

BEAMS FROM MEHER BABA ON THE SPIRITUAL PANORAMA
Second Printing (August, 1968)

By

Meher Baba

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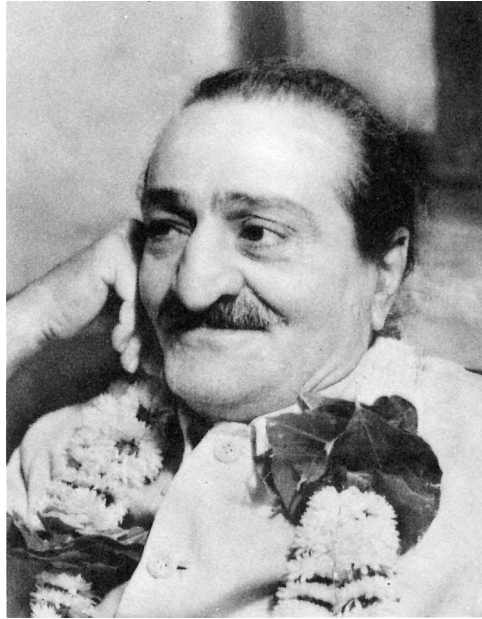
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Meher Baba — India, 1956

B E A M S
from
Meher Baba
on the
Spiritual Panorama



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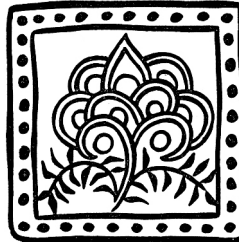
INTRODUCTION

One of the charms, as well as one of the liabilities, in any philosophic discourse is that it raises two new questions in answering one. While preparing Meher Baba's "God Speaks" for the printers, a number of such additional questions came to mind. These were submitted to Meher Baba in the hope that he might choose to elaborate further on them.

Despite the most severe handicaps of time and health, Meher Baba dictated by means of his new characteristic sign symbols the following work. Dr. C.D. Deshmukh, long associated with various of Meher Baba's literary projects, has woven the material into its present form as a series of gem-like essays. The result is a unique and invaluable work expounding the inner mechanics of some of the most intriguing aspects of the spiritual life. The student of Meher Baba and his thought, as well as the student of the metaphysics of creation, will be rewarded by finding much new material in this work.

IVY O. DUCE

Woodside, California
July, 5, 1958



The Whim from the Beyond

Through the ages, the human mind has been profoundly restless in its search for final explanations about first things. The history of these endeavors to grasp first things through the intellect is a tale of recurrent failures. The redeeming feature of these great efforts is that instead of being disheartened by the confessed failures of past thinkers, others are inspired to make fresh attempts. All these philosophical explanations are creations of the mind that has never succeeded in passing beyond itself. Thus they are confessed though inspiring failures; nonetheless each such failure is a partial contribution to knowledge of the Beyond. Only those who have gone beyond the mind know

the Truth in its reality. If they sometimes explain what they know, which they rarely do, those explanations also being in words are limited but these words illumine the mind; they do not fill it with novel ideas.

The unitarian Beyond is an indivisible and indescribable infinity. *It seeks to know itself.* It is of no use to ask why it does so. To attempt to give a reason for this is to be involved in further questions and thus to start an unending chain of reasons for reasons, reasons for these reasons and so on *ad infinitum*. The plain truth about this initial urge to know itself is best called a whim (*Lahar*). A whim is not a whim if it can be explained or rationalized. And just as no one may usefully ask why it arises, so no one may ask when it arises. "When" implies a time series with past, present and future. All these are absent in the eternal Beyond. So let us call this initial urge to know a "whim." You may call this an explanation if you like or you may call it an affirmation of its inherent inexplicability.

The initial whim is completely independent of reason, intellect, or imagination, all of which are by-products of this whim. Reason, intellect

and imagination depend upon the initial whim and not *vice versa*. Because the whim is not dependent upon reason, intellect or imagination, it can neither be understood nor interpreted in terms of any of these faculties of the limited mind.

The first whim to know instantaneously implies a duality, an apparent differentiation (not amounting to a breaking up) into two separate aspects, both of which are infinite as aspects of the Infinite. The first aspect is that of infinite consciousness and the second aspect is that of infinite unconsciousness. The duality strives to overcome itself and to restore the apparently lost unity: The infinite unconsciousness tries to unite with infinite consciousness. Both aspects are precipitated by the whim. This whim of the Infinite is in a way comparable to an infinite question, calling forth an infinite answer.

With the infinite question, there arises also the infinite answer. The infinite question is infinite unconsciousness; the infinite answer is infinite consciousness. But the infinite question and the infinite answer do not simply annul each other and relapse into the original unity of the Beyond. The two aspects have now descended

into the primal duality which can resolve itself only by fulfilling the entire game of duality and not by any shortcut. The infinite unconsciousness cannot overlap on infinite consciousness; such coalescence is impossible.

To reach out towards infinite consciousness the infinite unconsciousness first has to fathom its own depths. It must experience itself first as infinitely finite, and gradually evolve into limited and limiting consciousness. With the evolution of the limited and limiting consciousness, there is also the evolution of the illusion which limits this limiting consciousness. The two processes keep pace with each other.

When the infinite unconsciousness tries to reach out to the infinite consciousness, the process is not instantaneous because of the infinite disparity between the two. The process takes an infinitely long time and eternity gets seemingly broken into the unending past, the transient present and the uncertain future. Instead of embracing the infinite consciousness in one timeless act the infinite unconsciousness reaches out towards it through a long-drawn-out temporal process of evolution, with all of its innumerable steps. It first attempts to fathom its

own depths, then by backward treads it seeks and ultimately finds the infinite consciousness through numberless steps, thus fulfilling the whim from the Beyond.



The Fabric of the Universe

It is natural for the human mind to desire to know the general structure of the universe. It is also helpful to have a sort of chart of the universe in which one finds oneself. The fabric of the universe includes the spheres and the planes, and the different bodies with which a human soul is endowed.

The gross, subtle and mental spheres are interpenetrating globes and have an existence in space. They can be regarded as places since

they have an expansion in space. The planes, on the other hand, are both places and states, though the state of a particular plane cannot be experienced unless one's consciousness first gets raised to it and begins to function from there.

There are forty-nine steps in the ascent through the planes. The human mind delights in perceiving and creating symmetry and proportion everywhere, but this tendency should not be carried into the realm of facts. The forty-nine steps in the Path are not evenly distributed within the seven planes. They are distinguished from each other because of their distinguishing psychic characteristics, although they have also structural equivalents in the subdivisions of the seven planes.

The human soul has three bodies — gross, subtle and mental. Though overlapping each other, they would still impel the soul in three psychic dimensions were there no point of interaction or fusion between them. This contact of the intertwining bodies invites action and interaction between the three bodies.

With most men the life of action means nothing but inner confusion and outer chaos — a

jumble from which they cannot extricate themselves. To annul this confusion it is necessary to strive for conscious inaction which is the goal; and this striving for conscious inaction requires conscious action. This particular type of conscious action, which leads one on to conscious inaction, operates trans-bodily and requires vehicular purity and concord. In the Beyond-Beyond state of God there is *unconscious inaction*; at the goal of man there is *conscious inaction*; and in the intermediate state there is conscious action which is established in *illusion*.

The fusion point becomes the medium for effecting harmony between all three bodies. If the *Masts* (God-intoxicated souls) are to be brought down from the mental to the subtle or from the subtle to the gross, this has to be effected through the contact of intertwinement. This fusion point also brings all three bodies under the control of what is sometimes called the Universal Body, which is the seat of the Universal Mind.

The higher bodies function either by impersonal and unconscious forces or by conscious forces. *Kundalini* is a latent power in the higher body. When awakened it pierces through six

chakras or functional centres and activates them. Without a master, awakening of the *kundalini* cannot take any one very far on the Path; and such indiscriminate or premature awakening is fraught with dangers of self-deception as well as misuse of powers. The *kundalini* enables man consciously to cross the lower planes and it ultimately merges into the universal cosmic power of which it is a part, and which also is at times described as *kundalini*. Ordinarily *kundalini* is the name for the power latent in the individualized soul.

The awakened *kundalini* cannot by itself take any one to the seventh plane. When awakened and directed under the guidance of some great yogi, it can give many rare experiences which have both advantages and disadvantages. The important point is that the awakened *kundalini* is helpful only up to a certain degree, after which it cannot ensure further progress. It cannot dispense with the need for the grace of a Perfect Master.

The relation between cosmic power and the individualized soul is unique. In the case of a perfect soul, the relation has been described fairly adequately through the Christian idea of

trinity, which comprehends the three aspects of God: the Father (Creator and Preserver), the Son (Savior and Redeemer) and the Holy Ghost (the Spirit of truth or grace). This concept of Triunity (Three in One) grasps and expresses some important factors in the spiritual fabric of the universe. It should not be artificially equated with the Vedantic trinity of the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer, which reveals the fabric of the universe from a different point of view. All these are different ways of understanding the unitary and omnipotent power in the cosmos.

