

Meditation Group For The New Age

THIRD YEAR SET VI

Recognition Of Reality And The Dissipation Of Glamor

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Part I

Reality and Dissipation of Glamors Connected with Relationships

Introduction

In this Set VI we shall be considering two groups of glamors those connected in a general way with relationships and with the expression of spirit in matter. These categories are broad and cover a wide field of tendencies, characteristics, and problems. Most glamors concern relationships and the manifestations of life in form more or less directly, but here we shall be dealing with some of those which do so more closely and are very widespread and harmful.

But, before discussing them in detail, let us remember one point: in this year's work our objective has been to stimulate a clearer recognition and understanding of the glamors which, by obstructing and distorting Reality, prevent us from conducting our lives in harmony with it. This has meant that much of our attention has been given to negative and limiting rather than positive and constructive characteristics and qualities; and some may have found the extent of these glamors disheartening and depressing.

But we should not let ourselves react in this way. To recognize something is to throw the light of the mind upon it; to understand is to call in the wisdom of the heart to deal with it. And those who have been working with the techniques in these Sets will know from experience the transmuting and liberating effect produced by an intelligent application of such recognitions and understanding.

The first of these techniques was Dis-identification. It is designed to cultivate detachment and realization of the higher Self and was given because we cannot face our glamors without a certain amount of detachment from them, and without a measure of the inner strength and sense of the reality of the true Self which this exercise develops. So we recommend that students have recourse to that technique (to be found on pp. 4-8 of Third Year, Set II) whenever they feel that the glamors with which they are confronted - both individually and in society as a whole - threaten to overwhelm them. A teacher has written thus:

Let not the world glamor overcome you and see to it that you are not drawn into the vortex of fears and of pessimism which

surrounds so many... One of the things which all have to learn to do is to avail themselves of the forces and energies which are theirs by right of inherent possession; these are but seldom employed with understanding by the average man or woman... Few realize how stupendous are the energies upon which they can draw at will.... You should aim at the outer expression of the inner nature with greater frequency and should seek to make the conscious link between the outer and the inner more dynamic and real.

So let us face, with courage and confidence, the glamors we have to cope with, regarding them as a challenge prompting us to call in the help of our higher Selves. Of the unlimited power of our true Self, we can rest assured.

Devotion and Idealism

One of the difficulties in recognizing and then dispelling or offsetting the glamors of this sixth group (Third Year, Set I p. 14), is that many of them are considered to be good qualities and, to some extent, may bring positive results. For instance, personal devotion can be an incentive to self-sacrifice and useful service; the same can be said of idealism. Yet often these qualities are restrictive insofar as they generate various forms of bondage and limitation.

In contrast to the fifth group of glamors which we studied in the last Set (those related to the analyzing and critical functions of the mind), this sixth type prompts people susceptible to it to close their eyes to the imperfections, shortcomings, and even grave defects of those to whom they are devoted. They see only what they want to see and refuse to accept the notion that something less than good exists in the person they admire in the cause or objective they have made their own. This, outstandingly true in the case of personal devotion, has given rise on a collective scale to the "cult of the personality," of which this century has witnessed such world-shattering examples.

Devotion is still one of the strongest and most prevalent of humanity's glamors, though modern trends and attitudes are beginning to loosen its grip. It may be given to a cause, a creed, teacher, or a political ideology; a duty or a responsibility may kindle it; but once "hooked" the devotee becomes utterly absorbed in its service, to which is dedicated an immoderate proportion of life force even to the extent of loss of integrity.

Devotion can lead to much personal sacrifice and the development of a selfless spirit of service, but when it is carried to extremes the devotees get lost in a rapturous mist of their own making, a mist precipitated by their own desire. For devotion, being an emotional attitude, is often linked with idealism, which has a more mental quality. Furthermore, such one-pointed devotional absorption protects the devotee against a great many conflicts, responsibilities, and choices; many unwanted commitments are unconsciously - and sometimes consciously! - evaded by this attitude.

When idealism induces the belief that an ideal must be pursued at all costs, i.e., in a narrow, fanatical way, the consequences are ominous. Because an ideal is something that pertains to a higher than-normal level of thought, its materialization should be approached step by step. Moreover, we are so constituted that all our ideals are incapable of being realized at the same time.

This is true, too, as regards one's own "perfection." Spurred by idealism, the perfectionist will spend an excessive amount of time and energy in attempting to bring to perfection whatever goal is sought. In one-pointed desire to materialize the ideal, all sound sense of proportion is lost. If we have too high and unrealistic an "ideal model" of ourselves, we fail to achieve it, and the price of this failure is apt to be a reaction of depression created by self-accusation and a sense of guilt. We do well ever to remember that we inhabit an imperfect universe and can work only very gradually toward an eventual perfection which, here and now, is unattainable. This can serve as our long-range prospect, the ideal discerned at the summit of the mountain to be climbed. We can supplement it with intermediate and short-range views: planning the ascent and deciding upon the next few steps forward.

Fanaticism and Self-sacrifice

Idealism and fanaticism are apt to run hand-in-hand and become associated with the kind of devotion we have been discussing. Enough has been said in this connection to show that blind dedication and belief in the perfection of a person or cause can do neither the devotee nor the object of veneration any good. The world being in a state of perpetual change and growth, an ideal should be seen as but a temporary form for an idea, a form suitable for existing conditions in the present. And just as ideas

are in constant flux, ever bringing in new forces, so ideals have to evolve also to provide the right patterns for progress.

Fanatical adherence to ideals, doctrines, and theologies produces a limited and distorted vision of truth. It begets antagonism and friction in those who hold opposing views. History does not lack examples of the hostility it can provoke, exploding into active persecution and war. Christendom and Islam present a particularly bad record in this respect. Perhaps the glamors of this type demonstrate more clearly and dramatically than any others the way in which a virtue, or an inherently altruistic quality such as dedication and devotion, can, if carried to extremes, become dangerous and destructive.

Among the "higher" glamors, the glamor associated with sacrifice has its place. More widespread in the past, it still claims many victims who fall into its trap and think that the soundest action is the one that calls for the greatest sacrifice, the severest renunciation. But often it is not. Many mothers, for example, sacrifice themselves utterly for their children, curtailing their own lives and development, without realizing how bad this can be for the children themselves. Where a mother devotes a certain amount of time and attention to the development of her own personality and the realization of her true Self, she is enabled to provide her children with a higher quality of love and richer companionship as they gradually expand their interests and pursuits.

Possessiveness

Possessiveness is another glamor in this category. Its subtler aspects are difficult to recognize. While its more obvious origins lie in acquisitiveness for selfish motives, it can have its roots in the desire to protect what is dear and preserve what is of value. But if allowed to have its way, possessiveness can act like an octopus, gradually coiling its tentacles not only round the desired possession, but also around the one who seeks to possess.

