

Meditation Group For the New Age

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Part I

Meditation and Training in Self Awareness

The Balancing and Synthesizing of the Opposites

An important function of meditation is to bring about awareness of the many “pairs of opposites” existing in ourselves, the problems involved, and the techniques for balancing them. The “pairs of opposites” are the great dualities between which we are apt to swing as we respond to first one and then the other; for example, spirit-matter, joy-sorrow, love-hate. Their recognition and balancing so that we learn to stand poised between them is a fundamental part of both our psychological and spiritual integration and progress, and therefore this is a vital and practical subject to which we would do well to dedicate all the needed attention and effort.

The balancing of opposites enables a just harmony to be reached and the finding of this point of equilibrium is what has long been called in the teaching of the Buddha “the treading of the Noble Middle Way.” But the point to be realized is that we do not simply choose a middle path in terms of compromise, but find that higher place of right tension which utilizes each of the poles in a constructive way.

Polarity is a universal fact; from the very moment that cosmic manifestation begins to unfold, duality is born. The first fundamental duality is that of manifestation and the Unmanifest. In the process of manifestation the fundamental polarity is that of spirit and matter. All polarity is a *relationship* between two elements, and, as such, it is never absolute, but relative to a particular pair of opposites. Thus the same element can be positive in its relation to a certain “pole” and negative in its relation to another.

In the physical world, the most commonly recognized polarity is that between the positive and negative poles in electricity. This polarity is the basis of the constitution of matter since, as is well known, each atom is composed of charges of electricity differentiated into a positive nucleus (without considering the complexity of the various smaller particles constituting it which have been recently discovered) and a varying number of negative electrons.

In the three kingdoms of organic life (vegetable, animal, and human) one of the most important and general polarities is the sexual. The positive pole is represented by the masculine element, the negative pole by the feminine element. This does not mean however that only the former is active and the latter passive. Both are active, each in a different way: the masculine element being dynamic and positive, while the feminine element is receptive and “gestative.”

This type of polarity extends far beyond the man-woman relationship to innumerable manifestations in life. It has been particularly and deeply emphasized by the Chinese, who regard these two principles as the foundation of both the cosmic evolution and of every aspect of human life. The creative aspect, symbolized by the father and Heaven, they call Yang, while Yin is the receptive aspect, symbolized by the mother and the Earth. The well-being of humanity depends, in the view of this philosophy, on the harmonious accord between us and the cyclic evolution of the Universe woven from innumerable relationships and the interactions of Yang and Yin. Various Chinese texts deal with this subject; one of the most interesting is the *I Ching or The Book of Transformations or Changes*.

Within living organisms, such as the human body, there are many polarities; one of the most important is that between the sympathetic and the parasympathetic nervous systems; the former stimulates catabolism, and the latter assimilation or anabolism. Other polarities exist between the different endocrine glands.

In the field of emotions and feelings we find those dualities which are familiar to all: pleasure-pain; excitement-depression; confidence-fear; attraction-repulsion; love-hate.

In the mental realm there is the polarity between the analytical activity of the concrete mind and the synthetic operation of the higher intelligence; between the inductive process (from the particular to the general) and the deductive process (from the general to the particular). The human personality in its totality also has various fundamental polarities which have been extensively investigated by modern psychology. Among the most important psychological polarities are: impulse-inhibition;

submissiveness-self-assertion; feeling-reason; extraversion-introversion.

The fundamental duality in the spiritual realm is that existing between the personality and the Self, a polarity which is the cause of many inner conflicts, until harmonious relationships and an increasing blending or unification (psychosynthesis) are achieved.

Our relations with our fellow human beings create countless polarities. Not only is there that between man and woman, and individual and group, but that between youth and age, capital and labor and, on a still more inclusive level, between northern and southern types, between Occidentals and Orientals, etc.

Each of the numerous polarities confronts us with the problem of their interplay and balancing. It is possible here to present only the following brief survey of the principles and general methods of balancing opposite poles with the object of resolving "polar tensions," but it will indicate the objectives and nature of the work to be done.

1. *Fusion of the two poles*, involving the neutralization of their charges of energy.
2. *Creation of a new being*, of a new reality.
3. *Adjustment of the opposite poles*, by means of an "intermediary center" or a principle higher than both. A regulating action of this kind can be brought about in two
4. ways:
 - a. By diminishing the amplitude of the oscillations between the two extremes, at times even to vanishing point, thus inducing a more or less complete neutralization ("the happy medium"). An instance of this, of great actual interest, is the oscillation between excessive authority and uncontrolled freedom in education and the search for a balanced attitude.
 - b. By consciously and wisely directing the alternations so that the result is harmonious and constructive, and in accord with the cyclic alternations of both individual and general, human and cosmic, conditions.

