

Meditation Group For the New Age

SECOND YEAR · SET III

April 21 – June 20

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Meditation and Training in Self-Awareness

Realization of the Self or Soul

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PART I

Meditation And Training In Self Awareness

Realization of the Self or Soul

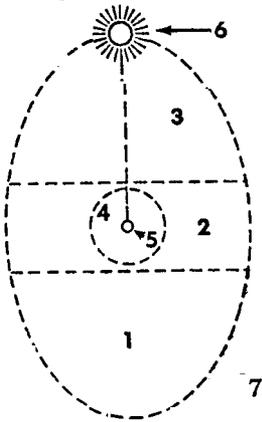
The problem of self-identity has received much attention recently. In the past it was generally ignored and even psychology did not take the true Self into consideration. But the present existential anxiety and search for meaning have brought into prominence the problem of self-identity, the problem of "who am I?"

Psychologists and psychiatrists are beginning to ask this question and the answers are interesting and sometimes surprising. Often, too, they reveal the confusion in most of us for, while we generally take our "selves" for granted, we are baffled and perplexed when faced with this question.

The chief difficulty is the constant identification of ourselves with the contents of our consciousness. We say all the time "I am tired," "I am angry," "I believe this," or "I think that"; thus we identify ourselves with our bodies, emotions or mental activities. We pass from one identification to another. The same occurs with the roles we play in life. We say "I am a son "or father, wife executive, doctor, or whatever the case may be. We say we are anything except our *Selves!* This can be explained pictorially by the diagram on the following page.¹

Consider the point in the middle of the oval and the circular area which surrounds it. The point represents the "I" or personal self, and the circle surrounding it the field of normal awareness. But there is a constant identification and confusion between the "I" and the *contents* of the consciousness.

¹ Assagioli, Roberto, *Psychosynthesis*, Hobbs, Dorman & Company, Inc. 1965



1. The Lower Unconscious
2. The Middle Unconscious
3. The Higher Unconscious or Superconscious
4. The Field of Consciousness
5. The conscious self or "I"
6. The Higher, Spiritual Self
7. The Collective Unconscious

Then, outside that area, there is the vast region of the unconscious with its three levels - the lower unconscious, the middle unconscious, and the superconscious. From all these levels, and from the outer world, new elements constantly enter into the field of consciousness, and so the poor I is, so to speak, smothered, veiled by all sorts of "contents" with which it usually identifies itself.

Therefore, the first step in self-identification is *disidentification* from all these "contents." The exercise which follows will be found of great help in this and in developing a real sense of the "I" at the center, the "I" referred to in the First Year as the "Observer," the "Controller."

Exercise in Dis-identification

"The exercise can be done as follows (when it is performed by a group, the one who directs the exercise naturally speaks in the first person, but each one can apply to himself what is said):

"I put my body into a comfortable and relaxed position with closed eyes. This done, I affirm: *I have* a body but *I am not* my body. My body may find itself in different conditions of health or sickness; it may be rested or tired, but that has nothing to do with *myself*, *MY* real 'I'. My body is my precious instrument of experience and of

action in the outer world, but it is only an instrument. I treat it well; I seek to keep it in good health, but it is *not* myself. I *have* a body, but I *am not* my body.

"I have emotions, but *I am not* my emotions. These emotions are countless, contradictory, changing, and yet I know that I always remain *I, my-self*, in times of hope or despair, in joy or in pain, in a state of irritation or of calm. Since I can observe, understand, and judge my emotions, and then increasingly dominate, direct, and 'utilize them, is evident that *they, are not myself*. *I have* emotions, but I am not my emotions.

"I have desires, but I *am not* my desires, aroused by drives, physical and emotional, and by outer influences. Desires too are changeable and contradictory, with alternations of attraction and repulsion. I *have* desires but they *are not* myself.

"I have an intellect, but I *am not* my intellect. It is more or less developed and active; it is undisciplined but teachable, it is an organ of knowledge in regard to the outer world as well as the inner; but *it is not myself*. *I have* an intellect, but / *am not* my intellect.

"After this dis-identification of the 'F from its contents of consciousness (sensations, emotions, and thoughts) *I recognize and affirm that I am a Center of 'pure self-consciousness*. I am a Center of Will, capable of mastering, directing, and using all my psychological processes and my physical body."

