

GOD, MAN AND THE UNIVERSE

Path to The Real Self – Chapter 3

Mankind has for a considerable time debated the question as to whether God is personal or impersonal, spontaneous consciousness or law and principle. Man always tends to an either/or attitude. The truth is that God is both. But when I say personal, this does not mean personality. God is not a person, residing in a certain place, but is highly personal and can be experienced as such. The only place God can be experienced as personal is within the self. The only place God can be looked for and found is within, no other place. God can be deduced outside the self through the beauty of creation, through the manifestations of nature, through the wisdom collected in philosophy and science. But such observations are an experience of God only when He is experienced first within.

An inner experience of reality is possible only when obstructions, false ideas and emotional deviations are removed; when the self is fearlessly faced in utter candor, and when man no longer avoids and escapes from himself. Since God is truth, untruthful ideas prevent man from experiencing Him. When man doubts the existence of God, but is afraid to admit such doubt, this denial of what happens to be true for him at the moment—his doubt—stands more in the way of an inner experience of the ultimate truth than the doubt itself. Man has been made to feel so guilty about such doubts that he either denies them, thus being untruthful with himself, or he acts in defiance, thus robbing himself of the possibility of finding the truth about the existence of God within himself.

Before considering the nature of God, as man can experience Him, it will be necessary to clear away false acceptance and belief. Do not declare “there is,” due to false guilt and a misplaced sense of duty. And do not declare “there is not” when still deeply involved with confusion within yourself. To say “I do not know,” or “I am partly in doubt and partly I believe,” without guilt and defiance, is good, when this is the truth of the momentary mental, emotional and spiritual state of your being. Such an attitude will make you more receptive and less strained. It eventually brings you nearer to an inner experience of the Infinite Intelligence.

Before an inner experience can take place, it is necessary that a truthful concept exist about the nature of the experience. An untruthful concept closes the door. Ignorance of the possibility of any experience also prevents it. This truthful concept should be held lightly, without fanaticism or rigidity, even if it seems to conform with some of your deeply felt convictions. If your convictions are contrary to this concept, try to keep an open mind in spite of it.

In order to give you such a concept, I shall speak of the nature of God, creation, the universe and man's relationship to God—at least as far as it is possible to convey this greatest of all experiences in the limited medium of human language.

It is the greatest of all experiences because it contains ALL desirable experiences. It is not either the experience of the Infinite or another human possibility for joy, for pleasure, for constructive self-expression. There is no limiting choice.

The universe is a unity of which man is an organic part. To experience God is to realize oneself as an integral part of this unity. Man's present inner state of development only allows him to experience God under the dual aspects of spontaneous consciousness and automatic law. In actuality this is an interacting unity.

The aspect of spontaneous consciousness is active principle. It is the life force which creates, it is potent energy. This life force permeates the entire creation and all creatures. It can be used by all conscious living beings.

The aspect of automatic law is the passive principle, is the life substance, which the creative principle plays upon.

These two aspects, together, are necessary to create. They form the conditions of creation and apply to every form of creation, whether it be the universe or a simple little gadget.

We shall now go into more detail about these two aspects, how they interact, and how they apply to man. Both these aspects are intelligent, purposeful and tremendously powerful, each in its own particular way. Man only utilizes a small fraction of these powers. For the most part they work without him being aware of them, or without understanding

that these vast, potent powers are operating. We shall return later to man and his potentiality for using these powers deliberately and constructively.

When speaking of God, it is important to understand that all divine aspects are duplicated in man, who lives and has his being in the same conditions, principles and laws as those pertaining to Cosmic Intelligence. They are both the same in essence, differentiated only by a question of degree. Self-realization then means activating the maximum potential of God in oneself.

God, as deliberate, spontaneous, directing intelligence, does not act for man, but through him, since He is in him. It is very important that man understand this subtle, but decisive difference. When man has an erroneous approach to God in this respect, he vaguely expects God to act for him, resents the inevitable disappointment and, subsequently, concludes that there is no Creator. We shall go more thoroughly into false concepts of God, and the consequences of such misconceptions in the individual's life. If man could contact an outer deity, he could logically expect it to act for him. Waiting for responses outside himself means focusing into the wrong direction. When God is contacted within the self, responses must come and, what is more, they will be noticed and understood. Such manifestations of God's presence within the self demonstrate God's personal aspect. They demonstrate active, deliberate, directing intelligence, forever changing and fresh, adapted in infinite wisdom to any situation. They express the Spirit of God manifesting through the spirit of man.

