

SPIRIT AND LIFE THE FOUR GOSPELS FOR AWAKENING

A PRACTICAL COMMENTARY ON THE
LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF JESUS CHRIST

VOLUME 2
THE WAY OF LIBERATION

“The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.”

(John 6:63)

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PREFACE

This is not a commentary on the four Gospels individually, but on a harmony of the Gospels: one continuous narrative as found in *A Harmony of the Gospels For Students of the Life of Christ* by A. T. Robertson (published by Harper and Row).

To me, the text commented on here is not a mere biography but a spiritual revelation consisting of both the life and the teachings of Jesus. Naturally, as someone who has a background in both Christianity and Hinduism (Sanatana Dharma), my analysis is a synthesis of western and eastern perspectives which I believe that Jesus himself possessed as I have explained in my book *The Christ of India*. (Which I am pleased to say has been publicly endorsed and recommended by the Shankaracharya of Puri–Govardan Math.)

INTRODUCTION

When studying the Gospels we have to keep in mind these four things:

1) We are only being given fragments of Jesus' teaching, fragments that seemed the most significant to the authors, but nonetheless only fragments. Because books had to be handwritten, and because the original Christians were vegetarians and would not use animal skins (parchment) that could be made into long scrolls, but rather only used papyrus which was greatly limited in its length, the evangelists were constrained to write as economically (briefly) as possible. So the Gospels had to be short, and only what seemed to the evangelists the most salient of Jesus' words could be set down.

2) Although there are early Gospel fragments, they are few and just that: fragments. The complete texts date from around the beginning of the fourth century. This means that they were likely edited to fit the theological alterations of three centuries from their original composition. This applies also to the "original Aramaic" text used by Geroge Lamsa, which is really only the Peshitta text which was totally overhauled in the fifth century to conform to the theology of the state religion of the Byzantine empire—for example, turning the Holy Spirit from a "She" into a "He."

Here are two examples of how Jesus' words were changed to fit the new Christianity of that time. In a very early Aramaic version of the Gospels, the Cureton Gospels, in Luke 21:34, which the King James Version (which is based on the "official" Greek text) has as: "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness," an exhortation to "moderation." But the Aramaic text has: "See that you never make your hearts heavy by drinking wine or eating meat." Not moderation but total abstinence. Then in John 14:1 the KJV has: "Let not your

heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.” The Cureton is: “Believe in God, and you *are* believing in me.” There is no “also” about it. If we go through the Gospels and Epistles we find a verse here and a verse there that express the real teachings of Jesus, the wisdom he learned first from the Essene teachers and then from the yogis of India. (See *The Christ of India*.) Jesus taught totally within the context of the wisdom of the East—India specifically. That is why a Saint Thomas Christian priest from South India once remarked to me: “You cannot understand the teachings of Jesus if you do not know the scriptures of India, especially the Upanishads.” Although there are profound metaphysical/spiritual principles in these fragments of Jesus’ teaching in the Gospels, to discover his meaning we must approach them in the same context within which he gave them: that of the wisdom of the Eastern sages, including Lao Tzu. Consequently I will be trying to rescue the meaning from some passages, as well as commenting on their surface appearance.

3) The material selected to include in the Gospels was done so for symbolic reasons as much as for historical and doctrinal presentation. Therefore we should also consider what might be the hidden symbolism in the incidents and teachings. The early Christians considered that the Gospels were a kind of mystery-drama portraying the spiritual journey of each spirit as it progresses to Christhood. So the study of the Gospels should be both objective and subjective.

4) The incidents and teachings of the Gospels are intended to be interpreted in various ways, all of them legitimate. Paramhansa Yogananda insisted that all scriptures should be studied with the understanding that they have three levels of meaning: physical, mental, and spiritual. So we should be intent on discovering the wealth of wisdom contained in even the simplest words of the Gospels.

For a completely straightforward historical account of Jesus and his teachings I recommend that you study *The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ* by Levi Dowling, upon which I have also written a commentary, *The Aquarian Gospel For Awakening*.

In this commentary I will be using the King James Version text. Though this is not usually a favored translation at this point in time, it has been

preferred by those of more esoteric understanding, including Paramhansa Yogananda and Eastern Orthodox Christians. The esoteric understanding, of course, will be up to us.

Jesus did not speak Greek, he spoke Aramaic. The Gospel of Matthew was written in Hebrew, and the other three were written in Greek. Saint Luke, author of his own Gospel, translated Saint Matthew's Gospel into Greek. Why? Because as a philosophical language capable of great nuance and subtlety Greek was unparalleled in the Mediterranean world. Also, through Greek the evangelists could reveal the inner meaning, the inner thought, of Jesus. So in this commentary I will do quite a bit of analysis of the Greek words of the text, for they will reveal profound aspects of Jesus' teachings. I will also be using a great deal of Sanskrit words, so I am including a Glossary at the end of this book.

Wherever I have put words in brackets in the Gospel text these are variant or supplemental words that are indicated by the Greek text which has been consulted throughout using Strong's *Concordance*.

I have only commented on those parts of the Gospels which are relevant to spiritual life, especially yoga sadhana, and what applies to the life of a sadhaka. I recommend that you read my book *The Unknown Lives of Jesus and Mary* to fill out the historical and esoteric picture. And for a very detailed account of Jesus' divine life, see the *Biblical Revelations* of the holy stigmatist Anne Catherine Emmerich (available from Amazon and other sources).

Perhaps the most important thing I should say is this: In these pages you will find the teachings of Jesus, Isha Nath, the divine yogi, presented in the perspective of his adopted religion: Sanatana Dharma–Hinduism. (For information on that subject see my book *The Christ of India*.)



THE LIVING BREAD

They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world (John 6:28-33).

They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work? This would have been a perfectly sensible question in the beginning of his ministry, but considering all that they had seen done by Jesus it is not very intelligent. What more do they want?

Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. We are right back to the loaves and fishes! As Jesus said before: “He that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth” (John 3:31). Saint Paul describes them as those “whose God is their belly, ...who mind earthly things” (Philippians 3:19).

But they want a sign from Jesus, and he now tells them what will be given to those who truly want it and will seek it. They have referred to the manna given to their ancestors in the wilderness as they journeyed to Israel after leaving Egypt. “And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel: speak unto them, saying, ... in the morning ye shall be filled with bread;... and in the morning the dew lay round about the host. And when the dew that lay was gone

up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground. And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat.... And the house of Israel called the name thereof Manna: and it was like coriander seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey. And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited; they did eat manna, until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan" (Exodus 16:11-15, 31, 35). The manna was a supernatural manifestation which enabled them to live and have the strength to continue their long trek to the promised land. But there is something greater.

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven. But my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. The manna was miraculous, but it was material, appearing after the dew evaporated from the earth each morning. The true bread from heaven is supernatural—is spirit itself in essence. Therefore it can give life in the spirit to those in this material level of existence. And by life I mean consciousness. This we will consider a bit later on.

Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

The Jews [Judeans] then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?

Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life (John 6:34-47).

Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. Naturally, being of the earth earthly, they wanted material food and wanted to have it always given to them (*pantote*—evermore). Regarding such people Saint Paul said, “whose God is their belly, and... who mind earthly things” (Philippians 3:18-19). Strong language, but not a dot exaggerated. So eager were they for an assured welfare program that they even called Jesus “Lord,” though they obviously had no respect for him at all.

Now Jesus is going to speak profound truth to them which they will not like. But since he is the embodiment of Truth he cannot do otherwise.

And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. The word translated “cometh” is *erchomai*, which means both to accompany and to

enter. So those who would “come” to Christ must be at all times in his presence and in the process of uniting with him through union with their own inner Christ Nature. Nothing could be further from what his petitioners really want. But hopefully we do want that very thing, that state of being a Christ. For in that state no one ever hungers: feels the lack or need

of anything within or without. Nor does he thirst in the sense of feeling desire for anything, because he is spiritually complete and self-sufficient in the condition of spiritual awakening.

But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. Those who follow a methodical spiritual life, especially the yogis, are very much involved with the matter of *experience* in their spiritual development, for it is essential. Yet here we see that people can have astounding experiences of the miraculous and not have the reasonable response.

How is it that some people respond to spiritual encounter and others do not? Because all response comes from within us. What is not there cannot come forth. That is why Jesus used the simile of the planting of wheat in a field and likened spiritual encounter to a seed whose fate is determined by the quality and character of the earth into which it falls. The universe, both visible and invisible, operates on precise, exact laws we can call The Will Of The Father. Only when the operations of those laws bring about an encounter with a master teacher for the purpose of our higher evolution will there be any possibility of our going higher. It is either possible or impossible. A true spiritual teacher knows this and never tries to get anyone to take up spiritual life when he clearly sees that it is impossible.

One time when Anandamayī Ma was at the New Delhi (Kalkaji) ashram a group of French tourists interested in Indian religion came to meet her. An acquaintance of mine translated for them. Ma said very many funny things and as they were all laughing heartily Ma said to her, "Well, at least I can make them laugh." For like Jesus she "knew what was in man" (John 2:25). If someone came to Jesus, being "sent" by God, he said that absolutely he would not turn them away. However, most people turned themselves away, as time subsequently proved.

Often Ma avoided meeting with people that were only spiritual tourists, for nothing positive could come of it. For example, once when Ma was at the ashram in Agarpara, north of Calcutta, a group of Australians arrived and wanted to see Ma. The Durga Puja celebrations were going on, and Ma had for some time been sitting to the side of the image of the Devi. But when they were brought there, Ma was nowhere to be seen. Devotees began searching the ashram, which was very large, but could not find her. After some time the Australians left, and immediately Ma was seen sitting

next to the Devi. When asked where she had been, Ma replied that she had been sitting right there all the time. “But Ma, we all searched for you but could not find you and they left. How is this?” Ma simply said: “Perhaps they were not meant to see this body.”

An event at the other end of the spectrum occurred one time I was staying only a short twenty-minute walk away from Ma’s ashram north of Calcutta (Agarpara). Two Australians arrived where I was staying and badgered me to take them to meet Ma. So I did, and when we were walking back, I told them that they could go back any time they liked. Their response was that it was too far to go and really just a waste of time. And they were right. For them it was.

For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. The heaven (*ouranos*) from which Jesus came and in which he was living, though seemingly only on earth, was the Infinite Consciousness of God. Consequently he was God, and those who really “saw” him saw God. (“He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” John 14:9). The word *thelema*, translated “will,” also means purpose. The sole purpose of relative existence, from the lowest to the highest worlds (*lokas*), is our deification—the revelation of our own divine Self which is one with the Absolute. If there has awakened in us the awareness of our divine Source and our return to That as our sole purpose for being here, then we will return to the Father as did Jesus.

And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. When a great master teacher comes to earth, it has already been determined exactly who will come to him for their spiritual evolution. Of course, many may flock around, but the teacher will know those who are “given” him by God and will put his attention on them.

The word *apollumi*, translated “lose,” really means being totally destroyed, to die. Its root word, *apo*, means to separate, leave, stop and go in reverse. Whenever this happens in relation to a great master, the result is truly grievous. I have seen this happen a few times, and it is the saddest thing possible. One of my very dear friends, Manmatha, was from a small village in Bengal and “accidentally” met Anandamayi Ma. Immediately Ma

said to him, "Please go to our ashram in Ranchi and become the priest of the temple." He did so, and devoted his whole time to spiritual matters. Speaking with him was a wonderful experience for me. My respect for him was great. So it was a shock to learn later on that he had gotten a craze to go to the Himalayas, and even though Ma assured him that he had no need to do so, and it would be disastrous for him, he pestered her so much that at last she told him to do what he wanted. Then, telling himself that "Ma approves," which she did not (this was a common practice with "devotees," as I saw through the years), off he went to the Himalayas, immediately got malaria, almost dying, and had a terrible fall that broke some of his teeth and left him partially crippled. I met him one morning while walking in the holy city of Hardwar and was shocked to see his degeneration. All his radiance (tejas) and intellectual power was gone and he looked completely disoriented, if not demented. After that whenever I would go to India I always asked about him and learned that he had just wandered aimlessly for a while and then started a Sanskrit school in Varanasi but never came to see Ma when she was there. It takes tremendous great good karma to have the opportunities he was given, and how many lives it will take for him to come back to that point is unknown.

But those who do not squander the riches of spiritual grace will indeed ascend to higher worlds when they come to the end of the path they have faithfully followed. They shall truly be raised up at the last day and freed from the bondage of this world.

And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. But what is it to "see" a great teacher? Such sight is not done by the eyes, but by the inmost Self. One time in Varanasi I was speaking with a man who had known Ma Anandamayi for many years. He told me that he had naturally assumed that all those who traveled with Ma (sometimes quite a number) and lived in the ashrams were very high souls. But when he said this to Ma, she just said, "Baba, even flies sit on this body." Many people from East and West spent time with Ma but never really "saw" her with the inner eyes that matter. But those who do see a great master and continue to keep on seeing (for many "go blind" after a while) will at the

end open their eyes in a higher world because their sight has become fixed on the Highest.

The Jews [Judeans] then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven? This type of person loves the idea that humans are all degraded and sinful and worthy only of hell fire. Because if that is so, they themselves cannot be expected to be anything but be degraded and sinful and worthy only of hell fire. But the truth is that we, too, have come down from heaven. From eternity we were in the depths of God, points of light within the Boundless Light. And that is our true nature: Divine Light. But we descended into this lowest of worlds (for hell is better than this world, because in hell everyone knows why they are there, but here almost no one knows why they are here) and took on a series of material bodies with which we identified and in which we wandered through the labyrinth created by our actions and the karma they produced. From our ever-changing side of things our situation appears hopeless, but from the unchanging and true side we are divinities dreaming we are mortal human beings, helplessly and hopelessly bound to the wheel of constant birth and death. According to which aspect we identify and work with, so will be our future. Everything and everyone around us may try to persuade us that we are our outer appearance, but if we really look inside we will find that is not so. We are never anything but our true Self. And because of that life in this world is a bondage and a torment to us. Further, we do not need to “go to heaven,” but to awaken to the heaven that is within us, and which we will come to see is also around us even now.

Here is a poem I read many, many years ago:

Once on the edge of a quiet pool,
Under the bank where 'twas nice and cool,
Just where the stream flowed out of the bay,
There sat a grumpy and mean old frog,
Who sat all day in the sand to soak,
And just did nothing but croak and croak.

A blackbird hollered, "I say, you know,
 What is the matter down there below?
 Are you in trouble or pain or what?"
 The old frog growled, "Mine is an awful lot."
 "'Tis a dirty world," thus the old frog spoke—
 "Croakety, croakety, croakety, croak."

Then the blackbird said. "I see what's wrong.
 Why don't you smile or sing a song?
 Look up, young feller, why bless my soul,
 You're looking down a muskrat hole!"

A wise old turtle, who boarded near,
 Said to the blackbird, "Now, friend, see here,
 Don't waste no tears on him," says he.
 "That fool's down there, 'cause he wants to be."

That is often the case with us. We are exactly where we choose to be, however much we complain and feel sorry for ourselves. We are all masters who have forgotten the fact—often willfully. And people like those complaining about Jesus do not want to be reminded of the truth about themselves.

Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. Gogguzo means to grumble and complain and make oneself a victim.

No man [no one; not even one] can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

Have you heard a voice from heaven
 calling in a solemn tone,
 "Come, my people, from confusion;
 This is not your native home"?

A person who is not motivated accomplishes nothing in the long run. Only those who are motivated by the divine spark within either can or

will succeed in spiritual life. Those who are so motivated will be drawn upward and “at the last day” when the path has been completely traveled will enter into the kingdom of the spirit and be free forever. Interestingly, the word *helkuo*, translated “draw,” is related to *helisso*, which means to coil or wrap up something and make a bundle or package that can be carried. Through many lives the divine, both within and without, has been drawing us inward and shaping us into a form which can be raised up at the last day of our evolutionary journey.

It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. This is very clear. Anandamayi Ma wrote to someone: “Have you not seen what life in this world is? In Him is everything. Him you must try to find.” Those that have heard the inner call and learned the truth about themselves and the world are really being taught by God.

Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father. Those who uncover their divine Self and thereby become “of God” shall truly see and understand.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. The “me” of Jesus was his own Self, the same as the Self in every one of us. That is who we must believe in: our own inner Christ. And more: we must believe in the possibility of manifesting that Christ and stop being what we are not and never have been. This is the only true life.

“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (I John 3:2). But only accepting or believing in this intellectually will get us nowhere, because “every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure” (I John 3:3). This purification is accomplished only by the yogi who knows the way.

I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of

this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

The Jews [Judeans] therefore strove [argued] among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever (John 6:48-58).

I am that bread of life. Bread is food which enables life to continue. It is something that is taken into our bodies and assimilated so its substance becomes incorporated into our bodies. In the same way, through yoga sadhana the consciousness that is Christ is taken into the subtle levels of our existence and imparts Conscious Life to us, revealing us as immortal.

Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. The manna was a miraculous thing, but it was material, not spiritual. Therefore those who ate it eventually died because its effect could not continue in them. Only that consciousness which is taken into the depths of our being can continue and infuse life into us.

This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. Only consciousness is truly life. The God/Christ consciousness which descends from the highest, transcendent realm, when assimilated and made part of our own consciousness makes us immortal.

I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. The Jews [Judeans] therefore strove

[argued] among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Jesus' words sounded insane to those devoid of spiritual insight.

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. The "flesh" of Christ consists of the wisdom teachings of Christ and includes the path of spiritual purification which transmutes the individual. It is the outer following of Christ. The blood of Christ is the inner Christ Life, the consciousness that is the essence of Spirit. Both the flesh and blood of Christ must become our life so we may be Christs.

For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. Just as material food maintains material life, so the spiritual food of the ordered life and consciousness of Christ maintains spiritual life and enables it to increase by the evolution and expansion of the finite to the infinite.

He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. This is not an abstraction but a real state of being which can be attained by those who aspire to it and cultivate it both within and without themselves. For That which they seek is not only infinite, it is the source and substance of all things.

As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This can be the experience of every one who seeks it. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Matthew 7:7).

This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. Again Jesus tells us that what he is speaking about transcends earthly-oriented experience and leads us beyond into the transcendent Absolute.

MORE PLAIN SPEAKING

These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.

Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear [accept] it?

When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend [skandalize] you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?

It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

But there are some of you that believe not.

For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.

And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?

Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure [know] that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?

He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.

After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry [Judea], because the Jews [Judeans] [Judeans] sought to kill him. (John 6:59-7:1).

These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum. So this was not some informal exchange, but part of Jesus' teaching in the Capernaum synagogue itself.

Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear [accept] it? *Skleros* means severe or extreme, even fierce. So what Jesus had said was difficult for them to cope with because, as is usual in the Gospels, when he spoke figuratively they took it literally, just as did the twelve apostles on occasion. Those who were objecting were not people who had come there out of curiosity, but those who had declared themselves Jesus' disciples. So they had even made some kind of commitment in establishing a spiritual relationship with him.

When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend [skandalize] you? The complaining must have been in whispers only since Jesus knew of it "in himself"—through his intuition. The company of such a person can be disconcerting because we naturally think that our thoughts are known to us alone. My sannyasa guru, Swami Vidyananda Giri, on occasion knew what my thoughts were going to be a day before I thought them! Once I was reading the Bhagavad Gita and pondering its possible meanings and coming to a conclusion about a meaning while he was writing letters in the same room. He put down his pen and quietly said, "No, that is not exactly right," and explained the actual meaning to me. Then he asked, "Do you understand?" I said Yes, and he resumed writing. That was repeated three or four times.

What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? The ascension of Jesus' body was minor compared to the transmutation open to those who assimilate his inner and outer teachings and ascend into their own Christhood. But if those he was speaking to saw his body ascend they would be amazed and no doubt frightened—the usual reaction of the negative when they witness truth objectified.

It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. The spirit, which is consciousness, gives life to those who center themselves in it. But those who center themselves in the material body shall have nothing, for it changes, weakens, becomes defective and weak and dies. Furthermore, the flesh (*sarx*)

hinders the spirit and blinds us to spiritual realities. This is not because the body is evil, but because it simply is its nature. However, when the spirit is dominant the body is purified and becomes an instrument of consciousness and therefore an instrument of evolution. So we do not reject or condemn the body, we spiritualize it. And the first step in this spiritualization is to heed, follow and embody the living words (*rhema*), the teachings, of Jesus, for since they proceed from the consciousness of a totally spiritualized being they themselves become consciousness—vehicles of spirit and enlightenment—and therefore are spirit itself and are the life of the awakening individual.

But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. The great masters know the character of a person the moment they come into their presence (and often before). At the beginning they know the end. One

of the most surprising experiences of my life was seeing people lying to Anandamayi Ma, while claiming to believe she was divine. One woman in particular was memorable because she was relating to Ma visions she claimed to have had. The expression on Ma's face was most interesting, and whenever I recall it I begin to laugh, for it revealed Ma's opinion of what the woman was telling her. One time at a celebration of Yogananda's birthday, as the people came filing by and pronaming to him, off at the side a man was kneeling and continually bowing his head to the floor as he declared that Yogananda was his life, his guru and his savior, and that he gave his life to him. Yogananda ignored him completely, but later on when from an upper floor he saw the man walking around the ashram property, he called him over and asked him to stand right below the window, "Because I have something for you." Yogananda disappeared and the man stationed himself below the window. In a few minutes Yogananda came back with a paper bag filled with water and dropped it down on the man in a direct hit. The man never was seen or heard of again!

Paradidomi, translated betray, means to betray, discard (cast away), hinder, resist, give over, strike and even put in prison. Spiritual betrayal can take all these forms, inner and outer.

And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. *Erchomai* does not just mean

coming, but accompanying. Many come to true spiritual teachers or situations in which spiritual growth is possible, but they cannot remain there; they cannot keep up with them. (I call it “running with the big boys.”) Few can do so. Therefore we should not congratulate ourselves if we only come into the orbit of those who can show us the way and guide us along the way.

One time a man brought his daughter to an ashram where Anandamayi Ma was visiting and said that his daughter was very involved in spiritual matters and wanted to become one of those who travelled with Ma. Ma said she could do so if she liked. When Ma left the place, the man came to the train station and, since his daughter was there and was going to accompany her, said to Ma, “I see, Ma, that she has passed the test.” Ma answered, “Baba, the only test that matters is the final test.” In a few weeks he got a telegram from his daughter saying she wanted to come home. “For many are called, but few are chosen” (Matthew 22:14).

Knowing Ma for the last nineteen years of her life I had occasion to witness many coming to her with high ideals and high aspirations—or so they thought. But almost none got anywhere spiritually because Ma was not a fetish or good luck charm that one need only “have” to live the life to end rebirth. Nearly all the Western men, seeing that in India the sadhus were “at the top,” asked Ma if they could become sannyasis. Ma would always say, “Let us wait and see what happens.” And what happened in every instance was that in just a few months (with some, in only two or three months) a letter would come to Ma asking her to bless their soon-to-be marriage! And so it was. Every time one man came to India to see Ma he brought a different wife!!!

Few indeed are those who say in sincerity, “Master, where dwellest thou?” (John 1:38), and themselves come to dwell in the consciousness in which the Master dwells. Or even really try to, or really want to.

From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. At least they were not hypocrites. They did not keep coming around in hope that this would give the impression they were leading a spiritual life, even though when they went back home they were as any committed samsarin.

Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Notice that Jesus did not try to get them to stay on with him or give them an inspirational pep talk about perseverance or commitment in the spiritual life. They were free to go also. In a recorded talk of Yogananda he says, “Master always said, “The door is always open. Whenever you want to go,... go.”

Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. Here we have it! Who knows what motivated the departees to come to Jesus in the first place. No doubt the loaves and fishes and the glamor of being a disciple of a miraculous teacher had much to do with it. And the age-old delusion that being around a master will somehow make them a master, too, without any effort—or change. But Saint Peter says the only right motivation: Eternal Life.

The word “sadguru” has usually been debased in India and now in the rest of the world. But what does it actually mean? It means a teacher who can tell the aspirant the way to unite his individual spirit with the Supreme Spirit—the only True and Real (Sat). And that is it. From then on it is all up to the disciple, for the word *mathetes* means a learner. Then he must become a doer and a realizer. All this business about eternal relationship with the guru and salvation through the guru is total nonsense, delusive and destructive.

“Faith in” the guru and “attunement with” the guru is meaningless. It is faith in God and attunement with God that is needed. Saint Peter understood: the disciples needed the instruction that would set them on the path to total freedom through the uniting of their consciousness with that of the Supreme Spirit.

My beloved friend, Swami Rama of Hardwar (Ram Kunj), at the age of nine was playing in the street of his home village in Kashmir. An elderly sadhu came walking down the street and said, “Come with me.” So he followed him, and when they were at some distance from the village the sadhu taught him a mantra. “Repeat this all the time,” he told him, and walked away. Swami Rama never saw him again, nor did he know his name. But he did as he was told, and became one of the most remarkable yogis I have met. He taught many people, but to each he said, “I am not your guru, nor are you my disciple. Find out who you really are, and you will have everything.”

And we believe and are sure [know] that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. They did not just believe, they knew. Faith is worthless if it does not lead to “knowledge of God which is nearer than knowing, open vision direct and instant” (Bhagavad Gita 9:1).

Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? Eklegomai means to choose something or someone out of many. Obviously all the twelve were more than just special. Yet one of them was more: a devil—*diabolos*.

He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve. In *The Unknown Lives of Jesus and Mary* (Chapter Six—The Infancy of the Savior) you will find some of the history of Judas, who had tried to kill Jesus when they were children.

CLEAN AND UNCLEAN

Then came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem. And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen, hands, they found fault. For the Pharisees, and all the Jews [Judeans], except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brasen vessels, and of tables.

Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands?

He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.

And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: but ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; making the word of God of none effect through your

tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye (Mark 7:1-16).

Then came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem. Throughout Jesus' ministry spies from Jerusalem will be present, looking for things to condemn. Being Satanic, they emulated their master, who "as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (I Peter 5:8).

And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen, hands, they found fault. For the Pharisees, and all the Jews [Judeans], except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brassen vessels, and of tables. These are all very good rules of hygiene, and should be observed by everyone. But they are not spiritual principles at all. Yet I have seen even in India such rules being taken as divine law, their non-observance being considered grave sins and incurrences of spiritual pollution. A friend of mine worked as a maid for an orthodox Jewish family. One time when she was serving a meal, her employer's five-year-old son asked, "Daddy, why don't we ever eat ham?" His father threw his table knife at him and shouted, "Don't you ever mention swine at my table!" This is not the way dharma is taught.

*Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands? He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias [Isaiah] prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Hupokrites, hypocrites, literally means those who assume a stage character, who are not at all what they seem to be. It also means those who deliberately act in a false manner. They are *porrho*, at a great distance from where they seem to be. Spiritually such persons are estranged from God by choice. And so are their hearts, which are *apo*, separated from God and truth.*

Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. Maten, "in vain," means foolish and engaged in folly with no true purpose.

For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. Spiritual principles must be followed in our lives and not be empty ideas, but thoroughly externalized religion that consists of nothing but outward action without the inner disposition of heart is worse than valueless—it is spiritual deception and inimical to real spiritual life. That is why we often refer to “exoteric” religion: nothing more than external display in which the inner spirit is totally ignored. What begins as a valid, supernatural religion often degenerates into thoroughly material observance without any knowledge of the original, esoteric (inner) meaning.

For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death. “Honor,” *timao*, means to highly value, honor, love, hold as precious and even reverence. This is no small thing, and many parents are not worthy of such an attitude and treatment, but a worthy son or daughter will still hold the command and observe it. The word *kakologeo* means to revile, curse or speak evil of someone or even harm or offend them to some degree.

But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free [of obligation to them]. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye. Korban (Corban; Quarban) is an Aramaic word meaning an offering unto God, something dedicated to divine service alone, including the temple treasury where the contribution boxes stood. So if a person said to his parents that whatever he might give them was instead korban, then it was dedicated to God and he could not by reason of his vow give to them. (It is not said whether they then really gave it to the Temple or just kept it for themselves. This latter seems likely, considering the usual ways of exoteric religion that disrespect both God and humanity.) This was a terrible thing to do, for at that time most parents in their old age had nothing, and would have to beg or starve if their children did not support them.

And when he had called all the people unto him, he said unto them, Hearken unto me every one of you, and understand: There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man (Mark 7:14-15).

Jesus is speaking of spiritual defilement, though many things can certainly pollute the body and mind when taken into the body.

If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. (Mark 7:16).

Akouo means to hear and understand. But what if someone has no ears? Then they cannot hear. The world is divided into two classes: those who have ears and mind to hear spiritual truth, and those who have no ears or mind to hear and understand. The first group is responsible and incurs negative karma if they do not hear and understand. The second group is incapable of hearing and understanding and therefore incur no negative karma when they do not hear and understand. A worthy spiritual teacher can tell the difference and will act accordingly in relation to them.

And when he was entered into the house... Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying? (Matthew 15:12).

To me one of the most amazing things about religion is that when someone speaks very plainly and expounds ideas that are a standard part of the religion, one or more supposed believers come and tell them that someone got offended at what they said. What is their motive? Is it that they themselves do not like the ideas but are too cowardly to say so? I once read the account of a man who in his youth had travelled with the founder of the church my family belonged to. The founder was extremely articulate and extremely fiery in delivery. One evening he made his audience so angry that they formed a mob and came after him. He and his companion ran as fast as they could and when they found a building that was up on

posts and had some space beneath, they crawled in as far as they could and waited until the mob had come by and was gone. Then they crawled out and hurried back to where they had been staying. At one point later that night the young man said to the founder, "Couldn't you have been a little less hard on them?" And the founder replied, "Young man, if you had been supportive of me I could have given it to them much harder!" As Jesus has already said, "Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me." (Matthew 11:6).

DEALING HONESTLY WITH THE SPIRITUALLY DISHONEST

But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up (Matthew 15:13).

This is true of our life, both inner and outer. Whatever has not been “planted” in us by God—whatever is not a manifestation or quality of our spirit-Self—must be rooted up and tossed away. And we are the ones that must do the rooting up and the tossing. Already Jesus has said that “The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away” (Matthew 13:45-48). People think that when they begin spiritual life it will just be one wonderful discovery after another as they increasingly become sunbeams in the firmament of heaven. But it is not so. Instead, they must scrupulously, yes ruthlessly, examine every aspect of their minds and life. The good they must determine to keep and increase, and the bad they must cast out immediately and without exception and keep far away from. Otherwise in time they will be those who go back and walk no more in the way of life (John 6:66).

Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch (Matthew 15:14).

Jesus is referring to the statement in the Katha Upanishad (1.2.8) that there are those who “go about like blind men led by one who is himself blind.” And he says that they should be left alone, for there is no rescuing them because of their own perverse will and ways. False teachers and their equally false disciples should be ignored by us and passed by and forgotten.

Then answered Peter and said unto him, Declare unto us this parable. And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding? Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man (Matthew 15:15-18).

For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts [reasonings, imaginations], adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness [greediness], wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy [evil speaking, vituperation] pride, foolishness [lack of good sense, folly]: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man (Mark 7:21-23).

...But to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man (Matthew 15:20).

This is very clear, but there is a major point that can be overlooked if the reader does not understand the fundamental truths of reincarnation and karma. Negativity comes from within the individual because of the negative karmas and samskaras that are stored within his subconscious mind, accumulated in many past lives. These are the results of negativity and are powerful impulses toward repetition and empowering of further negativity. Therefore we must purify ourselves both outwardly and inwardly through yama-niyama and meditation if we would be pure and live purely.

AN EXAMPLE OF SPIRITUAL PERSISTENCE

Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed [troubled; ill] with a devil. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matthew 15:21-24).

Canaan was the old name of Palestine. When we are told she was “a woman of Canaan” we know that she was from Gentile Palestine and not a Hebrew. Yet she certainly knew about the religion of Israel and called Jesus “Son of David,” which indicated that she knew Jesus was of the lineage of David. And perhaps she even knew this would be a title of the Messiah.

What is important, and has been missed for these nearly two thousand years, is the true meaning of his words, perhaps known only to him: “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

The word translated “lost” is *apollumi*, which usually means to cease to exist. But it comes from *apo*, which also means separation through departure. Krishna was a member of the gigantic kshatriya (warrior-ruler caste) Yadava clan, and therefore is referred to in Sanskrit writings as “Yadava Krishna.” He belonged to the Vrishni branch of the Yadava clan that was centered in north-central India in Mathura, where Krishna was born. This is very near the Braj/Vrindavan district where he grew up. Later the Vrishnis moved to Dwarka in the far West (the present-day state of Gujarat), and

Krishna became the king of Dwarka. Some time after the great Mahabharata war in which he took part, Krishna left this world by taking mahasamadhi, and the Vrishni Yadavas simply disappeared from India.

Today some anthropologists believe that in time they became the people we know today as Hebrews or Jews. There is a historical basis for this opinion. In *The Christ of India* I cite an ancient book of Kashmiri history, the *Bhavishya Maha Purana*, which gives the following account of the meeting of a king of Kashmir with Jesus sometime after the middle of the first century: "When the king of the Sakas came to the Himalayas, he saw a dignified person of golden complexion wearing a long white robe. Astonished to see this foreigner, he asked, 'Who are you?' The dignified person replied in a pleasant manner: 'Know me as Son of God [Isha Putram], or Born of a Virgin [Kumarigarbhasangbhawam].... O King, I hail from a land far away,.... I appeared in the country of the mlecchas [foreigners] as Isha Masiha [Jesus Messiah/Christ] and I suffered at their hands. For I said unto them, "Remove all mental and bodily impurities. Remember the Name of our Lord God. Meditate upon Him Whose abode is in the center of the sun." ...I asked human beings to serve the Lord. But I suffered at the hands of the wicked and the guilty. In truth, O King, all power rests with the Lord, Who is in the center of the sun. And the elements, and the cosmos, and the sun, and God Himself, are forever. Perfect, pure, and blissful, God is always in my heart. Thus my Name has been established as Isha Masiha.' After having heard the pious words from the lips of this distinguished person, the king felt peaceful, made obeisance to him, and returned" (*Bhavishya Maha Purana* 3.2.9-31). These teachings mentioned by Jesus are of course pure Sanatana Dharma (Hinduism). Another Kashmiri history, the *Rajatarangini*, written in 1148 A.D., says that a great saint named Issana lived at Issabar on the bank of Dal Lake and had many disciples, one of which he raised from the dead. (Would this be Lazarus?) When Jesus came to the Jordan at the beginning of his ministry, he had spent more years of his life in India than in Israel. After attempting in vain to bring the people back to their true spiritual roots in India, and being executed by them (through the Roman governor) in response, he returned there for the remainder of his life, because he was a spiritual son

of India both by ancestry and conviction. (For much more on this see *The Christ of India*.)

Unfortunately, despite Jesus' efforts the people of Israel remained lost to their spiritual roots, ancestral and spiritual. But today many of their descendants throughout the world have adopted Sanatana Dharma and Yoga, even in Israel.

And from thence he arose and entered into an house, and would have no man know it: but he could not be hid (Mark 7:24).

Then came she and worshipped [prostrated before] him, saying, Lord, help me (Matthew 15:25).

The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil [demon; spirit] out of her daughter. But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs (Mark 7:26-27).

This is not a very inspirational passage, as implying that someone is a dog is not what we expect from someone of higher consciousness! But it was necessary to reveal the woman's humility and the depth of her desire to gain help for her daughter. I have known people to neglect their children's health because it was either inconvenient or bruising to their egos to get help. In times of dire poverty people have allowed their children to die from starvation rather than "take charity." This is egotism run amok. I knew a woman whose brother was facing a terrible death from a disease that destroyed his immune system. A friend of ours knew a health practitioner who had cured two people known to him of that very disease. But when she was told that help was just a phone call away she said, "Oh, I just don't think we could stand getting our hopes up and then being disappointed if it didn't work." So she did nothing and her brother died. Once I gave a class on biomagnetic healing. Two women and a young man attended. A week or so later one of the women (the man's mother, the other was his grandmother) came to see me and asked me to treat him.

When I told her that she knew the whole procedure and could help him as much as I could, she cried and talked about how sick he was, then left and did nothing for him.

And she said, Truth [Yes], Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour (Matthew 15:27-28).

How easy and simple. Just stay on target and help will come. Saint Mark (7:29-30) says: "And he said unto her, For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter. And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed."

And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, he came unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis.

And they bring unto him one that was deaf [and mute], and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to put his hand upon him. And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue; and looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened.

And straightway his ears were opened, and the string [bond] of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain [correctly]. And he charged them that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it. And were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak (Mark 7:29-37).

The actions of Jesus show that he was using bioenergetic healing methods he must have learned in India. At times he used his supernatural

power to heal, but at others used natural methods known to him. He continually requested people to keep quiet about his healing so he would not be mobbed by people seeking healing because his main purpose was the giving of spiritual teaching. Everyone wanted the loaves and fishes and bodily cures; but he had something much more beneficial and necessary than those: the way to the revelation of our eternal nature and our true life in that consciousness.

A WORD TO AND ABOUT THE HYPOCRITES

The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting [testing] desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven.

He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times? (Matthew 16:1-3)

But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with [against] this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.

The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with [against] this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here (Matthew 12:39-42).

And he left them, and entering into the ship again departed to the other side (Mark 8:13).

The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting [testing] desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven. The word semeion comes

from *semaino*, which means a signification or proof of something. It usually means a miracle or something wondrous. Of course the enemies of Jesus were totally hypocritical, for they hated his teaching, and no miracle he might do would change that. And they did not expect one, for they ask that the sign be from God (“heaven”), and they were confident that would never happen. They were just looking for something new to use in their condemnation of him.

He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times? By kairos, “the times,” is meant two things: an opportunity and a season. Jesus means both. His advent—he himself—and his public teaching are indications that the Messiah has come, that truly “the time is at hand” for the wise to avail themselves of the promised blessings, and it is an opportunity for the wise to secure and fulfill their spiritual destiny.

But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. Jonah the prophet was told by God to go to the great city of Nineveh and warn them that their evil ways were going to work their destruction by their natural consequence—the law of karma. Although he surely knew God was omnipresent, he took a boat to Tarshis, thinking to escape God. But a terrible storm occurred and Jonah confessed to the crew his attempt to avoid the will of God, telling them that they should throw him into the sea and the storm would stop. Though they did not want to do this, they followed his advice. The storm stopped immediately. Jonah was not drowned, but was swallowed by some type of huge fish. He lived in the fish for three days and nights, after which the fish “vomited out Jonah upon the dry land” (Jonah 2:10). Jesus is indicating his death and resurrection which will span three days—Friday, Saturday and Sunday—according to the reckoning in use at that time.

The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with [against] this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas;

and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here. There is a summing up after each incarnation at the departure from our body. This has been described in various ways and I doubt that any are absolute or even standard. Certainly this does not always happen, for I know from various people (including myself) that very often as we go forth from the body we simply enter into light and after a while find ourselves entering the astral world in which we are to continue our journey of evolution. The nature of that world is determined by our karma and samskara. However, there sometimes is a kind of “judgment” that may involve others. Certainly the example of the people of Nineveh proved the culpability of those who heard Jesus and refused to act accordingly.

The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with [against] this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here. The queen of Ethiopia came to visit Solomon and learn from him.

And when his disciples were come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread (Matthew 16:5).

And he charged [commanded] them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have no bread.

And when Jesus knew it, he saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart [mind] yet hardened? Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember? When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve. And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven. And he said unto them (Mark 8:15-21),

How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? Then understood they how

that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees (Matthew 16:11-12).

And he charged [commanded] them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod. The word *blepo* means to look at something intently, see its true nature and be wary of it. The word *zume* comes from *zeo*, which means to be hot, even boiling, and means to be fervent or zealous. The zeal of the Pharisees was fervent and sincere, but utterly wrong on all levels. Saint Paul wrote of such people, “I bear them record that they have a zeal of [for] God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God” (Romans 10:2-3). Sincerity and dedication can be destructive when it comes from a wrong view or desire. We see this in both religion and politics constantly. To say that most of them are toxic is not at all an exaggeration. Oftentimes people are impressed by the dedication and drive of various groups but do not look at where that dedication and drive will eventually lead. Jesus urges the disciples to look at things with clear sight at all times.

And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have no bread. And when Jesus knew it, he saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart [mind] yet hardened? Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember?... How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. This was a common problem with the disciples of Jesus. They understood things with a simplistic literalism no better than that of inexperienced children. Symbolism went right by them. They did not see *into* Jesus’s words, but only at the mundane surface. Jesus says that their minds are *poroo*, hard like stone, callous (coarse and insensitive), and blind. Purification of the mind and heart result in subtlety of perception and spiritual insight. This

is why Krishna told Arjuna, “Be a yogi” (Bhagavad Gita 6:46). Otherwise his teachings could not be really understood either.

HEALING AND ADMONITION

And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him. And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought. And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking. After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly. And he sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town (Mark 8:22-26).

Frequently we have to get away from the crowd and into solitude to be cured of ignorance and delusion. We would not like to be spat upon, but we see that it was necessary for healing. This is also an instance of healing occurring in stages. Jesus could not leave him in the “walking trees” condition even though he was no longer blind, for he was not yet “seeing true.” So again Jesus put his hands on his eyes. It is good for us to not be too quick in thinking we are all right and know all we need to.

Of course we know the man will tell everyone about his healing, but there is a valuable symbolism in sending the man back to his house and telling him to avoid the town or telling of his healing to anyone living in the town. We need to keep our spiritual life and endeavors inside and never reveal them to those who are not making the same efforts as we are. Those who live in the noise and illusions of the world should not be told anything about our spiritual practice. Actually, we should not be having any more contact with them than is absolutely right and necessary. Swami

Satyananda, a disciple of Yogananda's guru, Swami Sriyukteswar, told me that whenever Sriyukteswarji instructed someone in yoga meditation he would ask him, "Do you know anyone who practices this yoga?" If the person did, he would say, "Good. Make them your only friends and meditate with them often."

WHO IS JESUS?

And Jesus went out, and his disciples, into the towns of Caesarea Philippi: and by the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am? (Mark 8:27).

And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ (Matthew 16:14-20).

And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. People speculated that John, Elijah, Jeremiah or one of the prophets had just suddenly appeared among them—not necessarily through reincarnation. (More on this later.)

And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. People like to turn religion into politics and social movements. Therefore Christianity has told people for centuries that Jesus was making Saint Peter the head

of his church. This is not so. It so happened that his name was Cephas, which means a stone (*petros*). But when Jesus speaks of “this rock” he uses the word *petra* that means a great mass of rock. And that rock was the revelation of the true nature of Jesus. “Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.” Peter was a stone in the spiritual structure of the church that would be born on Pentecost. All others who understood the nature of Jesus were also stones built (established) upon that revelation. Therefore Saint Peter himself later on wrote to the church in the Mediterranean world, “Ye also, as lively [living] stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded” (I Peter 2:5-6).

The word *ecclesia*, translated “church,” means a group of people who are called forth (*kaleo*) for a special purpose. Literally it means “the called out ones.” In ancient Greece the body of people who governed were called the Ecclesia (Ekklesia). In the early days of America such a group was called “selectmen,” meaning they were chosen by the people. It also implies a community or assembly. Although the *Ecclesia tou Theou*, the Church of God, was composed of people incarnate in earthly bodies, it was an expression of the Divine Spirit and those individual spirits who were its members.

And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. The keys of the kingdom are the inner and outer tools by which we enter and live in the kingdom which Jesus said very clearly is within us. “Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:21). Nor is the external church the kingdom of God on earth. Rather, the spirit-soul (spirit-Self) of everyone that is awakened and working to purify themselves to ascend in consciousness is the kingdom of God on earth. Those who diligently practice meditation will eliminate from their inner and outer being that which is negative and a hindrance, and will awaken, invoke and “loose” in themselves that which is positive and bears them upward

to the Divine Consciousness that is the Goal, the “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27).

Though it is lengthy, the following passage from the Chandogya Upanishad reveals what a true teacher teaches and a true student learns.

When Svetaketu was twelve years old, his father Uddalaka said to him, “Svetaketu, you must now go to school and study. None of our family, my child, is ignorant of Brahman.”

Thereupon Svetaketu went to a teacher and studied for twelve years. After committing to memory all the Vedas, he returned home full of pride in his learning.

His father, noticing the young man’s conceit, said to him: “Svetaketu, have you asked for that knowledge by which we hear the unheard, by which we perceive the unperceivable, by which we know the unknowable?”

“What is that knowledge, sir?” asked Svetaketu.

“My child, as by knowing one lump of clay, all things made of clay are known, the difference being only in name and arising from speech, and the truth being that all are clay; as by knowing a nugget of gold, all things made of gold are known, the difference being only in name and arising from speech, and the truth being that all are gold—exactly so is that knowledge, knowing which we know all.”

“But surely those venerable teachers of mine are ignorant of this knowledge; for if they had possessed it, they would have taught it to me. Do you therefore, sir, give me that knowledge.”

“Be it so,” said Uddalaka, and continued thus: “In the beginning there was Existence, One only, without a second. Some say that in the beginning there was nonexistence only, and that out of that the universe was born. But how could such a thing be? How could existence be born of non-existence? No, my son, in the beginning there was Existence alone—One only, without a second. He, the One, thought to himself: Let me be many, let me grow forth. Thus out of himself he projected the universe; and having projected out of himself the universe, he entered into every being. All that is has its

self in him alone. Of all things he is the subtle essence. He is the truth. He is the Self. And that, Svetaketu, THAT ART THOU.”

“Please, sir, tell me more about this Self.”

“Be it so, my child: As the bees make honey by gathering juices from many flowering plants and trees, and as these juices reduced to one honey do not know from what flowers they severally come, similarly, my son, all creatures, when they are merged in that one Existence, whether in dreamless sleep or in death, know nothing of their past or present state, because of the ignorance enveloping them—know not that they are merged in him and that from him they came.

“Whatever these creatures are, whether a lion, or a tiger, or a boar, or a worm, or a gnat, or a mosquito, that they remain after they come back from dreamless sleep.

“All these have their self in him alone. He is the truth. He is the subtle essence of all. He is the Self. And that, Svetaketu, THAT ART THOU.”

“Please, sir, tell me more about this Self.”

“Be it so, my son: The rivers in the east flow eastward, the rivers in the west flow westward, and all enter into the sea. From sea to sea they pass, the clouds lifting them to the sky as vapor and sending them down as rain. And as these rivers, when they are united with the sea, do not know whether they are this or that river, likewise all those creatures that I have named, when they have come back from Brahman, know not whence they came.

“All those beings have their self in him alone. He is the truth. He is the subtle essence of all. He is the Self. And that, Svetaketu, THAT ART THOU.”

“Please, sir, tell me more about this Self.”

“Be it so, my child: If someone were to strike once at the root of this large tree, it would bleed, but live. If he were to strike at its stem, it would bleed, but live. If he were to strike at the top, it would bleed, but live. Pervaded by the living Self, this tree stands firm, and takes its food; but if the Self were to depart from one of

its branches, that branch would wither; if it were to depart from a second, that would wither; if it were to depart from a third, that would wither. If it were to depart from the whole tree, the whole tree would wither.

“Likewise, my son, know this: The body dies when the Self leaves it—but the Self dies not.

“All that is has its self in him alone. He is the truth. He is the subtle essence of all. He is the Self. And that, Svetaketu, THAT ART THOU.”

“Please, sir, tell me more about this Self.”

“Be it so. Bring a fruit of that Nyagrodha tree.”

“Here it is, sir.”

“Break it.”

“It is broken, sir.”

“What do you see?”

“Some seeds, extremely small, sir.”

“Break one of them.”

“It is broken, sir.”

“What do you see?”

“Nothing, sir.”

“The subtle essence you do not see, and in that is the whole of the Nyagrodha tree. Believe, my son, that that which is the subtle essence—in that have all things their existence. That is the truth. That is the Self. And that, Svetaketu, THAT ART THOU.”

“Please, sir, tell me more about this Self.”

“Be it so. Put this salt in water, and come to me tomorrow morning.”

Svetaketu did as he was bidden. The next morning his father asked him to bring the salt which he had put in the water. But he could not, for it had dissolved. Then said Uddalaka:

“Sip the water, and tell me how it tastes.”

“It is salty, sir.”

“In the same way,” continued Uddalaka, “though you do not see Brahman in this body, he is indeed here. That which is the subtle

essence—in that have all things their existence. That is the truth. That is the Self. And that, Svetaketu, THAT ART THOU.”

“Please, sir, tell me more about this Self,” said the youth again.

“Be it so, my child: As a man may be blindfolded, and led away, and left in a strange place; and as, having been so dealt with, he turns in every direction and cries out for someone to remove his bandages and show him the way home; and as one thus entreated may loose his bandages and give him comfort; and as thereupon he walks from village to village, asking his way as he goes; and as he arrives home at last—just so does a man who meets with an illumined teacher obtain true knowledge.

“That which is the subtle essence—in that have all beings their existence. That is the truth. That is the Self. And that, O Svetaketu, THAT ART THOU.”

“Please, sir, tell me more about this Self.”

“Be it so, my child: When a man is fatally ill, his relations gather round him and ask, ‘Do you know me? Do you know me? Now until his speech is merged in his mind, his mind in his breath, his breath in his vital heat, his vital heat in the Supreme Being, he knows them. But when his speech is merged in his mind, his mind in his breath, his breath in his vital heat, his vital heat in the Supreme Being, then he does not know them.

“That which is the subtle essence—in that have all beings their existence. That is the truth. That is the Self. And that, O Svetaketu, THAT ART THOU.” (Chandogya Upanishad 6:1:1-6:15:1-3)

Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ. It was necessary that each person should come to understand on his own that Jesus was the Messiah, as had Saint Peter. Otherwise it would not be a true knowing, a true conviction, and when the testing time came his belief would be shaken and dissolved.

PREPARING THE DISCIPLES FOR THE FUTURE

From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day (Matthew 16:21). And he spake that saying openly (Mark 8:32).

Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke [admonish] him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee (Matthew 16:22).

But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.

And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels (Mark 8:33-38).

For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works (Matthew 16:27).

And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power (Mark 9:1).

From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. And he spake that saying openly. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke [admonish] him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. Naturally those whose consciousness is centered in this world and who think that pain and death are the worst that can happen to them, do not like the truth about the way spiritual life in the world really works. People pray to saints, masters and avatars all the time to take their troubles away. Yet if we look at the lives of these holy ones we see that their lives were filled with difficulties and uncertainties. But they did not hinder them in any way, nor did they think they mattered much. Those who love the loaves and fishes hate suffering, persecution and the cross. So they deny the truth regarding these things. How ironic that those who claim to worship him who said, "The Son of man hath not where to lay his head" (Matthew 8:20), preach the Gospel of Prosperity.

But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men. When Jesus saw that by his words Peter was sowing the seeds of false perspective, he very strictly reprimanded him, even addressing him as Satan, the Accuser. To believe that ease and prosperity in this world is the lot of the truly good, and trouble and hardship the lot of the truly bad is utterly perverse and reveals the mind of anti-Christ, not that of Christ. Note that Jesus by his words indicated that the end of the terrible things that would befall him would culminate in his triumphant resurrection from the dead, but those with earthly values did not want it to be so. They would have preferred that Jesus die peacefully of old age surrounded by friends and family, and the words would never be heard: "Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man

can shut it” (Revelation 3:8). The Beloved Disciple, the only one of the Twelve that did not die a martyr’s death because he openly followed Jesus through his trial and stood at the foot of his cross, willing to die, wrote: “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust [desire] of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (I John 2:15-17). Those that savor (*phroneo*—prefer and delight in) the things of God see exactly opposite to the perspective of those that love the perishable things of this world and betray their own self as Judas betrayed Jesus. They betray their own Christ nature to become just another mortal doomed to return to this world over and over until they resurrect into the truth of their Christhood.

Again let us look at the wisdom words of Sister Maddaleva.

Know you the journey that I take?
 Know you the voyage that I make?
 The joy of it – one’s heart could break.

No jot of time have I to spare,
 Nor will to loiter anywhere,
 So eager am I to be there

For tat the way is hard and long,
 For that gray fears upon it throng,
 I set my journey to the song.

And it grows wondrous happy so
 Singing I hurry on for–oh!
 It is to God, to God I go.

And when he had called the people [multitude] unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself;

and take up his cross, and follow me. This message was for everyone, not just the disciples. The word *erchomai* means to accompany someone in the sense of following after them (*opiso*). Being with our inner Christ in our awareness is the only true way to follow Christ. *Aparneomai*, means to deny, disown and separate from something. Every time we identify completely with our finite humanity we deny our Christhood which is the only real thing about us, however buried and therefore hidden it may be. *Akolouthéo* certainly means to follow, but it also means to reach someone. We follow Christ by finding the Christ within. We often speak of seeking God, but since God is everywhere, how do we seek? Only by becoming one with our true Self (Atman) that is already one with the Infinite.

In the parable of the Prodigal Son, his return to where he belonged happened “when he came to himself” (Luke 15:17). *Erchomai* also means to enter into something. When he entered into his Self, he was already on the homeward path. What does it mean to deny oneself? *Aparneomai* means to abstain from or disavow something. It is the false self, the ego with all its conditionings and delusions, that we must deny by recognizing its fundamental unreality as our own personal antichrist. Then we can get in touch with our real Self and enter the Kingdom where we belong. The cross we must bear is this denial of ego, not torturing ourselves. And that cross brings us to life, not death.

When I was in my early teens I saw the American Passion Play performed in Bloomington, Illinois where I lived. It lasted three hours or so and the sets and costumes were marvelous. But the message was what mattered. Throughout some parts of the performance a choir sang in the background. One of the most striking moments of the entire play was when Jesus was carrying the cross. As he was approaching the left side of the stage, the choir began to softly sing a hymn I knew: “Must Jesus bear the cross alone, and all the world go free?” And as he stumbled out of sight, they sang at full volume: “No! There’s a cross for every one, and there’s a cross for me.” I got the idea.

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it. Sozo means to save in the

sense of delivering, protecting and sheltering. We must save ourselves by eliminating ego and enthroning our Self in our life. It also means to heal, preserve and make whole in the sense of uniting what is not divided, by making one our individual Self (jivatman) and the Supreme Self (Paramatman). For that is life within Life. The world, however, sees the foolish ways of the ego as life, and the turning to the spirit-Self as death. The Gospel is the Good News: Thou Art That (Tat Twam Asi).

For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Yes; and what will a person *take* in exchange for surrendering his soul and becoming no more than a physical body? The soul (psyche) is the entire complex of our subtle astral and causal bodies, the inner mechanism (antahkarana) through which we evolve. This is the focus of authentic, liberating yoga. (See *Soham Yoga: The Yoga of the Self*.)

Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. In a time (generation) when almost everyone is engaged in spiritual adultery, having abandoned what spiritual consciousness they had for the “pleasures of the world” that are no more than the predations of the ego and the egocentric fidelity to the outer, false Not-Self, those who yet cling to the inner truth of spirit and Spirit and devote themselves to the recovery of the eternal relation of the two are derided and shrugged off as “behind the times” as “clinging to childish notions that give them a mythical security.” Their derogators smirk, sneer, chuckle and laugh. But behind all that is a guilty resentment and hatred of anyone who will not “run not with them to the same” destruction of their souls (I Peter 4:4).

Sadly, there are many who desire a spiritual life, and who have come part of the way in establishing themselves on the upward path, that are yet unable to face the mockery of those who are wading in the swamp of this world. They are ashamed and unable to stand up reveal their aspirations. As they pretend to not be seekers of the narrow way, in the same way they will be ignored and let alone to sink in the swamp, since that is their choice in the face of derision.

The last part of this verse is not about the second coming or the judgment, but about those times when there is an increase in the inner world of spiritual awareness, times when higher consciousness is “walking by” and our state of mind and heart at that time determines if we will even be aware that an opportunity to “arise and go” offers itself. Those who seek to hide their spiritual impetus from the ignorant and foolish will become blind to it themselves.

For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. There are many advents of spiritual awakenings and the openings of doors and ways to higher life. Those who embrace their approaching opportunities shall be rewarded with more chances to ascend into divine experience and understanding. Those who do not will not better themselves. What we do not sow we do not reap. We do it to ourselves.

And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power. This is usually thought to refer to the “second coming,” but it does not. All those hearing Jesus speak these words have physically died. Rather, Jesus is saying that some of those present would attain perfect realization—see the kingdom of God come with power—before leaving their body, as was the case with many of his disciples.

THE TRANFIGURATION OF JESUS

And it came to pass about eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening.

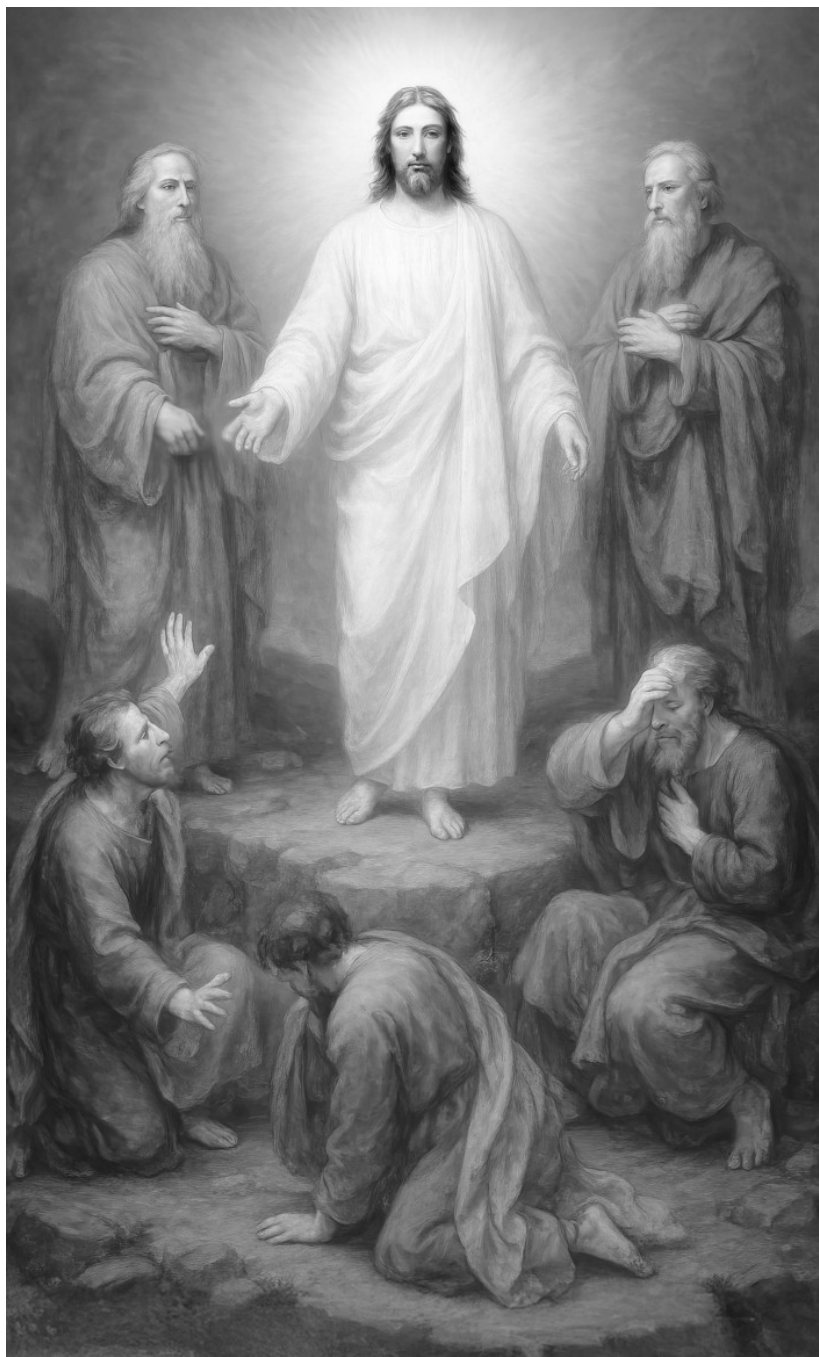
And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.

But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him. And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: not knowing what he said.

While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud. And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.

[And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only. (Matthew 17:6-8)]

And they kept it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen (Luke 9:28-36).



And it came to pass about eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. In the Bible many things are related that took place “on the eighth day.” In some of them, as in this incident, there is a definite symbolic lesson. There are seven days in the week of the earthly calendar, so the eighth day is that which is beyond earthly time, a symbol of eternity. It begins “about eight days”—on the seventh day that was leading to the eighth. So the ascent to the Mount of Transfiguration begins in time and leads to—ends in—eternity, to the pinnacle of illumined consciousness. There are lessons for the mystic, the yogi, in this incident.

The first is that we must ascend in our consciousness as is symbolized in the ascent on the mountain. Jesus did not take all the disciples, only the most advanced ones: Peter, John and James. So the second lesson is that we must leave behind all that cannot “ascend” with us, all that is “of the earth, earthly” (John 3:31). Often people want to know what they should do in spiritual life. This is laudable and reasonable, but they should also determine what they should *not* be doing—what is incompatible with Self-realization. In the just-cited verse Jesus continues: “He that cometh from heaven is above all.” And we must be the same by ascending the “mountain” of spiritual transformation through yoga sadhana.

And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistering. The word translated “altered” is *metamorphoo*, which literally means changed, transfigured and transformed. The divine light that was the very being, the consciousness, of Jesus which was usually unseen, began to shine forth even from his clothing as well as his body so the disciples could see that Jesus truly was a living embodiment of “the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world” (John 1:9). Earlier he had told the disciples, “Ye are the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14). Later Saint Paul wrote to the early Christians: “Now are ye light in the Lord” (Ephesians 5:8), and: “Ye are all the children of light” (I Thessalonians 5:5). We are unrevealed Christs. Divine consciousness is the very core of our being, our true Self, which must be revealed in us, awakening us from the dream that we are mortal and separate from God. The awakening yogi who perseveres shall come to know that God “hath

called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (I Peter 2:9) of Self-realization. That we are “light of light, true god of true God, begotten, not created, of one essence with the Father” as the Nicene Creed says about Jesus. Saint John wrote the absolute truth: “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (I John 3:2). Consequently, the intelligent yogi “that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure” (I John 3:3). Those who would call these ideas blasphemy are the real blasphemers when they tell us we are sinners deserving eternal hell. For they deny and blaspheme the “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27).

And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. So the disciples actually heard the coming sufferings and death of Jesus discussed with him. Why it did not remain in their memory is inexplicable, but they must have recalled it after Jesus’ resurrection.

But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep. This is an interesting phenomenon. Sometimes when people come into a very highly charged spiritual atmosphere they become very sleepy or actually fall asleep—slip into a subconscious state. Sometimes this is because they begin to enter an altered state which can go either downward into subconsciousness or upward into superconsciousness, and most fall asleep from habit.

Fortunately something wakened the disciples. *And when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him.* So shall we also experience the inner glory and see its workings around us. After reading the Bhagavad Gita my entire experiencing of my life was a matter of glorious wonder and increasing awakening and insight. Therefore I protected and increased that wonder by getting away from the dead world I was living in and speeding to California to live with other yogis. It was surely significant that the day I moved next door to the Self-Realization Fellowship center on Sunset Boulevard was July 4—Independence Day. Sri Ramana Maharshi said that there are two essential things for the yogi: vegetarian diet and satsang, the company of other yogis.

And it came to pass, as they [Moses and Elias] departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: not knowing what he said. Sometimes after an intense experience people become momentarily disoriented and speak nonsense. A friend of mine barely averted crashing into another car and being killed. He pulled over to the side of the road and loudly said, "I really like cream cheese!" He never figured out where that came from! So in the after-effect of his experience of the transfiguration, Saint Peter made this silly, senseless statement, even though Moses and Elias (Elijah) had left. And why would Jesus stay there on the mountain? But only good comes from genuine spiritual experience, so:

While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud. It was a cloud of light which enveloped them completely, so naturally they were apprehensive or even afraid, as people often are when they first experience spiritual phenomena for themselves. This is one of the reasons that it takes courage to be a yogi.

And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him. Moses and Elijah represented the past ways of the Mosaic Law and the Hebrew prophets. The disciples had heard Jesus say: "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached" (Luke 16:16). Spiritual life was no longer merely behavioral and intellectual, but was now through the teachings of Jesus a matter of the spirit, of the opening of the consciousness of each one's divine Christ-Self in perfect Self-knowledge. The Law and the prophets were preparation for the revelation of Self-realization. It was very difficult for the early Jewish Christians to give up and turn from their ancestral ways, just as it can be difficult to awaken inwardly and begin living that awakening outwardly in one's life. But the three disciples had to learn that. And right then.

Moses and Elijah represent the body and the mind, and Jesus represents the pure consciousness that is the spirit-Self. After countless incarnations of living in the experience of the body and mind/emotions, it is a great wrench to turn from them by consciously subordinating them to our newly-found understanding and awareness. But it is absolutely necessary if we would live in the spirit-Self.

And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. Fear is a dominant element in this vision of the Divine Light. Why? Because it is the beginning of the ending of our experience as mortals and the entry into experience as the immortal Self. This requires a total break from the past which has been millions of years at the least that have created in us a virtually infinite amount of conditionings in the forms of samskaras and vasanas. This will not be shaken off so easily since we have identified with them through creation-cycles. Freedom from them is the death of ignorance and delusion and the advent of wisdom and true-sight in our Self. We are leaving the effects of millions (if not billions) of bodies and minds behind and entering into the sole reality beyond all bodies—our true Self.

And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only. When we see only the Eternal both in and as everything, then we are Seeing True with the Truth of our own Self. This is a very drastic break with our former mode of experience and can even seem like death itself. And it is death, but only the death of illusion and the opening of Reality which is Life. The true “resurrection of the dead” is the resurrection of our true Self. Swami Sivananda wrote this about his resurrection:

Only God I Saw

When I surveyed from Ananda Kutir, Rishikesh,
By the side of the Tehri Hills, only God I saw.
In the Ganges and the Kailas peak,
In the famous Chakra Tirtha of Naimisar also, only God I saw.

In the Dedhichi Kand of Misrik,
In the sacred Triveni of Prayag Raj too, only God I saw.
In the Maya Kund of Rishikesh and
In the springs of Badri, Yamunotri and Gauri-Kund to boot,
only God I saw.

In tribulation and in grief, in joy and in glee,
In sickness and in sorrow, only God I saw.
In birds and dogs, in stones and trees,
In flowers and fruits, in the sun, moon and stars, only God I saw.

In the rosy cheeks of Kashmiri ladies,
In the dark faces of African negroes, only God I saw.
In filth and scents, in poison and dainties,
In the market and in society, only God I saw.

In trains and cars, in aeroplanes and steamers,
In Jutkas and dandies, in tumtums and landan, only God I saw.
I talked to the flowers, they smiled and nodded,
I conversed with the running brooks, they verily responded,
only God I saw.

In prayer and fasting, in praise and meditation,
In Japa and Asana, in Tratak and concentration, only God I saw.
In Pranayama and Nauli, in Bhasti and Neti,
In Dhouti and Vajroli, in Bhastrika and Kundalini, only God I saw.

In Brahmakara Vritti and Vedantic Nididhyasana,
In Atmic Vichara and Atmic Chintana, only God I saw.
In Kirtan and Nama Smaran, in Sravana and Vandana,
In Archana and Padasevana, in Dasya and Atmanivedana,
only God I saw.

Like camphor I was melting in His fire of knowledge,
Amidst the flames outflashing, only God I saw.
My Prana entered the Brahmarandhra at the Moordha,
Then I looked with God's eyes, only God I saw.

I passed away into nothingness, I vanished,
And lo, I was the all-living, only God I saw.

I enjoyed the Divine Aisvarya, all God's Vibhutis,
I had Viswarupa Darshan, the Cosmic Consciousness, only God I
saw.

We are all destined for this resurrection-awakening within ourselves.

And they kept it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen.

They did not keep silent because they were afraid, but because such sacred things should not lightly be made known to those who cannot understand or value them. This, too, is the mark of a yogi. He keeps his experiences and insights all to himself, revealing them only to another yogi who is following the same sadhana path. And only carefully and cautiously even then.

There is also another reason. The effects of an inner experience can be lost through speaking or writing of it. Years ago I read in an article about fiction writing that an author should not ever tell his ideas for a story or plot because in the telling something of his inspiration evaporates in his inmost mind. The author of the article said that it was like losing the sheen on a piece of fruit by handling it. We may not understand this, but we should heed the advice. I have read that Yogananda usually never spoke of his plans or projects to others, feeling that some power or energy for their accomplishment would be lost.

Personal spiritual experiences should be kept within unless we intuitively feel we should reveal them—and to whom they should be revealed.

So: "They kept it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen." Later Saint Mathew revealed it in his Gospel by divine inspiration.

And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.

[And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean (Mark 9:10).]

And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them.

Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist (Matthew 17:9-13).

And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead. As the wise Solomon said, “there is a time to keep silence, and a time to speak” (Ecclesiastes 3:7). There are also some people to not tell the things of the spirit and those to whom they should be told. Spiritual intelligence is needed to know which is which. Ignorant and dead souls always deny and deride that which is of the higher life, the life of spiritual realities. But awakened and living souls respond with glad recognition of the truths of higher life—especially the glad news that the higher life can be attained and established in us through spiritual practice: yoga sadhana.

And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean. This is an example of what I have just said: some things should be kept to ourselves. So the disciples did not tell others of the transfiguration until after the resurrection of Jesus, which they could not understand at that time. Many things encountered in spiritual teachings are symbolic and some are literal, and they had no idea which the words of Jesus were about resurrection from the dead might be. The concept was not new to them, because the Pharisees believed in a future resurrection quite openly. But how could Jesus arise from the dead when he was alive and with them at the moment? Their puzzlement was quite reasonable.

There are many things spoken about the yoga life that are a mystery and may even seem absurd and impossible. The yogi should honestly admit this to himself, but keep quiet about it to others. I can give three examples which you may think only prove me a liar or crazy, but here they are.

1) When I was a beginning yogi living in Hollywood, I went one day with some friends to a restaurant. As we walked up to it I saw in a niche by the door a white marble statue of a very fat human figure with an elephant's head. I asked them what that was supposed to be, and they told me it was the Hindu god Ganesha who had an elephant head. "How really stupid!" I exclaimed in my amateur-yogi assured ignorance. "Whoever heard of such a thing!" But some weeks later while meditating I clearly saw Ganesha. So I knew he was real and did truly have the head of an elephant. (Later I learned the whole story of how that came to be.)

2) In reading a book that told about the avatar Rama, I found the statement that his skin was green. I was disgusted. What a ridiculous thing to say. A green man! But one day in meditation I saw Rama. And he was green—not bright green, but a very subtle of green. So I learned he *was* green. Later in another book I read that he was light green like a new blade of grass—exactly as I had seen him to be.

3) Sacred texts say that Krishna was blue. By the time I read that I had learned a bit, so I did not believe it, but did not disbelieve it, either. When I saw Krishna I saw he was very dark, more bluish than outright blue. I thought of it as "negroid blue." One day in rainy weather I saw a distant cloud that was exactly the color I had seen, and pointed it out to another yogi. Later I learned that Krishna is commonly referred to as Ghanashyam—dark as a storm cloud.

For the yogi especially it is true: Live and learn.

And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist. John the Baptist was the reincarnation of the prophet Elijah (Elias). As Elijah he had rebuked King Ahab for illegally marrying Jezebel, so Jezebel was determined to have him killed, and died with that desire unfulfilled. But she was reborn as Herodias and was illegally married to King Herod. So Elizah/John the Baptist rebuked Ahab/Herod again for being wrongly married to Jezebel/Herodias. This

time she had her way. She had a horrible daughter like herself, named Salome and here is how she worked it out:

“At that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus, and said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him. For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for Herodias’ sake, his brother Philip’s wife. For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her. And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet. But when Herod’s birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod. Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask. And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist’s head in a charger [a large dish]. And the king was sorry: nevertheless for the oath’s sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded it to be given her. And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison. And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought it to her mother. And his disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus” (Matthew 14:1-12).

THE WAY TO SPIRITUAL POWER

And when he came to his disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them. And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to him saluted him. And he asked the scribes, What question ye with them?

And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; and wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not.

He answereth him, and saith, O faithless [unbelieving] generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me.

And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming.

And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child. And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.

Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.

When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him. And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead. But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose.

And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out? And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting (Mark 9:14-29).

And when he came to his disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them. And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to him saluted him. And he asked the scribes, What question ye with them? The Scribes, “theologians” who were interested only in the mechanics of religion and intellectual conceptions, were questioning others, perhaps to determine their orthodoxy of belief and practice, for with them everything was conceptual and behavioral. Something metaphysical (supernatural) was far beyond their viewpoint, so they were no doubt wanting to establish that the man was deluded about his son’s condition.

This is the way of the materialists that claim to be rational. However, some of their “rational explanations” are so far-fetched and irrational that they can be entertaining and at least good for a laugh. For example, one flight of “rational” fantasy explains the parting of the Red Sea for the Hebrews to escape from Egypt as a natural occurrence at the moment the land mass now known as South America broke away from what is now Africa and made the water temporarily drain away. Those less audacious and much less imaginative in their explanations say that it was not the Red Sea at all, but “the reed sea” that was just a swampy area—as though the Bible was written in English and a copyist missed a letter in “reed.” Impressive.

And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb [mute] spirit; and wheresoever he

taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not. I have mentioned before that in the womb our higher self supervised the development of our bodies, and consequently they are configured to our specific mind/karma. If, then, an alien intelligence invades our bodies and minds and attempts to control it, profound conflict is set up and our bodies and brains no longer function as they should. As the deeply buried mind struggles against the possession and the invading entity strives to take away the bodily functions from our control, dramatic reactions result. In this case the boy could no longer speak and epileptic symptoms manifested. (Please do not conclude from this that epileptics are possessed.)

More will be described by the father shortly.

He answereth him, and saith, O faithless [unbelieving] generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me. Anechomai, the word translated “suffer,” means to endure or put up with something.

Not only the crowd, but the disciples themselves are decried by Jesus as the faithless generation—those not (at least yet) belonging to the “generation” of Christ Himself.

Exoteric religion is centered on the material, including the human body. Esoteric religion is centered in the higher levels of the aspirant, especially the intellect and the will, for they have great “thought power” as their very nature. Consequently, the mind (of the yogi especially) greatly influences its surrounding, including the material world.

Therefore our thoughts can determine the effectiveness or the hindering or blocking of matters psychic or spiritual. For unbelief is often not just a matter of non-belief—not believing in something or its possibility—but of actual anti-belief—the active willing that something not happen, exist, occur or even be possible. Such a will can effectively block spiritual and psychic events or manifestations from happening, especially when a group of people is emitting such thought-power.

This is indicated by an incident in the Gospel: “And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence. And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue,

insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things? And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house. And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief" (Matthew 13:53-58). Jesus' opponents were astonished at his miracles (mighty works) and "were offended in him" because they were real and undeniable. Such people are still with us today.

And they brought him [the possessed boy] unto him: and when he saw him [Jesus], straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming [at the mouth]. The very sight of a holy person or a sacred image is repelling and even painful to evil people and evil spirits.

One day in a satsang with Swami Sivananda, a devotee told us that in the Second World War he was stationed in Europe. While there he visited a famous monastery that had for centuries been renowned for the exorcism of evil spirits. There was large room in the monastery where there was a very large image of the Virgin Mary against one wall. All around the floor were chains for holding the head, feet and hands of the possessed so they would be forced to see the image, the sight of which eventually expelled the evil spirits. He gave no explanation, but as a yogi I knew that the mind is a field of magnetic energy which shapes itself into whatever it sees through the eyes. And when the possessed—and their possessors, the evil spirits—saw the holy image their minds were shaped not just into her form but into her sacred vibration which drives away all evil. (In the praises of the Eastern Christians to the Virgin she is called "The Wailing of Demons," because the Mother, Mahashakti, aspect of God repels all evil. In India the Goddess Durga is invoked to exorcize evil spirits.) So when the possessing spirit saw Jesus, he began causing convulsions in the boy's body.

And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child. And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us. The father understands that the spirit wants to kill his son,

perhaps to fully possess and live in and through the boy's body, and if it fails, to kill him through malice.

Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. This is a principle we need to understand and apply. *Pistevo*, believing, is not mere positive thinking and affirmation, but is the result of actually intuiting and experiencing the supernatural. Such a believing person will not be ordinary, because he has had experience of higher realities. A healer is able to heal through his knowledge of those spiritual realities. Only one who has experienced, and to some degree become established in, that higher awareness can heal. Faith is needed, but "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). Faith is the positive vibration (and therefore power) produced by the unseen realities being known to the one who has faith. This is a very important matter for the yogi whose major focus is on the unseen inner realities. His sadhana produces in him awareness of subtle forces (realities) and the ability to evoke and apply those forces. Sadhana itself teaches and empowers the yogi who practices authentic yoga and not just some stimulation of psychic energies erroneously called yoga. (See *Soham Yoga: The Yoga of the Self*.) Faith is a result of Higher Knowing. Nothing is then impossible, but deep insight is needed by the yogi to discern what should or should not be done.

And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief. We have all experienced being "of two minds" about something. In fact Saint James the Great said "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways" (James 1:8), because he veers back and forth from one idea or impulse to another. And it often is a mental-spiritual problem that hinders us greatly. Such a state does need help in the form of stabilization. What we need is not to apply our will and bulldoze our way through a problem or situation. Rather, we need to have insight into a thing or situation, seeing the truth of its nature and the best way to deal with it. Spiritual intuition is developed by meditation and reveals the best way to deal with anything. This is one of the ways in which authentic yoga produces *abhaya*, the absence of fear, doubt or hesitation in the yogi's mind.

When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him. And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead. But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose. This is harrowing to witness, but I have been told by others about it who saw such things occur. However, it is not unknown that negative spirits often leave quietly when the possessed person is brought into the healing atmosphere of a sacred place or a holy individual.

And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out? And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting. The needed prayer is not just something done at the moment, but continual prayer by the person(s) seeking to banish the spirit. And the best form of that is constant mantra japa, which often is sufficient in itself to banish negative spirits. Fasting does not mean some drastic starvation of oneself, but a judicious abstinence from eating for a short time—even just a few hours—so the exorcist can marshal the pranic forces in his mind body that would be drained off or deflected by the digestive process, especially if a heavy meal had been eaten.

More from the Gospel of Saint Matthew:

Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting (Matthew 17:19-27).

There are many kinds of faith arising from many factors, but the faith needed for miracles is faith engendered by spiritual experience, which only comes from faithful spiritual practice, especially meditation. When the yogi meditates he links his consciousness with the Infinite Consciousness

and his consciousness reflects the divine Consciousness that is omnipotent. That experience produces calm assurance in the yogi's mind, and he no longer just believes, he believes and knows. This is what Saint Paul was referring to when he wrote, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). When this spiritual insight is established in the yogi, nothing remains impossible to him that does not violate the divine law and justice. The very word of such a yogi who is *yoga-yukta*, united with the Divine through yoga sadhana, is not his word alone, but the word of God with which his Self is always united. God does not work miracles capriciously or to amaze observers. But if there is a need and one who is united with God says the word it shall be done as he says. God has moved a mountain at the word of a holy person.

Here is what happened.

Some centuries back in Egypt the enemies of Christianity went to the Moslem ruler and told him that the Christians claimed they could move mountains. So he called in the Patriarch of the Coptic Church and asked him if this was true. When the patriarch said it was, the ruler set a date for him to prove it, saying that if he could not make a mountain move, the Christians would be executed for their claim. The patriarch sent out the word to all the Christians to pray fervently for God's response and protection.

