

Out-of-Body Experiences

What You Need to Know

Compiled By Marilyn Hughes

The Out-of-Body Travel Foundation!

**www.outofbodytravel
.org**



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Having worked primarily in radio broadcasting, Marilyn Hughes spent several years as a news reporter, producer and anchor before deciding to stay at home with her three children. She's experienced, researched, written, and taught about out-of-body travel since 1987.

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INTRODUCTION

By Marilyn Hughes

In the modern world, man has begun to seek a higher calling. And what he seeks in an age of technological development and massive advances in human science is of all things - an age old experience. Out-of-Body Experiences have been happening throughout time, though many seem to perceive them as something new. In reality, the great masters of our faiths have laid out the path for us to achieve such states in very explicit writings.

But these writings have often been set aside, forgotten and replaced with modern day techniques and ideas which do not encompass the whole and true path which Out-of-Body Experiences actually take.

Seeking to achieve Out-of-Body Experiences is, in essence, looking to reach for the highest mystical states.

But these states are not reached by techniques alone. In fact, the preparatory things we may do in meditation and contemplation to prepare for such states is such a small portion of the actual achievement of Out-of-Body Experiences regarding their substance, endurance and meaning, that it seems modern man is looking to the 5% rather than the 95% which is absolutely essential to the progression of the spiritual path in a tangible and real way.

This book recaptures the true path to Out-of-Body Experiences by tapping into ancient sources from World Religions. This path involves a completely different approach than most people have been willing to consider.

Traveling this road will be more difficult, because it involves intrusive self-examination and a willingness to see the truth even if that truth ends up being different than what you previously thought it to be.

Human beings can get so caught up in wanting to prove to themselves the reality of what they believe, they don't realize that this need to preserve a delusion can, in of itself, prevent the realization of that which they so desperately seek.

And what you are about to read involves absolutely no techniques. The methods you will read about - irregardless of the religion from which they come - will invariably lead to similar conclusions.

It is by studying the path that the great Masters used, in every World Tradition, that my spiritual experiences began, continued, grew and evolved. Because Out-of-Body Experiences are not meant to be a scientific inquiry alone, but rather, an inquiry into the true person of God.

For those who would say I have no interest in religion or what anyone in any of those religions might have to say, I would respond that you must judge a religion by its God, rather than the people who choose to follow it.

When it comes to Out-of-Body Experiences, following the great masters who actually attained to the perfection of the Out-of-Body Travel Experience rather than those who dabble with techniques is wise.

The great teachers in our many faiths attained realization and liberation. They achieved the highest mystical states known to man: Samadhi, Ecstasy, Nirvana and the Absolute. Most of all, their journeys were filled with knowledge-seeking, the kind of wisdom that can only be known through the experience of it energetically by the hand of God.

But these experiences were not generated by techniques, alone. What you will find is that they are all generated by a profound yearning to know God as He really is, and to attain to a divine union borne of surrender, sacrifice and the narrow path to God.

And in reading these different studies and accountings of such means, you'll find there is a key to Out-of-Body Experiences - but it is not held in the words. And you will begin to seek it in a non-verbal way because it will become known to you.

For those who have been seeking prudently the path to achieve Out-of-Body Experiences, this is how it's done . . .

Chapter 1

Hinduism

Abridged Excerpts From:

Hindu Mysticism

By S.N. Dasgupta

1927

LECTURE III

YOGA MYSTICISM

THE last lecture dealt with the ineffable intuitive experience which the sages of the Upanishads regarded as absolute and ultimate in nature. The Upanishads, however, indicate no definite method for arriving at the perception of this truth. It is made clear that the pathway consists not in erudition or scholarship, and that it is not traversed by any sharpness of intelligence. The truth is such that it cannot be conceived by the human mind or described by language. One of the fundamental conditions of attaining it is the complete elevation of the moral life, including the absolute control of all passions and desires, the abandonment of worldly ambitions and hopes, and the attainment of an unruffled peace of mind. But the dawning of the supra-consciousness

which can reveal this truth does not, even so, depend entirely on our own efforts; there is something like divine mercy that must be awaited. This self can only be realized by those to whom it reveals itself. The perfecting of our moral life is a prerequisite; but no method deliberately and consciously pursued is sufficient to bring us all the way into the full realization of the highest truth. In at least one or two of the Upanishads indications of a different line of thought and method of realization are to be found. Thus in Katha III, our senses are compared with horses which are always running after their respective sense-objects. He who is not wise but is without control over his own mind cannot control his senses, just as a bad driver cannot control his horses. If anyone wishes to make his way to his highest goal, he should have wisdom for his driver and his mind as the reins of the horses of the senses. In Katha VI, it is said that there is a state in which the five senses, thought, intellect, and mind all cease to operate, and this highest stage of absolute sense-restraint is called "Yoga," or spiritual union.

There are ample literary evidences that from very early times--from at least 700 or 800 B. C.--people were in the habit of concentrating their minds on particular objects and thereby stopping the movement of the mind and the senses and achieving wonderful, miraculous powers. It is difficult to say how the ancient Indians discovered this mode of mental control. But it seems very probable that as at first practised it did not form a part of any metaphysical system of thought but was simply the practise of

mental concentration and breath control for the sake of the resulting peace and quietness of mind, as well as of the miraculous powers which could be achieved thereby.

But let us turn to a consideration of the principal use of the yoga practices for the spiritual enlightenment, the ultimate and absolute freedom of man, as described by Patanjali, the great yoga writer of about 150 B. C. Patanjali not only describes the principal yoga practices, but he gives a philosophical basis to the whole system and indicates, for the first time, how yoga may be utilized for the emancipation of man from the bondage of his mind and senses. It was explained in the last lecture that the sages of the Upanishads believed in a supra-conscious experience of pure self-illumination as the ultimate principle, superior to and higher than any of our mental states of cognition, willing, or feeling. The nature of this principle is itself extremely mystical; many persons, no doubt, are unable to grasp its character. It has been shown that, even in the days of the Upanishads, it was recognized to be obscure, and that the sages were never tired of saying that it could neither be perceived by the eye nor conceived in thought; but that, nevertheless, the sages believed in its existence as the ultimate being and not as an experience of ecstatic feeling or any other kind of transient psychological state. It was regarded as the real self and the ultimate reality. It is this view of self that is the root, as it were, of Indian mysticism.

If we ask ourselves what we understand by "I," we shall all find that, though it is in the most constant use, it is also the obscurest word in all our dictionaries. About the meaning of the word, in one sense we can never doubt; for there is no person who can ever doubt whether he is himself or another person. But when we try to understand what it definitely and actually means, it appears to be one of the most elusive of words. It certainly cannot designate merely our bodies; nor does it mean any particular idea or feeling of a temporary character. So we have to admit that while we all understand what it means we cannot define it. This is not the place to enter into all the recondite philosophical discussions to which the problem of the nature of the self has given rise. But some attempt must be made to explain what the Indians understood by the immortal and unchangeable self. Some believed this self to be the same in all persons, while others believed it to be many; but the conception of its nature was more or less the same in most of the systems of Indian thought. It was pure, contentless consciousness, altogether different from what we understand by idea, knowledge, or thought. Our thoughts and feelings are changeful; but this mysterious light of pure consciousness was changeless. The ultimate aim of the yoga processes (as of most of the Indian systems of thought) is to dissociate ourselves from our sensations, thoughts, ideas, feelings, etc., to learn that these are extraneous associations, foreign to the nature of self but adhering to it almost so inseparably that the true self cannot be easily discovered as a separate and independent entity.

But with the Indian sages this doctrine of a transcendent self was not merely a matter of speculative philosophy. For philosophy came to them much later than the actual practice of the liberation of this true self from the bondage of the association with all our so-called psychical states, ideas, feelings, emotions, images and concepts. It is very difficult for a Western mind of today to understand, or appreciate, the minds of the Indian seers. They felt a call from within the deep caverns of their selves--a call which must have started from a foretaste of their own true essence--which made all earthly pleasures or hopes of heavenly pleasures absolutely distasteful to them. They could feel satisfied only if they could attain this true freedom, their true self. To appreciate their experience at all one must, in imagination, take a long jump backward of about twenty-five centuries and across the waters of the Atlantic and the Indian oceans, and picture to oneself the valley of the lofty snow-capped peaks of the Himalayas looking high up to the infinite of the heavens and, far beyond, the peaceful groves and cottages where the innocence and forbearance of man had endeared him to trees and beasts alike, where no other sounds disturbed the serene forest-dwellers than the breezy rustling of the lofty Sal trees and the grovy palms. The necessities of the men who dwelt there were few. They often wore clothes made from birch bark, and ate fruits and vegetables that grew wild in the hermitage and rice which grew without much trouble of cultivation. The cows of the hermitage supplied them with milk and butter. They did not take any animal life for food; the birds ate from their hands, the soft-eyed gazelles

roamed about their huts, made of straw or leaves of trees, and the peacocks danced in the shady groves of their forest walks. The clear, transparent waters of the holy river Ganges and other rivers watered their hermitages, and the cool breezes delightfully refreshed their bodies and minds when the wearisome tropical heat had relaxed their nerves and muscles into inaction. These men had no riches, and they did not seek them. Their natural needs were few, and it never occurred to them that these could be augmented or multiplied. They thought, rather, that what needs they had were in themselves too numerous and could be indefinitely curtailed. Even in rather recent times a story is told to the effect that a scholar in Bengal, called Ramnath, was visited by Raja Krishnachandra of Bengal who wanted to bestow riches on him and asked him if he had any wants. The scholar replied that he had plenty of rice in his house and that he could make his soup out of the sour leaves of the tamarind tree which grew in his yard; the only difficulty that he had was with regard to some intellectual problems which he was still not able to solve. For men who live in a world of sky-scrapers, motor cars and comforts of all sorts, with its varied scientific, political and social ambitions, with its desire for wealth and its highly developed system of trade and commerce, it is inevitably difficult to appreciate, or rightly understand, the minds of those who felt disinclined to all worldly things and were uneasy until they could touch their own inmost self. Theirs, however, was no ordinary pessimism, as is too often supposed by unsympathetic and shallow-minded scholars, who lack the imagination and the

will to understand the Indian thought and culture of the past. They felt dissatisfied with the world not because the world had no pleasures or joys to offer, but because their desire for attaining their highest good, their true selves, was so great that it could tolerate no compromise with any other kind of desire. The sole ambition of the yogins, or the seers who practised the yoga discipline, was to become absolutely free from all kinds of bonds and from all kinds of extraneous determination.

The problem of how to become free naturally raised the question as to who is to become free and from what. The logic of the yogins is irresistible. It is the self which has to become free; in fact it is always free. The self is the ultimate principle of pure consciousness, distinct from all mental functions, faculties, powers, or products. By a strange, almost inexplicable, confusion we seem to lose touch with the former so that we consider it as non-existent and characterize the latter with its qualities. It is this confusion which is at the root of all our psychological processes. All mental operations involve this confusion by which they usurp the place of the principle of pure consciousness so that it is only the mind and the mental operations of thought, feeling, willing, which seem to be existing, while the ultimate principle of consciousness is lost sight of. If we call this ultimate principle of consciousness, this true self, "spirit" and designate all our functions of knowing, feeling, and willing collectively as "mind," then we may say that it is only by a strange confusion of mind with spirit that the mind comes to the forefront and

by its activities seems to obscure the true light of the spirit. Our senses run after their objects and the mind establishes relations between the sense-data, or sensations, and deals with the concepts formed therefrom as it carries on the processes of logical thought with the aid of memory. The external objects which draw minds to them are not in themselves directly and immediately responsible for obscuring the spirit or in binding it to them. It is, rather, the mind and its activities by which the true nature of the spirit seems to be obscured so that the mind usurps the rightful place of the spirit. What is necessary, therefore, is to control the activities of the mind and to stop all mental processes. If we can in this way kill the mind, all logical thought and all sense processes will be killed with it. The light of the spirit will then shine alone by itself unshadowed by the darkening influence of thought. The spirit, the ultimate principle of consciousness, and the self are one and the same thing, the three terms expressing the threefold aspect of its nature. But this entity, by whichever name it is called, is to be distinguished from mind, whose activities are thoughts, feelings, etc. We may here employ a simile. We may say that the spirit is like a pure white light covered by the colored dome of the mind. This colored dome hides the pure white light, and, without changing the nature of the white light by its own color, makes the latter appear as colored and wrongfully appears itself to be a source of colored light, though it has no light whatsoever of itself. We fail to recognize the white light within and take it for granted that the colored dome is itself a colored light. The only way to restore the purity of the

white light is by smashing the colored dome. Similarly, the only way in which the spirit may be made to realize, in its own non-conceptual way, its own lonely light is by breaking the mind to pieces.

The mind lives by its activities of sensing, perceiving and conceiving. It creates illusions and hallucinations, revives past experiences in memory, and sometimes passes into a state of sleep in which it creates dreams. If the movement of the mind could be entirely stopped, its disintegration would be effected. The process of yoga consists in so controlling the activity of the mind that it ceases to pass through its different states. The cessation of all mental states is yoga. These mental states as they rise and pass away are not altogether lost. They continue in the subconscious mind as impressions which are revived by proper excitations. As they are thus revived and repeated, and return to the subconscious, the impressions become strengthened, growing more and more powerful and more likely to occur as conscious states. Thus, for example, when we once devote ourselves to making money and to enjoying the comforts it can procure, we become more and more deeply absorbed in earning money and enjoying its comforts. Similarly, the scholar through days and nights of study in his library grows ever more attached to his occupation of study. It is in this way that the tendencies of the mind become strengthened; repeating themselves almost mechanically they keep alive the continual flow of the mind from one state to another. Yoga consists in stopping the conscious and subconscious mental flow entirely and absolutely.

It is easy to see that no one will think of destroying his mind unless his desire for the absolute freedom of the spirit becomes so great that all the activities of the mind, all his sense-enjoyments, all his thoughts and feelings, lose all interest for him and appear to him to be entirely valueless. This disinclination to all worldly things, called *vairagya*, is the first thing which leads the yogin to seek the way of yoga to deliver himself forever from all mundane experiences. The seer is as sensitive as the pupil of the eye. Just as a speck of dust, which passes altogether unnoticed on any other part of the body, causes great pain when it gets into the eye, so the suffering, which is absolutely unnoticed by the ordinary person, is felt keenly by the seer. All ordinary pleasures appear to be distasteful to him. There is nothing in anything worldly that can give him any satisfaction. He is in that mood in which he is dissatisfied with them all and wishes to shun them.

Such a state of mind cannot be produced unless the mind has risen to the highest plane of moral elevation. Unless the mind is made absolutely pure there cannot be any steady disinclination toward worldly things.

A seer must abstain from all injury to living beings. His tenderness should extend not only to all human individuals but to all living beings. He would not willfully take the life of, or injure, any living being. He would not steal the property of any other person. He would be absolutely truthful in thought, word and deed. Veracity consists in the agreement of words and

thoughts with facts. But it must always be employed for the good of others and not for their injury. If it proves injurious to living beings, with whatever intention it be uttered it is not truth. Though outwardly such a truthful course may be considered virtuous yet since by his truth he has caused injury to another he has in reality violated the ideal of absolute non-injury. The seer must have a complete control of the sex tendencies. He must not desire anything more than the bare necessities. For the acquisition of things always entails attachment and greed, and injury to others in acquiring and preserving them. If in performing the great duty of universal non-injury, and in cultivating the other virtues auxiliary to it, a man be troubled by thoughts of sin, he should try to substitute for the sinful ideas those which are contrary to them. Thus, if the old habit of sin tends to drive him along the wrong path, he should, in order to banish it, entertain ideas such as the following:-- "Being burnt up as I am in the fires of the world, I have taken refuge in the practice of yoga, which gives protection to all. Were I to resume the sins which I have abandoned, I should certainly be behaving like a dog which eats its own vomit--I should be acting as if I were to take up again that which I had once put aside." Thus one should habituate himself to meditation upon the harmful effects of the tendencies which are leading him along the wrong path. The habituation to this contrary tendency consists in continually thinking that these immoral tendencies cause an infinity of pain and error. Pain and error are the unending fruits of these immoral tendencies and

in the recognition of this lies the power of righting the trend of our thoughts.

Other moral qualities of a positive character are considered indispensable to a seer toiling on the path of yoga. These are: purity, contentment, indifference to physical difficulties of heat, cold, etc., study and self-surrender to God. Purity here means both physical and mental cleanliness. Contentment means that self-satisfied condition of the mind in which we are at peace with ourselves, having ceased to run after new wants. Indifference to physical difficulties is also a virtue to be acquired by the yogin, who should be able to bear calmly the bodily wants of hunger and thirst, heat and cold. He should also be able to stop his physical movements for a considerable length of time, and be able, as well, to stop his desire to talk with others and to remain absolutely dumb.

In the last lecture, on the Upanishadic mysticism, it was shown that when such a high standard of moral elevation is reached and we seek to know the inmost essence of self, the self often reveals its own true nature through a direct intuition which is beyond the grasp of the mind and the senses. The yogins, however, not only emphasized the necessity of the highest moral perfection but they also required a particular course of physical and mental discipline as indispensable to the realization of yoga's high ideal. The yogins emphasized not only the negative aspect of morality, such as abstinence from injury, falsehood and the like, but also such positive moral virtues as purity and contentment. The four cardinal virtues

which a yogin was required to possess were universal friendship (*maitri*), compassion for all who suffer (*karuna*), happiness in the happiness of others (*mudita*), and a sympathetic consideration for the failings of others (*upeksha*). But even these were not deemed sufficient; they were only preliminary acquirements which the yogin must possess before starting with his yoga practices. The acquisition of these moral virtues went, indeed, a long way in restraining the mind from running after sense-objects and from being disturbed by greed, passions and antipathies; for the yogin was self-controlled, contented, pure in mind and body, and peaceable and charitable toward all living beings. But still he must be able to control his bodily movements. He must therefore habituate himself to sitting in one posture for a long time, not only for hours and days but often for months and years together. This implied the attainment of a power to bear calmly hunger and thirst, heat and cold, and all physical hardships.

In order that the movement in the body may be reduced to a minimum, it is necessary to acquire a control over breathing. To practice the science of breath-control, the yogin seats himself firmly, fixes his eyes on an object beyond him, or rather on the tip of his own nose or on the point between his two eyebrows, and slowly inhales a full breath. At first the breath that is taken in is kept perhaps for a minute and then slowly exhaled. The practice is continued for days and months, the period of the retention of the breath taken in being gradually increased.

The real yoga practice of the mind can be properly begun only when these preliminaries have been to a large extent acquired so that the chances of external bodily disturbances and internal disturbances due to passions, antipathies, attachments, etc., have been minimized. The yogin begins this superior mental yoga by concentrating at first on any gross physical object. This concentration is not the ordinary concentration of thought as exemplified in any scientific or literary work. For this latter type of concentration consists in the limiting of the mind's activity to matters associated with the object of attention. Thus, if we concentrate on the writing of a poem or the description of scenery, what we do is to restrain the mind from flying off to other objects in which we are not interested at the time and to focus it upon the relations between various associated images and thoughts. The mind is in such cases in a lively state of movement within a limited sphere, always seeking to discover new relations or to intensify the comprehension of relations and facts already known. But yoga concentration aims not to discover any new relations or facts or to intensify any impression; it aims solely to stop the movement of mind and to prevent its natural tendency towards comparison, classification, association, assimilation and the like. The fixing of the mind on an object is done I with the specific purpose of pinning it to that object and of preventing its transition to any other object. By this process the mind becomes one with the object, and so long as it is pinned to that object its movement is stopped. At the first stage of this union, there is knowledge of the name and the physical form of the

object to which the mind has been pinned. But at the next stage nothing is known of the object in its ordinary relations of name and form, but the mind becomes one with the object, steady and absolutely motionless. This state is called a state of *samadhi*, or absorptive concentration. This stage arises when the mind by its steadiness becomes one with its object, divested of all associations of name and concept, so that it is in direct touch with the reality of the thing uncontaminated by associations. In this state, the object does not appear as an object of *my* consciousness but *my* consciousness, becoming divested of all "I" or "mine," becomes one with the object itself. There is no awareness here that "I know this," but, the mind having become one with the thing, the duality of subject and object disappears, and the result is the transformation of the mind into the object of its concentration. Our ordinary knowledge of things is full of false and illusory associations which do not communicate to us the real nature of the object; but when such an absorptive union of object and mind takes place, a new kind of intuition is produced, called *prajna*, similar to the Upanishadic intuition, called *prajnana*, and thereby the real nature of the thing is brought home to us. This *prajna* knowledge, which is a new kind of intuition produced by stopping the movement of the mind, is entirely different from the ordinary logical type of cognition of thoughts, images, etc. This intuition is a direct acquaintance, more or less similar to direct perceptual vision but free from the ordinary errors of all sense-perception. Such a steadiness can however be achieved only after continual practice. A

yogin must be always watchful, particularly in the first stages, to keep his mind steadily on the object of his concentration. He must have, therefore, an inexhaustible fund of active energy (*virya*).

On the negative side we have, therefore, disinclination to worldly things; on the positive side, firm faith in the efficacy of the yoga process and vigorous energy exercised in steadying the mind in contemplation. Gradually, as the yogin becomes more proficient, he selects subtler and finer objects for his concentration; and at each stage in this refinement, new forms of intuitional prajna, or yoga knowledge, dawn. Truths wholly unknown to others become known to him. Though all these powers confirm his faith in the yoga process, he does not allow himself to be led away by their acquisition, but steadily proceeds toward that ultimate stage in which his mind will be disintegrated and his self will shine forth in its own light and he himself will be absolutely free in bondless, companionless loneliness of self-illumination.

This *prajna*, or yoga intuitional knowledge, may be considered as a new dimension of knowledge wholly different from any other kind of knowledge derived by the movement of the mind. The most fundamental characteristic of yoga mysticism consists, on its negative side, not only in a disbelief in the ability of sense-perception and logical thought to comprehend the ultimate truth about the absolute purity and unattached character of our true self; but also in a disbelief in the possibility of the realisation of this

highest truth so long as the mind itself is not destroyed. On its positive side, it implies that intuitional wisdom is able to effect a clear realisation of truth by gradually destroying the so-called intellect. The destruction of mind, of course, also involves the ultimate destruction of this intuition itself. So neither the intuition nor our ordinary logical thought is able to lead us ultimately to self-realisation. There are thus three stages of knowledge. First, our ordinary sense-knowledge and logical thought which always deal with the world and worldly objects and which appear valueless to us when we are in spiritual exaltation and are anxious to attain the highest truth. Second, the intuitional yoga wisdom, which can only be attained when, as a result of the highest moral elevation and the yoga practices, the mind can be firmly steadied on an object so that it becomes one with that object and all its movements completely cease. This yoga wisdom gives us a direct non-conceptual vision of, or acquaintance with, the ultimate truths concerning all objects on which our minds may be concentrated; and gradually, as the yogin begins to concentrate on subtler and finer objects, such as mind, self, etc., higher and nobler truths concerning these become known to him. Though we are free to concentrate on any object whatsoever, it is desirable for the quicker attainment of our goal that we should concentrate on God--surrender ourselves to Him. In the most advanced state of this yoga intuition, all the truths regarding the nature of the true self, of the mind and of the material world and its connection with mind, become clear, and as a result of this and also as a result of the

gradual weakening of the constitution of the mind, the latter ceases to live and work and is dissociated forever from the spirit or the self. It is then that the spirit shines forth in its own lonely splendor, free from the bondage of the mind which had so long by its activities led it towards false worldly attachments and to a false non-appearance of its own pure nature in all the varied products of ordinary knowledge, feeling and willing which make up our worldly life. The highest and ultimate revelation of truth is therefore not only non-conceptual and non-rational, but also non-intuitional and non-feeling. It is a self-shining which is unique.

Abridged Excerpts From:

Yoga Vashisht or Heaven Found

By Rishi Singh Gherwal
1930

SURAGHO

"Even though thou pursue thy appointed path through the world, O Ram, there is beneficent quietude in the throne of the All-Wise, if thou but recognize the Knower with thy mind. So long, Ram, as you attain the Atmic state by thy constant mastery of externals, your mind will ever be engaged in enquiry into the unlimited pure wisdom (inculcated by your wise Guru and the Holy precepts). The supreme state may be reached through Atmic enquiry; by turning aside from worldly objects., discernment of the true significance of the Books of Wisdom; one's own intelligence; initiation by a Guru; refraining from taking the life of any living thing; purity; or it can be attained by one's intelligence alone. Lacking all else, liberation will be his who is possessed of subtle and stainless intelligence, and is initiated by a Guru.

Upon hearing Muni Vashisht, Ram enquired: "The persons named by you divide into two classes. One class frees itself of pain and attains the unity of wisdom by going into Samadhi while still doing the work of the world; the other retires from action in the

world and goes into Samadhi. Of these two which is superior? Please enlighten me clearly on this point."

To which Vashisht answered: "In Samadhi there is recognition of the inactivity of this world. The mind becomes completely passionless, with no concern for the world or its objects. Whether one enters Samadhi from amid the turmoil of the world, or the quiet depths of a forest, there is no difference. Both have attained complete equipoise of mind, and the incalculable fruits of the great meditation are theirs. In this state of illumination, the serenity of mind is absolute. Therefore, O Ram, it matters not by what door one enters; the sublime state of Samadhi – within lies liberation.

"When the desires are extinct, the performance of actions will be as if not done, like one, who, deep in mental concentration does not hear the voices of bystanders. But if the gross mind still has desire, though one has withdrawn from worldly action, then one's actions are performed in the dreaming state when the body is as if paralyzed. Know, O Ram, when the mind performs action, but is yet free from it, that state is called the blissful Samadhi; the unchanging Nirvana and transcendent bliss.

"The two kinds of vision, meditation and non-meditation, are the results of the steady mind and the oscillating mind. Therefore, all the attributes of the mind must be controlled. It is said, that meditation is the firm mind itself, devoid of desire or vexatious thoughts. Pain, internal or external, wears away in

this Nirvanic state. A mind which is above its worries will reach Nirvana. Desires breed endless pain and misery in mental worry, and should therefore be relinquished.

"When all conception of "I" among the multitude of visibles is vanquished, it does not matter where you live, O Ram, whether in a house, on a hillside or in the great forest. The blessed of quiescent mind, who have let go egoism find in the busiest household, the solitude of the forest. They who stroll in a street, desiring nothing therein, really possess the street. Similarly, to those in full spiritual beatitude, the city and the wood are the same. The forest retreat and the city abode become alike to him of introspective mind, and the functions of sleeping, waking or walking do not disturb this tranquillity of mind.

"O quiescent mind, thou twin of Prana, thy cooling dew will chill the hot flowers of desire, and over all the universe shall be sweet peace. But should the mind become heated with the illusion of the world, then the hot breath of desire will sweep over the universe, like a great raging forest fire, leaving but ashes in its wake.