The reason man is hesitant about looking for God within himself is his lack of trust in himself. How can an individual, who deeply distrusts himself, look for a source of higher wisdom within? This lack of self-trust must make man either look outside himself, or negate altogether and look no place for any higher source of guidance and inspiration. Hence, man must first learn to trust himself, to like and believe in himself, before he can look within and find God. Self-trust and trust in God are therefore inseparable. But this does not mean that they are the same. Their difference lies between the outer little self, and the inner real self—so seldom fully activated. The latter is the part of God which personalizes itself in man.

The impersonal aspect of God manifests as law. This comprises all mental, psychological and spiritual, as well as physical law. Man's approach to the latter is entirely different from his approach to the former. It would never occur to an intelligent human being to expect the law of gravity, for instance, to change for him, to make an exception in his case because he happened to have ignored or forgotten its existence. He may regret the consequences of such neglect or ignorance, but he is reconciled to the law's inexorable working. Consequently, he learns to understand its nature, he adapts to it and, therefore, he becomes master over it. The law begins to work for him the moment he accepts its unchangeable nature. It works against him when he fights it. Man's spectacular advances in science and technology are a proof and a result of this attitude. The attitude is one of humility in relation to these laws. He tries to understand them and accepts their immutability.

However, man fails to recognize that mental, psychological or spiritual laws are equally immutable and operate on identical impersonal principles. If man's approach to the spiritual aspect of creation were similar to that of his approach to the physical aspect of creation, he would become master over his life. Man assumes, often unconsciously and without putting it in so many words, that a personality reigns over him who is supposed to exempt him from the consequences of his inadvertently misusing the laws of the spirit because "he means no harm." This attitude prevents man from making use of these universal forces constructively. As with physical law, the consequences of ignorance or abuse are enslavement.

When man learns to know himself, he must eventually discover the reality of these laws, provided he goes far enough. He will then recognize that his thoughts, feelings and attitudes are the active forces which influence the operation of these laws. No book can convince him of their power, no teacher can, other than helping him toward an awareness of himself and, consequently, an awareness of the universal powers available for his use. This path helps and guides towards this self-realization, in this deepest possible sense. When the layers of fear, guilt, self-rejection, needless inadequacy (imagined and real) and wrong ideas are exposed, understood and eliminated, man is ready to

discover both divine aspects within himself: the presence of God as spontaneous intelligence in, or as, his real self; and the power of the laws, in their immutable, inexorable perfection. Man is then spiritually mature. He constantly expresses both divine aspects through himself.

The entire universe is permeated and enveloped by this tremendous power which I call the life force. It is the origin and essence of all other forces, powers, energies, for it is the origin of all life. This life force affects the life substance, which contains all law, with its own automatically functioning intelligence. This life substance is also a reservoir of power—at first, unused and unformed, but ever ready to respond. The primary substance is molded into form by the power of directive mind. This substance is self-generating, producing more life stuff and more energy. It is a continuum in itself. Will and consciousness impress and mold this substance. The substance permeates the entire universe, including man. The sum total of his being, all that he is and thinks, feels and wills, whether he knows it or not, constantly influences this substance and molds his life.

Since most people are not aware of what goes on in them, what they feel and think, and why, they mold their fate without knowing that they do so, attributing it to a preordained destiny or to coincidence. When man discovers himself and, consequently, the role he plays in creating his fate, he truly comes into his own. He is no longer driven, but master of his life. He is no longer bound by forces he does not understand, but he deliberately uses these powers in the most constructive way, expresses more of the best in him, expands to ever greater potentials, adds more to life and, therefore, derives more from it.

When we speak of mastery over life, it must be clearly understood that tight self-will, inflexible insistence and inability to relinquish are not meant at all. In fact, these very traits must be abandoned before true master over self, therefore over life, can come. Inflexible self-will and tight greed are the distortion and misunderstanding of what the psyche senses and yearns for, mastery over life and the limitless abundance of all good things. The little will must be given up before the greater, inner will can manifest. But more of this later.

