

THE GOSPEL OF THOMAS



A Guide to Awakening
BY KUNDAN

The Gospel of Thomas is an amazing scripture of heavenly inspired wisdom. It was discovered in 1945 near the village of Nag Hammadi in Egypt and is now commonly known as the 5th Gospel. It is considered to be the most important non-canonical scripture ever found. Consisting of 114 beautiful sayings the Gospel of Thomas perfectly enshrines the sacred mystical teachings of Jesus Christ. Jesus' voice is a fervent call for us to wake up and look beyond the veil of illusion continuously created by the egotistical mind.

If there is any core message of the 5th Gospel that ought to be emphasized, it is Jesus' consistent teaching that enlightenment and the experience of awakening are, at any given moment, available to each and every one of us. Recognizing who we already are and always have been is all that needs to be achieved.

In Verse 108, Jesus says:

Whoever drinks from my mouth
Will become like me;
I myself will become that person,
And the hidden things
Will be revealed to him.

The 5th Gospel thus focuses on a universal experience of Cosmic Consciousness, which, in Eastern cultures, is called Samadhi or Satori. Therefore, Jesus' sayings are in perfect accord with what has been taught by the mystics, sages, and Masters for thousands of years.

Far from being an academic commentary, this guide is meant to create a comprehensive and intimate dialogue with the reader and lend a helping hand to those who long to integrate Jesus' timeless wisdom into their daily lives.



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*This book is wholeheartedly dedicated
to my teacher and Master Samarpan.
All I am now is by his grace.*

KUNDAN

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Jesus lived his life for you – then he gave his life to you.

Now he wants to live his life through you.

- JACQUELINE K. HEASLEY

Each of us is an innkeeper who decides if there is room for Jesus!

- NEAL A. MAXWELL

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to my beloved wife, Mecheale, who motivated me to write this practical guide. Having been reared in a strictly Catholic environment in the Philippines, she has been truly devoted to Jesus and the Divine ever since. As she began to discover the wisdom of other great spiritual Masters many guilt feelings arose, because these new perspectives did not fit into the rigid belief system she had adhered to for so many years. The following commentary was written for her and was originally meant to clarify that there is no real conflict between the sayings of the Masters and the teachings of Jesus Christ. The words may differ, but the message basically remains the same. I am happy to say that, after having read these pages, Mecheale's unconditional love for Jesus has even grown considerably.

Maybe Life itself was my greatest teacher. My life story is full of extremes, ups and downs, success and failures, ecstasy and depression. It has been heaven and hell and it has been just perfect for me. My feverish search for fulfillment gradually brought me in touch with the wisdom of many spiritual Masters and I cherish all of them. Among those who inspired me most are names like Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, Paramahansa Yogananda, Ramana Maharshi, Meister Eckhart, Ramesh Balsekar, Alan Watts, Eckhart Tolle, and Sri Swami Satchidananda.

I also have to express my heartfelt gratitude to Integral Yoga Publications

(Satchidananda Ashram-Yogaville) for kindly giving me the permission to include some most beautiful wisdom stories from Swamiji's wonderful book Enlightening Tales. I am sure you will enjoy reading them, because they are spiritually inspiring and at the same time entertaining in the best possible sense. Furthermore I would like to thank my friend Kathryn Phillips very much for her heavenly inspired poems which added so much grace, beauty and love to this book. I, moreover, have to extend my gratitude to Mooji. He not only is a great enlightened Master, but a gifted spiritual poet and creative artist as well. I am very happy that he granted me permission to use his remarkable painting "The Prophet" as an appealing cover motive for this guide!

Of course I would also like to praise my Master and teacher Samarpan, who has been lovingly guiding me for more than ten years. I deeply resonate with his teachings, and the present commentary, therefore, reflects his unique approach to a very large extent. Nonetheless it is also quite personal because it represents the fruit of my lifelong experience as a spiritual seeker. Since I was educated as a scientist I am not a typical believer. However, simply by objectively applying the empirical method when looking back upon my own life story, it was easy for me to recognize that Samarpan is obviously speaking the Truth. For many years I was truly listening and it changed my whole life. I cannot tell anybody how grateful I am for this blessing.

Last but certainly not least, I have to bow down to the magnificence of Jesus Christ himself. Drinking his wonderful wise words and meditating upon them is pure grace. My daily talks with Mecheale were delightful, and step-by-step the Eternal Christ Consciousness magically unfolded in our living room. I discovered Jesus as an inestimably important milestone in the history and evolution of Collective Consciousness and I gratefully acknowledge this to be an unfathomable gift.

KUNDAN

June 4, 2014

INTRODUCTION

Eternal Christ

By Kathryn Phillips

In Ancient times of long ago
A kind, humble man steps forth
Here to lovingly teach the way
To guide us from the peril
Of such ignorance in darker days

To save us and bring salvation
In much needed times of wrath
His pure words of wisdom
The 'Way of the Lord'
To be the only one true path

He selflessly came
To serve us, 'Enlighten' us
And lead us into the Light
Graciously, with his courage

Purity, integrity and fore-sight

A Messiah,
Sent to 'Awaken' us
Here simply to show us
The Kingdom of God
Belongs to everyone
All creatures big or small

And the Eternal
'Christ Consciousness'
Resides within ourselves
For we are all one
And one is truly all

And the Name of this
Bright 'Shining Star'
Amongst all the 'Enlightened'
Prophets, Masters and Mystics
Was 'Jesus the Eternal Christ'

About This Guide

No one can read the Gospels without feeling the actual presence of Jesus.

- ALBERT EINSTEIN

It is not necessary to meet your Master on the physical plane.

The Master is not external.

- NEEM KAROLI BABA

Jesus is alive in the Here and Now

The Gospel of Thomas was discovered in 1945 near the village of Nag Hammadi in Egypt and is now commonly known as the “5th Gospel.” It is considered to be the most important noncanonical scripture ever found. Unlike most other tractates of the so-called Nag Hammadi Library, the Gospel of Thomas is an entirely complete volume – though occasionally some single words are missing. Some well-known scholars belonging to the remarkable research group “Jesus Seminar” have recently dated its possible source as early as 50-60 C.E. – which would make it the first and most unbiased Gospel ever written. It is a wonderful collection of 114 sayings (cf. appendix) attributed to the Living Jesus, and it contains no stories about the virgin birth, the resurrection, or any other miracles. A considerable number of these sayings can be found in a similar, yet slightly different, form in the canonical gospels, but many of them throw an entirely different and surprising light on the teachings of Jesus. The Gospel of Thomas is comparable to a resurrection of Jesus’ timeless wisdom, and the following verse

even sounds like a prophecy:

Often you desired to hear these sayings that I am speaking to you, and you have no one else from whom to hear them. There will be days when you will seek me and you will not find me. (38)

Many inspiring books and treatises have already been written about the Gospel of Thomas. The present book hopefully has its own value because it, first of all, intends to develop an easygoing and comprehensive dialogue with the reader. As far as feasible, things are made simple, transparent, and practical for daily use. Therefore, no preliminary knowledge is required. In the best possible case this commentary will serve as a useful guide for your own understanding and spiritual growth.

This small book is of course in no way complete, nor would I ever dare to pretend that it contains the “final word” about the 5th Gospel. Some of Jesus’ sayings are so incredibly deep, multifaceted, and multilayered that one could write a whole volume about a single one without being exhaustive. Actually, this not only means that various perspectives are possible and appropriate, but, given the paradoxical nature of Truth, entirely accurate interpretations provided by different authors sometimes may even seem to be mutually exclusive.

If you are a fast reader, you will be able to read the whole commentary in a few hours, but this would not be very helpful. I suggest instead reading a maximum of one chapter a day, and even this may be too much. Better, you should allow Jesus’ words to penetrate your heart drop by drop. Sometimes you may feel bored and argue: “Oh, I don’t need that one anymore. It has already been said before!” However, this is just the mind trying to escape from the Truth. Actually, the Truth has to be said and heard over and over again. Otherwise we can’t free ourselves from the illusion. Every time you become silent and truly listen, your understanding and receptivity will deepen. Every good teacher knows that the learning process is considerably supported by approaching the same issue from different angles. This is exactly what Jesus always did, and most enlightened Masters are teaching us in the same way.

Moreover, the Truth can never be fully “known.” As the famous philosopher Sir

Karl Popper points out, the Truth can only be approximated, and the corresponding process of coming closer by definition has no ending. Yes, in theory, a deep understanding of one single saying would be enough to fully realize the Truth. But honestly, are you able to do that? Is anyone able to do that? I, for sure, am not.

It also may happen that you are being blessed with an amazing spiritual peak experience and realize that there is nothing but Divine Consciousness. This is the Truth. Nothing can be added to that, and you will never be the same as before. Nevertheless it is a unique experience and it won't stay forever. After a while it is just a blurred memory belonging to the realm of the mind. In order to really live it, the Truth has to be uncovered time and again. Just remembering some past experience is by far not enough. In any event, we will never reach a point where we "got it one time for all." This kind of attitude inevitably results in creating a new set of mental concepts that then again would veil our direct and unbiased experience of the Truth.

Real wisdom is always new and fresh. If you stay silent in the present moment, not listening to any comments of the mind, you will discover that Truth is multidimensional. Each saying reveals a new aspect of the Eternal, and this can be truly entertaining. The irony is that even a dog is wiser than the mind. You can do the same walk with him day by day and he will never feel bored. This is not a result of his "stupidity." He can totally enjoy his walk because all animals naturally live in the Now.

Finally, words are just words. They are never the Truth because the Truth can't be spoken. So rather than holding on to some words or concepts, try to get a fresh taste of the underlying Being or Reality they are pointing to! You can expect your mind to quite often rebel against what will be said here. He of course "knows better" and therefore loves to disturb and confuse you by arguing against this and that. This is normal, and it can't be avoided. Don't give any attention to the mind because he can't possibly know anything about the deep mysteries of existence. He's just an arrogant fool desperately trying to be wise.

I don't believe in the orthodox doctrines of the churches. Therefore, if you want to hold on to what the Vatican or any other Christian Church dogmatically teaches, better keep your hands away from this book. The idea is certainly not to offend anybody's religious feelings, and I am neither a preacher nor a missionary. If, however, you consider yourself to be a sincere Truth seeker, ready

to throw away your programmed beliefs, then this book could be the right one for you. Maybe you have even lost your faith or feel fed up with all the miracle stories and the idea that Jesus is a superhuman being from far above the clouds. In this case as well, you might be motivated to discover the following commentary and find your unique way back to Jesus.

Welcome it as an opportunity to meet the Living Jesus and come in touch with his most precious teachings. Receiving his uplifting message with an open heart will make you feel and experience his continued presence and will bring you into contact with this mysterious phenomenon called Christ Consciousness or Holy Spirit. In this transcendent aspect, Jesus has come to earth already thousands of times after his physical death, because Jesus was what every enlightened Master is, and every enlightened Master is what Jesus was and still is: A perfect instrument of the Divine's unconditional Love and Grace. "In Guru," Sri Swami Satchidananda explains, "there are no differences. It's only the bodies that are different. The Realization is the same."

It's interesting to see in which ways the established religions are missing the Truth. The Jews are still waiting for the real Messiah, and they will probably wait for another ten thousand years. Some Orthodox Jews even see Jesus as a symbol for aggression and a dangerous heretic. The Christians accepted Jesus as the Messiah, but now they are eternally waiting for a Second Coming of Christ in the same body. Jesus, however, did not invite us to wait for anything:

His disciples said to him, "When will the rest for the dead take place, and when will the new world come?" He said to them, "What you are looking forward to has come but you don't know it." (51)

Most churches are complicated political organizations, and they will never understand the Truth. They are not even willing to understand, because they are self-serving rather than serving Jesus and the Truth. And whenever somebody really wakes up, he or she gets into serious trouble. Then they are ordinarily accused of blasphemy and in some cases even expelled from the Church. During his lifetime, Jesus was exposing the hypocrisy of the Jewish priests, and today, for certain, he would address exactly the same words to the clergy of the

Catholic Church:

Damn the Pharisees! They are like a dog sleeping in the cattle manger: the dog neither eats nor lets the cattle eat. (102)

Jesus repeatedly said that the Kingdom of the Father is spread upon the earth and that we don't see it. Nonetheless, most Christian Churches postpone paradise to a blissful state coming after death. They put us in a lifelong waiting state, affirming that this life, basically, is nothing but a preparation for what subsequently will be. Is it imaginable that these popes, bishops, and priests envy us for having fun in this life? A priest can touch our hearts if his words emerge from a vital experience of the Truth. Proclaiming like a dead automaton what is written in the Bible, however, is utterly boring for everyone. The joy of being as manifested by African-American Gospel singers is by far more inspiring. Gratefully expressing our happiness by singing in togetherness is an utmost beautiful and ancient way of worshipping the Lord. Jesus himself certainly would have enjoyed it, because he was a devoted lover of life. He liked to laugh, to drink, to eat and, as far as we know, he never condemned any sensual or sexual pleasures. Early writings of the Church also suggest that all the apostles were married – except John. Jesus says:

Congratulations to the person who has toiled and has found life! (58)

This life should not only be filled with hard and stressful work. First, it is meant to be enjoyed. The philosophy of doing, achieving, and succeeding is the prevalent credo of our ego-based society. Sooner or later, a painful state of delusion will be the consequence of our vain endeavor to become “somebody special.” Maybe this will be helpful in order to change our ways. By giving us the opportunity to live our lives joyfully, the Divine showers His endless Grace upon us. Through these bodies, we are perfectly well equipped to savor this marvelous creation in every possible respect. Once our hearts open widely, we discover that life can be like paradise on earth. Have you ever asked how it

comes that Mother Nature is so amazingly beautiful? Well, the answer is stunningly simple: It is because the whole creation is a wonderful divine gift.

Truly living implies becoming rooted in the present moment, in the Here and Now. Here, as we will see later, there is no judgment, no suffering, and no guilt. In the Eternal Now we find subtle joy, peace, and freedom – freedom from our socially conditioned thoughts and freedom from the mind control of the Churches. What will the Churches do if their followers decide to enjoy life instead of waiting for death to come? What happens to the power of the Churches when people begin to realize that there is no sinner and no eternal hell, and that they can enter paradise right now? What if all of those believers understand that they are the beloved sons and daughters of the Divine, just as Jesus was? What if it dawns on them that they are God coming to earth in a human body and that they can wake up and become Jesus' twin?

In the long run, it won't help to hide the Truth because it is naturally popping up in thousands of ways – just as the Gospel of Thomas popped up, when it was time for these teachings to become conspicuous. The world today is simply ready for the Truth – otherwise it would not have happened. In the time of Jesus and Buddha, enlightenment was a very rare phenomenon, and only a few spiritual teachers reached an understanding comparable to that of Jesus. Although Jesus is, along with Buddha and Sri Krishna, the most influential Master of all times, he didn't earn the fruits of his enlightenment during his lifetime. Only some of his disciples – Thomas, for instance – were ripe enough to receive the full mystical teaching. Therefore, Jesus sadly says:

In the past, however, I did not tell you the things about which you asked me then. Now I am willing to tell them, but you are not seeking them. (92b)

Today many people wake up, and thousands of enlightened Masters are walking upon this earth (cf.73). All of them are rooted in the same Truth and what they teach is the Oneness of Being underlying everything that becomes manifest. Jesus never pretended to be the only one to know the Truth (cf.12). Stressing the importance of a living Master, he said:

Let there be among you a person who understands. (21c)

Many enlightened Masters contributed to this commentary. We learn from them that enlightenment is our true divine nature and that all we have to do, is to discover right now who we already are. This is exactly what Jesus teaches in the Gospel of Thomas and it is probably the main reason why the Vatican still rejects this scripture as pure heresy.

Feel invited to meet Jesus right here and right now. Get to know what his teachings are really about and enjoy reading the following commentary as much as you can. Take only what touches your heart and just leave aside what you don't accept or understand right away. Discovering the Truth step-by-step is really exciting. A passionate walker totally enjoys nature while he is walking. He is not feverishly attempting to reach his goal in the shortest time possible. For him walking the path is a rewarding goal in itself. Be patient with yourself and enjoy the ride! Anyway, there is no end to this wonderful game called awakening. So get ready for the greatest adventure of your life. Throw away all of your old beliefs, worries, and useless plans. Put God first because Jesus himself is inviting you to dine and celebrate with him. He is definitely calling your name, so you should better listen, relax, have fun, and wake up!

What Is True Listening?

Let us be silent, that we may hear the whisper of God.

- RALPH WALDO EMERSON

Listen or your tongue will keep you deaf.

- NATIVE AMERICAN PROVERB

Anyone here with two good ears had better listen!

Throughout the Gospel of Thomas, this admonishment from Jesus is said again and again. It will not be repeated in the following text, but it should be recalled before reading any saying. Whoever desires to get in touch with the words of the sages is required to perform a particular shift in perspective, because the Truth cannot be understood by the ordinary mind. What we call “mind” is actually a serious impediment for a deep understanding. Anyway, whether written or spoken, the Truth will remain inaccessible until it is part of your own experience. As Tau Malachi said, “Each verse of the Gospel of St. Thomas is like an endless well of wisdom into which one can dip one’s cup again and again, continually bringing forth more wisdom.” However, in order to truly listen and hear, the mind has to be silenced and purified.

Following a distinction introduced by the Indian sage Ramesh Balsekar, we can say that this “bio-computer” called the mind has two different modes of functioning. The working mind or intellect is a marvelous device that we need to cope with everyday life. The working mind is required for whatever kind of

action we want to perform. Without this amazing toolbox, we could not survive. We would actually be totally lost! Look at elderly people suffering from dementia. At a certain point even the simplest tasks such as brushing the teeth, eating, or clothing oneself become a tremendous challenge. Everything that had been stored in memory gradually fades away and after a while these people are as helpless as young infants. This happens because the illness destroys the cells and nerve connections responsible for the accurate functioning of the brain. So, provided it is properly applied, there is nothing to be said against this utterly practical tool called the intellect or the working mind.

The thinking mind, on the other hand, is heavily intoxicated by the “ego virus.” Basically, the root of the thinking mind is the false belief that, “I am somebody” separate from the world and the Divine. The thinking mind, therefore, is constantly producing nonsense. As a result of our conditioning, it feeds us with mountains of thoughts, imaginations, fantasies, and ugly judgments. Quite often the thinking mind also produces some chaotic and totally meaningless “white noise” as an afterglow of recent experiences. All of this is pure garbage, and this garbage needs to be evacuated. The main hindrance to a deep understanding is the awkward chattering coming from the ever-moving mind. When we later use the word “mind,” we mostly refer to this corrupted part of our bio-computer.

So how can we understand the sayings of Jesus? Do we have to use the rational logic of the working mind? Sorry, this doesn’t work either, because our bio-computer is supposed to be applied to the relative world. Every phenomenon occurring in the relative world is dependent on or connected to another phenomenon or object. Your bodily structure, for example, depends on your parents, and their bodies depend on the genetics of your grandparents. Nothing in this relative world exists on its own; it only exists in relation to some other thing. This is called the law of causality or interdependency.

The Divine, on the other hand, doesn’t depend on anything. God is the absolute Truth, the Ultimate Reality. God is everything and everywhere. The Divine has not been “created.” He has always been and He will always be. He has no limitations. He has no beginning and no end. He is beyond space and time. And He is far beyond conventional understanding. As a matter of fact, the Ultimate Truth cannot be rationally understood at all. How could the finite understand the infinite? This simply is impossible. For thousands of years, philosophers have tried to accomplish this unachievable task, and they have failed over and over again. Only a few attained real wisdom and applauded the words of Socrates,

who said, “The more I know, the more I recognize that I don’t know.”

Each “explanation” of the Absolute Truth must be incomplete. Thoughts, speech, and written words are utterly insufficient to express the Truth. So why should we then listen to any words of wisdom at all? Well, we can trust the words of Jesus, because they come out of the mouth of the enlightened one. The sayings of Jesus beautifully shine the Light of Truth. They point to the Absolute Reality, which, by definition, is beyond the limited reach of the intellect. Jesus, therefore, is not talking to our minds; he is talking to our hearts. We are not able to understand the Truth, but the wisdom of our heart is able to recognize and sense the Truth by the means of intuition. This recognition is what we can call deep understanding. Intuition is the spontaneous language of the Universal Mind or Source Mind. According to James Hilman, “It is clear, quick and full. Like a revelation, it comes all at once and fast.”

Allow yourself to softly tune in to the eternal wisdom of Jesus. Only read his words when you truly feel silent and peaceful, so that you don’t get disturbed by the chattering of the mind. Don’t feel disappointed or frustrated when you don’t immediately grasp the meaning of every word. Discovering the sacred enshrined Truth in Jesus’ sayings requires a thorough cleansing of your conditioned mind. Otherwise your old mental structures will get in the way and obstruct your intuition. Actually, the whole hard disk of your bio computer has to be entirely reformatted. It is natural that this process will need some time for completion. So there is no hurry about anything.

Open your heart and become pregnant with this beautiful and inspiring collection of sayings! Be ready and willing to use your two good ears and truly listen. Turn inward, without any idea, and Jesus Christ himself will speak to you! Just by innocently exposing yourself to the words of Jesus time and again, your awakening will inevitably happen. But please, don’t wait for it to happen! It will happen anyway and it will happen by itself, just in the right way and in the right time.

WHO IS JESUS?

Bringer of the Light

By Kathryn Phillips

Our Supreme Ascended Master

And Holy Son of God

Whose wisdom and sincerity

Was to guide us

To 'Enlightenment'

And teach us Awareness

Of 'Divine Consciousness'

The Eternal voice of Truth

Whose pure radiance shall

Forever shine so bright

Whose kind words of Purity

Peace, Forgiveness and Love

Eternally remain

And shall always speak to us

He is our true 'Bringer of the Light'

Let the Sun Shine In

As told by Sri Swami Satchidananda

There once was a little girl who didn't want to be in the sun, so she said, "Go away, sun, I don't want you!" She went inside, closed all the doors and windows, sat in the darkness, and started cursing the sun: "I don't want to see you anymore! Don't you dare to come into my house!"

After a while, the little girl slowly opened the door, but the sun started pushing in. The girl shouted, "No! Get out!" and slammed the door in the face of the sun. A little later, she started to open the door again, and again the sun came in.

The girl cried, "What is this? Aren't you ashamed? Don't you have any pride? I am scolding you. Aren't you offended? Why don't you stay away? Why do you want to come into my house?"

The sun smiled and said: "That's my nature. If anybody opens the door, I just walk in. I don't wait for your invitation, and I am not offended by your scolding. All I need is an open door. If the door is open, even if you don't want me, you can't stop me from coming in."

You Don't Know Who I Am!

Jesus is standing with one foot in humanity and with the other foot in divinity.

- SAMARPAN

Jesus was made irrelevant by pedestalization, by being kicked upstairs.

- ALAN WATTS

His disciples said to him, “Twenty-four prophets have spoken in Israel, and they all spoke of you.” He said to them, “You have disregarded the living one who is in your presence, and have spoken of the dead.” (52)

Jesus was very much aware that even his disciples didn't fully recognize their Master (cf.43, 59). He says, “I am standing here, right before you, and you talk about the past? Do you need twenty-four dead prophets to identify me as the one I am? Don't you have eyes to see and ears to listen?” To come in contact with a teacher like Jesus, we need to be anchored in the Here and Now, otherwise we will miss him. The disciples were ready to accept him as the Messiah, but the acceptance came from the mind. They analyzed the scriptures and found that Jesus was very much like the one who was announced to come. However, Jesus says, “Forget about all you have learned. Come here into the Now, don't think, don't memorize, don't analyze! Just open your eyes and see!”

Today Jesus has many millions of followers across the whole world, but only a few know who he really is and what he stands for. Most of his followers believe in a distorted image created over the centuries by the popes, bishops, and priests. Jesus was not the “one and only begotten Son of God.” He was a fully

blossomed human being, and, as every enlightened Master, he had realized his divinity. If we want to give true consideration to Jesus, we have to acknowledge both aspects of his being. As a human being he was part of this creation; as an enlightened Master, he was one with God. Jesus insisted on that issue. Therefore, he said:

You have become like the Judeans, for they love the tree but hate its fruit, or they love the fruit but hate the tree. (43b)

The Jesus proclaimed by the churches is from somewhere up in the skies. Therefore, we can't follow him or take him as a model for our own awakening. We will never be like him, as they say, so there is nothing left to do – aside from worshipping him as the Lord. This is not what Jesus was teaching. He said, "Look here, I am you, and you are me. Drink my words and recognize the Truth of who you really are. Discover the Light within and you will be like me!" With this assertion, Jesus is perfectly in line with the great Masters of many different spiritual traditions. An awakened one does not intend to show you your inferiority; he is a constant reminder that he is God, and that you are God.

When the ego dies, there is only Divine Consciousness remaining. Enlightenment is the recognition that – as an individual mind – you are nobody at all. Only the ego makes you believe in the illusion that you are somebody separate from the Divine. Just close your eyes, feel your inner body, and rest for a while. Then see whether you can find somebody! Is anybody in there? You may find some thoughts referring to your "idea of me," but this is just a temporary happening within the mind. These thoughts have no substance at all. The interesting question is: "Who is aware of these thoughts? Who is watching these thoughts? Who is aware of the breath and the body sensations?" Look closely and you will find out that this mysterious watcher or witness is not a particular somebody, but pure, impersonal awareness. And this is what you really are. You are Consciousness; you are Awareness; you are the Divine Light within.

The historical Jesus is dead and his unique human body most probably will not reincarnate again. However, the Cosmic Jesus, this "Christ Consciousness," is

always vibrantly alive in the Here and Now. If you are ready and willing to go into deep silence, open your heart, and listen to the words of Jesus, he will, for certain, be with you. And if you are sincerely longing for a spiritual guide, an enlightened Master will come into your life and teach you. Jesus has many faces and he appears in many different bodies, teachings, and mystical traditions. If you are so blessed to meet and fall in love with a living Master, you actually meet Jesus, because both speak exactly the same language of Truth.

Look at the living one as long as you live, otherwise you might die and then try to see the living one, and you will be unable to see. (59)

Finding a living Master is a great divine gift, because he or she will tremendously help you to bring Light into the darkness of ignorance. If not, you still can look to the Living One instead of wasting your lifetime with worldly attachments or by just waiting for heaven to come. God is always here, and you can meet Him everywhere and in every moment. Enjoy this magnificent creation with total awareness and you will see the Divine; search for the Light inside, and you will find the Divine. Become like a child, clean your dirty glasses, and look with innocent eyes. You will be amazed how many miracles are revealed in the simplest things. Life itself is a tremendous miracle, and it is far beyond any scientific explanation. To a certain extent we have some fleeting and fragmentary scientific insights about how things happen, but we will never understand why they happen the way they happen. Attempting to find an answer to the latter question is like trying to fill the ocean in a cup. The only reasonable conclusion is: “It is like it is and it is perfect as it is.”

It’s an outstanding aspect of our materialistic society that spirituality has been made nearly irrelevant. Our cultural values are almost exclusively based on becoming somebody, on achieving something, and on seeking a maximum of temporary “pleasures.” The Churches, on the other hand, like to spread the message that the Kingdom of Heaven is somewhere in the beyond. So why should we bother too much? Jesus, however, in the Gospel of Thomas, gives us a radically different perspective. “Examine the present moment!” he tells us, “Look here and look now for the Light instead of steadily postponing your awakening!”

What Jesus is telling us here is that we have to use our present lifetime to spiritually grow and wake up. This is what this lifetime or any other incarnation is really for! We are talking about nothing less than the meaning of your life! The mind simply can't figure out what this life is all about. The most gifted scientists throughout the world have not been able to create even a microbe. So what miracles do you want to seek for, as the greatest miracle is constantly unfolding right before your eyes? Instead of desperately trying to figure anything out, just come here into the Now and stay in silent amazement. Jesus is patiently waiting before your house. Do you really want him to stay outside in the cold? So be gentle, open the door, and invite him to come into your heart.

Neither This Nor That

We have to go beyond the outer appearances of the senses and beyond the concepts of the mind, and open us to the reality of the Christ within.

- BEDE GRIFFITH

The Master is all around and within you.

- SAMARPAN

Jesus said to his disciples, “Compare me to someone and tell me whom I am like.” Simon Peter said to him, “You are like a righteous angel.” Matthew said to him, “You are like a wise philosopher.” Thomas said to him, “Master, my mouth is wholly incapable of saying whom you are like.” (13a)

Peter obviously has no idea who Jesus really is. He takes him for a “righteous” moralist or some judge teaching us what is right and wrong, good and evil, holy and unholy. He still is strongly attached to the duality of the sinner and the saint. But Jesus isn’t talking about sinners and saints, and he doesn’t provide us with a new set of moral rules or legalistic restrictions. All of these rules and judgments about “right” or “wrong” are illusionary dividers, because the Ultimate Reality can’t be divided. God is the One and creation is the One. Can anything exist in separation from the Divine? No, this is not possible, because there is nothing but God. So there is no point in accepting one half and throwing the other half away. Either everything in this creation is holy or nothing is holy. Yet, we can easily see that dividing what by nature is whole and holy is an inherent feature of the thinking mind. Jesus clearly says:

A person said to him, “Tell my brothers to divide my father’s possessions with me.” He said to the person, “Mister, who made me a divider?” He turned to his disciples and said to them, “I’m not a divider, am I?” (72)

Jesus was teaching Oneness and, therefore, he transcended any kind of moral code or human institution of religious authority. His words are a call for awakening, an invitation to find the Truth within instead of relying on rules that are made, controlled, and sanctioned by someone else. Once you have discovered the Truth, you don’t need rules anymore. Being aware and true to yourself, you just spontaneously know what is up in the present moment. Anyway, it’s impossible to label or define a particular behavior as either “sinful” or “holy.” Take, for instance, a poor, hungry child who steals a loaf of bread at the local bakery. Would you dare to say that this child committed a sin?

Furthermore, Jesus never pretended to be an angel. In an utmost beautiful way, he was totally human. Neither did he play holy and nor did he attempt to appear as a supernatural being. Peter is generally considered to be the founder of the Catholic Church and, actually, his mistake has been perpetuated by the Church for almost 2000 years. The Catholic doctrine is still dividing, judging, and threatening. Jesus has been put upon a divine pedestal so that he is forever out of reach for us normal human beings. Peters’ argument originates from what we have called the thinking mind, which incessantly divides reality into good and evil, pleasant and unpleasant, acceptable and non-acceptable aspects. However, Jesus is not adhering to any type of “moralizing” doctrine. The Truth is that Jesus didn’t teach any doctrine or belief system at all. Rather, his message was: “Come here, into the present moment and everything hidden will be revealed to you!”

Matthew, on the other hand, believes that Jesus is like a wise philosopher. This already sounds much better because philosophy literally means: “The love of wisdom.” However, when we take a close look at what the philosophers say, we easily discover that their assertions mostly have little in common with the wisdom of the sages. Philosophers rely upon the logic of the working mind, which certainly is a marvelous instrument for scientific purposes. However, logic is always based upon the concepts of true and false, valid and not valid, sound

and unsound. The judging, moralizing mind is good for nothing and the working mind is fine, as long as we do not try to analyze the Ultimate Reality. The dualistic functioning of the working mind is not appropriate when it comes to the Truth – which is pure and undivided Oneness.

Of course, there is some Truth contained in what the philosophers find, but it is mostly incomplete or single-edged because the nature of Truth is definitely paradoxical. The ancient philosopher Heraclitus, for example, said that everything is permanently changing, which is obviously true. Parmenides, on the other hand, argued that nothing ever changes, that the Being is permanent, which is also true. And thereafter, of course, the disciples of Heraclitus and Parmenides got into a war, defending their masters and “the only Truth.” The point is that these philosophers obviously spoke about two entirely different issues. Heraclitus was referring to our ever-changing perception of the inner and outer world, whereas Parmenides focused on the underling Being or Pure Consciousness, which actually never undergoes any transmutations.

Since the Ultimate Reality is Oneness, it is logical that conventional logic cannot be applied to what-really-is. Theology is defined as “the rational study of the nature of God,” which is a contradiction in itself because God cannot be rationally analyzed. Trying to do this is utterly arrogant, although thousands of volumes have been written by people claiming to know everything about God. Real wisdom is not dependent on the intelligence of the working mind. It spontaneously emerges from the rootedness in the Being, in the present moment. That’s why we often find amazingly wise people among those who haven’t had any sophisticated education at all. So Matthew is also on the wrong track, because Jesus, without any doubt, is very wise, but he certainly is neither a theologian nor a philosopher!

The best answer by far is given by his disciple Thomas. He steps beyond the mind and speaks from the heart. He is totally touched by the amazing charisma of Jesus, but he is not willing to spoil his experience by uttering some shallow words. In humbleness, he accepts his not-knowing rather than trying to understand what can’t otherwise be understood. Furthermore, he is respectfully addressing Jesus as his Master, thus bowing down in devotion to the enlightened one. Acknowledging Thomas’ words, Jesus says:

“I am not your master. Because you have drunk, you have become intoxicated from the bubbling spring which I have measured out.” And he took him and withdrew and told him three things. (13b)

It is interesting that Thomas is usually labeled as the “unfaithful” one and therefore “inferior” apostle. This negative view violently collides with what we are told in the Gospel of Thomas wherein Jesus virtually urges us to not believe but to wake up and seek for the Truth within:

Seek and you will find. (92a)

Did Thomas not thoroughly and faithfully follow the advice of Jesus, whom he obviously cherished as his beloved Master? Without holding back, he drank the words of Jesus and got intoxicated to the point that his ego mind was completely destroyed.

Jesus was aware that Thomas had been truly listening over the years. In other words, Thomas was ready to wake up and reach to the highest realms of Consciousness! He, in other words, recognized the holy presence of Jesus because the same sacred flame had been ignited in his own heart. Therefore, Jesus wants Thomas to understand that he no longer needs a Master, as he now has discovered the Eternal Light within. So he decides to separate him from the other disciples in order to transmit his deepest secrets. The “three things” could symbolize the Holy Trinity, the three aspects of the Divine. These three aspects are the Father (or the creative power of God), the Son (symbolizing God coming to earth in these human bodies), and the Holy Spirit (which stands for the Divine Light or Consciousness). Furthermore, the entire Gospel of Thomas is most likely an unbiased collection of the secret mystical teachings that Jesus had transferred to his awakened disciple, Thomas.

When Thomas returned to his companions, they asked him, “What did Jesus say to you?” Thomas said to them, “If I tell you one of the things

which he told me, you will pick up stones and throw them at me; a fire will come out of the stones and burn you up.” (13c)

Thomas realized that the other disciples were not ready to be confronted with the entire Truth because they were still strongly holding on to some beliefs, judgments, and rational viewpoints. Touching these would just trigger verbal aggression and fruitless discussions. Sooner or later his fellow disciples would become aware of their ignorance and suffer from heavy guilt feelings. That's why there is no point in telling them what Jesus said. The Truth cannot be heard when we are not yet ripe. If these teachings had been meant for the other disciples too, Jesus would have spoken in their presence. So it's really a great blessing for all of us that the sacred treasures of the 5th Gospel have recently been revealed through the mysterious workings of the Divine.

Fire, Sword, and War

Not only do we know God through Jesus Christ, we know ourselves through Jesus Christ

- BLAISE PASCAL

The only way to deal with an unfree world is to become so absolutely free that your very existence is an act of rebellion.

- ALBERT CAMUS

Perhaps people think that I have come to cast peace upon the world. They do not know that I have come to cast conflicts upon the earth: fire, sword, war. (16a)

This certainly is one of the most misunderstood sayings of Jesus. In the Middle Ages, the Roman Catholic Church took it as an invitation to organize “holy crusades” against the Muslims and kill countless innocent people. We of course find the same type of misunderstanding when we hear the Muslim terrorists proclaiming their bloody “Jihad,” which also means “holy war.” They refuse to see that Muhammad was rather talking about an inner spiritual struggle than about the need for practicing physical violence in the name of Allah.

So what kind of fire is Jesus speaking of? It is the fire of Love, the fire of purification. Any kind of fire – be it natural, electrical, or nuclear, destroys, illuminates, and transforms. The fire or purgatory Jesus is speaking of is necessary before we can change and reach a higher level of awareness. Therefore, a real Master will not pity or comfort you; he will push you back into

the cleansing fire of hell. Some disciples hate their Master for doing this, but the Master knows that this is the only possible pathway to absolute freedom and peace of mind. Jesus says:

Whoever is near to me is near the fire, and whoever is far from me is far from the Father's kingdom. (82)

Whoever dares to approach a Master like Jesus will stumble into his Love fire. This fire will destroy his ego and transform him into pure gold. Fire, however, is very painful, and the fear of getting burned is tremendous. This special fire hurts immensely because it destroys all that is meaningless and unworthy in us. The ego is just a bundle of thoughts, and when all the beliefs, judgments, and imaginations are burned, the ego will have to die. It is painful, because we worshiped this useless garbage for so many years. We somehow cling to it even though it has created endless misery.

So gather all your courage and jump into Jesus' Love fire. Let him burn all of your desires, hopes, and dreams. Allow him to destroy your past as well as your future. All you are identified with is just a mental delusion, so better get rid of it! The fire will be terrible as long as you resist or hold on to your false self-image, but as soon as you surrender and let go, the fire gains a completely different quality. Instead of inflicting pain on you, it's suddenly soothing or even cooling you. This is the point at which your whole existence is being transformed. The ego vanishes, just as water evaporates when you heat it up. The flow of your energy shifts from the outside to the inside and from the thoughts to the present moment, to the Being itself. This is a real U-turn. As your ego dissolves, your life becomes so much lighter, and you can easily enter the Father's Kingdom. Referring to the required deconstruction of the egotistical mind and any institutionalized belief system, Jesus says:

I will destroy this house, and no one will be able to build it. (71)

The sword Jesus is carrying is of course not a real sword. It is the sword of discrimination between the permanent and the impermanent. This one is not meant for amputating limbs or heads, but it cuts very sharply through the mind and the illusion of duality and separateness.

Becoming a spiritual human being is not about placing one extreme against another – the holy against the unholy, abstinence against sensual pleasures, or the positive thought against the negative thought. Truly living is learning to creatively dance with all of these different energies. Don't make any "holy program" for your life. If you and your partner are in the mood for physical love, enjoy having sex and savor it with total awareness. There is nothing wrong about sensuality. As Ron Miller accurately said, "Lovemaking is no less holy than the kiss of peace in church." Give your 100 percent to whatever you feel attracted to do or not to do, instead of thinking about what you should do or not do.

Many people make a lot of money by teaching their clients how to "think positively." This is pure nonsense, because the stronger you repress a particular kind of thought, the more power you give to it. Fighting the mind with the mind doesn't help. Instead of resisting, just ignore the mind and the thoughts. Anyway, these thoughts are good for nothing and nobody needs them. They only serve to emphasize the ego's existence.

Many roads lead to the Divine and in the end they are not as different as they may at first glance seem. In any case, they finally lead into a total surrender to the workings of the Divine. If you give yourself fully to God, God will give Himself fully to you. In most spiritual traditions, we find the pathways of Bhakti, Jnana, and Karma. These ancient Hindu terms refer to the pathways of Love, wisdom, and selfless action. The term "Yoga," which includes all three pathways, means unification or becoming "whole again." The path of Yoga, to say it more precisely, is not about unifying different parts; it's about the recognition of THAT which has never been divided or separated. The Bhakti way is the path of Love. Seekers of this type devote their very heart and soul entirely to the Divine or the enlightened Master. Their path is total faith, absolute surrender, and unconditional love. The Karma yogi serves others in a selfless way. The secret of Karma Yoga is the absolute non-attachment to the work or the results of it. Karma Yoga, thus, is giving everything and expecting nothing. The Jnani, finally, is the one who realizes his divine nature through knowledge, wisdom, and the direct mystical experience.

Most modern Advaita masters are Jnani yogis. Their path is the crystal-clear discrimination between the finite and the infinite, the real Self and the illusionary self. In the tradition of the famous Indian Saint Ramana Maharshi, they ask: “Who am I?” This is a very special question because Ramana rejects any intellectual answer to it. His method is truly radical because he advises us to seek straightforwardly for the Source of the root thought, which is the “I-thought” itself. If we come to know from where this I-thought arises, nothing but the pure Self will remain.

Another ancient method of spiritual enquiry is called “Neti, Neti,” which means “Neither this, nor that.” By finding out what we are not, we gradually exclude the thoughts, feelings, perceptions, sensations, all the imaginations, and eventually, every possible concept or definition of “me.” What then remains is beyond words and descriptions. It’s just pure Divine Consciousness. Ramana Maharshi objects that in order to say, “I am neither this nor that,” the existence of an “I” or ego is still required. Nevertheless, the Neti-Neti method definitely is a valuable analytical meditation tool insofar as it can help to dismantle the artificially created self-image we usually believe in. Jesus cannot simply be placed into one of these different categories. He was complete and – as we clearly see in his words and deeds – he certainly was aware of all these wonderful pathways.