This exercise appears to be simple, but it is by no means easy. We have made such a constant habit of identification that it is difficult to stand free of any particular content. In fact we constantly use the word "I" in vain, because when we identify ourselves with those contents we become their slaves.

So the first step in Self-realization and liberation is to realize that "I am a pure center of self-awareness-I am I." The difference between the contents of the consciousness and the Self becomes clear if we meditate on it. The contents are manifold, changing, often conflicting, while the "I" is self-identical, permanent, stable and, therefore, of a radically different nature from all those contents.

This exercise leads to the most important discovery which a human being can make- The revelation of what we really are, of our *essential* nature. We may have acquired a theoretical knowledge or mental conviction of the reality of the self as different from any attribute or qualification, but this is *not a vital realization* producing an inner *transformation* and giving us an increasing *mastery* of our inner world. If we want to progress from an intellectual acknowledgement to the living *experience*, persistent exercises of meditation directed to that purpose are necessary.

In order to prevent possible misunderstandings and questionings, it is well to make clear that this exercise does *not* lead to any kind of preoccupation with oneself, to any egotism or to personal self-assertion. In all these, the "self" referred to is *not* the pure self-awareness; it is the personal self *identified with selfish* desires, fears, hopes, plans, etc., of which one is therefore a prisoner.

The development of self-awareness can rightfully be called a scientific process. It can be based on observation, experience, and experimentation without any preconceived ideas or beliefs.

It starts with a direct and primary experience, namely *awareness if* the conscious existence of oneself as a human being. (In this sense it can be called "existential.") From this fundamental fact of experience one is naturally urged to investigate the nature and the constitution of the human being, the psychological anatomy and physiology, so to speak. Then one precedes to man's vital connections with other human beings and with supra-personal Reality, because self-awareness constitutes only the first stage. It is not sufficient to realize our personal separate self-identity; it does not satisfy, and may even arouse a sense of anguish.

The steps of the ladder, or the stages through which one can reach up, recognize, and experience spiritual realities can be indicated in the following way:

1. Finding oneself
2. Finding the Self
3. Finding other Selves
4. Finding the One Self The Universal Being, The Supreme Reality.

Primitive people and children have no, or very little, self-consciousness, or awareness of their own separate "I"; their consciousness is merged with the outer world and with the 'inner world of images and emotions. They identify themselves with others, with the community or tribe. This should not surprise us when we realize that average man normally identifies himself successively, to a great extent, with the changing contents of this field of consciousness and not with his "self."

But when we have freed the "I" - the self-consciousness - from its identification and attachments, we can and should endeavor to raise it up along the symbolical thread toward its origin, the Spiritual Self, which is indicated in the diagram by a sun.

This second step is somewhat more difficult to understand and even more so to attain, but understanding can again be helped by study of the diagram.

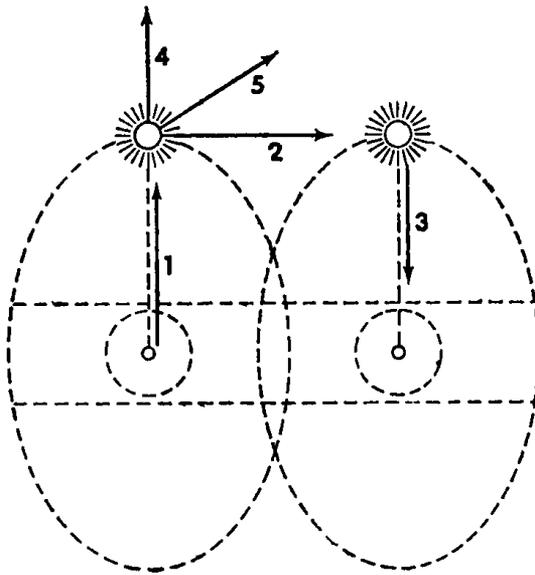
This leads to realization that the personal self-consciousness is only a pale reflection of the true full Self-consciousness, the consciousness of the spiritual Identity. We are generally unaware of this true Self, but the personal self-consciousness can gradually approach it and have increasingly vivid glimpses of it until, at moments, the two can blend.

The stages of this second realization - the identification with the Soul - can be described as follows:

1. First we believe, or are convinced, that we *have* a Soul.
2. Then the self recognizes its identity with the Soul, the Spiritual Self, and also that this Spiritual Self is different from the (*contents* of the super consciousness. Inspiration from and all higher activities of the superconscious are not the Spiritual Self.
3. The Spiritual Self recognizes, first, its communication with, and then its own unity with, other Spiritual Selves, and with the Universal Self, which is the name given in psychology and philosophy to God.

