

THE
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OF
CHRIST

The Resurrection
of the Christ
Within You

*A revelatory commentary
on the original teachings
of Jesus*

PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA



Self-Realization Fellowship
FOUNDED 1920 BY PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA

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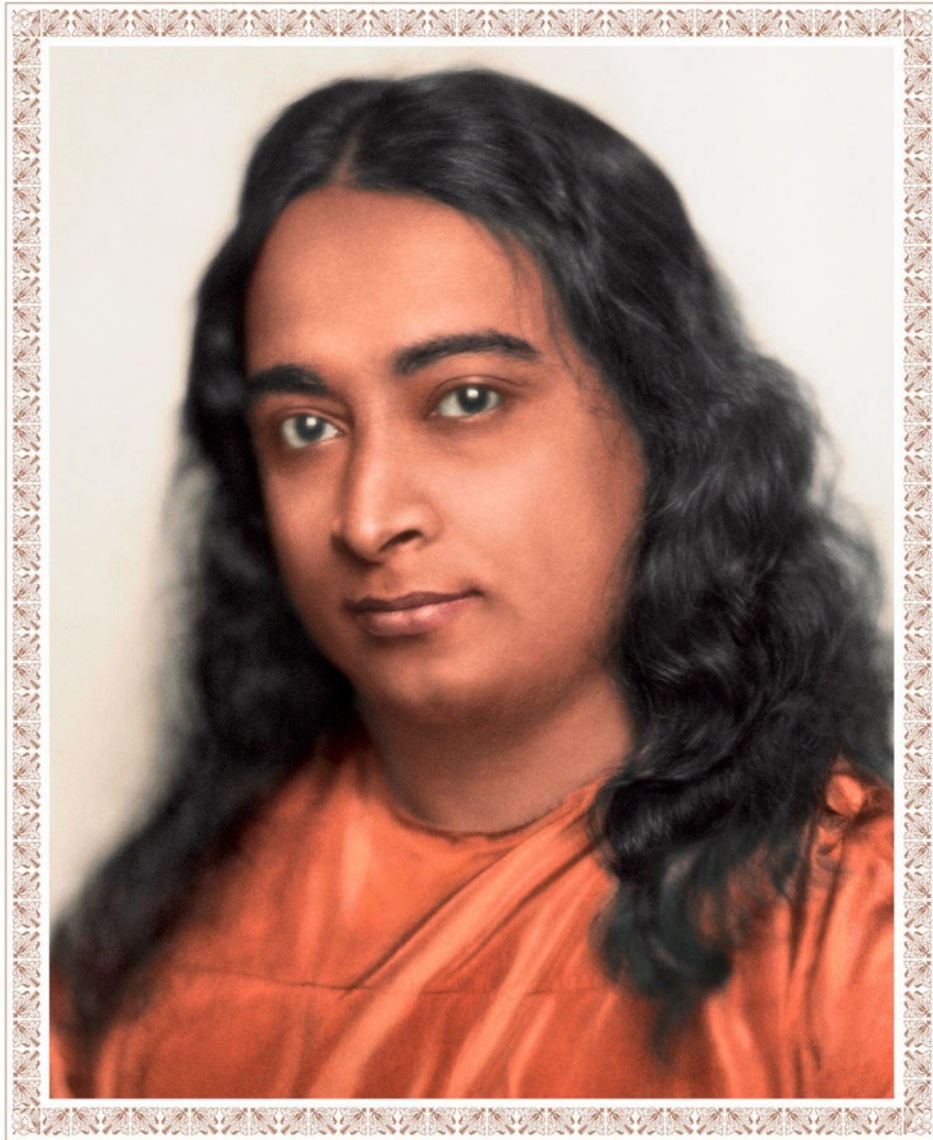
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PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA
(January 5, 1893—March 7, 1952)

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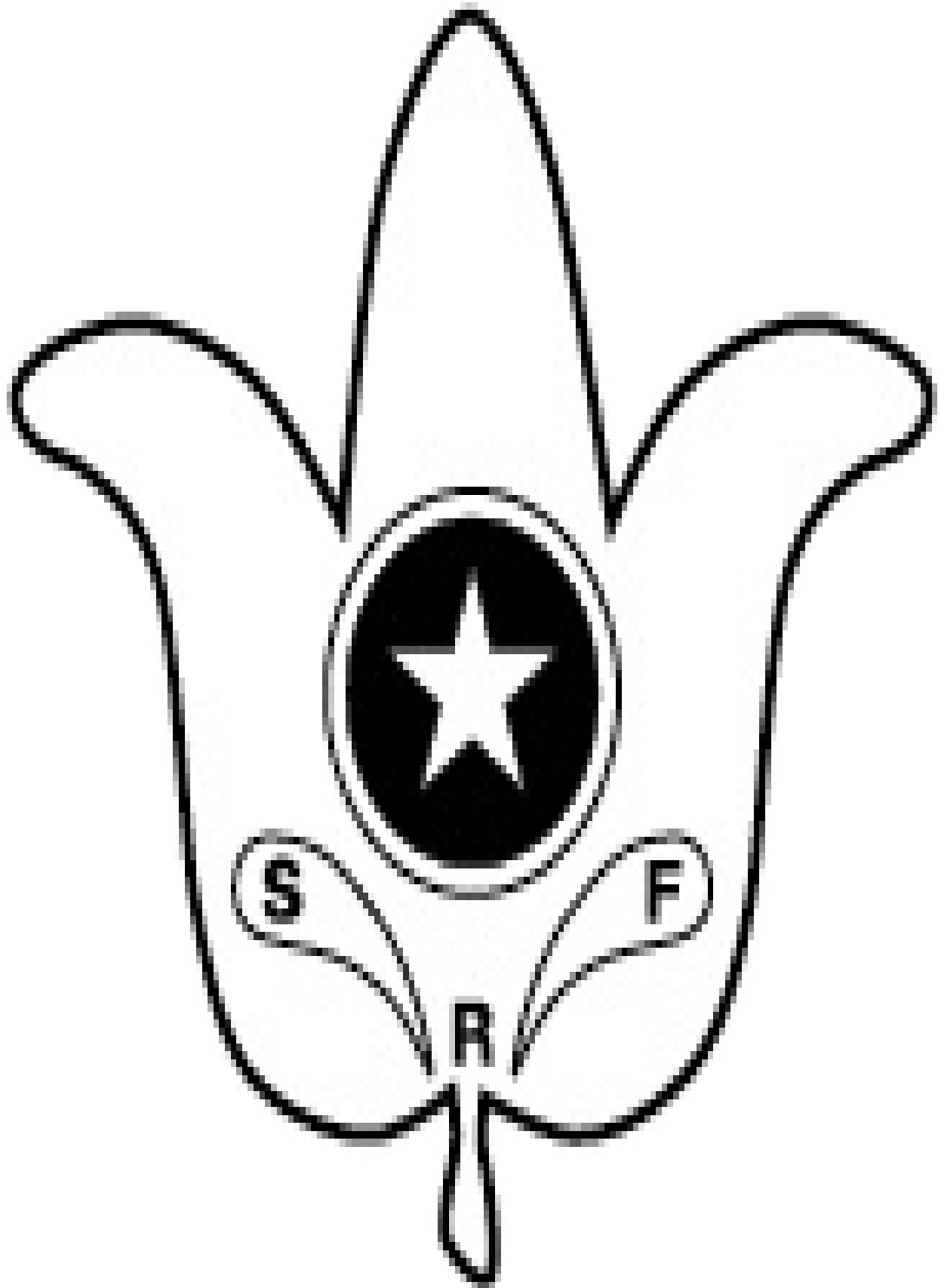
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*Dedicated to my revered guru,
Swami Sri Yukteswar Giri,
whose universal wisdom first illumined for me
the oneness of eternal truth
uniting the teachings of Jesus Christ
and India's ancient science of religion;

and to devout souls everywhere,
whom I summon to enter the inner light of divine perception
revealing the infinite Christ Consciousness
seeking resurrection within them*



The Spiritual Legacy of Paramahansa Yogananda

Paramahansa Yogananda founded Self-Realization Fellowship in 1920 to disseminate his teachings worldwide and to preserve their purity and integrity for generations to come. A prolific writer and lecturer from his earliest years in America, he created a renowned and voluminous body of works on the yoga science of meditation, the art of balanced living, and the underlying unity of all great religions. Today this unique and far-reaching spiritual legacy lives on, inspiring millions of truth-seekers all over the world.

In accord with the express wishes of the great master, Self-Realization Fellowship has continued the ongoing task of publishing and keeping permanently in print The Complete Works of Paramahansa Yogananda. These include not only the final editions of all the books he published during his lifetime, but also many new titles—works that had remained unpublished at the time of his passing in 1952, or which had been serialized over the years in incomplete form in Self-Realization Fellowship’s magazine, as well as hundreds of profoundly inspiring lectures and informal talks recorded but not printed before his passing.

Paramahansa Yogananda personally chose and trained those close disciples who formed the Self-Realization Fellowship Publications Council giving them specific guidelines for the preparation and publishing of his teachings. The members of the SRF Publications Council (monks and nuns who have taken lifelong vows of renunciation and selfless service) honor these guidelines as a sacred trust, in order that the universal message of this beloved world teacher will live on in its original power and authenticity.

The Self-Realization Fellowship emblem (shown above) was designated by Paramahansa Yogananda to identify the nonprofit society he founded as the authorized source of his teachings. The SRF name and emblem appear on all Self-Realization Fellowship publications and recordings, assuring the reader that a work originates with the organization founded by Paramahansa Yogananda and conveys his teachings as he himself intended they be given.

—*Self-Realization Fellowship*

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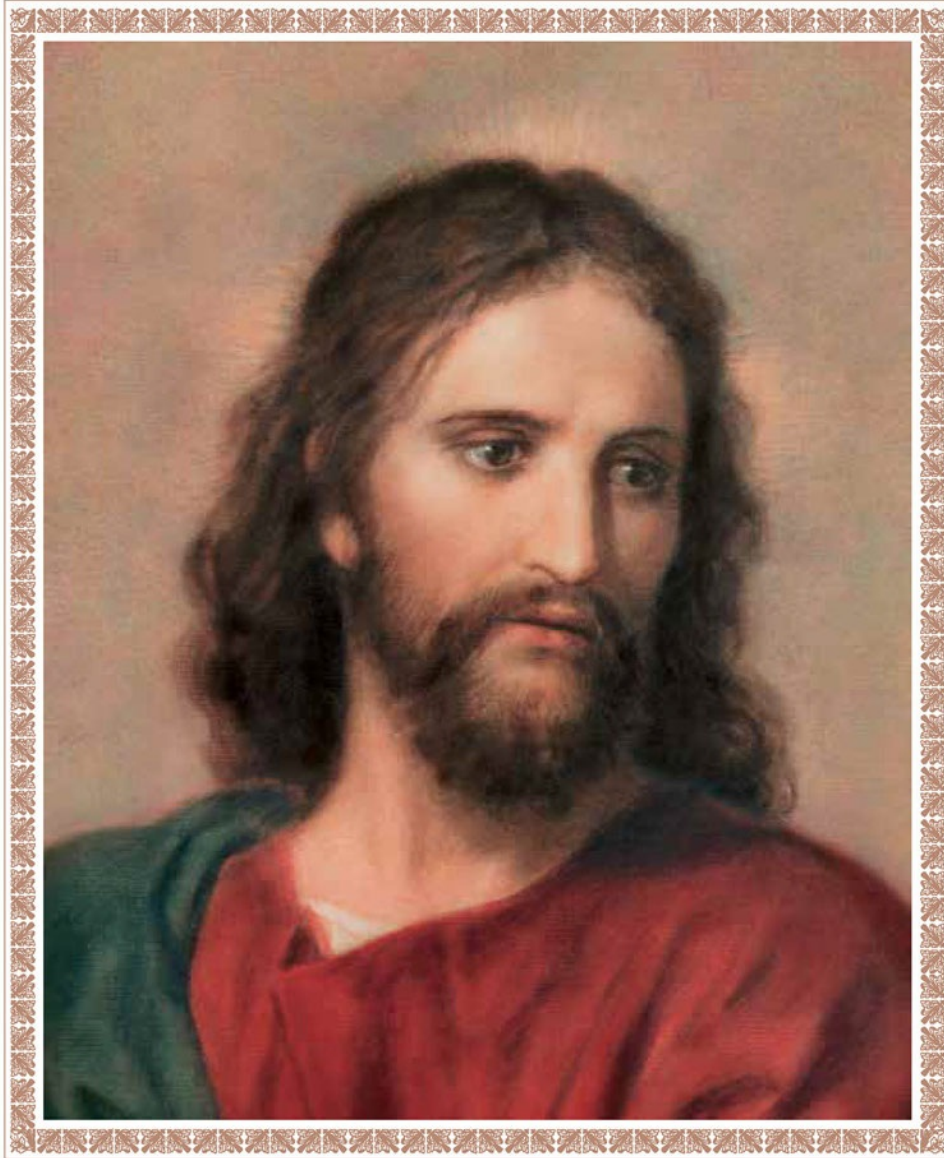
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“CHRIST AT 33”
Painting used on Self-Realization Fellowship altars

Preface

By Sri Daya Mata

Spiritual successor to Paramahansa Yogananda and president of Self-Realization Fellowship/Yogoda Satsanga Society of India from 1955 until her passing in 2010

It is with a joyous sense of fulfillment that I introduce the publication of these volumes of Paramahansa Yogananda's revelatory explanations of the words of the blessed Lord Jesus. In memories as vivid and sharply etched as though yesterday, I inwardly behold the great Guru, his face radiantly enraptured, as he records for the world the inspired exposition of the Gospel teachings imparted to him through direct, personal communion with Jesus of Nazareth. Still living in my consciousness are the sacred vibrations that enfolded us when through the years Paramahansaji, in ecstatic meditation, became absorbed in one of his many visions of Christ; and when my stenographic pen seemed to take on a life of its own in attunement with the Guru's voice as I took down his words during his lectures and classes and at every opportunity in his presence—words that flowed from his oneness with the infinite Christ- Kutastha wisdom of the universe.

My first meeting with Paramahansa Yogananda was in

1931

when he came to my hometown of Salt Lake City to give a series of lectures and classes. Instantly I felt a soul-quickenning recognition that at last I had found someone who truly knew God—one who could lead me to attainment of the God-realization that was so evident in the transforming power emanating from his very person. Not long after, in November of that year, I entered Paramahansaji's monastic ashram at the international headquarters of his society

atop Mount Washington in Los Angeles to devote myself to a life of seeking and serving God under his guidance.

Having been completely transfixed by the illuminating depth of the Guru's teachings of yoga and meditation, I found it something of a surprise that this consummate exponent of India's ancient spiritual heritage would also give emphasis to the life and message of Jesus in the New Testament. Indeed, I was not only to witness in Paramahansaji a living exemplar of this scriptural wisdom, but personally to record numerous lectures, temple services, informal talks, and writings in which he explicated the teachings of Jesus.

The scope and content of *The Second Coming of Christ* are clearly set forth in the author's Introduction and the Discourses that follow. But perhaps it will add to the reader's appreciation to know something of the genesis of this work, of which I can speak firsthand—from its inception to the culminating presentation in these pages.

Paramahansaji—as a delegate to the International Congress of Religious Liberals in Boston—had arrived in America in

1920

to undertake the mission given him by a line of enlightened masters in India:¹ to spread worldwide the ancient soul-science of yoga meditation, and (as he expressed in the Aims and Ideals of Self-Realization Fellowship) “to reveal the complete harmony and basic oneness of original Christianity as taught by Jesus Christ and original Yoga as taught by Bhagavan Krishna; and to show that these principles of truth are the common scientific foundation of all true religions.” The fulfillment of this sacred responsibility was his lifelong endeavor—beginning with classes in Boston in his first years in this country and continuing with ever newly expressed inspirations to the last days before his passing more than thirty years later.

After a few years in Boston, Paramahansaji embarked on a program of lectures and class series that, over the course of the next decade, took him over the length and breadth of the United States. He taught in nearly all the major cities; overflow audiences in the largest auditoriums were spellbound by his great wisdom and love for God—and by his dynamic personality, which was itself an explicit testimony to the practicality of the applied spiritual science he taught.

The introduction of his unique exposition of the teachings of Jesus Christ dissolved theological boundaries between the liberating path to God's kingdom revealed by Lord Jesus and the Yoga science of God-union taught by Bhagavan Krishna in the sacred scripture of India, the Bhagavad Gita. Paramahansaji's American students, consisting largely of persons raised in the Judeo-Christian tradition, longed for more—especially to be able to study these explanations in written form and thereby better absorb the unguessed spiritual treasures that had been revealed in their own familiar scriptures by this man of God from India.

Their requests did not go unheeded. In

1932

, not long after I joined the ashram at Mount Washington, the Guru found time, amidst organizational demands and travel to fulfill lecture engagements, to begin including commentaries on the Gospels and the Bhagavad Gita in the magazine he had founded a few years earlier. Each installment consisted of a few verses of both scriptures along with Paramahansaji's explanations. "These spiritual interpretations are the result of a long-unfulfilled promise to Yogoda students," he announced in the magazine.² Not infrequently, the copy was mailed to the magazine staff from whatever faraway city he was lecturing in at the time—even during his extended trip to India via Europe and Palestine in

1935

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36

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Of Paramahansaji's numerous remarkable experiences during that journey to India, especially of note in connection with this book is his visit to the Holy Land. In a letter sent from Jerusalem to his exalted disciple in America, Rajarsi Janakananda,³ the Guru wrote of his experiences with Christ: "There are no words adequate enough to express to you the joy and the vision and the blessedness which I perceived here. All the primitive atmosphere, the ancient background, is still present, marred only by a few modern buildings and hotels. His name is alive as before; only the Jesus that was and walked and suffered in the streets of Jerusalem very few people see. He was with me everywhere; and a

very special communion I had in Bethlehem where he was born as the little babe body of Jesus. He touched me as I entered the ancient menagerie where Mary brought him into the world—in a humble little stable under an inn. This place is absolutely authentic. I know it from the Divine. But there are other places where different factions have marked Jesus did this and that, which have some errors. Every place was verified from within. Most places are authentic.”

Returning to the United States late in

1936

, Paramahansaji was presented with a surprise “welcome home” gift: a secluded hermitage overlooking the Pacific Ocean at Encinitas, California. It was in this ideal location, away from the demands of lecturing and organizational work, that the Guru was able to devote himself more fully to his writings and to spend more time in seclusion and deep communion with God.

From the depths of these periods of divine communion in the Encinitas Hermitage, the Guru brought forth, in addition to profound scriptural commentaries, his long-contemplated Autobiography of a Yogi. It was my great blessing, along with my sister,⁴ to record on a typewriter the Guru’s dictation. He would work all day long and usually far into the night. The thrill of the truths pouring from him were intoxicating, a wonderful blissful state of consciousness! Of his interpretations of Christ’s words I wrote in my personal notes: “I have watched Master’s face as he dictates his inspirations. The joy and wisdom of another world are expressed there. His eyes are afire with a blaze of love for Christ, and his voice is permeated with tenderness. It evokes reflections of how Christ must have spoken centuries ago.”

Of his own experience, the Guru remarked during that period: “I am worshipping the Father in the greatest joy and glory that ever was given to me. I never dreamed before how deep are the teachings of Jesus. Through the interpretation that is being given to me now, I see that they express the same truths as Patanjali’s aphorisms, the condensed essence of Indian Yoga. Understood in this light, they can build a new age.”

Tara Mata, a close disciple of Gurudeva whom he had appointed as editor of his writings, wrote to a literary acquaintance describing the Guru’s commentaries on Christ’s words: “He will come to a passage which is so obscure that it defies all

possibility of plain interpretation. He will look blankly at me or one of his other secretaries for a while, close his eyes, and presently out will come the whole plain meaning. He gets it entirely from inspiration; in fact, it is only through him that I know what ‘inspired books’ really means.”⁵

Readers of the serialized Second Coming articles in Self-Realization Fellowship’s magazine were also uplifted. The pastor of a Congregational Church in England, the Reverend Arthur Porter, a Doctor of Divinity who had taken the Guru’s classes in New York City years earlier, wrote of Paramahansaji’s interpretation as “a masterpiece of divine insight.”

“One realizes that the complexities, the seeming irrelevancies and contradiction of the New Testament, have at last been solved in the white light of a soulful penetration,” his testimonial went on. “[This] is not a product of scholarly study or comparison of existing Biblical commentaries, but has come forth in an awe-inspiring originality from the depths of an unerring spiritual and intuitional judgment. It will live when whole libraries of intellectual theorizings on Christ have long been forgotten—the most important clarification of his teachings that has ever been offered the Christian world.”

During this period of working on the Gospel commentaries in Encinitas, Paramahansaji began plans to have the material made available in book form. An interested gentleman with outside business contacts offered to seek a publisher. However, these attempts were unsuccessful; and Paramahansaji’s Self-Realization Fellowship organization at that time had neither the printing facilities nor funds required to publish and promote a major book. Paramahansaji accepted the resulting evaluation that for the worldwide public distribution he envisioned, the manuscript would require further attention. “Continue to print the articles in our magazine for our readers,” he instructed us. “Later I will have to do more work on them.” In the meantime, he had already turned his attention, and that of his assisting disciples, to his Autobiography of a Yogi, which was completed and published in late

1946

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The final years of Gurudeva’s life, from

1948

until

1952

, were given over to long periods of intense concentration on his writings, his spiritual legacy to future generations. Knowing that his time on earth was drawing to a close, he found refuge for that work at a secluded retreat in the Mojave Desert, accompanied by a handful of close disciples who were assisting him, including his editor Tara Mata and the young editor he was training, Mrinalini Mata.⁶ He was focused on completing the major publications that would make permanent the teachings he had been ordained to bring to the world. Much of this time was devoted to his translation of and voluminous commentary on the Bhagavad Gita: God Talks With Arjuna. He also undertook a concentrated review of many of his other works. His instruction for the completion of this present book was to draw on the full measure of material he had given on the life and teachings of Jesus in order to impart to a world audience the comprehensive presentation of the true teachings of the blessed Christ that he had divinely received.

In his talks through the years, including weekly sermons at Self-Realization Fellowship temples, he often included some commentary on, or applicable to, one or more verses from the Gospels. From these, precious realizations about Christ's life and words came into being—freshly expressed concepts, clarification and elaboration of points Paramahansaji had introduced in the magazine serialization, and also new explanations of important Gospel passages that had not been included in the magazine series. These and other of Paramahansaji's truth-perceptions, forthcoming during his full lifetime of building and serving his Self-Realization Fellowship/Yogoda Satsanga organization, have been made an integrated whole in this definitive edition of *The Second Coming of Christ*.

Preparing this manuscript for publication in book form also entailed minimizing duplication of basic concepts that had been necessary when the commentaries were presented serially in the magazine over two decades—and also condensation of material that had been included in the early magazine articles primarily for Paramahansaji's students and followers and later incorporated into the printed Self-Realization Fellowship Lessons or elsewhere at his request. Additional work stemmed from the fact that in the earliest stages of composing his Gospel commentaries, Paramahansaji made use of a book that had been

given to him entitled *The Walks and Words of Jesus*, by Reverend M. N. Olmsted, in which the author had compiled into one chronological narrative the events and sayings recounted in all four of the Gospels (King James version). While the result was a very readable account of Jesus' life and words, inevitably some significant phrases or points were omitted or minimized when variant tellings from two or more Gospels were merged into one. Because of this, Paramahansaji had stopped using Rev. Olmsted's book partway through the magazine series, and switched to direct quotes from the King James Bible—which he had always used when giving explanation of Bible passages in his classes and temple services. Accordingly, in preparing this book, wording of the verses from the King James Bible has been used throughout, and parallel references from all the Gospels have been cited in order to insure a thorough presentation of Jesus' words.

In the fifty years since Paramahansaji's passing, advances in physics, medicine, biology, and other fields—as well as archaeological and historical research that has shed much light on the early Christian movement—have contributed additional scientific and historical information pertinent to Paramahansaji's farseeing spiritual vision and understanding of Jesus' life and world mission. In publisher's footnotes, we have cited some of the more recent discoveries.

This two-volume scriptural treatise thus represents the inclusive culmination of Paramahansa Yogananda's divine commission to make manifest to the world the essence of “original Christianity as taught by Jesus Christ.”

In giving the foregoing background as to how this book came into being, my hope has been to convey also to the reader at least something of the state of consciousness of the author. Truly his perceptions were of God. Paramahansaji's relationship with Christ far transcended a philosophical or moral appreciation of the message of the Gospels. He knew Jesus Christ in a personal way. He knew him through directly partaking of the infinite Christ Consciousness, God's consciousness omnipresent in creation, that the Master of Galilee had manifested—the consciousness through which Jesus had performed not only his wonders of healing and other “supernatural” feats, but the far greater miracles of unconditional love, forgiveness, and spiritual transformation of lives. Paramahansaji endeavored during his thirty years of teaching in the West to awaken that consciousness in all who would know Christ truly.

I had been at Mount Washington about a month when the Guru conducted the

first all-day Christmas meditation. For over eight hours that day he meditated with a group of Self-Realization Fellowship members and friends, remaining continuously in communion with God and Christ. As I sat in the afterglow of that memorable day, I remember thinking: “Here is a man from the Orient, of Hindu origin, yet such is his love for Christ that he has seen him and communed with him. It is he who has shown the West how truly to celebrate the birth and life of Jesus.”

During the more than twenty years of my discipleship that I served as Paramahansaji’s confidential secretary and assistant, never once did I see him step down from the lofty plane of Christlike behavior. I came to understand that his attunement with Jesus was founded not only in the profound depths of his joyous inner communion with the infinite Christ Consciousness in samadhi meditation, but also in his own realization and manifestation of the ideals of unconditional love, forgiveness, compassion, adherence to the highest divine truths, that were the hallmarks of Jesus’ incarnation on earth. Thus, Paramahansaji’s commentaries, divinely received and their truths realized, provide us an authentic glimpse of the spirit of those days when Lord Jesus walked with his beloved disciples by the shores of the Sea of Galilee and preached in the villages and countryside, and in the streets and temple of Jerusalem, giving his teachings of the “new testament” for the world. Paramahansaji takes us with Jesus on the journey of that divine life, from his birth to his death and resurrection, inviting the reader into the inner circle of Jesus’ disciples to know the love and wisdom of the Christ they knew and followed. As the Discourses unfold, the universal precepts of Jesus are brought alive for today. Truth does not change with time; nor does humanity’s basic potential and irrevocable choice: either to remain hapless victims of flawed human nature or to ascend to the glorious fulfillment of our blissful, immortal God-nature.

It is my hope and prayer that in this new millennium the publication of my Guru’s long-awaited Second Coming of Christ kindle the flame of love divine in the hearts of all who read these pages. The message herein illumines the universal path that welcomes and embraces persons of every race, nationality, and religion. May the surpassing truth and inspiration set forth in these volumes help to usher the world into an enlightened era of peace, unity, world brotherhood, and communion with our one Father-Mother-Friend-Beloved God.

Los Angeles

February

2004

Introduction

In titling this work *The Second Coming of Christ*, I am not referring to a literal return of Jesus to earth. He came two thousand years ago and, after imparting a universal path to God's kingdom, was crucified and resurrected; his reappearance to the masses now is not necessary for the fulfillment of his teachings. What is necessary is for the cosmic wisdom and divine perception of Jesus to speak again through each one's own experience and understanding of the infinite Christ Consciousness that was incarnate in Jesus. That will be his true Second Coming.

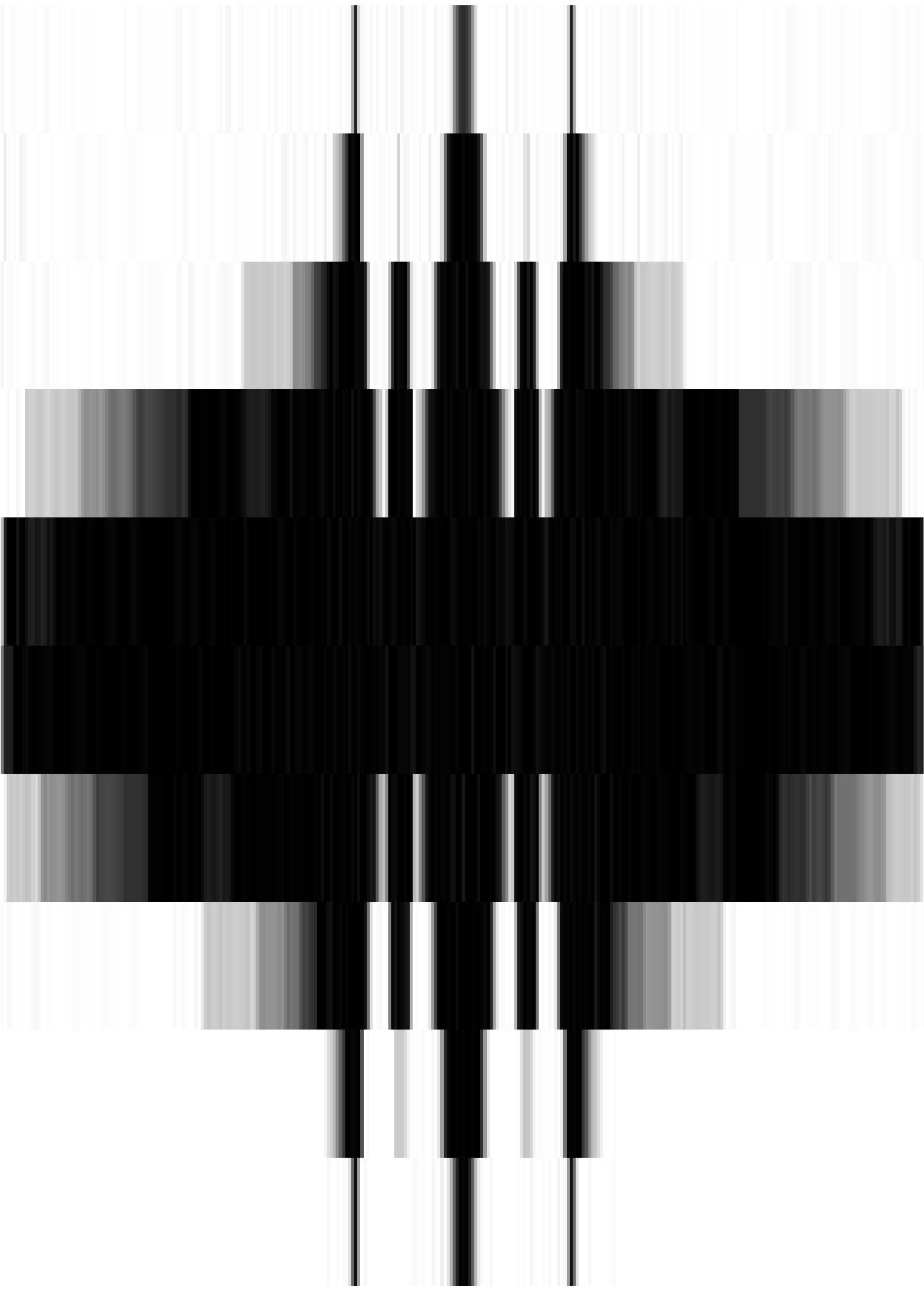


Difference in meaning between “Jesus” and “Christ”

There is a distinguishing difference of meaning between Jesus and Christ. His given name was Jesus; his honorific title was “Christ.” In his little human body called Jesus was born the vast Christ Consciousness, the omniscient Intelligence of God omnipresent in every part and particle of creation. This Consciousness is the “only begotten Son of God,” so designated because it is the sole perfect reflection in creation of the Transcendental Absolute, Spirit or God the Father.

It was of that Infinite Consciousness, replete with the love and bliss of God, that Saint John spoke when he said: “As many as received him [the Christ Consciousness], to them gave he power to become the sons of God.”¹ Thus according to Jesus’ own teaching as recorded by his most highly advanced apostle, John, all souls who become united with Christ Consciousness by intuitive Self-realization² are rightly called sons of God.

A small cup cannot hold an ocean within itself. Likewise, the cup of human consciousness, limited by the physical and mental instrumentalities of material perceptions, cannot grasp the universal Christ Consciousness, no matter how desirous one may be of doing so. By the definite science of meditation known for millenniums to the yogis and sages of India, and to Jesus, any seeker of God can enlarge the caliber of his consciousness to omniscience—to receive within himself the Universal Intelligence of God.



True understanding of Jesus' teachings comes through communion with Christ Consciousness

What Jesus gave as chronicled in the New Testament of the Bible very few people understand. They just read what he said and quote it; and because it is written in the biblical Scripture they believe it blindly, with little effort to realize the wisdom therein through personal experience. Realization is to attune one's consciousness with Christ; then the right comprehension will come. When persons try to deduce the meaning of Jesus' words by intellectual analysis alone, or from the perspective of a specific dogma, they inevitably distort his sayings to suit their purpose—however well-intentioned—or to comfortably accommodate their level of understanding. Christ-wisdom has to be grasped by communion, not by rationalization.

The only reliable standard of scriptural interpretation is the testimony of actual perception—to go into that state of consciousness in which the prophets perceived the truths they expounded and thereby witness the meaning they intended. The words of Jesus fully unfold their wisdom only to those who meditate deeply on the Christ Consciousness that Jesus possessed. Then one understands Jesus in the light of his spiritual experience of the Cosmic Consciousness of the Heavenly Father, realized through the Father's Christ-Intelligence reflection present in all creation.

The detailed knowledge of the heavens as discovered by great astronomers through study and the use of telescopes could not have been acquired by lay persons lacking that training and equipment. Likewise, what enlightened sages know about Truth and Spirit through the clarifying telescope of their intuition can be known by ordinary individuals only when they have similarly extended their vision by the use of their inner telescopic intuition erstwhile hidden in the chamber of their souls.

Christ did not go through the sublime drama of his life merely to provide sermon material for generations of preachers and their Sunday audiences. He lived, died, and was gloriously resurrected as an inspiration to others to live a divine life and attain in themselves his experiences of God and the afterlife.

Jesus Christ was crucified once; but his teachings are crucified daily at the hands of superstition, dogmatism, and pedantic theological misinterpretations. My aim

in offering to the world this spiritual interpretation of his words is to show how the Christ Consciousness of Jesus, free from such crucifixion, can be brought back a second time into the souls of all who make the effort to receive it. Surely, with the dawn of this more enlightened age, the time has come to stop the crucifixion of the Christ teachings as given by Jesus. His pristine message should be resurrected from its entombment by Self-realization, the inner enlightened experience of truth.

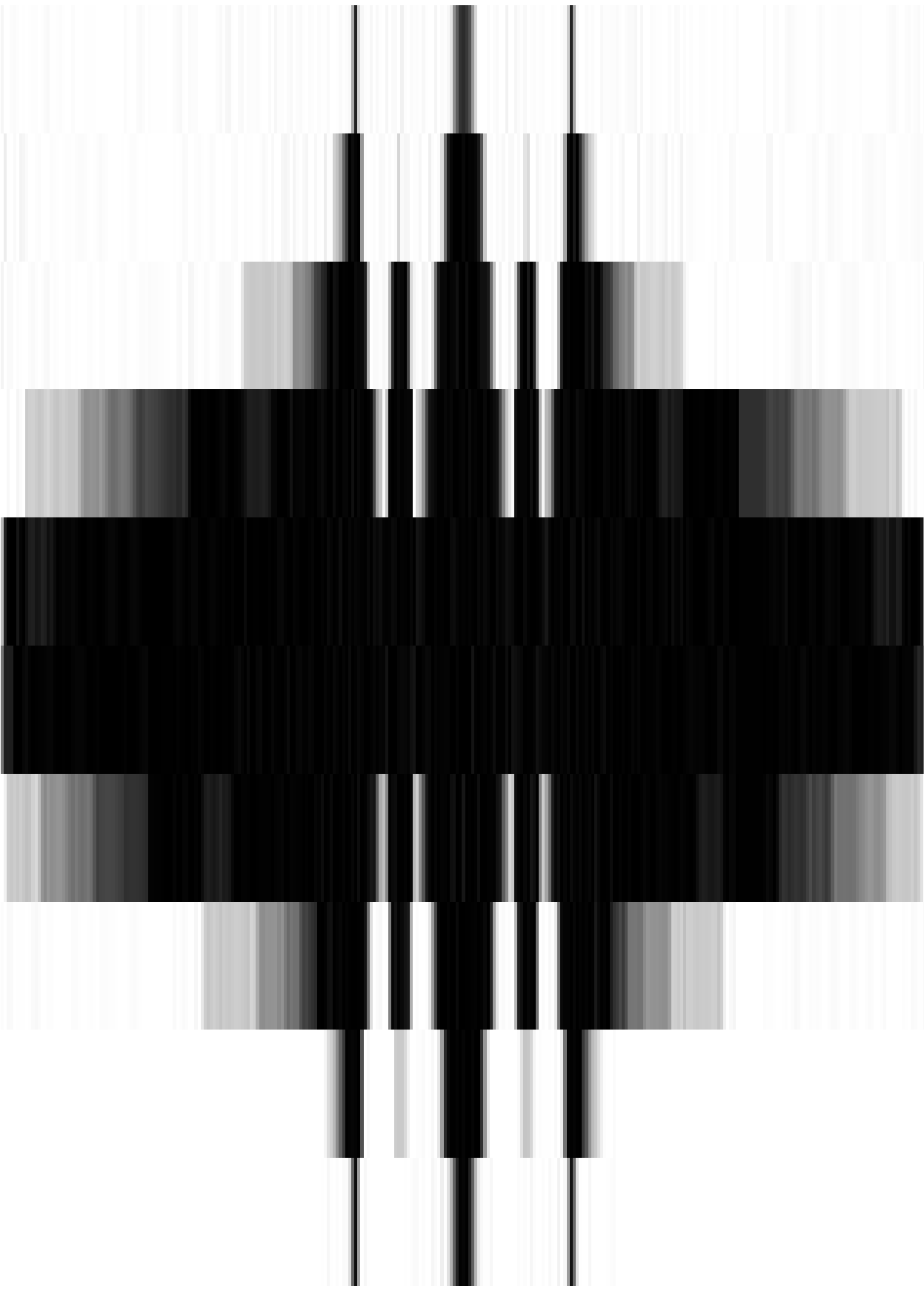
In these pages I offer to the world an intuitionally perceived spiritual interpretation of the words spoken by Jesus, truths received through actual communion with Christ Consciousness. They will be found to be universally true if they are studied conscientiously and meditated upon with soul-awakened intuitive perception. They reveal the perfect unity that exists among the revelations of the Christian Bible, the Bhagavad Gita of India, and all other time-tested true scriptures.

The saviors of the world do not come to foster inimical doctrinal divisions; their teachings should not be used toward that end. It is something of a misnomer even to refer to the New Testament as the “Christian” Bible, for it does not belong exclusively to any one sect. Truth is meant for the blessing and upliftment of the entire human race. As the Christ Consciousness is universal, so does Jesus Christ belong to all.

Though I emphasize the message of Lord Jesus in the New Testament and the yoga science of God-union delineated by Bhagavan Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita as the summum bonum of the way to God-realization, I honor the diverse expressions of truth flowing from the One God through the scriptures of His various emissaries. All such scriptures have a threefold meaning—material, mental, and spiritual. They are divine wells of “living waters” that can quench humanity’s thirsts of body, mind, and soul. The timeless revelations sent by God through illumined prophets serve human beings on each of the three levels of their nature.

The material meaning of the teachings of Christ emphasizes their value as applied to physical and social well-being—the eternal laws of right living pertinent to man’s personal, familial, business, community, national, and international duties as a member of God’s worldwide human family.

The mental interpretation explains the application of Christ's teaching for the improvement of man's mind and understanding—development of his intellectual and psychological faculties, his thoughts and moral values.



Threefold meaning identical in the Hindu and Christian Bibles

Interpreted in relation to the spiritual side of man's being, Jesus' teachings point out the way to the kingdom of God—personal realization of each soul's infinite divine potentials as an immortal child of God, through devout communion and ultimate oneness with the Heavenly Father-Creator of all.

Although both the material and the psychological interpretations of scriptures are necessary for the right conduct of a balanced, God-centered life, it is the spiritual interpretations that the God-sent emissaries of scriptural content intended as of supreme importance. Even the most materially or intellectually accomplished individual may fail to make a true success of life. Rather, it is the person of spiritual attainment who scientifically achieves all-round success, which means to be happy, healthy, intelligent, contented, and truly prosperous with blissful, all-fulfilling wisdom through God-communion.

The Bible and the Bhagavad Gita are satisfyingly complete, containing the science of life, the eternal principles of truth and philosophy of living that make life beautiful and harmonious. Philosophy is the love of wisdom; religion, as taught by the scriptural prophets, is likewise devotion to highest truth. The personal realization of truth is the science behind all sciences. But for most persons, religion has devolved to a matter of belief only. One believes in Catholicism, another believes in some Protestant denomination, others assert belief that the Jewish or Hindu or Muslim or Buddhist religion is the true way. The science of religion identifies the universal truths common to all—the basis of religion—and teaches how by their practical application persons can build their lives according to the Divine Plan. India's teaching of Raja Yoga, the "royal" science of the soul, supersedes the orthodoxy of religion by setting forth systematically the practice of those methods that are universally necessary for the perfection of every individual, regardless of race or creed.

There is a vast difference between theoretical religion and philosophy and their actual practice. Practically speaking, philosophy may be divided into three parts—ethics, psychology, and metaphysics. These three departments are covered in both the Hindu and Christian Bibles.

Ethics—scriptural truth as applied to material life—sets forth the science of human duty, moral laws, how to behave.

Psychology—truth applied to mental well-being—teaches one how to analyze himself; for no spiritual progress is possible without introspection and self-study by which one endeavors to find out what he is so that he can correct himself and become what he should be.

Metaphysics—truths pertaining to the spiritual dimension of life—explains the nature of God and the science of knowing Him.

These three, taken together and put into practice, constitute religion. The ethical moral principles prescribed in the New Testament are the same as in the Gita. The psychology and the metaphysics of these two scriptures, rightly interpreted, likewise coincide in every respect. The superficial difference is that the Hindu scriptures—of which the Gita is a sublime summation—were written in a higher age of civilization, against a background of greater understanding among the general populace. Though Jesus himself embodied the highest wisdom, he expressed truth in simple, concise language; whereas the scriptures of India are composed in Sanskrit terminology of extraordinary depth and scientific precision. Point by point I have compared the salient message of the Bible and Hindu scriptures, and have found only harmonious unity between them. It is from this understanding that these explanations of Christ's words have been written. By way of example, some parallel or complementary verses from the Bhagavad Gita are cited. I have given a detailed explanation of these verses and the entirety of the Gita in a separate work,³ to which I encourage readers to refer for additional insight into the truths implicit but not elaborated in Jesus' words that have come down to us in the four canonical Gospels. Had Jesus himself written his teachings, they might indeed have been expressed in greater depth than in the generalities of a conversation with his disciples or a discourse to the multitudes. Certainly in the Revelation of St. John we are led by means of metaphor into the profound insights of the yoga science in which Jesus initiated his advanced disciple John, and others, whose consciousness thereby ascended to the exalted Self-realized state of the kingdom of God within.

A scripture is mute testimony of spiritual truth; a divine personage is veritably a living scripture. Like tiny seeds that produce mighty trees, scriptural truths reveal their power and wisdom-yielding qualities in the most inspiringly useful way when manifested in the lives of God-realized souls.



Jesus is real; I have seen him

That the eternal verities were embodied in Jesus was declared by him when he said of his Christ Consciousness, "I am the way, the truth, and the life."⁴ At once divine and human, Jesus lived among God's children as a nurturing "big brother," beloved of the Father of all, sent on earth to redeem his desire-deluded brothers and sisters by urging them to become like him. In the Gospel record of his life we find his path to the kingdom of God taught not only by precept but by example.⁵

The veracity of the Biblical stories of Jesus is regarded skeptically by many in the modern age. Scoffing at supernormal capacities that challenge common prejudices about what is humanly possible, some staunchly deny that the God-man of the Gospels ever lived. Others concede a measure of historicity to Jesus, but depict him only as a charismatic ethical or spiritual teacher. But to the New Testament account of the Christ of Galilee I humbly add my own testimony. From personal experience I know the reality of his life and miracles, for I have seen him many, many times, and communed with him, and received his direct confirmation about these matters.

He has come to me often as the baby Jesus and as the young Christ. I have seen him as he was before his crucifixion, his face very sad; and I have seen him in the glorious form in which he appeared after his resurrection.

Jesus did not have a light complexion with blue eyes and blond hair as many Western painters have depicted him. His eyes were dark brown, and he had the olive-colored skin of his Asiatic heritage. His nose was a little flattened at the tip. His moustache, sparse beard, and long hair were black. His face and body were beautifully formed. Of all the pictures I have seen of him in the West, the rendering by Hofmann comes closest to showing the accurate features of the incarnate Jesus.⁶

It is an erroneous assumption of limited minds that great ones such as Jesus, Krishna, and other divine incarnations are gone from the earth when they are no longer visible to human sight. This is not so. When a liberated master has dissolved his body in Spirit, and yet manifests in form to receptive devotees (as Jesus has appeared throughout the centuries since his passing, such as to Saint

Francis, Saint Teresa, and many others of East and West), it means he has an ongoing role to play in the destiny of the world. Even when masters have completed the specific role for which they took on a physical incarnation, it is the divinely ordained task of some to look after the welfare of humanity and assist in guiding its progress.

Jesus Christ is very much alive and active today. In Spirit and occasionally taking on a flesh-and-blood form, he is working unseen by the masses for the regeneration of the world. With his all-embracing love, Jesus is not content merely to enjoy his blissful consciousness in Heaven. He is deeply concerned for mankind and wishes to give his followers the means to attain the divine freedom of entry into God's Infinite Kingdom. He is disappointed because many are the churches and temples founded in his name, often prosperous and powerful, but where is the communion that he stressed—actual contact with God? Jesus wants temples to be established in human souls, first and foremost; then established outwardly in physical places of worship. Instead, there are countless huge edifices with vast congregations being indoctrinated in churchianity, but few souls who are really in touch with Christ through deep prayer and meditation.



Jesus' wish to restore his original teachings to the world

To reestablish God in the temples of souls through revival of the original teachings of God-communion as propounded by Christ and Krishna is why I was sent to the West by Mahavatar Babaji, the deathless Yogi-Christ of modern India, whose existence was revealed to the world at large for the first time in

1946

in *Autobiography of a Yogi*:

“Babaji is ever in communion with Christ; together they send out vibrations of redemption and have planned the spiritual technique of salvation for this age. The work of these two fully illumined masters—one with a body, and one without a body—is to inspire the nations to forsake wars, race hatreds, religious sectarianism, and the boomerang evils of materialism. Babaji is well aware of the trend of modern times, especially of the influence and complexities of Western civilization, and realizes the necessity of spreading the self-liberations of yoga equally in the West and in the East.”⁷

It was Mahavatar Babaji who, in consonance with the wish of Christ, devolved upon me the tremendous task of properly interpreting for the world the profound meaning of Jesus' words. In

1894

Babaji instructed my guru, Swami Sri Yukteswar, to write a comparative study of the harmony between the Christian and Hindu scriptures from the point of view of India's Sanatana Dharma, eternal truth.⁸ Babaji further told my Guru that I would be sent to him to train for my mission in the West: to teach, side by side, original Christianity as taught by Jesus Christ and original Yoga as taught by Bhagavan Krishna.

For uncounted millenniums, India has been the spiritual lightland of the earth. It is in India that the divine soul-science of yoga—union with God through direct personal communion with Him—has been preserved. That is why Jesus went to India as a youth, and why he returned to India and conferred with Babaji for the spiritual evolution of the world.⁹ Time will testify to this truth, that they have given to the world through the Kriya Yoga teachings of Self-Realization

Fellowship (Yogoda Satsanga Society of India) the techniques of meditation by which each soul can reunite with God through inner realization of the universal Christ-Krishna Consciousness.

The promise of Jesus to send the Holy Ghost after he was gone¹⁰ few in the Christian world have understood. Holy Ghost is the sacred, invisible vibratory power of God that actively sustains the universe: the Word, or Aum, Cosmic Vibration, the Great Comforter, the Savior from all sorrows. Within the Holy Ghost Cosmic Vibration is the all-pervading Christ, the Son or Consciousness of God immanent in creation. The method of contacting this Cosmic Vibration, the Holy Ghost, is for the first time being spread worldwide by means of definite meditation techniques of the Kriya Yoga science. Through the blessing of communion with the Holy Ghost, the cup of human consciousness is expanded to receive the ocean of Christ Consciousness. The adept in the practice of the science of Kriya Yoga who consciously experiences the presence of the Holy Ghost Comforter and merges in the Son, or immanent Christ Consciousness, attains thereby realization of God the Father and entry into the infinite kingdom of God.

Christ will thus appear a second time in the consciousness of every devout adept who masters the technique of contacting the Holy Ghost, the bestower of indescribable blissful comfort in Spirit. Those who have spiritual ears to hear, let them hear that the promise of Jesus Christ to send the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, is being fulfilled. These teachings have been sent to explain the truth as Jesus intended it to be known in the world—not to give a new Christianity, but to give the real Christ-teaching: how to become like Christ, how to resurrect the Eternal Christ within one's Self.

To interpret the words of Jesus, not according to whim or dogmatic emotionalism or theological rationalization, but as he meant them, one must be in tune with him. One must know what Christ was and is; and that can be understood only in rapport with his state of Christ Consciousness.



These interpretations inspired by God and Christ

Identifying myself with the consciousness of Jesus, I have felt what he felt when he spoke to his disciples and to the crowds as recorded in the Gospels. What I have tried to convey are the thoughts and consciousness of Jesus that were behind his words when he uttered them. I commune with Christ and ask him: “I don’t want to interpret the Bible from my own views. Will you interpret it?” Then he comes to me.

In attunement with Christ in ecstasy and in spirit, I have taken down his explanations to the best of my ability as they came through me; those revelations are written in this treatise. I do not explain. I see. I do not tell you what I think, but what I am led to say by inner realization.

Many of Jesus’ sayings and parables, which have undergone transformations due to mistranslation from the Aramaic, I did not understand at a first reading.¹¹ But as I prayed and attuned myself with him, I received the meaning directly from him. Revelations that I never expected have been given to me; little did I dream what wealth of truth lay concealed. I believe that readers of this book will find that meanings buried twenty centuries have been brought out here for the first time, interpretations of the words of Jesus as he would talk to the people of today—truths he conveyed to his disciples and which he wants understood by devotees of the world throughout all time. Those who are receptive will feel through direct perception the message that Christ is speaking to them; for all I have done is to receive and convey the fullness of his thoughts and consciousness.

My singular desire to discern rightly the true meaning of Christ’s words was given wondrous confirmation one night during a period when I was working on these interpretations. It was in the Hermitage at Encinitas, California. I was sitting in my darkened room in meditation, praying deeply from my soul, when suddenly the blackness gave way to a celestial opal-blue effulgence. The entire room was like an opal flame. In that light the radiant form of the blessed Lord Jesus appeared.

His face was divine. His appearance was of a young man in his twenties, with sparse beard and moustache; his long black hair, parted in the middle, had a golden light about it. His feet were not touching the floor. His eyes were the

most beautiful, the most loving eyes I have ever seen. The whole universe I saw glistening in those eyes. They were infinitely changing, and with each transition of expression I intuitively understood the wisdom conveyed. In his glorious eyes I felt the power that upholds and commands the myriad worlds.

As he gazed down at me, a Holy Grail appeared at his mouth. It descended to my lips and touched them; then went up again to Jesus. After a few moments of rapt silent communion, he said to me: “Thou dost drink of the same cup of which I drink.”

At that I bowed down. I was joyous beyond dreams to receive the testimony of his blessings, of his presence. Exactly the words that he said to me in this vision he also said to Thomas, which I never read before.¹² His words meant that I was drinking of his wisdom through the Holy Grail of his perceptions which he has dropped in my consciousness, and he was pleased. He approved very dearly and blessed me for writing these interpretations. This I can say without pride, because the interpretation of Christ’s words herein is not mine. It has been given to me. I am happy this book is coming through me; but I am not the author. It is Christ. I am only the vehicle through which it is explained.

I hear Christ in the land of my inspiration; I behold Christ speaking to me all the eternal wisdom he intended to convey within his pregnant words. Even when urged by well-meaning British teachers in my youth, I never read the New Testament, except for a few passages; for had I done so, theology under their tutelage would have blinded my vision and prejudiced my hearing, and I could not have heard Christ’s voice or seen him speak. Now I rejoice as I will always long to rejoice, to hear Christ speak to me his words of life, truth, and eternal liberation for all.

Jesus said, “We speak that we do know,”¹³ and through this new interpretation I feel certain that people will be enabled to understand that true knowledge, the wisdom-realizations, which he meant the world to have. Therefore, in spite of multitudinous interpretations of his words already written by others, I believe that Christ has inspired me to lift the veil of misunderstanding and misinterpretation of his teachings and utter them anew in their native purity, divested of misconceptions, and stress their applicability to the changed conditions and life of modern civilization. The people of today should break through the dark glass of theology—intellectual knowledge about God—and perceive God directly.¹⁴ Such is my conviction, in thus writing the first thorough

study by an Oriental of the words of Christ, who also was born in an Oriental land and who spent many years in India.

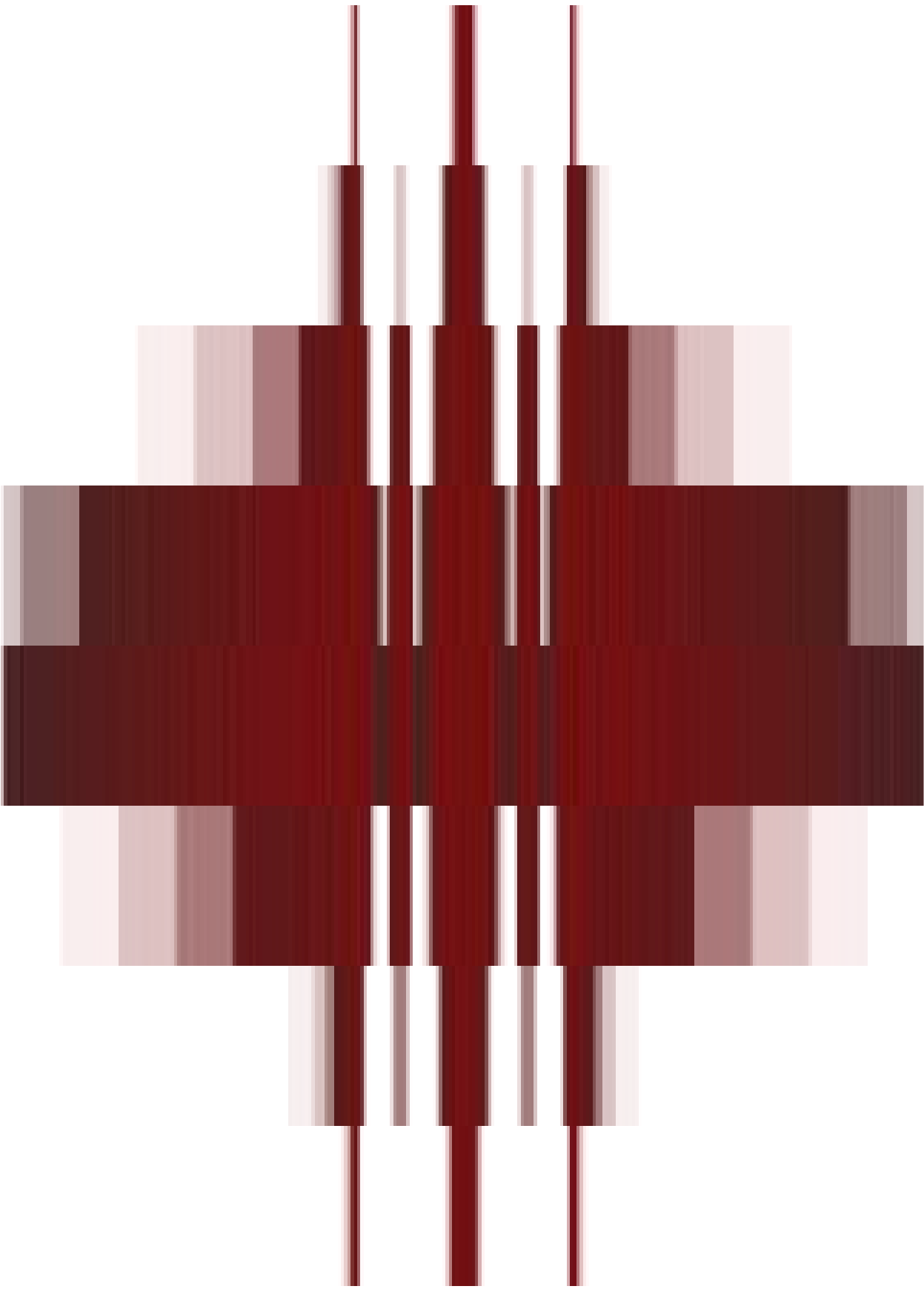
Universal Christ Consciousness appeared in the vehicle of Jesus; and now, through the Self-Realization Kriya Yoga teachings of meditation and these intuitionally received scriptural interpretations, the Christ Consciousness is coming a second time to manifest in the consciousness of true seekers of God.

As you read the pages of *The Second Coming*, you will see the mist of difficulty, misunderstanding, and mystery about the words of Jesus lifted forever after the lapse of twenty centuries. Many sects, many denominations, many beliefs, many persecutions, many conflicts and upheavals have been created by misinterpretations. Now, Christ reveals the consummate message in the simple words he spoke to an ancient people in a less-advanced age of civilization. Read, understand, and feel Christ speaking to you through this "Second Coming" bible, urging you to be redeemed by realization of the true "Second Coming," the resurrection within you of the Infinite Christ Consciousness.

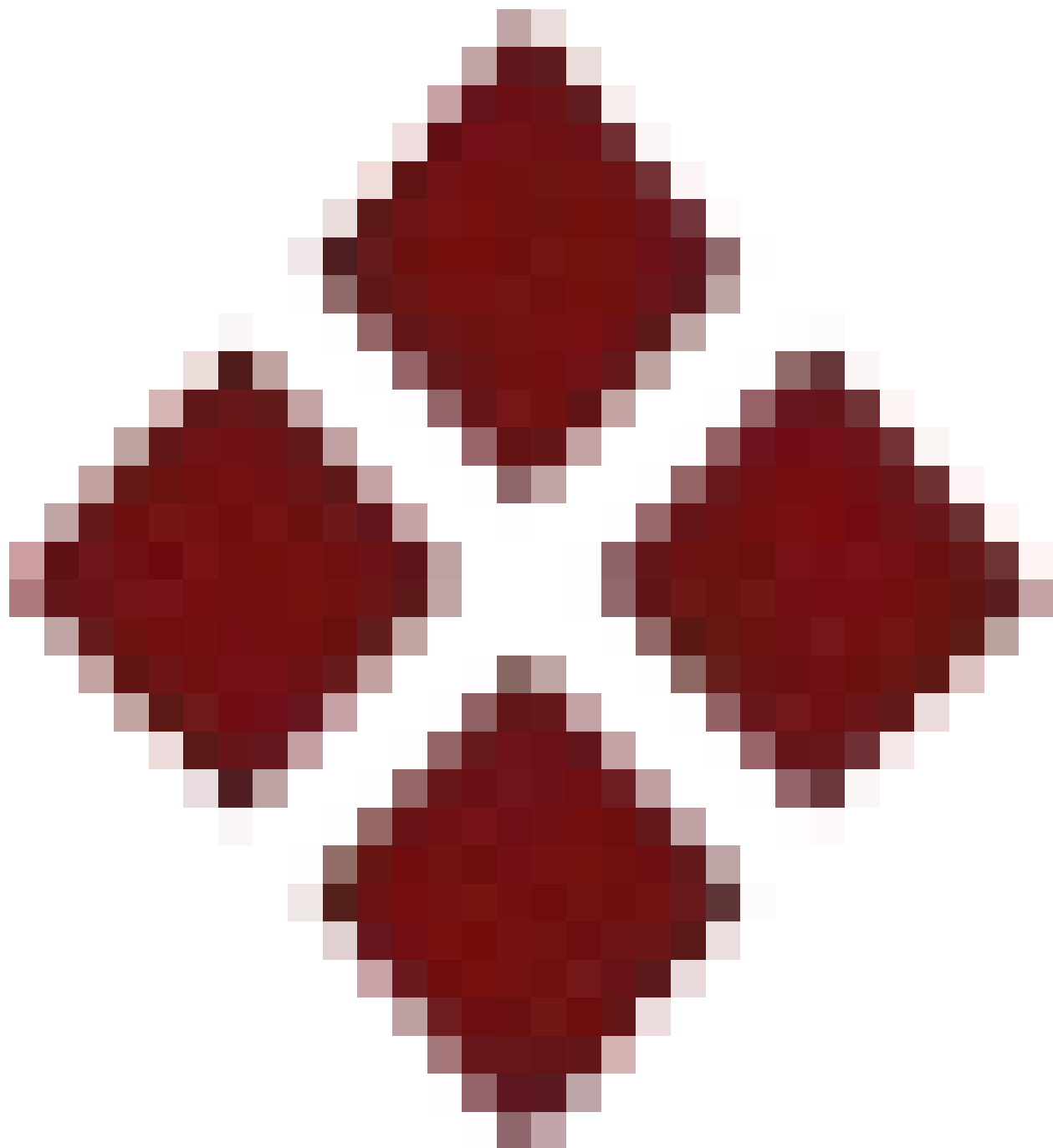


Discourse 1

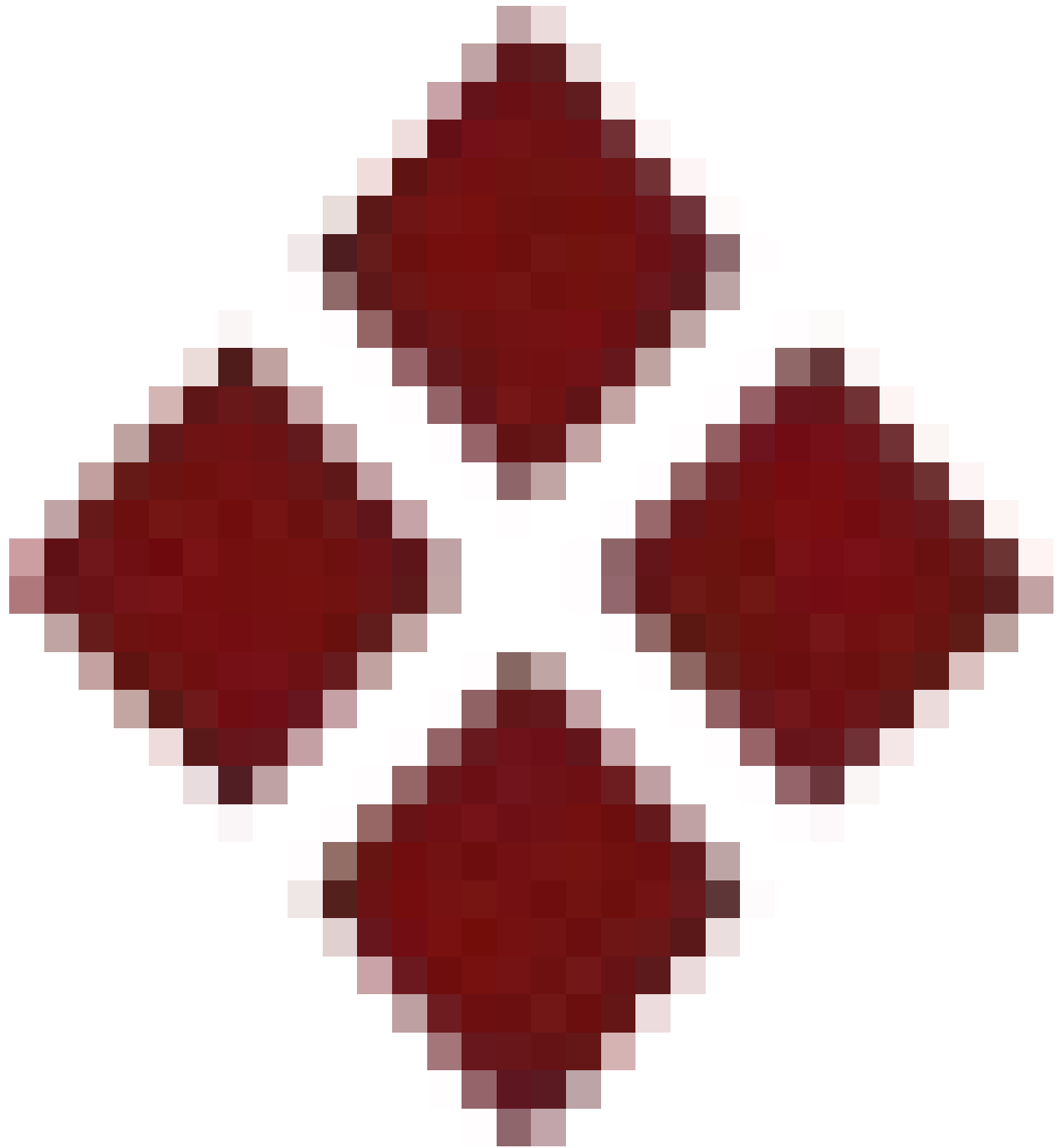
Divine Incarnations: God's Emissaries



The Mission of Divine Love That Jesus Came to Fulfill



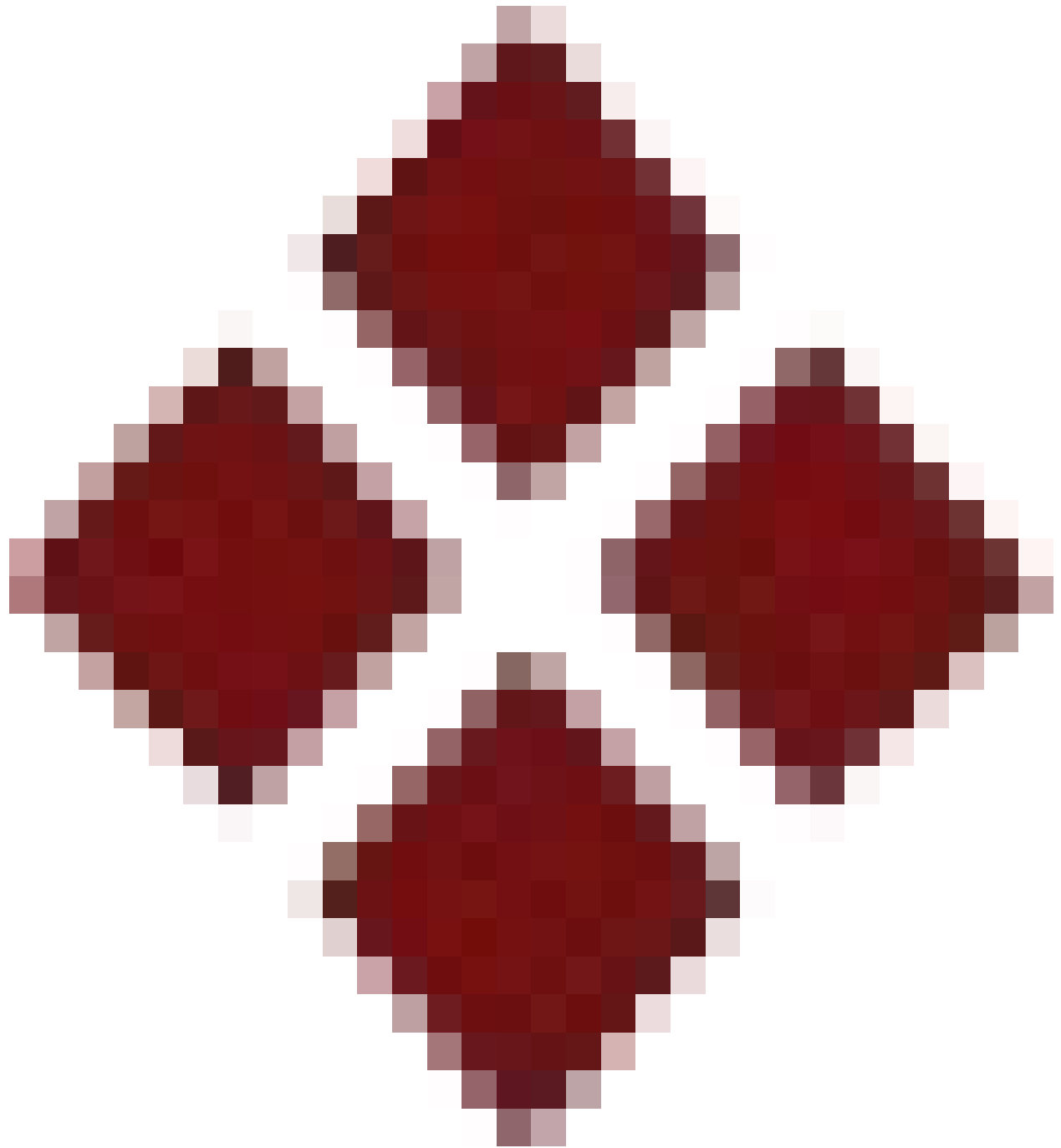
The Nature of an Avatar's Consciousness



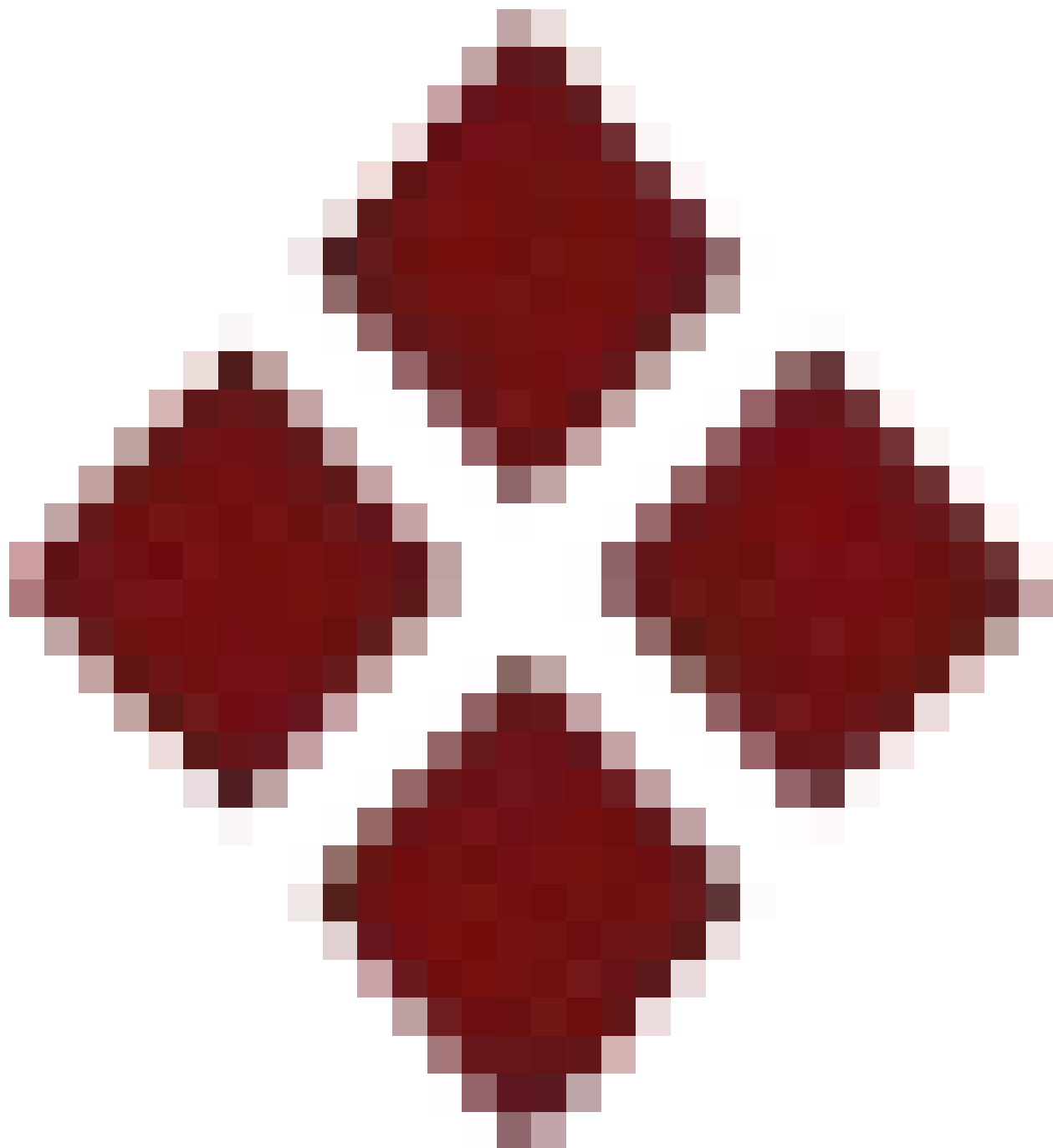
The One Spirit: Source of All Creation



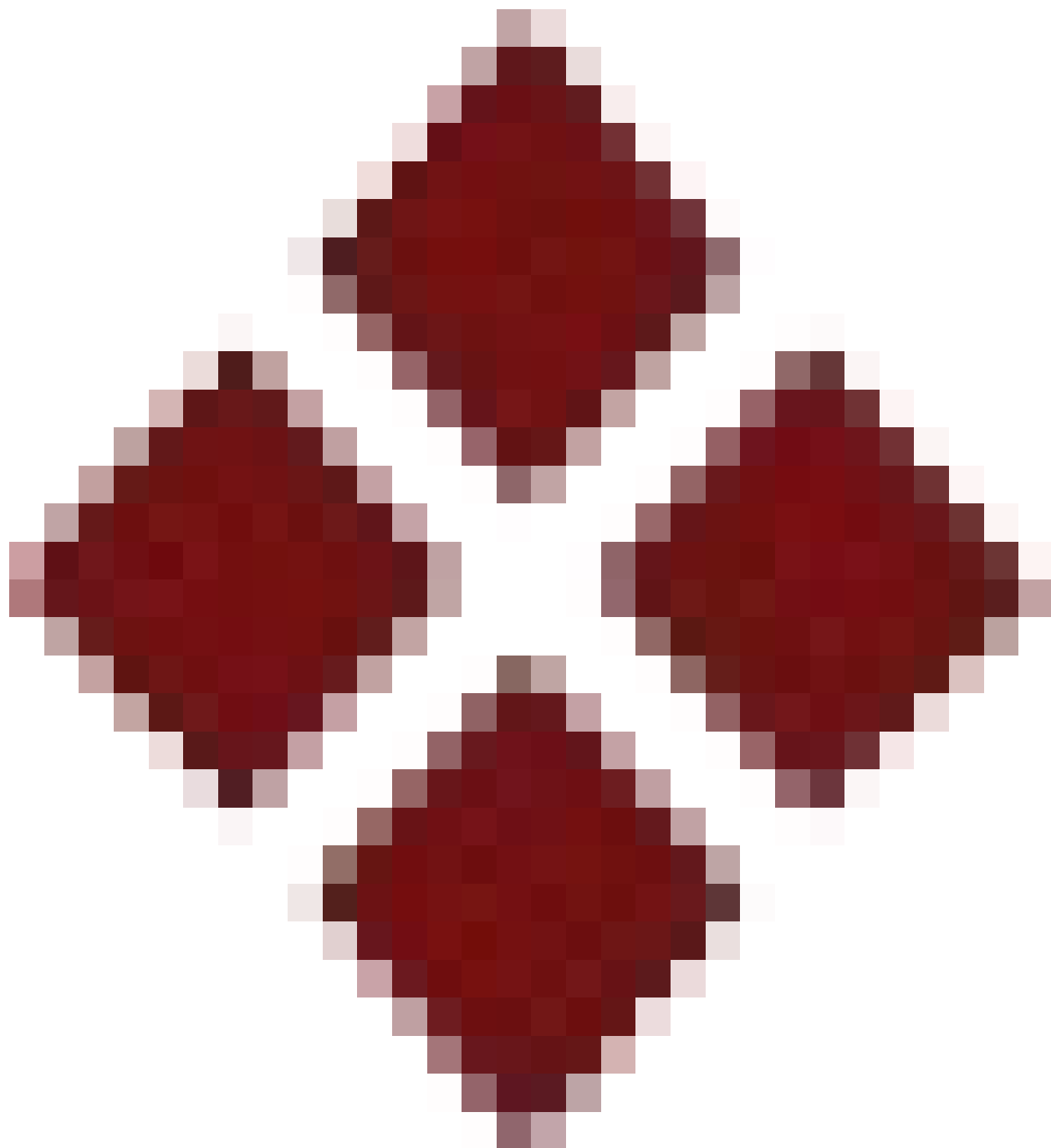
True Meaning of the Holy Trinity



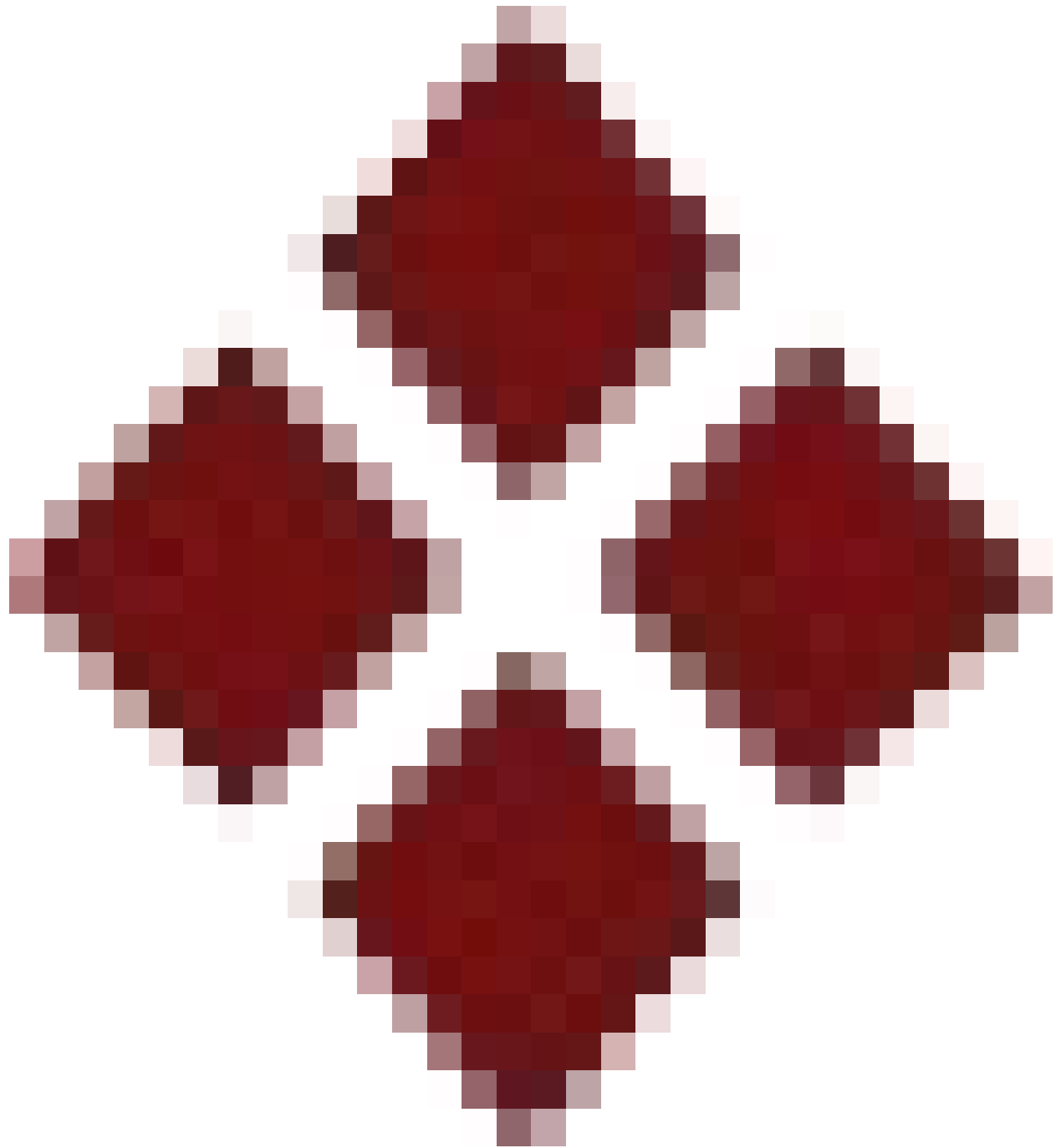
The Cosmic Word or Holy Ghost: Intelligent Creative Vibration of Aum



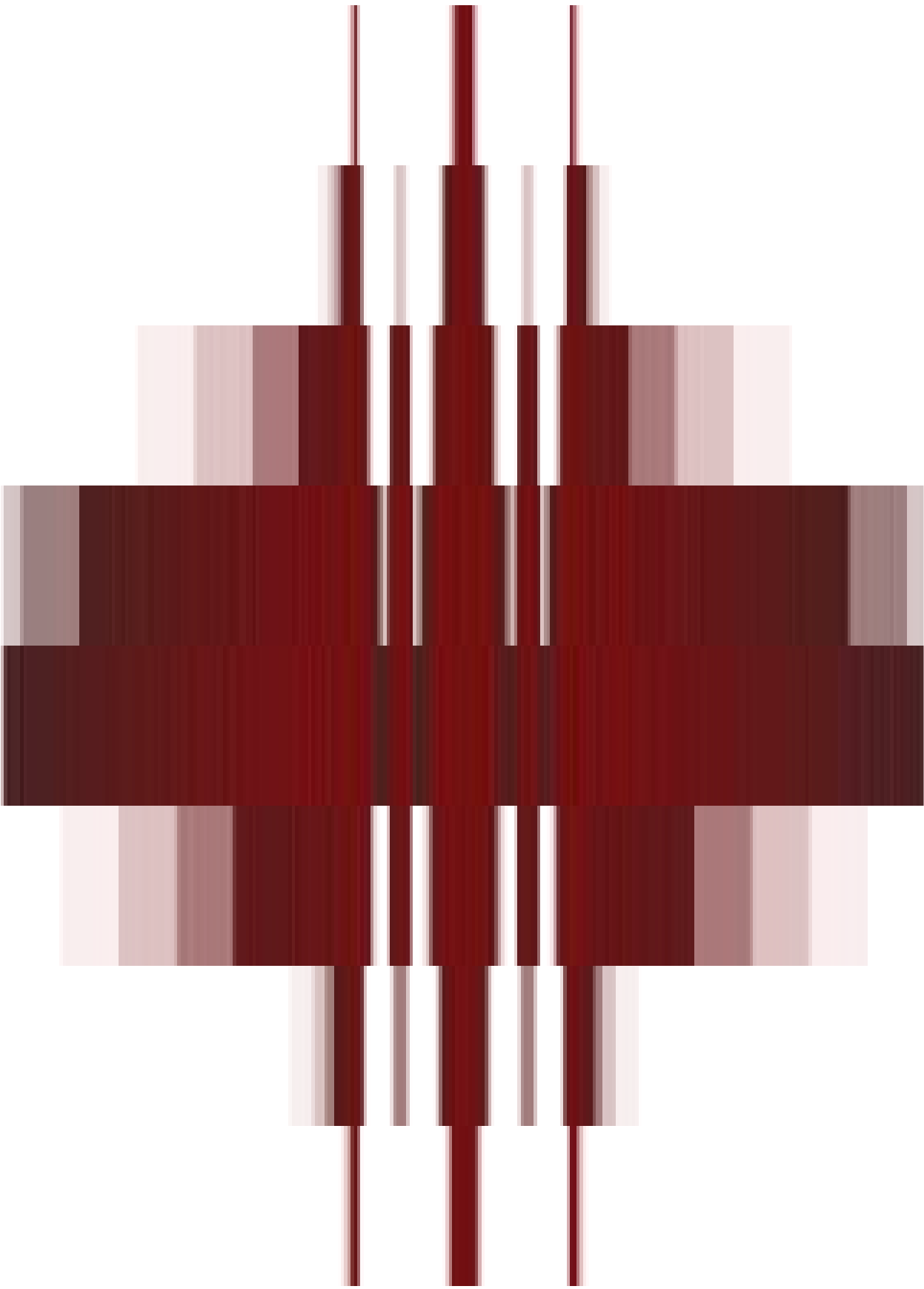
**“Only Begotten Son” Refers Not to Jesus’ Body, but to
His Christ Consciousness**



**How the Darkness of Delusion Blinds Man to the
Light of God's Presence in Creation**



All Souls Are Children of God, Made in His Image



“The opening verses of Saint John’s Gospel may rightly be called Genesis According to Saint John....[They] should be considered first when the true meaning of the life and teachings of Jesus is being sought.”

Come to Me, O Christ, as the Good Shepherd

O Christ, beloved Son of God! thou didst embark on a storm-tossed sea of prejudiced minds. Their cruel thought waves lashed thy tender heart.

Thy trial on the Cross was an immortal victory of humility over force, of soul over flesh. May thine ineffable example hearten us to bear bravely our lesser crosses.

O Great Lover of Error-Torn Humanity! In myriad hearts an unseen monument has arisen to the mightiest miracle of love—thy words: “Forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

Mayest thou remove from our eyes the cataracts of ignorance, that we see the beauty of thy message: “Love even thine enemies as thyself. Sick in mind or asleep in delusion, they are still thy brothers.”

O Cosmic Christ, may we, too, conquer the Satan of dividing selfishness that prevents the gathering in sweet accord of all men in the one fold of Spirit.

As thou art Perfection, yet wert crucified, teach us not to resent the inevitable tests of life: the daily challenge to our fortitude by adversities, our self-control by temptation, and our goodwill by misunderstanding.

Purified by contemplation on thee, innumerable devotees perfume their lives with emanations from thy flower soul. O Good Shepherd! thou leadest thy countless flock to the evergreen Pastures of Peace.

Our deepest aspiration is to see the Heavenly Father with open eyes of wisdom, as thou dost; and to know like thee that we are verily His sons. Amen.¹



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Discourse 1

Divine Incarnations: God's Emissaries



“F ather, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”

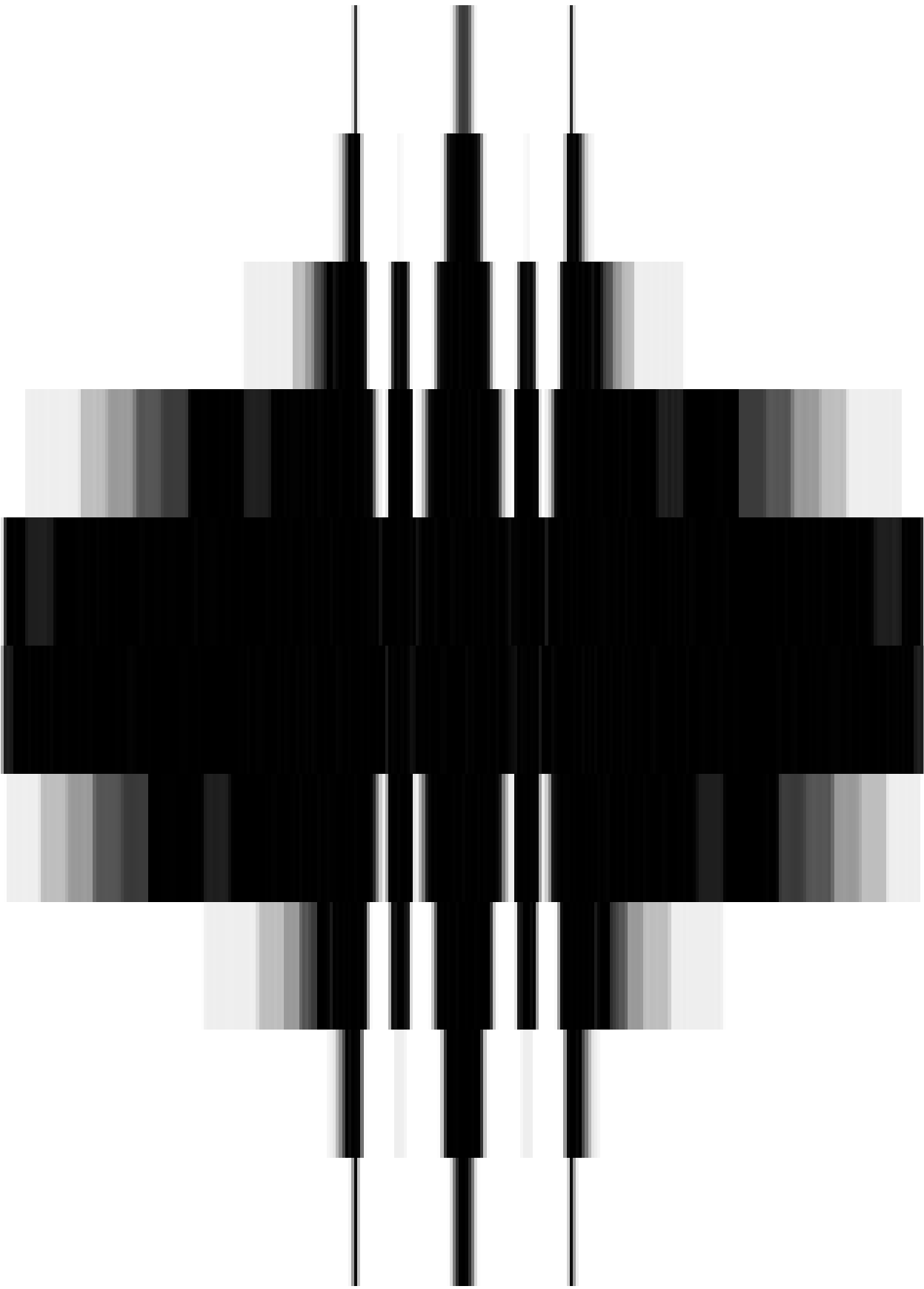
With these words, Jesus placed his signature on a unique life that enthroned him everlastingly on the altar of worshipful hearts as the incarnation of God’s loving compassion. The Good Shepherd of souls opened his arms to all, rejecting none, and with universal love coaxed the world to follow him on the path to liberation through the example of his spirit of sacrifice, renunciation, forgiveness, love for friend and enemy alike, and supreme love for God above all else. As the tiny babe in the manger at Bethlehem, and as the savior who healed the sick and raised the dead and applied the salve of love on the wounds of errors, the Christ in Jesus lived among men as one of them that they too might learn to live like gods.

For mere mortals to cope with a life of unsolved and unsolvable mysteries in an inscrutable universe created by the omnipotence of God, of the omniscient essence of His omnipresence, would indeed be an overwhelming challenge were it not for divine emissaries who come on earth to speak with the voice and authority of God for the guidance of man.

Aeons past, in ancient higher ages in India, rishis enunciated the manifestation of Divine Beneficence, of “God with us,” in terms of divine incarnations, avatars—God incarnate on earth in enlightened beings. The eternal, omnipresent, unchanging Spirit has neither a corporeal nor heavenly form called God. Nor as the Lord God Creator does He fashion a form in which He then deigns to dwell among His creatures. Rather, He makes Himself known through the divinity in worthy instruments. Many are the voices that have intermediated between God and man, khanda avatars, or partial incarnations in God-knowing souls. Less common are the purna avatars, liberated beings who are fully one with God; their return to earth is to fulfill a God-ordained mission. The Lord in the sacred Hindu Bible, the Bhagavad Gita, declares: “Whenever virtue declines and vice predominates, I incarnate as an Avatar. In visible form I appear from age to age to protect the virtuous and to destroy evildoing in order to reestablish righteousness” (IV:7 – 8). The same one glorious infinite consciousness of God, the Universal Christ Consciousness, Kutastha Chaitanya, becomes familiarly apparelled in the individuality of an enlightened soul, graced with a

distinguishing personality and godly nature appropriate to the times and purpose of the incarnation.

Without this intercession of God's love come to earth in the example, message, and guiding hand of His avatars, it would scarce be possible for groping humanity to find the path into God's kingdom midst the dark miasma of world delusion, the cosmic substance of human habitation. Lest His benighted children be lost forever in creation's delusive labyrinths, the Lord comes again and again in God-illuminated prophets to light the way. The glory of Christ in the form of Jesus made visible the Invisible Light that leads to God.



The mission of divine love that Jesus came to fulfill

Because the periodic recurrence of divine incarnations is a part of God's creative enterprise, signs of such a birth are imprinted in the Grand Master Plan. Sages, through their awakened soul intuition, can read the heavenly inscriptions; and if it be in accord with God's will that such a future event be made known, they prophesy in plain or veiled revelations. This is one of the many ways in which God assures His children of His awareness of their need for His presence amongst them. Of the future coming of Lord Jesus, several references in the Old Testament are cited by devout Christians and Biblical scholars. From the book of prophet Isaiah:

“The Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel”² (7:14).

My servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high...So shall he sprinkle many nations (52:13, 15).

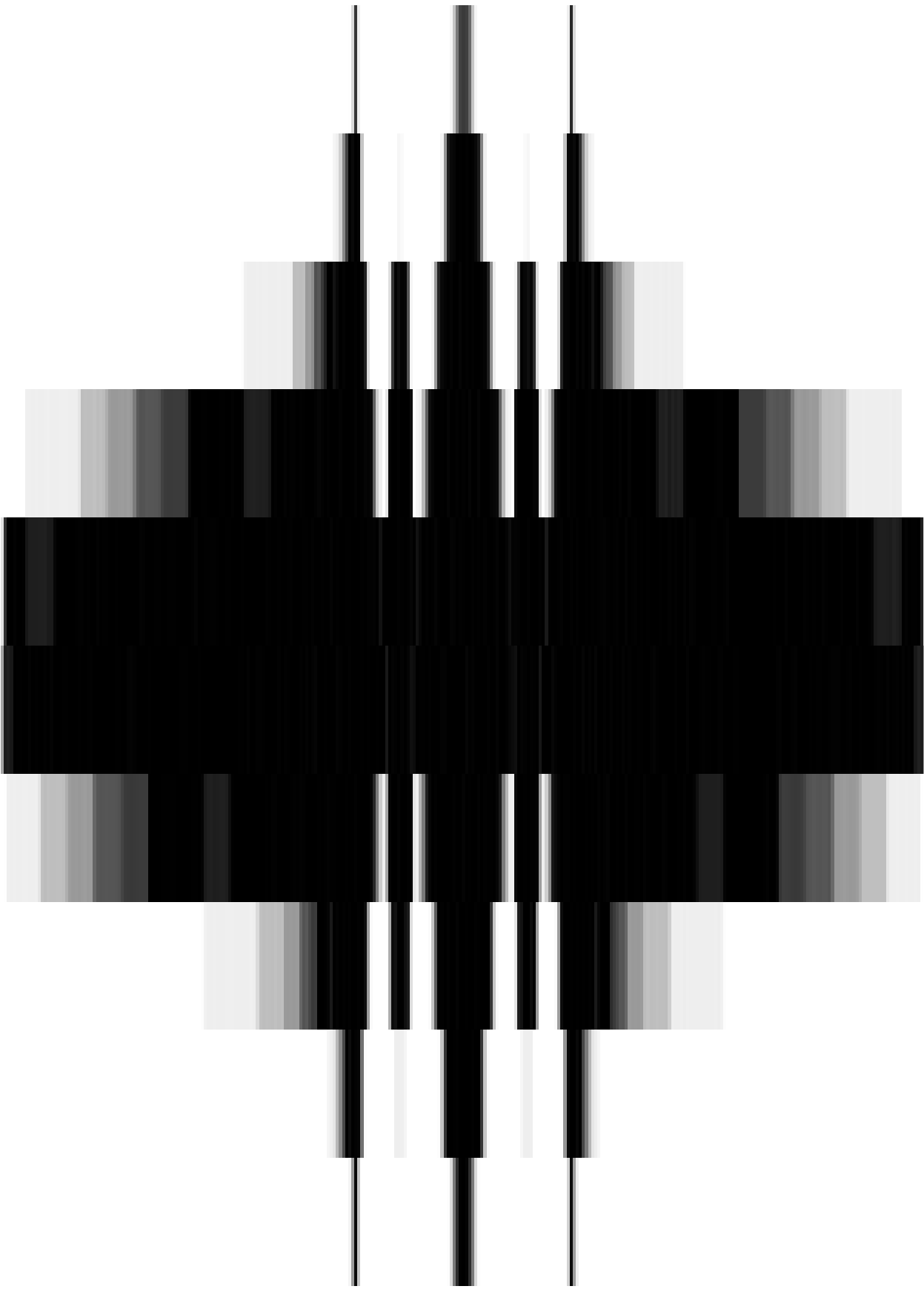
All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all...He was taken from prison and from judgment...he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of My people was he stricken...He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors (53:6, 8, 12).

Divine intercession to mitigate the cosmic law of cause and effect, by which a man suffers from his errors, was at the heart of the mission of love Jesus came to fulfill. Moses brought the law from God to man, emphasizing the awful justice that befalls willful heedlessness. Jesus came to demonstrate the forgiveness and compassion of God, whose love is a shelter even from exacting law. Similarly, Jesus was preceded by Gautama Buddha, the “Enlightened One,” whose

incarnation reminded a forgetful generation of the Dharma Chakra, the ever-rotating wheel of karma—self-initiated action and its effects which make each man, and not a Cosmic Dictator, responsible for his own present condition. Buddha brought heart back into the arid theology and mechanical rituals into which the ancient Vedic religion of India had fallen after the passing of a higher age in which Bhagavan Krishna, India's most beloved of avatars, preached the way of divine love and God-realization through the practice of the supreme spiritual science of yoga, union with God.

“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”³ Such was the exceptional mission shouldered by Jesus. Intercession by intimates of God is the palliative elixir that gives a weakened mortal the necessary strength to rise and conquer the forces of cosmic law he has roused against himself by disobedient behavior. The interceder stands with the devotee, offering him defense in the form of impermeable wisdom, and sometimes deflecting onto himself a portion of a devastating onslaught.

Jesus came in a darkened age that was little able to appreciate him; but his message of the love of God and his intercession on behalf of suffering humanity was not only for that time but for all ages to come—that God is with man in his darkest moments as well as in enlightened times. He reminded a world fearful of their Creator as a God of wrathful judgment that, though “God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth,”⁴ the Absolute is also a personal God who can be appealed to in prayer and who responds as a loving Heavenly Father.



The nature of an avatar's consciousness

To understand the magnitude of a divine incarnation, it is necessary to understand the source and nature of the consciousness that is incarnate in the avatar. Jesus spoke of this consciousness when he proclaimed: "I and my Father are one" (John 10:30) and "I am in the Father, and the Father in me" (John 14:11). Those who unite their consciousness to God know both the transcendent and the immanent nature of Spirit—the singularity of the ever-existing, ever-conscious, ever-new Bliss of the Uncreate Absolute, and the myriad manifestations of His Being as the infinitude of forms into which He variegates Himself in the panorama of creation.

The scientific evolution of cosmic creation from the Creator-Lord is outlined, in arcane terminology, in the Old Testament book of Genesis. In the New Testament, the opening verses of Saint John's Gospel may rightly be called Genesis According to Saint John. Both these profound Biblical accounts, when clearly grasped by intuitive perception, correspond exactly to the spiritual cosmology set forth in the scriptures of India handed down by her Golden Age God-knowing rishis.

Saint John was perhaps the greatest of the disciples of Jesus. Just as a schoolteacher finds among his pupils one whose superior comprehension ranks him first in the class, and others who must be ranked lower, so among the disciples of Jesus there were differing degrees of ability to appreciate and absorb the depth and breadth of the teachings of the Christ-man. The records left by Saint John, among the various books of the New Testament, evince the highest degree of divine realization, making known the deep esoteric truths experienced by Jesus and transferred to John. Not only in his gospel, but in his epistles and especially in the profound metaphysical experiences symbolically described in the Book of Revelation, John presents the truths taught by Jesus from the point of view of inward intuitive realization. In John's words we find precision; that is why his gospel, though last among the four in the New Testament, should be considered first when the true meaning of the life and teachings of Jesus is being sought.

■

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.

All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not...

That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

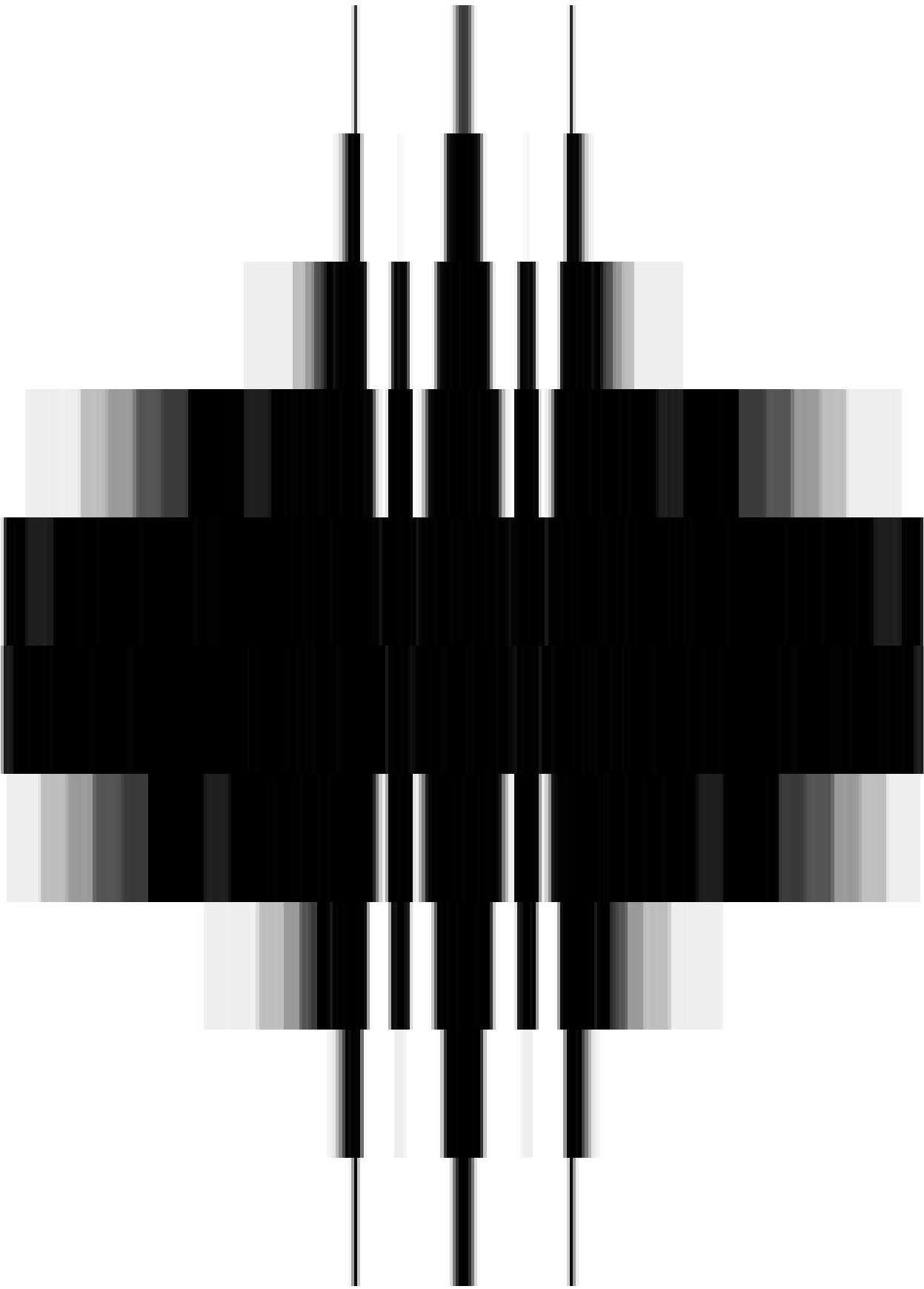
John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, "This was he of whom I spake, 'He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me.' "

And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared Him.

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“In the beginning...” With these words commence the cosmogonies of the Old and New Testament alike. “Beginning” refers to the birth of finite creation, for in the Eternal Absolute—Spirit—there is neither beginning nor end.



The One Spirit: source of all creation

When no goblin nebulae breathed and glided in the space body, when no fire-eyed baby planets opened their eyes in the cradle of space, when no star-rivers ran across the tracts of infinite space, when the ocean of space was unpeopled, uninhabited by floating island universes, when the sun and moon and planetary families did not swim in space, when the little ball of earth with its dollhouses and diminutive human beings did not exist, when no object of any kind had come into being—Spirit existed. This Unmanifested Absolute cannot be described except that It was the Knower, the Knowing, and the Known existing as One. In It the being, Its cosmic consciousness, and Its omnipotence, all were without differentiation: ever-existing, ever-conscious, ever newly joyous Spirit.

In this Ever-New Bliss, there was no space or time, no dual conception or law of relativity; everything that was, is, or is to be existed as One Undifferentiated Spirit. Space and time and relativity are categories of objects; as soon as a human being sees a planet hanging in the sky, he conceives that it is occupying dimensional space and existing in time, relative to its place in the universe. But when there were no finite objects of creation, neither were there the dimensions of being that define them, only the Blissful Spirit.

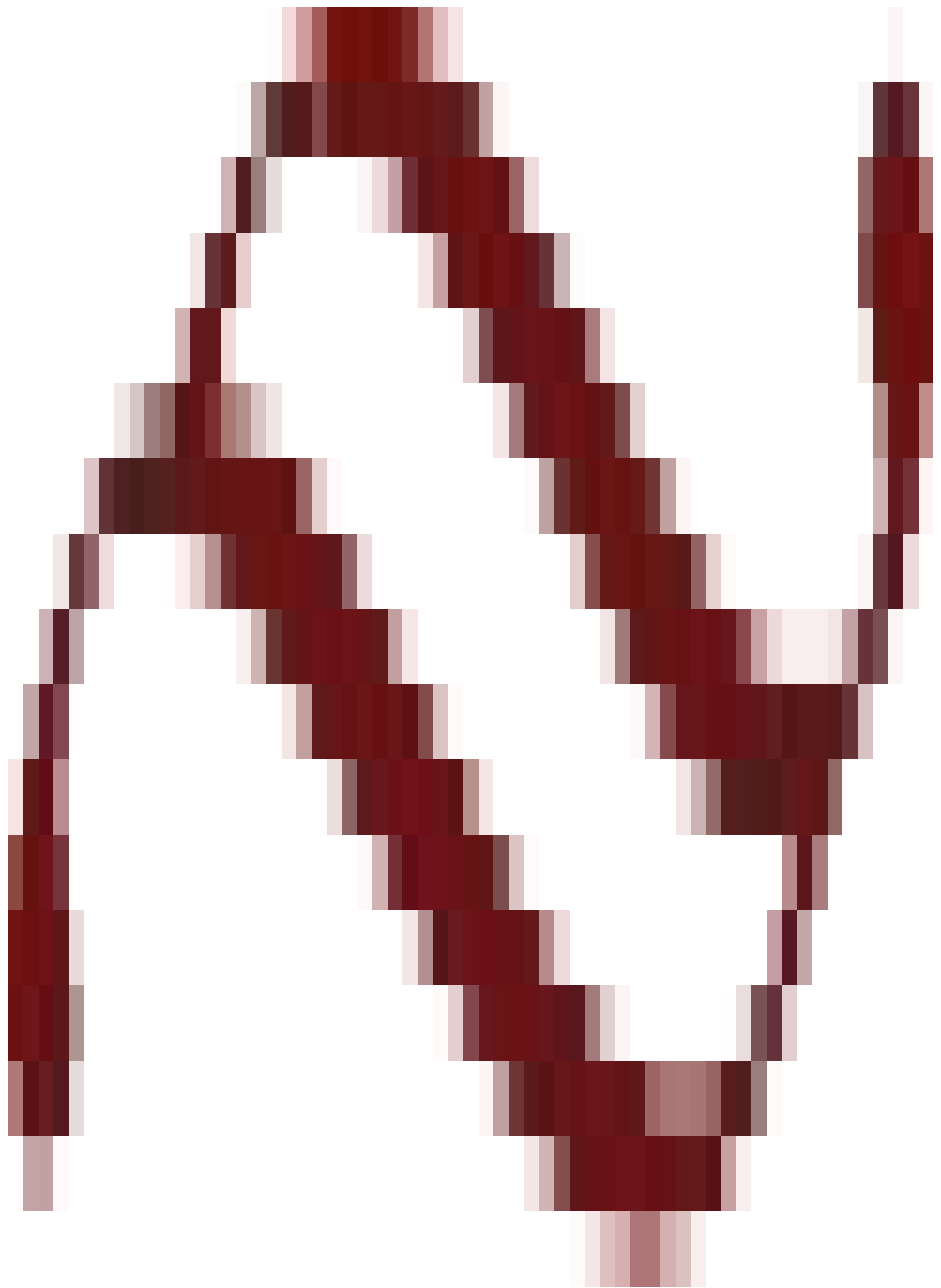
When, whence, and why came creation into being? Who may make bold to read the Mind of the Infinite in seeking causes from the Uncaused, beginnings from the Ever-Existing, paltry reasons from Omniscience?⁶ Audacious mortals pursue their queries, while sages enter that Mind and return to state in unadorned simplicity that the One entertained a desireless desire to enjoy His Bliss through many, and the cosmos and its beings were born. The Unmanifested Spirit felt, “I am alone. I am conscious Bliss, but there is no one to taste the sweetness of My Nectar of Joy.” Even as He thus dreamed, He became many.

In poetic fancy, I penned a depiction of this cosmic musing:

“The Spirit was invisible, existing alone in the home of Infinity. He piped to Himself the ever-new, ever-entertaining song of perfect beatific Bliss. As He sang to Himself through His voice of Eternity, He wondered if aught but Himself were listening and enjoying His song. To His wittingly imposed astonishment, He felt His solitariness: He was the Cosmic Song, He was the Singing, and He

was the Lone Enjoyer. Even as thus He thought, lo, He became two: Spirit and Nature, Man and Woman, Positive and Negative, Stamen and Pistil of the flowers, Peacock and Peahen, Male Gem and Female Gem.”

Spirit, being the only existing Substance, had naught but Itself with which to create. Spirit and Its universal creation could not be essentially different, for two ever-existing Infinite Forces would consequently each be absolute, which is by definition an impossibility. An orderly creation requires the duality of Creator and created. Thus, Spirit first gave rise to a Magic Delusion, Maya, the cosmic Magical Measurer,⁷ which produces the illusion of dividing a portion of the Indivisible Infinite into separate finite objects, even as a calm ocean becomes distorted into individual waves on its surface by the action of a storm. All creation is nothing but Spirit, seemingly and temporarily diversified by Spirit’s creative vibratory activity.



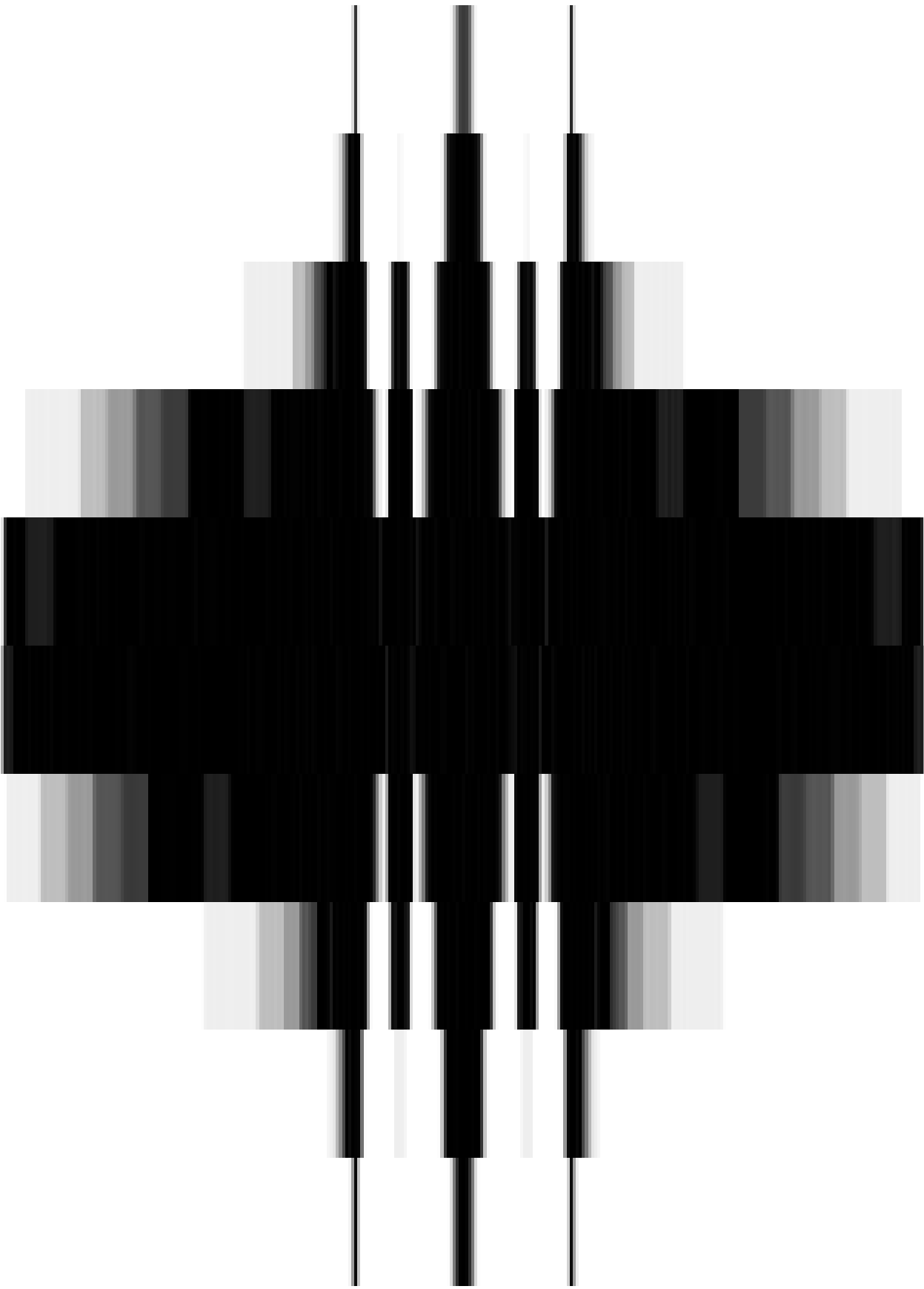
In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.

All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men (John 1:1 – 4).

“W ord” means intelligent vibration, intelligent energy, going forth from God. Any utterance of a word, such as “flower,” expressed by an intelligent being, consists of sound energy or vibration, plus thought, which imbues that vibration with intelligent meaning. Likewise, the Word that is the beginning and source of all created substances is Cosmic Vibration imbued with Cosmic Intelligence. ⁸

Thought of matter, energy of which matter is composed, matter itself—all things—are but the differently vibrating thoughts of the Spirit, even as man in his dreams creates a world with lightning and clouds, people being born or dying, loving or fighting, experiencing heat or cold, pleasure or pain. In a dream, births and deaths, sickness and disease, solids, liquids, gases are but differently vibrating thoughts of the dreamer. This universe is a vibratory dream motion picture of God’s thoughts on the screen of time and space and human consciousness.

“The Word was with God, and the Word was God”: Before creation, there is only undifferentiated Spirit. In manifesting creation, Spirit becomes God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.



True meaning of the Holy Trinity: God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost

As soon as Spirit evolved a cosmic vibratory thought, through the action of the cosmic magical measuring power of maya, delusion, the Unmanifested Spirit became God the Father, the Creator of all creative vibration. God the Father, in the Hindu scriptures, is called Ishvara (the Cosmic Ruler) or Sat (the supreme pure essence of Cosmic Consciousness)—the Transcendental Intelligence. That is, God the Father exists transcendently untouched by any tremor of vibratory creation—a conscious, separate Cosmic Consciousness.

The vibratory force emanating from Spirit, endowed with the illusory creative power of maya, is the Holy Ghost: Cosmic Vibration, the Word, Aum (Om) or Amen. All things, all created planets and living beings in the Holy Ghost, or Holy Vibration, are nothing but the frozen imagination of God. This Holy Ghost in the Hindu scriptures is called the Aum or Maha-Prakriti (Great Nature, the Cosmic Mother that gives birth to all creation); by the scientists, the structure of matter, its tissue or material, is also known, to a lesser degree, as cosmic vibration. “These things saith the Amen [the Word, Aum], the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.”⁹ The holy Cosmic Sound of Aum or Amen is the witness of the manifested Divine Presence in all creation.

A cosmic vibration omnipresently active in space could not of itself create or sustain the wondrously complex cosmos. The universe is not the result merely of a fortuitous combination of vibrating forces and subatomic particles, as proposed by material scientists—a chance excrescence of solids, liquids, and gases into earth, oceans, atmosphere, plants, all harmoniously interrelated to provide a habitable home for human beings. Blind forces cannot organize themselves into intelligently structured objects. As human intelligence is needed to put water into the small square compartments of an ice tray to be frozen into cubes, so in the coalescence of vibration into progressively evolving forms throughout the universe we see the results of a hidden Immanent Intelligence.

The transcendent consciousness of God the Father became manifest within the Holy Ghost vibration as the Son—the Christ Consciousness, God’s intelligence in all vibratory creation. This pure reflection of God in the Holy Ghost indirectly guides it to create, re-create, preserve, and mold creation according to God’s divine purpose.

Just as the husband is born again in the wife as the son, so the transcendental God the Father manifested in the Holy Ghost, the Cosmic Virgin Mary (the Virgin Creation), became the sole reflected intelligence of God, the only begotten Son, or Christ Consciousness.

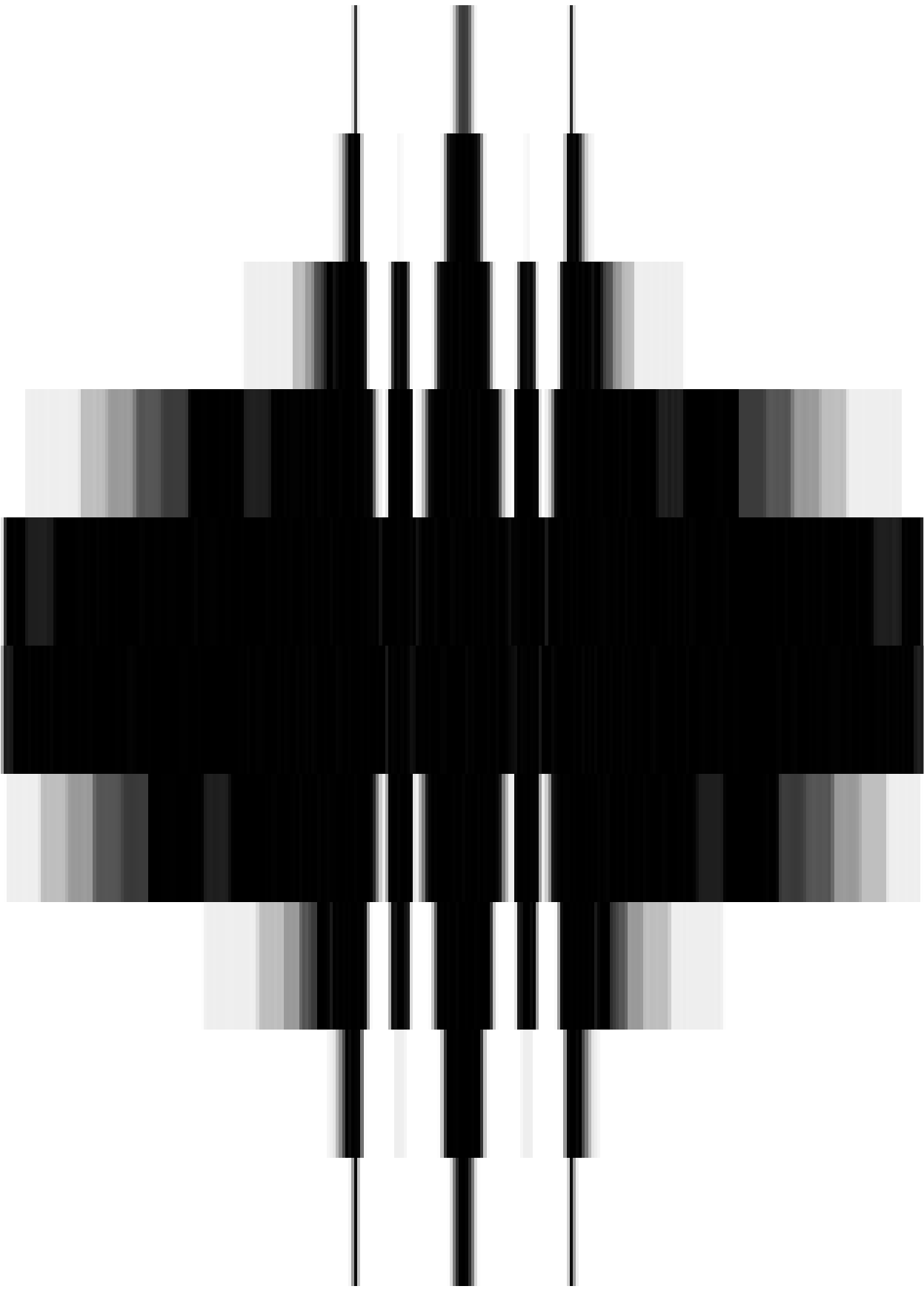
An analogy may serve to illustrate how the One Eternal Spirit becomes the Holy Trinity: God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, similarly acknowledged in the Hindu scriptures as Sat, Tat, Aum. Imagine the sun as existing by itself, with nothing surrounding it—a bright mass of light with untold power and heat, its rays spreading into boundless space. Place a blue crystal ball within this radiation. The sun now exists in relation to the blue crystal ball. The sunlight is divided as the inactive, transcendental white light beyond and around the crystal ball, and as the essentially unchanged light appearing as blue light by its reflection in the blue crystal ball. This division of the one sunlight into white and blue light is due to the dividing effect of the third object, the blue crystal ball.

Just as the sun is solitary pure brilliance, spherically spreading its rays in space when it stands by itself, so Spirit without any vibratory creation is the Unmanifested Absolute. But introduce the “blue crystal ball” of a manifested universe, and Spirit becomes differentiated as the vibratory substance of all manifestations evolved from the Aum or Holy Ghost; the pure reflected Intelligence of God as Christ Consciousness omnipresent in every object and pore of space in the realm of vibration; and the supreme Essence of all, Cosmic Consciousness, the transcendental God the Father of all creation. (Most analogies employed to define absolutes are at best imperfect intimations, since by their limited material nature they cannot depict the subtleties of spiritual truths. In the illustration of the sun and crystal ball, the sun does not create the crystal ball, whereas the Spirit, as God the Father, evolved the Holy Ghost with its creative vibratory power to manifest God’s universal imaginings.)

Thus, metaphorically, as soon as the cosmic bachelor Spirit stirs Itself to create the universe, He becomes the husband, God the Father, wedded to Cosmic Virgin Mary or Cosmic Vibration, giving birth to His reflection, the only begotten Son.¹⁰ Christ Consciousness, present in all specks of creation, is the only undifferentiated, pure reflection of the Absolute, God the Father. Hence, this Christ Intelligence, the only begotten Son, maintains an immanent, influential transcendence: Christ Consciousness is not the active element in creation; the distinct, active, differentiated conscious intelligence that brings into manifestation all particles of vibratory creation is the Holy Ghost, which is

imbued with the only begotten Son. The inactively active Christ Consciousness or Son is the conscious Presence of God's intelligent divine plan in creation, and the Eternal Witness of the work of the Holy Ghost, which is called "Holy" because it acts according to the will of God manifest in the immanent Christ Consciousness.

Spirit as the intelligent Holy Ghost, creative Aum Vibration, transforms Itself into matter by changing the rates of the cosmic creative vibration. Cosmic Intelligence becomes cosmic intelligent motion, or vibration of consciousness, which changes into cosmic energy. Intelligent cosmic energy changes into electrons and atoms. Electrons and atoms change into molecules of gas, such as cosmic nebulae. Nebulae, masses of diffuse gaseous matter, change into water and solid matter. As Cosmic Vibration, all things are one; but when Cosmic Vibration becomes frozen into matter, it becomes many—including man's body, which is a part of this variously divided matter.¹¹



The causal, astral, and material planes of God's creation

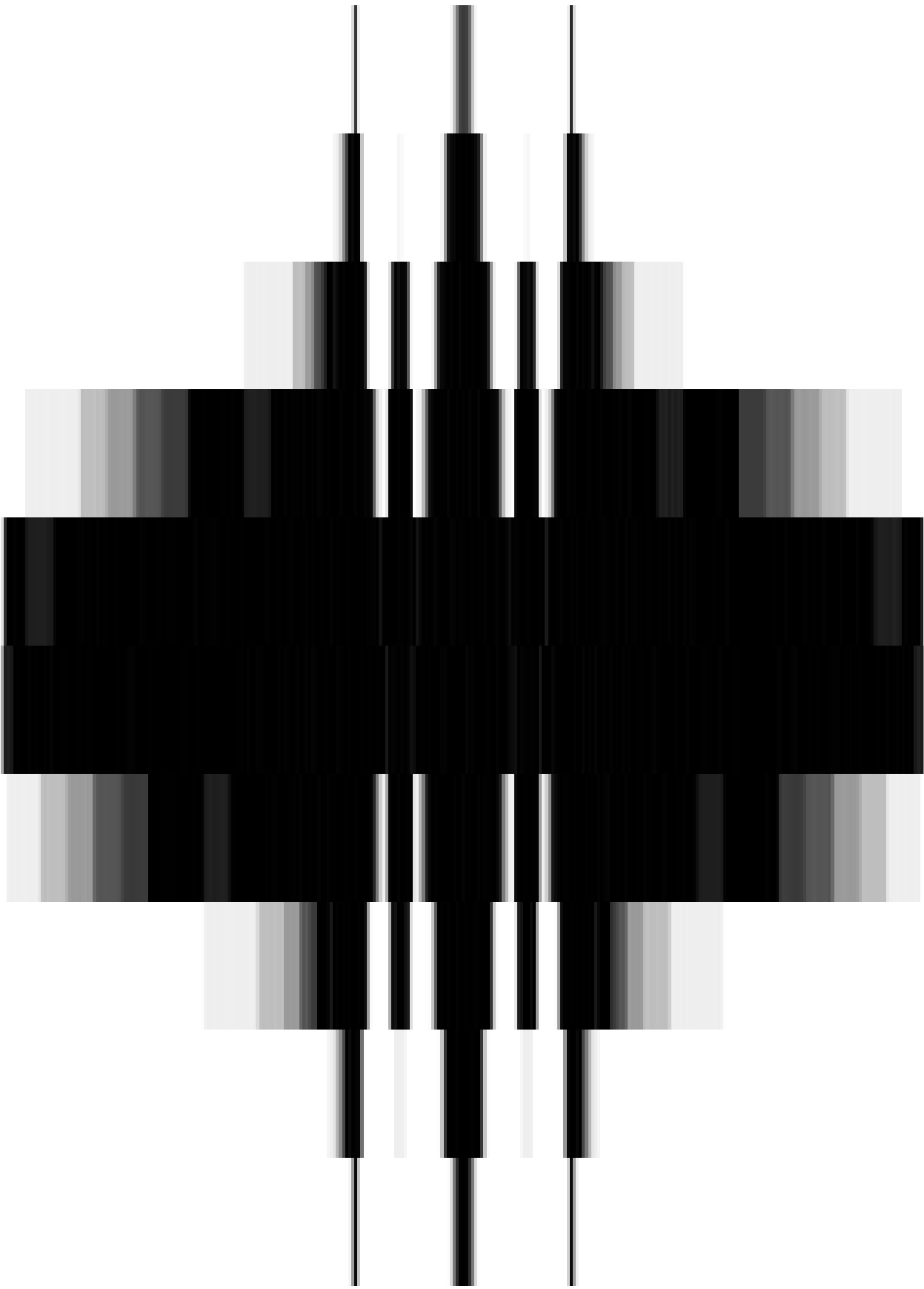
This metamorphosis of Spirit through the creative vibration of the Holy Ghost—taking place within a relatively minute sphere of the Infinite—produces a triune creation: an ideational, or causal, world of the finest vibrations of consciousness, God's thoughts or ideas that are the cause of all forms and forces; an astral world of light and life force, vibratory energy, the first condensation cloaking the original ideational concepts; and the material world of the gross atomic vibrations of matter. These worlds are superimposed on one another, the grosser dependent on the subtler, and all three ultimately conditional on the sole support of the will and consciousness of God.

As in the macrocosm of the universe, so in the microcosm of man there are three interdependent bodies. Man's soul dons these three coverings that serve as instrumentalities through which the incarnate spirit can perceive, comprehend, and interact with God's creation. The very tenuous first covering of the soul, which individualizes it from Spirit, is one of pure consciousness; it is composed of God's thoughts or ideas that cause the other two sheaths. Thus it is referred to as the causal body. These causal ideas emit a magnetic force of light and intelligent energy, which I have called lifetrans, that form the astral body of man. The astral body of lifetrans is itself the life energy that empowers all the senses and functions of the physical body. The physical body is merely a gross materialization of the causal ideas activated by the life and energy of the astral body, and endowed with consciousness, self-awareness, and intelligence from the causal body. All of these vibratory manifestations of the macrocosm and microcosm derive from the Holy Ghost Vibration and the transcendent consciousness of God.

Thus John summarizes: "In him (the Word) was life; and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4).¹²

The Biblical writers, not versed in the terminologies that express the knowledge of the modern age, quite aptly used "Holy Ghost" and "the Word" to designate the character of the Intelligent Cosmic Vibration. "Word" implies a vibratory sound, carrying materializing power. "Ghost" implies an intelligent, invisible, conscious force. "Holy" describes this Vibration because it is the manifestation of Spirit; and because it is trying to create the universe according to the perfect

pattern of God.¹³



The Cosmic Word or Holy Ghost: intelligent creative vibration of Aum

The designation in the Hindu scriptures of this “Holy Ghost” as Aum signifies its role in God’s creative plan: A stands for akara, or creative vibration; u for ukara, preservative vibration; and m for makara, the vibratory power of dissolution. A storm roaring across the sea creates waves, large and small, preserves them for some time, and then by withdrawing dissolves them. So the Aum or Holy Ghost creates all things, preserves them in myriad forms, and ultimately dissolves them in the sea-bosom of God to be again re-created—a continuing process of renewal of life and form in the ongoing cosmic dreaming of God.

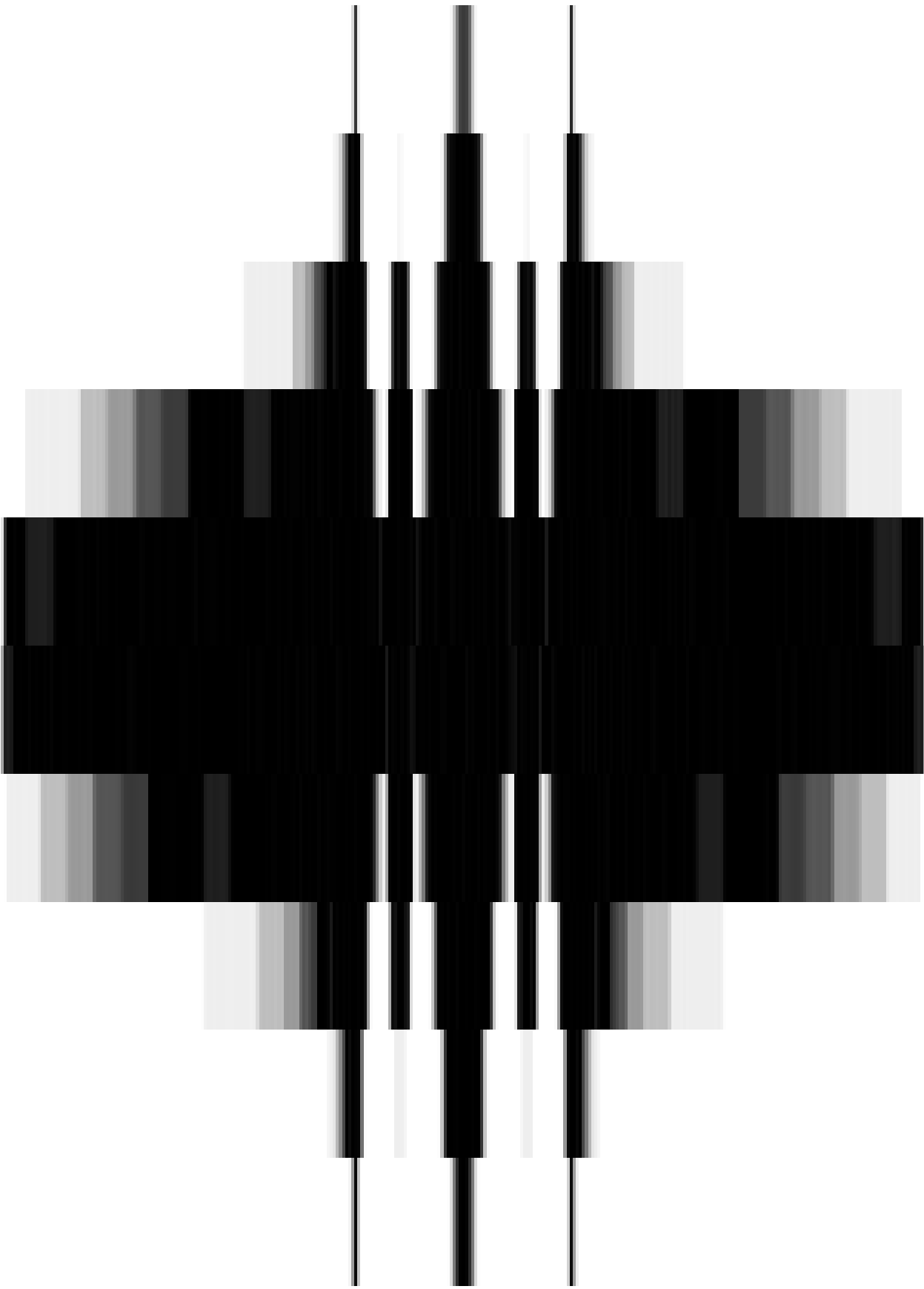
Thus is the Word or Cosmic Vibration the origin of “all things”: “without him was not anything made that was made.” The Word existed from the very beginning of creation—God’s first manifestation in bringing forth the universe. “The Word was with God”—imbued with God’s reflected intelligence, Christ Consciousness—“and the Word was God”—vibrations of His own one Being.

Saint John’s declaration echoes an eternal truth resonating in various passages of the hoary Vedas: that the cosmic vibratory Word (Vak) was with God the Father-Creator (Prajapati) in the beginning of creation, when naught else existed; and that by Vak were made all things; and that Vak is itself Brahman (God). In the Bhagavad Gita, the Lord affirms: “Among words, I am the one syllable Aum” (X:25). “Of all manifestations, I am the beginning, middle, and end” (X:32). “I, the Unchanging and Everlasting, sustain and permeate the entire cosmos with but one fragment of My Being” (X:42).

With the understanding of this truth, we have the underlying science of the universe and a proper basis for appreciating these verses of Saint John in the context of their reference to the life of Jesus Christ.

In scriptural parlance characteristic of India’s sages, Saint John in the several opening verses of his Gospel posits, in a double entendre reference to the incarnation of Jesus, the divinity of the Christ state of Jesus as analogous to the Universal Christ manifestation of God that comes forth as Intelligence and Creative Vibration at the birth of creation. Devotees in India make no differentiation between the divinity of God in the microcosm of the incarnate

consciousness of an avatar—as in Lord Krishna, for example—and the divinity of God in the macrocosm of universal expression. Likewise, Saint John speaks allegorically of the Christ in Jesus as one and the same as the Christ manifestation in Infinitude (the presence of God in creation), the latter being the prime intent of his presentation in these verses.



“Only begotten Son” refers not to Jesus’ body, but to his Christ Consciousness

The Holy Trinity of Christianity—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—in relation to the ordinary concept of the incarnation of Jesus is wholly inexplicable without differentiating between Jesus the body and Jesus the vehicle in which the only begotten Son, Christ Consciousness, was manifested. Jesus himself makes such distinction when speaking of his body as the “son of man”; and of his soul, which was not circumscribed by the body but was one with the only begotten Christ Consciousness in all specks of vibration, as the “son of God.”

“God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son”¹⁴ to redeem it; that is, God the Father remained hidden beyond the vibratory realm that went out from His Being, but then secreted Himself as the Christ Intelligence in all matter and in all living beings in order to bring, by beautiful evolutionary coaxings, all things back to His home of Everlasting Blessedness. Without this presence of God ubiquitously permeating creation, man would indeed feel bereft of Divine Succor—how sweetly, sometimes almost imperceptibly, It comes to his aid when he bows his knee in supplication. His Creator and Supreme Benefactor is never more than a devotional thought away.

Saint John said: “As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.”¹⁵ The plural number in “sons of God” shows distinctly, from the teachings he received from Jesus, that not the body of Jesus but his state of Christ Consciousness was the only begotten son; and that all those who could clarify their consciousness and receive, or in an unobstructed way reflect, the power of God, could become the sons of God. They could be one with the only begotten reflection of God in all matter, as was Jesus; and through the son, Christ Consciousness, ascend to the Father, the supreme Cosmic Consciousness.¹⁶

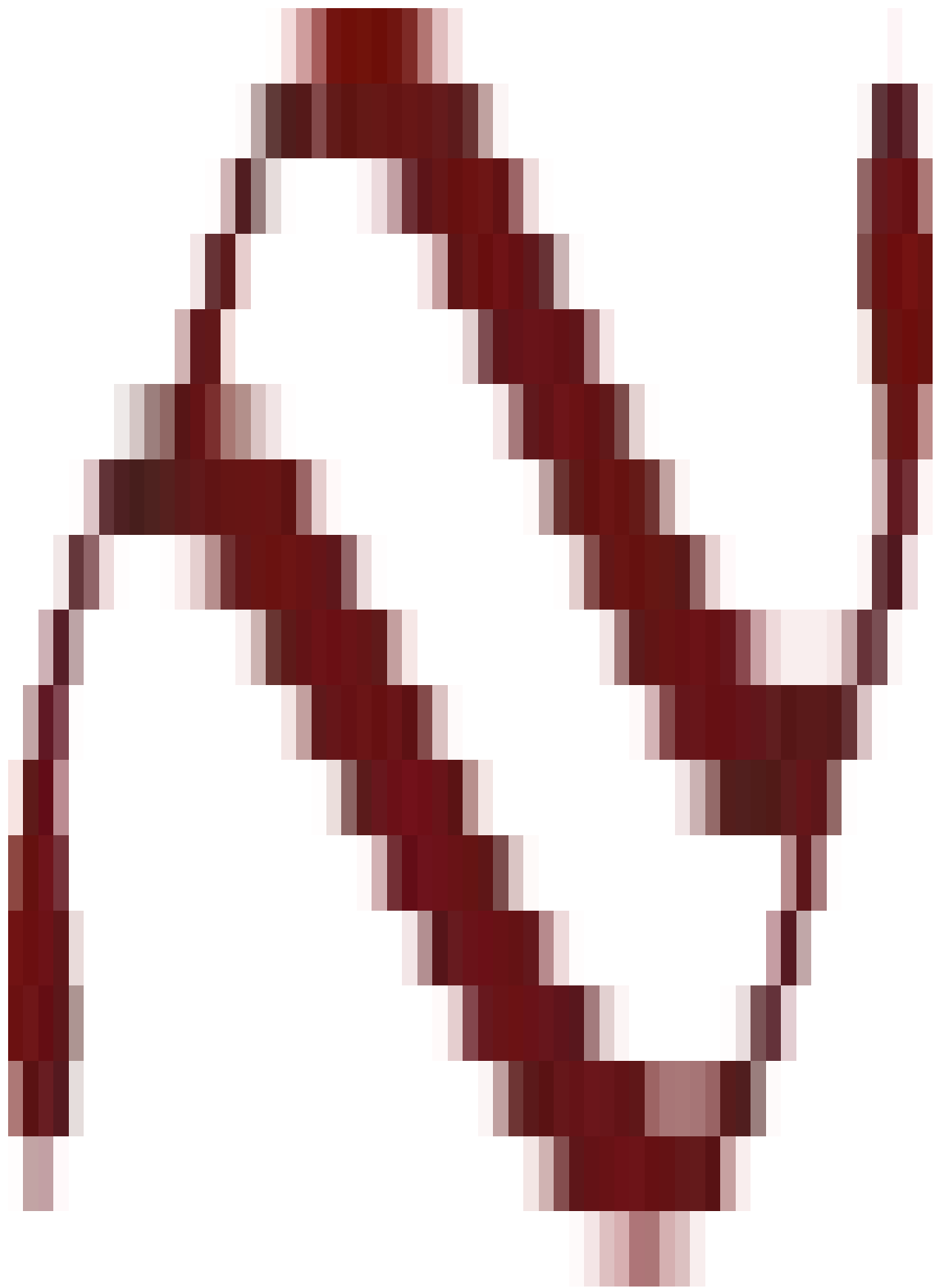
Before the advent of Jesus, Sage Vyasa, writer of the Bhagavad Gita, was a son of God, one with the only begotten reflection of God, the Kutastha Chaitanya or Christ Consciousness. So also, Swami Shankara (the founder of the Swami Order of renunciation circa

a.d.

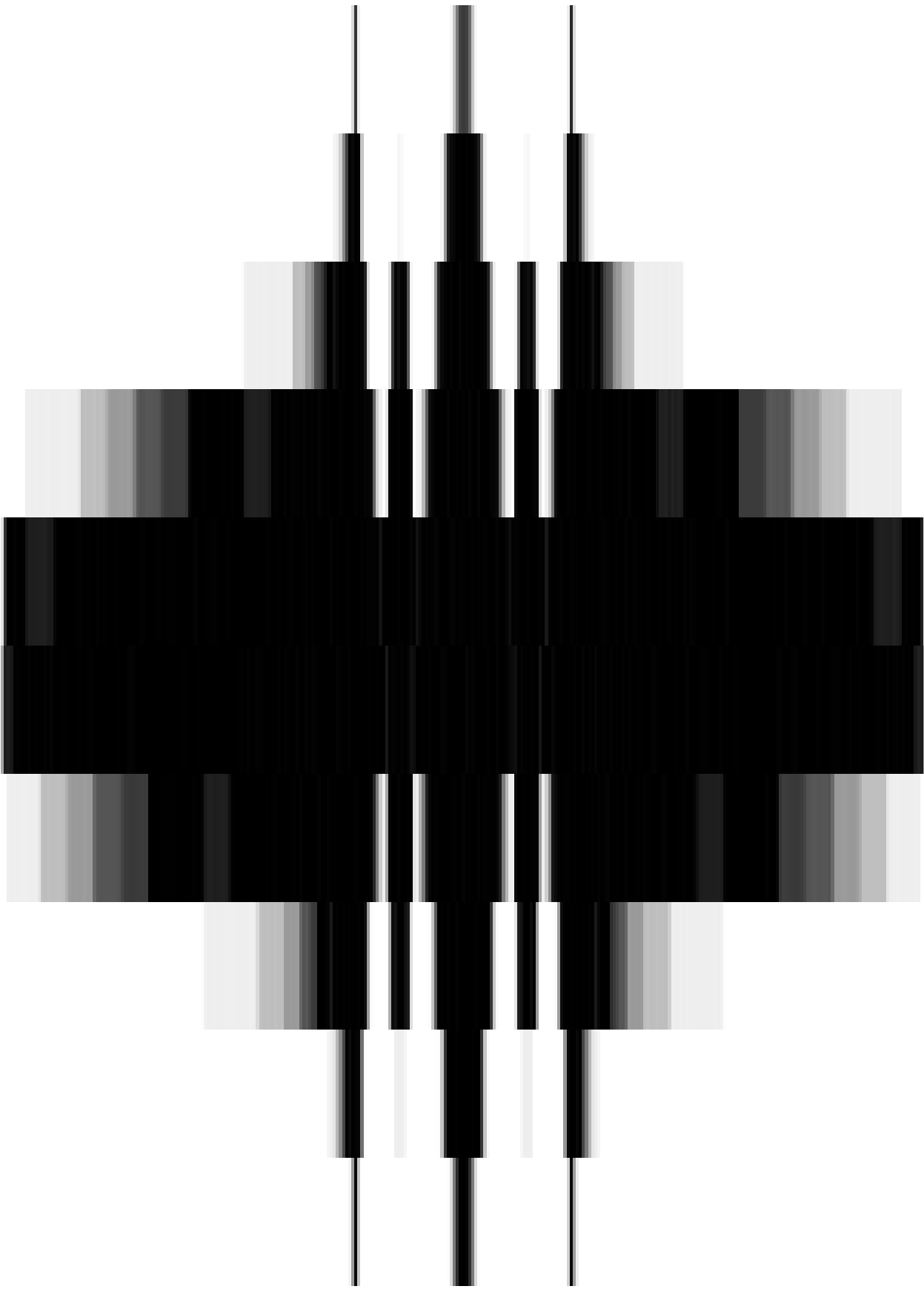
700), Mahavatar Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, and my guru Swami Sri Yukteswar,¹⁷ and others having Christ Consciousness, became thereby sons of God. The Spirit

could not be partial in creating Jesus as a Christ and all others as spiritually ineffectual mortal beings. Divinely imported Jesuses could be made by the thousands by God; and they would, being predestined, naturally behave on earth as Christs—spiritual puppets of God. Such Christs could hardly be the ideals of mortals struggling with all their frailties. But when there is one who became a Christ by self-effort to conquer temptations and by proper use of God-given free choice and power of God-communion through intense worship or a scientific technique of meditation, then that example stirs hope of salvation in the frail, timorous, matter-tortured human breast.

India's priceless contribution to the world, discovered anciently by her rishis, is the science of religion—yoga, “divine union”—by which God can be known, not as a theological concept but as an actual personal experience. Of all scientific knowledge, the yoga science of God-realization is of the highest value to man, for it strikes at the root-cause of all human maladies: ignorance, the beclouding envelopment of delusion. When one becomes firmly established in God-realization, delusion is transcended and the subordinate mortal consciousness is elevated to Christlike status.



And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not (John 1:5).



How the darkness of delusion blinds man to the light of God's presence in creation

Darkness means delusion, ignorance. In the Sanskrit scriptures the concepts in Saint John's esoteric verses are explained very thoroughly. When interpreted with the illumination provided by the masters of India, these truths will be found to be universal and scientific. Spiritual laws defining the workings of the universe and man's place in it are the highest science, underpinning all scientific discoveries; but since scientists depend more on effects than ultimate causes, spiritual pronouncements of the sages are largely dismissed as superstition. By a gradual pace of broadened understanding, however, spiritual science and material science find they are standing on common ground.

There are two manifestations of the darkness of delusion: one is maya, cosmic delusion, "that which measures the Infinite"; and the other is avidya, which means ignorance or individual illusion.

If someone sees an elephant moving around in the air, it would be said that what he is seeing is an illusion or hallucination; but to him the perception is real. Maya is the mass hypnosis of God by which He makes every human being believe in the same illusory "reality" of creation as perceived by the senses; avidya gives individuality of form, experience, and expression (it supports the ego or I-consciousness).

The light that "shineth in the darkness" of the delusion of creation is the light of God. God is light. In the First Epistle of St. John (1:5) we read: "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all."

In the intelligent creative Cosmic Vibration that went forth from the cosmic consciousness of God were His first two expressions in manifested creation: sound (the holy Aum or Amen) and light ("In the beginning...God said, 'Let there be light'"—Genesis 1:1, 3). Units of divine light, finer than electrons and other subatomic particles, are the bricks of which matter is composed. All things seen on the screen of the universe are differentiated currents of the cosmic light and the shadows or "darkness" of delusion.

The light of God shines within the darkness of cosmic delusion, but man, the

perceiver, suffers from two blinding maladies: the limitation of his senses, or individual delusive ignorance, and the cosmic delusion, combined.

Because of the limitation of the senses, man does not perceive the full spectrum of even material manifestations. If the power of vision were increased, one could see all kinds of lights—atoms, electrons, photons, vibratory auras—dancing around him. If the power of hearing were sufficiently increased, man could hear the hum of the atoms, the planets in their course around the sun, the explosion of stars, making a tremendous rumbling throughout the universe. One would sense the whole universe throbbing with life. But none of the finer and higher vibrations can be sensed except to a limited degree with the aid of delicate supersensory instruments. “Darkness” denotes that limitation, because it produces the illusion of confinement of consciousness.

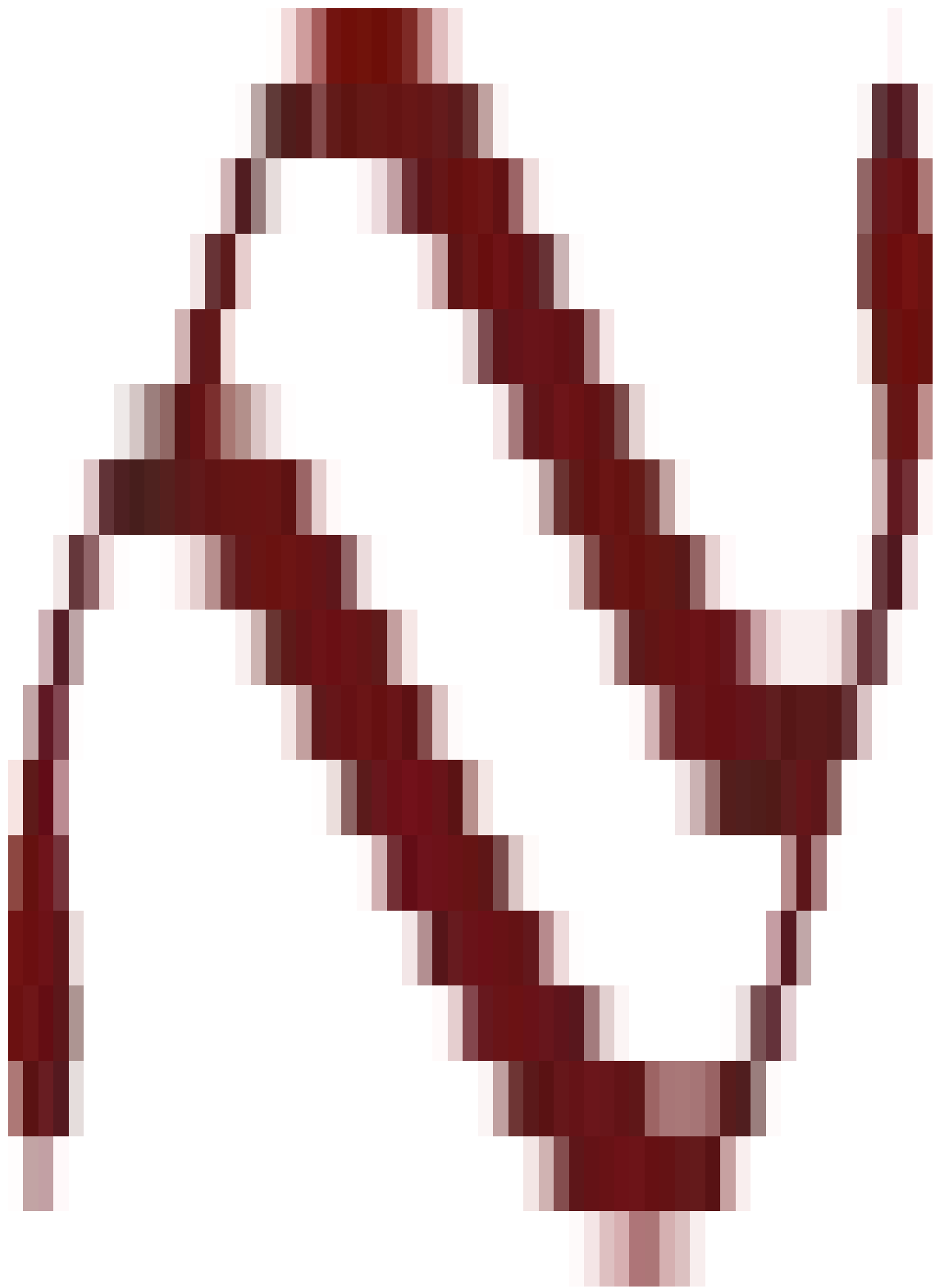
Even the light of the sun is considered darkness, because it is a part of this physical world of duality; its grossness, also, hides the greater light of God. Only in spiritually transcendent ecstatic states is there no duality of day and night, light and darkness, but God’s light alone. Just behind the darkness of closed eyes in meditation shines that radiance of God.

Man is blinded by the relativities of life. Without the aid of physical light he sees darkness. But beyond that darkness is another light that pervades the world. Hidden behind the ether of space is the tremendous light of the astral world, providing the life and energy that sustains the whole universe.¹⁸ The auroral rays of astral lifetrans are a spiritual ectoplasm around the entire cosmos. Out of the astral light, God is creating planets and universes. I am in that light all the time; I see everything aglow with that heavenly essence—all physical manifestation emanates from that astral light, and that light emanates from the creative manifestation of God as Light.

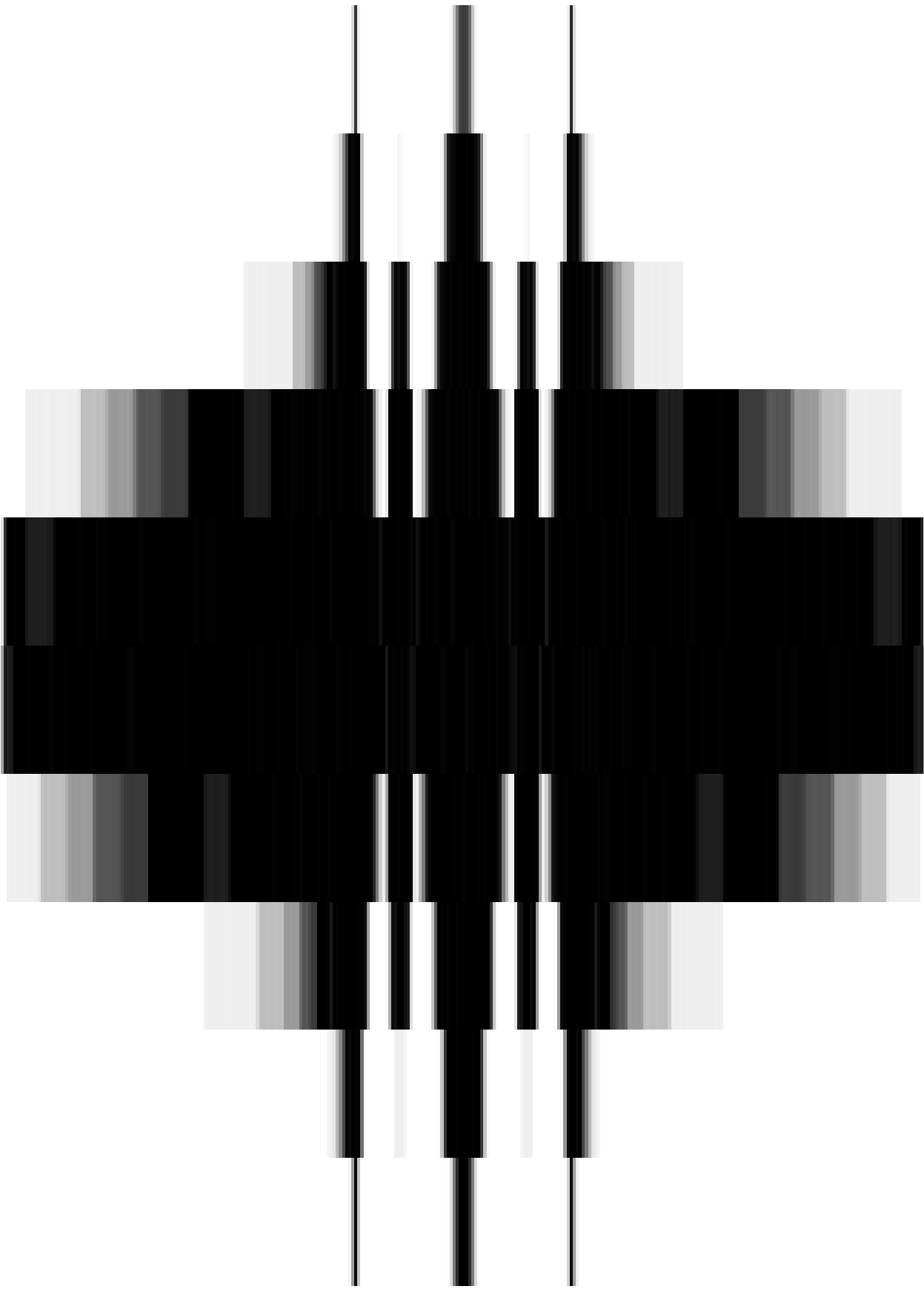
If you saw God right now, you would see Him as one mass of light scintillating over the whole universe. As I close my eyes in ecstasy everything melts into that great Light. It is not imagination; rather, the perception of the Sole Reality of being. Whatever is seen in that state will happen; that is the proof of the reality of that Omnipresent Light of all becomings.

Man is so drunk with delusion, it obliterates his true perception so that the darkness of his ignorance cannot apprehend the light of God vibrating everywhere. Both cosmic delusion (maya) and individual illusion or ignorance

(avidya) work together to thus obscure and confound the soul's inherent intuitive sense of God's omnipresence. In meditation this darkness of sensory dependence goes away and intuition prevails, revealing oneself as light in the magnitude of a whole universe of light.



*That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world
(John 1:9).*



The light of Cosmic Energy is the life of all beings

In the fourth verse it was said and explained: “In him was life; and the life was the light of men.” Now this ninth verse is a restatement of the same concept. In pragmatic or entertaining literature, redundancy is considered boring, even irritating, impeding the flow of thought. But repetition of truth, as evidenced in scriptural writings, is good, even necessary, for moral perception and spiritual assimilation, bringing out the meaning clearly. Truth is a living entity; familiarity with its principles through frequent contact makes it a faithful, supportive companion.

The light of the cosmic energy flowing out of the cosmic consciousness of God is the life that informs all beings and lights their consciousness, as a dynamo sends electricity into the bulbs of a city. It is the omnipresence of that light of God that supports the grand illusion of an infinitude of forms and their wondrous portrayals of individuality. That light is the true light because it is infinite and everlasting, while man only borrows from it his temporary mortal existence from one life to the next. Yoga teaches how to join the immortals by contacting that light and realizing the unity of human consciousness with “the true light, which lighteth every man.”



He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not (John 1:10).

The words “he” and “him,” though ambiguous at first reading, refer, in continuity of the preceding verses, to the Light, or omnipresent creative manifestation of God “in the world.”¹⁹ The “world” means not just this little earth, but the entire cosmos. (It is a translation in the Bible that should be changed, as also many other words that have been misunderstood.)²⁰

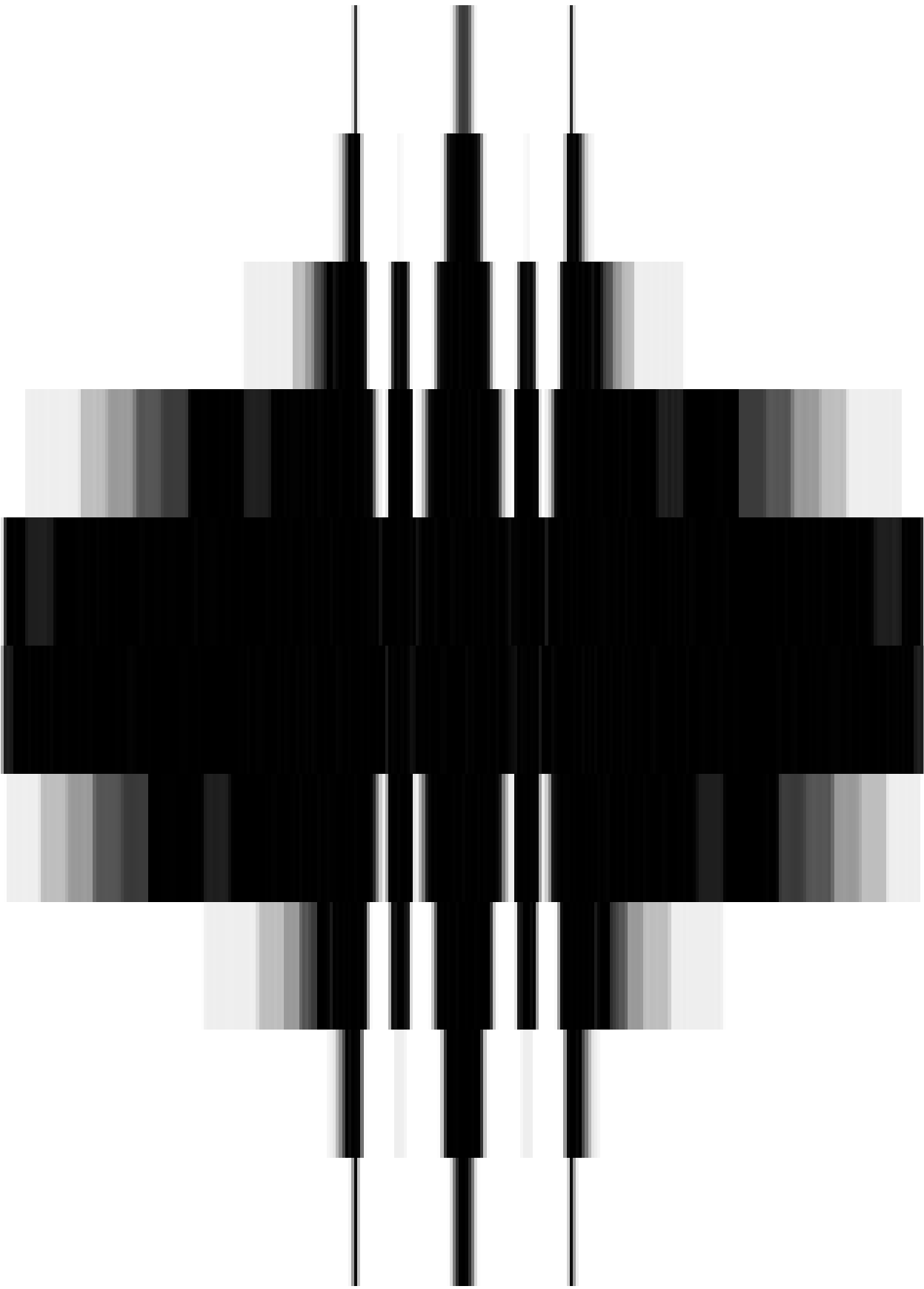
“The world was made by him” means the whole cosmos was evolved from that cosmic light, not just this little planet, which is nothing but a grain of sand on the seashore of time.

“And the world knew him not”: That “true light” was kept hidden by delusion, unseen by sentient beings.



He came unto his own, and his own received him not (John 1:11).

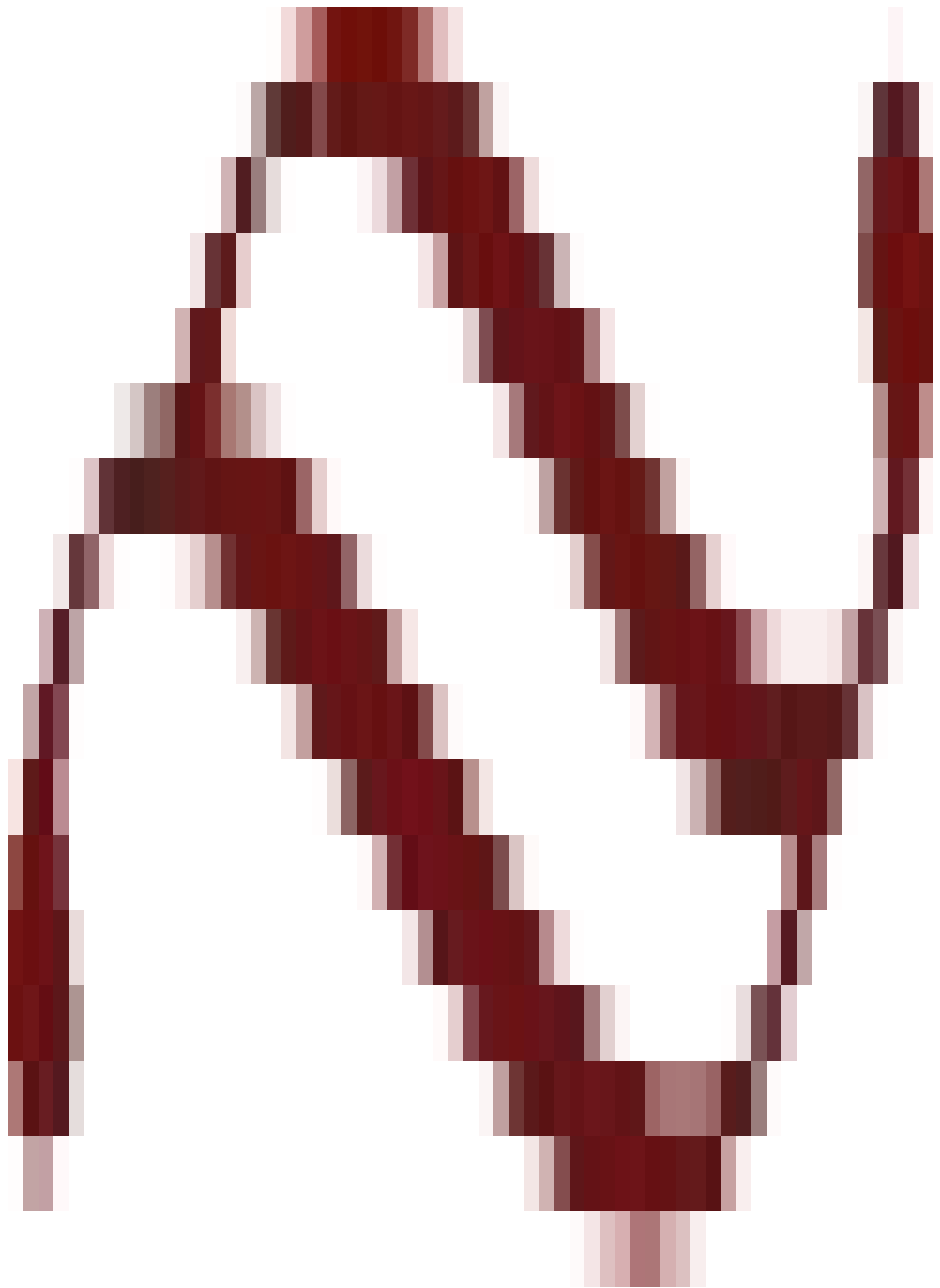
He was omnipresently immanent in creation, all things (“his own”) having been made or materialized from the cosmic light issuing from God’s cosmic consciousness, His own Self.



Because of delusion, matter, life, and mind do not fully reflect the Spirit

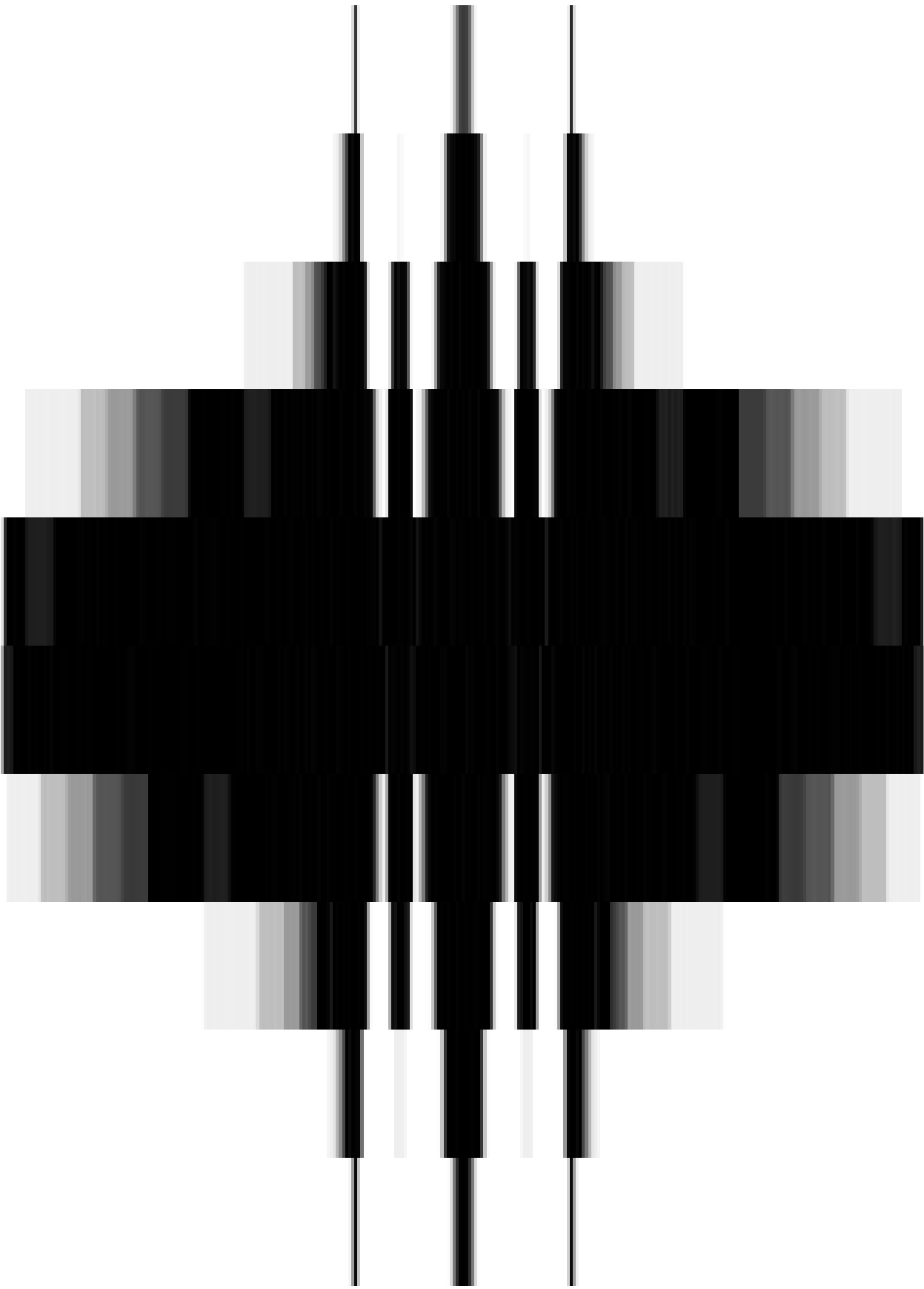
God objectified Himself as matter, life, and mind. His spirit is thus reflected in “his own,” since matter, life, and mind are direct manifestations of Spirit, just as man’s soul has manifested itself into body and mind imbued with life. Although these physical instrumentalities belong to the soul, and are indeed manifestations of the soul, the limitations imposed on the body and mind by delusion prevent man from knowing his ever perfect, blissful soul, his true Self. He rather thinks of himself as a form, name, and specific characteristics subject to worries, troubles, and other afflictions of delusion.

So it is said in this verse that the spirit of God came into “his own,” that is, became manifested in matter and life and His conscious processes in human beings; and “his own received him not”; that is, through the intervention of cosmic delusion, matter, life, and mind do not fully and truly reflect and express (“receive”) the Divine Immanence.



But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God (John 1:12 – 13).

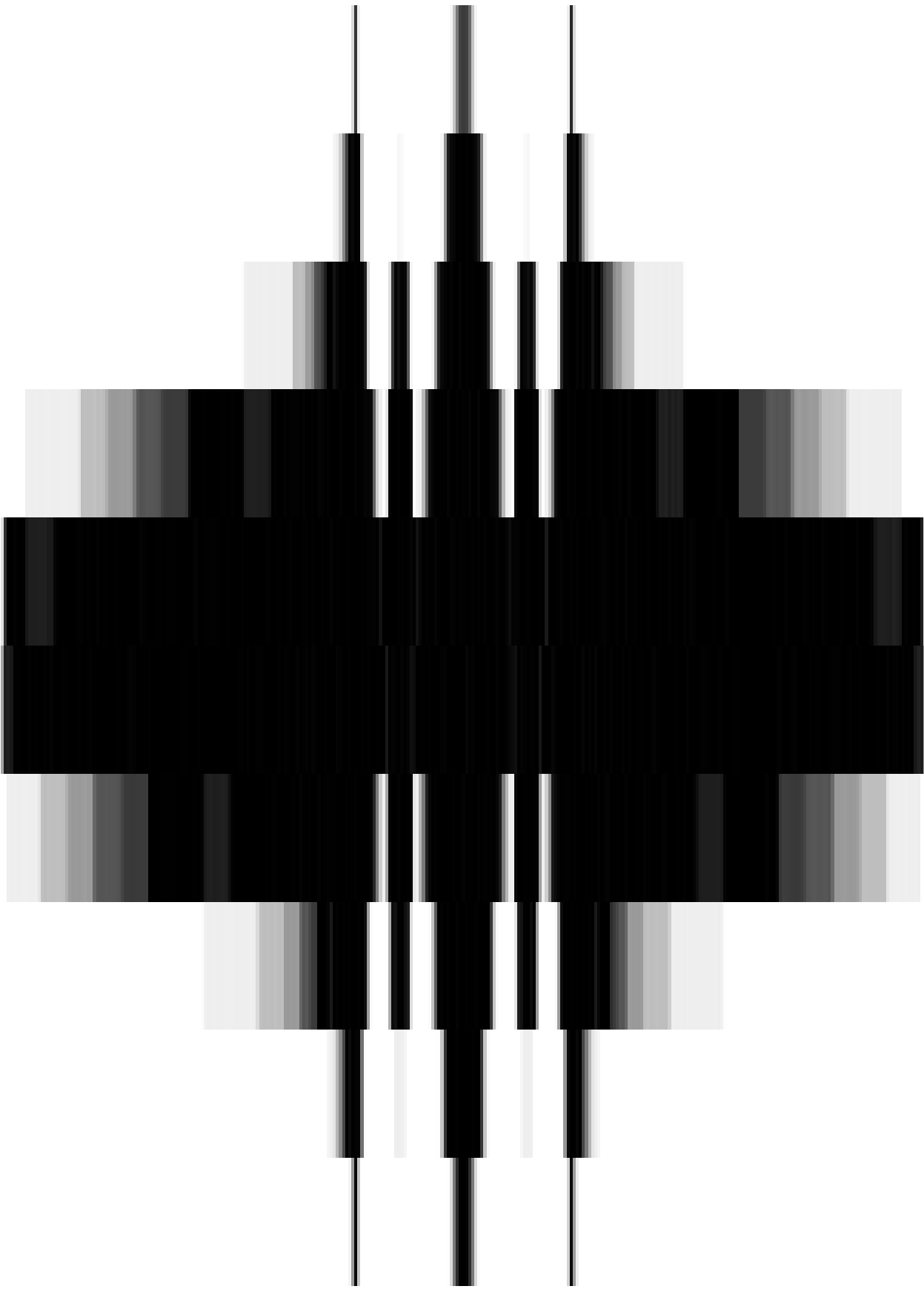


Everyone who clarifies his consciousness to receive God's light can be like Jesus

The light of God shines equally in all, but because of delusive ignorance all do not receive, reflect, it alike. Sunlight falls the same on a lump of coal and a diamond, but only the diamond receives and reflects the light in brilliant splendor. The carbon in the coal has the potential to become a diamond. All it requires is conversion under high pressure. So it is said here that everyone can be like Christ—whosoever clarifies his consciousness by a moral and spiritual life, and especially by the purification of meditation in which rudimentary mortality is sublimed into the soul's perfection of immortality.

To be a son of God is not something one has to acquire: rather, one has only to receive His light and realize God has already conferred on him, at his very inception, that blessed status.

“Even to them that believe on his name”: When even the Name of God rouses one's devotion and anchors one's thoughts in Him, it becomes a door to salvation. When the mere mention of His name sets the soul afire with love for God, it will start the devotee on his way to liberation.



“Believe on his name” : communion with holy Cosmic Vibration

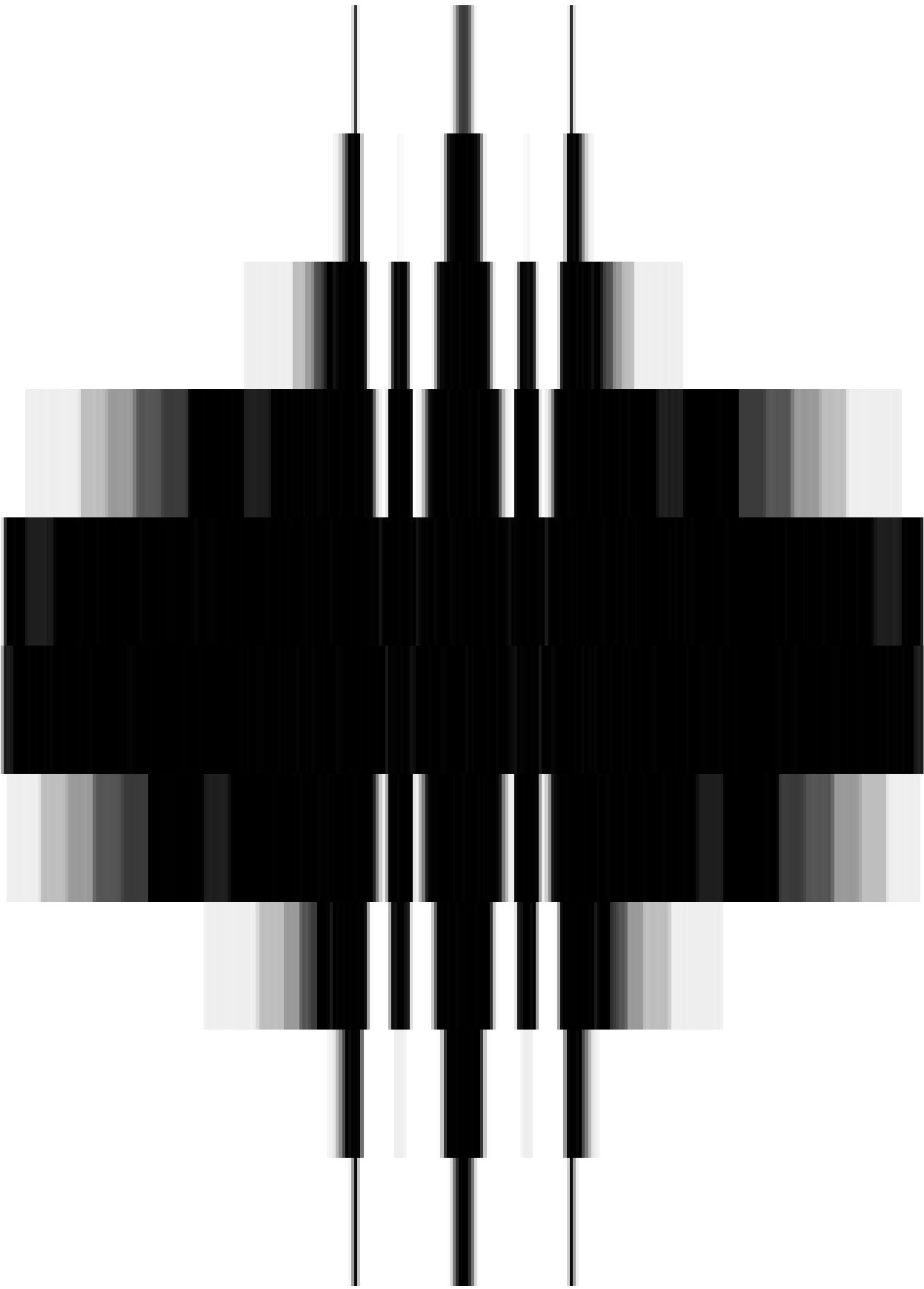
The deeper meaning of “name” is a reference to Cosmic Vibration (the Word, Aum, Amen). God as Spirit has no circumscribing name. Whether one refers to the Absolute as God or Jehovah or Brahman or Allah, that does not express Him. God the Creator and Father of all vibrates through nature as the eternal life, and that life has the sound of the great Amen or Aum. That name most accurately defines God. “Those who believe on his name” means those who commune with that Aum sound, the voice of God in the Holy Ghost vibration. When one hears that name of God, that Cosmic Vibration, he is on his way to becoming a son of God, for in that sound his consciousness touches the immanent Christ Consciousness, which will introduce him to God as Cosmic Consciousness.

Sage Patanjali,²¹ India’s greatest exponent of yoga, describes God the Creator as Ishvara, the Cosmic Lord or Ruler. “His symbol is Pranava (the Holy Word or Sound, Aum). By prayerful, repeated chanting of Aum and meditation on its meaning, obstacles disappear and the consciousness turns inward (away from external sensory identification)” (Yoga Sutras I:27 – 29).

The common condition of human beings is that their consciousness is hidebound by the body. Man’s body, being a delimited vibratory expression, existing in but separated from Cosmic Vibration, similarly circumscribes the consciousness. Yoga teaches that the spiritual aspirant must retrace the various states of higher vibrations in order to lift the consciousness from the captive vibrations of breath, heart, and circulation to the more subtly vibrating sound emanating from the bodily atoms and life force. By a special technique of meditation on Aum, known to students of the Self-Realization Fellowship Lessons, the devotee becomes aware of his consciousness as limited by the constrictions of the flesh, evidenced by the sounds of breath, heart, and circulation. And then, by a deepening of his meditation, he can hear the voice of the great Aum or Amen, the cosmic sound emanating from all atoms and sparks of cosmic energy. By listening to this omnipresent sound, and merging in its holy stream, the consciousness of the body-caged soul begins gradually to spread itself from the limitations of the body into omnipresence. The mental faculties renounce their boundaries and, with the all-knowing soul faculty of intuition, tune in with the Cosmic Mind, the Intelligence immanent in the all-pervasive Cosmic Vibration.

After listening to and feeling oneness with the cosmic sound of the Holy Ghost emanating from every part and particle of God's material, heavenly, and ideationally conceived spheres of being, the consciousness of the meditating devotee will vibrate in all creation as his own cosmic body. When his expanded consciousness becomes stable in all vibratory creation, he realizes the presence of the immanent Christ Consciousness. Then the devotee becomes Christlike; his consciousness experiences, within the vehicles of his expanded Self, the "second coming of Christ"—the presence within him of Christ Consciousness, even as Jesus felt the Universal Christ expressed in his body and taught his disciples to do likewise.²²

When the devotee feels his consciousness one with the Universal Christ, he realizes that Christ Consciousness is the reflection in his soul and in all creation of the Cosmic Consciousness of God the Father. The Cosmic Consciousness (God the Father) existing transcendentally beyond all vibratory (Holy Ghost) creation and the Christ Consciousness (Universal Intelligence, Kutastha Chaitanya) in all vibratory manifestation are realized as one and the same. The devotee rejoices in the ultimate joy, as Jesus proclaimed, "I (Christ Consciousness in creation) and my Father (Cosmic Consciousness beyond creation) are one."



