



Occultism

by

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Occultism

Series I

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The reason of the result of our every affair may be found by studying the nature of the source from which it has sprung, its nature according to our view and according to the view of another, and then the result.

Man is apt to think that the bad luck he has or the good gain he is receiving is the result of a past incarnation or a cruelty or kindness on the part of another, as the case may be.

The seer analyzes his own affair and sees as a scientist would from what elements a certain result has been produced. By giving thought constantly to one's thought, speech and action, one becomes the knower of one's affairs, while the average man, although he knows his affairs and sees their result, yet is—according to the occult point of view—blind.

The Nature of the Source

The explanation of the result of the affairs of others may be found by studying the nature of the source from which they have sprung, and their nature according to our view and the view of another and the result.

When we see a person doing bad or good, right or wrong we must not at once take it as such from our point of view, for according to the view of the other that which we consider good may be bad and that which we think right may be wrong. Therefore the Sufi is not supposed to readily form an opinion about the affairs of anybody, however good or bad, right or wrong they may appear.

He looks at it with his own point of view and at the same time with the point of view of another, thus justifying another by the knowledge of his view, however different it may be from his own, for the view of everybody cannot be the same, since the evolution of each being is different.

Man is apt to pity a person in his trouble and to envy him in his joy, but many times he does not know the fact that this person's trouble is preparing a greater joy for him, and the joy of another is leading him, perhaps, to everlasting sorrow.

Another fact is that the trouble of one person may be quite right in the view of the Supreme Will, and the joy of the other may be quite right also, since he deserved it. Perhaps we may not see the reason what makes one deserve the suffering and what justifies another to have joy in life. Our pity for one and our envy for another blinds us more at every example.

The occult view, therefore, would be to keep away the thought of our personal self when considering the affairs of others and their results. This allows the intelligence from within to throw its full light upon the subject; every affair begins to appear clear, and the sight of the seer becomes keen.

The Inner Reason for the Result of Our Own Affairs

We rejoice over the successful issue of our own affairs and grieve over their unsuccessful result, and especially in such cases where a success follows a bad deed and an unsuccessful result may come out of a good deed. This is the only puzzle which causes man's foot to slip from the right line of thought, and he is attracted to evil. If this puzzle does not exist, man's soul, which is light itself and seeks for light and loves light, would never have gone astray, and every soul on earth would have been a saint.

When walking, if a man knocks against a person, he is apt to blame the other, in both cases whether it was his fault or the fault of the other man. The secret is that the little hurt causes him to blame someone, and whoever appears to him to be the cause he blames, even before enquiring into the matter as to whose was the fault.

Such generally is the nature of all our affairs in which we fail; we at once lay the blame on someone in our immediate vicinity. On the receipt of a money order we thank the deliverer before the sender. In both cases man loses sight of the inner cause of the failure. We think, "Perhaps the evil which brought success was not evil, although the foolish call it so. It brought success, how could such a result be born of evil?"

And the same thought comes to man on having a failure after having done a good deed. He thinks that his good deed should have brought him success, and he would rather that which people call evil.

But the secret of this needs an occult view, and insight into one's affairs. If man would be just for one moment and weigh his action, whether good or bad, and compare every result of any of his actions in the past with the present result, his memory, with the light of truth and justice, would surely disclose the secret in time, and he would be able to see in every result of his affairs the source as clearly as his reflection in the mirror.

The Inner Reason for the Result of the Affairs of Others

When we see someone whom we consider unworthy prospering, having good luck in life, we think, "Why should he have such a result for his apparently bad actions if there is any justice in the world?" When we think of a good person, or of someone we love being ill or experiencing bad luck, we are apt to say, "Why should God, if He has any justice, give the man such a punishment, who does not for a moment deserve it?"

If man but knew that the bringers of joy have always been the children of sorrow! It shows that the pains, miseries, and bad luck which seemed to be the wrath of God are not so in reality, but on the contrary bliss. Yet sometimes they are punishments; other times they are as a preparation for a certain purpose.

Sometimes great gifts cover severe punishments. It is said in the West, "Give him a long rope, and he will hang himself." In the East they say, "Snakes are hidden under treasures of gold." And yet it does not mean that every pleasant experience and good gift should necessarily be a punish-

ment. The secret is that sometimes there are direct rewards and direct punishments, reward under the cover of punishment and punishment under the cover of reward. Do not be misled therefore, by the success of someone or by the failure of somebody. We know not for what purpose is hidden behind it all.

Do not think that God punished when Christ was crucified; it was his tribute. So do not think that Pharaoh was rewarded if the crown was placed on his head for a moment. These passing joys and sorrows which we look upon as punishments and rewards and give such importance to them and look at them so seriously are but the glimpses of His mercy. It is only the proportion and the comparison which makes them seem as punishments and rewards.

