

New Age

Old Path

I S H W A R P U R I

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Introduction

The Institute for the Study of Human Awareness encourages individuals to know and understand themselves in the manner of the Socratic theme of “Know Thyself”. This knowledge permits us to understand others and the world in which we live. The institute provides resources which lead to the investigation and discovery of one’s real self.

These publications are compilation of taped lectures by Ishwar C. Puri. Due to the varied formats and lecture subjects, some information may be repeated. We hope that you would experience the love as if you were there, and we invite you to experience the reality of your being.

New Age - Old Path

We are constantly learning. When we are ready to learn, we never stop learning. The only time we stop learning is when we become unwilling to learn. If we say that we know everything, we stop learning. It is so unfortunate that people who are just on the threshold of a break-through in realizing their true self and their potential, block entry to that knowledge by assuming that they know all, already. In order to avoid that kind of personal catastrophe, it is best to always keep the doors to knowledge open. Let knowledge flow as it comes without being hindered by any conditioning already adopted by your mind.

We have a very subtle computer built into our heads which is called the human mind. This computer functions much like other computers, and it will give you output, inferences and conclusions based upon the input you give the computer and the logic process that is built into it through prior conditioning. But the conditioned mind, although it functions like a computer, is slightly different from other computers in that it prevents any action you might take to destroy the computer. If you buy a computer from a store and

don't like it, you can throw it away—the computer will do nothing. But if you try to throw away this computer called the human mind, it will put up a stiff battle, a real fight to win. It will try to show you that you cannot vanquish this computer. For its own survival, the human mind has developed a conditioning which is called the misidentification of the human soul. As human beings, we derive our consciousness from the soul, but we have forgotten that there is a soul and have begun to consider that the mind is the human being.

When I first came to this country to study at Harvard, I was surprised to be asked the silliest of questions by serious students of consciousness—whether there was, indeed, any difference between the human soul and the mind. I heard lectures by these serious students who would say, “I am talking of the soul, or the mind or whatever.” They spoke as if it did not matter whether they were talking of the human soul or of the human mind. When things come to this point—that it doesn't matter whether you are talking of the human mind or soul—you have then sold yourself to the mind. The mind has now won that battle because the mind can take over and say to you, “Now, come on, you must follow me.” Then one follows the mind, losing one's own self and the potential which exists in the human soul.

New Age – Old Path

For many years, I devoted a large part of my lecture time to distinguishing between the mind and the human soul. I will repeat some of that lecture material to show you that the human mind is not the human soul and that our real self is the soul. What is the difference? The mind performs three functions in the human body and human personality. First, it picks up sense perceptions from the various sense organs that are fixed in the body—the sensory perceptions of seeing, tasting, smelling, hearing and touching. It interprets them, gives meaning to them and creates a world of relationships. This part of the mind is called the sensing mind because it senses what is around it. It senses or perceives through the sensory organs. The mind receives this data and then gives meaning to it. This is sometimes called the lower part of the human mind.

Then we have the middle part of the mind, which is the most important part of the human mind and the one we have to deal with as students of self-realization—as students of the explorations of the true nature of the self. This middle part of the mind is called the thinking and reasoning mind. The thinking and reasoning mind operates ceaselessly, day and night. It operates whether we are awake or sleeping. It operates from the time of our human birth until the time of our death.

This part of the mind which thinks continuously, thinks in any language. It speaks this language in our head. As a child, it speaks the blah, blah, blah of a child—the syllables a child hears and gives meaning to. As we mature, the mind picks up the organized languages of English, German, Japanese, French, Indian, or whatever language we speak—it doesn't matter as it will speak words of any language. We say that these are thoughts passing through our head. What are these words? These words that the mind speaks are no more than phonetic symbols, sound symbols, which get their meaning from the association of ideas we have with those sounds and other experiences in life. Therefore, the mind connects with external experiences and uses this process in a way which we call thinking. The mind also associates images with these thoughts. Whatever you happen to think about, the mind draws a picture before itself and you can see what it is thinking. This capacity of the mind to think results in a continuous activity, a stream of images and words passing through our head.

The mind also performs the allied function of reasoning. Thinking generally goes along with reasoning. What is reasoning? Reasoning is the application of a logic built into the mind by conditioning from past experiences. When we become educated a logic develops in the mind. Every interface that this

New Age – Old Path

computer has with the world around us gives it a new conditioning, a new logic. The combination of all of the logical processes that go into the mind make it a reasoning mind. Therefore, the thinking process becomes integrated with the rational process and the mind begins to reason.

This reasoning or logic is performed by the mind in two ways—as students of psychology would know. The logic that the mind applies is of two kinds—the deductive logic and the inductive logic. In the case of deductive logic, the mind makes a statement in thought and then proceeds to deduce something already contained in that statement. The mind might say that this wall is made of wood panels, therefore a small portion or part of this wall might also be made of a wood panel. This syllogism, or this method of rationalizing or reasoning, is called the deductive logic of the mind.

In the case of inductive logic, the mind sees part of the premise and induces what could be the whole, or what could be beyond that which is present in its own statement. In doing so, the mind is left in a state of uncertainty.