The Spiritual Self is the name psychology has given to what religion calls the Soul, which is not limited by or confined in the personality. In the world of spiritual Reality it is linked with other

Selves, other spiritual "Sparks," so to speak; it is not only linked, but it realizes its essential identity with them. This is true spiritual communion or brotherhood, through sameness of nature and essence (see arrow 2 of the following diagram).



From that (as the descending arrow, 3, indicates) one can commune with and have a loving understanding of the whole personality of our fellow beings. This is brotherhood, realized on the personal level, in actual life on earth.

The fourth stage is indicated by the arrow (4) and that means the realization of the identity of the Spiritual Self of each and all with the One Self, the One Reality, the Universal Being, with what in religious language is called God Transcendent.

There is another possible stage, intermediate between the last two mentioned, and that is communion with Beings of a higher order, superhuman Beings (arrow 5). This might sound strange to modern minds, but at all times and in all places the existence of Beings higher than us and at the service of God, the Supreme Being, have been believed in, recognized, and in many instances

conscious contact or relationship with them has been vouched for. Without dwelling on this, it seems reasonable to admit that humanity, however spiritual in its essential nature, is not the highest possible being next to God, and that between humanity and God there may be higher and greater Beings with cosmic functions. To deny this would indicate an attitude of rather ridiculous conceit!

So, the stages of realization proceed from the personal ego to the Spiritual Self, from the Spiritual Self to communion with other Selves in an ever expanding inclusiveness, and finally to the Universal Self or God, that is to the union of the Soul with God.

But here a note of warning is needed. In various religious and philosophical writings, especially the oriental, the "destruction" of the self is spoken of, or the destruction of the personality and the "losing" of oneself in the Universal Awareness in the Universal Reality. These expressions are misleading if taken literally. Here, again, there is a confusion between the make-up of the entire personality and the point of self-awareness.

What has to be "destroyed" or rather, transmuted is the personality *as it is at present*, i.e. with all its limitations, all its identifications, but *not* the point of self-awareness.

This is very clearly put by Lama Anagarika Govinda in his book *The Way of the White Clouds*:

"Individuality is not only the necessary and complementary opposite of universality but the focal point through which alone universality can be experienced. The suppression of individuality, the philosophical or religious denial of its value or importance, can only lead to a state of complete indifference and dissolution, which may be a liberation from suffering, but a purely negative one, as it deprives us of the highest experience towards which the process of individuation seems to aim: The experience of perfect enlightenment of Buddhahood in which the universality of our true being is realized.

"Merely to 'merge into the whole' like the 'drop into the sea', without having realized that wholeness, is only a poetical way of accepting annihilation and evading the problem that the fact of our individuality poses. Why should the universe evolve individualized forms of life and consciousness if this were not consistent with or inherent in the very spirit or nature of the universe?" (p. 124)

This is a very actual problem. Now so many, especially among the young, try to *evade* individuality; they are dissatisfied with the ordinary level of personality life, and in this they are quite right; but they try to evade it through elimination of all sense of identity or responsibility, and try even through drugs or special practices to lose themselves, forget themselves, attain some state or kind of hypnosis, of "ecstasy," or blissful condition which can only be temporary. One cannot evade the fact of being an individual, with its responsibilities.

In a sense, one could say that the circumference can be expanded indefinitely but the center remains. A Hindu philosopher, Radhakrishnan, has expressed this in the following way:

"The peculiar privilege of the human self is that he can consciously join and work for the whole and embody in his own life the purpose of the whole.

"The two elements of selfhood, uniqueness (each-ness) and universality (all-ness) grow together until at last the most unique becomes the most universal."

And another Teacher has put it concisely thus:

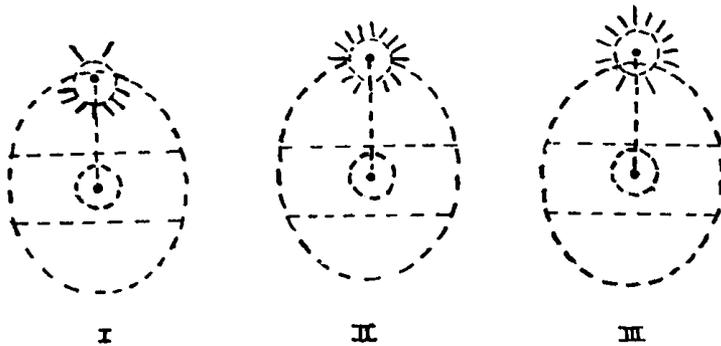
"There is no identity apart from universality and no appreciation of the Universe apart from individual realization."