I would like to add Samarpan’s pathway too. I call it the path of the lion. This peaceful lion is neither fighting nor applying any kind of violence or resistance; however, he is totally willing to go through the most dreadful hell of heavy feelings whenever they show up. He ruthlessly accepts what-is and is courageous enough to face the most frightening dragon. By doing this again and again his awareness steadily grows, and he will be able to realize the Truth of who he really is. Surrendering to what we don’t want to feel is probably the most direct pathway to transcend duality and to become fearlessly rooted in the Here and Now.

Jesus was aware that war and conflicts could not be avoided. His teachings were so drastically different from the conservative Jewish doctrines that he unleashed a real spiritual revolution. He wiped away all the ancient beliefs and ridiculed the power games of the Pharisees. He was teaching Oneness, but by doing this, he separated the whole world. The ministry of Jesus was not a mere continuation or extension of the old belief system. He rather came with a radically new approach. It is like turning on a bright light in a previously dark room. The light

immediately destroys the darkness, and nothing of it is left over. The darkness simply disappears and is replaced by the light.

Jesus knew that this would not be possible without triggering a collision between the ancient belief system and the new perspective. Both can't simply be married because one viewpoint totally excludes the other one. Truth by nature tolerates no compromise. Therefore, Jesus says:

Nobody drinks aged wine and immediately wants to drink young wine. Young wine is not poured into old wineskins, or they might break, and aged wine is not poured into a new wineskin or it might spoil. An old patch is not sewn on a new garment, since it would create a tear. (47b)

Jesus knew what would inevitably come, and, walking the path of the lion king, he even beautifully accepted the inconceivable pain of torture and crucifixion. Although he had the choice to withdraw, he preferred to stay and face the ultimate dragon. Jesus was not a masochist; he rather sacrificed himself and accepted to go through this horrible procedure for a higher reason. The actuality that an enlightened Master of his form had been treated in such a devilish way indeed had an enormous impact on the evolution of human consciousness. The very sad irony is that we probably wouldn't know anything about Jesus if he had not been crucified. Jesus was very much aware that the fire he thus ignited would not cease to burn after his death. As we can see today, Jesus' Love fire is still blazing, and it will continue to blaze until the end of times.

I have cast fire upon the world, and look, I'm guarding it until it blazes. (10)

What are trials and tribulations, conflicts and war, violence and bloodshed "good" for? Are they really good for anything? The point is: As long as we are not ready, willing, and able to step beyond collective selfishness and a dualistic perception of the world, we obviously need conflicts, misery, and sufferings in order to learn, understand, and progress. Without conflicts, most people would

live in a cemetery and there would be no conscious evolution whatsoever.

We don't really know how all of this works together and why this or that is needed. Looking back at our life story or at history, we often can see that even the most disastrous experiences and events were good for something. In Western Europe, for example, we witnessed constant wars and deep hatred between France and Germany. However, the last world war and the Holocaust were so incredibly horrifying and repellent that these countries literally "woke up" and have now lived in peace for many decades. A great evolution of Collective Consciousness has happened and the overwhelming majority of Germans today are open, friendly, and peaceful people.

We just don't understand the ways of God. But understanding the ways of God is neither possible nor required. Just by living our lives with awareness we discover that God is pure Love and that Life is a perfect happening. There is no way and no need to change anything. If anything needs to be changed, it will change anyway. Once we know that, we can relax and just enjoy life. It may seem a paradox, but a total surrender to the mysterious workings of the Divine is rewarded by ultimate peace and a subtle, but lasting happiness. This is not bondage. It is the absolute liberation of any kind of bondage.

THE NATURE OF THE MIND

The Heart Wears no Disguise

By Kathryn Phillips

What do you see
When you look at me?
Do your eyes tell all
But how can that be
For what I truly am
Is hidden from view
The real me
Is on the inside
Of me and you You
shall not see me
Until you open your eyes
For the Heart can wear
No such disguise...

The Wedding Guest

As told by Sri Swami Satchidananda

Once, a fellow received an invitation to a wedding party. He went to the party very simply dressed. But the host happened to be a very rich man, so all the other guests were very elegantly dressed. When the fellow arrived, the gatekeeper stopped him and demanded, “Hey, who are you? Where do you think you’re going?” Everyone just stared at the fellow. In fact, even the owner of the house pretended to not recognize him.

So the fellow went back home, borrowed an expensive suit, and returned to the party. Immediately, the same gatekeeper said, “Please, please come in. Our master has been looking for you. Where did you go? What happened to you? Please come this way.” And he escorted him to the dinner table.

The man sat down, and when everybody started eating, he picked up his food and began throwing it all over himself. He took a little pudding and rubbed it on his jacket; he took some bread and stuffed it in his pocket; he poured the soup on his pants. “Hey, what are you doing? Are you crazy?” asked the other guests.

“Oh, no, of course not. I’m just eating.”

“That’s not the way to eat!”

“Yes, but when I came before, dressed in my usual way, nobody would feed me. Now, when I am dressed like this, everybody is ready to host me. So, obviously, the food is being offered to the clothes, not to me.”

Who Is Dying?

Death is nothing but just changing our jackets.

- SRI SRI RAVI SHANKAR

Molecules dissolve and pass away, but consciousness survives the death of the matter on which it rides.

- DEEPAK CHOPRA

**Whoever discovers the interpretation of these sayings will not taste death.
(1)**

We are strongly identified with this body, with our self-image, and with these feelings. When somebody asks us who we are, we say, for example, “I am a psychologist, I am a man, I am a woman, I am an American, I am a European, I am a Catholic, I am a father, I am a wife, I am a scientist, I am a handyman,” and many other things as well. Alternatively, we respond to our momentary condition and say, “I am hungry, I am curious, I am angry, I am depressed, I am happy, I am enlightened,” and so on. But is this actually a good description for what we really are?

We usually have some very solid ideas about who we are and how we are. And we are attached to some weird story about “me.” In one way or another, we tend to repeat our life story thousands of times, and we are not even aware of it. However, what we usually believe to be our “true biography” is nothing but a mere collection of memorized experiences from the storehouses of the past. Actually, we are rather talking about thoughts and imaginations pointing to past

experiences, and, in addition, these thoughts and imaginations continuously change their appearance. Therefore, saying that our self-image is accurately mirroring past experiences is not true. Our self-image is rather based on a very unreliable construction consisting of memories and thoughts that merely refer to past experiences. Just honestly inquire whether you are truly able to exactly recall even your most recent experiences! If you speak the Truth, you must admit that you can't! Most of it will be lost forever.

Forensic psychologists know very well that the so-called eyewitness is utterly unreliable. On one hand the eyewitness actually observes his own blurred reality projection and on the other hand, the memory of even this distorted experience gradually deteriorates. The point is that all of these experiences do not reflect anything real, and in addition to that, they no longer exist. They are all gone. The whole past is gone. There is no past anymore. There are only thoughts about the past, but the past itself will be gone forever. So there is no need to be concerned about it, because anything coming from the past is just virtual reality.

Living this life is being exposed to continuous change. Nothing remains the same. Experiences come and go; feelings come and go; memories come and go; thoughts come and go; all kinds of ideas about who I am and how I am come and go. All of this is not dependable. It is not even real. So what about this construct of ideas about “my” identity? Is there anything solid we can rely upon? Is there anything permanent about this “me?” Is there anything that will eternally survive after death? Even the body, which may seem dense and solid to you, is subject to continuous change and reconstruction. During your lifetime, the body undergoes endless transmutations. And finally, after a fairly short while, this body will definitely die and disappear forever. It will not live eternally. It will be rotting in the soil of your grave together with everything you “attained” in this life and with everything else that made up your identity in society. So believing that you are this body or this mind is indeed a very limited perspective. Jesus says:

Two will rest on a bed: the one will die, and the other will live. (61a)

They live in the same house,

rest in the same room, and lie in the same bed and yet there is a major difference

between these two persons. The one who will die is identified with name and form, mind and body, and therefore is spiritually dead even before the death of the physical body and the false self occurs. But the one who will live has transcended name and form and thus became one with the Eternal Self which, by definition, is beyond birth and death. He knows that – as an individual human being – he is just a tourist on this earth, making a quite short holiday. In his perspective, death is not the end of existence but merely a transition from one state of being into another. This realization is an unfathomable gift, because Jesus says:

Blessed is he who came into being before coming into being. (19a)

This utterly deep mystical saying can be interpreted on three different levels. On the first level, it refers to the liberated individual having fully realized that God dwells in him, and that he dwells in God (cf. 84). On a second level, the verse also points to the reality of the so-called Bodhisattvas and Tulkus, enlightened Masters choosing to reincarnate for the sake of all sentient beings. They already have come into real Being in former lives and are now ordained to be among us in order to spirituality uplift and enlighten humanity through their boundless and unconditional Love. On the third and deepest level, Jesus speaks about the nameless and unchanging Absolute, which is the essence and Source of all that-is, ever was, and ever will be.

To taste THAT which in substance is permanent, you have to turn inside. You have to come here, into the present moment, again and again. Only here will you realize your true nature, which is beyond all of your thoughts and far beyond these animal bodies. Here in the silence of your being it is all quiet; here you discover your innocence, your purity, your peace. Here, in the immaculate stillness of the Now, your eternal divine essence will be revealed (cf. 85). You will never find it in your thoughts because the mind can't possibly figure out who you are.

Who you really are was never born.

Who you really are is eternal, limitless, and unbound.

Who you really are is beyond time and space.

Who you really are is Divine Consciousness.

Who you really are will never taste death.

As long as we do not realize our Eternal Beingness and instead believe that we are this body-mind, the inevitability of death will be a dreadful perspective. As a matter of fact, the fear of death is deeply rooted in our materialistic Western society. Actually, the issue of death and dying is more or less taboo. However, do we know anything about what really happens in the moment of death? We can see that those of us who desperately try to hold on to a life that is bound to expire tend to experience a “difficult” death. On the other hand, it is witnessed that in the moment of death sometimes the whole room seems to be filled with a sacred Light and an all-pervading peace. From the Masters, we even hear that death itself can be a lovely experience and that many of us attain the highest realms of Consciousness precisely in this moment. Near-death experiences more or less point in the same direction. The most common experience seems to be a blissful vision of pure and unstained white Light. It is also very interesting to see that those who “came back” often changed their ways in a radical manner and hence, in deep gratefulness, dedicated their entire lives to serving the Divine.

Can we prepare for death? In the Buddhist tradition, we find the advice to always be aware that death can tap on our shoulder at any moment of the day. Does this mean that we have to live in constant dread or sorrow? Obviously not! Quite the contrary. This powerful technique is meant to be an incentive to ruthlessly enjoy the wonder of Life in the ever-present Now. It is meant to bring us here, back home, into the very core of the present moment. Here and only here do we find the greatest treasure ever, which is peace of mind. Being able to live a harmonious and serene life is an invaluable gift from the Divine and by far the best preparation for death. Live peacefully and you will, for certain, die peacefully! As Samarpan says, “Death is nothing to be afraid of. It’s a natural part of life. These bodies come. They grow, they change, and then they die. This has nothing to do with who you are.”

The Mind Is Powerless

But only he who, himself enlightened is not afraid of the shadows.

- IMMANUEL KANT

Ego implies unawareness. Awareness and ego cannot coexist.

- ECKHART TOLLE

Lucky is the lion that the human will eat, so that the lion becomes human. And foul is the human that the lion will eat, and the lion still will become human. (7)

The lion is a symbol for power and respect. Just as the lion is the king of all beasts, the ego mind is worshiped as the ruler over the world. We gave all our power to the mind program, because we are in fear of getting punished. If we don't follow the mind's instructions, he freaks out and punishes us with unpleasant feelings like guilt, fear, and panic. We all have learned a lot of useless things in school, but nobody told us how to deal with heavy feelings. Instead of learning how to boldly face the lion, we were conditioned to escape from all kinds of unpleasant feelings. Psychologists call this defense mechanism avoidance behavior.

The trigger for avoidance always is the fear to feel what we don't want to feel. The real problem is that this kind of behavior is self-rewarding. Avoiding the fear reduces the fear for a short while, but in the long run the fear of the fear steadily increases and a lot of psychological disorders and strange behaviors are being created. Fear is the cornerstone of the mind's illusionary power. Many

dreadful thoughts are linked to anxiety. We are afraid of getting bruised, humiliated, ridiculed, rejected, or disliked, because all of this again triggers unpleasant feelings. But who is afraid? Looking closely it is the ego itself that is in fear. Dislike, humiliation, and rejection are dangerous attacks against the mind's false self-image, and this "idea of me" has to be protected and defended. The ego, therefore, pretends to be a lion. Nonetheless, the ego is totally powerless because it has no existence separate from the thoughts.

The whole ego is dependent upon the idea of being somebody separate from everybody and everything else. We steadily compare ourselves to others and thus develop either a positive or negative self-image – which is basically the same rubbish. When we want to feel superior, we try to dominate others, and when we feel inferior, we tend toward submissive behavior. In both cases, there is a mutual dependency and the mind is in command. Without this false concept of separateness, we wouldn't have any crimes or wars. If I realize that you and I are one and the same Being, how can I then do any harm to you? I would just hurt myself, wouldn't I? As long as this illusionary mind is worshiped as the master, we will have no freedom and no peace on this planet. The lion called "mind" will eat us and destroy all of our human qualities.

Looking closely we find out that thoughts are just nothing. Thoughts are just thoughts. They come, and they go. If we don't cling to them they just vaporize. Some teachers advise us to neutrally watch the thoughts. However, this will not be recommended here. This technique can surely help us to become more aware of the incessant chattering of the thinking mind, but, at the same time, the danger to once again become entangled with incoming thoughts is imminent. You can easily observe that your attention is the real source of power. It is, in other words, the power supply for the mind. If you give, for instance, your whole attention to some pessimistic thoughts, problems, or conflicts, they will inevitably grow and the mind will torture you in return.

Focusing your attention on "positive thinking" doesn't help either, because the positive thought by nature includes the negative one. It just has moved into the background for a while. Steadily thinking that you are a "good" person is hard work, and it actually means that you somehow believe yourself to also be a "bad" person. So you are once more caught by your selfjudgments, though all of these are just fleeting and arbitrary thoughts. Instead of watching the thoughts or compulsively trying to think positively, just totally ignore the thoughts and, by that, you will drop all of your judgments too. Know that the mind can only

“exist” through the thoughts, because the mind, after all, is nothing but a casual collection of thoughts. Stop the thinking process, be quiet, and the lion will die, so that you can devour him (cf.98).

So how should we proceed? Your attention is pure energy, and this energy wants to flow. Therefore, it has to be softly guided in another direction. As soon as you notice that some thoughts want to come, just turn inward and give your attention to either the breath, the body sensations, or – if there are any – to your feelings in particular. By ruthlessly feeling whatever you feel you will easily discover that no feeling will stay forever. In the very core of the feeling, there is just silence and peace. In the beginning, this might seem difficult to you because the mind still attempts to come in through the backdoor. Then you might say, for example, “I feel so fearful because I am wrong.” However, the feeling itself is not telling you this kind of thing. It is the mind judging you by making you believe that you are not worthy enough. Feeling the feelings purely, without any idea or judgment, is like pulling the teeth of the lion – as Samarpan would say. Practicing this for a while will reveal the lion as just being a ridiculous small mouse. Actually, “he” is not even a mouse; he is nothing at all.

The lion called mind has to be domesticated. Instead of accepting him as the master, you have to make him your servant. In the role of a servant he is marvelously functioning as the working mind; as the “master” he is a terrible tyrant. Don’t underestimate the thinking mind, because this little devil is very tricky, and he, for sure, doesn’t want to die. As soon as you lose your awareness, he will immediately try to take over again. If you do not notice that you are thinking, you are powerless. Therefore, your awareness needs to be thoroughly cultivated. It’s not as difficult as it seems. In the beginning, it can be helpful to close your eyes for a moment and give your undivided attention to the inner body. Provided you stay aware, you will witness how the mind is incessantly trying to distract you with irrelevant thoughts. You can practice at any time of the day and it’s completely effortless. By doing this for a while you will learn to become rooted in the Now and your awareness will naturally grow. This is how you start to become a vibrantly alive human being, gratefully enjoying every moment of your wonderful life.

Your awakening can happen at any moment – that’s true, but it won’t happen by feverishly waiting for it. Waiting and hoping will even destroy your awareness, and you will find yourself dwelling again on some thoughts or fantasies about an imaginary future. You can expect to get caught by the mind in a million ways.

Don't worry, because this is just normal. So relax, smile, and take it easy. Falling into the mind's trap time and again is no disaster at all. Instead welcome it as a new and precious opportunity to teach your awareness. The more often the lion catches you, the better you will become in successfully escaping from him.

Sometimes the mind appears to be the winner, but sooner or later he will die. You will absorb him like food, and thus the lion still will become human. The mind's inevitable destiny is death. He can't escape from his fate. Any dictator is bound to disappear into nothingness. Look at all these "powerful" fools who wanted to conquer the world. For quite a long time Hitler, Alexander, and Napoleon believed themselves to be or become the masters of the world. Today everybody is just laughing at their incredible arrogance and stupidity.

Throw away all of your judgments and false beliefs and let the mind burn in the fire of your awareness. Don't postpone anything. It's time to wake up! There is no other time for your awakening but now! So use your time well because you are here to claim your birthright, which is freedom, peace, and joy. Don't be afraid, because anyway, you are not alone. Jesus is always near to support you in every possible way.

The Ego Will Perish

Drop this identity that you are somebody. You are nobody. You are nothing. You are the non-dual.

- SRI SRI RAVI SHANKAR

As long as you think that you are somebody, you are not. When you realize that you are nothing, then you really are something.

- SRI SWAMI SATCHIDANANDA

A grapevine has been planted apart from the Father. Since it is not strong, it will be pulled up by its root and perish. (40)

This grapevine obviously is the little “I,” this powerless ego, believing itself to be a “somebody,” separate from the Divine. This “I” is not only growing apart from the Father; it, likewise, feels unconnected to everybody and everything else. The main function within the ego is dividing everything what-is into separate parts, into this and that, here and there, good and bad, inside and outside, past and future, me and you, your religion and my religion, “my true beliefs” and “your false beliefs.” The individual mind thus is not able to recognize the Oneness of the Ultimate Reality.

On another level, we can observe the collective egos of groups, countries, political parties, sects, and institutionalized religions. Being integrated in a group of thoroughly programmed “believers” sometimes seems to legitimize deep hatred and the most horrible crimes. Therefore, the warlords adore using propaganda as a powerful tool to program the collective mind. The Holocaust is

just one example of the workings of this ugly mechanism. In history, as well as in present times, wars and intercultural conflicts are obviously based on ever the same disgusting principles. This of course applies also to any kind of religious fanaticism. As a matter of fact, it still frequently happens that people are ready to kill each other in the name of God! Sad to say, but throughout history, Christianity has been extraordinary successful in “executing” this job.

Whether it is collective or individual, the ego can only exist through defining itself as being separate from nature, other people, other groups, and, ultimately, even from God. Once this has been done, it becomes easy to exclude and depreciate what, according to this false definition, doesn't belong to “me” or “us.” That's why the ego and only the ego is the root cause of all the problems we see in history and the world today. Rich countries exploit poor countries; Christians and Muslims kill each other; racists consider black people to be inferior to the white race; materialistic greed destroys nature; males rule over females, and so forth.

On the individual level, the ego is the result of our identification with the body-mind mechanism. The ego is, as has already been said, nothing but a collection of past stories, thoughts, memories, judgments, and imaginations. All of these create a great many useless expectations. Whenever things are not happening the way we expect them to happen, we become angry, sad, disappointed, unhappy, frustrated, or even aggressive and violent. Then we judge ourselves or others to be “wrong” or “sinners.” And when we do not find anybody to quarrel with, we blame God for His cruelty and His “imperfect creation.” This is like saying, “Oh God. I want my own will to be done! I obviously know better than you, so why don't you listen to me?”

All of this is pure rubbish, and you know that it is. Since it was planted and seeks to exist in separation from the Father, the ego is a very weak grapevine. As a matter of fact, it is absolutely powerless. It has no free will, and it doesn't know anything about the Truth. It doesn't even exist. Everything is perfect for the way it is. On this, we can totally rely, although we will never understand why it is like it is. If we need wars, misery, and sufferings in order to wake up, what can we do? Therefore, nothing needs to be changed, and changing would be impossible anyway. Any evolution or progress can only and exclusively happen through the graceful workings of the Divine.

So it is your choice. If you want to continue suffering, hold on to the mind and

stay convinced of your knowing better. If you believe you can change the world, make an attempt, and you will experience that it doesn't work. Anyway, at the end of this lifetime, death will tap on your shoulder and all of this bullshit radically ends. This whole body-mind mechanism will be pulled up by its root and perish one time for all.

Masks and Roles

To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment.

- RALPH WALDO EMERSON

Our faith in others betrays that we would rather have faith in ourselves.

- FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

**His disciples asked: “When will you appear to us and when will we see you?” Jesus said: “When you strip without being ashamed. And you take your clothes and put them under your feet like little children and trample them, then you will see the son of the living one and you will not be afraid”.
(37)**

Little children show natural and spontaneous behavior patterns. They are not afraid to exhibit how they really are. Infants don't try to make a false show for anybody. They just are the way they are. Therefore, it is delightful to watch them, and we are always deeply touched by their innocence and refreshing spontaneity. Have you ever seen a very young child feeling ashamed when it is naked? Shame is the result of feeling separate, and this feeling is gradually built up through the inevitable programming by parents, relatives, teachers, and the whole rest of society. As long as the child is like a little Buddha, it is not bothered by any thoughts. In the absence of thoughts, there is no shame, and whoever is not ashamed to be the way he or she is, behaves in a natural and spontaneous way. Then, no masks are needed anymore.

While growing up, we are programmed with a great many concepts about who we are and how we should or have to be. We are instructed which behavior is “wrong” and which one is “right.” This is tremendously confusing, because we furthermore learn that a certain behavior or feeling is “good” in one situation and “bad” in the next situation. And even this is not consistent. In addition, we learn, that – in order to be a really worthy member of this society – we have to become a particular somebody else. That’s why we eventually end up being afraid to show our true faces and simply be the way God created us. Occasionally we even feel guilty or ashamed when we just authentically are the way we are.

Trying to please other people, we need a lot of clothes or masks. Sometimes we are even wearing heavy armor in order to hide who and how we really are. Have you noticed how many different faces you show in your daily life, even during one single day? Your facial and bodily attitude varies all the time according to the situation you are in. With whomever you get into contact, your verbal and nonverbal behavior changes. Sometimes it switches so dramatically from one mode to another that you seem to be a totally different person. Whether you are with your partner, your parents, your boss, your colleagues, your friends, your children – your behavior is subject to considerable changes.

We play so many roles in this life, and these roles are like temporary masks behind which we bashfully conceal our true faces. However, even these countless roles are inherently unstable. Depending on your moods and the present situation, you are, for example, a certain type of mother, and a few minutes later you are a different type of mother. You can be a funny mother, a serious mother, a permissive mother, a rigid mother, a happy mother, an unhappy mother, and many other “mothers” too. So what kind of a mother are you really? Are you actually any mother at all? Or is your “being a mother” just one particular role that you play in this interesting game called life?

These roles basically make up our identity, our idea of “me.” We always tend to create a solid identity but as can be easily seen, there is nothing permanent about the roles we play. They are like “fluid” masks, and all of these masks are false. We wear these masks as a result of our mind programming. We want to fit into this society, and, therefore, we try hard “to do it right” in every possible situation. Instead of spontaneously being the way we are, we all day long do our best to fulfill the expectations of other people. We spend a lot of time worrying about how to behave correctly in upcoming situations, and we make plans about how to become a “better somebody” in the future. This permanent circular

thinking process leads to nowhere and creates the everpresent fear to fail and to be judged as “wrong,” “ugly,” or “guilty.”

Therefore, Jesus recommends:

“Do not be concerned from morning until evening and from evening until morning about what you will wear!” (36a)

But how can this be done? How can we get rid of all these masks, worries, and plans? How can we forget about our false identities that we loved so dearly? Behind virtually all the masks, we find the fear to be a failure in this society. We don’t dare to be the way we are because we could be labeled as “misfits,” “rebels,” “losers,” or “sinners.” The result is self-hatred and non-acceptance of what-is here now.

The issue is to make peace with all the so-called “unpleasant” feelings. Making peace with fear implies the readiness to give your whole loving attention to the fear and to entirely feel how it feels. Instead of trying to avoid the fear, go deep into the fear, into the very center of the fear (or any other feeling that wants to come). Treat all these feelings as your beloved children and welcome them as gently and as softly as you can. Forget about all the upcoming ideas and just feel the feelings purely. Doing this you will make an exciting discovery: The emotional storm is strongest on the outside border of the fear. In the very center of the fear, it is as silent as in the eye of the hurricane.

While practicing this with your total awareness, you will notice that the mind permanently tries to interfere with some thoughts or judgments. He might tell you: “Don’t do that. It is too dangerous!” or “No, no, no, by no means do I want to feel this!” Quite often you will observe that feelings come with a “story” attached to them, a story like, “I feel guilty because I did this or that,” or “I am afraid because I will be punished.” However, these are just thoughts, and feelings are just feelings. They don’t have any meaning at all. Don’t give them your whole power. As soon as you find yourself dwelling upon some thoughts, gently redirect your full attention to the emotion itself. This is how we gradually learn to be more aware and to accept ourselves the way we are. Hence, we will no longer be ashamed to get rid of our masks and to show our real faces.

It seems paradoxical, but this is the only way it works. We all have learned how to avoid feelings. Either we repress the feelings, or we search for some distraction. In either case, there is no progress. The feeling will visit you time and again. If you repress it, it will not get smaller but bigger. And the longer you try to run away from your own feelings, the more power you give to the mind. He will threaten you to behave as expected, otherwise you would be punished with guilt feelings and fear. Only by wholeheartedly being with all the feelings, instead of repressing, avoiding, or expressing them will you be the master of your house again.

Meister Eckhart said, "A human being has so many skins inside, covering the depths of the heart. We know so many things, but we don't know ourselves! Why? Thirty or forty skins or hides, as thick and as hard as an ox's or bear's, cover the soul. Go into your own ground and know yourself there!" So feel invited to get totally naked. Just dare to throw away all of your worn-out garments, masks, and false identities. Celebrate, dance, and fall in love with the one you really are. Stop trying to be somebody else or to do something else. Find out who you really are and discover that you are perfect the way you are. Anyway, it is impossible to be somebody else. Once you accept yourself without wanting to manipulate anything, your heart will open up and Jesus will appear as bright shining Christ-Consciousness.

Do Not Follow the Mind!

Inside of me there are two dogs. One is mean and evil and the other is good and they fight each other all the time. When asked which one wins, I answer, the one I feed most.

- SITTING BULL

To make the right choices in life, you have to get in touch with your soul.

- DEEPAK CHOPRA

Grapes are not harvested from thorns, nor are figs gathered from thistles, for they do not produce fruit. A good man brings forth good from his storehouse; an evil man brings forth evil things from his evil storehouse, which is in his heart, and says evil things. (45a)

In this saying the “good” man and the “evil” man are just metaphors. Actually, there is no such thing as a good person doing “good things” or a bad person doing “bad things.” “Good” and “evil” deeds just happen, because there is no individual doer responsible for them. Life is a happening, not a doing and everything that happens, happens according to the workings of God’s Cosmic Law. It happens because it is supposed to happen. We are not in control; God is in control, – always and forever!

In this relative world, we cannot but perceive duality or division. There is high and low, tall and small, left and right, hot and cold, inside and outside, male and female, right and wrong, good and evil. This ever-present polarity determines our ordinary perception and our experience of everyday life. As a matter of fact,

it is this dual perspective that creates the relative world. The underlying Ultimate Reality, on the other hand, is beyond polarity. The Ultimate Reality cannot be divided. It is pure Oneness. God is Oneness. Consciousness is Oneness.

To get a taste of the Ultimate Reality, a major shift in perspective is required. To do this, we have to come back here, again and again. Here we are in the center, in our middle, and there is no duality. To go left, I have to leave the center, to go right I must also. And this is true for each and every kind of polarity. Standing in the center means standing in our divine nature. Leaving the center means standing in the mind or ego. All the judgments about “good” and “evil” emerge from the past programming of the mind. Judgments are nothing but useless thoughts, and these thoughts create a distorted reality. Samarpan therefore, says, “The judgments are the sin, not the action.”

So how are the “good” and “bad” things being created? Is there any difference between the person producing “good” things and the person producing “bad” things? To answer this question, we have to consider thoughts, speech, and actions. Out of our thoughts, a certain quality of speech and behavior is generated. Manifesting negative thoughts leads to ugly speech and awkward actions.

Normally, all of this happens in an automatic way. Most people are not aware of this process. They unconsciously worship the thinking mind, and therefore, these mistakes inevitably must happen. When somebody arrogantly calls you a “sinner,” he simply is not aware that these disrespectful words are a mere result of his past mental programming. He is actually speaking from his own selfish mind. These words hurt you because you believe them to be true. Why do you believe in them? You believe in them because your mind has been programmed with the same garbage. That’s the one and only reason. So don’t waste your time worrying about these things. You are fine the way you are because it is exactly the way the Divine wants you to be.

A sage has thrown away all of this stinky old garbage. He or she gives no attention to any thoughts coming from the judging mind. Whenever such a thought arises, the wise person immediately withdraws her attention and comes back here, into the silence of the present moment. Only when you are aware can you notice when a thought arises and immediately sense the inherent quality of the respective thought. It will then be easy for you to discriminate whether the thought comes from the ego mind or from your real Self. Becoming more aware

therefore is pure Divine Grace. It is the most precious gift you can receive because only awareness will set you free from the dictatorship of the thinking mind. As Sri Swami Satchidananda beautifully said, “There are two voices in you, the lower self and the higher Self. If you can hear the voice of your higher Self, then you can follow what it says. You will enjoy the journey. It takes you on because growing is natural, not painful.”

Crystal-clear awareness is the nature of enlightenment. And enlightenment is nothing less and nothing more than your very nature. Although you are bound to live as a mortal and limited individual, the core of your heart and soul is eternal and divine. And you share this divinity with each and every single human being on this planet. Therefore, a sage will never judge or depreciate you. When he looks at you, he sees his own Self in a different body.

The enlightened one naturally abides in the Here and Now. He stands like a rock in his center and thus remains in touch with the Eternal Source. The core of his being is silence, love, and subtle happiness. Any thoughts, words, or actions arising from here are harmonious, spontaneous, and illuminating. They are for our best, because instead of creating more suffering, they support our own peace and happiness. The secret words of the Living Jesus are not borrowed from any dusty storehouse of the past. Rather, they are a pure manifestation of Divine Love and shine the fresh Light of Truth. Discovering the Eternal Truth and becoming a loving human being is your final destiny. It can happen any moment, and it will inevitably happen. So rather than worshipping the selfish mind, open your heart, carefully listen to Jesus, and wake up!

Circumcising the Mind

If the problem can be solved, why worry. If the problem can't be solved, worrying does no good.

- SANTIDEVA

It's the nature of the mind that he is not happy with whatever-is.

- SAMARPAN

His disciples said to him, "Is circumcision useful or not?" He said to them, "If it were useful, their father would produce children already circumcised from their mother. Rather the true circumcision in spirit has become profitable in every respect." (53)

Although it may seem to be the case, the point that Jesus is making here is not mainly about circumcision. So let's make it short. From a modern scientific viewpoint, the surgery to remove the male foreskin can become necessary for medical reasons, but usually it is neither required, nor has it to be forbidden. In the Jewish and Muslim traditions, it is practiced for religious reasons, while Christianity, in general, does not require it. We don't have to go into the issue of female circumcision resulting in the mutilation of the external genitals, because this obviously is nothing but a barbaric violation of female dignity. The only reasons for this horrible practice are ugly, insane male ideas about reducing the sexual drive of women and destroying their natural ability to enjoy sex.

One thing is for certain: Having a foreskin is not a birth defect or an illness that has to be cured. It is just the way God created us, and His perfect creation cannot

be improved. It is an outstanding feature of the mind that at no time he is at peace with what-is. Although God is always perfectly caring for each and every one of us, although Life is giving us exactly what we need in this moment, the mind is never satisfied with that which is available right now. Even in our prayers we are constantly asking to either get something or to get rid of something.

Not welcoming or accepting what Life gives us right now causes tension and suffering. Desiring something that is not here projects our thoughts into some future – which will never happen the way we imagine it to happen. Regretting something or feeling guilty, on the other hand, sends us back into a non-existing past. In either case, the mind pulls us out of the present moment, and we get lost in some worthless thoughts or imaginations. Therefore, as Jesus points out, a radical “circumcision” of the thinking mind as the root cause of all sufferings is needed. This easily can be done by just withdrawing your attention from the thoughts. Circumcise your mind and you will find the peace and freedom you are looking for. As Samarpan asserts, “The mind is the only problem we ever have. Without the mind we are in paradise.”

Jesus said, “The Father’s kingdom is like a person who wanted to kill someone powerful. While still at home he drew his sword and thrust it into the wall to find out whether his hand would go in. Then he killed the powerful one.” (98)

Does Jesus advocate the killing of any other men – the Romans, perhaps? No, certainly he does not. Let us not forget that he speaks about the Kingdom of the Father, and nobody will attain the realm of heaven through violence and bloodshed. So who or what is this “powerful being” that is eventually being killed? Is it the devil? No, it is obviously the ever-judging and ever-divided ego mind that remains in power, unless we destroy “him.”

The ego will be made innocuous, but first the sword of discrimination has to be sharpened and field-tested in our very own house. In other words, we first have to enquire about our true nature, cultivate our awareness and then, without any regret, circumcise and cut off what belongs to the illusion of the false self. This

is how we get ready to bring down the tyrant mind and receive the Light of Truth.

Therefore I say, if he is destroyed, he will be filled with light, but if he is divided, he will be filled with darkness. (61c)

The Business Mentality

The Truth brings no man a fortune.

- JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU

If you focus on success, you'll have stress. But if you pursue excellence, success will be guaranteed.

- DEEPAK CHOPRA

Buyers and merchants will not enter the places of my Father. (64f)

This is what Jesus concludes after narrating a fairly long parable about the attitude of “buyers and merchants.” These people perfectly exhibit the attributes of what we can call the business mentality. Of course, the parable likewise points back to our own attitude towards God and a spiritual life. The person who is inviting others for dinner is a metaphor for the enlightened Master generously scattering his seeds of wisdom. Everybody is welcome but only few are willing to put God first. The story is about a person who was receiving guests. When all the preparations for the dinner had been made, the Master sent his servant to invite people with a good reputation. And this is what happened:

The slave went to the first and said to that one, “My master invites you.” That one said, “Some merchants owe me money; they are coming tonight. I have to go and give them instructions. Please excuse me for dinner.” (64a)

The first “businessman” is obviously convinced that he is a very special somebody. He has to go and give some very important instructions to other merchants, otherwise they would probably “be lost.” What would the world do without his knowledge and know-how? Don’t we see this all day long? Just turn on the TV and watch any political discussion. What these people are doing is not about communicating. They instead fight each other, passionately trying to praise and defend their arbitrary beliefs. Everybody has a different view and yet all of these people seem to possess the “only truth.” If only they could change the world according to their imaginations! Then we certainly would have paradise on earth. All of these moralists and politicians pretending to know what is best for us and for the rest of the world have caused endless misery. The final outcome of this attitude of knowing-it-all-better is repression, terrorism, and war. Nobody knows better than God. Wanting to change what is already perfect is just a stupid idea, and it would be impossible anyway.

The slave went to another and said to that one, “My master has invited you.” That one said to the slave, “I have bought a house, and I have been called away for a day. I shall have no time.” (64b)

A “real somebody” of course is always stressed, and he has never time for what-is-now. So many things need to be done, new plans have to be conceived; money has to be invested; meetings have to be attended to; crucial decisions ought to be made. For this person, there is really no time left for meditating or simply relaxing in the Here and Now. Maybe this man finds some free time when he is living in retirement? Perhaps he first needs to die? One thing is for sure: Now, in this moment, no relaxation is possible. However, Life only happens in the Here and Now. When we have no time left for just being here, then we also have no time left to be truly alive. The same happens with the third businessman:

The slave went to another and said to that one, “My master invites you.” That one said to the slave, “My friend is to be married, and I am to arrange the banquet. I shall not be able to come. Please excuse me from

dinner.”(64c)

A businessman is continuously occupied with planning and performing some actions. Behaving in this way, we get distracted and miss the treasures that Life wants to give us right now, and even for free. The third guest is the typical doer, the so-called “self-made man.” He is always busy achieving something in order to attain some future goals. Being identified with the “doer” is the core of his self-image. So he of course shows no willingness to listen to the Master’s words, because the Master will tell him that events happen and deeds are done without any individual doer involved.

**The slave went to another and said to that one, “My master invites you.”
That one said to the slave, “I have bought an estate and I am going to collect the rent. I shall not be able come. Please excuse me.” (64d)**

Of course, a good businessman is totally focused on making money and acquiring material possessions. A core feature of the merchant’s attitude is to sell products for at least triple the invested value. The ideal procedure would probably be to give nothing and, at the same time, expect a fortune in return. This attitude is very common in our materialistic society and it eventually creates poverty, envy, and hatred.

We often find the trading mentality even in the relationship with the “beloved” partner. Obviously, there is no real love involved then. This kind of “love” is just a lie and it is based on a mutual dependency: “I give you this and I expect that in return,” or, “I will love you under the condition that you behave as I expect you to behave.” This is worth nothing because true love is unconditional. True love is about giving, not about taking. As Jesus points out, the trading mentality often is involved while doing prayers, fasting, or some other spiritual technique (cf.14) The seeker then says, “Okay Lord, I am willing to pray and to meditate, but only if you reward me by giving me ‘this’ and/ or taking ‘that’ away.” This is how we are trying to make deals with the Divine, and it will never work. And if it works, it merely means that you are in line with the plans that God anyway has for your life. You may then imagine that you did it, but you didn’t do or achieve anything.

Life just happens as it happens, and it is always perfect exactly the way it is.

Priests are selling prayers, and they don't feel ashamed to take money from the poorest, but God is not a merchant (cf.100). No pope, no bishop, and no priest has ever had a valid license for buying or selling God's Grace. In the Middle Ages, many people gave their whole fortune to the Catholic Church in order to "buy" redemption from hell and eternal suffering. This is just disgusting and yet it still happens – on a smaller scale – especially in poor countries. Besides the fact that Jesus didn't own anything but his garments, he never asked a wealthy man to donate in favor of his own spiritual community. As we know from Mark the donor was rather instructed to give the money directly to the poor.

The slave returned and said to his master, "Those whom you invited to dinner have asked to be excused." The master said to his slave, "Go out on the streets and bring back whomever you find to have dinner." (64e)

The Master had been trying to invite the most renowned, respected, wealthy, and successful people from his hometown. However, their minds are so hopelessly overloaded with myriad thoughts, worries, plans, and greed that there is no time and no motivation left for seeking the Truth. The Truth cannot be misused for material purposes and therefore, in the eyes of those people, it is worth nothing at all. As long as we behave like these buyers and merchants, there is no way to enter the Kingdom of our beloved Father.

That's why the Master decides to give his whole attention to the neediest of the neediest. He finally invites those who are homeless because they are at least not in fear of losing something. They are not busy with all kinds of activities, and, therefore, have a lot of free time. Since they are devoid of any material wealth, they will be grateful for everything they can get for free. Moreover, being really hungry, they will totally enjoy receiving the Master's gifts. Jesus says:

Congratulations to the poor, for to you belongs heaven's kingdom. (54)

Nonetheless, there is no real point in just being poor. Even a beggar can have a business mentality. If he, for example, says, “Oh, you gave me money; therefore, I love you!” or, “You don’t give me anything; therefore, I curse you!” then he is also making deals.

The one who is really “poor” is the one who has freed himself from the ego mind and all his attachments and identifications. That one is not stupid but poor in mind or spirit. Only an empty mind is ready and willing to receive what Jesus is teaching us. As Wei Wu Wei said, “The mind has to be empty to see clearly.” Those wealthy and respected businessmen are not spiritually hungry and, therefore, they do not appreciate the Master’s generous invitation. Buyers and merchants are worshiping the overloaded mind, permanently craving for more useless possessions. The trade value of the Truth, they believe, is by far not high enough to feel attracted.

Males and Females

A pure woman is better than a hundred yogis. Women are more open to love God.

- NEEM KAROLI BABA

What would men be without women?

- MAHARISHI MAHESH YOGI

Simon Peter said to them, “Make Mary leave us, for females don’t deserve life.” Jesus said, “Look, I will guide her to make her a male, so she too may become a living spirit resembling you males. For every female who makes herself male will enter the kingdom of heaven.” (114)

In Jesus’ time, women were considered to be second-class human beings. Actually they belonged to the most marginalized groups of the Jewish society. Who wonders, as we still find the same imbalance in many countries of today’s world? Even in the Western countries women’s liberation is still a fairly young concept. It was only between 1900 and 1920 that women were allowed to matriculate and graduate from the universities. Simon Peter’s demand reveals a deep aversion to women and at the same time strong jealousy feelings. Jesus obviously had a very close relationship with Mary, and he didn’t discriminate against women in any way. This was very unusual. At that time, the Jewish priests didn’t teach women or accept them as disciples; Jesus, however, had many female followers because he did not exclude anybody for such stupid reasons. He was far above this kind of judgments and prejudices.