The mind, using its reasoning and thinking faculty, is either not gaining any new knowledge or is gaining knowledge along with a sense of doubt and uncertainty. That is why, if you

New Age – Old Path

look at your own life, you can see that all of the doubt and uncertainty that has crept in has come because of thinking. Nobody has had any doubts until they began thinking about something.

The third part of the mind has been referred to as the creative mind. Actually, it creates nothing except new patterns using the same elements of perception that have been picked up by the lower mind. Journeying in the same stream of reasoning, which is the middle mind, the perceptions are then put into creative patterns and we say that this is the creative mind. It creates nothing except some new patterns, and yet we believe the creativity comes from the mind.

The mind performs these three functions of sensing, thinking and reasoning, and of creating only in the framework of time and space. The same three processes also follow the laws of cause and effect. Sometimes the mind is called the framework of time, space and causation. When the experience of human beings is framed like that, we call it the mental experience. This is all that the mind does. There is no other function that the human mind performs that cannot be categorized into these three areas that I have just described.

If this then is the human mind, what is the human soul? And what does the soul do while the mind is employed? The human soul provides the motive, operative power for everything—it is the life principle; it is vitality; it is consciousness and the source of consciousness. If you were not conscious, neither mind nor senses nor body would work. Therefore, the human soul, which provides consciousness, continuously performs its own functions.

There are three functions that the human soul performs that cannot be performed by the mind. The first function of the soul is to gather intuitive knowledge—intuition. This is the gut feeling or sudden hunch, that sudden flash that comes from nowhere. It is not logical nor does it come in any length of measurable time, and it does not come in any particular location in space. This spaceless, timeless, causeless bit of information or knowledge that flashes into our being or consciousness comes from the soul. It cannot come from the mind; so intuition is a function of the human soul.

The second function of the human soul is love. Love is the ability of the human being to identify with another, to have the same feelings of another, to forget the self and become the other person. This is not possible with the mind. You must have noticed that love is a universal experience because we,

universally, have souls. Having souls, we constantly identify ourselves with others. Then why do we lose that experience of love? It is because we start thinking about it. The mind has the capacity to destroy the experience of love but has no capacity to create love. This function belongs only to the human soul.

The first function, that of intuition, can also be destroyed by the mind. When an intuitive feeling comes to us, we throw it out by thinking about it. We say, “That’s not possible, that’s not logical, it doesn’t make sense,” or we decide it is not a rational thing. We throw out the intuitive knowledge, the basis of true knowledge that comes from the soul.

The third function of the human soul is the aesthetic function, the ability to experience beauty. When we human beings experience beauty, it is a function of our soul and not that of the mind. Mind cannot create beauty. Contemplate or think about an experience of beauty and you will destroy that experience.

If you were to look out of your window one morning and see the beautiful layout of nature—the trees, a pond and the blue sky—you could enjoy something of the totality of that picture. It gives you a sense of beauty and a joy that goes with beauty. And then you start thinking about it. You might say to yourself,

“Now, just what is creating this beauty?” you begin analyzing with the mind, “Is it the tree, the color of the leaves, or is it the blue color of the sky?” The mind continues analyzing and, as you continue thinking about the beauty of this scene, the beauty becomes less and less. The more you think about it, the more you destroy beauty.

Imagine, here is the human mind which we have taken as our best friend—indeed, we think that we are that mind—and this same mind is constantly destroying the natural functions of the human soul—those of intuition, love, and of beauty. In the process, we destroy the very basis of the joy and bliss that arises from our being. We are souls; we are automatically in a state of joy and happiness. We don’t have to learn how to be happy. We don’t have to learn how to love. We don’t have to learn how to acquire knowledge. We have to unlearn the mental process that comes in the way of our natural functions. If we could stop thinking at this moment, we would have a natural sense of beauty, love, joy and happiness which would require no learning. The difficulty is that we cannot stop thinking; therefore, we have to deal with the mind in a different way.

First of all, it is most important to recognize that we are not the mind. If we do not recognize this fact, we cease to be human. We dehumanize ourselves and make ourselves like a

machine when we think we are the mind. The mind functions no better than a machine. Human life, with the functions of love, intuition and beauty, is not a mechanical function at all. These functions of the soul cannot be performed by the soul when we think we are the mind. The potential of the soul is lost because we are in the company of a strange companion—living right inside of our head—who keeps on advising us all of the time. The mind takes us away from the path of discovery of our own self.

All of the religious traditions have given us the same message: to go within and find out who we are. Recently, I visited the headquarters of the Theosophical Society in New York and observed on the walls, the pictures of all of the great religious leaders of the world. Below the pictures were their original messages. I was surprised to see that there were so many Masters who had set up so many religions, but what surprised me most was the fact that the message of all these leaders was the same. The message was to be a human being and to find your own potential within the self—a simple message. These leaders who had established traditions leading to various religions had said the same thing: The Kingdom of God is within you. You are within yourself. Be human and you will find out everything.