All souls are children of God, made in His image

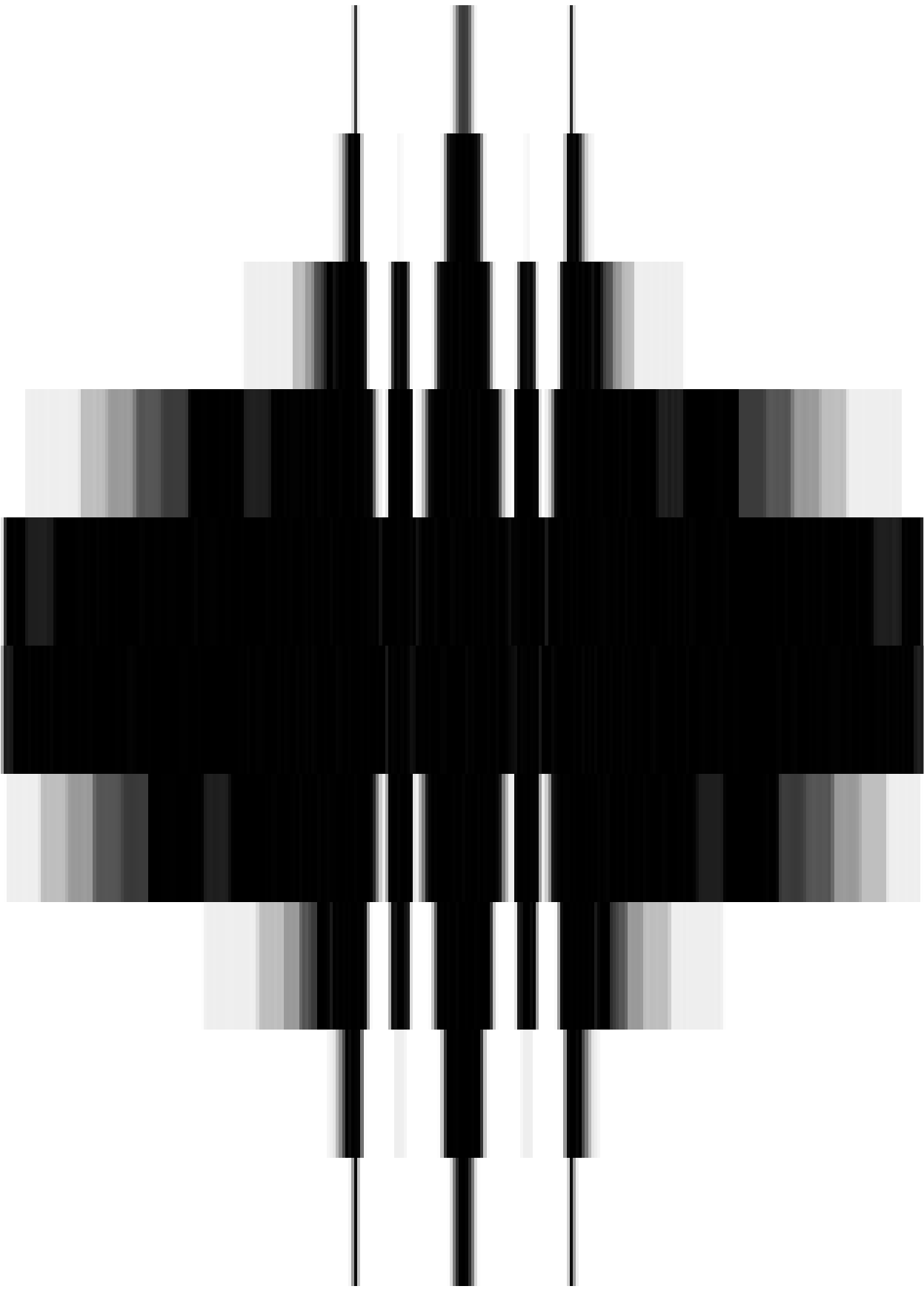
“Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God”: The son of man is the physical body, which comes out of another human body as a result of human will and sexual union, born of protoplasm and the bloodline of family or racial heredity. But son of God means the soul, the inherent divine consciousness of man, born not of man’s will or flesh or sex or family blood or pedigree, but of God. Thus in truth all human beings are sons of God, children born of God, made in His image.

Essential sons of God, clear reflections of the Father untarnished by delusion, have become sons of man by identification with the flesh and forgetfulness of their origin in Spirit. Deluded man is just a beggar on the street of time. But as Jesus received and reflected through his purified consciousness the divine sonship of Christ Consciousness, so also every man, by yoga meditation, can clarify his mind and become a diamondlike mentality who will receive and reflect the light of God.

To receive Christ is not accomplished through church membership, nor by outer ritual of acknowledging Jesus as one’s savior but never knowing him in reality by contacting him in meditation. To know Christ signifies to close the eyes, expand the consciousness and so deepen the concentration that through the inner light of soul intuition one partakes of the same consciousness that Jesus had. Saint John and other advanced disciples of Jesus who truly “received him” felt him as the Christ Consciousness present in every speck of space. A true Christian—a Christ-one—is he who frees his soul from the consciousness of the body and unites it with the Christ Intelligence pervading all creation.



And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth (John 1:14).



“The Word was made flesh”: Divine Energy manifesting as matter

The Word, the creative energy and sound of Cosmic Vibration, like the sound waves of an unimaginably powerful earthquake, went out of the Creator to manifest the universe. That Cosmic Vibration, permeated with Cosmic Intelligence, was condensed into subtle elements—thermal, electric, magnetic, and all manner of rays; thence into atoms of vapor (gases), liquids, and solids. The “Word was made flesh” means the vibratory energy producing that cosmic sound was condensed into matter.²³

All matter is “flesh” because it is all living; even the stone has life. Professor Jagadis Chandra Bose, founder of the Bose Research Institute in Calcutta, India, engaged in remarkable experiments in which he proved that even a piece of tin responds favorably to stimuli that are pleasurable and contrarily to others it dislikes; and that its life vibrations can also be poisoned and killed.²⁴

“And dwelt among us”: The Cosmic Vibration, which was materialized into physical creation, including man’s body, provided a circumambient universe observable to sentient souls.

Man is a threefold being: physical, mental, and spiritual—a unique combination of forces and consciousness capable of fully cognizing Divinity in himself and in the universe conceived for his appreciation. He is the soul, the Self, made in the image of God (an individualized reflection of God), which expresses itself in the manifested universe through the instrumentality of a body and a mind. The bodily instrument is a collective vibration of grossly stirring atoms, electromagnetic waves, and intelligent life force (subtle vital energy, finer than electrons). The mental faculty consists of both sensory instruments (of perception and action) and discriminative intelligence (which interprets sensory information and makes determinations regarding knowledge and action). The soul, while dwelling within the body, becomes identified with its physical and mental experiences and forgets its divine nature; it masquerades instead as the body-circumscribed ego, the pseudosoul. Scientific yoga techniques of meditation enable the soul to regain the memory of its oneness with the omniscient, omnipresent Spirit.

“And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.” “We”

means advanced souls who have reclaimed their sonship with God, and who experience the Holy Ghost Cosmic Vibration and the innate cosmic Christ Intelligence—the only begotten of God the Father in all creation. The Christ-imbued Word, “full of grace and truth,” is the replete repository of the universal principles and laws of natural righteousness, the “truth” that upholds the order of the world and governs man’s duty to God, nature, and his fellow beings.

The glory of the magnitude of the Light of Cosmic Vibration is coming like a great comet of life from God, surrounding matter and secreted just beneath its grossness. “We beheld...the glory” of the Cosmic Light and “of the only begotten” Intelligence of God that guides the Cosmic Light or Vibration and gives grace and beauty and true substance to all matter. Without “the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,” there would be no matter at all.

The entire creation of matter, Holy Ghost or Holy Energy; and the only begotten, only reflected intelligence of God in matter, receive their grace and truth, the glory of their manifestation, from God, who is the Father-Creator of all.



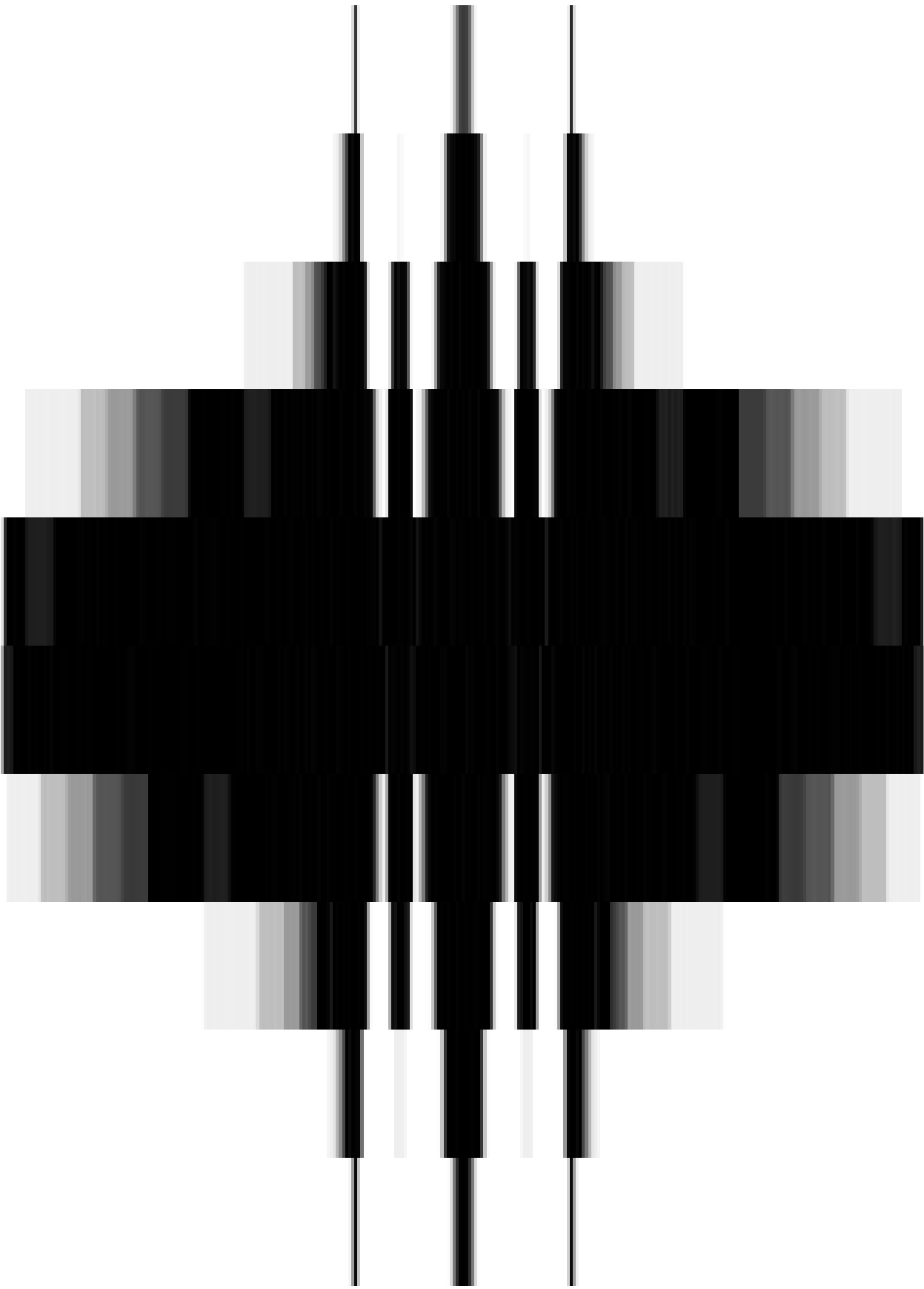
John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, “This was he of whom I spake, ‘He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me’” (John 1:15).

The consciousness of the prophet John the Baptist was in tune with the universal Christ Intelligence and could “witness” or declare from his own intuitive realization the glory of Christ Consciousness as manifest in the omnipresence of the Holy Ghost creative Light, and also in the divine consciousness he saw incarnate in Jesus. That Consciousness was “preferred” in Jesus for he came to fulfill a special dispensation. ²⁵



And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ (John 1:16 – 17).

Of the fullness of the Christ Consciousness that permeates creation all prophets have received—all those who are in tune receive that consciousness without measure. Lesser men, according to their capacity, also receive; their every goodness, like a mouth, drinks of the eternal grace of the Christ Consciousness. “And of his fulness”: That is, the omnipresent Christ Consciousness all can receive who make their minds pure. “And grace for grace”: For every goodness in man, he receives from the eternal goodness of God.



The fullness of Spirit is reflected in all souls

The fullness of the Spirit is reflected evenly in all souls. But those who are sons of God—those who have changed their charcoal mentality into a diamond mentality—receive and reflect the fullness of the Divine Presence. In the sons of God is the “fulness” of the omnipresent omniscience of the Bliss of Spirit, the complete awareness of the glory of God within themselves.

“And grace for grace”: Every goodness is an opening through which the light of God shines. Every expression of a dark mentality shuts out the sunny Divine Presence. So each time man practices goodness, he receives a special measure of God’s grace.

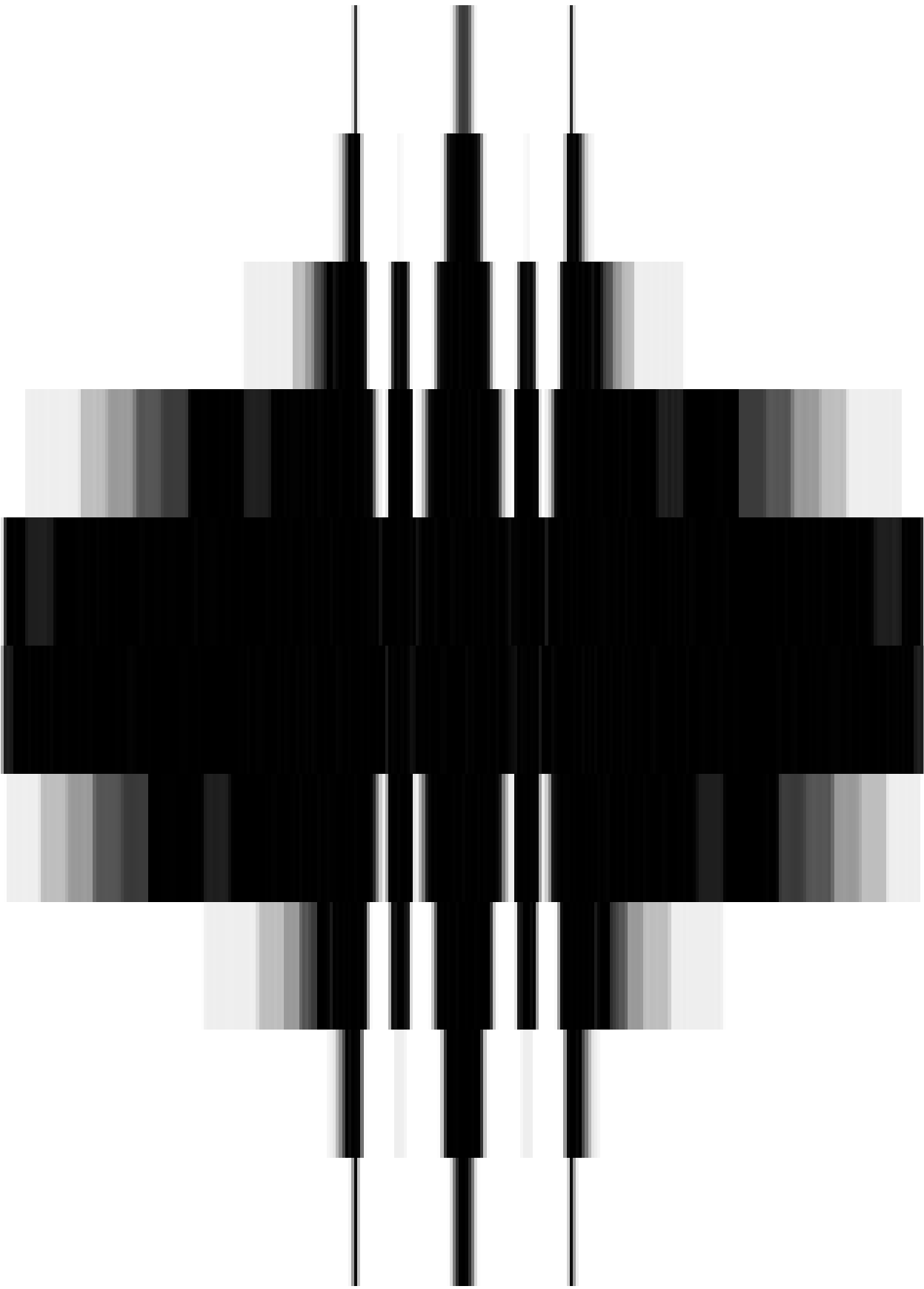
“For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ”: Now here is a contentious verse of scriptural disagreement between Jews and Christians. But this verse is not intended to define any difference in the degree of spirituality between Jesus and Moses. The point is, every prophet has a special purpose to fulfill on earth. This statement of Saint John’s merely recognizes Moses’ gift from God to man in the form of the Ten Commandments. These are eternal verities, universal laws of life that make man’s existence morally comfortable and spiritually fulfilling. The word “commandment,” however, does not give the best connotation, for it is as if God is a dictator and man His servile attendant. These dictums should rather be regarded as a code of natural righteousness. If man does not follow those laws which evince the divine image within him, he falls out of tune with God into delusive suffering of his own making.

“Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ”: That is, all truth, the power behind universal laws, flows from the Christ Consciousness, which power was manifested in Jesus, as in all great prophets. The eternal laws are in fact maintained through the omnipresence of the Christ Intelligence. Jesus, through the consciousness of the Universal Christ within him, came to show that grace and truth and goodness flow from that divine Source.



No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared Him (John 1:18).

Many have been misled due to a wrong reading of these words. If God is imperceptible, He must be equally unknowable. How frustrating would seem one's efforts in meditation, or in prayer to such a reclusive God. The meaning is this:



*No mortal can see God except by lifting his consciousness to Christ
Consciousness*

“No man hath seen God at any time (no mortal under ‘time,’ the relativities of maya, can realize the Infinite); the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father (the reflected Christ Consciousness or outwardly projected Perfect Intelligence that, guiding all structural phenomena through Aum vibration, has issued forth from the ‘bosom’ or deeps of the Uncreated Divine in order to express the variety of Unity), he hath declared (subjected to form, or manifested) Him.”

It is the Christ Intelligence in all creation that has manifested the invisible God the Father transcendent beyond creation. We would not have seen the beauty of the flower or responded with love to the sweet life in an infant if that Christ Intelligence were not present there. We would have had no inkling of God the Father in His transcendent vibrationless abode beyond the etheric vastness of creation unless that “only begotten” Intelligence reflected in matter declared His existence.

The word “seen” has such a provisory connotation. One who is body-bound, whose consciousness is limited to sensory perceptions and the thought that he is a mortal being—he cannot see God. But to Jesus, who was in tune with the Infinite Christ Intelligence, God was no longer an unintelligible mystery. With the all-seeing intuitive perception of his soul he could see God in any aspect, materialized out of the Vibratory Light, or in divine oneness embrace his Father as the Formless Absolute. When man has lifted his consciousness from the ordinary sensory state to receive that only begotten Christ Consciousness, he also shall see God, not with mortal sight but with divine perception.

When the consciousness is impregnate with the Christ Intelligence, one sees that Intelligence as the reflection of God manifesting in everything. But when the Creative Vibration of the outgoing externalization of God’s consciousness is enshrouded in maya, the true Essence of manifestation is hidden. It is the Holy Ghost pure intelligence and its innate undistorted reflection of God as Christ Consciousness that proclaims the everywhere-ness of the Divine Presence and is the stabilizer and magnetic attraction in matter that keeps created forms linked to their Divine Source, and ultimately pulls them back to God. The nature of this

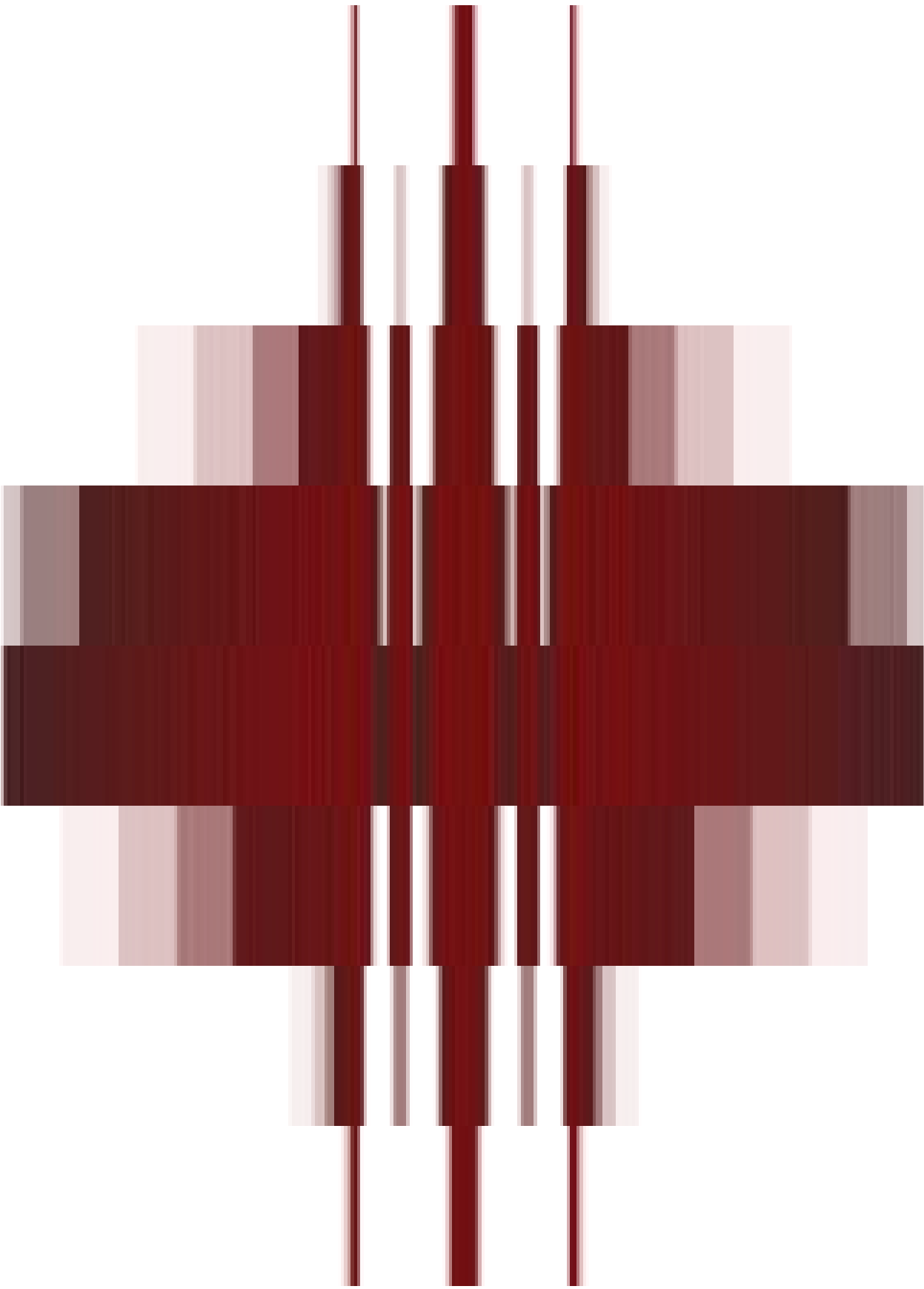
Christ magnetism is God's Love—His eternal caring and watchfulness of the greatest and the tiniest of His manifestations, never allowing them to wander outside of His sheltering presence.

This Omnipresent Love of God is why I consider Bhagavan Krishna and Jesus Christ, avatars of East and West, as the supreme expressions of the Krishna-Christ Consciousness (the Universal Kutastha Chaitanya), for in them was evident in the highest degree the incarnation of God's divine love and compassion. Krishna's love gave to the world the yoga of liberation from the sea of suffering through scientific meditation and right action, and the devotional approach of flinging oneself on the Divine Compassion. Jesus demonstrated in his every act of ministering to the sick and forsaken, and in the consummate sacrifice of his body to alleviate the sins of many, the incomparable love of God that is an infinitude of mercy and forgiveness. The paramount meaning of the birth of Jesus is the forgiveness of God. Though man cast himself into the darkest abyss of God-forgetfulness, spurning the Lord in favor of rampant material gratifications, yet is he ultimately rescued by the pull of God's love within and around him that aids in a natural upward evolutionary return to God. This is the world message Jesus the Christ was born to declare, by the hidden love of God made manifest in the divinity of his life.



Discourse 2

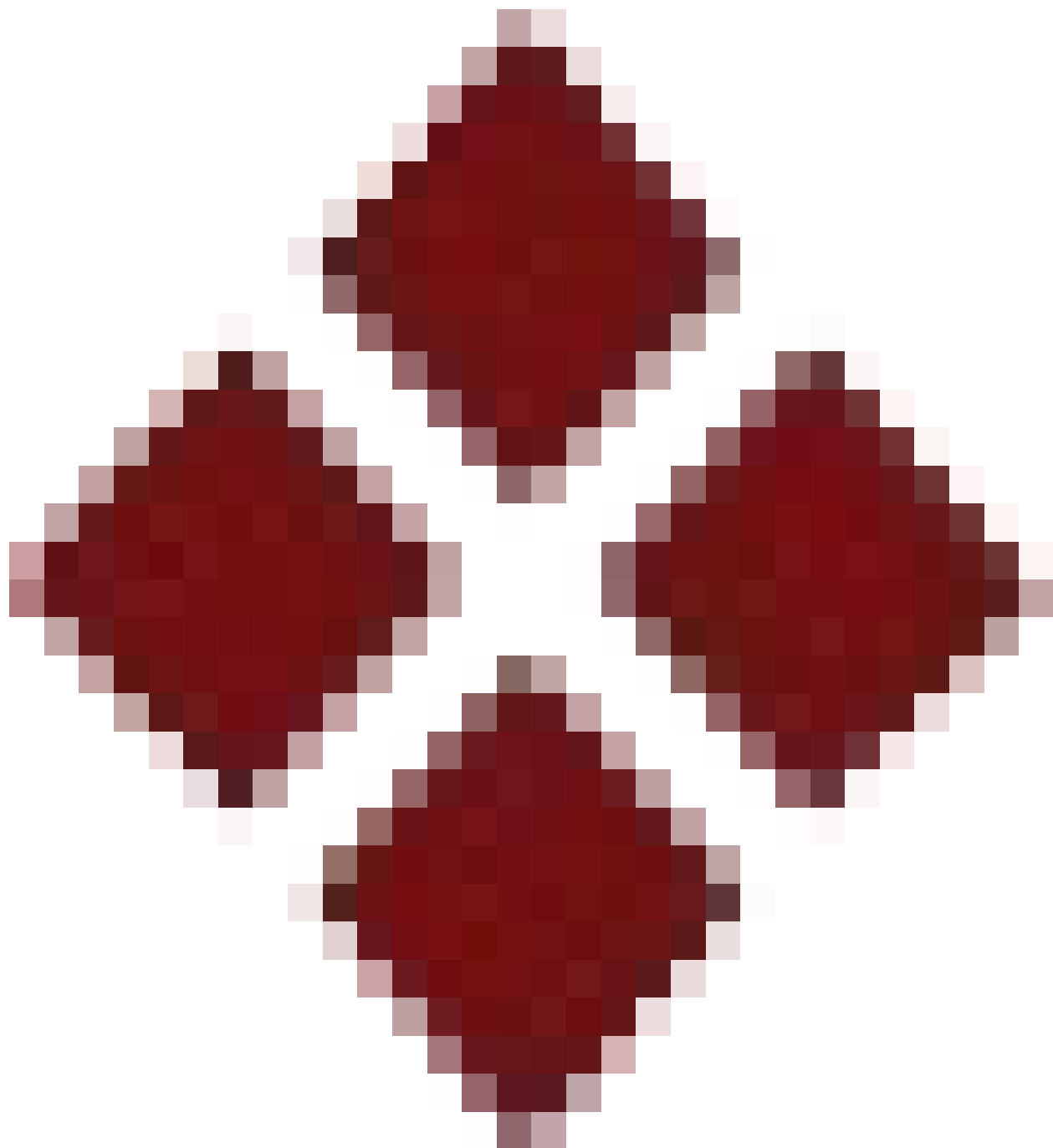
Jesus' Immaculate Conception and His Relationship With John the Baptist



**The Cosmic Principle of Reincarnation: Souls'
Journey Through Many Lives**



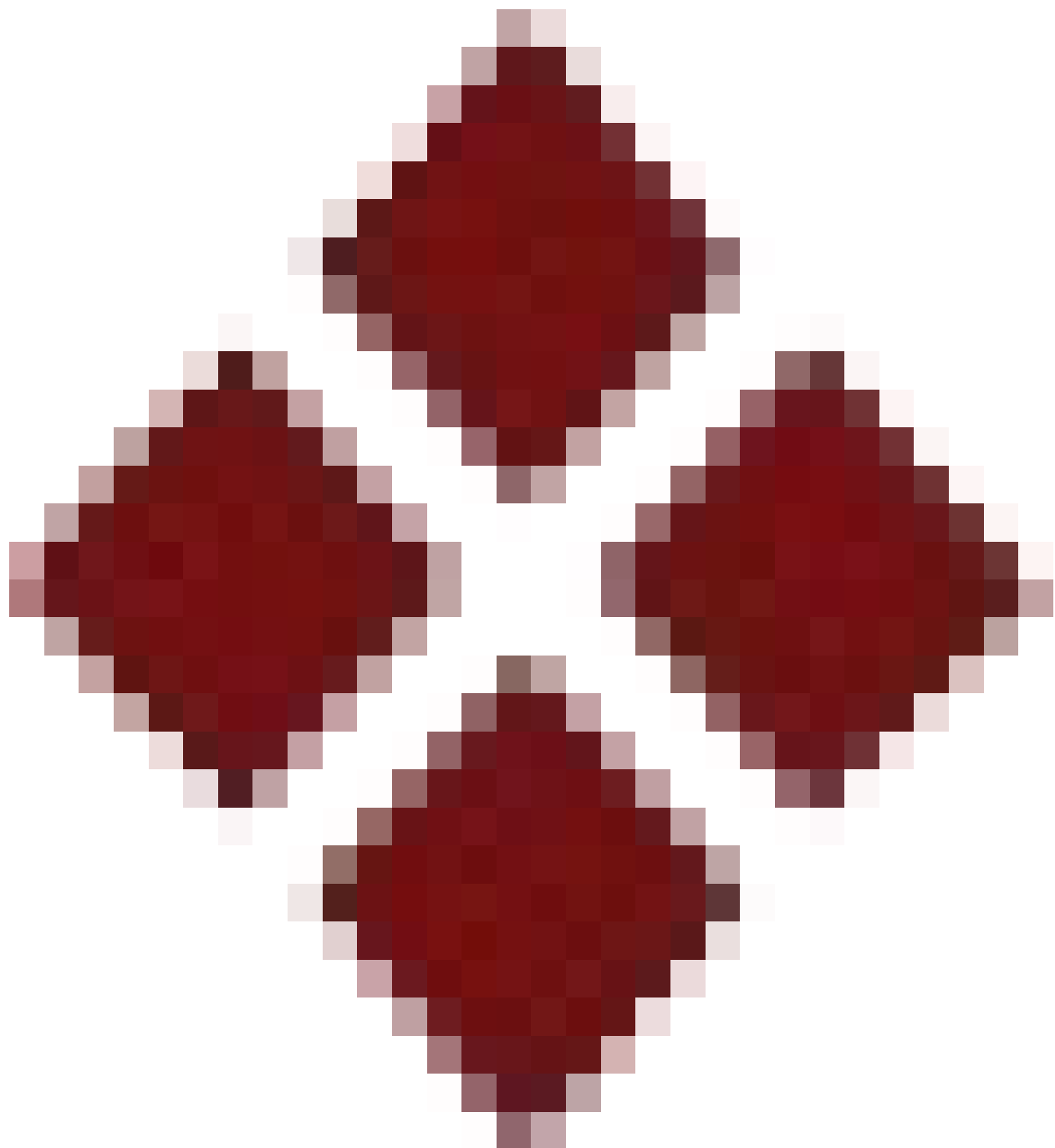
Jesus and John in Light of Reincarnation



Elijah as the Past-Life Guru of Jesus



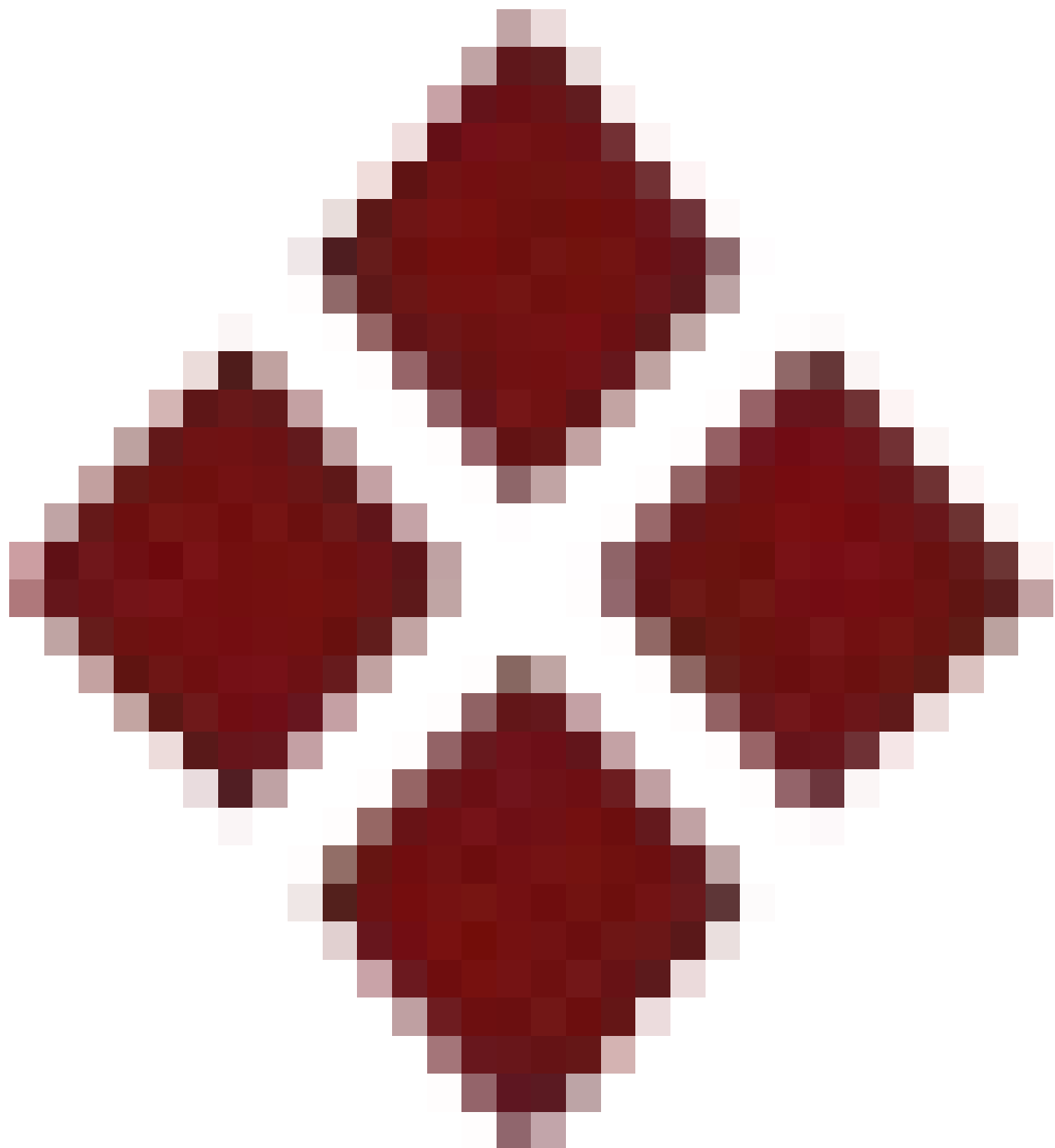
Jesus' Mission and Miracles Foreshadowed in His Previous Incarnation



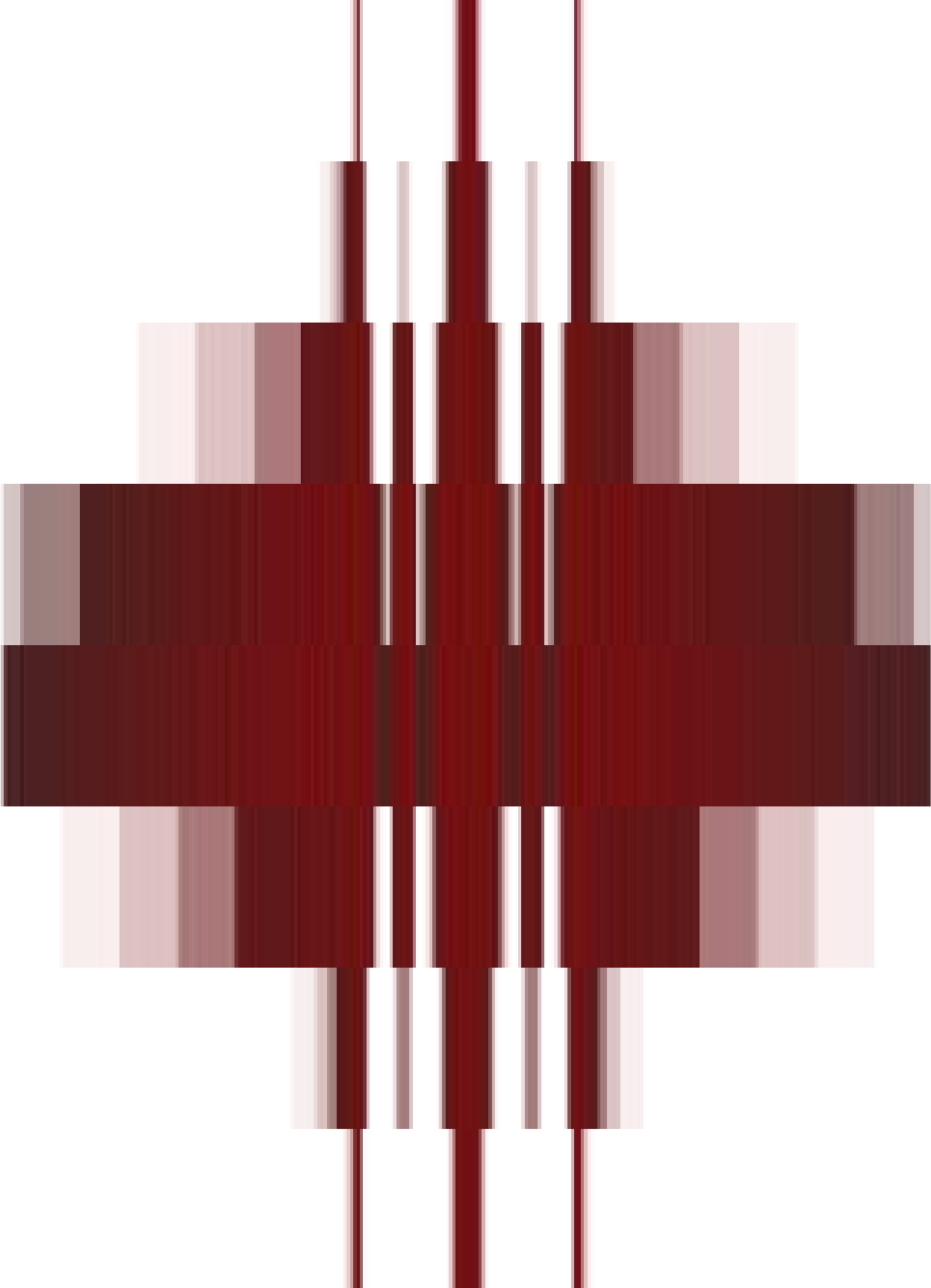
The Metaphysical Truth About Immaculate Conception



Sexual Reproduction in Humans Began With the Fall of Adam and Eve



Buddha and Other Avatars Also Born in the Immaculate Way



“God’s plan was in evidence from the moment of conception of these two souls in the wombs of their earthly mothers, embodying them for their incarnations as John and Jesus.”

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There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years.

And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, according to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense.

And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

But the angel said unto him, "Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.¹ And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, 'to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,' and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

And Zacharias said unto the angel, "Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years."

And the angel answering said unto him, "I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings. And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season."

And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple. And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they

perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless.

And it came to pass, that, as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house. And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying, "Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein He looked on me, to take away my reproach among men."

—Luke 1:5 – 25

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Discourse 2

Jesus' Immaculate Conception and His Relationship With John the Baptist



“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.”² These words, at the very end of the Old Testament, foretell the coming of Christ Jesus and the rebirth of Elijah as his precursor. The prophecy was fulfilled by John the Baptist, divinely ordained to “prepare the way of the Lord” and “go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah.”



The cosmic principle of reincarnation: souls' journey through many lives

The Biblical telling of the relationship between Jesus and John the Baptist takes on a new sanctity when viewed in the light of the holy tradition of the bond formed between guru and disciple—between one who knows God and one who is seeking to know Him. The relationship between Jesus and John was of a continuing journey together of two divine souls, begun in previous lifetimes.

The cosmic principle of reincarnation, with its dynamism of the law of karma (cause and effect, sowing and reaping), is a time-honored doctrine, embraced by the Hindus, Buddhists, the ancient Druid priests, the Essenes and Gnostics and many early Christian theologians; and also, eminent philosophers of the East and West. Though for centuries it has been divorced by church orthodoxy from the common understanding of Jesus' life and teachings, reincarnation is in fact evident in many passages in both the Old and New Testaments, including unequivocal statements by Jesus himself.³ For example, from the Book of Revelation (

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): “Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out.” Here Jesus distinctly refers to the doctrine of reincarnation, saying that when a soul overcomes by spiritual discipline his mortal desires accrued through contact of matter, that soul becomes a pillar of immortality in the everlasting mansion of Cosmic Consciousness; and, having found fulfillment of all his desires in Spirit, that soul has no more to be reborn on earth through the karmic reincarnating force of unsatisfied desires.⁴

All souls come from God—individualized rays of pure Spirit—and evolve back to their native perfection by exercise of their God-given free will. The ignorant and the wise alike require equal opportunity from the hand of a just and loving God in order to fulfill this quest. For instance, a baby who dies prematurely cannot possibly have used its free will to be either virtuous enough to be granted salvation or vicious enough to be damned. Nature must bring that soul back to

earth to give it a chance to use its free will to work out the past actions (karma) that were the lawful cause of its untimely death, and to perform sufficient good actions to attain liberation.

Ordinary souls are compelled to reincarnate by their earthbound desires and effects of past actions. Great souls, advanced in wisdom through learning the lessons of many lifetimes, come on earth partially to finish their karma but principally to act as noble sons of God whose example inspires His lost children along their way to the Heavenly Father's all-blissful home. Masters and prophets, having graduated from the school of mortal life into the immortality of Cosmic Consciousness, incarnate voluntarily to serve, at God's behest, as plenipotentiary agents of His millennial plan to shepherd all souls back to their eternal abode in Spirit.⁵

From my guru, Swami Sri Yukteswar, a master of Vedic wisdom with a universal spiritual understanding, I received a new appreciation of the Christian Bible—in which I confess to only a cursory interest in my youth, having been put off by the irrational orthodoxy of missionaries whose aim was to convert me. Listening to Master expound the Christian scripture with the same natural ease he felt among the esoteric depths of his native Hindu heritage, I experienced a wondrous expansion in the realm of truth, which has no boundaries or religious demarcations. Sri Yukteswar had written, at the request of his paramguru, Mahavatar Babaji, an amazingly compacted analysis of the unity of the Hindu and Christian scriptures: *The Holy Science*.⁶ That commission was the seed of my future mission—to show the harmony between the original science of yoga given by Bhagavan Krishna and the original teachings of Lord Jesus. My mind, therefore, early on, dwelt often on the life of Christ; his presence became a very real experience to me.



Jesus and John in light of reincarnation

As every human being has undergone many lifetimes to fashion his present nature and condition, an idle curiosity often imposed itself on my mind as to what incarnations Jesus must have passed through in order to reach Christhood. An ordinary materially minded man's consciousness is limited to the satisfaction of hunger, thirst, and minor necessities of the body, including gratification of desires. An intellectual man spreads his consciousness to explore the stars or the deeper regions of the secret caves of wisdom connected with the mind, life, or surroundings of human existence. A spiritual man, by many lifetimes of meditation and by extending his love to all, unites his consciousness with the all-pervading Christ Consciousness. Therefore, Jesus the man must have lived through other incarnations of human schooling and meditation before he reached his expanded, exalted state as Jesus the Christ.

Over the years, I made deep researches in Spirit to ascertain the outstanding previous incarnations of Jesus—with little result. (God keeps tightly closed the mystery door that closets a soul's past lives, lest undue and irrelevant attention be focused on former glories or disastrous errors rather than on the merits of the here and now. Nevertheless, glimpses He does vouchsafe when the purpose is beneficial.) One day as I sat in absorbed contemplation, with the Christian Bible in my hands, I deeply prayed, "Father, tell me who was Jesus Christ before he came to earth in that incarnation." In unexpected instancy, the Father's silent omnipresent voice became manifest in audible words: "Open the Bible!"

I obeyed the Divine Command; and the first verse on which my eyes fell was I Kings

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So he (Elijah) departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him.

Then I remembered what Jesus had spoken of John the Baptist: ““But I say unto you, that Elijah is come already, and they knew him not...’ Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist” (Matthew

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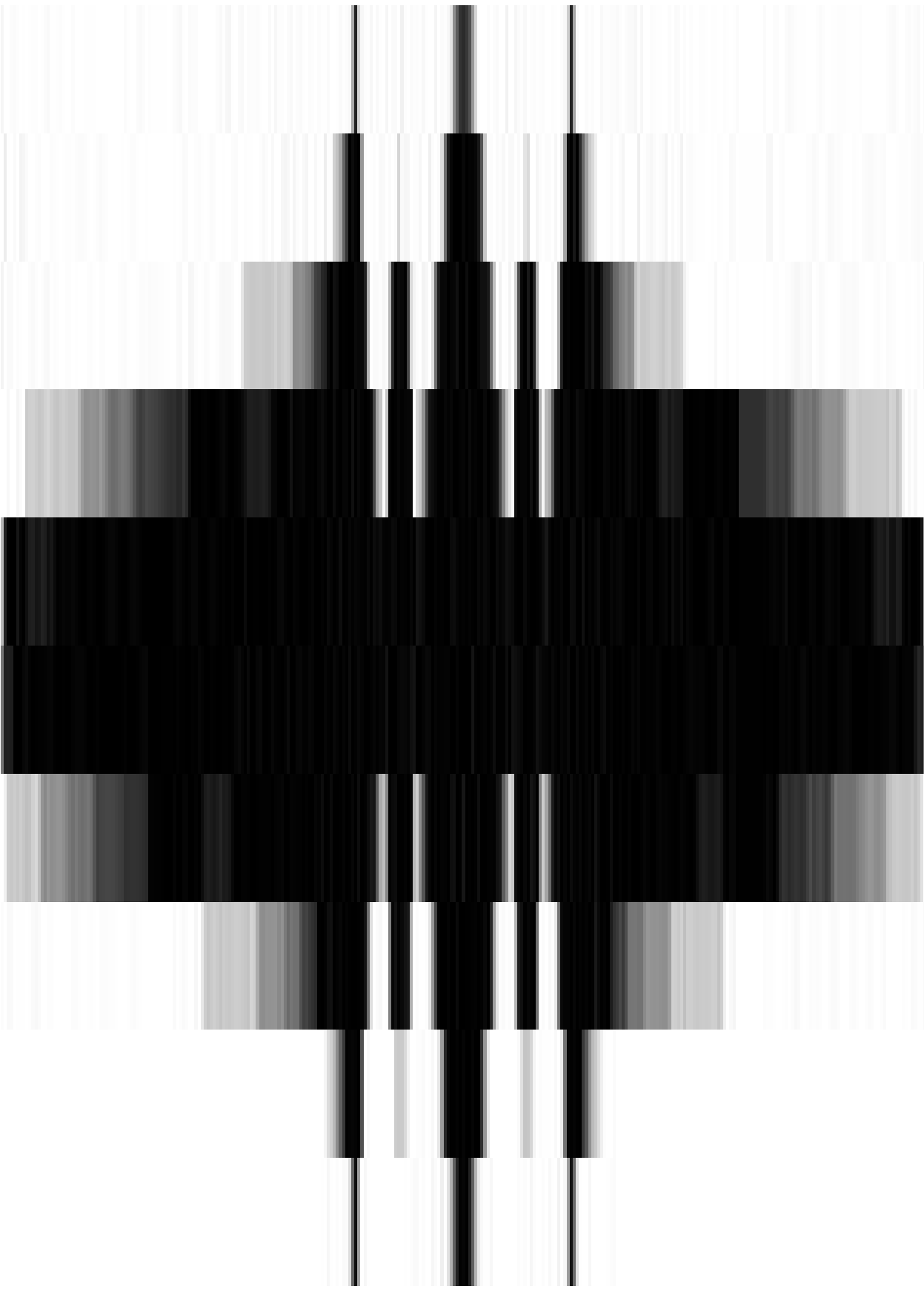
).⁷ It was Elisha, incarnate as Jesus, who could recognize his master in John the Baptist from their past association as Elijah and Elisha. In many places, as will be shown in these Discourses, Jesus made significant references to John the Baptist and showed deference to him—when Jesus asked to be baptized of him; when he extolled John as the greatest of prophets born of woman (which included himself); when Jesus was transfigured on the mountain and Moses and Elijah appeared and when afterward he identified Elijah as John the Baptist.

Both John the Baptist and Jesus in their former incarnations as Elijah and Elisha had found complete liberation. Who Jesus was before he was born as Elisha is not important, for it was in that incarnation that he attained the supreme goal. By divine appointment, Elisha was perfected through Elijah, who cast on him his mantle of spiritual realization.

The hand of the Lord was on Elijah (I Kings 18:46).

And God directed Elijah to initiate Elisha:

And the Lord said unto him, “Go, return on the way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest...Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room” (I Kings 19:15 – 16).



Elijah as the past-life guru of Jesus

Thus did God distinctly appoint Elijah to be the guru of Elisha. The Guru of Gurus, the Supreme Preceptor, always designates the channel through which the disciple shall receive instruction and liberation. Elijah, finding Elisha plowing with the twelve yoke of oxen is significantly symbolic, since Elisha, later as Jesus, was to plow the hard soil of human consciousness with his twelve disciples to bring forth a harvest of divine wisdom and salvation in many souls. By this incident did God indicate to Elijah the future remarkable world mission of Elisha; and that he was chosen for this divine dispensation because he was an extraordinary disciple.

To cast a cloth mantle on another has no transforming power in and of itself. But the casting of a master's garment of Self-realization over the consciousness of an advanced disciple is the baptism by the Holy Ghost. Having received that initiation from Elijah, Elisha, without word or argument or persuasion, thereafter faithfully followed his guru.

When it came time for the Lord to end the earthly incarnation of Elijah, the great prophet said to Elisha:

“Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee.”

And Elisha said, “I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.”

And he (Elijah) said, “Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so.”

And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and

Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

And Elisha saw it, and he cried, “My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.” And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces.

He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the bank of Jordan;

And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, “Where is the Lord God of Elijah?” And when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over.

And when the sons of the prophets which were to view at Jericho saw him, they said, “The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha.” And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him (II Kings 2:9 – 15).

So it was that Elisha, as Jesus, came with “a double portion of spirit,” to bring salvation to many disciples as well as to conquer by all-forgiving divine love when supremely tested with crucifixion. Elijah and Elisha both had performed many miracles, and were able to heal the sick, to produce abundance from a little food, and to raise the dead. Therefore, in accordance with the law of karma, Jesus possessed great powers even in childhood as a natural endowment from his incarnation as Elisha. As Jesus imbued life into the shell of his dead body, spiritualizing and immortalizing it, so also even the decaying bones of the departed Elisha retained life-reviving power:

And Elisha died, and they buried him. And the bands of the Moabites invaded the

land at the coming in of the year. And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band of men; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha: and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet (II Kings 13:20 – 21).



Jesus' mission and miracles foreshadowed in his previous incarnation

The soul of Elijah, after converting his physical body into luminous astral energy and ascending to heaven “in the whirlwind of a fiery chariot,”⁸ remained in the astral land to be timely reincarnated as John the Baptist to witness for the divine mission his disciple Elisha, reincarnated as Jesus, was preordained to fulfill.⁹ Elijah and Elisha, both being one with Spirit, were spiritual equals. Yet Elijah, returning as John the Baptist, humbly took an insignificant part in that incarnation, just to see and support his reincarnated disciple, Jesus, who came “with a double portion of spirit” to fulfill God’s wish that he play an eminent role in revolutionizing the spiritual destiny of man. Both Jesus and John were fulfilling the will of God. It is natural that Elijah, being the master, wanted to be on earth to witness and be the one to prepare the way for his disciple to carry out his divine dispensation and be glorified as a savior on earth. A noble father is never jealous of his son’s glory, but rather takes pride if the son surpasses his own repute in the eyes of the world. And though John played a lesser part, his ordeal of iniquitous imprisonment and beheading for the sake of truth was no less than the tribulation of Jesus on the cross.

God’s plan was in evidence from the moment of conception of these two souls in the wombs of their earthly mothers, embodying them for their incarnations as John and Jesus. Even when still in the womb, their spirits recognized one another and communicated their everlasting fealty and love. Advanced souls who have broken the cycles of compulsory incarnations do not have to undergo the ordinary experience of oblivion that disconnects one life from the next. If they choose it to be so, their ever awake souls can retain their continuity of consciousness throughout the sequence of death, afterlife, and rebirth—even in the mother’s womb.

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And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, "Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women."

And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

And the angel said unto her, "Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

Then said Mary unto the angel, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?"

And the angel answered and said unto her, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible."

And Mary said, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word." And the angel departed from her.

And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda; and entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth. And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy."

...And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house.

— *Luke 1:26 – 44, 56*

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily.

But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.”

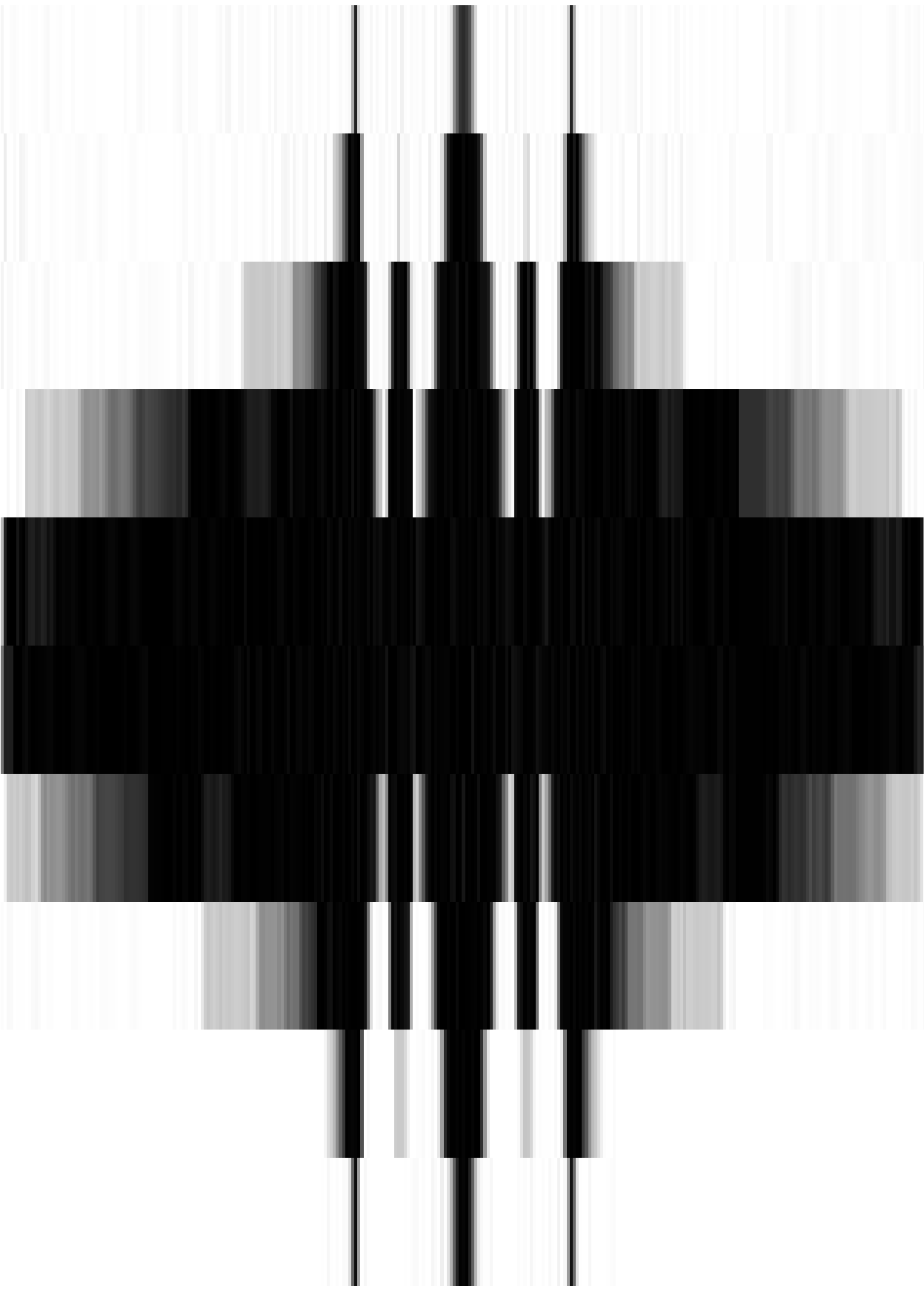
Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, “Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel,”¹⁰ which being interpreted is, “God with us.”

— *Matthew 1:18 – 23*



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The conception and birth of Jesus has been the subject of considerable controversy: Was he conceived in the natural or a preternatural way? Was he truly born of immaculate conception? Myth, fact, faith? Man so engrosses himself in trying to decipher the encrypted formulas of God's doings that he misses the joy of appreciating the hand of God in the affairs of man. Must one comprehend the full molecular biology of wheat to know the satisfaction of hunger in a loaf of bread? Must one be an astronomer to receive the life-giving light and warmth of the sun? The ultimate knowledge of every God-mystery is barred to no one who makes himself ready to read the Book of Life, whenever and in whatever way the Lord opens its pages to him.



The metaphysical truth about immaculate conception

God is the Great Cosmic Organizer. The most elite conclave of mortal minds could not so thoroughly set forth universal laws that endure the assaults of time and the presumptuous rejections of cultural change. Yet God is not rigid. He accords freedom to man to induce kaleidoscopic variations by manipulation of known laws—for good and ill—which in effect simply activate other laws which are thereby newly “discovered.” He Himself delights in surprising His children with a divine innovation now and again that confounds their common reason. In dismay man backs away and scoffs at the implausibility, or reverently folds his hands and concedes a miracle.

Even in nature, God plays with the staid methods. Some plants cannot grow and reproduce without sexual cross-pollination from male stamen to the female pistil; while other plants, such as the common geranium, can vigorously proliferate themselves from a small stem cutting. The animal kingdom, likewise, has evolved through sexual reproduction; yet a certain species of snail produces its own kind quite independently of male-female union. In science laboratories, frogs have been reproduced by stimulation of female ova without the introduction of male sperm.¹¹

Creation is creation, the forming of something new. It is always “immaculate” in the sense that it brings something into being by the creative power of God, whether by His divine fiat or by man’s employment of God’s natural laws. The first real immaculate conception, in its highest form, was when God materialized Adam and Eve—the symbolic parents of all human beings. God did not create original man and woman by sexual union. (Which came first, the tree or the seed? The tree, of course, which was then endowed with the ability to produce its own kind.) Though the physical body of man was generally patterned after the physiological and anatomical instrumentalities that had resulted from the long process of evolution of animal species, human beings were created by God with a unique endowment possessed by no lower forms: awakened spiritual centers of life and consciousness in the spine and brain that gave them the ability to express fully the divine consciousness and powers of the soul. By an act of special creation, God thus created the bodies of Adam and Eve in the immaculate way of direct materialization, and empowered these first beings similarly to reproduce their own kind. We find in the Hindu scriptures, also,

mention of the real immaculate conception when the divinely endowed first beings could create offspring by mind power.¹² Man and woman, expressing from their sexless souls a positive or negative vibration, could produce other male or female beings, respectively, by materialization even as God had created the Biblical Adam and Eve.



Sexual reproduction in humans began with the fall of Adam and Eve

In the beginning, the sexual organs were not pronounced at all in the symbolic Adam and Eve. God warned them not to eat of the fruit “in the midst of the garden” (Genesis

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The divinity and power of creation that God gave to Adam and Eve before their fall is still potentially present in every human soul, and will be brought back again when the Eden of godliness is reentered. The rishis of the ancient higher ages in India had the power to create by mind. By will power anything can be materialized in this world. In all cases, it is the Cosmic Vibration (Prakriti, Holy Ghost) that informs all matter. This vibration can be consciously wielded by the will power of Christlike beings who unite themselves with the Directing Intelligence of God’s will in the Holy Vibration. Or God Himself, directly or through His hierarchy of angelic agents, may transmit this power of the Holy Ghost to fulfill His purpose.

When it is written in the Bible that God took a rib from Adam to fashion Eve (Genesis

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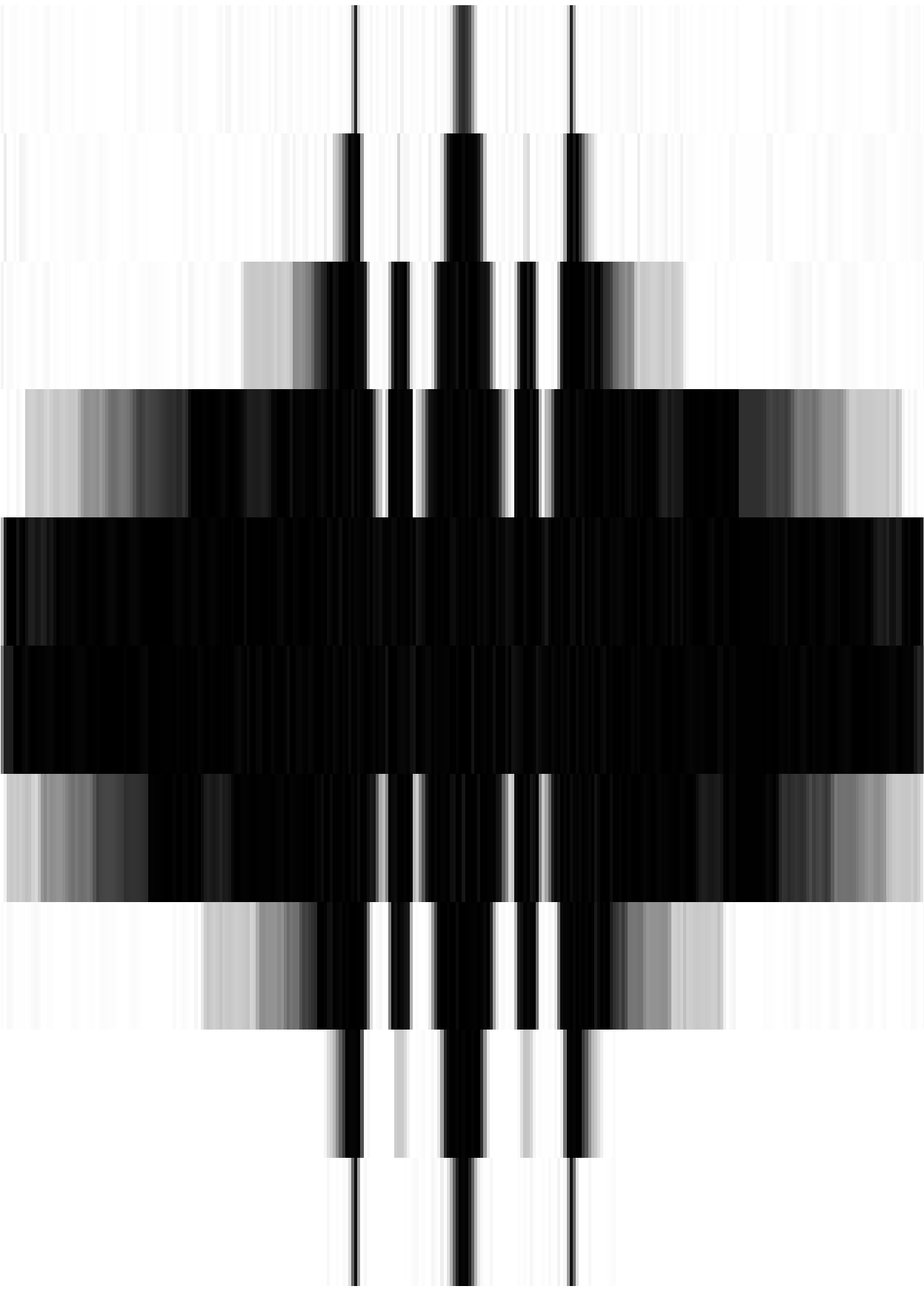
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), “rib” refers to vibration: The creation of man (the positive or male manifestation of creative vibration) consisted of God’s consciousness with reason uppermost and feeling partially hidden; and with the same vibratory power He then created woman (the negative or feminine manifestation of the creative vibration) with feeling uppermost and reason less dominant. From the predominance of these qualities, He fashioned differences in their bodies that encased their sexless souls. God’s plan—since creation depends on interaction between positive and negative forces—is that the God-given natures of man and woman would balance each other. When this vibration is equalized in a human being, he or she begins to manifest his or her innate divine soul-nature of perfect God-equilibrium.

Many saints have been born in the natural way, and some in the immaculate way. The great ones who have attained liberation retain their individuality in Spirit; and at God’s behest to return to the world as saviors, they can take a physical body either by immaculate conception or natural birth. (In higher world ages, they may even do so by direct materialization—though that is not for the eyes of unenlightened times.) The mode of birth does not matter, nor does it necessarily indicate the degree of divinity.



Buddha and other avatars also born in the immaculate way

Sexual creation has the selfish sexual instincts of the parents in it. Therefore, some saints choose to be conceived in the immaculate way, the pure system of conception. So it is a fact that Jesus was created by immaculate conception. His mother Mary, she who “had found favor with God,” was filled with the Holy Ghost Cosmic Vibration: “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee.” This sacred creative Vibration, suffused with the reflection of God as the Christ Consciousness, entered the ovum in Mary’s womb, immaculately creating the germ cell of life into which entered the soul of Jesus, the individualized Christ Consciousness. From this pristine cell, according to the pattern inherent in the soul of Jesus, grew the body in which Jesus the Christ was born. It is not a myth. Gautama Buddha (as also other avatars) was born in the same way. His mother saw the Spirit enter her body. As told in traditional Indian allegory in the Jataka (ancient Buddhist scripture):

“And lying down on the royal couch, she fell asleep and dreamed the following dream:

“The four guardian angels came and lifted her up, together with her couch, and took her away to the Himalaya Mountains....After clothing her with divine garments, they anointed her with perfumes and decked her with divine flowers. Not far off was Silver Hill, and in it a golden mansion. There they spread a divine couch with its head towards the east, and laid her down upon it.

“Now the Future Buddha had become a superb white elephant,¹⁵ and was wandering about at no great distance, on Gold Hill. Descending thence, he ascended Silver Hill, and approaching from the north, he plucked a white lotus with his silvery trunk, and trumpeting loudly, went into the golden mansion. And three times he walked round his mother’s couch, with his right side towards it, and striking her on her right side, he seemed to enter her womb. Thus the conception took place in the Midsummer Festival.

“On the next day the queen awoke, and told the dream to the king. And the king caused sixty-four eminent Brahmins to be summoned....[and] told them the dream and asked them what would come of it?

“‘Be not anxious, great king!’ said the Brahmins; ‘a child has planted itself in the

womb of your queen....You will have a son. And he, if he continue to live the household life, will become a Universal Monarch; but if he leave the household life and retire from the world, he will become a Buddha, and roll back the clouds of sin and folly of this world.’”¹⁶

There is a cosmic metaphysical symbolism in the wondrous conception and birth of Jesus. His incarnate Christ Consciousness came immaculately through the Virgin Mary. Likewise, the universal Christ Intelligence was born or reflected in the cosmic body of pure vibratory creation (Cosmic “Virgin Mary”) through the instrumentality of God the Father. The Holy Ghost Cosmic Vibration, Aum, Maha-Prakriti, is analogous to the Cosmic Virgin Mary because it is thus the mother of the immanent Universal Christ Intelligence, the Son of God, and of all created objects.

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Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should

be delivered; and she brought forth a son. And her neighbours and her cousins heard how the Lord had shewed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her.

And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father. And his mother answered and said, "Not so; but he shall be called John."

And they said unto her, "There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name." And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called. And he asked for a writing table, and wrote, saying, "His name is John." And they marvelled all. And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, and praised God. And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judea. And all they that heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, "What manner of child shall this be!" And the hand of the Lord was with him.

And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He hath visited and redeemed His people....And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; to give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.



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The Childhood of Jesus

And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

—*Luke 2:40*

It is related in the Infancy Gospels that father Joseph found the extraordinary talent of his son of incredible assistance in his carpentry trade—not as an artisan with hammer and chisel, but when by error “Joseph had any thing to make longer or shorter, or wider or narrower, the Lord Jesus would stretch forth his hand towards it. And presently it would become as Joseph would have it.”...This was as elementary for Jesus as later it would be for him to change water into wine, or to multiply the loaves and fishes.

—*Paramahansa Yogananda*

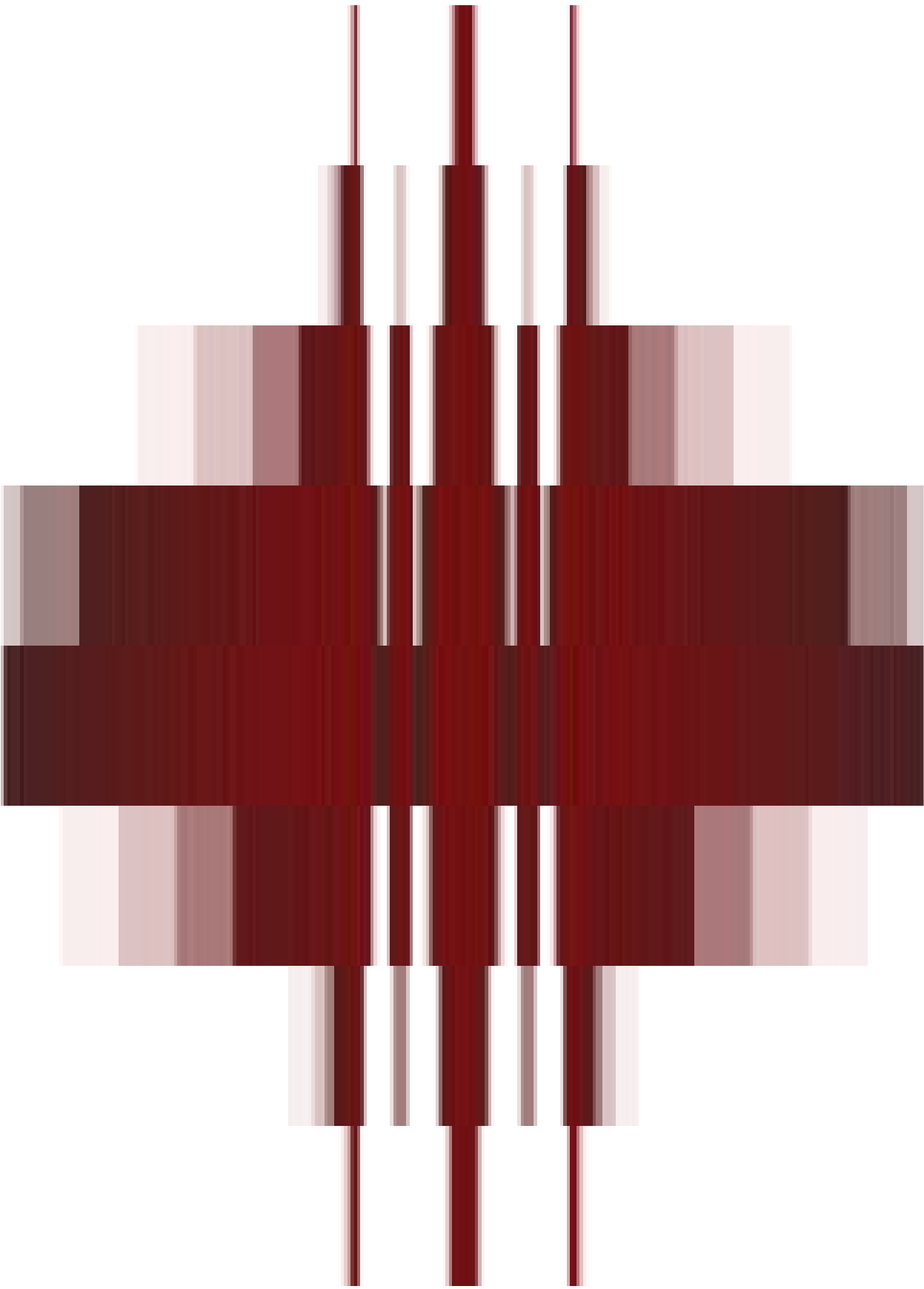
Drawing by Heinrich Hofmann



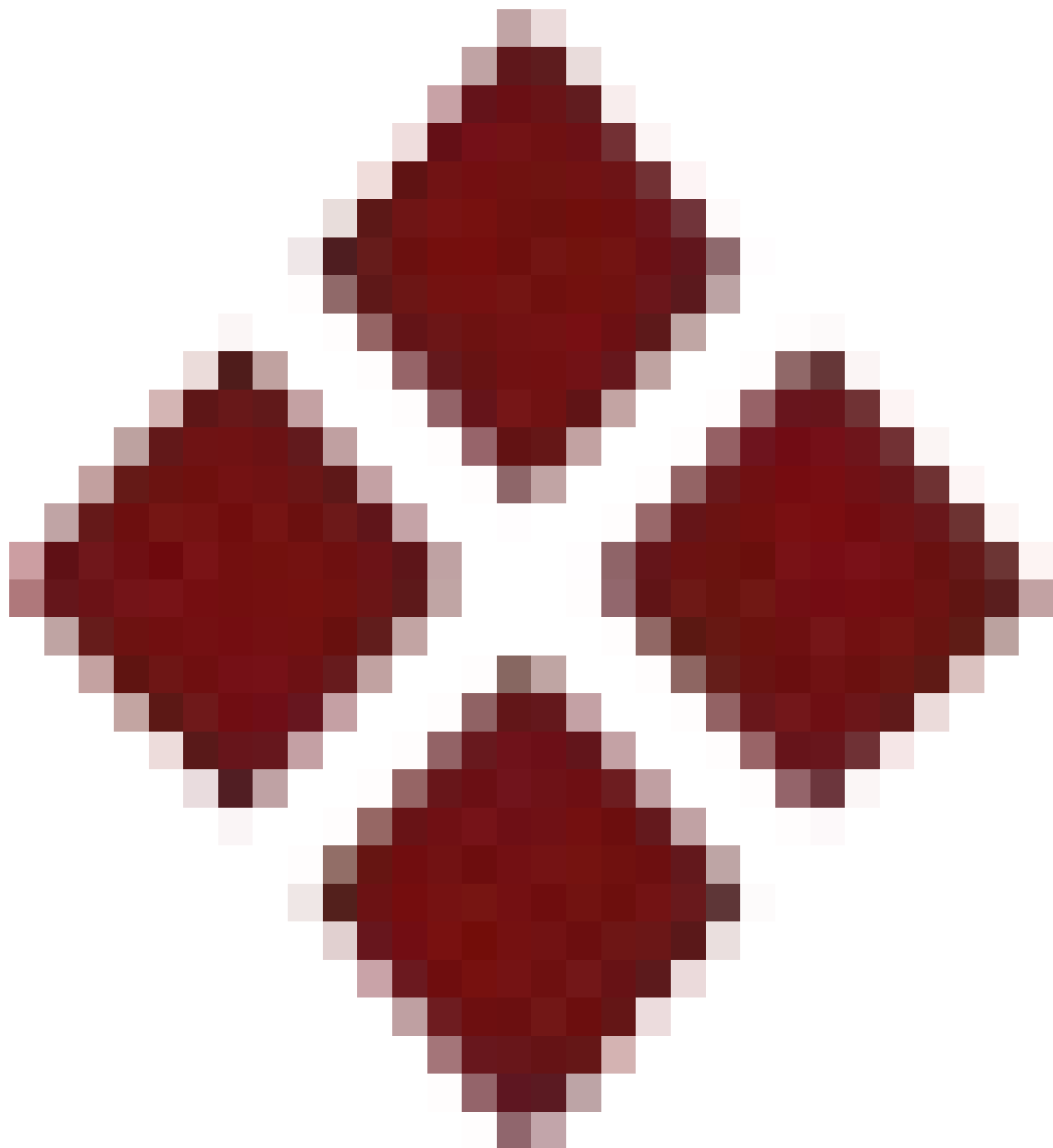


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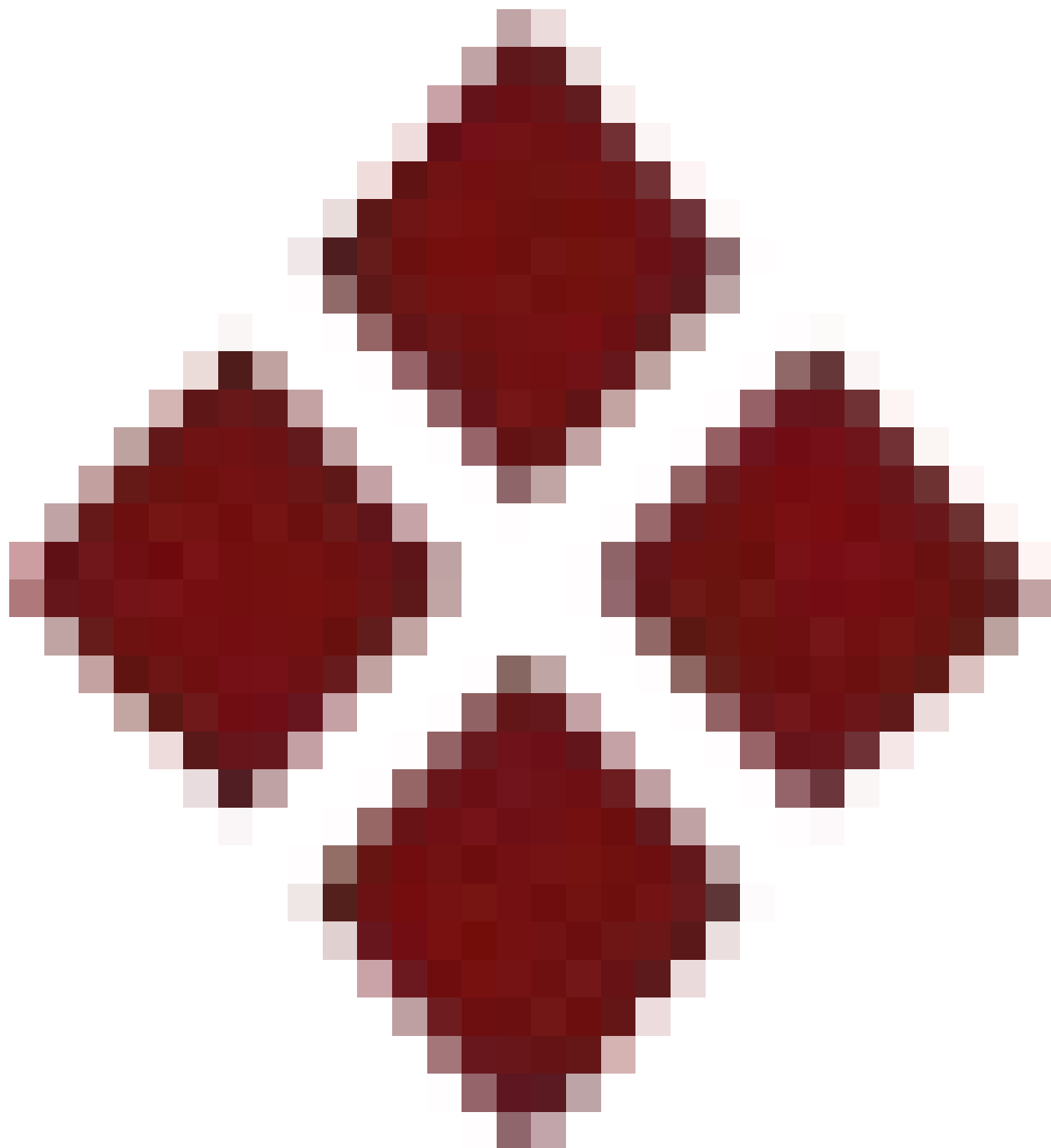
The Birth of Jesus and the Adoration of the Three Wise Men



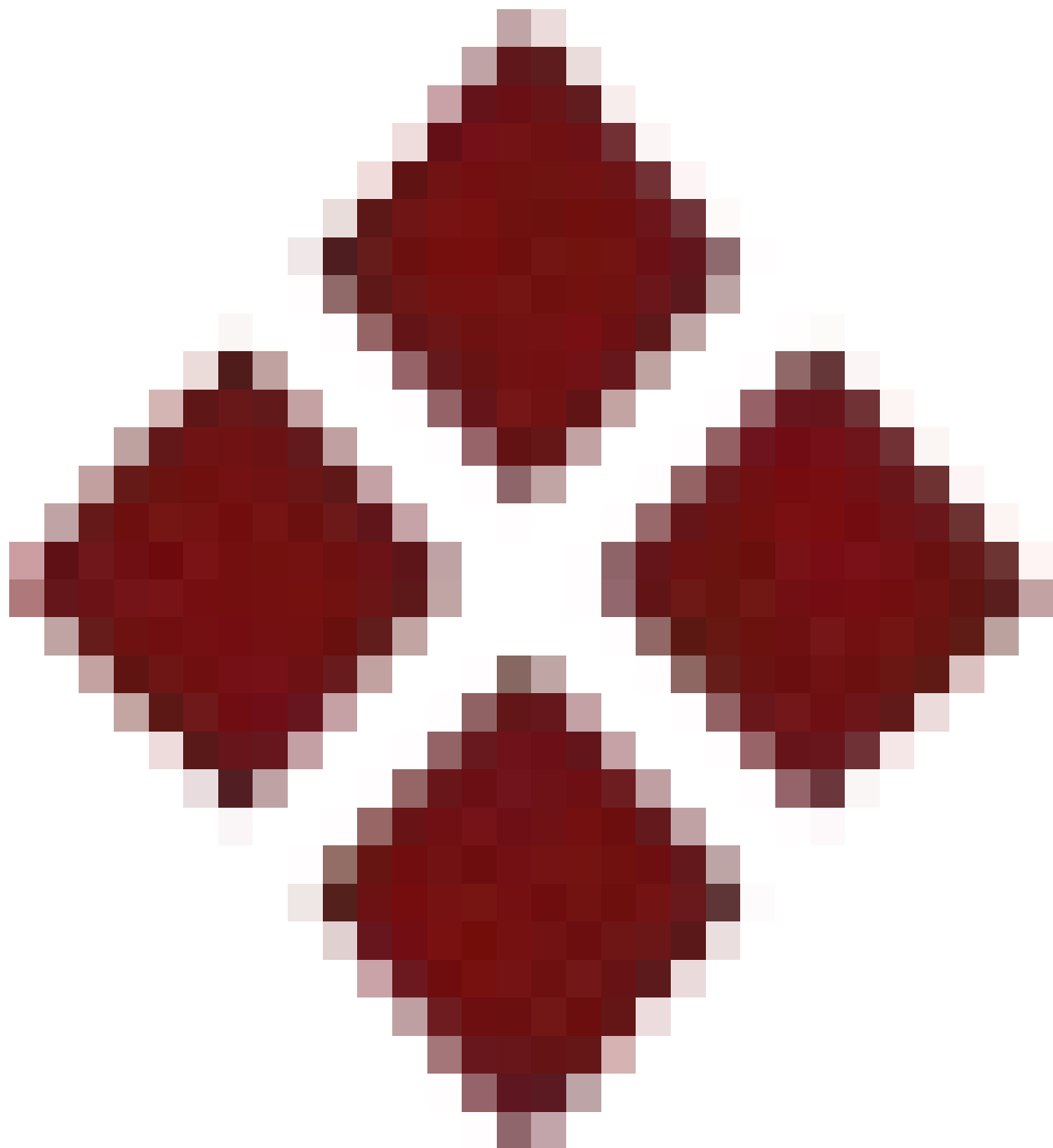
**Spiritual Celebration of Jesus' Birth: Communion
With the Infinite Christ in Meditation**



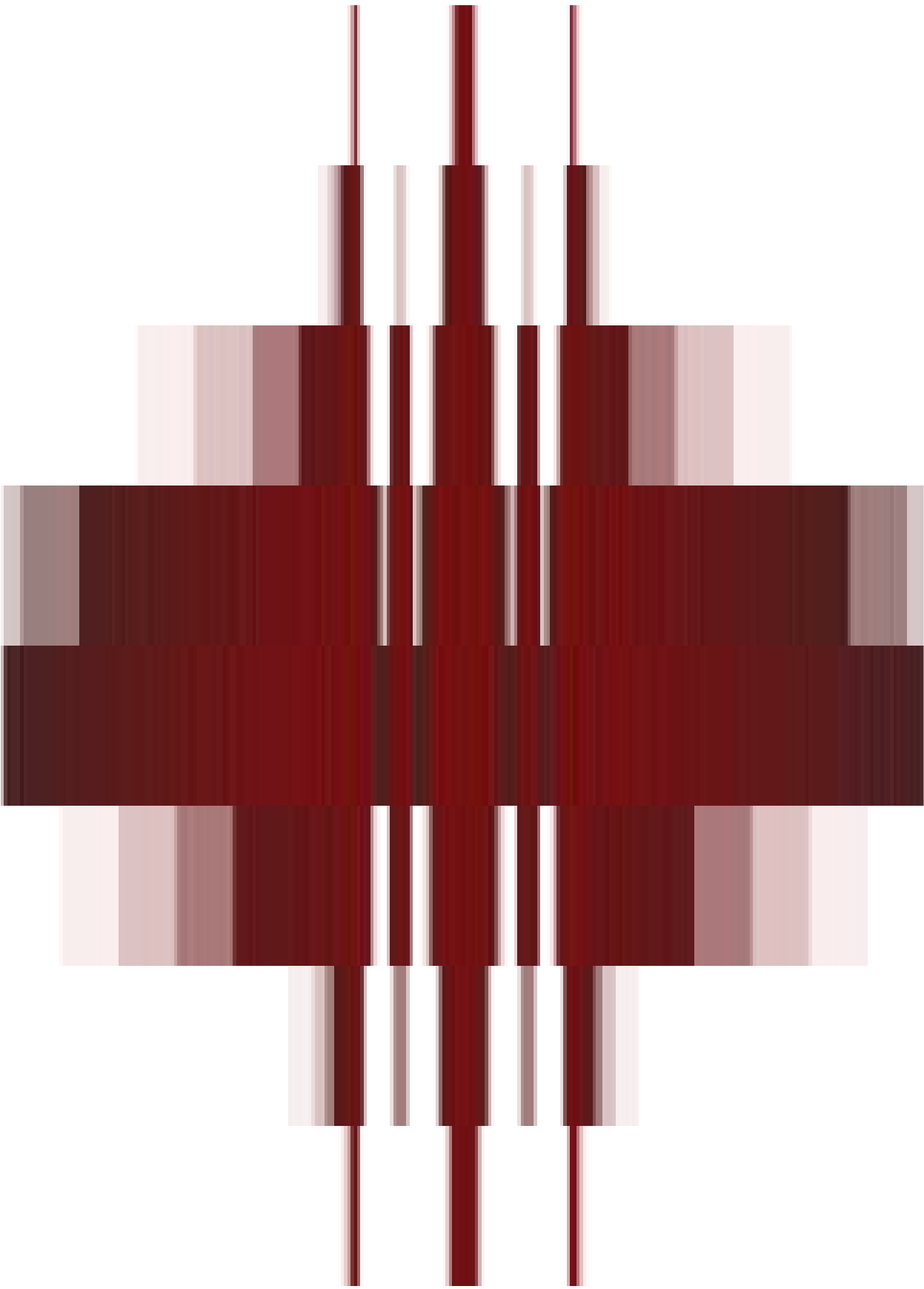
Jesus' Connection With India Through the "Wise Men From the East"



The Spiritual Eye: True “Star in the East”



Infinite Power Manifested in the Little Babe Jesus



“Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.”

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And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

And the angel said unto them, “Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.”

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”

— Luke 2:1 – 14

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king,¹ behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, “Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.”

When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.

And they said unto him, “In Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written by the prophet, ‘And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.’”²

Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, “Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.”

When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

— Matthew 2:1 – 12



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Discourse 3

The Birth of Jesus and the Adoration of the Three Wise Men



To simple persons, pure in heart, God sometimes proclaims a message or event of import to the masses. Such revelations have been well documented and attested to: for example, the visions of Saint Bernadette that brought forth the miraculous healing waters at Lourdes, which have benefited generations since; and the prophecies of Fatima conveyed to three peasant children, confirmed by a phenomenon witnessed by thousands when the heavens seemed to open and the sun appeared to hurtle toward earth. And one whose authenticity I personally witnessed, the testament of the holy Bavarian peasant Therese Neumann, who relives in vision the life of Christ and bears on her own body the marks of his crucifixion. Perhaps the Lord wisely concludes that astounding news might be better received by the common man if conveyed through one (or a few) of their own. Self-lauding orators with messianic ambitions make notoriously unreliable messengers. To my knowledge, an egotist has never been so entrusted with the word of God to man, notwithstanding avowed assertions.

On that first “Christmas” night, lowly shepherds, the Bible tells us, were blessed to behold the heralding of the birth of Jesus. God and His heavenly host celebrate the earthly incarnations of great ones whose lives are ordained to influence the destiny of man. It was the celestial rejoicing at the advent of Jesus’ birth that was seen by the shepherds. Perception of the finer vibratory dimensions are unperceived by the gross sensory instruments of the body; but through the touch of God’s grace, the veil of matter is parted, and with sight divine of the soul’s spiritual eye of intuitive perception glimpses of the heavenly spheres and beings are revealed.

The pageantry of Jesus’ coming to earth lacked no detail of symbolic significance. As with the shepherds on the hillside, the shepherds of man’s faith, devotion, and meditation will be bathed in the light of realization and lead those devotees who are humble in spirit to behold the infinite presence of Christ newborn within them.



Spiritual celebration of Jesus' birth: communion with the Infinite Christ in meditation

The observance by God and His hierarchy of the incarnation of divine ones is not only at the time of such a birth, but during succeeding celebrations of natal anniversaries as well. Each year at Christmastime there are stronger than usual vibrations of Christ-love and joy that emanate to earth from the heavenly realms. The ether becomes filled with the Infinite Light that shone on earth when Jesus was born. Those persons who are in tune through devotion and deep meditation feel in a wondrously tangible way the transforming vibrations of the omnipresent consciousness that was in Christ Jesus.

To celebrate the birth of Jesus in solely materialistic ways is a desecration of the meaning of his holy life and of the immortal message of divine love and God-union that he preached. Seeing in the West the shallow, often irreverent, observance given to the birth anniversary of this great avatar, I inaugurated in Self-Realization Fellowship the spiritual celebration of Christmas, before Christmas Day festivities, by devoting a daylong meditation service to the worship of Christ. The ideal is to honor Christ in spirit in meditation from morning till evening, absorbed in feeling in one's own consciousness the Infinite Christ that was born in Jesus. That experience is one of profound peace and joy, more than a human heart has ever known—expanding into an all-embracing consciousness. Often has the form of Jesus appeared before me during these services—such love in those eyes! It is my prayer—and my conviction that it will come to pass—that comparable observances of the real meaning of Christmas will become a tradition throughout the world.

The message of the “heavenly host” to the shepherds in the countryside of Bethlehem was “on earth peace, good will toward men.” Peace in the world starts with peace in individual hearts. “The peace of God, which passeth all understanding”³ is the peace Jesus came to bring to man; it is the only sure foundation for world amity. It is found in the interiorized state of one's God-communion in meditation. Then, like an ever full reservoir, it pours out freely to one's family, friends, community, nation, and the world. If everyone lived the ideals exemplified in the life of Jesus, having made those qualities a part of their own selves through meditation, a millennium of peace and brotherhood would come on earth.

A person who is imbued with God's peace can feel naught but goodwill toward all. The crib of ordinary consciousness is very small, filled to capacity with self-love. The cradle of goodwill of Christ-love holds the Infinite Consciousness that includes all beings, all nations, all races and faiths as one.

Legends abound concerning the worship of the infant Jesus by the "wise men from the east." A common tradition is that they were magi (Hebrew *chartumim*; Greek *magoi*), a priestly class of mystics among ancient Medes and Persians credited with esoteric powers and knowledge by which they were able to interpret hidden meanings in the scriptures and to read secrets of the past and divine the future. The Roman Church honored the Wise Men with the title of kings, based on Psalms

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relevant to the future coming of the Messiah: "The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Saba shall offer gifts." The kings are sainted by the Church and identified as Gaspar, Melchior, and Balthasar; relics of these kings are enshrined at Cologne. The Wise Men are presumed to be three in number, commensurate with the New Testament account of the offering of three gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.



Jesus' connection with India through the "wise men from the east"

The adoration of the Wise Men is far more significant than merely another scene of pageantry recognizing the holy birth. It was the defining stamp of God placed on the life of Jesus that would in future characterize his mission and message—a reminder that Jesus was born in the Orient, an Oriental Christ; and that his teachings bore the influence of the Eastern culture and customs. There is a very strong tradition in India, authoritatively known amongst high metaphysicians in tales well told and written in ancient manuscripts, that the wise men of the East who made their way to the infant Jesus in Bethlehem were, in fact, great sages of India. Not only did the Indian masters come to Jesus, but he reciprocated their visit. During the unaccounted-for years of Jesus' life—the Scripture remains silent about him from approximately ages fourteen to thirty—he journeyed to India, probably traveling the well-established trade route that linked the Mediterranean with China and India.⁴ His own God-realization, reawakened and reinforced in the company of the masters and the spiritual environs of India, provided a background of the universality of truth from which he could preach a simple, open message comprehensible to the masses of his native country, yet with underlying meanings that would be appreciated in generations to come as the infancy of man's mind would mature in understanding.

As civilization takes giant strides in the proliferation of material knowledge, man will find that the underpinnings of many of his old familiar religious dogmas may well begin to crack and crumble. What is needed is a reunion of the science of religion with the spirit, or inspiration, of religion—the esoteric with the exoteric. The yoga science taught by Lord Krishna, which provides practical methods for actual inner experience of God to supplant the feeble life-expectancy of beliefs, and the spirit of Christ-love and brotherhood preached by Jesus—the only sure panacea to prevent the world from tearing itself apart by its unyielding differences—are in tandem one and the same universal truth, taught by these two Christs of East and West, only with a variant outward emphasis according to the times and conditions of their respective incarnations.

The pages of this book invite the reader to reach back with the teachings of Jesus to the cradle of religion that has from ages unnumbered been tended by Mother India, and thence to the universality of religion in God-realization. In the words of Jesus: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not

come to destroy, but to fulfill.”⁵ The great ones come to preserve and restate not the dogma and expedient customs of religion, but the eternal principles of truth enunciated from time to time by God-knowing prophets. Thus was the continuity of God’s word through His avatars beautifully symbolized by the spiritual exchange between Jesus at his birth and the Wise Men of India come to honor his incarnation.⁶



The spiritual eye: true “star in the east”

As the prophets of the Old Testament foretold the coming of a Christ to be born in Bethlehem, so this major event of God’s helping hand extended to man was foreknown also to the Wise Men with whom Christ’s life and mission were to be linked. Avatars often choose for their time of birth auspicious astronomical and astrological configurations of the heavenly bodies, all of which emit their own characteristic vibrations that interact with one another for good or ill effect. These starry signs can be read by the spiritual insight of men of God, perception not even remotely approachable by the elaborate charts attempted by modern casters of horoscopes. Whatever celestial star might have indicated to the Wise Men the birth of Jesus, it was a “star in the east” of greater power by which they knew of the coming on earth of Christ Jesus: the all-revealing light of the spiritual eye of the soul’s intuitive divine perception located in the “east” of the body—in a subtle spiritual center of Christ Consciousness in the forehead between the two physical eyes.⁷

Man is veritably a microcosm of the macrocosmic universe. His finite consciousness is potentially infinite. While his physical sensory organs confine him to the world of matter, his soul is endowed with all-powerful instruments of perception by which God Himself may be known. Jesus said, “Behold, the kingdom of God is within you.”⁸ All manifestation is of the Holy Ghost Vibration, imbued with the Intelligence and Power of the transcendental Cosmic Consciousness of God the Father reflecting within vibratory creation as Christ Consciousness. This trinity of God is manifested microcosmically in man as the spiritual eye. As the universe is created by the Power and Intelligence of the Trinity, so is man upheld by the microcosmic triune power and consciousness in the spiritual eye.

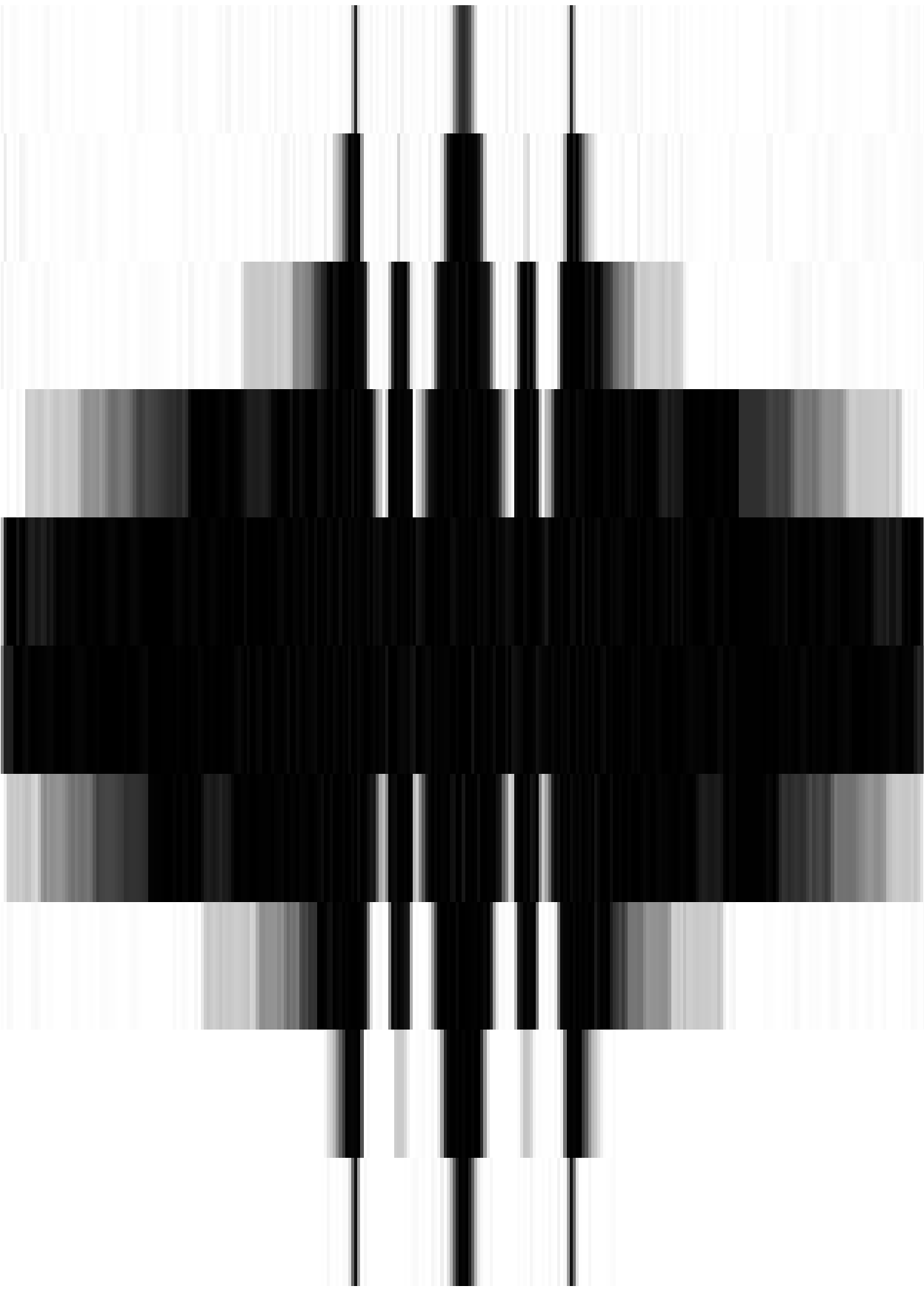
During meditative concentration at the point between the eyebrows, the spiritual eye can be seen: a brilliant white star in the center, encased within a sphere of sapphire-blue light, encircled by a radiant golden aura. The golden light is the epitome of the vibratory sphere of the Holy Ghost; the blue light is the omnipresent Intelligence of the Christ Consciousness; the star is the mystic door into the Cosmic Consciousness of God the Father.

Jesus said, “If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of

light.”⁹ Any devotee who, by the practice of yoga meditation, knows how to focus his inward gaze at the point between the eyebrows, finds that the light traveling through the optic nerves into the two physical eyes becomes concentrated instead into the single visible spiritual eye. The two physical eyes perceive only limited portions at a time of the world of relativity; the vision of the spiritual eye is spherical and can see into omnipresence.

By deep meditation the devotee penetrates his consciousness and life force through the tricolored lights of the spiritual eye into the macrocosmic manifestation of the Trinity.

When the Wise Men saw a star intimating to them the birth of Christ, they were beholding through the wisdom-star of infinite perception in their spiritual eye where the Christ Consciousness was newly manifested in the body of infant Jesus.¹⁰

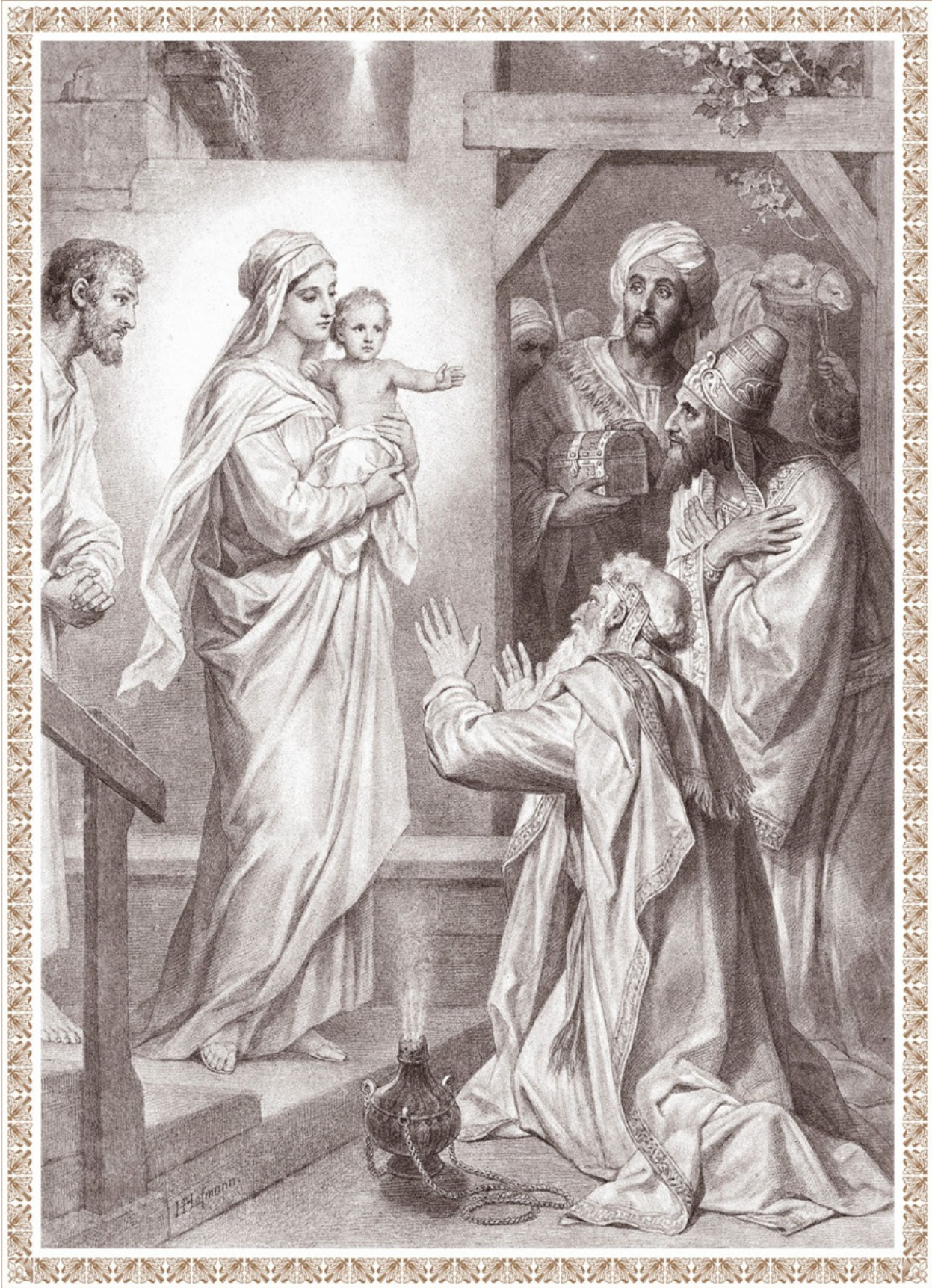


Infinite power manifested in the little babe Jesus

We think of the baby Jesus as helpless in his crib, dependent on his mother's milk and care; yet within that tiny form was the Infinite Christ, the Light of the universe in which we are all dancing as motion-picture shadows. During one of our daylong Christmas meditations, when I prayed to see the baby Christ, the light of the spiritual eye in my forehead opened its rays, and I saw Jesus as an infant. He appeared in such beauty and power of God. All the forces of nature were playing in that baby-face. In the light of those eyes the universe trembled—waiting for the command of those eyes. Such was the infant the Wise Men beheld—a little child over whom the angels stood watch, and in whom the whole universal consciousness was manifest.

Spiritual signs appear on the body and face of one who is a realized soul; these signs are held secret, and only a few know how to read them. By these signs, and by their sight divine, the Wise Men were able to know they had found the Christ they sought, the babe who was one with the Lord of the Universe. They knelt and offered their symbolic gifts. These were the traditional gifts given in India to the newborn; but they held further meaning coming from the Wise Men to Jesus: Gold (material treasure) is offered to a giver of wisdom as a symbol of appreciation of the great value of liberating truth bestowed by the spiritual teacher. Incense symbolizes devotion, the fragrance of the heart's love offered to the master who is a channel through whom God's guidance and blessings flow. The myrrh was in recognition of the bitter trial and sacrifice that would be required of Jesus in fulfilling his divine mission.

On a transcendent level of consciousness, in which others could neither participate nor bear witness, there was a spiritual exchange of soul-communion concerning the destiny of Jesus, which would be of universal benefit to man—as Jesus would be one of God's supreme message-bearers of Truth.¹¹



The Visit of the Three Wise Men

Behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, “Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.”...

And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

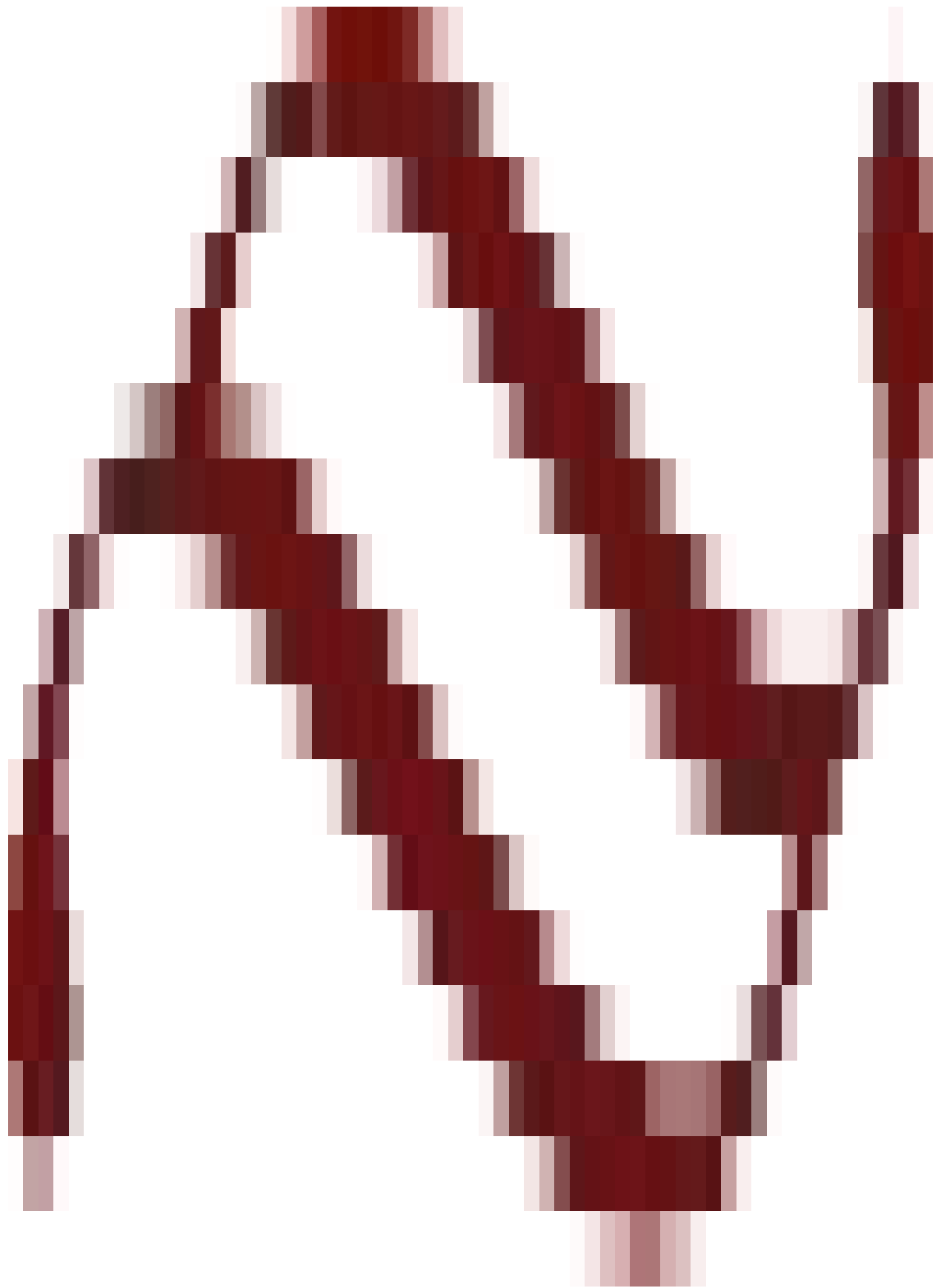
—Matthew 2:1–2, 11

There is a very strong tradition in India, authoritatively known amongst high metaphysicians in tales well told and written in ancient manuscripts, that the wise men of the East who made their way to the infant Jesus in Bethlehem were, in fact, great sages of India....

We think of the baby Jesus as helpless in his crib, dependent on his mother’s milk and care; yet within that tiny form was the Infinite Christ, the Light of the universe in which we are all dancing as motion-picture shadows. During one of our daylong Christmas meditations, when I prayed to see the baby Christ...I saw Jesus as an infant. He appeared in such beauty and power of God. All the forces of nature were playing in that baby-face. In the light of those eyes the universe trembled—waiting for the command of those eyes. Such was the infant the Wise Men beheld....

—Paramahansa Yogananda

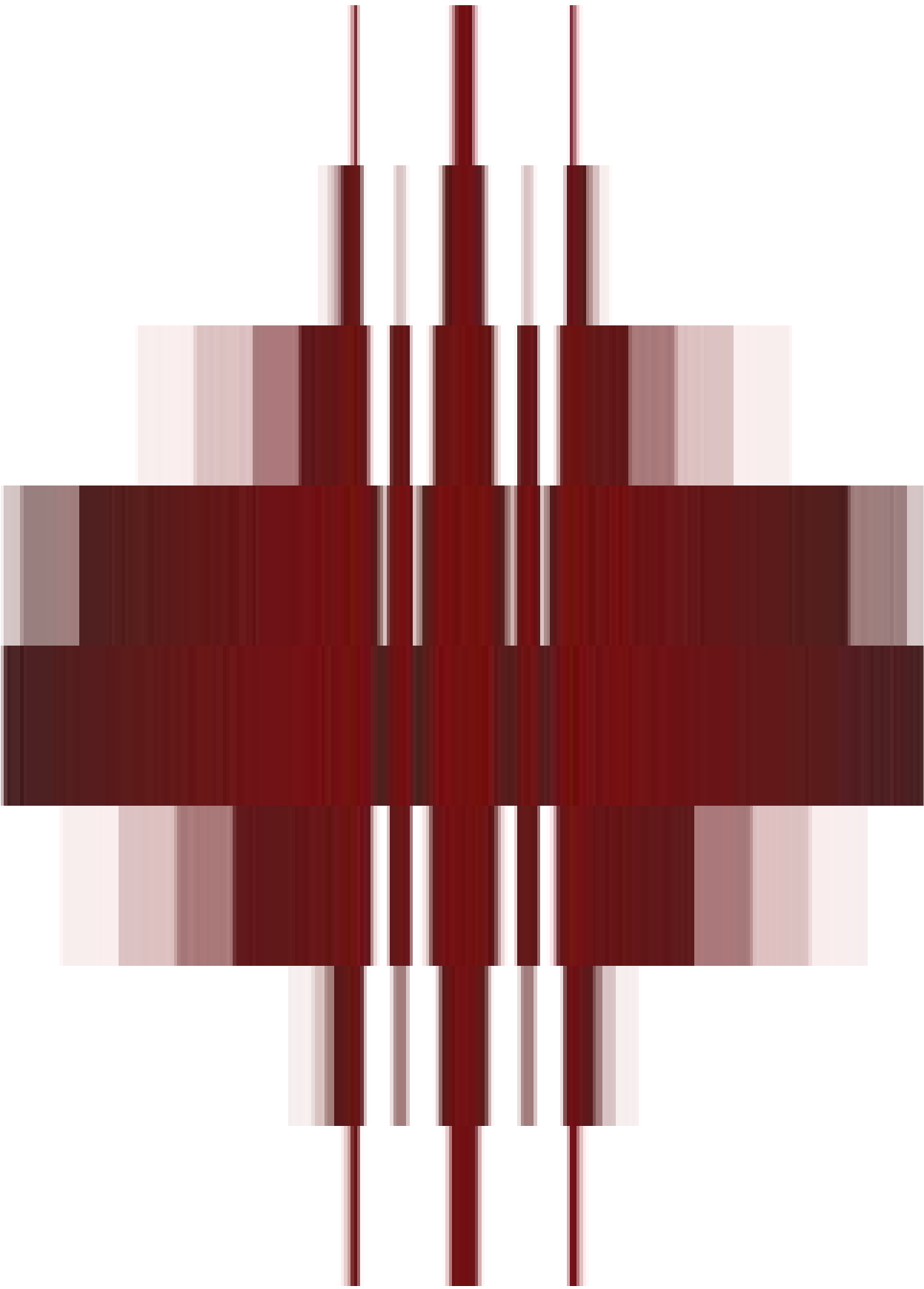
Drawing by Heinrich Hofmann





Discourse 4

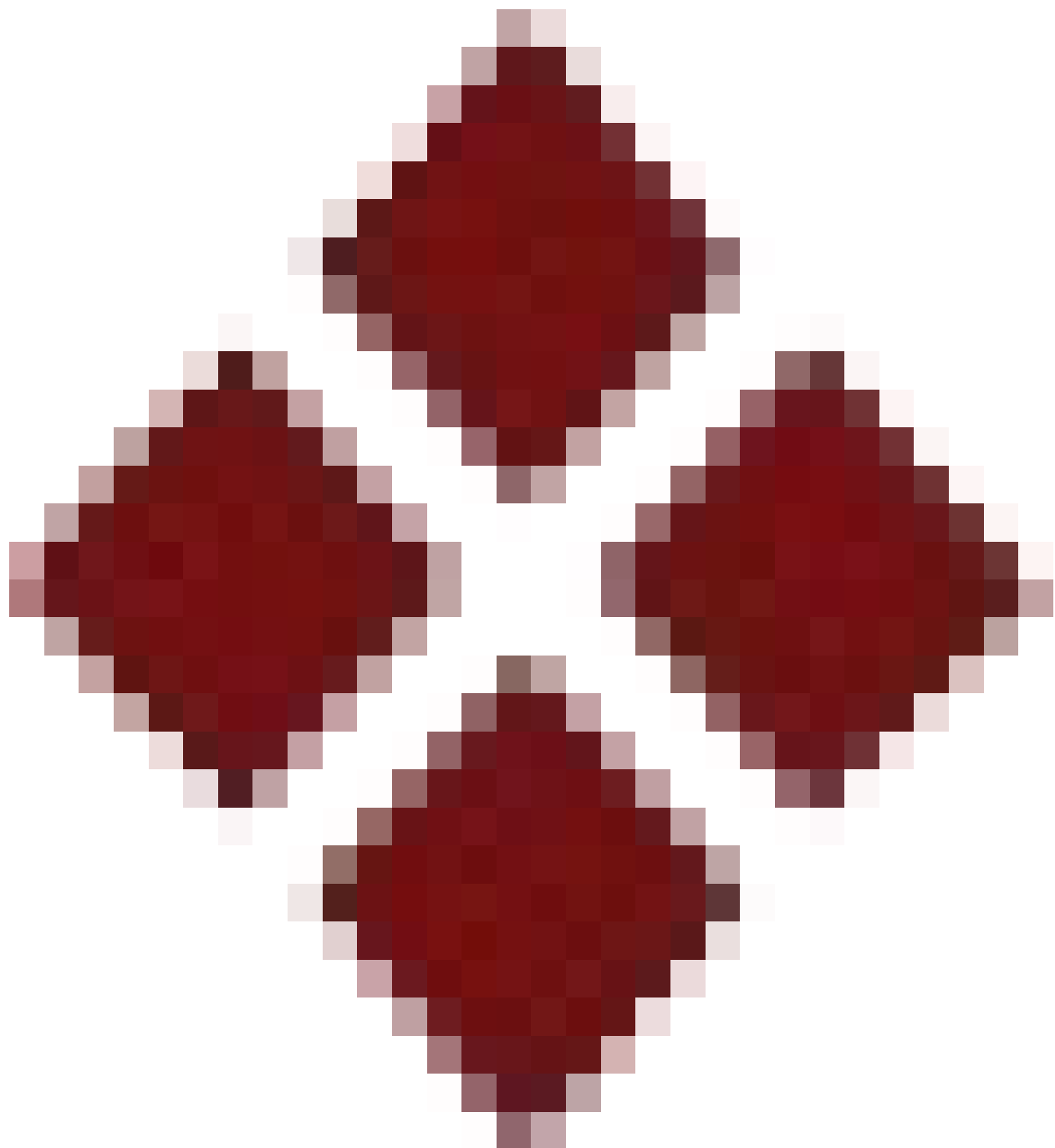
The Infancy and Youth of Jesus



Alternative Voices From Antiquity: Scriptural Fact or Heretical Fiction?



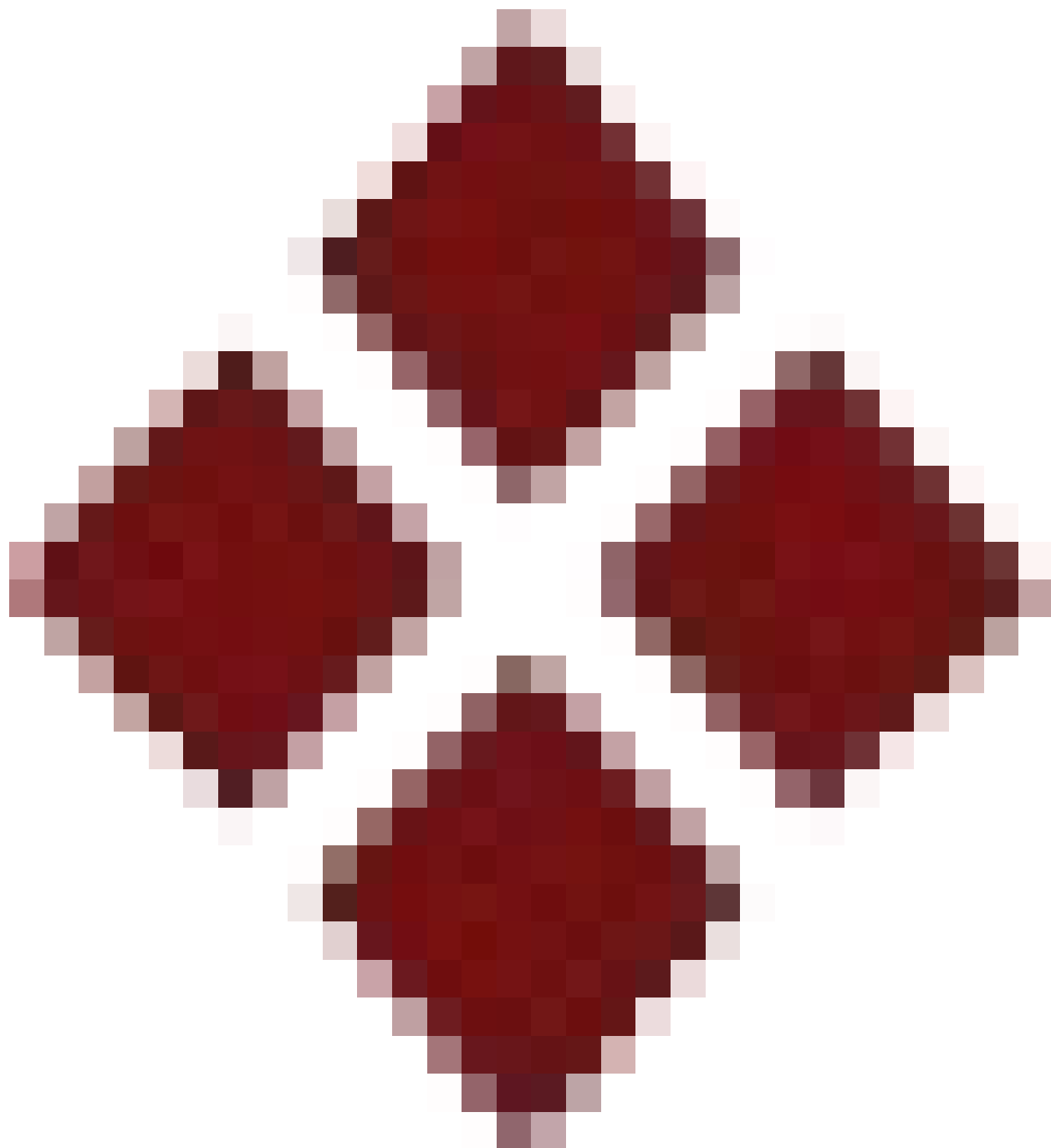
Influence of a Dark Age on the Official Canon of Scripture



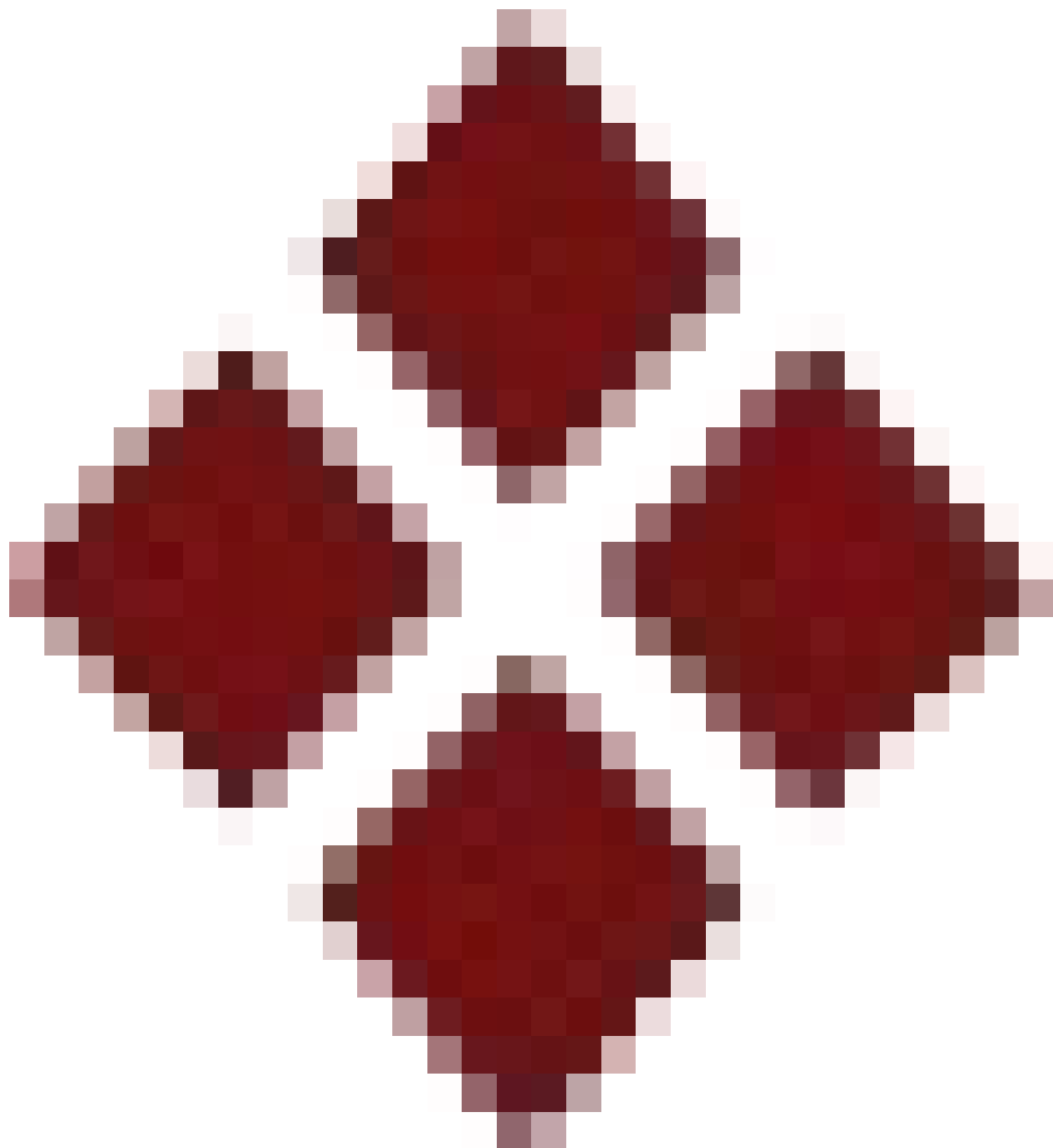
Human as Well as Divine Attributes Evidenced in the Lives of Avatars



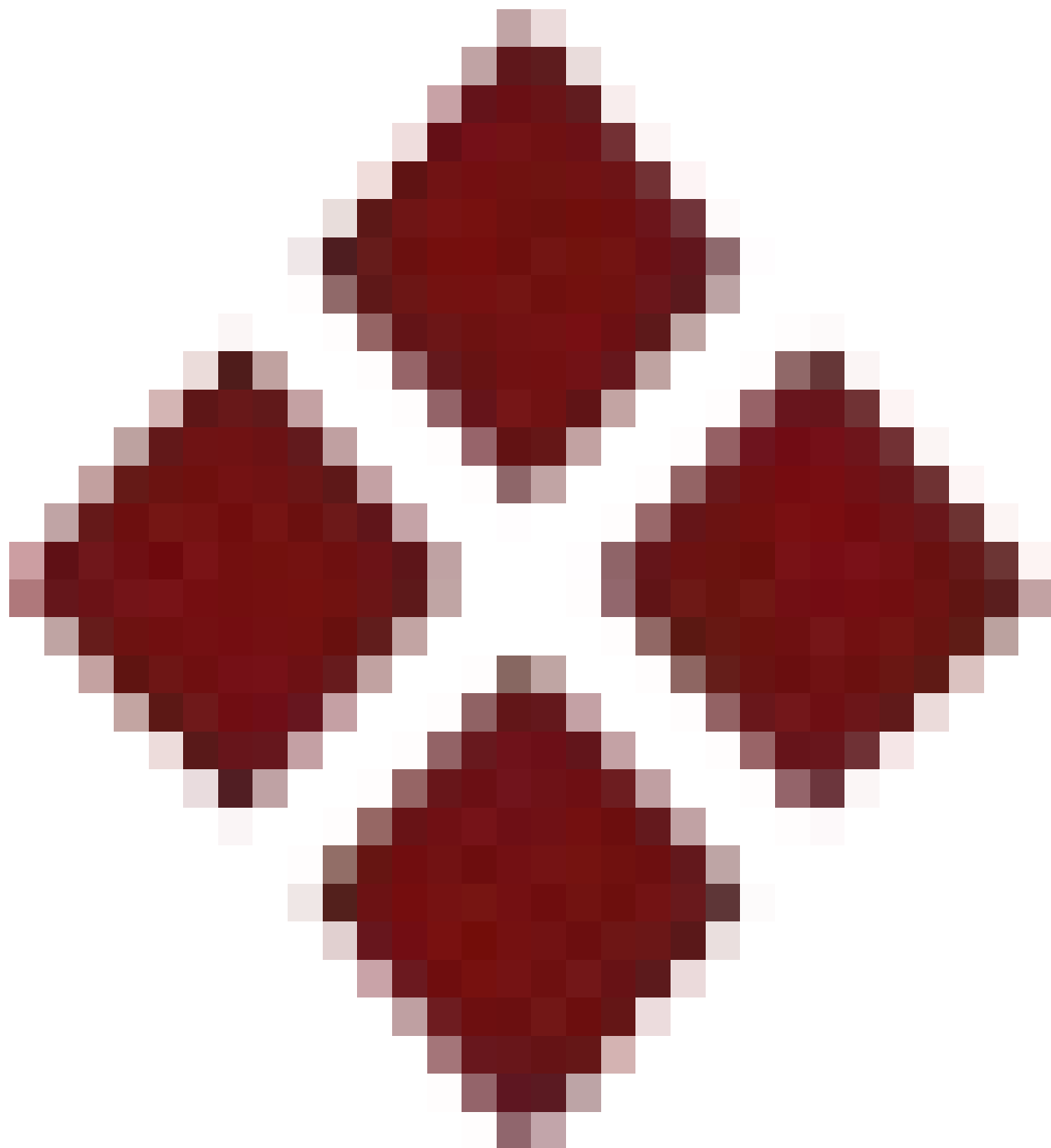
Miracles Ascribed to the Child Jesus



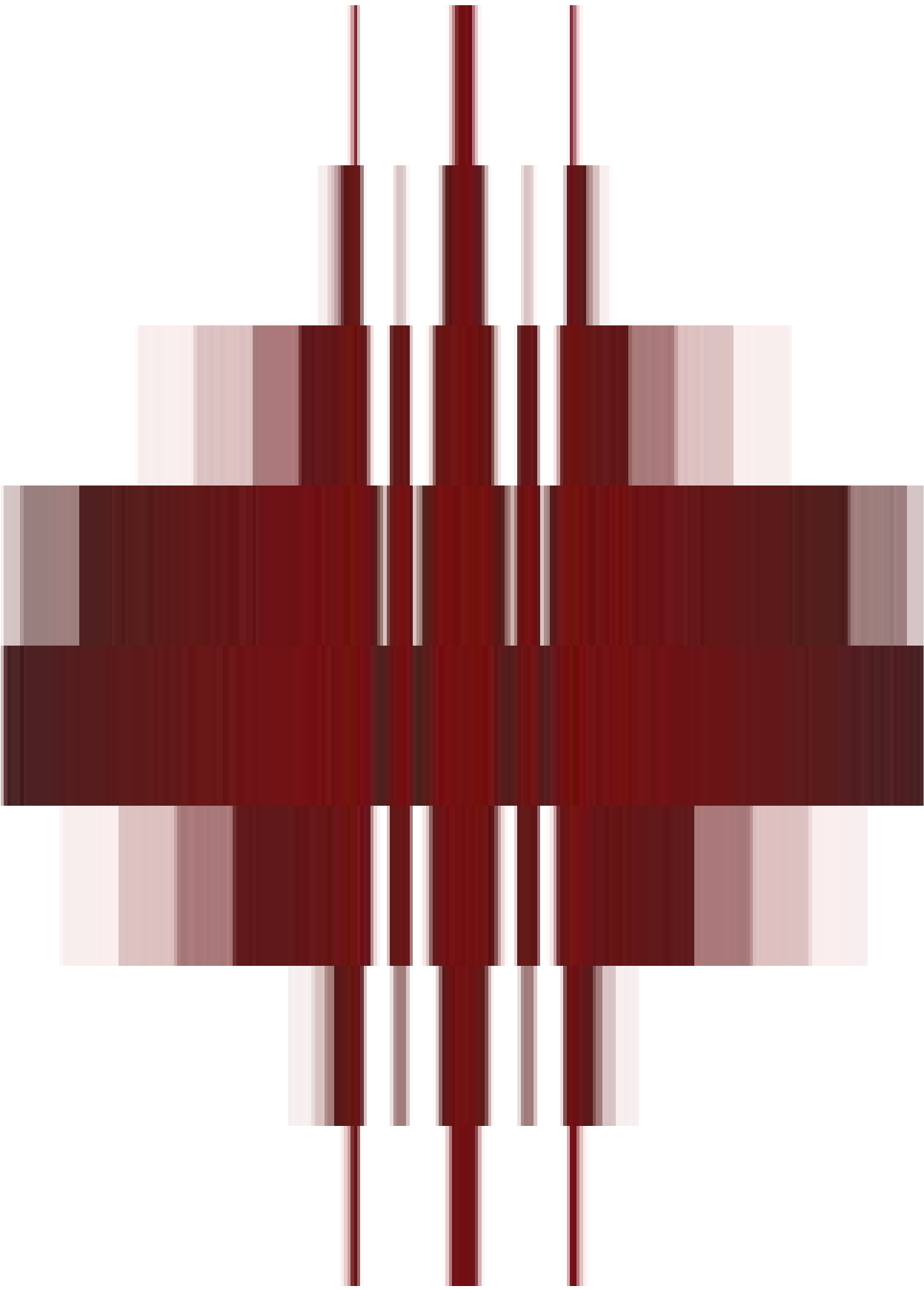
**Spiritual Geniuses Draw on the All-Knowing Intuitive
Faculty of the Soul**



“I Must Be About My Father’s Business”: Jesus’ Ideal of Renunciation



Spiritual and Material Duties Should Complement One Another



“My purpose in noting the broader narratives of Jesus’ life available in ancient records is not to insinuate their authenticity or opine as to their factualness, but rather to suggest their plausibility against the background of India’s vast spiritual tradition of saints, rishis, and avatars.”

■

And when they [the Wise Men from the East] were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, “Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.” When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, “Out of Egypt have I called My son.”

Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, “In Ramah was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.”

But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, “Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child’s life.” And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee: And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, “He shall be called a Nazarene.”

— Matthew 2:13 – 23

And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast.

And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him. And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.

And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing."

And he said unto them, "How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

— Luke 2:40 – 51



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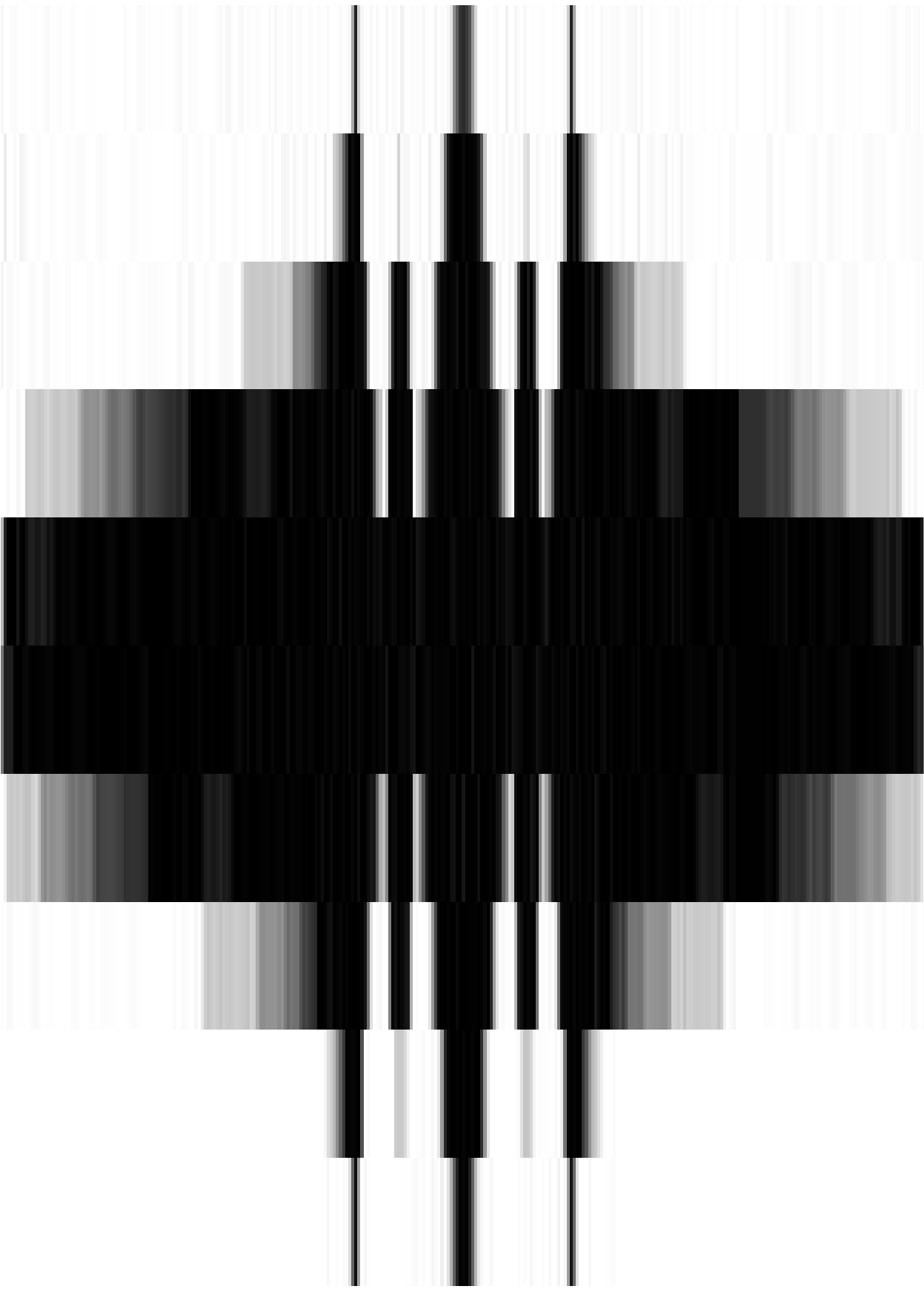
Discourse 4

The Infancy and Youth of Jesus



And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him (Luke 2:40).

The Gospels of the New Testament contain an inordinate paucity of information concerning the early years of Jesus. The verses are silent about the entire period of his infancy in Egypt and his youth in Israel, with the one exception of Luke's account of the twelve-year-old boy sagely disputing with the learned men in the temple in Jerusalem. Either unknown or discountenanced by the general Christian populace are ancient manuscripts that purport to relate anecdotes about the child Jesus. Titled simply as "The Gospels of the Infancy of Jesus Christ" (of which one is attributed to Jesus' disciple Thomas), these are referenced as in use and held sacred by some Christians, including the Gnostics, as early as the second century, and by other Christian sects in the following ages. ¹



Alternative voices from antiquity: scriptural fact or heretical fiction?

Time works on men's minds, especially on those removed from the instant of happening, to enhance or detract from the character of noteworthy personages and the events associated with their lives. If these are of religious import, transformations of facts into legend seem to be even more precipitate. Yet who can gainsay that the charm and mystery of pulling the threads of truth from the fabric of legendary tellings does not produce a singular inspiration and awe absent in the merely prosaic? India well understood this and cloaked her most sacred spiritual wealth and the godly givers of this treasure with symbology and a depth of meaningful mythology that has preserved her scriptural principles and codes throughout generations of foreign domination and influence. Perhaps the voices from antiquity should not be altogether silenced by offhand dismissal from our mental consideration. Discriminative perusal, however, is certainly warranted. Both innocent distortion and outright willful falsity are inevitable when truth is passed through the interpretations of successive generations, or even of individuals within a single generation, each of which finds it expedient to make it "clearly understood" according to what best suits the present time and purpose.

This sorting out of fact from fiction to maintain the integrity of the Christian church and doctrine was clearly the intention of the early church fathers. The twenty-seven books of the New Testament that today constitute the Biblical account of the life and teaching of Jesus were gleaned by the early church from a much larger collection of texts.² Councils of the so-called learned were assembled to debate and determine holy doctrine from heresy. Propounders who were judged to be heretics might find themselves condemned to the flames along with their writings. One wonders how honest an appraisal could be made by an individual member of one of these councils when not only their reputation but their very life depended on the favor of a political and religious hierarchy.

William Hone, in *The Apocryphal New Testament*, cites a legendary telling—at which one must wonder—of events at the Council of Nicaea, convened by Emperor Constantine in

a.d.

, which recounts how some three hundred bishops, having “promiscuously put all the books that were referred to the Council for determination under the communion table in a church, they besought the Lord that the inspired writings might get upon the table, while the spurious ones remained underneath, and that it happened accordingly.” In regard to the bishops assembled at this Council, annotator Hone remarks: “The Emperor Constantine says, that what was approved by these bishops could be nothing less than the determination of God Himself; since the Holy Spirit residing in such great and worthy souls, unfolded to them the divine will. Yet Sabinus, the Bishop of Heraclea, affirms that ‘excepting Constantine himself, and Eusebius Pamphilus, these were a set of illiterate simple creatures that understood nothing.’” One can hardly suppress at least a modicum of mental fraternity with the commentator John Jortin (

1698

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1770

; archdeacon of London) who, we are told by Hone, in analyzing the authority of these General Councils wryly concluded: “The Council held by the Apostles at Jerusalem [Acts

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] was the first and the last in which the Holy Spirit may be affirmed to have presided.”³

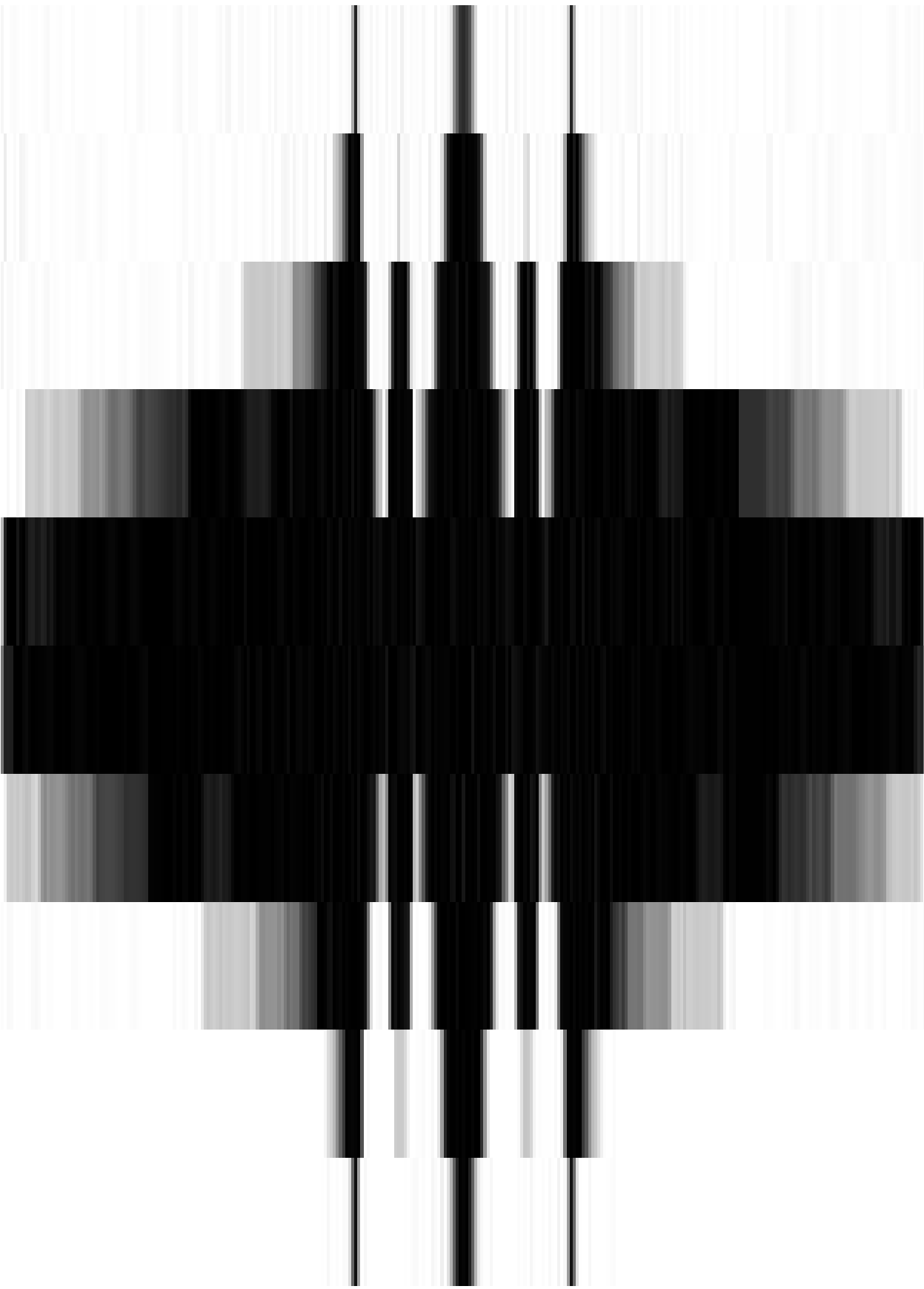


Influence of a dark age on the official canon of scripture

The influence of the dark age in which Jesus took incarnation, and which continued for several successive centuries, may well be faulted as providing a confounding background of ignorance and superstition that led the church fathers to exclude certain texts from the official canon of scripture. It is not altogether surprising that in attempting to define and preserve the memory and message of Jesus, believers were wont to err on the side of authenticating only those doctrines and texts that would best defend the new faith against contrary or diluting forces and secure the power of church hierarchy as the supreme keepers of the faith. Above all, their doctrinal concept of what the nature and acts of Jesus should be as the unique and perfect Son of God come to earth, with all that this implied to the understanding of the times, was in no measure to be compromised.⁴

The absolute proof of truth must pass more than the reasoned analysis of pedants, the prayers of faith of ecclesiastics, the scientific testing of dedicated researchers; the ultimate validation of any doctrine lies in the actual personal realization of those who touch the Sole Reality. Diversity of opinion in religious matters will doubtless persist so long as the masses are still wanting in such qualification. Nevertheless, God must enjoy the heterogenous medley in His human family, for He has not troubled Himself to write clear directions across the heavens for all alike to see and follow in unity.

My purpose in noting the broader narratives of Jesus' life available in ancient records is not to insinuate their authenticity or opine as to their factualness, but rather to suggest their plausibility against the background of India's vast spiritual tradition of saints, rishis, and avatars. The spiritually exceptional is quite the norm for incarnate souls who are able to pierce the veils of deceptive maya and behold the Lord's creation from His perspective. How else may the devotee and seeker recognize and appreciate the inner divinity of a godly person, except that it be manifested and extolled in the uncommon features and acts that characterize that life. A "miraculous" life may be a subtle vibratory influence that has the power to uplift others from ignorance, or it may be dramatic demonstrations as employed by Jesus to rouse faith in the power and word of God.



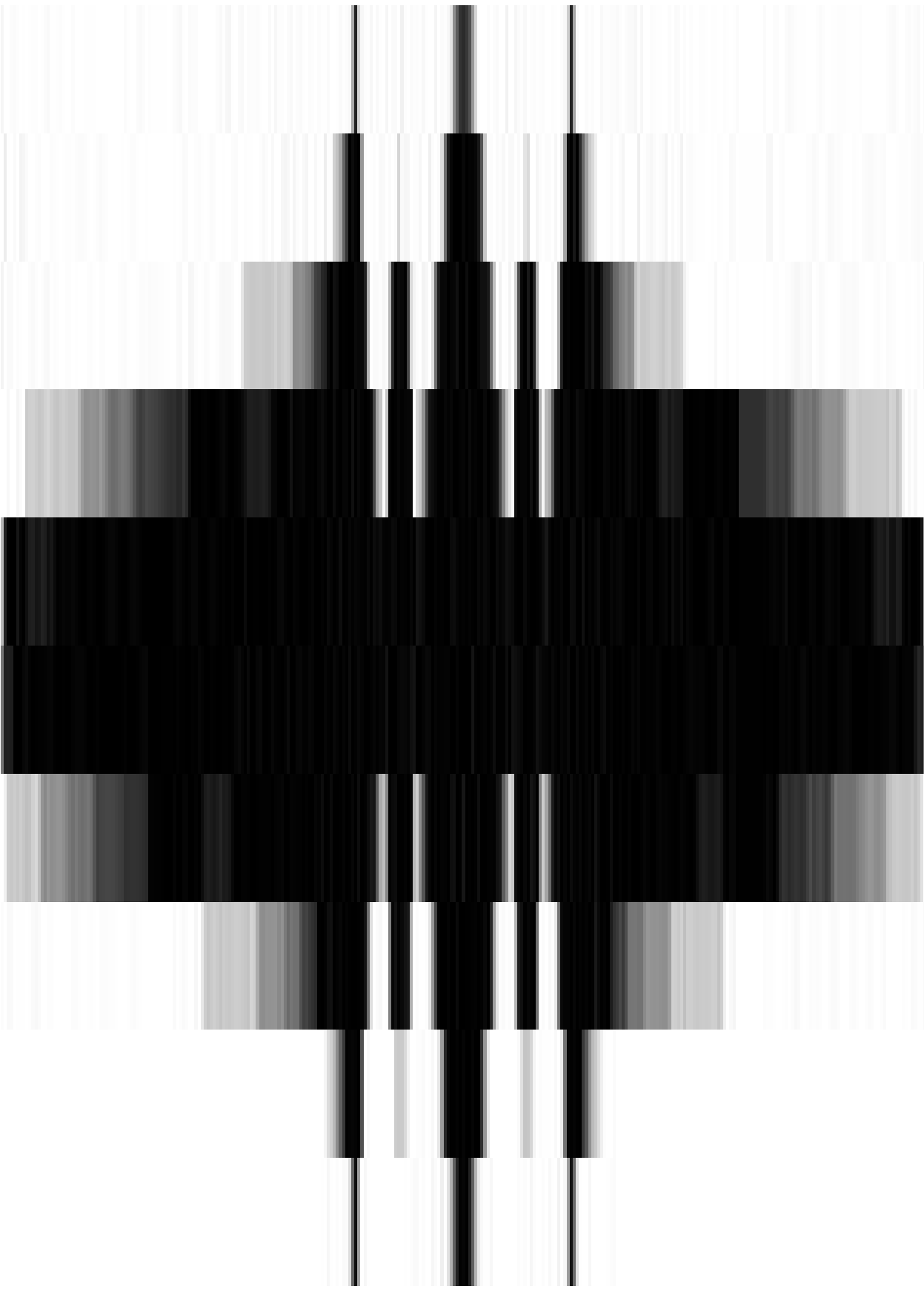
Human as well as divine attributes evidenced in the lives of avatars

One of the difficulties encountered in Western perception of divinity is the mindset that one is either human or divine. If human, he is made in man's image and subject to all the flaws inherent therein; if divine, he is made in God's image and must bear no hint of imperfection. But India's Vedic wisdom, and especially Bhagavan Krishna's yoga science in the Bhagavad Gita, quite reconciles human attributes and divinity in those whose consciousness transcends the ordinary and realizes its oneness with God. As the very existence of manifestation is the result of a complex formula of laws and forces activated by the catalyst of maya—the delusive factor that divides and differentiates the one consciousness of Spirit into diverse forms—a divine being cannot even assume and maintain a corporeal form without becoming subject to the principles that create and sustain manifestation. Thus the divine being undergoes the natural experiences associated with the limited instrumentality of the body and the effects of its environment, while at the same time his soul remains unobscured by the cosmic hypnosis of maya that stultifies the common man.

The accounts in the Infancy Gospels concerning the acts of Jesus would not be considered at all surprising or unexpected by the Eastern mind. In referring to these texts, William Hone notes in the preface to his second edition of *The Apocryphal New Testament* that “the legends of the Koran and the Hindoo Mythology are considerably connected with this volume. Many of the acts and miracles ascribed to the Indian God, Creeshna [Krishna], during his incarnation, are precisely the same with those attributed to Christ in his infancy by the Apocryphal Gospels, and are largely particularized by the Rev. Thomas Maurice in his learned *History of Hindostan*.”⁵

“Miracles” according to the will of God exude from His divine emissaries, whether consciously initiated or spontaneously expressed through the physical instrumentality from the superconscious motivation of the indwelling God-tuned soul. Thus even in childhood Jesus possessed great powers, akin to those he had manifested in his previous incarnation as Elisha, presaging the miracles of his adult ministry that showed command over life and death and over natural laws that do not yield their fixity except at a divine command. In the Infancy Gospels, Jesus is said to have spoken to his mother, even from the cradle, declaring his divine descent and world mission. When, as was the custom, the infant on the

fortieth day after birth was presented to God at the temple in Jerusalem, “angels stood around him, adoring him, as a king’s guard stands around him.” When honored by the Wise Men from the East, Mary gave to them one of the swaddling clothes in which Jesus was wrapped; “at the same time there appeared to them an angel in the form of that star which had been their guide in their journey.” On their return to their own country, “kings and princes came to them, enquiring what they had seen and done.” They produced the swaddling cloth, and according to custom prepared a fire and worshiped the cloth and cast it into the sacred flame. “And when the fire was put out, they took forth the swaddling cloth unhurt, as much as if the fire had not touched it.”



Miracles ascribed to the child Jesus

When King Herod, fearing the prophecy of the birth in Bethlehem of an almighty king, ordered the death of all infants, and God warned Joseph to flee into Egypt with Mary and Jesus, several miracles occurred in the land of their exile in the presence of the holy child. The Infancy Gospels relate how the son of an Egyptian high priest is cured of possession by devils, and the famous idol tended by his father inexplicably falls down and is destroyed, to the great terror of worshipers. A woman is dispossessed of a devil; a bride struck dumb by sorcerers is healed when she takes the infant Jesus lovingly in her arms. So also, others are cured of infirmities, including leprosy and other ills, sometimes by pouring over their body the water that had been used to bathe the infant Jesus.

Jesus, Joseph, and Mary, according to the apocryphal texts, abode three years in Egypt.⁶

On return to Israel, a litany of similar miracles ascribed to the infant Jesus continues. As the child emerges from infancy, he begins a more conscious wielding of his God-given powers. The legendary tellings might well be misconstrued as describing a child with powers over matter and life and death itself who is of a capricious, even petulant, nature, at whose command the elements obey. Certainly, in and of itself this literal acceptance of the tales would rightly doom them to the ash heap of heresy. Whatever vestiges of authenticity may breathe within these legends must be viewed in the light of the singular purpose for which saviors come to earth. No vindictive or arrogant intent motivates the actions of such a one. If indeed, according to the accounts, some persons were withered or struck blind or lifeless in their encounters with the child Jesus, it was through his command that some consequence from their past-life evils was thereby mitigated. Correspondingly, children who taunted Elisha were destroyed by bears summoned from the woods by the prophet, not as an act of wrath, but in recognition of a present cause providing the opportunity for the atonement and expiation of long-past evil actions—fruition of the law of karma, cause and effect, God's law of justice.⁷ It is, in fact, noted in the scriptures of India that karmic justice dispensed by the hand of an emissary of God is a privileged blessing leading to that chastened soul's liberation. Thus only with divine purpose does the god-king Krishna slay those of evil doing. Similarly, God's just law manifests through the child Jesus not to maim, but to free. (No

such concession is attached to the destructive actions of a despot or egotist with a self-induced savior complex. God's laws will not be mocked!)

Life and death, animate and inanimate matter, were all seen by the child Jesus as manipulatable vibrations of God's consciousness. We are told he formed sparrows from mud scooped from ponds after a rainstorm; and when chastised for such action on the Sabbath, he gave life to the birds and bade them fly away. More often than not, those who suffered death or affliction at his command were restored by him to life and health, just as later in his ministry he withdrew life from the fig tree and caused it to wither and restored life to Lazarus and raised him from the dead. Nature's laws are activated quite ingenuously by one who knows his unity with the omnipresent Universal Consciousness through which all existences are created, sustained, and dissolved.

It is related in the Infancy Gospels that father Joseph found the extraordinary talent of his son of incredible assistance in his carpentry trade—not as an artisan with hammer and chisel, but when by error “Joseph had any thing to make longer or shorter, or wider or narrower, the Lord Jesus would stretch forth his hand towards it. And presently it would become as Joseph would have it.” After two years of labor on a commissioned throne for the ruler of Jerusalem, the seat was found to be lacking “two spans on each side, of the appointed measure.” The king was angry and Joseph fearful; whereupon Jesus directed his father to pull on one side while he pulled on the opposite.⁸ And when “each of them had with strength drawn his side, the throne obeyed, and was brought to the proper dimension of the place: which miracle when they who stood by saw, they were astonished, and praised God.” (This was as elementary for Jesus as later it would be for him to change water into wine, or to multiply the loaves and fishes.)⁹

A boy at the point of death from a serpent's venom is restored to his former health. “And when he began to cry, the Lord Jesus said, Cease crying, for hereafter thou shalt be my disciple. And this is that Simon the Canaanite, who is mentioned in the Gospel.”

Satan is cast out of a young boy who went about biting people, or himself when no one else was nearby. That same child is identified as the later perfidious Judas Iscariot.

Jesus' brother James, while they both were out gathering wood, is bitten by a venomous viper; whereupon Jesus blew his breath on the wound and it was

instantly well. Amidst play, a boy falls from the roof and dies; Jesus restores him to life.

Precocious would hardly describe the child Jesus. Attempts at schooling by competent teachers met with frustration and even disgrace for these scholars. In beginning with the alphabet, the teacher could not progress beyond the first letter because of the insistence of Jesus that the teacher explain the full meaning of the letter. Whereupon receiving no such explanation the child proceeded with the whole alphabet and the process of its formation and the diagramming of each letter—none of which the teacher had ever heard nor read in any book. The parents brought Jesus to a more learned teacher, who suffered a similar defeat, and in addition a withered hand when he raised it to strike what he took to be an insolent child.

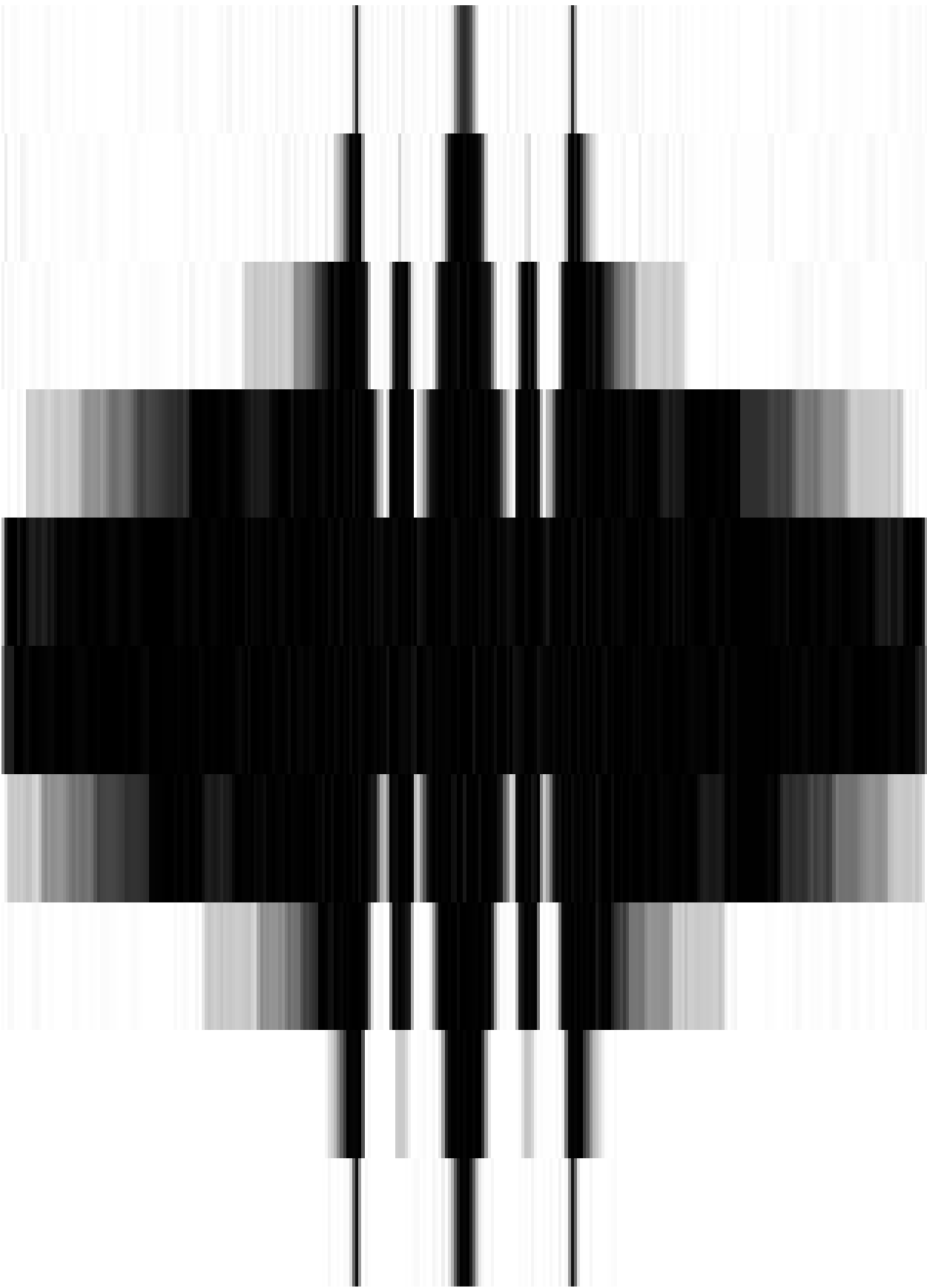


Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast.

And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him. And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.

And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing."

And he said unto them, "How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart (Luke 2:41 – 51).



Spiritual geniuses draw on the all-knowing intuitive faculty of the soul

We know of mental geniuses, whose brains absorb knowledge at astonishing speed. They are endowed with learning and learning abilities from past lives, which predisposes them to super-efficient brain development. Spiritual geniuses have, in addition, the superconscious ability to tap the wisdom library of soul realization—the all-knowing intuitive faculty of the soul that manifests its oneness with the infinite Divine Intelligence.

Narratives about godly youthful savants abound in the spiritual lore of India. It is widely accepted that those who come on earth for a God-given purpose are graced with divine intervention that blesses them with wisdom transcending the natural growth of the intellect.

Shukadeva was the saintly son of Rishi Vyasa (compiler of the Vedas and composer of the epic Mahabharata, which contains the Bhagavad Gita). The boy was an extraordinary child from birth. Quickly absorbing all knowledge, he is reputed to have recited from memory the entire Vedas as well as the more than

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verses of the Mahabharata, having heard them from his father, Vyasa.

Of exceptional renown is the sainted Swami Shankara, often extolled as India's greatest philosopher. The annals surrounding him relate that within his first year he was proficient in languages; by age two he could read; having once heard something he could recall it, and absorb its meaning intuitively. By the age of eight he had mastered the Vedas and completed his formal education—having become a wisdom expert in all the holy scriptures, writings, and six systems of Hindu philosophy. He preached throughout India his Advaita (non-dualistic) philosophy. The very best of the learned could not match him in debate. By sixteen he had completed writing his extensive commentaries, which are veritably revered to this day by scholars. He reorganized the monastic Order of Swamis, of which he is known as Adi (“the first”) Shankaracharya, head of this

sacred tradition of sannyasis. Having completed his work, he died at the age of thirty-two.

As told in the Biblical gospel of Luke, Jesus in his twelfth year, having been missing for three days is at last found in the temple at Jerusalem discoursing with the learned doctors and elders. One final amplification of this temple scene from the apocryphal Infancy Gospels might be noted; its recounting by the early Christians an attempt, no doubt, to express the awe and reverence they felt that Jesus was vested not only with heavenly wisdom, but earthly profundity as well.

“A certain principal rabbi asked him, Hast thou read books? Jesus answered he had read both books and the things which were contained in books. And he explained to them the books of the law, and precepts, and statutes, and the mysteries which are contained in the books of the prophets; things which the mind of no creature could reach....

“When a certain astronomer, who was present, asked the Lord Jesus, Whether he had studied astronomy? The Lord Jesus replied, and told him the number of the spheres and heavenly bodies, as also their triangular, square, and sextile aspect; their progressive and retrograde motion; their size and several prognostications; and other things, which the reason of man had never discovered.

“There was also among them a philosopher well skilled in physic and natural philosophy, who asked the Lord Jesus, whether he had studied physic?”

Here the reply attributed to Jesus transforms the young child into what might be seen as a hoary rishi reciting yoga philosophy from the Upanishads and Bhagavad Gita:

“He replied, and explained to him physics and metaphysics, and also those things which were above and below the power of nature; the powers also of the body, its humors and their effects; also the number of its members, and bones, veins, arteries, and nerves; the several constitutions of the body, hot and dry, cold and moist, and the tendencies of them. How the soul operated upon the body; what its various sensations and faculties were; the faculty of speaking, anger, desire. And lastly, the manner of its composition and dissolution; and other things, which the understanding of no creature had ever reached.”

When Mary finds and chastises the child for the worry he had caused by his disappearance, he, in effect, spoke before the assemblage his encapsulated first

sermon, which was to characterize his forthcoming ministry: his simple message was to be one of renunciation of material bonds for the greater love of God. “How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?”



“I must be about my Father’s business” : Jesus’ ideal of renunciation

In setting Jesus apart as one who is to be venerated but whose perfection cannot be emulated, the majority of his followers pay only token notice to the example of renunciation that he lived and preached: Seek ye first the kingdom of God; sell that thou hast and give to the poor and follow me; take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on; who is my mother or my brethren save whosoever shall do the will of God; follow me and let the dead bury the dead; the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head; whosoever that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. Lofty admonitions! But all who have stood in purity before the omnipresence of God know that without letting go of corporeal attachments in one’s consciousness—to which outer renunciation is an aid if not an absolute condition—there is no possibility of possessing the Infinite. Though Jesus stressed complete renunciation, he also said, “Love thy neighbour,” which means work for all—and this, while you “Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.”

The perfect life of Jesus, even at such a tender age, brings forth a perfect utterance as to how a divine child, consecrated to serve humanity, behaves. Knowing himself as a son of God, he states outright that his highest duty is to look after the celestial business of spreading the kingdom of his Heavenly Father. His caring parents had no cause to worry for him who was protected by the King of kings. It was the first public hint by Jesus to his parents as to what they would have to expect about what his life was to be.

Jesus knew that parental love and affection, being blindly compulsive, might demand from him greater attention to his earthly father’s occupation than to the work of his Heavenly Father, for which he came on earth. With the innocence of a divine audacity Jesus remonstrates that his parents should know this, and should wish for him to be busy with God’s work. The world, busy with all its busy-ness, little understands, as Jesus’ parents did not, the supreme focus of one who knows there is no greater duty than one’s duty to God. The Mahabharata says that if one duty contradicts another, then it is not duty, but something to be avoided. Spiritual and material duties should not contradict, but rather complement one another. If contradiction occurs, those duties are incomplete and should be modified so that instead of contending against each other they work

together like two stallions, pulling the car of life harmoniously and uniformly to one happy goal.



Spiritual and material duties should complement one another

The ordinary man thinks of the world, his family, and his work as his business; but the spiritual man knows that duties to parents, children, family ties, the business world, and all else are to be carried out as service to God. Everyone should help to maintain the well-being of the world by a universal consciousness of love and service, rather than as a selfish man whose actions are compelled and actuated by instinctive blood ties and greed.

Business should be spiritualized; everything should be done with the consciousness of God within. Man should endeavor in his works to please God by harmonizing all things with His ideals. Business that conforms with God's divine laws is of lasting benefit to mankind. Moneymaking enterprises that cater only to human luxury, and to false or evil propensities, are bound to be destroyed by the working of the divine law of the survival of the worthiest. Any business that harms the real spiritual comfort of people does no real service, and is bound to meet with destruction by the very nature of its activities.

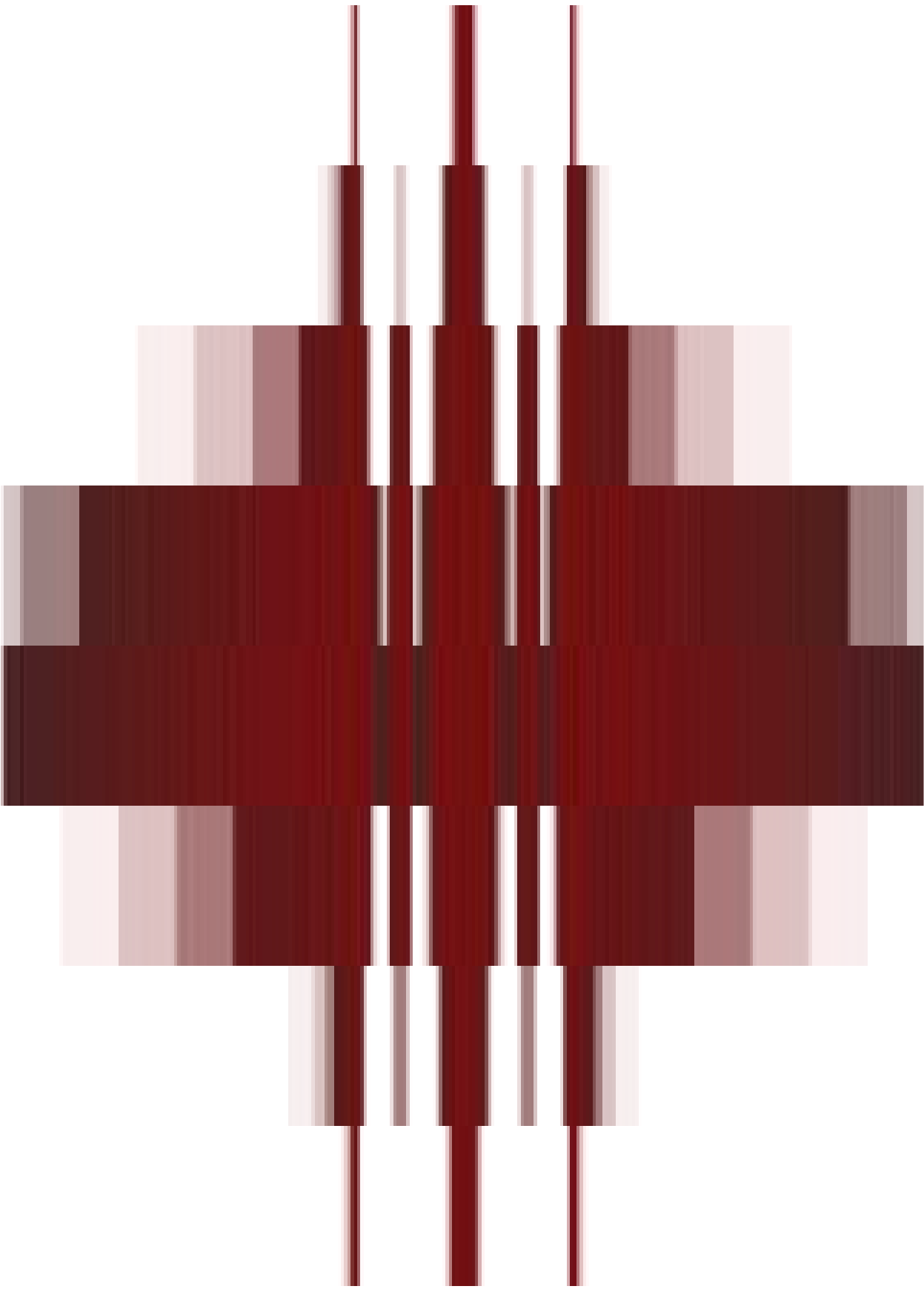
A successful life must be begun with spiritual culture, for all material and moral actions are governed by spiritual laws. Noble parents, lovers of God, should wish the first interest of their children to be in God's business. They should start their children on the right road in life by showing them the way to be proficient in contacting God and in doing all things with God-consciousness. A life can be successful, healthy, and complete—balanced with wisdom and happiness—when activity is guided by God's inner, intuitive direction.

In expressing the proper attitude toward his parents—that though duty to parents is important, it is secondary to one's first and foremost duty to the Heavenly Father—Jesus spoke not only of his own divine dispensation, but the truth that every man should remember: “God first.”

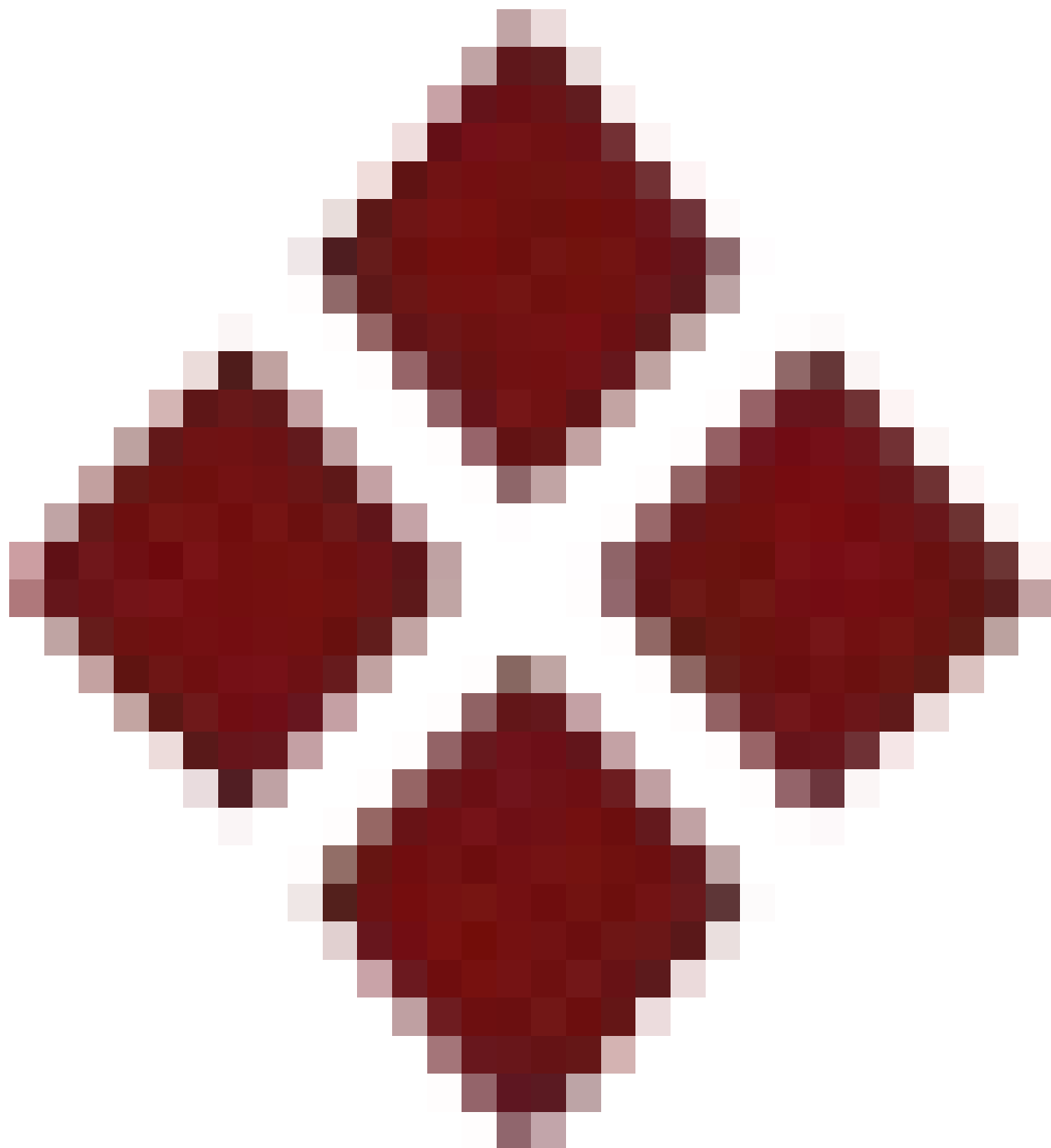


Discourse 5

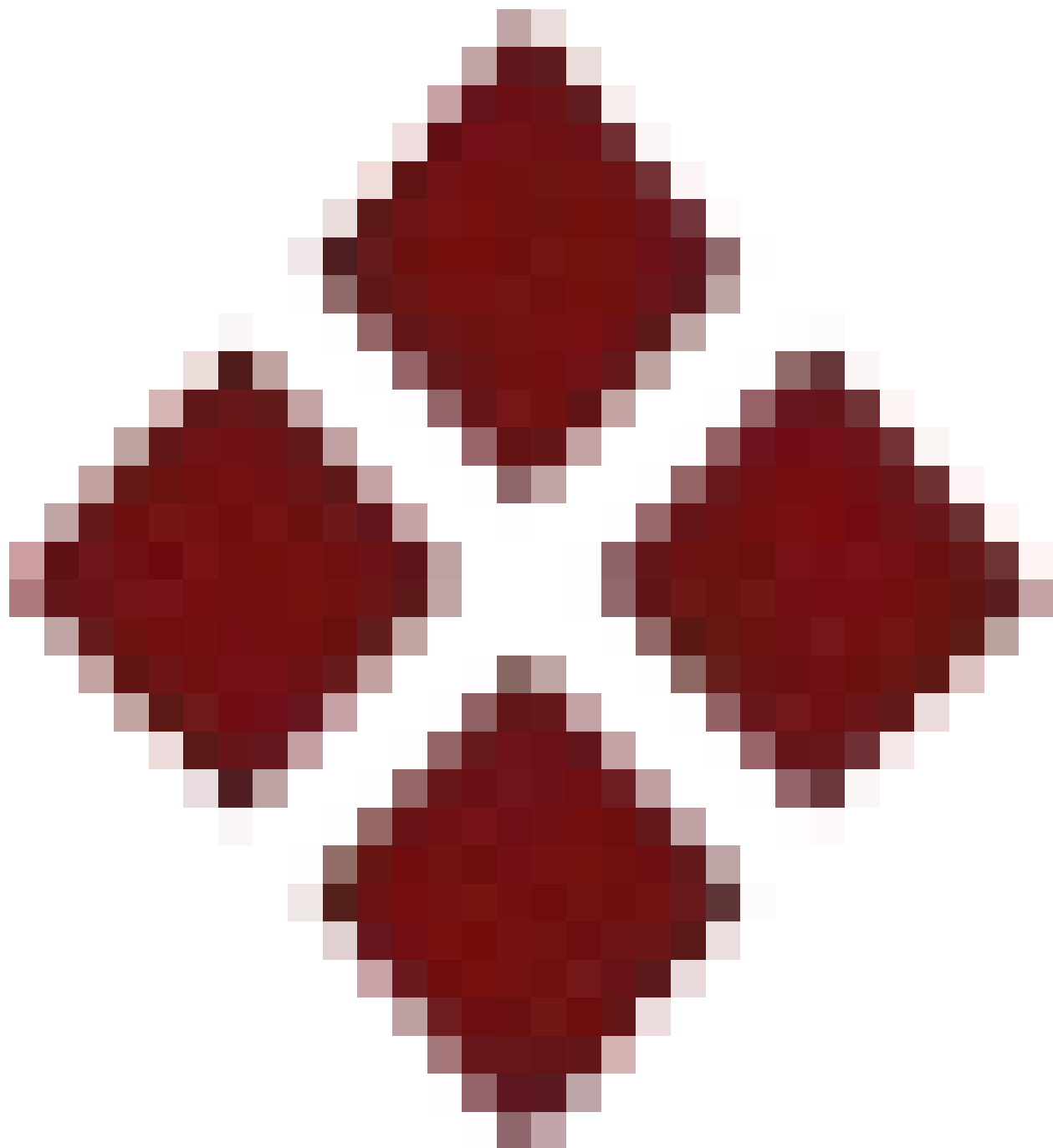
The Unknown Years of Jesus' Life — Sojourn in India



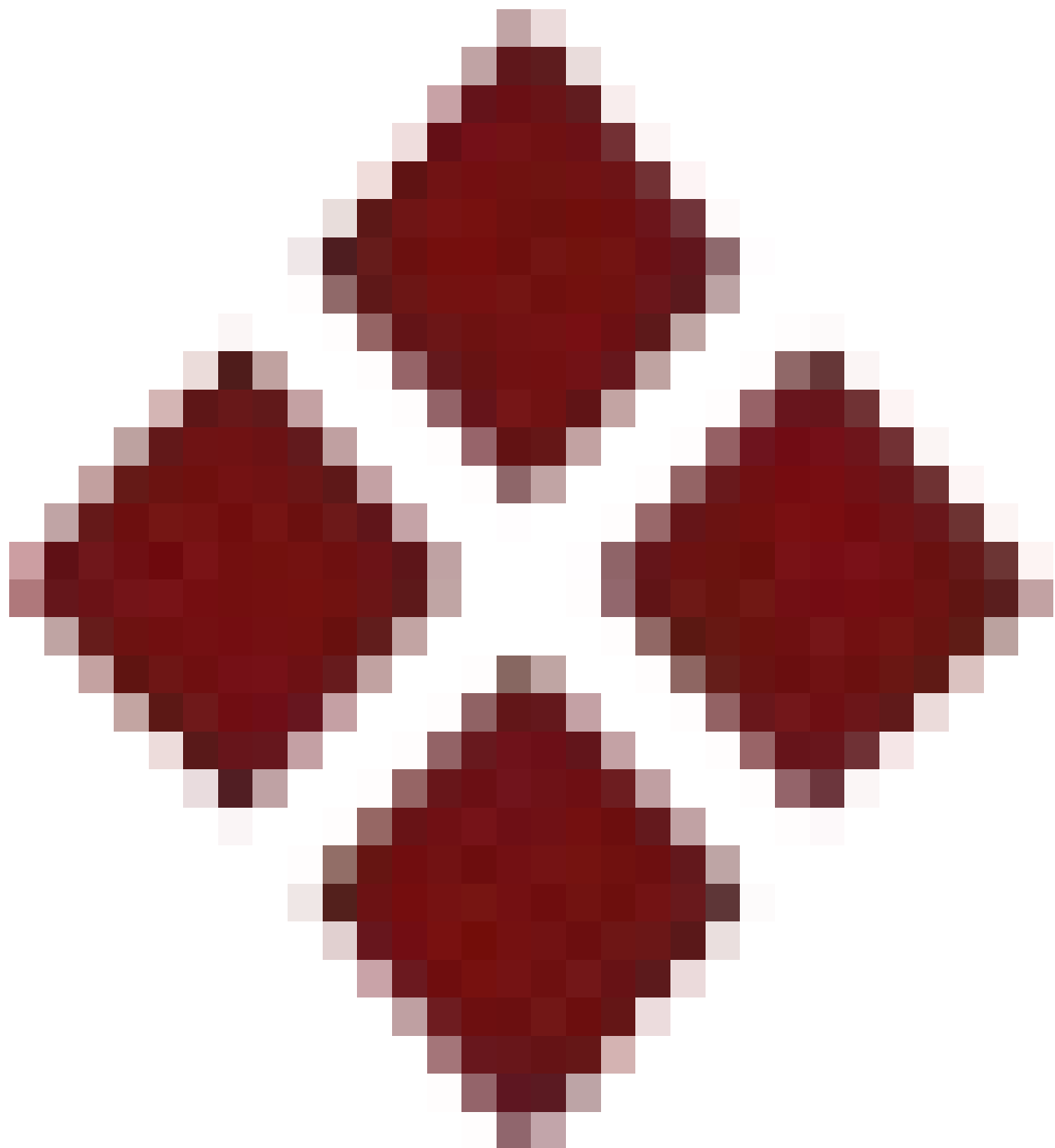
Ancient Records From a Tibetan Monastery



Jesus' Journey to India, Motherland of Religion



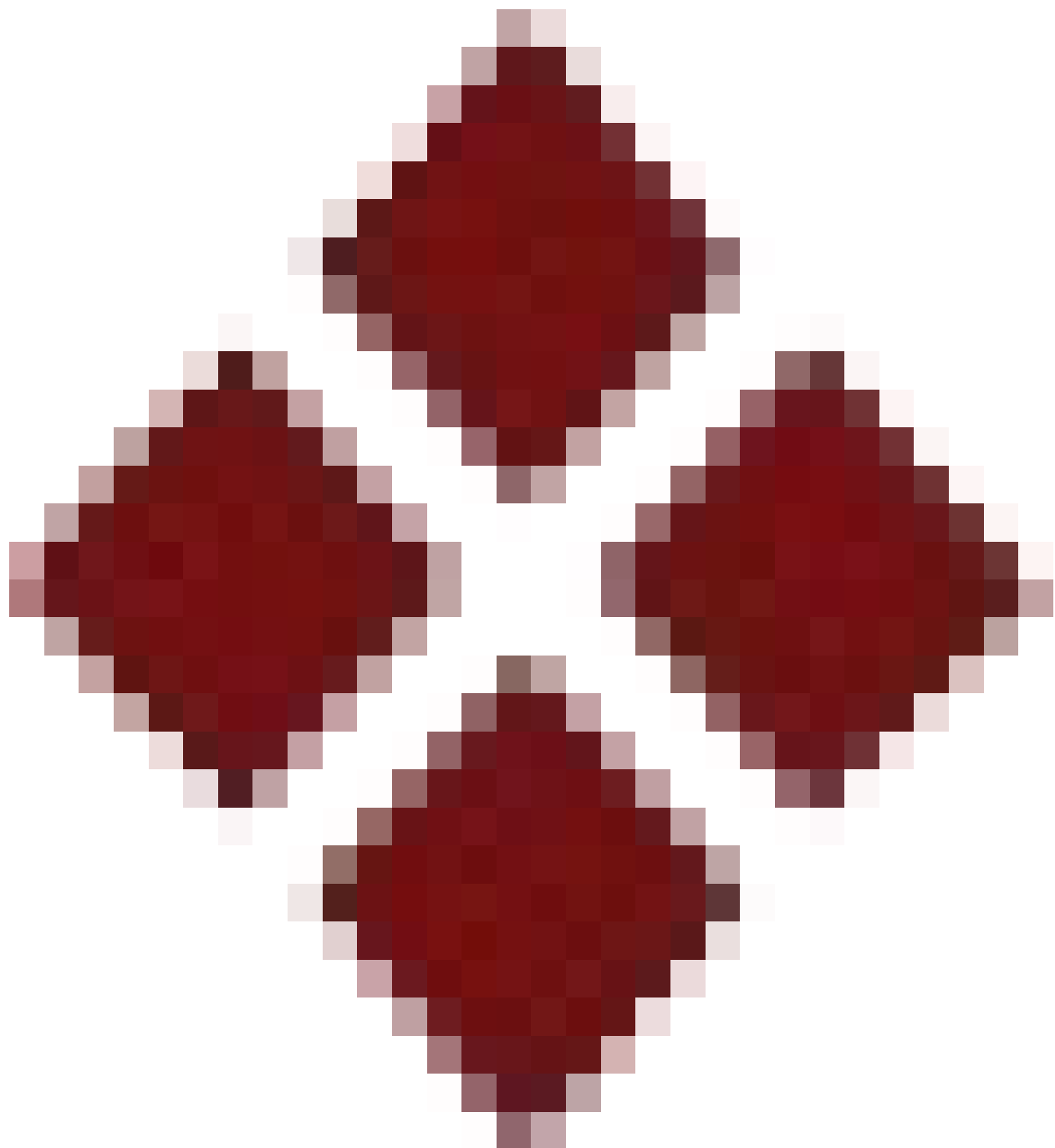
Cycles of Progress and Degradation in Outward Expression of Religion



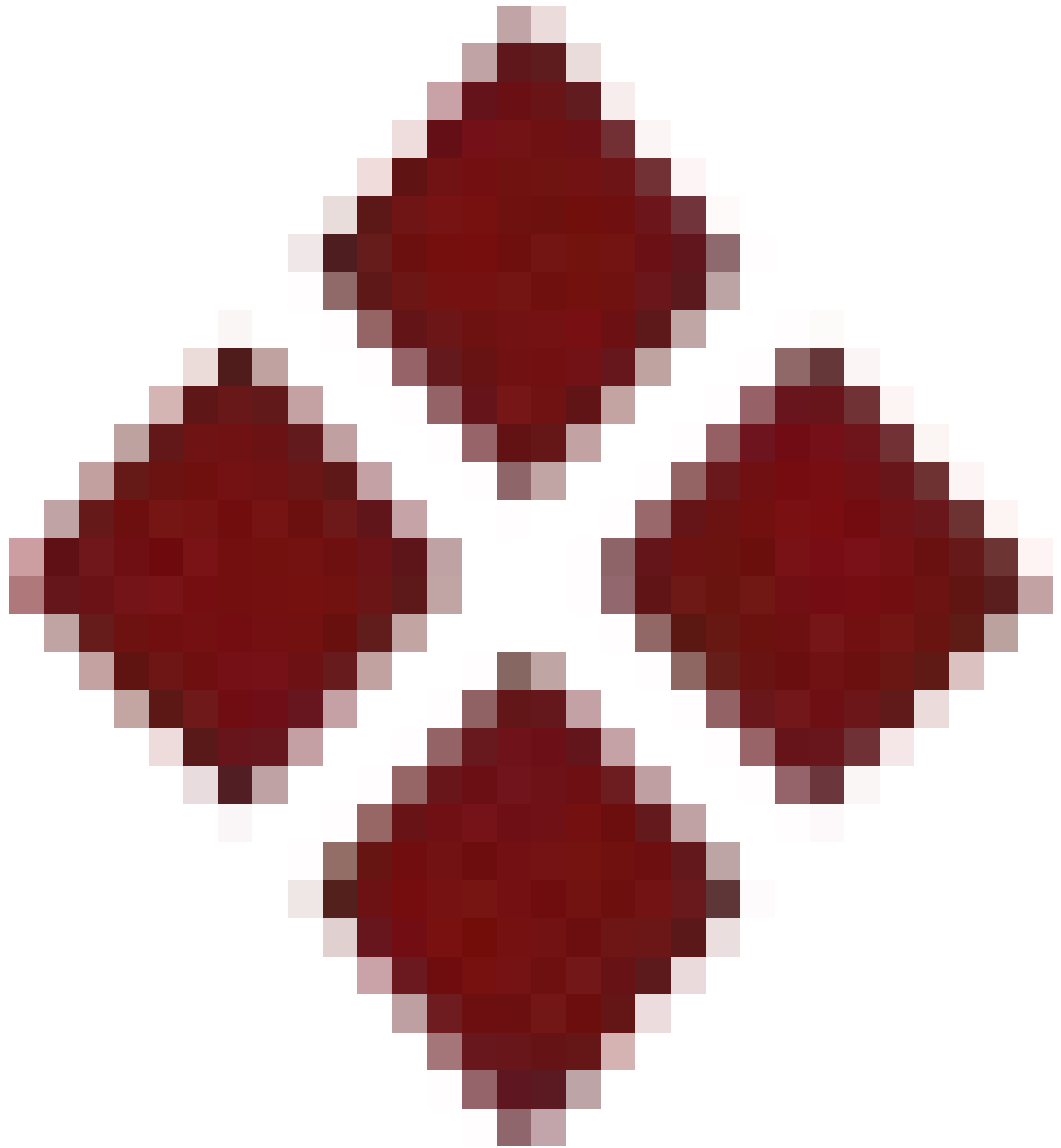
**All Chronicles of Jesus' Life Colored by the Cultural
Perspective of Their Authors**



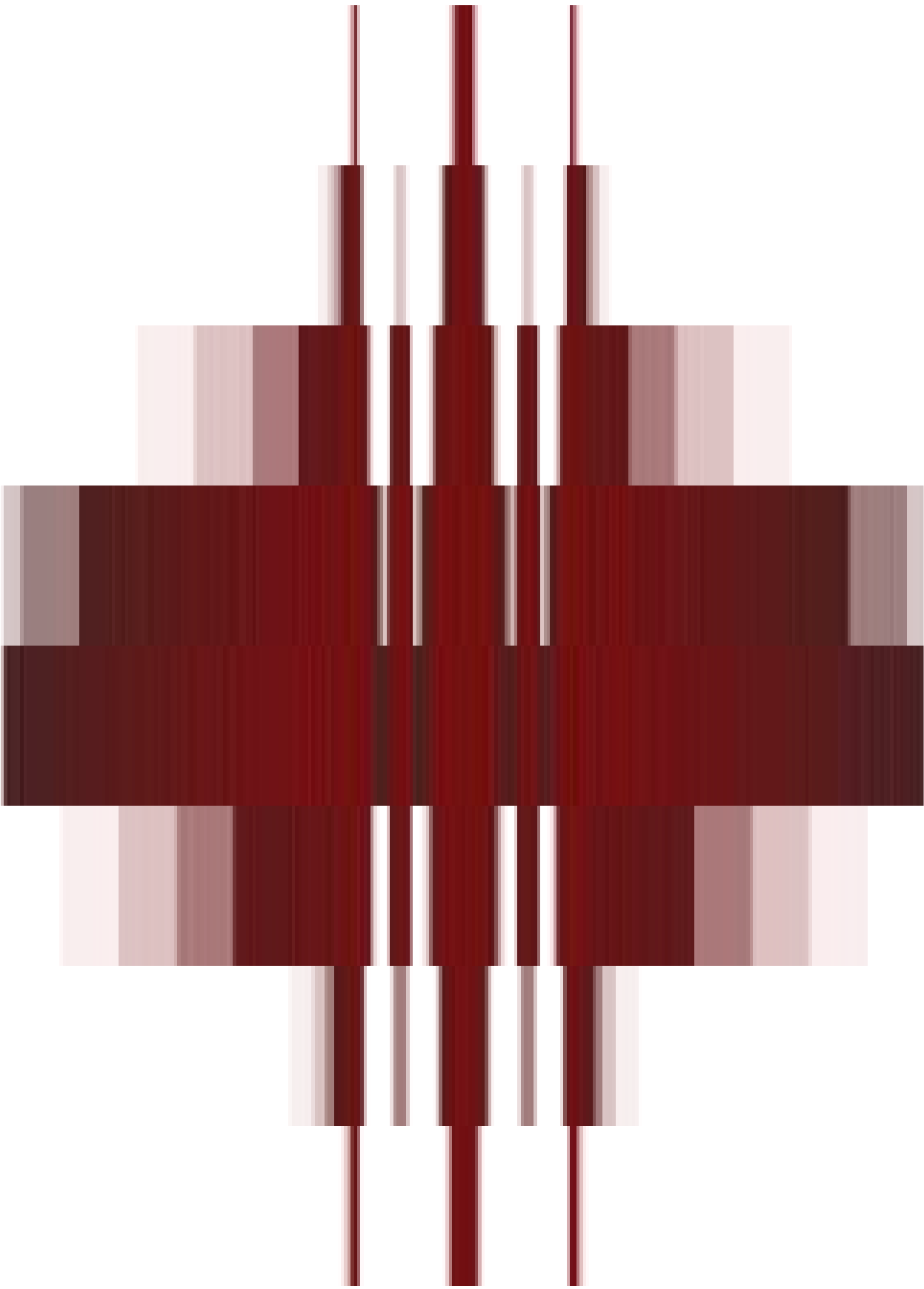
Teachings of the Oriental Jesus Have Been Too Much Westernized



Oriental and Occidental Christianity: The Inner and Outer Teachings



**Truth Is the Ultimate Religion; Sectarian Affiliation Is
of Little Meaning**



“Jesus knew his divine destiny and set out for India to prepare himself for its fulfillment....because India specialized in religion from time immemorial.”