There are various ideas circulating about the nature of the relationship between Jesus and Mary, but we don't have to be concerned about this issue. What we know is that Mary was one of the major and most beloved disciples of Jesus, and that he often taught her in private. There is a lot of evidence for her enlightenment, and as a matter of fact, she has been one of the most important Christian leaders after Jesus' death. That's why the famous Orthodox theologian St. Augustine later even bestowed the honorific title of "Apostle to the Apostles" upon her. It is also known that she must have been a very courageous person. When Jesus was crucified, all of his male apostles as well as most of his followers had fled and only two women, – his mother, Mary, and his disciple, Mary Magdalene, stayed and were strong enough to show their devotion in public. Simon Peter, on the other hand, denied being a disciple of Jesus three times in a row.

The Catholic Church still seems to hold on to Peter's strange "female inferiority" doctrine in some way or another. Furthermore, women are more or less suppressed in virtually every religion. This is such ridiculous nonsense, and, as Ron Miller correctly points out, "It's ironic that religions are often more in agreement in the way they sin than in the way they practice virtue." Even God is commonly thought to be a "He," a male person. In modern times some prefer to see God as a "She." Both ideas are of course false. When we use one of these pronouns for convenience, we should, nonetheless, remember that God is not a person. "He/She" is neither female nor male. God is Pure Being or "Beingness" and this Beingness obviously transcends any gender categories. According to Thomas Aquinas, God is not "a being among others." God abides in each and every being as the very heart of Reality. God is here and now. Actually, God is the Eternal Now – as we, in essence, are too.

The real issue about the above saying is gender identity. So what can be said about being a female or a male? From a biological viewpoint, a newborn baby can be easily identified as a boy or a girl, although, in some rare cases, even this is not true. We then talk about "intersex," which refers to certain variations in genetic and genital characteristics that do not allow an individual to be distinctly identified as male or female. Also, the newborn baby doesn't know anything about being a male or female before the end of the first year. Gender identity has first to be conditioned, and the result of this learning process is dependent on the culture, family, and other social circumstances into which we are born.

In general, we have no doubt about our gender, but what is called gender

confusion can happen in many ways. Some people like to wear the clothes of the opposite sex. The motivation for this behavior may simply be the wish for an enhancement of sexual pleasure, whereas there is no actual confusion about gender identity. On the other hand, it can also be an expression of identifying with the other gender. So we sometimes see these people deciding themselves for a hormonal and surgical correction of their gender. Furthermore, we have the phenomena of the androgyne and the bi-gender. An androgyne is defined as a person who may identify as beyond genders, between genders, genderless, or all of these, exhibiting a wide variety of feminine and masculine characteristics. A bi-gender, on the other hand, seems to move constantly between male and female roles, thus apparently switching between two distinct personalities according to the context. So, science undoubtedly has proven that gender identity is not always as permanent and solid as we think it to be.

Going back to the by far most frequent situation, we can see that gender identity is a very strong and crystallized part of our ego structure. It is very basic and it comes directly after identifying as a human being. When we think of a person we met a long time ago, we usually have a blurred memory of that person's face, but we obviously don't forget whether she was a male or a female. Most societies, therefore, only have two distinct categories of gender roles, namely "male" and "female."

Gender identity basically is a culturally constructed and programmed subjective identity, and it is tied to a great variety of specific roles and social expectations. Learning how to be a "good boy" or a "good girl" starts at a very early age. We have different toys to play with; we discover that boys have a penis and girls have a vagina; we are encouraged to do things "boys do in a certain way" or to do things "girls do in a certain way," and, last but not least, we are taught which feelings are okay or not okay for boys and girls. That's why it is generally more accepted that girls appear as fearful, shy, innocent, soft, and "weak," whereas boys are expected to be fearless, aggressive, self-defending, hard, and "strong." As a result of this conditioning, males repress their feminine sides and females repress their masculine sides in varying degrees. Even so, both aspects make up part of each and every one of us. Becoming whole requires us to find ways to marry both sides, to bring them into harmony and a perfect beautiful balance.

Jesus is not teaching Mary to be "like a man" and he is not intending to transform her into a man. She was born as a woman, and she will remain a woman. Nothing is wrong about that and even a "role" can be beautiful,

provided it is played in a natural, innocent, and spontaneous way. If a woman loves to be a housewife, if she enjoys cleaning her home and adores cooking, then she is truly devoted to her role, and it is just delightful to see how perfectly she is at peace with her everyday activities. When we love to do what we do, there is no conflict anywhere and everything happens effortlessly in the flow of the present moment. When we hate what we do, the result will be ugly and then it's time to look for another job or activity. It's as simple as that.

What Jesus is pointing to is our true nature, which transcends the body-mind mechanism, and, therefore, is beyond everything that we may define as male or female. Furthermore, he is strongly rejecting any ridiculous beliefs that only men are allowed to wake up and recognize the Truth. It is easy to realize that Jesus in his words and deeds always showed a special fondness for women. In order to not activate the linear mind, Jesus prefers to talk in metaphors, and this saying essentially is just another metaphor about our divine essence.

The Light of Truth is shining brightly when we realize that we are this Divine Consciousness or Beingness, which is the pure and undivided essence of manifestation itself. The commonly accepted polarities and divisions are just illusions of separateness. Therefore, Jesus clearly says:

When you make the two into one, and when you make the inner like the outer and the outer like the inner, and the upper like the lower, and when you make male and female into a single one, so that the male will not be a male nor the female be a female, ..., then you will enter the kingdom. (22b)

Another interesting non-dualistic view on the masculine and feminine aspect of Being is to be found in the ancient Vedic teachings. Sri Swami Satchidananda summarizes, "God is like a static force that expresses itself through activity. All creation is a manifestation of that force. This is Mother or Nature. Only the Mother (Shakti) can conceive and receive the baby, not the Father (Shiva). The entire universe is Mother. But remember, Shakti cannot dance without Shiva. They are not different gods, but different aspects of the one God. Shiva is expressing or making himself known as Shakti." Shiva and Shakti thus are merely symbols or metaphors. In a non-dualistic perspective the manifested and

the non-manifested definitely are only different facets of one and the same
Totality of Being.

The Timber in the Eye

Knowing your own darkness is the best method for dealing with the darkness of other people.

- CARL GUSTAV JUNG

Let's trade in all our judging for appreciating. Let's lay down our righteousness and just be together.

- RAM DASS

You see the sliver in your friend's eye, but you don't see the timber in your own eye. When you take the timber out of your own eye, then you will see well enough to remove the sliver from your friend's eye. (26)

Beginning in early childhood our minds are inevitably programmed with a lot of rules, beliefs, and prescriptions about how we should be and how we should not be. The first years in particular are vitally important, because what we learn then is deeply engraved upon our psyches. We are continually told what we are allowed or not allowed to think, to do, to say, or to feel. Parents, teachers, priests, and friends give rewards when we "do it right," or they apply all kinds of punishments when we "do it wrong." Being labeled as right or wrong basically depends on how well we fit into their rigid belief systems. We cannot blame anybody for manipulating us in this way because these people are not fully aware of what they are doing. They simply unconsciously pass on their own mind programming. That's all.

As a consequence of this, we start to construct a false self-image or ego, and we

continuously invent a lot of stories and fantasies about who we are and how we are. The problem is that we never succeed in fitting into that self-image. In other words, we are bound to fail and this “sense of failing” is the main reason for our suffering. We artificially divide ourselves into “good” and “bad” sectors. Whatever fits into our conditioned idea of “me” is accepted and whatever doesn’t is repressed. It has to be repressed because the ego feels in danger and, therefore, has to protect itself by all means.

We know a lot of defense mechanisms when it comes to repression. Basically, we repress what we don’t want to see. Because seeing how we really are brings about a lot of unpleasant feelings – especially fear, guilt, and shame. Actually, all of these come together as one package. The favorite defense mechanism of the ego is called projection. When we cannot accept what we have labeled as “wrong” in ourselves, we try to relocate our own “ugliness” and throw it on someone else. Therefore, a deep Truth is expressed by the following old and very wise saying: “Every time you point a finger at somebody else, there are three fingers pointing back to you!”

So the essence of judging others always represents a previous self-judgment. As we become more and more aware, we notice that the mind is putting out judgments all the time. We are not only relocating what we don’t like about us, we also tend to hugely amplify the mistakes of others. The more flaws we can detect in somebody else, the better we feel, because we continuously compare ourselves to others. When we meet a very small person, we feel elevated and superior. When we meet a really tall person, the opposite is true. That’s why we tend to diminish the personal value of others by making them wrong.

Projecting our “wrongness” upon others happens in many ways. When there is nobody around to fight with, we complain about God’s cruelty, the unfairness of life, or our own bad karma. The Truth is that God is Love, that life is perfect, and that there is no such thing as “bad karma.” The word “karma” simply points to the Law of Attraction. This is how Life is miraculously helping us in every moment by arranging the perfect circumstances so that we have the opportunity to learn what we need to learn. By the grace of the Divine we are continuously attracted to the right people and situations. Sometimes this can be very hard and painful, and we then make the mistake of believing that something must be wrong or needs to be changed.

What we don’t like about ourselves is banished to the dark cellar. After doing

that, we feel better, and we believe that we have really gotten rid of it. But it's still in the house and it won't move away. We may not want to see it, but others can see it very clearly. That's why we are walking through life, exposing a lot of big red buttons that want to be pushed. When somebody else pushes our buttons, we curse him or her, but actually, we should be grateful. The other person is just mirroring what we are not willing to accept about ourselves.

Judging others mostly implies the wish to change other people or some situations and circumstances. But even when we try as hard as we can, it doesn't work. It doesn't work because it is not supposed to work. We are not even able to change ourselves, so how should it be possible to change others? Trying to change anything is denying that God is doing His job perfectly well, and this thought is absurd. Nevertheless, the whole world is constantly unsatisfied and therefore, always trying to change something. This is the result of our dividing the world into right and wrong, good and evil, light and dark. This division is projected onto the outside world, but essentially, it is our own house, our own psyche that is divided. We live in a divided house, and we have to make it whole again. Jesus says:

If two make peace with each other in a single house, they will say to the mountain, "Move from here!" and it will move. (48;cf.106)

But how can we do this? Well, some courage is needed, because you have to take a good flashlight, go downstairs into the black cellar, and take a deep look at everything that is hidden there. What is needed is the readiness to accept everything that you find in the darkest corners – without judging yourself or others. Of course, this will confront you with a lot of unpleasant sensations because you now see what your ego never wanted to see. All kinds of heavy feelings will show up and say, "Here I am. I am your child, why did you reject me?" All these feelings want to be felt, because only by feeling what we feel, are we able to heal our old wounds. The path to heaven always leads through hell. That's the way it is. Therefore, Christian mystics speak of the "the dark night of the soul." Vine Deloria Jr., a famous Native American author, once humorously said, "Religion is for those who are afraid of going to hell, whereas spirituality is for those who have already been there."

Welcoming whatever feelings want to come is a most powerful key that Samarpan discovered for us. He invites us to go in the direction that the three fingers are pointing and just feel how it is to be in this body. Accepting all the feelings will result in accepting and loving you as you are. One by one your buttons will disappear and when there are no buttons anymore, nobody can push them. Just seeing and accepting how you are will set you free, and you will no more be a living target for other people. Becoming aware of your weaknesses makes you less vulnerable, and this has an incredible transformative power. We all have our little imperfections, and nobody is without any faults. It's indeed our weaknesses that make us into real human beings, and realizing our humanity is the most important job we have in this life. Rather than trying to be somebody "special" we should become totally humble, simple, and ordinary. It's much easier, and it brings a lot more fun.

When this occurs, we will be able to help others to do the same, and it will happen just by itself and in the right time. It will bring peace into our divided house, and this overflowing peace will naturally spill over to everybody else. Once we make peace with ourselves, we can be in peace with the whole world. However, it's always right here, in this very moment, where it has to start.

MAJOR ATTACHMENTS

Why Do We Seek?

By Kathryn Phillips

Why do we seek
Yet seem only to beguile
Pleasures that please
For just a short while

Why do we aimlessly
Search for these things
Only to find such sorrow
They can bring

For he who seeks
With a selfish mind
Shall discover
Consequences
Of a similar kind

But the wise humble man
Sits on a different throne
He has obtained riches
Far and beyond
And is never alone

He knows of the Grace
Such wisdom has earned
He has 'Awakened'
To the Truth
And can easily discern

He walks the path
Along an Eternal Shore
To find Peace there
Forever more...

The Greedy Milkman

As told by Sri Swami Satchidananda

There was once a milkman who lived in a village where he kept a couple of cows. He used to milk the cows and then take the milk to the next village to sell. But over time, he slowly became greedy and began adding water to the milk. He gradually added more and more water until he had doubled the amount. If he had one gallon of milk, he would add one gallon of water, and then sell it as two gallons of milk.

The milkman did that for a long time, and then finally the day came for him to collect all the money. It came to 1000 rupees. As he was returning to his village, it started to rain. The river was flooded, so he tied the money to himself very securely and started slowly wading across. As he reached the middle, he slipped and fell down; but somehow he managed to swim to the other shore. Immediately, he reached for his money. He opened the bundle and started counting. There were only 500 rupees! He had lost 500 in the river.

The milkman was sitting there very broken-hearted when a wise man approached. "What had happened?" asked the wise man. "You look so sad and dejected." So the milkman explained how he lost his money crossing the river.

"Aha," said the wise man, "I understand now. You are a milkman. Don't worry; you still have your milk money. The water money went to the water; the milk money came with you."

Looking for Attention

Our dependency makes slaves out of us, especially if this dependency is a dependency of our self-esteem.

- FRITZ PERLS

Do not feel lonely. The whole universe is inside you.

- RUMI

Congratulations to those who are alone and chosen, for you will find the kingdom. For you come from it, and you will return there again. (49)

Only a few of us enjoy being alone. When there is nobody around, we tend to feel “lonely.” Very often this feeling of loneliness is linked to anguish, feverishness, or utter boredom. Immediately, the mind becomes active, and we find ourselves searching for some possibility to escape from these unpleasant feelings. Expecting some relief, we then typically turn on the TV, the PC, or we pick up the phone. It even happens that we talk loudly to ourselves in order to hear at least our own voice.

The mind is afraid of being alone because he permanently needs attention from other people in order to emphasize his existence. It doesn't really matter whether this attention comes from the outside world or from within. As our awareness grows, we notice that we are not truly alone when we are alone. We find many different voices chattering in our heads, and the great majority of them are not our own.

Our parents, teachers, priests, friends, and partners – all seem to abide somewhere in the ego mind. Actually, they do provide the elements that make up our mental programming. Without these voices or thoughts, the mind would simply vaporize and dissolve into nothingness. Looking closely, we discover that these voices create a great variety of conflicts, because they are continuously arguing against each other. We can clearly observe this phenomenon whenever we try to force a decision. Sometimes a whole crowd of conflicting voices appears, thus pulling us simultaneously into different directions. This mechanism of the mind produces a lot of tension, suffering, and despair, because we will never succeed to agree to or please all of these contradictory voices. Trying to accomplish this we are bound to fail.

The irony is that these “people” in your head are not at all your business. Do you really want to allow others to decide about your life? Is it not your unique and wonderful life that we are talking about? When we are not aware, we don’t question the validity of these voices or thoughts. We instead focus on them and, in return, we expect to get attention from other people. Being deprived of other people’s attention is commonly experienced as very painful. This is especially true when we love or admire these persons. Therefore, it quite often happens that disciples develop a great dependency on their Masters or teachers.

Attention is the ultimate key for the mind’s existence, and this begins at a very early age. Children sometimes exhibit undesirable behaviors because they then get more attention from their parents. Even very young infants have already learned that loudly crying and screaming is a perfect means to get attention. And it continues like that for the rest of our lives. Teenagers need their friends; lovers need their partners; rock stars need the applauding crowd; actors need their fans; politicians need their followers; religious leaders need their believers; and false masters need their disciples. This list can never be completed because it is endless.

Craving for attention reduces us to slaves and makes us tremendously needy and dependent. Therapists make money by selling their attention, and parents are utterly unhappy when their teenage children suddenly withdraw their attention and give it to their peers. Some people with a negative self-image are even happy when you tell them, “Oh, you are so miserable. I really pity you!” In return, you get attention from this person, and she may say, “Thank you so much. You are really good to me!” This is how our inferiority feelings are steadily rewarded and reinforced by merely getting some attention.

When the mind lacks attention, he feels useless and unworthy. Look what happens to elderly people. They feel worthless because nobody cares about them anymore. For many people, retirement is more a nightmare than a welcome occasion to enjoy their later lives. In nursing homes you therefore can find more depressive people than anywhere else in society. Nobody needs them, and nobody gives them attention anymore.

It's an interesting paradox: The ego mind defines "himself" through feeling separate but at the same time "he" is utterly dependent on other people. Attention is our favorite drug and as any other "hard" drug it creates a heavy addiction. That's why we hate being alone. Yet, enjoying aloneness means freedom from the mind. Only in the absence of thoughts are we really alone and free. The obstruction is our programmed resistance to feeling lonely. Ignoring the thoughts and going deep into this feeling of loneliness, we discover the underlying peace and silence (cf.75). A sudden shift occurs and instead of feeling "empty," a flowering of our inner being starts to happen. Therefore, Samarpan says, "The loneliness is your friend. It is here to show you your fullness." As long as we try to escape from the feeling of loneliness, we will not be able to discover who we really are.

Any kind of bondage is just an illusion created by the mind. Basically, we are already free and nobody can prevent us from being true to ourselves and true to the Truth. This requires some courage because we can't be liberated unless we stop caring about what others might think or say. Don't expect any support on your path to freedom and independence. Your friends will probably judge you, reject you, and hate you, or at least withdraw their attention from you. Jesus, therefore, says:

Congratulations to you, when you are hated and persecuted! (68a)

Stepping out of society is the price for truly being the way you are. Maybe other people will feel attracted to you, and if they are real friends, they will love you the way you are, instead of trying to manipulate you. In the end, it's a game that you can't lose, and the benefits of your freedom are immense. In the Gospel of Thomas Jesus quite often (cf.55;99;101) encourages us to drop all the

dependencies:

Whoever does not hate father and mother as I do, cannot be my disciple and whoever does not love father and mother as I do, cannot be my disciple. (101a)

At first glance, this saying may be shocking, but a good teacher is very tricky in getting your full concentration. You won't learn anything, unless you totally focus on the teacher's words. Triggering our wakefulness is exactly what Jesus is frequently doing. Of course, he never taught us to "hate" anybody. His message was love and not hatred. The issue is a different one: For many of us, our parents are the most respected persons in the whole world, but in order to become free, we need to radically cut the umbilical cord. Often we see elderly people who are still being manipulated by their very old parents, and this mind program even continues to be active after the parents die. What we really are is in no way dependent on our bloodline. True spiritual intimacy arises only with those having realized the undivided Oneness of the Self and this intimacy is, by definition, bondless:

The disciples said to him, "Your brothers and your mother are standing outside." He said to them, "Those here who do what my Father wants are my brothers and my mother. They are the ones who will enter my Father's kingdom." (99)

In other words, we have to free ourselves from the mind programming that our parents and siblings unconsciously inflicted upon us. The "father," "mother," and "brother" whom Jesus rejects here are just symbols for those who are responsible for our mental programming. In this broader sense, teachers, priests, therapists, friends, colleagues, and especially partners tend to act like unfailing "authorities" and over-protecting parents. Instead of doing their own homework, they unconsciously seek to educate and shape us until we eventually will have learned how to become a non-existing somebody else thinking and behaving

according to the norms and rules of society.

In the second part of this paradoxical saying, Jesus is referring to real Love. This kind of love is devoid of any bonds or dependencies. Jesus was absolutely free and totally true to himself. He didn't depend on his close relatives, nor did he depend on his disciples or the religious establishment. And he wants us to become independent in just the same way he was. Our craving for attention, however, creates dependencies. Dependencies create expectations and expectations reduce our beloved ones to mere objects of our selfish desires. The best lover therefore is the one who doesn't need the attention or love of the partner. A needy partner can become a severe impediment to your ultimate liberation (cf.87). True love is supporting the partner – and everybody else – in being totally independent and free. But, first of all, it requires that you drop your own dependencies, and that you are not afraid of being alone.

Loving to be solitary doesn't imply that you have to reject or avoid other persons. You just don't need others for your happiness and you do not depend on receiving their attention. You have found your peace, and you are no more willing to destroy it by applauding to some gossip or by adhering to the uncooked beliefs and judgments of somebody else. Your awakening doesn't require you to sit alone in a cave for many years. When you discover the fullness of your inner being, you will start to enjoy your aloneness. Even in a crowd you will be alone and happy with yourself. Nobody will enter your house without your permission. It's your house, and it's your life! Don't let anybody enter your home, leave his stinky garbage, and rob your peace of mind! Jesus says:

One can't enter a strong person's house and take it by force without tying his hands. (35a)

As a rule, it can be recommended: Don't stay with someone if you don't like to stay with him or her. Merely receiving their attention is not nearly enough. In addition, this "poisoned gift" called attention is never for free. The price is that you behave the way these people expect you to behave. As soon as you are not willing to do that, you will be expelled from the group and quite often then, the repugnant phenomenon of "mobbing" starts to happen.

Whenever you are with people dwelling upon negative thoughts, you can easily notice the narrowing tension that will arise in your body and soul. Groups inevitably create a subtle collective energy field of a particular frequency. A positive field supports your peace and harmony; a negative field does the opposite. Therefore, the sages often urge us to thoroughly watch our company. Negative vibrations are highly contagious and harmful. So be present and listen to the wisdom of your heart: Whenever you feel the impulse to leave, just leave and don't make any excuses. You really don't need to apologize for being true to yourself.

Sometimes, however, it may seem impossible to leave a group. When you are attending a meeting at work and the collective energy takes a weird turn, you may not be able to leave because you might lose your job. However, this is not a problem. You can just secretly shift your attention inwards and be with your breath or any sensations belonging to the inner body. You can do this of course anytime, but it is especially important when you don't want to get drawn into somebody else's mind program. Stay here in the Now and be totally aware. You don't need to get emotionally involved with anything. If you try to defend yourself or fight with another mind, you will inevitably activate your own mind program. That's how we ordinarily get caught, and then we just are like any other player in this stupid ego game. Step back and neutrally watch with a quiet mind. Be careful not to get lost in some judgments because these people simply don't know any better. As soon as the egotistical mind is in command, each and every one of us behaves foolishly.

Going deeply into this matter, we find out that we actually are totally alone and that, at the same time, nobody is alone. Today's world population is estimated to be seven billion people, and this means that in this very moment, seven billion different experiences are happening. Cosmologists are toying with the hypothesis of the parallel existence of a theoretically unlimited number of universes, but the Truth is that we obviously have at least seven billion different universes just on this small and insignificant planet earth! And these are only the human universes. What about the perceived worlds of dogs, birds, reptiles, dolphins, or even insects? Einstein discovered the relativity of physical time but in everyday experience, our time perception is totally relative anyway. When we have fun, time seems to psychologically accelerate and when we suffer, time seems to not move at all. Furthermore, space perception is also relative. When afraid of something our world shrinks, whereas in a relaxed state, we tend to experience an expanded spaciousness.

We therefore cannot enter anybody else's universe. We don't even know anything about our partner's private universe and we for sure don't know anything about all these other seven billion universes. That's why we are totally alone. On the other hand, all these different worlds are just manifestations of the same unified field of Divine Consciousness, which is our true nature, our own Self. Your Self is my Self and my Self is your Self. Your world is different from mine, but both worlds arise like waves in the same Ocean of Consciousness. Papaji would say, "There is only THAT, and you are THAT." So, in a very deep sense, this aloneness is not empty but potentially full of everything. It is the sacred place of Divine Light where everything came from and ultimately will return to.

Money Rules the World

The goal of life is not earning money, but the service of God.

- SRI RAMAKRISHNA

The secret of happiness is not found in seeking more, but in developing the capacity to enjoy less.

- SITTING BULL

There was a rich person who had a great deal of money. He said, “I shall invest my money so that I may sow, reap, plant, and fill my storehouse with produce, that I may lack nothing.” These were the things he was thinking in his heart, but that very night he died. (63)

Money rules the world, as they say. And it is true. How could the politicians rule without spending our money? Look at all the dictators of the world: Virtually without exception, they are all billionaires. The same is true for most churches and a great number of sects. Some of them are worth uncountable millions, and the Roman Catholic Church for a long time has been the richest organization in the world. All of these dramatizing TV preachers in the USA make big money while sects like “Scientology,” for instance, are quite successful in completely ruining their followers. Moreover, no war could be fought without money, because there is nothing more expensive than weapons and armies. All the people in power are rich. In most cases, they have very big private bank accounts and if not, they at least control huge finances. That’s why we can say that money equals worldly power.

However, money brings much more than that. A rich person can buy whatever she seeks to possess, and this feeds the illusion of being important, powerful, and free. Individual power and material wealth contribute a great deal to our reputation in society. All the really wealthy people are famous, and they can count on many admirers. Sex and money are also strongly interrelated. With a well-filled purse, you are able to buy much more sex with beautiful women or men than your poor body can handle. Last but not least, money is an important means for the ego to feel secure, which in turn, makes the insurance companies as wealthy and influential as banks.

So money seems to be the ultimate key for happiness and for becoming somebody very special. Therefore, in rich countries, as well as in poor countries, money is worshiped as if it were God. A lot of people spend their whole lives focusing on the issue of money. Those who are poor postpone their happiness, hoping that some money will come in the future. Those who have money are in constant fear of losing what they have and, at the same time, crave to have more. If you are attached to money and everything that can be bought with money, know that it will never be enough.

However, money can't buy happiness. Nothing can buy happiness. In fact, the opposite seems to be true. Whenever you come to visit an underprivileged country such as India or the Philippines, you will be surprised to see how many happy smiles you earn throughout the day. For sure, these people often have a very hard life and the imbalance between wealthy and poor countries is just disgusting. This is especially true when we think of those who are not even able to care for their most basic needs. This situation of course is a result of the collective egos separating the poor and the wealthy countries. Yet, we don't have to judge this, and as normal citizens, we may donate, but we can't really change anything. First and foremost, we don't understand anything about God's plans. We just know that the Father's will is always done and that Life, therefore, is absolutely perfect. If we need to experience how it is to be rich, the Divine will provide us with a lot of money; if we need to learn how it is to be poor, we will be poor. On this we can trust. Whether we agree or not, it just is as it is.

Does all this mean that money is "bad" for your happiness? No, this is not the point. Money is just money. Money neither makes you happy nor does it prevent you from being happy. Money itself does not create problems; it's our attachment and our devotion to money that makes it difficult. Even giving away all of our possessions will not help, if the ego mind is still roaming around the

same issue. Rather, we have to let go all of our false beliefs and expectations that money will be the solution for everything. This is the only way out. As Alan Watts correctly said, “If you say that money is the most important thing, you’ll spend your life completely wasting your time: You’ll be doing things you don’t like doing in order to go on living, that is, in order to go on doing things you don’t like doing.”

Feel invited to challenge what has been said! Look with a quiet mind and see how it truly is. Let’s examine once again the belief system we constructed around the money issue. We already saw that money is not related to happiness. Why? It is because we usually define happiness as the amount of pleasure we can derive from the world. However, all of these pleasures are all-too-fleeting. We may feel happy when we buy a new car, but after a while the car is just a car – nothing special anymore. When we are attached to food, we enjoy it for some time, and then we get fed up and push the food aside. The same applies to all the other senses. If you overload them, they become exhausted quite quickly. Do you want to sit in a cinema the whole day or listen to music for 24 hours? When the peak pleasure is reached, a great deal of inner energy has been consumed and the body sensations instantly shift into the opposite direction. Feeling high necessarily includes feeling down. This is called the law of polarity. The higher we fly, the deeper we fall. Ask any heroin addict; he for sure knows the dark side of his ecstasy, and yet he is so strongly attached to the high that he continues destroying his health. All of these pleasures are not permanent. They come and go like any other experience.

Being attached to money doesn’t mean freedom; it means bondage. It implies that you transferred all your power to the mind and the thoughts. The more attached you are, the easier the mind can control you. In addition, money doesn’t provide any security. As a matter of fact, wealthy people often feel more insecure than poor people. Robbers, after all, won’t come to the needy ones; they will search for those who are really prosperous. And anyway, there is no security. It is wise to be careful, but what has to happen will happen and there is no way to avoid it. We have no idea what will happen tomorrow or even in the very next moment. Trying to know will just drive us crazy. Therefore, the fortune-tellers are good for nothing. First, they don’t know either, and second, it’s much better to not know anything about the future. Resting in not-knowing on the other hand and totally trusting the workings of the Divine brings deep relaxation and peace.

Money can buy sex, but what is sex without love? Having sex with a prostitute is shallow and empty. In the best case, you will have a short-lived pleasurable time. After a few moments of intense lust and a transient period of relaxation the energy drops down into the cellar and nothing remains. When you do this in secret – like most men – you usually can also experience some nice guilt feelings for free. Sex without love is just nothing (cf. 112b). In many ways it can even be a heavy burden or a terrible torture. Quite often women are forced to have sex, although they are not at all in the mood for it. This behavior has to be labeled as rape, because rape is possible in varying degrees. It may happen as a consequence of the man's begging for sex, his crying for sex, his yelling for sex, or, in the worst case, through aggression and physical violence. In each case, it is horrible for the woman involved.

The reverse also occurs, although not as frequently. When a woman is asking for sex, and the man is not willing or able to satisfy his partner, he gets into serious trouble. His programmed self-image is in utter jeopardy, because – according to our male programming – a “real man” is “always ready and able.” The Truth is that this applies only to very few men and with advancing age, it gets more difficult for everybody. Sex can be nice, fulfilling, and relaxing, but it also can be a curse for both sexes.

Finally, we have the issue of fame and reputation. Having much money attracts a lot of admirers, but at the same time a great number of people will feel envy or even hatred for your being rich. Yes, in the eyes of this society, you may be an established person, and you really appear to be somebody very special. Even so, it is very hard work to stay special and important. Have you noticed how many celebrated rock stars commit suicide or die for some other reasons at a very early age?

In most cases, fame doesn't remain for long and, moreover, there is always somebody around who is even richer and more famous than you. The more important you feel, the more hugely you can fail. Even if money and fame seem to stay for many years, you can't hold on to it. We have come naked into this world, and, like the wealthy man in Jesus' parable, we will leave this world naked. What will happen to all the material things we have hoarded and worshiped during our lifetime? Does it really matter? Devoting our whole lives to what is coming and going is just a waste of time. All these achievements are soon bound to dissolve into nothingness. Jesus, therefore, says:

Whoever has come to know the world has discovered a carcass, and whoever has discovered a carcass, of that person the world is not worthy. (56)

And:

There are many around the drinking trough, but there is nothing in the well. (74)

The whole world is gathering around this empty trough of fleeting pleasures, and none of these will lastingly quench their thirst. Discovering the real well requires digging deeply in order to uncover your true Self. This magical well produces fresh, sparkling water in abundance, and it will never run dry.

Most of the sages of this world lead a very simple and ordinary life and this, of course, was also true for Jesus. These wise people are beyond desire and attachment, and yet they obviously celebrate Life at any moment. They are aware that actually nothing is ever missing, and therefore, their inner being is totally fulfilled with peace and joy. Meister Eckhart said, “Whoever possesses God in their being has Him in a divine manner, and He shines out to them in all things; for them all things taste of God and in all things it is God’s image that they see.”

Since he has it all and is the All, the enlightened one doesn’t need to possess anything belonging to the world. Rather, the secret of the Master rather is a radical letting go of all desires, expectations, and worldly attachments (cf.110). Renouncing the world and richness thus not only refers to money and the materialistic aspects of life but even more to the claim of ownership over all thoughts of “me” and “mine.” In any event, any sense of ownership can ultimately be traced back to a mere collection of selfish thoughts.

What Do You Have?

He who is attached to things is worshipping the mind.

- SAMARPAN

Attachment leads to suffering.

- GAUTAMA BUDDHA

If you bring forth what is within you, what you have will save you. If you do not have that within you, what you do not have within you will kill you. (70)

Another enigmatic saying, but this is the way Jesus teaches us. Any attempt to interpret his words through the linear mind will not succeed. He wants the mind to collapse so that we have to rely on our intuition. Rather than forcing us to believe in dogmatic religious concepts or to rely upon the ancient scriptures, Jesus urged us to see that we are endowed with an innate capacity to explore and recognize the Truth by ourselves. In order to find salvation, we only have to bring forth what is already within us. As the great mystic Meister Eckhart later said, “God does not need first to enter the person because He is already there!”

As has been indicated, we all have been raised as collectors of material and immaterial objects. Depending on our main focus, we collect different things. This leads to the idea of “having” or “possessing” these objects. The more our self-image depends on the things we apparently have, the more special we feel. Some people are just collecting money and gold. Others may collect cars, toys, or garments. Then we have those chasing after reputation and fame, thus collecting fans, followers, or even sexual partners. Quite often we see collectors

of interesting or thrilling experiences, which also includes those looking for spiritual peak experiences. Last but not least we have the knowledge acquirers; they are passionately gathering scientific theories, theologies, or philosophies.

Often we hear people say, “What I have is what I have and nobody will take it away from me!” They really believe in having or possessing the above-mentioned objects, but the Truth is that these things rather point to what we do not have. We may strongly identify with these objects and try hard to integrate them into our self-image, but basically, they are just part of the illusion. Most of them quite quickly lose their attraction and when these bodies die, they are lost forever. So all of these things are not real possessions; they are just for hire. In our materialistic society artificial desires are already being created in young infants, and as an adult one is surrounded by so many useless things that it sometimes feels like suffocating. Jesus foresaw this when he said:

Do not be concerned from morning until evening and from evening until morning about what you will wear. (36)

Sri Swami Satchidananda refers to the same issue when he says, “You may possess things but don’t let them possess you! And don’t hoard things – having more than you need. You won’t know which to use, where to keep them, or how to take care of them. All this will disturb your mind. If you have too many clothes in the closet and you want to go somewhere in a hurry, you will waste hours because you don’t know what to wear. If you just have one or two items, take one, wear it, and go on.” Those who are always concerned about what to wear not only possess way too many things; they also are strongly dependent on other people’s attitudes and judgments. Instead of simply being as they are, they disguise themselves as what they imagine to be a better version of themselves.

Thus, we falsely tend to believe that we are what we have and that our possessions can add something to our personal value. However, identifying with these dead objects and focusing our whole attention on them prevents us from being spiritually alive. That’s why Jesus says: “What you do not have within you will kill you!” The attachment of the ego to all kinds of material and immaterial objects makes us blind to what we already have, and therefore, we live in a state

of drunkenness.

I took my stand in the midst of the world, and in flesh I appeared to them. I found them all drunk, and I did not find any of them thirsty. My soul ached for the children of humanity, because they are blind in their hearts and do not see, for they came into the world empty, and they also seek to depart from the world empty. But meanwhile they are drunk. When they shake off their wine, then they will change their ways. (28)

The mind is always aspiring to get something or to become somebody. He is constantly chasing after some new possessions, believing that these dead objects can bring him happiness or even serve as companions for eternity. However, happiness can never be found in any objects. Maybe there is some satisfaction for a while, but then the mind feels bored again and new useless objects need to be acquired. Actually, there is no end to this vicious circle. Being overfed with these illusionary possessions, we are blind to the unfathomable treasure within.

Jesus said, “The Kingdom is like a man who had a hidden treasure in his field without knowing it. And after he died, he left it to his son. The son did not know about the treasure. He inherited the field and sold it. And the one who bought it went plowing and found the treasure. He began to lend money at interest to whomever he wished.” (109)

This parable points to the Truth that the darkness of ignorance coming from an unconscious way of living often persists over many generations. The treasure has always been there, closer than close, and still the owners do not realize or appreciate it. They never try to look deeper and lift the cover of the treasure box. Eventually, a new generation of seekers arises and searches till they find. So we have to look beyond the realm of the superficial mind, plow up our uncooked beliefs and dive deeply into what-really-is.

The greatest irony is that we already have what we are permanently searching

for. We just have been looking for it in the wrong direction. That's the whole problem. Attachment to all kinds of outer objects is throwing us into a condition of slavery from the mind and thus obscures our true nature by greedy thoughts. Becoming aware of these attachments is required so that we can "shake off our wine," get a clear sight, and rise from the dead.

Realizing the Truth of who we already are, and always have been, only happens in the awareness of the Here and Now. Looking closely, we find that there is no difference between the present moment and our true Self. The Now is what we really are. Diving deeply into the Now, we become vibrantly alive, and we realize that the Being is eternal. The body and the ego will die, but Consciousness itself knows no beginning and no end, no birth and no death. Jesus, therefore, says:

The dead are not alive, and the living will not die. (11b)

Being lost in the thoughts, we can't bring forth what is within us. We then function like dead automatons. By becoming aware that we are Pure Consciousness, we realize that Eternal Life is already ours. The Now has always been and will ever be. The recognition of this is deepening in a natural way, because awareness spontaneously expands by itself and thus creates true richness (cf.81). This is what Jesus is pointing to:

Whoever has something in hand will be given more, and whoever has nothing will be deprived of even the little they have. (41)

Jesus didn't own anything beyond the few things he needed for daily use, and yet he certainly was the richest person in the whole world. He was blessed with the miracle of God-Realization, which is the most precious gift ever imaginable. In sharp contrast to many popes and Catholic bishops, he peacefully lived a very simple and ordinary life in utmost contentment. In many ways, we can say that he was and still is the emperor of the universe. Petty things like money and

material wealth were far beyond his concern:

They showed Jesus a gold coin and said to him, “Caesar’s men demand taxes from us.” He said to them, “Give Caesar what belongs to Caesar, give God what belongs to God, and give me what is mine.” (100)

“Don’t get attached to coins or material wealth!” he says, “Do whatever needs to be done in this society, but don’t forget to focus entirely on God!” So what can we give back to God or to the Master (cf.88)? As God is Pure Love, it is first and foremost our unconditional love, gratitude, and devotion. As many others, this saying sounds pretty much like a Zen Koan because how can we give back what anyway already belongs to the Divine? After all, our very existence as human beings entirely depends on the Heavenly Father. Just becoming aware of this immutable Truth is all that is needed. Everything else will follow by itself.

Jesus thus repeatedly advises us to renounce and transcend the world. However, when he talks about the world, he obviously doesn’t refer to the abundant kingdom of Mother Earth or the divine manifestation as a whole. If we refuse to love and cherish our Holy Mother, we do not love our Father in the Heavenly Skies either. The subtle beauty of a small flower, the graceful appearance of all sentient beings, the incredible power of a massive tree, the awful majesty of an untouched landscape, the stars and the unfathomable depths of space – all of this is here to make our hearts dance, and a constant reminder that God is to be found everywhere and in everything.

Experiencing the nameless elegance of a Lotus flower therefore is not equal to indulging in the great illusion. The great illusion starts to happen as soon as we give names to the nameless, and it becomes much worse when the mind adds some judgments to the names and forms. Saying, for instance, that the Lotus is the most beautiful flower of all creates an artificial division that diminishes the beauty of all the other equally beautiful flowers. Of course, there is an underlying meaning to that, because the Lotus – which is born from the mud (!) – symbolizes purity, love, awakening, and last but not least, the Self or God. So it is the illusionary world of thought – or attachment to thoughts – that has to be renounced before it finally vanishes. Actually, the great Saint Ramana Maharshi

teaches the same lesson: “What we call ‘the world’ is nothing but thought. When the world has vanished – in other words when there are no thoughts – the mind experiences happiness. When it reappears the mind is suffering.” The words of Sri Sri Ravi Shankar summarize the above in a perfect way. He says, “The whole world is here for you to enjoy, but when enjoying don’t forget your Self!”

This leads to the question of what we can reasonably expect to achieve in our everyday life. As spiritual seekers, we all want to get “enlightenment.” However, nobody knows what this should be before they actually wake up. Can anybody explain the taste of an apple to you if you didn’t have a single bite before? Samarpan comments, “We have a lot of ideas about ‘enlightenment’ and they are all wrong. Enlightenment is your birthright, your very nature, and it is very ordinary.” This may explain why most Masters – just like Jesus – live a very natural and simple life. Some are meditating for years or even decades in caves and monasteries, but most of them are among us, spreading their divine fragrance wherever they go.

So what then is the major difference between the perception of those who brought forth what they have within themselves and the perception of the ordinary man? Is the Master permanently abiding in a state of perfect oneness? Yes and no. When an awakened human being takes a walk in nature and looks at two different trees, he or she of course can see that they are different and absolutely unique – which truly is a fascinating and utmost entertaining aspect of creation itself. “This variety is necessary for enjoyment. Variety is the spice of Life” as Sri Swami Satchidananda explains.