"The inner processes of mind are revealed in external actions. The earth, sky and air are all manifestations of the lower mind. He who loses himself in earthly joys will never enjoy the surpassing delight of Samadhi. But he who recognizes that the function of the lower mind must operate, but yet is aloof from mundane enjoyment, finds pure delight in Atma

(wisdom). He who lives in the life of others, spurning wealth, and seeing the world as it really is, is the real Knower.

"Whether death comes now or at the end of a cycle, these wise ones will never be corrupted in mind. The Vedas proclaim them as the blessed conquerors of the illusory conceptions of duality and belief in endings and beginnings, true enjoyers of bliss. By these characteristics, may we recognize those who have attained wisdom. But the recognition will not aid, O Ram, in the conception of the universal soul, for in words alone wisdom does not lie. Only in the divine word OM is Brahma hidden.

"O, benignant Ram, I shall relate to thee a story which illustrates the attainment of Atmic wisdom. Hear thou this history of Suragho, which is indeed wonderful.

"Suragho was a mighty hunter and ruler of the Kiratas. He lived with his people, who were adepts in archery, in the Kailasa hills on the summit of the Himalayas.

"Whilst he administered royal justice with strict impartiality, rewarding the righteous and punishing the wrongdoers, he soliloquized: 'If in the exercise of my royal power I afflict my people, are not their pains mine? Yet, if I do not punish them according to prescribed law, they shall have lived in vain. It is indeed a difficult task to rule over a kingdom.'

"The tender king was sorely troubled in mind.

"Muni Mandavya made a timely appearance. To him Suragho paid honor, and addressed him: 'O virtuous Muni, thy coming fills me with happiness. It is indeed a blessing to know that I am in thy notice. Thou, righteous Lord, hast long been free from melancholy of spirit. Help me to clear my mind of the misgivings that assail me. What else torments the mind of man more than doubt? My head is awl, O Muni, with the miseries and joys my subjects experience in obeying my will. Let the sun of wisdom light the darkness of my mind, and equality of vision comfort me.'

"Muni Mandavya replied: 'Atmic enquiry will clear away the fog of illusion, Suragho. Ask thyself ceaselessly, Who am I? Whence came the universe? Whence came birth and death? If you do this faithfully the reward of the Brahmic Seat shall be yours. When you make Atmic enquiry habitual, your mind will obey your will and you will cease your agonizing. To a poised mind the ups and downs of life appear trivial. Does the elephant flee at sight of oxen tracks? What is of no consequence to the wise is appalling to others. For does not the rain, gathered in the footprint of a cow, seem an ocean of incalculable area to a mosquito? Know thou, Suragho, that the farther removed thou art from worldly distractions, the brighter the light of God illumines thee. Just so long as you are engrossed in the affairs of the world, the true principle of God will not be recognized by you. Deific light will not shine when dualities still exist in the mind. It is as difficult to realize Atmic Reality, as to know that the alchemy of gold is not

more to nature, than that of the baser metals. Therefore, longing for the things of the world must cease. The reward is the attainment of liberation—the supreme Brahmic state. O illustrious hunter, control your mind, and keep it free from bodily and unwise desires; so shall you then attain the stainless and beneficent Principle.'

"So saying Muni Mandavya returned to his own abode.

"The mighty hunter withdrew into his cave and in solitude began enquiry into origin of the 'I'. His meditations took the following form.—How absurd, he thought, to call my body 'I', for my body is composed of flesh and bone, which in its separate parts is passive. Hence my body is not 'I'. The ten organs of sense are other than the 'I'. I am not, then, the organs of my body. What remains is ego. What actuates my ego? Consciousness. But the universal consciousness cannot be termed the Reality. Therefore, I shall free myself from the Jiva state and become "THAT" which above all else, I desire to know. The fullness of wisdom, changeless and stainless, alone is my Reality. This transcendent Wisdom pervades all like the strand upon which pearls are strung,—Vishnu, Brahma, Devendra, Yama and all other states. This supreme and powerful Wisdom or Realization is not tainted by worldliness, is of divine aspect, and finds completion in all objects; has neither existence nor non-existence; is subtle and permeates all, even the abode of Truth where lives Brahma. This consciousness is the residual of all other potencies. It

is due to motion or fluctuation of this consciousness, and to nothing else, that the diversified objects of this world are due.

"Having relinquished the objective world and freed himself from the shackles of desire and delusion—delusion which follows one even in his seventh rebirth—Suragho maintained equality of vision, as one stationary in the Sushupti state. Free at last, though living in Atmic reality, he reached the Brahmic state and attained the status of a Brahman, like unto Raja Rishi Viswamitra, of extraordinary meditation.

"Thus did Suragho reach the Sushupti or dreamless state, wherein action is stilled, like a picture of a candle alight. In that state he was, and the opposites of love and hate, blessing or curse, association or separation, intelligence or ignorance, assailed him not.

"Vashisht continued, O Ram, pillar of strength hear also what took place between Suragho who attained, and a Raja Rishi named Parnada. Suragho had a friend, Parigha by name, of the race of Paraseeka, who was also a king. When Parigha's kingdom suffered a ten year drought, and famine and his people perished in great numbers, his heart gave way . He left his native country and went into a forest to meditate, denying himself food and subsisting upon dry leaves. Because of this he was called Parnada. Through the renunciation he practiced and his holy meditations, he attained Atmic wisdom, for none

could compete with the strenuities of this kingly recluse. This Muni, who traveled the three worlds as though he walked thru the room of a dwelling, appeared before King Suragho. Each responded to the other's affectionate greeting and found pleasure in reciting their respective experiences.

"In welcome Suragho said, 'My heart overflows with joy and exquisite bliss. I hail thee, O, honorable One.'

"Parnada answered; 'The sight of thee lifts me into that Jnana state into which Muni Mandavya initiated you. O, King, art thou able to direct thy worldly affairs with equality and clarity of vision? Hast thy body, changed by the passing years, remained free from diseases, either physical or mental? Canst thou preserve thy equilibrium of mind amid the inordinate luxuries of wealth? Hast thou been able to merge into Samadhi without thought, by following the paths of extreme serenity and solitude and forms actions or not, he who has Realized will always be poised in the Samadhic state. O Brother in Attainment, they who have not equanimity of mind will never be able to go into Samadhi, even though they sit in the Padme posture and offer salutations to Brahma. It is the fullness of Atmic wisdom which constitutes the noble Samadhi. If the mind controlled by concentration knows Reality, such a wise one may be said to enjoy Samadhi. The intelligence of the wise, free from illusion, yet mindful of worldly action, will not forget for a moment the eternity of Atmic Reality. As air flows freely in any direction, the wise intelligence will always follow the path of unchanging Atmic wisdom.

The wise, who are in rapport with the indivisible Intelligence, having abandoned the illusion of the opposites except as worldly recognition is necessary, can be said to have attained the Brahmic Seat. Therefore, those blessed in wisdom, who refrain from too much consideration for bodily action, and who have enlivened the intelligence by the acquisition of holy knowledge, may penetrate everywhere. Thou hast recognized the Intelligence which is wondrous and changeless. Thou hast attained the Brahmic state. Thy mind has been purged from worldliness, and thy heart is liberated from egoism. Having known the certainty of Atma, thou art complete and full in thy Self.

"Suragho made answer: 'Of what avail are circuitous expressions? To say it briefly, it is this, when all longing for the fruits of action cease, and the mind looks upon all equally, being directed within itself, then Brahmic bliss arises, the incomparable Wise-Vision is developed, and the resolute Atmic Reality alone illumines.'"

Abridged Excerpts From:

Ramakrishna: His Life and Sayings

By F. Max Muller

1898

301. A boat may stay in the water, but water should not stay in the boat. An aspirant may live in the world, but the world should not live in him.

302. He who thinks his spiritual guide a mere man, can-not derive any benefit from him.

303. What you think you should say. Let there be a harmony between your thoughts and your words; otherwise, if you merely tell that God is your all in all, while your mind has made the world its all in all, you cannot derive any benefit thereby.

304. A young plant should be always protected by a fence from the mischief of goats and cows and little urchins. But when once it becomes a big tree, a flock of goats or a herd of cows may find shelter under its spreading boughs, and fill their stomachs with its leaves. So when you have but little faith within you, you should protect it from the evil influences of bad company and worldliness. But when once you grow strong in faith, no worldliness or evil inclination will dare approach your holy presence; and many who are wicked will become godly through your holy contact.

305. If you wash the body of an elephant and set him at large, he is sure to get himself dirtied in no time, but if after washing him you tie him down to his own room he will remain clean. So if by the good influences of holy men you once become pure in spirit, and then allow yourself the liberty to mix freely with worldly men, you are sure to lose that purity soon; but if you keep your mind fixed on your God, you will never more get soiled in spirit.

306. Where does the strength of an aspirant lie? It is in his tears. As a mother gives her consent to fulfil the desire of her importunately weeping child, so God vouchsafes to His weeping son whatever he is crying for.

307. Meditate on God either in an unknown corner, or in the solitude of forests, or within your own mind.

308. Chant forth the sweet name of Hari (God), keeping time all the while by clapping your hands, then you will acquire mental concentration. If you clap your hands, sitting under a tree, the birds on the boughs thereof will fly away in all directions, and when you chant forth the name of Hari and clap your hands, all evil thoughts will fly away from your mind.

311. Bow down and adore where others kneel, for where so many hearts have been paying the tribute of adoration, the kind Lord will manifest Himself, for He is all mercy.

313, 314. A patient, in high fever and excess of thirst, imagines that he can drink away quite a sea of water; but when that fit of fever goes and he regains his normal temperature, he can barely quaff off a single cupful of water, and his thirst is at once appeased with even a very small quantity of it. So a man, being under the feverish excitement of *Mâyâ*, and forgetful of his own littleness, imagines that he can embrace the whole of Divinity within his own bosom, but when the illusion passes away a single ray of Divine Light is seen to be sufficient to flood him with eternal divine bliss.

315. A man, under the influence of very high fever and in excessive thirst, is placed between a row of pitchers filled with cold water and a set of open-mouthed bottles filled with flavoured sauces. Is it possible for the thirsty and restless patient in such a case to refrain from either drinking the water or from tasting the sauces placed so near him, although thereby his case may become worse? Even such is the case with the man who is under the maddening influence of his ever-active and misleading senses when he is placed between the attractions of woman's charm on the one side and those of wealth on the other. It is then difficult for him to behave properly, and he is liable to deviate often from the true path and thus make his case worse.

316. None ventures to keep milk in a vessel in which curd had formerly formed, lest the milk itself should get curdled. Nor can the vessel be safely used for other working purposes lest it should crack upon the

fire. It is therefore almost useless. A good and experienced preceptor does not entrust to a worldly man valuable and exalting precepts, for he is sure to misinterpret and misuse them to suit his own mean designs. Nor will he ask him to do any useful work that may cost a little labour, lest he should think that the preceptor was taking undue advantage of him.

317. When a certain quantity of pure milk is mixed with double the quantity of water, it takes a long time and much labour to thicken it to the consistency of Kshîra (condensed milk). The mind of a worldly man is largely diluted with the filthy water of evil and impure thoughts, and it requires much time and labour before anything can be done to purify and give the proper consistency to it.

318. The vanities of all others may gradually die out, but the vanity of a saint as regards his sainthood is hard indeed to wear away.

319. Of the grains of paddy which are fried in a frying-pan, the few which leap out of the pan and burst outside are the best fried, being without the slightest mark of any tinge; while every one of the properly-fried grains in the pan itself is sure to have at least a very small charred mark of a burn. So of all good devotees, the few who altogether give up the world and go out of it are perfect without any spot, while even the best of those devotees who are in the world must have at least some small spot of imperfection in their character.

320. We cannot say that God is gracious because He feeds us, for every father is bound to supply his children with food; but when He keeps us from going astray, and holds us back from temptations, then He is truly gracious.

321. If you can detect and find out the universal illusion or Mâyâ, it will fly away from you, just as a thief runs away when found out.

322. Fire itself has no definite shape, but in glowing embers it assumes certain forms, and the formless fire is then endowed with forms. Similarly, the formless God sometimes invests Himself with definite forms.

323. Should we pray aloud unto God? Pray unto Him in any way you like. He is sure to hear you, for He can hear even the footfall of an ant.

324. He who tries to give one an idea of God by mere book-learning is like the man who tries to give one an idea of Kâsî (Benares) by means of a map or a picture.

325. A man began to sink a well, but having dug down to the depth of twenty cubits he could not find the least trace of the water-spring which was to feed his well. So he desisted from the work and selected another place for the purpose. There he dug deeper than before, but even then he could not find any water. So again he selected another spot and dug still deeper than before, but it was also of no avail. At last in utter disgust he gave up the task altogether. The sum total of the depths of these three wells was little short of a hundred cubits. Had he had the patience to

devote even a half of the whole of this labour to his first well, without shifting the site of the well from place to place, he would surely have been successful in getting water. Such is the case with men who continually shift their positions in regard to faith. In order to meet with success we should devote ourselves entirely to a single object of faith, without being doubtful as to its efficacy.

326. Although in a grain of paddy the germ is considered the only necessary thing (for germination and growth), while the husk or chaff is considered to be of no importance, still if the unhusked grain be put into the ground it will not sprout up and grow into a plant and produce rice. To get a crop one must needs sow the grain with the husk on; but if one wants to get at the germinating matter itself he must first perform the operation of removing the husk from the seed. So rites and ceremonies are necessary for the growth and perpetuation of a religion. They are the receptacles that contain the seeds of truth, and consequently every man must perform them before he reaches the central truth.

327. The pearl-oyster that contains the precious pearl is in itself of very little value, but it is essential for the growth of the pearl. The shell itself is of no use to the man who has got the pearl, neither are ceremonies and rites necessary for him who has attained the Highest Truth --God.

328. A woodcutter led a very miserable life with the small means he could procure by daily selling the

load of wood brought from a neighbouring forest. Once a *Samnyâsin*, who was wending his way through the forest, saw him at work, and advised him to proceed onward into the interior recesses of the forest, intimating to him that he would be a gainer thereby. The woodcutter obeyed the injunction and proceeded onward till he came to a sandal-wood tree, and being much pleased he took away with him as many sandal-logs as he could carry, and sold them in the market and derived much profit. Then he began to think within himself why the good *Samnyâsin* did not tell him anything about the wood of the sandal-trees, but simply advised him to proceed onward into the interior of the forest. So the next day he went on even beyond the place of the sandal-wood, and at last came upon a copper-mine, and he took with him as much copper as he could carry, and selling it in the market got much money by it. Next day, without stopping at the copper-mine, he proceeded further still, as the *Sâdhu* had advised him to do, and came upon a silver-mine, and took with him as much of it as he could carry, and sold it all and got even more money; and so daily proceeding further and further he got at gold-mines and diamond-mines, and at last became exceedingly rich. Such is also the case with the man who aspires after true knowledge. If he does not stop in his progress after attaining a few extraordinary and supernatural powers, he at last becomes really rich in the eternal knowledge of truth.

329. If you first smear the palms of your hands with oil and then break open the jack-fruit, the sticky milky exudation of the fruit will not stick to your hands and

trouble you. So if you first fortify yourself with the true knowledge of the Universal Self, and then live in the midst of wealth and women, they will affect you in no way.

330. He who would learn to swim must attempt swimming for some days. No one can venture to swim in the sea after a single day's practice. So if you want to swim in the sea of Brahman, you must make many ineffectual attempts at first, before you can successfully swim therein.

331. When does a man get his salvation? When his egoism dies.

332. When a sharp thorn finds its way into the sole of one's foot, one takes another thorn to get the former out, and then casts both of them away. So relative knowledge alone can remove the relative ignorance which blinds the eye of the Self. As both such knowledge and ignorance are comprised truly under Nescience, the man who attains the highest *Gñâna*, or knowledge of the Absolute, does away with both knowledge and ignorance in the end, being himself free from all duality.

333. To drink pure water from a shallow pond, one should gently take the water from the surface, and not disturb it. If it is disturbed the sediments will rise up from the bottom and make the whole water muddy. If you desire to be pure, have firm faith and slowly go on with your devotional practices, and waste not your energies in useless scriptural discussions and

arguments. The little brain will otherwise be muddled.

338. The locomotive engine easily drags along a train of heavily-laden carriages. So the loving children of God, firm in their faith and devotion to Him, feel no trouble in passing through all the worries and anxieties of life, and leading many men along with them to God.

337. Every man should follow his own religion. A Christian should follow Christianity, a Mohammedan should follow Mohammedanism, and so on. For the Hindus the ancient path, the path of the Aryan Rishis, is the best.

338, 339. He alone is the true man who is illumined with the light of true knowledge. Others are men in name only.

340. The magnetic needle always points towards the North, and hence it is that the sailing-vessel does not lose her course. So long as the heart of man is directed towards God he cannot be lost in the ocean of worldliness.

341. As the village maidens in India carry four or five pots of water placed one over the other upon their heads, talking all the way with one another about their own joys and sorrows, and yet do not allow one drop of water to be spilt, so must the traveller in the path of virtue walk along. In whatever circumstances he may be placed, let him always take heed that his heart does not swerve from the true path.

342. In our theatrical exhibitions wherein the life and exploits of *Krishna* are exhibited, the performance commences with the beating of drums and the singing aloud of 'O *Krishna*, come; come, O dear one.' But the person who plays the part of *Krishna* pays no heed to this noise and turmoil, and goes on complacently chatting and smoking in the green-room behind the stage. But as soon as the noise ceases, and the pious sage *Nârada* enters on the stage with sweet and soft music and calls upon *Krishna* to come out with a heart overflowing with love, *Krishna* finds that he can no longer remain indifferent, and hurriedly comes on to the stage. So long as the religious devotee cries, 'Come, O Lord; come, O Lord,' with lip-prayers only, verily the Lord will never come; when the Lord does come, the heart of the devotee will melt in divine emotion, and his loud utterances will all cease for ever. The Lord cannot delay in coming when man calls upon Him from the depths of his heart overflowing with deep love and devotion.

343. There is no Path safer and smoother than that of *ba-kalamâ* (*sic*). *Ba-kalamâ* means resigning the self to the will of the Almighty, to have no consciousness that anything is 'mine.'

344. What is the nature of absolute reliance? It is that happy state of comfort felt by a fatigued worker, when reclining on a pillow he smokes at leisure after a hard day's toil: it is a cessation of all anxieties and worries.

345. As dry leaves are blown about here and there by the wind, and have no choice of their own, and make no exertion: so those who depend upon God move in harmony with His will, and can have no will, and put forth no effort, of their own.

346, 347. What do you think of the man who is a good orator and preacher, but whose spirituality is undeveloped? He is like a person who squanders another's property left in trust with him. He can easily advise others, for it costs him nothing, as the ideas he expresses are not his own, but borrowed.

348. A worldly man is best known by his antipathy to whatever savours of religion. He does not like to hear any sacred music or psalm, or to utter the holy name of God, and even dissuades others from doing the same. He scoffs at prayers, and pours down a volley of abuse upon all religious societies and men.

352. It is useless to pore over holy scriptures and sacred Shastras without a discriminating and dispassionate mind. No spiritual progress can be made without discrimination (Viveka) and dispassion (Vairâgya).

353. Know thyself, and thou shalt then know the non-self and the Lord of all. What is my ego? Is it my hand, or foot, or flesh, or blood, or muscle, or tendon? Ponder deep, and thou shalt know that there is no such thing as I. As by continually peeling off the skin of the onion, so by analysing the ego it will be found that there is not any real entity corresponding to the

ego. The ultimate result of all such analysis is God. When egoism drops away, Divinity manifests itself.

355. If thou wishest to see God, have firm faith in the efficacy of repeating the name of God, and try to discriminate the real from the unreal.

356. When an elephant is let loose, it goes about uprooting trees and shrubs, but as soon as the driver pricks him on the head with the goad he becomes quiet; so the mind when unrestrained wantons in the luxuriance of idle thoughts, but becomes calm at once when struck with the goad of discrimination.

357. Devotional practices are necessary only so long as tears of ecstasy do not flow at hearing the name of Hari. He needs no devotional practices whose heart is moved to tears at the mere mention of the name of Hari.

358. The companionship of the holy and wise is one of the main elements of spiritual progress.

359. The soul reincarnates in a body of which it was thinking just before its last departure from this world. Devotional practices may therefore be seen to be very necessary. When, by constant practice, no worldly ideas arise in the mind, then the god-idea alone fills the soul, and does not leave it even when on the brink of eternity.

360. How should one love God? As the true and chaste wife loves her husband and the niggardly

miser loves his hoarded wealth, so the devotee should love the Lord with all his heart and soul.

361. How may we conquer the old Adam in us? When the fruit grows out of the flower, the petals of the flower drop off of themselves. So, when the divinity in thee increases, the weaknesses of thy human nature will all vanish of their own accord.

362, 363. When does the attraction of sensual and worldly pleasures die away? In God, who is Indivisible Ever-Existing Bliss, there is a consolidation of all happiness and of all pleasures. They who enjoy Him can find no attraction in the cheap and worthless pleasures of the world.

364. In what condition of the mind does God-vision take place? God is seen when the mind is tranquil. When the mental sea is agitated by the wind of desires, it cannot reflect God, and then God-vision is impossible.

365. How may we find our God? The angler, anxious to hook a big and beautiful Rohitta-fish, waits calmly for hours together, having thrown the bait and the hook into the water, watching patiently until the bait is caught by the fish. Similarly, the devotee who patiently goes on with his devotions is sure at last to find his God.

386. The heart of a sinner is like a curled hair. You may pull it ever so long, but will not succeed in making it straight. So also the heart of the wicked cannot be easily changed.

367. Knowledge leads to unity, and Ignorance to diversity.

368, 369. The society of pious men is like the water in which rice is washed. The rice-water dissipates intoxication. So doth the society of the pious relieve worldly men, intoxicated with the wine of desires, from their intoxication.

371. Moist wood placed upon a fire soon becomes dry, and ultimately begins to burn. Similarly, the society of the pious drives away the moisture of greed and lust from the hearts of worldly men and women, and then the fire of Viveka (Discrimination) burns in them.

372. How should one pass his or her life? As the fire on the hearth is stirred from time to time with a poker to make it burn brightly and prevent it from going out, so the mind should be invigorated occasionally by the society of the pious.

373. As the blacksmith keeps alive the fire of his furnace by the occasional blowing of his bellows, so the mind should be kept a-burning by the society of the pious.

374. Throw an unbaked cake of flour into hot ghee, it will make a sort of boiling noise. But the more it is fried, the less becomes the noise; and when it is fully fried the bubbling ceases altogether. So long as a man has little knowledge, he goes about lecturing and preaching, but when the perfection of knowledge is obtained, he ceases to make vain displays.

375. That man who, living in the midst of the temptations of the world, attains perfection, is the true hero.

376. We must dive deep into the ocean of the Eternal-Intelligent-Bliss. Fear not the deep-sea monsters, Avarice and Anger. Coat thyself with the turmeric of Discrimination and Dispassion (Viveka and Vairâgya) and those alligators will not approach thee, as the scent of this turmeric is too much for them.

377. When unavoidably entering into places where there may be temptation, carry always with thee the thought of thy Divine Mother. She will protect thee from the many evils that may be lurking even in thy heart. Cannot the presence of thy mother shame thee away from evil deeds and evil thoughts?

378. How may we conquer the love of life? The human frame is made up of decaying things; of flesh and blood and bone. It is a collection of flesh, bone, marrow, blood, and other filthy substances subject to putrefaction. By thus analysing the body, our love thereof vanishes.

380. Sometimes peace reigns in the heart, but why does it not always last long? The fire made by the burning of the bamboo is soon extinguished unless kept alive by constant blowing. Continual devotion is necessary to keep alive the fire of spirituality.

383. As persons living in a house infested by venomous snakes are always alert and cautious, so

should men living in the world be always on their guard against the allurements of lust and greed.

384. If there is a small hole in the bottom of a jar of water, the whole water flows out of it by that small aperture. Similarly, if there be the smallest tinge of worldliness in the neophyte, all his exertions come to naught.

388. There are various sects among the Hindus; which sect or which creed should we then adopt? Pârvatî once asked Mahâdeva, 'O Lord! what is the root of the Eternal, Everlasting, All-embracing Bliss?' To her Mahâdeva thus replied, 'The root is faith.' The peculiarities of creeds and sects matter little or nothing. Let every one perform with faith the devotions and the duties of his own creed.

389. As a little boy or a girl can have no idea of conjugal affection, even so a worldly man cannot at all comprehend the ecstasy of Divine communion.

393. As the water and its bubbles are one, and as the bubbles have their birth in the water, float on the water, and ultimately are resolved into water; so the Gîvâtman and the Paramâtman are one and the same: the difference is in degrees--the one is finite and small, the other is infinite; the one is dependent, the other independent.

394, 395. When the tail of the tadpole drops off, it can live both in water and on land. When the tail of ignorance drops off, man becomes free. He can then live both in God and in the world equally well.

Abridged Excerpts From:

Relax with Yoga

By Arthur Liebers

1960

9. SANKYA YOGA – YOGA OF THE MIND

One of the lesser known schools of Yoga which seems to be particularly well suited to our search for relaxation of mind is the Sankya Yoga, based on the *sutras*, or writings, of the sage Kapila. Hindus believe this Yoga philosopher was none other than the god Vishnu, the son of Brahman, in one of his earthly reincarnations. On the surface, the *sutras* seem to be merely a series of philosophical propositions, yet students of this school affirm that a study of them will lead to *samadhi* and mental deliverance.

The Sankya philosophy states that the ills of life may be palliated by means discovered from reason, and that final deliverance – the ultimate of what we might call relaxation and harmony with the environment – can be achieved by "a method consisting in a discriminative knowledge of perceptible principles, and the imperceptible one and the thinking soul."

The commentaries state: "The accurate discrimination of those principles into which all that exists is distributed by the Sankya philosophy; *vyakta*, that which is perceived, sensible, discrete; *avyakta*, that which is unperceived, indiscrete, and *jna*, that which

knows or discriminates. The first is a matter of its perceptible modifications; the second is crude, unmodified matter, and the third is soul. The object of the Sankya Yoga is to define and explain these three things, the correct knowledge of which is in itself release from worldly bondage and exemption from exposure to human ills, by the final separation of soul and body."

There is nothing in this school of Yoga of any postures, movements, breath control or any effort of the mind save what is implied in any philosophical study. In other Yogas, knowledge that sets the soul free comes at the end of long, specific courses of practice and in the form of intuition or spiritual impression similar to that in which a saint learns the truth after he has lost his reason in an ecstatic trance. Kapila's teaching is addressed to the waking reason alone.