What is the difference between a human being and an animal? The difference is that the human being has the ability to take a particular way, a particular path. The human being has the feeling and experience of a free will that no other being has. Those of you who have studied comparative religions and those who have studied metaphysics will recognize that free will is a unique experience available only to the human being. All of the gods and angels that fly about have no free will because they have instead the knowledge of what is going to happen. If you were to have knowledge of what is going to happen tomorrow, of what you will do of your own free will tomorrow, then you have no free will either. Human beings are blessed with ignorance and still feel that they can decide what they will do tomorrow. This very feeling of free will distinguishes human beings from everything else created in this universe.

Animals go by instinct and are like machines. They operate by responses built into their systems. If human beings also became strictly instinctive and did not use their free will for a greater evolution of their own souls into a self-realization, they would be no better off than animals. Indeed, when you see so many human beings functioning like machines, you wonder where the human being has gone.

Once a question was asked of me, “What is the qualification for one to be self-realized, to be God-realized, to find God?” I said that the only qualification was to be human. If you are really human, then you are already divine. If you have the capacity to be a perfect human being, if you use your free will towards perfection, towards learning and a greater awareness of yourself, you are then already a divine person. So a perfect human being is automatically a perfectly divine being. You don’t need to seek a special divinity. To be divine is not a state of scholarship or learning. You cannot read more and become divine. You cannot listen to more sermons and become divine any more than you can read more books and become more human. To be human or divine, you must expand your own awareness into a greater knowledge of your own self—which is your own soul. A mechanical reliance upon our minds dehumanizes us and, therefore, takes us away from any divinity that is possible.

So, when you study the history of religions you will find that single message shining forth: be perfect human beings and find the reality of your own Creator within yourself; for, indeed, there is no greater Creator outside of yourself. That is the message. If you wish to find truth and reality, you will find it within the self. So go within. It is only those who come before

us and say, “Go within” whom we can recognize as truly spiritual beings and spiritual Masters.

Those who would come and draw us out to rituals, ceremonies and business, and the collection of funds are not truly spiritual people. Spiritual people are those who push us back into our own reality within our own selves. A great Indian sage spoke in this country eight decades ago at the World Congress of Religions. When Swami Vivekananda spoke there, he addressed this question. He, too, said that reality is within us. Everything that we see outside is illusion—it only looks real, but is not so. Then he put forth a very interesting question. He said, “I have been telling you that everything you see about you is unreal, illusion. That means that I, too, must be an illusion because you are seeing me about yourself. That must also mean that my words are illusion. My message is illusion, so why am I giving you this message knowing that I am an illusion, as are my words and my message?” He answered his own question by saying, “It is true that what you see is an illusion. My words are also illusion, but there is one difference between this one untruth and the rest of the illusion. The whole of illusion draws you to itself and makes you believe it is real. It captures or captivates you in illusion forever. This illusion of myself, however, takes you back into your own self and makes you find the reality.”

This was the message of all religions. This is the fundamental message of all Masters and leaders who have ever walked upon this earth. I think the Theosophical Society did a great job in collecting this wisdom from various parts of the globe and displaying it in one place to show mankind that there is only one message: be human, go within, and find the truth. Don't get cluttered up along the way by the mind and a mechanical process. When people try to go within, the mind puts up a battle and does not let you go within so easily. The old way was to overcome the mind and go within. I have heard that this has been the only path since the beginning of the earth—to go within to find the truth. However, this way has been discarded, thrown away because nobody knew how to go within.

There was once an old lady living in a village in India. She was looking for something in the street under the streetlight in her small village, when a young man passed by and asked, "Ma'am, have you lost something? May I help you find it?" The old lady answered, "Yes, I was sewing a piece of garment with my sewing needle, and I have dropped the needle. I am looking for it now." The young man asked to help, and she said, "Certainly, please help." So the young man also got down on his hands and knees and began looking for the needle. After a while,

the man asked, “Ma’am, just where did you drop the needle?” She said, “I have dropped the needle in my house.” The man asked her, “Why, then, are you looking for it out here in the street?” The old lady said, “But I have no light in my house. It is dark in there.”

This is what we have been doing with the message to go within. All the messages of all the religious leaders have said to go within, the truth is within us. We have closed our eyes to go within, found it was dark in there, and we began to go outside to find the same truth. Are we not doing that? Why are we looking outside? Because the inside is dark. We go anywhere and everywhere outside. I find that we are going on pilgrimages, to churches, around the world, to the Himalayas, and to India to find the wisdom of the East. People go everywhere except within themselves, and therein is where the truth is found. The truth is within and we carry it all about while looking for it on the outside. We laugh now at that old lady, but this is what we too are doing. We are looking for something in the wrong place, and so very far do we travel.

Some have asked me, “Please tell me of some good place where I can go and find the truth.” I have told them where they can find a good place, but that they cannot go anywhere to find it. They then ask, “Why not?” I answer “Because that place is

where you are. If you go anywhere else, you will not reach it.” The trouble is that we still continue to go elsewhere, we don’t stop. Look at the functioning of the human mind—it continues to drag us along, never stopping. We make visitations at this place and that place, and we visit everybody’s house except our own, which is behind the eyes. In our visits to everyone else’s home, we leave our own home asking, “Where is our home? We have lost it.” It is a strange situation, as we are carrying our own home with us. Why are we doing it? Because when we close our eyes, it is dark inside and we cannot see. Yet, every religion, without exception, says that within yourself shines the light that you cannot find outside.