However, the awakened one will not label, classify, or judge the trees. He will experience them purely – as whole and holy entities. He will sense how perfectly they are interconnected with everything that-is and ultimately he recognizes these trees as a manifestation of the same sacred essence – which is the Universal Source or Divine Consciousness. In other words, he or she consciously rises above the variety and never fails to see the all-encompassing unity in the diversity. The Jesus saying: “Be in the world, but not of the world” thus transports exactly the same Truth as the above statement of Sri Sri Ravi Shankar. We don’t have to lose our individuality, but we can learn to stay aware that everything comes from the same Source, the same Self, the same Holy Spirit.

THE SPIRITUAL PATH

The Beauty of the Light

By Kathryn Phillips

The lost Soul
Wanders aimlessly
And shall see only
The darkness of the night

But the wise Soul
Constantly seeks
And carries forth
‘The Beauty of the Light’

The Lion and the Sheep

As told by Sri Swami Satchidananda

Once a mother lion was running for her life from a hunter. She was fully pregnant at that time, and as she was running, the baby lion came. She knew that if she didn't stop to take care of the cub, they would both be killed, so she ran away.

Now the place where the cub was delivered was near a big flock of sheep. So, naturally, all the sheep came around. And when they saw the baby, they all took care of it. The lion cub started drinking milk from the mother sheep and grew up as a little lamb. It began to say, "Baa, baa, baa," because what else could it do? That's all it heard. Things went on this way for quite some time. The lion grew up into a nice big lion, but even though it had the body of a lion, it acted like a sheep.

One day, another lion came that way and began chasing the sheep. As the sheep were running, the hunter-lion noticed another lion running in the midst of the flock. So it ran fast, bit the back of the fleeing lion, and made it stop. "What is this nonsense? Why are you running?" it asked.

"Baa," was all the other lion said.

"Hey, fellow, don't you know who you are?"

"Baa."

The hunter-lion, embarrassed by this sheep-like behavior, caught the timid lion by the tuft and brought him to a stream. "Look there! See who you are and stop bleating!" And they both looked at their reflections in the water.

The bleating lion said, "I look like you!"

"Yes, you are a lion."

“Is that so?”

“Yes. Take a good look.”

And as it was looking, its tail went up in the air. It stood up straight and immediately started roaring. Finally, the lion realized who it really was.

What Are You Seeking For?

What you are looking for is what is looking.

- ST. FRANCIS OF Assisi

The sincere seeker is like a man whose head is on fire and is running for water. Nobody can stop him.

- SRI SWAMI SATCHIDANANDA

Those who seek should not stop seeking until they find. When they find, they will be disturbed. When they are disturbed, they will marvel, and will reign over all. And after they have reigned they will rest. (2)

What are your objectives for this precious lifetime? What are you striving for? What are your deepest desires? Are you praying for worldly pleasures? Do you wish to be rich, successful, famous, and beautiful? Is it this that you crave? Do you still believe that those rich, successful, famous, and beautiful people are always happy and contented? As we saw, this is obviously not true. And if they are happy, it is for some other reason, because all these things are not lastingly satisfying. Just open your eyes and look closely. It is not that difficult to see how it really is.

Maybe your prayer is: “Oh Lord, please be my Light and my Salvation!” This would be a delightful prayer, because you are longing for the Light of Truth, and you are looking for freedom from the tyrant ego, for peace of mind. These are what we can call pure desires. If you are sincerely seeking for the Truth, if your heart is longing for freedom and peace, then this is a blessing in itself. It actually

means that you are spiritually mature and, therefore, God is willing to shower His endless Grace upon you. Then you are ready for a spiritually inspired and peaceful way of living. Can you ever be happy and fulfilled when you are not at peace?

Just stay on this lovely path, go where the peace is, where the contentment is. God is your guide and He will never leave you alone. You can totally trust in Him. It's wonderful to be in peace; there is nothing better, actually. And – no matter what the mind is trying to make you believe – it's easy and even funny! So sincerely continue seeking for peace, and you will find freedom from the tyranny of the mind. It's always and only the mind that is robbing your peace. But peace is your very nature, and it can't be taken away! Peace is already here! Peace always was and always will be here. When you discover this, the ego mind will become very upset about losing his power. What you find is so amazing that your little ego will be totally confused and utterly afraid. The thinking mind will try everything to disturb your peace, because when you are in peace with whatever the present moment brings, the mind has no control anymore.

Discovering inner peace as your natural way of being is the end of the mind's dictatorship. Now you can celebrate in amazement and rest silently in the total acceptance of what-is-here right now. You are the only master of your house. You are the master of the universe. It's all yours anyway! God is willing to give you everything. Jesus is telling you to not ever give up the search, even if sometimes, you definitely feel like being thrown back into the darkness of ignorance. In these darker periods of your life, you should remember that nobody, at any time, can be cut off from God's endless Grace and Compassion. Meister Eckhart even said, "Truly, it is in darkness that one finds the light, so when we are in sorrow, then this light is nearest to us." Don't worry too much because the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Whenever you have some doubts about the perfection of your life, just remind yourself that God is pure Love and that everything that happens is supposed to happen according to His will. This actually means that you can't possibly do it wrong. Just keep on walking the path, and you will find what your heart is longing for!

Finding a True Teacher

When the student is ready, the master will appear.

- GAUTAMA BUDDHA

True devotees find the Master even if he goes to the belly of the earth.

- MOOJI

If a blind person leads a blind person, both of them will fall into a hole. (34)

In India, they say that there are three major gifts we can receive from the Divine. The first one is being born as a human being. Only as a human being are we endowed with the innate capacity to become aware of the Truth and realize our God-like nature. Animals perfectly abide in the present moment, but they never become aware of their being here. The second one is when you are blessed with the right questions. This refers for example to questions like: “How can I find peace and freedom?” or “What am I here for?” or “Who am I really?” Many different questions of this kind may arise in your spiritual heart, and all of these are most valuable gifts from the Divine. They actually are a sign of your readiness to wake up. They motivate you to find your own unique spiritual path. The third blessing fulfills itself when you find the particular teacher or Master who perfectly fits your personality and your individual life story.

The whole world is very quick in giving you some advice or telling you in which direction your life ought to go. However, this kind of advice ordinarily has a bad taste. As a matter of fact, nobody knows what you should do. Instead of following another mind and falling into a hole, you better rely on your heart and

follow your intuition. A lot of people seem to suffer from the insanity of “knowing better than anybody else,” and some of them even pretend to be enlightened masters. Especially when somebody tries to appear as particularly “holy” or asks for money and devotion, you should be extremely watchful.

A real sage neither calls for your money nor needs anybody’s devotion or obedience. Facing whatever the moment brings, he remains firmly anchored in peace, contentment, and radiating stillness. If you are sensitive and aware enough, you will easily sense the difference between a true and a false master. As Samarpan explains, “The Master is more like a mentor, a guide, a friend. He is not a dictator or tyrant.” Only an enlightened teacher is entirely legitimized to provide the appropriate answers to your sincere questions. A true Master is he who is capable of guiding and supporting you step-by-step on your journey back home.

Many real Masters are around these days, so you may ask: “What is the difference between those teachers and how can I find the right one?” The surprising answer is: There is no difference at all! There is only one Truth and there is only one true Master! All of these teachers of course look different and as individual human beings, they actually are unlike. They speak their own words of wisdom. They have different styles of teaching. They have a distinct personality and biography and in that sense all of them are indeed unique. A true teacher is one with the Father, and still he or she is a normal human being- just like you and me. What matters is that the same pure Light of Truth is shining through all these beautiful embodiments of the Divine. Looking beyond words, traditions, and concepts, we are marveled and deeply comforted to see that the sages of all spiritual traditions speak exactly the same language.

Through his amazing presence, the Master invites you to realize your full potential as a human being. Rather than trying to make you dependent, a genuine teacher will help you to become totally free and discover your own Self or the Christ-Consciousness as the Master within. It is often said that the Master appears when the disciple is ready. When you meet the right one for you, your heart will know. You will experience a very deep and intimate resonance. You will be able to trust him or her totally. Every now and then, some doubts will arise, but this is just a normal response of the mind’s non-acceptance of your striving for freedom. Until a full blossoming of your inner being has happened – and even thereafter – you will find yourself gratefully enjoying the words of your Master time and again. The attraction to what-really-is has a powerful grip

on you, and you will not be able to let loose again.

Jesus undoubtedly was a great enlightened Master, and perhaps he is the one and only for you. Maybe you do not wish or accept to be with any other teacher. No problem with that! “However, Jesus is dead!” you might object. That’s true, his body is no more on this earth, and he most probably won’t come back wearing the same biological costume. And yet he is still and always among us. His teaching will never die. Sri Swami Satchidananda even says, “It is the teachings that are the Master,” and, “If the Guru dies, he will continue to guide his disciples from the astral level. If the Guru desires to come into another body and continue to serve, then he will come again in another body.” In whatever direction your life may evolve, you won’t be abandoned. If your heart is passionately longing for Jesus, gently call for him, and he will come and find you. So don’t waste your precious lifetime waiting for a Second Coming of Christ in the same physical body. Your eyes might not be able to see him, but Jesus is closer to you than your very own breath. The Eternal Christ loves to dwell in the innermost core of your soul.

Discover Who You Really Are!

I want to make sure you know you are not what you think you are.

- GANGAJI

Only the truth of who you are, if realized, will set you free.

- ECKHART TOLLE

When you know yourself, then you will be known and you will understand that you are children of the living Father. But if you do not know yourself, then you live in poverty and you are the poverty. (3b)

Knowing yourself happens when you realize that any idea you may have about your identity is false. You are neither the body nor are you the mind. This collection of thoughts about “me” and “mine” is not and has never been what we are. We all are the beloved children of the Living Father, and this has to be recognized. This is what this life is all about. The ever-deepening process of discovering the Truth of who we really are is called awakening or enlightenment. However, it is nothing that we can get or become.

In his unparalleled and humorous way of teaching, Sri Swami Satchidananda tells us, “First you were fine. Then you began to de-fine yourself and now the time has come to re-fine yourself again!” As soon as we say, “I am this or that,” we not only define what we are, but moreover, we exclude everything else as not belonging to ourselves. As Meister Eckhart accurately said, “As long as I am this or that, I am not all things.” By defining ourselves, we create all kinds of artificial separations and divisions leading eventually to the most fatal delusion

of being separated from God. According to Alan Watts, “Knowing that you are God is just another way to say that you completely feel with this universe. You are profoundly rooted in it and connected with it. You feel, in other words, that the whole energy which expresses itself in the galaxies is intimate.”

This may sound difficult. We imagine that, in order to wake up, hard work needs to be done. This is not the case. Actually, nothing has to be done, because you already are what you are. Your true nature has always been divine. The core of your inner being is pure Love. So this solely has to be uncovered. It's like the sun and the clear-blue sky hiding behind some dark clouds. The sun and the sky haven't gone anywhere. They just were temporarily covered by the clouds. In the same way, your true nature is clouded by a great variety of thoughts. In most cases, these thoughts are pure nonsense. If we believe in this nonsense – what we usually do – we live in poverty, and we are poverty. We either feel “poor” and “miserable” or we feel “great” and “invincible,” – which is more or less the same poverty. The Truth is: We are neither this nor that. We are neither the body nor are we the mind. What we falsely assume to be will inevitably be lost, but what we really are will endure for the Eternity. Tau Malachi has put it like this: “The one who is lost has never existed, and the one to be found was never born. You are what you are seeking, the bornless Spirit.”

So why should we give our whole attention to this poverty? Why should we surrender all our power to this ridiculous ego mind? Do you know any good reason for doing this? After all, you want to be free, don't you? There is no need to make things complicated, and you are not required to gather piles of complicated esoteric concepts. Instead of being a slave of the mind, you can just be here, in this very moment. Every time you notice yourself dwelling on some thoughts or problems, you can gently come back here, back to how it feels right now. This is all that you ever need to learn, and the Divine is supporting you in every possible way.

Here, in the absolute stillness of the present moment we come to know who we really are. Here we find peace, freedom, and the Divine Light. From here our peace will naturally spread to everybody else. People will come and ask you, “What is going on with you? You seem so happy! How did you do that?” And all of all this happens just by itself, in its very own time. We don't have to do or manipulate anything.

The Tree of Light

The bird fights its way out of the egg. The egg is the world. Who would be born must first destroy a world.

- HERMANN HESSE

The spiritual journey goes from being somebody to being nobody, and from being nobody to being everybody.

- SRI SRI RAVI SHANKAR

The disciples said to Jesus: “Tell us what heaven’s kingdom is like.” He said to them: “It’s like a mustard seed, the smallest of all seeds, but when it falls on prepared soil, it produces a large plant and becomes a shelter for the birds of the sky.” (20)

This is a beautiful parable about the seeker and the spiritual path. Just like the mustard seed needs to fall on good soil, we first have to get incarnated as a human being here on this earth. Enlightenment is only possible when God comes to this earth as an individual human being. Falling on good soil is enough for the seed to sprout. Just by living this life with awareness, the Truth will be revealed.

If a good gardener cares for the soil by working it and adding some fertilizers, the plant will even grow faster and develop healthy leaves and branches. When we are ready to sprout, the Divine leads us to an enlightened teacher who will guide us through all the chaos produced by the ego mind. The Master will pull out all the bad weeds and thus eradicate our unhealthy illusions, beliefs, and imaginations. This may be very painful, because we tend to strongly hold on to

our cherished idea of “me.” Who will we be when this construction is being destroyed? This triggers the fear of getting lost and sometimes, as a reaction to that, a new identity as a “spiritual seeker” may arise. Nonetheless, the love of the Master will annihilate this newly manufactured “somebody” too. It’s nothing else than another bad weed that has to be eliminated. By guiding us through this painful process, the Master showers us with his grace so that the flowering of our inner being can happen.

When the mind attempts to analyze the very small seed, he will not find a miniaturized mustard tree inside. The divine nature of every human being cannot be uncovered by the mind, but the good gardener knows that the seed will sprout in the right time. When he takes a deep look at it, he can already sense the potential tree. As long as the seed doesn’t sprout, it stays as small as it is, and it will remain as insignificant as our little ridiculous ego. As soon as it begins to sprout, it will be totally consumed. It will dissolve and disappear. The gardener will not try to find the seed under the tree, because it will be gone forever.

The ego is bound to dissolve in Love. Walking on the spiritual path will step-by-step kill the attachment to any construct of “me” and “mine.” This imaginary “somebody” has to die. Trying to survive will not help. Once you have learned how to just be, the mind has no chance anymore. He will continue to bother you by producing some nonsense in your head, but who cares? You just come back here, again and again, and everything else will follow. Experiencing how it is to live in this body on this earth is a great help. Getting more and more aware of the body sensations supports us a lot in finding our true ground. Therefore, the body should not be condemned. This body is a marvelous divine machine, and no scientist will ever be able to construct a comparable robot. Without becoming aware of the body sensations, the feelings or the breathing, we would easily get lost in the clouds...

Therefore, the young tree needs to grow in both directions, – under the soil as well as above the soil. Good and strong roots are required, otherwise the tree will fall when the first heavy storms come. The more the tree is capable of resisting any environmental conditions such as storms, rain, heat, and cold, the better the roots and the stronger the grownup tree. The same is true for all of us human beings. In order to support our awakening, life exposes us to many heavy emotional storms. If we endeavor to reach heaven, we first have to go through the hell of suffering. Therefore, the ego also is a gift, because it is the endless misery created by the mind that finally motivates us to walk the spiritual path

and transcend our selfishness. But first, we have to realize our humanity before we eventually become ready to realize our divinity. Heavenly wings are a wonderful thing and yet they are insufficient. In order to stay in balance, we also need firm and healthy roots!

Nonetheless, even the Master's ego is not completely destroyed. When the disciples called Jesus by his name, he would respond and give them his attention. Some minor form of identification with the body-mind remains, and this identification is needed for survival. In a state of complete non-identification, we wouldn't even feel incited to provide the body with water and food. Sometimes, when saints go for weeks into a deep meditation, this can actually happen. Then some other people have to care for them in the same way as they would for newborn babies.

Even so, nobody will stay in this condition forever and for as long as the Master lives on earth, some identification with the body-mind is needed. The remaining construct of "me" is nearly empty, however. It is not overloaded with thoughts, judgments, and imaginations. Having realized his divinity, the Master is free from any thought control. Occasionally, some thoughts may come as a kind of background noise, but the awakened one will not give any attention to these. This is the peace. This is the freedom. And this peace will be shared with everybody who approaches him or her. The enlightened Master is like a fully grown-up mustard tree and therefore, all the birds of the sky, seeking for the Truth, will find shelter and guidance in his presence.

Being in the presence of the Master gives us a taste of our true potential. In each and every human being, the Kingdom of the Father is ready to unfold. However, it is not by blindly absorbing the beliefs of some other programmed mind that the tree of Light will grow. Only by experiencing life with total awareness can we remain in touch with the Father. Nobody else will walk the spiritual path for us. We have to do it by ourselves and find our own very personal and unique way. Jesus is willing to guide you but it's you alone who has to walk. Anyway, it's an interesting game. So don't get too serious about anything. Seriousness makes you tense, narrow, and ugly. Just play "hide and seek" and discover the Truth in a playful manner.

Whatever is needed to become a tree is already present in the seed. This is a great mystery (cf.96). So don't forget to water the delicate young plant that you are; care for a good soil, and deliver some wisdom fertilizers from time to time.

This should not be overdone, because too much water will kill the plant. If you overload your soul with a large amount of spiritual or esoteric knowledge, you will easily become confused again. Furthermore, the gardener will not pull out the young plant every day to check if the roots are having a good growth. Therefore, analyzing your progress with the tools of the mind will inevitably throw you back again. Have a wakeful eye on the young tree, but let it grow in peace.

Becoming a big tree is the unavoidable destiny of the mustard seed. We should not get in the way. It's God Himself who cares for the ripening of each and every human being. When the right time has come, the Father will reveal Himself. There is no point in trying to intervene or to accelerate this process. As Meister Eckhart said, "Sensing His presence is not in your power but in His. He will show Himself when it suits Him to do so, and He also can remain hidden if that is His wish." So the best thing would be to simply let your life unfold the way it wants to unfold. Do not fight the winds of change, but adjust your sails if needed. In every moment, Life anyway provides you with everything that is required for your spiritual growth. It all happens by itself. So be thankful, lean back and just let it happen!

Trusting the Master

Only one person in a million becomes enlightened without a teacher's help.

- BODHIDHARMA

The Guru in the outside is only here to help you to find the Guru inside.

- SAMARPAN

The Father's kingdom is like a person who has good seed. His enemy came during the night and sowed weeds among the good seed. The person did not let the workers pull up the weeds, but said to them, "No, otherwise you might go to pull up the weeds and pull up the wheat along with them." For on the day of the harvest the weeds will be conspicuous, and will be pulled up and burned. (57)

As we enter this life as young infants, we are unspoiled, innocent and pure. We are the good seeds that the divine farmer scattered on this earth. In the present time, an incredible number of seven billion seeds of the same type are growing on our beautiful blue planet. They invariably are precious seeds because we all come from the same Source, and every one of us is endowed with the same divine nature. The only problem we have is that we are not aware enough to recognize who we really are.

God has no enemy. He is the One without a second. He is everything that ever has been and will ever be brought into existence. So, there is simply no room left for Satan or any other ridiculous demon. The enemy is just a metaphor for the false self-image that has been created by the programming of our mind. This

little ego is not a serious enemy, because it is not even real. Nevertheless, most people give their whole faith to this delusion. Therefore, the imaginary “I” gets in the way and disturbs the recognition of who we really are. By constantly producing myriad thoughts, beliefs, judgments, and imaginations, the mind veils our perception of the Truth and thus continuously creates what Samarpan defines as virtual reality. The elements that make up this virtual reality simulation are the bad “weeds” Jesus is talking about.

A very commonly used parable narrates the story of a person who is utterly afraid because she has seen a dangerous snake in the night. Then, the next morning, the light of the sun reveals the snake as being a simple rope. All the panic and fear had been triggered by a mental phantasm. This beautiful metaphor points to the fact that our perception is incessantly tricked by a virtual reality construction. The mind projected the image of a dangerous snake on an innocent rope. In the Light of Truth, the whole delusion falls to pieces and the mind itself is revealed as a misperception. Being grounded in the Truth again, the person now can see what-really-is. The bad weed called illusion has been eradicated and burned in the fire of discrimination. Jesus says:

Let there be among you a person who understands! (21c)

The farmer’s ordinary workers certainly have the best intentions to be helpful, but the Master doesn’t encourage them to do so, because they might pull up the good wheat along with the pest plants. They just are not blessed with the discrimination needed to see the difference between this and that. So in the end, they would unconsciously do harm instead of doing something good. A capable farmer or gardener is needed to provide the appropriate teaching first. Only the Master teacher is endowed with the capacity to do that, because he really knows how and when to proceed. Therefore, we can totally rely on his or her advice.

Many false teachers walk around, arrogantly proclaiming their shallow insights. Countless politicians and scientists, priests and preachers, therapists and psychiatrists, workshop leaders and many others are eager to teach us, but most of them don’t know anything about the Truth. How could they teach or heal us, as they still appear to be trapped by some mind program? They didn’t do their

own homework, and therefore, most of them can't be helpful in any way. If you are depressed and consult a psychiatrist, you will receive some chemicals, so that you are not able to feel what you don't want to feel, but need to feel. Thousands of dubious treatments are waiting for you, but nobody will tell you that all of these "unpleasant" feelings are much more a blessing than a curse.

Only an enlightened Master will understand what is really going on. Rather than helping you to avoid your heavy feelings, he will lead you even deeper into the depression and invite you to feel and accept whatever wants to come. It seems paradoxical, but this is the only possible doorway to a true healing. Otherwise, the depression is repressed and will at the next occasion show up again. The same happens when your ordinary life gets disturbed in a radical way. You may lose your job, your partnership, your money, your reputation, and you will experience this situation as a dreadful disaster. A "good therapist" is generally considered to be the one who succeeds in putting all the scattered pieces together so that you fit into society again. The better they are in doing this, the more renowned and richer they become, because nobody likes to burn in the fire of hell.

A real Master has a radically different view. He knows that you first have to walk through the darkest night, and, therefore, he will even tell you that the Grace of the Divine is being showered on you. This "terrible drama" actually is the best occasion for you to see through the illusion and get rid of your false beliefs and worldly attachments. You will understand that all of this is neither permanent nor necessary for your joy of living. Many insights will come and little by little you will realize that nothing is missing in the Here and Now. In the long run, you will, for certain, see the bright shining Light of Truth. Jesus, therefore, says:

Congratulations to those who have been persecuted in their hearts: they are the ones who have truly come to know the Father. (69a)

This process needs some time, and a wise and loving guidance is required. The ripening of the Soul is sometimes very painful, and this can't be avoided. The Master will not deliver us from our pain, nor will he accelerate our spiritual

growth by force. However, he is able and totally willing to show us the most direct path to freedom and inner peace. He makes it as easy and light as possible by teaching us the fine art of acceptance. He knows that everything happens in its own time, and therefore, he will not try to pull out the bad weeds until they have become conspicuous. In addition to this, the good farmer has a lot of patience, and he will not reap the wheat before it is definitely ripe.

In some very rare cases, it actually happens that someone experiences a spontaneous awakening in the absence of a living Master, but ordinarily a wise teacher is required. When you radically and ruthlessly want the Truth, the Master will miraculously come into your life. As Sri Ramana Maharshi used to say, “If you go on working with the light available, you will meet your Master, as he himself will be seeking you.” When this happens, it is the answer to all your prayers. It is God Himself who is showering His endless Grace on you. You then are among the few lucky ones, and your awakening is at hand. This has to be acknowledged wholeheartedly because Jesus says:

I shall choose you, one from a thousand and two from ten thousand, and they will stand as a single one. (23)

Although a considerable shift in collective consciousness has happened in the last hundred years, and although it is true that it has never been easier to wake up, enlightenment is still a rare phenomenon. Enlightenment is the recognition that we all stand as a single one. We, however, need to be hungry enough to go for this without making any compromises or excuses. Therefore, Jesus says:

Congratulations to those who go hungry, so the stomach of the one in want may be filled. (69b)

Truly listening to the Master’s words requires unconditional trust and awareness. This is called surrender. In our ego-based society the word “surrender” unfortunately has a very bad connotation. Most people believe that surrendering

means losing their freedom and all their powers. However, in order to really come into our power the egotistical mind has to capitulate one time for all. So, don't try to hold on to your selfish endeavors and fantasies. All the old garbage we gathered in our storehouses should be thrown into the Master's love fire. This can be done without the slightest regret, because it is worthless anyway. Surrendering may appear to be a problem but it isn't really, because the mind actually has no power at all. So on one hand there is nothing to give away and on the other hand, the Master doesn't want anything from you. You can't give him anything because he already has it all.

Be as aware as you can and open your heart. Don't expect to always get the full message. When the Master is generously scattering his seeds of wisdom, some will sprout, others not. On one occasion, a particular disciple will understand, another will not. On the next occasion, the reverse will be the case. The abundance of his harvest is not even in the hands of the enlightened one. It's entirely a matter of Divine Grace. The Master will provide the very best conditions for our awakening, but if we are not ready, willing and ripe, no seed will sprout at all.

Look, the sower went out, took a handful of seeds and scattered them. Some fell on the road and the birds came and gathered them. Others fell on rock, and they didn't take root in the soil and didn't produce heads of grain. Others fell on thorns, and they choked the seeds and worms ate them. And others fell on good soil, and it produced a good crop: it yielded sixty per measure and one hundred twenty per measure.” (9)

For a good harvest not all the seeds need to sprout. Listen to these beautiful sayings of Jesus with a quiet mind and treasure what intimately touches your heart. Just by itself your own wisdom will exponentially grow, and you can be sure to harvest more than you ever could imagine. First, you have one measure; then you have sixty and even one hundred twenty per measure. Your reading this book with awareness is the best sign of your readiness to wake up. Otherwise, you would push it aside, curse its contents, or simply throw it into the garbage can. And even that would be totally okay. You are of course free to do whatever you feel compelled to do.

No Practice Needed

We need only to be awake, alive in the present moment.

- THICH NHAT HANH

Even the spiritual mind is not spiritual; even the religious mind is not spiritual.

- SAMARPAN

His disciples asked him, “Do you want us to fast? How should we pray? Should we give to charity? What diet should we observe?” Jesus said, “Don’t lie and don’t do what you hate, because all things are disclosed before heaven.” (6a)

What can we do in order to find freedom and peace? What can we do to see the divine Light of Truth? Does Jesus prescribe fasting, a special diet, or a charitable behavior toward the poor and the beggars? Do we have to donate money for the church? Is praying necessary and when we pray, how should this be done? What is required for a good prayer?

At the time of Jesus, legalistic spiritual rituals were believed to be an absolute necessity for the seeker’s progress. They were the reason for ugly judgments and guilt feelings, and their non-observance resulted in blaming and condemning the respective “sinners.” Jesus didn’t reject spiritual rituals as such, but he clearly depreciated the common motivation underlying these practices. Praying, fasting, and doing charity most often are considered to be successful tools to get something in return. And if this is not the case, they quite often serve as a means to appear as a particularly “holy somebody.” As Ron Miller points out, “The

greatest temptation in adopting a spiritual practice is hypocrisy.”

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus, therefore, says, “When you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, you must not be like hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others.” Praying most often is a way to tell God that our lives should be different from what they are. Either we miss something or we want to get rid of something. In some way, this is denying that God is doing a perfect job, which, of course, is ridiculous. As Gandhi told us, the greatest prayer simply is: “Thank you, God!” According to Meister Eckhart, the best one would be, “Lord, give me yourself or eternal life,” or rather, “Lord, give me only what you will and do only what you will in the way you will.” Greedily asking for worldly things like success, money, or fame, on the other hand, is not praying, but some kind of blasphemy. If we pray or do any spiritual practices for selfish purposes, we are actually defiling ourselves and blaming God’s ever-present Grace. The same issue surfaces once more when Jesus is speaking about the prescribed necessity to hold on to a particular diet for spiritual reasons.

When you go into a region and walk around in the countryside, whenever people take you in, eat what they serve you, and heal the sick among them. (14b)

In Jesus’ world, dietary prescriptions were believed to be an essential requirement for a “successful” spiritual life. Jesus again puts everything upside down and tells his disciples that it is much more important to be grateful for being kindly welcomed in the homes of their brothers and sisters. “Forget about all these dietary laws,” he tells them, “and just eat what comes on your plates. What truly matters is your compassion and your healing presence! You yourself should become a gracious offering and heal your kind hosts from the self-destructive sickness of their minds.” This is the real message. The message was not: “Become superhuman and do wonders!” Moreover, the liberation from the tyranny of the ego-mind kindles our awakening, and, therefore, is the greatest possible wonder that ever can happen in anybody’s life.

Giving to charity is one more way to feel especially generous and blow up the spiritual ego. Sri Swami Satchidananda gives us some precious hints: “If someone begs from you, and you give that person something, don’t think you are helping him or her. This person is helping you by giving you an opportunity to show your generosity. If no one is there to receive, how could you donate? The giver should thank the receiver.” Have you ever noticed that – in terms of the heart – you always get back more than you gave? However, for this to happen, charitable behavior needs to be an unselfish and spontaneous action. Therefore, Jesus says:

Do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. (62b)

On a basic level, this saying means: If you give, do not dwell upon egotistical thoughts about how generous and spiritual you are! Give and immediately forget that you have given. On a deeper level, it is a general reminder not to think about our past, present, and future actions, but to surrender and effortlessly flow with Life. Don’t try or plan to “do” anything! Let life blow you where it wants instead of vainly resisting the unstoppable stream of change.

In summary, Jesus’ answer to the above question is that no particular set of straining spiritual techniques is needed (cf.104). Cultivating your awareness by turning your back on the mind’s incessant chattering is more than enough. Ram Dass simply said: “Be here now!” Jesus recommends: “Do not lie!”- meaning to say that, first of all, you ought to be true to yourself and true to the Truth. Once you have gotten a taste of the real thing, don’t deny or betray the Truth anymore and simply ignore the phantasms of the mind. However, you have to be watchful, because the mind is the father of all lies, and he will do anything to prevent you from being truthful and sincere.

Even so, we are lucky, because the Divine gave us an inbuilt alarm bell. Whenever we are not true to ourselves, whenever we are betraying ourselves, this alarm bell is automatically activated, and we feel some tension or discomfort in our bodies. This reminds us to just be as we really are and to listen to our spiritual heart, which is nothing less than the direct connection to God. Rumi reassures us when he says, “The Beloved is whispering to you exactly what you

need to hear and know. Who can ever explain this miracle? It simply is.”

Actually, this implies that you start to become an authentic and fully blossomed human being. It’s easy to walk on this path, because you already are the one you truly are and nothing has to be improved. God loves you exactly the way you are. As your awareness expands, your whole life will transmute anyway, but it will happen spontaneously and not as a result of any spiritual effort.

If you do not observe the Sabbath as a Sabbath, you will not see the Father. (27b)

In the Gospel of Thomas, Jesus, as we have seen, does not appear as an advocate of doctrinal spiritual practices. So this saying certainly doesn’t mean that, on a special day of the week, we should rest, pray, and “play holy.” Working times and rest periods, action and rest, have to be balanced continuously. True Sabbath is, as Ron Miller points out, respecting the holiness of rest, stillness, and meditation, recognizing that the Divine perfectly cares for us. It is about reminding us to sometimes consciously withdraw from the world and solitarily enter the bridal chamber of our sacred innermost being. Jesus says:

“Many are standing at the door, but it is the solitary who will enter the bridal chamber.” (75)

True Sabbath can happen anytime and in any place, provided we give ourselves enough time and space for the Divine. This saying is very much up-to-date in the context of our fast-moving and completely overstressed materialistic world. Many of us work for more than ten hours a day without ever giving ourselves more than a few minutes of relaxation, silence, and meditation. However, God will not reveal Himself to anybody who is permanently lost in some thoughts and doesn’t show even one iota of gratitude and devotion.

“Don’t do what you hate!” Jesus further tells us. So, just go wherever you feel attracted to go now and do whatever you feel motivated to do now. Don’t forget

to put God first but stay true to yourself! Do not behave as a hypocrite! If you are able to enjoy fasting, fast! If you honestly feel motivated to give to charity, do it! If praying or meditating really gives you peace and joy, pray and meditate! When, however, in this moment you don't feel ready and motivated to do any of these things, then just relax, don't do anything, or do whatever brings fun right now. Never force yourself to pray or to "do" any other spiritual practice! A forced prayer is hard work, and it doesn't come from the heart. Actually, it is no prayer at all.

God wants you to be happy and whenever you are in a peaceful state of mind, it's like a beautiful prayer. You then gratefully offer your inner peace to the Divine, and He will be with you. Whatever doing or not-doing is emerging from a peaceful mind is a perfect and natural spiritual practice. Nothing else is required. Step-by-step, the Truth will be revealed to you. No effort is needed!

The End of the Search

Become nothing and He'll turn you into everything.

- RUMI

Enlightenment will now be the beginning, not the end.

- OSHO

The Father's kingdom is like a woman who was carrying a jar full of meal. While she was walking along a distant road, the handle of the jar broke and the meal spilled behind her along the road. She didn't know it; she hadn't noticed a problem. When she reached her house, she put the jar down and discovered that it was empty. (97)

The practice of women carrying a heavy burden for long distances on top of their heads has existed since ancient times. And it still is a regular activity for many people in poor countries. We find this practice in Africa, in India, and in other parts of the developing world. So what is so special about this woman?

What Jesus gives us here is a perfect metaphor for the process of awakening. It's pointing to the actuality that Life itself is teaching us. The road is far and the burden is heavy, but the woman neither complains about her fate, nor is she afraid that she can't handle the task at hand. She is doing what has to be done and – as many other women today – she has done it daily, for many, many years. Her life just is like that, and she has accepted it as it is. She is so deeply immersed in her activity that she doesn't even notice that the load is getting lighter and lighter. Actually, she is not concerned about any “burdens” and for

sure she isn't expecting the load to get lighter. She is free of worries and therefore, doesn't notice any problem.

How can this be? What is her secret? Well, let's examine that. First of all, just by the law of gravity, the load is grounding her. This helps her to feel her feet on the earth, because the sensations transmitted by the muscles, joints, and skin are much more intense than they usually are. This makes her feel utterly alive and aware of being in a human body. We tend to pity these people, but we don't see that they mostly are in a much better shape than we are. We can't do the same, because these women learn the appropriate technique at a very early age, and it was proven that they only invest a minimal amount of energy in doing what they do.

Carrying heavy loads on top of the head truly is an art, because head-supported loads are inherently instable. A very good sense of equilibrium is needed. If the woman is not a 100 percent with her task, the load shifts out of balance, the jar will be damaged, and she might even seriously harm her body. This implies that total awareness is required. Every step has to be perfect, otherwise she can't handle the task. She cannot afford floating in the clouds or getting lost in some thoughts. And this is the gift! Just imagine how much time she must have spent in the Here and Now!

When the head is loaded with a substantial weight, the spine reacts in a vertical way to support it. To some extent, the head is pushing against the load and as a result of this the spine lengthens and extends vertically. This means that, while walking, the spine is exactly in the upright position that yogis recommend in order to have a good meditation and a perfect subtle energy flow! So, rather than feeling pitiful, we should see that she is spending almost her whole life in meditation. This simple woman is not very highly educated and that is not needed in any way. She is aware for many hours of the day and therefore, the great miracle happens. Without thinking, she finally finds herself well established in her real home – which is her own Self – and she discovers the amazing secret that the jar is empty. When looking inside, she can't find anything!

She, in other words, realizes that there is nothing but Pure Consciousness. Although she has lost all the meal – the worldly possessions, beliefs, and attachments – she doesn't miss anything. Just the opposite is the case, because the load of life, the suffering caused by the ego identity, got lighter and lighter.

She didn't do anything special in order to achieve this goal, and she certainly wasn't expecting something or worrying all the time. Nevertheless, she was aware! She was totally rooted in the Here and Now. The load was just as heavy as it was in the present moment. She didn't compare it to any past or possible future load. And then, when she finally came home and entered the Kingdom of the Father, she woke up and realized her true nature. The treasure within is revealed by simply uncovering it. It is unfailingly waiting there and all of us already possess it. We always have been and always will be Pure Consciousness – we just don't know it. Therefore, Jesus says:

The Father's kingdom is like a person who had a treasure hidden in his field but did not know it. (109a)

As Sadhguru tells us, "It is all here. The beginning is here. The end is here. Eternity is here. For one who is lost in the mind, there are many places, but for one who is totally here, everything is here and now." Awakening is usually seen as a process of inner transformation. This can be easily misunderstood. It's our perception that is undergoing a radical transformation. In a way we just become aware of THAT which is permanent, though the perception of THIS is ever deepening. Our sense of Being moves from the background into the foreground and awareness becomes aware of itself. As a consequence of this realization we deeply understand that there is no doer except God, which, according to Ramesh Balsekar, is the definition of enlightenment. At this point we have become one with the All and the searching stops one time for all. Jesus says:

"When you are in the light, what will you do? On the day you were one, you became two. But when you become two, what will you do?" (11c)

The startling answer to the first question is: You will stop doing anything, meaning to say that you have fully realized that there is no doer apart from the Divine. In this perfect Oneness there is no room left for an individual doer. Out of this realization many good deeds will happen through you, but you will no

more claim them to be your own achievements. On the other hand, once you sense that you became a divided being, what then will be your choice? Will you continue to live in separateness from the Divine, or will you passionately seek to become one again? Will you follow the mind or will you start listening to the voice of your heart? Contemplating on this saying is of utmost importance because the choice that is gracefully offered to us represents the essential bifurcation in our spiritual life. As we have been created in the image of the Father, and therefore are His co-creators, this fateful bifurcation either leads to creating hell or paradise on earth.

MORE GIFTS FOR THE SEEKER

The Kingdom of God

By Kathryn Phillips

It matters not
The path you take
How successful you are
Or the mistakes you make
What really matters
Is the Truth you shall find
When you return
To our true home
To 'The Kingdom of God'
And leave the rest behind

You Can Have It All

As told by Sri Swami Sachidananda

Once a king decided to test his ministers. He asked them to bring all his possessions to a park and arrange a big exhibition. There were many beautiful and valuable things. They put a throne right in the middle, and once he was seated, the king announced: “Before the sun sets, everyone may come and select whatever they want. But no one may leave the compound until I give the permission to do so.”

Everybody ran to the park, and each one took something. While they were picking and choosing, a peasant woman walked in. Everyone looked up as they were curious to see what she would take. She walked over to the king and said, “Sir, I heard your offer. Are you sure you want to give me anything within the compound?”

“Yes, why do you ask me?”

“I just wanted to make sure.”

“Yes. You may ask for anything in the park that you want.” “Well, Sir, I want you.”

Everybody was shocked. “How dare she!” they exclaimed.

Then the king explained: “I, too, am inside the compound. All you people chose my things, but she chose me. Whoever takes the king automatically gets his kingdom.” Then he turned to the woman and said, “Yes, I am yours and so, too, is everything that belongs to me.”

Where Is the Kingdom?

The kingdom of heaven is available for you in the here and now. But the question is whether you are available for the kingdom.

- THICH NHAT HANH

To work with God's happiness bubbling in the soul is to carry a portable paradise within you wherever you go.

- WEI WU WEI

If your leaders say to you, “Look the kingdom is in the sky,” then the birds of the sky will precede you. If they say to you, “It is in the sea,” then the fish will precede you. Rather, the kingdom is within and it is outside you. (3a)

You may call it “heaven,” “paradise” or “the Kingdom of the Father” – it doesn't matter. But where, will you ask, can we find this Kingdom of Heaven? Where is it? It seems so far away. Is it in the sky, somewhere beyond cloud number nine? No, it isn't, because this is the kingdom of the birds, and we can't fly – obviously. Is it in the sea? No, it isn't, because this is the kingdom of the fish and sooner or later we would drown. Is it perhaps somewhere else on earth? If yes, where is the exact location of this mysterious Kingdom? Where does it begin and where does it end? Is it imaginable that the Kingdom of the Divine has a beginning or an end? Is it so limited, so small and insignificant? If the Kingdom is limited, then God is also limited. Subsequently, He would neither be omnipresent, nor would He be almighty.

So, all of this can't be true. The Truth is that God is everywhere and everything.

There are no limitations for the Divine – neither in time, nor in space. God doesn't know anything about "parts," "divisions," separations," or "locations." God encompasses everything that exists and everything that doesn't exist. God is the One. God is the only One; God is pure Oneness. God is the vibrantly alive Totality of whatever-is. Open your heart and look inside – you will find God. Open your heart and look outside – you will find God. As a matter of fact, you can't possibly miss Him. Everything that is brought into being is the breath of the Father.

Thus, there can't be any division between God and the Kingdom of God. When we close our eyes, we are "inside." When we open our eyes the world reappears, and we look "outside." So this separation is acknowledged as being real and sharply defined. However, if you sit quietly for a while, leave your eyes open and look with the eyes of a very young child – without any idea, thought, or concept – you will not be able to find an actual difference between the inside and the outside. This imaginary separation belongs to our virtual reality projection and traces back to the false idea that we are the body. Therefore, we usually take for granted that what-we-are precisely ends where the body ends.