Synthesis, brought about by a higher element or principle which transforms, sublimates, and re-absorbs the two poles into a higher reality.

The different types of polarity require corresponding appropriate solutions. But the individual often has the liberty—and consequently the responsibility—of choosing between one method of balancing and another. It should, however, be pointed out that the indicated solutions are not always as clear-cut as the above enumeration might lead one to believe. Sometimes they can overlap or be combined in various ways.

The balancing of opposite qualities in the field of the emotions and feelings requires the intervention of a higher regulating principle of a mental or spiritual nature. The first task is to prevent the emotions from overwhelming and carrying away the reason and will. The best way to achieve this is to refuse to identify oneself with them, to maintain the “I” or self, the center of consciousness, on a higher level above them, in order to be able to observe, evaluate, and then wisely master them.

Let us make it clear that to “master” does not mean to “suppress,” and that the aim is not to achieve a state of insensibility or aridity. Let us, for example, consider the fundamental polarity, pleasure-pain. As long as we remain slaves of this duality, always greedily seeking pleasure and fearfully fleeing from pain, we shall never find peace or true satisfaction. On the other hand, a forced inhibition, or artificial impassivity, certainly does not constitute a satisfactory solution. This can only be arrived at by means of a clear insight which enables us to understand the causes, the nature, and the functions of both pleasure and pain. This insight carries the recognition that in accepting pleasure without craving for and attachment to it, and in accepting pain, when unavoidable, without fearing it and rebelling against it, one can assimilate precious lessons from both pleasure and pain, and “distill the essence” which they contain. Moreover, one can gradually raise the quality and level of these “opposites”; one passes by degrees from the physical pleasures to the joys of feeling and of the mind, finally experiencing spiritual joy. One makes one's way from physical suffering to emotional troubles, to intellectual turmoils; thence to compassion for the sufferings of others, of the whole human race, and of the entire creation. From all these experiences one gathers

the fruits of wisdom, and learns to keep the center of consciousness stabilized more and more at a level above the alternations of personal pleasure and pain. Finally we can acquire the ability to identify ourselves with the Universal Life, with the Supra-Individual Self, with the Supreme, which transcends all “opposites” in ineffable bliss.

If we examine more closely the specific polarities of the emotional field, we can clearly distinguish two types of solution. One is realized on the same level; it can be called the “middle way” of compromise, the blending of the two poles. The other solution is achieved at a higher level and is, in its turn, of two kinds:

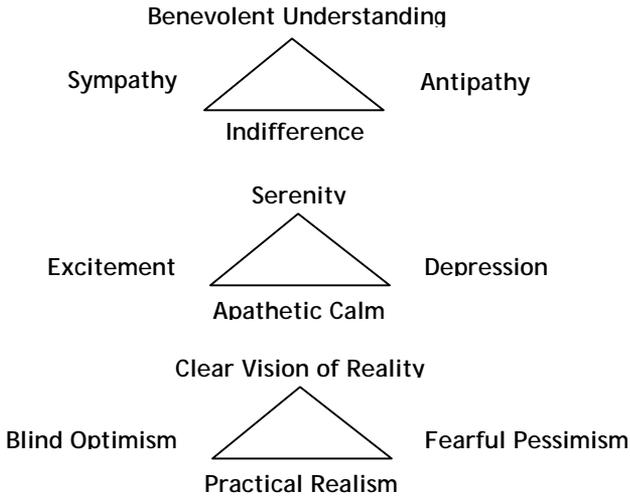
1. A wise control and utilization of the two opposite forces.
2. The fusion of these two into a higher synthesis.

The first method of skillfully using the contrary forces is explained in a curious book of magic which—apart from its specific subject contains interesting psychological material:

“In order to balance the forces, it is necessary to maintain them simultaneously and to use them in alternation. The more you are gentle and calm, the more your anger will be effective; the stronger you are, the more your gentleness will be prized...the more you are indifferent, the easier it is to make others love you.” (*Ritual of High Magic*, by Eliphas Levy, Chapter VIII.)

Of course, the right and constructive use of this method presupposes good motives and purity of intentions.