Discourse 5

The Unknown Years of Jesus' Life — Sojourn in India



In the New Testament, the curtain of silence comes down again on the life of Jesus after his twelfth year, not to rise once more until eighteen years later, at which time he receives baptism from John and begins preaching to the multitude. We are told only:

And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

— *Luke 2:52*

For the contemporaries of such an extraordinary figure to find nothing noteworthy to record from his childhood to his thirtieth year is in and of itself extraordinary.

Remarkable accounts, however, do exist, not in the land of Jesus' birth but farther east where he spent most of the unaccounted-for years. Hidden away in a Tibetan monastery priceless records lie. They speak of a Saint Issa from Israel "in whom was manifest the soul of the universe"; who from the age of fourteen to twenty-eight was in India and regions of the Himalayas among the saints, monks, and pundits; who preached his message throughout that area and then returned to teach in his native land, where he was treated vilely, condemned, and put to death. Except as chronicled in these ancient manuscripts, no other history of the unknown years of Jesus' life has ever been published.



Ancient records from a Tibetan monastery

Providentially, these ancient records were discovered and copied by a Russian traveler, Nicholas Notovitch. During his travels in India in

1887

, Notovitch basked in the wonders of the soul-stirring stark contrasts of her ancient civilization. It was midst the natural grandeur of Kashmir that he heard stories about a Saint Issa, the details of which left no doubt in him that Issa and Jesus Christ were one and the same person. He learned that copies of ancient manuscripts preserved in some Tibetan monasteries contained a record of Issa's years of sojourn in India, Nepal, and Tibet. Undeterred by hazards and obstacles, he journeyed northward, finally arriving at the Himis monastery outside of Leh, the capital city of Ladakh, which he was told possessed a copy of the sacred books about Issa. Though he was received graciously, he did not gain access to the manuscripts. A disappointed Notovitch turned back toward India; but in a near-fatal mishap on the treacherous mountain pass, his leg was broken in a fall. Seizing this as an opportunity for a second attempt to see the sacred books, he asked to be carried back to Himis to receive the necessary care. This time, after repeated requests, the books were brought to him. Perhaps the lamas now felt obliged to treat as hospitably as possible their stricken guest—a time-honored tradition in the East. With the help of an interpreter, he meticulously copied the contents of the pages pertinent to Jesus as they were read to him by the head lama.

Returning to Europe, Notovitch found that his enthusiasm for the discovery was not shared by the Western Christian orthodoxy, which was loath to support such a radical revelation. So he published his notes himself in

1894

under the title *The Unknown Life of Jesus Christ*. In his publication, he urged that a qualified research team be dispatched to view and judge for itself the value of these previously secreted documents. Though Notovitch's claims were challenged by critics in America and Europe, the accuracy of his account was attested to by at least two other reputable persons who journeyed to Tibet to seek out and ascertain the authenticity of these manuscripts.

In

1922

, Swami Abhedananda, a direct disciple of Ramakrishna Paramahansa, visited the Himis Monastery, and confirmed all of the salient details about Issa published in Notovitch's book.¹

Nicholas Roerich,² in an expedition to India and Tibet in the mid-1920s, saw and copied verses from ancient manuscripts that were the same, or at least the same in content, as those published by Notovitch. He was also deeply impressed by the oral traditions of that area: "In Srinagar we first encountered the curious legend about Christ's visit to this place. Afterwards we saw how widely spread in India, in Ladak and in Central Asia, was the legend of the visit of Christ to these parts during his long absence, quoted in the Gospel."³

Answering the critics who had claimed that Notovitch's story was a fabrication, Roerich writes: "There are always those who love scornfully to deny when something difficult enters their consciousness...[But] in what possible way could a recent forgery penetrate into the consciousness of the whole East?"⁴

Roerich notes: "The local people know nothing of any published book [i.e., Notovitch's] but they know the legend and with deep reverence they speak of Issa."⁵



Jesus' journey to India, motherland of religion

The Gospel account of Jesus' early life ends in his twelfth year with his discourse with the priests in the temple at Jerusalem. According to the Tibetan manuscripts, it was not long after this that Jesus left his home in order to avoid plans for his betrothal as he reached maturity—which for an Israelite boy at that time was thirteen years of age. Certainly Jesus was above the commonality of marriage. Of what necessity was human love and family ties for one who possessed supreme ardor for God and a universal love that embraced all human beings? The world urges a conformity to its pedestrian course, and little knows how to reckon with those who hew a higher path in response to God's will. Jesus knew his divine destiny and set out for India to prepare himself for its fulfillment.

India is the mother of religion. Her civilization has been acknowledged as much older than the legendary civilization of Egypt. If you study these matters, you will see how the hoary scriptures of India, predating all other revelations, have influenced the Book of the Dead of Egypt and the Old and New Testaments of the Bible, as well as other religions. All were in touch with, and drew from, the religion of India, because India specialized in religion from time immemorial.⁶ So it was that Jesus himself went to India; Notovitch's manuscript tells us: "Issa secretly absented himself from his father's house; left Jerusalem, and, in a train of merchants, journeyed toward the Sindh, with the object of perfecting himself in the knowledge of the Word of God and the study of the laws of the great Buddhas."⁷

The ancient manuscripts say Jesus spent six years in various holy cities, settling for some time in Jagannath, a sacred pilgrimage site in Puri, Orissa.⁸ The famous temple there, which has existed in one form or another since ancient times, is dedicated to Jagannath, "Lord of the Universe"—a title associated with the universal consciousness of Bhagavan Krishna. The name by which Jesus is identified in the Tibetan manuscripts is Isa ("Lord"), rendered by Notovitch as Issa.⁹ Isa (Isha), or its extension Ishvara, defines God as the Supreme Lord or Creator immanent in as well as transcendent of His creation.¹⁰ This is the true character of the Christ/Krishna universal consciousness, Kutastha Chaitanya, incarnate in Jesus, Krishna, and other God-united souls who possess oneness with the Lord's omnipresence. It is my conviction that the title Isa was given at

birth to Jesus by the Wise Men from India who came to honor his advent on earth. In the New Testament, Jesus' disciples commonly refer to him as "Lord."¹¹

The ancient history relates that Jesus became learned in all the Vedas and shastras. But he took issue with some precepts of the Brahminic orthodoxy. He openly denounced their practices of caste bigotry; many of the priestly rituals; and the emphasis on worship of many gods in idolic form rather than sole reverence for the one Supreme Spirit, the pure monotheistic essence of Hinduism which had become obscured by outer ritualistic concepts.

Distancing himself from these disputes, Jesus left Puri. He spent the next six years with the Sakya Buddhist sect in the Himalayan mountainous regions of Nepal and Tibet. This Buddhist sect was monotheistic, having separated itself from the distorted Hinduism that prevailed during the dark age of Kali Yuga.¹²



Cycles of progress and degradation in outward expression of religion

Though true God-realized masters have arisen in India in every age, preserving from generation to generation the eternal truths of Spirit (Sanatana Dharma), the outward religious practices of the masses have undergone cycles of progress and degradation as have the religions of other lands and cultures. According to my guru, Swami Sri Yukteswar, the most recent descending and ascending Dark Ages (Kali Yuga) lasted from about

700

b.c.

to

a.d.

1700

. In India, this period saw the gradual perversion and loss of the sublime spiritual science of the Vedas and Upanishads, resulting in priestly adherence to a number of misunderstood precepts falsely held to be taught by the scriptures. It was during this time of spiritual darkness that the avatar Gautama Buddha took incarnation in India (c.

563

b.c.

), to right some of the gross abuses of truth perpetrated by priestly pundits. His message of compassion for all beings and his Noble Eightfold Path taught how to escape misery and free oneself from the karmic wheel of birth and death.¹³

The Tibetan scrolls relate that while among the Buddhists, Jesus applied himself to the study of their sacred books and could perfectly expound from them. Apparently around age twenty-six or twenty-eight, he preached his message abroad as he wended his way back to Israel through Persia and adjacent countries, encountering fame from the populace and animosity from the

Zoroastrian and other priestly classes.



All chronicles of Jesus' life colored by the cultural perspective of their authors

All this is not to say that Jesus learned everything he taught from his spiritual mentors and associates in India and surrounding regions. Avatars come with their own endowment of wisdom. Jesus' store of divine realization was merely awakened and molded to fit his unique mission by his sojourn among the Hindu pundits, Buddhist monks, and particularly the great masters of yoga from whom he received initiation in the esoteric science of God-union through meditation. From the knowledge he had gleaned, and from the wisdom brought forth from his soul in deep meditation, he distilled for the masses simple parables of the ideal principles by which to govern one's life in the sight of God. But to those close disciples who were ready to receive it, he taught the deeper mysteries, as evidenced in the New Testament book of Revelation of St. John, the symbology of which accords exactly with the yoga science of God-realization.

The major import of the chronicles discovered by Notovitch is that they provide compelling evidence that the missing years of Jesus' life were spent in India. But they bear also, as would be expected, the distinctive character of their authors. The original documents purportedly were written in Pali script just a few years after the death of Jesus. This was the language of the Buddhists of that day. When reports reached India through traders from Jerusalem of the ignominious death of Isa, the holy one who had been held in such reverential regard by their community during his time among them, they set about to record his history as a part of their sacred annals. The Buddhistic perspective is quite naturally evident in their accounts.

If Jesus himself had written his life history and the substance of his teachings, they would have been expressed significantly differently than what has come down to this present day. With all the best efforts of those who related and recorded the events of Jesus' life, the view of each narrator was bound to have been somewhat influenced by his own background, be it of a Jewish, Gnostic, Greek, Roman, Buddhist, Zoroastrian, or any other religious persuasion or cultural bias—not to mention the additional assault of translation from one language to another, sometimes passing through many transitions.

The manuscripts published by Notovitch, for example, were written originally in Pali, having been gathered from eyewitnesses or hearsay-tellings of persons

from various linguistic and regional backgrounds and then translated into Pali. The manuscripts then made their way from India to Nepal and thence to Lhasa in Tibet where they were translated into Tibetan and eventually copied for various major monasteries. Notovitch, a Russian, copied the Tibetan pages with the assistance of a translator, eventually published them in French, and that edition was subsequently translated and published in English.

Nevertheless, the overall value of these records is inestimable in a search for the historical Jesus. There are two ways to know an avatar. First, to glimpse his essence that shines through a *mélange* of fact, legend, innocent or purposeful distortion; and by discriminatively sifting the significant from the unimportant, just as a person is recognized for himself apart from the accoutrements he wears. And second, to have direct knowledge of a great one through intuitive divine communion with that soul—as many through the centuries have known Jesus Christ, such as Saint Francis of Assisi to whom Jesus appeared nightly in flesh and blood, Saint Teresa of Avila, and many others of the Christian faith; and such as Sri Ramakrishna of the Hindu faith, and I also who have been many times in the manifested presence of Jesus. Never would I have undertaken this book except with the assurance of personal knowledge of that Christ.

The documents discovered by Notovitch lend historical support to my long-held assertion, gleaned from my earliest years in India, that Jesus was linked with the rishis of India through the Wise Men who journeyed to his cradle, and for whom he went to India to receive their blessings and to confer concerning his world mission. That his teaching, born internally from his God-realization and nurtured externally by his studies with the masters, expresses the universality of Christ Consciousness that knows no boundary of race or creed, is what I shall endeavor to make evident throughout the pages of this book.



Teachings of the Oriental Jesus have been too much Westernized

Like the sun, which rises in the East and travels to the West spreading its rays, so Christ rose in the East and came to the West, there to be enshrined in a vast Christendom whose adherents look to him as their guru and savior. It is no happenstance that Jesus chose to be born an Oriental Christ in Palestine. This locale was the hub linking the East with Europe. He traveled to India to honor his ties with her rishis, preached his message throughout that area, and then went back to spread his teachings in Palestine, which he saw in his great wisdom as the doorway through which his spirit and words would find their way to Europe and the rest of the world. This great Christ, radiating the spiritual strength and power of the Orient to the West, is a divine liaison to unite God-loving peoples of East and West.

Truth is not the monopoly of the Orient or the Occident. The pure silver-gold rays of sunlight appear to be red or blue when observed through red or blue glass. So, also, truth only appears to be different when colored by an Oriental or Occidental civilization. In looking at the simple essence of truth expressed by the great ones of various times and climes, one finds very little difference in their messages. What I received from my Guru and the venerated masters of India I find the same as that which I have received from the teachings of Jesus the Christ.

It amuses me when my Western brothers ask: “Do you believe in Christ?” I always say: “Jesus the Christ”—Jesus the divine son of man in whom was manifested the Christ Consciousness, the Son of God. Much more than merely believing in him is to know him.

Christ has been much misinterpreted by the world. Even the most elementary principles of his teachings have been desecrated, and their esoteric depths have been forgotten. They have been crucified at the hands of dogma, prejudice, and cramped understanding. Genocidal wars have been fought, people have been burned as witches and heretics, on the presumed authority of man-made doctrines of Christianity. How to salvage the immortal teachings from the hands of ignorance? We must know Jesus as an Oriental Christ, a supreme yogi who manifested full mastery of the universal science of God-union, and thus could speak and act as a savior with the voice and authority of God. He has been

Westernized too much.¹⁴

Jesus was an Oriental, by birth and blood and training. To separate a teacher from the background of his nationality is to blur the understanding through which he is perceived. No matter what Jesus the Christ was himself, as regards his own soul, being born and maturing in the Orient, he had to use the medium of Oriental civilization, customs, mannerisms, language, parables, in spreading his message. Hence to understand Jesus Christ and his teachings one must be sympathetically open to the Oriental point of view—in particular, India's ancient and present civilization, religious scriptures, traditions, philosophies, spiritual beliefs, and intuitive metaphysical experiences. Though, esoterically understood, the teachings of Jesus are universal, they are saturated with the essence of Oriental culture—rooted in Oriental influences which have been made adaptable to the Western environment.

The Gospels can be rightly understood in the light of the teachings of India—not the caste-ridden, stone-worshipping, distorted interpretations of Hinduism, but the philosophical, soul-saving wisdom of her rishis: the kernel not the husk of the Vedas, Upanishads, and Bhagavad Gita. This essence of Truth—the Sanatana Dharma, or eternal principles of righteousness that uphold man and the universe—was given to the world thousands of years before the Christian era, and preserved in India with a spiritual vitality that has made the quest for God the be-all and end-all of life and not an armchair diversion.

In spite of the meaningless superstitions and pitiful provincialism in religious thinking that have crusted on both Hinduism and Christianity down the ages, each of them has done immeasurable good to mankind—each has brought peace, happiness, consolation to millions of suffering souls; each has inspired people to highest spiritual endeavor and granted salvation to many.



Oriental and Occidental Christianity: the inner and outer teachings

My endeavor is to restore a proper view of Christianity as an aggregate of the teachings of Jesus—separating them without any prejudice or partiality from the Western adaptations of dogma and sectarian creeds that can more accurately be called churchianity, with its sundry defects as well as merits. In order to understand Christ-ianity—that is, the pure teachings of Jesus—one must first take away its Western crust, and then its Oriental crust. Behind the two opaque coverings lies the universality of true Christianity.

Occidental Christianity is the outer crust, and Oriental Christianity is the inner crust. The Oriental Christ always emphasized: “Take no heed for the body, what ye shall eat, what ye shall wear. Bread, the men of the world seek after; seek ye the kingdom of God, and all these things will be added unto you.” The proposition of the Occidental Christian is instead: “Take heed of the body first, that in a healthy body temple ye may find God. Bread, ye men of the world, seek first—and afterwards, seek the kingdom of God.”

In the warm Oriental climate, in a bygone age, “bread,” clothing, and shelter were simpler and attainable without much effort; thus there was more freedom to meditate on God in leisure and solitude. In the Occident, however, with its artificially high standard of living, one has to think and work for these material necessities, hard and fast and successfully, or he will have no time at all, or strength, to seek the kingdom of God.

The universal teachings of Jesus Christ should be judiciously adapted according to the respective needs of the Oriental and Occidental—emphasizing the principles of Christian religion, and omitting the nonessential forms added to them from time to time. Great care should be taken, however, to embody the essential, living Christianity while it is being transplanted from Oriental atmosphere to Occidental environment. Otherwise, it would happen that, as some doctors say, “the operation was successful,” but the patient peacefully died on the table! No difference should be made between Occidental religious methods of salvation and the Oriental technique of salvation. The only distinction to be made is between true Christ-principles and dogma-bound beliefs.

Oriental Christianity would consider the exoteric practices of churchgoing, sermonizing, theological study of scriptures, as spiritual kindergarten work. The purpose of these would be to emphasize and support the necessity of “university-level” testing of religious beliefs in the laboratory of scientific esoteric meditation, under the direction of a Self-realized guide who through deep spiritual effort has found God in the light of his own intuitive soul-perception. While Western Christianity has saved its civilization from a plenary slide into atheism and immorality, it has accomplished relatively little to awaken the desire, and the faith that it is possible, to attain personal metaphysical experience of God, evolved out of the self-effort of scientific meditation.

The community religious services of the West are marvelous if they turn the mind to God and truth, but they are not enough if they lack meditation and knowledge of the methods of actual communion with God. On the other hand, the East emphasizes direct, personal realization of God, but is wanting in organization and philanthropic social welfare work. In order to understand Jesus Christ’s doctrine, it is necessary to combine organizational efficiency and social welfare philanthropy with personal verification of Christ’s teachings by metaphysical study and the actual contact of God in the temple of meditation. Then each one can, himself, realize what Jesus Christ was, and is, through the intuitive self-verification of his teachings.



Truth is the ultimate religion; sectarian affiliation is of little meaning

Truth, in and of itself, is the ultimate “religion.” Though truth can be expressed in different ways by sectarian “isms,” it can never be exhausted by them. It has infinite manifestations and ramifications, but one consummation: direct experience of God, the Sole Reality.

The human stamp of sectarian affiliation is of little meaning. It is not the religious denomination in which one’s name is registered, nor the culture or creed in which one was born, that gives salvation. The essence of truth goes beyond all outer form. It is that essence which is paramount in understanding Jesus and his universal call to souls to enter the kingdom of God, which is “within you.”

The great message of Jesus Christ is living and thriving in both East and West. The West has concentrated on perfecting the physical conditions of man, and the East on developing the spiritual potentials of man. Both East and West are one-sided. Granted, the East is not practical enough; but the West is too practical to be spiritually practical! That is why I advocate a harmonious union of the two; they need each other. Without spiritual idealism, material practicality is the harbinger of selfishness, sin, competition, and wars. This is a lesson for the West to learn. And unless idealism is tempered with practicality, there is confusion and suffering and lack of natural progress. This is the lesson to be learned by the East.

The East can learn from the West, and the West can learn from the East. Is it not strange that, perhaps due to God’s secret plan, since the East needs material development, it was invaded by Western material civilization? And since the West needs spiritual balance, it has been silently but surely “invaded” by Hindu philosophy, not to conquer lands but to conquer souls with the liberation of God-realization.¹⁵

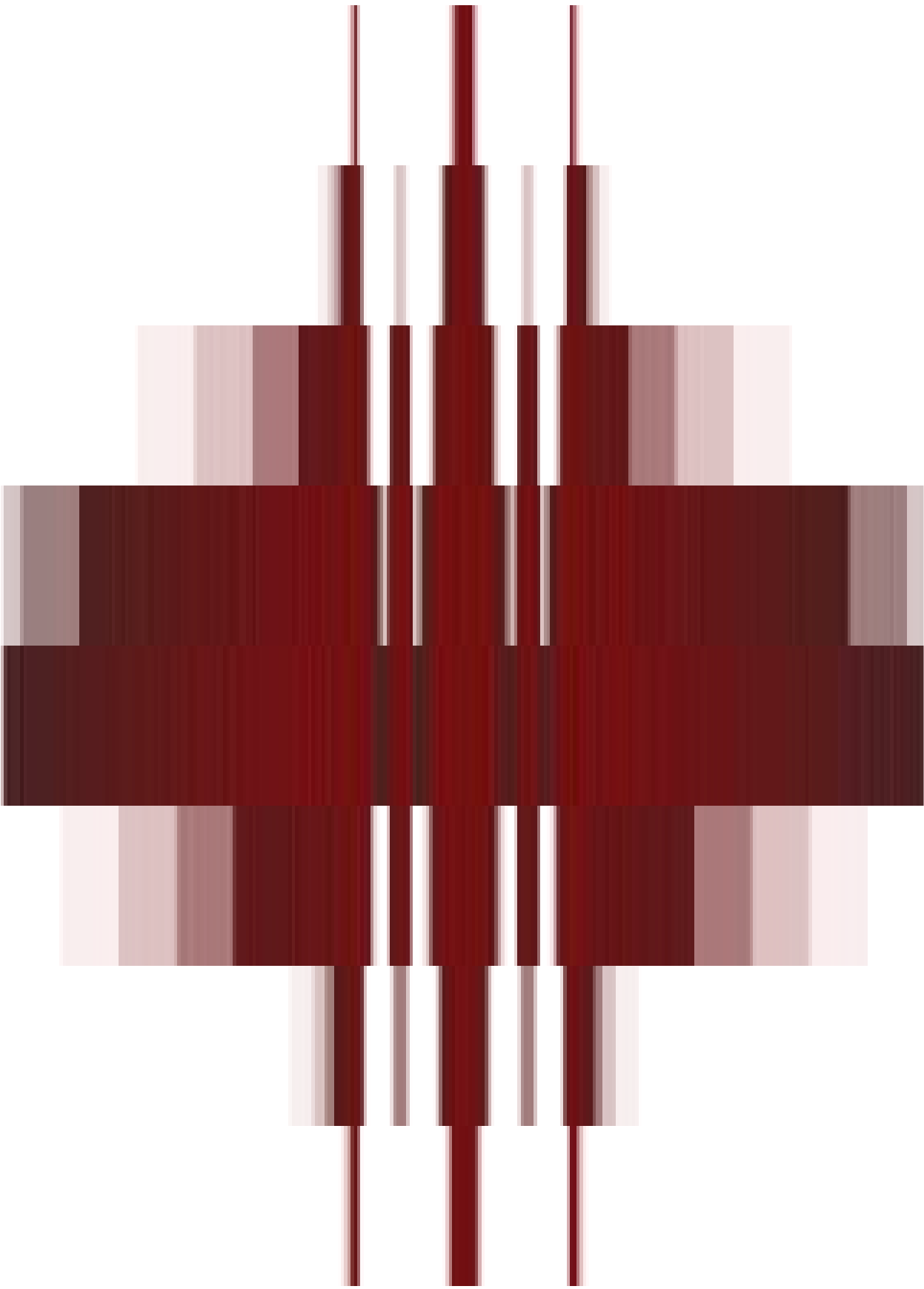
We are all children of God, from our inception unto eternity. Differences come from prejudices, and prejudice is the child of ignorance. We should not proudly identify ourselves as Americans or Indians or Italians or any other nationality, for that is but an accident of birth. Above all else, we should be proud that we are children of God, made in His image. Is not that the message of Christ?

Jesus the Christ is an excellent model for both East and West to follow. God's stamp, "son of God," is hidden in every soul. Jesus affirmed the scriptures: "Ye are gods."¹⁶ Do away with masks! Come out openly as sons of God—not by hollow proclamations and learned-by-heart prayers, fireworks of intellectually worded sermons contrived to praise God and gather converts, but by realization! Become identified not with narrow bigotry, masked as wisdom, but with Christ Consciousness. Become identified with Universal Love, expressed in service to all, both materially and spiritually; then you will know who Jesus Christ was, and can say in your soul that we are all one band, all sons of One God!

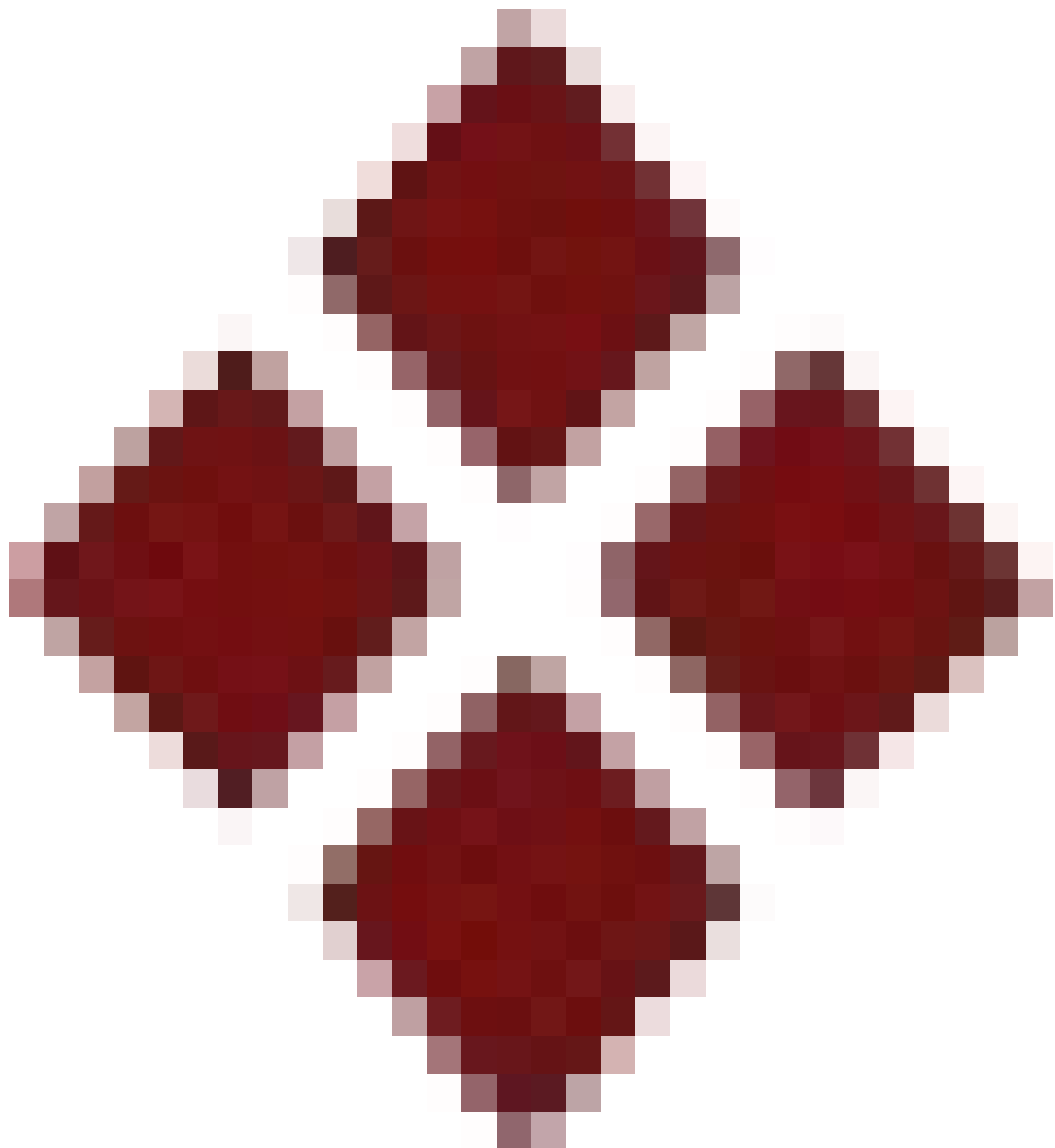


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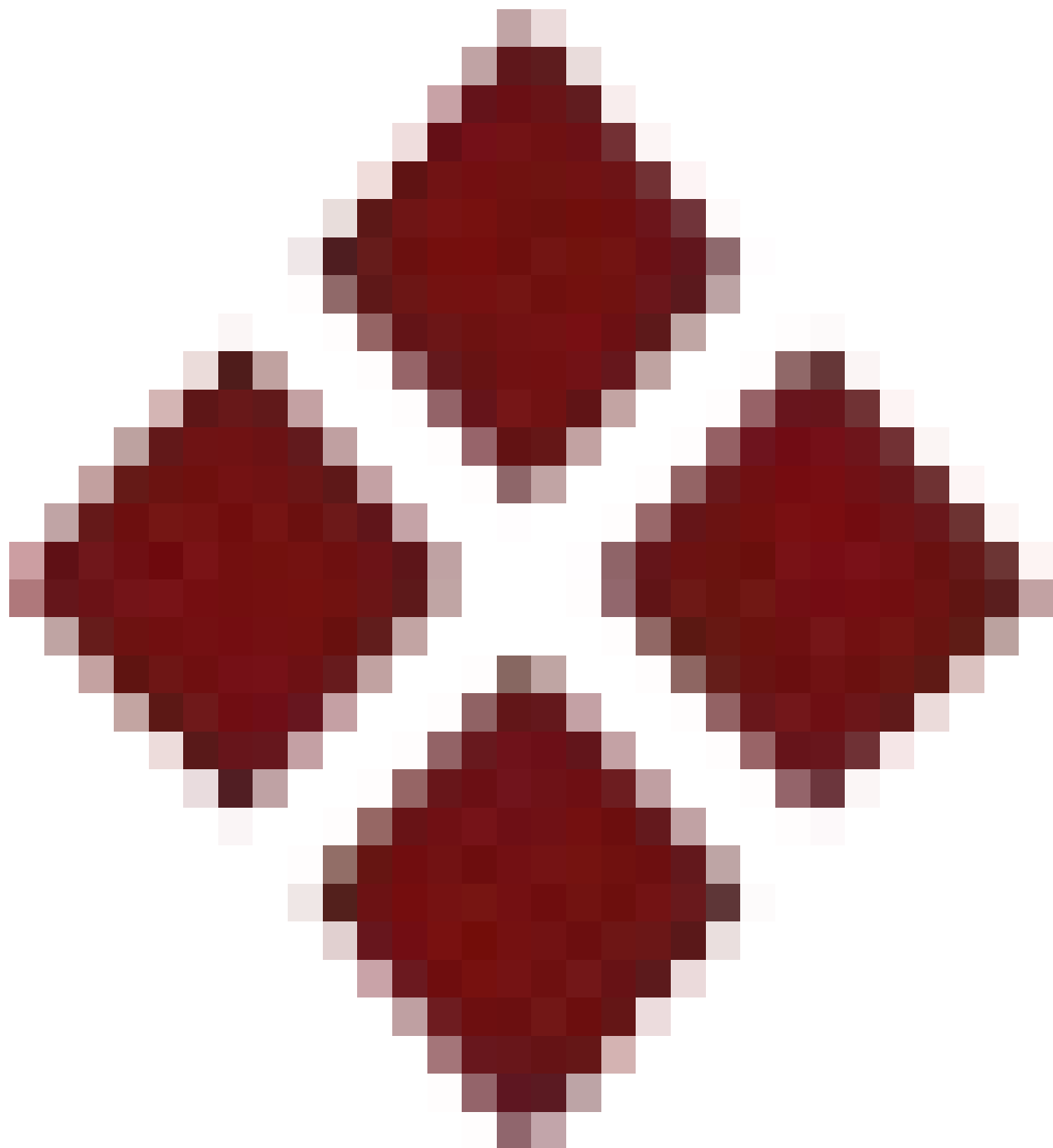
The Baptism of Jesus



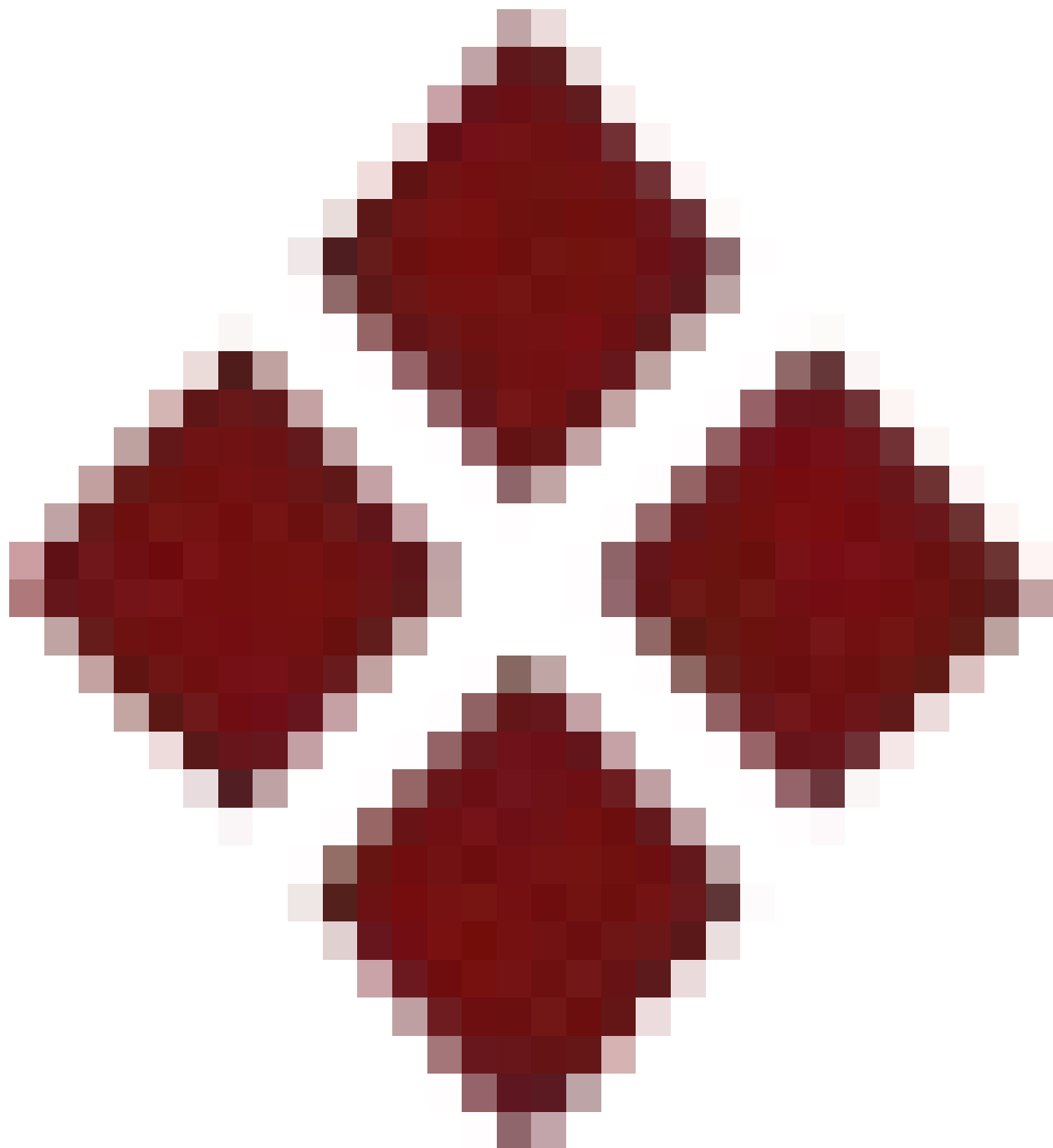
John the Baptist: Forerunner of the Christ Incarnate



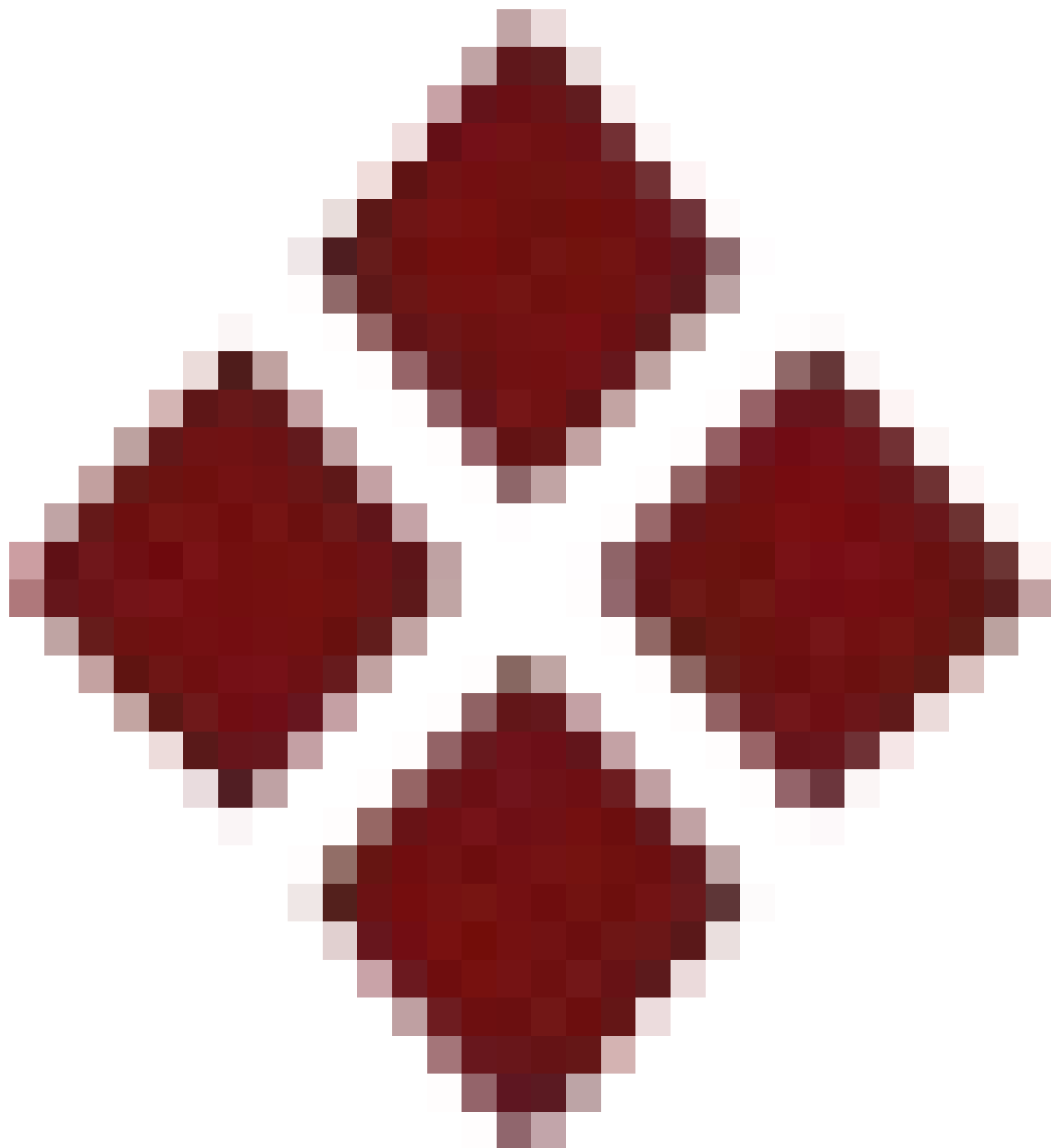
Guru-Disciple Relationship: The Way of “All Righteousness”



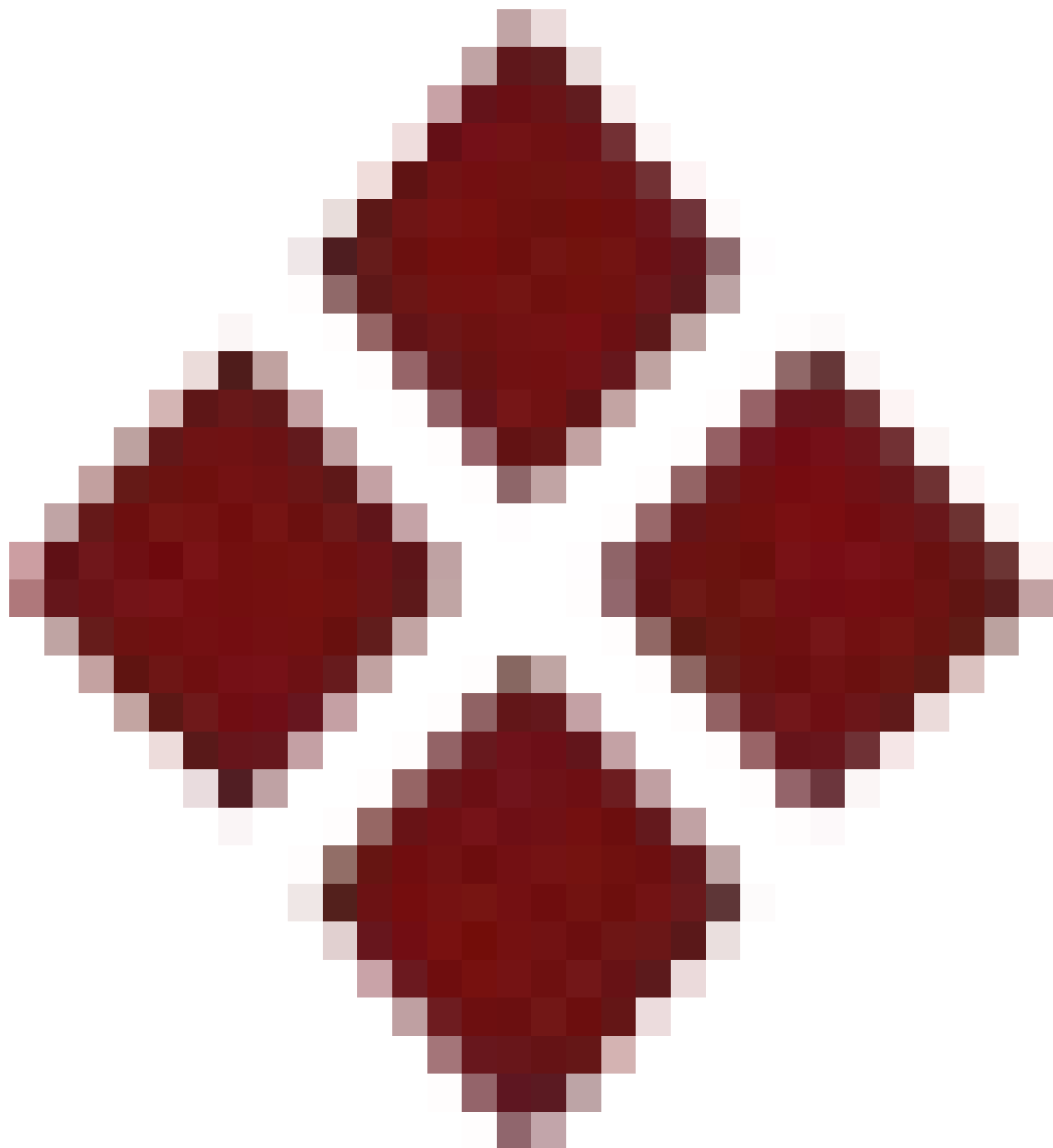
Different Types of Baptism



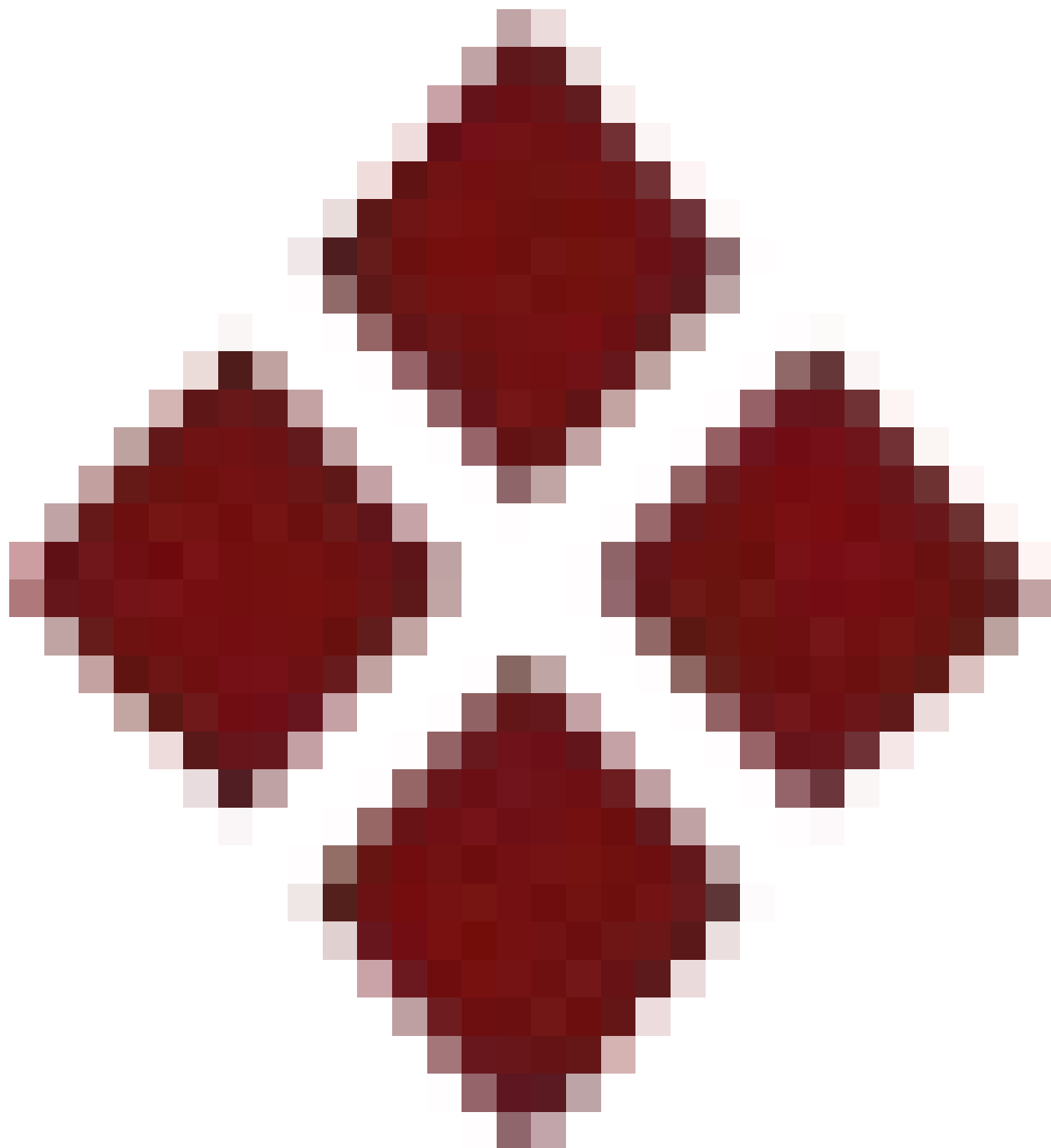
Baptism by the Holy Ghost



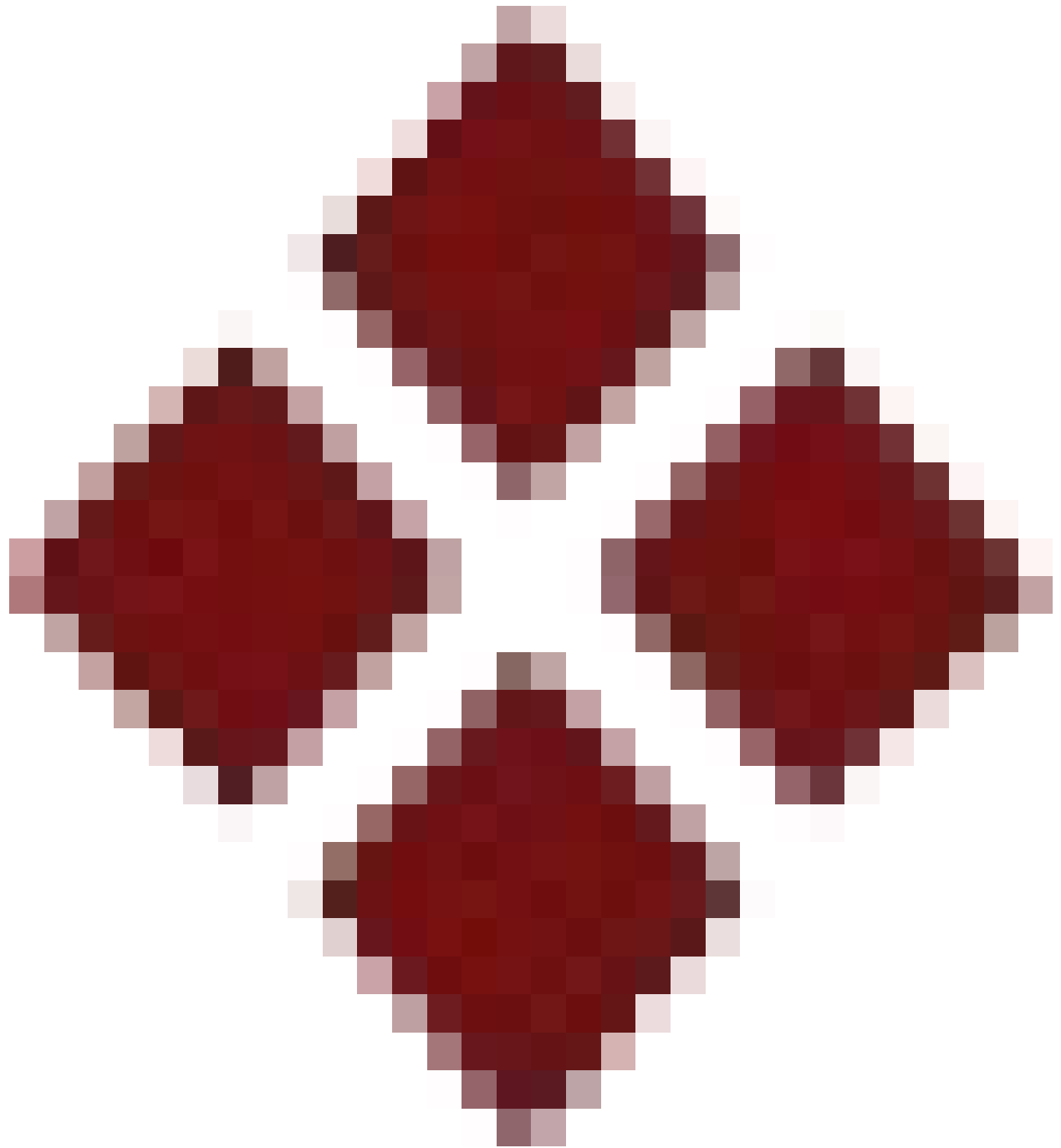
Meaning of “the Spirit of God Descending Like a Dove”



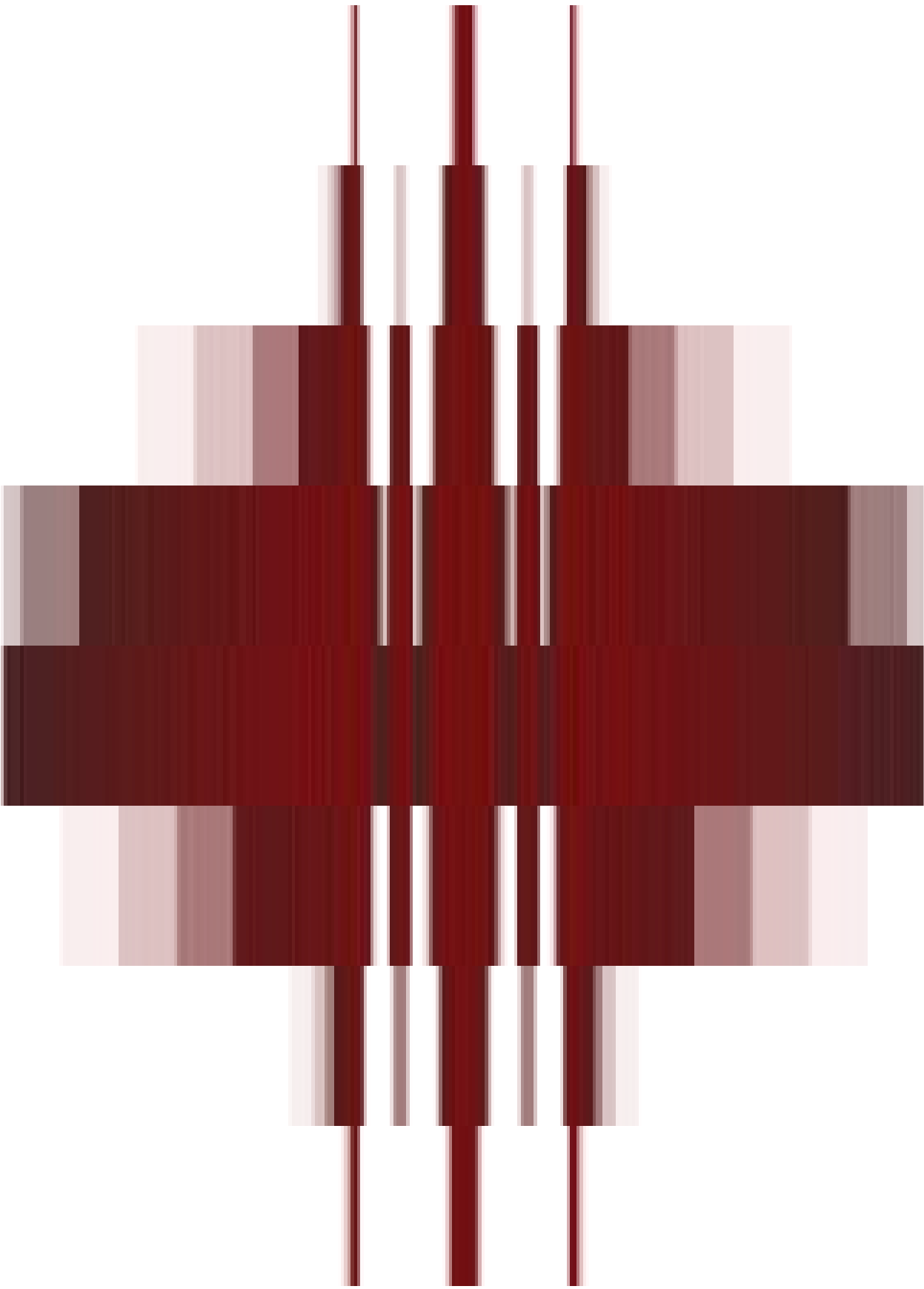
The Lamb of God: A World Savior



The Three Aspects of Spiritual Initiation



Highway to Christ Consciousness: “The Straight Way of the Lord”



“The ultimate baptism, acclaimed by John the Baptist and by all Self-realized masters, is to be baptized ‘with the Holy Ghost, and with fire’—that is, to become permeated with God’s presence in the holy Creative Vibration.”

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In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, “Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah saying, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.’”

And the same John had his raiment of camel’s hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey. Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, “O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: And think not to say within yourselves, ‘We have Abraham to our father’: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, “I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?”

And Jesus answering said unto him, “Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he suffered him.

And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world....

And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who art thou?”

And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, “I am not the Christ.”

And they asked him, “What then? Art thou Elijah?”

And he saith, “I am not.”

“Art thou that prophet?”

And he answered, “No.”

Then said they unto him, “Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself?”

He said, “I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Isaiah.”

And they which were sent were of the Pharisees.

And they asked him, and said unto him, “Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elijah, neither that prophet?”

John answered them, saying, “I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; he it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe’s latchet I am not worthy to unloose.”

These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, ‘After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me.’ And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.”

And John bare record, saying, “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, ‘Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.’ And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.”

— John 1:6 – 9, 19 – 34



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Discourse 6

The Baptism of Jesus



In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, “Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.’”

And the same John had his raiment of camel’s hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey. Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, “O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: And think not to say within yourselves, ‘We have Abraham to our father’: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.¹ And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.²

“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire” (Matthew 3:1 – 12).³

Of great import was the role played by John the Baptist as the prophesied forerunner divinely sent before Jesus to prepare his way and bear testimony to

the Christ incarnate in him and evidenced in the authority of his teaching.



John the Baptist: forerunner of the Christ Incarnate

A holy man of the desert solitudes, subsisting on wild honey and the fruit of locust trees, John engaged himself in the mysteries and meditations of an anchorite, awaiting Jesus to proclaim himself ready to begin his ministry. Many believe that John was associated with the Essenes and their ascetic and esoteric practices; included among their ceremonies was baptism for purification of the body and spirit.⁴ When John made himself known in the environs of Judea, crowds followed him as a saint and prophet. His renown made it possible for him to fulfill worthily his part in Jesus' destiny, a pattern set in their previous relationship as Elijah and Elisha.⁵

One of God's grand illusions is the screening of one incarnation from another. Without this partitioning, no actor on the stage of life would be able to cope with his kaleidoscopic identity and its relationships with others, and with his place in the karmic cause-and-effect events whirling around him—a dizzying conflict of countless incarnations with their interpersonal relationships branching off into their own limitless previous existences and experiences. By wiping clean the memory slate of each new lifetime, there is a freshness and a degree of progressive order maintained in the cosmic drama.

The Hindu scriptures refer to creation as God's lila, a delusive phantasmagoria for man's entertainment through interaction with the workings of the Cosmic Creator. Without a perception of believability in each actor's part, the drama would soon lose its charm and come to a close. Thus even those of high spiritual estate accept the "reality" of their present position, dissociated outwardly from identity with their previous roles lest their overlay unduly influence and characterize their new dramatic portrayal. God-realized and liberated souls can well remember previous enactments if they choose to do so; but for the effectiveness of the earthly theatrics, they fully submit themselves to God's direction for their part in an unfolding new scene. This is in evidence in the following verses concerning the statement of John the Baptist about his identity:

And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who art thou?"

And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, "I am not the Christ."

And they asked him, "What then? Art thou Elijah?"

And he saith, "I am not."

"Art thou that prophet?"

And he answered, "No."

Then said they unto him, "Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself?"

He said, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Isaiah."

And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said unto him, "Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elijah, neither that prophet?"

John answered them, saying, "I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; he it is, who coming after me is preferred before

me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose" (John 1:19 – 27).

The priests and Levites, with only ordinary perception, were naturally unable to discern the qualities of a Christ. Wise men would not need to question a Christlike person, but would at once recognize his spiritual aura. By asking John if he were the expected Christ, the Pharisees revealed their spiritual ignorance.



Why John denied that he was Elijah

John disavowed them of any notion that he was the foreordained Christ they sought. In spite of his greatness he did not see himself as one who had expressed Christ Consciousness. Though he had attained that consciousness as Elijah, yet owing to his acceptance of and delusive identification with his role as a lesser figure, he spoke the truth relative to his present life that the potential Christ in him was not manifest in his outward human consciousness. That is why John affirmed: "I am not the Christ."

John also denied that he was Elijah, because he chose not to remember his previous exalted incarnation as that prophet. It was not part of John's role that he extol himself, but rather in absolute subjugation of the ego to portray a somewhat "fallen" spiritual state in which he could rightly declare, "I am not Elijah."

Therefore John gave an evasive answer when he was asked: "Who art thou, that we may give an answer to them that sent us?" His reply meant: "I am the voice, or Cosmic Sound, crying or vibrating in the wilderness of silence."⁶ Wilderness signifies the consciousness of a saint wherein no verdure of fresh material desires can grow. The saint makes himself a barren tract on which the presence of God may flower without resistance from the burgeoning growth of materialistic intrusions.

The people sent to confront the Baptist, unable to understand the depth of John's statement, asked further: "Why baptize thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elijah, neither that prophet?" John answered that he was giving the physical baptism of water, clarifying the consciousness with repentance that would bring a temporary spiritual influence. He went on to say that the exalted one who was yet to come would show people the path of redemption through baptism in Spirit—proclaiming that it was the role of Jesus, with his Christ-aura, to baptize souls with the fiery wisdom and power of the sacred cosmic vibratory emanations of the Holy Ghost. By his words John turned the minds of the multitude from himself to the Christ Savior whose special dispensation he had come to herald, and to witness and support.



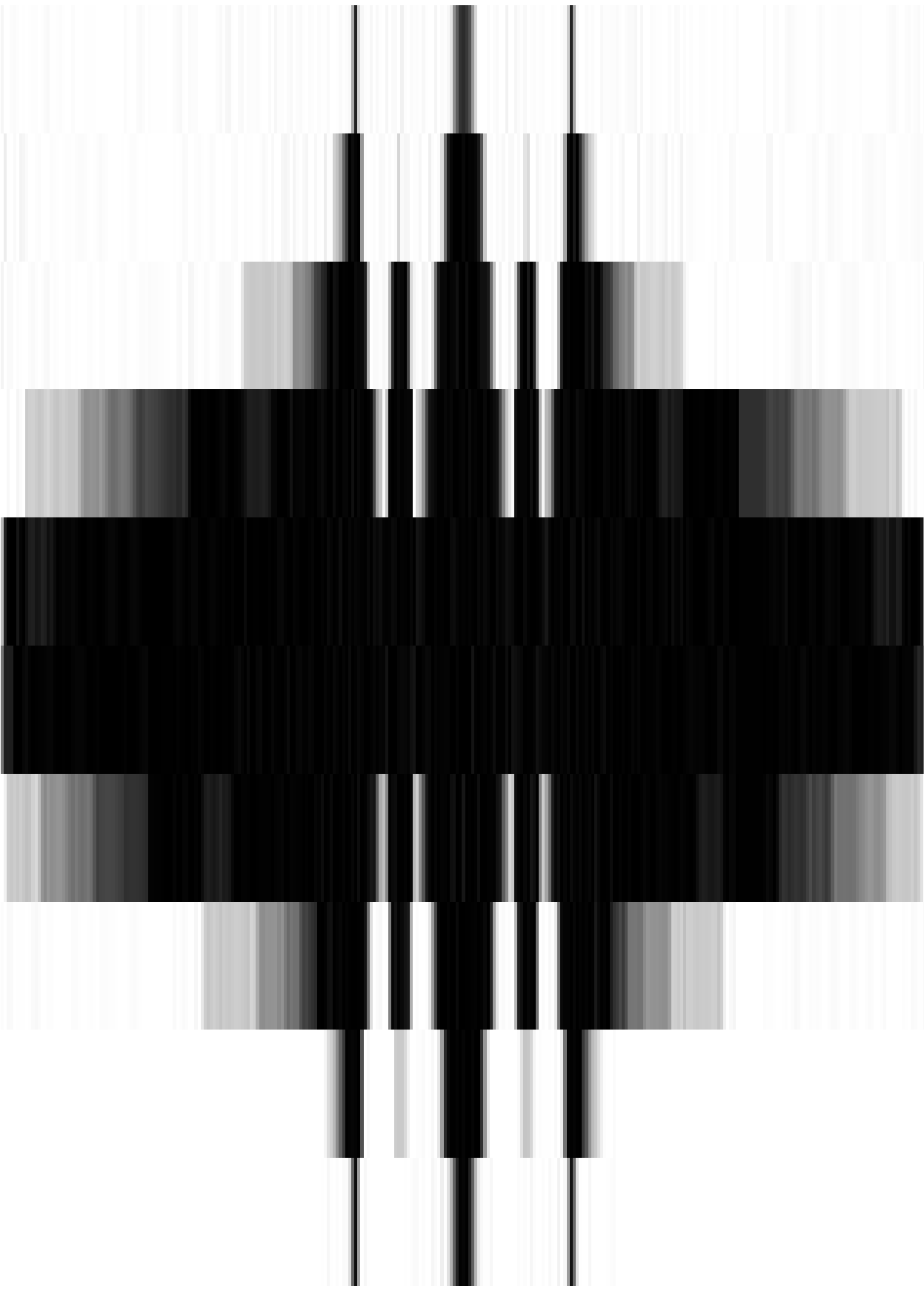
There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world (John 1:6 – 9).

“To bear witness of the Light” means that John had tuned himself with the cosmic creative light of the Holy Ghost that imbues the whole universe. Just as the electric current from a dynamo pervades the lightbulbs of a city, so the Cosmic Light manifests itself in the stones, the grass, the animals, the air, the thermal and electric currents; and enlivens every human being. John experienced and bore witness to that Light. In his incarnate consciousness he was not actively manifesting oneness with the whole Cosmic Light, but rather knew himself as an individualized expression of it. He came to bear witness of that All-Pervading Light and of its immanent radiant power of Christ Consciousness that would be evidenced in the Lord Jesus. ⁷



Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?"

And Jesus answering said unto him, "Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he suffered him (Matthew 3:13 – 15).



Guru-disciple relationship: the way of “all righteousness”

When Jesus came to John asking to be baptized, John affirmed his inferior position, an incarnation of lesser prominence in the cosmic drama. With what artless humility, the hallmark of godliness, John had set aside his former preeminence—declaring himself unworthy to baptize Jesus, and that he himself rather had need to be baptized. Certainly Jesus, a master, was far above the need for ritualistic baptism, especially by anyone of far lesser spiritual stature. A doctor of philosophy does not take lessons from a child engaged in elementary studies. Jesus, recognizing the divine instrumentality of his past-life guru, therefore gave no credence to John’s statement; rather he said: “Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.” These words speak volumes of Jesus’ reverential regard for John, of whom he was later to proclaim, “Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist.”⁸

In receiving baptism from John, Jesus not only honored in the eyes of the masses the ancient, pre-Christian, Hindu custom of baptism in holy waters, but also the tradition of initiation that uniquely distinguishes the guru-disciple relationship, the divine law through which “all righteousness” (truth and salvation) is bestowed on the disciple by a God-ordained master. Jesus came to John for that spiritual anointing, an avowal of reverence for his guru from whom he had received “a double portion of Spirit” in their incarnations as Elijah and Elisha.

The relationship of guru and disciple is not for one incarnation only. A guru, being the agent of salvation appointed by God, must take the disciple through successive incarnations, if necessary, until complete liberation of the disciple is reached. In the dim past, in former lifetimes when John was first sent by God as the guru of Jesus in response to his prayers, the souls of John the Baptist and of Jesus were eternally bound together by the law of unconditional divine friendship; and both at this long-ago first meeting as guru and disciple had made the resolution, “We will be divine friends forever until our souls by mutual help and the lasting goodwill of many incarnations break the bubble-walls of caging desires and set free our imprisoned omnipresence to become one with the sea of Infinitude.”

Jesus came on earth as a world savior, a role of higher degree than that of John

the Baptist, yet he acknowledged John as his guru of former incarnations, the agent first sent by God to enter with him into this covenant of divinely ordained friendship. This is why Jesus said, “Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.” Though John and Jesus both knew that Jesus was far beyond the need for this outer ritual, they were quite sincerely enacting the necessary formalities in setting the right example for the world.⁹ Words may be easily forgotten or distorted; the erudition of acts is far more indelible.

John’s declaration to the priests and Levites, “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me...shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire,” introduces a doctrine crucial to the attainment of salvation: that the real baptism consists of spiritual initiation bestowed by a true guru. Even though John said he baptized the masses with water, he did not say he was incapable of baptizing with Spirit, only that such initiation would be the prerogative of the Christ who by special dispensation would come to be their savior, or guru. In fact, it was the true baptism of Spirit that was bestowed on Jesus when, after immersion in the Jordan (purification by water), “the heavens were opened unto him.” As John himself witnessed: “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him” (John

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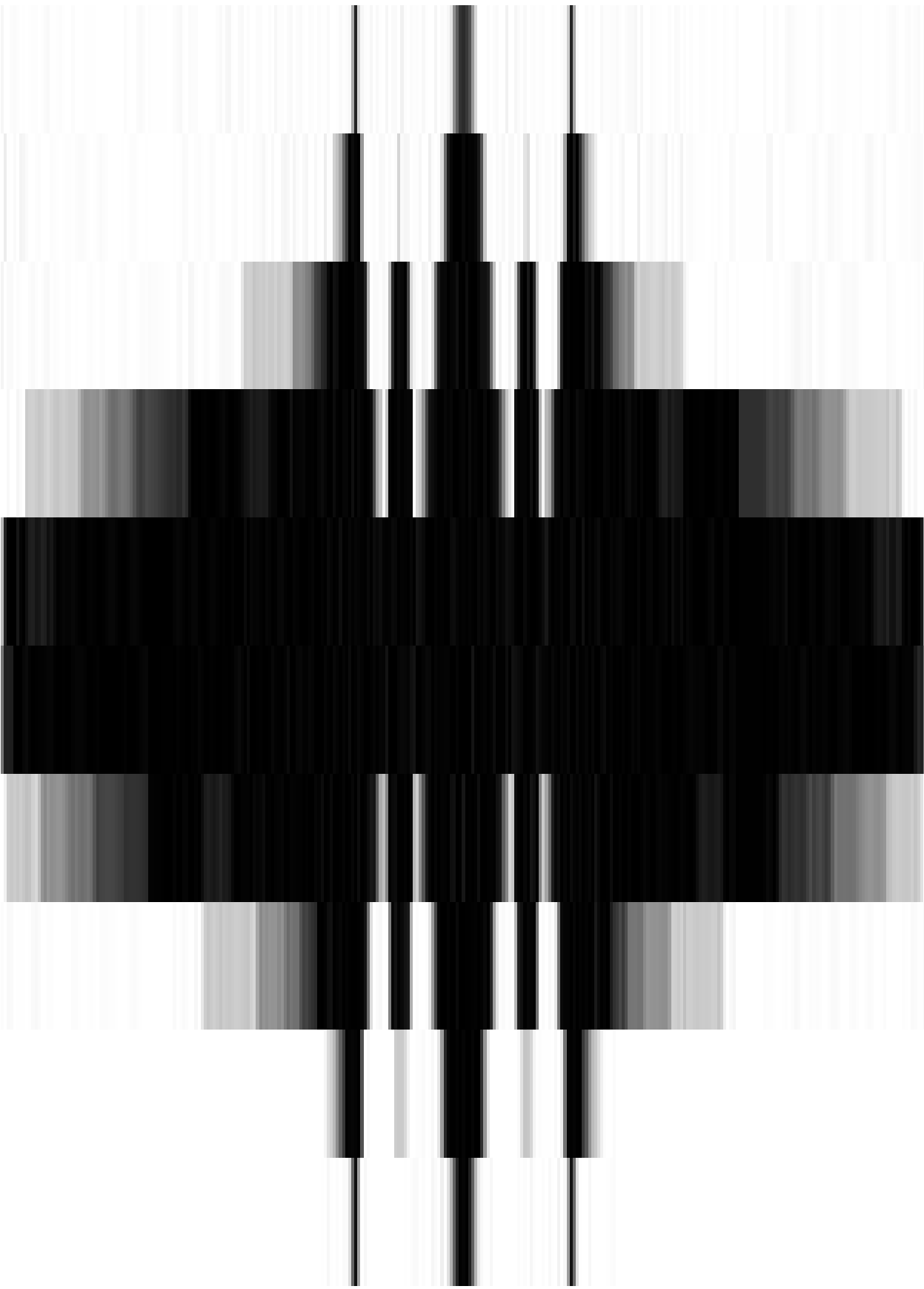
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). If John were an ordinary man, he would not have seen the Spirit descending on Jesus. He himself was in tune with Spirit, but with unfeigned humbleness deflected attention from himself to the preeminence of Jesus.

It is by the grace of the guru that heavenly consciousness unfolds to the initiated disciple, revealing the light of the omniscient spiritual eye, symbolized by the dove—through this medium one ascends from the body to Spirit through the Holy Ghost, the Christ Consciousness “only begotten Son,” and Cosmic Consciousness, or God the Father.

The various processes of baptism and their corresponding effects or spiritual states should be explained.



Different types of baptism

The ritual of baptism by immersion in water originated in India, which laid stress on purification of the body precedent to the purification of the mind. Students who sought instruction in the spiritual life from a holy man had first to purify their bodies by bathing, which in itself was the beginning of cleansing the mind, by showing proper respect to the teacher, and by interiorizing the thoughts in expectation of the blessings and the value of the lessons to be received.

“Cleanliness is next to godliness” is a worthwhile first lesson. Immersion in water opens the pores of the skin, letting out disturbing body poisons and calming and soothing the circulatory system. Water cools the nerve endings and sends reports of calm sensations throughout the vital centers of the body, balancing evenly all the vital energies.

Life came initially from energy, then from nebulae, then from water. All seeds of life are irrevocably connected with water. Physical life cannot exist without it. One who bathes every day and meditates immediately thereafter will feel the power of “baptism” by water. To bathe with the consciousness of purification in a holy river or a lake, or other natural waters surrounded by God’s scenic grandeur, is a vibrantly uplifting experience.

While baptism by water as a sacred rite has its valid points, including the temporary cleansing of the mind, the ceremony, to be of lasting value, must be followed up with continued lessons in spiritual living and God-contact. Otherwise, the mind begins to revert to its old habits; their evils wear away the salutary effects of the baptismal ritual. Unless wickedness is purged by meditation and constant spiritual vigilance and endeavor, the initiated simply remain possessed of the same devils with a penchant for misbehavior. A story in India illustrates this point metaphorically: A saint said to his would-be disciple, “Son, it is necessary to bathe in the Ganges to purify the mind from sin. The sins will leave you while you bathe, for they cannot tolerate the holy waters. But take care, for they will wait in the trees skirting the river; and as soon as you come out of the sacred influence of the holy waters, they will again try to jump on you.”

It is the mental attitude of faith and devotion in which one receives a ceremonial baptism—whether by immersion or the modified symbolic way of sprinkling

water on the head—that determines the blessings received; and it is the continuity of right thought and action that assures the lasting benefit. The initiate thereafter should regularly baptize the self with Spirit by immersion of the consciousness in the wisdom, magnetism, and spiritual radiation of the Holy Ghost in meditation.

As the intent of baptism is to bring about an uplifting change in the consciousness by some form of symbolic immersion, it is good to consider how one can be “baptized” unknowingly by one’s associates. The would-be “initiate” should therefore be discriminatively aware of the waters into which the consciousness is immersed.

Vibrations of other people can be received by an exchange of magnetism. One who comes near a holy person will be benefited; this is baptism by spiritual magnetism. The saint’s thoughts and magnetic aura cast out a vibratory glow that changes the consciousness and brain cells of those who come within range. All who visit or live on the same grounds where a master lives or has lived will automatically be transformed if they are in tune. If that attunement is deep enough, even from thousands of miles away a holy person’s uplifting vibrations can be received.

If one loves poetry and is much in the company of a poet of noble ideals, one will be baptized with wholesome elevated feelings and the appreciation of the goodness and beauty in everything. Such baptism by feeling makes one aesthetically imaginative and sympathetic.

If one associates long with persons of high morality and self-control, one’s own life will feel a positive reinforcement of moral consciousness and self-control.

If purposely and attentively one associates with successful creative business minds, the consciousness will be baptized with a creative business sense.



Baptism by the Holy Ghost

The ultimate baptism, acclaimed by John the Baptist and by all Self-realized masters, is to be baptized “with the Holy Ghost, and with fire”—that is, to become permeated with God’s presence in the holy Creative Vibration whose omnipresent omniscience not only uplifts and expands the consciousness, but whose fire of cosmic life energy actually cauterizes sins of present bad habits and karmic effects of past erroneous actions.

The macrocosm of the universe with its diverse beings is made of the divine vibration, or cosmic energy, of the Holy Ghost, imbued with the Christ Intelligence, which in turn is a reflection of the Cosmic Consciousness of God. Man is a microcosm of the universe: a combination of body, life force, and consciousness. His consciousness is a reflection of Christ Consciousness, his soul differentiated by his own personalized ego. His life force is individualized cosmic energy. His body is condensed cosmic energy, enlivened by specialized life energy.¹⁰ Life force vibrating grossly changes into electrons, atoms, molecules, and bodily flesh; life force vibrating progressively finer becomes consciousness. In the human being, the body, life force, and consciousness—being three different rates of vibration—are held together by the nucleus of ego and its pure nature, the soul. In order to free the soul, the Christ in man, from the limited threefold vibrations of the human body, life force, and consciousness, the divine consciousness in man has first to be baptized or united with the Holy Ghost, the original cosmic vibration of Aum, the Word, the primal manifestation of God. Thence, the consciousness merges in the Omnipresent Christ immanent in creation and ascends to the transcendent Cosmic Consciousness, the Father. No one can reach God the Father except through the Holy Ghost and Christ Consciousness.

The way of ascension was made manifest in the baptism of Jesus. As told in the Gospel According to St. Matthew:

And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo,

the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:16 – 17).¹¹



Meaning of “the Spirit of God descending like a dove”

“Spirit” signifies the Unmanifested Absolute. As soon as Spirit descends into manifestation, It becomes three, the Trinity: God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. In the cosmic sense, if one sees the whole universe, it would be as a tremendous mass of radiant light, like a mist of aurora. That is the great Aum vibration of the Holy Ghost. God’s superimposed intelligence omnipresent in all manifestation—the Son or Christ Consciousness—is reflected as a wondrous light of opal blue; it overlays and permeates every particle of creation, yet remains always untouched and unchanged by its ever-mutating environment. Beyond creative manifestation, through a radiating white light, is God the Father in the vibrationless heaven of ever-existing, ever-conscious, ever-new Bliss. That triune manifestation is the cosmic aspect of Spirit descending in these three forms: as Cosmic Vibration, Christ Consciousness, and God the Father. This Trinity is manifested in the microcosm of man as the triune light of the spiritual eye.

Man’s body, unique among all creatures, possesses spiritual cerebrospinal centers of divine consciousness in which the descended Spirit is templed. These are known to the yogis, and to Saint John—who described them in Revelation as the seven seals, and as seven stars and seven churches, with their seven angels and seven golden candlesticks.¹² When one is baptized by immersion in the light of Spirit, the microcosmic spiritual eye in the body may be seen in its relation to the light of descending Spirit as the Cosmic Trinity.

In the baptism of Jesus, this is described metaphorically as “Spirit descending like a dove, and lighting upon him.” The dove symbolizes the spiritual eye, seen by deeply meditating devotees at the Christ Consciousness center in the forehead between the two physical eyes. This eye of light and consciousness appears as a golden aura (the Holy Ghost Vibration) surrounding an opal-blue sphere (Christ Consciousness) in the center of which is a five-pointed star of brilliant white light (doorway to the Cosmic Consciousness of Spirit). The threefold light of God in the spiritual eye is symbolized by a dove because it brings perennial peace. Also, looking in the spiritual eye produces in man’s consciousness the purity signified by the dove.

The mouth of the symbolic dove represents the star in the spiritual eye, the secret

passage to Cosmic Consciousness. The two wings of the dove represent the two spheres of consciousness emanating from Cosmic Consciousness: The blue light of the spiritual eye is the microcosm of the subjective Christ Intelligence in all creation; and the golden ring of light in the spiritual eye is the microcosmic objective cosmic energy, Cosmic Vibration, or Holy Ghost.¹³

All manifestation is a product of vibration, which is of the Holy Ghost, and is sustained by the inherence of God's consciousness. Thus the light of the spiritual eye is composed of vibratory lifetrans, the finest ultimate unit of intelligent energy emanating from the Holy Ghost (the subtlety of lifetrans is superseded only by the vibrations of pure consciousness). Lifetrans are the underlying support of the grosser electrons and structural atoms of which all matter is composed. Each microscopic lifetrans contains in miniature the essence of all macroscopic creation.



The triune Spirit manifested through man's spiritual eye

The consciousness present microcosmically in the spiritual eye in man is composed of the elements of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—transcendental Cosmic Consciousness, immanent Christ Consciousness, and Cosmic Energy. Jesus saw the Spirit descending from the abode of Heavenly Bliss in the form of a microcosmic spiritual eye and settle upon his consciousness. The spiritual eye of Jesus was opened, and through this immersion in Spirit, he perceived the mergence of his individualized consciousness with the macrocosmic manifestations of Cosmic Consciousness, Christ Consciousness, and Cosmic Energy.

The holy Cosmic Vibration, the primal manifestation of transcendental God the Father, emits not only the property of light—the magnificent effulgence of God's divine light and its structural lifetrans and microcosmic spiritual eye of supernal consciousness—but also the wondrous sound of Aum, the Word, the great Amen, which is the witness or proof of the Holy Presence. During baptism by Spirit in the form of the Holy Ghost as experienced by Jesus, he saw the light of the spiritual eye as descended from the macrocosmic Divine Light; and from this came the voice of Aum, the intelligent, all-creative heavenly sound, vibrating as an intelligible voice: "Thou art My Son, having lifted thy consciousness from the limitation of the body and all matter to realize thyself as one with My perfect reflection, My only begotten image, immanent in all manifestation. I am Bliss, and My joy I express in thy rejoicing in attunement with My Omnipresence." Jesus felt his consciousness attuned to the Christ Consciousness, the "only begotten" reflection of God the Father's Intelligence in the Holy Vibration: he first felt his body as the entire vibratory creation in which his little body was included; then within his cosmic body of all creation, he experienced his oneness with God's innate Presence as the Infinite Christ or Universal Intelligence, a magnetic aura of blissful Divine Love in which God's presence holds all beings.



Saint John, the beloved disciple of Christ, records the testimony of John the Baptist, the guru through whose instrumentality Jesus received this baptism of Spirit:

The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, ‘After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me.’ And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.”

And John bare record, saying, “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, ‘Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.’ And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God” (John 1:29 – 34).



The Lamb of God: a world savior

All masters who have attained the ultimate realization and oneness with God are equal in the eyes of God. But the Father of the Universe, during certain cycles of time, “prefers,” that is, chooses, one soul to come to earth as a world prophet to give spiritual impetus to His children. Sometimes in the world there are several masters present, but one is delegated by God to carry out a preeminent dispensation. That in no degree lessens the greatness of other masters, who are all one in Spirit. John came baptizing with water, in the customary ritualistic way, to draw the attention of Israel, true souls, to the advent of Jesus. Having stirred their receptivity, he could then humbly fulfill his own dispensation: to make manifest by his testimony the divine credentials of Jesus, who was “preferred”—chosen by God—for a grand mission of the reformation of humanity. Jesus was to do this by inspiring the world with a new consciousness through revival of the true rite of baptism by Spirit, the transformation of consciousness by immersion in the sacred vibration of the Holy Ghost.

The expression “I knew him not” is misleading. It does not mean that John didn’t recognize Jesus. Rather, he was pointing out that no one in the ordinary state of body-identified ego consciousness—or even John himself, through purely external sensory perception—could possibly fathom the spiritual consciousness of the Christ in Jesus. It was during Jesus’ baptism, when both he and John were transfigured in the light of the Holy Ghost, that John witnessed that Jesus was indeed a fully manifested “Son of God.” Such recognition could not be evidenced to an ordinary mind; but through the transparency of an uplifted consciousness, the full divinity of Jesus’ consciousness as one with Christ Consciousness can be realized.

John’s reference to Jesus that “he was before me” again demonstrates John’s humility in acknowledging, in their incarnations as John and Jesus, the reversal of their previous roles as Elijah and Elisha—it was Jesus in this present drama who demonstrated Christhood before John (“before me”).

John introduced Jesus the Savior with the epithet “Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” A lamb is a symbol of innocence, meekness, and loyalty. Jesus was innocent, pure, humble, and true to God in every way. His was not the arrogant power of a tyrannical crusader out to destroy evil by force.

Rather he came to offer himself as a sacrifice (as lambs are sacrificed in the Orient) to exemplify the supreme power of love. If God used His omnipotence to punish man, it would be impossible for a mere mortal to exercise independent judgment and thus learn and grow by his own mistakes. The karmic law works whereby man punishes himself proportionate to his misdeeds, while at the same time God uses love to encourage discriminative right behavior and to awaken in the human spirit the higher soul qualities of God's image within the true Self.

Jesus exemplified God's love in a rare expression of spiritual magnanimity: the willing oblation of his own life. By sacrificing himself for the spiritual welfare of others, a savior who is empowered by God to do so can expiate the sins of others. Jesus, a world savior, took on himself not only the karmic debt of his disciples but also the sin of the masses by allowing himself to be crucified.

It would be folly to presume that anyone, even a Jesus, can take away an individual's sin unless the sinner himself cooperates to remove that karmic consequence. A master can take upon himself some of the burden of a disciple if that devotee makes a worthwhile spiritual effort to improve himself. But most of all, a master serves in the highest way by example and teachings that inspire the errant children of God to free themselves from their bad habits and spiritual negligence.

To demonstrate the Divine Compassion, Jesus came as the lamb of spirituality, ready to offer himself as a sacrifice before the temple of truth—an exemplar of the consummate power of love over evil, wisdom over ignorance, forgiveness over vengefulness, light over darkness.

Jesus' sacrifice was, primarily, to exemplify for all time the power of spiritual force over ignorance and brute force. He showed that the power of love could conquer the Roman Empire, which with all its might could not suppress his philosophy. His reign has outlasted that of all warrior conquerors, based on the divine edict: "Love your enemies."

In pointing to Jesus as one sent by God to be the savior of multitudes, John proclaims: "Behold the gentleness of compassion and the meek but almighty power of love represented in Jesus, which will destroy ignorance and evil from the lives of those who will receive within themselves the Christ incarnate in him. Christ-love will act as a powerful current in the heart and brain to destroy the sin of evil."

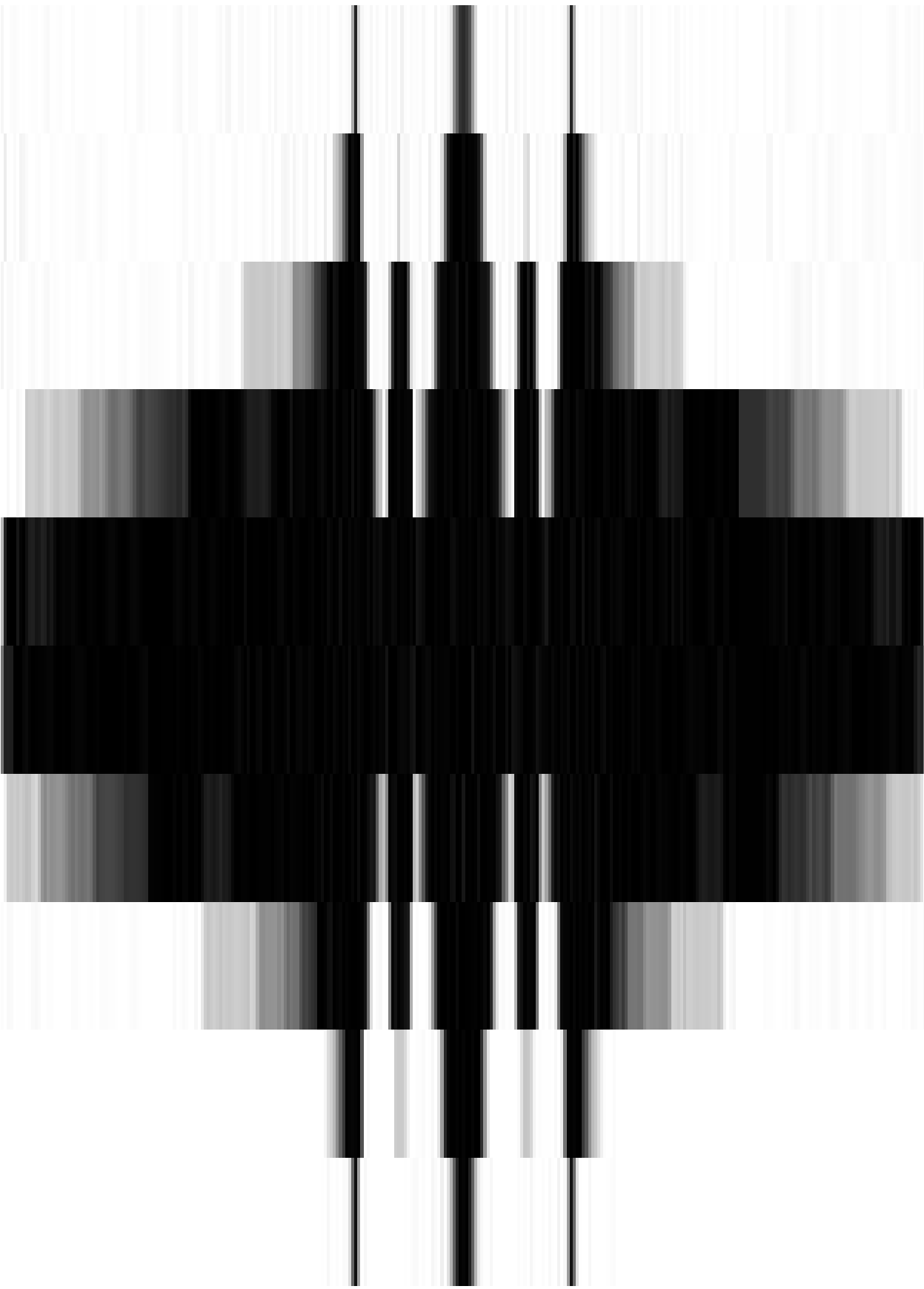


The three aspects of spiritual initiation

The word “initiation” (in Sanskrit, diksha), as used in India, means the same as implied in the term “baptism” adopted by the West. Initiation by a guru is the interior consecration of the disciple into the spiritual path that leads from the domain of matter-consciousness into the kingdom of Spirit. The true initiation, as has been shown, is baptism by Spirit: coming in contact with a saintly person who can by a glance or a touch send the vibrating light of Spirit over the devotee to change and uplift the consciousness. This real baptism cleanses the consciousness of the initiate with the Holy Light of the spiritual eye and the sacred sound of Aum. Whosoever can see the life current of the spiritual eye changing and spiritualizing the brain cells and the very composition of the mind of the initiate is one who baptizes with the Holy Ghost. He sees the light of the spiritual eye and throws that Light of Spirit onto the consciousness of the devotee. When that vibratory power passes through the initiate, it cauterizes present bad habits and past karmic seeds lodged in the brain. By the consciousness of God which is within him, a great spiritual soul can transfer to others who are receptive an experience of some of his own God-consciousness.

This spiritual baptism is threefold. First, when the teacher bestows initiation, he sees the Light himself as he baptizes the disciple. Second, when the teacher sends that Light into the initiate, which the devotee may or may not see himself, it remains a little while with its full vibratory power to effect a spiritual change in the devotee; but it is temporary. A master’s blessings can for some time hold that Light within the disciple, but the devotee must also make the effort to retain it. Third, to keep the Light permanently, the devotee has to make it his own through conscientious endeavor in meditation and in following the spiritual guidance and practices, the sadhana, given by the master.

The surest way to find God is to learn about Him from one who knows Him. To follow a master whose path has led him to God-realization is to reach assuredly the same Goal.



The necessity of following a true guru on the spiritual path

The scriptures of India speak of the liberation of the soul in terms of a calibrated formula, which, providentially, seems to favor the “spirit is weak” syndrome in man. Of the total requirement to achieve salvation, it is said that

25

% is the disciple’s spiritual effort,

25

% is the blessing of the guru, and the remaining

50

% is the grace of God. The aspirant should not be tempted into complacency, however, waiting to be moved by the spirit of the blessings and grace, for it is the catalyst of the devotee’s effort that makes the formula work.

As the devotee’s effort and the guru’s blessings are equally necessary to the disciple’s progress, we are taught in India the first requisite importance on the spiritual path of following faithfully one’s guru. He takes personal interest in the welfare of the devotee’s soul and lays before him a path of spiritual discipline that leads as far as the God-seeker wishes to go.

In the early years of my spiritual search I was blessed to have frequent association with saintly souls whose God-consciousness transported my consciousness into supernal realms. But it was not until I met my own God-ordained guru, Swami Sri Yukteswar, and received initiation from him, that I understood fully the transforming power of the sacred guru-disciple tradition. Baptized in a radiance as of a thousand suns, my whole being was blissfully enwrapped in God’s love and secured in the care of Guru’s wisdom. The Kriya Yoga sadhana imparted to me at that diksha was the “pearl of great price” with which all doors to the Divine Presence would be opened.

A guru is not an ordinary spiritual teacher. One may have many teachers, but only one guru, who is the agent of salvation appointed by God in response to a

devotee's demands for release from the bondage of matter.

Ministers in churches and priests in temples are oftentimes chosen only by a set standard of their intellectual knowledge of the scriptures, or by virtue of sacerdotal authority ceremonially conferred on them by a formally higher ecclesiastical superior. No guru can be developed only by years of study in the intellectual factory of a theological seminary, which deems it has attained its ends when it confers B.D. or D.D. degrees. Such titles can be won by men of good memory; but character, self-control, and the wisdom of soul intuition can be cultured only by knowledge and application of advanced methods of deep daily meditation that produce Self-realization and actual experience of God.

Neither can one be a guru by self-choice. He must be ordained to serve and save others by a real guru, or else he must hear in reality the voice of God asking him to redeem others. As has been shown, this law was honored even by Jesus, who received his guru's blessing before beginning his ministry—just to set the right example. Self-appointed gurus are much misguided by listening to the voice of their imaginative ego in their subconscious mind. Those who thus falsely anoint themselves as gurus, or exult in the veneration of followers who are encouraged to look on them as such, are not empowered by God nor their own spiritual attainment to grant salvation to anyone. It is admirable to lecture and teach good principles; but without possessing the qualifications of a real guru a teacher cannot redeem souls, nor should he presume to accept others as disciples until he himself has progressed far in his own Self-realization.

True gurus train first their inner selves in the theologically advanced school of intuition and God-communion in meditation. They spiritually baptize themselves in Spirit before they aspire to initiate others. They teach not for mundane gain or glory, but for the singular purpose of leading souls to God. A guru never seeks for himself the devotion and obedience of his disciples, but transfers that reverence to God.

It is not necessary for a disciple to be in the company of the guru in order to receive his blessings. What is most important is to be spiritually in tune with the guru, for his help is transferred to the disciple primarily on the inner spiritual plane rather than through material means. If the disciple is uncarping, unconditionally reverential and loving to the master, and faithful in following his precepts, his receptivity makes the task of the guru easier. Attunement links the help of the guru with the sincere striving of the disciple, even if the guru is no

longer incarnate on earth. My guru, Sri Yukteswarji, wrote: “To keep company with the Guru is not only to be in his physical presence (as this is sometimes impossible), but mainly means to keep him in our hearts and to be one with him in principle and to attune ourselves with him...by keeping his appearance and attributes fully in mind, and by reflecting on the same and affectionately following his instructions, lamblike.”¹⁴

Many who were born centuries after Christ have attained God-realization through devotion to Jesus, the Good Shepherd, whom they followed as their guru or savior. Jesus said, “Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?”¹⁵ The secret of the saints is that they practiced what Jesus taught and exemplified; and by their single-hearted devotion they were able to attain ecstatic interiorization, as do adept yogis, which is necessary for communion with Christ.



There is a beautiful revelation of the way to that divine contact hidden in the Biblical verses where John the Baptist describes himself:

“I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Isaiah” (John 1:23).



Highway to Christ Consciousness: “the straight way of the Lord”

John prepared the way for the extremely short ministry of Jesus by baptizing and preaching to the masses to make ready, as best he could, a not very enlightened generation. For his own part, his quoting the veiled prophecy of Isaiah in the Old Testament¹⁶ was not only a confirmation of himself as the one foretold to announce Christ, but a pronouncement of the true preparation required to receive Christ—in the coming of Jesus at that time, and for all future times.

When one’s senses are engaged outwardly, one is engrossed in the busy mart of creation’s interacting complexities of matter. Even when one’s eyes are closed in prayer or in other concentrated thoughts, still one is in the domain of busyness. The real wilderness, where no mortal thoughts, restlessness, or human desires, intrude, is in transcendence of the sensory mind, the subconscious mind, and the superconscious mind—in the cosmic consciousness of Spirit, the uncreate trackless “wilderness” of Infinite Bliss.

John the Baptist spoke from his inner spiritual state as having attained realization of the omnipresent Cosmic Vibration: “I am in tune with the Sound of Creation vibrating in the wilderness where there are no desires or restlessness. The human expression of my voice crying—that is, trying to teach people from my cosmic consciousness—emanates from the Voice or Word of the Cosmic Vibration coming out of Spirit. With the divine power of that Voice, I have come to declare the consciousness that is in Jesus.”

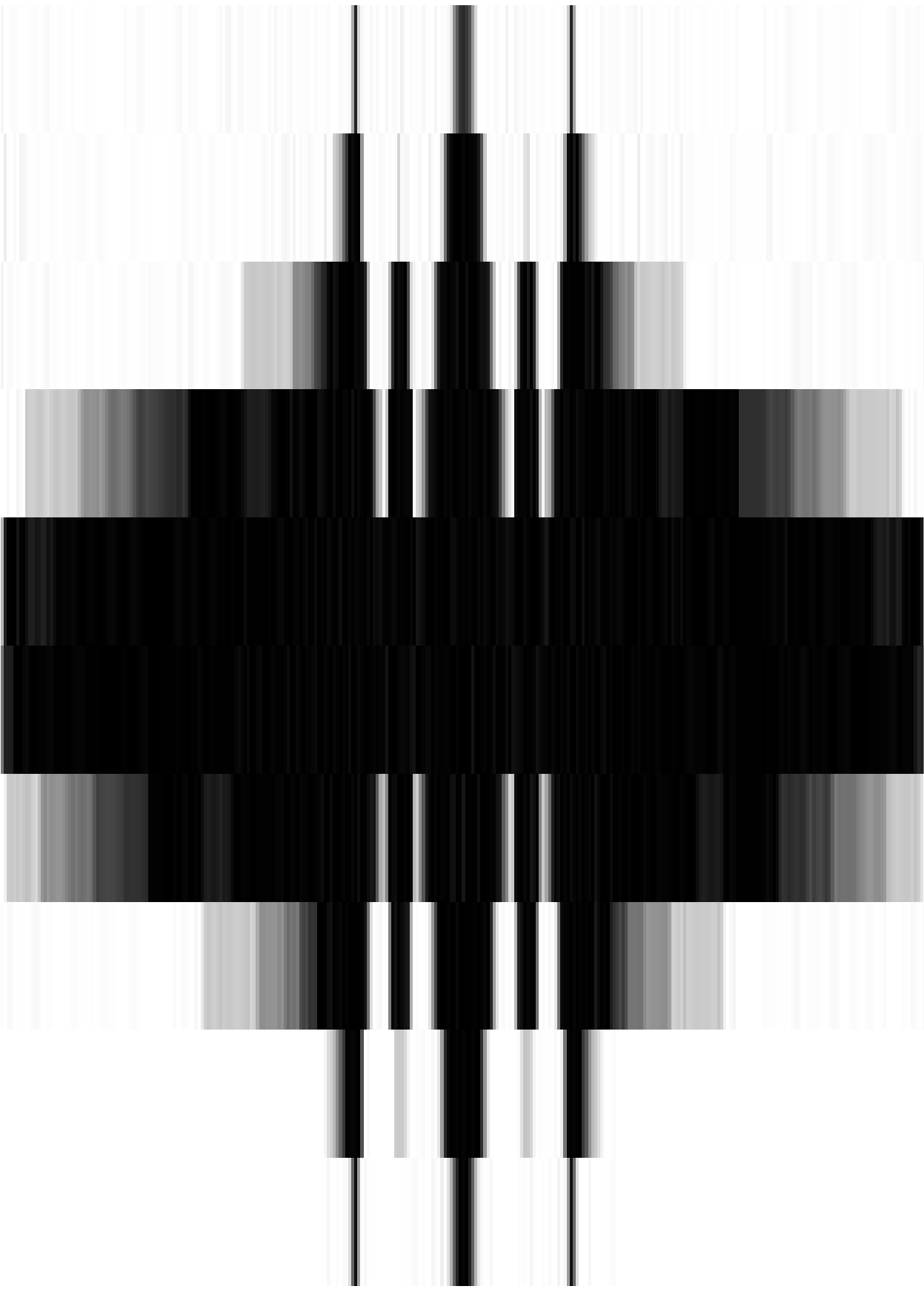
As John heard within himself in the wilderness of silence the all-knowing Cosmic Sound, the intuitive wisdom commanded him silently: “Make straight the way of the Lord.” Manifest the Lord, the subjective Christ Consciousness in all cosmic vibratory creation, within yourself through the intuitive feeling awakened when in the state of transcendental ecstasy the divine metaphysical centers of life and consciousness are opened in the straight spinal pathway.

Yoga treatises explain the awakening of the spinal centers not as some mystical aberration but as a purely natural occurrence common to all devotees who find their way into the presence of God. The principles of yoga know no artificial boundaries of religious isms. Yoga is the universal science of divine union of the soul with Spirit, of man with his Maker. Yoga describes the definite way Spirit

descends from Cosmic Consciousness into matter and individualized expression in all beings; and how, conversely, individualized consciousness ultimately must reascend to Spirit. Many are the pathways of religion and the modes of approaching God; but ultimately they all lead to one highway of final ascension to union with Him. The way of liberation of the soul from its ties to mortal consciousness in the body is identical for all: through the same “straight” highway of the spine by which the soul descended from Spirit into the body and matter.¹⁷

Man’s true nature is the soul, a ray of Spirit. As God is ever-existing, ever-conscious, ever-new Bliss, so the soul, by encasement in the body, is individualized ever-existing, ever-conscious, ever-new Bliss. The bodily covering of the soul is threefold in nature. The physical body, with which man so affectionately and tenaciously identifies himself, is little more than inert matter, a clod of earthly minerals and chemicals made up of gross atoms. The physical body receives all its enlivening energy and powers from an inner radiant astral body of lifetrans. The astral body, in turn, is empowered by a causal body of pure consciousness, consisting of all of the ideational principles that structure and maintain the astral and physical bodily instruments employed by the soul to interact with God’s creation.¹⁸ The three bodies are tied together and work as one by a knotting of life force and consciousness in seven spiritual cerebrospinal centers: a physical bodily instrument, empowered by the life force of the astral body and the consciousness from the causal form. In its residency in the triune body, the soul takes on the limitations of confinement and becomes the pseudosoul, or ego.

Descending first into the causal body of consciousness through the ideational centers of the causal spine of magnetized consciousness, thence into the wondrous spinal centers of light and power of the astral body, life force and consciousness then descend into the physical body through the brain and spine outward into the nervous system and organs and senses, enabling man to cognize the world and interact with his material environment.¹⁹



Reversing the flow of consciousness and life force to awaken the spiritual eye

The flow of the life force and consciousness outward through the spine and nerves causes man to perceive and appreciate sensory phenomena only. As attention is the conductor of man's life currents and consciousness, persons who indulge the senses of touch, smell, taste, sound, and sight find the searchlights of their life force and consciousness concentrated on matter. But when, by self-mastery in meditation, the attention is focused steadily on the center of divine perception at the point between the eyebrows, the searchlights of life force and consciousness are reversed. Withdrawing from the senses, they reveal the light of the spiritual eye.

As one switch throws light into the two headlights of an automobile, so the astral center of superconsciousness in the medulla throws its current into the two physical eyes that behold the world of duality. But by deep concentration on the point between the two eyes, the light of the medulla flowing into the two eyes can be made to converge into the one single spiritual eye in the forehead. Jesus said: "If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." Through this eye of omnipresence the devotee enters into the realms of divine consciousness.

India's yogis (those who seek union with God through formal scientific methods of yoga) lay the utmost importance on keeping the spine straight during meditation, and upon concentrating on the point between the eyebrows. A bent spine during meditation offers real resistance to the process of reversing the life currents to flow upward towards the spiritual eye. A bent spine throws the vertebrae out of alignment and pinches the nerves, trapping the life force in its accustomed state of body consciousness and mental restlessness.

The populace in Israel was looking for Christ in a physical body, so John the Baptist assured them of the coming of one in whom Christ was manifested; but he also told them subtly that anyone who wanted truly to know Christ must receive him by uplifting the consciousness through the spine in meditation ("the way of the Lord"). John was emphasizing that just worshiping the body of Christ Jesus was not the way to know him. The Christ Consciousness embodied in Jesus could be realized only by awakening the astral centers of the spine, the straight way of ascension by which the metaphysical Christ Consciousness in the

body of Jesus could be intuitively perceived.

The words of the prophet Isaiah, which were echoed by John the Baptist, show that both knew that the subjective Lord of Finite Vibratory Creation, or Christ Consciousness, could be welcomed into one's own consciousness only through the meditation-awakened straight highway of the spine. Isaiah, John, the yogis, all know that to receive Christ Consciousness more than a simple physical contact with a Christlike person is necessary. One must know how to meditate—how to switch off the attention from the distractions of the senses, and how to keep the consciousness fixed on the altar of the spiritual eye where Christ Consciousness can be received in all its glory.

Jesus himself and his disciples were products of the intuitive omniscience of ecstatic meditation and devotion, not results of intellectual theological seminaries.



Scientific meditation lifts the practice of religion beyond intellectual theory

Churches today have digressed from the path of Self-realization, personal experience of God and Christ. Congregations are generally satisfied with sermons, ceremonies, organizations, and festive socials. The complete revival and restoration of Christ-ianity can be effected only by less emphasis on theoretical sermons with their oft-repeated platitudes, and on external emotion-rousing, psycho-physical ceremonies, and by substituting instead quiet meditation and real inner communion. Rather than being passive members of a church, satisfied merely with listening to sermons, worshipers should engage more in the effort to cultivate perfect stillness in both body and mind. The peace of absolute physical and mental stillness is the real temple wherein God most often visits His devotees. “Be still, and know that I am God.”²⁰

The word “straight” also signifies following the straight path of truth, through which alone the soul can reach God. It is very difficult to choose the right course amid the varied religious opinions. John declared to the people the straight path out of their ignorance, and exhorted them to follow it to receive the teachings of Jesus in attaining Christ Consciousness. People who wander from church to church seeking intellectual satisfaction seldom find God, for intellectual nourishment is necessary only to inspire one to “drink” God. When the intellect forgets to actually taste God, it is a detriment to Self-realization. Spiritual truth and wisdom are found not in any words of a priest or preacher, but in the “wilderness” of inner silence. The Sanskrit scriptures say: “There are many sages with their scriptural and spiritual interpretations, apparently contradictory, but the real secret of religion is hidden in a cave.”²¹ True religion lies within oneself, in the cave of stillness, in the cave of calm intuitive wisdom, in the cave of the spiritual eye. By concentrating on the point between the eyebrows and delving into the depths of quiet in the luminous spiritual eye, one can find answers to all the religious queries of the heart. “The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost...shall teach you all things” (John

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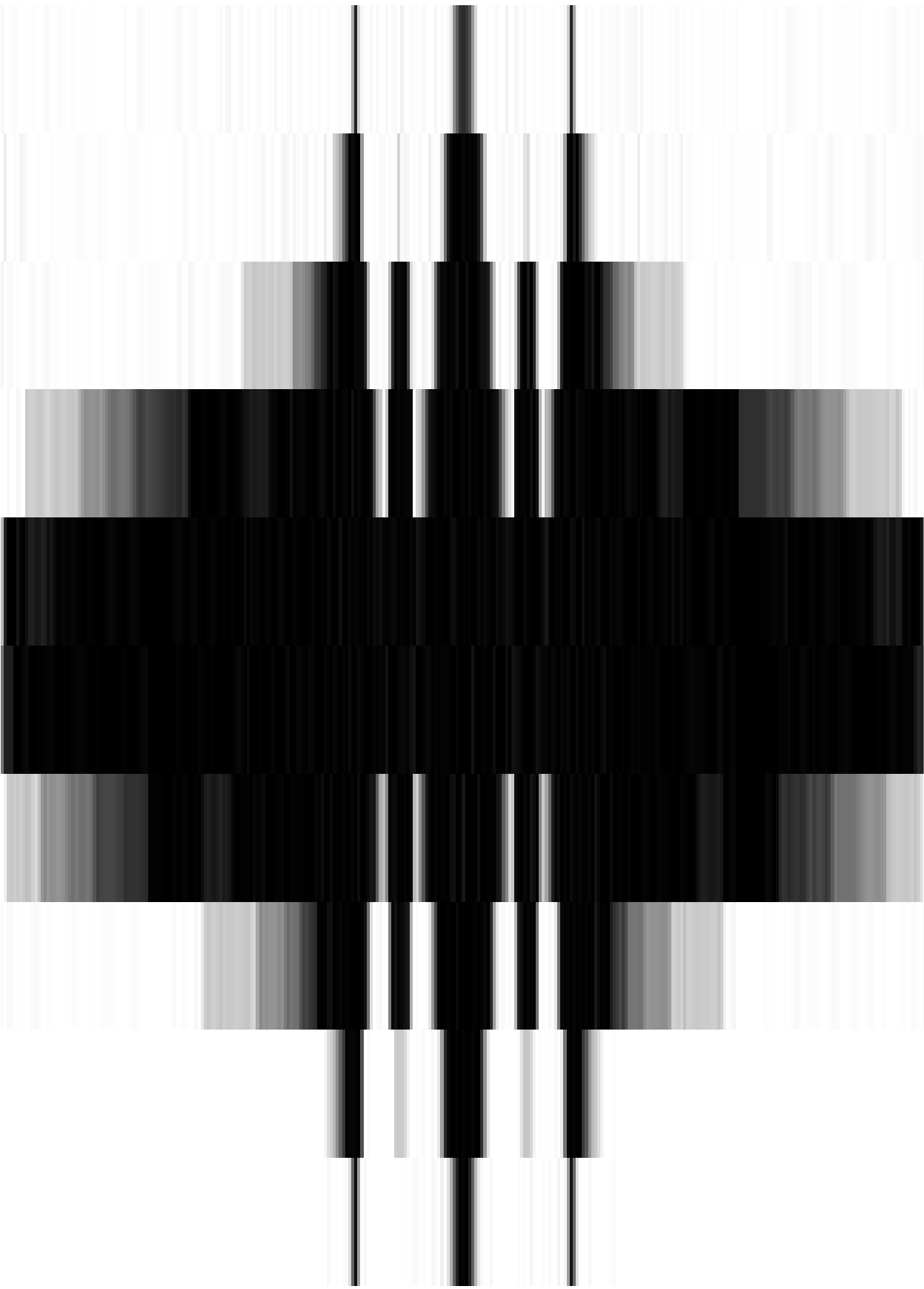
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By the right method of meditation on the Holy Ghost as the light of the spiritual eye and the holy sound of the cosmic vibration of Aum, any persevering devotee, by constant practice, can experience the blessings of the manifested vibratory presence of God. The Sacred Vibration, the Great Comforter, being imbued with the universal, reflected God-consciousness, contains the all-encompassing bliss of God. On the day of Pentecost the disciples of Jesus were filled with the new wine of this Joy coming from the touch of Aum, the comforting Holy Vibration, and they could talk “in diverse tongues.” Aum, the Word, the cosmic intelligent Vibratory Sound, is the origin of all sounds and languages. One filled with the Holy Ghost—one who can hear, feel, and spread his consciousness in Aum—can understand and communicate in the diverse tongues of inspirations of men, animals, and atoms. He truly communes with Nature; not as an experience of the senses, but as one united with the Voice of God through which the Creator guides the symbiosis of His beings in an underlying harmony.

All human beings are born of the Creative Vibration of the Holy Ghost; but they are prodigal sons who have left the home of their parental Divine Consciousness and have identified themselves with the finitely limited territory of the human body. The soul feels confinement in the physical, astral, and ideational bodies. At the onset of spiritual awakening, that Self begins to assert its connate desire for freedom from delusion’s constraints. The conscious mind should then be taught how to detach the soul consciousness from identification with these three bodies to reclaim its origin in the omnipresent Spirit.



Meditation on Aum brings baptism in the Holy Ghost and Christ Consciousness

By a guru-given technique of meditation on Aum (Om), such as I have taught to Self-Realization Fellowship students,²² the sacred Aum vibration of the Holy Ghost can be heard in meditation through the supersensory medium of intuition. First, the devotee realizes Aum as the manifested cosmic energy in all matter. The earthly sounds of all atomic motion, including the sounds of the body—the heart, lungs, circulation, cellular activity—come from the cosmic sound of the creative vibratory activity of Aum. The sounds of the nine octaves perceptible to the human ear, as well as all cosmic low or high vibrations that cannot be registered by the human ear, have their origin in Aum. So also, all forms of light—fire, sunlight, electricity, astral light—are expressions of the primal cosmic energy of Aum.

This Holy Vibration working in the subtle spinal centers of the astral body, sending forth life force and consciousness into the physical body, manifests as wonderful astral sounds—each one characteristic of its particular center of activity. These astral sounds are likened to melodic strains of the humming of a bee, the tone of a flute, a stringed instrument such as a harp, a bell-like or gong sound, the soothing roar of a distant sea, and a cosmic symphony of all vibratory sound. The Self-Realization Fellowship technique of meditation on Aum teaches one to hear and locate these astral sounds. This aids the awakening of the divine consciousness locked in the spinal centers, opening them to “make straight” the way of ascension to God-realization.

As the devotee concentrates on Aum, first by mentally chanting Aum, and then by actually hearing that sound, his mind is diverted from the physical sounds of matter outside his body to the circulatory and other sounds of the vibrating flesh. Then his consciousness is diverted from the vibrations of the physical body to the musical vibrations of the spinal centers of the astral body. His consciousness then expands from the vibrations of the astral body to the vibrations of consciousness in the causal body and in the omnipresence of the Holy Ghost. When the devotee’s consciousness is able not only to hear the cosmic sound of Aum, but also to feel its actual presence in every unit of space, in all finite vibrating matter, then the soul of the devotee becomes one with the Holy Ghost. His consciousness vibrates simultaneously in his body, in the sphere of the earth, the planets, the universes, and in every particle of matter, space, and astral

manifestation. Through the expanding power of the Holy Ghost, the all-spreading Aum-vibrating sound heard in meditation, the consciousness then becomes immersed, or baptized, in the sacred stream of Christ Consciousness.

These progressively higher states of realization are attained through deeper and longer meditation as guided by the guru. But from the very beginning, the blessings of contact with Aum become increasingly manifest.

The uplifting vibrations of “the Comforter” bring profound inner peace and joy. The Creative Vibration vitalizes the individual life force in the body, which conduces to health and well-being, and can be consciously directed as healing power to those in need of divine aid.²³ Being the source of intelligent creativity, the Aum vibration inspires one’s own initiative, ingenuity, and will.

Baptism in the vibration of the Holy Ghost loosens the hold of bad habits and wrong desires, and aids in the establishment of good habits and desires—ultimately transmuting desire itself into a single-hearted attraction to blessed contact with God. To know God is not the negation of desires, but rather complete fulfillment. Just as by feeding somebody else one’s own hunger cannot be appeased, so the soul can never be satisfied by catering to the senses. The senses crave indulgence, greed, and temptations to excite and amuse them; the soul feels fulfilled only by the calmness, peace, and bliss bestowed by meditation and the moderate use of the sensory instruments.

Ambition for good things, noble achievements, and spiritual work, serving the many, should be instituted to displace selfishness and greed, and the limiting circumscription of sole consideration for one’s self and one’s immediate family. When undertaken in the thought of God, there is great enjoyment in all good work and achievements.

By contacting God in the world and in meditation, all desires of the heart are fulfilled; for nothing is more worthwhile, more pleasant or attractive than the all-satisfying, ever-new joy of God.

Desire limits the consciousness to the object of desire. Love for all good things as expressions of God expands man’s consciousness. One who bathes his consciousness in the Holy Ghost becomes unattached to personal desires and objects while enjoying everything with the joyousness of God within.



Traversing the “straight way” for highest ascension in Spirit

In deepest meditation, as practiced by those who are advanced in the technique of Kriya Yoga,²⁴ the devotee experiences not only expansion in the Aum vibration “Voice from heaven,” but finds himself able also to follow the microcosmic light of Spirit in the “straight way” of the spine into the light of the spiritual eye “dove descending from heaven.”

First, the life force and consciousness must be withdrawn from the senses and bodily restlessness, and must cross the portals of Cosmic Energy represented by the golden ring of the spiritual eye. Then the consciousness must plunge in the blue light representing Christ Consciousness. Then it must penetrate through the silver star opening into Spirit, in the boundless region of Infinity. This golden, blue, and silver light contains all the walls of rays—electronic, atomic, and lifetronic—of Cosmic Vibration through which one has to penetrate before one can reach heaven.

In these highest states of meditation, the body itself becomes spiritualized, loosening its atomic tenacity to reveal its underlying astral structure as life force. The aura often depicted around saints is not imaginative, but the inner divine light suffusing the whole being. By deeper meditation still, the astral body becomes elaborated into the ideational body of consciousness. Then as pure wisdom the ideational consciousness transcends the vibrations of the Holy Ghost and becomes immersed in Christ Consciousness, through which it ascends to Cosmic Consciousness, the bosom of God the Father.

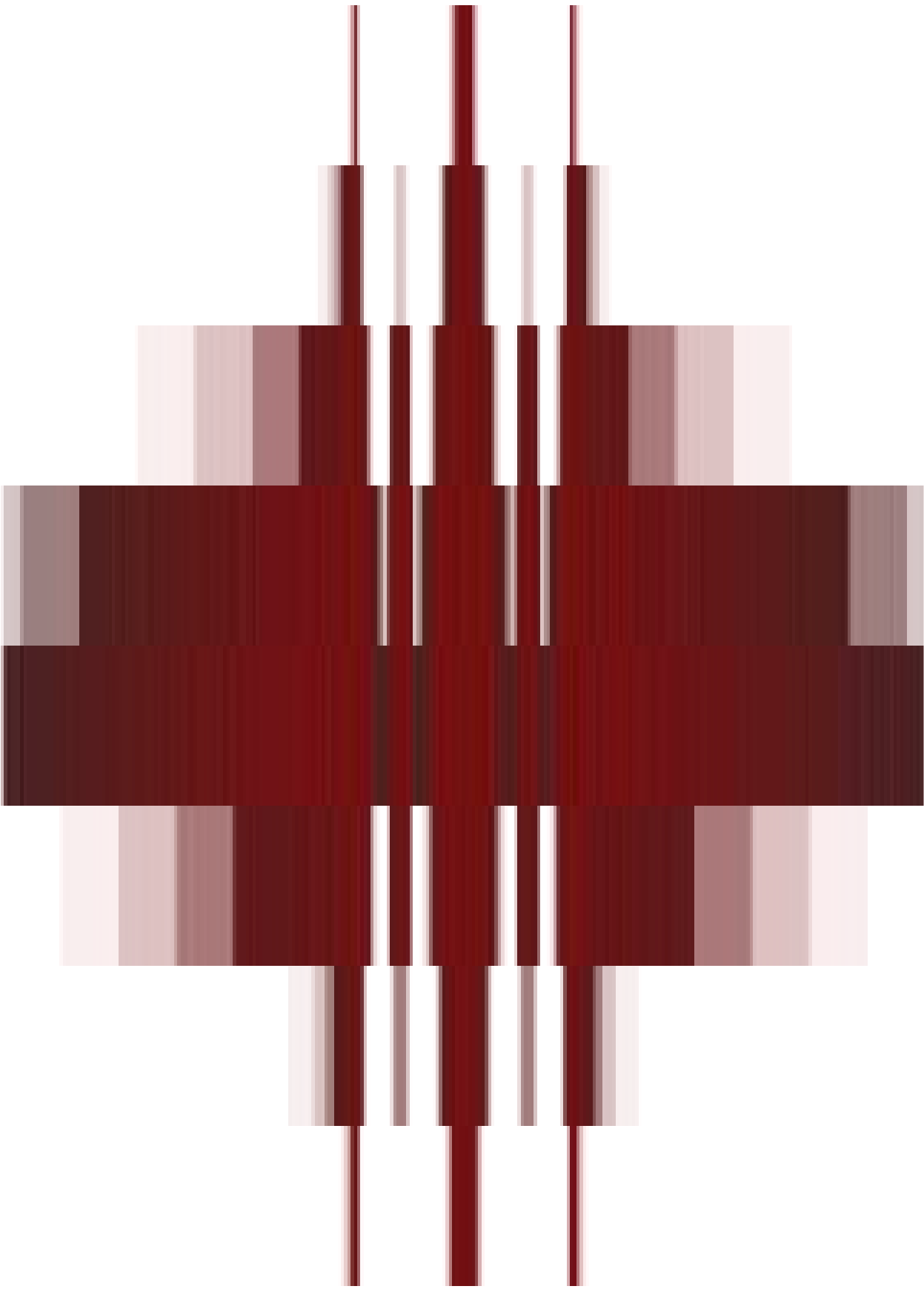
This, then, is the real teaching of Jesus Christ who came to baptize with the Holy Ghost. Only that person who can see his spiritual eye, not temporarily, but always, and who can perceive through this eye the Omnipresent Spirit, can baptize others with the cosmic magnetism of the Holy Ghost. Simply seeing the light, or being able to show others the light of the spiritual eye, is not enough. One must be able to perceive the Spirit through the spiritual eye. This is the baptism given by John to Jesus, the diksha given by a true guru who can summon the Almighty Spirit to envelop the disciple with the Cosmic Magnetism. The disciple, in turn, must be advanced and deserving in order to be able to receive such a baptism in Omniscience by his advanced guru who is one with Cosmic Consciousness, and thus serves as the channel of Spirit.

Through his two physical eyes, man sees only his body and a little portion of the earth at a time. But spiritual baptism or initiation received from a true guru expands the consciousness. Anyone who can see, as did Jesus, the spiritual dove alight on him—that is, who can behold his spiritual eye of omnipresent omniscience—and through perseverance in ever deeper meditation penetrate his gaze through its light, will perceive the entire kingdom of Cosmic Energy and the consciousness of God existing within it and beyond, in the Infinite Bliss of Spirit.

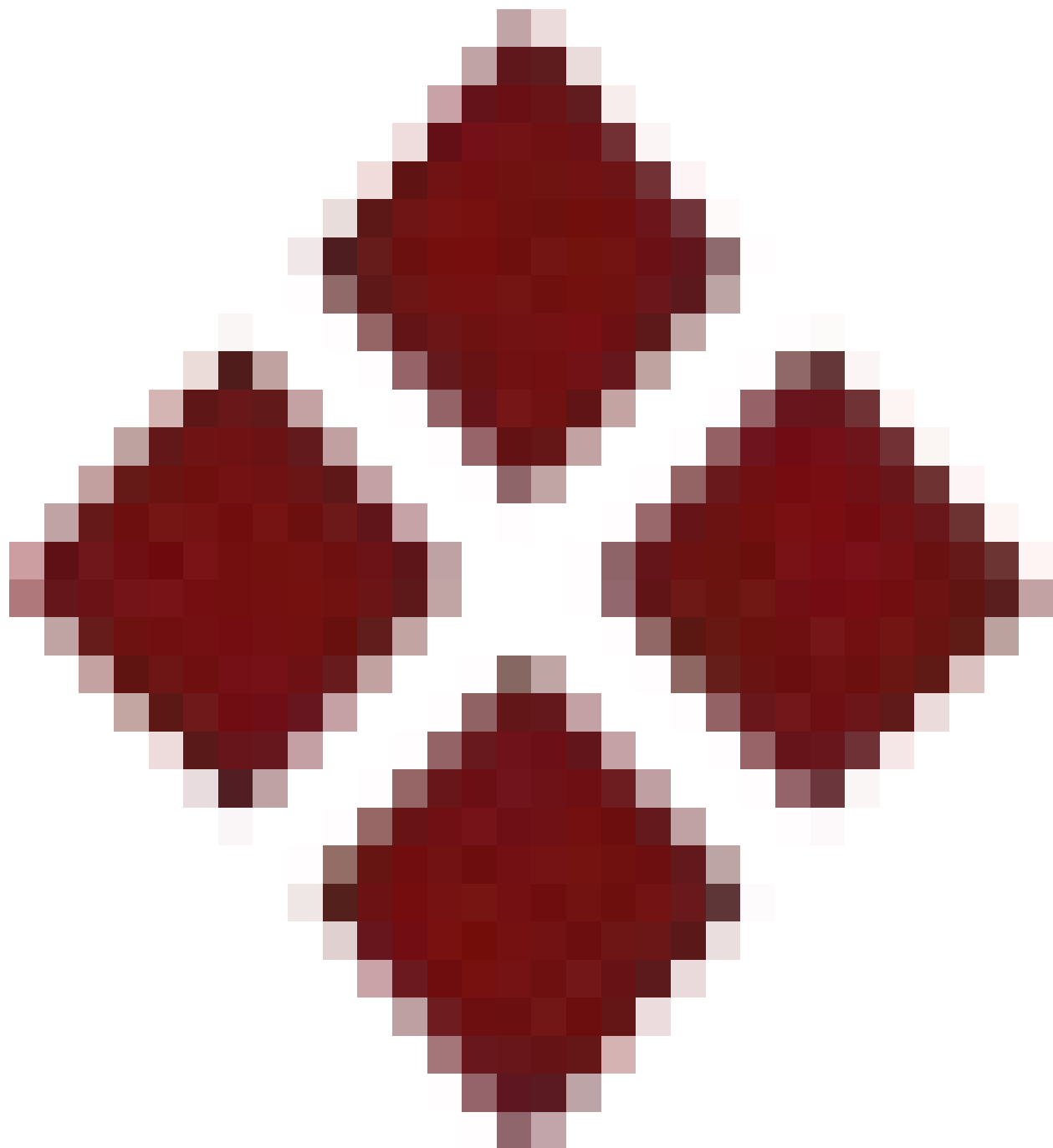


Discourse 7

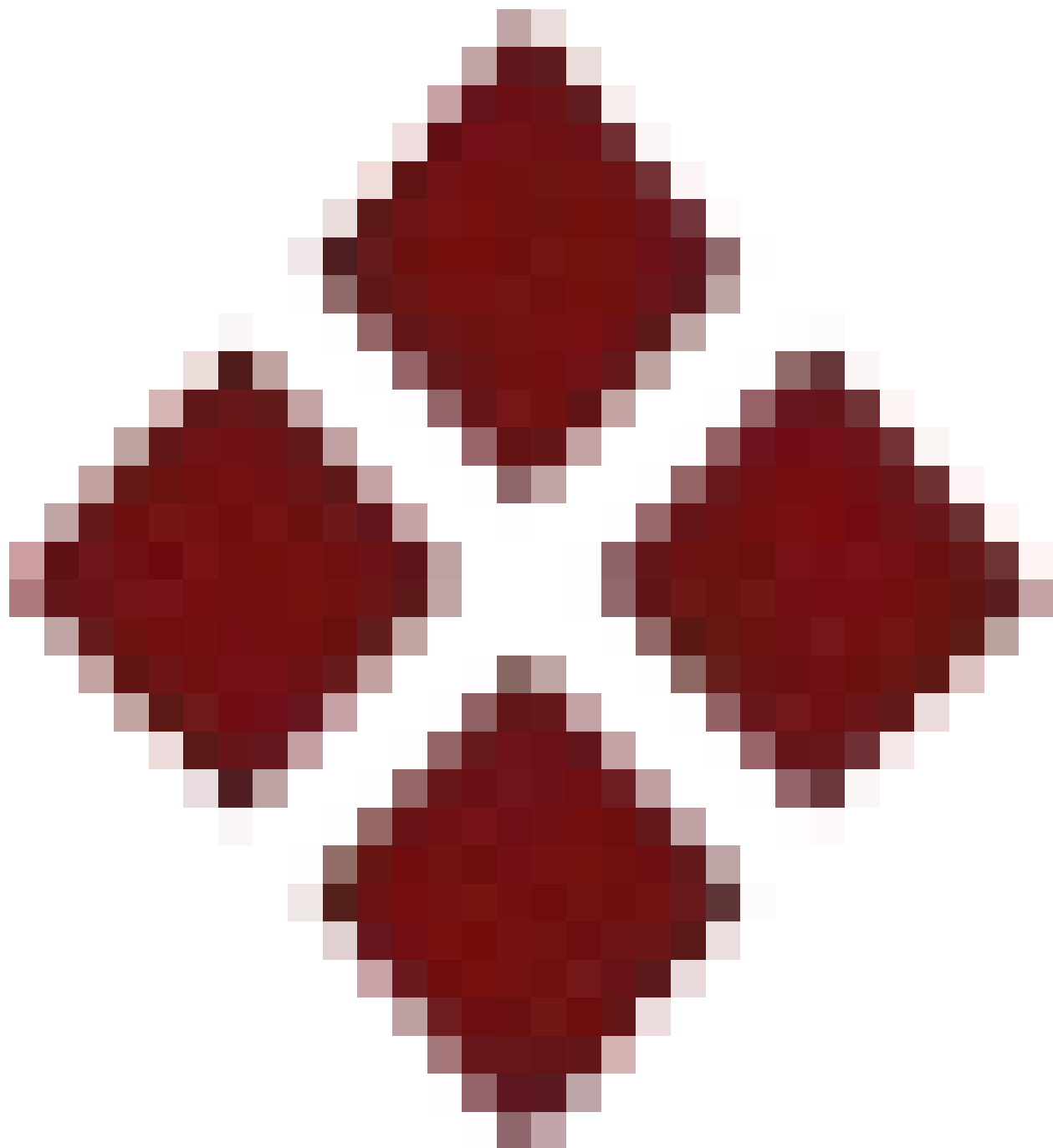
The Role of Satan in God's Creation



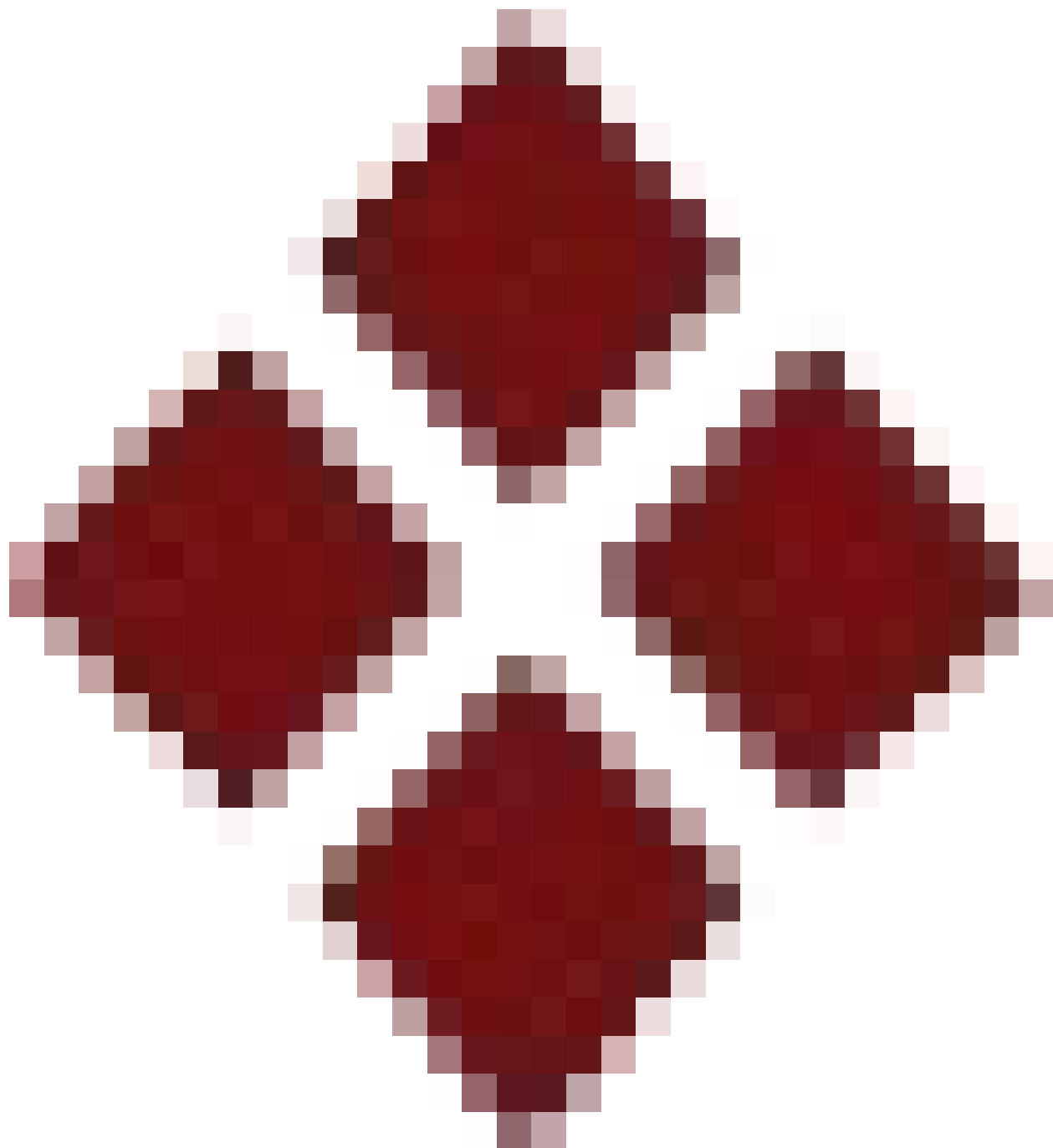
The Nature and Origin of Evil



Why Evil Has a Place in God's Plan



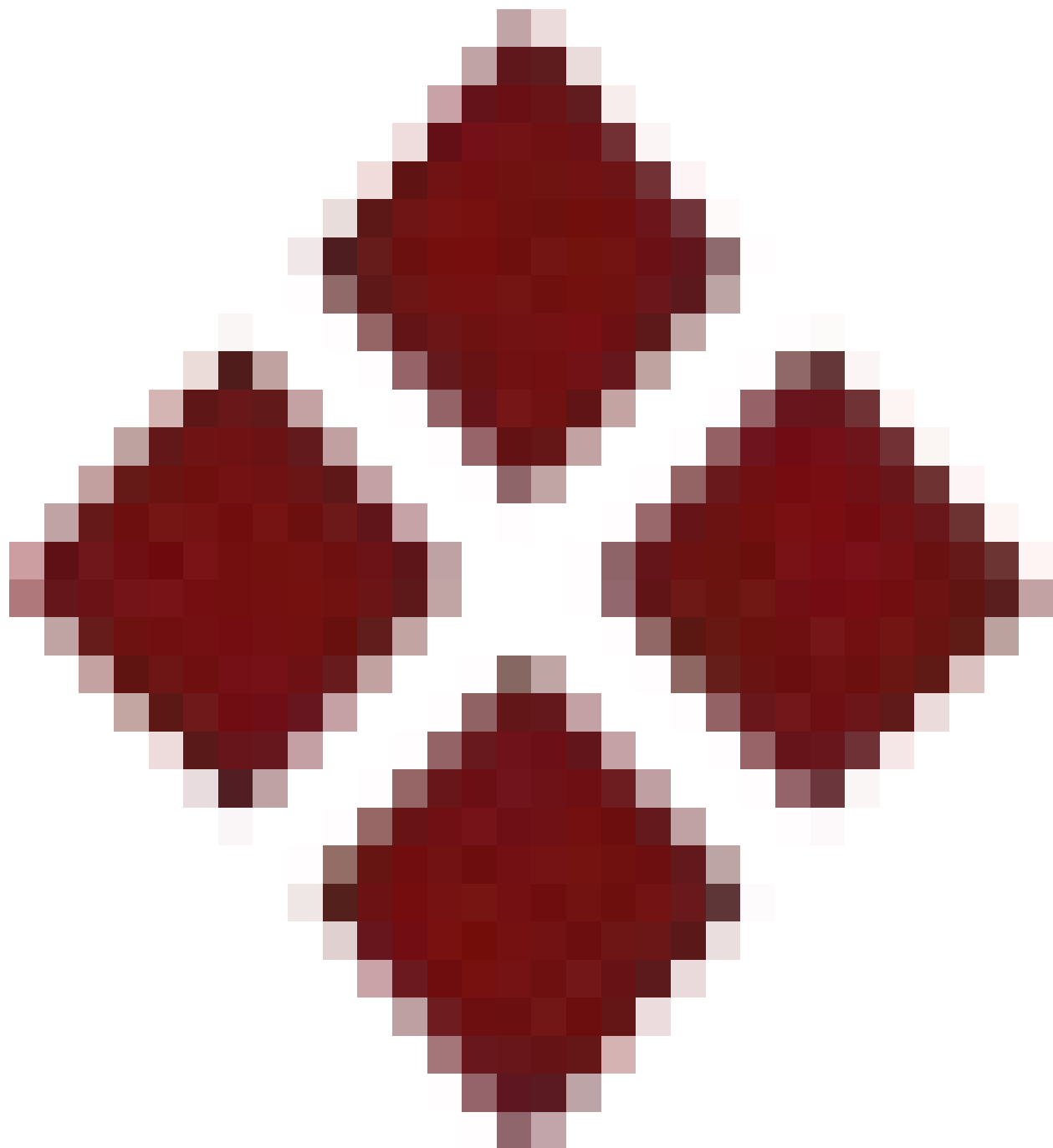
The Origin of Satan, the Creative Power That Rebelled Against God



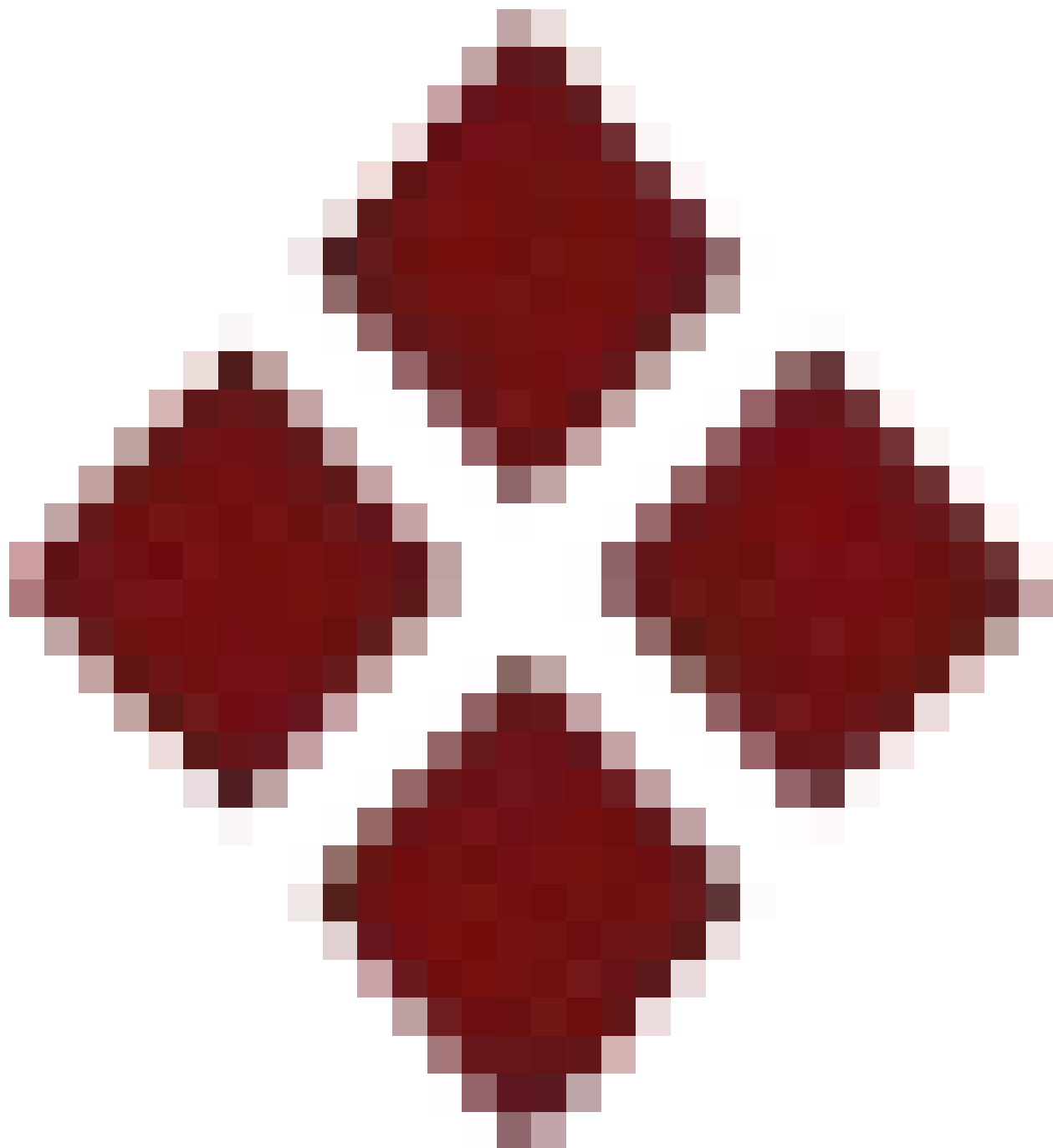
The Conflict in Creation Between Christ Consciousness and Satan



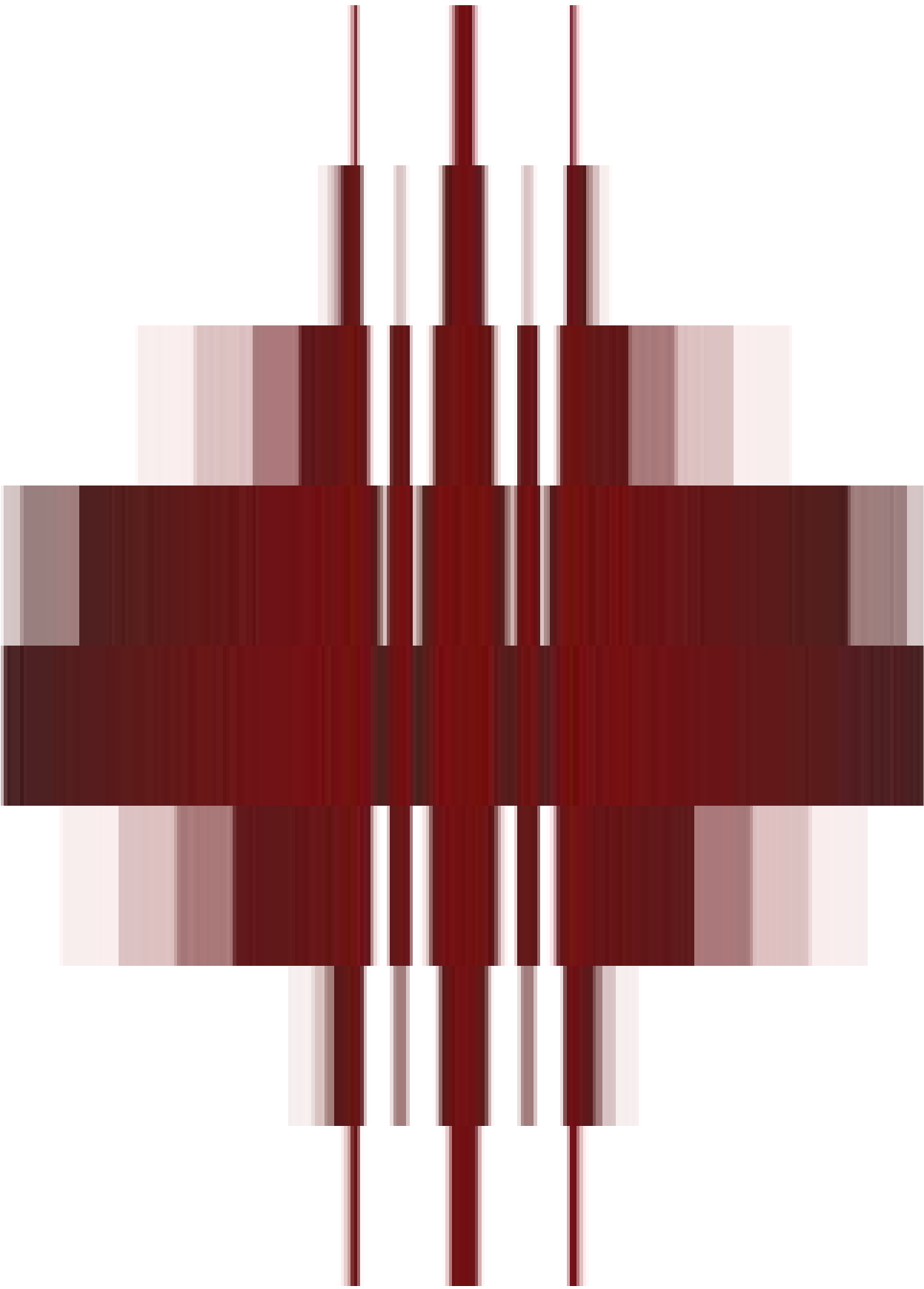
How Satan Caused the Fall of Man From Divine Consciousness



Man's Place in the Conflict Between God's Goodness and Satan's Temptations



Perceiving the Taintless Spirit by Transcending the Dualities of Delusion



“Satan originated as the natural consequence of God’s desireless desire to divide His Sea of Oneness into waves of finite creation....The Adversarial Force maintains its realm of influence by the gross obscuration of the true God-nature of all created beings.”

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And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being forty days tempted of the devil....And Jesus answered and said unto him, "Get thee behind me, Satan."¹

— ***Luke 4:1 – 2, 8***



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Discourse 7

The Role of Satan in God's Creation



The consciousness of Jesus the man who had become Jesus the Christ was permeated with the omnipresence of the Holy Ghost—one with the sacred Vibratory Essence of God that upholds all manifestation. The universality of creation became his body, in which his little Jesus-form lived and moved.



True meaning of “being full of the Holy Ghost”

To understand exactly what is meant by Jesus being filled with the Holy Ghost, one must scientifically and metaphysically explode superstition with true understanding of the significance as demonstrated by the actions and statements of Jesus. He spoke of the Christ omnipresence in the Holy Ghost when he said: “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without [the sight of] your Father.”² Jesus, as also the divinely realized yogis of India, not only could foretell the actions of people and the distant course of events through telepathic vibrations of thought, but he also could know all happenings within vibratory creation through the feeling of his Christ omnipresence.

An ant’s consciousness is limited to the sensations of its little body. An elephant’s consciousness is extended throughout its massive frame, so that ten people touching ten different parts of its body would awaken simultaneous awareness. Christ Consciousness, experienced in oneness with the Holy Ghost, extends to the boundaries of all vibratory regions.

The entirety of vibratory creation is an externalization of Spirit. [See Discourse 1.] Omnipresent Spirit secretes Itself in vibratory matter, just as oil is hidden in the olive. When the olive is squeezed, tiny drops of oil appear on its surface; so Spirit, as individual souls, by a process of evolution gradually emerges from matter. Spirit expresses Itself as beauty and magnetic and chemical power in minerals and gems; as beauty and life in plants; as beauty, life, power, motion, and consciousness in animals; as comprehension and expanding power in man; and again returns to Omnipresence in the superman.³

Each evolutionary phase thus manifests a fuller measure of Spirit. The animal is freed from the inertia of minerals and the fixity of plants to experience with locomotion and sentient consciousness a greater portion of God’s creation. Man, by his self-consciousness, additionally comprehends the thoughts of his fellow beings and can project his sensory mind into star-studded space, at least by the power of imagination.

The superman expands his life energy and consciousness from his body into all space, actually feeling as his own self the presence of all universes in the vast

cosmos as well as every minute atom of the earth. In the superman, the lost omnipresence of Spirit, bound in the soul as individualized Spirit, is regained.

The superman attains this ultimate evolutionary state after “baptism” or immersion in the Holy Ghost Cosmic Vibration [as described in Discourse

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] by advancing from body consciousness through the successive stages of superconsciousness, Christ Consciousness, and Cosmic Consciousness.



Two phases of communion with the Holy Ghost Cosmic Vibration

In the first state attained in the successful attempt of the soul of Jesus to rise above the Cosmic Nature–induced habit of bodily attachment of incarnations, Jesus the man felt within the limitation of the body the vibratory presence of the Holy Ghost: the intelligent Cosmic Vibration heard intuitively in the meditative state of inner communion. In this state of metaphysical development, the divine perception of Spirit as the Holy Ghost Comforter and the power of attraction of God’s love and intelligence in the Christ Consciousness is experienced as bounded by the body occupying a little speck of vibratory region on the earth.

In the second higher state, by immersion of his consciousness in the Holy Ghost vibration with its inherent Christ Intelligence, the consciousness of Jesus was transferred from the circumference of the body to the boundary of all finite creation in the vibratory region of manifestation: the sphere of space and time encompassing planetary universes, stars, the Milky Way, and our little solar system family of which the earth is a part, and on which the physical body of Jesus was but a speck. Jesus the man, a tiny particle on the earth, became Jesus the Christ, with his consciousness all-pervading in oneness with the Christ Consciousness in the Holy Ghost.

This state can be cultured externally by experiencing God’s love in His reflection as Christ Consciousness, which attracts matter and consciousness toward Divinity, and then expanding that feeling of unconditional love to one’s family, society, nation, all nations, all creatures. And it can be attained by internally expanding the consciousness in meditation on the Cosmic Sound of Aum, transcending semi-subconsciousness, semi-superconsciousness, soul consciousness, semi–Christ Consciousness to the culminative all-embracing Christ Consciousness.

A Christlike person loves all beings and actually feels every portion of the earth and vibratory space as the living cells of his own body.

Once Lahiri Mahasaya, my preceptor’s Guru, was teaching from the scriptural Bhagavad Gita to a group of his students in Banaras.⁴ While explaining the meaning of Kutastha Chaitanya (the universal Christ or Krishna Consciousness), suddenly he gasped and cried out: “I am drowning in the bodies of many souls

off the coast of Japan.” The next morning the disciples read in the newspapers that a ship had foundered near the coast of Japan, resulting in the deaths of a number of persons; the fatal event occurred at exactly the time Lahiri Mahasaya experienced the shipwreck in his omnipresence.

So it was with Jesus. He had successfully led his consciousness through the ascending degrees of expanding consciousness to this second Holy Ghost state—the Christ state of omnipresence. That is what is meant by Jesus “being full of the Holy Ghost.”



A degree of delusion is accepted even by God-sent saviors

The Holy Ghost or Christ state, oneness with the presence of God in manifested creation, is the commonality of divine beings who incarnate to serve and uplift delusion-entrapped humanity. As it is none else than the Lord Himself as individualized souls who is imprisoned in the multitudinous forms in the created realm fraught with tests and trials, struggle and suffering, so also saviors sent by God choose to share the challenges and woes of those they have come to free. To redescend into a new body and mind necessitates taking on a degree of delusion, even for fully liberated masters. The bliss of intimacy with the transcendental God the Father, Spirit beyond all workings of delusion, is embraced by Christs in periods of transcendence in samadhi meditation, but they return therefrom to the realm of manifestation and its circumscribing creative principles that make possible the cosmic drama of interacting delimited forces and forms. The nature of the manifested world is such that a prolonged or constant state of mergence in Transcendence would be less than feasible—or even possible—for one whose work for humankind is carried out in their midst.

Rare souls sometimes serve the world by remaining primarily in transcendent meditation, sending forth powerful spiritual vibrations to balance the world's evils; but these souls seclude themselves in remote haunts and seldom or never appear before ordinary men. I have written of one such avatar, Mahavatar Babaji, in *Autobiography of a Yogi*: Nature herself stands in powerless awe before him. Stumbling man needs not only the silent blessings issuing from these exalted spiritual benefactors, but also familiar examples who live as mortal beings to bolster courage, faith, and desire for God, and to demonstrate the way to redemption. Enter thus the divine ones who choose for their service the milieu of human fracas.

There is an exalted state of inner transcendence in oneness with the Absolute which in Yoga is defined as nirvikalpa samadhi: the soul remains in conscious realization of its oneness with transcendent God even while the physical and mental instrumentalities of the body engage in normal expression and exacting activities. This is the goal of advancement, seen only in supernal beings. It can be experienced for short intervals, or by the highly advanced for months at a time, or for even a few years by those who attain what Yoga describes as Brahmasthiti, the state of being permanently established in God-union. To

remain in the world of illusion while experiencing the indescribable bliss of the Sole Unmanifested Reality makes one's hold on the body tenuous indeed; it becomes eventually a difficult proposition just to sustain the atomic cohesiveness of the specious material form and to prevent the soul-individuality from dissolving into Spirit. So even in the highest states of divine oneness, the outer nature of the God-united retains some degree of the individualized consciousness of egoity and delusion, just to keep body and soul together.



Third state of spiritual transcendence: complete union with the Absolute

Jesus the man become Jesus the Christ, enacting his special role in God's drama, prepared himself for his culminating three years of ministry, when he would have to face the strongest of foes, delusive evil and ignorance. To bear his mission's foreordained burden, his physical and mental faculties needed to be forged and strengthened in the fires of testing and temptation, securing his outer consciousness in the God-union of his immutable inner realization. He had to conquer the metaphysical and psychological tests of Satan before he could relinquish all delusion in the third and last state of transcendence in Spirit—the complete union of body, Holy Ghost, Christ Consciousness, and God the Father perceived as one in Spirit. He knew that so long as he was incarnate in maya's domain, mortal tests born of delusion remain.

Although Jesus was already liberated in Spirit in his incarnation as Elisha, his newly incarnated body and mind as Jesus bore somewhat of the pattern of past existences. Though no longer binding, the memory and intimations of his prior limited human consciousness and its earthly desires, through the law of habit that attaches the soul to mortal existence, tried to attract his expanded consciousness to earthly consciousness. This is the psychological explanation of the tempting of Jesus' habit of divine consciousness by his past-life established mortal habits in order to lure him from the Great Comforter—the Holy Ghost Vibration from which comes all satisfaction, being the sum total of all earthly things looked for.

The Nature and Origin of Evil

Many modern scriptural interpreters, unable to understand why a perfect Christ would acknowledge the existence of Satan and Satan's power to tempt him, have tried to explain away the old concept of a devil by saying it is obsolete and metaphorical. God is the Source and Essence of all things, they point out, therefore evil does not exist—how could evil exist in a world created by the Deity who is only good? Others say that the good God does not know evil, for if

He did He would surely put an end to it.

To see God in everything and to deny the power of evil to influence one's life has its good points; for even if it is conceded that a conscious evil force or Satan does exist, it cannot influence human minds unless they mentally accept it. However, it is quite contradictory to deny the existence and temptations of evil while remaining subject to suffering and succumbing to desires unbefitting the God-image within one. If one inhabits a body, he has tacitly acknowledged the duality of the world of matter. Philosophy can play an intricate word-game with truth, but what each individual has to deal with in fact is the obstinate mindset of his present state of consciousness. It is better to know the wiles of evil and the ways to combat them than to be caught unaware in blithe denial. Knowledge only, and not assertion without realization, can produce final emancipation.

Though it cannot be denied that God is the Source of all that exists, and that evil is a part of His creation, it must also be acknowledged that what we call evil is relative. Certainly it is terrible that violence, accidents, and diseases kill billions of people every century. But death itself is necessary to the renewal and progress of life. Also, earth is not meant to be "heavenly"; if it were, no one would want to leave the comfortable physical body and pleasurable world to go back to God. Misery, in one sense, is man's benefactor, because it drives him to seek sorrow-transcendence in God. Thus it is hard to fix a boundary line between good and evil, except in a relative sense. To God Himself nothing is evil, for nothing can diminish His immortal, eternally perfect Bliss. But for the myriad beings trapped in the crucible of mortal existence evil is all too real; and to say that God does not know their suffering as evil would imply that He is a very ignorant God!



The subjective nature of evil—arising from man's thoughts and actions

There are various causes that can be put forth to explain evil occurrences in the world. Some people say that the responsibility for them lies neither with God nor with any objective Evil Power. They reject as medieval superstition the view that Satan is an actual being, like a dragon who has to be slain by the sword of the conquering knight; and try to explain Satan away by saying that the origin of evil is subjective, arising from psychological factors, from the thoughts and actions of man himself. This can perhaps be granted in the case of heinous acts perpetrated by villainous souls who cause suffering for their fellow beings; but what about the pain of disease, injury, and premature death? According to the view that evil is subjective, even these sufferings result from man's erroneous choices and actions—his lack of harmony with universal laws.

In this sense it is certainly true that evil in man's life is self-engendered: If a man hits a stone wall with his knuckles, the resulting undeniable evil of pain would not be created or willed by the wall, but would be the result of his ignorance in striking the naturally unyielding hardness of the stones. Likewise, it can be said that God is a stone wall of Eternal Goodness. His universe subsists on the workings of just and natural laws. Anyone foolish enough to misuse his intelligence to act against that goodness will inexorably produce the evil of pain and suffering—not because of any intent or wish of God, but because of pernicious ways of life colliding with the eternal good principles underlying all things in God. Man possesses the divinely given gift of free choice to tune in with God's goodness, peace, and immortality. Those who use their will contrarily and act out of tune with Him, breaking His laws, are bound to suffer from the recoil of their misdeeds, according to the law of cause and effect.

A little boy endowed with reason may enjoy perfect health and protection under the strict discipline of his mother; but when he grows up, he says: "Mother, I know I am safe in your care; but I wonder why you fostered my intelligence and gave me the power of free choice if you are always to decide how I am to behave? I want to make my own choices; I will find out for myself what is good or bad for me."

The mother replies: "Son, it is fitting for you to demand the right to use your free choice. When you were helpless and your reason had not yet budded forth, I

nurtured you through the protection of maternal love. Now your eyes of reason are opened; it is time for you to depend upon the guidance of your own judgment.”

Thus the youth ventures into the world unguarded, with only a semideveloped discrimination. He abuses health laws and becomes ill. He chooses wrong company and gets into a fight, resulting in a black eye and a broken leg.

It is the Divine Mother⁵ who tries to protect each baby through the instinctive love of parents. But there comes a time when the baby grows up and has to protect itself by the exercise of reason. If guided rightly by discrimination, the maturing individual becomes happy; but if reason is misused, then an evil outcome is precipitated.

From the foregoing analysis of evil, it would appear that the cause of evil is more subjective than objective, that much of it is due to the ignorance and wrong judgment of man, not to some malicious force in the universe. The power of habits presents an apt example: The consequent evils of physical overindulgence or indiscretion—ill health, being held in the grip of temptation—do not arise until man, by an act of erroneous judgment, forgets himself and by repeated transgressions allows the wrong indulgence to become a habit in the consciousness. All habits, good or bad, control and enslave the mind only after the will has allowed itself to be overcome by repeated good or evil actions born of good or evil judgment.

Why, then, are some children born with special tendencies of self-control and some with tendencies of weakness, before they have had any opportunity to exercise their reason and free choice? Some intellectuals confidently assert that heredity is responsible for good or bad traits in a child. But why would an impartial God endow one child with a good heredity producing a good brain inclined only to good tendencies, and another child with a bad heredity and a dysfunctional brain inclined only to do evil under the compelling influence of evil physiological instincts?

An answer is found in the law of reincarnation and its corollary of karma—the cosmic dispenser of justice through the law of cause and effect which governs the actions of all persons. According to this law, the soul attracts to itself a good or bad heredity, and a good or bad mentality, according to desires and habits formed in past earth-existences, which being unexpurgated are carried forward

from the last incarnation into rebirth in one's present life. A person's good or bad judgment of all incarnations, working through the law of cause and effect, creates good or bad inclinations, and those inclinations attract him to rebirth in a family with good or bad hereditary tendencies (or beyond the effects of heredity, to an environment and life experiences consistent with his karmic propensities). Thus it may be said that evil in man's life arises from his own wrong judgment.



The objective force

of evil in creation independent of man's actions

While all of these facts support the contention that evil is subjective—that man may be accused of misusing his reason and, by creating inharmony with God's laws, of giving birth to evil—this explanation does not adequately account for every aspect of evil inextricably bound into the myriad manifestations of creation.

Millions of bacteria and virulent, invisible armies of germs move silently about the earth seeking, like devouring locusts, to destroy the crops of human lives. Numberless diseases infest plants and animals who have no free choice and consequently could not attract these evils due to prenatal bad karma.

Why is there death by floods and cataclysms? It does not seem possible that all of the millions of people destroyed by floods and famine in China could have suffered due to their past actions in previous lives.⁶

Why is there cannibalism in nature? The baby salmon lives on the flesh of its mother; the big fish eats the little fish. Then the fisherman finds joy in catching the big fish, deceiving it with hooked food; and the more the fish struggles for life, the more the sportsman enjoys it and says, "My, it is a game fish!" Who would like to change places with the fish?

Why do men murder each other in war? Why do even the thoughts of wrong judgment and emotions of jealousy, revenge, greed, and selfishness arise at all in the human mind? If man is made in the image of God, and God is good, then the logical deduction is that man could become nothing else but good. Wars result from industrial and territorial selfishness, from nations fuming with national selfishness and greed for possession; but why are conflicts not avoided by parliamentary discussions? Why was it that the slaying of the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand threw the world into furious conflagration precipitating World War I? Think of Tamerlane, emperor of India, slaying one million Hindus after his victory. Think of the Aztecs who used to cut out the hearts of their prisoners of war, hundreds at a time, in front of their idol gods. Think of the burning of witches and martyrs under the zeal of the Christian faith. How do despots such as Hitler gain the power to wreak untold horrors on humanity? And what of the

war of the Crusades, fought in the name of Jesus' teachings, which stress only love for one's enemies—thousands of priests advocated this war and prayed for the destruction of their enemy brothers and victory for themselves.

Man did not create physical temptation, death-dealing bacteria, natural cataclysms. From the very beginning evil existed to delude man and influence his free choice. How easy it is for the majority of people to be tempted materially, to languish spiritually and do the very things that will hurt themselves.

The warfare of animals preying on each other, the battle of opposites and destructive forces in nature, predatory germs, delusion's power to effect wrong judgment in men, infinitely creative temptations to do wrong even against better judgment, distinctly show that there is an objective evil force that tries to destroy the evidential expressions of the Infinite Good.



Why evil has a place in God's plan

The delusion-wizened mind of man sends forth a boasting, hollow challenge to Omniscient Divinity that if he were the Almighty he could create a much better world than this. He would banish from this earth devastating diseases and accidents; mental weakness and pernicious emotions such as revengefulness, anger, greed; industrial avarice resulting in depression; natural disasters of earthquakes, floods, droughts, famines; boredom, despair, old age, painful death—all of the ruinous tragedies of life.

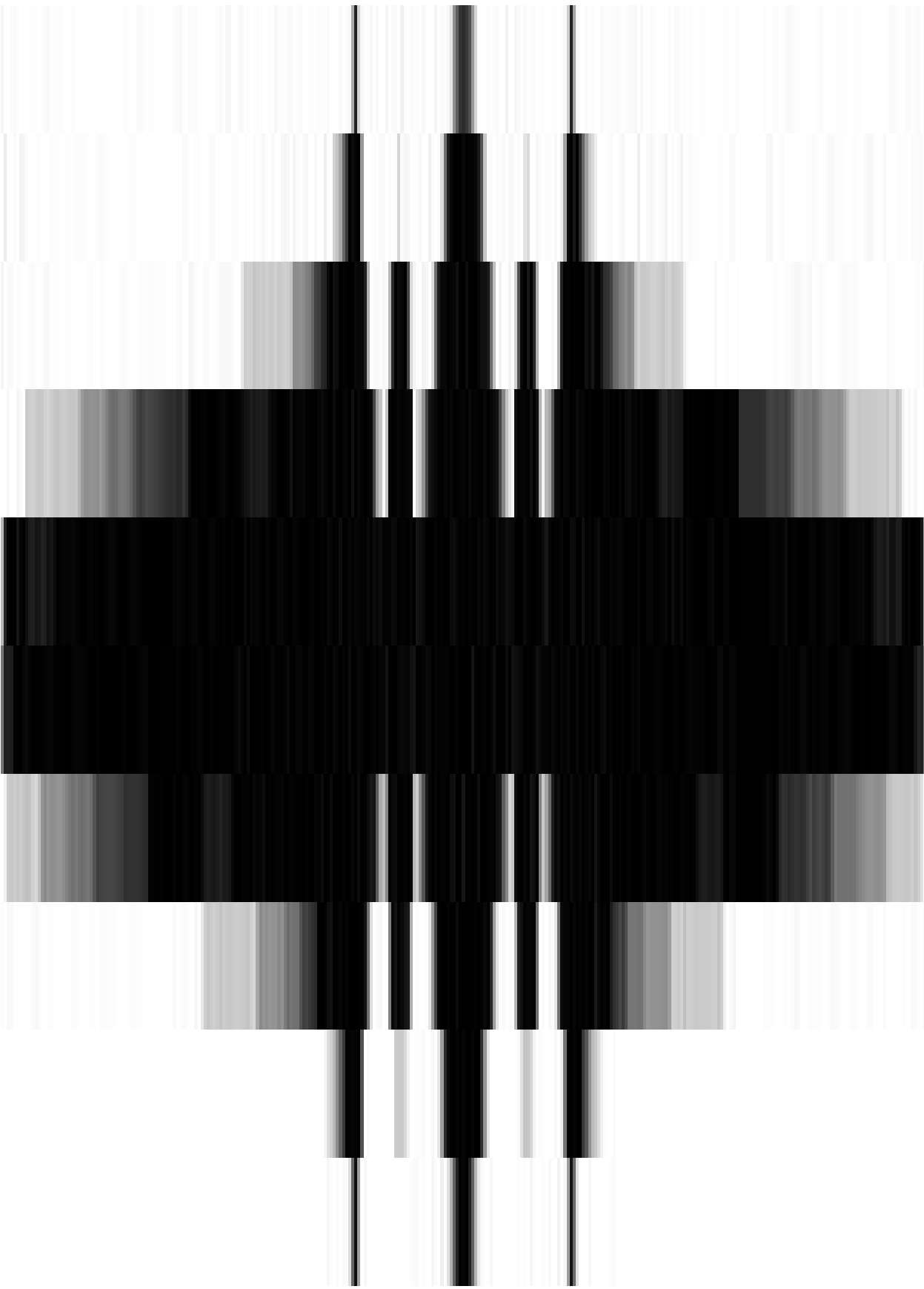
He would create a world with a joyous struggle free from the pain of travail, an ever newly happy state of mind for all men, sans mental idleness and boredom. He would make the body invulnerable, changeable according to the commandments of one's will. He would have our bodies tailored in the workshop of materialization and self-rejuvenation.

He would create a variety of occupations with a vast scope of activity, all leading to infinite, unending, pleasurable satisfaction. Good citizens would be materialized by will from the ether, as God created the first man and woman. All beings would go to heaven and become angels after they had successfully finished their earthly entertainment.

Such a world is easy to fancy, for the soul is always whispering to man its native perfection, even while the ego engages him in gambling with the enticements of a distorted earthly duality. An ideal existence is not impossible, but it is for a different time and realm reserved for those who have graduated from the learning assignments of earth life. For the ordinary man in his present stage of evolution, a life without difficulties would be of little value. No lessons of growth would be learned, no transformations of inflexible natures into godly consciousness, no compelling incentives to seek and know one's Maker.

Regardless, the time-worn, unresolved conundrum persists: Did evil have its origin in the plan of a good and perfect God? The Lord Himself answered prophet Isaiah: "I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside Me: I girded thee (invested thee with thy powers and attributes), though thou hast not known Me...I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things."⁷ The illumined rishis of India

similarly perceived: "...Joy, sorrow, birth, death, fear, courage...these diverse states of beings spring from Me alone as modifications of My nature....I am the Source of everything; from Me all creation emerges."⁸



Dualities of good and evil are inherent in creation

Spirit alone is perfect. Everything in creation, being delimited, is imperfect. The very beginning of creation gave rise to the law of duality—light and darkness, good and evil—the law of relativity necessary to divide the One into the many. By the storm of vibration, God’s thoughts of multiplicity brought forth the waves of manifestation: His lila, or divine play.

Spirit’s desireless desire to enjoy Its Bliss as many selves was unnecessary to the complete and perfect Spirit, just as a father through no vital necessity may desire the joy in playing with his child. Spirit’s desire was therefore an imperfect stirring in the perfect Quiescent Bliss, a thought vibration to accomplish something when that accomplishment was not necessary.

As introduced earlier, Spirit, being the only Substance existent, had nothing other than Itself with which to create. [See Discourse 1.] So in Its infinite consciousness Spirit differentiated—in thought only—between Itself and creation evolved from Itself, just as the varied images in a dream assume a semblance of reality in their relative existence as separate thoughts made of the one mind-stuff of the dreamer’s imagination.

In order to give individuality and independence to Its thought images, Spirit had to employ a cosmic deception, a universal mental magic. Spirit overspread and permeated Its creative desire with cosmic delusion, a grand magical measurer described in Hindu scriptures as maya (from the Sanskrit root m̄a, “to measure”). Delusion divides, measures out, the Undefined Infinite into finite forms and forces. The working of cosmic delusion on these individualizations is called avidya, individual illusion or ignorance, which imparts a specious reality to their existence as separate from Spirit.⁹ Individualized selves possessing the instrumentalities of a human body and mind are gifted with the power of free choice and independent action.

Even though God has created the universe out of delusion, He Himself is not deluded by it. He knows maya as naught but a modification of His one Consciousness. The colossal dramas of creation and dissolution of planets and galaxies; the birth, growth, and decline of empires and civilizations; the countless miniature plays of individual lives with their subplots of health and

sickness, riches and poverty, life and death—all are happening in God as the One Dreamer-Creator, a chimerical perception of change within the Eternally Changeless. One part of the Infinite Being ever remains transcendent, beyond vibratory dualities: There He is the inactive Absolute—Spirit. When Spirit vibrates Its consciousness with thoughts of diversity, It becomes immanent as the omnipresent Creator in the finite vibratory realm of infinity: There God is active as the creative Vibratory Holy Ghost with its immanent Christ Consciousness.

Within the creative Holy Ghost Intelligence are all the governing laws and principles that manifest, sustain, and dissolve every part and particle of the Lord's universe. The Holy Ghost inherited from Spirit the independence to create and govern within the mandated vast scope of the manifesting powers endowed to it.

This Creative Power, which gives birth and nurture to creation, is referred to in Hindu scripture as Maha-Prakriti, Great Nature, the potentials of all becomings. When this power goes forth from Ishvara (God the Father of Creation) as Intelligent Creative Cosmic Vibration, it takes on a dual nature. As Para-Prakriti (Pure Nature) it creates and expresses all good and beauty in harmony with the God-tuned immanent Kutastha Chaitanya (Christ Consciousness). Its divine nature is magnificently expressed in the causal and astral heavenly realms. But as the Vibratory Power descends into material manifestation, it becomes conjointly a deviant Apara-Prakriti (Impure Nature), creating through the circumscriptive laws of gross matter and the uttermost density of delusion.



The origin of Satan, the creative power that rebelled against God

These two aspects of Prakriti correspond to the Christian designations of Holy Ghost and Satan. The Holy Ghost in tune with Christ Consciousness creates goodness and beauty and draws all manifestation toward a symbiotic harmony and an ultimate oneness with God. Satan (from the Hebrew, literally “the adversary”) pulls outward from God into entanglement with the delusive world of matter, employing the mayic cosmic delusion to diffuse, confuse, blind, and bind.

Thus Satan is defined as an archangel that fell from heaven, a force fallen from the grace of attunement with the Holy Creative Vibration of God. Jesus said: “I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven” (Luke

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Satan originated as the natural consequence of God's desireless desire to divide His Sea of Oneness into waves of finite creation—a power of independent will that would wield the laws of material creation to manifest and sustain its existence. The plan of Spirit was that this conscious Cosmic Delusive Force should be endowed with independence in order to use maya and avidya to create God-reflecting finite objects out of Holy Ghost cosmic vibratory energy, in harmonious attunement with the divine Christ Intelligence present therein.

Perfect gems in mines, perfect flowers, perfect animals, and human soul-luminaries residing on perfect planets were thus created, brought forth as material manifestations from the heavenly astral and causal realms. That is why in the Christian Bible we find the ideal Adam and Eve communing with God, so naturally and simply in the abundant Garden of Eden. After a harmonious existence—a perfect expression of form, health habits, and modes of existence on the stage of time, without suffering, disease, cruel accidents, or painful premature death—all created forms were to return to God. Just as rainbows come and go, or as motion-picture forms can be created for entertainment and electrically switched on or off at will, so all created things were to exist as pleasant, mutually entertaining pictures on the screen of space and time, and were to resolve into their pure essence in God at the end of their cycle, after the drama of that period was perfectly played.

Thus originally all Cosmic Energy, being vibrated by the Holy Ghost and Christ Intelligence, was flowing Godward, creating perfect images from astral light turned inward to reveal God. The conscious Cosmic Delusive Force, with its independent power from God, saw that if the cosmic-energy manifestations of the Holy Ghost Vibration were to dissolve back into Spirit according to the divine plan, then its own separate existence would also cease. Without the Holy Vibration, there would be neither a reason for nor sustenance of the Cosmic Delusive Force. This thought frightened Satan; the sole purpose of his being—to keep these forms in manifestation—was threatened. So for his own purpose of self-perpetuation he rebelled against God, as an obstreperous general sometimes turns against his king, and started to misuse his cosmic powers. He manipulated the laws and principles of creation under his command to establish patterns of imperfection that would preclude their automatic resolution back into Spirit. Satan became as lightning falling from heaven because he turned the light of cosmic energy away from its focus on God and concentrated it on gross matter. The heaven-revealing astral light became the bedimmed physical luminaries of sun, fire, electricity, which show only material substances.

Scriptural literature of many persuasions employs a pragmatic imagery of personifying the qualities, acts, and motivations of the Deity and Its hierarchical derivations, inasmuch as the minds of ordinary persons, comfortably closed in a cause-effect view of phenomena, do not easily accommodate divine abstracts unless they too are metaphorically cloaked in familiar guise. God must have a cause to create—His desireless desire—and there must be a rationale for the existence and behavior of a fallen archangel who became a devil, deceiving man and opposing God in ways innumerable—Satan’s desire to perpetuate his own existence.

