

**PERFECTIONS OF A
BODHISATTVA**

HENRY VAN ZEYST

Perfections of a Bodhisatta

Henry van Zeyst

1979

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons License](#). It allows to share, copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format, adapt, remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially, under the following terms:

- Attribution—You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use.
- ShareAlike—If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you must distribute your contributions under the same license as the original.
- No additional restrictions—You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits.

This is version no. 20210706.

Contents

Introduction	2
The Purifying Way	5
The Gift of Self—Liberality	5
The Growth of Character—Moral Virtue	11
The Going Forth—Renunciation	17
The Illuminating Truth	24
Insight in Nature—Wisdom	24
Inner Strength—Energy	30
Pliability—Patience	36
Sincerity—Truth	42
The Unifying Life	50
Stabilisation—Determination	50
Universal Love—Loving Kindness	56
Blissful Life—Equanimity	62

Introduction

The world as a whole and the overwhelming majority of the people in it are suffering nowadays from a deep sense of frustration. The first world-war 1914–18 was begun with some enthusiasm; it was thought to be a war to end all war. But within a few years it had proved a lost ideal to all. And when the second world-war became unavoidable in 1939, there was not even that shade of self-deception. Now that war too has ended, more than twenty-five years ago, and has been lost by all, leaving a tense of frustration hang over the world, heavier than ever before. Even the will for reconstruction is damped by the gloom and threat of an almost certain break-down once more, perhaps within our life-time.

Unless the rebuilding of society is undertaken in all its layers, to be placed upon a new foundation, it is bound to be mere patchwork. But the nations are not united in their isolated determination to see each one's individual advantage. And hence, there is not much chance that the conflict of opposites will be solved in peace. Even if all causes which produced war will be temporarily shelved, the same wants and fears continue to dominate the economic, political, social and even the intellectual life of the world and its individuals. And so, all striving to bring about a lasting and satisfactory settlement will fail.

This continued sense of frustration has produced a moral and mental depression in which man becomes more and more inclined to let himself go like a machine, to become a slave to the exploiting organisation called the modern state. But then

it is hoped by some, that by losing one's identity in the mass, fulfilment can be reached for all. Individual desires and fears, however, do not become lost in the mass, but only enlarged; and thus, the sense of frustration is ever increased.

It is against this that the youth of the world rebels. They are on the point of shaking off the burden of traditional conventions; the fetters of organisation, in the hope of finding fulfilment in freedom, without responsibility.

Perfection can of necessity not be attained in one single act. There is so much to be cleared away, so much to be understood, so much to build up, before mere existence can become true life. A way will have to be walked, a way of purification, not as a method of self-purification, but a way of surrender (*dāna*), a growth of character (*sīla*), a going forth in the real sense (*nekkhamma*). When progress is made on that purifying path, the illuminating truth will begin to spread its light in deeper insight in nature (*paññā*), while with inner strength (*virīya*) and pliability of thought (*khanti*) that truth will reveal itself in utter sincerity (*sacca*). Only then, the unifying life, stabilised (*adhiṭṭhāna*) and universalised in love (*mettā*), will give that bliss of equanimity (*upekkhā*) in fulfilment, for which the world has been hankering in vain.

It is an old doctrine, the ten perfections of a Bodhisatta (*dasa pāramitā*), the doctrine of fulfilment in perfection. But, the way, truth and life do not know of time. They are eternal, because they are new every moment. That which is always new cannot crave for the future or cling to the past. And thus, in this eternally new present may be found the fulfilment and perfection which the world needs so much.

These are the ten perfections (*dasa pāramitā*), the virtues of morality which fill the life of a Bodhisatta, till fulfilment in Buddhahood. It is the path of virtue, which is morality through understanding, rather than a code of precepts, which should be the light and life of everyone. Thus, we present here the essence of Buddhist morality as these ten perfections: the gift

of self (liberality: *dāna*) growth of character (virtue: *sīla*), going forth (renunciation; *nekkhamma*), insight (wisdom: *paññā*), inner strength (energy: *virīya*), pliability (patience: *khanti*), sincerity (truth: *sacca*), stabilisation (determination: *adhiṭṭhāna*), universal love (loving kindness: *mettā*) and bliss (equanimity: *upekkhā*).

The Purifying Way

The Gift of Self—Liberality

The great problems in the world are merely the extension of individual problems. Just as there is no army apart from individual soldiers, so there is no state apart from individual citizens; there are no political, no economic problems which are not related to individual conflicts and rooted in individuals. Thus, the solution of the world-problems must be sought through the solution of individual problems. By focussing all one's attention on the general world-questions, there is a tendency to overlook their real cause in the individual self. But, when this individual self is understood as a delusion, the individual conflict and the world problem will have been dissolved. Peace, then, will come only to the world when there is peace in the minds and in the hearts of men. The conflagration of lustful passions which led the events of the world from peace to war finds its cause in the little spark of egotism. If that spark can be choked before it can grasp around it and become a flame, all the misery of destruction can be prevented. That is the purpose of the gift of self. For the self is like an eddy in the river. While it does not form an entity which can exist separately by itself, but forms a mere part of the process of the flow of the river, yet its whirling presence obstructs the smooth movement, which cannot be helped forward better than by the dissolution of the counter-movement.

It is that counter-movement, a reaction to the natural flow

of life, which imprisons the mind in the delusion of a separate individual self, or substance, or soul. But, when that same process of thinking is freed from that delusion which makes it turn around an imaginary centre and prevents all progress, when that whirling revolution has solved itself in a steady evolution, then truth reveals itself in real life, which knows neither stagnancy, nor repetition, but only an ever-new becoming which alone can give true freedom from self, real deliverance from all delusion. The water bubble on the river by bursting loses nothing but its isolation, as its very existence was merely an empty and hollow pretension. Just as the flow of the water does not obstruct but constitutes the very progress of the river as long as there are in it no individual movements like counter-currents, eddies and whirlpools, so worldly work of any nature will not form an obstacle to progress as long as the feeling of "I work" does not set up a counter-wave of isolation and selfishness.

Only by losing one's personal point of view and goal, only by understanding the world-problem as a whole, one becomes truth, absorbed in truth.

For that reason truth should never be sought as something desirable from which satisfaction may be derived. For, self-satisfaction even in the spiritual field necessarily leads to stagnation which impedes the free flow of life which is truth. As long as action is dominated by interest in self, there is no true action, no pure action, no action of any real value, but mere reaction, reflection, which sets up a retrogressive tendency. One is then like a coin, bearing the impression of someone else and having an inflated value which is not one's own.

The gift of self does not necessarily mean the placing of oneself at the disposal of others in social service, national welfare, spiritual upliftment and similar altruistic modes of activity. For, the real problems of life are not poverty, crime, political dependence, illiteracy, exploitation of labour. These and similar defects are only the symptoms of a universal disease. The scientist, who in the seclusion of his laboratory works out the composition of

a treatment which will prevent the outbreak of a contagion, is of greater service to mankind than the doctor or the nurse, who in actual service treat the patients and perhaps even cure them. The scientist appears to have lost contact with society; he might never visit a hospital, and yet his lonely study is more highly beneficial, for his gift of self is not limited to a few, but given to all. The purpose of his gift is not a cure of symptoms, but the prevention of the disease. He does not cure effects, but attacks the cause.

All the defects under which modern society ails are merely the reflection of individual anaemia. It is the selfish attitude towards life which causes in each individual the necessity of the struggle for existence. That struggle, starting in the individual, produces a spirit of exploitation in the whole of society, which in its criminal attitude towards life as its own cannot but rear criminals. After having given birth to crime for as its own child, society further produces laws and associations for the prevention of crime, in which usually the leading capitalists play the role of patrons. Thus, the same individual and the same society who were the causes of the evil effects of modern life, later glorify in their humanitarian spirit which builds poor-houses, reformatories and prisons. Content with their charity they merely continue the conflict.

And who is that society but you and I in relationship? As long as I cultivate that selfish aloofness which is not physical, but mental, aloofness which feeds and lives at the expense of others by mental isolation, so long also am I exploiting and contributing to the spirit of exploitation in the world. Thus the problem can be solved only by the gift of self i.e. by the giving up of "self".

In helping others there may be plenty of selfishness in the form of self-esteem and satisfaction; in bending down there may be plenty of haughtiness; self-abasement may even be camouflaged pride. Moreover, the service of others is only true service if help is given in what is really needed. To give money to a starving man in times of famine is no true service. To relieve poverty for

a moment is no solution of the problem. Hence, one's spirit of service should be directed on such lines that not merely evil effects are being removed, but so that the cause of their origination is attacked, so that no evil may arise again. If this is constantly kept in view, much dissipation of energy would be avoided, energy which is now concentrated on discriminating small details which do not matter at all, as they are only effects which would have died off naturally anyhow, while the root-cause remains unaffected.

The root-cause of all evil in private, social, economic or spiritual life is always the seeking of self, which can only be done at the cost of others. All sorrow is ultimately dissatisfaction. And thus, as we saw earlier, such self-satisfaction leads to stagnation, and as we see now, to sorrow. Therefore, the only way to solve that conflict between the two opposites of satisfaction and dissatisfaction is the dissolution of "self", which is the veil which hides the vision of truth. Hence, the giving up of "self" is the first step towards realisation, which is the fulfilment of perfection. There is, therefore, no greater service than the help to overcome that obstacle of delusion.

But, how can one assist others to become free from this fetter, as long as one is bound in ignorance about this process of the arising and maintenance of this "self"? The greatest service possible then is the freeing oneself of this obstruction, which will show the road to freedom. People are not in need of knowledge derived from books, which they can read for themselves if they so wish. What they need is truth, truth realised in one's own person. No substitute can be of any real value. Substitutes create only new problems without solving the old ones. Therefore, the gift of self is the only true gift. It is the gift of self in the overcoming of all selfishness and delusion, as the purest gift without admixture or substitute.

It is the highest degree of sacrifice, compared with which the gift of possessions or even the gift of one's body in service to others are small donations and imperfect ones. This supreme gift

does not point to effacement and annihilation, but it is rather the sacrifice of the flame, which burns in consuming itself. It does not consume itself towards destruction, but into a living flame which gives its light to all who seek its influence. The light does not shine in order to derive some benefit for itself, but its natural inclination is to burn; it is that tendency of unselfishness which constitutes its greatest value and service. Thus, by being “a lamp unto yourselves¹”, one can at the same time fulfil this perfection and virtue of giving to the highest degree; for, by being a light unto oneself, one does not cast a shadow across another’s path.

Yet, for the solution of this conflicting problem of self and non-self, a mere giving up of self will not suffice. This process of “self” must be realised as a delusion; then its giving up will come spontaneously and necessarily. In the understanding of that delusive distinction the two opposites will disappear as such; and thereby alone can the world and its events be comprehended as one complete process of inter-dependence. The gift of self, therefore, must be based on the understanding of “self”. Hence it is said that “self is the saviour of self²”. It is only in the awareness of the delusion, inherent in the “I”, that the conflict can be solved, as it is only the owner of the goods who can make a gift of them. The understanding of the transient process of the “I” is the giving up of “I” as an individual isolation, is the giving up of selfishness, is the giving up of a delusion for the sake of truth. And that indeed is the highest gift.³

The gift of self does not mean a subjection to the authority of others, for that would only shift the battle to another field. Whether the mind subjects itself to the authority of public opinion, of religious faith, of economic pressure, or to the authority set up by itself in the form of striving for the attainment of an ideal. It will always be the acceptance of a system which involves compulsion, and hence, new struggle, though on a different plane.

¹Digha Nik.

²Dhp. 160

³Dhp. 353.

It is not through experience that one becomes wise; one cannot learn from one's own mistakes, for the lesson is never the same, is never repeated; and therefore, the solution must be always new. Experience and mistakes increase knowledge, but not wisdom; and the increase of knowledge without insight can only produce an increased self-delusion by storing up the lessons learnt for the better protection of "self". It is the will to store up, to continue, to gain, the will to become and to be, which is always in search of protection, which has created that prison of authority, of morality, of convention, of social law in self-defence, without realising that by doing so all freedom has been lost. In the isolation of this self-made prison the will-to-be expresses itself as an individual "self", because all natural contact with the flow of life has been cut off.