When you sleep, you are unconscious. So the world disappears and the body also. Even space and time are non-existent. When you wake up in the morning, you are conscious again and both reappear. So, where have you been during your sleep? Did you cease to exist? If so, what exactly ceased to exist for a while? In your dreams, other "worlds" arise and – in case you ever experienced a nightmare – you know how incredibly real and frightening this imaginary scenery can appear to you. And all of this obviously happens inside of you. You simply are not aware of it. As soon as you wake up, you feel relieved and say, "Oh thank you Lord, it just was an ugly dream!" Now, you find yourself happily back home in the "solid" world. Upon this, you can fortunately rely! However, wait a moment: Is it conceivable that you merely entered another dream? What if this world just were a perfectly manufactured reality simulation, a kind of gigantic "divine computer game," – a beautiful game called Life, wherein you are destined to play the role of the main actor?

The Truth is that there is no genuine division between the inside and the outside world. Both are temporary and ever-changing projections of the Divine Light, of Pure Consciousness. All kinds of divisions are mere concepts. They are meaningful in everyday life, yet non-existent when we focus on the underlying Being. The Ultimate Reality is all One, and this all-encompassing and all-

permeating Oneness is the Kingdom of the Father. It is inside, and it is outside; it is everywhere. This immense universe and everything happening in it is just God incessantly exploding into existence.

The Children of the Divine

You were born with wings, why prefer to crawl through life?

- RUMI

To be open means to receive like a child, simply, with no constructions, no mind.

- MOTHER MEERA

The person old in days won't hesitate to ask a little child seven days old about the place of life, and that person will live. For many of the first will be last, and will become a single one. (4)

Aren't we totally charmed when looking at a newborn baby or a very young infant? We cannot but love these delightful little human beings. But how should it be possible that a grownup person learns from a baby? Can the baby teach us anything about life? If yes, then certainly not by speaking elaborate words of wisdom. So what is Jesus telling us here?

Well, give the baby or the small child your loving and undivided attention and just take a closer look! What do you see? How come that you are so touched? First of all, these wonderful beings obviously behave in a totally natural and spontaneous manner. Their fragrance is untouched innocence, perfect purity, utter simplicity, and unfathomable beauty. These unspoiled children of the Divine are totally immersed into the present moment. Their place of life is the Eternal Now, and this is the reason for your enchantment.

So there are truly valuable lessons we can learn from the very young ones. They

show us how wonderful life is beyond the mind, how delicious it is to just be. The baby is not identified with anything. There is no thought and therefore, no judgment and no ego. Does the baby know anything about being a boy or a girl, about the “inside” versus the “outside,” about “good” and “evil”? Does the baby have any feeling of separateness? No, it hasn’t, because the baby is pure Oneness, pure Beingness. The baby just is, without knowing that it is. Therefore, we can say that the newborn baby is like a silent little Buddha. And like any enlightened master, the baby can teach us by just being here. The place where the babies innocently abide is the Kingdom of Heaven. It is this present, undivided moment. The Kingdom of the Father is located in the Here and Now; paradise is here and now. Only in The Now can we find this magical place of life that the old man is inquiring about. Jesus therefore says:

“From Adam to John the Baptist, among those born of women, no one is so much greater than John the Baptist that his eyes should not be averted. But I have said that whoever among you becomes a child will recognize the Father’s kingdom and become greater than John.” (46)

Nobody will enter paradise by getting intellectually sophisticated or by becoming a most successful personality in the ordinary world. As long as we try to be somebody special, our awakening will not happen. We may arrogantly believe that we are “worthy” enough to be the first, but, actually, we then will be the last on the divine waiting list.

We rather have to recognize that in the very depths of our hearts we are as simple, as natural, and as innocent as a young infant. The only difference between the awakened one and the baby is that the Master is aware of the unstained innocence and beauty of his inner Being. Instead of trying to become an illusionary “somebody” we instead have to realize that we are nobody at all. Once we are nobody, we can be everybody. We will become a single one, because we recognize that the same Primal Energy or Divine Consciousness is operating through each and every one of us. Therefore, Ram Dass said, “There is only one of us, one consciousness manifesting into different forms.” We come from the Source and we are the Source. Stepping beyond the realm of the narrowing mind, we realize that we all are the beloved children of one and the

same Father.

What Is True Love?

They say there is a doorway from heart to heart, but what is the use of a door when there are no walls?

- RUMI

It's the relationship with your Self that is the true Love.

- SAMARPAN

Love your friends like your own soul, protect them like the pupil of your eye. (25)

Ordinarily, when we talk about love, we refer to the love we feel toward our partner. Most of us know how exciting it feels when we fall in love. And yes, it is like a magical falling into Love, because we cannot “do” or create love. Can you love somebody whom you do not spontaneously love? What kind of love would that be? If you are honest, you must admit that this doesn’t work. As everything else in life, love simply happens. And when it happens, it is an utterly beautiful experience.

If the love is mutual, we feel bliss for a certain period of time, which we may call “honeymoon.” We then adore saying inspiring words like, “I love you more than anything else” or “You are me, and I am you; there is no difference between you and me.” In the same way, during a sexual encounter, we seem to melt into each other, and an orgasm can be like an ecstatic explosion that wipes the whole ego away. For a moment, we are full of everything, totally happy and free of any desires. Being in deep love truly feels like heaven on earth.

But after a while, this special kind of love seems to vanish. Little by little, we feel “normal” and down to earth again. What has happened to all the love we felt? Instead of loving the partner, we now expect him to make us happy again and if this doesn’t work, we blame him or her. The mind readily finds reasons for our unhappiness, and we typically project these “explanations” upon the partner. Our speech weirdly transmutes and we now make statements like, “It’s your fault; if you only could behave in a different way, everything would be okay again,” or “I love you so much and what do I get in return – nothing!” The point is that this is not love anymore. As soon as we want or expect something from somebody else, it is not love. We then reduce the other person to an object of “my” pleasure, “my” entertainment or “my” satisfaction. In any case, it is ridiculous to make the partner responsible for our unhappiness, because it is our unhappiness and all the feelings are our own private business.

Are there any other varieties of love? Love has many different faces, but essentially, it’s the same love. We, for example, know the love for my parents, my children, my brothers and sisters, my friends, and my relatives. Is this the love Jesus is speaking about? Perhaps, but mostly it is not, because the egotistical mind is usually strongly involved. Therefore, we say: my parents, my children, my friends and so forth. We tend to consider all these persons as possessions or as mere extensions and enrichments of our selfish ego and this, of course, is not love

Very often parents want their children to be successful in this society because they didn’t manage to achieve their own goals. Now the child either has to “do” it for them, or is urged to walk on the same “successful” path. But are any of these people truly concerned about the happiness and freedom of the child? They aren’t, because they unconsciously act according to their own programming. They don’t know anything about real freedom and happiness, so how could they support their children in being free? We cannot blame them because they are simply not aware that what they call “love” is just selfishness.

When a partner leaves, we tend to withdraw our love, and it may even turn into aggression and hatred. What if we just continued being in love? Can anybody steal our love? The Truth is, when we fall in love, we fall into the very core of our own Being – which is pure Love. And this Love doesn’t depend on any circumstances. Real Love is unconditional and by nature non-exclusive. True Love just is.

Samarpan says very clearly: “Give everything and expect nothing. This is the mathematics of Love.” As soon as we expect something in return, we are making deals, and the selfish mind is back in command. Moreover, getting what we ask for doesn’t make us really happy. It rather leaves a bad taste. We all know how well it feels when we wholeheartedly share what we have with someone in need. Giving not more than three dollars can make a beggar happy and us even more so. You certainly have heard the famous Jesus saying, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” This is the simple Truth. More or less, the same is meant by the following words:

If you have money, don’t lend it at interest. Rather give it to someone from whom you won’t get it back. (95)

The above saying is not only relating to conventional charity giving, it also reminds us to generously offer everything we gracefully received – our life experience, our wisdom, and our talents, to the Divine and become the loving co-creators of a better world. Jesus invites us to love our parents, children, siblings, friends, and neighbors in the same way as we love ourselves. Usually we stick to the first part of this saying but forget the even more important second part. Taking a closer look at the saying, it becomes obvious that before loving somebody else, we first have to love ourselves. When you don’t love yourself, how can you love anybody else? This is just impossible. First of all, you have to fully accept and love yourself the way you really are.

On a more profound level, Jesus is telling us to love our true Self. “First find out who you are and fall in love with your real Self – which is your divine essence or the Father within!” Then and only then, he teaches us, are we blessed with the gift of true Love, and this kind of Love doesn’t exclude any living being in the whole universe. Loving yourself will redirect your attention inwards and little by little your divine essence is uncovered. Uncovering your true Self means discovering that you are a perfect embodiment of God’s Love, and this pure Love wants to be shared. Without any doing, it just naturally spills over to everybody who comes into your presence.

You are not the thoughts, you are not the feelings, you are not your experiences,

and you are not your life story. You are undivided and unstained Consciousness, and this same Divine Consciousness is abiding in every other human being too. From a relative perspective, it is true to say that we all are different, but from the perspective of the Absolute, we are one and the same Being. From this latter viewpoint, you really can say, “You are me, and I am you!” Wherever you look, you will discover your very own divine Self. The deepest compassion arises out of the realization that, in the whole wide world, there is nothing but you.

Everything in this entire universe is in essence a manifestation of Divine Consciousness. The entire creation is a magnificent coming into Being of God’s nature, which is pure Love and amazing Grace. Meister Eckhart therefore says, “Whatever God does, the first outburst is always compassion,” and: “Where there is Isness, there is God. Creation is the giving of Isness from God. And that is why God becomes where any creature expresses God.” This boundless divine Love is what you truly are. It is the very core of your innermost Beingness. Once you recognize this, your love will be totally unstained, unconditional, and without any narrowing limitations. This is the kind of Love Jesus is trying to teach us. He knows, because he is and forever will be the purest embodiment of Love in the whole universe.

Stepping Beyond Duality

No matter how thin you slice it, there will always be two sides.

- BARUCH SPINOZA

The direction of life is from duality to unity.

- DEEPAK CHOPRA

A person cannot mount two horses or bend two bows. And a slave cannot serve two masters, otherwise that slave will honor the one and offend the other. (47a)

It is impossible to mount two horses at the same time. It would tear us apart, because the two horses tend to go in different directions. And yet, this is what the mind is constantly trying to do. We want to be free as a beggar and secure as a millionaire. We have insights into the Truth, and nevertheless we hold on to our programmed values and beliefs. We want to renounce all our desires, and at the same time we stay attached to all kinds of worldly pleasures. We pretend to let go of our selfish ego, but we still keep on worshiping this imaginary phantom. Attempting to mount two horses is a typical result of the mind's greed. He wants it all and, therefore, he is stupid enough to aim at the impossible. "If one is limited to duality," Sadhguru says, "one does not know the beyond."

As long as we are trapped within this duality the pendulum of our attention will incessantly swing from one side to the other side. We do not find our peace, because the mind is constantly jumping from branch to branch like a crazy nervous ape. This puts our body under heavy tension, because we are living in a

permanent conflict. When you find yourself in a situation where you feel the need to come to an extremely “important” decision, you can watch this process very closely.

Assume you are married for a long time, and that you are in love with another woman. Since you don’t want to abandon your spouse, you will prefer to meet your beloved one in secret. This certainly can be fun and exciting for some time. Even so, you are living a lie, and constantly playing false roles. You are neither faithful to your spouse, nor to your beloved one. You are not even faithful to yourself. Your heart is divided, and your lies will inevitably create more and more tension and suffering. When the suffering culminates, you will feel the strong need to come to a decision. And then you will experience how your greedy mind is making you crazy. Of course, he wants the whole cake. He wants to stay with the wife, keep all the material possessions together, and he is afraid of the guilt feelings and the insecurity that will inevitably come. On the other hand, he feels so much attracted to the new partner and the vibrantly good sex he can experience with her. So, what would be the best decision? What to do? Wouldn’t it be best to do nothing at all?

The pendulum is constantly swinging from one alternative to the opposite one, and you feel totally lost in between. The point is that no decision will come as long as it is not ripe to come. In other words, we don’t decide anything at all. It may seem that we take decisions, but it’s Life itself that decides. If you are supposed to stay with your wife, you won’t be able to leave her. If you are supposed to make your life with the new partner, there is no way to stay with your wife. This “decision-making process” is just a most painful illusion occurring in the kingdom of the mind. We don’t live our life; Life is living us. Our entire life belongs to God, and decision-making is His business, not ours.

The same confusion happens when spiritual seekers are piling up esoteric knowledge in the same way as a greedy person gathers money or material things. Therefore, the seeker’s ego likes to practice what is called guru-hopping. These people sometimes spend decades traveling from one teacher to the next. They read hundreds of wisdom books; they try every spiritual technique they can grab and still there is no real progress happening. Mountains of useless knowledge are built up, and the poor result is utter confusion. These people seem to know everything and yet they don’t know who they really are. They may preach the most beautiful words of wisdom and correctly quote the scriptures, but they just borrowed what belongs to the sages. Jesus, therefore, clearly says:

**“Those who know all, but are lacking in themselves, are utterly lacking.”
(67)**

The point is that true knowledge is not a matter of memorizing and repeating the words of the Masters. Authentic wisdom rather blossoms as a fresh fruit of the present moment. Insights spontaneously happen by themselves when the mind is in a silent and peaceful state. These moments of utter clarity are free gifts from the Divine. Even Einstein, who is generally considered to have been the most intelligent person in the whole world clearly said, “I didn’t do it. This breakthrough simply was given to me. I have no idea where it came from.”

Therefore, a truly wise person doesn’t need a lot of notes or any other “preparation” before he or she speaks. The Master doesn’t have to previously torture his brain in order to figure out what he will say, should say or should not say. He totally and fearlessly relies on the Divine. Actually, his words spontaneously emerge from a silent state of not-wanting-to-know and an utter surrendering to the unconditional Love for the Father. When no words want to come, he simply remains silent without caring about what anybody might expect him to say. Being radically true to the present moment, he knows that the right words will manifest, whenever something is supposed to be said. And, immediately thereafter, he will forget and even throw away, what he – for a short moment – has known.

Theologians and philosophers may quarrel endlessly, but the enlightened Masters and mystics of all spiritual traditions speak one and the same Truth, yet they discovered different doorways to the Now. Therefore, you can of course listen to different Masters. Feel invited to enjoy their teachings like a colorful bouquet of amazingly beautiful flowers, but please, don’t do it for the mind’s sake. In particular, you should not attempt to walk on two or more paths simultaneously.

There is no Master ranking. They are all the same. In Truth, there is only one Master anyway. The perfect teacher for you is simply the one with whom you deeply resonate. It’s pretty much like falling in love – not logical, rather a great mystery. The words of your Master will touch your heart more than the words of

any other teacher. So you will naturally know. It is just a graceful divine happening. Either you do feel strongly drawn to a Master or you don't. Total trust is needed but it can't be created or achieved. Either it is like that or it isn't. Further comments on this issue are futile. However it is, it is fine.

So the above saying is obviously not about finding a mentally or rationally motivated decision. Can we adopt another way of proceeding? Let us inquire again: If we give our attention to one single side of the coin, we for sure miss the other one. So this is not the solution. In search of an exit, we often tend to make compromises, but this approach doesn't work either. Sitting between two horses will not bring us anywhere. As long as we are wobbling around, no satisfactory choice is possible. In order to support your learning, the Divine may allow you to freely decide. But what will be the result? What will truly happen? In any case we suffer, because we still are divided. Our inner being is divided against itself. Therefore, we can say and feel that a "forced" decision is always kind of a painful division. It's dividing THAT which – by nature – is whole and holy.

Putting God first implies ruthlessly voting for awareness – or mindfulness as the Buddhists would say. Instead of trying to merely choose one side of the coin or even attempting to divide the coin, the whole coin has to fall. Looking at only one side doesn't help, because the other side is still there. Dividing the coin doesn't help either, because we again have two or even four separate sides. So we have to totally and radically let go of all the duality and give our whole attention to the Oneness and perfection of the present moment.

When the coin eventually falls just by itself, the two (or more) horses simply merge into one and all of a sudden everything becomes clear and obvious. When the time is ripe, Life will inevitably lead you in the right direction. You can count on that. Don't worry when it is not the direction you imagined, wished, or judged to be the "right one." Your mind will probably not agree, but your heart unfailingly knows. Being true and faithful to yourself, no exhausting decision-making process is needed. Surrendering to the Divine, you easily choose the one and only big fish Jesus is talking about:

The person is like a wise fisherman who cast his net into the sea and drew it up from the sea full of little fish. Among them the wise fisherman discovered a fine large fish. He threw all the little fish back into the sea, and easily

chose the large fish. (8)

Instead of giving our attention to a divided mind and an everchanging variety of thoughts, we redirect our attention inside, into the energy field of the inner body. As soon as we notice that the mind is active again, we give our whole attention to the breath, the feelings, or any body sensations. Most probably you will detect some tension or emotional turmoil inside. Then fearlessly plunge into that, melt into that, and see what wants to happen. This is how your awareness rapidly expands so that you can easily sense what the present moment actually is asking for.

Voting either for awareness or the demon called “mind” seems to be the only free choice God is allowing us to have. This is really interesting. You can challenge this and figure it out by yourselves. You will gratefully discover that it works perfectly. When you are totally determined not to spend any time in the mind, when you systematically redirect your attention into the inner body, you will more and more often notice that you are just peacefully resting in the entirely whole and holy womb of the present moment, in the Being itself. Here in the Now, everything that was hidden or obscured by the clouds of the mind will be disclosed, and you finally will recognize that you are the one and only big fish, or, in other words, undivided and immaculate Consciousness.

Divine Consciousness is your perfectly secured and fortified city on the high hill. It is THAT which cannot be seen, touched, damaged, divided, or destroyed in any way. Therefore it will never fall, nor can it be hidden. According to Tau Malachi, “The whole of life is a divine revelation, God revealing itself. The mystery is revealed in plain sight – in life itself, for those who have the awareness to perceive it.” Jesus says:

**A city built on a high hill and fortified cannot fall, nor cannot it be hidden.
(32)**

About Rebels and Misfits

Whenever you find yourself on the side of the majority, it is time to pause and to reflect.

- MARK TWAIN

We rarely find people who achieve great things without first going astray.

- MEISTER ECKHART

The Father's kingdom is like a shepherd who had a hundred sheep. One of them, the largest, went astray. He left the ninety-nine and looked for the one until he found it. After he had toiled, he said to the sheep, "I love you more than the ninety-nine." (107)

The shepherd is unhappy because his largest and most precious sheep went astray. It takes a lot of courage to leave the flock and the security therein. It must be a very rebellious sheep! Most people behave like sheep in a flock. They are doing and thinking the same, and they worship the same gods in the same robotic way. As long as you don't dare to leave the flock called society, you stay an accepted member, and everybody judges you to be okay. But as soon as you go against society or refuse to collaborate, you get into some very serious troubles.

You then are labeled as being a misfit, a rebel, or an outcast. In some countries, the so-called "dissidents" still risk long years in prison and sometimes are even sentenced to death. Often, the only "crime" they committed consists of rejecting the official political doctrine. This is basically what happened to Jesus too. He

was the Father's favorite sheep and – according to the Jewish establishment – he went astray.

Jesus had enormous courage and he was absolutely true to the Truth. Popular conceptions tend to soften him up, but he was a true rebel, publicly exposing the hypocrisy and self-serving behavior of the Pharisees. In his time he certainly was among the most hated people of the conservative Jewish society. Finally, he was killed because his teaching was considered to be a threat to the religious and political establishment. Most disciples of Jesus came from the lower classes of the Jewish society. They were either very poor, or they were outcasts, prostitutes, or even petty criminals. Jesus obviously wasn't concerned with the scribes, priests, or the upper classes. He knew that all of those "successful" people were not ready and willing to listen to his words:

Why have you come out to the countryside? To see a reed shaken by the wind? And to see a person dressed in soft clothes, like your rulers and powerful ones? They are dressed in soft clothes, and they cannot understand the truth.” (78)

As long as we are successful in this society, we seldom search for the Truth, and prefer to remain members of the flock. Some people may feel very special and, therefore, more worthy than the flock, but they are just like reeds shaken by the winds of the mind. They entirely adhere to the societal values and, therefore, they don't go astray. Bathing in the warm sunlight of the "selfmade" man, they feel no need for a change.

The Truth is that we do not control our success. We have no power at all because we entirely depend on the Divine. When it's time for us to change our ways, Life will arrange the perfect circumstances to make it happen. God first gives us everything and then, when we are ripe and ready, He takes it all away – if this is what's necessary for our ripening. Getting excluded from the flock can be extremely painful. Your whole self-image breaks into pieces and you suddenly find yourself being an outcast too. While we are immersed in such an experience, we suffer greatly, but actually, it is a blessing. We are hereby given the opportunity to recognize that all this stuff is not needed for our happiness.

Most people are not blessed with this kind of drama. They are allowed to stay with the flock until the end of their lives. Only the strongest go astray. We ordinarily think that such an experience is “too much” to bear. Yes, it hurts like hell, but it is never too much. We tend to underestimate our abilities, but the Divine never does. Everything we need to wake up is perfectly and individually served on the plates of our lives. When we are ripe, God is there to harvest the fruits of His work:

When the crop ripened, he came quickly carrying a sickle and harvested it. (21d)

Sometimes we feel completely lost, but God has a watchful eye on us. Those of us who leave the flock have the energy and the power to do it. We may not be aware of it, but that’s the way it is. The shepherd leaves the flock alone because these sheep won’t move anyway. They will stay together and cling to their secure, conditioned habits. So there is no need to worry too much about them. However, the one who became lost needs special attention and care.

Whenever you visit a mental ward, you will be surprised how many wonderful and intelligent people you find there. Even in a prison you can meet utterly interesting and beautiful people. Often they are closer to awakening than any member of the flock. As Eckhart Tolle reports, there have even been murderers on death row waiting for execution who, in the last few hours of their lives, experienced the egoless state and the deep joy and peace that come with it. The wisdom literature is full of stories about the sudden awakening of former criminals. A similar story is also narrated by Luke when he tells us about the “good thief” who was one of the criminals crucified together with Jesus. He said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom!” and Jesus replied, “Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

God is not a judge, and He doesn’t take revenge. If He did, He would not be one iota better than the egotistical mind. God is pure Love, and Jesus is pure Forgivingness. As Sri Sri Ravi Shankar points out, there is no sinner, because all of our mistakes are the result of a lack of awareness. Doing “good” is not our merit and doing “bad” is not our fault. The deep Truth is that there is no “doer”

at all. Life just happens as it happens, and it is always perfect. The famous Indian Saint Ramakrishna once said, “Enlightenment is beyond merit and sin. The enlightened one knows that God is doing everything.”

Just imagine that you were raised and conditioned in a terrorist environment. Most probably you would then also proclaim your “holy war” and act in the same stupid way as these fanatic fools. Nevertheless, the question is: Are they really responsible for what they do, or are they just victims of their own mind programming? What they do is doubtlessly horrible, but let us not forget that they truly believe in their fighting the devil in the name of Allah. The closer you look, the more difficult it becomes to condemn anybody. Ultimately, there is no “sinner” anywhere and there is no Divine punishment either. Hell and eternal suffering are insane inventions of the Churches. If such an absurd thing existed, God would be the most dreadful demon of all times. Do you really want to believe that a loving and forgiving God would act like this? So just drop all of these concepts. Love and cherish God rather than being afraid of Him. God is your best friend, not your worst enemy.

The large sheep went astray but sooner or later the good shepherd will find it. It may take some time, because when we feel excluded from the flock, we might start hating the flock. We then will exclaim, “What you have done to me, I will do to you: An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth!” This is taking revenge, and it is certainly not the right way. Actually, you would still play the same stupid game with reversed the roles. Before, you were a successful member of the flock and now you seek to become a successful enemy of the flock. In both cases, you falsely believe yourself to be an imaginary somebody with a particular identity. Instead of being happy and enjoying just being nobody, you create a “rebellious somebody” and the suffering continues.

Aggression and violence are self-reproductive mind mechanisms and merely create more of the same madness. Accepting circumstances and other people as they are is the only way out. The Buddha says, “Events happen, deeds are done, but there is no individual doer of any deed.” So there is nobody to blame and nobody to forgive. Relying on the actuality that God is always doing an absolutely perfect job, we stop resisting and deeply relax into what-is. A well-balanced and peaceful way of living is the priceless reward.

Any kind of judgment or condemnation is not the Truth. Judgments are just programmed thoughts emerging from an arbitrary and egotistical belief system.

As soon as you go beyond any judgment, condemnation, or revengeful thought, you are free. This stops the game, which otherwise goes on endlessly. True rebellion is becoming like a rock, not moving from the Truth. It is about radically and ruthlessly being true to yourself and true to the Truth. Take Jesus as an example and follow his brave footsteps through the torrents of life. Don't be concerned about the judgments, beliefs, and incessant expectations of other people. You don't need the flock and you don't need your own mind programming either. Whenever you sincerely and faithfully ask for help, the Divine will rescue you. Most probably this will not happen the way you imagine or wish it to happen, but it will happen.

LIVING IN THE NOW

The Ever Present Now

By Kathryn Phillips

The wisdom of the 'Now'

There all Truth resides

Our God Consciousness

Resting place

Where illusion cannot hide

Our natural state of 'being'

An all pervading Peace

For our Souls

Which is not unknown

Our sacred spiritual sanctuary

That is our Eternal Home

When Will You See God?

As told by Sri Swami Satchidananda

A young man went to the great saint Sri Ramakrishna and said: “Sir I want to see God right away!”

Sri Ramakrishna said, “Before you see God, we will go to take a bath in the Ganges.” He took the young man to the Ganges and told him, “All right, dip.” But as the fellow dipped, Sri Ramakrishna held him under the water. Immediately the devotee started fighting for breath. When he knew the young man could not stay under any longer, Sri Ramakrishna let him up.

As the young man stood gasping on the riverbank, Sri Ramakrishna asked him, “What were you thinking about while you were under water? Were you thinking about your money, your wife, your son, your name, your profession?”

“All I could think about was getting some air!”

“Good! When you have that kind of yearning for God, you will see Him right away.”

The Wisdom of the Now

Whatever is destined to not happen will not happen, try as you may. Whatever is destined to happen will happen, do what you may to prevent it.

- RAMANA MAHARSHI

*Understand that nothing happens unless it is God's will and do what you like.
What can be easier than that?*

- RAMESH BALSEKAR

Know what is in front of your face, and what is hidden from you will be disclosed to you. For there is nothing hidden that will not be revealed. (5a)

Jesus invites you to stop for a moment and to see what is in front of your face. What is right in front of your face? – It is this present moment, it is THAT which is here right now and it is closer than your own breath. It is your true essence: The Eternal Now. All we ever have to know will be revealed in the present moment. No doing is involved and no thinking effort is required. Just stop, become quiet, and look within! Don't "believe" anything! Anything you believe to know will just obscure your clear vision. Better use your two good eyes and discover the Eternal Truth in innocence. Experience the ever-present manifestation of the Divine in the Here and Now and the fresh wisdom of your own Self will sputter like the clear water of a mountain spring. Just come here and all your questions will be answered.

So let us follow the invitation of Jesus and see if we can discover something interesting by using the recommended method! Let's, for example, find out if

there is such thing as a free will. This is a very important question because if no free will is found, subsequently no “sinner” can be found. And when there is no sinner, then any guilt feelings are absurd. Why should you feel guilty, when this phenomenon we call “sin” just happened because it was supposed to happen? This would actually mean that you didn’t do anything at all. It would mean that you didn’t do anything “good” and that you didn’t do anything “bad” either. Do you know why this is true? It is very simple, because literally everything in this world depends on the workings of the Divine! The totality of this tremendous cosmic motion picture called “Life” is nothing but a perfect manifestation happening according to the Father’s will – or the Cosmic Law, as Ramesh Balsekar would prefer to say.

Today’s scientists quite uniformly state that our thoughts, opinions, attitudes, talents, beliefs, and decisions are dependent on two major factors. The first one is our genetic structure and the second one is the mind-programming that results from what they call the socialization process. The socialization process has many ingredients: Culture, society, moral codes, religion, schooling programs, attitudes of family members and friends, formative life experiences, and so forth. Basically the programming of the body-mind structure is a life-long process, though the early years are much more decisive. Since Pavlov we know that even our emotional responses are the outcome of a process called classical conditioning. Ramesh Balsekar stops here and says, “We are the product of our genes and our conditioning. Everything we do, think, or feel depends on these two factors.”

Now you might object: “But I can decide. I have the choice to do whatever I want!” Okay, let’s do a little inquiry into that issue! Suppose that the decision to be made is: Should I go shopping or is it better to go for a walk? After a while, you decide to go for a walk. Was it your free decision? What is your experience? – Your experience is that it was you who made the decision. It is like that because we all have this same experience of doing something. So let’s go deeper: Why did you come up with the idea that a decision has to be made? First of all, a thought has to arise in your mind, a thought like, “Should I go shopping or should I instead go for a walk?” And then, after a while of swinging back and forth, a new thought appears and this thought is telling you that it is better to go for a walk. And of course, you believe that this is your thought. This thought may perhaps lead you to the action of walking, but where did the thought and your motivation to go for a walk come from? Did you create the thought? Are you responsible for your thoughts? Do you have any control over your thoughts,

or do thoughts merely happen as they happen? Don't think, just look and see how it is!

Even if we hold on to the concept that, in a given situation, we can freely decide between two or more possibilities, we still have to admit that we have not the slightest control over the outcome of our decisions. Our lives are full of decisions about future “doings” and plans, but do they ever happen exactly the way we imagine or wish them to happen? You may decide to do something “good” and it turns into something “bad.” You may decide to do something “bad” and it turns into something “good.” And often enough nothing at all happens as a result of your decisions. The Truth is: What will happen or not happen is simply not in our hands! Just look back on your own life story. Did you really choose your parents, teachers, friends, or love partners? Did you choose the crucial circumstances, situations, and events that shaped your biography? Do you have any influence on your experience – on the thoughts, emotions, and body sensations that show up in a particular situation?

So we have this experience of a “free will,” but if we go deeper, this free will is revealed as an illusion. Life is a happening, not a doing. So we have no power whatsoever. We are not in control. The mind is not in command because the “I” is absolutely powerless. Everything that happens has to happen, because it is supposed to happen. And it only happens because it is happening in perfect harmony with God's will or the Cosmic Law. For anything to happen, the Divine first has to allow it to happen. Otherwise there would be no way for it to come into existence. Provided you believe in God, it is simple and clear, isn't it?

Being devoid of any free will may seem terrible to you. But it isn't. Looking closely you will find out that – in a state of crystal-clear awareness – you actually are free to give your attention either to the mind or the present moment – the feelings, the breath, or the body sensations. If you are really determined to go for this, your awareness will steadily evolve. According to its programming, the body-mind mechanism immediately reacts to any incoming information from the inner or outer world, thus either triggering a particular emotion, a compulsive thinking process, and/or some unconscious action. If you are, however, firmly and consciously anchored in the Now, you can easily take a step back and just quietly notice the movements in your mind and body instead of mechanically reacting to these stimuli like a programmed robot. As Sadhguru explains, “Your whole life and existence is moving from unconsciousness to consciousness. That's why your reactions become less. The more unconscious you are, the more

reactive you are. The more conscious you are, the less reactive you are.”

Becoming aware of the inner energy field, you will automatically learn to withdraw your attention from the thoughts and consciously respond to the demands of the present moment. As a result of this you will enter the natural stream of Life and spontaneously know where to go or what to do. Instead of listening to this “alien” tyrant called the mind, you will follow the wisdom of your deep intuition. And this actually is what we can define as absolute freedom. It’s another paradox, because, being fully aware means that you do not have and do not wish to have any other choice than following the voice of your very own heart. In other words: You humbly aligned your own will with the Higher Will of the Father. Meister Eckhart says, “Whenever I have taken leave of my own will, putting it in the hands of my superior, and no longer will anything for myself, then God must will on my behalf, and if He neglects me in this respect, then He neglects Himself. And so in all things in which I do not will for myself, God wills on my behalf.”

Our voting for awareness therefore is the only and essential free choice that is fully supported by the Divine. And yet we still totally depend on the workings of the Cosmic Law. Being aware we experience freedom from the programmed dictatorship of the mind – that’s true, but the remaining question is: Who or what makes us aware of our thinking, judging, or fantasizing? Who or what makes the miracle of awareness happen? Can we consciously create awareness? In one moment we are aware; in the next moment, we aren’t. Actually our state of mind constantly flickers between the conscious and the unconscious mode of existence. Neither this nor that is the result of any will power, effort, or deed. However, it is obvious that our awareness steadily grows and expands as soon as we start to open up and listen to our very own hearts.

Maybe you accept that God is almighty, but probably still some questions arise, such as, “Why does He then allow such horrible things to happen throughout the world? Why is there war? Why do we have to suffer? Why is God so cruel?” Well, instead of torturing yourself with useless ideas about how the world should be, just look back on your own life story. Of course, you have experienced a lot of pain and suffering. Nevertheless, it is the suffering caused by the ego mind that brought you here! Only the suffering urges us to seek for peace and freedom. Without all of these painful experiences, we wouldn’t feel motivated to progress or learn anything. If we had been free to decide about our lives, we never would have voted for pain and suffering. We instead would have voted for

everlasting bliss and ecstatic happiness, which – in the end – would mean unbearable boredom. The Truth is that especially the unpleasant experiences are highly valuable. They are made to catch our conscious attention and they strongly support our spiritual maturity.

When Jesus was being asked what God is like, he answered, “God is Love!” You can rely on that, and you are free to experience the Truth of these words by yourself. A full understanding of what is said here will result in total acceptance of what-is-now. Once you realize that God is Love and that nothing ever happens against His will, a deep relaxation follows. This relaxation is called enlightenment or awakening. Enlightenment is the end of all judgments toward yourself or others. It naturally occurs, when the imaginary doer finally leaves. After this phantom has gone, no space is left for guilt or shame, pride or hatred, and you will easily find your true freedom and peace of mind.

Cultivate Your Awareness!

It is only through awareness that our physical and mental attitude can change.

- JEAN KLEIN

Buddha means awareness, the awareness of body and mind that prevents evil to arise in either.

- BODHIDHARMA

If the owners of a house know that a thief is coming, they will be on guard before the thief arrives and will not let the thief break into their house and steal their possessions. As for you, then, be on guard against the world. Prepare yourselves with great strength, so the robbers can't find a way to get you, for the trouble you expect will come. (21b)

The robber in question is nobody other than the mind. He is constantly bothering you with all kinds of thoughts, and he visits you time and again to rob your peace. As we all know, he unfortunately usually succeeds in doing that. Therefore, Jesus says:

The foxes have their holes and the birds have their nests, but human beings have no place to rest. (86)

Being in peace brings joy and happiness. Peace is our greatest treasure, so let's make sure that the robbers will not come and take it away. If we allow the thoughts to permanently break in and disturb us, we will not be able to rest. We go to bed and try to sleep, but we can't because the mind is still torturing us. Even in our dreams we can't let go of the thoughts, and all kinds of nightmares show up and thus destroy our peace of mind.

So how can we fight the mind? The answer is: Don't even try to fight the mind. This is a fight that cannot be won. Actually, it is only the mind that can fight the mind. So, in the end, the ego mind is fighting with "himself," and this gives him more and more power. Fighting is resisting to what-is and any resistance to what-anyway-already-is creates unnecessary suffering. The aim is not trying to get rid of all the thoughts. This is impossible. Even so, it is very important to see that thoughts are just thoughts. If we don't take them seriously, they are really nothing. Unless we give the thoughts too much importance, they don't have any control over us. Why should we give any attention to the thoughts? We don't even know where all these thoughts come from. Most of the thoughts arising in the mind are a mere result of our past mind programming. As such, they contain no Truth at all.

The good news is that you are the source of all the power. Your attention actually is the power supply for the mind. If you don't give your attention to the thoughts, the mind simply runs out of juice and stops producing rubbish all the time. Be on your guards, because the robbers will soon and inevitably come back. The mind is really a tricky bitch. Like a ghost, he adores coming through the backdoor and attacking you from behind. If you are not vigilant, you can expect him to get your attention time and again. The mind needs your attention because if you withdraw your attention from the thoughts, he will have to die and his tyranny comes to an end. So be well prepared. When the ego feels in danger of losing control, it will create a lot of trouble and bombard you with a crowd of threatening thoughts and unpleasant feelings.

What we need is the total readiness to be as aware as possible. As we already saw, only awareness can help. Whenever we notice that we are lost in some thoughts, we are aware or awake. Then and only then are we free to give our attention to something else (cf.103). Rather than fueling the mind, we can give our attention to the breath, the feelings, or any body sensation. This will bring us home again.

A little patience and some practice will be needed. After a while of practicing, your awareness will expand and your coming back here will start to happen in an automatic, effortless, and most natural way. However, if you want to see the Truth, if you want to see your real face, you need a clean mirror. To reflect the Truth of what you really are, your mind has to be polished until it is blank. Therefore, Jesus says:

Why do you wash the outside of the cup? Don't you understand that the one who made the inside is also the one who made the outside? (89)

Normally, we are busy with worldly things. We are attached to all kinds of sense objects, experiences, and thoughts about the world. Only seldom do we turn inward and make contact with our true ground, our divine nature. Awareness polishes the inside of the cup. Awareness is the key for everything. So don't let the robbers grab your awareness. By becoming aware you will be able to realize the Truth, and you can expect a great number of benefits. You will, for example, recognize that nothing is ever missing in the Here and Now. Every moment is perfect, and nothing has to be added or removed. This makes life really light and easy!

Looking back on our life with awareness will reveal that we always have been showered by the Love and Grace of the Divine. As a matter of fact, everything in life is a blessing, because Life is taking care of us in a perfect way. We don't know what we need, but Life knows. In every single moment Life gives us exactly what we need or it takes away what we don't need. We do not have any control about what is happening in our lives, although it occasionally seems so. As Sri Swami Satchidananda said, "In dramatic Truth, we are all in a great play. But there's only one super-director, the puppet master that pulls the strings that make us dance." Sometimes it looks like our own will would be done but this can only happen if God is willing to agree. Mostly, our selfish will is allowed to be done in order to support the spiritual learning process. Often enough we fall on our nose, and we then can see that, actually, we didn't know any better than Life itself.

When you pray, "Oh Lord, be my Light!" your prayer is twofold. On one hand,

you pray for the Light of Truth, and on the other hand, you ask for guidance in your everyday life. The key to both again is awareness. The Divine is more than willing to guide you in every moment, and He is doing this in a most direct way. Just let go of all your ideas and joyfully flow with the river of Life. Trying to swim against the direction Life wants to flow is not helpful at all. It is much better to rely on the wisdom of Life itself. It will simply attract us to the right people and situations. This is how we learn, and there is no end to this process. All we need is to become aware of the energy that is here now. Awareness is what brings us into the present moment. When we are here, in our real home, it is easy for the Divine to guide us.

Sometimes the mind is disguised as a wise inner voice. However, this is mostly just a subtle and tricky mask. In the light of your awareness, the mask will quickly fall and you will be able to see the ridiculous demon hiding behind. These false voices don't support your peace and you can sense this immediately. Listening to these voices typically causes some tension or feverishness in the body. Let this be your alarm bell. As soon as you feel any narrowing tension, know that the mind is trying to take over control again. The only thing you ever need to do is to come back here by just feeling how it feels to be anchored in the present moment. This will silence your mind and gradually expand your awareness so that you can hear the whispering of your heart and enter the innermost core of your being. It's easy because everything in Life can support us in becoming more conscious and aware. It is a natural process because crystal-clear awareness is what we really are.

Don't Hold on to Anything!

When you swim, you don't grab hold of the water, because if you do you will sink and drown. Instead you relax and float.

- ALAN WATTS

Whatever comes, let it come, what stays, let it stay, what goes, let it go.

- PAPAJI

Jesus said, "Be passersby!" (42)

This very short and mysterious saying is of great importance. With his words, Jesus urges us to totally be in the present moment, in the Here and Now. This, what we can call "the Now," is all that we ever have. Whatever is supposed to come into existence, will come into existence in the Here and Now. It is always and eternally now. The Now or the present moment is beyond time, beyond past and future. What we name "the last moment" has been now, what we name "the next moment" will be now. Only the Here and Now is real and there is no other now than the Now. There are at most thoughts, memories, and fantasies about "another" now. However, any "other now" is by definition nonexistent. Our whole life is happening now- exactly and precisely here and now.

Sit quietly for a while, turn inside, and enter the inner energy field that is here now. Can you find a beginning or an end to this Now? When did the "last moment" end? When does the "next moment" begin? If you don't get lost in some thoughts, if you don't try to analyze anything, you will be able to enter the timeless Here-and-Now. It has no beginning, and it has no end. It is just now.

The Now is the only place where we can be. The Now contains all the wisdom and all the Love; it contains the relative world and the Ultimate Reality. The essence of the Now is your own Self and this essence is Pure Consciousness. It is the naked Being; it is the all-permeating Divine Presence.