When the appointed day came, virtually the whole population of Cairo assembled outside the city limits where there was a large mountain. At the command of the ruler, the patriarch stepped forth and said to the mountain, "Dur!" which means "Move!" And the mountain began moving in the direction of the ocean. The ruler was terrified and told the patriarch to make the mountain stop—which he did by saying "Stop" (in Arabic—I do not know the word), and the mountain stopped. So the Christians were not executed. And today Dur Mountain is there outside Cairo. In the twentieth century geologists examined both the spot where it had been originally and its base. They declared that absolutely the mountain had been in that original place, though they had no explanation for it. I visited that mountain and was told its history by the Coptic Christians of Cairo. I had no trouble believing, because I grew up with a miracle-working

grandmother who healed the sick and raised the dead, and I myself had witnessed the blind see and the lame walk through prayer.

And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God. But while they wondered every one at all things which Jesus did, he said unto his disciples, Let these sayings sink down into your ears: for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men. [And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again (Matthew 17:23).] But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask him of that saying. (Luke 9:43-45)

And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God. But while they wondered every one at all things which Jesus did, he said unto his disciples, Let these sayings sink down into your ears:... There are disciples who purify their life, learn and follow what they are taught. And then there are the groupies, those that vicariously share in the glory of a teacher or renowned figure, but go no further than using their association to impress and appear “spiritual” themselves. Such people are elated by anything that adds to the teacher’s reputation and respect. But Jesus did not intend for his disciples to be groupies, so he directs their minds to what matters: not momentary notoriety and respect. He wanted them to have the same insight into people in general as he did. We have already read Saint John’s account: “Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man” (John 2:23-25). The praise of most people is worthless. There is a short poem that says:

On [Palm] Sunday the people all shouted for joy;
And on Friday the King they did destroy.

So Jesus told the disciples what was really going to matter, and for which he was born.

...for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again. Not a pleasant prospect for those who are “of the earth, earthly,” but it was the hope of the world.

But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask him of that saying. Interesting, isn't it?

They were always asking Jesus about what he said and did—and why. But not this. It was beyond their comprehension. Although when he had earlier said it, “Peter took him, and began to rebuke [admonish] him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee” (Matthew 16:22).

WHO IS GREAT IN THE KINGDOM OF SPIRIT?

At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

[For by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest. (Mark 9:34)]

And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.

But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!

Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire.

And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.

Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.

How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray.

Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish. (Matthew 18:1-14)

At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? [For by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest.] Here is unrestrained egotism, but exoteric religion usually results in the desire and competition for being greater than another.

And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. The word translated “converted” is *strephe*, which means to turn around completely or to reverse the direction one is going. It also has the connotation of returning to a former state.

Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. The wording implies that a person can consciously cultivate humility and thereby become great in the realm of the spirit. Then Jesus further says that whoever receives such a one actually is receiving Jesus himself.

But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!

Skandalizo, the word translated “offend,” mean to entrap, deceive or entice someone to wrongdoing—an act of deliberate malice and evil.

Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire. If anything in ourselves or outside ourselves, including external situations or other people, is/are pulling us toward any form of negativity, outer or inner, it/they must be cut off and banished from our life sphere absolutely and instantly, and we must do everything to prevent their return. This requires external and internal vigilance and readiness to act in our defense. It also requires doing our utmost to see that they never return. Sometimes we must rid ourselves of such a threat, and sometimes it means our removing ourselves from any threatening situation.

Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven. *Kataphroneo*, translated “despise,” mean to think less of something, to consider it of no consequence.

These words of Jesus were meant primarily in reference to other people, and must be taken seriously in that manner, but they also apply to the things that may cause us to offend or transgress in the life of the spirit. From childhood onward I heard spiritually careless people saying, “Oh, that little thing won’t hurt me,” or “Something that small doesn’t really matter.” But they do, because of what they can become—and also because of what they really are through we cannot see it. The prophet Ezekiel had a vision that is relevant to this matter.

“And he [an angel] brought me to the door of the court; and when I looked, behold a hole in the wall. Then said he unto me, Son of man, dig now in the wall: and when I had digged in the wall, behold a door. And he said unto me, Go in, and behold the wicked abominations that they do here. So I went in and saw; and behold every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, pourtrayed upon the wall round about. And there stood before them seventy men of

the ancients of the house of Israel, and in the midst of them stood Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan, with every man his censer in his hand; and a thick cloud of incense went up. Then said he unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? for they say, The Lord seeth us not” (Ezekiel 8:7-12). A little hole was really a door—a door to evil! And that is true of many things, including people and situations. In spiritual life as well as in civil life, eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. “And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch” (Mark 13:37). The word *gregoreuo* means to be awake and watchful. We should never be afraid or anxious, but at all times we must be aware of potential threats and dangers.

For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost. But we have the last word in that, for even God cannot save us if we are careless and neglectful and thereby lose our own soul. “For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” (Mark 8:36).

How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish. Evil religion makes its adherents think that God is implacable and callous toward those that do wrong, but that is utterly false. God truly does seek and save the lost. And no one is “lost” forever. In time we all return to Him in Whom “we live, and move, and have our being” (Acts 17:28), even now.

THE RIGHT PERSPECTIVE

And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbad him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us (Luke 9:49-50).

More than once in the Gospels we have a hint of people who were not even known to the apostles, yet were Jesus' disciples. Was there an "inner circle" that no one but Jesus knew? The ancient Christian Gnostics declared that was so, and claimed they were the spiritual descendants of those unknown disciples who had a better knowledge of Jesus' words than the "official" Christians. However that may be, Jesus did not mind another than the twelve working miracles in his name. And he did say to the twelve, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold" (John 10:16).

A very important perspective and attitude is expressed in his words, "He that is not against us is for us." Christians really like to draw lines and declare those they do not like or that do not agree with them as heretics that should be cast out and shunned. But there is wisdom in Edwin Markham's little poem:

He drew a circle that shut me out—
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.
But Love and I had the wit to win:
We drew a circle that took him in!

And God is has done the same, for the Bhagavad Gita says: "Whatever path men travel is my path: no matter where they walk it leads to me"

(4:11). All life paths eventually lead to the One Path that takes us to God. For God is the ultimate source of all that exist—including us.

FORGIVENESS AND MERCY

Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?

Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.

Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience

with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.

So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses. (Matthew 18:15-35)

Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. Philosophy or religion is worthless if it is not accompanied, supported and demonstrated by action in conformity with the principles of that philosophy or religion. True religion is not merely believed, it is experienced and acted upon. That is why Saint James said plainly, “faith without works is dead” (James 2:20, 26). This being so, Jesus is giving very clear instructions about our dealings with others.

The first principle is not to sit and brood and fume about a supposed wrong someone may have done to us. Rather, we should speak with that person one-to-one without telling anyone else about the problem. If the matter is cleared up, then we have established harmony between us and fulfilled the counsel of Saint Paul, “Follow peace with all men” (Hebrews 12:14).

But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. If the person refuses to listen or be reconciled and the matter is very serious, perhaps affecting other people in some way, then one or two others should witness your endeavors at harmony. If that does not work, then more associates may be consulted and assist you. If that does not succeed, then you should withdraw all contact and consider him outside your life sphere, and live at peace with yourself.

Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. We have considered this earlier in the sixteenth chapter of Saint Matthew. *Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.* The disciples had esoteric knowledge, not just rote, intellectual “faith,” and therefore could produce or invoke change by applying that wisdom. The British occultist Dion Fortune (Dr. Violet Firth) defined “magic” as making a change through an act of will. This certainly includes the putting forth of the will by a person of inner development and perception. I have read accounts of people who healed someone by their intense desire and will for that person to be well. It is interesting that Jesus recommends that two or three be united in that intention.

Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven. In other words, forgiveness should be a natural reflex for those who desire to attain higher spiritual life and consciousness. And there is no numerical limit for forgiving. But it should be pointed out that forgiving is not forgetting, and safeguards can be rightly taken to prevent any harm from such “sins.” And sometimes steps must be taken to ensure that the “sins” cannot occur again.

This is not the place to discuss such things further, but I recommend Dion Fortune’s valuable book *Psychic Self Defense* which, though written

nearly a century ago, is the best study of the subject I know. I also recommend my study *Psychic Defense For Yogis* posted on the ocoy.org website.

Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses. In other words, IT IS ALL A MATTER OF KARMA, mental as well as physical.

GETTING THE RIGHT PERSPECTIVE

And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, and sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.

And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village. (Luke 9:51-56)

This is the most perilous aspect of acquiring psychic powers of various kinds without the necessary purification of mind and heart that is needed to wisely use them. Saint John is considered the apostle of love. At the end of his life when he had become too feeble to speak aloud, it was noticed that his lips continually moved. Seeing that, one of those near him put his hear close to the apostle's mouth and heard that he was saying over and over: "Little children, love one another." Yet here he is quite ready to burn up everyone who was not hospitable to them! This is why the sages of India have warned aspirants from the use of psychic powers. For ego may still be lurking in the heart and impel them to misuse those powers. Healing and deliverance are the two aims of a true spiritual teacher and aspirants. A careful watch must be kept over mind and heart lest shadows

from the past arise and hinder the progress of the aspiring yogi. We should not condemn ourselves, but we should never fully trust ourselves, either. Many things lie within the deep mind, and though we should not be paranoid about that, we must be on guard lest darkness arise and cloud our minds. "And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch" (Mark 13:37). The word *gregoreuo* means to keep awake and be watchful. The upward path can be as perilous as the downward path if the heart is not kept pure and at peace. At all times Be A Yogi.

And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head. (Luke 9:57-58)

Those whose consciousness has not evolved beyond materiality and animality can rest on and within the earth in contentment. But those who have become truly human in heart and mind cannot be satisfied with a hole in the ground, and truly cannot rest their minds and hearts anywhere or upon anything that is merely earthly. There is a hymn that asks:

Have you heard a voice from heaven
 Calling in a solemn tone:
 Come My people, from confusion:
 This is not your native home.

And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.

And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God. (Luke 9:59-62)

In a later chapter of Saint Luke's Gospel we will find a list of excuses to stay away from higher life and burrow into the earth of ignorance and believe oneself to be absolved of all spiritual obligation. But here we have a pretty good start in human aversion to a genuine, deeply-rooted spiritual life.

And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. The man did not mean that his father's dead body was back home and he needed to go bury it. He meant that until his father died he was obligated to live at home rather than follow Jesus. But Jesus told him that the spiritually dead—which included his father—should be left for the spiritually dead to bury them physically, but the spiritually alive should leave the world of the spiritually dead behind. He even said that the man should “preach the kingdom of God,” which indicates this man was not someone new to Jesus, but someone he intended to teach along with his other apostles. So he had spent time with Jesus and seen his miraculous life, but that did not outweigh his personal aversion to a dedicated spiritual life. I remember a woman using her husband as an excuse, saying that her obligation to him had come before she had formed any spiritual obligations. But no one had told her to leave her husband, so why did she say that? Because she wanted to appear noble and true, when in reality she was just a cowardly spiritual dropout. This ploy is not new to me; a few others have done the same over the years. Spiritual honesty is a rare thing, I am sad to say.

However, there is another valuable lesson for us here. “Let the dead bury their dead.” In the film, *The Emerald Forest* the chief of an Amazon tribe refers to the “civilized world” as “the dead world.” It is so, spiritually speaking. But the citizens of that dead world will want those who are striving upward to stop and engage with them in the worries and hurries of ordinary deluded life, whether civil or personal. “Get engaged.” “Make a difference.” “Fulfill your obligations.” And forget your true inner reality, your divine Self. We dare not even lean toward doing that. Just as the newly-formed embryo in the womb has but a fragile tie to physical life, so the aspirant must realize that his spiritual life is fragile and tenuous,

and must be shielded and fostered diligently. Truly: "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:14). And even fewer enter it.

And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. A man stayed some time at our ashram and made noises about becoming a monk. But he said that first he wanted to go to the west coast to "say goodbye to the ocean." Well, today he need not say goodbye, for he lives at the ocean in the South Pacific and wind-surfs daily, having abandoned his wife and child and pretensions to monastic life.

And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God. The aspirant that will succeed sets his sights on the highest realization and keeps on moving steadily toward that goal, not looking back. Those who hesitate and look back and waver are not fit, not worthy, to attain the divine kingdom of freedom in the spirit. Such people should not be coddled or cajoled, nor should there be an attempt to "salvage" them. They are unfit and therefore unable to enter the kingdom. This should be faced. And instead of worrying about them, the wise aspirant should consider himself and his own weaknesses and guard against them by making himself strong through yoga sadhana. Where is a will there is a way; and where there is no will there is no way.

Now the Jews' [Judeans'] feast of tabernacles was at hand. His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest. For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world. For neither did his brethren believe in him.

Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready. The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.

Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come. When he had said these words unto them, he abode still in Galilee. (John 7:2-9)

Now the Jews [Judeans]' feast of tabernacles was at hand. His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest. For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world. For neither did his brethren believe in him. This is a most interesting passage because Jesus' relatives (*adelphos* means close relation, though often translated "brother") urge him to go to Judea, and therefore Jerusalem, and work miracles there. Their real intention-hope is that he will fail to make any impression on the religious authorities and the pilgrims that would be in Jerusalem for the feast. They no doubt also hope that the religious leaders will confront and discredit Jesus so he would stop being "above himself" and come home and be like them. This is way of the world.

Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready. There are special people sent into this world for the upliftment of others and they are subject to perceiving what is the right time to fulfill their purpose. But we should not wait for the "right time," but immediately begin to fulfill our purpose for incarnation in this world: working toward our ultimate Self-realization. This is the only reason we are here, and the only purpose or obligation we have. Therefore our entire attention should be directed to the fulfilling of that purpose by attaining perfect Self-realization. To do less is to fail as a human being. For we are all divine at this very moment. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure: (I John 3:3).

Here we come to the practical aspect. We have to understand the way to go about gaining Self-realization. Otherwise we are like a character in a Woody Allen movie who tried to play the cello by blowing through the holes. The path to purification—clarity of consciousness—is yoga sadhana. For we must be the same as God—Saint John says so. And that requires the permanent removal of all obstacles to that divine likeness which is our true nature already. Yoga alone does that. Other processes are just psychic gymnastics that do not lead anywhere, but which distract us from the true path.

The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil. The word translated “hate” is *miseo*, which also means detest or persecute. Those who are truly part of the world and in complete synchronization with its deluded ways and ideals are themselves the world. Therefore they are carried along in the current of the world, inseparable from it. So they cannot be in conflict with the world, but they establish and empower it. Worldlings are the world itself, so they are not just at peace with it, they are its sustainers and perpetuators.

But those who are awakening and realizing they are separate from the world, that the world is deadly to their real existence as the Self, become its opponents, striving to turn from it and ascend to the higher reality that is their essential being. They do not hate the world, but detest the bondage of the world and realize that the world is death and the spirit is life. Often a great resistance arises from our outward life (and those within it) the moment we see through the mirage to the destructive nature of life in this world with its illusions and delusions.

It takes tremendous courage to awaken and look with clear and open sight at the world and our unlife—even anti-life—within it. And there is only one sane reaction: to turn away and move into higher life and consciousness and leave it all behind as we move ever upward into the limitless potentials of the spirit through the yoga life. Sadhana is the only path or door to freedom we shall ever have. That is why the essential message of the Bhagavad Gita is simply: Be A Yogi.

Between the yogi and the world there is unreconcilable opposition. It is not emotion or hatred on the yogi's part, but an irrevocable opposition in orientation and purpose, for the world is death to the spirit, and the spirit is death to the world. This is a basic fact which the sadhaka must ever keep in mind. He must both fight for his life and run for his life—according to what his relationship with the world might be. Only the awakening yogi has the insight and the inner strength to win the fight and win the race. Therefore Swami Vivekananda often said: “Awake! Arise! And stop not till you reach the Goal!” When I was much younger, in church we used to sing:

O soul, be up and doing,
 You have no time to lose.
 There is life and death before you:
 O which one will you choose?

When I became a yogi I chose life—not before. And yoga was the door and the way to the chosen life.

Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come. Two verses go together: “Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready.... Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come” (John 7:6, 8). Jesus is not speaking in an offhand manner, but quite exactly. The entire cosmos is a field of living energy that is in continual movement or vibration. It is an ocean of energies, and like an ocean it has tides—cyclic movements—that can ensure either success or failure according to whether they are favorable or whether we are in synchronization with them. This fact is the basis of divination and astrology, both of which have great value to the intelligent individual who understands these things. The yogi should not be led astray by the ignorance of Western “spirituality” which pretends to be pure spirit and above and beyond all such “superstitions” such as these age-old systems of wisdom that are invaluable to those whose consciousness has extended itself beyond materiality and mere sensory experience and evaluation. Let’s look at three invaluable aids to inner and outer life.

Astrology. It is bedrock good sense for anyone to seek out a qualified astrologer, difficult though one may be to find, and consult that astrologer regarding various decisions that need to be made. Naturally, no one should be slavish and not use his own intuition in such matters, but the science of astrology is a great advantage to anyone whose takes his life seriously.

Divination. Although you will need to find (and test carefully) an astrologer, you can divine for yourself.

Geomancy. One very reliable form of divination is Geomancy. The best source of that knowledge which I have used for many years is a book:

Manteion by Apollonios Phocaeus (Stephen Gargilis). It was printed over seventy years ago, and used copies can be found through the internet. A reprint is available from Amazon.

Tarot. Another very old and reliable form of divination which I use is the Tarot. For that I recommend my own book, *How to Read the Tarot*.

Naturally, you must be cautious with both astrology and divination and ensure that you are getting correct results. Nevertheless, you should be doing divination for yourself. Self-doubt in moderate doses is wisdom, but always saying, “I don’t trust myself” is not.

When he had said these words unto them, he abode still in Galilee. Knowing both when to act and when not to act, Jesus remained behind in Galilee and the disciples went on to Jerusalem. Those who seek for higher life and consciousness must also know when to act and when not to act.

But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret. Then the Jews [Judeans] sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he? And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people. Howbeit no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews [Judeans]. (John 7:10-13)

Please always keep in mind that “Jews” often means “Judeans,” and there was a very real tension between the Judeans and the rest of the Hebrews, especially between the Judeans and the Galileans. Regional arrogance and pettiness seem to have been with humanity for must of our history.

Naturally, Jesus was controversial, some considering him good and others considering him a detriment and false.

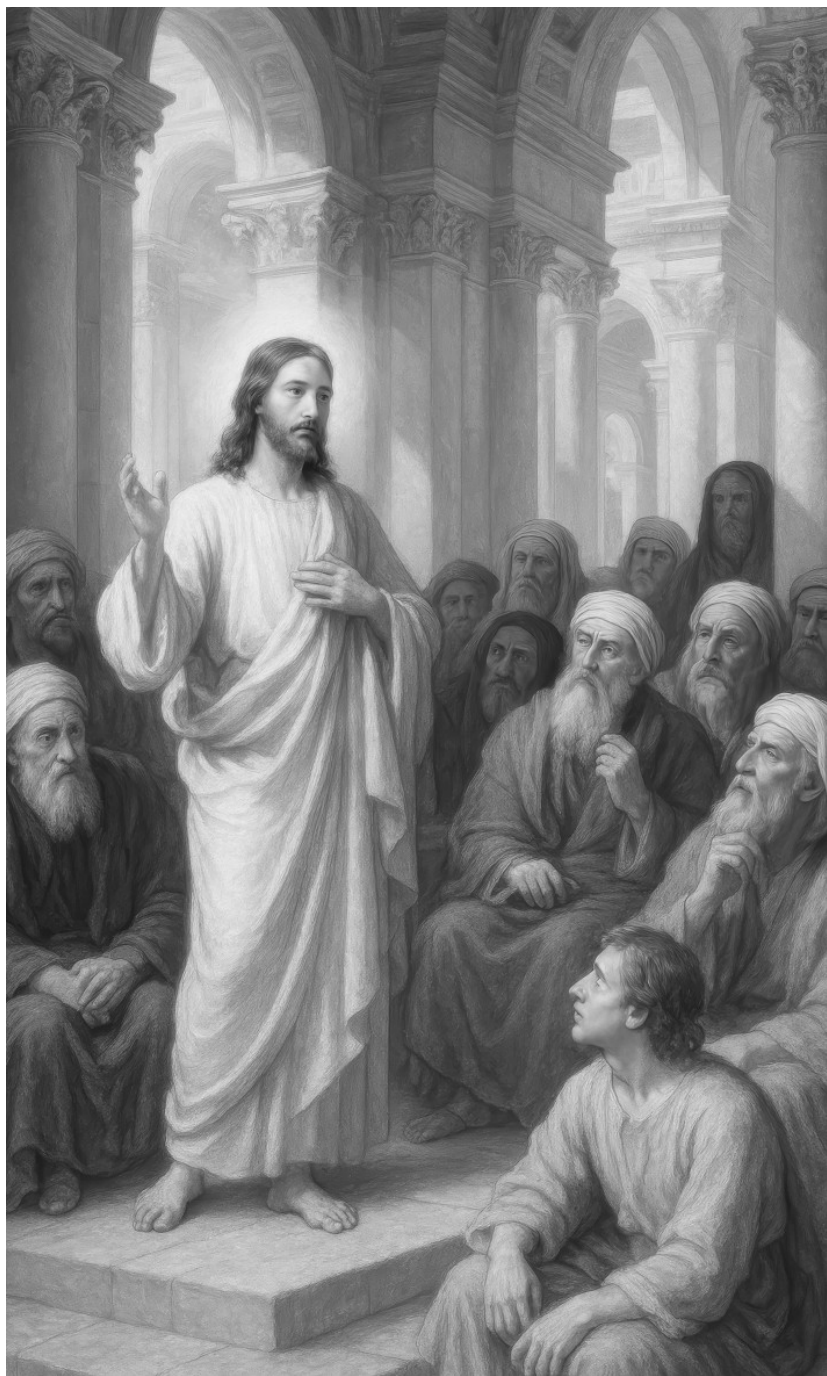
JESUS PREPARES THE WAY FOR THE END

Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught. And the Jews [Judeans] marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? (John 7:14-15)

In *The Unknown Lives of Jesus and Mary* you will find the accounts of attempts to teach the boy Jesus and how he demonstrated his omnipotence at those times. Apparently many among the people knew about this prodigy, even though it did not cause them to respect him. Intellectual and spiritual blindness come in many forms, often as irrevocable and entrenched as physical blindness.

Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. (John 7:16-17)

My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. Didache, translated “doctrine” simply means “teaching,” very simple and straightforward. But Jesus’ teaching was of God Who had sent Jesus into the world as its Light (John 8:12). So his words were literally the Word of God. This is true of all fully awakened teachers of whatever tradition. And those that heed and follow those teachings are disciples of God and thereby create and reap the divine karma of the “sons of God.” This is awesome but nonetheless true. So we must be very careful in both accepting or rejecting spiritual teaching.



If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. Often in the lives of great masters we find that when people did just very simple things the masters told them to do, incredible miracles or tremendous benefits resulted—far greater than could have been expected. This is because the masters spoke out of divine consciousness and will, and those who followed their words aligned themselves with that divine consciousness and will, so divine results followed as a natural course. I have seen this in India. When people did very small and easy things that Anandamayi Ma told them to do, miracles were worked.

Ma told one man who was deathly ill to eat things that would literally have killed him as a “natural” result. But he went ahead and ate and was instantly cured.

I saw her teach a man a series of silly little “exercises” for him to do. Ma and those observing, and the man himself, were actually softly laughing as he went through the shrugs and weavings Ma demonstrated. But it cured him immediately.

One time I was present when a European woman of a persistently “difficult personality” was told by Ma to go to Bombay and have her throat x-rayed by a doctor who was a devotee of Ma. The woman said there was no need, she knew everything about her condition, etc., etc., etc. One of the devotees said to her, “Is it so difficult for you to do this simple thing that Ma has told you?” So her ego was embarrassed and she walked out of the room saying, “O! Ho! How hard it is to have a guru!” But she went to Bombay, did as she was told, and discovered that she had thyroid cancer. When the word reached me I went directly to Calcutta to a specialist in radionics who treated her by long distance and cured her in less than two weeks.

Earlier I had met a man from Bombay who was an avid polo player. He told me that one day in north-central India when he was bidding farewell to Ma, she looked intently at him and asked, “What is wrong with your eye?” “Nothing Ma,” he replied. “Have your eye examined in Bombay,” insisted Ma. He decided to ignore her instructions. But the day after he returned to Bombay, he played polo, and a ball struck him near that eye. It hurt a bit, but seemed only a slight thing. Yet he remembered Ma’s words

and went from the polo ground directly to a specialist who discovered that part of his eye had become detached slightly and if not corrected he would become blind in that eye. He received treatment and all was well.

So those who do to the utmost what they understand the will of God to be will find that God takes responsibility for them and glorifies their life. Certainly “ask and you shall receive” is true; but so also is “*act* and you shall receive.” “Thy will be *done*” has profound implications for the sadhaka.

He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him. (John 7:18)

There are a great number of people who love to expound themselves, and some you cannot get onto any subject other than Me. These are the people that love to get into psychoanalysis so they can cite what the analyst has said about Wonderful Me—even if it is sordid or petty. Those whose interest is centered in themselves seek to impress others with their special and interesting egos while also entertaining and impressing themselves with the recital. Their glory may be a bit dim or mundane, but it is theirs, and only that matters. Rare are those who know that they have been sent into this world to realize and manifest their Divine Origin—not for the amazement and admiration of others, but for their liberation into the Infinity from which they came and to which they are destined to return. Such a person is true—real—in the highest sense, for only the Self is ever real. All the rest is “unrighteousness.”

“Therefore be a yogi” (Bhagavad Gita 6:46).

Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me? The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee? (John 7:19-20)

Later Jesus will show how his accusers did not keep the Mosaic Law, but right now he is being accused by them of being possessed by

a demon—though the materialists to whom he is speaking did not even believe in demons. They were continually consulting among themselves as to how they could bring about his death, because they knew that alone could silence him. Assassinations of a person are often an admission by his enemies that he is so dedicated and effective in his words and deeds that only death will stop him—not intimidation in any form.

Jesus answered and said unto them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel.... are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day? (John 7:21-23)

Yes. For evil people hate good in any form.

Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment. (John 7:24)

This is no simple principle. To really see into something and perceive its inner nature clearly is essential in all levels of life, and especially in spiritual life. The yogi must evaluate every aspect of his life, both internal and external. How can he be confident in his judgment? If it is based on the insight and intuition engendered by his daily practice of sadhana, then he can know it is accurate and trustworthy. The yogi lives his entire life with both eyes open: the eye of the world and the eye of the spirit.

Then said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this he, whom they seek to kill? But, lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ? Howbeit we know this man whence he is: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is. (John 7:25-27)

Here we have the common mental two-step. First, the idea that perhaps Jesus is the Messiah, and then immediately the “proof” that he cannot be the Messiah. These people neither know their minds, nor are they really in touch with them. They truly are “like the troubled sea, when it cannot

rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt” (Isaiah 57:20). Their thoughts shift around continually in instability and ultimate confusion.

Strange as it may sound, in some of my writings I have stated that to understand the esoteric philosophy of the East we have to be able to think in two opposite directions at the same time. But here we have an example of those who cannot or will not think in any direction at any time, but just turn around and around perpetually. This is not an uncommon condition. And it usually resolves itself by believing in nothing at all.

Although the people saying, “when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is,” did not have a clue as to what they were citing, still it was a good lead-up to believing nothing eventually and just walking away from a situation they did not want to face since they did not want to commit themselves to any conclusion which would have to be acted upon and made public. “I’m an agnostic” is what every intellectually lazy person likes to say in the face of philosophic uncertainty. They really do not care about the matter, but that would not look good if stated, so they put on the agnostic mask and hope the subject will be dropped. After all, the term “agnostic” does have an aura of sophistication to it, and the person need not be either a believer or an unbeliever. Just a nothing. But that will not be pointed out.

Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not. But I know him: for I am from him, and he hath sent me. (John 7:28-29)

Now here things are getting interesting. The people have said they know Jesus, and he says they also know that he is sent by God to them, not by his own ideas or wish, but by the divine will. Yet they pretend ignorance, which they think absolves them of any obligation to be honest and open about what they inwardly know to be true. This is standard human avoidance of responsibility, especially in the spiritual realm.

Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come. (John 7:30)

Here we have a cornerstone of understanding karma. Karma is an absolute. Nothing happens in the universe that is not a manifestation of karma. Karma is the scenario, and if something is written in the karmic realm it will absolutely occur, and if it is not written, then nothing can bring it about. So nothing can happen to us that is not our karma, and it cannot happen to us except at the exact moment determined by our karma. Are we helpless before it? Yes. But it is in our power to do our best to understand it and work with it to our betterment. Since we created it we can influence its advent in our life and determine our response to its arrival. We can learn from it or just undergo it. The choice is ours.

This is not the only time in Jesus' life that karma determines what will or will not happen. "Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above" (John 19:10-11). "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" (Matthew 26:53-54).

But there is something more to be said on karma. Karma is basically in the consciousness—it is conditioning. And if the state of consciousness is changed, then the karma is changed. This is the way sadhana can alter or completely dissolve the yogi's karma.

THE PLOTS BEGIN

And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?

The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him; and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him.

This is always the response of the world to truth: Suppress It. Only those who turn inward away from the world will know pure truth. It is fundamental: “Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (James 4:4). By “the world” is meant the false world of delusion that reigns in the minds and hearts of the deluded—it is not the real world which is itself the manifestation of God and is meant to lead us to God. Outwardly the yogi lives in the same material world that all sentient beings on earth live in. But inwardly the yogi is in an entirely different world, a realm of peace and the clarity of the higher mind: the Intelligent Self, the Buddhi.

There was a young Chinese monk named Winter Melon that most people considered either daft or useless. One day he was no longer seen walking about, so some people went to his little hut. Inside they found a piece of paper with the words: “I walk though this world and no know one knows that Paradise is within.” No one knew where he had gone. It is the same with the adept yogi. He may be walking down a crowded street with people even jostling against him, but he is alone. Alone with the Real, moving in a realm of light and life beyond the comprehension of anyone but another yogi. As I write this I vividly see in my memory a

sadhu walking down a sidewalk in Delhi in obvious tranquility despite the rush and push around him. Someone even ran into him, nearly knocking him off balance, but he just calmly looked at the man with no censure or annoyance whatsoever and kept on walking. There was a great lesson in that which I hope I never forget.

Then said Jesus unto them, Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me. Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come.

Then said the Jews [Judeans] among themselves, Whither will he go, that we shall not find him? will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles? What manner of saying is this that he said, Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come? (John 7:31-36)

As always, those of the outer world have no clue about those who dwell in the inner world, and their words are incomprehensible to them. Ordinary intelligence has nothing to do with it. It is spiritual intuition alone that gives clear sight.

In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Spirit was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.) (John 7:37-39)

The Holy Spirit, Mahashakti, the Divine Motherhood Power of the Universe, is Life itself and the Giver of Life. This Power is inherent in every atom of the universe and therefore also in every atom of the yogi's existence. But it must be awakened for him to be truly alive and complete in himself. His yoga sadhana is the process by which he awakens and enlivens himself.

No external force accomplishes this, only the inmost power of the reality that is his own Self. The yogi is himself the beginning, middle and end of his evolutionary process. We have only one Savior: our own Self. That alone is Life. Jesus knew this because he was himself a Nath Yogi, having discovered his true spiritual heritage as a Yadava during the years he lived in India before returning to Israel to proclaim this heritage to his fellow Yadavas. This is outlined in *The Christ of India*. Every awakened individual will eventually find himself on the path Jesus travelled before him. And that was the path of Sanatana Dharma.

Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet. Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was? So there was a division among the people because of him. (John 7:40-43)

Whenever there is an advent of Light and Truth it produces a necessary division between those who are truly of the Light and Truth and those that are actually living in the darkness and untruth of ignorance. Saint Paul wrote: “We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life” (II Corinthians 2:15-16). To those who are inwardly alive, Light and Truth are known to be Life Itself; but to those that are inwardly dead, they are experienced as death. Many years ago in my teens I spoke with a friend of mine about the ways of spiritual life and discipline. His response was, “To live like that would be like being in prison!” And in a few years he was totally and permanently addicted to alcohol, drugs and sex. But in my “prison” I remained free.

As John Oxenham wrote:

To every man there openeth
A Way, and Ways, and a Way.
And the High Soul climbs the High way,

And the Low Soul gropes the Low,
 And in between, on the misty flats,
 The rest drift to and fro.
 But to every man there openeth
 A High Way, and a Low.
 And every man decideth
 The Way his soul shall go.

And some of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him. Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him? The officers answered, Never man spake like this man.

Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him? But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed.

Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,) Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth? They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.

And every man went unto his own house. (John 7:44-53)

Yes. In time everyone goes “unto his own house” and remains as before. The choice is always ours.

In the book of Acts we find that Saint Paul was imprisoned for his faith in Christ: “And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee” (Acts 24:24-25). But he never did call for Saint Paul, because true spiritual awakening and living are not in any way “convenient” for those enslaved and bound in spirit—by their own choice.

MERCY AND GRACE

Jesus went unto the mount of Olives. And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them.

And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? This they said, tempting [testing] him, that they might have to accuse him.

But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not.

So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.

And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.

And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?

She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more. (John 8:1-11)

As a Fundamentalist Protestant I learned early on that the self-righteous are never merciful, nor are they ever self-aware or self-honest.

The visionary stigmatist Catherine Emmerich said that when Jesus wrote on the ground he was writing the names of the women which whom the accusers were committing adultery. When they saw those names they quickly departed.

Was Jesus being surprisingly liberal when he told the woman he did not condemn her? No, because he plainly said to her: "Go, and sin no more." Nothing more was needed than to not repeat her sin. There is a great lesson here. Whining and castigating ourselves for wrongdoing is not in the least either righteous or evidence of conscience on our part. It is hypocrisy. The only sincerity is shown by sinning no more.

JESUS SPEAKS OPENLY ABOUT HIMSELF

Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true.

Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go.

Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man.

And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me.

It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me.

Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.

These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come. (John 8:12-20)

Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. Earlier Jesus told his disciples “Ye are the light of the world” (Matthew

5:14). If we put these two together we come to realize that they are both of the nature of light, they are both essentially spirit, which is light and life. If we and Jesus were not essentially the same, he would have no real lasting value for us. Jesus is what we are. We are what Jesus is. The problem is we do not know that, and we must come to know it by experiencing it ourselves. Yoga is the key.

When he was living in India, Yogananda's disciple, Swami Kriyananda, once spent quite some time with Anandamayi Ma. Finally he had to leave because of his organizational obligations and return to the headquarters of Yogoda Satsanga in Ranchi. When he entered the building he was given a telegram from Ma asking that he return immediately. He turned right around and went back to the train station that was just a short distance from the YSS ashram and got the next train to where Ma was. When he saluted Ma he asked her why she had summoned him. "I just wanted to see you," she replied. "But Ma!" he protested, "you always see me!" "Yes," said Ma, "but you do not really *know* that."

Some years before that incident, Judith Tyberg was living at and attending the Benares Hindu University in Benares (Varanasi). One evening she very much wanted to go see Ma Anandamayi even though it was monsoon season and there was a terrible torrent of rain. So she trekked through the streets to the Anandamayi Ashram. As she was hurrying down the narrow alley to the main entrance, a small door in the wall opened and one of the women who travelled with Ma called out, "Come. Ma is waiting for you." When Dr. Tyberg had saluted Ma she asked, "Ma, how did you know I was coming?" "I saw you in my heart," was the memorable reply. The lesson was the same for Kriyananadaji and Dr. Tyberg: They were always present to Ma. And we are always in and with Jesus through his infinite consciousness. If we follow him and do not walk in darkness, we shall have—and become—the Light of Life.

The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true. It is truly remarkable how righteous and philosophical the ungodly can be when it takes their fancy.

Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell

whence I come, and whither I go. Do we actually know from whence we came and where we are going? Are we then any better than the Pharisees?

Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man. And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. The spiritually and morally bankrupt love to spout to others the words of Jesus: “Judge not, that ye be not judged” (Matthew 7:1), when their hypocrisy is in danger of being exposed and pointed out. But we can certainly—and must—judge if we are truly with God and not alone in our consciousness.

It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me. This should be our consciousness. We are never alone. Wherever we are there are two: God and us. The diligent yogi comes to know that.

Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also. Why do we not perceive and acknowledge the divine origin and status of others? Because we do not know either the Divine or our true selves as part of the Divine. Yoga sadhana alone corrects this unfortunate state.

These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come. Again: the universe is a precise and infallible reflection of the Divine Presence. Nothing happens either before or after its ordained time.

Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come. Then said the Jews [Judeans], Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come.

And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world.

I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins. (John 8:21-24)

Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come. Then said the Jews [Judeans],

Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come. Since they wanted to kill Jesus, his enemies jumped to the absurd conclusion that he was going to kill himself. What some people say about others is often a mirror revealing their true face and their true intent. Note it.

But we should consider how this applies to us. Jesus went his way to death, resurrection and ascension to Infinity. And so can we. But if we cling to our ignorance, weaknesses and wrong intentions, we will truly “die” from and in them, and neither can nor will follow the path to liberation in the spirit-Self.

Others will say to us: “I am just human; I am not spiritual like you; I know it will take me many lives to attain Self-realization; I can’t....” But they really mean, *I will not.* This is the way the enemies of their inner Christ think and speak. Saint Paul (II Timothy 3:5) describes them as “having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof” to follow the call to Christhood. And he advises us: “From such turn away.” In other words: get out of their life and get them out of yours, for they are enemies of the Self and those who seek the Self. And therefore are your enemies, too.

And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world. I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins. If we have no faith or interest in our own divine Self we shall remain aliens to and enemies of our own Self. Further, we must believe in the divinity of our Self, other wise we do not “believe that I am he” as did Jesus. For we are as divine as he. And he wants us to know it and live it.

Then said they unto him, Who art thou? And Jesus saith unto them, Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning.

I have many things to say and to judge of you: but he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him.

They understood not that he spake to them of the Father.

Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing

of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.

As he spake these words, many believed on him.

Then said Jesus to those Jews [Judeans] which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?

Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.

They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father.

Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father.

Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God.

Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.

Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word.

Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not.

Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.

Then answered the Jews [Judeans], and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?

Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me. And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.

Then said the Jews [Judeans] unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?

Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God: Yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.

Then said the Jews [Judeans] unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?

Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by. (John 8:25-59)

Then said they unto him, Who art thou? And Jesus saith unto them, Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning. Enemies of truth are always asking questions that they only ask for effect, and never to learn anything about those they instinctively oppose. Often they ask things they already know about just to muddy the waters and confuse the situation. Jesus had

from the beginning told these enemies just what he was and why he was. But they wanted to exasperate and frustrate him and his disciples. They did not succeed. But casual bystanders without knowledge of the history of the situation could be misled by their inferences.

I have often witnessed evil people pretending to misunderstand or imply what they know is false. They do this all the time in an attempt to give a completely false impression of a teaching or teacher. They will denounce a teacher or his teachings, claiming blatantly untrue things. (I once got denounced for trying to persuade people at a yoga retreat to commit suicide!) Even in my childhood I saw this tactic—a form of oblique, lying defamation. I saw people become “righteously” indignant and begin slinging outrageously false accusations at people they knew were not at all guilty of their claims.

In case you come across this yourself, I want to describe a particular attack of human demons that began when I was only twelve or thirteen. It was so bewildering to me that it was not until after it had ceased in my beginning twenties that I was able to recognize its true character.

It always took place in a religious social setting—that is, with other people around. I would find myself in a group of strangers—though of the same church or philosophical interests—in which one (it would never be more) would instantly “square off” for a verbal battle the moment I would enter the group. Spite and animosity would appear on their faces instantly, and the rage that would radiate from them would be tangible—at least to me. This would completely perplex me, for as we would not know each other at all, there could be no comprehensible basis for a conflict between us.

The hate vibrations always translated into the same message: “I am going to ‘get’ you and discredit you before these people so you will not be able to ‘get’ me!” This was additionally confusing, for it was not even in my nature to ever ‘get’ anyone. And since I knew absolutely nothing about them, how could I possibly manage to ‘get’ them even if I wanted to? And why would I want to do such a thing to a stranger? It was compounded madness. Nevertheless, the moment I would open my mouth in any statement whatever, they would swing into action and bombard me with rapid-fire rebuttal intended to prove that both my words and I were

completely idiotic and contemptible. The thrust was always to discredit me and any future words I might speak, not merely to refute any idea I might have just expressed. Often what I said was so patently true or in agreement with the thinking of everyone present, including the antagonist, that the attacker would just begin blaring back to me the very ideas I had expressed—often in the same words—as though refuting what I had just said! When I would express my agreement, they would jut out their chin, jerk their head up and down a few times and spit out: “That’s *right!*” in a tone indicating that they had certainly set me straight and I had better not stray in the future. This confused the hearers as much as it did me, but I came in time to realize that the colossal absurdity of it had a very definite and evilly clever purpose. By so acting they would convince our hearers that I must have said the opposite to what I had—otherwise why the vehement protest? What appears silly is often hellishly—in the very literal sense—clever.

For the first few years I would try to placate these people, which only produced more nastiness on their part.

What actually ended this odd kind of assault was my finally developing the insight and wisdom to spot these people immediately and send them the mental message: “I know just what you are and I know just what you are trying to do.” All of them would usually leave within a few minutes. After several of these internal encounters over the years they stopped altogether.

But several times in conversations I have told people about this phenomenon and they would tell me they were experiencing the same thing. So I advised them to look right in their attackers’ eyes and mentally say, “I know just what you are and I know just what you are trying to do.” Some of them told me later that they had followed my advice and it had worked just as it had for me. Their tormentors became silent and walked out.

I once told this when I was teaching some classes in drugless therapies in Hawaii. A woman in the group said to me, “I work at the Diamond Head Unity Church bookstore, and the manager acts like this to me all the time.” I urged her to try my silent “exorcism” and see what would happen. Two weeks later I saw her and she told me, “The very next day after our

conversation, when the bookstore manager came walking in I looked at her intently and mentally said what you told me to say. She stopped, looked around, then turned and went back to her car and drove away. No one has seen her or heard from her since.”

I recommend you try this if such a situation ever arises.

I have many things to say and to judge of you: but he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him. They understood not that he spake to them of the Father. God does not come to mind when He is not a constant presence in a person’s thoughts or life. And who but the yogi is able to keep the Divine in his consciousness through constant japa and meditation?

Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. Jesus is referring to his crucifixion in these words, but they have an alternate, personal meaning. When we lift up our “son of man” consciousness into our true “son of God” consciousness, then we shall know “I am He,” part of the divine: our eternal Self. And the keynote of the entire matter is SOHAM. The Soham yogi knows by experience that God is all-embracing Reality, that every action takes place by the will and power of Divinity. It is the Soham Yogi who links his awareness with the Absolute by Its Name, Soham, and thus comes to know his own eternal identity with the Eternal Soham, his eternal Self. He, like Brahman, says: *Soham Asmi*—I Am Soham (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 5.15.2).

And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him. Of course the primary meaning of these words is centered on Jesus as an avatar sent from the Absolute into relativity to show the way to the transcendence in which he consciously dwelt at every moment.

None of us is at any moment “left alone” by God, for He is the essence of our Self. But we can isolate ourselves from God by alienation from our Self. The things that “please God” are whatever leads us into moksha: the conscious union-identity of the jivatman with the Paramatman. Who else seeks this—or can succeed in that search—but the dedicated yogi?

As he spake these words, many believed on him. As the spoken words of Jesus entered their ears, their hearts and intellects believed both them and him. How is this? Jesus himself said: “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh” (Matthew 12:34).

The power of speech (vakya) is a divine gift given to human beings as the most evolved organisms on earth. For this is a primal power of God Himself: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1). This is a quotation from the Krishna Yajurveda and the Sama Veda: *Prajapati vai idam agra asit. Tasya vak divitiya asit. Vag vai paramam Brahman.* “In the beginning was Prajapati, with whom was the word (vak). And the word was verily the supreme Brahman” (Krishna Yajurveda, Kathaka Samhita, 12.5, 27.1; Krishna Yajurveda, Kathakapisthala Samhita, 42.1; Jaiminiya Brahmana II, Samaveda, 2244).

Since each human being is an image of God, the powers of God are inherent in us, although finite in scope. The faculty of inner and outer speech is the most divine of all our powers. Our consciousness is embodied or extended outward in every word we speak. And whoever hears us speak is touched by our consciousness and its vibration on their subtle levels.

A psychically sensitive person can know the personality and vibration of a person just by hearing him speak. For that person's vibration is projected through his hearing into his astral and causal bodies. This caused me a great deal of confusion and misery from my childhood, especially later on when I condemned myself for “judging” them when I perceived how negative they were. Since I was always proved right in my psychic diagnosis, after a while I stopped worrying. And when I became a yogi and fully understood the matter, I appreciated my ability and trusted it.

Then said Jesus to those Jews [Judeans] which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. The word, the Logos, of Christ is twofold. It is the actual words spoken by Jesus and his mind—the consciousness—from which he spoke them. *Meno* means to live somewhere. So Jesus is telling us to live in the same consciousness which he had, to have “the mind of Christ” (I Corinthians 2:16). “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phillipians 2:5). Then we shall not only *know* the truth,

we shall *be* the truth: the Self. The only way to be a true Christian is to become a Christ, just as was Jesus. This is freedom—moksha.

They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Identifying totally with the body, Jesus' hearers understood his words in a material, external manner. The inner freedom of the spirit was beyond their comprehension. Such people are still around. Once a university professor asked me to speak to his English class about yoga and Indian philosophy. When I early arrived for the class, he showed me an indignant note from one of his students saying she would not be attending the class "because I do not believe in mysticism and all that fluff."

Since they insisted they were free:

Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. Whoever sins against his own divine Self by acting and thinking in ways that bind and blind him is a slave of his ego-based ignorance. And usually a very defensive and hostile slave, too.

And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. Those who identify with and serve the ever-changing world and their own ever-changing minds that mirror the ever-changing world cannot be established (abide) in their Self. But the yogis through continuous yoga sadhana literally do live in their true Self and abide there permanently and know real peace and contentment. That is the true eternal life that can be lived in the here-and-now.

If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. Freedom is found only in the consciousness of the ever-free spirit that is a "son" of God like Jesus. All else is an illusion. We must literally save ourselves. No one else can do it.

I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. Those whose minds are negatively polarized are attracted to negative, false ideas and are repelled by truth—even hating and opposing the truth.

I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father. "God is a Spirit" (John 4:24), and those that are not just near Him, but actually live in Him, in His consciousness, are the

sons of God. Saint John the Apostle wrote: “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (I John 3:2). As David sang, “In thy light shall we see light” (Psalms 36:9). God is light and we are also light, “For in him we live, and move, and have our being,... For we are also his offspring” (Acts 17:28). The word translated “offspring” is *genos*, genus or species. We are the same “species” as God since we live, and move, and have our being both in and from Him.

The only difference between God and us is scope of being and consciousness. God is infinite and we are finite. But eternally we are the same—not just alike or similar. The wave is not the ocean, but it is one with the ocean, part of it and taking its very existence from it. Just like Jesus we can truthfully say, “I and my Father are one” (John 10:30). This was the desire of Jesus for his true disciples, for he prayed to God: “that they may be one, even as we are one” (John 17:22).

How is this possible? Jesus tells us: “Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure” (I John 3:3). And that purifying process is yoga sadhana. It is the knowledge of yoga that Saint John meant when he wrote about Jesus: “To them gave he power to become the sons of God” (John 1:12). The word translated “power” is *exousia*, which means ability, power, strength, capacity and competence. The power Jesus gave to his disciples was the knowledge of yoga sadhana by which they could attain perfect and total union with the Absolute, the union of the jivatman with the Paramatman and be, as the Nicene Creed says of Jesus: “of one substance with the Father.”

They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. We all have ancestry, physical and spiritual. Although heredity is a deciding factor in many people’s lives, we have a spiritual heredity which is divine, for we are all “sons” of God possessing a divine Self. From life to life we have countless parents, but God is always our Father. The challengers of Jesus were “of the earth, earthly” (John 3:31), with their consciousness filled only with materiality. So they boasted of being physical descendants of Abraham, which was nothing compared to their spiritual descent. “He that cometh from heaven is above all” (*ibid.*). Those who live in the spirit

have a genealogy higher than all others, for their consciousness is in the Self which is truly one with God. You cannot get higher than that.

Matter acts like matter: inert and unconscious. Those of materialistic consciousness are therefore spiritually inert and unconscious. One of the early Christian Fathers of the desert was once visited by a group of spiritual tourist sight-seekers. He was kind to them, and when they expressed interest in seeing one of the great ascetics of the desert he told them how to find him and sent with them a letter to give that monk. The letter simply said: "Do not water the vegetables," referring to their vegetative spiritual and mental state. Jesus had the same perspective, therefore:

Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. Having a spiritual genealogy, we consequently have spiritual genetics. Just as we have physical traits inherited from our forebears, so we have spiritual traits, being made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26). So Jesus points out that if his enemies were truly "Abraham's children" they would act toward him as Abraham had done when he met the prophet-priest Melchizedek (Genesis 14:18-20; Psalms 110:4).

But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. Now we have the slander that Jesus was illegitimate (and at other times that his father was not even a Jew).

Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. It is easy to think that people's spiritual reactions are purely intellectual, but they are deeper than that: they reflect their karma and their consciousness, which are interwoven. Their response to something reveals the truth about their consciousness. Evil people reject and oppose the good and good people, whereas good people reject and oppose evil and evil people. (Actually, the evil people *hate* the good and good people, but the good never hate anyone, for it is not their nature. Hatred is a vice, never a virtue.) These responses are reflexive—and reflect their true inner character. I knew a thoroughly negative woman whose judgment

of anything and anyone I could always trust: she hated the good and loved the evil.

Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts [epithumia: desires] of your father ye will do. There are people who truly are of their father, Satan—the force of cosmic evil. And whatever Satan desires they desire. For they have been deformed into his image inside and out. They are simply reflections of him. They are in a very real sense his incarnate presence in the world. This is such a horrible and ugly truth that we do not want to acknowledge it, but we cannot will or wish it away: we must face it. There is no virtue in being blind to or refusing to acknowledge the truth—just the opposite. For then we would become “satanic” ourselves.

No one who aspires to higher consciousness can safely deny or ignore the reality of evil in the world—not just metaphysically, but physically in those who are evil. To “see only the good” is to be self-deceived and allied with Satan and evil. For evil is present in the world as well as good. Negativity is often (very often) disguised as false positivity. That is why I long ago formulated the maxim: “‘Positive thinkers’ are positive stinkers.” By that I mean the false and negative people who wish to deny and blind themselves and others to the truth that light and darkness are both part of this samsaric (worldly) existence. There are seemingly sincere people who engage in this self-deception. They are not consciously evil in intent, but they are ignorant and foolish tools of Satan. And I believe that subconsciously they know it and eventually will know it consciously. So they really are stinkers. Or will be so consciously in time. For in the beginning is the ending. In the seed is the tree. “In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil” (I John 3:10).

He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And so are those who become his image-children.

And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. The children-images of Satan literally do not believe the truth because they cannot believe it any more than a bent mirror can give a true reflection. The moment they encounter the truth—especially spiritual truth—they overtly oppose and deny it. I have observed and experienced this for most of my life.

The children of Satan are very sensitive and responsive to light and truth. When a person of any marked spiritual development enters a room they are his instant enemies and antagonists—sometimes only inwardly and sometimes overtly so. I have already described this previously regarding the people who can be banished by mentally saying to them: “I know just what you are and I know just what you are trying to do.”

I have also had such people interrupt me and vehemently deny the truth of what I was saying. Once I was talking to some people about the power and benefit of yoga sadhana. A man began loudly saying, “No! No! No! That can’t be true!” When I asked him, “Why can’t it be true?” he just sat there sullenly muttering, “No... No... No...” So I just continued my talk while he sat there and shuffled about and grimaced. He was a human demon. So I gave him no quarter or leeway.

Which of you convinceth [elegcho: accuses, convicts, proves the accusation against] me of sin? In Revelation 12:10 Satan is called “the accuser of our brethren... which accused them before our God day and night.” Satan and his sons are Equal Opportunity Accusers. They accuse and blame everyone—but themselves. The children of Satan like to accuse the righteous of “hurting” and “offending” them. Evil spirits often claim to being burned by the presence of a righteous person or holy objects. Once “there met him [Jesus] two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way. And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?” (Matthew 8:28-29). I have known of evil people claiming that the presence of outstandingly good people made their stomachs ache or feel nauseous. They also like to say someone or something good “scares” them or makes them “feel funny.” I have also known of people claiming that positive, healing energies made them sick. The whole idea is to accuse good people of being bad and harmful, even claiming they are “black magicians.” Anything to defame and destroy.

Seeing these human demons for what they are and unmasking them by speaking the truth about/to them is the best exorcism.

And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? Well, I think we have pretty well covered that!

He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God. There it is in the proverbial nutshell.

Then answered the Jews [Judeans], and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil? Already his enemies have accused Jesus of being illegitimate, and now they claim that he is not even Jewish. When evil people get desperate they try anything that comes to mind to injure, silence or discredit anyone or anything they hate and oppose. There were enemies of Yogananda that not only accused him of being and doing evil, they even complained that he was too fat and sweated too much! (I learned this from Brother Bimalananda who witnessed it.)

Once I was riding in a car with another college student whom I had known in high school. He said to me, "I don't want to make you mad at me, but could I ask you a personal question?" That gun certainly seemed loaded, but I bravely said, "Yes." "Is it true that when you were sixteen you ran away from home and became a piano player in a nightclub?" My reply was simple: "I should be so lucky! When I was sixteen I moved away from here to stay with my grandmother after my grandfather had died and she was all alone." One avid (and psychotic) critic posted on the internet that at one point in my life I went to California and became Paramhansa Yogananda's publicity agent. Since I was only eleven at the time Yogananda left his body, I must have been a real child prodigy to manage that!

Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me. Despising Jesus, his enemies despised God his Father, for Jesus was one with the Father, and was sent by Him into the world to do His will.

And as Jesus has already told the apostles about the world: "Me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil" (John 7:7). But if the world hates us we are in good company, for later Jesus will tell them: "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you" (John 15:18).

And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth. And that One is God.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death. To keep the teaching of Jesus is to act on it and manifest it in our life—to become ourselves a Christ. Then we shall never undergo the death of our consciousness, but shall always be alive in—and unto—God.

Then said the Jews [Judeans] unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself? This can be encapsulated as: Just Who Do You Think You Are?

Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God: Yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying. The knowers of truth, including God, the highest truth, embody truth in every aspect of their life, both inwardly and outwardly. I am not exaggerating when I say that when Swami Sivananda entered the room, God entered the room. When I saw Anandamayi Ma I was seeing a Reality that was beyond my personal, limited reality. Simply being in the presence of these two transcendent beings worked a profound change in those that really “saw” them with both the outer and inner eyes.

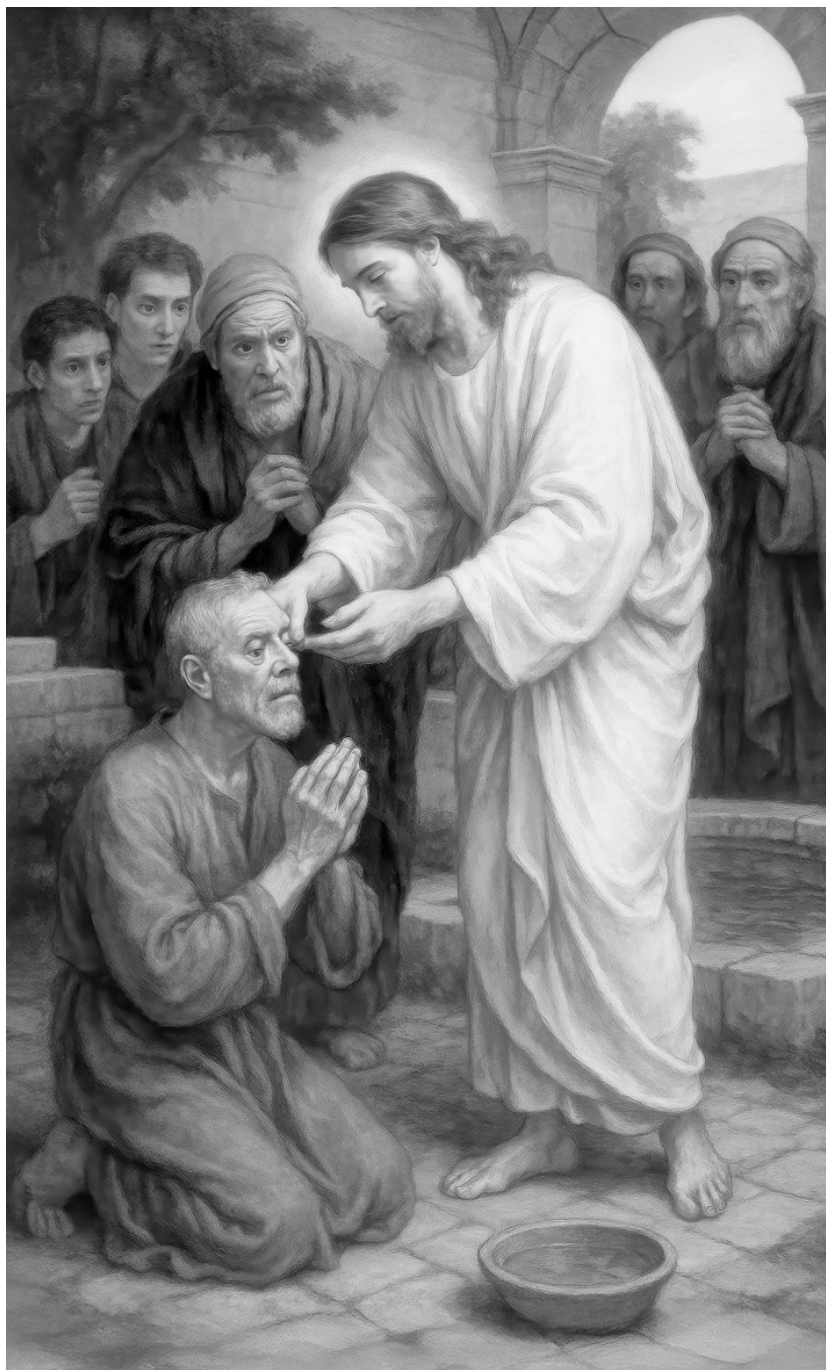
But the seeing was determined by the consciousness of the seer. For example, one time four people came to my door because they were locked out of the apartment next door to me. They asked if they could come in and wait until a locksmith came and opened the door for them. So they came in and sat down and immediately saw my meditation altar and a large photograph of Anandamayi Ma. They looked at it in silence for a while, and then one of them said, “She looks like my mother.” Another said, “She looks like my aunt.” The other two also said Ma looked like someone very close to them. For a long time they just sat and looked at Ma’s photo. I could see they were deeply affected by the experience. Yet a few years later two of my friends, devotees of Ma, showed a photo of Ma to a man that responded: “Stringy-haired old broad, ain’t she?” It is all in the eye, the consciousness, of the beholder.

Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews [Judeans] unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. Because they lacked a metaphysical background, the translators of the original Greek did not translate literally, but put in

what they supposed Jesus had said. What he actually and literally said, was: “Before now, I myself was Abraham,” referring to his past life. The mysterious prophet Melchizedek revealed to Abraham his future lives. Naturally, he was happy to see the spiritual enlightenment that he would attain and which would culminate in his life as Jesus.

Then took they up stones to cast at him. Such is the response of evil people who hate the light of truth because it literally pains them inwardly. So their response to anything beyond them is: Destroy It. And it continues to this day. So if anyone ever reacts this way to you (hopefully in a somewhat milder manner): “Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you” (Matthew 5:12).

But Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by. Making himself invisible, Jesus simply walked away from them and left the temple. The same can happen to you. I know, because it happened to me once. But that is a long story, and not for here.



A HINT ABOUT REINCARNATION

And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. (John 9:1-5)

And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? This shows that the disciples of Jesus believed that the blind man had lived before and in that life had done something negative which resulted in his being born blind in the subsequent life—or that his parents had done something which would result in them having the sorrow of a blind child. Obviously both would be the case, for it would be unjust for someone to suffer the consequences of someone else's negative karma—and therefore impossible.

Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. So there is good karma being manifested here. Certainly the blind man had good karma, but his parents also had the positive karma of having their blind child cured. And even more positive: they all three had the great good karma of meeting Jesus.

I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. This is true of us, also. We do not have

a mission like Jesus, but we are here solely to awaken and seek and find God through yoga sadhana. And it must be undertaken immediately while we have the inner light of awakening. For if we do not immediately act on our awakening we will go back to sleep and truly “sleep the sleep of death” (Psalms 13:3).

As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. And Jesus also said: “Ye are the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14). So just as Jesus had a mission to enlighten blind humanity, we have the mission to bring ourselves into the light of spiritual consciousness: “That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world” (Philippians 2:15). That pretty well sums it up!

When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing. (John 9:6-7)

The Eastern Christian tradition is that the man was born without eyes, and Jesus made two balls of clay, put them into his eye sockets and they became living, functioning eyes. Why did Jesus tell him to wash in the pool? Because by doing what Jesus directed he aligned himself with the will of Jesus so the healing will and intention of Jesus could manifest in him. Therefore he had two healers: Jesus and himself. It is the same with us: God and our Self is the goal: Self-realization. The goal is one because we and God are one.

The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he.

Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened? He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and

anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight. Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not. (John 9:8-12)

The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he. This, too, is the usual reaction of those whose minds are polarized toward negativity, untruth and outright evil. They cannot stand the idea of someone being healed of spiritual blindness and no longer stumbling around in spiritual darkness like them. In fact, they denounce those that can see, calling them incorrigible, deluded and ignorant—in other words, exactly what they are themselves. Have you ever noticed how habitual liars reflexively call others liars? Whatever they are guilty of or like, negative people accuse others of doing or being like that. Drunks often come up to a sober person, sway around with unfocused eyes and say, “You’re drunk!”

They may even claim, as these Pharisees are doing, that the seeing person is someone else and not the healed man. Quite some time back, a website that disliked our ashram’s website and publications posted that I was dead!

I was unaware of this, but one day I answered the phone and a friend of our ashram was on the line to condole us for my death! I explained I was not dead, however. Later on I learned that someone was saying that Swami Nirmalananda was dead and a former convict was masquerading as him. But I assure you that the real Nirmalananda is writing these words. (And I was never Yogananda’s publicity agent, either.) The previous words of Jesus in the eighth chapter of John can be applied to such persons: “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He... abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it” (John 8:44). Like father, like sons. Nevertheless: “I am he,” as the blind man said before me.

Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened? He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed,

and I received sight. Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not. This shows us that Jesus did not work miracles to make followers. He simply did the work God had sent him to do and went on with no fanfare or fuss. The wise and virtuous always do the same.

They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.

Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.

Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.

They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet. (John 9:13-17)

They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet. Seeing is literally believing in this case, but only the one who sees believes—others do not, especially those who, being spiritually and willfully blind themselves, do not want such things to be possible. This is why it is good for the yogi to keep his sadhana and his experiences and insights to himself. Jesus advises us: “Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you” (Matthew 7:6). Naturally, it is not good to habitually consider people dogs or pigs, but sometimes they are so: physically, psychologically and spiritually. There is no value in denying the truth, even if it is unpleasant and not “nice.”

Jesus said, “Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe” (John 4:48), but those who do not want to believe will not believe even when they see the signs and wonders. For as he further said, “Light is come into

the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God" (John 3:19-21). It is just that simple. And we should always be aware of that.

But the Jews [Judeans] did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see? His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself. These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews [Judeans]: for the Jews [Judeans] had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him. (John 9:18-23)

Know that this is true and is the way the world works. Be prepared. And at peace.

Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner.

He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see. (John 9:24-25)

This is the simple truth. The yogi should examine himself, his mind and his daily life, and determine whether his sadhana has produced positive results in his behavior and mind—positive change. If so, he is on the right track, but if not he should look carefully to see if his practice is correct.

It is, then the practice itself is faulty and ultimately useless. He should look further to find the practice that will benefit him. I spent over half a century wandering through methods that had only short-term effects that eventually evaporated or proved to be dead-ends leading nowhere. But I kept on until totally by accident I came across a website about Sri Gajanan Maharaj that had a book about him and his teachings. I knew I had found something different, tried it out and was satisfied at last after decades. So I put the material from the book into *Light of Soham* and *Inspired Teachings of Sri Gajanan Maharaj*, and my own further researches into *Soham Yoga: The Yoga of the Self*. Before I, too, was blind, but now I, too, see.

Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes?

He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples?

Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is.

The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvelous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.

They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out. (John 9:26-34)

Practical results mean nothing to false spiritual teachers and their adherents. In fact, genuine results either frighten or repulse them. Their response is to turn and run, often trying to keep others from finding the real way to spiritual awakening. But the wise keep searching until they

find and obtain true spiritual experience and growth. Then they will no longer merely believe, but will know.

SPEAKING OPENLY ABOUT HIMSELF AND HIS DESTINY

Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him. (John 9:35-38)

This is way to seek and find: See and Know.

And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.

And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also?

Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth. (John 9:39-41)

Often the best testimony to the value of the principles of spiritual life and those who genuinely follow them is the hatred and persecution directed at them both. Early on in my spiritual life I learned to look into the spiritual character of those who either encouraged or tried to hinder me. I clearly saw that those in the light said, "Go onward," and those in the dark shouted "Stop." So I ran from the dark and into the light. And never regretted it, for it kept leading onward into more and more light

and I experienced for myself that “the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day” (Proverbs 4:18). You can do the same. I certainly recommend it.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. (John 10:1-5)

Although Jesus is speaking here mostly about spiritual leaders, true and false, I will comment on it from an interior and symbolic viewpoint that we can apply to ourselves personally and benefit greatly.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

There are many ways to fake “spirituality” and fool others and even ourselves. But it is the spiritual centering of anyone that gives the true picture. Authentic spiritual practices and methods produce spiritual development.

He that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. The “door” of our inmost being is our inmost being itself: our divine Self (jiva/jivatman). It is the True Way. But as the yogic maxim says, “There are many ways to the One Way.” That is, there are positive psychic practices that lead the aspirant to real spiritual practice and experience that develop his inner consciousness so in time he will attain perfect Self-Knowledge: Atmajnana.

To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. Those who apply the practices that awaken them to the revelation of the Self, will find that the “door” to inner realities will open to them, and that their own inner faculties and powers (“the sheep”) will enter into greater and greater depths of their potentially

infinite spirit-Self, the experience of which will eventually lead them out of darkness into the Light of God as encapsulated in the brief prayer:

Lead me from the unreal to the Real.

Lead me from darkness to the Light.

Lead me from death to Immortality.

Jesus has given us an invaluable yogic principle in his statement. The sheep respond to the seekers "voice" as he "calls" to the sheep by their "name." This means that the yogi engages in Mantra Yoga, in Soham Sadhana that involves continual invocation of the divine mantra Soham, which means I Am That: the yogi's own divine Self that is part of the Infinite Being and Self of all things: Ishwara, the Supreme Being. This is thoroughly presented and explained in *Soham Yoga: The Yoga of the Self*. (After reading that, two other books will be found valuable: *Light of Soham* and *The Inspired Wisdom of Sri Gajanana Maharaj*.)

And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. The Soham yogi is always in charge both inwardly and outwardly. By Soham sadhana he is the shepherd-guide of his inner faculties and powers, leading them forth into the fruition/manifestation that is perfect Self-Realization. All it requires is the doing to lead ourselves out of our present limitation into the boundless Consciousness that is God.

And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. There are many ways to stimulate psychic levels and powers within us, but they are "strangers" to our true Self, which will not manifest through them because It does not "know" them: they are not essentially It. Only Soham is the key that unlocks and frees our Self whose essence is Divine Consciousness because Soham is our Self. (*Soham Yoga: the Yoga of the Self* explains this fully.)

This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them. (John 10:1-6)

Only the Soham yogi knows and understands through his own spiritual awakening and experience produced by his Soham Yoga practice.

Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. (John 10:7-8)

The Goal is also The Way, for they are one: Soham. I know this seems an incredible claim, but it is not—though it is amazing. Those who diligently practice Soham Yoga will come to know for themselves that my words are true. I did—so I know it will happen to others. Some will come to know that all their previous endeavors to awaken, develop, know and come alive were thieves and robbers: only distractions compared to the experiences resulting from their diligent practice of Soham Yoga.

I know this sounds arrogant and narrow-minded, but it is the simple truth. You can find out the truth of this by practicing yourself. It is very like the story of the man who played a single note on his violin for hours. When his wife asked him, “Why don’t you play other notes like everyone else?” he replied, “Because they are looking for it, but I have found it.” You can find it, also, because I did—and those who have learned it have told me the same, just as earlier in this Gospel the Samaritans who met Jesus after the “woman at the well” had told them of him, later said to her, “Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world” (John 4:42). Soham is itself the Savior of the Soham yogi.

I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. (John 10:9)

The Christ-Consciousness, the Knowledge of the Self whose essence is consciousness, is the door. Those who enter through their constant practice will be saved from all that is not their Self. The Greek word *sozo*, translated “saved,” means to be delivered, protected, healed, shielded, saved, and

made complete-whole. The Sanskrit word is *moksha*: the liberation from the bondage of karma and the wheel of birth and death and permanent release into the life and consciousness of the Absolute.

The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. (John 10:10)

Ignorance and delusions are the thieves that not only take from us the consciousness we should have, they kill and destroy our consciousness. Spiritual awakening through Soham sadhana establishes us in the life, the consciousness, of the spirit that is infinite.

I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. (John 10:11-13)

That which is not truly “us” is part of the illusions and delusions that will not protect us from the destruction of our spiritual consciousness and the immersion of our consciousness in materiality. Only our Self is our “own,” and that alone can (and should) be trusted and hearkened to by us.

I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. (John 10:14)

Christ consciousness, our own Self-realization, is the good shepherd-guide of our mind and life, for in that we come to know all the aspects of our being and come to know our finite and our infinite Selves.

As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. (John 10:15)

First we know our individual Self, the Son of God, and then by continual sadhana we come to know our Cosmic Self, the Father, since we have eternally existed in Him but have been living in the delusion that we are separated from Him.

And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. (John 10:16)

These words have two meanings, one exoteric and one esoteric. The exoteric meaning was that Jesus had other disciples, both in India (see *The Christ of India*) and in Israel. The esoteric meaning is that there are many things, including practices and insights, which belong in the fold of our individual inner development that are either buried in our subconscious and need awakening or bringing forth in spontaneous remembrance, or need to be taught us on the conscious level so we can have complete insight and understanding in order for us to take full charge of our life on all levels that we “may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God” (Colossians 4:12).

Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father. (John 10:17-18)

There is a great tragedy and handicap in the minds of most contemporary aspirants: they want both the philosophy and the practice of spiritual life to be simple and easy. This is impossible because we must both fully comprehend and understand the entire nature and purpose of all, and then lay down—objectively separate ourselves from—our minds and lives so through yoga sadhana we can both purify and order them completely in order to then take them up again and live in their full mastery and spiritual unfoldment. This is to be done through our power and maintained through

our power—the power of both intelligence and will practically employed. This is the imperative “command” of the Infinite of which we are a part. For nothing less than total unity and union is the goal of every sentient being: to realize that “I and my Father are one” (John 10:30).

There was a division therefore again among the Jews [Judeans] for these sayings. And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him? Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind? (John 10:19-21)

Please do not desire or try to make those around you understand what you are all about, much less come along with you to the divine goal. Some will disapprove, some will oppose, some will intuitively understand and therefore be on your side though they do not consciously understand. But you must be independent of them all in order to fully depend on yourself and your Self. You should still like and even love them as friends, but you must not let them trespass on the territory of your spiritual life and practice. Be kind and loving but firm—both with them and with yourself.

It is not either simple or easy to succeed in spiritual life, but it is the only worthwhile endeavor there is.

EMPOWERING AND SENDING FORTH THE SEVENTY

After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.

Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest.

Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.

Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way.

And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house. And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again.

And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the laborer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house.

And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you:

And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say, Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off

against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city.

Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you.

And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell.

He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.

And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.

And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.

And he turned him unto his disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see: For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them. (Luke 10:1-24)

After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come. We can be so busy being mystical and esoteric that we do not even see the practical good sense that is the hallmark of any worthy teacher or aspirant. But such practicality is essential for all levels of life, for “as above so below” can be interchanged and be equally vital. Or, as Sri Ramakrishna said, “If you can weigh salt, you can weigh sugar.”

The practicality and good publicity skill of Jesus is shown by two things: sending the disciples forth, and sending them in two's. First, he was preparing the people for his appearance after the disciples had introduced and familiarized the people with Jesus and his message. Second, he realized that problems could develop if they went out alone, and by going two-by-two they would have each other for moral support and even defense, for reaction to what they and Jesus would have to say could be very explosive.

Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest. Grain is reaped only when it has ripened and dried completely in the husk so it can be threshed (separated from the husk) and stored in the granary. We, too, ripen (evolve) within this body until we, too, separate from it in our consciousness and are free from material bonds both physically and mentally. Then we are stored in the astral realms and await future planting through subsequent incarnation and continue in repetitions of this cycle until we have evolved beyond the need for it and can permanently pass into higher and higher levels of consciousness and existence until Eternal Infinite Consciousness is revealed in our entire being. This the ultimate goal: to be gods within God.

But we are only able to evolve at the hands—under the guidance—of those enlightened ones who are qualified to awaken, lead and free us through their instruction in yoga sadhana, and thereby end for us the constant turning of the wheel of birth, death, and further rebirth. So we must pray earnestly and look for their advent in our life either in their living, incarnate forms or through their words of wisdom relayed to us through books or teachers.

The thirteenth chapter of the Bhagavad Gita is entitled, “The Yoga of the Distinction Between the Field and the Knower of the Field,” the

“field” being our material existence and the “knower” being our true Self, the Atman. Having this in mind from his years as a student-yogi in India, Jesus spoke in this manner.

Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves. No one in this world needs to be more clear-sighted—totally possess both spiritual and material (practical) insight—than the aspiring yogi. There can be no haziness of sentimentality or lack of total comprehension of the nature of anything or anyone he encounters, including himself and his own mind and inner makeup: the field in which he is living and hopefully evolving. Ahimsa, harmlessness, is a cardinal trait of a yogi, but it is not ignorance and misperception masquerading as innocence or simplicity of heart and mind. That is stupidity—which the Tibetan Buddhists call “one of the daughters of hell,” since it is usually willful, even if it is not faced or admitted to be what it really is. So an ignorant and naive person is “of hell” and not of God. Nor is being “childlike” and “simple” a virtue. Rather, for the yogi it is willful death, capitulation to his own inner negativity and evil which is in complete synchronization with the evil and folly of the world around him. The yogi must be the opposite to this. As Jesus said of his disciples, “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world” (John 17:16). And to them: “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you” (John 15:18-19). Later his disciple, James wrote: “Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (James 4:4). By “world” is meant the illusions and delusions created by the ignorance and negativity of human being, not the world that is the divine creation whose purpose is the evolution, enlightenment and liberation of the spiritually awakened.

Jesus calls those who tread the path to eternal life in the Self “lambs.” The word for “lamb” is *aren*, but in Greek it is also as a synonym for *arrhen*, which means “human.” The implication is that only the lambs who follow the Lamb of God, the Christ-principle, are true human beings. All others are degraded to the level of animals. Wolves kill and eat lambs, therefore the seekers of higher consciousness must realize that “the world” and its

inhabitants are of an opposite polarization to that of their awakened consciousness, and therefore their implacable enemies—although they may not consciously realize it.

Those who are awakening must avoid the contamination, the state of consciousness, of the world and its “children” by keeping themselves centered in their own higher consciousness through the *japa* and meditation of *Soham*. And they must realize that they have within themselves negative *samskaras*—affinities with the world and its servant-slaves—that may pull them back into the whirlpool path of delusion unless they separate and cut off themselves from all inner and outer influences to which they may become susceptible. As long as you are in the wolf-pen you are in danger of being eaten.

Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way. A purse (*balantion*) was a wallet for money, and a scrip (*pera*) was a pouch for carrying food. So the disciples were not to carry money or food, but to simply go forth “in the Name of the Lord,” entrusting their welfare to the Most High alone. And further, they were not to *aspazomai*—embrace, greet or salute—anyone they should meet, themselves being messengers (*angelos*—angels) of God—lest they be distracted and held back from their sole purpose. They were to go forth in total self-containment and of set purpose, even isolation, to safeguard themselves and their resolve. This may seem to us negative and unnecessarily harsh, but we have this example from Jesus himself: “Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man” (John 2:23-25). This was not cynicism on his part, but sanctity of the highest order which we must ourselves follow if we would enter the Kingdom of God in the spirit and say with Jesus: “I and my Father are one” (John 10:30).

And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house. And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again. If no “child” (*huios*) of peace is in a household, then no blessings will remain upon it and bless it. But he who gave the blessing shall

be blessed in turn by his own blessing, for whatever we sow, that we reap. This being so, the wise at all times at least inwardly and consciously bless all with whom they come in contact.

And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the laborer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house. Since spiritual knowledge and inspiration is the gift of a worthy teacher, blessed are those who give him any recompense or return for his gift to them, for this is a worthy thing.

And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you. Whatever is given by those benefitted is to be received with appreciation.

And heal the sick that are therein. A genuine spiritual aspirant—specifically, a dedicated yogi—brings healing wherever he goes, both healing of ignorance and spiritual weakness and healing of the body. For spiritual teaching and practice heal both the inner and the outer person. However, be aware that to heal physical illness is to open yourself to being besieged by people that will pester and annoy you with their selfish, greedy demands to be made well—often of the most trivial complaints. This happened to me in my early teens. A very dear elderly friend of mine was ill, and I felt such sympathy for her I put my hands on her and she was instantly relieved. So she told everyone she knew that was sick or in pain, and my parents were very annoyed by phone calls asking me to come cure them. So pray for the sick from a distance without their knowledge.

And say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. The kingdom of God is the consciousness of God. Worthy spiritual teachers make that spiritual realm near to aspirants who desire it. But to enter that kingdom is solely the the work of those aspirants. Anyone who claims to put you into the kingdom by “initiation” or blessing is a liar of the basest sort. Certainly you can be helped, but you must walk every step of the way. False gurus will hinder you and fake yogas will deceive you. Be wary.

But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say, Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. These are intense words, but

they are definitely true and worthy of being heeded. You should not make some public spectacle of yourself, but in your mind you should quietly and firmly withdraw and leave the unworthy and unbelieving to themselves.

Say nothing; just leave. And the karma they have created will manifest in time, even if you pray for it not to. I speak from experience—sad experience.

But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city. This also is sad but true. This, too, I have witnessed more than once.

Having spoken of these things in warning to his disciples, Jesus addresses two places and their inhabitants that had overtly and hatefully rejected his words to them.

Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell. I have seen over and over the results of rejecting and even mocking spiritual teachings. For the rejection is directed at God, not the humans who spoke to them the truth of God. But the results are overt and evident, not just inward, though that is where the worst effects will be felt and experienced.

The words to Capernaum always remind me of the holy Russian Orthodox Archbishop Seraphim of Chicago. In reference to them he told me that the now-abandoned city of ancient Capernaum is very slowly sinking into the earth, and has been for centuries. He himself had witnessed Jesus' words being literally fulfilled.