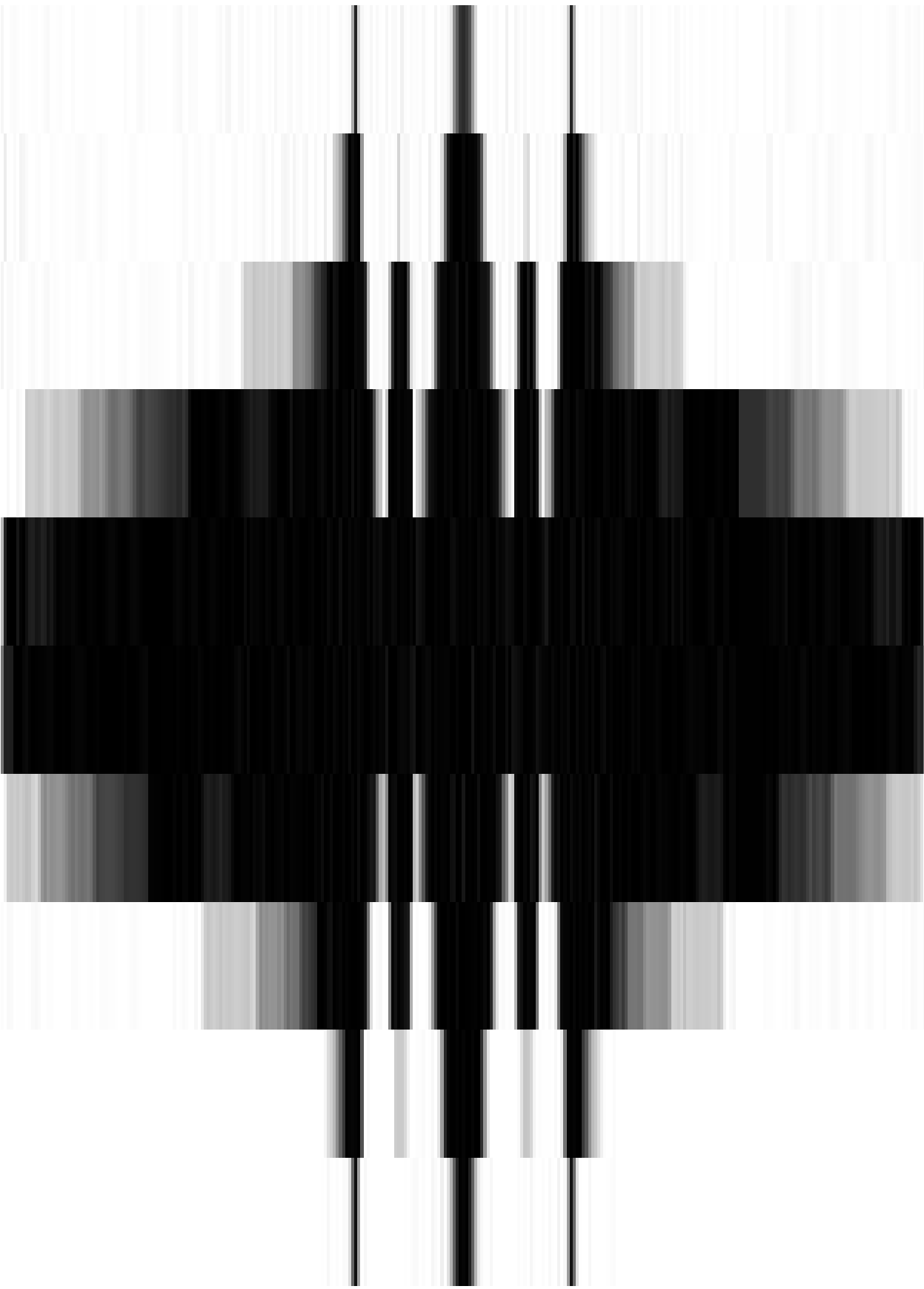
Therefore, it can be said that except in the absolute sense that everything is made of the one Cosmic Consciousness of God, there is no evil in the All-Perfect God. Evil resides in the Adversarial Force that maintains its realm of influence by the gross obscuration of the true God-nature of all created beings. Philosophic sophistry could convincingly make the case that since the duty of Satan as an archangel was to sustain the existence of manifested forms, he fell from heaven just trying to do his job!



The conflict in creation between Christ Consciousness and Satan

In whatever way it has been rationalized, Satan's fall started an enduring conflict between the God-tuned Holy Ghost with its immanent Christ Intelligence, and the matter-bent lover of finite creation, Satan. Satan has conjured an ugly counterpart for every beautiful creation of God in man's body and mind, and in Nature. God created a wondrous human form to be charged by cosmic energy, and to live in a free, unconditioned divine state; but Satan created hunger and the lure of sensory indulgence. For mental power, Satan substituted mental temptation; for soul's wisdom, Satan contrived perplexing ignorance; for the grandeur of Nature, Satan countered with the potentialities of warfare, disease, pestilence, earthquakes, floods—a horde of disasters.

God made man immortal, to reign on earth as an immortal; Satan's evils bound man with the consciousness of mortality. Man was to behold the drama of change with a changeless immortal mind; and after seeing change dancing on the stage of changelessness, he was to return to the bosom of Eternal Blessedness by consciously dematerializing his physical form. If Adam and Eve, the symbolic first beings, had not succumbed to the temptations of Satan, and their descendants had not allowed themselves to be influenced by hereditary ignorance, modern man would not have to experience heartrending, painful deaths through accident and disease. Man, being out of tune with God, has lost the power of dematerialization given to the original human beings, so he lives with the frightening prospect of the movie of life being prematurely cut off before he has finished seeing the whole perfect picture of his changeful life.



How Satan caused the fall of man from divine consciousness

In the temptation of Adam and Eve we see that Satan's evil was at work from the earliest period of creation. It was from my Hindu guru, Swami Sri Yukteswarji, that I received my first clear insight into the esoteric essence of the Christian Bible and its enigmatic story of Adam and Eve. I related his explanation in *Autobiography of a Yogi* and reproduce it in this present context for the edification of the reader.

“Genesis is deeply symbolic, and cannot be grasped by a literal interpretation,” he explained. “Its ‘tree of life’ is the human body. The spinal cord is like an upturned tree, with man's hair as its roots, and afferent and efferent nerves as branches. The tree of the nervous system bears many enjoyable fruits, or sensations of sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. In these, man may rightfully indulge; but he was forbidden the experience of sex, the ‘apple’ at the center of the body (‘in the midst of the garden’).¹⁰

“The ‘serpent’ represents the coiled-up spinal energy [at the base of the spine] that stimulates the sex nerves. ‘Adam’ is reason, and ‘Eve’ is feeling. When the emotion or Eve-consciousness in any human being is overpowered by the sex impulse, his reason or Adam also succumbs.¹¹

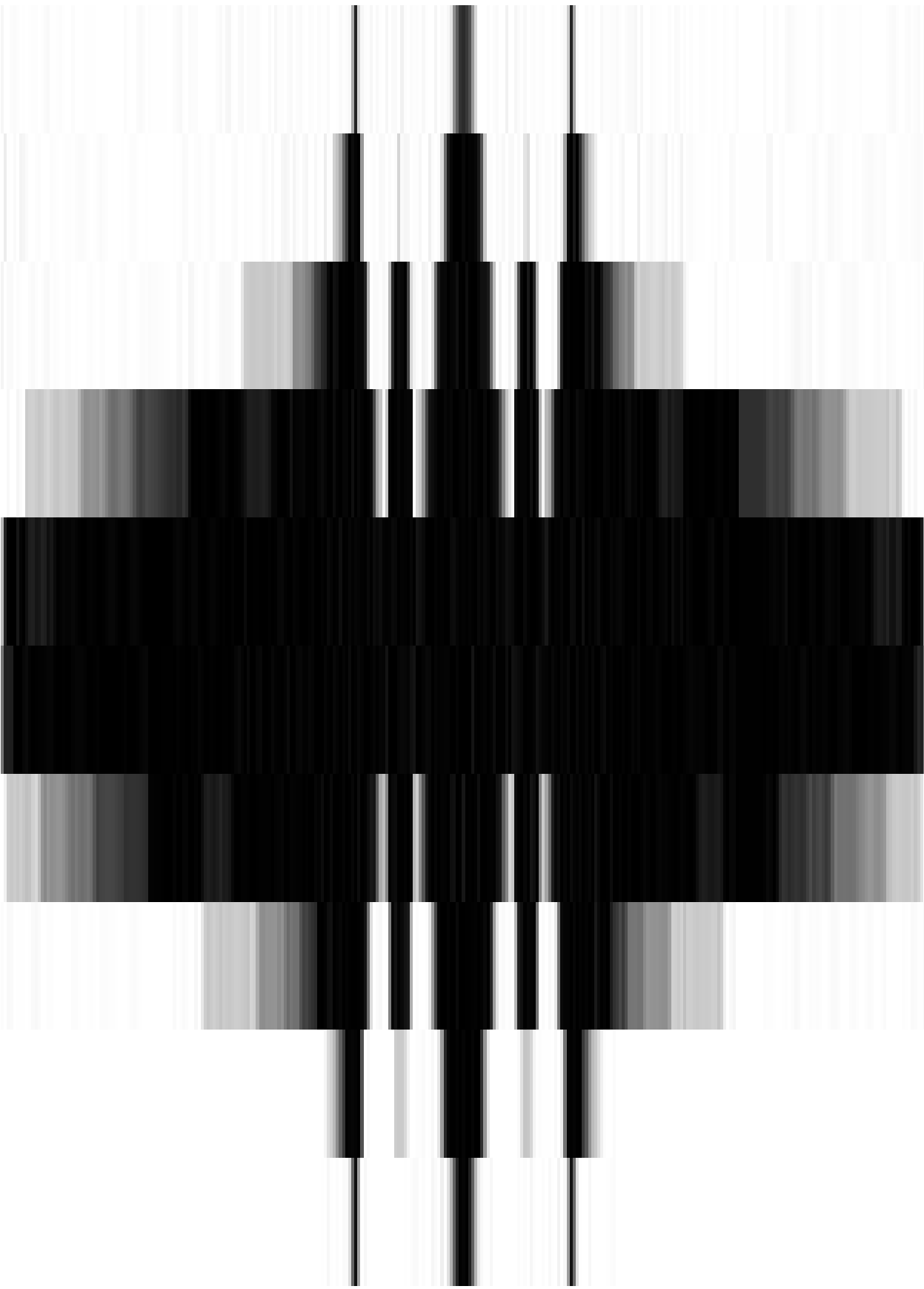
“God created the human species by materializing the bodies of man and woman through the force of His will; He endowed the new species with the power to create children in a similar ‘immaculate’ or divine manner.¹² Because His manifestation in the individualized soul had hitherto been limited to animals, instinct-bound and lacking the potentialities of full reason, God made the first human bodies, symbolically called Adam and Eve. To these, for advantageous upward evolution, He transferred the souls or divine essence of two animals.¹³ In Adam or man, reason predominated; in Eve or woman, feeling was ascendant. Thus was expressed the duality or polarity that underlies the phenomenal worlds. Reason and feeling remain in a heaven of cooperative joy so long as the human mind is not tricked by the serpentine energy of animal propensities.

“The human body was therefore not solely a result of evolution from beasts, but was produced through an act of special creation by God. The animal forms were too crude to express full divinity; man was uniquely given the potentially

omniscient ‘thousand-petaled lotus’ in the brain, as well as acutely awakened occult centers in the spine.

“God, or the Divine Consciousness present within the first created pair, counseled them to enjoy all human sensibilities, with one exception: sex sensations.¹⁴ These were banned, lest humanity enmesh itself in the inferior animal method of propagation. The warning not to revive subconsciously present bestial memories was unheeded. Resuming the way of brute procreation, Adam and Eve fell from the state of heavenly joy natural to the original perfect man. When ‘they knew that they were naked,’ their consciousness of immortality was lost, even as God had warned them; they had placed themselves under the physical law by which bodily birth must be followed by bodily death.

“The knowledge of ‘good and evil,’ promised Eve by the ‘serpent,’ refers to the dualistic and oppositional experiences that mortals under maya must undergo. Falling into delusion through misuse of his feeling and reason, or Eve- and Adam-consciousness, man relinquishes his right to enter the heavenly garden of divine self-sufficiency.¹⁵ The personal responsibility of every human being is to restore his ‘parents’ or dual nature to a unified harmony or Eden.”¹⁶



Delusion of body-identification produces the false idea of death

When Eden, the state of divine consciousness, was lost to the original Adam and Eve, they became intensely identified with the gross physical form and its limitations. They lost their primal innocence, in which they could see themselves as souls encased in a wondrous triune body of consciousness, life force, and atomic radiation. God intended man to behold the human body and mind as delusive thought-forms that provide the soul with a means to experience the Lord's cosmic drama. Ever since the Fall, man has indulged in the ephemeral attractions of bodily pleasures, thereby subjecting himself to countless miseries inherent in body consciousness. Under the influence of Satan, man concentrates on the outward appearances and vicissitudes of life rather than on the underlying immutability. He is thus stricken with the false idea of death as annihilation.

The cosmic motion picture of a man's life seen on earth—his birth, experiences, and death—produces the exhilarating consciousness associated with his birth and the sad concept of his ending in death. Satanic ignorance hides from view man's life as he joyously began the descent from God, and his exultant return to God as he hies back to Him. Satan, by enslaving man's attention to the physical body and senses, makes him forget prenatal and after-death experiences in the superphysical astral realm; and by showing for a time this drama of life and then lowering the curtain of obscurity, has produced a fallacious conception of death.

The change called death is only an outward link in the chain of immortality, the continuity of which is surreptitiously hidden from man's view. It is unmetaphysical and erroneous to say that death does not exist, but it is equally untrue to give to it the reality and finality suggested by delusion. To dismiss the dismal view of the danse macabre, man should learn to behold all permutations as mere wavelets of change appearing and disappearing on the changeless ocean of Infinity.

As it is possible to watch the slow process of a flower budding, blossoming, and disappearing on a movie screen, so man should behold his life pictured on the screen of his consciousness through the stages from childhood to a full-grown individual; and then his disappearance into God of his own accord.



How Satan entraps souls in the mortal labyrinth of earthly reincarnations

Satan saw that it would all be very simple if the immortal children of God, after beholding a perfect earthly existence with a changeless attitude, would go back again to immortality. So Satan tampered with the showing of this perfect picture of life before it had a chance to be completed in God. Satan's delusive machinations introduced mental and bodily pain and sorrow. These devil-born patterns of evil have disturbed the intended desireless, perfect existence of human beings. Dissatisfaction arising from an imperfect, prematurely destroyed picture of life created in man a sense of unfulfillment and the desire to see perfect pictures played out and completed to his satisfaction.

Thus, the immortal soul-images of God forgot their already perfect immortality. They began to exercise their free will in pursuit of a desire for temporal fulfillment. But desire begets a brood of desires, enticing immortals into a mortal labyrinth of cause and effect comings and goings, earthly births and deaths. The law of compensation, that for every action there is a binding reaction, serves as Satan's most effective means of keeping otherwise free souls earthbound. This law of action, karma, which imprisons souls in Satan's kingdom of finitude, makes necessary the constantly revolving wheel of reincarnation. The rebellious Cosmic Delusive Force, through the karmic consequences of man's wrong actions and his mundane desires arising from the dissatisfactions of imperfect living, slaps back into finite existence again and again those beings who earn only a brief respite between incarnations in the astral realm of life after death.

Reincarnation evolved from Satan's attempt to immortalize changeable flesh in order to keep creatures under his subjugation. Flesh, being subject to change, was not perdurable but fated to succumb to the ultimate change of the state called death. Immortal souls in bondage to the karmic law of recurrence could not go back to God with their Satan-engendered imperfect desires, so they had to return repeatedly to earth, through rebirth in new fleshly forms.

Satan, like a fisherman, has cast a net of delusion around all mankind and is continually trying to drag man toward the slavery of delusion, death, and finitude. Satan tempts humanity by his baits of greed, and promises of pleasure, and leads people to destruction and continuous painful reincarnations. He keeps souls, like fish, in the pond of finitude and spawns in them the consciousness of

mortal limitations and desires in order to make them reincarnate on earth—again and again. As one desire is fulfilled, Satan insinuates into the consciousness new desires by ingenious temptations lest the soul escape his devilish earthly nets.

In a way, Satan provided a means, witlessly acting as the tool of God, to ultimately free souls from their mortal attachments. Reincarnation assures freedom, for it gives immortal souls ample time and opportunities to divest themselves of all false notions of earthly fulfillment, and to realize through wisdom their already perfect divine natures. With the expiration of desires and karmic consequences from wrong determinations, they will be liberated.

It has to be conceded that Satan is exceedingly clever to be able to captivate immortals with material tawdry, after successfully mesmerizing them with forgetfulness of their endowment of divine treasure. Satan uses this forgetfulness to hold all created beings in their finite state, identified with the physical body and consequent slavery to material attachment, instinct, and conscious and unconscious desires for finite experiences. Until man regains his lost Eden on earth, he remains an exile, constrained by the law of reincarnation to strive ceaselessly for the outworking of his human longings.



Satan's strategies of pain and sorrow, and how man may defeat them

Satan has a subtle strategy for propagating desires: the introduction of the idea of pain, which is purely a mental phenomenon. The original humans had great self-control and a mind that was impersonally nonattached to the body, and so did not feel pain when the body was injured. Originally, pain as a part of creation was simply a heightened sense of awareness to protect the fragile physical and mental instrumentalities from injurious clashes with the objects and laws of gross matter. But by increasing man's attachment to the body and ego, and thereby his mental sensitiveness to their complaints, Satan made pain excruciating. Every impingement of discomfort, physical or emotional, great or small, creates a desire for appeasement.

Similarly with the affliction of sorrow imposed by Satan on the phenomenon of death: Death was to have been a conscious, happy transition from the changeful body to Changeless Spirit. That was God's idea of death. Satan so influenced man's consciousness to desire lasting happiness in the physical body that death became a dreaded, painful parting from the mortal form, causing unconsciousness at the time of transition. Because of Satan's delusion, man fails to see the godly event that death was meant to be—a promotion, a liberation from toilsome, imperfect earth-life to perfect, everlasting freedom in God. Rather, the grief at being forced to depart the material playground engenders a Satan-devised desire to come back.

Ultimately, however, Satan defeats his own purpose; for physical pain and sorrow are also prods that at last cause matter-weary souls to seek their preordained freedom in God.

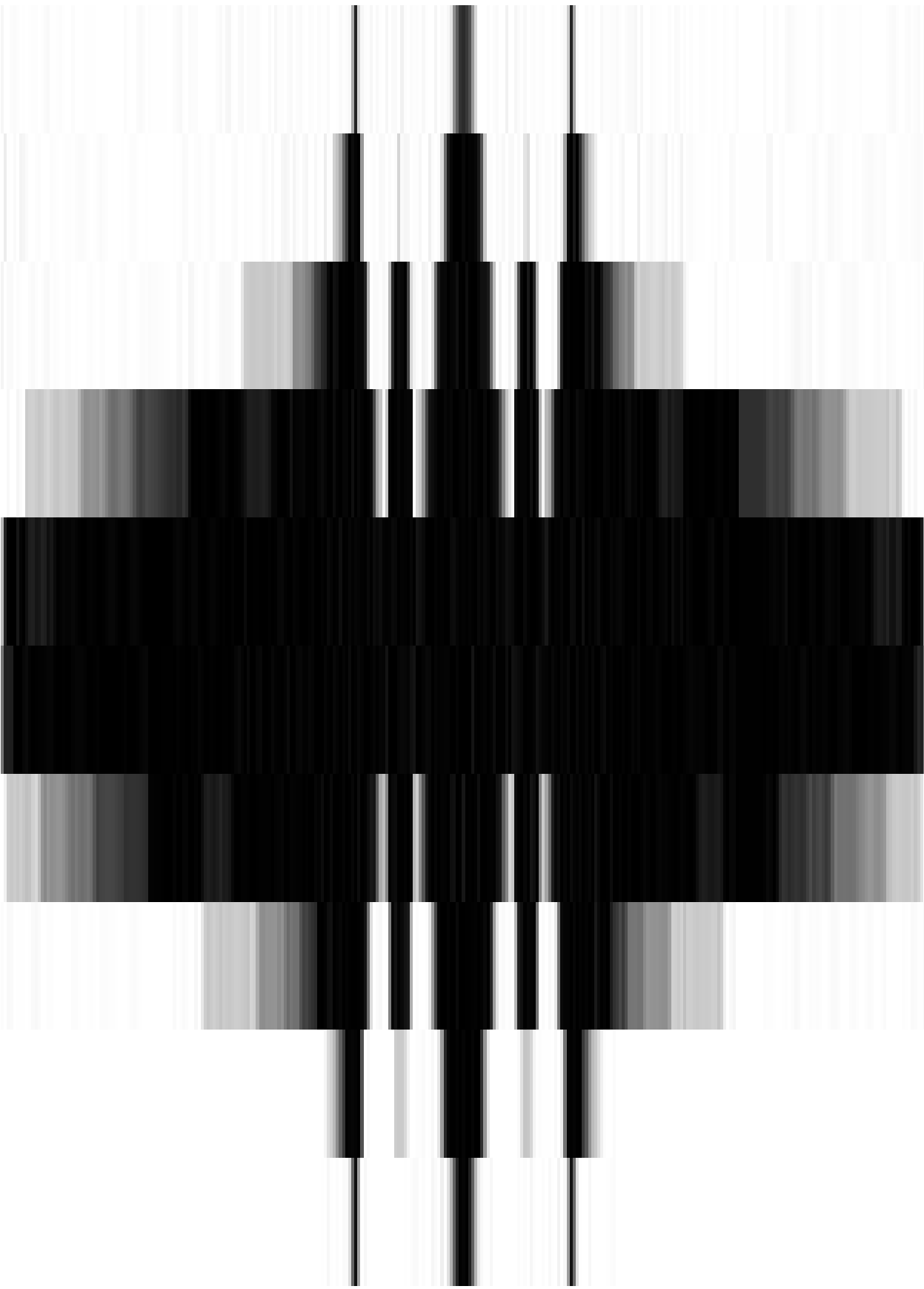
Emancipation is hastened by playing the living drama of a perfect life of health, abundance, and wisdom with a detached mental aboveness. Satan-engendered dualities of pain and sorrow are greatly lessened by a strong mind that does not exacerbate suffering by fear or nervous imagination. That is, if one can remove the consciousness of sickness and not fear illness if it does come; and not crave health while suffering from ill health, this helps one to remember one's own soul, the transcendent Self that has never undergone the fluctuations of either sickness or health, but has always been perfect.¹⁷ If one can feel and know that he is a child of God, and as such possesses everything, even as his Father God

does—whether he be poor or rich—he can be free. If one can believe in his soul-omniscience, even while endeavoring to add to his little store of knowledge, he can transcend the ignorance of delusion.

All dualities belong to the domain of ignorance: fear of sickness and a desire for mortal health, fear of poverty and a desire for opulence, a feeling of inferiority from a lack of knowledge as well as a desire for a great intellect. Of course, if one is stricken with ill health, failure, or ignorance, this doesn't mean he should supinely continue in that state. He should rouse the perfection within him to express outwardly as health, prosperity, and wisdom, but without acknowledging the pain of lack or the fear of failure. Man should know that his struggle for completeness is born of delusion; for he already has all he needs within his inner powerful Self. It is only because he mistakenly imagines, while identifying himself with spiritually ignorant mortal company, that he is lacking in these divine endowments. He needs only to realize the everlasting fullness of his soul treasure-house.

The ignorant man stubbornly dreams about lack and failure, when he might instead claim his birthright of joy, health, and plenty as a son of the Ruler of the Universe. He is even now, in his transcendent Self, living in his perfect kingdom, yet in his mortal consciousness persistently dreaming Satan's evils.¹⁸

God's awakening touch in meditation is the way to be free from pernicious delusions. Divine contact with the Perfect Fulfillment destroys utterly all seeds of earthly longings and attachments. The soul instantly recalls its inheritance of Eternal Bliss, which makes a mockery of all desires for exiguous earthly ways.



Man's place in the conflict between God's goodness and Satan's temptations

God in His omniscience must surely have anticipated the origin of evil in the outgoing powers of His creative archangel. But even though delusive duality was the only means by which God could organize a cosmic play in order to enjoy Himself through His many selves, He assured that no convolution of His design would be outside the embrace of His Goodness reflected ubiquitously in the Christ Consciousness. This magnetic power of God's love would in time attract all beings back to Him through evolution into divine awakening.

By an infinite display in nature and the life of man, God's Goodness advertises itself to impress man and influence him to turn of his own free will toward the Abode of Bliss. Satan counteracts in every instance with deceptive, charmingly pleasant contrivances of temporary satisfaction to dupe gullible man into seeking permanent happiness in impermanent materiality. People succumb to Satan's offerings because he puts honey in his evil pleasures; they taste nice in the beginning but end in dire consequences.

The Almighty could annihilate Satan in an instant. By divine fiat He could wholly subjugate the Satanic Force. Various world scriptures speak of partial dissolutions of the earth because of excessive evils. As described in Genesis, much of the earth during Noah's time was devastated by a flood. But God does not illogically use His omnipotence to arbitrarily destroy His self-perpetuating creation, for that would contradict His own laws and the independence of action given by Him to Satan, empowering that Force to use these principles of manifestation.

Since God gave independence to man as well as to Satan, He can free souls only with their permission and cooperation. Satan has created such a delusive attachment to the instrumentality of a physical body that even if God were at this moment to offer liberation to the masses, I daresay not many would be eager to depart this merry playground—to leave behind their accustomed bodily residence with its possessions and sensory opportunities. To most persons even the concept of an existence in heaven is of a familiarly similar, though far more glorious, sentient bodily form and habitation. The body-identified sense-oriented are rigidly unconvinced that it is worthwhile to forgo known pleasure for the arcane bliss of Spirit. So many learning experiences must be undergone before

man is ready to use his free will to choose God above all else. Earth, in the meantime, is the schoolhouse in which he must pass examinations in how to discriminate and choose between the soul-binding delusive patterns of Satan and the liberating patterns of God.

Man rebelliously protests: If God knows that we are suffering, why does He, being almighty and eternally blessed, allow weak mortals to suffer from the temptations and scourge of evil? It should not be assumed that God is enjoying His eternal blessed state in selfish happiness; He is suffering the tragedies of man's existence, delayed evolution on earth, and belated return to Paradise through all-emancipating wisdom. His compassion is not elsewhere expressed more munificently than in His incarnate sons, divine saviors, through whom His silent Voice speaks audibly to man. Jesus, as a manifestation of God, came to speak for God of the eternal kingdom of Heaven, upon whose threshold no sorrow can tread. His message of God's love is that permanent happiness can be found only in God: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt" (Matthew

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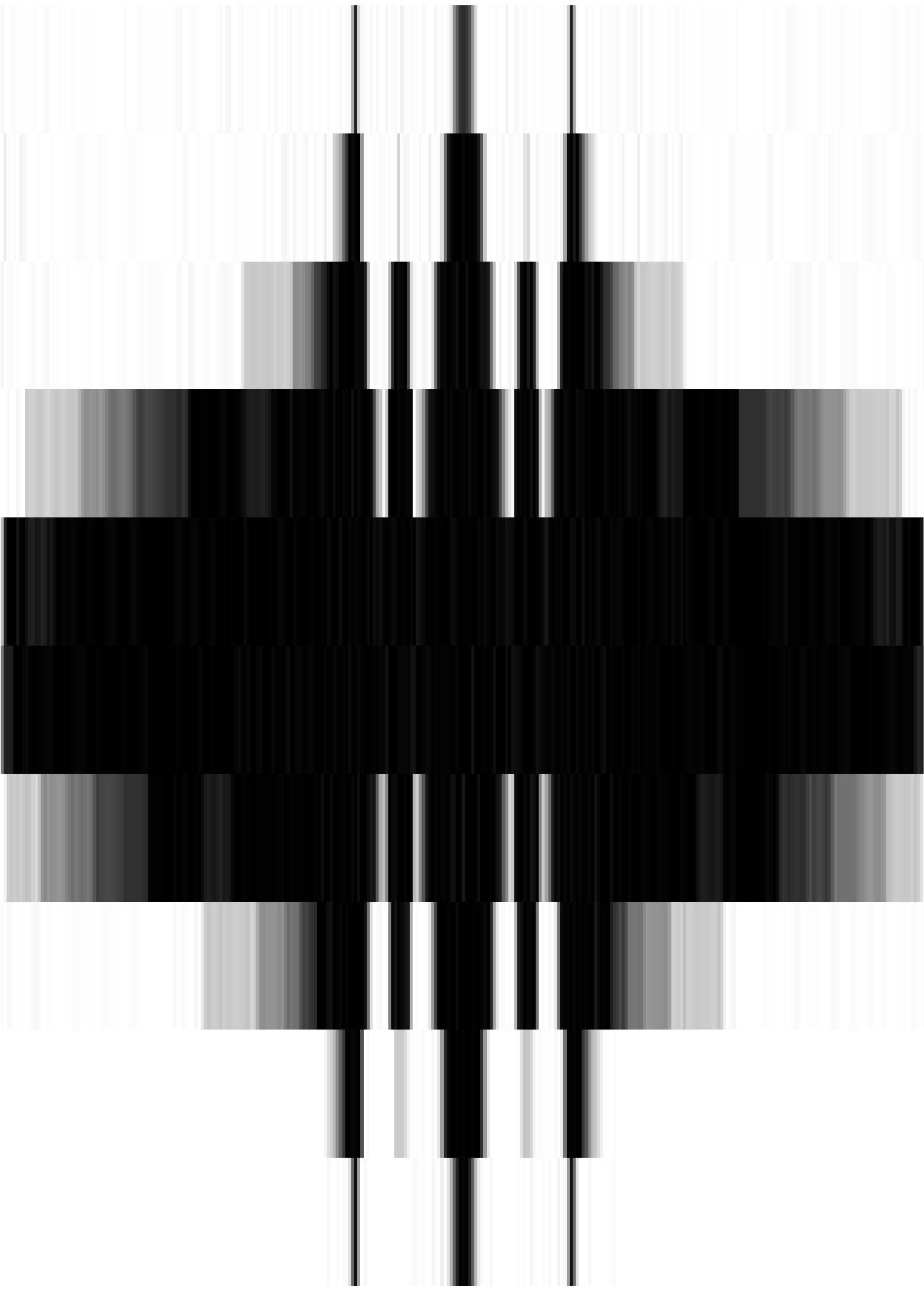
Possessing Christ Consciousness, Jesus realized fully the tug-of-war between the perfect, universally intelligent Holy Ghost Vibration manifesting Divine Goodness and Satan's pull of imperfection toward the evil in finite creation. He exemplified the love of God the Father, and that Father's eagerness to alleviate man's suffering and ignorance, as God's power flowed through him to heal the maladies of body, mind, and spirit. He represented God's love for erring humanity in acts and sermons of forgiveness and compassion that showed how God is continuously trying to use the superior force of Divine Love expressed as parental, friendly, filial, and all-surrendering pure conjugal love to coax man to forsake his cooperation with Evil's forces of hate, anger, jealousy, lust, and selfishness. And he exhorted those he blessed to repent of their past wrong actions that had caused their suffering: "Go and sin no more."

Man cannot be held responsible for being tempted: Satan interjected into the

perfect makeup of man's sentient being the potentials for terrible physical enticements that constantly urge him to transgress morally and spiritually. Satan thereby tries to keep human beings deluded by greed, anger, fear, desire, attachment, and ignorance; so God uses the psychological counterparts of self-control, calmness, courage, satisfaction, unattached divine love, and wisdom to bring man to His Divine Kingdom. Though temptation is Satan's doing, man is responsible for not using his reason and will power to conquer evil by knowing and following God's laws of happiness.

The gauntlet flung at the feet of Everyman is to face Evil, battle it with the armaments of wisdom, and win the victory.¹⁹

The duplexity of Satan as both subjective and objective accounts for the whole of evil manifestations. An objective Satan, as an independent adversarial force opposing Divinity, explains the origin of evil that cannot be relegated solely to the individual or collective subjective ignorance of man. Satan has to be acknowledged as conjointly the objective evil in nature, and as a power that can also work as the wrong subjective consciousness in man.



Perceiving the taintless Spirit by transcending the dualities of delusion

Recognizing the existence of Satan does not negate the conception of one God who alone is the Alpha and Omega in the cosmos. In essence, in reality, there is nothing but Spirit, the only Substance: ever-existing, ever-conscious, ever-new Bliss. The evil of delusion exists only in form, not in the essence of the Spirit. As long as there is creation, a coalescence of finite phenomena in the Infinite Substance, formal delusion will produce the consciousness of a conception of imperfection apart from the Absolute Inimitability.

In St. John

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it is written: “He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not.”²⁰ Spirit, the Prime Cause and Substance of creation, pervades the creation It has made; but the world neither perceives nor understands this Divine Inherence. “Made” does not mean created as man builds a house. Rather, as water transforms itself into ice, so the Spirit, by the condensing power of will, materialized Itself by cosmic delusion into a fabulous universe. “He came unto his own, and his own received him not.” That is, having manifested Itself as Its own creation, that creation did not “receive,” did not reflect, its true Spirit Essence. The illusory dichotomy falsely defined matter as a substance apart from Spirit, whereas nothing exists that is not Spirit, everlastingly indivisible.

Spirit is perceived as the only Reality, the sole Eternal Substance, when one’s consciousness enters the deep samadhi experience of divine union with Spirit. After attaining this realization, one is then qualified to say assuredly that there is neither a subjective nor objective Satan, but only the blissful Spirit. However,

while the incarnate soul views its existence as a part of the dualities of creation, there must needs be acknowledgment that God and Satan are facts, even if the latter exists only in a delusive, relative nonreality. If one is dreaming, he cannot deny the resultant dream pain of the collision of his dream head with a dream-conceived wall. While dreaming the delusion of the universe, one cannot say that Satan or evil, or pain, or disease, and matter do not exist. This transcendent overview sets apart one who awakens in Cosmic Consciousness. His soul rejoices in the repossession of its memory of wisdom: “Ah, nothing exists but Pure Eternal Goodness—the one Immutable Spirit.”

While Jesus was striving to reach the final state of complete absorption in Spirit—enacting the full drama of human consciousness to set a pattern for the world—Satan began to tempt him and try to dissuade him from God through the accumulated memory of subjective and objective evil born of delusive mortal habits of incarnations of short-lived pleasures from contact with finite sensory objects.

Jesus did not deny this Evil Force. His intuitive knowledge recognized this power as a conscious Satan who lured him with the patterns of evil arrayed side by side with the divine patterns of God. Addressing this objectified Force, Jesus destroyed its binding effect with the power of wisdom in his command: “Get thee behind me, Satan”—which is to say: “Let delusion be left behind my soul racing toward Spirit.”

It is folly to deny subjective or objective evil while one is still grappling with delusion. The urgent need is to be watchful and protect oneself from the destructive patterns of evil everywhere, as temptations within and as imperfection and strife in Nature. One should never think it possible to best Satan at his own game. Just when one feels sure of invulnerability, the devil tricks his opponent with some ruse and the challenger loses. It is better not to enter into sport with his temptations. There are plenty of entertaining good games in God’s playing fields in which to test one’s mettle and prove oneself a worthy winner. One should rally the patterns of the Christ Consciousness—inspired goodness in one’s conscience and reason, and in the presence of God as the harmony and beauty in all Nature. When the consciousness of goodness is strengthened, its light dispels the perilous darkness of Satan’s evil influence.



“Get Thee Behind Me, Satan”

And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being forty days tempted of the devil....And Jesus answered and said unto him, “Get thee behind me, Satan.”

—Luke 4:1–2, 8

Every time man is tempted to do wrong, he should remind himself that it is not his subjective mind alone that is tempting him, but also objective Satan. He should adamantly refuse to cooperate with the Evil One who would destroy him. That is why Jesus said, “Get thee behind me, Satan” when that Evil Force showed him kingdoms of temporal glory, which could be his if he worshiped delusion....By emerging victorious from temptation, he is a shining example for all souls struggling to regain their divine sonhood.

—Paramahansa Yogananda

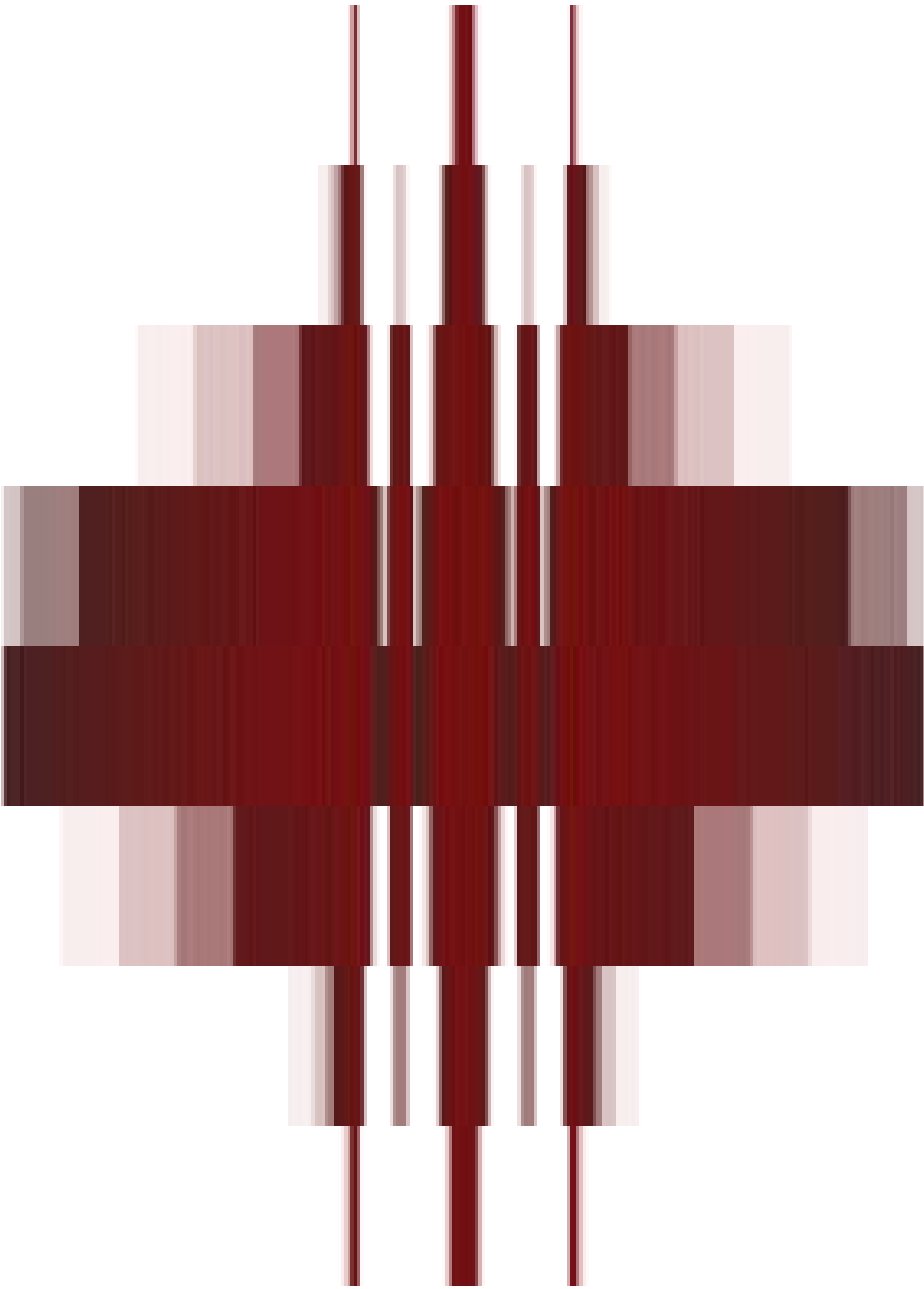
Drawing by Heinrich Hofmann



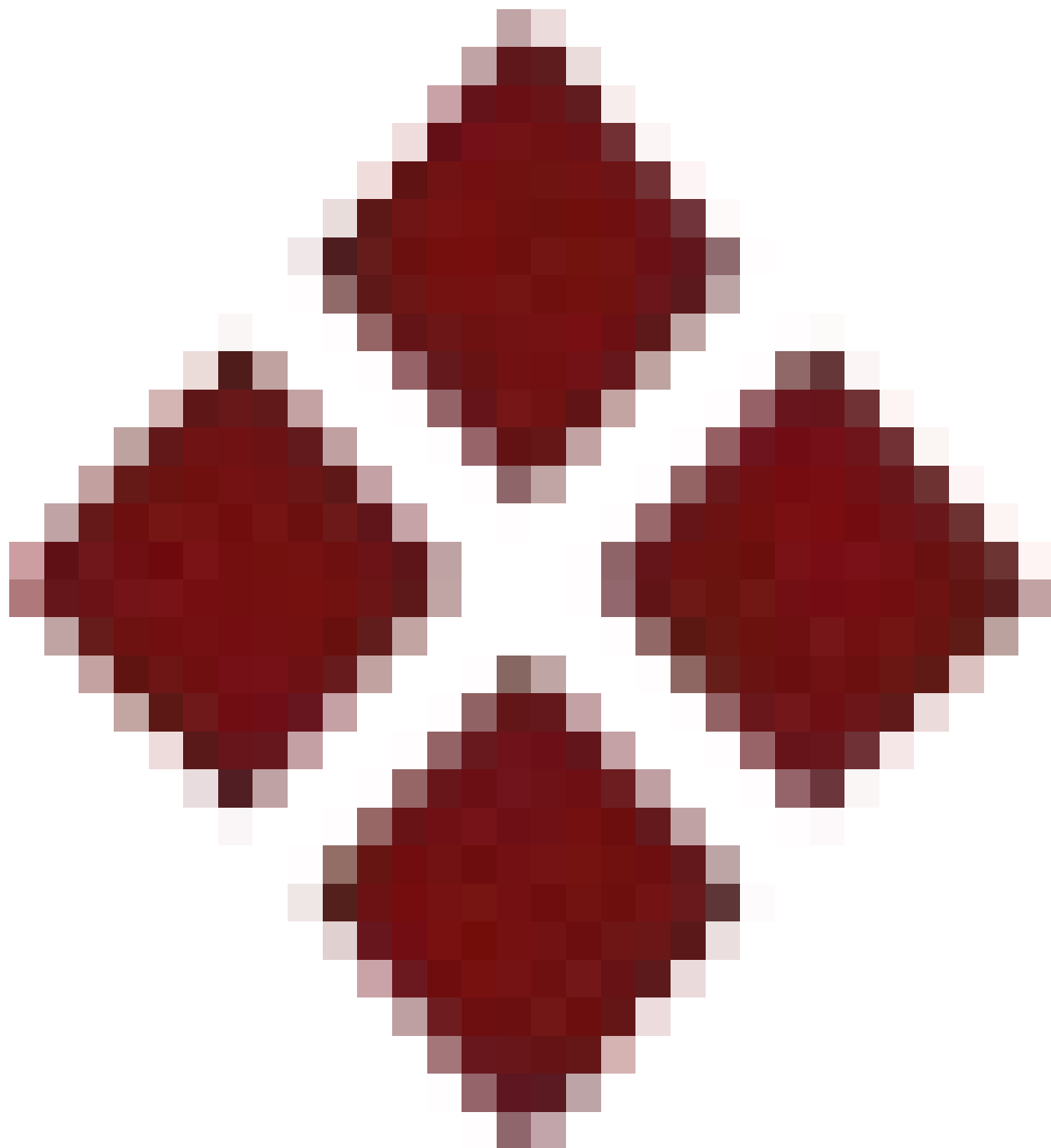


Discourse 8

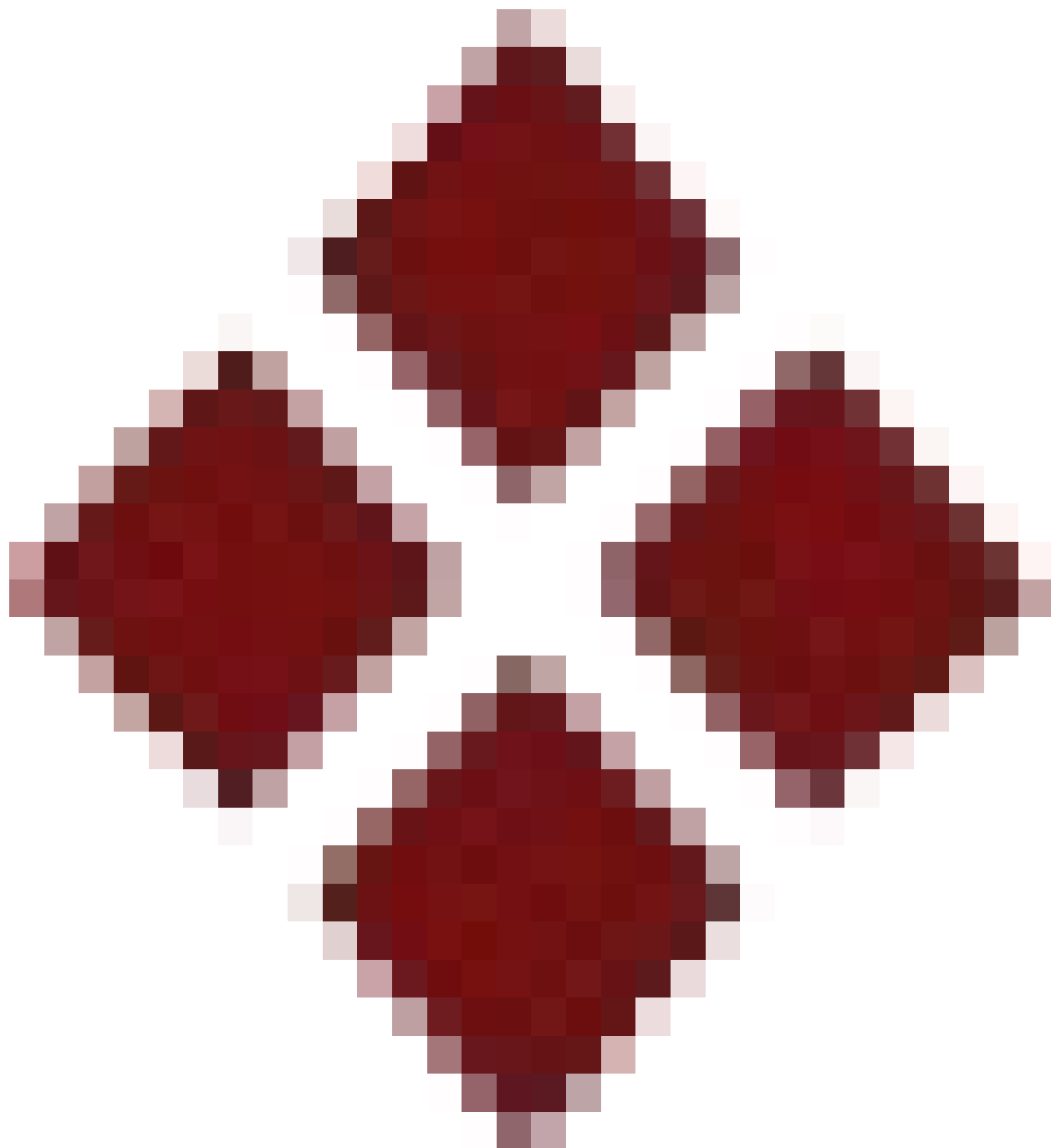
Jesus' Temptation in the Wilderness



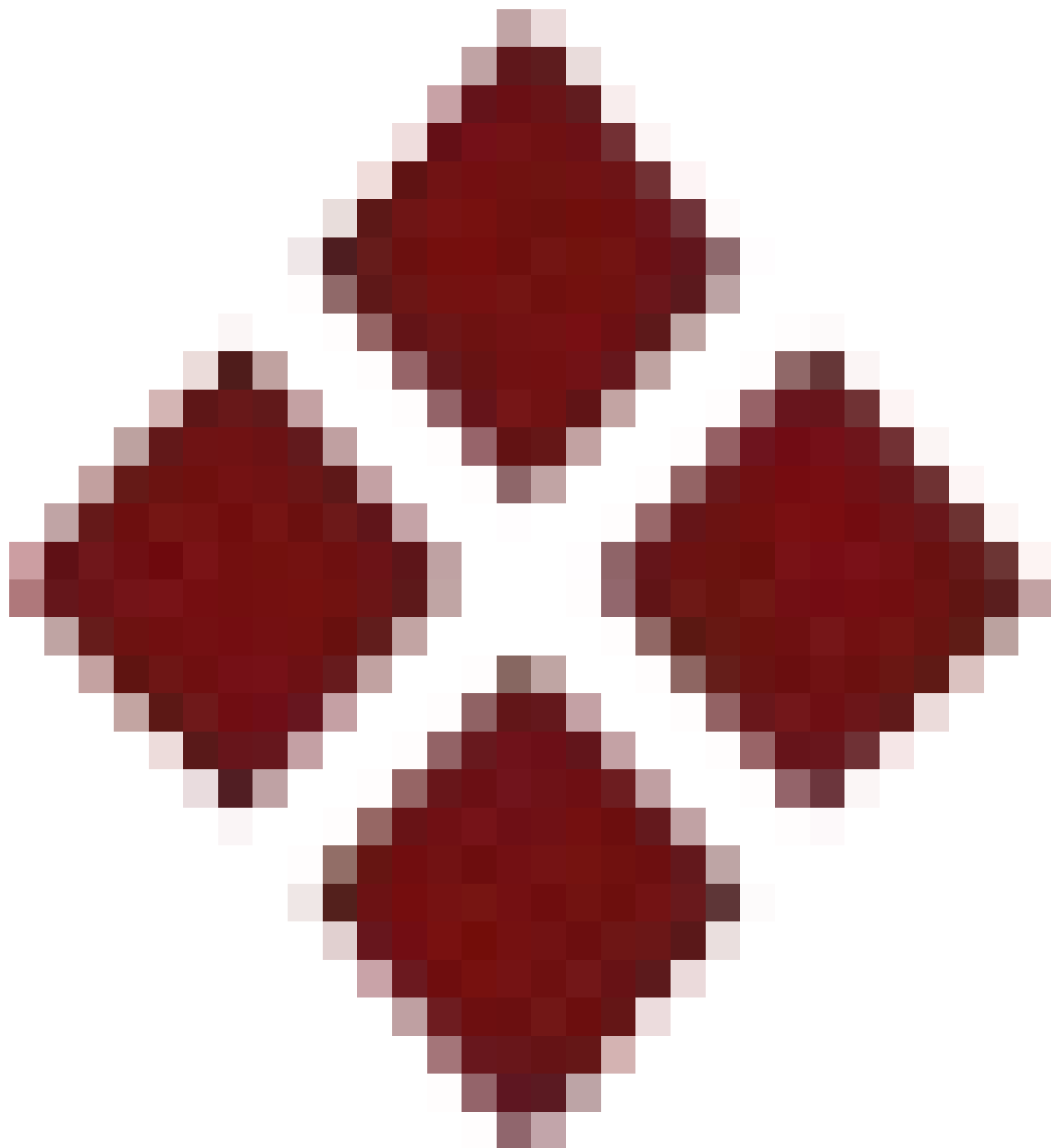
The Human and Divine Nature of Jesus



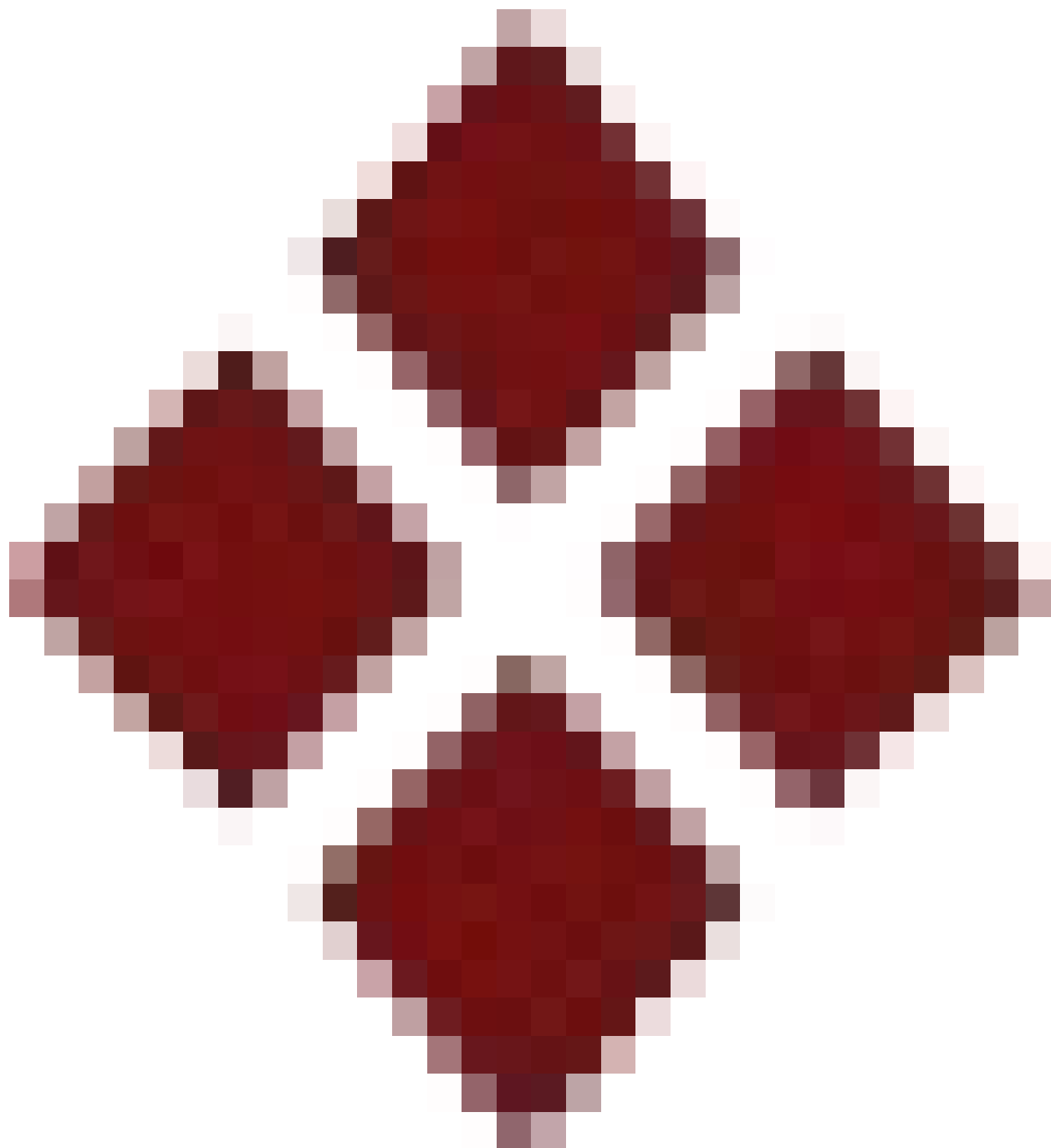
How Satan Tempted Jesus to Forsake His Unconditioned Divine State



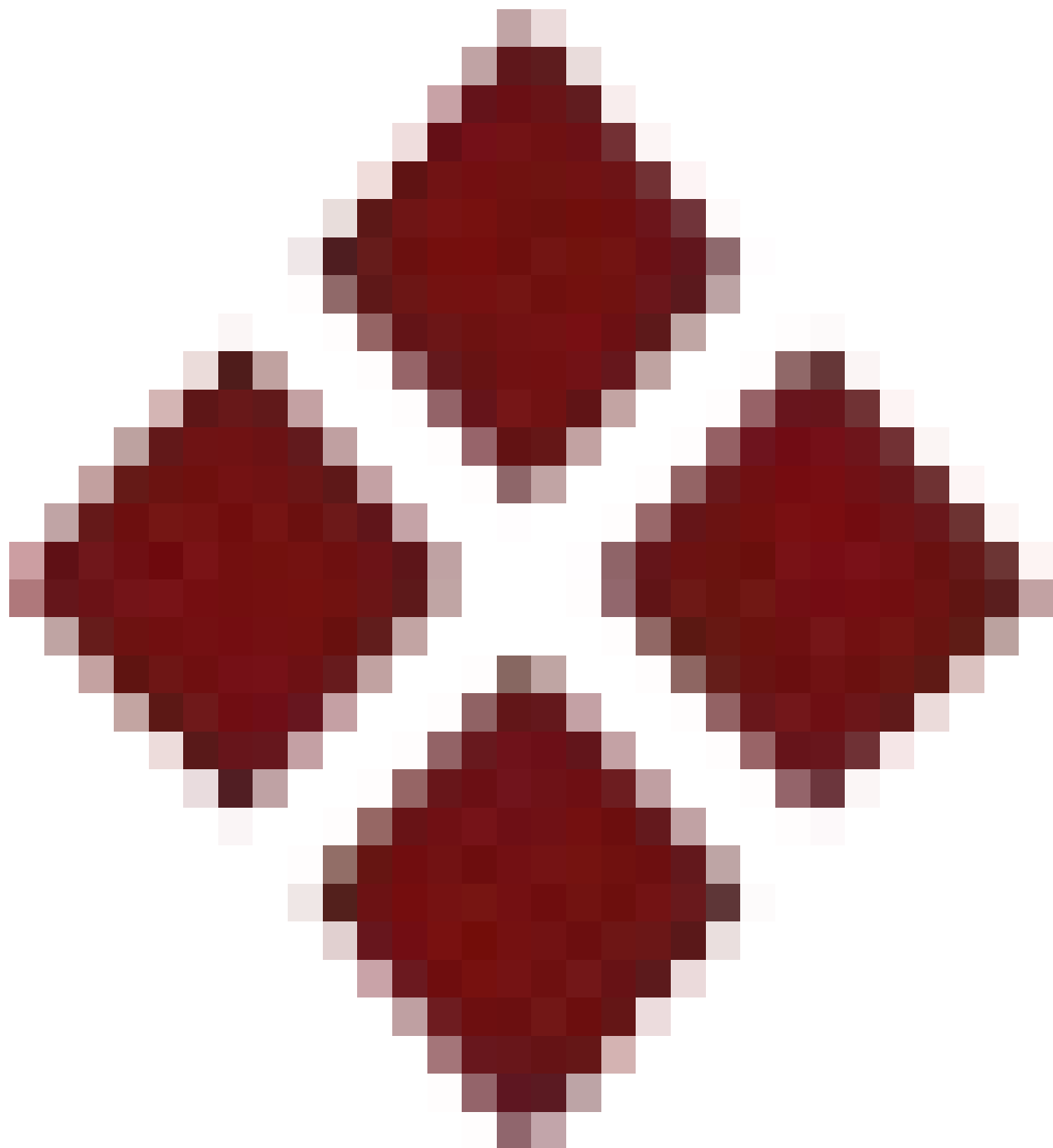
Metaphysical Meaning of “Mouth of God”



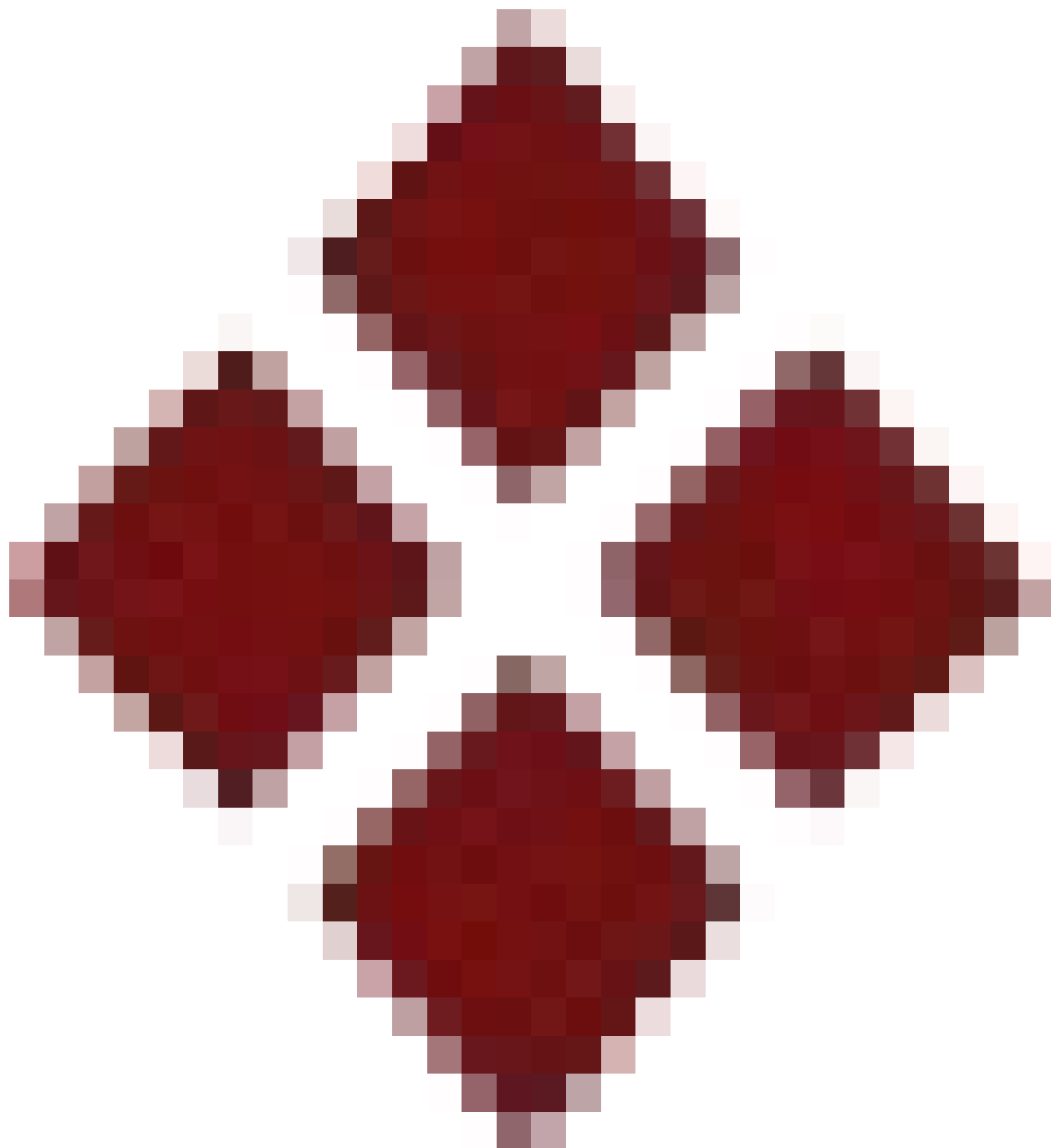
The Yoga Science of Mastering the Energies That Sustain the Body



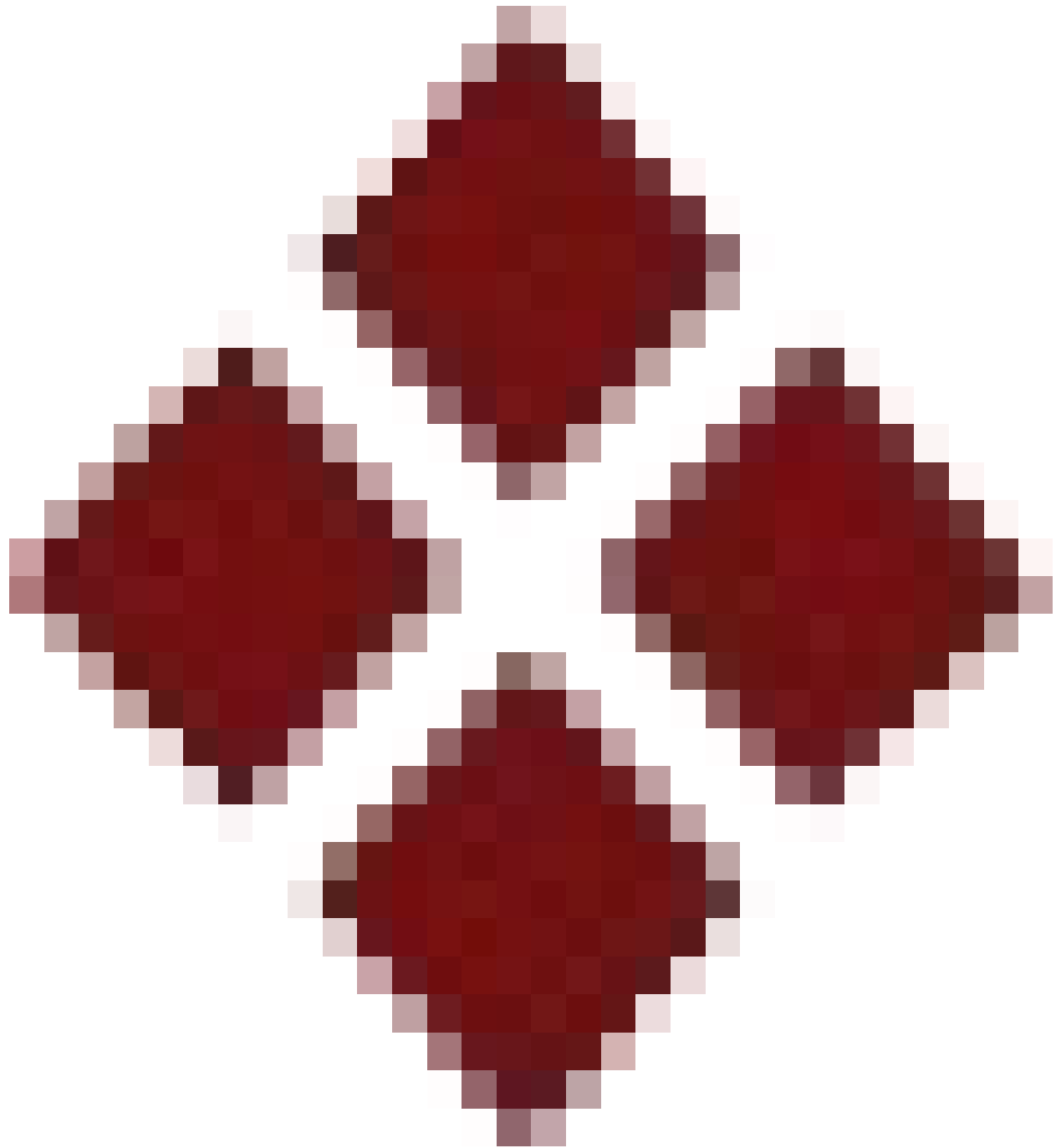
The Spiritual Lesson in Jesus' Refusal to Change Stones Into Bread



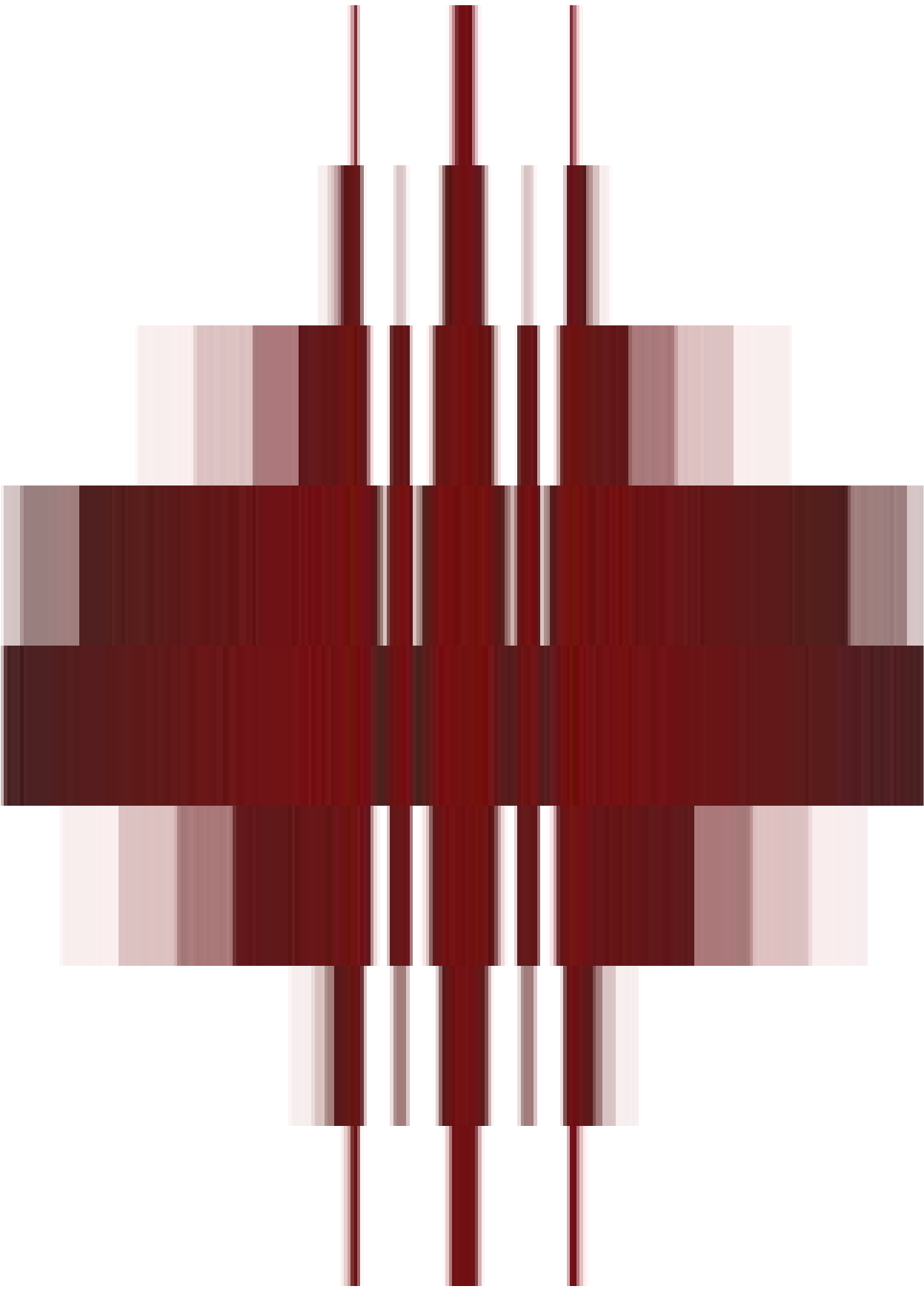
Symbolism of “the Holy City” and “Pinnacle of the Temple”



**Man's Free Choice and Power of Reason Are His
Redemption**



**In Highest Samadhi, “the Devil” of Delusive Dualities
Departs From Man’s Consciousness**



“Jesus was both human and divine...Jesus the man met with temptations, he wept, he suffered like any other human being; but he exerted his will supremely to overcome evil and the delusion of his material nature.

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”Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred. And when the tempter came to him, he said, “If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.”

But he answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.’ ”

Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, “If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, ‘He shall give His angels charge concerning thee’: and ‘in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.’ ”

Jesus said unto him, “It is written again, ‘Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.’ ”

Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto him, “All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.”

Then saith Jesus unto him, “Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, ‘Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.’ ” Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

— Matthew 4:1 – 11



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Discourse 8

Jesus' Temptation in the Wilderness



Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred. And when the tempter came to him, he said, “If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.”

But he answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God’” (Matthew 4:1 – 4).¹

Jesus, in lifting himself from the Holy Ghost state of omnipresent Cosmic Vibration and its Christ Consciousness immanent in vibratory space into oneness with Cosmic Consciousness—the transcendental, vibrationless God the Father as well as the Father’s reflection as the universal Christ Consciousness—experienced a matterward pull of cosmic delusion, a reminder of confining, limiting, human habits of incarnations. The Divine Spirit had led Jesus into the silence of the wilderness to be tested, to see if his Christ Consciousness could be retained despite the deluding influence of all mortal memories.

A superman, even though he is fixed in a high state of consciousness by deep meditation, is still subject to the temptations of Cosmic Delusion so long as he dwells in the realm of maya. The demands of a bodily form will coerce him to recollect past-life and postnatal memories of dependence on sensory experiences and enjoyment of their offerings. While Jesus was engaged in the divine bliss contact of God, he was “tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts” (Mark

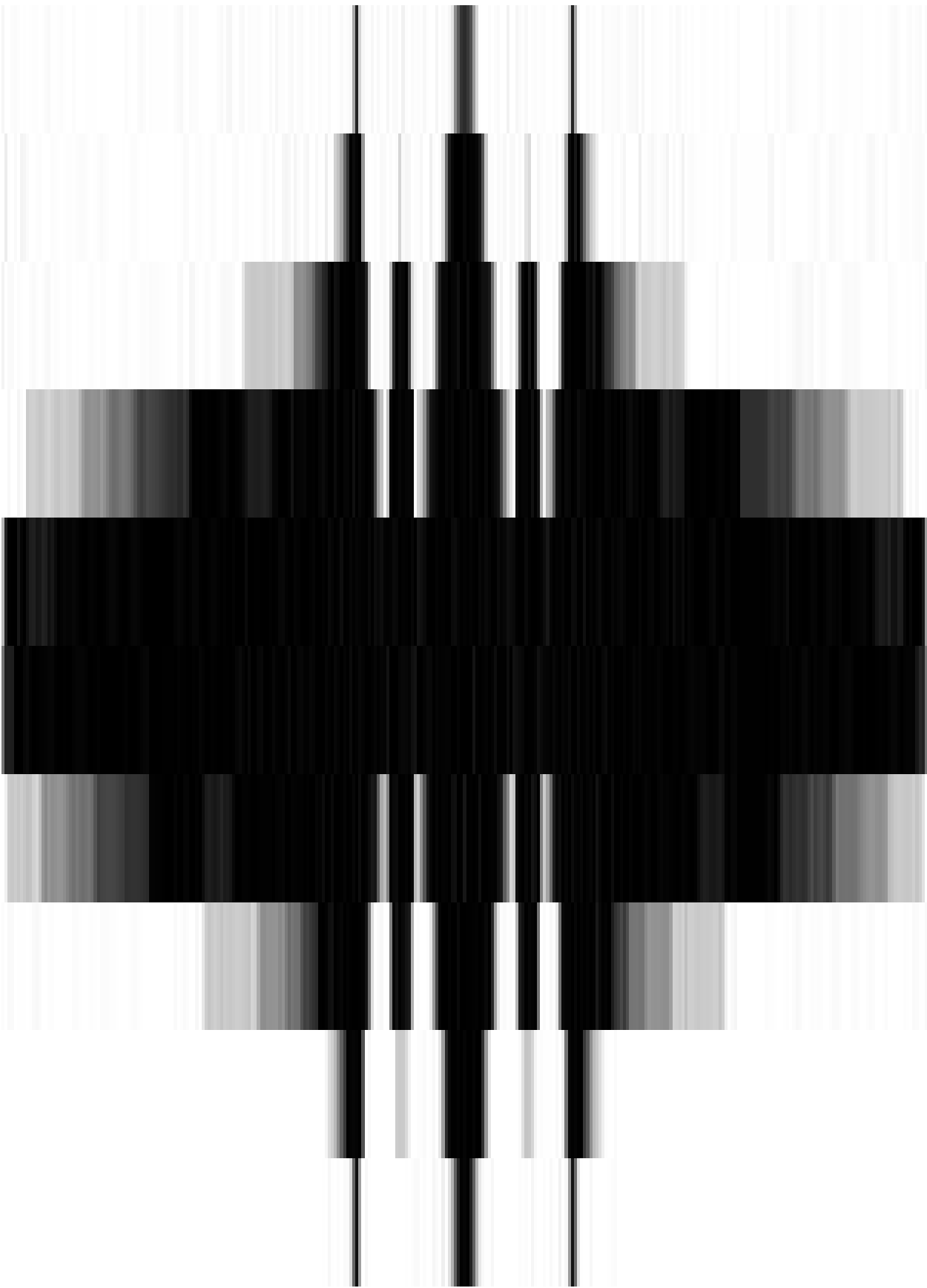
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). The cosmic delusion of metaphysical Satan instigated psychological temptations of beastly passions, of cunning allurements for power and possessions, and of fierce mortal desires issuing from physical pain and hunger to entice him away from his transcendent wisdom-perceptions. The apostles

relate that for forty days and nights in the wilderness solitudes Jesus was “tempted of the devil.” With God as his sole witness and ally, he fought off the Evil Force with fasting to conquer the delusions of body consciousness, prayer to strengthen the mind in faith and determinate will, and the ecstasy of meditation that reaffirmed the identity of his soul as an awakened son of God.



The human and divine nature of Jesus

A Jesus who was a ready-made, imported-from-heaven son of God, already complete and perfect, would have no temptations to overcome. The machinations of Satan, and Jesus' victory, would then be nothing more than divine acting. How could that accomplishment be a human ideal? A God-manufactured spiritual being has no credit of being what one should become by self-effort, and is therefore no exemplar for struggling, temptation-riddled human beings.

The inspiring truth is that Jesus was both human and divine: he was a liberated soul, one of the greatest that ever came on earth; and he was a human, who by spiritual labor of past incarnations of self-discipline, prayer, and meditation had reaped the plenteous spiritual harvest of God Consciousness. Through his accumulated development, he exteriorized the potential image of God Consciousness hidden within him; he became a Christ, one endowed with Christ Consciousness. It was during the Christ state, in which he could feel his consciousness in every atomic cell of his cosmic body of all matter, that he could act as a savior of mankind. Only a soul who attains this universality is able to feel perfect identity with God, qualified thereby to become an emissary of the Divine.

The Heavenly Father sent Jesus on earth to serve His misery-laden children as a spiritual example. Jesus the man met with temptations, he wept, he suffered like any other human being; but he exerted his will supremely to overcome evil and the delusion of his material nature, and ultimately succeeded. Two quotations from Saint Paul bear on this point:

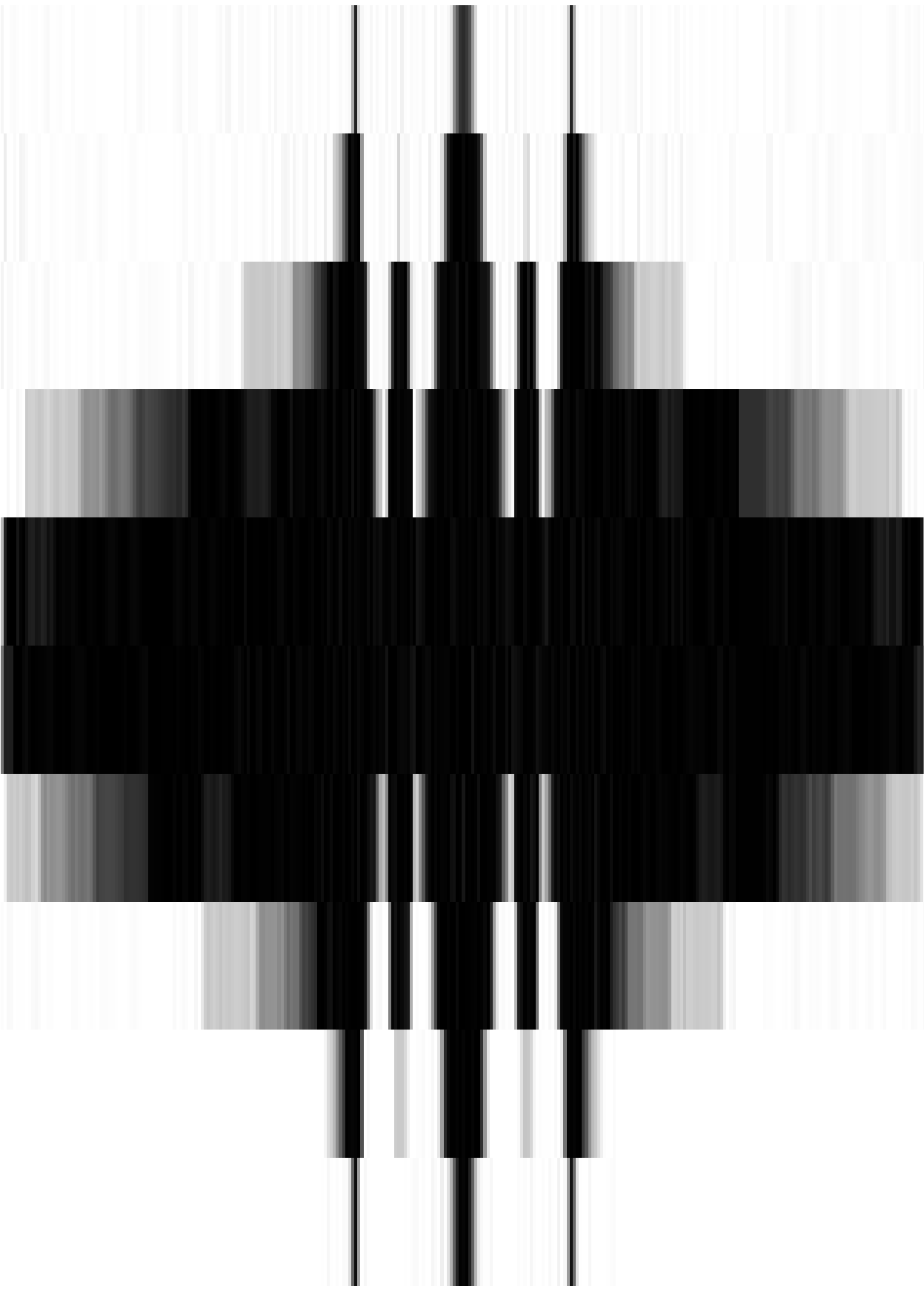
For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.

Wherefore in all things it behoves him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered

being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted (Hebrews 2:16 – 18).

For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin (Hebrews 4:15).

All prophets of God during their earthly incarnations were tested and had to overcome the human frailties of mortal embodiment in order to attain the final state of mergence in Cosmic Consciousness. A master's striving to regain finality while on earth sets an ideal pattern for other advancing souls.



How Satan tempted Jesus to forsake his unconditioned divine state

The ordinary man's encounter with "the Tempter" is primarily as subjective ideas subtly luring him through prenatal and postnatal bad habits and the come-hither attraction of his material environment. To obstruct the highly advanced, Satan may take objective form and use vibratory voices in his desperate last attempt to dissuade the Godward-fleeing master.

Great masters approaching final liberation can distinctly see Satan and his legions of evil spirits take personified forms to mount a decisive resistance against the masters' liberation in Spirit. Satan mysteriously tries great devotees of God with various temptations that come unpredictably into their lives as they advance spiritually. These alone are often sufficiently effective to achieve Satan's purposes. But when devotees are very near God, Satan then forsakes his subtleties and from his hiding place openly appears to defy the Lord's saints. Buddha was confronted by Mara who appeared to him in the shape of dancing-girls, tempting him to give up his divine bliss for sensual pleasure and comfort for his body emaciated by ascetic discipline. When Buddha remained unaffected, final liberation came to him. Similarly, when Satan saw a resurgence of spiritual power in Jesus, sundering the incarnating bonds of maya, he took an objective shape, talked to him, and promised him the temporal happiness which all his evil patterns of life could afford if Jesus would only forsake God.

During Jesus' forty days of fasting and self-denial, his consciousness remained on an exalted plane of spiritual duality: On the one side blessed by Spirit, and on the other cajoled by the Adversary. When he returned fully to incarnate consciousness, he was renewed in spirit, but felt the hunger of his mortal body deprived of its accustomed nourishment.

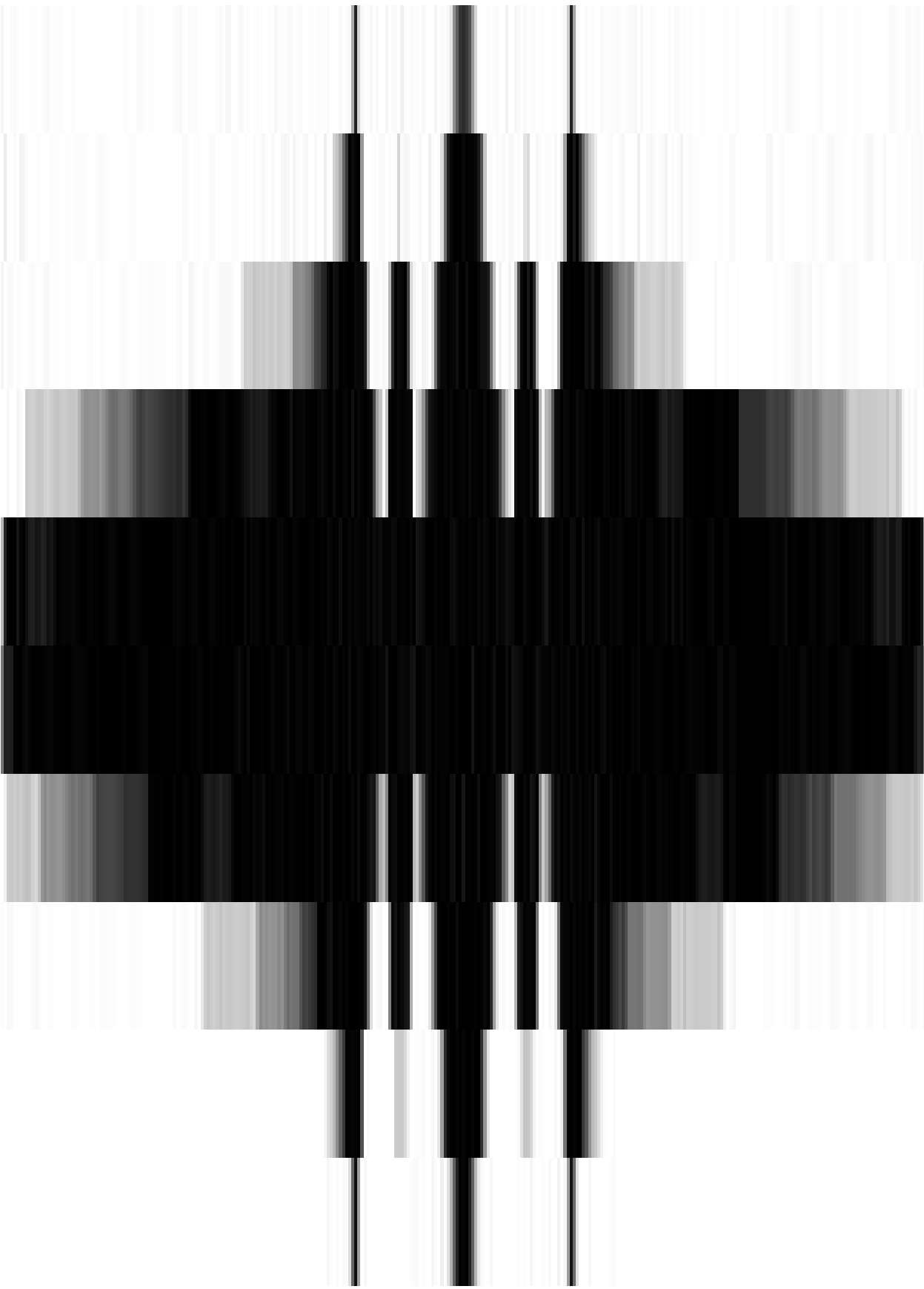
As souls, individualized sparks of unconditioned Spirit, children of God are immortal, free from any dependence on materiality. The cells of flowers, plants, animals, and human beings were intended by God to live recharged by Cosmic Energy and not by cruelly feeding on one another. It is only when the soul is identified with the Satan-desecrated human body that man feels the hunger of dependence on nature's store. The Cosmic Delusive Force has led body-conscious man to believe that without physical sustenance his existence would be terminated. In turning to earth-products for nourishment (breath and "bread"),

man remains earthbound, forgetful of his true nature that lives solely by the Cosmic Energy and will of God.

Satan wanted Jesus to forget his divine state of unconditioned existence. He began to tempt the Christ Consciousness of Jesus by playing upon the primal need of the human body to satisfy its hunger. Satan worked through the mind of Jesus, expressing a tempting proposition: “Why don’t you use your divine power to change stones into bread?”

Jesus—being one with the Divine Intelligence that has vibrated Itself into solids, liquids, and gases, and is holding them in balance by magnetic, electrical, and thermal laws—had the power to manipulate those principles to convert stones into bread by changing their rate of electronic vibration. But he recognized Satan’s delusively plausible suggestion as a ruse to encourage the mortal habit of catering to the psychology of physical hunger, which in that instance would have been a betrayal of the realization that as an immortal, he lived by God’s Infinite Energy. This does not mean that after this experience Jesus foreswore human sustenance. He partook of simple foods, and of feasts prepared by loving hosts; but he did it as a God-man, and not as a deluded human subject to the body’s habit of physical hunger.

So Jesus answered the metaphysical Satan with a great vibratory force of thought within himself, refusing to misuse his divine powers: “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” Jesus quoted the scriptural truth, not theoretically as do theologians, but from his own realization of the mystery and origin of life, experienced in his fast and intense meditation: “I have found the divine way of living by God the Father through the Holy Ghost as the fountainhead of all life,” he signified, “and will not again acknowledge dependence on physical bread.”



Metaphysical meaning of “mouth of God”

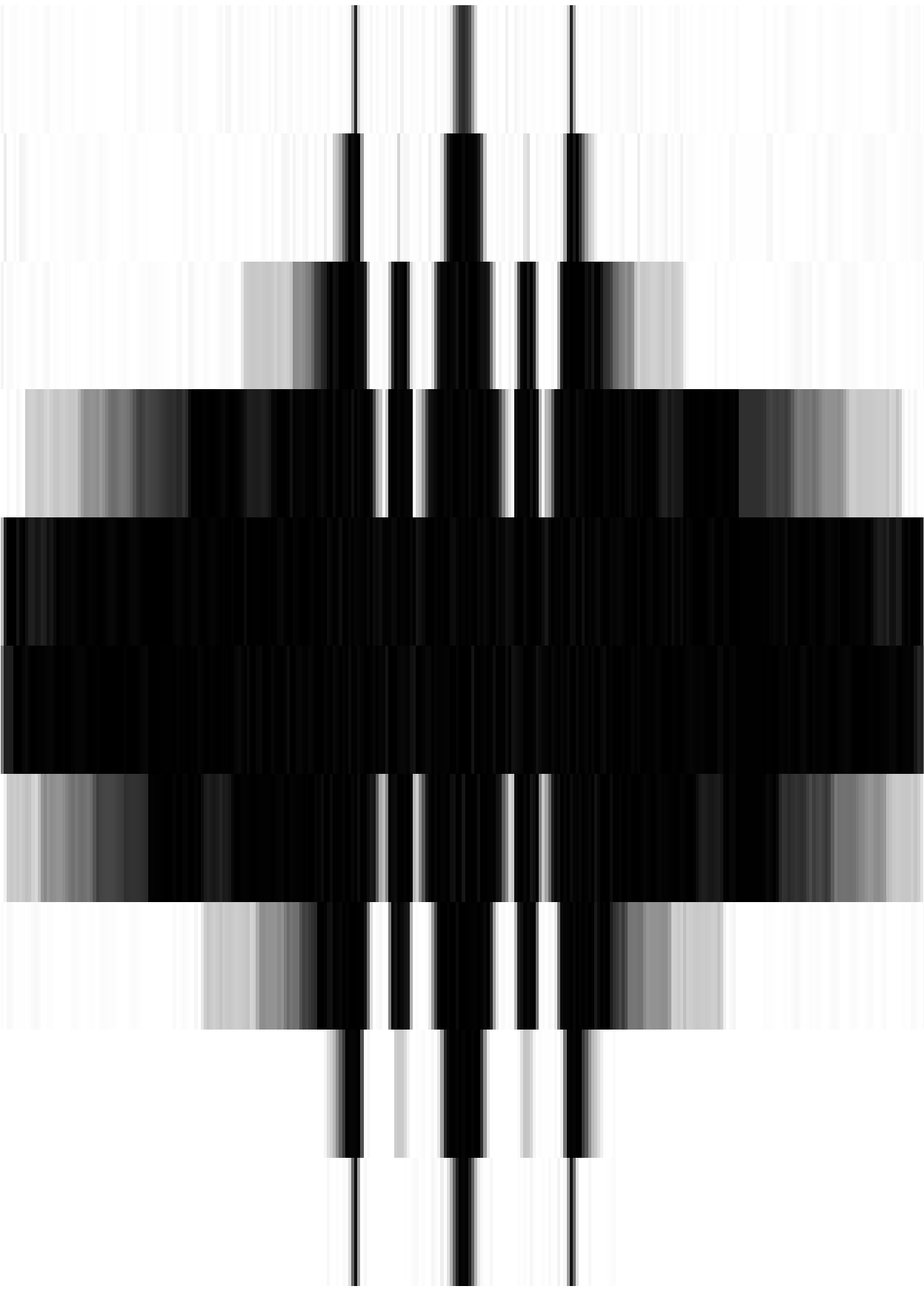
Man is not sustained only by “bread,” the limited relative energies derived from the solids, liquids, and gases of the physical sources that nourish life, but primarily by “every word” (unit of unlimited Cosmic Energy vibrating from the Holy Ghost—the great Aum or Amen) descending into the human body through the “mouth of God” (medulla oblongata). To consciously experience this truth, as did Jesus, is to realize the eternal link between the human and divine, matter and consciousness—the irrevocable oneness of the Self with the Creator.

The medulla oblongata at the base of the brain is the seat of life, formed from the seed cell, the original nucleus, entered by the soul at the time of conception. Like radio waves, which are unseen but can be drawn out of the ether by a receiving apparatus, vibrating life energy from the omnipresent cosmic source is continuously received through the subtle astral center in the medulla. It is stored in the dynamo of astral power in the brain, whence it flows out through the medulla—it “proceedeth out of the mouth of God”—and is distributed throughout all the cells of the body. If that beam of energy were taken away, the body would drop dead immediately.

Man thinks he lives on “bread”—food, oxygen, and sunshine—but these are nothing but condensed Cosmic Energy. Radiant energy from the sun feeds plants; the plants are eaten by animals and humans; and in turn the plants eat them when they die. Directly or indirectly, solar energy is the primary physical source of life. When a person ingests food, life energy in the body begins to work on digesting and metabolizing it, ultimately drawing the stored solar energy out of that food to supply the body. So the scientists say that the cells of the body operate by energy radiated from the sun, released through the chemical reaction of oxidation. The very construction of protoplasm is made possible by this solar radiation, which gives off electric forces that enliven the cells. When man responds to the senses through perceptions and actions, he expends some of that energy; and when the body’s supply is too depleted he feels weak. Then he decides to eat something or breathe deeply or go out into the sunlight to be replenished with energy-radiations.²

The ordinary man, identified with his animal body, thinks that his entire existence depends upon food, water, oxygen, and sunshine. But the time comes

in the life of every individual when, regardless of what food he eats, or how many breathing exercises he does or sunbaths he takes, he is forced to admit: "No matter what I do, my health is failing." Likewise, oxygen inflated into the lungs of a dead man, and food stuffed into his stomach, and his body exposed to sunshine, will not bring back life. The material agencies that support the body are only indirect sources of vitality and are dependent upon Cosmic Energy, the direct source of life.



Cosmic Energy: the inner source of life in man's body-battery

Man's body is like an automobile battery, which is able to generate some electricity from its components and the distilled water supplied it from outside. But the power available from these chemical reactions is only temporary; they have to be continually recharged with electric current from the car's generator, or else the battery "dies." Similarly, the life in man's body is not maintained solely by means of indirect sustenance (food, liquids, oxygen, and sunshine) but by the direct source of vibrating life current, the "word" of God.

Electricity from the generator recharges the automobile battery and restores its power to generate more electricity from its chemicals and distilled water; likewise, Cosmic Energy coming into the body through the medulla enables the body to convert food and gross elements into life-giving energy. This same Cosmic Energy, in its universal creative role, made solids, liquids, and gases what they are; when we ingest them, the intelligent life energy in the body must convert those solid, liquid, and gaseous forms of nourishment into energy that can be utilized by the body. The body's intelligent life energy is prana, lifetrans, deriving from the life-giving functions of the astral body. The difference between materially active forms of energy (electricity, light, heat, magnetism) and life energy (prana) is that the former are merely mechanical forces while the latter, being lifetric, possesses an inherent divine intelligence.

In truth, the inner life energy is self-sufficient; it alone can support the body. But through evolutionary generations of bad habits, it has been conditioned to complete dependence upon food—becoming encapsulated, as it were, in gross vibrations—and refuses to function properly, or even to remain in the body, without material sustenance. Man, as a "food addict," has simply forgotten how to draw directly upon the bodily life force and its continuous supply of Cosmic Energy. When an opium addict is suddenly denied any access to the drug, he becomes sick or dies; similarly, when a person is addicted to Satan's delusive laws of the material conditions of life, which have become second nature to man, he must work off gradually such dependence by realizing his true spirit nature, or in ignorance he will die a mortal's death without those life supports.

To live by the evolutionary standard of eating food is not a sin; but to believe only in physical means as sustaining life is delusion. Through vibratory power

and the various forces of nature, it is ultimately God alone who sustains life, His power that digests food and changes it into bodily nourishment, tissue, and blood. It is right to give tacit appreciation and obedience to Nature and her ways, but the consciousness should remain unfettered by these material limitations.

The seemingly solid body is itself a nonmaterial electromagnetic wave made up ultimately of underlying astral lifetrans, which in turn are made of Cosmic Consciousness. God has ingeniously condensed His consciousness into lifetrans, lifetrans into electrons and protons, these subatomic particles into atoms, and atoms into molecules and cells—all of which live by radiations from the Cosmic Source. An actor on the movie screen seems so real; but he is nothing but radiation divided into light and shadow issuing from the projection booth. Man should realize the ethereal nature of his being—made of light and consciousness, divine and indestructible, projected on the screen of time and space by the creative Cosmic Beam of God.



Role of the mind and soul in health of the body

Man is a threefold being; his body is a battery within batteries. The body battery is contained in the mind and soul batteries. It is continually recharged by Cosmic Energy from the mind-driven will, which in turn draws its power from Cosmic Consciousness flowing through the superconsciousness of the soul.

The body, mind, and soul batteries are interrelated. From the outside, the mind battery is charged by life energy generated by bodily metabolism; and inwardly it is charged by the superconsciousness of the soul. Likewise, the soul battery is charged with a good mind, good life energy, and good chemical energy of the body from the outside; and inwardly the soul is charged by Cosmic Consciousness.

A weak, dilapidated body weakens the mind; but a healthy body does not always mean a remarkable mind, unless it is charged with the superconsciousness of the soul. A diseased body discourages the mind and suppresses the expression of the soul, when the mind and soul are attached to the body. On the other hand, a strong soul, which reclaims its joy in meditation, makes the mind indomitably positive; such a powerful mentality in turn can influence a disease-stricken body to manifest healing and vitality.

The more one daily meditates deeply, and feels his joy increasing, the more his soul battery will be recharged with wisdom poured out from God. Meditation, the company of saints and intelligent, mentally powerful people, good books, introspection, creative work in art, science, literature, and business—all further the development of a strong mind, receptive to the wisdom of the soul.

Since the soul has descended into matter from Spirit and has made the imperfect body its playground, the perfection of Spirit and soul needs to be established in the mind in order to enable the erstwhile flesh-entangled soul to manifest within and through the body its Spirit nature. Its native immortality, diseaselessness, and immutable happiness must be evidenced in complete mastery of the mind over the body.

Man's intelligence, a reflection of Divine Intelligence, controls the very atoms of his body.³ God's Cosmic Consciousness flowing through the soul battery empowers the mind; and it is the power of will wielded by the mind that draws

the conscious creative life force, or “Word,” from the invisible dynamo of Cosmic Energy and causes it to flow into the body through the medulla oblongata, or “mouth of God.”



Will power draws Cosmic Energy into the body

Will is the operator of the switch that controls the flow of energy into the body. Every movement requires an act of will to empower it with energy. Merely to lift one's hand is to inject energy and consciousness into the entire system. When one is unwilling to do a task, he is tired from the beginning; but when he is willing, he is full of energy. One who does everything with willingness and interest finds that he is able to draw unceasingly from the reservoir of cosmic power. To remain apathetically passive and not use the will in a face-off with every duty and challenge in life—as some misguided dogmatists interpret Jesus' words: "Not my will, but Thine, be done"—is to shut off from the body the reinforcing free flow of divine currents. It is when the will to live becomes paralyzed, by overpowering disease or other difficulties, that the death of the body ensues.

By will power alone man can recharge his bodily cells, which are nothing but electrical globules. One who judiciously fasts for a long time will notice that he feels less and less need for food, that something else sustains the body. The currents of energy locked up in the brain and cells are drawn upon by the mind and will, which are capable of converting man's body from a "wet battery" to a "dry battery."

A wet battery is dependent on replenishment of its water supply to generate electricity.⁴ A dry battery, however, is sustained by its own internal reservoir of energy recharged solely by electricity. By developing his will power, man can gradually lessen his dependence on chemical atomic energy from gross food, and instead learn to sustain and revitalize his flesh and mental faculties from increasingly finer mediums of Cosmic Energy. He can draw more of his sustenance from oxygen, or from sunlight. Ultimately, saints have shown that it is possible to live by the Word of God alone.



Saints who live without eating

In a book entitled *Amanzil*, about Therese Neumann, the peasant girl of Konnersreuth, Bavaria, taken from an address of Right Reverend Joseph Schrembs, D.D., Bishop of Cleveland, delivered February

12

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1928

, we find striking facts about Therese Neumann's life relative to living by divine energy.⁵

1. "She possesses the wounds of the crucified Savior. The wounds remain always the same. They neither fester nor heal."

2. "She goes through the Passion of our Lord each Friday."

3. "She repeats the Aramaic words spoken by Christ."

4. "She divines the innermost secrets of the heart."

5. "She takes neither food nor drink. Has eaten no solid food since

1923

, except water or a little fruit juice."

"But on Christmas Day of the year

1926

she ceased entirely taking any food or any drink, so that almost for two years

now, this girl has neither eaten nor drunk anything except to receive Holy Communion every morning....The verdict of all the doctors from the University of Berlin, from Prague, from Frankfurt, from Munich—doctors without any faith—is this: ‘Deception and fraud are absolutely out of the question in the case of Therese Neumann.’ She is not emaciated, despite lack of food since Christmas

1926

, and is as healthy looking as anyone around you. On Fridays she loses about eight pounds. Six hours after the vision of the Passion is over, she is again back to her normal weight of one hundred and ten pounds.”

When I saw Therese Neumann in Bavaria in

1935

, she had lived without food for twelve years, but she looked as fresh as a flower.⁶

In the case of Therese Neumann we find one of God’s many anomalies, a divine nudge to keep man’s complacency humbly off center. She is moderately active, enjoys sunshine and tending her garden, her heart and circulatory system and breath work normally, but she does not live by edible solids nor liquids. Therese Neumann’s life demonstrates in this age the teaching of Jesus that the body does not live by “bread alone.” As she expressed it to me, “I live by God’s light.” The saintly stigmatist lives by her will drawing on Cosmic Energy from the ether, sun, and air; and by the Cosmic Consciousness of Christ.⁷

The Bengali woman saint Giri Bala had lived without eating for more than fifty-six years when I visited her in

1936

. She told me that ever since her guru had initiated her into a technique that frees the body from dependence on physical food, she has been able to live entirely on Cosmic Energy. In all these years of noneating, she has never been sick or experienced any disease. Her nourishment is derived from the finer energies of the air and sunlight, and from the cosmic power that recharges the body through the medulla oblongata.

I asked her the purpose of her having been taught to live without eating. “To prove that man is Spirit,” she replied. “To demonstrate that by divine advancement he can gradually learn to live by the Eternal Light and not by food.”⁸



The yoga science of mastering the energies that sustain the body

The atypical lives of saints such as Therese Neumann and Giri Bala are used by God to demonstrate man's essentially incorporeal nature. In higher evolutionary ages it will be the norm for food to consist primarily of oxygen, sunshine, and etheric energy. Extracting nutrients from gross foodstuffs is such a roundabout way of getting at the encased energy for repairing the decay of bodily tissues. Drawing energy from oxygen and sunshine is far more efficient. And to tap directly the unlimited supply of free Cosmic Energy is to restore the soul's natural power to sustain its bodily instrument by the Vibratory Word of God.

Certain yogis of India, in the suspended state, have shown the sustaining power of Cosmic Energy, even in the absence of energy from oxygen and sunshine. Sadhu Haridas, under rigid observation of medical men, was buried several feet beneath the surface of the earth in the courtyard of a well-guarded palace. His body survived without food, oxygen, or sunshine for forty days. When he was disinterred, he was pronounced dead; but to the amazement of his attendant English and French physicians, the suspended life in his body returned.⁹

When the yogi puts himself in a trance of suspended animation, he halts decay in the bodily cells. While he is buried, the cold earth acts like a refrigerator, preserving the body from the destructive work of heat. The inner life force additionally creates a sort of coolness in all the cells, which helps to preserve them. In this state, the cells temporarily forget their bad habit of addiction to food, and live by the vibration of Cosmic Energy.

Science postulates that each gram of flesh in the human body has enough energy in its electroprotonic constituents to run the electrical supply of the city of Chicago for two days. The life force in the ordinary human body is accustomed to deriving power from the chemical energy in food; nature's cumbersome procedures have blocked the process of living solely on the lifetronic energy stored in the electrons and protons of body cells. In the state of suspended animation, yogis know how to utilize this electroprotonic energy to keep the body cells electrified like trillions of dry batteries.

All consciousness, energy, and forms evolve from and exist in God's immanent and transcendent Cosmic Consciousness. We exist only because our Creator

allots infinitesimal segments of His Being to masquerade as a multitude of beings. The ordinary man thinks of himself as a body whose faculties produce consciousness. Self-realized yogis, to the contrary, know that it is the consciousness and subconsciousness in the brain and spine that sustain and animate the body. They understand how to withdraw life and consciousness into the astral cerebrospinal centers and connect them with the source of all consciousness, God's Cosmic Consciousness.

Just as ships can be controlled by a distant radio, so God sustains all thought processes and cells in the body by continually sending Cosmic Consciousness and Cosmic Energy to them. Even if one is not conscious of this Sustaining Power, no one can live without the inner intelligence of subconsciousness, charged with God's consciousness, utilizing the Cosmic Energy "radioed" into the body through the medulla and stored in the protonic center of all bodily cells.¹⁰ During the suspended state of the body, unless the cell and thought radios are tuned in with the dynamo of Cosmic Consciousness, or with the subdynamo of the superconsciously charged subconscious, the cells and bodily functions will be destroyed because of the lack of a controlling intelligence. When consciousness departs from the spine and brain in the suspended body, death is instantaneous, and decay ensues.

The suspended animation accomplished by yogis such as Sadhu Haridas is useful primarily for the purpose of demonstrating advanced psychophysiological laws. A suspended state of unknowingness is not necessarily spiritually beneficial. Any kind of suspended animation when one is unconscious outside and unconscious inside is only a mental chloroform and should be discarded. Certain teachers produce a state of suspended animation in animals or themselves by pressing glands. This produces a state of inner and outer unconsciousness which should be strictly avoided as metaphysically useless. In the spiritual yoga of samadhi meditation, though the body may assume a trancelike suspension, the consciousness remains fully awake in oneness with God in the bliss of conscious divine communion.



Meditation: connecting one's limited energy and consciousness with the Infinite Life and Cosmic Consciousness

In the state of divine ecstasy, the life force becomes concentrated in the spiritual cerebrospinal centers and electrifies all of the trillions of cells of the body, not only preventing their decay but rejuvenating them with a powerful elixir of Cosmic Energy. When the cells are electrified with this super-current, they cease their accustomed mutations of growth and decay. This is what is meant by ecstatic "suspended animation." The body, being a cluster of atomic, cellular, circulatory, muscular, and astral lifetronic motions, depends usually upon such motion for its existence. But the yogi in samadhi meditation consciously suspends the activity of change in the muscles, blood, nerve force, and all tissues, and supports the body by the changeless power of Cosmic Energy from Cosmic Consciousness. If one gently touches the spring of a fine watch, it will stop; and when the watch is shaken, it will run again. In the same way, when the body functions are stilled by quieting the restless activity of the mental processes, the life force and human consciousness cease their outward activity with the material world and temporarily suspend their slavery to oxygen, food, and sunshine; they learn to depend wholly upon the true body supporters, God's Cosmic Energy and Cosmic Consciousness.

To return to activity, the yogi stirs his will and consciousness in the spine and brain. When he turns on the switch of the will, the thoughts begin to stir. With the connecting of the mind to the sensory powers of perception and action, the life force restores complete animation to the body.

A Sadhu Haridas who can put the body into a subconscious trance state of suspended animation; a Therese Neumann or Giri Bala who can subsist on pure energy from the air, sunshine, and vibratory light of God; an avatar such as Mahavatar Babaji for whom breath, bodily atoms, life itself, are no more than manipulatable light and God-thoughts—all provide dramatic proof of man's potential to master the life forces of his erstwhile materially stubborn body.

Jesus showed his mastery over the body by the manifestation of Cosmic Consciousness during his forty days of fasting and meditation. After attaining such a state, it makes no difference whether a master eats normally to remain in touch with his human nature, or whether he eats sparingly or not at all.

Extreme examples are cited not as an objective toward which the average man or even the God-seeker should aspire, but to show that if such remarkable control of the physical being is possible, it is also possible for a person living a normal life to so spiritualize his body that he can experience the Divine Power as the real source of his life, and can consciously use that Power to help free himself from physical suffering and other grief-inflicting mortal limitations.

Meditation is the method of realizing the connection between one's body-circumscribed life energy and the infinite Cosmic Energy of God, the connection between the conscious and subconscious states and the Cosmic Consciousness of God. Through Kriya Yoga meditation, the consciousness is gradually transformed from identification with the inept and often treacherous physical body, with its love of breath and "bread," to awareness of the inner astral body of self-renewing vibrant life energy, and thence to one's ultimate nature as a soul image of God: ever-existing, ever-conscious, ever-new Bliss. Jesus, Elijah, Kabir, and other prophets were past masters in the use of Kriya or a similar technique, by which they could cause their bodies to materialize or dematerialize at will—even as Jesus resurrected his crucified body; and as he witnessed, in his former incarnation as Elisha, his guru Elijah dissolve his body into fiery energy and ascend into heaven.¹¹



Value of proper diet and periodic fasting

Deep samadhi meditation is possible only when all bodily functions are stilled. Proper diet and fasting are helpful in conditioning the body for this state of quiet and interiorization. Jesus acknowledged this principle by fasting to spiritualize his body and free his mind during his forty days in the wilderness.

To meditate when the stomach is empty is a good practice because the energy that runs the nervous system is not then as busy with bodily functions. Meditation after heavy meals sets up a tug-of-war between the body consciousness and the soul's superconsciousness. With a full stomach, the heart, lungs, and digestive and nervous systems are all engaged in digesting food, burning carbon, and maintaining circulation to the lungs to rid the blood of carbon dioxide. This keeps the subconscious mind busy, which in turn injects its restlessness into the conscious mind. Such invasion of the consciousness precludes inner God-communion. But when the inner activities of the body are still, the heart is calm. When the heart is calm, the life current is switched off from the senses, and the mind is freed from restless thoughts to concentrate wholly on God.

People who habitually overeat and never fast harness the life force in their bodies to a relentless activity of burning carbon and cleansing venous blood, overworking the heart and keeping the five sense-telephones constantly active. Fasting in connection with meditation slows the activity in the muscles, heart, circulation, diaphragm, and lungs by denying carbon and chemicals to the blood, thus helping to draw the attention away from the body and its functions. Metaphysically, fasting helps to open up the life-giving inner source of Cosmic Consciousness and Cosmic Energy.¹²

Long fasting should never be undertaken without the guidance and direction of a competent preceptor. Long fasting (that is, for more than one day a week, or three days once a month or every forty-five days—taking sufficient fluids) is not necessary in order to demonstrate the vital sustenance of Divine Power. Nourish the body and spirit with meditation.

The mind sets the tone for all the activities of the body. Thus, affirmations are helpful: "I live by the power of God and not by physical means only." A state of

such freedom is nearly inconceivable to the typical body-bound individual, who cannot even begin his day without first paying homage to his need for morning toast and coffee. But Jesus demonstrated the truth that man lives by Divine Power, and that by the proper effort he can become aware of his inherent connection with God Consciousness and Cosmic Energy.

Meditation is the most effective way to spiritualize the body. Meditative effort to make the body live on this higher plane is aided by right eating at all times. Even a spiritual man eating food injudiciously would find the body obstructing the practices that lead to spiritual realization. Dietetics is not delusion so long as the body itself asserts its existence in the realm of manifestation. Healthful food, pure oxygen through proper breathing, and sunshine are Nature's requirements for the upkeep of this body battery.

The proper diet should be chosen and care should be taken never to overeat. There is a lot of truth in the adage that man digs his own grave with his knife and fork! Most kinds of meat (especially beef and pork) and other vibrationally gross foods overtax the life force, making it difficult to disengage its preoccupation with the senses and overworked vital organs, and to reverse the current of life and consciousness toward God when one sits for devotional communion.

One should choose a healthful balanced diet of natural foods rich in life force that are easily processed by the body—fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts, some dairy products—and avoid foods in which the life force has been denatured or destroyed by improper processing or are otherwise unsuited for the human system.¹³ Additionally, fanaticism is to be avoided. A food fanatic, constantly obsessed with fastidious observance of health and dietary laws, will find his attachment to the body a real hindrance to spiritual realization. Eat rightly, never admitting dependence on food. Know that it is God's Cosmic Energy and Cosmic Consciousness that changes the food into the energy of life.

The soul is above hunger and the desire for food. This does not mean that the spiritual aspirant should stop eating, but it does mean that he should eat properly and joyously to maintain the body-temple of God, and not just to satisfy sense craving. The sense of taste should not be debased with greed and indigestion from wrong eating and overeating; its purpose is to select and enjoy the right food to keep the body healthy and vibrant for the use of the soul. To eat only for the pleasure of taste produces greed, slavery, indigestion, disease, and premature death. To eat for the maintenance of the body-temple produces self-control, long

life, health, and happiness.

Through fasting and meditation, Jesus realized fully that hunger is a delusion connected with the law of change in the body, and can be overcome—that one can live entirely by God's energy. By not accepting Satan's suggestion to turn stones into bread, Jesus performed a greater miracle of conquering his mortality by the divine memory of his self-sustaining unconditioned spiritual existence. From then on it was at his option to live with or without sustenance from food.



The spiritual lesson in Jesus' refusal to change stones into bread

For Jesus to have miraculously created food to satisfy the needs of his human body would have been a misuse of his divine powers. Great souls who attain the highest do not employ their powers for their own benefit. Their unspectacular demeanor in personal affairs embraces the difficulties common to all human beings, whose struggles they have come on earth to share. The only power they use for themselves is their exceptional love and devotion for God. It is this supreme miracle with which they also seek to attract others to the Divine Presence.

Miracles are held in esteem by earthbound mortals, who try to satisfy their own feelings of inadequacy by challenging God to prove Himself. But divine souls do not test the attention and love of God, because that is to doubt Him. If Jesus had invoked a miracle for the mere trifle of appeasing hunger, that would have been an assault on his faith in God and a denial of his reliance on God's all-protecting power. Jesus' triumph over this temptation was a severe defeat to Satan, whose strongest delusion holding man in bondage is attachment to the mortal body consciousness.

Satan saw in Jesus his nemesis that would snatch many souls from his domain, so he was not deterred in his efforts to prevent Jesus' ascendancy.



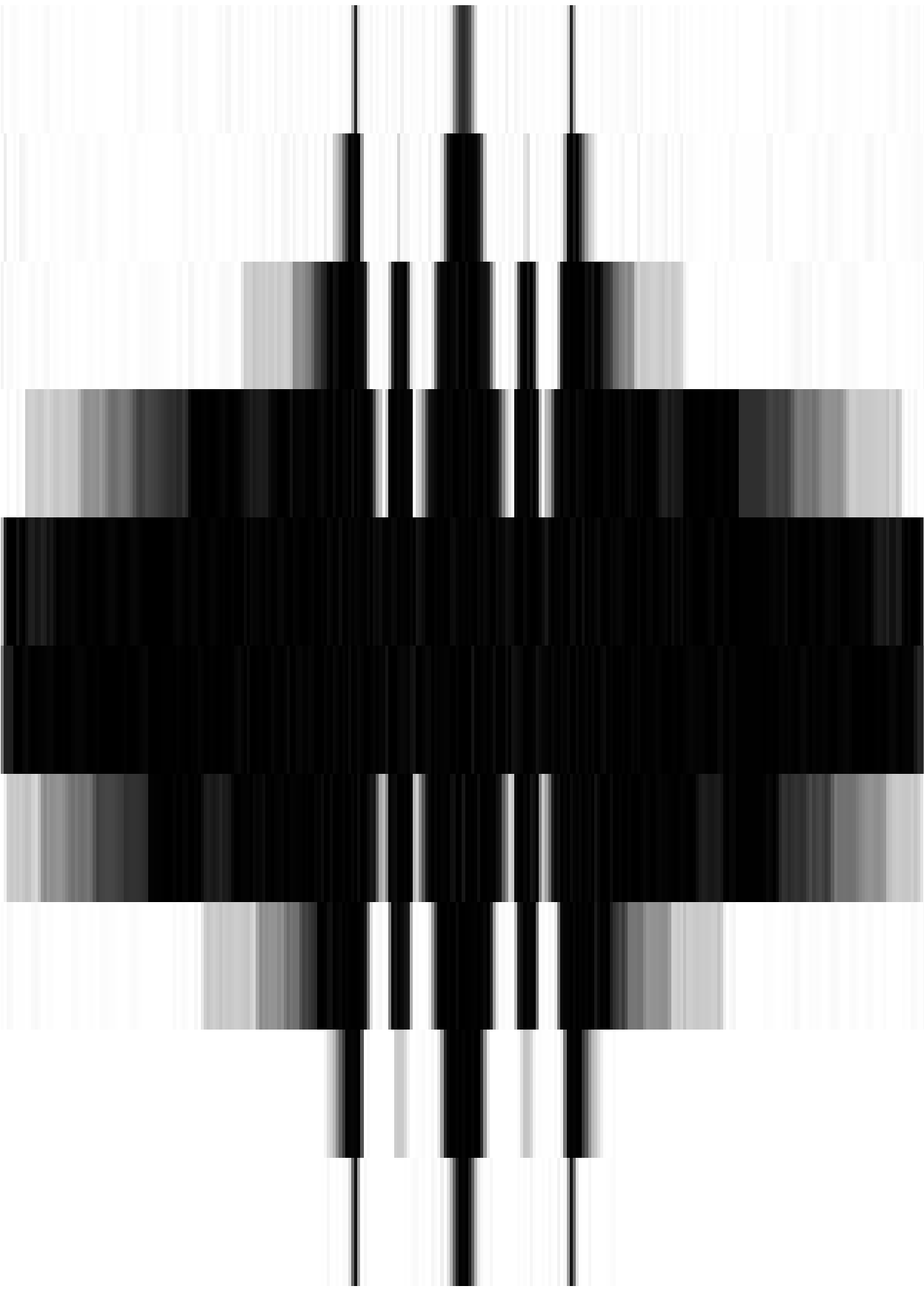
Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, “If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, ‘He shall give His angels charge concerning thee’: and ‘in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.’”

Jesus said unto him, “It is written again, ‘Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.’”

Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto him, “All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.”

Then saith Jesus unto him, “Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, ‘Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.’” Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him (Matthew 4:5 – 11).¹⁴

There is an esoteric meaning to the above two metaphorical passages.



Symbolism of “the holy city” and “pinnacle of the temple”

The body and spirit of Jesus were tempted and taunted both subjectively and objectively by Satan. The Evil Force has many contrivances at his command. He does not always employ his easily recognized objectified manifestations. Often his best strategy is subtly to creep subjectively into the very thought processes and imagination of his would-be captive. In this psychological guise, Satan took hold of the mind of Jesus while he was on the very height of the temple of meditation situated in the “holy city” of his universal Christ Consciousness. The consciousness of Jesus was concentrated “on a pinnacle” of the cerebrospinal axis at the point between the eyebrows, in the heavenly center of Christ perception. Satanic delusion wanted him to fall down to the lower region of the spine—the lumbar, sacral, and coccygeal plexuses—the plane of the senses with their bodily attachments.

Although the consciousness of Jesus had reached the pinnacle of meditative intuitive experience of the Christ state, its residence in the body predisposed the mind of Jesus to be subject still to the temptation of delusion. Jesus’ past delusive habit of identification with the body, finding constant defeat in his sacred consciousness, was roused by Satan to make a culminative effort to dislodge the habit of his divine thinking. His memory of delusive mortal habits cast a tempting thought into his mind: “Since I have regained in meditation my high state of divine Sonhood, it is safe for me to cast myself down into realms of bodily temptation. God will protect me through my guardian angels of spiritual conviction, intuitive experiences, and meditation-born wisdom. Even if I fall into delusion, the angels of spiritual thoughts will lift me up again to my high estate of consciousness, and will prevent my foot of strong will power from dashing against the stone of misery-making spiritual error.”

The preeminent spiritual habit conquered, and Jesus replied in his introspective thought: “The highest scriptural wisdom is that the attention must never stray from God. He is the Father and Creator of all forms of consciousness, cosmic and human. No expression of that divided Indivisibility should succumb to the temptation of delusive experience to feel itself separate from Him, and thus drag that manifestation of Divinity matterward. The consciousness must remain concentrated in the truth of its transcendental identification with God, untouched by satanic temptations.”

All craving and desire in man should be transmuted and turned toward God, instead of being allowed to enshroud in delusion the God-image in man. Satanic temptation's delusive, compelling, conflicting, happiness-expecting thought leads to misery-producing error. Divine temptation summons man to pursue happiness-making truth. Knowing this, Jesus snubbed the devil's temptation, and scorned its audacity to tempt the God in him.

It is never wise to tempt the protecting grace of God merited by acquired virtues. Even advanced devotees have fallen into delusion by self-assured, presumptuous reliance on their righteous attainments as a safeguard against a lapse, even momentarily, in requisite right behavior and discriminative judgment. "Thou shalt not tempt the inner Divine Consciousness to prove Itself." It is for the devotee to remain always at one with the immutable Sheltering Presence.



Temptations of sensory and material gratifications versus self-mastery and spiritual joy

Again, the psychological Satan followed Jesus to his very high, mountainlike state of Self-realization; and in an instantaneous mental vision arrayed before him all the temporal power and glory of material possessions and position; and thus lured him with the thought: “I will give you kingdoms of power and wealth.” The psychological past delusive habit of pleasurable familiarity with the body, pressing its momentary opportunity to regain control of the wisdom-guided free choice and will of Jesus, made him feel that, having gained mastery over the laws of nature, it had the power to give him enjoyment of all glorified material things if only he would fall down to the plane of sensory gratifications from his high state of self-mastery and joy in Spirit.

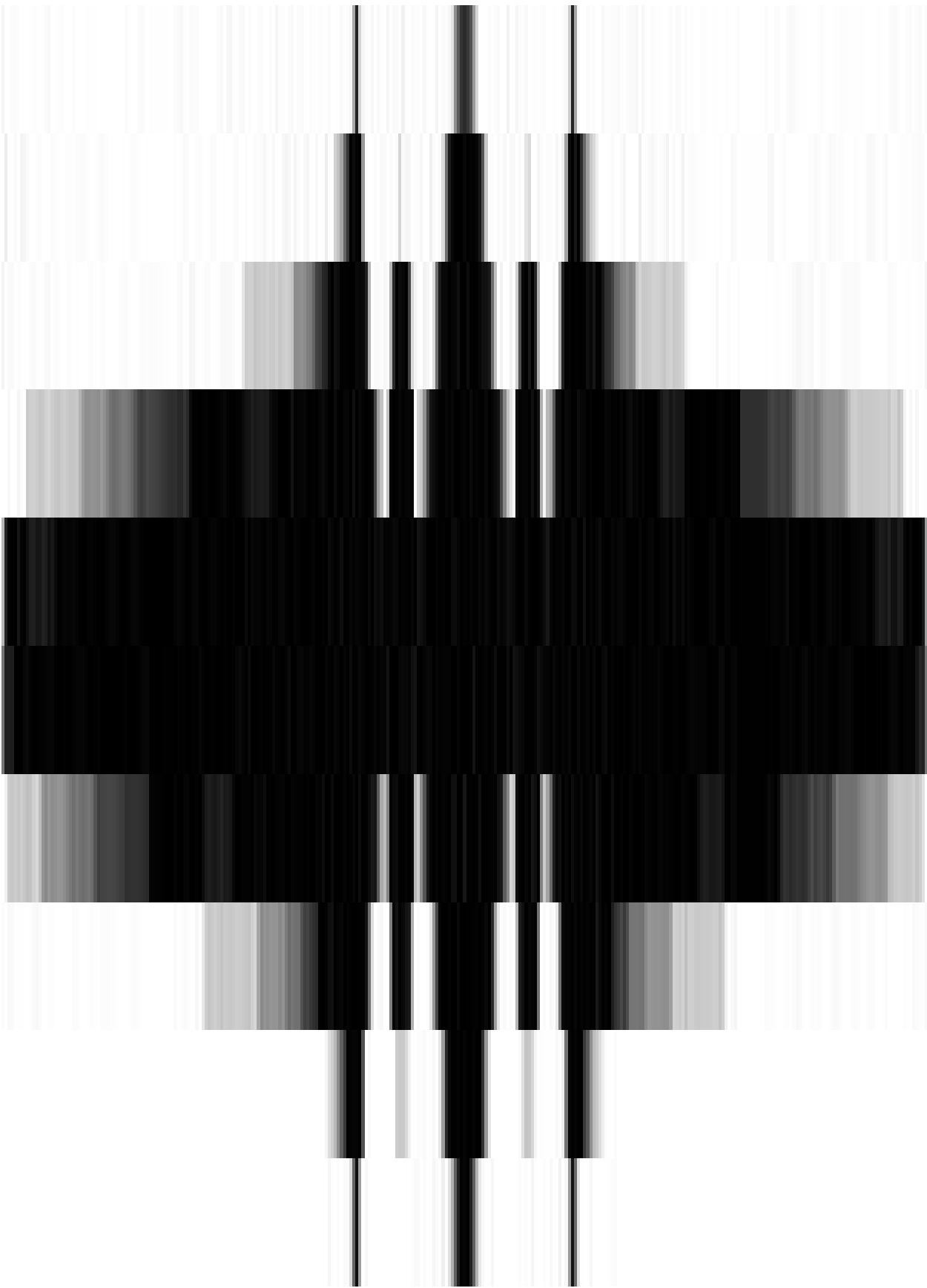
Jesus answered within his discriminative introspection: “O ye senses of smell, taste, sight, touch, and hearing, you were made to be devoted to Spirit, and constantly to act and serve the soul in its contact with matter without interrupting its transcendent, conscious experience of the joy of Spirit.”

The senses were given to serve man with perceptions of God incarnate in matter, not for man to cater to their insatiable cravings—an innovation of satanic delusion. As the servants of man, the God-created senses, guided with discrimination, produce self-control, long life, health, and happiness. Controlled by the temptations of Satan, the senses enslave man in the misery of body identification and soul forgetfulness.

The Cosmic Intelligent Force, which has turned away from God, throws its searchlight of vibratory luminosity upon matter to extol it and captivate man with its shimmering tinsel glory.

To use the soul’s searchlight of attention for worshiping the speciousness of changing, temporary-pleasure-yielding matter is to become mesmerized by the charm of Satan’s sensory kingdom of finitude.

To reverse the searchlight of attention and focus it upon the God-knowing soul in meditation is to behold and enjoy the changeless, everlasting, joy-giving Spirit.



Man's free choice and power of reason are his redemption

The great drama of cosmic existence honors man's free choice and power of reason. Man, made in the image of God, has the same liberty of free choice in his sphere as has God the Father. God can redeem man only when in every way he chooses to act in accordance with divine laws of right living.

God is coaxing man with a limitless exhibition of good happenings to influence him for his own highest welfare. Satan is tempting man with deceptive contrivances that are pleasant-looking and promise happiness, but after a little evanescent pleasure give evil consequences instead.

Man stands in the middle between God and Satan, each ready to pull him in whichever direction he wishes to go. Satan is on the left side with his kingdom of misery cloaked in ostentation, and God is on the right side with His kingdom of happiness bathed in eternal light. It is up to man to signal God or Satan as to which direction he wants to be pulled. Man is perfectly free to act, controlled neither by God nor Satan. Whenever he initiates good actions, or has a pure, ennobling thought, that is the signal to God; and he is automatically pulled toward God, toward a paradise of Bliss hidden in the womb of eternal futurity. But as soon as man thinks or acts in accord with evil, he is automatically pulled toward Satan, toward entanglement in the realm of misery-making dualities.

When man succumbs to temptation, or is angry, or jealous, or selfish, or greedy, or revengeful, or restless, he has accepted Satan's invitation to come to his side. When man is master of himself—moderate, calm, understanding, unselfish, forgiving, practicing meditation—he is inviting God to help him.

God is very anxious for all His children to get back to His kingdom, free from suffering and death and all other terrors and uncertainties of human life in which Satan keeps man constantly involved through bondage to the senses. Every time man is tempted to do wrong, he should remind himself that it is not his subjective mind alone that is tempting him, but also objective Satan. He should adamantly refuse to cooperate with the Evil One who would destroy him. That is why Jesus said, "Get thee behind me, Satan" (Luke

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) when that Evil Force showed him kingdoms of temporal glory, which could be his if he worshiped delusion.

The wisdom of Jesus could not be swayed. If someone offered a man a million dollars, and someone else held before him a thousand dollars as an alternative, only a fool would prefer the paltry offering. Jesus spoke from his soul-realization: "I have chosen imperishable Bliss; what care I for anything temporal?"

The deluded man muses how wonderful it would be if he were as rich as Henry Ford or Andrew Carnegie, but where are they now? Why desire things that must be abandoned at death? The great poet Saadi of Persia said: "If thou dost conquer the world and bend all the people to thy will, what then? You will one day have to leave it all."

As a result of the choice Jesus made, he has eternal life in God's Bliss. By emerging victorious from temptation, he is a shining example for all souls struggling to regain their divine sonhood. He showed the way: On the mountain peak of high meditation, Jesus lifted the veil of body consciousness, sense appearances, and matter, and identified himself with the "only begotten Son," Christ Consciousness. It is then that a soul knows its divine status as a son of God.

There was a time when I believed Satan was a symbolical force, a metaphysical delusion; but now I know and add my testimony to the testimony of Jesus Christ that Satan is responsible for all the creation of evil on earth and in the minds of men. I have consciously seen Satan many times obstructing me by mysterious misfortunes, and by consciously taking materialized forms while I was receiving the grace of God.



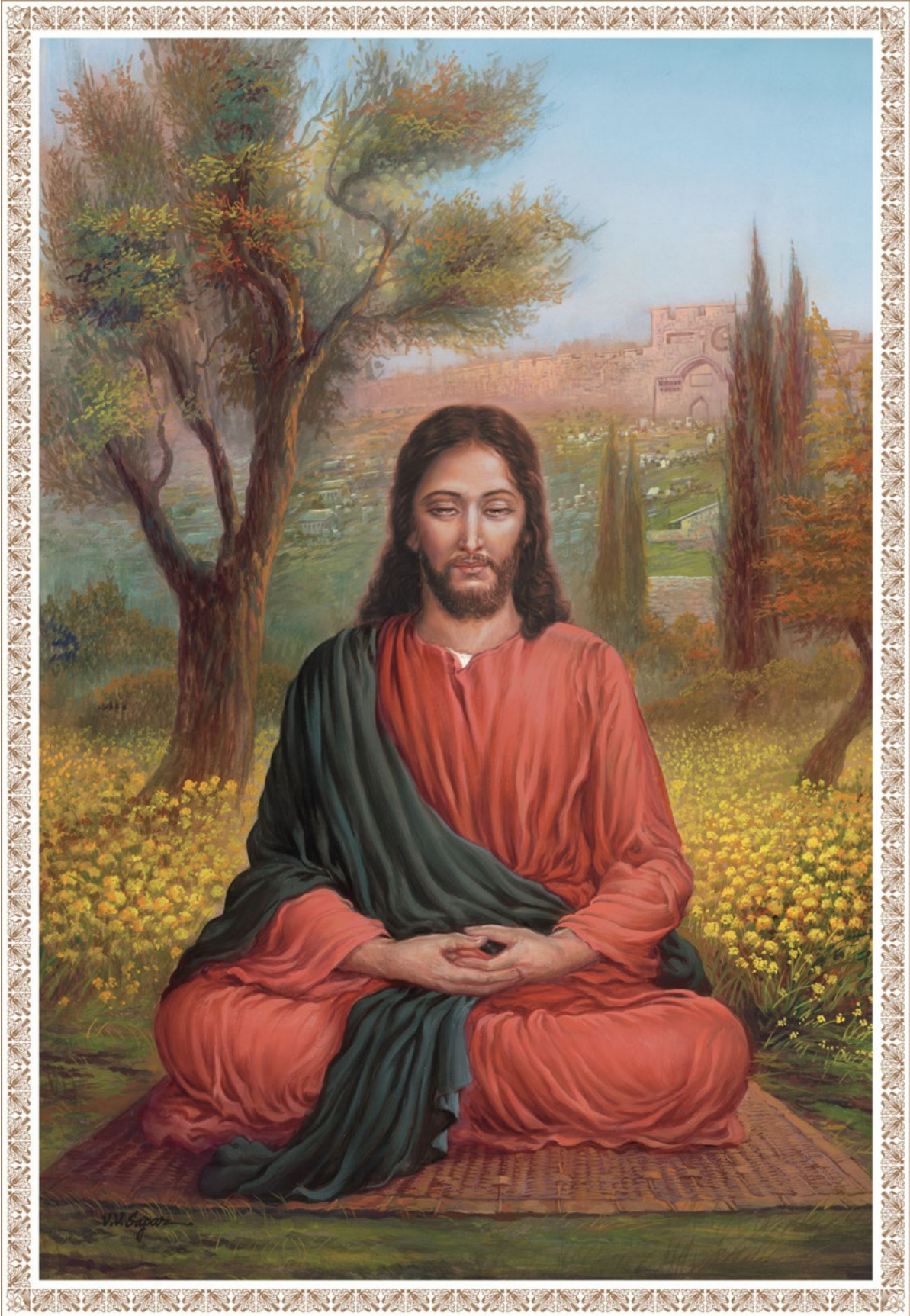
In highest samadhi, “the devil” of delusive dualities departs from man’s consciousness

On one occasion I was beholding the face of Christ, and just as he passed out of my vision I saw the evil force too as Satan. It was a terrific vision: Those two forces passed through my body, one of them the universal Christ-joy and peace, the other the great cosmic delusion. The Evil Force didn’t touch me, only tried to frighten me. As one goes into the Spirit he sees those two forces distinctly; but when I reached the highest samadhi I found there is nothing else there but God. But before that realization is reached, that Cosmic Dichotomy will not yield its illusory reality as two forces, the power of evil and the power of Christ, the power of Satan and the power of God.

When the Psychological Satan had finished tempting Jesus, the delusion of memories of mortal habit departed, for a time at least, giving rise to the feeling of victory for the permanent habit of spiritual consciousness. The Gospel According to St. Luke notes: “And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.”¹⁵ The departing of Satan “for a season” signifies the transcendental state of fixed self-mastery, when the devotee rises above duality and its compulsory struggle with evil.

Every master who has attained the realization of the state of nirvikalpa samadhi feels the obsession of ignorance within him gone. With the disappearance of the mindset of ignorance that sees everything in terms of mortal consciousness, sublime changes occur within that advanced devotee. Under the influence of cosmic delusion, even sincerely aspiring devotees behold matter as matter, and see the dualities of good and evil and the relativity of consciousness, which reveals matter as different forms of solids, liquids, gaseous, and astral substances. But when the influence of Satan is completely terminated, the liberated devotee finds only the presence of the omnipresent, ever-existing, ever-conscious, ever-new blessed Spirit. All evil, all discrepancies of nature, disappear as forgotten shadows from the consciousness of the illumined devotee.

When Jesus in the wilderness was victorious in defeating the temptations of Satan, the mortal delusive habit disappeared, and the angels of Intuition, Calmness, Omniscience, and Self-realization appeared in the consciousness of Jesus to serve him with lasting Bliss.



Jesus in the Interiorization of Prayer in Meditation

“The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, ‘Lo here!’ or, ‘lo there!’ for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.”

—Luke 17:20–21

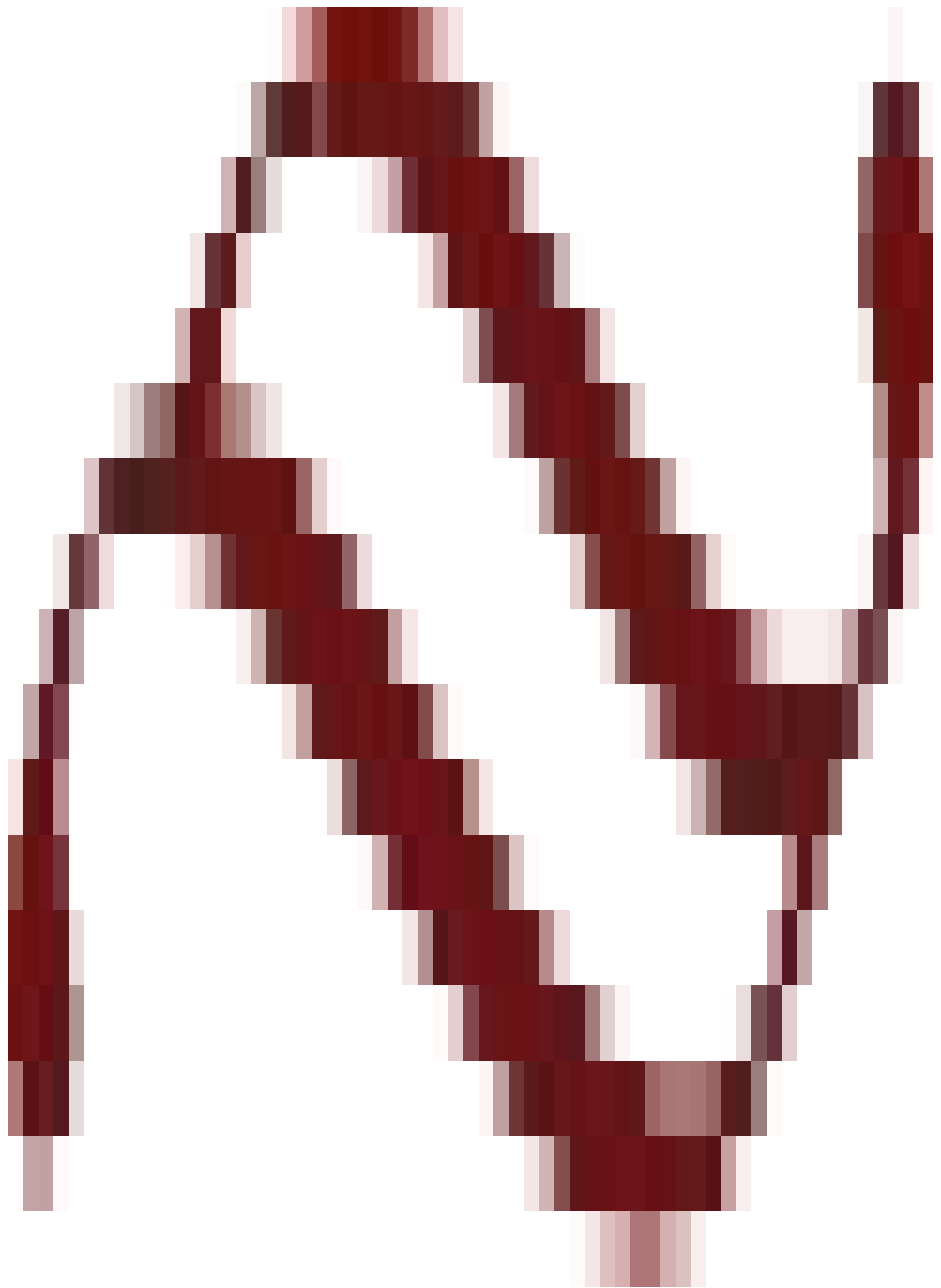
The kingdom of God awaits discovery by those who delve within in meditation... Devotees who at will can thus interiorize their minds and concentrate fully within the resultant peacefulness will definitely find entry into the kingdom of God-consciousness. That realization gradually unfolds itself as omnipresence, omniscience, ever new bliss...

No one can enter this heaven of Cosmic Consciousness unless through the gates of devout concentration and meditation he can penetrate his consciousness deeply within himself. That is why Jesus said unequivocally, “The kingdom of God is within you,” that is, within the transcendent states of your soul perceptions....

Raja Yoga, the royal way of God-union, is the science of actual realization of the kingdom of God that lies within oneself. Through practice of the sacred yoga techniques of interiorization received during initiation from a true guru, one can find that kingdom by awakening the astral and causal centers of life force and consciousness in the spine and brain that are the gateways into the heavenly regions of transcendent consciousness.

—Paramahansa Yogananda

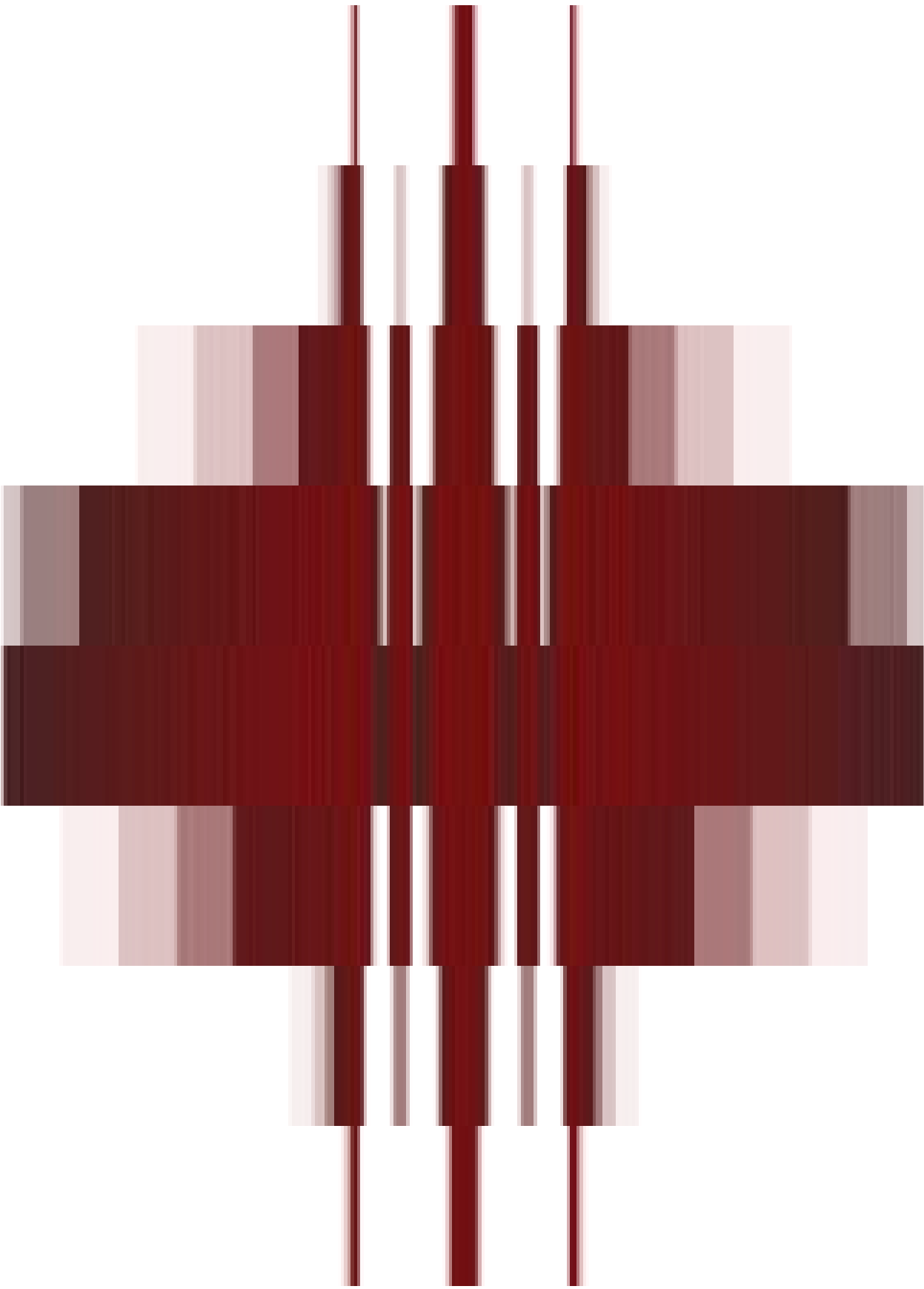
Painting by V. V. Sapar



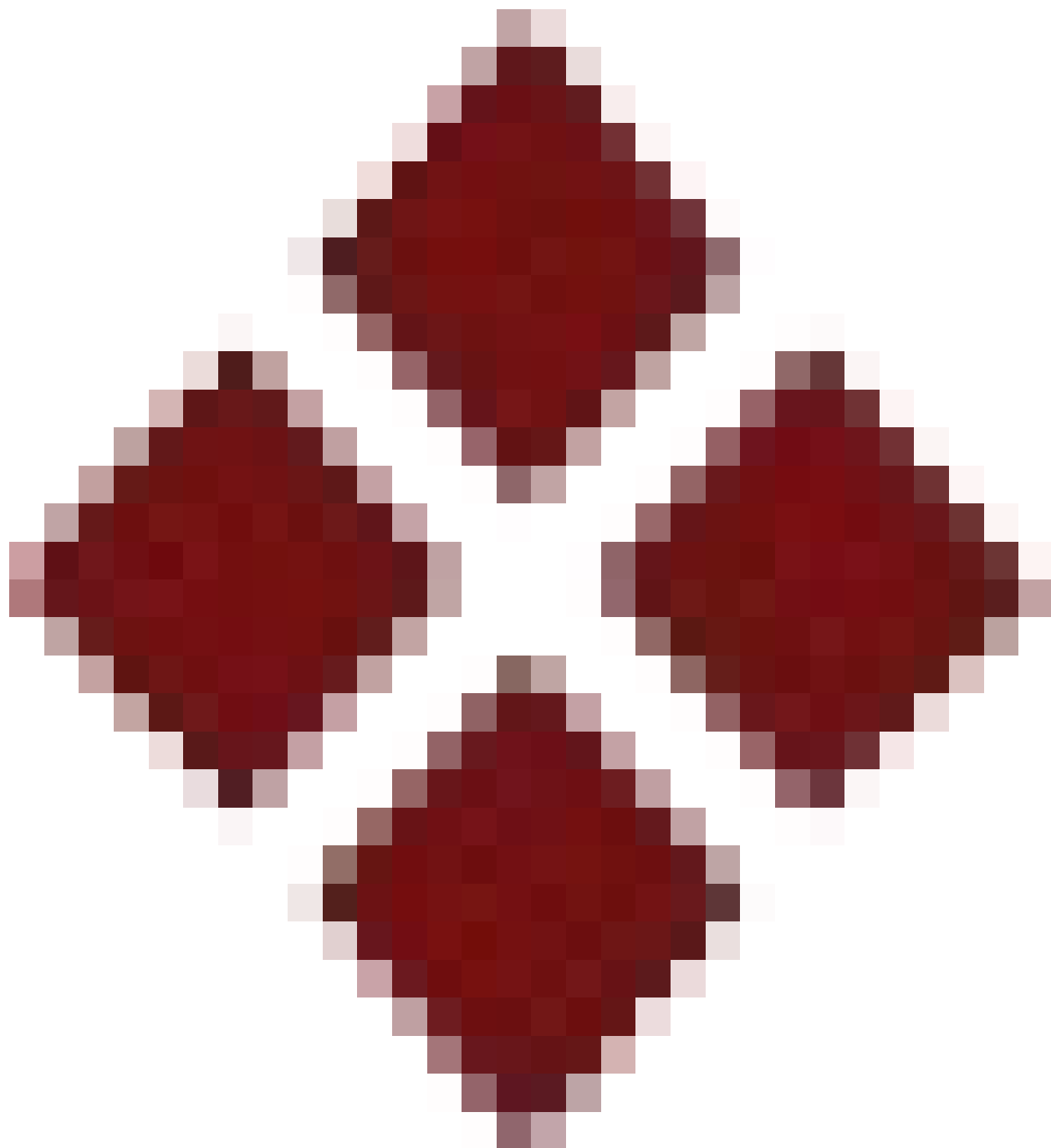


Discourse 9

Jesus Meets His First Disciples



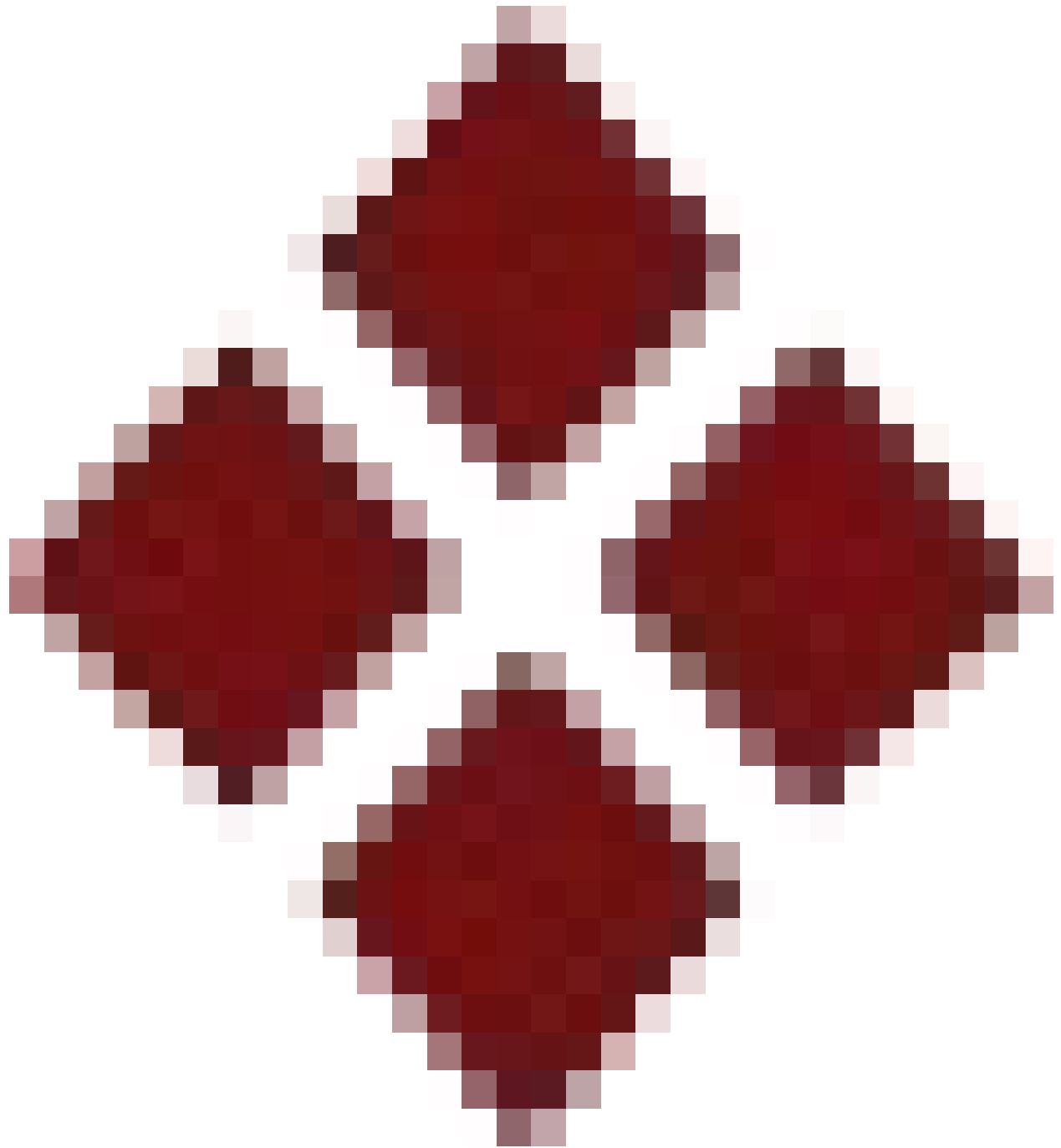
Rabbi, “Master”: As Guru, One Who Is Master of Himself



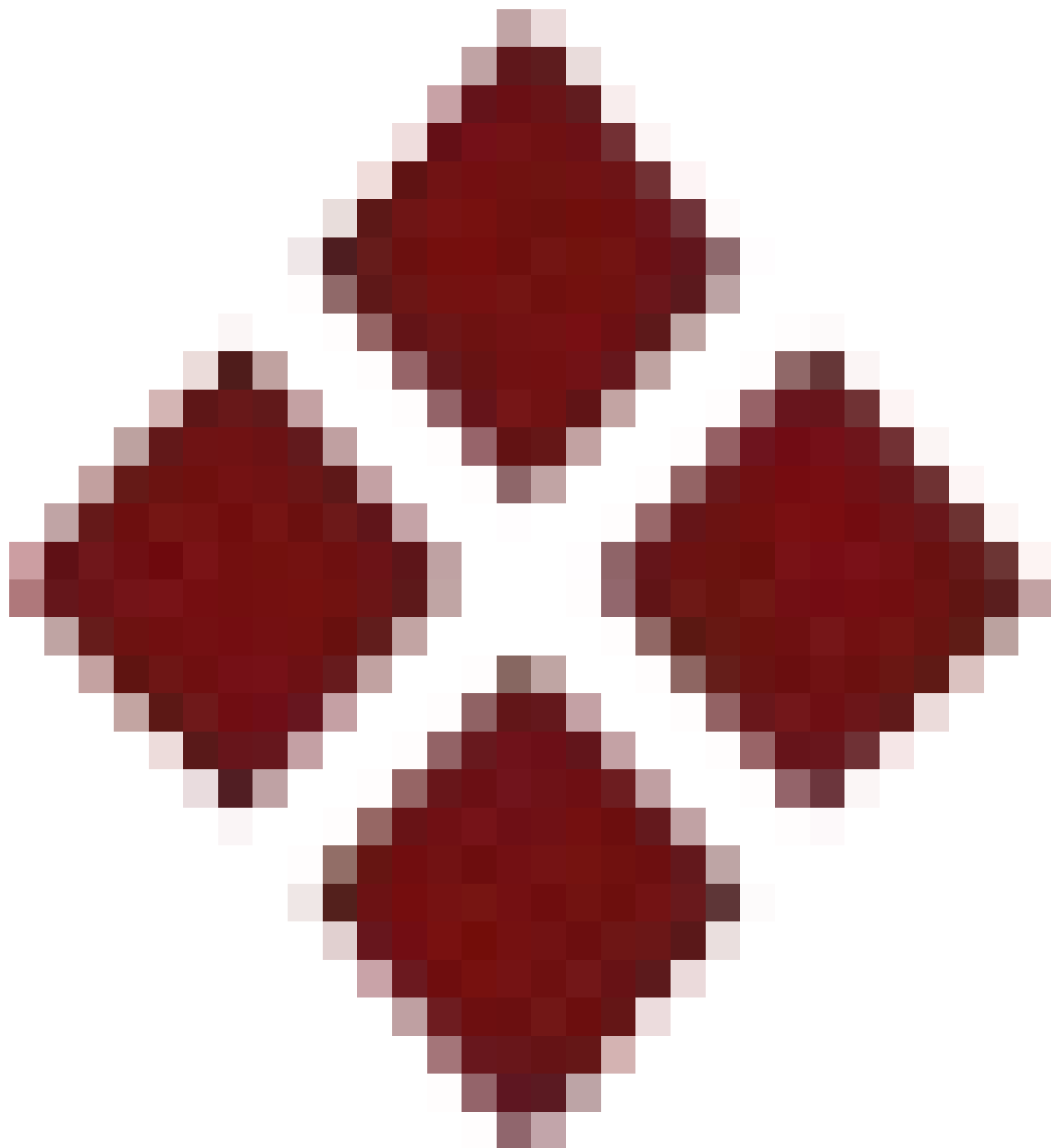
**True Gurus Draw Disciples by the Spiritual
Magnetism of Their God-realization**



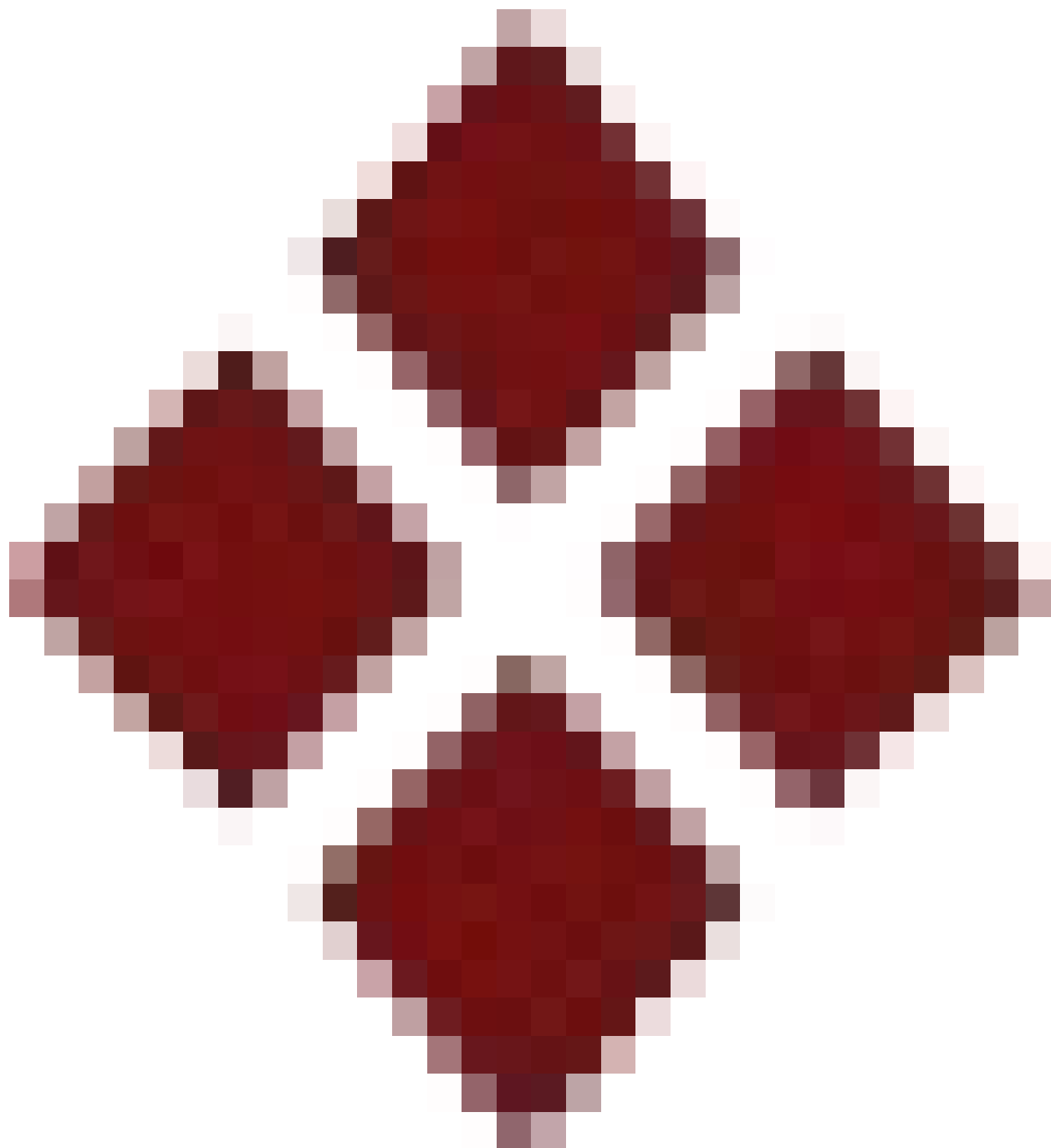
**Jesus' Disciples Recognize Him as the Messiah,
Incarnation of Christ Consciousness**



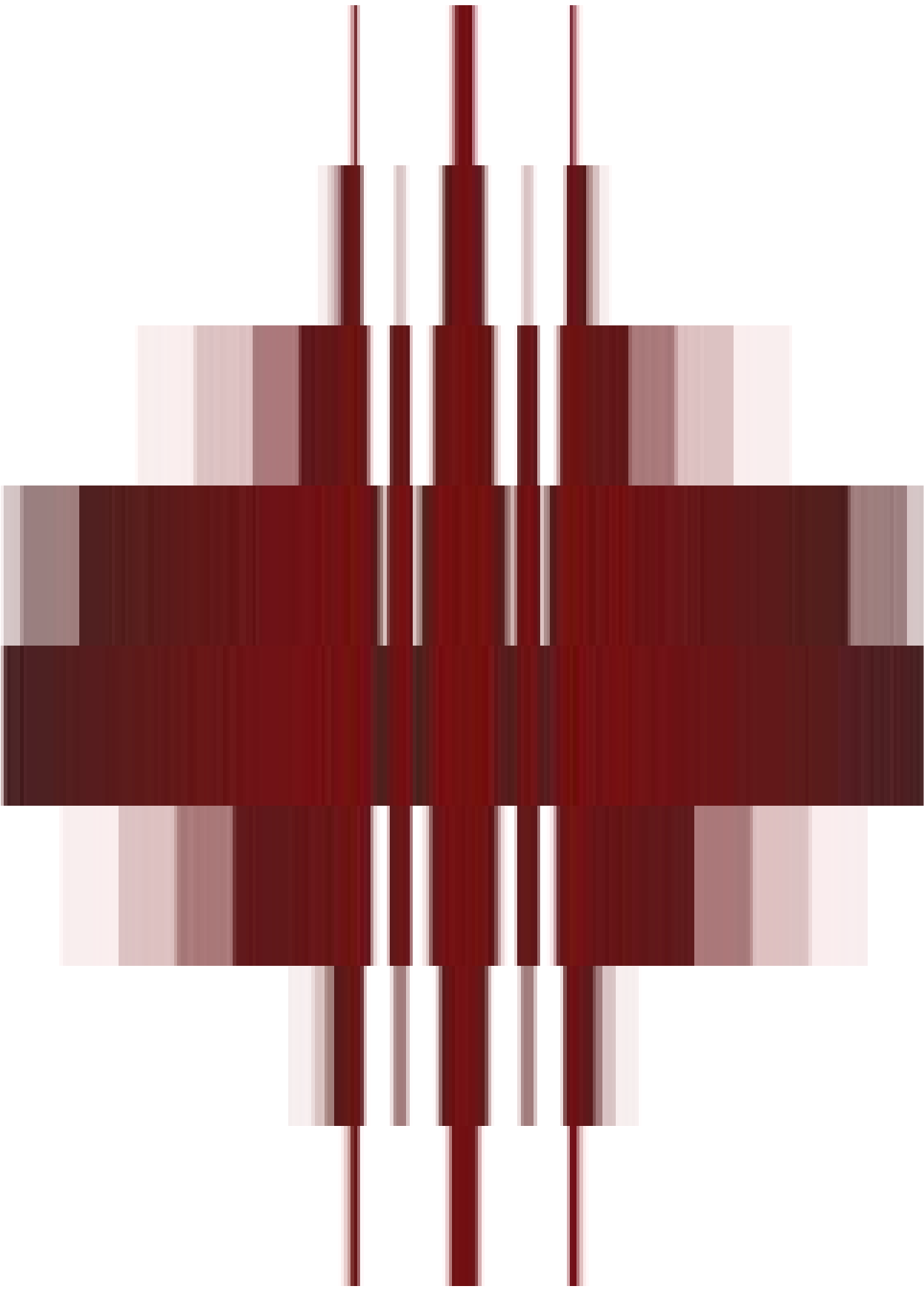
Finding a True Guru:
A God-Sent Guide on the Path to Self-realization



Unconditional Love, Loyalty, and Obedience Are Hallmarks of the Guru-Disciple Relationship



**Following the Wisdom-Guidance of the Guru Bestows
Freedom of Will and Liberation**



“Jesus knew the secret law of emancipation inherent in the guru-disciple relationship, and its pact of mutual help, as God began to send to him those disciples destined to help him and to find liberation through his instrumentality.”

■

Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; and looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, “Behold the Lamb of God!” ¹ And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, “What seek ye?”

They said unto him, “Rabbi,” (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) “where dwellest thou?”

He saith unto them, “Come and see.” They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour.

One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, “We have found the Messiah,” which is, being interpreted, the Christ.

And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, “Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas,” which is by interpretation, a stone.

The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, “Follow me.”



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Discourse 9

Jesus Meets His First Disciples



When great masters come on earth, they bring with them select advanced disciples from past incarnations to help them in their mission and to further or culminate the preparations of those disciples for liberation. Through association with the master, receiving his guidance in the higher teachings of soul freedom, and having their spirituality tested in the applied science of life in this earth-school, while also assisting the guru in his God-ordained work, such disciples and their guru fulfill in the highest way the divine covenant of the guru-disciple relationship. Among the throng who followed Jesus were many disciples, of greater or lesser qualification, known to him from lives past. From among these disciples he chose and appointed twelve to serve as apostles—those who are “sent forth”—notwithstanding that one among them failed his test, and succumbing to delusion was the instrument of betrayal and the cause of his own lost opportunity of salvation for many, many lifetimes of sorrow.

The mission of a savior on earth may be primarily quantitative, to influence as many people as possible with his uplifting God-sent spiritual message, thus urging the world forward in a right trend. The receptivity of the ordinary person among the masses, however, has a limited capacity; he may be satisfied with merely one thought or a few precepts from the master’s teachings as being all he feels he needs or wants to improve himself to an adequate degree in his settled stratum of life. Other masters concentrate primarily on qualitative good: to serve those souls—be they few or many—who are eager to know God, to help uplift them into Christ Consciousness and ultimate liberation. Still other saviors, such as Christ, serve the world both quantitatively and qualitatively. The qualitative task requires the endeavor of the disciple and the blessing and guidance of the master in a mutual relationship sanctified by God. Students are those who follow the master more or less superficially according to their pick-and-choose inclination. But the disciple is one who accepts wholly, with open heart and mind. He does not have to be coaxed, but follows through his own will and determination. He remains steadfast, dedicated, and devoted to the end, until he has found freedom in God. The Lord Christ and the Lord Krishna both had such disciples.

God-ordained gurus feel intuitively the spiritual vibrations of their disciples, whether near or far; and when a guru mentally calls his disciples, they come, drawn by their soul attunement with the teacher, the channel of divine grace appointed by God.

In his supportive role of assisting the mission of Jesus, John the Baptist turned many of his own followers toward Jesus—in particular, those who had been disciples of Jesus in past lives. The first of these was Andrew, brother of Simon Peter; and the other unnamed person of the “two” with John the Baptist has been logically proposed as being John the Apostle himself, since his is the only Gospel that relates this episode. These two devotees, on the commendation of John the Baptist, and responding to their own inner devotional attraction, followed Jesus to his residence, addressing him reverentially as Rabbi, or Master.



Rabbi, “master”: as guru, one who is master of himself

The word rabbi is a Jewish title of respect which means “my Master,” a form of address recognizing one who is qualified to teach. Applied to one’s guru, Master is synonymous with the proper form of addressing the guru with the respectful suffix of ji or deva: Guruji, Gurudeva, Master. The word master may be traced etymologically back through Latin, magnus, great; with magnus being akin to Sanskrit mahat (great; important, high, eminent: maharishi, a great knower of God). The widespread generic usage of master as a title (as also that of guru) to denote any ordinary teacher or mentor should not disrespectfully belie the proper usage: as an appellation for a God-knowing, divinely endowed guru.

From the cradle to the grave to ascension in Spirit, the whole of civilization is based on the passing down of knowledge from the learned to the learning. The infant learns from his parents, the youth from his schoolteachers and professors, the worker from his trained supervisors, the artist or musician from his superiorly accomplished instructors. The level of attainment rises or falls with the aptitude of the “student” and the qualification of the “mentor.” In no other field is this as true as in spirituality. In India, where religious doctrines are melted in the crucible of testing experience to separate truth from dogma, the verdict is that the only sure way of finding God is to learn about Him from one who knows Him. The Hindu scriptures say, “When a spiritually blind novice is led by a blind teacher, then both are misled”—an admonition voiced similarly by Jesus.²

God is The Master, ruler of the universe; and those who manifest their oneness with Him may also be honored as masters. A spiritual master is not a wielder of authority over others, but rather a master of himself, fully self-possessed and controlled in body, speech, and mind, with all his senses fully reined. He never allows himself to be compelled by temptation to do anything against his discrimination-guided will, unlike those who think that freedom, or free will, is to do whatever entices their minds. A master is he who knows in what lies the best interest of his true Self, the soul, and so never entertains evil in thought or deed.

Self-mastery is the citadel of wisdom. When the title of Master is used in addressing a personage of this stature, it signifies reverence for him who knows

truth offered by one who desires to have that knowledge conferred on himself by the guru.



True gurus draw disciples by the spiritual magnetism of their God-realization

Andrew, after he and his companion had been with Jesus for a day, was so saturated with the spiritual magnetism emanating from Jesus that he understood who Jesus was, recognizing him as the Christ. The Christ Consciousness cannot be intellectually inferred, but has to come through intuitional awareness. God-ordained gurus do not have to convert their inner circle of disciples by soapbox preaching; they communicate primarily by the silent emanation of the vibrations of their God-realization. My Master drew me that way when I first saw him, without introduction, in a busy market lane in Banaras. (I have written about my experiences with great masters and with my Guru in my memoirs, published under the title of *Autobiography of a Yogi*.³) The first contact between guru and disciple is usually sufficient to awaken memories of the everlasting bonding of that relationship. They feel a connection of oneness at first sight in their exchange of magnetism.

The sum total of a person is expressed in his magnetism. His very being, in fact, has its origin in magnetism—in the creative ideational powers of man's causal body, the God-ideas that form man's astral and physical bodies and sustain the soul's incarnation. Through the medulla oblongata, Cosmic Consciousness and Cosmic Energy enter into the subtle astral cerebrospinal centers of life and consciousness, and thence into the physical body, as positive and negative currents, forming a series of attracting magnets. Each individual is a bundle of these magnets, with attracting power according to their magnetic strength. Jesus was a Christ magnet empowering him to attract multitudes, as compared with the ordinary man who can attract very little.

All the parts of the body that come in pairs—eyes, ears, tongue and the little uvula tongue, hands, feet, and so on—have their positive and negative sides. They receive and radiate positive and negative lifetronic currents, each pair forming a magnet. The optical magnet can charm, enthrall, and strongly draw people; they will feel the magnetism of the soul of that person through his eyes. Some highly developed persons are able to spiritualize or heal others, even a whole audience, just by the magnetism of the eyes.

The spiritual practice of “laying on of hands” to send healing rays into the body of a patient electrocutes the germs and other agents of disease. There is

tremendous power in the life force flowing through the hands, provided it is made strong by a pure, indomitable will. A will that refuses to be discouraged by anything, and that flows continually and energetically toward accomplishment of its object, becomes divinely empowered. The strong will of man guided by wisdom is Divine Will.

As each person carries with him a telltale silent evidence of his own vibrations, individuals residing in the same house, sharing the same rooms, soon come to know each other, even if they verbally communicate very little, because of an exchange of the magnetic vibrations of their consciousness, nature, vitality, and feelings. Each feels the silent emanation of the other's thoughts and life force, and the range and strength of his vital magnetism.

Unbiased, spiritually sensitive souls can know people simply by looking into their eyes, or by merely coming in close proximity with them and feeling their radiating vibrations. Worried, calm, timid, brave, cruel, wise, or godly vibrations can be felt instantly even by people with little spiritual perception.

Persons with ordinary perception are usually sensitive to others only when within near range of their magnetism. Great minds, however, can feel another person from a distance, although receptivity is stronger if they have been closely associated for a while. Thus it was that Andrew's soul, after remaining for some hours with Jesus, felt unquestionably his Christ magnetism and could proclaim to his brother Simon: "We have found the Messiah."



Jesus' disciples recognize him as the Messiah, incarnation of Christ Consciousness

In the words of Andrew we find the differentiation between the name Jesus and the title Christ (Messiah). Jesus ("Isa," Lord of Creation⁴) was his given family name, signifying a divine child. The title Christ was appended later when he began his ministry and was recognized as the one whose coming had been prophesied, in whom Divinity would be incarnate. Thus Christ signifies the Christ Consciousness, the reflection of God which became manifest in the consciousness of Jesus.

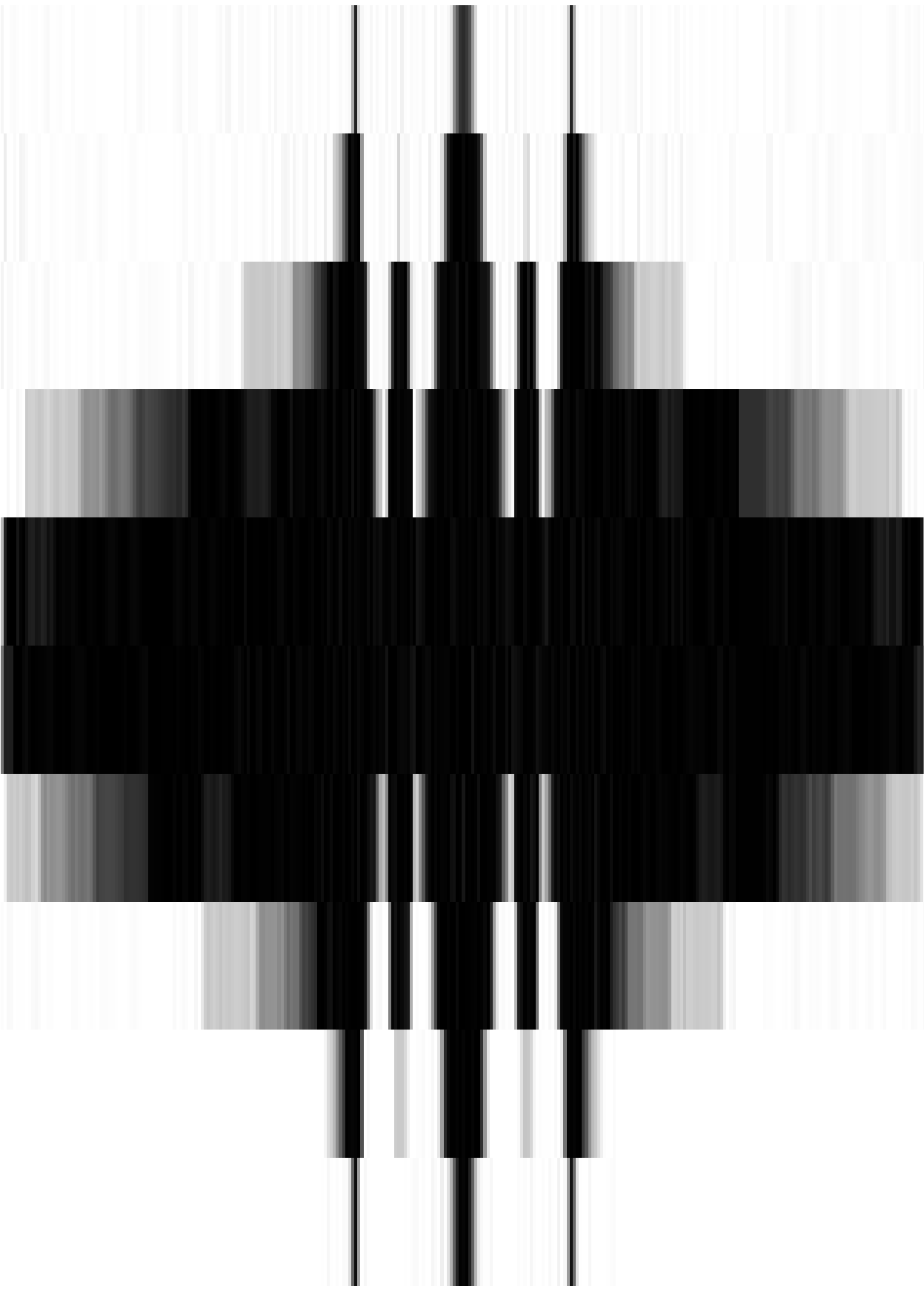
The concept of Christ as a state of consciousness, as well as linguistic variants of the word itself, is very ancient, referring to the unchangeable Intelligence, the pure Reflected Consciousness of God, present in every atom of matter and every pore of finite creation—the Christ Consciousness, known from time immemorial by India's rishis as Kutastha Chaitanya.

Jesus the Christ signifies that the body of Jesus was the vehicle in which was manifested the Christ Consciousness. The title Christ is more anciently found in India in the word Krishna. Perhaps the Christ title was first bestowed on Jesus during his sojourn in India. Sometimes I purposely spell Krishna as Christna to show the correlation. Similarly, Yadava was the family name of the beloved Hindu avatar who lived in India centuries before Jesus,⁵ and Krishna (Christna) was his spiritual epithet. Thus, the words Christ and Krishna are the spiritual titles for these two illumined beings: Jesus Christ and Yadava Krishna.⁶

People throughout different ages have sought the Messiah, many believing he would be a temporal king who would reign in a golden age of opulence and well-being, free from travesties of suffering and oppression.⁷ Few were to understand that the purpose of a Messiah, a Christ, would be to turn their soul's attention from the consciousness of attachment to little portions of the matter-world—country, society, family, possessions—to the omnipresence of Christ Consciousness. When souls, descending into form to experience the Lord's cosmic drama of maya-creation, lose their identification with the universality of Christ Consciousness, they are diminished into limited egos entangled in mortal relationships, circumscriptions, and national and social identities. Blind attachments lead to selfishness, quarrelsomeness, delusion of permanent

possession, inharmony, worries; and on a national scale produce commercial greed, desire of wresting the possessions of others, and terrible wars.

After accumulating a bewildering collage of adventurous and often painful incarnations, the beleaguered soul cries, "Enough!" and a serious search for emancipation begins.



Finding a true guru: a God-sent guide on the path to Self-realization

One has to wonder how our Creator must feel that most of His truant children turn to Him only when in desperation, after being impelled by the scourge of sorrow. Nevertheless, whether through suffering, or wonderment, or discriminative reasoning, when they do begin to long for God and deliverance, and pray deeply to Him, God is touched and responds with loving help. The Heavenly Father, who is ever watchful of the inclination of the human heart, favors the truth-seeking devotee with some form of assistance, commensurate with the depth of the supplicant's desire and readiness. During the period of a seeker's philosophical curiosity, God causes a seemingly chance contact with the precepts of a good book or the counsel of some spiritual teacher. But when the aspirant is not satisfied with meager placations from religious treatises or mediocre instructors, and his heart is corroding with eagerness to find God, then the Father sends unto His child one who knows God and is empowered to confer that realization on others. God does not reveal Himself in the beginning to an undeveloped truth-seeker, emerging from haloed clouds to proffer blessings and wisdom; He uses the transparent intuition, God-consciousness, and teachings of a master, an enlightened soul, to bring the devotee unto Himself. The guru is therefore not an ordinary teacher, but a preceptor-messenger celestial who guides the devotee through wisdom and reason, and the discipline of spiritual practices, sadhana, throughout one life, or as many lives as necessary, until the soul is again free in Spirit.

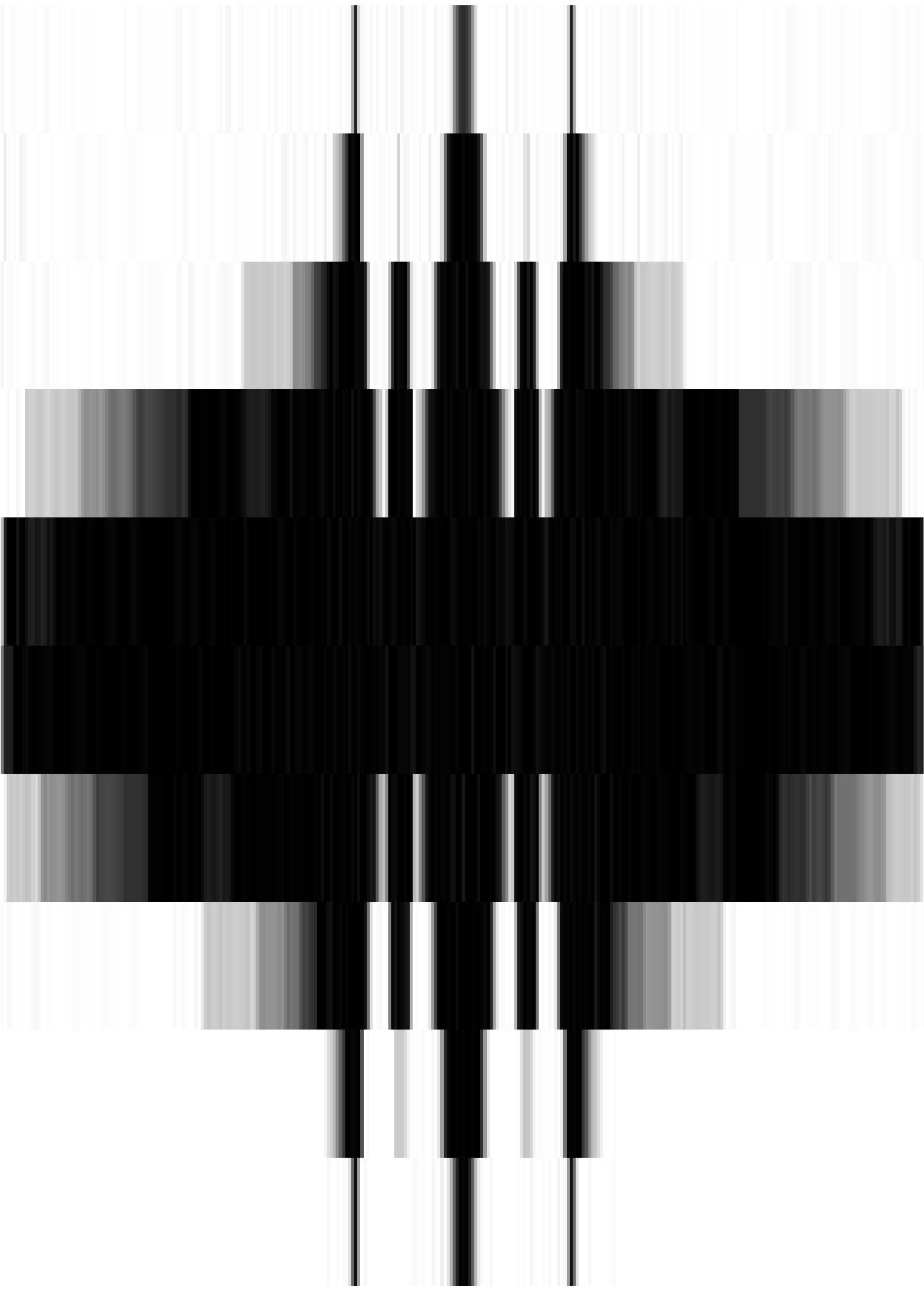
The whims of fickleness and the mental excitement of love of the new are real deterrents on the spiritual path. Sampling one church after another, one teacher after another, collecting an incompatible hash of ideas, is a sure formula for developing theoretical indigestion. The way to wisdom lies in assimilating truths into one's own personal realization, not in the amassing of concepts left untried and unproven. The method of finding God is different from the methods of gathering knowledge and storing it in the brain employed by universities to educate specialists in any field. Even so, a medical student, for example, will never learn his speciality if he roams willy-nilly from subject to subject, switching from one medical institution to another and listening to a few lectures at each, but not going through intensive training in the necessary courses in an effectively integrated program to earn a degree. The serious spiritual aspirant, also, needs to commit himself to the time and lessons necessary for Self-

realization, to the practice of those proven methods that have produced God-knowing saints.

There are many worthy teachers who selflessly serve and help others; but there is also much scope for unscrupulous abuse by those who would take advantage of the emotional vulnerability of persons who in seeking support from religion become blindly attached, all hidebound, to a teacher's personality and self-conceived assertions. In my early years of seeking God, not a few such pseudo-gurus tried to impress me with grandiose displays of piety and scriptural verbosity; but there was no godliness in their do-as-I-say-not-as-I-do facade and in the hollowness of holy words that they rolled out from rote rather than from the resonance of realization.

It is good to discriminate between the so-called teacher—who uses religion as a livelihood or to make money, or to gain fame and following—and the genuine teacher, who uses his religion (and principled business methods in religion) solely to serve his brethren with real spirituality. Discretion and caution are particularly necessary in accepting a guru, one to whom explicit loyalty and trust are given.

One may have many teachers in the beginning of his search, but when one's heart and soul are confidently settled in a guru-disciple relationship ordained and blessed by God, the disciple has only one guru, and no other teachers thereafter. The devotee remains loyal to such a guru, being spiritually fulfilled by the God-sent messenger. To forsake the guru and his ideals is to spurn the help sent by God, the One Guru of gurus: “the Lord God of the holy prophets”;⁸ He whom alone “seers great, and heaven's-path successful ones,” do worship.⁹



Unconditional love, loyalty, and obedience are hallmarks of the guru-disciple relationship

The spiritual soul contact between guru and disciple is one of eternal, unconditional divine love and friendship, bearing no taint of any selfish consideration. Human love is conditional and based upon merit and inborn attachments. Unconditional divine love is the Christ-love with which God embraces all His children, high or low, naughty or good, under all circumstances. Only a master, one who has cast off his ego with its biases and selfish expectations, is capable of serving as a perfect channel through which God's divine love may flow without measure.