The second method, that of synthesis, which is analogous in a certain sense to a chemical combination, reabsorbs the two elements into a higher unity endowed with qualities differing from those of either of them. The difference between the solutions achieved through compromises and those brought about through synthesis can be clearly indicated by a triangular diagram. Here are a few examples:



The various equilibrations, adjustments, and syntheses are preceded in many cases by intense crises and conflicts. In others they are reached in a more gradual and harmonious way. A clear understanding of these processes of psychosynthesis enables one to achieve it more easily and rapidly. The essential requirement, as previously mentioned, is to avoid identifying oneself with either of the two opposite poles, and to control, transmute, and direct their energies from a higher center of awareness and power.

Another way in which we can consider the synthesis of qualities is to remember the symbol of the pyramid. At the top is *unity*; from these descend lines which diverge, and on the physical plane and at the human level there is a maximum of diversity, which implies at the human stage conflict, misunderstanding, and differences.

Here is an example of this which clarifies many problems: the three main spiritual energies or qualities are Truth, Beauty, and Goodness; this has been recognized since Plato's time. At the top of the pyramid they make a beautiful synthesis, but in humanity they are often widely separated, and we have to recognize that fact—which is not generally done. There can be genuine beauty with no goodness at all and no truth; there can be pure scientific truth, without any goodness and without beauty; and unfortunately there can be expressions of real goodness which are

sometimes very foolish. Incidentally this answers the great question of the independence of art and morality, which has been so hotly debated. At the apex of the pyramid harmony and synthesis are reached, but on the lower levels there is differentiation and, often, conflict.

Another polarity of great importance is that between “mind” and “heart,” reason and feeling. This is regulated in the first place by the recognition of their respective functions and of the legitimate field of action of each of the two functions, so that neither dominates the other. This can be followed by a mutual and increasing cooperation and interpenetration between the two, finally arriving at the synthesis so well expressed by Dante in the words “intellectual light full of love.”

The fundamental polarity between the human personality as a whole and the Spiritual Self is resolved into a unity through a long process of conflicts, transmutations, approaches, and contact producing first partial and then ever greater fusion, culminating in complete blending or soul-infusion. In this process meditation has an important role. This ongoing process of psycho-spiritual growth has been called by many names, including individuation, psychosynthesis, self-actualization and self-realization.

PART II

Trends and Characteristics of the New Age DEVELOPMENT OF THE MIND

The Growth of Mental Activity

One of the most important advances made by humanity in recent times has been the widespread development of mental activity. Down the ages there has always been a minority of intelligent and highly cultured individuals and groups, but the majority of people lived almost entirely at the material and emotional levels. Many of them had deep devotional and religious feelings, and were capable of great self-sacrifice, but their minds only functioned to a very limited extent; in fact, it could be said they were “unthinking” and were chiefly motivated by the feeling nature.

Beginning with the Renaissance and the development of the natural sciences, and especially after the invention of printing, an increasing number of men and women began to use their minds more and more. The process was accelerated by the French Revolution and the establishing of democracies in the 19th century, which brought about much greater general participation in public and social life. But during the present century, through the phenomenal development of mass communication, through the migrations and intermingling of peoples enforced by two world wars and changing regimes in many countries, and also through the conflicting and spreading ideologies, as well as the universal emphasis on education, the mass of humanity has been stimulated and, one might even say, compelled to *think*.

Another reason for this growth of mental activity has been that people have become less and less content to accept abstract, philosophical conceptions or theological and authoritative teaching, and have refused—and rightly so—to believe or accept “readymade” theories. Yet they want to *understand*; they want to find out the true values of life and its real purpose both for the individual and the world as a whole. This independence of thinking has reached a critical point today and humanity, particularly the young generation, is questioning and discussing everything.

This mental awakening is rapidly spreading in all continents; hundreds of millions in the under-developed areas of the world are

eagerly and almost fanatically trying to reach up to the levels of education and mental activity existing in Europe and North America.

This is a distinctive New Age characteristic which will bring about unforeseen changes and unfoldments in humanity. At first it may increase the present critical, separative, and combative use of the mind. But later it will serve as a unifying link and provide common ground between peoples because it will be balanced and associated with the other New Age trend of unification and synthesis.

Higher Aspects of the Mind

Mental development should not, however, be regarded merely in terms of the concrete, analytical mind. There is a higher aspect of mental activity which is now rapidly coming to the fore. It is a search for the essential meaning of facts, events, and behavior. It is the *asking why*. It manifests also as the urge to understand human nature, both in oneself and others, and in the recognition of the working of not only natural but also psychological and spiritual laws—particularly the law of cause and effect.

In raising these problems, human beings discover the limitation and inadequacies of the exclusively mental approach and the need for the use of another means of recognizing reality—the intuition.