Therefore, the striving toward the Universal is right; it is inherent in the nature of the self, which strives toward its origin; and it is in the nature of the Spiritual Self to merge with the Universal Self. But the three stages make together a synthesis - that of *individual, Spiritual, and Universal*.

Now, if we proceed from this general picture to its practical realization, we find by experience that we cannot reach permanent and wholly from the personality or individual to the Universal. We can have mystical flights, moments of ecstasy, but we are bound to come back to "earth." That identification can be attained only by degrees and by constant spiritual endeavor.

What is the bridge between the individual and the Universal? It is *the group* - we can become *group conscious*. We can first unify ourselves with even one other individual in the highest aspects of love; then we can become unified with a small group, then a larger group, then a larger group and gradually with larger and larger 'I' we reach a certain degree of universal awareness. groups, until we reach a certain degree of universal awareness.

The degrees of participation in the Universal are illustrated by the different positions of the suns in each of the three examples in the following diagram:¹



In the first, the Spiritual Self represented by the sun at the apex sends out almost all its "rays" toward the individual; that is, it produces an acute sense of individuality with a feeble sense of participation in the Universal. In the second, the sun representing the Self is located at the point of contact between the individual and the universal areas, indicating that the awareness is more or less evenly balanced between the two. The third example shows a high degree of Universal realization but always with some individual self-awareness.

In our own experience of meditation and contemplation we can become clearly aware of this fluctuation of the emphasis between the individual and the Universal awareness, because there is not only gradual spiritual development, but at different moments we reach different stages of awareness. All this happens not only in

¹ Assagioli, Roberto, *Act of Will*, Esalen Book, 1973

meditation, but also in other conditions of participation - for example, in nature or the external universe, and especially in communion with other human beings.

I Assagioli, Roberto, *Act o.1 Will*, Esalen Book, 1973

As well as clarifying many of our own experiences, this also explains much that is happening among some of the young people at present and their attempts to escape from the average, from the so-called normal, from the purely personal, but without true insight, true direction, and right method. Meditation in all its phases offers a sure way from the individual. through group identification, to the Universal.

PART II

Trends And Characteristics Of The New Age

POSITIVE MODALITY AND DYNAMISM

We come now to the second of the characteristics of the New Age mentioned in the first Set of this year - the trend towards Positive Modality and Dynamism. These are manifestations of the will aspect.

The subject of the will is a large and difficult one and it cannot be dealt with extensively in this Set. It includes purpose, intention, motivation, deliberation, decision or choice, affirmation, planning, and direction of inner and outer action. Here we will only deal with its energetic or dynamic function, that is, the projection or propelling of energy for implementing that which has been decided upon.

In the individual, the positive modality is expressed as self-assertion, courage, willingness to take risks, to assume responsibility, and to commit oneself. It also manifests as the determination to mastery, both in the outer and inner worlds - mastery of matter, nature, and the psychological forces in oneself and in others.

An appropriate symbol of the will is fire. It symbolizes victory over fear and inertia, the tendency to least effort, and we frequently speak of "fire" in someone as meaning a dynamic, driving power and positivity of intention or will. The development of the will and its use in connection with meditation will be examined in the next Set.

Dynamism is the active expression of the positive modality. It is demonstrated as a vital, vigorous display of energy, driving power, plan, zest for life, and as a general intensity and speeding up of life in every way. It has a positive value because it is greatly accelerating the process of evolution; but it can be, and has already proved to be, dangerous and destructive if it leads to or induces uncontrolled activity, restlessness, and extreme expressions of power.

The most obvious instances are the urge to excessive and useless speed, the continual high pressure and tension in modern life, and the feverish, relentless activity which so often results in nervous

and psychological exhaustion, and sometimes even causes death. Here, the use of the will is most needed in its aspect of self-mastery and control - an aspect as essential as those more commonly recognized of determination and persistence.

The highest spiritual expression of the positive modality is *heroism*; a more general manifestation can be seen in the realms of sport, in the competitive spirit and the urge to break records. It is also evident in mountain climbing and is outstanding in the exploration of space.