The 16 Sutras of Kapila

The practice of Kapila, which dates back to the seventh century of the Christian era, consists first of meditation on the following *sutras*. Each holds an inner meaning that responds to the individual mind which studies them: (1) An expression of Yoga is to be made; (2) Yoga is the suppression of the transformation of the thinking principle; (3) the seer abides in himself; (4) otherwise he becomes assimilated with transformations; (5) the transformations are fivefold, and either painful or not painful; (6) they are known as right knowledge, wrong knowledge, fancy, sleep and memory; (7) right

knowledge is direct cognition, or interference or testimony; (8) wrong knowledge is false conception of a thing whose real form does not answer to it in reality; (9) fancy is the notion called into being having nothing to answer to it in reality; (10) that transformation which has nothingness for its basis is sleep; (11) memory is not allowing that which is known to escape; (12) suppression of memory is secured by application and non-attachment; (13) application is the effort toward the state (*stillhi*) in which the mind is at a standstill; (14) this becomes a position of firmness, being practiced for a long time without intermission and with perfect devotion; (15) the consciousness of having mastered every desire, so that one does not thirst for objects perceptible or scriptural, is non-attachment; (16) that is highest, wherein from being the *purusa* (soul), there is entire cessation of any desire for the *gunas* (things of sense).

The Practice

The practice recommended by Pantajali, one of the earlier followers of this school of Yoga, consists of meditation on the *sutras*, the exercise of faith, energy, memory and discriminative judgment, ardent desire to attain to *samadhi*, or a trance, constant repetition and intense meditation on the message of Kapila. There should also be intense concentration on a single thing, sympathy with happiness, compassion for misery, complacency toward virtue and indifference to evil. Other means of achieving this state are breathing exercises (Pranayama), and concentration on sensuous enjoyment by those who cannot steady

their minds but through a form of sensual pleasure. This is done, according to the text, "by fixing the attention on one of the five senses of smell, taste, color, touch and sound. These are respectively reproduced by concentrating on the tip of the nose, the tip of the tongue, the forepart of the palate, the middle of the tongue, and the root of the tongue. The sensation in each case is not merely a flash of pleasurable feeling, but a kind of complete absorption in the particular enjoyment meditated upon."

There is also concentration on the *joytis* (light). To help concentration you must imagine that in the heart there is a lotus-like form with eight petals which has its face turned downward. You must believe that this can be raised by exhaling the breath, then meditate upon this thought, while pronouncing the mystic sounds A.U.M. The effect of this is that a calm light is seen "like that of the moon or sun, resembling a calm ocean of milk." Concentration may also be on the condition of deep sleep, or finally, according to one's own predilection—that is to say, on any chosen thing.

So much for the objects of concentration. The states induced by it and other results will now be considered. The test of proper concentration is acquired in "a mastery extending from the finest atom to infinity." The two kinds of concentration are the argumentative, or mixed, and the non-argumentative, or pure. The latter results in bliss, intuition and revelation.

Obstructions

While it may seem that the method of Yoga under discussion is an easy path to fulfillment and relaxation in its pure sense, it may require time to achieve results. The soul or mind must be purged of distractions or obstructions. These include ignorance, the sense of being, desire, aversion, attachment. Each of these may have to be overcome by sincere and sometimes lengthy meditation and self-examination.

Accessories

Accessories along this path are forbearance, observance, posture, regulation of breath, abstraction, contemplation, absorption and trance. Each of these terms has a specific meaning in Yoga that we will now consider.

Forbearance means abstinence from killing, falsehood, theft, incontinence and greediness. *Observance* means purity, contentment, mortification, study and resignation to the authority of a higher divinity. *Posture* is that which is easy and steady. *Regulation of the breath* is control of the vital body forces. *Abstraction* means drawing away the senses from their objects in the same way that thoughts are drawn away, abstracted from theirs, whence "follows the greatest mastery over the senses." *Contemplation* means fixing the mind on something. *Absorption* means so fixing the mind that it becomes one with the object of contemplation. *Trance* is when this fixing of the mind is carried so far that the thinker, the thinking and the thing thought of are one.

These last three together constitute *samyama*, which is the way to several occult powers and which conducts the Yogi to conscious *samadhi*. The other five accessories are called external means, and are useful only in obviating distractions. As do other schools of Yoga, Kapila adherents claim a list of *siddhis*, or miraculous powers, through the attainment of *samyama*. They are:

(1) Knowing the past and the future; (2) recollecting previous incarnations; (3) discerning the state of a person's mind by outward signs like complexion, tone of voice, etc.; (4) reading the thoughts of others; (5) the power to become invisible; (6) knowing the time of one's death by meditating on his Karma or by portents such as specters, dreams, etc.; (7) attracting the good will of others; (8) acquiring the power of an animal, as the strength of an elephant, by meditating on it; (9) knowing the "subtle, the remote and the obscure" by contemplating the inner light, such as Yogis are able to evoke by performing *rechaka*, or exhalation.

Also, (10) the knowledge of space by contemplating the sun; (11) knowledge of the starry regions by contemplating the moon; (12) knowledge of the motion of the stars by contemplating the pole-star; (13) knowledge of the internal arrangement of the body by contemplating the important nerve centers near the navel. (The nerve centers are termed *circles*, *padmas*, *chakras*. Contemplation on these centers is an important part of Yoga practice.); (14) destroying hunger and thirst by contemplating the pit of the

throat; (15) making the body fixed and immovable by contemplating the *karma-nadi*, a nerve in which the vital air is supposed to reside; (16) the power of seeing the things called *siddhas*, or *mahatmas*, by contemplating the light in the head. (This is said to appear somewhere near the pineal gland or coronal artery, or over the medulla oblongata, and can be seen by concentrating on the space between the eyebrows.); (17) the power to accomplish all of the above by *pratibha*, which is that degree of intellect which develops itself without any special cause, generally termed "intuition," and can be developed by simply contemplating the intellect; (18) knowledge of the mind of another or of one's own by contemplating the nerve center of the heart; (19) knowledge of one's soul as distinct from his mind, by contemplating himself.

There is another group of *siddhis* which verge on the preternatural and may be meant literally or figuratively, as they appear in the original manuscripts of the school of Yoga. These are: (1) Entrance into and possession of another body, whether living or dead, by discovering through contemplation on the nerves the particular one by which mind can pass in and out; (2) levitation of the body and the ability to die at will; (3) effulgence of the body, halos about the head; also clairaudience or the power to hear distant sounds by concentrating on *akasa*, the ether conveying sound; (4) ability to pass bodily through space by concentration on the relation between the body and *akasa*; (5) the condition known as *mahavideha*, in which knowledge of every

description is within easy reach of the ascetic and obtainable without effort; (6) mastery over the elements by concentrating on their natures respectively; (7) the attainments of *anima* and the other eight *siddhis*, as also perfection of the body and the corresponding non-obstruction of its functions; (8) beauty, gracefulness and strength, adamant hardness of body; (9) mastery over the organs of sense by concentration on their natures; (10) as a result of this mastery, fleetness of body equal to that of mind, sensation independent of the body or the organs of sense and the ability to command anything or create anything at will; (11) mastery over all things and knowledge of all, by contemplating the distinctive relation of soul and mind; (12) *Kaivalya*, the highest end, state of oneness, of being one and alone, obtained by renouncing attachment to even these ten last-named high occult powers.

It can be seen that the intense thought required to produce such a system as that of Kapila amounts to mental concentration sufficient to induce a state of mind that results in ecstasy and lets in supernal light. Intense and persistent devotion as well as hard thinking is required for an understanding of this system. The truth or falsity of the preceding propositions have nothing to do with the ultimate results. The formulation described here contains enough concentrated work to carry the adherent to the desired end, though the student may lag behind.

The disposition that was shown by Kapila to rely on intellectual conviction—a reliance condemned by the

magicians of old—is manifested at present by many schools of so-called magical healers, and on a higher level, perhaps, by lay analysts and psychiatrists, who claim to cure by simply telling the patient only the truth.

Neither truth nor untruth can be shown to have magical power, but concentration on untruth or truth, long continued, will still the mind and thereby permit nature to do its work. The principle of Kapila was to set up reason against revelation. When, by force of concentration on the construction of his system, he had attained to *samadhi* in its ultimate stage, such impressions confirmed him in his previous conclusions. They revealed to him that release obtained by his methods was complete and final. Naturally, he must have felt that he had both reason and revelation on his side. However, reason is no more infallible than its mystical offspring, revelation. The modern Western adherent will be wiser and profit most from Yoga as he practices more and theorizes less.

Abridged Excerpts From:

Whispers from Eternity

By Paramahansa Yogananda

1949

**Cure Spiritual Deafness and make me listen to the
chorus of Noble Qualities.**

Can a blind man ever appreciate the beauty and glory
of light? Can a deaf man appreciate the song of divine
voices?

O Father, how can one, blinded by the brief pleasures
of the senses, behold the health and beauty rays
which flow from the sun of self-control?

Father, how can the materially rich, but spiritually
deaf, listen to the celestial, peace-giving chorus of
noble qualities in the soul of the sacred?

Bless us, that we may behold in the light of good
habits, that virtue is more attractive and comforting
than vice, and that we may hear Thy guiding voice
above all other sounds.

**Bless me, that I may know that I am Dreaming,
while I think that I am Awake.**

As we rest, and wake a little, to slumber again—so from
beneath the cover of fleeting dreams of birth and death
we rise for a while and fall asleep again, and dream
another earthly dream of struggle.

On the sleigh of incarnations, we slide from dream to dream. Dreaming, on a chariot of astral fire, we roll from life to life. Dreaming, we pass through dreams, failures, victories. Dreaming, we sail over trying seas, eddies of laughter, whirlpools of indifference, waters of mighty events, deaths, births – dreams.

It was only in Thee that I awoke!

And then I knew that I had been dreaming, while I thought I was awake.

Universal prayer of the Cosmic Temple

With a myriad of living thoughts of devotion, I have built for Thee a temple of awakened silence. I have brought the multi-colored lamps of wisdom from all good faiths. They all shine with the luster of Thy one truth.

The commingled incense of human cravings for Thee soars in spirals from the vase of our hearts. Thy sacred presence is glistening on altars everywhere.

All prayers of all temples, tabernacles, churches, and mosques are chanting to Thee in the one universal language of deep love. The orchestra of our feelings plays in tune with the chorus of all soul-songs, the cry of all tears, the bursting shout of all joys, and the anthem of all prayers.

In this wall-less cosmic temple of our souls, we worship Thee, our one Father. Be pleased to reveal Thyself thus, always. *Amen, Aum, Amin.*

Demand for Pearls of Wisdom to be obtained in the Sea of Meditation.

Father Divine, teach me to dive deep in the ocean of meditation for the pearls of wisdom. Teach me to plunge headlong, armored with the diving suit of conscience, that the sharks of passions may not destroy me. If I find not the wisdom-pearls by one or two divings, teach me not to call the sea of meditation devoid of the pearls of Thy wisdom. *Rather teach me to find fault with my diving.* Teach me to dive again and again in meditation, deeper and deeper always, until I find Thine immortal pearls of wisdom and divine joy.

Chapter 2

Judaism

Abridged Excerpts From:

Jewish Mysticism

By J. Abelson

1913

CHAPTER VI

SOME GENERAL FEATURES OF THE 'ZOHAR' MYSTICISM

THE *Zohar* (lit. = 'Shining' or 'Brightness' from the word in *Daniel*, xii. 3--"And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament") is, *par excellence*, the textbook of Jewish mediæval mysticism. Its language is partly Aramaic and partly Hebrew. While purporting to be but a commentary on the Pentateuch, it is, in reality, quite an independent compendium of Kabbalistic theosophy . . .

It is of interest--and vital to an understanding of all Kabbalistic literature--to note some of the favourite technical terms employed, in addition to those already here mentioned in passing. A ubiquitous term is *En-Sof*, applied to the Deity. These words mean literally 'No End.' The Deity is boundless, endless.

The *Zohar* was not the first mystical work to use the words. The underlying idea was probably supplied by the idea underlying the description of the Godhead in the philosophy of Ibn Gabirol, the Spanish-Hebrew poet and mystic philosopher of the eleventh century. He describes the Deity as the '*shě-ěn to tiklah,*' i.e. the one who has no bounds or ends. Ibn Gabirol was a Neoplatonist, and much of his philosophy shows the influence upon him of Plotinus. But he forsakes his master and follows strictly in the line of Jewish tradition in one respect, *viz.* that in order, as he thought, to safeguard the Jewish doctrine of monotheism, the Deity must be freed from the ascription to Him of all attributes. Hence God can only be properly described by a title which emphasises the negation of all attributes. The *En-Sof* of the *Zohar* and its predecessors is probably an echo of this ultra-negative characterisation of the Deity. Let us quote the *Zohar*:

"Before having created any shape in the world, before having produced any form, He was alone, without form, resembling nothing. Who could comprehend Him as He then was, before creation, since He had no form? It is forbidden to picture Him by any form or under any shape whatsoever, not even by His holy name, nor by a letter [of the alphabet] nor by a point [the Yod, which is the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet, is usually designated as a point]. Such is the sense of the words, 'For ye saw no manner of similitude on the day when the Lord spake unto you in Horeb, out of the midst of the fire' (*Deut. iv. 15*). This means that you saw no other thing which you

might possibly represent by a form or shape. But after He had created the form of the Heavenly Man (*Adam 'Ilā-ā*) He used him as a chariot (*Merkābāh*) on which to descend. He wished to be called by the form which consists of the holy name of Jahveh. He wished to make Himself known by His attributes, by each attribute separately. So He let Himself be styled as the God of pardon, the God of justice, the God omnipotent, the God of hosts and He who is (Jahveh). His object was to make thus intelligible what are His qualities and how His justice and His compassion extend over the world as well as over the works of men. For, had He not shed His brightness over all His creatures, how would we get to know Him? How would it be true to say that the world is filled with His glory? Woe unto the man who would dare to compare Him to even one of His own attributes! Yet still less ought He to be likened unto the man who came from the earth and who is destined for death! It is necessary to conceive of Him as above all creatures and all attributes. And then when these things have been removed, there is left neither attribute, nor shape, nor form" (ii. fol. 42).

From this characteristic extract, the following deductions are possible:

(a) God as the *En-Sof* and as a Being utterly divested of attributes is an idea that can only be postulated negatively. You cannot tell what God is; you can only tell what He is not. But if this be so, and if, as is axiomatic to the *Zohar* and all the Kabbalah, the world is contained in God just as a small vessel is contained

in a larger, and nothing exists outside of God, how can creation be explained, whence and how arose the universe? The universe is imperfect and finite, and its creation must have involved, therefore, some change in the character of God who *ex hypothesi* is perfect, free from all attributes, and therefore free from all possibility of change. How could this be? The answer is contained in the *Zohar's* teaching on the Ten Sefirot, which will be considered in our coming chapter.

(b) The idea of God using the Heavenly Man (*Adam 'Ilā-ā*) as a chariot on which to descend indicates a noteworthy identity of teaching in the *Zohar* and Plotinus. For both systems imply that there is a sort of double movement in the universe, 'a way down and a way up.' There is a process of Divine emanation, *i.e.* an outgoing of God, a self-descent from His transcendent height towards the lowly abodes of man. And correspondingly there is an ascent, a way up, on the man's part. For, just as to Plotinus, the final stage of the soul's return journey to its home in God, consists in its highest experience (brought about by a withdrawal from desires and from objects of sense) of contact and union with God, so also, according to the *Zohar*, the three elements of which the soul is composed, *viz.* the rational (*neshāmāh*), the moral (*ruah*), and the vital (*nefesh*), are each of them, not only emanations from the Sefirot, but also have the potency of uniting him again with the Sefirot, and, in the case of the pious man, of uniting him with the highest of the Sefirot, the Crown or Supreme Intelligence.

(c) The idea of the Heavenly Man, or *Adam Kadmon* ('First' or 'Original' Man), or *Shechinta Tā-tā-ā* ('Lower' or 'Terrestrial' Shechinah), is vital to an understanding of the *Zohar* and of all Kabbalistic literature. It has resemblances to the Philonic exegesis on the distinction between "the heavenly man born in the image of God," and therefore having "no participation in any corruptible or earthlike essence," and "the earthly man," who was made "of loose material, called a lump of clay" (*On the Allegories of the Sacred Laws*, i. 12). One thinks also in this connection of Paul's views on the First Adam who was flesh and blood, a 'living soul,' and the Second Adam whom he describes as a 'quickening spirit' (1 *Cor.* xv. 45-49). There is, too, a Rabbinic *dictum* about a "spirit of Adam" which "moved upon the face of the waters" (as did the *Ruah* in *Genesis*, i. 2)--a pre-existent First Man.

The *Zohar* is possibly indebted for its treatment of the Heavenly Man to some one or, perhaps, all of these sources. It says as follows: "The Heavenly Man after he had manifested himself from out of the midst of the upper-world primitive obscurity, created the earthly man" (ii. 70 fol.). This means that the creation of man was the work, not of God, but of His supreme manifestation, His first emanation. This manifestation or emanation is the first of the Ten Sefirot (the Crown), which, as will be shown later, is the primal will of God which contained within itself the plan of the universe in its entire infinity of time and space. To say that the plan of the world in its entirety is contained in one of the emanations of God, is tantamount to saying that man (who is part of the

world) is the product of an immanent Divine activity in the world. This immanent Divine activity is denoted by the term 'Heavenly Man,' as also by the term 'First of the Sefirot,' and, in varying senses, by all the Ten Sefirot.

But why, after all, such a title as 'Heavenly Man'? It is because, according to the *Zohar*, man is a copy of the universe below as well as or the universe above. Hence God in His creative capacity chose also the form of man. The *Zohar* puts it thus:

"Believe not that man consists solely of flesh, skin, bones, and veins. The real part of man is his soul, and the things just mentioned, the skin, flesh, bones, and veins, are only an outward covering, a veil, but are not the man. When man departs he divests himself of all the veils which cover him. And these different parts of our body correspond to the secrets of the Divine wisdom. The skin typifies the heavens which extend everywhere and cover everything like a garment. The flesh puts us in mind of the evil side of the universe. The bones and the veins symbolise the Divine chariot, the inner powers of man which are the servants of God. But they are all but an outer covering. For, inside man, there is the secret of the *Heavenly Man*. . . . Everything below takes place in the same manner as everything above. This is the meaning of the remark that God created man in His own image. But just as in the heavens, which cover the whole universe, we behold different shapes brought about by the stars and the planets to teach us concerning hidden things and deep secrets, so upon

the skin which covers our body there are shapes and forms which are like planets and stars to our bodies. All these shapes have a hidden meaning, and are observed by the sages who are able to read the face of man" (ii. 76a).

CHAPTER VII

THE TEN SEFIROT

ALL finite creatures are, in divergent senses and varying degrees, part and parcel of the Deity. *Creatio ex nihilo* is unthinkable, seeing that God, in the Neoplatonic view, is the Perfect One, 'an undivided One,' to whom no qualities or characteristics can be ascribed, and to whom, therefore, no such idea as that of intention or purpose, or change or movement, can be applied. All existences are emanations from the Deity. The Deity reveals Himself in all existences because He is immanent in them. But though dwelling in them, He is greater than they. He is apart from them. He transcends them.

The foregoing might be said to be a general *résumé* of the philosophy of the Ten Sefirot. To quote a passage from the section of the *Zohar* called the *Idra Zūtta* ('Small Assembly'):

"The Most Ancient One is at the same time the most Hidden of the hidden. He is separated from all things, and is at the same time not separated from all things. For all things are united in Him, and He unites Himself with all things. There is nothing which is not in Him. He has a shape, and one can say that He has

not one. In assuming a shape, He has given existence to all things. He made ten lights spring forth from His midst, lights which shine with the form which they have borrowed from Him, and which shed everywhere the light of a brilliant day. The Ancient One, the most Hidden of the hidden, is a high beacon, and we know Him only by His lights, which illuminate our eyes so abundantly. His Holy Name is no other thing than these lights."

The 'ten lights' are, of course, the Ten Sefirot, the ten successive emanations from the Godhead, the ten powers or qualities which were latent from all eternity in the Godhead. But what is meant by saying that 'His Holy Name is no other thing but these lights'? We turn to another passage in the *Zohar* for the explanation. It reads as follows:

"The name 'I am' [in Hebrew, *ěhěyěh*; see Exodus, iii. 14, 'I am that I am'--in Hebrew, *ěhěyěh ašhěr ěhěyěh*] signifies the unity of all things. Afterwards He brought out that light which is the celestial mother, and when she bare a child, then He called Himself 'that I am' (*ašhěr ěhěyěh*). And when all else came into existence, and everything became perfected and in its right place, then He called Himself Jahveh" (iii. 65).

The passage seems hopeless as regards a meaning. But on deeper consideration it becomes quite clear. The Divine Name, 'I am that I am,' is inferior to the Divine Name Jahveh. It typifies an earlier, less-developed stage. The student of Hebrew will readily know why this is. Although translated into English as

'I am that I am' it belongs grammatically to what the Semitic philologists call the 'imperfect tense,' representing an unfinished action. But 'Jahveh' is grammatically the 'present tense' (*i.e.* a noun formed from this tense). Hence 'I am that I am' signifies the Godhead as He was when He existed as the 'Hidden of the hidden,' *i.e.* when He was the 'undivided One,' the Absolute containing in Himself the All, before He had, so to speak, unfolded Himself in His creative acts, before any emanations had radiated out from Him. But 'Jahveh' denotes the crown and summit of the Divine self-manifestation; in other words, it denotes God as immanent in all the numberless parts of the cosmos, which is but a revelation, an embodiment of the Divine thought. The idea of the 'celestial mother' having a child is part of the *Zohar's* doctrine of emanation, where, as will be shown later on, a certain one of the Ten Sefirot is called 'father' (*Abba*) and another is called 'mother' (*Imma*), and from the union of the two, there is born another of the Sefirot, called the 'son' (*Ben*).

Hence to say that 'God's Holy Name is no other thing than these lights' is but to say that the Sefirot which represent the world as the copy of an ever-active, ever-energising God, sum up all that the Divine Name stands for. And that the Divine Name denotes a strongly mystical aspect of the relation between God and the universe is abundantly clear from the Essenic literature, as well as from the Book *Yetsirah*. In fact, it appears occasionally in this sense, in the Talmudic and Midrashic records (see, *e.g.*, *T.B. Pesahim*, 55b), and the germ of the idea can be traced back to the Old

Testament, to such phrases as: "This is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations" (*Exodus*, iii. 15); or: "Thy name, O Lord, endureth for ever; and thy memorial, O Lord, throughout all generations" (*Psalms*, cxxxv. 13).

One of the clearest passages in the *Zohar* stating what the Ten Sefirot are, is the following:

"For the waters of the sea are limitless and shapeless. But when they are spread over the earth, then they produce a shape (*dimiōn*), and we can calculate like this: The source of the waters of the sea and the force which it emits to spread itself over the soil, are two things. Then an immense basin is formed by the waters just as is formed when one makes a very deep digging. This basin is filled by the waters which emanate from the source; it is the sea itself, and can be regarded as a third thing. This very large hollow [of waters] is split up into seven canals, which are like so many long tubes, by means of which the waters are conveyed. The source, the current, the sea, and the seven canals form together the number ten. And should the workman who constructed these tubes come to break them up, then the waters return to their source, and there remains naught but the *débris* and the water dried up. It is thus that the *Cause of causes* has created the Ten Sefirot. The *Crown* is the source whence there springs a light without end, from which comes the name *En-Sof*, *i.e.* Infinite, designating the *Supreme Cause*; for while in this state it possesses neither shape nor figure; there are no means of comprehending it; there is no way of knowing it. It is

in this sense that it has been said, 'Seek not the things that are too hard for thee' (*Ecclesiasticus*, iii. 21). Then there is formed a vessel contracted to a mere point [the letter *Yod*, the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet] into which the Divine light penetrates. It is the source of *Wisdom*, it is Wisdom itself, in virtue of which the *Supreme Cause* is called the God of Wisdom. Afterwards, it [*i.e.* the *Supreme Cause*] constructs a channel, wide as the sea, which is called *Intellect* [or *Intelligence*]. From this, comes the title of 'God who understands' [*i.e.* is intelligent]. We must know, however, that God only understands and is wise by means of His own essential substance; for Wisdom does not merit the title by itself, but only by the instrumentality of Him who is wise and who has produced it from the light which emanates from Him. One cannot conceive what 'knowing' is by itself, but by Him who is the 'knowing One,' and who fills it with His own essential substance.

"Finally, the sea is divided into seven parts, and there result [from this division] the seven precious channels which are called: (a) Compassion (or Greatness), (b) Justice (or Force), (c) Beauty, (d) Victory, (e) Glory, (f) Royalty, and (g) Foundation. It is for this reason that God is called the 'Great' or the 'Compassionate,' the 'Strong,' the 'Magnificent,' the 'God of Victories,' the 'Creator to whom all glory belongs,' and the 'Foundation of all things.' It is this latter attribute which sustains all the others, as well as the totality of the worlds. And yet, He is also the King of the universe, for all things are in His power whether He wills to lessen the number of the channels and

increase the light which springs from them, or whether He wills the contrary" (foll. 42, 43).

According to this characteristic passage, the Sefirot are the Names of the Deity--but only in the deeply mystical sense of 'Names' as has been referred to above. The Divine Name is, on this understanding, equivalent to the Presence of God, the eternal Source of the power and intelligence enshrined in the constitution of the world and the heart of man. The Ten Sefirot together are thus a picture of how an infinite, undivided, unknowable God takes on the attributes of the finite, the divided, the knowable, and thus becomes the cause of, the power lying at the bottom of, all the multifarious modes of existence in the finite plane--all of which are thus a reflection of the Divine. The Sefirot have no real tangible existence at all. They are but a figure of speech showing the Divine immanence in all cosmic phenomena, in all the grades of man's spiritual and moral achievement.

It should, however, be pointed out here, that the functions and natures of the Sefirot are described by the *Zohar* in the most enigmatic of enigmatic language. Hence different deductions have always been possible, and hence, too, the rise of more than one school of *Zohar* interpretation. The view mostly followed--and it may be said to be the universally-accepted standard--is that of the school of Luria and Cordovero, the two most famous Kabbalists of the sixteenth century.