The giving up of this delusive "self", therefore, will result in the breaking down of the prison bars. But that can be done only through the comprehension of the process of self-isolation. In clinging to the distortion of the individual view, even though enlarged in organisations, the wide world-view of life will never be discerned; for that can come only through the surrender of "self". As long as the "I" is asking for continuation there can be no fulfilment and no happiness. As long as the "I"-process is "self-inductive", i.e. producing volitional activities (*kamma*) from its own ignorance (*avijjā*), there will be the "alternating current" of the dual conflict, arising from the opposing poles of want and fear. But, when the "I"-process is understood, it will also be relinquished, and in that surrender will be found an opening up of life, a blossoming of the flower which is the beginning of its chance of fructification.

To make the world see the absurdity of its civilisation, to produce a true revolt against the horrors of modern exploitation, there must be individual comprehension. One has to begin with oneself, how infinitesimally small the result of such action may appear. There is no other beginning possible but the uprooting of personal ambitions, of craving for power, of the spirit of acquisi-

tion. With the easing of these selfish tendencies alone is there a chance that competition, exploitation and hatred between races and nations will cease. And in this sense, the giving up of self is the highest gift and is rightly placed as the first, fundamental and most important virtue leading to perfection.

The Growth of Character—Moral Virtue

There are two concepts of morality: to be good and to do good. The second one cannot be called morality in the true sense, as it is considered as a means to an end. It is true, one can do good in order to become good, but that is rare. People do good actions, which appear entirely altruistic, yet fundamentally they are egoistic, activated by acquisitiveness, desire for merit, reward, heaven, bliss, or motivated by fear to avoid punishment, purgatory, hell. This, however, is really immorality, because these so-called good actions were inspired by selfishness. The amount of “self” put into an action, therefore, will be the criteria of its morality.

Real morality is to be good, that is, to be in harmony with one’s own and with the whole nature through the absence of selfish motives, through the absence of isolation, through the absence of opposition. Then alone will virtue be pure and perfect by necessity, as it will be without limitation, restriction or bondage. Such virtue must grow naturally through the understanding of one’s nature, through understanding of relationship, through an urge from within. Cultivated virtue, or virtue for a purpose is shop-keeping. And thus, true virtue is growth of character.

Righteousness is called *dhamma*, and unrighteousness is called *adhamma*, i.e. that which is or is not in harmony with the norm (*dhamma*), the ultimate nature of things. Further, that which is conducive towards that harmony is wholesome (*kusala*) in the sense of healthy; for, mental states are healthy, if they are free from the illness of the corruptions (*kilesa*). Harmonious actions are called skilful (*kusala*) in the sense of achievement by

skill, for morality is not a wild growth; it requires understanding. It is good because it produces good effects (*kusala vipāka*).

But who will set the standard or the margin to right and wrong? Does the distinction between good and bad depend on intuition? Is the line of demarcation between skilful and unskilful drawn by reason? Or is it nature itself which gives the norm of good? Is it so absolutely evident that nature is good to all? The contrary seems to be true, rather. The universe is non-moral. And it is not intuition therefore in the goodness or badness of things, which constitutes morality. "Sin" does not consist in a transgression of a law, but in selfishness, in seeking self-satisfaction, even if this not at the expense of somebody else. "I must have pleasure", does not always imply: "You must have pain". But still there is a foundation of selfishness, even if it is not always understood as doing positive harm to others. Selfishness sets up an individual tendency which in its isolation and separateness indirectly deprives the rest of the community, that is, the whole of nature, of its rights. In this sense selfishness does always harm, and thus is always: "sin".

There are moralists who maintain that the aim of morality should be the development to the full of human personality, This, however, must inevitably lead to conflict, as personalities will develop on different lines. To have them develop to the fullest will merely accentuate the differences. It is rather in the elimination of the foundation on which these differences are built, that we can fulfil the deepest, need of nature. Full individual development might produce the summit of excitement, but that can never be maintained, and will therefore never satisfy nature. The deepest need of nature is equilibrium, for all striving has only this single purpose: the attainment of perfection and fulfilment, where further striving becomes needless and even impossible.

This singleness of purpose (if purpose it could be called) necessarily makes morality very simple. It cannot be that complicated code of law, which has been built up artificially or scientifically. Morality must be above all natural, and the frustration of nature

must be immoral. Nature is a process of evolution. And therefore, it must follow that if to be good is to be natural, and to be natural is to change, then goodness and morality will not always have the same meaning. If morality means to be in step with nature, then to be out of step is to be immoral. But when in course of evolution through ages of involution, nature adopts that “faux pas”, it would be natural again, and moral.

This is very rarely understood. Many there are who speak of absolute morality, believing that moral goodness at one time will be morally good at all times and all places. But, even the very limited time of world-history as known to us, and the very restricted space of our universe which we can investigate, show marked changes of moral standards, which are almost as fickle as fashions. If we wish to search for ultimate moral values, we shall have to be content with a very few essential characteristics, without building on rules and regulations. Traditional morality has changed considerably with the evolution of world-culture and so-called civilisation, so that moral law cannot be called inflexible. To speak of a law of morality at all is a monstrosity, for goodness, like beauty, cannot be imposed from outside by legislation, but must grow from inner necessity as a part of nature itself. Commandments given by a supreme being can only inspire fear for punishment, and hence an inclination for secret violation. But, if morality is understood as nature itself, it will lead to a greater sense of responsibility.

If these principles are thoroughly grasped the correspondence between morally good (*kusala*) and artistically beautiful (*sobhana*) will easily be seen. Both are based on harmony, but harmony is sometimes misinterpreted as symmetry. Symmetry is objective, external, with physical proportions, material in balance. There is no symmetry in the starry sky at night, yet it is full of beauty because there is harmony. Harmony is subjective, internal, mental balance. The peaceful majesty of the firmament is not in the sky, but in the reflecting mind where it produces peace and rest and balance, which is harmony. The loss of that balance, mental

unrest, disharmony, all that is conflict (*dukkha*) and evil (*akusala*) and ugly (*asobhana*).

Just as beauty and ugliness are harmony or disharmony, which do not change according to the surroundings, so goodness and moral evil do not change with evolution. Therefore, those moral aspects which have changed in the course of time are not essential to morality; they are mere accidentals. If killing is wrong, it is not so because it has been forbidden by some supreme being; it cannot be wrong in peace and right in war; it cannot be permissible to kill an animal rather than a man. If killing is wrong, it is because life is the highest and the only real possession of a sentient being, without which no property is of any avail. Life is the expression of his "karma", the very process of his being, the only means to be, to grow, to continue towards perfection.

But there are many aspects of morality which have undergone considerable change in the course of the ages. Of these it must be said that they are truly accidentals. If they are present in some individuals, or even if they are found universally, but at certain times only, it is clear their appearance is dependent on certain conditions which are not difficult to trace. Just as the moral sense in children is in their prime youth even less than primitive, and needs awakening through understanding, so the moral sense of humanity has had its stages of evolution. In less civilised countries this sense of morality or public conscience has not reached the same level yet as in countries inhabited by so-called more advanced or developed nations. Now, this growth or decay of conscience would never be possible, if this were a divine faculty.

Take as example the law of matrimony. At present, not only the law courts but also most of the Churches recognise the right of divorce. Yet, one reads in the Gospel that "what God hath joined together, let no man put asunder".⁴ Before Christ, however, "Moses suffered you to put away your wives, but from the begin-

⁴Mt. xix, 6.

ning it was not so”.⁵ Thus, the so-called sacred law of matrimony, on the social stability of which is based the organic structure of civilised family-life and society, has undergone already four times essential alterations, which force us to the conclusion that the difference between morality and immorality does not lie in marrying once or twice, in monogamy or bigamy, but in the mental attitude which prompts the nuptial act.

If to marry once is good and sacred, a holy sacrament which deserves the blessing from on high, then to marry twice ought to be better and more abundantly blessed. But if the nuptial act is seen as an act of self-satisfaction, then bigamy becomes merely a question of plurality, which, however, does not make a virtue of marriage.

Conscience does not need to be accounted for by assuming a divine origin, as being a sense of right and wrong which “God” has implanted in the heart of every man. On the other hand, to claim only the parental origin for this standard, so that the sense of right and wrong would be traceable to parental injunctions and prohibitions, does not explain, still less solve, the problem of the origin and similarity of moral principles. But, if we consider that morality is a necessary consequence of sociality, then the sense of right and wrong will be understood as a sense of duty towards the whole of nature, of which “self” and “society” are but two imperfect and incomplete views. Thus, finally, the understanding of morality will depend on the understanding of the relationship between self and others. When, therefore, “self” is understood as a delusion, the relationship of that delusion to “others” must also be delusive.

Most people, however, are under the delusion of “self”; and for them “good” is that which does not affect them adversely, of which they are not afraid; while “evil” is all that which inspires fear, which threatens one’s sense of security. “The terror of society is the basis of morals; the terror of God is the secret of religion”

⁵Ibid.

(Oscar Wilde). These are the originators of the hard and fast rules by which life is bound. This regimentation of thought becomes necessary, if the individual is nothing more than a social product, i.e. a product of a conflicting environment; then discipline and coercion become essential. Even for those who believe that man is a creation by a supernatural being, morality is but the expression of fear of his law. But all those various aspects of virtue and morality spring from the same root: the desire for self-protection in the midst of these opposites.

As long as the mind is caught in these secret desires, all its striving for perfection, though it may appear highly developed virtue, is nothing but a process of acquisition. I search for consolation, a seeking for comfort and protection. These conflicting tendencies of fear and want produce a sense of frustration, which under a misunderstood system of morality develops into a sense of guilt. This sense of guilt may ultimately be traced, directly or indirectly, to the fact of struggle for existence. For, the struggle for existence brings man directly in contact with conflicting elements, which must be avoided or overcome, if survival is to be effected. Morality is frequently little more than the code of avoidings, abstinences and restraints. Even when this conflict is not experienced directly, its presence will be made known indirectly by teaching and tradition, resulting in a system of prohibitions and taboos.

But, if it is once recognised that morality with its sense of guilt finds its origin in the struggle for existence, we have at the same time discovered the discriminating factor between moral and immoral. For, the struggle for existence, psychologically, is disharmony and selfishness, like any other struggle.

To have real growth of character there must be a breaking down of all the hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*) which are self-protecting walls. One must become loose from that sense of distinction between self and others, imposed by society and religion. To have true morality one must throw off all those things which

bind and remain, control and limit, for they prevent real freedom and development.

Only in absolute freedom is growth and fulfilment possible. And that can be done only through constant alertness to each action and reaction whereby all opposition will be seen as a delusion, whereby all restraint will be understood as an expression of fear.

This does not mean that one should or may live unrestrained and negligent, for in this constant watchfulness there is no place for carelessness. Restrictions and controls according to systems, however, are dead letters which only have the power to kill creative thought and action. In them, therefore, there cannot be true morality which is a growth of character. All principles and standards belong to the past where they were established. They cannot solve the problem which arises in the present. But in full awareness, in full understanding of the present, there alone is found the true way of acting, which will set the mind free from all conflicting delusions, and thus purify the way to the illuminating truth in the full freedom of living.

The Going Forth—Renunciation

When through growth of character the distinction between good and evil will have been understood, not as an external value, but as an inner attitude to life, then the renunciation of those imaginary values will also lose its meaning. Renunciation, understood as a giving up and a separation, will be based on identification and opposition, namely, identification with the so-called good which strengthens the “I”, and opposition to the so-called evil which is antagonistic to the “I”-ideal.

In identification lies always appropriation. It is through memory especially that identification of action is established. The constant process of change is a process of evolution and involution, of growth and decay. Because of this, the continuity of

the process is misunderstood as a continuity of a person. If the change is more abrupt, as at the end of a life-span, this identification process will also be interrupted. It is the mental retention of past actions which leads to identification which is appropriation. The change is there, appearing to be something which came through earlier experiences to present action. It is this slow understanding, slow through grasping, which results in misunderstanding of the changing process for a permanent self. True renunciation is the leaving behind of this misunderstanding. It is a going forth at the pace of the process without staying behind, without clinging, without appropriating, without identifying—a going with the process, watching, moving, changing, adapting, understanding. In that harmonious movement there is no more friction, and therefore, that renunciation has nothing of the spirit of sacrifice which is painful and sorrowful.

It is not *in* sorrow, but *through* sorrow, through the understanding and the setting aside of sorrow and its cause, that happiness is met. But, as long as sorrow is accumulated in the form of attachment to things from which security and comfort are expected, that very desire for security will produce fear, and that desire for comfort will produce sorrow. Fulfilment can only be experienced when there is not in the mind the fear of missing something. This fear can only be overcome in total and unconditional surrender and renunciation of “self” and all that pertains to self. Therein lies the ecstasy of freedom, of release, of deliverance.