The heart of the one who is rewarded may not be so happy as the reward makes one imagine, nor may the punishment of someone be so painful as it makes us believe. When we see this with the light of knowledge, then we are not like a tide which rises with the wave of the sea and prides itself on its rise, and falls with the wave and bemoans its own fall; but we, on the shore, see the waves rising and falling in the distance. Then to us it is revealed, and we begin to understand the inner reason of the rise and fall of all things.

For Seeing the Inner and Outer Result of Every Affair

The outlook that a Sufi takes is quite different from that of the average person. When the average man looks at things in their present condition, the Sufi perceives from the present condition its future.

There is a story told that people went to climb a mountain, and among them was a dervish. They reached the summit and saw with pleasure the view so beautifully spread out before their eyes but, to the surprise of the others, the dervish had tears in his eyes. When asked the cause, he said, "I am shedding tears seeing that someday none of these men and women whom we are looking at today will be found on the face of the earth."

Sometimes it happens that a Sufi meets with a miserable person, in a humble guise, and he sees that his misery is a preparation for that depth of misery from which he will find a lift to rise above it.

A Sufi may look on a disaster, a catastrophe, and would see a reconstruction of the future reflected in the realm of destruction. A Sufi, on seeing one reaching the limit of earthly glory, does not rejoice nor consider it great, seeing a fall awaiting him in the future.

In the obstinacy of a child, when the parents become impatient with him the Sufi sees, in that obstinacy, the growing power of will, which may have quite a different destiny for the child from that which the parents think in their impatience.

In the love of someone the Sufi may see poison hidden, which is love today, but will be hatred tomorrow; and in the hatred of someone he sees love, for a certain hatred has within it a hidden treasure of love. He foresees good coming out of good, good coming from bad and bad coming from bad. But on the horizon of his sight he sees one thing, the beginning and end of all affairs, the perfect love which he calls God, the most merciful and compassionate.

Impressions About Oneself

We can have an insight into our own life if only we watch our external self with its environments and surroundings, and what impression it makes upon our soul. For instance, the house we live in or the room we sleep in or the clothes we wear and the way we dress and act and speak and think, this all makes an impression upon our soul and brings about results accordingly. A sad appearance, surroundings or environment will produce sadness in us; cheerful surroundings or environment will produce cheerfulness in us.

The form and color of every impression acts upon us according to its nature. Our thoughts, speech and action, if pleasant to ourselves, will surely be pleasant to others; but if they are unpleasant to us, they will surely be unpleasant to others.

If in the morning we have the impression of success, all day we shall have success; if of failure, then in all things we shall have failure. If we are depressed when rising in the morning, all day the depression will last; if cheerful, throughout the day it will continue. So it is in the beginning of the day, month, year, period and life.

Impressions are of three kinds, one is what we see and are impressed by; next, what we think and are impressed by; third, what we feel and are impressed by. Truth lies in all the above-mentioned impressions; but the feeling is the most reliable, thought less and what we see least. If one thinks that, "By going out in this damp weather I shall be ill," he will surely be ill; and if a person feels sad and without reason when starting on a journey, he will certainly be sad throughout his journey.

If a person sees all things coming as he wants, surely his success is at hand. We are not only the picture of our impressions, but every impression is a seed sown on the soil of our life, and it will sooner or later spring up and bear its fruits.

The same applies to the effect of dreams and omens. The Sufi, therefore, sees into the life by studying his impressions and their natural outcome and makes every effort to fortify his soul so that no impression may take root in the soil of his soul unless he allows it to enter in his soul. This is called Vilayat, mastery over one's self.

Impressions About Another

The external form of every person who comes into our presence appears to our eyes, but his mind is reflected upon our mind. He may bring a sense of sweetness or bitterness, anger or friendship, whatever he bears in his mind, with speech or action, which is impressed on our mind, and according to the strength of that impression and according to the susceptibility of our mind we partake of it.

The impression can tell us of a person much more than his physiognomy, for physical life has more limitations than the mental life. Mentally we are impressed more fully of another person's condition than by the external signs which tell us about him.

Generally mankind allows impressions of another unintentionally, whether good or bad, but ignorance is a curse in both cases, in benefit and in loss. If we have a piece of land which we call our own and if anybody comes and sows seed in that soil, or poison and thorns, and unintentionally allowed all to take root in our soil, it would be a great pity. That is worse than not owning the land.

When we partake of other's impressions, giving them a place in our mind unintentionally, it is still worse than letting others sow their thorns on our soil. As our eyes are open to impressions, so our mind is open to them. We can perhaps cover the eyes with our eyelids, but there is nothing to cover the mind from impressions.

The mind which is let open to all impressions, how can it be a sacred temple of God? How can divine love or even human love take place where there is a crowd instead of privacy? Concentration is for this purpose, to possess that which man calls mind, not in claim but in reality, and to sow what man wishes to sow in it, and to keep away what he does not wish to grow in it.

The heart kept so pure and controlled becomes in time an observatory from which the heavens and earth both are observed clearly.

Impressions About One's Own Affairs

Our life in reality is a manuscript of impressions that we gather from the external and internal activities of ourselves. Each impression is a page therein. An action of righteousness done by us builds within us strength to carry out a thousand deeds of righteousness; an impression of weakness manifesting from our own character constantly produces weakness.