Man must discover this power and freedom to master his life by himself. If life forced man into his true birthright—for the purpose of

saving him from unnecessary suffering—he would never be a free creature. The very meaning of freedom implies that no force can be used, not even for good or desirable results. What man discovers, as the greatest of all discoveries on the road of his evolution, would be meaningless if he were compelled to it. The discovery of those powers must be left to each individual, when he chooses to turn in the direction that will finally yield true freedom and power. Self-discovery—first on a mundane, so-called psychological level—when followed through must lead to the realization that man is master over the universe, to the exact degree that he masters himself. This self-mastery depends on a thorough knowledge of himself and on the depth and width of the concepts his mind is capable of embracing. When man follows an intense path of self-realization, he must find that each self IS a universe to himself. The beginning of this path is 1) self-knowledge and self-acceptance; 2) a realistic concept and understanding of certain universal processes. The better the individual knows himself, the more he finds these concepts confirmed as living reality within himself.

When man tries to limit God into a circumference of human shape, he loses himself in a completely erroneous concept. As long as he thinks this way, he cannot truly find God. When it is said that man is made in the image of God, it is not meant that God has a limited circumference and is a replica of man. What is meant is that man possesses all divine attributes, that he carries, deep within the center of his very being, a kernel, consisting of identical “material” and forces. When man finds this center, he truly becomes a god and participates in the creative evolutionary process. These divine attributes are direct expressions of the Creator. Man harbors the identical divine “substance” within himself, the substance which permeates the whole universe, in free floating energy. The vast life force is at his constant disposal. When man awakens, he finds these powers. He begins to deliberately use them, instead of inadvertently and unknowingly. He finds that he was all along constantly surrounded and permeated by powers of such love, purpose, intelligence and meaningfulness, that no words can describe them. He discovers that they are his to use, that they can be used to create infinite beauty and bliss. To some degree, this same power exists in all living things. Hence, it is true that God has form—through the living beings expressing Him.

When man understands that he expresses God, the possibility of God, the potential of Him, he must regard himself, and all other creatures, in a new light. In order to attain such understanding, he must first uncover how the creative processes have produced his suffering by dint of his ignorance and the consequent abuse of these powers. When he completely understands cause and effect in his own life, thereby being capable of eliminating the cause of suffering, he is finally on the threshold of spiritual selfhood. He is then capable of making conscious, deliberate use of the creative powers at his disposal.

These processes work in an utterly impersonal way. The life substance responds whether it be impressed with correct or incorrect conclusions, favorable or unfavorable ideas, constructive or destructive goals which bring pleasure or pain. This substance is very malleable and fertile. It contains highly powered energies, a sweeping current of force, which is the essence of life itself. Out of it are fashioned the worlds, planets, stellar systems, all that lives and moves, from mineral to man. Ideas take fruition in the life substance, vitalized by the life force. And, since man is created in the image of God, he, too, must create. He constantly does so, whether he knows it or not. He creates his life, his fate, his experience. Every thought, every reaction, every emotion, every response, every intent, every action, every opinion, every motivation, are creative processes. When man is torn in contraction and conflicts, in mutually exclusive motivations, when he fluctuates between automatic blind reflexes and deliberate action, the sum total of all this is his creation.

Every self-conscious being uses the life substance and its inherent life force, creating and molding form, experience and manifest life. Life organism which has not yet attained self-consciousness in the evolutionary process—a plant or animal, for instance—IS part of the Divine Principle, functioning as law. Active principle, or the Divine Spirit, is still unawakened, even in the highest developed animal.

The life force contains all the powers necessary to activate the organic growth of any organism—physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. Every law, principle and requirement to unfold the original idea, and bring it to fruition, is activated by this sweeping force. Ideas, intent, thoughts, will, feelings, attitudes and motives are the greatest

forces in the universe. This means that the power of the spirit is superior to all other energies and forces. If this power is understood and used according to its inherent law, it supersedes ALL other manifestations of power. No so-called physical power can be as strong as the power of the spirit. Since man is spirit and intelligence, he is inherently capable of directing all automatic, blind law. Through this potential of his, he truly experiences God. Through this potential it is proven that man is created in the image of God.

When man has discovered all this, life no longer controls and enslaves him (as he had falsely assumed). It has seemed to have done so only due to his not knowing of the power at his disposal. Using this power must not be confused with a blind power drive. It is a relaxed, flexible, harmonious awareness of strength, power and influence. There is nothing strained about it, nothing has to be proven, no one is harmed, and no fear of the opposite need make the desired goal a desperate drive.

The life force activates growing and healing elements which nature has provided in incredible abundance and generosity, for every detail imaginable. It is directed toward wholeness, growth, health, productivity, fulfillment, pleasure supreme. False concepts and ignorance divert this same powerful stream into the wrong channels, upsetting balance and harmony. When the flow congests, a blockage occurs. If the pure beneficial waters of a river are clogged up through blockage, what was meant to be a blessing will create disturbance, either in the form of swelling waters bursting the dam and flooding the land, or by stagnating waters with resultant germs. When the blockage is removed, the waters will take their natural course again and the effects of the disturbance will wear off. It is the same with man's inner life, so intimately linked with the great River of Life.