The over-possessive parent or partner is too familiar a figure to need discussion, but possessiveness has other forms linking it with the general narrowing, limiting, and too one-pointed glamors of this group. Possession, to have and to hold, is often pursued for its *own sake* and not for the object's usefulness or true value. This is graphically illustrated by the exorbitant sums collectors are willing

to pay for certain kinds of objects figures totally out of proportion to their real value.

On the material level, the acquisitive tendency has served human development up to a certain point. It has taught humanity to plan and accumulate the technical know-how which has made such an amazing “workshop” of the modern world. But this glamor has now reached exaggerated proportions. Particularly harmful is the possessive attitude toward money, with its tendency to grow into an overwhelming passion and manifest itself in reckless and even criminal behavior. What constitutes the right relation to money presents a difficult and subtle problem. It has been dealt with in the pamphlet *Money and the Spiritual Life*¹ However, a healthy reaction against material possessions is in evidence today, particularly among the young, many of whom are little interested in comfort and security (an obsession with the majority of adults), and they exhibit a spirit of sharing rare in the past.

Possessiveness is to be found on mental as well as physical and emotional levels. The gathering of knowledge for the sake of knowledge might be classified as one of the “higher” glamors, a glamor that breeds forgetfulness of the precept that intake, or ingathering, has to be balanced by outflow and outgiving.

Obviously, a primary technique for dispelling possessiveness is cultivation of its opposite – a spirit of sharing. But other techniques are available for helping us to get rid of this form of self-centeredness. We should always look for the *causes* of a glamor, not solely at its forms of expression. We can then deal with its roots rather than merely prevent its manifestation. The majority of our glamors originate at much deeper levels than the superficial levels from which they emerge. For example, possessiveness often has its origin in fear and insecurity.

Sentiment and Attachment

Many good people are held in the thrall of a sentiment they believe to be love, but which in reality is more often an emotional reaction of another kind, an expression of desire. Where directed toward other people, it is generally a mixture of the *desire* to love, a longing to be loved and eagerness to do anything that will evoke that love. Directed towards objects, it may take the form of

¹ Available from MONA, P.O. Box 566, Ojai, CA 93023

nostalgic clinging to things of the past – things once associated with bygone happiness but now no longer needed. They should be superseded by other interests better adapted to the present.

This kind of attachment is common. One readily clings to the past, the known, the previously experienced, not only because it gives a sense of security, but also because it avoids the effort of making new contacts, of stepping out toward fresh experiences and exposing oneself to the unknown. The *status quo* appears to be a state of comparative repose and safety – where nothing new is demanded of us!

But this attitude is in direct opposition to evolutionary progress. Change is of necessity taking place all the time, and it has been said that everything which constitutes our next step could in this respect be called “spiritual.”

As has already been mentioned, all these glamors are either produced or reinforced by the protection they give from personal commitment and responsibility. Writers such as Hermann Keyserling and Erich Fromm have pointed out a curious ambivalence often existing in people. On the one hand they clamor for liberty and are apt to rebel against any kind of discipline or restraint, even when legitimate or needed. On the other hand, where given freedom, they make poor use of it, frequently getting involved in damaging situations. Or else they are afraid of it and shirk the responsibility it entails. This makes them prone to take shelter again behind some external authority, perhaps in the form of a political figure, a teacher, or a leader. Thus the tendency to personal worship is reinforced and the glamor of idealistic and fanatical devotion fortified.

Attachment to persons or doctrines may be considered a kind of possessiveness, but in reality it is a form of *being possessed* or even obsessed. Fanatics have literally sold themselves to the cause they espouse; they are enslaved by it. Emotionally and mentally, even if not physically as well, they have forfeited their freedom, for they think only in its terms, see things only by its light, believe only in its “truth.” This is the measure of its possession of them.
Service

Then there is the glamor of “service.” It is among those we have termed the “higher glamors,” but it is one that often ensnares us

with the meshes of over-devotion and fanaticism. The dedicated server can get so caught up in serving that all sense of proportion is lost. Convinced that service is the only thing of importance, the whole life is subordinated to it.

This ill-balanced attitude overlooks the fact that there should be room in life for *being* as well as *doing*. It also ignores the importance of others, too, being given opportunity to “earn merit” along with ourselves. Immoderate ministrations to someone, while possibly engendering a fine spirit of selflessness in ourselves, may well encourage the growth of selfishness in the one lavishly ministered to. If all responsibility is lifted from others and no demands are made on them, little opportunity is left for them to practice selflessness and grow in spiritual stature. However well-meaning she may be, the efforts of the mother who slaves for her family under the impulse of this glamor are misguided, and she needs to learn to create opportunities that will evoke service from others as well.

Those who recognize in themselves a tendency to overemphasize the virtue of service will find the *technique of right proportions* helpful. All these “over-intensity” glamors need to be offset by the cultivation of right perspectives and the broadening-out of one-pointed vision to embrace a larger picture.

Narrow Vision and Rigidity

The glamors of narrow-mindedness and rigidity require no elaboration. Their restrictive effects are obvious. But they may not always be recognized and we can slip into them for various reasons: because we want to feel firmly around us the protective walls of a certain way of thinking; because of what we might call “mental agoraphobia,” or fear of moving out into new areas of thought; because of mental or emotional laziness, ignorance, and the self-satisfaction which is fed by complete absorption in one’s own beliefs, convictions, and ways of life.

Should we discover such tendencies in ourselves, let us remember the value of “divine discontent.” It has been through the constant urge of the human heart and the open-mindedness of the enquirers that humanity has found its way from primordial darkness to its present comparatively advanced stage of development. A closed mind and a right attitude constitute great obstacles to our own progress and that of others. As Prof. Tucci, an

authority on Tibetan Buddhism, has said, "Avoid the harshness of unyielding certainty."

The antidote to this kind of narrowness is *expansion*, and this can be cultivated in various ways. These are the most effective and direct methods to develop it:

Discrimination the ability to look at things clearly, without prejudice and with flexibility.

Sense of proportion (see *Third Year, Set II*, pp. 9-15).

Broad-mindedness the willingness and ability (which *can* be cultivated) to see all sides and aspects of a matter and endeavor to achieve as far as possible what has been called a "completed point of view."

Detachment – the refusal to let oneself become unduly absorbed in anything; the cultivation of the "detached observer."

Sincerity as a Glamor

In associating the ideal of glamor with sincerity, we naturally intend no derogation of a quality which, intrinsically, ranks high among the virtues. As the antithesis of falseness, of make-believe and of deception, and so on, it is by definition a reflection of truth (or what we believe to be true).

Now truth can be so dynamic, so powerful, so productive of effect that many people experience serious difficulty in facing up to it. When projected upon a person unready or reluctant, or both, to confront it, its action can inflict severe psychological disturbance. Thus the indiscriminating, even when well-meaning, exercise of sincerity ("I always say what I think") in situations where it is neither opportune nor welcome, qualifies as a glamor, even if it be classified among those we have designated as "noble."