Much of the work of the Divine Incarnation is often done through his agents who carry on the duty entrusted to them by the Incarnation. The agents may be on the gross plane or on the inner planes. If they do not have a gross body they are invisible to ordinary people. They help persons in their ascent through the planes.

Some agents fulfill the purpose of the Divine Incarnation unconsciously. They do not know consciously whence their impetus or inspiration comes. Other agents receive instructions from the Avatar and knowingly and voluntarily carry out these instructions.

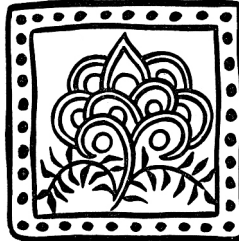
As a rule, in his ascent to the eternal Truth, an aspirant first becomes subtle-conscious and then mental-conscious before realizing the Truth. The subtle-conscious soul generally does not come back to the gross world. This does not mean that the subtle-conscious soul does not take a gross form or dwell in the gross world with his gross body.* It means that the consciousness of the soul is no longer entangled with the gross form or the gross world, and that it is chiefly engrossed in the subtle world.

The condition of the subtle-conscious soul is an interesting contrast with the condition of ghosts. Ghosts are departed spirits who have been too much attached to the gross world. After dropping the physical body they still desire to live in close contact with the gross. They continue to gravitate in the lower subtle and astral planes. Their astral sheath or envelope is automatically actuated by the impressions concerning the gross and keeps them tied down to the gross for long periods. Their tendencies are directly opposed to the tendencies of the subtle-conscious aspirants. The subtle-conscious aspirant, though linked up with the gross world,

* *Vide* Paragraph 2, Page 40 of *God Speaks*.

gets *wafted* to the subtle planes and experiences and moves upwards toward the Truth. The ghosts, though severed from the gross body, *gravitate* to the gross world with its experiences, owing to their actuating gross impressions. Thus, in a sense, the subtle-conscious soul is an inverted ghost.

The mental-conscious soul, even while retaining a gross body, remains stationed on its higher planes, without getting entangled even with the subtle planes. It keeps waiting till it merges with God or Truth in the seventh plane. After merger, the soul may remain immersed in the bliss of God-realization and become a *Majzoob* or come down to the lower planes of duality for work (without losing its realization of the unitary Truth) and become a Perfect Master. Whether a particular God-realized soul becomes *Majzoob* or a Perfect Master is a matter decided by the initial urge in creation. These varieties of terminal states are not subject to sanskaric or impressional determination. In both terminal states there is no trace of any binding impressions. However, the entire fabric of the universe serves but *one* purpose, *viz.*, realization of God.



The Mystery of Creation

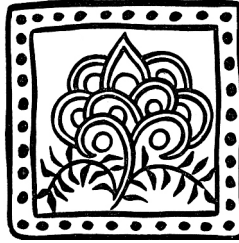
God is the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer of the universe which emanates from Him, is sustained by Him in His own being and also is re-absorbed in Him. God alone is real and the universe is in the domain of illusion, even though it is the manifestation of God himself.

The world or creation comes out of the eternal and infinite being of God through the creation-point, which is referred to as "*Om*." No one can attain lasting peace unless he contacts and transcends this *Om* point. We therefore find the sacred symbol *Om* often appearing in juxtaposition with the word "*Shantih*," which means peace.

The phonetic similarity between *Om*, *Amin* and *Amen* is suggestive of many things. The

sacred words *Amin* and *Amen* are frequent at the end of Muslim and Christian prayers. They both mean "So be it". Coming from a man, "So be it" is a blessing or a wish; but coming from God it is creation. Creation is God's *Amin* or *Amen*, i.e., an immediate and instantaneous fulfilling of His will into actuality. The Arabic word *Amin* comes from the root *Omn*, which means safety or peace and thus *Amin* may be regarded as an equivalent or at least a kin of *Om*, which also is associated with peace.

All prayers of different religions such as Hinduism, Islam and Christianity have a reference to the Creator. Creation is the greatest mystery with which all creatures, including human beings, are faced. The mystery cannot be unraveled or fulfilled unless and until man consciously becomes united with the Creator and realizes himself as being one with God, who is both the Creator and creation in one, at once including and transcending both in His infinite being.



The Advancing Life-Stream

The onward march of evolving consciousness from one species to another proceeds step-by-step and very rarely by leaps. But the diverse steps in onward evolution must not be rigidly construed. If a particular species is extinct its spiritual purpose can be served by some other kindred species, or by added births in some complementary species, or by deficient and partial expressions through a slightly higher species. In short, evolution takes advantage of innumerable alternatives available to it. It can never be frustrated by minor gaps constituted by extinct species or missing links.

Even if the kangaroos, whooping cranes or any other species of plants or animals become

extinct, it will neither arrest nor hamper the advancing life-stream. Nor will it frustrate the real purpose of evolution, which is to arrive at full consciousness. Even if there were a hundred missing links, the advancing life-stream can either forge new suitable species or make use of existing species.

However, an interesting fact which needs special mention is that at the transition from one species to another species, there is for every such transition a sub-species or a form which is double-faced. It can, as it were, not only look in two opposite directions but also move in two opposite directions. With equal facility it can retain its contact both with the species from which it is disengaging and with the new species into which it is becoming moulded. This intermediate form has to be able to move backwards and forwards. It is absolutely necessary for transitions from one species into another.

Some species help and others hamper the forward movement of the advancing life-stream. For example, weeds retard the development of higher forms of vegetables and plants. Their part in the vegetative life is comparable to that of primitive races in the civilized world. But

their function is not merely negative. By competing with higher forms of vegetation, they invite in such higher forms a greater power for struggle for existence. Yet the spiritual status of a species is not always to be determined by its usefulness to some other species. The stinging nettle is not necessarily lower in evolution just because it stings the men who touch it. To think so would be to take a purely anthropocentric view of creation. To view things in their right perspective, we have to see all forms, including human forms, as evolved for the fulfillment of the one eternal divine life.

In its creative self-fulfillment, the advancing life-stream can and does forge new species such as natural or artificial hybrids in vegetable or animal kingdoms. Even man-made hybrids in plants or animals can become a medium for gathering fresh experiences in the ascending scale of evolution. But it is not compulsory for every soul to go through these hybrid forms. It is open to the soul to gather these experiences through the parent species from which the hybrids have sprung into existence.

However, evolution is sometimes expedited through hybrid forms, and this would be

applicable to the products of interracial marriages.

The advancing life-stream creates numerous forms. But no form should be regarded as a cage, restricting and canalizing the gathering of experiences in a manner that would exclude intercommunion with other forms of the same species or even with forms of other species. Human beings communicate with each other and evolve together by an interchange of experiences. In the same way, intercommunication of some type is an important factor even in the world of plants and animals. Exchange of experiences and evolving together are not necessarily conditioned by the use of spoken or written language, which facilitates profiting by each other's experiences.

Men can understand each other through spoken or written language and get an opportunity of sharing life with others, but animals also share life together despite the absence of such language. Even animals and plants have a language of their own, a mode of partial or rudimentary communication. They share life with other forms and advance together. In fact all forms and species live in a common world. They not only share life with forms of their own

species but also with forms of other species. Thus birds, beasts, plants, and human beings, and all that lives and breathes, make their contributions to the unfolding life of each. The unfoldment of the divine in life is a common enterprise and not an exclusive achievement.

Even the evolution of angels and archangels (with all of their hierarchy) is not to be regarded as an exclusive stream in advancing life. They can incarnate among the human beings and become linked up with the human stream of life. They are also subject to the laws of cycles and all that happens to them is subject to the control of the Perfect Masters.

In the subhuman creation, reincarnation of evolved consciousness takes place through the subtle matrix, from which at a later stage a fully formed subtle body develops. Plants and animals do not have a fully developed subtle body, but the rudimentary subtle matrix gradually takes shape according to the stage of development achieved. This subtle matrix is the vehicle for the transmigration of subhuman consciousness from one species into others. It is also the medium in which the subhuman creatures live in the astral before taking a new gross form.

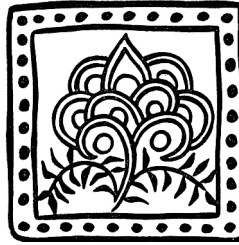
As a general rule the life-stream advances through opposites. For example, those men who have once appeared with mental brilliance in the gross world are sometimes devoid of that mental brilliance in a subsequent incarnation. Of course, the capacities of mental brilliance which they have once acquired are retained in the mental body and are in no way destroyed. But the intrinsic logic of the spiritual advancement of the soul may entail for it a period in which these capacities of mental brilliance are not accessible to it. The opposites of experience* are equally necessary for the full unfoldment of spiritual understanding.