You, who follow this path, will convince yourself of these facts. This experience cannot come through theorizing and mental deliberation alone. The mental work involved plays a comparatively small role. It merely sets an inner process in motion through the formulation of productive thoughts and intent, through preparing the appropriate inner climate by conceiving of these processes as they actually are. What really counts is an inner act, a commitment, as it were. When you

deliberately contact and request your higher self, which contains all divine aspects, for guidance and inspiration, and when you experience the results again and again, so that no longer any doubt about possible coincidence of such demonstrations can remain, you will have directly experienced the power of your faculties, when deliberately used. You will see how close and immediately accessible the Infinite Intelligence is. And when you discover, after some serious effort in this work, with what painstaking exactitude your ideas produce commensurate results and effects in your life (not only conscious ideas, of course), you will gain a glimpse of the tremendous power at your disposal. You will experience as a fact, not as a theory, the plasticity and responsiveness of the life substance. Its impersonal nature will no longer frighten you, but be reassuring, when you understand the interaction between your mind, your entire consciousness, the personal God, manifesting through you in intelligent inspiration, and the impersonal aspect of God, incorporated in perfectly functioning law contained in the life substance surrounding all living organisms.

All potentials of creation exist in the as yet unformed life substance. Spirit, or mind, or spontaneous intelligence, bring these potentials into form. The law takes its inexorable course, according to the mold created for it by intelligence, by active, willing mind. This can happen through deliberate action and will, according to knowing truth, knowing reality, knowing the possibilities of unfoldment and expression of life. Or, it can happen through the undeliberate, unintentional, inadvertent, unknowing effects the personality has on the life substance. When a personality is blindly immersed in confusions and inner conflicts, he does not understand how he molds his emotions and attitudes into the life substance. The effect is automatic.

The life substance, the passive aspect of the cosmic principle also has, as mentioned, intelligence in its inbuilt laws, but this is not an independent intelligence; it has no spontaneity, no power to decide. Once set in motion, through directive intelligence, it performs in absolute perfection. It is faultless within its own framework. For example, the laws and intelligence by which the growth of a seed proceeds into a flower cannot be matched by the human brain. The fine tissue it brings forth in the leaf of the flower, the essence of its texture,

its scent, its beauty, the purposefulness of every detail comprising it, surpass human understanding. And yet, the human mind has the power to influence all existing laws of nature the moment it thoroughly understands them. The logical sequence of the innate intelligence at work within the impersonal life substance is matchless in perfection and cannot be altered, unless a superior spiritual power—the power of consciousness—directs the impersonal intelligence into new channels. This can be done deliberately only when the forces at work are profoundly understood.

This understanding must do away with man's complaint that God "allows all the suffering." If God were to interfere, man would not be made in the image of God: namely, he would not be a free creature. He could not be intrinsically and essentially divine, which means freedom, selfhood and the power to participate in the creative, evolutionary process, and, at the same time, be a dependent object over whom it is disposed, ordained and who is forced into any direction. How could he be a controlled marionette and yet be what he is—a free creature? All the suffering in the world is preferable to the state of enslavement implicit in the idea that man can be forcefully prevented from suffering. If control over him could be exerted for the prevention of his own errors, man would eternally remain a helpless, even if well treated, slave. Even when the master is utterly benign, such a state is hardly desirable. Temporary suffering exists only as long as false ideas exist. They are a result of man's choice of his thoughts, beliefs and convictions. Even if what he believes in is good, from a moral point of view, if it contains limitations, false ideas about the virtue and necessity of suffering, then suffering must be the result. His being forbidden false ideas would be so utterly foreign to the nature of creation that this trend of thinking cannot even be logically followed through. It is senseless in itself and only seems to make sense in an entirely distorted God concept; in a dualistic concept of life, in which life is one thing and man another.

When man comes upon this truth in the course of his evolution, the joy of finding himself free, as the creator of his fate, makes whatever suffering has been entailed in the process unimportant compared to this freedom.