As long as renunciation is a denial, it is an opposition. But an opposition can arise only within a conflict. Hence, to deny evil tendencies is to create new tendencies, which may be different, but which will still be binding and, therefore, be an obstacle to freedom. Renunciation which is a denial of the world, is a denial of life, and therefore it is death. Renunciation does not consist in a life in the forest. As long as the mind creates the ideal of “self” as a forest-dweller, or the delusion of “self” as a householder, there will be attachment to that model of living. It is that attachment, that ideal, that delusion of “self” which

has to be renounced. It is the attitude of mind rather than the condition of living which must be altered. For, as long as the "ego" remains the source of inspiration, there may be a substitution of one method of living for another method, but that change of environment will not overcome the obstacles to freedom, for the fetter of misconception of "self" remains the same.

But, if the worldly life is understood as a way in which a delusive "I" tries to continue its existence through acquisitiveness, then there will not be another attempt at escape into some other delusion of an "over-self", of a "super-ego", of a world-soul, but the simple dissolution of the delusion, which is then a complete renunciation. It is only in understanding, that craving and ignorance and the resulting "self"-delusion can be overcome and totally renounced without creating an opposite. Renunciation should not be negative, as a denial, but a positive act of going forth without fear. This may not always appear to be a very consistent life; but then, consistency is frequently a sign of stagnation, a lack of originality, attachment to traditional ways of living, and hence without this spirit of renunciation or freedom.

It certainly requires courage to renounce the support of age-long traditions which claim such marvellous culture. But it is noteworthy that only in the beginning of a new reform movement there is that intense interest, not only on account of the novelty, but mainly because only in the beginning the need is felt and understood to depart from the traditional. But when in course of time that reform spirit becomes an authority and a tradition itself, it is bound to fail to solve new problems and conflicts which will differ from those which gave rise to the issuing forth from the original conflict. Every institution or organisation has started with that spirit of breaking away from an undesirable situation. But thereby it proved at the same time the impossibility to continue the movement. For, its continuation will necessarily produce a situation which is as little actual as the stagnation which it tried to reform. Unless there is an ever new issuing forth, there can be no movement or progress, because it will stagnate

in its turn. No organisation, therefore, however well established, and whatever its past record of service may be, can lead on to the realisation of actual truth. Rituals, ceremonies and all the ornamental accessories of different religious systems are a burden, when one wants to reach higher levels. Founders and reformers have always been able to start their new life by completely divesting it from all those trappings. But later followers, who failed to live into that same spirit, found it necessary to bind themselves to the movement. Thereby, however, they stagnated and even killed the movement.

When some people group themselves together in common striving under the inner urge to rise against certain anomalies, they meet and work in mutual understanding. But after some time, when others join without that same urge and understanding, it becomes necessary to form regulations and a constitution. With rules one tries to bind the future without knowing even what that future may hold in store. It is only in freeing oneself from all those narrowing restrictions that there can be a real issuing forth. Renunciation should be a going forth (*nekkhamma = nis+kamati*) but this going forth should not be a going out to a fixed destination, an ideal or a goal. If the stage is set beforehand, renunciation does not mean anything more than a change-over to something better. Then, renunciation is merely an act of acquisition of greater security. But then, the very thing which should have been left off, the cause of all conflict, viz. the misconception of "self", is only taken to a different sphere, where it will develop instead of wither.

All the things one relies on may give satisfaction for a few moments, but that constitutes their very danger. The drug is for many so tasty, that they prefer the poison to a cure. One likes to be miserable, because one does not know and has never known mental health. To come to fulfilment, one will have not only to leave all toys behind; one will have to forget them, which can only be done through understanding their fictitious value. One will have to stop the chase after happiness; for happiness which

is found elsewhere is mere pleasure which does not last. But, if instead of joys real bliss is found in the fullness of understanding, then the leaving off of those playthings will not be painful. The will to go forth must not be a will to obtain new excitement, but a natural shedding of one's childlike nature, as a snake casts off its slough.

This risking of a leap into the unknown, can only take place after a natural growth of the spirit of adventure. This spirit of adventure, however, though it may be in each one's character to some extent, cannot develop as long as there is a holding fast, a clinging to anything whatever in life. The going forth of the mind must take place in the same way as the issuing forth of the body at birth. In the travail at child-birth lies also the hope of deliverance, but it takes place in utter nudity. It is in this spirit of detachment that life can become infinitely interesting, for when attachment to particulars is indulged in, there cannot be interest in the whole, as the road of progress towards fulfilment is blocked.

People are striving for power, but that is possessiveness, acquisitiveness, selfishness, which makes man a slave to his own desires, to his own petty attachments, and to the means he has invented to satisfy those desires. But real power comes when man is able to rise above acquisitions; for there he will find real freedom in true renunciation. Having renounced all, he will possess all without being possessed by it. And that is the bliss of perfection.

Renunciation must be complete, if it would be a step on the purifying way. It must be a leaving behind of everything. The giving up of material things is easy enough, but that giving-up is not even essential. It is not the surrender of books which is renunciation, but the abandonment of the doctrines contained therein. As long as there is attachment to any particular doctrine or system, or school, a free going forth is impossible. It is not the leaving behind of friends and family, but it is the breaking of the bonds of attachment, which is necessary. As long as one is caught within the limitations and restrictions of society, association or

family, they form a burden which prevents real progress. But if one were free from their fettering influences, the going-forth has taken place already. To leave home and to bind oneself with restrictions in a homeless life is to exchange one prison for another. Any mode of living may become a prison, if one considers that mode as a means of salvation, or deliverance. Freedom does not exist in methods, for methods are binding, however much support one may find in them.

Renunciation should not be a tearing away from those bonds, from the things to which the heart still clings. That renunciation makes wounds and leaves scars. But it should be a waning of interest, based on the understanding of the futility of trying to satisfy a delusion. It should be a going-forth from dreamland, in the knowledge that, however beautiful life there may be, it remains a dream, an unreality. To discover truth in oneself, away from all securities, and then to surrender to that truth, requires great determination; for, the world of unreality is so much more real for those who are used to live within the confines of that prison.

Religions, politics, science and art belong all to that region of dreamland, where we try to amuse ourselves, to make ourselves comfortable and secure, where we occupy ourselves, toying with life without living it. Then, of course, those things become all of vital importance, when with all one's life's energy those ambitions will be pursued for the good and welfare of society, it is thought. In reality, it is for our own satisfaction that we have made society; it is for our own comfort and enjoyment that we make progress in science and art. But thereby we bind ourselves to dogmas, to conventions, to an artificial way of living; and thus we block the way to freedom and perfection. Others may call this a stupid neglect of the possibilities of life. But, those who see deeper will find in all this striving nothing but selfishness, at best a mechanical response to stimuli. In our selfishness and isolation we have created society. But, as we can create nothing but ourselves, that society is a true picture of our nature. And it

is that society which further claims us, to which we have become slaves in reaction to the stimuli evoked by ourselves. To stand aloof from this is not selfish isolation, but a true understanding of the whole process of playing with life.

It cannot be anti-social to refuse one's co-operation with a system or exploitation, ruled by class privileges, religious monopolies, national seclusions and economic preferences. To break away from such a system will certainly necessitate a complete change of life. But that change should not be merely an isolated mode of living; for, if that new mode of living is still based on individual security, if it is merely an escape from a disagreeable environment, the problem and the conflict will have remained the same. For, it is always the desire for individual security, which gives birth to some kind of exploitation. The breaking away from society, therefore, will be less than useless, it will be positively harmful, if it is based on individual acquisitiveness; for, in isolation the individualistic spirit of egotism will find better opportunities to develop, as opposition will be absent.

Renunciation is a going forth, a growing up, a leaving behind of toys, a becoming interested in life itself, a thing which "children" will never be able to understand. But, if this part of the purifying way has been passed through with understanding, it will naturally lead to progress and growth in the illuminating truth.

The Illuminating Truth

Insight in Nature—Wisdom

Knowledge is not the ultimate purpose of thought. This can only be realised if the process of thought is understood in its origination, development and dependence. The process of thinking is not consciousness as a passive mirror in which the external world is reflected, but it is a process of grasping, laying hold of the object by giving it a subjective interpretation. It is an active appropriation of what is misunderstood as an outer world, opposed to an inner “self”. Thought has, therefore, developed into a means of craving. The object, sensed and perceived, becomes assimilated in knowledge, the process of mental grasping. Thus, knowledge is not the purpose of thought, but serves the purpose of craving, just as science has found its greatest stimulus not in man’s need, but in his greed for additional comfort. Man’s physical needs can be satisfied easily enough, but his greed to gain time for the sake of increased profit led him to invent machines and employ power to assist him in fighting his own nature in time and space.

The true action of the mind should, therefore, not be the gathering of knowledge (*nāṇa*) which is a kind of craving, but creative insight without grasping, which is true understanding which is insight (*paññā*). The conception of thought finds its beginning in imagination; for, concepts are acts of grasping and therefore produce sorrow and conflict. But the culmination of a conception which was without grasping will not come with the

pains of childbirth, but with the joy of creation in the mind. That is not imagination leading to will, but the dawn of truth leading to insight.

A concept without grasping is only possible in simple awareness and watchfulness, without purposeful striving of attainment, without intentional desire of escaping from the conflict. It is in that awareness that understanding of a problem can grow, and that insight will dissolve a delusion.

For the solution of any problem a thorough understanding of it is absolutely necessary. So it is with the problem which offers itself daily in life, the problem of the individual, when life's harmony is constantly disturbed by unfulfilled desires which cry for satisfaction, and by fulfilled desires which cry out in fear of impermanence. This problem is not a lifeless one dealing abstractly with numbers and symbols, but it is a living, actual problem. Therefore, it cannot be abstractly dealt with, it cannot be analysed even. For, a living process offers always a new problem at every moment. In analysing such a process, one comes across old problems only, while the actual problem of the present moment remains unsolved. Psycho-analysis might give some information about past actions; it might try to explain dream, but it cannot work quickly enough to understand the present. And that is the only understanding which is really needed. Analysis of past mental action will lead to the drawing up of a line of conduct to avoid certain irregularities which have been observed. This creates a pattern of morality which is a new bondage. Imitative action is based on fear to break away from convention and tradition. It is not true action, but reaction to a stimulus, to a reflection, which only continues the conflict. Its solution, therefore, does not lie in analysis of the past, but in comprehension of the present. This true insight into the nature of an action will clearly see the motives which condition, which prompt, and which give rise to the action. For this are required an awareness and an alertness without setting a goal, without purposeful searching, as in analysis. It is simple watchfulness which can lay the hidden motives bare,

which can solve the problem by showing the delusive nature of the opposing forces in that conflict.

Knowledge will try to satisfy one's curiosity and questions will arise like: How does rebirth take place? But, insight will go deeper and will investigate not the past fact of rebirth, but: Why does the question about rebirth arise? For, that is the real problem.

The question about the possibility and the ways of rebirth is so fascinating, because it has behind it a desire for security. If this question about rebirth could be settled, then it would guarantee something definite for the future. In other words, the motive of the question was not a need for understanding, but the fear of uncertainty which causes the greed for knowledge. It is "self" which wants to find some solid ground in which to take root, in which to perpetuate itself.

Again: knowledge of the four noble truths will tell us that we must be detached, because craving or attachment is the cause of sorrow. But, insight will go deeper and find out whether this desire for detachment is not due to fear of sorrow rather than to the understanding of the conflict thereof. If conditioned by fear, detachment will be merely an escape, but not a solution of the conflict. For, the opposites of fear and want still remain.

Insight, therefore, will never ask for a method, but will ask for the cause. Knowledge answers the question: How? That is science. Ignorance looks for answer of its question: Why not? That is the easy way out through satisfaction. Only insight answers the question: Why? And that gives the true solution. Thus, the problem of the conflict between craving and detachment is solved by the understanding of the cause which is always one and the same: "self". If that "self" is truly understood as a delusion, as a reaction to the environment, a result of education, tradition, society and religion, a result of a desire for continued existence, then both attachment and detachment will become impossible.