It is just as a little rent in the cloth will increase every day until the cloth is fully torn. So it is with weakness in life. The impression of success made externally was an action done and gone, but its impression is creative, it creates its life. The impression of failure likewise creates failure after failure, and there is no end to it until and unless the impression was washed away from the mind.

Our speech, thought and action have their effect for the moment, but it is the impression they leave behind that draws our fate; it is the impression they leave behind that draws our fate line.

How few understand this! God does not predestine our fate; it is this range of impressions that forms the line of our destiny in life. [text missing—Ed] ...is considered best for those who tread the spiritual path. If not, in the light of Truth there is no such thing as right and wrong or such a thing as good and evil, since all is illusion. It is right because in the manuscript of our impression it is written as right, and it is wrong for the same reason.

So it is with good or bad and rise and fall. Everybody is not able to overcome these distinctions of polarity. For him who has not overcome it is better to control his thought, speech and action, that the impressions made by them maybe satisfactory to his own ideal, otherwise he himself becomes the means of annoyance to himself.

Do all that you admire and appreciate others doing to you; speak so that one may be harmonious and sweet to you when spoken to you by others; think such thoughts that you may admire and

enjoy when they are of others. The thing is what we appreciate and enjoy in the character of others we should ourselves do, in order to be independent of others and to be self-sufficient in creating joy and satisfaction from our own thought, speech and action.

The Impression About the Affairs of Others

To the wise, apart from the mystical way, even in the realm of intelligence the conditions of others are manifest. First of all the action, speech, form and features of the person tell the wise so much about him, and every movement tells one about the cleverness and stupidity of another, but the Sufi generally reads man as clearly as a letter by sensing from the impression of the person reflected in himself.

The nature of reflection on one's heart is just like the reflection in the water. If the water is pure, the reflection is clear; if it is dirty, the reflection is dim; if the water is still, the reflection is distinct; and if the water is moving the reflection is indistinct.

So it is with man's heart. If the heart is pure from distinctions and differences of this illusionary world, the reflection is clear; if the heart is impure with falsehood, bitterness or deceit, the impression cannot become clear. At the same time, the heart may be pure but restless; it cannot have distinct reflection. Distinct reflection is to be found in the heart that is calm and powerful.

Do not depend upon man's looks and speech, not even on his actions, for man can make himself look much better than he is, can speak more wisely than he is, and can act like a saint, being a devil at the same time. The best thing is to take the impression of another person upon oneself and see in the mirror of one's own heart what he reflects. For man can put on the way of speech, the manner of deed and a good appearance, but cannot create out of himself an atmosphere different from what he is.

A great philosopher once in the East was tested by his teacher. The teacher, who had been separated from him for many years, came in a guise such that the pupil might not be able to recognize him. There were many people sitting to consult the Sheikh; among them the teacher sat, and went in his turn. The teacher had made himself look twenty years older than he was, and, dressed as a farmer, spoke with him in the same language, asking him for advice on a matter that any foolish person even might understand.

The pupil looked at him from head to foot, and sat and thought; and stood up from his seat and holding his hand, he took him away from the crowd and said, "Pray, O venerable man, who are you?" He said, "I am a farmer, sir." The pupil says; "No, I cannot believe it. Either you are my teacher or a spirit sent from above; for the impression that I get from you is contrary to your looks, movement and speech." The teacher was very glad at seeing the wisdom of his pupil, and they met and knew each other afterwards.

Keeness of Sight

The secret of understanding about the nature and future of our own affairs as well as those of others is in the keeness of sight when the mind becomes clear from the shadow of the thought of the self. As clear as it becomes, so clearly does it see inside things, all confusion being caused by the thought of the self.

Impression is the elementary aspect of inspiration. No soul, however sinful or stupid, is void of this. It is in the soul, but man usually does not see it. Man generally does not believe in his first thought, because the faculty of reason drives his mind away from the natural line, which can never be a wrong direction. Man's reason has always been the enemy of his inspiration. The inspiration and reason both fight until one has overpowered the other. Then man becomes either spiritual or without it altogether.

When you think, "Shall I do this or shall I do this?" our first impression about the intention is surely right, if only we can distinguish the first thought, which is very difficult. Many times we take the second thought as the first. That is where we fail.

It is the same way about another person. If someone asks, "Shall I be successful in my new endeavor?" "Is my friend a faithful person?" "Is the work that I am looking for meant for me?" In all these cases one's first thought must be consulted which will show you the real picture of the affair, with its result before you.

One day a pupil came to me and asked my advice on a matrimonial question. I saw the picture of the pupil's life as a record of many years. Today, proving my first thought, I hear from the pupil the same account that had been pictured and produced on my heart years before. This thought is new and surprising to the pupil, an old and natural one to me.

Many have prophesied on seeing a child, what it will become. The Prophet Mohammed was foretold by an Arab that he would be a saviour of humanity when very young. In many cases the picture of all that is going to happen comes to the kindled hearts as impressions from above.