In the spiritually receptive, loyalty to the guru rises spontaneously when the disciple's heart is bathed in the aura of the guru's unconditional love. The soul knows that it has found at last a true friend, counselor, and guide. The disciple strives therefore to reciprocate the guru's unconditional love, especially when tested, even as the faith and loyalty of Jesus' disciples were often tried with nonunderstanding. Many were with Jesus at the feasts and sermons, but how few at the cross! Yet from among loyal followers, advanced disciples greatly help the master in ways common and unique. Even a Christ could scarce fulfill his mission without those who are steadfast and in tune with him.

Jesus knew the secret law of emancipation inherent in the guru-disciple relationship, and its pact of mutual help, as God began to send to him those disciples destined to help him and to find liberation through his instrumentality.

In Andrew, Jesus found the receptivity to intuit the presence of the Christ Consciousness in the bodily vehicle of the Master. In John the beloved, Jesus saw the devotion that would hold this disciple steadfast and take him deep into the experience of the yogic science of God-union that he would later record in the Book of Revelation. In Simon Peter, Jesus discerned a divine strength on which to build the early foundation of his teachings, and predicted that the spiritual life of Simon would be as firm as a stone (Hebrew: cephas; Greek: Peter, "a rock").¹⁰

In meeting Philip, Jesus, remembering their previous guru-disciple relationship, said to him without hesitation, "Follow me." By this command, Jesus exercised

his spiritual responsibility as preceptor to his disciple Philip. He indicated that Philip should tune his instinct-guided reason and will power with the higher wisdom-guided reason and will of Jesus, the way by which Philip could free himself from mortal delusion and overcome the common compelling temptations and attachments of the flesh.



Following the wisdom-guidance of the guru bestows freedom of will and liberation

Delusion and bad habits may completely overpower the judgment and will power of a disciple during crucial tests when the factitious dictates of his own reason seem to him to be valid, even virtuous. In this state, the disciple should not trust to his own decisions. Vice wears the cloak of virtuous reason to lure the unwary one who finds it pleasant to submit to conclusions that serve his wishes. Determinations should be matched with the wisdom-guidance of the preceptor and followed obediently, even though the disciple's befogged reason may rebel. In the delusive state, the devotee may find that even the best-intentioned of undertakings may nevertheless end in a disaster; for Satan, the Universal Metaphysical Tempter, tries by every means to instigate faulty reason and unspiritual behavior in the virtuous devotee on the spiritual path.

My guru Sri Yukteswar said to me, when he accepted me for training: "Allow me to discipline you; for freedom of will does not consist in doing things according to the dictates of prenatal or postnatal habits or of mental whims, but in acting according to the suggestions of wisdom and free choice. If you tune in your will with mine, you will find freedom." In attunement with his God-guided, wisdom-guided will, I did find freedom.

Sri Krishna says in the Bhagavad Gita: "Comprehending that wisdom from a guru, thou wilt not again fall into delusion....Even if thou art the chief sinner among all sinners, yet by the sole raft of wisdom thou shalt safely cross the sea of sin" (

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rough seas will surely founder. But if he clings to the wisdom-raft of the guru's guidance, he will reach safe harbor.

He is not a guru who leads his followers into blind subjugation. Teachers who slavishly control their students after a dogmatic pattern destroy in them the power of free will. Such teachers want the student to see only as the teacher sees. Obedience to a true guru, however, does not produce any such spiritual blindness in the disciple. On the contrary, the guru wants the disciple to keep his eyes of reason open, and in addition he helps to develop in the disciple another eye: the "single eye" of wisdom and intuition whereby he may act wisely out of his own free choice. A guru disciplines the disciple only until the latter can guide himself through his own unfolding soul wisdom.

The God-sent guru has no selfish interest, only the highest interest of the disciple. Everyone needs a psychological mirror in order to see the blemishes that have become an accustomed and favored part of the acquired personality of one's second nature. The guru serves as this mirror. He holds up to the devotee a reflection of his perfect soul-image over which are superimposed the flaws of the ego that yet mar perfection. In ways both open and subtle the guru brings to the fore in the disciple lessons to be learned that perhaps for incarnations have lain shelved in the dusty corners of the consciousness. In an inevitable sooner-or-later choice the devotee accepts and learns or balks and avoids these admonitions. Wiser for the learning, he moves nearer to freedom; obstinate in ego comfort, delusion continues to hold him tightly.

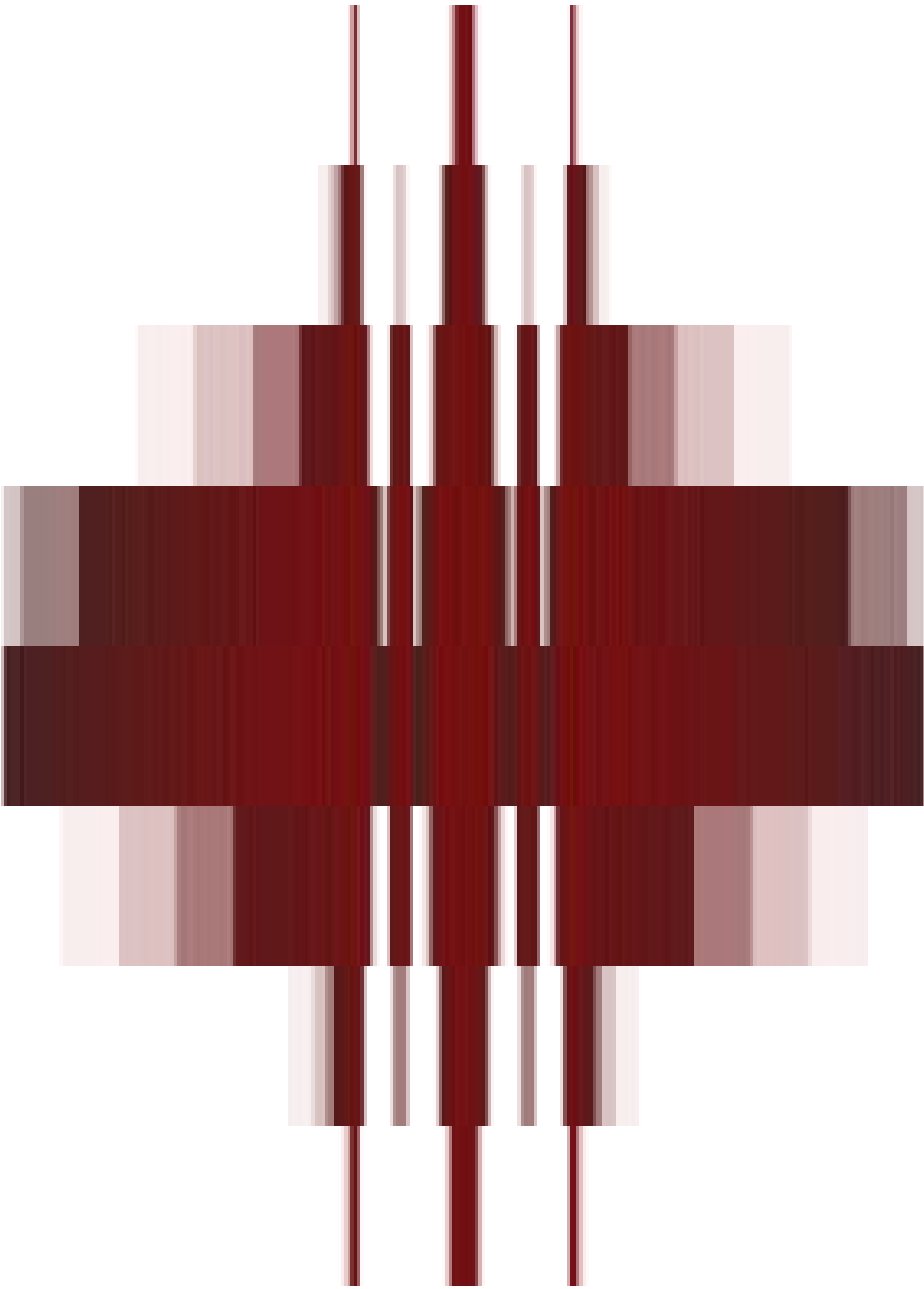
Very few persons enjoy true freedom of will. To follow one's desires, compelled by the dictates of instincts and habits, or to be good and refrain from evil simply because one has become accustomed to that good behavior, is not freedom. When the will is guided by discriminative wisdom to choose good instead of evil in any and every instance, then indeed one is free. Harnessed to wisdom, no longer swayed by prejudice and error or by the influences of heredity, prenatal or postnatal habits, family, and social and world environment, the will becomes established in righteousness. Until then, the way to all righteousness lies in following the wisdom-guidance and sadhana of a master who is divinely empowered to bestow enlightenment on others. Such was the Master recognized by the disciples of Jesus, who began one by one to seek spiritual shelter in his grace and blessings.



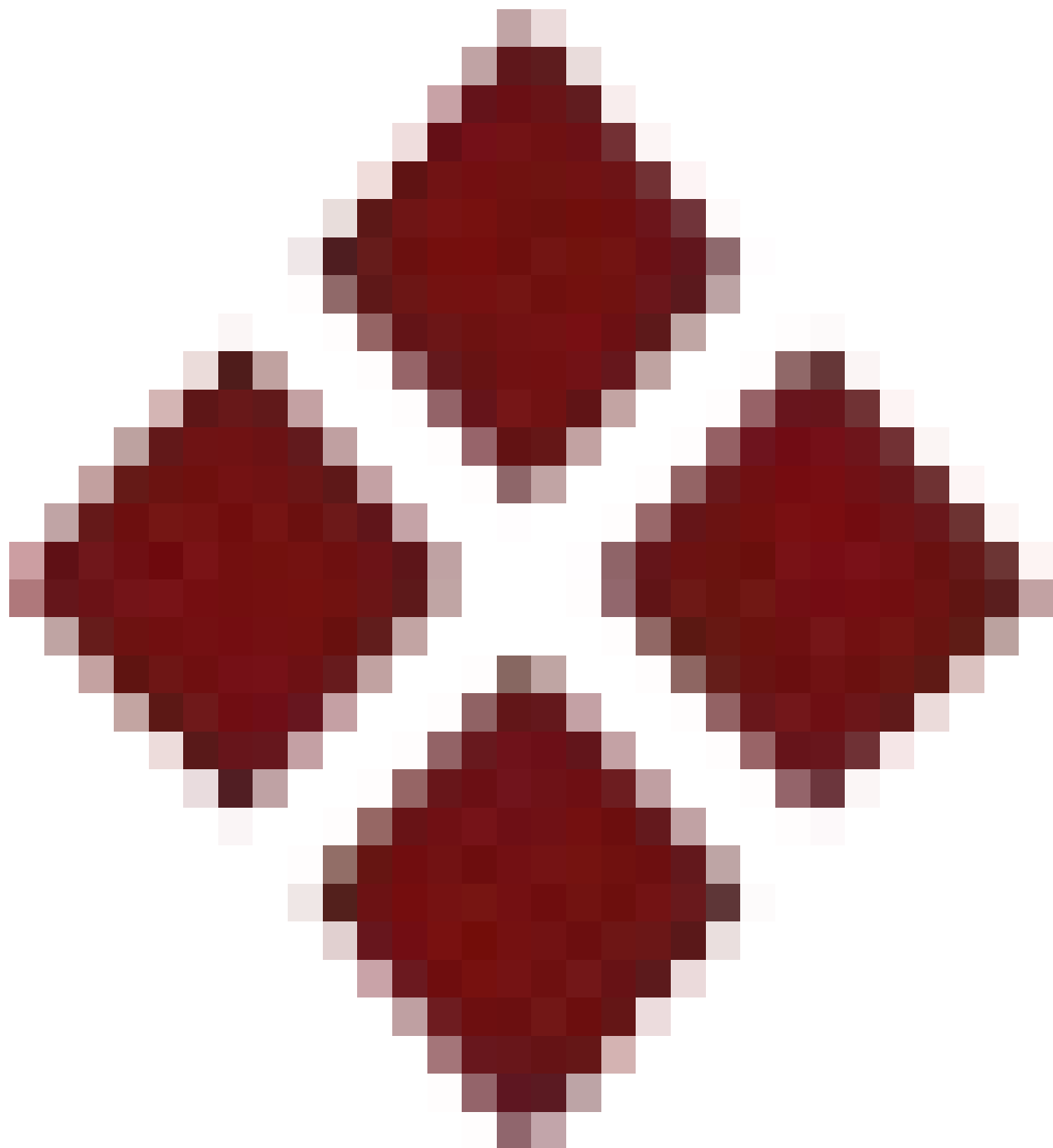
Discourse 10

“Hereafter Ye Shall See Heaven Open”

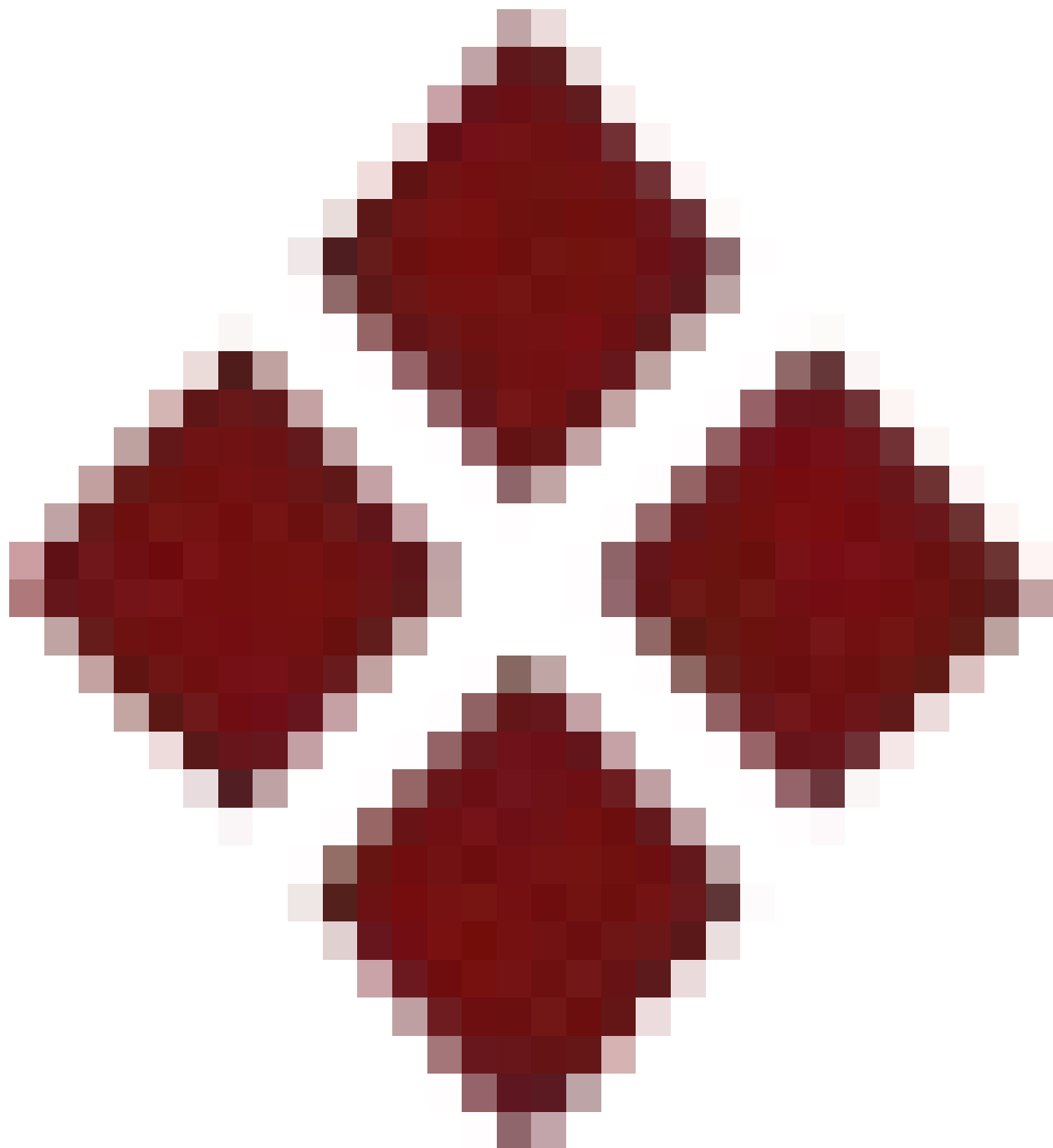
Jesus’ Discourse to Nathanael



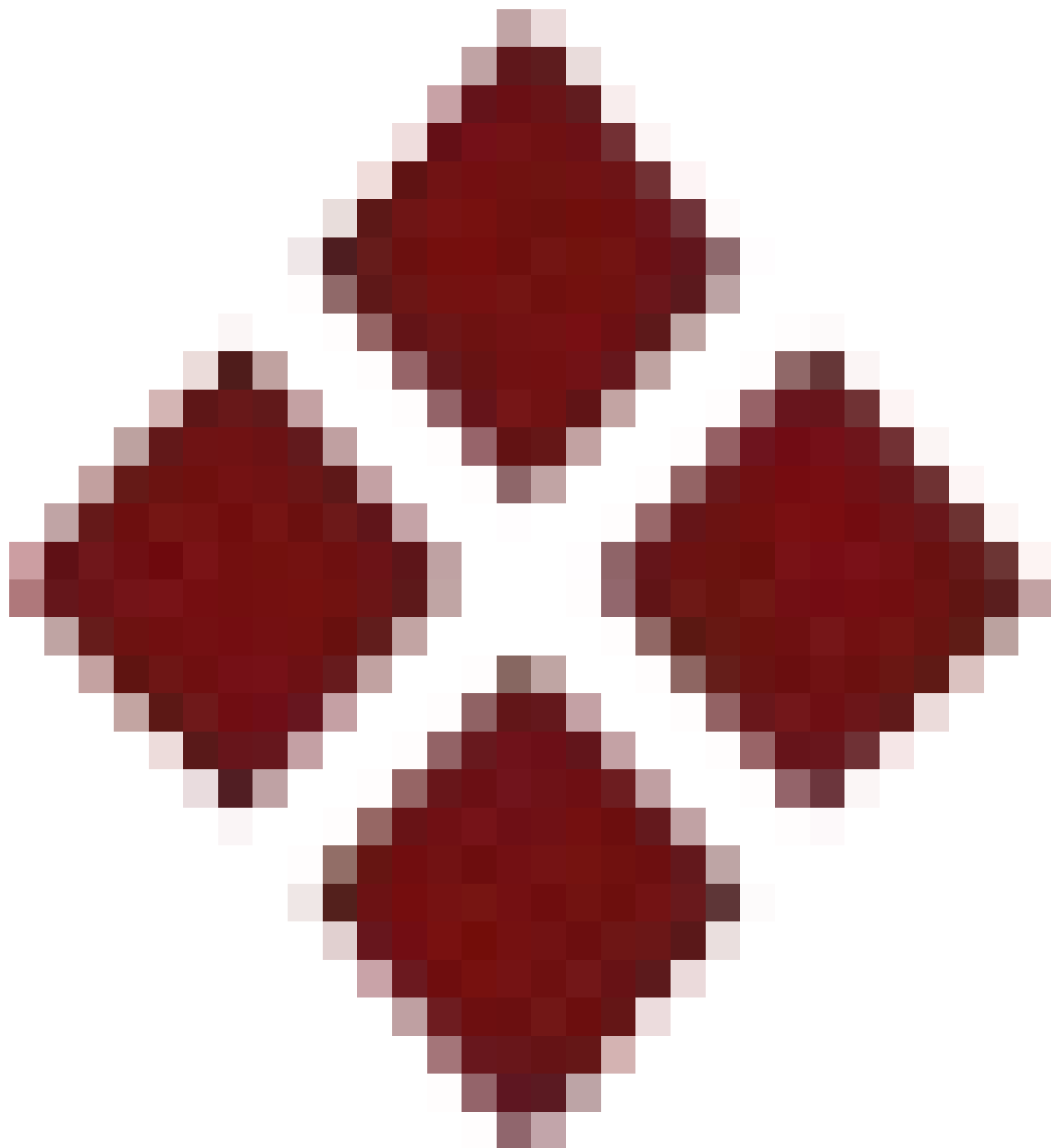
Sincerity: A Virtue of Virtues on the Spiritual Path



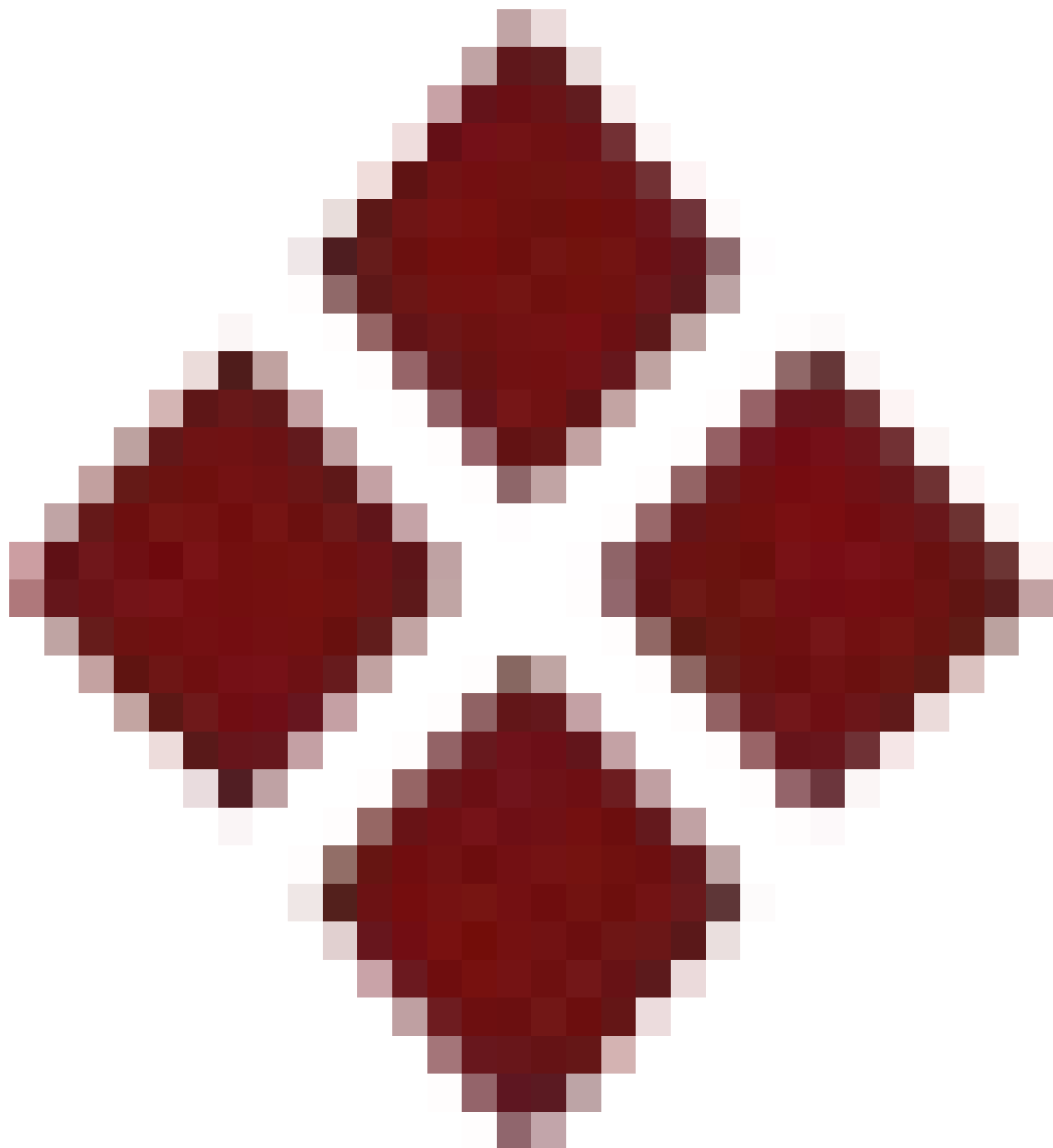
**“Fig Tree”: The Cerebrospinal Tree of Life With Its
Astral Nerve Branches and Roots**



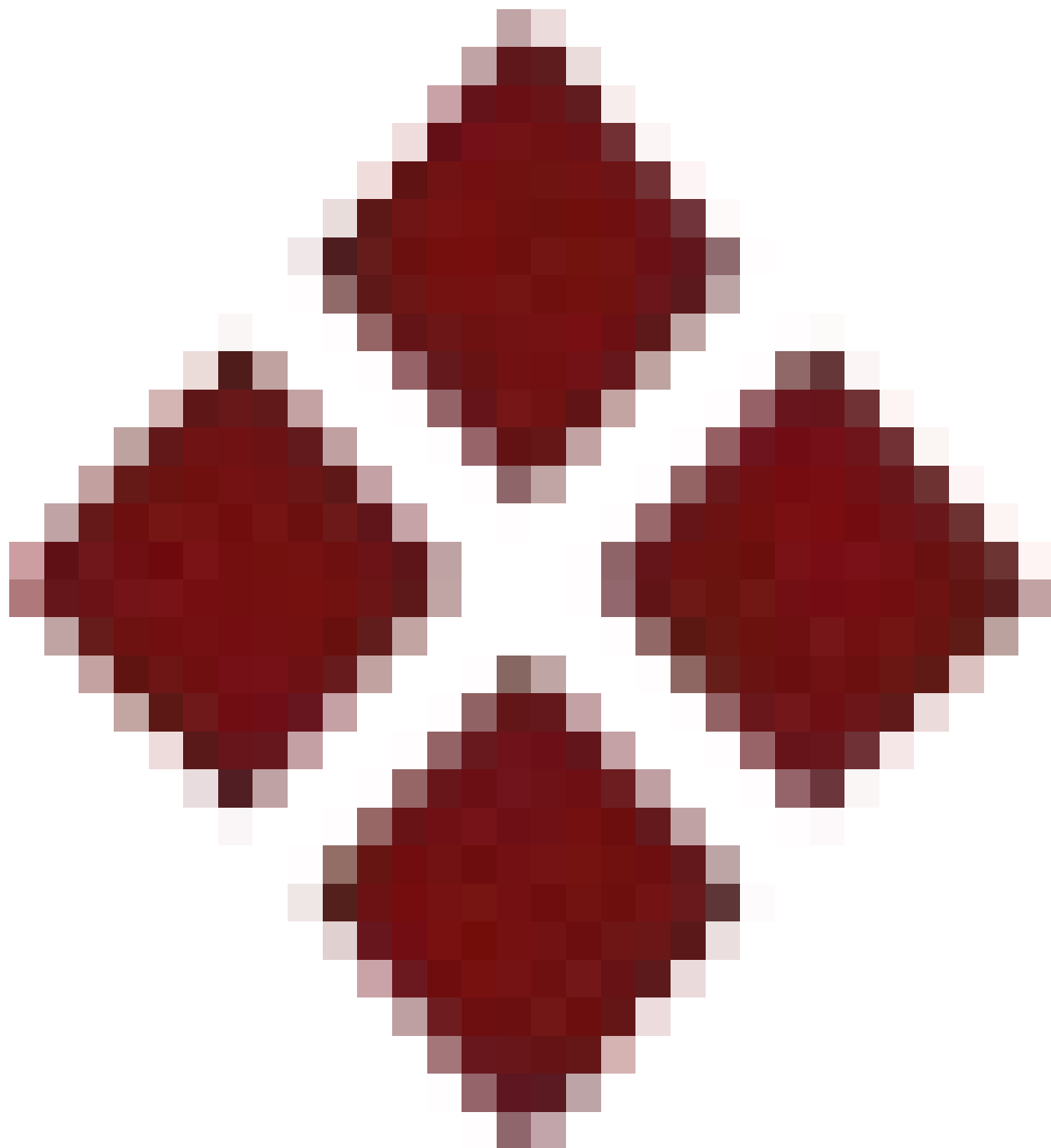
Man's Astral Body Ascends at Death and Descends at Rebirth



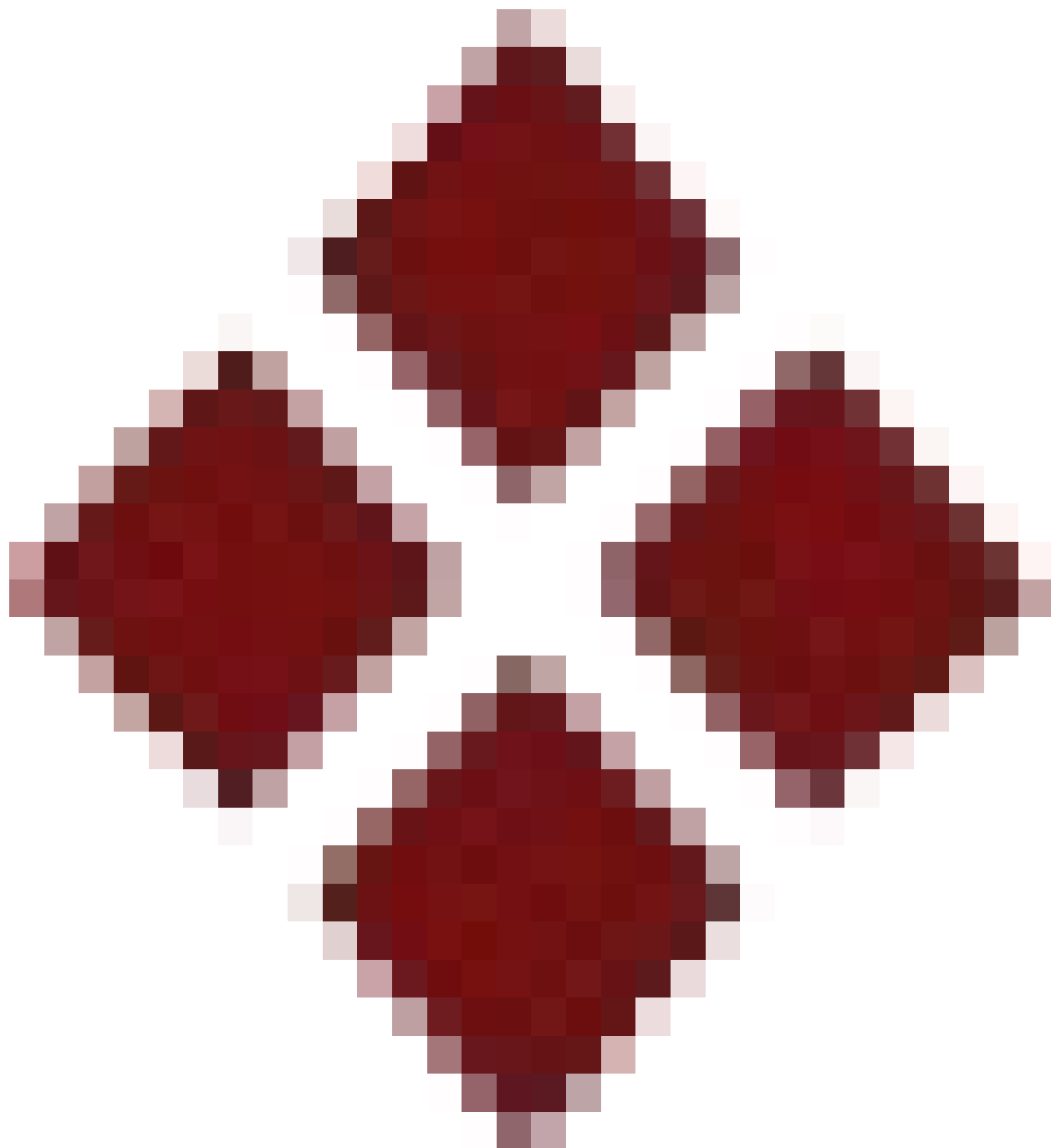
What and Where Is Heaven?



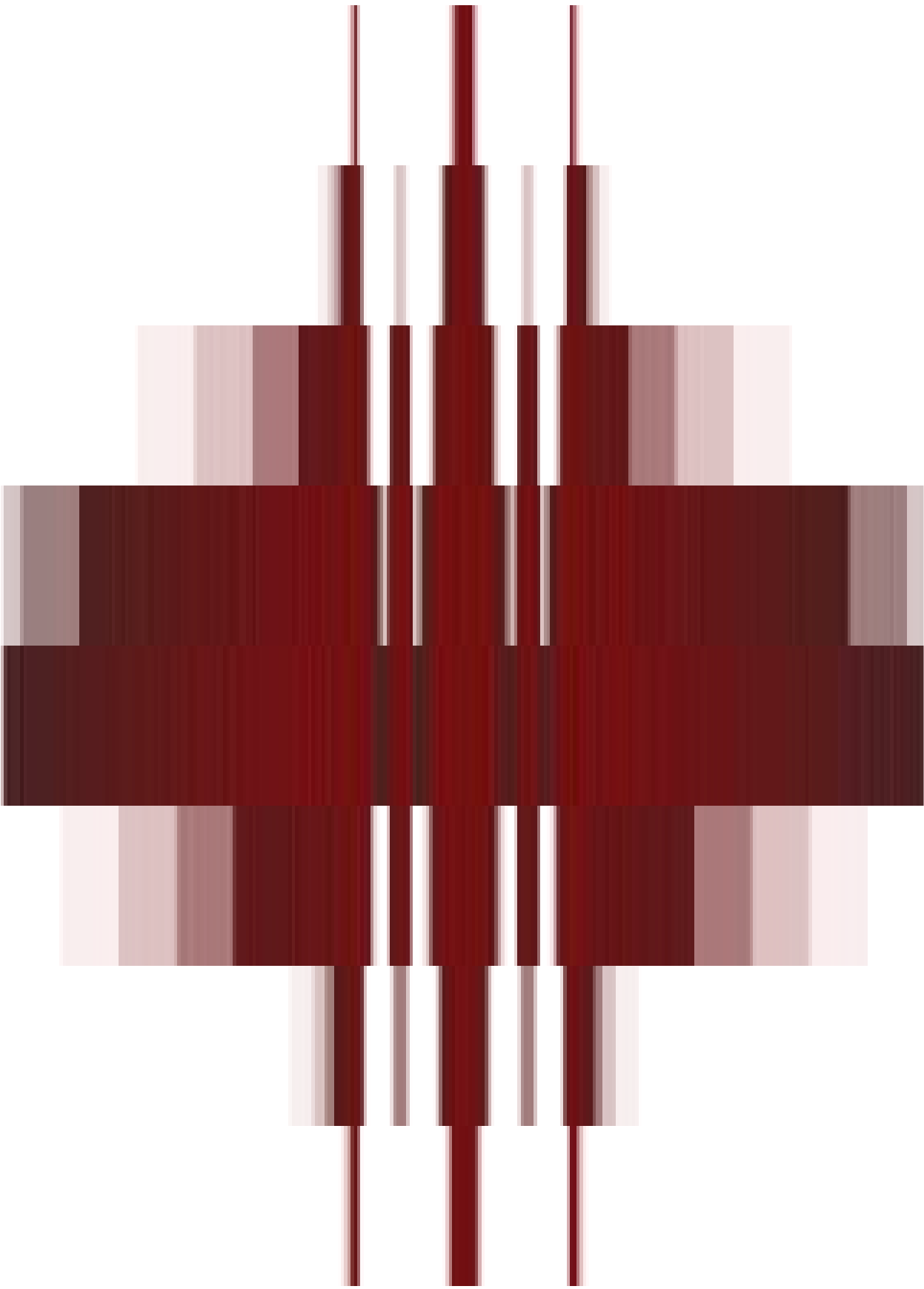
The Astral Heaven of Light and Beauty Described



How to “See Heaven Open” Through the Spiritual Eye



The Nature of Angels, and How to Commune With Them



“...a promise that man has a divine inheritance to reclaim the omniscience of spiritual perception, that heaven and its wonders can be realized in the here and now.”

■

Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, “We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”

And Nathanael said unto him, “Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?” Philip saith unto him, “Come and see.”

Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, “Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!”

Nathanael saith unto him, “Whence knowest thou me?”

Jesus answered and said unto him, “Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.”

Nathanael answered and saith unto him, “Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.”

Jesus answered and said unto him, “Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these.” And he saith unto him, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.”



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Discourse 10

“Hereafter Ye Shall See Heaven Open”

Jesus’ Discourse to Nathanael



Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, “We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph” (John 1:44 – 45).

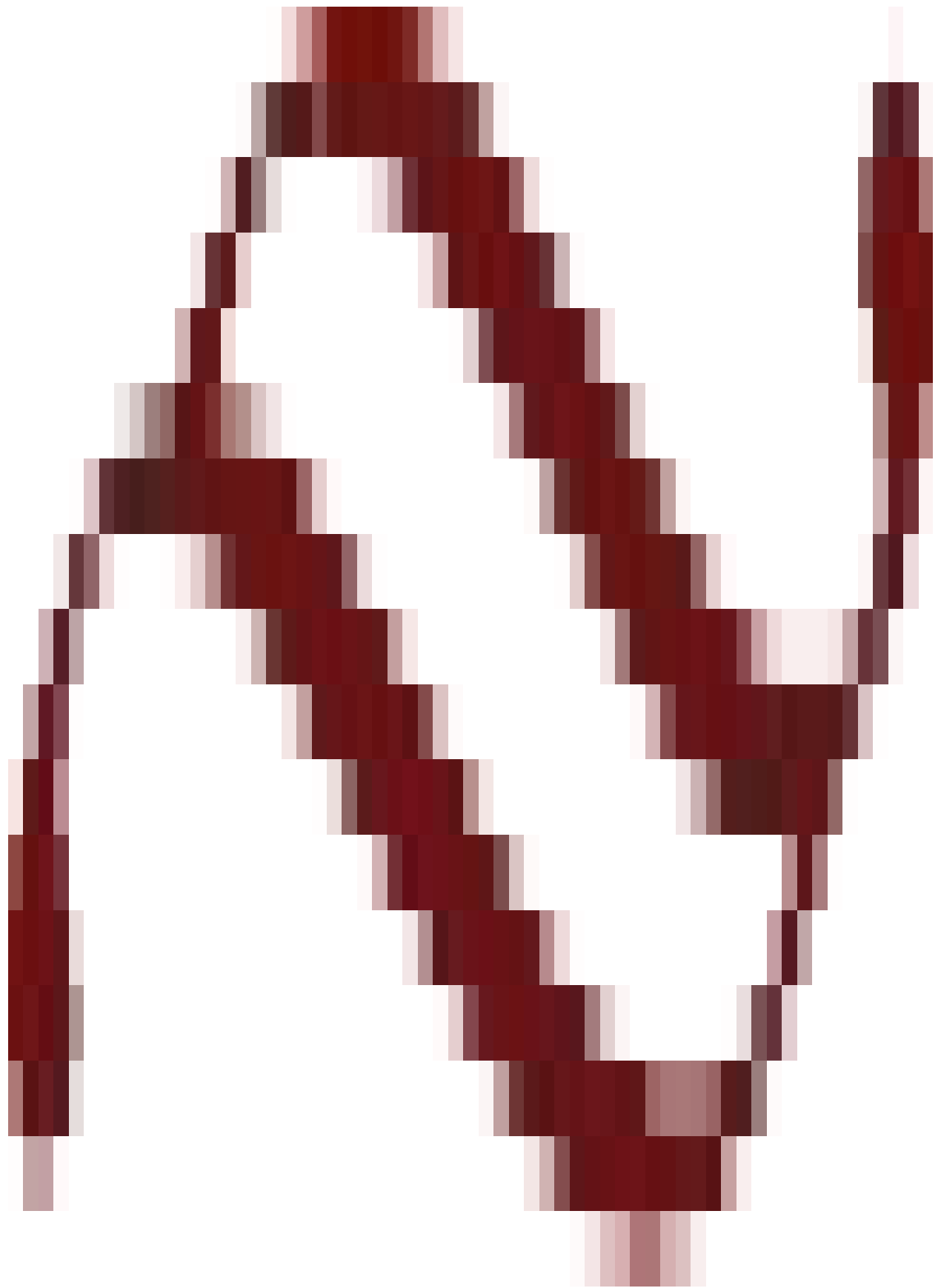
Philip cites the intuitive revelations of Moses and the prophets about the coming of the Christ, when he announces to Nathanael that the long-awaited one had come in the form of Jesus of Nazareth.

Prophecy does not mean that all happenings on earth, including earthly human affairs, are predestined. It is not an art that can be practiced reliably by those who possess some small degree of psychic power. All events that have happened in the past leave vibratory impressions in the ether, which sensitive people may sometimes tune in as mental images or visions. Similarly, the karmic law of cause and effect projects into the ether vibratory potentials of future events that are a probable outcome, or effect, of previously initiated causes. Future events forming in the ether from causes originated by human actions are not always inevitable; they evolve and can change dramatically according to the transmuting power of man’s free-will actions integrating into those karmic vibrations. One who has the ability to link past and future may predict a certain outcome according to extant conditions; but if those conditions are altered, the outcome may negate the foretelling. Doomsday “prophets” find themselves embarrassingly duped by their imagination and misreading of heavenly and scriptural signs.

Only the rare true prophet who is in tune with the will of God can make sure and accurate predictions, such as the foreseeing of the coming of Jesus. Such God-given predictions are concerned little with temporal matters that blow in the winds of whimsical human actions and their effects. Their primary and loftier purpose is to influence the spiritual betterment of man with both encouraging and cautionary revelations.

Thus, Moses and Isaiah and other prophets of the Old Testament who foretold the advent of Jesus were able, by intuitive foresight, to trace the law of cause and effect which governs the drama of human existence. They knew also the law of

God that sends self-emancipated, Christlike souls onto the earth at different ages, when the masses, burdened with the sin of ignorance, are in dire need of divine light.



And Nathanael said unto him, “Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?” Philip saith unto him, “Come and see.”

Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, “Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!” (John 1:46 – 47).

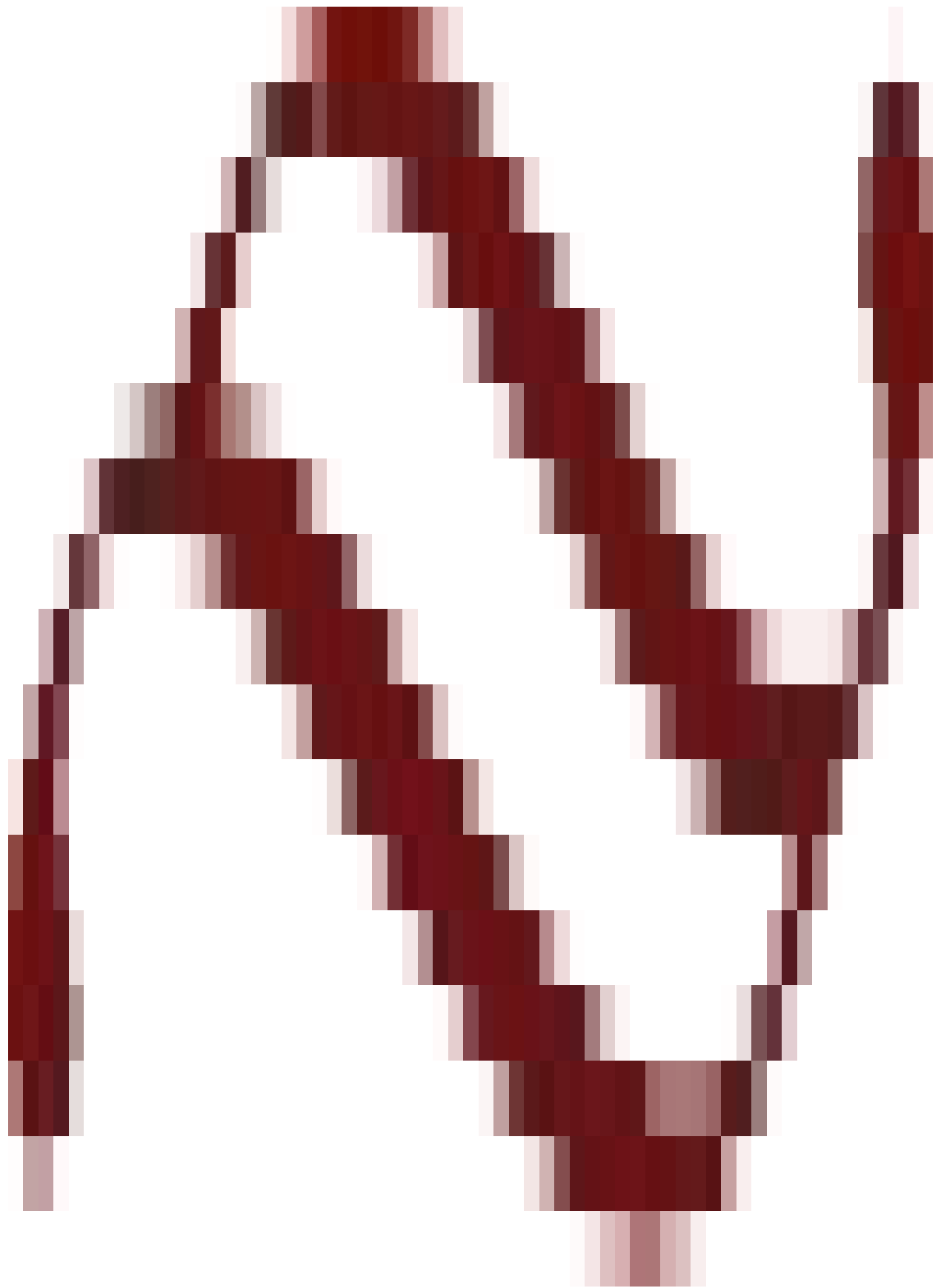


Sincerity: a virtue of virtues on the spiritual path

Nathanael was a plainspoken, sincere man. He knew the backward, socially and politically insignificant status of Nazareth and expressed doubt that a savior would come forth from such an inconsequential place. Philip was practical, and without offering an argument sought instead to bring Nathanael into the transmuting personal magnetism of Jesus. Philip knew from the blessing he himself had received that Christ, by his very look and magnetic life force, could remove whatever stubborn impressions of skepticism had formed in the brain of Nathanael. The transforming power conveyed to one who comes reverently into the presence of a holy personage is referred to in the traditions of India as darshan, an experience that is a veritable purifying rite.

Jesus gave Nathanael a soul-penetrating look, the vibration of which dispersed ages of ignorance; and like a shaft of light on a sensitive film, took an intuitive photograph of his disciple's life. Pleased with the image, Jesus said: "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile." Behold a soul that is free from satanic insincerity.

Guilelessness means sincerity, the simplicity or natural state of one's true being, free from duplicity, dissembling, hypocrisy, and all other self-serving guises. It has no association with crudeness or rude hurtfulness in the name of being honest. Craftiness, the cunning to outwit others for selfish purposes or spite, is a demented use of intelligence. The quiet humility of guilelessness is the sapience that distinguishes a truly spiritual personality. What magnetism it has! Sincerity is a virtue of virtues in the realm of spirituality. All other qualities a disciple may offer as the sum of his being at the feet of the guru must borrow a great measure of their worth from sincerity. Words and deeds are a sham without it. But a heart that is pure in its intention is the way to touch the heart of God.



Nathanael saith unto him, “Whence knowest thou me?”

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Nathanael answered and saith unto him, “Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel” (John 1:48 – 49).



“Fig tree”: the cerebrospinal tree of life with its astral nerve branches and roots

Nathanael was astonished to hear Jesus speak of him with the familiarity one would expect only from long association. How could a stranger thus analyze him so candidly? Jesus responded: “Before Philip called thee, I saw thee.” This seeing was not by the superficial sensory eyes, it was the intuitive photography of Nathanael’s soul imprinted on the omnipresent perception of Jesus by the art of divine telepathy.

Jesus explained: “I saw thee under the fig tree”; that is to say, “I saw through my spiritual eye thy soul resting beneath the astral nerve branches of the cerebrospinal tree of life.” Man’s body is figuratively an upturned tree with roots of cranial nerves feeding the spinal trunk and sending forth life and consciousness to the burgeoning branches of the nervous system. The Bhagavad Gita, similarly, likens the composite of man—consciousness, life force, and the nervous system—to the “ashvattha tree [pipal or holy fig, *Ficus religiosa*], with roots above and boughs beneath.”¹ A spiritual adept with divine sight, looking deeply into another person, can see the soul garbed in its astral nervous system. Persons imbued with spiritual qualities have a refined astral nervous system, vibrantly luminous, while the astral nervous system of the materialist is bedimmed with life-sapping “figs” of sensory desires vibrating on its branches.

Now Jesus may have seen with his divine vision the actual physical form of Nathanael resting under a fig tree in a distantly placed scene. But it was the perception of Nathanael’s soul and astral form that had attracted the consciousness of Jesus. With this penetrating insight, the Master recognized and drew to him yet another rediscovered disciple of lives past,² searching him out in the realm of astral manifestation—remote to myopic physical eyes, but proximate to the vision of the telescopic spiritual eye.

Every soul is garbed with its own unique individuality. When a soul changes its fleshly garment from one incarnation to the next, donning a newly inherited racial and familial appearance, it is no longer recognizable to those who look only to physical features. But masters can peer behind the purely physical facade and with intuitive perception recognize the soul’s individuality, unchanged from one lifetime to another. There are even telltale indications in the eyes, facial features, and bodily characteristics that reveal certain similarities to the soul’s

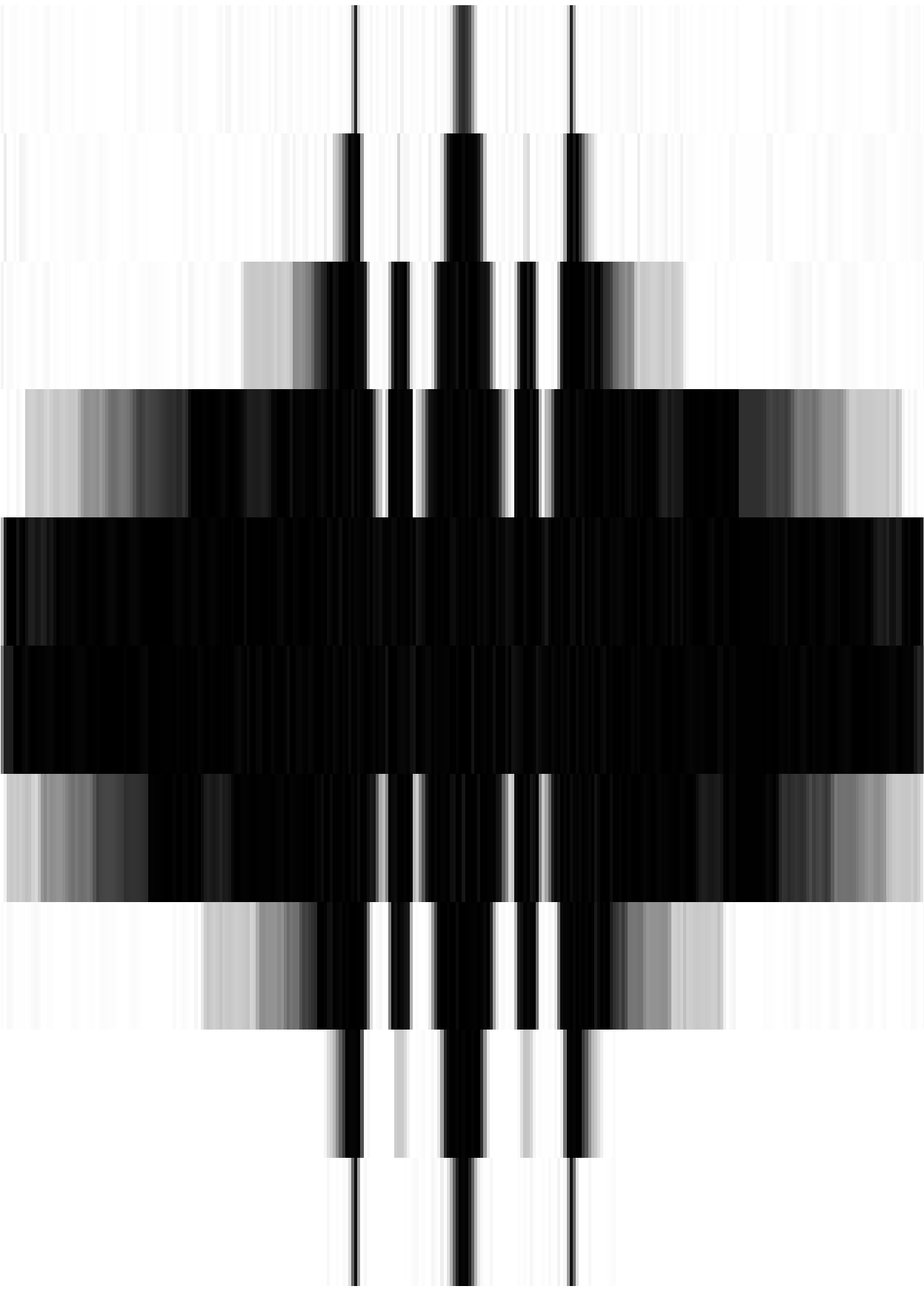
garb in a former existence—signs that a master knows how to read. The eyes, especially, change very little, for they are the windows of the soul.

Nathanael could feel the astral body of Jesus permeating his own being, suffusing his consciousness with vibratory blessings. With the enlightenment bestowed by that darshan, in which the disciple partook of the omniscient consciousness of Jesus, Nathanael recognized in an instant: “Thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.” In awe, Nathanael spoke of the Master as preeminent in heaven and on earth: son of the Owner of the Universe, entitled also to the terrestrial honorific of King of Israel—a diminutive kingdom situated on the little pill of earth embracing its place in the Infinite Kingdom of God.



Jesus answered and said unto him, “Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these.” And he saith unto him, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man” (John 1:50 – 51).³

Jesus responded: “Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these.” Jesus was pleased with Nathanae l’s receptivity, in that his belief was the result of the incontrovertible vibratory experience he had received from Jesus.



Man's astral body ascends at death and descends at rebirth

Many people cling to their shadowy doubts even when an inner feeling urges belief in a truth; but when belief is transmuted into realization, mental wandering ceases. In the clear atmosphere of faith, realization continues to unfold. Jesus' words were said to encourage Nathanael: "As you believe in me receiving my astral and thought vibrations, greater things than this you will be able to perceive; you shall see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the son of man."

"Son of God" refers to the soul, the individualized expression of the "only begotten" Christ Consciousness reflection of God omnipresent in creation. The "son of man" signifies the physical body with its faculties, which even in the divine man is at best a limited instrument for the material expression of the soul. The senses of the physical body are enamored with impressions of the world of matter, but they have no inkling of the marvels of God's overspreading creation unseen within and beyond the gross manifestations. In that hidden realm of cosmic beginnings, sustenance, and dissolution lie all the mysterious wonder-workings of the macrocosmic universe and the microcosm of man.

Jesus said to Nathanael that as he had already been able to intuit that grand other world that supports the three-dimensional sensory world, he would be able thereafter to develop further his divine sight: "Through the opening of the spiritual eye you shall see the glories of the astral heaven, and the transmigration of luminous astral bodies ascending out of death's dark abyss of discarded physical bodies into the light of the astral kingdom. Also you shall behold astral beings descending from the celestial spheres into the to-be-formed physical bodies of newly conceived babies." Birth and death—creation's most tantalizing mystery revealed!

At the end of each earthly sojourn the soul emerges from its fleshly prison, garbed in its heavenly causal and astral coverings of consciousness and life energy—an "angelic" contrast to the corruptible physical form. Astral freedom is temporary for those whose karma compels eventual return to physical incarnation; but those who transcend the self-woven cause-effect nets of earthbound desire progress by continuing spiritual effort through ever higher spheres of the astral heaven and the even finer causal heaven, eventually earning

enrollment in the Heavenly Host of perfected beings. Thus does each soul rise to its source in Spirit.

Genesis in the Bible tells us of the universal becomings. In brief: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void (pure consciousness, the creative thoughts of God that are the ideational causes of all beginnings)...And God said, ‘Let there be light’: and there was light (the basic building block of manifested forms—the structural essence of God’s triune creation: the vibratory light of thoughtrons, lifetrons, atoms)...And God said, ‘Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters (creative elements), and let it divide the waters from the waters’ (the subtle causal and astral elements from the gross physical elements). And God made the firmament (fine vibratory etheric space providing a background for gross manifestation and serving as a curtain to divide the physical universe from the overlying astral realm), and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament....And God called the firmament Heaven (the astral world secreted behind etheric space)...And God said, ‘Let the waters (gross elements) under the heaven be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear (materialization of the gross elements into a physical universe)’” (Genesis

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What and where is heaven?

Heaven may be said to consist, overall, of three regions: where the Heavenly Father lives in vibrationless Infinity; where Christ Intelligence reigns—omnipresent in but transcendently untouched by vibratory creation—and in which the angels and highest evolved saints reside; and the vibratory spheres of the ideational causal world and lifetronic astral world. These heavenly realms, vibratory and transcendent, are only figuratively “above” the gross vibrations of earth “below”: They are in fact superimposed one on the other, with the finer screened from the denser manifestation through the medium and intervention of the “firmament,” vibratory etheric space, hiding the astral from the physical manifestation, the causal from the astral, and the transcendent Christ and Cosmic Consciousness from the causal. Without this integration—producing a physical instrumentality empowered by astral life, guided by individualized intelligence, all arising from consciousness—there could be no meaningful manifestation.

So this earth and its beings seemingly floating in limitless space as the result of blind forces is not happenstance at all; it is highly organized.

The physical cosmos is diminutive in relation to the enormously larger and grander astral cosmos, as is the astral universe in relation to the causal—both the astral and causal heavens are permeated with the Christ Consciousness; and interlacing all is the Cosmic Consciousness of God, extending into the boundless infinity of blissful Spirit.

No one can measure Eternity. Man has yet to plumb the immensity of even this limited physical cosmos; there are untold billions of stars in the heavens that still have not been seen. The Lord has Infinitude as His space in which he dangles the intricately designed baubles of these physical, astral, and causal worlds, intriguingly reflecting as well as mysteriously hiding facets of His Immutable Being.

Different cultures and sects conceive of heaven according to their racial, social, and environmental habits of thought: a happy hunting ground; a glorious realm of endless pleasures; a kingdom with streets of gold and winged angels making celestial music on harps; a nirvana in which consciousness is extinguished in an everlasting peace.

Jesus said: “In my Father’s house are many mansions” (John

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At death of the physical body, a soul garbed in its astral form ascends to the astral heavenly level merited by the balance of that person’s good and evil actions on earth. It is not by virtue of death that one becomes an exalted angel in heaven. Only those persons who become angelic in spiritual behavior and God-communion on earth are able to ascend to the higher regions. While persons of wicked deeds are attracted to astral nether regions and may experience something akin to periodic dreadful nightmares, the majority of souls awaken in a luminous land of incredible beauty, joy, and freedom, in an atmosphere of love and well-being.⁴



The astral heaven of light and beauty described

The astral kingdom is a realm of rainbow-hued light. Astral land, seas, skies, gardens, beings, the manifestation of day and night—all are made of variegated vibrations of light. Astral gardens of flowers, planted on the soil of the ether, surpass human description. The blossoms glow like Chinese star shells, ever-changing but never fading, adapting themselves to the fancy of the astral beings. They disappear when not wanted and reappear with new colors and fragrance when desired again.

Astral beings drink prismatic light from lifetronic fountains cascading from the bosom of ethereal mountains. Oceans heave with opalescent azure, green, silver, gold, red, yellow, and aquamarine. Diamond-bright waves dance in a perpetual rhythm of beauty.

Astral beings use all their subtle senses as physical man uses them in the dreamland. The difference is that inhabitants of the astral heaven consciously and at will control their surroundings. The earth is so full of decay and destruction; in the astral world, havoc caused by any clash of inharmonious vibrations could be remedied by mere willing.

The astral kingdom is many times older and longer-lived than this earth. Every physical object, form, and force has an astral counterpart. This astral heaven is veritably the factory of life, the world of life force from which this atomic universe is being created. But the heavenly manifestations haven't the limitations of earth life. Everything is vibrating energy. Though beings and objects there have form and substance and therefore seem solid, one manifestation can pass through another without collision or harm: just as with photographic techniques so many physically impossible things can be done in the movies.

Colors on the earth-plane are crude imitations of their astral source. Lifetronic colors are beyond human conception, far more beautiful than any sunset or painting or rainbow or aurora borealis. The most exquisite colors in nature, if blended together in scenic portrayal, still would not depict the beauty of the astral world; the motley physical hues are such dense vibrations of their astral counterparts. In the delicacy of the astral land, neither dull skies nor blinding sun assaults the senses. The astral luminosity dims all physical light, yet is never

harsh or glaring.

The boundary of the earth is the cosmic sky. The boundary of the astral heaven is a deep circumventing nimbus, rainbow-like in the seven colors of the spectrum—diaphanous, translucent rays blended with infinite taste and beauty of the Father. Within this astral firmament are the “pearly gates” referred to in Revelation

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. These “gates,” of the luster of pearls, are the primary channels of ingress and egress between the vibratory spheres and the vibrationless realm of God, and for the movement of creative forces and souls between the astral and physical worlds. The pearly luster is the Lord’s creative white light tinged with the blue of Christ Consciousness flowing into the vibratory sphere, where in the astral realm it is refracted into the multicolors of rainbow hues.

Birth and death in the astral world are merely a change in consciousness. When the physical body dies, a being loses the consciousness of flesh and becomes aware of his subtle astral form in the astral world. At a karmically predetermined time that astral being loses consciousness of his astral form to undergo rebirth in the physical world. When the astrally garbed soul leaves the astral world, at the end of its astral life, it is attracted to parents and an environment on earth (or to similar inhabited planets in other island universes) which are suited to the working-out of that individual’s store of good and bad karma.

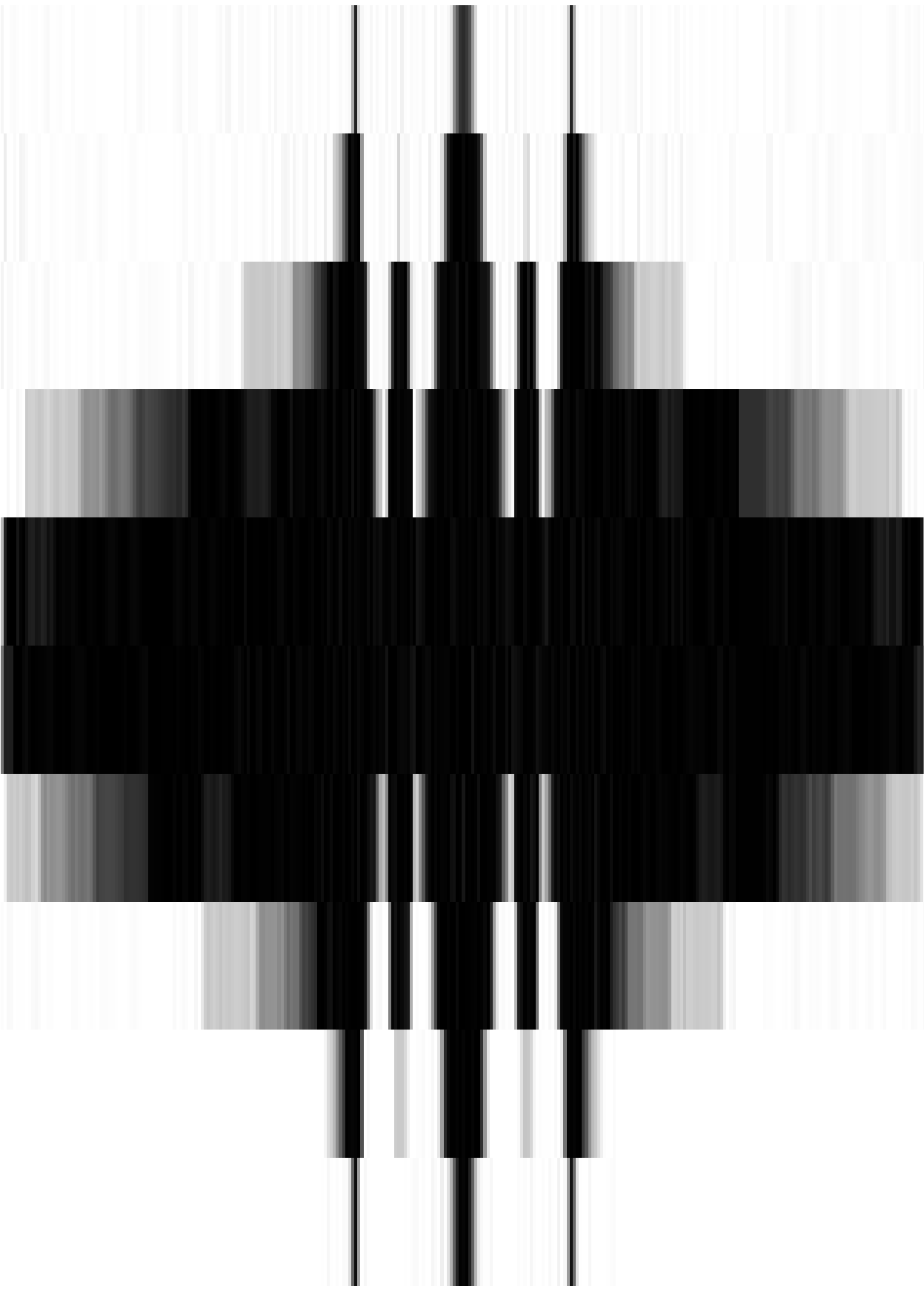
No one is born of a woman’s body in the astral kingdom. There is only spiritual marriage in that realm, without cohabitation. If children are desired, they are created by inviting a soul—usually recently departed from earth—into an astral body imaged by the immaculate method of condensing the positive and negative thoughts, and will, and feeling tendencies of parents into the form of a male or female child. A predominantly positive-charged thought of lifetronic energy produces a male child, a predominantly negative-charged thought of lifetronic energy produces a female child. The form of the child, as with most astral beings, resembles that of their recently discarded earth body, but without its decrepitude.

The earth memories of astral beings gradually fade, but they meet and recognize many of their loved ones lost to them on earth—so many mothers, fathers, children, friends, spouses, of so many incarnations; it becomes difficult to isolate special feelings for one over another. The soul rejoices to embrace them all in its consciousness of universal love.

Astral beings have all the faculties of perception and cognition to which man is accustomed in his physical body, but as instruments of intuition independent of the limitations of the imperfect mortal senses and rationalizing intelligence. The astral land is thus conspicuous for the absence of books, a distinctly material omnium-gatherum for storing and transmitting man's ideas and knowledge. Astral beings can concentrate upon anything in the particular stratum to which they are assigned and know about its nature through the instantaneous knowledge-producing power of intuition. Though they need not depend on the tedious methods of book-learning, advanced beings who wish to record their special thought vibrations have only to visualize those concepts, which are then immediately transformed into a permanent record of astral light vibrations.

As there are both highly developed saints and also ordinary beings in the astral realms, they use their own degree of semi- or fully awakened intuition to complement their highly receptive astral intelligence. Only after a soul reunites with God is there no longer a need to read books or to concentrate upon anything in order to know it by intuition. The soul identified with Spirit already knows all and sees all.

Advanced astral beings can traverse any plane or region of the vast astral heaven, traveling faster than the speed of light in a vehicular mass of luminous lifetrans. Ascending to the causal heaven of ideational consciousness, the causal being transcends time and distance altogether in the instancy of thought—with every experience, consciously willed, an exquisite throb in the tranquil essence of consciousness.



How to “see heaven open” through the spiritual eye

When Jesus told Nathanael that he would “see heaven open, and angels ascending and descending on the Son of man,” it was a promise that man has a divine inheritance to reclaim the omniscience of spiritual perception, that heaven and its wonders can be realized in the here and now.

This son of man, this human body and consciousness, has become dissociated from its heavenly essence because of its identity with the physical world. But Jesus intimated that all those who tune their physical self with their spiritual Self can perceive the astral world and transcend the consciousness of physical limitations. If a radio is not properly tuned in, it cannot catch the songs and voice-information passing through the ether. If a television set is dysfunctional, it cannot receive the vibrations of televised electronic images. Analogously, the human body is tuned in with matter. That is why it doesn’t perceive the presence of divine beings and all finer forces just behind the astral etheric firmament separating heaven and earth, and one’s finer constituent lifetric form within the gross manifestation of the physical body.

Though paradise is not visible to the eyes of most mortals, nevertheless it is real. There was a time when people would have dismissed with utter skepticism the idea of radio and television vibrations in the ether, but now millions hear and see them daily. Likewise, any devotee can tune in the celestial sights and sounds of the angelic realms through the soul’s powers of super-audition and super-vision, when by meditation the inner television and heart- and mind-radio are freed from the static of restlessness and mortal desires.⁵

To “see heaven open,” as expressed by Jesus, is possible in two ways: (

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) By removal of the vibrations of etheric space with its boundary walls of light through the command of the Ultimate Intelligence. (

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) By overcoming the limitations of the physical eyes and penetrating the spiritual eye of omnipresent perception.

Now as to the first supposition, imagine the chaos if the Lord were to remove the dividing firmament between earth and heaven. If heaven were bombarded by all the noises and discord of the earth, even the angels couldn't stand it! Heaven is heavenly because the Lord has made it a place of respite from mortal mania. Conversely, the physically circumscribed instrumentality of the ordinary man could not cope with the intrusion of a dimension it could neither enter nor control. God keeps man focused on the learning tools and lessons he is to master in this earthly schoolhouse. At the same time, the Lord has guarded the astral universe so that the cacophony of human beings on earth cannot disturb with the gross vibrations of their troubles the rapturous pleasures and meditations of astral beings.

The door to heaven, through which one can enter the divine spheres consciously, and as a welcome visitor, is the spiritual eye in the Christ center in the forehead. The eye of mythological Cyclops is true in concept, but as a spiritual, not a malevolent, instrument of perception. The third eye of the gods is a more accurate depiction: The aspect of God as Lord Shiva—God's power of dissolution for the renewal of created forms—for example, is shown with two physical eyes and one divine eye in the middle of the forehead. Similarly, in astral beings the two physical eyes are but faintly visible, their sight is through the single intuitive spiritual eye. Those who are advanced enough to peer into the physical cosmos from their heavenly home open the two eyes when they want to see the relativity of matter.⁶ All saints, also, receive their communion with God and the supernal realms through the spiritual eye. The eyes of saints in ecstatic communion are always upturned, locked in that center of divine perception.

By the right method of meditation and devotion, with the eyes closed and concentrated on the spiritual eye, the devotee knocks at the gates of heaven.⁷ When the eyes are focused and still, and the breath and mind are calm, a light begins to form in the forehead. Eventually, with deep concentration, the tricolored light of the spiritual eye becomes visible. Just seeing the single eye is not enough; it is more difficult for the devotee to go into that light. But by practice of the higher methods, such as Kriya Yoga, the consciousness is led inside the spiritual eye, into another world of vaster dimensions.

In the gold halo of the spiritual eye, all creation is perceived as the vibratory light of the Holy Ghost. The blue light of Christ Consciousness is where the angels and deity agents of God's individualized powers of creation, preservation, and dissolution abide—as well as the most highly evolved saints. Through the

white light of the spiritual eye, the devotee enters Cosmic Consciousness; he ascends unto God the Father.

Science itself confirms that with our limited senses we perceive only a certain range of vibrations of matter: We do not perceive it as its constituent dancing electrons, and the solid body as an electromagnetic wave. In the spiritual eye, the veritable darkness of physical light disappears and the electronic and astral lifetronic nature of substances is perceived through the sixth sense of intuition. The materially formidable firmament between heaven and earth becomes only a diaphanous veil revealing astral scenes and beings. When I enter the sanctuary of meditation and peer through the portals of the spiritual eye, in a trice the lights of the material creation around me vanish and I am in that other world. The ordinary astral phenomena hold no interest for me, but it is the greatest joy to be in the presence of the angelic saints and of the Mother of the Universe.

Angels are God-ordained heavenly beings who serve God's purposes throughout creation. They are either personified powers or qualities of God, or are fully liberated souls in whose beings the perfect spirit of God is encased. The latter, having overcome both material and heavenly desires and attachments, have merged in Spirit and then reemerged in bodies of pure energy—omnipotent, omniscient forces of the Divine Will.



The nature of angels, and how to commune with them

God's angels and exalted saints in the immanent-transcendent sphere of omnipresent Christ Consciousness can move freely in any realm of Infinity. They can ascend to the region of the Father; there the Self is dissolved in the unfathomable Blissful Spirit. Yet the impression of their individuality remains and can be reclaimed at will or at God's command. In the Christ Consciousness sphere they have individuality, but are in an ecstatic state. They dissolve their astral bodies there. When they descend into the vibratory region, they can be seen with astral bodies, which look just like a physical body, except made of a glow of light. That body has substance as a manifested form, but not gross solidity—just as dream images seem so solid, and yet are composed of the subtlety of astral light. By changing the vibrations of their super-electric forms, angels can make themselves large or small, visible or invisible at will, not only in the astral but also in the physical ether—as when angels appeared to laud the birth of Jesus. At other times, also, angels and divine beings in their astral forms, seen or unseen, intersperse the blessings of their presence into the happenings on earth, as when in response to devotional supplication or good karma a person or condition merits divine intervention.

It is not insurmountably difficult to see and commune with angels. But it requires deep concentration long enough so that all the disturbances of the mind drop away and the heart becomes perfectly attuned to the fine, heavenly vibrations. When the physical body and mind are restless, the consciousness does not record the presence of angels and spiritual beings. One must know how to tune in with them in order to see the divine ones “ascending and descending upon the Son of man.”

The heart, or center of feeling—the conscious awareness principle in man, described in Yoga as chitta—is the receiver of perceptions, as the radio or television set receives sounds and images passing through the ether. The spiritual eye of intuition broadcasts those perceptions from omnipresence into the consciousness. Therefore, in a state of deep concentration attained in the practice of the scientific methods of yoga meditation, the feeling (the aggregate mind-stuff of intelligent consciousness) and the spiritual eye work together to tune in the finer vibrations of spiritual manifestation by refining and uplifting the human consciousness, the son of man, to a receptive state. Neither the higher heavenly

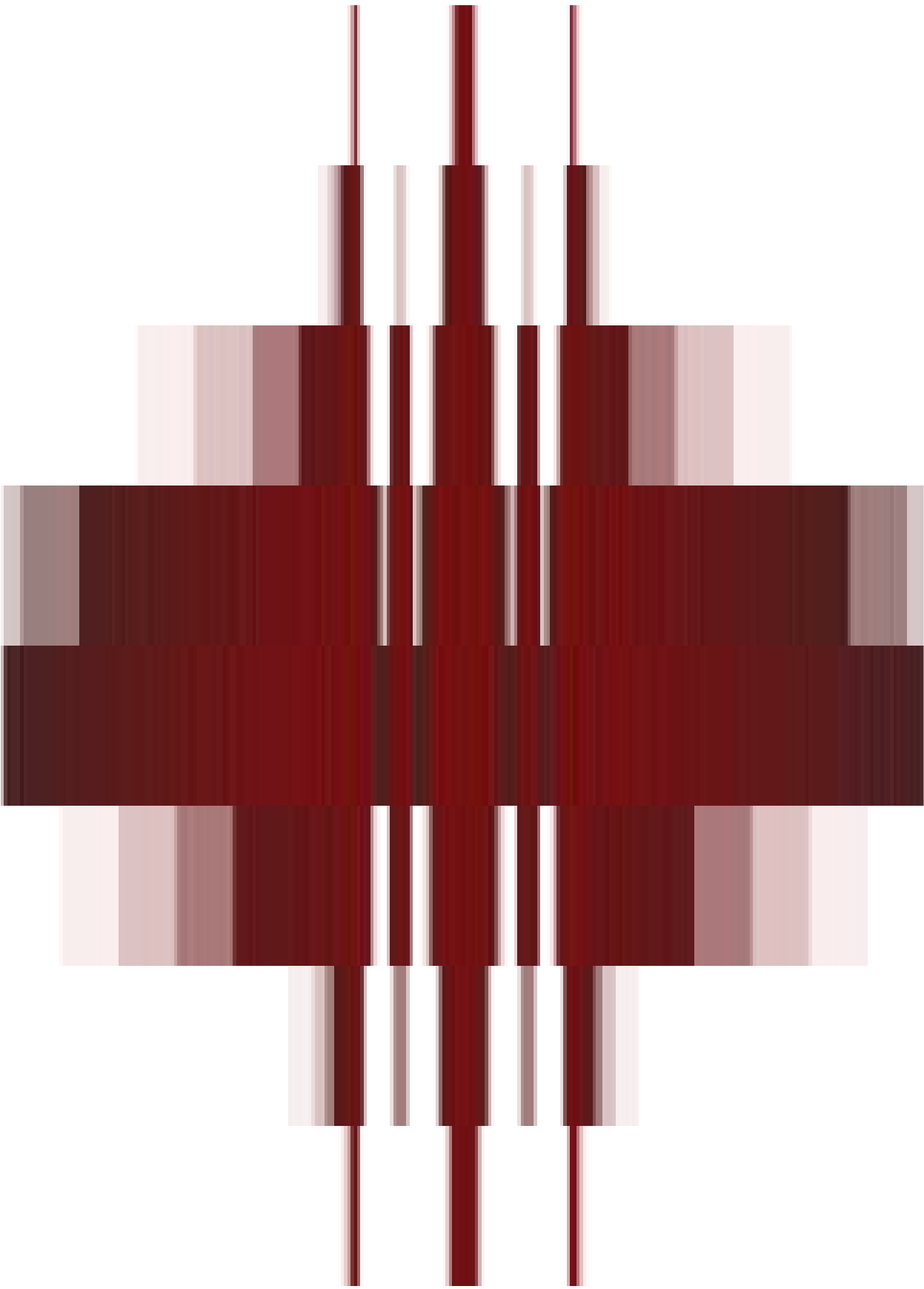
realms nor their exalted saints and angels can be contacted through such means as mediums or psychic demonstrations—which at utmost can reach only the ordinary or lower astral planes and their beings, or, more commonly, unreliable earthbound entities.⁸

In his words to Nathanael, Jesus spoke of this spiritualization of consciousness toward which the disciple was to aspire under the guidance of the Master; ultimately to see the highest heaven open and the physical body or son of man translated into a son of God. When the spiritual eye is opened and the consciousness embraces all creation in the Christ state, the devotee knows that his own true Self is an angelic being—an immortal immutable soul. He realizes that in the incarnate state it is the astral body that is the real body, the purveyor of life, sensory powers, consciousness—more tangible than the gross atomic form, and powerfully invulnerable to sickness, diseases, and troubles. Satanic delusion transforms perfect soul-angels into mortal devils, or at the least into individuals forgetful of their divine status. But even an ocean of sins cannot spoil the soul. Sin means error. Renounce the sin of ignorance and its delusive enticements of evil doings. Keep the heart free from jealousy, anger, selfishness; love all persons unconditionally, in spite of their weaknesses—that is the way to become an angelic son of man, in tune with the angels and fully liberated sons of God. By following Jesus, Nathanael would be led into his own position among that holy heavenly host.

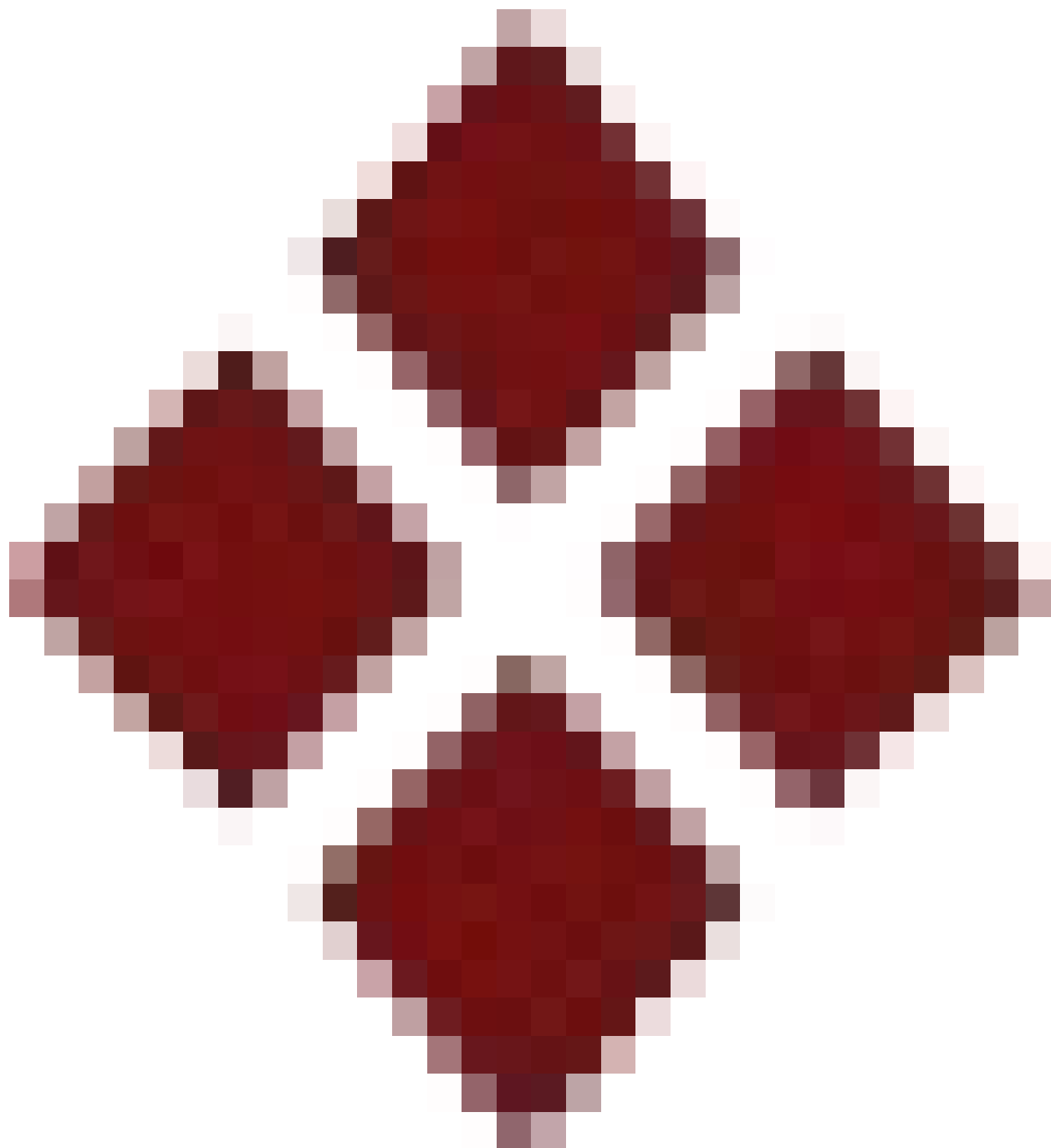


Discourse 11

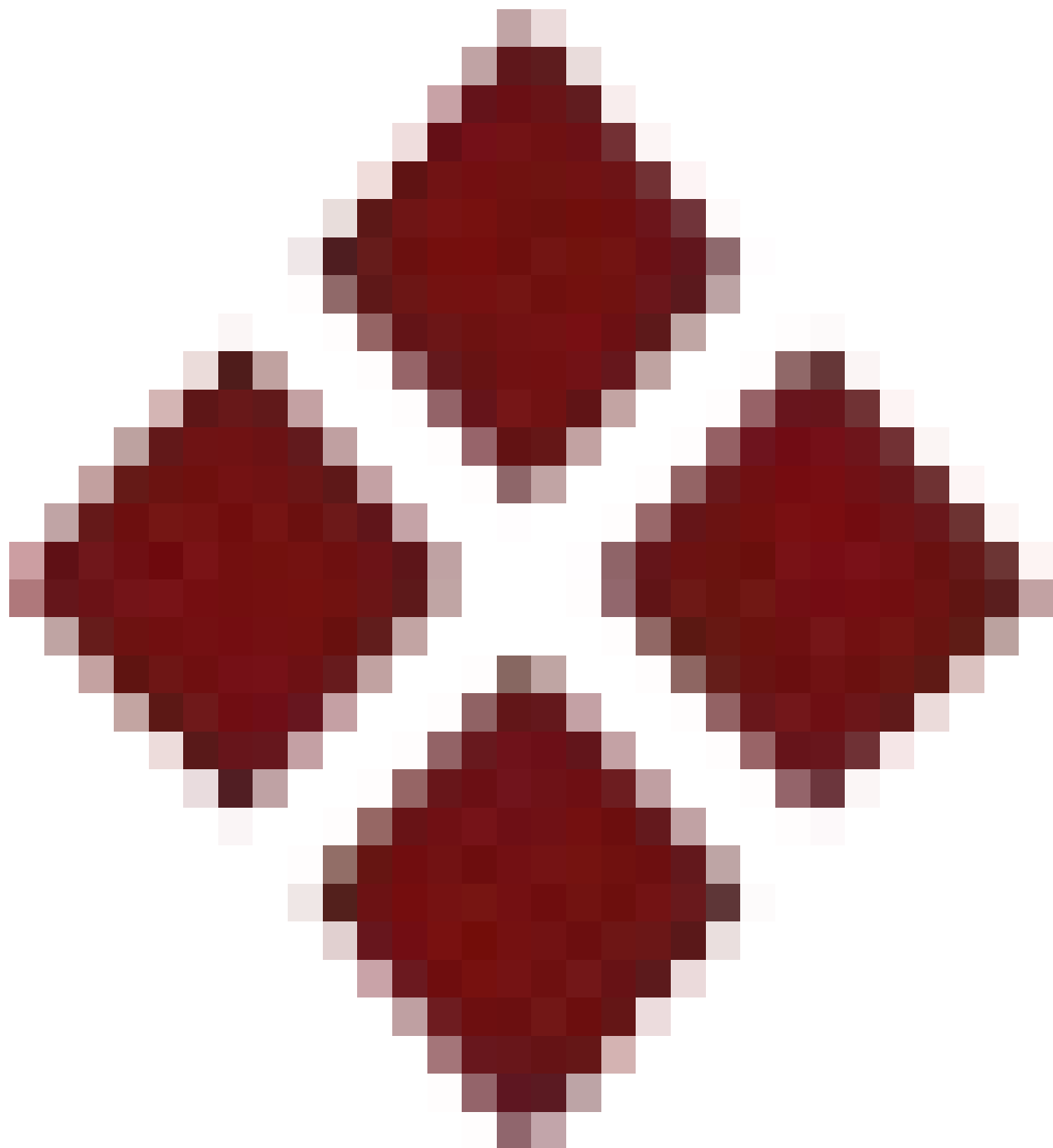
Water Into Wine: “This Beginning of Miracles....”



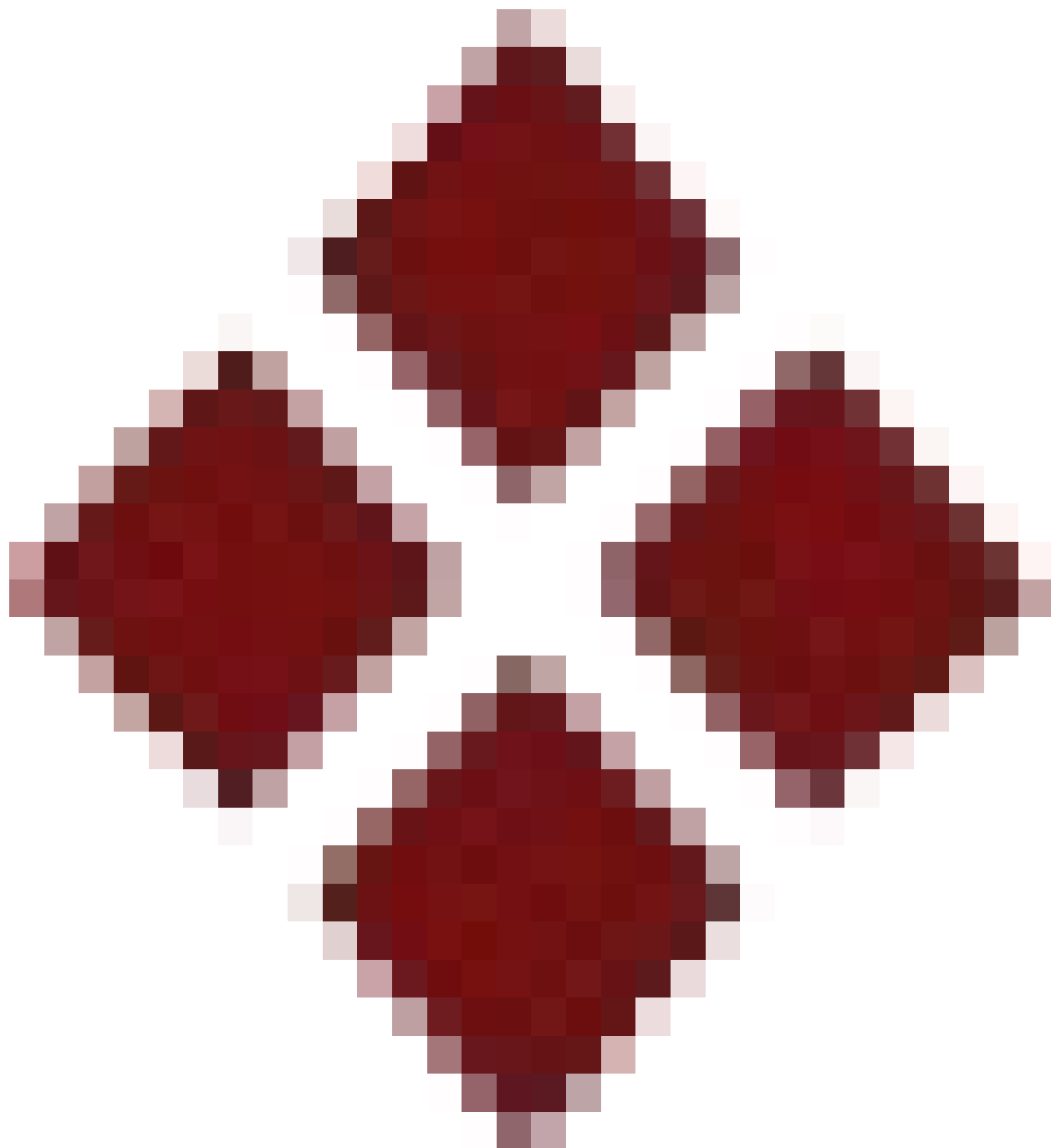
Why and When God Permits His Emissaries to Work Miracles



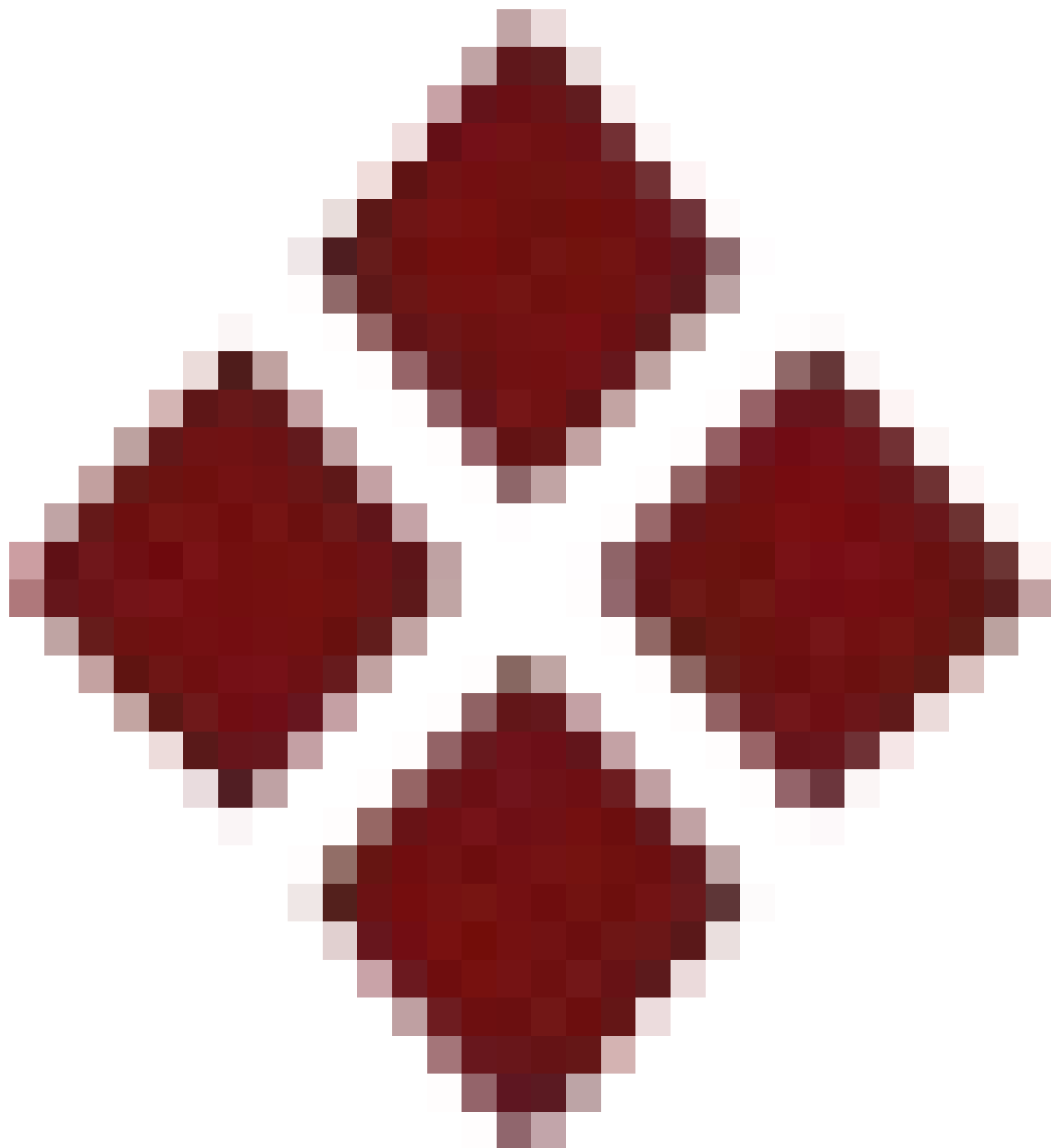
Did Jesus Support the Drinking of Wine?



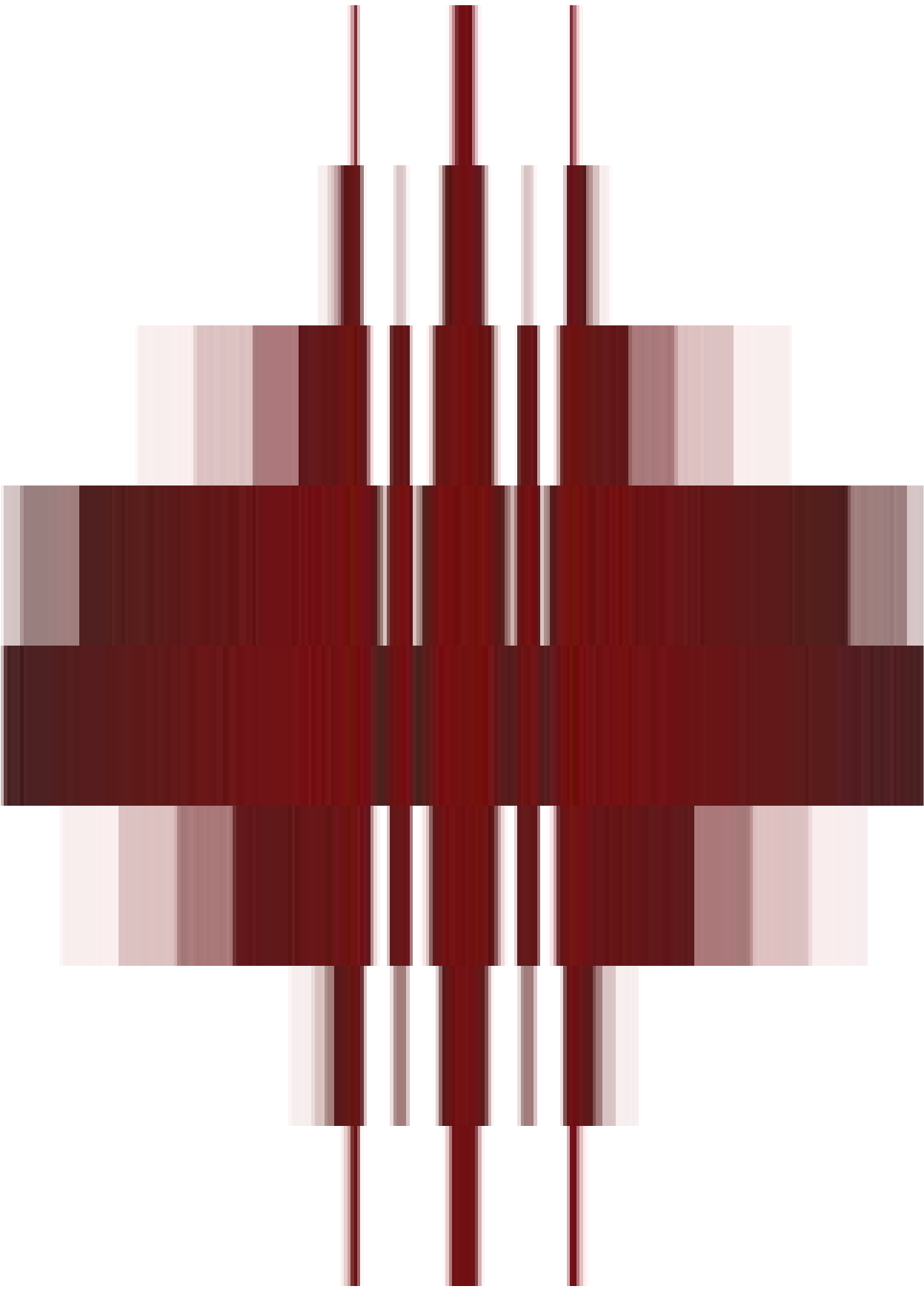
Control Over Atomic Matter by the Power of Universal Mind



Relationship of Matter, Energy, and Thought



The Power to Effect Miraculous Changes in the Material World



“Jesus performed his first public miracle not to sanction intoxication by the social use of wine, but to demonstrate to his disciples that behind every diversity of matter is the one Absolute Substance.”

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And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, “They have no wine.”

Jesus saith unto her, “Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come.”

His mother saith unto the servants, “Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.” And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.¹

Jesus saith unto them, “Fill the waterpots with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. And he saith unto them, “Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast.” And they bare it.

When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, and saith unto him, “Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now.” This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

— John 2:1 – 11



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Discourse 11

Water Into Wine: “This Beginning of Miracles....”



Jesus addressed his mother impersonally as “woman” because he saw himself only as Spirit—not as a mortal son born of the flesh of earthly parents of one transient incarnation, but as a son of the Divine who was his everlasting Mother and Father. Similarly, Swami Shankara sang of the enlightenment of bodily transcendence: “No birth, no death, no caste have I. Father, mother, have I none. I am He, I am He; blessed Spirit, I am He.”

All souls are “children of the most High” (Psalms

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). To forget this divine pedigree is to accept the limitations of a soul-humiliating identity with a “dust-thou-art” human body. One who knows God remembers at all times that the Heavenly Father-Mother-Creator is the true Parent of the souls and the bodies of all. It is the Divine Potter who has made the mortal clay and fashioned out of it temporary bodily dwelling-places for father and mother and offspring alike.

Jesus’ divine attitude of nonattachment implied no disregard of the God-given command to “honor thy father and thy mother.” His love was evident; at the time of his crucifixion, for example, when he asked his disciple John to take care of his mother.² The spirit of motherhood should be revered as an expression of the unconditional love of God, as also honor belongs to the father-figure as imaging the wisdom guardianship of the Heavenly Father. Devotion to parents is thus a part of devotion to God, which first and foremost is filial love for the Parent behind the familial caregivers, the Divine Father-Mother who has delegated parents to nurture the child. When the heart is divinely attuned, close human relationships are opportunities to imbibe God’s infinite love from the vessels of many hearts. Without this perceptive understanding, these God-given relationships easily degenerate through the influence of cosmic delusion into limiting, unfulfilling attachments, with their sad partings and their separations at death.

When the mother of Jesus made a request of him during the marriage feast at

Cana, Jesus responded from his paramount loyalty to God: “Woman, I cannot accede to your request just because you entreat me as a loving mother. It is God only who can appoint the time and the means through which He will manifest His glory through me.” Jesus meant no disrespect for his mother, and Mary understood. She told the servants, in an expression of faith in the Divine Will, to be attentive to whatever her son asked of them.

Having felt intuitively an inner divine guidance and permission, Jesus forthwith asked the servants to fill six large pots with water, which he instantaneously changed into fine wine. All this he did before the eyes of his disciples in order that they might know that the water became wine through divine power and not through some sleight-of-hand or other trickery.

The Gospel account distinctly implies that this first miracle of Jesus was not to accommodate his mother, or to display his supernatural abilities for the amazement of the wedding throng, none of whom were privy to what had occurred. The miracle was in obedience to God’s direction, solely for the benefit of Jesus’ earnest disciples, who had just begun to follow him—to enhance their faith in God’s power and in His manifest presence in the one sent to them as savior.



Why and when God permits His emissaries to work miracles

Miracles attract curiosity seekers; the love of God draws highly developed souls. The Lord has already arrayed before man a bounty of wonders to behold: What could be more miraculous than the evident presence in every speck of creation of a Divine Intelligence? How the mighty tree emerges from a tiny seed. How countless worlds roll in infinite space, held in a purposeful cosmic dance by the precise adjustment of universal forces. How the marvelously complex human body is created from a single microscopic cell, is endowed with self-conscious intelligence, and is sustained, healed, and enlivened by invisible power. In every atom of this astounding universe, God is ceaselessly working miracles; yet obtuse man takes them for granted.³

The all-knowing, ever-understanding Lord silently goes on regulating His vast family of the cosmos without compelling any recognition from man by an overt show of His power and excellence. Having hidden Himself humbly behind the universal veils of forms and forces, He nevertheless intimates His presence in myriad ways, and calls souls through inner whispers of His love. No miracle demonstrates more surely the presence of God than attunement with even one touch of His loving omnipresence. God's highest gift to man is free will—freedom to choose Him and His wisdom or the lures of maya's satanic delusion. As the Cosmic Lover of all souls, the Lord's one desire is that perchance man might use his free will to cast away the mercurial inducements of Satan and embrace the consummate fulfillment of Divine Love.

If God revealed Himself as the Eminent Creator or spoke to the world as Indisputable Authority, human beings would in that instant lose their free choice; they could not refrain from rushing to His manifest glory. If He displayed His omnipotence in grandiose miracles, the awestricken masses would be attracted to God compulsively by these phenomena instead of choosing Him by their soul's spontaneous love. So even through the instrumentality of His saints God does not draw souls to Himself by using spiritual power that abrogates free choice.

The maya-vitiated intellect of man seems nevertheless constrained to prefer some definite demonstrable proof of God's existence before turning to Him—in blind effrontery challenging his Creator again and again to prove Himself through “signs and wonders.” But if man does not take a hint from the evidence

that every so-called natural manifestation is itself a miracle expressing God's immanence, he is unlikely to get any other signs that he can better appreciate. It is easy to believe when the senses are presented with comprehensible spiritual phenomena; no efforts to bring out the faith latent in the soul are then necessary. Jesus expressed this in his words to Thomas: "Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

One who truly desires God has no inclination toward powers and miracles. It is the Lord's nature to reveal Himself silently and subtly—only rarely openly—unto devotees who crave naught else more than the Creator. At the proper time, before people who have the possibility of spiritual awakening, He permits His saints to exhibit the extraordinary; but never to satisfy idle curiosity. Though Jesus had a unique role as a world savior that began in a dark, unenlightened age requiring open demonstration of God's power to make a permanent impression in the annals of time, he nevertheless often refused to offer spectacular signs and miracles to prove his divinity and God's presence.⁴ Jesus worked his miracles of healing, raising the dead, walking on the sea, for the sake of true believers, strictly under divine guidance and permission. He always emphasized that he was doing the will of God who sent him, awaiting first his Father's command.



Did Jesus support the drinking of wine?

A so-called convincing argument made in support of drinking wine is that Jesus himself drank wine and even produced it as one of his miracles. In that arid land, even the scant resources of water were often polluted, with no knowledge at that time of purification methods; the juice of fermented grapes provided supplemental liquid for the body, and was even considered hygienic as well as sacramental. Notwithstanding the invalidity under different circumstances, people are quite opportunistic to imitate those actions of a master that justify their own inclinations, while they are wanting in equal fervor to emulate his spiritual example! First become like Jesus—drink the wine of his inspiration, the wine of God-consciousness, which placed him above worldly compulsions.

Great masters throughout the ages have talked against the use of intoxicants. Their effects are very bad; they dull man's most precious endowment, his fine instruments of consciousness. One who indulges in drink finds all awareness of God obliterated. The temptation of drink, which provides a temporary euphoria, was created by the satanic force to divert man from seeking true bliss in God. The soul's need for refreshment in transcendence, which becomes degenerated under the influence of delusion, has induced every culture to develop its spurious forms of escape in inebriation, producing instead a pernicious enslavement. God-consciousness is a thousand times more intoxicating than drunkenness, and elevates the spirit of man rather than degrading his potential. Jesus' disciples on the day of Pentecost were as if drunk; but with the wine of God-consciousness. One who is inebriated with God needs no other palliative to ease whatever woes befall him. So the great ones enjoin man to sit quietly and go deep into meditation. After the resisting restless thoughts have been stilled, the devotee finds his "cup runneth over" with an ecstatic divine elixir of joy.

Jesus performed his first public miracle not to sanction intoxication by the social use of wine, but to demonstrate to his disciples that behind every diversity of matter is the one Absolute Substance.



Control over atomic matter by the power of Universal Mind

To Jesus wine was not wine. It was a specific vibration of electrical energy, manipulatable by knowledge of definite superphysical laws. All of God's creation operates according to law. Events and processes governed by already discovered "natural" laws are no longer considered miraculous; but when the law of cause and effect operates too subtly for man to discern how something comes to pass, he calls it a miracle.

By the ordinary mechanical process we know how wine is made: through fermentation caused by microscopic organisms that change sugar into alcohol. But to convert a substance made of certain elements (such as water) into one made of different elements (such as wine) requires atomic control. Jesus knew that underlying and controlling all atomic matter is the one unifying and balancing power of Divine Intelligence and Will—that all matter can be followed back to its origin in consciousness if dissolved into its constituent parts. Jesus understood the metaphysical relation of matter to thought, and demonstrated that one form of matter could be changed into another form not only by chemical processes, but by the power of Universal Mind. By his oneness with the Divine Intelligence that permeates all creation, Jesus changed the arrangement of electrons and protons in the water and thus turned it into wine.

According to modern scientists, there are nearly a hundred different elements of which material stuff is composed. Though possessing a multiplicity of properties and characteristics, all these elements can be resolved into electrons, protons, neutrons, and other subatomic building blocks; and subtle units of energy and light. Water and wine and all things else in material creation are made of the same particles, but in differing combinations and with different rates of vibration, thus constituting creation's endless variety of substances and forms.

The law of causation of all material manifestations can be traced to the activity of subatomic particles; but beyond that the operation of the law of cause and effect is lost sight of—scientists do not know why electrons and protons arrange themselves into different molecular forms to create diverse kinds of matter. Herein nature submissively makes room for a Divine Intelligence, says the scientist, inasmuch as there must be some Power that directs the subtle electronic-protonic bricks to arrange themselves in different combinations,

creating innumerable substances in exceedingly complex configurations,
including intelligent life-forms.



Relationship of matter, energy, and thought

Spirit is the power that gives intelligence and life to matter. There is no fundamental difference between matter and Spirit. Thought and matter both originate in the creative vibratory power of God.⁵ Thought, energy, and matter differ only in terms of relativity of vibration, thought being the subtlest vibration, which condenses into the light of life energy (prana) and ultimately into the gross vibrations of matter. Thoughts when energized become visible images, as in dreams; matter is the crystallized thought of God, the crystallized dreams of God.

The vibrations of the creative thoughts of God differ from the vibrations of matter in quality and quantity. Matter is a gross vibration evolved from the consciousness of God, and thought is the originating subtle vibration of Divine Consciousness—the active and activating vibratory power.

Matter consists of relatively fixed vibrations of consciousness; but thought—the basic unit of God's creative activity—is moving and progressive consciousness, capable of unending transformations. Watching a child advance through the various stages of maturation, we can see the progress of changing thought within him. The child's thoughts are transformed into those of the youth, which in turn mature into the thoughts of the adult; yet all these thoughts arise from the consciousness of the same person.

Thoughts are subjective vibrations of consciousness. They are sufficiently differentiated to be classified, yet not as rigidly differentiated as objectified matter. Thoughts of fear, of joy, of hunger, of ambition—all these are different; yet they are interrelated inasmuch as they are all manifestations of the same consciousness. Every phase of thought touches other thoughts in an interchange of communication.

Matter is vibration that gives the idea of the want of interrelation. Matter can be divided or classified in different ways without interrelation; that is, each object has its own distinct fixity. You can divide a piece of cake and place it in two rooms without interrelation, but our thoughts of today and tomorrow are interrelated and are conscious of each other. The objectified consciousness of matter cannot think of itself, or of its interrelation with other matter. It is fixed

consciousness, instinct-bound. What is instinct-bound? Thought vibrations that generate only one kind of consciousness.

A glass before me, whenever I look at it, gives me the fixed consciousness of a glass only. Though material things were created to produce fixed consciousness within us, still, human consciousness can modify them to some extent. A natural stone producing the fixed consciousness of a stone can be modified, as when the stone is made into a cup. But human consciousness has its limitations; it understands the stone from which that cup is made to remain always stone.

A person under hypnosis may be induced to dive onto the floor and make the motions of swimming if the hypnotist has suggested that he see a pond spread out before him. Similarly, a process of cosmic hypnosis impinges on man the ordinary consciousness of matter, making him perceive water as fluid, solid things as impenetrable, air as an invisible current, fire as light and heat.

It is cosmic delusion that gives the idea of fixed, differentiated finite substances and objects with definite unchanging properties. The universal creative force, or maya, conjures apparent limitations in the Unlimited; it makes the vibrationless Infinite Substance appear as finite things through vibration, motion, the process of change. In the ultimate sense nothing in this universe is finite, except the various phases of change that materiality undergoes.

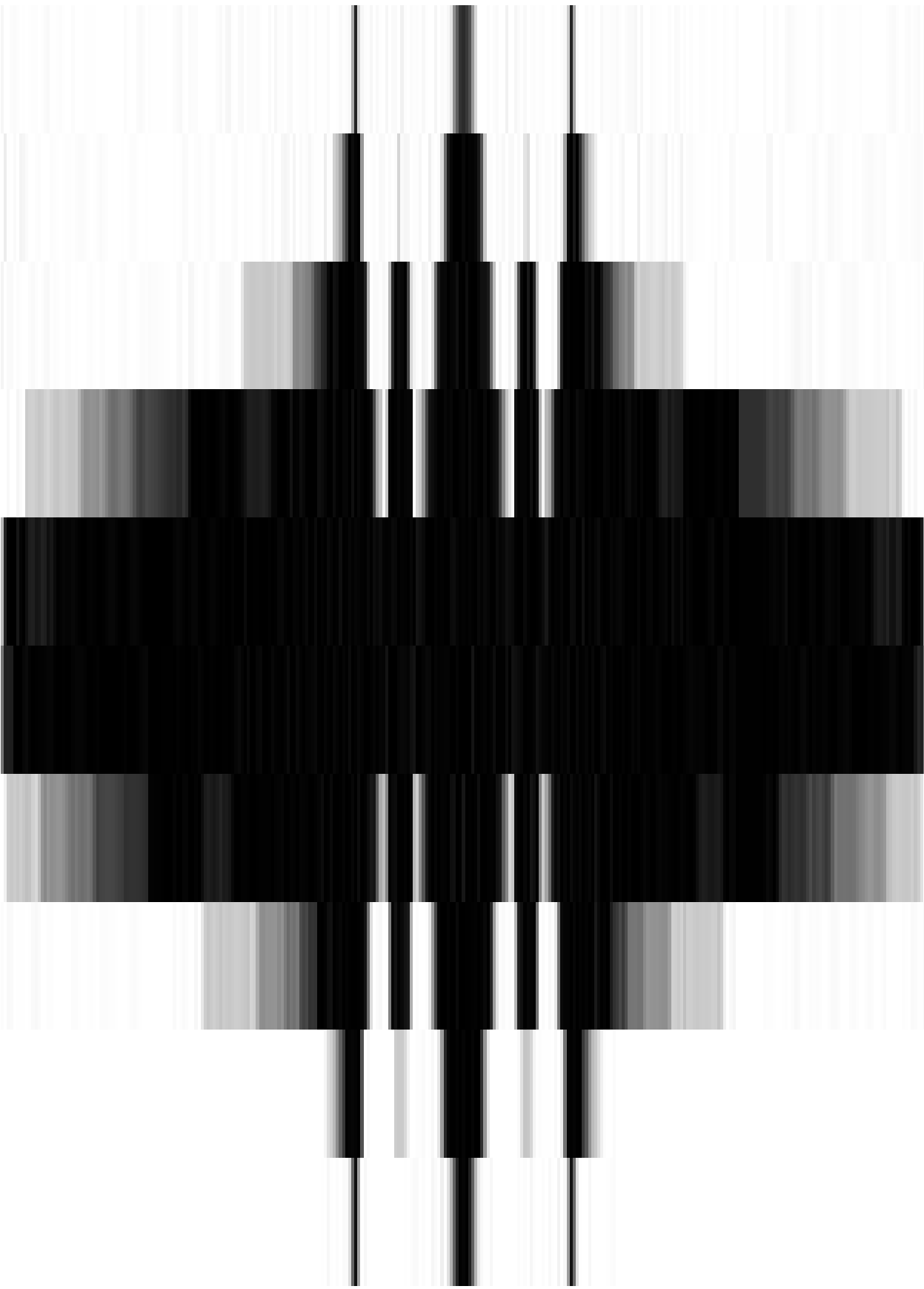
Waves on the ocean are finite because they appear temporarily and then dissipate—again temporarily, until they rise again. When the ocean is thrown into waves, and the waves disappear on the bosom of the ocean, would anyone say that the water in the waves has been lost? No. It resolved into its source. Only the particular surging form that the water assumed has disappeared.

When water passes into steam, the collected steam can be condensed into water again. Though its form and characteristics change as the water passes through various physical processes, in its elemental composition it remains the same.

Thus with all matter: Whirling particles, metamorphosing energies, come together and part in an unending vibratory dance of change, producing for a span of time objects and substances that have the appearance of being finite, of being separate from other things, of having a beginning and end. Yet all matter in its underlying essence is unlimited and unchangeable: Its changing phases are impermanent, but the Power that vibrates into change is permanent. Deluded by

maya or metaphysical Satan, the human thought-process cognizes only changing phenomena, not the underlying divine Noumena.⁶

Thought is human consciousness in vibration. Human consciousness is delimited God-consciousness in vibration. In the process of thought man's consciousness vibrates. One whose consciousness vibrates under the control of Maya, the Cosmic Hypnotist, remains fixated upon finitude. Through psychophysical techniques of yoga one can regain mastery of his mind, stilling the restless thought vibrations of human consciousness and entering the ecstasy of God-consciousness.⁷



The power to effect miraculous changes in the material world

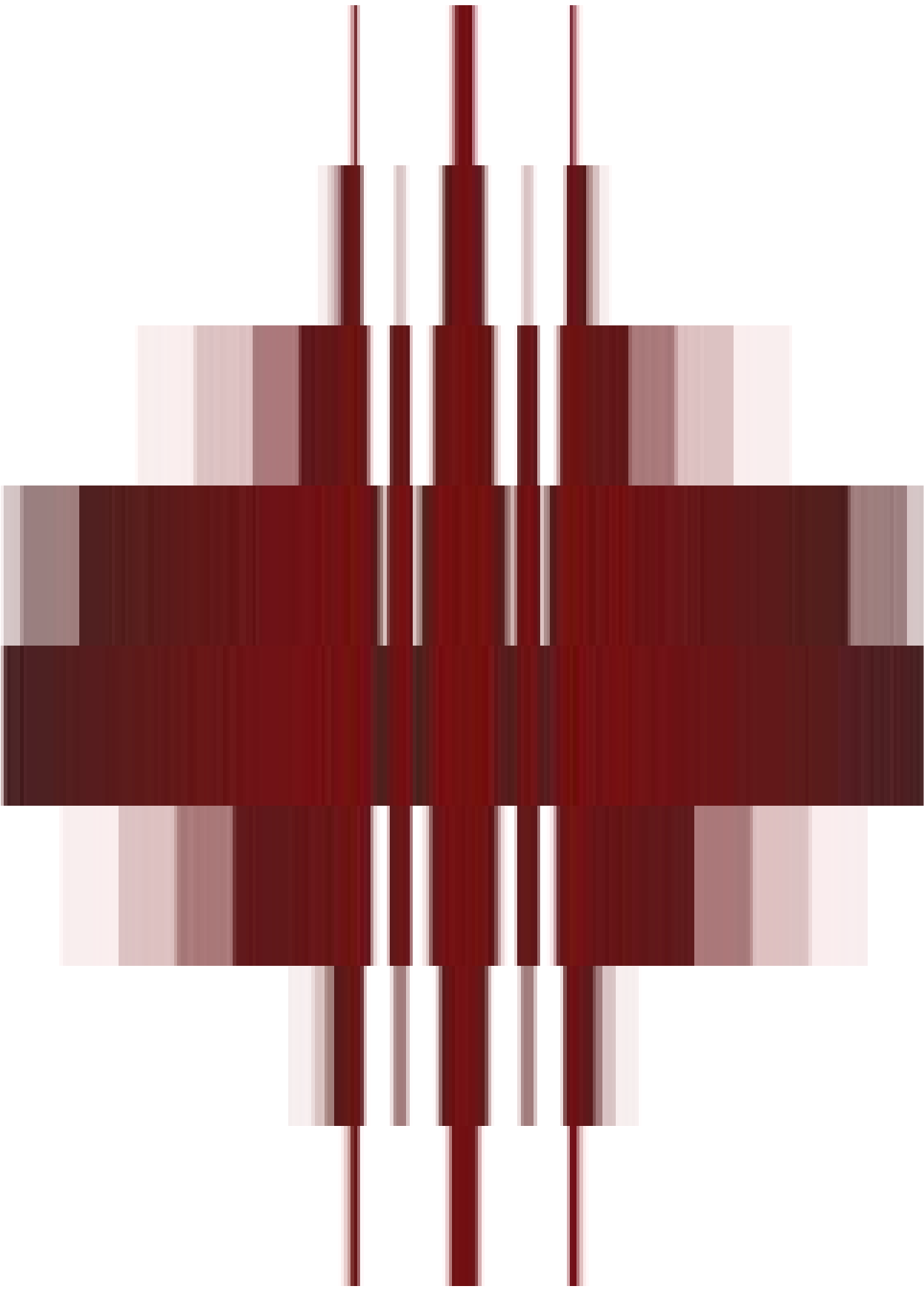
By spiritual development, one rises to a state wherein the fixed consciousness generated from contact with matter vanishes. Finite objects are seen as naught but imprisoned consciousness; and the formerly rigid differentiations of matter are experienced as relativities of thought, all interrelated in the preeminent, unifying Divine Intelligence from which they flow. In his oneness with that imperial Christ Intelligence, Jesus had wakened from the grand mayic dream; he had transcended the fixed consciousness under the control of the Cosmic Hypnotist. Thus he could at will convert the materialized thoughts of stones into bread or those of water into wine.

Ordinary human beings have to go through material processes to effect changes in the physical world because they are limited by the law of duality and the relative difference between vibrations of matter, energy, and thought. But one who by the higher consciousness of Unity realizes the true nature of creation can perform any metamorphosis, just as a movie director can make any miracle appear on the screen by manipulating projected beams of light. Jesus was sitting in the booth chamber of Eternity, from which he saw all creation as projected thoughts of God, actual thought particles of the consciousness of the Supreme Creator, made visible through vibratory light of life energy. As Jesus was one with the Divine Mind, it was nothing for him to direct one informing vibration to change into another.

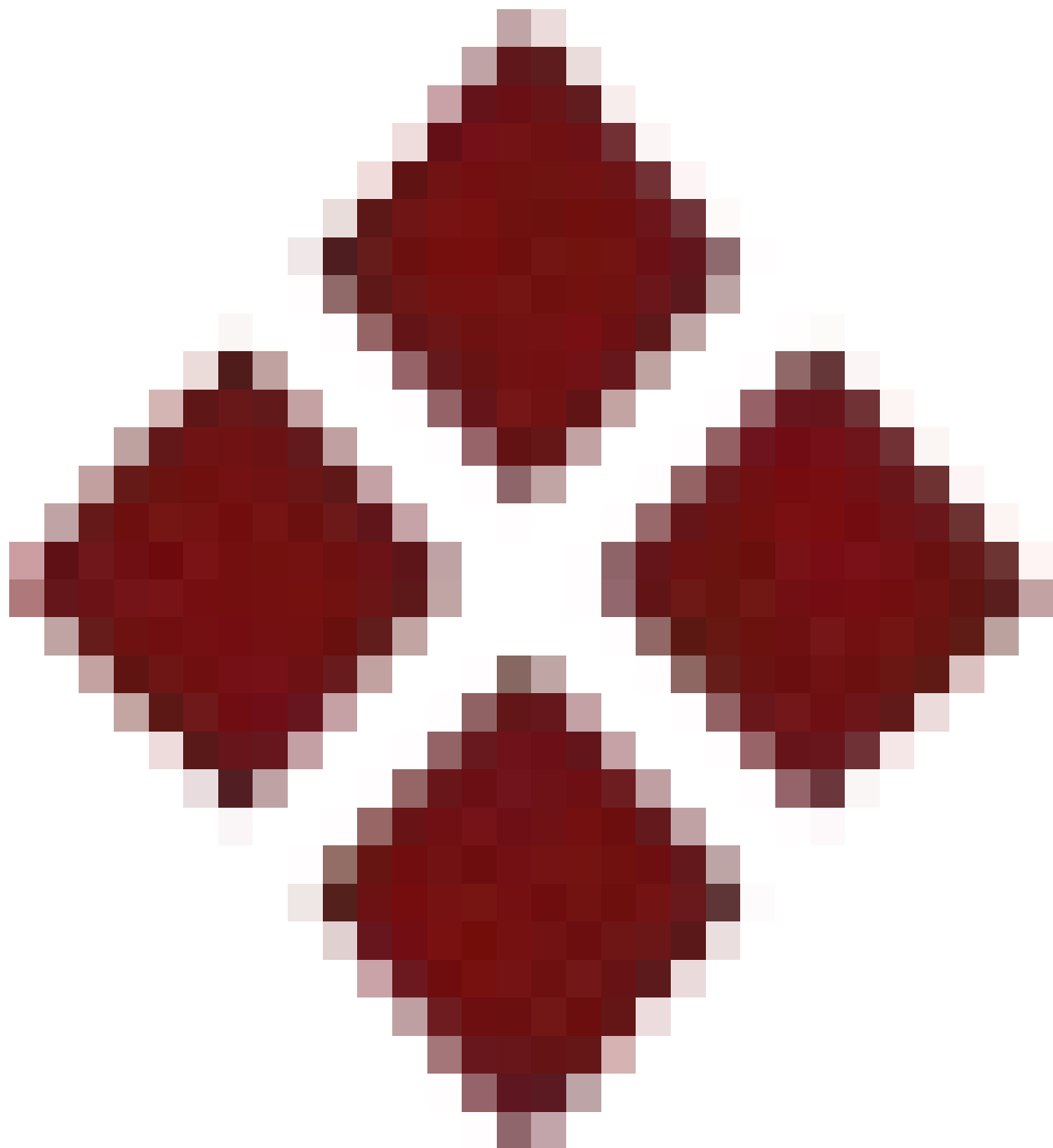


Discourse 12

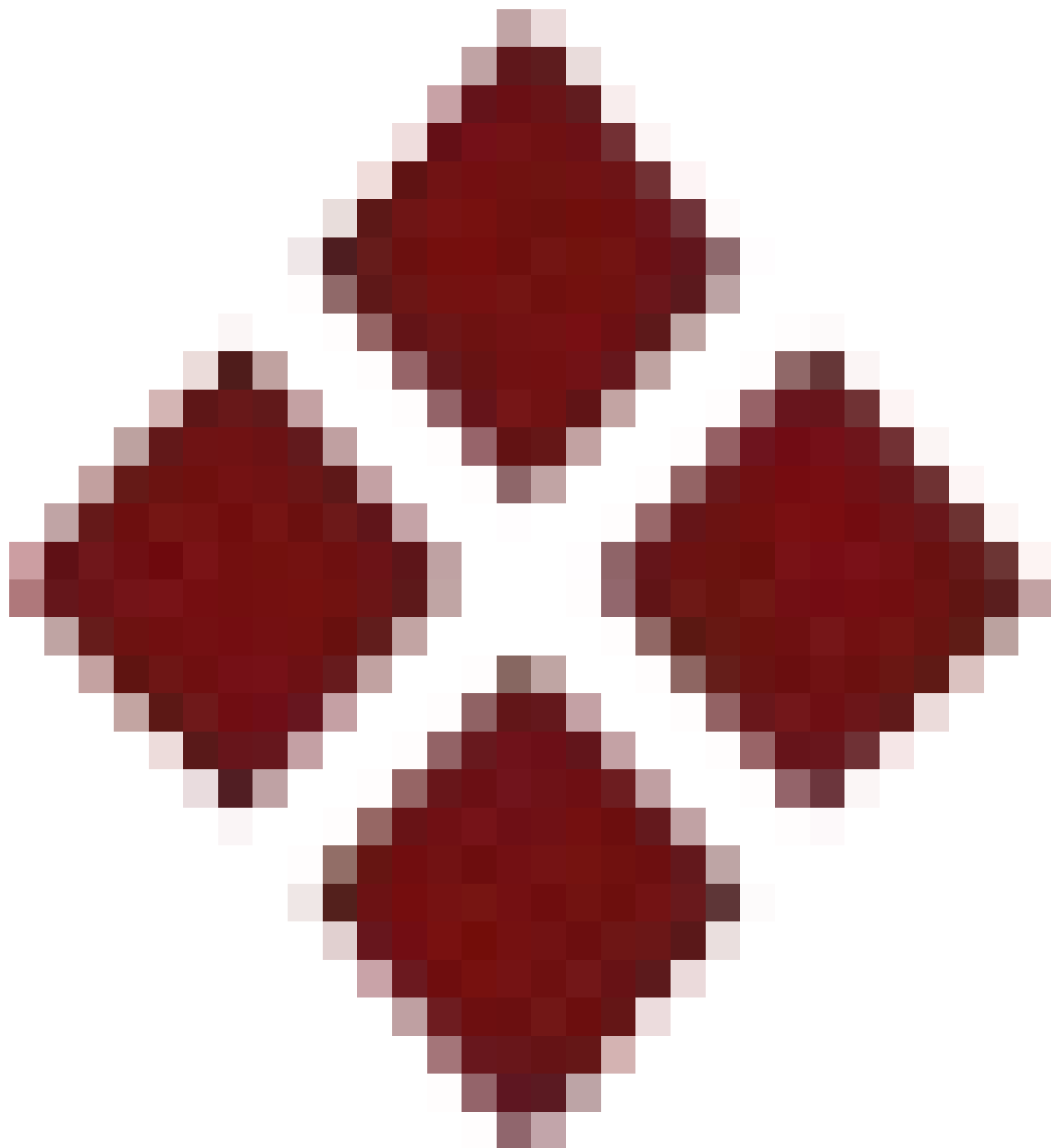
Driving the Money Changers Out of the Temple



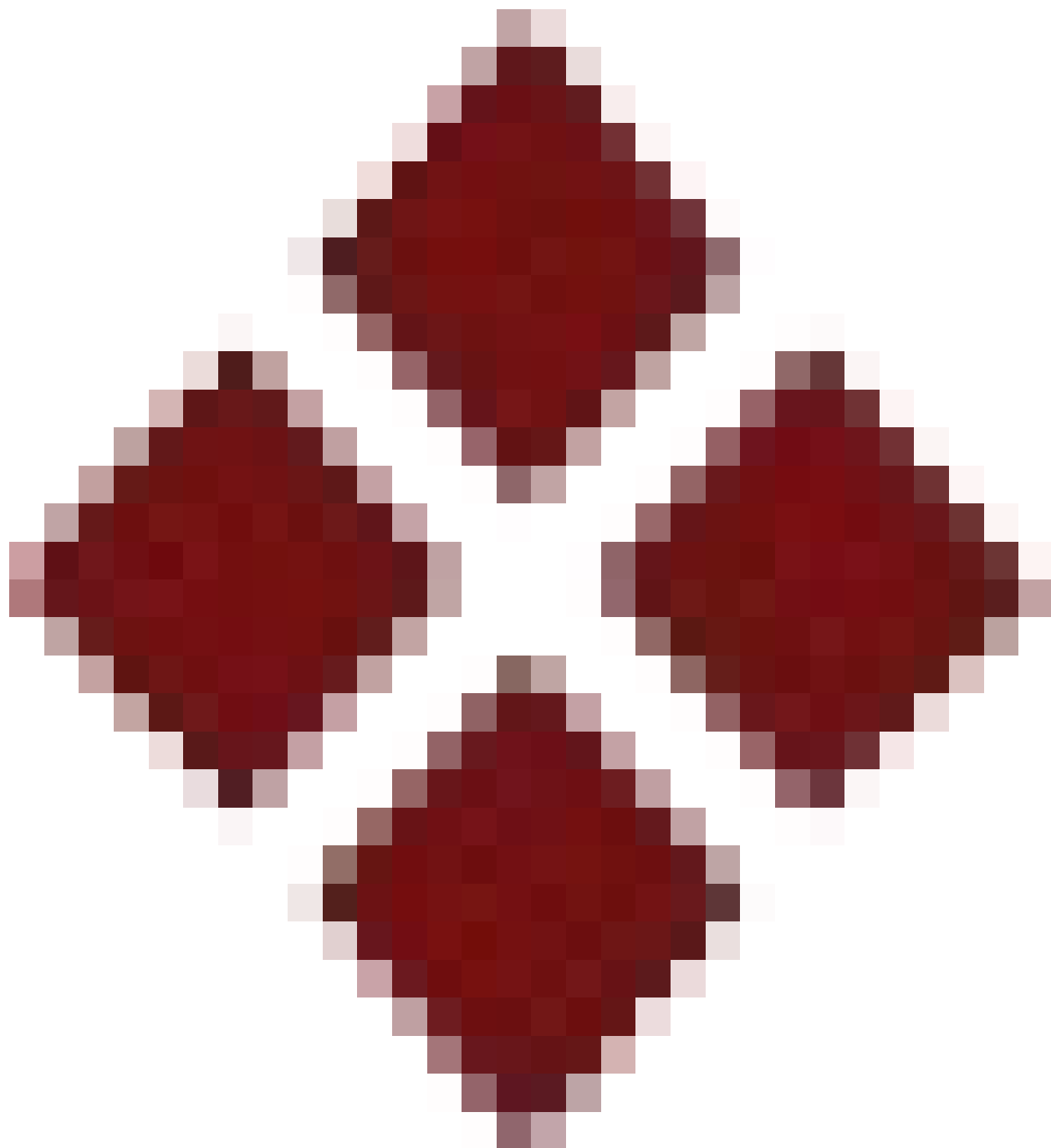
When Forceful Behavior Is a Righteous Response to Wrongdoing



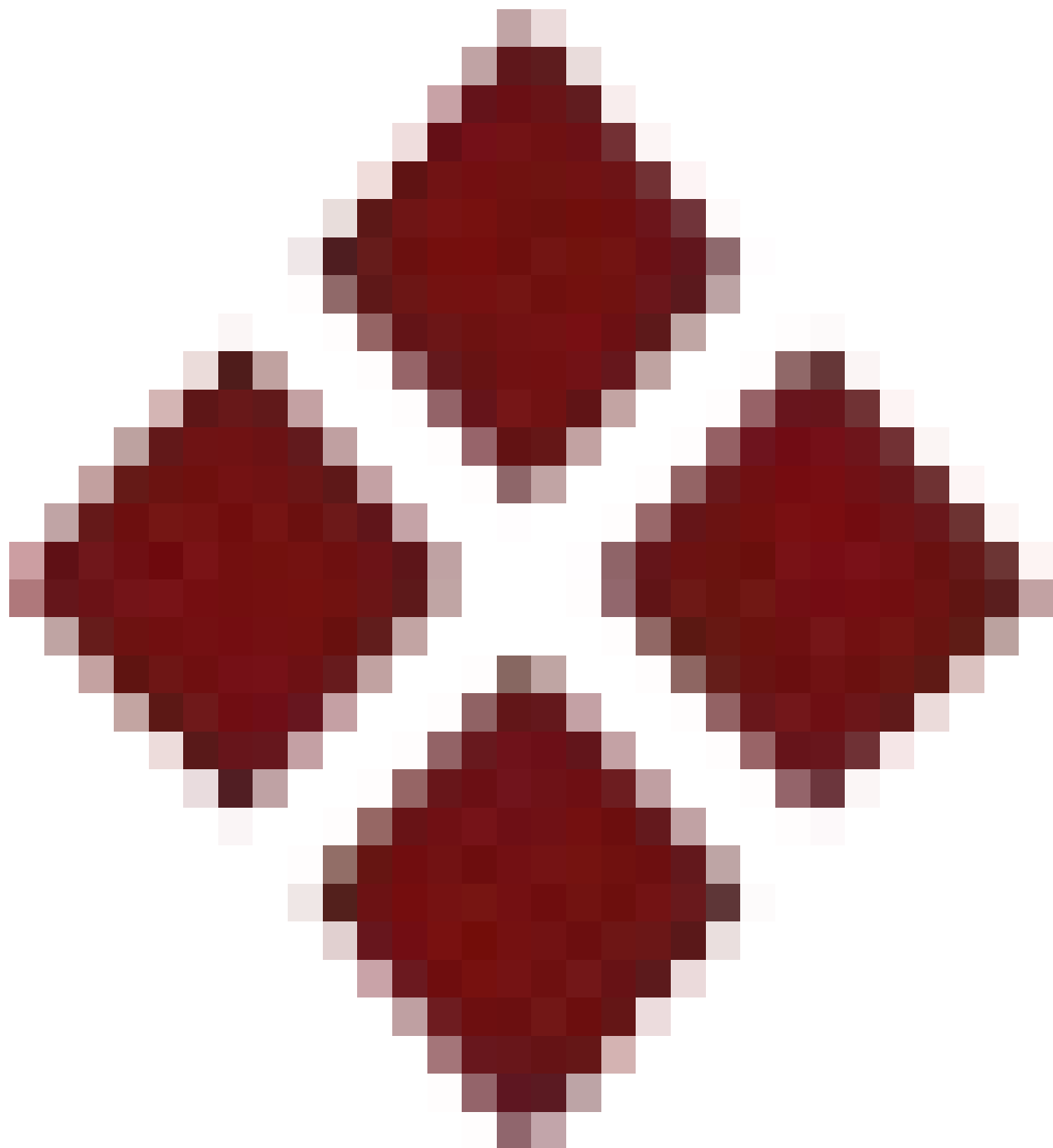
Meekness Does Not Mean to Become a Doormat



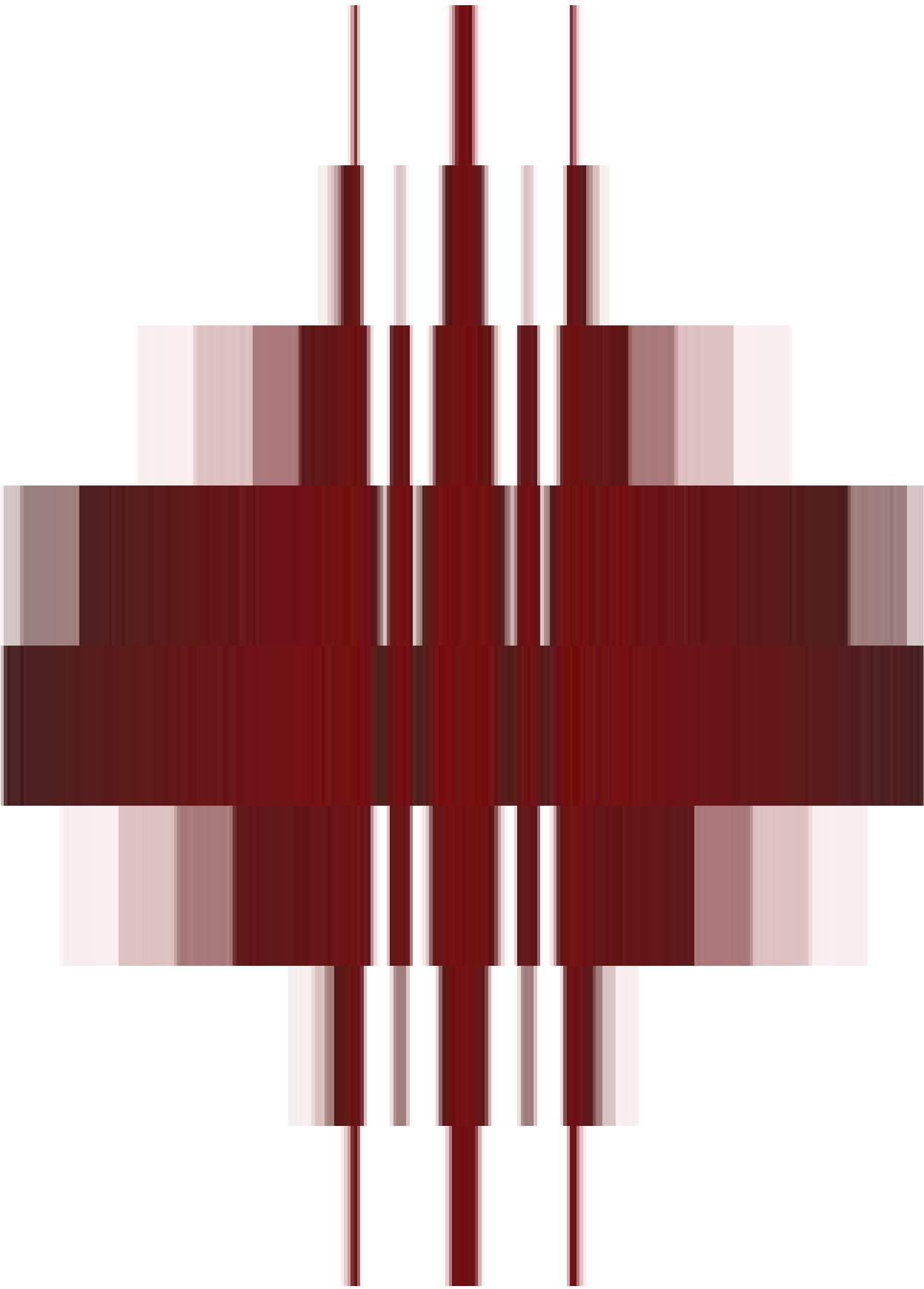
Driving Restless Thoughts From the Temple of Concentrated Prayer



Jesus' Refusal to Perform a Miracle to Satisfy the Skeptics



How Masters Read Character Through the Soul's Faculty of Intuition



“The Lord’s liberated sons act purposefully and effectively in this world of relativity, adopting any characteristic necessary to accomplish the Divine Will, without deviation from inner attunement with the unruffled calmness, love, and bliss of Spirit.”

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After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples: and they continued there not many days. And the Jew s' Passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changer s' money, and overthrew the tables; and said unto them that sold doves, "Take these things hence; make not my Fathe r's house an house of merchandise."

And his disciples remembered that it was written, "The zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up."

Then answered the Jews and said unto him, "What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?"

Jesus answered and said unto them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

Then said the Jews, "Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?" But he spake of the temple of his body. When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.



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Discourse 12

Driving the Money Changers Out of the Temple

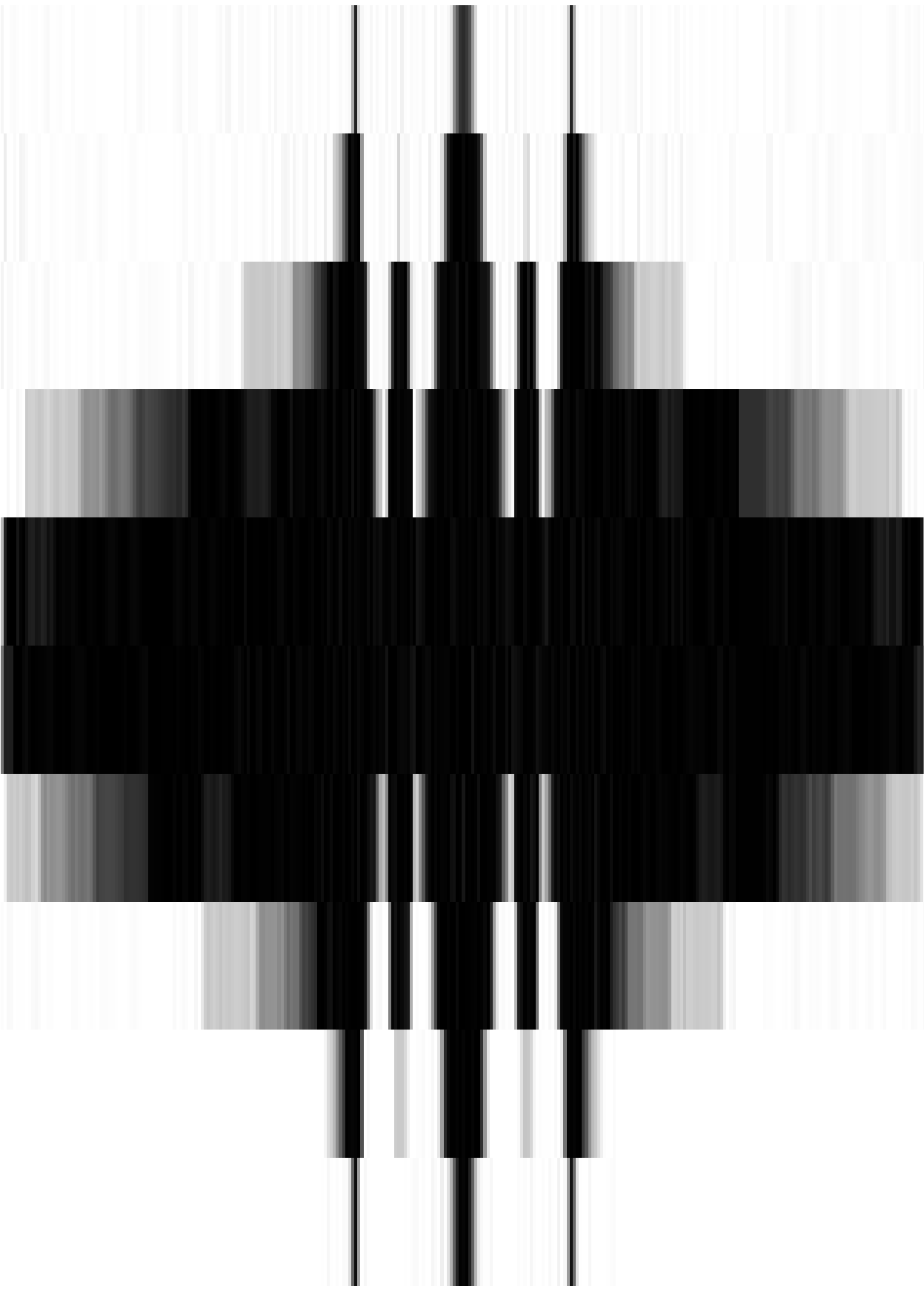


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Parallel reference:

And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, and said unto them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves'" (Matthew 21:12 – 13).¹



When forceful behavior is a righteous response to wrongdoing

Meekness is not weakness. A true exemplar of peace is centered in his divine Self. All actions arising therefrom are imbued with the soul's nonpareil vibratory power—whether issuing forth as a calm command or a strong volition. Nonunderstanding minds might critique Jesus' confronting the temple mercenaries with a scourge as contradicting his teaching: "Resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also."² The forceful use of a whip to drive the merchants and money changers out of the house of worship may not seem wholly in keeping with the propagated lamblike image of Jesus, who taught forbearance and love. The actions of divine personalities, however, are sometimes willfully startling to shake complacent minds out of their vacuous acceptance of the commonplace. An accurate sense of spiritual propriety in a world of relativity requires a ready wit and a steady wisdom. The proper course of behavior is not always discerned by scripture-quoting dogmatists whose literal dependence on inflexible dictums may pay homage to the letter rather than the spirit of spirituality in action.³

Jesus responded to an untenable situation, not from an emotional compulsion to wrath, but from a divine, righteous indignation in reverence for the immanence of God in His holy place of worship. Inwardly, Jesus did not succumb to anger. Great sons of God possess the qualities and attributes of the ever tranquil Spirit. By their perfected self-control and divine union, they have mastered every nuance of spiritual discipline. Such masters participate fully and empathetically in the events of man, yet maintain a transcendental soul freedom from the delusions of anger, greed, or any other form of slavery to the senses. Spirit manifests Itself in creation through a multiplicity of elevating, activating, and darkening forces, yet remains simultaneously in Uncreated Bliss beyond the teeming vibrations of the cosmos. Similarly, the Lord's liberated sons act purposefully and effectively in this world of relativity, adopting any characteristic necessary to accomplish the Divine Will, without deviation from inner attunement with the unruffled calmness, love, and bliss of Spirit.

The meekness of divine personalities is very strong in the infinite power behind their gentleness. They may use this power in a forceful dramatization to admonish those who are stubbornly irresponsive to gentler vibrations. Even as a loving father may resort to firm discipline to deter his child from harmful

actions, so Jesus put on a show of spiritual ire to dissuade these grown-up children of God from ignorant acts of desecration, the effects of which would surely be spiritually harmful to themselves as well as to the sanctity of the temple of God.

Divinely guided actions may command extraordinary means to right a wrong; but they are never activated by wanton rage. The Bhagavad Gita, the revered Hindu Bible, teaches that anger is an evil enveloping one in a delusion that obscures discriminative intelligence, with consequent annihilation of proper behavior.⁴

If Jesus had been motivated by a real spate of anger, he might have used his divine powers to destroy utterly these desecrators. With his little bundle of cords he could not have seriously hurt anyone. In fact, it was not the whip but the vibration of colossal spiritual force expressing through his personality that routed the merchants and money changers. The spirit of God was with him, a power that was irresistible, causing a throng of able-bodied men to flee before the intensely persuasive vibration of a single paragon of meekness.

Spirituality abhors spinelessness. One should always have the moral courage and backbone to show strength when the occasion calls for it. This is well illustrated by an old Hindu story.



Meekness does not mean to become a doormat

Once upon a time, a vicious cobra lived on a rocky hill on the outskirts of a village. This serpent extremely resented any noise around his dwelling, and did not hesitate to attack any of the village children who disturbed him by playing thereabout. Numerous fatalities resulted. The villagers tried their utmost to kill the venomous reptile, but met with no success. Finally, they went in a body to a holy hermit who lived nearby, and asked him to use his spiritual powers to stop the death-dealing work of the serpent.

Touched by the earnest prayers of the villagers, the hermit proceeded to the dwelling place of the cobra, and by the magnetic vibration of his love coaxed the creature to come forth. The master told the snake it was wrong to kill innocent children, and instructed him never to bite again, but to practice loving his enemies. Under the saint's uplifting influence, the serpent humbly promised to reform and practice nonviolence.

Soon thereafter, the hermit left the village for a year-long pilgrimage. Upon his return, as he was passing the hill he thought: "Let me see how my friend the serpent is behaving." Approaching the hole where the serpent dwelt, he was startled to find the hapless reptile lying outside, half dead with several festering wounds on his back.

The hermit said: "Hello, Mr. Serpent, what is all this?" The serpent dolefully whispered: "Master, this is the result of practicing your teachings! When I came out of my hole in quest of food, minding my own business, at first the children fled at the sight of me. But before long the boys noticed my docility, and began to throw stones at me. When they found that I would run away rather than attack them, they made a sport of trying to stone me to death each time I came out in search of sustenance to appease my hunger. Master, I dodged many times, but also got badly hurt many times, and now I am lying here with these terrible wounds in my back because I have been trying to love my enemies."

The saint gently caressed the cobra, instantly healing his hurts. Then he lovingly corrected him, saying: "Little fool, I told you not to bite, but why didn't you hiss!"

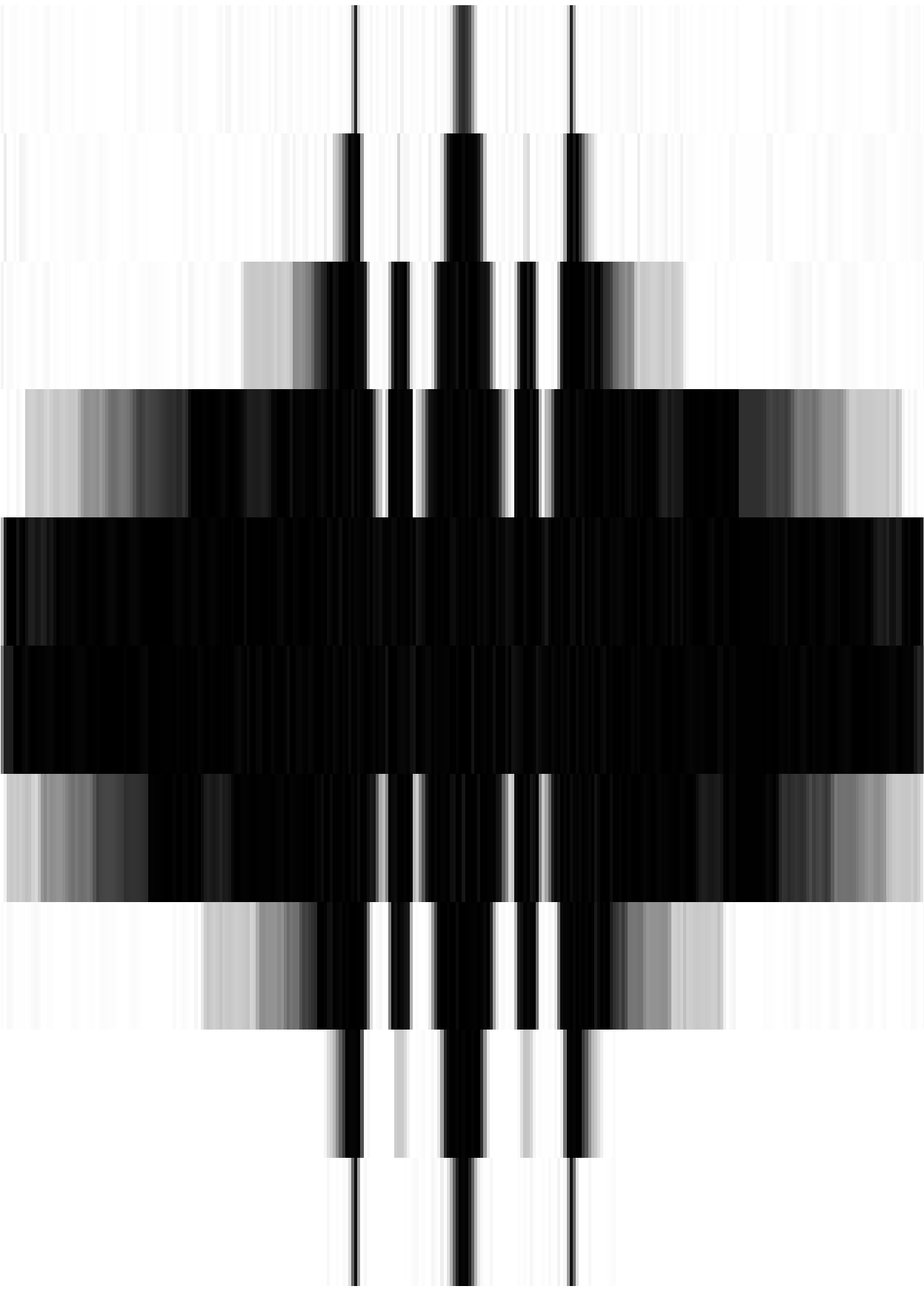
Although meekness is a virtue to be cultivated, one should not abandon common

sense nor become a doormat for others to tread over with their misconduct. When provoked or unfairly attacked, one should show noninjurious strength in support of one's just convictions. But even a pseudodisplay of anger should not be attempted by anyone who has the tendency to lose his temper and self-control in violent behavior.

Jesus "hissed" at the merchants and money changers because he was not willing that the house of God be demeaned by worldly vibrations of selling and individual profit. His words and actions signified to the people: "Remove this crass commerciality from God's temple, for materialistic vibrations quite obscure the subtle presence of the Lord. In the temple of God the singular thought should be to possess, not worldly profit, but the imperishable treasure of the Infinite."

The subtle law of magnetism is that each object or person or action radiates a characteristic vibration that engenders specific thoughts in the consciousness of one who enters its sphere of influence. The vibration of a candle or oil lamp in the temple induces thoughts of unruffled peace or of the illumination of wisdom—light being the first manifestation of Spirit—whereas any form of commerciality involving worldly goods stirs restlessness and sensory desires. There may be no negative vibration attached to the unobtrusive selling of scripture or other God-reminding books in the temple when offered as a service to devotees, provided the proceeds are used to support the house of worship and its spiritual good works. The selling of other merchandise in the house of God, and marketing goods for individual profit, set up derogatory vibrations contrary to the purpose and spiritual consciousness of the holy place.

"The zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up." The disciples corroborated the words of Jesus with this scriptural saying. The fervor to worship God inspired by a sanctuary dedicated to the Supreme Being should be all-consuming, uncontested by material zeal or vibrations that would swallow up the spiritual vibration of God's presence.⁵



Driving restless thoughts from the temple of concentrated prayer

The subjective admonition to be drawn from this action of Jesus in the temple is that the sincere worshiper of God must reverentially observe the law of devoted concentration. To give superficial attention to one's prayers, while entertaining in the background of the mind thoughts of one's life enterprises—getting and having, planning and doing—is to take the name of God in vain. The manifesting power of concentration comes from centering the mind upon one thing at a time. “Buying and selling”—the unending “busy-ness” of material life—should be carried on in the marketplace of one's duties; whereas it is distractingly intrusive in the temple of prayer—just as an altar and preaching in a shop would be an unwelcome imposition on the legitimate conduct of commerce. Halfhearted, unconcentrated mental rambling during the time of prayer brings neither a response from God nor the focused power of attention necessary for material success.

Though God tries to respond to the earnest prayers of His children, His voice resonating in intuition-felt peace is wholly distorted by restlessness-producing transactions between the senses and the outer world, and by the aroused attention-demanding associated thoughts. The Lord recedes humbly into a remote silence when the temple of His devotee's concentration becomes a noisy marketplace desecrated by these mercenaries of material consciousness. Soul intuition—the inner Christlike preceptor and guide of man's sublime thoughts and feelings—must come and wield with will power the whip of spiritual discipline and self-control to drive out the intruders. Repeated practice of scientific techniques of meditation fully concentrates the attention within, blessing the temple of inner communion with a tranquil surcease of sensory commerce. The devotee's consciousness is thereby restored to a sanctuary of silence, wherein alone is possible true worship of God.⁶



Then answered the Jews and said unto him, “What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?”

Jesus answered and said unto them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”

Then said the Jews, “Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?” But he spake of the temple of his body. When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said (John 2:18 – 22).

The bystanders in the temple protested the assault on the merchants and money changers, unwilling to cede Jesus the right to interfere with their customary ways. If he were a prophet with authority over their human affairs, he ought to prove it by some miraculous sign from God.



Jesus' refusal to perform a miracle to satisfy the skeptics

In a distinctively beautiful way Jesus accepted their challenge. He did not respond with a miracle. He felt no compulsion to convince naysayers of his divine commission. He simply told them what would happen as a result of his actions in fulfilling the wish and work of God. He knew that the greatest proof of his divinity would be the future event of his crucifixion, precipitated by the law of cause and effect, as a result of which God would perform the miracle of miracles: the resurrection and ascension of his body after his crucifixion, and the Father permitted him to reveal this to the masses.

Jesus' obscure saying about raising the temple in three days was naturally misinterpreted. How could Jesus reconstruct the temple of Jerusalem in three days if it were destroyed, when forty-six years were required to build it the first time? His words, however, registered with his disciples, who were to realize later that he spoke of resurrecting the temple of his body after death, as had been spoken of in scripture.⁷ To remake the bodily atoms into a living form after death has extracted its grim toll far surpasses in wonder any reassembling of a broken stone building, no matter how instantly accomplished.

Great masters cannot be coerced to flaunt miracles just for effect, even when seemingly expedient, and regardless of consequences. An astonishing story is found in chronicles of the life of Tegh Bahadur, a great master in medieval India and revered ninth successive guru of the Sikh lineage.

The saint was renowned for the numerous miraculous healings he had performed. Word of these wonders reached the emperor—a tyrannical ruler who brooked no opposition. He had the guru forcibly brought to court with the purpose of converting him to Islam; or otherwise to show his miraculous powers. Even when threatened to perform or die, Tegh Bahadur remained immovable.

Finally, after being forced to witness the barbaric torture and death of several of his disciples, the guru sent word to the emperor that he would comply with the royal demand for a miracle. With a string he tied around his neck a slip of paper, declaring that this "charm" would protect him by miraculously deflecting the executioner's sword. The emperor's swordsman was invited to put this claim to the test then and there. Before the horrified eyes of the onlookers, the saint's

severed head fell to the floor, the “charmed” paper falling loose on the marble. When it was retrieved and read aloud, Tegh Bahadur’s real “miracle” was revealed; the note was inscribed with the words: “Sir diya, sar na diya”—“I have given my head, but not the secret of my religion.”⁸

Saints feel no need to satisfy the challenges of unbelievers. Devotees who with humility seek from the guru the disclosure of his God-realization will see things much more wonderful than a display of phenomenal powers—as Jesus’ disciples saw, and as I saw in my Master.



Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man (John 2:23 – 25).

Jesus was little impressed by the growing popular acclaim accorded him as a result of his miracles. He knew that in the fickle emotionalism of the masses there was scant durable response capable of upholding his teachings or adding one whit to his divine credentials. He therefore did not count on man's testimony as a criterion of success. The preaching of his gospel was impelled solely by God's infinite force.

Fame is at best a fair-weather friend whose loyalty easily chills at an unfavorable change in the winds of public opinion. The best of one's intentions, if lacking in the stability of wisdom, is woefully subject to the mutating distortions of erroneous judgment.

A master well knows, without prejudice, the nature of man. He can instantly ascertain the salient features of any person's consciousness just by looking at him. Jesus did not rely on people's reputation in the community, or on the image presented by their appearance or demeanor, in order to know their character and innermost thoughts; he "knew all men" through the soul's wisdom faculty of intuition.



How masters read character through the soul's faculty of intuition

Knowledge of a person's character may be sought through various means. The different schools of psychology are able to identify specific personality types and their prominent traits. Other methods of appraising character have been advanced at various times—such as phrenology (study of the structure of the head), physiognomy (deducing a person's nature through analysis of facial and bodily features), and pathognomy (the study of man's feelings and emotions through the outward signs of his facial expressions and bodily movements, and through study of his emotional reactions to diverse incidents in his life). But these various methods are liable to bring about wrong conclusions. Socrates' physical unattractiveness caused some people to think him evil, yet he was an advanced soul. Conversely, sometimes an appealingly beautiful and fair-spoken man or woman is at heart a treacherous human being. It is not the appearance or outer demeanor or renown that is the true index of a person's nature, but what he is within.

A master responds not to the words of people but to their thoughts, not to any psychological inference but to actual perception of their inner self. Intellectual analysis or the deductions of reason are dependent upon data furnished by the fallible sensory instruments. Intuition is direct knowledge of truth, independent of unreliable sensory data and the intellections of the lower mind. Intuitive perception is deeper than telepathy: Even with telepathic awareness of another person's thoughts and feelings, it is possible to misjudge them. A master, however, knows people through apperception of their consciousness, by being one with their life.

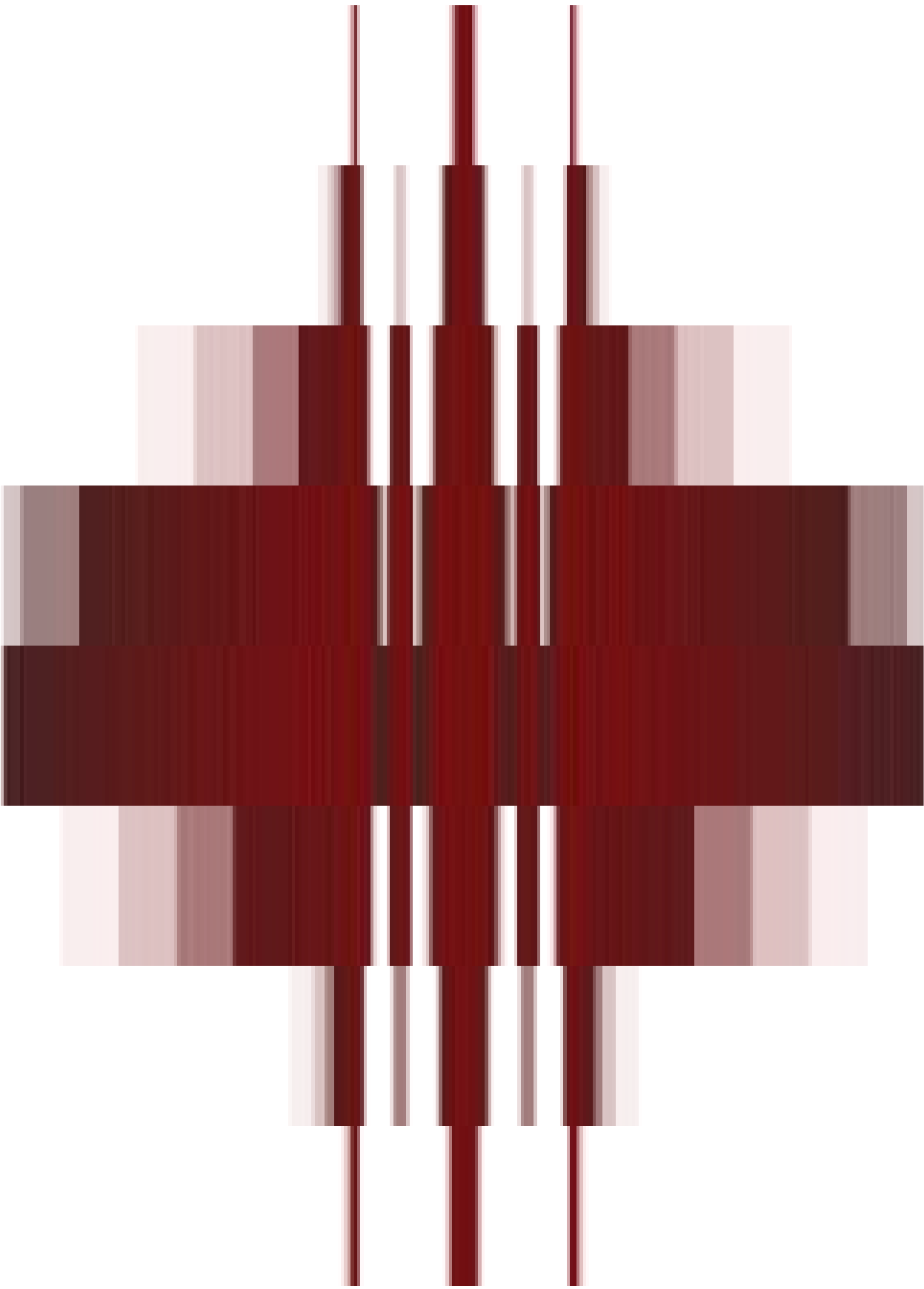
Perceiving the limited spiritual capacity of the newly converted throngs in Jerusalem, Jesus did not entrust himself to them, nor speak the full measure of his realization to their nonunderstanding minds.⁹ His unconditional love and blessings embraced all equally, even while he sought from among the masses genuinely sincere seekers, such as Nicodemus in the verses that follow.



Discourse 13

The Second Birth of Man — In Spirit

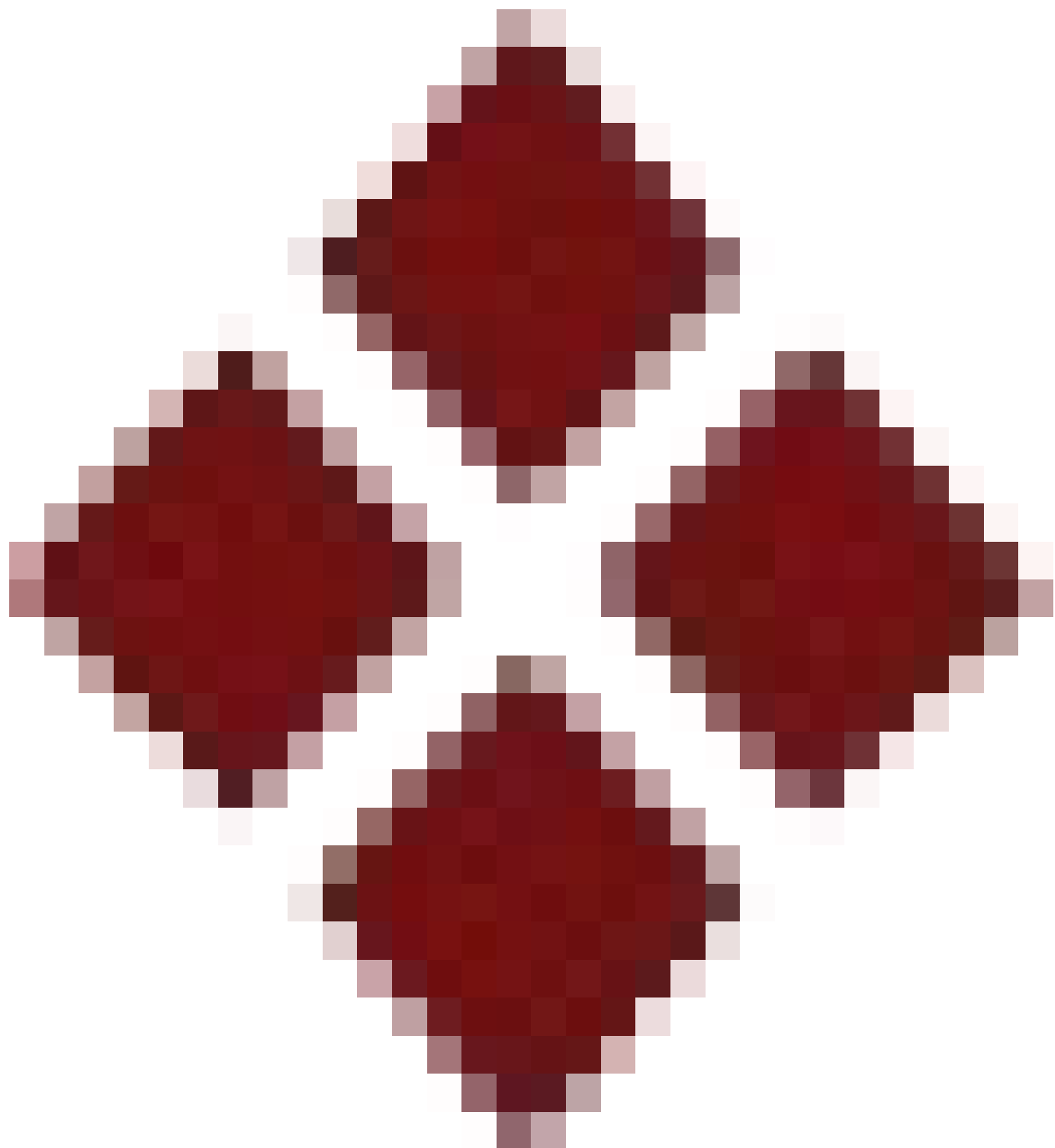
Dialogue With Nicodemus, Part I



**True Religion Is Founded Upon Intuitional Perception
of the Transcendental Reality**



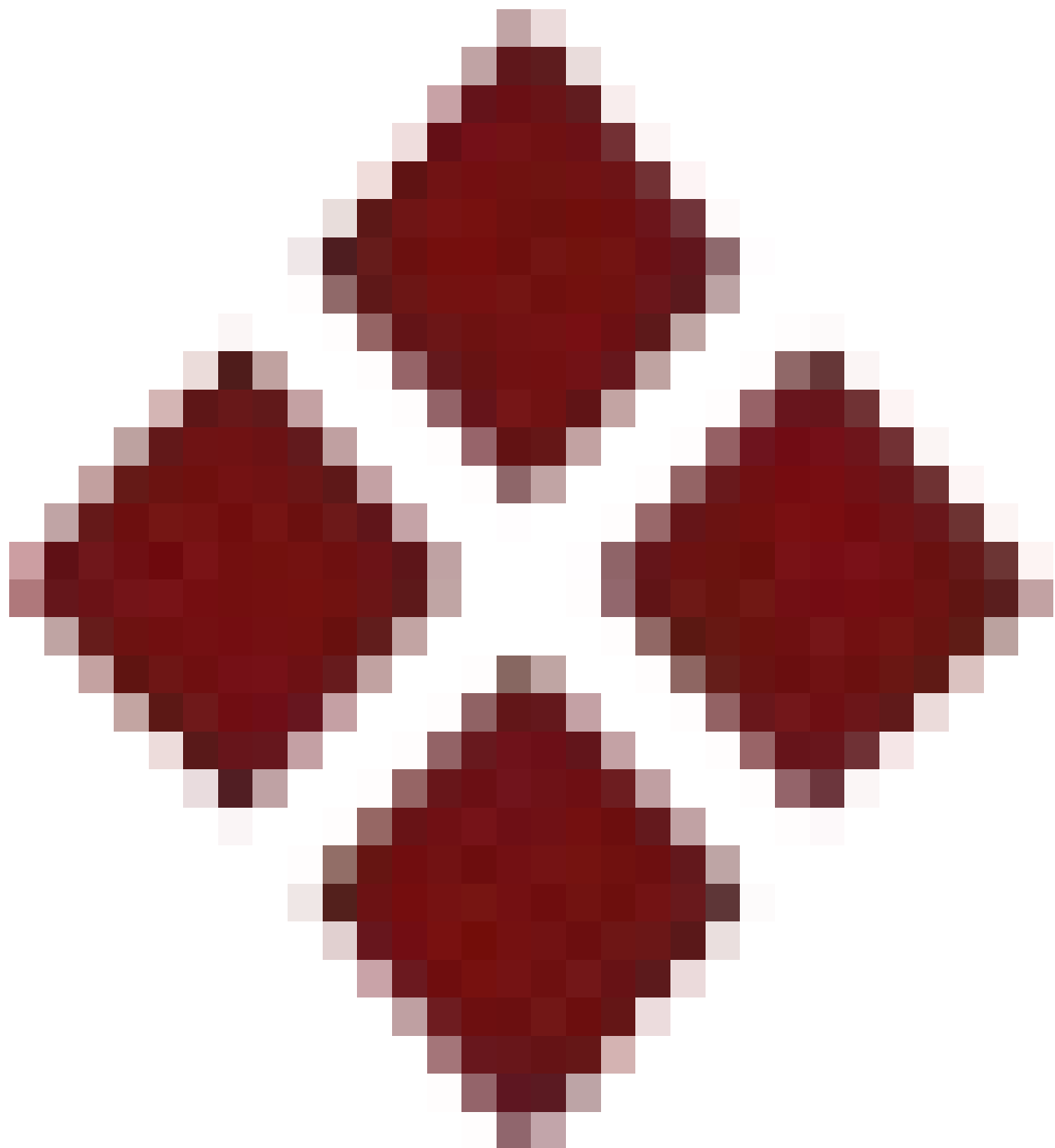
Jesus' Esoteric Teachings Reveal the Universality of Religion



To “See the Kingdom of God”



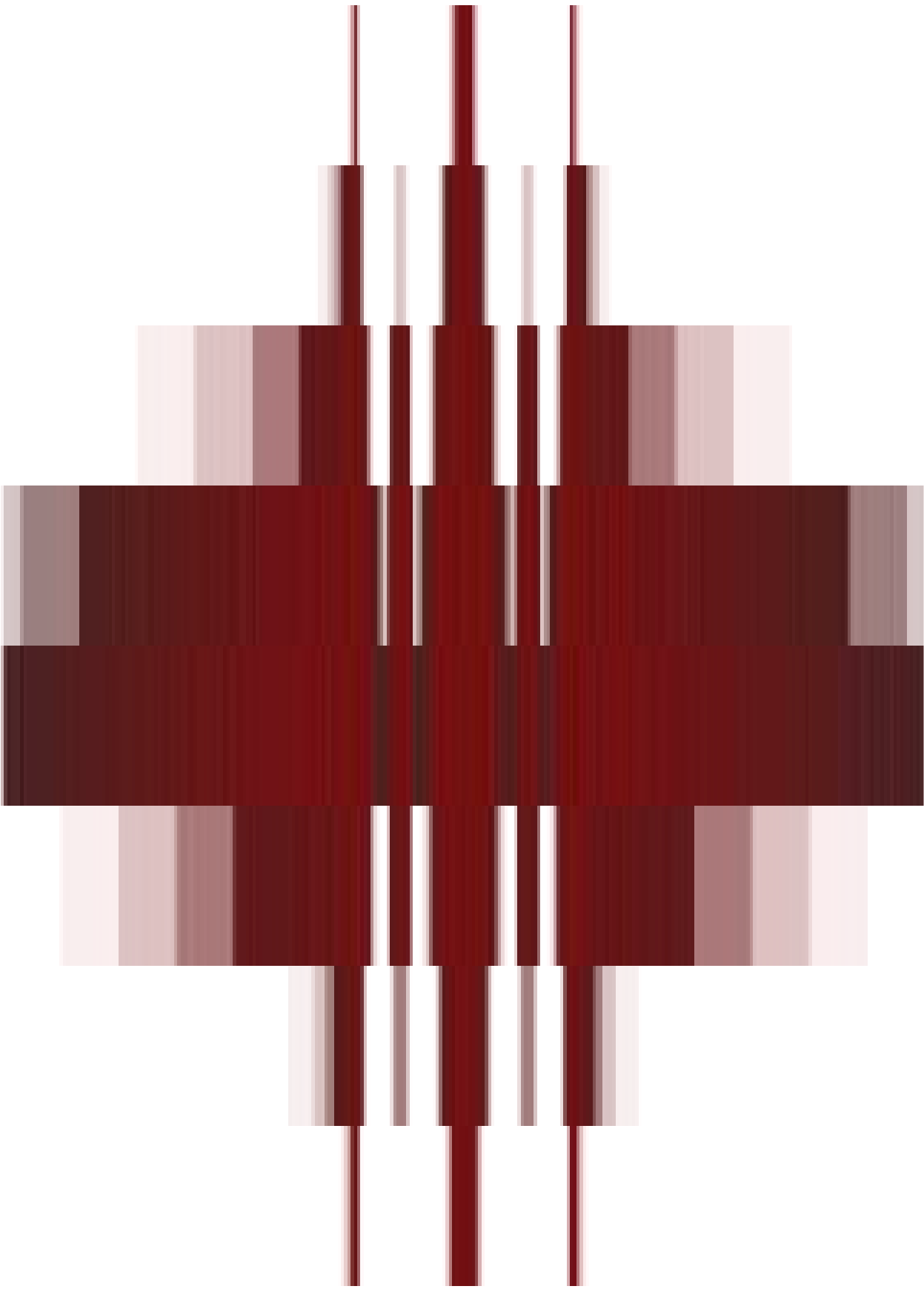
Matter and Consciousness: The Perpetual Duality of Manifest Creation



“The Wind Bloweth Where It Listeth...”



**Spiritual Birth—to Be Born Again in Spirit — Is
Bestowed by a True Guru**



“The term ‘born again’ means much more than merely joining a church and receiving ceremonial baptism....The twenty-one verses describing Nicodemus’ visit present, in condensed epigrammatic sayings so typical of Oriental scripture, Jesus’ comprehensive esoteric teachings relating to the practical attainment of the infinite kingdom of blissful divine consciousness.”

■

There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, “Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.”

Jesus answered and said unto him, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

Nicodemus saith unto him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?”

Jesus answered, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, ‘Ye must be born again.’ The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”

— John 3:1 – 8



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Discourse 13

The Second Birth of Man — In Spirit

Dialogue With Nicodemus, Part I

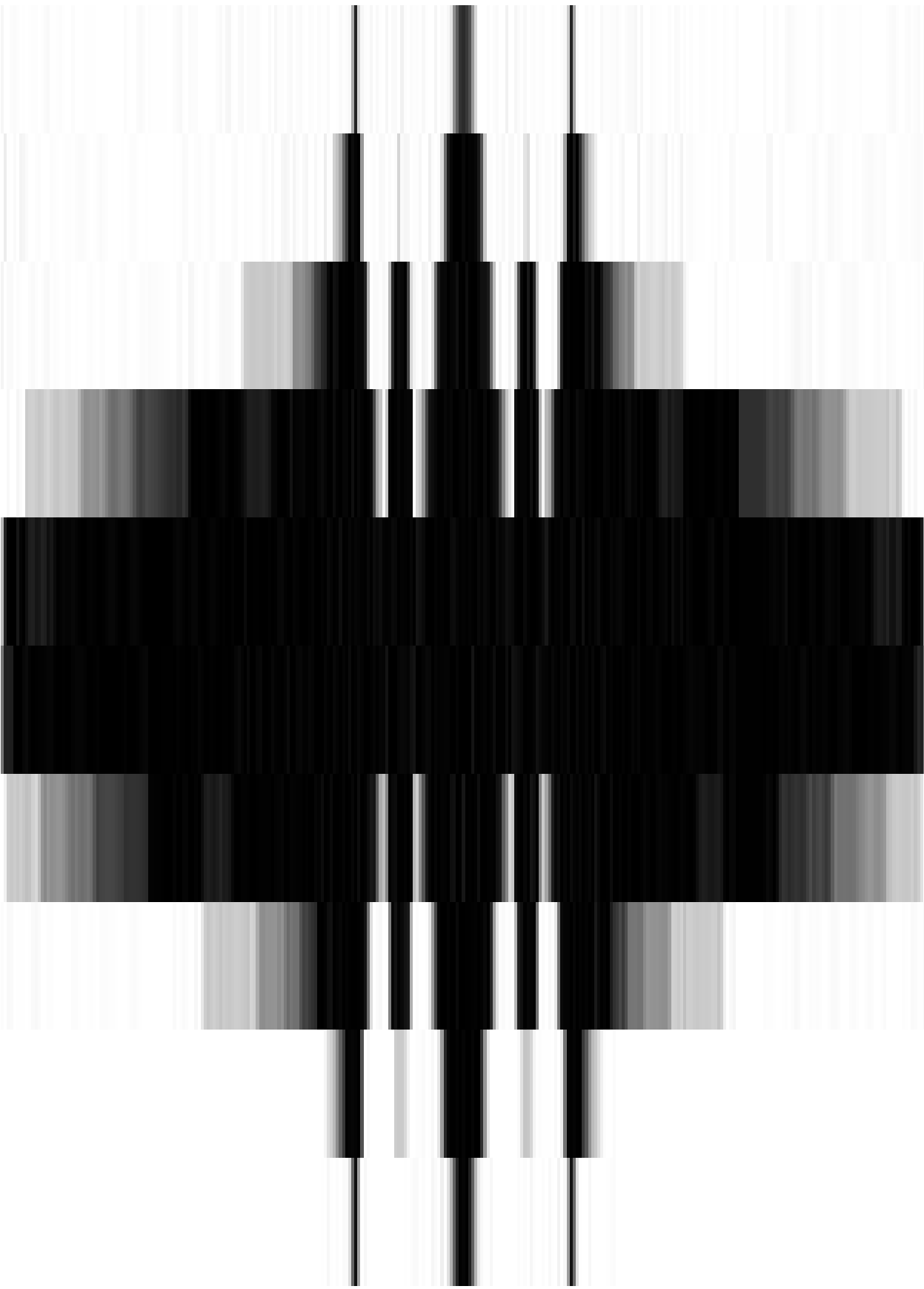


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Jesus answered and said unto him, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:1 – 3).

Nicodemus visited Jesus secretly in the night, for he feared social criticism. It was an act of courage for one of his position to approach the controversial teacher and to declare his faith in Jesus’ divine stature. He reverently affirmed his conviction that only a master who had actual God-communion could work the superlaws that govern the inner life of all beings and all things. In reply, Christ forthrightly directed Nicodemus’ attention to the heavenly Source of all phenomena in creation—mundane as well as “miraculous”—pointing out succinctly that anyone can contact that Source and know the wonders that proceed therefrom, even as Jesus himself did, by undergoing the spiritual “second birth” of intuitional soul-awakening.

The superficially curious crowds attracted by displays of phenomenal powers received only scantily from the wisdom trove of Jesus, but the manifest sincerity of Nicodemus elicited from the Master determinate guidance that emphasized the Supreme Power and Goal on which man should concentrate.¹ Miracles of wisdom to enlighten the mind are superior to miracles of physical healing and the subjugation of nature; and the even greater miracle is the healing of the root-cause of every form of suffering: delusive ignorance that obscures the unity of man’s soul and God. That primordial forgetfulness is vanquished only by Self-realization, through the intuitive power by which the soul directly apprehends its own nature as individualized Spirit and perceives Spirit as the essence of everything.



True religion is founded upon intuitional perception of the Transcendental Reality

All bona fide revealed religions of the world are based on intuitive knowledge. Each has an exoteric or outer particularity, and an esoteric or inner core. The exoteric aspect is the public image, and includes moral precepts and a body of doctrines, dogmas, dissertations, rules, and customs to guide the general populace of its followers. The esoteric aspect includes methods that focus on actual communion of the soul with God. The exoteric aspect is for the many; the esoteric is for the ardent few. It is the esoteric aspect of religion that leads to intuition, the firsthand knowledge of Reality.

The lofty Sanatana Dharma of the Vedic philosophy of ancient India—summarized in the Upanishads and in the six classical systems of metaphysical knowledge, and peerlessly encapsulated in the Bhagavad Gita—is based on intuitional perception of the Transcendental Reality. Buddhism, with its various methods of controlling the mind and gaining depth in meditation, advocates intuitive knowledge to realize the transcendence of nirvana. Sufism in Islam anchors on the intuitive mystical experience of the soul.² Within the Jewish religion are esoteric teachings based on inner experience of the Divine, evidenced abundantly in the legacy of the God-illuminated Biblical prophets. Christ's teachings are fully expressive of that realization. The apostle John's Revelation is a remarkable disclosure of the soul's intuitional perception of deepest truths garbed in metaphor.

The elite traditions of Western philosophy and metaphysics laud the intuitional knowing power of the soul. The Greek mystic, philosopher, and mathematician Pythagoras (born c.

580

b.c.

) emphasized inner experience of intuitive knowledge. Plato (born c.

428

b.c.

), whose works have come down to us as a primary foundation of Western civilization, likewise taught the necessity for supersensory knowledge to apprehend eternal truths. The Neoplatonist sage Plotinus (

a.d. 204

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270

) practiced Plato’s ideal of intuitional knowing of Reality: “Often I have woken to myself out of the body, become detached from all else and entered into myself,” he wrote, “and I have seen beauty of surpassing greatness, and have felt assured that then especially I belonged to the higher reality, engaged in the noblest life and identified with the Divine.”³ He died exhorting his disciples “Strive to bring back the god in yourselves to the God in the All.”⁴

The Gnostics (first three centuries

a.d.

); the early Church fathers such as Origen and Augustine; great Christian luminaries such as Johannes Scotus Erigena (

810

–

877

) and Saint Anselm (

1033

–

1109

); the monastic orders founded by Saint Bernard of Clairvaux (

1091

—

1153

) and Hugh, Richard, and Walter of Saint Victor (twelfth century)—all practiced intuitive contemplation of God.