Unawareness of this process of conditioning leads to ever darker ignorance, producing the delusion of a permanent entity,

unaffected by the changing environment, of a living soul with eternal existence, of a substance beneath all changing phenomena. It is thus in simple awareness, while seeing and experiencing everything, in eluding “self” and all mental states, as a continual movement and not as something that moves—awareness of action without reflection of an actor, of change and nothing but change—it is in that awareness that true insight can arise. This awareness must be without expectation, for then alone can insight be without disappointment. It must be without ideal, without goal, without striving—and then there will be pure understanding and seeing things as they are in themselves (*yathā bhūta nāṇa dassana*). As long as thoughts are conditioned by expectations, ideas will be conceived according to hopes and desires, which is wishful thinking. When striving is conditioned by a goal, it is limited, its path is laid out and it can only reach what was known already within the precincts of its ignorance.

This realisation of one’s “self”, of one’s own nature, is the only thing that truly matters. This illuminating insight may begin at any stage, it does not require a particular setting, for it is life which is to be realised, and life is at hand wherever we are. In the midst of transitoriness this illuminating truth can begin to shine and reveal the world of reality in seeing the false as false, the “self” as delusion, a goal as an escape. For, that is the truth. But, this reality will have nothing substantial in it, nothing to lay hold of, no foothold for consolidation; it will leave no room for craving, but only for insight. All the rest will be understood as mere fiction.

Thought has created its own environment, and has attached its own feelings to it. Then, in the ensuing conflict it has produced the opposition between an inner self and an external world. Whatever takes place in that world of fiction is seen as highly important, till in its self-contradictoriness the world of events appears one mass of conflict. Insight into the real nature of this process of delusion will understand from its cause the true, i.e. the fictitious, value of all its reactions. Feelings, whether inner or outer, which arose

from a deluding distinction, from a fictitious “self” in opposition and in conflict with a fictitious environment, will be discarded as passing shadows which cannot truly darken the light of the sun, unable to leave a trace in their passing. This insight, therefore, will truly solve the problem of sorrow, the dissolution of conflict.

It is limited knowledge which perverts the truth. For, limited knowledge admits of a certain amount of misunderstanding. In that twilight it is most difficult to work, for a glimpse of truth convinces the mind that it has grasped the full truth; then its own mistaken distortion of the world is taken as an understanding thereof. Then there will be partly a going forth, and partly a holding back. Compromise between the two will give a temporary satisfaction; and so mental stagnation sets in, which is the greatest hindrance for the illuminating truth to grow into a blissful life. For, compromise is a betrayal of the truth.

Even in the case of the few people who were, perhaps, able to work themselves up and out of the drudgery of routine work, even their mind is frequently occupied with speculation, analysis, philosophy and similar mental playthings, leaving no room for growth and development. Whatever is learnt anew is put in old receptacles and thus truth itself will become distorted. Thus it happens that all religions claim to have and to be the truth. In reality, no religion is true, for religions are organisations working along fixed lines, dogmas, moral codes, faith, spiritual exercises, methods of meditation, prayers, rituals, etc.

Only insight into the real nature of all things and “self” can deliver one from all these fetters. Any system which claims to have the truth is a deception, for truth is a living understanding which has to grow in each one individually till all individuality will have been outgrown. Religions may contain some truths, they may be reminders of truth, but when they claim to be channels of truth and means of salvation, they are mere distortions, for then they prove to lack real insight into the inner nature of the mind. Just as the Buddha found enlightenment within himself by realising “non-self” (*anatta*), so each one has to discover the Buddha within

himself and there worship him in the realisation of his own nature. That is how one should take refuge in the Norm, that is in the understanding of nature (*dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi*). If this understanding of one's nature is not able to break the bonds which keep the "self" isolated and imprisoned, it is a clear sign that such understanding is not insight, but mere learning which has not developed beyond physiology and affiliated sciences.

This understanding cannot be developed through experience. What is called experience is nothing but a name given to mistakes made in the past. Experience through mistakes only tells one how to set about things. In its failure to solve a problem in the past it shows a lack of understanding. And, moreover, as that problem of the past is not and never can be the same problem again—as the environmental and other conditions are constantly changing—it will be impossible to learn from that lack of understanding. In a very remote way in unessential matters a failure in the past may be a sign of warning not to try that experiment again, but that still remains a very vague and negative way of learning, and certainly not of understanding. Hence we can truly say that understanding does not develop through experience, and insight cannot arise through memory.

The understanding, however, that ignorance was the cause of earlier failings will produce greater alertness in the present conflict. It is the insight in our nature as a process of ignorance and delusion. If that insight is actual, the delusion will vanish at the moment, just as the delusion of a man who in the dark mistook a rope for a serpent, will disappear and not arise again once the mistake is found out. Speculations about the nature of delusion will not bring about an actual solution of the same, for in speculation only imaginary cases are taken up for consideration. It is a scholarly work, perhaps, but not actual. Such speculations lead to suggestions which are merely temporary remedies. From those speculative solutions have arisen the different institutions, meant to organise social welfare, spiritual welfare, etc. And they certainly produce many good effects. But as they have not origi-

nated from the understanding of the problem, but only from the knowledge of its existence, those organisations cure the effects, but can do nothing to remedy the cause which they do not even try to understand. Thus, Christ restored life to the son of the widow of Naim, because he had compassion with the weeping mother; he had knowledge of her sorrow. The Buddha did not restore the life of the baby of Kisa Gotami, because he had deeper compassion with the weeping mother: he had understanding of her sorrow which found its cause in her attachment. Curing her from the cause, he made her reach the state of insight which is beyond sorrow and conflict.

A rearrangement of causes will not solve a conflict, but merely produce a different one, while the opposition remains the same. Insight, however, will understand both opposites as delusions, and thereby reduce them and the conflict to nothing. With the perception of the conflict there should not be a desire for a solution even; for that would be an actual taking sides. A choiceless awareness alone will comprehend the necessity of solving the conflict, for in awareness alone there is actuality, not based on experience of the past, not building on speculation in the future, but actually present like sorrow, like conflict. In this actual comprehension there is no separation possible between the world and self, for the conflict arises in the contact, in relationship misunderstood. When the two are seen as one single process all delusion, all conflict, all opposition comes naturally to an end, not by controlling, checking or overcoming it but by understanding it as a delusion.

Inner Strength—Energy

Attainment, as we have seen, is not the reaching of a goal which is in another world; it is not the obtaining, the acquisition of something. It is rather an inner growth, proportionate to the decrease of self-delusion. Thus, the strength and energy, the vitality,

which is the result of that growth, is not a power derived from reliance on external forces, but the vigour which spontaneously bursts forth from an inner source. It is energy in the true sense, for en-ergy means in-force, the strength which grows from inner conviction and understanding, and not from reliance on authority, which is the experience of others. Only the word which is spoken with the strength of inner realisation has the power to move others, to wake others, and make them see the need to realise for themselves. For, it is only the word which comes from within, that has the sound of truth. Everything else is repetition and imitation, which may be beautiful as art, but is lifeless as stone. Art may call for admiration but never for conviction, because it is essentially artificial. Truth, which is artificial, i.e. which is reproduced from books, can also be admired, perhaps, but it will not be convincing unless it has come to life in each one's mind, each one for himself. That is the vitality of truth which is an inner life-force, which does not need any exertion of an outer force, such as authority.

All effort which is engendered without the understanding of its motive may appear as furthering the growth of character and development of virtue, but is in reality only strengthening the delusion of "self". The need for this effort, if properly understood, is the outcome of a feeling of inward poverty. But, that effort, based on desire, cannot eradicate that poverty, based as it is on a delusive opposition in which the "self" wants to possess the world of its contacts, feelings and perceptions. It is an artificially created void which therefore cannot be filled, as it has no existence in reality, but only in misconception. Thus, all efforts like self-control, self-denial, self-mortification, though virtuous in appearance, are only different disguises under which the "I" hides itself.

Only in true energy can true action arise. All action arising from effort which is exertion is an outgoing force, a strength bent on an outward object, limitation, acquisitiveness, selfishness. Then, an object must be chosen; but that choice itself is limitation

and selfishness. And hence, it can produce only struggle and conflict in its effort to obtain, to conquer, to acquire. Such exertion is action leading to reaction; it is not a pure action which springs from inner strength, but an induced action, a motivated action, a purposeful striving which is craving.

True action and true energy are one, and they rise spontaneously from the understanding of a need. True energy does not need to be spurred on by argument, nor by expectations of reward, but it needs understanding. In the awakening of intelligence there will be the natural and spontaneous cessation of exertion which comes through craving and fear. For, exertion is not a proof of free will, but rather of a conditioned reflex, while the cessation of that exertion is freedom from conditioning. For, surely, as long as man is but the result of environment and heredity, he is a mere social machine, a social convenience, one may say. And then, of course, he will be most fitting in that environment, if he has been moulded into it by discipline and training.

It is on such foundations that society and religion have built their organisations with convention, tradition, education, culture and all forms of control, training and discipline, which have produced the automaton of modern civilisation, where there is no true and pure action, but only reactions to stimuli, reactions to an environment which has not been understood.

Energy, which is inner strength, is not a reaction; it is spontaneous, self-acting energy, springing into life through understanding. And that is real virtue.

Virtue is not the same as merit, for merit is gain acquired through effort, while virtue is the natural blossoming of the flower of understanding. In its opening up there is the loss of the delusion of seclusion and isolation. Merit is for many the purpose of their positive effort; and thus it becomes an end in itself. But, virtue has no further purpose, it acts from inner strength.

Strength (*viriya*) is not heroic (*vira*), as long as there is the expectation of reward. The soldier who fights for a V.C. is not a hero; the man who is virtuous for heavenly bliss is not a saint.

Both, heroic and virtuous actions must spring up spontaneously from the comprehension of the conditions of the present moment. Strength and energy should be full of courage and heroism. Then it is no longer a going forth in running forward, which would even be a rush if not tempered by insight and patience. Courage is more than a brave facing of danger. It is the meeting of a challenge without fear. To be brave in the knowledge of superior power is domination which can be done by any coward and bully. But not to yield, not to run away, when facing the problem which most inspires us with fear, that is courage which is rooted in inner strength and energy. If it needs courage to stand by one's convictions, it requires much more courage to attack and to discard one's own convictions. This strength will not rely on others, but is found in aloofness, not to be confused with selfish isolation. It will not be supported by the applause of an approving audience; but it will make a stand or even yield in humiliating conditions, in disappointment, in betrayal, in fear. Fear is the only enemy who has to be faced with courage, for fear is rooted in "self". To throw away self-respect, public opinion, traditions and conventions, and even one's own opinions, when it is understood that they maintain themselves through fear, that proves courage.

But why throw away self-respect and public opinion? To attain to freedom from those fetters. But for most people the company of others in prison is preferable to solitary freedom. It is not the fear from without, but the fear from within, which binds and hinders all progress. The question is not: Why should we despise public opinion? For, that is the question of a coward. The question rather is: Why should I listen to public opinion? If general sentiment requires a certain action of behaviour, we must find a substantial reason to submit to the same. Thus the question is: Why submit? And if we submit without knowing the reason, it is a submission to fear, an escape from the conflict.

Prudence is frequently thought to be a sign of sagacity; but it might easily be a sign of cowardice and fear, a lack of inner energy and inner strength. Prudence might arise from the understanding

that the opposition is strong and that there is none to support this side. The feeling of loneliness makes one look out for external help, while the knowledge of inner strength would enable one to cast all prudence to the winds. Such actions of heroism will flout public opinion, scorn common sense, scoff at an easygoing theory, will not understand them; they will ascribe them to a divine power or to lunacy. But this heroic strength is the realisation that one is not isolated, even though, one stands alone facing an overwhelming majority. There is no isolation when there is no "self". There is no argument, when there is understanding.

This energy, then, is not of a supernatural origin or quality, but it is a development of the unimpeded progress in a natural process of growth. Conflict will produce a tendency towards escape, but the understanding of the nature of the conflict will see that there is nothing to escape from, except the "I" in conflict. An escape is an action born of ignorance; energy is an action born of understanding. This understanding cannot be imparted from outside; and so it is really impossible to help somebody else. The very wish to become stronger through the support of others is destructive of intelligence, for, it is an expression of fear, an admission of defeat, a lack of comprehension. But, if in the understanding of the nature of the conflict, the two opposites are comprehended as delusions, fear will naturally disappear, and the conviction of inner strength will not need to be supported by external help.

Strength arises from the knowledge that the "self" is not that tiny being which wriggles through cosmic life like a worm that goes from leaf to leaf. Strength arises from the knowledge that the "self" is not an isolated entity opposed by mighty unseen powers. The lone creature which, moves from life to life, burdened with its own sorrows, does, not become the universe, loaded with the total weight of suffering. But, when that "self" is understood, neither as a separate entity, nor as an infinite and universal soul, but as a passing process, then there is none to bear the burden; for, the burden itself appears to be a delusion, while life can be a

continuous joy in a new rebirth of every moment, always fresh and always strong, without limitation and without the sorrow which is conflict.