Dreams

Dreams are the activity of mind which in the waking state is called imagination, and imagination controlled and directed by the will becomes a thought. So the dream controlled and directed by the will becomes a real dream.

It is true that the will loses its control—and the activity of mind its direction—in the state of sleep, but if we keenly study the whole nature and its workings we shall realize that they all are under the influence of habit. Even an infant, without knowing what time it is, desires food and wakes up at a regular time according to the habit he has formed. Our hunger and thirst, sleep and waking condition all depend upon habit. Therefore those who control their imagination by concentration become thoughtful, masters of their own affairs, and in the state of sleep they accomplish their purpose in the dream; but the thoughtless have unruly imaginations in their waking state and in the

dream their mind becomes like a ship on a rough sea; sometimes high up in the air, at other times low down in the depths.

All nightmares and unhappy dreams are caused by uncontrolled activity of mind during the waking state. From this we learn that though our experiences in the waking state are, many times, directed by our dreams, yet by the knowledge of the truth about it we shall know that it is the state of our mind in the waking state that produces dreams.

Among the various kinds of dreams there is one in which we see nothing but the reproduction, mixed up with other things of our activities of the day; another is the contrary occurrence to what takes place in the waking state in the future; the third is the real vision, either symbolical or clear of what will happen tomorrow.

The dream of the first part of the night shows its result after a very long time, but that of the early morning shows its result very soon, for the impression of the dream in the morning is fresh upon the mind, therefore it works more quickly than the dream of the first part of the night. A puzzled dream has a puzzled result, the result of a clear dream is clear.

Mental Dreams

The mind has its full play when a person is asleep. For in the waking state man has a rein over the mind, but in sleep mostly that rein is lost and the mind is free to produce pictures, natural or unnatural, broken or unbroken, as it happens to produce.

The pictures are produced according to the life in them, and that life is given them by the mind itself. Plainly speaking, the things one thinks of often and the objects one sees more, gain life at every observation given to them. Therefore one sees in the dream mostly the dearest friend or the bitterest enemy and the same thing accounts for the dairyman's dreaming of milk and a butcher dreaming of meat. Every person's world is separate; his world is that in which he lives and of which he thinks.

The reason why mental dreams should have an effect upon the life of a person is that the line of our fate is made on the lines of the impressions that our mind creates before our soul. It is therefore that an unhappy dream would bring about unhappiness and a happy dream would bring about happiness.

It is not true that what was going to happen is shown to us in the dream though we are always apt to think so. The fact is that the dream has built a bridge for us to land into trouble or happiness.

Symbolical Dream

It is very interesting to see how knowledge of past, present, and future is revealed to every soul in symbols. The illuminated one sees, and to him it is everything; and to him who cannot see it is nothing. Nothing can teach how to read the real meaning of symbols unless our own soul disclosed to us their secret.

Occultism

The symbolical dreams are mostly concerning ourselves; they show us the conditions of our affairs in life and the state of those whom we love. The reason why a symbol in the dream should show us what is hidden in past, present and future is that that is how it first constructs itself and then it changes its form on the surface; the next reason is that the former or latter effect of a happening has quite a different form from that of its real occurrence.

It is just as in sound there is a tone and an undertone which belongs to its original note, only it is different in its effect and color. As delicate a person's thoughts are, so delicate is the symbol. To a simple person the symbol is simple; to a complex person the symbol is complex.

One reads the symbol of the dream according to the development of his soul, for in proportion to his soul's evolution he sees things clearly. There is no end to the interest when the secret of symbolical dreams begins to disclose itself to the dreamer. It is more than an astonishment; it is more than a wonder.

Astral Dreams

The astral dream manifests to the sight of pious beings who are at the same time balanced. It is scarcely vouchsafed to an unbalanced person, however spiritually evolved.

The astral dream is the real experience of the soul dwelling in the higher spheres with the vehicle of the mind.

There are three aspects of the astral dream. One aspect is that a person knows the real happening, not contrary or symbolical; the **real happening** manifests on the surface.

The next aspect is that a person meets the living or dead friend and sees his actual condition.

The third kind is that the astral part of the living or dead comes and visits a person.

By means of the astral dream a great many things are accomplished. Those who became masters of life control the astral plane and bring about the above said three experiences at will.

Spiritual Dreams

The spiritual dream is that during which the light of the soul has fully illuminated the mind, and the mind is able to create and perceive the clear picture of past, present and future.

In the spiritual dream one sees accurately what is happening at a distance or what has happened or what is going to take place. But in order to see the spiritual dream one must be naturally capable or spiritually developed. Naturally capable is he who is innocent, simple and righteous, kind, harmless and loving.

In spiritual development it is not natural that he should have the above-said virtues. If his soul can rise at will from the lower planes of existence, he can dwell in the spiritual sphere with mastery.

The greatest hindrance that veils man's eyes from the spiritual dream is the thought of self. As much as one can forget this, so capable does one become of witnessing the spiritual dreams.