Another and entirely different expression of it is the present rapidly increasing interest in yoga, psychism and affirmations as a means of acquiring power.

This trend to positive modality and dynamism has, as all others, its exaggerations, distortions, and "degradations." Exaggeration may frequently be detected along the lines of excessive self-assertion, recklessness, combativeness or lack of consideration for and understanding of others. There is also a pseudo-positive modality, obvious in those who are over-active outwardly, and who are driven by the urge to action, but do not master and make any constructive use of it.

Those who most need to learn to tune in to and develop the positive modality are religious people, particularly Christians, who have developed along the lines of acceptance, devotion, and submission to the Will of God. This does not mean that they should eliminate these high spiritual virtues, but that they should be balanced and integrated with the *positive* qualities.

On the other hand, those who are spontaneously on the line of positive modality must balance its excesses and its one-sidedness through an adequate development of the receptive modality, of the "feminine" principle of acceptance, love, compassion, protection, and preservation of life.

When this integration is achieved, at least to some extent, one can master and use both modalities, assuming them in rhythmic alternation according to the inner or outer situation and its needs. The highest achievement is to raise the consciousness and remain *above* both polarities and, from that higher point of inner freedom, utilize them with wisdom.

Before leaving this subject, it will be as well to eliminate a possible misunderstanding and explain a seeming contradiction. Some writers have called the coming cycle the Epoch of Woman, and this seems in contrast with positive modality being a characteristic of the New Age. But in reality there is no contradiction. The coming age can be called in one respect the Era of Woman, because at present, and from now on, women have for the first time the opportunity of entering fully and on equal terms with men in the life of humanity. During the last decades women have both claimed and been obliged by the new conditions to take an increasingly active part in social life. This was inevitable and has had good results. Women are no longer confined to their feminine roles, however important and valuable they are, but as individuals, as human beings, they are increasingly contributing their specific human qualities to the life of humanity.

Yet dangers and exaggerations are also possible in this and are already occurring, for instance, in the excessive "masculinization" of women, their imitating and competing with men and their corresponding lack of appreciation of the feminine roles and even refusal to fulfill them. This was called "masculinization protest" by Alfred Adler, who gave much importance to it as a cause of various nervous and psychological troubles.

In order to avoid such exaggeration or overcompensation, clear insight is needed on the part of women, and recognition that the solution lies in fully accepting their feminine roles, appreciating their value, and fulfilling them in a controlled way. This means not being *completely identified with any feminine role and also complementing them consciously with the higher* masculine qualities (we emphasize the word "higher"!). It is again a question of integration, of synthesis, without eliminating anything vital and valuable.

Such individual and group integration within women themselves, enables them to undertake the great task of cooperating freely and on an equal footing with men in bringing about the new civilization and culture; in this task they also have the important role of counteracting excessive positive masculine modality, integrating it, and balancing it with the higher feminine qualities.

One may say that the balancing of the masculine and feminine polarities and roles is one aspect of the relationship of love and

will. Very often these two are dissociated and even seem in opposition, and this is the cause of much of our present trouble.

The problem is that those who have a strong will generally have little love and those who are loving have but little will. The solution is obvious, although not easy to put into practice. Those who have love should develop a corresponding amount of will and those who have will should develop love. Unfortunately, those who have a strong will generally have no inclination to develop love and are satisfied by the assertion of their wills, until the reaction comes which often destroys them. There are many historical examples of this.

On the other hand, those who are predominantly loving should be "willing" to develop the will, in order to make their love more effective, more creative, and to neutralize or balance the excess of will which is prevalent at present. This is an urgent task - to develop the will in order to express love more effectively and constructively, and it is an important aspect of the balancing and synthesizing of the opposites which was considered in the last Set.

PART III

THE LAW OF GROUP ENDEAVOR

This law has two aspects, or rather includes two ideas: that of the *Group* and that of the *Endeavor*. It is well to consider them separately at first. They point out two different achievements, and for some of us one is more difficult to attain, and for some the other.

One may say in a general way that people in whom the will is more developed, who are individualistic, self-centered and self-assertive, have much difficulty in uniting and cooperating harmoniously in a group. Their chief problem is integration and fusion into the group, merging the self-will with the group-will.