In that fearless state there is no craving for security, because its inner strength lies in its non-identity, in its capacity to yield and rise. But, craving for security will express itself in the economic sphere through exploitation of others, in the social sphere through running after distinctions, in the religious sphere through striving for virtue and merit. In all these kinds of energy, which are rather exertions to obtain security for one's "self", there is the seed of fear and competition, of opposition and sorrow, all of which would disappear, if real energy in a fearless life would not care for security, because there are no opposites. As long, however, as that fear remains, the process of thought itself will be divided through conflicting tendencies between a higher and a lower life. Then discipline will take the place of inner strength, and through drill and control one will try to bring about the harmony which was disturbed.

But, in the very effort of discipline and control the opposing tendencies are sharper divided and thereby strengthened for the division is unnatural: it is a delusion. Their solution can never be obtained by enforcing a separation which will only give them an individual existence which merely strengthens the delusion.

Energy leading to truth must be concentrated energy. A person who dissipates his energy in the pursuit of passions becomes a slave, because his inner strength is spent and he becomes powerless. But a person who brings his thoughts and feelings, that is, his intellect and heart, in harmony, such a person will be able to concentrate his energy and to judge his actions truly. This concentration of energy may appear to some as asceticism. But as long as this is not based on a desire to escape from another problem, detachment even from actions will be the only condition to make a free and unbiased approach possible.

When, therefore, we have been speaking throughout of inner strength, this should not be misunderstood as forming an opposite

to some outer strength, on which to rely it would be possible, though not advisable. The distinction between inner and outer is a delusion, as delusive as the distinction between self and others as separate entities. To deny the one and maintain the other is impossible, for, as long as one is kept intact, it will naturally form its opposite. Thus, where there is striving for happiness, there will be sorrow; in expectation there will be disappointment; in satisfaction there will be craving for more; in grasping for immortality there will be fear of death; in the love for some there will be hate for others; in self-control there will be uncontrolled pride; in the acceptance of faith there will be the seed of doubt.

Only in the realisation that both opposites are delusive, and that both have to cease, in that understanding is a cessation of exertion. And that will bring with it true peace, and the real victory of truth over all delusion, a strength which is absolute because it has no opponents and because it is unrelated, unconditioned.

Pliability—Patience

When the desire to discover the truth becomes intense, great precaution should be taken to ward off impulsiveness, to which a surplus of energy might easily lead. A desire which causes unrest is always to be mistrusted, however good its object may appear. For, such an unrest must surely produce a new conflict, which can neither lead to the desired goal, nor pave the way to peace of mind, which should always be the first sign of satisfaction. Hence excitement and agitation fail to give lasting satisfaction, even though a temporary elated feeling may give ecstasy to the mind. Not through rapture and ecstasy can lasting peace of mind be found, because of the limiting conditions and the narrowness of understanding in exercises of concentration. Only in calmness of attainment can there be fulfilment of deep understanding.

It is the agitation in desire which causes frustration, for agitation particularises desire and hence limits the attainment. In this

limitation there is no liberation, so that the very desire for freedom produces nothing but further entanglements. Knowledge, in stead of expanding into understanding, merely becomes conceit and deceit.

Conceit with its basis of self-delusion leads to separation and isolation, and thus produces disappointment and sorrow in stead of satisfaction and peace. It is the desire to go out in search of truth, to fulfil the purpose of life, to satisfy the emptiness within, which makes one to be caught over and over again in the clutches of rebirth. It is this going out which is the cause of the delusive distinction, which perpetuates the deception of "self".

The calming down of such passionate desires is essential to the realisation of the truth, the attainment of perfection, the fulfilment of life. And that is exactly the function of patience as a step on this ladder of perfection. Patience is far from meekness or weakness, for it is in its yielding power that lies its very strength. The small paddy-plant bends under the wind and lives, while the mighty tree resists and is broken. The spirit of resistance is not always a sign of strength and truth. Frequently it is born of fear, a degree of egotism which fears a loss of prestige in yielding. Thus, a lack of pliability gives rise often to stubbornness. This mental obduracy is easily recognised as a vicious kind of egoism. But, not so easily will it be understood that there are other and more subtle forms of this type which pass under virtuous names as tolerance and forbearance.

Tolerance is a condescension, an affability to inferiors. It is an allowance, a permission to live, though not by right. It is just this appearance of virtue which makes tolerance so dangerous, for it cultivates inwardly an opposition based on self-righteousness. It has in it a degree of conceit, which is even worse than open enmity. Forbearance is suffering of injustice without resistance, frequently based on one's impotence to resist, a virtue by necessity. To make of patience, tolerance, forbearance, sufferance, real perfections, they should be divested of all sense of opposition. Then, they will not stand with an isolated "self" but will try to

come over to the other side through understanding. It is pliability as adaptability alone which can overcome the separation, which is still maintained in tolerance. Ignorance which tries to become truth by going in search of it, will ever remain ignorance. But, when it is prepared to admit its delusive state, then it will have found truth already without exertion. Such admission is pliability to the actuality of the present moment which alone can give liberation from the conventional fetters of the past and fear of the future.

In adaptation to present conditions there should not be a craving to adapt the environment to ones liking; but, in the understanding of oneself as the result of the environment, to the conditions of life, tolerance will become affection, belief will become knowledge, ignorance will become insight.

But in man's striving there is no patience. One wants immediate results and solutions for the passing symptoms without trying to solve the real problem which lies within. Little joys and little sorrows preoccupy the mind so much that there is only confusion and doubt about details, which prevent the truth to be understood in its entirety, the basic problem in its foundation. As long as joys and sorrows are shallow they hang on and cast their shadows over man's life. But when sorrow is deep and love is great, they destroy all pettiness and make one realise the depth of life in true relationship in narrowness of mind there is limited apprehension and that shallowness is the cause of continued sorrow and conflict, because everything is seen against the background of the limited "self". But, when in understanding through watchfulness those limitations are seen as delusions, then there will be a constant refitting into an always new environment. Such constant change and adaptation to the present make of sorrow the pin-prick of one moment without being dragged along in time by a delusive imagination. Thus, the agony of passion is overcome, not by endurance, but by living in and with this actual and momentary present. As the flame does not endure but arises anew at every moment, so the pain produced by it is new and

lasts only for a single moment. Thus, in the pliability of adapting oneself to the true nature of things, all sorrow becomes bearable in the absence of conflict.

The main difficulty in seeing this truth lies in one's incapacity for thinking without being influenced. When thought is being guided by the misapprehension of life as separated and isolated entities with which the "self" and "others" are identified, the feeling of conceit becomes wounded in adversity. But, when life is understood as one process of action and reaction, the pliability of thought versus the environment will come spontaneously without producing any conflict. Patience towards all living creatures as well as with inorganic matter will greatly be helped by this understanding. Patience with oneself, however, is most essential, and this is only possible to the extent that the delusion of "self" is overcome. The more of "self", the less adaptation and, therefore, the greater conflict. Instead of using the power one may possess to alter the evil consequences of other people's actions, it would be better to alter the inner dispositions which is a reaction to those deeds. When stones on the road hurt our feet, not the stones should be blamed, while the fault lies in the sensitivity of our feet.

To speak of tolerance in the case of opposition is ridiculous. All opposition is based on delusion. Where there is no "self", there can be no opposition. Tolerance is, therefore, developed only with the purpose of maintaining a distinction which cannot be overcome as long as it is seen as opposition. There is no common factor between the two, for the opposites are a desire for "self"-security and an aversion to the constant flow of life. Tolerance may try to bring about a compromise, which is bound to fail. It is the "I"-delusion which causes all sorrow, conflict and disharmony. The maintenance of this delusion can never solve the problem, and all attempts to escape from its consequences by compromising will naturally fail, as long as the cause remains extant. But, as soon as one ceases to escape from conflict, the understanding of this disharmony itself will produce the solution

in the dissolution of the “self” through non-identity. To be fully conscious and aware of the conflict leads to the comprehension of the “I”-process; and thereby the opposition in the conflict will vanish.

But then, there must be complete certainty that all escape is impossible, so that there cannot be any reliance on external help, any superficial remedy or even temporary relief. For, only then will there be that perfect surrender of self, which makes life pliable, which alone can lead to the realisation of what is truth in life.

It is this yielding capacity which leads to comprehension. Comprehension is an act of taking in, of absorbing; and to do that effectively, there must be emptiness. As long as fear and craving delude the process of thought and fill the mind with ideas of past and future, so long also can there be no true discernment of the present, no full comprehension of the truth, no true fulfilment of life. But, when individuality is understood as a process of thought itself, it will cease to be a reflection or a reaction, and it will emerge as pure and creative action.

Without environment no life is possible; and, therefore, to place the “self” opposite to the environment as a reaction to an action, is destructive of the process of life, and that is conflict, causing friction and an insoluble problem. The environment can be made harmonious by solving all opposition, by understanding the true relationship which constitutes the environment. For, it is not the surroundings themselves which influence, but the contact with and the reaction to them. If then this relationship is understood as one process, and not as a relation of two interdependent and co-existing factors, all opposition will disappear as imaginary, from which will ensue perfect harmony without self-protective desires.

When the opposition in relationship is seen as real, the mind in fear will naturally seek an escape from conflict. And thus, it is only in the full comprehension of the process of relationship that both fear and escape become impossible, because there is no more

conflict; then only will it be possible, to have a truly harmonious living through pliability and adjustment without opposition in relationship.

Different tendencies which have grown through ignorance, want, fear and greed, have produced a society which maintains itself in class-conflict, caste-distinctions, social exclusiveness, religious monopolies of truth. And man clings to all these, because they alone show a certain order which is mistaken for harmony, and which holds the false promise of security. But it is an order based on fear and selfishness. By giving up that exclusiveness of "self" one has nothing to lose, for that superficial order, artificially maintained in fear, will make place for spontaneous harmony, maintained by understanding. Then patience will not be the necessity of a virtue like tolerance, but the choiceless and oppositionless adjustment to the completeness of life.

There is plenty of adaptation, which is not always the adjustment of pliability, however. It is frequently the acceptance of, and the submission to, certain customs, public opinion, convention, tradition in many forms. Mere submission without understanding can only be the result of fear, which again is but a symptom of selfishness and of craving for self-security. Faith and dogmas were created through fear, and they, in their turn acquiring mastery, instituted a system of control and compulsion, called morality, which has become the greatest hindrance to freedom of thought, the greatest obstacle to the realisation of truth in living truly.

A surrender to those limitations in the different spheres of life must necessarily lead to restricted liberty. Adaptation to the heritage of tradition by slavishly following old habits which might have been useful at the time when they grew spontaneously, or even intentionally, will always be a hindrance to real progress. Attachment to nationality is a condemnation to remain for ever within the narrow precincts of a small group, in the midst of which one has been cast. Not even by one's own choice submission to a code of morality does not constitute virtue, for the actions outside

that conventional code do not all at once change their nature by being brought under control of a sacred law. If murder is wrong then killing cannot be justifiable. If prostitution is wrong, then marriage cannot be sacred. If the end is wrong the means thereto cannot be called good. These kinds of adaptation are but poor forms of imitation, forms in the sense of moulds which all lack creative intelligence.

But, the pliability of which we are speaking here is a patience of heart, a sensitivity of mind, a vulnerability of emotion, which can instinctively sense and intellectually discern the non-identity in the movement of life, and which without stagnating can move on beyond all joy and sorrow, conflict and limitation, standards and values.

Sincerity—Truth

Though there have been so many founders and reformers of religion, so many saints and seers, so many philosophers and theologians, still there are and there always will be more seekers of the truth. Does that not show that many are not satisfied with the findings of others? Life is sometimes so cruel, and always so meaningless that people will ask themselves over and over again the same old questions. And they cannot be content with the answers of others, for each one has to find his own solution; each one has to find his own truth.

Faith puts the question aside and asks for submission of the intellect. Thus, faith is entirely unsatisfactory for those who think and want to understand. Many, however, have no question to put at all; for, when they dance through life in their shallow enjoyments, they see no problem whatsoever. Faith does not search for truth, and the world has no need of truth. And thus, the truth, though it reveals itself in every action in nature, remains unknown to man.

Truth is not a kind of philosophy; it is not even *the* philosophy.