Illumined Christian mystics of medieval times—Saint Thomas Aquinas (

1224

—

1275

); Saint Bonaventure (

1217

—

1274

); Jan van Ruysbroeck (

1293

—

1381

); Meister Eckhart (

1260

—

1327

); Henry Suso (

1295

—

1366

); Johannes Tauler (

1300

—

1361

); Gerhard Groote (

1340

—

1384

); Thomas à Kempis (

1380

—

1471

), author of *The Imitation of Christ*; Jacob Boehme (

1575

—

1624

)—sought and received ultimate knowledge through the light of intuition.⁵ Christian saints through the centuries—Juliana of Norwich, Hildegard of Bingen, Catherine of Siena, Teresa of Avila, and many more known and

unknown—partook of soul intuition in their attainment of divine realization and mystical union with God.

British poets such as Wordsworth, Coleridge, Blake, Traherne, and Pope aspired to intuit and write about the all-pervading Spirit. Emerson (

1803

—

1882

) and other American Transcendentalists sought personal experience of immanent spiritual reality through intuition. The German Idealist philosophers Hamann (

1730

—

1788

), Herder (

1744

—

1803

), Jacobi (

1743

—

1819

), Schiller (

1759

—

1805

), and Schopenhauer (

1788

—

1860

) emphasized it; and the great modern French philosopher Bergson calls intuition the only faculty capable of knowing the ultimate nature of things.⁶



Jesus' esoteric teachings reveal the universality of religion

The "second birth," the necessity of which Jesus speaks, admits us to the land of intuitional perception of truth. The New Testament may not have been scribed with the word "intuition," but it is replete with references to intuitive knowledge. Indeed, the twenty-one verses describing Nicodemus' visit present, in condensed epigrammatic sayings so typical of Oriental scripture, Jesus' comprehensive esoteric teachings relating to the practical attainment of the infinite kingdom of blissful divine consciousness. These verses have been largely interpreted in support of such doctrines as baptism of the body by water as a prerequisite for entering God's kingdom after death (John

3

:

5

); that Jesus is the only "son of God" (John

3

:

16

); that mere "belief" in Jesus is sufficient for salvation, and that all are condemned who do not so believe (John

3

:

17

—

18

). Such exoteric reading of scripture engulfs in dogma the universality of religion. A panorama of unity unfolds in an understanding of esoteric truth.

Truth is one: exact correspondence with Reality. Divine incarnations do not come to bring a new or exclusive religion, but to restore the One Religion of God-realization. The great ones, like waves, all bathe in the same Eternal Sea and become One with It. The outwardly varying messages of the prophets are part of the necessary relativity that accommodates human diversity. It is narrow-mindedness that creates religious bigotry and divisive denominationalism, constricting truth to ritualistic worship and sectarian dogma; the form is mistaken for the spirit. The essential message of actual contact between man and Maker is diluted with ignorance. Humanity drinks of the polluted waters, understanding not at all why its spiritual thirst remains. Only pure waters can quench a vexing thirst.

The undreamed-of technical advances in civilization made possible by the splitting of the atom and the harnessing of subatomic energies will ultimately bring all peoples into such close proximity in travel and communication that humanity will have to reevaluate its attitudes. Either persistence in ignorant intolerance will spawn mass suffering, or an openness to the common spiritual link of souls will presage a global well-being of peace and amity. This is a clarion call that the time has come to separate truth from spurious convictions, knowledge from ignorance. The teachings of Jesus as understood in harmony with the revelations of the Great Ones of India will revive the practical methods of the intuitive knowing of truth through Self-realization. Realized truth and scientific knowledge are the sure means to combat the shadowy doubts and superstitions hedging humanity. Only a mighty flood of the light of truth through actual communion with God can dispel the gathered darkness of the ages.



Jesus answered and said unto him, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

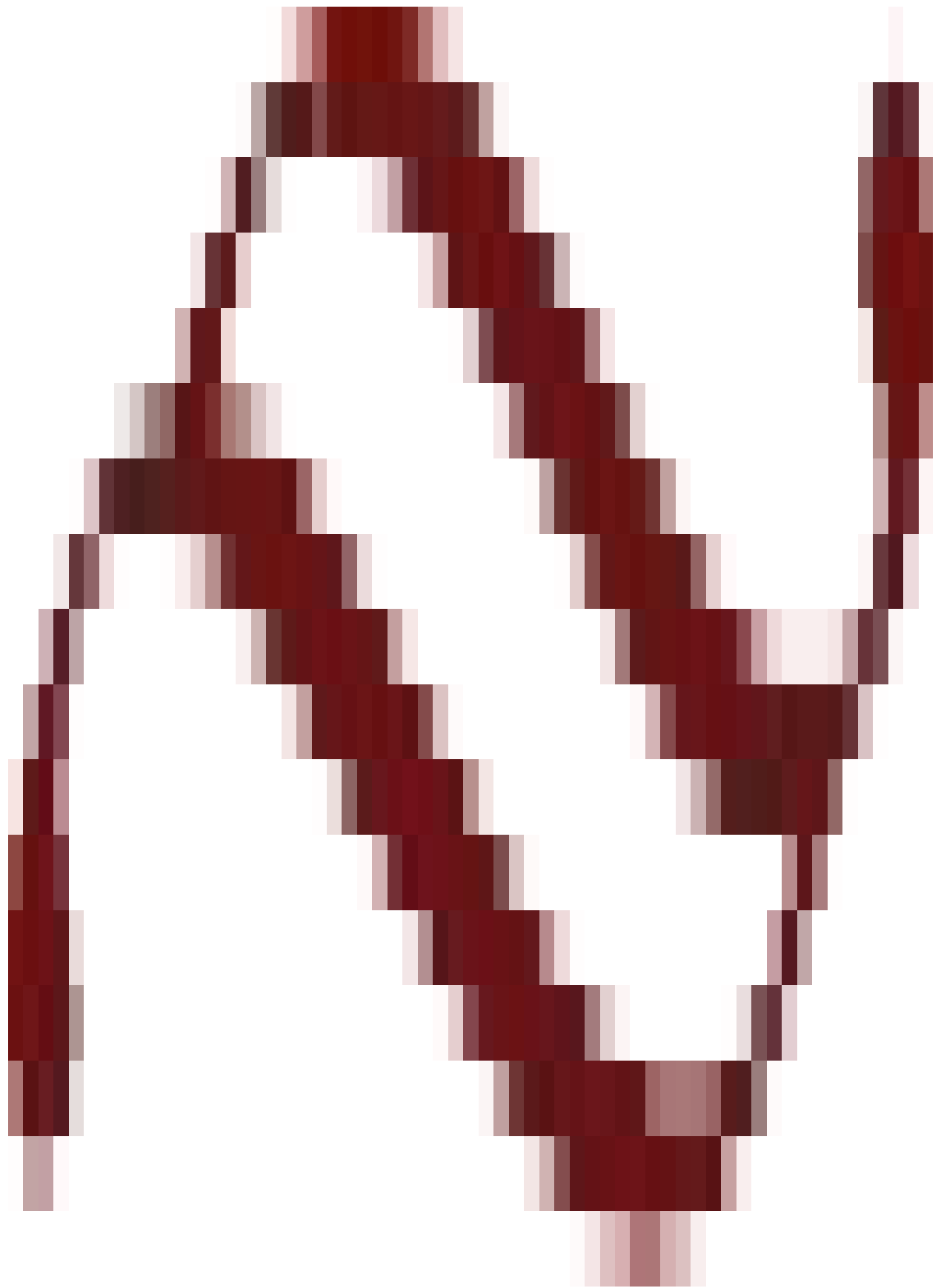
Nicodemus saith unto him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?”(John 3:3 – 4).



To “see the kingdom of God”

This choice of words by Jesus is an allusion to his familiarity with the Eastern spiritual doctrine of reincarnation. One meaning to be drawn from this precept is that the soul has to be born repeatedly in various bodies until it reawakens to realization of its native perfection. It is a false hope to believe that at bodily death the soul automatically enters into an everlasting angelic existence in heaven. Unless and until one attains perfection by removing the debris of karma (effects of one's actions) from the individualized God-image of his soul, he cannot enter God's kingdom.⁷ The ordinary person, constantly creating new karmic bondage by his wrong actions and material desires, adding to the accumulated effects of numerous previous incarnations, cannot free his soul in one lifetime. It takes many lifetimes of physical, mental, and spiritual evolution to work out all karmic entanglements that block soul intuition, the pure knowing without which one cannot “see the kingdom of God.”

The principal import of Jesus' words to Nicodemus goes beyond an implied reference to reincarnation. This is clear from Nicodemus' request for further explanation of how an adult could reach God's kingdom: Must he reenter his mother's womb and be reborn?⁸ Jesus elaborates in the succeeding verses as to how a person can be “born again” in his present incarnation—how a soul identified with the flesh and sense limitations can acquire by meditation a new birth in Cosmic Consciousness.



“Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5).

To be “born of water” is usually interpreted as a mandate for the outer ritual of baptism by water—a symbolic rebirth—in order to be eligible for God’s kingdom after death. But Jesus did not mention a rebirth involving water.⁹ “Water” here means protoplasm; the body is made up mostly of water and begins its earthly existence in the amniotic fluid of the mother’s womb. Though the soul has to go through the natural process of birth that God has established through His biological laws, physical birth is not enough for man to be fit to see or enter into the kingdom of God.

The ordinary consciousness is tied to the flesh, and through the two physical eyes man can see only into the diminutive playhouse of this earth and its encircling starry sky. Through the small outer windows of the five senses, body-bound souls perceive nothing of the wonders beyond limited matter.

When a person is high aloft in an airplane he sees no boundaries, only the limitlessness of space and free skies. But if he is caged in a room, surrounded by windowless walls, he loses the vision of vastness. Similarly, when man’s soul is sent out of the infinity of Spirit into a sensory-circumscribed mortal body, his outer experiences are confined to the limitations of matter. So Jesus alluded to the fact, as expressed by modern scientists, that we can see and know only as much as the limited instrumentality of the senses and reason allow. Just as by a two-inch telescope the details of the distant stars cannot be seen, so Jesus was saying that man cannot see or know anything about the heavenly kingdom of God through the unaugmented power of his mind and senses. However, a

200

-inch telescope enables man to peer into the vast reaches of star-peopled space; and similarly, by developing the intuitional sense through meditation he can behold and enter the causal and astral kingdom of God—birthplace of thoughts, stars, and souls.

Jesus points out that after man’s soul becomes incarnate—born of water, or

protoplasm—he should transcend the mortal impositions of the body by self-development. Through awakening the “sixth sense,” intuition, and opening the spiritual eye, his illumined consciousness can enter into the kingdom of God. In this second birth the body remains the same; but the soul’s consciousness, instead of being tied to the material plane, is free to roam in the boundless, eternally joyous empire of Spirit.

God intended His human children to live on earth with an awakened perception of the Spirit informing all creation, and thus to enjoy His dream-drama as a cosmic entertainment. Alone among living creatures, the human body was equipped, as a special creation of God, with the instruments and capacities necessary to express fully the soul’s divine potentials.¹⁰ But through the delusion of Satan, man ignores his higher endowments and remains attached to the limited fleshly form and its mortality.

As individualized souls, Spirit progressively unfolds Its power of knowing through the successive stages of evolution: as unconscious response in minerals, as feeling in plant life, as instinctive sentient knowledge in animals, as intellect, reason, and undeveloped introspective intuition in man, and as pure intuition in the superman.

It is said that after eight million lives traveling the successive steps of upward evolution like a prodigal son through the cycles of incarnations, at last the soul arrives in a human birth. Originally, human beings were pure sons of God. Nobody knows the divine consciousness enjoyed by Adam and Eve except the saints. Ever since the Fall, man’s misuse of his independence, he has lost that consciousness by associative equivalence of himself with the fleshly ego and its mortal desires. Not altogether uncommon are persons more like instinct-motivated animals than intellectually responsive human beings. They are so materially minded that when you talk about food or sex or money they understand and reflexively respond, like Pavlov’s famous salivating dog. But try to engage them in a meaningful philosophical exchange about God or the mystery of life, and their uncomprehending reaction is as though their conversationalist were crazy.

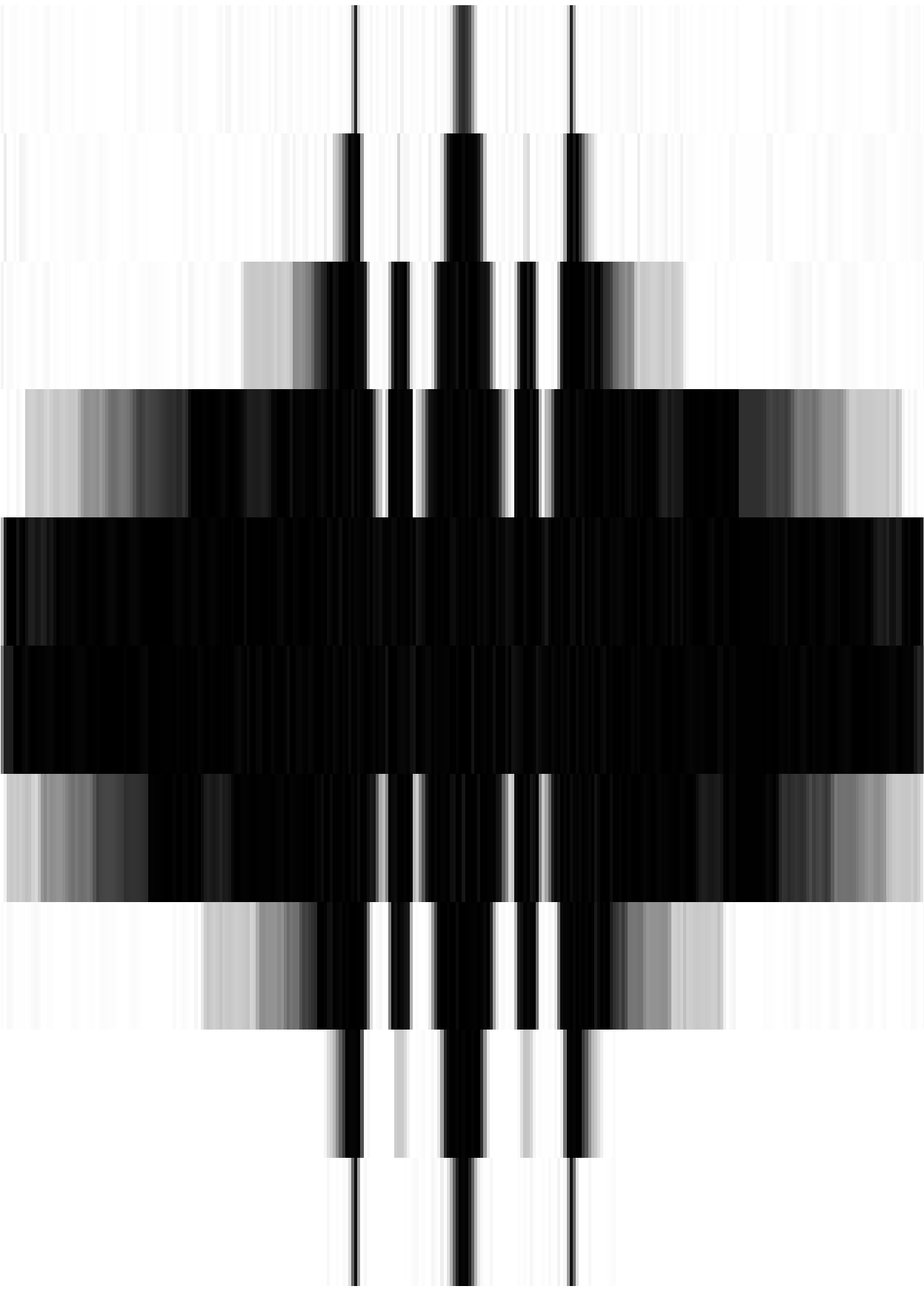
The spiritual man is trying to free himself from the materiality that is the cause of his prodigal wandering in the maze of incarnations, but the ordinary man does not want more than a betterment of his earthly existence. As instinct confines the animal within prescribed limits, so also does reason circumscribe the human

being who does not try to be a superman by developing intuition. The person who worships reason only and is not conscious of the availability of his power of intuition—by which alone he can know himself as soul—remains little more than a rational animal, out of touch with the spiritual heritage that is his birthright.



“That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:6).

These words of Jesus rest upon the truth that both consciousness and matter are perpetual and self-perpetuating—they continue to propagate as long as Spirit maintains Its creation.



Matter and consciousness: the perpetual duality of manifest creation

The Transcendental Absolute has a dual manifestation: subjective and objective, Spirit and Nature, noumena and phenomena. Objectively, vibrating Spirit manifests as conscious Cosmic Light, which through progressive condensation produces the triune causal, astral, and material creation as well as the causal, astral, and physical bodies of man. Subjectively, Spirit is immanent in the cosmic creative Light as Consciousness, the ultimate Source and Sustainer of all: Christ Consciousness in the causal-astral-physical macrocosm, and the soul in the causal-astral-physical microcosm of man.¹¹

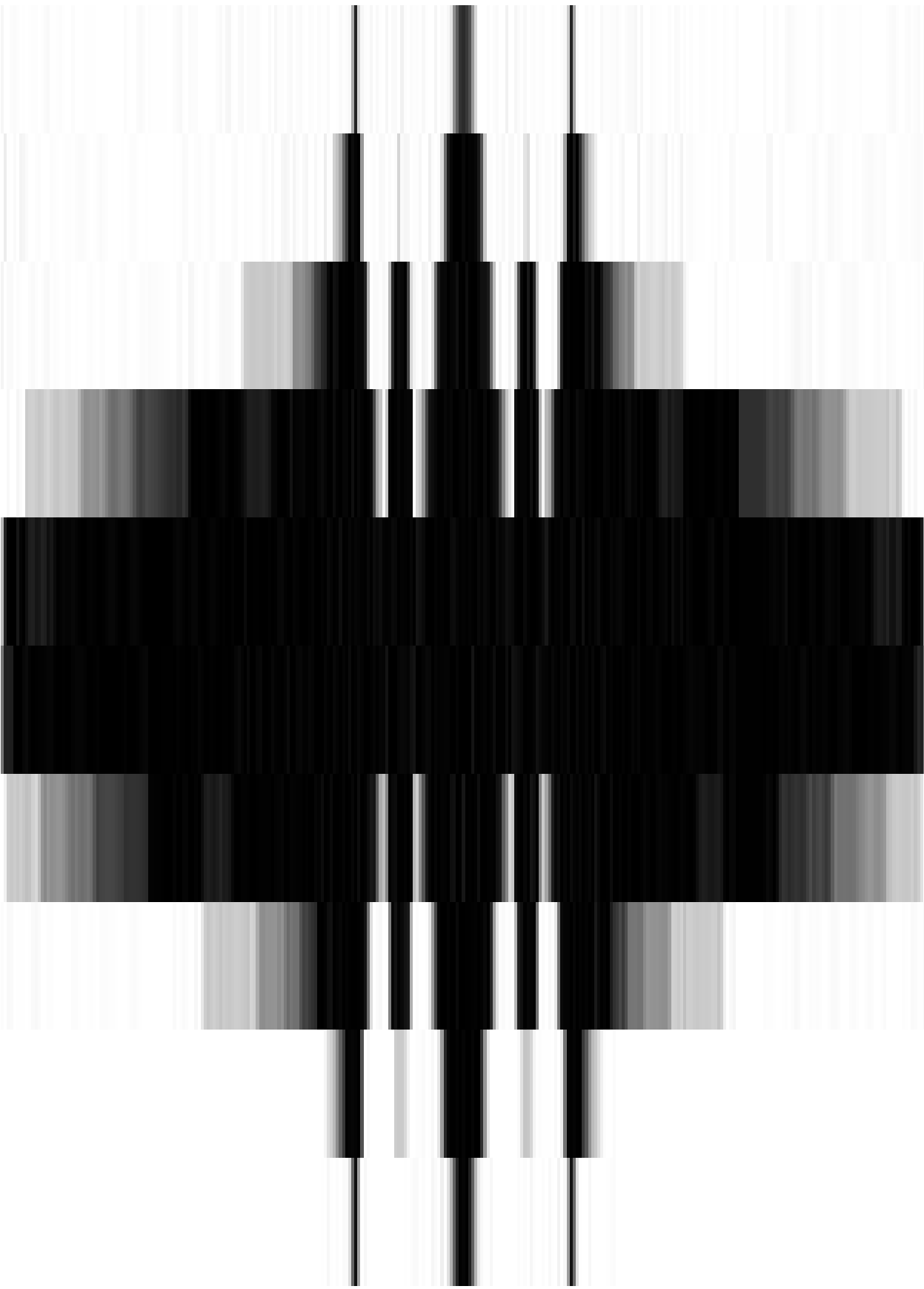
The consciousness of God is self-perpetuating in the consciousness of man. Man bequeaths salient characteristics of his consciousness to children or disciples, and his physical characteristics are passed down in the flesh of descendents. Both the consciousness and the body are vibrations of eternal Spirit, and there is no essential difference between them; but each perpetuates its own nature according to the characteristic duality of manifest creation.

Man apprehends the phenomena of objective nature (more or less, according to their subtlety) with his senses and reasoning intellect. The noumenon behind the phenomenon—consciousness as the causal essence of man and creation—is beyond the grasp of human intelligence. Human intelligence can give knowledge only of phenomena; noumena must be known through intuition, the power by which consciousness apprehends itself. The ordinary man therefore cognizes the natural universe around him but not the immanent Spirit, and cognizes himself as so many pounds of flesh rather than as pure consciousness indwelling as the soul.

Thus man is born of both flesh and consciousness, and flesh has become predominant. The body born of flesh has the limitations of the flesh, whereas the soul, born of the Spirit, has potentially limitless powers. By meditation, man's consciousness is transferred from the body to the soul, and through the soul's power of intuition he experiences himself not as a mortal body (a phenomenon of objective nature), but as immortal indwelling consciousness, one with the noumenal Divine Essence.¹²



“Marvel not that I said unto thee, ‘Ye must be born again.’ The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit” (John 3:7 – 8).



“The wind bloweth where it listeth...”

Jesus was describing a metaphysical law of noumena (substance, or cause) and phenomena (the appearances of substances, or effect) when he compared the Spirit, and the souls emerging from It, with the invisible wind, and its presence declared by its sound. Just as the source of the wind is hidden but the wind is made known by its sound, so the Spirit-substance is invisible, hidden beyond the reach of human senses; and the incarnate souls born of the Spirit are the visible phenomena. By the sound, the invisible wind is known. By the presence of intelligent souls, the invisible Spirit is declared.

Jesus was stating that, as it is difficult to find the source of the wind, so it is difficult to find the Spirit-Source from which all things come. There is a parallel quotation in the Hindu scripture, the Bhagavad Gita (

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): “The beginning of all creatures is veiled, the middle is manifested, and the end again is imperceptible.” All beings come from the ocean of Spirit and dissolve again in the ocean of Spirit. Everything emerges from the Invisible, to play upon this earth for a little while, and then enters the invisible state again at the end of life. Only the middle of life we behold; the beginning and end are hidden from sight in the subtler spiritual realms. To illustrate: Think of a huge chain out in the ocean. If you lift the middle of the chain above the surface of the water, you can see a few of its links, but the ends are still unseen in the depths. So the outer manifestations of life are perceptible to man’s sensory mind, but their origin and ultimate destiny are unknown to man in ordinary consciousness. He perceives only the middle of the chain of eternal existence and consciousness, that which is visible between birth and death.

Man remains firmly convinced that he is essentially a body, even though he daily receives proof to the contrary. Every night in sleep, “the little death,” he discards his identification with the physical form and is reborn as invisible consciousness. Why is it that man is compelled to sleep? Because sleep is a reminder of what is

beyond the state of sleep—the state of the soul.¹³ Mortal existence could not be borne without at least subconscious contact with the soul, which is provided by sleep. At nighttime man dumps the body into the subconscious and becomes an angel; in the daytime he becomes once more a devil, divorced from Spirit by the desires and sensations of the body. By Kriya Yoga meditation he can be a god in the daytime, like Christ and the Great Ones. He goes beyond the subconscious to the superconscious, and dissolves the consciousness of the body in the ecstasy of God. One who can do this is born again. He knows his soul as a waft of the invisible wind of Spirit—soaring free in the unbounded heavens, entrapped no longer in a whirling dust devil traipsing heedlessly over the toilsome tracks of matter.

This earth is a habitat of trouble and suffering, but the kingdom of God that is behind this material plane is an abode of freedom and bliss. The soul of the awakening man has followed a hard-earned way—many incarnations of upward evolution—in order to arrive at the human state and the possibility to reclaim his lost divinity. Yet how many human births have been wasted in preoccupation with food and money and gratification of the body and egoistic emotions! Each person should ask himself how he is using the precious moments of this present birth. Eventually the bodies of all human beings fall painfully apart; isn't it better to separate the soul from the body consciousness—to keep the body as the temple of the Spirit? O Soul, you are not the body; why not remember always that you are the Spirit of God?¹⁴



Spiritual birth—to be born again in Spirit—is bestowed by a true guru

Jesus said that we must reestablish our connection with Eternity; we must be born again. Man has either to follow the circuitous route of reincarnations to work out his karma, or—by a technique such as Kriya Yoga and the help of a true guru—to awaken the divine faculty of intuition and know himself as a soul, that is, be born again in Spirit. By the latter method he can see and enter the kingdom of God in this lifetime.

Sooner or later, after a few or many painful incarnations, the soul in every human being will cry out to remind him that his home is not here, and he will begin in earnest to retrace his steps to his rightful heavenly kingdom. When one is very desirous to know Truth, God sends a master through whose devotion and realization He plants His love in that person's heart.

Human birth is given by one's parents; but the spiritual birth is given by the God-ordained guru. In the Vedic tradition of ancient India, the newly born child is called *kayastha*, which means "body identified." The two physical eyes, which look into alluring matter, are bequeathed by the physical parents; but at the time of initiation, spiritual baptism, the spiritual eye is opened by the guru. Through the help of the guru, the initiate learns to use this telescopic eye to see Spirit, and then becomes *dwija*, "twice-born"—the same metaphysical terminology used by Jesus—and begins his progress toward the state of becoming a Brahmin, one who knows Brahman or Spirit.¹⁵

The matter-bound soul, lifted into the Spirit by God-contact, is born a second time, in Spirit. Alas, even in India this initiation from body consciousness to spiritual consciousness has become just a formality, a caste ceremony performed on young Brahmin boys by ordinary priests—tantamount to the symbolic ritual of baptism with water. But Jesus, like great Hindu masters of ancient and modern times, conferred the actual baptism of Spirit—"with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." A true guru is one who can change the disciple's brain cells by the spiritual current flowing from God through his enlightened consciousness. All will feel that change who are in tune—who meditate sincerely and deeply and, as in the practice of Kriya Yoga, learn to send the divine current into the brain cells. The soul is bound to the body by cords of karma, woven by lifetimes of material desires, behavior, and habits. Only the life current can change one's life,

destroying those millions of karmic records. Then one is born again; the soul opens the inner window of oneness with the Spirit and enters into the perception of the wondrous omnipresence of God.¹⁶

So the term “born again” means much more than merely joining a church and receiving ceremonial baptism. Belief alone will not give the soul a permanent place in heaven after death; it is necessary to have communion with God now. Human beings are made angels on earth, not in heaven. At death, wherever one leaves off in his progress, he will have to start in again in a new incarnation. After sleep one is the same as before sleep; after death one is the same as before death. That is why Christ and the Masters say it is necessary to become saintly before the sleep of death. It cannot be done by filling the mind with mortal attachments and useless diversions. One who is engrossed in storing up treasure on earth is not busy with God; one who is intent on God does not want many fillers in his life. It is by freeing oneself from earthly desires that one gains entry into the kingdom of God. The Lord patiently waits for one hundred percent of man’s devotion; for those who diligently seek Him every day, and who fulfill His commandments through godly behavior, He opens the door to the kingdom of His presence.

A multitude of lectures about sunshine and scenic beauties will not enable me to see them if my eyes are closed. So it is that people do not see God who is omnipresent in everything unless and until they open their spiritual eye of intuitive perception. When one can perceive that he is not the mortal body but a spark of the Infinite Spirit cloaked in a concentration of life energy, then he will be able to see the kingdom of God. He will realize that the composition of his body and the universe is not soul-imprisoning matter, but expansive, indestructible energy and consciousness. Science has proved this truth; and each individual can experience it. Through Kriya Yoga, he can have the unshakable realization that he is that great Light and Consciousness of Spirit.

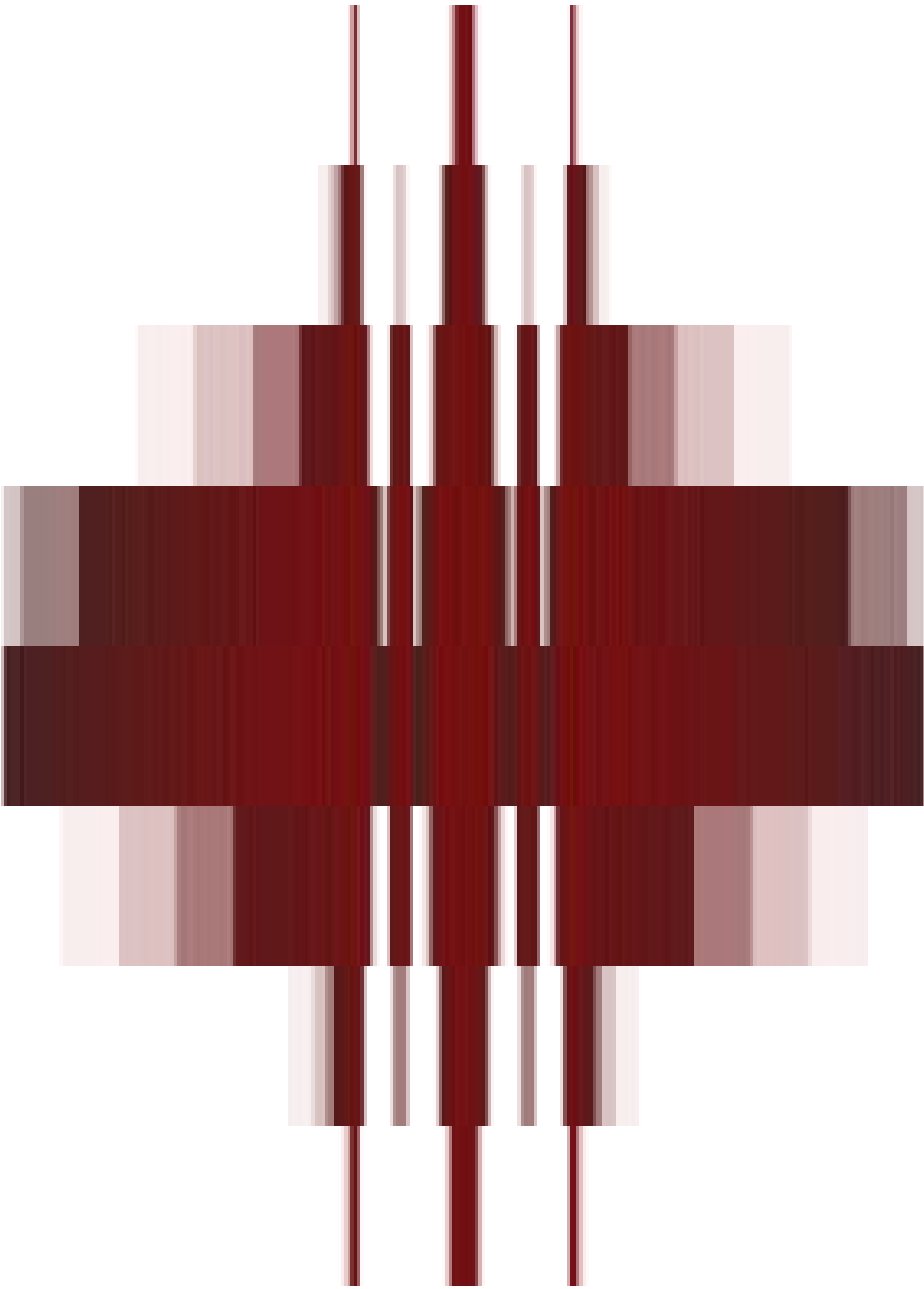
O man, how long will you remain a rational animal? How long will you fruitlessly try to look into the endless tracts of creation with only your myopic eyes of senses and reason? How long will you remain bound to satisfying the demands of animal man? Shed all constraining fetters; know yourself as something immortal, having limitless powers and faculties. No more this age-old dream of rational animal! Wake up! you are the intuitional child of immortality!



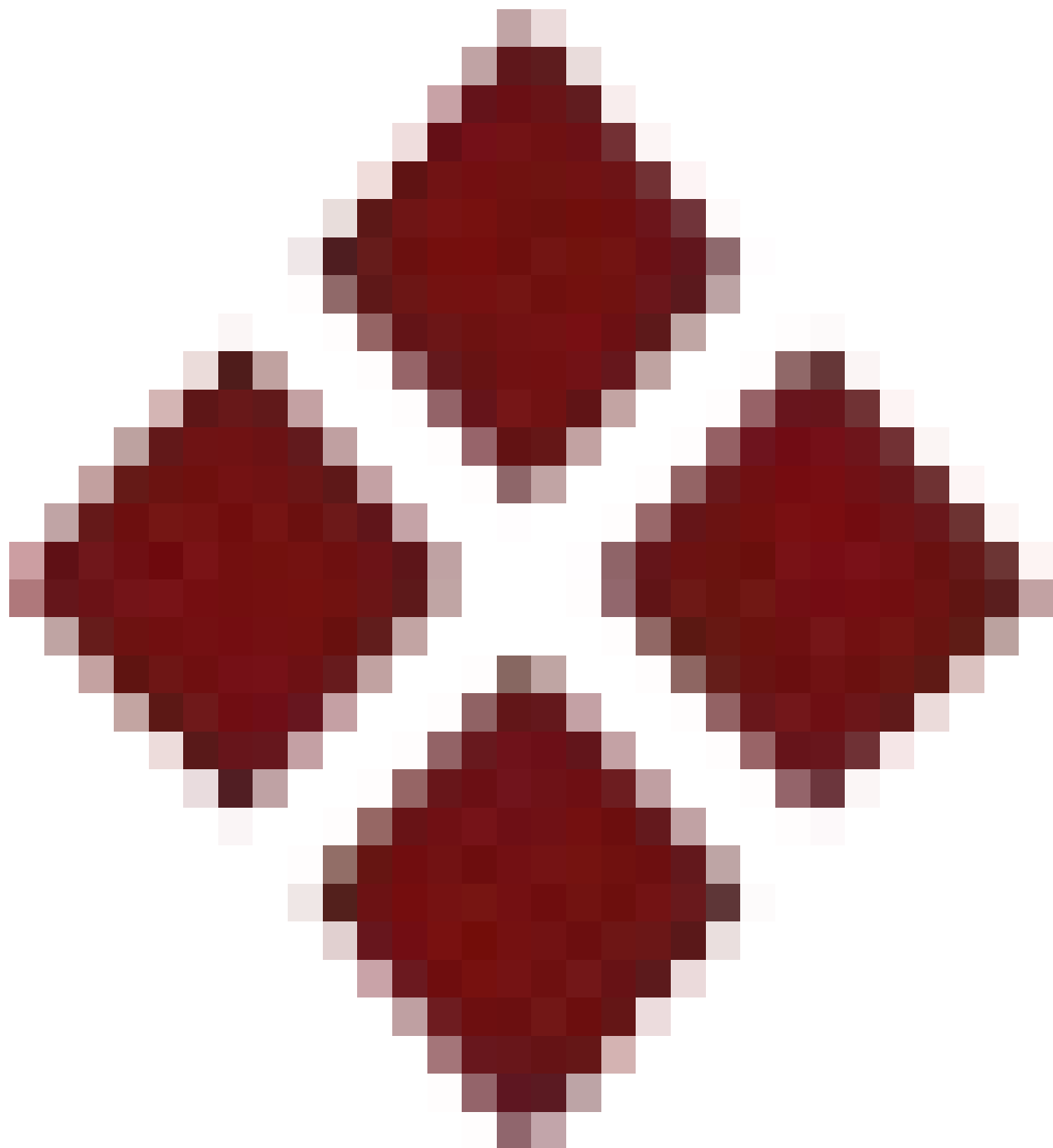
Discourse 14

The Ascension of Man—Lifting Up the Serpent in the Wilderness

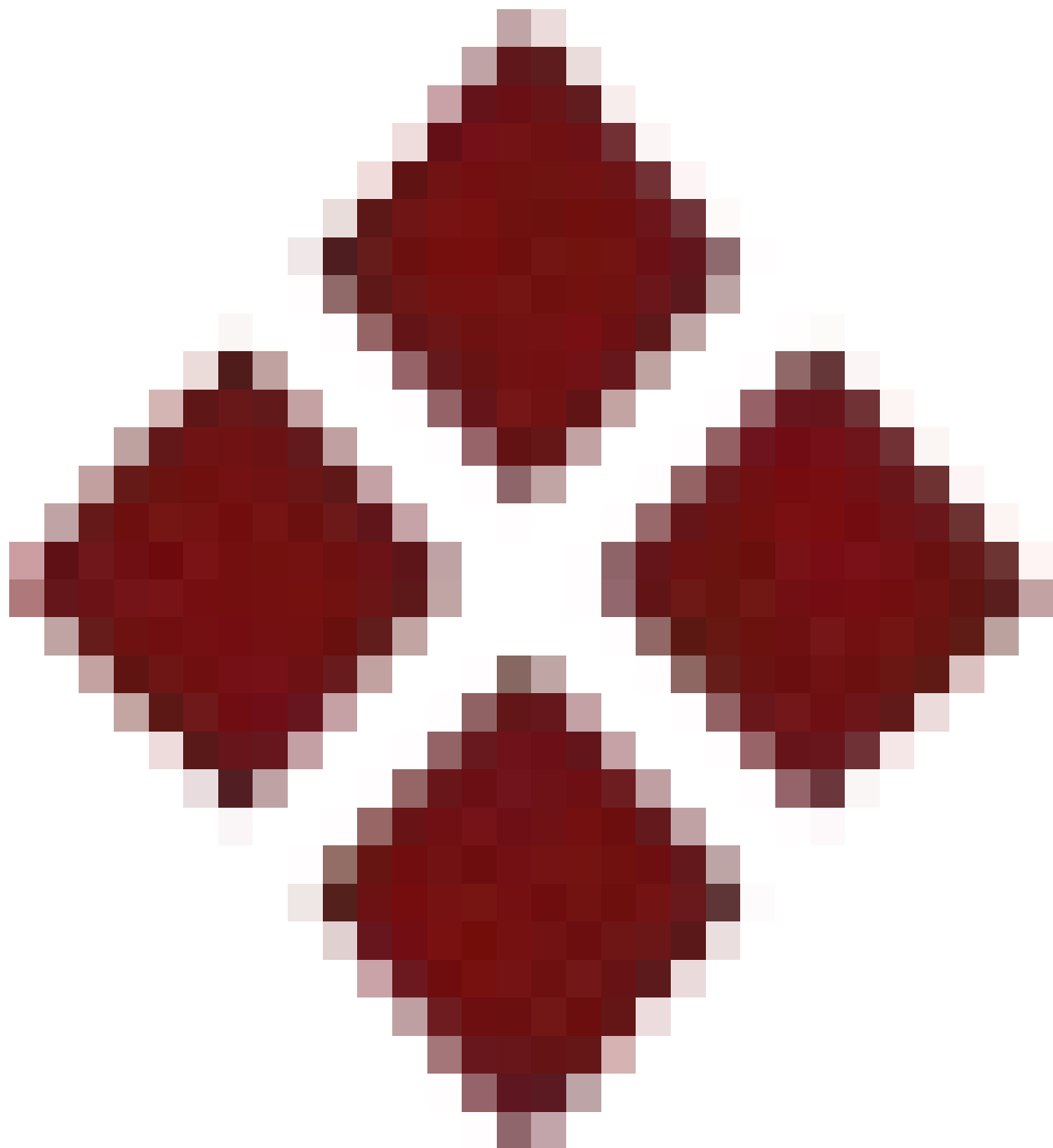
Dialogue With Nicodemus, Part II



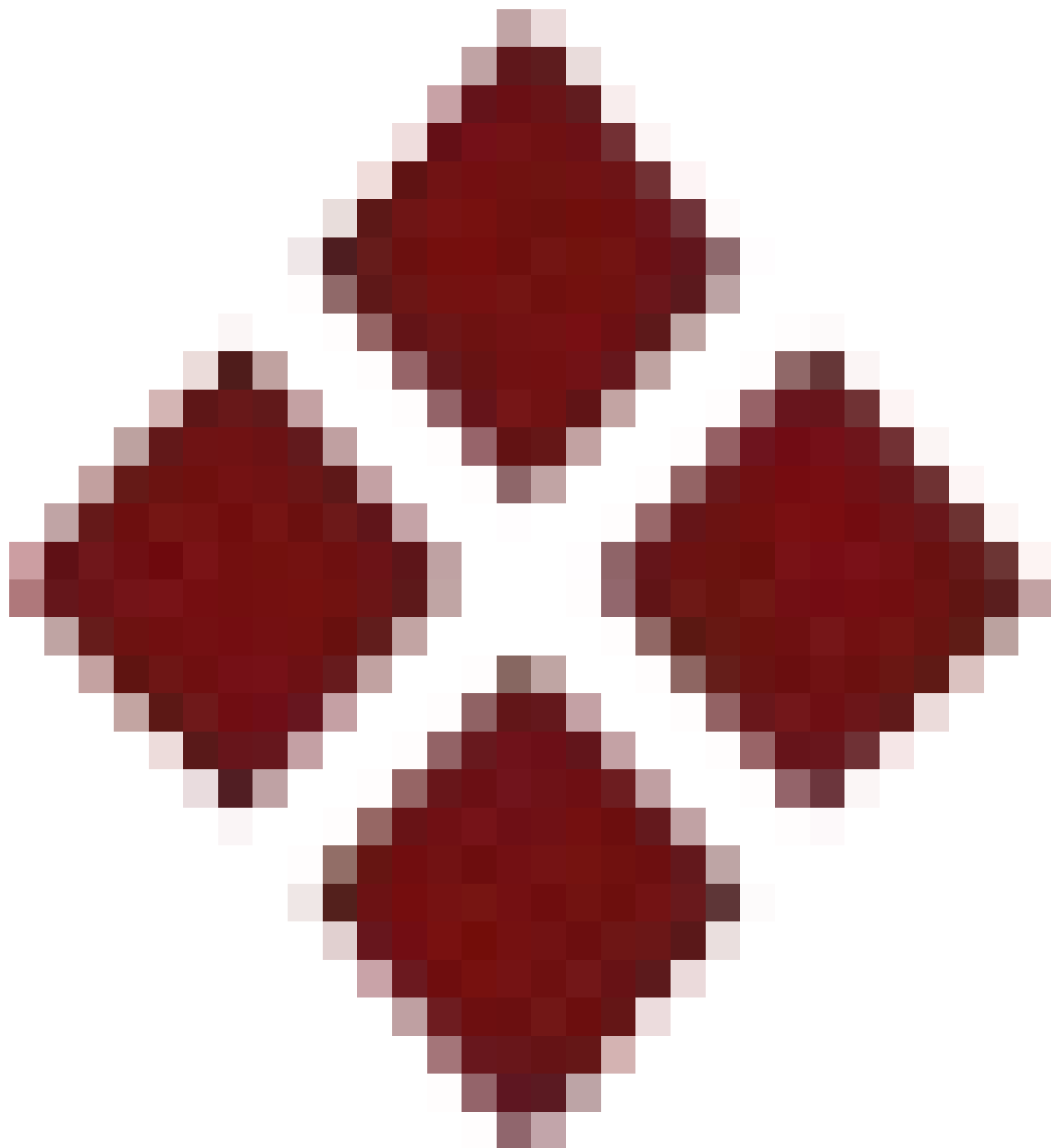
Heavenly Truths Can Be Fully Known Only Through Intuition



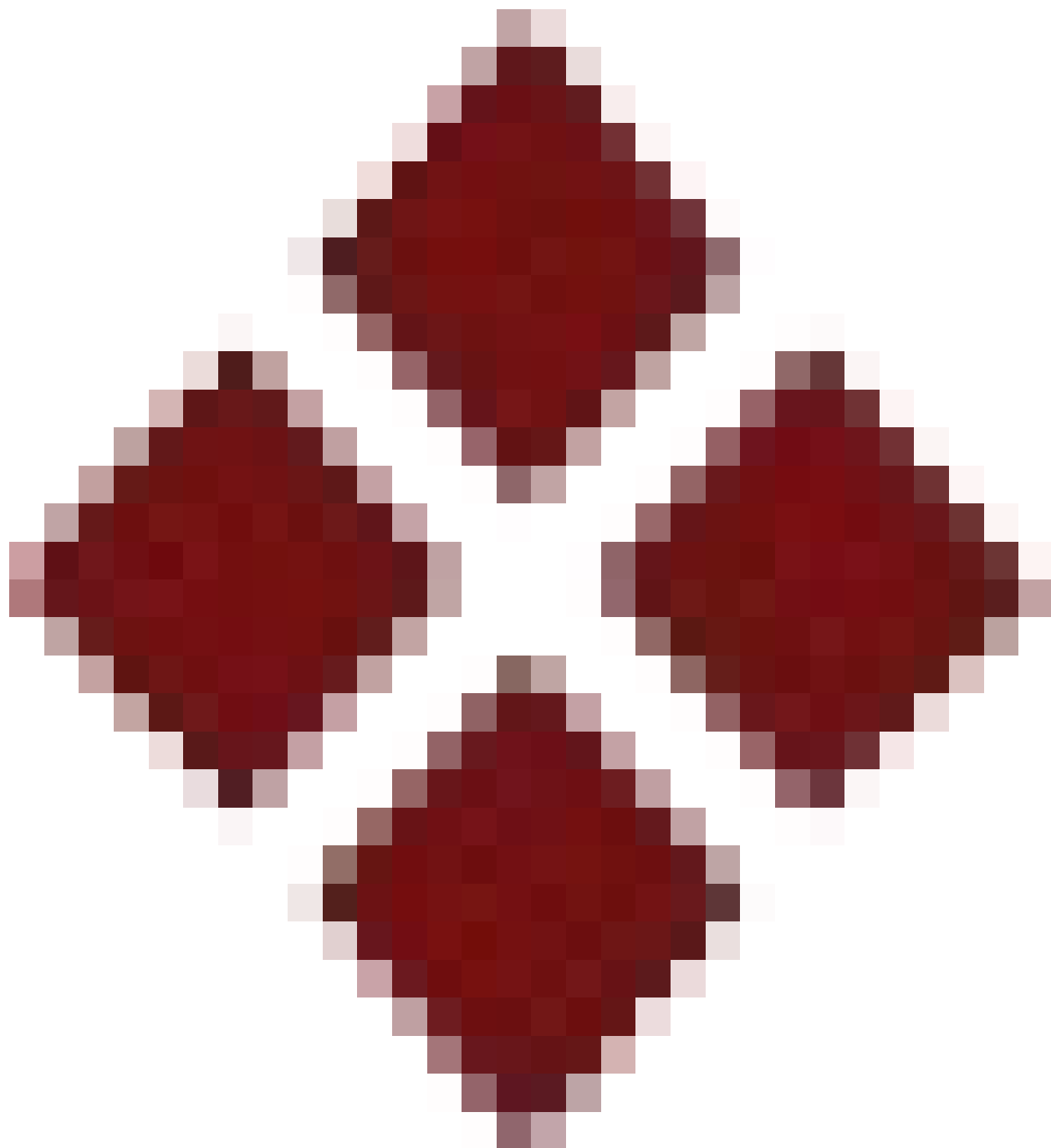
**The Potential to Remain in Heavenly Consciousness
Regardless of Outer Circumstances**



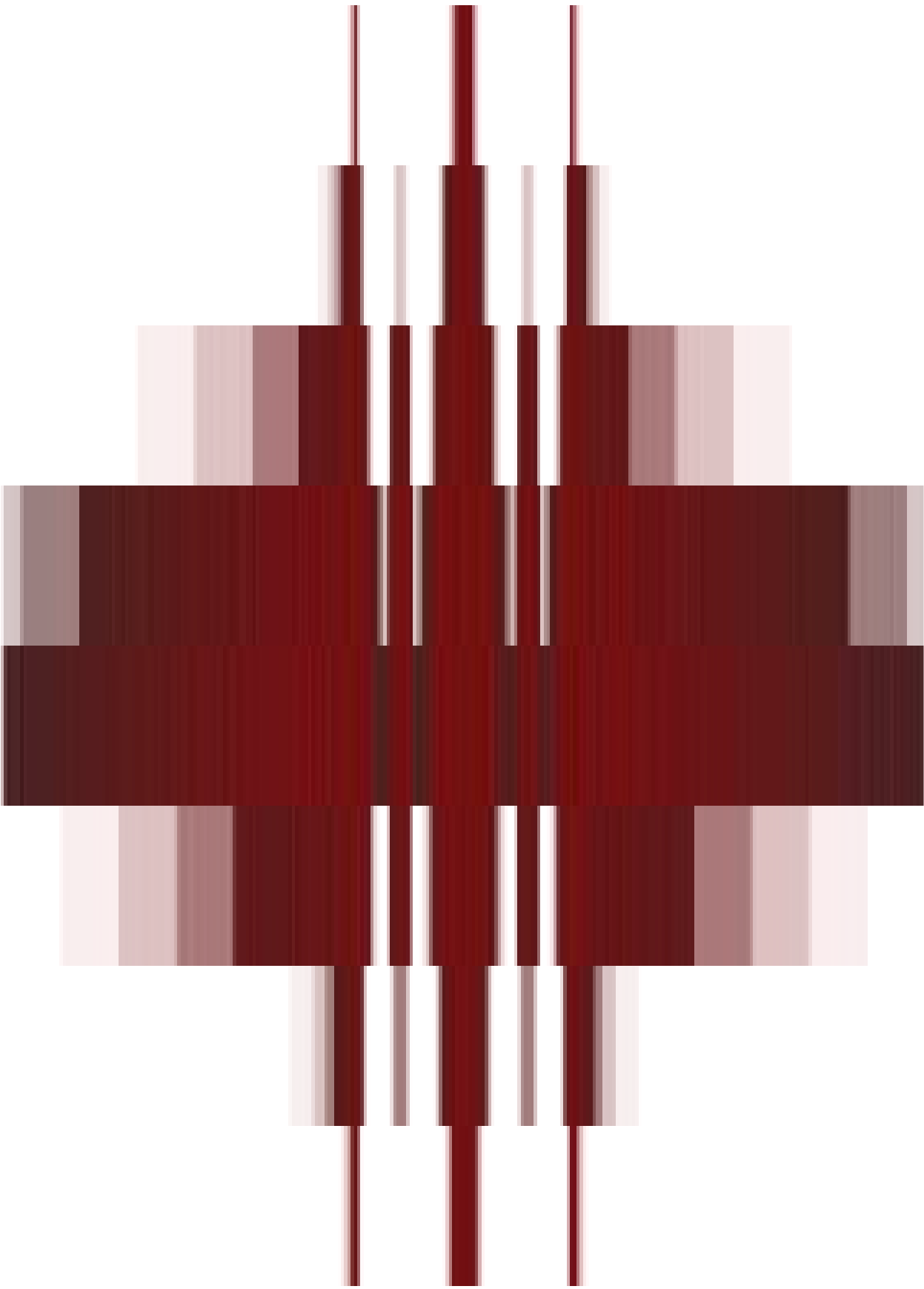
“Lifting Up the Serpent”: Kundalini Force at the Base of the Spine



Yoga: Science of Switching Off the Senses and Entering Superconsciousness



Common Fallacies About Kundalini Awakening



“Whosoever believes in the doctrine of lifting the bodily consciousness (Son of man) from the physical to the astral by reversing the life force through the coiled passage at the base of the spine...will gradually acquire the immutable state—Christ Consciousness.”

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Nicodemus answered and said unto him, “How can these things be?”

Jesus answered and said unto him, “Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, we speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?”

“And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.”

— *John 3:9 – 15*



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Discourse 14

The Ascension of Man—Lifting Up the Serpent in the Wilderness

Dialogue With Nicodemus, Part II



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Jesus, in addressing Nicodemus, observed that merely holding the ceremonial office of a master of the house of Israel did not guarantee an understanding of the mysteries of life. Often persons are accorded religious titles by virtue of intellectual knowledge of the scriptures; but a full comprehension of the esoteric depths of truth can be known only by intuitive experience.



Heavenly truths can be fully known only through intuition

“We speak that we do know” is knowledge deeper than the information derived through sensory-dependent intellect and reason. Since the senses are limited, so is intellectual understanding. The senses and mind are the outer doors through which knowledge percolates into the consciousness. Human knowledge filters in through the senses and is interpreted by the mind. If the senses err in perception, the conclusion drawn by the understanding of that data is also incorrect. A white gossamer cloth fluttering in the distance may look like a ghost, and a superstitious person believes that it is a ghost; but closer observation reveals the error of that conclusion. The senses and understanding are easily deluded because they cannot grasp the real nature, the essential character and substance, of created things. Jesus, with his intuition, had full realization of the noumena supporting the workings of the cosmos and its diversity of life, so he said authoritatively: “We do know.”

Jesus was attuned to the grand scheme of manifestation behind all space, behind earthly vision. To belligerent minds he could not speak openly of his omnipresent perceptions—even the truths he did tell brought crucifixion! He said to Nicodemus: “If I tell you about matters pertaining to human souls who are visibly present on earth, and how they can enter into the kingdom of God, and you believe not, then how can you believe me if I tell you about happenings in the heavenly realms, which are completely hidden from the ordinary human gaze?”

Though Jesus regretted, with accommodating patience, that Nicodemus doubted the intuitional revelations of the Christ state, he went on to tell his visitor the way in which he—and any other seeker of truth—could experience these truths for himself.

So many doubt heaven because they do not see it. Yet they do not doubt the breeze simply because it is unseen. It is known by its sound and sensation on the skin and the motion in the leaves and other objects. The whole universe lives, moves, breathes because of the invisible presence of God in the heavenly forces behind matter.

Once a man gave some olives to another who had never seen olives, and said,

“These have a lot of oil in them.” The person cut the fruit but could see no oil—until his friend showed him how to squeeze the olives in order to extract the oil from the pulp. So it is with God. Everything in the universe is saturated with His presence—the twinkling stars, the rose, the song of the bird, our minds. His Being permeates everything, everywhere. But one has metaphorically to “squeeze” God out of His material concealment.

Inner concentration is the way to realize the subtle, prolific heaven behind this gross universe. Seclusion is the price of greatness and God-contact. All who are willing to snatch time from the greedy material world to devote it instead to the divine search can learn to behold the wondrous factory of creation out of which all things are born. From the heavenly causal and astral spheres every physically incarnate soul has descended, and every soul can reascend by retreating to the “wilderness” of interior silence and practicing the scientific method of lifting up the life force and consciousness from body identification to union with God.



“And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:13 – 15).

This passage is very important, and little understood. Taken literally, the words “lifted up the serpent” are at best a classic scriptural ambiguity. Every symbol has a hidden meaning that must be rightly interpreted.

The word “serpent” here refers metaphorically to man’s consciousness and life force in the subtle coiled passageway at the base of the spine, the matterward flow of which is to be reversed for man to reascend from body attachment to superconscious freedom.¹



Man's supernal nature as an angelic being garbed in thought and light

As souls we were all originally in God's bosom. Spirit projects the desire to create an individualized expression of Itself. The soul becomes manifest and projects the idea of the body in causal form. The idea becomes energy, or the lifetronic astral body. The astral body becomes condensed into the physical body. Through the integrated spinal passageway of these three instrumental media, the soul descends into identification with the material body and gross matter.

"He that came down from heaven" means the physical body. (Jesus refers to the human body as "man"; throughout the Gospels he spoke of his own physical body as "the Son of man," as distinguished from his Christ Consciousness, "the Son of God.") Man descends from the heavenly planes of God's creation when his soul, garbed in its causal body of God-congealed ideas and its astral body of light, takes on an outer covering of material tissue. So not only Jesus but all of God's children have "come down from heaven."

Just as the little threads of flame percolating through the holes of a gas burner are part of the one flame under the burner plate, so also the one flame of Spirit underlying all creation appears as a separate soul-flame in every individual being. When the burner is turned off, the many individual jets retire into the one central flame. The separate threads of fire had first to come out of the primary flame before they could go back into it. This illustrates what Jesus said about souls ascending to heaven, having descended from heaven.

No human body has ascended into heaven, the etheric essence of which does not accommodate corporeal forms; but all souls can and will enter the supernal realms when, through death or through spiritual transcendence, they cast off physical consciousness and know themselves as angelic beings garbed in thought and light.

We are all made in the image of God, beings of immortal consciousness cloaked in diaphanous heavenly light—a heritage buried beneath the cloddish flesh. That heritage we can only acknowledge by meditation. There is no other way—not by reading books, not by philosophical study, but by devotion and continuous prayer and scientific meditation that uplifts the consciousness to God.



Highest ecstasy: being united with God while simultaneously active in the world

Jesus spoke of an extraordinary truth when he mentioned “the Son of man which is in heaven.” Ordinary souls behold their bodies (“Son of man”) roaming only on the earth, but free souls such as Jesus dwell simultaneously in the physical and in the astral and causal heavenly kingdoms.

A motion picture can portray human beings, animals, trees, mountains, oceans, on the screen; all of which have descended from the projection booth, projected through a beam of light. Similarly, every figure in this world has emerged from the booth of eternity. The physical body or “Son of man” is a projection of the cosmic beam of God’s light. So Jesus’ words are very simple and very wonderful: Even while dwelling in a body in the physical world, he was beholding himself as a ray of God descending from heaven. He demonstrated this conclusively after his death, re-creating his physical body from rays of cosmic creative light, and later dematerializing it in the presence of his disciples when he ascended back to heaven.²

Some masters in their oneness with God may preserve the projection of their bodily form indefinitely. Other masters in their God-union dissolve the bodily image in Spirit when they depart from the earth; but they can reappear at will in response to the earnest soul-entreaty of a yearning devotee—either in vision or actually rematerializing their physical form, as Jesus did for Saint Francis and as my own Master, after his passing, did for me. Or, at the behest of the Divine Father, they may voluntarily return to earth in a new incarnation to usher souls from the realm of delusion into the kingdom of God.

While Jesus, in his God-ordained incarnation, was effectually engaged in his Heavenly Father’s work in the world, he could in truth proclaim: “I am in heaven.” This is the highest ecstasy of God-consciousness, defined by yogis as nirvikalpa samadhi, an ecstatic state “without difference” between external consciousness and interior God-union. In savikalpa samadhi, “with difference,” a less exalted state, one is not conscious of the outer world; the body enters an inert trance while the awareness is immersed in interior conscious oneness with God. The most advanced masters can be fully conscious of God and not show any signs of the body being transfixed; the devotee drinks God and simultaneously is conscious and fully active in his external environment—if he

so chooses.



The potential to remain in heavenly consciousness regardless of outer circumstances

This declaration of Jesus offers great encouragement to every soul: Although man is beset with the perplexities that accompany residence in a physical body, God has provided him with the potential to remain in heavenly consciousness regardless of outer circumstances. An inebriate takes his drunkenness with him no matter where he goes. One who is sick is all the time preoccupied with his sickness. One who is happy is ever bubbling with good cheer. And the one who is conscious of God enjoys that supreme Bliss whether he is active in the outer world or absorbed in inner communion.

When one is engrossed in watching a convincingly played scene of tragedy in a motion picture, it may so impinge itself on the consciousness and emotions that it begins to feel real. But when one is troubled by a particular scene of cruelty, such as the catastrophic destruction of human life in a burning city, if the viewer looks up from the picture to the beam of light from the projector and analyzes its relation to the figures and events on the screen, the seemingly real material nature of everything being shown—buildings, landscapes, the misery of human beings—is seen as nothing but light.

Likewise, the materially engrossed individual beholds his ever-changing surroundings, birth, death, marriage, acquisition and loss, as material facts. But the individual who awakens into the consciousness of God through constant ecstasy, or union with God, begins to see a light trembling in all creation. He perceives that the different forms of matter—solids, liquids, gaseous substances—as well as human life and thought, are nothing but the diverse vibrations of that all-pervading, quivering light of God. By further development one can actually perceive God as the Almighty Creator dreaming this Cosmic Dream.

While watching a movie, one person might concentrate on the pictures, while another might keep his attention on the projection beam that causes their “materialization” on the screen. The moviegoing experience of these two individuals would be quite different—one becoming immersed in the story, forgetful of the beam; and the other seeing only rays of light without any pictures. But there is a third possibility: a person sitting in the motion-picture house enjoying the pictures on the screen, while remembering their source by

keeping a part of his attention on the pictureless beam.

A person concentrating on matter will see only material objects, and a person absorbed in God's light in the initial state of ecstasy (savikalpa samadhi) beholds only God. But one who has advanced to the highest state of consciousness, nirvikalpa samadhi, sees the great pictureless light of Cosmic Energy coming from God, and simultaneously beholds on the vast screen of space the motion picture of the universe produced by God's Creative Light.



“Lifting up the serpent”: kundalini force at the base of the spine

Jesus’ words in this passage make clear that all souls who are promoted back to heaven had originally descended from heaven and become entrapped in earthbound desires by the spurious realism of the cosmic drama, but were able to reascend by conquering every delusive attachment to material allurements. Again and again in the Gospels, Jesus emphasizes that what he attained, all may attain. His next remark to Nicodemus shows how.

Jesus said that each son of man, each bodily consciousness, must be lifted from the plane of the senses to the astral kingdom by reversing the matter-bent outflowing of the life force to ascension through the serpent-like coiled passage at the base of the spine—the son of man is lifted up when this serpentine force is uplifted, “as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness.”³ We must reascend, just as Moses, in the spiritual wilderness of silence in which all his desires were no more, lifted his soul from body consciousness into God-consciousness through the same path by which it had descended.

As explained earlier, man’s physical, astral, and causal bodies are tied together and work as one by a knotting of life force and consciousness in the seven cerebrospinal centers. In descending order, the final tie is a coiled knot at the base of the spine, preventing the ascension of consciousness into the heavenly astral kingdom. Unless one knows how to open this knot of astral and physical power, the life and consciousness remain attracted to the mortal realm, emanating outward into the body and sensory consciousness.

Most energy moves through space in a spiral form—a ubiquitous motif in the macrocosmic and microscopic architecture of the universe. Beginning with galactic nebulae—the cosmic birth-cradle of all matter—energy flows in coiled or circular or vortex-like patterns. The theme is repeated in the orbital dance of electrons around their atomic nucleus, and (as cited in Hindu scriptures of ancient origin) of planets and suns and stellar systems spinning through space around a grand center of the universe. Many galaxies are spiral-shaped; and countless other phenomena in nature—plants, animals, the winds and storms—similarly evidence the invisible whorls of energy underlying their shape and structure.⁴ Such is the “serpent force” (kundalini) in the microcosm of the human body: the coiled current at the base of the spine, a tremendous dynamo of life

that when directed outward sustains the physical body and its sensory consciousness; and when consciously directed upward, opens the wonders of the astral cerebrospinal centers.

When the soul, in its subtle sheaths of causal and astral bodies, enters physical incarnation at the time of conception, the entire body grows from the seed cell formed from the united sperm and ovum, beginning with the first vestiges of the medulla oblongata, brain, and spinal cord.

From its original seat in the medulla, the intelligent life energy of the astral body flows downward—activating the specialized powers in the astral cerebrospinal chakras that create and give life to the physical spine, nervous system, and all other bodily organs. When the work of the primal life force in creating the body is complete, it comes to rest in a coiled passage in the lowest, or coccygeal, center. The coiled configuration in this astral center gives to the life energy therein the terminology of kundalini or serpent force (from Sanskrit kundala, “coiled”). Its creative work completed, the concentration of life force in this center is said to be “sleeping” kundalini, for as it emanates outward into the body, continuously enlivening the physical region of the senses—of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch, and of the earthbound physical creative force of sex—it causes the consciousness to become strongly identified with the delusive dreams of the senses and their domain of activity and desires.

Moses, Jesus, the Hindu yogis, all knew the secret of scientific spiritual life. They unanimously demonstrated that every person who is yet physically minded must master the art of lifting up the serpent force from sensory body consciousness in order to accomplish the first retracing of the inward steps toward Spirit.

Any saint of any religion who has attained God-consciousness has, in effect, withdrawn his consciousness and life force from the sense regions up through the spinal passage and plexuses to the center of God-consciousness in the brain, and thence into omnipresent Spirit.



Yoga: science of switching off the senses and entering superconsciousness

When one is sitting quietly and calmly, he has partially stilled the life force flowing out into the nerves, releasing it from the muscles; for the moment his body is relaxed. But his peace is easily disturbed by any noise or other sensation that reaches him, because the life energy that continues to flow outward through the coiled path keeps the senses operative.

In sleep, the astral life forces are withdrawn not only from the muscles but also from the sensory instruments. Every night each man accomplishes a physical withdrawal of the life force, albeit in an unconscious way; the energy and consciousness in the body retire to the region of the heart, spine, and brain, giving man the rejuvenating peace of subconscious contact with the divine dynamo of all his powers, the soul. Why does man feel joy in sleep? Because when he is in the stage of deep, dreamless sleep, unconscious of the body, physical limitations are forgotten and the mind momentarily taps a higher consciousness.

The yogi knows the scientific art of withdrawing consciously from his sensory nerves, so that no outer disturbance of sight, sound, touch, taste, or smell can gain entry into the inner sanctum of his peace-saturated meditation. Soldiers posted for days on the front lines are able to fall asleep despite the constant roar of battle, because of the body's mechanism of unconsciously withdrawing the energy from the ears and other sensory organs. The yogi reasons that this can be done consciously. By knowledge and practice of the definite laws and scientific techniques of concentration, yogis switch off the senses at will—going beyond subconscious slumber into blissful superconscious interiorization.

Though the soul is given periods of freedom from body consciousness at regular intervals in its existence—for a few hours each night, and for a longer respite between physical incarnations during the sleep of death—the unenlightened man inevitably finds that his unfulfilled earthly yearnings stir him once again to the consciousness of the body. When he has sufficiently recovered from his sensory fatigue, the sleeping man's wants cause him to return to wakefulness, just as unfulfilled urges for earthly experiences impel man's reembodiment after a temporary rest in the astral realm between physical incarnations.

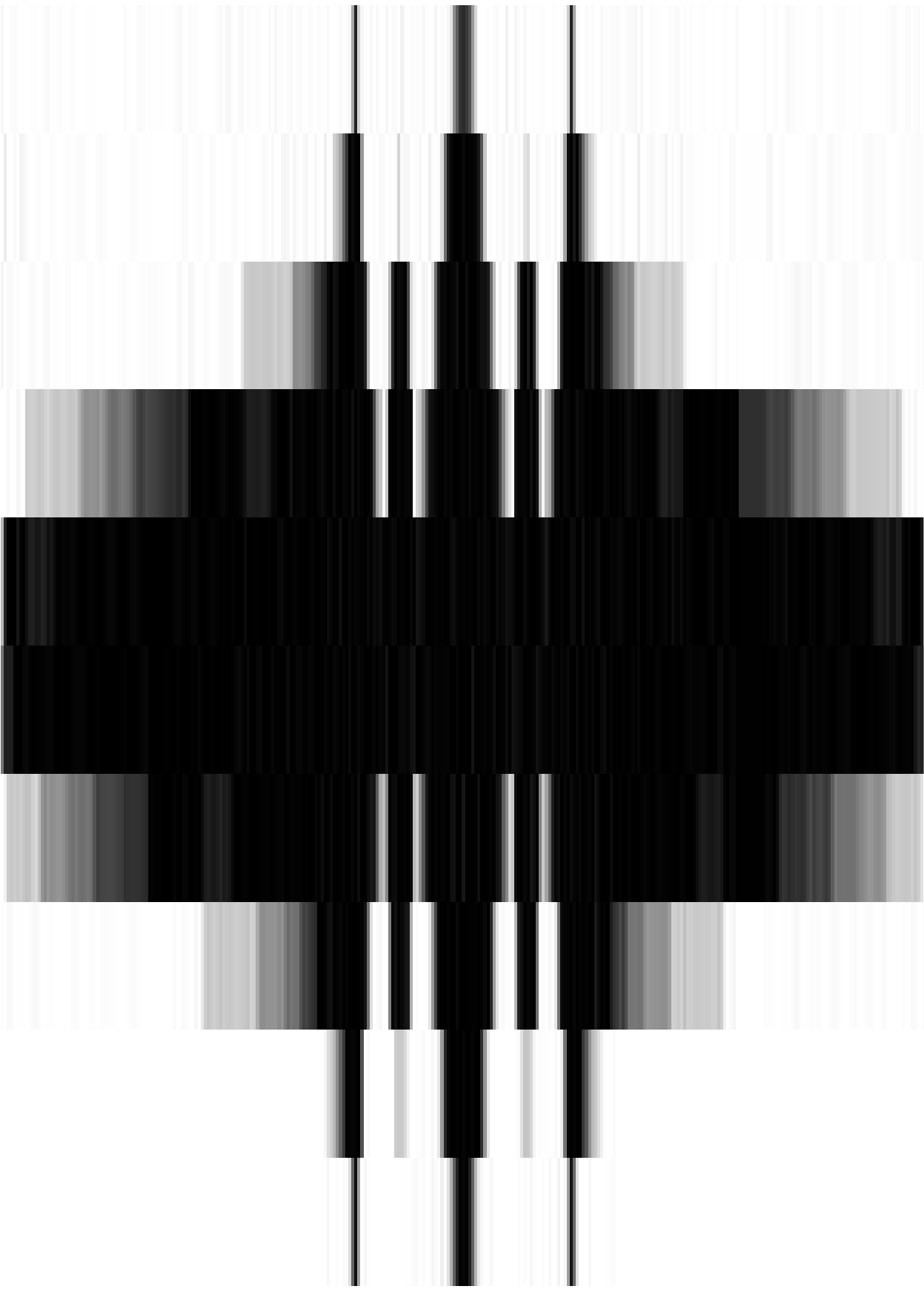
The state of subconsciousness, experienced in sleep, thus affords man only partial transcendence. So long as the life force and consciousness remain tied to the body by the activities of heart, lungs, and other vital organs, man cannot enter superconsciousness. The yogi, in the ecstasy of deep meditation, completely switches off the life force and consciousness from the physical body, refocusing on superconscious perception of the soul's invisible heavenly nature of Bliss. Repeated and prolonged sojourns into the sublimity of ecstasy satisfies the devotee's every desire and frees him from earth-binding compulsions with their cycles of reincarnation.

Whoever cynically thinks that seeking spiritual progress in meditation is a waste of time should reflect on the consummate benefits of being able to lift the consciousness into the elevated states of superconsciousness. In sleep all the dualities and miseries of physical existence are forgotten; indeed, the whole world vanishes into the invisible vastness of subconscious peace. If one learns to produce that mental freedom consciously and at will in samadhi, then when afflicted by suffering or confronted by death he is able to transfer his consciousness to the boundless inner kingdom of bliss, which is secreted behind the wakeful and subconscious minds even as the misery-quelling subconsciousness of sleep is hidden behind the conscious mind.

Every human being has learned to enter subconsciousness in sleep; and everyone can likewise master the art of superconscious ecstasy, with its infinitely more enjoyable and restorative experience than can be gleaned from sleep. That higher state bestows the constant awareness that matter is the frozen imaginings of God, as in sleep our dreams and nightmares are our own ephemeral thought-creations, condensed or "frozen" into visual experiences through the objectifying power of our imagination. A dreaming person does not know that a nightmare is unreal until he wakes up. So also, only by awakening in Spirit—oneness with God in samadhi—can man disperse the cosmic dream from the screen of his individualized consciousness.

Ascension in Spirit is not easy, because when one is conscious of the body he is in the grip of his second nature of insistent moods and habits. Without timidity, one must vanquish the desires of the body. A body-bound "son of man" cannot ascend to heavenly freedom just by talking about it; he has to know how to open the coiled knot of kundalini force at the base of the spine in order to transcend the confinement of the fleshly prison.

Every time one meditates deeply, he automatically helps to reverse the life force and consciousness from matter to God. If the current in the astral knot at the base of the spine is not lifted up by good living, good thoughts, meditation, then materialistic thoughts, worldly thoughts, base thoughts, are emphasized in one's life. With every good act man performs he is "ascending to heaven"—his mind becoming more focused at the Christ Center of heavenly perception; with every evil act he is descending into matter, his attention captivated by the phantoms of delusion.



Common fallacies about kundalini awakening

The true meaning of kundalini awakening is little understood. Ignorant teachers often associate kundalini with sex force and enshroud it in mystery to frighten neophytes about the danger of awakening this sacred serpentine power. To confuse the awakening of kundalini with the arousal of sex consciousness is an extremely ridiculous and wholly corrupt conception. On the contrary, in kundalini awakening the yogi's life force is withdrawn from the sensory nerves, particularly those associated with sex, giving him absolute mastery over sensory and sexual temptations.⁵

To think that this kundalini force can be easily awakened or roused by accident is another fallacy. Awakening the kundalini force is exceedingly difficult and cannot be done accidentally. It takes years of concerted meditation under the guidance of a competent guru before one can dream of releasing the heavenly astral body from its bondage to physical confinement by awakening the kundalini. One who is able to awaken the kundalini fast approaches the state of Christhood. Ascension through that coiled pathway opens the spiritual eye of spherical vision, revealing the whole universe surrounding the body, supported by the vibratory light of heavenly powers.

The senses of sight, hearing, taste, touch, and smell are like five searchlights revealing matter. As the life energy pours outward through those sensory beams, man is attracted by beautiful faces or captivating sounds or enticing scents, flavors, and tactual sensations. It is natural; but what is natural to the body-bound consciousness is unnatural to the soul. But when that divine life energy is withdrawn from the autocratic senses, through the spinal path into the spiritual center of infinite perception in the brain, then the searchlight of astral energy is cast onto the boundlessness of eternity to reveal the universal Spirit. The devotee is then attracted by the Supernal Supernatural, the Beauty of all beauties, the Music of all music, the Joy of all joys. He can touch Spirit all over the universe and can hear the voice of God reverberating throughout the spheres. The form dissolves in the Formless. The consciousness of the body, confined to a temporal, little form, illimitably expands into the formless, ever-existing Spirit.

Jesus explains that whosoever believes in the doctrine of lifting the bodily consciousness (son of man) from the physical to the astral by reversing the life

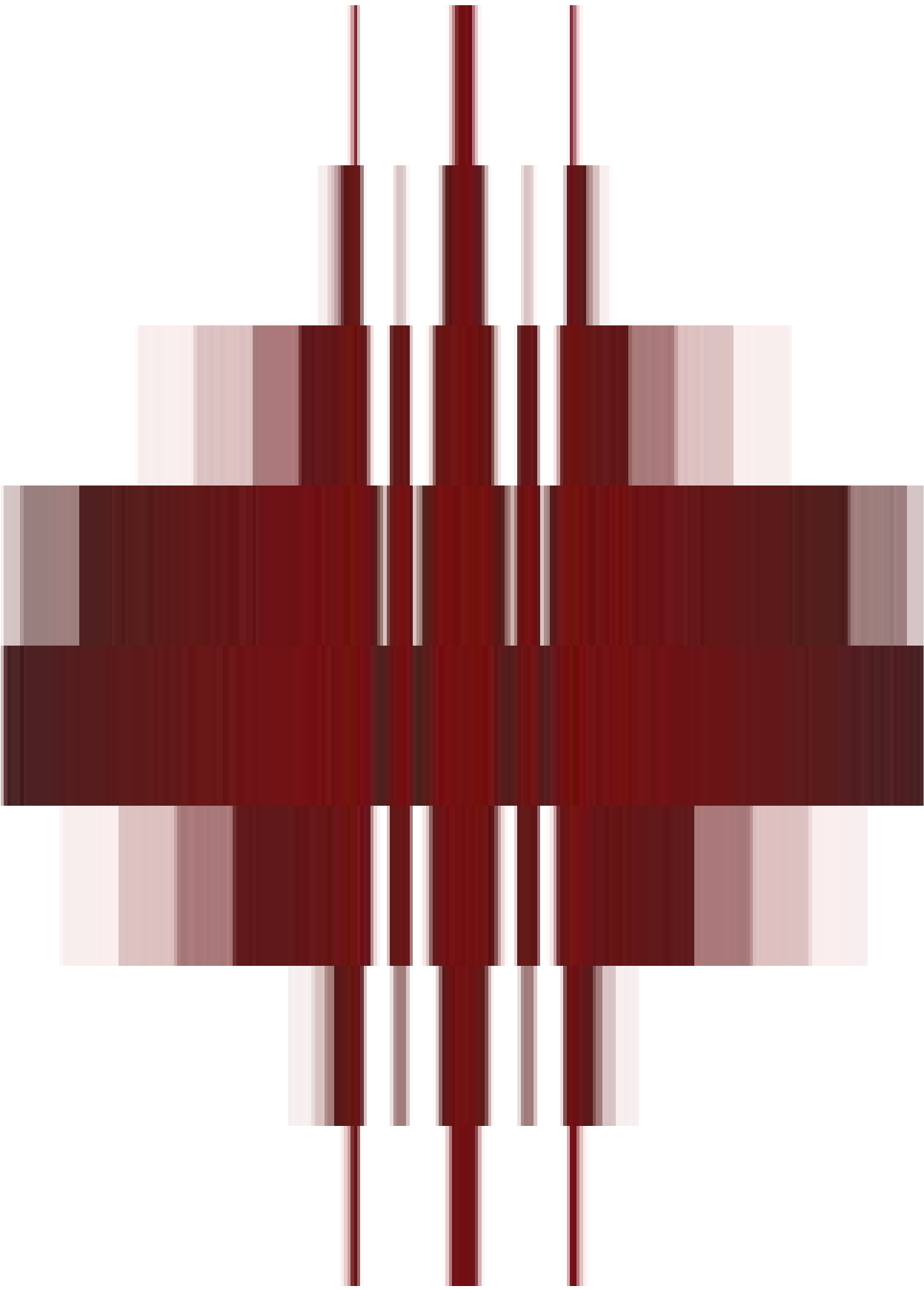
force through the coiled passage at the base of the spine, will not perish, that is, be subject to mortal changes of life and death, but will gradually acquire the immutable state—Christ Consciousness, the Son of God.



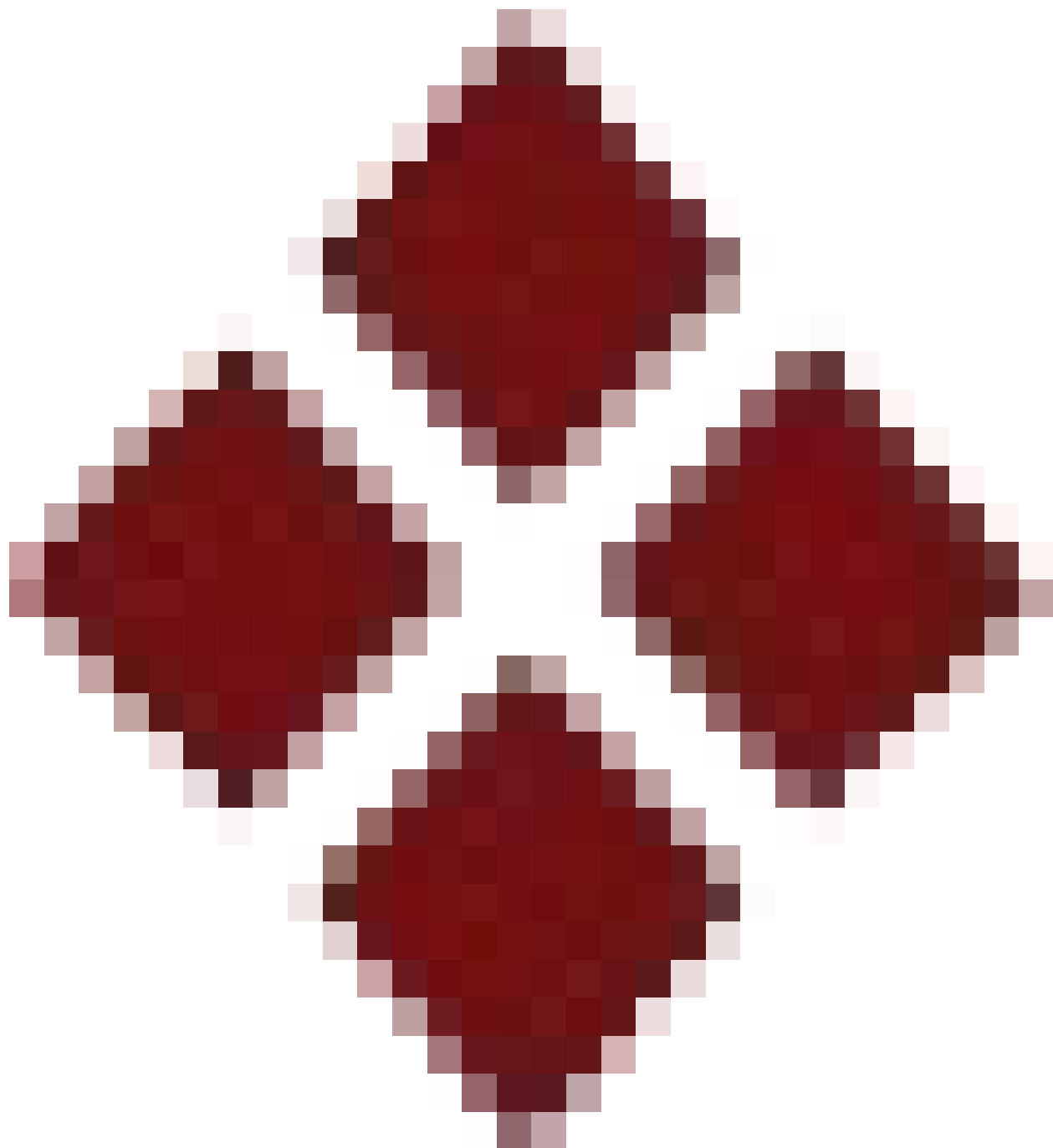
Discourse 15

God's Love Gave to the World His Only Begotten Son

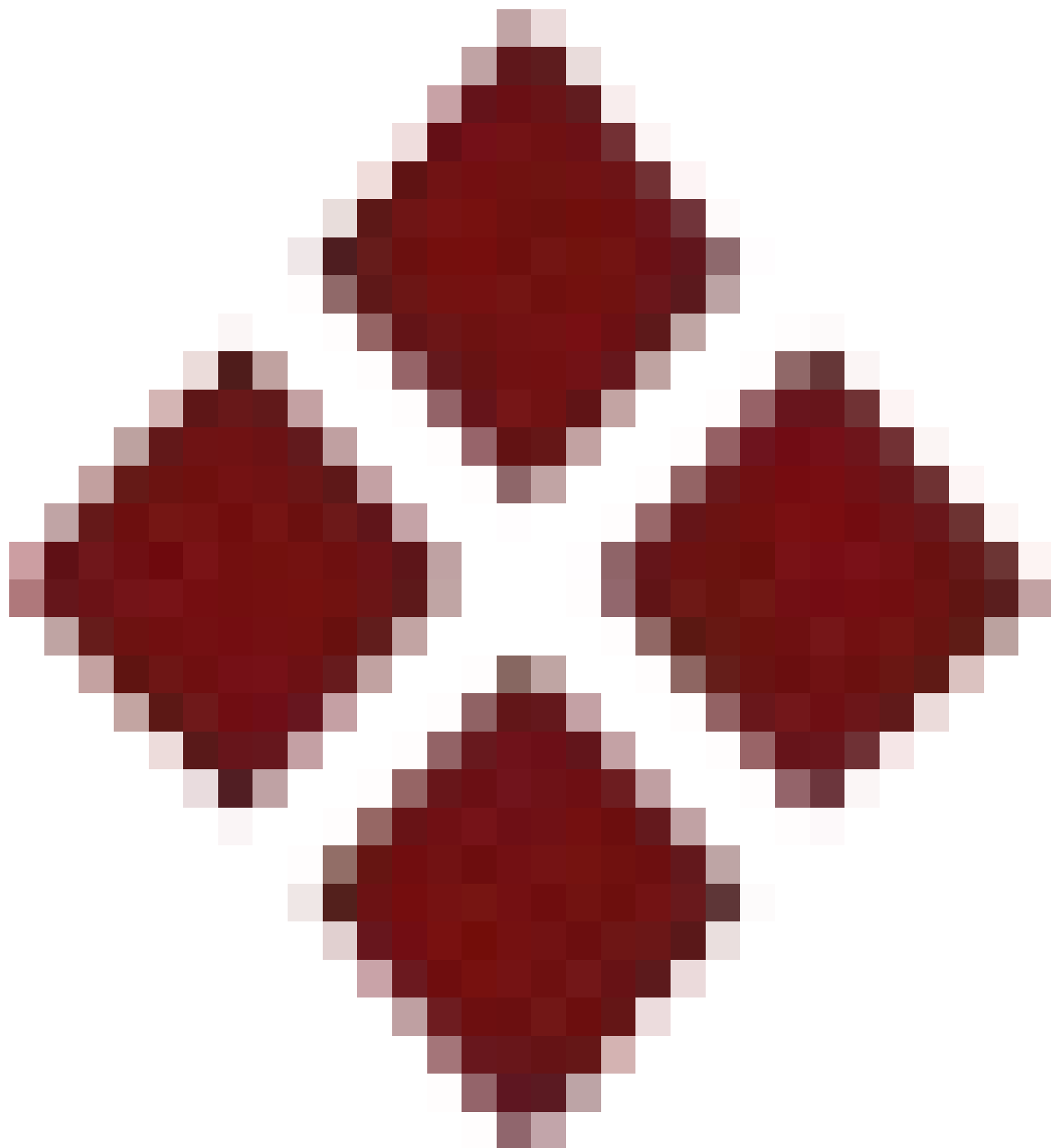
Dialogue With Nicodemus, Part III (Conclusion)



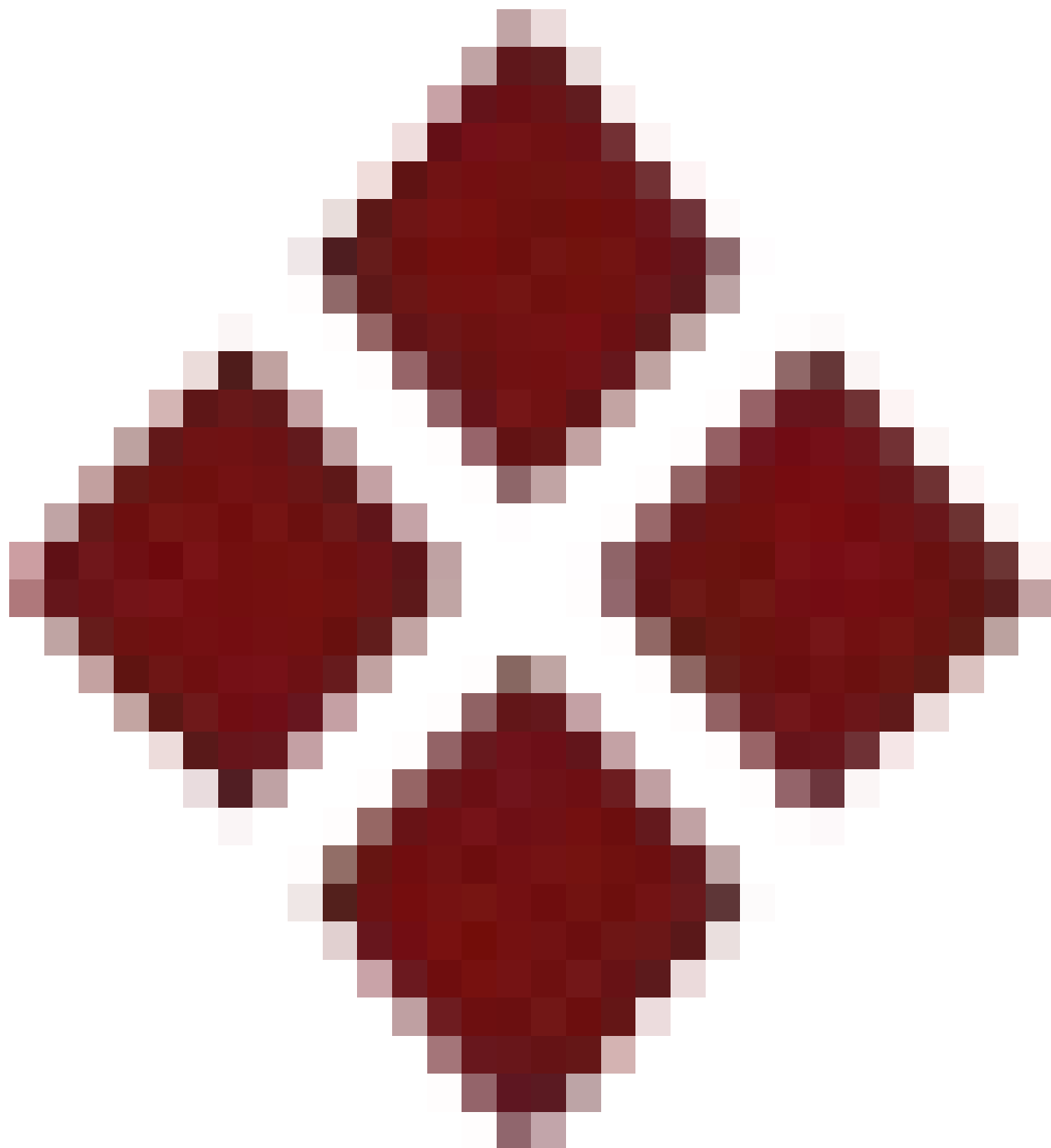
Jesus Never Meant That He Was the Only Savior for All Time



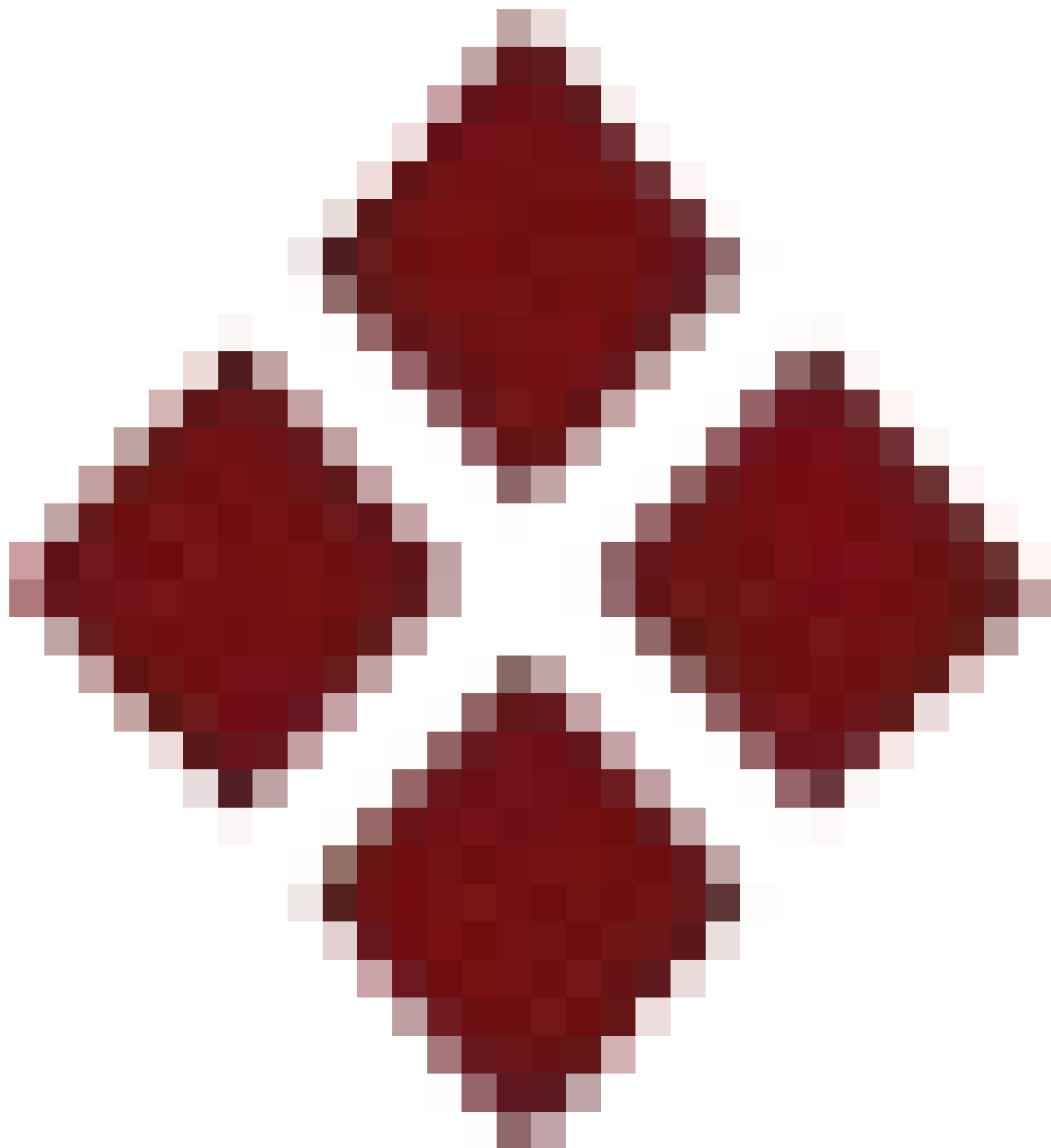
**Those Who Disavow Their Divine Source “Condemn”
Themselves to the Jailhouse of Finitude**



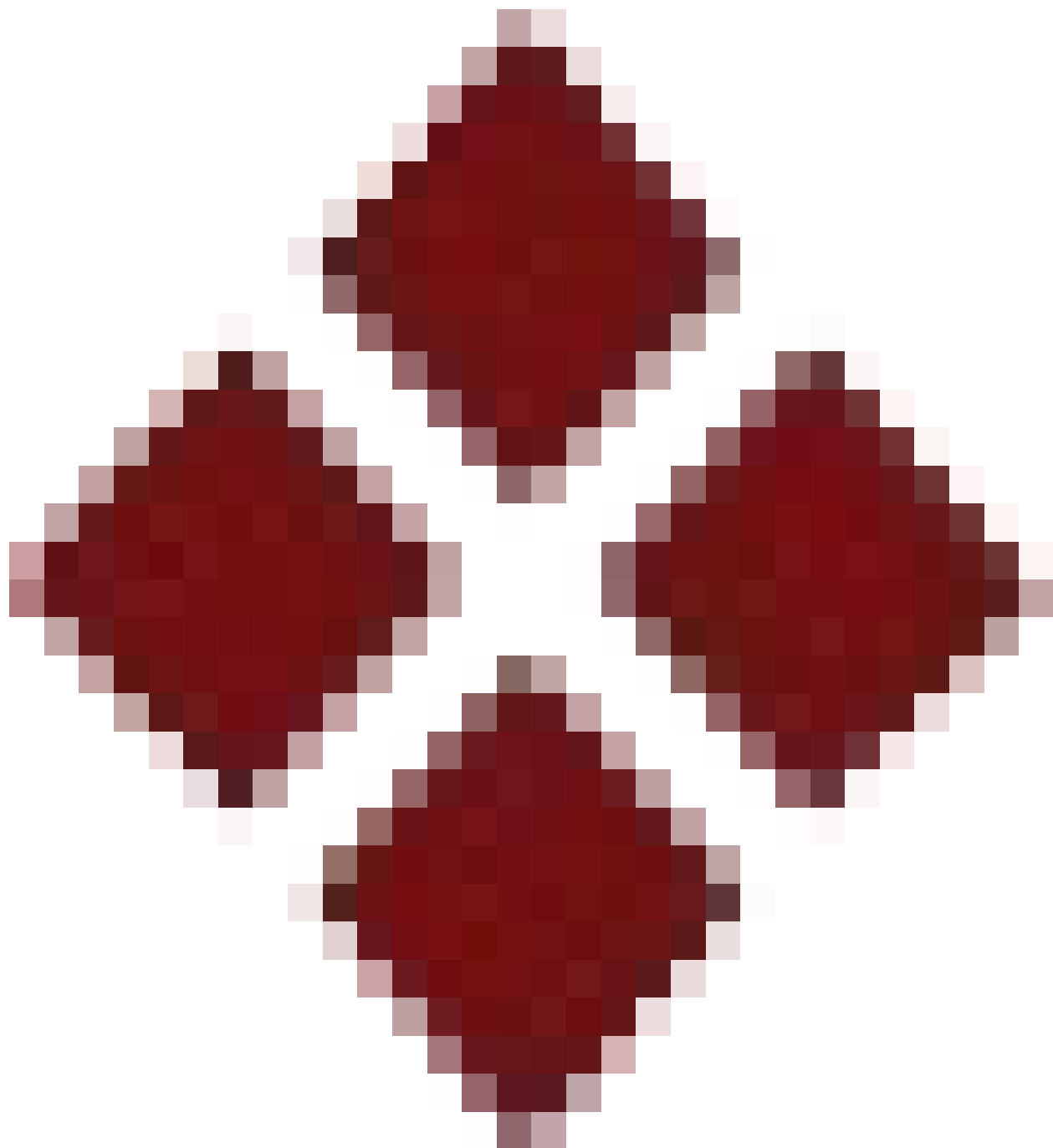
Expanding One's Consciousness of the Infinite Christ Intelligence



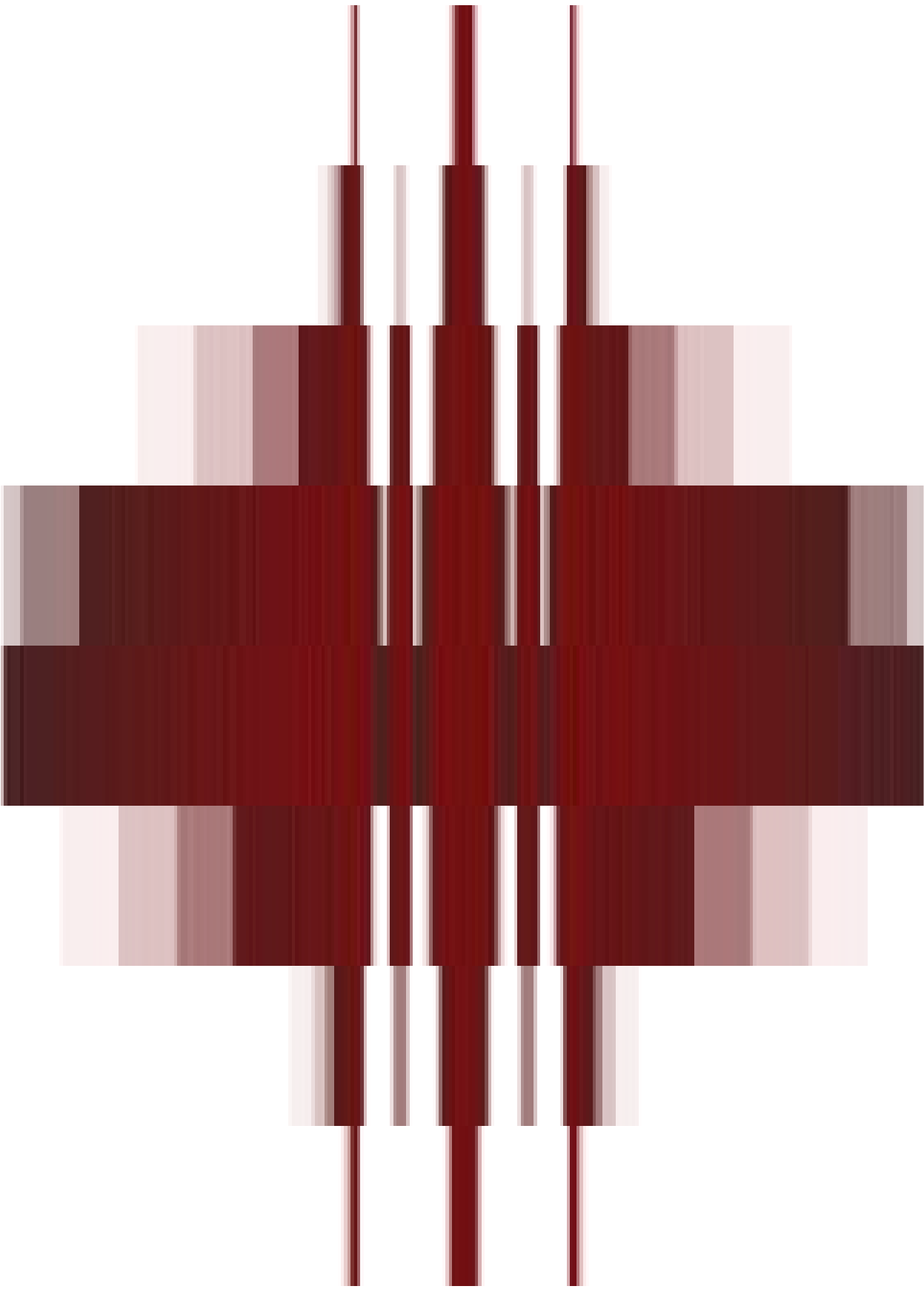
**Salvation Comes Not Through Blind Belief, but
Through Direct Experience of God**



**To “Love Darkness Rather Than Light”: The Soul-
Obscuring Power of Bad Habits**



The Inner Voice That Leads One to Follow Truth



“The all-pervading light of God, imbued with the universal Christ Intelligence, silently emanates divine love and wisdom to guide all beings back to the Infinite Consciousness.”

■

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

“And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.”

— John 3:16 – 21



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Discourse 15

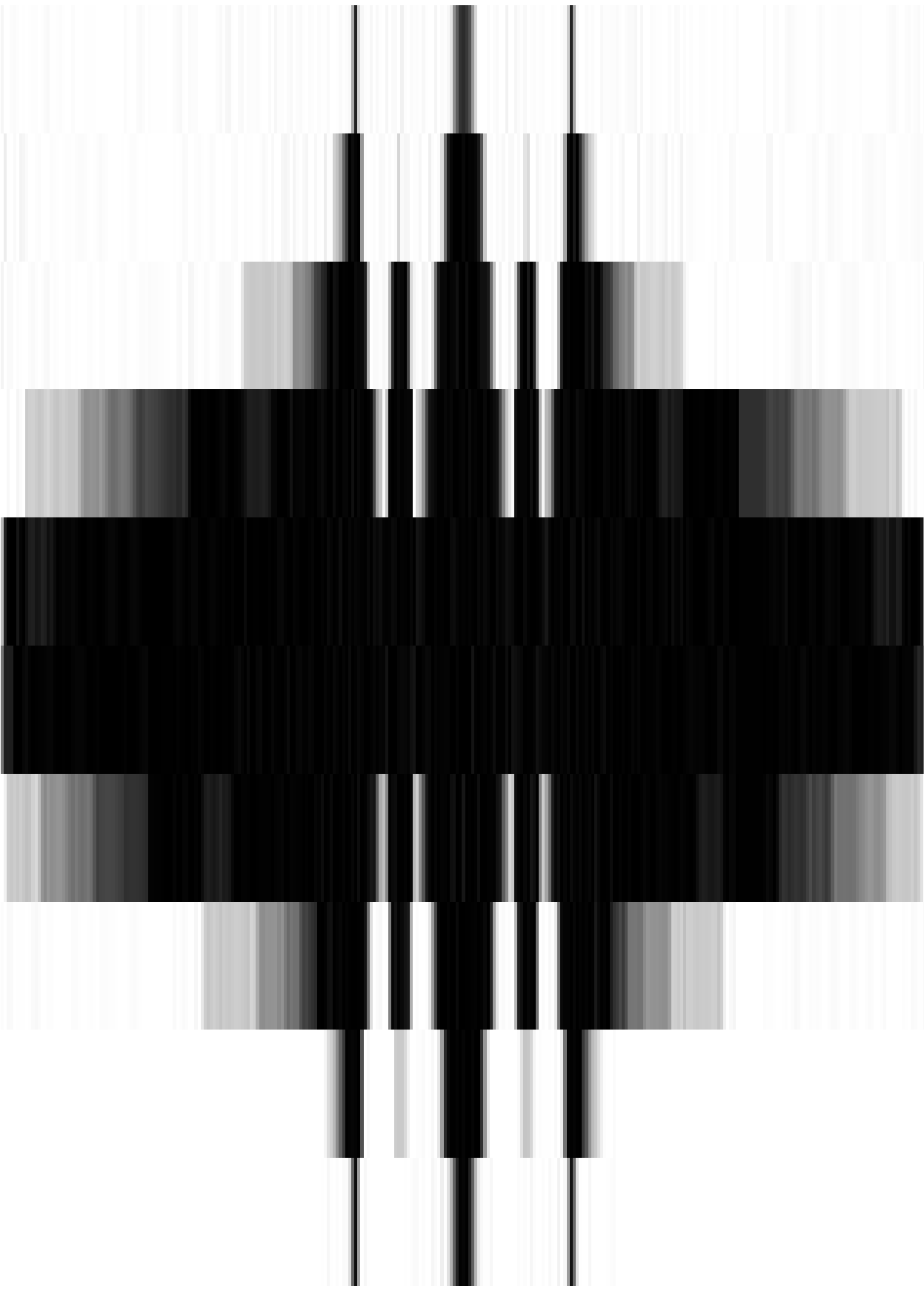
God's Love Gave to the World His Only Begotten Son

Dialogue With Nicodemus, Part III (Conclusion)



“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (John 3:16 – 18).

The confusion between “Son of man” and “only begotten Son of God” has created much bigotry in the community of churchianity, which does not understand or acknowledge the human element in Jesus—that he was a man, born in a mortal body, who had evolved his consciousness to become one with God Himself. Not the body of Jesus but the consciousness within it was one with the only begotten Son, the Christ Consciousness, the only reflection of God the Father in creation. In urging people to believe in the only begotten Son, Jesus was referring to this Christ Consciousness, which was fully manifest within himself and all God-realized masters throughout the ages, and is latent within every soul. ¹ Jesus said that all souls who lift their physical consciousness (Son of man consciousness) to the astral heaven, and then become one with the only begotten Christ Intelligence in all creation, will know eternal life.



Jesus never meant that he was the only savior for all time

Does this Bible passage mean that all who do not accept or believe in Jesus as their Savior will be condemned? This is a dogmatic concept of condemnation. What Jesus meant was that whoever does not realize himself as one with the universal Christ Consciousness is condemned to live and think as a struggling mortal, delimited by sensory boundaries, because he has essentially disunited himself from the Eternal Principle of life.

Jesus never referred to his Son-of-man consciousness, or to his body, as the only savior throughout all time. Abraham and many others were saved even before Jesus was born. It is a metaphysical error to speak of the historical person of Jesus as the only savior. It is the Christ Intelligence that is the universal redeemer. As the sole reflection of the Absolute Spirit (the Father) ubiquitous in the world of relativity, the Infinite Christ is the one mediator or link between God and matter, through which all matter-formed individuals—irrespective of different castes and creeds—must pass in order to reach God.² All souls can free their matter-confined consciousness and plunge it into the vastness of Omnipresence by tuning in with Christ Consciousness.

Jesus said: “When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he.”³ He realized that his physical body was to remain on the earth plane for only a little while, so he made clear to those for whom he was the savior that when his body (son of man) was gone from the earth, people would still be able to find God and salvation by believing in and knowing the omnipresent only begotten Son of God. Jesus emphasized that whosoever would believe in his spirit as the Infinite Christ incarnate in him would discover the path to eternal life through the meditative science of interiorized ascension of the consciousness.

“That whosoever believeth in him should not perish.” The forms of nature change, but the Infinite Intelligence immanent in nature is ever unchanged by the mutations of delusion. A child who is temperamentally attached to a snowman will cry when the sun rises high in the heavens and melts that form. Likewise do the children of God suffer who are attached to the mutable human body, which passes through infancy, youth, old age, and death. But those who interiorize their life force and consciousness and concentrate on the inner soul-spark of immortality perceive heaven even while on earth; and, realizing the transcendent

essence of life, they are not subject to the pain and suffering inherent in the incessant cycles of life and death.⁴

Jesus' majestic words in this passage were meant to convey a divinely encouraging promise of redemption to all humanity. Instead, centuries of misinterpretation have instigated wars of intolerant hatred, torturous inquisitions, and divisive condemnations.



Those who disavow their Divine Source “condemn” themselves to the jailhouse of finitude

“For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.” “The world” in this verse means the whole of God’s creation. The Lord’s purpose in reflecting His Intelligence in creation, making a structured cosmos possible, was not to devise a jailhouse of finitude where souls are confined as willy-nilly participants in the danse macabre of suffering and destruction, but to make Himself accessible as an impelling Force to urge the world from ignorance-darkened material manifestation to an illumined spiritual manifestation. It is true that the vibratory creative manifestation of the Universal Intelligence has originated the myriad attractions of the cosmic playhouse through which man is constantly bemused to move away from the Spirit to material life, to turn away from the Universal Love to the infatuations of human life. Still, perception of the Absolute beyond creation is intimately close through the intermediary of Its reflected Intelligence in creation. Through this contact, the devotee realizes that God sent the Christ Intelligence (His only begotten Son) to produce not a torture chamber but a colossal cosmic motion picture, whose scenes and actors would entertain for a time and ultimately return to the Bliss of Spirit. In the light of that understanding, regardless of one’s circumstances in this relative world, one feels his connection with the Universal Spirit and apprehends the vast Intelligence of the Absolute working in all the relativities of Nature. Anyone who believes in and concentrates on that Intelligence—Christ—instead of Its products—the external creation—finds redemption.

To think that the Lord condemns nonbelievers as sinners is incongruous. Since the Lord Himself dwells in all beings, condemnation would be utterly self-defeating. God never punishes man for not believing in Him; man punishes himself. If one does not believe in the dynamo and cuts the wires that connect his home to that source, he forfeits the advantages of that electrical power. Likewise, to disavow the Intelligence that is omnipresent in all creation is to deny the consciousness its link with the Source of divine wisdom and love that empowers the process of ascension in Spirit.



Expanding one's consciousness of the infinite Christ Intelligence

Recognition of the immanence of God can begin as simply as expanding one's love in an ever-widening circle. Man condemns himself to limitation whenever he thinks solely of his own little self, his own family, his own nation. Inherent in the evolution of nature and man back to God is the process of expansion. The exclusivity of family consciousness—"us four and no more"—is wrong. To shut out the larger family of humanity is to shut out the Infinite Christ. One who disconnects himself from the happiness and welfare of others has already condemned himself by isolation from the Spirit that pervades all souls, for he who does not extend himself in love and service to God in others disregards the redeeming power of connection with the universality of Christ. Each human being has been given the power to do good; if he fails to utilize that attribute, his level of spiritual evolution is little better than the instinctive self-interest of the animal.⁵

Pure love in human hearts radiates the universal Christ-love. To expand continuously the circle of one's love is to attune human consciousness with the only begotten Son. Loving family members is the first step in expanding self-love to those nearby; loving all human beings of whatever race and nationality is to know Christ-love. It is God alone as the Omnipresent Christ who is responsible for all expressions of life. The Lord is painting glorious scenery in the ever-changing clouds and sky. He is creating altars of His fragrant loveliness in the flowers. In everything and everyone—friends and enemies; mountains, forests, ocean, air, the wheeling galactic canopy overarching all—the Christ-devotee sees the one blended light of God. He finds that the myriad expressions of the one Light, often seemingly chaotic in conflict and contradictions, were created by God's intelligence not to delude human beings or to afflict them, but to coax them to seek the Infinite whence they have emerged. One who looks not to the parts but to the whole discerns the purpose of creation: that without exception we are moving inexorably toward universal salvation. All rivers are moving toward the ocean; the rivers of our lives are moving toward God.

The waves on the surface of the ocean constantly change as they sport with the wind and tidal elements, but their oceanic essence remains constant. He who concentrates on one isolated wave of life will suffer, because that wave is unstable and will not last. This is what Jesus meant by "condemned": Body-

bound man creates his own condemnation by isolating himself from God. To be saved he must reestablish his realization of inseparable unity with the Divine Immanence.

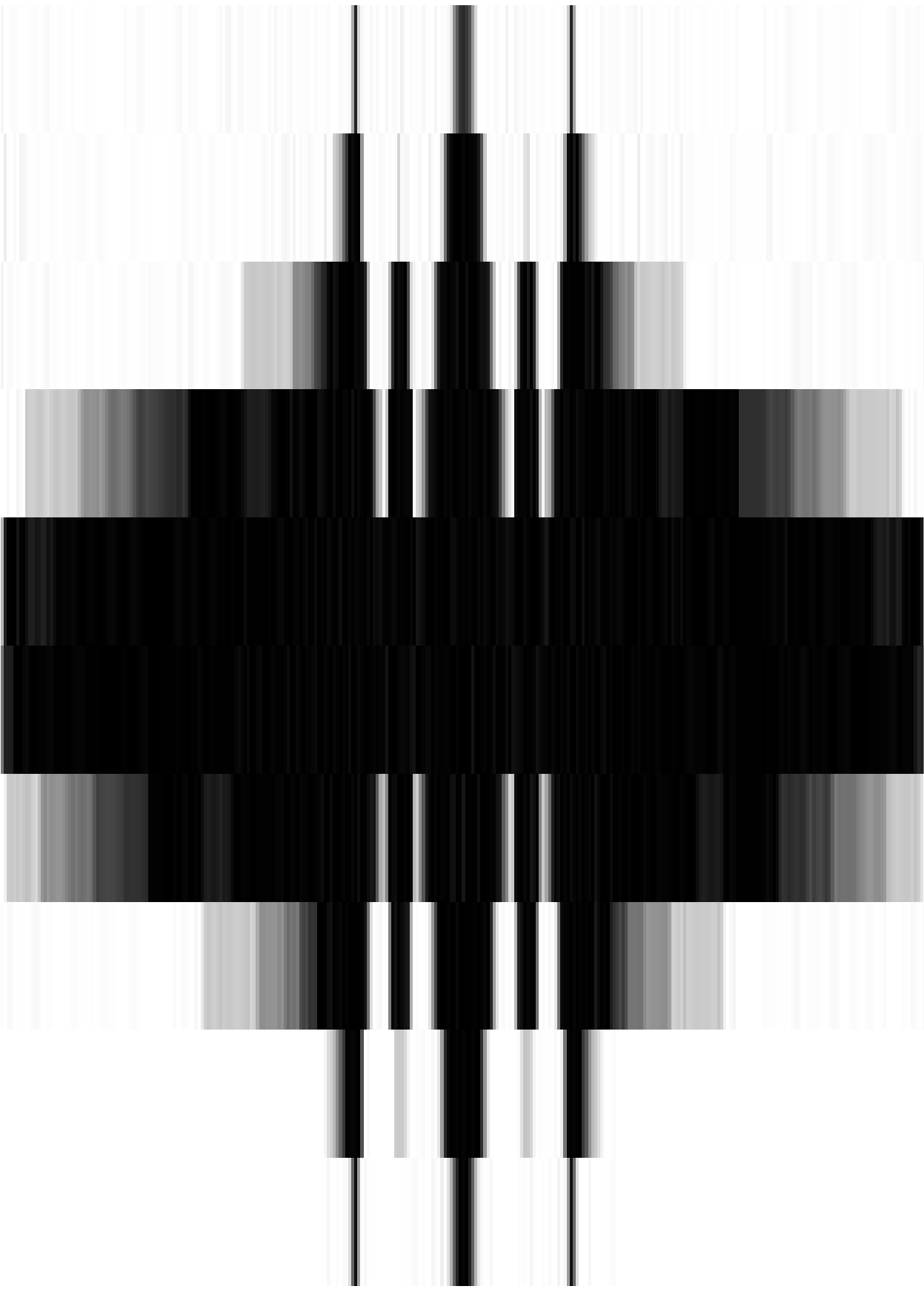
“In waking, eating, working, dreaming, sleeping,

Serving, meditating, chanting, divinely loving,

My soul constantly hums, unheard by any:

God! God! God!”⁶

In this way one remains continually aware of his connection with the changeless Divine Intelligence—the Absolute Goodness underlying the provocative riddles of creation.⁷



Salvation comes not through blind belief, but through direct experience of God

“He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already.” This highlights also the role of “belief” in the condemnation or noncondemnation of man. Persons who do not understand the immanence of the Absolute in the relative world tend to become either skeptical or dogmatic, because in both cases religion is a matter of blind beliefs. Unable to reconcile the idea of a good God with the seeming evils in creation, the skeptic rejects religious belief as stubbornly as the dogmatist clings to it.

The truths taught by Jesus went far beyond blind belief, which waxes and wanes under the influence of the paradoxical pronouncements of priest and cynic. Belief is an initial stage of spiritual progress necessary to receive the concept of God. But that concept has to be transposed into conviction, into experience. Belief is the precursor of conviction; one has to believe a thing in order to investigate equitably about it. But if one is satisfied only with belief, it becomes dogma—narrow-mindedness, a preclusion of truth and spiritual progress. What is necessary is to grow, in the soil of belief, the harvest of direct experience and contact of God. That indisputable realization, not mere belief, is what saves people.

If someone says to me, “I believe in God,” I will ask him, “Why do you believe? How do you know there is a God?” If the reply is based on supposition or secondhand knowledge, I will say that he does not truly believe. To hold a conviction one must have some data to support it; otherwise it is mere dogma, and is easy prey for skepticism. If I were to point to a piano and proclaim that it is an elephant, the reason of an intelligent person would revolt against this absurdity. Likewise when dogmas about God are propagated without the validation of experience or realization, sooner or later when tested with a contrary experience reason will assail with speculation the truth about those ideas. As the scorching rays of the sun of analytical inquiry get hotter and hotter, frail unsubstantiated beliefs wilt and wither away, leaving a wasteland of doubt, agnosticism, or atheism. Transcending mere philosophy, scientific meditation attunes the consciousness to the highest mighty truth; with every step the devotee moves toward actual realization and avoids bewildered wandering. To persevere in efforts to verify and experience beliefs through intuitional realization, which can be attained by yoga methods, is to build a real spiritual

life that is proof against doubt.

Belief is a powerful force if it leads to the desire and determination to experience Christ. This is what Jesus meant when he urged people to “believe in the name of the only begotten Son of God”: Through meditation, withdraw the consciousness and life energy from the senses and matter to intuit the Aum, the Word or all-pervading Cosmic Vibratory Energy that is the “name” or active manifestation of the immanent Christ Consciousness.⁸ One can assert incessantly an intellectual belief in Jesus Christ; but if he never actually experiences the Cosmic Christ, as both omnipresent and incarnate in Jesus, the spiritual practicality of his belief is insufficient to save him.

No one can be saved just by repeatedly uttering the Lord’s name or praising Him in crescendos of hallelujahs. Not in blind belief in the name of Jesus or the adoration of his personality can the liberating power of his teachings be received. The real worship of Christ is the divine communion of Christ-perception in the wall-less temple of expanded consciousness.

God would not reflect His “only begotten Son” in the world to act like an implacable detective to track down unbelievers for punishment. The redeeming Christ Intelligence, abiding in the bosom of every soul regardless of its bodily accumulation of sins or virtues, waits with infinite patience for each one to awaken in meditation from delusion-drugged sleep to receive the grace of salvation. The person who believes in this Christ Intelligence, and who cultivates with spiritual action the desire to seek salvation through ascension in this reflected consciousness of God, no longer has to wander blindly along the delusive path of error. By measured steps he moves surely toward the redeeming Infinite Grace. But the unbeliever who scorns the thought of this Savior, the only way of salvation, condemns himself to body-bound ignorance and its consequences, until he awakens spiritually.



“And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God” (John 3:19 – 21).

The all-pervading light of God, imbued with the universal Christ Intelligence, silently emanates divine love and wisdom to guide all beings back to the Infinite Consciousness. The soul, being a microcosm of Spirit, is an ever present light in man to lead him through discriminative intelligence and the intuitive voice of conscience; but all too often the rationalization of desireful habits and whims refuses to follow. Tempted by the Satan of cosmic delusion, man chooses actions that obliterate the light of discriminative inner guidance.



To “love darkness rather than light”: the soul-obscuring power of bad habits

The origin of sin and its resultant physical, mental, and spiritual suffering therefore lies in the fact that the soul’s divine intelligence and discrimination are suppressed by man’s misuse of his God-given free choice. Though nonunderstanding people ascribe to God their own vengeful propensities, the “condemnation” of which Jesus spoke is not punishment meted out by a tyrannical Creator, but the results man brings on himself by his own actions, according to the law of cause and effect (karma) and the law of habit. Succumbing to desires that keep their consciousness concentrated on and confined in the material world—the “darkness” or gross portion of cosmic creation in which the illumining Divine Presence is heavily obscured by the shadows of maya-delusion—benighted souls, humanly identified with mortal egos, repeatedly indulge their erroneous ways of living, which then become firmly entrenched in the brain as bad habits of mortal behavior.

When Jesus said that men love darkness rather than light, he was referring to the fact that material habits keep millions away from God. He did not mean that all men love darkness—only those who make no effort to resist the temptations of Satan, taking instead the easy way of rolling down the hill of bad habits and thus becoming inured to the darkness of worldly consciousness. Because they shut out the voice of Christ Consciousness whispering in their personal conscience, they shun the infinitely more tempting experience of joy to be had through the good habits urged by the guiding wisdom-light in their souls.

Material temptation promises happiness from gratification of a desire, but giving in to temptation will bring misery, the annihilation of happiness. People who succumb to the allurements of evil often do not realize this until the habit of yielding is established. Those who form bad habits before being exposed to the superior joy of good habits prefer—instead of the slightest effort at self-improvement—to endure the consequences of wrong indulgence because of the prospect of even a little temporary satisfaction. Eventually they become so adapted to surrendering automatically to the instigations of bad habits, despite the inevitable repercussions, that the very thought of forsaking such traitorous pleasure is rejected outright. They balk at the mere suggestion that a little self-control of lust and greed might be beneficial—erroneously believing that they would be unhappy, even tormented, if denied their indulgences.

Restless worldly people, habituated to continuous activity, feel suffocated at the thought of the deliberate stillness of meditation. They disregard the soul-comfort offered in God-communion, convinced that they are far more at ease in catering to their second-nature tendencies—no matter how potentially destructive—of worry, nervousness, useless talk, and material desires, rather than endeavoring to experience an as-yet-unfamiliar joy of God-contact. The first priority of most persons, after awakening each morning, is a hasty breakfast followed by a headlong rush into their routine of busyness. To precede the day's activities by allocating time to cultivating God-centered inner peace and happiness through the spiritual habit of meditation is altogether foreign to them. Accustomed to the darkness of worldly ignorance, they abhor the Christ light eternally present in their souls. Their perverse habit of worldly attachment can be overcome only by a stronger attachment to divine peace and bliss resulting from nurturing the opposite good habit of daily meditation.

Thus Jesus' emphasis that by the light of soul awakening, the mortal habit of preferring the delusive darkness of materiality can be dispelled from man's consciousness. With repeated acts of will power to meditate regularly and deeply, one attains the supremely satisfying Bliss-contact of God and can recall that joy to his consciousness anytime, anywhere.

In contrasting men of darkness and men of light, Jesus cited the universal psychological error committed by the habit-enslaved: They avoid all thoughts of the greater fulfillments of mind and body awaiting them in the practice of good habits, because they fear that in giving up their imagined pleasures of the flesh they will suffer the pangs of deprivation. Just as the owl loves the nighttime and hides away during the day, so persons governed by dark habits shun the light of self-improvement.

Persons who by meditation have formed the habit of peacefulness gravitate naturally toward the company of high-minded and saintly souls, just as materially restless individuals prefer worldly associates. People of bad habits seek bad company and avoid those who are virtuous; but this is foolish, because if they mix openheartedly with those who have good habits they will find an automatic mechanism at work that causes their evil compulsion to leave them. The right company provides the essential impetus for improving oneself. To imitate the good is to engage in good actions; good actions form good habits; and good habits will dislodge bad habits.

But somehow evil people feel rebuked in the company of the good, though the really good never scold persons for their past bad behavior if they are seriously trying to reform themselves. One should never heap scornful judgment on the sinner, for he is all too familiar with the self-tortures resulting from his sin. He ought not to be further punished by condemnation or hatred; but if he does not heed a loving, helping hand, he should be given a chance to learn his own lessons in the school of hard knocks. In time he will be ready and willing to benefit from constructive advice.

As long as a person is intoxicated with evil thoughts and ways, his dark mentality will hate the light of truth. The one good thing about bad habits, however, is that they seldom keep their promises. They are eventually found out to be inveterate liars. That is why souls cannot forever be deceived or enslaved. Though people of bad habits initially recoil from the thought of better living, after they have had enough of evil ways and reach the point of satiety, and have suffered enough from the consequences, they turn for relief toward the wisdom-light of God, despite any entrenched bad habits that must yet be vanquished. If they continually practice ways of living in harmony with Truth, then in that light they come to realize the joy and inner peace brought by self-control and good habits.



The inner voice that leads one to follow truth

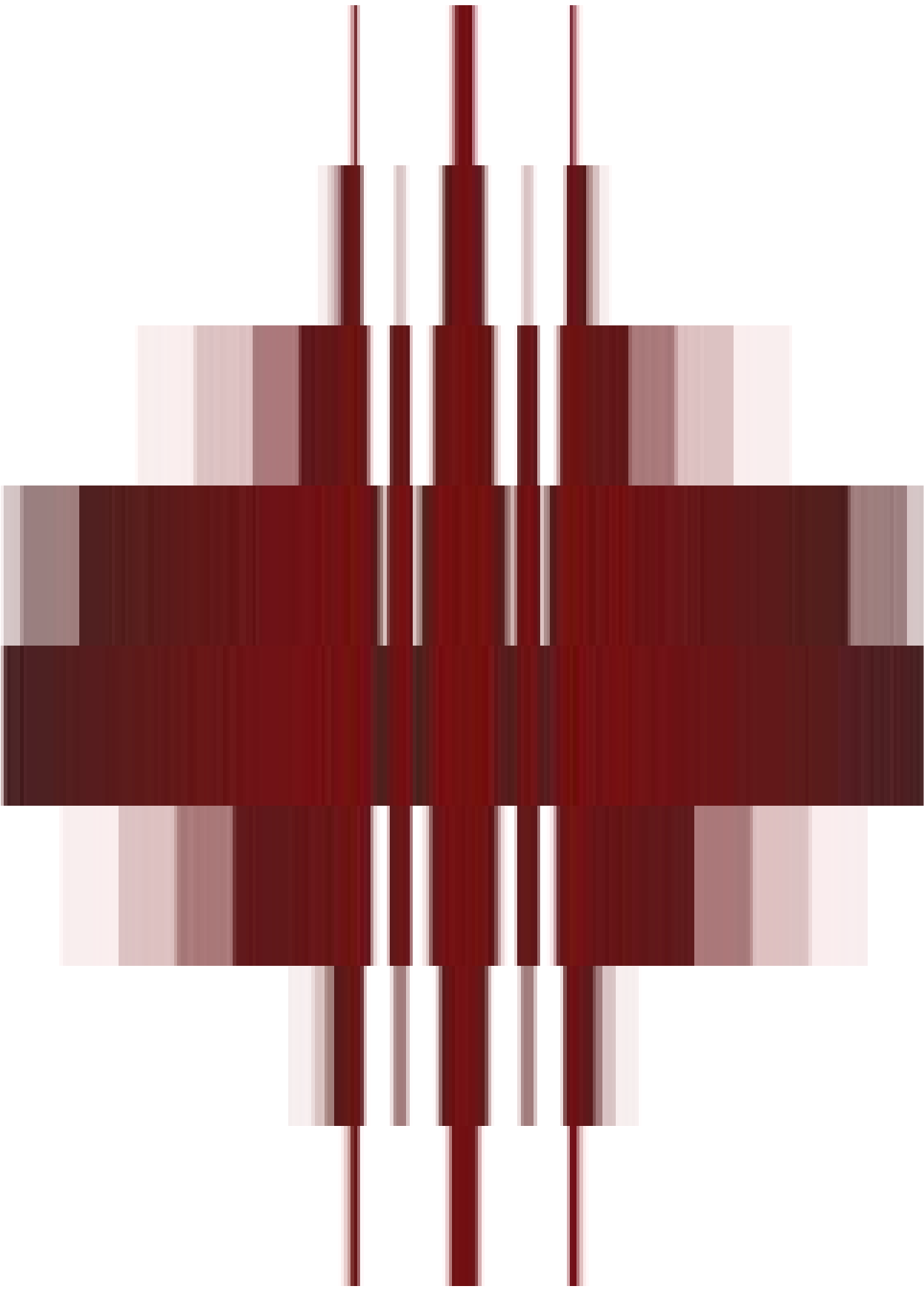
“But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.” Truth is a very slippery term; Christ himself refused to define it when interrogated by Pilate.⁹ Absolute standards cannot always be applied in this relative world. To adhere to truth in everyday living, man must be guided by intuitive wisdom; that alone illumines unerringly what is right and virtuous in any circumstance. The voice of conscience is the voice of God. Everyone has it, but not everyone listens to it. Those who have a trained sensitivity can detect wrong by the inner disturbance of uneasiness it engenders. Virtue is known by the vibration of harmony it creates within. Always the light of God is there, guiding through discriminative wisdom and through calm feeling. If one does not disturb feeling by emotion, or discriminative intelligence by rationalized wrong behavior, he will be aided by that inner voice. To follow the light of inner wisdom-guidance is the way to true happiness, the way to be always of God, the way to disengage oneself from the coercive influence of bad habits that usurp man’s decision-making power.

Enslaved by bad habits, so many people become psychological antiques—never changing, year after year committing the same faults, deteriorating in their fixations. But the divine seeker, trying every day to change something that is not good in his nature, gradually transcends his old habit-bound material ways. His deeds and his very life are re-created, “wrought in God”; he is in truth born anew. Adhering to the good habit of daily scientific meditation, he sees and is baptized in the light of Christ-wisdom, the divine energy of the Holy Ghost, which actually erases the electrical pathways in the brain formed by bad habits of thought and action. His spiritual eye of intuitive perception is opened, bestowing not only unerring guidance on the path of life, but the vision of and entry into God’s heavenly kingdom—and ultimately, oneness with His omnipresent consciousness.

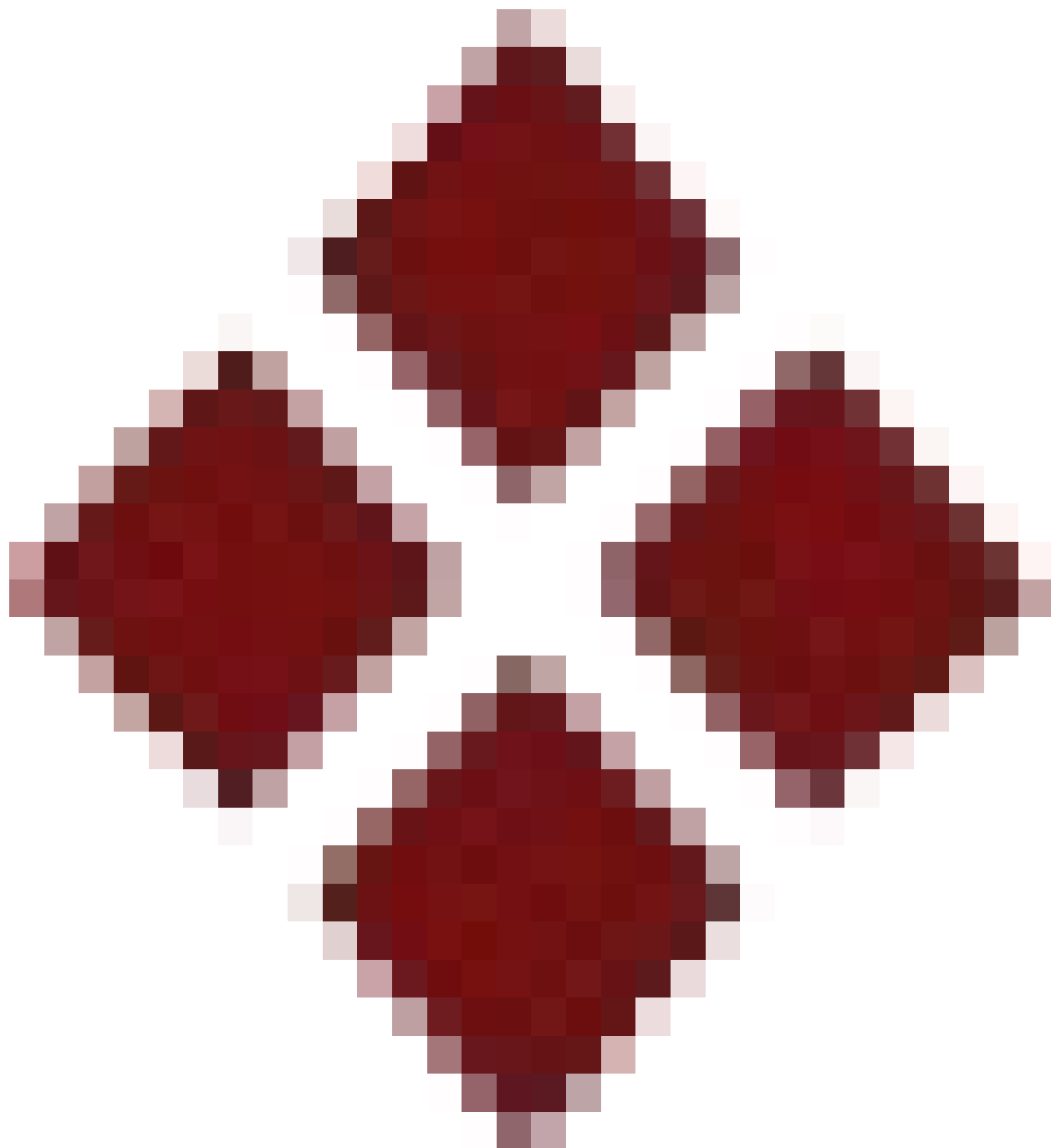


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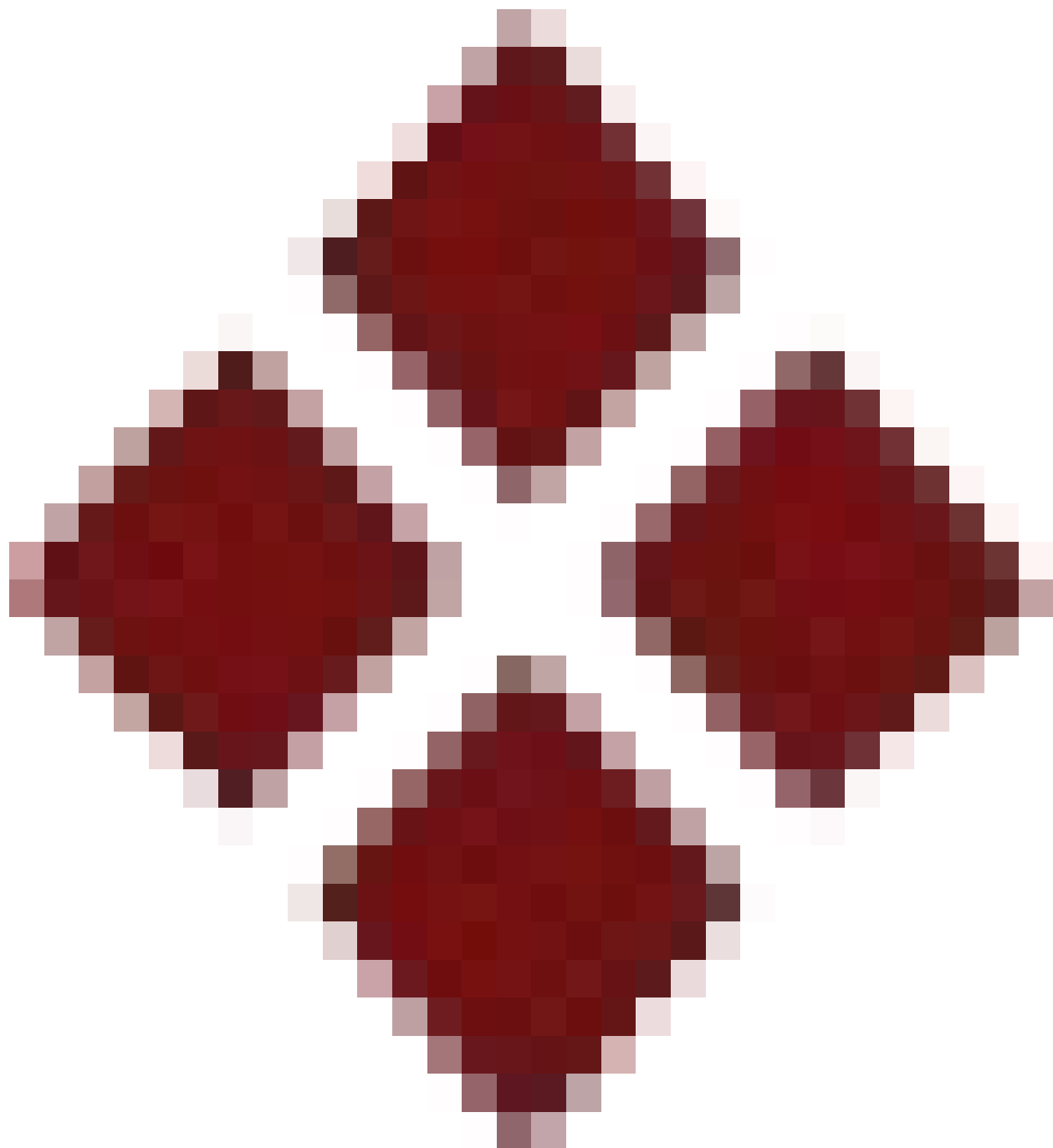
Rejoicing in the Voice of the Bridegroom



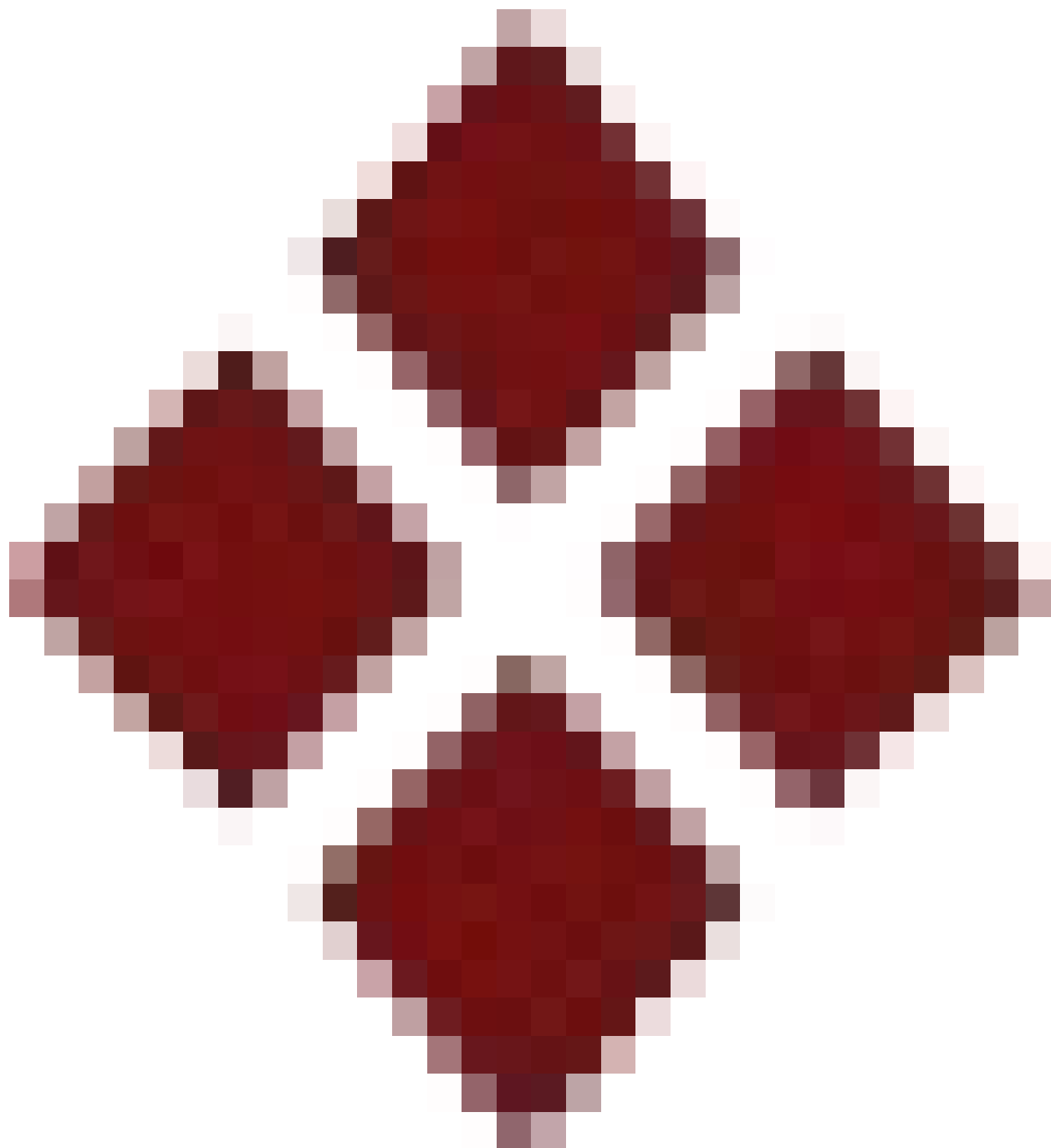
**“He Must Increase, but I Must Decrease”: What John
the Baptist Meant**



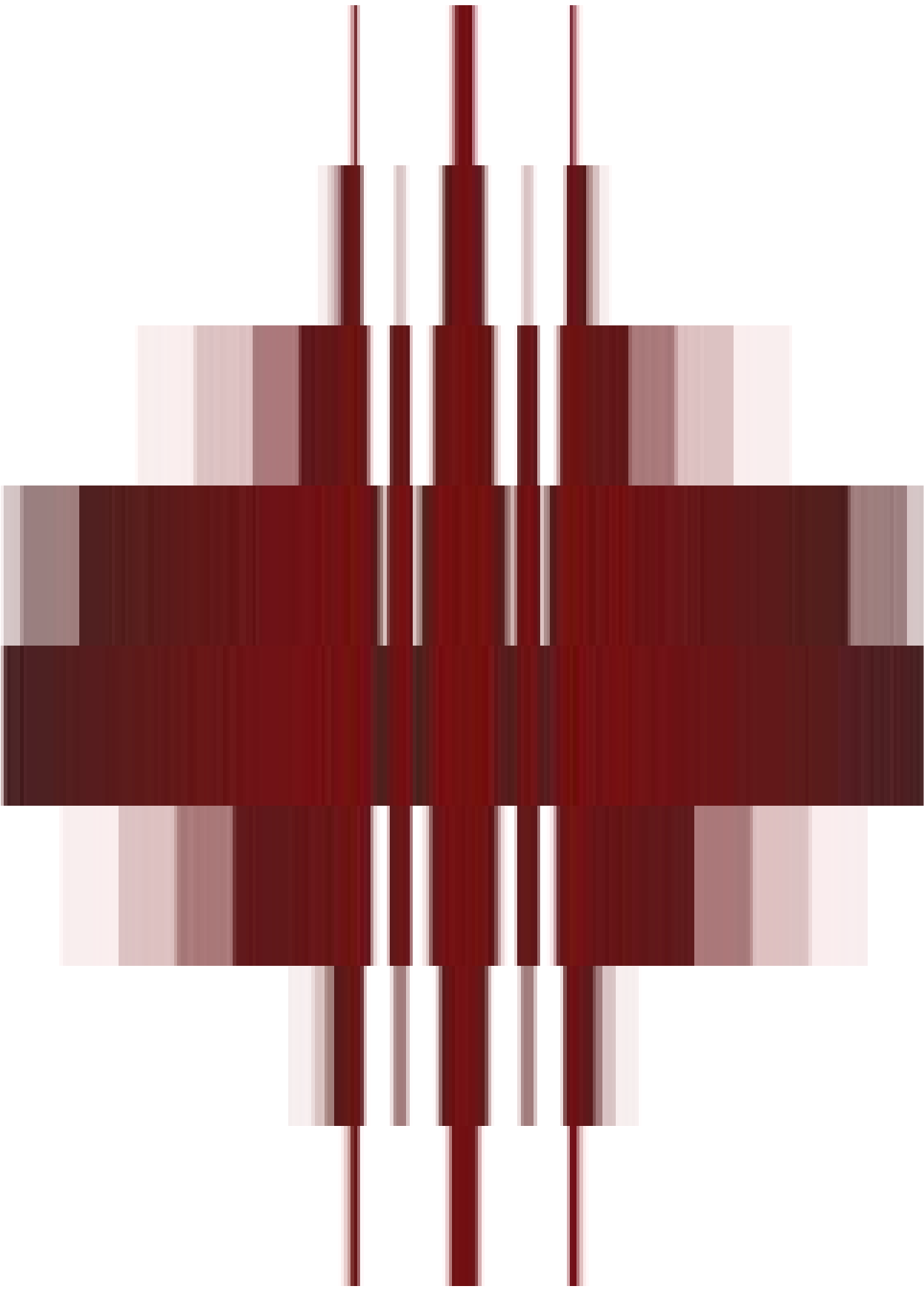
Symbolic Meaning of the Divine “Bridegroom”



“Voice of the Bridegroom”: Cosmic Sound of Aum



True Meaning of “the Wrath of God”



“In the womb of Mother Nature, Spirit gives birth to creation....Jesus was one with the omnipresent positive consciousness of Spirit....He was a complete manifestation of God—the Bridegroom, universal Spirit wedded to universal Nature.”

■

After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized. And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized. For John was not yet cast into prison.

Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying. And they came unto John, and said unto him, "Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him."

John answered and said, "A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him.

"He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease.

"He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all. And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony. He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.

"For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) he left Judea, and departed again into Galilee. And he must needs go through Samaria.

— *John 3:22 – 4:4*



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Discourse 16

Rejoicing in the Voice of the Bridegroom



The opening verses of this Discourse again call attention to the difference between symbolic baptism with water and the true baptism of Spirit. John observed the outer purificatory rite of physical immersion in water to highlight the superior spiritual initiation of baptism with the Holy Ghost that Jesus as the long-awaited Christ had come to bestow. As a God-ordained savior, Jesus had begun to attract masses of souls with the magnetism of his divine love and power.



“He must increase, but I must decrease” : what John the Baptist meant

The fact that Jesus was drawing larger crowds than the theretofore acclaimed John the Baptist became part of a dispute between some of John’s disciples and the Jews about purification. When they brought to John the report of Jesus’ fame, John reminded them of his previous commendation of Jesus, who had come with a greater role to play than himself in manifesting God on earth.¹ It was thus the will of God that the renown of Jesus would increase while his own role would now decrease. He pointed out to them that man could have no powers except those received from the Heavenly Spirit. This does not mean that souls are specially created with individual advantages and limitations predestined by Heaven. Spirit is the fountain, and all created things—stars, souls, thoughts, universes—are Its spray. In the case of each evolving soul a person manifests God more or less completely according to the right use or misuse of his innate divine power. But as applicable to liberated souls who return to earth at God’s behest, John’s words mean that each is individually invested by God with those powers and characteristics that would best serve his divine commission and support the delusive realism of the cosmic drama by making real, in the relative sense, the experiences they undergo in their incarnate portrayals. So here John is referring specifically to the will of God that designated significant differences between himself, who came in this incarnation as an ordinary saint, and Jesus, who incarnated as a world savior.

Advanced souls, those who are able partially or fully to manifest the Divine as a result of promoting their own spiritual evolution through incarnations of endeavor, are sent by God to help in the accomplishment of His divine plan on earth. Saints and prophets who come to earth to aid in the upliftment of souls, but who are not fully liberated or have no world mission to perform, may be called partial incarnations (khanda avatars). Those liberated masters in whom God openly manifests as a world savior, or who have a divine dispensation to facilitate the redemption of the masses, may be called full incarnations of God (purna avatars). Jesus Christ, Bhagavan Krishna, Mahavatar Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, Swami Sri Yukteswar, and many others down the ages have been full manifestations of God. John the Baptist, though liberated in his previous incarnation as Elijah, was sent on earth as John in a more humble but distinctive role: to bear witness of a world savior; to declare the special divine dispensation of the coming of Jesus.

It is providential that masters who come on earth with a public mission be declared, or properly introduced, so that people may recognize their importance and attentively receive their spiritual services. As it takes an expert gemologist to rightly declare the value of a gem, so preeminent incarnations, divinely humble and never trumpeting their own greatness, can be identified only by qualified souls. Thus was John sent to testify to the God-given credentials of Jesus, so that people might readily know him and embrace his wisdom.



Symbolic meaning

of the divine “Bridegroom”

John’s analogy of Jesus as the divine Bridegroom is a symbolism that appears in several passages in the New Testament.² Similarly, one of the epithets applied to Bhagavan Krishna, the Christ of India, is Madhava: Ma, Prakriti, or Primordial Mother Nature; dhava, husband. Both Jesus and Krishna, as perfect embodiments of the omnipresent Krishna-Christ Consciousness, were consorts of the Divine Spirit as Prakriti, or Primordial Mother Nature, which has created and become all matter and space.

To manifest creation, Spirit causes a vibration of duality, dividing Its One Being into the transcendent inactive Creator and His active Creative Power: God the Father and Cosmic Mother Nature. Spirit and Nature, subject and object, positive and negative, attraction and repulsion—it is duality that makes possible the birth of the many out of the One. In His active objectifying Creative Vibration (Holy Ghost or Maha-Prakriti), God Himself is subjectively present in an unchanged, unaffected reflection, the Universal Spirit in creation: Kutastha Chaitanya, Krishna or Christ Consciousness. That immanent guiding Intelligence—the subjective consciousness or soul of the universe—empowers the structuring of the omnipotent Vibratory Force into myriad objective manifestations; in the womb of Mother Nature, Spirit thus gives birth to creation.³

Jesus was called the Bridegroom because his consciousness was one with the omnipresent positive consciousness of Spirit united with the negative vibration of Cosmic Nature, the Bride, that engenders the vast universe. The positive universal consciousness flows toward Spirit, counterbalancing the outward flow of negative matter-projecting Cosmic Energy or Nature. It is by becoming one with the Christ Intelligence that a man of realization can see Spirit and Nature together—beholding the Imperishable amidst the perishing, and realizing the endless permutations of life, change, and death as the ecstatic dance of Spirit and Nature on the stage of infinite space and time. “Whatever exists—every being, every object; the animate, the inanimate—understand that to be born from the union of Kshetra and Kshetrajna (Nature and Spirit). He sees truly who perceives the Supreme Lord present equally in all creatures, the Imperishable amidst the perishing.”⁴ Ordinary persons see only Nature because their

consciousness is focused externally on the screen of material vibration; but when the consciousness is reversed into the Cosmic Booth from which all pictures of creation are projected, then it is possible to perceive the singularity of the Christ Consciousness present in all space—to realize that in truth it is Spirit that has become creation, that all things are naught else but a glorious diversification of God. Jesus had reached this state; he was a complete manifestation of God—the Bridegroom, universal Spirit wedded to universal Nature.



“Voice of the Bridegroom”: cosmic sound of Aum

When John spoke of his rejoicing in the Bridegroom’s voice, he was referring to the Cosmic Sound of Aum (Amen), the active vibration that is the voice or “witness” of the inherent Christ Intelligence.⁵ That voice of Cosmic Vibration can be heard through practice of a specific Self-Realization Fellowship method of yoga meditation.⁶ John had heard the Cosmic Sound and perceived the Christ Intelligence in it, but it was on Jesus that he focused attention as the one who had penetrated beyond the Cosmic Sound and Nature vibration into the pure realm of Christ Intelligence contained within them. John contrasted himself as having had glimpses of the omnipresent wisdom of Christ, whereas the infinite consciousness of Jesus actually felt itself as the Christ in every unit of vibrating space in all creation.

The advancing yogi first listens to the Cosmic Sound within his body, and then becomes able to hear it in any part of creation. Next, he feels the Christ Intelligence in the sound in his own body, and then he feels the Christ Intelligence throughout creation. John refers to himself as “the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him...this my joy therefore is fulfilled.” He had heard the Cosmic Sound and indirectly felt the presence of Christ Intelligence in it. He rejoiced at being in the company of Jesus who as the divine Bridegroom, one with the Spirit as the positive reflection of omnipresent Christ Consciousness, had won as his Bride the Universal Spirit manifesting as Universal Nature. He who perceives Spirit as both transcendental and immanent is one with Spirit as the Bride, God’s consciousness omnipresent in and as Cosmic Mother Nature (Maha-Prakriti), as well as one with Spirit as transcendent consciousness in creation as Christ Consciousness and beyond manifestation as Cosmic Consciousness, the Absolute.

In his reference to Jesus, John extols Christ-illuminated souls, those whose consciousness is not actuated by downward-pulling earthly desires but by the uplifting Cosmic Consciousness from above: “He that cometh from above.” Body-bound souls, being identified with earthly things, focus their attention exclusively matterward: “He that is of the earth is earthly.” Spiritually awakened souls, attuned with and guided by Cosmic Consciousness, are thus said to “come from heaven” and are “above” all others; they have ascended higher on the ladder of evolution and enjoy the transcendent awareness of the supernal

heavenly kingdom within.

John further points out that divine souls do not speak from book knowledge or from intellectual imagination that fancies its own realisms and absolutes; they speak only the truth that they hear, perceive, and see through the all-knowing power of soul intuition. No mortal man, who depends on the testimony of his limited senses, can grasp the depth and magnitude of truth perceived by persons of Self-realization; but uplifted souls who develop their intuition by meditation can not only comprehend the truth declared by prophets, but prove it to themselves. Through their own experience, they authenticate with the unchallengeable “seal” of intuitional conviction the seer’s ecstatic proclamation that God is the only true Eternal Substance, and that all phenomena of Nature are but waves of Spirit playing on the Infinite Bosom.

The words of guidance of a true messenger of God come forth only according to what God speaks through him. On such souls God bestows His wisdom not in proportion to the caliber of their acquired intellectual powers, but with the outpouring of measureless grace that characterizes an all-loving Father. Those that are one with God are God themselves.

As the only reflected Intelligence of transcendental God the Father in vibratory creation, the Son or Christ Intelligence has control over all matter—God “hath given all things into his hand.” Christ Consciousness is God’s Divine Love —“the Father loveth the Son”—reflected in creation and in liberated saints in all its purity, coaxing created beings with its magnetic attraction back to blissful unity in Spirit. Any devotee who believes in, and gradually becomes one with, this immutable Immanent Intelligence—by merging with the Cosmic Sound of Aum heard in meditation—shall receive the everlasting life of Christ.



True meaning of “the wrath of God”

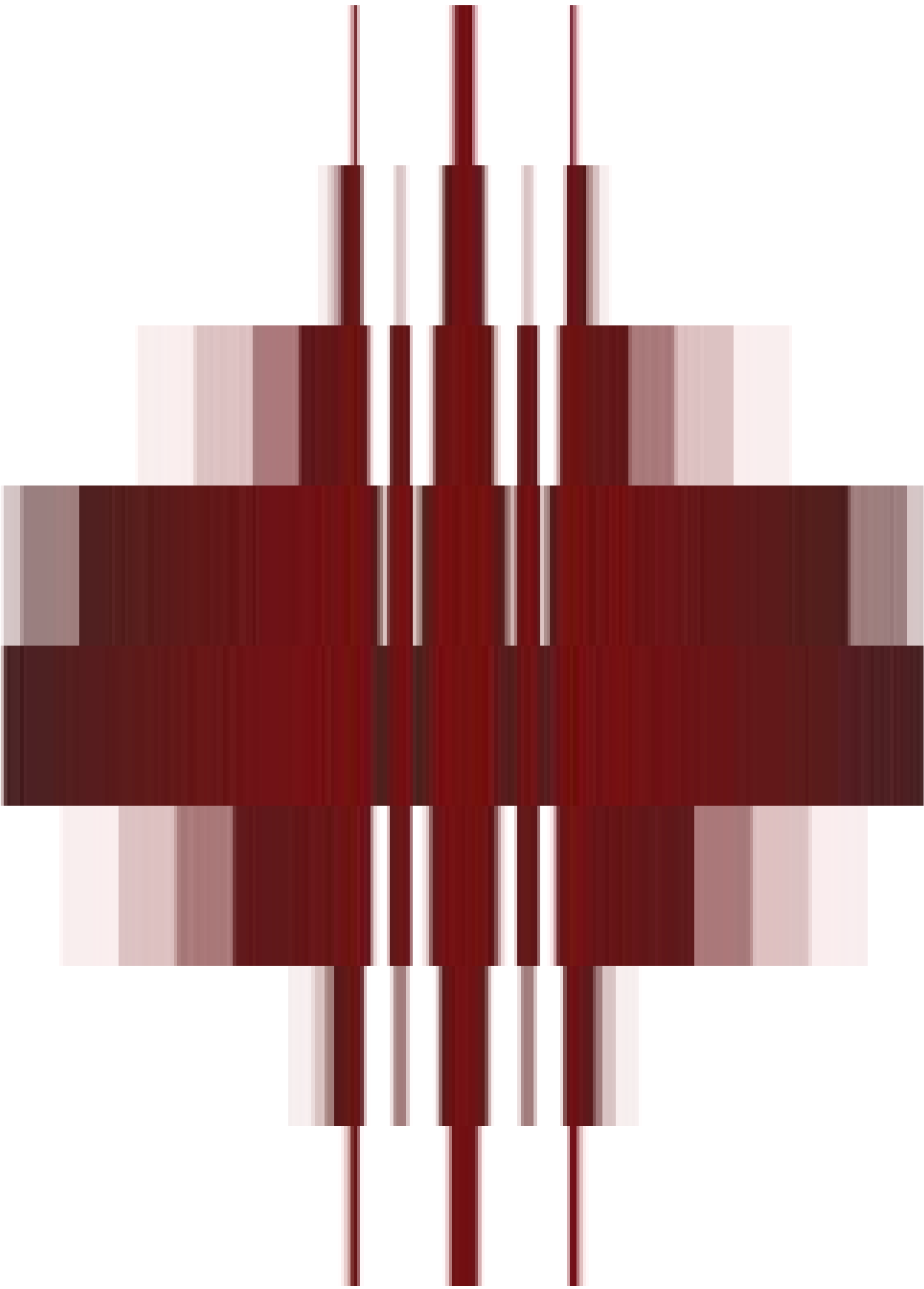
The only way to Cosmic Consciousness consists in penetrating through the encrusting shell of material vibrations to the living essence of immanent Christ Intelligence. Persons whose eyes are shut to the light of Cosmic Vibration and the Christ Intelligence hidden in matter fail to reach God. “He that believeth not the Son...the wrath of God abideth on him.” God is both angry and sorry for such souls, as a mother would be angry and sorry for a son who hurts himself by misuse of his free choice. The “wrath of God” is the Biblical terminology for the Lord’s just law of karma, which metes out the consequential effects of a man’s self-initiated actions. God need not intervene to impose a decree apart from His relentless and exacting karmic law; but His compassion that mitigates karmic effects may be withheld, blocked by man’s sheer ignorance and oftentimes willful stupidity.

After God announced the coming of Jesus through John, and showed to the Pharisees the magnetic drawing power of Jesus—attracting crowds of soul-bees by the Divine Fragrance manifested in him—Jesus left Judea and departed for Galilee to preach there the Gospel (revelations of truth, which God spells⁷ or speaks through man’s intuition). He had a special mission to redeem a fallen disciple of former incarnations, the woman of Samaria. That is why it was written: “And he must needs go through Samaria.”

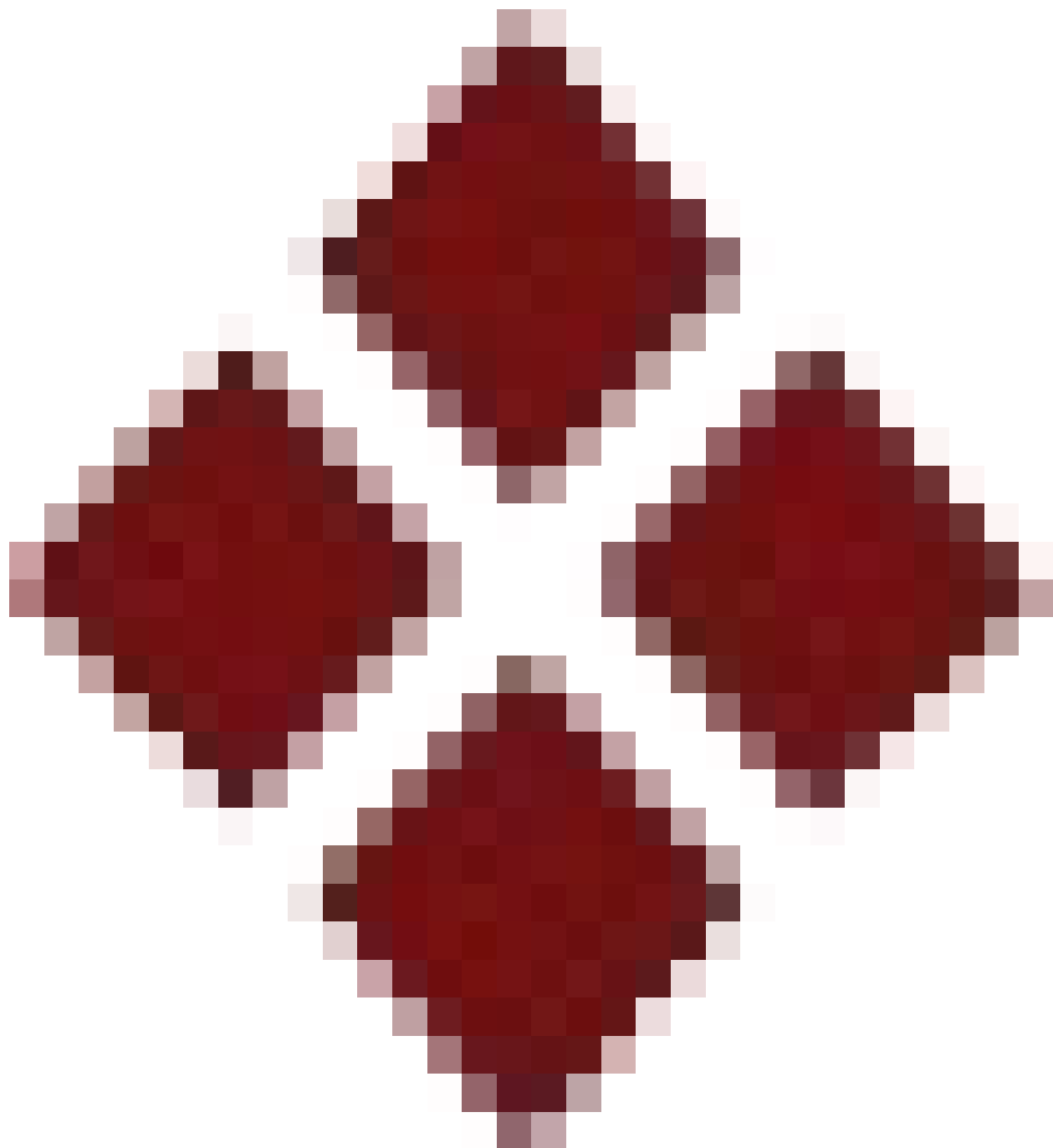


Discourse 17

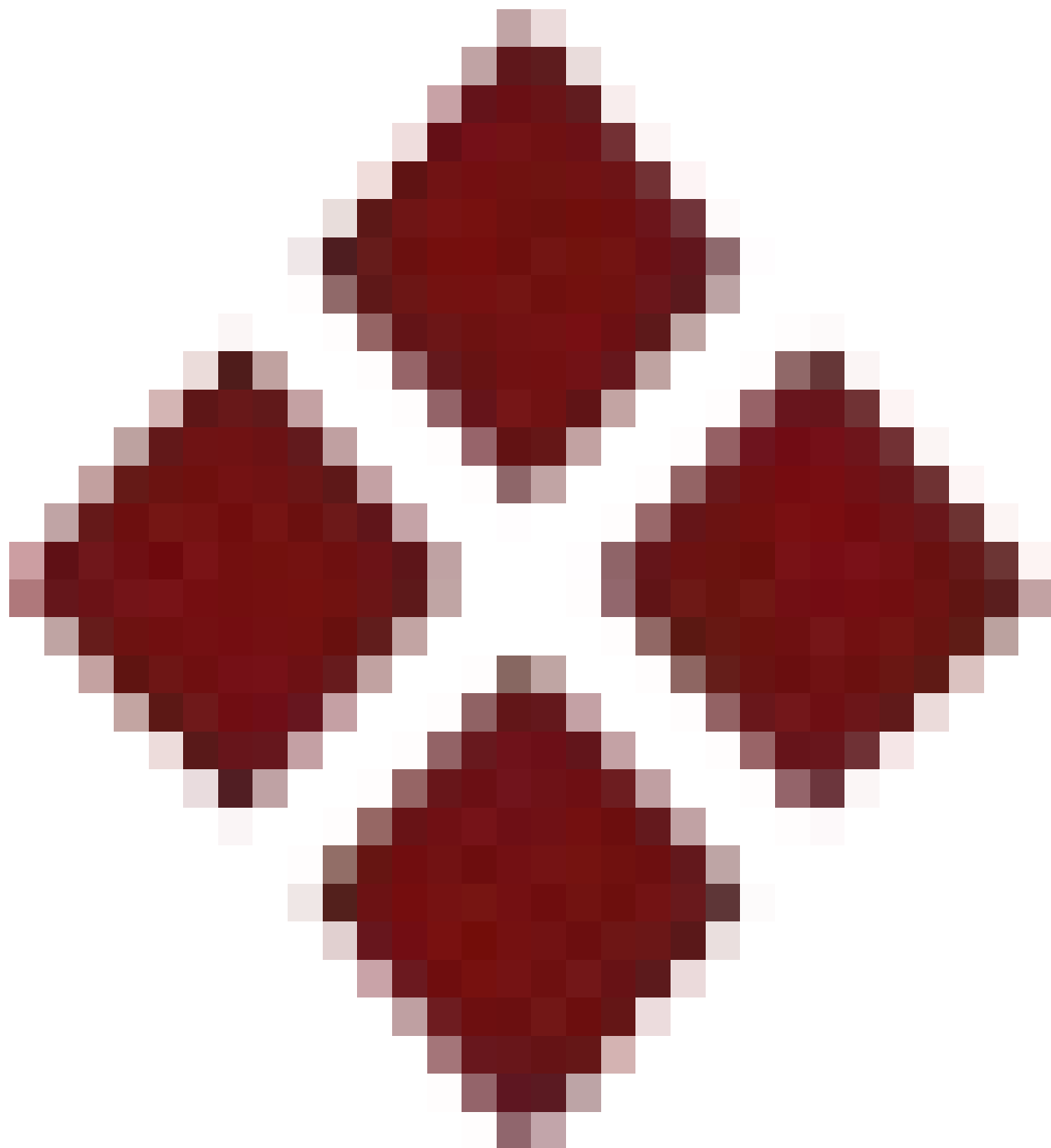
The Woman of Samaria



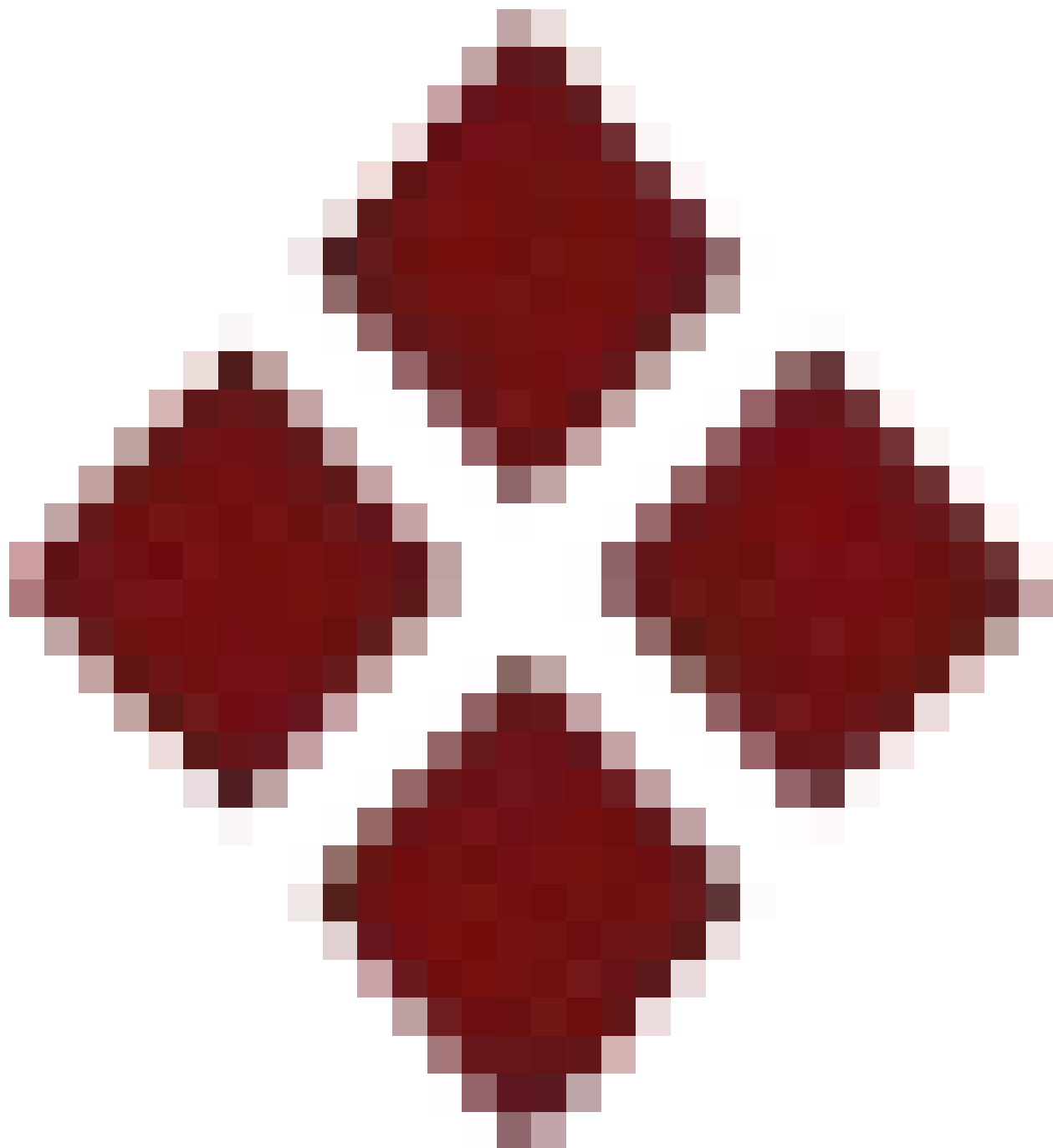
The Redemption of a Fallen Past-Life Disciple



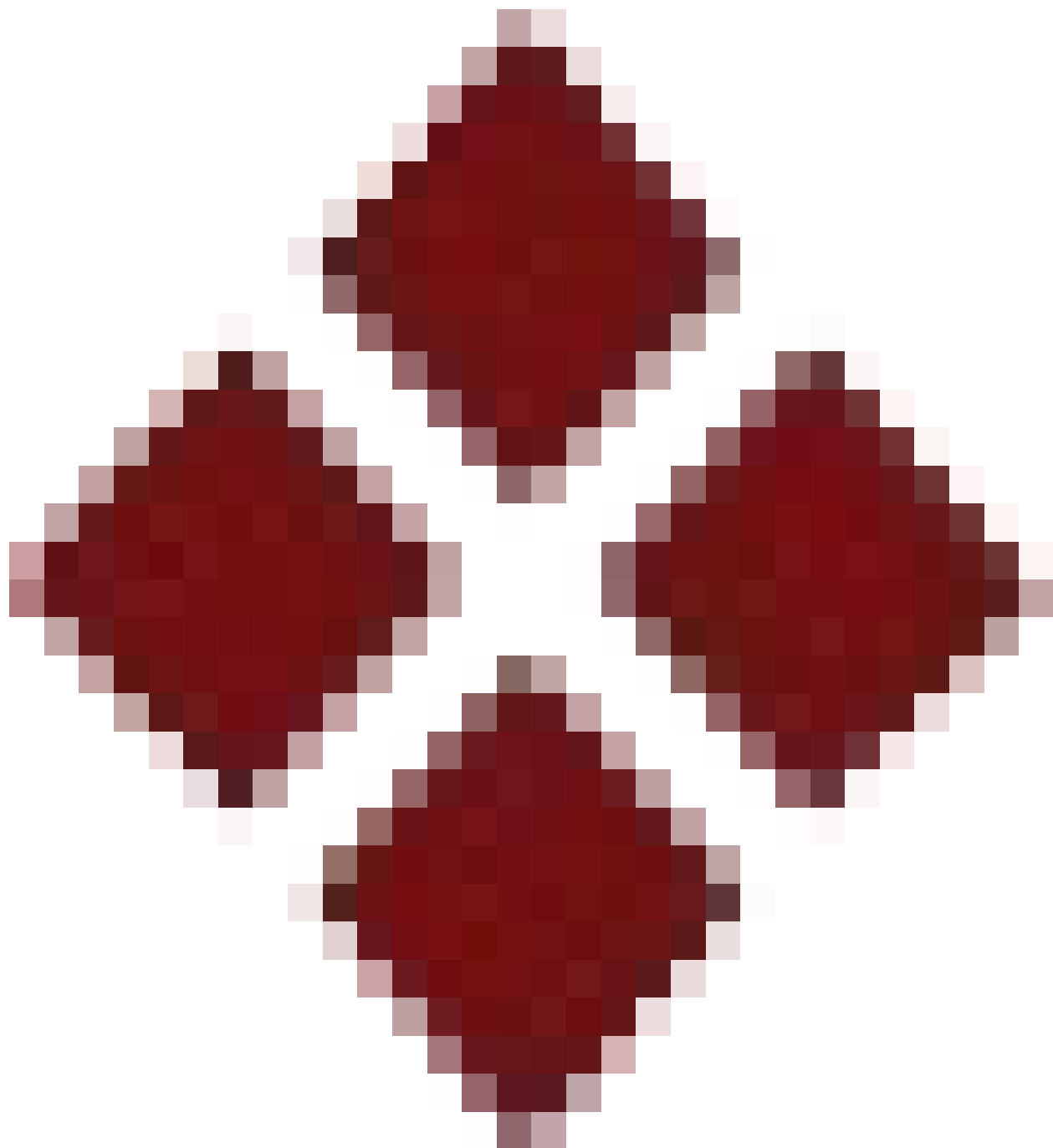
Jesus Shunned the Evils of Racial Prejudice and Caste Consciousness



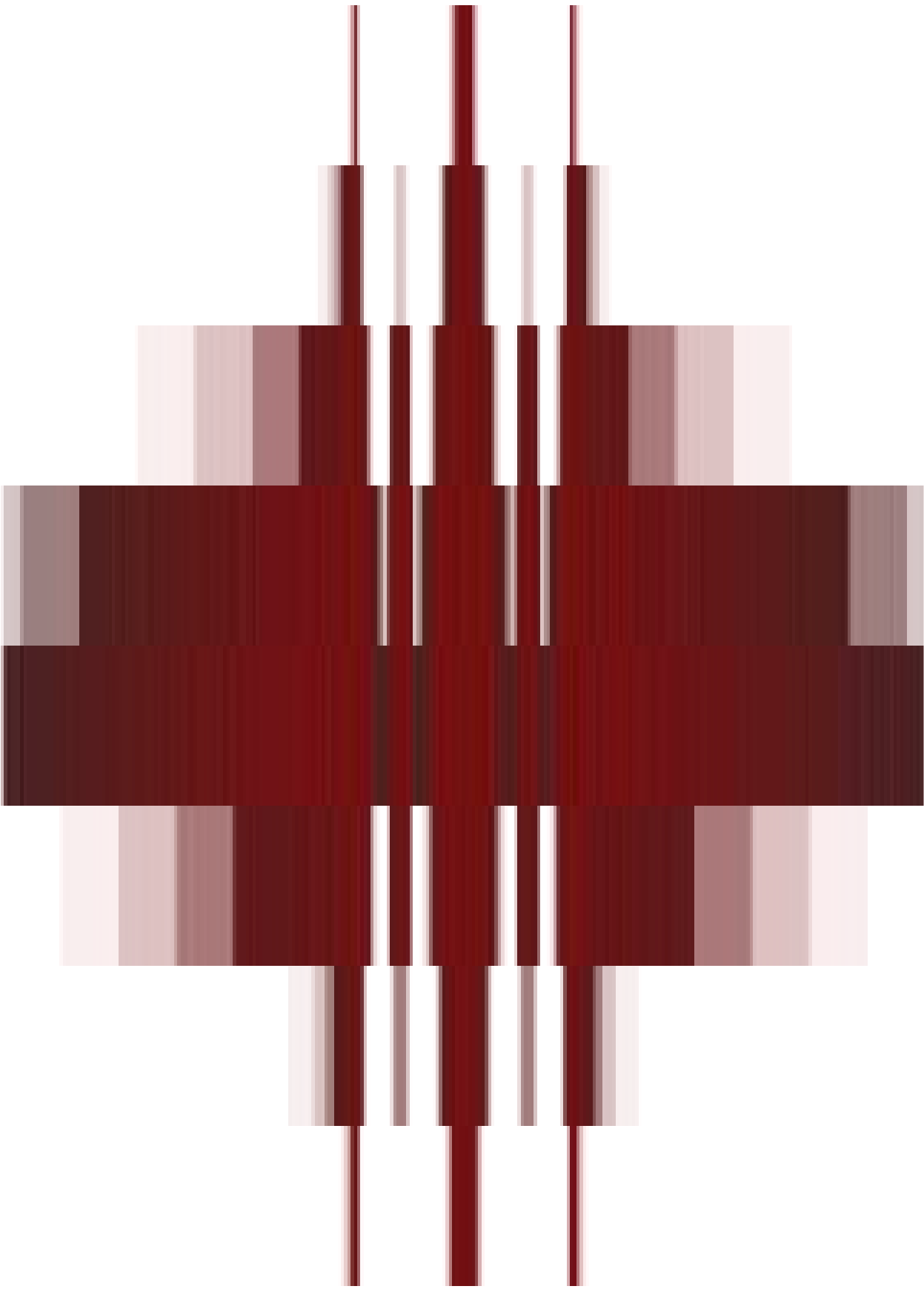
The “Living Water” of Divine Bliss in the Soul



**Sincere Cooperation With One's Guru Can Save Even
the Worst Sinner**



How a Master Perceives the Innermost Thoughts of a Disciple



“The meeting of Jesus with the woman of Samaria was not a chance encounter, but a divinely devised guru-disciple reunion.”

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Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.

There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, "Give me to drink." (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)

Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, "How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria?" for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

Jesus answered and said unto her, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, 'Give me to drink'; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water."

The woman saith unto him, "Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?"

Jesus answered and said unto her, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

The woman saith unto him, "Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw."

Jesus saith unto her, "Go, call thy husband, and come hither."

The woman answered and said, "I have no husband."

Jesus said unto her, "Thou hast well said, 'I have no husband': for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly."

The woman saith unto him, "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet."

— *John 4:5 – 19*



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Discourse 17

The Woman of Samaria



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Jesus answered and said unto her, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, 'Give me to drink'; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water" (John 4:5 – 10).

The meeting of Jesus with the woman of Samaria was not a chance encounter, but a divinely devised guru-disciple reunion. The Samaritan woman was a morally lost disciple of a previous incarnation whom Jesus wanted to redeem.



The redemption of a fallen past-life disciple

As with many great masters, Jesus had among his following a number of disciples from past lives. The guru-disciple covenant they had established in previous lifetimes drew them together again by the unseen magnetism of divine law. These were not only the twelve who had qualified themselves in past incarnations to be among the inner circle of Jesus' disciples; others there were as well. Jesus recognized those disciples who were continuing the relationship they had begun with him in a former life as distinguished from those who were coming to him for the first time for enlightenment. However, even a close associate or past-life disciple of a great master may not be a perfected devotee, as was demonstrated in the ignominious betrayal of Jesus by his disciple Judas. It is for the sake of the unredeemed that the guru must come back to earth: By taking human incarnation or by appearing in vision to guide and bless those who are in tune—or sometimes even by using the instrumentality of another qualified master—the God-ordained savior continues to help his disciples when their own efforts permit him to do so, until all are finally liberated. No matter what their degree of advancement, disciples once accepted by a true guru hold a secure place in that relationship as they gradually progress, and oftentimes falter, incarnation after incarnation.

The woman of Samaria was one such disciple. It appears that during his trip from Judea to Galilee Jesus purposely planned this meeting, waiting alone at Jacob's well where the woman would be likely to encounter him while the disciples went into the city to obtain food.



Jesus shunned the evils of racial prejudice and caste consciousness

Contrary to the prevailing attitude at that time, that Samaritans were shunned by the Jews as “low-caste,” Jesus engaged the woman in conversation and asked her to draw water for him. The Samaritan’s astonishment at Jesus’ request to her highlights the differentiation observed by the people in the time of Jesus between the Jews and the Samaritans; the Jews being considered of a higher religion and race as compared to the Samaritans,¹ even as the Brahmins in India are held by an artificial standard to be high-caste and spiritually superior to the lower castes of society.

Christ did not see people in terms of their race, creed, or social position. He saw the Divine in all. It is ego consciousness that prejudicially discriminates among God’s children, creating boundaries of exclusivity. Thus the ordinary human being relates to and identifies with his family first; then his neighbors, or persons of his own caste or social position, or members of his own religion; then his race; and finally his nation. There his consciousness stops—his ego imprisoned in concentric barriers, cribbed in an isolated corner of its insular world, cut off from the universality that Jesus and the great ones lived by: “God hath made of one blood all nations.”²

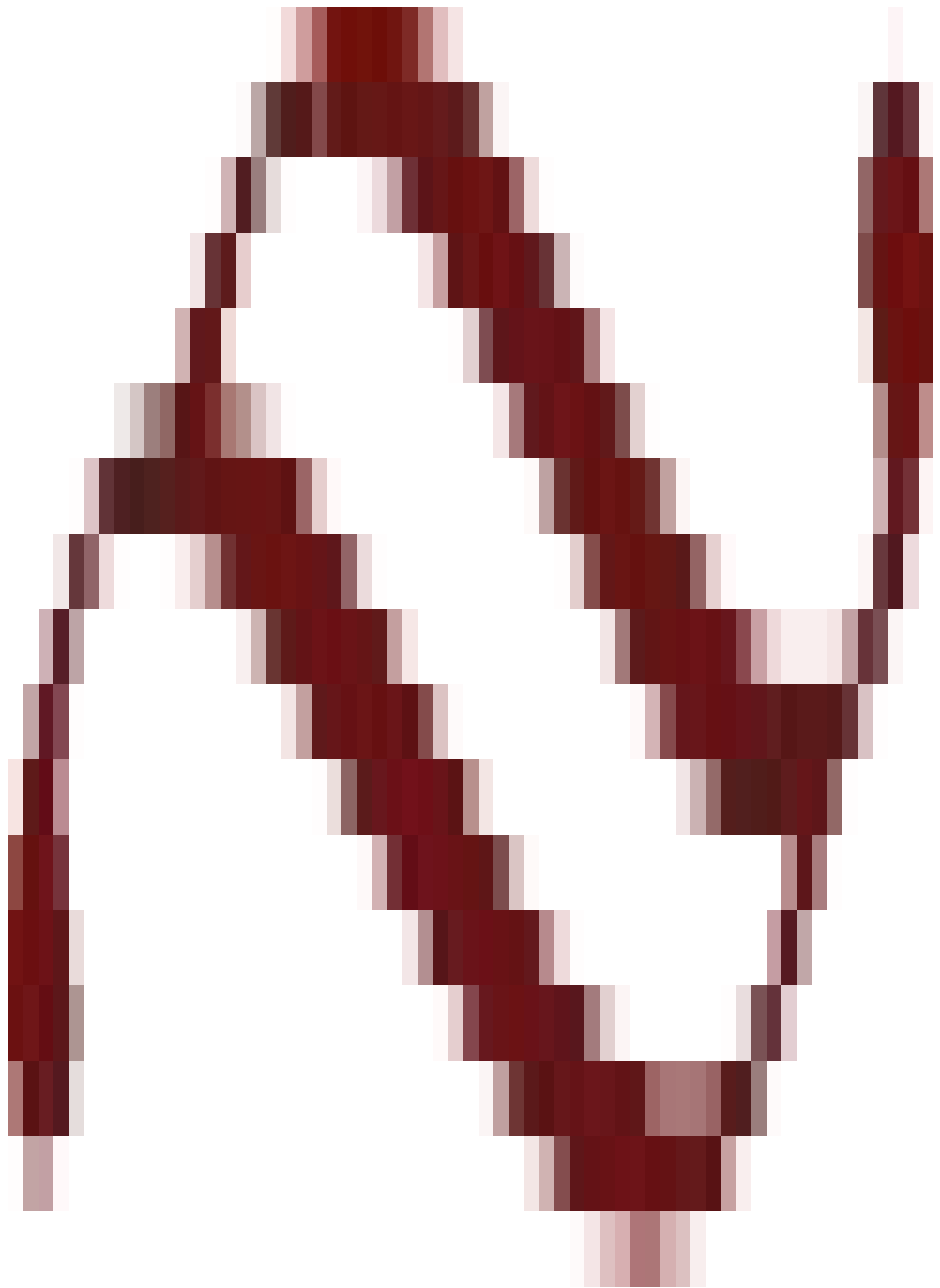
In India, rigidified caste consciousness has been productive of many evils.³ In America and other lands, bigotry based on color and national origin has created injustice, hatred, and racial conflict. And throughout the world, blind assertion of the superiority of one religion over all others has perpetuated misunderstanding, fear, and hostility. The Christian missionary calls the Hindus heathen; with equal disdain the Brahmin priests of India permit no Westerners to defile with their presence the holy temples of Hinduism—though all love the same one God.