In order to truly understand the meaning of free will, the law of cause and effect has to be observed and experienced in one's personal life. Few people do so, therefore few people are aware of the wide range of free will. Most individuals concede some measure of free will, but believe it to be limited by fate, or coincidence, or the arbitrariness of others. Direct and visible links between cause and effect make free will obvious. Where these links are once, or several times, removed and free will works by remote control, as it were, it is no longer immediately discernible. When the small child overeats and becomes sick a few hours later, it is incapable of connecting cause and effect. Most adult individuals find themselves in a similar position as to the cause of their suffering. When going deeply into the psyche and discovering, perhaps on a hitherto unobserved level of consciousness, a will to be sick, frantic fear of sickness, and finally sickness itself, become understandable. Or, a persistent frustration and unfulfillment in a specific area, for which there seems no other explanation than "bad luck," may prove to be a result of unconscious convictions, prohibiting the desired fulfillment. The prohibition induces the individual to behave in such a way as to make the fulfillment impossible. This may be so subtle that he himself is utterly unaware of it, but the negative, fearful emotions he emanates, the unfree, defensive ways of behaving, affect others as surely as the most overt act of rejection. Once power of observation and discernment is sufficiently developed by the desire and courage to be truthful with oneself, these links between cause and effect will become very obvious.

This is not a simple, easy matter. It requires painstaking, patient work, perseverance and the ability to look at facets one may never have noticed. When one finally succeeds, it gives an entirely new outlook on life. At first, certain manifestations in one's life may appear to be completely disconnected from any personal, inner beliefs, concepts, destructive mechanisms, defenses and negative emotions. A connection may appear to be so far fetched that an individual will shy away from even attempting such a search. One should go about it gradually and begin by establishing those connections that are easiest to observe. The following lectures will give the necessary specific help.

There comes a point on this path, after uncovering unconscious “reasoning processes” of a destructive nature, when one fears his own unconscious mind. First, man fears life, others, fate and circumstances beyond his control. Then, having advanced to a certain point on a path of self-realization, he finds that all undesirable facets in his life are caused by his unconscious thoughts, motivations and fears, so he begins consciously to fear the “strange creature” dwelling within. He has, at this point, recognized the truth that he is being motivated by unconscious emotions, but he is still not sufficiently in possession of himself to influence them. He is exerting a wrong kind of control, namely, repression, denial, superimposition, escape. This has only driven undesirable emotions underground, with the effect of creating the results in his life he had ascribed to outside factors of poor luck, etc. He begins to understand that this kind of “control” (denial, repression, rigid discipline, self-deception) does not work. He now knows that by imposing his will and rational knowledge over these heretofore hidden aspects, he only drives them underground again, so he is afraid of his unconscious mind.

It is better to be afraid of his own unconscious emotions than of circumstances outside the self, for one is then nearer to reaching selfhood. The moment man can bring undesirable experience home to himself he is a step nearer to producing positive experience. When he becomes aware of negative emotions and attitudes without total self-rejection and without compulsion to act upon them, he has almost reached the point when he becomes capable of changing damaging emotions and attitudes into constructive ones. Hence, as surely as day must follow night, desirable experience must come into being. This works with unfailing exactitude. Of course, it does not suffice to superficially accept these new, more truthful and constructive thoughts and feelings. It is necessary to accept them totally, to commit the self to them. When this is not yet possible, the calm recognition of one’s inability to do so brings the personality nearer to this total commitment than a forceful striving and fearful denial of the temporary inability.

The new freedom and selfhood, resulting from such growth, prove the greatness of creation, its generosity and the possibility for all creatures to share in the continuous process of creation. A profound experience of the law of cause and effect, through self-understanding, opens the universe and makes it accessible, with all its powers and beauties, with all its harmony and perfection. Then, God is no longer a remote “figure,” or a concept to theorize about, but an immediate reality.

Experience of bliss, perfection, harmony and dynamic self-expression need not wait for a life in the hereafter. All of it can be discovered right here and now. To the extent that he removes levels of pretense, repression and illusion, man approaches the ultimate bliss religions talk about. But they usually talk about it as though it could only be experienced after physical death has occurred and as a result of sacrificing what is supposed to be “worldly happiness.” The concept of “holiness” conveyed is usually so unattractive that the vague promises for an uncertain future do not warrant giving up what often seems more desirable.

Bliss is a result of finding God, but finding God does not come about through a moralistic adherence to strict codes and rules which one is supposed to accept in slavish obedience. Finding God is the greatest freedom there is. God is found in the degree the self is found, for God dwells within the self—the final, real self IS God. When the real self has become a living reality, creation must be understood. Reality and divine law are one. Reality and love are one. Deviating from reality creates illusion, fear and hate. Since love is reality, and love and reality bring bliss, the suffering accruing from illusion and non-love can only be temporary. Although the suffering is not illusory in its effect on the person who experiences it, it is the result of illusion, and therefore it can have no permanent substance. When this is profoundly understood, there is no more room for fear in the human heart.