A consideration of the motives that lie back of the expression of this "sincerity" shows them to be mixed. First of all, to justify speaking the truth, on all occasions on the score of one's love of veracity is, more often than not, a rationalization (in the psychoanalytic sense). The real reason may well be an indiscriminate yielding to an impulse to say the first thing that comes into one's head, on the basis that its "truth" gives one the right, imposes on one the duty even, to come right out with it.

On other occasions the motive may lie at a less reputable level. The impulse to criticize others, to point out their shortcomings to them, may seem to stem from a laudably sincere intention to improve their characters. But how often is it traceable to an urge for self-gratification through the demonstration of our superiority, the display of our natural gifts or the exercise of our will-to-power!

Yet even when the motive is genuinely altruistic, that is, untainted by self-gratification, this technique is fundamentally misguided. Calling attention to character defects automatically arouses a defense-mechanism in the person criticized. On the one hand this may assume the form of denial, of counter-criticism, or of hostility toward the critic. On the other hand fault-finding, even if accepted docilely, creates feelings of inferiority and guilt, or begets self accusation, which may be just as bad. The art of counseling is a difficult and subtle one, and ill-considered "sincerity" proves no ally in dealing with its problems.

Seriousness

Over-seriousness is the characteristic glamor of those who are prone to the intensity and one-pointed drive which underlie this sixth group of glamors. Seriousness can become oppressive and inhibiting if it gets too strong a grip on us. It can develop into a grim and solemn frame of mind which makes us take people and events, circumstances, and above all ourselves far too seriously. Apart from its conditioning influence on us personally, it has an oppressive effect on others.

Again, though fundamentally caused by lack of proportion, over-seriousness is also due to an excessive emphasis on the grave and somber which dulls appreciation of the joyous and hopeful aspects of life. The direct way of getting rid of this glamor is to cultivate joy. There are several ways of doing this. Joy is a quality of the higher Self which is always available to us, and by practice it can be channeled into our personalities. Of course this is not always easy, but we can develop the habit of maintaining a light-hearted attitude and so conduct the minor affairs of life with gaiety. The extent to which this lightens the atmosphere for those around us, as well as ourselves, and helps to create an aura of cheerfulness, makes it well worth the effort it may cost us at first.

The tendency to be overly serious can be counter-balanced by a sense of delight, by enjoyment of the wonders surrounding us, by appreciation of all that is beautiful. As such an attitude becomes established, it provides a channel for the deeper joy of the Soul, and also that joy, like a thermometer, indicates the measure of our Soul infusion. We might also remember the words quoted in the section on Joy in *Set V* of the *Second Year*: “Joy lets in the light and where there is Joy there is little room for glamor and misunderstanding.”

Another essential quality to be cultivated is a *sense of humor*. With its tendency to broaden points of view and encourage more detached and joyous habits of mind, it dispels the gloom of over-seriousness like magic. Laughter is one of the tonics nature has bestowed upon the human system. Its stimulating influence not only gives a psychological life, but also, by discharging nervous and mental tension, oils the wheels of our relationships. In addition, it massages the liver!

An effective way of recalling to mind a quality we need to develop is to write it in large letters on a card, which is then placed where it will constantly attract our attention. It will not only serve to remind us to practice the quality in question, but will also directly affect the unconscious. This method, known as the *Technique of Evocative Words*, is a most valuable means of influencing the unconscious, which, even without our conscious attention, registers its message and responds. The quality we wish to cultivate begins to take form with increasing definition and intensity below the threshold of awareness, the levels which condition our attitudes to life so much more than we realize.

Part II

Reality and Dissipation of Glamors Related to Form

Broadly speaking, the glamors of the seventh type, the last that we shall be considering in this Year, are those specifically associated with the problems of form and expression. They are thus related to the means whereby life, or “Spirit” (using that word as a general term), manifests both collectively and individually.

The Form

An outstanding characteristic of the present time is the importance attributed to form in general. One of the most widespread examples of this is the great amount of attention given to the appearance and well-being of the physical body. For centuries the narrow dualistic religious views that prevailed in the western world encouraged its neglect and deprecation; ascetic practices even subjected it to pain. But as advances were made in all fields concerned with the preservation of human life, such as hygiene, chemistry and medical care, the physical body was gradually given proper attention and respect.

Now the pendulum has swung to the other extreme and there is an exaggerated preoccupation with this aspect of life. Great efforts have been taken to promote and preserve physical attractiveness and vigor; yoga exercises are widely taught; beauty products are a major industry; an exorbitant amount of time, energy, and money are expended on following the dictates of fashion. Another example of this over-valuation of physical form and its superiority is the relentless competition to create new records in the world of sport.

But the worst of the glamors associated with attachment is the prevailing fear and even horror of physical death; there is an almost universal refusal to accept the naturalness of dying, and in consequence frantic efforts are made to prolong life in the body. All this has created a wholly materialistic conception of life, with an attendant neglect of the non-material values and a lack of concern with the destiny and continuity of life independent of its physical instrument.

Adequate recognition and appreciation should be accorded all those who, often in a truly heroic way, have overcome severe physical handicaps to make contributions of lasting value to

humanity. An outstanding and almost unbelievable example is the life of Helen Keller. Blind and deaf from birth, her determination carried her through the stages of a normal education that led to a university doctorate. She wrote books, lectured, and conducted a campaign for the disabled. Beethoven similarly overcame what would ordinarily be considered a composer's greatest disability (his total deafness in later years) to produce the major part of his series of symphonies. Another figure is Charles Darwin. His physical and nervous debility permitted him to work only an hour or so each day, but despite this handicap he succeeded in writing his long and pioneering book, *The Origin of Species*, and other works.

In another field, Renoir is representative of creative workers who have produced valuable works of art in the face of physical disabilities. In the last years of his life he went on painting in spite of the intense pain he suffered in his hands due to arthritis. Here it is of interest to mention a group of artists who, being unable to use their arms, have learnt by dint of patience and training, to turn out work of a professional standard by holding the brush in the mouth or with the toes. Such people are to be admired just as much as those who have achieved prominence in the sporting and athletic fields through physical prowess.

Considerations such as these assist us in acquiring a properly balanced attitude toward the body, an attitude free from dependence on it and certainly opposed to enslavement by it. It is thus recognized for what it should be: a useful, indeed an indispensable instrument, a "mechanism" as the service of the human being.

The Relationship Between Humanity and Machine

The analogy of the driver and the car helps to put into perspective the larger problem of the *proper relationship between humanity and machine*. The very rapid expansion of the use of the machine has produced radical changes in our mode of living, and different attitudes and evaluations have accordingly developed in regard to the results of this technological revolution. Let us first of all look at the extreme positions.

At one pole, there are those with great enthusiasm for all mechanical and electronic devices, and for automation and

cybernetic systems designed to replace the individual psychic activities.

The opposite extreme is negative; it is an aversion to technology aroused by a recognition of the dangers to which excessive use of machines can lead. People who hold this view fear that humanity is being subordinated to and dehumanized by the machine, and such extremism can lead to its total repudiation.