Some religions went beyond this. They have said that only within this physical body can you find the light that shines beyond the suns and the moons. The Bible says, “When thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.” We are not talking of some other body, but of this very body of ours. Those who have tried to go within and have had a glimpse into their own soul within this body, have seen the light—the likes of which does not exist anywhere else.

When the religious leaders and others close to them, found that people were forgetting the message to go within, they began to build replicas of this great church or temple of the living God.

They began to build replicas of the human body, the human temple, and they called these places of worship temples, mosques and churches. They made domes over these structures much like the top of the human head with steeples that resembled even the headgear worn at that time. They gave them the same shape and then added candles for light. Many traditions called these lights the unending flame or the eternal flame. Those who used candles used a very large supply of candles to ensure a continuing, unending light. They provided a light that would never fail, forgetting that the light we carry with us never fails.

Those who had heard the inner music, the beauty of the Lord, within their heads, knew the sound was reverberating from within. They knew, indeed, it was the Lord. They had read and understood Saint John's gospel which begins, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." The leaders knew that was the Creator and that all things were made by him.

We can go further into tradition and see that another book was written centuries before the Bible. The four Vedas contain the counterpart of Genesis and they say, "In the beginning was the Sound, and this Sound created all that was to be created." Yet another great tradition, the Islamic, found it was the Bani,

the Sound in the sky, that created all things. Others would say that it was the music of the spheres, the Logos, the Holy Ghost. So many words for so many traditions, all saying the same thing. There is the great resounding power that can be heard; it is audible and continually moving. This is the basis of all creation. Go, harken within. Listen to it and you will see the light and hear the sound within yourself, without going anywhere.

But what did we do but forget. We began to play music and sing and dance outside, forgetting that the eternal music within never stops. We began to place bells in every place of worship throughout the world, to sound like the bells in the temple of the Lord within our bodies. We used the same kinds of music and the same kind of light, and yet we did not catch the message. The light and sound are universal in every religion throughout the world. Soon, nobody went inside to see the significance of these symbols. So much was taken away by the external symbols that we began to invent even more symbols, more rituals, more ceremonies—everything to keep us outside—and the mind was exceedingly happy. The mind was assured of its survival.

It is only when we overcome these things and go within ourselves that we find reality and overcome the mind. The more we stay with these external ceremonies, rituals and symbols, the

further we go away from our own selves. Therefore, the message is simple and clear: Find the truth. Find the path, the light, and the real sound. Discover the sound that is not an outwardly audible sound, but a creative sound—the creative resonance that sustains the melody of the universe. Find it within yourself. That is the path. I suggest that you go back and read about the path as expressed by anyone. Old or new—it is the same path. The path is that truth that is within us and can be recognized by the light and sound that accompanies it.

If you are lost in a forest and you want to go back home, how will you go? If you are lost in a desert in the dark of night, how will you know where to go? You might look about and see the lights of a town and say, “I can see the lights from a town to follow safely.” Then you might hear some sounds, and you can follow them. Light and sound have been a guide for human beings on this earth for many, many years. Many people lost in darkness, have found their way with the light and sound. Why then, can’t we use the light and sound to go within ourselves and pierce the darkness that is there? What creates the darkness? Someone has said, “There is no darkness, but only ignorance.” When we have knowledge, we get light enough. What makes the darkness when we close our eyes is the fact that when we close our eyes, we are not inside. We are still trying to peep

outside. We are so accustomed to looking outside that we are unwilling to look inside. We have forgotten how to turn our attention to ourselves. Our attention continuously flows out to experiences in the world outside of this body. Our relationships come from this body. We forget the soul because this is the only awareness we have.

Consider that we make the simplest of mistakes, such as calling our clothing that of ourself. Suppose that I were to say that this jacket is mine. Please call it Ishwar Puri. You would laugh, but that is exactly what we are doing. We call our bodies in a similar manner as though they were us. Even in a name, the body is no more than a garment. We see people wearing the garment then taking it off. The cemeteries are full of testimony to the fact that we threw away our garments. Since the beginning of the world and until now, we have shown that this garment cannot last. The spirit never dies. We get this message that the spirit never dies and that the body does not last, yet we continue to call this garment by the name of the person whose spirit speaks to us. A simple mistake? What greater mistake can we make? There is a simple statement in English which says, “What is mine cannot be me.” It is very simple. If this is my jacket it cannot be me—because I am using it. This is my house, so I cannot be the house. I can only use it. Is it not logical? Is it

not valid to say, also then, that this is my body, therefore it cannot be me? Is it not valid also to say that this is my mind and, therefore, it cannot be me? Obviously, we are using both the body and the mind, but we are not that which we are using. So who are we? We are the ones who claim that this is my body, my mind, my jacket. That is our consciousness claiming to use these things. Yet, when someone calls us by the name given to our body, we respond as if the entire spirit is called by that name.