Let us now consider each of the Sefirot separately. What we shall say will amount in substance, though not in form, to a commentary on the lengthy passage from the *Zohar* previously quoted. Prior to the first of the Sefirot must come, what our extract has termed the *Supreme Cause* (literally the 'Cause of causes') or the *En-Sof*. What is the relation of the *En-Sof* to the Sefirot? According to the theories of Luria and Cordovero, all the Sefirot emanate from the *En-Sof*, who, although eternally present in them all, is not comprehended in them, but transcends them. All modes of existence and thought embody some fragment of the *En-Sof*, but, with all this, the *En-Sof* is divided from them by an impassable gulf. He remains the hidden, unapproachable Being. This is why, while each of the Sefirot has a well-known name, the *En-Sof* has no name. Just as in the Talmudic mysticism of the Shechinah the idea of a universally-diffused, all-penetrating Deity is conveyed by the metaphor of light, so in the case of the mediæval Kabbalah the *En-Sof* is likewise spoken of as Light (*Or En-Sof* = 'The Infinite Light'). The Christian mystics also favoured the same figure. Closely connected with this teaching is the general Kabbalistic doctrine of *Tsimtsūm*, i.e. contraction. It, too, is found in the Talmud and Midrashim, and it is from them that the Kabbalah, most likely, received it. Thus *Genesis Rabba*, iv. 5, dwells on the paradox (mentioned also by Philo) of the world being too small to hold God, but yet the space between the Ark's staves being large enough. The Kabbalistic idea of *Tsimtsūm* is an attempt to explain the contraction or limitation of the *En-Sof* (the Infinite), in order to make possible the emanation of

the Sefirot, *i.e.* in order to produce the finite world of phenomena. The universal infiltration of the light of the *En-Sof*, its diffusion throughout all the Sefirot, gave rise to the idea of the existence of a changeable and an unchangeable element in each of the Sefirot. The former represents the material, outward, perishable side of man and the universe. The latter is the changeless, unfading eternal quality embedded in man and the universe. It is just this dual aspect which is referred to in the long extract from the *Zohar* quoted above, in the words: "Should the workman who constructed these tubes come to break them up, then the waters return to their source, and there remains naught but the *débris* and the water dried up." In other words, should the *En-Sof* withdraw its eternal immanent light and life from any one of the Sefirot, or, to speak in untechnical language, should God, who is the Life of the universe, the Power lying beneath and behind all phenomena, by some miraculous intervention withdraw or suspend some fragment of Himself, then the cosmos reverts to chaos.

The first of the Ten Sefirot is the Crown (in Hebrew, *Keter*). It is of importance for the reader to note that whereas Neoplatonism is largely responsible for the basis of the *Zohar's* doctrines of emanation, the names of the Sefirot and the teaching embraced and conveyed by those names are entirely drawn from the field of the Old Testament and Rabbinical theology. All ages of Jewish thought (as well as of Jewish art) employ the word, image, and idea of a 'crown' in a considerable variety of senses. In Biblical Hebrew

there are no less than five different words all indiscriminately translated as 'crown,' but denoting really either different forms of the thing or different prominent portions of it. In the Apocryphal and Rabbinical literature men 'crowned' themselves in all sorts of ways, and the crown was symbolic of a host of religious ideas. In the theological realm, 'crown' played many parts.

Only two references--both germane to our subject--can be quoted here. In *T.B. Berachoth*, 17a, it is said: "In the world to come there is neither eating nor drinking, nor marrying, nor bargaining, nor envy, nor hatred, nor quarrel; but the righteous sit, *with crowns upon their heads*, and feed upon the splendour of the Shechinah, as it is said of the nobles of the children of Israel, 'He laid not His hand upon them, but they saw God, and this was equivalent to their eating and their drinking' [so the Targumic paraphrase of *Exodus*, xxiv. 11]." *T.B. Megillah*, 15b, says: "In the time to come, God will be a *crown of glory* upon the head of each saint, as it is written, 'In that day shall the Lord of Hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of His people' (*Isaiah*, xxviii. 5)." Hence, it is not hard to discover by what process of reasoning the mediæval Jewish mystics thought it fitting to designate the first of the Sefirot as the Crown.

"It is," says the *Zohar*, "the principle of all principles, the hidden Wisdom, the Crown which the Highest of the high, and by which all crowns and diadems are crowned" (iii. 288). It is the first of the emanations

from the *En-Sof*. The latter being, as has been said above, the infinite, hidden, unknowable Being, the Crown represents, as it were, the first stage by which the Infinite Being takes on the properties of the finite and becomes drawn out of His impenetrable isolation. But, nevertheless, the Crown is an absolute indivisible unity, possessing no attributes or qualities, and baffling all analysis and description. It is, to quote the original, a '*nekūdah peshtūah*,' i.e. 'a simple point,' or '*nekūda rishōnah*,' i.e. 'a primordial point.' The idea here is that the first manifestation of the Divine is a point, i.e. a unity, unanalysable, indescribable, and yet possessing the All. In other words, it is the Hegelian idea of 'pure being' (*das reine sein*). This 'pure being' or 'existence' is the thought or reason of God. The starting-point of everything is the thought as it existed in God. The universe is this 'thought' of God. It is in this 'thought' of God that everything was originally embraced. The first of the Sefirot denotes, then, the primordial Divine Thought (or Divine Will, as the Hebrew commentators often style it); and to say this is tantamount to saying that the Crown contained within itself the plan of the universe in its infinity of time and space, in its endless varieties of form, colour, and movement. And it is an emanation from the *En-Sof* who, while immanent in the Crown, and hence immanent in all the Sefirot, yet transcends them all.

The Crown, for the reasons just mentioned, is oftentimes styled *Resha Hivra*, i.e. the 'White Head'--'head' denoting the idea of source, and 'white' being the blend of all the colours (just as the Crown is the blend

of all forms in the cosmos). But the idea may possibly be drawn from *Daniel*, vii. 9, where "One that was ancient of days did sit; his raiment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool" (cf. 1 *Enoch*, xiv. 18-22; *Revelation*, i. 14). The original Aramaic for 'ancient of days' is '*attik*'; and this, too, is a name for the first of the Sefirot, and is frequently employed in the Kabbalah, generally as a designation of the Deity.

Wisdom and Intelligence are the second and third of the Ten Sefirot. They are parallel emanations from the Crown or first Sefirah. Here we alight upon an interesting feature of this mysticism, *viz.* the application of the idea of the sexual relationship to the solution of the problem of existence. "When the Ancient One, the Holy One, desired to bring all things into being, He created them all as male and female" (iii. 290). Wisdom is the 'father,' *i.e.* the masculine active principle which engenders all things and imposes on them form and measure (an idea derived from *Job*, xxviii. 12). Intelligence is the 'mother,' the passive, receptive principle (derived from *Proverbs*, ii. 3, "Yea, if thou cry after discernment," *i.e.* 'Binah' in Hebrew; and the word rendered by 'if' can, by the slightest alteration of a vowel, be rendered by 'mother,' and thus the passage is translated by the *Zohar* as, "Yea, if mother thou tallest discernment"). Out of the union of Wisdom and Intelligence comes a 'son' who is dowered with the characteristics of both parents. This son is Reason (*Da'at*), which is, by the way, not regarded as an independent Sefirah. These three, father, mother, son (*i.e.* the two Sefirot, *viz.*

Wisdom and Intelligence, and their offspring Reason), hold and unite in themselves all that which has been, which is, and which will be. But they in their turn are all united to the first Sefirah (the Crown), who is the all-comprehensive One who is, was, and will be.

Here one meets again with a foreshadowing of the Hegelian teaching concerning the identity of thought and being. The universe is an expression of the ideas or the absolute forms of intelligence. Cordovero says:

"The first three Sefirot must be considered as one and the same thing. The first represents 'knowledge,' the second 'the knower,' the third 'that which is known.' The Creator is Himself, at one and the same time, knowledge, the knower, and the known. Indeed, His manner of knowing does not consist in applying His thought to things outside Him; it is by self-knowledge that He knows and perceives everything which is. There exists nothing which is not united to Him and which He does not find in His own essence. He is the type of all being, and all things exist in Him under their most pure and most perfect form. . . . It is thus that all existing things in the universe have their form in the Sefirot, and the Sefirot have theirs in the source from which they emanate."

Thus, the first three Sefirot form a triad constituting the world as a manifestation of the Divine Thought. The remaining seven Sefirot likewise fall into triads. The Divine Thought is the source whence emanate two opposing principles, one active or masculine, the other passive or feminine. The former is Mercy

(*Hesed*), the latter is Justice (*Dīn*). From the union of these two there results Beauty (*Tifēřēth*). The logical connections between these three principles, as they stand in the *Zohar*, are extremely difficult to fathom. But Cordovero and other Hebrew commentators give us the needed solution of the problem. The Sefirot Mercy and Justice represent the universe as being at one and the same time an expansion and contraction of the Divine Will. Mercy, as the active masculine principle, is the life-giving, ever-productive because ever-forgiving power innate in man and the universe. Justice is the necessarily-opposed immanent faculty holding in check what would otherwise prove to be the excesses of Mercy. The theology of the Talmudic Rabbis shows itself unmistakably here. In the beginning, say the Rabbis, God thought to create the universe by the 'attribute of justice' (designated by the word 'Jahveh'). But on considering that the universe could not exist by 'justice' alone, He determined to join the 'attribute of mercy' (designated by the word 'Elohim') with the 'attribute of justice,' and to create the universe--as He finally did--by the dual means. Likewise in the *Zohar* mysticism, the moral order of the universe can only follow on a combination of the Sefirot Mercy and Justice. And the inevitable product of the union is the sixth Sefirah, Beauty. The reasoning is apparent. We have thus far seen how the first triad of Sefirot pictures God as the immanent thinking power of the universe, and how the second triad interprets God as the immanent moral power of the universe.

The third triad are: Victory (*Nezah*), Glory (*Hōd*), and Foundation (*Yesōd*). The first of these is the masculine active principle. The second is the feminine passive principle, while the third is the effect of their combination. What aspect of a God-saturated world do these three Sefirot point to? The *Zohar* tells us, as follows: "Extension, variety [or multiplication], and force are gathered together in them; and all forces that come out, come out from them, and it is for this reason that they are called Hosts [*i.e.* armies or forces]. They are [the two fore-mentioned Sefirot] Victory and Glory" (iii. 296). The allusion is obviously to the physical, dynamic aspect of the universe, the ceaseless, developing world with its multiplicity and variety of forces, changes and movements. From their coalescence comes the ninth Sefirah, Foundation. Rightly so; for it is the endless, changeless ebb and flow of the world's forces that, in the last resort, guarantees the stability of the world and builds up its 'foundation.' It creates the reproductive power of nature, endows it with, as it were, a generative organ from which all things proceed, and upon which all things finally depend.

The last of the Sefirot is Royalty (*Malkūt*). Its function is not very apparent, and its existence may be due to the desire on the part of the Kabbalists to make up the number ten--a number which looms largely in the Old Testament literature, as well as in the theology of the Talmud, Midrashim, and Philo. Generally speaking, this tenth Sefirah indicates the abiding truth of the harmonious co-operation of all the Sefirot, thus making the universe in its orderliness and in its

symmetry a true and exact manifestation of the Divine Mind--an '*Olam Azilut*, i.e. a world of emanation, as the Kabbalists themselves style it.

The fact that the Sefirot fall into triads or trinities, and the ascription to them of such sexual titles as 'father,' 'mother,' 'son,' has encouraged many an apologist for Christianity to say that the essential Christian dogma of the Trinity is implicit in the Jewish mystical literature. But it is beyond a doubt that the resemblance is quite a matter of accident. It cannot be too often repeated that there is a substantial admixture of foreign elements in all branches of the Kabbalah. The philosophy of Salomon Ibn Gabirol (which largely echoes Plato), Neoplatonism, Gnosticism, Philonism, and other systems have all left indelible traces. But Christianity, be it remembered, besides being a debtor to Judaism, is a debtor to these sources as well; so that what appears to be Christian may be, in reality, Jewish; a development of the original material by an unbroken succession of Jewish minds. This original material is the old Talmudic and Midrashic exegesis upon which was foisted the alien philosophies just alluded to. That there should be a resultant resemblance to Christianity is quite a normal outcome; but it is beyond dispute that the Christian Trinity and the trinities of the Ten Sefirot lie in quite distinct planes.

The Jewish Prayer Book echoes much of the theological sentiment of the *Zohar*. There is a fine hymn in the Sabbath-morning service which, while giving a noteworthy prominence to the *names* of the

Sefirot, reproduces with a charming simplicity of Hebrew diction, the main body of the Zoharic doctrine, its cosmology, angelology, astrology, and psychology. It is as follows: "God, the Lord over all works, blessed is He, and ever to be blessed by the mouth of everything that hath breath. His greatness and goodness fill the world; *knowledge* (*Da'at*) and *understanding* (*Tebūnah* = *Bīnah*) [*i.e.* intelligence] surround Him. He is exalted above the holy Ḥayot, and is adorned in *glory* (*Kabod* = *Hōd*) above the celestial chariot (*merkabah*); purity and rectitude are before his throne, *loving-kindness* (*Hesed*) and tender mercy before his *glory*. The luminaries are good which our God hath created: He formed them with *knowledge*, *understanding*, and *discernment*; He gave them *might* and *power* to rule in the midst of the world. They are full of *lustre*, and they radiate *brightness*; beautiful is their *lustre* throughout all the world. They rejoice in their going forth, and are glad in their returning; they perform with awe the will of their Master. *Glory* and *honour* they render unto his name, *exultation* and *rejoicing* at the remembrance of his *sovereignty* (*Malkūt*). He called unto the sun, and it shone forth in light; He looked and ordained the figure of the moon. All the hosts on high render praise unto Him, the Seraphim, the Ophanim, and the holy Ḥayot ascribing *glory* (lit. beauty, *i.e.* *Tifērēth*) and *greatness*."

CHAPTER VIII

THE SOUL

As in all systems of mysticism, the soul plays a towering part in the theology of the *Zohar*. Mysticism's centre of gravity is the close kinship between the human and the Divine; and the only avenue through which this kinship can become real to us is the soul. The soul, as a spiritual entity playing the highest of high parts in man's relation with the Unseen, is not a conspicuous element of either the Old Testament or the Talmudic-Midrashic writings; and the critics of Judaism have a way of saying harsh things about that religion on the grounds of its deficiency in this respect. But the shortcoming is amply atoned for by the large part assigned to the function of the soul in all branches of the mediæval Kabbalah.

That the *Zohar* is a debtor to a double source--the Talmudic teachings and the teachings of the Neoplatonists--is very apparent from its treatment of the soul. A passage from the former reads as follows: "Just as the soul fills the body, so God fills the world. Just as the soul bears the body, so God endures the world. Just as the soul sees but is not seen, so God sees but is not seen. Just as the soul feeds the body [*i.e.* spiritually, intellectually], so God gives food to the world" (*T.B. Berachoth*, 10a). The predominant influence of the soul over the body, the body as overflowed in all its parts by the soul and dependent upon it for the source of its life--these are the

implications of the passage just quoted; and they are the substratum of the Zoharic ideas of the soul.

Neoplatonism gave to the *Zohar* the idea of the soul as an emanation from the 'Overmind' of the universe. There was originally one 'Universal Soul,' or 'Over-soul,' which, as it were, broke itself up and encased itself in individual bodies. All individual souls are, hence, fragments of the 'Oversoul,' so that although they are distinct from one another they are, in reality, all *one*. Thus, to quote the *Zohar*:

"At the time when God desired to create the universe, it came up in His will before Him, and He formed all the souls which were destined to be allotted to the children of men. The souls were all before Him in the forms which they were afterwards destined to bear inside the human body. God looked at each one of them, and He saw that many of them would act corruptly in the world. When the time of each arrived, it was summoned before God, who said to it: 'Go to such and such a part of the universe, enclose thyself in such and such a body.' But the soul replied: 'O sovereign of the universe, I am happy in my present world, and I desire not to leave it for some other place where I shall be enslaved and become soiled.' Then the Holy One (blessed be He) replied: 'From the day of thy creation thou hast had no other destiny than to go into the universe whither I send thee.' The soul, seeing that it must obey, sorrowfully took the way to earth and came down to dwell in our midst" (ii. 96).

There is more than one echo of Plotinus--the master-mind of Neoplatonism--in this Zoharic extract. 'The world coming up in His will before Him' is Plotinus' teaching about God thinking out the original patterns of all things, the first manifestation of God being Thought. 'The souls were all before Him in the forms which they were after-wards destined to bear' is clearly an allusion to the splitting-up of the Oversoul, so that its fragments might get embodied in individuals--as Plotinus taught. But although the *Zohar*, like Plotinus, draws a distinction between *lower* souls ('they who would act corruptly in the world') and higher souls, it, unlike Plotinus, makes every soul descend into some body. Plotinus has quite a different teaching.

"The lower soul desires a body and lives in the stage of sense. . . . The higher soul, on the other hand, transcends the body, 'rides upon it,' as the fish is in the sea or as the plant is in the air. This higher soul never absolutely leaves its home, its being is not here but 'yonder,' or, in the language of Plotinus, 'The soul always leaves something of itself above'" (Rufus M. Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 74).

According to the *Zohar*, while there are distinctions there, too, between superior and inferior souls--as is shown by their belonging to a higher or lower Sefirah--they must all descend to earth and unite with the body, returning, all of them, at death to their fountain-head, God.

The *Zohar* is, after all, but a commentary on the Hebrew Bible, and however much it may, at times, forsake the traditional Jewish pathways in favour of alien philosophies, it is always strictly conservative where the fundamental axioms of the Jewish faith are concerned. That every body possesses a soul which in its pristine form is 'pure,' that recompense in an after-life awaits it on a scale commensurate with its deserts, is an impregnable tenet of Judaism. The *Zohar*, wherever it may wander, must come back to this central point.

The soul is a trinity. It comprises three elements, *viz.*: (a) *Neshāmāh*, the rational element which is the highest phase of existence; (b) *Ruah*, the moral element, the seat of good and evil, the ethical qualities; (c) *Nefesh*, the gross side of spirit, the vital element which is *en rapport* with the body, and the mainspring of all the movements, instincts, and cravings of the physical life.

There is a strong reflection of Platonic psychology in these three divisions or powers of the soul. More than one mediæval Jewish theologian was a Platonist, and in all probability the *Zohar* is a debtor to these. The three divisions of the soul are emanations from the Sefirot. The *Neshāmāh*, which, as has been said, is the soul in its most elevated and sublimest sense, emanates from the Sefirah of Wisdom. The *Ruah*, which denotes the soul in its ethical aspect, emanates from the Sefirah of Beauty. The *Nefesh*, which is the animal side of the soul, is an emanation from the Sefirah of Foundation, that element of divinity which

comes, most of all, into contact with the material forces of earth.

To sum up the matter in general and untechnical language, the three divisions or aspects of the human soul enable man to fit himself into the plan and framework of the cosmos, give him the power to do his multifarious duties towards the multifarious portions of the world,—the world which is a manifestation of God's thought, a copy of the celestial universe, an emanation of the Divine. The *Zohar* puts it poetically thus:

"In these three [*i.e.* *Neshāmāh*, *Ruah*, *Nefesh*] we find an exact image (*diyūkna*) of what is above in the celestial world. For *all three* form only *one* soul, one being, where all is *one*. The *Nefesh* [*i.e.* the lowest side of soul] does not in itself possess any light. This is why it is so tightly joined to the body, acquiring for it the pleasures and the foods which it needs. It is of it that the sage says, 'She giveth meat to her household and their task to her maidens' (*Proverbs*, xxxi. 15). 'Her household' means the body which is fed. 'Her maidens' are the limbs which obey the dictates of the body. Above the *Nefesh* is the *Ruah* [the ethical soul] which dominates the *Nefesh*, imposes laws upon it and enlightens it as much as its nature requires. And then high above the *Ruah* is the *Neshāmāh*, which in its turn rules the *Ruah* and sheds upon it the light of life. The *Ruah* is lit up by this light, and depends entirely upon it. After death, the *Ruah* has no rest. The gates of Paradise (*Eden*) are not opened to it until the time when *Neshāmāh* has reascended to its source, to the

Ancient of the ancients, in order to become filled with Him throughout eternity. For the *Neshāmāh* is always climbing back again towards its source" (ii. 142).

It can be gathered from this passage, as from many similar ones which might have been usefully quoted had space allowed, that *Neshāmāh* is only realised, that man only becomes conscious of *Neshāmāh*, after death. A whole lifetime is necessary (and in some cases more than one lifetime, as we shall see) in order that *Neshāmāh* should be able to mount up again to the Infinite source from which it emanated. And it is the inevitable destiny of *Neshāmāh* to climb back and become one with the 'Ancient of ancients.'

But if *Neshāmāh* is so exalted, so sacrosanct, why should it have emanated from its immaculate source at all, to become tainted with earth? The *Zohar* anticipates our question and gives its answer as follows:

"If thou inquirest why it [*i.e.* the soul] cometh down into the world from so exalted a place and putteth itself at such a distance from its source, I reply thus: It may be likened to an earthly monarch to whom a son is born. The monarch takes the son to the countryside, there to be nourished and trained until such a time as he is old enough to accustom himself to the palace of his father. When the father is told that the education of his son is completed, what does he do out of his love for him? In order to celebrate his home-coming, he sends for the queen, the mother of the lad. He

brings her into the palace and rejoices with her the whole day long.

"It is thus with the Holy One (blessed be He). He, too, has a son by the queen. This son is the high and holy soul. He conducts it to the countryside, *i.e.* to the world, in order to grow up there and gain an acquaintance with the customs appertaining to the royal palace. When the Divine King perceives that the soul has completed its growth, and the time is ripe for recalling it to Himself, what does He do out of His love for it? He sends for the queen, brings her into the palace, and brings the soul in too. The soul, forsooth, does not bid adieu to its earthly tenement before the queen has come to unite herself with it, and to lead it into the royal apartment where it is to live for ever.

"And the people of the world are wont to weep when the son [*i.e.* the soul] takes its leave of them. But if there be a wise man amongst them, he says to them, Why weep ye? Is he not the son of the King? Is it not meet that he should take leave of you to live in the palace of his father? It was for this reason that Moses, who knew the Truth, on seeing the inhabitants of earth mourning for the dead, exclaimed, 'Ye are the children of the Lord your God; ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead' (*Deut.* xiv. 1). If all good men knew this, they would hail with delight the day when it behoves them to bid adieu to the world. Is it not the height of glory for them when the queen [*i.e.* the Shechinah, the Divine Presence] comes down into the midst of them

to lead them into the palace of the king to enjoy the delights thereof for ever-more?" (i. 245).

It should be noted, by the way, that there are many instances in Talmudic literature, of men seeing the Shechinah at the hour of death. It is the signal of the return of *Neshāmāh* to its home, the Oversoul, of which it is but a loosened fragment; and the return can only begin after it has completed its education within the life-limits of an earthly body.

It seems to follow, as a necessary corollary from the foregoing doctrine, that the *Zohar* must give countenance to some theory of the transmigration of souls. If it is imperative upon *Neshāmāh* to climb back again to the Oversoul and obtain union with it; and if, in order to effect this end, it must previously have reached the summit of purity and perfection, then it stands to reason that its sojourn within the confines of one body may, on occasions, be inadequate to enable it to reach this high and exacting condition. Hence it must 'experience' other bodies, and it must repeat the 'experience' until such a time as it shall have elevated and refined itself to the pitch at which it will be able to become one again with the fountain from which it emanated. The *Zohar* does contain some such tenet as this, although for the full and systematic treatment of the subject one has to look to the Kabbalistic writers who built upon the *Zohar*. The *Zohar* states as follows:

"All souls must undergo transmigration; and men do not understand the ways of the Holy One (blessed be He). They know not that they are brought before the

tribunal both before they enter into this world and after they leave it. They know not the many transmigrations and hidden trials which they have to undergo, nor do they know the number of souls and spirits (*Ruah* and *Nefesh*) which enter into the world, and which do not return to the Palace of the Heavenly King. Men do not know how the souls revolve like a stone which is thrown from a sling. But the time is drawing nigh when these hidden things will be revealed" (ii. 99).

To the minds of the Kabbalists, transmigration is a necessity not alone on the grounds of their particular theology--the soul must reach the highest stage of its evolution before it can be received again into its eternal home--but on moral grounds as well. It is a vindication of Divine justice to mankind. It settles the harassing query which all ages have propounded: Why does God permit the wicked to flourish as the green bay tree, whereas the righteous man is allowed to reap nothing but sorrow and failure? And the only way for reconciling the dismal fact of child-suffering with the belief in a good God, is by saying that the pain is a retribution to the soul for sin committed in some one or more of its previous states. As has been already mentioned, the Jewish literature of this subject of transmigration is an exceedingly rich one. But it lies outside the scope of the present book.

Not only does the *Zohar*, as we have seen, teach the emanation of a threefold soul, but it also propounds a curious theory about the emanation of a pre-existent form or type of body, which, in the case of each one of

us, unites the soul with the body. It is one of the strangest pieces of Zoharic psychology extant; and the object is probably that of accounting, on one and the same ground, for the varying physical and psychical characteristics embedded in each of us from birth. The passage runs as follows:

"At the moment when the earthly union [*i.e.* marriage] takes place, the Holy One (blessed be He) sends to earth a form [or image] resembling a man, and bearing upon itself the divine seal. This image is present at the moment just mentioned, and if the eye could see what goes on then, it would detect above the heads [of man and wife] an image like a human face, and this image is the model after which we are fashioned. . . . It is this image which receives us first on our arrival into this world. It grows in us as we grow, and leaves us when we leave the world. *This image is from above.* When the souls are about to quit their heavenly abode each soul appears before the Holy One (blessed be He) clothed with an exalted pattern [or image or form] on which are engraven the features which it will bear here below" (iii. 107).

But of far greater consequence in the history of Jewish mysticism is the commanding place assigned by the *Zohar* to the idea of Love. Indeed, Jewish mysticism is here but a reflection of the nature of the mysticism inherent in all other creeds. The soul's most visible, most tangible, most perceivable quality is love. The soul is the root of love. Love is the symbol of the soul. "Mystic Love," says Miss Underhill, "is the offspring of the Celestial Venus; the deep-seated desire and

tendency of the soul towards its source." The soul, says the mystic of all ages, seeks to enter consciously into the Presence of God. It can do so only under the spur of an overpowering ecstatic emotion called love. Although, according to the *Zohar*, the soul in its most exalted state as *Neshāmāh* can only enjoy the love inherent in its union with its source after it has freed itself from the contamination of earthly bodies, it is nevertheless possible, under certain conditions, to realise this ecstatic love while the soul is in the living body of an individual. One of these conditions is *the act of serving God*, the chief outward concomitant of which is *prayer*.

"Whosoever serves God out of love," says the *Zohar*, "comes into union (*itdabak*) with the place of the Highest of the High, and comes into union, too, with the holiness of the world which is to be" (ii. 216). This is to say that the service of God, when effected with love, leads the soul into union with the place of its origin, and it gives it, as it were, a foretaste of the ineffable felicity which awaits it in its highest condition as *Neshāmāh*.

The verse "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God the Lord is One" (*Deut.* vi. 4) hints, says the *Zohar*, at this blending of the soul into a Unity. For this branch of its teaching the *Zohar* is certainly not indebted to Neoplatonism or any other alien system. It got it from its Jewish predecessors--the Midrashic homilists who enriched the Jewish literature of the opening centuries of the Christian era with their mystic interpretations of the *Song of Songs*. Verses like "I am my beloved's,

and my beloved is mine" (vi. 3) served them as a starting-point for their sermons on the nearness of man and God to one another, brought about by the instrumentality of love.