An example of this is Thoreau's downright refusal to have anything to do with the mechanical in any form, but especially with the restrictive and oppressive routines of New England social life. He withdrew to lead a solitary existence and built himself a primitive cabin by a lake in the woods. His account of his ideas and experiences in his book *Walden* is worth reading because of his intellectual and moral stature, even if his anti-social position is not shared by the reader.

Another example is Gandhi, who tried to induce the Indians to abstain from the use of machines. In particular, he advocated the replacement of power-driven looms by the ancient methods of hand-weaving traditional in India. His efforts failed because there is no turning back to the past. In fact, his great disciple and admirer, Pandit Nehru, was forced not only to abandon the attempt but also to realize that India's industrial development had to be actively encouraged. Gandhi's noble mistake provides a clear proof of how good intentions and lofty motives inspired by spiritual principles are not sufficient for making decisions that are both right and successful.

Such decisions demand constant awareness not only of motives, but also of *conditions* as they really are, and therefore of the *actual possibilities* of achievement. One must take the whole situation into consideration and foresee insofar as is possible the probable results of the projected decisions. This applies to all who adopt an attitude of total repudiation of modern civilization, whether they are intellectuals like Guenon or the rebels among the young people of today. Their justified eagerness for radical change incites them to attempt to destroy everything without any clear ideas about future goals and programs of reconstruction.

Regarding the specific problem of humanity versus machine, and leaving aside the extreme positions *pro* and *con*, the fundamental

question is one of *establishing right relationships and proportion between ends and means*. The means, both inner and psychological, and external and practical, must be accepted and appreciated. But we should select only those means which are most suitable and which yield the best return for our efforts. At the same time, we need to exercise constant vigilance and with a strong and alert will ensure that our goals are protected from being distorted by the *means* which we have chosen for realizing them.

In this respect, the driver-car analogy is illuminating. The right approach to car usage is to see it as a means of getting rapidly and comfortably to where we want to go, be it for reasons of work or of recreation. The passion for speed and the status symbol of "bigger and better" cars have no part in this. All machines can be exploited for motives and purposes ranging from the altruistic to the criminal. A tape-recorder, for example, can be used for great music, business efficiency, personal communication, or espionage and blackmail.

Is it humanity and not the machine that presents the problem. There are machines whose utilitarian simplicity obviates abuses, such as the honest washing-machine which relieves drudgery and saves time. There are those, like the wonder-working computer, that reinforce human activities. But we should not expect them to replace the individual where they are not capable of doing so. One such example was an attempt at computerized translation which rendered the term "spirit" as "alcohol!"

Norbert Wiener, one of the originators of cybernetics, has given a significant warning about this. "Heaven help us," he says, "if we allow the machine to make decisions and guide us without having first examined the laws which govern its operation and ascertained with certainty if the principles of its behavior are acceptable." It may be added that the machine has not and cannot have a sense of responsibility or autonomous will.

Glamors of Organization and Order

These problems loom large in modern society, in which the well being of the immense numbers of people populating our cities is heavily dependent on the management of the gigantic industries and organizations of all kinds required to handle their needs. These complex conditions have created a growing tendency toward

people's lives being regimented and organized, individually as well as in the mass. While this has contributed to the progress of society to a certain extent, the economic and other pressures under which we live are forcing an over-emphasis of this control, with the result that life today is becoming more and more immersed in the glamors of bureaucracy, technology, statistics, and the smooth-running machinery of organization.

In all this the human element, the individual need, is apt to be overlooked or underestimated. The organization becomes the "reality," while its true function to supply human needs is given scant consideration. This inversion of purpose represents a glamor that is all the more dangerous because of its collective nature. Many are aware of it and suffer because of it, but the difficulties presented by an attempt on the part of any one individual to counteract it generally produces a feeling of helplessness. And yet awareness of the effects of this trend will go far to offset its power to influence us psychologically without our knowledge. We can also guard ourselves against yielding to the temptation to over-organize in our own lives.

One of the inherent dangers here is the liability of the rights and integrity of the individual to be sacrificed. This opens up the difficult problem of the conflict between the good of the whole and that of the individual, a problem to which excess of organization and control furnishes no solution. Another danger is that an individual is apt to assume the power of an organization, to take on its authority and identify with its machinery. In such soil the glamor of power and status thrives. With an organization's support, a person of little significance can acquire a feeling of importance from the role as its representative, entitled to speak on its behalf. Unfortunately such people often fail to represent its true purpose, and under the cloak of *its* authority their own desires, opinions, or tendency to dominate and control are given free range. Bureaucracy is indeed a fertile breeding-ground of petty dictators! Alternatively the structure of a large organization is apt to encourage its members to shelter within it and hide behind its imposing machinery to the extent that their own individuality and initiative become stunted. If this provides a feeling of security, it also promotes the growth of the negative type of glamors and may lead to frustration and depression.

The very power of large concerns and the “group thoughtform” they build make these tendencies very difficult to resist. The situation is responsible for the development of a new kind of organized society characterized by what has been called the “culture of the machine.” But we should not tamely accept the notion that this is bound to lead to the destruction of individuality and the elimination of all initiative. The organization, the machine, reinforced by computerized thinking and planning, order and system, can and must be kept in its place as our servant, not the master of our destiny. Standardization and conformism of thought, attitude, and action impose varying degrees of bondage on the human spirit. But this menace can be counteracted: the power of the spirit is our safeguard. Standardization need mean nothing more than an assemblage of expedients enabling humanity to make more efficient use of resources and giving greater scope for creative living. As Frank Lloyd Wright is quoted as saying in a *UNESCO Courier*:

That we may be enamored by the negation brought by the machine may be inevitable for a time. But I like to imagine this novel negation to be only a platform underfoot to enable a great splendor of life to be ours than any known to Greek or Roman, Goth or Moor. We should know a life beside which the life they knew would seem not only limited in scale and narrow in range but pale in richness of the color of imagination and integrity of spirit.

While what has been said about glamors of this type has applied collectively in the main, individuals as such are equally susceptible to them. Many people have inordinate love of organizing – other people’s lives as well as their own! The glamor of *order* is of common occurrence; its victims are far more concerned with achieving a neat and tidy result than with the purpose of what is being done. Comparatively simple and harmless though this glamor may appear, it can nevertheless have the effect not only of diverting and wasting time and energy, but also of implanting the habit of paying undue attention to form and the material aspects of life. These become overemphasized and over-valued to the detriment of purpose, meaning, and the more qualitative and spiritual aspects. The onset of this glamor is thus both subtle and cumulative, and it needs to be “nipped in the bud.” The sense of

order can then be relegated to its proper place as an *instrument* which promotes greater skill in action and efficiency.