I make a further mistake when someone asks, “Who is this child with you?” I answer, “This is my son,” and this is incorrect. The correct statement would be, “This is my body’s son,” which indeed he is. The spirit occupies the body only temporarily, and the son is the product of the body. In claiming he is my son, I am misidentifying myself with my own garment. This is my son, this is my wife, and this is my house—they all belong to the body, to the cover. The entire set of relationships that we form in this world belongs to the physical body, which is not going to stay with you. The physical body is not the real you; therefore, none of these relationships, none of these people, and none of these properties around you are yours. How can you claim that they are yours? When a person dies, that is the first moment of truth—when this person finds that nothing he thought was his, can go with him.

Let me tell you of Alexander the Great. Alexander conquered many countries and finally ended up in India. He had made so many orphans and widows by killing their menfolk in his great conquest of the world. He had amassed huge fortunes and carried all the jewels laden on his camels and his horses. When he was about to die, he called for his doctors and told them to take all of his wealth in exchange for restoring his health and life to him. The doctors had said that they could not do this for him, that it was God's will for him to age and die. Alexander said, "What! I have collected all of this wealth and can pay any price, but I cannot get life nor can I take it with me?" The doctors told him that this was so and that the collected wealth would now be used by others, as he would go on without the wealth. Alexander was shocked at his sudden knowledge and declared that, when he was to be buried, his hand was to be left sticking out of the coffin to be seen. His hand was to be seen out of the grave in order that all persons could see that Alexander the Great went to the grave empty-handed. And so he was buried like that. He realized that nothing goes to the grave with us. Alexander also said, "And I have caused so much cruelty to others in amassing this wealth and so much treasure, only to find that none of it is mine. Even my relatives are not mine, nor are

my people, my kingdom, my body nor my wealth. What is mine? What was mine I gave no attention.”

The spirit that is our own—the spirit that is the self—how much attention have we given to it? Have we ever cared for it? What have we done about it? And it is the natural source of intuition, love and beauty. How much have we practiced love? The path of love is an integral part of going within because it is integral to the realization of our own soul. If we come to know our own soul, we will know what love is. How much of love have we shared? Have we really been willing to share love with others? When we share love, we become someone else. Love is the capacity to identify with someone else. Love is not a case of saying, “I love you; therefore, do this for me.” This is an ego trip. “I want this. I have done so much for you and I love you” is said by many. This is only the “I” and it is not love. This is ego. Whenever the “I” asserts itself, it is ego and not love.

There are also attachments which we have created with our mind. The mind cannot love and, therefore, finds a substitute in attachments. What is attachment? In this case, it is simply growing together, being attracted to each other. When people become attracted to each other, they mistakenly call it love. It is not love, but attachment. Attachment causes pain when people come together and then are separated. When they come together

again, there is again happiness. But the happiness is only temporary, and they are not truly one. In attachment, at best, they can only be together. It is only love that gives oneness. Attachment provides togetherness, and many people mistake one for the other. Do you see the difference? In togetherness, the “I” remains.

Look, for example, at the number of people who daily repeat the words, “I love you.” Every day, everywhere, people repeat this expression. If they don’t repeat it, then they are asked to say the words. People will ask, “Don’t you love me? Tell me so.” Another will answer, “Yes, but yesterday I told you that I loved you.” This person might well be asked, “Well, say again today that you love me.” Why is this so? The former declaration of love has already been written off? The love is gone? For some, after five minutes, they would have you say it again. They wish to be sure. What kind of love is this? I have also seen a situation where one says, “I love you,” then the other says, “I hate you.” So the first one then too says, “I hate you, too.” This is love? This is nothing more than pain-giving attachment.

We can better describe love as when neither the “I” nor the love is known to you. Only the other—the “you” is known to yourself. When you can think of nothing more than the other person, then you are in love. It is when you have forgotten

yourself and have transposed your attention to the beloved, that you will know love. It is when your feeling of the beloved alone is important and when you are entirely with the beloved, then you can know love.

How often have we loved? When we love, we are caring for the spirit. We are then caring for something that truly belongs to us. This will outlast the end of the physical body and it will truly outlast even the end of the world. If we have that love, and we express it by being the other person, then we have built something that goes with us even after death. Have we done this? Even when the flash of love comes, because of nature's gift to our soul to love, we destroy love by using the machinery of the mind—thinking and logic. We use self-interest, ego, effort and struggle. All of these elements are attacking the very basis of a natural asset and wealth that we can accumulate—that which is called love.

How much time have we spent in forgetting the “I” and placing ourselves in the other's place? What is a simple method by which people can experience love? The answer is to just become the other person to whom you are talking. Imagine that you are the other person and feel that you are that person. Imagine what he or she is thinking. Imagine what he or she is

expecting or finding. Become that other person and you will experience love.

But if you say, “I love that other poor fellow. I love that poor child. They are very sad and I want to give something.” Then the ego will never let you see love beyond the “I” of it. How can you patronize love? Love therefore, is the only thing that takes care of our ego. When we don’t care for love, how can we say that we are exploring our own real self? Our own self consists of nothing but love. Have you heard the statement that God is love? Have you also heard that love is God? Both are truths. They are not said just to make us more loving and kind to one another. They are absolute truths. If you can experience love and become someone else who is the object of your love, then you have experienced God. You have then experienced your innermost self and the function of your own soul. It is so powerful.