This higher faculty has long been recognized. Plotinus wrote in the third century:

“You ask, how can we know the Infinite? I answer, not by reason. It is the office of reason to distinguish and define. The Infinite, therefore, cannot be ranked among its objects. You can only apprehend the Infinite by a faculty superior to reason.”

The intuition is clear, synthetic vision which brings “light” into acquired knowledge and transmutes it into wisdom. The task ahead is therefore the development of the *higher* functions of the mind, the judicious and *controlled* use of its analytical and “concrete” powers and the increasing growth of its higher abilities to discriminate, penetrate, understand and *realize*.

Until we recognize the fact of this higher capacity of the mind, and also the place which the lower concrete mind should fill as the

servant or instrument of the higher, we shall have only the present trend to over-development of the concretizing, materializing faculty, with its aptitude to memorize, correlate facts, analyze, and produce only that which meets humanity's lower needs and desires.

The problem of harmonizing intellect and intuition and arriving at their mutual cooperation will be an important factor for educators to consider, for the integration of these two is bound to be one of the important developments of the New Age.

Processes of Development

Education seems the obvious chief means of developing the mind, reaching as it does today into almost every corner of the world, and the need for it also ranking high in the social conscience. But everything around us in our modern way of life is “feeding” and “stretching” our minds in one way or another, and science is playing a major part in this development.

Not only is the thinking of scientists penetrating into the spheres of “abstract thought,” but the results of their thinking are causing all of us to quicken our step. We are constantly being induced, if not compelled, to extend our thinking to the limits of its capacity in the effort to understand and handle the world being built around us. We are continually being introduced to new concepts and more complex factors and knowledge. But these, the new generation digests readily and so they become commonplace in human consciousness. In this way we mount upon our discoveries, growing mentally with each new vista.

Meditation has a major contribution to make in the development of the higher aspects of mind. Its true practice leads the mind into subjective areas of perception and teaches the refined, controlled receptivity which makes contact possible with truths and realities subtler than those so far understood.

The recent widespread interest in various kinds of meditation is evidence of a search for ways of developing these higher faculties. It also indicates a more or less vague recognition that realms of consciousness exist into which penetration has yet to be made. But a word of warning must be given here. Methods of meditation which negate the use of the mind before it has been developed

cannot bring about its higher potentialities. It must be developed and used with control on all levels in order to become a true higher instrument and a sound cooperator with the intuition. The mind is needed for discriminating between psychic impression, "hunches," imaginative illusions, and the true working of the intuition.

The functions of the mind cover too wide a field for us to explore at this point. Our main objective here is to see the place of this trend, to develop it in the emerging New Age and recognize the lines along which it should proceed. The following excerpts from Alice A. Bailey's book *From Intellect to Intuition*¹ outline the picture concisely:

“As the race progresses...the mind body comes into being and activity, and gradually assumes an active and natural control. Like the physical and emotional organisms, this mental mechanism is at first entirely objective in its orientation, and swings into activity through impacts to it from the outer world, via the senses. Becoming increasingly positive, it slowly and surely begins to dominate the other phenomenal aspects of man until the personality, in all its four aspects, is completed and unified as the functioning entity on the physical plane. When this happens, a crisis is reached and new developments and unfoldments become possible...

We have arrived at an understanding of the laws which govern the natural world, and some of those which govern the Psychological. The laws of the spiritual realm, so-called, remain to be scientifically discovered and utilized...May we not be able now to pass on to our next evolutionary development? Having arrived at some understanding of the nature of humanity and the mind, can we not begin to grasp the nature of the intuition and to function in another kingdom in nature with as much realization and facility as we function as men? (pp. 58 and 180-181).”

This book is strongly recommended to those wishing to pursue this subject further.

¹ Bailey, Alice, *From Intellect to Intuition*, Lucis Publishing Co., New York, 1932.

This is a challenging and stimulating thought. The steady growth down the ages of humanity's power to think is gathering a great momentum in the present century. This is bound to bring its difficulties as well as benefits, problems as well as advances in realization, but they will be our stepping stones to greater understanding. A "highway" is opening out before us to new comprehension of ourselves and the universe in which we live, and *the right* development of mind will be one of the greatest factors in making the era ahead a truly *enlightened* New Age.

PART III

The Principle of Goodwill

The word *Goodwill* is something with which we are all familiar, in fact, perhaps over-familiar, so that it holds but little magnetic appeal or inner meaning to promote our interest and enthusiasm. But what is the *Principle of Goodwill*? And why has it been called “the touchstone that can transform the world”?