Ordinary Vision

Vision is of two kinds: a vision when a person is in a trance or half asleep and a vision when a person is asleep and dreams a dream which either solves some important problem of life or warns or suggests concerning something important in life.

In the ordinary vision a person sees past, present and future exactly as it is. For instance, if some friend or relation is about to come unexpectedly the vision shows his arrival first. So it shows the rise and fall of oneself and of friends.

Vision is generally vouchsafed to those who are pious, righteous in their action, and of tranquil mind; for an un-tranquil mind is just like moving water, which does not take a clear reflection.

It is still and clear water in which the reflection is clear; so it is with the reflection of vision on the ocean of man's heart.

Mental Vision

There are times when, in sleep or in the waking state, man gets a glimpse of past, present or future happenings. It is not like a dream, which goes on like an act on the stage, but it is a picture. That is why it is called vision, and that is the difference between dream and vision.

To those who are developed spiritually, this vision often comes, sometimes as an answer to their questions, sometimes to warn them of an unforeseen danger, and sometimes to guide them toward some accomplishment in life.

Mental vision also comes to those who walk in the path of devotion, and who hold an ideal in their concentration. To them, at times when it is necessary, in the form of that ideal a warning or a guidance appears as a vision.

Those who master Tasawwur, meaning a concrete production of the ideal in thought, their first experience is that every form they see seems covered with the form of their ideal. This is the first step toward progress, which in the Sufi term is named **Fana-fi-Sheikh**. Then a vision is already created within them, and advice on any point they wish for they receive from within.

Symbolical Vision

The dreams and visions that we have in life are mostly symbolical and scarcely ever plain. They are symbolical because everything in the inner plane shapes differently from the form it wears in the outer plane. The same reason accounts for the inspiration of the prophets. For many others besides them at times touch the same goal that they touched, since the consciousness of all is one, but everybody does not realize it consciously, and some who realize it do not know the language of the inner world, for the spirit speaks a language that is unintelligible to all save a few who are gifted by nature to understand the cry of truth behind it.

A person who has known oranges is not necessarily able to recognize the orange-tree, but he who knows the orange-tree can expect oranges on seeing the seedling of the orange-tree. Sometimes the buds of flowers cannot at all give an idea what the flower is like, and sometimes the shell of a nut can delude a person who does not know what it is and may not be benefited by the kernel in it.

Many people see symbolical dreams and some see symbolical visions and yet cannot understand their effect, for they sometimes seem quite different from the effect they have. For instance, an elephant in the East is considered to be a sign of honor and in the dream it is the sign of death.

One cannot take an object as having such and such an effect in life; it is how it is produced that makes one realize its results. Intelligence is a great bliss, and then it is clear it helps one realize the nature of things, and by that one can read symbolical visions.

The study of symbology can never suffice one's purpose, for there is no limit to the variety of nature's forms. It is intuition that helps one and makes the meaning clear.

Astral Vision

Astral vision is the seeing of the unseen beings, such as spirits, jinns, fairies or angels. Now the question is whether it is we who make them or they who come. The answer is both; in part we make them, in part they come. In saying we make them I do not mean one single individual in particular, perhaps another person also. And yet as all are children of God although they are called children of their parents, so all seen and unseen beings are created by one source, Whom man recognizes as the Creator.

Every unseen form that we see in a vision—be it of a spirit, fairy, or angel, or of a teacher, sage, or saint—is according to man's evolution. As highly evolved a person is, so high is his vision. Sometimes he attracts the object of his vision, sometimes the object of his vision wishes to manifest to him, and sometimes he creates the object of his vision before him.

The goodness of the vision depends upon the greatness of the object. In an astral vision a relation or a friend may appear to a person and tell him something about the other side of life; before another a saint or sage may appear, who may guide him still further; to another an angel may appear, as Gabriel to Moses, and may give him the Message of God. In all cases vision is a bliss, especially when a person is treading a spiritual path.

Spiritual Vision

Although all things that one meets with in his life's journey are either made by himself or by others, or by both, by an individual, or by a multitude, yet when the soul is clear from all doubts and confusion, he sees the clear picture of his own life and of the life of another, perhaps, whom he likes, however distant in space or time it may be. This vision manifests to a spiritual mind, and sometimes to anyone who may be for that moment in a clear spiritual atmosphere.

Sometimes man overlooks such pictures manifesting before him in a dream or in the waking state, and sometimes one cannot understand what may be the meaning of these pictures, though spiritual vision is not necessarily symbolical; sometimes it is as clear as it manifests on the surface.

Impression

The first step in occult progress is clearness of impression: impression of objects, of people, and of affairs. To impressionable minds even objects speak, so to say, of their nature, of their origin, of their history, of their use, and of their secret; the impression of living beings is still more. Partly the appearance of both objects and living beings speaks, but mostly it is a disclosure of one's own spirit that unveils all things.