So long as any form of arrogant, intolerant consciousness will remain, war and great miseries will continue to visit the earth. The most powerful ammunition for the guns of war, and the cause of so many other forms of mass destruction and suffering, are selfishness and the limiting race consciousness of egoistic human beings. The Heavenly Father is the progenitor of every race; His children are duty-bound to love their whole family of nations. Any country that goes against that principle of love for humankind will not long prosper, for lack of international harmony and mutual cooperation puts a nation in conflict not only

with its neighbors but with Divine Law, the Organizing Principle of the cosmos. Through evolutionary coaxings of the Christ Intelligence, with Its cosmic heartbeat of coalescent love, God is trying to bring unity in the universe. Those who are in tune with this cosmic beneficence, as was Jesus, have love and understanding that embraces the totality of humanity, setting the standard for all of God's children to follow.

To Jesus no one was a stranger; he loved unconditionally, and gauged individuals solely by their inner qualifications: their spiritual sincerity and receptivity to Truth.

Thus, despite the woman of Samaria's expectation that Jesus would shun her as a racial outcast, he asked her to share with him the water she drew from the well, a gesture of friendliness through which she could become acquainted with him. Having perceived that as a fallen disciple of past lives she had the potential to be resurrected spiritually, Jesus had created this opportunity, during the absence of his other disciples, so that without disturbance he could give to her the everlasting elixir of divine awakening. When he said, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee," Jesus was hinting to the woman that God had blessed her in previous incarnations with the greatest of all gifts, a divine savior (guru) who had followed her to this life to redeem her. Jesus sought to stir her dormant memory of the past; thus he intimated that if she but knew that it was her God-given guru who was asking for the drink, she would hasten to ask him for the living water of God's contact, without which no human being can quench his spiritual thirst.⁴



The woman saith unto him, “Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?”

Jesus answered and said unto her, “Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:11 – 15).

The woman of Samaria, steeped in ignorance, could not yet understand the oblique reference of Jesus to “living water,” hence her foolish question: “[Since] thou hast nothing to draw with...from whence then hast thou that living water?”



The “living water” of divine bliss in the soul

Jesus spoke of the inner experience, the uncovering, with the help of one’s guru, of the wellspring of divinity within the soul. He said, in effect, that whosoever depends solely upon physical sustenance remains bound by mortal body consciousness, with its never-ending thirst for sensory experiences and the fulfillment of material desires. Oblivious of the all-sustaining, all-desire-quenching Divine Life and Bliss within his soul, the material man will die unfulfilled. His yearnings will remain with him even after death, a latent thirst that will impel him to reincarnate again and yet again in search of satisfaction.

But whosoever drinks of the fountain of eternal bliss in God will find the thirst of every desire of all his incarnations quenched forever. Souls who discover the everlasting Well of Bliss within themselves are never thirsty for the evanescent satisfactions of a mortal existence and its material desires.

The worldly man, on the other hand, having lost his soul contact with God-Bliss, tries to satisfy himself with pleasures of the senses—a foolish expectation. Millions of people die of broken hearts, having tried vainly to “lay up for themselves upon earth” a treasure of lasting happiness garnered from material things, when joy inexhaustible in God awaits the seeker in the temple of meditation. Thus did the Lord speak to Prophet Jeremiah: “For My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.”⁵

Gratifying the body and ego with material experiences and possessions can never compensate man for his lost infinite soul-happiness. Indeed, the materialist’s quest achieves the opposite of what he intended, making him susceptible instead to every form of sorrow and suffering inherent in the cosmic scheme of dualities.

Mortal desires promise happiness, but give sorrow instead. “Because sense pleasures spring from outward contacts, and have beginning and end (are ephemeral), they are begetters only of misery. No sage seeks happiness from them.”⁶

The soul of even the most worldly person is inwardly conscious of its supernal Bliss, lost only in its outward identification with the flesh. That is why it can

never remain contented for long with the temporary pleasures of the senses. If one has lost a diamond, he will not satisfy himself by replacing it with bits of broken glass that he finds shining in the sunlight. The glitter of sense pleasures, no matter how alluring, soon yields disappointment, satiety, and disgust.

“The thirst of incarnations is slaked by whosoever will drink the effervescent waters of the well of Divine Bliss in the soul, springing up into everlasting life”—this is the wisdom Jesus sought to convey to the woman at the well.



The woman saith unto him, “Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.”

Jesus saith unto her, “Go, call thy husband, and come hither.”

The woman answered and said, “I have no husband.”

Jesus said unto her, “Thou hast well said, ‘I have no husband’: for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.”

The woman saith unto him, “Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet” (John 4:15 – 19).



Sincere cooperation with one's guru can save even the worst sinner

A flicker of receptivity stirred in the woman. So Jesus tested the character of this fallen disciple, the degree of her degradation. He asked her to call her husband; and when she said that she had no husband, he was pleased with her truthfulness in tacitly admitting that the man with whom she was presently coupled was not a lawful spouse. Jesus then revealed that he knew of her promiscuous behavior in having had five such illicit relationships. Rather than lying to defend herself, she recognized Jesus as a divine prophet who alone could have known her secret. In this moment of spiritual submission, Jesus saw the genuine quality of her sincerity. Her immorality lay like a clay crust over her pure, truth-loving soul, hiding it only temporarily.

Insincerity, prevarication, and treachery toward a guru-preceptor are devastating sins, for these are deliberate, willful transgressions and, as such, are worse evils than flesh transgressions, which are to a considerable extent due to instinctive compulsion.

Some persons, owing to immoral behavior in a past life, are born with a compelling inclination that overrules almost all sense of shame, church threats, conscience, social discomfiture, or efforts toward self-control. Sincerity in recognizing and acknowledging their faults, and in following the advice of their spiritual doctor, will give these individuals mental and moral strength that will remedy the malady.

The disciple who is insincere toward his guru in attempting to hide or rationalize his moral disease shuts out the healing help of the master. Hypocritical evasion causes the moral transgression in the error-stricken disciple to spread tenaciously within him. To hide moral disease from the spiritual doctor is dangerous to spiritual health, just as concealing physical symptoms of disease from a medical doctor imperils bodily health.

In any case, the guru is not deceived, no matter how cunning the evasive disciple. The master can perceive the inmost character of a disciple exactly and immediately. Masters rarely, if ever, make errors in discerning the qualities of those who come to them. Even when a guru accepts a disciple who later exhibits evil or treacherous tendencies, it is not because the master was unknowing. Jesus

had his Judas; why did he accept such a follower? There was a karmic connection, in that Judas had been his disciple in a previous life. When a guru sees the soul of a disciple fallen in ignorance, his God-given duty and heartfelt concern leave no choice but to help. Every soul can be rescued, no matter how entangled in error, if the mind makes a genuine commitment to cooperate spiritually. The guru provides repeated opportunities for the disciple to make this breakthrough from ignorance. Though one's sins be as deep as the ocean, still he can be saved if he is sincere and loyal to his master, linking himself with the channel that draws him to God.



How a master perceives the innermost thoughts of a disciple

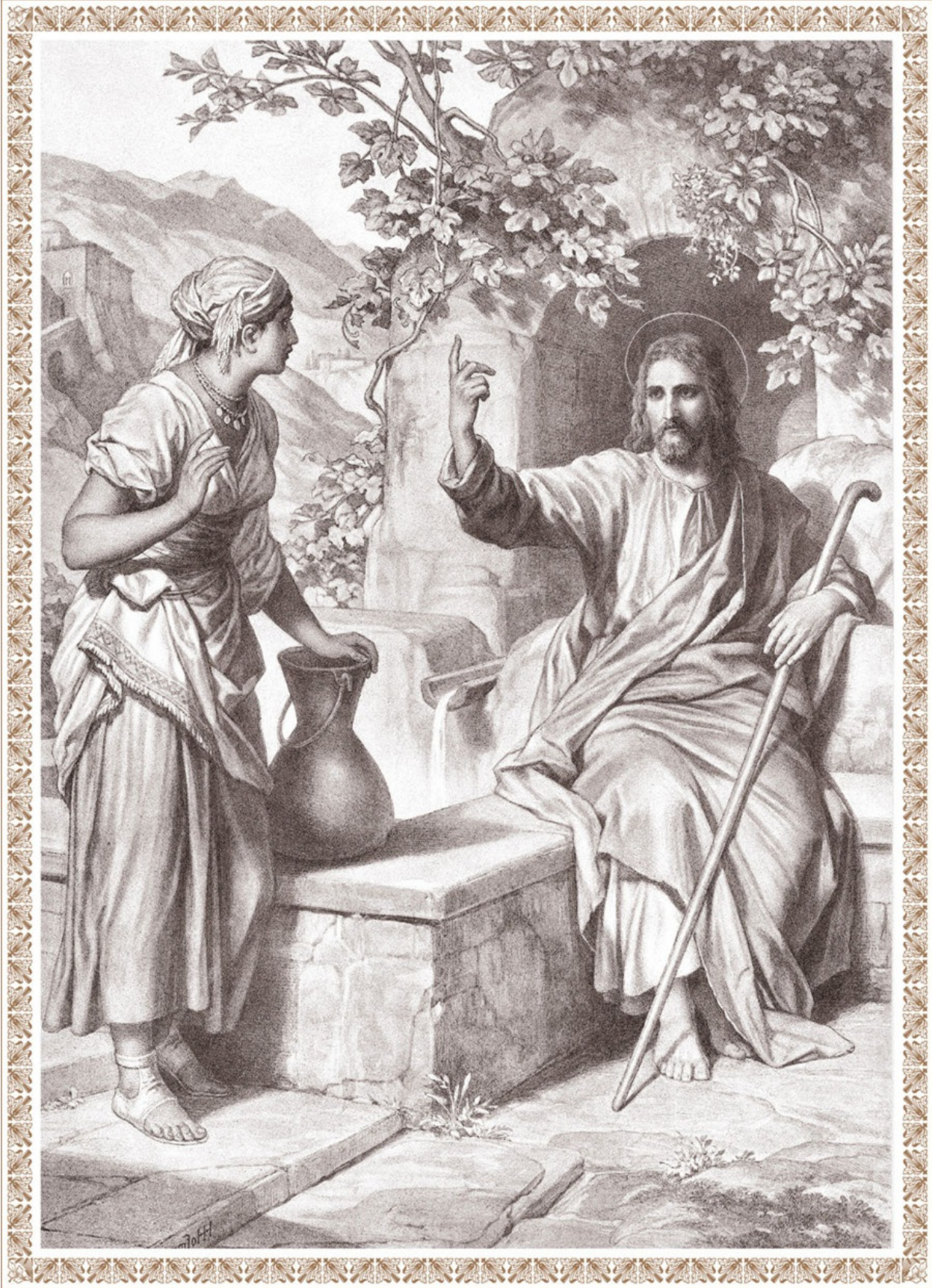
How did Jesus know the intimate details of the life history of the woman of Samaria? Did Jesus read her thoughts from her subconscious, conscious, or superconscious mind? If a person holds his mind absolutely still, free from the oscillations of restless thoughts, he can reflect within him the thoughts that pass through the consciousness of another person. This is only possible when one is versed in the art of subduing his own thinking for any desired length of time; then, on the virgin unexposed film of his mind, he can “photograph” any thought that is present in the conscious mind of another individual.

It entails greater mental power to know the buried subconscious thought-experiences of others. Subconscious thoughts are those that remain below the conscious mind, hidden behind its closed doors. By consciously projecting one’s subconscious mind into the subconscious mind of another person, one can know the tabloid thought-experiences closeted there. This is possible when by the right method of concentration one can delve into his own subconscious mind and feel the experiences stored there without being intruded upon or influenced by the thoughts of the conscious mind.

In the third and more advanced way, a master whose mind has plumbed the depths of meditation and who has gained control of his all-seeing eye of intuition can transfer his consciousness to the region of soul bliss of the superconscious mind. The superconsciousness hides behind the restlessness of conscious life and the fanciful dream state and memories of subconscious life, and knows everything, not by reason or sense perception, but by God-given intuition, the direct all-knowing power of the soul. This intuitive power can be developed by learning the step-by-step methods of scientific deepest meditation that lead to Self-realization.

With fully developed superconscious intuition, one can instantly feel all that is going on in the consciousness of another individual, all that is hidden in his subconscious mind, and all the prenatal experiences of former incarnations that are stored permanently in his superconsciousness. Jesus had this usable, controlled power of intuition; he knew at once everything that lay in the conscious, subconscious, and superconscious minds of the woman of Samaria.

Jesus openly manifested his omniscience by revealing to his fallen former disciple his knowledge of her moral indiscretions. A master very seldom tries to attract new followers by a mental miracle other than by the expression of the love of God, but everything is right in its own place. This display of a miracle was not performed by Jesus in order to satisfy the mental curiosity of a stranger, but to lift a fallen disciple. The woman of Samaria witnessed this omniscient power of Jesus because she confessed to a master; and the master, out of compassion, let her know that her privacy was in safe hands. With her veracity, she had passed his test of true discipleship. And the salutary effect of the miracle was that the woman of Samaria was spiritually awakened to the realization that she was in the presence of a prophet of God.



Jesus and the Woman of Samaria

There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, "Give me to drink."...

Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, "How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria?" for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

Jesus answered and said unto her, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, 'Give me to drink'; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water."

—John 4:7, 9–10

The meeting of Jesus with the woman of Samaria was not a chance encounter, but a divinely devised guru-disciple reunion. The Samaritan woman was a morally lost disciple of a previous incarnation whom Jesus wanted to redeem....

Jesus spoke of the inner experience, the uncovering, with the help of one's guru, of the wellspring of divinity within the soul....

"The thirst of incarnations is slaked by whosoever will drink the effervescent waters of the well of Divine Bliss in the soul, springing up into everlasting life"—this is the wisdom Jesus sought to convey to the woman at the well.

—Paramahansa Yogananda

Drawing by Heinrich Hofmann

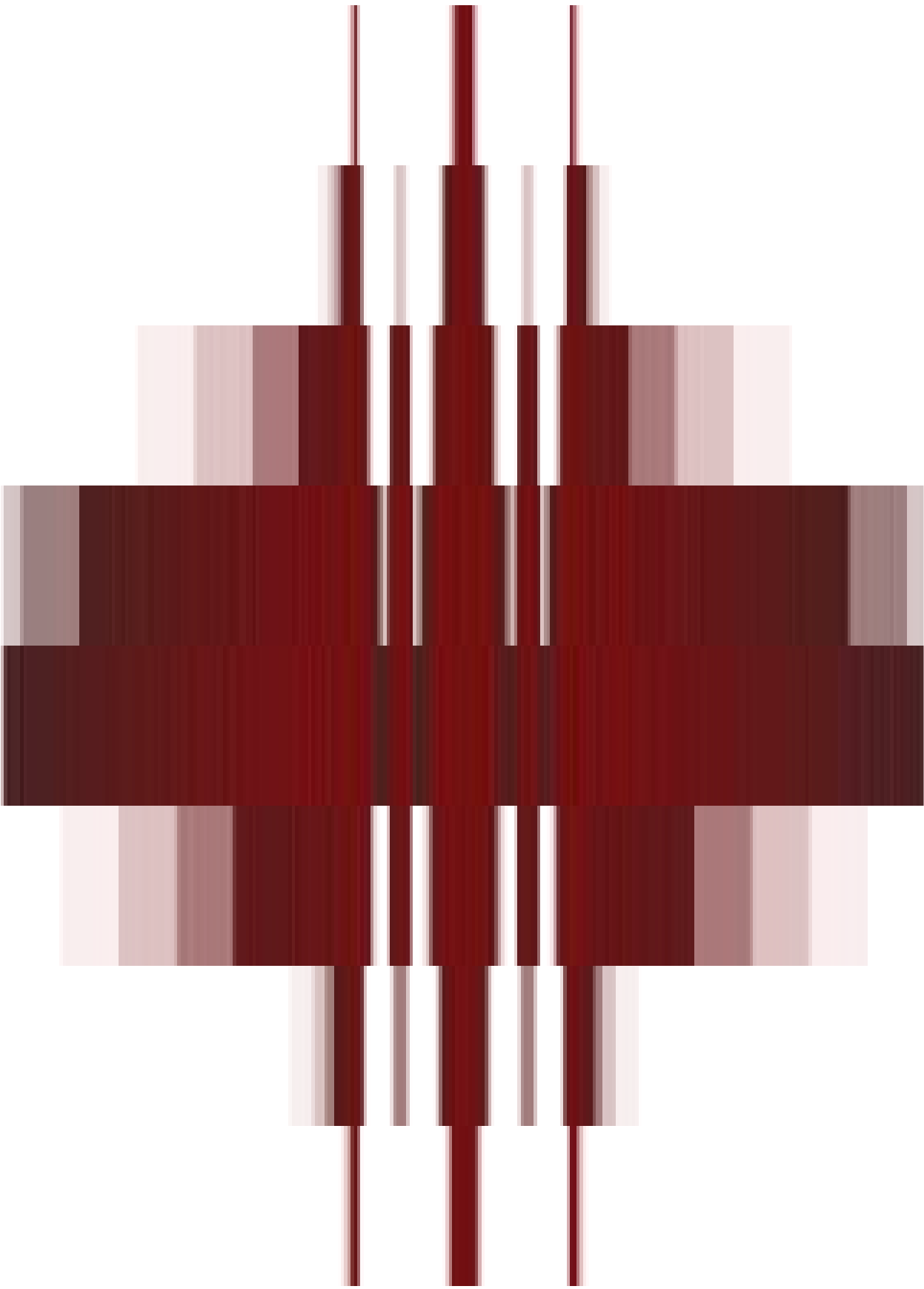




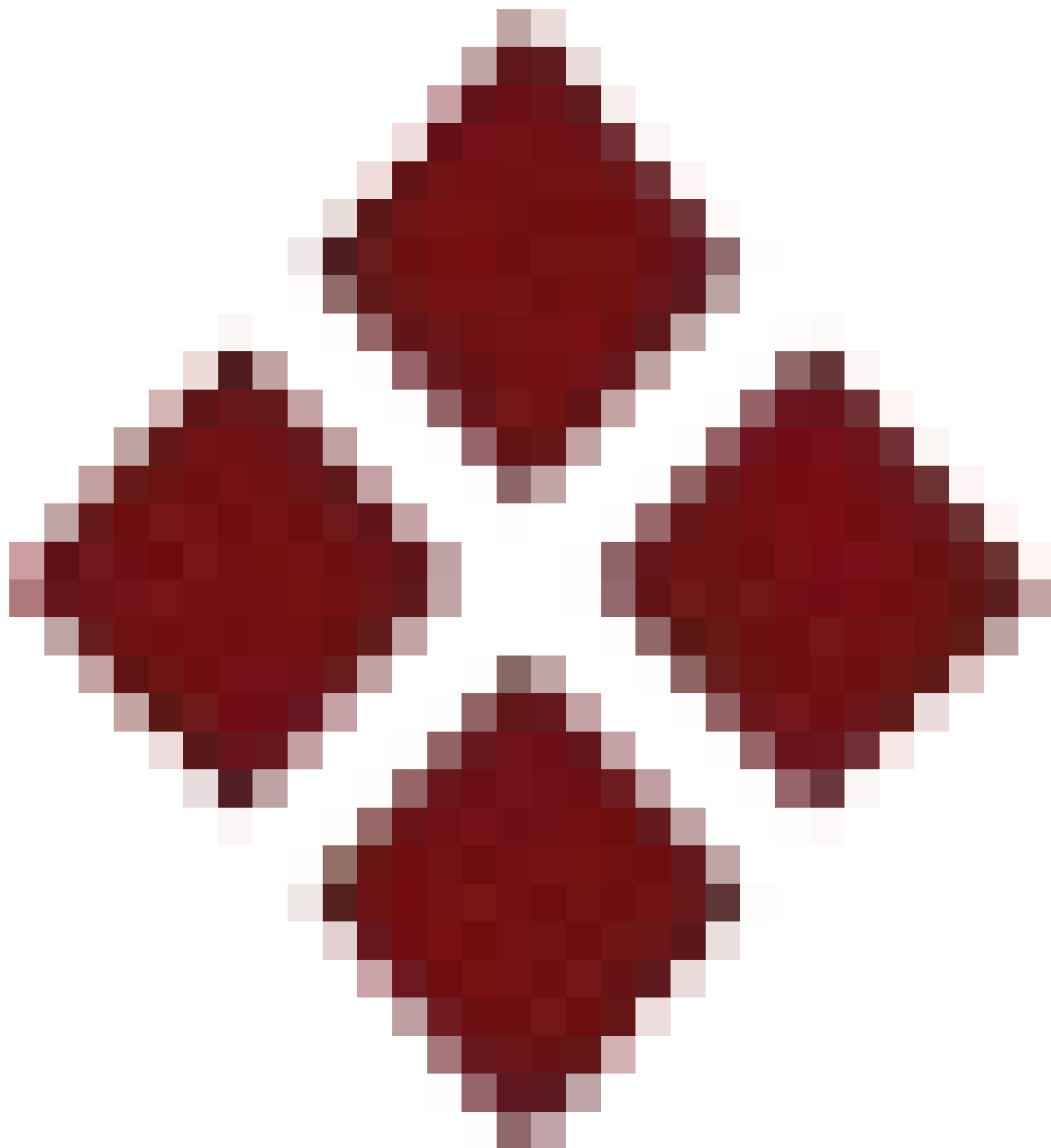
Discourse 18

Worship God “in Spirit and in Truth”

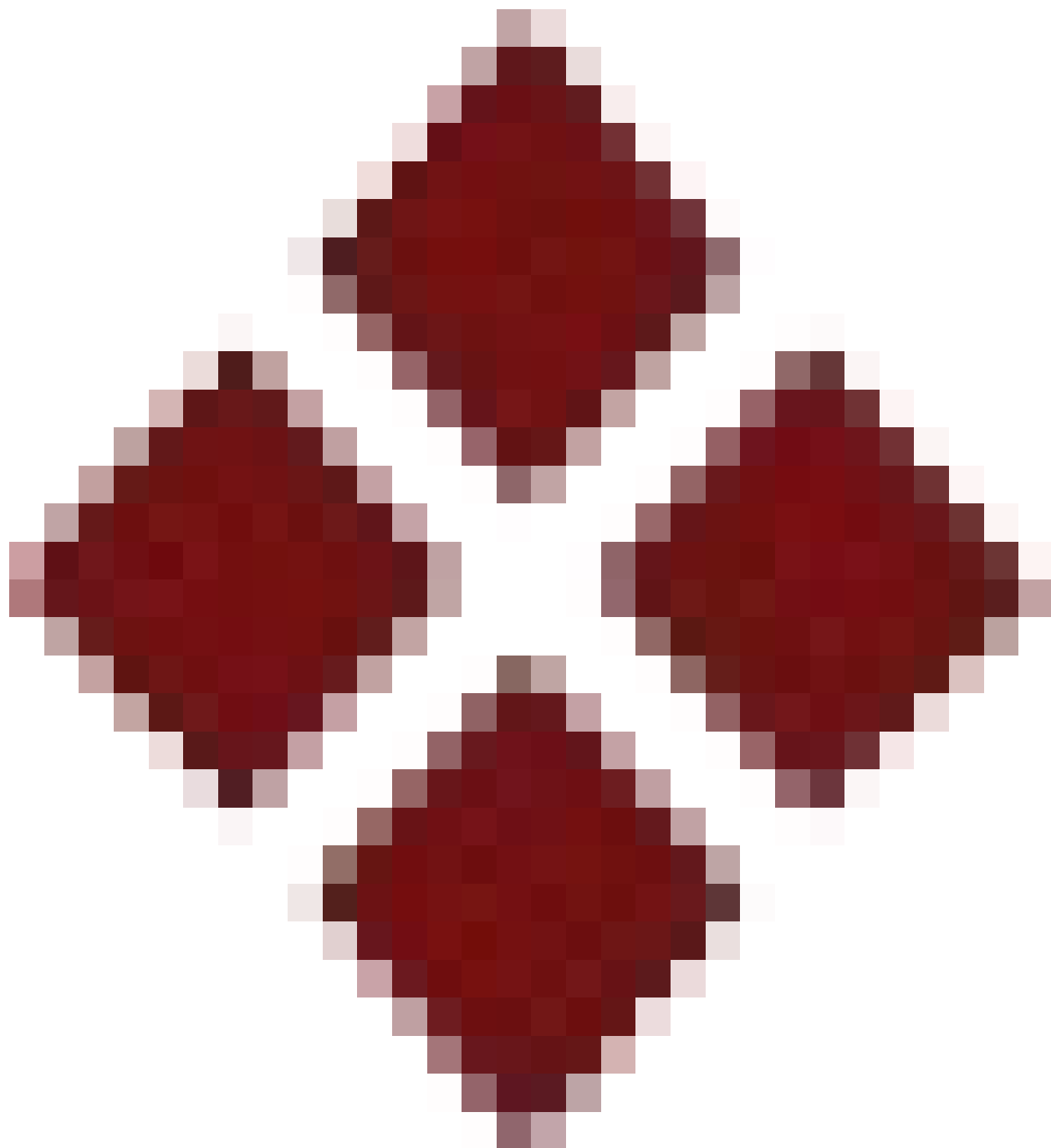
The Woman of Samaria, Part II



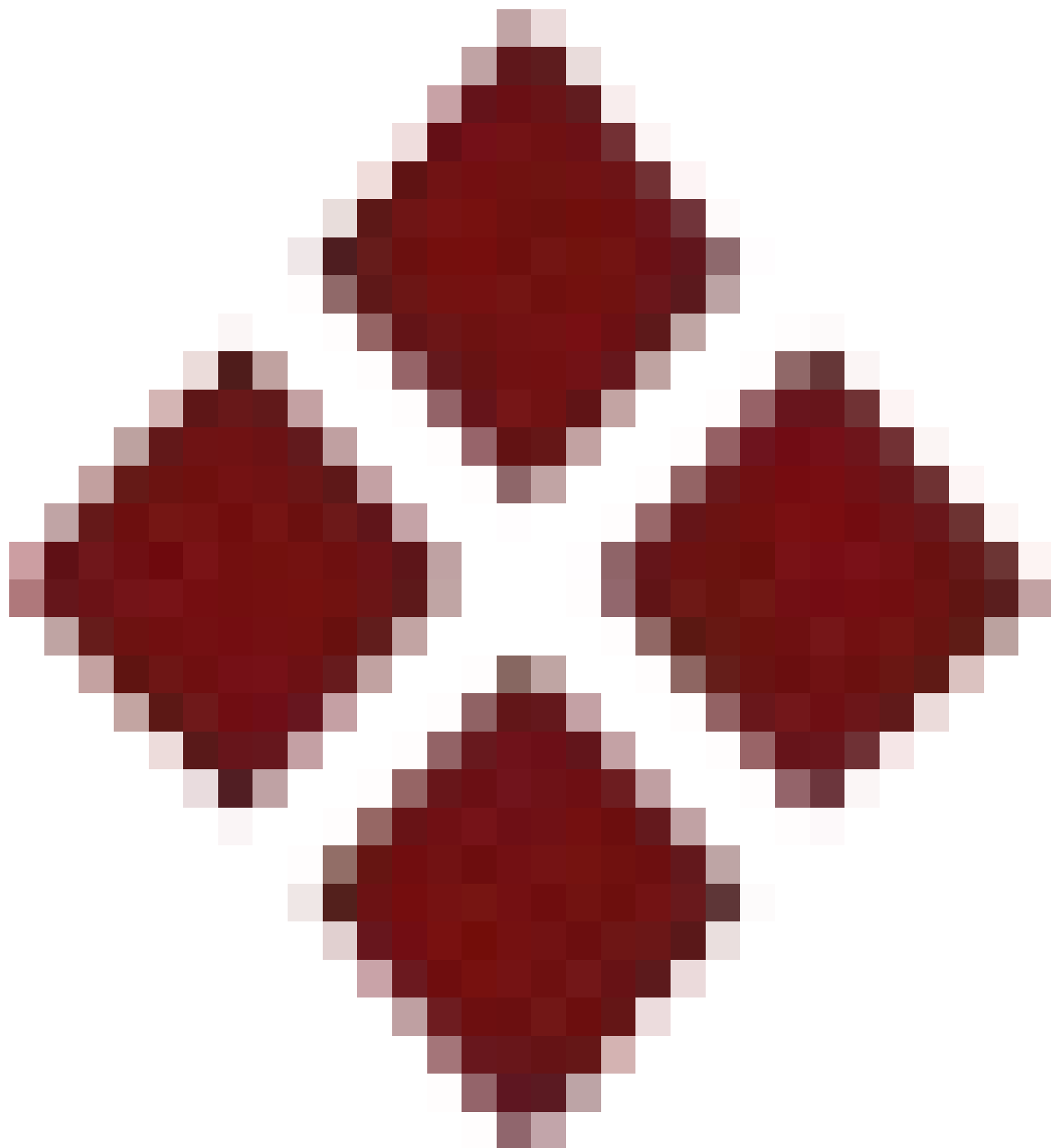
Ceremonial Worship Versus Actual Communion With God



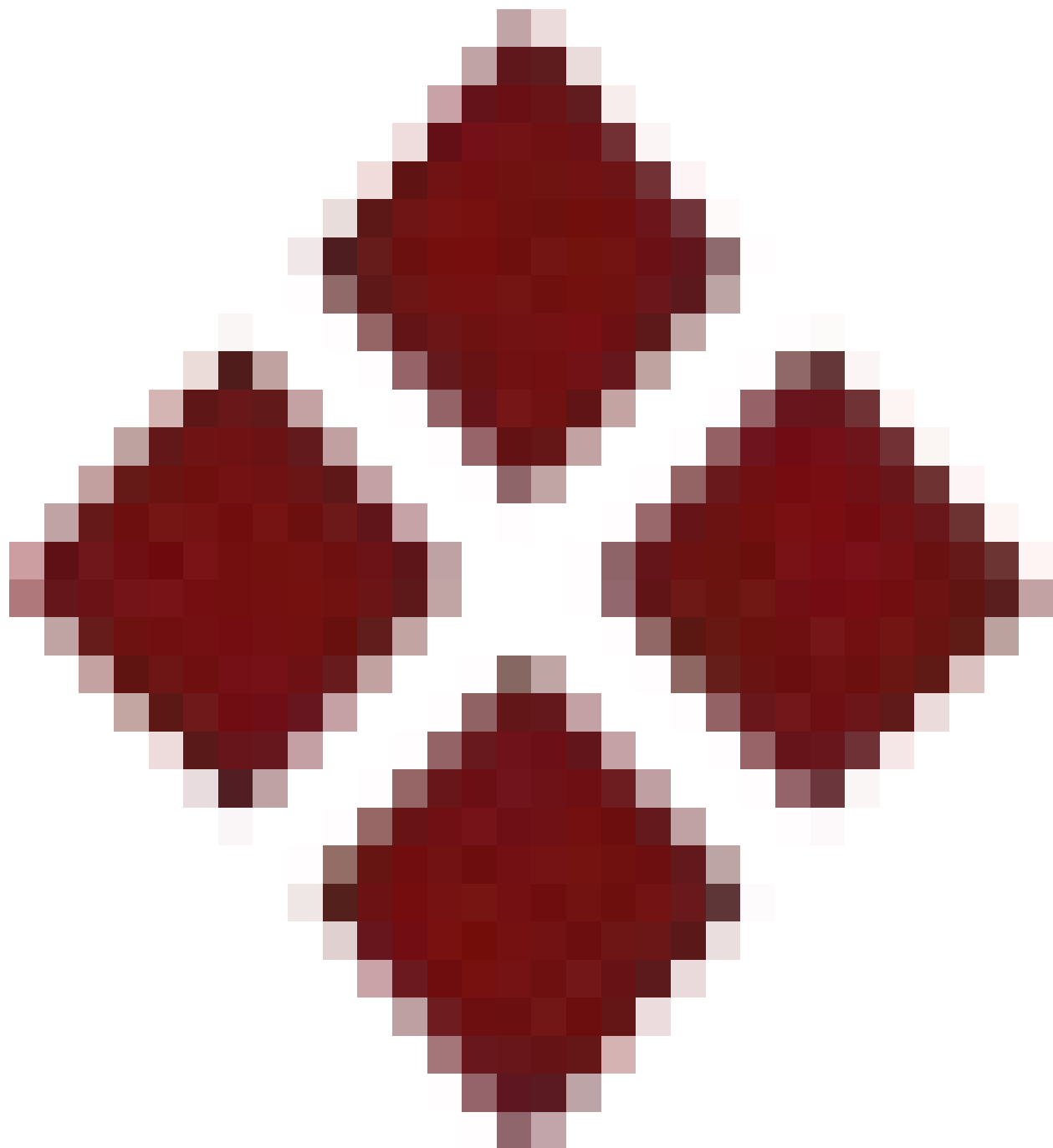
Where Is the Best Temple for Worshipping God?



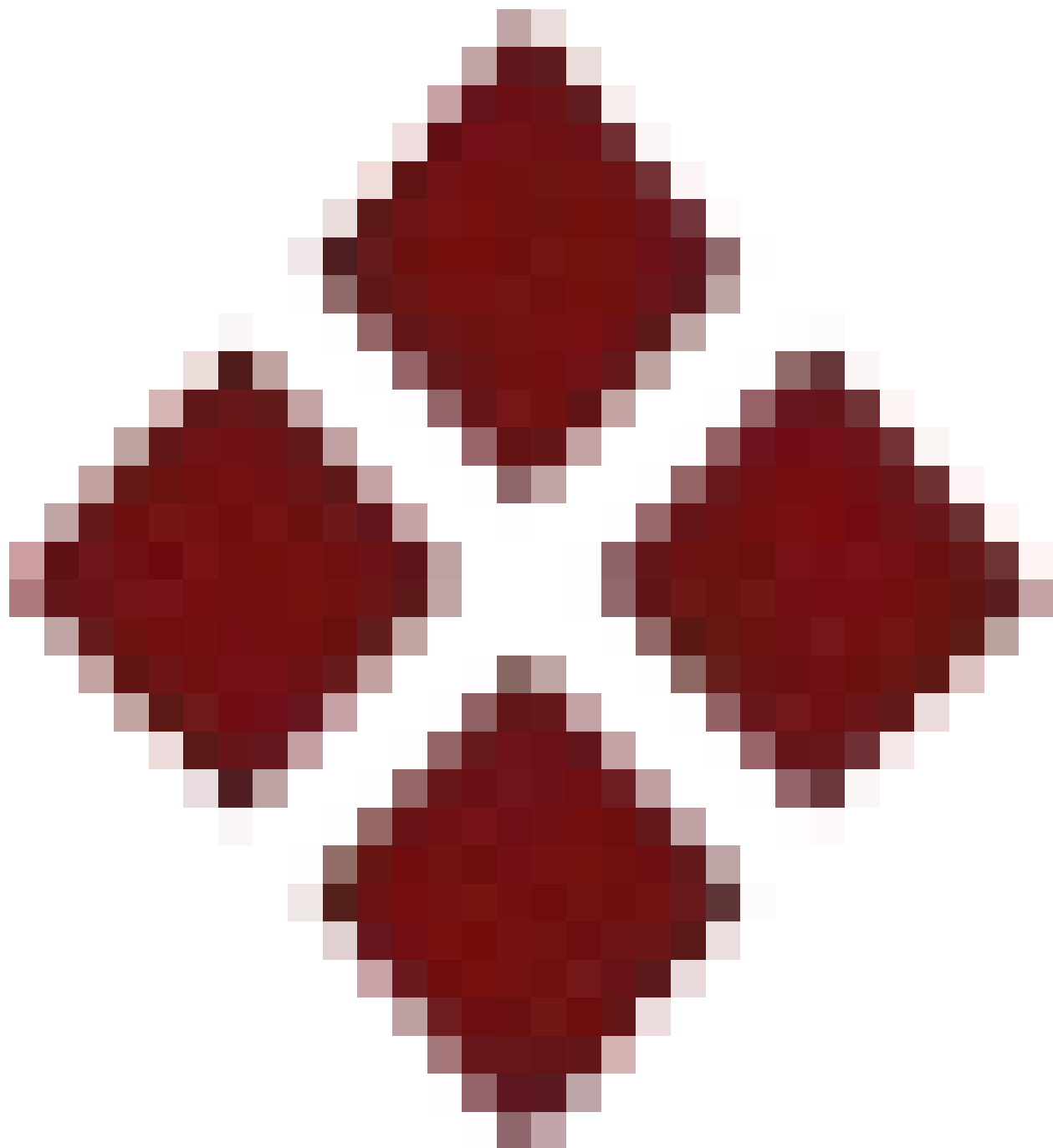
**Salvation Comes to All Who Have Made Sufficient
Spiritual Effort**



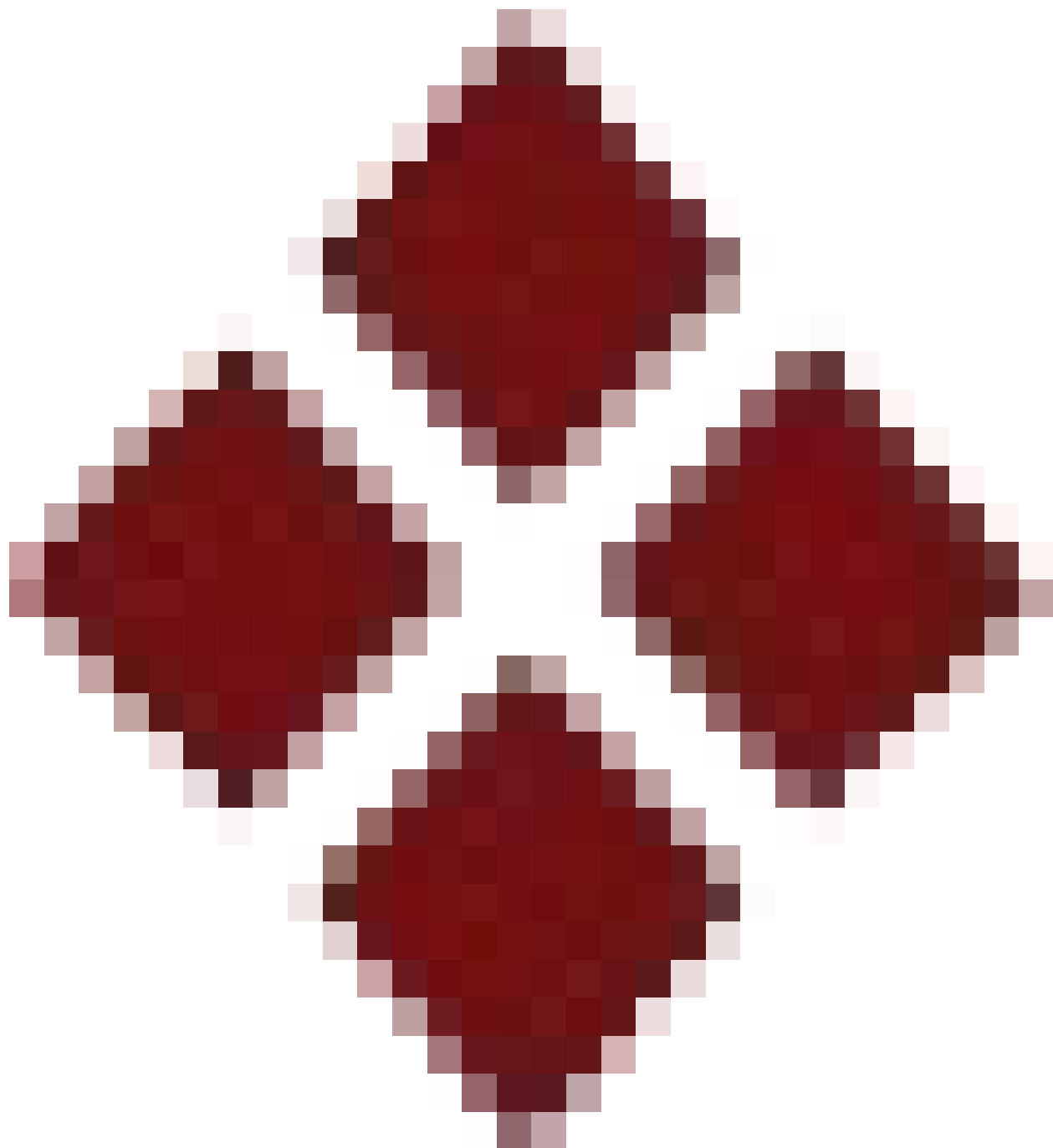
Definitions of “God” and “Spirit”



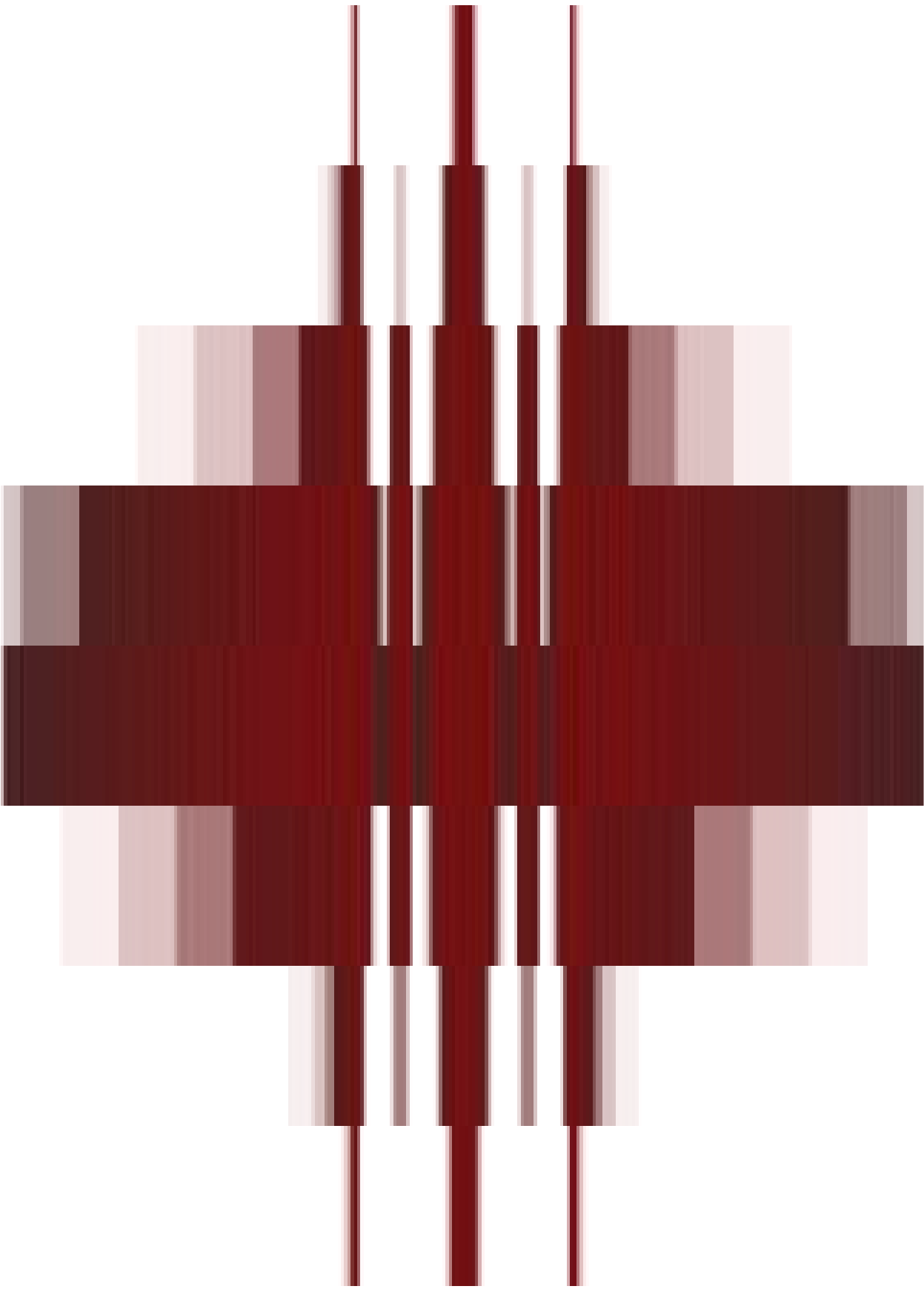
Worshiping “in Spirit and in Truth”



Personal Attributes and Manifestations of God



The Higher State of God-realization: Oneness of the Soul With Spirit



“To truly worship God is to worship Him as transcendent Spirit in Nature and beyond Nature....It is then that the devotee finds emancipation by becoming one with the Spirit.”

■

“O ur fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.”

Jesus saith unto her, “Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.”

— John 4:20 – 24



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Discourse 18

Worship God “in Spirit and in Truth”

The Woman of Samaria, Part II



Having recognized Jesus as a prophet of God, the woman of Samaria sought from him spiritual guidance on the disputed question as to which was the right place to worship: Jerusalem, as the Jews believed; or the mountain nearby, which was sacred to her forefathers. ¹

In reply, Jesus set aside both the mountain and Jerusalem and spoke of Self-realization, the inner Jerusalem,² where true devotees of God, having ascended the sacred mountain of meditation, worship Him in the temple of actual Spirit-to-soul communion.



Ceremonial worship versus actual communion with God

Jesus declared that the mass of religious believers take part in ceremonies or rituals but never know the Object of their worship. It is those who have God-consciousness, who commune with God, that can truly speak of worshiping God. Ceremonial worship—whether it be of diverse images venerated by different cultures down the ages, or customized prayers, chants, or hymns, or symbolic rites—without inner communion rarely uplifts the consciousness of the worshiper beyond vague concepts of Divinity to actual perception of God. This is why Jesus said, “You know not what you worship.”

If a person is deeply sincere and devout, no matter what words are used to address God or what concept of the Divine informs those words, God will answer. But most people do not worship with the conviction, born of experience, that God is real and that He is listening to their prayers; that He is just behind their thoughts, just behind the words of their prayers, just behind the love with which they love Him. If they would pray with heart and mind indivisibly concentrated on that indwelling Presence, they would know the One they worship.

The reason that God remains unknown to millions who worship Him in temples and churches, and in holy cities and places of pilgrimage, is that the physical instruments of knowledge can apprehend only the products of the Creator; Divinity Itself is perceived by the supramental faculty of intuition, the soul’s God-given power of knowing truth. When mental restlessness is stilled and the consciousness is interiorized, in touch with the soul, the God-revealing intuitive faculty is awakened.

The tabernacle of deep meditation, the temple of soul intuition, is where the devotee is first introduced to God. To one who finds Him within, God is no longer an unknown mystery concealed by His various material manifestations. Thus in answer to the woman’s inquiry as to the best outer place for worship, Jesus spoke instead of the difference between the theological priestly conditions of worship and the saintly way of worshiping God in actual communion with Him “in spirit and in truth.”



Where is the best temple for worshipping God?

A magnificent, multimillion-dollar temple might draw an aristocratic congregation of worshipers, impressed with the comfort of cushioned velvet seats, ornamental architecture, and elaborate services. But the omnipresent God, who lives in the temple of the cosmos, with the star-decked dome of Eternity, illumined by suns and moons, is not lured by a display of pomp and wealth into pride-created man-made edifices. He is easily coaxed, however, onto the altar of meditation by those who establish the temple of God within themselves.

“The most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, ‘Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool: what house will ye build Me?’ saith the Lord: or ‘What is the place of My rest? Hath not My hand made all these things?’”³

In my early years of traveling and lecturing throughout the West, I was often struck by the contrast between the practice of religion as I learned it from God-knowing sages in India and the customary Western approach. God once showed me an illustrative vision:

In one place, there stood an immense temple, resplendent with marble decorations and a skyscraper golden dome, comfortably seating a congregation of ten thousand. Its walls echoed with organ music and a glorious choir chanting hymns to God. It was all impressive and enjoyable, and I appreciated and admired it.

Then God showed me sitting in meditation under a tree, beneath a canopy of free skies, with only a few true souls; His light was passing through all of us. God asked me which I would prefer, the magnificent church without Him or the tree-temple with Him. Without question, I chose to be under the tree enwrapped in God. He laughed, however, when I countered that some big buildings would be necessary for His work and that He could be in them as well as under the tree.

God is in the temple, and He is under the tree. But He is perceived only in interiorized meditation when the inner sanctuary door of silence opens. Neither pomp nor penury opens that door. It swings open wide, as if on magical hinges, when the high vibration of the worshiper’s soul turns the key.

Quiet mountaintops and holy places sanctified by the presence of masters are fit

places of worship, yet in themselves are of marginal benefit to restless materially minded people. Worldly people have built temples on hilltops and lived in places of pilgrimage, only to find that their inner environment is still a den of matter worship of sense-bound thoughts. That is why Jesus emphasized that true worship of God is not conditioned by location or found in the imaginary communion of mere outer silence, but takes place in the inner contact of spiritual perception.

Devotees who by meditation interiorize the outgoing consciousness, withdrawing their attention from identification with the mortal body and material Nature, discover through direct experience what God is. They alone know what it means truly to worship Him; they alone have found the way to attain salvation.



Salvation comes to all who have made sufficient spiritual effort

When Jesus said that “salvation is of the Jews,” he was not referring to the Jews as a nation, but to the exalted class or caste of spiritually developed souls. In India the highest caste, the Brahmins, originally designated those who knew God (Brahma). Hereditary membership in that caste is not a guarantee of such realization; only those who have made sufficient spiritual effort and have become knowers of God can rightfully lay claim to the title of Brahmin; and for them liberation is assured. So Jesus’ statement that salvation is of the Jews did not exclude the rest of mankind. He meant that salvation is for the spiritually exalted—the position, socially speaking, generally accorded to the Jews, who were held to represent the highest standard of spirituality in that place and time.⁴

Jesus said: “God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.”

The terms God and Spirit, theosophically speaking, are mutually exclusive, but are semantically interchangeable in common usage where no distinction is required.



Definitions of “God” and “Spirit”

Spirit signifies the unmanifested Absolute. In the darkless dark and lightless light of eternal infinity—void of even the slightest ripple of thought or vibratory activity to manifest creation; where even the categories of space, time, and dimension are nonexistent—there abides only ever-existing, ever-conscious, ever-new Bliss that is Spirit. “Where no sun or moon or fire shines, that is My Supreme Abode.”⁵

God implies the transcendental Creator, beyond creation but existing in relation to the manifestation that evolves from Him. When relative creation is dissolved again into its Creator, then God becomes Spirit, the unmanifested Absolute.⁶

God remains transcendental as both the source of cosmic becomings and immanent as their sum and substance. In manifesting creation, when Spirit becomes God the Creator, His transcendence is reflected in creation as the guiding Universal Intelligence. Thus, God is Divine Intelligence manifesting creation. Spirit is Divine Intelligence with creation dissolved in It. So, in truth, God is Spirit become the Father of creation. He is all things in creation; but the manifestations of creation are not God. His Spirit nature never changes, though a portion of that Consciousness is garbed in a delusive medley of diversification.



Worshipping “in spirit and in truth”

Since the waves of creation distort their oceanic Source in appearance, but not in essence, the true vision of God lies in the perception of the Spirit Ocean without the waves of creation—the realization of God as unmanifested Spirit: the only existing substance, Truth, without the delusion of matter or phenomena.

Jesus said that so long as a devotee’s consciousness is limited to manifested creation and its inherent delusion of separate things, he has not yet attained the ultimate enlightenment. He remains in delusion, his consciousness absorbed in ever-changing phenomena. Though God is manifest everywhere, His essence is secreted behind the veil of Nature’s phenomena. The devotee has to lift that illusory veil and see God first as transcendent in His creation. After that realization, the devotee can realize God as transcendent beyond manifestation.

Unless the devotee is able to perceive the Father of Creation as the unmanifested Absolute Spirit—pure, ever-conscious Bliss, without delusion’s shadows of imperfect creation—he does not know Truth, the noumenal Substance of all phenomena.

As Absolute Spirit is reflected as God’s guiding Intelligence in macrocosmic creation, so is Spirit reflected in the microcosm of the body as the soul, the individualized image of Spirit in man. The true worshiper, he who actually communes with God, who experiences His presence in meditative realization, knows the truth that his soul and God the Creator are reflections of Spirit.

This knowing involves another theosophical nuance. God, the Father of manifestation, can be known by the soul either by perception of or oneness with any of His manifested attributes. Spirit, the Unmanifested Absolute, can be known only by oneness with Spirit.



Personal attributes and manifestations of God

God, in relation to the soul, presumes a duality—the Object to be perceived, God; and the perceiver or experiencer, the soul. The spiritually awakening man seeks some familiarity, some tangibility, in his relationship with his Creator. He begins by personalizing God's Presence. In the Bhagavad Gita, the Lord promises: "In whatever way people are devoted to Me, in that measure I manifest Myself to them. All men, in every manner (of seeking Me), pursue a path to Me" (

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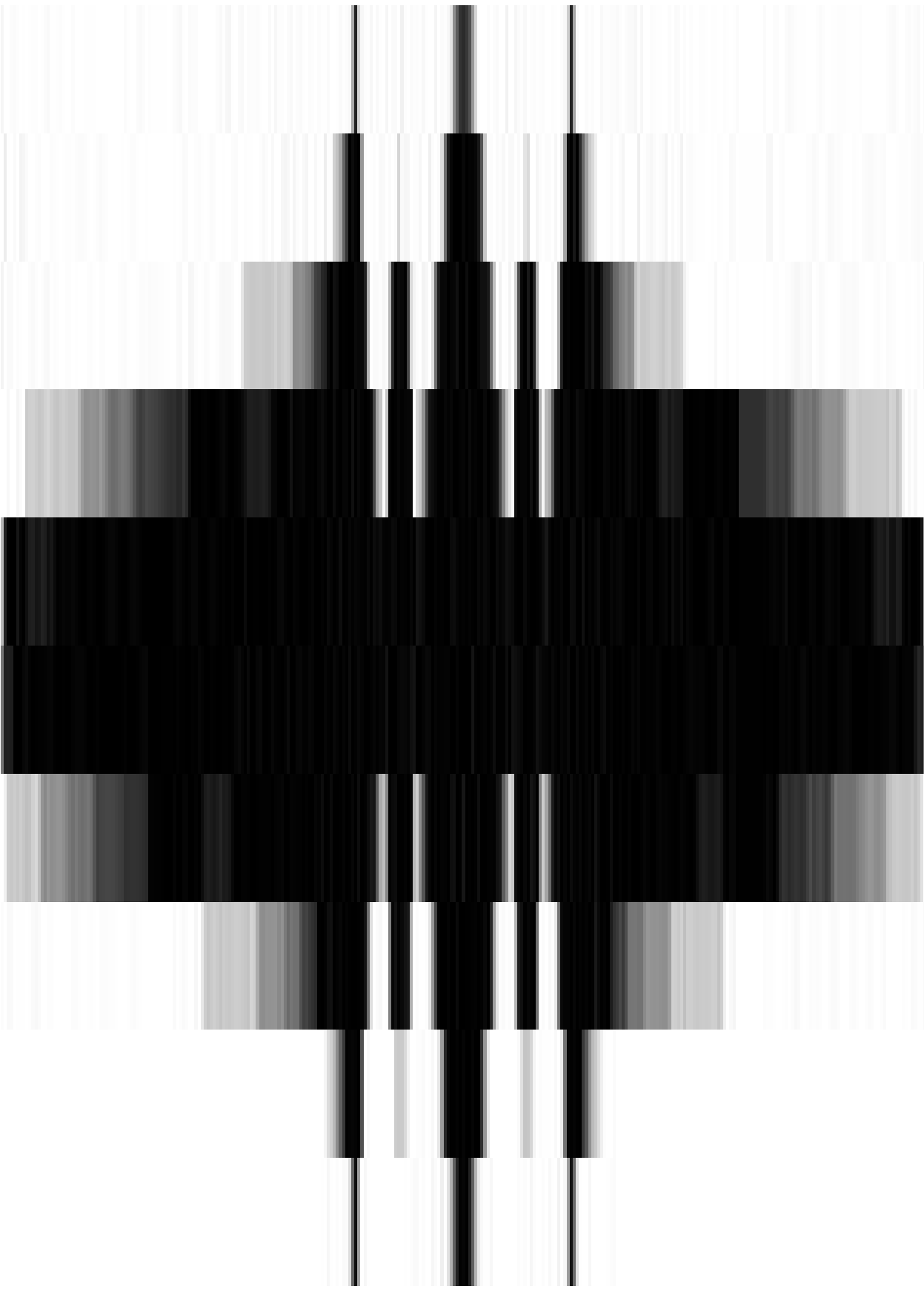
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The unmanifested Spirit as God makes His presence known to the devotee by manifesting some attribute of Divinity commensurate with the devotee's expectation. Jesus taught his followers to think of God as Father. In India it is more common to speak of God as Divine Mother. Saints of various persuasions have successfully communed with God by similarly idealizing other human relations—such as Friend or Beloved. It makes no difference. When I feel the gravity of wisdom, I speak of God as the Father. When I feel unbounded, unconditional love I call God Divine Mother. When I feel God as the nearest of the near, supporter and confidant, I call Him Friend.

Thus, it is a misnomer to refer to God always as "He." It is equally appropriate to call God "She." But in the ultimate, God is Spirit, neither masculine nor feminine. Spirit is above any human correlation. Similarly, the soul is neither male nor female, though karmic inclinations cause it to incarnate either with the body of a man or a woman.



The higher state of God-realization: oneness of the soul with Spirit

Any personalized communion with God or worship of a conceptualized aspect or attribute of Divinity maintains the duality of worshiper and Worshipped, the ecstatic relationship sometimes preferred by saints. But the even higher state referred to by Jesus, beyond dualistic devotion, is Oneness with the Object of worship, and specifically, the ultimate union: oneness of the soul with Spirit. God as Spirit, the Absolute, beyond form, qualities, manifestations, cannot be perceived, but only experienced by the supreme realization of Spirit and soul union. This ecstasy, a supernal Bliss that no human tongue can tell or rational thought conceive, is described simply by India's rishis: "He who knows, he knows; naught else knows."

God, being in truth the unmanifested Absolute, wants all His true devotees to know that they are emanations of that Spirit, and as such, to reunite with their immortal, ever conscious, pure Bliss-Essence. That is why Jesus said: "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him."

All devotees who worship God as the manifested Intelligence of creation—the guiding power within the universal laws and forces and forms of the cosmos—are gradually taught by Him, through awakening of the soul's intuition, to worship Him as the unmanifested Absolute, or Spirit. The link between the manifest and the Unmanifest is the Holy Ghost, the Holy Vibration of Aum; and the way to cross this bridge is by communion with that Holy Ghost Vibration.

In spiritual ecstasy the meditator perceives the individual vibration of his life and all lives as informed from the cosmic Holy Ghost, inherent in which is God's reflected Christ Intelligence, which in turn uplifts the consciousness into the transcendental Spirit.

Therefore, to truly worship God is to worship Him as transcendent Spirit in Nature and beyond Nature, to worship the Substance and Its presence in the delusive phenomena evolved from It, to worship the ocean of God with its delusive waves of creation⁷—and then to realize God solely as Spirit, the only existing substance, Truth, Bliss, without any delusive manifestation.

The persevering devotee advances in the realization that God is Spirit, the

Unmanifested Absolute, and understands the truth about Him as being the ever-existent, ever-conscious, ever-new Bliss without the delusion of a material cosmos. It is then that the devotee finds emancipation by becoming one with the Spirit. It is only by worshiping God and His presence in Nature, and then by worshiping God as unmanifested Spirit, by Spirit-and-soul union, that the devotee reaches the final state of emancipation, from which there is no fall.

In the brilliance of sunlight, one may close one's eyes and thereby create a darkness in which to live and move. But when the eyes are open, darkness is no more. So the consciousness of matter as the perdurable reality of existence is due to man's having closed his God-perceiving eye of wisdom. When the wisdom eye is opened, the consciousness of relativity of the pairs of opposites—birth and death, sorrow and pleasure, good and evil—disappear, and the Spirit, as ever-existing, ever-conscious ever-new Joy, is realized as the sole existent Substance.⁸ Then all creation, with its attendant evils, is found to be a manifestation of cosmic delusion; its darkness and fears created by closing the eyes in spiritual ignorance, and not by any absence of God's light, which is omnipresent and thus ever-present.

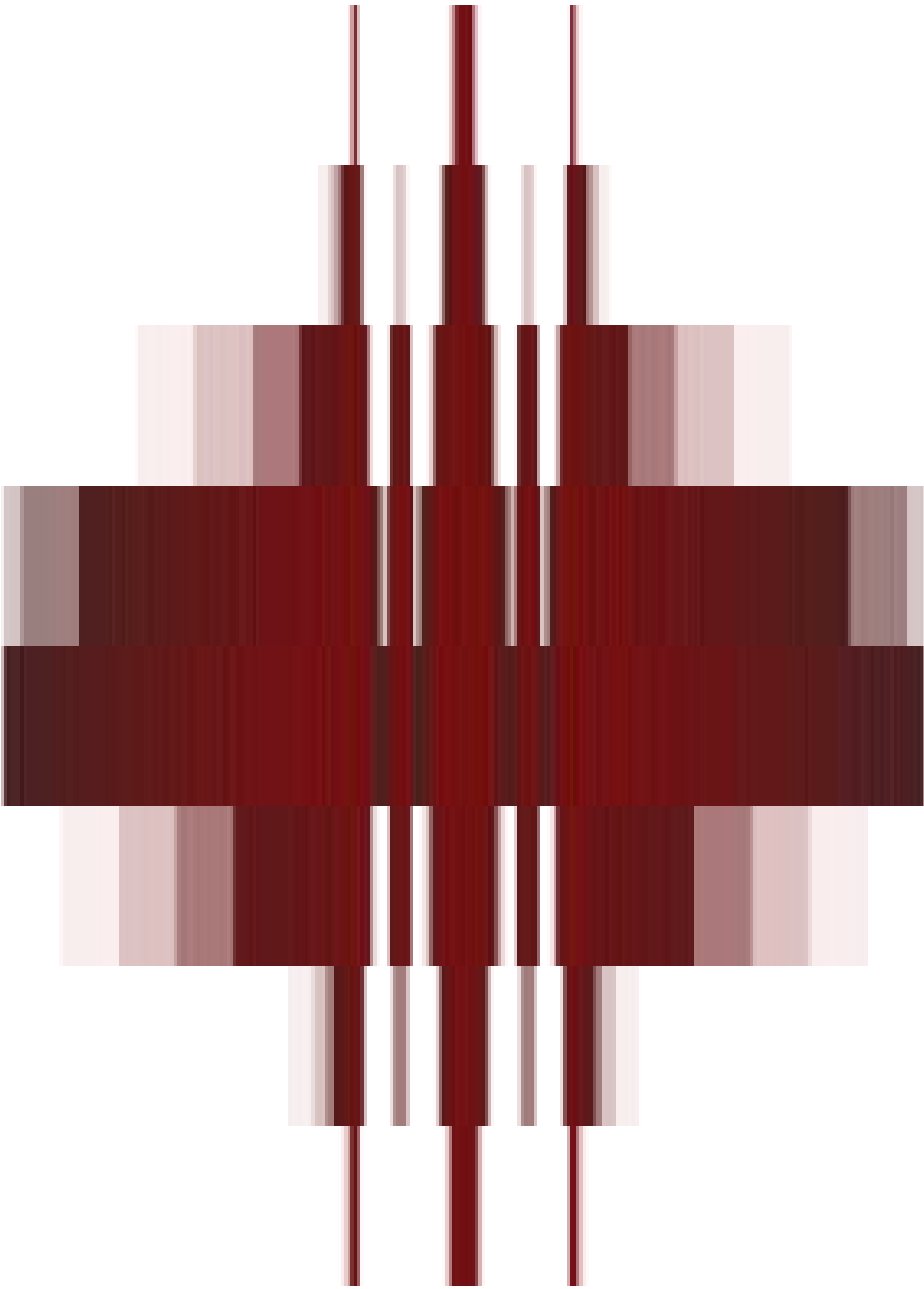
Learn to worship God in the temple of super-communion, or samadhi. In divine communion, the cosmos, like a shadow of darkness, dissolves as a non-existent illusion with the opening of the eye of wisdom to the light of the only existing Truth, Spirit, the ever blissful Absolute.



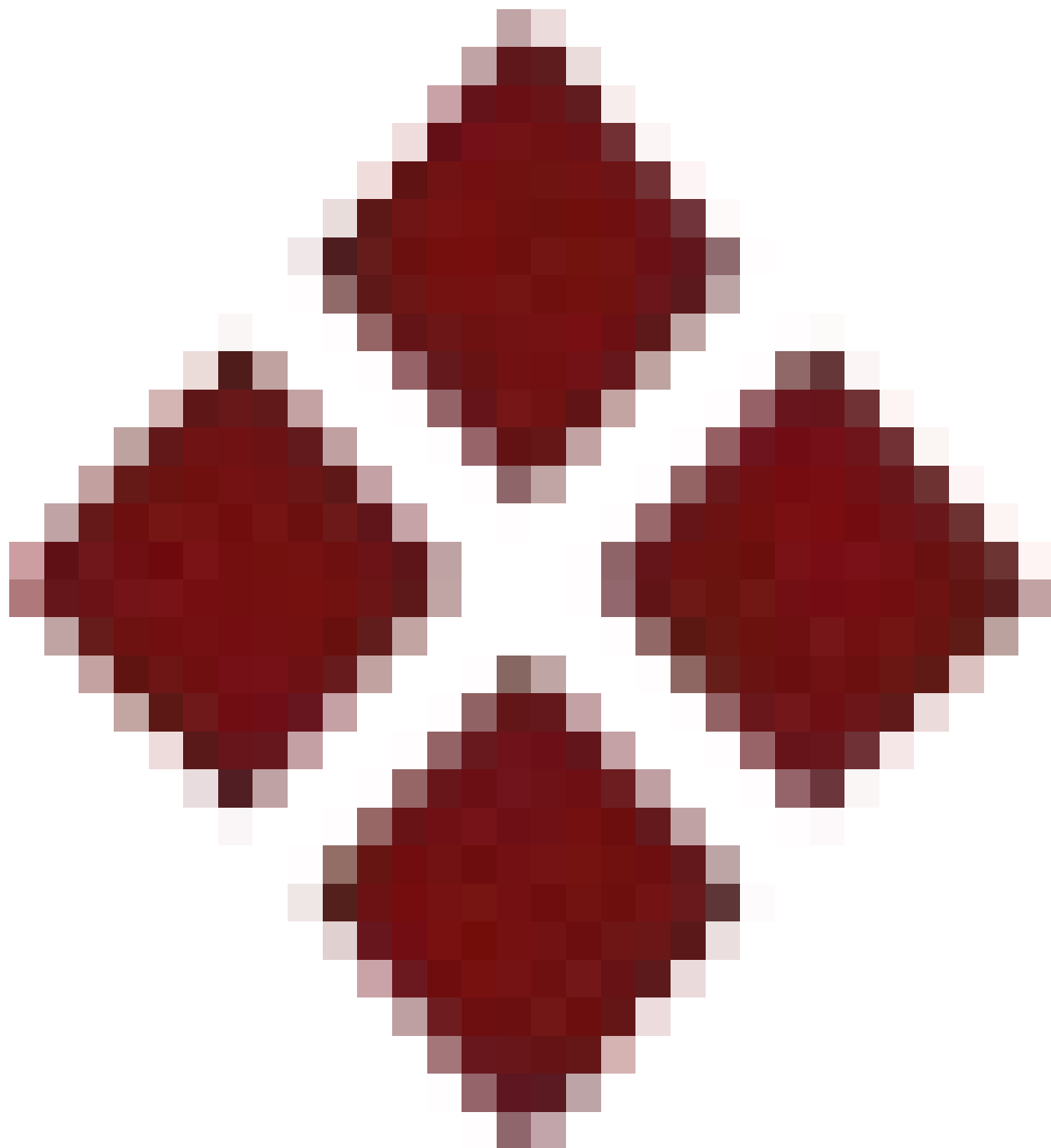
Discourse 19

“My Meat Is to Do the Will of Him That Sent Me”

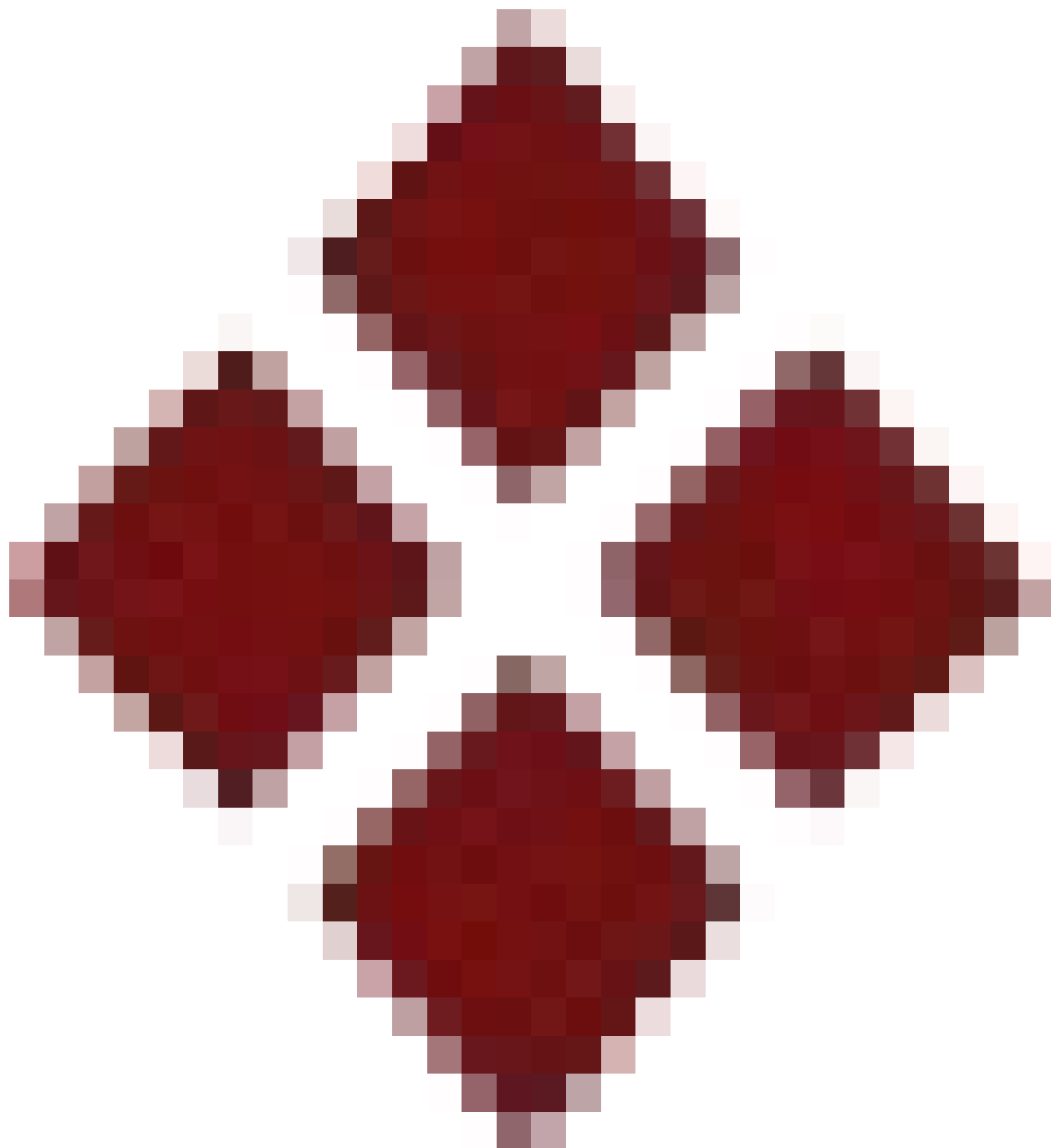
The Woman of Samaria, Part III (Conclusion)



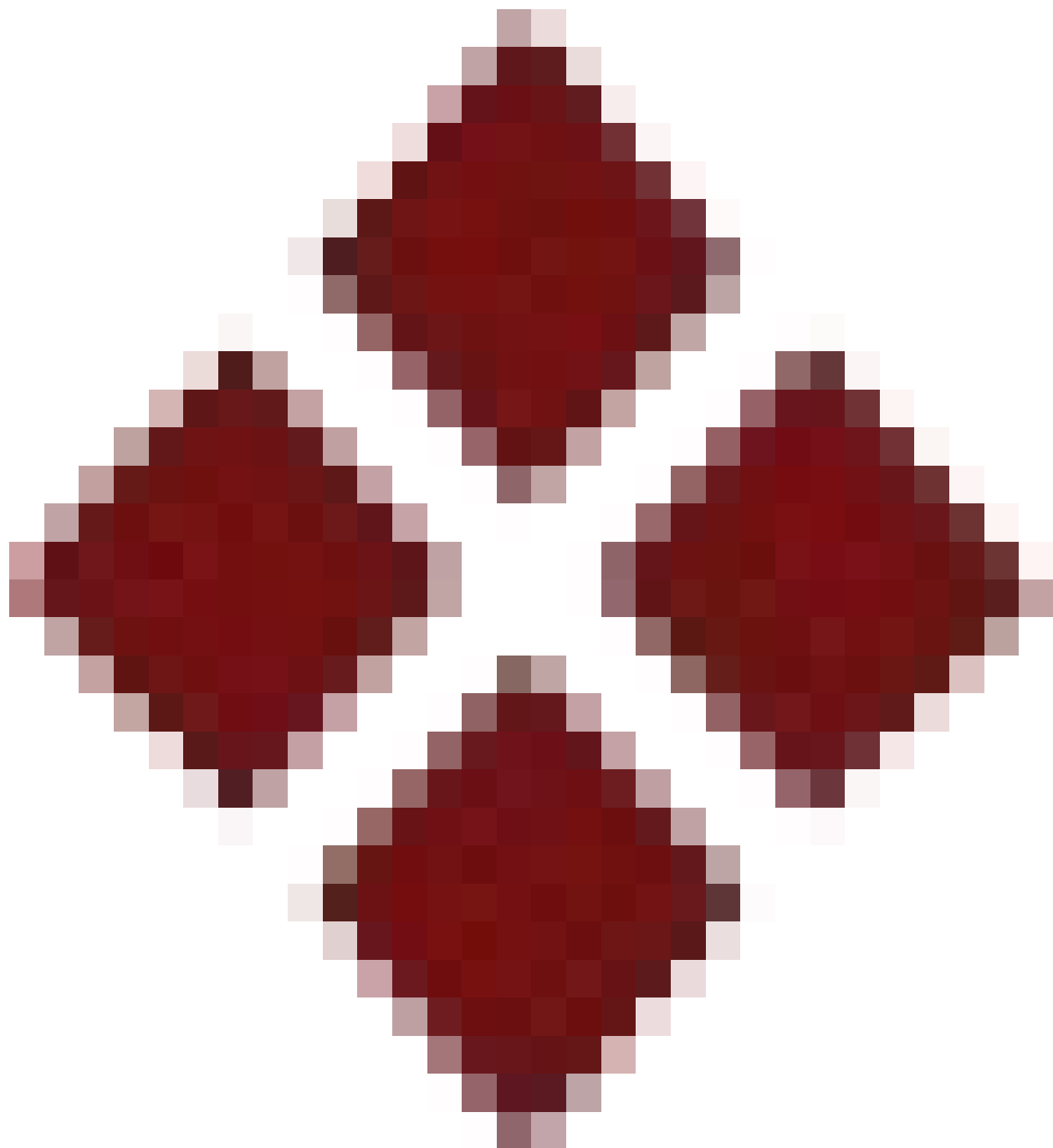
Overcoming the Delusion That Man Is Essentially a Physical Being



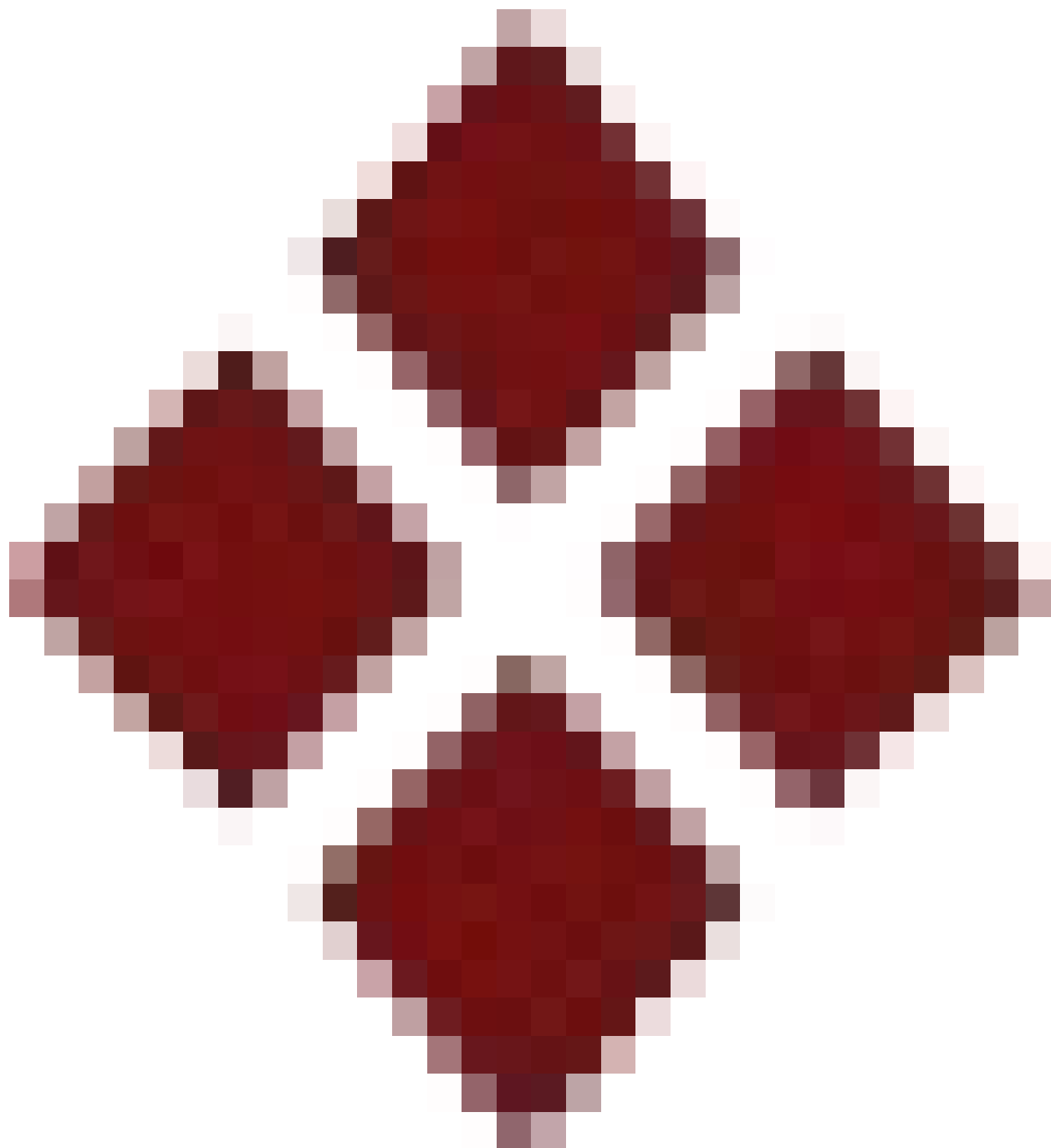
**Become Attuned to God's Will: In the World but Not
of the World**



**Discovering God's Will for One's Destined Role
According to the Divine Plan**



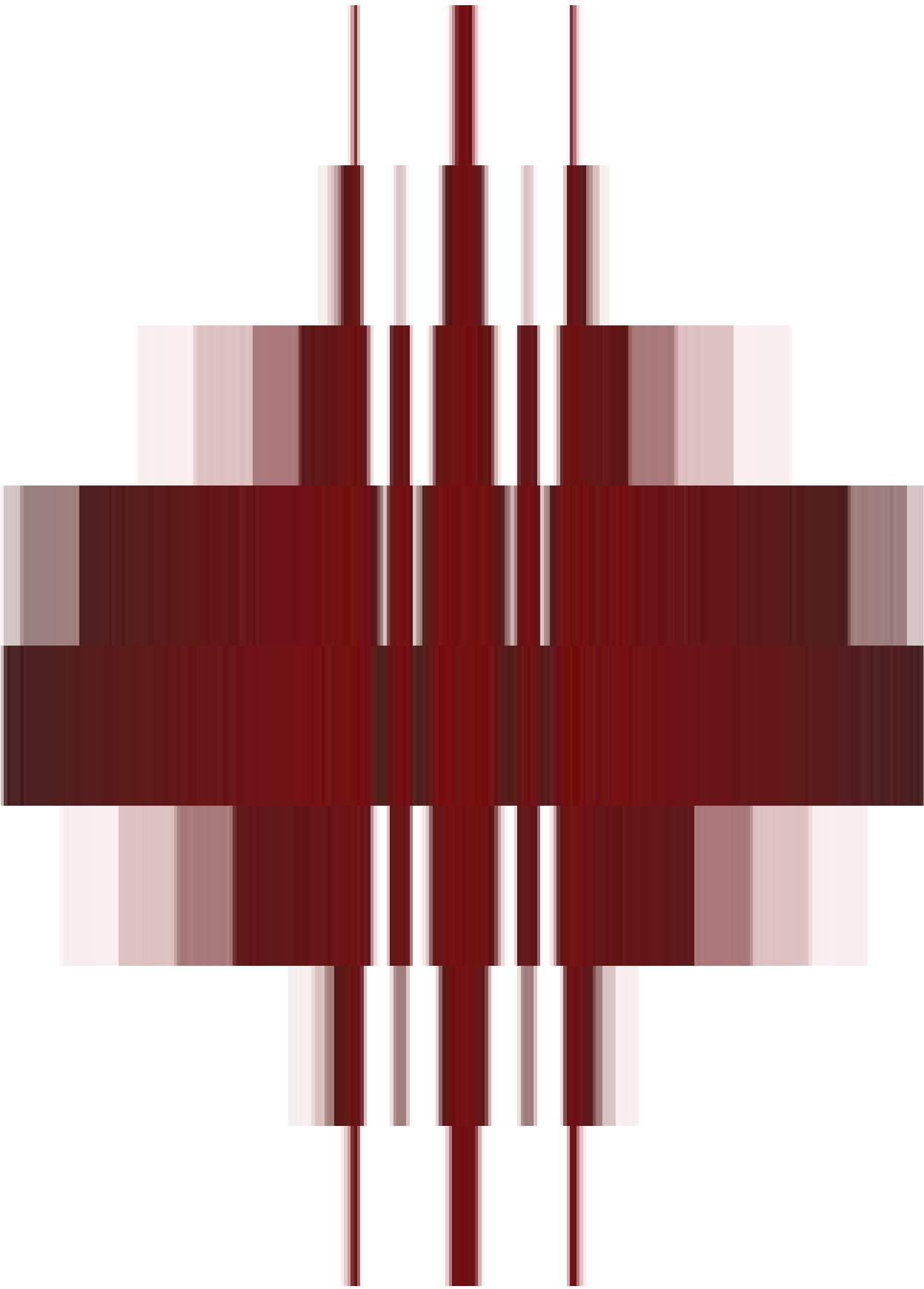
**The Soul Needs Nothing but to Remember the Divine
Wealth It Already Possesses**



Human Life Is Affected by Mass Karma as Well as Individual Karma



Should a Spiritual Teacher Use Advertising and Publicity?



“Cheerful cooperation with God’s will is the secret of a dynamic existence, charging body and mind with divine life....That is why Jesus wished to show the disciples that the consciousness of man should not be predominantly on a material diet, but on the nourishment of divine wisdom.”

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The woman saith unto him, "I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things."

Jesus saith unto her, "I that speak unto thee am he."

And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, "What seekest thou?" or, "Why talkest thou with her?"

The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.

In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, "Master, eat."

But he said unto them, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of."

Therefore said the disciples one to another, "Hath any man brought him ought to eat?"

Jesus saith unto them, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work. Say not ye, 'There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest'? Behold, I say unto you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. And herein is that saying true, 'One soweth, and another reapeth.' I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours."

And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, "He told me all that ever I did."

So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days. And many more believed because of his own word; and said unto the woman, "Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."

—*John 4:25 – 42*



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Discourse 19

“My Meat Is to Do the Will of Him That Sent Me”

The Woman of Samaria, Part III (Conclusion)



The woman saith unto him, “I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.”

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The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, “Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?” Then they went out of the city, and came unto him (John 4:25 – 30).

Having unconsciously received the telepathic message of the presence of God and Christ Consciousness emanating from Jesus as to his spiritual identity, the woman of Samaria said: “I know that the Messiah cometh.” Diffidently, she was seeking some response from Jesus in confirmation of her inner feeling that he indeed might be the long-awaited Messiah.

Great saints, free of even the subtlest wish for celebrity, often keep their godliness intentionally hidden most of the time, revealing their eminence only as prompted by the Divine Will to accomplish some specific purpose related to their mission. Their full spiritual stature may not be recognized even by those mixing intimately with them. God wanted to declare the glory of Jesus through the woman of Samaria, who, having been spiritually healed by him of her entrenched immoral tendencies, was to serve as a “test case” demonstrating to others the miracle of soul healing. To remove the ignorance that eclipses man’s divine nature is the most important of all forms of healing; that is the blessing Jesus would impart to all who attuned themselves with the Christ in him.

Jesus reinforced the glimmer of understanding in the woman by declaring the

truth about himself. His purpose was to deepen her receptivity to the all-healing Christ Consciousness in him. Jesus saw her alone because, considerate as he was, he wanted to avoid causing embarrassment to the woman by revealing before his other disciples his prophetic knowledge of her moral indiscretions.

God has given to each human being the privacy of thought in which to fight his inner battles in secret instead of before others' curiosity and prying, prompting their sarcasm and condemnation. If there were not invisible walls between our mental processes and those of others, we would have no peace; and we would lose, to a large degree, our independence of thought and determination and thus the right to receive our own knocks and score our own victories.

One may get inklings of the thoughts of others from the expressions of their faces and eyes. This makes the mystery of life all the more challenging and interesting; for many times their thoughts are read correctly. Yet people frequently jump to conclusions about the feelings and motives of others and make horrible blunders. One's mistakes in such psychological reading should teach a prudent caution and prevent overconfidence in the sufficiency of one's "intuitions"; that misguided surety often arises prematurely from one or two correct hunches about the thoughts of others.

Even a master does not intrude with his intuitive perception into the mind of another if his help is unwelcome. He leaves the touch-me-not temperament to its own devices of conscience and karma. But Jesus found no such exclusion from the consciousness of his Samaritan disciple.

The disciples traveling with Jesus, lacking his ability to discern the inner quality of souls, were surprised to see him flouting convention by his warm demeanor toward a common woman of Samaria. Yet the pure vibrations of their newfound Master quelled any expression of criticism. That is why nobody asked: "Why talkest thou with her?" Perhaps to the modern mind of a world society this instance seems unworthy of remark, but to those cultures of the past, persisting in some closed regions even today, such rigid social structure was considered of great consequence, the material and psychological backbone of both nations and provinces. "Caste," in whatever form, is a divisive evil that deeply embeds itself in the ego of man; but it cedes its power to the wisdom and soul magnanimity of one such as Christ.

The woman of Samaria was so overwhelmed by the power of her meeting with

Jesus that, returning to the city in a state of divine joy, she spoke freely of her past moral blemishes and of the wonderful soul-healing she had received from Jesus, exhorting the townspeople to come with her to meet him. She thus became the first among the general populace to act as a public messenger to declare Jesus the Christ.



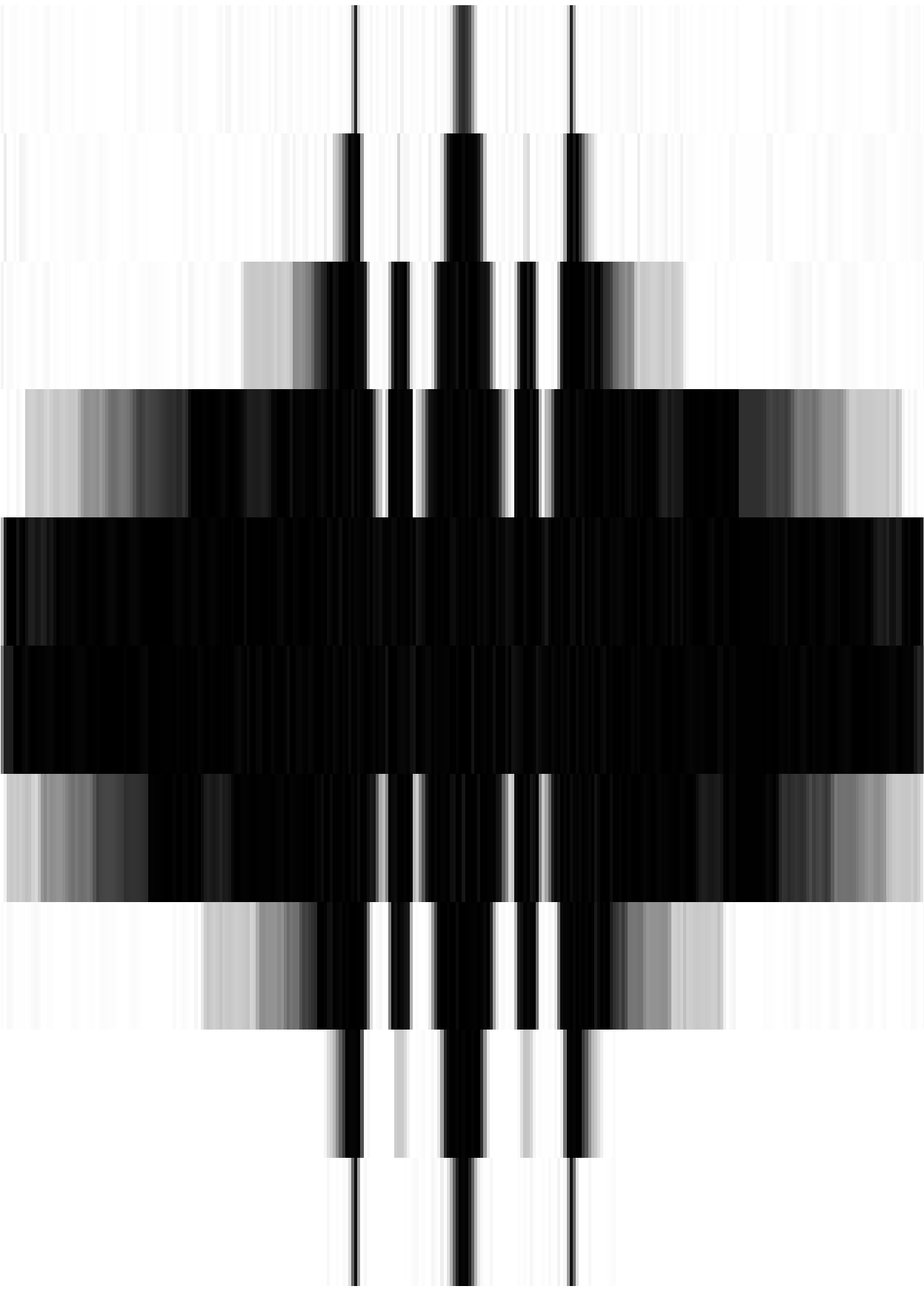
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But he said unto them, “I have meat to eat that ye know not of.”

Therefore said the disciples one to another, “Hath any man brought him ought to eat?”

Jesus saith unto them, “My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work” (John 4:31 – 34).

When the Samaritan woman left to bring the townspeople to Jesus, his disciples offered him food they had brought from the city. But Jesus demurred: “I have meat to eat that ye know not of.”¹ The disciples incorrectly presumed that Jesus had already been given food by someone else; but he explained: “My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me and to finish His work.” The mind of Jesus was in an exalted state, attuned with the divine power of Christ Consciousness that had filled and nourished his own body when he healed the woman of Samaria. At such times, the Divine Satiety in a master laughs at the delusive “necessity” of supplying the body with the insipid grossness of material sustenance. Jesus felt his life coming directly from God—as he had said before: “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”² Every moment he was conscious of that connection. He knew himself as a soul; the only “meat” it needed for nourishment was the blessedness and eternal wisdom of God.



Overcoming the delusion that man is essentially a physical being

Jesus was also trying to heal the spiritual ignorance of his disciples: the delusion that man is essentially a physical being. When a master is with his disciples, he makes use of every opportunity, no matter how significant or insignificant, to help them spiritualize their consciousness. No lapse into identification with accustomed mortal habits is too trite to warrant correction. The untangling of delusion's net is achieved one knot at a time. Jesus wanted the disciples, first and foremost, to think of the body as an instrument for doing the will of God, even as he was demonstrating by his example that the sole purpose for his life on earth was to finish whatever work God wished him to do. The secondary concern is to care for the body only as necessary to maintain it as a fit instrument.

Ordinary food temporarily nourishes the perishable body and gives it a passing pleasure arising from the sense of taste. But even if a person were to sate himself with any and all food he desired, still his hunger would burn; man cannot appease the hunger of the soul by satisfying the desires of the body. Jesus was telling his disciples that although they had brought food for his human body—the token need for which he did not deny—his real Self tasted the ever-satisfying, eternally nourishing manna of Divine Wisdom and celestial ever-new Bliss.

The disciples had been drawn to Jesus that they might learn how to nourish their souls. So Jesus spoke to them of the supremely sustaining “meat” of wisdom. When man is not guided by wisdom, material food does not even sustain the body: By wrong dietary choices or overeating people may forfeit their physical health and comfort.

In the homes of most materially minded persons in the West, the occupants wake up in the morning with the consciousness of a cup of coffee, toast, and ham and eggs, and go to sleep at night with their minds on the heavy beefsteak dinner they have eaten. In spiritual homes in India, the first thought in the morning is of drinking the nectar of peace from the bowl of deep contemplation; and at night, before retiring, they sit quietly in meditation to hear the voice of Divine Peace singing softly, inviting them to rest on the bosom of Divine Peace.

As long as one is identified with the body, he is tempted to seek happiness in

fulfilling its desires and appetites. He dreams of being a millionaire, of having a luxurious home, expensive cars, and the best meals money can buy. However, even a cursory observation of those who have these things dispels their illusory sufficiency. Material surfeit attracts swarming pests of worry, restlessness, boredom, psychological and spiritual dissatisfaction. Upon wakening in the morning, and at night before going to sleep, and at mealtime, people should rid their consciousness of the material pestilence with the thought of God.



Become attuned to God's will: in the world but not of the world

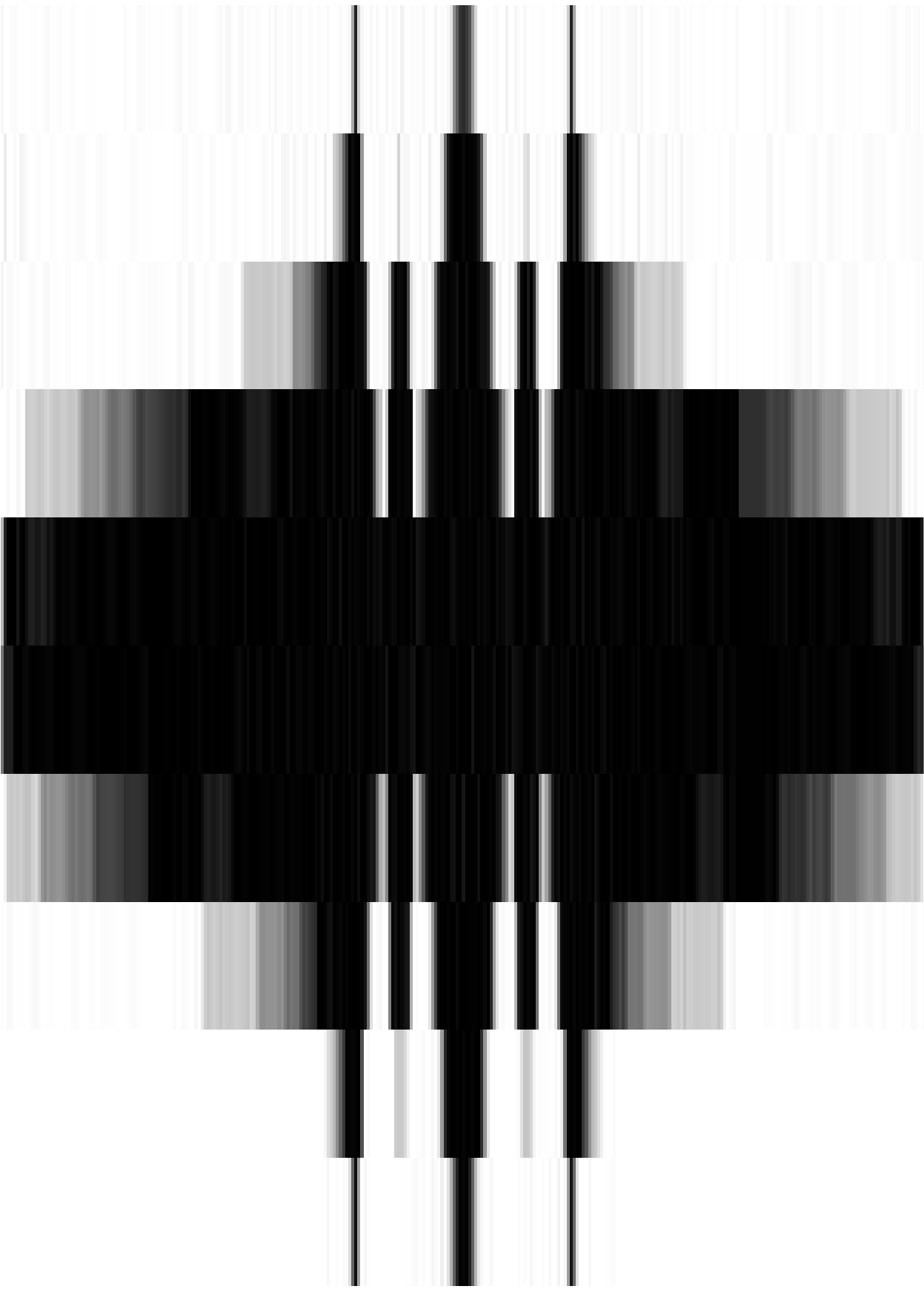
Seeking in deep meditation to become attuned to God's will enables one to be in the world but not of the world. To remain unattached, like the dewdrop on the lotus leaf, is to be really happy, ready to slip the consciousness into God. As a dewdrop cannot slide on blotting paper, so the mind of the average person cannot readily slide into thoughts of God if it is absorbed in an inner environment of earthly desires or an outer environment of materially minded companions.

The way to remain spiritually free and nonattached is to realize that this earth belongs solely to God. All of man's so-called possessions are loaned to him only that he may play a role in this colossal drama of life. None of the props belongs to man, not even his body, which is but a temporary costume that must be surrendered when his particular part in the drama is over and God calls him behind the curtain of death. Until man's histrionics are finished, happiness lies in perfecting his performance, without personal attachment, according to the promptings of the Divine Director. The will of God is to plan for every actor the best finale; in that lies the true joy of living.

Thus Jesus said that as food is the pleasurable sustenance that man depends on for life, so the relish that supported the vitality of his life consisted in doing the will of God—cheerfully, willingly, not like a puppet. Cheerful cooperation with God's will is the secret of a dynamic existence, charging body and mind with divine life. Man is made of the blissful consciousness of God, and lives by that Consciousness. The more cheerful a person is, the more his positive thoughts draw vitality into his body cells from the abundance of Divine Consciousness. One who allows the episodes of life to make his mind habitually cross and moody finds his bodily energies depressed accordingly, no matter how much or what type of food he eats. That is why Jesus emphasized to his disciples that the consciousness of man should not be predominantly on a material diet, but on the nourishment of divine wisdom. That wisdom which feeds man's body with vitality, his mind with invulnerability, and his soul with celestial bliss is to do the will of God.

As prophets are sent on earth to fill a world need according to the Lord's cosmic plan, Jesus knew the stupendous mission he had to perform, and the possible consequences that could come to him as a result of his actions. Yet he was

sustained in the peace and joy of his commitment “to do the will of Him that sent me.” “To finish His work” signifies finishing, in the short span that was left to him, the God-given task that was his part to carry out during his incarnation as Jesus—not the completion of the work of redemption, which God and His avatars have to carry on throughout eternity.



Discovering God's will for one's destined role according to the divine plan

Every human being has a unique part in the drama of life, destined according to that individual's self-created karmic pattern. God has so choreographed the divine plan that each part is important, whether one appears on the earth stage as sovereign or servant. All roles are needed for the show to go on. No one should feel unworthy if one's present incarnation is not a starring role. It should be played with wisdom, nonattachment, and inner freedom, remembering that Reality lies not in but beyond the tragicomic scenes of life and death.

If one is disgruntled with his designated role and rejects the scenes that are karmically necessary to him, attempting instead a part more appealing to his desires, he disrupts the cosmic harmony and spoils the better drama God's love and laws had scripted for him. That is the fate of most human players on the stage of life. They follow not the wisdom will of the Divine Director but their own blind will. Thus they turn their scenes into tiresome tragedies. They have to reappear on stage incarnation after incarnation until they become perfected thespians in the Lord's cosmic entertainment. Heeding Divine Direction, they ennoble the drama and earn liberation.

It is easy to do what one wants to do, but difficult to do what one should do. How may one even know the will of God as to what one should do? So many have told me that they are divinely guided; but I know they are not, because I see they have not even communed with God. So how could they be guided by Him? I try to warn them; but when they are immovably fixed in the delusion that they know God's will, I have then to remain silent and watch the ego make a mess of their determinations. It is often a sad spectacle.

Of course, through prayer and meditation and faith one does get some inner spiritual sense of direction. No one should be without this attunement. But to be consciously guided by God, rather than by the manipulative rationalizations of one's desires or whims or habits, is another matter, of deeper realization. For most people, the will of God is best understood through a God-sent guru. Guru is one who knows God, and who shows the way to Him. To follow a divine manifestation is the sure way to God-realization. One who knows God becomes the speaking voice of the silent God. Attunement with the wisdom-guided will of a true guru teaches one how to guide his will according to God's will. Those who

follow the voice of their own ego, ascribing to it a halo of divine guidance, find out too late that no amount of deluded rationalization will relieve one of the karmic responsibility of wrong actions. To be led by an ego-bound will is to stumble into painful delusive entanglements. Do not remain entangled! Be free!

The will of God is to free every soul. Man's part is to cooperate with that purpose by living in harmony with God's laws as defined by a God-realized guru. Man thereby learns his destined purpose and understands what God wants him to do with his life. Acting accordingly, he "finishes God's work" that is his unique assignment on the stage of incarnation. With Christ, he ingests the "meat" of wisdom and becomes an instrument in fulfilling the Divine Will.



“Say not ye, ‘There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest’? Behold, I say unto you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. And herein is that saying true, ‘One soweth, and another reapeth.’ I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours” (John 4:35 – 38).

Mortal life is governed by the law of karma: “As you sow, so shall you reap.” In this passage, however, Jesus used the parable of the sower, the laborer, the harvesting time, and the harvest to illustrate that the immortal soul of man, a reflection of transcendent Spirit, is above creation’s cause-and-effect subjugation. To one who is identified with his assumed mortal nature, the karmic law metes out wisdom and happiness only according to one’s earned merit. One who is identified with Spirit reaps without measure the infinite wealth of Divinity.



The soul needs nothing but to remember the divine wealth it already possesses

Thus did Jesus elucidate the superior law of the Divine Harvest: In ordinary farming there is a great deal of labor, and the harvest comes in about four months after planting; but Jesus said that reaping divine abundance is not a matter of laboring, waiting, and finally acquiring the spiritual harvest. The soul need acquire nothing. As a child of God, it needs only to remember what it already possesses in latent form: its infinite wisdom-inheritance from the Divine Father. The moment man's consciousness transcends body identification into Self-realization, the soul's contact with God becomes manifest, its God-essence revealed from beneath the wisdom-seared veil of ignorance.³

Human wisdom has to be cultivated gradually through the instrumentality of the senses and rational intelligence; but the measureless harvest of divine wisdom can be reaped instantaneously through the medium of intuition, developed by meditation. Jesus exhorted his followers, "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields," for all one has to do is to lift the consciousness from the plain of material vibrations to the ever-ready harvest of wisdom, glistening on the pure white fields of Cosmic Consciousness. The two physical eyes see only material Nature. Raising the gaze and consciousness in deep meditation to the third eye of spiritual perception, the aspirant beholds in the starry white light of soul realization the wisdom- and bliss-abundance that is his divine birthright—long forgotten, never lost, and instantly reclaimable.

As the darkness of closed eyes is dispelled immediately when one opens his eyes, so the instant one opens his eye of wisdom, the gloom of ignorance is banished and he beholds himself as a perfect soul in the light of God. This is a great consolation, for to reach perfection through the karmic consequential process of trial and error seems a near impossibility, requiring countless incarnations. Man must labor to acquire prosperity, wisdom, and happiness; a Self-realized child of God, reclaiming his divine inheritance, already possesses everything.

So much effort is required to reap a harvest of material worth—a relative waste of time when one must inevitably lose, sooner or later, all that has been acquired. Jesus points out that it is far better to make the effort to know what one already possesses as a divine child. The soul that has cast off its mortality claims its

birthright and enjoys throughout eternity the harvest of Bliss in God.

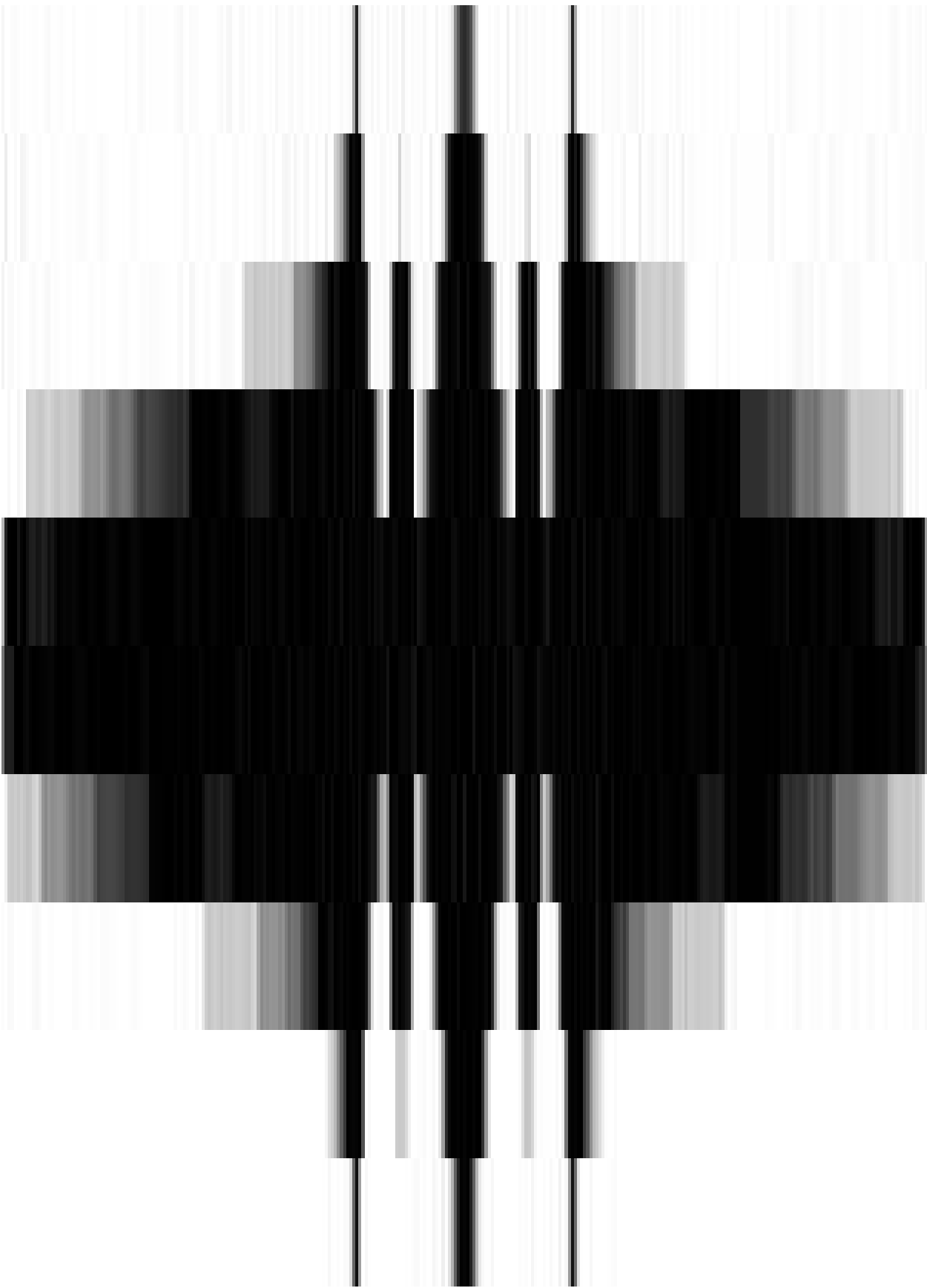
Material habits and indolence cause many otherwise spiritually inclined persons to say: “Well, it takes prodigious effort to be spiritual.” I say: “No.” The only effort we have to make is to forget our unspiritual mortal consciousness; as soon as that is done, we know we are gods. “He that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal.” He who reaps soul knowledge through meditation receives the wages of Divine Wisdom, and gathers the resultant fruits of immortal, ever new Bliss.

“That both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together” signifies that God, as the Sower of Wisdom in souls, is pleased when He finds that His true children reap the harvest grown by Him, and not the harvest of evil sown and reaped by mortal ignorance.

“One soweth and another reapeth” can be interpreted on two levels of meaning: first, as relating to the harvest in man’s soul; and second, as relating to man’s influence on his fellow beings in the world.

Primarily, Jesus’ words signify that God is the Sower, the sole Source, of wisdom, and that His children have only to reap what He has already grown for them in their souls. God sent human beings on earth to reap the soul harvest of wisdom and bliss, for which no human effort was made. In the world, just forgetting that one lives in poverty does not make one rich; one has to work to acquire material wealth. But as God’s children, the moment in deep meditation that they forget their self-created mortal consciousness, they immediately become divine, spiritually enriched with their endowment from God.

“Other men laboured and ye are entered into their labours” means that worldly persons labor for perishable material acquisitions and for unfulfilling and unrealistic goals; God’s devotees should not foolishly imitate them. For all people to become in this lifetime as rich as a Henry Ford would be impossible, because of the limitations of earthly existence. But every human being has the potential to become Christlike in one life by proper meditation, because all are already sons of God, made in His image. By meditation and calmness, man opens his agelong closed eyes of wisdom. The light of awakening actualizes his latent potentials, and he finds himself one with the Owner of the entire cosmos.



Human life is affected by mass karma as well as individual karma

The fruits of one's spiritual awakening are a blessing not only on one's own life, but on the world at large. This is the second meaning of "one soweth and another reapeth": a reference to mass karma. Every person sows good or bad actions in the soil of his life, and not only does he himself reap the karmic harvest of those actions, but he makes others reap them as well. If a person writes a degrading novel, all who read it reap the evil effects of the author's thoughts. The law of cause and effect operates in even subtler ways as well. The actions of each individual leave electromagnetic etchings in his brain, influencing his future actions; and they also leave vibrational traces in the ether, which register in and influence the minds of others.

In Mysore I visited a sandalwood factory; each piece and shaving of sandalwood contributes to the atmosphere of the whole place, and anyone who enters enjoys the wonderful fragrance. Similarly, when I come to our Self-Realization Fellowship temples, there are so many good souls earnestly seeking God that I feel the spiritual vibration emanating from their collective goodness. Conversely, a gathering of persons given to drinking and rowdyism would produce a strong negative atmosphere.

The overall quality and character of any community, any civilization, is produced by mass karma, the accumulated effects of actions left in the ether by the populace in general. Each individual is responsible for contributing to the mass karma, which in turn influences every individual.

The person who keeps himself cleansed of all wrong vibrations produces a powerful uplifting effect on his contemporaries. One moon gives more luster than all the stars; so a moonèd soul—one who purely reflects the light of God—can influence the masses much more than the masses influence each other. Thus, individual effort can be even more important than mass karma. One who in every way tries to uplift himself, harmonizing body, mind, and soul with the Divine, creates positive karma not only in his own life, but in his family, neighborhood, country, and world. Hence it is not justified to say, "Thousands of people are misbehaving, so what does it matter if I am, too?" No! The goodness of one soul may effectively neutralize the mass karma of millions.

Such was the accomplishment of Mahatma Gandhi: he brought freedom to

400

million people by his spiritual influence. He was scoffed at and spent many years in prison, but still he went on. Ultimately, his spirit of righteousness triumphed, and he became instrumental in freeing India by peaceful means. His life stands as a monumental example of the practical application of Christ's doctrines. Because one individual sowed goodness, millions reaped that goodness and freedom.

Each drop of water contributes to the existence of the ocean. So even if one's life seems no more than a droplet in the sea of humanity, that life can have a significant influence. One who makes himself godlike automatically uplifts countless others on the divine path. One who makes himself evil demotes others from the spiritual plane by a negative effect on their potential weaknesses. He who has reformed himself has reformed thousands; for what one sows in the ether, by the vibrations of his thoughts and character, others will surely reap.



And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, “He told me all that ever I did.”

So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days. And many more believed because of his own word; and said unto the woman, “Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world” (John 4:39 – 42).

Many Samaritans were roused to belief in Jesus because of the testimony of the woman he had spiritually healed. True testimonials from benefited students as to their master's qualities enable him to become known to others so that he can serve them through the power of his wisdom.



Should a spiritual teacher use advertising and publicity?

Advertising and publicity of spiritual teachings is deplorable when tainted with commerciality or selfish motive by teachers who feign an ability to impart wisdom to others but never practice the lofty principles they preach. To wantonly promote spiritual quackery is despicable. But to use whatever media are available to draw the attention of people to a usable, beneficial spiritual teaching or teacher is admirable. Word-of-mouth was the primary medium of “publicity” in the time of Jesus. Even flowers advertise by their fragrance, calling people to come near and bathe in the fountain of sweetness. Similarly, by the perfume of their holiness, real spiritual teachers draw eager souls to divine teachings. They convey the value of their services principally through personal example, not merely through eloquent promises or easily dispensed advice.

Jesus attracted multitudes by demonstrating his divine power, not as a matter of ostentatious display, but in the cause of helping the spiritually, mentally, and physically sick. He also attracted people by the fragrance of divine love and magnetism that saturated his lotus soul. That is the best kind of advertisement.

When the fragrance of a flower is experienced by a few and then described to those who have not yet discovered its sweetness, the latter are able to seek out that beauty and savor it themselves. A spiritual man who remained unknown, enjoying God in solitude, would be like a fragrant blossom “born to blush and die unseen.” Truly advanced souls, no matter how much they love seclusion, never selfishly fail to serve others with the solace of their acquired wisdom. Great saints who experience the intoxicating joy of God-contact love to share that joy and to exercise their spiritual healing powers for the sake of worthy seekers.⁴ This serves a double purpose: Those in need receive healing; and when they feel better they broadcast, with the sincerity born of personal experience, their teacher’s ability to serve and to heal, so that others may likewise receive.

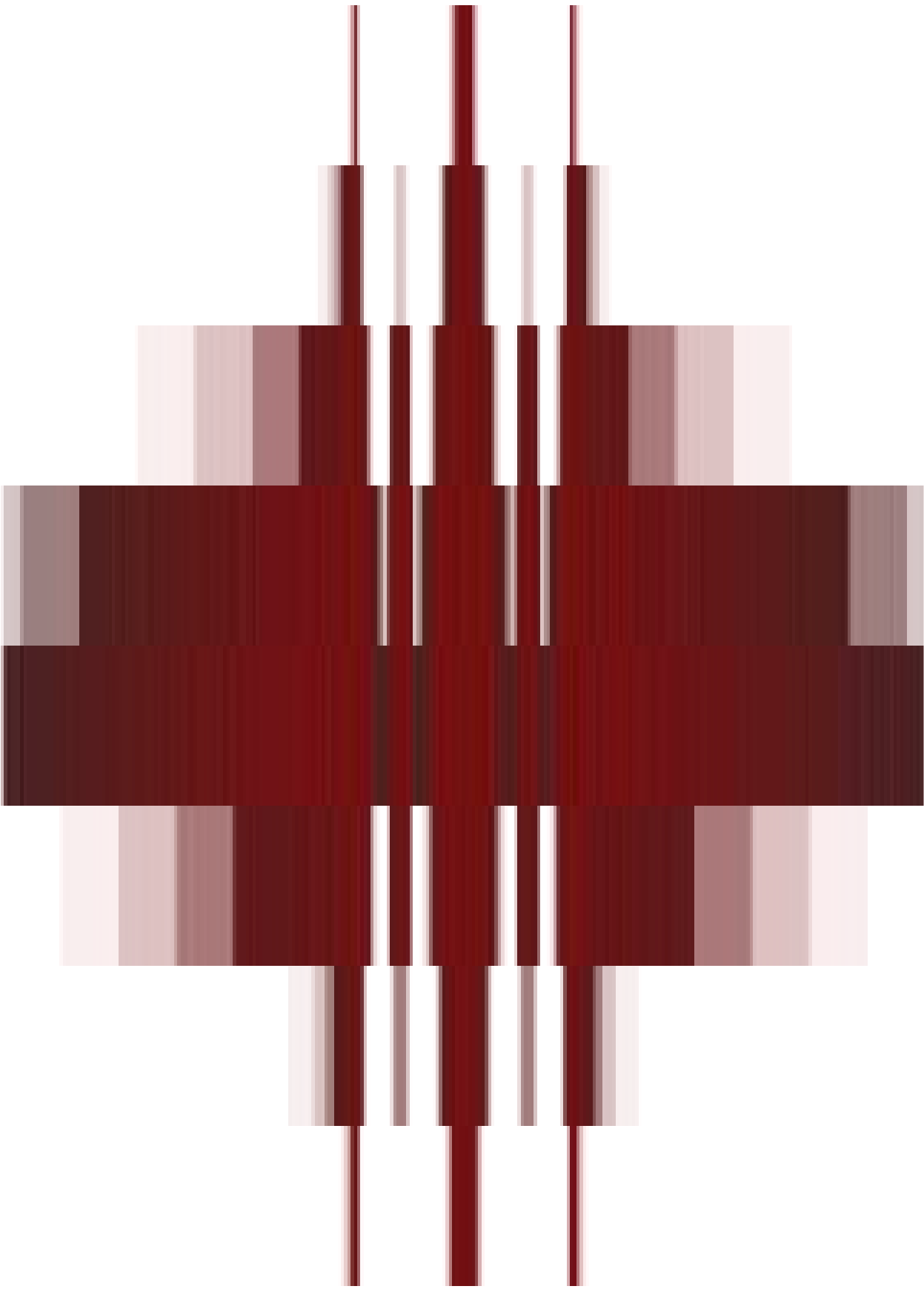
Jesus, actuated by Divine Will in healing the woman of Samaria, thereby drew many souls to God through the instrumentality of her convincing encomium: “Many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman....When the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days.”

Many persons are initially attracted to a teacher through the testimonials of benefited followers, but others have the keen perception to recognize and believe in him by tuning in with his emanating spiritual vibrations. In Samaria some were convinced not by the woman's enthusiasm, but by going to Jesus themselves and feeling his divinity: "Now we believe...for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world." Having been introduced to a teacher or a path, earnest seekers should then fully satisfy their hearts by attunement with the teacher and application of his teaching. Convictions become firmly based, not on the uncertain foundation of hearsay, but on the indestructible rock of personally experienced wisdom.

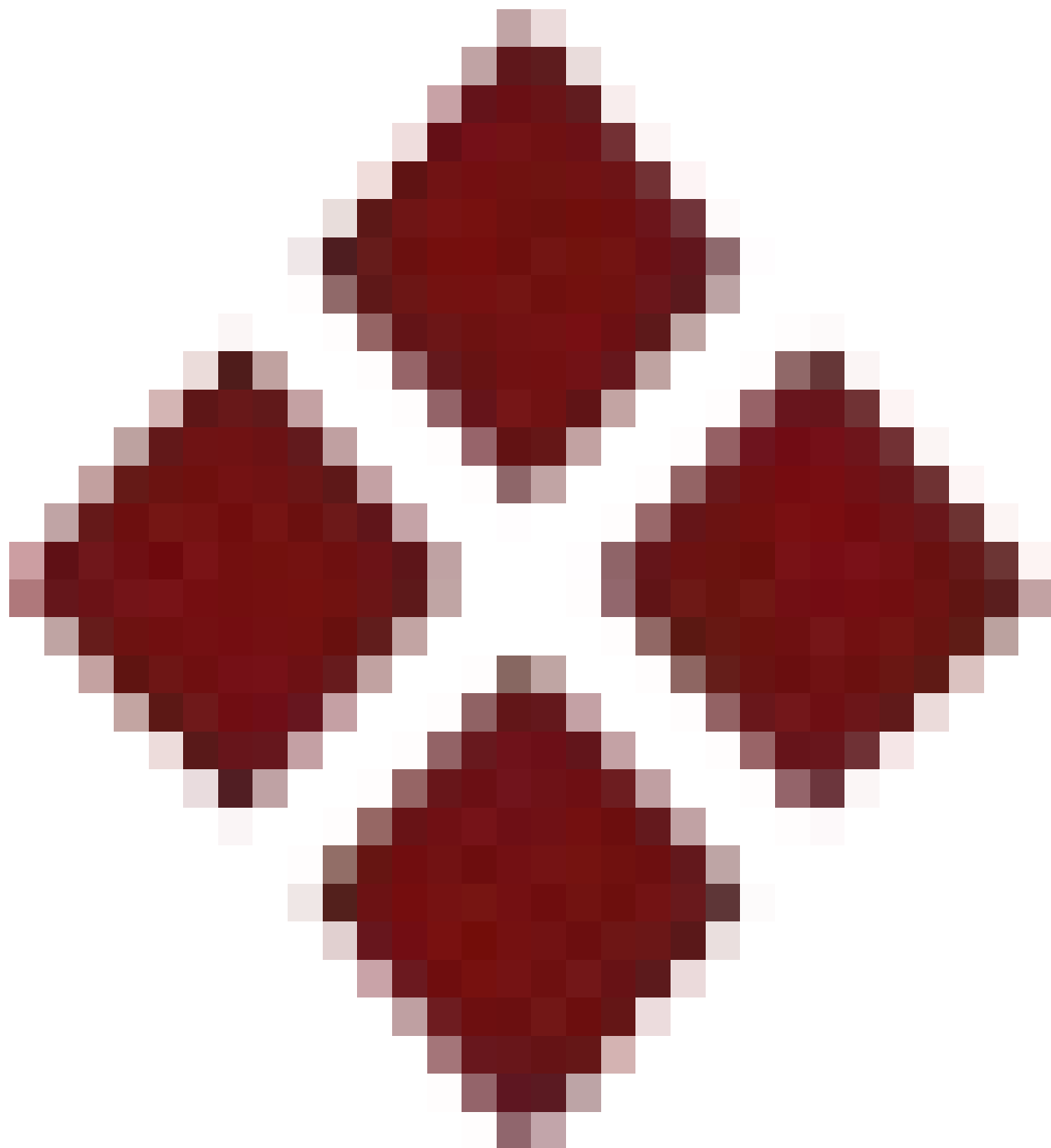


Discourse 20

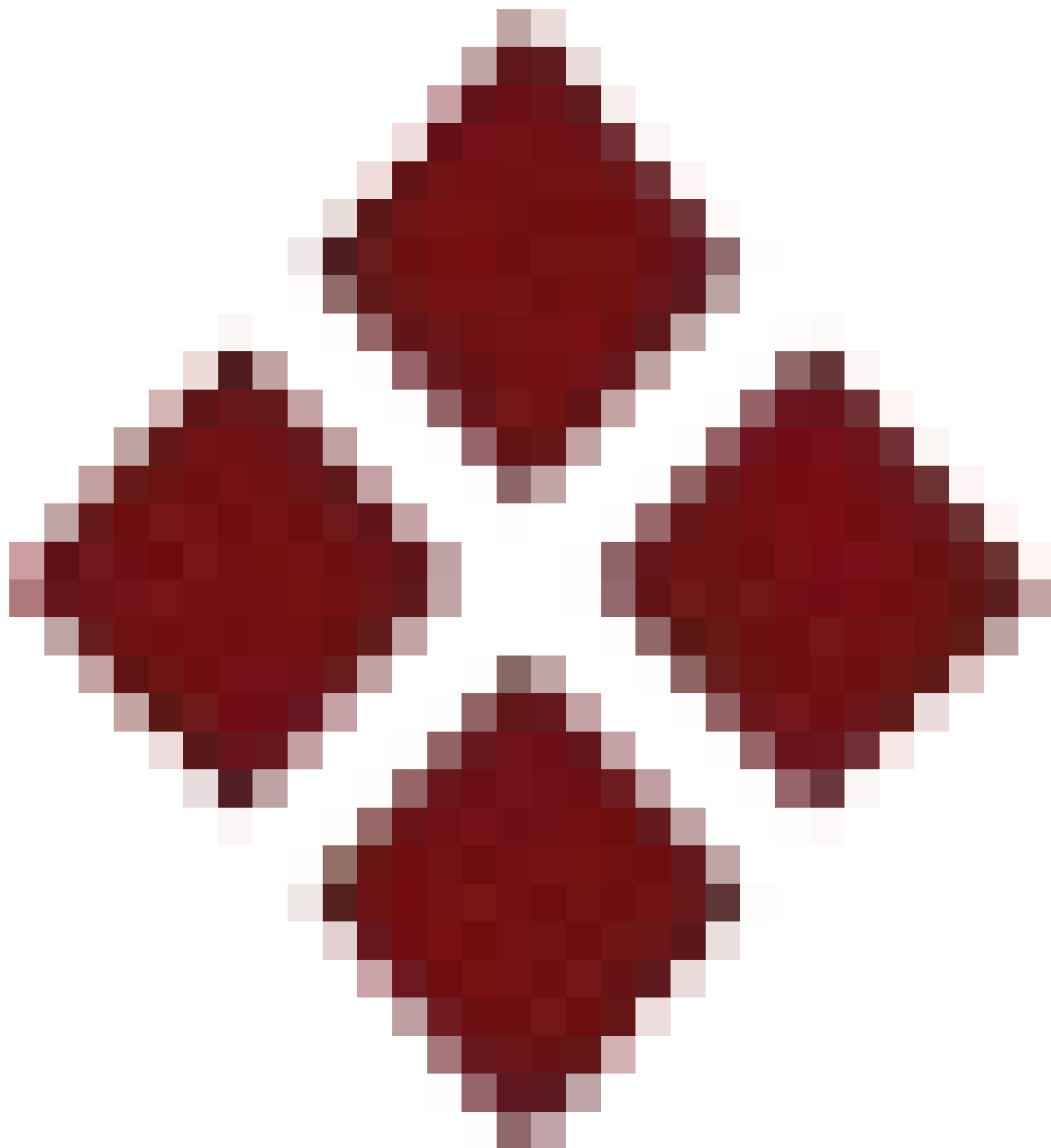
“Thy Son Liveth”: The Healing Power of Thought Transformation



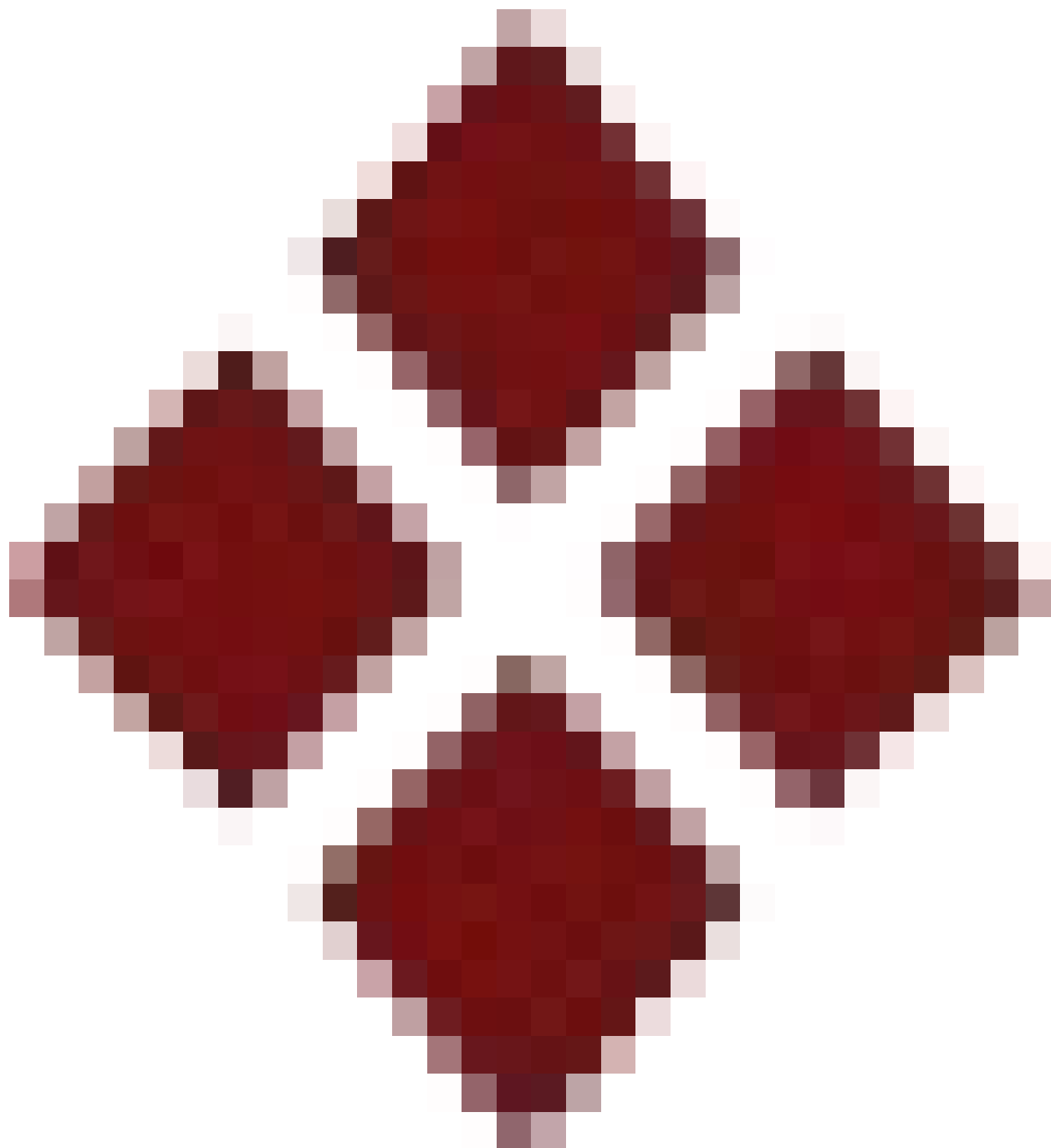
A Master Can Heal the Body by Restructuring Its Underlying Energy Matrix



How Concentration of Human Thought and Will Acts on the Cells of the Body



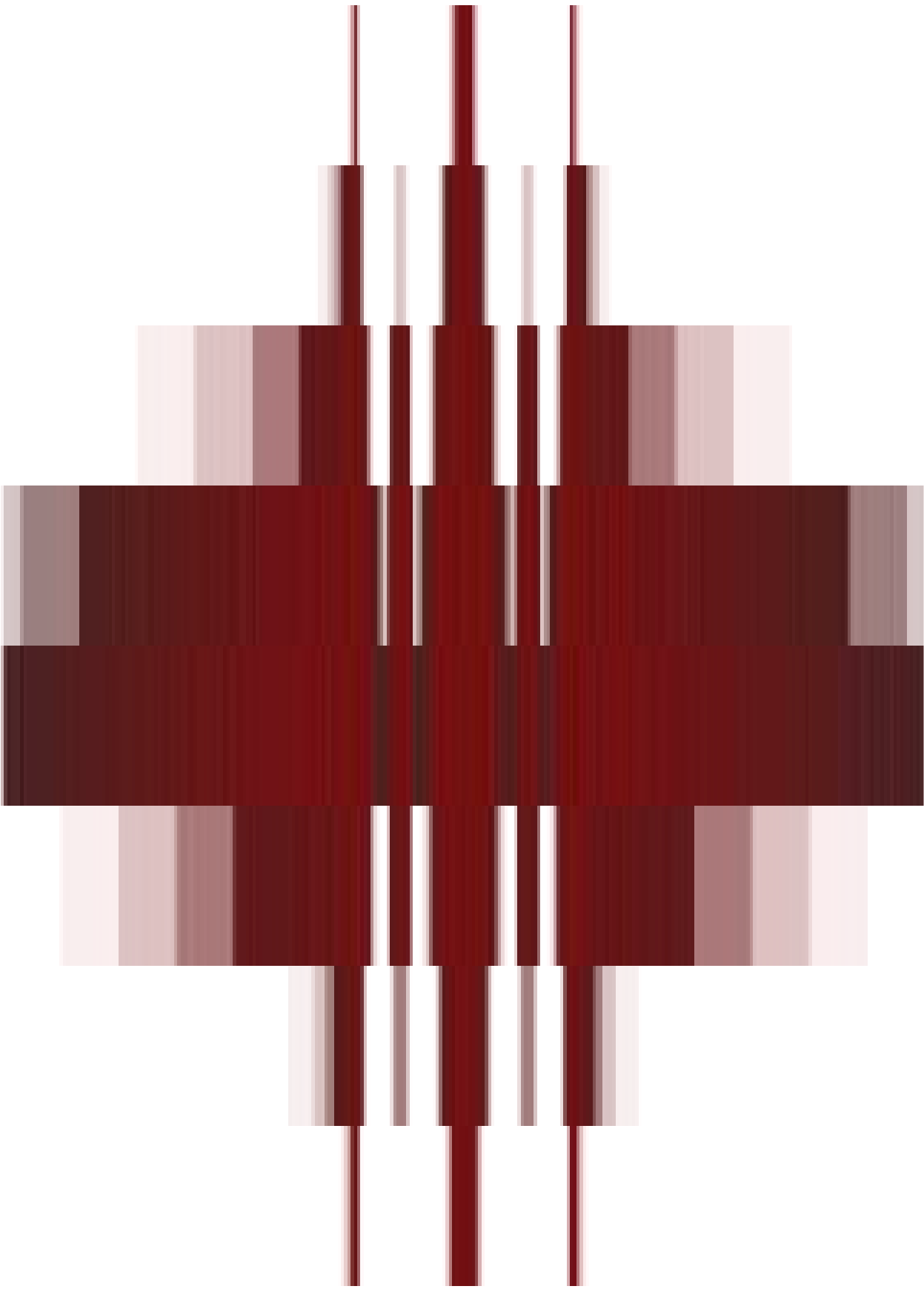
Healing by Affirmations: The Dynamic Vibratory Power of the Spoken Word



**Vibrations of Healing and Prayers for Others Are
Effective at Any Distance**



Harnessing Mind Power to Heal by Positive Thinking, Affirmation, or Prayer



“A divinely strong mind, implanting a thought of health and perfection in another person, can dissolve a stubborn thought of illness and cause a surge of restorative healing energy.”

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Then when he was come into Galilee, the Galileans received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast.

So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death.

Then said Jesus unto him, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe."

The nobleman saith unto him, "Sir, come down ere my child die."

Jesus saith unto him, "Go thy way; thy son liveth." And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way.

And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, "Thy son liveth."

Then enquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him."

So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, "Thy son liveth": and himself believed, and his whole house.

This is again the second miracle that Jesus did, when he was come out of Judea into Galilee.



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Discourse 20

“Thy Son Liveth”: The Healing Power of Thought Transformation



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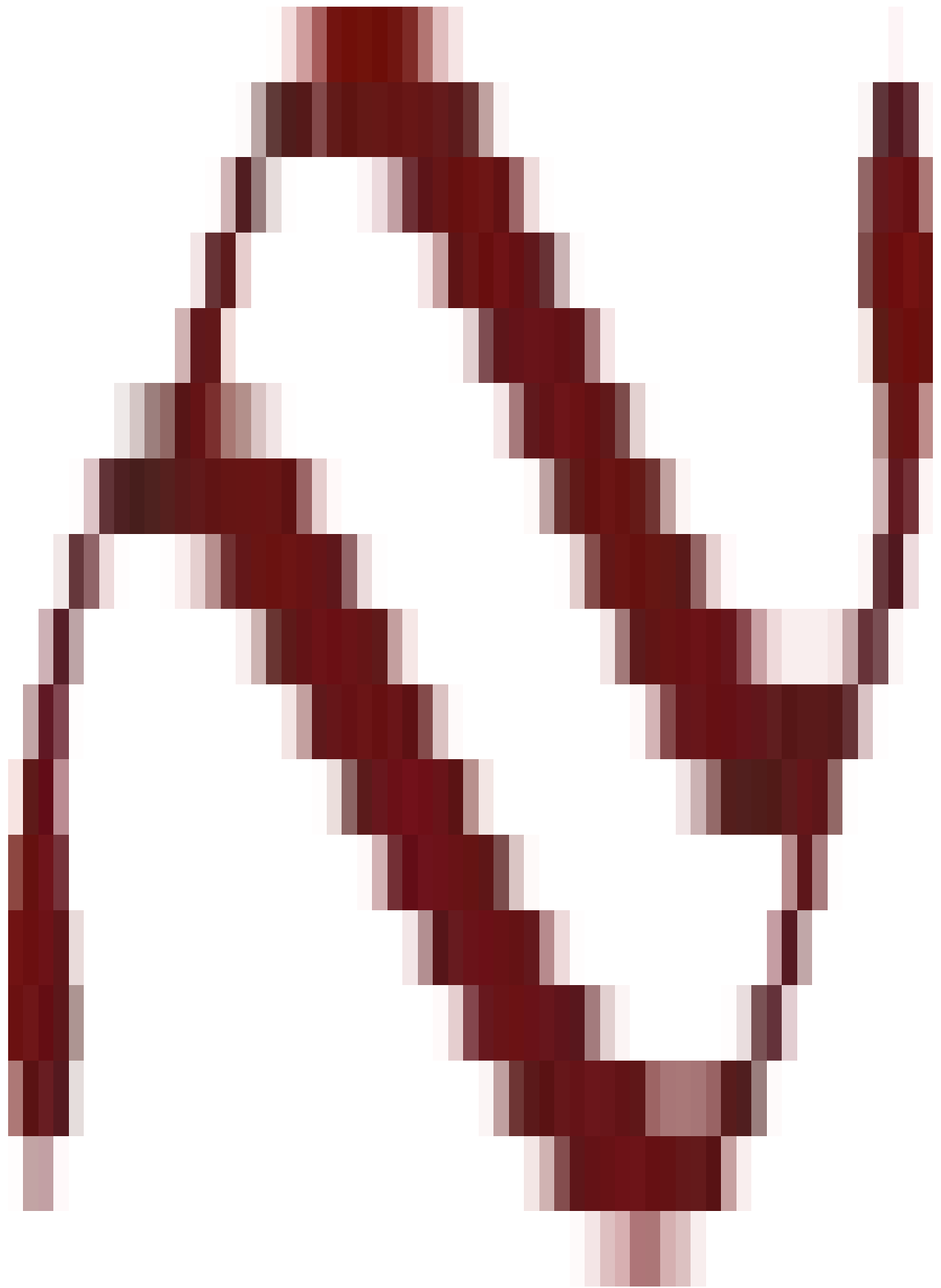
The nobleman saith unto him, "Sir, come down ere my child die."

Jesus saith unto him, "Go thy way; thy son liveth." And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way (John 4:45 – 50).

Part of Jesus' mission was to make visible God's healing mercy. Through his public miracles, Jesus demonstrated that even "incurable" diseases and "insoluble" problems can be surmounted, sometimes instantly, by attunement with Divine Will. The purpose of these miraculous healings was not to glorify the perishable body, but to rouse faith in the omnipresence of God and in man's innate ability to contact and personally know his Heavenly Father. Jesus knew that worldly mentalities have difficulty accepting their personal access to the Merciful Omnipotence. Thus, when asked by the nobleman to heal his son who was dying at Capernaum, Jesus observed wryly: "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." It was a gentle rebuke: "You are loath to believe in God's message of salvation sent through me unless He first demonstrates His

presence in me by a display of miracles that benefits primarily your temporal needs.” God should not have to prove Himself through miracles to earn the love and trust of His children. Each one, through his own free will and perfect accord, should make a voluntary choice of the heart to love God and to seek to know Him. In the wisdom of a master, one should recognize the Divine Presence and be inspired toward God-realization without the impetus of supernatural demonstrations. Nevertheless, seeing that the nobleman’s faith was sincere, Jesus sympathetically told him: “Go thy way; thy son liveth.”

These few words, supported neither by persuasive eloquence nor obvious evidence, were yet sufficient to satisfy the nobleman; he could sense the divine vibration of healing power in Jesus. Thus, “he believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way.”



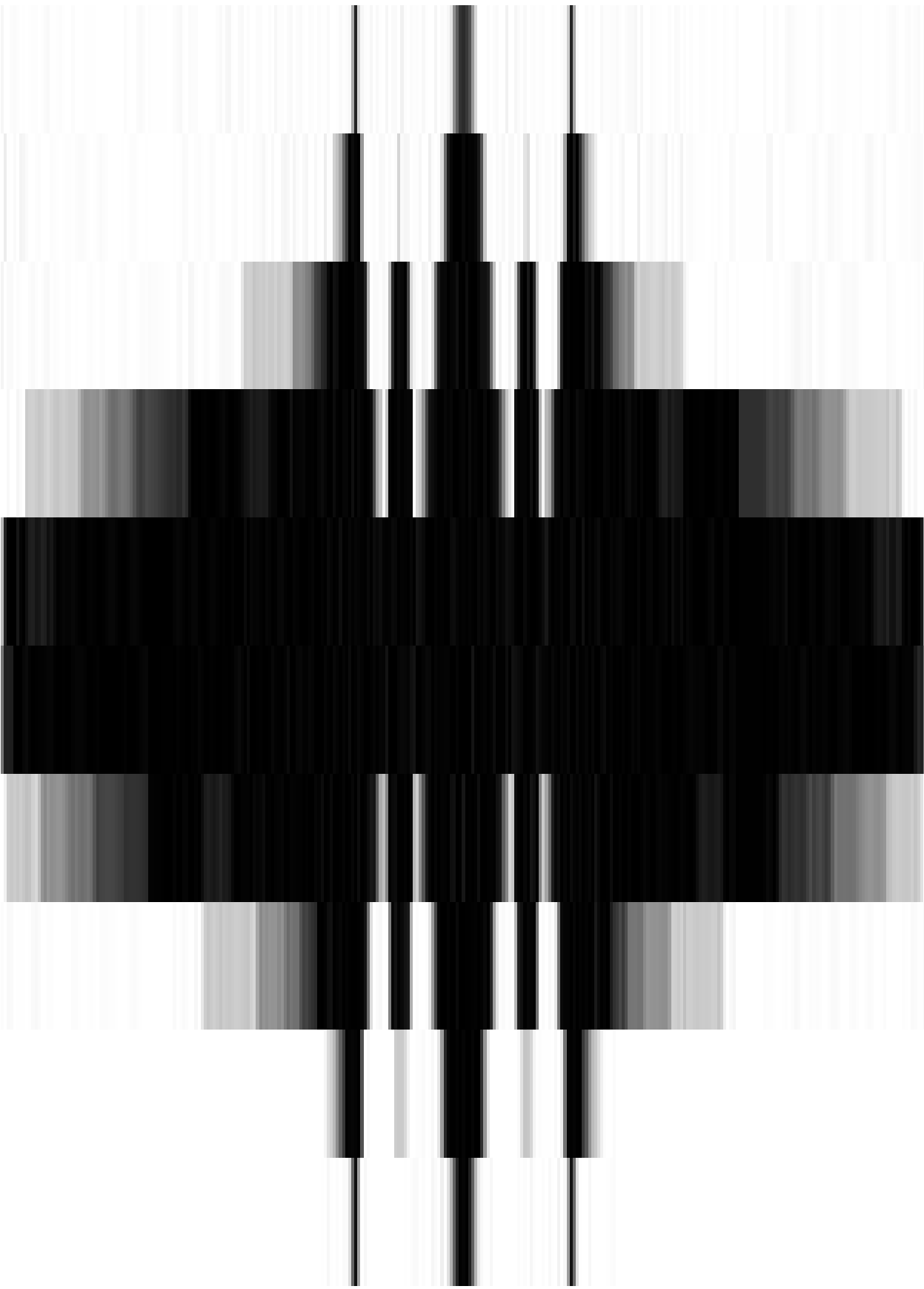
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This is again the second miracle that Jesus did, when he was come out of Judea into Galilee (John 4:51 – 54).

The many instantaneous physical healings wrought by Jesus were accomplished through his knowledge of the same scientific law by which he had earlier changed water into wine: the relationship of thought, life energy, and matter. [See Discourse 11 .]

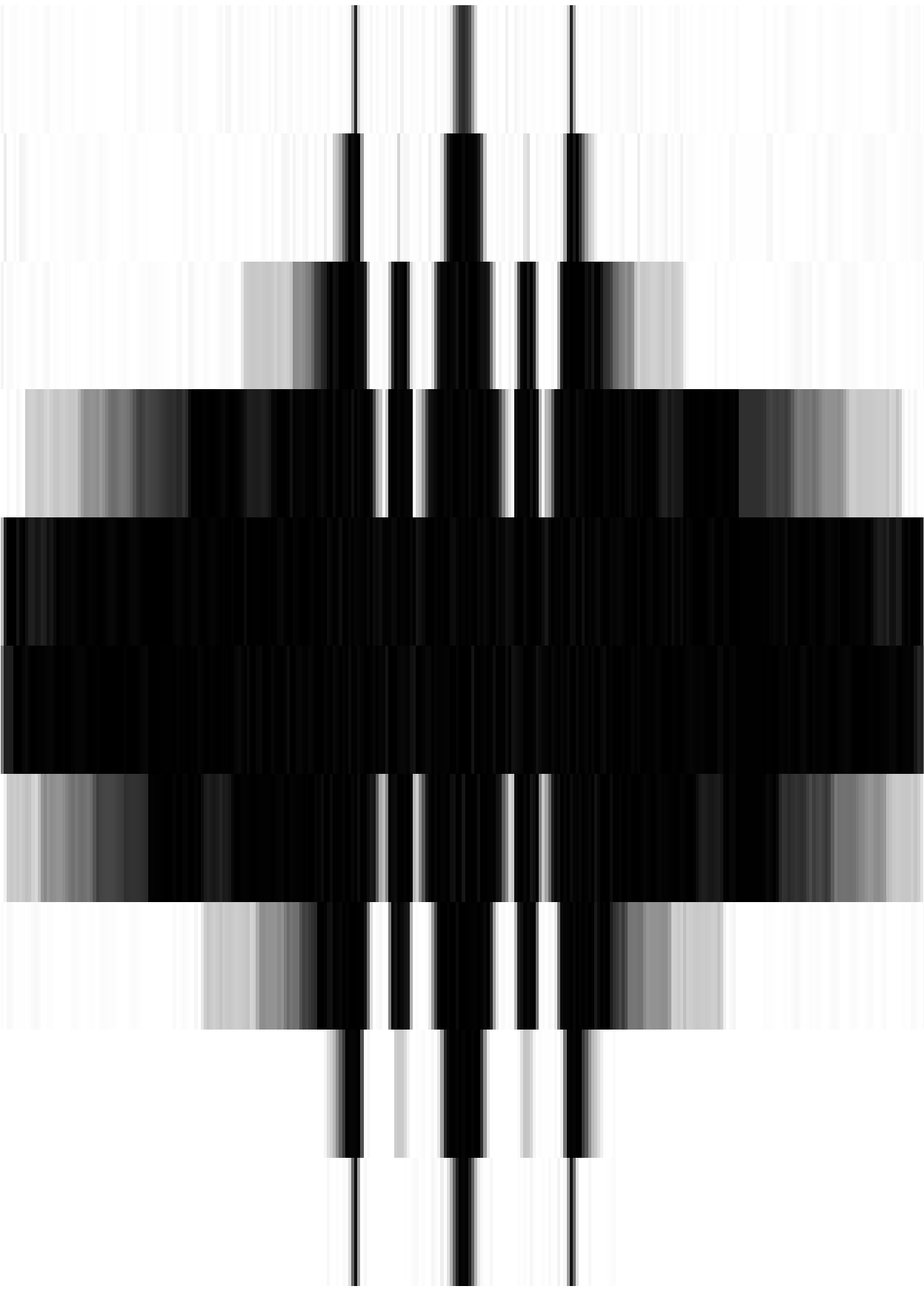


A master can heal the body by restructuring its underlying energy matrix

The universe, being a product of Divine Mind, can be changed by Divine Mind at any time. God's will created all things through condensation of His invisible ideations into the light of life energy and thence into atomic matter. God-realized souls who are in tune with the Divine Will can instantaneously produce any desired changes in matter, including the human body, by concentrated thought, which acts on and restructures the subtle energy matrix underlying each material form. As the energy in man's body can be directed by his will to initiate or influence the movement of any bodily part or function, so also, by omnipresent Divine Will, any vibratory movement effecting atomic changes can be initiated in any body, in any thing, and at any place, no matter how far distant.¹

The creative vibratory thought of sickness was firmly fixed in the consciousness of the nobleman and his son, but Jesus thought differently, and so the son recovered. Jesus was able to displace the dream of sickness in the son by a dream of health. A divinely strong mind, implanting a thought of health and perfection in another person, can dissolve a stubborn thought of illness and cause a surge of restorative healing energy.

Ultimately, all disease can be found to have psychological roots, with every thought, in turn, being an ideation of consciousness. Thought is thus the brain, the architect, of the cells and units of life force in every particle of bodily tissue, influencing the functions of the underlying intelligent lifetrans. Hence, disease thoughts can upset the entire government of the life force in the cells; if strong enough or chronic enough, such thoughts manifest as bodily disease. Conversely, a strong thought of health can correct any disorder in the cellular system.



How concentration of human thought and will acts on the cells of the body

Concentrated human thought touches Divine Thought; it is that which can heal, not unfocused fanciful thought or imagination. To effectively move Divine Thought, one must be conscious of the relation of thought, life force, and the physical body. Rather than merely asserting the delusive, unreal nature of the body and its diseases, it is better to say: "The body is not what it appears to be." It does exist, though only as the frozen thought and energy of God. Instead of intellectualizing the delusive nature of the body, one should make the effort to realize how thought condenses into energy, and energy into flesh and blood and tissue. Neither fanatic fancy nor dogmatic belief bestows this realization; it comes by tuning in with God through some technique of awakening His consciousness in the soul. In this state of enlightenment, one fully realizes that the physical body and the entire cosmos are but frozen dreams of the Creator; and that our consciousness, an individualization of His consciousness, is the perceiver of and participator in His creative activity. Flowing water directed over an iceberg sculpts the berg into a new shape, either melting it partially or adding to its substance by becoming frozen itself. Likewise, a powerful mind and will can make consciousness interact with frozen consciousness to manipulate it for good or for ill.

The life force in the body has the absolute power to construct or destroy the body. But the life force can only perform according to the will of the bodily owner. Most persons do not know that their will can be trained to command the body to bring about miraculous changes in it; hence the wonder-working life energy remains disobedient most of the time to their conscious directives. Neither can the life force be mobilized by a will that has become paralyzed by persistent physical or mental infirmity. When one's will is debilitated by disease, it can be stimulated by the strong will of a mighty healer; the will of the healer and the renewed will of the patient awaken the life force to perform the desired healing.

Most persons who are ineffectual in trying to heal themselves have allowed their thoughts of health to be weakened by the mental habit of chronic thoughts of sickness. If for fifty years a person has enjoyed health, he thinks he can never be sick. If he suddenly finds himself physically ill, he thinks at first he will get well; but if the disease persists for six months, he becomes convinced that he will

never get well. It is a regrettable psychological error to allow oneself to be manipulated by negative thoughts. One should visualize the conviction of one's healthful experiences to strengthen one's health consciousness and thereby dislodge any die-hard conviction of disease. If the strong mind of a healer can revive the will of the patient who has become paralyzed with the consciousness of sickness, then the patient can change his thought and energy, and thus heal himself. No one can heal us except through the cooperation of the hidden power of our own thoughts. A God-realized master can produce healing in an unresponsive person, but it is much more difficult; and only a master would be aware of the karmic circumstances that would make such a healing possible.

The power of thought in the healing of disease sets into motion a whole metaphysical process cooperative with the laws of creation that bring matter into manifestation. A dynamic thought of healing begins with modulation of the consciousness, of the thoughtrons of the superconscious mind, activating the lifetronic energy, the prana or life force in the body, to make changes in the subatomic electrons, and in the atoms, molecules, and cells. Any wave of consciousness thus sent forth to accomplish a purpose in the manifested realm traverses the whole spectrum of natural laws requisite to fulfilling its goal. Not in the least confounding to the orderly working of the intelligent principles of creation, the entire complex healing process can be effected instantaneously when so willed by divine fiat of a master in tune with God's mind; or, according to the wisdom of karmic conditions or other purposes, a healing may take place over a circumstantial period of time. The slower progression of the physical healing is simply catching up with the spiritual healing that has already taken place.



Healing by affirmations: the dynamic vibratory power of the spoken word

Physical healing, no matter what method initiates it, depends in the final analysis on the action of the life energy in the body to correct the diseased or otherwise inharmonious condition. A master such as Jesus, through his attunement with divine will, can administer vibrations of life energy directly to effect cures in cases where all other attempts have failed.

In various instances cited in the Gospels, Jesus employed the divine healing power of life energy in diverse ways, depending on the circumstances. In many cases, he transmitted the healing life force by direct touch. Others he cured by rousing their faith in the power of God emanating through him, thereby stimulating and reinforcing the dormant life energy within them. In the case of the nobleman's son in Capernaum, he utilized the dynamic vibratory power of the spoken word.

Vibratory healing consists in creating and consciously directing vibrations of life energy to individuals afflicted with disease or other maladies. This may be done internally by mentally projecting energy charged with will power, or externally by the vibrations of chants, intonations of the human voice, and enlivening words, phrases, and affirmations impregnated with superconsciousness.

As all creation consists of varying rates of vibration, sound has very great power. When one says softly, "Oh," a little vibration goes through the speaker and into the ether surrounding him. But if a big cannon is fired, its sound will pass through those in proximity and their whole body will be shaken and windows will be shattered. Intelligently spoken words are not merely sounds of communication, but vibrations of consciousness and energy. Their potency is determined not only by the physical force with which they are uttered, but even more by the magnitude of the thought- and energy-vibrations behind them.

A spoken word is composed of three vibrations—mental vibration, astral or energy vibration, and flesh vibration. Thus the vibratory sound of an utterance such as "Thou art peace" has behind it: (

1

) the vibration of thought that initiates the act of will, the original cause of

vibrations of energy and flesh that result in the word “peace” being uttered; (

2

) the vibration of life energy sent by the will from the brain through the nerves to the vocal cords and tongue to allow the word “peace” to be spoken; and (

3

) the physical movement of the vocal cords that produce the sound, and the vibratory effect on the physical body and its environs created when the word “peace” is voiced.

Vibration means motion, which keeps all manifestations—material, mental, or spiritual—in an elastic state, subject to change. All phenomena—solids, liquids, gases; sound, X-rays, visible light; life energy, emotions, intelligence—are grosser or finer vibrating variations of the one Cosmic Vibration of the Creator. The grosser vibrations of matter are relatively fixed, within a circumscribed range. The mind of a matter-bound individual, attuned to the crimped vibrations of the material sphere, also remains relatively fixed. It vibrates with limited power. But potentially the mind has infinite elastic power; no matter how much you stretch it, it will not break. By spiritual techniques that develop concentration and will power and expand the consciousness, the matter-habituated mind is released from those constraints to vibrate at a finer rate, in tune with the astral and causal vibrations of God’s creative activity and ultimately with the Creator Himself. One who knows how to use mind power can do anything.

The words of ordinary persons have limited effectiveness to create changes in vibratory matter because of the enfeebled mind power that projects them. But any imaginable transformation is possible to one who connects his utterances with the omnipotent vibration of God—He whose Word made the light, stars, stones, trees, human beings; He who is sustaining the incredible activity of the innumerable worlds moving in a purposeful order through space.²

When behind the spoken word is the word of God, the vibration of God (when one not only says the word God, but feels God as that word), the vibration of the voice goes forth with infinite power. When Jesus said, “Thy son liveth,” it was a divine command. Behind his words were the consciousness and perception of God, impregnating his utterance with God’s almighty healing power.

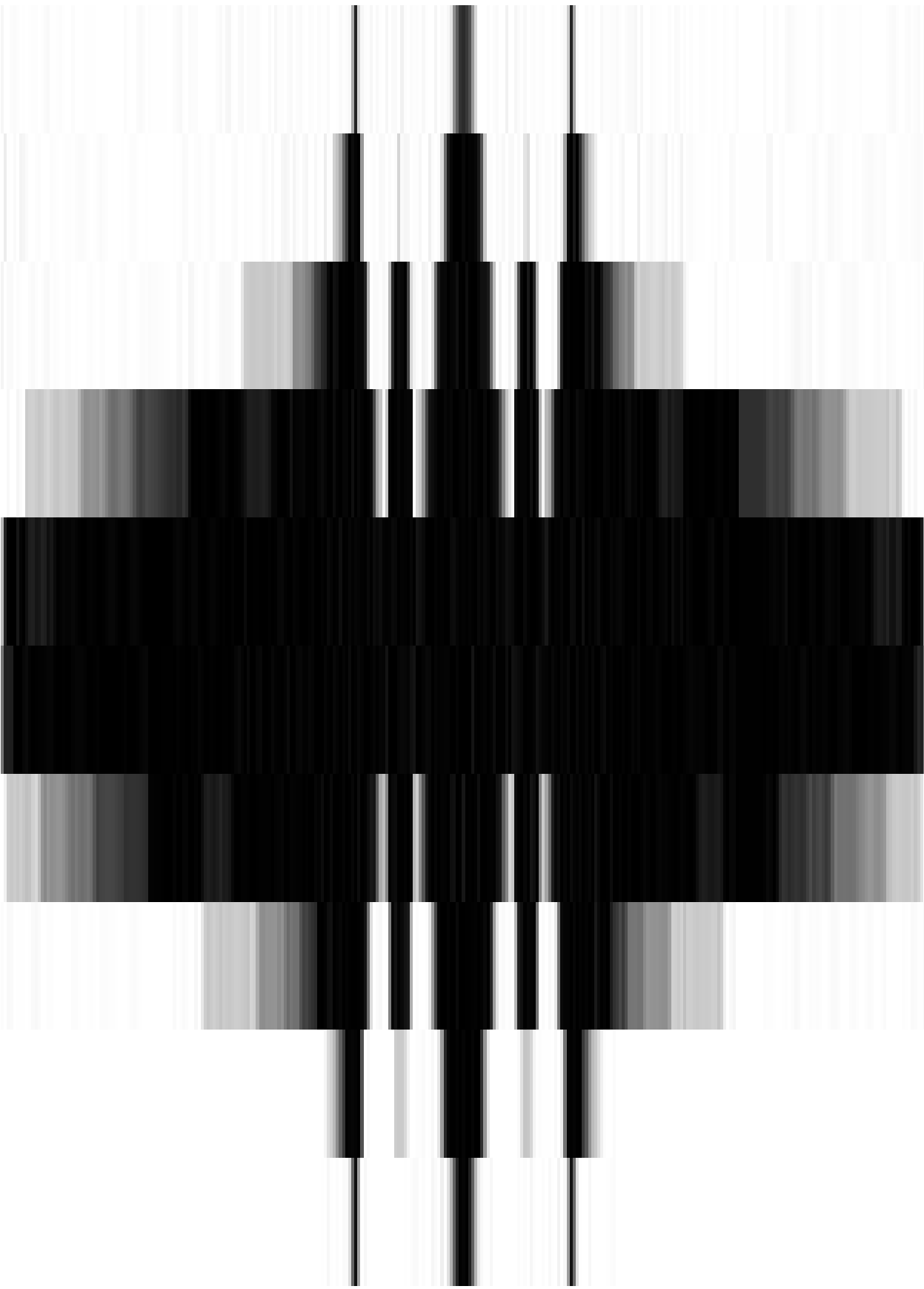
God's omnipotence omnipresent in creation is insulated in space. The vibratory etheric firmament separates the material realms of creation from the subtler realms, where the divine creative forces are not obscured by gross matter. The mind of a spiritually advanced person pierces the etheric insulation and contacts the higher vibratory forces emanating from God in the astral and causal worlds of all becomings.

In the presence of God-realized saints, when they are acting as conduits of the Divine Power, God is not insulated. Even a little mental tuning-in with a master who is in divine consciousness will engender a change in an individual. This is why so many crowds were magnetically drawn to Jesus and were healed by that contact.



Vibrations of healing and prayers for others are effective at any distance

The healing of the nobleman's son did not even require direct contact with Jesus. In absent healing, there is a transcendence of time and space, mocking their illusory persistence. As songs can be broadcast to float through the ether, ready to be caught by a radio, so it is that broadcast healing vibrations can be picked up by sensitive soul radios. When Jesus spoke the healing command, his voice set in motion his will-charged soul force, broadcasting into the ether the God-given healing vibrations, which were received by the faith of the nobleman, and thence relayed to his son, who became well immediately. Songs broadcast at any given moment from Los Angeles reach New York with no perceptible delay, because the sound is carried by electromagnetic radio waves moving at the speed of light. If radioed sound waves can be carried with such speed, then sound vibrations impregnated with healing soul force and transmitted through the Divine Omnipresence in the ether can reach their goal with perfect instancy.



Harnessing mind power to heal by positive thinking, affirmation, or prayer

All vibrations of sound let loose in the ether produce some momentary mental effect upon the hearer; but the vibrations of words saturated with soul force remain long in the ether, ever ready to work for the benefit of the recipient. This principle is operative in the effectiveness of prayers offered on behalf of others. The moment the healing vibrations reach the superconsciousness of the person to be healed, his soul sends a surge of energy from the brain down through the spine into the body. It is that divine life energy, reinforced by the vibrations of God's healing power broadcast through the ether, that effects a cure.

Man does not realize the power of God that has been implanted by Him in the mind. It controls all the bodily functions, and when its power is properly exercised it can promote any condition in the body.³ In divine healing, first the mind receives the suggestion of healing through positive thoughts, affirmation, or prayer. Then, through the superconscious conviction of the soul, the latent power of God in the mind becomes manifest. Finally the brain releases the divinely recharged life energy to heal.

In praying to God, the supplicant must churn the ether with his prayers; God will listen, even as He listened through the instrumentality of Jesus to the urgent entreaties of the nobleman. As was the case in Capernaum, there is no limit to the response and the love of God, if one has faith and loves Him truly. Jesus, in that Love, said, "Thy son liveth." Immediately his thought vibration pierced the ether, and powerful life-force currents and light began to play in the nobleman's son, changing the constitution of the ailing body. By divine fiat Jesus performed this miracle, demonstrating that his thought was connected with the omnipresent cosmic creative energy of God that is the source of all life. The light in a lamp can be switched off and on again if it is connected to the current from the dynamo. God created the body lamp and is also the Dynamo that lights it with His cosmic energy. Even if the lamp is broken, its Creator can repair and light it again.

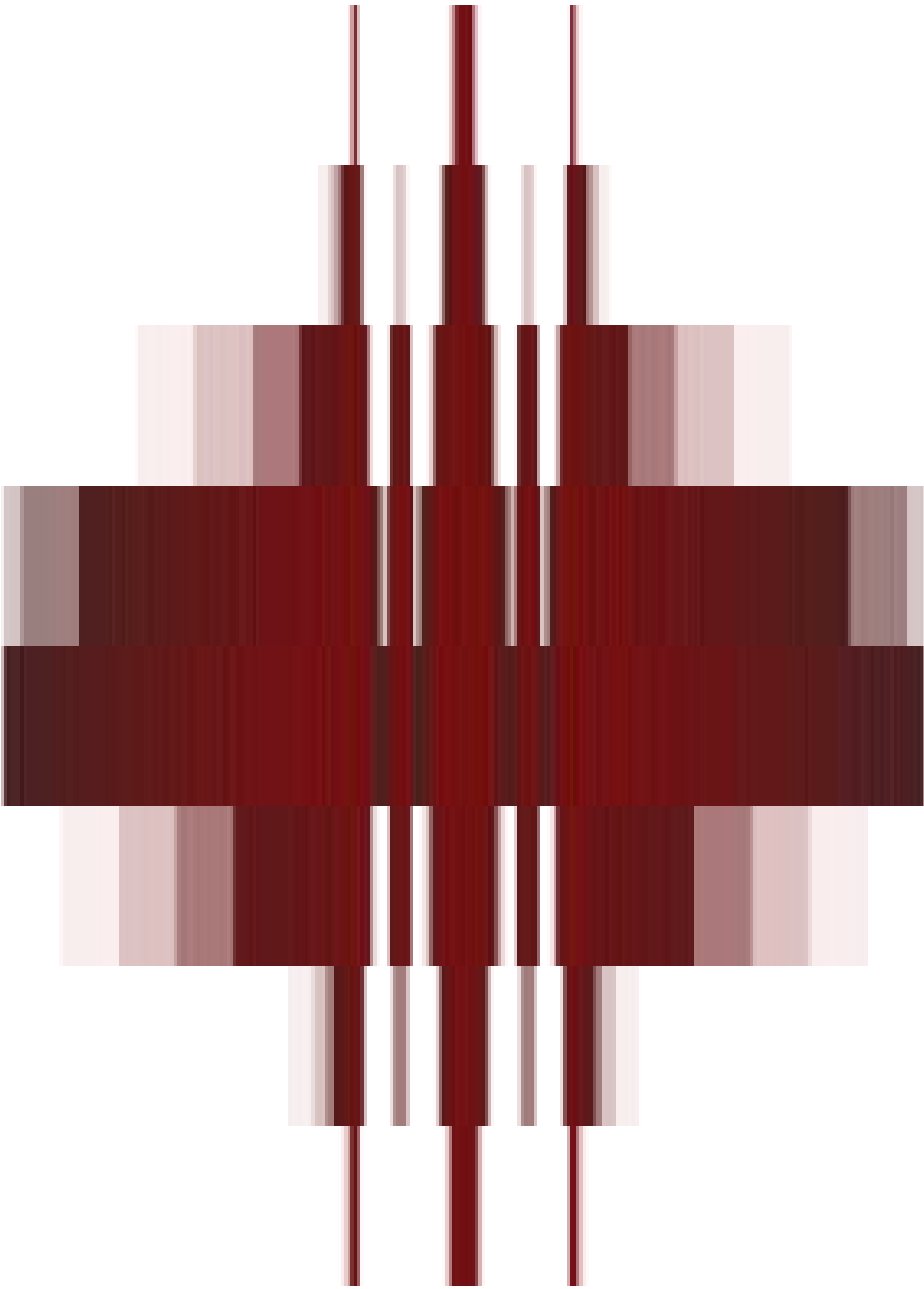
Jesus showed what it is to be in touch with the Cosmic Dynamo. When one feels God's presence, His vibratory energy, the strength of His infinite power, any thought he declares will materialize.



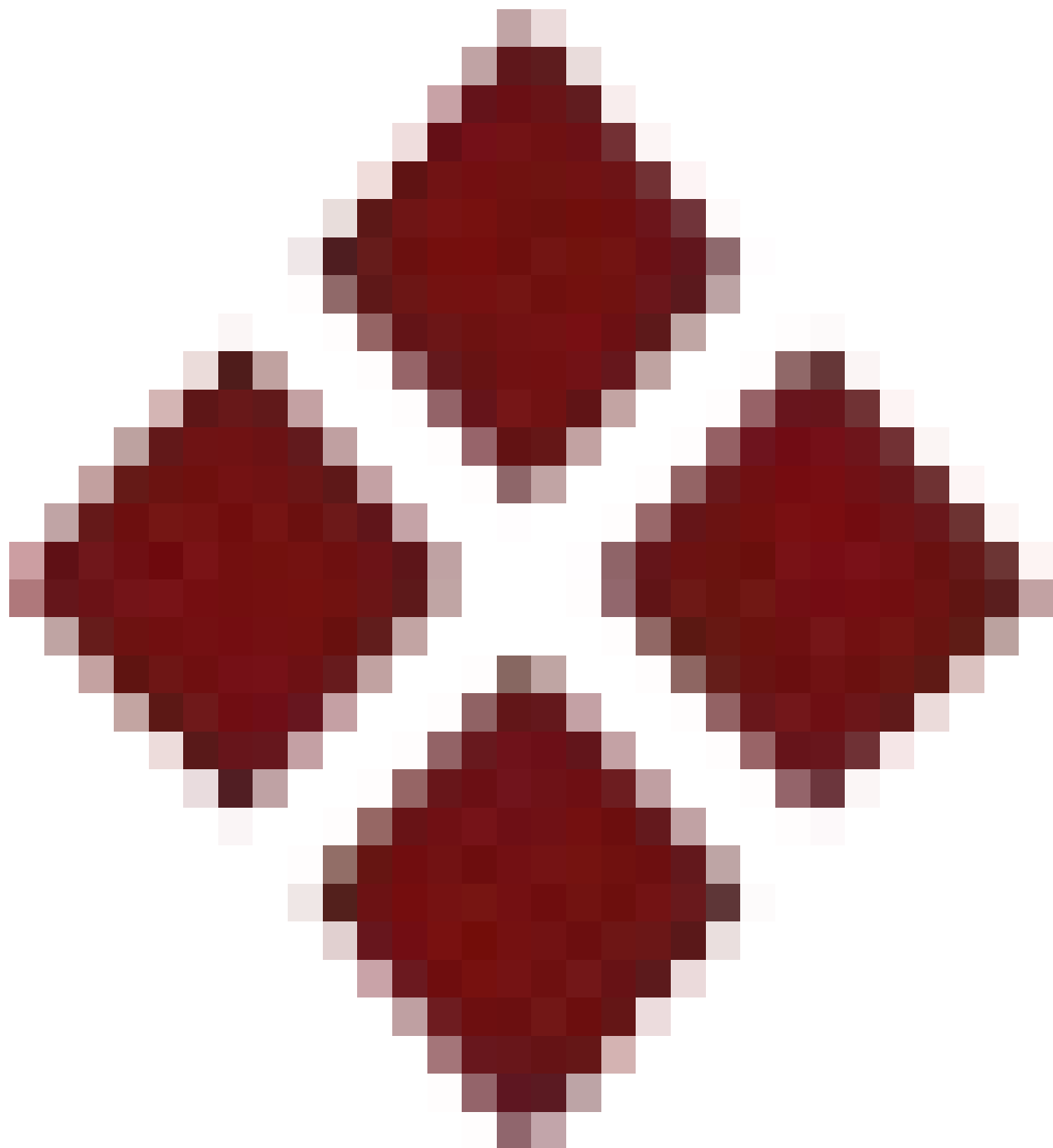
Discourse 21

**“What Things the Father Doeth, These Also Doeth the
Son Likewise”**

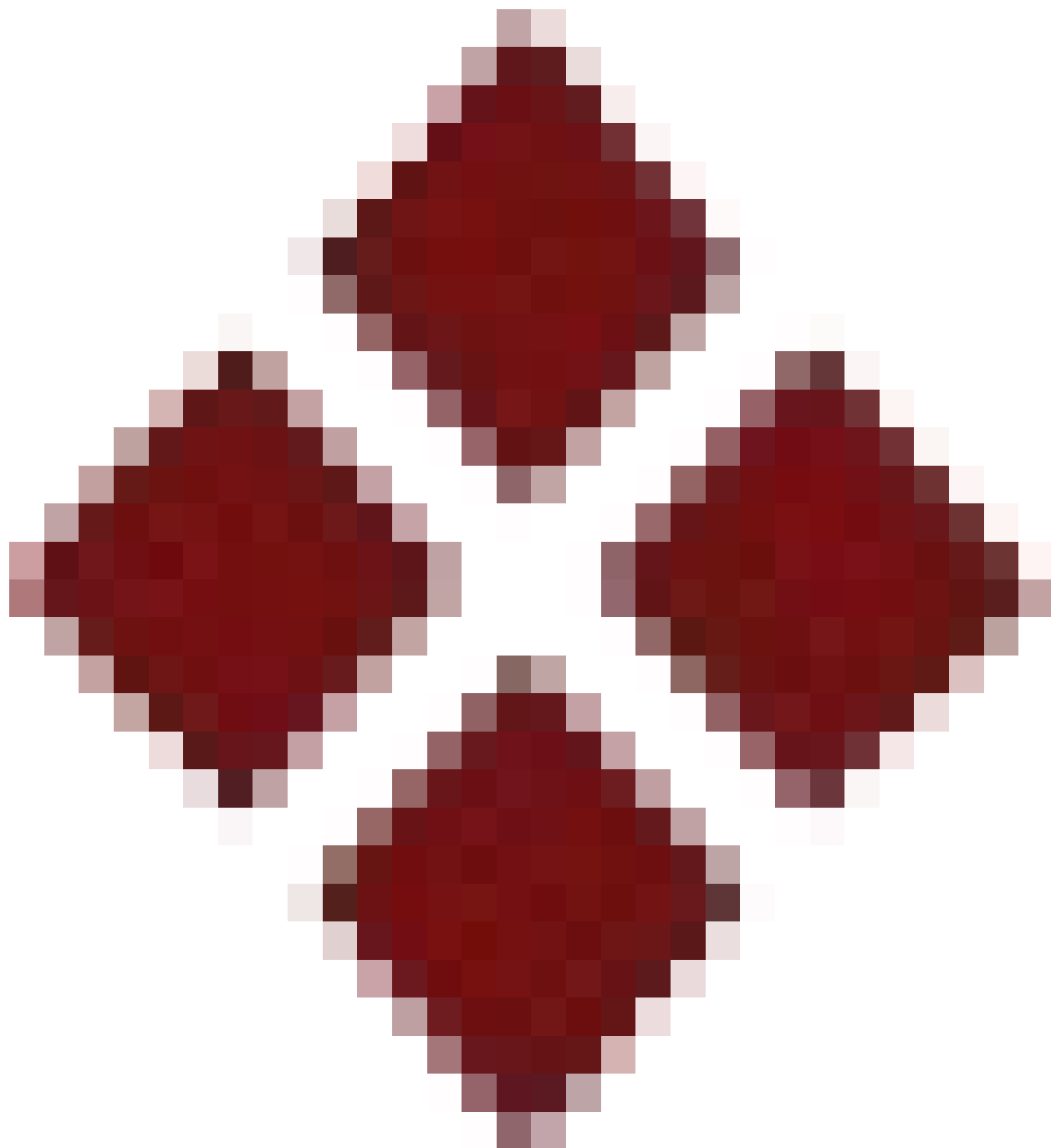
**Jesus’ Discourse on Judgment and Resurrection After
the Healing at the Pool of Bethesda**



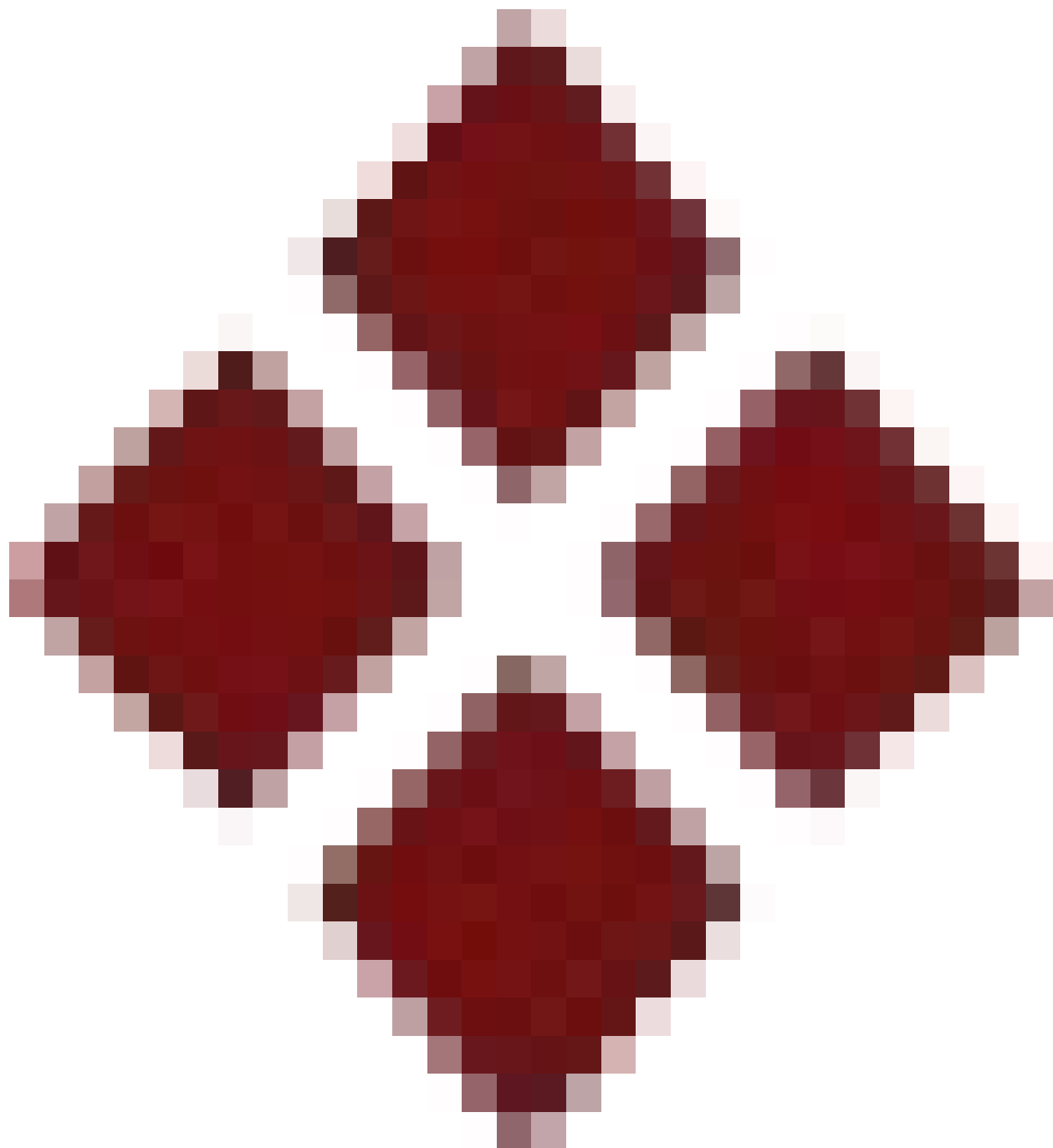
Effect of Past Wrong Actions on Present Human Suffering



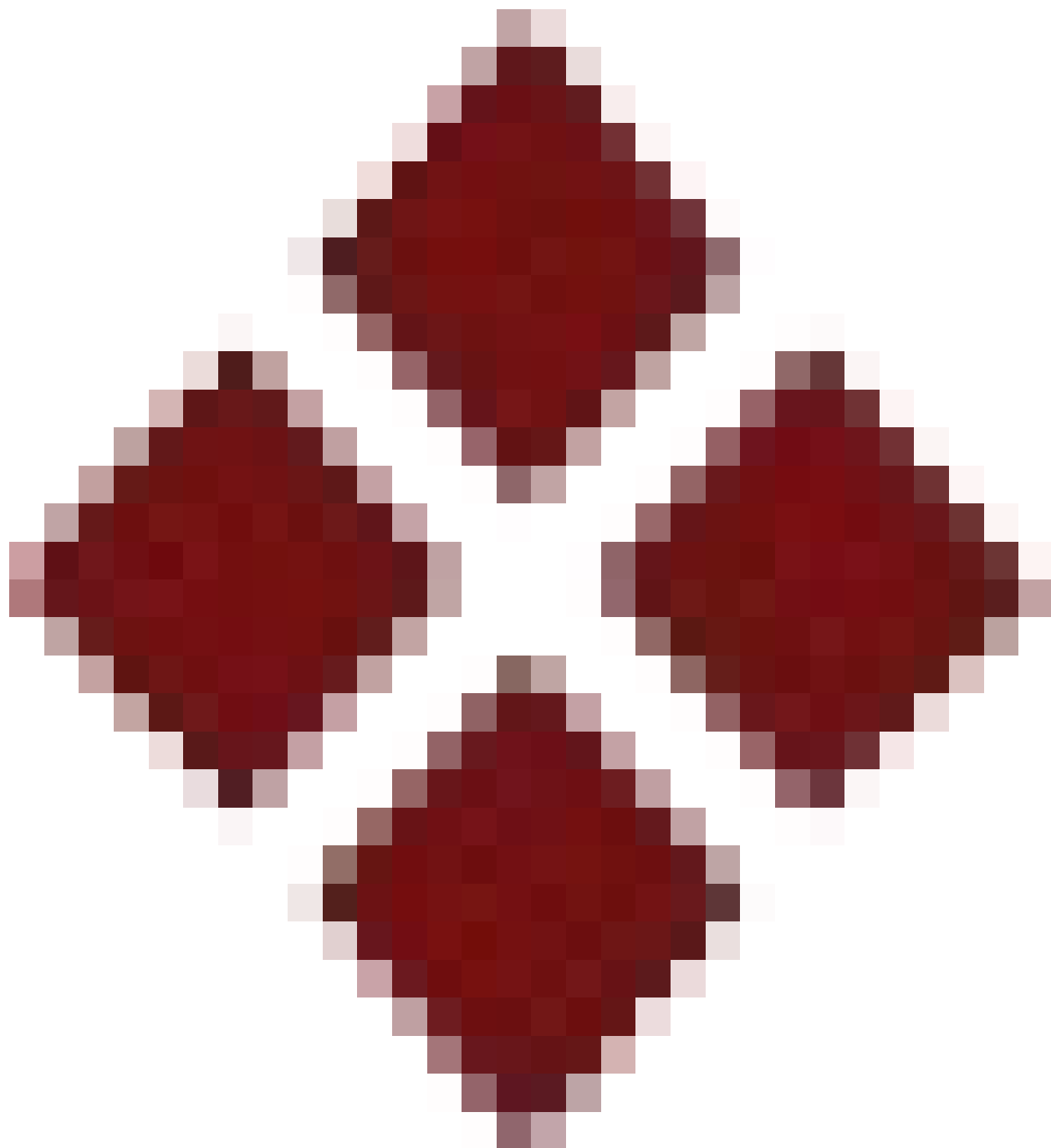
Metaphysical Meaning of “Death”: Liberating the Soul From All Three Bodies



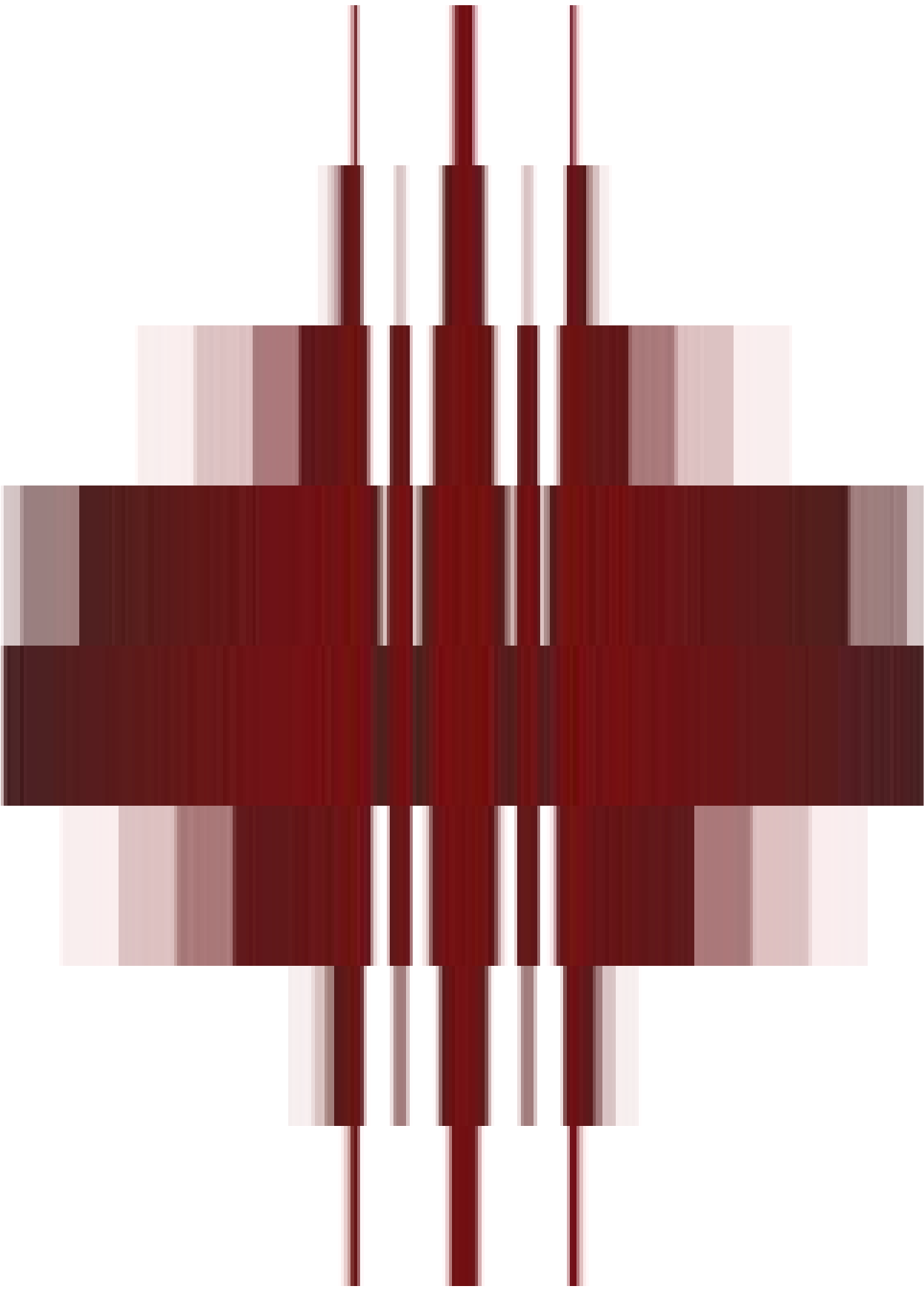
**Communing With Cosmic Vibration in Meditation
Brings Imperishable Life**



Did Jesus Teach Bodily Resurrection of the Dead?