Once a soul acquires the human form, the general rule is an onward march through human incarnations only. Retrograde incarnation is extremely rare in the advancing self-fulfillment of the life-stream. It sometimes results from flagrant misuse of occult powers. Retrograde incarnation is not a general rule but an extremely rare exception. Continuation of the human form without revision to any subhuman form is the normal occurrence. Even for

* *Vide* "Discourses" of Meher Baba, "*God to Man and Man to God.*"

gross violation of moral laws a corrective is provided by the same soul having to go through the opposite of what he has done or experienced. For example, a person who murders another for lust might himself be murdered for lust, either in the same incarnation or in the next, and thus realize the nefariousness of his heinous crime.

However, retrograde incarnation can take place in those exceptional circumstances where occult powers are used for the perpetration of heinous crimes. A soul which is invested with occult powers (due to his station on a higher plane) is expected to have them under full control. But if he grossly misuses them due to being a victim of his lower desires or ego-projects, he invites upon himself the drastic penalty of having to revert back to the subhuman form and recommence his evolution from that point. This sort of thing can happen on the fourth plane unless there is a timely intervention by some higher beings. But retrogression of this type is very unusual. The forward march of the advancing life-stream brings with it an increasing ascent towards the peak of realized Truth, and an increasingly greater unfoldment of inner divinity.



Avatar as the First Master

In the infinite Beyond state of God, which transcends the categories of consciousness as well as unconsciousness, there appeared the first initial urge for God to know Himself. And with the arising of this initial urge, there was an instantaneous manifestation of infinite consciousness as well as infinite unconsciousness, as simultaneous resultants. Of these two seemingly opposite but complementary aspects, the infinite consciousness plays the role of Avatar or Divine Incarnation. The infinite unconsciousness finds its expression through an evolution, which seeks to develop full consciousness through time processes. In the human form, the full consciousness strives to

have self-knowledge and self-realization. The first man to realize God as one indivisible and eternal Truth was taken up into this realization by the eternal Avataric infinite consciousness.

The Avatar is the first master of the first God-realized soul. But in God-realization the full consciousness of the first master became fused with the eternally infinite consciousness of the Avatar. Therefore, with the "coming down" of the first God-realized man, the Avatar himself descended and took an incarnation in his body. So from the point of view of incarnation, the Avatar is the same as the first master. This master had no master in the human form. But all subsequent masters have had masters in the human form to help them in Truth-realization.

The first master could realize God without a master in the human form, whereas the subsequent masters always and invariably need some master for God-realization. The reason is simple. God-realization implies inner poise as well as adequate adjustment with the universe (which is the shadow of God) along with everything it contains. The first master (who is also the first incarnation of the Avatar)

attained both these things, because it is the very goal of the initial urge seeking fulfillment. He did not have a master in the human form.

With regard to those souls who attain God-realization subsequently, the two requirements stand, *viz.*, inner poise and adequate adjustment with everything in the universe. But there is one great difference. For example, for the soul who is second in attaining God-realization, one of the important factors in his spiritual environment is the existence of a *human* God-realized soul. Hence, while adjusting himself with everything in the universe, this second candidate for God-realization is confronted with the problem of adjusting himself to the first master or God-realized soul who, as we have seen, is indistinguishable from the eternal Avatar. In this case the only adequate adjustment possible is unreserved acceptance of the bountiful help which comes from the first master. Refusal to accept this help is maladjustment to a tremendous factor in the universe; and this prevents God-realization. This is why the first God-realized person did not need an incarnate master, while all subsequent masters inescapably need some master or masters in order

to realize God. They cannot do so by their own independent efforts.

The first master who got fused with the eternal Avataric infinite consciousness is the master of all masters. Yet, if and when the Avatar takes an incarnation in the human form, he brings upon himself a veil; and this veil has to be removed by some master or masters.

The veil with which the Avatar descends in the human form is placed upon him by the five Perfect Masters who bring him down from his formless being. In the Avataric periods, the five masters always put this veil upon the infinite consciousness of the Avatar, because if he were to be brought without such a veil into the world of forms, the existing balance between reality and illusion would be profoundly disturbed. However, when the five masters think that the moment is ripe, they remove this veil which they have placed on the Avataric consciousness. From that moment the Avatar consciously starts his role as the Avatar.

The incarnation of the Avatar does not take place unless it is precipitated by the five Perfect Masters of the cycle. In all of his incarnations except the first, even the Avatar needs a master

in order to come into his own eternal and infinite consciousness. He does not become an exception to the rule that a "touch" of a master is necessary for God-realization. However, the "touch" of a Perfect Master does not necessarily mean physical touch. When we say that we are "touched" by music, or a poem or story, the touch has deeper significance. Far more truly is this so when it is a question of spiritual "touch." In the case of the master, this deeper spiritual touch is often transmitted through the physical touch.

Every time the Avatar descends, he is not necessarily recognized as the Avatar by the masses. He can be recognized as such only by those who are very advanced spiritually. The Avatar himself is the least concerned about whether or not he comes to be recognized as Avatar by large numbers. He plays thoroughly his role as the Avatar and his chief work lies in the higher invisible spheres of existence. If, however, he appears at a critical or transitional cyclic period, as is often the case, he is hailed by the masses as the Avatar of the age.

The Avatar is not necessarily recognized and hailed as the Avatar by each and all, because

he covers himself under a veil for his own spiritual work. This veil, under which he prefers to remain hidden, is different from the veil which the five Perfect Masters draw on him while bringing Him down in the human form. The veil which the Avatar puts on himself can be removed by him at any time, and for any person or persons as he may desire, for the purposes of self-revelation or self-communication.

The Avatar does not take upon himself the *karma* of the world nor does he become bound by it. But he takes upon himself the suffering of the world which is the result of its *karma*. His suffering for the world is vicarious. It does not entail entanglement with the *karma* of the world. But humanity finds its redemption from its karma through his vicarious sufferings, e.g., illness, humiliation, accidents and the like. In his own ways, the Avatar unfailingly fulfills his incarnation by giving a spiritual push to his age.



Supervening Orders in the Spiritual Panorama

The mystery of the universe is hierarchic in structure. There are graded orders, one supervening upon the other. The spiritual panorama of the universe reveals itself as a gradient with laws upon laws. Superimposition of one type of law over the other implies elasticity and resilience of lower laws for the working out of higher superseding laws. Instead of lawlessness, it means a regime of graded laws adjusted with each other in such a manner that they all subserve the supreme purpose of God, the Creator.

The lower laws are subsumed under the higher laws. We have first the law of cause and effect reigning supreme in Nature. Such natural

laws seem to be mechanical, rigid and inexorable. But by acting and interacting with life-force, they lead to higher laws of *sanskritic* or impressional determination and become superseded by them. Impressional determinism is not an exception to causal laws but is their finer and higher form. It supervenes upon mechanical causal laws.

Let us take an example to illustrate the functioning of supervening orders in the spiritual panorama. The days of every incarnate soul in the gross world, and what they bring, are both definitely determined by the accumulated impression of past lives. But this impressional determinism does not work itself out independently of, or in defiance of, ordinary causal laws. On the contrary, it works *through* established causal laws. For example, wrong diet or gluttony or any other disregard for natural physiological laws will definitely affect the duration of the life-term in the gross body. In the same way, intelligent use of known laws will affect happenings during this term of life. But, whether or not there is going to be a disregard of such laws on the part of some particular soul, is itself impresssionally determined;

i.e., it is dependent upon his gathered dispositions. Thus physiological and other causal laws are subsumed by higher *karmic* laws and lend themselves as pliant fabric-work for them. The law of *karma* supersedes and uses the other laws of Nature without violating them.

Nor are the natural laws in any way violated by what are called miracles. No miracle is an exception to the existing laws of the universe. It is an overt result of the impersonal working or conscious use of the established laws of the inner spheres. It is called a miracle because it cannot be explained by the known laws of the gross world. Here, known laws are superimposed by unknown laws; it is not a case of chaos or lawlessness.

There are many examples of miracles. Giving sight to the blind and kindred achievements are brought under the category of miracles. They do not set aside the laws of the universe but are the expression of laws and forces, unknown and inaccessible to most human beings. There are some persons who, through the use of their supernatural powers, can keep their bodies alive for hundreds of years although they are not necessarily spiritually advanced.

In the same way, the lingering aura of a saint may work miracles from his burial place.

The scope of miracles is very wide. Even the animal world is not exempt from the possibility of miracles. Though mammals such as porpoises and other animals do not have a fully developed subtle body, there is in the subtle world an equivalent or counterpart of their gross forms. The rudimentary subtle matrix, which has yet to develop into a definite and functionally self-sufficient subtle form, can still serve some purposes and become a medium for performance of miracles. Stories of sorcerers who caused schools of porpoises to come from the open sea to shore for a native feast are within the bounds of probability. But all this realm of the supernatural, occult, miraculous and magic (black or white) must be regarded as having no spiritual value in itself.