He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me. Those who heed the messengers of truth are hearing and respecting the Author of Truth: God. But to those who reject their message, Jesus said: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40). I knew a devout Christian man who tried to spiritually help some people who mocked and insulted him. When he prayed and asked Jesus to overlook and forgive them, he heard an inner voice say: "I will not. They have rejected you, so they have rejected me."

And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. A demon, a *daimonion*, is an evil spirit.

There are actually two kinds of spirits that can plague human beings: 1) nature spirits of various kinds and non-human spirits that have somehow gotten into this dimension from various astral worlds, and 2) human spirits: spirits of the dead who are earthbound and therefore cannot pass on into an astral world, or spirits of the dead who have somehow returned into the earth plane through some attachment or karmic connection. Some of these are “escapees” from astral hells. Both kinds need to be returned to their rightful places, which is no simple or easy thing as a rule. At his request I once worked with the great scientist Marcel Vogel in helping some spirits, both other-dimensional and human, return to where they belonged. It was very interesting. But it is a mistake for the yogi to become over-involved with the spirit-world, just as it is a mistake to become involved in “spiritual” healing. (There is no problem with vibrational or natural therapies.)

The important part of this verse is the statement that evil spirits can be banished/exorcised by the power of the Names of God as well as mantras that invoke the various forms of God or Divine Consciousness Itself. The supreme mantra of Divine Consciousness is Soham, as explained in *Soham Yoga: The Yoga of the Self*.

And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. “Satan” is the power of cosmic delusion, the “father of lies” (John 8:44). By a Name of God or Soham, delusion is banished from the consciousness of the yogi and from his environment as well. And evil vibrations and consciousness as well as evil spirits are also banished from the aura and surroundings of a yogi who constantly inwardly mentally invokes (intones) sacred mantras such as Soham. For this reason, the yogi must be prepared to observe that some people leave whenever he enters a place, or will never enter his home, even if invited.

Let me give two examples.

1) Once I found a very good picture of Ganesha and put it over our ashram front door (this is the custom throughout India) on the inside. When I did so, I prayed to him: “Ganapati: please do not let anyone in this door you do not like.” I also had some written mantras of the Sudarshan

Chakra for the expulsion of evil, and I taped them behind the picture. At that time we had a satsang in our ashram on Friday evenings. At the end of one, when our visitors had left, the ashramites told me that a man had come with some of them, but had stood just outside the doorway as though he was pressing against an invisible force which was blocking him from entering. Those he was with asked him why he was not coming in. Suddenly he turned around and ran to his car, jumped in and roared off. A few days later I learned that he engaged in negative occult practices. Years later I was taken (unannounced) by some friends to a supposed spiritual center run by people who did the same practices. As we got out of the car, the door of the center opened and the man in charge of it ran out shouting that we could not come in!

2) Every week one of the sadhus here and I go to a very large wholesale warehouse that sells virtually everything including groceries. Some months back one of employees came up to us and said, "I want to thank you for coming here. Whenever I see you, even from a distance, I always feel such great peace." Actually, every week we are greeted with affection by the employees stationed at the door, and often while we are inside, an employee will come up and say they are glad to see us.

Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. The word translated "power" is *exousia*, the root word of exorcise. "Serpents and scorpions" not only indicate evil spirits but are symbolic terms for negative and malicious people, often conscious servants of evil who are motivated and empowered by Satan. They hate the good, but usually walk or run from it.

In my teens I met a remarkable woman whose spiritual wisdom and power was a great blessing to me. She told me that she went to a spiritual gathering once, and as she was entering she saw a woman going into a semi-trance with her eyes closed and her arms extended down and outward and muttering something under her breath. My friend just moved the woman's hand aside as she mentally commanded the evil power to depart. Instantly the woman jumped and opened her eyes and looked at my friend in shock, then turned away. Later, the woman who had invited

that woman told my friend, “She was very angry when we left at the end, and she said to me, ‘I was going into the spirit, but she touched me and took away my liberty. I won’t come back here again!’”

Teddy Roosevelt was not a spiritual leader, but his advice should be followed by the yogi: “Speak softly, but carry a big stick.” Soham is the biggest stick there is to produce and maintain your own inner peace and protection. And evil flees from its silent invocation.

Notwithstanding [nevertheless] in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven. It is not always easy for us who live in this material and delusive world to keep our priorities in right order. Even if we work miracles and have incredible visions and speak with gods, it is nothing in comparison with what we already have and are. Our “names are written in heaven.” That is, our spiritual citizenship, our very fundamental being, is in the *ouranos*, the spiritual heaven which is the infinite Consciousness Itself. It is both our Self and the Abode. We are identical with it, and have been from eternity. We do not need to attain it, we need to realize/experience it. We are gods within God.

In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight. The word’s “wise and prudent” refer to those whom the world and its ways consider wise and prudent—and who are really foolish and careless in matters of the higher life in the spirit. To those who understand that they are but infants before the wisdom of God, the things of divine life are revealed because their spiritual eyes are opened in God and they have a right perspective on their relation to God, knowing with Saint John the Baptist: “He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:30). That is, spiritual consciousness must dawn in them and increase to full illumination—the illusions of the false ego having decreased and disappeared.

All things are delivered [entrusted] to me of [by] my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him. Saint John wrote: “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we

know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure” (I John 3:2-3). Without real purification of our entire being it is impossible to even converse theoretically about the nature of God or ourselves. Those who silently and privately engage in genuine sadhana for years will be able to directly perceive (for it is not a matter of intellectual comprehension) the higher realities of both God and themselves—their Self. There are many trinities in the full range of existence, each one of them reflecting the one above it. So in understanding we move to higher and higher planes of existence and consciousness.

It is as Saint Paul described: “We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (II Corinthians 3:18) through yoga sadhana. However, “now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known” (I Corinthians 13:12). By “glass” Saint Paul means a glass mirror, and the quality of the glass of which mirrors were made was very crude—dim and cloudy. So the reflected image was both dark and obscure. This is the case when we see the human side of ourselves, but when we see “the glory of the Lord” that is our essential nature, we will see it as light and clarity. To “know even as also I am known” is to see ourselves through the divine eye (consciousness) as God sees us. It all resolves back into the counsel of Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita: “Therefore be a yogi” (6:46).

And he turned him unto his disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see: For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them. Spiritual life is a matter of spiritual sight—of seeing true by the spirit itself, our essential being and reality. As the disciples saw the miracles of Jesus, so we witness the miracle of our own transformation “from glory to glory” through the awakening power of yoga, the dawning of the knowledge: *Soham Asmi*: I am He—Soham, that Spirit-Self. The yogi lives in a realm far beyond the mere healing of bodily defects and diseases. He lives in That which heals the defects and diseases: Divine Consciousness. He can say to the Infinite:

“I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness” (Psalms 17:15); and
“When I awake, I am still with thee” (Psalms 139:18), as he has been
throughout eternity without beginning or end.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted [tested] him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?

And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.

And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

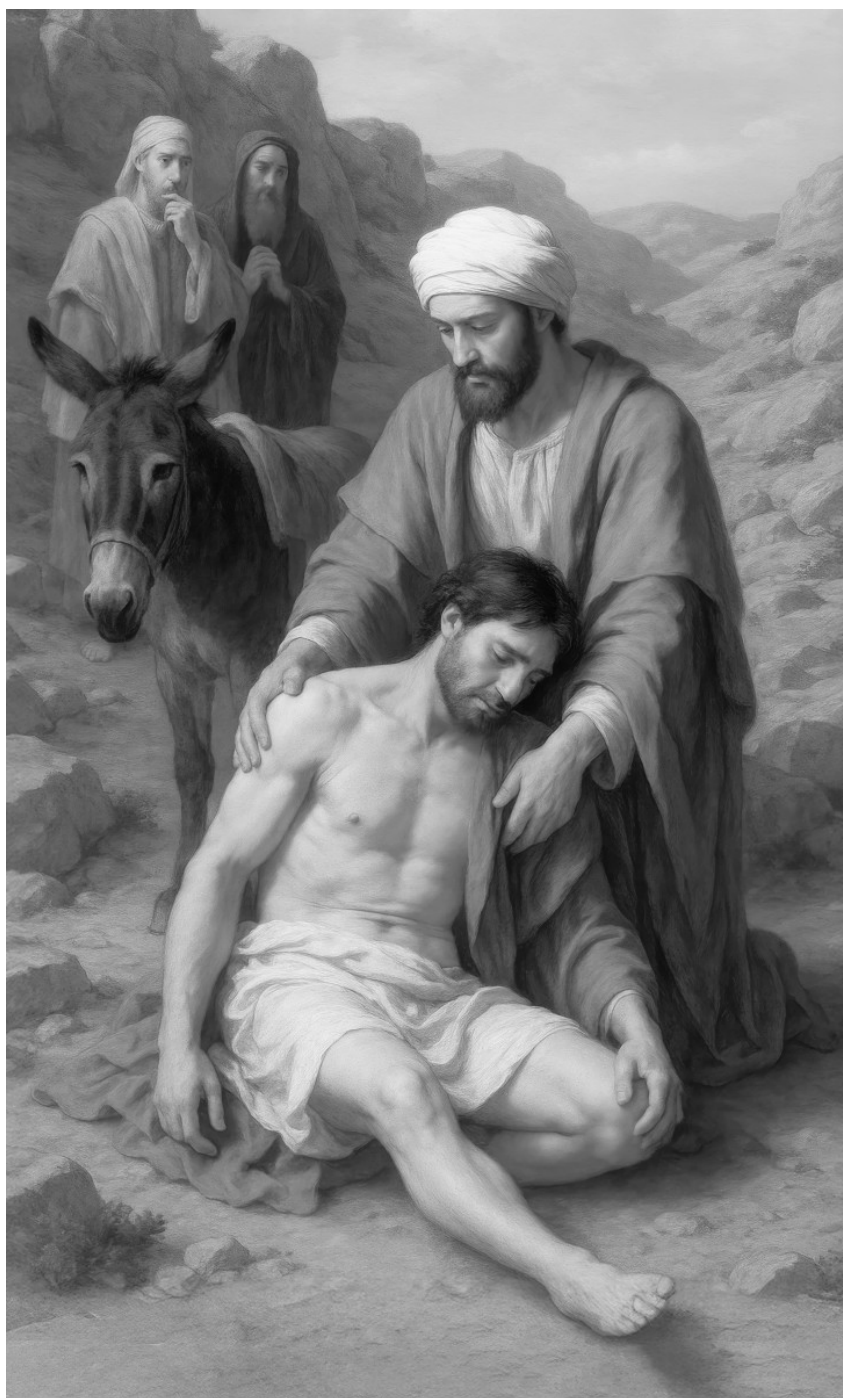
But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?

And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And

likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him,

he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.

Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?



And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise. (Luke 10:25-37)

And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted [tested] him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? This verse itself is very interesting, for the word translated “inherit” is *kleronomeo*, which means—either literally or figuratively—to be an heir to something, to receive something by it being one’s inheritance. The implication is that eternal life is not an alien thing somehow gained from something external, but is actually the innate nature of the individual jivatman as part of the Paramatman. Therefore eternal life is simply entering into what has always been our state. But we have to know that it is possible because it is our nature to do so, and shall inevitably be ours. It is a matter of awakening to and into our full, eternal reality. We *realize* the Self, we do not become or obtain it. We *are* it.

He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. The first part is the conscious embracing of the truth of our Self through sadhana and the second part is the realization that all sentient beings, all individual Selves, are actually one with us in this mystical unity, in the Supreme Self, yet also distinct from us. Only the yogi can comprehend and understand this through his actual, spiritual experience. As Yogananda used to sing, “He who knows, knows. None else knows.” It is not his words that make this cryptic, it is our own unknowing. “Therefore be a yogi” (Bhagavad Gita 6:46).

And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. The eternal, divine life of the Self is the only real life. And it is not mere belief, but realization.

But he, willing [wishing] to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour? This man obviously understands Jesus perfectly, but since he does not like Jesus’ implications he pretends to not understand and asks what he hopes will be a “gotcha” question that Jesus cannot answer. This is standard procedure for such people who know they are in the wrong but think if they can muddy the waters they will not be seen as the spiritual

miscreants they really are. As the saying goes: The Dog That Howls Is The One That's Hit.

And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. The priest and Levite were not just being uncaring. At the time of Jesus thieves often had one of their number lie on or beside the road, apparently injured. When someone went to help the man, they emerged, beat or killed him and took his clothes, money and whatever he had. Knowing this, many people moved as far away as they could and continued on.

But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. This man was willing to risk being set upon by thieves in case the man was truly injured—which he was. This was both compassionate and heroic.

And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. This man was also generous and deeply caring for the man's welfare, spending his money to bring healing to him. So he was courageous, caring and charitable.

Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise. It is not likely that he did, but we must if we would follow the ways of our own inner Christ.

ONE THING IS NEEDFUL

Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.

But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her. (Luke 10:38-42)

All my life I have seen and heard “good Christians” protesting the teaching of this incident. “We need Marthas as much as we need Marys,” they protest. But they are never themselves Marys, sitting at Jesus' feet in contemplative prayer or meditation. Rather, like Martha they are busybodies going about seeing other people are “right with God” and creating all kinds of external projects (usually involving other people's money which they and others raise and spend “for the glory of the Lord and His kingdom”).

Spiritual frauds and layabouts resent and even hate those who give their life to God and sacrifice the very things their critics love and cannot do without. So they hate and resent. But the “needed” Martha did not risk her life by standing at the foot of Jesus' cross as did Mary. Nor did she go to his tomb and meet the resurrected Jesus as did Mary. Anyone who reads the Gospel and observes intelligently knows that Mary alone—and those like her—have “chosen that good part which shall not be taken away” but daily increased. The wise say with Mirabai: “I have sold everything in

the market-place of this world and bought my Khanaia [Krishna]. Some laugh at me and say the price was too high, and others say it was too little; but all I know is that it was all I had.” The Marthas end up only with themselves—their first love.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. (Luke 11:1-4)

Pray. In Greek the word translated “pray” and “prayer” is *proseuchomai*, which literally means “to draw near” and implies supplication and worship which is accomplished by drawing near to the object of the prayer. Real prayer brings us near to God, and the highest prayer is the japa and meditation of Soham, since Soham is not just a statement of identity (“I am That”) or a designation of God, but the very embodiment/presence/consciousness of God. And since God is our inmost Self, Soham is also the same for us: it is our true Self. So it is both objective and subjective—all-embracing. Therefore Soham Yoga is Purna Yoga: full, complete, all-encompassing, and infinite—embodying the qualities of its focus: Brahman. And Soham yogis are transforming themselves into That by their Soham sadhana.

Our Father. God is not just “God” but Our (*hemon*) Father (*pater*). We belong to God and God belongs to us. He is ours and we are His. Further, he is the source of our origin—our Father. And just as every drop of blood in our body has ultimately come from our human father, and the life is in the blood (“the life of the flesh is in the blood”—Leviticus 17:11), so our life is drawn from God exclusively. As Saint Paul said, “In him we live,

and move, and have our being” (Acts 17:28). As the sages of India knew in their divine insight: we are one with the One That Is God. “For we are also his offspring” (*ibid.*). But to truly be a “child” of God, we must know Him, consciously live in Him and become totally one with Him. This is the process known among the Eastern Orthodox Christians as *theosis*—deification—the passage from humanity to divinity, from mortality to immortality. And this “attainment” is really our very nature from the moment we enter into relative existence and even after our ascent to the revelation of our divine essence, the Atman-Self.

Which art in heaven. Ouranos is not the exoteric Christian idea of heaven—a place of glory and beauty where righteous people go after death to live there forever. Rather, it is the highest, boundless realm of infinite consciousness, the Chidakasha, God-Consciousness, Divinity Itself. This is our true, essential Being.

This passage from the Chandogya Upanishad expresses it perfectly, so I am going to repeat it.

When Svetaketu was twelve years old, his father Uddalaka said to him, “Svetaketu, you must now go to school and study. None of our family, my child, is ignorant of Brahman.”

Thereupon Svetaketu went to a teacher and studied for twelve years. After committing to memory all the Vedas, he returned home full of pride in his learning.

His father, noticing the young man’s conceit, said to him: “Svetaketu, have you asked for that knowledge by which we hear the unheardable, by which we perceive the unperceivable, by which we know the unknowable?”

“What is that knowledge, sir?” asked Svetaketu.

“My child, as by knowing one lump of clay, all things made of clay are known, the difference being only in name and arising from speech, and the truth being that all are clay; as by knowing a nugget of gold, all things made of gold are known, the difference being only in name and arising from speech, and the truth being that all are gold—exactly so is that knowledge, knowing which we know all.”

"But surely those venerable teachers of mine are ignorant of this knowledge; for if they had possessed it, they would have taught it to me. Do you therefore, sir, give me that knowledge."

"Be it so," said Uddalaka, and continued thus:

"In the beginning there was Existence, One only, without a second. Some say that in the beginning there was nonexistence only, and that out of that the universe was born. But how could such a thing be? How could existence be born of non-existence? No, my son, in the beginning there was Existence alone—One only, without a second. He, the One, thought to himself: Let me be many, let me grow forth. Thus out of himself he projected the universe; and having projected out of himself the universe, he entered into every being. All that is has its self in him alone. Of all things he is the subtle essence. He is the truth. He is the Self. And that, Svetaketu, THAT ART THOU."

"Please, sir, tell me more about this Self."

"Be it so, my child:

"As the bees make honey by gathering juices from many flowering plants and trees, and as these juices reduced to one honey do not know from what flowers they severally come, similarly, my son, all creatures, when they are merged in that one Existence, whether in dreamless sleep or in death, know nothing of their past or present state, because of the ignorance enveloping them—know not that they are merged in him and that from him they came.

"Whatever these creatures are, whether a lion, or a tiger, or a boar, or a worm, or a gnat, or a mosquito, that they remain after they come back from dreamless sleep.

"All these have their self in him alone. He is the truth. He is the subtle essence of all. He is the Self. And that, Svetaketu, THAT ART THOU."

"Please, sir, tell me more about this Self."

"Be it so, my son:

"The rivers in the east flow eastward, the rivers in the west flow westward, and all enter into the sea. From sea to sea they pass, the

clouds lifting them to the sky as vapor and sending them down as rain. And as these rivers, when they are united with the sea, do not know whether they are this or that river, likewise all those creatures that I have named, when they have come back from Brahman, know not whence they came.

“All those beings have their self in him alone. He is the truth. He is the subtle essence of all. He is the Self. And that, Svetaketu, THAT ART THOU.”

“Please, sir, tell me more about this Self.”

“Be it so, my child:

“If someone were to strike once at the root of this large tree, it would bleed, but live. If he were to strike at its stem, it would bleed, but live. If he were to strike at the top, it would bleed, but live. Pervaded by the living Self, this tree stands firm, and takes its food; but if the Self were to depart from one of its branches, that branch would wither; if it were to depart from a second, that would wither; if it were to depart from a third, that would wither. If it were to depart from the whole tree, the whole tree would wither.

“Likewise, my son, know this: The body dies when the Self leaves it—but the Self dies not.

“All that is has its self in him alone. He is the truth. He is the subtle essence of all. He is the Self. And that, Svetaketu, THAT ART THOU.”

“Please, sir, tell me more about this Self.”

“Be it so.

“Bring a fruit of that Nyagrodha tree.”

“Here it is, sir.”

“Break it.”

“It is broken, sir.”

“What do you see?”

“Some seeds, extremely small, sir.”

“Break one of them.”

“It is broken, sir.”

“What do you see?”

"Nothing, sir."

"The subtle essence you do not see, and in that is the whole of the Nyagrodha tree. Believe, my son, that that which is the subtle essence—in that have all things their existence. That is the truth. That is the Self. And that, Svetaketu, THAT ART THOU."

"Please, sir, tell me more about this Self."

"Be it so."

"Put this salt in water, and come to me tomorrow morning."

Svetaketu did as he was bidden. The next morning his father asked him to bring the salt which he had put in the water. But he could not, for it had dissolved. Then said Uddalaka:

"Sip the water, and tell me how it tastes."

"It is salty, sir."

"In the same way," continued Uddalaka, "though you do not see Brahman in this body, he is indeed here. That which is the subtle essence—in that have all things their existence. That is the truth. That is the Self. And that, Svetaketu, THAT ART THOU."

"Please, sir, tell me more about this Self," said the youth again.

"Be it so, my child:

"As a man may be blindfolded, and led away, and left in a strange place; and as, having been so dealt with, he turns in every direction and cries out for someone to remove his bandages and show him the way home; and as one thus entreated may loose his bandages and give him comfort; and as thereupon he walks from village to village, asking his way as he goes; and as he arrives home at last—just so does a man who meets with an illumined teacher obtain true knowledge.

"That which is the subtle essence—in that have all beings their existence. That is the truth. That is the Self. And that, O Svetaketu, THAT ART THOU."

"Please, sir, tell me more about this Self."

"Be it so, my child:

"When a man is fatally ill, his relations gather round him and ask, 'Do you know me? Do you know me? Now until his speech is

merged in his mind, his mind in his breath, his breath in his vital heat, his vital heat in the Supreme Being, he knows them. But when his speech is merged in his mind, his mind in his breath, his breath in his vital heat, his vital heat in the Supreme Being, then he does not know them.

“That which is the subtle essence—in that have all beings their existence. That is the truth. That is the Self. And that, O Svetaketu, THAT ART THOU.” (Chandogya Upanishad 6:1:1-6:15:1-3)

Hallowed be thy name. God and His Name (*Onoma*) are one—so the yogi-sages tell us. Yet *hagiazō* mean “to make holy, purify or consecrate.” We do that by japa and meditation of the Divine Name (Soham), which sanctifies, purifies and consecrates *us*—body, mind and soul. *Hagiazō* also means to venerate, so we must consider the Name of God worthy of virtual worship because of Its divine power that manifests in us through our japa and meditation. If we do that, then we ourselves bring about the next petition:

Thy kingdom come. *Basileia* means both ruling and a realm which is ruled. Through the sadhana of the Divine Name—Soham Sadhana particularly—the divine consciousness that is our Self is both invoked and actively manifested through the transformation it works in us. In this way the kingdom of God truly does come to us.

The word translated “come” is *erchomai*, which interestingly means: come, accompany, appear and grow. All of these certainly apply to the advent of spirit-consciousness within us. The heavenly kingdom of spiritual consciousness comes—arises—from deep within us; and it goes along with us every moment of our lives. It is our inner companion and guide. It appears to our inner sight and then develops (grows) in our continual outer perception of inner realities. What before concealed the real now is the revealing of the real. It is both life and living.

When I became a yogi, there was much in my religious past that became meaningful to me in a living insight and experience. What before was theory or hope was a present, conscious reality. Songs that I had sung in church with scant understanding became joyfully clear and expressive of my new-found realities. One was this:

There's a theme that is sweet to my mem'ry,
There's a joy that I cannot declare,
There's a treasure that gladdens my being,
'Tis the kingdom of righteousness here.

There's a scene of its grandness before me,
Of its greatness there can be no end;
It is joy, it is peace, it is glory,
In my heart, how these riches do blend!

This song could rightly be a hymn of praise to Sanatana Dharma and its actualization through yoga. When I became a yogi I really and truly was “saved.”

Thy will be done. “Will” is the translation of *thelema*, which means an active determination, purpose, decree, volition inclination, desire, will or pleasure in the sense of what pleases a person. This is, of course, all applied to God Himself in this prayer. In the highest level it may be considered that with God will is deed—that the moment He wills something it is done. This implies three things: 1) That the creation is really ideation. 2) That creation, evolution and final dissolution occur in a divine moment—that time is an illusion, and everything is in the Eternal Now: IS the Eternal Now. 3) That God alone exists at any time. Without the perspective of Sanatana Dharma, Hinduism, this is impossible to even conceive, much less comprehend.

“Done” is the translation of the word *ginomai*, which means to cause to be, to generate, to become (come into being), be produced, be brought to pass, to be completed/fulfilled, and to be revealed. And it comes from the root word *ginosko*, which means to be known and carried out or made manifest, with implication that it is known and understood. So all this is meant by the four syllables: Thy will be done. The will of God is not theoretical, but the objectification of a primary, pre-existent, eternal reality or condition.

As in heaven, so in earth. Ouranos, translated “heaven,” means the boundless expanse of the sky—infinity itself, and implies the highest level

of existence. "Earth" means the material creation, and heaven is the vast expanse of Spirit, of the Consciousness that is the Infinite God. The will of God is God, and so is its reflection in the form of relative existence.

God alone exists in the final or ultimate sense.

Give us day by day our daily bread. The word *epiousios* means that which is necessary for subsistence—that without which life is impossible. It is asked for each day because each day the aspiring sadhaka must seek that necessary sustenance within through japa and meditation. For it is the inner nourishment that gives life to the spirit. Life is made up of days—both spiritual and physical life. And each day is a new, miniature life unto itself. The questing soul must realize this and become "new" every day and live anew in the eternal Now.

And forgive us our sins. The word translated "sins" is *hamartia*, derived from *hamartano*, which means to miss the mark, to fail by coming short in what is necessary for eternal life. "Shortcoming" is a good word for it. It is not something necessarily evil, and certainly not displeasing or angering to God. It is failure in coming up to the mark: the life lived in the world by Jesus as an example for us to follow, not just admire and claim is beyond us. When he said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10), he meant the fullness, the totality of life in the spirit—the true life besides which everything else is death or non-existence.

We do not need our sins "forgiven" by God just not caring about or overlooking what we have done. The word *aphiemi* means to dismiss something in the sense of sending it away, dismissing it forever. It also means a reversal in the form of turning our consciousness toward the light in which darkness and delusions, the causes of sins, are dissolved, dispelled and banished. For sin is not just an act: before that it is a state in which sin is possible. But Saint John tells us: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (I John 3:9). "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new (II Corinthians 5:17).

For we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. "But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses"

(Mark 11:26). What we sow, we reap; and what we do not sow, we do not reap.

And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. This is a puzzle to those who do not know the Greek text. *Eisphero*, which is translated “lead,” means to be carried along toward something. The problem is that it is the nature of both the subject and the object of temptation to be impelled, even compelled, toward something. *Peirasmos*, means a testing, a determining of the character of something or someone—in this case, the spiritual aspirant and his aspiration. Such a situation or experience can be perilous to the individual, so the wise pray to be delivered from it. *Rhoumai* means to be impelled or drawn toward something, and often means deliverance—a putting of the individual beyond the reach of *poneros*: that which is unfortunate, harmful, degenerating or destructive—evil in its effects on the aspirant. This can be applied to both attitude, thought, exercise of will and action.

The attraction of magnets for one another comes from their polarity. In the same way everything has a polarity, a force, inherent in it. Those with compatible or the same polarity will be attracted to something, while those with incompatible or opposite polarity will be repelled by it. Like does attract like. Therefore our prayer must be to be polarized in our mind and heart toward the holy and thus repelled by the evil. It should not just be a matter of resisting evil, but of being held away from it by the polarity of our subtle energy makeup, which includes the mind and intellect.

PRACTICAL SPIRITUALITY

And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him?

And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee.

I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.

And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. (Luke 11:5-10)

These verses are easy to understand, but the last one merits consideration.

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. The fundamental law of relative existence is the Law of Karma. It is best summed up in the words of Sir Isaac Newton: "For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction." And Saint Paul: "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7). In this verse Jesus is anticipating both Saint Paul and Newton. Having spent most of his life in India (see *The Christ of India*), Jesus was very conversant with the concept of karma and is outlining the way it works. His words are not promises that God will give us whatever we desire—ask or seek. Rather, they state a fundamental law of intelligent

life in whatever form in whatever world. In the highest form of life, the spiritual life, we must consciously apply it and thereby take charge of our own life. Though we say, “Thy will be done” in the Lord’s Prayer, it is our will that will ultimately be done according to how we apply our will, thought and action. C. S. Lewis wrote that there are two kinds of human beings: those that say to God, “Thy will be done,” and those to whom God says, “thy will be done.” Jesus is showing us how it works on the practical level of cosmic law and order.

If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? (Luke 11:11-13)

The real “catch” to this proposition is whether we really want what we pray or claim to aspire for. My dear friend, Sri Narayan Das, who administered the Birla temples in India (Raja Birla was their builder), and also the Sapta Rishi Ashram in Hardwar where I stayed for some of the time in my first two pilgrimages to India, told me the following.

He began to think that his life was passing on rapidly, and he had no divine experience. In a few days he learned that Anandamayi Ma was going to be at the Delhi railway station to depart on a trip, so he went there. As soon as he saw her he said, “Ma! I want to see God!” Ma had been walking back and forth on the train platform, but when he said this, she stopped, smiled, looked at him intently and said, “Do you *really* want to see God?” He told me, “Immediately I realized that if I said Yes, Ma would tell me to become a sannyasi. So I put my hands together in pranam and said, ‘No, Ma. I do not want to see God!’ Ma laughed and resumed walking.” So it is. Who in this world Dares To Be Divine?

It is all a matter of will. My friend Elwood Decker was very creative, and one day his wife, Ann, told him, “I want you to write a two-person play about Christmas that we can record and send to the grandchildren for

Christmas.” So he wrote one about a shepherd that was present when the angel told the shepherds about the birth of Jesus. The announcing angel guided him and one of his fellow shepherds to the place where the child Jesus was. But that shepherd immediately walked away. “Isn’t he going to come in and see the Child?” asked the angel. “Oh, no,” the shepherd replied, “he is going to tell others to come and see Him.” So they went in and honored the Child. When they came out, the angel said, “I have to go back to heaven, now.” The shepherd said, “I wish I could go to heaven.” “Do you *really* want to go to heaven?” asked the angel. “Yes. I do,” said the shepherd. Then suddenly there was a whooshing sound, and the play was ended. He really wanted to go to heaven, so he did. There is certainly a lesson there for those who would “lay hold on eternal life” (I Timothy 6:12, 19). Just Do It.

EVIL SPEAKS AND IS ANSWERED

And he was casting out a devil [demon], and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake; and the people wondered. But some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils. And others, tempting [testing] him, sought of him a sign [proof] from heaven. (Luke 11:14-16)

And he was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. The word *daimonion* means a spirit or supernatural being. Usually it refers to a malignant or deluded spirit of some kind that is harming the possessed. In this case, since the spirit was not the rightful “inhabiter” of the possessed, the victim’s nervous system was disrupted and his ability to speak was impaired. The word *kofos*, translated “dumb,” means either deaf or speechless, or both. This situation is very difficult, for there usually is no way to tell whether the impairment of speech or hearing is a result of possession (or obsession, which is a lesser degree of interference from a spirit, though detrimental). Jesus, of course, knew exactly the situation and expelled the spirit.

And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake; and the people wondered. But some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils. The enemies of right and truth always have an “explanation” ready when they are shown to be wrong or ignorant. The more “rational” it is supposed to be, the more irrational it usually is. Jesus will be dealing with this shortly.

And others, tempting [testing] him, sought of him a sign [proof] from heaven. Obviously the “sign” was to be a miracle. But Jesus had already

worked a miracle that proved he was not only a son of light, he had the power to dispel darkness and replace it with light. So he did something that was the last thing they wanted: he spoke the truth.

But he, knowing their thoughts [intentions], said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth. If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub [Satan]. And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges. But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you. (Luke 11:17-20)

But he, knowing their thoughts [intentions], said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth. If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? Because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub [Satan]. This is obvious logic.

And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges. Jesus means that those who could exorcise would know from their experience that a charlatan or an evil person could not dispel evil spirits.

But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you. The “finger” of God is not just the power of God, but is also the very presence of God—the kingdom of God. So the prayer “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth,” is fulfilled that very moment.

When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome [conquer] him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.

Those who are strong in God through personal righteousness can render evil harmless and banish it. We can, and must be, stronger than that which opposes us in our spiritual life, of which our life in the world must be an extension and manifestation. Then the kingdom of God is wherever we are. That is why Jesus said to his disciples, “Ye are the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14). The yogi especially is a light in the world. But the yogi must be prepared to be opposed by those who live in darkness and not in the light. For Jesus continues:

**He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth
not with me scattereth. (Luke 11:21-23)**

Despite the propaganda of the “there is no black and white, only gray” servants of evil, in spiritual realities there are only two sides: in and out; for and against; light and darkness. Therefore Saint James the Great wrote: “Let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation” (James 5:12). The word translated “condemnation” is *hupokrisis*, which means hypocrisy, deceitfulness.

There must always be clarity in our thinking, acting and speaking. There is no place for diplomacy when facing falsehood and evil. There is black and white—nothing else—though the two can be mixed by the words and actions of those who wish to deceive. Therefore Saint James also wrote: “Purify your hearts, ye double minded” (James 4:8). And: “A double minded man is unstable in all his ways” (James 1:8). We must heed the words of the prophet Joshua: “Choose you this day whom ye will serve” (Joshua 24:15). There are only two honest choices. Only two possible ones, in reality.

In the Gospel of Saint John he tells us that once after Jesus had spoken the plain and open truth to those around him, as a consequence: “From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life” (John 6:66-68). Blessed are those that choose eternal life and follow the way to it.

A SOBERING TRUTH

When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out. And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. (Luke 11:24-26)

When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest. The expression “dry places” means desert places which cannot sustain life. The idea is that the spirit was living in a human being comfortably in a parasitic manner, but when he was exorcised and cast out of the human he began to wander, unable to be at rest.

And finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out. So he returns. This is especially observed in people who are not fully possessed, but only obsessed—having an evil spirit (or “tramp soul”) living in their aura and influencing and sometimes even controlling their thoughts and actions—even affecting their health. A spirit driven out of the aura through encounter with positive vibrations wanders for a while and then comes back. Often:

And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished. It has been cleaned and augmented and strong and orderly—but empty. So it can enter and occupy it as it did before. But it wants to ensure that it will not be expelled again. Even in the spirit world there is safety in numbers, so:

Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there. *Katoikeo* means to permanently reside somewhere. The original spirit having gone out, instead of there

being one possessing entity, upon the return there are now eight spirits in possession—eight times worse than before! The lesson here is that if we once eliminate something negative or hindering from our life and then take it back, things will not be as they were, they will be many times worse. Therefore: *And the last state of that man is worse than the first.* This is the law of the inner life.

THE TRULY PRAISEWORTHY

And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked. But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it. (Luke 11:27-28)

In the middle east they like hyperbole and poetic flights in their praise, and this is an example. Words like these were a common thing to say in praise of someone—to say how blessed and special their mother was to imply that the son was blessed and special. But blessedness has many levels, and Jesus is firm in stating that the blessedness of merely giving birth to a great person is not the real blessedness, but the blessedness of those who hear the word of God through their awakened consciousness and embody (“keep”) it on all levels of their being—especially in the spirit.

Akouo does not just mean to hear, but to *understand*. Believing in something is ignorance or superstition if it is not fully understood intellectually. And more: it must be embodied in the believer’s thinking and living. For *phulasso* means to observe something in the sense of making it a part of someone’s life, both outwardly and inwardly. To not just believe, but to BE what is believed.

A WARNING

And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to say, This is an evil generation: they seek [desire] a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet. For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation. (Luke 11:29-30)

The word translated “sign” is *semeion*, which means a miracle that indicates something. In the third chapter of the book of Jonah we read that God told Jonah to warn the people of Nineveh that their city would be overthrown by their enemies because of their evil ways. The Ninevites heeded him and truly reformed and remained safe and at peace. Jesus was as Jonah in his exhortations to righteousness. And only the warning would be given, not a miracle.

The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them: for she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.

The men of Nineve shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here. (Luke 11:31-32)

The subject is continued. But we shall see the result toward the end of Jesus’ life.

No man, when he hath lighted a candle [lamp], putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel [basket], but on a candlestick [lampstand], that they which come in may see the light.
(Luke 11:33)

First the inner lamp of consciousness must be lit by the flame of spiritual awakening and wisdom. Such a thing cannot be hidden or invisible, but all who approach it see it clearly even if they do not fully understand it. Those who kindle the inner light of the spirit will emanate that light, and those who are not blind in the spirit will be able to perceive it. This is evident in India where people are able to see by their own inner light the presence of the inner light in others. Here are three examples.

One time Anandamayi Ma was standing in the door of a sleeper car in the Howrah Station in Calcutta. Ma's birthday celebration had been held that year in the Agarpara Anandamayi Ashram north of Calcutta, and she was leaving for the north. A goodly number of her devotees were standing there looking at Ma. Other trains had come in and passengers were rushing along to leave the station for their destinations. Nearly all just rushed by with hardly a glance, but some saw Ma, stopped and joined us, quietly asking someone, "Who is this mahatma [great soul]?" Then they stood with us looking at Ma until the train left.

When Yogananda's great disciple Sister Durga went to India, whenever she walked down a street people would begin following her, drawn by her sacred presence although they had no idea who she was. Soon there would be a small crowd walking along behind her.

One time in Chicago I was talking with Dr. John Demakis in a restaurant. He had gone to India a few years before to attend a World Council of Churches youth event. At one point in our conversation he asked me, "Why do people in India come and touch you when you are walking along?" I was surprised, even amazed, because Indians do not ever do such a thing as touch a stranger. But he assured me that people had done so every time he went out. I realized that it was because they sensed his spiritual radiation, but I said nothing, knowing he would be embarrassed if I said so.

Jesus told his disciples, “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12; 9:5). But he also said to them, “Ye are the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14). Being himself a fully self-illuminated yogi, he had shown his disciples the way to light the inner lamp of their spirit, so they themselves became Christians: other Christs—other lights in the world. This is the way of the yogi: making other yogis equal to himself. Sri Gajanana Maharaj did the same. (See *Light of Soham* and *The Inspired Wisdom of Sri Gajanana Maharaj*.)

At first yogis see the Light, but through their sadhana they become the Light.

FULL OF LIGHT

The light [luchnos: lamp; illuminator] of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness. Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness. If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light. (Luke 11:34-36)

The light [luchnos: lamp; illuminator] of the body is the eye. The word translated “eye” is *ophthalmos*, which means both eye and the faculty of sight. This especially refers to the consciousness and mindset of the individual—the way he “sees” things in the world around him, including other human beings.

Therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light. *Haplous* means literally “folded together,” a single thing. The inner eye of the mind and spirit must be seeing unity, oneness, and not duality. It must be a vision that gathers in and unites what is seen. This of course is not literal but symbolic of the psychology of the enlightened person. He must realistically see duality, but also see the underlying unity. He must see the One in all things. As the Gita says of the illumined individual: “His heart is with Brahman, his eye in all things sees only Brahman equally present, knows his own Atman in every creature, and all creation within that Atman. That yogi sees me in all things, and all things within me. He never loses sight of me, nor I of him” (Bhagavad Gita 6:29-30). For “God is light” (I John 1:5). *Haplous* also means clear-sighted. We must remove all shadows or darkness from our minds.

But when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness. The King James Version is in 17/18th century English, when “evil” also meant misfortunate or harmful—which is the meaning of the original Greek word *poneros* in this passage. “Eye” in this passage is of course referring to the mind, the state of consciousness, of the individual. When the mind is corrupt, so also is the body, and the result is mental and moral darkness (*skoteinos*). Therefore: “Keep thy heart [mind, intellect] with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life” (Proverbs 4:23).

Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness. When the mind is darkened, light can be “seen” as dark, and darkness as light. This is the dilemma of the ordinary mind of which we should always be aware.

If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light. If our consciousness is full of light through sadhana and dedication to higher consciousness, then we shall be self-illuminated. But only the yogi will experience this.

MORE WAYS OF THE “VIRTUOUS” UNRIGHTEOUS

And as he spake, a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him: and he went in, and sat down to meat [anapipto: eat]. And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed before dinner. (Luke 11:37-38)

The Pharisees were obsessed with ritual purity. They even had rules about how deep in the water people needed to lower their hands for it to be considered really washing them.

And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness. (Luke 11:39)

Our inner being is the true being, the outer being but a casing, a cover. Therefore those without inner awareness are out of touch with true reality. And since nature truly does abhor a vacuum, their minds become full of unreality and delusion. The word *harpagē* translated “ravening” means intense, even violent extortion, plundering and pillage—in this instance economic oppression and thievery. *Poneria*, translated wickedness, implies malice and scheming to take advantage of others.

Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also? (Luke 11:40)

Aphron means mindless, ignorant, egotistic and unbelieving. Such were the Pharisees in the spirit who were intent only on the outward appearance and action, ignoring their inner being which was the source of the external, and whose correction alone could bring about correction of the outside behavior. In essence the inner and the outer being are one. And any spiritual endeavor must include the purification and development of both.

**But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and, behold,
all things are clean unto you. (Luke 11:41)**

Because of their intense greed for money and possessions, Jesus tells the Pharisees to purify themselves through *eleemosune*: compassion and assistance for the poor and needy. Both the inner disposition and the outer deed must come from genuine care for others: loving-kindness—not just a mechanical fulfilling of a duty.

WARNING TO HYPOCRITES

But woe [alas] unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over [ignore] judgment and the love of God: these ought [must] ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. (Luke 11:42)

Mint, rue and herbs were of little monetary value, yet the Pharisees made a big show tithing (giving a tenth) of them while giving no thought to just action in relation to human beings or to love for God in whose image human beings are formed.

Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets. (Luke 11:43)

They loved to be shown deference and preference and to be saluted and honored in public.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them. (Luke 11:44)

But though they might be honored in private and public, they were only tombs, abodes of death and decay, even though those who showed them respect were not aware of their inner corruption and evil.

Then answered one of the lawyers [an expert in the Mosaic Law], and said unto him, Master, thus saying thou reproachest us also. And he said, Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade

[load] men with burdens [obligations] grievous [oppressive] to be borne, and ye yourselves touch [alleviate] not the burdens with one of your fingers. (Luke 11:45-46)

Caring nothing for the state of the mind and heart, intent only on the outside appearance, the Pharisees ignored the truth that “the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life” (II Corinthians 3:6). It is in the outer world that we die, and in the inner world that we live. But this is unknown to those whose awareness is filled with externals, including the religious externals that have no actual relation to spiritual life.

Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. (Luke 11:47)

The ancestors of the Pharisees “killed” the prophets in two ways. *Apok-teino* means both to destroy or kill. The idea here is that the Pharisees destroyed the teachings of the prophets by ignoring or distorting them and they physically murdered them as well. And all through their religious authority which made them appear righteous.

Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres. (Luke 11:48)

Suneudokeo means to allow and assent to something while being pleased with it. So they honored the murdered prophets but approved of the murder in their hearts.

Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute: That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; from the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say

unto you, It shall be required of this generation. (Luke 11:49-51)

This is a terrible thing, but Jesus assures them that by their inner enmity and rejection they themselves share in the guilt of the persecution and murder of all the righteous by their ancestors.

Woe unto you, lawyers [experts in the Mosaic Law]! for ye have taken away [removed] the key of knowledge [and understanding]: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered [prevented, opposed, forbade]. (Luke 11:52)

This is the way with all false and degenerate religion. They maintain and exaggerate the mere external elements and totally eliminate the spiritual teaching and practices and outlook of the true religion they are despoiling by putting false, worthless and harmful elements in their place. That is why when Gandhi was asked the main obstacles to the acceptance of Christianity in India he simply replied: “Christians.” (Although not relevant here I must share with you another bit of Gandhian insight. Once he was asked, “What do you think of Western civilization?” He answered: “I think it would be a good idea.”)

And as he said these things unto them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things: Laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him. (Luke 11:53-54)

And as he said these things unto them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to urge him vehemently. “Urge vehemently” is the translation of *enecho*, which means to ensnare or entangle.

And to provoke him to speak of many things. Laying wait for him.... *Enendra*, translated “laying wait,” means to ambush someone with the

connotation of intending assassination. The Pharisees wanted nothing less than the death of Jesus.

Seeking to catch something out of his mouth. Thereuo means to hunt and trap someone with the intent to kill or destroy them in some way.

That they might accuse him. Katagoreo means to charge or accuse someone of an offence. The root word *katagoros* means to make a public or legal complaint against someone.

But none of this affected Jesus at all. Therefore:

WARNING AND WISDOM

In the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode [trampled] one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. For there is nothing covered [concealed], that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets [secret, hidden places] shall be proclaimed upon the housetops. (Luke 12:1-3)

Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. Leavening agents are what make bread to rise and liquids to become alcoholic. They are substances causing decay and degeneration that transmute something from their original condition or substance. The root word *zeo* means to heat up. It was the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and the fear of their being unmasked for what they were—and were not—that motivated them against Jesus.

For there is nothing covered [concealed], that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. This is a universal law. In time everything is revealed because the creation itself is a veiling that is intended through evolution of consciousness to become a revealing of the Supreme Consciousness. First it is maya, illusory appearance, but in time it becomes a revelation of the Reality of everything, producing Self-realization.

Since all things are intended to eventually be known, Jesus continued: *Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets [secret, hidden places] shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.* This has two aspects. One is the

law that all things hidden shall in time be revealed, even if centuries must pass before it occurs. The other is a command that the spiritual aspirant must speak out all that is within him. This does not mean a person should not be diplomatic and cautious with his words and know when there is “a time to keep silence, and a time to speak” (Ecclesiasticus 3:7), but as a rule to always and at all times act in accordance with what he knows to be the truth, and at the right time—even if it is inconvenient—to speak out unrestrained that which he knows to be true. For hiding the truth, concealing the truth, is a form of lying.

Do you know how a lie detector works? When a person lies there is a reaction in his body: blood pressure, pulse, respiration, and skin conductivity. These are physical reactions to the metaphysical effect of lying. They are indications of stress induced in both the mind and the body by the speaking of untruth. This is because the body and mind are really one in essence and interact on each other. When a person lies it is literally detrimental to him physically. The detriment is slight, but repetition of speaking falsehood can in time manifest as bodily malfunction or other negative reactions. All negative actions mental or physical affect us on all the levels of our existence. It is true: although “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23) on the metaphysical level, the metaphysical manifests eventually physically, as well. The mental “death” is the destruction of conscience, but its physical reflection can be detrimental to our spiritual, mental and physical health.

So the yogi should be scrupulously truthful at all times. When he speaks, he must speak clear and plain truth always, for *Satyam Eva Jayate*—Truth Alone Prevails/Conquers. When truth is spoken the very fabric of the world is strengthened, and when untruth is spoken, it is weakened. So a liar harms himself, the world and those around him.

And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him. (Luke 12:4-5)

The word *haidēs*, often translated “hell,” simply means the unseen world in general, the place/state of departed souls, but the word “Gehenna” here translated as “hell” has a very specific meaning.

Gehenna, the Valley of Hinnom, was the garbage dump of Jerusalem where despite the heat the maggots continued to burrow and eat in the refuse that was cast there. The refuse and filth was set on fire, but it only smoldered and smoked rather than blazed, so the maggots could live in it. This why Jesus described it in the ninth chapter of the Gospel of Mark, as the place “where their worm [soul] dieth not, and the fire [of suffering] is not quenched” (Mark 9:44, 46, 48). Gehenna is a symbol of the earth and the after-death realms where people suffer misery continually but do not (and after death, cannot) die.

This is what is meant by the Sanskrit word *samsara*: life through repeated births and deaths; the wheel of birth and death; the process of earthly life for the transmigrating soul. There is no end to the suffering—and the potential for suffering—for the *samsarin*: one who is subject to *samsara*—repeated births and deaths—and who is deluded by its appearances, and therefore immersed in ignorance. Continually cycling between earth and the low astral worlds (hells), there seems to be no hope for such a person. This we should fear being our fate produced by our own karma, negativity and ignorance.

Odd as it may seem, there are no words in the foregoing Greek text that can be translated as “them” or “him” in these verses. Rather, there is the implication of anything—person or element—which has the power to kill or destroy body or soul (mind, heart). And that is to be really feared: anything which can kill our inner consciousness and being and plunge us into either the earthly state or the astral realm symbolically called Gehenna by Jesus.

Are not five [little] sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten [lost out of mind/neglected] before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered [counted]. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many [little] sparrows. (Luke 12:6-7)

The Absolute Being knows all about us, even how many hairs we have. How is this possible? Because the Absolute Being is one with us and we are one with It, since It is our very essence. And It values us in some ineffable way. Therefore we should not fear and feel little or small, for these distinctions do not exist in the Infinite Consciousness.

Also [Moreover] I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God. (Luke 12:8)

Interestingly, the word *homologeō* translated “confess” means to assent in the sense of making a covenant, to acknowledge, to give thanks and to promise. So this is not a simple or shallow matter. These attitudes and actions are to be directed toward God and demonstrated to the world by our actions and words. And they are witnessed to by the holy spirits, the angels, of God, one of which has been our guardian from our birth.

But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God. (Luke 12:9)

Arneomai, translated “deny,” means to oppose, disavow, reject, deny and refuse. These are serious attitudes and actions toward God, and those who engage in them shall be denied in return. But *aparneomai*, translated “denied,” means to deny utterly, disown and separate from—this on the part of God. In a sense the Divine Presence/Consciousness acts like a mirror: what we do in relation to It, It does in relation to us. We are made in the image of God, and both God and ourselves reflect one another since we are actually one though not the same.

We cannot be separated from God in actuality, but by our own negative will our consciousness can be alienated from awareness of God. As Jesus said, (Matthew 6:23), “If thine eye be evil, thy whole body [being] shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!” The “eye” of our spirit is our consciousness. If it is darkened by evil—negativity and delusion—then our entire being shall be

full of darkness: darkness itself. Here, too, it is a matter of mirroring, of reflecting, though on the level of our will.

And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Spirit it shall not be forgiven. (Luke 12:10)

And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him. This is most interesting. Anyone who speaks against or opposes Jesus shall be forgiven or not reacted to. That is, he shall not undergo any kind of external karmic reaction at all. In a sense his words will just be spoken “into the air.”

But unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Spirit it shall not be forgiven. The Holy Spirit, the Holy Breath, is the force or power of evolution—especially spiritual evolution. Those who mock, disdain or actively oppose—and attempt to hinder—the working of the Divine Evolutionary Power both in themselves and others will create strong karma of spiritual darkness—not a punishment, but a banishing from their minds and life sphere of anything inner and outer that would work to the enlightening and evolving of their inner being.

I mentioned before that C. S. Lewis wrote that there are two kinds of human beings: those that say to God, “Thy will be done,” and those to whom God says, “thy will be done.” Jesus is showing us how it works on the practical level of cosmic law and order. Those who say to God, “Come,” will find God present; and those who say to God “Go,” will experience Him absent. And until the karmic force of that negative will and attitude is expended, their life and awareness will be entirely devoid of spiritual wisdom and any kind of evolutionary movement toward inner evolution or awakening. It will not be a punishment; it will be a reaction, a fulfilling of their own will.

The maxim is true: Bidden or unbidden, God is present, but to the blasphemers of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Breath of God, God will be present but unreacting. For He will say: “Your will be done.” And on a functional level God will be absent from them until the force of that negative will is

expended and the negative disposition dissolved. To resist the Light is to go into the Dark. It is a simple matter of karma: action and reaction. It is our doing—not God’s doing.

And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: For the Holy Spirit shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say. (Luke 12:11-12)

Jesus is foretelling the persecutions that will come upon his disciples and followers after his departure from this world. He tells them that they need not be worried or concerned about what to say, for from within their consciousness will arise the inspiration from the Holy Spirit what to speak. For the awakened and enlightened ones can truly say: “We have the mind of Christ” (I Corinthians 2:16)—the mind of their own inner Christ.

I knew a very righteous young man who was also not at all intelligent. One time I witnessed two evil men, “spiritual” intellectuals, try to persuade him away from his right understanding and dedication in spiritual matters. They would speak out some specious nonsense, and he would reply: “That’s right!” and say back to them the irrefutable truth which in his innocence he thought they were saying. Finally they just sat there, speechless, unable to say a word.

SOME PLAIN WORDS AND COUNSEL

And one of the company said unto him, Master [Teacher], speak to [tell; command] my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider [apportionater; administrator] over you? (Luke 12:13-14)

This is the way of the materialistic and worldly—they want religion and religious teachers to back up and benefit them in earthly matters, though they seldom conform to the spiritual requirements or demands of their religion. Many people bring their minister or priest along to even a minor lawsuit. Whatever the problem, however alien to true spiritual life and perspective, they demand that religion give them or help them gain whatever in the world they want. And fake religion goes along with them. But Jesus said he was “come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10) in the spiritual, not the material realm. Therefore he had no part in the situation at all. He was not a lawyer or arbitrator. We all need to remember and follow Jesus’ example.

And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of [be on guard against; avoid; keep yourself from] covetousness [greed]: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. (Luke 12:15)

The man who petitioned Jesus to intervene in the matter of his inheritance was focused on material gain, and Jesus warned him of putting a

falsely high valuation on such things, for life is in the spirit, not in having possessions. It is only sensible to use wisdom in material things, but to overvalue them and act accordingly is not wisdom but folly.

And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground [land; field] of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow [store] my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down [demolish] my barns, and build greater [larger]; and there will I bestow [store] all my fruits and my goods [produce]. And I will say to my soul [heart; mind], Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease [rest], eat, drink, and be merry [rejoice]. But God said unto him, Thou fool [foolish; mindless; stupid one], this night thy soul [life] shall be required [demanded] of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided [gained]? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich [possessing much] toward [in relation to] God. (Luke 12:16-21)

It is the greatest folly or foolishness to not consider God and our relation to God in every aspect of our thought, deed and life. There is a little-known but greatly wise song:

God be in my head, and in my thinking.
God be in my eyes, and in my looking.
God be in my mouth, and in my speaking.
Oh, God be in my heart, and in my understanding.

This should always be our aspiration.

Although the end-of-the-world ideas of exoteric Christianity are not true, an accurate symbolism and spiritual message can be found in one of their songs called “The Great Judgment Morning,” for after death there is a summing up and a resulting future determined for the reincarnating soul—not in punishment or reward, but according to the person’s self-created

karma. So do not take it literally, but consider its spiritual meaning from life to life, from birth to birth.

I dreamed that the great judgment morning
 Had dawned, and the trumpet had blown;
 I dreamed that the nations had gathered
 To judgment before the white throne.
 From the throne came a bright shining angel
 And stood on the land and the sea,
 And swore with his hand raised to heaven,
 That time was no longer to be.

The rich man was there, but his money
 Had melted and vanished away;
 A pauper he stood in the judgment,
 His debts were too heavy to pay.
 The great man was there, but his greatness
 When death came was left far behind;
 The angel that opened the records,
 Not a trace of his greatness could find.

The moral man came to judgment,
 But self-righteous rags [Isaiah 64:6] would not do;
 The men who had crucified Jesus
 Had passed off as moral men too.
 The souls that had put off salvation--
 "Not to-night; I'll get saved by and by;
 No time now to think of religion!"
 At last they had found time to die.

And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you,
 Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the
 body, what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the
 body is more than raiment. (Luke 12:22-23)

Take no thought for your life. The word translated “thought” is *merimnao*, which mean to be anxious about something—not indifferent or heedless as is sometimes mistakenly thought. *Psuche*, translated “life” is actually “breath,” indicating the purely material life of the body.

What ye shall eat. *Phago* is feeding the body on material food.

Neither for the body, what ye shall put on. For the body (*soma*) is the material clothing of the spirit, which is what truly matters. For it has put on the body as its clothing.

The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment. *Trophe*, translated “meat,” means food—material food. And the body is more than that which merely covers it.

**Consider [observe] the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap;
which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them:
how much more are ye better [of more value] than the fowls?
(Luke 12:24)**

The word *trepho*, translated “feedeth,” also means to cherish, even pamper, and rear (bring up). It is the attention of God alone which evolves us and brings us to our complete potential. Writing this, I see in memory the joyful expression on the face of the holy Brahmachari Paramachaitanya (also called “Brother Phillip” at the Ananda Ashram in La Crescenta, California) when he said to me regarding all sentient beings: “God meditates on them and they evolve. They can’t help it!” A blessed pampering and upbringing indeed.

**And which of you with taking thought [being anxious about]
can add to his stature one cubit [the length of a forearm]? (Luke
12:25)**

Remember how anxious we were as children to grow larger and larger? But it did not accomplish anything. We grew as slowly as God intended—not as undeveloped and impatient “us” wanted.

If ye then [therefore] be not able to do that thing which is least [smallest], why take ye thought [be anxious] for the rest? (Luke 12:26)

Knowing what we can and cannot do is adult wisdom. But if we remain undeveloped children in mind and soul we will never know the peace of wisdom. The great Stoic philosopher Epictetus said that we should consider what in our life lies within the scope of our will and carefully attend only to that, leaving the rest to the universe.

Consider the lilies how they grow [increase]: they toil [labor; weary themselves with toil] not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed [clothed] like one of these. If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and to morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith [unbelieving; lacking confidence]? (Luke 12:27-29)

Lillies and grass do one thing in common: they spontaneously manifest their nature. We, too, must manifest our nature which is pure, divine spirit, our essential Self (Atman). This is underlined by using hard manual labor and spinning thread as examples. One is the usual occupation of men and one that of women. Again, it is living according to our nature, which in both men and women is divine spirit. Those who are in touch with their inner being will naturally, and often effortlessly, live out—manifest—that inner being.

And seek [after] not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful [anxious; fluctuating] mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after [desire]; and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. (Luke 12:29-30)

This does not recommend a passivity toward or ignoring that which is needed to maintain life in this world, but rather maintaining peace of

mind without fear or anxiety in attaining them. This is the attitude or state of mind recommended in various parts of the Bhagavad Gita. (See *The Bhagavad Gita For Awakening*.) Also, it implies the correct response to the question of Jesus: “Is not the life more than meat [food], and the body than raiment [clothing]?” (Matthew 6:25).

Those that are “of the world” rather than of the spirit scramble after these things as though life consists of them as its essence, when they are only its supports—but necessary supports—which Jesus indicates by telling us that God knows that we need these things. But we must seek them in the right perspective and in the right manner.

THE WAY TO THE KINGDOM

But rather [instead] seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. (Luke 12:31)

What is the kingdom of God? The inner, spiritual consciousness that is a perfect reflection of the Divine Consciousness. Those in that state are the only real “children of God” who truly do live in and manifest their essential divine image or likeness. Our face and mind should be undistorted reflections of the Face and Mind of God in this world. If we seek that goal, everything needed will come to us, both inwardly and outwardly.

Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure [will] to give you the kingdom. (Luke 12:32)

A person who takes a good look at this world and the conditions of life within it may rightly be apprehensive or outright fearful. For the suffering and death that is inherent in material existence does prevail here. Consider this simple fact: no one gets out of here alive. So death faces everyone, and no one accompanies you through that door. You are alone. And in the meantime physical and mental suffering are the prevailing condition. But Jesus tells us we should not fear, because he was a yogi, a yoga siddha of the Nath Yogi Tradition. (See *The Christ of India*.) And if we are also yogis of his tradition we, too, need not fear, because the key to the inner, divine kingdom has been given to us. (See *Soham Yoga: The Yoga of the Self*.) And since it is our very purpose in this world to attain perfect liberation through total Self-realization, it is the will of the Infinite we fulfill through

our sadhana (yoga meditation practice.) Therefore our success is assured by the very nature of our practice.

Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not [is inexhaustible], where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. (Luke 12:33)

Sell that ye have, and give alms. Remember that although in the beginning of this chapter we are told there was a large crowd assembled, Jesus is speaking only to his disciples. Whether it was to his disciples in general who followed him, or only the chosen twelve is undeterminable, but I will comment on them as being addressed to those twelve, of whom “Peter said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee” (Matthew 19:27). For only such disciples in the final analysis—including times of persecution or difficulty—will really persevere and lay hold of and possess the kingdom of the spirit, leaving all else behind. Throughout the ages the “moderate” followers always have eventually become “fall-awayers.”

A disciple of Christ-consciousness will live a simple and frugal life and give excess money or possessions to those in need. Not just to be noble, but to be *eleemosune*—one who has compassion on others and a heart of genuine benevolence.

Provide yourselves bags which wax not old. *Poieo* means both to get or make something. This is an exhortation to create or develop in ourselves the permanent capacity to hold within our hearts and minds the inner wealth of spiritual consciousness.

Treasure in the heavens that faileth not [is inexhaustible]. That which is of earth is perishable and limited, but that which is of the heaven of awakened spiritual consciousness is permanent and cannot be limited or ended.

Where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. The distractions of relative existence in this material, mortal world cannot intrude in the divine consciousness that is the very nature of our Self. Nor can that consciousness be corrupted or diminished. That vision and enlightenment are permanent and eternal like the Self.

**For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.
(Luke 12:33-34)**

Kardia, translated “heart,” means the center, the core of our being—the totality of our spiritual reality which is the spirit itself.

**Let your loins be girded about, and your lights [lamps]
burning. (Luke 12:35)**

We have to think of how people dress even today. The first thing we put on is something around our waist, and *osphus* means “hips.” The verb *perizonnumi* translated “gird” means to fasten the clothing all around the waist firmly so it cannot slip off. In a sense we must be “gathered up” and centered firmly in our selves (Selfs). And the lamp of our mind must be burning, alight, with the inner light (flame) of the spirit.

**And ye yourselves like unto [in the manner of] men that
wait [look] for their lord, when he will return from the wedding;
that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him
immediately. (Luke 12:36)**

We wait and watch attentively for the advent of spiritual awakening within ourselves by which we shall open our hearts and minds to spirit-consciousness when it touches us within and makes its presence and its knowability known to us directly by its advent. And the moment that consciousness arises in us we must open the depths of our being immediately so it can enter and remain within. For both perceiving the coming and the opening-receiving, yoga sadhana is the only means.

Religiosity and emotional “devotion” may seem noble and entertaining to us, as well as ego-satisfying, but it is only empty (and often delusional) daydreaming and fantasy if it is not produced by constant sadhana supported by the fundamental principles of spiritual life known as yama-ni-yama, the “Ten Commandments of Yoga” outlined in the Yoga Sutras.

Blessed [and happy] are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching [wakeful and vigilant]: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat [eat], and will come forth and serve [minister unto] them. (Luke 12:37)

Before commenting I want to make clear that the word *anapipto* incorrectly translated “meat” does not at all mean flesh. It literally means “lean back/lie down,” indicating the posture that was taken when people ate at the time of Jesus, odd as that may seem to us today. So it means to assume the posture to eat. “Sit down to meat” means “Sit down to eat.” This will occur later in the Gospel.

Those who serve God in their inmost being will find that really God is serving them by awakening and inspiring them to “lay hold on eternal life” (I Timothy 6:12, 19). Truly, the yogi lives on the inner food that the world does not even know about. For he knows with Jesus: “My meat [food] is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work” of Self-realization within (John 4:34).

And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. (Luke 12:38)

At the time of Jesus the days and nights were divided in periods called “watches,” no doubt because all villages and towns had watchmen who walked through them throughout the night to see that all were safe. This is still done in India.

At night people are asleep, so Jesus means that those who do not let themselves sleep in their inner consciousness, but remain spiritually, inwardly, awake will be blessed by God with even higher consciousness.

And this know, that if the goodman [master; head] of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. (Luke 12:39)

Here “thief” has two meanings. One is that which steals from us our spiritual awakening and development (evolution of consciousness)—against which we must always be on our guard. The other is the advent of spiritual consciousness within ourselves, which both Saint Paul (I Thessalonians 5:2) and Saint Peter (II Peter 3:10) call “the day of the Lord,” and which they describe as coming to us “as a thief in the night” if we are not watching for it so we can enter into that “day” and dwell in the Light.

Be ye therefore ready [prepared] also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour [time] when ye think not. (Luke 12:40)

At the beginning of his lectures Yogananda often would call out: “How do you feel?” And the audience would call back: “Awake and ready!” And if they did not say it loudly or intently enough he would repeat his question until they replied with real attention and vigor. We, too, must always be awake and ready. The Christs of all ages have told us this.

Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all? (Luke 12:41)

Saint Peter asks this because there were some of Jesus’ teachings which he meant only for those who were ready and able to comprehend and follow them when others (most) were not. Jesus’ words to him imply that some were able to understand and follow and some were not. So they were meant for some and not for others. All masters are aware of this and speak accordingly.

And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful [true, faithful, trustworthy, believing] and wise steward [manager, overseer], whom his lord shall make [appoint] ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat [food—literally, measure of grain, not animal flesh] in due season [time]? (Luke 12:42)

The authoritarian attitude of western religion tends to make people interpret these words as speaking of those who have been appointed bosses

of the inferior laborers. But they are not. Rather, they are speaking of those who are accepting responsibility for their own inner personality and tendencies—their own “household”—those who rule (control) their own mind and its impulses and tendencies, and who nourish (feed) their soul with the right “food” at the right time. And thereby live in the spirit, heeding the counsel of Saint Paul: “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit” (Galatians 5:25). That is, if we are truly alive in our spirit, we shall act and think in the perspective of the spirit and manifest that spiritual reality in all things internal and external.

Blessed [happy] is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find [see him] so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath. (Luke 12:43-44)

Earlier Jesus said, “Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:32). And a kingdom is worthless if it is not ruled over. A kingdom must have a king, and each of us is to rule in our inner and outer being, taking charge of our inner and outer life. And that reign must entail total mastery and control of our body, mind and subtle bodies (soul). But the only way to do that is to be centered in our spirit-Self and to rule from there. And there is only one way: “Therefore be a yogi” (Bhagavad Gita 6:46).

But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat [and wound] the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken [intoxicated]; the lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder [flog severely], and will appoint him [ordain] his portion [part] with [among] the unbelievers [faithless]. (Luke 12:45-46)

Those who do not even believe there is a lord—either God or their own immortal spirit—think that their body and mind are just toys to exploit for

their own amusement or benefit. So they abuse body and mind in their folly, unconcerned about the damage and detrimental effects of such neglect or abuse. Unaware of the law of cause and effect (karma) that will in time also produce a reaction, they think and act to their own destruction, and mentally and physically eventually suffer greatly outwardly and inwardly. Further, this negative condition can continue beyond death in the astral world and in future physical incarnation. Even worse, such a person will become deadened in his spiritual dimensions and become completely unaware of either his higher, true nature or the existence of God—truly an agnostic, since that term literally means “one who does not know,” much less believe. Most human beings live in this state.

And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask [require] the more. (Luke 12:47-48)

And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. The universe is set up according to laws, both physical and metaphysical. And in the perspective of karma we can even say that the universe is a manifestation of law—the law of cause and effect, action and reaction—karma or action either physical or mental. The mentality and intention of the individual determines the quality and extent of karmic reaction. This is why Saint James the Great wrote: “To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin [an offence]” (James 4:17). Therefore, those with little knowledge or understanding will incur lesser karma—and karmic reaction—than those who have more or even full knowledge. For karma is really only in the mind, and the world around us, being the product of intelligence/consciousness, reacts to the content of our

mind and produces the conditions or situations that mirror or manifest that content of the mind.

For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask [require] the more. This principle demands serious understanding and action. The better informed, developed or evolved the individual's consciousness (which includes intellectual insight and spiritual intuition) is, the greater the responsibility he has for his actions, for the greater is his understanding. This is in relation to both the material, mental and spiritual levels of the world and the individuals within it. Law is the fundamental power of existence itself.

Therefore those who pride themselves on their intellectual and spiritual development and knowledge must realize that they are therefore obligated to act in perfect accord with that development and knowledge. For true (especially higher) knowledge requires/entails a transformation or conformity of the individual according to that knowledge. It is an obligation, not an option. Otherwise all that has been "given" will be lost and the individual regressed by the force of his own negativity and ignorance.

FIRE AND BAPTISM AND DISCERNMENT

I am come to send [cast] fire on the earth; and what will I if
it be already [even now] kindled? (Luke 12:49)

Fire symbolizes many things and is even considered a supernatural element when consecrated or kindled with mantras in the Hindu religion. Basically, it is a transforming/transmuting power or energy. Also in Hinduism it is considered a force that can carry a material object over into the immaterial world. We can see in the following passage from the book of Acts that this is so.

“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:1-4).

The question is this: How is this spiritual, transforming power kindled and maintained alive in us? The answer: Soham Yoga sadhana.

But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I
straitened [constrained, compelled] till it be accomplished!
(Luke 12:50)

Baptizo—baptism—means total immersion. Sadhana is the immersion process by which the human consciousness is totally immersed in the Divine Consciousness. We, too, must be impelled to attain that state.

The means is also the end: Soham Yoga sadhana. Practice will reveal that as truth.

Suppose [think] ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: for from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. (Luke 12:51-53)

This has two meanings, one literal and the other symbolic. Those who choose the way of purification and interior development to attain eternal life will be divided, sometimes intensely, against those close to them or those of differing opinion who do not choose the narrow way and even persecute those who follow the inner way. The same division and conflict can take place within those who choose the way, being opposed by their own lower minds and their own negative samskaras and negative karmas.

And he said also to the people, When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it is. And when ye see the south wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass. Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time? Yea, and why even of yourselves judge [determine] ye not what is right? (Luke 12:54-57)

The ability to understand what we see both around and within us is a great asset to the spiritual aspirant, and we should cultivate that ability. Although it might seem contradictory, since all that is real comes from within and is reflected outside us, the way to comprehend and react wisely to our inner and outer life we must cultivate the inner awareness, for by that literal “in-sight” we will understand the nature of what is going on

within and around us and be able to deal with it and direct and shape it intelligently to our ultimate benefit.

When thou goest with thine adversary [antidikos—opponent in a lawsuit] to the magistrate, as thou art in the way, give diligence that thou mayest be delivered [released] from him; lest he hale thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and the officer cast thee into prison. I tell thee, thou shalt not depart [get out] thence, till thou hast paid [rendered] the very last [uttermost] mite [a small coin—lepton, literally “a flake” because of its tiny value] (Luke 12:58-59)

The prison into which we shall be cast is the prison of samsara, the realm of constant death and rebirth. One of the titles of Satan, the power of cosmic illusion is “the adversary,” the power of maya, of false seeing, which casts us into this prison of material existence again and again. We cannot get out of the prison until we have paid the price of “bail” which is the constant purification of our consciousness through yoga sadhana. If even a shadow of karma and its attendant cause, illusion, taints our consciousness we shall not be free. Like the prodigal son of the parable (Luke 15:18), we must “arise and go” beyond this world into that higher consciousness which alone frees us from the cycle of birth and death in this world and in the higher worlds as well.

There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. (Luke 13:1-5)

The word translated “repent” is *metanoeo*, which means to turn the mind around, to change its direction and focus, to change one’s very perception and understanding—an inner awakening of consciousness, awakening into the spirit-Self. The fate of those cited in these verses were undergoing the power of their karma, and so shall we all until all the shadows of our karma are dissolved by the light of the Self, which is the Light of God.

THE PARABLE OF THE FIG TREE

He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung [fertilize] it: and if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down. (Luke 13:6-9)

If anything about us does not bear the fruit of developing consciousness and the spiritual realization it produces, then it must be totally eliminated, otherwise we shall fall from the level of consciousness we now have and become inwardly dead to spiritual realities. I have witnessed this throughout my life. Every one of my yogi friends with whom I spoke of spiritual matters and meditated with fell away into deep spiritual darkness and degradation. I do not exaggerate. All crashed and burned. We must keep pressing onward and upward at every moment, otherwise we shall be cut off from our own higher consciousness and fall like a dead tree. As Saint Paul said “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.... How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?” (Hebrews 2:1, 3).

The word translated “slip” means to flow by like something flowing by in the water that will disappear if we do not immediately reach out and grasp it. Words and concepts have vibrations, and if we let the “words” of illumination and higher consciousness flow by us, then darkness and

suffering is our inevitable fate. Great is the glory of Self-realization if we take hold of it and make it ours, and equally great is the ruin and misery we create for ourselves if we hold the means to Self-realization loosely and carelessly and let it fall and ourselves be lost. We control our lives and destiny, so we can either save or enslave and destroy ourselves.

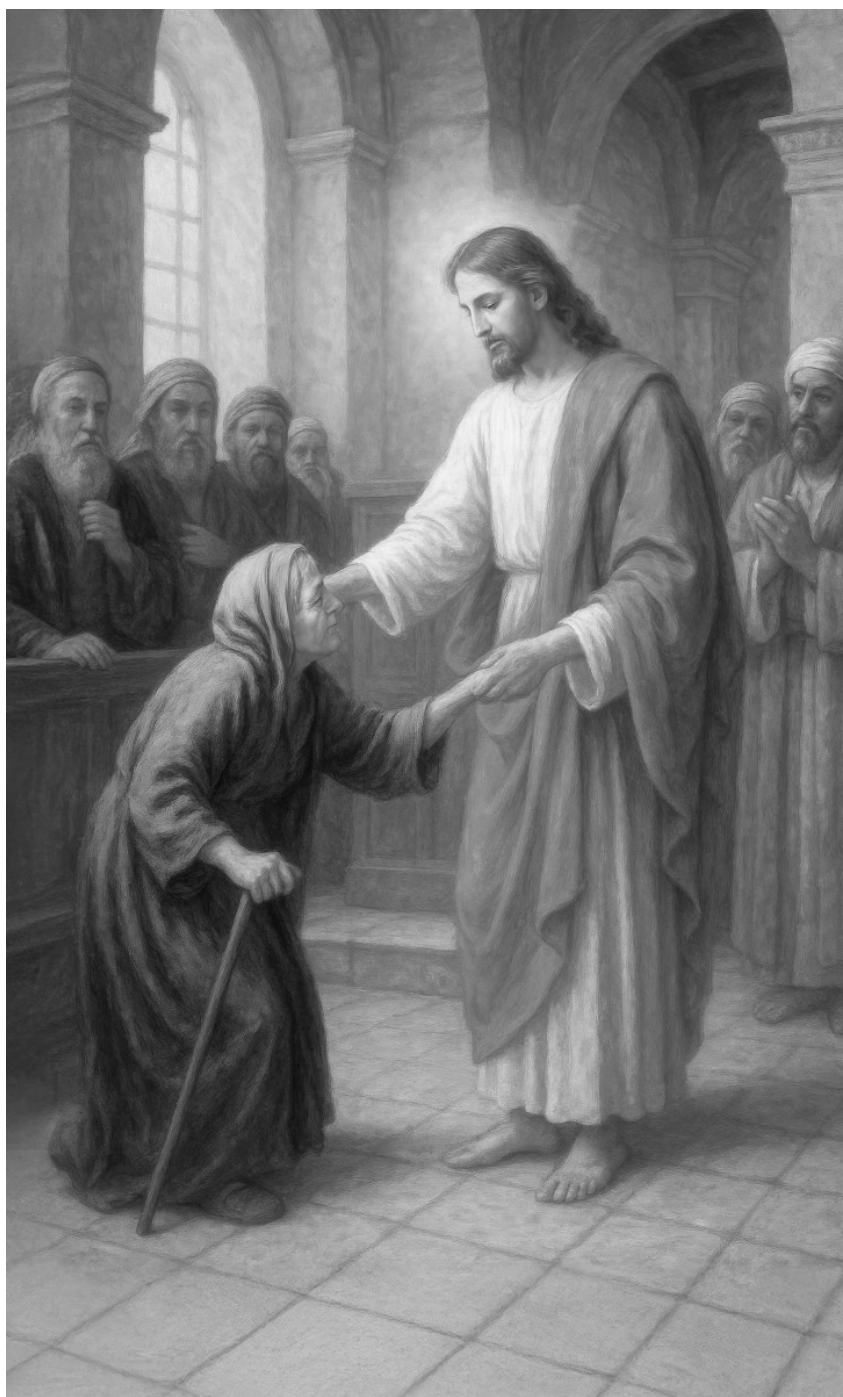
The word Saint Paul used, translated “neglect,” is *ameleo*, which means to be careless about something, consider it lightly and of little meaning or value. How well I remember a very close friend of mine who remarked to me that when he was in an intensely religious atmosphere he was aware of the importance of spiritual purification and spiritual life, but when he was out of such an environment, “it just doesn’t seem so important.” I am

sorry to tell you that the “not so important” attitude won out in his life. The motto of our daily life must be: “Behold, now [the present] is the accepted [acceptable, favorable] time; behold, now is the day of salvation”

(II Corinthians 6:2). *Soteria*, translated “salvation,” means rescue, safety, deliverance, health and salvation. All that. So who in their right mind will not prize that above all? For it is life itself, without which we are truly dead.

The power of illusion within and outside ourselves is strong, inescapable and irresistible to everyone but the diligent and steadfast yogi.

Be aware, and beware!



A REVEALING HEALING

And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. (Luke 13:10-23)

This woman's problem was not caused by a negative spirit, as is often the case in the Gospels. *Pneuma*, translated "spirit," can also mean a mental disposition. In the twelfth chapter of *Autobiography of a Yogi* Yogananda recounts the following relevant incident.

"Years ago, I too was anxious to put on weight," Sri Yukteswar told me. "During convalescence after a severe illness, I visited Lahiri Mahasaya in Benares.

"Sir, I have been very sick and lost many pounds.'

"I see, Yukteswar,¹ you made yourself unwell, and now you think you are thin.'

"This reply was far from the one I had expected; my guru, however, added encouragingly:

"Let me see; I am sure you ought to feel better tomorrow.'

"Taking his words as a gesture of secret healing toward my receptive mind, I was not surprised the next morning at a welcome accession of strength. I sought out my master and exclaimed exultingly, 'sir, I feel much better today.'

"Indeed! Today you invigorate yourself.'

“No, master!’ I protested. ‘It was you who helped me; this is the first time in weeks that I have had any energy.’

“O yes! Your malady has been quite serious. Your body is frail yet; who can say how it will be tomorrow?’

“The thought of possible return of my weakness brought me a shudder of cold fear. The following morning I could hardly drag myself to Lahiri Mahasaya’s home.

“Sir, I am ailing again.’

“My guru’s glance was quizzical. ’so! Once more you indispose yourself.’

“Gurudeva, I realize now that day by day you have been ridiculing me.’ My patience was exhausted. ‘I don’t understand why you disbelieve my truthful reports.’

“Really, it has been your thoughts that have made you feel alternately weak and strong.’ My master looked at me affectionately. ‘You have seen how your health has exactly followed your expectations. Thought is a force, even as electricity or gravitation. The human mind is a spark of the almighty consciousness of God. I could show you that whatever your powerful mind believes very intensely would instantly come to pass.’

“Knowing that Lahiri Mahasaya never spoke idly, I addressed him with great awe and gratitude: ‘Master, if I think I am well and have regained my former weight, shall that happen?’

“It is so, even at this moment.’ My guru spoke gravely, his gaze concentrated on my eyes.

“Lo! I felt an increase not alone of strength but of weight. Lahiri Mahasaya retreated into silence. After a few hours at his feet, I returned to my mother’s home, where I stayed during my visits to Benares.

“My son! What is the matter? Are you swelling with dropsy?’ Mother could hardly believe her eyes. My body was now of the same robust dimensions it had possessed before my illness.

“I weighed myself and found that in one day I had gained fifty pounds; they remained with me permanently. Friends and

acquaintances who had seen my thin figure were aghast with wonderment. A number of them changed their mode of life and became disciples of Lahiri Mahasaya as a result of this miracle.

“My guru, awake in God, knew this world to be nothing but an objectivized dream of the Creator. Because he was completely aware of his unity with the Divine Dreamer, Lahiri Mahasaya could materialize or dematerialize or make any change he wished in the cosmic vision.”

The woman’s mental disposition was causing her body to be literally bent in half. Jesus healed her mind and her body was instantly healed as well. Oftentimes we have troubles in our inner and outer life that will be dispelled if we change—elevate—the level of our consciousness. And yoga sadhana is the way, for through sadhana the “hands” of God can touch us and change us within and without.