When we trace the origin of medicine we come to the same belief that mystics had, that all has been revealed to man. People will perhaps differ in explaining the source of all knowledge, but it is after all rooted in man's soul.

A seer, looking at an object, perceives, sometimes without reason, whence the object must have come, who must have used it, why it was made, of what use it is, no matter whether it be natural or artificial, for its origin is nowhere else than in the spirit. A man one meets gives an impression not necessarily from his appearance, but from his atmosphere. One sees whether it is favorably inclined or unfavorably, whether he is on the right track or on the wrong, whether he will meet with success or with failure. All this is felt by the man who can receive impression aright.

Then about affairs, one's own affairs and the affairs of others, the appearance of even the thought of the affair has in it a hidden voice, telling: "yes" or "no," "right" or "wrong," "success" or "failure," "do it or "do not do it." But one may ask, "If that is so, we may never do wrong, never be confused about anything?" The answer is that we lack concentration, and it is lack of stillness of mind that causes all confusion and ruin.

For water disturbed never takes a clear impression; it is still water upon which impression is clear, also clearness of impression depends upon purity of water. So it is with the mind, a mind pure from all that keeps it disturbed or confused, that accounts for impurity of mind.

The plain definition of pure and impure is that every outer element that destroys the element with which it is mixed makes the original element impure. And the spirit becomes impure, which is the cup of matter, when matter sticks to it and when this cup cannot be washed. All meditation and concentration is intended to still the activity of mind and to purify the spirit from all that destroys its purity.

Intuition

Intuition may be explained in plain words as an unintentional knowledge of truth, and to say whence it comes is a difficult thing. Some think that it is from Heaven or a divine source; but, really speaking, everything is from there. And some think that it is a spirit that they picture in their minds. There is a possibility of that to a certain extent.

But intuition can be described as a glimpse of knowledge that one has stored within oneself, which comes at a time when it is needed, by chance. In a spiritual person it comes more, for the very reason that his mind is clear. And woman is more intuitive than man, for as man represents power, that power becomes a cover upon his heart.

Again, people with a gentle disposition are more intuitive than those who have a desperate nature, because desperation is a force which upsets the physical and mental mechanism, and the knowledge that becomes reflected does not become clear.

One develops intuition by gentleness of disposition, by calmness, and by confidence in one's intuitions. The more you depend upon them, the more they come; the more you trust them, the more trustworthy they become. Reason destroys them, and doubt weakens them.

The importance of faith, in the Bible, shows that even in this direction faith becomes the protection and support of intuition, which has no material foundation whatever.

Sometimes intuitions are clear; sometimes they are unclear. It is lack of intelligence which makes them unclear. Intuitions come as a warning, sometimes as an impression. It is the opening of the sight to a higher plane of one's being.

Inspiration

Inspiration is the knowledge that pours out, so to speak, from within, without any special effort of the part of the mind. And yet it is not knowledge that comes from within; it may be called within only because it is within in the presence of the physical plane; and yet it is not from within, because the soul is the self within and this knowledge is external to the soul.

It is not gathered anywhere as a treasure that a spirit or angel comes and hands over to the inspirational person. If it were so, then without being lettered the poets would have been as prophets, and without any knowledge of music the composers would have written music, just by inspiration.

In plain words it may be said that it is the search-light of the soul that moves about in the spheres in which the soul is interested, throwing its light on the horizon in its range and watching with interest what appears and picking up what seems good, beautiful, interesting. That is inspiration.

It may be pictured as a room full of interesting things with no light in it, and someone coming into the room with a bull's eye lantern and throwing its light all around until the light happens to fall on the spot he was searching for or in which he was interested, and what he picks up from there is his inspiration. Therefore a poet may not have the inspiration of a musician; a painter may not

have the inspiration of a philosopher, for their worlds are different. They may throw their light on all things but the things in which they are interested; this they will hold their light on.

Therefore the sight of the inspirational person is keen in all things, which means he takes interest in all things. An inspired person will not be tired to listen to conversation about something quite different from his line, for he may not understand, so far as his experience goes, and yet he will have some insight into it.

I remember that to my Murshid no subject was quite foreign or so that it did not interest him. But real inspiration comes from the subject of interest, and without the light within, however great interest one may have in any study or practice, it will be with very little success. It is for this reason that among many painters one painter comes out as a successful one, and among many sculptors there is perhaps one who has mastered his art. However realistic material life may seem to be, in the end one realizes the truth of the saying in the Bible, that "The spirit quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing."

Vision 1

Vision is generally vouchsafed to the keen-sighted. By keen-sighted I mean those whose heart can see. Vision mostly comes to the pious, to the innocent, to the loving, to those who have suffered in life, who have had patience and are tenderhearted, who are on the path of goodness. It generally comes when they are fast asleep, and sometimes it comes when a person is half-asleep.

Sometimes it comes through meditation. Sometimes when the eyes are closed it comes as a glimpse and disappears. It also comes to those who have gone through a long illness, who are perhaps abnormal in mind or weak in body.