Ceremony and Ritual, Magic, and Symbols

There is another type of glamor to which people of this kind are often addicted: the fascination of ceremony and ritual. Here again the form can become over-emphasized to the neglect of its meaning and purpose. Love of the ritual in which one is taking part then turns it into little more than an emotional experience, whereas a ceremony or ritual should constitute the expression or symbol of a principle or reality much greater than itself. Its function is to offer a channel to the higher realities and beings whereby the evoked spiritual energies may pervade the consciousness of those present, thus becoming anchored and expressed objectively.

All the great religions have made use of ritualistic practices, and the forms of ritual in general range from comparatively simple prayer and worship to the perverted and horrifying sacrifice of living creatures, a rite going back to the earliest times and still performed in some places.

There is a close link between all this and the glamor inherent in what is "secret," in magic and symbols. Depending on our conception and use of symbols, they serve either to clarify the nature of reality or to veil and obscure it. Taken for what it is, just an image, a pointer to reality, a symbol is useful to the extent that it builds a bridge in our understanding. But if we mistake it for the reality, if we get attached to the symbol itself, it is a generator of glamor; and the glamor masks reality, actually prevents us from discerning it behind the symbol, and consequently conceals its purpose.

The current interest in magic in its various guises is conducive to glamors of a particularly perilous kind. The application of subjective energies in what is known as black magic, practiced for material ends, is a gross perversion of the living energy which can, when used for spiritual purposes, transmute, enlighten, and redeem. For this reason it is very unwise to make light of the subjective powers which underlie all outer living. They are a sacred trust. Fortunately, the fact that people are largely unaware of their existence prevents them from making use of them to any great extent. Nevertheless, all who are awakening to and becoming

interested in them should exercise extreme caution in their approach to them. Purification of motives is the watchword, and elimination of all selfishness the great safeguard.

The Old and the New

The importance and prevalence of two additional glamors warrant their consideration before we close our study. Diametrically opposed to each other, they are the *glamor of the past* and the *glamor of the new*. At the present time they are a constant source of conflict, often embittered by violence, at all levels and in all fields. The undeniable value inherent in the best traditions of the past is a strong argument for appreciating them and preserving what is good in them. At the same time the march of events is inevitably ushering in the new, much of which represents a genuine advance

It might fairly be said that neither of these conditions is *per se* necessarily productive of glamor. The glamor enters in when people go to extremes and adopt a one-sided or exclusive attitude in their support of one or other position, when this attitude is reinforced either by fanatical adherence to the past – sometimes in its worst aspects – in the one case, or by indiscriminate infatuation with what is new in the other. Let us take a closer view of these explosive elements.

First the glamor of the past. With its origins deep-rooted in long-established habit and routine, in emotional attachment and traditional observance, it serves the vested interests of authority and the “establishment” by fending off the new with its unknown dangers and insecurity. Let it be remembered that the idea of form is not limited to the material. While forms such as objects, institutions, habits, and so forth are recognizably such, feelings, ideas and ideologies are, on emotional and mental levels respectively, equally *forms*. And they are often rock-hard! If obsessive and all-pervading, they “die hard,” but die they must when like all forms they have outlived their usefulness.

The relevant problem here is the difficult one of discriminating between what is still viable and of value in the old form and what it outmoded and must be superseded and discarded. The solution then consists in preserving the living core, the eternal truth, and the right values pertaining to the old form while jettisoning the elements in it that are obsolete. Much the same criterion applies to

what it new. Is it its very novelty that casts a glamorous spell over us, or does it really provide a channel for a quality or energy which is lacking? The new, incoming energies tend to be expressed at first in barbarous, exaggerated and violent ways. The beginning of each era has witnessed this phenomenon and the present age is no exception. The fact is that the forms to contain the new energies and express them constructively are not yet prepared and available. Their development needs to be gradual; meanwhile the times are sadly out of tune. But these disquieting conditions are temporary, and we would be wise not to be over-concerned about them or permit them to frighten us.

The answer here is the opposite of glamored clinging to the outmoded usages and traditions of the past. We need to hasten the building of new forms equal to the task of containing and rightly expressing the new energies. As things stand today, only tentative efforts can be made in this direction, and these by trial and error – and mostly by error! But the *life* is there, pressing to manifest itself, and cannot be denied or thwarted. It demands our collaboration and the best forms we can devise for its appearance.

And so the remedy for both these glamors largely depends on our taking the right *attitude* in this intermediate period. However uncomfortable and depressing a time it is in some ways, it will lead eventually to a new and better form of civilization and culture, and to the utilization of new and wonderful energies. The hallmark of this correct attitude can be expressed in one short but great word: *wisdom*. Through the light and insight it bestows, wisdom establishes a balance which can eliminate the worst aspects of most glamors in

ourselves, in the social groups to which we belong, and in humanity in general. It is not possible to deal in any specific way with the endless possibilities of exercising wisdom that exist in all fields, but we recommend a general rule for its application. This consists in 1) recognizing what of the past is still valuable and worth conserving, and extricating it from the outworn forms imprisoning it; and in 2) being alert to the promise inherent in the new, incoming energies, and seeking to marshal their potentialities for building a world more fitted to express them worthily.

(Additional insight in dealing with glamors may be found in the book *The Act of Will*, by Roberto Assagioli, M.D.; published by Esalen Book, 1973.)

Part III Techniques

The Technique of Indifference

This is a very effective technique for achieving freedom from all the types and aspects of illusion, and especially from the glamors we are most subject to, or, one might say, are immersed in most if not all the time.

By inducing the gradual elimination of our emotional reactions to the external and inner conditions affecting us, it establishes inner freedom and creates efficiency in action. The principal requirement is dis-identification from the constant flow of the psychological elements (thoughts images – desires – urges emotions) and the physical sensations which normally, by occupying the field of consciousness, hold our attention captive. Dis-identification implies the assumption and maintenance of the inner attitude of the *Observer*; in other words, the achievements of true *self-awareness*, i.e., the awareness of *That* within us which, permanent and immutable, lies behind, or rather above, the endless variety of transient psychological states.

The attitude of the Observer is of special importance. It is required by practicing the *Exercise of Dis-identification and Self-identification* described in *Set III* of the *Second Year* (pp. 3-10) and *Set II* of the *Third Year* (pp. 4-9).

Another effective technique is the one we have termed *The Sense of Proportion*. Its purpose is twofold:

1. Applied to time (*Right Proportion in Time*), it reveals the unimportance of the fleeting moment within the flow of time as expressed in the succession of cycles: days, months, years, decades, centuries, millennia, and the sweep of the larger cosmic cycles. This long-range view produces a living realization of the relative insignificance of the ever-shifting “present,” and so weakens its power to engross us.

A simple way of performing this technique is to try to recall what we did and felt on, let us say, the same day one or two years ago. If, as is probable, we shall have forgotten, this will help us to realize how unimportant our actions and feelings were then. We can reverse the order by imagining

how unimportant what we are experiencing emotionally and physically today will seem in the future. There is a story about an Indian king which aptly illustrates this idea. Summoning the court jeweler, he bade him engrave on the ring he constantly wore a motto that should help him maintain a dispassionate spirit in good times and bad. The jeweler inscribed the three words "It Will Pass."