Suffering is not punishment, but the result of illusory concepts—concepts of suffering. By the same token happiness is not reward, but the result of truthful concepts—concepts of happiness. Divine law is made in such a wonderful way that suffering cannot possibly be the ultimate fate. The ultimate fate of every creature can only be in keeping with ultimate reality. Deviation from truth must finally defeat itself, so that the deviator is bound to discover, at some point of his evolution, what the truth is.

Let us take a simple example. When a person falsely believes that cruelty and toughness are more advantageous than decency and integrity, this misconception might, for a limited time, appear to be true. But this only appears to be so when one has a very short-sighted view. Others are bound to dislike and reject this individual and, at first, he may not wish to connect cause and effect. He may try to convince himself that this occurs for other reasons. However, when he is sufficiently isolated and unhappy, sooner or later, there comes a phase in his evolutionary ascent when he can no longer avoid looking at the cause. Although he may argue, at first, that the dislike he engenders justifies his ruthlessness, he cannot possibly remain blind forever. This will confront him with the decision as to whether his cruelty and ruthlessness are worth the result he encounters. This example is a simplified illustration of the law of cause and effect, and it shows that man has a choice of avoiding unnecessary suffering if he wants to see the truth in himself. However, in this context, the example primarily serves to illustrate that, even if an individual refuses candor with himself, his very suffering must bring him out of illusion. If he had not been free to experience suffering—the effect of his misconceptions—he would have to forfeit the greater freedom of truly being the creator of his own life.

This same principle exists throughout all divine law. Evil is illusion in the sense that there is no purpose to evil, it exists through misunderstanding. It is not necessary, has no advantages and is therefore eventually given up. It has no substance of its own, but is merely an inversion of the divine law and the power, contained in the life force. The same power can work in many directions. The direction is set by consciousness. The choice of setting the direction of the powers can be made according to reality or illusion. However, the operation of the law is such that the undesirability of the results of illusion inevitably brings the individual to eventually change the direction of the power in accordance with reality.

The argument may be advanced that many people obviously terminate a life span without understanding any of this. Life beyond physical existence is a doubtful proposition for many. For those who can accept the theory of life beyond death, continuity of development will seem logical. Many assume that the mere fact of shedding the physical body brings automatic perfection—or doom. They believe that a drastic change in consciousness takes place through the shedding of the body. This is not so. I say that physical existence is the expression of a certain state of consciousness and must re-occur again and again until the state of consciousness has been increased and raised sufficiently to open a further dimension of being. When death and suffering are no longer an accepted inevitable fact, when the individual is no longer bound by the duality of two opposite alternatives, the narrow confines of physical matter must recede. A new form of expression of the spirit is created through this raised consciousness.

The transition from helplessness, when one is apparently the victim of fate, to the discovery of the deeper meaning of cause and effect, is a crucial high point on the road of evolution. Searching the self, which brings understanding of creation, is also a cause which sets new effects in motion. No thought can be thought, no emotion felt, no opinion held, no activity undertaken, without setting effects in motion. The entire conscious and unconscious being is a cause.

These are not new theories. They have been proclaimed by all spiritually awake and aware people, but they are rarely understood in their full impact and significance. As long as man thinks of God as a force outside himself, he cannot possibly realize and experience Him. God is an immediate inner presence, waiting to be contacted. He is not in the least remote, nor confined to a particular place. Contact with God is not possible by the means so often vaguely imagined, by the moralistic, obedient, weak, begging attitude of the little child, imploring and placating a severe authority. This is a widespread emotional attitude in regard to man's relationship to God. Part of this attitude is that one can approach this remote authority only with "holy" matters. These "holy" matters often have nothing to do with the many issues of every-day living, which are deemed too small to bring to God. In truth, there is nothing, no matter how insignificant it may appear, that is "worldly," as opposed to "spiritual," for whatever elicits reactions, feelings, thoughts and concepts affects the self, others and the cosmic forces around and within man. There is no division between worldly and spiritual matters, as there is no division between the real self and God. The concept of declaring the body to be the enemy of the spirit is one of the greatest and most harmful misunderstandings which has widened the chasm of conflict within man and is responsible for great disunity. Every manifestation of life, every expression of self, of feeling, of joy, of happiness, of pleasure, furthers growth, provided it does not damage or destroy or hurt. Hence, it is spiritual, and in harmony with the life principle, no matter what it is.