People ask, “Is there an answer to the problems of the world? There is one answer, “Yes, the power of love.” Is there any answer to the violence of this world? Yes, the same answer—love. Is there any answer to the individual problems and worries that we have? Yes. The answer is love. Is there any problem, any difficulty, or anything that cannot be surmounted? No. Everything can be surmounted. There is nothing known to

us which cannot be surmounted with the power of love. Love is natural to us. We go with our mind to cast the doubt and uncertainty of our minds upon others. The others suspect us also, in their turn. Love is then the casualty in the process.

People who use their minds too much are always suspicious, doubtful and uncertain. They are always wanting to be sure. When someone offers them real love, they will ask, “How can I be sure? There must be a catch to this. There must be something up their sleeve.” In some lectures that people give on love, they say, “Take a flower and go and give a hug to the one you love.” Any man who has not done this in the past, who then takes a flower and a hug to his wife, will cause her to ask, “What is wrong? What have you been up to today?”

Why is this so? Because the mind will put her on another track immediately. This is the nature of the mind. You can make the best gesture out of love, and if the mind is being used, it doesn't respond. But if you put yourself in the position of not worrying about the flower, the hug and the kissing, or any of the external rituals and acts, then something else will happen. Put yourself in the position of thinking about the other, think as if you are the other person, and that person will be drawn to you. Try it. Tomorrow morning, go out into the world and meet

everyone as though you were that person. You will find no bad people in this world. Where have they gone?

Everyone says that the world is full of wicked people. I have traveled around the world more than forty times, and I have met thousands of people. All were good, loving people. So where are all the bad guys hiding? And how is it that I meet so many good people? I meet people full of kindness, smiles, and love. Where does this come from but from their own souls? Fortunately, there is no body without a soul except the devil. All human beings have a soul and have the goodness and love within them, provided that you meet them with your soul. If you meet people with your soul, you will meet their soul directly. The love and the soul within you are so powerful. They alone can take care of the ego and the mind—even of others. Don't try to teach this and involve the mind—it will not work or succeed.

Thirty years ago I had a very interesting experience when I was lecturing at a college in India. There was a class of students and professors assembled and I had been asked to speak on the nature of the self. For the benefit of the scientific community, I spoke in depth of the latest experiments in which others had determined a way in which to measure the weight of the astral body. When the physical body dies, the life principle

that goes on, or continues, has a weight. The experiments had concluded that even when the body was tightly sealed or enclosed, there was a loss of weight when the body died and the astral body departed. I went deep into these questions of the nature of the self. I took this group into the ultimate levels of the real self beyond senses—even beyond the soul—to the totality of consciousness. When I took them to this level, they were so overwhelmed that one young student stood up and asked, “Sir, please tell me how much of what you have told us today is from your own experience, and how much of it have you read from books?” And I answered him by saying, “Young man, whatever I said that has gone straight into your heart and made an impact there was from my experience—the rest was from books.”

That is what books can teach us. Books can teach us scholarship and words. New words and phrases and the ability to write even more new books, but books cannot give us love. They cannot give us intuition and the knowledge of our own self. Books can never give us the true spiritual experience. Indeed, the intellect that becomes so developed by scholarship becomes a stumbling block to our discovery of our own self. Therefore, when you find people having difficulty in finding and retaining love, ask them if they are reading too many books.

Not so long ago, a man from Harvard University came to a lecture where I was speaking for the Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship, and he asked me to give him a short-cut. He had been so engrossed in the study of the self with the reading of books, but he said that he had gotten nothing and only wanted an answer to his search. I told him that I would give him a real short cut. I told him to go and pack up all of his books and to dump them into the river, that he would begin improving tomorrow.

For him, the books were the stumbling block, because they were placing more and more of the intellectual apparatus and concepts in front of him. Concept can never be reality. Concept differs from the real thing and that is why it is called concept—either it precedes or succeeds the real thing, but it cannot be the real thing.

Many people confuse reality with their concepts. They say that they know their own soul because they have a concept of it. How can one know the soul with only a concept of it? Concept is only an intellectual process, a mental process that blocks us from the experience that need not be rational at all. The true spiritual experience of the self transcends reason. It is not bound by the logical framework nor does it follow cause and effect. So how can we have concepts and still expect to overcome the

process? These concepts are not an aid to realization. Concepts are an obstacle or blockage to realization of the self. Concepts are an aid to understanding and not an aid to experience. Understanding has a very strange role in self-realization.

Once I was present at a very unusual meeting with a spiritual Master in India. Someone had come to him and asked, “Master, I have been reading all these books. Tell me, am I doing the right thing?” The Master replied, “Yes. Read all of the books that you have and then go and get some more books and read those also.” Later, I asked the Master why he had told the man to read more books. The Master told me that some people will never take the next step until they have exhausted their mind.