It is not something impersonal, something that exists or can exist in itself. And yet, that is what most religions want us to believe. Truth is proclaimed by them as dogma and revelation, the full acceptance of which is said to be necessary to the realisation of the truth. Those revelations, as they are found in the Vedas, the Bible and the Quran, are said to be the only possible starting point, and they must be accepted in toto. For them, truth is something given from above.

But truth is more than that. Truth is not found in books, in words, in monuments. Truth is living as life itself, emotional as a passion, fiery as a flame. In truth there is no definition, no analysis, no theory, no distinction, no compromise, but completeness and comprehension; and hence it brings fulfilment. It is the necessary completion of the vacuum created by the gift of self and the going forth on the purifying way. It is insight, the knowledge of darkness, the understanding of nature, the understanding of delusion, which provides the light of truth. Truth will not only try to understand each individual reaction and each event in itself, but also—and that is most important—in relation to the whole. Men, beings and things are not mere objects; they are events. And as events in action they are known by their reaction. And that reaction is the subject, the most important aspect of the entire process. To see a tree properly, one must see also the jungle in which it grows and the struggle it had for its existence, the competition with other plants, the soil from which it drew its nourishment, the sunlight, the rainfall, etc. In other words, one should not forget the wood for the trees. But in that full setting the individual is not lost; rather, each individual event has its special meaning. And that particular action of the event is its contribution to the whole process. It is the individual music of violins, clarinets, brass instruments, etc. which gives the sound effects of orchestral music. Each taken individually, the parts have little or no meaning; the understanding of the effect lies in the whole. And that means the action as seen in the objective

event as well as the subjective reaction. Truth sees the whole, but does not forget the particulars.

The simple fact of total interdependence, which at first sight appears to be restricting and limiting every single action, becomes in the light of truth the very opposite. For, if interdependence is truly understood, there is no individual, isolated action, but action becomes universal and therefore without limitation. Truth is not something new, but a new viewpoint from which the whole receives, as it were, life, where formerly there was but death. It is the illuminating truth which is the approach and which opens the closed door of delusion.

Formerly, security could only be thought of by strengthening one's own position, socially in the present, spiritually in the future. But in the light of truth the greatest security is found in the freedom from social and religious bonds, for that freedom gives the liberty of action in union with the whole of nature, the liberation from all opposites, freedom from all conflict, deliverance from all fictitious values and delusions.

Frequently, even those who have understood at least intellectually that matter as well as mind are fictions, i.e. mental concepts which for the sake of convenience replace by one word a long explanation ("matter" for the phenomenal functions of energy without a substance; "mind" for arising and passing perceptions and conceptual states without entity, identity or soul)—even those who have thus grasped the true nature of the process of becoming which is called life, frequently cling to the idea of truth as something absolute which can be attained in final realisation. "Absolute" means that which is loosened from all limitations, unrestricted, with an independent existence. As such, the absolute stands opposed to the relative, but the very fact of opposition is a denial of the absolute. The very existence of something like relative truth would exclude the possibility of absolute truth. The existence of a boundary somewhere makes unbounded space a contradiction, if it is to include all. If the absolute stands in con-

tradictory relationship to the non absolute, it becomes thereby relative also.

As pointed out already on several occasions, it is the conception of something as an opposite which is the cause of misunderstanding. The relative does not stand opposed to the absolute, because the absolute is a pure fiction, the great delusion. The mere idea brings it in relationship to thought, whereby it would cease to be absolute, as knowledge is a relationship between the knower and his thought. The dividing line between the thinker and his thought between subject and object, however, is entirely imaginary, though it may have had its use in the development of speculative thought.

Sensations are analysed as having two poles, the subject and the object, though it is admitted that both are fictitious, as there can be no subject, a thinker, without an object, his thought. It is the thought that makes the thinker. The reality then is only the actuality which makes the thought into a thinker. Having perceived this actuality as reality, the two imaginary poles can be dropped. As long as subject and object are considered as cause and effect of this activity, there is an agency apart from the act, which would be the admission of a possible agent without the act, an obvious contradiction, which has been thought out to provide permanency to the impermanent, a substance to the phenomena, a motive for action to endure, to continue, to project an ideal into the real.

Truth does not exist as an entity, as a supreme being or God to be visualised in beatific ecstasy. That is a perversion of the truth, based on the acquisitiveness of a deluded "self". Similarly, there is the usual misunderstanding of the concept of reality. Certainly, if truth is anything it must be real. It is in the realisation of the ultimate reality that is supposed to lie the deliverance from all delusion, a reality sought by many as some super-natural existence, an inner contradiction in subjective and objective relationship, a fiction of a soul, of a thing-in-itself.

Reality as an entity has thus to be abandoned as an impos-

sibility. Reality as a relationship has equally been proved to be fallacious, as depending on false terms. Thus, the only reality is that stream of proceeding conditions and reactions, of sequences and co-activities, which is neither an entity or identity in itself, nor a relation between entities. It is not a meeting place of subject and object, but the flux of action which in its own movement produces the friction of opposition, resulting in the delusive distinction of “self” and “others” of subject and object, of substance and phenomena, of a material body and a spiritual soul. Concepts are not pictures of actuality, but they are actuality themselves; they form and constitute the process of reality. It is in them that the process proceeds. And it is the recognition of this process which constitutes truth.

Truth is found everywhere, not *in* everything; but everything is truth. Concepts about things, however, have given them a colouring which is delusive. Hence, to discover the truth, one has to uncover and divest nature of all one’s subjective ideology which is vain speculation. Truth is the understanding of things as they are in themselves. But that seems impossible! For the very fact of knowing makes them an object of knowledge; and that is not what they are in themselves, but what they are to the knower. Neither is it possible in the ultimate sense to stand apart from things and from life to obtain an abstract idea. An artist may thus try to get at the “soul” of things, but what he is doing, actually is nothing but giving his own reverberations and reactions to the actions of life. The more he stands apart from things as events, the less contact he has with their true nature. It is absurd to say that by withdrawing from life the artist sees the idea, which he then embodies, bodies forth, in some form of art. For, the idea thus conceived will be entirely subjective and hence not correspond to the truth. That is the reason why art is artificial, i.e. not natural and not true. Only he will be a good artist who loves beauty more than truth.

Love of truth implies an unreserved sincerity in actions, words and thoughts. Truthful actions are not those actions which thrust

themselves ahead only because they are expedient. When people believe in the moral worth of actions performed with belief in the practical value of an ideal of moral perfection, that is, when people accept actions as good because they are imitations of an imaginary archetype of perfection, they do not act according to truth, though their actions may have good results, and were therefore expedient, skilful. Actions which are performed for the sake of obtaining merit, e.g. prayers, may produce the desired effect, and may for that reason be called good; but that does not make them true. Prayers offered to some deity merely strengthen one's reliance, when one imagines to be backed up by some supernatural force.

Truthful actions may fail in their results and yet be true. Thus, self-sacrifice in the exercise of one's duty naturally results in the subjective failure and death of the individual, though the action was one of great sincerity and truth. Truth is therefore not to be measured by its outward success. It has its own intrinsic value. And as it is the victory over error and delusion, it will only be found in the individual; for, delusion is only possible in the individual through his misapprehension in his way of life.

Truthfulness in relation to others will necessarily be proportioned to the degree of truth in oneself. This relationship of one to another is called duty. But, when people speak of duty to oneself, does that imply a relationship of oneself to oneself? That is clearly absurd. Duty, therefore, is not based on relationship. And this same applies, of course, to right. Duty is a moral fiction and right is a legal fiction. When there is full understanding, a right action will be performed spontaneously, and not out of a sense of duty. When the truth of the real nature of the process of life has been comprehended, no thought of right will arise, just as feet and eyes will never question the right of place of other organs in the body. The thought of individuality can arise only in a selfish mind in a heart which is not sincerely tuned in to the good of the whole.

Sincerity in words does not always involve speech which is

agreeable and pleasing. Very frequently, truth is as hard to bear as an operation. But it must not be overlooked that it is not the truth which is hard; but the person receiving it experiences hardness, owing to his own sensitivity. Thus, here again a difference is observed between the truth as given and the truth as received. A lie has neither, for there is not only the material untruth, but also the intention to deceive. Very many words are mere symbols of convention, and they will convey, therefore, but little of the truth. Then, in their incompleteness they become a hindrance to, rather than a vehicle of truth.

What is needed most of all is sincerity of thought. Thought has to be true to itself. It has to dissociate itself from past experiences, to be independent from the thoughts of others, to be blind to and unconditioned by an advantageous future. A heart which is true cannot worship personalities, for they can mostly be reflections of the truth. It cannot be a follower of others. For, if the truth is in oneself, the following of others would be a betrayal of the truth. Dogmas, therefore, and institutions have nothing to do with the truth. To stand apart from those institutions and be true to oneself requires great courage. For, though labels have no value, yet it is the label only which is seen from the outside. To be without label and without distinction, to be simply nobody, and in sincerity of thought to follow no one but the dictates of one's own consciousness (sometimes called conscience!) that is to live according to the truth.

That is the truth which kills all delusion, the truth which is beautiful only in its nakedness, which is comfortless, which offers no security. That will be a new creation, a new vision from the peak of the mountain, reaching over the clouds. But to obtain such vision, much has to be left behind, for all petty acquisitiveness would only hinder in the climb. Truth has nothing to do with comfort or discomfort, with wealth or poverty, with joy or sorrow. Truth is understanding, and that alone gives fulfilment in life, where all opposites are mere negations of life.

It is thus the illuminating truth, which leads at once into

the fullness of living, which is blissful in its completeness and unifying action.

The Unifying Life

Stabilisation—Determination

When truth has illumined the mind with regard to the real nature of the process of life, the attitude towards life will have completely changed thereby. Once truth has been attained, striving finds no further scope. And therefore, the process of thinking will have become stabilised.

The first impression received from the word “stabilisation” is one of fixity. But, if this would convey the meaning of standardisation, it is very far from the mark. For, the beginning of a blissful life, resulting from the realisation of truth of the process of life, is far from stagnancy. The stabilisation mentioned in this connection is a complete assurance of truth, a total fading of all doubt, and hence a cessation of all further striving. But, even though the current may have taken a determined course, it does not thereby cease to be a process.

The difference is that formerly there was the possibility of alternatives, the delusion of opposites, reflected against a background of human experience. Now, truth has shed a new light on that background, which thereby dissolves into the thin air of reactions to convention, tradition, religion, fear and craving. With the disappearance of that background of “self”, alternatives and oppositions have vanished also, and hence the process has become stabilised. This stabilisation process, therefore, has neither crystallised into a being or soul, nor dissolved itself into

nothing. It is the pure process of becoming, of actuality. It is the only position (*tḥāna*) to view the reality of life.

Stabilisation is not a question of controlling or repressing, but of understanding the false views, which have created the different opposites, the fears and cravings which constantly threaten to upset the balance, the equilibrium of one's mental life. Controls can only lead to standards; but a standardised life is far from a stabilised life. A standard is as a mould, in which all opposition is suppressed, but no conflict solved. Thus, controls are destructive to truth. But, when one has fully realised one's limitations and their causes, then one does not try to control those shortcomings; but in removing the overweight laid on the scales by wrong valuation, the balance of harmony will be restored, and stability of living attained.

Stability means the purity of action without the agitation of a purpose, without the worry of a motive, without the fear of failure, without the desire of success, without the wish to escape, without the longing to attain. It is simplicity in living without being thrown off one's balance, without being attracted or repulsed this way or that. It is a purity of thought from which even the idea of purification has been washed off.

This determination is not the following of a plan with set purpose, but the holding on to what is, seen as truth. In a world of unreality it is truth alone which can give peace and true happiness in a stable mind. Stabilisation, therefore, does not mean the attainment of a fixed position, but the finding of one's proper place within the process of constant change. This is not some absurd suggestion of a reconciliation between the incompatibles of change and permanence, such as contained in the idealistic claim of "identity in difference", "unity in diversity", but the complete denial of anything except becoming in the concept of existence. Within that process of becoming there is not an identity of being; but, the continuation of the process is the only individuality discernible. The complete realisation of this individuality as a process of action and reaction is the beginning of stabilisation.

For, without this understanding there will be only reaction to other processes, i.e. the passive movement of a mechanism set in working by an external agency. It is this reaction without understanding which keeps the movement going on in fear and craving, in striving and escaping, in controlling and repressing, in the hope of attaining a fixed destiny of everlasting security.