Of course, man is often still so deeply immersed in illusion, and the thus resulting duality, that every alternative available to him—in certain instances, at least—seems to be detrimental for some concerned. Until he finds the way out of this trap, he simply has to do the best he can. Self-responsibility and integrity will not automatically choose the way that is most pleasant for the self, but will try to consider all alternatives in fairness. On the other hand, automatic self-denial is not the answer either. There is one rule in these matters, and that is that there is no rule. Each issue has to be weighed and profoundly considered separately, regardless of public opinion, for its own sake. We shall discuss this topic in greater detail later.

Every living creature possesses the same elements as the great creative principle. The wisdom contained in it can be contacted always within the self. The blade of grass constantly contacts it, although unknowingly. Man must learn to contact it knowingly. But, as the blade of grass cannot contact it outside itself, neither can man. We shall devote a separate lecture to the subject of establishing this contact.

At least some general concepts of the vastness of the creative Spirit is helpful. Let us imagine an intelligence containing the entire knowledge existing on earth in every field; the inventor of all there is, not only of what man has laboriously found, but all that mankind is yet to discover. Such a thought defies the imagination. Add to this that infinitely greater laws and principles exist which man cannot possibly comprehend as long as he remains in his present form, expressing his present state of consciousness. All these laws and principles dovetail in the most magnificent manner and result in one comprehensive whole—the unity which is creation. Think of the marvel of the living cell, the organism with all its parts, the life flowing through the organism—the leaf, flower, the human skin, movement and consciousness. Think of the stellar systems and their rhythms. The foresight and purposefulness of the minutest detail in the human body is duplicated and surpassed by the foresight and purposefulness of the totality of creation.

Yet, man is not a little, insignificant speck in comparison with this vast, all-embracing giant intelligence, this love, this joyful squandering of abundant beauty and blissful experience, of unimaginable wisdom and creative genius. He, too, contains elements of these aspects.

The more he opens his soul to the universe, the more he reaches out for comprehension in this area and sheds separateness, fear, ignorance, distrust and imbalance, the more of this tremendous power he can realize through the vehicle of his personality. He and God are truly one. This is not a figure of speech, connoting compatibility and love between two separate individuals. It is to be taken literally. God is in man and man is of God, man expresses as much of God as he is willing, desirous, open and capable of understanding at any given phase of his development. When this truth is finally understood, man has come into his own. He will never be the same as before, and yet he will be more himself than he ever was before. He need not fear that he will have a new demeanor, dramatic and strange. Those around him may never even know of a change, unless they are intuitive and open to a subtle difference, expressing a greater peace, integrity and integration. After this awakening, man will never walk alone again.

And since God is man and man is God, God can only be found when man finds himself. This eliminates a frequent and typical conflict, which is the result of a misconception concerning God. When man leans on God in order to escape from himself, he does not wish mature self-responsibility. The God he finds in this case is a false God, outside of himself. When man is ready to stand on his own feet, he may, temporarily, have to stand alone while he abandons the false God who is supposed to be responsible for him. When he has succeeded in this and becomes responsible for himself—in the deepest possible sense—he can discover the real God—within himself. This is a curve in the cycle of development.

As mentioned before, all this is not new. No truth can ever be new. But knowing the truth superficially in the outer regions of intellect, and experiencing a truth so that it can be lived, are worlds apart. A path of thorough self-confrontation in which one practices utter candor with oneself, opens channels to the higher self through which one can realize its divine potential. No one need be afraid that this means renouncing the world. This is a complete misunderstanding of the true meaning of spiritual living. Spiritual living means a heightening of all experience, so-called worldly or not. It means greater capacity for all pleasure, greater balance and harmony, more security and confidence in the self, and greater capacity for coping with all situations. It means more dynamic vitality, a deeper sense of being alive, a greater flavor in life in every possible expression and facet of living. It means constant growing and making the best of all one's inherent capacities. It means that each and every situation one finds oneself in contains a deep meaningfulness, conveys a deeper sense of unity with the whole, yet does not diminish or lessen uniqueness of one's own individuality—on the contrary. The more keenly one feels part of the whole, the more one is united with the universe, the more the sense of one's own individuality is heightened.