And the ruler [director] of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day.

The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?

And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him. (Luke 13:14-17)

But we must not forget that Jesus said: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on [has faith in] me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father: (John

14:12). This is not to be taken lightly. The yogi is following the straight path from humanity to divinity, just as did Jesus when he was living with the Nath Yogis in India. And so does every Soham yogi. We just need to get going and keep on going.

Then said he, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I resemble [liken] it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew [increased], and waxed [became] a great [large] tree; and the fowls [birds] of the air lodged [rested] in the branches of it.

And again he said, Whereunto shall I liken [compare] the kingdom of God? It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened. (Luke 13:18-21)

Jesus will say later on, “Behold [see], the kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:21). But when the seed, the leaven, of that kingdom is planted deep within our consciousness—which is already at least potentially the kingdom of God—the boundless kingdom of infinite consciousness is revealed. A seed and a bit of leaven are so small, but they become great. Such is the effect of Soham when it is hidden within the aspiring Soham yogi by its japa and meditation.

JESUS TELLS FALSE SEEKERS THE TRUTH

And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch.

Then came the Jews [Judeans] round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ [Messiah], tell us plainly.

Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish [die], neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck [take] them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one.

Then the Jews [Judeans] took up stones again to stone him.
(John 10:22-31)

Please keep in mind in all the Gospel passages that “Jews” does not mean all the Hebrew nation, but Judeans—those that lived in the province of Judea, which included Jerusalem. This is important to know, because in ancient Christian texts the Judeans are often rebuked—even by Jewish Christians (especially, actually). You get expressions like “you faithless [treacherous] Judeans,” because the Judeans gladly surrendered to the Romans and cooperated with them in the subjugation of Israel. They even bribed Roman officials to arrest or hinder those they did not like

or did not like them. The Roman Procurator (one of which was Pilate who condemned Jesus to death) appointed the high priest of the Jerusalem temple, and the Judeans paid him a great deal of money to always appoint a Judean to that office. So the rest of Israel had great dislike and resentment toward the Judeans. The Jewish Christians considered it symbolic that Jesus was betrayed by a false disciple named Judas whose name was akin to Judea/Judeans, those that betrayed Israel into the hands of the Romans.

I should add here the fact that the Judeans hated the Galileans—the usual animosity between segments of the same country. One point that offended the Judeans was the Galileans’ difference in the time for celebrating Passover. For example, in the Gospels we are told that Jesus and his disciples celebrated Passover on the evening he was arrested. Then it is said that the Judeans would not enter into Pilate’s palace lest they be defiled and unable then to celebrate the Passover. So Jesus, a Galilean, had celebrated Passover on a day before their reckoning.

Then came the Jews [Judeans] round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ [Messiah], tell us plainly.

The Judeans’ demand: “If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly,” was made so they could then find some way to be “offended” and “shocked” by his “fraud” and “deception” and even “blasphemy.” This is the way all haters of God and truth—and the godly and the truthful—assault those they dislike and wish to discredit. (The Judeans were also angling for justification in putting Jesus to death.)

Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father’s name, they bear witness of me. Miracles certainly show that something out of the ordinary is going on. The ability to heal physical and mental illness by a word or simple willing indicates this, certainly. And raising the dead to life indicates that a supernatural force is definitely acting through the person working the miracles. What more would they expect the Messiah to do?

But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. We often say that if it looks like a duck, quacks like a duck and swims like a duck: it’s a

duck. There were many prophecies about the Messiah, all of which Jesus fulfilled. But as the saying goes: Don't confuse me with the facts; my mind is made up.

The mind is a field of vibrating energy that is reflected in our consciousness. The quality of the mind is the quality of the subtle energies of which it is composed. There are three kinds of minds in the situation we are considering. 1) Those who believe. 2) Those who disbelieve. 3) Those who believe—even know—but lie and say they do not believe. Jesus' enemies were of this third type. They knew who he was, and hated him for it since as he told them:

"If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.

"Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word.

"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts [desires] of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth [understands] God's words: ye therefore hear [understand] them not, because ye are not of God" (John 8:42-47).

It is all a matter of vibration and magnetism, the composition of the minds of those involved. The hatred of the evil for the good is reflexive, automatic, even instinctual. It is also a matter of will, and therefore a matter of knowing the truth they hate and deny. "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin.... If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father" (John 15:22, 24).

In the world, whatever the religion, there are many Judeans, many Judases, many Pilates, many ready to hate and reject the light and love the dark. Being aware of this, we must at all times be sure we are not like them in our minds and hearts.

And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish [die], neither shall any man pluck [take] them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. There are many ways to die—physical, mental and spiritual—and most of us are quite adept at all three forms. But those who seek the ultimate liberation of the spirit must diligently avoid all of them by rising to the level in which those things which prove deadly to body, mind and spirit cannot touch or attract us to their contact. To turn toward life we must turn away from death—this is a lesson hard for us to take to heart and follow through.

In our essential being we cannot be separated from God and cannot die. Therefore we must center our attention, our awareness, in that essence which is our eternal, immortal spirit. How to do this? Yoga sadhana is the only way, but that must be supported by a constant way of life that facilitates it, namely the establishment in the full observance of yama and niyama.

I and my Father are one. God is the primary numeral One. We, too, like Christ, are one with the Absolute. But our consciousness has fallen into the fever-dream of duality and constant rebirth resulting from our karma—the thoughts, will and actions in our previous lives and this present one, as well. Again, yoga alone can restore us to awareness of our eternal state of unity with the divine—the state known as advaita—not two. This is a matter of consciousness, but it is attained through physical, mental and spiritual discipline which by its very character awakens us into our true status of I And My Father Are One. In other words, we must become Christs—which we already are.

Jesus answered them, Many [abundant] good works have I showed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?

The Jews [Judeans] answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest [declare] thyself God.

There was a great Moslem mystic who had realized his oneness with God. When the local ruler's son became so ill the doctors said he would surely

die, the ruler sent for the saint and asked him to heal his son. Knowing the militant ignorance of ordinary (not mystical) Moslems, the saint put his hand on the boy and said aloud, "In the Name of God, be healed." Nothing happened. So he again put his hand on the boy and said aloud, "In my name be healed." The boy was instantly healed and the saint was executed for blasphemy. Such are those who insist they are "only human" and like the idea. I once read a book of prayers that people really say to God. One was: "O God, will you please stop this awful experiment of trying to make people like Christ!" But like it or not it is mandatory: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48).

Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law [Psalms 82:6], I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified [purified, consecrated], and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him. (John 10:34-38)

The root word translated "gods" is *theos*, the word used throughout the New Testament for God. But as I have pointed out elsewhere, the motto of a religious cult is Adore The Messenger And Ignore The Message. So Jesus' opponents pretended to have great veneration for David and God, but they rejected the words of God given through David—and thereby rejected God.

The only way someone can be totally and truly in God and God in him is when both are God. Jesus learned and experienced this for himself when he lived with the Nath Yogis in India. For his saying so, the "guardians of truth" he speaks to now will crucify and kill him. But his guru, the great Nath Yogi master, Chetan Nath, will raise him from the dead and take him back with him to India where Jesus will remain for the rest of his time on earth. (See *The Christ of India*.)

Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand, and went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized; and there he abode.

And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true. And many believed on him there. (John 10:39-42)

Seeing ought to be believing, but for those who do not want to believe, seeing is impossible—or so they pretend it to be. But those who observe and clearly see within themselves through yoga sadhana will come to believe and then evolve further and know: I Am The Father Are One.

“Therefore be a yogi” (Bhagavad Gita 6:46).

FEW THAT ARE SAVED

And he went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem. Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them,

Strive to enter in at the strait [narrow] gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek [desire, endeavor] to enter in, and shall not be able. (Luke 13:22-24)

Strive to enter in at the strait [narrow] gate. To enter upon the way to higher consciousness, the seeker must strive (*agonizomai*—labor fervently) to even begin. And to continue on that way the striving must be continual. Without constant discipline and endeavor spiritual life is impossible. The road to eternal life does indeed “wind up all the way.” But the end is worth all the journeying upward.

For many, I say unto you, will seek [desire, endeavor] to enter in, and shall not be able.

Simple Simon met a pieman,
Going to the fair.
Said Simple Simon to the pieman,
“Let me taste your ware.”

Said the pieman unto Simon,
“Show me first your penny.”
Said Simple Simon to the pieman,
“Indeed I have not any.”

This is an accurate picture of many “seekers.” (See “Am I A Simple Simon? The Simple Simon Test” posted on our ocoy.org website.) First of all, they only want a taste, a tentative touch of spiritual life. Second, they do not have the price, the inner resources, to take even the first step into the realm of higher consciousness. For them the assurance of Jesus, “Seek and ye shall find” (Matthew 7:7; Luke 11:9), is irrelevant because they do not have either the will or aspiration to gain the inner kingdom. The truth is that anyone who has attained to human birth in their evolution has the innate capacity to attain Self-realization, but only those who have the sufficient desire and will power to pay the price shall manage. Only the willing are able. Again:

So straight is the gate and so narrow
 The way to eternal day,
 And few are the pilgrims who find it,
 Too great is the price they must pay.

This why Jesus said, “With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26, Mark 10:27). When we whine and make the excuse that we are “only human,” then his affirmation: “With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible” is the diagnosis. And God has said to all human beings: “Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High” (Psalms 82:6, John 10:34). So none of us are human in essence or in our destiny. But we are free to accept or reject it.

When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to [closed] the door, and ye begin to stand without [outside], and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity [unrighteousness]. There shall be weeping

and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust [cast] out. (Luke 13:25-28)

This is a really disturbing picture. It is usually cited for the purpose of frightening people into “getting saved,” but it is really an intelligent and practical warning given for our consideration and response.

There is such a thing as death of conscience, when the inner intuitive, spiritual sense of what is right and what is wrong and what is needed and what is urgent in character either fades out of our consciousness or actually dissolves and exists no more in us. This is a result of karma—for thinking, ignoring thought and refusal to think are all three very real karmas. As a hymn says:

There’s a line that is drawn by rejecting our Lord,
Where the call of His Spirit is lost,
And you hurry along with the pleasure-mad throng—
Have you counted, have you counted the cost?

It is our choice simply echoing back to us. If we do not want to feel doubt about some action or even feel guilty about it, our wish will be fulfilled and the inner voice will no longer speak to us. As C. S. Lewis said, there are those who say to God, “Thy will be done,” and those to whom God says, “thy will be done.” It is an echo. If we say to God, “I don’t want to know You,” he replies, “All right. Do not know Me.” And so it will be. We get what we want, even when it is spiritual death.

I knew a remarkable man who kept refusing the inner call to reform until it ceased. When after many years he realized his folly, he found himself inwardly paralyzed and unable to repent, for the word in the Bible is *mataneoe*, which means to turn around completely—especially in the mind—not just feel guilty or sorry. Years went by that way until he became old. He would never go to church with his wife since he considered himself a hopeless case. But then one day he felt God speak inside him and say, “Today I will receive you.” He jumped into his car and sped off to the

church and came in saying loudly, “Stop! God will receive me right now. Pray with me.” And it was so. He became very holy and possessed genuine spiritual clairvoyance when I met him.

And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down [dwell] in the kingdom of God.

And, behold, there are last [farthest/lowest] which shall be first [foremost], and there are first[foremost] which shall be last [farthest/lowest]. (Luke 13:29-30)

It does not matter where we are “from” for there is no one who cannot enter the kingdom of God and dwell there even while in this world. Yet there is a principle that is attributed to the first formal monastics in Christianity, the “fathers of the desert.” They said, “It is not how you begin, but how you end.” Many are born, but die young. It is the same in the spirit.

As I have told before, once a young woman left home and went to Anandamayi Ma, wanting to stay and travel with her as many women were doing. Her father came to see her to persuade her to return home, but she refused. The day Ma went to the train station to leave that place, he came along to say farewell to his daughter. He remarked to Ma, “I see, Ma, that she is here with you. Does that mean she has passed the test?” Ma replied, “Baba, the only test that matters is the last test.” And of course that girl after a short time with Ma went back home.

When people make great spiritual claims about their aspirations—and with great self-assurance—I always think of Edward Lear’s poem, “The Jumblies.” The poem is great fun, as well as having a symbolic spiritual message, so I am including the whole thing for you.

I

They went to sea in a Sieve, they did,
 In a Sieve they went to sea:
 In spite of all their friends could say,
 On a winter’s morn, on a stormy day,

In a Sieve they went to sea!
And when the Sieve turned round and round,
And every one cried, 'You'll all be drowned!'
They called aloud, 'Our Sieve ain't big,
But we don't care a button! we don't care a fig!
In a Sieve we'll go to sea!'
Far and few, far and few,
Are the lands where the Jumblies live;
Their heads are green, and their hands are blue,
And they went to sea in a Sieve.

II

They sailed away in a Sieve, they did,
In a Sieve they sailed so fast,
With only a beautiful pea-green veil
Tied with a riband by way of a sail,
To a small tobacco-pipe mast;
And every one said, who saw them go,
'O won't they be soon upset, you know!
For the sky is dark, and the voyage is long,
And happen what may, it's extremely wrong
In a Sieve to sail so fast!'
Far and few, far and few,
Are the lands where the Jumblies live;
Their heads are green, and their hands are blue,
And they went to sea in a Sieve.

III

The water it soon came in, it did,
The water it soon came in;
So to keep them dry, they wrapped their feet
In a pinky paper all folded neat,
And they fastened it down with a pin.
And they passed the night in a crockery-jar,

And each of them said, 'How wise we are!
 Though the sky be dark, and the voyage be long,
 Yet we never can think we were rash or wrong,
 While round in our Sieve we spin!'

 Far and few, far and few,
 Are the lands where the Jumblies live;
 Their heads are green, and their hands are blue,
 And they went to sea in a Sieve.

IV

And all night long they sailed away;
 And when the sun went down,
 They whistled and warbled a moony song
 To the echoing sound of a coppery gong,
 In the shade of the mountains brown.
 'O Timballo! How happy we are,
 When we live in a sieve and a crockery-jar,
 And all night long in the moonlight pale,
 We sail away with a pea-green sail,
 In the shade of the mountains brown!'

 Far and few, far and few,
 Are the lands where the Jumblies live;
 Their heads are green, and their hands are blue,
 And they went to sea in a Sieve.

V

They sailed to the Western Sea, they did,
 To a land all covered with trees,
 And they bought an Owl, and a useful Cart,
 And a pound of Rice, and a Cranberry Tart,
 And a hive of silvery Bees.
 And they bought a Pig, and some green Jack-daws,
 And a lovely Monkey with lollipop paws,
 And forty bottles of Ring-Bo-Ree,

And no end of Stilton Cheese.
Far and few, far and few,
Are the lands where the Jumblies live;
Their heads are green, and their hands are blue,
And they went to sea in a Sieve.

VI

And in twenty years they all came back,
In twenty years or more,
And every one said, 'How tall they've grown!'
For they've been to the Lakes, and the Terrible Zone,
And the hills of the Chankly Bore;
And they drank their health, and gave them a feast
Of dumplings made of beautiful yeast;
And everyone said, 'If we only live,
We too will go to sea in a Sieve,—To
the hills of the Chankly Bore!'
Far and few, far and few,
Are the lands where the Jumblies live;
Their heads are green, and their hands are blue,
And they went to sea in a Sieve.

Now here is the summation in the form of a question: Who Wants To Be A Jumbly? They are peculiar—even freaks or weirdos. You can want to do all they have done—and more—but do you want to be green with blue hands? And do you want to do such a dangerous and foolish thing as to sail in the sea in a sieve full of holes, leaving your familiar and comfortable home and possessions and friends behind?

So do you want to be a yogi? Even—dare I ask it—a monk?

WORDS TO HEROD

The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him, Get thee out, and depart hence: for Herod will kill [put] thee [to death].

And he said unto them, Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures [healing] to day and to morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected. (Luke 13:31-32)

Go ye, and tell that fox. Herod was the son of the Herod that sought to kill the infant Jesus. He was a puppet ruler under the power of Rome. (The Wikipedia entry under “Herod Antipas” is very interesting and informative, and includes a section about his involvement with both Saint John the Baptist and Jesus). Jesus’ saying, “Go ye and tell that fox,” was shocking and bold. Foxes were considered unclean vermin—cunning, secretive, underhanded. So his words were quite insulting. Their intention we do not know. Perhaps they were a rebuke referring to his outrageous murder of the Baptist at the insistence of his wife, Herodias, whose marriage to Herod he had denounced.

“At that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus, and said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him.

“For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for Herodias’ sake, his brother Philip’s wife. For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her. And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet.

“But when Herod’s birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod. Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask. And she, being before instructed of

her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger. And the king was sorry: nevertheless for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded it to be given her. And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison. And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought it to her mother.

"And his disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus." (Matthew 14:1-12).

Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures [healing] to day and to morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected. It would be easy to mistakenly think that Jesus is just saying "I work miracles and have a great destiny," but they have a much more and important meaning. They describe one whose Christhood is being revealed and established: an adept yogi. There are three points that relate to such a yogi:

1) *Behold, I cast out devils.* Through the purification and elevation of his physical, astral and causal bodies he expels all that is negative and increases all in his makeup that is positive. He transmutes his consciousness according to the ancient prayer:

Lead me from the unreal to the Real.

Lead me from darkness to the Light.

Lead me from death to immortality.

The ordinary human being is immersed in unreality (maya—illusion and delusion) inwardly and outwardly. Many wish and pray and struggle to extricate themselves from it, and not knowing the effective way, they fail.

But through yoga sadhana he immediately begins to answer that prayer through gaining the sure and inevitable results of prolonged and steady practice. He walks every step of the way, led by the light kindled by sadhana.

2) *I do cures [healing] to day and to morrow.* Whether our consciousness is damaged, distorted or detrimentally limited, it is sick and needs healing. Since the road to perfection/liberation does indeed "wind uphill all the way," as long as we are in relative existence the process of correction, restoration and right-orientation of our consciousness must be continual. Just as a rocket sent into outer space must continually be kept on its course by adjustments from earth, so the daily practice of yoga sadhana corrects

and polarizes the yogi's consciousness and the entire complex of bodies through which he is functioning and evolving.

Yoga sadhana is continual therapy, continual healing. Some people are barely healthy and some are moderately healthy. Both can become diseased and even die. But the totally healthy person who is strengthening himself at every waking moment of his life, increasing the level of his health without interruption, can never become ill. Yoga sadhana develops spiritual immunity in the yogi. But if his practice is not constant, the level of his health wavers and lessens. A yogi dare not take that risk. He must be cultivating atmic awareness at every moment.

3) *And the third day I shall be perfected.* We consist of three levels: body, mind and spirit. The physical, astral and causal bodies of the yogi must be freed from defects and deficiencies and then transmuted into higher and higher levels of vibration until he moves beyond into spirit—total atmic consciousness—atmabhava, atmavidya, atmajnana—and attains moksha. We must pass through all three “days” to be perfected. The word translated “perfected” is *teleioo*, which means, accomplished, completed and made perfect.

Nevertheless I must walk to day, and to morrow, and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem.

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!

Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. (Luke 13:33-35)

Jesus knew his destiny, that in Jerusalem he would be killed. And knowing this he went willingly to Jerusalem where all the prophets of God had perished. (An interesting trait of the official religion.) Later Jesus

will tell Pilate: “To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world” (John 18:37). So he walked on to his fate. As he had said to John the Baptist: “It becometh us to fulfil all righteousness” (Matthew 3:15).

Jesus went throughout Israel teaching and working miracles, but he knew that eventually he would be abandoned to his enemies and killed by them. On the day we call Palm Sunday Jesus was welcomed by a huge number of people who called out, “Blessed is he that comes in the Name of the Lord,” but on Friday he was crucified. I remember as a child hearing a minister recite:

On Sunday the people shouted for joy.

On Friday the King they did destroy.

Saint John says regarding an earlier Passover, “Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man” (John 2:23-25).

The word translated “knew” is *pisteuo*, which really means to have faith in someone—to trust them. “For he knew what was in man” is not an accurate translation. Rather in the Greek it is, “For he knew man,” the nature of human beings. He loved them, but he knew them clear-sightedly. And that makes his love for them all the more wonderful.

UNDER HOSTILE SCRUTINY

And it came to pass, as he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the sabbath day, that they watched him. (Luke 14:1)

The word *paratereo* means to spy on someone with evil intent. For evil people always want to be justified and appear not only blameless but praiseworthy. So they have to create a “case” for their evil-doing and malice.

And, behold, there was a certain man before him which had the dropsy.

And Jesus answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful [right] to heal on the sabbath day?

And they held their peace. And he took him, and healed him, and let him go; and answered them, saying, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath day? (Luke 14:2-5)

According to the Jewish authorities at Jesus’ time and today, the definition of “work” which is prohibited on the Sabbath is anything that makes any kind of change in something. (That is why in Israel at sundown on Friday all elevators are put on a setting that makes them automatically go up and down, stopping at every floor for a short time so people can get on and off without pushing a button and thereby programming—changing or effecting—the mechanism. A very sensible solution, I think.) Therefore to heal someone would be to effect a very definite, and in some cases a drastic, change. Since, as Jesus said, it was considered lawful to pull an animal out of a pit on the sabbath, and a human being merits being rescued

from difficulty or danger (and people can die from dropsy), he cured the suffering man.

And they could not answer him again to these things. (Luke 14:6)

So they hated him all the more. For the ways and words of a righteous person are a living reproach and condemnation of the unrighteous—especially when they pretend to be righteous.

And he put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them, When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honorable man than thou be bidden of him; and he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee.

For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased [brought low]; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. (Luke 14:7-11)

This lifting up and casting down occurs in social matters, but most importantly in mental and spiritual matters. As the adage says: pride goes before a fall.

I want to point out that humility is not having a low opinion of oneself. It is having NO opinion of oneself—in the egoic sense.

Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee. But when thou

makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind:
And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for
thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just. (Luke
14:12-14)

This is easy to understand.

And when one of them that sat at meat [actually, “at the
table”] with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed
is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.

“Eating bread” and “breaking bread” were and are common expressions
for simply eating something. What the fellow-diner meant by eating bread
in the kingdom of God is not clear. But in the following parable it is clear
that Jesus meant it as a symbol of drawing on spiritual life by living in the
spiritual consciousness that is the true “kingdom of God.”

COME TO THE FEAST

Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade [invited] many: And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready.

And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.

So that servant came, and showed [reported to] his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry [exasperated] said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed [crippled], and the halt [crippled], and the blind.

And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.

And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, That none [not even one] of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper. (Luke 14:15-24)

A certain man made a great supper, and bade [invited] many: And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. If we do not eat, we die. The “great supper” we are invited to is the knowledge and adoption of the spiritual life culminating in perfect

consciousness and perfect liberation from all bonds of ignorance. When the time is right the individual learns of this possibility and its means of realization. But he has to “go” to partake of the spiritual banquet. It does not just come to him. Like the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:18) he must decide to “arise and go” to partake of it.

And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The word *paraiteomai* translated “make excuse” literally means to beg off, refuse, reject, avoid, deprecate and shun. So aversion is part of the refusal. This is the truth about many “seekers” who are only interested in seeking, but averse to finding since finding would change them. That is why Jesus said, “Many are called, but few are chosen” (Matthew 22:14). A sadhu friend of mine in India said to me more than once: “If someone chooses God, it is because God has chosen him first.”

Yes; few are called, so few choose to answer the call. I have said elsewhere that all (not just some) of my yogi friends at the beginning of my spiritual journey eventually fell away, abandoned the yoga life and became totally immersed in the delusions of the world and morally degraded. Not just some: *all*.

Now here are some of the incredible excuse-refusals that such people give to turn away from spiritual life.

The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. Land does not get up and walk away or evaporate in time. It stays permanently there. So there was no need for him to “go and see it” right then. And are we supposed to believe that he had not already seen it before buying it? This excuse is made because the person wants to be absorbed in materiality, in physical life.

And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. Won't they be there the next day? Actually, this is a symbol of the five senses. The person wants to enjoy the experiences the senses give, to also immerse himself in material sensuality, to “live life to the full.” He wants “experience” of sensory life.

And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. A popular and pathetic excuse. Why not bring them along with you to the banquet rather than remain back with them? Whether it is wife, husband,

children, family, friends or “prior commitments” the message is the same: I will not come. I do not want to come.

So that servant came, and showed [reported to] his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry [exasperated] said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed [crippled], and the halt, and the blind. Some of these were born handicapped and others were injured and permanently affected. But they needed only one thing: to hear and heed the invitation and come. So we need not doubt and worry about whether we are worthy or able to sit at the banquet and fill our soul’s hunger. The fact that we have been invited, that we even know of the spiritual benefit that awaits us, indicates that we are in truth both worthy and able.

And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. This is because we are called to infinity, to boundless consciousness. No matter how many respond to the call (and in time every sentient being will) there is always room.

And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. In time everyone is called, for the evolving universe is so constituted that in time every sentient being is compelled or stimulated and motivated to respond to the upward call to arise to evolving and expanding life and consciousness.

For I say unto you, That none [not even one] of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper. There is no such thing as being “damned” or “lost” forever, but it is possible to delay entry into higher awareness for countless lifetimes and even for creation cycles. But at last all enter because it is their very nature to rise into higher and higher consciousness until at last the goal of infinite consciousness is reached—the goal that has at all times been present for each one, but unperceived. For divinity is our nature. The call is really to discover (uncover) our eternal reality.

PLAIN WORDS TO BE PLAINLY UNDERSTOOD

And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot [is unable to] be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace.

So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith [by means of what] shall it be seasoned?

It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. (Luke 14:25-35)

And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. The word *miseo* in this context means, according to *Strong's Concordance*, a major authority, "to love less." Jesus means that no matter how close or dear anyone is to us, we must love them less than we love God. For people continually suppress or neglect their own spiritual life and growth by neglecting or ignoring it because of their intense attachment to some person(s).

This can be a dilemma to someone who is intensely dedicated in their spiritual life and discipline. When I was a child I loved my miraculous and angelic maternal grandmother more than all the world. And I used to wonder if I loved her more than I loved God, for it is true: "he who offers God second place offers Him no place." This anxiety prevailed for years, until one day I was walking over to see her and pondering this truly crucial question, when suddenly I got the insight I needed. If God told me to commit suicide—a cardinal sin—I would do it because He was the source of my life. But if my grandmother told me to commit suicide I absolutely would not. So I loved God more. What a relief!

Unlike the King James Version's poor translation, Jesus is not at all saying to hate anyone, but rather to love all things less than we love God—to love God more than anything else. We should truly love "father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters," but not as much as we love God, the idea being that love for them must never lessen or deflect or impede our love for God above all else. We must be those of whom it can be said, "they loved not their lives unto death" (Revelation 12:11), but loved God above all—for He IS our life. Therefore we are told in Revelation: "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (3:11).

And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. The word translated "bear" is *bastazo*, which mean bear, take up and endure. Now the cross is not a sacred symbol or decoration to the serious believer, but the death in us of all that prevents the life and revelation of our divine Self, which was declared by Saint Paul as: "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27). To be a true and perfect disciple

of Jesus is to be ourselves a Christ. That takes effort and exacts a price. As Jesus continues:

For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassador, and desireth conditions of peace. There must be a sober and serious taking stock of both our aspirations and our ability to realize them. For nothing less than divinity is to be our goal: to pass from human to god—which even now is our real nature. “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear [manifest], we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (I John 3:2). To see and know God is to see and know our Self, and vice-versa.

What, then, is needed to realize this? “And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure” (I John 3:2-3). Since we are in essence divine, we truly can be as pure as God. For that is our nature which we must realize and reveal.

So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot [is unable to] be my disciple. *Apotassomai*, translated “forsake,” has two distinct meanings: to dismiss something or to leave it oneself. In both meanings separation from something is the essence. In most instances this is an overt, physical separation, but it can also be psychological—a matter of detachment from or disinterest in something. Now there is danger here of thinking that if someone is mentally unattached to something then its use or company is all right. Swami Sivananda wrote about those who said, “We are giving color to our minds,” rather than assuming the gerua (orange) clothing of a sannyasi, a monastic. This is both cowardly and hypocritical, a ploy to not separate oneself from those things, situations and people that are inconsistent with spiritual consciousness and life. There are things that are impossible to retain and live a spiritually viable

life—the path to Self-realization. Therefore the aspirant must rid both his outer environment and his inner environment—mind and heart—from all that is not fully compatible and helpful to spiritual life and discipline. Great self-honesty is need to do this successfully. For as the wise Solomon wrote: “Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay” (Ecclesiastes 5:5).

The bottom line is that we must carefully and even ruthlessly examine our minds and lives and eject from them anything that conflicts with or even hinders leading the yoga life, the life that ends in union (yoga)—with the realization of the Self.

Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out. Salt is not just a seasoning it is a preservative. So it has a taste and a very valuable function. Jesus has been speaking of someone to aspires to discipleship, to the active spiritual life. Such a person must have within himself genuine strength of character and ability for the spiritual life. Just being nice and sincere counts for nothing, since that is not the basis for success in spiritual life. Rather, character and capacity (ability) is everything. And so is perseverance in aspiration and discipline. Those who have the preserving power of inner “salt” will succeed, and others will fail. Here again the statement about the western expansion movement in America applies: the cowards never started and the weak died along the way.

He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. This is brief but profound. The Greek word *ooco* means both the physical ear and the mental ability to hear.

The second word translated “hear” is *akouo*, which means to understand.

It not enough to have potential for spiritual life—everyone does—that potential must be realized/manifested by actively heeding the principles for success and applying them diligently and persistently.



SEEKING AND FINDING THE LOST

Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.

And he spake this parable unto them, saying, What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.

I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance. (Luke 15:1-7)

The whole purpose of this relative existence is the development of consciousness that culminates in our total Self-realization and liberation (moksha). Truly God seeks the lost and wandering until they awaken and return to awareness of the Self within the Supreme Self. The idea of this parable is that every single one of us is of supreme value to God who seeks us perpetually until we awaken and turn our consciousness back towards Him. “Therefore be a yogi” (Bhagavad Gita 6:46).

Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? And when she hath found it, she

calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost.

Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth [reforms]. (Luke 15:8-10)

This parable is about the ten coins that were given to every bride at her wedding and which she was to keep as a memorial of her marriage—a treasure both material and spiritual to remind her of her marriage ties. (There was also a practical aspect: in time of dire need those coins could be spent for relief.)

Since these coins were a truly sacred trust and symbol of the marriage bond, if even one was lost the woman would be frantic to find it and would seek it in desperation. Equally intense would be her relief and rejoicing when she found it, so much so that she would call her friends and neighbors to celebrate with her. Therefore there is great rejoicing in the realm of someone's higher self whenever they reform and take up the spiritual life. And this is often reflected in the higher spiritual realms when highly evolved spirits come to bless, guide and protect that person in their spiritual journey.

There is another symbolic teaching. All ten coins had to be preserved. The marriage gift must be retained in its integrity. In the same way the soul “wedded” to the search for God must do so in a “wholistic” manner—without a single observance or discipline omitted. Just as we cannot go anywhere without our entire body going there, so not one thing can be omitted in our spiritual life. It is truly All Or Nothing.

The prophet Malachi asked what must surely have been considered a strange question: “Will a man rob God?” (Malachi 3:8). Yes: whenever we do not steadily and intensely seek the revelation of God within us: our divine Self. The Hebrew word *quaba* means to rob, but it also means to defraud—to cheat. Many try to cheat God and themselves by not seeking Him in their Self or doing that which is necessary to find Him in the Self. But they only rob and cheat themselves and continue to wander and suffer in samsara.

THE PRODIGAL SON

And he said, A certain man had two sons: And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

And when he had spent [wasted] all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want [suffer need]. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields [farms] to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat,

and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard musick and dancing. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him. And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: but as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.

And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet [necessary; obligatory; fitting] that we should make merry [rejoice], and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found [restored]. Luke 15:11-32)

And he said, A certain man had two sons: And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. This is the picture of all of us who have taken our divine inheritance, our atmabala (soul-force), and squandered it foolishly until we find ourselves depleted in body, mind and soul—just mediocrities (or less). And in this folly we have forgotten our true Self and the Supreme Self and become worthless husks without content or value, spiritually speaking. This world of samsara is truly a “far country” where we have lost contact with and awareness of both God and our own Self.

And when he had spent [wasted] all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want [suffer need]. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields [farms] to feed

swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

During the Yoga Boom in the mid nineteen-sixties I got into big trouble at a retreat sponsored by one of the main yoga cults. I spoke on this parable and said that the senses are the pigs and the objects of sense enjoyment are the empty husks which humans wish to eat and satisfy themselves, but it is impossible to be satisfied by them—rather they produce pain and grief. “So,” I concluded, “sense-enjoyments are just pig food which human beings cannot live on.” Uproar! Everywhere were the indignant claims that “He called us pigs!!!” Of course they knew I had said no such thing, but they were angry that I spoke the truth about the degradation produced by sensual life—which they were living. So they lied and faked up the claim that I had insulted them. But it is still true: we are “joined” to the body, a “citizen” of this material world and addicted to the slop, the pigswill, of the senses. But though we desperately want to satisfy ourselves through the senses it cannot be done. For we are not the body or the senses, and their “food” cannot nourish or satisfy us.

What is the solution of this dilemma? Jesus now tells us.

And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

He came to himself. One of my favorite moments in the motion picture version of *Gone With the Wind* is when Doctor Mead's wife begins asking him about the furnishings of Belle Watling's brothel. He exclaims with great indignation and rebuke: “Mrs. Mead! Remember yourself!” That is what we must do: come to ourself—remember who and what we really are: spirit-Self evolving to perfect consciousness within the Supreme Consciousness that is God.

I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. Having come to himself, what was his resolve? To arise and go home. Our true home is in the transcendental,

divine consciousness which is the very essence of our being, our Self. We must rise in consciousness and enter into and become established in—and as—that Self. And there is no way to accomplish that but yoga sadhana. Again: be a yogi. (This is the sixteenth time I have said this, but it is good to repeat for it is the imperative truth.)

In our ignorance we sinned again heaven—our divine Self—and therefore against the Supreme Self, the Paramatman/Parabrahman who is the Self of our Self. And the requisite attitude is humility.

And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. Yogananda used to say, “For every one step we take toward God, He takes two steps toward us.” In one of his writings Yogananda speaks of God running after us offering his love. The word translated “kiss” is *kataphileo*, which means to kiss fervently. For God’s love is not just sincere, it is His heartfelt fervor toward us. Yet see how heartless and indifferent we are toward God. In the writing I just referred to, Yogananda says that man says to God, “I am too busy now to pay attention to you.” And God, at whose glance the universes tremble, humbly says, “I will wait.” So it is. In one of Tennessee Williams’ plays there is a reference to “man’s inhumanity to God.”

And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. As Jesus has already said in verses seven and ten of this chapter: “I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.... Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.”

Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard musick and dancing. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come;

and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him. And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: but as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.

And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. The most significant sentence in this entire passage of the Gospel is this one: “Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.” This is spoken to every sentient being, every atman, in relative existence because it is bedrock truth. We are always with, in and as: God. Since God is all that is, and our atman is god within God, infinity is ours. But we have to awaken into that consciousness. “Therefore be a yogi” (Bhagavad Gita 6:46).

It was meet [necessary; obligatory; fitting] that we should make merry [rejoice], and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found [restored]. This is true of the awakened person, the awakened Self. He who was dead in consciousness has become alive and restored to the consciousness that is the Self.

THE UNJUST BUT WISE STEWARD

And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward [manager; overseer]; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account [computation] of thy stewardship; for thou mayest [might] be no longer steward.

Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for [if] my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed [will be disgraced]. I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.

So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord? And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore [eighty].

And the lord commended [praised; commended] the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser [more sagacious] than the children of light. (Luke 16:1-8)

Jesus is not advising underhanded scheming, but is commending the foresight and intelligence of the unjust steward in assuring his future if he was dismissed.

In the Bhagavad Gita Krishna says: “I am the gambling [skill] of the fraudulent” (10:36). He was not praising the dishonesty of the gambler, but his intelligence in figuring out how to win. Intelligence is always laudable, but not its application for wrong purposes. The lesson is: Use Your Mind. As I mentioned quite some time back, Yogananda said that stupid people cannot find God. Neither can the cunning and deceitful, but the intelligent, honest person can.

Similar to this is the praise of Sri Sarada Devi for a man whom she observed caring so diligently for a prostitute with whom he was infatuated. She did not praise the infatuation or relationship, but the loving care.

I once had a long conversation in a bus station with a man who was involved in crime. He told me about how he once shot a dishonest man through the hand for trying to cheat him. But in the bulk of his narrative I saw that he was also usually scrupulously honest and charitable, though he was not trying to defend himself and seem honorable in my eyes.

In the opera *Rigoletto*, a professional assassin is asked by his sister to not kill a man, but rather to kill the man who had hired him to kill. He indignantly responds: “What do you think I am? A crook?”

The poet Longfellow wrote, “Often in a wooden house a golden room we find.” After I read that in my late teens I decided to try and find the golden room in those I met—if it was there. But intelligent caution is a virtue in dealing with people.

And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail [die], they may receive you into everlasting [eternal] habitations.

He that is faithful [trustworthy] in that which is least [very little] is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust [unrighteous] in the least is unjust also in much.

If therefore ye have not been faithful [trustworthy] in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?

And if ye have not been faithful [trustworthy] in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own? (Luke 16:9-12)

And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail [die], they may receive you into everlasting [eternal] habitations. The word *mammonas* includes both extreme wealth and extreme avarice for more wealth. And it implies a virtual deification of both wealth and the pursuit of wealth. Yet Jesus says to make them our friends! How is that done? By intelligently—not greedily or selfishly—engaging in the accumulation of money and possessions to use them in positive ways, such as charity, for the benefit of others.

In India I met a man, Jagannath Roy, who was fabulously wealthy. His family had created the largest charitable trust in India. They all were intent on helping people through their money. Mr. Roy dressed in inexpensive clothing like a poor person and travelled in third class on trains. A friend of mine asked him, “Mr. Roy, why don’t you spend your money on yourself?” he simply replied, “How, then, could I give it to others?” Such people are living deities.

In *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens, when the main character Scrooge, says to the ghost of his greedy former business associate, Jacob Marley, “You were always a good businessman, Jacob,” he replies, “Business? Mankind was my business.” But his business with them was their exploitation. So he became a wandering ghost. There was no place for him in the everlasting habitations.

He that is faithful [trustworthy] in that which is least [very little] is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust [unrighteous] in the least [very little] is unjust also in much. It is a matter of character, of integrity. In Sanskrit there is the word *samskara* which is defined in *A Brief Sanskrit Glossary* as: “Impression in the mind, either conscious or subconscious, produced by action or experience in this or previous lives; propensities of the mental residue of impressions; subliminal activators; prenatal tendency.” Integrity is a fundamental trait of a righteous, virtuous person. It is developed in our past lives and manifested in the present life by our thoughts and deeds.

There are no “white” lies or “little no-harms” so beloved in the vocabulary of the deceitful and hypocritical who wish to be thought good and virtuous. This is because a small thing is potentially a large thing. A little fault is the seed that can develop into a great fault, a great defect. A speck of gold dust is as truly gold as a large bar of gold. It is equally so with virtue and vice. We must examine our minds and thoughts at all times to determine our true, inner character—and that of those around us. And pay not attention to the secretly corrupt who like to wave the flag of Don’t Judge lest someone take a good look at them and see what they really are. As Jesus said, “By their fruits ye shall know them” (Matthew 7:20). That necessitates coming to a conclusion about someone.

If therefore ye have not been faithful [trustworthy] in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? If we are not trustworthy and capable in our use of material things and matters, how can we be considered trustworthy in spiritual matters? The Hermetic principle, As Above, So Below can rightly be reversed and read: As Below, So Above. They mirror each other. And the “below” certainly reveals the truth of a person’s “above.”

And if ye have not been faithful [trustworthy] in that which is another man’s, who shall give you that which is your own? When we come into this world we are given a body that is part of our father’s and mother’s bodies. We were totally dependent on them until we matured and demonstrated our capacity for independence. If we are not trustworthy in our handling of the spiritual knowledge which came to us from the teaching of worthy teachers, how can we ever gain direct spiritual knowledge of our own? We cannot.

No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate [disregard] the one, and love [hold to and value] the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise [disesteem] the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon [simultaneously]. (Luke 16:13)

God and matter are one, for it is the Holy Spirit, Mahashakti, who manifests as creation, as matter. But for the ignorant they are two. And

those whose consciousness is limited to and formed by duality/materiality are susceptible to falling into the pit of mammon: extreme wealth and extreme avarice for more wealth. The mental state of “mammon” implies a virtual deification of both wealth and the pursuit of wealth.

The divine eye of their spirit-Self is opened, therefore the truly wise love and serve God, and see things with the eye of spirit (spiritualized) consciousness. But the mind-eye of the ignorant leads them to believe in material gain as the purpose of their existence, and therefore they love the material and ignore or deny the spiritual.

The intelligent, the awakened person, must clearly see this duality and choose to love and serve God alone and see Him alone in what can be mistakenly thought of as mere matter.

MORE TRUTH TO THE HYPOCRITICAL PHARISEES

And the Pharisees also, who were covetous [avaricious], heard all these things: and they derided [sneered at] him.

And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves [show yourselves to be righteous] before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of [before] God. (Luke 16:14-15)

And the Pharisees also, who were covetous [avaricious], heard all these things: and they derided [sneered at] him. The word *philarguros* means “fond of silver.” Loving money and its material advantages and influence, they considered those who were not so infatuated as nothing but fools.

And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves [show yourselves to be righteous] before men; but God knoweth your hearts. God knew that such people worshipped materiality and greed, however righteous and “spiritual” they might outwardly appear to be before others.

For that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of [before] God. This a principle we must take very seriously. “Men” are those whose minds are materialistic. Those who see and live rightly are gods within God.

The law [of Moses] and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached [brought; declared; revealed], and every man [whosoever] presseth into it. And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass [perish; pass away], than one tittle [mark over a letter in the text] of the law to fail. (Luke 16:16-17)

The law of Moses and the prophets were preparations for the revelation of “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27). Now that revelation has come in the person of the Messiah himself who teaches about the kingdom of God. And everyone who will enter, pushes his way into or seizes it. Such is the meaning of *biazō*, translated “presseth.” It is not at all passive, but a putting forth of will and strength. Higher consciousness is accessed and made our own through yoga sadhana. Self-realization is not a gift, it is an attainment.

**Whosoever putteth away [abandons or divorces] his wife,
and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever
marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth
adultery. (Luke 16:18)**

Such is the serious nature of the marriage bond. But even more serious is the “betrothal” of each one of us to God—to union with God through Self-realization. We are eternally “wedded” to God and commit spiritual adultery whenever we let anything or anyone but God occupy the place in our life and heart that is His rightful place and priority.

PARABLE OF THE RICH MAN AND THE BEGGAR

There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared [made merry] sumptuously [luxuriously] every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. (Luke 16:19-20)

Purple was the imperial color and only the Roman emperor and his household or those whom he honored with permission could wear it—usually as a border of their clothing. So the rich man had imperial favor, was perhaps even a relative of the emperor. And, in our modern parlance, he “partied” every day.

We are told that there was a beggar who was “laid at his gate,” which indicates that he was paralyzed. And he was covered with ulcerous sores. He lay there hoping to eat even a tiny morsel of food from the rich man's table.

Dogs came and licked his sores. This was a kindness, in contrast to the rich man's contemptible ignoring of his suffering. For a dog's mouth is not only completely sterilized less than every minute, its saliva has healing properties. I knew of a woman who developed a large sore on the back of her heel. Nothing the doctors prescribed would affect it at all. When she took her shoe off, her dog would try to lick it and she would push the dog away. But she remembered this parable (it pays to read the Gospel) and decided to let the dog have its way. So daily it licked the sore and it began to heal, eventually disappearing altogether.

And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy [pity; compassion] on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would [wish to] pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: for I have five brethren; that he may testify [attest; exhort] unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.

Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.

And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.

And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead. (Luke 16:21-31)

And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. From this we know that Lazarus was a righteous man whose soul was received by angelic spirits and taken into the heavenly realms and received as a child of Abraham.

The rich man also died, and was buried. Does the mention of the rich man being buried imply that Lazarus was just tossed off somewhere? It is likely. Though disregarded by men, Lazarus was known to the angels. But back to the rich man.

And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. Haides is not the fiery pit of contemporary Christianity, but “the unseen world” of departed spirits. And in that world the souls are fully conscious and aware in their astral bodies. Karmic connections are not severed or dissolved by death. Because of his suffering in life and his strong connection with the rich man at whose gate he lay, Lazarus was seen by the rich man leaning against the breast of Abraham in peace and happiness—and honor.

And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy [pity; compassion] on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. The astral body retains all the senses of the earthly body, so the man feels the agony of being burned by fire and that of terrible thirst. Is there fire in the astral world? Of course—and water, too—for it is just a step away from the material world and has the astral levels of all earthly objects and the senses of the physical body.

But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. See how kindly Abraham speaks to the man, calling him “son” (actually *teknon* which means “child”). But in the astral world karma is as inexorable a force as it is in the material world, and Abraham points out the balancing of karma which ultimately manifests in all worlds. Here it is interesting, for it would usually be thought that the man’s riches would be a sign of good karma and Lazarus’ condition as a sign of bad karma. But it is the effect of some object or experience on a person that reveals the quality of the karma that produces it. For some people, comfort and possessions calls forth gratitude and charity. And for others, it calls forth greed and selfishness. For others, suffering calls forth compassion and patience, and for others, resentment, self-pity, and complaint. Karma is a blessing for the good and a curse for the bad—according to their perspective and response.

And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would [wish to] pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. The “gulf” (“chasm”) is a barrier between regions of the astral world, like a wall between rooms. The mere

willing cannot produce passage from one side to the other. Of course, it is also an astral manifestation or picturing of the will of the persons who find themselves separated. One of the realizations of those in either “heaven” or “hell” is the fact that they have themselves chosen to be there by the karmas they willfully created/produced. God has not placed them there as reward or punishment. It is simple reaction-result. We are at all times in any world the creators of our present and future. There is no “fate,” but only karmic response. People like to boast about their “free will” yet want to avoid its results. But the cosmic rule is: Action Creates Reaction.

Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: for I have five brethren; that he may testify [attest; exhort] unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

The word translated “repent” is *metanoeo*, which means to turn around, to change directions. But those whose inner spirit is not awakened in them, but have only their lower mind and impulses functioning, do not have the awareness of truth or the spiritual intuition to understand and act according to wisdom.

Jesus spoke of having “ears to hear” (Matthew 11:15; 13:9; 13:43). But those are spiritual ears, and only those centered in the consciousness of spirit possess such spiritual faculties of perception and understanding. Therefore even the resurrection of the dead will not make an impact on the heedlessness of the spiritually deaf and blind. If such people do witness a supernatural event, they look for a “rational explanation,” or fake up a specious “rational” explanation so they will not have to face spiritual reality. And they can become very hostile and verbally abusive toward both the spiritual phenomena and those that show it to them.

Leave them alone! As Jesus said, “Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead” (Matthew 8:22). Writing this I can clearly hear the voice of Yogananda from a recording I heard saying: “But you... go after God!” Leave them alone, for unlike Little Bo-Peep’s sheep they will NOT come

home to spiritual realities. As Saint Peter wrote, “they willingly are ignorant” (II Peter 3:5). And the prophet Hosea: “Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone” (Hosea 4:17). *Yanach*, translated “let him alone,” can also be correctly translated “withdraw from him.” That is just good sense.

A SEVERE WARNING

Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come! It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend [cause to stumble and fall away] one of these little ones. (Luke 17:1-2)

Opposition and persecution can come from those who because of their ignorance and negativity (they are the same, actually, or have the same roots) detest the truth and those who speak it and dare to live it. Their negative karma is tremendous, and like a whirlpool it can draw into it those who come too close or “touch” these evil ones Jesus has just described.

Those who have their spiritual sight fixed on liberation through Self-realization that is accomplished through yoga sadhana should heed the exhortation of Saint Paul: “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?... Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord” (II Corinthians 6:14-18). Let’s look at this bit by bit.

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers. The word translated “unequally” is *heteros*, which means “other,” “different,” and even “alien.” Now this is speaking of character, outlook and the very quality or nature of the mind, not just thoughts or ideas and concepts.

An unbeliever, *apistos*, is someone who denies spiritual realities, or who simply does not believe because his mind cannot grasp the concepts of spiritual principles. Neither are fit for close association, *metoche*, with

someone who seeks transmutation from ordinary humanity to divinity, one who aspires to one day be able to say with total truth: “I have the mind of Christ” (I Corinthians 2:16).

The very makeup or substance of the mind is included here. For the mind is a field of vibrating energy formed of the food eaten. Obviously, the mind of a carnivore and a vegetarian are at opposite poles. The carnivore exhibits in his thinking and behavior the qualities of the animals whose flesh he eats because his mind is formed of their mental energies. He cannot do otherwise. His body and mind are animal cemeteries. His body is formed of/from their body substance and his mind is formed of their mental substance. The carnivore has degraded himself to the level of an animal, and the vegetarian has maintained his physical and mental integrity as a human being. This sounds drastic because it is. The human being is an interactive complex of body (matter), mind (astral energies) and soul (causal energies). If a house is built of bricks you end up with a brick house. So if you build your body with animal elements you will end up with an animal (not truly human) body, mind and soul. Diet is the “great gulf” between carnivore and vegetarian, between human and humanimal. And why even bother to discuss the mind poisoned and distorted by nicotine, drugs and alcohol?

For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? Dikaiosune, translated “righteousness,” means following an innocent, worthy and even holy character. The perfect example of such character would be the yogi who follows the principles of yama and niyama in every aspect of life. Unrighteousness (*anomia*) would be the absence and the opposite of those ten qualities and observances. The word literally means “lawless” in the sense of both transgressing the law and being outside the law in character, mentality, and behavior.

And what communion hath light with darkness? Koinonia, translated “communion,” means taking part in something, partaking of it, fostering it, or even feeling an affinity for it. Obviously, righteousness is purely of the light, and unrighteousness is purely of the dark(ness). However, *skotos*, translated “darkness” also means shadiness or obscurity—a tinge or element of darkness, a form of compromise, the good old “shades of gray” which

hypocrites and the guilty invoke to cover or excuse their darkness and declare there are no absolute principles of righteousness or unrighteousness, of right or wrong. There is safety in the advice: “Let a man examine himself” (I Corinthians 11:28), and “Let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation” (James 5:12). There are such things as absolutes in spiritual life. In fact, genuine spiritual life consists mostly of absolutes.

And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Sumphoneo (from which we get the word “symphony”) means to be harmonious or in accordance with something, to agree with it or conform to it—even to just consent to it.

We can see from this that the way of the world and the way of spiritual life are vastly different. One is the way of Christhood and the other the way of Satan. (Belial is a Hebrew title for Satan meaning, interestingly, “worthlessness.”) That is why Jesus exhorted his disciples: “Enter ye in at the strait [*stenos*: narrow] gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow [*thlibo*: so narrow that it is extremely difficult and even painful to squeeze through it] is the way, which leadeth [*apago*: brings you] unto life, and few there be that find [*heurisko*: obtain, perceive] it” (Matthew 7:13-14).

Those who think they wish to attain Christhood should consider the words of Jesus: “Which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish” (Luke 14:28-30). As Solomon said: “Better is it that thou shouldest not vow [*nadar*: promise to do something in relation to God], than that thou shouldest vow and not pay [*shalam*: fulfill or do] it” (Ecclesiastes 5:5).

Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? Pistos, translated “believeth,” does mean “believing,” but it also means faithful, trustworthy, sure (in the sense of “a sure thing”) and true (genuine). *Apistos*, translated “infidel,” means actively disbelieving in the sense of denying the reality or value of something, and therefore untrustworthy.

And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? Sugkatathesis, translated “agreement,” means a disposition of the heart, accordance with something. “Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?” (I Corinthians 6:19). Our very physical being is a divine temple when we follow the way to Christhood, the yoga life embodying the principles of yama and niyama. An “idol” is anything, physical, mental or spiritual, that we allow to hinder, lessen or block our spiritual life to any degree, however slight.

Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord. Ecerchomai means coming forth and departing, but it also implies escaping something. And certainly our separation from evil or negative people or thinking is an escape, for as Saint Paul assures us: “Evil communications corrupt good manners” (I Corinthians 15:33). The word strangely translated “communications” is *homilia*, which means companionship and association. The word *phtheiro*, translated “corrupt” means to shrivel or wither, to spoil, ruin, defile or destroy something. This is the effect of negative associations, contact and thinking. “Manners” is *ethos*, which means moral habits. Yogananda said, “Company is greater than will power,” and I have seen myself that it is absolutely true. There is a story about a yogi who told his guru about a “spiritual” woman he had met and was conversing with about spiritual matters. The guru simply said, “Yogi, beware.” But he did not and fell away from spiritual life. A friend of mine once told me, “I have had several people say to me, ‘I have met a soul.’ And in every case they fell morally and spiritually—permanently.”

And touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. “Unclean” is the translation of *akathartos*, which means impure, foul, unclean, morally impure and even demonic. Such must not even be touched by us physically or mentally or by companionship and association with it. The simple touch of impure people, things, situations and influences can destroy spiritual consciousness and life. It is a matter of vibration. And having said that, I am reminded of an incident from the life of Edgar Cayce, the Sleeping Prophet. A vegetarian once saw Cayce eating a porkchop and remarked about it. Cayce replied, “What am I worth if I cannot raise the vibration of even that little porkchop?” I could tell him, but I do not think he would want to know.

If we diligently avoid—and whenever necessary, flee from—all that is unclean, then we shall be received in companionship and life with and in God. The word translated “receive” is *eisdechomai*, when means “to take into one’s favor.” I once saw a book called *Friendship With God*. That is what God offers to those who heed the call: “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate.” *Aphorizo* means to separate, exclude, divide, sever, and set up a boundary. As the hymn I have cited before says:

O souls, be up and doing,
 We have no time to lose,
 There is life and death before us—O
 which one will you choose?

RIGHTEOUS FORGIVENESS

Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against [offend] thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him. (Luke 17:3-4)

Take heed to yourselves. Jesus is not wasting time, but takes us right to the heart of the matter. The word *prosecho* has several layers of meaning, and all are not just relevant, but crucial for the spiritual aspirant. They are:

Holding—being in control of—the mind.

Always being attentive and aware of the mind.

To take care of and be cautious about the mind.

To be aware of the mind's weaknesses and foibles

To look at things in the perspective of the health and welfare and integrity of the mind

To follow and scrutinize the mind in its processes.

This is to be done at all times. That is a tremendous recommendation which cannot be followed without intense inner awareness, vigilance and dedication.

If thy brother trespass against [offend] thee, rebuke him. The word *epitimaō* means to admonish and even to command or rebuke. In other words, you do not ignore the offence, but speak plainly to him. There is no hint here of just looking the other way and letting someone get away with wrong words or actions. Set them straight.

And if he repent, forgive him. There is no “forgive and forget” here. *Metanoeō*, translated “repent” means to genuinely regret one's action and words, and to “turn about,” and think and act differently in all the future.

That is true repentance; and the offender must demonstrate that he does truly understand his guilt and regrets it sincerely. If he does not, then do not forgive him. Do not harbor resentment or anger toward him, but either be watchful about him in the future, ready to forestall any repetition of his offense, or simply withdraw from association with him. There is no virtue in being a doormat.

And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him. If the repentance is sincere, then forgiveness is in order. But not otherwise.

THE POWER OF FAITH

And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith. And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you. (Luke 17:5-6)

What is faith? “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1). Faith is not an inner feeling or conviction or an attitude or outlook as is commonly thought. Rather, it is the result of personal experience of spiritual realities, which are thenceforth *known*—not merely believed or hoped in. It is “knowledge of God which is nearer than knowing, open vision direct and instant” (Bhagavad Gita 9:1. Prabhavananda translation). Faith and knowledge are inseparable, because knowledge comes from faith. They are one as cause and effect. Such experiential knowledge is itself power: creative divine power. And it is so powerful that a virtual speck (a mustard seed is very small) bestows creative and recreative power—divine power. The universe being a living entity formed of living, conscious energy, responds to the word and will of a Self-realized master-soul.

THE RIGHT PERSPECTIVE

But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat [eat]? (Luke 17:7)

Again, I want to point out as I did in the comment on Luke 12:37 that “sit down to meat” means “sit down to eat.”

And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink? Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not.

So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do. (Luke 17:8-10)

This is not an exhortation to humility, but to honest reality. *Achreios*, the word translated “unprofitable,” means unmeritorious in the sense that praise should not be expected for doing what is right and good. *Opheilo*, translated “duty,” means something owed—an obligation.

THE RAISING OF LAZARUS

Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.) Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick. When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby. Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was. (John 11:1-6)

Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick. Remembering that the life of an avatar is literally a mystery drama given to the world to reveal profound spiritual truths through symbolic acts, we realize that these words of Jesus gives us an insight into the eternal relationship that the individual spirit has with God: love. Later, after the resurrection, we will encounter a conversation between Saint Peter and Jesus in which Jesus asks Peter if he loves him. And Peter says Yes, but uses a word that really means only liking someone very much. Jesus asks again twice, and gets the same reply so he give up the matter. But in the relationship of Jesus with Lazarus, Mary and Martha there was deep, spiritual love, so the sisters referred to Lazarus as “he whom thou lovest.”

Love is not a superficial emotion based on egos—what a friend of mine called “luv”—but a positive, magnetic attraction toward unity which turns two into one. This is why genuine love of God unites us with God. “God is love” (I John 4:8, 16), is a profound metaphysical statement, as Swami Sriyukteswar Giri states in *The Holy Science (Kaivalya Darshan)*. Bhakti

Yoga is the uniting of the atman with the Paramatman through intense love in the form of *mumukshutwa*—the intense desire and yearning for liberation. It is not emotion at all—it is intelligent spiritual wisdom: jnana.

When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby. When the individual—especially the yogi—truly sets his will to walk the path to union with God, then everything in his life will be a step toward that goal, his life also becoming a mystery drama.

Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was. Now this sounds very strange to us: because Jesus loved Lazarus he did not immediately go and heal him, but waited for two days, and in that time Lazarus died. This was because Jesus intended something more wonderful than healing for Lazarus and his sisters. Lazarus was to learn that after death there is still life and experience his immortality in the astral world as a reality, not just a theory, and then return to his incarnate life with that knowledge—no longer merely a believer, but a knower.

Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judaea again. His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews [Judeans] of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again? Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him. (John 11:7-10)

Twelve is the number of completeness. The “day” of those who seek God is the light of the inner knowledge that comes to them as they “walk” by their consciousness and their will in the way that leads them to their goal. Those who do not just intellectually or emotionally desire the experience of divinity, but who intelligently and clear-sightedly follow the practical path shown by the illumined masters of all ages, will not falter or err, because by their endeavors the inner light of the spirit will reveal the divine way

to them. But if they do not walk in the Path of the Masters, observing all that is shown to them, they will be stumbling in the dark.

These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. (John 11:11-13)

It is not easy, or even possible, for the inexperienced seeker to understand the words or the ways of the path that leads to the revelation and experience of the Eternal Life that is his own nature. But those who persevere and have the “ears to hear” in their inmost consciousness being awakened will learn, understand and go forward.

Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent [purpose that] ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him. (John 11:14-15)

What we may think is a mistake or a misfortune can turn out to be a disguised blessing. Often if we did not miss an opportunity or lose something we would never have found a better prospect or found something better than that which we lost, or in the finding discover what we would never have known or gained. This is why Saint Paul said, “We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28).

Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus [The Twin], unto his fellow-disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him. (John 11:16)

When Jesus is taken by his enemies and murdered, Thomas and those he is speaking to will run away in fear and hide until Jesus himself comes to them after his resurrection—which they will doubt when told about it, Thomas being the last to believe (John 20:19-30).

Then when Jesus came, he found that he [Lazarus] had lain in the grave four days already [by that time].

Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off: And many of the Jews [Judeans] came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house. (John 11:17-20)

Earlier in the tenth chapter of Saint Luke's gospel it was Martha who was dithering around while Mary sat and listened to Jesus, and he had said then, "One thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." But now she sat in the house with her grief, and Martha went to meet Jesus. So it is with human beings. As Swami Sriyukteshwar Giri said, "Human conduct is ever unreliable until anchored in the Divine."

Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world. (John 11:21-27)

Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. This shows that Martha has developed spiritual intuition and knows that through the power of God—with Whom he is one—Jesus can do something about death, irrevocable as it seemed to be.

Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth

in me shall never die. The consciousness of Christ, Christ-consciousness, is the true resurrection into life—the life of Spirit. Remember, the word *eis* does not mean just *in*, but *into*. So Jesus said, “He that believeth *into* me...”

Christ consciousness is itself life, and those who enter into that consciousness are the only ones who really are alive in the complete sense. And we, too, are destined to become Christs by our entry into our own eternal consciousness—*atma-chaitanya*—the consciousness that is our Self, our immortal *atman*. No one truly lives until they resurrect—rise—into that consciousness. Then, although he was once “dead” to higher realities, he will come to life and live in Reality Itself. He then will truly never die, no matter whether his body dies. For then he shall rise into the realms of immortality never to come back into this world of spiritual death. This is the true liberation: *moksha*.

And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee. As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him. Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him. (John 11:28-30)

And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee. The true call to higher life is a “secret” call. That is, it comes from deep within and is known by none but the one to whom that call comes. Therefore, when they answer that call, those around them who are uncalled may consider them deluded, crazy or a fool. But those who are worthy of the call, will not give in to external pressures and stop heeding the call (for a real inner call results in a change in the mind, outer behavior and deeds of the called), but will resist all inner and outer pressures that oppose their awakening and change. They will keep moving onward to higher understanding, higher life and consciousness, and “go forth” from their present level of evolution to take refuge in the “master”—their own higher self—who has called them, even if the call seems to come from an external source.

To know that the Self is near, right at hand, and to go within and experience that Self and then conform the entire life to the teachings of that inner Master, is the right arising and going forth to meet the Truth. Jesus was waiting outside the town for Mary to come and meet him, and so is the Truth of our being awaiting our coming within.

As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him. Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him. Like the Prodigal Son, the truly called arise immediately and go to meet the Caller. And the Caller will not be where we “are” at the moment of our calling, but away from and beyond our usual state of consciousness. There we meet the Truth, the Reality, and begin to truly Live.

The Jews [Judeans] then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there. Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews [Judeans] also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, and said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see.

Jesus wept. Then said the Jews [Judeans], Behold how he loved him! (John 11:28-36)

He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled. The word translated “groaned” is *embrimaomai*, which means to sigh with chagrin, and *tarasso*, translated “troubled,” means to be inwardly moved or stirred.

And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died? (John 11:37)

Of course! The worthless and the powerless (ineffectual in their own mind and life) are always quick to question and cast doubt when the real thing comes near them. Sometimes they take action against it, as we will see in the forty-fifth verse.

Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?

Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.

And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go. (John 11:38-44)

Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. The tomb of Lazarus is preserved and can be entered by pilgrims, for it is underground and steps lead down into it. And it is just as described here—a cave which was closed by a huge rock.

Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. The consciousness of many is only a “grave” in which wisdom is buried—sometimes by natural incapacity and sometimes by deliberate, negative choice. Each of us should analyze ourselves and our life carefully and determine if there is some “stone” that shuts us up in the tomb of material consciousness.

Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days. Knowing only the ways

of the material world, Martha naturally thought that Lazarus would be disintegrating and beyond any healing that Jesus might attempt.

In 1917 the atheistic dictatorship of Portugal, infuriated at the miracles being worked by the Virgin Mary at Fatima, declared that miracles were prohibited because they “broke the laws of nature.” Some hope! The great miracle of the sun took place, and many other great wonders after that.

We can choose to see with the eyes of our body, mind or spirit. Martha’s “eyes” were of the body, and so she said these words. But she had been with Jesus a great deal (he used to stay with Lazarus, Mary and Martha in their home occasionally) so the power of Jesus could not have been unknown to her. But the healing of disease is one thing, and the reversal of death is another, especially if the body has been dead for some time and therefore decaying. No one in Israel had heretofore witnessed that. So we should not blame Martha. But “nature” did not bind Jesus, as it did Martha.

Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? The word *pisteuo* means to believe and put trust in something (or someone). And through that to actually “see the glory of God” is possible. There is a remarkable film by the Danish director Carl Theodor Dreyer called *Ordet*—The Word. It deals with death and resurrection, also. I recommend it. I first saw it sixty-two years ago and again a few times, including about a week before I am writing this. Each time I find it truly amazing.

But there is an even greater glory of God than miracles: the glory of the eternal, immortal divine Self, the Atman. And those who diligently apply themselves to both the prerequisites, yama and niyama, and the practice of yoga will behold the glory of God in their Self (Atman) and the Supreme Self (Paramatman).

Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. We, too, must take away the stone (or stones) which prevent us from entering into our innermost being and experiencing the Self which is so often “entombed” by our unawareness.

And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. God,

being omnipresent and omniscient, always “hears” every movement of our hearts, also. For even “now are we the sons of God” (I John 3:2).

And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. We must summon forth our own entombed Self with the “loud voice” of dedicated and persistent sadhana.

And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. When we come forth from the deathly sleep of ignorance we do not find ourselves free, but realize that we are bound and veiled by the accumulated illusions and delusions of many lives. And our inner, spiritual work is just beginning.

Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go. We ourselves must loose ourselves from all the bonds of ignorance and set ourselves free. Again: yoga sadhana is the way.

Then many of the Jews [Judeans] which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him.

But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done. (John 11:45-46)

The term “the enemy within” is rightly applied to a certain class of evil persons who are found in positive company or positive events in order to observe and go away and defame and disparage it to those who were not present. Sometimes they snipe openly, but usually they work out of view on those they hope will be influenced by their spite and evil-speaking. Sometimes they get into a position in which they can actually disrupt a person or situation. Or they join a spiritual group and work to destroy it from within.

A COUNCIL AGAINST JESUS

Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. Being obviously genuine panics the workers of evil.

If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. What nonsense! But the evil ones have to justify their treachery—at least to themselves.

And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.

And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad. (John 11:47-52)

In esoteric cosmology there is a very important concept: the reality of thought forms. A thought form is a field of subtle mental energy produced by a human mind, and which becomes powerful when augmented by the mental energy-projections of many minds. A nation is ensouled by a thought form, and so is any organization or association of like-minded people. (Please put emphasis on “minded.”) In time a thought form becomes a very real force, and since everything, including energy, is divine consciousness at its root, a thought form develops a kind of consciousness and personality of its own. The Jewish nation and the Jewish religion were fundamentally a unity which projected a tremendously powerful thought

form which was concentrated in and overshadowed the spiritual figures such as the high priest. Although Caiaphas was not a righteous man, and had obtained his post through bribery and toadying to the Romans, nevertheless as possessor of the high priesthood—itsself a powerful thought form—he could speak in an inspired and prophetic manner. And in this instance, he did, even though not intentionally. But his statement cited here could legitimately be considered a divine oracle. After all, the prophet Balaam had a donkey that spoke and prophesied to him:

“And God came unto Balaam at night, and said unto him, If the men come to call thee, rise up, and go with them; but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do. And Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab.

“And the ass saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and the ass turned aside out of the way, and went into the field: and Balaam smote the ass, to turn her into the way.

“And when the ass saw the angel of the Lord, she fell down under Balaam: and Balaam’s anger was kindled, and he smote the ass with a staff. And the Lord opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times?

“And Balaam said unto the ass, Because thou hast mocked me: I would there were a sword in mine hand, for now would I kill thee.

“And the ass said unto Balaam, Am not I thine ass, upon which thou hast ridden ever since I was thine unto this day? was I ever wont to do so unto thee? And he said, Nay.

“Then the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face” (Numbers 22:20-31).

I have said that nations are a powerful thought form. This was demonstrated when the Bolsheviks opened the tombs of the Russian monarchs

in the Peter and Paul Fortress to loot their bodies. *Most of the bodies of the monarchs from centuries back were incorrupt.* How was this? Because of the power imparted to them by the ritual at the anointing which consecrated them as the rulers of the Orthodox Russian nation. When there is a genuine monarchy, divine power flows continually into the monarch and from him to all his subjects. In this way the monarch's body becomes virtually deified and may be incorrupt after his death. In the same way, the thought form of the Jewish religion was so intense that even a scoundrel like Caiaphas, an irreligious puppet of the Roman government, could be overshadowed by divine illumination/intuition and speak of Jesus' destiny in relation to Israel and the whole world.

Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death.

Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews [Judeans]; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples. (John 11:53--54)

For his ministry needed some more time to be completed.

TEN LEPERS

And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.

And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go show yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.

And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.

And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole. (Luke 17:11-19)

There are four lessons in this account. 1) The very asking for help is an act able to bring it about. 2) Simply by obeying Jesus they aligned themselves with his will, and through that will were cured. 3) Only one out of ten people know how to be thankful for their blessings and express that thankfulness, and often that is the person considered least likely to do that. 4) Faith is itself the beginning of that which we wish, the “power of God through faith unto salvation” (I Peter 1:5).

THE COMING OF THE KINGDOM

And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come [appear], he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation [by the eye]: Neither shall they say, Lo here [in this place]! or, lo there [in that place]! for, behold [see yourself], the kingdom [reign] of God is within you [your own selves]. (Luke 17:20-21)

Only interior experience and the resulting knowledge can reveal to us the kingdom of God which is already within us, and has been from eternity. “Therefore be a yogi” (Bhagavad Gita 6:46), for only yoga gives us the necessary inner experience and knowledge.

And he said unto the disciples, The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it. And they shall say to you, See here; or, see there: go not after them, nor follow them. (Luke 17:22-23)

Jesus is telling them of the future when he will be gone from the earth and they will yearn for his sacred presence. Various substitutes or false Christs will be presented to them, all “of the earth, earthly” (John 3:31), and should be ignored. For only the Christ within will be real.

Now he begins to speak of his destiny and the ending of his earthly incarnation and sacrifice.

For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day. But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation.

And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.

Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.

Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.

In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back.

Remember Lot's wife.

Whosoever shall seek to save [preserve] his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.

I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together. (Luke 17:24-37)

For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day. But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation.
In the Zohar, written before the birth of Jesus, we find the prophecy that the Messiah will be born twice: first as son of Joseph and be rejected, and

next as son of David and be accepted. So the future will be filled with light. Until then humanity must wait in hope. For Jesus continues about his “day” that was unfolding right then, though much of his words were symbolic.

And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.

Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.

Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed. We should consider these words as applying to humanity right now. Although Jesus came and told people to turn about and live in the spirit, actively preparing for and seeking the advent of their own Christhood within their consciousness, yet it is “business as usual,” with people (including Christians) living as though Jesus had not come. From birth to death they live as heedlessly as they did in their prior incarnations. But when the call comes to each one of us, here is what we and all true aspirants to Christhood must follow:

In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back. At the time of Jesus houses had flat roofs and people often sat up there and even ate and slept there in hot weather. Naturally, there were stairways to the roof which could be descended. This is all symbolic. The idea is that when our consciousness is elevated enough to realize the true purpose of our life as Self-realization, we should fix ourselves in that awareness and not let ourselves become distracted by the “stuff” in our former mentality, or descend at any moment to the level of our former, lower consciousness. And just as in the time of Jesus it was possible to flee across the rooftops by leaping from roof to roof, so we should hold on to our newly-awakened perspective and by that means retain our elevated purpose of Self-realization and move through life holding to that and living on a higher plane than that of the unawakened. We cannot “come down” for any purpose or person, but take the “high

way” to the Highest. Those “in the field” must also make the same flight to freedom. And both must understand that “NOW is the accepted time; behold, NOW is the day of salvation” (II Corinthians 6:2). “Tomorrow” never comes for those who delay.

Remember Lot's wife. Lot, the brother of Abraham, was living in the evil city of Sodom when he was visited by two angels, who told him, “We will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord; and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it.... And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.... Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven; and he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground. But his [Lot's] wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.” (Genesis 19:13, 17, 24-26)

The looking back of Lot's wife represents a wavering in the forward-moving spiritual journey of the aspiring individual, an indication of sympathy, affinity and perhaps even a desire for former negative actions, attachments or mode of thinking and living—a reversion to that which must be absolutely renounced and abandoned. Lot and his family were fleeing for their life—it truly was a matter of life or death. And so is the spiritual life. There can be no compromise or concessions made.

Whosoever shall seek to save [preserve] his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it. Those who seek to retain the life of ignorance, ego and materiality will lose the true life of the spirit, but those who “lose” the false life of illusion and delusion by turning from it and living consciously in the true life of their spirit-Self will preserve their awakening into higher life and consciousness and attain to higher and higher development and evolution.

I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. This is a symbol of the spiritual division

that will take place when someone enters into higher awareness by consciously leaving behind him all that can interfere with or obscure his newly-awakened (and awakening) consciousness and its corresponding and necessary mode of life and thought. It is true: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature [creation]: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" II Corinthians 5:17).

And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together. Where will those just spoken of be "taken"? Those who are eagles of the spirit, keen-sighted and capable of flying into the heights of the "sky" of spirit-consciousness will be gathered together into the "body of Christ," the company of those who dwell in Christ Consciousness, the knowledge of their own divinity and their unity with the Divine.

PERSEVERANCE AND HUMILITY

And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: and there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.

And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth? (Luke 18:1-8)

Those who persevere gain what they seek. Those who “storm heaven” by their spiritual perseverance and spiritual discipline and practice will gain what they desire.

However, Jesus wonders if he will find his teachings still known when he returns to earth as Son of David.

And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised [disesteemed] others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a [highly religious] Pharisee, and the other a publican [tax collector]. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I

thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified [righteous] rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased [brought low]; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted [lifted up]. (Luke 18:9-14)

Those of small minds are satisfied, even pleased, with themselves. Jesus says of such that “they have their reward”—meaning themselves (Matthew 6:2, 5, 16). But those with awakened and expanded minds are aware of their every fault and failing, and keenly realize how purified and evolved they must become to attain liberation through Self-realization. Since they aspire to higher and higher levels of consciousness and continually purify themselves by moral observations (yama/niyama) and spiritual practice (yoga sadhana), they shall attain higher levels of evolution and consciousness.

MORE TRICK QUESTIONS OF THE PHARISEES

And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts of Judaea beyond Jordan; and great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there.

The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting [testing] him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?

And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. (Matthew 19:1-6)

See how serious, even severe, is the subject of marriage? Marriage is not just physical, it is metaphysical, and the “bonds of matrimony” are causal, astral and physical—more profound than any other human relationship. Both the joining and the parting of these bonds have deep and far-reaching effects on all levels of those concerned. To allow mere attraction and desire to be the motive and basis of marriage is a colossal error. Karma must be taken into full consideration. That is why both divination and astrology are so important and even essential in determining the wisdom or folly of a prospective marriage.

What if a marriage has been made contrary to wisdom and right judgment? What should be done, then? That Jesus has not spoken about. But

before someone enters into marriage the foregoing words of Jesus should be pondered deeply and both astrology and divination used to determine the wisdom or folly of a prospective marriage.

They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?

He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness [spiritual blindness] of your hearts suffered [allowed] you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication [adultery], and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery. (Matthew 19:7-9)

What comment is needed?

His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good [not expedient; better not] to marry.

But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. (Matthew 19:10-11)

These words of Jesus were not meant for all—only those whose karma and samskara are in harmony with it. This is not a matter of convenience but of karmic destiny, character and obligation. See what a tremendous obligation and sankalpa is marriage!

For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it. (Matthew 19:12)

There were three kinds of eunuchs: 1) those who were eunuchs through birth defects that prevented sexual function; 2) those who were eunuchs

through physical castration; 3) those who were voluntary celibates for spiritual discipline—to attain higher consciousness through preservation of the subtle energies related to sexual functions that can be transmuted into spiritual energy and power.

“He that is able to receive it, let him receive it” puts the matter exclusively in the hands of the individual. But it is implied that he who is able to follow it should do so, for it is a matter of spiritual discipline and obligation, not personal desire or whim.



BLESSING THE CHILDREN

And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked [forbade] those that brought them.

But when Jesus saw it, he was much [very] displeased [indignant], and said unto them, Suffer [allow] the little children to come unto me, and forbid [hinder] them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.

And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them. (Mark 10:13-16)

The touch of a spiritually exalted person conveys his subtle bio-energies—and even subtler auric energies—to whatever or whomever they touch. In the case of Jesus such energies would have a great blessing and awakening effect, even upon children.

One time when Anandamayi Ma was in samadhi, her niece touched her and immediately fell down in a semi-conscious ecstatic state. When Ma touched her and ran her hands over her head and upper body, she stabilized, but the moment Ma took her hands away she returned to that state. Ma laughed and said that it was like letting go of the string of a kite which would automatically fly up into the air.

I understand this, because the first time I met Ma I put out my hand for her to touch. She said, “No, no,” but I kept holding out my hand. So she lightly touched both sides of my hand with her fingertips. Immediately the subtle energies in my body began streaming up like a volcano and there was nothing in the world but Ma and I. I followed after her, and

when she got into an auto she sat looking calmly at me as I continued to erupt. As the auto pulled away, suddenly it was as though a switch was pulled and the eruption stopped. But I knew that Ma alone was real and all else was unreal.

GOODNESS AND THE COMMANDMENTS

And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master [Teacher], what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal [everlasting] life?

And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter [arise] into life, keep [fulfill] the commandments. (Matthew 19:16-17)

At the time of Jesus it was held by religious people that God alone was truly good, and only God should be referred to as good. So when someone who certainly did not believe that Jesus was God called him “good” it was blasphemous and grossly flattering—inexcusable. And Jesus reminds him of that. Then he gets to the heart of the matter: if anyone wishes to arise and enter into the only true life, the life of the spirit, he should prepare himself for that ascent by observing the commandments. For the yogi, the necessary observance-commandments are those of yama and niyama.

He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? (Matthew 19:18-20)

First of all, it is ridiculous and disrespectful that the man would ask “Which?” to Jesus’ original reply. And when he further asks, “What lack

I yet?" I think we can be skeptical regarding his sincerity—as was Jesus. So Jesus went right to the core of things: the man's materialistic obsession/addiction.

THE NECESSARY ACTION, BUT...

Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow [accompany] me. (Matthew 19:21)

The word translated “perfect” is *teleios*, which does not mean without defect, but full and complete. The man lacked the virtues of detachment from all external, material things and the attachment to internal, spiritual things. So Jesus told him the only way to cancel out those bondages and be free and able to accompany Jesus and live with him in the kingdom of heaven even while on the earth.

But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great [very many] possessions. (Matthew 19:22)

Infinity was offered the man—an awesome prospect—but he left *lupeo*: distressed, grieved, heavy of heart and sad: possessed by his possessions.

The great Stoic philosopher Epictetus (whose *Discourses* I heartily recommend to you), told a man who came to learn from him: “It is you who know yourself, how much you are worth to yourself, and at what price you sell yourself; for men sell themselves at various prices....Only consider at what price you sell your own will.” The intention of Epictetus was for the man to discover what he would sacrifice his will and integrity to attain, and then absolutely destroy any attachment or attraction to whatever that

might be. And thus be a person of true integrity and purpose—which this unfortunate young man was not.

A SOBERING TRUTH

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly [be able to] enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. (Matthew 19:23-24)

Those who either have a lot of money—or who want to be in favor with those who have a lot of money in hope of being somehow benefitted by them—do not like these words of Jesus. But we who desire to “possess the kingdom” must consider them carefully.