Occult phenomena like stigmata, telekinesis (effecting the flight of objects such as a communion wafer through the air), elongation, elevation, etc., may amuse, astound or overpower people. But they cannot bring about spiritual healing or uplift, which is the real thing that matters. They are just an illustration

of the supersession of ordinary and known laws of nature by the supernatural and unknown laws of the inner spheres. The curious might very well occupy their minds with these things, but they are best relegated to the background as insignificant. The real lover of Truth passes by these things without becoming entangled with any of them. He cannot afford to be distracted or diverted from his *real* objective, *viz.*, attaining union with God and releasing the radiance of His purity and love.

The apparent anomaly of miracles does not constitute the violation of known natural laws but means only their supersession by other unknown laws. It also does not mean violation of the higher *karmic* laws which supervene upon natural as well as supernatural laws. However, among the supervening orders in the spiritual panorama there is one important factor which transcends and controls all laws, including the supernatural laws and the laws of *karma*. That factor is divine grace, which is beyond all laws.

God forgives sins in the sense that He does not eternally damn any one for his sins. He keeps the door of redemption eternally open.

Through repeated sincere prayers it is possible to effect an exit from the otherwise inexorable working out of the law of *karma*. The forgiveness asked from God evokes from Him His inscrutable grace, which alone can give new direction to the inexorable *karmic* determination.

The only miracle which is worthy of the name is the divine grace that knows no fetters, and that can control the entire universe with all of its laws. It is the last supervening factor in the graded orders which obtain in the spiritual panorama.

Divine grace is not concerned with phenomena. It is concerned with the emancipation and spiritual fulfillment of souls. Here an interesting question is, "Does God work miracles in the narrower sense of operating the hidden laws of the inner spheres?" The answer is, "God does everything and at the same time does nothing. He leaves everything to the natural and supernatural forces prevalent in the spiritual panorama of the universe."

Although God does nothing by way of small miracles, the entire universe which has emanated from Him is the miracle of miracles. The more we ponder on anything in the universe —

even the meanest of things — the more miraculous it appears to the human mind. And the universe, which includes an infinite number of such items, giving to each of them an indelible stamp of eternal significance, is an unquestionable miracle because it admits of a thousand questions but offers no answer to the limited human intellect. So, having created this supreme miracle of the universe, God does not bother about performing further minor miracles within his universe, but leaves it to the reign of laws. However, this does not apply to the God-man who may, if he deems it to be fit and necessary, perform numberless miracles in supervision of the normal routine working of the universe, without attaching any especial importance to them.

God does everything and in another sense does nothing. Although God does nothing, those who approach Him with love and surrender derive everything that matters in the spiritual realm, even though He does not do anything in particular towards them. God may be compared to the sandalwood. It continually emits a sweet scent in all directions, though only those who take the trouble to go near it

have the benefit of its charming fragrance. But we cannot say that the sandalwood has done anything in particular towards those who approach it, because emanation of its sweet scent is going on all the time and is not specifically directed towards any person or persons. It is available to each and all who care to come within its range. Thus the sandalwood gives in one sense; and in another sense it does not give. Take another example. The river gives water to those who are thirsty in the sense that if thirsty persons approach the river and drink its waters, their thirst is quenched; but the river does nothing either to invite them to itself or to fill them with its waters.

These examples show how God does everything and at the same time does nothing. This naturally applies to the so-called miracles, which are minor happenings within the great miracle. Mind also can be called the great miracle of the universe, because it is out of the mind that the illusion of the universe arises. Mind is a parent miracle; yet the fulfillment of its destiny lies in self-annihilation. It has not fulfilled its true purpose if it does not completely disappear. The temporary clay model

often has to be destroyed in order to bring out a statue of permanent importance; the form of wooden planks is raised only to be replaced later by a slab of concrete; and the hen's egg has not fulfilled its destiny until it is broken from inside by the pecking of a hatching chicken. In the same way, the mind-mould arises only in order that it may be shattered to pieces and that its bursting may make possible the unfoldment of true and unlimited understanding which is self-sustained. Thus the mind, which is the parent miracle, comes into existence only in order to vanish.

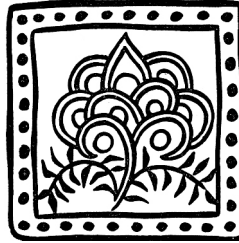
The vanishment of the mind means its stopping to function as mind. In its normal functioning the mind sees, hears and speaks but it has to cease this functioning. It must not see, hear or speak through impressional goadings as it is wont to do. When it succeeds in stopping its impressional functioning, it has vanished as mind and achieved the last miracle in its vanishment. The mind is a miracle in its origin, in its functional products, and last but not least in its vanishment, which is the pinnacle of its miraculous tenor. But the mind cannot jump over itself. It cannot stop its own impressional

functioning. It can only make a somersault and hold before itself a pretence of annihilation, as do snakes and scorpions which often pretend to be dead as a last resort to save themselves.

When the mind gets annihilated, it happens not through its own somersault or gymnastics, but by an act of divine grace. We can neither deny nor explain this divine grace which transcends all of the graded orders, together with all their laws, in the spiritual panorama. With the wiping out of the mind, there is the wiping out of all minor and major miracles. This is the only miracle worthy of the name and which is spiritually necessary. All other miracles, despite their imposing gradations in the panorama, are like the evanescent waves which rise and fall on the surface of the ocean without being able to fathom its immeasurable depths.

The miracle of wiping out the mind brings with it complete disappearance of all forms of manyness. The many divisions, of which the mind makes too much and in which it becomes enmeshed, are all within the domain of the illusion or the self-created objects of the mind. Within the domain of the objective world of imagination there are differences, e.g., between the

cobra, the tiger, the man, etc. But they are not in the mind, which is the origin of this imagination. All separateness vanishes as soon as the mind, which is the creator of all this separateness, comes to its termination through the act of divine grace.



The Equation of Body and Soul

As a rule we equate one body with one soul. The equation of one body implying one soul holds true, particularly in the higher stages of evolution. However, the exceptions to this general rule are also interesting and noteworthy.

In the frequent cases of obsessions we have an example of one and the same physical body

being used alternately by different souls. Some departed spirit or spirits can occasionally take possession of the gross body of an incarnate soul and try to use it for obtaining experiences of the gross world. When this happens too often, the general equation of one body with one soul is seriously disturbed. We have here only one gross body but many souls who are using it, in succession or alternation.

Just as one body can get linked up with many souls, one soul can get linked up with many bodies. This can occur at the earlier stages of evolution. There are group-souls. Each group-soul gets linked up with numberless physical forms as in the case of blades of grass. When the group-soul gets more advanced in consciousness then it can get connected with one form instead of with numerous forms. Group-souls are an exception to the one-body-one-soul equation.

But whether souls come under this equation or fall outside of it, their externality is due to imagined separateness. Even a group-soul is external to another group-soul in the inner spheres, and is as illusory as any other separative soul. In truth, there is only one cosmic soul

which gathers experience through all the different forms, sometimes appearing to separate itself into group-souls and at other times into souls which come under the body-soul equation. Group-souls imply a one-soul-many-bodies relationship, which is the opposite of the many-souls-one-body relationship found in obsessions and possessions.

However, cases presumed to be of the many-souls-one-body relationship frequently turn out to be instances of split personality. They are not exceptions to the one-body-one-soul equation. In split personality some dissociated nexus from the psyche of the same soul gets possession of its body and seeks separate and exclusive expression. It is not another soul or spirit but another group of impressions (*sanskaras*) of the *same* soul or spirit. In split personality each homogeneous nexus of the psyche takes possession of the body for some time, to make room for other nexuses of this or previous incarnations. These other nexuses are qualitatively different and are incapable of being accommodated in the first nexus; so they seek alternate expression instead of simultaneous adjustments.

In the realm of literature, a famous example of dual personality is that of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. This is an example of two sections of the mind dominating one body, and not of two souls getting linked up with it. However, it remains true that in some instances two or more souls can use the same body. When this happens, there is generally an alternation between their regimes. Simultaneous use of the same body by different souls comes under a special exception, where the different souls have to be in perfect harmony with each other. The harmony between the souls has to be so complete that one and the same bodily action or experience equally meets the needs of all the souls concerned.

Some advanced disciples are in such complete harmony with the master that the master can, if he so wills, sometimes "overshadow" the ego-mind and the body of a disciple, without supplanting his soul. Such overshadowing may take place for the working out of the wider plans of the master. Instead of replacing or wiping out the individuality of the disciple, it implements and amplifies his individuality. Here the disciple and his master are so merged

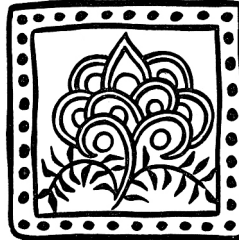
into each other that they both find equal fulfillment through whatever the disciple achieves through his bodily existence.