2. The second application of this technique is to space (*Right Proportion in Space*). Modern astronomy tells us of the inconceivable extent of the *known* cosmos, containing more than a thousand million galaxies, each composed of thousands of millions of suns. Against this unfathomable background, the pettiness and vanity of our egocentric sense of self-importance, our pretensions and personal concerns dwindle to an insignificance which serves to liberate us from their thrall. Here we can usefully adopt Theodore Roosevelt's practice of contemplating the sky at night in order to "cut himself down to size." (Quoted in *Third Year, Set II*, p. 15.)

The foregoing preparations will facilitate the application of more specific psychological means for achieving indifference. Of these, the first and basic one aims at the elimination of rebellion against unpleasant and undesirable conditions. The initial step in this direction entails their *acceptance* as a *preliminary* to developing the clear vision necessary to deal with them by appropriate action. It breaks up the emotional chain-reactions, or "vicious circles," which so frequently reinforce and fixate our glamors. A common example of the operation of such chain-reactions is the process by which the awareness of feeling depressed increases depression, which in turn creates further depression, and so on. The same kind of vicious circle acts also in the case of fear: we become afraid of our fears and this generates more fear. Again, the feeling of anger toward another breeds anger with ourselves for reacting thus, and so forth. Emotional reactions of this kind can also generate *combined* vicious circles: anger can arouse fear of being driven to violence, fear can cause or deepen depression, etc.

The key to breaking the impetus of such chain-reactions is to be found in *acceptance* of the original emotional reaction. Acceptance means recognizing the "normality" of such reactions at the ordinary level of human existence and therefore being neither

surprised nor dismayed by them. As “automatic” response of our emotional nature, they are to be observed serenely.

But of course acceptance is not enough. It is only a *first* step, although a necessary one. The second step consists in making a conscious and affirmed *dis-identification* from the emotion in question. The act of acceptance itself implies some measure of dis-identification, a *distinction* between the *accepting* I, or Self, and the experienced emotion. The subsequent step is the recognition of the power we possess of *deciding* what is the right attitude to adopt toward the emotion-arousing event or situation. In other words: What can we *make of it*? What can we *get out of it*? What *meaning can we assign to it*?

The event of situation can be seen as conveying a *message* to be interpreted, a *challenge* to be met, or an *opportunity* to be grasped. By adopting this positive attitude, we actually change, or transform, a situation which in reality is a *relationship* between the external occasion and ourselves. According to our assessment of it, we can take it as a salutary warning, a summons to rouse latent energies, an occasion for exercising the will, a call for action. Many examples of such “signals” come to mind, of which the commonest is physical pain. We can either react to it with irritation, or with depression and self-pity, and have immediate recourse to some palliative, or we can draw profit from it by ascertaining its causes and then taking adequate steps to eliminate them.

A reaction-producing situation with which most of us are familiar at one time or another arises when we are the object of criticism or hostility on the part of others. Instead of giving way to what are the normal reactions of anger, depression or the use of some defense mechanism, we can decide to seek the cause of the criticism or attack to which we have been subjected.

An effective way to counteract sensitivity to criticism is acceptance of the fact that it cannot be avoided however we behave. Often a sincere assessment of our part of the situation reveals that it has been *our* attitude or behavior toward the critic or opponent which has aroused his hostility. This recognition can help us to modify such “provoking” attitudes and behavior, to eliminate these causes in ourselves.

The usefulness of critics or “enemies” has been pointed out by various writers:

Confucius: “I am indeed fortunate. Whenever I commit a mistake the others always discover it!”

Plautus: “Wise people learn many things from their enemies.”

George Sand: “A smart man always profits in some way from the evil which is said of him.”

Inayat Khan: “My friends send me sweetly to sleep, but my enemies keep me awake.”

F. Schiller: “My friend is dear to me, but also my enemy is useful: the first shows me what I can do, the second what I should do.”

An extreme, paradoxical expression of this recognition is the Indian saying: “An enemy is as useful as a Buddha!”

On the other hand it is advisable to adopt an attitude of indifference and even caution toward being praised and popular. G. Dupre warns:

Praise is like a perfume, pleasant to smell; but it is well to accept it with discretion, for it goes to the head, intoxicating and sometimes confusing us. It is advisable to keep flowers with a strong perfume out of the room.

Another consideration which can greatly help in assuming an attitude of equanimity toward events is the recognition of the fact that often the subsequent consequences of an event prove to be sooner or later at variance with, and even opposite to, the immediate ones. That this can be so is aptly illustrated by a story quoted by Lin Yutang:

The great Taoist philosopher Liehtse gave the famous parable of the Old Man at the Fort:

An Old Man was Living with his son at an abandoned fort on the top of a hill, and one day he lost his horse. The neighbors came to

express their sympathy for this misfortune, and the Old Man asked, 'How do you know this is bad luck?' A few days afterward, his horse returned with a number of wild horses, and his neighbors came again, to congratulate him on the stroke of fortune, and the Old Man replied, 'How do you know this is good luck?' With so many horses around, his son began to take to riding, and one day he broke his leg. Again the neighbors came around to express their sympathy, and the Old Man replied, 'How do you know this is bad luck?' The next year there was a war, and because the Old Man's son was crippled, he did not have to go to the front¹.

The "indifference" cultivated in all these ways is not to be misunderstood as something negative. It is not insensitiveness or lack of feeling; it is the source of a joyous realization of our *inner* freedom, our *inner* independence of people and happenings. It further bestows upon us two precious gifts: a *clear recognition of reality* and the *capacity for effective action*. By eliminating the glamors created by faulty emotional reactions, it admits the pure Light of truth to illumine our consciousness. It likewise prevents the energy of the will, which prompts us to action, from being deflected or weakened by passing through emotional levels, and thus gives free scope to our capacity for constructive activity.

Thus we have excellent reasons for training ourselves in the *Technique of Indifference*, and making good use of it.

The Technique of the Presence

In the *First Set* of this *Third year* we said that the Recognition of Reality, which is its central subject, requires both the dispelling of illusion and the dissipation of glamor. Up to now we have dealt chiefly with the latter, because glamors are more wise spread than illusions, owing to the prevalent emotional polarization of humanity, and because, without having in some measure dissipated the glamors besetting us, it is hardly possible to dispel illusion effectively.

The dispelling of illusion is a large subject, and we cannot deal with it at length in this Set, but the *Technique of the Presence*, which we are going to describe, is an effective means of liberating us from both illusion and glamor, being, as we have said, the most direct procedure for recognizing Reality (*Third Year*,. *Set I*, p. 6).

¹ Lin Yutang, *The Importance of Living*; The John Day Co., New York, 1937.