What do we find in the Now? Looking from a relative perspective, we find all kinds of sense objects. For most of us, sight is the most powerful sense organ. Therefore, we attribute great importance and firm reality to the visual world. But just consider a sightless person. If she was blind since birth, she has never seen anything! The visible world doesn't even exist for this person! Next to the objects of our visual perception, we hear sounds, speech, and music; we taste food or other objects that we put into our mouths; we have certain sensations when we touch something or when we are being touched by somebody else and finally, we smell a great variety of odors. These are the five senses and they all point to the outward world. In addition to that we have the objects that we perceive as belonging to the inside world: Feelings, body sensations, and thoughts. All this taken together creates the relative world, which we ordinary believe to be dependable and real.

Nevertheless, this relative world is highly unreliable. It is subject to continuous change. Nothing is permanent in the relative world, and it is our very own projection. What we perceive as the inner or outer world is highly dependent on the momentary condition of our body-mind mechanism. When you are really hungry, your whole perception will be focused on food. Walking through town, you will see all the places where you can buy food; you will smell the fragrance of food, and all of your thoughts are spinning around food. This is what psychologists call selective perception. As a matter of fact, our experience of the world is continuously transmuting, many times during a single day. After having had your meal, the craving for food comes to an end. If you overeat, you may even feel disgusted by any kind of food. We, consequently, have to admit that "my world" is not the same as "your world." It may be similar, but it is never the same. That is why we call it "relative." What we perceive as "the" world is utterly personal, temporary, and unstable.

All of this appears for a moment in the Here and Now. After a short while it is all gone. It doesn't exist anymore. It belongs to the past, and the past is gone forever. Only the Now is real. Is it imaginable to step out of the Now? No, it isn't possible in any way. However, it is easily possible to be unaware of the Now. This usually happens when we dwell on some thoughts about the past or

future. Then we are lost in the mind. When we are in the mind, there is no awareness of the Now, though even thoughts can only arise in the Here and Now. The point is, when we are in the mind, we are not aware of our time-bound horizontal thinking process. We are not even aware of our being here. The Being hasn't gone anywhere, but the awareness of this "Beingness" or "Amness" has.

When Jesus says, "Be passersby!" he is talking about attachment. Attachment happens when we hold on to the objects or experiences of the relative. The roots of our attachments are "pleasant" or "unpleasant" experiences of the past. Sometimes they are also just imaginations about what probably would be pleasant or unpleasant. They produce what we can call "positive" and "negative" attachment. Holding on to a pleasant experience creates the desire to have the same experience again. Holding on to an unpleasant experience creates fear and the desire to avoid this kind of experience in the future. The same is true for any attachment to thoughts, beliefs, and imaginations. Believing that money can make us happy creates the hope for more money and the fear to lose what we have. Hope, fear, and guilt are the result of our attachment to past experiences. In any case, we lose the awareness of what-is-now. Hope and fear arise because we are not able to appreciate what the Divine is generously giving us in this moment. The mind either wants something that is not available now, or he rejects what is available now.

Mary said to Jesus, "Whom are your disciples like?" He said, "They are like children who have settled in a field which is not theirs. When the owners of the field come, they will say, 'Let us have back our field.' They undress in their presence in order to let them have back their field and to give it back to them." (21a)

Young children by nature easily "pass by." They are not attached to or worried about anything that is outside their present focus. Moreover, they are not ashamed of simply and truly being the way they are. First, they had a lot of fun playing in the field and now they just keep on moving and joyfully return even more than they have got. Jesus thus wants us to walk lightly through life, being non-attached to the material and immaterial things of this world. Anyway, there obviously is a Cosmic Law according to which we always get more in return

than we can give. If we just gratefully accept what God wants to bestow on us, we miraculously end up receiving what we didn't even ask for.

There is nothing wrong about this ever-changing relative world. After all, we are talking about God's creation! This incredibly interesting playground called Life is an utterly precious gift. This beautiful world is meant to be enjoyed – fully, ruthlessly, and with no guilt feelings whatsoever. Nonetheless, joy and happiness are only available when we become free of our negative and positive attachments to past experiences. Any attachment inevitably creates dissatisfaction and suffering (cf. 27). Therefore, a total let go of all our attachments to the world is needed. This letting go can happen as soon as we become aware of the experiences that are binding us.

Letting Life flow opens our hearts for everything that-is-here-now. By welcoming whatever wants to come and by letting go whatever wants to leave, we experience a deep relaxation. What you are supposed to get, you will get, what you are supposed to lose, will be lost. All of this is not your business. It is only God's business. Desiring something or being afraid of something doesn't change anything. Whether we agree or not, the will of the Divine is done anyway. There is no escaping this. So you better surrender to what-is-now because it already is anyway. Just enjoy the wonder of Life with full awareness! This is what all the enlightened sages and saints who ever walked on earth have done.

If you want to achieve the same, you just have to come back here again and again. Whenever you find yourself dwelling on some thoughts, come back to your breath or your body sensations. This will lead you to your center, into the very core of your being. In the Here and Now you will find peace, sparkling joy, and lasting happiness. Here and now you will get a delightful taste of the Divine. If you don't want to miss this, you need to let go all of your greedy desires and fearful thoughts.

This is what it means to be a passerby. A true passerby walks lightly. He doesn't carry any burden on his shoulders. He is fully aware of the present moment and doesn't care about the past or the future. Neither does he look back nor does he look forward; he's only looking here. His whole life is happening in the absolute awareness of the Now. It is important to understand that the Here and Now actually is the only place where you can be! So why don't you come here right now?

Discovering the Inner Body

The seed of this Universe is deep inside you; in the Self. In this human body it is possible to realize it fully.

- SRI SRI RAVI SHANKAR

There is more wisdom in your body than in your deepest philosophy.

- FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

Whoever has come to know the world has discovered the body, and whoever has discovered the body, of that one the world is not worthy. (80)

Whenever Jesus speaks about “the world,” he is not referring to this beautiful divine creation. He is talking about the mind and the mind’s attachments to the world of illusion. Throughout our life, we adopt a whole bunch of false ideas about how to be “happy.” The search for happiness is as ancient as mankind and for thousands of years we have been searching somewhere in the outside world. This world is full of temptations and promises. As we have already seen, the gods of happiness that mankind are worshiping are money, sex, reputation, power, fame, food, alcohol, drugs, and many others too. In a “spiritual” environment, these gods are subtler, but it’s basically the same old story. The spiritual seeker is chasing after enlightenment or after some peak experience that makes him feel “holy.” Although an experience of the Truth is in many ways a wonderful blessing, it also can become a hindrance when we crave to have the same experience again. This is a pure waste of time because the same experience will never occur again. Every single experience is a unique happening in the Now.

All of these ideas about how to be happy belong to the impermanent world of past experiences. Lasting happiness can never be found in that which is constantly coming and going. We usually mistake happiness for an experience of some pleasure. As a result of these false ideas we develop all kinds of attachments and dependencies. Actually holding on to any concept of happiness implies an addiction to pleasant experiences or some variety of feeling high. This high can come in a multitude of different forms. In the world of sexuality, for example, almost everything is possible. Some people derive their whole sexual pleasure from receiving suffering or humiliation from another person, who in turn adores inflicting these things upon the partner. Others get aroused by objects like shoes, undergarments, or even excrement. Many obese people are strongly addicted to food whereas others hate food so much that they sometimes die from not eating. In cases where people get heavily addicted to tranquilizers – which quite frequently are legally provided by the medical doctors – the “high” rather comes as a “low,” as a sort of anesthesia of the senses and the feelings.

Nevertheless, there is one common denominator in all this endless variety: It is basically the misinterpreted search for happiness that inevitably results in an addiction to feeling some kind of “high.” This can’t work of course, because the pendulum has to swing back. Nobody can feel “high” or “stoned” all the time. There is an inbuilt rebound effect and after a while the “high” turns into frustration, disappointment, and a lot of unpleasant feelings.

These unaccepted feelings are the main cause for our suffering. The mind is an artist in creating “unpleasant feelings,” which he subsequently refuses to accept, thus producing even more suffering. Here we have a true vicious circle. The non-acceptance of the mind on one hand and these heavy unpleasant feelings on the other hand, are just the two sides of the same coin. They are actually strongly interrelated. As soon as you get lost in some thoughts about how terrible Life is, you immediately feel sadness, anger, guilt, or some other unpleasant feeling. And since we never learned to accept these feelings, we run back into the mind and more negative thoughts and feelings are being created. It’s like a merry-go-round constantly picking up speed. Sometimes we can spend days or even weeks playing this utterly exhausting game.

At a certain point in time, the suffering becomes so strong that we can no longer ignore or repress the associated feelings – and this is the blessing. This is how we are forced to shift our attention inwards and therefore, start to discover what Eckhart Tolle calls the inner body. There has been a lot of confusion about the

body. Especially in the spiritual world the body is often regarded as something that we have to overcome, reject, or leave behind. It is true: What we really are is not the body, but cursing the body is denying our humanity and at the same time God's marvelous creation. This denial of the body is practiced by countless people in the East and West, and some monks still seem to believe that Jesus' major message was a recommendation for self-torture. They try to inflict a maximum of pain on their bodies because they regard it as "sinful." This absurd ascetic practice is called mortification of the flesh. The same craziness happens in the Philippines, when, in an annual "show of devotion and repentance," a considerable number of men are nailed to crosses. In India, you can even find people standing for years on one leg with one arm raised above their head, thus completely ruining their body health. There really is nothing spiritual in these stupid and self-destructive exercises. They are just another method to feed the spiritual ego and appear as an especially "holy somebody."

All of this is the result of a deep misunderstanding. Even the Buddha is said to have practiced ascetics for six years before he finally discovered that the Truth is always to be found in the center and never in the extremes. It also has been commonly overlooked that the whole Yoga system is about learning to softly get in tune with the inner body. While practicing the body exercises or "Asanas" we are instructed to feel the movements of our limbs, joints, and muscles. Breathing techniques help us to focus our undivided attention on the process of inhaling, exhaling, and the gap in between. And meditation is about sitting quietly and getting in touch with the inner energy field. So we can see that the inner body has been known as an eminent doorway to the Self for thousands of years. Eckhart Tolle therefore rightly says, "The body is an incredible misperception of your true nature. But your true nature is concealed somewhere within that illusion, not outside of it, so the body is still the only point of access to it."

Spiritual techniques are wonderful but sometimes they can become a real hindrance or even a new addiction. This happens when they are misused as a means to create positive feelings or to "get enlightenment." Moreover, we often see people feeling peaceful, harmonious, and well balanced while doing their practices. Thereafter the mind immediately takes over again and they behave in the same foolish way as before. Jesus didn't recommend any particular techniques, because he saw that praying, meditating, and fasting are often done according to a beggarly attitude. As Meister Eckhart accurately said, "Many people want to look upon God with the eyes with which they look upon a cow; they want to love God the way they love a cow that you love because it gives

you milk and cheese. This is how people behave who want to love God for external wealth or inner comfort; but they do not love God properly: rather, they love their self interest.” This trading attitude is clearly rejected by Jesus:

If you fast, you will bring sin upon yourselves, and if you pray, you will be condemned, and if you give to charity, you will harm your spirits. (14a)

There is nothing wrong about all of these spiritual practices, but the point is that we don't need any particular set of strenuous and complicated methods in order to become aware of the Now. Practicing taking away our attention from the thoughts and gently redirecting it into the inner body is more than enough to bring us back home, into the present moment. Being here is meditation and meditation can happen all day long. In the silence and peace of the present moment God feels invited to come into this body. Being here, joyfully inhabiting this human body is simple, effortless, and natural.

The mind is always trying to escape from the present moment by projecting our attention somewhere into the past or the future. Not accepting what-is-here and wanting what is not here causes the body to react with tension, feverishness, and other unpleasant feelings. Many teachers talk about the need to accept, but most of them do not tell us how to do that. When we try to do it with the mind, we will inevitably fail, because the mind will never ever accept what-is. The mind's nature actually is pure non-acceptance. The mind can't accept what is, because accepting what is, implies his immediate death.

Discovering the “inner body,” the breath, and all these sensations and feelings is a great blessing. As Samarpan points out, these bodily feelings are not our deadly enemies; they are much more like wise teachers. Everybody is ready and willing to welcome happiness, joy, and ecstasy. These delightful experiences temporarily provide us with the idea that we are “doing it right.” In the next moment, we inevitably feel “wrong” because no experience stays for long. The only secure way to learn true acceptance is by the willingness to radically and ruthlessly welcome what we don't want to feel. The heavier the feeling, the greater the potential for us to learn how to accept ourselves the way we really are. This is the quickest pathway leading to peace, freedom, and lasting

happiness.

Diving deeply into the feelings we discover that they are just energy. This energy is neither good nor bad. It is just Life energy. By giving our whole attention to these sensations the body will teach us how to creatively dance with this energy. Whoever is ready to welcome all the feelings without any ideas or judgments will be set free from the fears that shadow our lives and our inner Being. Here in the Now there is no need and no room for the mind and his dreadful thoughts. Deeply resting in ourselves brings us into contact with our true nature, with this unstained Consciousness or Holy Spirit that we truly are. Realizing the Truth of who we are definitely is the result of making friends with the body and the feelings. Jesus even labels this process as the miracle of all miracles:

If the flesh came into being because of the spirit, that is a marvel, but if the spirit came into being because of the body, that is a marvel of marvels. (29a)

Learning to face and accept whatever-is rewards us with a subtle, quiet, and lasting contentment, which is beyond all pleasures and worldly attachments. Lasting happiness never comes from the outside world. It always comes from within. Actually, there is nothing better than being rooted in this human body and peacefully enjoying the present moment. Only here do we find our true Self and will leave the world behind. Therefore, Jesus says:

Those who have found themselves, of them the world is not worthy. (111b)

In sharp contrast to what we are told by the Church leaders, Jesus time and again reminds us that the Kingdom of Heaven is not to be found somewhere in the beyond, but deep within. As the contemporary Gnostic teacher Tau Malachi says, “You are created in the image of the Lord so that you may unite with the Holy One and dwell in the Holy One and the Spirit of the Holy One might dwell in you.” And somewhere else, “It is in your humanity that you will find your divinity, and it is your divinity that will perfect and fulfill your humanity.”

Examine the Present Moment!

Realize deeply that the present moment is all what you have. Make the Now the primary focus of your life.

- ECKHART TOLLE

The heart surrenders everything to the moment. The mind judges and holds back.

- RAM DASS

They said to him, “Tell us who you are so that we may believe in you.” He said to them: “You examine the face of heaven and earth, but you have not come to know the one who is in your presence, and you do not know how to examine the present moment.” (91)

Normally, we see the world through the distorting, dirty glasses of the mind. We are not blinded by the light; we are blinded by thoughts and judgments. Therefore, we do not sense or feel the all-permeating presence of the Divine. His magnificence unfolds in every moment right before our faces. We are not able to examine the present moment because our vision is blurred by the mind. Rather than recognizing what is here now, the mind is constantly busy with this and that. Alternatively, we try to become scientifically, spiritually, or philosophically sophisticated. We then try to understand God’s creation – which is impossible – or we are even stupid enough to analyze and dissect the nature of the Divine.

All of this happens because we are not grounded in the present moment. The famous French philosopher Descartes created the saying: “I think, therefore, I am.” Generations of philosophers worshiped Descartes for having found this

universal key. However, when we look closely, we see that this “I” is just another thought referring to the ego. Even the statement “I think” is false, because there is no “I” separate from the thoughts. Actually, this “I” doesn’t even exist. Just sit quietly for a while and look again if you can find such an “I.” You can look as often as you like, you still will not find anybody. What you will find is an impersonal “Amness” but not an entity called “I.” You may also find some thoughts, stories, fantasies, and imaginations about an “I” but all of this does not mirror any reality. These ideas are definitely not what you really are; in Truth, they are nothing at all. So this fictitious “I” neither thinks nor is it able to “do” anything else. Even when we assume that the “I” exists – which it doesn’t – it would not be able to “create” the thoughts. Just examine your thoughts for a while. Can you figure out where they come from? Are you sure that these thoughts are really your thoughts and not somebody else’s thoughts? What if they were merely the result of an arbitrary conditioning of your mind?

Imagine you were born in a Buddhist country like Tibet for example, wouldn’t your thoughts and beliefs then be totally different? You think in a certain “Christian way” because you were born and raised in a Christian environment. With a Muslim conditioning, you would praise Allah and as a Buddhist you would worship the emptiness as the essence of all things. All of these religions are based on the same Truth, but taken as dogmatic belief systems they are just a burden for our liberation. We all know which kind of situations we have to face when some group of self-righteous believers is aiming to change the world according to their religious fantasies and unique “divine insights.” This has always been and will always be a very awkward and bloody issue.

Most thoughts obviously arise as a mere result of your past mind programming. Neither are they “your” thoughts, nor did you “do” the thoughts. The thoughts merely are a temporary happening in the present moment. We have no control over our thoughts because they simply arise by themselves. You can see that very clearly with addictions and strong habits. When a smoker stops smoking, his thoughts will bring up the cigarette issue hundreds of times a day. Every time he feels nervous, he craves a cigarette; as soon as he smells some cigarette aroma, he starts fantasizing about cigarettes and in each situation in which he used to smoke, the desire for a cigarette will be triggered. So this person would be happy, if she could “undo” these thoughts, but this is impossible. Nobody can “do” the thoughts, nor can anybody “undo” the thoughts. We can only turn our back on them and ignore them by going deep into the feelings and body sensations that are attached to them.

So the premise “I think” is false and when the premise is not sound the conclusion also can’t be sound. “I think, therefore, I am” is only true in one sense. When we correctly reformulate this saying it would be: When thoughts arise, there is an attached illusion of an existing “I.” We can even say: “I think, therefore, I am not,” or more precisely: “Whenever the inner Being is covered by thoughts, there is no awareness that we are.” Descartes was a great mathematician, and, therefore, he tried to understand the mysteries of existence by applying the logic of the working mind. This cannot work, because conventional logic is always based on duality, on a mathematical notion of “either true or false” or “either sound or unsound.” The Ultimate Truth, on the other hand, is by nature paradoxical and therefore transcends the rational mind. This probably sounds very complicated. However, Divine Logic is utterly simple because it embraces all the polarities. “Mathematically” speaking the first axiom of this logic would be: $1 + 1 = 1$ and the second: $(+1) + (-1) = 1$. The result is always ONE because God is pure Oneness. Everything else follows. Our state of being, in this perspective, constantly switches from 0 to 1 and from 1 to 0. To be aware (1) or not to be aware (0), that’s the relevant question!

Consciousness or awareness is by nature undivided Oneness. There is no way to describe what consciousness is or how consciousness is. Words are never the Truth. In the best possible case, they at least point to the Truth. The finger may point to the moon, but the finger is not the moon. Consciousness cannot be understood, but it can be tasted and explored. By turning inwards, by withdrawing all our attention from the thoughts, we can just merge with this subtle Beingness, which continuously reveals itself by and to itself in the present moment, in the Here and Now. Only from here, from beyond the limitations of the narrowing mind, are we able to sense the all-permeating presence of the Cosmic Jesus, because the dualistic mind is blind to Jesus and the ultimate Oneness of Reality.

The Now is timeless presence. It is beyond time and at the same time it is eternal. Therefore, Eckhart Tolle accurately says, “The time is always now.” Past and future are nothing but mental concepts. Even if you try as hard as possible, you will not be able to connect with the past or the future in any way. Past and future definitely do not exist; merely some fleeting thoughts, fantasies, and imaginations about an illusionary past and future surface for a moment and this moment is precisely and always now! The Now or the present moment, however, is permanent and absolutely stable. It is our real home. Only here can we feel secure and find our freedom and peace of mind. From here we can see the Truth

and learn to be true to ourselves.

The disciples said to Jesus, “Tell us, how will our end come?” Jesus said, “Have you found the beginning, then, that you are looking for the end? You see, the end will be where the beginning is!” (18a)

What does this mean? If the end is at exactly the same location where the beginning is, what then is the end and what is the beginning? With this saying, Jesus is pointing to the timeless character of the present moment.

When you redirect your whole attention to your “inner body,” can you then find a beginning or an end to this present moment? Don’t try to analyze. Stay in silence and see what is here. The mind will of course look for a beginning or an end because the functioning of the mind’s logic is always time bound. The whole world of conventional science is based on time and there is nothing wrong about that. Nevertheless, when it comes to the Truth of what-really-is, time is revealed as a mere concept. Time is practical in everyday life. You say, for example, “Okay, I will need two hours in order to prepare our dinner.” That’s all right, but when you look closely, you will see that all the cooking happens in the present moment. In whatever phase you are, whether you prepare, eat, or digest the food, it is always now. This Eternal Now, therefore, is all there is.

In the present moment, nothing is ever missing. In the Here and Now we find love, fulfillment, happiness, freedom, and peace. In the Now we come into touch with our true divine nature, which is immaculate Consciousness and crystal-clear awareness. Actually, there is no separation or difference between the one I really am and the impersonal Now. Only Here and Now, I am. Facing the absence of an individual “I,” should we perhaps better say, “Being is” or simply: “IT is?”

So why don’t we stay in this present moment when it brings about so much sparkling joy? The answer is: This is the game we are playing in this life. Who will win? Is it the mind, or is it God? This really is a silly question, isn’t it? But it’s a nice game, so don’t take it too seriously. Anyway, it is obvious who will win in the end. Playing the game is really exciting and interesting. What would this life be without being exposed to the dual nature of existence? You know what – it would be utterly boring! Can you imagine each and every body

constantly floating in the clouds, being happy and blissful all the time? Would you want to read a novel or watch a film in which everybody is happy all day long?

Life is so beautiful, so juicy, and so full of everything because of – and not in spite of – all the “ups” and “downs.” This is real dynamics. This makes us feel truly alive. Anyway, if you didn’t experience how it is to feel “down” or terrible, could you then know anything about how it is to feel happy and peaceful? If you were happy all the time, you wouldn’t even know what it is like to feel happy. You wouldn’t even notice that you are happy! Duality is not the Truth. Nevertheless, experiencing the polarity of existence is a divine gift. Sadhguru says, “Without duality there would be no creation. It’s only because of these opposites that creation happened; but to be trapped within the duality is the problem.”

Only through experiencing duality can we realize our humanity. Duality turns us into real human beings. So there is nothing wrong about “pleasant” feelings and there is nothing wrong about “unpleasant” feelings. They are just the two sides of the coin called Life, and they come as a package. There is no way to escape from this polarity. Life is duality, and duality is Life. As long as we live as human beings on this planet, duality is what is daily served on our plates. And we need this pendulum to keep us alive. We need it in the same way as our car needs gasoline to move. It’s not duality that gets in the way; it’s the judgments about our experience of duality. The mind constantly says, “Oh, this is a nice feeling. I love it,” or “Ugh, this is an ugly feeling. I really hate it!”

If you ignore these judgments and peacefully accept what-is, you will find that all of these feelings are just distinctive fragrances of the same Life energy. They merely have a different taste, and all of them are quite interesting. However, in order to experience purely, you have to withdraw all your attention from the judging mind and be ready to dive deeply into the feelings and especially into those that you normally reject. You may be afraid to do this, but the immense reward is total freedom and absolute fearlessness. If you are willing to accept whatever feeling comes, nothing remains to be afraid of. It’s really worth going for this. Feeling what we don’t want to feel is the ultimate doorway to our awakening. You can forget this whole commentary, but don’t forget to feel what you feel. If this is all that you achieve in this life, it’s a wonderful life!

There are many widely open gates to the Now, although welcoming all the

feelings is by far the most important one. If you really want to become healthy and whole, you have to walk on this path. Of course you don't need to wait for any feelings in order to consciously enter the Here and Now. You can ignore the thoughts at any time and at any moment of the day. Actually, your whole life can become a meditation. Just let God move you and – whenever possible – do whatever you like to do and don't do what you don't like to do. When you do what you really like to do, it is easy to fully be with it and to give your 100 percent. When you are joyfully and totally immersed in what you do, this is also a perfect meditation. You then can take a step back and just watch how your work is done virtually by itself in an effortless and miraculous way.

You literally can use everything to come here – except giving attention to the thoughts. Just feel your body, be with your breath, and be aware of what you do. When you walk, become aware of the ground below your feet, be with the tension and relaxation of your leg muscles, or notice how your body is moving by itself. We are looking for the “supernatural” but miracles permanently and naturally happen all day long. As Ron Miller points out, miracles are nothing but usual events to which we have learned to pay unusual attention. Just a subtle intention is enough and your arm moves. But do you really know how to move your limbs? Who is making your heart beat, who is breathing for you, and who is caring for all these extremely complicated bodily tasks that need to be continuously monitored and executed in order to keep you alive? The breath of the Divine is constantly flowing through your body and soul. Without the Divine not even an atom could move!

The core element of the nervous system is the nerve cell, which is also called a neuron. In the human body, we find approximately 100 billion of these neurons, and they are interrelated in an extremely sophisticated way by electrical currents, which move from cell to cell. If we lined up all the neurons of the brain in a row, the line would extend for a full length of 100 (!) kilometers. Nobody understands how all this works together in such a perfect way. The electric system in the body is much more intricate than any electronic device, which includes the most sophisticated computers. Professor Eric R. Kandel even states that the human nervous system is much too complex to allow the possibility of research. According to Professor Werner Gitt, “The nervous system in our bodies functions like a very complex data network, which depends on all the neurons performing their duty in perfection. With the rhythmic, coordinated impulses from one neuron to the next, each organ, muscle, joint, system, and cell performs its function without any conscious command or supervision from us.”

This is the voice of science. As we can see in these modern times, there is a constant convergence between science and spirituality. Wherever we look, the miraculous Divine Light is shining through, and it becomes clear that there is no individual “doer.” Nevertheless, the deepest mysteries of Life are far beyond any scientific understanding. Therefore, we could set up an endless list of exceptionally gifted scientists who believed in God. This list includes, for instance, Isaac Newton, Charles Darwin, Albert Einstein, Erwin Schroedinger, Wernher von Braun, and many others. So let’s close this little science chapter by quoting a short statement from Albert Einstein: “Everyone who is seriously involved in the pursuit of science becomes convinced that a spirit is manifest in the laws of the universe – a spirit vastly superior to that of man.”

The enlightened Masters of the past didn’t know anything about modern science, yet they came to very similar conclusions thousands of years before the most brilliant scientists. They found the Truth because they were truly capable of examining the present moment. Everything that needs to be known is effortlessly revealed by the wisdom of the Eternal Now:

After all, there is nothing hidden that will not be revealed, and there is nothing covered up that will remain undisclosed. (6b)

It’s nice to see that science and spirituality are not mutually exclusive, but what really counts is your very own, direct experience. Just by looking closely, you can see that there is no “doer.” In every single moment, God is here to care for you and to keep you alive. Without the Divine, we wouldn’t live for one millisecond, and nobody would be able to breathe or move his little finger. Recognizing this implies an unconditional bowing down and surrender to the workings of God’s Cosmic Law. This and only this brings about the ultimate liberation from the dictatorship of the ego mind.

THE DEEPEST SECRETS

Universal Light

By Kathryn Phillips

Oh Bright, White
Illuminating Light
Such an incredible
Magnificent
And Beautiful sight
The 'Power', the Source
That will always be...
The Spirit of God
And all humanity
Our breath of creation
Giving forth Life to send
Creating a cycle
Of loving Energy
That never ceases to end

The Whole World Is Your Projection

As told by Sri Swami Satchidananda

Several people were walking early in the morning when they saw a man lying by the side of the road. The first person who passed him said, “He must have spent the whole night in the gambling casinos and couldn’t make it home, and he fell asleep along the way. Gamblers are always like that.”

The next person to come by said, “Poor man, he must really be sick. Well, probably it’s best to not disturb him.” And he walked away.

The third person said, “Humph! You dirty fellow, you didn’t know how much to drink. Someone probably gave you some free whiskey. You drank a lot, and now you can’t even get up.”

The last person said, “To a saint, nothing matters. Even if he is lying on the pavement, he’ll just be communing with God. Well, probably, he is above this physical consciousness. Let me not disturb him.” And he bowed to the man and went away.

All four saw the same person, but each saw him differently, because each one projected something of himself.

Everything Is Consciousness

The entire universe is God's cosmic motion picture.

- PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA

The consciousness in you and the consciousness in me, apparently two, really one, seek unity and that is Love.

- SRI NISARGADATTA MAHARAJ

His disciples said, "Show us the place where you are, for we must seek it." He said to them, "There is light in a person of light, and it shines on the whole world. If it does not shine it is dark." (24)

This Pure Consciousness or Divine Light is present in every human being, and it is shining through everything that exists. Consciousness is our true nature, our own Self, and enlightenment is our birthright. This Divine Light is the Father Himself abiding deep in the core of our hearts. The only difference between the awakened one and us is that he or she is Self-aware. In a way, we can say that Consciousness became conscious of itself or, more poetically, that God recognized Himself in a human being.

The essence of everything that-is is Pure Consciousness. There would be no manifestation without Consciousness. Divine Consciousness is the Light from which everything came from and to where everything will return. When you want to project a film, you will need a screen. You can't point the projector to the dark sky, because no film could be watched. The screen in this metaphor is Consciousness, and the film is the manifestation. The film is perpetual

movement whereas the screen is absolute stillness. The screen remains untouched and unstained by the film (cf.79). It is white before the film is projected, it is white while the film is projected, and it is still white when the film has come to its end. The blank screen is a frequently used allegory for the Holy Spirit or Divine Light. If it does not shine, it is dark.

In the same way as the Ocean and the waves are one, God and creation are one. Nothing ever exists in separation from the Divine. This includes the earth, the oceans, the mountains, the body, the feelings, the sensations, and the thoughts. As a matter of fact, it includes the whole universe and every possible parallel universe too. As Tau Malachi says, “The whole creation is the house or body of God, and God dwells in it and reveals itself through it.” Consciousness is the essence of everything that is, ever was, and ever will be. Before anything came into Being, God is; Divine Consciousness is. Therefore, Jesus is praising the non-manifest aspect of the Divine when he cryptically says:

Congratulations to the one who came into being before coming into being. (19a)

The whole creation is nothing else but the eternal “waving” of Divine Consciousness. Every single material or immaterial object that comes into being is like a fleeting wave of the ocean. In this moment the wave is there, in the next moment it is gone, and it never had any separate existence from the ocean. In the same way, we never have been and never will be separate from the Light, which is the eternal ocean of Divine Consciousness. Therefore, the masters keep on saying, “Search for the Light within, because this is what you truly are!”

Everything in this creation has a beginning and an end. This is even true for the universe, although it obviously has a very long-lasting life. As with anything else, the universe will return to the nothingness where it came from and new universes will be born. Jesus alludes to this in the following verse:

This heaven will pass away, and the one above it will pass away. (11a)

The creational power of the Divine is limitless, and the manifestation is permanent change. The whole universe is imbedded in an eternal cycle of creation, preservation, and decay. Divine Consciousness, however, just is and it never undergoes any change. It was neither created nor is it dependent on anything else. The Divine knows no father and no mother, no death and no birth – and the same is true for the Light within. Jesus therefore says:

When you see one who was not born of woman, fall on your faces and worship. That one is your father. (15)

Seek for THAT which is permanent, which was never born and will never die. Don't cling to some waves, when you can deeply dive into the eternal Ocean of Light. Of course, we can't see the Divine with our eyes, but we are able to sense His all-permeating presence everywhere and in every moment. The eternal Now is the place where we can meet God. Here we can take a purifying bath in Divine Consciousness.

But how can we go there? What should we do? The cross has often been mistaken as a recommendation for utter suffering, but we suggest a different understanding. The cross has a horizontal and a vertical dimension. The horizontal dimension represents the time-bound mode of existence. One half points to the past whereas the other half points to the future. This is the realm of the mind. As soon as we dwell upon some thoughts, we find ourselves thrown somewhere into a no-longer-existing past or an imaginary future. We are caught in the illusion created by horizontal thinking, and our vision becomes blurred.

In order to see clearly, we have to come here, into the Now. To do this, a radical shift is required. We need to shift from the horizontal mode of thinking to the vertical mode of conscious existence. The upper end of this line points to the Divine and the lower end points to what is happening here and now. This is one single continuum; we can move up and down on this timeless dimension, but basically, we have to find a natural state of balance just in the middle. The point where the two lines intersect represents the place where heaven and earth meet, where the form and the formless touch one another. Here we effortlessly find our

center beyond past and future. Here is the bridge between our divinity and our humanity. Here, in the very center of existence, is our place to live.

A great many spiritual exercises have been recommended in order to find our center. Jesus repeatedly told us to search for the Light within and to transcend any kind of duality, but he didn't teach any practices (cf. 104). Just shifting our attention from the thoughts to our inner being is more than enough. When there is no horizontal thinking, meditation is naturally happening; real prayer and devotion are spontaneously happening. This is fun and totally effortless. Therefore, Jesus says:

Come to me, for my yoke is comfortable and my lordship is gentle, and you will find rest for yourselves. (90)

Why is it easy? It is easy because we are solely asked to recognize who we really are and to be as we are. There is no "alien" or "binding" element in Jesus' yoke or yoga. The wonderful perspective is our awakening to the Truth and the liberation from the yoke called ego mind. As we have seen, Jesus' yoke doesn't require forcing ourselves in order to strictly fulfill any prescribed religious rituals. According to your inner impulses, "move and rest," he says, and let it be a graceful and spontaneous energy dance. What can be easier than that?

This is exactly what Papaji recommends. He tells us, "Don't make any efforts; just be quiet!" Actually, the instruction is: "Don't do anything!" This unfortunately is often misunderstood, because "not doing anything" does not mean that you have to sit in a yoga seat for hours, desperately trying not to move. This is really doing something; it is mostly painful and it actually needs a lot of effort. As Sadhguru points out, "The main thing with non-doing is that even if you work twenty-four hours a day, you don't feel like you have done something. This is because you are not identified with your actions. You are just doing action as needed." Jesus says:

If they ask you, "What is the evidence of your Father in you?" say to them, "It is motion and rest" (50c)

Neither resting nor movement is the only Truth. Life has to be an effortless dance between these two poles. The only thing we ever need to do is to become aware of our inner impulses and to go where Life attracts us to go. This is how the Divine is guiding us in a very practical way. The good news therefore is: You can take the easy route and avoid going where the effort and the tension are.

If you have to think about where to go or if you feel some feverishness in your body, then it is the mind talking to you. This voice, for certain, leads in the wrong direction. It's more about coming here and feeling the energy that is here now. If no energy is there, you need some rest; if the energy flows, it's time to move or to work. Going with the energy makes life light and easy. Depending on the available amount of energy, work is a burden, or it is done in a completely effortless way. If you want to suffer, let the mind move you; if you prefer to have fun, let the Divine move you. It's really simple!

There is Only One

God is One, but He has innumerable forms. He is the creator of all and He Himself takes the human form.

- GURU NANAK

Everything is made from one essence, but different names are given to the many forms that it takes. If you can see beyond the name and form, you see the Truth.

- SWAMI SATCHIDANANDA

When there are three deities, they are Divine. When there are two or one, I am with that one. (30)

The Christian doctrine of the trinity defines God as three different divine “persons” or holy entities. These three persons are distinct, yet are one in substance. In this view, God is the Father, the Son (Jesus Christ), and the Holy Spirit – but the three entities remain different persons. Jesus didn’t adhere to this confusing doctrine. His teaching clearly points to the all-encompassing Oneness and not to duality or trinity. In this deeper understanding we don’t look at three different persons, we just see God from three distinct angles. The term “Father” points to the creative power of the Divine; the Son is a metaphor for God coming to earth as a Self-realizing human being, and the Holy Spirit is nothing other than Divine Consciousness or Awareness. Jesus mostly prefers to use the term “Light” for Divine Consciousness, which is the essence of everything of all that-is, ever was, and ever will be.

Answering the question “Where is God?” the catechism says, “God is

everywhere.” These words carry a profound Truth, because they point to the all-pervading presence of the Divine. In His endless grace, He gave us so many different ways to come and remain in touch with Him, and one most simple and natural way is to sharpen our perception and fully enjoy the incredible beauty of this amazing creation. Even so, enjoying is only possible when we become totally silent in the present moment, thus stopping the incessant chattering of the mind for a while. God is not hiding somewhere in the beyond. He is here, in each and every moment. Coming here, into the Now, allows us to make contact with the Divine. All the senses can be helpful, but we have to experience them purely, without thinking, labeling, or analyzing.

So stop and be quiet for a moment. Just look and listen without any idea. Close your eyes and listen to the sounds of nature, the falling of the raindrops, the howling of the wind, the singing of the birds, the humming of some insect, and you will feel the mystical heartbeat of existence. Look at the stars or any creature of this earth, a plant, a tree, a flower, a stone, an animal, and you will sense the Divine presence. This has to be like this because, as Meister Eckhart said, “Every creature is a word of God and a book about God.” Without wanting to know anything, allow yourself to melt into the jaw-dropping beauty of Mother Nature. After all, the famous Garden of Eden symbolizes nothing more and nothing less than unspoiled nature and, in a broader sense, the whole Divine Creation.

The Truth is that we never got thrown out of paradise. Living in hell rather than in paradise is our own decision. After eating from the forbidden tree of knowledge of good and evil, we systematically started dividing and judging what by nature is whole and holy. In other words, we got trapped by the serpent called the mind. God didn’t interfere. By the Grace of the Divine, we are endowed with the free will to either follow the thoughts or to just be here and taste what-is. There is no other Satan than the divided mind, and his favorite preoccupation is to make us suffer. Only the mind prevents us from becoming aware of the paradise that is in us and all around us. This life is meant to be gratefully appreciated. We are here to discover paradise and not to wait for it. Just consider for a moment what Jesus says on this issue:

His disciples said to him, “When will the kingdom come?” And Jesus replied: “It will not come by waiting for it. It will not be said, ‘Look, here!’

or ‘Look there!’ Rather, the Father’s kingdom is spread out upon the earth, and people don’t see it.” (113)

Cultivating our awareness, therefore, is highly valuable. Actually, it is the only thing that really matters in life – and it’s simple. Just ignore the thoughts and come back here as often as you can! That’s all you ever have to learn, and you will realize that you already are in paradise.

According to the Christian doctrine, God has only one child; this child is male, and his name is Jesus Christ. This doctrine is based on lies. It is a result of the power games that the churches like to play. Holding on to this idea, the church supports itself in a twofold way. First of all, the supremacy of the male aspect in relation to the female aspect of existence is established. Just look at the Catholic Church: The totality of the political power is concentrated in the hands of popes, bishops, and priests, and all of them are male. Second, Christianity insists that Jesus Christ is the only one who can teach us. Jesus and only Jesus can speak the Truth, which implies that there are no other enlightened Masters we are allowed to listen to. As Jesus is the one and only “real” Son of God, it also follows that he is far beyond humanity. These dogmatic principles obviously have only been created in order to legitimize the worldly power of the Catholic Church through a metaphysical argument.

Nothing of this can be found in Jesus’ teachings, because he kept on saying: “I am the Son of Man,” which originally had no messianic connotations but simply meant: “I am a human being.” Of course he also said, “I and the Father are one,” but did he ever say, “You and the Father are not one?” Jesus was such a beautiful teacher, and he loved being human. He was laughing, enjoying, crying real tears, and sometimes he could also become very angry. He liked to talk about his own weaknesses, and he never denied his humanity. He made no attempts to be special, although in many ways he doubtlessly was. He was totally human and at the same time he realized his divinity. Every enlightened Master is a perfect human embodiment of the Divine, and each of them is here to tell us, “You and the Father are one!” We are all the children of the same Father, and it certainly doesn’t matter whether we are male or female. Jesus is totally aware of his divinity, and we aren’t. That’s the major difference. Even though each of us comes to earth in a limited human body, our origins are divine. Jesus clearly tells his disciples:

“When you are asked where have you come from?” say to them: “We come from the light, from the place where the light came into being by itself, established itself and appeared in their image.” (50a)

And, pointing to our full human potential:

Whoever drinks from my mouth will become like me; I myself shall become that person, and the hidden things will be revealed to him. (108)

So living on this earth in a human body is not a punishment. Through these bodies and these senses, we become grounded in everyday life. The body perfectly enables us to enjoy the beauty of the Father’s creation and we are endowed with the innate capacity to recognize the Truth and realize our real nature, which is the “Holy Spirit,” the “Light,” or pure and immaculate Divine Consciousness. In the light of this unstained Consciousness, all the hidden things are revealed, and we discover that all is Oneness. The Ultimate Reality knows no duality, no division, and no separation. There are neither two, nor three – there is just One.