I have observed the truth of Jesus’ declaration for nearly a century, and know it is true. Money especially has a very real power materially and psychically. We say, “Money is power,” but we do not understand the esoteric reality behind those words. Money and possessions are thought forms—a subject discussed earlier. Money is materialized energy—life energy. The more money or material possessions, the more powerful is the energy and the thought form. And only those of strong minds and wills can handle possessing or encountering great wealth and assets. The problem is in the human mind, not in the money or possessions. I have witnessed spiritually-minded people completely overwhelmed by suddenly possessing money, and losing what spiritual focus they had. Money and possessions can indeed possess their possessors. It is a matter of magnetism, not morality.

Here is a striking example. My aunt Ethel became acquainted with a very wealthy woman who had married another wealthy man and had several servants. Once when my aunt was in the kitchen of her mansion, this woman came there carrying a sweater she neither needed nor wanted, apparently planning to give it to one of the workers. For quite some time

she stood at the door, looking alternately at the sweater and the woman she had come to give it to. Then suddenly she clutched the sweater to herself, turned and virtually ran out. She was so addicted to possession that she could not give away what was useless to her!

Another example, even sadder, is that of the proverbial “rich kid” who has virtually no personality or inner development—and usually no genuine friends. Once I was present when a friend of mine encountered a man who behaved in the usual juvenile manner of such people. When the obnoxious man left, my friend quietly observed, “If he was not a ‘rich kid’ he would be nothing.” And it was so.

It is not money or possessions that are the problem, but the effect on the minds of those without the strength of personality and integrity to deal with the effects of money and great possessions. I have known more than one rich person who tried to be a yogi and just could not because of their weakness. For wealth and possessions can become addicting and sap the psychic energies of many people, rendering them incapable of the required mental and moral strength necessary to themselves be the masters.

The yogi is truly “shooting for the stars” in the form of consciousness. The Greek word in the expression “kingdom of heaven” is *ouranos*, which means the vast, limitless sky. And for the yogi, this “sky” is not just the vastness of space, but the infinite Consciousness that is the Absolute Being: Brahman. And its attainment requires incredible will and ability on the part of the yogi. The maxim about the American Westward Expansion applies to the yogi’s quest: “The cowards never started and the weak died along the way.” I have sadly “buried” a lot of yogis in my life, however much I liked and even loved them. Yogananda said that the yogi who perseveres will find his fellow yogis falling “to the right and to the left.” “But you,” he said to the dedicated yogi, “must keep on till the end.” “And some,” he added, “will come to the door and fall asleep.” Regarding this Jesus said, “What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch” (Mark 13:37). The Greek word *gregoreuo* means “be vigilant, be awake, be watchful.” The word from which that is derived (and therefore implied) is *egeiro*, which means to collect oneself mentally, to rouse oneself from sleep and stand up.

WHO CAN BE SAVED?

When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? (Matthew 19:25)

The word translated “saved” is *sozo*, which means saved, delivered, protected, healed preserved, do well and be whole—with the implication that it is done by the individual himself. “Therefore be a yogi” (Bhagavad Gita 6:46).

But Jesus beheld them [looked at them fixedly], and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible. (Matthew 19:26)

This is very significant. With only the consciousness/awareness of our humanity and our finite abilities we cannot be “saved.” But with the consciousness/awareness of the divinity of our true Self we absolutely can “save” ourselves through sadhana. This is why the authentic yogis say that God and our Self alone are our guru.

Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken [left, renounced] all, and followed [accompanied] thee; what shall we have therefore?

And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed [accompanied] me, in the regeneration [restoration] when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (Matthew 19:27-28)

Those who will truly live the life of the spirit must turn from all that conceals and stifles that life. We must live in God, the Self of our Self, leaving behind the illusions of the false ego for the Reality that is our reality as well: the Truth of the Self. Those who do so, and persevere, will certainly find their awareness seated (centered) upon the throne of the Self, masters of their entire inner and outer being.

And every one that hath forsaken [left] houses [homes], or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting [eternal] life. (Matthew 19:29)

We must separate ourselves from all identity with this entire list. And we must not mistake: some aspirants can renounce these things inwardly and it will suffice; but there are those who must renounce them outwardly, otherwise they will attain nothing of the divine kingdom. All these things have come to us through the force of our own karma created by ourselves in the living of our outer, material life. And those who separate from them, either inwardly or outwardly, alone will inherit the life of the divine Self. It is our heritage by our own true nature as eternal spirits, but we must renounce to gain the divine patrimony.

We have always been in the kingdom of infinite being, but we have “lost” and “strayed” from it through the forgetfulness brought about by our immersion in only external, material “life.” When we come to ourselves like the Prodigal Son and arise and go back to our original home, then we shall experience the glorious declaration: “thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine” (Luke 15:31).

May our heart's prayer always be: “O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was” (John 17:5).

**But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first.
(Matthew 19:30)**

Many that in the outer world seem to be foremost will be revealed as the least in the realm of the spirit, and many that seem to be least in the outer world will be revealed as the foremost in the world of the spirit. But only those whose eyes of the spirit are opened will perceive this reality.

Writing these two sentences I was suddenly reminded of the experience of an Indian friend of mine which he told me many years ago. He had come to America and become a successful doctor of both allopathic and Ayurvedic medicine. In India he had been very close to a great yogi, whom he decided to bring to America for a visit. The yogi came, and my friend was happy and blessed by his presence. But two weeks after his arrival the yogi came to him and said, "As soon as possible, please book me a flight back to India, because I cannot stay in this impoverished land any longer." For India was the land of spiritual riches in abundance, and in the West he had found intolerable spiritual poverty.

Once when I was in New York City I went to a book store where I found a first edition of *Autobiography of a Yogi* autographed by Paramhansa Yogananda priced at only a few dollars! Obviously it had no meaning or value for the owners. A very nice lady waited on me, and when she found I had been to India, she said intensely, "Didn't the poverty just break your heart?" I smiled and left, saying nothing, for she could not possibly understand how the spiritual riches I had found and made my own in "poor" India were the rejoicing of my heart.

THE WAY IT WORKS

For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the laborers for a penny [denarius] a day, he sent them into his vineyard.

And he went out about the third hour [nine a.m.], and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right [fitting; just] I will give you. And they went their way.

Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour [noon and three p.m.], and did likewise.

And about the eleventh hour [five p.m.] he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle?

They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive.

So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the laborers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny.

But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house, saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.

But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?

So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen. (Matthew 20:1-16)

There is only one goal for those that live and apply themselves in spiritual practice: Self-realization which is total Liberation in the spirit. The time taken to gain this will appear to differ from person to person, but the difference is according to the “work” each had done in previous lives. The effort needed, and the wage earned, is the same for all, but some have already gained the inner development needed for Self-realization while others are just beginning and will take longer to get the desired “wage” of Self-realization. And there are some that are called, but choose not to heed the call. But they will some time in the future. It is something like a horse race: all reach the finish line, but at differing times.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

And they were in the way [road] going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before [preceding] them: and they were amazed [astonished]; and as they followed, they were afraid [in awe].

And he took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto him, saying, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles: and they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him: and the third day he shall rise again. (Mark 10:32-34)

Jesus was literally hastening to his destiny in Jerusalem, eager to fulfill his mission, even though it involved the terrible things he reveals to the disciples. Such was his zeal to do the will of God. Are we the same?

And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew [understood] they the things which were spoken. (Luke 18:34)

This can be the same with us: we do not comprehend the meaning or implications of spiritual teaching. This is to our serious detriment, and is usually because of slackness and heedlessness. Solomon depicted this situation: “I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was

broken down. Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: so shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man” (Proverbs 24:30-34). Not a lot of sleep—just a little; not a lying down to sleep, but just a little relaxation and disposition toward sleep. And then sleep comes. We, too, should pray: “Hear me, O Lord my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death” (Psalms 13:3). For to sleep in the spirit (consciousness) is the sleep of spiritual death.

And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire [ask].

And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you?

They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory. (Mark 10:35-37)

Saint Matthew recounts this incident: “Then came to him the mother of Zebedee’s children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom” (Matthew 20:20-21). This is “business as usual” with ignorant, self-centered people—and that is most of humanity. No wonder Jesus said: “O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer [bear with; put up with] you?” (Matthew 17:17; Mark 9:19). The word translated “worshipping” is *proskuneo* which *Strong’s Greek Dictionary* says means fawning on someone “like a dog licking his master’s hand.” An accurate assessment.

Anyhow, the request is outrageously inappropriate and reveals the low opinion the petitioners have of Jesus. Again: “how long”?

But Jesus said unto them, Ye know [understand] not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?

And they said unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized:

But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared [made ready]. (Mark 10:38-40)

But Jesus said unto them, Ye know [understand] not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? The path which Jesus was traveling led to the cup of ignominy and the baptism of death. Naturally, the disciples did not know that, nor did they have an inkling of the spiritual struggle and attainment/experience that cup and baptism represent.

This is the dilemma of all those who awaken to the possibility of higher life and consciousness and desire to attain it: they do not really know what it means and what it requires—and cannot conceive the nature and extent of the attainment. We are all in that situation at the beginning. A few continue on for a while before failing in the attempt, and much fewer attain by persevering to the end.

This is a serious matter.

And when the ten heard it, they began to be much displeased [indignant] with James and John.

But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be [it not shall be so] among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister [serving-man; servant]; and whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant [a slave; a bondman] of all.

For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto [served], but to minister [serve], and to give his life a ransom [a redemption price] for many. (Mark 10:41-45)

How rare are those who can truly conform their lives to Jesus' high (and plain) ideal. I only saw it manifested to some degree in a small, despised and mocked (even persecuted on occasion) church that I belonged to until I awoke to Sanatana Dharma. But in India I saw it lived to glorious perfection in Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh. His humility was the humility of God. He sponsored many projects which uplifted ordinary (and many very poor) people on all levels of their existence. But one morning in the satsang I saw the following example of his genuine attitude of being the servant of all in all things.

A woman whose eyeglasses were incredibly thick, indicating that her eyesight was very poor indeed, was sitting off to one side in the satsang hall. Sivananda was reclining in his chair on the other side with a cloth spread over his legs. At one point in the satsang this woman came crawling forward and began polishing her glasses on that cloth! Apparently she thought that doing so might improve her eyesight. But immediately Swami Devananda who was sitting next to Sivanandaji jumped up and shooed her away with his hand. She quickly retreated, but in a short while crawled back and repeated her polishing. When Devanandaji again jumped up and waved his arm, Sivananda pushed his arm back and indicated that he should sit down. By then the woman had retreated to her original spot. Sivananda looked over at her, took hold of the cloth and indicated to her to come back and clean her glasses. So she did. Like God, Sivananda was the servant of all and considered it the most natural thing in the world for her to do what she did. As one of his disciples once said, "Sivananda had one constant thought: how to serve others more and better." He was the embodiment of words I had sung in church for years, but only understood when I met him:

Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heaven to earth come down.

ON THE JERICHO ROAD

And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging. [And hearing a multitude going by, he inquired what this meant (Luke 18:36)]

And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me.

And many charged him that he should hold his peace [be quiet]: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me.

And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee.

And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus.

And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive [recover] my sight.

And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way. (Mark 10:46-52)

And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me. And many charged him that he should hold his peace [be quiet]: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me. This is the symbol of the successful yogi. When he is confronted by opposition, whether from within himself or from outside, he knows he is on the right track—for that is the nature of

this world (samsara). And in response he doubles and triples his resolve, his sadhana and his self-purificatory practices and observances. He knows that if he does not he will be destroyed, literally. For the satanic force of cosmic illusion is an implacable enemy that wants nothing less than his total capitulation and defeat. So the more he is opposed, the harder he pushes onward since it is literally a matter of life or death—in the spirit. The wise yogi does not care from where or from whom the opposition comes. He stands firm.

And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. If the yogi perseveres, he is called unto ever higher attainment. If anyone in relative existence has the “ear of God” it is the faithful yogi. My friend Swami Bhumananda often said to me, “You can be sure that he who chooses God does so because God has first chosen him.” So even the slightest thought or movement toward higher consciousness occurs because of the Great Call. Those who ignore it become increasingly “hard of hearing,” and in time become totally “deaf” to the divine summons—which may not come to them again for many incarnations. As C. S. Lewis said, there are two types of people: those that say to God, “Thy will be done,” and those to whom God says, “thy will be done.” We choose which we will be.

And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee. Bartimaeus had to get up and go to Jesus. I once saw a cartoon in which a Salvation Army woman was looking down at a bum in a gutter who was saying: “Can you save me here, or do I have to go somewhere?” Like the Prodigal Son, we must “arise and go” (Luke 15:18). We have to do something. And that implies leaving behind us the things that are irrelevant to—or in opposition to—our spiritual journey.

And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus. The yogi ruthlessly tosses aside his former mode of life and runs to take refuge in higher consciousness—in his own divine Self. For he knows it is a matter of life or death. As God told the prophet Jeremiah: “Unto this people thou shalt say, Thus saith the Lord; Behold, I set before you the way of life, and the way of death” (Jeremiah 21:8).

And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight.

We have to know what it is we want: the opening of our inner sight, the eyes of our higher Self. We need the blessing: "The Lord give thee understanding in all things" (II Timothy 2:7). The word *sunesis*, translated "understanding," also means intelligence, reasoning power. We just need good sense. As I have often cited, Yogananda said, "Stupid people cannot find God." There are such things as spiritual stupidity and spiritual intelligence. We must choose which we will embody in all our thought and deed.

And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed [accompanied] Jesus in the way. Those who truly see with the eyes of the spirit unhesitatingly follow Jesus in the very same path that he took before them. The entire life of Jesus is a symbolic mystery drama of the individual's journey to Christhood. And that is the path we must walk with him.

THE SALVATION OF ZACCHAEUS

And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans [tax collectors], and he was rich.

And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way.

And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide [stay] at thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. (Luke 19:1-6)

Tax collectors were among the most hated and despised people of Israel, not just because they collected taxes, but because instead of being given a salary by the Roman government, they were allowed to swindle or extort as much over the actual tax rate as they could, and that they kept in lieu of a normal wage. And Zacchaeus was wealthy from his extortions. He must have had pretensions to some degree of dignity, so his climbing up a tree in the view of everyone revealed his great desire to see Jesus. Whoever desires to encounter God must do the same by ascending in their consciousness, especially through yoga sadhana. Those who do so will also receive joyfully the advent of spiritual enlightenment.

And when they saw it, they all murmured [complained], saying, That he was gone [going] to be guest with a man that is a sinner.

And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.

And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham.

For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. (Luke 19:7-10)

We are not told just who “they all” were that complained about Jesus going to the house of Zacchaeus, but I feel sure that they were the perpetual critics of Jesus whose negativity and malice would not allow them to have any other reaction.

And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. Standing was the stance taken when a person made a solemn declaration or vow. It was done in the presence of witnesses. This indicated that Zacchaeus was profoundly serious, and so was his inner reformation, as proven by the terms of his vow.

And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forso-much as he also is a son of Abraham. Salvation has many aspects. The word in this verse is *soteria*, which means also means rescue, safety, deliverance, healing, preservation and completeness. When this all occurs within the individual, then he truly is “saved.”

For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. *Apol-lumi*, translated “lost,” means destroyed, dead, lost and marred (distorted). This is the state of the spiritually lost.

A SEVERE AND SOBERING PARABLE

And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately [soon] appear.

He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds [one pound each], and said unto them, Occupy [do business; trade with them] till I come.

But his citizens hated him, and sent a message [an ambassador] after him, saying, We will not [with to not] have this man to reign [rule] over us.

And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received [resumed] the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.

Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said unto him, Well [done], thou good [beneficial] servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little [amount], have thou authority over ten cities.

And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities.

And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin: For I feared thee, because

thou art an austere [severe] man: thou takest up that [which] thou layedst not down, and reapest that [which] thou didst not sow.

And he saith unto him, Out of [from] thine own mouth will I judge [condemn; punish] thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow: wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank [a broker's office for loans at interest], that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury [interest]?

And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds. (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.)

For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that [what] he hath shall be taken away from him.

But those mine enemies, which would [wished] not that I should reign [rule] over them, bring hither, and slay them before me. (Luke 19:11-27)

We all come into this life with inner and outer assets—some more, and some less, but all with karmas and samskaras created by us in our previous lives. The most important of these are the positive ones which enable us to increase their amount and their quality, and at the same time lessen or completely eliminate the negative karmas and samskaras—replacing darkness with light. That is what this parable is all about: what are we doing with our life—and why? The result will be determined only by us. And those who neglect or waste the assets they brought into this incarnation will lose them and their possible future benefits. What you sow you reap, and what you do not sow you do not reap. It is all in our hands—no one else's. So we can increase them by diligent self-development or decrease them by neglect or wrong use. And our “increase” will be exactly proportionate to our efforts to better or worsen ourselves. If we possess our lives by mastery, then life will be increased for us. But if we do nothing,

then everything will be taken away from us. It is according to our will, choice and effort.

And those who show by their will, actions and inactions that the principles of higher life and consciousness shall not be the guides of their life, will by their own choice destroy themselves in moral suicide, “slain” by their own karma of rebellion and neglect. Again, it is a matter of our choice. As God said long ago: “I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed [our present and future lives] may live” (Deuteronomy 30:19).

THE END DRAWS NEARER

And when he had thus spoken, he went on before, going up to Jerusalem. (Luke 19:28)

And the Jews' [Judeans'] passover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country[side] up to Jerusalem before the passover, to [ceremonially] purify themselves.

Then sought they for Jesus, and spake among themselves, as they stood in the temple, What think ye, that he will not come to the feast?

Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment [an injunction], that, if any man knew where he were, he should show [report] it, that they might take [seize] him. (John 11:55-57)

The Jews' [Judeans'] passover was nigh at hand. The expression "Judeans' passover" is used here because the Judeans and the Galileans celebrated Passover on different dates—which caused great conflict and mutual recrimination. One of the charges against Jesus at his trial before the high priest was this discrepancy in ritual practice.

Here we see the blindness of hypocrites and exoteric religionists. Those who were to plot the murder of Jesus were very intent on their ceremonial purification, as we will see when they will not enter the judgment hall of the Gentile Pilate to clamor for the death of Jesus lest they be defiled and unable to celebrate Passover. Incitement to murder does not faze them, but ceremonial pollution does.

THE WAY OF LOVE AND THE WAY OF THE DARK HEART

Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.

There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.

Then took Mary a pound of ointment [perfumed oil] of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. (John 12:1-3)

In my book *The Christ of India* I wrote the following: “During the years he lived in India Jesus visited many spiritual centers both Hindu and Buddhist, including some in Ladakh as will be seen later, then set forth on his return journey to Israel with the blessings of the masters. Jesus was aware of the form and purpose of his life and temporary death from his very birth. But it was the Indian masters who made everything clear to him regarding them. They promised Jesus that he would be sent a container of Himalayan Balsam to be poured upon his head by a close disciple as a sign that his death was imminent, even ‘at the door.’ When Saint Mary Magdalene performed this action in Bethany, Jesus understood the unspoken message, saying: ‘She is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying’ [Mark 14:8.]”

The balsam was incredibly expensive, because on its journey from India it was taxed at the border of every country it passed through. Consequently it was so precious that it was put into oblong alabaster containers with very small holes in the top so it could be shaken out a drop at a time. But in the account of Saint Mark we are told that Saint Mary broke off the the top and poured the whole thing on Jesus' feet. The symbolism is twofold. First, that the devotee of God and enlightenment breaks all restraints and gives his whole life to the search for God. (Of course the world says, "What a pity; what a waste," when that is done.) Second, that just as the house was filled with the fragrance of the balsam, so the dedicated life of the yogi is pervaded by the vibrations of the divine response to his search, and so is his environment. This is why miracles can occur spontaneously around a yogi. Further, the example of the yogi lives on even after his physical departure from this world. That is why Saint Paul said of the true spiritual aspirants: "Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life" (II Corinthians 2:14-16). So someone's response to a yogi reveals whether he is himself alive or dead within.

Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence [denarii], and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag [purse], and bare [carried] what was put therein.

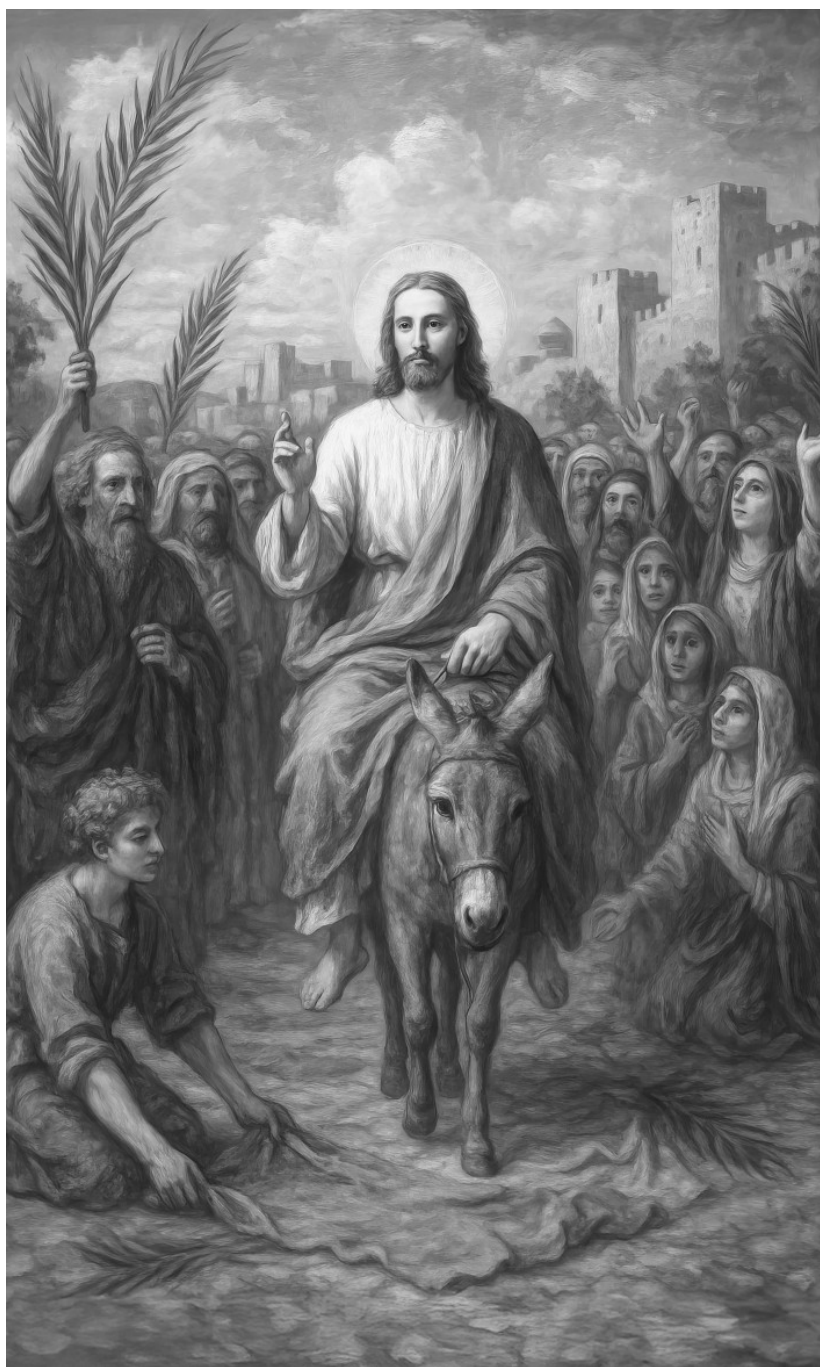
Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.

Much [Many] people of the Jews [Judeans] therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead.

But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death; because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus. (John 12:4-11)

Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence [denarii], and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag [purse], and bare [carried] what was put therein. Earlier we considered the question of the prophet Malachi: "Will a man rob God?" Yes—if he is robbing God by withholding that devotion and dedication that everyone owes God by his very nature. And as I said, anything given to God in the dedication and search for God is decried and denounced by the world as a waste. There are many Judases eager to denounce the yogi for his folly and waste of his life.

But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death; because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus. There are those alive-but-dead who hate the awakening of the spiritual aspirant and would do anything to put him back into his prior unawakened condition. Being dead, they hate life just as a vampire hates the living. For the spiritually dead are often vampires inwardly, hating yet envying life and the living. And they especially fear that the living will inspire others to awaken to life.



THE ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM

And it came to pass, when he was come nigh to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called the mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying, Go ye into the village over against you; in the which at your entering ye shall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man sat: loose him, and bring him hither. And if any man ask you, Why do ye loose him? thus shall ye say unto him, Because the Lord hath need of him.

And they that were sent went their way, and found even as he had said unto them. And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said unto them, Why loose ye the colt? And they said, The Lord hath need of him. (Luke 19:29-34)

Go ye into the village over against you; in the which at your entering ye shall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man sat: loose him, and bring him hither. A king did not ride on a donkey or horse that anyone else had ridden. It had to be his alone. A mind that does not belong—is not dedicated to—God alone is not a mind that can attain the divine vision of Self-realization. We, too, like the colt must be “loosed” and “brought” to God. Every aspect of our being must be “owned” by God and primarily used in the quest for moksha—liberation.

Mahendranath Gupta, the “Master Mahasaya” of *Autobiography of a Yogi*, asked Sri Ramakrishna “How ought we to live in the world?” Paramahansa-deva replied: “Do all your duties, but keep your mind on God. Live with all—with wife and children, father and mother—and serve them. Treat them as if they were very dear to you, but know in your heart of hearts

that they do not belong to you. A maidservant in the house of a rich man performs all the household duties, but her thoughts are fixed on her own home in her native village. She brings up her master's children as if they were her own. She even speaks of them as 'my Rama' or 'my Hari.' But in her own mind she knows very well that they do not belong to her at all. The tortoise moves about in the water. But can you guess where her thoughts are? There on the bank, where her eggs are lying. Do all your duties in the world, but keep your mind on God. If you enter the world without first cultivating love for God, you will be entangled more and more. You will be overwhelmed with its danger, its grief, its sorrows. And the more you think of worldly things, the more you will be attached to them."

And if any man ask you, Why do ye loose him? thus shall ye say unto him, Because the Lord hath need of him. It can be hard for us to let go of the world, and hard for the world to let go of us. But if in truth we declare that our life and heart are for God, and the realization of God, then we will make the separation.

And they brought him to Jesus: and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they set Jesus thereon. And as he went, they spread their clothes in the way.

And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen; saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.

And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples. And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.

And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee

round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation. (Luke 19:35-44)

And they brought him to Jesus: and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they set Jesus thereon. And as he went, they spread their clothes in the way. The garments on the colt and the clothes laid down on the road to be ridden over represented the total offering of the king's subjects to him, both body and life. The life of the yogi, his body, mind and spirit, is to be made "the way of the Lord," the means by which God comes into the world by means of the advent of his Christhood. Everyone who attains to Self-realization, to Christhood, is "Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matthew 1:23). This is why Saint Paul wrote that "the earnest expectation of the creature [creation] waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God" (Roman 8:19).

The whole world is benefitted by the presence of the Self-realized yogi. When Solzhenitsyn came to America and spoke, he asked one question: "Where are your saints?" Attainment of Christhood is the great, the sole, necessity for each one of us. The entire range of creation has this one ultimate purpose: "the manifestation of the sons of God." Consequently only the yogi is truly relevant in this world. In the perspective of this sole, highest purpose, Swami Vivekananda said countless times to his hearers throughout his life: "Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached." Saint John Vianney used to say: "Go to God like a shot out of a cannon." This is the secret of life.

And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen; saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.

And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples. And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.

This implies that the creation is not “dead matter,” but consciousness itself dreaming/manifesting as matter, and at that moment the entire creation was responding to the presence of Jesus, which was the presence of the Absolute revealed in him.

And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation. Jesus grieved because he saw the future of the city and its people who were ignoring and rejecting him. In April of the year 70, the Romans besieged Jerusalem and after conquering it left it in total destruction—literally not a stone was left upon another, as was the Romans’ policy.

And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this?

And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.

And the blind and the lame [crippled] came to him in the temple; and he healed them.

And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; they were sore displeased, and said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise? [Psalms 8:2]

And he left them, and went out of the city into Bethany; and he lodged there. (Matthew 21:10, 11, 14-17)

And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? When higher consciousness makes its advent in us, truly every aspect of us will be shaken. If we cooperate with that movement forward

and upward, then abundant life shall open before us, and we shall in truth become a new creation, born into the beginnings of the revelation of our own Christhood. As Saint Paul wrote: “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (II Corinthians 5:17). This is a great wonder, and will be the experience of the newly-awakening yogi. It will be a rebirth and a resurrection. I experienced this for myself sixty-four years ago, and it increased until the blessed day when I discovered Soham Yoga and really became “a new creation” in a process that has continued. For the Soham yogi comes to experience for himself that “the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day” (Proverbs 4:18). This is revealed in my book, *Soham Yoga, the Yoga of the Self*.

And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them. In the temple of meditation all that is “blind” or “lame” in us can be healed—especially by the inner repetition of Soham.

THE CURSED FIG TREE

And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he [Jesus] was hungry: And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet. And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard it. (Mark 11:12-14)

This incident seems puzzling because Jesus appears to be annoyed and punishing the fig tree when it was not the time for figs. But that is not so. Fig trees have an interesting feature: the fruit appears before the leaves. So if there are leaves on a fig tree, fruit should be there also. The fig tree symbolizes those that are capable of bringing forth the fruit of spiritual consciousness and development, but only have the leaves of external righteousness, a pretense of possessing spiritual development. In other words, a person that pretends to be what he is not, or one who should have spiritual awakening and development but does not through willful neglect. Such a person is self-indicted and self-condemned.

THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE

And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves; and would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple.

And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves.

And the scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people was astonished [amazed] at his doctrine [teaching].
(Mark 11:15-18)

This, too, bewilders those who expect the “gentle Jesus, meek and mild” of sentimental religion to always be nice and polite, and never “violent.” But there is a background they need to know.

First, the temple was never intended to be a place of commerce, but only offering and worship.

Second, the temple authorities made their own money which alone could be used to purchase offerings. So worshippers had to change their money for temple money at an outrageously unjust rate; and when they had made their purchases, the money-changers bought back the temple money at another unjust rate. So they cheated everyone twice.

Third, no one was to walk through the sacred area of the temple just to carry things through it. That would be blatant disrespect. Only those with a spiritual purpose or function were ever to step into that area.

So the temple was being disrespected and profaned by those who should have been the guardians of its sacred character.

We can do the same. The very purpose of our taking on a body and mind is to use them for spiritual purification and evolution. Therefore the temple of our body and mind can also be profaned by thoughts and deeds that contravene that sacred purpose. The yogi must be especially aware of this. Our body and mind must be a “house of prayer” through our continual japa and meditation of Soham and the avoidance of every-thing, inner and outer, that would prevent that. Otherwise we ourselves are a den of thieves.

THE HOUR IS COME

And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast: The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus. (John 12:20)

The word “Greek” was applied to all non-Jews, so the exact nationality of these inquirers cannot be known, but this may have been the first time that non-Jews had even heard of Jesus—and certainly was the first time that non-Jews wanted to meet and speak with him. Since his very purpose in his life extended to the entire world, the following words of Jesus may have been inspired by that perspective.

And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour [time] is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn [grain] of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth [remains] alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

He that loveth his [earthly] life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep [preserve] it unto life eternal [everlasting].

If any man serve me, let him follow [accompany] me; and where[ever] I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honor [value]. (John 12:21-26)

He that loveth his [earthly] life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep [preserve] it unto life eternal [everlasting]. It is the nature

of everything in this material world to disintegrate and dissolve. Therefore nothing can be possessed forever—especially since we ourselves are destined to die and leave this world. So those who identify completely with their physical entity will suffer from fear of losing their “life” and eventually doing so. Also, it will usually disappoint them.

The word *miseo*, translated “hate,” can mean that, but it also means to love something less—to value it but not be obsessed with it. Since our life in this world is the means to evolve our consciousness—at least for the yogi—we should appreciate it for that reason, but always subordinate it to our search for Self-realization. This is real spiritual adulthood.

Whenever you read the word “hate” in the Gospel consider whether it means this.

If any man serve me, let him follow [accompany] me; and where[ever] I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honor [value]. Jesus invited his disciples to accompany him, so he would accompany them in their life. It is vital to understand that God is with us, within the core of our being, at every moment in this life. We are never alone.

Paramhansa Yogananda’s favorite hymn was “In The Garden.” When understood with the yogi’s perspective it is a wonderful affirmation of the presence of God, however we may conceive of Him.

I come to the garden alone,
While the dew is still on the roses;
And the voice I hear, falling on my ear,
The Son of God discloses.

He speaks, and the sound of His voice
Is so sweet the birds hush their singing;
And the melody that He gave to me
Within my heart is ringing.

I’ll stay in the garden with Him
Though the night around me be falling,

And He bids me go through the voice of woe
To where His voice to me is calling.

And He walks with me, and He talks with me,
And He tells me I am His own,
And the joy we share as we tarry there,
None other has ever known.

As John the Beloved Apostle wrote: “We have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love” (I John 4:16).

Now is my soul troubled [agitated; stirred]; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify [make glorious] thy name.

Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.

The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him.

Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes.

Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

This he said, signifying what death he should die. (John 12:27-33)

Now is my soul troubled [agitated; stirred]; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. One thing that reveals the nature of this world, its very character, is the life of those who come into the world for its ultimate betterment: the avatars—incarnations of God. Often from their very birth—even sometimes before their birth—there are those who wish to kill them. This was especially true of Krishna. His mother was imprisoned so her child could be killed at birth.

This did not succeed, but throughout his childhood and after there was a series of attempts on his life. Earlier, the avatar Rama had been hated and constantly plotted against by the evil king of Lanka, Ravana. Jesus had to be taken into Egypt so King Herod could not find and kill him.

An avatar, an “incarnation of God,” is a jiva who has ascended the entire evolutionary scale, attained to perfect oneness with the Absolute, and then returned to the earth as a savior to those that who will take refuge in him.

The avatara (incarnation) of Jesus was overshadowed by murderous hatred from his very birth until his execution on the cross when his enemies mocked him, saying: “He saved others; himself he cannot save” (Matthew 27:42, Mark 15:31), though he was actually suffering for their salvation as well as that of others.

And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. Part of Jesus’ salvatory life was his crucifixion, his lifting up on the cross. We, too, have come into this world for the purpose of salvation: the salvation of ourselves through Self-realization when we lift ourselves, our consciousness and entire being, up from earth-consciousness into spirit-consciousness. This entails great struggle and even suffering of deep anguish, but it is the path to deliverance from aeons-long bondage—through our Self-realization. So when the yogi encounters adversity and opposition he, too, should say with Jesus (John 18:37): “To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth” by his very life.

Our reaction/response to our negative karma can be a great force toward our spiritual advancement if it is positive. That is why the hymn says:

Nearer, my God, to thee, nearer to thee!
Even though it be a cross that raiseth me.

Adversity and opposition can be a great force for spiritual upliftment if we respond/react to it in a manner that will advance our spiritual development. One day after I had become a yogi, I looked at a person who had made my life truly a living hell for seven years. (Too long a story for recounting here.) And I said to myself, “There is a cross that raised me.” And I felt gratitude.

WALK IN THE LIGHT

The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?

Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.

While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.

These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide [conceal] himself from them. (John 12:34-36)

The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man? The yogi must realize that it, too, is in the nature of the world that people will not at all understand him—either his way of life or his motivation for it. And he should not blame them.

Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. This, too, is crucial for the yogi. He must act immediately according to his awakened understanding and continue on the upward way without hesitation. For those who ignore the upward call will become deaf and blind to that call and fall back into darkness and inner death. There can be no hesitation, for he may again relapse into the darkness of his former ignorance.

While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. It is not enough to “see” the light of the spirit, we must enter into it through constant sadhana and in time become Light ourselves.

These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them. Often God seems hidden from us, but the difficulty is with us. We do not look in the right place.

An incident from the life of Saint Anthony the Great is relevant. Saint Anthony was living in an abandoned cave-tomb in a deserted place. Evil spirits attacked him, demanding that he abandon his allegiance to Christ. Of course he ignored them and they literally beat him, leaving him almost dead. Then Jesus appeared and he was completely healed. But he had a complaint and expressed it, asking: "O Lord, where were you when I was suffering so?" Jesus replied, "Anthony, I was in your heart waiting to see what you would do."

We are never alone, never abandoned, but if we do not have the inner eye of our consciousness awakened and operative we cannot know that. As the Bhagavad Gita says: "Only that yogi whose joy is inward, inward his peace, and his vision inward shall come to Brahman and know Nirvana" (5:24).

God does not hide from us; we hide from him.

BELIEF AND UNBELIEF

But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: That the saying of Esaias [Isaiah] the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?

Therefore they could not [it was impossible for them to] believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes [vision; sight], and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand [perceive] with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.

These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him. (John 12:37-41)

Isaiah the prophet in supernatural vision saw the future coming of Jesus and the reaction the ignorant would have to him. God did not make the people incapable of perceiving the truth of Jesus and his words, but they did willfully make themselves deaf and blind by the callousness, the “hardening,” of their minds/hearts. No one wants to believe that their life is totally in their hands, but it is. When anyone says, “It is my karma,” they are affirming that. They created their situation. Everything in our life is ultimately our own doing.

Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess [acknowledge] him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue [excommunicated]: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. (John 12:42-43)

We sometimes have to choose between our relationship with others and our relationship with God. The dearest friend I ever had chose to live a life of thorough degradation, and though it grieved me I quietly withdrew from contact with him.

Yogananda had a disciple whose brutal husband was spiritually destructive, and Yogananda more than once told her she should leave him. But she insisted she could not do so in good conscience. One day, however, her husband picked up a chair, intending to strike her with it. "Now I see you for what you really are!" she exclaimed. The man dropped the chair, ran out of the house, and she never heard from him again.

Once a woman told me about her relationship with her husband: "I feel like my soul is dying."

Yogananda often said, "Company is greater than will power." It is true. A friend of mine had a great sense of humor and decided to write "The X—— Sutras." I made suggestions which she added to hers, and one of mine was: "Spiritualize your relationships. End them." We both laughed, but knew that in some instances it is true.

SELF-REVELATION

Jesus cried [exclaimed] and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me.

I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide [continue] in darkness.

And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge [condemn] him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save [deliver] the world.

He that rejecteth me, and receiveth [accepts] not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.

For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.

And I know that his commandment is life everlasting [eternal]: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak. (John 12:44-50)

Jesus cried [exclaimed] and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me. Many times in our life God “appears” or “speaks” to us through other people or our life situations, our own observations and even through what we read, especially in spiritual books. If we ignore their message or meaning we are ignoring God and betraying our own Self. This is the truth.

I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide [continue] in darkness. God can come into our lives in many ways which will illumine our understanding and insight. He can also show us

what we should do. And if we do not accept what he tells or shows us, he politely withdraws and leaves us on our own. Many times I have seen this in others' lives, and in my own. God has given me ultimatums several times—some of them with a “now or never” character—and heeding them brought me great benefit. God is always on our side, but we have to be on our side, too.

And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge [condemn] him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save [deliver] the world. In exoteric Christianity there is talk about having God's friendship and losing it. This is impossible in relation to God “with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (James 1:17). God is always on our side. Anandamayi Ma used to say, “Ma is for everyone's salvation.” But those who were not for their own salvation did not get it, however much they stayed around Ma or made a show of being her devotees.

We often say of someone that they are their own worst enemy. That is true of us. “What is man's will and how shall he use it? Let him put forth its power to uncover the Atman, not hide the Atman: man's will is the only friend of the Atman: his will is also the Atman's enemy. For when a man is self-controlled, his will is the Atman's friend. But the will of an uncontrolled man is hostile to the Atman, like an enemy” (Bhagavad Gita 6:5-6). This tells us who is our enemy and condemns us: our own lower self. So we condemn ourselves or we save (deliver) ourselves. We choose. God has put the entire matter in our hands.

He that rejecteth me, and receiveth [accepts] not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. The “words” of Christ were Truth itself. Later Jesus will say in a prayer to God: “Thy word is truth” (John 17:17). The truth itself will determine our future. Jesus prayed just before these cited words: “Sanctify [*Hagiazō*: make holy, purify, consecrate] them through thy truth.” The ultimate Truth is the ultimate Reality: Brahman and the Atman—God and our own Self, for God is the Supreme Self in which our Self exists as an inseparable part of God's Being. Truth, then, in its highest sense is Reality: God. And as the Chandogya Upanishad says to us in the sixth chapter: Thou Art That (Tat Twam Asi). So Reality Itself will be our final judge.

For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting [eternal]: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak. The ultimate Word of God IS God to which the ways, the principles, of truth and righteousness lead us. And that eternal life is not a reward, but a state of being which we must ourselves attain—or rather, awaken in our consciousness, for we have always been that Reality ourselves. It is an attainment that is really a rediscovery.

THE POWER OF THE WORD OF THE FAITHFUL

And when even was come, he went out of the city. And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away.

And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. (Mark 11:19-25)

And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

This is not some kind of extreme or exaggerated saying. It has happened at least once to Dur Mountain in Cairo, Egypt, as I have already recounted.

And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

Since God is seated within the heart of every sentient being as their Self, if we have enmity or grudges against another, that comes between us and God, the Self of their—and our—Self. We must forgive them so nothing stands between ourselves and the Supreme Self.

AUTHORITY?

And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?

And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men?

And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet.

And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things. (Matthew 21:23-27)

And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority? Now it is tricky question time. It seems straightforward, but has hidden traps. Jesus himself in the parable of the unjust steward says, “the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light” (Luke 16:8). That is, in the context of the supposedly sophisticated world and its deceits a dweller in the inner light of the spirit is disadvantaged when confronted by those those who have no interest in truth or right, but only in using deceptive words and specious reasoning to make such a person appear foolish in the sight of “normal” people, and hopefully even hypocritical, pointless,

or irrelevant. Their attempts are usually specious, since they do not really have either reason or intelligence behind them. I knew a person who was asked by a supposed “atheist” (they usually are not, really) if she believed God was omnipotent. When she replied that she did, she was then asked if she believed God could make something so heavy that he could not lift it. They traffic in that kind of thing, in absurdities, when they know they have no other recourse. In the matter of “authority” as in this instance of the Gospel, I have some experience. I was once challenged as to whether I had a license from the state government to teach meditation. Now really.

Whether Jesus’ teachings or miracles are being questioned is not clear. But he is ready for them, since he knows the enemy. So:

And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet. And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. Jesus caught them in their own trap! Now you must decide for yourself whether you are going to answer these dishonest, defensive people, or dismiss their sophistry in some way. Sometimes one of these is the wise thing to do, and sometimes the other. But whichever it is, give it to them with the proverbial both barrels, so they will not bother you in the future.

Jesus has his question, too.

EXHORTATION TO SELF-DIAGNOSIS

But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented [regretted it], and went.

And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not.

Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him. (Matthew 21:28-32)

The fundamental idea here is that to “lay hold on eternal life” (I Timothy 6:19) is not a matter of only wishing or wanting, but of *doing*. Our actions reveal whether we intend to follow (do) the will of God by entering into the divine life of our Self or not.

Of course, we must know the way to enter. Millions if not billions of people are praying daily to draw closer to God, but they do not know how. I, too, prayed and prayed until God answered my prayer by my discovery of Sanatana Dharma and Yoga (for Yoga makes no sense without the perspective and motivation given by Sanatana Dharma).

We must not only wish to do the will of God mechanically, but to awaken into God—into our Self.

Hear another parable: There was a certain household-er, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it.

And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise.

But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him.

When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?

They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.)

Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. (Matthew 21:33-43)

This is true of both nations and individuals. Those who “kill” their own souls by degrading themselves by those things and deeds which destroy their higher consciousness, their own Self, will become desolate and abandoned. That will be their own choice. Of course, we can become “estranged” from higher consciousness, but never totally alienated from it since it is our essential nature. So in time we will turn back, but after how long a time? And having created the habit of negative ways intense struggle to return will be required for us to succeed.

And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken [shattered; crushed]: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. (Matthew 21:44)

Whoever falls by ignoring, stumbling over or going against the “stone” of the divine will (divine law) which would lead to their deification in spirit—to Self-realization—because they will not order their life so they can attain it, will thereby break and shatter their own consciousness by their own choice and action. And those whose willful blindness continues will be rendered incapable of higher life and consciousness for incalculable lifetimes. It is not a matter of God’s rejection of them, but the enormity of their rejection of spiritual life.

Those who were enemies of Jesus were “ground into powder” by the cosmic implications of rejecting and calling for the death of the incarnation of Divine Life itself. Jesus was infinite, therefore any karma in relation to him was virtually infinite. Our own divinity is also infinite, at least in potential. So to transgress against that divinity and not only deny it, but seek to destroy it, results in terrible consequences. And those consequences will not be “God’s wrath” but our own devastating karma, our own negative free will, created by our choice.

And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them. But when they sought [desired] to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet. (Matthew 21:45-46)

Evil is always cowardly; it only acts boldly when it feels there will be no effectual opposition. Otherwise it sneaks around in the dark until it can strike—either being unseen or able to run to assured safety.

THE MARRIAGE FEAST AND THE UNINVITED AND UNWORTHY

And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come.

Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them.

But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.

Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.

And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding

garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping [lamentation] and gnashing of teeth.

For many are called, but few are chosen. (Matthew 22:1-14)

The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son.

In the mysticism of various traditions, the relationship between God and the devotee is presented as the relationship between lover and beloved. Marriage, because of its binding and intimate character, is especially used to represent the bond between God and devotee. The union between the human and the divine, the Self and the Supreme Self, is called “the marriage supper of the Lamb.” “Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness [innocence] of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb” (Revelation 19:7-9).

The spirit-soul that is to be “wedded” unto God in the union, the oneness, of the Paramatman and the jivatman must be pure. “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God” (Matthew 5:8). *Katharos* means “clean, clear, pure.” To be pure in heart is to be clean, clear, and pure at the core of our being: our Self. And that purity is to totally pervade and be a fundamental quality of our entire makeup: the physical, astral and causal bodies enveloping our Self. For to see God is to be God. This is the real Gospel of Christ.

And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. God has sent many messengers throughout the ages, calling all human beings to union with the Absolute—to liberation through Self-realization. But nearly all have refused to take up that long, blessed path to the realization of their own divine Self. That will never change. But each one of us must ask: Will I, too, refuse the divine call? Our reply and resolve should be No.

Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: . . .and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. Life after life the call has come to everyone. But who has even listened? And few have responded by saying with the Prodigal Son: "I will arise and go back to where I belong—in the depths of the Divine Being."

I have often cited hymns from my childhood, and there is another I will mention. We had a song called "Softly and Tenderly," and the very name held a message. The inner call is soft—quiet and subtle—and sent forth gently, never coercively. So people ignore and delay the inevitable return, even though the song continues:

Time is now fleeting, the moments are passing,
passing from you and from me;
Shadows are gathering, deathbeds are coming,
coming for you and for me.

For every birth there is inevitable death. Until we heed the call to Infinite Life.

But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. Most treat the matter as so light that they need not even give it serious consideration. And many mock the call as crazy or a delusion. Others immerse themselves in material possessions and material gains, and others despise the call and reject it even violently. Others kill the call in various ways so it will come to them no more. Spiritual suicide is the result.

But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Our own negativity plunges us who are murderers of our own souls into suffering and death—often through many lives.

Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. What a terrible indictment!

Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together

all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. Here, “bad and good” mean the unworthy and the worthy, the negligent and the diligent—for both need the “wedding” of the spirit. Also, often people must be forced to face the call, whether unworthy or worthy.

And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. At the time of Jesus it was the custom for rich people to actually send clothing to those invited. Their style was distinctive and was used in place of a wedding invitation card to admit them. But here was a man with no wedding garment, who obviously had seen people going in and entered with them to enjoy a good feast. In the same way there are people who show interest in religion and even attend religious and spiritual events, but they have no real interest in the spiritual union of themselves with God—just in material good fortune and prosperity. In every spiritual group there are the serious seekers and the dabblers, the onlookers. And when the spiritual tourists are challenged (often by their own conscience) as to their “ticket” for the spiritual journey, they have none—and know it. They are mute when confronted with the truth of their status of intruder—and therefore unworthy.

Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping [lamentation] and gnashing of teeth. Spiritually speaking, we all live in outer—external—darkness, the ignorance of material consciousness, until we awaken within. And those who willfully live in that condition will be bound and confined in it until they awake and deliver themselves from it. But it is often, even usually, a long time before the inner light dawns for them. It is a matter of the karma created by their own spiritual neglect and even resistance. And in that “outer darkness” there is nothing but pain and misery in present and future. For them there is the lamentation: “The harvest is past, the summer [harvest time] is ended, and we are not saved” (Jeremiah 8:20).

That is, the good spiritual karma has been exhausted and the neglectful are not *yasha*: freed—delivered and safe—from the state of self-destructive ignorance which they could have dispelled if they wished.

So we also used to sing in church:

Oh, what an awful picture!
To some it will come true;
And oh, my brother, sister,
Shall it be I or you?

Oh, souls, be up and doing,
We have no time to lose;
There's life and death before us—
Oh, which one will you choose?

Our theology and ideas about all this were mistaken, but there was a reality behind them which we rightly intuited.

For many are called, but few are chosen. *Kletos*, translated “called,” means both invited and appointed. That is we are drawn toward higher consciousness because it is our destiny. *Eklektos*, translated “chosen,” means just that: we have all been chosen, without exception. This being so, the principle my Indian friend said to me that I have already quoted is true: If someone chooses God you can know that beforehand he has been chosen by God.

It is sad that at any one time the called are many, but the “choosers” are few, but all shall eventually make the right choice and go back home to God where they originated. That is a beautiful picture, and will come true to every of us. So why waste time? Let us be Up And Doing.

ANOTHER HYPOCRITICAL QUESTION

Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel [deliberated] how they might entangle [ensnare; trap] him in his talk.

And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians [agents of King Herod], saying, Master, we know that thou art true [openly truthful], and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men. Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute [taxes] unto Caesar, or not?

But Jesus perceived [understood] their wickedness [literally: plots], and said, Why tempt [test; examine] ye me, ye hypocrites [dissemblers]? Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny [denarius].

And he saith unto them, Whose is this image [likeness] and superscription [inscription]?

They say unto him, Caesar's.

Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.

When they had heard these words, they marvelled [admired], and left him, and went their way. (Matthew 22:15-22).

Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel [deliberated] how they might entangle [ensnare; trap] him in his talk. This is business as usual, especially on television news-related shows or suchlike. Never is honest speaking considered, but instantly the hackles rise and opposition planned in the form

of hopefully “gotcha” questions disguised as honest inquiry or statements. This happens especially in religion and politics, which is understandable since both areas are focused on practical matters of life, though one is spiritual/psychological and the other externalized though based on a mindset expressed outwardly or hidden. Often people are recruited to ask the questions and thus be the screen behind which the real face of the opposition can be hid. These people usually read their words off a printed sheet or a smartphone text. And it is often evident that they do not at all have the intellectual acumen or resources to have come up with their scripted words on their own. It is actually comic to observe the desperate scribbling of these hirelings at a speech by someone they are to confuse or stymie by their challenges that will follow.

And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians [agents of King Herod], saying, Master, we know that thou art true [openly truthful], and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men. Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute [taxes] unto Caesar, or not? The challengers often come with psychological bodyguards to offset their moral cowardice, as in this case when these protestors have the goon squad of King Herod with them.

But Jesus perceived [understood] their wickedness [literally: plots], and said, Why tempt [test; examine] ye me, ye hypocrites [dissemblers]? Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny [denarius]. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image [likeness] and superscription [inscription]?

They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's. Stupid people always think they are intelligent and their targets are stupid, as do these gangsters. But good, practical sense completely dispels their evil machinations. Yet they never learn.

However, Jesus has set forth a principle that must be understood and applied by every spiritual aspirant. First, we must utilize the spiritual perspective in both inner and outer, material and spiritual, life. Also, our spiritual life must be as sensible and practical as our life “in the world.” As Sri Ramakrishna said, “If you can weigh salt you can weigh sugar.” A truly intelligent person can live both the material and the spiritual lives

equally effectively, and both must be ordered according to the highest social and spiritual ideals. For life is really one. Inner and Outer are aspects and expressions of that unified life. Inconsistency between them is unacceptable. Hypocrites do not accept this, and find it intolerable, unworkable and (of course) “extreme” and “fanatical.” As Jesus (Matthew 6:2, 5, 16) said: “Verily... they have their reward,” namely: themselves. A very small reward, indeed.

When they had heard these words, they marvelled [admired], and left him, and went their way. Yes; they were amazed at the intelligence and reason of Jesus words; they knew they could not argue against them; so they left. And that was that. Are we the same? Do we acknowledge the truth but turn away and do not follow it? Saint James the Apostle wrote: “Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty [freedom], and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful [negligent] hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed [action]” (James 1:25). The true “gospel of Christ” is the truth of “Christ in you the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27), the truth that the principle of Christhood, of Christ Consciousness is within us, and it IS us. We, too, are Christs potentially, and must become Christs in actuality—in demonstration. For that is the purpose of the entire creation, the entire cosmos.

This truth was a part of original Christianity—which was Sanatana Dharma brought by Jesus to the Mediterranean world. Saint Paul wrote: “The earnest expectation of the creature [*ktisis*: creation] waiteth for the manifestation [*apokalupsis*: appearing, coming, revelation] of the sons of God.

“Because the creature [*ktisis*: creation] itself also shall be delivered [*eleutheroo*: made free] from the bondage [*douleia*: slavery] of corruption [*phthora*: ruin, death] into the glorious liberty [*eleutheria*: freedom] of the children of God.

“For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together [*sunodino*: as in labor—birth—pains] until now.

“And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits [*aparche*: the beginnings] of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption [*huiiothesia*], to wit, the redemption [*apolutrosis*: deliverance, liberation] of our body” (Romans 8:19, 21-23).

Matter itself shall in time be transmuted into spirit, and so shall our “body” consciousness be transmuted into our Self-realization. This is why Jesus said: “Look not upon the flesh; it is not king. Look to the Christ within, who shall be formed in every one of you, as he is formed in me. When you have purified your hearts by faith, the king will enter in, and you will see his face” (Aquarian Gospel 68:13-14) .

ANOTHER SILLY QUESTION ANSWERED WITH SOBERING WISDOM

Then came to him certain of the Sadducees, which deny that there is any resurrection; and they asked him, saying,

Master, Moses wrote unto us, If any man's brother die, having a wife, and he die without children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. There were therefore seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and died without children. And the second took her to wife, and he died childless. And the third took her; and in like manner the seven also: and they left no children, and died. Last of all the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection whose wife of them is she? for seven had her to wife.

And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: but they which shall be accounted worthy [deserving] to obtain [attain] that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto [like] the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.

Now that the dead are raised [lifted up], even Moses showed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him.

Then certain of the scribes answering said, Master, thou hast well said [answered]. And after that they durst [dared] not ask him any question at all. (Luke 20:27-40)

Then came to him certain of the Sadducees, which deny that there is any resurrection.... First we must consider the word “resurrection.” In the original Greek text the word used is *anastasis*, which merely means “rising up,” and can mean ascending to a higher world after death—implying immortality of the spirit—or coming back from the dead in some manner, which includes the possibility of a person being resurrected miraculously after death.

For us who believe in the innate immortality of every sentient being, the real question is the true nature of resurrection—is it literal, physical, or spiritual-metaphysical? The latter is what matters to us. Resurrection is an awakening and arising into higher consciousness, particularly the arising into Christ consciousness: Self-realization. The only question relevant to us is: How To Do It. And the answer is simple: Yoga Sadhana.

We need not bother with the fatuous fable presented by the Sadducees to try and disprove the idea of either immortality or physical resurrection, or Jesus’ refutation of their teachings, but we must seriously look at the reply of Jesus which applies to us.

The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: but they which shall be accounted worthy [deserving] to obtain [attain] that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto [like] the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection. What does this mean?

First there is the interpretation of the monastics which certainly has some validity, though many would say with many of Jesus’ disciples: “This is an

hard saying; who can hear it?” (John 6:60). But there is an additional, more generally applicable view: that those of this material world whose mentality is immersed in material consciousness, “marry” themselves to their physical bodies and all that pertains to them, including materialistic viewpoints, ignoring their essential reality as spirits. This materialistic view and mode of life by its limiting and deadening effect on their consciousness

prevents any significant “resurrection” of their consciousness into the higher life and function which alone is immortality. But those who attain to this “resurrection from the dead” will never die. Even if their body dies, their spirit will rise from that body and this world and enter into the limitless realm of the liberated spirit, having become like (equal to) those of higher, angelic evolution, and will continue to evolve to even higher levels of consciousness until they attain the state of perfect (total) Christhood as gods within God—like Jesus Whom the Nicene Creed describes as: “God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God.”

AND ANOTHER...

And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first [foremost] commandment [precept] of all?

And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart [mind, thoughts], and with all thy soul [life, mind and soul], and with all thy mind [intellect, understanding], and with all thy strength [ability, power, strength]: this is the first [foremost] commandment.

And the second is like [similar], namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour [fellowman] as thyself. There is none other commandment greater [more] than these.

And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said [spoken] the truth: for there is one [one only] God; and there is [absolutely] none other but he: And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more [above] than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.

And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly [prudently], he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst [dared] ask him any question.
(Mark 12:28-34)

We really only need to consider these words of Jesus: “The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all

thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.” They need no comment—only following.

NOW A QUESTION FOR THE QUESTIONERS

While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, What think ye of Christ [the Messiah]? whose son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David.

He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord [Jehovah] said unto my Lord [Adonai], Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?

And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst [dared] any man from that day forth ask him any more questions. (Matthew 22:41-46)

Both Jehovah and Adonai are names or titles of God. The use of the two names indicate that God and Jesus are one and yet two. In essence they are one, but there is a distinction. It is the same with us. We and God are one, yet God is infinite and we are finite. So Jesus was not the Absolute Divinity, yet he was divine. This underscores the idea that an avatar is divine, yet not the Absolute Divinity. An avatar has attained the highest level of consciousness possible and is virtually divine, but not the Absolute Divinity. There is both a unity and a diversity. We will only comprehend that distinction when we ourselves become Self-realized.

A FEW PRACTICAL WARNINGS

Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.

For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.

But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, and love the uppermost rooms [places of honor] at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.

But be not ye called Rabbi [Master]: for one is your Master [guide, teacher], even Christ; and all ye are brethren. (Matthew 23:1-8)

Religion is often the domain of the sociopathic since it presumes divine authority, which should not be disobeyed or ignored. I grew up with “the Lord spoke to me” as a preface to ignorant and foolish “revelations” given to ignorant and foolish religious teachers/preachers. But Jesus shows us that we should carefully scrutinize these “divinely-guided” people. We should not look at their outer appearance and words, but discern their inner character. Yes! We *should* “judge,” for “by their fruits ye shall know them” (Matthew 7:16, 20). I well remember a friend of mine who was challenged on being “a judge” and therefore out of line—perhaps even a hypocrite. He simply replied, with the previously-cited words of Jesus in

mind: “I am a fruit inspector.” And we should be, too, if we take the words of Jesus in this passage seriously. Ignore words and look at their source.

We should do the same with any philosophy or spiritual practice—especially yoga methods. What does it do? What is the result? That is the only legitimate question which will reveal their nature. I spent half a century wasting my time with highly-touted “yoga” methods that either did nothing or distorted and deluded the subtle energy systems (including the minds) of the duped “yogi.”

Forget the hype: what does it deliver?

Seven times in the New Testament we find the words Come [*Erchomai*] And See [*Eido*] (John 1:39, 46; 11:34; Revelation 6:1, 3, 5, 7). *Erchomai* means come, enter and accompany. *Eido* means see, know, be aware consider, perceive, understand and be sure. We can do all this only through yoga sadhana in which we join our finite consciousness with the Infinite Consciousness, the only limitation being the degree of that joining: *yukta*, from which we get the word *yoga*.

We are always called to personal experience, to direct knowing with no intermediary or interpreter needed. In the words of the Bhagavad Gita: “Knowledge of God which is nearer than knowing, open vision direct and instant (9:1; Prabhavananda). It is always there right inside us—for it IS us.

I recommend you read *Soham Yoga: The Yoga of the Self*. It works.

And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. (Matthew 23:9-10)

Only the inner light of the Self is our true father, for it is the eternal urge or impulse to know the Self that has brought us into incarnation from life to life. We have come into this world to KNOW. For Jesus himself said when he prayed to God: “This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God” (John 17:3). That true God is *en tois ouranois*: in the limitless Consciousness that is God’s true nature. And our true master, our true guru, is our own Christhood “which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Collosians 1:27).

But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased [brought low]; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted [lifted up]. (Matthew 23:11-12)

This first sentence means that the greater a person is, the more humble he is, and in this divine humility he shall truly serve and benefit others according to their need and his inner illumination.

I do not recall a single person ever speaking of the humility of Anandamayī Ma. But it was a marked trait in her, a divine quality. Once a group of us from our ashram did worship of Ma, during which she went into samadhi. At the conclusion of the worship, she looked at us and said, "You have come from so far away just to see this little girl." Another time at the Dehradun ashram there was a special worship of Ma. Ma was in a small room with a door that had a window, but everyone was sitting down so no one could see her. One other ashramite and I went around to the back of the building where the opposite door was open and we could clearly see Ma. When Brahmachari Nirmalananda started the worship of Ma, she looked up at me and pranamed and entered samadhi.

She often said, "Ma is for everyone's salvation." Once a man came to a great saint in India and complained that his wife was always worshipping her image of Krishna and neglecting her household duties. So the saint asked to come witness her worship. At its end, the saint told the husband, "You think your wife is bowing down to Krishna, but I tell you, Krishna is bowing down to her!" So Ma bowed to us so we might be lifted up.

A DESERVED INDICTMENT

But woe [alas] unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites [actors on a stage]! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in [enter] yourselves, neither suffer [allow, leave alone] ye them that are entering [arising] to go in.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence [show] make long prayer: therefore [because of this] ye shall receive the greater damnation [condemnation, judgment].

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte [convert], and when he is made, ye make him twofold more [double, twice] the child of hell [Gehenna] than [you,] yourselves. (Matthew 23:13-15)

Whenever I read these and other intense and pungent words of Jesus, I recall reading in a highly respected "Christian" magazine (interdenominational and broad-minded, of course) the words: "We should never criticize, for Jesus never criticized." Oh really! I got my Bible and read out this and other places where Jesus certainly "read the pedigree" of people. Then I closed it and said aloud: "Oh, yes. Jesus *never* criticized." Talk about making God in man's image! "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild," my eye! But there are many Christian antichrists. Even before my teenage years I came to realize that whenever someone said, "Our minister only preaches love," that he was corrupt.

Back to Anandamayi Ma: She always spoke the truth, but when people did not like her words they managed to forget what she said. Here is an interesting incident related to that.

Annually there was an event known as the Samyam Sapta (Week of Observance/Discipline/Restraint) sponsored by the Anandamayi Sangha. Various spiritual leaders were invited to speak at the daily satsangs, some of them worthy and some of them simply wealthy. In this latter group was a Mahamandaleshwar (Ruler of an Association of Ashrams) with a lot of money. This man was such a lifeless, boring speaker that I think he could have made a stone cry with boredom. Anyhow, during one Samyam Sapta when I came to the ashram one morning I found everyone hushed and traumatized, and an atmosphere of real agitation. Inquiry on my part revealed that in the morning satsang (which I had missed for the first time ever) someone had asked a question of Ma and the Mahamandaleshwar had jumped in and answered it before Ma could reply. After he ended his answer to the query, Ma quietly said, "Only someone with no experience of this matter could have given such an answer." Consternation! Shock! The Mahamandaleshwar was very insulted! So when I got there everyone was running up and touching his feet and groveling and flattering him. Ma had embarrassed them and offended him. Naughty Ma. (And Naughty Nirmalananda to tell you about this.)

Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear [make an oath] by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor [bound under obligation]! Ye fools [heedless] and blind [clouded of mind]: for whether [which] is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth [makes holy] the gold?

And, Whosoever shall swear [make an oath] by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift [offering] that is upon it, he is guilty [under obligation, morally bound, indebted]. Ye fools [heedless] and blind [clouded of mind]: for whether [which] is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth [makes holy] the gift?

Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon. And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein. And he that

shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth [dwells] thereon. (Matthew 23:16-22)

Here we see outlined the utterly outrageous and conscienceless priorities of the leading religionists of Jesus' time: the temple and God Himself counted for nothing in a oath, but money, offerings and even heaven itself were absolute guarantees, "honor bound." Priorities determine a great deal in the aspiring yogi's life, and we must ensure that their priorities are not ours—just the opposite.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. (Matthew 23:23)

A tithe is one tenth of something. So the hypocrites scrupulously paid out this little bit of utterly negligible substances, and disregarded their natural moral obligation to follow the prescriptions of genuine religion: justice, compassion and faith—part of which was fidelity, of adherence to righteousness. All these are dispositions of the heart without which the outer actions count for absolutely nothing. This is why we must always distinguish between external, material, exoteric religion and internal, spiritual, esoteric religion of the spirit.

Ye blind guides, which strain at [filter out] a gnat, and swallow [gulp down entire] a camel. (Matthew 23:24)

This is a primary trait of externally observant hypocrites. They make a huge fuss over very small points or items to show how very careful, strict and scrupulous they are, drawing attention to this display of righteousness, while at the same time they are accepting and doing wrong actions that are as obvious as a camel.

In nineteenth century Vienna there was a thief who had murdered a young servant-girl in a house he had robbed, but had put extra food and

water in a bird-cage there. When he was asked why he did that, he became very angry and shouted, “What kind of a person do you think I am, that I would let a little bird die?”

Such is the terrible distortion and reversal of moral intelligence that we find in many people to some degree. The Bhagavad Gita describes a darkened, tamasic mentality as: “That [intellect] enveloped in darkness, regarding adharma as dharma, and seeing all things pervertedly (turned backward: that is, seeing all things completely opposite to their true nature or state)” (18:32). Swami Prabhavananda renders it: “When the conscience is so thickly wrapped in ignorance that it mistakes wrong for right and sees everything distorted.”

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. (Matthew 23:25-26)

Our essential nature is spirit, the innermost reality of ourselves. But our spirit is encased in many layers, from subtle energies to material substance. Purification of our entire inner and outer being is necessary, otherwise we are not in any way truly pure. Therefore Saint John wrote: “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure” (I John 3:2-3). As pure as God!!! This is not an impossible ideal, because our true Self, our Atman, is an eternal part of God. We are gods within God. And the revelation of that truth is the real Gospel of Christ, the Gospel of “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27).

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited [whitewashed] sepulchres [tombs], which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear

righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy [deceit, falsehood] and iniquity [wickedness, unrighteousness, transgression of the law]. (Matthew 23:27-28)

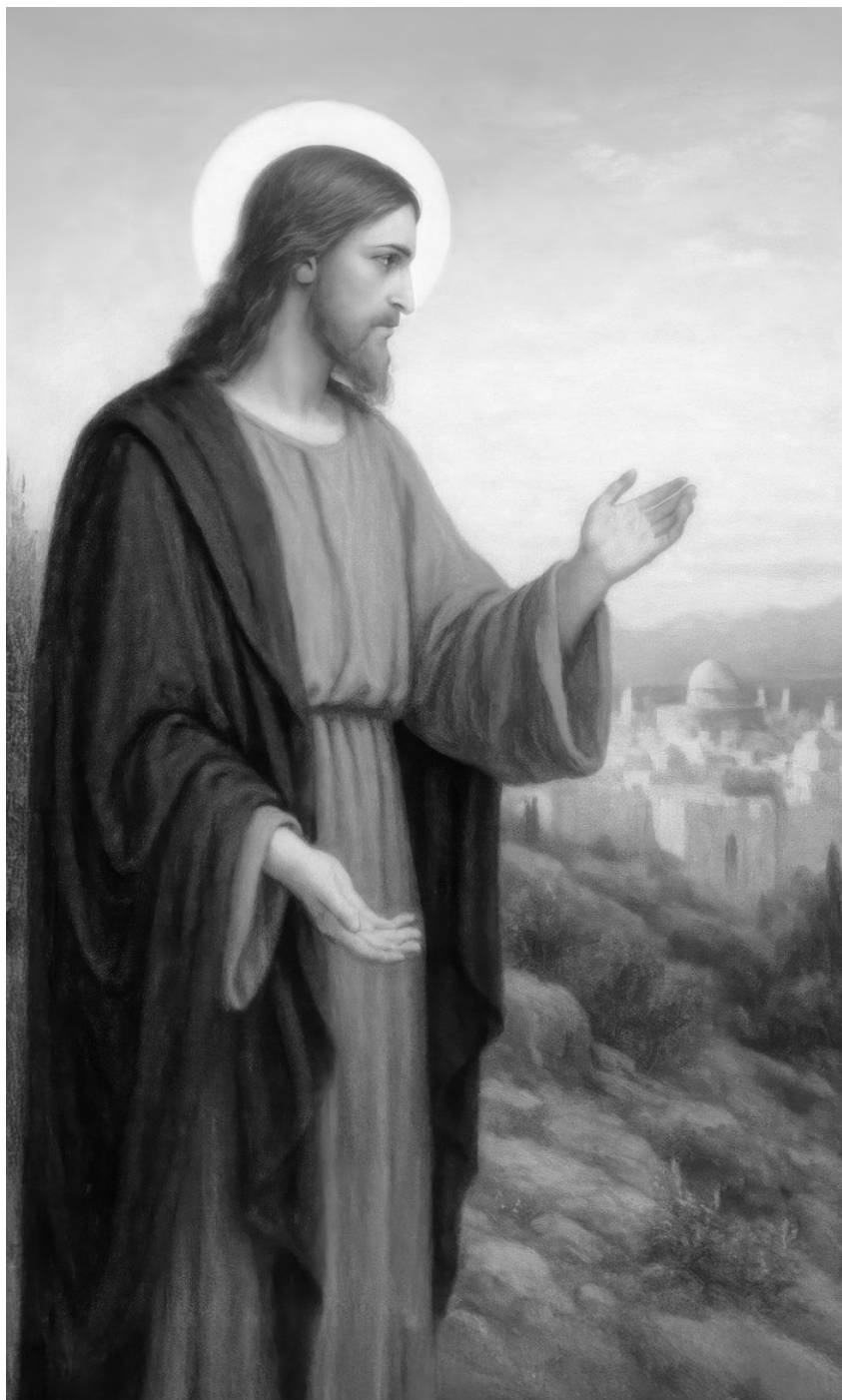
This needs no comment, except to point out that we should be always on guard that these words will never apply to us.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish [adorn, decorate] the sepulchres of the righteous, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood [bloodshed, murder] of the prophets.

Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure [heritage] of your fathers.

Ye serpents, ye generation [offspring] of vipers, how can ye escape [reverse] the damnation [condemnation] of hell [Gehenna]? (Matthew 23:29-33)

Yes; those Jesus addressed these words to were stinkers, all. But what matters is our seriously looking at these words and making sure they never apply to us, either now or in the future.



A PROPHECY REGARDING THE INDICTED

Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill [put to death] and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge [flog] in your synagogues, and persecute [pursue] them from city to city: that upon you may come all the righteous [innocent] blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.

Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation [nation]. (Matthew 23: 34-36)

Jesus is speaking of the future when he shall have left the world and empowered his disciples to carry on his mission. Zacharias was the father of Saint John the Baptist who was killed for taking the Virgin Mary in the Holy of Holies when she was brought to the temple to serve there as a temple virgin. Also, he would not tell them where his son, the future John the Baptist, was hidden from Herod who feared he was the Messiah, as he feared Jesus later on.

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would [willed it] not!

Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. (Matthew 23:37-39)

All life occurs in cycles. Relative existence is a vast interweaving of cycles on levels of being. Jesus foresees the destiny created by those who accepted or rejected him. He also intended to go into solitude until his entry into Jerusalem on what we now call Palm Sunday when multitudes would come out and meet him, crying aloud, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." And later: "Crucify him!"

When I was nearing my teens a minister quoted in church:

On Sunday, they cried aloud for joy.

And on Friday, the King they did destroy.

Such is the way of the world, which Jesus knew well. Therefore Saint John wrote in his Gospel: "Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man" (John 2:23-25).

WHAT IS GREAT AND WHAT IS SMALL

And Jesus sat over against [before] the treasury [collection-boxes], and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much [a great deal].

And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites [coins], which make a farthing [a fourth part of a coin—undesignated].

And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury:

For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want [deep poverty] did cast in all that she had, even all [every bit—the whole, the totality of] her living. (Mark 12:41-44)

The “mites” were lepton, the smallest coin minted. The word “lepton” is derived from *lepis*, which literally means “a flake.” So that gives us the measure of a lepton—virtually nothing. But for that widow it must have been a great deal indeed, since it was everything she had. Love does such things.

I was blessed even in my childhood to know holy people. One was Nellie Herrin, a member of our church. We became friends (the older a person was the more I liked them). She told me that the reason she took religion seriously was the example of her mother, a widow with children. During the Great Depression many people had very little economic resources, her mother included. One Sunday at church when the collection was being taken, her mother opened her purse. Nellie and her sister were amazed. That purse contained only two quarters, the only money they had, and

they had no food at home. Was Mom going to put one of them in the collection plate? No. She took both of them and put them in the plate. She, too, gave all she had. As a result, Nellie looked upon her religion as the most important part of her life. And she lived accordingly.

A few times I have cited these words of the song of Mirabai, and will do so again: "I have sold everything in the market-place of this world and bought my Khanaia [Krishna]. Some laugh at me and say the price was too high, and others say it was too little; but all I know is that it was all I had." This is the outlook of all genuine spiritual aspirants. As one of the hymns I heard in church along with my friend Nellie said: "Not just a part or half of my heart: I will give all to Thee." The word translated "living" in this passage from Saint Mark's Gospel, is actually *bios*, which means "life." Nothing less suffices than the dedication of our entire life and being to the revelation of our Christ-nature.

In the next chapter of Saint Mark there is a great deal of prophecy that has occupied (and confused) many commentators for two thousand years. But we will be wise to consider the spiritual aspects of Jesus' words that are relevant at all times.

WARNING AGAINST SPIRITUAL DECEPTION/ DELUSION

And Jesus answering them began to say, Take heed [beware] lest any man deceive you [lead you astray; cause you to wander out of the way]: For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. (Mark 13:5-6)

This entire world is an illusion as insubstantial as a dream, though we mistake it for reality and identify with it. We mistakenly consider it to be absolutely real and project onto it (and ourselves within it) a completely false conception and evaluation. Delusion is a fundamental characteristic of our present relative existence.

How do we make our way through this mental maze? First we must realize that nothing is as we think it to be. The word “Christ” was interpolated into this sixth verse by the translators. It really says that many will come saying *Eimi*: I am—I am real. But Jesus says it will all be a mere—and a false—appearance, what is known in Sanskrit as Maya. Maya is defined as: “The illusive power of Brahman; the veiling and the projecting power of the universe, the power of Cosmic Illusion.”

Maya is like the illusions of a stage magician. We see them, but they are false, mere appearances. At the same time they have a fundamental reality upon which those illusions are based, like the projections of a motion picture on a screen.

A friend of mine had a very brilliant three-year-old son. She told me that once when she had been watching television, on the screen a man

was playing a piano, and at one point he and the piano appeared to rise in the air and flip around and around. My friend said aloud to herself, “I wonder how they do that.” And Nicky said: “I know! There is a magician hidden in the piano!” Maya is the magician hidden behind the appearances of the world and our life.

FEAR NOT

And when ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled [frightened]: for such things must needs be [come to pass]; but the end shall not be yet.

For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles [disturbances]: these are the beginnings of sorrows. (Mark 13:7-8)

This is going on outside all the time, and it will never change. There is no such thing as world peace—only times of ceasefire. As Vivekananda said, the world is like a dog's curly tail; however much you straighten it, it immediately goes back into a curl when you let go. If you put it in a splint for months, just as soon as the splint is removed it goes back to its original form.

What Jesus describes is the nature of the world, because this earth plane is the place where severe karmas are manifested and worked through. New souls are coming in all the time with those karmas, so the world is like a school: the same grades are repeated perpetually because students are moving from grade to grade continually—beginning and ending. As the hymn says: “Change and decay all around I see,” because this is the world, the realm, of continual birth and death. Death is the end to all. Life is the moving out of this world into the higher world of Immortality. “Therefore be a yogi” (Bhagavad Gita 6:46).

PERSEVERE

He that shall endure [persevere] unto the end [the uttermost], the same shall be saved [delivered, preserved, protected, safe, do well, be healed, be made whole—perfected or completed]. (Mark 13:13)

All those synonyms for “saved” are impressive, indeed. But continual practice, enduring to the end, is an absolute necessity. As a Fundamentalist Protestant I sang a silly little ditty:

Going, going on, Christian, going, going on.
Going, going on, Christian, going, going on.

I guess it took two times to get the idea! But we also frequently said, “Keep on keeping on.” In India the yogis say: “Banat..., banat..., banjai!” “Making..., making..., made!” Or: “Doing..., doing..., done!” In other words, just keep at it and the result will come—if the yoga is genuine and done correctly and for the necessary time required. The necessary factor is *mumukshutwa*—the intense desire to attain the goal: *moksha*/liberation.

As pointed out before, it is not how you begin but how you end. For many are fervent in the beginning but slack off and fade away in the end. That is why, as I have mentioned before, Anandamayi Ma said: “The only test that matters is the final test.”

BELIEVE NOT

And then if any man [anyone] shall say to you, Lo [Behold], here is Christ; or, lo [behold], he is there; believe him not. (Mark 13:21)

One of the tests the sadhaka faces is mistaking an illusive experience or state for the real goal of liberation. The religious world abounds in delusionals who claim to have made the grade and attained perfect knowledge and liberation, and delusional/deluding teachers who set forth completely erroneous ideas about the nature of—and the way to—ultimate attainment. And even worse, there are false yoga practices that delude their practitioners. So the wise aspirant must hold fast to the wisdom of the traditional yogis through millennia, not just centuries. And that wisdom is twofold: the wisdom of the Nath Yogis, the original yogis, as found in *Soham Yoga: The Yoga of the Self*, and Sanatana Dharma as set forth in two books: *Sanatana Dharma, the Eternal Religion* and *Hinduism, the Universal Religion*.

WATCH

Take ye heed [be aware], watch [be sleepless, keep awake, be vigilant] and pray [pray earnestly]: for ye know not when the time is.... And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch. (Mark 13:33, 37)

The “time” is the Eternal Moment, the entering into Brahmajnana/Atmajnana: the knowledge that is perfect Self-realization. We must remain alert and ready, capable of that attainment. Again: the original yoga of the Nath Yogis and the philosophy of Sanatana Dharma are absolutely necessary as a way of life and thought—a darshan, a vision.

THE WISE AND THE FOOLISH

Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

While the bridegroom tarried [delayed], they all slumbered and slept [lay down to sleep]. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold [See!], the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose [awoke], and trimmed [put in order] their lamps.

And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.

But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready [prepared] went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.

Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.