Let us also remember that while illusion, which has a mental character, is distinct from glamor, which pertains to the realm of emotion, yet in the living human being they are not separated, since there exist a close relationship and constant interaction between mind and emotions. Illusion, when it arouses feelings or emotions, as it often does, is itself a source of glamors. Likewise, glamors intercept (so to speak), color, and distort the insights of the mind.

Recognition of the “Presence” can be reached in various ways and in different degrees, or stages. Essentially, it is realization of the Universal Life, or Reality, pervading both the external world and every human being. In philosophical terms this permeation can be called the *immanence* or *manifestation* of the Reality, which in its essence is *transcendent*; in religious terms it has been known as the omnipresence of God.

A key to reaching the first stage of this realization is provided by scientific evidence of the close interdependence and interaction of all parts of the universe, showing it to be an organic Unity, or “Whole.” Within it, recent astronomical discoveries reveal countless galaxies exist, forming gigantic groups and rotating at enormous speeds. The fact that radiations emanating from sources of immeasurable intensity situated at vast distances impinge on this our planet gives a vivid, even a dramatic, sense of this Wholeness.

But the unity of the visible universe may be, and indeed is, only the outer manifestation, or reflection, of a unity subsisting in the inner space of the subjective worlds. The key needed here is another faculty, the *intuition*. As its etymology indicates, the intuition is a direct inner sight, a “seeing into,” a direct apprehension of reality. It enables its possessor to “see” the “Presence” of the universal Reality in all manifested forms and in all differentiated, individual beings or entities. This act of “seeing” is a wonderful experience which, though ineffable in its essence, has been described by some of those who have undergone it in terms that give a vivid picture of the wonder they have sensed.

One of the most impressive of these descriptions is to be found in the Eleventh Book of the *Bhagavad Gita*, where Krishna, the symbol and incarnation of the Supreme, accedes to Arjuna’s entreaty. Having opened Arjuna’s “inner eye,” He reveals to him

His divine appearance in countless forms. “Behold, O Partha (Arjuna), My forms, a hundred-fold, a thousand-fold, various in kind, divine, of various colors and shapes.” (v. 5) “Here today behold the whole universe, moving and unmoving.., all unified in My Body.” (v. 7) Having thus spoken... the great Lord of Yoga then reveals to Partha His Supreme and Divine Form. (v. 9) “If the light of one thousand suns were to blaze forth all at once in the sky, that might resemble the splendor of that exalted Being.” (vs. 12)¹

But the Divine Presence in the whole universe is only one aspect of the Supreme, Who remains, in His essential Being, transcendent, free, and uninvolved in His manifestation within time and space. In the Ninth Book (of the Gita), as Radhakrishnan says in his illuminating commentary:

The Gita does not deny the world, which exists through God and has God behind, above and before it. It exists through Him Who, without the world, would yet be in Himself no less what He is. Unlike God, the world does not possess its specific existence in itself. It has therefore only limited and not absolute being. The teacher inclines not to pantheism which asserts that everything is God but to panentheism that denotes that everything subsists in God. The cosmic process is not a complete manifestation of the Absolute. No finite process can ever finally and fully express the Absolute, though this world is a living manifestation of God².

The synthesis of transcendence and immanence is called the “Supreme Secret” by Aurobindo, and he expresses it in the following way:

This mystery of our being implies necessarily a similar supreme mystery of the being of the Purushottama, rahasyan uttaman. It is not an exclusive impersonality of the Absolute that is the highest secret. This highest secret is the miracle of a supreme Person and apparent vast Impersonal that are one, an immutable transcendent Self of all things and a spirit that manifests itself here at the very foundation of cosmos as an infinite and multiple personality acting everywhere – **A Self and Spirit revealed to our last, closest, profoundest experience as an illimitable Being who accepts us and takes us to him, not into a blank of featureless existence, but most positively, deeply, wonderfully into all Himself and in all the ways**

¹ *The Bhagavad Gita*, by Radhakrishnan; Allen and Unwin, London, 1970.

of his and our conscious existence. This highest experience and this largest way of seeing open a profound, moving and endless significance to our parts of nature: our knowledge, will, heart's love and adoration. It is not the austerity of knowledge alone that can help us; there is room and infinite room for the heart's love and aspiration illumined and uplifted by knowledge, a more mystically clear, a greater calmly passionate knowledge. It is by the perpetual unified closeness of our heart- consciousness, mind-consciousness, all-consciousness, *satatam maccittah*, that we get the widest, deepest, the most integral experience of our oneness with the Eternal. A nearest oneness in all the being, profoundly individual in a divine passion even in the midst of universality, even at the top of transcendence, is here enjoined on the human soul as its way to reach the Highest and its way to possess the perfection and the divine consciousness to which it is called by its nature as a spirit¹.

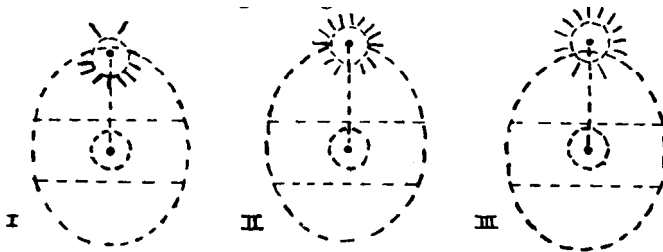
While in the West the Presence has been for the most part defined in terms of the relationship and close communion between God and the soul, there is no lack of descriptions of the omnipresence in a universal sense. Plotinus affirms: "God is not external to anyone, but is present with all things though they are ignorant that He is so." (Sixth Ennead, IX, 7.) Then in a collection of sayings attributed to Jesus we find the following: "Lift the stone and you will find Me, cleave the wood and I am there." The most concise and at the same time inclusive expression of the inner union between God and man is St. Paul's statement: "In Him we live and move and have our being." (*Acts of the Apostles*, 17:28).

Evelyn Underhill has dealt with this subject at length in a very lucid and understanding way in her classic *Mysticism* (published by E.P. Dutton and Co.). She gives a wealth of quotations from the Christian mystics, some of them poets including Dante. We recommend its careful study, particularly the chapters on "The Illumination of the Self" and the "Unitive Life," in which the author draws a fine distinction between the various levels of the realization of the Presence. There are six stages, or degrees, of this realization:

¹ Sri Aurobindo, *Essays on the Gira*; Sri Aurobindo Library, New York, 1950, pp. 490-

1. Illumination
2. Contact
3. Temporary partial merging
4. Fusion
5. Identification
6. Unitive Life

Within certain limits these stages are represented by the different positions of the star in the diagram originally given in *Set III*, p. 10 of the *Second Year*⁴, and given again here:



The relationship of the individual transpersonal or spiritual Self with the Universal Reality existing outside the “oval” of the individual is there depicted. In the first stage the star is placed almost wholly within the oval, thus indicating the prevalence of the individual aspect in consciousness. The second stage shows the position in which the subject is almost equally aware of the individual and universal aspects. In the third stage (which represents an exalted and universal level of experience termed ecstasy, samadhi, etc.) realization of the universal aspect is overwhelming. Illuminating descriptions of this state by St. Theresa and others are quoted by the author of *Mysticism* (pp. 238-254). Naturally these stages do not remain fixed and static; they can change rapidly.