When the soul has completed the cycle of its earthly career and hurries back to become blended with the Oversoul, it revels in ecstasies of love, which the *Zohar* describes with a wealth of poetic phraseology. The soul is received in what is termed a 'treasury of life,' or sometimes a 'temple of love,' and one of its crowning joys is to contemplate the Divine Presence through a 'shining mirror.' The Rabbis of the Talmud and Midrashim used the same phrase. Thus a passage in *Leviticus Rabba*, i. 14, reads thus: "All the other prophets saw God through nine shining mirrors, but Moses saw Him through only one. All the other prophets saw God through a blurred mirror, but Moses saw Him through a clear one." The meaning is that Moses had a clearer and nearer apprehension of the Deity than all other prophets.

Thus we read: "Come and see! When the souls have reached the treasury of life they enjoy the shining of the brilliant mirror whose focus is in the heavens. And such is the brightness which emanates therefrom that the souls would be unable to withstand it, were they not covered with a coat of light. Even Moses could not approach it until he had stripped off his earthly integument" (i. 66). Again: "In one of the most mysterious and exalted parts of heaven, there is a palace called the Palace of Love. Deep mysteries are enacted there; there are gathered together all the most

well-beloved souls of the Heavenly King; it is there that the Heavenly King, the Holy One (blessed be He), lives together with these holy souls and unites Himself to them by kisses of love" (ii. 97).

The Talmudic Rabbis described the way in which death comes to the righteous as 'death by a kiss.' The *Zohar* defines this 'kiss' as 'the union of the soul with its root' (i. 168). There is, in fine, an exceptionally high degree of optimism encircling the *Zohar's* treatment of the soul.

If the theology of the early Rabbinic schools of Palestine and Babylon errs, as its critics say, in the direction of making Judaism too much of a rigid discipline, too much of a law-compelling, outward obedience rather than inward feeling, the balance is redressed by the theology of the *Zohar* which, by making the soul, on the completion of its earthly work, so great a partaker in the Divine love, emphasises the deep spirituality inherent in Judaism, the emotional element which it calls forth in those who rightfully and adequately put its teachings into practice. It thus imports an added brightness into Jewish life. It inspires the Jew with the conviction that a high destiny awaits him in the hereafter. It makes him put a premium upon virtue, and encourages him to raise himself to the sublimest pitch of moral and religious worth. Judaism for the Jew can never be a mere soulless formalism so long as the *Zohar's* doctrine of Divine love is an integral part of Judaism. Such a consummation is well attested by such a passage from the *Zohar* as the following .

"When Adam our first father dwelt in the garden of Eden he was clothed, as men are in heaven, with the Divine light. When he was driven forth from Eden to do the ordinary work of earth, then Holy Writ tells us that 'the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife coats of skin and clothed them.' For, ere this, they wore coats of light, of that light which belongs to Eden. 1 Man's good deeds upon earth bring down on him a portion of the higher light which lights up heaven. It is that light which covers him like a coat when he enters into the future world and appears before his Maker, the Holy One (blessed be He). It is by means of such a covering that he can taste of the enjoyments of the elect and look upon the face of the 'shining mirror.' And thus, the soul, in order to become perfect in all respects, must have a different covering for each of the two worlds which it has to inhabit, one for the terrestrial world and the other for the higher world" (ii. 229).

And this cheerful view of the soul is an incitement to nobler effort, not only for the Jew as an individual, but also for the Jew as a unit of a race which, according to Scriptural prescription, looks forward to its highest evolution in the arrival of a Messiah. The *Zohar*, truly enough, is comparatively silent upon this theme. But the famous Kabbalist and mystic Isaac Luria, who is the chief expounder of the *Zohar*, and who carried many of its undeveloped dogmas to their logical conclusions, has elaborated this point in a strikingly ingenious and original way. Luria held a peculiar theory of the transmigration of the soul; and conjoined with this there went, what might appear to

some, an approach to Christian teaching about the truth of original sin. With the *Zohar*, Luria maintained that man, by means of his soul, unites the upper and the lower world. But he maintained further that with the creation of Adam there were created at the same time all the souls of all races of mankind. Just as there are variations in the physical qualities of men, so there are corresponding variations in their souls. Hence there are souls which are good and souls which are bad and souls of all the shades of value which lie between these two extremes.

When Adam sinned there was confusion in all these classes of souls. The good souls became tainted with some of the evil inherent in the bad souls, and, on the contrary, the bad souls received many an admixture of goodness from the superior souls.

But who emanated from the inferior sets of soul? According to Luria, the pagan world. Israel, however, issued from the superior souls. But, again, seeing that the good souls are not wholly good nor the bad souls wholly bad by reason of the confusion ensuing upon Adam's fall, it follows that there can be no real unalloyed good in the world. Evil infests some spot or other everywhere. A perfect condition of things will only come with the coming of the Messiah. Until that time, therefore, all souls, tainted as they all inevitably are with sin, must, by means of a chain of transmigrations from one body to another, shake off more and more of the dross clinging to them, until they reach that summit of purity and perfection when, as *Neshāmāh*, they can find their way back to

unite with the Infinite Source, the Oversoul. Hence the individual Jew in promoting the growth of his own soul is really promoting the collective welfare of his race. Upon the weal or woe of his own soul hangs the weal or woe of his people.

Luria's arguments, when fully stated, have a decided air of the fantastic about them. But that his conclusion is sound and valuable, no one will doubt. He encourages the Jew to the pursuit of a lofty communal or national ideal. He reminds him, too, of the imperative necessity of Israel's solidarity. For the Jew, taking his stand upon many a text in the Old Testament, has always felt that his thought and his work must not be for himself alone. His prayer has ever been for the well-being of Israel rather than for the well-being of individual Israelites. What he counts, in God's sight, as a separate entity is small in comparison with what he counts as an inseparable unit in the compact body of Israel. In this voluntary, self-forgetful merging of the smaller interests of the part in the greater interests of the whole lies much of the secret of the long roll of Israel's saints and heroes, his martyrs and his mystics.

Chapter 3

Buddhism

Abridged Excerpts From:

Self Realisation of Noble Wisdom

Lankavatara Sutra

Translated by Professor Suzuki

Chapter V

The Mind System

THEN MAHAMATI SAID to the Blessed One: Pray tell us, Blessed One, what is meant by the mind (*citta*)?

The Blessed One replied: All things of this world, be they seemingly good or bad, faulty or faultless, effect-producing or not effect-producing, receptive or non-receptive, may be divided into two classes: evil out-flowings and the non out-flowing good. The five grasping elements that make up the aggregates of personality, namely, form, sensation, perception, discrimination, and consciousness, and that are imagined to be good and bad, have their rise in the habit-energy of the mind-system,--they are the evil out-flowings of life. The spiritual attainments and the

joys of the Samadhis and the fruitage of the Samapattis that come to the wise through their self-realisation of Noble Wisdom and that culminate in their return and participation in the relations of the triple world are called the non out-flowing good.

The mind-system which is the source of the evil out-flowings consists of the five sense-organs and their accompanying sense-minds (*vijnanas*) all of which are unified in the discriminating-mind (*manovijnana*). There is an unending succession of sense-concepts flowing into this discriminating or thinking-mind which combines them and discriminates them and passes judgement upon them as to their goodness or badness. Then follows aversion to or desire for them and attachment and deed; thus the entire system moves on continuously and closely bound together. But it fails to see and understand that what it sees and discriminates and grasps is only a manifestation of its own activity and has no other basis, and so the mind goes on erroneously perceiving and discriminating differences of forms and qualities, not remaining still even for a minute.

In the mind-system there are three modes of activity distinguishable: the sense-minds functioning while remaining in their original nature, the sense-minds as producing effects, and the sense-minds as evolving. By normal functioning the sense-minds grasp appropriate elements of their external world, by which sensation and perception arise at once and by degrees in every sense-organ and every sense-mind, in the pores of the skin, and even in the atoms that

make up the body, by which the whole field is apprehended like a mirror reflecting objects, and not realising that the external world itself is only a manifestation of mind. The second mode of activity produces effects by which these sensations react on the discriminating mind to produce perceptions, attractions, aversions, grasping, deed and habit. The third mode of activity has to do with the growth, development and passing of the mind-system, that is, the mind-system is in subjection to its own habit-energy accumulated from beginningless time, as for instance: the "eyeness" in the eye that predisposes it to grasp and become attached to multiple forms and appearances. In this way the activities of the evolving mind-system by reason of its habit-energy stirs up waves of objectivity on the face of Universal Mind which in turn conditions the activities and evolvement of the mind-system. Appearances, perception, attraction, grasping, deed, habit, reaction, condition one another incessantly, and the functioning sense-minds, the discriminating-mind and Universal Mind are thus bound up together. Thus, by reason of discrimination of that which by nature is maya-like and unreal false-imagination and erroneous reasoning takes place, action follows and its habit-energy accumulates thereby defiling the pure face of Universal Mind, and as a result the mind-system comes into functioning and the physical body has its genesis. But the discriminating-mind has no thought that by its discriminations and attachments it is conditioning the whole body and so the sense-minds and the discriminating-mind go on mutually related and mutually conditioned in a most intimate

manner and building up a world of representations out of the activities of its own imagination. As a mirror reflects forms, the perceiving senses perceive appearances which the discriminating-mind gathers together and proceeds to discriminate, to name and become attached to. Between these two functions there is no gap, nevertheless, they are mutually conditioning. The perceiving senses grasp that for which they have an affinity, and there is a transformation takes place in their structure by reason of which the mind proceeds to combine, discriminate, apprise, and act; then follows habit-energy and the establishing of the mind and its continuance.

The discriminating-mind because of its capacity to discriminate, judge, select and reason about, is also called the thinking, or intellectual-mind. There are three divisions of its mental activity: mentation which functions in connection with attachment to objects and ideas, mentation that functions in connection with general ideas, and mentation that examines into the validity of these general ideas. The mentation which functions in connection with attachment to objects and ideas derived from discrimination, discriminates the mind from its mental processes and accepts the ideas from it as being real and becomes attached to them. A variety of false judgements are thus arrived at as to being, multiplicity, individuality, value, etc., a strong grasping takes place which is perpetuated by habit-energy and thus discrimination goes on asserting itself.

These mental processes give rise to general conceptions of warmth, fluidity, motility, and solidity, as characterising the objects of discrimination, while the tenacious holding to these general ideas gives rise to proposition, reason, definition, and illustration, all of which lead to the assertions of relative knowledge and the establishment of confidence in birth, self-nature, and an ego-soul.

By mentation as an examining function is meant the intellectual act of examining into these general conclusions as to their validity, significance, and truthfulness. This is the faculty that leads to understanding, right-knowledge and points the way to self-realisation.

THEN MAHAMATI SAID to the Blessed One: Pray tell us, Blessed One, what relation ego-personality bears to the mind-system?

The Blessed One replied: To explain it, it is first necessary to speak of the self-nature of the five grasping aggregates that make up personality, although as I have already shown they are empty, unborn, and without self-nature. These five grasping aggregates are: form, sensation, perception, discrimination, consciousness. Of these, form belongs to what is made of the so-called primary elements, whatever they may be. The four remaining aggregates are without form and ought not to be reckoned as four, because they merge imperceptibly into one another. They are like space which cannot be

numbered; it is only due to imagination that they are discriminated and likened to space. Because things are endowed with appearances of being, characteristic-marks, perceivableness, abode, work, one can say that they are born of effect-producing causes, but this can not be said of these four intangible aggregates for they are without form and marks. These four mental aggregates that make up personality are beyond calculability, they are beyond the four propositions, they are not to be predicated as existing nor as not existing, but together they constitute what is known as mortal-mind. They are even more maya-like and dream-like than are things, nevertheless, as discriminating mortal-mind they obstruct the self-realisation of Noble Wisdom. But it is only by the ignorant that they are enumerated and thought of as an ego-personality; the wise do not do so. This discrimination of the five aggregates that make up personality and that serve as a basis for an ego-soul and ground for its desires and self-interests must be given up, and in its place the truth of imagelessness and solitude should be established.

THEN SAID MAHAMATI to the Blessed One: Pray tell us, Blessed One, about Universal Mind and its relation to the lower mind-system?

The Blessed One replied: The sense-minds and their centralised discriminating-mind are related to the external world which is a manifestation of itself and is given over to perceiving, discriminating, and grasping its maya-like appearances. Universal Mind (Alaya-vijnana) transcends all individuation and

limits. Universal Mind is thoroughly pure in its essential nature, subsisting unchanged and free from faults of impermanence, undisturbed by egoism, unruffled by distinctions, desires and aversions. Universal Mind is like a great ocean, its surface ruffled by waves and surges but its depths remaining forever unmoved. In itself it is devoid of personality and all that belongs to it, but by reason of the defilement upon its face it is like an actor and plays a variety of parts, among which a mutual functioning takes place and the mind-system arises. The principle of intellection becomes divided and mind, the functions of mind, the evil out-flowings of mind, take on individuation. The sevenfold gradation of mind appears: namely, intuitive self-realisation, thinking-desiring-discriminating, seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, touching, and all their interactions and reactions take their rise.

The discriminating-mind is the cause of the sense-minds and is their support and with them is kept functioning as it describes and becomes attached to a world of objects, and then, by means of its habit-energy, it defiles the face of Universal Mind. Thus Universal Mind becomes the storage and clearing house of all the accumulated products of mentation and action since beginningless time.

Between Universal Mind and the individual discriminating-mind is the intuitive-mind (*manas*) which is dependent upon Universal Mind for its cause and support and enters into relations with both. It partakes of the universality of Universal Mind,

shares its purity, and like it, is above form and momentariness. It is through the intuitive-mind that the good non out-flowings emerge, are manifested and are realised. Fortunate it is that intuition is not momentary for if the enlightenment which comes by intuition were momentary the wise would lose their "wiseness" which they do not. But the intuitive-mind enters into relations with the lower mind-system, shares its experiences and reflects upon its activities.

Intuitive-mind is one with Universal Mind by reason of its participation in Transcendental Intelligence (*Arya-jnana*), and is one with the mind-system by its comprehension of differentiated knowledge (*vijnana*). Intuitive-mind has no body of its own nor any marks by which it can be differentiated. Universal Mind is its cause and support but it is evolved along with the notion of an ego and what belongs to it, to which it clings and upon which it reflects. Through intuitive-mind, by the faculty of intuition which is a mingling of both identity and perceiving, the inconceivable wisdom of Universal Mind is revealed and made realisable. Like Universal Mind it can not be the source of error.

The discriminating-mind is a dancer and a magician with the objective world as his stage. Intuitive-mind is the wise jester who travels with the magician and reflects upon his emptiness and transiency. Universal Mind keeps the record and knows what must be and what may be. It is because of the activities of the discriminating-mind that error rises and an objective world evolves and the notion of an ego-soul becomes

established. If and when the discriminating-mind can be gotten rid of, the whole mind-system will cease to function and Universal Mind will alone remain. Getting rid of the discriminating-mind removes the cause of all error.

THEN SAID MAHAMATI to the Blessed One: Pray tell us, Blessed One, what is meant by the cessation of the mind-system?

The Blessed One replied: The five sense-functions and their discriminating and thinking function have their risings and complete endings from moment to moment. They are born with discrimination as cause, with form and appearance and objectivity closely linked together as condition. The will-to-live is the mother, ignorance is the father. By setting up names and forms greed is multiplied and thus the mind goes mutually conditioning and being conditioned. By becoming attached to names and forms, not realising that they have no more basis than the activities of the mind itself, error rises, false-imagination as-to pleasure and pain rises, and the way to emancipation is blocked. The lower system of sense-minds and the discriminating-mind do not really suffer pleasure and pain-they only imagine they do. Pleasure and pain are the deceptive reactions of mortal-mind as it grasps an imaginary objective world.

There are two ways in which the ceasing of the mind-system may take place: as regards form, and as regards continuation. The sense-organs function as regards form by the interaction of form, contact and

grasping; and they cease to function when this contact is broken. As regards continuation,--when these interactions of form, contact and grasping cease, there is no more continuation of the seeing, hearing and other sense functions; with the ceasing of these sense functions, the discriminations, graspings and attachments of the discriminating-mind cease; and with their ceasing act and deed and their habit-energy cease, and there is no more accumulation of karma-defilement on the face of Universal Mind.

If the evolving mortal-mind were of the same nature as Universal Mind the cessation of the lower mind-system would mean the cessation of Universal Mind, but they are different for Universal Mind is not the cause of mortal-mind. There is no cessation of Universal Mind in its pure and essence-nature. What ceases to function is not Universal Mind in its essence-nature, but is the cessation of the effect-producing defilements upon its face that have been caused by the accumulation of the habit-energy of the activities of the discriminating and thinking mortal-mind. There is no cessation of Divine Mind which, in itself, is the abode of Reality and the Womb of Truth.

By the cessation of the sense-minds is meant, not the cessation of their perceiving functions, but the cessation of their discriminating and naming activities which are centralised in the discriminating mortal-mind. By the cessation of the mind-system as a whole is meant, the cessation of discrimination, the clearing away of the various attachments, and, therefore, the clearing away of the defilements of habit-energy on

the face of Universal Mind which have been accumulating since beginningless time by reason of these discriminations, attachments, erroneous reasonings, and following acts. The cessation of the continuation aspect of the mind-system as a whole, takes place when there is the cessation of that which supports the mind-system, namely, the discriminating mortal-mind. With the cessation of mortal-mind the entire world of maya and desire disappears. Getting rid of the discriminating mortal-mind is Nirvana.

But the cessation of the discriminating-mind can not take place until there has been a "turning-about" in the deepest seat of consciousness. The mental habit of looking outward by the discriminating-mind upon an external objective world must be given up, and a new habit of realising Truth within the intuitive-mind by becoming one with Truth itself must be established. Until this intuitive self-realisation of Noble Wisdom is attained, the evolving mind-system will go on. But when an insight into the five Dharmas, the three self-natures, and the twofold egolessness is attained, then the way will be opened for this "turning-about" to take place. With the ending of pleasure and pain, of conflicting ideas, of the disturbing interests of egoism, a state of tranquillisation will be attained in which the truths of emancipation will be fully understood and there will be no further evil outflowings of the mind-system to interfere with the perfect self-realisation of Noble Wisdom.

Chapter IX

The Fruit of Self- Realisation

MAHAMATI ASKED the Blessed One: Pray tell us, Blessed One, what is the fruitage that comes with self-realisation of Noble Wisdom?

The Blessed One replied: First, there will come a clearing insight into the meaning and significance of things and following that will come an unfolding insight into the significance of the spiritual ideals (*Paramitas*) by reason of which the Bodhisattvas will be able to enter more deeply into the abode of imagelessness and be able to experience the higher Samadhis and gradually to pass through the higher stages of Bodhisattvahood.

After experiencing the "turning-about" in the deepest seat of consciousness, they will experience other Samadhis even to the highest, the Vajravimbopama, which belongs to the Tathagatas and their transformations. They will be able to enter into the realm of consciousness that lies beyond the consciousness of the mind-system, even the consciousness of Tathagatahood. They will become endowed with all the powers, psychic faculties, self-mastery, loving compassion, skillful means, and ability to enter into other Buddha-lands. Before they had attained self-realisation of Noble Wisdom they had been influenced by the self-interests of egoism, but after they attain self-realisation they will find themselves reacting spontaneously to the impulses of a great and compassionate heart endowed with

skillful and boundless means and sincerely and wholly devoted to the emancipation of all beings.

MAHAMATI SAID: Blessed One, tell us about the sustaining power of the Tathagatas by which the Bodhisattvas are aided to attain self-realisation of Noble Wisdom?

The Blessed One replied: There are two kinds of sustaining power, which issue from the Tathagatas and are at the service of the Bodhisattvas, sustained by which the Bodhisattvas should prostrate themselves before them and show their appreciation by asking questions. The first kind of sustaining power is the Bodhisattva's own adoration and faith in the Buddhas by reason of which the Buddhas are able to manifest themselves and render their aid and to ordain them with their own hands. The second kind of sustaining power is the power radiating from the Tathagatas that enables the Bodhisattvas to attain and to pass through the various Samadhis and Samapattis without becoming intoxicated by their bliss.

Being sustained by the power of the Buddhas, the Bodhisattva even at the first stage will be able to attain the Samadhi known as the Light of Mahayana. In that Samadhi Bodhisattvas will become conscious of the presence of the Tathagatas coming from all their different abodes in the ten quarters to impart to the Bodhisattvas their sustaining power in various ways. As the Bodhisattva Vajragarbha was sustained in his Samadhis and as many other Bodhisattvas of like degree and virtue have been sustained, so all

earnest disciples and masters and Bodhisattvas may experience this sustaining power of the Buddhas in their Samadhis and Samapattis. The disciple's faith and the Tathagata's merit are two aspects of the same sustaining power and by it alone are the Bodhisattvas enabled to become one with the company of the Buddhas.

Whatever Samadhis, psychic faculties and teachings are realised by the Bodhisattvas, they are made possible only by the sustaining power of the Buddhas; if it were otherwise, the ignorant and the simpleminded might attain the same fruitage. Wherever the Tathagatas enter with their sustaining power there will be music, not only music made by human lips and played by human hands on various instruments, but there will be music among the grass and shrubs and trees, and in mountains and towns and palaces and hovels; much more will there be music in the hearts of those endowed with sentiency. The deaf, dumb and blind will be cured of their deficiencies and will rejoice in their emancipation. Such is the extraordinary virtue of the sustaining power imparted by the Tathagatas.

By the bestowal of this sustaining power, the Bodhisattvas are enabled to avoid the evils of passion, hatred and enslaving karma; they are enabled to transcend the dhyana of the beginners and to advance beyond the experience and truth already attained; they are enabled to demonstrate the Paramitas; and finally, to attain the stage of Tathagatahood. Mahamati, if it were not for this sustaining power,

they would relapse into the ways and thoughts of the philosophers, easygoing disciples and the evil-minded, and would thus fall short of the highest attainment. For these reasons, earnest disciples and sincere Bodhisattvas are sustained by the power of all the Tathagatas.

THEN SAID MAHAMATI: It has been said by the Blessed One that by fulfilling the six Paramitas, Buddhahood is realised. Pray tell us what the Paramitas are, and how they are to be fulfilled?

The Blessed One replied: The Paramitas are ideals of spiritual perfection that are to be the guide of the Bodhisattvas on the path to self-realisation. There are six of them but they are to be considered in three different ways according to the progress of the Bodhisattva on the stages. At first they are to be considered as ideals for the worldly life; next as ideals for the mental life; and, lastly, as ideals of the spiritual and unitive life.

In the worldly life where one is still holding tenaciously to the notions of an ego-soul and what concerns it and holding fast to discriminations of dualism, if only for worldly benefits, one should cherish ideals of charity, good behavior, patience, zeal, thoughtfulness and wisdom. Even in the worldly life the practice of these virtues will bring rewards of happiness and success.

Much more in the mind-world of earnest disciples and masters will their practice bring joys of emancipation, enlightenment and peace of mind,

because the Paramitas are grounded on right-knowledge and lead to thoughts of Nirvana, even if the Nirvana of their thoughts is for themselves. In the mind-world the Paramitas become more ideal and more sympathetic; charity can no longer be expressed in the giving of impersonal gifts but will call for the more costly gifts of sympathy and understanding; good behavior will call for something more than outward conformity to the five precepts because in the light of the Paramitas they must practise humility, simplicity, restraint and self-giving. Patience will call for something more than forbearance with external circumstances and the temperaments of other people: it will now call for patience with one's self. Zeal will call for something more than industry and outward show of earnestness: it will call for more self-control in the task of following the Noble Path and in manifesting the Dharma in one's own life. Thoughtfulness will give way to mindfulness wherein discriminated meanings and logical deductions and rationalisations will give way to intuitions of significance and spirit. The Paramita of Wisdom (Prajna) will no longer be concerned with pragmatic wisdom and erudition, but will reveal itself in its true perfectness of All-inclusive Truth which is Love.

The third aspect of the Paramitas as seen in the ideal perfections of the Tathagatas can only be fully understood by the Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas who are devoted to the highest spiritual discipline and have fully understood that there is nothing to be seen in the world but that which issues from the mind itself; in whose minds the discriminations of dualities has

ceased to function; and seizing and clinging has become non-existent. Thus free from all attachments to individual objects and ideas, their minds are free to consider ways of benefitting and giving happiness to others, even to all sentient beings. To the Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas the ideal of charity is shown in the self-yielding of the Tathagata's hope of Nirvana that all may enjoy it together. While having relations with an objective world there is no rising in the minds of the Tathagatas of discriminations between the interests of self and the interests of others, between good and evil,--there is just the spontaneity and effortless actuality of perfect behavior. To practise patience with full knowledge of this and that, of grasp and grasping, but with no thought of discrimination nor of attachment,--that is the Tathagatas Paramita of Patience. To exert oneself with energy from the first part of the night to its end in conformity with the disciplinary measures with no rising of discrimination as to comfort or discomfort,--that is the Tathagata's Paramita of Zeal. Not to discriminate between self and others in thoughts of Nirvana, but to keep the mind fixed on Nirvana,--that is the Paramita of Mindfulness. As to the Prajna-Paramita, which is Noble Wisdom, who can predicate it? When in Samadhi the mind ceases to discriminate and there is only perfect and love-filled imagelessness, then an inscrutable "turning-about" will take place in the inmost consciousness and one will have attained self-realisation of Noble Wisdom,--that is the highest Prajna-Paramita.

THEN MAHAMATI SAID to the Blessed One: You have spoken of an astral-body, a "mind-vision-body" (*manomayakaya*) which the Bodhisattvas are able to assume, as being one of the fruits of self-realisation of Noble Wisdom: pray tell us, Blessed One, what is meant by such a transcendental body?

The Blessed One replied: There are three kinds of such transcendental bodies: First, there is the one in which the Bodhisattva attains enjoyment of the Samadhis and Samapattis. Second, there is the one which is assumed by the Tathagatas according to the class of beings to be sustained, and which achieves and perfects spontaneously with no attachment and no effort. Third, there is the one in which the Tathagatas receive their intuition of Dharmakaya.

The transcendental personality that enters into the enjoyment of the Samadhis comes with the third, fourth and fifth stages as the mentations of the mindsystem become quieted and waves of consciousness are no more stirred on the face of Universal Mind. In this state, the conscious-mind is still aware, in a measure, of the bliss being experienced by this cessation of the mind's activities.