If one is whole, one will be filled with light, but if one is divided, one will be filled with darkness. (61c)

Consciousness is undivided, unlimited, un-located, and unchanging. It cannot be seen; it cannot be heard; it cannot be touched; and it cannot be understood. It is THAT which sees, hears, tastes, and understands. It is the nature of all that-is and it can’t be used for anything else. It exists by itself and for itself. Therefore, Jesus says:

Show me the stone that the builders rejected: that is the key stone. (66)

The realization of this is called “awakening.” It is just a deep recognition of what we always have been: Pure Consciousness. We emerge from the Light, and we are the Light. If there is anything sacred in this universe, it is Consciousness itself. It is the cornerstone on which the whole creation is built. Every possible phenomenon or object, every experience, every thought, every feeling, and every body sensation arises in Consciousness, which is the essence of the Being, the Now, the present moment. Nothing comes into existence in a way other than through Consciousness. Consciousness is God, and God is Consciousness. That’s why Jesus says:

Whoever blasphemes against the Father [God as creative power] will be forgiven, and whoever blasphemes against the son [God as a human being] will be forgiven, but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit [God as Pure Consciousness] will not be forgiven. (44)

Our true nature is Consciousness. Ordinarily, we create the experience to live in this human body, and we are convinced to be this body. Enjoying our lives as a human being in a human body is an integral part of the game, and this is perfect. This body is a marvelous divine construction, and we should do everything to take good care of it, but it is not what we really are. As with everything else in this creation, the body manifests as a sense object of our perception and the apparent solidity of this perception makes us believe that we abide somewhere within. It seems a paradox, but the opposite is true. We are not in the body; the body is in us. The body appears as a projected object in Consciousness. For the body to arise, Consciousness is needed. In a deep, dreamless sleep, we are not conscious and the body, as well as the whole world, disappears. So there is nothing but Consciousness. When we realize that what we are is “Holy Spirit,” the search comes to an end, and our lives will be totally fulfilled. This is the direction in which Jesus wants to lead us:

The Father's kingdom is like a merchant who had a supply of merchandise and found a pearl. That merchant was prudent; he sold the merchandise and bought the single pearl for himself. So also with you, seek his treasure that is unfailing, that is enduring, where no moth comes to eat and no worm destroys. (76)

All Permeating Presence

The Great Spirit is in all things.

- BIG THUNDER

The presence of God is everywhere; you have only to embrace it with your presence.

- DEEPAK CHOPRA

Jesus said: “Split a piece of wood, and I am there. Lift up a stone, and you will find me there.” (77b)

What aspect of Jesus can be found when we split a piece of wood? What do we find when we lift up a stone? Is the living Jesus abiding there? The answer is yes and no. It is important to see that Jesus is an enlightened Master and as every Master, he went beyond any identification with the body or the mind. He discovered that his true nature – which is the same for every human being – is not from the relative world; it is absolute Oneness with the Divine. Therefore, when Jesus is talking, his words are a manifestation of the Divine Himself. His all-permeating presence can be seen everywhere and in everything. Nothing exists in separation from Universal Consciousness, and the Divine Light shines even through the most insignificant phenomena of this relative world.

It is interesting that modern quantum physics comes to quite similar conclusions. First, we believed that all matter consisted of small, solid elements, which we called atoms. Subsequently, it was seen that there is a lot of empty space between the atoms. Then it was discovered that the atom has a very small

nucleus and that 99.99 percent of its volume is empty! But even that was not the end of the story, because we found that the nucleus is made up of protons and neutrons, which again are composed of infinitesimal particles. And these particles spontaneously appear and disappear into the nothingness. They virtually come out of nowhere. So the concept of solidity was finally rejected.

Today the scientists prefer to speak of a unified field, and any particle is seen as a temporal densification of the overall energy field. However, this field is not empty in the sense of nothingness. It is a “pregnant” energy field, an undivided and interconnected “creative” and infinitely powerful void, out of which all the forms and objects of this world arise and into which they ultimately fall back again. As Sadhguru explains, “Everything is the same energy. The rock is the same energy. God is also the same energy. This is gross; that is subtle. As you make it more and more subtle, beyond a certain level of subtleness, you call it divine. Below a certain level of grossness, you call it animal; further below you call it inanimate. It is all the same energy.” That’s why the Buddhists say, “Emptiness is form and form is emptiness.”

All forms that come to existence emerge from the same Source. They appear and disappear, but they have no substance different from Divine Consciousness. Whatever can be perceived is nothing but a temporary manifestation of Consciousness. So taking a deep look at any particular object of perception reveals the Divine Light within. Having realized his divinity, Jesus introduces the above saying with the following words:

“I am the light that is over all things. I am all: From me all came forth and to me all attained.” (77a)

These words of the living Jesus point to the creative power of God and the unspeakable Truth. They come out of the mouth of an enlightened human being, and, as such, they arise from beyond time and space. The ultimate meaning of these sayings cannot be figured out by the mind. Don’t even try to do this because any attempt to understand is bound to fail. The nature of Truth is, as we have seen, paradoxical. The Divine logic doesn’t know anything about true or false. It only knows Oneness, the Totality of all that-is. In this perspective each

and every single object or being is merely a finite and temporary form of the infinite.

If all of this seems too complicated for you, just relax and enjoy the Father's wonderful creation. You don't have to know anything; it is more than enough to just be. Come here with a quiet mind and look, without any idea, at a piece of wood, a stone, a flower, a tree, or any living being. Sooner or later, you will inevitably discover the sacred Divine Presence in all the material and immaterial things that make up this amazing cosmic motion picture.

All of us have learned to look from the mind. Therefore, when we see, for example, a rose, the mind immediately says, "Oh, I know what this is; this is a flower called a rose!" However, this form is more than just a flower or a rose. We have reduced its existence by giving it the particular name "rose" belonging to the category "flowers," which again is a subdivision of the category "plants." This is practical and accurate from a scientific point of view, but it doesn't tell us anything about the incredible grace and spiritual significance of this delightful little being. According to Mirra Alfassa, flowers are the prayers of the plants. Just by looking at a flower with a peaceful mind, we can get a taste of the all-permeating Divine Light. Eckhart Tolle, therefore, says, "When you are alert and contemplate a flower without naming it mentally, it becomes a window for you into the formless. There is an inner opening, however slight, into the spiritual dimension."

The mind-blowing beauty of nature thus is only revealed to the spiritual heart, never to the thinking mind. A sensitive human being feels the presence of the Divine in every moment. Virtually everything in this immense universe points to the Divine. The great Indian Saint Sri Neem Karoli Baba hence recommends, "Instead of trying to see God in a particular appearance, it is better to see Him in everything!"

How Far Can We Go?

All know that the drop merges into the ocean, but few know that the ocean merges into a drop.

- KABIR

If one says “I am God” from the ego self, that is delusion, but if one says it from the larger Self, it is profoundly true.

- RON MILLER

I will give you what no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, what no hand has touched and what never occurred to the human mind. (17)

What kind of knowledge can we expect from Jesus? When we fully understand the meaning of these sayings, will we then be able to see the Divine? Will we understand what Life is all about? No, we won't. There is no way to understand or describe God. What we can look forward to is having a taste of our divine nature. Nothing more than a glimpse is possible, and the mind will never figure it out. Jesus says:

The images are manifest to man, but the light in them remains concealed in the image of the light of the Father. He will become manifest, but his image will remain concealed by his light. (83)

It's comparable to a person approaching a dark place, holding a flashlight in her hand. We can see the light, but we cannot see the person holding the flashlight. We know that there must be a person behind the light, but we can't see this person. We are blinded by the light. God cannot be perceived by the human senses and even the greatest genius in the world won't be able to find God by reflecting, experimenting, or theorizing about God. God is everything and everywhere; God and His creation are one, and, at the same time, God is beyond creation. God is definitely beyond time and space and what is beyond time and space is also beyond conventional understanding.

Even the manifested aspect of the Divine – this creation and this Life, cannot be understood by the mind. It is estimated that the universe exploded into existence about 13.8 billion years ago. And you know where it came from? It came virtually out of the nothing! This tremendous happening called the “big bang” not only was the birth of matter, it also was the beginning of time and space! When he tries very hard, the working mind can imagine a point hanging somewhere in an endless space, but he cannot imagine that there is no space at all. And when he tries to reach beyond the beginning of time, he totally collapses. The question “What was before time?” obviously leads nowhere. Here is an eternal barrier that cannot be crossed.

Since the beginning of time, this inconceivable universe is constantly expanding at an incredible speed. In other words, space itself is expanding. If we now ask, “What is beyond that expanding space?” the mind once more has to surrender. It also seems clear that even this apparently infinite universe will shrink again after a certain point in time is reached. And what happens then? Where will it go? Well, it will return to nothingness again and this unfathomable divine cycle of creation, destruction, and reconstruction will probably continue for all eternity.

We simply have to accept that there are no rational answers to this kind of question. As the German philosopher Immanuel Kant pointed out, the linear mind is not able to transcend time and space because time and space provide the basic framework for its very functioning. So it's better that we forget about all of these useless enquiries. God becomes manifest in everything that we can see, hear, touch, or feel, and at the same time His nature and His image remain concealed. Pointing to the mystery of all mysteries the 14th Dalai Lama speaks of the “emptiness of the emptiness.” Meister Eckhart, on the other hand, short-circuits the mind by cryptically telling us, “God is greater than God.” Reaching this point of the search we have to surrender once and for all because this kind of

equation will never be resolved by the limited mind. Every image or concept we may invent in order to describe or understand God is false by definition and the most absurd thing we can do is imagine Him as a long-bearded and threatening old man sitting on a throne somewhere above the clouds.

So how far can we go? What is revealed through becoming aware of our inborn enlightenment? What is the last answer that is given, when we realize our true nature? The Indian sage Ramesh Balsekar clarifies his view by providing answers to some interesting spiritual questions, and perhaps you feel motivated to follow his example: “What am I? Am I God? No. Am I the devil? No. Am I an angel? No. Am I a saint? No. Then what am I? I am awareness.”

Pure awareness or unstained and immaculate Consciousness is the nature of your Divine Self. It is the deepest core of who you really are. In this sense, you truly can say that you are God, even though you are subject to the limited understanding and the biased perception of a human being. The whole universe appears as a manifestation of this Divine Light. Undivided Consciousness is what you really are. It is THAT, which you always have been and always will be. Once you realize this, your whole life will be filled with Light, harmony, and peace.

SHARING THE TRUTH

Dear Lord

By Kathryn Phillips

I am your instrument

Use me at your will

Let me be your messenger

To teach the Word of God

All hearts with hope fulfill

Let us carry the Light of Jesus

And teach his work the same

Life is eternal and constant

Love is all there is

And in his name

We shall proclaim

The Horoscope

As told by Sri Swami Satchidananda

It was a joyous day for the king! After many, many years of wanting an heir, his wife at last gave birth to a baby. Immediately, the king called all the astrologers to predict the child's future. Many great astrologers came to study the boy's horoscope. Each one studied the charts. The signs were quite clear. "Sir," the astrologers said, "your son is not a good child. Because of him, you will die by the time he reaches the age of ten. In a way, he has come to kill you."

The king was furious. "You devils! You don't even know how to cast a horoscope. Throw them all in jail!"

One day, an astrologer from far away came to the kingdom. When the king learned of this, he immediately called for the astrologer and asked him to look at his son's chart. The astrologer studied the horoscope carefully and said. "I have never seen a horoscope like this! It's a very strong horoscope. Your son will live a long life and will be a great king. He will live for one hundred years after you died." Now, the astrologer was a very clever man. He read the same chart as the others, but he presented the information in a completely different way.

The king was so happy. "Shower this man with gifts. He is a great astrologer. If there is anything you want, sir, just ask me."

"Well," the astrologer said, "I have only one request."

"Of course. What is it?"

"Please release those other poor astrologers from the prison. Their only crime was not being smart. They know how to calculate, but they don't know how to communicate."

What Are They Talking About?

The less people know, the more stubborn they know it.

- OSHO

A man is accepted into a church for what he believes and he is turned out for what he knows.

- MARK TWAIN

The Pharisees and the scholars have taken the keys of knowledge and have hidden them. They have not entered nor have they allowed those who want to enter to do so. (39a)

The clerics have locked away many scriptures that reveal the Truth. They did it, and they still do it. The established churches merely accept what fits into their political power structure and dogmatic belief system and yet, they pretend to be the holy guardians of the only true faith. The amazing Gospel of Thomas, among many others, was rejected as heretical because it offers a new view of Jesus and his mystical teachings. Instead of speaking of sin, repentance, and condemnation, the “Living Jesus” comes as a loving guide to deep understanding and awakening.

These teachings are not even new. As modern research on the so-called Gnostic Gospels has demonstrated, they were quite widespread in the early years of Christianity. Elaine Pagels explains, “To know oneself, at the deepest level, is simultaneously to know God; this is the secret of Gnosis.” With the beginning of the orthodox Christian era, these insightful scriptures were systematically

banned and destroyed. Even today the established Churches still strongly reject them as pure heresy. Tau Malachi therefore boldly says, “Everything Jeshua had to say about the Pharisees and scribes can be said of the clergy and theologians of our times. It is the indwelling Christ-Self that has been rejected – the teaching of the Lord that every man and every woman is to become a son or daughter of God.” In the meantime there is a lot of resistance against the ugly, yet ultimately vain, practice of censoring and suppressing the Truth. This opposition to the official doctrine is even increasingly coming from within the churches.

Nonetheless, this still doesn’t seem to impress the Vatican in any way. Those in power simply don’t fully understand what Jesus is teaching, and they are not willing to understand either. They prefer to cling to their self-made and self-serving version of the Christ. The Vatican seems to be very much afraid that we could become free, that we could discover the Truth on our own and become independent of popes, bishops, and priests. They don’t like the idea that you could escape from their mind control. Therefore they don’t even properly teach you what is written in the Bible and they also do not explain what your prayers are really about.

In many respects, it’s much better when they don’t tell you too much, because they don’t know how to use the keys to enter the rooms of true knowledge. Anything they could teach you would be misleading and confusing anyway. Actually they are like those blind teachers who lead you into the darkness. Only an enlightened priest is capable of speaking the Truth. But this unfortunately happens very rarely. And when it happens, this person has attained spiritual Mastery through her own and unique experience of the Divine Light. Then and only then can you trust him or her totally. There are also many female saints, as you know, so how come that women are still not allowed to be Catholic priests? It is simply because the church is a male organization playing male power games. This again has nothing to do with the teachings of Jesus. He didn’t mark any difference between males and females. He loved males and females alike and among his followers and disciples, we see many women. Is not, after all, each of us a beloved son or daughter of the same Heavenly Father?

But don’t get into any judgments about the priests or the Church! This would be a pure waste of time and energy. Just look and see how it is. These people are victims of their own dogmatic mind programming. Being totally unaware of the Truth, they can’t be different than they are. If they understood what Jesus really stands for, they wouldn’t dare hide the keys of knowledge. They instead would

be eager and more than willing to spread the good news and share the Truth with everyone. Simply withdraw your attention from these false prophets. You don't need them. Sooner or later you will inevitably discover the Truth. By the Grace of the Divine, we all are fortunately endowed with the innate capacity to recognize the Truth of Jesus' words on our own.

Spreading the Message

Thousands of candles can be lit from a single one, and the life of the candle will not be shortened.

- GAUTAMA BUDDHA

I love when someone can hear the Truth. This is what makes my life worthwhile

- SAMARPAN

What you will hear in your ear, in the other ear proclaim from your rooftops. After all, no one lights a lamp and puts it under the basket, nor does one put it in a hidden place. Rather, one puts it on a lamp stand so that all who come and go will see the light. (33)

Jesus wanted to pass on his celestial message to the whole world. So he urged his disciples not to sit on the Truth, but to share the keys of knowledge with each and everyone longing for the Light. At the same time, he was very much aware that talking about the Truth is a delicate matter. Jesus for certain is not supporting us in creating a new belief system replacing the ancient one! A lot of questions arise around this issue: “When should we talk and when should we keep quiet? About which issues should we talk and to whom should we talk? What is required from us when we feel motivated to share our insights?”

Jesus’ time was very dangerous for real Truth seekers. The Jewish tradition – out of which Jesus himself came – was very strong, and the conservative Pharisees had great political influence. A lot of courage was needed to rebel against those who were in power. We all know what finally happened to Jesus, and he

definitely knew that there was no way to avoid torture and crucifixion. However, being totally determined to stay true to the Truth, he was ready to go through the fire of hell. So be careful to whom you speak. Jesus gives us precious advice when he says:

You should be clever as snakes and as innocent as doves. (39b)

The dove is the symbol for innocence, purity, and inner beauty. But this is not enough. Engaging yourself in spreading the Truth also requires cleverness and intelligence. Jesus doesn't see any point in putting ourselves unnecessarily in danger. The instruction rather is, "Keep your hearts clean and pure but do not act like sheep!" In some countries of the present time, you still can get into very serious trouble when you speak the Truth, because the Truth is never in harmony with any rigid religious or political belief system. Before and after the time of Jesus Christ, prophets, scientists, and countless individuals have been despised, locked away, tortured, and killed for staying true to their spiritual, scientific, or political convictions. Jesus gives us a straightforward warning when he narrates the following parable:

A person owned a vineyard and rented it to some farmers, so they could work it, and he could collect its crop from them. He sent his slave so the farmers would give him the vineyard's crop. They grabbed him, beat him, and almost killed him, and the slave returned and told his master. His master said, "Perhaps he didn't know them." He sent another slave, and the farmers beat that one as well. Then the master sent his son and said, "Perhaps they'll show my son some respect." Because the farmers knew that he was the heir to the vineyard, they grabbed and killed him. (65)

In the saying above Jesus probably refers to the often-painful fate of the prophets who came before him and at the same time foresaw what would happen to him. These days are long gone but Tau Malachi reminds us that, "Business, politics, academics, dogmatic religion, and mass humanity are the same as in the days of

Jeshua. The unenlightened society remains fundamentally the same, and the response to the holy and enlightened ones whom the Lord sends is the same.”

The words of Jesus can easily be learned by heart, but this would be good for nothing. It would mean that you haven't got the message yet. The Truth should not to be learned by heart. It rather has to come from the heart – right now, out of the freshness of this moment. Rely on your intuition and you will be inspired in a natural and effortless way. Use your own simple and spontaneous words and never try to talk about anything that is not emerging from your very own experience. Speaking from the mind by recalling some “concepts” you memorized before is utterly boring. You can only share your own true insights, and this will be more than enough. This is expressed by the following verse:

When you know yourselves, you will be known. (3b)

If we do not have a clear understanding of who we really are, what kind of spiritual “knowledge” can then be shared? Everything that we said would be hollow and empty. That's the reason why priests in their sermons are often so incredibly tiresome. They simply don't speak with the unshakable certainty of a self-authenticating spiritual experience.

Insights come by seeing what-is-here right now. If you honestly can say, “Oh yes, this is my experience,” then your words will be vibrantly alive. Everything that comes from the mind is nothing but old garbage from the past. It's like a prerecorded message, and we are tired of hearing the same nonsense all over again. True knowledge is always naturally arising out of the Now. What you have to know right now, you will know. So trust your personal wisdom and never force yourself to “preach.” Most preachers want us to swallow their shallow beliefs. This kind of brain food is not really tasty. Jesus further wants us to be totally aware of our words. He, therefore, says:

What goes into your mouth will not defile you; rather it's what comes out of your mouth that will defile you. (14c)

Jesus again draws our attention to what is of prime spiritual importance compared to any prescribed and regulated practice. He urges us to be aware of what comes out of our mouths. If our words are ugly and offending, we not only hurt others, we also seriously hurt ourselves. What is the purpose of meditating or keeping a severe diet when we are not even able to become aware of the words we speak? Any kind of valuable teaching requires total awareness. Otherwise, it is worth nothing.

Of course, the above saying also refers to the quality of our thoughts. Speech, as any other form of “action,” is, after all, just a grosser expression of our thoughts. Ugly thoughts lead to awkward actions, and these can even consist of a simple gesture, a facial expression, the tone of your voice or a disrespectful body posture. Thoughts modulate the form of your energy field, and this subtle field reaches far beyond the boundaries of the physical body. You ought to be aware that everybody will – consciously or unconsciously – sense this energy field and be, in one way or another, touched and influenced by it. It’s amazing to see how our inner world is always perfectly reflected in the “outer world,” which in this perspective not only includes our nonverbal behavior and our actions, but our particular way to perceive the world as well.

Everybody has already heard the famous saying, “What you think you will become.” Therefore, the Buddha, in perfect accord with Jesus, reminds us to “always be mindful (aware) of our thoughts and actions.” When does our speech become ugly? Is it not precisely when we experience some kind of unpleasant feeling such as anger, frustration, or hatred? There is obviously a very close relationship between emotions, thoughts, and speech. Actually these are just different aspects of one and the same. We believe that we “act” according to our own free will but the Truth is that we mostly just re-act like dead automatons: Righteous arrogance, frustration, and feelings of aggression create repugnant thoughts and – since we are unaware – we tend to verbally “throw up” and project our own garbage onto others. The root cause again is our unwillingness to feel what we don’t want to feel. If we are aware enough to step beyond the thinking mind and instead deeply dive into the feelings, the situation quite quickly relaxes and the way we express ourselves becomes smooth, respectful, and loving.

A great teacher like Jesus adores sharing his overflowing wisdom, but basically,

he motivates everybody to seek and find the Truth within. Rather than feeding the mind with a new set of religious concepts, Jesus' words are intended to set us free from all programmed beliefs. If anybody is willing to open their heart and truly listen, the seeds of Jesus' wisdom will sprout. If people are not yet ripe, they will automatically jump into the mind and doubt the Master's words. The mind is extraordinarily quick in finding some arbitrary arguments against the Truth. Therefore, trying to convince or manipulate anybody doesn't work at all. In terms of spiritual wisdom, some individuals have no willingness and no capacity to receive. It simply is like this and it is neither good nor bad. Speaking the Truth, in this case, just makes no sense. Jesus says:

I disclose my mysteries to those who are worthy of my mysteries. (62)

And somewhere else:

Don't give what is holy to the dogs, for they might throw it upon the manure pile. Don't throw pearls to pigs! (93)

When you are aware, it is not difficult to see whether a person is ready to listen to your words. Just observing how her attitude is expressed nonverbally reveals everything. If there is any resistance, you will sense it. Then you should better keep quiet or start some nice conversation. Only speak when a person is approaching you with openness. Sometimes people come up with questions, but they merely want you to confirm their own concepts and beliefs. If you challenge their beliefs, they can become very angry and aggressive. Some are even ready to kill in order to "defend" their gods. However, the Truth doesn't need to be defended. Whether we accept it or not: The Truth is the Truth.

Speaking the Truth can be utterly exciting. It can be lovely, delightful, and satisfying. Nevertheless, it is very important to honestly check your underlying motivation. When you try to appear as a very "holy somebody," it will not work. Then your words are coming from the so-called spiritual ego and no wisdom

whatsoever will be transported. Sharing the Truth is sharing your love. It only happens when you are able to meet the other person from heart to heart. True intimacy arises out of such a meeting. You cannot “do” it, and the person you are talking to can’t do it either. Nobody can. When it’s time for it, sharing just happens in a most natural and rewarding way. If there is anybody around who is deeply longing for the Truth, and if you are the right one, this person sooner or later will find you. If she rings your bell, you just have to open the door. That’s why Jesus says:

One who seeks will find, and for one who knocks it will be opened. (94)

Another obstacle may get in the way when you try to share with those who know you as the person you were before: Your parents, brothers and sisters, your friends and relatives and all those who have some clear-cut ideas about who and how you are. It is very rare that parents, friends, or relatives are able to recognize and accept your awakening. To witness your transformation, makes them afraid because you don’t fit into their habits and mental structures anymore. Therefore, you should be extra careful and sensitive when talking to them. This is what is meant by the following saying:

No prophet is welcome on his home turf; doctors don’t cure those who know them. (31)

Finally, don’t forget where the wisdom comes from: It emerges from a peaceful mind and a loving heart. Actually, all the wisdom arises out of your deep silence, and it manifests in an effortless way. If no words want to come, keep quiet, turn inward, and just be with yourself. Anyway, your peace will spill over to anybody who approaches you with an open heart. This is what really matters, and no words are needed for that.

There are enlightened masters who don’t talk at all. Being totally immersed in the Now, they teach by just keeping quiet. Enjoying their presence can be a great

experience, because you cannot help but catch their silence. The presence of such a Master touches the innermost core of the disciple and supports him in becoming aware of his own enlightenment. Maybe, after a while, he will attain Mastery and teach; maybe he will not even have a single disciple. Being awakened doesn't imply that you have to teach anything. Basically you switched from an unconscious to a conscious mode of existence. That's the main difference. Anyway, your light is not hidden under a basket. It shines bright and will be seen by everybody who comes and goes.

What Remains to Be Said

It looks like I'm really wise but I don't know anything.

- SAMARPAN

True knowledge is not attained by thinking.

- SRI AUROBINDO

While I was writing this book, some issues and unanswered questions came up. In these last chapters I would like to share my very personal reflections, hoping that they may inspire some of my readers. The following lines are the result of my humble contemplations on the Truth. As I further advance on the spiritual path, I will hopefully be blessed with a much deeper understanding. In any case, we should always remember what Ron Miller so fittingly said, “All our knowledge is partial, provisional, and perspectival.” That’s why it continuously needs to be completed and revised. Keeping these insightful words in mind, let’s come straight to the point.

Gurdjieff once said, “The greatest untold story is the evolution of God.” But how could there be a possibility for God to evolve? Is He not already perfect in the absolute sense? Can we see the slightest flaw in His creation? We can’t – provided we have eyes to see and a heart to appreciate the incredible beauty that is constantly unfolding right before our faces. In my view, Gurdjieff gave us this riddle in order to draw our attention to the manifested and ever-changing aspect of God. Otherwise, this statement would not make much sense. Mother Nature and the entire universe can be looked upon as being the “body” and breath of God. As such the whole manifestation is in every moment perfect and yet a permanent evolution is happening.

Is there an end to this evolution? Modern scientists as well as the ancient sages tell us that in billions of years from now the universe will shrink until it reaches the point where it will disappear once again into the “nothingness” from where it came. Paramahansa Yogananda and other Rishis taught that this tremendous cycle will be accomplished when the whole manifestation has become Self-aware. This may sound a little strange. The universe should become Self-aware? How can this be? How can “dead matter” attain consciousness? The point is that from the perspective of modern quantum physics, there is no such thing as dead matter anywhere.

When quantum physicists began to look at the subatomic aspect of matter, they were shocked to discover a cohesive and interconnected energy field where no form or separation existed. They even discovered that the tiniest subatomic particles were somehow alive and conscious. Max Planck, one of the most renowned founders of quantum physics summarized, “I regard matter as derivative of Consciousness. Everything that we talk about, everything that we regard as existing, postulates Consciousness.” Actually, this implies that we can’t draw a separating line between the animate and the inanimate anymore.

It is awful to see that the findings of today’s physicists – despite their completely different language – are in perfect consonance with the more-than-3000-year-old Vedic teachings as well as with the all-permeating Oneness of Being Jesus is referring to in the Gospel of Thomas. In essence, the whole Cosmos has to be seen as a multi-dimensional field of Consciousness. Lee and Steven Hager have explained it like this: “Unless consciousness is observing matter, matter appears as energy. Unless someone is observing it, the tree outside your house exists as an energy pattern. It takes your sensory input filtered through your brain to create the material object we’ve agreed to call a tree.”

So it is true that the whole world is our projection, and therefore, some kind of interesting “virtual reality.” However, we also have to explore and acknowledge the inherent quality of this marvelous “projection.” Seen through the dirty lenses of a poisoned mind, the tree doesn’t even exist beyond an almost unconscious and selective perception of it. Its majestic “is-ness” is more or less reduced to an uninteresting dead obstacle that stands in the way and has to be avoided. A pure and still mind, on the other hand, will joyfully contemplate the unfathomable beauty of the tree and sense its vibrant liveliness. A person with a serene mind will not even see any essential separation or difference between the tree and herself. In the latter case, the whole creation is not merely perceived as virtual

reality, but much more as a colossal and ever-changing cosmic spectacle that is meant to kindle our spiritual hearts. Isn't it interesting that the beauty and liveliness of nature are revealed to anyone who awakens?

There are three possible answers to the question, "Why does creation exist at all? Why did the Source manifest?" The first answer is given by the Gnostic thinker Valentinus: "Since the Father was creative, it seemed good to Him to create and produce what was most beautiful and most perfect to Himself. For He was all Love and love is not love if there is nothing to be loved." Second, God has the opportunity to experience the limitations and imperfections of an ordinary human being or any other creature, and third: In the enlightened one, the Self reveals itself to itself, which, in essence, implies a continuous evolution of manifested Consciousness. The least we can say is that somehow there must be some inscrutable "Cosmic Desire" to exist in time and space, otherwise the whole manifestation – and this of course includes us human beings too – would not be.

In my view, the manifested and the non-manifested are equally real and divine anyway. I do not depreciate this mindblowing manifestation just because it is in permanent movement. Is it not precisely this utterly entertaining element of multi-dimensional change that makes our lives worthy, interesting, exciting, and adventuresome? Both aspects of the Divine perfectly permeate each other. I can even imagine that the manifested aspect of Divine Consciousness, meaning to say, the extent to which the Self reveals itself to itself, may permanently "deepen" and "expand" while repeatedly undergoing the tremendous cosmic cycles of creation and decay. Andrew Cohen's concept of "Evolutionary Enlightenment" seems to point into this direction. According to Cohen, the process of awakening does not only trigger a substantial evolution in individuals but in Consciousness itself. Nonetheless, it is true that, as soon as we speak about an "evolving" or "deepening" Consciousness, we are not referring to the deepest layer of existence or the Absolute. How could the Absolute Reality evolve? This is a contradiction in itself, because if this were possible, the all-encompassing, inscrutable and ineffable Absolute, by definition, would not be the Absolute.

In the Mundukaya Upanishad, we find the following commentary about the Absolute: "This is the Lord of All; the Omniscient; the Indwelling Controller; the Source of All. This is the beginning and end of all beings: neither inward-turned nor outward-turned consciousness, nor the two together; not an

undifferentiated mass of consciousness; neither knowing, nor unknowing; invisible, ineffable, intangible, devoid of characteristics, inconceivable, indefinable, its sole essence being the consciousness of its own Self.”

These of course are merely some philosophical reflections. The only thing that really matters is the profound realization that God is everything and everywhere. God is the one and only reality. The great sage Acharya Shankara accurately said, “The Absolute One is the only Truth.” Advaita thus is solely concerned about the Ultimate Reality, the nameless and formless essence of all-that-is, ever was and ever will be. More than once Jesus too clearly points to this all-pervading and all-encompassing essence or Divine Light. Among many others, the following saying could easily be attributed to any God-realized Master:

Jesus said, “I am the light that is over all things. I am all; from me all came forth, and to me all attained.” (77a)

Even so, the interesting – and in my eyes most crucial – question arises whether, in this Absolute Oneness, there is any space left for an individual and immortal soul. And, if such thing as a soul exists, what then is the nature of the soul? What is referred to, when we sometimes sporadically exclaim, “Oh, what a beautiful soul!” In a deeper sense, there of course is no ugly soul anywhere. Nonetheless, from time to time, we come in touch with such warmhearted, unselfish, and wise beings that we can hardly imagine that these wonderful people would disappear forever into nothingness.

Some Advaita teachers radically deny the existence of a soul. Others hold on to the concept of reincarnation and tell us that all individuality will cease after the ultimate liberation has occurred. On the other hand, Yogananda, in his monumental book about the “Second Coming of Christ,” teaches the immortality of the pure soul as a divine spark of the Eternal Light. Is it true to say that we all have been “created in the image of the Father” – not only for one single lifespan, but for eternity?

So let us ask for the advice of a most beautiful soul on whom we can totally rely and who surely knows much better than anybody else! According to the words of the 14th Dalai Lama, all sentient beings come to this present life from their

previous lives and take rebirth again after death. For those blessed beings who remember their past lives, rebirth is a clear experience. That's why they do not need any proof beyond their self-authenticating experience. However, most ordinary beings forget their past lives. Therefore, the Dalai Lama enumerates four major, evidence-based logic arguments for the existence of past and future lives: First, the logic that things are preceded by things of similar type; second, the logic that things are preceded by a substantial cause; third, the logic that the mind has gained familiarity with things in the past; and fourth, the logic of having gained experience of things in the past.

The Dalai Lama further reveals two ways by which someone can take rebirth after death. A rebirth either happens involuntary under the sway of karma, destructive emotions, or unfulfilled desires, or voluntarily through the power of the purest Love and the one-pointed desire to serve all the sentient beings in this wide world. In the latter case we speak of a Boddhisatva or a Tulku. These higher beings are perfectly able to choose and predict their place and time of birth and, if needed, they can reincarnate in hundreds or even thousands (!) of bodies simultaneously.

This is in perfect conformity with the teachings of Paramahansa Yogananda. As he tells us, a fully God-realized individual can choose to either reincarnate, or to work in the realms of the Astral Heavens, or as a third possibility, to entirely merge into the nameless Absolute. Of course, he or she will also reincarnate if so ordained by the Higher Will. In my limited understanding, all God-realized beings are, by nature and by definition, Boddhisatvas because enlightenment without unconditional Love and limitless compassion for all sentient beings is an unthinkable thing. Do we know how often Jesus, Sri Krishna, or the Buddha have already reincarnated in some other body? Are they ultimately not exactly one and the same Being – as we are, in essence, too? And yet, the Dalai Lama, most obviously, is not the same individual as any other enlightened Master. The Dalai Lama is the Dalai Lama, and Jesus is Jesus. Both of their lives are incredibly inspiring and spiritually instructive divine artworks. The rational mind will never understand because whatever we try to do: The Truth is by definition paradoxical, illogical, and, therefore, remains an unfathomable mystery that can't be "explained" or "understood" by the rational mind.

Let's go back to everyday life and the issue of a continued existence of the soul again! What can we learn from the wise words of the Dalai Lama? Provided you trust the Dalai Lama, this is really good news. Even if we are not able to recall

our former lives, we are reassured that our souls are bound to ripen all along the way and that, somehow, we can continue to walk the path even after these bodies are no more. So we incarnate in order to learn and by this, we carry the very essence of our experiences and all of our good qualities from life to life. This sounds good and intelligible to me. Moreover, it is not widely known that the concept of reincarnation was quite common in the early years of Christianity.

Why don't we remember our past lives? I think there is a very simple explanation for this. We ordinary human beings already spend far too much time reflecting on an illusionary past or future. What would happen if we were provided with piles of additional information referring to our past or even future lives? How strong temptation would become to dwell on useless memories and imaginations, on regrets and guilt, on hopes and fears? It's much better when we stay fully aware in the Here and Now, faithfully relying on the perspective that everything that has to be known will be revealed in the right time. The Masters and sages may remember their former lives; nonetheless they for certain are not concerned with any thoughts about the past or the future.

When the immortal soul is neither the body nor the mind, neither the thoughts, nor the feelings, nor our experiences, what then is left over? It's obviously the ever-deepening realization of "I AM," as Sri Nisargadatta would say. This bigger and undefined "I" is beyond the insignificant ego – which is nothing but a bundle of thoughts. "Soul is the spark of divinity and the image of God," Sri Swami Satchidananda explains, "while the Self is God. When you make the mind calm and serene, you realize that the soul and God are one and the same, without any distortions, without any color." The bigger "I" is, therefore, undiluted, unstained, and utterly holy. The brighter this immortal divine "I-Amness" shines through the outer appearance of a person, the more we tend to speak of a "beautiful soul." It is the innermost core of our inner being and the realization of this impersonal "I-Amness" or pure "Self-Awareness" eternally deepens. It has no defining "contents" in the usual sense and yet, in a mysterious way, treasures everything we have ever learned or experienced.

If you belong to those people who have read this book, your only purpose probably is to lead a pure and spiritually inspired life. As Sri Swami Satchidananda explains, a good life can happen on three different levels. As a matter of fact, these pathways interpenetrate each other and none of them is nobler than the other one. They are just different facets of one and the same spirituality. On whatever level you "operate," you are in the right place. Your

preferences will depend on your personality, your inclinations, as well as on your momentary state of being. The Swami says, “When you are identified with the body, let your hands be an instrument of the Divine. When you are identified with your heart and Soul, let God’s infinite Love and Compassion flow through you. When you are one with the Eternal Self, dissolve into the Divine!”

The more our actions become innocent and pure, the more we advance on the spiritual path. Sri Swami Satchidananda gave us the following definition: “A perfect action should be completely harmless, and, at the same time, bring at least some benefit to someone.” And what happens when our acts are not that perfect? Do we then commit a sin? What the hell is a “sin” anyway? – The term “sin” is a terrible word that has caused endless suffering in the world. We are even told that we are “born guilty” because Adam, by his fault, transmitted the so-called Original Sin to all the future generations. In Greek and Hebrew, however, “sin” simply means missing the target. Adam, in this metaphor, missed the target called Self because he began to think and judge and thereafter believed that he was separate from and maybe even wiser than God. He started to listen to the serpent mind, and hence overheard the voice of his very own heart. And yes, this fundamental misunderstanding is the origin of all the misery we unfortunately still see in the world of today.

Dogmatic believers also like to blame Eve for being the true instigator. Some even strongly assert that women are biblically proven to be inferior to men because, after all, Eve, in the very well-known metaphor, has been created “from” and “after” Adam. We, therefore, see this kind of stupid religious confusion especially in traditional Judaism, orthodox Christianity, and Islam. But does this insignificant “time delay” mean anything when we consider the immutable Truth that time is nothing but an illusion occurring to the mind? Neither the past nor the future really exists! “The time is always now!” as Eckhart Tolle rightly said. In any event, the argument is shallow and empty because it is based on a literal interpretation of a biblical metaphor.

Does this now imply that everybody has got a free ticket for behaving in an awkward and unkind way whenever he or she wishes to? No, of course this can’t be the Truth. The lesson is that we first and foremost are called to cultivate our awareness and to follow the commandments of our hearts in the Here and Now. Nonetheless, we have to take a closer look at this issue. A deed that badly harms another human being may happen because the “doer” is utterly unconscious and just “reacts” to his conditioning like a robot. On the other hand, the same deed

can be consciously planned and intentionally performed in order to cause the biggest possible damage to someone. Both deeds are obviously not on the same level, and sooner or later the “doer” will have to pay for this. And yet, it is not a sin in the usual sense. It still is somehow due to a lack of awareness, because you simply can’t help listening to the wisdom of your heart when you are fully aware. This, by definition, is impossible. If it were possible, you would indeed commit a “deadly sin” and become Satan in person.

Will this illusionary world of artificial division and separation ever change? A Mayan Indian once said, “In terms of the spaceship Earth, the wrong crew is in command. It’s time for a mutiny!” I am quite sure that this peaceful mutiny is about to come. However, it will happen just by itself, and the mechanism behind it is called “Massive Awakenings.” People will most likely build up worldwide connections and create new types of spiritual networks – regardless of their culture, religion or personal beliefs. As soon as the right time has come, inconceivably powerful communication methods will help millions to unite all over the world. Change, then, can be very quick and successful. This truly would be nothing less than the Second Coming of Christ!

Of course, I can’t tell anybody when this will happen, but I am pretty sure that it will happen. Sometimes I wonder why it hasn’t already occurred a long time ago. All the technological prerequisites are there. And, even without these, it has been accomplished- at least partially – in the past. Gandhi is a good example of this kind of peaceful “resistance.” The same holds true for Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King, and the Hippie movement of the late sixties. In the West, this evolutionary trend can be seen in a great variety of places and ways. However, we also witness the first signs of an essential change in many other parts of the world. According to Eckhart Tolle, we simply have no other choice left than to evolve. Either humanity will disappear or it will ascend to never-before-known levels of Collective Consciousness. It’s our choice. Will we participate in restoring paradise on Earth or will we continue raping our Holy Mother and keep on creating hell on earth? Will we vote for the devil called the mind or the eternal Love-Light of the Divine?

These reflections are not really relevant in a practical sense, because world peace definitely is not in our individual range of influence and, therefore, none of our own business. What can we do about it? Nonetheless, whatsoever the overall future evolution will be, remember that it always has to start here and now. It has to start with you and me and each and everybody else. Actually, as Tau Malachi

said, “If you bring about a transformation in your own consciousness, it contributes to the transformation of the collective consciousness.” Therefore, our first purpose in this life should be to attain a silent, serene, and peaceful state of mind. This would be more than enough. All the rest spontaneously follows by itself. We really do not need to worry about anything else.

Life is exactly as it should be, and it is always perfect as it is. Sometimes we are not able to see clearly, but it is like that. Samarpan says, “Life is perfect in its imperfection.” “The Father is pure Love” – as Jesus told us. Everybody will further agree that God is omniscient and almighty too, meaning to say that nothing happens unless it is according to the Father’s will. So, if you can accept these basic premises, why not then give your entire life into the hands of God? Do you see any reason to hold something back? The more we surrender to the Divine and give up any resistance, the more we can sense the perfection of existence in every single moment of the day. Steadily and joyfully cultivating our awareness and thus keeping the robbers away is the one and only necessary requirement for our awakening.

Fortunately, there is no end to this mind-blowing journey back home – provided you do not try to interrupt the natural flow of Life somewhere in between. However, be watchful and don’t forget: The mind is a very clever trickster. As soon as you think you have arrived or done it, know that the mind has trapped you again. The simple Truth is: We won’t ever “arrive” and we never will have “done” or “achieved” anything.

About My Own Experience

A man will be imprisoned in a room with a door that's unlocked and opens inward as long as it doesn't occur to him to pull rather than to push.

- LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN

Life is on the driver seat, and we are just along for a ride.