The vision may be of anything. It may be a condition of the past, present or future seen as if produced on a stage. It could bring an appearance of a saint or a sage, a Master, living or on the other side. It could show symbols which tell something about one's life in different forms and colors. It could come as a sound, as words, as a song, as poetry, as a written letter, or as a fragrance. During vision the condition of the person is negative, in other words, passive.

Those who talk about their vision to everybody or feel proud of their vision indeed abuse their spiritual gift. Then this passes away from them; and what remains with them is exaggeration and then falsehood. The wise thing is to keep one's vision secret to oneself, not to tell anybody about it, except one's most trusted friend, who one thinks is wise and can help on the path or one's teacher who knows the state of one's development.

Vision 2

There are times when visions are symbolical and there are times when visions are clear. When the visions are clear it is the moment when the soul is clear from all earthly shadows and therefore heavenly pictures, so to speak, appear upon the curtain of man's heart.

One may see the vision of his Rassoul, his saviour, his lord, Master, or Prophet, or Teacher. One may see the vision of one's friends, relations, past and present. One may see faces never seen before and yet faces that have once existed in the world. One may see jinns and angels, and no right pertains to any person to judge of the truth of the vision.

The symbolical visions are very interesting, because forms of things and beings and their combination and the running course with changes all tell of past, present and future, and to any intuitive person or to a seer it is an open book.

Khadijah says, "Before the declaration of the Divine Message Mohammed had visions in different forms, which he told me; and exactly the same thing or something similar to what the symbols of his vision related happened." Every soul has visions at very important times in his life, but there comes a time of the clearness of the soul when every dream becomes a vision, and a person may have twenty visions in a single day.

Vision is not the only sign of spiritual progress. A person may have gone far on the spiritual path, and he may not have visions. Visions are a temperament. There is a type of person, a visionary type, imaginative, dreamy, interested in dreams and whims, and if he is spiritual, the same type produces real visions.

Vision 3

Vision is generally taken as a dream, and yet the traditions of the world are mostly based upon visions. The vision of Valmiki brought Rama, the great king of the Hindus; Solomon, Jamshyd, Joseph, even Abraham, the father of religions, were known and accepted as Prophets by reason of their visions; the foundation of the life of Jesus Christ was the vision of the Virgin Mary; the beginning of the prophethood of Muhammad was the vision of Amina, his mother.

The Qur'an contains law and morals, and if mysticism and philosophy can be traced in it they are in the Meraj, the vision of the Prophet. In the Bible the most interesting part to a mystic are the Revelations, where there is a vision.

Visions may be described as a language of God which is expressed not only in words, but in a picture: that which cannot be audible and that which cannot be intelligible when audible is produced within as a visible form.

There are two different visions, a vision which descends and a vision that ascends. The former is from God, the latter from man. There are two aspects of the former: in voice, and in picture. There are two aspects of the latter: self-created, and that which comes as a response.

For instance, a devotee by the fullness of his devotion may create the picture of the Saviour in his heart and one who is responsible, in his full response and waiting, may attract the Spirit of the Saviour. And in both cases the benefit and blessing are the same; for it is not man who creates, and if it were creation even by man, God alone is the Creator and He creates whenever anything is created, as God and also as man.

Vision 4

There is no greater sign or more wonderful proof of the inner life than vision. Such appropriate forms and symbols appear to the visionary, to tell him of past, present and future, that one can do nothing but marvel at the inner wisdom of nature and glorify the name of God.

There is language of forms and symbols. When one does not know this the visions to him make no meaning, and there cannot be made a standard of this language. Though many have written books on dreams, yet no book has been so successful as to be a general standard of dreams and visions.

Every vision springs from the heart of man with as fine and delicate a form as his own personality, and in as picturesque a form as his artistic capabilities, and in such metaphor or so symbolical as his poetic gift.

Therefore the visions of prophets have always been interesting, for the prophets are the real poets, not poets necessarily prophets.

The vision is the art nature, it is the poetry of nature, it is a beautiful dream of nature. The purer the soul is, the clearer the vision becomes. It is the bowl of Jamshyd, the seven-ringed cup, which is the head with its seven openings. And in this head the vision rises, and shows him all whose sight is keen.

Revelation 1

People think that one arrives in Heaven after death, but really Heaven is experienced from the first moment of revelation. As a matter of fact it is revelation that makes Heaven, and every stage of this revelation is a Heaven; and so when they say Heaven it means different stages of revelation.

The first stage is cleverness; the next is wisdom. In cleverness the intelligence is in confusion, since it is active, passionately active; in wisdom the intelligence is rhythmic. When a person says, "I will not allow you to take the best of me. If you are crooked, I will show you ten times more crookedness," then he is clever; but when a person says, "Yes, I understand you, you need not play that game with me, let me alone," then he is wise.

When a person does not know the crookedness of the other person and so allows him to take the best of him he is a fool; but when a person sees clearly the roguery and crookedness of the other person and yet allows him to take the best he is the holy man; he is beyond the regions of humanity, he is beginning to climb the angelic planes, he sees all things, understands all things, and tolerates all things.