Since the one-body-one-soul equation can have so many exceptions, the question of determining the number of souls in existence becomes complicated. There is another aspect to this question which lifts it beyond the ken of any need for enumeration. The number of souls from this point of view is infinite. There is one infinite, indivisible soul which, through illusion, appears as many separate souls. Just as the one real soul is infinite in its indivisible being, the many souls into which it *appears* to get split are infinite in number. The shadow of the Infinite is infinite and remains infinite. Though the number of souls who attain full or human consciousness is limited and growing, the total number of souls of all plants, animals, insects, atoms, etc. is infinite and cannot be counted.

When we say that the number of souls in the universe remains infinite, this does not mean that it is constant. It remains the same only in the sense of remaining infinite and not in the sense of barring creation of new or fresh souls.

The number of human-conscious souls is not to be judged or arrived at by a census of living human bodies which dwell in the gross world at any one time. There are ever so many human-conscious souls who have just passed away or who are waiting to be born. Of course, the number of those souls who are freed from the round of births and deaths is very limited, compared with the number of those who are caught up in it.

Which groups of souls will incarnate in a specific period or cycle, and in what manner they are accommodated so as to allow scope for their evolution, are all matters governed by the masters who represent the divine will. The example of shifts working by day and night in factories is appropriate in this context. It indicates the many ways in which complex adjustments can be made to provide for the spiritual evolution of one and all. Even the exceptions to the one-body-one-soul equation are only parts of adjustments, which ultimately serve the divine will.



Spiritual Jingoism

In no sphere of life is jingoism more rampant than in the fields of spirituality. As in the market of economic goods, so also in the realm of spirituality, there is the inexorable law of demand and supply. The whole world is pining for light and freedom. To meet this recurrent and poignant demand there always arises a plentiful supply of those who claim to meet it adequately. Most of the claimants are impostors. Those who can meet the demand adequately are extremely rare.

Extremely rare also are those person who can either recognize or profit by the true claimant. Among the seekers there are two categories: those who are sincerely struggling with their backs to the walls, and those who pretend to seek. Those who pretend

to seek and those who pretend to give are close kin in the bewildering realm of spiritual jingoism.

Of course, the pretended seeker and the pretentious saint may become closeted in the arena of life and play their game in the wilderness of the world through selfish motives. Then, as Kabir has said, they both sink in the waters like a boat made out of stone. They have jointly invited their watery grave through selfish aims.

In this world of innumerable frailties, the greatest of all frailties is the common fault of not being able to face, accept and acknowledge one's own weaknesses. This is the frailty of all frailties. It gives rise to hypocrisy. Hypocrisy is said to be the tribute which vice pays to virtue. In contrast with the world of facts man builds out of his inspired imagination another world of ideals. Sometimes he imaginatively transports himself into the world of ideals; sometimes he reverts to his realistic world of facts; and occasionally he tries to bridge the gulf between them by actually and laboriously traversing the path with slow and bleeding steps. The temptation to seize the ideal imaginatively and pose as having realized it is so

Irresistible that there are very few who do not succumb to it. This is the origin of the fraudulent saint or the spiritual jingo, who walks and talks with his nose in the air and arms akimbo as if he were somebody very special.

Among the claimants for spirituality, there are very few who sincerely believe in their own claim and then take their stand by it. Most of them are self-deceived. Such persons deceive themselves before they start deceiving others. But even if they are thoroughly self-deceived, they can wriggle their way out from the tentacles of spiritual jingoism as soon as they discover that they had overestimated their own spiritual achievements. There is a faint ray of hope for their coming around to the Truth because they are not consciously dishonest. On the other hand, conscious and deliberate impostors in the field of spirituality are at once the most confirmed culprits and the most piteous victims. They get stuck deeper and deeper in the quagmire of their own creation until everyone, including themselves, loses all hope of their redemption.

It is of no use to attribute motives to the conscious impostor or fraudulent claimant of

spirituality. The inner spiritual path is narrow and difficult. Even sincere seekers can become enticed by the allurements of spiritual jingoism before they become aware that they have fallen. But they may have the advantage of a timely beacon light flashed forth by some Perfect Master. The line dividing the true from the false on the steep path to Truth is so narrow that it has almost no dimensions.

Let us put the most charitable construction upon spiritual jingoism. It can entice even sincere souls who fail to be constantly alert on the Path. The process of realization *appears* to be a process of becoming what one apparently is not. It seems like a movement from where you are to where you are not. To give conscious direction to this process it is necessary not only to have a perception of the goal, but also to dramatize our transport to it in imagination. For example, a person who wished to go to London makes preparations after visualizing all the vicissitudes of the journey. To this inevitable process we must add the consideration that the realistic position where he is actually stationed is itself a creation of his imagination. It is very natural for a person to take imagination for

reality and to believe that he has realized in his search what he has only imagined.

There are some assumptions and presumptions which necessarily attend upon the divine speculation, to which each seeker is inevitably drawn. All search is a struggle to arise from the false to the real. No struggle is possible unless the seeker has some initial idea, right or wrong, about the real. Further, the false cannot eternally take its stand upon the false and patently and wantonly cling to itself and remain itself endlessly. Thus arises the imperative need to visualize Truth, to take one's stand on this imagined or perceived Truth, and to act as if one has realized this cherished goal of search. This also implies a belief that one has realized it although, again and again, one will be rudely shaken out of this belief by having to face the unchallengeable facts that overtake one in one's imaginative race.

A sincere belief, no matter how false, does not chain the seeker irredeemably, because he is open to correction. However, the person who knowingly and deliberately plays a false role is pretentiously airing claims for which he has no authority. He is inviting a spiritual doom

for himself by yielding to patent illicitness. He embraces his boastful jingoism in order to exploit the simple credulity of others. The first person sincerely, albeit falsely, believes in his own spiritual credentials. The other fraudulently and knowingly poses as what he inwardly knows himself not to be — far from veritable truth. The difference is tremendous. The former is confirming in perceived Truth, whereas the latter is confirming his being in perceived falseness.

The conscious impostor in spiritual jingoism therefore condemns himself to a self-created shadowy destiny of piling sins, quite apart from dragging all the other credulous souls into the slippery quagmire of his own creation. He is spiritually burying himself and all who, in their childlike simplicity, have loved him and put their faith in him. The jingo invites this doom upon himself and others who have loved him; he cannot escape it except through an act of special grace from some Perfect Master. The most tragic fact in the situation is that the impostor does not deserve such grace, which alone can save him.



Evil as a Relic

Good as well as evil are impressional products of the evolutionary momentum. They come into conflict with each other and as such are to be recognized as separate groups of forces. Satan, Lucifer, Beelzebub, each in his own way symbolizes the forces of evil. However, it is a mistake to think that evil is an irreducible active force by itself. Both good and evil are abstractions and have to be seen in their true perspective as inevitable phases in the subhuman and human evolution. Evil is the lingering relic of earlier good. Some impressional tendencies, which were necessary and inevitable at a particular phase, are carried over to the higher phase of evolution and they persist in their existence due to inertia. They hinder harmonious

functioning in the new context and appear as evil.

Good as well as evil have an undeniable relationship with the circumstances. No judgment can be passed on the goodness of any action without considering the concrete context in which the judgment is called for. An act which is normally undeniably evil may under special circumstances be not only defensible but praiseworthy. Take for example an exceptional case. Suppose a mother has given birth to a baby and has not her own milk to feed it. The baby has to be fed on cow's milk, which is very difficult to obtain. A neighbor may have some cow's milk but the mother knows that he will not part with it for money or for any philanthropic consideration even though he does not need it for himself. Under such circumstances, if a person steals the cow's milk and feeds it to the new-born baby in order to keep it alive, the act of stealing is in this case not only justifiable but definitely good.

Of course an exception of this type does not make stealing a good act under all circumstances. Normally stealing continues to be evil but in the exceptional case above it has become

good. The illustration proves how considerations of good or evil must, in their very nature, be dependent upon circumstances in all the variety of detail which obtains in concrete situations. Good is relative to a concrete context of actual circumstances and so is evil. But for many practical purposes certain trends of action have to be classified as good while other trends of action have to be classified as evil.

Everything happens according to divine will, and it is a mistake to think that God has a rival in the form of a Devil. Accentuation of the forces for good is necessary for releasing divine life in all its fullness. But evil itself often plays an important part in accentuating the forces for good; and it becomes an inevitable shadow or counterpart of the good. Like other opposites of experience, good and evil are also in a sense opposites which have to be withstood and transcended. One has to rise above the duality of good and evil and accept life in its totality, in which they appear as abstractions. Life is to be seen and lived in its indivisible integrity.