- SAMARPAN

In my life there has been a lot of everything: Emotional turmoil, suffering and depression, electric feverishness and creativity, radiating stillness, great happiness and orgiastic ecstasy. In my professional life, I was very successful and “achieved” everything that makes up a respected person in this society. Even so, something was utterly missing. At a certain point in time, my life literally exploded, and it turned into an endless roller-coaster ride. I went through some very heavy experiences, but looking back, I can clearly see that all of this was just perfectly suited to bring me here, into the harmony and silence of the present moment.

My first spiritual peak experience happened when I was nineteen. Up to then I hadn't heard anything about “enlightenment” or the seeker's path. The experience unexpectedly came while I was listening to a beautiful meditative recording. It is hard to find words for it. Actually, there are no suitable words to describe what happened. I can only try to point to it:

All of a sudden, a radical shift happened in my perception. First, I was irritated and looked inside – trying to understand what was going on. However, there was virtually nothing inside. To my surprise I could not find an “I” anywhere. There was just this immense emptiness and clarity: No thoughts, no feelings, and no

body – nothing was there. I was nothing, and I was everything. It was like being here and not here at the same time. Any division between the inside and the outside world vanished. The music I was listening to was in me, around me, and even more: I entirely was music. Being immersed in an endless and unstained pure space, I experienced undivided Oneness and crystal-clear impersonal awareness: No separation, no limitations, no time, no object, and no person. Now and then an “I” was popping up for a split second, but it was nothing more than a temporary thought devoid of any substance. The core experience was absolutely overwhelming and stayed for about 20 or 30 minutes. Then it gradually faded, though I could feel a strong afterglow for many weeks.

Subsequently, my way of perceiving the world had forever changed. Actually, this experience had a strong impact on my whole life. Since that time, I have somehow been on the path without being aware of it. Twenty years later, I met my first Master, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar. I learned so much from this beautiful Yoga teacher, but I was not ready to surrender to him. I instead insisted on having my own will. He gracefully tried to guide me into a teacher’s course, but each time I refused. I was – and still am – not willing to be a member of any organization or spiritual community.

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar also showed me the path to another Indian Master. I can’t remember his long and complicated name, and I only met him once in Mysore. Prior to this, we had visited some other saints, and I wasn’t impressed at all. Therefore, I didn’t expect anything other than boredom and was fairly reluctant to enter the small ashram. This remarkable humble man was teaching without any words. His silence was the teaching. Since I was brooding for some time, I could not immediately sense his mind-blowing presence. But then, suddenly, my heart started to melt and tears of happiness ran down my cheeks. Just sitting next to this wonderful embodiment of the Divine was like taking a delicious bath in a sacred energy field. It was unbelievably tangible, intense, and soothing. This experience was a tremendous revelation! If there are any saints walking on earth, then this man certainly belongs to them.

Henceforth, I practiced Yoga (Asanas, Pranayama, Kriyas) and formal Mantra meditation for more than seven years before I finally dropped my daily routine. I dropped it because I eventually realized that my meditation had become some kind of “doing” which was tied to the expectation that it would give me “enlightenment,” or at least some kind of bliss. Moreover, Mantras are of course mental objects and focusing on them quite easily creates an artificial

division/duality between the “meditator” and the “object of meditation.” Mantras can be a wonderful vehicle to silence the mind, but at some point, you need to let go and completely merge with the Self or the Source. The whole of Yoga was truly beneficial for body, mind, and soul – no doubt about that. As such it can be recommended to each and every one who feels drawn to these techniques. Even so, I didn’t wake up through Yoga, though it was a very important stepping stone on my – never-ending – way back home.

Today meditation happens spontaneously throughout the day. It doesn’t matter whether my eyes are open or closed, whether I am active or not active. Whatever feeling comes, I completely “feel” it and merge into it. When I walk, I feel my body moving and the sensations in my feet. When I work, I fully work. Sometimes I just lean back and become one with my breath or my body sensations. Therefore, I entirely agree with Alan Watts when he says, “Zen does not confuse spirituality with thinking about God while one is peeling potatoes. Zen spirituality is just to peel the potatoes.”

The common denominator is always about “coming here, into the Eternal Now,” as often, and as well, as I can. This really works perfectly for me. Of course, you can also sit two times a day and formally meditate if you prefer to do that. In my definition, meditation simply means stepping beyond the mind and coming back home to our true Self. That’s the essential point. As Samarpan would say, “Either you are lost in some thoughts, or you meditate.”

In 2003, after another eight years, I first met Samarpan. I came in despair, because I had been suffering from a severe depression for many, many months. Instead of consoling me, he made the shocking prediction that my whole life was about to fall apart. And it did! A year later, I “lost everything”: My job, my house, my reputation, and my beloved one. I was again thrown into the fire of purification. My life eventually became so stressful and disastrous that I literally jumped the rails. Constantly switching between the opposite poles of a manic depression, I was given the occasion to watch my ego in all kinds of states. This ranged from believing myself to be the “most miserable” person in the world to ridiculously experiencing myself as a true “spiritual giant.” During this period, I had a lot of deep insights and spiritual peak experiences. Nonetheless, I was floating somewhere above the clouds and had completely lost my ground. Out of this, many delusions and stupid actions happened.

After this intense period, I was treated with such strong chemicals that, for about

three years, I was sleeping almost 16 hours a day. I gained a lot of weight and had no energy left for anything. Nevertheless, I was at peace. I didn't worry. I made no plans, and I didn't regret anything of the past. However, my awareness was somewhat anaesthetized. I stopped swallowing these legal drugs when heavy side effects became obvious and then for three weeks experienced this nice phenomenon that junkies know as "cold turkey." Looking back, it was like sleeping for years. As soon as my body got rid of the chemicals, my life gradually opened up and a lot of sparkling energy manifested. From a relative viewpoint, I of course see that most of these doctors are just greedy fools. They actually don't know what they are doing, nor do they really care about the patient's well-being or health. However, looking from the Truth, I just know that I needed this period of "dull sleepiness" in order to recover totally.

Today I live a very simple and ordinary life. Yet some major changes have happened. Language is utterly insufficient to describe how it is. The very fact that "I" say "my life" is already a joke, but I guess you know what I want to point to. I feel this incredible and all-permeating Divine Presence in almost every moment of the day. Sometimes it is really strong and breathtaking, but mostly it is a quiet and very subtle experience. The sense perceptions are sharpened to a virtually psychedelic degree. I do not remember having experienced this beautiful springtime in such an intense way. It is like watching the Divine Energy exploding into nature. Right now, while I am writing these lines, our fruit trees are flowering, and I spend many blissful moments by just being with this crowd of delicate white flowers. No labeling or judging happens. I simply stay in amazement and silent joy. The same is true for whatever action I perform: Drinking, eating, taking a shower, going for a walk, shopping, watching people do what they do – nothing is excluded, and I am totally aware that everything spontaneously happens by itself. Even the so-called "dead" objects feel somewhat alive. As a matter of fact, I can't see such thing as a lifeless object. I just experience this exuberant beauty and, especially in the handicrafts, it seems that the consciousness of the artist or handyman is abiding somewhere within.

I know that all of these phenomena are pure manifestations of Divine Consciousness and therefore, permanently changing and in some way not even "real." Even so, this moment is utterly real and beauty is beyond any doubt here. Some teachers say, "The outside world has to disappear." I experience this kind of assertion as shallow and cold. It's true; I can't see any real difference between the inside and the outside. It is all one and in this sense, there is no "outer world"

separated from the “inner world”; there is just Consciousness. Nevertheless, I experience this marvelous creation as totally tangible and real. As already indicated, I don’t care that all of this is not permanent. The flowers may disappear tomorrow, and of course, they will, but now, in this very moment, they are here and the inherent beauty of Mother Nature is always available.

I ruthlessly enjoy the infinite creative power of the Divine. It is manifesting in each and every moment, and therefore, I can’t see a point in degrading these delightful experiences by saying, “Oh, forget about it; this is nothing but Consciousness.” In my perception, the Divine and this magnificent creation are just one. “Father is transcendent Consciousness; Mother is manifestation or creation,” as Tau Malachi says. This entire manifestation is a miraculous outburst of God’s unconditional Love, and it is meant to be enjoyed with total awareness. I really love to be human and alive. Therefore, I totally agree with what Ron Miller says, “As we advance on the spiritual path, enlightenment embraces all that-is. Mountains are indeed mountains. Trees are indeed trees. But, oh, what a difference in meaning from those same words when we uttered them at that unconscious, half-asleep stage of our lives! Now all is bright. Now all is miraculous.” Our whole life truly is an unfathomable divine gift and it can be unpacked in every single moment.

Other teachers say that the feelings will vanish with our awakening. In my view, this is a bad message because it would mean that we failed whenever heavy feelings show up. Anyway, that’s not true. Feelings still happen, although the identification with the feelings is almost gone. Instead of repressing or expressing the feelings, I just feel them, and that’s the major difference. It is also said time and again that we have to accept the feelings. This is of course true, but when we try to accept without totally feeling what we don’t like to feel, then the mind is just faking acceptance. There may be other pathways and for some, they surely work. But for me, I can’t see any better way than diving deeply into what-is-here, whatever it may be.

Worries, expectations, or judgments still show up from time to time, but fortunately, I quite quickly recognize these thoughts as pure nonsense and immediately withdraw my attention from them. Meanwhile this happens in an automatic way. By the Grace of the Divine, the mind doesn’t bother me for a long time. Refusing to dwell upon anything from the past or the future gradually reduces the mind’s activity to a subtle and occasional background noise. Actually, living in the present moment is easy and most enjoyable, but we really

have to go for it. We have to be radically determined to come back here into the Now as often, and as well as we can. Then the rest will perfectly work out by itself.

Insights are spontaneously emerging out of the freshness of the present moment. No effort or previous work is required. In the natural flow of the Now everything becomes clear and Satsang happens. It's not that I personally did achieve anything. The Truth is revealed because it is supposed to be revealed, and that's all. Life simply brought me here in a most natural way. There was no particular "doing" or "merit" involved. However, as beautiful as they may be, insights are not what matters most to me. What really matters is that I have had the occasion to learn how to be free and live my simple life in silence, peace and contentment.

This is a short report about my own experience, but this doesn't mean I am pretending to be a model for anything or anybody. Life just provided the right experiences for my spiritual growth, and the same is true for everybody else. You are a unique human being, and therefore, you have to walk on your own private path. You have to find out what is best for you. If you simply trust the wisdom of Life, you will be guided in a perfect way. Try to become aware in which direction the energy wants to flow, and you will spontaneously know. This is how the Divine is lovingly guiding us. You can rely on that.

This whole book is not the work of a sophisticated theologian but rather an effortless fruit of my silently resting in the Now and simply reading the present moment. Maybe it is of some practical value for your personal spiritual adventure. This would be my greatest pleasure and reward. There is nothing to get, there is nothing to become, and there is nowhere to go. This makes it really easy. Jesus says, "The kingdom of Heaven is to be found right here and right now, so what are you waiting for?"

CONCLUDING WORDS

God has no religion.

- MAHATMA GANDHI

Gnosis is a state of Truth-consciousness in which the Spirit and Truth is inwardly known, hence a state of enlightenment or self-realization.

- TAU MALACHI

In summary, the Gospel of Thomas is an amazing scripture of heavenly inspired wisdom. It is not really difficult to recognize that these wonderful words carry the sublime fragrance of Truth. Besides that, the 5th Gospel focuses on a universal experience of Cosmic Consciousness, which, in Eastern cultures, is called Samadhi or Satori. Therefore, Jesus' sayings are in perfect accord with what has been taught by the mystics, sages, and Masters for thousands of years. "Wake up!" he exclaims, "What are you waiting for? The Kingdom of Heaven has already come!" If there is any core message that has to be emphasized, it is Jesus' consistent teaching that enlightenment and the experience of awakening are at any moment available to each and every one of us. Turning our back on the selfish mind and realizing our true divine nature is all that needs to be done. In verse 108 Jesus says with utmost clarity:

"Whoever drinks from my mouth will become like me; I myself will become that person, and the hidden things will be revealed to him."

What we find here is a striking similarity, especially with the essential teachings of Buddhism, Taoism, and Vedanta. This similarity is so obvious that a

considerable number of scholars believe that Jesus was in Tibet and India in order to learn and to teach. I have no idea whether this is true or not, though it is a startling fact that the four canonical Gospels do not tell us anything about Jesus' years between 12 and 30. Where has he been? What if he really had spent some years in India or Tibet, would that create a problem for anybody, and if yes, why? Just reflect a while upon that!

Whatever the historical reality may have been, it ultimately doesn't really matter. The Truth is the Truth and no narrow-minded dogma whatsoever can touch the Holy Grail. In the end, all great religions are based on the mystical experience of their "founders." Sri Krishna, Buddha, Muhammad, and Jesus, they all taught the Truth. The same holds true for all the wonderful mystics, prophets, and Masters who ever walked this Earth. The Christian mystic Meister Eckhart, for example, wrote, "In this breaking-through, I receive that God and I are one. Then I am what I was, and then I neither diminish nor increase, for I am then an immovable cause that moves all things." The point is: Wherever on this globe, somebody awakes, they will realize the same Truth, the same Ultimate Reality, and go through the same universal experience of Cosmic Consciousness. This is not "a problem" but rather deeply comforting and reassuring!

"The very heart of all religions is one!" do we hear from the 14th Dalai Lama. Therefore, no organized religion in the whole world should exclude or depreciate others. A new, unified understanding that reaches far above these artificial, intolerant, and often violent separations is definitely needed. "I am increasingly convinced," the Dalai Lama asserts, "that the time has come to find a way of thinking about spirituality and ethics beyond religion altogether."

The Gospel of Thomas obviously enshrines the sacred enlightenment teachings of Jesus Christ. Jesus' voice is a fervent call for us to wake up and look behind the veil of illusion that is continuously created by the thinking mind. Labeling this most beautiful, spiritually elevating, and genuine wisdom scripture as "heretical" is really a ridiculous joke – but not necessarily a good one. This ugly practice of suppressing most precious scriptures is rooted in irrational fear and utter ignorance. However, it won't help. As John G. Lake said, "There were days when the Church could club men into obedience by preaching hell to them, but that day has long passed. The world has outgrown of it." Spiritually mature adults will not care whether the 5th Gospel is "classified" as heretical or not. In the perspective of becoming Jesus' twin they will continue to deeply appreciate the secret teachings of the Living Jesus – simply because these words beautifully

express the Eternal Truth.

THE MYSTIC SHORE

By Kathryn Phillips

As I take another step
Toward the Ancient waters
Of the mystic shore

And I breathe the breath
Of our Lord God again
My Soul has become restless
To journey once more

New dreams and aspirations
Shall be awakened from deep inside
Divine Truth I carry with me
My consciousness, my inner guide

Only to forget
That which I have known
Learned from many

Other life-times before

Seemingly long ago

Until such time, I need

To call upon the wisdom

My rewards, my gifts,

Their blessings shall bestow

Each new challenge to overcome

Defeat shall be but a choice

A chance to understand all reason

And listen to the one true voice

Thereafter the Divine

Shall once again beckon me

To surrender to the calling

I shall so yearn

To the Golden Light I succumb

And to Sacred Salvation I return

APPENDIX

The Complete Gospel of Thomas

Translated by Stephen Patterson and Marvin Meyer

The translation of Patterson and Meyer was used for this commentary. In some cases I also referred to the translation of Thomas O. Lambdin. The respective text is then added and marked in italics Both translations can be downloaded from the Nag Hammadi Library at www.gnosis.org/naghamm/nhl.html.

These are the secret sayings that the living Jesus spoke and Didymos Judas Thomas recorded.

1. And he said, “Whoever discovers the interpretation of these sayings will not taste death.”

2. Jesus said, “Those who seek should not stop seeking until they find. When they find, they will be disturbed. When they are disturbed, they will marvel, and will reign over all. [And after they have reigned they will rest.]”

3. Jesus said, “If your leaders say to you, ‘Look, the (Father’s) kingdom is in the sky,’ then the birds of the sky will precede you. If they say to you, ‘It is in the sea,’ then the fish will precede you. Rather, the (Father’s) kingdom is within you and it is outside you. When you know yourselves, then you will be known, and you will understand that you are children of the living Father. But if you do not know yourselves, then you live in poverty, and you are the poverty.”

4. Jesus said, “The person old in days won’t hesitate to ask a little child seven days old about the place of life, and that person will live. For many of the first will be last, and will become a single one.”

5. Jesus said, “Know what is in front of your face, and what is hidden from you will be disclosed to you. For there is nothing hidden that will not be revealed. [And there is nothing buried that will not be raised.]”

6. His disciples asked him and said to him, “Do you want us to fast? How should we pray? Should we give to charity? What diet should we observe?” Jesus said, “Don’t lie, and don’t do what you hate, because all things are disclosed before heaven. After all, there is nothing hidden that will not be revealed, and there is nothing covered up that will remain undisclosed.”

7. Jesus said, “Lucky is the lion that the human will eat, so that the lion becomes human. And foul is the human that the lion will eat, and the lion still will become human.”

8. And he said, “The person is like a wise fisherman who cast his net into the sea and drew it up from the sea full of little fish. Among them the wise fisherman discovered a fine large fish. He threw all the little fish back into the sea, and easily chose the large fish. Anyone here with two good ears had better listen!”

9. Jesus said, “Look, the sower went out, took a handful (of seeds), and scattered (them). Some fell on the road, and the birds came and gathered them. Others fell on rock, and they didn’t take root in the soil and didn’t produce heads of grain. Others fell on thorns, and they choked the seeds and worms ate them. And others fell on good soil, and it produced a good crop: it yielded sixty per measure and one hundred twenty per measure.”

10. Jesus said, “I have cast fire upon the world, and look, I’m guarding it until it blazes.”

11. Jesus said, “This heaven will pass away, and the one above it will pass away. The dead are not alive, and the living will not die. During the days when you ate what is dead, you made it come alive. When you are in the light, what will you do? On the day when you were one, you became two. But when you become two, what will you do?”

12. The disciples said to Jesus, “We know that you are going to leave us. Who will be our leader?” Jesus said to them, “No matter where you are you are to go to James the Just, for whose sake heaven and earth came into being.”

13. Jesus said to his disciples, “Compare me to something and tell me what I am like.” Simon Peter said to him, “You are like a just messenger.” Matthew said to him, “You are like a wise philosopher.” Thomas said to him, “Teacher, my mouth is utterly unable to say what you are like.” Jesus said, “I am not your teacher. Because you have drunk, you have become intoxicated from the

bubbling spring that I have tended.” And he took him, and withdrew, and spoke three sayings to him. When Thomas came back to his friends they asked him, “What did Jesus say to you?” Thomas said to them, “If I tell you one of the sayings he spoke to me, you will pick up rocks and stone me, and fire will come from the rocks and devour you.”

13. Jesus said to his disciples, “Compare me to someone and tell me whom I am like.” Simon Peter said to him, “You are like a righteous angel.” Matthew said to him, “You are like a wise philosopher.” Thomas said to him, “Master, my mouth is totally incapable of saying whom you are like.” Jesus said, “I am not your master. Because you have drunk, you have become intoxicated by the bubbling spring which I have measured out.” And he took him, and withdrew and told him three things. When Thomas returned to his companions, they asked him, “What did Jesus say to you?” Thomas said to them, “If I tell you one of the things he told me, you will pick up stones and throw them at me; a fire will come out of the stones and burn you up.”

14. Jesus said to them, “If you fast, you will bring sin upon yourselves, and if you pray, you will be condemned, and if you give to charity, you will harm your spirits. When you go into any region and walk about in the countryside, when people take you in, eat what they serve you and heal the sick among them. After all, what goes into your mouth will not defile you; rather, it’s what comes out of your mouth that will defile you.”

15. Jesus said, “When you see one who was not born of woman, fall on your faces and worship. That one is your Father.”

16. Jesus said, “Perhaps people think that I have come to cast peace upon the world. They do not know that I have come to cast conflicts upon the earth: fire, sword, war. For there will be five in a house: there’ll be three against two and two against three, father against son and son against father, and they will stand alone.”

17. Jesus said, “I will give you what no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, what no hand has touched, what has not arisen in the human heart.”

17. Jesus said, “I will give you what no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, what no hand has touched and what never occurred to the human mind.”

18. The disciples said to Jesus, “Tell us, how will our end come?” Jesus said,

“Have you found the beginning, then, that you are looking for the end? You see, the end will be where the beginning is. Congratulations to the one who stands at the beginning: that one will know the end and will not taste death.”

19. Jesus said, “Congratulations to the one who came into being before coming into being. If you become my disciples and pay attention to my sayings, these stones will serve you. For there are five trees in Paradise for you; they do not change, summer or winter, and their leaves do not fall. Whoever knows them will not taste death.”

19a. Jesus said, “Blessed is he who came into being before he came into being.”

20. The disciples said to Jesus, “Tell us what Heaven’s kingdom is like.” He said to them, “It’s like a mustard seed, the smallest of all seeds, but when it falls on prepared soil, it produces a large plant and becomes a shelter for birds of the sky.”

21. Mary said to Jesus, “What are your disciples like?” He said, “They are like little children living in a field that is not theirs. When the owners of the field come, they will say, ‘Give us back our field.’ They take off their clothes in front of them in order to give it back to them, and they return their field to them. For this reason I say, if the owners of a house know that a thief is coming, they will be on guard before the thief arrives and will not let the thief break into their house (their domain) and steal their possessions. As for you, then, be on guard against the world. Prepare yourselves with great strength, so the robbers can’t find a way to get to you, for the trouble you expect will come. Let there be among you a person who understands. When the crop ripened, he came quickly carrying a sickle and harvested it. Anyone here with two good ears had better listen!”

22. Jesus saw some babies nursing. He said to his disciples, “These nursing babies are like those who enter the (Father’s) kingdom.” They said to him, “Then shall we enter the (Father’s) kingdom as babies?” Jesus said to them, “When you make the two into one, and when you make the inner like the outer and the outer like the inner, and the upper like the lower, and when you make male and female into a single one, so that the male will not be male nor the female be female, when you make eyes in place of an eye, a hand in place of a hand, a foot in place of a foot, an image in place of an image, then you will enter [the kingdom].”

23. Jesus said, "I shall choose you, one from a thousand and two from ten thousand, and they will stand as a single one."

24. His disciples said, "Show us the place where you are, for we must seek it." He said to them, "Anyone here with two ears had better listen! There is light within a person of light, and it shines on the whole world. If it does not shine, it is dark."

25. Jesus said, "Love your friends like your own soul, protect them like the pupil of your eye."

26. Jesus said, "You see the sliver in your friend's eye, but you don't see the timber in your own eye. When you take the timber out of your own eye, then you will see well enough to remove the sliver from your friend's eye."

27. "If you do not fast from the world, you will not find the (Father's) kingdom. If you do not observe the Sabbath as a Sabbath you will not see the Father."

28. Jesus said, "I took my stand in the midst of the world, and in flesh I appeared to them. I found them all drunk, and I did not find any of them thirsty. My soul ached for the children of humanity, because they are blind in their hearts and do not see, for they came into the world empty, and they also seek to depart from the world empty. But meanwhile they are drunk. When they shake off their wine, then they will change their ways."

29. Jesus said, "If the flesh came into being because of spirit, that is a marvel, but if spirit came into being because of the body, that is a marvel of marvels. Yet I marvel at how this great wealth has come to dwell in this poverty."

30. Jesus said, "Where there are three deities, they are Divine. Where there are two or one, I am with that one."

31. Jesus said, "No prophet is welcome on his home turf; doctors don't cure those who know them."

32. Jesus said, "A city built on a high hill and fortified cannot fall, nor can it be hidden."

33. Jesus said, "What you will hear in your ear, in the other ear proclaim from your rooftops. After all, no one lights a lamp and puts it under a basket, nor does

one put it in a hidden place. Rather, one puts it on a lampstand so that all who come and go will see its light.”

34. Jesus said, “If a blind person leads a blind person, both of them will fall into a hole.”

35. Jesus said, “One can’t enter a strong person’s house and take it by force without tying his hands. Then one can loot his house.”

36. Jesus said, “Do not fret, from morning to evening and from evening to morning, [about your food—what you’re going to eat, or about your clothing--] what you are going to wear. [You’re much better than the lilies, which neither card nor spin. As for you, when you have no garment, what will you put on? Who might add to your stature? That very one will give you your garment.]”

36. Jesus said, “Do not be concerned from morning until evening and from evening until morning about what you will wear.”

37. His disciples said, “When will you appear to us, and when will we see you?” Jesus said, “When you strip without being ashamed, and you take your clothes and put them under your feet like little children and trample them, then [you] will see the son of the living one and you will not be afraid.”

38. Jesus said, “Often you have desired to hear these sayings that I am speaking to you, and you have no one else from whom to hear them. There will be days when you will seek me and you will not find me.”

39. Jesus said, “The Pharisees and the scholars have taken the keys of knowledge and have hidden them. They have not entered nor have they allowed those who want to enter to do so. As for you, be as sly as snakes and as simple as doves.”

40. Jesus said, “A grapevine has been planted apart from the Father. Since it is not strong, it will be pulled up by its root and will perish.”

41. Jesus said, “Whoever has something in hand will be given more, and whoever has nothing will be deprived of even the little they have.”

42. Jesus said, “Be passersby.”

43. His disciples said to him, “Who are you to say these things to us?” “You don’t understand who I am from what I say to you. Rather, you have become like the Judeans, for they love the tree but hate its fruit, or they love the fruit but hate the tree.”

44. Jesus said, “Whoever blasphemes against the Father will be forgiven, and whoever blasphemes against the son will be forgiven, but whoever blasphemes against the holy spirit will not be forgiven, either on earth or in heaven.”

45. Jesus said, “Grapes are not harvested from thorn trees, nor are figs gathered from thistles, for they yield no fruit. Good persons produce good from what they’ve stored up; bad persons produce evil from the wickedness they’ve stored up in their hearts, and say evil things. For from the overflow of the heart they produce evil.”

45a. Jesus said, “Grapes are not harvested from thorns, nor are figs gathered from thistles, for they do not produce fruit. A good man brings forth good from his storehouse; an evil man brings forth evil things from his evil storehouse, which is in his heart, and says evil things.”

46. Jesus said, “From Adam to John the Baptist, among those born of women, no one is so much greater than John the Baptist that his eyes should not be averted. But I have said that whoever among you becomes a child will recognize the (Father’s) kingdom and will become greater than John.”

47. Jesus said, “A person cannot mount two horses or bend two bows. And a slave cannot serve two masters, otherwise that slave will honor the one and offend the other. Nobody drinks aged wine and immediately wants to drink young wine. Young wine is not poured into old wineskins, or they might break, and aged wine is not poured into a new wineskin, or it might spoil. An old patch is not sewn onto a new garment, since it would create a tear.”

48. Jesus said, “If two make peace with each other in a single house, they will say to the mountain, ‘Move from here!’ and it will move.”

49. Jesus said, “Congratulations to those who are alone and chosen, for you will find the kingdom. For you have come from it, and you will return there again.”

50. Jesus said, “If they say to you, ‘Where have you come from?’ say to them, ‘We have come from the light, from the place where the light came into being by

itself, established [itself], and appeared in their image.' If they say to you, 'Is it you?' say, 'We are its children, and we are the chosen of the living Father.' If they ask you, 'What is the evidence of your Father in you?' say to them, 'It is motion and rest.'"

51. His disciples said to him, "When will the rest for the dead take place, and when will the new world come?" He said to them, "What you are looking forward to has come, but you don't know it."

52. His disciples said to him, "Twenty-four prophets have spoken in Israel, and they all spoke of you." He said to them, "You have disregarded the living one who is in your presence, and have spoken of the dead."

53. His disciples said to him, "Is circumcision useful or not?" He said to them, "If it were useful, their father would produce children already circumcised from their mother. Rather, the true circumcision in spirit has become profitable in every respect."

54. Jesus said, "Congratulations to the poor, for to you belongs Heaven's kingdom."

55. Jesus said, "Whoever does not hate father and mother cannot be my disciple, and whoever does not hate brothers and sisters, and carry the cross as I do, will not be worthy of me."

56. Jesus said, "Whoever has come to know the world has discovered a carcass, and whoever has discovered a carcass, of that person the world is not worthy."

57. Jesus said, "The Father's kingdom is like a person who has [good] seed. His enemy came during the night and sowed weeds among the good seed. The person did not let the workers pull up the weeds, but said to them, 'No, otherwise you might go to pull up the weeds and pull up the wheat along with them.' For on the day of the harvest the weeds will be conspicuous, and will be pulled up and burned."

58. Jesus said, "Congratulations to the person who has toiled and has found life."

59. Jesus said, "Look to the living one as long as you live, otherwise you might die and then try to see the living one, and you will be unable to see."

60. He saw a Samaritan carrying a lamb and going to Judea. He said to his disciples, "that person ... around the lamb." They said to him, "So that he may kill it and eat it." He said to them, "He will not eat it while it is alive, but only after he has killed it and it has become a carcass." They said, "Otherwise he can't do it." He said to them, "So also with you, seek for yourselves a place for rest, or you might become a carcass and be eaten."

61. Jesus said, "Two will recline on a couch; one will die, one will live." Salome said, "Who are you mister? You have climbed onto my couch and eaten from my table as if you are from someone." Jesus said to her, "I am the one who comes from what is whole. I was granted from the things of my Father." "I am your disciple." "For this reason I say, if one is whole, one will be filled with light, but if one is divided, one will be filled with darkness."

61a. Jesus said, "Two will rest on a bed: the one will die, and the other will live."

61c. "Therefore I say, if he is destroyed, he will be filled with light, but if he is divided, he will be filled with darkness."

62. Jesus said, "I disclose my mysteries to those [who are worthy] of [my] mysteries."

62b. "Do not let your (left) hand know what your (right) hand is doing."

63. Jesus said, "There was a rich person who had a great deal of money. He said, 'I shall invest my money so that I may sow, reap, plant, and fill my storehouses with produce, that I may lack nothing.' These were the things he was thinking in his heart, but that very night, he died. Anyone here with two ears had better listen!"

64. Jesus said, "A person was receiving guests. When he had prepared the dinner, he sent his slave to invite the guests. The slave went to the first and said to that one, 'My master invites you.' That one said, 'Some merchants owe me money; they are coming to me tonight. I have to go and give them instructions. Please excuse me from dinner.' The slave went to another and said to that one, 'My master has invited you.' That one said to the slave, 'I have bought a house, and I have been called away for a day. I shall have no time.' The slave went to another and said to that one, 'My master invites you.' That one said to the slave, 'My friend is to be married, and I am to arrange the banquet. I shall not be able

to come. Please excuse me from dinner.’ The slave went to another and said to that one, ‘My master invites you.’ That one said to the slave, ‘I have bought an estate, and I am going to collect the rent. I shall not be able to come. Please excuse me.’ The slave returned and said to his master, ‘Those whom you invited to dinner have asked to be excused.’ The master said to his slave, ‘Go out on the streets and bring back whomever you find to have dinner.’ Buyers and merchants [will] not enter the places of my Father.”

65. He said, “A [...] person owned a vineyard and rented it to some farmers, so they could work it and he could collect its crop from them. He sent his slave so the farmers would give him the vineyard’s crop. They grabbed him, beat him, and almost killed him, and the slave returned and told his master. His master said, ‘Perhaps he didn’t know them.’ He sent another slave, and the farmers beat that one as well. Then the master sent his son and said, ‘Perhaps they’ll show my son some respect.’ Because the farmers knew that he was the heir to the vineyard, they grabbed him and killed him. Anyone here with two ears had better listen!”

66. Jesus said, “Show me the stone that the builders rejected: that is the keystone.”

67. Jesus said, “Those who know all, but are lacking in themselves, are utterly lacking.”

68. Jesus said, “Congratulations to you when you are hated and persecuted; and no place will be found, wherever you have been persecuted.”

69. Jesus said, “Congratulations to those who have been persecuted in their hearts: they are the ones who have truly come to know the Father. Congratulations to those who go hungry, so the stomach of the one in want may be filled.”

70. Jesus said, “If you bring forth what is within you, what you have will save you. If you do not have that within you, what you do not have within you [will] kill you.”

71. Jesus said, “I will destroy [this] house, and no one will be able to build it [...].”

72. A [person said] to him, “Tell my brothers to divide my father’s possessions

with me.” He said to the person, “Mister, who made me a divider?” He turned to his disciples and said to them, “I’m not a divider, am I?”

73. Jesus said, “The crop is huge but the workers are few, so beg the harvest boss to dispatch workers to the fields.”

74. He said, “Lord, there are many around the drinking trough, but there is nothing in the well.”

75. Jesus said, “There are many standing at the door, but those who are alone will enter the bridal suite.”

75. Jesus said, “Many are standing at the door, but it is the solitary who will enter the bridal chamber.”

76. Jesus said, “The Father’s kingdom is like a merchant who had a supply of merchandise and found a pearl. That merchant was prudent; he sold the merchandise and bought the single pearl for himself. So also with you, seek his treasure that is unfailing, that is enduring, where no moth comes to eat and no worm destroys.”

77. Jesus said, “I am the light that is over all things. I am all: from me all came forth, and to me all attained. Split a piece of wood; I am there. Lift up the stone, and you will find me there.”

78. Jesus said, “Why have you come out to the countryside? To see a reed shaken by the wind? And to see a person dressed in soft clothes, [like your] rulers and your powerful ones? They are dressed in soft clothes, and they cannot understand truth.”

79. A woman in the crowd said to him, “Lucky are the womb that bore you and the breasts that fed you.” He said to [her], “Lucky are those who have heard the word of the Father and have truly kept it. For there will be days when you will say, ‘Lucky are the womb that has not conceived and the breasts that have not given milk.’”

80. Jesus said, “Whoever has come to know the world has discovered the body, and whoever has discovered the body, of that one the world is not worthy.”

81. Jesus said, “Let one who has become wealthy reign, and let one who has

power renounce it.”

82. Jesus said, “Whoever is near me is near the fire, and who-ever is far from me is far from the (Father’s) kingdom.”

83. Jesus said, “Images are visible to people, but the light within them is hidden in the image of the Father’s light. He will be disclosed, but his image is hidden by his light.”

84. Jesus said, “When you see your likeness, you are happy. But when you see your images that came into being before you and that neither die nor become visible, how much you will have to bear!”

85. Jesus said, “Adam came from great power and great wealth, but he was not worthy of you. For had he been worthy, [he would] not [have tasted] death.”

86. Jesus said, “[Foxes have] their dens and birds have their nests, but human beings have no place to lay down and rest.”

87. Jesus said, “How miserable is the body that depends on a body, and how miserable is the soul that depends on these two.”

88. Jesus said, “The messengers and the prophets will come to you and give you what belongs to you. You, in turn, give them what you have, and say to yourselves, ‘When will they come and take what belongs to them?’”

89. Jesus said, “Why do you wash the outside of the cup? Don’t you understand that the one who made the inside is also the one who made the outside?”

90. Jesus said, “Come to me, for my yoke is comfortable and my lordship is gentle, and you will find rest for yourselves.”

91. They said to him, “Tell us who you are so that we may believe in you.” He said to them, “You examine the face of heaven and earth, but you have not come to know the one who is in your presence, and you do not know how to examine the present moment.”

92. Jesus said, “Seek and you will find. In the past, however, I did not tell you the things about which you asked me then. Now I am willing to tell them, but you are not seeking them.”

93. “Don’t give what is holy to dogs, for they might throw them upon the manure pile. Don’t throw pearls [to] pigs, or they might ... it [...].”

94. Jesus [said], “One who seeks will find, and for [one who knocks] it will be opened.”

95. [Jesus said], “If you have money, don’t lend it at interest. Rather, give [it] to someone from whom you won’t get it back.”

96. Jesus [said], “The Father’s kingdom is like [a] woman. She took a little leaven, [hid] it in dough, and made it into large loaves of bread. Anyone here with two ears had better listen!”

97. Jesus said, “The [Father’s] kingdom is like a woman who was carrying a [jar] full of meal. While she was walking along [a] distant road, the handle of the jar broke and the meal spilled behind her [along] the road. She didn’t know it; she hadn’t noticed a problem. When she reached her house, she put the jar down and discovered that it was empty.”

98. Jesus said, “The Father’s kingdom is like a person who wanted to kill someone powerful. While still at home he drew his sword and thrust it into the wall to find out whether his hand would go in. Then he killed the powerful one.”

99. The disciples said to him, “Your brothers and your mother are standing outside.” He said to them, “Those here who do what my Father wants are my brothers and my mother. They are the ones who will enter my Father’s kingdom.”

100. They showed Jesus a gold coin and said to him, “The Roman emperor’s people demand taxes from us.” He said to them, “Give the emperor what belongs to the emperor, give God what belongs to God, and give me what is mine.”

100. They showed Jesus a gold coin and said to him, “Caesar’s men demand taxes from us.” He said to them, “Give Caesar what belongs to Caesar, give God what belongs to God, and give me what is mine.”

101. “Whoever does not hate [father] and mother as I do cannot be my [disciple], and whoever does [not] love [father and] mother as I do cannot be my [disciple]. For my mother [...], but my true [mother] gave me life.”

102. Jesus said, “Damn the Pharisees! They are like a dog sleeping in the cattle manger: the dog neither eats nor [lets] the cattle eat.”

103. Jesus said, “Congratulations to those who know where the rebels are going to attack. [They] can get going, collect their imperial resources, and be prepared before the rebels arrive.”

104. They said to Jesus, “Come, let us pray today, and let us fast.” Jesus said, “What sin have I committed, or how have I been undone? Rather, when the groom leaves the bridal suite, then let people fast and pray.”

105. Jesus said, “Whoever knows the father and the mother will be called the child of a whore.”

106. Jesus said, “When you make the two into one, you will become children of Adam, and when you say, ‘Mountain, move from here!’ it will move.”

107. Jesus said, “The (Father’s) kingdom is like a shepherd who had a hundred sheep. One of them, the largest, went astray. He left the ninety-nine and looked for the one until he found it. After he had toiled, he said to the sheep, ‘I love you more than the ninety-nine.’”

108. Jesus said, “Whoever drinks from my mouth will become like me; I myself shall become that person, and the hidden things will be revealed to him.”

109. Jesus said, “The (Father’s) kingdom is like a person who had a treasure hidden in his field but did not know it. And [when] he died he left it to his [son]. The son [did] not know about it either. He took over the field and sold it. The buyer went plowing, [discovered] the treasure, and began to lend money at interest to whomever he wished.”

109. Jesus said, “The Kingdom is like a man who had a hidden treasure in his field without knowing it. And after he died, he left it to his son. The son did not know about the treasure. He inherited the field and sold it. And the one who bought it went plowing and found the treasure. He began to lend money at interest to whomever he wished.”

110. Jesus said, “Let one who has found the world, and has become wealthy, renounce the world.”

111. Jesus said, “The heavens and the earth will roll up in your presence, and whoever is living from the living one will not see death.” Does not Jesus say, “Those who have found themselves, of them the world is not worthy”?

112. Jesus said, “Damn the flesh that depends on the soul. Damn the soul that depends on the flesh.”

113. His disciples said to him, “When will the kingdom come?” “It will not come by watching for it. It will not be said, ‘Look, here!’ or ‘Look, there!’ Rather, the Father’s kingdom is spread out upon the earth, and people don’t see it.”

114. Simon Peter said to them, “Make Mary leave us, for females don’t deserve life.” Jesus said, “Look, I will guide her to make her male, so that she too may become a living spirit resembling you males. For every female who makes herself male will enter the kingdom of Heaven.”

Recommended Resources

There is a whole crowd of interesting books and treatises about the Gospel of Thomas. As an introduction I would like to recommend:

Beyond Belief by Elaine Pagels (Random House, 2003)

The Mustard Seed by Osho (Osho Media, 2009)

The Gnostic Gospel of St. Thomas by Tau Malachi (Llewellyn Publications, 2004)

The Gospel of Thomas: A guidebook of spiritual practice by Ron Miller (Skylight Paths Publishing, second printing, 2006)

The Gospel of Thomas: Where science meets spirituality by Lee and Steven Hager (Oroborus Books, 2011)

The Gospel of Thomas by Robert Wolfe (Karina Library, 2010)

The following readings specially refer to the teachings of some enlightened

Masters quoted in the text:

Ashtavakra Gita by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar (Shankara Europe, 2010)

Become What You Are by Alan Watts (Shambhala Publications, 2003)

Enlightening Tales by Sri Swami Satchidananda (Integral Yoga Publications, 1996)

Let Life flow by Ramesh Balsekar (Yogi Impressions, 2005)

The complete Mystical Works of Meister Eckhart translated by Maurice O'C Walshe (The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2009)

Stille by Samarpan (Noumenon, 2010)

Teachings of Ramana Maharshi by Arthur Osborne (Red Wheel, 2008)

The Power of Now by Eckhart Tolle (Hodder & Stoughton, 2005)

To Know Yourself: The Essential Teachings of Swami Satchidananda. Edited by Philip Mandelkorn (Integral Yoga Publications, 2012)

Wake up and Roar by Papaji (Sounds True, 2007)

Writing on Water by Mooji (Mooji Media, 2011)

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