The mystics talk about the innocence of Jesus, and Sufis try to follow it as an example. This innocence is the same; and revelation comes to that person who sees all the falsehood and treachery of human nature and pities instead of accusing, and forgives because he has reached that height that no falsehood, roguery, deceit, or treachery of an ordinary human being can touch him; he is above it.

Revelation 2

Revelation may be explained in plain words as discovery. The whole life is before us, and we perceive it through our fine senses, and yet there is confusion. It seems as if we see things and do not see them and we understand and yet we do not understand, as if we see nuts in their shells, not knowing whether it is a decayed or a fresh nut; and mostly we make mistakes; that which is living is as dead to us, and that part of life which may be called dead alone seems living.

Revelation has several grades of depth; and every stage of evolution makes a person capable of having a certain revelation. Revelation is greater than intuition, impression, or inspiration, because it is as plain as a written letter. It comes to a person who, so to speak, lives in the soul more than in the body or the mind.

A person to whom things are revealed may be pictured as a man with a bull's-eye lantern in his hand. The world is like a dark room where there is everything and yet nothing can be seen, and on whichever object this lantern throws its light, that object becomes clear to the light of the seer.

And as they say in the old traditions that the trees have tongues to speak to the saints and that the birds talked to Noah, these tales of the past to the soul having revelation become the action of the present. All things that are speechless converse with the listener who has revelations.

Before such a person the minds speak, the souls speak. If the lips are closed, the eyes speak, if the mind is held fast the atmosphere tells all that one could hide. The Vedantists recognize this and call the person Antaryami; the Sufis name him Sahib-i-dil, the mastermind.

Revelation 3

The action of the mind pondering upon a certain thing is in itself a power. Mystics gain this power by concentration of mind. The tendency of the mind is to go from one thought to another, and it is not its nature to hold to one thought; and when one is able to hold it on one thought, then the mind becomes like a telescope, and it sees not only the form of the thought; it makes, so to speak, the thought transparent.

There is a revelation of form, which a gifted scientist may claim to a certain extent. When he looks at the objects in which he is interested it reveals to him things which are unknown to others; and it would not be an exaggeration to say that with the scientific person, the objects in which he is interested converse with him.

So with the philosopher does every thought. When revelation begins with the philosopher, then he not only sees thought, he, so to speak, touches the soul of thought. It is just as by seeing the plant one may get an idea of the root. And in this way things unknown are known and things unseen are perceived by the mystic, and he calls it revelation.

As the language of science is gibberish to an ordinary person, so is the language of the philosopher; and still more incomprehensible is the language of the mystic. Mystics have tried to tell of their revelation in parables as did Jesus Christ. Some have tried to give the idea of what they have

known in simple words, what would mean more than, perhaps, a hundred words, which would be a hundred covers around the Truth. However, it is human nature that the intellect is always attracted by subtlety; and it is the heart quality to which simplicity appeals.

There are revelations of the mystics and prophets which cannot be justified by reason, which cannot be argued by logic; even they cannot be made really intelligible in words, such as the truth of the hereafter, Heaven or Hell, the angels and the jinns. The reason why they cannot be proved by reason is that reason is born of the earth, not of Heaven; for it is a store of impressions collected in the memory, and impressions which do not come from the earth have nothing to do with earthly reason.

No doubt in giving the revelations to another the one to whom they are revealed has to garb them in some earthly words, to make the ideas intelligible to him who can reach only so far. It is therefore that the angels are pictured in human forms and jinns are supposed to be something like people, Heaven is supposed to have comforts similar to those on earth, and Hell is described as not different from earthly tortures. These are the interpretations given to people by those who have revelation, not the original revelation; for the original revelation every soul must experience for himself, no one else has the power to tell how it is and what it is.

Spiritual revelation tells you about life and nature, its secret, its condition. It comes in a language of its own; then he to whom it comes puts it through different processes in order to make it intelligible to himself. If he is artistic he shapes it in a beautiful phrase, in a verse, in a song, in a form of beauty. If he is interested in experiencing beauty through the sense of hearing, he reproduces it on the disk of his heart, and listens to it speaking, as Moses did on Mount Sinai. If he is accustomed to admire the beauty of form, he pictures the revelation in a beautiful form; he calls it an angel as Gabriel came to Mohammed. The worshipper of God calls it the word of God, the one who listens to it calls it the word from within. It is the same thing in all cases; it is revelation. Nothing in the world can give the joy it gives, and to the ones who enjoys it there is nothing more precious than this. The sacred books of the world, be they Qur'an, Kabbalah, Bible, Githa or Gathas, are all one, an interpretation of revelation. The prophets who gave them tried, to the extent of their abilities, to make it as comprehensible as possible to their followers. The joy of the original thing is different from an interpretation. The interpretation is for the beginners on the path, but the object in the spiritual pursuit is to arrive at the state where the original revelation is vouchsafed. That makes the life of a living soul worthwhile.