Where the psyche is comparatively free from serious obstructions, from deeply rooted misconceptions, these words (heard or read) will make an instant impression; an echo will be evoked and accepting them will be easy and natural. In fact, it will be as though the soul has hungered for them all along, and finally the hunger has been satisfied. Acceptance of truth affects health, strength and vigor; thoughts change; concepts are reoriented; the mind begins to stretch, to question old, stale and often obsolete ideas; feelings purify; the will becomes stronger and more relaxed; thoughts are clearer and more concise. They become more creative. The ideas expressed here will form independently, perhaps from different angles. They will become the self's creative discovery and be experienced from within. One's role in life clarifies and one's sense of security increases. It will be comparatively simple for these individuals to change in response to these lectures which give guidance for proper meditation and thought formation.

But where severe and deeply engraved misconceptions have distorted the free flow of the life force, words of truth can only be an incentive for the necessary search into the depths of one's being, so as to find what is responsible for a life that leaves many desires unfulfilled.

The beauty and truth of creation is that the final reality is bliss, pleasure supreme and fulfillment without satiety. This happiness is easy, without struggle or fear of losing it again. The tragedy of man is that he so arduously struggles against happiness by fearing truth and holding on to misconception. He also actually fears happiness—its consequences and apparent obligations.

Once it is discovered that heretofore unconscious forces fear and resist happiness, thus making the conscious struggle for happiness all the more painful and tense, it will be clear that the self alone creates strife and suffering—not God, nor an unkind fate, nor even other people. The consequences of such a realization are, needless to emphasize, far reaching. Such a realization not only opens the door that kept particular fulfillment away, it also opens a channel to the source of the inner self, which is constantly in touch with cosmic reality, with the life force, with God. This means a life fully lived, fulfilled in all areas. It means steady growth and rich life experience. It means dynamic peace and stimulating, vibrant awareness of all that comes to pass. It means the ability to approach unhappy events with a more constructive attitude, learning from them, growing by them, until the personal involvement and connection with them is understood in such a profound way that the causes for these unhappy experiences finally dissolve.

As confidence in the self grows, as a result of making difficulties constructive steppingstones, fear of not being able to meet life fully ceases. The knowledge is constantly being confirmed that whatever arises in life is the product of oneself. It is an outgrowth of the self, therefore nothing can happen that the self cannot cope with. If it can produce the cause, it is capable of handling the effect.

This path of self-confrontation and self-realization teaches what is necessary and points out the direction to take. It shows how to meet one's own obstructions, the mental attitude most productive in encountering self-produced misery, and how to face, accept and change the self, so as to become more truly oneself. Out of this arises awareness of the Creator, of creation and of man's relationship to the universal process.

When I say that final reality is happiness, this means that only what is indestructible is real. There is, of course, temporary reality, but it is not of infinite duration. It is bound to dissolve again. This is demonstrated by the following fact: when he holds a wrong conclusion, man may be deeply convinced of its accuracy. The belief in it influences his actions, thoughts and emotional reactions, with the result of creating further effects—all based on the original misconception. These effects become reality at the moment. They are experienced as facts, although they have arisen from a wrong conclusion. However, the truthful idea can never be extinguished. It is forever available and ready to unfold itself, the moment conscious intelligence considers its possibility and reaches for it. Truth can only be covered by untruth, it cannot be eliminated by it. The moment truth is known, untruth disappears—with all its effects. It is like the clouds covering the sun. These clouds seem so dense that their effect blots out the rays of the sun, but the sun remains solid behind them, no matter how thick the clouds are. It is the same with the truth and untruth. The latter is no more than thick fog or clouds which eventually must dissolve. Evil, suffering, unhappiness, confusion, illness and strife of any kind are results of untruthful ideas. They do not, cannot destroy the truth and reality behind, as it were, whose results are happiness, fulfillment, health, productivity, well being, meaningfulness and growth.

Take any example of a wrong idea. Watch how it leads you from assumption to subtle inner attitude, to overt actions. Does the thus resulting reality situation eliminate the truthful idea, as opposed to the false one? Certainly not. It quietly exists, waiting to be found. As soon as this happens, an entirely new climate exists and the results of the untruthful idea begin to disappear. It is the same with God. God is reality and truth, love and beauty—all things that make life worth living. God is not forbidding, punishing, depriving. We shall discuss man's distorted (often unconscious) concepts of God. We are concerned with dispersing the clouds of untruth, and with uncovering the light of truth. The clouds are the result of misconceptions and distortions which have to be faced and properly understood. Through this understanding the real self is uncovered and can take over, in full possession and control of the individual and his life processes.