Nevertheless there is an important factor in the opposites of good and evil. Evil is to all appearance the converse of good yet at the same time it is capable of being converted into

good. Thus generally speaking, the path lies from evil to good and then from good to God, Who is beyond both good and evil.

If any suffering comes to a Perfect Master or Avatar, it should not be interpreted as a temporary victory of evil. It happens by divine will and is a form of divine compassion. He voluntarily takes upon himself the suffering of others in order to redeem those who are engulfed in gnawing cravings, unrelieved hatred and unabated jealousies.



The Calculus of Opposites

Spiritual unfoldment takes place through experience of such opposites as pleasure and pain, success and failure, virtue and vice. Both

extremes are equally necessary for the fulfillment of life although they appear to be direct opposites of each other. In fact, from a larger point of view, the opposites of experience turn out to be complementaries rather than contraries. They appear to be clashing incompatibles only for the mind that cannot transcend them. They are like diametrically opposite points on the circumference of a circle. If you pursue any point on the circumference, the path through it will necessarily lead to its diametrically opposite point. And the path from this opposite point again returns to the starting point. Movement between the opposites is as endless as movement in a circle.

The law of opposites does not imply an exact mathematical polarity. Opposites are not antipodes with point-to-point contrariety in every detail.

Take for example the first air pilots who experienced failure and death in their undertakings. This failure cannot be said to be the exact opposite of their previous success in flying, for they never had any success in flying. Of what then is it the opposite? These first air pilots may have experienced success in some

similar endeavor of a slightly different type, and their failure in flying (culminating in death) is the *qualitative* opposite of that experience of success.

The opposites of failure and success need each other. There can be no success unless there is failure; and it is equally true that there can be no failure unless there is success. If one has never succeeded in a particular thing, it is meaningless to style such attempts or their results as failure. In the same way, success is success only if there have been prior failures, either by that particular person or by others who tried in the same field.

Success and failure are generally measured, appreciated or suffered more in relation to what has been achieved in the same field by others, than in relation to a target which has been hit or missed. If it is usual for any person to do a particular thing, the doing of it is not to be regarded as a success, although it is success in the sense that what was planned has been achieved. In every worldly sphere there is bad, worse and worst, as well as good, better and best. There is a conscious or unconscious racing with each other, as well as a perception of that

which is beyond all racing. It is out of this racing that success or failure arises.

If success and failure become independent of their accentuation by the felt duality of others, they become something entirely different from what they generally are. The severity of their contrariety is very considerably mitigated and they gradually get amalgamated. For example, the persons who failed to reach the top of Everest before its first conqueror will be seen not to have failed but to have succeeded in getting near the peak, unless success happens to be a name not for the entire process of climbing but only for the last step which the first conqueror took.

The more our perception is free from clouding and the less vitiated it is by felt duality, the less contrariety or incompatibility exists between the extremes or opposites of experience. In the final undimmed perception there is neither success nor failure, for there is nothing to gain or lose. However, until this unfailing self-assurance is permanently established, one is inevitably engaged in the illusion of duality or relatively false values. Then there always are approximations towards a receding target; and

these approximations may be called either partial failure or partial success, according to one's own point of view. This also shows how every success implies a failure and every failure a success. The two opposites tread upon each other in the world of illusion. One who can withstand both success and failure with equanimity is nearing a truer appreciation of both; and for one who goes beyond the extremes or opposites, the question of withstanding either does not arise.

However, both opposites are unavoidable during the process of evolution. Evolutionary illusion or illusory evolution has to proceed through apparently incompatible opposites such as pleasure and pain, vice and virtue, success and failure. Of the many pairs of opposites, the pair which needs especial mention and consideration is that of man and woman. Male and female human forms are rightly described as opposite sexes. Progressive realization of the adequate forms, the continuation of the species, and the onward march of the incarnated life-stream are dependent upon the opposition and interplay of the sexes, particularly at the higher phases of biological evolution. This is equally

true of psychological and spiritual evolution as long as it is held up in the domain of illusion. The opposition of sexes and the alternative attempts to overcome or reconcile this opposition are admittedly a source of inspiration, sublimation and exasperation, which haunt the interplay of sex opposites at the psychic level until they are withstood or understood fully and adequately.

One special feature of the sex opposites is that while remaining in counterbalancing opposition to each other, they are more patently and firmly tethered to each other than many other opposites. A man who is conscious of himself as a male is at the same time conscious of woman as a female; and the tension of the felt duality is on him a constant burden, which he often invisibly passes on to a member of the opposite sex. The same is true of a woman who is particularly conscious of herself as a female. The opposites create and sustain a burdensome illusion which is transferred to each other. And if this illusion is shared by both, it goes on increasing in geometrical proportion instead of being mitigated in any way. On the other hand, the disburdening of the illusory and oppositional

Duality of sex is also a self-communicative understanding. Then love is gradually freed from the tinge of differentiative sex consciousness, and understanding is lifted out of the obsessiveness of one of the most oppressive forms of duality.

If one experience is an exact antithetic of another, they counterbalance each other. But very often an exact antithesis is not necessary for such counterbalancing. Suppose "B" is directly the reverse of "A" in every detail. Here "B" can counterbalance "A." But the onward unfolding of the purpose of life is equally served if something similar to "A" counterbalances "B", or something similar to "B" counterbalances "A", or something similar to "A" counterbalances something similar to "B" and *vice versa*. In other words, the law of opposites is not a mechanical law of action and reaction but is a significant search through complementary fractional experiences.

The complicated manner in which one opposite invites and attracts its supplementary opposite may be illustrated through another example. Suppose a person finds himself forced to kill others, as often happens in wars. Here

his destructive disposition is being accentuated and released without the approval of his innermost being. One day this person inwardly revolts against such a type of action and tries to repress his destructive disposition to kill. However, the destructive disposition cannot be so easily halted, since it has been too much accentuated through repeated practice. So his disposition recoils on himself and he commits suicide. He has invited upon himself this opposite — consisting of being killed. This is partly due to his wanting to escape from having to kill others against his will; and partly due to his wanting to expiate for having killed others against his will but mostly it is due to his being hopelessly caught up in the momentum of a destructive disposition which demands expression on some object, whether it be some one else or himself. The working out of the law of opposites is beyond the limited intellect.

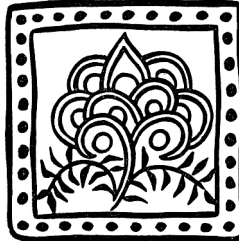
In the above example another point is clarified. If an action does not have the whole-hearted support of the innermost being of a person, it is quick in inviting its opposite. If, however, an action has had the whole-hearted support of the innermost being, it can evade

deflection as long as it does not gather in its train some other things which strike a note of discord within the innermost being. The way to transcend the alternation between fractional opposites is to steer one's own life so as to make it a true and complete expression of the inner-most being.

Nevertheless, until the entire accumulated self of a person comes into complete harmony with the One Divine Self within, the law of opposites inevitably comes to this help, whether he consciously wants it or not. Suppose a person kills sick animals out of what he regards as compassion for them, *i.e.*, with the intention of giving them relief from suffering. His innermost being does not sanction this apparent act of compassion, since he would not like that sort of compassion to be expressed towards him if *he* were ill. This implicit acknowledgment of cruelty involved in killing animals is sufficient to necessitate his having to become in some life a shepherd or a cowherd or a herder of the animal kingdom. Very similar is the case of one who keeps hens awake all night in order that they should lay more eggs, not realizing the callousness involved in it. In the world of

plants also, one may inadvertently or deliberately cause wanton destruction, only to attract to himself the role of a horticulturist or a gardener. The harm which one may have inadvertently or deliberately have done to any living beings has to be made good. In a future incarnation he has to nourish and protect those very souls (in some other form) either as a kind head of a family or a wise ruler.

The law of opposites does not function through arithmetical or mechanical calculus but through the requirements of *karmic* adjustments and a supreme need for full and free unfolding of life in every form. Alternation between the palatable and unpalatable opposites is a game of see-saw which must continue until arrival at a dynamic poise, which is beyond the opposites and which is the unhampered expression of the unalloyed eternal.



The Interplay of Souls

ON THE interplay of souls and their resilient opposition, much has been said by scientists, psychologists, philosophers, moralists, spiritualists, mystics, saints and seers, as well as by Tom, Dick and Harry. They differ sharply in their appraisal of the significance of this trans-subjective relationship and certainly in their attitude towards it, but none of them has treated the intersubjective life with indifference. By man's heritage, from the initial whim from the eternal Beyond, his consciousness is constrained to move within the opposites of "I" and "you"; and this juxtaposition circumscribes the depths to which man may fall as well as the heights that he may scale.