Intellect is such a thing in that it will not stop interfering in our path to self-discovery unless it can be brought to say, “I give up.” Therefore, go ahead and read, drive your intellect to such effort. Drive it against the wall and into a corner. When the intellect then says, “No more! This is beyond me. I can do no more.” Then one can take the next step. Then one can come back to the path of effortless love. Come back to the path of realization, that of being the self. The path of transformation requires no effort at all, but we will not accept the effortless way until we have found the futility of effort. The mind is so crafty

that we can bring to it any argument and it will respond with the element of effort until effort has been exhausted.

People hear of effortless meditation and say, “I am going to try very hard for effortless meditation.” That is what the mind does. We are going to chase the dog from the room, so we catch the dog by the tail. We begin to strike the dog with his own tail and expect the dog to run from us. Likewise, the very mind we are trying to overcome is the same one we employ to do it. Similarly, we add more bricks to the wall that we are trying to escape.

What are we doing? How can the mind help us to overcome the mind? It doesn’t happen that way—we must exhaust the mind. The spiritual path indicates to us that we must go through the process of the mind. We must first study, think, become confused, and struggle. Finally, we will just throw up our hands—but only when the mind gives up. Otherwise, the mind will never give up. It is when the mind gives up that the soul comes into its own. It is then that you find that you are not the mind, but someone else.

In this body, we have the entire universe, the entire creation. We carry it with us in the human body. The mind, the soul, and the Creator—everything is inside this body. But if we

identify our self with any one of these, then we fail to recognize our own reality. When we find that the body is not our self and we wish to discover the real self within, how do we check on this? What is the reality? One way, of course, is to kill the body and see what remains. This is the simplest way, but if we do this, we are not likely to come and tell anyone else of our discovery. Therefore, the second way is better and requires that we don't kill the body, but we simulate death. This method has been used in every path throughout the world. It is the experience of death while living. Saint Paul once said, "I die daily." Every tradition, every religion, and every discipline asks us to die while living if we wish to discover who we are, besides this body. We experience death while living by simulating death.

One of the great spiritual leaders from India, Raman Maharishi, got his entire spiritual wisdom and enlightenment when he was lying sick on his death bed. His attendant had gone shopping and left the swami alone. The swami, being only a simple man, thought to himself, "Oh, my God! I am going to die. There is nobody around even to give me a drink of water. What is going to happen to me?" The swami became very afraid, as he felt he would die alone. It then occurred to him, "Why am I afraid to die? After all, what can happen to me? Should I die, this body will become rigid." The swami then

stiffened out his arms and legs as in death. He then opened wide his eyes and stopped his breathing. He continued to think to himself, “My eyes will open wide at the time of my death. I will become rigid and my breathing will cease. Now, if this is what will happen to me, why then, am I speaking so loudly to myself in fear? Who is this who is speaking more loudly than before? I have simulated death and I have become more alive than ever before.” That was the beginning of his spiritual realization.

The consciousness that can assert its presence, even when we simulate death, must be something other than the body. Practitioners of meditation have refined this process even more. They tell us not only to simulate death in the body, but to do so by losing consciousness of the body. Go beyond the stiffening of the limbs. The Lord has given us a wonderful gift called human attention. Attention enables us to choose our experiences. This ability of ours, allows us to draw our attention to one thing and, thereby, withdraw the attention from something else. What will happen then, if we were to give our attention to our own self within and ignore the body? The attention would be withdrawn from the body and into our own true self. What would happen if we were to simulate that we were a conscious being within the body, but not inclusive of the body? If we gather our attention into that simulated self, the

conscious self, we will gradually become unaware of the body. At first, we will not know where the hands and feet have gone. Then our limbs and the body trunk will be gone from our awareness. Our entire body will cease to exist in our awareness and we will become very much more alive and conscious.

Try it out, anyone can do it. All of the practitioners of meditation do it, and it is called “dying while living.” You remain still very much alive, but unconscious of the body and, therefore, discover what you are besides a body. When you do this, you will find that your ability to see, taste, touch, and smell remains intact. This is because we have yet another body. You can walk about in this lighter body and talk, see, touch, taste, and smell without the physical body. All of the physical sense perceptions remain intact, even without the physical body.

When we allow the attention to return to the physical body, we find that we are experiencing these sights, smells, tastes, and touch because of this other body and not because of the physical body. The power of sense perception belongs to this other body, but since we are using the physical body, we then misidentify the capacity to perceive with the physical body. What a great discovery one can make merely by dying while living. When you find this other body, often called the sensory body or the astral body, you will wish to go further.

You will ask, “Is this astral body really me, or is there something even deeper beyond this discovery?” You have only to die while living in the astral body. Again, you simply withdraw your attention from the sensory perceptions of the astral body and place your attention onto the self within, the self that claims that these are my senses. When you withdraw attention to the core of that astral body, you will find that you can become completely unaware—unconscious of the astral systems and sensory systems. You will become completely unaware of the sensory perceptions and still hear, see, and grasp mentally all of these things.

You will find that the mind outlives even the sensory building. That means that the mental or causal body that causes this experience is even deeper than the astral level. There is no difference, really, between the mind and the causal body. The mind, when it encloses us, is called the causal body and, when it is applied and we don’t see the causal body, it is called the mind.