But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. (Matthew 25:1-12)

Then shall the kingdom of heaven.... What is the kingdom of heaven? *Basileia*, translated “kingdom,” is derived from *basileus*, which means

“king.” So a kingdom is an entity ruled over by a king, a conscious, intelligent and powerful individual. *Ouranos*, translated “heaven,” literally means the sky: infinite space (*akasha* in Sanskrit). The kingdom of heaven, then is the abode, the place of rulership, of an infinite individual Being. The sky has long been a symbol of divinity because it cannot be measured, nor does it have any quality of appearance. There is nothing relative about it since it cannot be measured. It exists, but not as “things” exist. It both is and is not simultaneously. Therefore it is beyond definition or description—without qualities (*nirguna*). In Sanatana Dharma we speak about the *Chidakasha*: infinite, intelligent consciousness. It is not amiss to say that to Jesus the kingdom of heaven was the very Consciousness that is God: Ishwara. Therefore the kingdom of God is God.

Within this *Chidakasha* there exist innumerable, individual beings or purushas. That is, within the Paramapurusha exist an infinite number of purushas consisting of an infinite number of degrees of consciousness—of awakening. An “awakened” purusha is consciously aspiring to—seeking—complete awakening into and establishment in its eternal nature as a divine Self/Atman, which is Atmajnana, knowledge of the Self, Atmasthiti, establishment in awareness of being—identifying with—the Self.

Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins. Parthenos means an unmarried woman who has had no sexual relations with a man. One of the Gnostic writings speaks of the individual soul coming into this world and continually roaming about “committing fornication.” The soul, the atman-self, comes into relative existence from the depths of Brahman, and is pristine: virgin. But by being immersed in relative consciousness and therefore in connection with—and identification with—countless objects of inner and outer experience, the Self loses its purity of consciousness, its “virginity,” and lives in a state of impurity: delusion that is essentially spiritual fornication or adultery. So the kingdom of heaven is a matter of virginity on all levels.

Which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. These ten virgin souls went with the lighted lamps of spiritual consciousness to seek the Supreme Self. *Exerchomai*, translated “went forth,” means to go forth, leaving something behind. This symbolizes the separation of the

spiritual aspirant's consciousness from the material, temporal into the eternal spirit—to seek the fullness of spiritual awakening and the return to its original virginal state of consciousness. It also means to escape, to get out of a place, for we must escape the bonds of ignorance and external slavery by arising and going forth into the realms of ever-increasing spiritual consciousness and freedom. *Exerchomai* also means “to spread abroad,” so we must expand our consciousness: we must become yogis and immerse ourselves in sadhana.

And five of them were wise. The intentions of all ten were laudable, but only half of them were wise. The word *phronimos*, translated “wise,” means one who has understanding and is intelligent. There is no place here for the mythical “simple soul” ideal of exoteric religion. As Yogananda said, “Stupid people cannot find God.” Intelligence does not necessarily involve intellectuality, but it certainly is practical, good sense, and includes intuition and insight. Both intellectual intelligence and spiritual intelligence are necessary.

And five were foolish. The word translated “foolish” is *moros*, from which we get the word “moron.” It means someone who is uncomprehending, dull, stupid, blockheaded, heedless and even absurd. There is intellectual foolishness and there is spiritual intelligence. Even highly intelligent people can be spiritually foolish, and intellectually unintelligent people can be spiritually wise.

I knew a young man that was very pure-hearted and sincere in his spiritual life, but intellectually he was definitely limited. Once I witnessed two highly intelligent men who were spiritual sellouts gang up on him to persuade him from his intense spiritual aspiration and consequent dedication (immersion) in spiritual life. Several times they presented him with principles of their spiritual sophistry, and each time he would say: “You are right!” and proceed to take their own words and disprove their evil intentions, while thinking his wise understanding was their meaning. Finally the two sat there in silence, completely vanquished by his words. He was a blessed soul, and persevered in his intense spiritual life.

They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them. The oil (*elaion*—olive oil) was necessary for the kindling of the flames to give

light—the sole purpose of the lamps. The oil is a symbol of the inner life of the spirit which gives the true light to both the yogi's external life and his interior life.

But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. So the foolish are those that have no cultivation of interior life or consciousness, and the wise are those that have instilled spiritual consciousness in the depths of their own being by sadhana and thereby have kindled and kept the light of inner illumination. For “God is light, and in him is no darkness at all” (I John 1:5). *Skotia*, translated “darkness,” means darkness, dimness or obscurity. The light that is God is total, so there is no degree of darkness, dimness or obscurity in the mind of the genuine yogi. There is not a shadow or a degree of lessening of the inner light. It is all or nothing. It is that definite, and therefore that serious.

But only real yoga produces that light in the yogi's consciousness. Elsewhere I have told how all my yogi friends fell away from yoga, crashed and burned. Why? Because what we all thought was yoga was mere manipulation of pranas, a practice that—as Anandamayi Ma later told me in India—deceived its practitioners by giving experiences that were mirages, so what they thought was spiritual development would eventually evaporate and leave them empty. Only authentic yoga sadhana delivers the desired result.

While the bridegroom tarried [delayed], they all slumbered and slept [lay down to sleep]. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold [See!], the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. When this point has arrived the Call arises from within the yogi's consciousness. The first part is imperative: the yogi must perceive—really comprehend—that there is a state of consciousness approaching through his sadhana that culminates in the “wedding” of his consciousness with the Supreme Consciousness, of the Atman-Self with the Paramatman, the Supreme Self.

Then all those virgins arose [awoke], and trimmed [put in order] their lamps. The lamps in this parable are not our western-style kerosene lamps of earlier days, but were usually shallow clay cups or bowls, flat and with a lip for a wick made of a narrow strip of cotton cloth or plain cotton pulled and twisted into a small wick. This was put in the lamp, olive oil added,

and when the wick was fully soaked in the oil it was ready to light. So the wicks needed to be placed exactly right, and already-used wicks that had carbon on the ends needed to have the carbon removed and the ends formed into a point of sorts and then lit. That was “trimming” them. It took some skill. The yogi must be both intelligent and capable.

And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

No one can live off the spiritual life of someone else—only their personal inner practice and discipline will suffice. That is the oil in their soul-lamp. And their light must be the inner light of their awakened spirit. Otherwise, no matter how sincere and dedicated anyone may be, if he has no inner oil, no inner consciousness, he will be in the dark. And no one can give of his inner experience to another: it is an absolutely personal, individual matter that can only be accomplished by an aspirant for himself.

An Eastern Orthodox monk once told me of his meeting with a great spiritual advisor (“elder”) in Greece who was a hermit. After their meeting in which the monk had been profoundly impressed with the hermit, the monk said to him: “Please pray for me.” To his amazement the hermit replied: “No. I cannot eat or sleep or walk for you, and I cannot pray for you. You alone can pray for your benefit.” Such honest spiritual advisors are rare indeed. But the foolish always try to cover up their lack by association with religious people and say to them, “Remember me in your meditations!” It is indeed all foolishness with them. And I was just such a foolish person. I had heard this silly request back in America, and once in India I asked a saint, “Remember me in your meditations.” The reply I got was wise and informative: “No! I don’t go into meditation to remember you, I go into meditation to forget you and the whole world and remember my Self.”

The one thing needed is the cultivation of our interior consciousness through yoga sadhana. Then we will be filled with light inwardly and our outer life will be illuminated as a result.

And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready [prepared] went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.

The foolish dawdle and dally on the way, entertaining and distracting themselves with religiosity and show. But the wise get busy and kindle their inner light and enter into the marriage, the union, of their own finite Self with the Infinite Self. And the door is shut to anyone else. It always has been and always will be.

Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. In a sense, God can be a mirror to us, showing us our own true face. Those who have not preserved their spiritual virginity and gained inner experience through spiritual practice do not know God and God does not “know” them. It is not God’s choice but theirs. For our actions are in a sense our message to God. As Jesus said, citing the prophet Isaiah, “This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me” (Matthew 15:8). The word translated “far” is *porrho*, which means far away—a great distance. It is not a small thing. When people really want to be far away, even shut away from God, He grants their desire. Please understand this: each person is in charge of his spiritual destiny. This is what karma is all about.

A SOBERING PERSPECTIVE

For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods [property]. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.

Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid [concealed] his lord's money.

After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.

And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy [gladness] of thy lord.

He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard [severe, demanding] man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where

thou hast not strawed [strewn, sown]: And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine.

His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers [money brokers, bankers], and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury [interest]. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast [expel] ye the unprofitable [useless, unmeritorious] servant into outer [exterior] darkness [obscurity]: there shall be weeping [lamentation] and gnashing of teeth. (Matthew 25: 14-30)

This is simple. If we use what we have of our inner resources, including our will and our understanding, they will increase greatly. But if we neglect and do nothing with them, through our own will expressed by our neglect, we shall lose them—they will evaporate leaving nothing behind but emptiness. Throughout my life I have seen people become totally empty inside, dead to God and their own divine Self, because they neglected or ignored their inner being and life. Use It Or Lose It is applicable to spiritual life. And the clock is ticking. If we “neglect so great salvation” (Hebrews 2:3), eventually—if any consciousness remains in us—we will lament: “The harvest is past, the summer is ended [has ceased], and we are not saved” (Jeremiah 8:20). *Yasha*, the word translated “saved,” means to be free, safe, delivered, rescued, and victorious. That is a lot, but it is all found in the kingdom of the spirit, the inner kingdom of God. Just as there are seasons in the outer world, there are seasons in the inner world. And when we let the favorable times pass by we have nothing—neither past nor future. It is our own choice through neglect and spiritual sloth. What we sow we reap, so if we sow nothing we will end up with nothing.

A GREAT DIVISION

When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. (Matthew 25:33)

The bugaboo of the second coming and the judgement which will result in everlasting glory or everlasting damnation is false, and is used by exoteric Christians to frighten people into beliefs or actions that are false. So what should we understand by this verse?

It is the experience of the individual that is being described. It can take place at two times: when a person's subtle bodies are being separated at the time of death, or just after that separation in the astral plane where a person's astral destiny is determined. Usually this happens within the psyche of the individual, but it can involve other intelligences such as guides, guardians, angels, etc. In the first, the person sees his own mind and its aspects, and his Self is the "judge." In the second, one or more persons already in the astral world are involved as either judges or guides for the person to be his own judge. Both determine which level in the astral or causal realm the newly departed will find himself in eventually. People sometimes experience these things for their awakening/instruction and then come back into their body and live for years more. This happened to an aunt of mine twice, and she told me about it.

The word translated "come" in this verse is *erchomai*, which means to come or appear. As said, this can be the coming/appearing of either one's own higher mind or an astral being, either human or someone who has

evolved into a higher evolutionary form. It can even be a previously-departed relative.

And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats.

In the middle-east, sheep and goats look very alike. A friend of mine worked in a large zoo and had a small collection of animals at his home. I saw there what I thought was a large goat, but he told me it was really a middle-eastern sheep. Only then did I realize why this separation was described in this parable.

This description is a symbol of the newly-departed seeing all facets (“nations”) of his own inner makeup and mentality for the purpose of judgment—either by himself or others. As I have just said, usually after death either an astral helper comes to help the departed in his self-examination, or the needed insight arises from within him. But it is essential that the departed clearly see the character of all aspects of mind and character.

Of course this does not apply to those of low evolution and inner development. They just “go to sleep” and “wake up” when someone smacks them on the rear at the time of their next birth. It takes a definite degree of evolution to go to either heaven or hell!

And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. In self-judgment the individual clearly perceives what is positive and negative in himself, and in that clarity of insight embraces the positive and banishes the negative, determining to retain that insight in his next incarnation. But the birth process usually wipes that out unless his inner mind is evolved enough to retain a subliminal recollection of his experience in the astral plane.

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared [provided, made ready] for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat [food]: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. (Matthew 25:34-40)

Right hand. The word is *dexios*, from the word *dechomai* which means accept, receive, take and get the idea. This latter meaning implies intelligence and discrimination—seeing the nature of things and evaluating them accordingly. At the time Jesus spoke these words all things received by a person was taken into his right hand, not the left, so it means doing a thing with understanding and therefore wisdom. A person who lives life with this insight is worthy of the final welcome into the higher worlds.

Blessed. *Eulogeo* means both blessed and praised. Our English word “eulogy” come from it. Such is the character and the reward of the spiritually wise.

Inherit. *Kleronomeo* means to be an heir, to obtain by inheritance. This implies relationship with the one by whom the inheritance is given. The giver need not be dead. In the time of Jesus it was common for a man to divide his possessions among his children while he lived and then stay with one of them, or with all in turn.

All human beings are “of one substance with the Father,” as the Nicene Creed says of Jesus. Saint Paul speaks of people being “heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ..., that we may be also glorified together [with him]” (Romans 8:17). To inherit is to possess the inheritance. And since the inheritance of God is union with Him—union with the Consciousness that is the very essence of our being—we become gods within God. “Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High” (Psalms. 82:6). “Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?” (John 10:34).

Kingdom. A place is a kingdom because it has an active and reigning king. It must be the same with us in a dual manner. God must be the ruler, the king, the sole power in our mind and life, and at the same time we ourselves must be ruler and possessor of our life through our divine nature. Saint Paul said that we are “heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ” (Romans 8:17). *Sugkleronomos*, the word translated “joint-heirs,” means “participant in common.” We can experience and act with full awareness of God’s infinite divinity and our finite divinity. The difference is one of degree, but there is oneness in nature. Yoga is the key, the door, the opening of the door and the entering in through the door to live in our true Self.

Saint Paul wrote of “Christ in you the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27). The things now to be enumerated are done materially both to those around us in need and internally, spiritually, to ourselves, our inner Christ-nature. The outer, material actions need not be considered here since their meaning is obvious. But we should definitely look into the meaning of the inner, spiritual obligations.

For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat [phago-food]. We are essentially spirit, not matter, and our inner, spiritual being cannot be nourished on physical or even psychic vibrations. Consciousness is our essence, and only consciousness or the opening of consciousness is our food. So we must “feed” our inner Christ-nature by continual invocation and assimilation of higher consciousness. The invocation is done by Soham sadhana and the assimilation made possible through the observance of yama and niyama, the pillars of yoga.

None are optional, all are essential and therefore mandatory. Those who do not observe them all will not make the final grade. Rather, their inner Christ will starve and weaken progressively until it is functionally dead.

I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink. Our inner being craves for the awakening of consciousness that is itself the water of life. That, too, we must give our inner being abundantly if it is to live and function.

I was a stranger, and ye took me in. Through most of our evolutionary journey the very existence of the Self is a stranger—unknown. But we must awaken to its existence within and make it ever live in our consciousness and function as our true and inmost reality.

Naked, and ye clothed me. We “clothe” the Self by fostering its existence and purpose within us, and at the same time putting it on consciously and conforming our life to its needs/requirements.

I was sick, and ye visited me. *Astheneo*, translated “sick,” also means to be weak. Through our inner weakness we have become sick even unto death, the death of our consciousness, and are powerless in the spirit. As Jesus says in the book of Revelation: “Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable [pitiable], and poor [beggarly], and blind [also: with darkened sight as by smoke], and naked” (Revelation 3:17). The person that has lost the consciousness of his Self and wanders in *samsara* is exactly in this condition inwardly, however he may appear to himself and to others outwardly. We need the visitation, the advent, of Self-realization.

Therefore Jesus says to the spiritually afflicted person: “I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed” (Revelation 3:17-18). Gold tried in the fire is inner awakening and inner experience that have been tested by the purifying “fire” of spiritual discipline and practice and being lived outwardly and inwardly.

We are isolated in our consciousness in a dual dilemma: we are unaware of our true Self and seriously limited in our understanding of our outer life. We need the visitation of inner, spiritual insight and wisdom.

I was in prison, and ye came unto me. First the individual must realize that he is imprisoned in his ignorance and unconsciousness in relation to himself and higher realities. *Phulake*, translated “prison,” also means “cage,” for we are confined, imprisoned, by our limited awareness and understanding.

Yoga sadhana as outlined in *Soham Yoga, the Yoga of the Self* is the way to visit, to come to, our true, ever-free Self.

Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. This is because

God is seated in the heart of each one of us—in each sentient being. He is experiencing everything a sentient being is experiencing throughout all relative existence. Every twinge we feel of unhappiness or happiness: He experiences it along with us. This is part of His omniscience which embraces everything, including the entire life of every sentient being—not just human beings. So whatever we do to another person we are doing to God. Everything we say, we are speaking to God. This is literal truth. And we must live in that awareness always. Sadhana is the way to awaken and establish that awareness within us.

Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared [provided, made ready] for the devil [Satan] and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.

And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal. (Matthew 25:41-46)

We have seen the positive side of this judgment, now the negative picture.

Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil [Satan] and his angels.

Poreuomai, translated “depart,” means “leave,” but has the connotation of “go on your way,” the implication being that the condemned have condemned themselves already by consciously living on the “left-hand path” of negativity—of ignorance and wrong thinking and acting—both inwardly and outwardly. Their condemnation is actually a continuation of their choice, a revealing of its true nature.

God never sends anyone to hell; they send themselves. In fact, most of them gladly run along the ways to destruction. Even as a child I never feared God, knowing that the only person I need fear was myself—that God would not send me to hell, but I certainly could.

Kataraomai, translated “cursed,” means to have called evil and harm upon oneself. In other words, the sentence “Depart” is what they have wished—and therefore brought—upon themselves.

Pur is fire, or fiery. *Aionion* means everlasting, perpetual, but it also means of this world—earthly. The idea is that the fire which will be undergone is the torment, the agony, the despair, the regret and the grief which is produced by this world, a result of uniting our life and consciousness with this world. For what we call “hell fire” is really the product of this earth, the result of earthly, material consciousness, will and deed.

“Hell fire” is inherent in this world, but so is “heaven.” If we live the life of the body and its impulses with a mind of total material orientation we will lose awareness of our true Self and be immersed in delusion that will lead us to the misery inherent in the world. It is the nature of fire to burn, of water to wet, and the nature of this world to maim and destroy. “Change and decay all around I see,” according to the words of the song, is the normal environment of the spiritually blind and ignorant. So the fate of those described here is actually the effect of their own choice.

Perhaps the worse torment of the “cursed” will be the realization that they have chosen their fate. It is their doing alone. They are reaping what they have sown. This fire is the consequence of the actions of rebelling against and suppressing their own divine nature, their own inner Godhead or Christ-hood. Having made themselves the servants of Cosmic Delusion, they have chosen. People boast of free will but do not realize its far-reaching and perilous implications.

This terrible sentence, a result of the simple law of action and reaction—of karma—is experienced in life in this world and life in the astral worlds after the death of the body. It is not punishment, it is reaction. That is the nature of karma. And it is for our learning and purification, not punishment at all. But until we learn the lesson we will cycle back and forth between earthly and astral embodiment and suffering.

For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.

And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

Those who neglect and ignore their true, inner being and do not foster and nourish it as those did who are called blessed by God in the previous verses, will reap what they have sown, just as those spiritually awake and alive will reap the consequences of their aspirations and actions. For “How shall we escape [this sad consequence], if we neglect [disregard] so great salvation [safety; deliverance]?” (Hebrews 2:3).

All the foregoing has special meaning for the yogi, and is meant to motivate and inspire.

A PROPHETIC WARNING

And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples, Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.

Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, and consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill him. But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people. (Matthew 26:1-5)

Business as usual.

A MEMORIAL THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, there they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.

Then took Mary an alabaster box, a pound of ointment [perfumed oil] of spikenard, very costly, and she brake the box, and poured it on his head and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment.

Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.

Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.

Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.

Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her. (John 12:2-8; Mark 14:3-9)

Then took Mary an alabaster box, a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and she brake the box, and poured it on his head and anointed the

feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment. The “spikenard” was Himalayan balsam which was valuable in India, its place of origin, and at every customs station in the countries it was brought across a tax was demanded, so by the time it reached Israel it cost a tremendous amount of money. Being so precious, it was put in alabaster containers with a very small hole to dispense it a tiny drop at a time. But Mary broke off the top and poured the whole thing over Jesus’ head and spread some over his feet.

The lesson here is that we cannot give our life, our dedication or our love to God in dabs and dribbles. We must break the restraining bonds of our mind and life and pour our very soul out at the feet of God. Decades ago I heard the adage: “He who offers God second place in his life offers Him no place.” We can also say: “He who offers God less than his entire life offers Him nothing.”

By her act Mary offered herself at the feet of Jesus. And the resulting fragrance filled the whole “house” of her being, inner and outer. If spiritual life does not pervade and affect our whole being, then it is fake. For the spirit is all-pervading and cannot be divided. It is unitary.

A man once said to me that he considered the invention of the “pie chart” one of the great detriments to humanity, because people thought they themselves could be considered living pie charts all neatly divided into separate, individual compartments that functioned independently of one another. And consequently the condition of one part did not affect the others. But each human being is unitary, with all his aspects interacting with and dependent on one another. The part is in the whole, but in a living, conscious being the whole is in every part—is every part.

Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein

Those who steal their life from God, who withhold it and say, “It is my life and I will do with it what I want,” are spiritual Judases. How many times have I heard the dedication of a person’s life to God and spiritual life and practice denounced as fanaticism.

Monastic life is especially denounced as a waste and “running away from life.” Sometimes it is from sincere delusion and sometimes it is resentment for being shown up by someone’s dedication. “Well, if everybody did it...” they protest. I was myself bullied when people learned I aspired to the monastic life, and later on after I was a monk I was very rudely sneered at and denounced. One time I was indignantly reprimanded for not being “a productive member of society.”

The prophet Malachi (3:8) asked, “Will a man rob God?” Yes. And usually.

Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. At this time in Israel the dead were anointed with perfumed oil all over their bodies and then wrapped in linen bands like a mummy for their burial.

For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always. Spiritual awakening, spiritual consciousness and spiritual aspiration are very volatile, prone to evaporation. They must be guarded as our most valuable possessions, and freely “spent” in our journey toward Self-realization.

Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her. Wherever the true gospel of “Christ in you the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27) is spoken, there Saint Mary the Myrrh-bearer is remembered and lauded. And so it should be with us.

THE SELF-DESTRUCTION OF JUDAS

Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. And he went his way, and communed [spoke] with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray [deliver up] him unto them.

And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted [agreed] with him for thirty pieces [drachmas] of silver.

And they were glad, and covenanted [agreed] to give him money. And he promised, and sought opportunity [occasion] to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude [people].
(Luke 22:3-6; Mark 26:15)

Thirty pieces of silver was the usual price of a slave!

Judas was one of those whom Jesus sent forth to preach and work miracles—and did so. Yet here he betrays Jesus for money. How is that? First of all, his past attempts as a child to kill Jesus, which you can read about in *The Unknown Lives of Jesus and Mary*. So the samskara was there in the beginning. Still, how could a miracle-worker, a disciple of Christ, become a conspirator in the death of Jesus? The answer is in the words of Jesus in the twelfth chapter of Matthew: “When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man

is worse than the first” (Matthew 12:43-45). The soul of Judas was empty, there was no spiritual consciousness or conscience to prevent the power of cosmic evil from overwhelming his mind and heart and impelling him to such an action. Only those who fill their minds and hearts with divine consciousness through continual yoga sadhana will not be found empty in times of temptation or negative psychic bombardment.

THE LAST PASSOVER

And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed [sacrificed] the passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover? (Mark 14:12)

And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat. And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare?

And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in. And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guest chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? And he shall show you a large upper room furnished: there make ready. And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover. (Luke 22:8-13)

This supernatural knowledge of Jesus should not surprise us by now.

And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. (Mark 14:17)

And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that

exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.

Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (Luke 22:24-30)

I am sure much of this can be explained with elaborate and convoluted interpretations by exoteric and esoteric Christians, but none with a satisfactory basis and without any regard to Jesus' insistence on humility and service to others as a mark of discipleship. So I will not attempt a commentary on it, except that it shows how very little these men had taken to heart of Jesus' teaching, including the sons of Zebedee that demanded they be made greatest in the kingdom.

Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour [time] was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. (John 13:1)

In his conversation with Nicodemus Jesus told him: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have [possess] everlasting [eternal] life" (John 3:16).

The incarnation of Jesus was not to clean up the mess the world was in—that is impossible—nor to just set things straight and put them in order.

Love was the motive. *Agape*, translated "love," means to love, to consider someone dear in a personal manner, to feel benevolence and affection for them. This is most manifested in the love of a parent for his child.

And beyond even that, love is a spiritual force, a magnetism that draws the loved into unity with the one who loves. So when we are told that

God loves the world or an individual spirit we should realize that it is not emotion or attachment, but a spiritual force that ultimately makes two into one. That is why the original Greek text speaks of those who believe *into* (eis) Christ—and ultimately God. It is a state of union—not just unanimity or emotion.

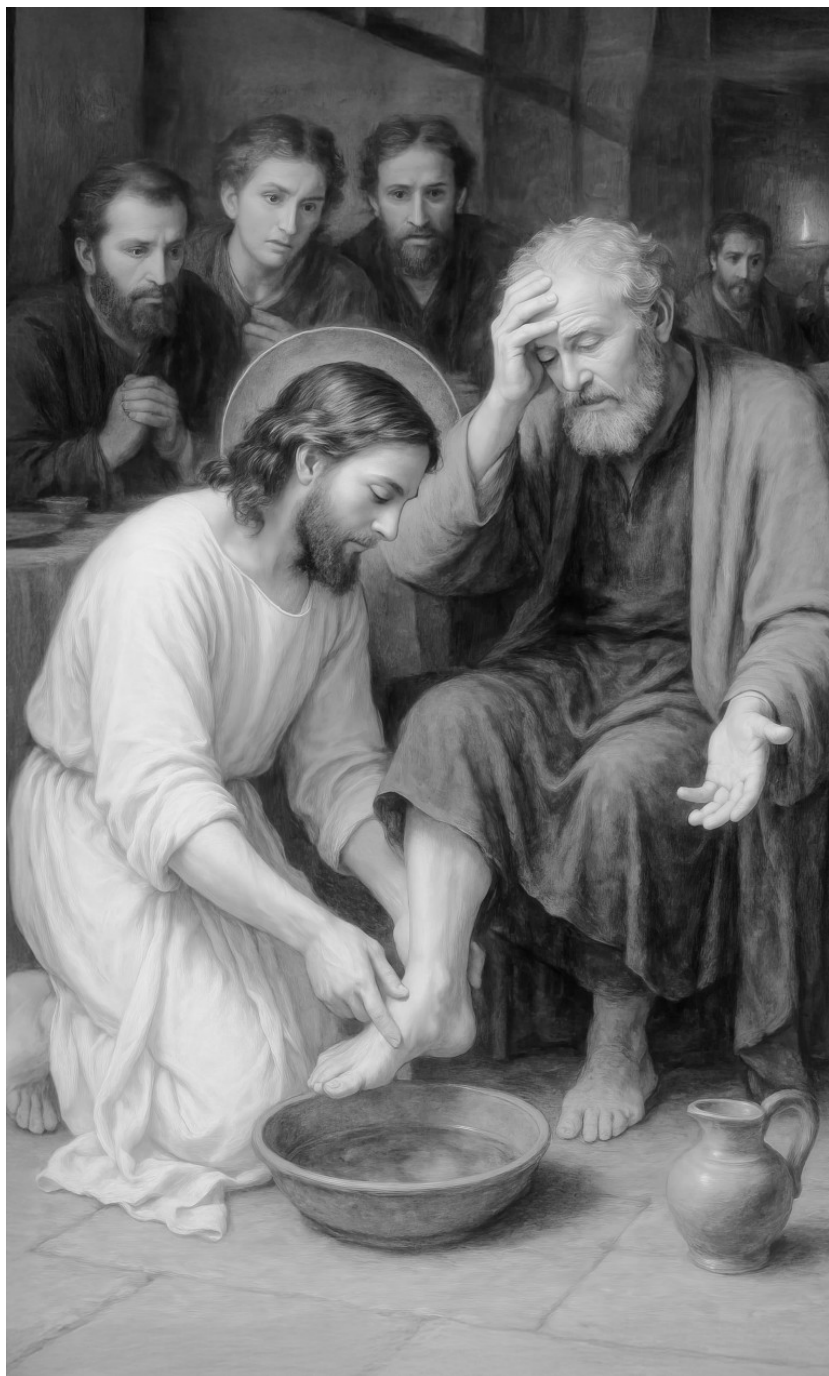
The passage from duality into unity is the essence of yoga. Who but the yogi can really love God, as opposed to some form of the emotional or sexual agitation that the deluded world considers love, but is really *eros*—sensuality.

Only those who live in the spirit can love. Others are only attached or addicted on the level of the ego.

**And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him; Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things [everything] into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God;...
(John 13:2-3)**

This realization that we have come from God and have in our own self the ability to return to God, was uppermost in Jesus' consciousness.

"For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you" (John 13:15). We must never forget in reading the Gospels that Jesus is meant for our example, that we are given the command: "Go, and do thou likewise" (Luke 10:37), to manifest the reality of "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27). We must never forget that we, too, have come from God and go to God. This is the way of Christ in us, the hope of glory.



THE DIVINE HUMILITY OF CHRIST

He riseth from supper, and laid aside his [outer] garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. (John 13:4-5)

At that time people mostly walked around barefoot or in open sandals, so their feet became dusty or dirty. A good host provided water just inside his door for them to wash their feet. Or, if they were highly honored guests, the host washed their feet himself. So Jesus was showing both his humility and his respect and affection for his disciples, such was his love and care.

Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest [understand; are aware of] not now; but thou shalt know [understand] hereafter.

Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. (John 13:6-9)

In the east people are very sensitive as to matters of respect and honor. The idea that a revered teacher would serve his disciples and be as a servant to them is unthinkable. Also nothing is ever done that implies the disciple is superior to or even equal to the teacher. For example, in India devotees will not sit in a seat above or even equal with the seat of the teacher or a

very respected person. Anandamayi Ma was Infinite Reality, and I always did whatever she ordered or instructed me to do, but on two occasions when Ma indicated that I should sit right next to her I could not do such a thing. On both occasions I sat right in front of her on a lower level, and have never regretted it. I did not have the courage of Saint Peter, and I do not regret that, either.

Jesus saith to him, He that is washed [bathed] needeth not save [except] to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean. (John 13:10-11)

As said previously, a person might bathe, but if he walked any distance being barefoot or in sandals, his feet would get dusty or dirty and need washing. Here, the “clean” is the company of the disciples and Judas the “dirty” one. *Katharos*, translated “clean,” also means “pure.”

THE LAST COMMANDMENTS

So after he had washed their feet, and had taken [put on] his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know [understand] ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master [Teacher] and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. (John 13:10-15)

This is quite clear: the true disciples of Christ are like him in humility, service, and respect and love for others.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them. (John 13:16-17)

The example of the great and holy ones should be followed by those who aspire to become like them. This is the way of blessedness.

I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.

Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he. (John 13:18-19)

I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen. Jesus seems to be implying that he did not call Judas to be a disciple, but that Judas pushed

his way into the company and Jesus permitted it. Therefore Judas was not a disciple in reality, but a goat among the sheep. Judas had known Jesus as a child and had tried to kill him, and was taking up the thread again.

This is not at all an unusual situation. Padre Pio was accompanied at nearly all times by an unworthy monk who just intruded himself into the disciples of the saint. Another disciple of Padre Pio told me that he believed the intruder was literally possessed by evil spirits. There were people who came and bowed before Anandamayi Ma and pretended to be fervent devotees, but they were hiring sorcerers to do occult rituals to actually kill Ma, and only came around to see if the black magic was working. Ma herself revealed this without naming them.

I am he. The word *eimi* simply means “I am,” no doubt in reference to the incident in Exodus 3:14, where “God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.”

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth [accepts] whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. (John 13:20) This is because Jesus was absolutely one with God and was therefore the embodiment of the divine consciousness and power. He himself had said: “I and my Father are one” (John 10:30). And further: “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father” (John 14:9).

This is a great mystery, the mystery of God With Us, which is cited in the first chapter of Saint Matthew’s Gospel where an angel said to Saint Joseph: “Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us” (Matthew 1:21-23).

In Sanatana Dharma it is believed that there have been many avatars—incarnations of God—and shall be in the future. It is usually considered that an avatar is God born on earth in human form, that the avatar's body is the absolute divine consciousness and power in manifestation. But there is also the belief that an avatar can be a perfectly Self-realized, liberated master born on earth by his own will and who is the embodiment of God by virtue of his total and irrevocable union with God.

Since the scriptures of India speak of full and partial avatars—four-fourths, three-fourths, two-fourths and one-fourth avatars—both views can be held. Anyhow, it is not the definition or the unseen spiritual status of the avatar that is important, but the effect which the presence and the teachings of the avatar have on those who meet him or come to believe in him and his teachings during his life on earth or after his departure therefrom.

Mere belief or faith, however, has little value. It is the actual, practical following of the avatar's teachings and the attainment of Self-realization through them that result in the liberation (moksha) of the believer that matters. Mere groupie-ism is foolish, delusional and pointless—even detrimental. For example, millions of people have believed in and worshipped Rama and Krishna as avatars, but have remained ignorant samsarins. We must not just believe in God, we must become God. “For this is the will of God, even your sanctification [*Agiasmos*: purification, holiness]” (I Thessalonians 4:3). “Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law [Psalms 82:6], I said, Ye are gods?” (John 10:34-38). Only those who become gods, Christs, are Christians. *Christianos* means “little Christs,” a term of derision given to the followers of Jesus because they believed and said that they could become Christs like Jesus. That was original Christianity, not the deformed spiritual compromise of today.

REVEALING THE END

When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me [deliver me up]. (John 13:21)

But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table.

And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined [written of him]: but woe [alas] unto that man by whom he is betrayed! (Luke 22:21-22) It had been good for that man if he had not been born. (Matthew 26:23-24)

Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake. (John 13:22)

And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I? (Matthew 26:22)

Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake.

He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it?

Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop [morsel], when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.

And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly.

Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him. For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag [purse], that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor.

He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night. (John 13:21-30)

This is straightforward, but there are a few significant points.

When Jesus told the disciples that one of them would betray him, they did not protest but asked, “Lord, is it I?” being aware of their fallibility, their ability to fail. It is always good to not be over-confident with or within ourselves and to be aware of our spiritual vulnerability. More than once I have heard people affirming how devoted or dedicated they were, and how much they understood or how much they had “grown” and become wise and strong spiritually. They all fell flat eventually, not only crashing but burning. “Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall” (Proverbs 16:18). Spiritual humility is a great prize and protection.

When Jesus was asked the identity of the future betrayer, he did not name him, but took a tiny bit of the passover meal and gave it to Judas. He did not give it into Judas’ mouth, but into his hand and Judas took it and swallowed it—perhaps in defiance—rather than refusing it and pleading to not be guilty of such evil. Such is pride and hardness of heart. By taking and eating the tiny bit he expressed his agreement, his willingness, to betray. As a result of this brazen action “Satan entered into him.” I grew up hearing, “This little thing doesn’t matter.... Such a little thing can’t hurt me....” But it did. Those who take risks regarding their spiritual life will fail and fall. Why? Because it is their wish, their will, to do so. Nobody falls or is thrown into the spiritual abyss. They all jump into it. That is why, as I have mentioned before, C. S. Lewis wrote that there are two kinds of human beings: those that say to God, “Thy will be done,” and those to whom God says, “thy will be done.”

The final words of the passage are chilling: “And it was night.” For the mind and soul of Judas, and those that have followed his example throughout the history of the human race, it was and is Darkness.

Therefore, when he [Judas] was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified [made glorious], and God is glorified

[made glorious] in him. If God be glorified [made glorious] in him, God shall also glorify him [make him glorious] in himself, and shall straightway [immediately] glorify him.

Little children, yet [still] a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek [desire] me: and as I said unto the Jews [Judaean], Whither I go, ye cannot [are not able to] come; so now I say to you. A new commandment [precept] I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. (John 13:31-35)

In the early days of Christianity in Rome the people often said in awe and appreciation, "See how the Christians love one another!" Actually, they loved everyone, so much so that it was a joke in Rome that if Nero ever got lost in the catacombs where the Christians often hid or came to assemble in the security of secrecy, the Christians would give him food and a set of new clothes and lead him out. This was considered folly, but it was really divine wisdom and proof of their being disciples of Jesus. There is a lot of cheap talk about "love" everywhere, but the real item can only be found among those with awakened hearts and souls. Only those awakened enough to love God above all else can love others, for they alone can truly see God in the hearts of others. To love the god-nature in others is the highest and greatest love.

Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not [are not able] follow [accompany] me now; but thou shalt follow [accompany] me afterwards.

Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow [accompany] thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake [for thee].

Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied [disowned] me thrice [three times]. (John 13:36-38)

Saint Peter did not know that Jesus was going to martyrdom and that later he would himself also be martyred, but all was known to Jesus, including Saint Peter's denial that would take place in a matter of hours. It is good to keep in mind that as human being we are all liable to fail in our resolves, and especially to realize that if we are not vigilant and grounded in sadhana we can fall or fade away at any time. As I have said before, every yogi friend of mine fell away in time and crashed and burned—not with the proverbial whimper but with a bang. But if someone had predicted their eventual failure, they would have sworn on their life that it would never happen to them, that they would be true unto death.

Saint Luke gives us something further in this conversation.

And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death.

And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.

And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing.

Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.

For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors [Isaiah 53:12]: for the things concerning me have [are coming to] an end.

And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough. (Luke 22:31-38)

And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not:

and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. Whether Jesus means “sift” as in rolling wheat to remove the outer husk to make it fit for use, or as sifting wheat flour to remove fragments of husk or any debris beside the pure flour, we do not know. Either way the process is far-reaching and in Peter’s case will be traumatic. But he will survive the trial and strengthen the resolve and dedication of many.

And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death. This resolve is right and even noble, however:

And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me. We shall see that this is true.

And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse [a money pouch], and scrip [a food pouch], and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing. Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one. At the previous time Jesus refers to, the disciples had no provision for the future or even shoes for their feet, but the time has come when this is to be reversed as the disciples travel throughout the Mediterranean world and even beyond to teach the way of Christ.

For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end. And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough. As usual, what Jesus means symbolically is taken literally—materially. And Jesus does not bother to explain, knowing that in time they will have their consciousness awakened and expanded and comprehend all he had said to them.

THE GREAT WONDER

And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.

And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you. (Luke 22:17-20)

Usually at Passover a lamb was eaten, but being an Essene Jesus was a vegetarian and substituted bread, promising to eat and drink with the apostles after his resurrection. The sacramental aspect of the last two verses is too vast for discussion here.

ASSURANCE

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house [abode] are many mansions [abodes]: if it were not so [if it were otherwise], I would have told you. I go to prepare [make ready] a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive [take] you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. (John 14:1-3)

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. This is an amazing statement, but the disciples had lived with Jesus for a few years and had seen both his miracles and his divine personal conduct. Otherwise he would not have told them to believe in him.

It is a pity that when fake teachers (or gurus) make such demands their “disciples” do not demand in turn that they prove their worthiness of such faith. Swami Sivananda and Anandamayi Ma were gods upon earth, and they never demanded faith from anyone. When someone asked Ma what or who she was, she would simply say, “I am whatever you think I am.” It was all up to them. For everyone must ask and find out the answer of the question: Who Am I? A true spiritual teacher puts people on the path to find out the answer to that most crucial question. And a true spiritual aspirant does not waste his time with any other question.

Writing the foregoing I vividly recalled a satsang with Anandamayi Ma in 1968. When people asked a question, prefacing it with “Ma,” she would instantly say “I am not Ma. The Self is your mother and father.” Just as the compass needle always points north wherever the compass is put, so in all situations at all times the Self must be in our consciousness through

constant japa of Soham supported by Sohan meditation. Realization of the Self is the prime necessity.

In my Father's house [abode] are many mansions [abodes]: if it were not so [if it were otherwise], I would have told you. Rare is the teacher that can honestly say the same. Spiritual window-shoppers like to be regaled with endless trivia that has no relation to authentic spiritual life, but the genuine seekers need and desire the true “facts of life” in the spirit. It is helpful for the aspirant to know something about evolutionary cosmology, how the field of evolutionary life and experience is laid out.

I go to prepare [make ready] a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive [take] you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. (John 14:1-3) Ultimately every spirit-Self will transcend all relativity and become united with Brahman the Absolute. This is the goal we should set for ourselves.

THE WAY

And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.

Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. (John 14:4-7)

And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. These are the words of a genuine spiritual teacher. He is not unique, but the students know his “path” as well as he does, for they are following it themselves. Their difference is only in the length of the time of their practice. And practice is the key word. Theory and “knowledge” are worthless if they are not acted upon successfully.

Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus says they know, and Thomas says they do not know. How is this? Because Thomas does not yet know the nature of the way. Again the materialistic, external view of the disciples versus the spiritual view that Jesus speaks from. The way is the inner way of atmic consciousness. This is the way to the Goal of Self-realization. But spiritual duds do not want to get to the goal, so they are always trying to deflect the teacher from the real teachings and get for themselves a lot of busywork that will keep their ego and ignorance intact and secure.

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

The “I” of Jesus is not the ego of the samsarin, but the Self of the fully liberated. The liberating consciousness of the spirit-Self–Christ Consciousness—is itself the way, the truth, and the life. That Consciousness is both the way, the reality and the goal. It is the difference between a newborn and an adult. It is a matter of degree. As Jesus said to Saint Martha, “But one thing is needful” (Luke 10:42). There is no way but the One Way: the union of the individual consciousness with the universal, Infinite Consciousness. Soham Yoga sadhana is that way.

If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Fortunately, Christ Consciousness is in the future of Saint Thomas and the others. When they awaken into that they will find themselves in the Infinite.

BELIEVE AND UNDERSTAND

Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?

Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake. (John 14:8-11)

Once again the insistence on something external. Philip wants Jesus to show him the Father, the Absolute, like a sideshow barker shows an exhibit. This mentality is like a story I once heard. A woman was trying to convey to her little daughter the omnipresence of God. When she told her God was everywhere, the girl picked up a water glass and asked, "Is God inside this glass?" When the mother said, "Yes," the girl slapped her hand over the top of the glass and shouted, "Gotcha!" It does not work that way, but a lot of people want it to.

He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. When Jesus said, "I and my Father are one" (John 10:30) he meant it literally. But it is a mistake to think that he alone was one with the father. Every sentient being is essentially an atman, a divine Self, and could not even exist if they were not one with God. But only when someone is in total and perfect union with the divine Self and their bodies have become pure divine consciousness and light can it be said that we see God when we see them. I have told elsewhere

of how my friend, Dr. Ghosh of Ranchi, was friendly with some Catholic nuns who often berated him for his veneration of Anandamayi Ma, saying, "She is only a human being." One day when Ma had come to the Ranchi ashram, he took those nuns to meet Ma. Afterward Dr. Ghose demanded of them, "Is she only a human being?" And they refused to answer. They had seen divinity in Ma, but their bigotry outweighed their own inner experience—for the very sight of Ma was a profound spiritual experience.

Ma had a very great but eccentric devotee, Dr. Panalal. Whenever he would just come where Ma was, she would start to laugh and tease him. One time he said to Ma, "My guru told me, 'God is incarnate on the earth right now. I will not have the good fortune to see the avatar, but you will one day.' But all these years have gone by and I have not seen God incarnate. Why?" "Apparently your guru was wrong," Ma answered. "I can never believe that!" exclaimed the doctor. Ma replied: "Well, you are seeing me now."

Only by her mercy and grace could any people know who they were seeing when they saw Ma. Fortunately I was one of them.

A COVENANT

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on [eis: into] me, the works [deeds] that I do shall he do also [likewise]; and greater [more] works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. (John 14:12)

It is not enough to merely believe in Christhood as a reality. The individual must himself act on his belief, and through the process that other Christs have applied to become Christs, himself attain Christhood. That is believing *into* Christ. And that process is yoga—Soham Yoga especially.

Though the West likes to talk about “hidden masters” and “secret sages,” a Christ is very visible when he appears openly among people. The evolved people will immediately see that he is different from anyone else, even if they do not know the exact nature of that difference—though some will not know what they are seeing.

I had the blessing of visiting several times with Sri Durga Mata, a disciple of Yogananda. She lived at the top of the Self-Realization Fellowship headquarters. Before Yogananda had purchased the property, it was a resort hotel. The top level was a penthouse where she lived in almost complete obscurity, though once a month she held an evening satsang in the ashram chapel. Otherwise she was always in her home “at the top” literally and figuratively.

Whenever I would begin ascending the stairway to her abode I would feel as if I were entering into a cloud of divine light and consciousness. When I got near the top she would open the door, knowing I was there. Then I spent eternal moments with her. We would always meditate together before I left. When before and after the meditation she would gently intone “Om” the atmosphere was awesome. She had gone to India a short time

before and would tell me about it. When I went to India less than a year later I learned that whenever she walked down a street people would begin following her, sensing that she was a great soul—a mahatma.

Later I met a highly evolved American man in Chicago who had gone to India a year before to a religious assembly. He asked me, “Why do people in India come up and touch you when you walk down the street?” This astounded me, for in India people are very careful not to touch strangers, as this is considered impolite. When I asked what he meant by the question, he told me that whenever he walked around New Delhi people came up, touched him and silently walked on. He did not understand, but obviously they sensed his spiritual radiance.

In India I met people who truly were Christs—Swami Sivananda and Anandamayi Ma especially, but I met others. One was wandering around in rural Bengal pretending to be insane. People laughed at her and made fun of her. Work was being done on the road where I saw her, and she went out into the road and took stones that were to be used in its repair and threatened her tormentors, so they stayed at a distance. She looked at me and spoke in Bengali. Mentally I said, “I am sorry, Ma, but I do not know Bengali.” She kept looking at me, and then spoke, again in Bengali. And I understood her! So I mentally asked if I could put questions on sadhana to her. She nodded, so I began mentally speaking to her. She would look at me intently and answer mentally. So we had a mind-to-mind conversation about sadhana and its practice. At the end she stood up and walked on down the road with people still laughing at her. But not me.

A PROMISE

And whatsoever ye shall ask [call for, desire, require] in my name, that will I do [agree to], that the Father may be glorified in the Son. (John 14:13)

The word translated “son” is *huios*, which means a child, implying kinship—so “son” is a viable translation. The idea is that true spiritual aspirants are children of God both by their innate, eternal nature and their will, their aspiration to manifest their divine kinship.

How does one become a son, a child, of God? Saint John said of Jesus: “As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God” (John 1:12). So power is given to those who aspire to sonship to become the sons of God by the action of their will—by entering into the very primal being which they possess in common with God, drawing it from Him as a child derives its body from its parents. Empowerment is not enough, it is only the beginning. Then comes the work of self-divinization through the bestowed power. Yes: we beget ourselves, we become what we will to become.

We should look at this matter further. “For as many as are led by [open to] the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Romans 8:14). There is a perpetual call in the depths of every sentient being to ascend in consciousness and be revealed as a divine wave in the ocean of Divine Being. First the inner impulse, the inner call or movement, must be perceived and then acted upon to come to the intended revelation of innate divinity.

Where does that impulse come from? “For the earnest expectation of the creature [*ktisis*—creation] waiteth for the manifestation [*apokalupsis*—appearing, coming, manifestation, revelation] of the sons of God” (Romans 8:19).

The root purpose of all relative existence is the ultimate Self-realization of all sentient beings. The realization and actualization–revelation of each one’s divinity is inherent in the very nature of relative existence/embodiment.

Why does that impulse arise from within us? “That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world” (Philippians 2:15). In other words, we are to be revealed as gods within God who is the Self of our Selves.

What is the root purpose of this amazing revelation? “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not” (I John 3:1). The word translated “behold” is *eido*, which means see, know, perceive and understand—comprehend. And the object of this is love: the positive magnetic force that unites—in this case, uniting us with God. And it has been given to us freely, put into our hands for a purpose: “that we should be called [known to be] the sons of God.” Yoga is the active manifestation of the love of the Infinite for the finite.

And the perspective that follows all this: “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (I John 3:2). Certainly we are going into unknown territory because we do not at all know who/what we are, any more than we know the Who and What of God. But we shall know: “For now we see through [in] a glass [mirror], darkly [obscurely]; but then face to face: now I know [understand] in part; but then shall I know [perceive, understand] even as also I am known [perceived, understood]” (I Corinthians 13:12). This is true Jnana Yoga, the direct insight and realization that produces union—yoga—with the Perceived: Infinite Consciousness and Being. It is seeing which transforms the seer into the seen. It is incomprehensible, but absolutely attainable. “Therefore be a yogi” (Bhagavad Gita 6:46).

If [Whensoever] ye shall ask any thing [whatsoever] in my name, I will do it. (John 14:14)

Physically, materially, the West and the East are in the same world, but mentally (intellectually) and spiritually they are two different worlds, having opposite polarities. This produces a profound divide in them, including two different and often opposing world-views. Nowhere is this more evident than in the religious and philosophical viewpoints of the two.

The West considers speech to be a means of communication, an expression of ideas or emotion, that a person's name is a simple designation of that person. The East, however has a more philosophical and metaphysical view—that a person's name can be a psychic bond with him.

To the East, speech in the human being is potentially a divine, spiritual power, and the spoken words vehicles of profound effects under the right conditions and in the right configurations known as mantras. A mantra is a syllable, word or set of words which through repetition—especially inner, mental repetition—a specific effect is produced, physical, mental or spiritual. The purpose of the spiritual the attainment of psychic and spiritual powers known as siddhis, and in the higher levels, the realization of the Self. “Mantra” literally means “a transforming thought” (*manat trayate*). In the spiritual realm, a mantra is a sound formula whose inner or outer repetition produces a specific change outwardly or inwardly in the consciousness. The highest (siddha) mantras literally transform the consciousness of those who repeat them in the correct way for the required length of time.

The Name of God, then, is declared to be the same as God—at least potentially. That is, it can shape or produce in the yogi's consciousness higher awareness and experience of the highest realities—including his Self which is inseparable from God, though God is infinite and the yogi is finite. Experience of this is dependent on the responsiveness of the yogi's bodies (various levels of existence/embodiment) and the quality and length of time spent in repetition of the mantra.

So the Name of God and the Consciousness of God are essentially the same. The name of an incarnation of God is an embodiment of his divine consciousness and being. Esoteric science has known through the ages that the invocation of a person's name is an effective means of establishing psychic contact with him. So the name of Jesus is a link to the consciousness,

the spiritual being, of Jesus, just as the names of the avatars Rama and Krishna have a bond with them.

The reality of Jesus' statement that calling upon his name will have a effect is seen by the miracles done by the invocation of Jesus as recorded in the fourth and nineteenth chapters of the book of Acts in the New Testament. In Eastern Christianity this is fully understood.

IF WE LOVE...

If ye love me, keep my commandments [precepts]. (John 14:15)

This is not difficult to understand, but to learn and follow the precepts of Jesus is a serious matter. The lives of the saints demonstrate that this can be done to great effect.

THEN...

And I will pray [ask] the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter [Intercessor, Consoler, Advocate], that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive [attain and hold], because it seeth [perceiveth] him not, neither knoweth [is aware] him: but ye know [perceive] him; for he dwelleth [is present] with you, and shall be in you. (John 14:16-17)

Comforter, Intercessor, Consoler, Advocate. All these relationships will be found in communion with the Infinite Spirit, since we are ourselves spirits. And they will be experienced in the company of those that embody that Infinite Spirit. This occurs in two ways: 1) when God is present in a human being who through self-evolution by spiritual practice, sadhana, has consciously and completely become one with the Absolute, and 2) when God incarnates upon the earth as a human being. I say this with confidence in its truth because I have had experience of both of these forms myself. The first was in the presence of holy people I met in both America and India, the second was in the presence of Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh and Sri Anandamayi Ma. The first uplifted and inspired me, but the second changed my consciousness. Sivananda and Anandamayi Ma were present in this world, but at the same time beyond it. Their very presence made me deeply Self-aware and both awakened and deepened my inner consciousness. The first manifests the reality of God With Us, the second produces the experience of God Within Us. I cannot really say anything more than that.

The Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him. The mind that is samsaric in nature, cannot conceive

or experience the Infinite Being because it does not have the opening and awakening of consciousness that enables a person to conceive or experience It. As long as the body and mind fill our consciousness completely, there is no possibility of our perceiving our true nature of spirit, or the Infinite Spirit in which we ever exist as part of that Infinite Being. Only the yogi who daily refines and transmutes his awareness through yoga sadhana can even touch the edge of that Consciousness. And in time he will fully awaken into the reality of his own Self within the Supreme Self. At first there are just occasional glimmers, but in time he sees and enters that Light with the totality of his being.

Saint Paul speaks of it this way: “For now we see through a glass, darkly [obscurely]; but then face to face [presence to presence]: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known” (I Corinthians 13:12). At the time of Saint Paul they did not have the kind of clear glass we do now. Rather, it was cloudy, and objects could be seen through it only obscurely. But the refined mind can see what previously was unseen or barely seen. In the same way the yogi with a thoroughly purified and clarified mind (buddhi) will see God clearly face-to-face. And he will not just see God, he will know God: “Then shall I know even as also I am known.” He (we) shall know with the knowing of God. It could not be otherwise, for we are an eternal part of God and possess the spiritual intuition that leads us to the full perception of God.

But ye know [perceive] him; for he dwelleth [is present] with you, and shall be in you. It will not be gaining something we do not already have, it will be a regaining of our original, eternal awareness.

Self-realization is God-realization.

THE FUTURE...

I will not leave you [let you be] comfortless [fatherless, orphaned]: I will come to [accompany] you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. (John 14:18-19)

Jesus withdrew his physical presence so the disciples would seek him within, in the core of their own being. For they, too, were Sons of God and Christs. Those whose minds are in the world see nothing—at least nothing that is real and not a mirage. But those whose minds and consciousness are in the Self see and know Christ within, the “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27) that is the Self.

At [in] that day [time] ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. (John 14:20)

This is a divine symbiosis that only our awakened divinity within us can truly know when it hears and heeds the call: “Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light” (Ephesians 5:14),... “that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (I Peter 2:9). “For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light” (Psalm 36:9).

He that hath [holds, observes] my commandments [precepts], and keepeth [holdeth fast to] them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest [show, reveal] myself to him. (John 14:21)

Jesus said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63). It is the meaning, implications and results of Jesus' words when they are manifested in our consciousness, our life, that matter. And since they are spirit and life they impart spirit and life to those whose thinking and behavior conform to and mirror them—who embody them as Jesus did. These are the ones that truly love God and will be loved by God who through Jesus will be manifested to them in their own essential being.

Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? (John 14:22)

Genuine spiritual life is an absolutely individual matter. It is between an awakened consciousness and the Supreme Consciousness which is both its origin and its goal, its conclusion. It is as when the drop merges into the ocean after long separation which was in essence illusion. Our entire journey from an atom of hydrogen to the revelation of our divine Self is a dream, but a necessary dream, a journey of a separated consciousness back to union with the Supreme Consciousness. It is an exercise in will, a kind of guided visualization intended to culminate in the awakening from the dream.

ILLUSION

Edna Wheeler Wilcox

God and I in space alone
 And nobody else in view.
 "And where are the people, O Lord!" I said.
 "The earth below and the sky o'erhead
 And the dead whom once I knew?"

"That was a dream," God smiled and said,
 "A dream that seemed to be true,
 There were no people, living or dead,

There was no earth and no sky o'erhead
There was only Myself—and you."

"Why do I feel no fear," I asked,
"Meeting you here in this way,
For I have sinned I know full well,
And there is heaven and there is hell,
And is this the judgment day?"

"Nay, those were dreams," the great God said,
"Dreams that have ceased to be.
There are no such things as fear or sin,
There is no you—you have never been—
There is nothing at all but Me."

This is a dialogue of the false self with the true Self.

LOVE IS THE LIFE

Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep [observe] my words [teaching, precepts]: and my Father will love him, and we will come [manifest] unto him, and make our abode with him. (John 14:23)

God is Consciousness, and the union, the merging, of our consciousness with God Consciousness is the result of both inner aspiration and diligent sadhana. “For this is the will [purpose] of God, even your sanctification [purification/holiness]” (I Thessalonians 4:3). As Swami Sivananda said, “Bhakti [devotion] begins with two and ends with one.” It is the same with yoga. And yet the yogi retains his identity in that perfect unity. It cannot be explained to a finite intellect, but it can be experienced by the siddha yogi.

He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings [precepts]: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father’s which sent me. (John 14:24)

The purpose of all great masters is revealed in their teachings which, as Jesus says here, is not from their own minds, but are the wisdom of God. Therefore, those who ignore or reject their teachings are ignoring the words of God—for the masters are only transmitters of what has been revealed to them in their enlightenment. Consequently, we can see by someone’s reactions to the words of the master-teachers whether they are themselves of God or not. One time I quoted (accurately and completely) to a supposedly devoted Christian a statement of Jesus from the Bible. Her immediate response was: “Only a fool would say that!” What response could I have to *that*?

These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. (John 14:25-26)

Those who are in tune with God are in tune with the wisdom of God, whoever speaks it. And it will stay in their mind.

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. (John 14:27)

The world's peace is an external and temporary thing because it is rooted in the world whose nature is continual flux and change. But "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds" (Philippians 4:7), fixed on God, in the eternal Light. Nothing can shake that peace, for it is the actual presence of God. But how do we attain such peace? Sadhana. Since the kingdom of God is within, so is the way to the kingdom. Jesus was a yogi, and the Way of Christ is yoga sadhana.

Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away [depart from hence], and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice [be glad], because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.

And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe. (John 14:28-29)

Externally Jesus will leave this world, but he will return through the Holy Spirit in the depths of the souls of his disciples. And that will be an eternal abiding. If the disciples understood that they would have rejoiced, but it was a great mystery that would only be revealed to them when it happened to them. Until then it would be as Saint Paul said, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the

things which God hath prepared for them that love him” (I Corinthians 2:9). This is the nature of divine experience: only those who have it can understand or believe in it. “Therefore be a yogi” (Bhagavad Gita 6:46).

Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince [chief, ruler] of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.

But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise [Awake], let us go hence [go from here]. (John 14:30-31)

Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince [chief, ruler] of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. The time is drawing near when the Satanic Power and its agents led by Judas will seem to be in control of Jesus’ destiny, though actually his hidden will shall be carried out. Nevertheless Jesus shall do the will of the Father, understanding the great divine plan which is hidden from everyone else.

But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise [Awake], let us go hence [go from here]. We, too, must arise in spirit and go—as did the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:18). As the deacon in the earliest Christian eucharistic liturgy exclaimed: “May grace come to us; and may this world depart from us!” And may we depart from the consciousness of this world and enter into the consciousness of the heavens.

ONENESS IN CHRIST

I am the true [real] vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not [brings not forth] fruit he taketh away [removes]: and every branch that beareth [brings forth] fruit, he purgeth [prunes] it, that it may bring forth [bear] more [pleion: more in quantity and more in quality; more excellent] fruit.

Now ye are clean [clear, pure] through the word which I have spoken unto you. (John 15:1-3)

I am the true [real] vine, and my Father is the husbandman. We do not draw our life from the earth or anything earthly, but from the supernatural Life that is the essence of all things. Jesus is the embodiment of that Life and God is the origin of it—and *is* it. So we are the same, though in a finite and often imperfect manner. But God is the planter and cultivator of that life in us and in all manifested beings, animate and inanimate. We are all rooted in the Cosmic Christ which was revealed in Jesus.

Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. The is the process of growth and development (evolution) from life to life. It is often painful and confusing, but it is necessary, and the end result justifies it. Each sentient being is a work of God which he is developing and refining and increasing in scope of consciousness through incarnation after incarnation until perfection is reached. It is our nature to be so perfected and God's nature to perfect us. Ultimately, all life is One, so God is evolving himself—or rather, his reflection in us. He is experiencing all we are experiencing; he undergoes all that we undergo. And that includes pain and sorrow. This is the Love that is God. He is experiencing everything along

with us. We cannot understand this, mostly because our concept of God is so small and primitive, but it is nonetheless true.

Abide [dwell] in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. (John 15:4-5)

Abide [dwell] in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. Since we are all one with the Infinite, the Infinite is living in each sentient being. But this will not be realized until we are consciously awake and living in God. Then evolution of consciousness becomes possible and culminates in the experiential realization that we are god within God. At every moment this awareness must pervade us as the “fruit” of our evolution. It is our essential being and the purpose of our evolution through ages.

I am the vine, ye are the branches. God is the essential being within all the branches that comprise the entire range of existence. There is unity and multiplicity.

He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit. Those that immerse and unite their consciousness in/with the Universal Consciousness will experience their essential unity and identity with It. It is beyond words, but not beyond experience. That is why the philosophers of India have called those perfected in wisdom munis—silent ones.

For without me ye can do nothing. For all power, all consciousness comes from and is God. Everything that is or that occurs is a manifestation of God. “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered” (Matthew 10:29-30). The falling of the sparrow is not just known by God, it is possible through the power of God—is an action of God. It is, therefore, in a very real sense done by God. And the omniscience of God knows the number of the hairs on every head.

If a man abide [remain, continue] not in me, he is cast forth as a [broken] branch, and is withered [dried up]; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned [consumed]. (John 15:6)

Those who do not consciously unite their consciousness with God through sadhana, especially the japa and meditation of Soham, will find their awareness alienated from their inner reality and eternalized. A consciousness so cut off or alienated will become deadened and cast into the fires of samsara where it will be perpetually agitated and suffering until all awareness of the truth of its being or its destiny as a god within God will be forgotten and consumed—annihilated. This is a “damnation” much worse than the exoteric Christians could ever imagine in their hell-and-damnation mythology.

If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask [desire] what[ever] ye will, and it shall be done [come to pass] unto you. (John 15:7)

Our present was created by us in our past, and our future is being created by us now through the law and power of karma. Also, when the mind and will are empowered by sadhana, the exterior world becomes responsive to them and mirrors their intentions. In time the yogi need not ask, but only will something for it to occur. In his autobiography Yogananda describes his experiments with this power even as a child. The will of a yoga siddha, a perfected yogi, becomes the will of God through his conscious union with God. Such a person never wills anything not in keeping with the will and wisdom of the Divine. This is the safety mechanism, so to speak.

Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear [bring forth] much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. (John 15:8)

Discipleship is not some form of sacred groupie-ism, but the pursuit of wisdom and inner transformation. The word *mathetes*, translated “disciple,”

means a learner, a student, one who understands. A perfect disciple of Christ is a perfect knower of Christ. At first he had faith and believed, but now he knows because he is in touch with his true being as god within God. A perfect disciple of Christ is one who has become a Christ. This was the intention of Jesus for his disciples.

THE JOY OF CHRIST AND CHRISTHOOD

As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. (John 15:9-10)

The word *meno*, translated “continue,” means to live, to be, in a certain state permanently. Genuine spiritual life is without fluctuation, but is a steady condition of consciousness—and therefore of behavior, outlook and awareness. It is a matter of discipline and practice that culminates in a permanent state of being and consciousness.

These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy [chara: calm delight, gladness, fullness of joy] might remain [continue, endure, be present] in you, and that your joy might be full [complete, perfect]. (John 15:11)

There is no possible way to describe or convey the experience of being in the presence of an incarnation of Absolute Consciousness. Firstly, because there is no way to know if one individual's experience will be the same as that of another, nor can it be known if someone's description is accurate. As Yogananda sometimes sang: “He who knows... he knows. None else knows.”

Also, there is a difference between the actual experience of the presence of a divine being and the memory of that experience. Whenever I was in the presence of Anandamayi Ma I experienced an indescribable, subtle

“something” which I forgot the moment I left her presence. It was over a dozen years before I even realized this fact. So on my next pilgrimage to India and Ma I asked Brahmacharini Atmananda who had known Ma for over twenty years, “Is there something that you experience when you are with Ma and which you forget as soon as you leave her presence?” “Yes,” she replied, “but it took many years before I could remember that.”

Consequently I will not try to describe something that was unique to Ma’s presence and ungraspable by memory. However I can say that in Ma’s presence I became immediately deeply self-aware as I never was away from her. I also experienced total peace and clarity, complete contentment, satisfaction and profound contentment—a sense of total rightness. The Sanskrit word for this is *sukha*, which can be defined as: happiness, ease, joy, and a feeling of total “rightness” and well-being. This was so strong that I could not remember any questions I wanted to ask Ma, so I always had to write them down beforehand. Just sitting in her presence was complete fulfillment. I was born to be with her. She told me, “Every day say to yourself: ‘Ma has been with me in all the past. Ma is always with me now. And Ma will always be with me in the future.’” It is so.

I feel confident that what I have described was the feeling people had when they were with Jesus. You might be interested to know that Ma said to me about Jesus: “When you worship Jesus, you worship all the gods. For Jesus is the embodiment of all the gods.”

LOVE IS THE WILL AND PRESENCE OF GOD

**This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I
have loved you. (John 15:12)**

All is one; and God is that All. As the Bhagavad Gita says: “The Lord dwells in the hearts of all beings” (18:61). And Saint John further said: “He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?” (I John 4:20) It may not always be easy to love the personality of someone, but we should love their eternal, immortal Self.

Going to the train station to meet Anandamayi Ma was a wonderful experience. One by one we would arrive on the platform where Ma’s train was to arrive. We would smile and recognize each other as Ma’s devotees, even if we had not met before. So we would stand together, happy and content, children waiting for their Mother with that Mother in their hearts.

Finally the train would come and we would scan the windows of the cars as they went by until we would see Ma. A shout would go up, and we would start running alongside the car Ma was in. When the train stopped and she came out we all bowed before her, and then followed her through the station and out just as chicks and duckings crowd together behind their mother and follow her with total attention. Oh, the joy! Fulfillment was ours. This was why we lived and breathed. When people would ask, “What do you see in this Anandamayi Ma?” we only smiled and kept silent. Yogananda was right: “He who knows... he knows. None else knows.”

**Greater [More] love hath no man than this, that a man lay
down his life for his friends. (John 15:13)**

Jesus is speaking of his approaching self-sacrifice for the sake of his disciples. This will be the demonstration of his love for his friends. But who are Jesus' friends?

FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD

Ye are my friends, if ye do [observe] whatsoever I command [enjoin] you.

Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard [understood] of my Father I have made known unto you. (John 15:14-15)

The friends of Jesus have two characteristics. 1) They follow absolutely everything that is required of them. 2) They will know and understand and embody in themselves all they have been taught and shown by him.

Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained [appointed] you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain [abide, continue, endure, be present]: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give [grant] it [to] you. (John 15:16)

Our highest, ultimate destiny is not chosen by us or any other person or force. We are the chosen of God for the purpose of our own Self-revelation, our awakening and liberation in the Self. And this awakening and liberation is to continue and endure and be present in our consciousness forever.

These things I command [charge, enjoin] you, that ye love one another. (John 15:17)

All that Jesus tells us to do has the purpose of so purifying, strengthening and enlightening us that we will love as he loves: eternally in the spirit.

If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. (John 15:18)

Miseo means to both detest and persecute. Such will be the reaction of those gripped by the delusions of ignorance toward those who follow the way of inner light and liberation. We are not alone or singled out. It is the innate nature and will of the deluded and degraded to hate light and truth, and those who live in light and truth. It is a matter of magnetism, of polarity. A magnet has two poles: attracting and repelling. So the world and its elements and its citizens have these two reactions to things: like-dislike or love-hate. That is the nature of things.

If you will look closely you will see that the “good mixers,” the “hail-fellow-well-met” types that are everybody’s friend and are universally designated as “great guys” by all, are empty, shallow people, just veneers with nothing behind, appearances with no substance. Therefore they are “well-liked” (see *Death of a Salesman*) by the equally minimal. There is not always safety in numbers, but there certainly is safety in being a zero. When I was in college I did a study in which I was given access to the personality profiles of my freshman class. There were ratings for inner stability and development and social skills (*i.e.*, social manipulation skills). Consistently, those with high inner development scored low on the social side, and those with very little inner development and stability were very high on the social side—and these included the freshman “class officers.” In other words, there were those who were persons in their own right and others that were totally dependent on what others thought of them and their response to them. This is indeed “the way of the world,” and why the world hates those who live in the spirit—and thus outside the world in essence. When Yogiraj Shyama Charan Lahiri Mahashaya left his body, one of his most evolved disciples was plunged in great sorrow. When he was sitting, weeping and lamenting, the Yogiraj materialized in physical form, grabbed hold of his hand and said, “Why do you weep? You do not live in this world. You live with me!”

It is intriguing to observe the virtually reflexive and systemic aversion and hostility toward Sanatana Dharma and those who follow it. India is

particularly detested, mocked and defamed by such. When I was sitting with some members of our ashram in the Tel Aviv airport on our way to India, an American sitting nearby suddenly broke forth in a loud voice, “I can’t believe what I am seeing! People from the richest country in the world following the religion of the poorest country in the world!” (Not so. The poorest countries in the world were several Christian countries in South America. Today India is a country with a booming economy and development. And it is openly Sanatana Dharmic, which is the greatest wealth.) No spiritually sane person believes that wealth is the measure of religion and truth. But so it is, and always will be, because the true sanatana dharmi and yogi lives against the whole orientation of the worldlings. Jesus said this about those that are “of the world” and their attitude toward the dharmis and yogis: “Whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented. For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children” (Matthew 11:16-19). So the wise forget the fools and hold to wisdom. They are definitely not “in the club.” Blessed freedom.

If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. (John 15:19)

We are not the body, intellect or ego, but the immortal Self (Atman). The body, intellect and ego are of the world, however, and those who follow dharma and practice yoga to realize their true spirit-Self have been chosen by God, the Supreme Self, to transcend this world and be free from it and its influence, and live in the only true life—that of those who know the only true Self. For there are many false selfs and self-concepts offered to us by the world.

Why does the world hate those that seek freedom? First, because choosing the life of the spirit is a statement that for them the life and mind of the world are worthless and false. A perfect example is the legend of the twin brothers Romulus and Remus and the beginning of Rome. It says that wanting to found the city of Rome, Romulus built a city wall that was only three feet high so the city would be protected from enemies. Laughing at this folly, Remus jumped over it to show that it was no protection whatsoever. So Romulus killed him for demonstrating the truth of the matter and the inadequacy of his childish beliefs. This is the archetypal portrayal of the Western mind and intellect: complete ignorance and folly, and hatred of those who see through and reject its fantasies. So those who Turn East for wisdom must be prepared for at least the social and psychological reactions of the Romulus West. And it can be worse, as I know from experience. But there is an up side. Whenever the hackles of the Western wolves rise up and they begin to growl and howl, know that you are on the right track. And stick to it.

A REMINDER

Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord [master]. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept [followed] my saying [teaching], they will keep yours also.

But [Nevertheless] all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me. (John 15:20-21)

Those who seek higher consciousness and perfect freedom in the divine spirit will be opposed and denounced and possibly worse. Let us recall the previously quoted words of Jesus: "But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented." So it is. We dare not "go with the flow," but row as hard as we can in the other direction, remembering what we have earlier considered: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:13-14). And: "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32).

It is easy to say these things about holding fast and resisting all attempts to block our upward search. But what about me? Yes. I have done these things that I urge you to do. For I have seen that there is no other way to follow and remain on the upward path to freedom.

Now we come to one of the reasons the spiritual slackers will hate the determined spiritual seeker.

If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke [cloak] for their sin. (John 15:22)

Saint James the apostle wrote: "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17). There we have it. All the argumentation and excuse-making and accusations of "negativity" will not excuse those who have heard the truth. Ignorance can be an excuse for not understanding and not following the right path, but once the truth has come to us, whether by the written word or hearing it spoken, we are obligated as seekers for higher consciousness to heed and follow it no matter what. And it is the same for others. So those who love the darkness hate those who speak the words of light. As I have cited earlier: "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God" (John 3:19-21). Marcus Aurelius wrote that once a person's mind has been expanded by knowledge it cannot return to its original state. But a lot of people try and can find supporters who will reassure them. But inside themselves they know the truth. People who live in self-delusion and denial are like the emperor in The Emperor's New Clothes. As long as no one says they are naked they can pretend to be clothed. A confederacy of dunces is formed for mutual support and protection against the truth. Yet the truth about them is this: "Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Revelation 3:17). But they do know. And those who see and speak the truth are treated by them like Romulus treated Remus.

He that hateth me hateth my Father also. (John 15:23)

Indeed so. Those that hate God hate the godly and those that seek a higher life in God. Excellence is detested both personally and academically.

In high school I had a history teacher who would throw into the wastebasket the test papers of the class if many failed, and would give another, easier test so all would pass. Incredible, but true.

When I was in college there was an idiotic and destructive mode of grading called “grading on the curve.” It was a system of grading that was based on the performance of an individual class, not on academic standards. Basically it was this: if everyone was a dummy then everyone should get a passing grade. Believe me, this craziness was current and accepted—especially by those that wanted a better grade than their work merited. Anyone who excelled was castigated as “ruining the curve.” The intelligent students that consistently got high grades were ostracized and sometimes driven from the class by both teacher and students. As I say: craziness. The upshot of this was that in nearly every college class I took, on the first day someone would ask the teacher, “Do you grade ‘on the curve’?” If the answer was not Yes, then the slackers would immediately go and transfer into another class until they got a hack teacher that would accommodate their laziness and lack of integrity.

It worked in “academia,” but never works in spiritual life.

When something or someone is famous and sought after, no one will fault them, but will laud them along with the crowd. At the time I went to India two people were most esteemed in spiritual life: Swami Sivananda and Anandamayi Ma. There were many (especially those from the West) that hated and despised them both. But to do so openly was to reveal their ignorance and evil. So they spoke disrespectfully, even scornfully, about them, or about their disciples.

Those that disliked Swami Sivananda would say, “Oh! He is not a real spiritual yogi—he is just a good karma yogi,” or, “He is just like someone’s grandfather....”

Those who hated Ma would hate her devotees and spew venom about them. “I like Anandamayi Ma, but I do not like the people around her.” Or, “I believe in Ma’s greatness, but I can’t accept all the rules in her ashrams. Didi is the one who imposed them, not Ma.”

The detested “Didi” (*didi* means “elder sister”) was Sri Gurupriya Devi the greatest devotee of Ma Anandamayi. She was herself a supernatural

person. I loved Didi because she merited it and because I loved Ma. Whenever someone from our ashram would be with me for the first time, I would take them to Didi and have them (along with me) prostrate before her, and would say to her, “Didi, this is a new brother for you. Please bless him.”

At one of my pilgrimages Ma was in Delhi when I arrived, so I went directly to the ashram to salute Ma and then left to get settled in a dhar-mashala and visit some temples. In the evening when I returned to the ashram I found one of Ma’s very close devotees waiting for me just outside. “Come,” he said to me, “Tonight Didi is going to give the Brahma Sphota (tilak) to people. On a special day like this the Brahma Sphota is given by the elder sister to her brothers, and she wants to give it to you first. We are waiting for you before starting.” Such was her loving kindness. The last time I saw Didi was also at the Delhi ashram. Ma was leaving to go to some spiritual event far away. Didi was standing on the steps of the ashram, and I was standing on the ground with Dr. Ghosh, a great devotee of Ma. I wanted to ask Didi a question, so he spoke to her, saying, “Didi, Didi...,” but got no answer. Didi’s eyes were fixed on Ma in the car which was moving away. Doctor Ghosh turned to me and said, “What can I do? Didi is with Ma.” And she always was.

If someone really loved Ma, they loved those that loved her.

If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.

But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law [scripture], They hated me without a cause [Psalm 69:4]. (John 15:24-25)

This is the way of the hypocrites and the enemies of their own Self and the Supreme Self. They love their false egos and hate their true Self and the Self of others—especially those that seek for the Self.

THE PRESENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

But when the Comforter [Holy Spirit] is come, whom I will send unto [bestow upon] you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from [issues out of] the Father, he shall testify [bear witness] of me:

And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning. (John 15:26-27)

Arche, the word translated “beginning,” means commencement, first state, the idea beginning that every spirit-Self has been with God, with and within the Cosmic Christ, from the beginning of its entry into relativity.

The *Agia Pneuma*, the Holy Spirit, is literally the Holy Breath of God and the Holy Spirit of God, since *pneuma* means both breath and spirit.

This is why yoga is centered in the breath. (See *Soham Yoga: The Yoga of the Self*.) The Breath of God is the Holy Out-breathing of God, the Divine

Word, the Cosmic Vibration of which all things are formed, including our causal, astral and physical bodies. It is this Force which is both the Evolver and the evolved: Maha Shakti, Maha Prakriti—the Primal and Divine Vibration Whose Inner Being is Soham and Whose Outer being is the Pranava, Om (Omkar).

BE PREPARED

These things have I spoken [told] unto you, that ye should not be offended [scandalized, stumble]. (John 16:1)

“Spiritual” people like to live in a cosy, rosy world where everything is love and joy and peace and contentment—and usually self-congratulation. But that is the ignorance and delusion of the ego. Spiritual life is an endeavor, or even a war, according to the individual’s karma and samskara. Of course, those that are centered in yoga sadhana do experience contentment and ease (*sukha*), but when karma requires, *dukha*, the opposite, comes into our life. That is why when the Virgin Mary appeared to Saint Bernadette at Lourdes she told her, “I do not promise to make you happy in this life.” But for the yogi things are more optimistic: no matter what negative or unpleasant things may occur in his outer life, in his environment, in his inmost consciousness he has “righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Romans 14:17).

When I was a child, the motion picture theaters copied the ways of the “legitimate” theaters. Before the main feature, there would be “previews of coming attractions.” When these began, curtains would be momentarily drawn before the screen, which became semi-transparent from the light of the projector, and then opened. This dramatic action was always greeted by loud cheers and applause from the juvenile audience. Jesus is now going to give the disciples a description of what will be coming to them as his disciples, and it will not be attractive. But God always levels with human beings. And so do true spiritual teachers.

They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. (John 16:2)

There are two ways to engage in commerce. One is to show something to a prospective customer and get them to want it, and then tell them the price, hoping that they will pay it since you instilled the desire in them. The other is to immediately tell the price and the prospect says Yes or No completely on their own motivation and that is that. Jesus is this second kind, so when someone wanted to be his disciple, he would tell them the price that discipleship demanded. Knowing the future he knew that fanatics who thought killing someone “in the cause of God” was a virtue, would indeed kill every one of the men he was speaking to, except for Saint John. Later we will see why Saint John was the exception.

And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. (John 16:3)

This is not an excuse for future wrongdoing, but an explanation of what will produce the murderous evil that the disciples will all face in time. The word *ginosko* means to know absolutely, to fully perceive and understand and be aware of something. In order to not betray God or ourselves in our spiritual life we must have this experiential knowledge (*jnana*) which comes from spiritual experience gained through sadhana.

But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. (John 16:4a)

Forewarned is truly forearmed in spiritual matters.

And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you. (John 16:4b)

The presence of a great soul (mahatma) is of tremendous benefit to the aspirant because his very aura or vibration affects us positively and uplifts our minds and wills, enabling us to think and will that which can strengthen and enlighten us along the spiritual journey. As I have said, the very physical presence of Anandamayi Ma affected me profoundly,

but when I was away from her I myself had to do the needful so I would not lose the perspective or resolve which her company produced in me. That application is the difference between a disciple and a groupie. Ma had many, many groupies, but very few disciples. Many ask, “What was it like to be with Anandamayi Ma?” But what mattered was what it was like when I was away from her.

**But now [soon] I go my way [depart] to him that sent me;
and none of you asketh me, Whither [Where] goest thou? (John
16:5)**

In the presence of a divine or Self-realized being higher consciousness can be experienced, as I have described about Anandamayi Ma. Therefore wherever Ma went we followed her like chicks following the mother hen. When she left from a place we felt desolate, alone, and yearned to be with her. Occasionally Ma would enjoy solitude by going to far-away places where no one even knew about her. Once when she was going to do this, just before she left she looked at me and said, “If I let you know where I am, will you come there?” YES was the answer, and so it was. Twice Ma arranged things so I and those with me were the only ones with her except for two or three people who always accompanied her.