The "you" is a sort of alter ego or another

self within self. But the awareness of the "you" is of necessity a challenge to the enclosing of the self within itself. It is an effective check on the introversion or the inward withdrawal of consciousness into a subjective vacuity. There are many urges which draw the soul out powerfully and link it up with other souls in such a manner that it becomes impossible for the soul to take an uncompromisingly separatist stand.

Let us take a few examples. Jealousy keeps the mind-heart whirling on some other soul. Revenge also can clasp the soul-object in its arms with a gusto that safeguards against a possible relapse into a separatist subjective vacuity. And the capacity of fear to keep the mind-heart pinned upon the object causing fear is too well known to need special mention. Felt duality, in its multitudinous aspects, holds the mind in the grip of a variegated interplay of souls. However, the oppressiveness of sex-tinged relationship is more subtle than all the rest. It pierces into the very being of the separatist soul, exploding it from within like a time bomb. But it always flies off at a tangent to the other soul and is stamped with a patent failure in soul alchemy.

Though sex consciousness clasps its opposite with an outgoing fervor, it augments duality instead of sublating it, and the soul continues to be arrested within the spell of the felt "other." The invincible other is a constant companion of sex-driven consciousness and is felt as the "other."

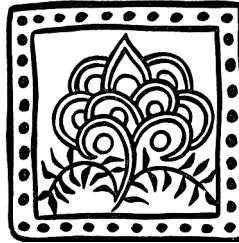
In deepest fulfillment, the sex-tinged opposition suddenly brings to the surface an equally deep frustration which is latent in itself. Even in its most refined and directed form, it does not succeed in sublating duality. In fact, despite appearances to the contrary, it is perhaps the most trenchant of the separatories which obtain in the confused psyche. At all psychic levels, sex consciousness creates the sex opposites and their game of hide and seek, gain and loss, conquest and surrender, love and hate, frustration and fulfillment. At its best it may pierce the assertive separatism of the soul but it is never able to relieve it. Its rare moments of evanescent vanishment of separatism are always followed by its accentuation in a more formidable form.

What sublates all forms of duality is untethered love. Untethered love neither allows

you to fall back into a subjective vacuity nor does it throw you at the mercy of the felt "other." It relieves you from the harassing interplay of the felt duality of "I" and "you." Among the psychic separatories which create and sustain the multicolored duality of "I" and "you", none is more formidable than that of sex drive. The sex opposites, which are its creations, find themselves helplessly caught up in the game of illusion, being unable to separate from each other or really to unite with each other.

The multicolored interplay of souls and the variegated opposition of "I" and "you" persist until through the grace of some enlightened one the soul gets initiated into the untethered love which is free from every tinge of duality. Prior to this relieving fulfillment, every soul has to suffer the juxtaposition of "I" and "you" for countless lives. By the logic of the situation, every soul is driven to gather experiences of both sexes, sometimes incarnating in the male form and sometimes in the female form. Sometimes tethered at one end of the trans-subjective opposition and sometimes at the other end, the soul dramatizes within its own psyche the interplay

of soul opposites by whom it is confronted until it gets established in the relief of nondifferentiating and untethered love. Such love alone can understand the "I" as well as "you" as being its own illusory creations, rising from itself and disappearing within itself to find the ineffable fulfillment of the eternal Beyond.



Prayer as Inner Approach

For most persons, the outer ceremonies and rituals prevalent in the diverse religions are the established approach to God and Divinity. They are regarded as indispensable. However, they are neither essential nor necessary, though at times they have been allowed or given by masters by way of inevitable accommodation to human weakness. They may also be practiced

with benefit when they are thus allowed or given by a master, but only during the period for which they have been prescribed, and in the context in which they are intended to be given effect. They have no lasting value nor can they be made eternally binding. They were never essential or indispensable; they are never essential or indispensable; and they will never be essential or indispensable.

Let us take for example the stern discipline and fasts associated with Ramdhan. No doubt they serve some spiritual purpose. But one way of looking upon it is to regard them as a sort of compulsory rationing of food and water in those areas where they were rare, and where such control was necessary in the interest of society. It is not necessary to convert the instructions of the Prophet into inflexible and eternal rules of discipline. In the context in which they were given they served both material and spiritual purpose. They cannot be regarded as inescapable or necessary in all times and climes. The same thing applies to any other disciplines given by other seers or masters.

The masters have sometimes followed external disciplines including prayers and have

set an example of humility and readiness to learn from others. Thus Mohammed played the role of being taught by Gabriel. He thereby achieved two things. Firstly, he gave to the world an example of readiness to learn from others; and secondly, he awakened the teacher in Gabriel. No teachers have been content with merely external disciplines. Through their teachings as well as example they have often set forth prayer as the inner approach to God and Divinity.

What constitutes the essence of prayer? Many prayers to God are current among the lovers of God, arising as they do from diverse cultural contexts. Some of the prayers invariably contain an element of asking something from God, either material or spiritual. In fact, God is so merciful and bountiful that even without their asking He always gives more than His lovers can receive. He knows their real needs more deeply than they do. Therefore the element of asking something from God is superfluous. It often mars the inner love and worship which a prayer tries to express.

The ideal prayer to the Lord is nothing more

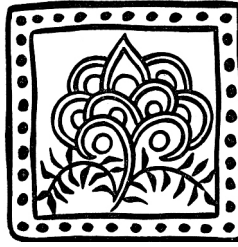
than spontaneous praise of His being. You praise Him, not in the spirit of bargain but in the spirit of self-forgetful appreciation of what He really is. You praise Him because He is praiseworthy. Your praise is a spontaneous appreciative response to his true being, as infinite light, infinite power and infinite bliss. It is futile to attempt a standard prayer and hold it up as an ideal for all people of all times. The glory of the Almighty transcends all human understanding and defies all verbal descriptions. Eternally fresh and self-renewing in its unlimited amplitude, it never fades. Nor is it ever confined within the limits of the best of hymns.

All hymns and prayers reach out towards the eternal Truth of Godhead only to merge those who utter them in silent and unending adoration. If by ideal prayer to the Lord is meant a set formula, any search for it is a wild goose chase. All prayers ultimately initiate the soul into an ever deepening silence of sweet adoration; and all formulae are dissolved and assimilated into the integral and direct appreciative perception of divine Truth. That which seeks to reach towards the immeasurable, itself becomes

incapable of being measured by any set standards.

The ritualistic and repetitive expressions of prayer do not and cannot do justice to the innermost essence of prayer, which is adoring love for the eternal Beloved. To attempt to standardize prayer is to mar its intrinsic beauty.

If you pray with a motive to do good to some one, your prayer may actually bring about good both to him and to yourself. Some people pray for the spiritual benefit of those who have done them some wrong. There also, they are helping others spiritually. But all prayers with a motive fall short of the ideal prayer which is without motive. In the entire spiritual panorama of the universe nothing is more sublime than a spontaneous prayer. It gushes out of the human heart, filled with appreciative joy. It is self expression of the freed spirit without any actuation of a motive. In its highest form, prayer leaves no room for the illusory diarchy of the lover and the Beloved. It is a return to one's own being.



From Eternity to Eternity

God, who is the sole reality, is comparable to a shoreless ocean. The biggest ocean on earth has shores and is accordingly limited. But the ocean of the divine Life has no shores. There is yet another important difference between the earthly ocean and the ocean of Divine Life. The earthly ocean has a surface and a bottom. The ocean of Divine Life has neither surface nor bottom. And yet, the analogy of the ocean is one of the closest conceptual approaches to God, if we take away the tri-dimensional limitations which obtain in the earthly ocean.

The shoreless ocean of Divine Life has its existence in eternity. It has neither beginning nor end; nor is it sandwiched between the ever-

lengthening shadows of the past or future. And yet, an incomprehensible divine game precipitates within its being a cosmic or transcendent illusion. This illusion is so unsubstantial that it can have no justification or standing ground in the indivisible and unalloyed reality of God. It exists by a sort of sufferance or tolerance; it comes into existence in the same manner; and ultimately it vanishes like a nightmare which leaves no vestige after a man is fully awake.

Eternity arrives at itself through the fleeting gradations of the manifest aspect of evolutionary forms. They are precipitated by the limitless unconsciousness trying to grasp the limitless consciousness of shoreless divinity. The limitless unconsciousness first descends into the grip of delusion in seven steps. For the unconsciousness as such, there can be neither knowledge nor illusion. Therefore it has to develop consciousness by extremely gradual stages, and this development of consciousness starts with the most minute degree of consciousness, which is characteristic of the most rudimentary forms. Just as a man who is in deep sleep may awaken in very gradual stages, the manifested unconsciousness arrives at full

consciousness in seven important steps.
(See chart.)