But, fixity is a very relative concept, for it refers to a definite position in time and space, in which everything else seems to move. It is, therefore, a kind of resistance in which everything else, compared with "self", seems to flow along. Thus, there appears fixity as an opposition to the flow of life, a fixity of thought which is nothing but the isolation of egotism. But, that opposing position, born of egotistic resistance, is a craving for security, a fear to step into the current, a fear to lose one's "self". That very fear and craving prove the instability of that chosen pedestal. The coming down from that base to the natural level gives rather stability even in the process of change. For, when there is no opposition against the flow, there will be no friction, no relative movement, and hence no opposition in isolation.

It is indeed in unification that perfect stability can be attained. But to look for unification anywhere is the setting up of duality. Even if the two scales of a balance are equally weighted, they may be in equilibrium, but there will be no stability, as the slightest increase or decrease of weight in one of the scales will upset the balance. The balancing of opposites, as it is being done in politics, has always led to war, sooner or later. And no peace-treaty has ever been able to restore the balance, unless the opposing parties were fused.

Stabilisation, which is unification, is therefore more than balancing, which involves opposition. It is that factor of unification which has given to life its stability, notwithstanding all the struggle for survival. Survival was attained finally not by extermination, which refers only to a species but not to life itself, but by assimilation of inorganic matter into the organs. It is that process of unification, which is the constant process of life, of

living. It is in the organs that inorganic matter comes to life. And that is truly creative action. Thus, it is in “mind” that rebirth takes place and thus preserves the stability of the sum-total of matter and energy, on the physical as well as in the intellectual plane.

When speaking of “mind” in this connection outside the intellectual plane, we should not be understood to advocate a soul-theory or conscious activity in inorganic matter. Mental activity is not always conscious. Even sensitivity (*vedanā*), reflex actions (*saññā*) and subconscious tendencies (*saṅkhāra*) form parts of the mental process (*nāma*), long before conscious awareness (*viññāṇa*) completes the process. In an undeveloped form (*paritta*) it will never attain completion intellectually. And because of its incompleteness it will roll on seeking its fulfilment. But in awareness of this process lies its completion and solution. As, however, all consciousness is not full awareness, mere intellectual grasping cannot solve the problem, but can only deepen it by emotional resistance. Only when intelligence and emotion are united in this process, all conflict will cease. It is through lack of understanding that the heart gropes in the dark for satisfaction; for stability, for security.

Stabilisation answers once and forever the question of the meaning of human *progress*. In human progress is seen by some a striving to the goal of the greatest happiness for the greatest number. Others, with a more egoistic outlook, explain progress as the increase of power over the environment. Both views see progress only in the advance of the individual. They forget that the individual is only the expression of society and environment. There is no individual apart from the environment. As progress is a relative term which has only meaning in particular events relative to other events, progress cannot be conceived of the whole. But no particular event stands isolated, no individual is a separate entity which can progress by itself. And thus, the whole concept of human progress is purely fictitious.

The individual is not real when considered only as such. For, he is a particular expression of the social, economic, educational

and religious environment which produced him. Certainly, at birth he not only received the impressions of the new environment, but he brought along the inheritance of the past in the form of tendencies, likes and dislikes. But as those tendencies were shaped in contacts of earlier lives, we may say in truth that there is nothing in man which is not directly or indirectly influenced by environment. In that environment the individual is not standing by himself, but forms a part of that process. And as part of the process he influences the whole, as well as he is influenced by the whole. There is no individual apart from the entire process, and there is no process apart from those individual expressions. For an individual trying to obtain power over the environment is to become subject to a grave hallucination, as no man can make himself free from the environment by trying to overcome it. But, the limiting influences of the environment will disappear as soon as the individual finds his position within and as part of the environment, apart from which there is mere delusion.

Thus, there is stability only within the process; and there alone is the possibility of realising that stability in which there is no transcending power of any individual, in which the individual problem is universal, and the world-problem is everybody's own. In this understanding, all striving for individual happiness becomes meaningless. Only when the individual tries to find his happiness in the happiness of all, only then can there be a stable society, free from strife and war. All striving to relieve individual distress is very temporary and can never solve a problem fully, as long as only the symptoms are treated and not the cause of the disease.

The weaknesses which make life so unstable can be summed up thus: first, the mistake of trying to find stability in any kind of system of authority; and second, the extraordinary importance attached to individuality.

The first weakness: a system of morality has produced hypocrisy, for men were forced to make a distinction between their inner and their outer lives. The inner life of the spirit, as they

called it, according to the authoritarian standard of morality, became incompatible with the development of life in other spheres. Hence a separation between Church and State became necessary, reflecting also in one's private life. Religion and morality became standardised and were left behind, while man had to pretend to keep up those moral standards, which his outer life could not put into practice. Though man has developed intellectually and has greatly increased his knowledge, still he pretends to believe in supernatural teachings with the blind faith of a child. It is this very standardisation of morality and of religious thinking, which produced this unbalanced state in the mind of modern man, who fails to reconcile the teachings of Sunday with his practical life from Monday to Saturday.

The second weakness: the extraordinary importance attached to individuality has upset the balance economically by free trade, unrestricted competition and unscrupulous exploitation. It has upset the balance spiritually by focussing the attention on personal salvation and the doctrine of an individual soul. Thereby a distinction was created between self and others, a distinction which naturally developed into opposition and conflict. A clear example of how a conflict cannot be solved by developing an opposing tendency, was offered by contemporary history, when Fascism and Nazism tried to revolt against an admittedly grossly individualistic social order by substituting for it a racial theory, which dispensed with the individual, it is true, but which created instead the false mysticism of purity of race.

It is thus the absolute authority of religion and the worship of the individual, which, instead of being the foundations of progressive life, have in reality destroyed all stability by the opposition they created.

Morality then should be free from its bonds, which, however, is not the same as the libertinism of a permissive society. Morality should be a spontaneous action in the understanding of the need of the present moment. And the individual should be understood as an aspect of the process of life, from which he cannot be

isolated. If these two “principles” would take the place of old-fashioned faith and individualism, life itself would be a steady and peaceful flow without conflict, in a harmony of truth and bliss.

Universal Love—Loving Kindness

Love is like truth. It is a passion and it is life. And as truth makes no distinction, but comprehends the whole, so true love is not partial but universal. That which is partial is self-love, is sentimentality, egotism, attachment and craving and clinging. But love which is universal cannot know any distinction, because it does not exclude anything.

This love is not the love of a philanthropist, not the love of men, but of man; not of living things, but of life. Hence, it cannot be bound by rules. It does not learn from imitation, but is always original, always new and always fresh as a flame. It is the solution of all problems, the answer to all questions, the key to all doubts. But, it is paradox, apparently absurd because it knows no reason. Because it unites all opposites in its self-contradiction. But it is not uniting in an ego-centric way, just because it knows no “ego” in its universality.

No wonder, therefore, that egotistic natures will consider this kind of love as eccentric, for it does not recognise any law or rule. There is no plan or purpose in love which cannot select because it chooses all. In such love there will a bewildering originality, which scientific consistency will easily take for madness. Love knows no respect, for it sees no difference. It will do the most unexpected, because it goes beyond reason. It cannot calculate, because it takes all; it cannot save, because it consumes all; it cannot desire, because it possesses all; it cannot renounce, because it has given all.

And yet, it is love alone that can renounce, or rather that has renounced; for, until there remains nothing behind, love

is not complete. Love is the complete surrender of "self", and thereby it makes light all that was heavy. It bears evenly and gladly all suffering; it perseveres under all failures; it is free from all entanglements, estranged from all affections, un-elated in prosperity, not downhearted in adversity. It will attempt even the impossible ...and succeed.

There is in love no confusion, even if it does not reason; no exhaustion when tired and tried; no decrease when being consumed. Love enlarges the heart, till all individuality is dissolved and has spent itself in its own fire. That love is active and creative, because it contains nothing of "self". It is sincere, because it has burst forth from truth. It cannot think of suffering, for sorrow belongs to the illusion of self, and love therefore is bliss supreme.

Opposition cannot prevent love, for opposition is incomprehensible to universal love. It has no need for consolation or support, for it can lose nothing in its all-embracing disposition. It is not the rapture of ecstatic joy, which passes by and leaves a void, but, as a living love, it pervades all actions at all times.

War, conflict, struggle, competition, etc. which seem to obstruct love, do not do so in reality, as they are merely the symptoms, the outward manifestations of a mental disposition, which in selfish isolation is not grown out into universal love. Hence, it will be impossible to regulate competition by law or to prevent war by international legislation. The different organisations which man has instituted are only proofs of his tendency of responsibility. The individual responsibility put on the whole group, though each one has been conducing to the general state of antagonism by his own individual isolation and opposition, by his particular attachments and preferences, in other words, by his lack of universal love. Organisations may contribute to the regulation of social life, but as long as the individual tendency of isolating selfishness remains unchanged, outward methods of control can have only a very temporary effect without improving the conditions of life essentially; for, control inspires fear but not love.

There can be no love, as long as there is fear. For, fear arises

from attachment, which is always attachment to the particular. That means choice and preference. But, preference means conversion towards one and aversion from another. Such love of attachment and preference is therefore not truly universal love, but selfish selection. It is the love of the unessential, which strengthens one's individualism and blocks the road to the essential, to living. For, the unessential is limited and therefore it prevents the understanding of the whole, whereby it becomes a source of delusion. Love of the unessential gives a disproportionate value to the simple needs of life, which do not require for their satisfaction the intensity of love, as man's natural instinct sees to their fulfilment.

The isolation of particular love has erected self-protecting walls which imprison the mind, even though they are given the beautiful names of virtue, free will, independence. In reality they are ambitions, egotistic tendencies, self-love, fear and craving, expressions of a deluded mind, ignorance of the process of life. Frequently, love is little more than crude self-interest craving for security which wants to establish itself through power. To hide these ugly motives, a sense of responsibility was invented, which would allow a domineering character to consider itself protecting the weaker ones, thereby increasing its own influence. Thus, although love is often described as sacrificing, it is more the other party who is sacrificed than self. For, love which is particular is exacting and not accommodating. Love is idealistic, romantic, but not realistic, as long as it is self-centred. Particular love has for object personal happiness. In the pursuit of that object ambition will lead to exploitation; and thus, particular love will lead finally to hate.

As long as love is emotional, it cannot be constant, it cannot be universal, it cannot be love in the true sense. For, emotions form only a part of life, the mechanical part, so to say; for, emotions are reactions which develop into uncontrolled passions, if they are not understood intelligently. One needs to be strengthened by comfort and consolation in body and mind, because one is weak

in love and hence imperfect in virtue. Because of the inordinate affections of the heart, evil passions arise, which are based on selfishness and hence engender more hate than love.

Emotions are the expressions of a psychological want. Physical needs have to be fulfilled and satisfied to keep the physical body alive. Food, shelter, clothing are some of the objects of those primitive instincts. Similarly, the deluded mind has instincts which ask for satisfaction to maintain the delusion. Those instincts are not of need, but of greed in acquisitiveness and self-protective love. Acquisitiveness is the characteristic tendency of craving, lust, greed, desire, through which the need of the body has become greed of the mind. Self-protective love is the very opposite of universal love, for its only object is "self". All others are loved only in so far as they are contributing to the greater happiness of "self". This self-love is thus really aversion from others; it is ill-will, hate, envy, jealousy.

Can there be love without passion? There are people who think that once the passion is dead, the remaining sentiment is nothing but kindness or communion of taste and interest. That may be the remainder of habit, but not of love. It shows that their opinion of love is entirely based on selfish possessiveness. Their love is desire. And when their desire fails to be satisfied, their love is gone. Such love is the natural consequence of the sexual instinct, but it is not a creative action, even if it results in procreation. Such love is destructive as hunger which out of love for food destroys that which supports it. To speak here of assimilation, transformation, sublimation, is only to circumvent the real issue. It is assimilation for the betterment of "self". Unless love has conquered passion, it is not love but thrives on satisfaction. Passion is destructive, but love is creative, if it has no thought for "self".

Earlier we said that love is a passion; and now we say that love must conquer passion. Such is indeed the nature of a paradox. It is only in love, growing out into a universal passion, that the passions of lust and lasciviousness can cease. And in the cessation

of those destructive passions is found the beginning of creative love, which does not wish for personal happiness. It is not the spirit of acquisition, for in love that embraces all there is nothing to be obtained by acquisition or accumulation.