Now, what would happen if you were to allow the mind to die while the self remained conscious? If the self that is using the mind says, “Let me withdraw my attention from thoughts, from reasoning, and withdraw the attention to the self,” then you become unconscious of the mind. When, through this process of

deep meditation, you become unconscious of the mind, you will become more conscious of the self than ever before. For the first time, you realize that your consciousness was not dependent upon the mind, the senses, or the physical body. Anyone can do this, provided that you go in the right direction, the right path—within and not out ward.

If you continuously place your attention outside of yourself, how can you then have any of these experiences? The moment you reverse this direction to the right path, within yourself, you can have the experience of existence without the physical body. Then, by doing without the sensory body, you can be more alive than ever. And by doing without the mind, you can be ever more conscious than before. Then, for the first time, you have a legitimate claim - a right to say, “I know who I am. I was never the mind; I was never the body and the senses. I am the soul.”

However, when you come to this point and say, “I am the soul,” you are still not the total soul. Who is it that is claiming to be the soul? Someone is still asserting, still claiming as much as one would claim a body. You cannot be the soul, either, at this point. So now what is left for us to do? We have taken off all of the covers, all of the outer garments, and still there is something saying that it is the soul. Who is it that has the soul? What part

of consciousness is still left that is being deluded from the soul? The last unseen and subtle cover that keeps us separated from the true self is called the cover of individuation.

What makes us an individual soul, that is itself unreal? When this individuation, this individuality, is also removed by drawing attention to pure consciousness rather than individuated consciousness, you will then find that there was always but one consciousness—the total consciousness. There never were so many, but we have created the illusion of the many levels of consciousness to have the experience of a dramatic creation. It is immaterial what you call it, whether it be totality, God, or total Consciousness, there is only one, single, undivided, indivisible Consciousness. It is here that you have thrown aside the last of the illusions and found that everything that exists, everything that has been created is you, the self. It is only illusion that has created the walls between one another.

The question arises, if you were to have even a glimpse of this higher experience, do you think that you could remain the same person thereafter? Can you, after this experience, not love, laugh, and enjoy all of creation? Can you ever see any enemies around you after this experience? One of the mystics in India was once asked whom did he like and whom did he not like. He

answered, “How can I like or dislike anybody else, when there is no one else? Where is the other person?” The truth is that there is no one else. And when does this knowledge come to us? When consciousness of the human being, which is available to each of us right now, can transcend the covers which it thinks is the self. We will see this when we can rise to our own totality, our own reality, through these stages. When we can say that we are self-realized. Then we can see that there is no difference between the self and the Creator because there is but One. There were never two.

When I was very young and was taught the Way, the path to my father’s home, a strange philosophy was propounded. And that was: You are a soul, a drop from the ocean, separated from the ocean. Try hard to go back and merge with the ocean, which is your Father, full of love. I thought to myself, “Good grief! Today, I am a drop and I have a personality, an individuality, and I am supposed to go and merge with the ocean? It will make no difference to the ocean to have one more drop and I will lose everything I have. What kind of game is this? The spiritual path is no good. I should not lose all that belongs to me in merging with an ocean to whom it makes no difference or consequence.”

But I was wrong at that time, and those who believe that we are like drops of the ocean, separated from the ocean, are also wrong. They are wrong for the simple reason that if a single drop is taken from the ocean, the ocean is no longer a total ocean. If it is no longer a total ocean, it is no longer God. Do you realize that God is totality, with nothing missing or separated? If any part happens to escape, it not only destroys God but it destroys everything. It destroys totality. Therefore, as I grew up and better understood the path, I found that it is true that I am a drop. I am a drop in the ocean, but I have never left the ocean. The truth is that I am a drop of consciousness in the ocean of total consciousness, but I have never left the ocean. And what did I leave? I left only the awareness of being the ocean. See now what happens? If I am already in the ocean as a drop of that ocean, and the spiritual path takes me back into my awareness, I become one with the ocean. The drop enlarges its personality to its truth or totality which is the total ocean. When I learned this, it immediately made sense.

Go and look at the ocean and see if it is anything but drops. Are they not drops all placed together? How big are the drops? Are they not as big as your awareness will make them? Look at them as tiny drops and they will be tiny. Look at them as big drops and they will become bigger. They become larger and

New Age – Old Path

larger and become one entire drop. The whole ocean becomes but one large drop. It is the awareness, the expansion of awareness, the realization of the totality that gives you the truth. Therefore, the spiritual path is not a path that takes you anywhere else but into your own totality. And as you leave the illusion of your covers one by one, you discover the truth.

Large numbers of people are coming to me today with invitations to come to new organizations related to New Age movements. They say I have brought them a message for the New Age, but actually it's an old message in a new package, a new container. Call it the New Age, if you will, but it is the same path and the same message. Every age needs it, and the New Age needs it more than ever before. We have reached the brink of being overwhelmed by the mind. The mind likes analysis, and analysis means a breaking down, and breaking down means violence. The soul likes synthesis and peace and oneness. The New Age needs the Old Path more than ever before. I hope that anyone of us who is given attention by the New Age will rejoice in the fact that the turn of the century will see a real New Age, when we give up the pursuit of the mind and return to our own souls. And we will then, through the totality of our own souls, know everlasting love, joy, beauty and happiness.

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