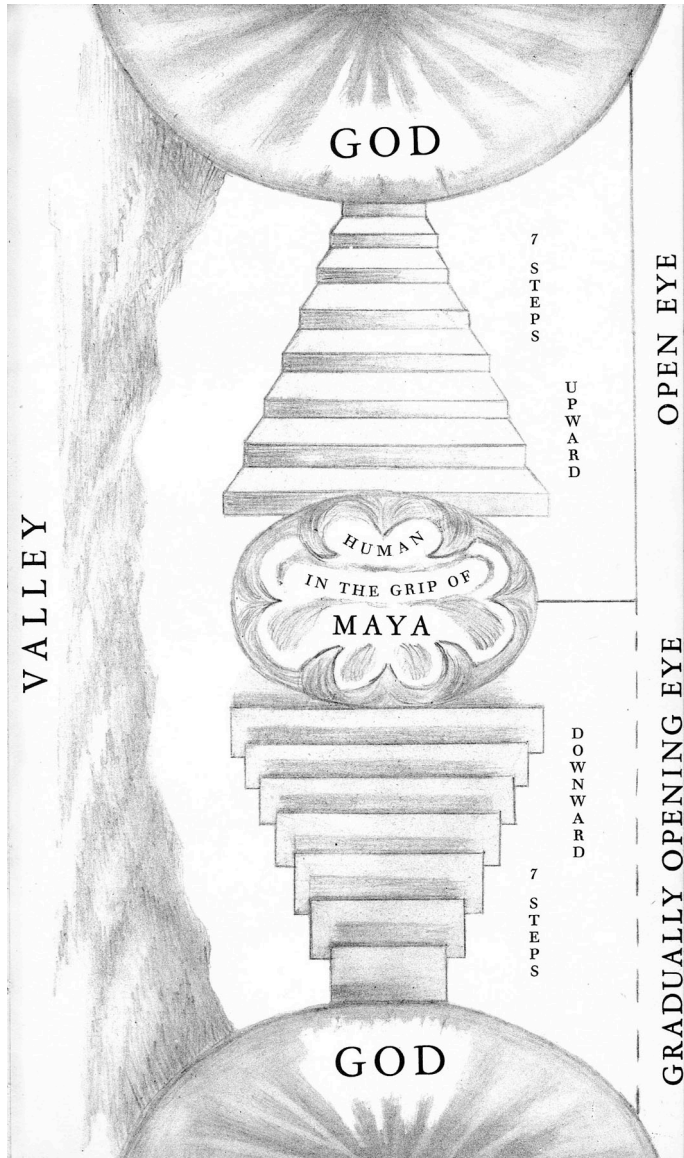
But to arrive at full consciousness in the human form is the very antithesis of arriving at full knowledge of the shoreless Divinity. The downward descent through seven steps (consisting of the gradual opening of the eye of consciousness) means a fall into the veritable depths of the valley of illusion. At the end of seven strides, evolution has only succeeded in engaging consciousness in unending delusion. Man is at the very bottom of the abyss of illusory existence. He goes on taking millions of incarnations in this shadowy valley without being able to find a way out of the separative ignorance in which he is caught. After aeons of participation in futile bungling, he starts to grope into the deceptive mazes of illusory values.

His long-drawn sojourn through the wilderness of dual existence is a story of repeated blunders, ever tightening the grip of ignorance on his consciousness. An easy prey to the guiles of *Mayavic* mirage, he gets enmeshed in its clutches. He goes astray in the feverish dreams of his vitiated imagination, with little prospect of launching on his homeward journey. How-

ever, by a stroke of good luck, which is God's grace, he may stumble upon an exit through these mazes and get a glimmer of the limitlessness of the real.

But just at this juncture, he proves vulnerable to the temptation of becoming a pretentious and preposterous claimant sailing under false colors and arrogating to himself the truth of his dim perception. It is an abortive attempt at seizing the Truth. He only succeeds in being a magniloquent imitation, puffed up with invalid claims. He encroaches upon the fields of the real saints, bluffing each and all whom he meets. But he is thereby only fooling himself and he moves further into the grips of the false. Only the intercession of some compassionate master can initiate him into the real and arduous Path. This Path also consists of seven stations or planes. (See the chart depicting the seven *upward* steps or planes to be climbed with the eye of consciousness now fully open.)

The emanation of the world is as it were a descent from the navel of a man along one leg; the reincarnations of the soul in human form are a wandering into the wilderness of Maya (illusion) between the legs of a man; and



the onward ascent of consciousness through the planes to the realization of the original infinite Beyond is like the slow and gradual ascent of an ant along the other leg back to the navel from which the creation started. The navel represents the "OM" point of creation. After transcending this point, the duality of the creator and creation is sublated. The portion above the navel is like the Beyond, where there is conscious enjoyment of the shoreless ocean of Divinity.

In the gross world as well as in the inner planes, places, states and experiences are interlinked with each other and yet should be regarded as separate from each other. This is particularly true of the inner planes. Places, states and experiences all tend to be fused with each other on the higher planes; and the trio as trio disappears in the unitary realization of the seventh plane.

Let us see how places, states and experiences are interlinked with each other in the gross world as well as on the inner planes. Suppose you go for awhile to Pratapgarh. This change of place brings with it a change of state in you. Your general tone of mind is different. At

Pratapgarh you also have experiences which you would not get at another place. Change of place brings in its train a change in the state of mind and both of these result in a change in the nature of experiences felt at this new place.

Just as a change of place in the physical world is linked with changes in the mental state and gathered experiences, an ascent to a plane also brings about changes in states and experiences. An ascent to a plane means a change in the standing ground of consciousness. It is a change of place. It therefore brings with it the changes in states and experiences. But the changing states and experiences which accrue from the change of plane are radically different from the changing states and experiences which accrue from wandering in the gross world. The qualitative difference is enormous. However, in the planes also we have the interlinking of places, states and experiences, all these remaining separate from each other up to a particular point only.

How the places, states and experiences tend to get fused into each other, and how their initial separateness comes to be gradually obliterated may be illustrated by an example, which

does not involve a change of plane but which consists merely of a change of state, within the normal range of gross-conscious souls. When a gross-conscious person has a dream, he has, as in his waking state, an experience of some place and also of some mental state and experience associated with it. But the place, mental state and experience with which a person is confronted in his dream do not have the same externality or separateness which characterize them in wakefulness. It will be very artificial and even misleading if we try to separate the place in the dream from the state and the experience connected with it, though such separateness presents us with no difficulty when we are concerned with the place, state and experience in gross-conscious wakefulness.

The example of the dream is merely suggestive of how a place need not invariably stand outside the state and its experiences. However, what happens in a transition to another plane of consciousness is very different from what happens in the dream. In the divine hallucinations of the subtle planes, as well as in the spiritual nightmare of the mental plane, there is a growing tendency towards fusion of the

experiences which are normally separated from each other in gross wakefulness.

In fact the integral fusion on the seventh plane is so complete that there we cannot have any places, states or experiences. Life there is lived only in its indivisibility. The illusion which gives room for changing places, states and experiences has itself disappeared on the seventh plane of realization.

But as long as the mind exists the illusion also exists, even up to the very sixth plane, although the type of illusion which exists on each plane may be different. Mind is subject to imagination. It imagines and experiences imagination through places and states which imagination creates. So long as mind exists, imagination also persists; and the imaginary places, planes, states and experiences also continue to engage the mind. Just as in the gross world there are places, states and experiences, there are imaginary places, states and experiences on the subtle and mental planes. Yet in both cases they belong to the illusion created by imagination.

However, when the illusion exists, there are within it six ingredients *viz.*, time, space, law, nature, cause and effect. Of these six factors,

law and nature are most important. Evolution depends on these six factors and its working is clocklike and without any deviation because of the unfailing interplay of these six factors. Although illusion is the product of imagination, the evolutionary working within that illusion goes on exactly as it should. The determinism is complete.

On the seventh plane the mind does not exist. Hence there are no places, states nor experiences in God-realization, just as such places, states and experiences are absent in the infinite unconsciousness. What exists in God-realization of the seventh plane is just uninterrupted and indivisible consciousness, without any form of burden or limitation.

With his back to the false and evanescent and his gaze firmly fixed on the goal of shoreless divinity, an aspirant traverses the Path through spiritual planes with security if he has the help of a master of wisdom. And when he sheds his illusion completely, he finds that his mysterious sojourn has been from eternity to eternity, from God to Himself. But it is not an arrival at the same point. In the shoreless Divinity of the eternal reality, there are no

dividing points or lines. So you cannot call it a "return." It is a return only in the sense of his having realized his initial limitlessness, but not a return to some imagined point or terminus.

It has been a flight from eternity to eternity, from the shoreless Divinity to the shoreless Divinity, from the unending to the unending. It is a fulfillment that can never become stale. No one may put the seal of finis on this story of the invincible eternal but every one may disappear in it and share its unending and ineffable glory. Through the incident of imaginary creation God overtakes Himself, only to discover that He is limitless in all dimensions.