Its deep significance becomes clearer if we think of goodwill as an expression of “will-to-good.” Will is a fundamental initiating and propelling power, whether it be the individual will or what is called the “Will of God,” the great over-all Purpose; and the will-to-good is the highest use to which the will can be put, the truest orientation it can have. It means identification with the “greatest good” and an intention to work towards it; this brings an irrefutable redeeming force into action.

Goodwill is the attitude which will-to-good engenders; it is the expression of this high identification with something greater than ourselves. It is a “saving force” which can aid in the solving of every problem, and yet it is the simplest instrument with which we can equip ourselves.

The will-to-good has been called “*the magnetic seed of the future,*” and this thought gives the key to why the Principle of Goodwill is one of the fundamentals of the meditation work for the New Age.

Yet another point goodwill is contagious. Once expressed or experienced it lights up the hearts of all it touches and moves on from them to give its warmth in new directions. But it can dry up, wither away, become negated, if it is not nurtured and fed. Here lies our personal responsibility. It needs stimulation to increase its growth, and this is brought about by *inner* work—by recognition of its significance, meditation on its meaning as a principle, and identification with its “life,” or energy. In this way it becomes for us not simply something which we know we ought to possess, but an inner motivating urge which radiates from us and impels everything we undertake.

Finally, we should recognize that a spirit of goodwill can produce an atmosphere in which true cooperation can take place, problems

can be solved and obstacles overcome. Goodwill is more widespread than people think; it is often present, yet awaits release. This should be recognized, for when goodwill is cultivated and used, world problems, no matter what they may be, can in due time be resolved. When goodwill becomes an active, positive factor in human affairs it will lay the foundations for a new type of sensitivity—the sense of orientation to humanity. This will bring us into an age of fuller, richer understanding of our fellowman and a new spirit of trust will arise.

In *Set II* of the *First Year*, Goodwill and its techniques and effects were examined, and this Set, which also included a Tabulation on Goodwill, is recommended for re-reading. But to arrive at true realization of the value and significance of basic principles such as this, we must do our own thinking and build our own concepts. For this reason, the following “seed thoughts” are suggested. They are seeds from which deeper layers of meaning will unfold in our understanding if we meditate on them, and this will bring about a new flowering of Goodwill in our lives and into our environment.

SEED THOUGHTS

Contemplate Goodwill as—

The will to create that which is right and ought to be. The agent of right relationship.

A *subjective* factor, which is “picked up” by others, and so can transform a situation silently, “behind the scenes,” as well as in the obvious ways.

The hallmark of the great “Company of the Concerned.”

Experiment with the fact that—

Deliberate effort to practice goodwill can have an expanding effect upon ourselves.

The practice of harmlessness can evoke goodwill from others.

Goodwill can exist even when there is fundamental disagreement.

Goodwill is a harmonizing *energy*.

Goodwill becomes dynamic only when it is called into action, that is, when it is evoked to solve a problem, bridge a cleavage, heal disunity. Goodwill then becomes dynamic, creative energy, released by the will-to-good in the heart...“Goodwill is the touchstone which can transform the world.”

Meditation Outline

I. Alignment

Through:

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

II. Dedication

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

III. Meditation on the New Age

Theme: *The Balancing and Synthesizing of the Opposites.*

1. *Reflective Stage.* Consider what it means to take various opposites (one “pair” of opposites can be taken in each meditation) and try to find how they should be balanced and synthesized. Correlate this trend with the Principle of Goodwill.
2. *Receptive Stage.* Open yourself to and assimilate the idea of this characteristic of the New Age.
3. *Creative Stage.* Infuse the energy of *feeling* into whatever thoughtform of this you have built and, by an act of will, *affirm* that it can manifest.
 - a. Telepathically radiate this conception through:
 - 1) Reflecting it in a concise form.
4. Sending the thoughtform out along rays of light in all directions.

IV. Invocation

Voice *The Great Invocation* dynamically with all your mind, heart, and will; recognize it as a powerful means of bringing about the New Age:

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

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

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

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

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

Outer Work

Other ways of contributing to the approach of the New Age:

1. Making the ideas and ideals of the New Age known through the spoken and written word; handing on this and any other relevant material can also help to spread these ideas.
2. Cooperating with the *right* manifestation of the New Age characteristics and energies, participating in New Age enterprises, and endeavoring to discern and counter all misapplications and distortions of its principles and trends.
3. Constantly endeavoring to *live* as a citizen of the New Age, as if it were already in full existence.

Recommended Reading

Assagioli, Roberto, *The Act of Will*, Penguin Books

Bailey, Alice, *From Intellect to Intuition*, Lucis Publishing Co.

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