The realization of the Presence is both the objective and the ultimate achievement of all the inner action which is meditation in its widest sense. This is especially true of its phases of receptive silence and contemplation. Revelation of the Presence can also come to us through a heightened awareness of the beauty of nature and the purposiveness and wonderful intelligence evidenced by the processes of creation, growth, and maintenance of all living forms.

The Presence within us, the realization that we are living souls ("The Christ in you"), is affirmed and kept vivid in consciousness by the beautiful Indian salutation, "Namaskara" ("I salute the divinity in you").

The *effects* of the awareness of the Presence of God can vary greatly, according to the degree of the realization, the psychological constitution of the individual, and the cultural milieu in which we are placed. On the cognitive side they take the form of insight, revelations, meaning, and purpose; in the domain of feeling, a sense of intense joy, wonder, gratitude, *love* and dedication. In the field of activity they induce surrender of the personal will, its unification with what is sensed as the Will of God, and with its culmination in the expression "Thy Will be Done."

As has been wisely stated:

[He] learns eventually to know himself to be, above everything else (whilst in incarnation), the director of forces:

these he directs from the altitude of the divine Observer and through the attainment of detachment.... If you could but grasp the full significance of and stand serene as the observing Director, there would be no more waste motion, no more mistaken moves and no more false interpretations, no wandering down the by-paths of daily living, no seeing of others through distorted and prejudiced vision and above all no more misuse of force....

All human beings live and move and express themselves in and through the same world of ever-moving, ever- impacting, outgoing and incoming energies.... [He] *however works there*; he becomes a conscious directing agent; he creates upon the physical plane that which he desires, and that which he desires is the pattern of things and the design laid down upon the trestle board of the spiritual consciousness by the great divine Architect.... Therefore increasingly he becomes aware of the Plan as it exists in the Universal Mind and the Purpose which motivates the Will of God.¹

¹ Alice A. Bailey, *Glamour: A World Problem*; Lucis Publishing Co., New York.

Part IV

The Principle of Essential Divinity

The Principle of Essential Divinity has been dealt with from various angles in the *First Year, Set VI*, pp. 12-16, and in the *Second Year, Set VI*, pp. 19-21. The different approaches to it and techniques for putting it into operation are described there.

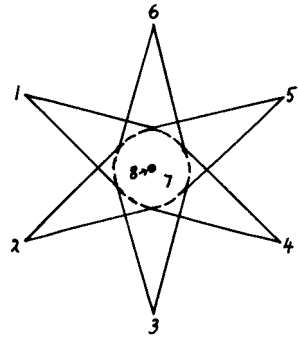
We recommend that you re-read these sections once again carefully, and that you practice these techniques. Please use the Meditation Outline in the *First Year, Set VI*, p. 20.

In this *Third Year, Set VI*, we call your attention to another technique, termed *The Technique of the Presence* (see previous pages), which can prove to be very effective for awakening us to more vivid awareness of our essential divinity, and for assisting us to achieve that Recognition of Reality in both its aspects, *transcendent and immanent*, which is the subject and aim of this year's work.

Finally, may we also suggest that you continue or resume the constant use (spoken or silent) of the powerful affirmation of essential divinity, "Namaskara" ("I salute the divinity in you.") As indicated in the *Sixth Set* of the *Second Year*, p. 20, it is not only a reminder of the divinity in all of us, but also an effective means of blessing in a definite and dynamic way.

It is also important to realize the close connection between essential divinity and the will, because, as it has been said, "the distinctive quality of Divinity is will." At the personality level also, the will is the psychological function which is more directly related to the "I," or Self. The respective "positions" of the various psychological functions and their relationship with the "I," or self, are clearly pictured in the following diagram:

1. Sensation
2. Emotion-Feeling
3. Imagination
4. Impulse-Desire
5. Thought
6. Intuition
7. Will
8. Central point: "I" or Ego



Moreover, for the purpose of spiritual realization, the use of the will is required for controlling the other psychological functions and keeping them temporarily quiescent while the center of consciousness reaches up to and is one-pointedly fixed in the spiritual or trans-personal Self. This is clearly and concisely stated in Charles Johnston's translation of the thirteenth verse of the First Book of Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*: "The right use of the Will is the steady effort to stand in Spiritual Being¹."

Our essential divinity is one of the central tenets of Aurobindo's view of life, and he has expressed it in these words:

This supreme Godhead is the one unchanging imperishable Self in all that is; therefore to the spiritual sense of this unchanging imperishable Self man has to awake and to unify with it his inner impersonal being. He is the Godhead in man who originates and directs all his workings; therefore man has to awake to the Godhead within himself, to know the divinity he houses, to rise out of all that veils and obscures it, and to become united with this inmost Self of his self, this greater Consciousness of his consciousness, this hidden Master of all his will and works, this Being within him who is the fount and object of all his various becoming².

¹ Charles Johnston, *Bhagavad Gira*; John M. Watkins, London, 1965.

² Sri Aurobindo, *Essays on the Gira*; The Sri Aurobindo Library, New York, 1950.

Meditation Outline

I. Alignment

Through:

1. Relaxation - physical, emotional, and mental.
2. Aspiration.
3. Mental concentration.
4. Linking with all those doing this Meditation all over the world.

II. Dedication

"I dedicate myself, with all men and women of goodwill, to the building of the New Age."

III. Meditation on Recognition of Reality through Dispelling Glamor

a. Stage of Recognition

Raise the focus to the mental plane and, keeping the attention there, turn the searchlight of the mind upon the glamor selected, seeing it clearly in this light and reflecting on the work to be done. Do not let any emotional reaction interpose itself.

b. Stage of Direction

Realize that it is through the higher light, the light of the Higher Self or Soul, that the personality life can be illumined. Identify with this light and direct it, with the aid of creative imagination, upon the glamor under consideration, visualizing the light encompassing it, penetrating it, and dissipating it.

c. Creative Stage

Now relate the Principle of Essential Divinity to your work; deliberately and creatively bring its reality into the thoughtform being held. Affirm, by an act of the will, that it can manifest, can triumph; and radiate it in all directions along lines of visualized light.

IV. Invocation

Repeat the Great Invocation, seeing the light, the love, and the will of God streaming in to dissipate world glamor and establish a spiritual New Age.

The Great Invocation

From the point of Light within the Mind of God
Let light stream forth into the minds of men.
Let Light descend on Earth.

From the point of Love within the Heart of God
Let love stream forth into the hearts of men.
May Christ return to Earth.

From the center where the Will of God is known
Let purpose guide the little wills of men
The purpose which the Masters know and serve.

From the center which we call the race of men
Let the Plan of Love and Light work out
And may it seal the door where evil dwells.

Let Light and Love and Power restore the Plan on Earth.