Why was this? Once I heard a tape recording of Didi’s (Gurupriya Devi’s) brother talking about Ma. He told about how once Ma suddenly told everyone with her to get ready to travel, and continually kept telling them to hurry up, hurry up. So they got into a huge “touring car” and set off on a road indicated by Ma. She kept telling the driver to go faster, faster. After some time they came to a very high hill with a large dharmashala at the top. Ma told the driver to stop and jumped out of the car and started running up the hill with the others scrambling after. At the top she ran into the building and down a labyrinth of halls and into a room where an old sadhu was dying. Ma ran over to him and put her hand on his head, and he immediately left his body. Apparently he had heard of Ma and was praying to see her. So she heard the call and came to him. Did’s brother then said: “If you yearn for her, she yearns for you. That is the secret!”

The disciples did not ask where Jesus would go, for they did not yearn to be with him. Ma came out of the Infinite into this world, and her true devotee-disciples did/do their utmost to follow her into the Infinite.

But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow [heaviness] hath filled your heart. (John 16:6)

Most interesting. They were unhappy that Jesus would leave them, but did not ask where he was going or if they might go with him.

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient [better, profitable, to your advantage] for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto [enter into] you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. (John 16:7)

The visible, physical presence of Jesus needed to be withdrawn so the invisible spiritual presence of the Holy Spirit could be with—and within—them in unity of consciousness.

And when he is come, he will reprove [convict, convince] the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged [condemned]. (John 16:8-11)

Obviously, when the Holy Spirit comes to and enters the disciples their consciousness will be opened and they will perceive the spiritual realities behind the appearances of life in this material world. They will also perceive the *Archon*, the ruler of materiality and producer of deluded consciousness: Satan, the power of Cosmic Delusion. This is not a person, but negative energy which clouds and corrupts. Yet, since all things are essentially consciousness, this force manifests and operates in an intelligent and cunning manner. All we need know of this Satan is the absolute and urgent need to divest ourselves of its illusions and delusions and become knowers of Reality: the Paramatman, the Parambrahman,

and our own reality as atmans, spirit-Selfs, with It. And yoga sadhana is the way.

I have yet [also] many things to say unto you [tell you], but ye cannot bear [receive] them now [at present]. (John 16:12)

There are two major obstacles to our acceptance of an idea or fact: it conflicts with what we consider we already know to be true, or we just do not understand it. There are two reasons that we may not understand something: it is beyond the scope of our intellectual development to comprehend, or it is beyond our intuitional development and insight to perceive its reality or truth. Both the intellect and the intuition must be developed in depth and scope. There are two forms of “word” involved in this. One is the spoken, vibratory, intellectual word denoting an object or concept perceived by the senses or the intellect. The other is the unspoken word that embraces conceptualization, intuition and insight. Both are involved in yoga sadhana.

Howbeit [But] when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide [lead] you into all [the whole] truth: for he shall not speak [tell, reveal] of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear [understand, know], that shall he speak [tell, reveal]: and he will show you things to come.

He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.

All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take [receive, attain, obtain] of mine, and shall show it unto you. (John 16:13-15)

The reception of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was literally an initiation received by the apostles through the Virgin Mary, the embodiment of the Holy Spirit, the Mother aspect of God. A key term in these verses is the word “show,” the translation of the word *anaggello* which means to reveal to both intellect and intuition the existence and nature of something as

well as its implication. In a sense the initiate becomes one with the thing “shown” by his intellect and intuition entering into it and experiencing it—what the Bhagavad Gita (9:1) describes as “open vision direct and instant.”

FINAL WORDS

A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father. (John 16:16)

In a short time the tomb will separate Jesus from the disciples, but after another short time they will be reunited by his resurrection. Eventually the physical seeing of Jesus will end at his ascension, but the faithful disciples will see him inwardly with the eye of the spirit and sometimes even outwardly if he so chooses to manifest in subtle astral or material form, for “death hath no more dominion over him” (Romans 6:9).

Then said some of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father? They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith.

Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye inquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me?

Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice [be glad]: and ye shall be sorrowful [grieve], but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.

A woman when she is in travail [labor] hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man [human being] is born [brought forth] into the world.

And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see [appear to] you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man [no thing] taketh from you. (John 16:17-22)

Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. Such is the experience of being in this material world for those of true spiritual orientation and outlook. What the world loves and rejoices in is grievous to the wise who see its implications and its harms, for they see the spiritual devastation that life in the world can produce. But those who live in the spirit and its ways will ultimately find tremendous and lasting joy and fulfillment, while the worldlings will wander through life after life alternating between happiness, misery and hopelessness.

A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. We, too, “conceive” spiritual consciousness within, and by cultivating it through the purification and elevation of consciousness in sadhana we, too, are “born again” in the spirit and rejoice.

And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see [appear to] you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man [no thing] taketh from you. Finding the bonds of the world galling and bitter, the yogi intensely labors in the work of inner transformation, and when the inner life opens up and he begins to truly live in the spirit, that rejoicing and joy prevails over all things that might distract the yogi from his destiny and the journey to the realization of that destiny. “For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.... Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (I Corinthians 15:53-54, 58).

And in that day [time] ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give [grant] it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.

These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs [parables, similies]: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall show you plainly of the Father.

At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray [ask] the Father for you: For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.

I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father. (John 16:23-28)

And in that day [time] ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give [grant] it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. In the beginning the disciples needed Jesus to be an intermediary for them with God because they had no connection or practical experience with God. But after having spent three years with Jesus and learned from him, he tells them to freely approach and commune with God on their own. This is the way of every true spiritual teacher: he makes his students independent of him—in every way as close to and conversant with God as he is.

These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs [parables, similies]: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall show you plainly of the Father. The disciples will no longer be dependent on hearing truths being spoken to them, but will discover and know truths for themselves in their communion with God.

At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray [ask] the Father for you: For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father. Saint John, who was hearing these words along with the

other disciples, would himself one day say to his disciples: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (I John 3:2-3). For we, too, have come out from God and must purify ourselves and return to God. Yoga sadhana is the best and surest way to purify ourselves on all the levels of our being and existence and return to our divine Origin.

His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.

Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe? Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world. (John 16:29-33)

Being intellectually convinced of something is good, but it is not enough. Direct knowing is needed for an aspirant to be enabled in continuing his pilgrimage to Self-realization. Therefore Jesus knows and tells them of their coming flight from association with him. Though his words shocked them, he assured them of his love for them and their eventual establishment in their own divine experience and insight.

THE GREAT PRAYER FOR ALL

These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour [time] is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power [authority, jurisdiction] over all flesh [humanity], that he should give eternal [everlasting] life to as many as [whosoever] thou hast given him.

And this is life eternal [everlasting], that they might know [perceive, be aware of] thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished [completed, fulfilled, made perfect] the work which thou gavest me to do.

And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. (John 17:1-5)

These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour [time] is come. Nothing happens until the entire universe, visible and invisible, is in alignment for its manifestation. This is the basis for the science of astrology. That is why a capable astrologer can tell us what will not—because it cannot—happen, and what absolutely will happen, and what will happen if we make the right effort, but will not happen if we do not. The serious yogi should take astrology seriously. (But finding a good, reliable astrologer is no easy matter.)

Glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee. When two mirrors are set facing one another, they reflect each other to a seemingly infinite degree. This is why Paramhansa Yogananda had two very large mirrors facing each other in the vestibule of the Hollywood SRF Church: to symbolize the

infinity in everything. Each sentient being is a reflection of God, but that cannot be experienced or manifested unless there is complete alignment with God on all levels. This alignment is the “glory” of God and of each one of us. That is why the way to God-realization is called yoga: yoking—the union of the jivatman, the individual Self, with the Paramatman, the Supreme Self.

As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

To explain this would take a great deal of space, so I will just refer you to my small book *Robe of Light, An Esoteric Christian Cosmology* which explains the relation of Jesus to the world, and his purpose.

And this is life eternal [everlasting], that they might know [perceive, be aware of] thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

The purpose of every genuine spiritual teacher is to teach the way by which a human being can experience God as his inmost being. Those who just teach philosophy, however mystical, are merely wasting the time of those who aspire to real spiritual life. The master yogis show the way to know our own finite, divine god-Self, our own Christhood within the Infinite God. Only that awakening and knowing is truly Life Eternal. And those who are truly awakened, the truly knowing, will see and recognize the divine reality in all Its manifestations. All religions will be their religion, all the enlightened in those religions will be their master-teachers, and all scriptures will be their scriptures—sources of wisdom.

I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished [completed, fulfilled, made perfect] the work which thou gavest me to do. Like Jesus, we must also glorify God within us as our Self by totally knowing and manifesting our eternal divinity. For that is the work we have been given by God to do.

And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. And that glory is the experience of our Self as truly being, in the previously-cited words of the Nicene Creed: “God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God.”

I have manifested [revealed] thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept [held fast to] thy word.

Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. (John 17:6-8)

I have manifested [revealed] thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept [held fast to] thy word. God is the essence of our being, and therefore we belong to God. This is true of every sentient being. What a glorious perspective to live in and with!

Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. Such persons are fully equipped and empowered to experience and manifest “Christ in you the hope of glory.”

I pray [ask, beseech] for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given [committed to] me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. (John 17:9-10)

The material world by its very nature cannot know anything, for although all things are manifestations of consciousness, matter does not have the capacity or faculty of self-awareness, self-consciousness. And those whose consciousness is drowned in the experience of materiality therefore are incapable of awakening into spirit-consciousness at this stage in their evolutionary development. So Jesus does not waste his time with those who cannot awaken—and neither should we. This is not arrogance or snobbery, but just the simple truth. We do not try to teach an infant to speak, read or walk. That is just recognition of their present limitation. And although every sentient being will in time become a yogi and attain Self-realization, it will literally be in their own time—not ours.

There are three kinds of people: the unawakened, the awakening and the awakened. We should distinguish between them and relate to them accordingly.

And now [henceforth] I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep [guard] through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost [perished, destroyed], but the son of perdition [destruction, pernicious ways]; that the scripture might be fulfilled. (John 17:11-12)

Judas truly was “the son of perdition” as you can read about in *The Unknown Lives of Jesus and Mary*.

And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

I pray [ask] not that thou shouldest take them out of [remove them from] the world, but that thou shouldest keep [guard] them from the [things that are] evil.

They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

Sanctify [make holy] them through [in] thy truth: thy word [logos] is truth.

As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify [purify, consecrate] myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. (John 17:13-19)

And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. That perfect awakening which Jesus

carried always within himself is in us right now, but we must self-manifest it as he did.

The true true joy of Christ will be our fulfillment within. *Chara*, the word translated “joy,” means cheerfulness and calm delight. *Chara* is the quiet joy of the Self. It comes from *chairō*, which mean to be calmly happy, and was a common greeting among the Greeks, meaning “Be glad” and “Rejoice.” The English translation has that when the archangel came to tell the Virgin Mary of her coming motherhood of the Messiah he said “Hail,” but the original Greek has *chairō*: Be Glad–Rejoice. A fundamental characteristic of the yogi is quiet assurance and optimism. Therefore the yogi is *abhaya*: without fear, anxiety or worry.

I have given them thy word. *Logos*, translated “word,” means the power of speech, thought and intelligent, reflective reason(ing). It also implies the psychology, the mentality, which is created by possessing the power/ faculty of *logos*. It is specifically what we could call the mind of Christ, the “Christed” mind. That is why Saint Paul said, “We have the mind of Christ” (I Corinthians 2:16). And even more significantly: “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God” (Philippians 2:5-5). For the illumined Christ Mind knows it is equal with God, though finite and not infinite as is God. This is the essential teaching of Sanatana Dharma: THOU ART THAT, as we have seen in the sixth chapter of the Chandogya Upanishad.

And the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Illusion and the resulting delusion are the primal effects of the world on the mind of all sentient beings. Yet it is the innate nature of the human mind to rise to perfect knowing (gnosis) free from all illusion or delusion. Therefore the basic polarity of the world and the polarity of the mind free from the world’s polarization are absolute and irreconcilable opposites. And only one can prevail. Therefore the human population of the world consists of two fundamental types: the deluded and the enlightened, those whose minds are enmeshed in and identified with the world, and those who know themselves as spirit, as consciousness untouched by the world.

Saint John the Baptist said: "He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all" (John 3:31). Therefore there is a fundamental and unresolvable conflict between them.

This is why Saint Paul wrote: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people [Leviticus 26:12]. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters [Isaiah 52:11], saith the Lord Almighty" (II Corinthians 6:14-18). Jesus further said, "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise [turn against: disesteem] the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24, Luke 16:13). And as Saint James wrote: "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways" (James 1:8).

Therefore, as the yogi moves through his life he has to decide what and whom he will retain in his life sphere and what and whom he will eliminate. This is not easy and can even be painful. It was a sad day for me when I had to acknowledge that some people had no place in my life, however much I loved or valued them. Some I just quietly withdrew from and found that they never contacted me, and others just "somehow" drifted away on their own and never gave me a second thought.

Through the years I have seen that as a person evolves and rises in spiritual development he becomes invisible and virtually forgotten, even unremembered, by those with whom he was close before he began his upward climb in consciousness. As Abraham says in the parable of the beggar and the rich man, "Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence" (Luke 16:26). Truth is not easy

to face sometimes, but if it is not faced we will lose the ability to see it and thereby lose everything.

I pray [ask] not that thou shouldst take them out of [remove them from] the world, but that thou shouldst keep [guard] them from the [things that are] evil. The word translated “evil” is *poneros*, which means harmful influence. For the principles of righteousness are not just moral but practical. Evil is not just “bad,” it is harmful—actually, deadly, since it kills the conscience as well as the capacity to do the right and the good. It makes slaves of those that God and the master-teachers like Jesus desire to be free. There is no freedom outside of our own Self which is one with God. “Therefore be a yogi” (Bhagavad Gita 6:46).

They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. This is the truth. We and Jesus have the same Christ-nature, but we do not realize and actualize this truth. We are not at all of this world, anymore than our physical bodies have anything to do with the dreams we have in which we think we move around and inhabit dream bodies. This is why vairagya is essential just to be a sensible human being.

Sanctify [make holy] them through [in] thy truth: thy word [logos] is truth. *Logos* here means thought, intention and will and the power behind the divine thought, intention and will for all sentient beings. “God said, Let there be light: and there was light” (Genesis 1:3). The willing, the intending, was the doing! It can be the same with us as we grow more and more into the likeness of God, the inner pattern of divinity which is our purpose and destiny—the truth of our being.

As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify [purify, consecrate] myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. As Jesus did, so must we sanctify, purify and consecrate ourselves. As a child we sang in church a beautiful song, “Sitting At The Feet Of Jesus.” Not that we understood or even meant what we sang. For example, in that song we sang: “Give me, Lord, the mind of Jesus, keep me holy as He is.” The *mind* of Jesus? Holy as *he* is? Did we mean that? No. But Jesus meant it when he prayed that his disciples would be sanctified through the truth of their divine nature just as he was. So if we are wise, we will mean that utterly.

Health-food advocates often say, “We are what we eat,” and that is so, with some qualifications. But one thing is true: we are and become what we worship—if our worship is effective. Those who worship Christ become a Christ. Those who truly worship God become god at first, and then later on become God. Yes: “God from God, Light from Light, True God from True God.” The Nicene Creed said that in the fourth century and it is as true today as it was then, even though today Christians not only do not believe it, they deny it and say we are mere mortals and sinners. That is why a young woman I met at the Hollywood Vedanta Society had composed a song: “Jesus Made Me A Hindu.” Sanatana Dharma was the religion of Jesus (see *The Christ of India*), and will in time become the religion of those who truly seek to follow him. The others will just piously muddle around until they hear the words: “I never knew you” (Matthew 7:23).

Neither pray [ask, desire] I for these alone [only], but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. (John 17:20-23)

Neither pray [ask, desire] I for these alone [only], but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

Love is the basis of true spiritual unity. Unity is not uniformity—just the opposite. When there is true unity there is freedom for diversity. This is exemplified by the millennia-long history of India. Unity of purpose—the attainment of liberation-moksha—is the fundamental trait of authentic religion and of all genuine spiritual aspirants. Just as the jivatma and the

Paramatma are one, though not the same, so unanimity will prevail where there is true religion. For true religion is dharma: the righteous way of living which leads to enlightenment through Self-realization. Whatever omits or opposes this is adharma: unrighteousness, enmity toward righteousness (dharma). And those who oppose dharma are unrighteous and adharmic. *And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.* The glory which Jesus gave to his disciples was the glory of the revealed spirit-Self. This Self-realization is the supreme bond of unity and the sole aim of yoga. And its nature is love, the prime requisite of unity.

The final words of this prayer indicate that the disciples of Jesus will be exactly what Jesus was/is. Otherwise there could be no unity. So Christhood is the prime characteristic of being a disciple of Christ.

Father, I will [desire] that they also [likewise], whom thou hast given [committed to] me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

O righteous [holy] Father, the world hath not known [experienced, understood] thee: but I have known [experienced, understood] thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.

And I have declared [revealed] unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them. (John 17:24-26)

Father, I will [desire] that they also [likewise], whom thou hast given [committed to] me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. There are two aspects to being “with” Jesus: 1) being a Christ, and 2) consciously living in and with God. This consciousness is the regaining of our original consciousness which we had in the depths of God before we entered into relativity and constant rebirth. It is a blessed return in the

glory of our attained Christhood. For we were eternally potential Christs, but now shall be actual(ized) Christs.

O righteous [holy] Father, the world hath not known [experienced, understood] thee: but I have known [experienced, understood] thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. This knowing, this gnosis, which both Jesus and his true disciples possess is a direct knowing on the part of both God and his disciples. Saint Paul described the attainment of this knowing in these words: “For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known” (I Corinthians 13:12). Since we and God are one, our knowing of one another will be identical when we attain Self-realization. And that knowing, that *epignosis*, shall be full and complete—all-embracing.

Reading all these things I have been citing, who could doubt that Jesus was a yogi, a Sanatana Dharmi?

And I have declared [revealed] unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them. What is that Name which Jesus has declared, and which united those who knew it with God? That name is SOHAM, the cornerstone of the yoga of the Nath Yogis which they taught to Jesus when he joined them in India and was named Isha Nath by them. Soham Yoga is fully presented in the book, *Soham Yoga: The Yoga Of The Self*.

IN GETHSEMANE

And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives. And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray.

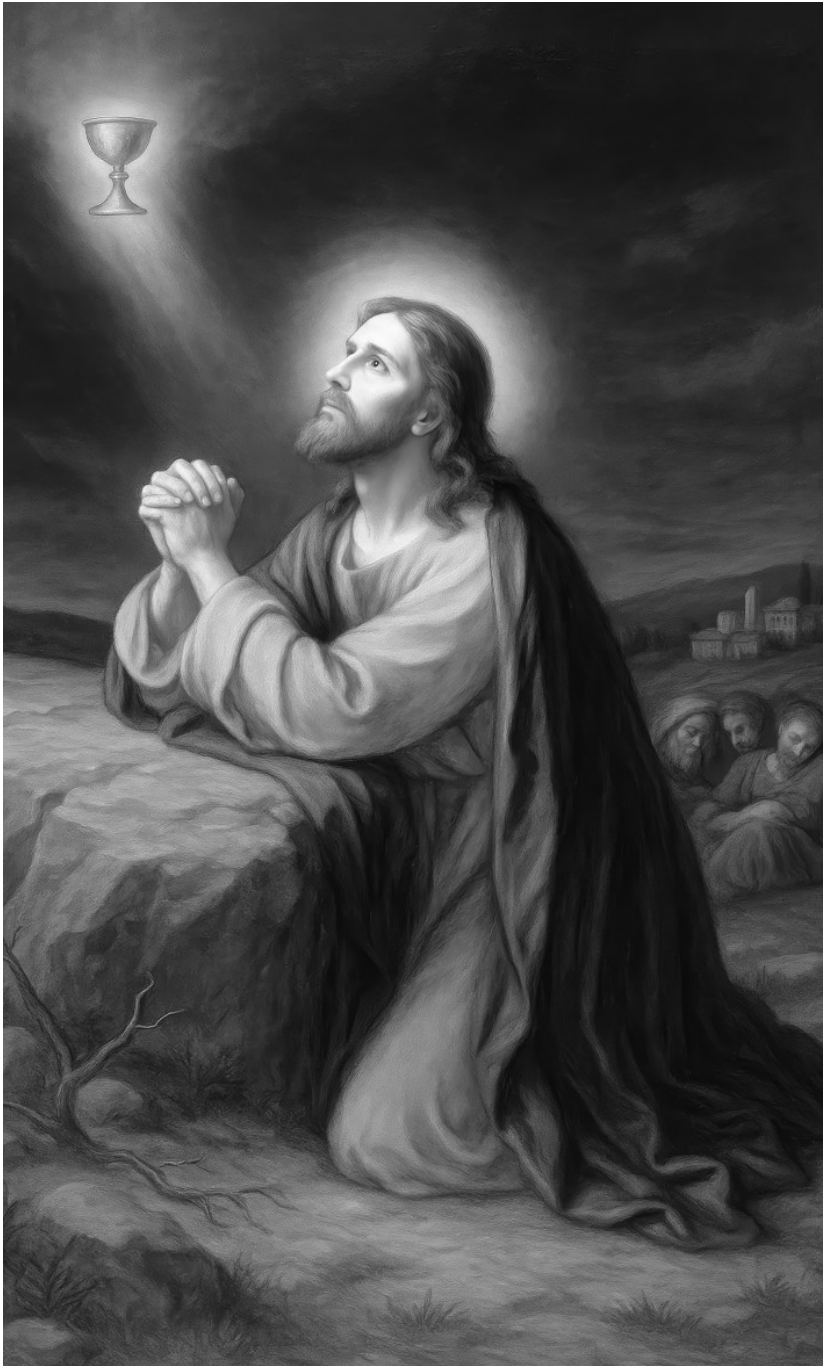
And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore [deeply] amazed [moved/agitated], and to be very heavy [distressed]; and saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry [remain] ye here, and [keep] watch.

And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass [away] from him. And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup [potion: figuratively, fate] from me: nevertheless not what I will [desire], but what thou wilt[desire].

And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldest not thou watch one hour? Watch ye and pray, lest ye [so you will not] enter into temptation. The spirit truly [indeed] is ready [willing], but the flesh [body] is weak [without strength].

And again he went away, and prayed, and spake the same words. And when he returned, he found them asleep again, (for their eyes were heavy,) neither wist [knew] they what to answer [say to] him.

And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed [committed, delivered] into the hands of sinners [the sinful].



Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand [coming near]. (Mark 14:26, 32-42)

And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives. And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray. And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore [deeply] amazed [moved/agitated], and to be very heavy [distressed]; and saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry [remain] ye here, and [keep] watch. The Mount of Olives is just outside Jerusalem, and Gethsemane means “oil press” because it was the place where the olive oil was pressed from the olives.

When an occasion of special significance was to occur, Jesus usually took Peter, James and John with him, leaving the others behind. When Swami Sriyuktaswar Giri met Mahavatar Babaji, the great master quickly disappeared. Later, when they met again, and the Swami was miffed at the mahavatar’s disappearance, Mahavatar Babaji said to him, “I told you I would see you, but didn’t say how long I would remain. You were full of excitement. I assure you that I was fairly extinguished in the ether by the gust of your restlessness.” In the same way, only those whose minds and hearts are united and established in atmic serenity can benefit from divine visitation. So Jesus the yogi acted accordingly.

The greatest pivotal moments in our spiritual life are almost always experienced when we are alone and cannot be distracted by the presence of others. After all, we come out from Brahman alone and we return to Brahman alone. That is why spiritual life has poetically been termed, “the flight of the alone to The Alone.”

In the Gospels a few encounters with Jesus occurred on the road to Jericho. More than once in my childhood I heard a song in church whose refrain was: “On the Jericho road there is room for just two, no more and no less: just Jesus and you.” The idea is that if we want to meet with and journey with Jesus, with God, no one else can be along in our journey. It is private and personal.

It is preferable that no one know you are a yogi, but if they do, that is all they should know. No details, not a hint about your sadhana. Be firm

and silent. You can refer them to the Bhagavad Gita or *Soham Yoga: The Yoga of the Self*, but leave it at that. And do not loan or buy a copy for them—they should get one for themselves, otherwise they are not serious in their inquiry.

Even in India people who should know better ask questions that are not appropriate about another person's sadhana. Anandamayi Ma was adamant that a sadhaka should tell nothing about his practice except in the most general way—if at all. She was uncompromising in her insistence on this. So those of us who took Ma seriously took her directions about this seriously.

Swami Kriyananda's first recorded album had a song called "Go On Alone." Here are the words:

Some men call it progress—
Down with those who doubt!—
To join the causes others join,
And shout when others shout.

Some men lack the daring
Ever to be free!
They shun the heights, and crowd the depths,
And court security.

Cowards see but pride in
Singularity,
"Oh, never mind if men are wrong,
So long as they agree!"

Claim the power within you
Error to defy!
The world may change or disappear,
But truth can never die!

This is not just an inspirational poem. It was written with Swamiji's heart blood. He did not just write it. He first lived it. As a Fundamentalist

Christian I had sung the words: "Heaven wills to thee a crown... Hell is moved to cast thee down." But Swamiji had lived it and come through victorious through scarred.

There is another song I had sung:

I can hear my Savior calling,
"Take thy cross and follow, follow Me."

Where He leads me I will follow,
I'll go with Him, with Him all the way.

I'll go with Him through the garden,
I'll go with Him, with Him all the way.

I'll go with Him through the judgment,
I'll go with Him, with Him all the way.

He will give me grace and glory,
And go with me, with me all the way.

It is every word true. And must be the yogi's resolve to go all the way to the glorious end. So once again I want to quote the words about the American Westward Expansion: "The cowards never started, and the weak died along the way."

In movies about the Old West it was not unknown for one or more characters to die and there to be a scene of their burial with a crude marker put over the grave and the major characters going on their way to the destination all had wanted to reach. As a yogi I left behind all my aspiring yogi friends. They would/did not go all the way.

And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass [away] from him. And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup [potion: figuratively, fate] from me: nevertheless not what I will [desire], but what thou wilt[desire]. In speaking of karma and its inescapable fulfilling or "reaping," Jesus had told

the disciples, “Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing” (Matthew 5:26). Even the greatest master cannot contravene the law of karma, and Jesus knew that. But sometimes there are alternatives in the way karma manifests or is dealt with, and he refers to that. But if there are no such alternatives, then it is only wisdom to embrace the karma and undergo it. For ultimately it is for the benefit of the individual. Karma is reaction, not reward or punishment, and its reaction-fulfillment is necessary for an individual’s progress in consciousness and evolution. That is why when Saint Bernadette was extremely ill and bedridden, when some visitors asked how she was, she replied, “I am doing my work.” “What work is that?” they asked, and she said, “Being sick.” This is the way of the wise.

And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldst not thou watch [stay awake] one hour? Often when people are in stress their inner mind tries to escape it by making them fall asleep. So sleep can be avoidance. One time some friends took me to a midnight showing of miscellaneous film shorts from decades before that were meant to be curiosities or even humorous. One was an old, thirty-minute silent film that dealt with a serious moral condition. People throughout the theater began falling asleep, and I understood that it was because the thing being portrayed was their condition, so they shut it out with sleep. As soon as that film was over, they all woke up and continued watching the rest of the program.

Watch [be vigilant, awake] ye and pray, lest ye [so you will not] enter into temptation. The Katha Upanishad has the same exhortation: “Arise, awake.... Sharp as the edge of a razor and hard to cross, difficult to tread is that path [so] sages declare” (Katha Upanishad 1.3.14). Only the alert mind will not be subject to delusion or incomprehension. For like the edge of a razor the path is supremely subtle, and only those with finely honed and subtle awareness can even perceive it, much less travel it.

The spirit truly [indeed] is ready [willing], but the flesh [body] is weak [without strength]. Therefore those of material-physically-oriented minds and consciousness, who as a consequence are completely out of touch with their true Self and the realities it alone can perceive and deal with, are

asleep in relation to their Self. In contrast, those who will continue their awakening in the Self are willing, ready and able to do all that is needed to attain liberation in this very life. This is why without meditation, without sadhana, no genuine spiritual progress is possible.

And again he went away, and prayed, and spake the same words. And when he returned, he found them asleep again, (for their eyes were heavy,) neither wist [knew] they what to answer [say to] him. They relapsed into their earlier stupor, and so do those whose consciousness is not centered in the Self or at least approaching that state. Simply accepting the reality of the Self is not enough. There must be motivation to empower the search for the revelation of the Self. When we are going to take a long journey we fill our auto with gasoline and keep replenishing it as we travel. In the same way we must keep alert and active at all times. Mumukshutwa, the desire to realize the Self, and the scrupulous observance of yama-niyama are the necessary fuel for the journey. This is why in a talk Yogananda said that most people will come to the door of Self-realization and fall asleep; that few will enter.

“Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait [narrow] gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able” (Luke 13:23-24).

Earlier I cited the song:

So straight is the gate and so narrow

The way to eternal day,

And few are the pilgrims who find it,

Too great is the price they must pay.

Salvation is free, yet to gain it

The soul must leave all things behind;

Deny self [ego] and follow the Savior,

The way straight and narrow to find.

How rugged the path, yet God's glory

Attendeth each soul on that way;

And brighter and brighter it shineth,
Revealing a glad, perfect day.

But it's worth all it costs to be holy,
It is worth all it costs to be true;
God's blessing and honor shall crown thee
With power thy life to endue.

And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed [committed, delivered] into the hands of sinners [the sinful]. How sad it is when those who have heard the call to awake turn and go back to sleep. This is why the wise soul prays: "Consider and hear me, O Lord my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death" (Psalms 13:3). And how does that sleep of death come upon us: "Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come" (Proverbs 6:10-11, 24:33-34). Little things destroy just as big things destroy. "Little no-harms" destroy those who are not spiritually vigilant, for they are what the wise Solomon called "the little foxes, that spoil the vines" (Song of Solomon 2:25).

The inner vigilance we need is expressed in this incident I heard about many decades ago. A school board was interviewing applicants for the job of school bus driver. They asked each applicant, "If it was winter and you had a bus full of children and you came to an icy bridge that had no railings, how close do you feel you could drive to the edge of the bridge and yet feel safe?" They hired the one who said, "I would drive right in the middle of the bridge, and I would not feel safe until I got to the other side."

Rise [wake] up, let us go [away—from here]; lo [see], he that betrayeth me is at hand [coming near]. The Prodigal Son said, "I will arise and go" (Luke 15:18), and so should we arise in our consciousness and remove ourselves from that which would lead us into betraying our own Self. And we do not just walk a few yards away—we get out of there!

As Saint Peter counsels us: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil [Satan, the force and power of delusion], as a roaring lion,

walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (I Peter 5:8). Otherwise it will be with us as in the children's song:

O she sailed away on a bright and sunny day
On the back of a crocodile.
"You see," said she, "he's as tame as he can be,
And I'll ride him down the Nile."

But the croc winked his eye
As she bade them all goodbye,
Wearing a great big smile.
At the end of the ride, the lady was inside,
And the smile on the crocodile!

THE BETRAYER COMES

And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples.

Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons. [John 18:2-3]

[And he that betrayed him had given them a token [signal], saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he; take him, and lead him away safely [securely]. And as soon as he was come, he goeth straightway to him, and saith, Master, master; and kissed him. (Mark 14:44-45)]

[But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss? (Luke 22:48)]

Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons. This is very interesting and revealing. Judas comes surrounded with a numerous escort with weapons to arrest Jesus, an Essene pacifist. Why? Partly from guilty fear and to create the false impression that Jesus and the disciples were dangerous, violent people. It is a common ploy of evil people to claim that those they hate and wish to defame (or worse) “frighten” and “unsettle” them, creating an image of them to others as threatening and possibly harmful. And also it shows his hatred toward Jesus and his disciples. He would like to have an excuse to physically harm them, perhaps to kill them.

[And he that betrayed him had given them a token [signal], saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he; take him, and lead him away safely [securely]. And as soon as he was come, he goeth straightway to him, and saith, Master, master; and kissed him. (Mark 14:44-45)]

[But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss? (Luke 22:48)]

“Christian” religionists continually betray Jesus and God with the “kiss” of their false devotion and supposed worship. And it happens in India, too.

Anandamayi Ma revealed that there were major politicians who believed that Indira Gandhi was protected and kept in political power by Ma’s blessing. Ma had given Indira a rudraksha mala, and it was said (falsely) that as long as Indira wore that mala she could never be ousted from power. I had heard of this, and during one pilgrimage to India I saw in a newspaper a political cartoon showing Indira jumping from stone to stone in a river while holding on with one hand to a japa mala around her neck!

Anyhow, some of these politicians actually hired black magicians to kill Ma with magic so Indira would fall from power. Ma said that at all times she was bombarded with curses and evil energies. Of course it had no effect. But these people continually came to see Ma to observe if their machinations were working. Ma said that some of those who were believed to be the most devoted to her were really trying to assassinate her by magic.

There are many forms of “Judas-ism” in religion, from simple hypocrisy to much worse. All we need to concern ourselves with is making sure we will never be Judas to ourselves or to God.

Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye?

They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them.

As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground.

Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth.

Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way:

That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none [John 17:12]. (John 18:4-9)

There is nothing to comment on here, since it is simple narrative, except the sixth verse: "As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground."

This brings to mind two things. First, Shankara's magnificent "Stanzas on Nirvana" which has the recurring refrain: *Chidanand rupah: Shivo ham, Shivoham*: "I am the form of blissful consciousness. I am Shiva! I am Shiva!" Here is the translation of these verses by Swami Nikhilananda in his translation of *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*.

I am neither mind, intelligence, ego, nor chitta,
Neither ears nor tongue nor the senses of smell and sight;
Nor am I ether, earth, fire, water, or air:
I am Pure Knowledge and Bliss: I am Shiva! I am Shiva!

I am neither the prana, nor the five vital breaths,
Neither the seven elements of the body nor its five sheaths,
Nor hands nor feet nor tongue, nor the organs of sex and voiding:
I am Pure Knowledge and Bliss: I am Shiva! I am Shiva!

Neither loathing nor liking have I, neither greed nor delusion;
No sense have I of ego or pride, neither dharma nor moksha;
Neither desire of the mind nor object for its desiring:
I am Pure Knowledge and Bliss: I am Shiva! I am Shiva!

Neither right nor wrong doing am I, neither pleasure nor pain,
Nor the mantra, the sacred place, the Vedas, the sacrifice;
Neither the act of eating, the eater, nor the food:
I am Pure Knowledge and Bliss: I am Shiva! I am Shiva!

Death or fear I have none, nor any distinction of caste;
Neither father nor mother nor even a birth have I;
Neither friend nor comrade, neither disciple nor guru:
I am Pure Knowledge and Bliss: I am Shiva! I am Shiva!

I have no form or fancy; the All-pervading am I;
Everywhere I exist, yet I am beyond the senses;
Neither salvation am I, nor anything that may be known:
I am Pure Knowledge and Bliss: I am Shiva! I am Shiva!

Then second, and most likely: the *Mahavakya*, the Great Word of Truth, SOHAM, which literally means “I Am That.” When Jesus as a perfected Nath Yogi said from the depths of his being with full realization: “I Am He!” the divine light and power that he embodied in his consciousness enveloped his enemies, literally knocking them to the ground.

And Jesus said unto him [Judas], Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him.

And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote [cut] off his ear.

[And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. [Leave it be.] And he touched his ear, and healed him. (Luke 22:51)]

Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.

[The cup which the Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? (John 18:11)]

Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?

But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?

In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me.

But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled. (Matthew 26:50-56)

And Jesus said unto him [Judas], Friend, wherefore art thou come? We sometimes speak of establishing a relationship with God. Of course, that means from our side we must be relating to him. But God has an eternal relationship with us that cannot be lost, though it can be ignored, denied or hindered by us. And one facet of that relationship is Friend. God does not see us as subjects or servants, but as his own and dearest. As Saint John wrote: “Now are we the sons of God” (I John 3:2). We are one with him and he is one with us. This is a great wonder, but nonetheless true. However, a refrain of a song I often sang about this is also definitely true:

There is not a friend like Jesus,
Patient, tender, kind, and true;
If you'll be a friend of Jesus,
He will be a friend to you.

There is potential friendship and actual friendship. Actual friendship must be established on both sides. Otherwise one or both are strangers. That is why Solomon wrote: “A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly” (Proverbs 18:24). But since we are one with God, a much more intense friendship than that with other human beings is possible, even obligatory. It is a state of unity, of eternal identity, yet without loss of distinction. As Saint John said of this mystery: “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (I John 3:2). This is what is known in Sanskrit as Vishishtadvaita Vedanta: Qualified Non-Dualism. It cannot be understood by the limited intellect, but it can be experienced and known by the Self, since it is the nature of the Self.

Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him. And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priests, and smote [cut] off his ear. [And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. [Leave it be.] And he touched his ear, and healed him. (Luke 22:51)] When sandalwood or roses are crushed they give forth a sweet perfume. In the same way, a truly good person at all times

only radiates and does good. So Jesus restored the ear of someone whose aim was to seize and arrest him at the order of his enemies who intended to kill him. As I mentioned before, in the early days of Christianity there was a joke in Rome that if Nero wandered into the catacombs and got lost the Christians (who were hiding there from the persecution of Nero) would give him food and new clothing and lead him out. They thought the Christians were fools to act in such a manner, but the term “fool for Christ’s sake” is a title given by the Eastern Christian (Orthodox) Church to some saints. As Saint Paul said, “The foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men” (I Corinthians 1:25).

Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. “For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Galatians 6:7).

[The cup which the Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? (John 18:11)] This is the test of the true sons of God: those who say with Jesus, “Thy will be done.”

Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? Later Jesus will tell Pilate, “Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above” (John 19:11).

But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be? All must be done according to the divine word and will. The entire life of Jesus was a mystery drama portraying the unfolding life of Christhood in each one of us. And the cross is an essential part of that journey to Christhood. As “The Way of the Cross Leads Home”—another song I knew long ago—said:

I must needs go home by the way of the cross,
There is no other way but this;
I shall never get sight of the gates of light,
If the way of the cross I miss.

I must needs go on in the blood-sprinkled way,
The path that the Savior trod,

If I shall ever climb to the heights sublime,
Where the soul is at home with God.

Then I bid farewell to the way of the world,
To walk in it nevermore;
For the Lord says, "Come," and I seek my home
Where He waits at the open door.

Saint Paul assures us that Jesus "for the joy that was set before [presented to] him endured the cross, despising [disesteeming] the shame [disgrace], and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:2). Or course, it is only the ego, the false self, that finds the way of the spirit painful and stifling. To the real Self, it is freeing and joyful. Therefore the worthy yogi says there is no price too high, for through self-purification and sadhana "we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory" (II Corinthians 3:18). That is the wonder that awaits us.

In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me. The opponents of good are fundamentally cowards.

But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. And this must all be done in the life of those who seek the revelation of "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27).

Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled. Christian mystics have said that there is a condition known as "the dark night of the soul" undergone by those who seek Christhood. It is an inner condition of darkness, of emptiness, a kind of spiritual void in which there is no indication of God even exists. There is nothing within or without. And all must go through it to reach the Light of Christ within themselves as a permanent inner condition. This is not just a test, it is actually a necessary preparation for the discovery within us of our own self-sufficiency. For God himself has declared to all human beings: "Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High" (Psalms 82:6). When all "things" vanish from us, then

we find the “one thing needful” that Jesus spoke about to Saint Martha (Luke 10:42).

Ultimately we walk the Way of Christhood alone. Jesus prayed alone in Gethsemane, stood alone in Pilate’s judgment hall, was crowned with thorns alone, was crucified alone, and conquered death alone. That is the way our inner Christhood is revealed.

But it’s worth all it costs to be holy,
It is worth all it costs to be true;
God’s blessing and honor shall crown thee
With power thy life to endure.

THE ARREST AND TRIAL

Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him, and led him away to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year. Now Caiaphas was he, which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest.

But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter.

Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not.

And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold: and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself.

The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine. Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said.

And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so?

Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?

Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest. (John 18:12-23)

Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him, and led him away to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year. Now Caiaphas was he, which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people. This last part refers to a passage from the eleventh chapter:

“Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.

“And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.

“And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad” (John 11:47-52).

And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was [well] known [an acquaintance] unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest.

The “another disciple” was Saint John himself. Knowing that the captors of Jesus had been sent and armed by the high priest, to whom he was well known, he did not hesitate to enter and be recognized as Jesus’ disciple.

But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter. From this we see that Saint John was like a member of the high priest’s household.

Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not. This is the first denial prophesied to him by Jesus.

And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold: and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself. Yogananda said, "Company is greater than will power," and observance of human behavior bears that out. As a yogi Yogananda knew that the energies—including mental energies—of a person's aura mingle with those around him. So we continually mingle mind-and-life energies with whomever we are near. So part of our mind is absorbed by them, and their mind-power is absorbed by us. No wonder yogis prefer solitude! "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord" (II Corinthians 6:17, Isaiah 52:11) is wise counsel. So Peter is mingling his prana and mind with those warming themselves around the fire—which is also a psychic force.

The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine. Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said.

And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so?

Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?

Jesus is fearless, though he knows what lies before him. One of the features of an adept yogi's personality is *abhaya*—complete absence of fear or anxiety.

TO THE HIGH PRIEST

And they led Jesus away to the high priest: and with him were assembled all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes. And the chief priests and all the council sought for witness against Jesus to put him to death; and found none. For many bare false witness against him, but their witness agreed not together. And there arose certain, and bare false witness against him, saying, We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands. But neither so did their witness agree together.

And the high priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee?

But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?

And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death.
(Mark 14:53, 55-64)

Here we see the typical absurdity and shameless falsehood that comes from the mouths of the enemies of their own souls when they persecute the righteous.

And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say unto him, Prophecy: and the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands. (Mark 14:65)

Jesus was blindfolded (Luke 22:64), so they struck him and demanded that he tell them who it was that had struck him. Even servants dared to participate and mock him. Such was the cup Jesus drank, loving his tormenters at all times. The composer Ira Stanphill wrote a hymn entitled "A Crown of Thorns." The words are these:

There was no crown for Him of silver or of gold,
There was no diadem for Him to hold.
But blood adorned His brow,
And proud its stain He bore,
And sinners gave to Him the crown He wore.

He did not reign upon a throne of ivory,
But died upon the cross of Calvary.
For sinners there He counted all He owned but loss,
And He surveyed His kingdom from a cross.

No purple robe He wore,
His bleeding wounds to hide,
But stripes upon His back He wore with pride.
And from the wounds there flowed a crimson, cleansing stream
That was a cover for the soul unclean.

A rugged cross became His throne
His kingdom was in hearts alone
He wrote His love in crimson red
And wore the thorns upon His head.

THE DENIAL OF PETER

And as Peter was beneath in the palace, there cometh one of the maids of the high priest: And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked upon him, and said, And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth. But he denied, saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest.

And he went out into the porch; and the cock crew.

And a maid saw him again, and began to say to them that stood by, This is one of them. And he denied it again.

And a little after, they that stood by said again to Peter, Surely thou art one of them: for thou art a Galilaean, and thy speech agreeth thereto [sounds like it]. But he began to curse and to swear [vow, take an oath], saying, I know not this man of whom ye speak. And the second time the cock crew.

And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. (Mark 14:66-72)

And Peter went out, and wept bitterly [wept aloud violently]. (Luke 22:62)

What comment need be made? Perhaps only that no one should be confident about their resolve to live the higher life, but be aware that many before them have failed and even reversed their intentions. Therefore they must stay safe at all times by never slackening in their resolve or neglecting their spiritual obligations and disciplines—especially meditation.

BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN

And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes came together, and led him into their council [Sanhedrin], saying, Art thou the Christ [Messiah]? tell us.

And he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe: And if I also ask [question] you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go [free].

Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the [omnipotent] power of God.

Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am [You say what is true].

And they said, What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of [from] his own mouth. (Luke 22:66-71)

This is quite clear. They have gotten Jesus to declare the truth about himself and his condemnation will follow as a consequence. This is why spiritually-oriented people—yogis especially—should be very reticent, even closed-mouthed, about their beliefs and practices. Jesus said very plainly: “Give [reveal] not that which is holy [sacred] unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again [around] and rend [tear, gore, lacerate] you” (Matthew 7:60).

When Jesus spoke about dogs he did not mean what we are used to today. He meant wild animals—jackals and hyenas—that were the ancestors of our animal friends. And by swine he meant wild boars that would attack and even kill human beings just as the jackals and hyenas would. Now it is certainly not a pleasant thing to consider people as vicious wild animals, but some are in their minds and behavior.

Your spiritual life and practice are the most sacred things you have and should be guarded. Though most inquirers about your spiritual life will be only idly curious and you are wasting your time, there are those that will be enraged at your words and viciously attack and denounce you verbally. Realize this: there are people who hate dharma in any form, especially Sanatana Dharma. One time a woman asked me what I liked about India. When I simply said, "Everything," she began screaming at me and denouncing me as an idiot and insane.

Another fact we must be aware of is that some people are either obsessed or possessed by evil spirits. Much of Jesus' ministry was in freeing such people from obsession or possession. And they will hate you on sight. Some will quickly leave, but some will remain and do what they can to frustrate, hassle or insult you. They would like to physically assault you, but will not out of fear of legal retribution. A man who had recently taken up the practice of Soham Yoga told me that some people, strangers, upon seeing him coming down the street would make faces of disgust or dislike and turn and run away.

Hope for the best and be prepared for the worst is a good motto.

THE REPENTANCE OF JUDAS

Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented [regretted] himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.

And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that.

And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.

And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood. And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood [Haceldama], unto this day.

Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value; and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me. (Matthew 27:3-10; quotation from Zachariah 11:13)

See the hideous distortion possible to the minds of exoteric religionists. These people are plotting the death of Jesus, bringing upon themselves the sin and the resulting karma of murder, and they are scrupulous about putting the price of blood into the temple treasury! So they decide to "do good" with the money by buying land where strangers (usually pilgrims from abroad) who died in Jerusalem could be buried. That field exists today as a memorial to vile hypocrisy in religion.

Here is what the book of Acts tells us regarding Judas and his suicide. "In those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, Men

and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood.” (Acts 1:15-20)

Judas betrayed Jesus and then betrayed his own divine Self by committing suicide. Yogananda said that suicide is the worst sin a person can commit against himself. So what was the fate of Judas? Yogananda revealed that, also. He said that Jesus himself appeared to Sri Ramakrishna and told him that Judas had suffered through many lives after his betrayal and was finally able to turn around and take up spiritual life again, and he wanted to send Judas to Sri Ramakrishna so he could be liberated from rebirth. Sri Ramakrishna agreed, and in a short while he met a young man, Sarat Chandra Chakravarty, whom he recognized as the reincarnated Judas. When Yogananda met him he was Swami Saradananda, transformed by his contact with Ramakrishna. However, Yogananda said that he had “a peculiar attitude toward money” which Yogananda did not describe. But Yogananda said that whenever Sri Ramakrishna’s other disciples teased him about this attitude, Ramakrishna would rebuke them severely and tell them to leave him alone.

In time Swami Saradananda was a renowned spiritual leader. In 1896 he went to London where he headed the Vedanta Society, and later went to New York and did the same in New York City, Brooklyn, and Boston. In January of 1898 he returned to India and was the administrative head of the Ramakrishna Mission there. As Saint John the Beloved Apostle was the guardian of the Virgin Mary after the departure of Jesus from this world, so Swami Saradananda became the guardian of Sri Ma Sarada Devi, the virgin consort of Sri Ramakrishna after Sri Ramakrishna’s departure from this world.

The love of God always wins in the end, since “God is love” (I John 4:8, 16).

BEFORE PILATE

Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early [morning]; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be [ceremonially] defiled; but that they might eat the passover [meal].

Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man?

They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee.

Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death:

That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die. Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews?

Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?

Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?

Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto [give testimony of] the truth. Every one that is of the

truth heareth [understands] my voice.

Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all. (John 18:28-38)

Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early [morning]; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be [ceremonially] defiled; but that they might eat the passover [meal]. Here again is the moral insanity of the fanatical externalists in religion. Through hatred and lies they are wanting to bring about the death of an innocent person, but they think that simply entering a Roman building will defile them and render them unfit to observe the Passover. Jesus had this mentality in mind when he said, “Except [Unless] your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case [no wise] enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:20).

Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man? They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee.

Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death. That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake [John 12:33], signifying what death he should die. The outrage compounds. Only the death of Jesus will satisfy them.

Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews? If Jesus was publicly claiming to be the king of Judea (“Jews” in the English translations should be translated “Judeans”), then Pilate could condemn him for insurrection against the Roman government. So he is not just asking for facts, but is seeking a valid reason to sentence him to death. Pilate merits no sympathy in this matter. He knows the truth and like Jesus’ accusers wants to find a way around it.

Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? That is: Are you accusing me or only repeating what others have told you?

Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done? For he seeks a point of civil law against Jesus.

Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. Jesus is speaking into the air, wasting his time with Pilate. There is a lesson here for the spiritual aspirant, especially the yogi, to learn. Attempting to explain or justify your spiritual path to the ignorant and the corrupt will only create trouble for you. Say as few words as possible, or say you do not like to engage in religious discussion, or leave. I advise you from long personal experience. Please understand that the path you have taken has already morally separated you from those who do not walk that path with you. As Abraham said to the rich man in the afterlife: “Between us and you there is a great gulf [chasm] fixed [established]: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence” (Luke 16:26). I know this sounds extreme, but that is because it IS. Look and learn.

“For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish” (Luke 14:28-30). “Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay” (Ecclesiastes 5:5). This is wisdom.

Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto [give testimony of] the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth [understands] my voice. Each one of us has come into this world to discover and experience the truth of the Self, and to live out that truth on the stage of this world. It is not enough to speak truth: it must be lived, it must be acted upon, and it must be embodied in us. This is a great obligation laid on all who truly seek the ultimate reality of their Self. Here is how Jesus said it according to three gospels:

“Neither [Never] do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel [basket], but on a candlestick; and it giveth light [shines out] unto all that are in the house” (Matthew 5:15).

“Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed? and not to be set on a candlestick?” (Mark 4:21).

“No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light” (Luke 11:33).

And Saint Paul said to the early Christians, “Ye shine as lights in the world” (Philippians. 2:15)

Once I was eating in a small vegetarian restaurant in Hollywood just down the block from the Self-Realization Fellowship center. A man came smiling over to my table and said with no preamble, “You’re a yogi, aren’t you”? I said, “Yes,” and he replied, “I knew it, because all you yogis have light around you.”

Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all. Notice that Pilate did not wait for Jesus to answer his question as to the nature of truth. Obviously he was one of these falsely “open” and “liberal” people who are comfortably self-assured that there either is no truth, or no one can absolutely define the truth, or no one can really know the truth. And like most of them he does not want there to be a definable—and therefore obligating—truth. In other words, as we shall soon see for ourselves, he was a moral coward.

THE CHOICE IS OFFERED

But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you [pardon] one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?

Every year someone who was condemned to death was freed by the Roman government. The roots of this I do not know, but I suspect it is a mutation of the practice or concept of the “scapegoat.” Here is what Wikipedia says about it.

“The scapegoat was a goat that was designated ‘for absolute removal’ (for symbolic removal of the people’s sins with the literal removal of the goat), and outcast in the desert as part of the Yom Kippur Temple service, that began during the Exodus with the original Tabernacle and continued through the times of the temples in Jerusalem.

“Once a year, on Yom Kippur, the Cohen Gadol [High Priest] sacrificed a bull as a sin offering to atone for sins he may have committed unintentionally throughout the year. Subsequently he took two goats and presented them at the door of the tabernacle. Two goats were chosen by lot: one to be ‘for YHWH’, which was offered as a blood sacrifice, and the other to be the scapegoat to be sent away into the wilderness and pushed down a steep ravine where it died.... Later in the ceremonies of the day, the High Priest confessed the intentional sins of the Israelites to God placing them figuratively on the head of the other goat, the Azazel scapegoat, who would symbolically ‘take them away.’”

It is my speculation that the custom of a malefactor being released and the other executed is derived from this. So when Pilate presented Jesus and Barabbas to the people they declared for the release of one and the death of the other. Jesus was the “scapegoat” and Barabbas the other.

Here is an interesting though hardly known historical fact. Both men were named Jesus–Yahosuhua in Hebrew and Yeshua in Aramaic. One was Yeshua Bar Abbas, Son of Abbas, and the other was called by some Yeshua Messihah, Jesus the Messiah, the Christ. The symbolism is interesting. It portrays the decision the human being makes throughout life when confronted with the choice between right and wrong, between noble and ignoble. (And for the yogi: between Atma [Self] and Anatma [Not-Self].) In his poem, “The Misty Flats,” John Oxenham wrote this:

To every many there openeth
A way, and ways, and a way.
And the high soul climbs the high way,
And the low soul gropes the low,
And in between on the misty flats
The rest drift to and fro.
But to every man there openeth
A high way and a low—
And every man decideth the way his soul shall go.

To those of us with a metaphysical view it is the choice between not just right and wrong but between Christhood and Manhood, immortality or mortality: Christ Nature or human nature. God has said, “Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High” (Psalms 82:6), but that is rarely acknowledged, much less aspired to.

Naturally Pilate assumed that the crowd would demand the release of Jesus, but:

THE CHOICE IS MADE

Then cried [clamored] they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber. (John 18:39-40)

Leistes, translated “robber” means a plunderer, a brigand, and Saint Luke’s gospel says that Barabbas had been put in prison “for insurrection and murder” (Luke 23:25). By this we see the profound evil of those clamoring for Jesus’ death. They would have a criminal released in order to have the death of someone who healed the sick, raised the dead and converted (reformed) sinners.

PILATE'S WIFE

Here we must pause for a moment to consider an incident that took place during the foregoing.

When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just [innocent, righteous] man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him. (Matthew 27:19)

Pilate's wife, Claudia Procula, was shown in a dream-vision the trial of Jesus and the truth of his nature and his innocence. She was in great distress lest her husband commit a terrible crime against such an innocent person by sentencing him to death. But Pilate did not have the moral strength, even after this sign, to set Jesus free. When Pilate released Jesus to his enemies, Claudia secretly left the governor's palace and took refuge with the disciples of Jesus, becoming a member of the original Christian community in Jerusalem.



THE MOCKERY OF JESUS AND THE CONDEMNATION BY PILATE

Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him.

And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe, and said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands.

Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him.

Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!

When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him.

Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him.

The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.

When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid; and went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer.

Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?

Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against [concerning] me, except it were given thee from above: therefore

he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.

And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar.

When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha.

And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour [noon]: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!

But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priest answered, We have no king but Caesar. (John 19:1-15)

When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it.

Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children. (Matthew 27:24-25)

Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him. Pilate gave instructions that Jesus was to be flogged with a flagellum, a whip that had several thongs at the end of which were lead balls so not only would the skin be broken, the flesh would be pounded to jelly. It was common for a scourged person to die from the trauma, or if they lived, to die from the consequent infection that would result. It was virtually a death sentence in itself.

And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe, and said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands. Saint Matthew describes it in this way: "Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers. And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put

it upon his head, and a reed [mock scepter] in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head” (Matthew 27:27-30).

During my pilgrimage to Israel I stood where the crowd clamored for the death of Jesus. Then the guide took me into a lower part of the remains of Pilate’s palace. There several geometrical figures had been chipped into the stone that reminded me of a hop-scotch diagram. I had always assumed that Jesus was given special torment by the soldiers, but the guide told me that a “game” called *Basileus*—The King—was a common way of torturing a prisoner to death. A marker was tossed onto the diagram which was divided into several compartments, and according to which section the marker landed in, a specific torture was applied. This would be done again and again until the victim either died or was spared to be crucified—the worst form of death to undergo. So Jesus did not even get special torture from the wild beasts in human form!

The prophet Isaiah, whom some believe to have been a previous incarnation of Jesus (see *Robe of Light*), had foreseen this and wrote about the Messiah: “Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed [regarded] him not.

“Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

“He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

“And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth” (Isaiah 53:7-8). Jesus “made his grave... with the rich in his death” when he was buried in the tomb of the wealthy Joseph of Arimathea.

Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man! When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him. The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid; and went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? The Romans believed that the gods on occasion impregnated human women and so the resulting offspring was a son of a god. Pilate was afraid that Jesus might indeed be such a child of a deity and whoever would harm him, much less kill him, would incur the deity's curse and vengeance.

But Jesus gave him no answer. Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?

Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against [concerning] me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin. This is the simple truth. No one has the power to do anything to anyone except through the fulfillment of a person's karma. It is often said about someone who escaped great peril that he had “a charmed life,” but the reality is that he could not be harmed if it was not his karma to undergo that harm. This is why we hear of “freak” incidents in which someone was inexplicably either protected or harmed. But it really was all according to cosmic law: Karma.

So we should understand that everything which happens to us occurs only through the power of our own karma. Our karma is an echo of, a response to, our previous thoughts and actions. We create our own destiny

of either fulfillment or deprivation. I Did It Myself is a good motto to keep in mind throughout our life. There is no room in karmic law/force for blaming others. However, those who were seeking Jesus' death were creating tremendous and horrendous karma for their future life or lives. It is the physics of metaphysics: For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. What we do to others is done to us. It is the Law.

And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar.

When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour [noon]: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!

But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priest answered, We have no king but Caesar. (John 19:1-15) This final sentence is the capstone. The enemies of Jesus hated the Roman emperor above all, for ultimately he was their enslaver. So for them to even acknowledge that Caesar was their king was maximum hypocrisy. But their hatred of Jesus was stronger than their hatred of Caesar.

When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. It would not prove to be that easy for Pilate. Karma, too, was the determining force that he would one day face.

Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children. They said this with this verse in mind which describes God as: "Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation" (Exodus 34:7). But did they really believe it? Chances are they did not.

Sadly, their outrageous words of self-cursing have been invoked for two thousand years to prove that the Jewish people are guilty of Jesus'

death. Only those who intentionally and with full understanding were involved in his death incurred any karma. Also, it must be kept in mind that whenever the King James version says “Jews,” the word is *Ioudaios*, which means Judeans, the citizens of Judea—not anyone else. And of course it cannot involve everyone of Judea, because many of Jesus’ disciples were from Judea!

There was, however a history to this. First, the Judeans thought they were the foremost in Israel and were snobbish to all the other Jews (Israelites). Further, they especially disliked and snubbed the Galileans, and Jesus and his disciples were from the district of Galilee.

There was more. Not only were the Judeans arrogant towards other Jews in Israel, they were the same to the Jews in the diaspora, and cheated them outrageously whenever they came on pilgrimage to worship in the temple at Jerusalem. Here is how. Money coined by Gentiles was considered profane, so the temple made its own money which had to be used for the purchase of any offerings to be made in the temple. Only offerings purchased by temple money would be considered pure and acceptable. So money was changed right in the temple itself. And the exchange rate was criminal: very little temple money was given in exchange for a great deal of ordinary money. There was more to come. When a worshipper exchanged the leftover temple money he had bought for regular money, the exchange rate was even more unfair. It was literally daylight robbery. And since people usually make no distinction between an entire nationality and a minority, the whole world came to dislike and despise the entire Jewish nation because of the wrongdoing of some (not all) Judeans.

TO GOLGOTHA

Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away. And he bearing [carry-ing] his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha: (John 19:16-17)

And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus.

And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry? And there were also two other, malefactors, led with him to be put to death. And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary [The Skull], there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left (Luke 23:26-33). And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not (Mark 15:23) And it was the third hour [nine o'clock in the morning], and they crucified him (Mark 15:25).

Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away. And he bearing [carrying] his cross went forth into

a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha [The Skull].

As Jesus carried his cross, so each aspirant to higher consciousness must elevate his consciousness by his own discipline and practice. No one can do it for us, nor can anyone make it easier or quicker. The whole price must be paid as did Jesus. The alternative is spiritual stagnation and death.

The hillock where Jesus was crucified was shaped like a skull, so it was called Golgotha by the local people. This simple title was all that remained of the original reason for this name. Tradition said that the skull of Adam was somewhere there. Under the Romans it had become used for executions by crucifixion—perhaps through some deep-seated intuition. The hillock was mostly stone, and a few stone sockets had been hallowed out for the crosses to be placed in. The Eastern Christians say that the earthquake which followed the death of Jesus cracked the stone socket in which the cross was held, and his blood flowed down into the stone and over the skull of Adam. Is this so? Today you can go to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre which contains Golgotha and put your hand into the crevice and decide for yourself. I have; and I recommend it.

And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus. Obviously Jesus was too weak from the tortures to carry the cross for himself. Here, too, he was humiliated. But it is also a message that when we carry our cross for the transmutation of our consciousness, Another will carry it and we need only follow. Today Simon is venerated as a saint by the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches.

And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him. Don't worry: Saint Luke is not inferring that women are not people! The word translated "people" is *laos*, which means general people and not just Jews. And women would usually never be following a criminal to be crucified, so Saint Luke points out that Jesus' female disciples were with him courageously to the end.

But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs

that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry? This is a prophecy of the terrible times approaching when Jerusalem was utterly destroyed and multitudes were killed by the Romans.

And there were also two other, malefactors, led with him to be put to death. And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary [the skull], there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. And it was the third hour [nine o'clock in the morning], and they crucified him. The lives of great ones, avatars, are often symbolic, divine mystery-dramas with profound meaning. In the early days of Christianity Jesus' life was always considered both literal and symbolic. We will be considering this soon.

And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not [Mark 15:23]. Smurnizo, here translated "myrrh," was a bitter narcotic that was mixed in wine and given to those who were crucified so the pain would be greatly lessened or even eliminated. Saint Matthew says that it was *chole*, a very bitter extract of wormwood and poppy that was also a narcotic. Whichever it was (and it may have been a mixture of both), Jesus refused it because he intended to suffer completely and thus fully undergo the necessary sacrifice. This is an example for us. Even though our struggles in spiritual endeavor can sometimes be bitter, even painful or miserable, we, too, must drink the cup to the dregs—and swallow those, too. For it if was not necessary, our sadhana would not have led us to these pivotal moments which will be our salvation if we persevere, and our condemnation if we pull back and turn aside. Writing this, I just remembered the voice of Yogananda from a recorded talk I heard over sixty years ago: "This path is not easy; but the path of the world is much harder." For as the song I cited some time back truthfully says:

How rugged the path, yet God's glory
 Attendeth each soul on that way;
 And brighter and brighter it shineth,
 Revealing a glad, perfect day.

FORGIVENESS AND INTERCESSION

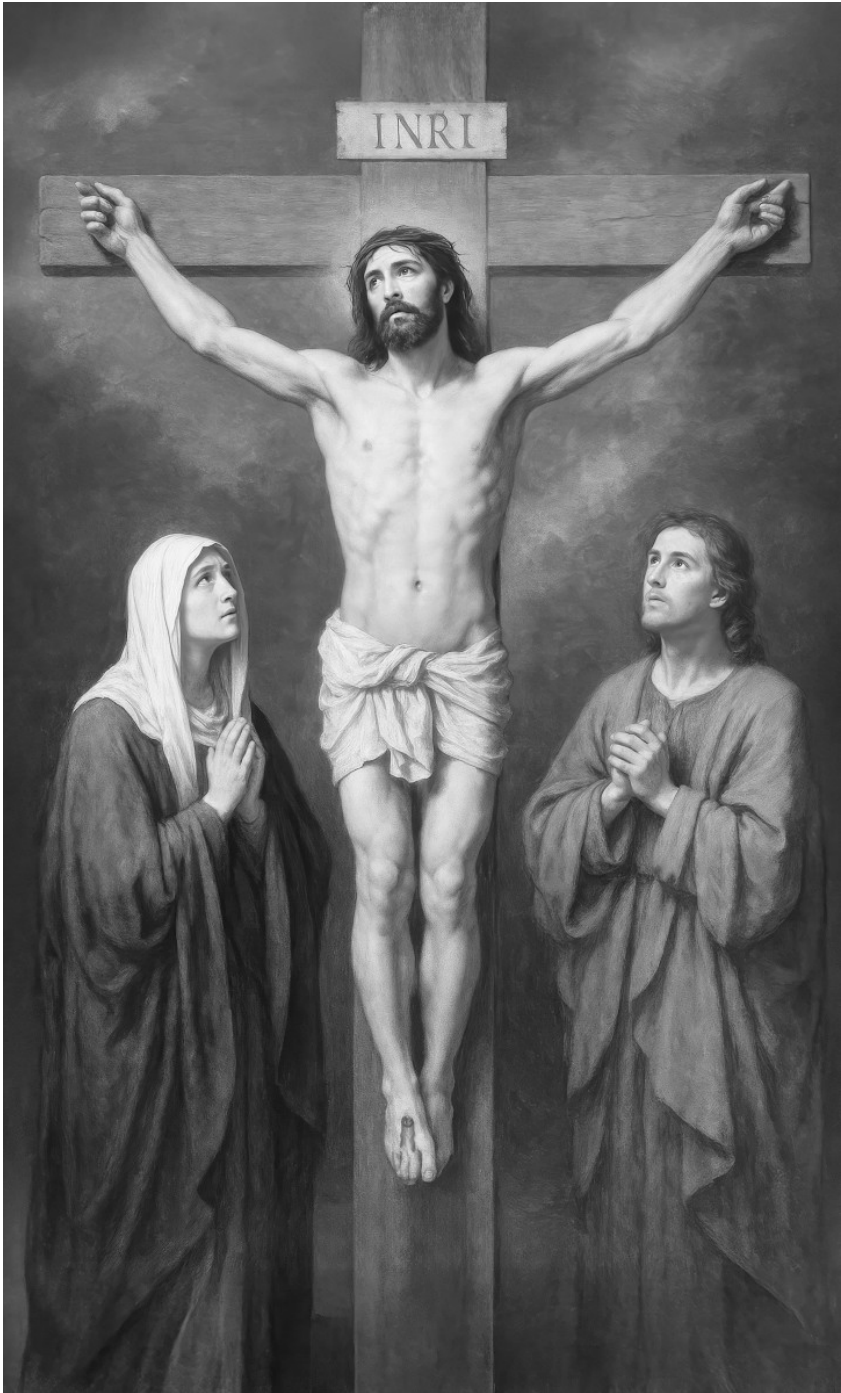
Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know [understand] not what they do. (Luke 23:34)

We say that ignorance of the law is no excuse, but in the love of God this is not an absolute. About an hour before my writing these words I saw some videos of really brutish and evil people threatening and assaulting others. Although their negativity and hellish mentality was obvious, the thing that struck me most when intently studying their faces was the fact that they were stupid—virtually mentally retarded. It was sad and pathetic. Were they capable of being responsible for their deeds?

In the same way, how often do we think, speak and act without full comprehension of the nature or implications of our thought, speech and action? This is why Saint James wrote: “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness], neither shadow of turning. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures” (James 1:13-18).

We need to be aware of the source of our own thoughts and outlook since we are the only ones choosing those sources. We see from Saint James’ words that ignorance breeds more ignorance and produces evil, whereas wisdom which comes from “above” from the higher nature, the

higher self, of each individual, is beneficial and true. “Logos” means both word and the source of word: the mentality of the individual. The *logos aletheia*, the “true word” or “word of truth,” comes only from the truth of our being: our self-revealed Self. “Therefore be a yogi” (Bhagavad Gita 6:46). It always comes back to this: ourselves.



THE FINAL HOUR

And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS. This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin.

Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written I have written. (John 19:19-22)

Nothing can placate the wolves. There is no depth to which they have not already sunk in their minds.

Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat [tunic]: now the coat [tunic] was without seam [unsewn], woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend [divide] it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted [divided] my raiment [clothing] among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots [Psalms 22:18]. These things therefore the soldiers did.

Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy

mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home. (John 19:23-27)

When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.

Saint John in his gospel never refers to himself by name, but by the sacred words: "whom he [Jesus] loved," for this is the truth of everyone: we are the beloved of God. Jesus gave the Virgin Mary into the keeping of Saint John for the rest of her life, and Saint John into the keeping and spiritual patronage of the glorious Virgin.

And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, and saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.

Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now [Psalms 22:8], if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.

The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth [in reproach, in mockery]. (Matthew 27:39-44)

And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar, and saying, If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself. (Luke 23:36-37)

And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, and saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. This is in reference to a prior occasion already cited: "Then answered the Jews [Judeans] and said unto

him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things? Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews [Judeans], Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body. When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said” (John 2:18-22).

Evil is always consistent, even if hypocritical and often hiding its face to deceive. Being evil themselves, the soldiers also mocked Jesus. Although the text says “thieves,” only one of the two who were rightly condemned to death because of their evil deeds joined in with those of his spiritual ilk in disrespecting Jesus. Here he was facing a horrible death and yet he could gladly and freely defame and mock the innocent Jesus.

And one of the malefactors [criminals] which were hanged [on the cross] railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ [the Messiah], save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear [revere] God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly [rightly]; for we receive the due [right] reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss [wrong].

And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember [be mindful of] me when thou comest [enterest] into thy kingdom.

And Jesus said unto him, Verily [Truly] I say unto thee, Today [This day] shalt thou be with me in paradise. (Luke 23:39-43)

Here we see an incredible contrast. Both of these men are undergoing the inconceivable agony of crucifixion, yet the very presence of Jesus evokes from them the essence of their psychology, their spiritual personality. One is so evil that in his death agony he vilifies Jesus. The actual word used by Saint Luke is *blasphemeo*—he blasphemes Jesus. But the other man, who was once an Essene but fell into evil ways, confesses Jesus and prays for his mercy and blessing, knowing that Jesus is not defeated or

rendered helpless, but is truly the King of Glory praised by David in the twenty-seventh psalm:

“Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle.

“Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory” (Psalms 24:7-10).

Furthermore, he shows a real insight into inner realities. We often hear the maxim Thoughts Are Things—and they are. But thinking of something or someone can actually make that thing or person present to us. People we think about can actually feel our presence if they are psychically sensitive, and we can feel theirs. When God or masters “think” of us a subtle link is made with them and we become present to them and they become present to us. So this man, who is called The Wise Thief, is asking Jesus to be with him spiritually and bless him. And Jesus assures him that he will enter Paradise and be with him. Jesus would not answer Pilate’s questions, but he speaks to the repentant thief. There is a hymn about this called “He Answered Never a Word.” I only heard it once decades ago, but just before writing this I found the words which are significant.

A friendless prisoner at Pilate’s bar,
Amid the raging mob He stood;
Like wolves that had scented His blood from afar
And eagerly Him pursued;
The voice of these murderers was heard as they cried,
Till Jerusalem’s city was stirred;
“Away with Him, let Him be crucified;”
But He answered never a word.

The priests and the elders with fiendish spite,
Accused Him of many things;
But His face was radiant with heavenly light—
He could hear the sound of wings.

And Pilate marveled to see Him there,
As each wicked charge he heard,
His mute lips moved as in silent prayer,
But He answered never a word.

With fiercest hatred his foes pressed on,
To kill Him their greatest desire;
The faith of His followers was almost gone,
Must the last faint spark expire?
Will He meekly yield in His dreadful hour,
When a murderer is preferred?
He who raised the dead, has He lost His power?
But He answered never a word.

Then they brought the cross that Barabbas should fill,
He, a murderer, now to go free;
And they laid in on Jesus to bear up the hill,
To purchase salvation for me;
Though hungry and thirsty, and bleeding and cold,
Not a sigh passed His lips that was heard;
He trembled a moment, then sank to the ground,
But He answered never a word.

The rabble with spite and revenge urged them on,
Till He came to Calvary's brow,
Where they nailed His hands and His feet to the cross—
O sinner, look on him now!
Then raising the cross, oh, what suffering and pain!
Till the earth and the heavens were stirred,
But the suffering Jesus with meekness endured,
But He answered never a word.

But there hung by His side a thief, broken and sad,
With sins that were all his own,

And he cried, "Dear Lord, remember me
When Thou sittest on Thy throne;"
And the Savior turned and looked upon him,
His compassion deep was stirred;
And peace, sweet peace He shed o'er that soul—
He could answer him with a word.

Blessed are those who are true yogis and unite themselves with the Infinite through sadhana, through the continual japa and meditation of Soham, the declaration of I AM. That Word is always answered, as the yogis know by experience.

THE END

Now from the sixth hour [noon] there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour [three in the afternoon]. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? [Psalms 22:1]

Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias [Elijah]. And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar [sour wine], and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink.

The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save [deliver] him.

Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up [sent forth] the ghost [spirit]. (Matthew 27:45-50)

Since Jesus was David in a previous birth, the psalm whose words he called out were in his deep subconscious mind. That psalm further said: “I am a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head saying, He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.... They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture”

(Psalms 22:1, 7-8, 13-18). So we see this was a prophecy, a foreshadowing shown to David of his subsequent incarnation as the Messiah. Also, Jesus may have been calling to God—Eli—but he might in this time of stress called on Elijah, who had been his guru in his incarnation as Elisha.

Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up [sent forth] the ghost [spirit]. Jesus did not die of crucifixion. He consciously left his body as he prophesied earlier when he told the apostles, “I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again” (John 10:17-18). And he will “take it again” by his resurrection.

John’s gospel says: “After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost” (John 19:28-30).

THE REACTION

And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks [were] rent [broken];

And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept [were dead] arose [awakened],

And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. (Matthew 27:51-53)

And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks [were] rent [broken]. The “veil of the temple” was the veil before the entry to the Most Holy Place of the temple, where only the High Priest could go, and that only once in the year. It was very substantial and strong, having been woven by the temple virgins. Yet it was torn in half like tissue paper at the death of Jesus. And not only that: it was torn from top to bottom, and no human agency could have done that. It was considered by many a divine sign that at the death of Jesus the Presence of God that rested upon the Ark of the Covenant in the Most Holy Place was withdrawn from the temple, that the worship there would no longer be acceptable, that the temple itself was Ichabod: Abandoned By The Glory of God—literally Inglorious.

And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept [were dead] arose [awakened], and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. So the death of Jesus gave life to the dead! There are very ancient accounts of this incident found in *The Lost Books of the Bible and the Forgotten Books of Eden* (available from Amazon), which contains many books that were considered scripture by the

early Christians but not included in the Bible when Christianity became a state religion. Some are quite valuable and certainly contain esoteric truth.

Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God. (Matthew 27:54)

Too much should not be read into this. In the Greek original the word “the” is not before the last three words. Therefore the centurion and the others likely said that Jesus was *a* Son of God, not *the* Son of God.

And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned [into the city]. (Luke 23:48)

And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him: among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee’s children. (Matthew 27:55-56)

So it was. Yet it was only the beginning, as we shall see.

The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation [day for the Passover], that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.

And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone

of him shall not be broken ([Exodus 12:46]. And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced [Zechariah 12:10]. John 19:31-37)

Again we see how scrupulous the murderous enemies of Jesus were regarding externalities. This is often the way with the hypocritical and the secretly corrupt in order to distract others from examining them and their true evil character. And extreme externalization is a trait of the inwardly dead, for they have nothing else to them but the outside. They are the kind of people that Origen called *somas*—mere bodies without either intelligence or life.

It is important to know that “one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water,” because “rationalists” have said for centuries that Jesus just fainted on the cross and came to later.

The gushing out of blood and water indicate that the pericardial sac was pierced and therefore the spear did enter Jesus’ heart, which would be fatal.

Others add that he later revived and was so disillusioned that he went away and was never heard from afterward. About such people Jesus said, “Verily I say unto you, they have their reward” (Matthew 6:2, 5, 16): their own desolate hearts that are truly “twice dead, plucked up by the roots” (Jude 12).

THE BURIAL

And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, Joseph of Arimathaea, an honorable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, [being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, (John 1938a)] came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus.

And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead. And when he knew it of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph. (Mark 15:42-46)

And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.

Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day [for Passover]; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand (John 19:38-42), and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre (Mark 15:42-46) and departed (Matthew 27:60).

And the women [Mary Magdalene and "the other Mary" (Mark 27:61)] also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment. (Luke 23:55-56)

This needs no commentary, just a profound taking to heart.

Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can. So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch. (Matthew 27:62-66)

This is a perfect example of the principle stated by Saint Paul when he wrote: “We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28). The machinations of Jesus’ enemies would result in there being witnesses of his resurrection, witnesses who could not be doubted for they were not his followers, but his murderers.

THE EMPTY TOMB

And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. (Matthew 28:2-4)

Those who were to keep the followers of Jesus from perpetrating a fraud became witnesses of the reality of his resurrection! For they saw an angel come from heaven and roll away the stone blocking the entrance of the tomb as the earth itself trembled—and they fainted dead away in fear and awe.

COMING TO THE TOMB

And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. (Mark 16:1)

This was the traditional form of embalming a body.

And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great.

And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted.

And he saith unto them, [Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. (Luke 24:5-7)] Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here, but is risen: behold the place where they laid him. But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.

And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid. (Mark 16:2-8)

Why seek ye the living among the dead? This is a valid question for us who seek the life of the spirit-Self. If we wish to live, why do we occupy ourselves with the dead, material world like those who are likewise dead in themselves through their total identity with the dead world? Our very nature is spirit-life; we only dream that we are dead and part of this dead world. We must truly resurrect into spirit-life. In my late teens I met a remarkable man who wrote hymns, one of which said:

A resurrection, I confess,
Has taken place within my breast;
I've been awakened from the dead,
And now I live with Christ instead.

Each human being is destined to awake into Christhood. We may put it off through ignorance or spiritual darkness, because we fear the true life, but one day we will leave fear behind and rise into the light of our own godhood.

They were afraid. We, too, fear when we learn the truth of our glorious destiny. Why? Because we rightly intuit that to live we must first die: we must die to delusion and resurrect into the reality of Eternal Being. And that will require effort, sacrifice and the separation of our consciousness from the unreality we have believed in for countless lives. We are addicted to slavery of mind and heart. It makes us suffer, but we yearn for and crave it as the addict craves for more of that which has addicted and is destroying him. We think that without it we will die. And our false un-self will have to die so our true Self can resurrect in us and live.

And they remembered his [Jesus'] words, and returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest.

It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles.