The second kind of transcendental personality is the kind assumed by the Bodhisattvas and Tathagatas as bodies of transformation by which they demonstrate their original vows in the work of achieving and perfecting; it comes with the eighth stage of Bodhisattvahood. When the Bodhisattva has a thorough-going penetration into the maya-like nature

of things and understands the dharma of imagelessness, he will experience the "turning-about" in his deepest consciousness and will become able to experience the higher Samadhis even to the highest. By entering into these exalted Samadhis he attains a personality that transcends the conscious-mind, by reason of which he obtains supernatural powers of self-mastery and activities because of which he is able to move as he wishes, as quickly as a dream changes, as quickly as an image changes in a mirror. This transcendental body is not a product of the elements and yet there is something in it that is analogous to what is so produced; it is furnished with all the differences appertaining to the world of form but without their limitations; possessed of this "mind-vision-body" he is able to be present in all the assemblages in all the Buddha-lands. Just as his thoughts move instantly and without hindrance over walls and rivers and trees and mountains, and just as in memory he recalls and visits the scenes of his past experiences, so, while his mind keeps functioning in the body, his thoughts may be a hundred thousand yojanas away. In the same fashion the transcendental personality that experiences the Samadhi Vajravimbopama will be endowed with supernatural powers and psychic faculties and self-mastery by reason of which he will be able to follow the noble paths that lead to the assemblages of the Buddhas, moving about as freely as he may wish. But his wishes will no longer be self-centered nor tainted by discrimination and attachment, for this transcendental personality is not his old body, but is the transcendental embodiment of his original vows

of self-yielding in order to bring all beings to maturity.

The third kind of transcendental personality is so ineffable that it is able to attain intuitions of the Dharmakaya, that is, it attains intuitions of the boundless and inscrutable cognition of Universal Mind. As Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas attain the highest of the stages and become conversant with all the treasures to be realised in Noble Wisdom, they will attain this inconceivable transformation-body which is the true nature of all the Tathagatas past, present and future, and will participate in the blissful peace which pervades the Dharma of all the Buddhas.

Abridged Excerpts From:

Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch

**Translated by Wong Mou-lam
Edited and Interpreted**

Chapter III

Discourse on Dhyana and Samadhi

THE PATRIARCH, on another occasion, addressed the assembly as follows:--

Learned Audience: Samadhi and Prajna are fundamental. But you must not be under the wrong impression that they are independent of each other, for they are not two entities, they are inseparably united. Samadhi is the quintessence of Prajna, while Prajna is the activity of Samadhi. At the very moment that one attains Prajna, Samadhi is present; when one enters Samadhi, Prajna is present. If you understand this, you understand the "Oneness" of Samadhi and Prajna. A disciple should not think that there is a distinction between "Samadhi begets Prajna," and "Prajna begets Samadhi." To hold such an opinion would imply that these are two characteristics in the Dharma.

For one whose tongue is ready with good words but whose heart is impure, Samadhi and Prajna are useless because they are not in balance. On the other hand, when one is good in mind as well as in word, and when the outward appearance and inner feelings

are in harmony with each other, then Samadhi and Prajna are in balance.

To an enlightened disciple (who has realised Prajna in Samadhi) discussion about it is unnecessary. To argue about Prajna or Samadhi as to which comes first, places one in the same position with those who are under delusion. Argument implies a desire to win, it strengthens egoism, it binds one to belief in the idea of "a self, a being, a living being and a person." But we may liken Samadhi and Prajna to a glowing lamp and its light: with the glowing lamp there is light; without it there is darkness. Light is the quintessence of the glowing lamp, the glowing lamp is the expression of light. In name they are two things, but in reality they are one and the same. It is the same with Samadhi and Prajna.

The Patriarch continued: To practice samadhi is to make it a rule to have the mind in concentrated attention on all occasions (that is, not to let the mind wander from the thing in hand),--no matter what we are doing, walking, standing, sitting or reclining. The Vimalakirti Nirdesa Sutra says: "Straightforwardness is the holy place, the Pure Land." Do not let your mind be "crooked" and try to be straightforward with your lips only. People should practice straightforwardness but should not attach themselves to anything. People under delusion believe obstinately that there is a substance behind appearances and so they are stubborn in holding to their own way of interpreting the samadhi of specific mode, which they define as, "sitting quietly and

continuously without letting any idea arise in the mind." Such an interpretation would class us with inanimate objects; it is a stumbling-block to the right Path and the Path should be kept open. How can we block the Path? By attachment to any definite thought; if we free our minds from attachments, the Path will be clear, otherwise we are in bondage. If that practice of "sitting quietly without letting any idea arise in the mind," is correct, why on one occasion was Saraputra reprimanded by Vimalakirti for sitting quietly in the forest? (That is, it is not thinking that blocks the Path, but attachment to definite thoughts.)

Some teachers of concentration instructed their disciples to keep a watch on their minds and secure tranquillity by the cessation of all thought, and henceforth their disciples gave up all effort to concentrate the mind and ignorant persons who did not understand the distinction became insane from trying to carry out the instruction literally. Such cases are not rare and it is a great mistake to teach the practice.

It has been the tradition of our school to make "non-objectivity" as our basis, "idea-lessness" as our object, and "non-attachment" as our fundamental principle. "Non-objectivity" means, not to be absorbed in objects when in contact with objects; "idea-lessness" means, not to be carried away by any particular idea in our exercise of the mental faculty; ("non-attachment" means, not to cherish any desire for or aversion to any

particular thing or idea). "Non-attachment" is the characteristic of Mind-essence.

We should treat all things--good or bad, beautiful or ugly--as void (of any self-substance). Even in time of dispute and quarrel, we should treat intimates and enemies alike and never think of retaliation. In the thinking faculty, let the past be dead. If we allow our thoughts, past, present and future, to become linked up into a series, we put ourselves under restraint. On the other hand, if we never let our mind become attached at any time to any thing, we gain emancipation. For this reason we make "non-attachment" our fundamental principle.

To free ourselves from dependence upon externals is called, "non-objectivity." In as far as we are in position to do this, the path of the Dharma is free. That is why we make "non-objectivity" our basis.

To keep our mind free from defilement under all circumstances is called "idea-lessness." Our mind should always stand aloof and on no account should we allow circumstances to influence the functioning of the mind. It is a great mistake to suppress all thinking. Even if we succeed, and die immediately thereafter, still, there is reincarnation. Mark this, pilgrims of the Path! It is bad enough for a man to commit blunders by cherishing false ideas of the Dharma, how much worse to teach others. Being deluded, he is blind himself, and in addition he misrepresents and puts to shame the Buddhist

scriptures. Therefore we make "idea-lessness" our object.

There is a type of man who is under delusion who boasts of his realisation of Mind-essence; but being influenced by circumstances ideas rise in his mind, followed by erroneous views, which in turn become the source of attachment and defilement. In Essence of Mind, intrinsically, there is nothing to be attained. To boast of attainment and to talk foolishly of merits and demerits is erroneous and defiling. For this reason we make "idea-lessness" the object of our school.

(If "idea-lessness" is not the cessation of all thought) what ideas should we get rid of, and on what ideas should we focus our mind? We should get rid of all "pairs of opposites" of all conceptions of goodness and badness (that is, of all discriminative thinking). We should focus our mind on the true nature of reality. (The word used is "Tathata," which means, "True Nature," or Mind-essence, or Prajna, or "Oneness," or "Suchness," or anything else that is ultimate.) Tathata (considered as the ultimate "suchness" of Mind-essence) is the quintessence of "idea"; "idea" is the manifestation of Tathata. It is the function of Tathata to give rise to "ideas." It is not the sense-organs that do so. Tathata (considered as the Intellective Principle) reproduces its own attribute, therefore, it can give rise to "idea." Without Tathata, sense-organs and sense-objects would disappear immediately. Because it is an attribute of Tathata to give rise to ideas, our sense-organs, in spite of their

functioning in seeing, hearing, touching, smelling and knowing, are not tainted and defiled under all circumstances. (It is the cherishing of "attachments" that defiles.) Our true-nature is "self-manifesting" all the time. (The Path to self-realisation of Mind-essence through Samadhi and Prajna is present to all, even though for some it may be blocked for a time by "attachments.") Therefore, the Sutra says: "He who is an adept in appreciation of that which lies behind things and phenomena, is established upon the Ultimate Principle (Prajna).

The Patriarch one day preached to an assembly as follows:

In our system of Dhyana, we neither dwell upon our mind nor upon its purity; neither do we seek to suppress its activity. As to dwelling on the mind: the (functional) mind is primarily delusive and as we come to realise that it is only a phantasm we see that there is no reason for dwelling upon it. As to dwelling upon its purity: our nature is intrinsically pure, and just as far as we get rid of discriminative thinking, there will remain nothing but purity in our nature; it is these delusive ideas that obscure our realisation of True reality (Tathata). If we direct our mind to dwell upon purity, we are only creating another delusion: the delusion of purity. Since delusion has no abiding place, it is deluding to dwell upon it. Purity has neither shape nor form, but some people go so far as to invent the "Form of Purity" and then treat it as a problem for solution.' Holding such an opinion, these people become purity-ridden and their Essence of

Mind is thereby obscured. Those who are training themselves for serenity of mind, in their contact with the many types of men, should not notice the faults of others. They should be indifferent as to whether others are good or bad, or whether they deserve merit or demerit. To assume a discriminatory attitude toward others is to invite perturbation of mind. An unenlightened man may seem outwardly unperturbed, but as soon as he opens his mouth and criticises others and talks about their merit or demerit, their ability or weakness, their goodness or badness, he shows that he has deviated from the right course. On the other hand, to dwell upon our own mind and its purity is also a stumbling-block in the true Path.

At another assembly the Patriarch spoke as follows: What is dhyana? It means, first, to gain full freedom of mind and to be entirely unperturbed under all outward circumstances, be they good or otherwise. What is the difference between Dhyana and Samadhi? Dhyana is the effort to be mentally free from any attachment to outer objects. Samadhi is the realisation of that freedom in inward peace. If we are attached to outer objects the inner mind will be perturbed. When we are free from attachment to all outer objects, the mind will be at peace. Our Essence of Mind is intrinsically pure; the reason we become perturbed is simply because we allow ourselves to be carried away by the circumstances we are under. He who is able to keep his mind serene, irrespective of circumstances, has attained true Samadhi.

To be free from attachment is Dhyana; to realise inner peace is Samadhi. When we are able to hold the mind concentrated, and to rest in inner peace, then we have attained both Dhyana and Samadhi. The Bodhisattva Sila Sutra says: "Our Essence of Mind is intrinsically pure." Learned Audience: let us each realise this for himself from one momentary sensation to another. Let us practice it by ourselves, let us train ourselves, and thus by our own effort attain Buddhahood.

Chapter 4

Native American

Abridged Excerpts From:

Vision Quest

By Black Elk

A Vision Quest is an experience of deeper understanding of Nature and Spirit. It is a ceremony practiced by American Indians.

To prepare for this "insight" one must first cleanse the body and mind by going through a Inipi or sweat lodge.

Then with the help of a Holy Man is told certain things and must go to a spot, usually on a holy mountain, and stay 2 or 3 days

During this time no food is eaten and one does not sleep but spends the time in deep prayer and observation.

Many times, but not always, there is a vision. This vision is then shared with the Holy Man to help learn of its meaning.

Sometimes the meaning is not shown for several years afterward.

This is part of a vision quest I was told to share with all who may be interested.

Once, I went to pray at the top of the sacred mountain of my ancestors.

As I climbed to the top I heard voices singing as the wind blew the leaves.

At the top I saw, made from many stones, a large circle with a cross inside.

I knew from my teachings that this represented the circle of life and the four directions.

I sat down by the edge of this circle to pray.

I thought this is only a symbol of the universe.

"True," a very soft voice said.

"Look and you will see the Center of the Universe.

Look at every created thing."

As I looked around I saw that every created thing had a thread of smoke or light going from it.

The voice whispered, "This cord that every created thing has is what connects it to the Creator.

Without this cord it would not exist."

As I watched I saw that all these threads, coming from everything, went to the center of the circle where the four directions were one place (the center of the cross).

I saw that all these threads were tied together or joined here at this spot.

The voice spoke again, "This is the Center of the Universe. The place where all things join together and all things become one. The place where everything begins and ends. The place inside everything created."

That's when I understood that all of creation, the seen and the unseen, was all related.

The voice spoke one last time, "Yes, now you know the Center of the Universe."

I pray to the four directions.....hear me.

I pray to the West which gives us rest and reflection.

I thank you for these gifts for without them we could not live.

I pray to the North which gives us patience and purity.

I thank you for these gifts for without them we could not live.

I pray to the East which gives us energy and emotions.

I thank you for these gifts for without them we could not live.

I pray to the South which gives us discipline and direction.

I thank you for these gifts for without them we could not live.

Grandmother, share with me your wisdom, and I thank you for this gift.

Grandfather, share with me your strength, and I thank you for this gift.

Chapter 5

Christianity

Abridged Excerpts From:

The Works of Dionysius the Areopagite

Translated By John Parker
1897

TRIAD supernal, both super-God and super-good, Guardian of the Theosophy of Christian men, direct us aright to the super-unknown and super-brilliant and highest summit of the mystic Oracles, where the simple and absolute and changeless mysteries of theology lie hidden within the super-luminous gloom of the silence, revealing hidden things, which in its deepest darkness shines above the most super-brilliant, and in the altogether impalpable and invisible, fills to overflowing the eyeless minds with glories of surpassing beauty. This then be my prayer; but thou, O dear Timothy, by thy persistent commerce with the mystic visions, leave behind both sensible perceptions and intellectual efforts, and all objects of sense and intelligence, and all things not being and being, and be raised aloft unknowingly to the union, as far as attainable, with Him Who is above every essence and knowledge. For by the resistless

and absolute ecstasy in all purity, from thyself and all, thou wilt be carried on high, to the superessential ray of the Divine darkness, when thou hast cast away all, and become free from all.

SECTION II.

But see that none of the uninitiated listen to these things--those I mean who are entangled in things being, and fancy there is nothing superessentially above things being, but imagine that they know, by their own knowledge, Him, Who has placed darkness as His hiding-place. But, if the Divine initiations are above such, what would any one say respecting those still more uninitiated, such as both portray the Cause exalted above all, from the lowest of things created, and say that It in no wise excels the no-gods fashioned by themselves and of manifold shapes, it being our duty both to attribute and affirm all the attributes of things existing to It, as Cause of all, and more properly to deny them all to It, as being above all, and not to consider the negations to be in opposition to the affirmations, but far rather that It, which is above every abstraction and definition, is above the privations.

SECTION III.

Thus, then, the divine Bartholomew says that Theology is much and least, and the Gospel broad and great, and on the other hand concise. He seems to me to have comprehended this supernaturally, that the good Cause of all is both of much utterance, and at the same time of briefest utterance and without

utterance; as having neither utterance nor conception, because It is superessentially exalted above all, and manifested without veil and in truth, to those alone who pass through both all things consecrated and pure, and ascend above every ascent of all holy summits, and leave behind all divine lights and sounds, and heavenly words, and enter into the gloom, where really is, as the Oracles say, He Who is beyond all. For even the divine Moses is himself strictly bidden to be first purified, and then to be separated from those who are not so, and after entire cleansing hears the many-voiced trumpets, and sees many lights, shedding pure and streaming rays; then he is separated from the multitude, and with the chosen priests goes first to the summit of the divine ascents, although even then he does not meet with Almighty God Himself, but views not Him (for He is viewless) but the place where He is. Now this I think signifies that the most Divine and Highest of the things seen and contemplated are a sort of suggestive expression, of the things subject to Him Who is above all, through which His wholly inconceivable Presence is shown, reaching to the highest spiritual summits of His most holy places; and then he (Moses) is freed from them who are both seen and seeing, and enters into the gloom of the *Agnosia*; a gloom veritably mystic, within which he closes all perceptions of knowledge and enters into the altogether impalpable and unseen, being wholly of Him Who is beyond all, and of none, neither himself nor other; and by inactivity of all knowledge, united in his better part to the altogether Unknown, and by knowing nothing, knowing above mind.

CAPUT II.

How we ought both to be united and render praise to the Cause of all and above all.

SECTION I.

WE pray to enter within the super-bright gloom, and through not seeing and not knowing, to see and to know that the not to see nor to know is itself the above sight and knowledge. For this is veritably to see and to know and to celebrate super-essentially the Superessential, through the abstraction of all existing things, just as those who make a lifelike statue, by extracting all the encumbrances which have been placed upon the clear view of the concealed, and by bringing to light, by the mere cutting away, the genuine beauty concealed in it. And, it is necessary, as I think, to celebrate the abstractions in an opposite way to the definitions. For, we used to place these latter by beginning from the foremost and descending through the middle to the lowest, but, in this case, by making the ascents from the lowest to the highest, we abstract everything, in order that, without veil, we may know that *Agnosia*, which is enshrouded under all the known, in all things that be, and may see that superessential gloom, which is hidden by all the light in existing things.

CAPUT III.

What are the affirmative expressions respecting God, and what the negative.

SECTION I.

IN the *Theological Outlines*, then, we celebrated the principal affirmative expressions respecting God--how the Divine and good Nature is spoken of as One--how as Threefold--what is that within it which is spoken of as Paternity and Sonship--what the Divine name of "the Spirit "is meant to signify,--how from the immaterial and indivisible Good the Lights dwelling in the heart of Goodness sprang forth, and remained, in their branching forth, without departing from the coeternal abiding in Himself and in Themselves and in each other,--how the super-essential Jesus takes substance in veritable human nature--and whatever other things, made known by the Oracles, are celebrated throughout the *Theological Outlines*; and in the treatise concerning *Divine Names*, how He is named Good--how Being--how Life and Wisdom and Power--and whatever else belongs to the nomenclature of God. Further, in the *Symbolical Theology*, what are the Names transferred from objects of sense to things Divine?--what are the Divine forms?--what the Divine appearances, and parts and organs?--what the Divine places and ornaments?--what the angers?--what the griefs?--and the Divine wrath?--what the carousals, and the ensuing sicknesses?--what the oaths,--and what the curses?--what the sleepings, and what the awakings?--and all the other Divinely formed representations, which belong to the description of God, through symbols. And I imagine that you have comprehended, how the lowest are expressed in somewhat more words than the first. For, it was necessary that the *Theological*

Outlines, and the unfolding of the Divine Names should be expressed in fewer words than the *Symbolic Theology*; since, in proportion as we ascend to the higher, in such a degree the expressions are circumscribed by the contemplations of the things intelligible. As even now, when entering into the gloom which is above mind, we shall find, not a little speaking, but a complete absence of speech, and absence of conception. In the other case, the discourse, in descending from the above to the lowest, is widened according to the descent, to a proportionate extent; but now, in ascending from below to that which is above, in proportion to the ascent, it is contracted, and after a complete ascent, it will become wholly voiceless, and will be wholly united to the unutterable. But, for what reason in short, you say, having attributed the Divine attributes from the foremost, do we begin the Divine abstraction from things lowest? Because it is necessary that they who place attributes on that which is above every attribute, should place the attributive affirmation from that which is more cognate to it; but that they who abstract, with regard to that which is above every abstraction, should make the abstraction from things which are further removed from it. Are not life and goodness more (cognate) than air and stone? and He is not given to debauch and to wrath, more (removed) than He is not expressed nor conceived.

CAPUT IV.

That the pre-eminent Cause of every object of sensible perception is none of the objects of sensible perception.

SECTION I.

WE say then- that the Cause of all, which is above all, is neither without being, nor without life--nor without reason, nor without mind, nor is a body--nor has shape--nor form--nor quality, or quantity, or bulk--nor is in a place--nor is seen--nor has sensible contact--nor perceives, nor is perceived, by the senses--nor has disorder and confusion, as being vexed by earthly passions,--nor is powerless, as being subject to casualties of sense,--nor is in need of light;--neither is It, nor has It, change, or decay, or division, or deprivation, or flux,--or any other of the objects of sense.

Of intelligible perception is none of the objects of intelligible perception.

ON the other hand, ascending, we say, that It is neither soul, nor mind, nor has imagination, or opinion, or reason, or conception; neither is expressed, nor conceived; neither is number, nor order, nor greatness, nor littleness; nor equality, nor inequality; nor similarity, nor dissimilarity; neither is standing, nor moving; nor at rest; neither has power, nor is power, nor light; neither lives, nor is life; neither is essence nor eternity, nor time; neither is Its touch intelligible, neither is It science, nor truth; nor

kingdom, nor wisdom; neither one, nor oneness; neither Deity, nor Goodness; nor is It Spirit according to our understanding; nor Sonship, nor Paternity; nor any other thing of those known to us, or to any other existing being; neither is It any of non-existing nor of existing things, nor do things existing know It, as It is; nor does It know existing things, *qua* existing; neither is there expression of It, nor name, nor knowledge; neither is It darkness, nor light; nor error, nor truth; neither is there any definition at all of It, nor any abstraction. But when making the predications and abstractions of things after It, we neither predicate, nor abstract from It; since the all-perfect and uniform Cause of all is both above every definition and the pre-eminence of Him, Who is absolutely freed from all, and beyond the whole, is also above every abstraction.

Abridged Excerpts From:

The Mind's Road to God

By Saint Bonaventura

From the Franciscan Fathers Latin Text "Tria Opuscula"
(Quaracchi), 1938

THE MENDICANT'S VISION IN THE WILDERNESS

CHAPTER ONE

OF THE STAGES IN THE ASCENT TO GOD AND
OF HIS REFLECTION IN HIS TRACES IN THE
UNIVERSE

1. Blessed is the man whose help is from Thee. In his heart he hath disposed to ascend by steps, in the vale of tears, in the place which he hath set [Ps., 83, 6]. Since beatitude is nothing else than the fruition of the highest good, and the highest good is above us, none can be made blessed unless he ascend above himself, not by the ascent of his body but by that of his heart. But we cannot be raised above ourselves except by a higher power raising us up. For howsoever the interior steps are disposed, nothing is accomplished unless it is accompanied by divine aid. Divine help, however, comes to those who seek it from their hearts humbly and devoutly; and this means to sigh for it in this vale of tears, aided only by fervent prayer. Thus prayer is the mother and source of ascent ("sursum-actionis") in God. Therefore Dionysius, in his book, "Mystical Theology" [ch. 1, 13, wishing to instruct us in mental elevation, prefaces his work by prayer.

Therefore let us pray and say to the Lord our God, "Conduct me, O Lord, in Thy way, and I will walk in Thy truth; let my heart rejoice that it may fear Thy name" [Ps., 85, 11].

2. By praying thus one is enlightened about the knowledge of the stages in the ascension to God. For since, relative to our life on earth, the world is itself a ladder for ascending to God, we find here certain traces [of His hand], certain images, some corporeal, some spiritual, some temporal, some aeviternal; consequently some outside us, some inside. That we may arrive at an understanding of the First Principle, which is most spiritual and eternal and above us, we ought to proceed through the traces which are corporeal and temporal and outside us, and this is to be led into the way of God. We ought next to enter into our minds, which are the eternal image of God, spiritual and internal; and this is to walk in the truth of God. We ought finally to pass over into that which is eternal, most spiritual, and above us, looking to the First Principle; and this is to rejoice in the knowledge of God and in the reverence of His majesty.

3. Now this is the three days' journey into the wilderness [Ex., 3, 18]; this is the triple illumination of one day, first as the evening, second as the morning, third as noon; this signifies the threefold existence of things, as in matter, in [creative] intelligence, and in eternal art, wherefore it is said, "Be it made, He made it," and "it was so done" [Gen., 1]; and this also means the triple substance in Christ, Who is our ladder, namely, the corporeal, the spiritual, and the divine.

4. Following this threefold progress, our mind has three principal aspects. One refers to the external body, wherefore it is called animality or sensuality; the second looks inward and into itself, wherefore it is called spirit; the third looks above itself, wherefore it is called mind. From all of which considerations it ought to be so disposed for ascending as a whole into God that it may love Him with all its mind, with all its heart, and with all its soul [Mark, 12, 30]. And in this consists both the perfect observance of the Law and Christian wisdom.

5. Since, however, all of the aforesaid modes are twofold--as when we consider God as the alpha and omega, or in so far as we happen to see God in one of the aforesaid modes as "through" a mirror and "in" a mirror, or as one of those considerations can be mixed with the other conjoined to it or may be considered alone in its purity--hence it is necessary that these three principal stages become sixfold, so that as God made the world in six days and rested on the seventh, so the microcosm by six successive stages of illumination is led in the most orderly fashion to the repose of contemplation. As a symbol of this we have the six steps to the throne of Solomon [III Kings, 10, 19]; the Seraphim whom Isaiah saw have six wings; after six days the Lord called Moses out of the midst of the cloud [Ex., 21, 16]; and Christ after six days, as is said in Matthew [17, 1], brought His disciples up into a mountain and was transfigured before them.

6. Therefore, according to the six stages of ascension into God, there are six stages of the soul's powers by

which we mount from the depths to the heights, from the external to the internal, from the temporal to the eternal--to wit, sense, imagination, reason, intellect, intelligence, and the apex of the mind, the illumination of conscience ("Synteresis"). These stages are implanted in us by nature, deformed by sin, reformed by grace, to be purged by justice, exercised by knowledge, perfected by wisdom.

7. Now at the Creation, man was made fit for the repose of contemplation, and therefore God placed him in a paradise of delight [Gen., 2, 16]. But turning himself away from the true light to mutable goods, he was bent over by his own sin, and the whole human race by original sin, which doubly infected human nature, ignorance infecting man's mind and concupiscence his flesh. Hence man, blinded and bent, sits in the shadows and does not see the light of heaven unless grace with justice succor him from concupiscence, and knowledge with wisdom against ignorance. All of which is done through Jesus Christ, Who of God is made unto us wisdom and justice and sanctification and redemption [I Cor., 1, 30]. He is the virtue and wisdom of God, the Word incarnate, the author of grace and truth--that is, He has infused the grace of charity, which, since it is from a pure heart and good conscience and unfeigned faith, rectifies the whole soul in the threefold way mentioned above. He has taught the knowledge of the truth according to the triple mode of theology--that is, the symbolic, the literal, and the mystical--so that by the symbolic we may make proper use of sensible things, by the literal we may properly use the intelligible, and by the

mystical we may be carried aloft to supermental levels.

8. Therefore he who wishes to ascend to God must, avoiding sin, which deforms nature, exercise the above-mentioned natural powers for regenerating grace, and do this through prayer. He must strive toward purifying justice, and this in intercourse; toward the illumination of knowledge, and this in meditation; toward the perfection of wisdom, and this in contemplation. Now just as no one comes to wisdom save through grace, justice, and knowledge, so none comes to contemplation save through penetrating meditation, holy conversation, and devout prayer. Just as grace is the foundation of the will's rectitude and of the enlightenment of clear and penetrating reason, so, first, we must pray; secondly, we must live holily; thirdly, we must strive toward the reflection of truth and, by our striving, mount step by step until we come to the high mountain where we shall see the God of gods in Sion [Ps., 83, 8]

9. Since, then, we must mount Jacob's ladder before descending it, let us place the first rung of the ascension in the depths, putting the whole sensible world before us as a mirror, by which ladder we shall mount up to God, the Supreme Creator, that we may be true Hebrews crossing from Egypt to the land promised to our fathers; let us be Christians crossing with Christ from this world over to the Father [John, 13, 1]; let us also be lovers of wisdom, which calls to us and says, "Come over to me, all ye that desire me, and be filled with my fruits" [Ecclesiasticus, 24, 26].