Universal love is not a love of nature. It is not the poetical sentimentality of the peace of the forest, of the silver moonlight. That is love for the sake of the soothing effect on the nerves; but it is also a subjective feeling, a reactive sentiment, based on self-love and attachment. Universal love is detached, because it does not love an object it is love. That love is not self-seeking, because it is not ego-centric. It is not envious, it is not ambitious, it has no desires. It does not rejoice in evil, because it purifies all. It never fails, because it is fulfilment. It embraces all, because it is one and undivided.

When life is so full of love, it is not hard to do without human consolation, for that kind of comfort is rather a distraction than a help. Sometimes worldly pleasures are scorned, so as to reach for spiritual consolation. But, perfect love cannot be content with that either. It must embrace all, or it is not worthy of the name of love. Even when devotion is absent as a feeling, it will be all the purer devotion as a complete surrender and outpouring. Only in losing all, can all be saved. Then, love is the fulfilment of all perfections.

Without love, the gift even of "self" is that of an empty vessel. Without love, the practice of virtue is the controlling of a machine. Without love, renunciation is cold asceticism. Without love, there is no understanding but only the knowledge of science. Without love, all energy is egotistic self-love. Without love, endurance is powerless and full of craving. Without love, sincerity is but hypocrisy. Without love, determination is fickle and dispersed. Without love, even equanimity is but stoic indifference.

Universal love will only be possible when all emotional feelings, devotional aspirations, subconscious tendencies and purposeful intentions are perfectly coordinated by intelligent awareness. It is this intelligence in supervision which calms the emo-

tions and cools the passions. It is the absence of this awareness which causes love to direct itself to individuals only. It is fear of frustration, which sows in love the seed of hate. Fear can never be covered up by love. And, as the whole structure of society is built upon fear, there is no place in it for love. What the world calls love is but self-love.

The sex-problem can arise only in love of the particular, for then love has been replaced by sensation. The sex-problem is not a reality but a delusion, for it is based on a distinction which is caused by a sensation of incompleteness in one's self. It is that sensation which makes one search for security, and which branches out further in the different layers of life, social, physical, intellectual, spiritual, political, cultural. This feeling of insufficiency is conditioned by an inner discontentment with the surroundings of daily life. But, this discontent finds its origin not in the surroundings but in a lack of one's understanding thereof. Then sensations grow and stretch their feelers to find something to fill some inner emptiness.

When, however, genuine love of a unifying and understanding nature does not unite with "self", but rather dissolves all delusions about "self", then it becomes an omnipresent experience, when all sensations of incompleteness make place for the reality of fulfilment, in which life as a whole can be understood in its completeness. Then, love is not dependent on sexual satisfaction, but is truly universal without selection, without exception, without separation, in the fullness and unity of living. When such love has become the basis of one's entire being, it becomes impossible to speak of affection, of love, in any particular direction. Then, love will be in every action, in every thought, even when surrounded by indifference. In the fullness of love there is no indifference, no preference, no motive, no effort in concentration, but the natural awareness that all distinction is a delusion.

Blissful Life—Equanimity

Conflict should not merely be felt, but it should be understood as a part of the process of life, even if it is only a delusion. It is in the understanding of this misunderstanding that conflict completely disappears. The process of life is constantly making itself, here with success, there with failure, growing towards its own perfection and fulfilment. Such growth is naturally not always an even flow, as obstacles have to be overcome, fetters broken, hindrances removed, tendencies straightened and ignorance enlightened. Thus, there is bound to be plenty of disharmony. The misunderstanding of this disharmony will be felt as sorrow. But in understanding, this disharmony will become a source of joy, which, of course, is entirely mental, as it does not bring any sense-satisfaction with it. But that bliss can be so great, that even physical pain is joyfully endured and accepted; for that too plays a part in the purification of the mind in leading it nearer to enlightenment by truth.

Equanimity is not an ecstatic bliss of suspended awe, but a blissful life where everything is perfectly balanced. The worldling's view of the World is unbalanced. It is the worldling's mind, which is steeped in ignorance and craving, which is unhinged.

Equanimity is possible when insight is full-grown and thus extended to everything experienced. Only when there is nothing left out, can there be perfect even-mindedness which makes of life a real ecstasy. When virtue has not grown into perfection, when giving and renunciation have not been complete, the world will naturally be seen from the subjective viewpoint. But in perfect insight and stabilisation the mental outlook is changed. There is no subjective, no objective viewpoint any more. There is no viewpoint at all, for in the stream of life there is nothing but the process, while any viewpoint would but obstruct that stream. Then the world does not come into us, not on to us; then there is no escape from the world possible, nor meeting its

demands, because all disposition will have disappeared. We do not come nearer to the goal, but the goal seems to have broadened itself constantly as a river overflowing its banks, till finally the whole country is inundated and neither land nor river can be distinguished. Thus, this going forth is not leading into a void, but merely breaks the bonds of isolation. It is not light perceiving darkness, for wherever it shines there it brings its light.

Equanimity is not just a well-balanced condition, containing two opposites keeping them in restraint when they debar one another from functioning, being of equal strength and importance. That would be a balance which is a temporary suspension of power with opposing tendencies, which can only produce fear of a possible upset.

To attain to a life of perfect harmony, it is not enough to be occupied with the affairs and problems of family-life and society. It is over-occupation with those affairs which prevent a true outlook on life. Many will object that self-awareness leads to isolation and hence to selfishness. This is not so; for no object, no person, no action, is ever in isolation. To be is to become, to change, which can only take place in relationship. In the absolute there is no change; in the perfect there is no proceeding; in the eternal there is no becoming. It is thus in "self" that family affairs and society problems are reflected; it is in self-awareness that they can be solved. It is in "self" that those relations became entangled, and thus in the understanding of this "self"-delusion the problem will become disentangled.

Equanimity is far removed from indifference which is a stoic austerity, ignoring both pleasure and pain. Instead of ignoring, which is an attempt at escaping the conflict, equanimity is fully aware of the causes which place the deluded mind as an ego-entity in opposition to an imagined objective world. It is just in this awareness and understanding that the peace of even-mindedness can be maintained; for, in this awareness is comprehension. Not by warding off all influences but by grasping them without clinging, i.e. grasping by the mind in understanding to find out their

true meaning, origin and value, can their problem be brought to a solution; but not by cultivation.

Some people, for whom everything goes smoothly in life, feel a certain complacency which they mistake for equanimity, while in reality it is only the lack of opportunity which prevents their evil tendencies from showing themselves. Others who have experienced the difficulty of preserving their balance under all circumstances, say that equanimity cannot be cultivated in a day. Not in a day, true! Neither in a hundred years, or even lives. For, equanimity is not to be cultivated at all.

Cultivation is the purposeful setting out to obtain some definite result. We feel anger arising under certain provocation. In that state of anger we forget ourselves; and later, when we think the matter over, we realise what a poor figure we made, what a bad impression we gave. The result is that we become very angry with our anger. This last mental state is a reaction. In this resentment there is no pure action, for it is the experience that we did not live up to the expected standard. Then, from this reactionary resentment grows a desire to behave more self-controlled. Accordingly, strong resolutions are made, only to be broken at the very next opportunity.

Why do we fail to live up to our resolutions? That is the all-important question. Why can we not be good, when we want to be good? Because we make our resolutions means of escaping from the humiliating position in which our failures place us. Instead of finding out the cause of our anger, we create new anger, because we were angry. Thus we declare war on our vices which can never lead to peace.

To obtain real peace we must put the question: Why are we angry? It may be that some physical disposition or indisposition is the cause of this mental reaction. The humours in the body are known to have great influence on the way in which the unconscious differentiations make up their likes and dislikes. It may be that an undeserved humiliation, or even the leakage of a well-guarded secret weakness exposes our private lives in a

new light, with the risk of the disapproval of public opinion. It may be that our social position is threatened through financial losses. Without knowing fully the reasons for our anger, and only trying to overcome our angry mood by making resolutions of not becoming angry, will clearly never solve the problem. But by the intelligent awareness of the causes it will be realised that there is no reasonable connection and proportion between our stomach and our mood, and that a mental upset cannot cure a financial loss. And yet it is the attitude to control one's anger which is taken as the characteristic of a cultured man. Culture and control, however, have nothing in common with the perfection of virtue.

Culture is mostly a very strange phenomenon. It is the imposition of the will of a small minority upon a large majority. That the majority resists and dislikes to be imposed upon, makes no difference, as long as the minority has the means of control, coercion and suppression. Man will suppress anything which he can be made to believe anti-social, because he feels instinctively that that concerns his very existence. But who is deciding the sociality or otherwise of an action?

The need for the preservation of life forms, of course, a very influential factor, that is human instinct. For the sake of obtaining that safe-guard, man realises, that he has to make some small sacrifices, infringing on his own liberty. And thus the law is shaped through which a few rule the masses according to the imagined needs of the time. This culture is based on fear, the law of which applies all the more to demands which are psychological, demands in the name of public opinion and religion.

Culture and civilisation, therefore, cannot produce the equanimity which is bliss, just because it is without fear. Culture may balance external actions, but equanimity prevents opposition in thought. In this spirit of equanimity there will be complete disinterestedness of purpose, because every action will simply be performed for its own deserves. Life becomes then such a simple process that others who do not have the same simplicity of balance, will not be able to understand. Life, as it is being lived in

society with all its restrictions and conventions, is so unnatural, so complicated and so purposeful, that guileless action and a life free from duplicity appear funny, if not idiotic.

There are many very confused ideas about the nature of emancipation. The most common is an expectation of transforming happiness, whereby the individual "self" becomes absorbed into the absolute. Even when the absolute is not crudely grasped as a personal deity, it remains always a difficult point to understand, how it can be happiness to lose one's individuality in an impersonal vagueness, called the infinite "Being, Intelligence and Bliss". People want to taste the sweetness of life; they cannot understand what it is to be the sweetness of life. But, tasting is an expression of egoism, till the last trace of "self" has been shed. People want life as an object, they want to enjoy life, but they do not want to live truly. They want the actuality, but not the reality. They want joy, but not happiness. They want the ideal, but not the real. They want consolation and the satisfaction of desire, but not the freedom from desire. And because all their actions are motivated by a desire to obtain, which is acquisitiveness, or to attain, which is self-projection, not a single one of those actions is pure and simple and true, not a single one is creative, which is only in the present.

For them impermanence is sorrow, because they can only look towards the future. But, to him who lives fully in the present, impermanence is not frightening. Even if it be true that the fragrance and the beauty of flowers plucked in the morning have faded in the evening. It is also true that they were fragrant and beautiful in the morning. He who at morn looks toward the evening will meet only with disappointment because he overlooked the joy of life, when it was with him. If in foolishness one asks that joy of life to last, there is bound to be sorrow. But if this fleeting joy is understood as a part of the process of life, just as anything else, it will be seen that it can be enjoyed afresh at every moment.

Then impermanence is not sorrowful, but leads to equanimity

and blissful peace. It is true, joys are fleeting, but so are sorrows, so are we, so is life. And at every turn there springs up a new life with all the freshness of a new birth. If one looks at it without the desire of acquisitiveness.

Equanimity is the outcome of a perfectly harmonious life. It is not enough to try to be even-minded, for emotions and actions should be in harmony as well as thoughts. Actions will be in harmony with thought, if thought itself is not a constant looking-forward. When thought is merely searching for a reward, seeking for there is a tendency to harmonise thought with the result, thereby projecting thought with desire into a future, whereby action in the present with understanding becomes impossible. But, when there is full awareness of the problem of sensation, as it arises this very instant, then there will be spontaneous action, creative thinking, which will be in perfect harmony with the need of the moment.

That is the harmony, which brings peace to the mind, silence to thought, balance to sensation, spontaneity to action, bliss to life, and Buddhahood to a Bodhisatta.

About the Author

Henri van Zeyst was born in Utrecht, the Netherlands, in 1905. Educated throughout in Catholic schools and colleges, he spent his final years of studies in philosophy and theology and the first year of his priestly ordination in an Italian monastery near Florence. At the age of 31 he was sent to London to be in charge of a new foundation of his Order, where he was also teaching Dogmatic Theology to the scholastics of Christus Rex Priory in North London. An intensive course of comparative religion brought him in contact with Buddhism. Within a year of his coming to Sri Lanka he was ordained a Buddhist monk there in 1938 under the name of Bhikkhu Dhammapāla. From 1956 to 1968 he worked at the Encyclopaedia of Buddhism at the University of Ceylon in Peradeniya of which he was in the final years of that period the Senior Assistant Editor and Administrative Officer. During the last stages of his life he was residing in a meditation centre at Nilambe, Kandy, giving instructions to those who came to him for guidance on meditation.

He died on September 15th in 1988.