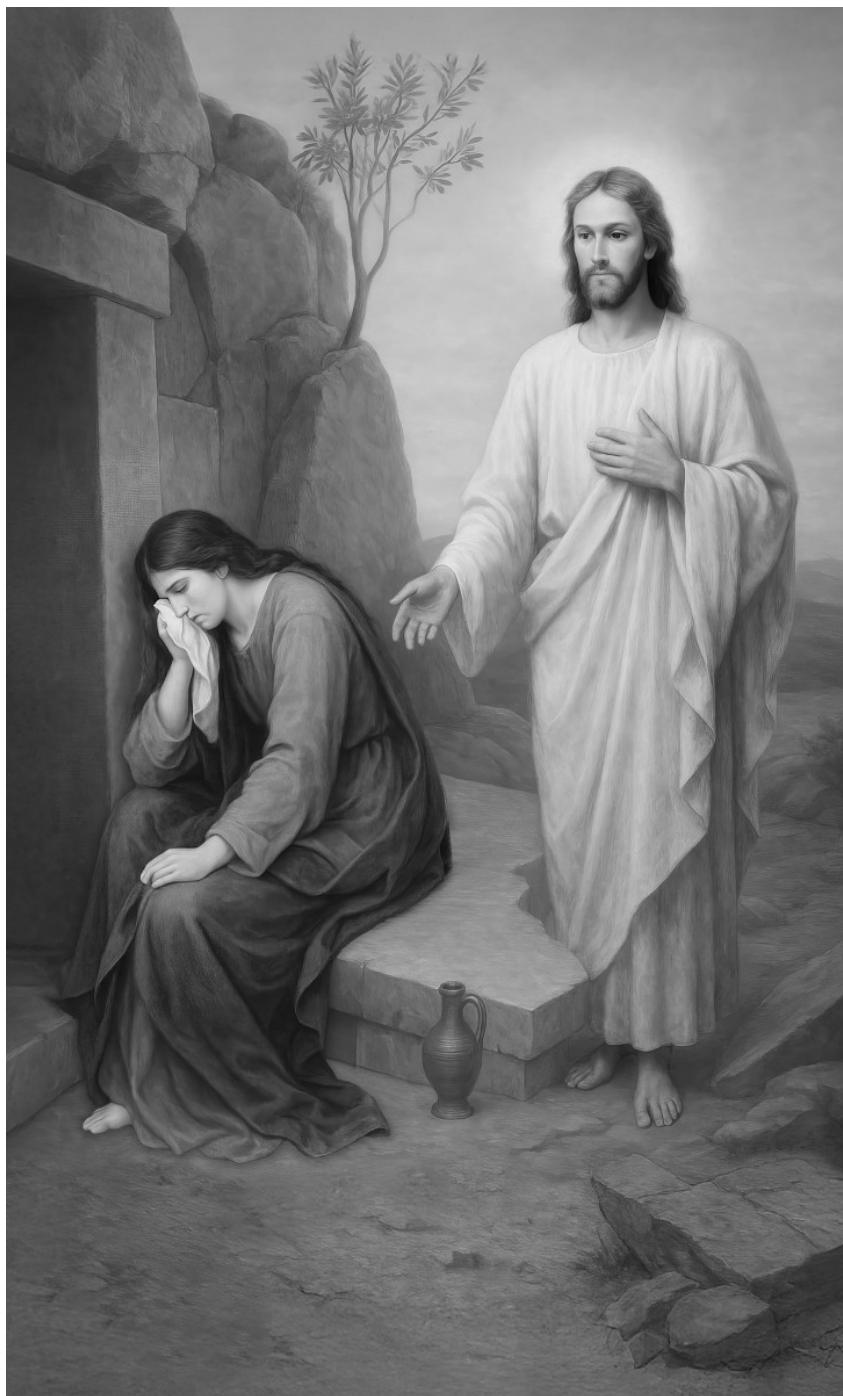
And their words seemed to them [appeared to them] as idle tales [incredible], and they believed them not. (Luke 24:8-11)

Can we blame them? Certainly they witnessed incredible miracles done by Jesus, what to say of the indescribable experience of living with God incarnate, something which would have to profoundly affect someone's basic consciousness. Yet because of the *samskaras* of countless previous incarnations, the material usually wins out over the psychic (psychological) or the spiritual unless a person's own consciousness, his own fundamental being, has been indelibly affected and thereby transmuted.

Let me give an example from less than a century ago. In India there was a great master yogi named Harakhan Baba. Once he went with one of his disciples on pilgrimage to Mount Kailash. While there he got cholera, died in a few days and was cremated. The disciple then returned to the Himalayan foothills, dreading to tell his fellow-disciples that their great guru was dead. When he came to the outskirts of Dehra Dun he passed by a small shop owned by a fellow-disciple of Harakhan Baba. As soon as the disciple saw him, he called out, "What are you doing here? Why aren't you in town with Baba?" "What do you mean?" the grieving man replied, "Baba is dead. I supervised his cremation at Kailash myself." "What nonsense!" replied his fellow-disciple, "Baba is at N.'s house right now. I saw him there this morning." Confused completely, the disciple hurried to the disciple's house and found Harakhan Baba sitting there speaking with his disciples. How could it be? The disciple had enough sense to not try to figure it out, but rejoiced in his guru's living presence.

This incident has a special value. Since my early teens I heard people say that proof of Jesus' greatness was that he alone died and came back to life by his own power. But here is an example of another great master who could not be conquered by death. He, too, was a spiritual son of India as was Jesus. My friend Durgaprasad Sahai was present when his guru, Swami Keshavananda (mentioned in Yogananda's autobiography), manifested in physical form after his death at the plea of his disciple Swami Satyananda. (There is a photo of both these swamis in *Autobiography of a Yogi*.) And Yogananda tells in his autobiography of a woman disciple of Swami Sriyuktaswar who saw her guru in physical form after his death, as did Yogananda himself.

Saint John continues with Mary Magdalene in his narrative and says:



SAINT MARY MAGDALENE

Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.

But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping; and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, and seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.

Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.

Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her.
(John 20:10-18)

Later (Luke 24:16) it will be said of two disciples that did nor recognize the risen Jesus that “their eyes were holden,” that is, their minds could not comprehend that it was him, or else that he was so changed by the

transmutation of resurrection that he was physically unrecognizable to them. It may have been the same for Saint Mary Magdalene. But when Jesus spoke her name and she turned and looked at him directly, then she knew whom she was seeing. We, too, must hear the call, but that will not be enough—we must turn ourselves around completely, and then we shall behold our saving Christ-Self.

Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father. Apparently the body of Jesus was still going through the process of total transmutation into Divine Consciousness, and the power (shakti) effecting that transmutation would virtually electrocute or even dissolve her body at its touch.

This kind of situation is well known to the yogis in India. One time when Anandamayi Ma was in samadhi her little niece asked, “What is wrong with Auntie?” and embraced Ma. Immediately the girl fell down in a semi-conscious state, uttering the sacred Name “Hari” over and over. Ma then stroked her head and she seemed to become normal, but when Ma took her hands away she went back into semi-consciousness, saying the holy Name. So Ma stroked her head again, and again she calmed down, but immediately “went off” again when Ma stopped touching her. Although everyone around was distressed and bewildered, Ma laughed and said, “It is just like a balloon filled with gas! When you let go of it, it flies upward! This state of hers worries and frightens you, but yogis pray for this state.” After a while the girl became as before.

Blessed and happy were those whom Ma touched and never “became as before.”

THE OTHER WOMEN

And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid [alarmed, fearful]: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me. (Matthew 28:9-10)

Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. The word *proskuneo*, translated “worshipped” mean to prostrate before someone. They also touched his feet at the same time just as is done today in India.

Go tell my brethren. Jesus does not refer to the eleven as his disciples, but as his brothers (*adelphos*). Is this extreme humility on his part? Not at all. It is a statement of truth: Jesus was a jivatman, a spirit-Self, just as they were.

The difference was that Jesus had evolved through embodiment in all the physical, astral and causal realms—all states of evolution in consciousness—and was now established in perfect divine consciousness, a Son of God, an avatar, a manifestation of God, which we all are in essence. This is why Christians were called “Little Christs” in mockery by those who derided the teaching of original Christianity that all were meant to become Christs exactly like Jesus, with the same divine consciousness. The only way to be a true Christian is to become a Christ like Jesus. It is not a matter of believing, but of becoming.

False Christianity makes a great to-do about “faith,” but personal realization of the Self is the purpose of Jesus’ true teachings. And this realization most certainly can be attained through purification and yoga sadhana.

Jesus was a yogi (see *The Christ of India*), and we must be the same if we would be “saved.” This is the saving message of “Christ in you the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27).

THE ROMAN SOLDIERS REPORT

Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch [Roman sentries at Jesus' tomb] came into the city, and showed [reported] unto the chief priests all the things that were done [had happened].

And when they were assembled with the elders [of the Sanhedrin], and had taken counsel [made consultation], they gave [a] large [amount of] money unto the soldiers, saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade [assure] him, and secure you.

So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying [account] is commonly reported [spread abroad] among the Jews [Judeans] until this day. (Matthew 28:11-15)

This is the way of the world.

ON THE WAY TO EMMAUS

And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. And they talked together of all these things which had happened.

And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know [recognize] him.

And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?

And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass therein these days?

And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word [teaching] before God and all the people: And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him.

But we trusted [hoped] that it had been [was] he which should have redeemed [ransom; liberate] Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and [however] certain [some] women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; and when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not.

Then he said unto them, O fools [foolish; unwise], and slow [dull] of heart [mind] to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered [undergone] these things, and to enter [arise] into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded [explained; interpreted] unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. (Luke 24:13-27)

So Jesus prepares their intellectual understanding before giving them a personal revelation of his resurrection.

THE REVELATION

And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further. But they constrained him, saying, Abide [remain] with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry [remain] with them.

And it came to pass, as he sat at meat [sat to eat] with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.

And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn [shine] within us, while he talked with us by [in] the way, and while he opened [expounded] to us the scriptures? (Luke 24:28-32)

Whether Jesus had a distinct way to bless the bread, or whether the spiritual atmosphere produced by his blessing alerted them, it happened and their inner eyes were opened and they “saw” aright.

It is interesting that when their spiritual sight became operative the physical sight of Jesus vanished. It is a good symbol of how what is external in our spiritual life must eventually be spiritualized and internalized to become a living part of us.

Then they remembered how they had earlier felt within themselves when he first came and spoke to them. When we are in the presence of enlightened beings we, too, become inwardly illumined to some degree. What we experience then cannot be described, but the effects of that experience can be described. That is why I have said that in the presence of Swami Sivananda and Anandamayi Ma I became deeply self-aware. I experienced much more than that, but there are no words to convey it.

APPEARANCE TO THE APOSTLES

And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.

And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.

And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.

And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he showed them his hands and his feet.

And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat [food]? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. (Luke 24:33-43)

Here we see that there is nothing wrong in being slow to accept phenomena at face value and to seek objective proof of supernatural phenomena. What is objectionable is any attempt to prove or disprove something through prejudice or a dislike of the truth. "I want proof" is often a

statement that indicates someone does not want something to be true.

And “I do not believe it” often really means, “I do not want it to be so.”

Anandamayi Ma never objected to sincere investigation. For example, Ma said that she had no mind. So some scientific researchers asked her to come to their laboratory and be tested. She did so, and when they attached devices to detect brainwave activity to her head, nothing was produced.

They attached them to a few people there, and brainwaves were indicated. Then they tried again with Ma, and nothing was registered. Ma laughed and asked, “What is the matter? Are your machines broken?”

When Brahmachari Vijayananda, a French doctor, first met Ma he heard that she never slept, but was always awake. A few days later Ma and some devotees, including him, were traveling overnight by train in a single compartment. Everyone was sleeping on the floor, in darkness. Throughout the night he would quietly approach Ma, who was lying completely still. She would immediately pranam and speak to him. She was not at all offended by this.

Sri Brahma Chaitanya of Gondawale (Maharashtra) was hated by some religious hypocrites who were jealous of him. They hired a man to give him poison in some sweets, threatening to kill that man if he did not do so. When he handed the sweets to Sri Brahma Chaitanya, the saint asked him, “Do you really want me to eat this?” When he replied “Yes,” Sri Brahma Chaitanya swallowed them all. In terror, the man jumped up and ran away. Some people ran after him, but could not catch him. When they came back and reported their failure, the saint said, “That is too bad. I wanted to initiate him.”

THE GREAT INITIATION-EMPOWERMENT

Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained. (John 20:21-23)

What/Who was the Holy Spirit, the *Pneuma Agion*? It was the Divine Feminine Power (Mahashakti) aspect of the Holy Trinity, the Father (Brahman) being beyond all polarity and the Son (Ishwara) being the Divine Masculine aspect. The Holy Spirit is the power of spiritual transmutation-deification.

The disciples were going to go throughout the known Mediterranean world and spread the message of “Christ in you the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27) to all who would hear and accept it. They were not just armed with theory, philosophical or theological, but with spiritual power (shakti) that could affect the body, mind and spirit of those who accepted their wisdom and followed their instruction. They accomplished a very real transfer/awakening of spiritual force (atmabala) which would either purify someone from negative vibrations/energies by eliminating them, or would repolarize the negative subtle energies within them to a positive polarity. It was both purification (remission of “sins”) and empowerment. It truly was a kind of rebirth, a true “born again” experience through inner awakening and empowering. Those whom they did not so awaken and empower would have their spiritual darkness/blindness retained as

a consequence of their refusal/rejection of the wisdom offered them by the disciples.

THE TOUCHING OF THOMAS

But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side [where the spear entered], I will not believe.

And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.

And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.

Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name. (John 20:24-31)

Jesus did not rebuke Thomas for his demand of proof, but supplied that proof. Saint Paul wrote, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for,

the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1). These words do not mean that we have to believe with no basis for that belief, rather they imply that faith is a result of either inner intuition or actual external experience. Faith is illumined insight arising from outer, objective experience or from inner intuition: psychic perception. The gospels were not written to convince us intellectually, but they were intended to be stimulants to awaken our own inner knowing of the mystery of Christ in us the hope, the very presence, of spiritual glory.

BY THE SEA OF TIBERIAS

After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise showed he himself.

There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples. Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing.

But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat [food]? They answered him, No. And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.

Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea. And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes.

As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.

Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.

Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, and hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.

Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.

Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise.

This is now the third time that Jesus showed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead. (John 21:1-14)

This is not very vegetarian. But after the purification and empowerment of Pentecost things will be different.

So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these [fish]? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.

He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep. (John 21:15-17)

Peter had denied Jesus three times, and Jesus neutralized the karma of those denials by the three declarations of love made now by Peter.

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.

This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. (John 21:18-19)

Saint Peter was taken in chains to Rome and there martyred for his faith and love for Jesus, glorifying God.

And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me. Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.

Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? (John 21:20-25)

This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true.

And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen. (John 21:20-25)

The path to Self-realization is a solitary matter. It is accomplished solely by the yogi's sadhana. When Jesus said "follow me" to Peter he was calling him to follow the path of inner transmutation in which only two people are involved: God and the yogi.

According to Saint Luke (18:35-43), once Jesus was walking along the road to Jericho when he healed a blind man who was sitting by the road. Another time (Luke 19:1-10) when he was on that road he encountered the tax-collector Zacchaeus and transformed his life. So Donald S. McCrossan wrote a song called "On The Jericho Road" about transforming encounter with Jesus. The refrain has great wisdom, saying:

On the Jericho road there is room for just two,
No more and no less, just Jesus and you.

The inner path to Christhood is our Jericho Road. And to successfully travel it to healing and transformation, in our heart there must be only God our us. Even when we are in the midst of many people, inside we must be alone with God. A great mystic, Daniel S. Warner, wrote some very inspiring, mystical hymns. One is called "The Holy of Holies," and says:

There is a blest pavilion,
A sacred inner court,
The place of God's own dwelling
With all the world shut out.
Oh, holy resting place!
Oh, calm and pure retreat!
Where God unveils His face,
And life is only sweet.
Oh, sweet and tranquil home,
Where only God is known!

Another of his hymns, "Alone with God," says:

When storms of life are 'round me beating,
When rough the path that I have trod,
Within my closet door retreating,
I love to be alone with God.

What though the clouds have gathered o'er me?
What though I've passed beneath the rod?
God's perfect will there lies before me,
When I am thus alone with God.

'Tis there I find new strength for duty,
As o'er the sands of time I plod;
I see the king in all His beauty,
While resting there alone with God.

And when I see the moment nearing
When I shall sleep beneath the sod,
When time with me is disappearing,
I want to be alone with God.

Alone with God, the world forbidden,
Alone with God, O blest retreat!
Alone with God, and in Him hidden,
To hold with Him communion sweet.

God granted his desire. He was seriously ill, but was miraculously healed. He then asked to be alone, and after some time he was found in the tranquility of a blessed death.

APPEARANCE ON THE MOUNTAIN AND FINAL INSTRUCTIONS

Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.

And when they saw him, they worshipped [prostrated before] him: but some doubted.

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power [authority] is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit:

Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: (Matthew 28:16-20a)

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power [authority] is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Christhood is not a mere abstract idea. It is a reality, a condition of the total being of the aspirant. It is not just “spiritual,” but is mental and physical. True yoga sadhana transforms the yogi in his three “worlds”—his causal, astral and material/physical bodies through which he functions in their entirety. Self-realization is the mastery of the yogi’s entire being. Just as God rules every atom in the universe, the enlightened yogi knows and functions on every level, every aspect of his being and existence. He is purna: complete. There is a Sanskrit verse recited daily by Hindus throughout the world:

Purnamidah, purnamidam,
 purnat purnamudachyate;
 Purnasya purnamadaya,
 Purnam ewawashishyate.

Purna means “total, full, complete,” which is what our English term “perfect” used to mean, rather than just “without fault.” In this verse, the word Purna (Complete) refers to God. Here, as best I can, is a translation into English:

This is the Complete; That is the Complete.
 The Complete has come out of the Complete.
 If we take the Complete away from the Complete,
 Only the Complete remains.

When something is purna, it is the whole thing. There is nothing else beside it. And yet somehow the purna, the total, has come out of the total, according to this verse. And both “this” relative purna and “that” transcendent purna are absolutely total, full, and complete, and always one though manifesting as two. They are the same, not different. They are two, but always one. And this is not just a cosmic mystery, it is the mystery of each sentient being, for they have “come out” of God and will return to God in the ultimate transmutation.

**He that believeth and is baptized [immersed, submerged]
 shall be saved [delivered, freed]; but he that believeth not shall
 be damned [condemned].(Mark 16:16)**

We must both believe in spiritual realities and be immersed in them—embodying them, becoming living manifestations of them. This is what being “Another Christ” means. Anything less is not Christianity at all, but Churchianity. A true believer in God, a theist, embodies God, the *Theos*. This is why the very presence of a true believer, a true yogi, can even work miracles.

I knew a great yogi, Luther McKinney. His tiny meditation room in Harlem was one of the holiest places I have experienced in America. One of Yogananda's greatest disciples, Dr. M. W. Lewis, once said to Luther, "Luther, you have purified your heart, and from now on you will purify the hearts of others." Luther respected Dr. Lewis, but he did not believe his words. However, after a few years they were proven true. Luther was a guard in the New York City subway. One day two drunk women, holding on to each other, staggered up and began talking to him. Luther spoke with them for a while in patient kindness, and then they staggered on. This was repeated a few times, until one day only one of the duo came up and demanded, "What did you do to my friend?" "I didn't do anything!" replied Luther. "Oh, yes, you did," the woman insisted. "As long as I have known Evelyn she has been an alcoholic, but now she is sober and won't touch liquor. And she tells everyone you cured her." Luther eventually changed the lives of many.

And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. (Mark 16:17-18)

Sometimes these wonders are literal. Great yogis in India have been doing these things and even more amazing ones through the ages. Anandamayi Ma and Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh did these very things on occasion. Criminals became reformed by seeing them just once. Ma spoke any language she wished. Whenever it was needed, both of them showed their miraculous nature. And they both did the spiritual equivalents of these things daily.

And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen. (Matthew 28:20b)

And it is not a bad idea for us to “end the world” every day of our life by ending its influence over and within us. When I was visiting Bishop Hedra, the Coptic bishop of Aswan, Egypt, one evening we were sitting outside with quite a few Copts. One of them told me that the Protestant missionaries were always making a big fuss about how the world was going to end soon, asked me what I thought about the matter. I told them, “A real Christian ends the world every day.” They understood completely.

So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received [taken] up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. (Mark 16:19)

We, too, must be lifted up into the consciousness of our true Christ Nature and be established there in total polarization to the reality of our own divine Self, our inner Christ. And we must remain there. One of the most evident characteristics of Swami Sivananda and Ma Anandamayi was their constant transcendental consciousness which pervaded everything around them. However, not everyone perceived it, and many denied it.

Peggy Deitz, one of Yogananda’s secretaries, told me that she invited a very psychically sensitive woman to go with her one Sunday to hear Yogananda speak at the Hollywood church. About halfway through the talk, her friend asked her, “When does the Paramhansa come out?” “What do you mean?” Peggy asked, “He’s right up there in front of us.” “Oh!” replied her friend, “All I can see is a great white light with his voice coming out of it. Since this is Hollywood, I thought it was some special effect!” Afterward when they were outside the church on the lawn, a woman nearby said very loudly and indignantly for them to hear, as she glared at them: “Great white light indeed! I was there! And there *was* no light!”

Get ready for it yogis. You will no doubt get the same reaction if you speak openly about spiritual realities.

And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word [teaching] with signs [miracles, wonders] following [accompanying]. Amen [May It Be So]. (Mark 16:20)

Wherever the truth of the divine Self and the truth of transmutation of consciousness are taught with intelligence and clarity, and both teachers and the taught are sincere and aspire to Christhood—and engage in diligent sadhana—there the miracle of Christ in You the Hope of Glory will be manifest. It *will* be so.

And now we have come to the end of our consideration of the Gospels of Christ. But for you and I their exploration and experiencing will go on through our yoga sadhana until we attain perfect Christhood and know:

I AND MY FATHER ARE ONE

(John 10:30)

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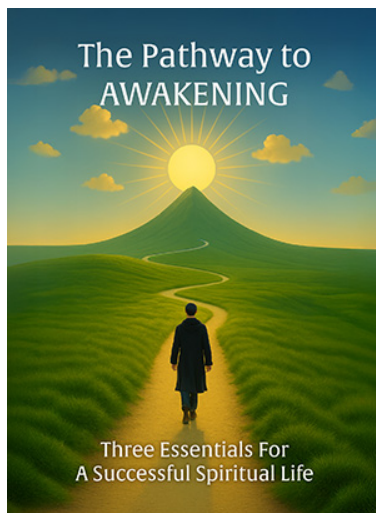
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GLOSSARY

Abhaya(m): “Without fear;” fearlessness; a state of steadfastness in which one is not swayed by fear of any kind.

Adharma: Unrighteousness; demerit, failure to perform one’s proper duty; unrighteous action; lawlessness; absence of virtue; all that is contrary to righteousness (dharma).

Adharmic: Having the character of, or producing, adharma.

Adhikari(n): An eligible or qualified person; a worthy person. It implies both fitness and capability.

Advaita: Non-dualism; non-duality; literally: not [a] two [dvaita].

Ahimsa: Non-injury in thought, word, and deed; non-violence; non-killing; harmlessness.

Ajapa Japa: A yogic term that means the natural, spontaneous sound of the breath that goes on perpetually through the simple act of breathing. This sound is extremely subtle, and though non-verbal is the highest form of mantra. The Mantra “So’ham” (I am That) which is produced by the breath itself, without any conscious effort at repeating it: the inhalation sounding ‘So’ and the exhalation ‘ham.’

Akasha: Ether; space; sky; literally: “not visible.” The subtlest of the five elements (panchabhuta), from which the other four arise. It is all-pervading, and is sometimes identified with consciousness—chidakasha. It is the basis of sound (shabda), which is its particular property.

Amrita: That which makes one immortal. The nectar of immortality that emerged from the ocean of milk when the gods churned it.

Ananda: Bliss; happiness; joy. A fundamental attribute of Brahman, which is Satchidananda: Existence, Consciousness, Bliss.

Anandamayi Ma: One of the major spiritual figures in twentieth-century

India, first made known to the West by Paramhansa Yogananda in his *Autobiography of a Yogi*.

Anatma(n): Not-Self; insentient.

Antahkarana: Internal instrument; the subtle bodies; fourfold mind: mind, intellect, ego and subconscious mind.

Arya(n): One who is an Arya—literally, “one who strives upward.” Both Arya and Aryan are exclusively psychological terms having nothing whatsoever to do with birth, race, or nationality. In his teachings Buddha habitually referred to spiritually qualified people as “the Aryas.” Although in English translations we find the expressions: “The Four Noble Truths,” and “The Noble Eightfold Path,” Buddha actually said: “The Four Aryan Truths,” and “The Eightfold Aryan Path.”

Ashram(a): A place for spiritual discipline and study, usually a monastic residence.

Ashramite: Resident of an ashram.

Asmita: I-ness; the sense of “I am;” “I exist;” sense of individuality.

Atma: See Atman.

Atmabala: Soul-force.

Atma-bhava: The nature of the Self; awareness of the self; feeling: “I am the Self.”

Atma-bodha: Knowledge of the Self; also a work of that name by Sri Sankara.

Atmachaitanya: The consciousness of the Self: the awareness of the Self as an object, the awareness that one is the Self, and the actual consciousness that is the Self.

Atma-cintana: Reflection on the Self or the Atman.

Atma-darshan: The seeing or sight of the Self (atma); the vision of the Self; knowledge of the Self through direct vision or knowing; the vision of seeing everything as the Self.

Atma-drishti: Atma-darshan.

Atmajnana: Direct knowledge of the Self; Brahma-Jnana.

Atma(n): The individual spirit or Self that is one with Brahman. The true nature or identity.

Atmasakshatkara: “Direct sight of the Self;” realization of the true nature of the Self; Self-realization.

Atmavidya: Teaching about the Self and its reality; knowledge of the Self.

Atmic: Having to do with the atma—spirit or Self.

Avatar(a): A fully liberated spirit (jiva) who is born into a world below Satya Loka to help others attain liberation. Though commonly referred to as a divine incarnation, an avatar actually is totally one with God, and therefore an incarnation of God-Consciousness.

Avidya: Ignorance; nescience; unknowing; literally: “to know not.” A Sakti or illusive power in Brahman which is sometimes regarded as one with Maya and sometimes as different from it. It forms the condition of the individual soul and is otherwise called Ajnana or Asuddha-maya. It forms the Karana Sarira of the Jiva. It is Malina or impure Sattwa. Also called ajnana.

Bhagavad Gita: “The Song of God.” The sacred philosophical text often called “the Hindu Bible,” part of the epic Mahabharata by Vyasa; the most popular sacred text in Hinduism.

Bhava: Subjective state of being (existence); attitude of mind; mental attitude or feeling; state of realization in the heart or mind.

Brahma: The Creator (Prajapati) of the three worlds of men, angels, and archangels (Bhur, Bhuwah, and Swah); the first of the created beings; Hiranyagarbha or cosmic intelligence. See Kalpa for an explanation of the Days and Night of Brahma and the length of his term as Creator.

Brahmajnana: Direct, transcendental knowledge of Brahman; Self-realization.

Brahmamuhurta: “The muhurta of Brahman.” The period of one and a half hours before sunrise, which is said to be the best time for meditation and worship.

Brahman: The Absolute Reality; the Truth proclaimed in the Upanishads; the Supreme Reality that is one and indivisible, infinite, and eternal; all-pervading, changeless Existence; Existence-knowledge-bliss Absolute (Satchidananda); Absolute Consciousness; it is not only all-powerful but all-power itself; not only all-knowing and blissful

but all-knowledge and all-bliss itself.

Buddhi: Intellect; intelligence; understanding; reason; the thinking mind; the higher mind, which is the seat of wisdom; the discriminating faculty.

Chidakasha: “The Space (Ether) of Consciousness.” The infinite, all-pervading expanse of Consciousness from which all “things” proceed; the subtle space of Consciousness in the Sahasrara (Thousand-petalled Lotus). The true “heart” of all things. Brahman in Its aspect as limitless knowledge; unbounded intelligence. This is a familiar concept of the Upanishads. It is not meant that the physical ether is consciousness. The Pure Consciousness (Cit) is like the ether (Akasa), an all-pervading continuum.

Chit: Consciousness (that is spirit or purusha); “to perceive, observe, think, be aware, know;” pure unitary Consciousness. The principle of universal intelligence or consciousness.

Darshan: Literally “sight” or “seeing;” vision, literal and metaphysical; a system of philosophy (see Sad-darshanas). Darshan is the seeing of a holy being as well as the blessing received by seeing such a one.

Dharma: The righteous way of living, as enjoined by the sacred scriptures and the spiritually illumined; law; lawfulness; virtue; righteousness; norm.

Dharmashala: A place for pilgrims to stay, either free of charge or at a minimal cost.

Dharmi: One who follows dharma—specifically, Sanatana Dharma.

Dharmic: Having to do with dharma; of the character of dharma.

Dukha(m): Pain; suffering; misery; sorrow; grief; unhappiness; stress; that which is unsatisfactory.

Ganapati: “Lord of the Ganas” (the spirits that always accompany Shiva). See Ganesha.

Ganesha: The elephant-headed son of Shiva and Parvati; the remover of obstacles; lord (pati) of the ganas (spirits that always accompany Shiva); god of wisdom; god of beginnings; the granter of success in spiritual and material life; in ritual worship he is worshipped first, and is therefore known as Adi-deva, the First God.

Gita: The Bhagavad Gita.

Gotra: Clan; family; lineage.

Hridaya: Heart; essential center or core of something; essence; the Self; a special mantric formula that is felt to embody the very being of the deity specially worshiped by the devotee.

Hridayaguha: The cave or chamber of the heart.

Ishwara: “God” or “Lord” in the sense of the Supreme Power, Ruler, Master, or Controller of the cosmos. “Ishwara” implies the powers of omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience.

Japa: Repetition of a mantra.

Japa Mala: A string of beads, usually one hundred and eight, on which repetitions (japa) of a mantra are kept count of, or used just to help the yogi remember to do japa. Though one hundred and eight is the usual number of beads, smaller malas can be used when more convenient, especially since they can be put around the wrist when not in use. The beads can be of any substance, whatever is convenient or preferred.

Jiva: Individual spirit.

Jivatman: Individual spirit; individual consciousness.

Jnana: Knowledge; knowledge of Reality—of Brahman, the Absolute; also denotes the process of reasoning by which the Ultimate Truth is attained. The word is generally used to denote the knowledge by which one is aware of one’s identity with Brahman.

Jnani: A follower of the path of knowledge (jnana); one who has realized—who knows—the Truth (Brahman).

Jyotirmaya/Jyotirmayi: Full (mass) of light.

Kali: “The Black One;” the black-skinned goddess who emerged from the body of Goddess Durga to defeat the demons that were attacking her. She wears a garland of skulls (or severed heads) around her neck and a skirt of severed arms—both symbolizing the sense of egotism. In one hand she wields the sword of spiritual wisdom (prajna) and in the other carries a severed head (ego). Despite her fearsome appearance, her two other hands are held in the gestures (mudras) that indicate: “Fear not” and “Draw near.”

Kalpa: A Day of Brahma—4,320,000,000 years. It alternates with a Night of Brahma of the same length. He lives hundred such years. Brahma's life is known as Para, being of a longer duration than the life of any other being, and a half of it is called Parardha. He has now completed the first Parardha and is in the first day of the second Parardha. This day or Kalpa is known as Svetavarahakalpa. In the Day of Brahma creation is manifest and in the Night of Brahma is it resolved into its causal state.

Karma: Karma, derived from the Sanskrit root *kri*, which means to act, do, or make, means any kind of action, including thought and feeling. It also means the effects of action. Karma is both action and reaction, the metaphysical equivalent of the principle: "For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction." "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7). It is karma operating through the law of cause and effect that binds the jiva or the individual soul to the wheel of birth and death. There are three forms of karma: sanchita, agami, and prarabdha. Sanchita karma is the vast store of accumulated actions done in the past, the fruits of which have not yet been reaped. Agami karma is the action that will be done by the individual in the future. Prarabdha karma is the action that has begun to fructify, the fruit of which is being reaped in this life.

Kirtan(a): Singing the names and praises of God; devotional chanting.

Kosha: Sheath; bag; scabbard; a sheath enclosing the soul; body. There are five such concentric sheaths or bodies: the sheaths of bliss, intellect, mind, life-force and the physical body—the anandamaya, jnanamaya, manomaya, pranamaya and annamaya bodies respectively.

Krishna: An avatar born in India about three thousand years ago, Whose teachings to His disciple Arjuna on the eve of the Great India (Mahabharata) War comprise the Bhagavad Gita.

Krishna Chaitanya, Sri; Chaitanya Mahaprabhu: A leading devotee of Krishna in the sixteenth century, the founder of the Bhakti Movement in Bengal. Considered an avatar by many Vaishnavas.

Loka: World or realm; sphere, level, or plane of existence, whether physical,

astral, or causal.

Mahasamadhi: Literally “the great union [samadhi],” this refers to a realized yogi’s conscious departure from the physical body at death.

Mahashakti: The Great Power; the divine creative energy.

Mahatma: Literally: “a great soul [atma].” Usually a designation for a sannyasi, sage or saint.

Mahavakya: Literally: “Great Saying.” The highest Vedantic truth, found in the Upanishads expressing the highest Vedantic truths or the identity between the individual soul and the Supreme Soul. There are four Mahavakyas: 1) Prajñanam Brahma—“Consciousness is Brahman” (Aitareya Upanishad 3.3); 2) Ayam Atma Brahma—“This Self is Brahman” (Mandukya Upanishad 1.2); 3) Tat Twam Asi—“Thou art That” (Chandogya Upanishad 6.8.7); 4) Aham Brahmasmi—“I am Brahman” (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 1.4.10).

Mala : Rosary (japa mala).

Manas(a): The sensory mind; the perceiving faculty that receives the messages of the senses.

Mantra(m): Sacred syllable or word or set of words through the repetition and reflection of which one attains perfection or realization of the Self. Literally, “a transforming thought” (manat trayate). A mantra, then is a sound formula that transforms the consciousness.

Mara: The embodiment of the power of cosmic evil, illusion, and delusion; Satan.

Maya: The illusive power of Brahman; the veiling and the projecting power of the universe, the power of Cosmic Illusion. “The Measurer”—a reference to the two delusive “measures,” Time and Space.

Moksha: Release; liberation; the term is particularly applied to the liberation from the bondage of karma and the wheel of birth and death; Absolute Experience.

Mukta: One who is liberated—freed—usually in the sense of one who has attained moksha or spiritual liberation.

Mumukshutwa: Intense desire or yearning for liberation (moksha).

Muni: “Silent one” (one observing the vow of silence—mauna); sage; ascetic.

Nirguna: Without attributes or qualities (gunas).

Nirguna Brahman: The impersonal, attributeless Absolute beyond all description or designation.

Niyama: Observance; the five Do's of Yoga: 1) shaucha—purity, cleanliness; 2) santosha—contentment, peacefulness; 3) tapas—austerity, practical (i.e., result-producing) spiritual discipline; 4) swadhyaya—self-study, spiritual study; 5) Ishwarapranidhana—offering of one's life to God.

Om: The Pranava or the sacred syllable symbolizing and embodying Brahman.

Omkara: Om.

Om Tat Sat: A designation of Brahman; used as a benediction, a solemn invocation of the divine blessing.

Papa(m): Sin; demerit; evil; sinful deeds; evil deeds; trouble; harm; anything which takes one away from dharma.

Parambrahman: Supreme Brahman.

Param[a]purusha: The Supreme Spirit; Supreme Person. See Purusha.

Paramatman: The Supreme Self, God.

Paramhansa Yogananda: The most influential yogi of the twentieth century in the West, author of *Autobiography of a Yogi* and founder of Self-Realization Fellowship in America.

Patanjali: A yogi of ancient India, a Nath Yogi and the author of the Yoga Sutras.

Pradhana: Prakriti; causal matter.

Prajapati: Progenitor; the Creator; a title of Brahma the Creator.

Prajna: Consciousness; awareness; wisdom; intelligence.

Prakriti: Causal matter; the fundamental power (shakti) of God from which the entire cosmos is formed; the root base of all elements; undifferentiated matter; the material cause of the world. Also known as Pradhana. Prakriti can also mean the entire range of vibratory existence (energy).

Prakritilaya: Absorbed or submerged in Prakriti; the state of yogis who have so identified with the cosmic energy that they are trapped in it as though in a net and cannot separate themselves from it and evolve onwards until the cosmic dissolution (pralaya) occurs

in which the lower worlds of men, angels, and archangels (bhur, bhuwah and swar lokas) are dissolved.

Prana: Life; vital energy; life-breath; life-force; inhalation. In the human body the prana is divided into five forms: 1) Prana, the prana that moves upward; 2) Apana: The prana that moves downward, producing the excretory functions in general. 3) Vyana: The prana that holds prana and apana together and produces circulation in the body. 4) Samana: The prana that carries the grosser material of food to the apana and brings the subtler material to each limb; the general force of digestion. 5) Udana: The prana which brings up or carries down what has been drunk or eaten; the general force of assimilation.

Pranam: “To bow;” to greet with respect. A respectful or reverential gesture made by putting the hands together palm-to-palm in front of the chest.

Pranava: A title of Om, meaning “Life-ness” or “Life-Giver.” Om is the expression or controller of prana—the life force within the individual being and the cosmos.

Punya: Merit; virtue; meritorious acts; virtuous deeds.

Purna: Full; complete; all-encompassing; infinite; absolute; Brahman.

Purna Yoga: Complete yoga.

Purna Yogi: A full-blown Yogi.

Purusha: “Person” in the sense of a conscious spirit. Both God and the individual spirits are purushas, but God is the Adi (Original, Archetypal) Purusha, Parama (Highest) Purusha, and the Purushottama (Highest or Best of the Purushas).

Purushottama: The Supreme Person; Supreme Purusha; the Lord of the universe. (See Purusha.)

Rama: An incarnation of God—the king of ancient Ayodhya in north-central India. His life is recorded in the ancient epic Ramayana.

Ramakrishna, Sri: Sri Ramakrishna lived in India in the second half of the nineteenth century, and is regarded by all India as a perfectly enlightened person—and by many as an Incarnation of God.

Ramana Maharshi: A great twentieth-century sage from Tamil Nadu, who

lived most of his life at or on the sacred mountain of Arunachala in the town of Tiruvannamalai.

Rishi: Sage; seer of the Truth.

Rita(m): Truth; Law; Right; Order. The natural order of things, or Cosmic Order/Law. Its root is *ri*, which means “to rise, to tend upward.” It is said to be the basis for the Law of Karma.

Rudraksha: “The Eye of Shiva;” a tree seed considered sacred to Shiva and worn by worshippers of Shiva, Shakti, and Ganesha, and by yogis, usually in a strand of 108 seeds. Also used as a rosary to count the number of mantras repeated in *japa*.

Sadhaka: One who practices spiritual discipline—*sadhana*—particularly meditation.

Sadhana: Spiritual practice.

Sadhana-chatushtaya: The fourfold aids to spiritual practice: 1) *Viveka*, the ability to discriminate between the transient and the eternal (*nitya-anitya-astu-viveka*); 2) *Vairagya*, the absence of desire for securing pleasure or pain either here or elsewhere (*iha-anutra-artha-phala-vairagya*); 3) *Shad-Sampat* (The Sixfold Virtue): *Sama*, the serenity or tranquillity of mind which is brought about through the eradication of desires; *Dama*, the rational control of the senses; *Uparati*, satiety or resolutely turning the mind away from desire for sensual enjoyment; *Titiksha*, the power of endurance (an aspirant should patiently bear the pairs of opposites such as heat and cold, pleasure and pain, etc.); *Shraddha*, intense faith, lasting, perfect and unshakable; *Samadhana*, fixing the mind on Brahman or the Self, without allowing it to run towards objects; 4) *Mumukshutwa*, the intense desire for liberation.

Sadhana Shakti: Both the power to successfully engage in *sadhana*, the the power that accrues within the *sadhaka* from his practice of *sadhana*.

Sadhu: Seeker for truth (*sat*); a person who is practicing spiritual disciplines; a good or virtuous or honest man, a holy man, saint, sage, seer. Usually this term is applied only to monastics.

Saguna: Possessing attributes or qualities (*gunas*).

Saguna Brahman: Brahman with attributes, such as mercy, omnipotence,

omniscience, etc.; the Absolute conceived as the Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer of the universe; also the Personal God according to the Vedanta.

Sahasrara: The “thousand-petalled lotus” of the brain. The highest center of consciousness, the point at which the spirit (atma) and the bodies (koshas) are integrated and from which they are disengaged.

Samadhi: The state of superconsciousness where Absoluteness is experienced attended with all-knowledge and joy; Oneness; here the mind becomes identified with the object of meditation; the meditator and the meditated, thinker and thought become one in perfect absorption of the mind.

Samsara: Life through repeated births and deaths; the wheel of birth and death; the process of earthly life.

Samsari: The transmigrating soul.

Samsaric: Having to do with samsara; involved with samsara; partaking of the traits or qualities of samsara.

Samsarin: One who is subject to samsara—repeated births and deaths—and who is deluded by its appearances, immersed in ignorance.

Samskara: Impression in the mind, either conscious or subconscious, produced by action or experience in this or previous lives; propensities of the mental residue of impressions; subliminal activators; prenatal tendency. See Vasana.

Sanatana: Eternal; everlasting; ancient; primeval.

Sanatana Dharma: “The Eternal Religion,” also known as “Arya Dharma,” “the religion of those who strive upward [Aryas].” Hinduism.

Sanatana Dharmi: One who follows Sanatana Dharma.

Sankalpa: A life-changing wish, desire, volition, resolution, will, determination, or intention—not a mere momentary aspiration, but an empowering act of will that persists until the intention is fully realized. It is an act of spiritual, divine creative will inherent in each person as a power of the Atma.

Sannyasi(n): A renunciate; a monk.

Sat: Existence; reality; truth; being; a title of Brahman, the Absolute or Pure Being.

Satchidananda: Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute; Brahman.

Satsang(a): Literally: “company with Truth.” Association with god-ly-minded persons. The company of saints and devotees.

Satya Loka: “True World,” “World of the True [Sat]”, or “World of Truth [Satya].” This highest realm of relative existence where liberated beings live who have not entered back into the Transcendent Absolute where there are no “worlds” (lokas). From that world they can descend and return to other worlds for the spiritual welfare of others, as can those that have chosen to return to the Transcendent.

Shabda: Sound; word.

Shabda Brahman: Sound-God; Brahman in the Form of Sound; Soham; the Vedas.

Shaiva/Shaivite: A worshipper of Shiva; pertaining to Shiva.

Shakti: Power; energy; force; the Divine Power of becoming; the apparent dynamic aspect of Eternal Being; the Absolute Power or Cosmic Energy; the Divine Feminine.

Shankara: Shankaracharya; Adi (the first) Shankaracharya: The great reformer and re-establisher of Vedic Religion in India around 500 B.C. He is the unparalleled exponent of Advaita (Non-Dual) Vedanta. He also reformed the mode of monastic life and founded (or regenerated) the ancient Swami Order.

Shankaracharya: The title of the head of one of the major monasteries (maths) of the Swami Order founded by Shankara. There are four maths in the four quarters of India: Sringeri, Dwaraka, Badrinath and Jagannath Puri.

Shiva: A name of God meaning “One Who is all Bliss and the giver of happiness to all.” Although classically applied to the Absolute Brahman, Shiva can also refer to God (Ishwara) in His aspect of Dissolver and Liberator (often mistakenly thought of as “destroyer”).

Shiva Linga: A column-like or egg-shaped symbol of Shiva, usually made of stone. The column-like linga represents the central axis of creation which was seen by Brahma and Vishnu as a column of Light that had no top or bottom, but out of which Shiva emerged and

explained that he was the source—indeed the totality—of creation. To yogis it represents the sushumna nadi which embodies the Consciousness that is Shiva. The egg-shaped (garbha) linga represents Shiva as the germ or seed of the universe out of whom all things have come to be as his manifestation. It is often considered to represent the universe itself which is identical with Shiva.

Siddha: A perfected—liberated—being, an adept, a seer, a perfect yogi.

Siddha Purusha: A perfectly enlightened being.

Siddhaloka: The highest realm of existence in which the fully liberated (siddhas) live. (However, wherever a siddha is, that place is siddhaloka.)

Siddhi: Spiritual perfection; psychic power; power; modes of success; attainment; accomplishment; achievement; mastery; supernatural power attained through mantra, meditation, or other yogic practices. From the verb root *sidh*—to attain.

Soham: “That am I;” the ultimate Atma mantra, the mantra of the Self; the Ajapa Gayatri formula of meditation in which “So” is intoned mentally during natural inhalation and “Ham” is intoned mentally during natural exhalation. Soham is pronounced “Sohum,” as the short “a” in Sanskrit is pronounced like the American “u” in “up.”

Soham Bhava: The state of being and awareness: “THAT I am.” Gorkh Nath says that So’ham Bhava includes total Self-comprehension (ahamta), total Self-mastery (akhanda aishwarya), unbroken awareness of the unity of the Self (swatmata), awareness of the unity of the Self with all phenomenal existence—as the Self (vishwanubhava), knowledge of all within and without the Self—united in the Self (sarvajñatwa).

Sri Yukteswar Giri, Swami: The guru of Paramhansa Yogananda.

Sukha(m): Happiness; ease; joy; happy; pleasure; pleasant; agreeable.

Sudarshana: Sudarshana Chakra.

Sudarshana Chakra: The invincible weapon of Lord Vishnu which is able to cut through anything, and is a symbol of the Lord’s power of cutting through all things which bind the jiva to samsara. Thus it is the divine power of liberation (moksha).

Tapasya: Austerity; practical (i.e., result-producing) spiritual discipline; spiritual force. Literally it means the generation of heat or energy, but is always used in a symbolic manner, referring to spiritual practice and its effect, especially the roasting of karmic seeds, the burning up of karma.

Tat: That. A neuter pronoun expressing the indescribable Absolute. (See Tat Twam Asi).

Tat Twam Asi: “Thou art That.” The Mahavakya (Great Saying) of the Chandogya Upanishad.

Tilak: A sacred mark made on the forehead or between the eyebrows, often denoting what form of God the person worships.

Turiya: The state of pure consciousness. *A Ramakrishna-Vedanta Wordbook* defines it as: “The superconscious; lit., ‘the Fourth,’ in relation to the three ordinary states of consciousness—waking, dreaming, and dreamless sleep—which it transcends.”

Turiya-Turiya: “The consciousness of Consciousness;” the Absolute Consciousness of God, the Consciousness behind our individualized consciousness (turiya).

Upanishads: Books (of varying lengths) of the philosophical teachings of the ancient sages of India on the knowledge of Absolute Reality. The upanishads contain two major themes: (1) the individual self (atman) and the Supreme Self (Paramatman) are one in essence, and (2) the goal of life is the realization/manifestation of this unity, the realization of God (Brahman). There are eleven principal upanishads: Isha, Kena, Katha, Prashna, Mundaka, Mandukya, Taittiriya, Aitareya, Chandogya, Brihadaranyaka, and Shvetashvatara, all of which were commented on by Shankara, Ramanuja and Madhavacharya, thus setting the seal of authenticity on them.

Vairagya: Non-attachment; detachment; dispassion; absence of desire; disinterest; or indifference. Indifference towards and disgust for all worldly things and enjoyments.

Vak: Speech.

Vakya: Word or statement.

Vasana: Subtle desire; a tendency created in a person by the doing of an

action or by experience; it induces the person to repeat the action or to seek a repetition of the experience; the subtle impression in the mind capable of developing itself into action; it is the cause of birth and experience in general; an aggregate or bundle of *samskaras*—the impressions of actions that remain unconsciously in the mind.

Vasana(s): A bundle or aggregate of such *samskaras*.

Vedas: The oldest scriptures of India, considered the oldest scriptures of the world, that were revealed in meditation to the Vedic Rishis (seers). Although in modern times there are said to be four Vedas (Rig, Sama, Yajur, and Atharva), in the *upanishads* only three are listed (Rig, Sama, and Yajur). In actuality, there is only one Veda: the Rig Veda. The Sama Veda is only a collection of Rig Veda hymns that are marked (pointed) for singing. The Yajur Veda is a small book giving directions on just one form of Vedic sacrifice. The Atharva Veda is only a collection of theurgical mantras to be recited for the cure of various afflictions or to be recited over the herbs to be taken as medicine for those afflictions.

Vedic: Having to do with the Vedas.

Vijnana: The highest knowledge, beyond mere theoretical knowledge (*jnana*); transcendental knowledge or knowing; experiential knowledge; a high state of spiritual realization—intimate knowledge of God in which all is seen as manifestations of Brahman; knowledge of the Self.

Vishishtadvaita Vedanta: The philosophy of Qualified Non-Dualism formulated by Sri Ramanuja.

Vishwaprana: The universal life force (*prana*).

Vishwarupa: Cosmic form; multiform having all forms.

Vivekananda (Swami): The chief disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, who brought the message of Vedanta to the West at the end of the nineteenth century.

Vritra: One who hates the light and burrows into the dark; a symbolic term used in the Vedas for those of low and bound consciousness who are the opposite of the Aryans.

Yadava: “Descendant of Yadu” an ancient Indian king; the Yadavas, a clan of India, were descended from King Yadu; a title of Krishna, since he was part of the Yadava clan. Swami Bhaktivedanta, founder of the Hare Krishna movement in the West, as well as some anthropologists, believed that the Yadava clan, who disappeared from India shortly after Krishna’s lifetime, emigrated to the middle east and became the people we know today as the Jews, Abraham having been a Yadava.

Yajna: Sacrifice; offering; sacrificial ceremony; a ritual sacrifice; usually the fire sacrifice known as agnihotra or havan.

Yama: Restraint; the five Don’ts of Yoga: 1) ahimsa–non-violence, non-injury, harmlessness; 2) satya–truthfulness, honesty; 3) asteya–non-stealing, honesty, non-misappropriateness; 4) brahm-acharya–continence; 5) aparigraha–non-possessiveness, non-greed, non-selfishness, non-acquisitiveness. These five are called the Great Vow (Observance, Mahavrata) in the Yoga Sutras.

Yama-Niyama: The “Ten Commandments of Yoga” outlined in the Yoga Sutras. See Niyama and Yama.

Yoga: Literally, “joining” or “union” from the Sanskrit root yuj. Union with the Supreme Being, or any practice that makes for such union. Meditation that unites the individual spirit with God, the Supreme Spirit. The name of the philosophy expounded by the sage Patanjali, teaching the process of union of the individual with the Universal Soul.

Yoga Siddha: One who is perfected in yoga and therefore totally liberated and united with Brahman.

Yoga Sutras: The oldest known writing on the subject of yoga, written by the sage Patanjali, a yogi of ancient India, and considered the most authoritative text on yoga. Also known as Yoga Darshana, it is the basis of the Yoga Philosophy which is based on the philosophical system known as Sankhya.

Yogananda (Paramhansa): The most influential yogi of the twentieth century in the West, author of *Autobiography of a Yogi*.

Yogi(n): One who practices Yoga; one who strives earnestly for union with

God; an aspirant going through any course of spiritual discipline.

Yuga: Age or cycle; aeon; world era. Hindus believe that there are four yugas: the Golden Age (Satya or Krita Yuga), the Silver age (Treta Yuga), The Bronze Age (Dwapara Yuga), and the Iron Age (Kali Yuga). Satya Yuga is four times as long as the Kali Yuga; Treta Yuga is three times as long; and Dwapara Yuga is twice as long. In the Satya Yuga the majority of humans use the total potential—four-fourths—of their minds; in the Treta Yuga, three-fourths; in the Dwapara Yuga, one half; and in the Kali Yuga, one fourth. (In each Yuga there are those who are using either more or less of their minds than the general populace.) The Yugas move in a perpetual circle: Ascending Kali Yuga, ascending Dwapara Yuga, ascending Treta Yuga, ascending Satya Yuga, descending Satya Yuga, descending, Treta Yuga, descending Dwapara Yuga, and descending Kali Yuga—over and over. Furthermore, there are yuga cycles within yuga cycles. For example, there are yuga cycles that affect the entire cosmos, and smaller yuga cycles within those greater cycles that affect a solar system. The cosmic yuga cycle takes 8,640,000,000 years, whereas the solar yuga cycle only takes 24,000 years. At the present time our solar system is in the ascending Dwapara Yuga, but the cosmos is in the descending Kali Yuga. Consequently, the more the general mind of humanity develops, the more good can be accomplished by the positive, and the more evil can be accomplished by the negative. Therefore we have more contrasts and polarization in contemporary life than previously before 1900.

About the Author

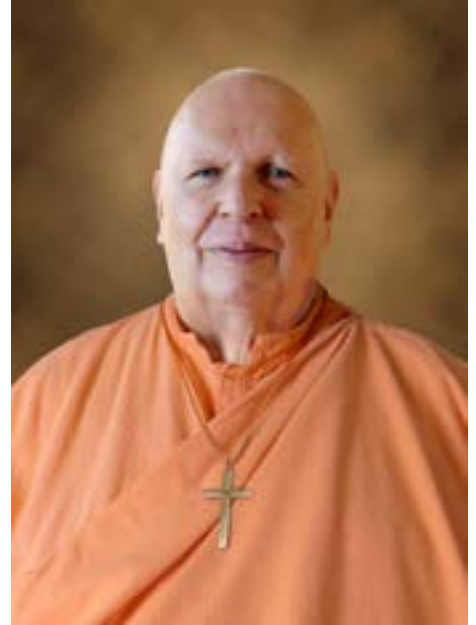
Swami Nirmalananda Giri (Abbot George Burke) is the founder and director of the Light of the Spirit Monastery (Atma Jyoti Ashram) in Cedar Crest, New Mexico, USA.

In his many pilgrimages to India, he had the opportunity of meeting some of India's greatest spiritual figures, including Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh and Anandamayi Ma. During his first trip to India he was made a member of the ancient Swami Order by Swami Vidyananda Giri, a direct disciple of Paramhansa Yogananda, who had himself been given sannyas by the Shankaracharya of Puri, Jagadguru Bharati Krishna Tirtha.

In the United States he also encountered various Christian saints, including Saint John Maximovich of San Francisco and Saint Philaret Voznesensky of New York.

For many years Abbot George has researched the identity of Jesus Christ and his teachings with India and Sanatana Dharma, including Yoga. It is his conclusion that Jesus lived in India for most of his life, and was a yogi and Sanatana Dharma missionary to the West. After his resurrection he returned to India and lived the rest of his life in the Himalayas.

He has written extensively on these and other topics, many of which are posted at OCOY.org.



Atma Jyoti Ashram (Light of the Spirit Monastery)

Atma Jyoti Ashram Atma Jyoti Ashram (Light of the Spirit Monastery) is a monastic community for those men who seek direct experience of the Spirit through yoga meditation, traditional yogic discipline, Sanatana Dharma and the life of the sannyasi in the tradition of the Order of Shankara. Our lineage is in the Giri branch of the Order.

The public outreach of the monastery is through its website, OCOY.org (Original Christianity and Original Yoga). There you will find many articles on Original Christianity and Original Yoga, including The Christ of India. Foundations of Yoga and How to Be a Yogi are practical guides for anyone seriously interested in living the Yoga Life.

You will also discover many other articles on leading an effective spiritual life, including Soham Yoga: The Yoga of the Self and Spiritual Benefits of a Vegetarian Diet, as well as the “Dharma for Awakening” series—in-depth commentaries on these spiritual classics: the Bhagavad Gita, the Upanishads, the Dhammapada, the Tao Teh King and more.

You can listen to podcasts by Swami Nirmalananda on meditation, the Yoga Life, and remarkable spiritual people he has met in India and elsewhere, at <http://ocoy.org/podcasts/>

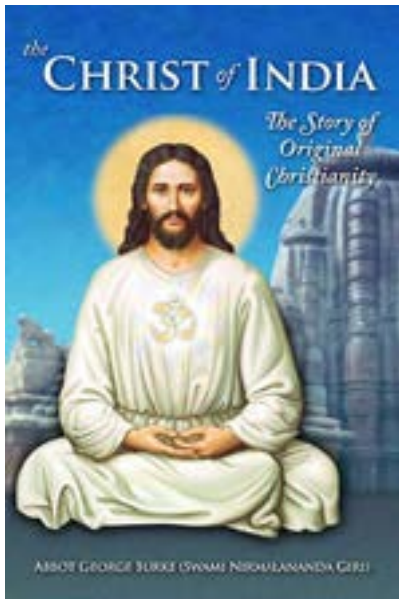
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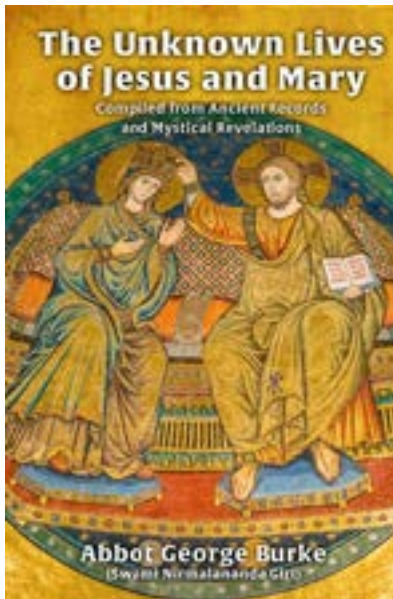
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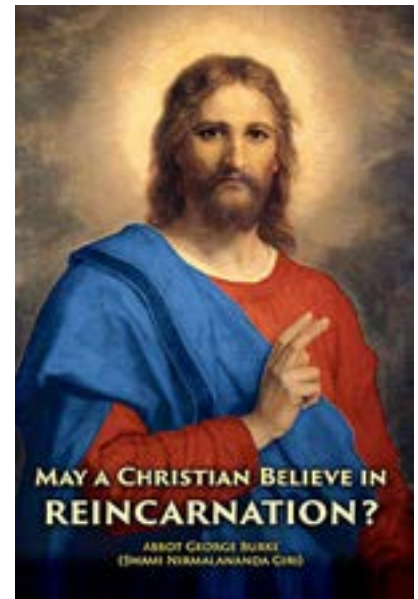
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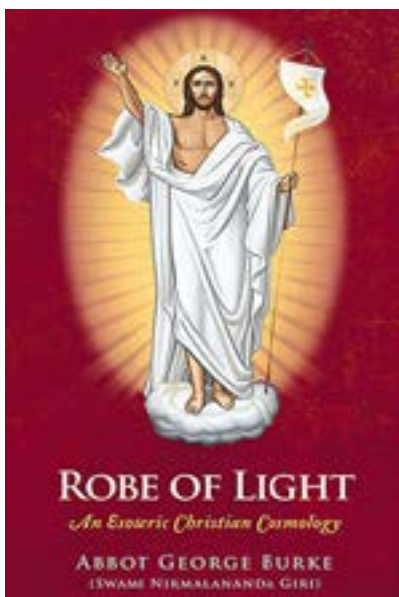
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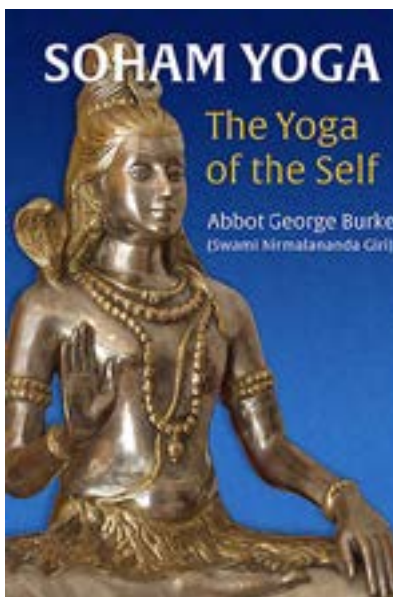
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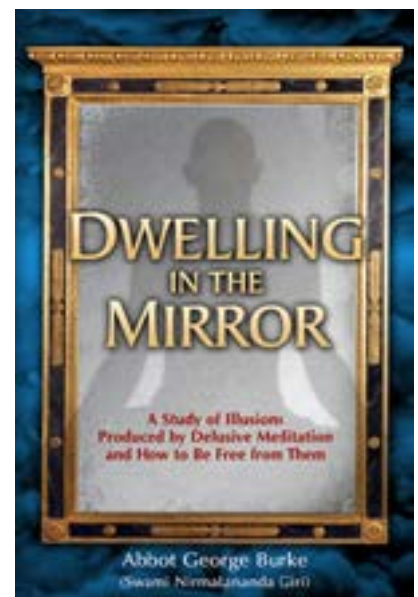
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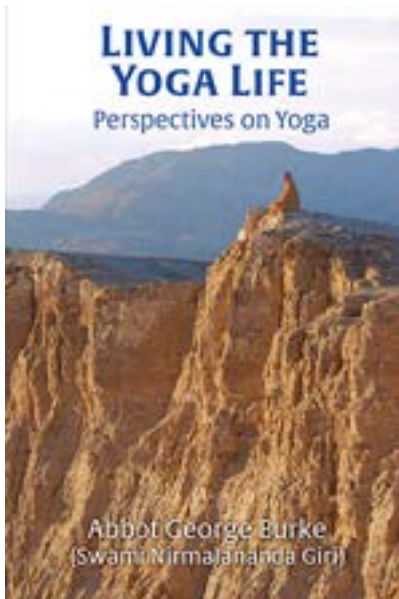
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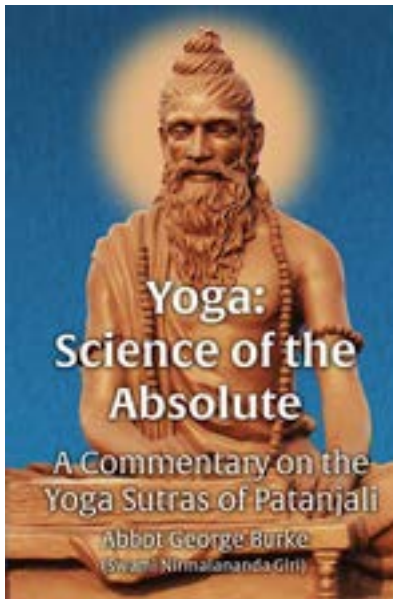
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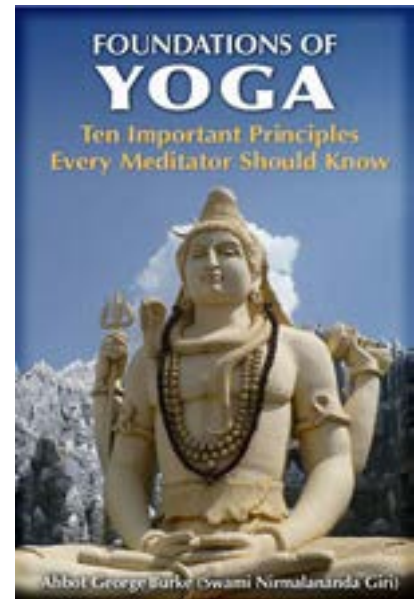
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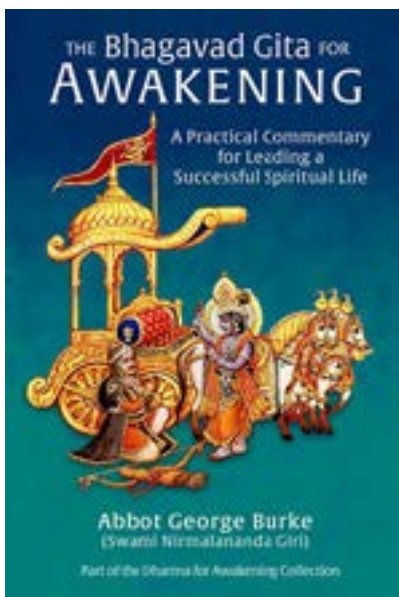
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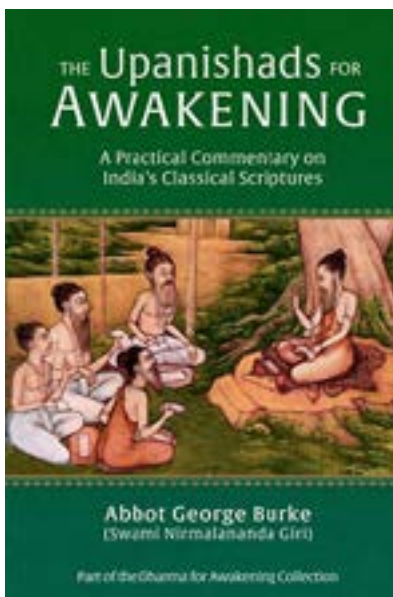
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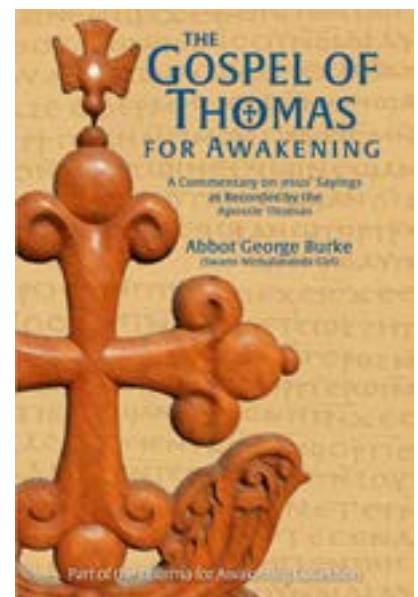
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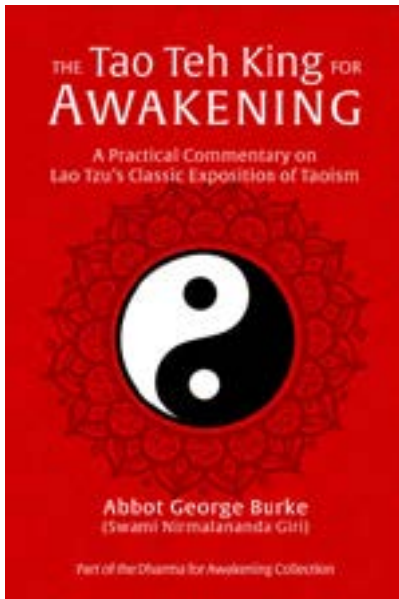


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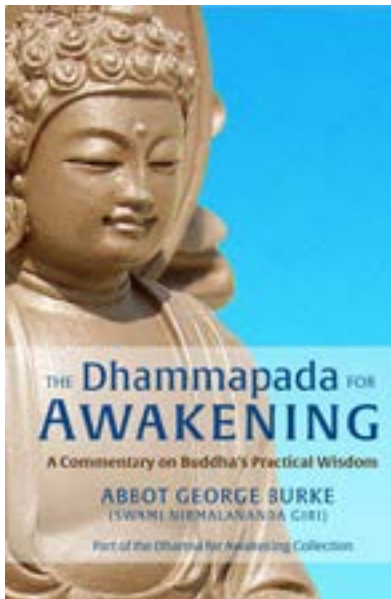


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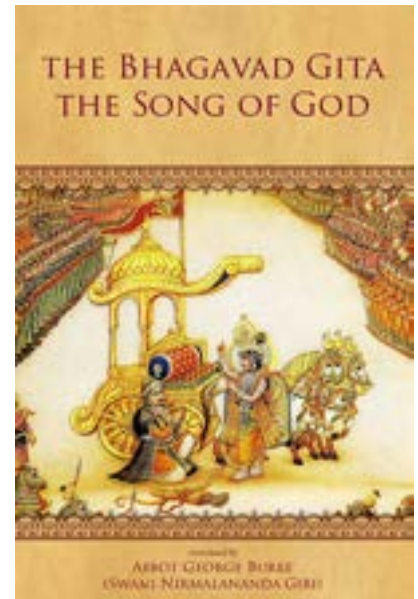
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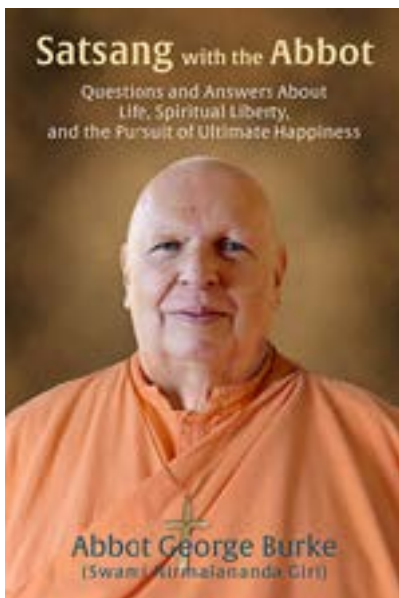
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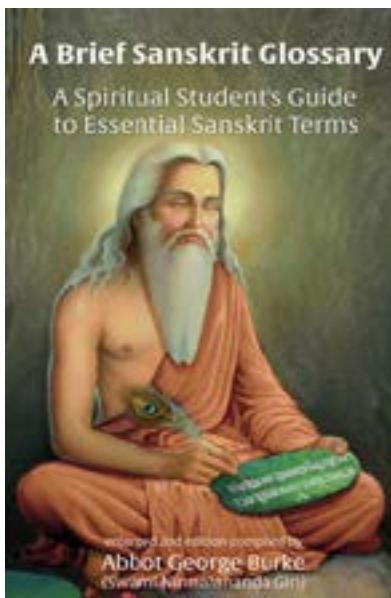
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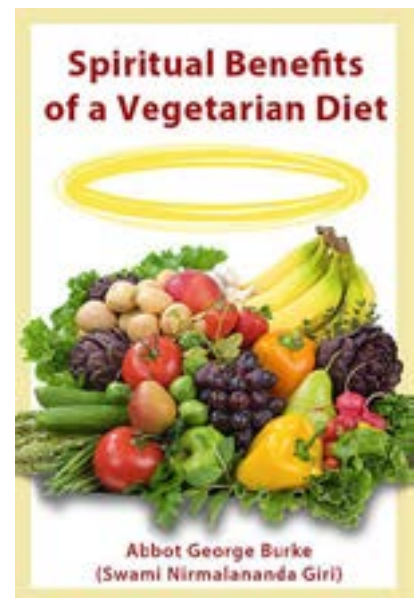
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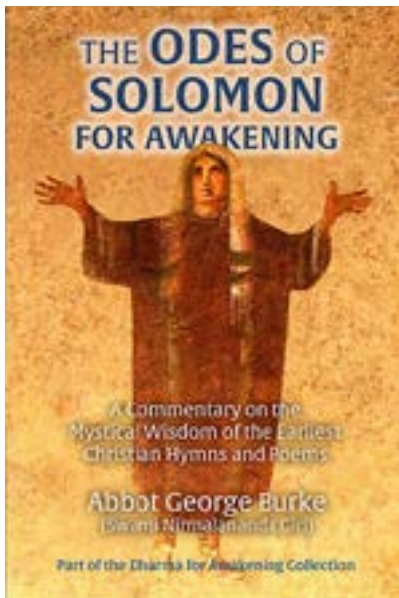
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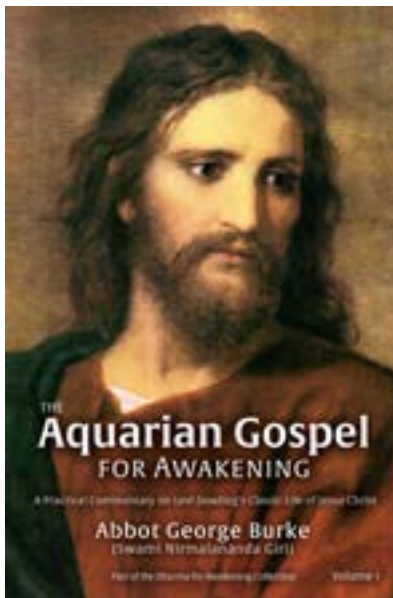
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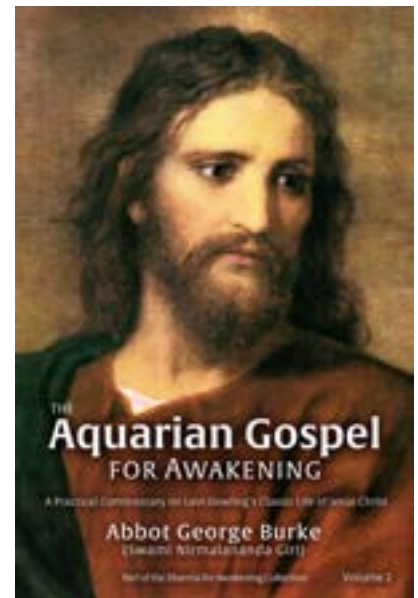
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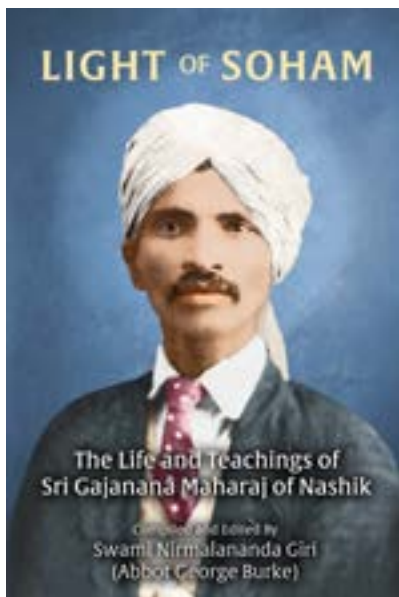
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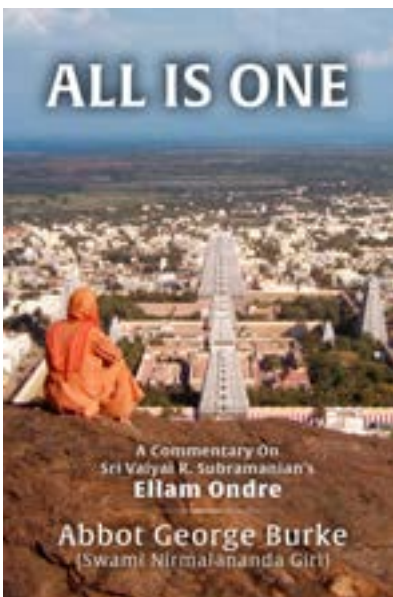
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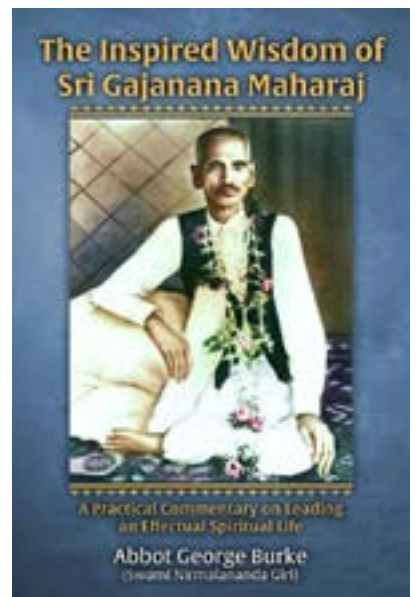
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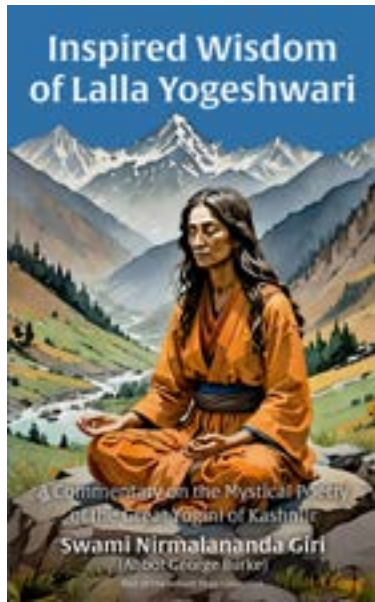
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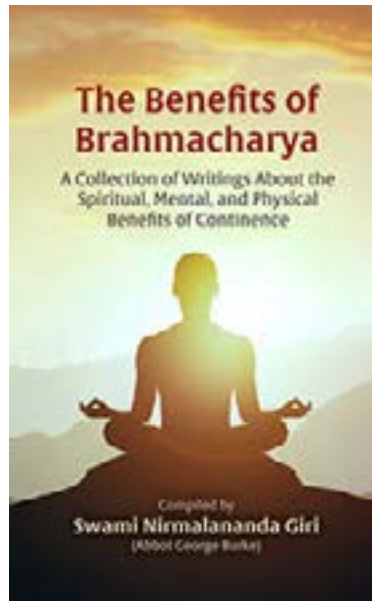
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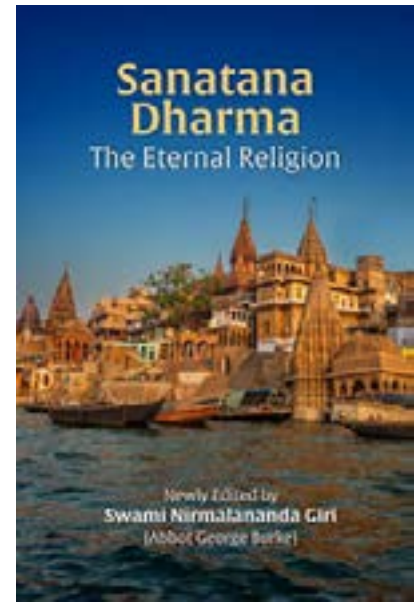
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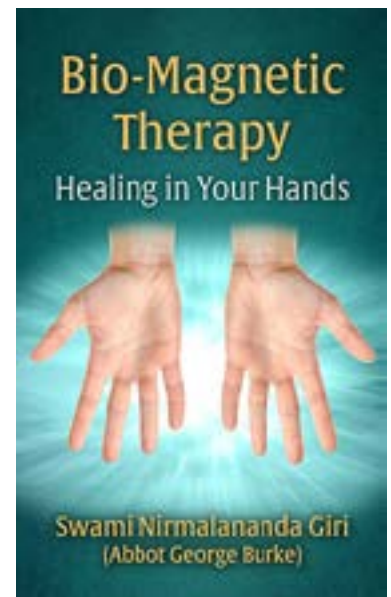
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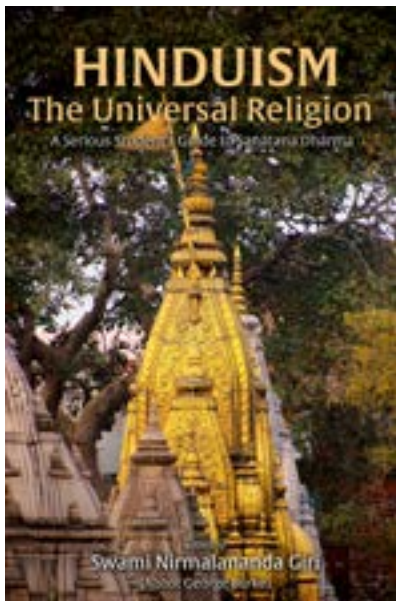
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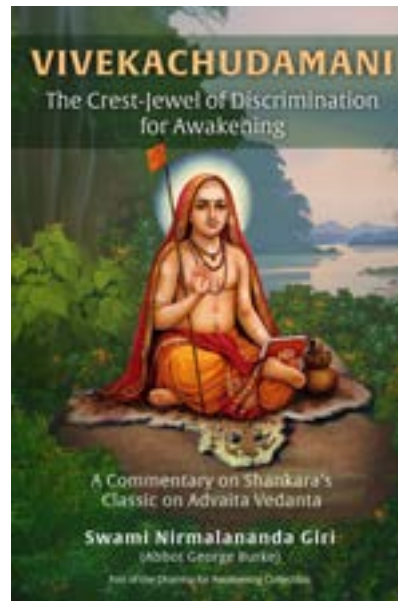
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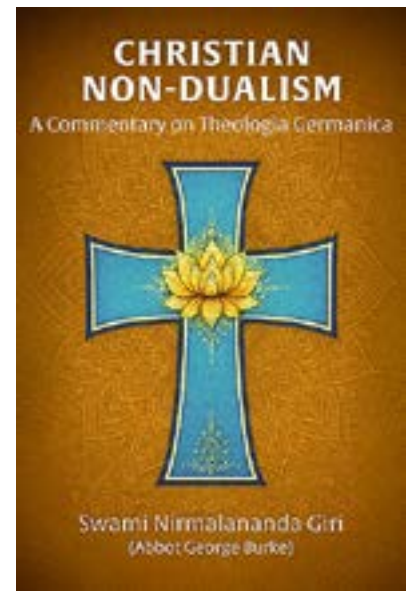
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