For by the greatness of the beauty and of the creature, the Creator of them may be seen [Wisdom, 13, 5].

10. There shine forth, however, the Creator's supreme power and wisdom and benevolence in created things, as the carnal sense reports trebly to the inner sense. For the carnal sense serves him who either understands rationally or believes faithfully or contemplates intellectually. Contemplating, it considers the actual existence of things; believing, it considers the habitual course of things; reasoning, it considers the potential excellence of things.

11. In the first mode, the aspect of one contemplating, considering things in themselves, sees in them weight, number, and measure [Wisdom, 11, 21]--weight, which directs things to a certain location; number, by which they are distinguished from one another; and measure, by which they are limited. And so one sees in them mode, species, and order; and also substance, power, and operation. From these one can rise as from the traces to understanding the power, wisdom, and immense goodness of the Creator.

12. In the second mode, the aspect of a believer considering this world, one reaches its origin, course, and terminus. For by faith we believe that the ages are fashioned by the Word of Life [Hebr., 11, 3]; by faith we believe that the ages of the three laws--that is, the ages of the law of Nature, of Scripture, and of Grace--succeed each other and occur in most orderly fashion; by faith we believe that the world will be ended at the

last judgment--taking heed of the power in the first, of the providence in the second, of the justice of the most high principle in the third.

13. In the third mode, the aspect of one inquiring rationally, one sees that some things merely are; others, however, are and live; others, finally, are, live, and discern. And the first are lesser things, the second midway, and the third the best. Again, one sees that some are only corporeal, others partly corporeal and partly spiritual, from which it follows that some are entirely spiritual and are better and more worthy than either of the others. One sees, nonetheless, that some are mutable and corruptible, as earthly things; others mutable and incorruptible, as celestial things, from which it follows that some are immutable and incorruptible, as the supercelestial things.

From these visible things, therefore, one mounts to considering the power and wisdom and goodness of God as being, living, and understanding; purely spiritual and incorruptible and immutable.

14. This consideration, however, is extended according to the sevenfold condition of creatures, which is a sevenfold testimony to the divine power, wisdom, and goodness, as one considers the origin, magnitude, multitude, beauty, plenitude, operation, and order of all things. For the "origin" of things, according to their creation, distinction, and beauty, in the work of the six days indicates the divine power producing all things from nothing, wisdom distinguishing all things clearly, and goodness

adorning all things generously. "Magnitude" of things, either according to the measure of their length, width, and depth, or according to the excellence of power spreading itself in length, breadth, and depth, as appears in the diffusion of light, or again according to the efficacy of its inner, continuous, and diffused operation, as appears in the operation of fire--magnitude, I say, indicates manifestly the immensity of the power, wisdom, and goodness of the triune God, Who exists unlimited in all things through His power, presence, and essence. "Multitude" of things, according to the diversity of genus, species, and individuality, in substance, form, or figure, and efficacy beyond all human estimation, clearly indicates and shows the immensity of the aforesaid traits in God. "Beauty" of things, according to the variety of light, figure, and color in bodies simple and mixed and even composite, as in the celestial bodies, minerals, stones and metals, plants and animals, obviously proclaims the three mentioned traits. "Plenitude" of things--according to which matter is full of forms because of the seminal reasons; form is full of power because of its activity; power is full of effects because of its efficiency--declares the same manifestly. "Operation," multiplex inasmuch as it is natural, artificial, and moral, by its very variety shows the immensity of that power, art, and goodness which indeed are in all things the cause of their being, the principle of their intelligibility, and the order of their living. "Order," by reason of duration, situation, and influence, as prior and posterior, upper and lower, nobler and less noble, indicates clearly in the book of creation the primacy, sublimity, and dignity of the

First Principle in relation to its infinite power. The order of the divine laws, precepts, and judgments in the Book of Scripture indicates the immensity of His wisdom. The order of the divine sacraments, rewards, and punishments in the body of the Church indicates the immensity of His goodness. Hence order leads us most obviously into the first and highest, most powerful, wisest, and best.

15. He, therefore, who is not illumined by such great splendor of created things is blind; he who is not awakened by such great clamor is deaf; he who does not praise God because of all these effects is dumb; he who does not note the First Principle from such great signs is foolish. Open your eyes therefore, prick up your spiritual ears, open your lips, and apply your heart, that you may see your God in all creatures, may hear Him, praise Him, love and adore Him, magnify and honor Him, lest the whole world rise against you. For on this account the whole world will fight against the unwise [Prov., 5, 21]; but to the wise will there be matter for pride, who with the Prophet can say, "Thou hast given me, O Lord, a delight in Thy doings: and in the works of Thy hands I shall rejoice [Ps., 91, 5]. . . . How great are Thy works, O Lord; Thou hast made all things in wisdom; the earth is filled with Thy riches" [Ps., 103, 24].

CHAPTER SEVEN

OF MENTAL AND MYSTICAL ELEVATION, IN WHICH REPOSE IS GIVEN TO THE INTELLECT WHEN THE AFFECTIONS PASS ENTIRELY INTO GOD THROUGH ELEVATION

1. Now that these six considerations have been studied as the six steps of the true throne of Solomon by which one ascends to peace, where the truly peaceful man reposes in peace of mind as if in the inner Jerusalem; as if, again, on the six wings of the Cherub by which the mind of the truly contemplative man grows strong to rise again, filled with the illumination of supreme wisdom; as if, once again, during the first six days in which the mind has to be exercised that it may finally arrive at the Sabbath of rest after it has beheld God outside itself through His traces and in His traces, within itself by His image and in His image, above itself by the likeness of the divine light shining down upon us and in that light, in so far as is possible in this life and the exercise of our mind-- when, finally, on the sixth level we have come to the point of beholding in the first and highest principle and the Mediator of God and men, Jesus Christ, those things of which the likeness cannot in any wise be found in creatures and which exceed all the insight of the human intellect, there remains that by looking upon these things it [the mind] rise on high and pass beyond not only this sensible world but itself also. In this passage Christ is the way and the door, Christ is the stairway and the vehicle, like the propitiatory over the ark of God and the mystery which has been hidden from eternity [Eph, 3, 9].

2. He who with full face looks to this propitiatory by looking upon Him suspended on the cross in faith, hope, and charity, in devotion, wonder, exultation, appreciation, praise, and jubilation, makes a passover--that is, the phase or passage [Exod., 12, 11]

with Him--that he may pass over the Red Sea by the staff of the cross from Egypt into the Desert, where he may taste the hidden manna and with Christ may rest in the tomb as if outwardly dead, yet knowing, as far as possible in our earthly condition, what was said on the cross to the thief cleaving to Christ: "Today thou shalt be with me in Paradise."

3. That was shown to the blessed Francis when, in the transport of contemplation on the high mountain--where I thought out these things which I have written--there appeared to him the Seraph with the six wings nailed to the cross, as I and several others have heard from the companion who was with him when he passed over into God through the transports of contemplation and became the example of perfect contemplation, just as previously he had been of action; as another Jacob is changed into Israel, so through him all truly spiritual men have been invited by God to passage of this kind and to mental transport by example rather than by word.

4. In this passage, if it is perfect, all intellectual operations should be abandoned, and the whole height of our affection should be transferred and transformed into God. This, however, is mystical and most secret, which no man knoweth but he that hath received it [Apoc., 2, 17], nor does he receive it unless he desire it; nor does he desire it unless the fire of the Holy Spirit, Whom Christ sent to earth, has inflamed his marrow. And therefore the Apostle says that this mystic wisdom is revealed through the Holy Spirit.

5. Since, therefore, nature is powerless in this matter and industry but slightly able, little should be given to inquiry but much to unction, little to the tongue but much to inner joy, little to the word and to writings and all to the gift of God, that is, to the Holy Spirit, little or nothing to creation and all to the creative essence, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, saying with Dionysius to God the Trinity:

"Trinity, superessential and superdivine and supergood guardian of Christian knowledge of God, direct thou us into the more-than-unknown and superluminous and most sublime summit of mystical eloquence, where new and absolute and unchangeable mysteries of theology are deeply hidden, according to the superluminous darkness of instructive silence--darkness which is supermanifest and superresplendent, and in which all is aglow, pouring out upon the invisible intellects the splendors of invisible goodness."

This to God. To the friend, however, to whom I address this book, let me say with the same Dionysius:

"Thou then, my friend, if thou desirest mystic visions, with strengthened feet abandon thy senses and intellectual operations, and both sensible and invisible things, and both all nonbeing and being; and unknowingly restore thyself to unity as far as possible, unity of Him Who is above all essence and knowledge. And when thou hast transcended thyself and all things in immeasurable and absolute purity of

mind, thou shalt ascend to the superessential rays of divine shadows, leaving all behind and freed from ties of all."

6. If you should ask how these things come about, question grace, not instruction; desire, not intellect; the cry of prayer, not pursuit of study; the spouse, not the teacher; God, not man; darkness, not clarity; not light, but the wholly flaming fire which will bear you aloft to God with fullest unction and burning affection. This fire is God, and the furnace of this fire leadeth to Jerusalem; and Christ the man kindles it in the fervor of His burning Passion, which he alone truly perceives who says, "My soul rather chooseth hanging and my bones death" [Job, 7, 15]. He who chooses this death can see God because this is indubitably true: "Man shall not see me and live" [Exod., 33, 20]. Let us then die and pass over into darkness; let us impose silence on cares, concupiscence, and phantasms; let us pass over with the crucified Christ from this world to the Father [John, 13, 1], so that when the Father is shown to us we may say with Philip, "It is enough for us" [John, 14, 8]; let us hear with Paul, "My grace is sufficient for thee" [II Cor., 12,9]; let us exult with David, saying, "For Thee my flesh and my heart hath fainted away; Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion forever [Ps,m 72, 26] Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting; and let all the people say: So be it, so be it" [Ps., 105, 48.] AMEN.

Chapter 6

Islam

Abridged Excerpts From:

Studies in Islamic Mysticism

By Reynold A. Nicholson

1921

II.

In describing Abú Sa'íd's mystical doctrines and their relation to the historical development of Šúfisim, European scholars have hitherto relied almost exclusively on the quatrains which he is said to have composed and of which more than six hundred have been published. As I have shown above, it is doubtful whether Abú Sa'íd is the author of any of these poems, and we may be sure that in the main they are not his work and were never even quoted by him. To repeat what has been already said, they form a miscellaneous anthology drawn from a great number of poets who flourished at different periods, and consequently they reflect the typical ideas of Persian mysticism as a whole.

Abú Sa'íd helped to bring its peculiar diction and symbolism into vogue, by quoting Šúfí poetry in his sermons and allowing it to be chanted in the *samá'*,

but we may hesitate to accept the view that he invented this style (which occurs, full-blown, in the odes of his contemporary, Bábá Kúhí of Shíráz) or was the first to embody it in quatrains.

The mysticism which his sayings and sermons unfold has neither the precision of a treatise nor the coherence of a system. It is experimental, not doctrinal or philosophical. It does not concern itself with abstract speculations, but sets forth in simple and untechnical language such principles and maxims as bear directly on the religious life and are the fruit of dearly-bought experience. As we read, we seem to hear the voice of the teacher addressing his disciples and expounding for their benefit the truths that had been revealed to him. Abú Sa'íd borrows much from his predecessors, sometimes mentioning them by name, but often appropriating their wisdom without a word of acknowledgement. Amongst Moslems, this kind of plagiarism is considered respectable, even when the culprit is not a saint.

The sayings of Abú Sa'íd include several definitions of Şúfisim, which it will be convenient to translate before going further.

1. To lay aside what thou hast in thy head, to give what thou hast in thy hand, and not to recoil from whatsoever befalls thee.
2. Şúfisim is two things: to look in one direction and to live in one way.

3. Şúfisim is a name attached to its object; when it reaches its ultimate perfection, it is God (*i.e.* the end of Şúfisim is that, for the Şúfí, nothing should exist except God).

4. It is glory in wretchedness and riches in poverty and lordship in servitude and satiety in hunger and clothedness in nakedness and freedom in slavery and life in death and sweetness in bitterness.

5. The Şúfí is he who is pleased with all that God does, in order that God may be pleased with all that he does.

6. Şúfisim is patience under God's commanding and forbidding, and acquiescence and resignation in the events determined by divine providence.

7. Şúfisim is the will of the Creator concerning His creatures when no creature exists.

8. To be a Şúfí is to cease from taking trouble (*takalluf*); and there is no greater trouble for thee than thine own self (*tu'i-yi tu*), for when thou art occupied with thyself, thou remainest away from God.

9. He said, "Even this Şúfisim is polytheism (*shirk*)."
"Why, O Shaykh?" they asked. He answered, "Because Şúfisim consists in guarding the soul from what is other than God; and there is nothing other than God.

The quietism and pantheistic self-abandonment, on which these definitions lay so much stress, forms only the negative side of Abú Sa'íd's mystical teaching. His

doctrine of *faná*, the passing-away from self, is supplemented by an equally characteristic positive element, of which I shall have more to say presently. Both aspects are indicated in the following maxim: "A man ought to be occupied with two things: – he ought to put away all that keeps him apart from God, and bring comfort to dervishes."

Innumerable are the ways to God, yet the Way is but a single step: "take one step out of thyself, that thou mayst arrive at God." To pass away from self (*faná*) is to realise that self does not exist, and that nothing exists except God (*tawhíd*). The Tradition, "He who knows himself knows his Lord," signifies that he who knows himself as not-being (*‘adam*) knows God as Real Being (*wujúd*). This knowledge cannot be obtained through the intellect, since the Eternal and Uncreated is inaccessible to that which is created; it cannot be learned, but is given by divine illumination. The organ which receives it is the "heart" (*qalb* or *dil*), a spiritual faculty, not the heart of flesh and blood. In a remarkable passage Abú Sa‘íd refers to a divine principle, which he calls *sirr Allah*, *i.e.* the conscience or consciousness of God, and describes it as something which God communicates to the "heart."

Answering the question, "What is sincerity (*ikhlás*)?" he said:

The Prophet has said that *ikhlás* is a divine *sirr* in man's heart and soul, which *sirr* is the object of His pure contemplation and is replenished by God's pure contemplation thereof. Whosoever declares God to be

One, his belief in the divine Unity depends on that *sirr*.

Being asked to define it, he continued as follows:

That *sirr* is a substance of God's grace (*latífa*)—for He is gracious (*latíf*) unto His servants (Koran, 42, 18)—and it is produced by the bounty and mercy of God, not by the acquisition and action of man. At first, He produces a need and longing and sorrow in man's heart; then He contemplates that need and sorrow, and in His bounty and mercy deposits in that heart a spiritual substance (*latífa*) which is hidden from the knowledge of angel and prophet. That substance is called *sirr Allah*, and that is *ikhlás* ... That pure *sirr* is the Beloved of Unitarians. It is immortal and does not become naught, since it subsists in God's contemplation of it. It belongs to the Creator: the creatures have no part therein, and in the body it is a loan. Whoever possesses it is "living" (*hayy*), and whoever lacks it is "animal" (*hayawán*). There is a great difference between the "living" and the "animal".

Students of medieval Christian mysticism will find many analogies to this *sirr Allah*, e.g. the "synteresis" of Gerson and Eckhart's "spark" or "ground of the soul."

I will now translate some of Abú Sa'íd's discourses and sayings on the Way to God through self-negation.

He was asked, "When shall a man be freed from his wants?" "When God shall free him," he replied; "this is not effected by a man's exertion, but by the grace and

help of God. First of all, He brings forth in him the desire to attain this goal. Then He opens to him the gate of repentance (*tawba*). Then He throws him into self-mortification (*mujáhada*), so that he continues to strive and, for a while, to pride himself upon his efforts, thinking that he is advancing or achieving something; but afterwards he falls into despair and feels no joy. Then he knows that his work is not pure, but tainted, he repents of the acts of devotion which he had thought to be his own, and perceives that they were done by God's grace and help, and that he was guilty of polytheism (*shirk*) in attributing them to his own exertion. When this becomes manifest, a feeling of joy enters his heart. Then God opens to him the gate of certainty (*yaqín*), so that for a time he takes anything from any one and accepts contumely and endures abasement, and knows for certain by Whom it is brought to pass, and doubt concerning this is removed from his heart. Then God opens to him the gate of love (*maḥabba*), and here too egoism shows itself for a time and he is exposed to blame (*maláma*), which means that in his love of God he meets fearlessly whatever may befall him and recks not of reproach; but still he thinks 'I love' and finds no rest until he perceives that it is God who loves him and keeps him in the state of loving, and that this is the result of divine love and grace, not of his own endeavour. Then God opens to him the gate of unity (*tawḥíd*) and causes him to know that all action depends on God Almighty. Hereupon he perceives that all is He, and all is by Him, and all is His; that He has laid this self-conceit upon His creatures in order to prove them, and that He in His omnipotence

ordains that they shall hold this false belief, because omnipotence is His attribute, so that when they regard His attributes they shall know that He is the Lord. What formerly was hearsay now becomes known to him intuitively as he contemplates the works of God. Then he entirely recognises that he has not the right to say 'I' or 'mine.' At this stage he beholds his helplessness; desires fall away from him and he becomes free and calm. He wishes that which God wishes: his own wishes are gone, he is emancipated from his wants, and has gained peace and joy in both worlds...First, action is necessary, then knowledge, in order that thou mayst know that thou knowest naught and art no one. This is not easy to know. It is a thing that cannot be rightly learned by instruction, nor sewn on with needle nor tied on with thread. It is the gift of God."

The heart's vision is what matters, not the tongue's speech. Thou wilt never escape from thy self (*nafs*) until thou slay it. To say "There is no god but Allah" is not enough. Most of those who make the verbal profession of faith are polytheists at heart, and polytheism is the one unpardonable sin. Thy whole body is full of doubt and polytheism. Thou must cast them out in order to be at peace. Until thou deny thy self thou wilt never believe in God. Thy self, which is keeping thee far from God and saying, "So-and-so has treated thee ill," "such and such a one has done well by thee," points the way to creatureliness; and all this is polytheism. Nothing depends on the creatures, all depends on the Creator. This thou must know and say, and having said it thou must stand firm. To stand

firm (*istiqáma*) means that when thou hast said "One," thou must never again say "Two." Creator and creature are "Two."...Do not double like a fox, that ye may suddenly start up in some other place: that is not right faith. Say "Allah!" and stand firm there. Standing firm is this, that when thou hast said "God" thou shouldst no more speak or think of created things, so that it is just as though they were not...Love that One who does not cease to be when thou ceasest, in order that thou mayst be such a being that thou never wilt cease to be!

So long as any one regards his purity and devotion, he says "Thou and I," but when he considers exclusively the bounty and mercy of God, he says "Thou! Thou!" and then his worship becomes a reality.

He was asked, "What is evil and what is the worst evil?" He replied, "Evil is 'thou'; and the worst evil is 'thou,' when thou knowest it not."

Abú Sa'íd's belief that he had escaped from the prison of individuality was constantly asserting itself. Once he attended a party of mourners (*tá'ziya*), where the visitors, as they arrived, were announced by a servant (*mu'arrif*) who with a loud voice enumerated their titles of honour (*alqáb*). When Abú Sa'íd appeared, the *mu'arrif* inquired how he should announce him. "Go," said he, "and tell them to make way for Nobody, the son of Nobody." In speaking of himself, he never used the pronouns "I" or "we," but invariably referred to himself as "they" (*íshán*). The author of the *Asráru 'l-*

tawhíd apologises for having restored the customary form of speech, pointing out that if he had retained "they" in such cases, the meaning of the text would have been confused and unintelligible to most.

While the attainment of selflessness is independent of human initiative, the mystic participates, to some extent, in the process by which it is attained. A power not his own draws him on towards the goal, but this divine attraction (*kashish*) demands, on his part, an inward striving (*kúshish*), without which there can be no vision (*bínish*). Like many Súfís, Abú Sa'íd admits freewill in practice but denies it in theory. As a spiritual director, he could not teach what, as a pantheist, he was bound to believe – that the only real agent is God. Speaking from the standpoint of the religious law, he used often to say: "O God! whatever comes from me to Thee I beseech Thee to forgive, and whatever comes from Thee to me, Thine is the praise!" On the other hand, he says that had there been no sinners, God's mercy would have been wasted; and that Adam would not have been visited with the tribulation of sin unless forgiveness were the dearest of all things to God. In the following passage he suggests that although sin is an act of disobedience to the divine commandment (*amr*), it is none the less determined by the divine will (*iráda*).

On the Day of Resurrection Iblís (Satan) will be brought to judgment with all the devils, and he will be charged with having led multitudes of people astray. He will confess that he called on them to follow him, but will plead that they need not have

done so. Then God will say, "Let that pass! Now worship Adam, in order that thou mayst be saved." The devils will implore him to obey and thereby deliver himself and them from torment, but Iblís will answer, weeping, "Had it depended on my will, I would have worshipped Adam at the time when I was first bidden. God commands me to worship him, but does not will it. Had He willed it, I should have worshipped him then."

It is significant that Abú Sa'íd lets Iblís have the last word, whereas Ḥalláj, who was faced with the same dilemma, insisted that the saint must fulfil the divine command (*amr*) at whatever cost of suffering to himself.

The "inward striving" after selflessness is identical with the state which Abú Sa'íd calls "want" (*niyáz*). There is no way nearer to God than this. It is described as a living and luminous fire placed by God in the breasts of His servants in order that their "self" (*nafs*) maybe burned; and when it has been burned, the fire of "want" becomes the fire of "longing" (*shawq*) which never dies, neither in this world nor in the next, and is only increased by vision.

Complete negation of individuality involves complete affirmation of the real and universal Self—a fact which is expressed by Súfís in the formula, "Abiding after passing-away" (*al-baqá ba'd al faná*). The perfect mystic abides in God, and yet (as Ruysbroeck says) "he goes out towards created things in a spirit of love towards all things, in the virtues and in works of

righteousness." He is not an ecstatic devotee lost in contemplation of the Oneness, nor a saintly recluse shunning all commerce with mankind, but a philanthropist who in all his words and actions exhibits and diffuses amongst those around him the divine life with which he has been made one. "The true saint," said Abú Sa'íd, "goes in and out amongst the people and eats and sleeps with them and buys and sells in the market and marries and takes part in social intercourse, and never forgets God for a single moment." His ideal of charity and brotherhood was a noble one, however he may have abused it. He declared that there is no better and easier means of attaining to God than by bringing joy to the heart of a Moslem, and quoted with approval the saying of Abú 'Abbás Bashshár, "When a disciple performs an act of kindness to a dervish, it is better for him than a hundred genuflexions; and if he gives him a mouthful of food, it is better for him than a whole night spent in prayer." His purse was always open, and he never quarrelled with any one, because he regarded all creatures with the eye of the Creator, not with the eye of the creatures. When his followers wished to chastise a bigot who had cursed him, he restrained them, saying, "God forbid! He is not cursing me, but he thinks that my belief is false and that his own belief is true: therefore he is cursing that false belief for God's sake." He seldom preached on Koranic texts describing the pains of Hell, and in his last years, when reciting the Koran, he passed over all the "verses of torment" (*áyát-i 'adháb*). "O God!" he cried, "inasmuch as men and stones have the same value in Thy sight, feed the flames of Hell with stones and do

not burn these miserable wretches!" Although Abú Sa'íd's charity embraced all created beings, he makes a clear distinction between the Şúfís and the rest of his fellow-men. The Şúfís are God's elect and are united by a spiritual affinity which is more binding than any ties of blood.

Four thousand years before God created these bodies, He created the souls and kept them beside Himself and shed a light upon them. He knew what quantity of light each soul received and He was showing favour to each in proportion to its illumination. The souls remained all that time in the light until they became fully nourished. Those who in this world live in joy and agreement with one another must have been akin to one another in yonder place. Here they love one another and are called the friends of God, and they are brethren who love one another for God's sake. These souls know each other by the smell, like horses. Though one be in the East and the other in the West, yet they feel joy and comfort in each other's talk, and one who lives in a later generation than the other is instructed and consoled by the words of his friend.

Abú Sa'íd said:

Whoever goes with me in this Way is my kinsman, even though he be many degrees removed from me, and whoever does not back me in this matter is nobody to me, even though he be one of my nearest relatives.

To many Christians the description of Abú Sa'íd as a Moslem saint will seem doubly paradoxical. The Mohammedan notion of saintship, which is founded on ecstasy justifies the noun; but we may still wonder that the adjective should be applied to a man who on one occasion cried out in a transport of enthusiasm, "There is nothing inside this coat except Allah!" I need not discuss here the causes which gradually brought about such a revolution that, as Professor D. B. Macdonald says, "the devout life within the Muslim church led to a more complete pantheism than ever did the Christian trinity." At any rate, the question whether Abú Sa'íd was a Moslem cannot be decided against him on this count, unless we are prepared to excommunicate most of the saints, some of the profoundest theologians, and wellnigh all the earnestly religious thinkers of Islam. This was recognised by his orthodox opponents, who ignored his theosophical doctrines and attacked him as an innovator in matters connected with the religious law. Within reasonable limits, he might believe and say what he liked, they would take notice only of his overt acts. The following pages, which set forth his attitude towards positive religion, will prove to every impartial reader that in their treatment of heretics the medieval Christian divines had much to learn from their Moslem contemporaries. Upon toleration also *ex Oriente lux*.

At the time of Abú Sa'íd's residence in Níshápúr Shaykh Bú 'Abdallah Bákú was in the convent of Shaykh Abú 'Abú *al-Raḥmán* al-Sulamí, of which he became the director after the death of Abú 'Abú *al-*

Rahmán. (Bákú is a village in the district of Shirwán.) This Bú 'Abdallah Bákú used frequently to talk with Shaykh Abú Sa'íd in a controversial spirit and ask him questions about the Şúfí Path. One day he came to him and said, "O Shaykh! we see you doing some things that our Elders never did." "What are these things?" Abú Sa'íd inquired. "One of them," said he, "is this, that you let the young men sit beside the old and put the juniors on a level with their seniors in all affairs and make no difference between them; secondly, you permit the young men to dance and sing; and thirdly, when a dervish throws off his gaberdine (in ecstasy), you sometimes direct that it should be given back to him, saying that the dervish has the best right to his own gaberdine. This has never been the practice of our Elders." "Is there anything else?" said Abú Sa'íd. "No," he replied. Abú Sa'íd said, "As regards the juniors and seniors, none of them is a junior in my opinion. When a man has once entered on the Path of Şúfisim, although he may be young, his seniors ought to consider that possibly he will receive in a single day what they have not received in seventy years. None who holds this belief will look upon any person as a junior. Then, as to the young men's dancing in the *samá'*, the souls of young men are not yet purged of lust: indeed it may be the prevailing element; and lust takes possession of all the limbs. Now, if a young dervish claps his hands, the lust of his hands will be dissipated, and if he tosses his feet, the lust of his feet will be lessened. When by this means the lust fails in their limbs, they can preserve themselves from great sins, but when all lusts are united (which God forbend!), they will sin

mortally. It is better that the fire of their lust should be dissipated in the *samá'* than in something else. As regards the gaberdine which a dervish throws off, its disposal rests with the whole company of dervishes and engages their attention. If they have no other garment at hand, they clothe him again in his own gaberdine, and thereby relieve their minds from the burden of thinking about it. That dervish has not taken back his own gaberdine, but the company of dervishes have given him their gaberdine and have thus freed their minds from thought of him. Therefore he is protected by the spiritual concentration (*himmā*) of the whole company. This gaberdine is not the same one which he threw away." Bú 'Abdallah Bákú said, "Had I never seen the Shaykh, I should never have seen a real Şúfí."