On the other hand, those in whom the love aspect is predominant, who have a natural tendency and desire to unite with others, even to the point of losing themselves in others, in groups, and in communities, are apt to be content with the enjoyment of harmonious relations, with the advantages of social adjustment, with loving and being loved. They are apt to be negative and to follow passively a leader or the trend of the groups to which they belong. For them the emphasis should be put on *endeavor*, on active pursuit of and dynamic striving toward the goals of the group; this requires the development and use of the will.

In the Section of *The Law of Group Endeavor in Set III* of the First Year, the main characteristics of group formation and group life were indicated. Of course, much more could be said, developing the points mentioned and only briefly described there. But enough indications were given for those who are willing to meditate upon them and try to put them into operation, and the study again of the Tabulation is recommended.

In this Set we are dealing with the second aspect of the Law, that of *endeavor*. This is one of the characteristics which will be developed in the New Age as it corresponds to *positive modality*, *to dynamism*, and to *the use of the will*.

In the present connection we are only dealing with the aspect of the will which is more directly connected with endeavor, that is,

striving, the effort to direct energies and outer activities, consistently and persistently toward a well defined end or aim - and this in unison with the other members of the group. This means an inner tension, a psychological and spiritual high voltage. It can be expressed also in terms of heat, of a fiery, striving, and it is kept up and increased by enthusiasm, derived from a vivid appreciation of the value of the goal to be attained.

If, and when, group unity and harmonious group activity have been achieved, the group helps very much to keep up and intensify the endeavor of each of its members. There is a reciprocal stimulation, and the result is not only a sum total, but a multiplication of the individual quotas of each one's endeavor.

Now let us look at endeavor as it applies to the work of the *Meditation Group for the New Age*.

There are two general and several more specific kinds of endeavor.

The two general are:

1. To carry out, and persist in *inner* action, in the use of the various means of inner action, in order to balance, in ourselves and in the world, the present excess of external activities.
2. To arouse and use the will-to-good for counteracting the many selfish, separative, and reactionary endeavors, not only of individuals but of many groups also, that are contrary to the spirit of the New Age. It is not necessary to give examples, we are all painfully aware of such activities. But let us remember that it is not our task to fight those separative and reactionary groups directly. We should endeavor to invoke, to bring in, the new and higher energies. through the dynamic use of *Invocation*, and at the same time to cooperate with all who attempt to establish the Laws and Principles of the Kingdom of God and the specific characteristics of the New Age. That *means substituting* the new for the old, and what unifies for what separates.

The more specific endeavors of our group should comprise offsetting the dangers of the present situation, helping to bridge over the present difficult period of transition and, most of all,

actively creating areas or "Islands" of the New Age - in other words, *expressing and demonstrating*, individually and in groups, the qualities of the New Age.

Our chief tool or instrument is *meditation*, with special emphasis on *creative* meditation. After having thoroughly clarified in our minds through reflective meditation, the characteristics, the tasks, the ideas, and the ideals of the New Age, our chief endeavor should be to *meditate creatively on them*.

First of all we should *vitalize* the already existing thoughtforms. Then our chief concern should be to keep them true to their original source, to the living idea behind them, and to develop them in a balanced way, preserving the right pattern, avoiding lopsided development, distortions, misapplications, and exploitation for selfish and separative purposes. This fidelity and adherence to the original idea and to the true pattern can and should be achieved also *through receptive and reflective* meditation, alternating these two methods with the practice of *creative* meditation.

Finally, our endeavor should include, or rather, culminate in, the *manifestation* of the ideas and thoughtforms, through both inner mediation and outer expression.

Meditation Outline

I. Alignment

Through:

1. Relaxation - physical, emotional, and mental
2. Aspiration
3. Mental concentration
4. Linking and identification with this worldwide Meditation Group.

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: Positive Modality, and Dynamism

1. *Receptive Stage.* Open yourself to and assimilate the living idea of the New Age.
2. *Reflective Stage.* Consider what the Positive Modality is and its different aspects. Reflect on the role of this dynamic quality and also of the Will in Group Endeavor.
3. *Creative Stage.* Infuse the energy *feeling* into whatever thoughtform of this you have built and, by an act of will, *affirm* that it can manifest.
4. *Telepathically* radiate this concept through
 - a. Repeating it in a concise form.
 - b. Sending the thoughtform out along rays of light in all directions.

IV. Invocation

Say The Great Invocation dynamically with all your mind, heart, and will, recognizing 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.

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