This interesting passage represents Abú Sa'íd as having departed in certain respects from the ancient Şúfistic tradition. His innovations, by destroying the influence and authority of the more experienced dervishes, would naturally tend to relax discipline. Early Şúfí writers, *e.g.* Sarráj, Qushayrî, and Hujwírî, do not agree with him in thinking that the practice of *samá'* is beneficial to the young; on the contrary, they urge the necessity of taking care lest novices should be demoralised by it. According to the same writers, the doctrines of Şúfisim are contained in, and derived from, the Koran and the Traditions, of which the true meaning has been mystically revealed to the Şúfís alone. This theory concedes all that Moslems claim as to the unique authority of the Koran and reduces the difference between Moslem and Şúfí to a question of

interpretation. Abú Sa'íd, however, found the source of his doctrine in a larger revelation than the Word which was given to the Prophet.

The author of the *Asrár* says:

My grandfather, Shaykhu 'l-Islám Abú Sa'íd, relates that one day, whilst Abú Sa'íd was preaching in Níshápúr, a learned theologian who was present thought to himself that such doctrine is not to be found in the seven sevenths (*i.e.* the whole) of the Koran. Abú Sa'íd immediately turned towards him and said, "Doctor, thy thought is not hidden from me. The doctrine that I preach is contained in the eighth seventh of the Koran." "What is that?" the theologian inquired. Abú Sa'íd answered: "The seven sevenths are, *O Apostle, deliver the message that hath been sent down to thee* (Kor. 5, 71), and the eighth seventh is, *He revealed unto His servant that which He revealed* (Kor. 53, pp). Ye imagine that the Word of God is of fixed quantity and extent. Nay, the infinite Word of God that was sent down to Mohammed is the whole seven sevenths of the Koran; but that which He causes to come into the hearts of His servants does not admit of being numbered and limited, nor does it ever cease. Every moment there comes a messenger from Him to the hearts of His servants, as the Prophet declared, saying, 'Beware of the clairvoyance (*firása*) of the true believer, for verily he sees by the light of God.'" Then Abú Sa'íd quoted the verse:

Thou art my soul's joy, known by vision, not
 by hearsay.
 Of what use is hearsay to one who hath vision?

In a Tradition (he went on) it is stated that the Guarded Tablet (*lawh-i mahfúz*) is so broad that a fleet Arab horse would not be able to cross it in four years, and the writing thereon is finer than a hair. Of all the writing which covers it only a single line has been communicated to God's creatures. That little keeps them in perplexity until the Resurrection. As for the rest, no one knows anything about it.

Here Abú Sa'íd sets aside the partial, finite, and temporal revelation on which Islam is built, and appeals to the universal, infinite, and everlasting revelation which the Şúfis find in their hearts. As a rule, even the boldest Mohammedan mystics shrink from uttering such a challenge. So long as the inner light is regarded only as an interpreter of the written revelation, the supremacy of the latter is nominally maintained, though in fact almost any doctrine can be foisted upon it: this is a very different thing from claiming that the inner light transcends the Prophetic Law and possesses full authority to make laws for itself. Abú Sa'íd does not say that the partial and universal revelations are in conflict with each other: he does not repudiate the Koran, but he denies that it is the final and absolute standard of divine truth. He often quotes Koranic verses in support of his theosophical views. Only when the Book fails him need he confound his critics by alleging a secret

communication which he has received from the Author.

The foregoing anecdote prepares us for mysticism of an advanced and antinomian type. Not that Abú Sa'íd acted in logical accordance with his beliefs. With one exception, which will be noted presently, he omitted no religious observance that a good Moslem is required to perform. But while he thus shielded himself under the law, he showed in word and deed how little he valued any external ceremony or traditional dogma.

There was at Qá'in a venerable Imám, whose name was Khwája Muḥammad Qá'iní. When Abú Sa'íd arrived at Qá'in, Khwája Muḥammad spent most of his time in waiting upon him, and he used to attend all the parties to which Abú Sa'íd was invited. On one of these occasions, during the *samá'* which followed the feast, Abú Sa'íd and all the company had fallen into transports of ecstasy. The muezzin gave the call to noonday prayers, but Abú Sa'íd remained in the same rapture and the dervishes continued to dance and shout. "Prayers! Prayers!" cried the Imám Muḥammad Qá'iní. "We are *at* prayers," said Abú Sa'íd; whereupon the Imám left them in order to take part in the prayer-service. When Abú Sa'íd came out of his trance, he said, "Between its rising and setting the sun does not shine upon a more venerable and learned man than this"—meaning Muḥammad Qá'iní—"but his knowledge of Şúfisim is not so much as the tip of a hair."

Although it would be wrong to use this story as evidence of Abú Sa'íd's habitual practice, we may at least affirm that in his eyes the essence of prayer was not the formal act, but the "passing away from self" which is completely attained in ecstasy. "Endeavour," he said, "to have a mystical experience (*wárid*), not a devotional exercise (*wird*)." One day he said to a dervish, who in order to show the utmost respect stood before him in the attitude of prayer, "This is a very respectful posture, but thy not-being would be still better."

He never made the pilgrimage to Mecca, which every Moslem is bound to make at least once. Many Šúfís who would have gladly dispensed with this semi-pagan rite allegorised it and attached a mystical significance to each of the various ceremonies; but they saved their orthodoxy at the expense of their principles. Abú Sa'íd had no such reputation to keep up. His refusal to perform the Ḥajj is not so surprising as the contemptuous language in which he refers to one of the five main pillars of Islam.

Abú Sa'íd was asked, "Who has been thy Pír? for every Pír has had a Pír to instruct him; and how is it that thy neck is too big for thy shirt-collar, while other Pírs have emaciated themselves by austerities? And why hast thou not performed the Pilgrimage, as they have done?" He replied, "Who has been my Pír? *This* (doctrine that I teach) *is part of what my Lord hath taught me* (Kor. 12, 37). How is it that my neck is too big for my shirt-collar? I marvel how there is room for my neck in the seven heavens and earths

after all that God hath bestowed upon me. Why have I not performed the Pilgrimage? It is no great matter that thou shouldst tread under thy feet a thousand miles of ground in order to visit a stone house. The true man of God sits where he is, and the *Bayt al-Ma'múr* comes several times in a day and night to visit him and perform the circumambulation above his head. Look and see!" All who were present looked and saw it.

The mystic's pilgrimage takes place within himself. "If God sets the way to Mecca before any one, that person has been cast out of the Way to the Truth." Not content with encouraging his disciples to neglect the Ḥajj, Abú Sa'íd used to send those who thought of performing it to visit the tomb of Abú 'l-Faḍl Ḥasan at Sarakhs, bidding them circumambulate it seven times and consider that their purpose was accomplished. One sees what a menace to Mohammedan institutions the cult of the saints had already become.

The saint lost in contemplation of God knows no religion, and it is often his fate to be classed with the freethinkers (*zanádiqa*), who, from the Moslem point of view, are wholly irreligious, though some of them acknowledge the moral law. Abú Sa'íd said, "Whoever saw me in my first state became a *ṣiddíq*, and whoever saw me in my last state became a *zindáq*," meaning that those who accused him of being a freethinker thereby made themselves guilty of the very thing which they imputed to him. I will translate the biographer's commentary on this saying.

His first state was self-mortification and asceticism, and since most men look at the surface and regard the outward form, they saw the austerity of his life and how painfully he advanced on the Way to God, and their sincere belief (*ṣidq*) in this Way was increased and they attained to the degree of the Sincere (*ṣiddíqán*). His last state was contemplation, a state in which the fruit of self-mortification is gathered and the complete unveiling (*kashf*) comes to pass; accordingly, eminent mystics have said that states of contemplation are the heritage of acts of self-mortification (*al-musháhadát mawáríthu 'l-mujáhadát*). Those who saw him in this state, which is necessarily one of enjoyment and happiness, and were ignorant of his former state denied that which was true (*ḥaqq*); and whoever denies the Truth (*Ḥaqq*) is a freethinker (*zindíq*). There are many analogies to this in the sensible world. For example, when a man seeks to win the favour of a king and to become his companion and intimate friend, before attaining to that rank he must suffer all sorts of tribulation and patiently endure injuries and insults from high and low, and submit with cheerfulness to maltreatment and abuse, giving fair words in return for foul; and when he has been honoured with the king's approval and has been admitted to his presence, he must serve him assiduously and hazard his life in order that the king may place confidence in him. But after he has gained the king's confidence and intimacy, all this hard and perilous service belongs to the past. Now all is grace and bounty and favour; everywhere he meets with new pleasures and delights; and he has no duty but to wait upon the king always, from whose palace

he cannot be absent a single moment by day or night, in order that he may be at hand whenever the king desires to tell him a secret or to honour him with a place by his side.

Asceticism and positive religion are thus relegated to the lower planes of the mystical life. The Şúfí needs them and must hold fast to them while he is serving his spiritual apprenticeship and also during the middle stage which is marked by longer or shorter intervals of illumination; but in his "last state," when the unveiling is completed, he has no further use for ascetic practices and religious forms, for he lives in permanent communion with God Himself. This leads directly to antinomianism, though in theory the saint is above the law rather than against it. One who sees the reality within cannot judge by appearances. Being told that a disciple of his was lying blind-drunk on a certain road, Abú Sa'íd said, "Thank God that he has fallen on the way, not off the Way." Some one asked him, "Are the men of God in the mosque?" "They are in the tavern too," he replied.

His pantheistic vision blotted out the Mohammedan afterworld with its whole system of rewards and punishments. "Whoever knows God without mediation worships Him without recompense." There is no Hell but selfhood, no Paradise but selflessness: "Hell is where thou art and Paradise where thou art not." He quoted the Tradition, "My people shall be split into more than seventy sects, of which a single one shall be saved, while the others shall be in the

Fire," and added, "that is to say, in the fire of their own selves."

As I have already remarked, Abú Sa'íd speaks with two voices: now as a theosophist, now as a Moslem. Hence the same terms bear their ordinary religious meaning in one passage and are explained mystically in another, while the purest pantheism runs side by side with popular theology. To our minds it seems absurd to suppose that he believed in both; yet probably he did, at least so far as to have no difficulty in accepting the Mohammedan scheme when it suited him. For example, he preaches the doctrine of the intercession of saints, in which (though the Koran does not support it) Paradise, Hell, the Day of Judgment, etc., are what the Koran says they are. A few of his sayings on this subject may be quoted here, especially as it is closely connected with his miracles and legend which will be discussed in the following pages.

The man who is being carried off to Hell will see a light from afar. He will ask what it is and will be told that it is the light of such and such a Pír. He will say, "In our world I used to love him." The wind will bear his words to the ears of that Pír, who will plead for him in the divine presence, and God will release the sinner on account of the intercession of that holy man.

Whoever has seen me and has done good work for my family and disciples will be under the shadow of my intercession hereafter.

I have prayed God to forgive my neighbours on the left, on the right, in front, and behind, and He has forgiven them for my sake." Then he said, "My neighbours are Balkh and Merv and Níshápúr and Herat. I am not speaking of those who live here (Mayhana)."

"I need not say a word on behalf of those around me. If any one has mounted an ass and passed by the end of this street, or has passed my house or will pass it, or if the light of my candle falls on him, the least thing that God will do with him is that He will have mercy upon him."

ARGUMENT

The poem, addressed to a real or imaginary disciple, sets forth in due order the phases of mystical experience through which the writer passed before attaining to oneness with God, and describes the nature of that abiding oneness so far as it can be indicated by words.

In the opening verses (1-7) Ibnu 'l-Fárid recalls a time when his love of God was still imperfect and unfixed, so that the "intoxication" of ecstasy would be followed by the "sobriety" of a relapse into selfhood.

He tells (8-83) how he sought the favour of the Beloved and related to her his sufferings, not by way of complaint—for suffering is the law of love—but in the hope of relieving them; how he said that he was enraptured by her beauty, that he would never

change, that he cared for nothing but her and for her sake had abandoned all.

The Beloved answers (84-102), accusing him of insincerity and presumption. He is not really in love with her, but only with himself. If he would love her in truth, he must die to self.

In reply he protests that this death is his dearest wish and prays the Beloved to grant it, whatever pain it may cost (103-116). Then, addressing the disciple, he describes his dying to self and its effects: how it has brought him great glory, though he is despised by his neighbours and regarded as a madman; and how it has caused his love to be hidden even from himself, his faculties to be jealous of one another, and his identity to be lost, so that in worshipping he feels that he is the object of worship (117-154). He proceeds to explain the mystery of his love, saying that he loved before the creation but was separated from his Beloved in this world, and that by casting-off his self-existence he has found her to be his own real self. There was no thought of merit in his sacrifice, so she accepted it (155-174). He exhorts the disciple to follow the *via purgativa*, by which mystics are prepared for the highest things, and describes how he himself disciplined his soul (175-203).

The poet now begins to explain the origin and nature of his *ittiḥād* or oneness with the Beloved. As it is hard for the mind to conceive that two may be one, he points to the analogous case of a woman possessed by a spirit. He urges the disciple to get rid of the illusion

of dualism, and the mystery will then become clear to him. He says that this was the way by which he himself attained to his present state (204-238).

He bids the disciple mark that all beauty is absolute. Every fair earthly form is in reality a manifestation of the Beloved (239-264).

He then explains why, notwithstanding his exalted degree, he strictly fulfils the duties of the religious law and occupies himself with voluntary works of devotion. Antinomianism would be consistent with belief in incarnation (*hulúl*); but he does not hold that doctrine. His own doctrine is supported by the Koran and the Apostolic Traditions (265-285).

He calls on the disciple to follow him in the path of love, but warns him that he must not aspire to the supreme grade of *ittihád*, which is now described as being beyond love (286-333)

After a hymn of praise to the Beloved (336-387), he resumes the description of his oneness. His spirit and soul, which formerly drew him up and down between them, are in reality one with the Beloved, *i.e.*, they are identified with Universal Spirit and Universal Soul, whence all forms of spiritual and sensible life are fed. The image of the Beloved that he receives through sensation agrees with the image of her in his spiritual consciousness; and this is a proof that he is one with her. He says that she is presented to him by all that he sees, hears, tastes and touches. He describes particularly his listening to music: at that time he beholds her with his whole being and is

riven asunder by the struggle of his spirit to escape from the body; then dancing soothes him, and, as it were, rocks him to sleep (388-440).

Continuing, he declares that the state which he has now reached is higher than "union" (*wiṣāl*). He gained it through casting aside every vestige of self-regard. It was he who imposed the laws of religion on himself and was sent as an apostle to himself before any prophet appeared in the world. His overruling influence is exerted throughout heaven and earth. He is beyond all relations: place, time, and number are gone; he has no rival or opposite; he is the object of his own worship. No change of state can now befall him: the alternation of "intoxication" and "sobriety" has been superseded by a permanent consciousness in which past and future are the same. He is the Pole (*Qutb*) on which the universe revolves (441-501).

He mentions, as a strange effect of his love, that he sought his Beloved in himself until he found that he was seeking himself, so that in being united with himself he embraced his own essence (502-532). Speaking in the person of God, he says that his attributes, names, and actions cannot be known except through himself, and that he cannot be known through them. As the names of his external attributes, *e.g.*, sight and hearing, which are really faculties of the soul, are derived from his organs of sensation, so the names of his inward attributes are ultimately derived from his (the Divine) essence. By means of the names God manifests Himself in creation. Their qualities and

the benefits which they confer on the body and the soul are described at some length (533-574)

He is so entirely one, he says, that all his faculties are interfused and each part has become absorbed in the whole. Hence he acts universally and infinitely. This is the explanation of the miracles wrought by the prophets. Mohammed, the last of the prophets, not only summed up in himself all the marvellous powers of his predecessors but is the source from which these powers were bestowed on the prophets before him and the Moslem saints after him. Ibnu 'l-Fárid, making himself one with the spirit of Mohammed, claims to be the father of Adam, the final cause of creation, and the origin of life: all creatures obey his will, speak his word, see with his sight; he is hidden in everything sensible, intellectual, and spiritual (575-650).

He forbids the disciple to believe in metempsychosis, pointing out that what appears in different forms is really the same, *e.g.*, Abú Zayd (the hero of Ḥarírí's fiction) in all his disguises, the image in a mirror, the echo, the phantom seen in dream, and the figures shown by a shadow-lantern. He describes the various scenes of the shadow-play – all of them the work of a single person behind a screen – and likens the soul to the showman, the body to the screen, and the figures to the objects perceived in sensation. When the bodily screen is removed, the soul becomes unified (651-730).

He says that faith and infidelity are not essentially different. The One God is adored in every form of

worship – by Moslems, Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, even by idolaters; those who go astray from Him are none the less seeking Him: it is He that guides and misguides them, according as they are destined for salvation or perdition. All is determined by the Divine will and is the effect of the Divine nature. This the soul knows from itself (731-749)

He declares that he is not to be blamed for having revealed the mysteries imparted to him, and concludes with the assertion that none living or dead has attained to such a height as he (750-761).

Chapter 7

Baha'i

Abridged Excerpts From:

Tablets of Baha'u'llah Revealed after the Kitab-I- Aqdas

By Baha'u'llah
1988

Lawh-I-Karmil
(Tablet of Carmel)

ALL glory be to this Day, the Day in which the fragrances of mercy have been wafted over all created things, a Day so blest that past ages and centuries can never hope to rival it, a Day in which the countenance of the Ancient of Days hath turned towards His holy seat. Thereupon the voices of all created things, and beyond them those of the Concourse on High, were heard calling aloud: `Haste thee, O Carmel, for lo, the light of the countenance of God, the Ruler of the Kingdom of Names and Fashioner of the heavens, hath been lifted upon thee.'

Seized with transports of joy, and raising high her voice, she thus exclaimed: `May my life be a sacrifice

to Thee, inasmuch as Thou hast fixed Thy gaze upon me, hast bestowed upon me Thy bounty, and hast directed towards me Thy steps. Separation from Thee, O Thou Source of everlasting life, hath well nigh consumed me, and my remoteness from Thy presence hath burned away my soul.

All praise be to Thee for having enabled me to hearken to Thy call, for having honoured me with Thy footsteps, and for having quickened my soul through the vitalizing fragrance of Thy Day and the shrilling voice of Thy Pen, a voice Thou didst ordain as Thy trumpet-call amidst Thy people. And when the hour at which Thy resistless Faith was to be made manifest did strike, Thou didst breathe a breath of Thy spirit into Thy Pen, and lo, the entire creation shook to its very foundations, unveiling to mankind such mysteries as lay hidden within the treasures of Him Who is the Possessor of all created things.'

No sooner had her voice reached that most exalted Spot than We made reply: `Render thanks unto thy Lord, O Carmel. The fire of thy separation from Me was fast consuming thee, when the ocean of My presence surged before thy face, cheering thine eyes and those of all creation, and filling with delight all things visible and invisible. Rejoice, for God hath in this Day established upon thee His throne, hath made thee the dawning-place of His signs and the dayspring of the evidences of His Revelation. Well is it with him that circleth around thee, that proclaimeth the revelation of thy glory, and recounteth that which the bounty of the Lord thy God hath showered upon thee. Seize thou the Chalice of Immortality in the name of thy Lord, the All-Glorious, and give thanks

unto Him, inasmuch as He, in token of His mercy unto thee, hath turned thy sorrow into gladness, and transmuted thy grief into blissful joy. He, verily, loveth the spot which hath been made the seat of His throne, which His footsteps have trodden, which hath been honoured by His presence, from which He raised His call, and upon which He shed His tears.

‘Call out to Zion, O Carmel, and announce the joyful tidings: He that was hidden from mortal eyes is come! His all-conquering sovereignty is manifest; His all-encompassing splendour is revealed. Beware lest thou hesitate or halt. Hasten forth and circumambulate the City of God that hath descended from heaven, the celestial Kaaba round which have circled in adoration the favoured of God, the pure in heart, and the company of the most exalted angels. Oh, how I long to announce unto every spot on the surface of the earth, and to carry to each one of its cities, the glad-tidings of this Revelation--a Revelation to which the heart of Sinai hath been attracted, and in whose name the Burning Bush is calling: "Unto God, the Lord of Lords, belong the kingdoms of earth and heaven." Verily this is the Day in which both land and sea rejoice at this announcement, the Day for which have been laid up those things which God, through a bounty beyond the ken of mortal mind or heart, hath destined for revelation. Ere long will God sail His Ark upon thee, and will manifest the people of Baha who have been mentioned in the Book of Names.'

Sanctified be the Lord of all mankind, at the mention of Whose name all the atoms of the earth have been made to vibrate, and the Tongue of

Grandeur hath been moved to disclose that which had been wrapt in His knowledge and lay concealed within the treasury of His might. He, verily, through the potency of His name, the Mighty, the All-Powerful, the Most High, is the ruler of all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth.

Kalmita-I-Firdawsiyyih
(Words of Paradise)

He is the One Who speaketh through the power of Truth in the Kingdom of Utterance.

O YE the embodiments of justice and equity and the manifestations of uprightness and of heavenly bounties! In tears and lamenting, this Wronged One calleth aloud and saith: O God, my God! Adorn the heads of Thy loved ones with the crown of detachment and attire their temples with the raiment of righteousness.

It behoveth the people of Baha to render the Lord victorious through the power of their utterance and to admonish the people by their goodly deeds and character, inasmuch as deeds exert greater influence than words.

O Haydar-'Ali! Upon thee be the praise of God and His glory. Say: Honesty, virtue, wisdom and a saintly character redound to the exaltation of man, while dishonesty, imposture, ignorance and hypocrisy lead to his abasement. By My life! Man's distinction lieth not in ornaments or wealth, but rather in virtuous

behaviour and true understanding. Most of the people in Persia are steeped in deception and idle fancy. How great the difference between the condition of these people and the station.

Haji Mirza Haydar-'Ali, outstanding Persian Baha'i teacher and author. He spent nine years in prison and exile in Khartum, travelled extensively in Iran, and passed away in 1920 in the Holy Land. Western pilgrims knew him as the Angel of Mount Carmel. Of such valiant souls as have passed beyond the sea of names and pitched their tents upon the shores of the ocean of detachment. Indeed none but a few of the existing generation hath yet earned the merit of hearkening unto the warblings of the doves of the all-highest Paradise. 'Few of My servants are truly thankful.' People for the most part delight in superstitions. They regard a single drop of the sea of delusion as preferable to an ocean of certitude. By holding fast unto names they deprive themselves of the inner reality and by clinging to vain imaginings they are kept back from the Dayspring of heavenly signs. God grant you may be graciously aided under all conditions to shatter the idols of superstition and to tear away the veils of the imaginations of men. Authority lieth in the grasp of God, the Fountainhead of revelation and inspiration and the Lord of the Day of Resurrection.

We heard that which the person in question hath mentioned regarding certain teachers of the Faith. Indeed he hath spoken truly. Some heedless souls roam the lands in the name of God, actively engaged in ruining His Cause, and call it promoting and teaching the Word of God; and this notwithstanding

that the qualifications of the teachers of the Faith, like unto stars, shine resplendent throughout the heavens of the divine Tablets. Every fair-minded person testifieth and every man of insight is well aware that the One true God--exalted be His glory--hath unceasingly set forth and expounded that which will elevate the station and will exalt the rank of the children of men.

The people of Baha burn brightly amidst the gatherings even as a candle and hold fast unto that which God hath purposed. This station standeth supreme above all stations. Well is it with him who hath cast away the things that the people of the world possess, yearning for that which pertaineth unto God, the Sovereign Lord of eternity.

Say: O God, my God! Thou beholdest me circling round Thy Will with mine eyes turned towards the horizon of Thy bounty, eagerly awaiting the revelation of the effulgent splendours of the sun of Thy favours. I beg of Thee, O Beloved of every understanding heart and the Desire of such as have near access unto Thee, to grant that Thy loved ones may become wholly detached from their own inclinations, holding fast unto that which pleaseth Thee. Attire them, O Lord, with the robe of righteousness and illumine them with the splendours of the light of detachment. Summon then to their assistance the hosts of wisdom and utterance that they may exalt Thy Word amongst Thy creatures and proclaim Thy Cause amidst Thy servants. Verily, potent art Thou to do what Thou willest, and within Thy grasp lie the reins of all affairs. No God is there but Thee, the Mighty, the Ever-Forgiving . . .

God is immeasurably exalted above all things. Every created being however revealeth His signs which are but emanations from Him and not His Own Self. All these signs are reflected and can be seen in the book of existence, and the scrolls that depict the shape and pattern of the universe are indeed a most great book. Therein every man of insight can perceive that which would lead to the Straight Path and would enable him to attain the Great Announcement. Consider the rays of the sun whose light hath encompassed the world. The rays emanate from the sun and reveal its nature, but are not the sun itself. Whatsoever can be discerned on earth amply demonstrateth the power of God, His knowledge and the outpourings of His bounty, while He Himself is immeasurably exalted above all creatures . . .

All-Sufficient is He for Us and for all created things. He is the One by Whose leave, and through the potency of Whose command, the Day-Star of sovereign might hath shone resplendent above the horizon of the world. Well is it with him who perceiveth and recognizeth the Truth and woe betide the froward and the faithless.

This Wronged One hath invariably treated the wise with affection. By the wise is meant men whose knowledge is not confined to mere words and whose lives have been fruitful and have produced enduring results. It is incumbent upon everyone to honour these blessed souls. Happy are they that observe God's precepts; happy are they that have recognized the Truth; happy are they that judge with fairness in

all matters and hold fast to the Cord of My inviolable Justice.

The people of Persia have turned away from Him Who is the Protector and the Helper. They are clinging to and have enmeshed themselves in the vain imaginings of the foolish. So firmly do they adhere to superstitions that naught can sever them therefrom save the potent arm of God--exalted is His glory. Beseech thou the Almighty that He may remove with the fingers of divine power the veils which have shut out the diverse peoples and kindreds, that they may attain the things that are conducive to security, progress and advancement and may hasten forth towards the incomparable Friend.

Out-of-Body Experiences

What You Need to Know

Compiled By Marilyn Hughes

The Out-of-Body Travel Foundation!



Author, Marilyn Hughes

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