True Meaning of “Gabriel’s Trumpet”



“The Son is thus God’s love in creation—a magnetic power of harmony and intelligence working to evolve all manifestations to ever higher levels....Neither God nor Jesus as the Christ Intelligence is a despotic disciplinarian passing judgment on the actions of man.”

■

After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹

Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, "Wilt thou be made whole?"

The impotent man answered him, "Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me."

Jesus saith unto him, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk."

And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the Sabbath.

The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, "It is the Sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed."

He answered them, "He that made me whole, the same said unto me, 'Take up thy bed, and walk.' "

Then asked they him, "What man is that which said unto thee, 'Take up thy bed, and walk'?" And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place.

Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, "Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee."

The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole. And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the Sabbath day.

But Jesus answered them, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.

Then answered Jesus and said unto them, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that Himself doeth: and He will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in himself; And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

"I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me. If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true. There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true. Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth. But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved. He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.

"But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. And the Father Himself, which hath sent me, hath borne

witness of me. Ye have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His shape. And ye have not His word abiding in you: for whom He hath sent, him ye believe not. Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life. I receive not honour from men. But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you.

“I am come in my Father’s name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only? Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?”

—John 5:1 – 47



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Discourse 21

**“What Things the Father Doeth, These Also Doeth the
Son Likewise”**

**Jesus’ Discourse on Judgment and Resurrection After
the Healing at the Pool of Bethesda**



After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, "Wilt thou be made whole?" (John 5:1 – 6).

During a feast time, Jesus went to Jerusalem and came to the pool of Bethesda. He went among a crowd of stricken people who were waiting to immerse themselves when, at certain periods, the waters were moved by an inner healing force that was believed to be an angel. The pool vibrated and emanated healing earth currents (electromagnetic), and many who bathed in the pool at those times were healed. ²

Belief in the healing power of the water was also a factor, causing a mental reaction that roused the natural healing power within the body. When sickness weakens the mind and paralyzes the will, one cannot throw off the troubling illness. Faith revives one's all-healing, all-powerful will to release the nascent life energy in the brain to effect the healing of any diseased part of the body.

Jesus felt compassion for the man who had been afflicted for thirty-eight years, and who was unable to get into the pool by himself. He asked the suffering man, "Wilt thou be made whole?"



The impotent man answered him, “Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.”

Jesus saith unto him, “Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.”

And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the Sabbath (John 5:7 – 9).



Both the seed of healing power and the soil of faith are necessary

The divine law of healing requires the proper soil of faith on the part of the patient, and the proper seed of mental healing power on the part of the healer, in order for the roots and branches of the plant of healing to reach deep and broad enough into the consciousness of the person to be healed. Jesus prepared the soil of faith by creating in the stricken man the desire to be healed by the immediacy of divine law, which does not depend on external factors. When Jesus found that the sick man was receptive, he said, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." He showed the stricken man that he need not wait to be made whole by the waters of the pool, but that he could be healed at once by the unlimited power of God hidden within the human will and mind.

The man was instantaneously made whole by (

1

) the uninterrupted flow of the infinite all-healing energy of God through the mental transparency of the consciousness of Jesus; and (

2

) by his own awakened faith and the revival of his paralyzed will, which served as the antenna to attune himself to the vibrant cosmic energy from Jesus that combined with and recharged the latent life energy of his own brain.



The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, “It is the Sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed.”

He answered them, “He that made me whole, the same said unto me, ‘Take up thy bed, and walk.’”

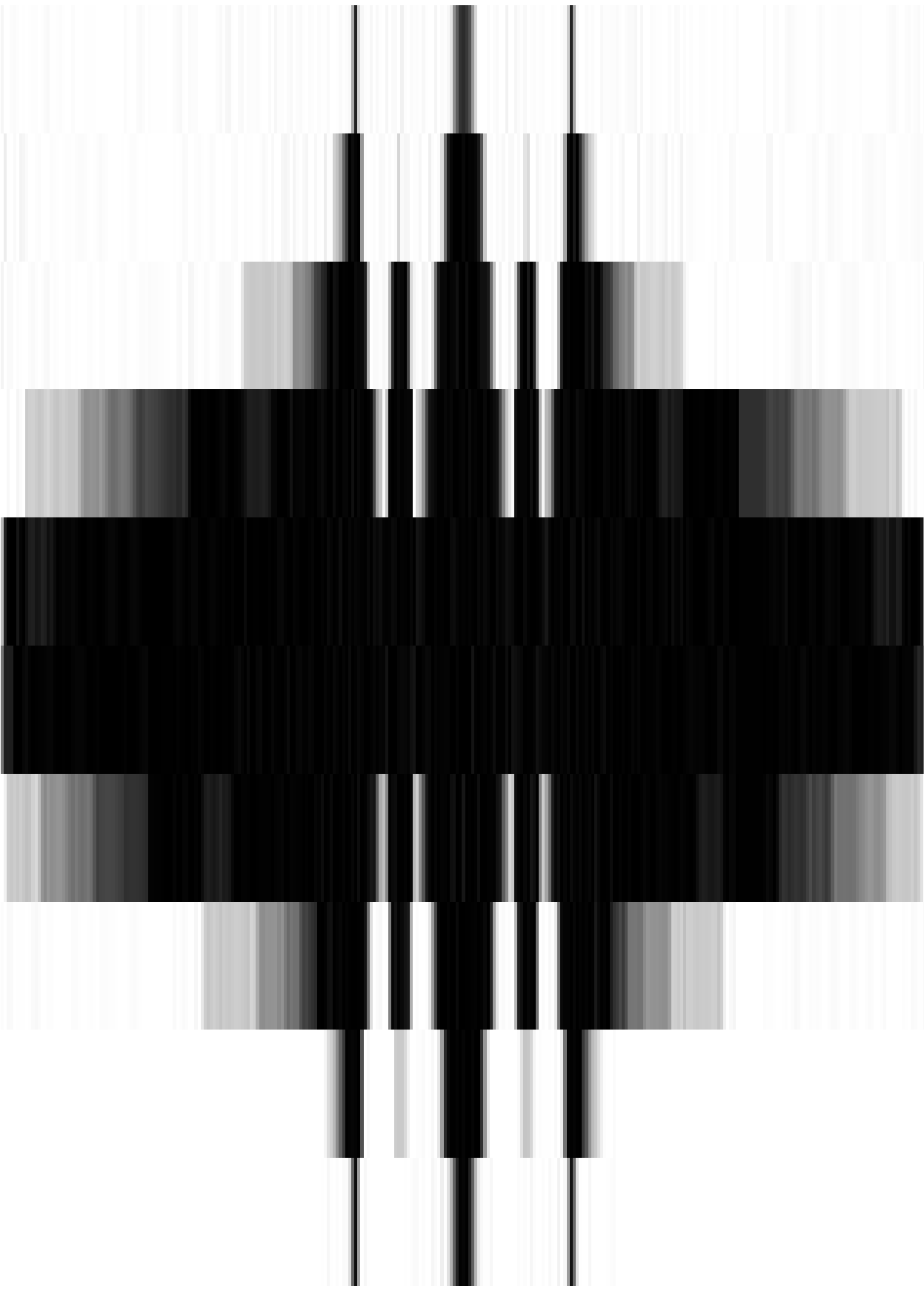
Then asked they him, “What man is that which said unto thee, ‘Take up thy bed, and walk’?” And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place (John 5:10 – 13).

Not wishing to express amazement at the healing performed by Jesus, for that would be an acknowledgment of his superiority, skeptical observers displayed instead a sham zeal for the laws of the Sabbath day.



Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, "Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee" (John 5:14).

Jesus was warning the healed man that his sickness had been the result of his own prenatal actions from past incarnations as well as postnatal evil behavior of his present life; and lest he succumb again, he should not persist in his sinful ways. Jesus was pointing out the importance of freeing one's power of independent action from the influence of the tendencies of past wrong actions. If the man's transgressions continued, the cumulative evil of the past and the evil accruing from new actions would result in a condign punishment of an even worse disaster.



Effect of past wrong actions on present human suffering

Traces of past evils lie hidden within the consciousness in the brain, potentially ready to be roused by a stimulus of fresh misdeeds. Those malevolent tendencies can instead be eradicated with the electrifying force of newly acquired wisdom.

Jesus clearly signified that the consequences of sin, as also the rewards of virtue, do not come from unknown causes or from a decree of God, but are the result of human wrong or good actions, the law of cause and effect, which governs the life of man. Persons who do not lead scientifically discriminative lives ascribe good fortune or misfortune to an inscrutable, whimsical destiny. This irrational quirk in some strange way seems to offer comfort in its false sense of irresponsibility. This misconception should be courageously renounced and replaced by wisdom. Instead of moaning over one's fate and blaming destiny, one should adopt discriminative good behavior, which will mitigate and counteract the effect of past evil doings.

In this healing incident, Jesus pronouncedly makes every man responsible for his own suffering. It further points out that not only is man's life governed by the law of action, but that reincarnation alone can explain the inequalities and seeming injustices that visit human beings from their birth. The remedy is that a chronic physical, moral, or mental sickness can be healed in one of two ways: either by direct divine intervention of one of God's intermediaries, and cooperation with his advice; or by adopting the counteracting good actions that will destroy, or at least minimize, the effects of past wrong actions.



The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole. And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the Sabbath day.³

But Jesus answered them, “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.”

Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God (John 5:15 – 18).

The critics of Jesus mechanically followed the letter of the rules in observing the Sabbath and their other ethics of living, whereas Jesus followed the spirituality of rules, often ignoring superficiality and man-made formality. The spirit of the Sabbath consists in setting aside material and social engagements and remaining in an inner worshipful state of devotion with the consciousness focused on God. In cessation of material activity without spiritual communion, it is possible to be conscious, not of God, but of little more than the idleness of the body. In the name of God, Jesus could perform a material act on the Sabbath day without its being in the least material. To him every day was a Sabbath, lived in wisdom and God-consciousness.

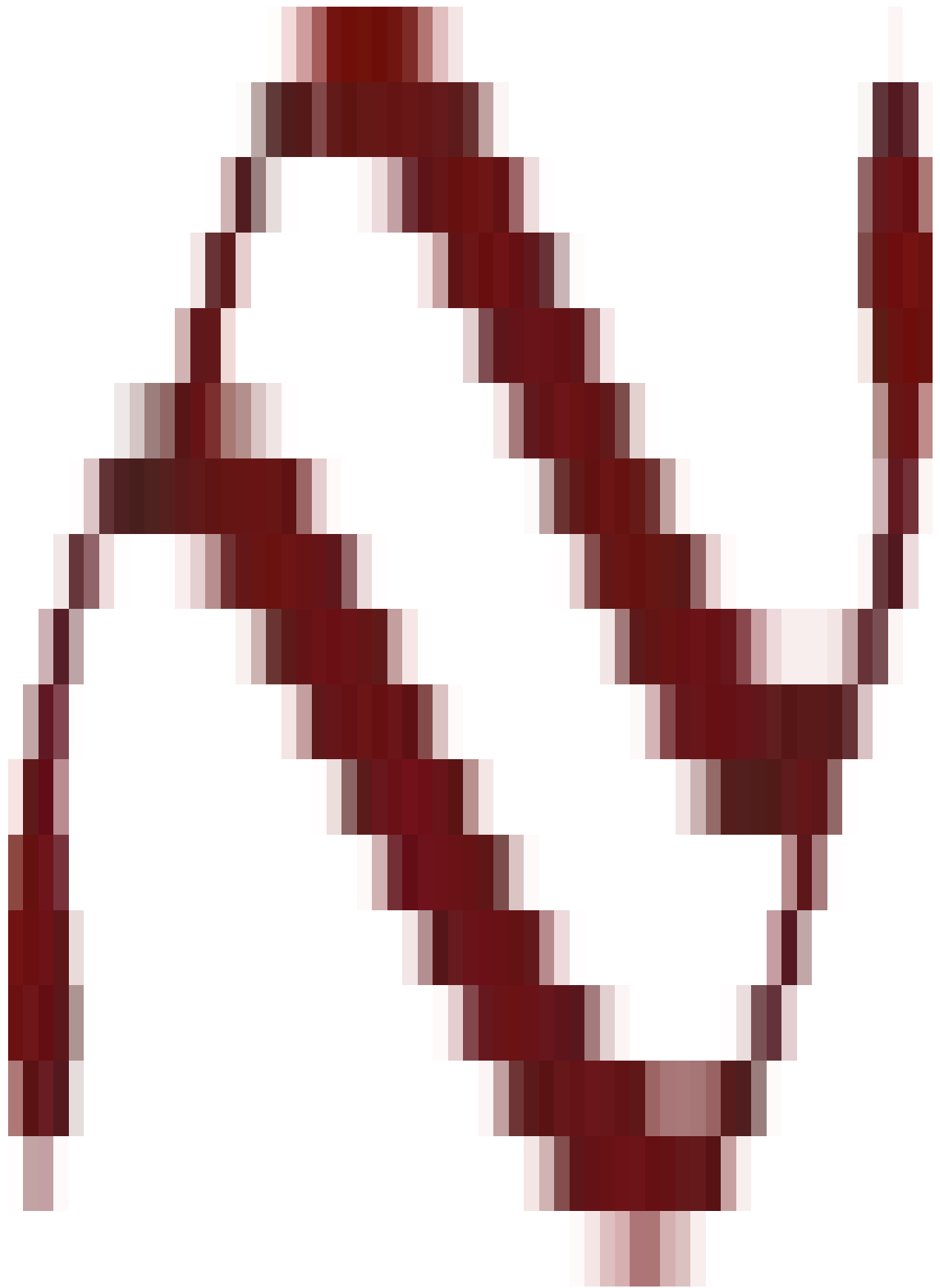


Actions guided by God automatically accord with spiritual laws

That is why Jesus said: “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.”⁴ Whatever work Jesus did on earth was actuated by his consciousness of the Father and guided by the intuitional direction he received from God; it therefore could contain no taint of evil nor violate any spiritually legitimate law.

No matter what a God-attuned devotee does, his actions, will, and reason are of his own free choice, but he feels them guided by the wisdom of the Heavenly Father. Such devotees are not slaves of God; rather, in acting wisely of their own volition, they find that the wisdom in man’s soul is the wisdom that comes from God. The Lord never constrains His devotees to do anything; but those who feel the presence of God know the wisdom of His will and prefer His guidance rather than their own egoistic determinations.

“Thy will be done” does not involve enslavement of man’s will; but as demonstrated by Jesus, a man’s wisdom-guided will is identical with God’s wisdom-guided will, since all wisdom is His alone.



“Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do” (John 5:19).

In these words, Jesus told exactly how he worked. He showed his great love for God and reverential deference. With such love and wisdom, he saw God and God’s actions as the Father of creation. As he saw how the Heavenly Father acted, and felt the effects of those actions as governed by love as well as by law, Jesus acted likewise out of his own free choice.

What the Son “seeth the Father do” suggests an intimacy possible only in manifestation. As omnipresent Jesus appeared in bodily form after his resurrection, so also the infinite formless God can appear in a Deity-form materialized out of the ether, or as a manifested Light or Voice as experienced by Jesus on the mountaintop.⁵ It is this personalization of God that Jesus addressed in reverent familiarity as Father.⁶

In the phrase, “he seeth,” Jesus spoke of divine sons who could see by their intuitional eye what the Omnipresent Father or Spirit is working in all creation. The physical body of Jesus saw through its physical eyes, as do other human beings, but the inner Jesus could see everything with his spiritual eye of intuition. The inner spirit of Jesus the Son, with the countless eyes of omnipresence, saw or intuitively perceived the Omnipresent Father secretly residing and working in the heart of atoms, of electrons and protons contained in everything materially created. The Cosmic Consciousness of the Father, inactive beyond all creation, works only indirectly in His reflected intelligence as the Son, the Christ Intelligence in all vibratory creation, and is directly active as the creative Holy Ghost vibration bringing God’s cosmic dreamings into manifestation. No physical eyes can see the Omnipresent, Invisible Father and know of His awesome secret work in His cosmic kingdom.



“What things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise” (John 5:19).

Any incarnate son of God feels himself tuned with the Universal Christ Intelligence and knows that that Consciousness is the reflection of God the Father's Intelligence. The sun reflected in a crystal ball is divided into two, the light of the sun beyond the crystal ball and the light of the sun in the crystal ball. The light in the crystal ball, though limited, is the same as the sunshine beyond the crystal ball. Likewise, the Christ Consciousness shining within creation, though limited, is the same as God the Father's Cosmic Consciousness shining beyond vibratory creation. Therefore, Jesus says that he, as a son of God, one with the reflected Christ Presence of God in all creation, could only do as His Father's Consciousness actuated him to perform.



“For the Father loveth the Son and sheweth him all things that Himself doeth: and He will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel” (John 5:20).

God the Father differentiated Himself into the Holy Ghost or Cosmic Vibratory Creation. In the womb of the Holy Ghost, with its myriad manifestations, was born the Christ Intelligence of God the Father. Since God differentiated Himself into God the Father beyond creation and God the Son in all creation, He respected all the differences that He created through the Christ-imbued Holy Ghost Cosmic Vibration. So, God the Father beyond creation, being ever new Bliss and Love, caused the same ever new Bliss and Love to be reflected in the Son or Christ Intelligence present in all vibratory creation. This is what is meant by the “Father loveth the Son.” The Son is thus God’s love in creation—a magnetic power of harmony and intelligence working to evolve all manifestations to ever higher levels of perfection.

The Father showing all things to the Son denotes that God the Father’s Intelligence beyond creation reveals all His qualities in His reflection as the Christ Intelligence in creation. Hence as Omnipresent God knows everything, so also a true son who can feel the omnipresence of God likewise participates in His omniscience.

Revelation of greater works to the Son signifies that all things have their origin in God the Father of creation and proceed toward manifestation through the Son, or Christ Intelligence. As a Self-realized master advances toward complete liberation and mergence in God, he perceives more and more of the endless manifestations of God’s power in eternally progressive creation, in which there will always be greater works throughout eternity—more wonderful than all those revealed up to any given time. The progress of creation in God is endlessly new, for God the Creator is eternal and eternally new in His expression.



“For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will” (John 5:21).



Metaphysical meaning of “death”: liberating the soul from all three bodies

As the Father has the power to reanimate a dead body by charging it with life force, so a master, if he is commanded by God, can similarly restore life, as was demonstrated by Jesus. Metaphysically speaking, however, real death means not only extinction of life in the physical body of sixteen elements, but also the dissolution of the two other bodies in which the soul is encased—the astral body of nineteen elements and the causal body of thirty-five elemental ideas.⁷ Death is a condition applicable only to these three bodies. It is the immortal soul that “the Father raiseth up” from the delusive death-dealing tentacles and attachments of its three bodies, provided it has regained realization of its unity with the consciousness of the Omnipresent Father. Advanced souls by meditation techniques and God’s grace free themselves from imprisonment in the three bodies. Such souls, their bodily encasements being metaphysically dead, are forthwith spirited away from the limitations of mortal consciousness to the perception of the kingdom of infinite life—transferred from the bodily death-state of their forgotten omnipresence to experience the resurrection of their true universal Self.

In the Bible, we find Christ defined as “the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth.”⁸ This definition is very deep and subtle. The soul wave, individualized out of the ocean of Spirit by encasement in the physical, astral, and ideational bodies, is corked therein by ignorance (delusion) and material desires and is unable to mingle with the ocean of Spirit surrounding it. With the change of the physical body called “death,” the soul still remains encased in its astral and ideational bodies, unable to loosen its oceanic essence to join the ocean of Spirit. By a liberating technique of highest meditation, the soul frees itself completely and merges itself in Christ Consciousness, the “first-begotten” state of the soul raised from the death of mortal confinement.

In human consciousness, the soul experiences itself as ego, identified with the physical body, name, titles, possessions, nationality, and all the other factors of I, me, and mine. In the subconscious state, the soul cognizes itself as the restless power of dreams, or as the dreamless peace of deep sleep. In the superconscious state, the soul feels itself as undiluted, formless, ever new joy. In the state of Christ Consciousness, the soul, emerging from its three metaphysically dead bodies, feels itself commingled with the Christ Intelligence in all creation, the

ever-conscious, supreme princely Intelligence guiding all other kingly intelligent forces that govern the earth and all matter.

Jesus, the man, could feel his consciousness, not only as residing in and governing his mortal body, but also as the Christ Intelligence pervading all the space cells of his vast cosmic body.

As God helps to resurrect souls from entombment within the delusive sepulchre of the three bodies, so also, a true son—a master or God-realized guru—can raise any devoted, aspiring disciple into the omnipresent Spirit. The guru who is one with the Father can help the deeply meditating disciple to expand his consciousness and life from the limited sensations of the body out into unlimited space to feel all life in omnipresence. That is the meaning of the “Son quickeneth” or the “Father quickeneth.”



“For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him” (John 5:22 – 23).

The transcendental God the Father beyond all creation reflected Himself as the Christ Intelligence in creation, to be the underlying guiding Intelligence of all manifestations. The intelligent creative forces of Cosmic Nature all emerge from the supreme Christ Intelligence as accessories of the Holy Ghost Cosmic Vibration. Thus Christ Intelligence is directly responsible for the creation of man and for giving to each man his power of free choice to do good or evil. Hence, all human beings are in turn directly responsible to the Christ Intelligence for the use or misuse of their free will.



The all-loving Christ never renders vengeful judgment or punishment on man

“The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son” does not mean that the Christ Intelligence punishes or rewards each person, but that each individual must suffer the consequences of his own actions when he makes wrong determinations. Man, whose soul is made in the image of the Infinite Christ, should naturally live as a Christ; but when he resists and acts against the Christ conscience in him, he puts himself in disharmony with the ever-flowing judgment or wisdom or harmony or love or peace of Christ. A river follows its natural course to make a land fertile; but if an embankment is put up which impedes that flow, the river indirectly, with no subjective intent, passes judgment of punishment by denying its theretofore freely given water. So also, when man erects a wall of ignorance and non-receptivity and matter-identified living, he finds that the divine waters of Christ-wisdom have passed judgment not to flow in his life, in respect of his free will. It would be wrong to ascribe to Christ (who suffered on the cross, saying: “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do”), and to God or Godlike souls, any vengeful judgment or action.

The Father, hidden in all space, manifests Himself through His true incarnate sons who receive and reflect His wisdom. Those who respect the Father and are desirous of knowing Him, but cannot hear His guiding voice, should honor and follow these true sons of God—God-sent enlightened gurus—through whose voices God speaks to truth-seeking devotees. It is so easy for devotees to hear the voice of God in the definite guidance of God-known masters. Ignorant people do not know God because they do not purify their minds to receive Him. Jesus and Christlike souls manifest God; and therefore persons who do not honor or offer respectful attention to these pure channels similarly deny respectful attention to the Father who is responsible for His emissaries’ missions of redemption on earth.



“Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man” (John 5:24 – 27).

“V erily, verily, through the certitude I feel through my intuitive oneness with the universal Christ Consciousness, I say unto you and all mankind that devotees who listen to the Cosmic Vibration, the Word or comforting Holy Ghost and my guided wisdom of Christ Intelligence felt in it, believe and know that my wisdom comes from God the Father.”



Communing with Cosmic Vibration in meditation brings imperishable life

Devotees who by constant meditation and spiritual ecstasy feel Christ in all creation are the real Christ-ians. Through direct experience they know and believe in Christ Intelligence and the Father who reflected that Intelligence in all creation, and they know Christ as manifested in the Cosmic Vibration. That is why it is emphasized “he that heareth my word...hath everlasting life”; that is, he who listens to the Cosmic Vibration and intuitively feels Christ-wisdom flowing into him not only knows and believes in God and Christ, but becomes one with the imperishable life emanating from Them.

Such souls who are one with Cosmic Vibration and the Christ Intelligence in it, and with God’s Intelligence beyond creation, are free from condemnation; that is, from the law of action and its inscrutable judgment that governs man’s life.

The devotee seeking everlasting life needs to practice the consciousness-expanding technique of listening to the Cosmic Vibration and feeling Christ Consciousness within it. When he is consciously able to do that and to lift his soul from perceiving the sensations of the physical body, the power and energy of the astral body, and lastly, the thought confinement of the causal body, he raises himself from the tomb of the metaphysically dead three bodies to pass on into the perception of perpetual freedom in Spirit.

Ordinary persons who have no direct knowledge or experience of the Cosmic Vibration—the comforting Holy Ghost, which Jesus promised to send and which devotees can feel by practicing Self-Realization methods—actually have relatively little conscious awareness after death during their deep peaceful rest between incarnations. But the time will come to such persons, and verily the time has arrived now for advanced disciples, when by the guru’s help and by meditation they shall hear the cosmic sound of the Holy Ghost Vibration and feel their expanding wisdom as emanating from the Son of God, the Christ Consciousness. Those devotees who commune with the all-comforting Holy Ghost Vibration (as taught in Lahiri Mahasaya’s technique and in which Christ instructed his close disciples) shall not experience the ordinary oblivion of death, but shall live in a continuity of consciousness in the everlastingness of life that flows from God the Father, linking their life with the omnipresent life in all creation.

An ordinary person appears to live only once, in his present lifetime, because he cannot remember his identity during the process of transition from one life to another, as his soul passes through many incarnations. In that sense, man does not live forever, even though his immortal soul never dies. But a fairly advanced master passing through a few last incarnations required to finish up his latent ties to earth bondage can preserve in his memory the continuity of the identity of his soul. Gradually such souls learn to live forever in God without their consciousness being interrupted by death.

As the Father is the Source of Cosmic Life, so has He bequeathed that power to His reflected presence as the Christ Intelligence in all vibratory creation. In the Christ Intelligence God has also placed the universal laws that govern all aspects of creation. Through these righteous principles that uphold the universe, the Son executes judgment.⁹ That is, whensoever any of these divine codes are transgressed, a consequential judgment is automatically imposed by the Universal Intelligence. As the Christ Intelligence can be manifest also in a human form, “the son of man,” as it was in Jesus and other true sons of God who received God-consciousness through the transparency of their consciousness, such a one speaks with the authority of God’s wisdom in guiding souls to live in harmony with God’s divine principles and on occasion mitigating the judgmental effects of those laws at God’s behest.



“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation” (John 5:28 – 29).



Did Jesus teach bodily resurrection of the dead?

This age of logic, having struggled out of a long dark night of superstition, belies belief in a literal interpretation of Christ's words in this verse. The word "graves" used by Jesus gave Biblical interpreters of little or no direct intuitional perception the thought that after death man's soul waits with its cold corpse entombed, able to rise only on Resurrection Day when archangel Gabriel blows his trumpet. It appears that for twenty centuries Gabriel has not sounded his trumpet, because the skeletons of millions can be found still in their graves. ¹⁰

This misconception of resurrection, that God would keep living souls refrigerated for years beneath the cold sod, and then suddenly warm them up to be sent to Hades or Heaven, is baseless, revolting, injurious, and unreasonable.

If that is the plan, what injustice it is that sinners and the virtuous alike, without discrimination, have been kept waiting for centuries. Surely the just law of cause and effect has something better to offer those who strived sincerely to live a righteous life. Are we to believe that an autocratic God, without rhyme or reason, dumps all souls after death under a clod of earth and keeps them sleeping peacefully or dreaming in nightmares for centuries until His mood suddenly chooses to command Gabriel to blow the trumpet and wake the dead? And what of those highly spiritual souls whose bodies are not buried but were cremated and the ashes scattered in the winds and seas?

If Gabriel sounds the trumpet tomorrow, souls who died today would wake up after only a few hours, along with the souls who have been dead for centuries before the time of Christ. To drug immortal souls with the sleep of death for centuries, to gag their expression in the gloom of the tomb for aeons, to chloroform their intelligence for millenniums, and then suddenly wake them up and sort them out for Heaven and Hades, is an untenable conception to ascribe to a just and loving God.

How would God select from the various grades of dead sinners and the various degrees of virtuous people, and the babies who have had no time to be either virtuous or evil, which ones are to go eternally to Heaven and which eternally to Hades? From such a medley of imperfect, half-perfect, and neutral souls no divine justice could perform any reasonable selections. If God arbitrarily makes

persons of reasonable or unreasonable mentality, souls predisposed to be either good or bad, nudged by a favorable or unfavorable earthly inheritance, and endows babies with reason and then lets them die before they can express their potentials, just for the sake of variety, then this earth is a hopeless mess, and its creatures hapless puppets dancing on strings of chance. Our common sense tells us that there must be a wiser purpose from a Creator who is wisdom itself. The reason and free choice of every human being must have time and equal opportunity to evolve and express the full God-given divinity of the soul.

The true meaning of these verses becomes clear when understood in the light of the law of karma and reincarnation, according to which the Christ Intelligence immanent in the Holy Ghost Vibration (“his voice”) judges the fate of each human being after death. This “voice,” or Gabriel’s trumpet, signals the transition, governed by cosmic law, from one vibratory state of existence to another.¹¹



True meaning of “Gabriel’s trumpet”

The slipping of the lifetronic astral body from the atomic physical body at death causes the hum of released lifetronic energy. This sound, resonating with the uplifting Cosmic Sound, every person, virtuous or sinful, automatically hears with his subtle astral senses during the transition from the physical to the astral world.

“All that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth” refers to another transition of consciousness effected by “Gabriel’s trumpet” or the divine voice of Cosmic Vibration. “Graves” signifies a temporary after-death state of mental stupor or unconscious sleep which most souls, except those who are advanced, undergo when they depart from the physical body. A comparison may be made with the state of sleep. The wakeful consciousness of man nightly rests in the subconsciousness of sleep, during which man is not aware of the body and his sleep state. The astral body and the causal body semiretire from the muscles and sense organs and rest in the internal organs and the spine and subconscious mind. At the moment of awakening, the life force vibrates outward with many sounds and resurrects the sleeping astral body and mind of man into the state of conscious wakefulness.

Similarly, in the after-death state there is a period of unconscious rejuvenating sleep, referred to metaphorically by Jesus as a grave, in which souls are “entombed” within their resting astral and causal bodies. The time of this death sleep is different for various people, according to their individual qualities and good or bad karma—even as people of various habits sleep for long or short periods.

Just as the vibrating life force resurrects the consciousness of the sleeper into the wakeful state, so the energy voice of the Holy Cosmic Vibration, the great Amen or Aum sound, lifts souls of good or bad karma, with their astral and causal bodies, from the “tomb” of after-death oblivion to awareness of the spiritual environment of the astral heaven, or to reincarnation in a karmically attracted good or bad environment of earthly life.



Explanation of the real after-death resurrection

“For the hour is coming,” that is, it is imminent with the physical death of each man that he shall hear the sound of Cosmic Vibration (the trumpet of Gabriel) and shall forsake the unconscious sleep of the after-death state. Those who have stored up effects of good actions will be resurrected into conscious awareness of life in the glorious astral realm—for a karmically predetermined time—and then be reincarnated into a spiritual earth life. Those who have stored up evil in their past lives may experience in their astral bodies the dark astral realms of distressing or nightmarish dreams; eventually, by the damnation of the karmic law of reaping what one has sown, they will be led by the Cosmic Vibration to reincarnate in new physical bodies with their same evil tendencies impinged on the brain, and the effects of their past wrong actions.

In sleep the first thing that is forgotten is the body. In death, likewise, the first thing that is forgotten is the physical body. In sleep, however, there is still a link between the body and the soul, so in wakefulness the person becomes conscious again of the same forgotten body. In death the soul’s connection with the physical form is permanently severed: After the sleep of death is finished, a soul awakens not in the same body but in a different body. In the exceptional case of Jesus Christ, though death separated his soul from his physical body, he rebuilt his same broken body by an act of divine will with the Holy Ghost cosmic energy and housed his soul therein again.

Thus the word resurrection, “to rise again” after death, means reincarnation, which may occur from the physical to the astral, or from the astral to the physical; or for supremely advanced souls, from the physical to the spiritual, from which place souls are never forced to leave again. “Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out.”¹²

In the astral, souls have luminous bodies of lifetronic energy. In the physical world, souls condense the lifetronic energy of their astral bodies into the grosser atomic structure of the physical body. In the spiritual realm, souls dissolve their delusive bodily forms and dreams of a little body into the consciousness of the Infinite, either as tenuously individualized souls in the causal realm or in complete mergence in Spirit. Ordinary souls have to reincarnate repeatedly from the physical to the astral, then back to the physical, until they become developed

enough to resurrect from the physical to the astral and then to the all-liberating spiritual realm.

No matter where the soul is, it receives a chance to use its reason consciously, or subconsciously, or superconsciously (if its actions are very good), in the causal, astral, or physical world. God-given reason and free choice can never be withdrawn, even if temporarily constrained by karmic effects of one's evil actions. Souls must be reborn countless times until they have full opportunity to use their free choice to disengage themselves from the woesome bondage to matter, and thereby return to God.

As a saint once said to God, "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee."¹³ To this I will add: "until they deserve—by our free-will efforts to rise above all restless desires that divert us matterward—to rest in Thee."

Only during nocturnal sleep or during the big sleep of death may a soul rest for a while from external stimuli and the ceaseless activating force of desire; but though its bodily instruments sleep, the ever conscious soul keeps stirring all the time. If one sleeps peacefully or fretfully, then, on waking, one feels peaceful or worried, as the case may be. So, in deathly sleep, man's deep consciousness keeps stirring—the life and intelligence is continuously invigorating itself. After he has had sufficient respite from external stimuli, his unfulfilled desires begin to revive, increasing in strength until they cause him to reawaken—either in an astral environment or in a new physical incarnation, depending on his karma and the inclination of his desires.

Any stir of intelligence during life or death is vibratory change, the motion of which creates sound—as all vibration is manifested from the Holy Cosmic Vibration and all sound from its sound of Amen or Aum. The great uplifting vibratory change instilled by Cosmic Law at the karmically appointed time of death to release physically captive souls into the freedom of the diseaseless, accidentless, painless astral sphere is one meaning of the "resurrection after Gabriel blows his trumpet." Gabriel's trumpet sounds again after a soul's pre-allotted time in the astral world: The Cosmic Intelligent Vibration, "his voice," leads that soul—encased in an astral body wherein its past good and bad karmic tendencies are stored—to enter into a newly built protoplasmic home of a united sperm and ovum cell, which then develops into the embryo and a new physical body.¹⁴ This Cosmic Vibration serves like dancing waves in the sea of ether to

float the astral-causal – body-encased soul from the astral world to the shores of a good or evil environment in earth life, commensurate with that individual's good and bad karma accrued from the good and evil actions performed by the use of free will.

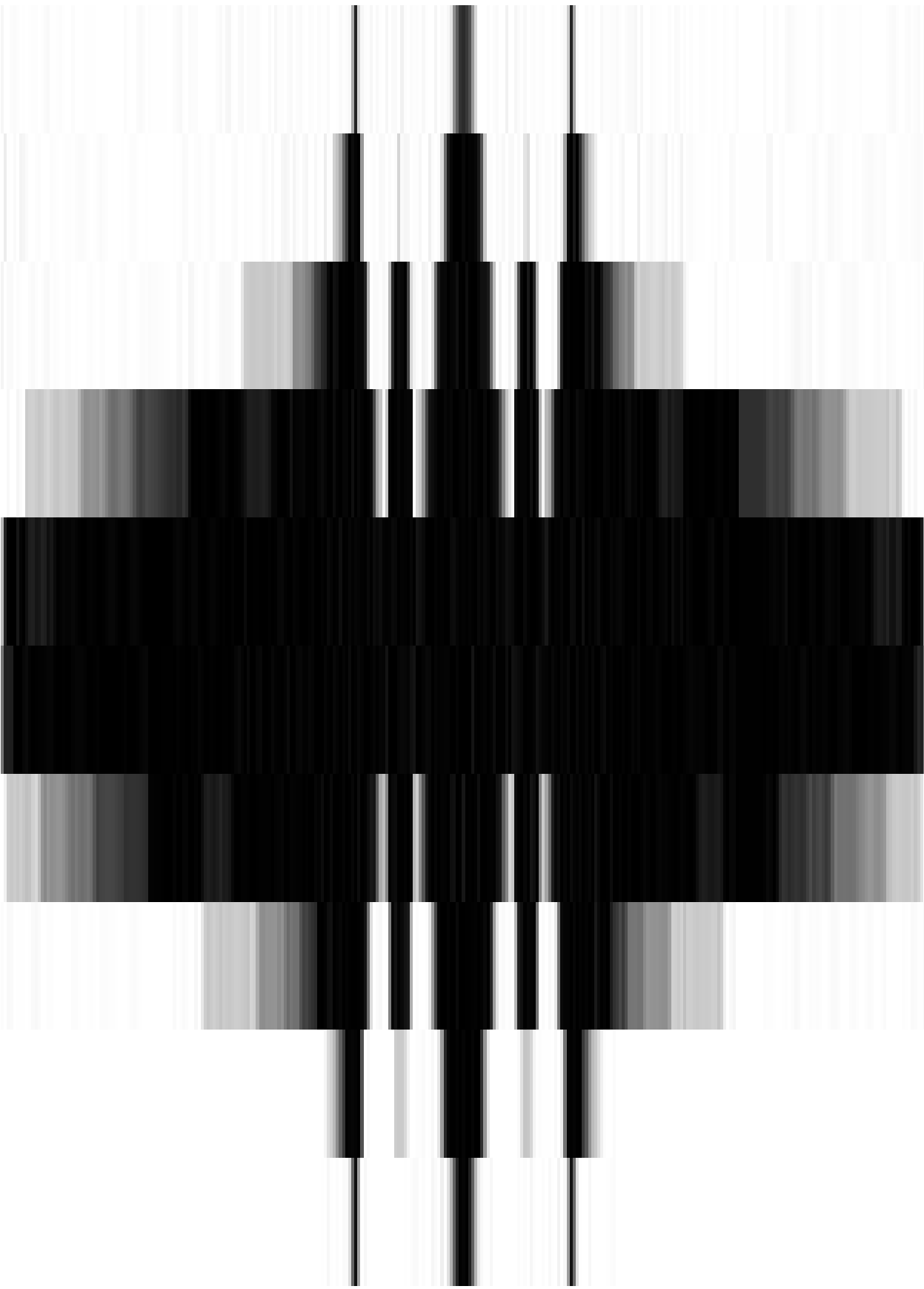
Like attracts like. One's karmic pattern draws him to incarnate in an advantaged or disadvantaged, good or evil, body and mentality, family, and environment that not only reflect the effects of one's past actions, but provide the necessary challenges for learning from past errors. Thus they who have done good come forth resurrected into a higher life of better circumstances; and they who have done evil come forth on earth "unto the resurrection of damnation," to face and work out the consequences of their misdeeds, in a new life and opportunity to learn and change their ways. The Cosmic Law and Cosmic Holy Ghost Vibration are only guides to help both good and bad to their respective new-life destinations, Nature's secretive way of working to carry out God's creative plan in a wondrous, mysterious dignity.

The law of resurrection, or reincarnation, thus teaches man that he must never give up, even if old, discouraged, or at death's door. He should try every minute of his existence to improve himself, knowing that life continues after death into the better land of the astral plane, and thence into new encouraging surroundings on the physical plane. At last he will wake up to Gabriel's trumpet call of ultimate wisdom in the spiritual kingdom, from which there is no forced return to earth. Even as Jesus by overcoming mortal consciousness attained supreme power over life and death, so every man, by the right method of deep meditation, can learn consciously to lift the soul from body consciousness into the presence of God. When the last trumpet sounds for that soul, death will hold no mystery. The prodigal soul is taken back from its wanderings in matter to its ever-blessed spiritual home in God.¹⁵



“I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just: because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me” (John 5:30).

Jesus speaks from his universal Christ Consciousness: “I, the Christ Consciousness present in all creation and all souls, seek not to materialize my wishes on earth, but to obey the just cosmic law of creation as guided by the will and wisdom of the Cosmic Consciousness, the Father who is present beyond creation as the Transcendental Absolute, and in creation as myself, the Christ Intelligence.”¹⁶



Karmic law judges justly, reflecting the Father's divine wisdom

Neither God nor Jesus as the Christ Intelligence is a despotic disciplinarian passing judgment on the actions of man. The Christ Intelligence in all matter never punishes anybody; instead, according to the self-created vibrations of good or evil present in man, the cosmic law in the Christ Intelligence, reflecting the divine will, or wisdom, of the Father, automatically pronounces a judgment of a good or evil effect equal to its cause. This judgment is just, based on the equity of the law of cause and effect.

The divine law of harmony metes out just conditions for all persons. When anyone acts against this law, he hurts himself. For example, the human flesh in the hand is sensitive—if it is dipped in cool water it receives a soothing effect. If it is plunged in fire, it burns. The fire does not willingly burn an individual, nor does the cool water produce from choice the coolness in anyone's hand. The one who touches the fire or dips his hand in the water is solely responsible for the ensuing effect.

The karmic law is just, because its judgment is never an eternal imposition. A few evil actions cannot condemn a soul made in the image of God to suffer perpetually. A few good actions could not qualify a soul to enjoy everlasting happiness. The amount of good and evil in man merely brings him nearer to God or sends him farther away from God. Man is thus inherently law-bound to be happy when he is harmonious with God and Christ Consciousness. And he is equally law-bound to suffer when he acts against the harmony of God. But no matter how much sin man has acquired, though he be the greatest of sinners, sinning for many incarnations, still he cannot be judged and damned forever. A finite cause cannot have an infinite effect. Nor should a good man rest on the laurels of past good actions; they must be dutifully and continually compounded.

That is why Jesus clearly says, "I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge." That is, the Christ Intelligence acts according to the vibrations of the cosmic law of God that governs our lives.

The words of Jesus are a strong exhortation to put one's life in order, in accord with the cosmic law, the divine will of God, lest by wrong living one create a physical and mental hell of suffering even greater than the imaginary judgment

of an after-death hellfire. Far better that by good living man create within himself the sweetness of a portable heaven.

Only when man attains the final good, or God, does he escape the inescapable judgment of the mortal law of action into the immortal Divine Transcendence.



*“If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true. There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which He witnesseth of me is true”
(John 5:31 – 32).*

“It is not true, right or proper, if I give testimony about my own being. There is another, the transcendental Cosmic Consciousness beyond creation (God the Father) whose reflected Christ Consciousness in all matter bears witness of my being; that is, declares my wisdom as derived from Him. And I, one with Christ Consciousness, intuitively know that the testimony of God the Father is true, whatever He declares through my voice and teachings about me and my characteristics and about my being the prophesied savior come to aid in the redemption of all beings.”



“Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth.¹⁷ But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved. He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light” (John 5:33 – 35).

“You believed in John, who declared the truth that he witnessed within himself. You thus received the truth of God indirectly through the testimony of John’s human consciousness. But I, Jesus Christ, whose consciousness is one with the Intelligence in all creation, do not speak from the borrowed knowledge of another man; these truths which I declare and which will save you from the suffering entailed in identity with physical consciousness, I receive through God the Father. John was aflame with divine love and shining with God’s wisdom, and you all were willing for a little while to rejoice by watching the glory of God in him, but without sincerely following him.”



“But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. And the Father Himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His shape. And ye have not His word abiding in you: for whom He hath sent, him ye believe not” (John 5:36 – 38).

“But, I, Christ Consciousness, in my universal perception, witness and behold greater wisdom even than that of John. John inspired you in God, but my work of resurrecting souls again unto God, as manifest in the changed lives of the disciples who follow me, and the miracles that I have to work according to the wishes of the Father, and the divine reformations that God has given me to finish during my earth life, bear sufficient testimony that God’s absolute consciousness is vibrating in me. My various demonstrations of divine power prove His manifestation in me, and that my works, my consciousness, my teachings are witnessed and upheld by the Cosmic Consciousness of the Heavenly Father.

“O ye who are body-identified, you have never at any period of your life heard the Cosmic Intelligent Sound emanating from all vibratory creation in the cosmos, nor have you seen the Cosmic Light emanating from that Vibration as spread within everything in the realm of the cosmos. If any of you had been blessed with such experience, you would have known that God can be seen as this Cosmic Light and His voice heard as this Cosmic Sound omnipresent in creation, as intuitively perceived by intelligently guided devotees through their ecstatic communion. If you knew God as the all-creative Cosmic Vibration of light and sound, you would have understood that He can take the shape of any saint and appear before your eyes and talk to you.

“Because you believe not in the Christ Intelligence manifest in my consciousness, that shows that you have not felt the Cosmic Vibration of God within you. All devotees who have heard the uplifting Cosmic Sound know that it is not an ordinary vibration, but that within it is the intelligence and inspiration of Christ Consciousness.”



“Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life. I receive not honour from men. But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you.

“I am come in my Father’s name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?” (John 5:39 – 44).

“Search the words of wise men in the timeless wisdom of scriptures in which you have belief in the promise of eternal life, for those very scriptures spoke of my coming. And yet, you do not accept me, I who am the very embodiment of eternal life. I have come to show you how your isolated little lives floating away from God can unite with Cosmic Life. By connecting with the Life Eternal, you will find freedom from the cyclic wheel of life and death created by your material desires, which will have found complete fulfillment in God, who is the Most Desirable.

“I seek no personal honor from men, for I have received the consummate recognition and love of God. I ask only that you listen to me that I may deliver unto you the message of Him who sent me. I know that your hearts are forgetful of God, diverted from Him by your love for the manifestations of the material world. Those who attract your attention by their eloquence, exaggeration, and emotional appeal, cast over you the false glamor of their own egoistic personality. I have come to declare not myself, but my Heavenly Father.

“You refuse to receive in your consciousness my all-redeeming wisdom about the Father. How can you believe that His certification and assurance is the highest security, honored by all creation, when you crave instead for the futile, short-lived, hollow praise of man? The acclaim of people is fickle; the honor of God’s loving attention is lasting and insures ever certain security and guidance. Do not waste time seeking the praise of man; utilize every moment in doing

those works that will draw the attention and favor of God.”



“Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?” (John 5:45 – 47).

“Do not think that because you do not heed my words I will accuse you and hold you blameworthy before the Father. But the prophet Moses will justly accuse you because you trust in him; and if you truly believed Moses, you would also have to believe me, for Moses wrote about my coming in the scriptures. If you do not believe the visible prophetic writings of Moses, how indeed could you believe my words?” ¹⁸

A comparison is also made here in Jesus’ forgiving the people for their ignorance and his reference to Moses as accusing them for their nonbelief. Moses was a prophet of God’s law. He thus expressed the “fatherly” aspects of God’s love as conditioned by law. If a son is good, the father (in whom the masculine quality of reason predominates) shows his love for the son; if the son is bad, the father punishes him. Moses treated his disciples and followers with that conditional fatherly love. The love that Jesus gave was from the “motherly” aspect of God; a mother’s love (when it comes predominantly from the feminine quality of feeling) is unconditional toward the son, no matter whether he is good or bad.

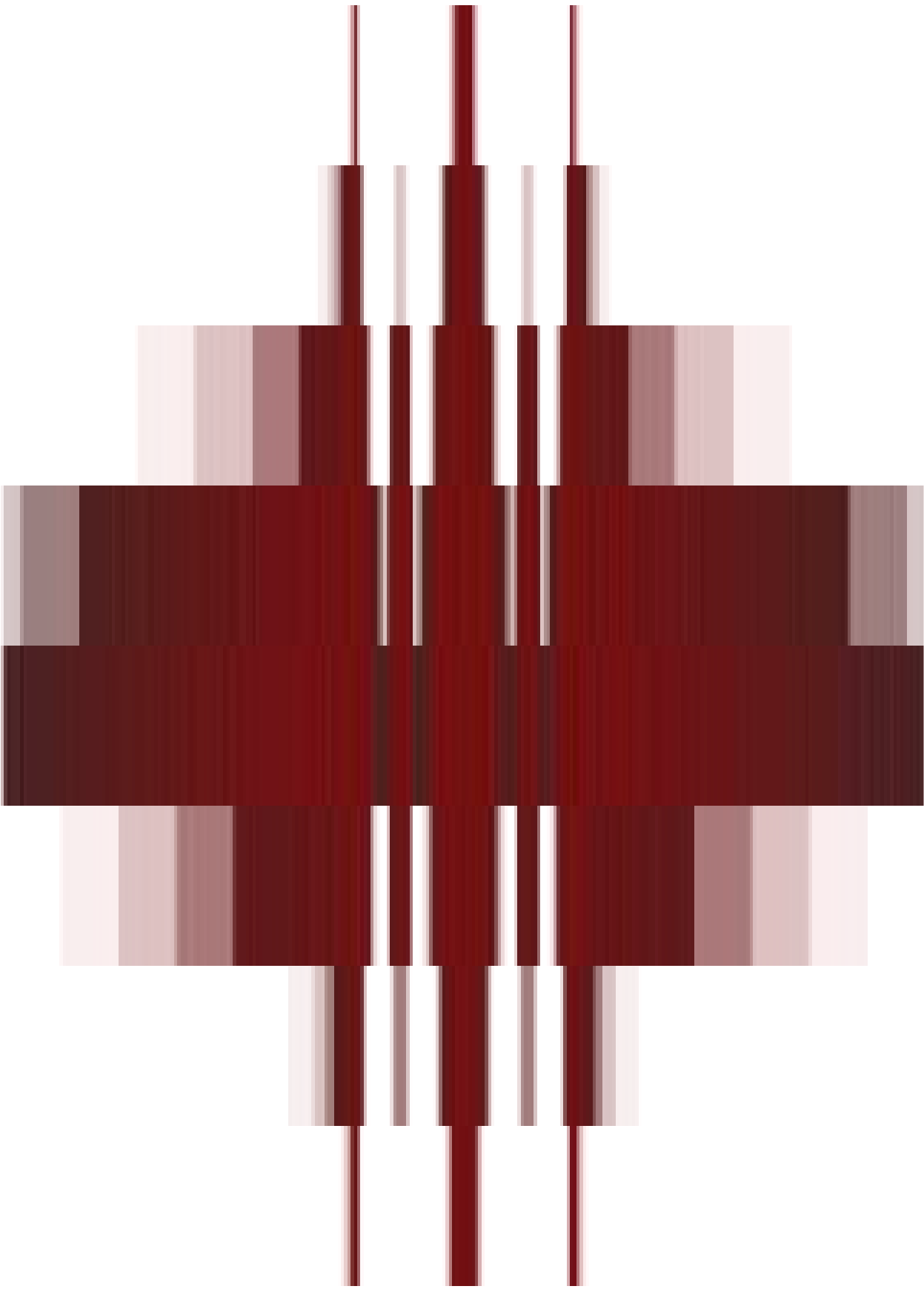
The way of Jesus, in his humbleness, was to try to persuade his ignorance-bewildered brethren through reason and the manifest love of God, rather than by theological threats and the fear of providential punishment. If Almighty God used force to make His prodigal children come back to Him, they would be mechanical, not soulful, creations.

Jesus, with all miraculous powers at his command, used only his love and persuasive reason to plead with the ignorant crowds in trying to awaken their wisdom, through which they would use their free will to forsake the evils of the world and seek the lasting ever new bliss of God.

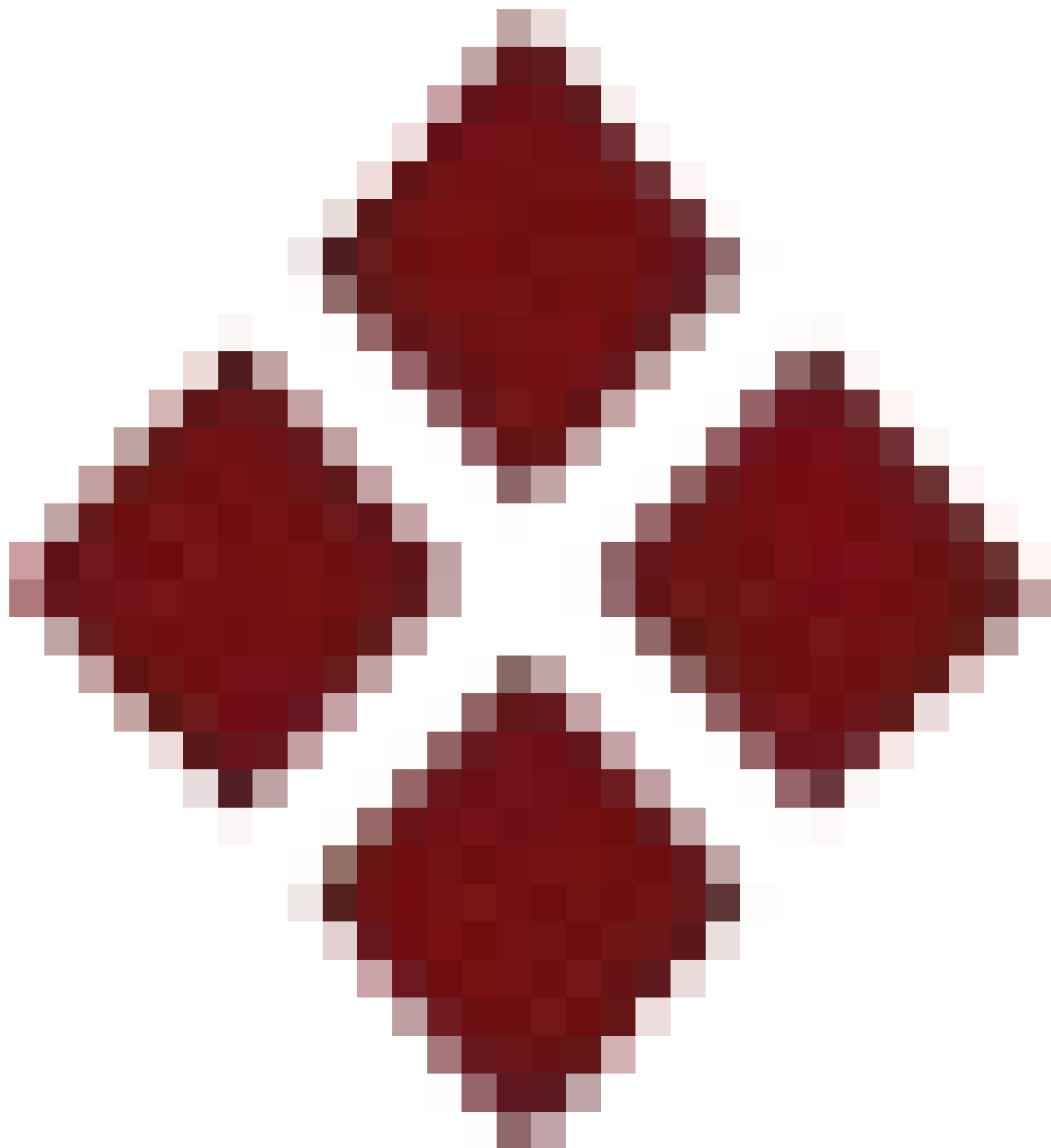


Discourse 22

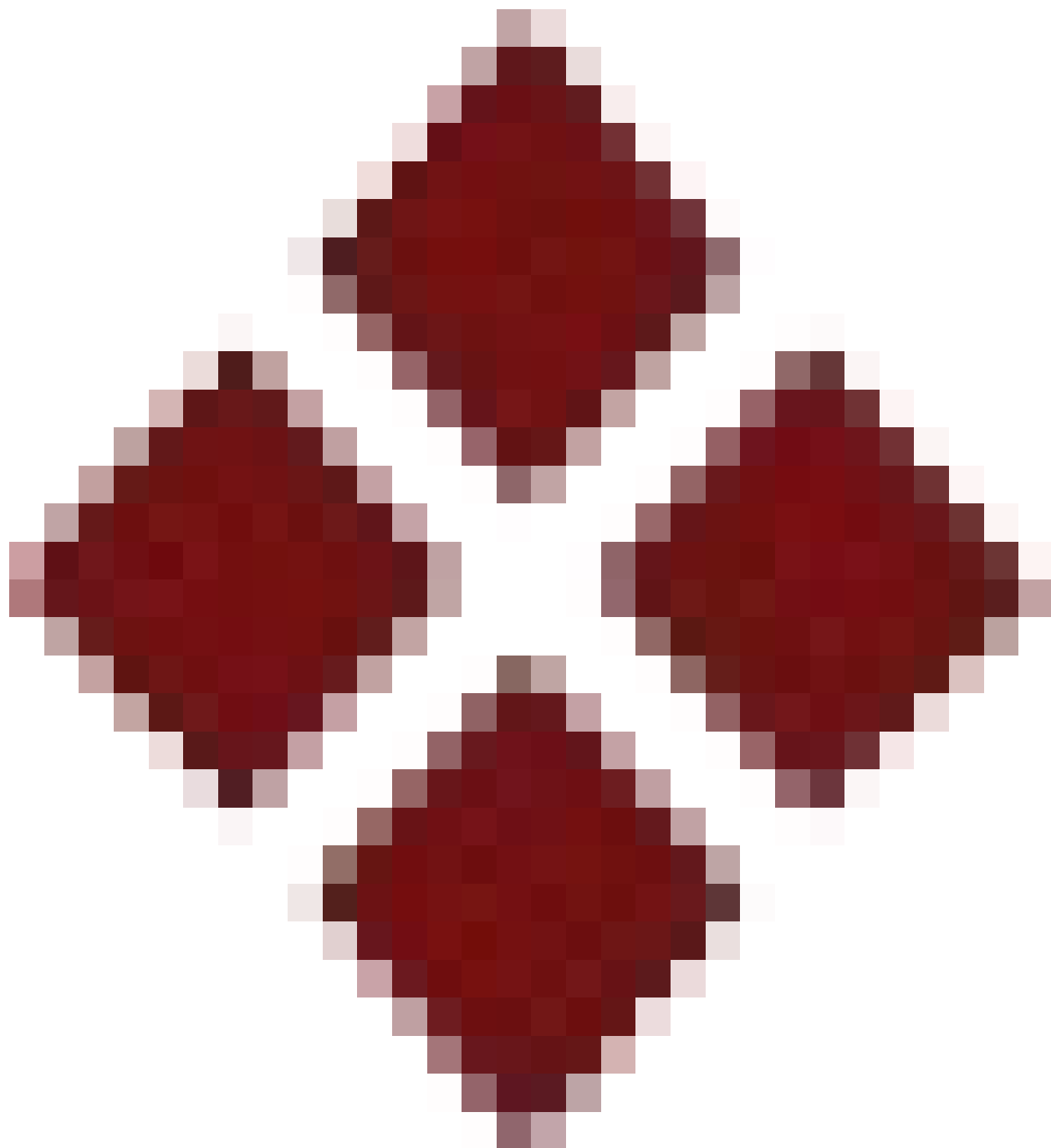
“Repent Ye, and Believe the Gospel”



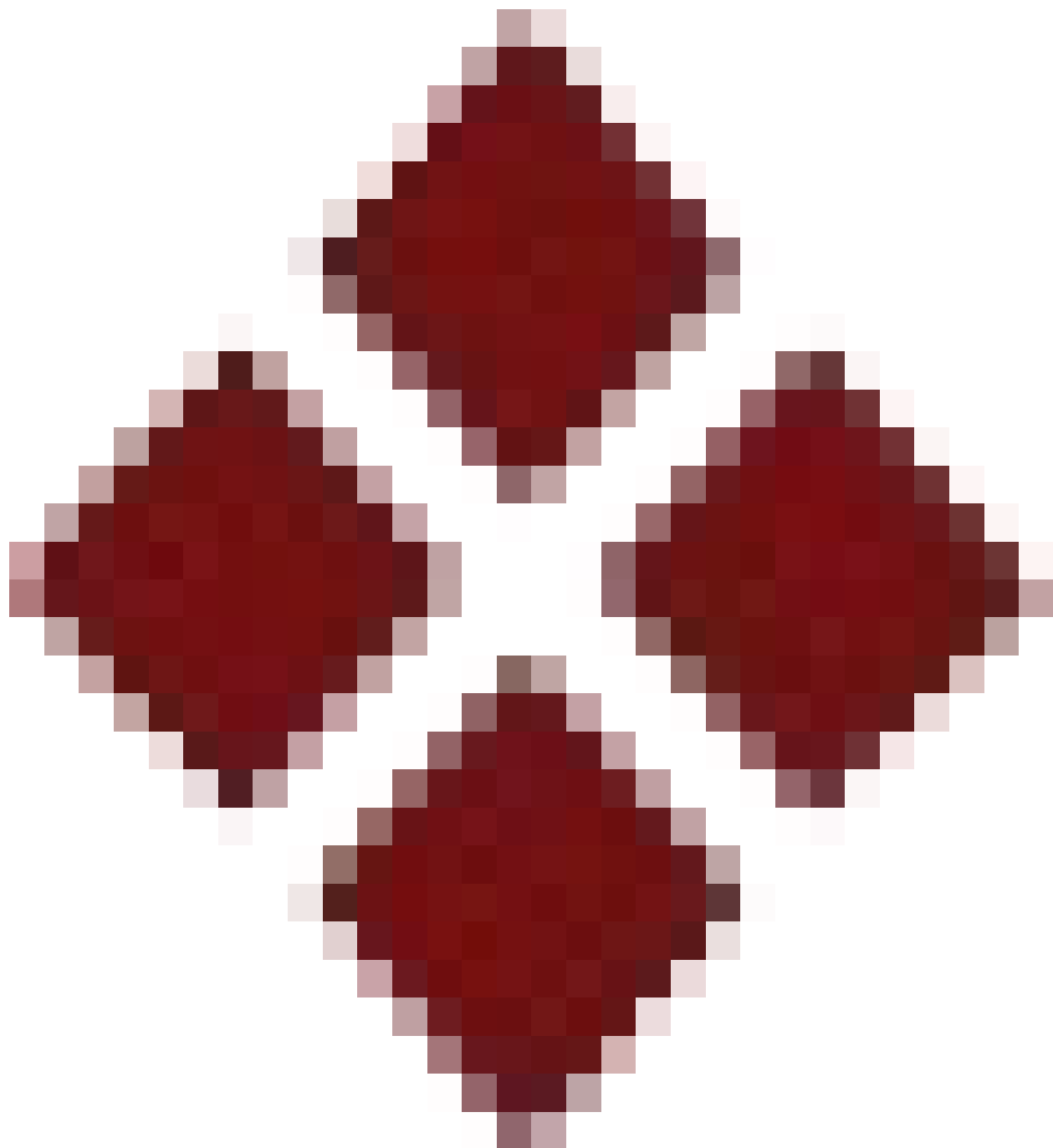
How Prophets Foretell the Future Unfolding of God's Plan



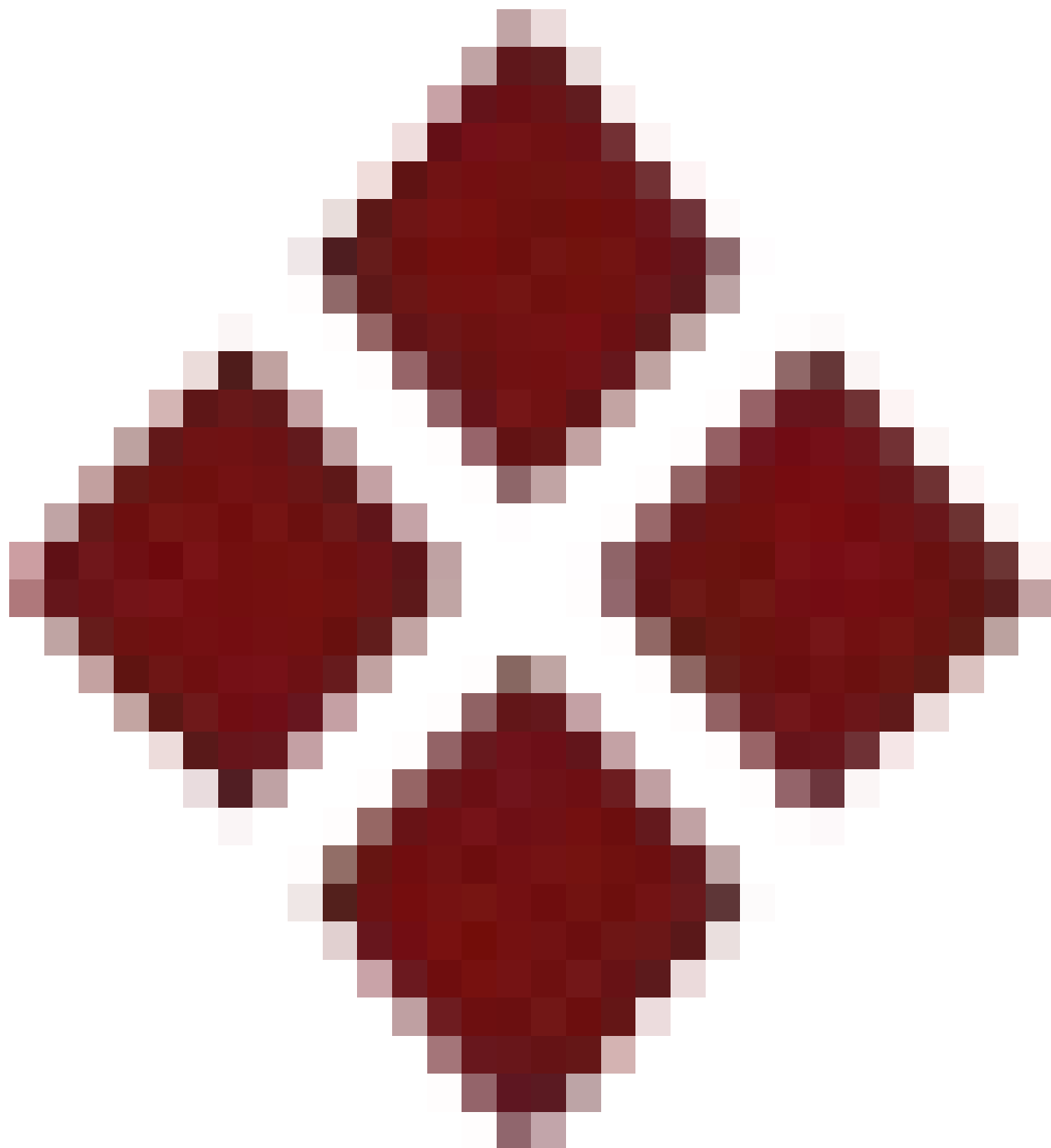
Dispelling the Darkness of Ignorance by the Light of Christ-Wisdom



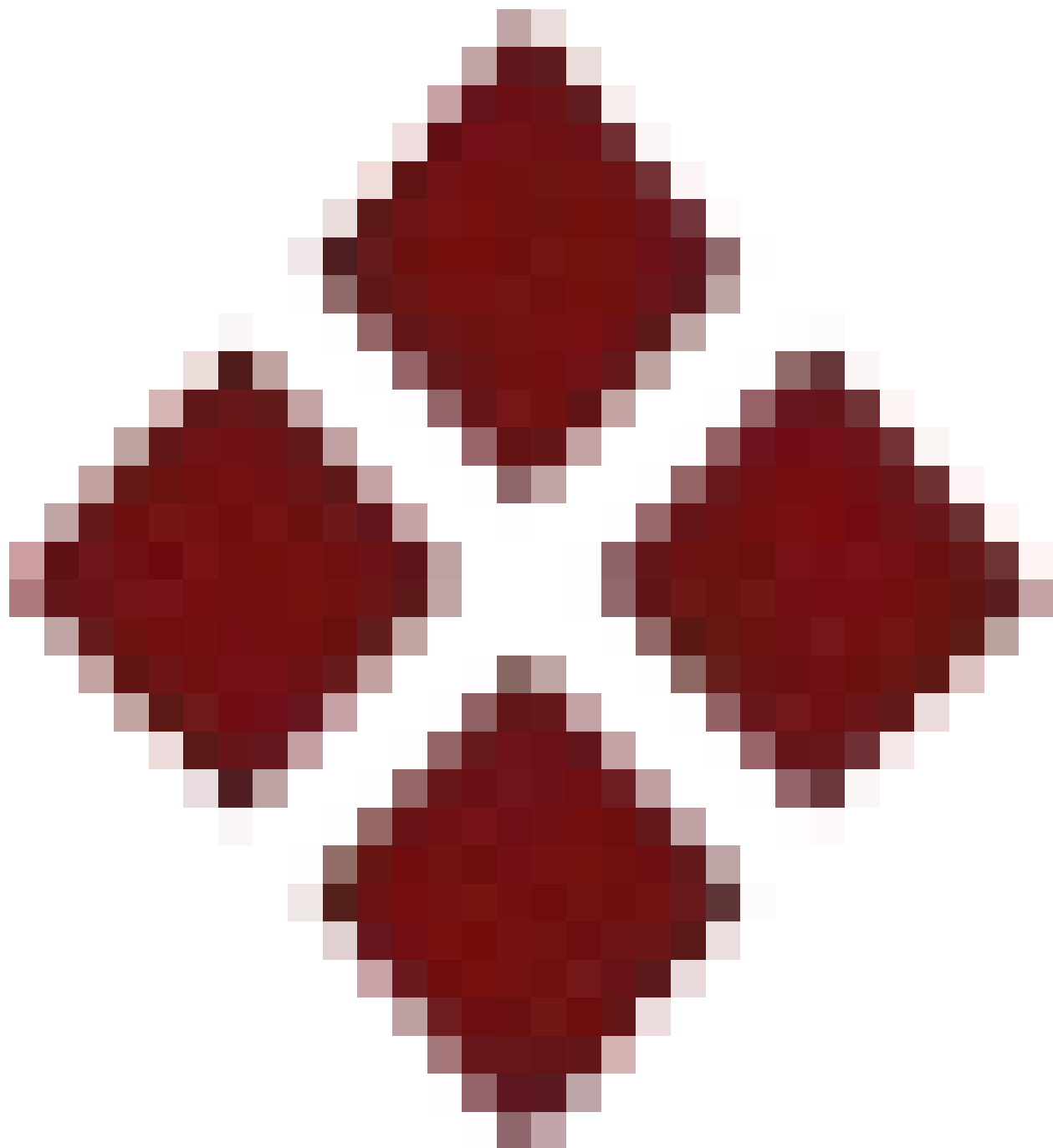
**The Kingdom of Heaven Is to Be Found Within the
Consciousness of Man**



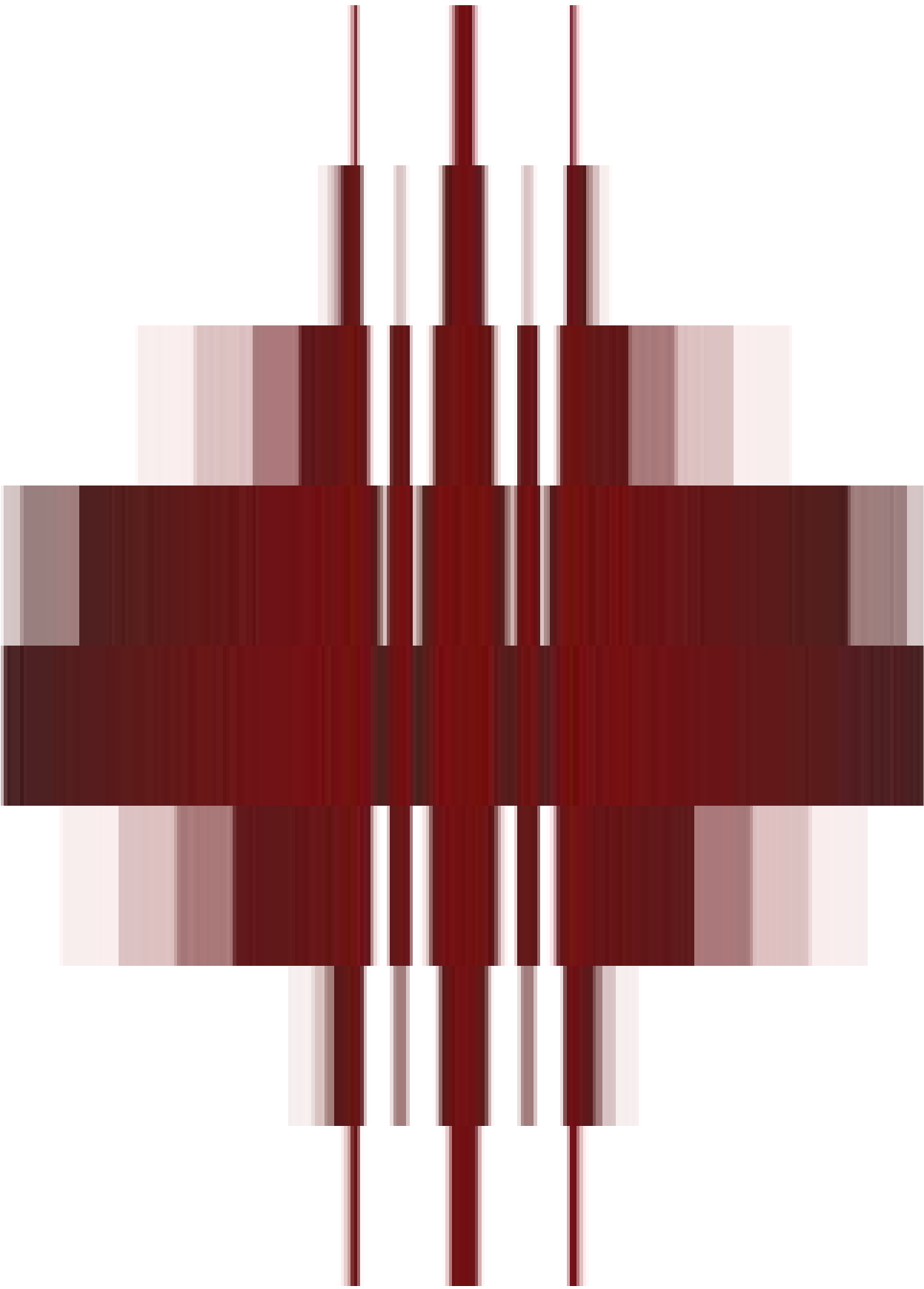
Inner Meaning of Jesus' Counsel to "Repent"



What Did Jesus Ask People to “Believe”?



The Science of Yoga Unifies the Diverse Paths of Religious Belief



“Withdraw your outflowing consciousness and turn it inward toward Spirit. In intuitional communion, align your actions, thoughts, life, and will with God’s Word of salvation-bestowing truth.”

■

And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all. ¹

—Luke 4:14 – 15

Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee; and leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:

“The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; the people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.”

From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, “Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

—Matthew 4:12 – 17

...Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.”

—Mark 1:14 – 15



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Discourse 22

“Repent Ye, and Believe the Gospel”



Here the New Testament chronology of Jesus' life and teachings shifts from the Gospel of St. John, whose early chapters provide a background of the esoteric core of the teachings of Jesus, to the so-called synoptic narrative Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Jesus begins to preach openly, in divinely simple terms for the masses, his panacea for all human woes: "Repent ye, and believe the gospel....

the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The underlying message: "Forsake your slavish worship of matter; withdraw your outflowing consciousness and turn it inward toward Spirit. In intuitional communion, align your actions, thoughts, life, and will with God's Word of salvation-bestowing truth; and you will know, with the conviction of personal experience, that the kingdom of Heavenly Bliss can be found here and now."



How prophets foretell the future unfolding of God's plan

Returning from Judea, Jesus went to dwell in Capernaum, which is on the Sea of Galilee at the border between the lands of Zabulon and Nephthalim, in fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah.² God used the prophet Isaiah as His mouthpiece to declare the coming of Jesus, as in different climes and ages He has used other prophets to make known, sometimes centuries ahead, some fortuitous divine plan. When prophecies of enlightened seers come true, it is definitive testimony, which should convince even unbelievers, of the consciously initiated plan of God in the world. Though it is usually a mystery as to what may be forthcoming in life's events and strange happenings, once in a while definite prophecies, veiled in complex language, are given to humankind to awaken realization of the subtle presence of God's hand in creation.³

Just as a motion-picture director plans the filming of various scenes to project at the proper time, so also, God and His angel assistants plan the timing for the materialization and projection of certain great events in the cosmos. There is a time for everything, the universe being mathematically adjusted by God and His angels so that it runs like a clock. At certain periods when ignorance like an inky mist encircles the minds of mundane people, God sends His saints to redeem souls submerged in darkness. "The time is fulfilled" signifies that the moment had arrived for enactment of the divine plan presaged by Isaiah long before: Jesus' mission to bring God's light to the world. When Jesus reached Galilee he felt the divine vibrations of the cosmic cycle prepared for his coming, and he put the love of his heart and the dynamism of his soul into giving God to all. At this auspicious time, Jesus was filled with the Holy Ghost, having been baptized in Spirit by John the Baptist; thus when he began his mission in Galilee it was "in the power of the Spirit."



Dispelling the darkness of ignorance by the light of Christ-wisdom

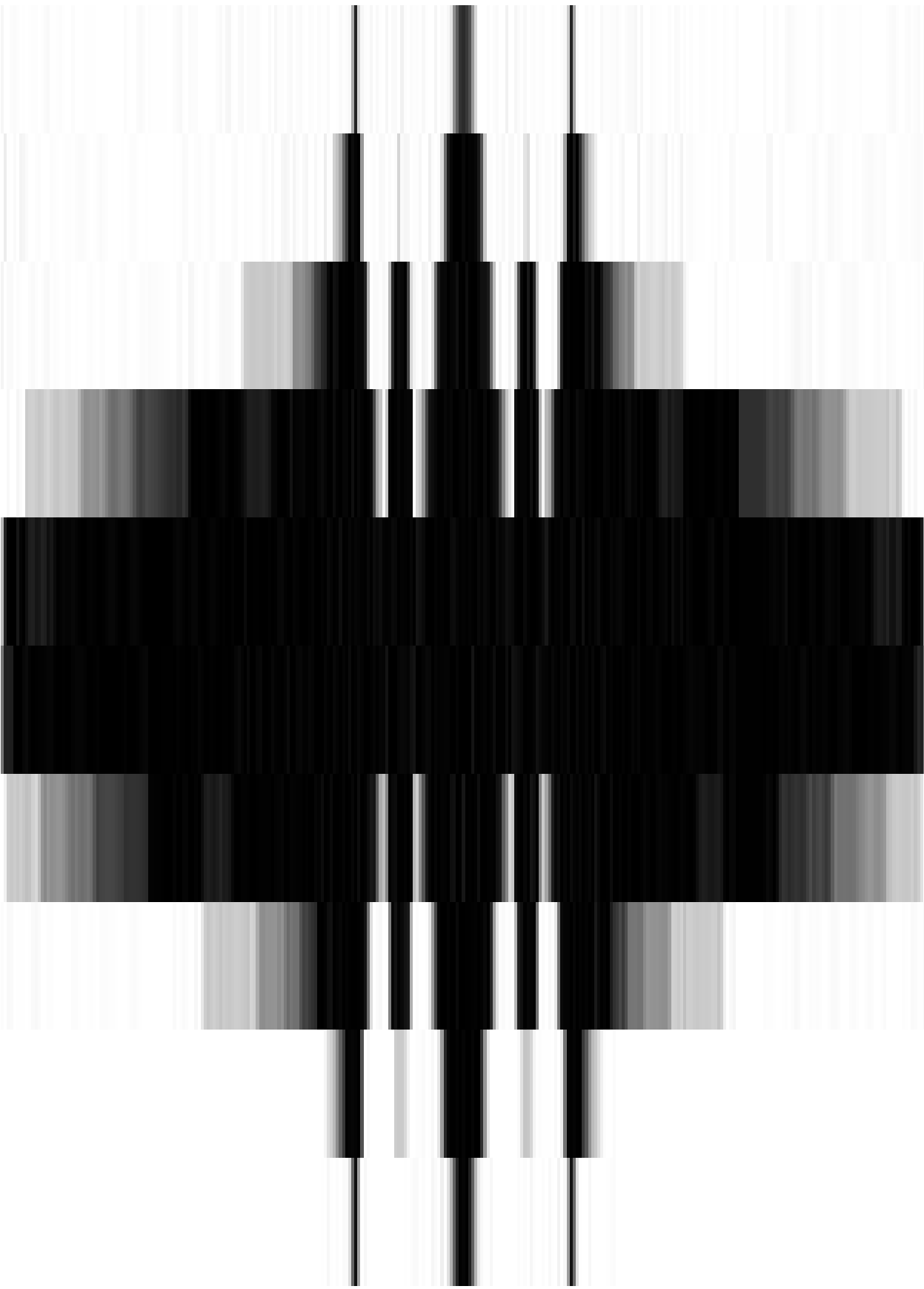
Jesus knew about the declaration of the prophet Isaiah, and that he had been thus divinely guided to follow his foretold dispensation into Galilee to preach the gospel.⁴ As prophesied by Isaiah, the people who abode in the darkness of ignorance in that land beheld in the advent of Jesus the all-revealing light of Christ-wisdom. Just as aeons of darkness lodged in a mountain cave are dislodged by a single lighted match, so the vibrations of a people's gathered ignorance of ages can be dispelled by a saint who bears the illumining torch of God's wisdom.

Among those persons who sit in the darkness of ignorance, many love it and do not wish to be displaced from its complacent familiarity. But others there are who become conscious of the stolid gloom of unknowing and earnestly long for freedom from its torpidity. Through the gathering of knowledge and arousal of subconscious memories in the soul, seekers of wisdom receive glimpses of their lost experience of God's light and increasingly abhor their fallen state. So, in Galilee, those people who realized their abject darkness, those who were inwardly clamoring for light, were receptive to the wisdom vibrations of Jesus.

Lord Krishna, in the Bhagavad Gita, speaks of this earth as the aggregate of delusive mysteries and as the ocean of affliction.⁵ Isaiah speaks of worldly people as sitting "in the region and shadow of death," the constantly changing temporal events of this earth. For people steeped in spiritual ignorance, life is a series of mysterious changes; nothing remains the same or retains any permanency. The influence of this cosmic dream is such that persons behold with frenetic attachment life and shadowy death and all concomitant dualities; but when they awaken in wisdom, they behold all seeming contradictions harmonized in the Oneness of God's Light. The very presence of Jesus and his luminous wisdom relieved many of their delusive inner gloom.

Again, the Hindu scriptures cite an apt metaphor: Saints, in their nonattachment, are considered by ordinary men to reside in a darkness of material poverty, while actually they live in the light of opulent Eternal Wisdom; whereas most persons bask in an imagined light of prosperity in material possessions, while they are in truth enveloped in a thick darkness of spiritual ignorance.⁶

Jesus knew he was empowered by heaven to give spiritual light to man. In that power of Spirit, he preached the gospel: the “good message” or enlightening revelation of God’s pronouncements—commandments and laws for attaining the kingdom of heaven and its happiness. He preached truth as he perceived it through his own God-realization: “The kingdom of God is at hand.”



The kingdom of heaven is to be found within the consciousness of man

Many people look for heaven at some point in space beyond the clouds, far away from the noxious, sinful vapors of the earth. Jesus' words "at hand" signify the nearness of heaven, which lies just behind the darkness of closed eyes, within the consciousness of man; and that with ease, people could find God through the mediation Jesus was offering to them. In deep meditation, when one shuts out the land of finitude and matter, the realm of Eternity, the vast heavenly kingdom of God's omniscience, is found to lie tier upon tier in endless vistas before the inner vision.

Therefore, the first commandment Jesus gave to the people was "Repent ye," signifying the withdrawal of the principal attention from matter to God. Every soul, upon spiritually awakening, should repent of its folly of expecting permanent happiness from fleeting sense pleasures. The poor taste for sorrow-producing evil should be displaced by the superior inclinations for joy-producing good.

People are foolish to look for Paradise in earthly things. How could changeless, perfect happiness be wrung out of imperfect earth surroundings, a motley perplexity of events of sorrow and joy, disease and health? Earth conditions, being born of delusion, will always be more or less defective. Heaven on earth is found only within by the contact of the illuminating Immutable Wisdom perceived in meditation. Jesus' spiritual persuasion made people open their closed eyes of soul wisdom to dispel their self-created darkness: The Fountain of Light springs forth from the cleft soil of dark delusion.

If man repents of his excessive attention given to the finite cosmos, and regularly devotes time to deep meditation, he will find the heavenly land of infinity within him. The wise man repents because he sees the frivolity of worldly life and knows the miseries resulting from the contact of matter, not only in himself but in empathetic feeling for all beings.



Inner meaning of Jesus' counsel to "repent"

In The Holy Science, my guru, Swami Sri Yukteswar, elaborated on the deep spiritual meaning of Jesus' oft-repeated exhortation to "repent."⁷ The turning of one's mind from matter to God necessitates a reversal of man's life energy and consciousness from absorption in the dark ignorance of materiality to communion with the Holy Ghost, the Word or Cosmic Vibration of Aum or Amen through which man is uplifted to Christ the Son, and God the Father:

"When man directs all his organs of sense toward their common center, the sensorium or Sushumnadwara, the door of the internal world, he perceives... Pranava Sabda, the Word of God. Thus perceiving, man naturally believes in the existence of the true Spiritual Light, and, withdrawing his self from the outer world, concentrates himself on the sensorium...By this Samyama or concentration of self on the sensorium [through yoga techniques of meditation], man becomes baptized or absorbed in the holy stream of the Divine Sound....

"[He] begins to repent and return toward his Divinity, the Eternal Father, whence he had fallen. See Revelation

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: 'Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent.'"



What did Jesus ask people to “believe”?

Along with repentance,⁸ it is necessary also to believe in the Gospel, God’s Word of truth to man. First, one must believe in God’s message as sent through His saints and avatars, as in the gospel preached by Jesus, and repent of the folly of matter attachment. When one’s repentance turns his mind toward truth and he believes in the kingdom of God within, then, by constant meditation, he will in time perceive, through the intuitive knowing of his soul, that Kingdom of Eternity lying close at hand in the inner realization of his uplifted consciousness.

Jesus’ exhortation to “believe the gospel” does not refer to study of or belief in scriptural writings per se.⁹ In the original Greek in which the New Testament was written, the word used for gospel is euangelion, “good news” or “good message.” As used by Jesus it expressed the “good message,” the revelations of truth, he was bringing to man from God.

When Jesus said to “believe the gospel,” he meant more than a casual mental acceptance of his message. Belief in general is that conditional receptive attitude of mind that must precede an experience in order to cognize it. One must have sufficient belief in a concept in order to put it to the test, without which one cannot possibly verify its validity. If a man is thirsty and is advised to quench his thirst with the water from a nearby good well, he must believe in that advice sufficiently to make the effort to go to the well and drink from it.

Similarly, Jesus emphasizes that truth-seeking souls must not only repent of the foolishness of following unsatisfying material ways of living, and believe in the truths experienced by him through God; they must also act accordingly that they might realize those truths for themselves.

To be an orthodox unquestioning believer in any spiritual doctrine, without the scrutiny of experimentation to prove it to oneself, is to be ossified with dogmatism. Jesus did not ask the people merely to believe in his message, but to keep faith in his divine revelations with the assurance that by believing in, and hence concentrating upon, the gospel, they would surely and ultimately experience within themselves the truths in those revelations. Belief is wasted on false doctrines; but truth poured out to man through the authority of God-realized saints is worthy of belief and sure to produce divine realization.

Even on the authority of the fame of scriptural text, one cannot judge what it teaches, for various are the meanings and consequent distortions drawn from holy writ, some of which defy the laws of both reason and wisdom. Also, who can deny what errors might have come down through the centuries in the form of mistranslations or mistakes made by scribes? The Bible and the Vedas may well be inspired texts that came from heaven, but the ultimate test of truth is one's own realization, direct experience received through the medium of the soul's omniscient intuition.



The science of yoga unifies the diverse paths of religious belief

Belief, faith, in themselves are only bypaths. Yoga, “divine union,” is the consummate path; it is both the way to attain God-realization and the universal experience of that attainment. Travelers to New York from different parts of the country, for example, will journey along different routes. But when they reach New York, they will all see the same things. Every true religion leads to God, but some paths take a longer time while others are shorter. No matter what God-ordained religion one follows, its beliefs will merge in one and the same common experience of God. Yoga is the unifying path that is followed by all religionists as they make the final approach to God. Before one can reach God, there has to be the “repentance” that turns the consciousness from delusive matter to the kingdom of God within. This withdrawal retires the life force and mind inward to rise through the spiritualizing centers of the spine to the supreme states of divine realization. The final union with God and the stages involved in this union are universal. That is yoga, the science of religion. Divergent bypaths will meet on the highway of God; and that highway is through the spine—the way to transcend body consciousness and enter the infinite divine kingdom.¹⁰

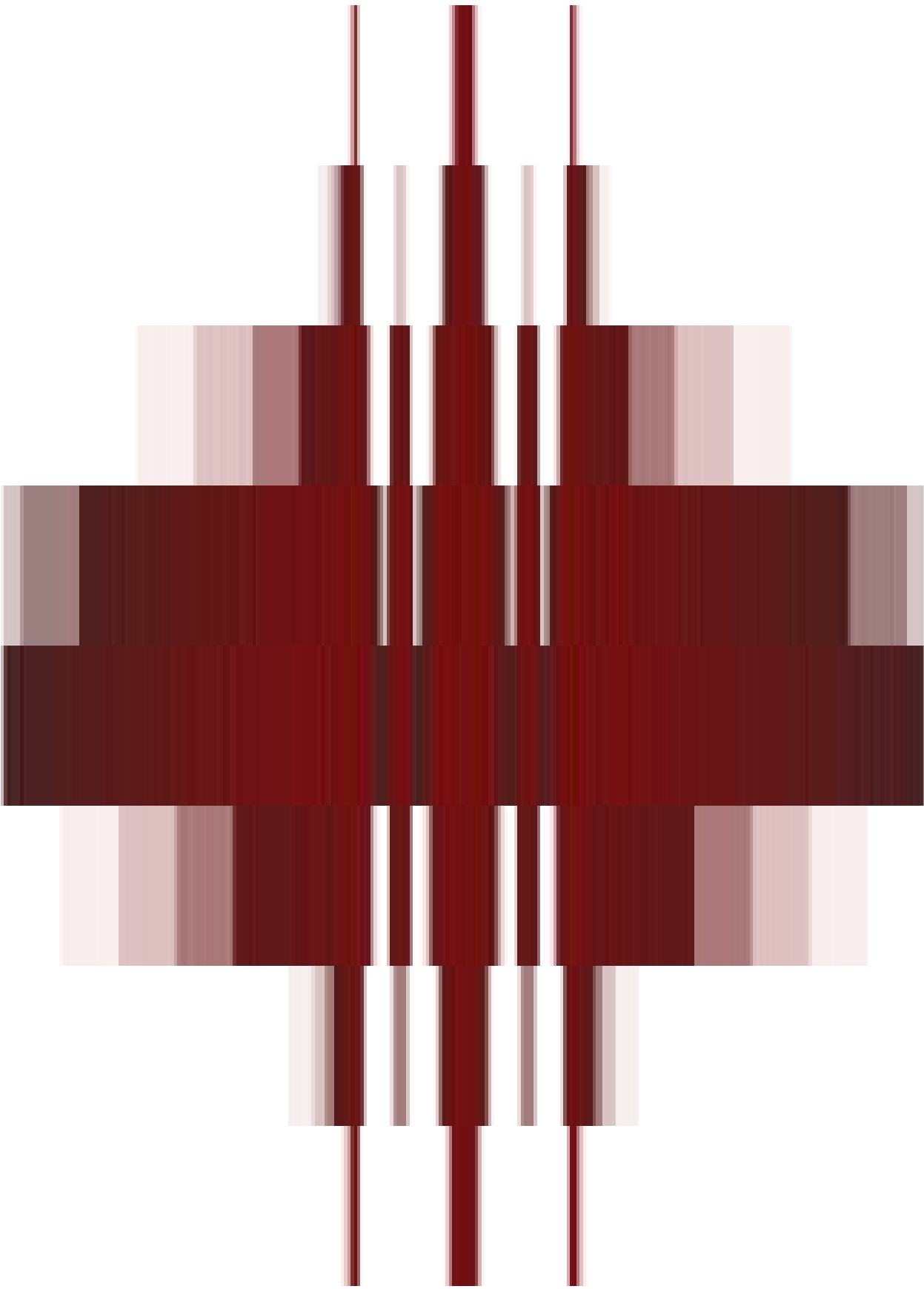
Religionists may argue, “My faith is better than yours.” They are like the blind men who fought about descriptions of the elephant they had been washing. One had been washing the trunk, so he said that the elephant was like a snake. One said the elephant was like a pillar; he had been washing the leg. Another said the elephant was like a wall; he had been washing the massive sides. The man washing the tusks proclaimed confidently that the beast was no more than two pieces of bone. The man washing the tail was sure all were wrong, for the elephant was a rope leading high up toward heaven! Then the driver said, “Friends, you are all right and you are all wrong.” Because each blind man had been washing a part of the elephant, they were all partly right; but they were also wrong because the part was not the whole.

The purpose of religion, of life itself, is to find God. Man will not be able to rest until he reaches that Goal, because all the forces of the universe will seem to conspire to entrap him in his karma until he heeds the gospel of repentance and realizes that “the kingdom of God is at hand”—within himself in the here and now.

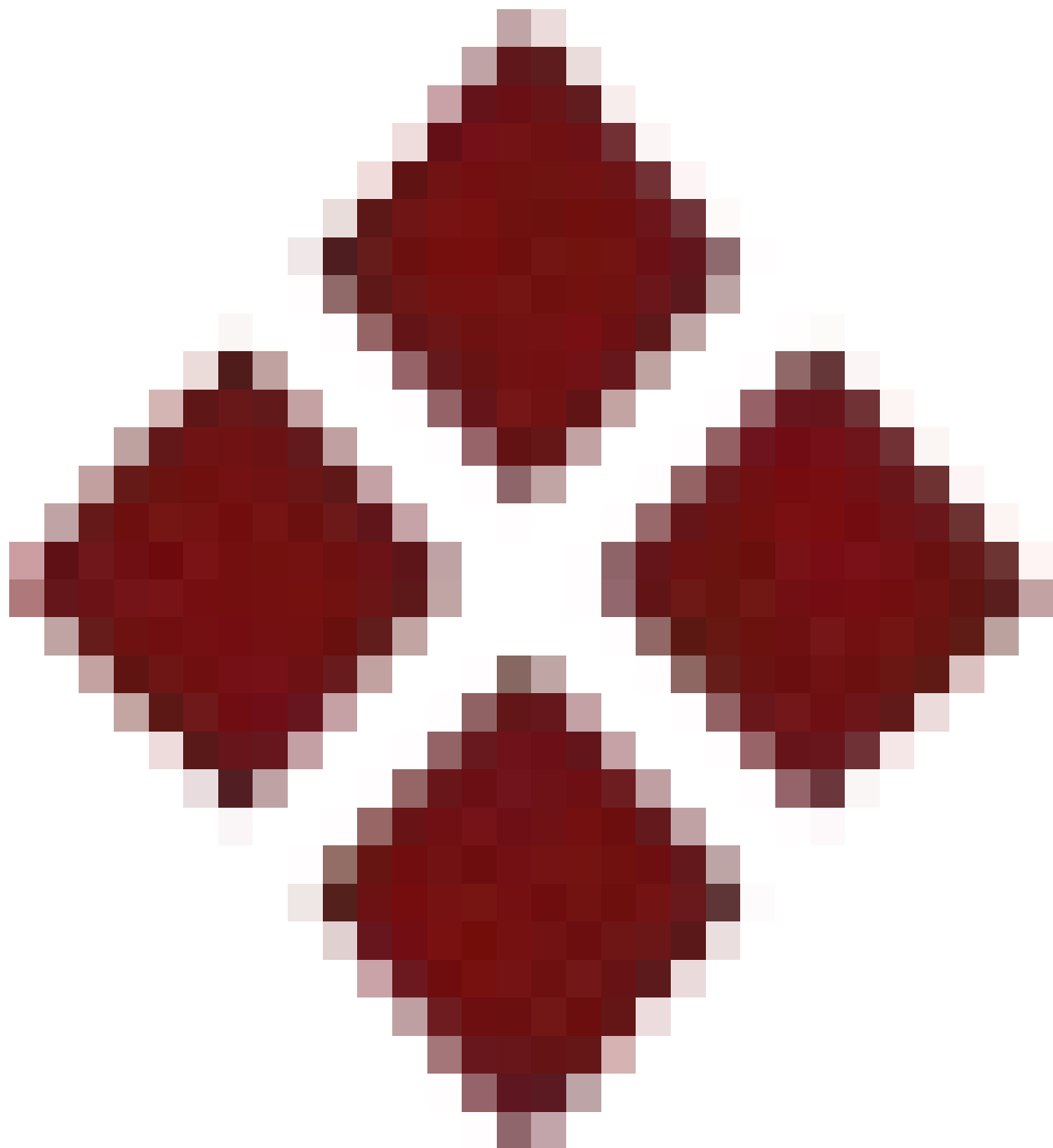


Discourse 23

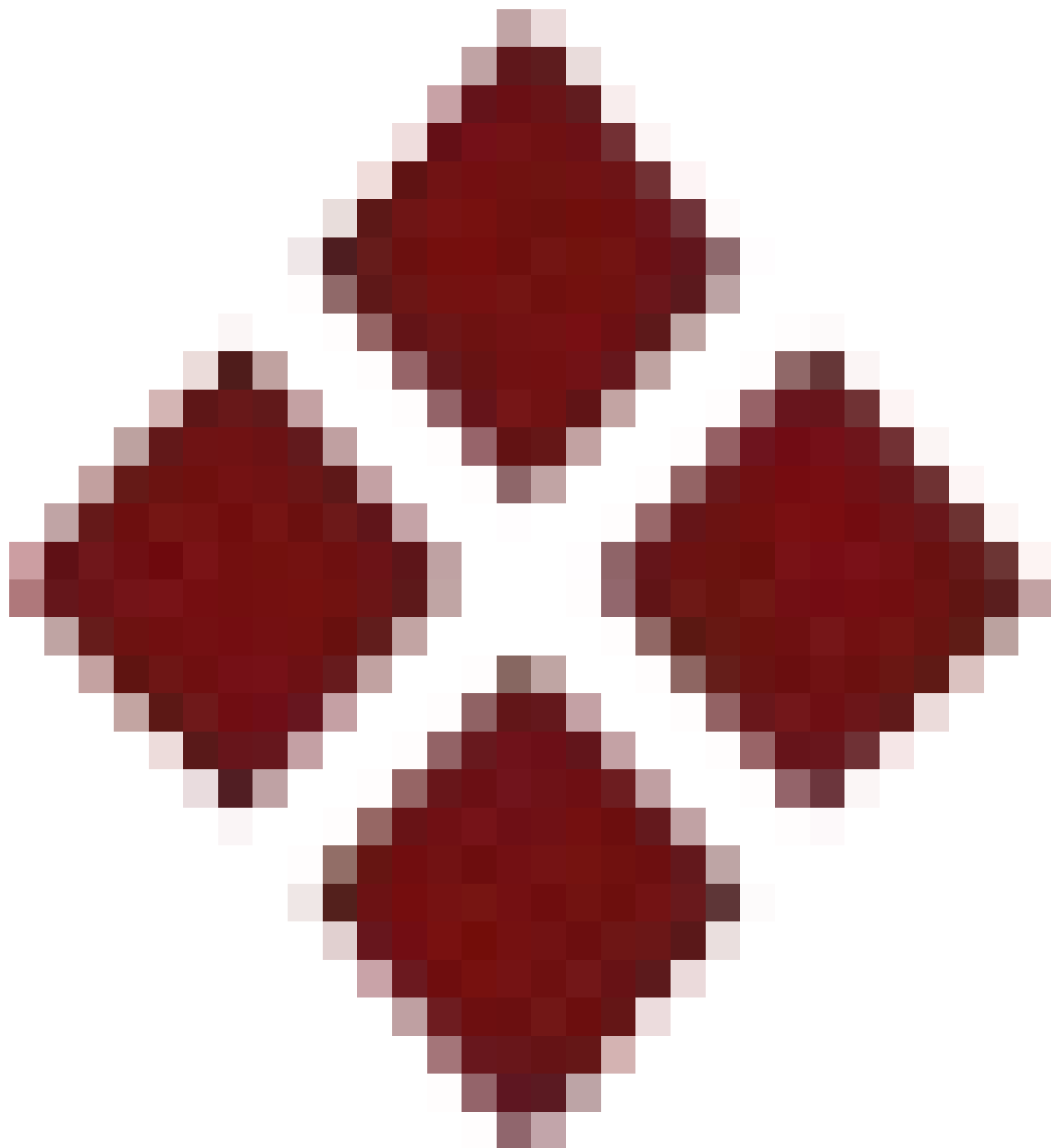
Fishers of Men



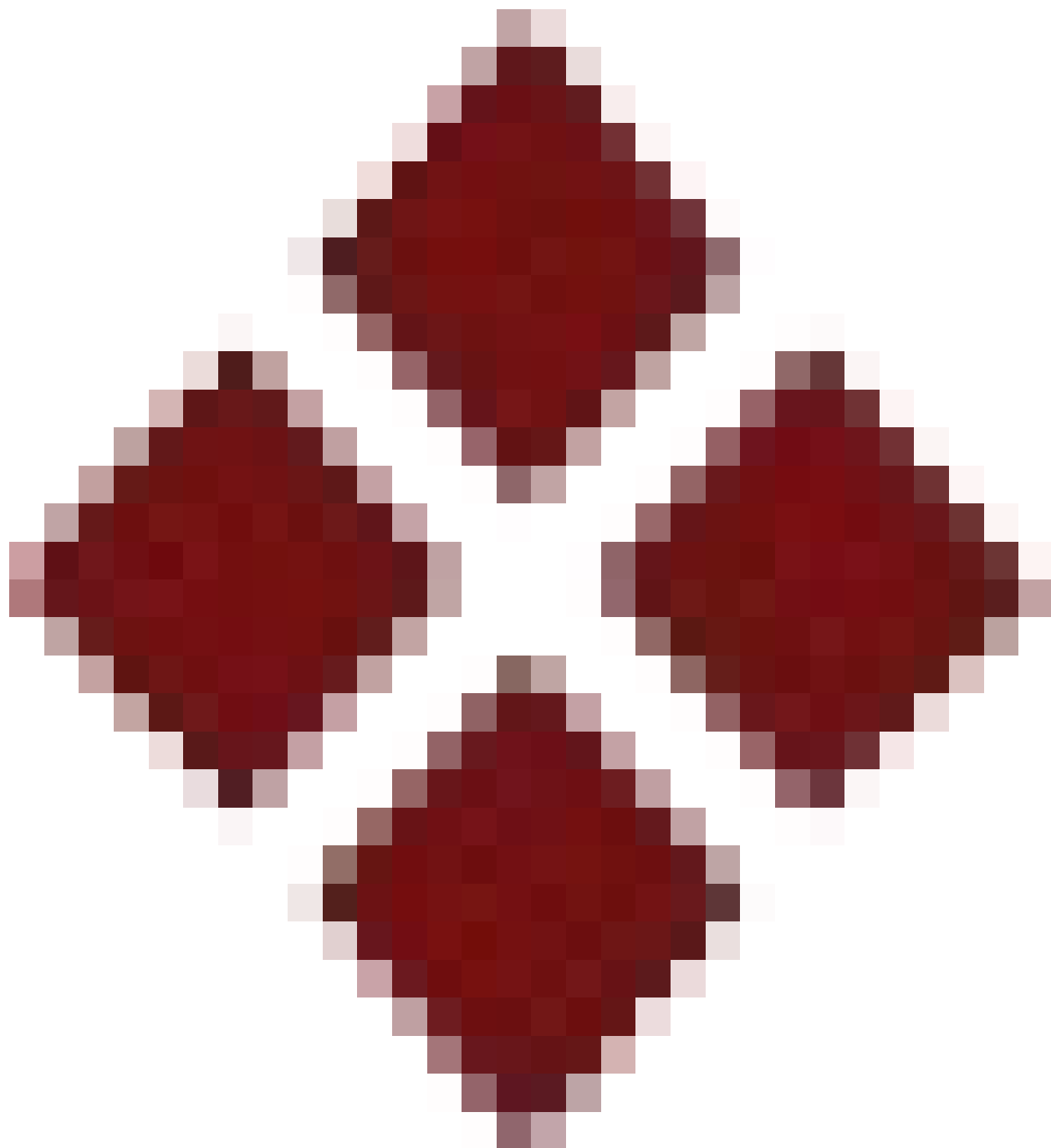
Fishing for Souls in the Ocean of Delusion



**To Acquire Soul Wisdom and Impart It to Others Is
the Highest Service**



Teaching the Truth About Virtue and Evil in an Effective Way



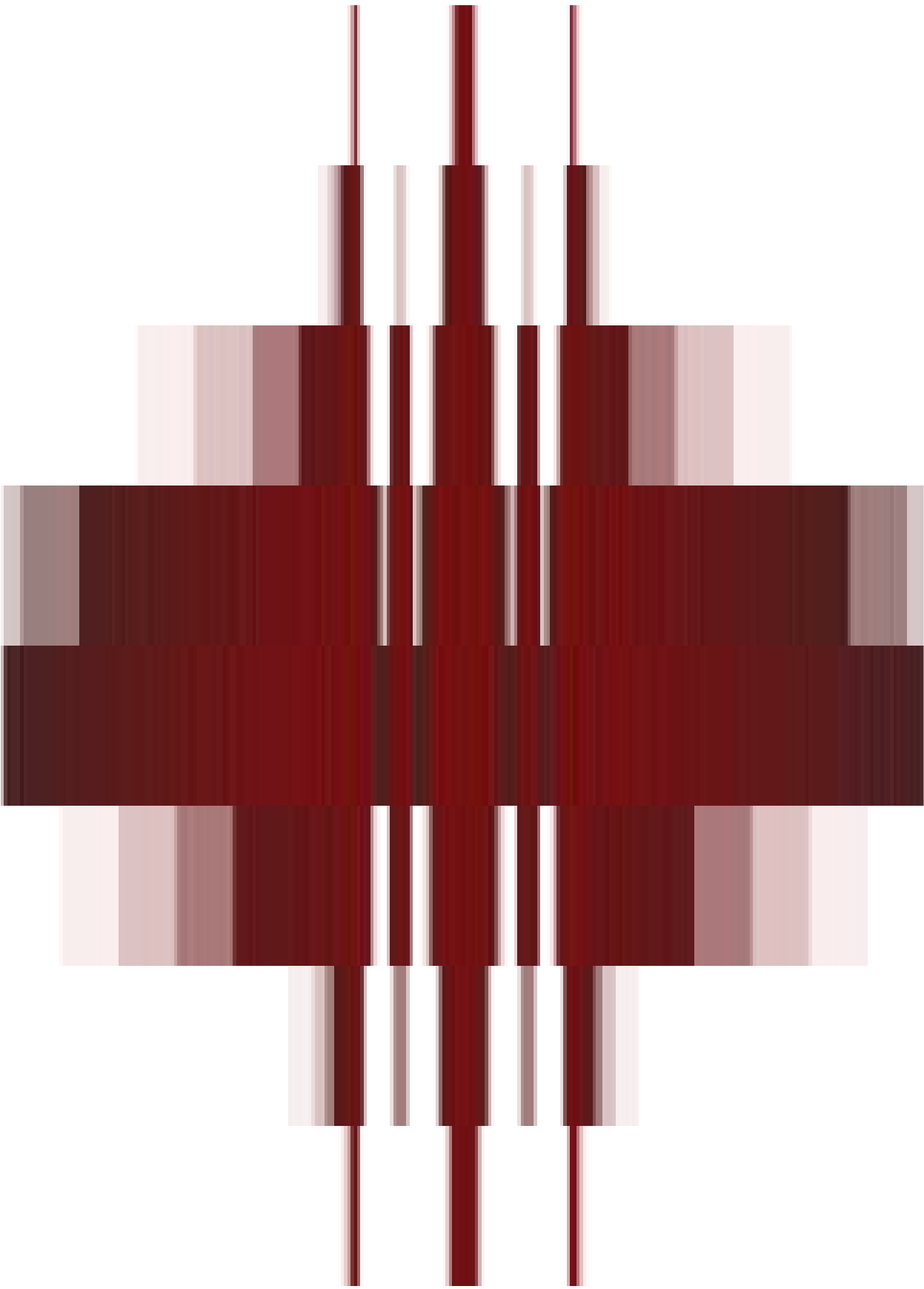
Soul Magnetism More Important Than Oratorical Ability



Qualifications and Requirements for Spiritual Teachers



Preaching With the God-Saturated Conviction of the Soul



“Wise men consider this world an ocean of delusion in which human fish are constantly chased by the sharks of the senses....That is why Jesus began to call qualified disciples from their natural labors to assist him in drawing souls from the waters of delusion into the ever-living wisdom of God’s oceanic presence.”

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And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret, ¹ and saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets. And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship.

Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught."

And Simon answering said unto him, "Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net."

And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink.

When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken: And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon.

And Jesus said unto Simon, "Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men." And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him.

—Luke 5:1 – 11

[Variant telling recorded in the Gospel According to St. Mark:²]

Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother

casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

And Jesus said unto them, “Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.” And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him.

And when he had gone a little farther thence, he saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets. And straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him.

And they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the Sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught. And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes.

—Mark 1:16 – 22



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Discourse 23

Fishers of Men



As the fame of Jesus spread with his ministry, the time had come for him to call those select disciples into service who would not just be among his followers, but would give their all to help fulfill his work on earth. The opportune occasion came at the Sea of Galilee. As he stood at the water's edge, throngs pressed upon Jesus to hear his gospel and receive his blessing. He boarded a fishing boat, moored on land belonging to Simon (Peter) and his brother Andrew, and asked Simon to move the vessel a little offshore, from which vantage place he taught the people.

Afterward, he instructed Simon: "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught." Simon obeyed, even while he protested the futility in that no fishes had been hauled aboard though they had labored all night. With Jesus' silent intervention, however, so many fishes filled Simon's net that it broke. The partners of Simon and Andrew, the brothers James and John, were called to launch their boat from shore to help with the catch. Both ships became so laden they began to sink—an abundant contradiction to Simon's assertion that there were no fish to be had.



Fishing for souls in the ocean of delusion

Jesus wanted to demonstrate to Simon the bountifulness of God to those who trust in Him, and to show that even the fish obeyed the Divine Command. Andrew, James, and John were astonished at the surfeit of fishes. And at this sign from God, Simon Peter bowed down in humble contrition before Jesus, repenting of his sins and lack of faith. Jesus now voiced the purpose of the miracle: “Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men....Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” This was Jesus’ first intimation to these disciples that their role would be to serve as an extension of his own self in the spread of his teachings.³

Masters often teach in parables and metaphors to test the depth of their disciples’ intuitive perception. Jesus thought as a Hindu master would think, when in calling his disciples to become fishers of men he sought to instill in their minds the imagery: “O Beloved God, as I pass by the sea of my consciousness, I behold my ego catching the small bony fishes of material objects—name, fame, coins of good fortune. Bless me so that I may see, instead, in the sea of my unruffled desire-free consciousness, the way to make a far more worthy catch with the net of devotional God-given wisdom—the large fishes of divine truth-seeking souls. May I learn how to cast the net of truth over soul-fishes roaming in the fetid waters of delusion, to release them in the immortalizing sea of God-wisdom.”

Wise men consider this world an ocean of delusion in which human fish are constantly chased by the sharks of the senses. Satan then casts upon these piscine mortals his colossal dragnet of entangling desires, and is pulling his catch to the shores of destruction. God wants true fishers of men to learn the art of casting the net of personal spiritual magnetism to catch error-bound souls and bring them to Him. Those who are brought with wisdom into God’s presence are ever protected in the clear waters of immortality.



To acquire soul wisdom and impart it to others is the highest service

When, through the help of wise men, souls are transferred from the brine of material desires to the sweet waters of Bliss, they bring rejoicing to the august Giver of Life. God loves to see His sons consciously seek Him, and He is extremely pleased when one influences others to come unto Him. When a reformed Spirit-bound soul inspires another spiritual fugitive to return to God, that service to a fellow being is considered the highest human duty.⁴ Blessed are those who fish for souls in fulfillment of this noblest spiritual activity on earth. The achievement of catching truth-seeking souls in the net of one's own truth conviction and heavenly devotion to draw them to God brings the blessing of the Divine to the soul-fisherman, and also eventually liberates him.

To furnish food to the hungry is good, to give inner strength to the mentally weak so that they can fend for themselves is even more important, and to impart all-freeing wisdom to the soul-bewildered is of supreme consequence. Material or mental help is only transitory consolation for human embroilments; Heaven is the permanent panacea for all human afflictions.

The givers of food and mental power enrich themselves temporarily by the goodwill of those benefited; but the givers of soul nourishment benefit themselves throughout eternity, as also the receivers of the divine manna. The effect of food and mental power more or less wears off in time unless constantly replenished, but the marks of soul wisdom impinged upon the inner being can seldom be erased. That is why Jesus began to call qualified disciples from their natural labors to assist him in drawing souls from the waters of delusion into the ever-living wisdom of God's oceanic presence.

To be a good fisherman, one must learn the tools and skills of the trade. In order to become a spiritual fisherman, one must become adept in the art of spiritual fishing. To give salvation to others without having it oneself is impossible. No matter how well-meaning, a person can give only what he has, nothing else. In order to give spiritual power, one must first acquire that power himself. Just as a gift of food presupposes its possession by the giver, so also, wisdom can only be conferred upon others by those who possess it. Enlightenment can be imparted only by one who himself reflects that inner light.

Jesus knew this requisite, that anyone willing to be a fisher of souls must intensely spiritualize himself first. He voiced this quite plainly in the Sermon on the Mount: “Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother’s eye.”

A fisher of men must save himself from the ocean of ignorance by sincerely offering himself unto God with constant effort and vigilance. The Heavenly Father wants to see His fishers of men escape from Satan’s nets of delusion and destruction so that they can help other entrapped souls. To seek one’s own salvation and then not use it to benefit others is extreme selfishness. But to seek salvation for oneself so that ultimate freedom may be shared with others is divine.



Teaching the truth about virtue and evil in an effective way

In the first stage of spiritual progress, a clear line of demarcation must be established between good and evil in order that the latter may be superseded by the former. A great tug-of-war is going on between the divine forces and the forces of depravity over the possession of the human soul. Peace, joy, divine bliss, forgiveness, self-control, unselfishness, and so forth, stimulate good habits to produce lasting happiness and pull man toward emancipation. On the other side, disquietude, sorrow, sense pleasure, revengefulness, temptation, selfishness, inflame bad habits that lead to bondage and trouble. It is nature's quixotic teasing of man that strenuous self-control produces ultimate happiness, and the effortlessness of momentarily pleasurable indulgence brings eventual unhappiness.

Evil, once established within man, is made so attractive that he easily inclines toward evil actions, evil habits, and evil tendencies. Discriminating souls who have compared the results of evil experiences with the outcome of righteous behavior have inevitably concluded that evil, though ever so appealing in the beginning, is really a loathsome harbinger of acute suffering, while virtue, though initially difficult to pursue, is the ambassador of invariable ultimate good.

Hysterical moralists decry evil as an ugly, vile abomination to be summarily discarded. But when some of their followers taste the intoxicating comfort of temptation, it seems neither ugly nor vile; they dismiss the fear of evil consequences and embrace the freely given momentary pleasure. Long afterward—or sometimes in the resounding crash of instancy—the mask of attractiveness falls off, and the satanic nature of evil appears with its consequential ravages.

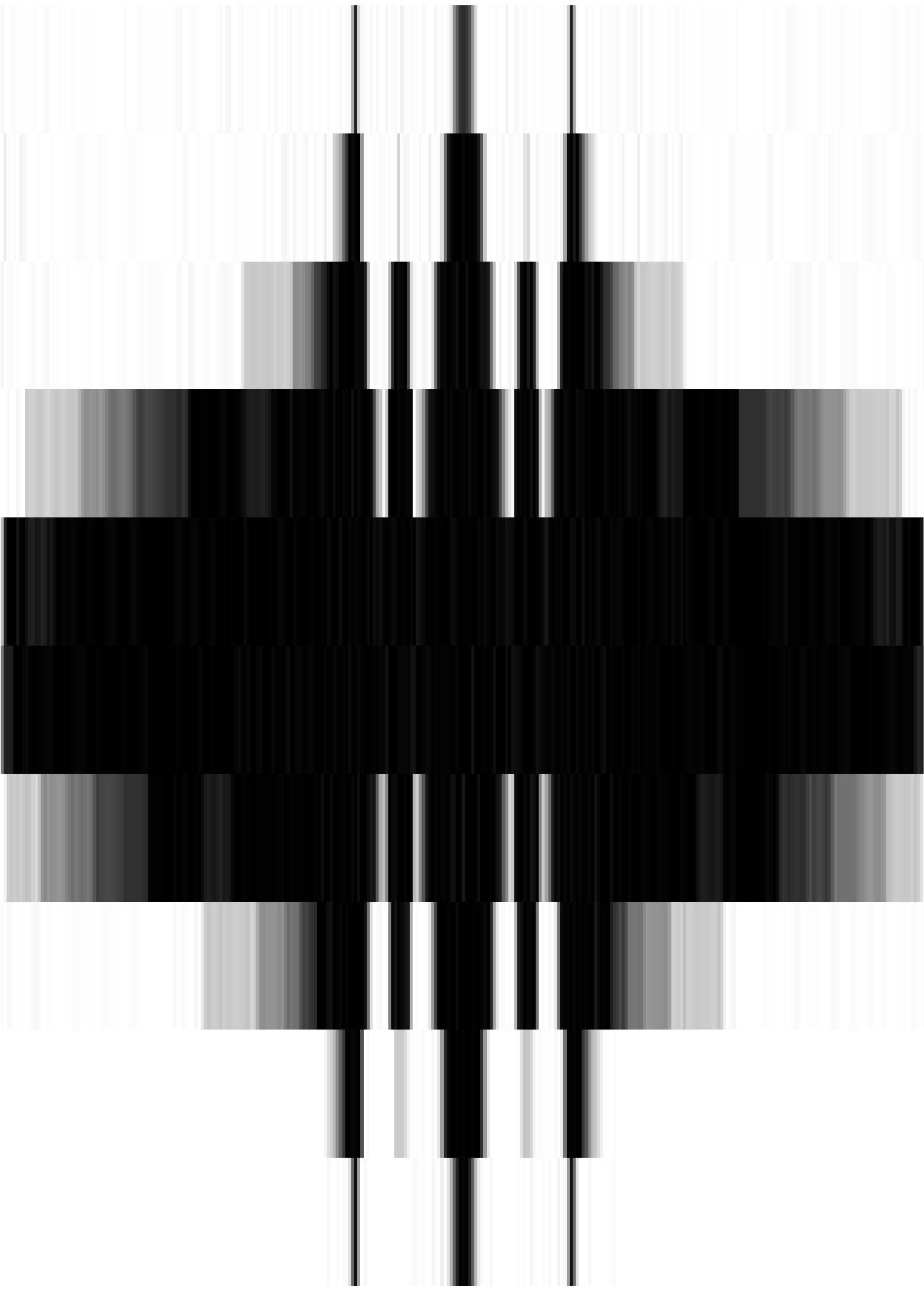
It is not enough to preach against evil, for its deceptive cunning will counteract every argument. Man needs to be convinced of the eventual, everlasting blessings of virtue. It is better for teachers to tell the truth—that evil is very attractive and enjoyable in the beginning, like poisoned honey, sweet to taste; but it is deathly bitter once swallowed. Good may be troublesome and therefore unpalatable for a time, but only until its subtle effects stir the soul to exude the incredible sweetness it draws from the nectarine sea of the inner Elysium. It is far better to abhor the trouble-producing instant gratification of evil for the lasting happiness earned through the urge and labor of virtuous actions. This is

the ultimate realization the clear thinker comes to as to why good is preferable to evil.

Indulging in evil is a cultivated habit. The first time a person smokes, it burns his nose, throat, and lungs; but after some time the habit takes over and he enjoys a smoke and becomes very uncomfortable without it. If the inveterate smoker later accurately analyzes the effect of smoking on his health and mind and tries to forsake the habit, he is hard put and often unsuccessful in doing so. Evil has a gripping affect. But so have virtuous ways.

When evil arrives first and firmly establishes itself in a person's life, it takes advantage of its priority and deludes its host with the consciousness of its supreme attractiveness. This blinds that person to the superior offerings of goodness and virtue. Many people are thus so steeped in error that they enter the grave without ever realizing their deluded state. Their evolution is delayed as they carry their progression in evil into the next life, or several lives, until through the inevitable effects of their wrongdoings they come to a rude awakening.

So, before evil mesmerizes one's mind with false expectations, the power of goodness should be cultured to become the in-charge of one's life. God is the goal of man's existence. To find Him and share Him with others is the tremendous work He has placed before every man. As Jesus called his disciples to be fishers of souls by becoming teachers of his gospel, so God has charged everyone to perfect themselves in His love and wisdom and help bring others back to Him through unspoken sermons of their spiritual example. When one's whole being is with God, others will be drawn to Him by the silent eloquence of that divine magnetism.



Soul magnetism more important than oratorical ability

The question arises: Why did Jesus call Simon (as also several of his other unlettered disciples) to be a teacher when he had not undergone even rudimentary instruction in spiritual teachings? Those who became apostles were certainly not chosen on the basis of academic credentials. Jesus had taught Simon in the principles of discipleship and God-knowledge in their relationship in a previous incarnation, not immediately remembered by Simon. Jesus could see Simon's spiritual attainments in the astral marking in his brain, so on that certification he recognized and chose Simon to be foremost among his missionaries.

In the early years of my work in the West I used to hold seminars to create teachers to spread the message of the Masters. But I soon abandoned that practice. Too often, those who were the least qualified spiritually were the most eager to emote and aggrandize themselves as leaders. I did not want to add to the world's surfeited roster of orators who are silver-tongued and lead-minded. Spiritual eloquence is less a matter of articulation than of soul magnetism born of virtuous living and meditative inner communion with God. Spreading the word of God should not be used as a medium for glorifying one's ego and indulging its penchant for recognition.



Qualifications and requirements for spiritual teachers

Until I feel a disciple is true from the past, I would not ask him to teach. If a devotee has good karma and sincere willingness to listen, it does not take much to train him. Attunement is the most important requisite. All great masters have chosen their disciples according to that, notwithstanding the Judases in whom latent egotistical tendencies awake to snatch away their spirituality. Humility, love for God and doing everything with the thought of God, forgetting self, are the fundamental criteria characterizing a true servant of God's word.

Additionally, I would include the following requirements and practices, principles that Jesus also, in one form or another, instilled in his apostles during the time they spent in his company absorbing his spirit and ideals:

A spiritual teacher should have Self-realization, or at least be sincerely striving for that God-attunement and subversion of the ego.

He should have an appreciative, respectful, comparative knowledge of religions, while being grounded in truth, free from hidebound dogma. He should know the difference between true religion and custom, discriminating between universal spirituality and denominational observances.

In order to transmit truth effectively, one must be inspired by the inner perception of truth. The highest type of spiritual teacher spends much time in the divine communion of prayer and meditation—preferably, every morning, noon, and night. This is the way to be able to arrive at the truth in any given situation.

He should believe in and be well versed in the truths he wants to teach, and then strive to realize those truths in himself. The intuitional teacher is the most qualified. The intuitive power of the soul, once awakened by meditation, does not have to depend on reason; it knows.

A teacher should always meditate before instructing others, a practice more valuable than gleaning ideas from books or dialogues with other people.

He must keep his mind on God that he might in the highest way be able to convey thoughts of God to others.

He must have complete faith in God, believing that His help will come when

needed. The divine law works!

The best sermon a teacher can give is through the voice of his character and actions; he should be one with God in exemplary qualities. He should be morally upright, balanced and evenminded, honest, and agreeable. He should wear a soulful smile; cheerfulness that comes from the soul.

Proper decorum and knowing the rules of etiquette are highly desirable, but even more important than manners is sincerity. He should always keep his word with people; one's word is one's bond.

He should be natural and loyal to his ideals. He should always stand firm for the truth, but never be angry with or entertain revengeful thoughts against people who criticize him. He should never spread gossip or speak unkind words about others.

One cannot transmit truth if he is not sympathetic. A spiritual teacher should be free from racial and class prejudices and preferences, and give spiritual help to those seeking relief from their troubles as well as to those seeking spiritual development.

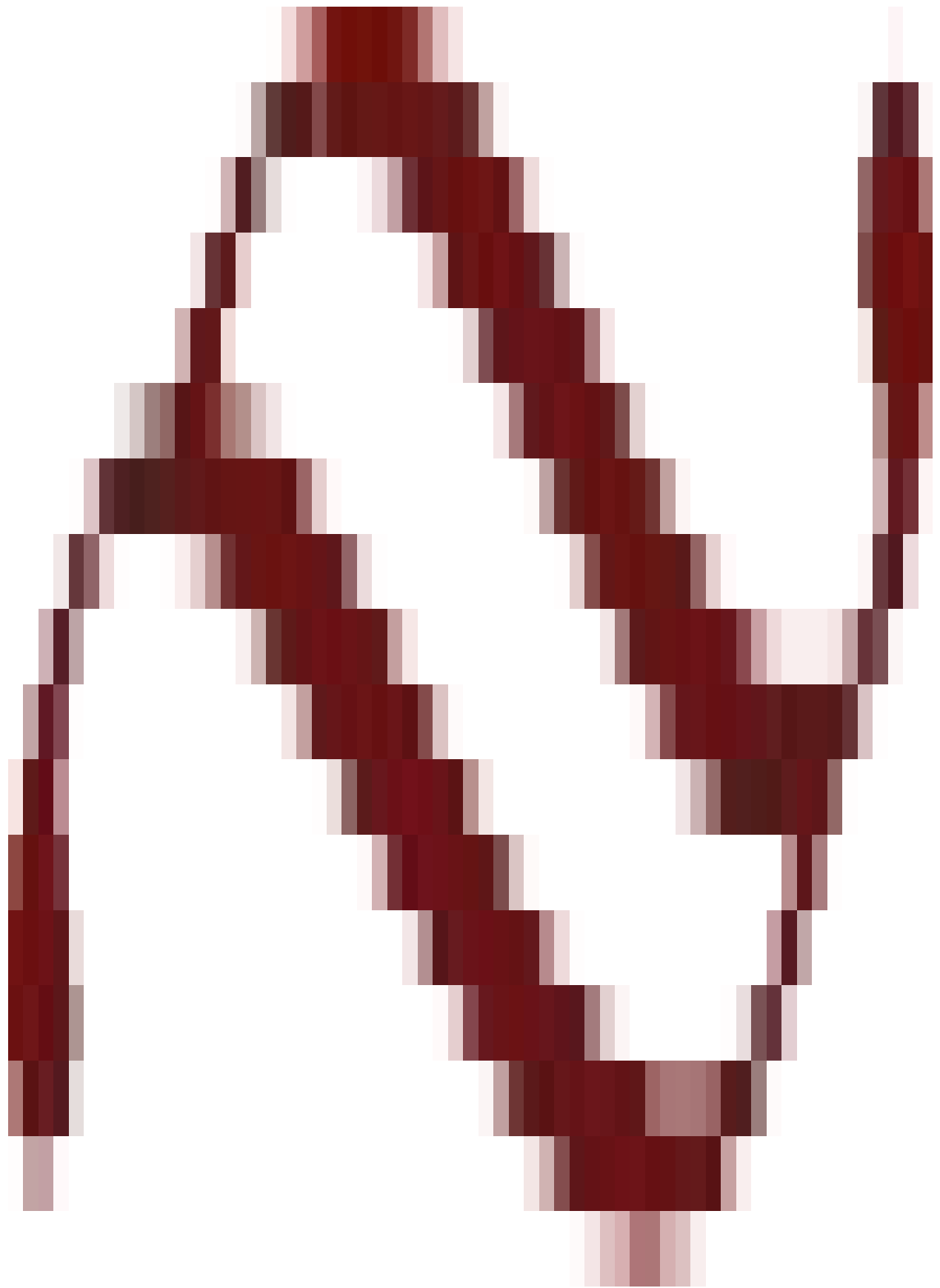
Spirituality should never be used for commercial or personal gain. It is preferable that a spiritual teacher not receive a salary. Once he begins to take money for his service to God's work, it becomes merely a job; his mind will be on making a living and wanting more money, not upon the Christlike ideal of serving without thought of remuneration. That is why I have never allowed paying teachers of Self-Realization Fellowship. I am concentrating on monastic teachers who renounce all for God's work. They must be free to give unselfishly of themselves. That is the way I was trained, and that is what I believe. God's work and those who serve it will be supported by God through the goodwill offerings of those who are benefited, as well as through the proceeds from spiritual goods and services that spread the work.

A spiritual teacher should never try to compete with others; he should stick to his goal and teach loyalty to that purpose.

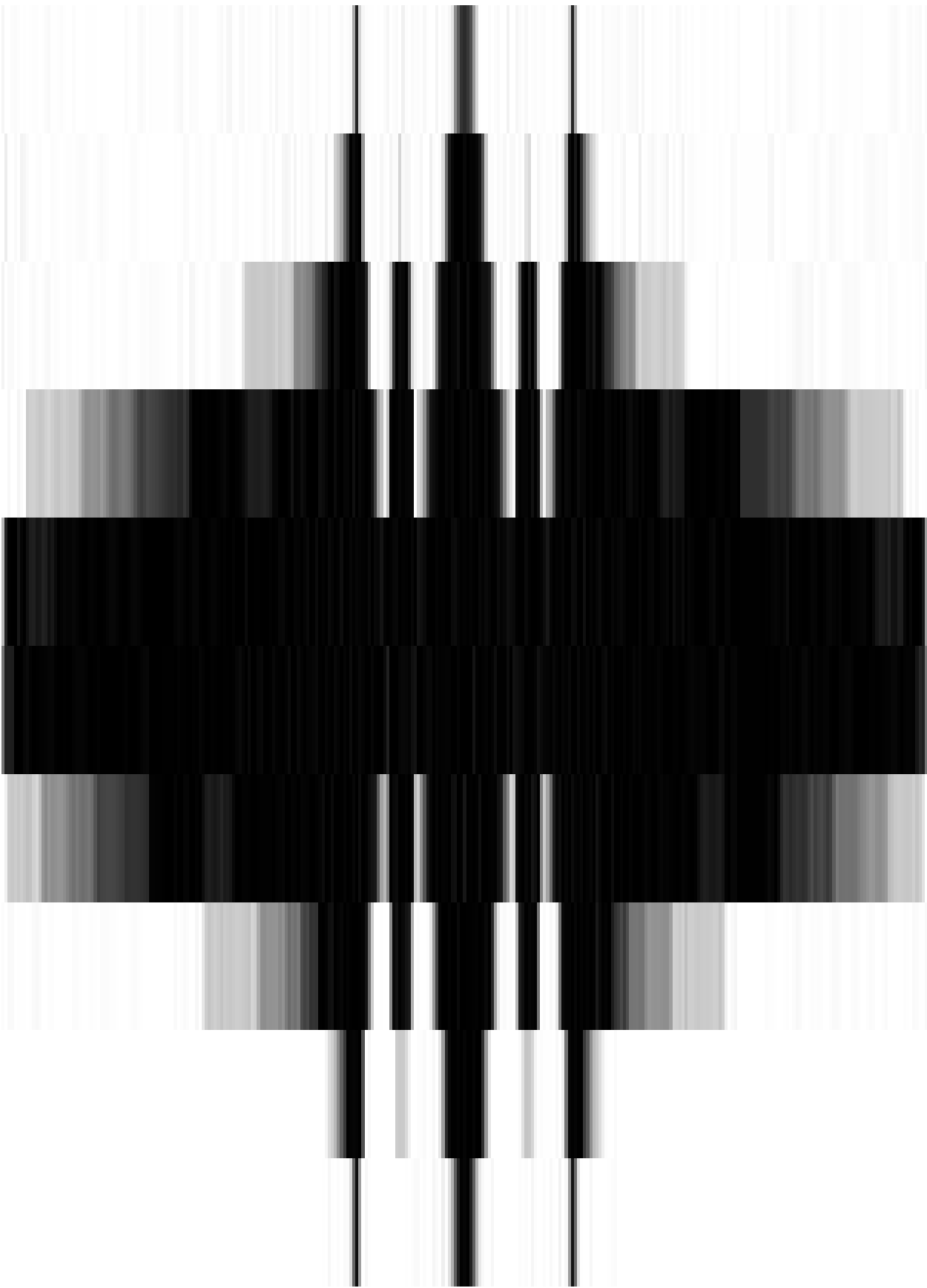
He should never allow himself to be controlled by those who would compromise his ideals for financial or organizational favors given.

Only a true disciple who has undergone the purifying discipline of the sadhana,

spiritual practices, of a master will make a good teacher. The disciple cleanses his delusion-infected ego by obeying the word of his guru implicitly, because he recognizes the master as a channel of wisdom and purity. Those who themselves become true gurus by divine commission remain also, at all times, true disciples.



And they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the Sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught. And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes (Mark 1:21 – 22).⁵



Preaching with the God-saturated conviction of the soul

Jesus spoke with God-saturated conviction of the truth in his work. Words are dynamically effective if they are charged with superconscious realization. To try to sell an object, or an idea, or a belief in which the promoter does not himself wholly believe is to mouth words that, no matter how clever, will lack the luster and vibratory seal of conviction. Jesus was absorbed in his realization of God; his authority was demonstrably indisputable.

Speaking about God from one's own imagination without knowing God is ignorance. But the devotee who knows Him, who feels Him in every fiber of his being, who can perceive His manifested presence, who talks to Him just as he talks to those who are his nearest and dearest and receives His answer—when that devotee speaks about God, true souls listen.

Teachers who know nothing about God offer to their audiences secondhand ideas gleaned from hours spent poring over books and scriptures. It is a sham to represent oneself as an authority on jewels if one knows nothing about gemology. Similarly, it is unprincipled to present oneself as spiritually qualified if no endeavor is made to commune with God. If one is sincerely making a deep spiritual effort, it is all right. But those who espouse God only from the pulpit, having little or nothing to do with Him otherwise, are of the ilk characterized by Jesus as “hypocrites.” They hardly ever pray; they read, and they preach what they have read. People in their congregation, for the most part, let their unlive d sermons pass through one ear and out the other.

That is the great import of this verse depicting Jesus in the synagogue. He did not preach like the scribes, with empty words. When he spoke, his words were filled with the Word, the Cosmic Energy, of God. His doctrine was replete with the conviction of realization, born of his Christ stature and Cosmic Consciousness, vibrating with the authority of God's wisdom. His sermons bore the seal of God's assurance.

Is this not a hint to all ministers of the gospel? It is not enough to commit to memory the words of the scriptures, or to receive a Doctor of Divinity degree. One must digest truth and then preach with the power and conviction of the soul. When God speaks through a soul, mountains of delusion are removed from the

minds of listeners.

Face-to-face realization of truth gives one intuitive experience, true vision and understanding. Such wisdom gives power; it is the energy that moves the Cosmic Factory, producing control over all things. That power declares the absolute authority of infallible truth. Jesus spoke not with the fanaticism or rote of the scribes, but with the authority of Self-realization of God and a knowledge of all His mysteries.

When one has been a devotee for years, living virtuously and meditating upon God, and thereby succeeds in pleasing Him, then He chooses that soul to bring others back to His kingdom. These advanced souls are saturated with the spirit, intelligence, and power of God; anyone physically, mentally, or spiritually sick, coming in contact with them, receives God's healing blessing.

Holy sermons create a vague devotion in the minds of people. The power of a true emissary of God heals man of his most pernicious affliction, the spiritual sickness of ignorance.



Jesus and Peter Walk on Water

And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, “Lord, save me.”

And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, “O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?”

—**Matthew 14:29–31**

Peter, by the power of faith and mental concentration, became momentarily attuned to the consciousness of Christ, free from the material dream-delusion of matter. Thus he was buoyed by divine consciousness when he stepped out of the ship to approach Jesus. But when the violent winds shook Peter’s concentrated faith with fear, his habit of beholding matter as real came back into his mind and immediately he felt his body sinking....

By faith Jesus did not mean mere mental belief, which evaporates at the slightest contact with contrary evidence. Faith is absolute conviction; its proof lies in the intuitive knowing of the soul. God-consciousness and its unlimited powers are available to those ardent devotees who steadily develop themselves by meditation until they form an unwavering faith in the omnipotent nature of God and His manifestation in themselves.

—**Paramahansa Yogananda**

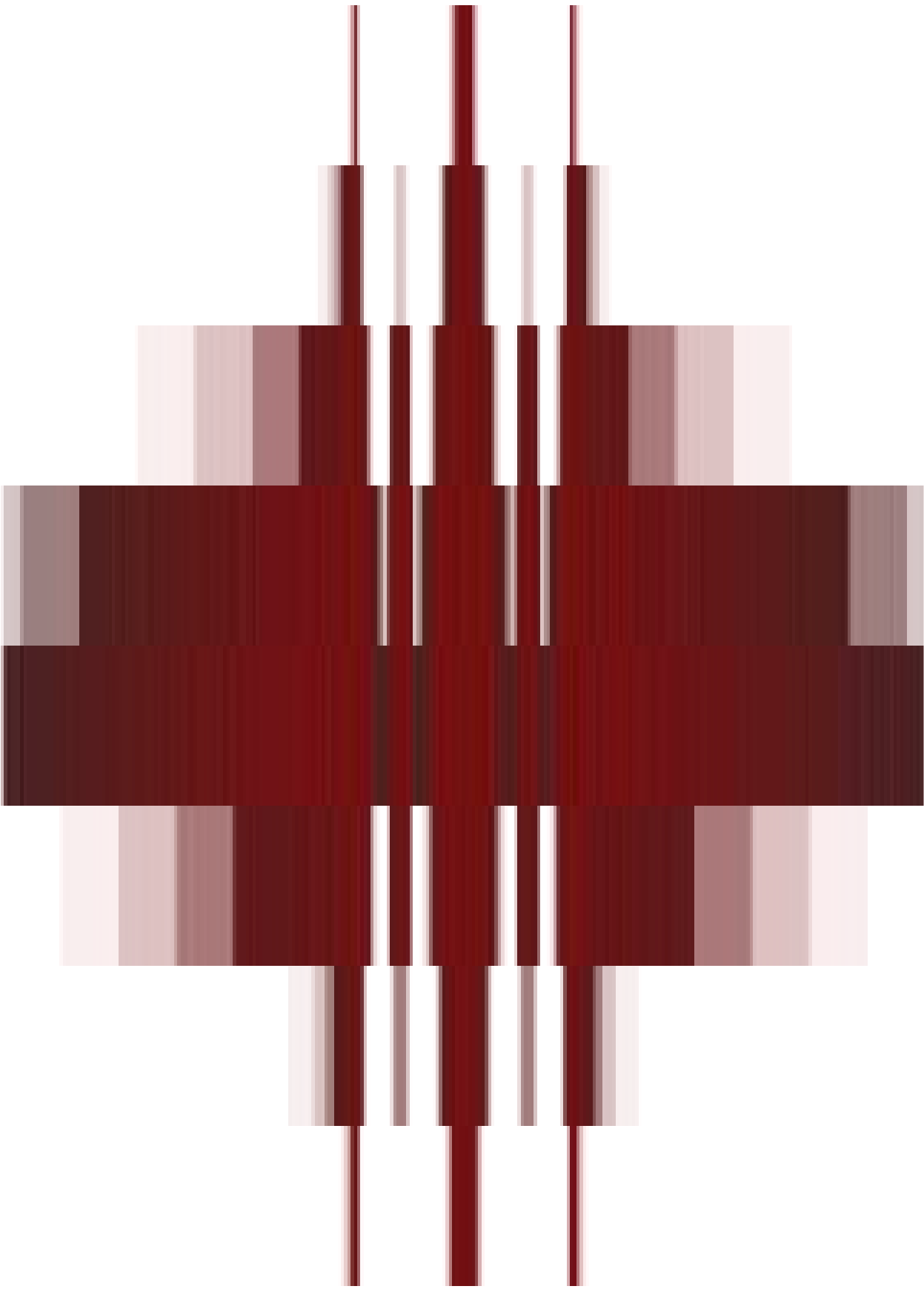
Drawing by Heinrich Hofmann





Discourse 24

Casting Out Devils



Difference Between Psychological Obsession and Possession by Disembodied Spirits



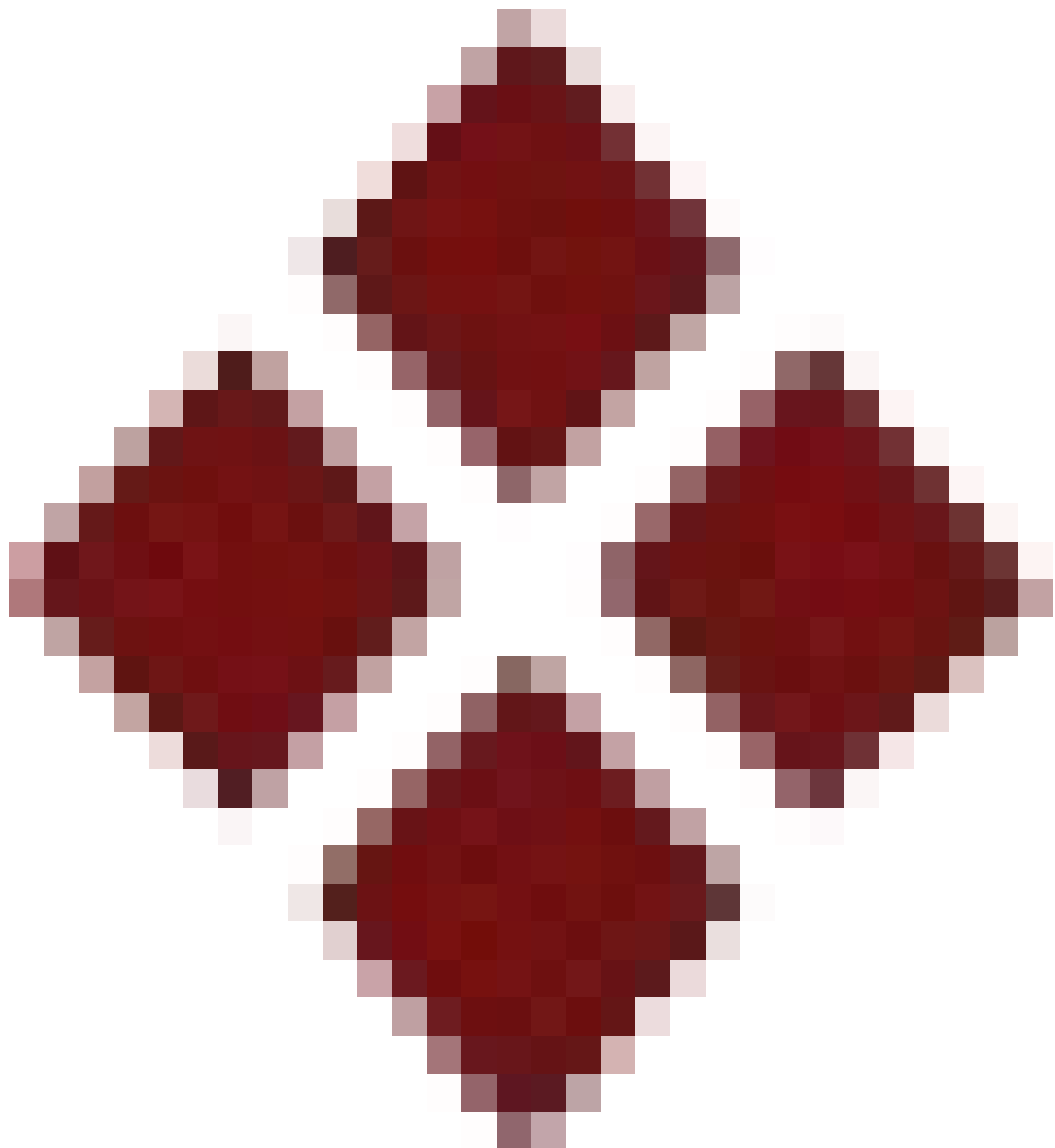
Demystifying the Truth About Disembodied Evil Spirits



Characteristics of Souls in the After-Death Realm



Explanation of the Phenomenon of Possession by “Tramp Souls”



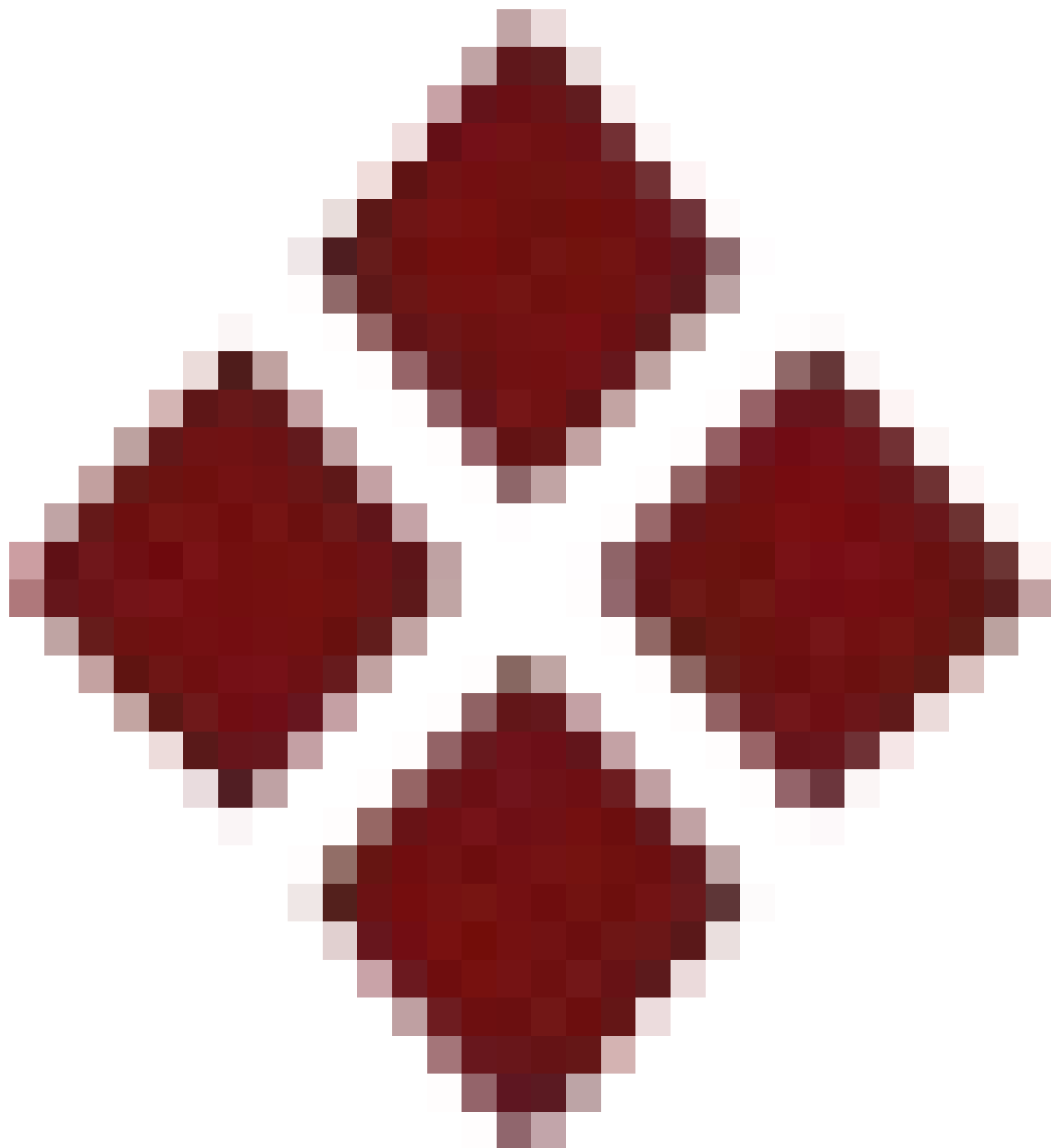
How Jesus Exorcised an Unclean Spirit Through Will Power and Cosmic Energy



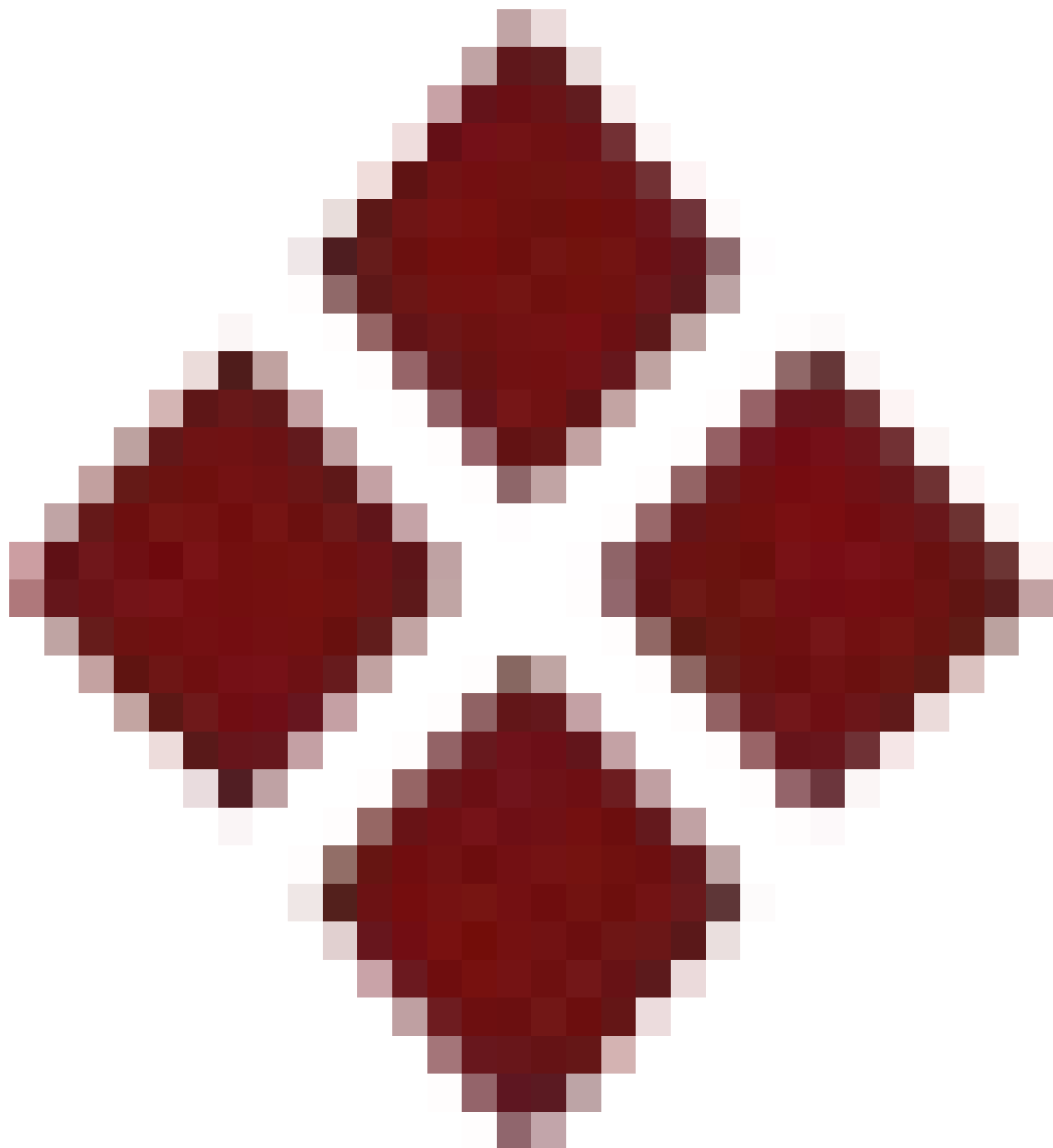
**Spiritual Forces of Good and Evil That Vie for
Influence Over Man's Consciousness**



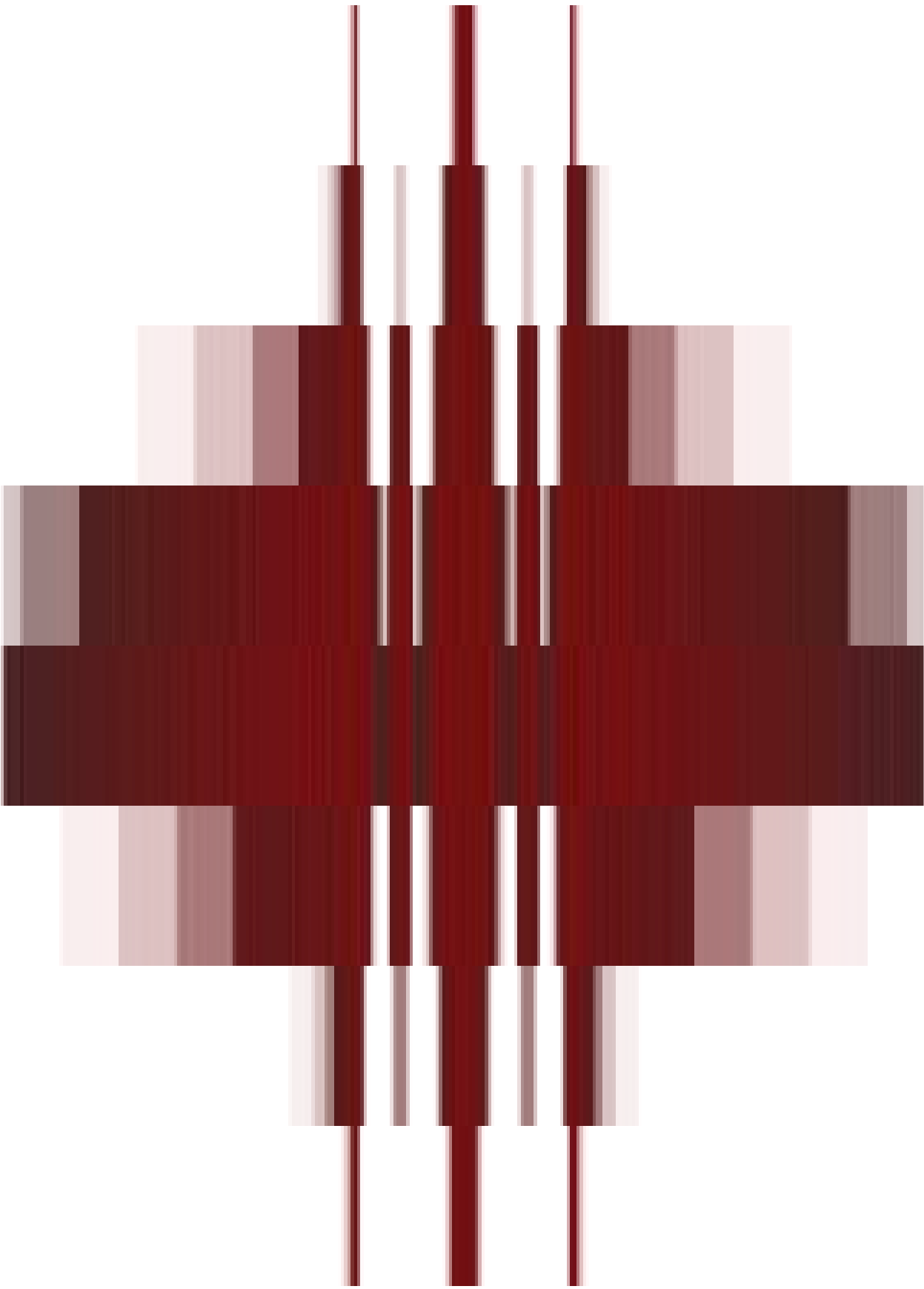
Satan's Evil Intelligence at Work in Creation



How Satanic Tendencies Become Obsessions in the Human Mind



Freeing the Consciousness From the Influence of Satan's Devils



“One should have a working knowledge of and healthy respect for the ever present delusive satanic power and thereby keep oneself wholly immune to evil influences.”

■

And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God."

And Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Hold thy peace, and come out of him." And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not.

And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, "What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out." And the fame of him went out into every place of the country round about.

And he arose out of the synagogue, and entered into Simon's house. And Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever; and they besought him for her. And he stood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her: and immediately she arose and ministered unto them.

— Luke 4:33 – 39



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Discourse 24

Casting Out Devils



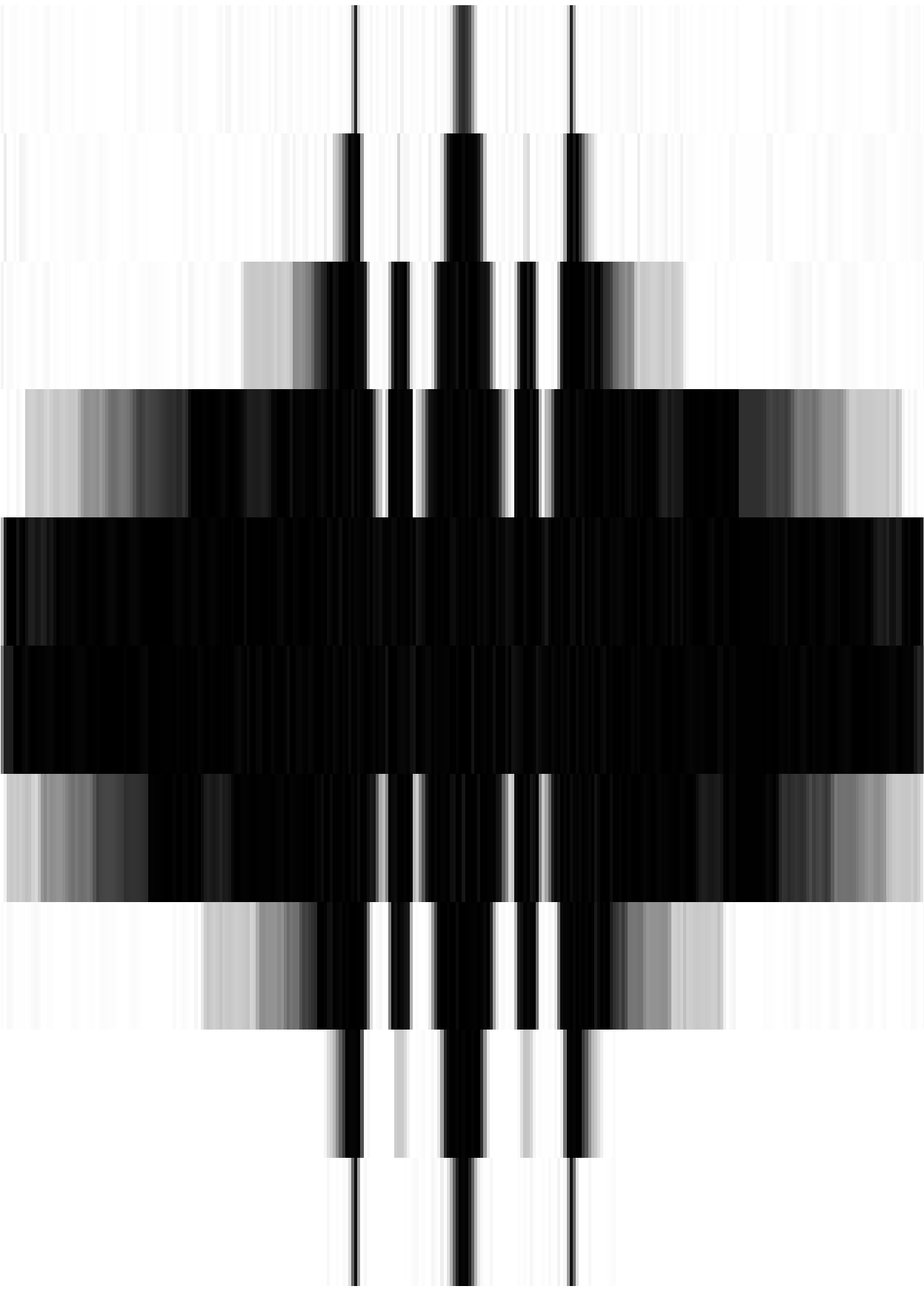
And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God."

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And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, "What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out." And the fame of him went out into every place of the country round about (Luke 4:33 – 37).¹

Casting out devils is not an antiquated superstition. The art of casting out devils and healing the spiritually sick of evil obsessions has been largely forgotten due to the lack in all religions of God-tuned apostles who know the subtle workings of the good and evil forces in the world.

On many occasions Jesus drove evil spirits from the afflicted, as in this present verse, and as once he commanded the entities to take leave of a tormented man and enter into the bodies of pigs, who then perished in the sea.² And also in the case of the woman of Canaan and her daughter, who was "grievously vexed with a devil," and whom Jesus healed through the mother's great faith in him.³ No amount of so-called progressive "liberal" thinking can accurately explain away these works of Jesus. Each time, he distinctly called forth the evil spirit and the victim was then made whole. Jesus, with his perfect integrity and divine knowledge, would not have referred to such cases as possession by evil spirits if they had instead been psychological, as in hysteria or lunacy.



Difference between psychological obsession and possession by disembodied spirits

In modern times many people scoff at the idea of anybody being possessed by an unclean devil. They dismiss such assertions as a myth or superstition—and no doubt there are many quasi-superstitious outgrowths in beliefs and practices. In the olden days of superstition and candle light, devils seemed to be plentiful; but now, in the electrical age, the evil spirits appear to be scared away. However, psychiatrists can tell of the many cases of mental obsessions by fixed ideas, little knowing that some patients may indeed be suffering from actual possession by unclean spirits. Real cases of possession may be misdiagnosed as brain-derangement, or as a state of hallucination, or as spells of hysteria. On the other hand, many psychological cases have been erroneously described as spirit possession by credulous spiritualists. Actual cases of spirit possession, while true, are relatively rare; more common is mental obsession caused by the evil forces of delusion.⁴ Whatever the cause, physical and mental and spiritual healing are possible when one, like Jesus, can employ divine power to cast out devils and the forces of evil from the threefold nature of man.

The human body and mind, being products of Nature, individualized from Spirit by cosmic delusion, are subject to various kinds of mortal diseases. Jesus, as a true minister of Self-realization, the perfection of the real Self or soul, not only knew how to win people away from satanic ignorance and bring them into divine vibrations by his words of wisdom, but he knew also how to heal them of their diverse kinds of maladies. While preaching in the synagogue (a place where people usually go for their souls to be healed by the salve of inspiring sermons), Jesus encountered a man possessed by an unclean devil. Forthwith Jesus healed this stricken victim.



Demystifying the truth about disembodied evil spirits

There is nothing mysterious about devils or disembodied evil spirits except in the ignorance of people who have not studied their characteristics. Many scientific secrets that formerly lay hidden in nature are now commonplace matters. Someday, when people will be more spiritually advanced they will understand the mysteries of life and death and the nature of disincarnate souls that have gone into the unknown.

By long successful practice of meditation, a devotee can transfer his will and attention beyond the portals of the conscious and the subconscious minds into the superconscious. When he can go deeper and project his concentration consciously from superconsciousness felt within his body into the light of Christ Intelligence hidden beyond the state of wakefulness, dreams, subconsciousness, and superconsciousness, he can then behold the vast astral universe of luminous vibratory planets and vibratory spheres peopled with millions of disincarnate souls.

The inhabitants of the astral world are garbed in forms made of energy and light, and are confined to higher or lower astral spheres according to their karma. There are, however, a few astral beings known as “tramp souls.” They are earthbound because of strong material urges and attachments. They roam in the ether, desirous of reentering a physical form to satisfy their need for sense enjoyments. Such beings are usually harmless, invisible “ghosts,” and have no power to affect the ordinary person. However, tramp souls do occasionally take possession of someone’s body and mind, but only such vulnerable persons who are mentally unstable or have weakened their mind by keeping it often blank or unthinking. Owing to their mental emptiness, and karmic attraction, they unwittingly invite the advent of vagrant spirits within their bodies. If one leaves his car unlocked with the key in the ignition, any uncouth character may get in and drive off. Tramp souls, having lost their own physical-body vehicle to which they were inordinately attached, are on the watch for such unattended conveyances.

Unclean devils, cited in the cases of possession that Jesus exorcised, are those astral beings among tramp souls who on earth were murderers, robbers, and other criminals, drunkards and licentious persons, and especially vicious and

treacherous beings, who did not cleanse themselves of their evil propensities before death. Even the greatest sinner, if he cleans his subconscious mind and memory by contacting the superconsciousness in meditation before death, does not carry his unpurged wickedness into a sphere beyond death. But those persons who leave their physical bodies in a state of sin, as also those who ruthlessly and foolishly commit suicide, are considered unclean souls in the astral world. They roam in the lower astral spheres, imprisoned in their astral and causal bodies, finding no rest, and either hating to be reborn on the earth or grieving for the loss of their physical incarnation. These forlorn souls have to wander about in the ether until some of the karmic effects of their bad actions are worn out through the operation of the divine law. The devilish spirits among them are very unscrupulous, even as they were during earth life.

Satan, the Cosmic Evil Intelligence, has his satellites in disreputable persons who have lost in the moral and spiritual battle, working through these decadent beings not only on earth while they are living but also in their afterlife astral existence. As evil-possessed persons do mischief on earth, so these Satan-obsessed astral beings continue their mischief in the astral world as well as in the physical world as tramp souls. They seek out persons with similar karmic potentials, attracted by their negative vibrations. They intelligently possess and punish such earthly human beings during the term of their own astral punishment determined by their specific transgressions in worldly life.



Characteristics of souls in the after-death realm

Why should it be considered amazing that such disembodied evil spirits reside on the other side of life when devils and devilish persons exist right on this side of life? If souls are immortal, then, according to the law of cause and effect, it is logical to expect that when a devilish person sheds the mortal coil and passes through the door of the mortal change called “death,” into the afterlife, he does not become an angel, but continues to be a devil. Only a soul who has been angelic on earth can continue to be so after crossing the gulf of death, entering not the dark astral spheres but the finer atmosphere of Heaven.

As a good boy turned to evil ways can be called a devil, so the disincarnate astral consciousness of a person gone wrong becomes devilish in its behavior. Such wicked beings pass through many strange experiences in the afterlife. As people of calm disposition usually have deep soothing sleep, so good souls, when they sleep the sleep of death, experience a wondrously refreshing peace and uplifting dream visions before reincarnating to continue working out their earthly karma. But as restless and excitable persons often experience nightmares during sleep, so also when people of evil-disturbed disposition die, they experience during the great death sleep, according to the law of cause and effect, only horrible astral nightmares, reflections of their own accumulated evil.

As a man may sleep a few hours or three hours or twelve hours or may have sleeping sickness, so some souls after death remain in the state of unconscious sleep for a little while or a long time, according to their karma in earthly life. Souls with good karma are able to be awake in the astral land after their sleep of death. Those who have practiced many virtues enjoy the results of their good karma on heavenly astral planets where the limitations of earth life are non-existent. Most souls, neither categorically virtuous nor evil, after sleeping the sleep of peaceful unconscious death, with occasional experiences of astral wakefulness, wake up in the womb of their new earthly mother.

Only souls who by meditation can control the life-force functions of heart and breath and remain engrossed in the constant ecstasy of God-consciousness during their earth life can remain conscious unbrokenly during the transition of death and also in the astral world. It is the testimony of these devotees who can retain their consciousness in the after-death state that declares the mystery of the

astral experience.

As worms live in the earth, fish live in the water, humans live on earth, birds live in the air, and angels live in the fine airless vibratory realms, so also there are various atmospheres and vibratory regions in the astral universe where souls of varying degrees of advancement reside, according to the merits and demerits of their pre-astral existence in earth life.⁵



Explanation of the phenomenon of possession by “tramp souls”

Fish cannot live for long out of their watery habitat; similarly, tramp souls, unclean spirits, must remain in gross vibratory astral planets, whereas finer souls reside in the subtly vibrating luminous planets. If tramp souls dared to approach these finer regions, they would be shocked or “astralocuted” by the high voltage of astral energy.

As people walk in sleep or cry out during a bad dream, so, during the sleep after death, unclean spirits move about in the ether crying out for relief. Often they try to get hold of some passive bodily vehicle through which to express their agony and pent-up wickedness. As a sleepwalker does many strange things, so these ghostly sleepwalkers engage in many strange antics. But they can never infest brains occupied with intelligent thinking, or people with strong will power or vibrations of spiritual perception. That is why one should never make the mind negative, or blank, in order to open oneself to messages from disincarnate spirits. This presents an ideal opportunity for possession by low-type tramp souls seeking human vehicles for expression and experience.⁶

The minds of spiritually advanced persons cannot be occupied by devilish souls; but these devotees can invoke the presence of and communion with saintly souls by use of the proper technique of astral intuition. One must learn the right technique from one’s guru. Divine saints do not appear through mediums and séances; they respond only when they are invited by the urge of the devotion of advanced devotees. Such devotees can see or talk to saints in vision. When they develop even further, they can see with open eyes the materialized form of saints and can talk to them or touch them, even as the advanced disciples of Jesus were able by their devotion to see and touch Jesus Christ in flesh after his resurrection.

So the idea of devils possessing weak-brained, thought-unoccupied persons cannot be discarded as superstition. But a strong personality fully occupies his brain, thereby shutting out the invasion of tramp souls. Devotees who are sincerely seeking God, and who practice scientific methods of prayer and meditation, need never fear such beings; for no harm from negative spirits can come to one whose thoughts are on God. While one meditates on God, one can be absolutely convinced that his body is so charged with a high voltage of

cosmic energy emanating from the thought of God that he is protected from the lower-astral intruders. If any such spirits would even try to possess the bodies of God-tuned souls, those entities would be shocked and driven back to the dark spheres of the astral world.

There is a distinct difference between the condition of a person acting under the influence of possession by a tramp soul or unclean devil, and that of one acting under a hypnotic spell or the obsession of a subconscious idea, or autosuggestion. Men and women under the influence of hypnosis or strong obsession of the subconscious mind can be made to act in either a noble or a devilish way. Real possession consists of the actual presence in one's body of a soul that has cast off its own physical garment and in its astral form is partially, completely, or spasmodically incapacitating the rational faculties of the possessed. One human body ordinarily cannot house another being along with its own self (except in the case of a mother carrying a child). But spiritual experts are able to distinguish true cases of spirit possession, because by their psychic powers they are able to behold, within the person possessed, the astral body of the invisible visitor side by side with the astral body of the host. The only way a layman is able to deduce a case of spirit possession is by analyzing the different states of paroxysm and wild behavior to which a possessed person is subject. The evil-spirit-possessed person usually displays unusual physical strength, bloodshot eyes, uncanny expression, and general lack of normal behavior. This bestial irrationality is variously displayed and described in the instances of spirit possession exorcised by Jesus.



How Jesus exorcised an unclean spirit through will power and cosmic energy

Like attracts like, so the possessed man in the synagogue, by the attraction of his own sinful vibration, drew unto himself an unclean spirit. Jesus, possessing the universal Christ Consciousness, could feel exactly what was going on within the body of the bedeviled man. And the unclean spirit, through the intuition of its astral body, could feel the power of Jesus. (Astral-bodied souls perceive through the sixth sense of intuition; but they can use it to perform the functions of vision, audition, smell, taste, touch, and so forth.) The unclean, wicked spirit kept the mind of the possessed man in a state of suspension, neutrality, and sub-hypnosis of obsession, so that its victim's instruments of consciousness—senses, brain, and body—could be used without interference. A possessed individual may or may not be unconscious within his spirit-controlled body, just as a person under hypnosis may manifest the unconsciousness of sleep or the superficially normal state of the obsessed conscious mind. The unclean spirit saw Jesus through the eyes of the possessed man, and used his voice to cry loudly: "Let us alone; do not deny us our freedom of expression, be it good or evil."

The possessive spirit, itself obsessed with satanic evil, recognized in Jesus the opposing force of godly good: "I know thee...the Holy One of God." The spirit rightly feared that Jesus, with his Christ Consciousness having control over all life, would put an end to the unauthorized, forced occupation of the possessed man's mind. It knew that the omnipresent Christ Consciousness in Jesus was the Lord of creation. Astral beings, whether clean or unclean, know that it is the Christ Intelligence and not Satan's maya that has ultimate power over the inner world, even though Satan tries to exert his influence in the astral world to the same degree he succeeds on earth. But heaven is not a comfortable place for a fallen archangel.

Jesus did not want the unclean devil, in its irritated state, to do harm to the brain of the obsessed man. If possession by unclean devils or disembodied souls continues for long, great mischief is done to the brain, mind, and sense organs of the possessed individual, posing a threat of the advent of permanent insanity. By his life-controlling will power, Jesus spoke: "Hold thy peace and come out of him." That is, stop the devilish work of wrecking possessed brains; hold on to the inner peace of the soul, hidden behind the dark barrier of self-created past evil propensities, and restore again your right behavior by coming out of the

body you have forcibly and unethically occupied.

It requires strong concentration and divine will power to dislodge an evil spirit. If one has dynamic spiritual force, the entity can be thrown out by constantly looking into the eyes of a stricken individual, using steady, silent will power continuously, inwardly commanding the evil spirit to leave. The entity will depart provided the will of the healer to drive the evil force out is stronger than the latter's will to remain.

By the repeated whisper of "Aum" in the right ear of a possessed individual, the evil spirit is bound to leave. Tramp souls, having wandered out of the dark lower astral regions, cannot stand the high vibration of spiritual thoughts and consciousness. The utterance of holy names and words, especially Aum, Aum, Aum, into the ear of possessed individuals usually brings forth a quick, frightened reply from the individual like: "I am going; don't utter that holy word," which indicates spirit possession.

Jesus, drawing power from the Cosmic Aum Vibration, commanded, with his Aum-impregnated voice, the devil to come out of the body of the afflicted individual. The devil, unwilling to obey Jesus, fought against the powerful vibration. This created convulsions in the body of the bedeviled man as the powerful Cosmic Current vibrating within him tried to dislodge and shake out the intruding spirit. At last the evil entity came out of the body violently, leaving the man limp and shaken but not hurt, unable to harm him due to the intervention of the divine Christ Jesus. The people who beheld this casting out of an unclean spirit were in awe of the sovereign authority in the word of Jesus, which even demonic entities were constrained to obey—adding far and wide to the renown of Jesus.



Spiritual forces of good and evil that vie for influence over man's consciousness

Why be concerned about the harassment of ghostly tramp-souls? Such threat is negligible. Normal, healthy minded persons are impervious to their mischief. A far greater danger to one's well-being exists right within and around every human being. Good and evil are fighting for supremacy—the one force is trying to save us, and the other to harm us. We are caught in the middle of this cosmic war between God and His “fallen archangel” Satan. One cannot dismiss this problematic conflict by rationalizing that Satan is a mere delusion. Jesus himself acknowledged the actuality of the adversary when he said: “Get thee behind me, Satan” and “Deliver us from evil.” It would hardly be necessary to pray to God at all if there were no devil and works of the devil from which man requires divine intervention to be delivered.

Satan, with his power of maya, exists in order to provide the dichotomy of Spirit necessary to bring into manifestation and perpetuate the universal cosmic drama. But though God allows the shadows of troubles to play amidst His light, He also tries to help us out of delusion's turmoils. God and His angels and countless good spirits, spiritual forces, are trying to establish divine harmony in man and his cosmic environment. Every beneficial quality is created by a divine agent of God. These personified spiritual forces are constantly implanting noble thoughts in man's mind. At the same time, Satan, with his evil spirits, is fomenting chaos in the world and restive temptations to distress man's consciousness.

As all good is organized by God and His angels, and as He sends His spiritually advanced children on earth from time to time to eradicate evil, similarly, the mighty evil force, Satan, with a vast horde of evil spirits, personified evil forces, is carrying on a campaign of organized wickedness throughout the universe.

Millions of harmful bacteria and a mélange of evil diseases, evil thoughts, evil passions, are all potentially implanted by the evil force into the mind and body of man. Though man is essentially made in the image of God, when his mortal vulnerability succumbs to obsession by the latent satanic forces in him of greed, selfishness, anger, or any of the evil tendencies, these overcloud the purity of the human soul.

God's light is present in every being as the soul with its godly reflections of

divine forces and qualities; Satan is also present in every being as ignorance with distinct reflections of himself as evil forces or spirits. Thus, each individual is influenced both by the soul and its good qualities and by Satan and his evil qualities.

So the truth is that the direct creator of evil—as concerns the relative existence and experience of man—is this Satanic Force, the archangel that turned away from God and misused his God-given power in order to create evil as a counterpart of all the good that God has created. Thus we find in each man opposite qualities—good created by God, evil created by Satan; love created by God, hate created by Satan; kindness created by God, selfishness created by Satan; intoxication of divine ecstasy created by God, and intoxication of evil gratifications created by Satan.⁷

When a person is beset with an evil obsession, physically, mentally, or spiritually—such as chronic disease; insidious emotions, habits, or desires; spiritual ignorance—it is the manifestation of a spirit reflection of Satan, a devil, that needs to be cast out as decidedly as the exorcism of a tramp soul, or unclean devil, in a case of spirit possession. Such, indeed, were among the many healings effected by Jesus, as in the following incident.



And he arose out of the synagogue, and entered into Simon's house. And Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever; and they besought him for her. And he stood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her: and immediately she arose and ministered unto them (Luke 4:38 – 39).⁸

Diseases are due to the lack of proper operation of the conscious beneficial forces that govern the body, and are also due to the evil forces which consciously allow the bane of disease to spread in the body. Some diseases are brought about by physical transgressions against the laws of health, but the disease germs themselves are engendered and intelligently controlled by the evil force of Satan, which tries to destroy the beautiful creation of God—the human body. Whenever a person transgresses physically, mentally, or spiritually, a portal is opened for a specific disease or malady to enter the body, according to the nature of the transgression. Vibrations are generated that attract the agencies of evil in the form of disease germs.



Satan's evil intelligence at work in creation

Disease germs have a dormant intelligence that at an opportune time is roused and directed by Satan. Jesus could see the evil force that was responsible for the introduction of fever into the body of Simon's wife's mother, and thus he rebuked it away and restored the harmony of health. Jesus commanded the predominating evil force to depart from the body of the stricken woman, thus reinstating the conscious astral forces that govern normal health. He knew all the intelligent evil forces that create havoc in people and was able, through his all-powerful Christ Consciousness, to talk in the vibratory language of the fever and command it to depart from the ailing body of the woman. That is what is meant by Jesus "rebuking the fever."

All evil has some intelligence by which it works its mischief. Note how cleverly it insinuates itself into the mind of a person through false reasoning. Vice takes the cloak of virtue and fools the gatekeeper of reason, and thus enters the forbidden sanctum of virtue. Each soul is independent and free to act according to the good influences of God and soulful qualities, or to act under the influence of Satan's evil qualities and Satan's reflections, the devils which obsess the being of man. While good and evil actions can be freely chosen, after one has acted he has no free choice as to consequences. If he acts in a good way he must receive a good result and if he acts in an evil way he must receive an evil result. The cohort reflections of Satan in each man constantly urge him to do wrong through the lure of temptations that appeal to his prenatal karmic tendencies and present habits. God tries to influence a being through conscience and soul peace found in meditation. As a free agent, man must choose either to act under the influence of God's direction or Satan's evil incitements.

When one acts according to the influence of conscience or good qualities, he creates good tendencies and good habits which automatically draw him toward God. Whenever an individual acts evilly under the influence of evil habits or evil qualities, then automatically he is drawn toward Satan, ignorance, and satanic ways.



How satanic tendencies become obsessions in the human mind

This explanation of good and evil is to point out that man is not responsible for being tempted to do evil under the influence of anger, greed, or fear, or other evils, implanted in him by Satan, but he is responsible if he chooses to act according to the temptations of the evil forces. Such temptations appear in man as evil impulses and inner promptings to do wrong. When the evil forces are successful, obsessed man feels compelled to act out those urges.

Human beings thus succumb to evil not only through the influence of their prenatal or postnatal tendencies and bad habits, but also because they are consciously pushed by the satanic entities residing in the brain. When the evil entity of an obsession is dislodged from the brain by higher meditations, self-controlled right actions, and the help of one's guru, then a soul really becomes free. Jesus healed Mary Magdalene from seven devils, visitations of the evil forces.⁹ Great masters, like Jesus, can transmit their light of spirituality into the mind of a person obsessed with an evil intent and thereby dislodge the specific evil force causing the affliction.

If a man sits in a room full of light, beholding beautiful objects, to him light exists. If another man sits in the same room with eyes closed, to him darkness exists—albeit self-created. Similarly, there are two kinds of people in this world. One kind have their spiritual eyes of wisdom open; they see God and His goodness existing everywhere, in everything. The second kind have their spiritual eyes closed; they experience creation as rife with Satan and his evils.

Man is responsible for harboring the darkness of evil if he does not cultivate the true perception of wisdom. Devotees are those souls who obey the wishes of God to keep their eyes of wisdom open and focused only on good; and deluded persons are those who heed the voice of evil and keep their eyes of spirituality closed, thus courting the darkness of misery, sickness, and the whole host of Satan's evils.

God is alluring His devotees by all good things to come unto Him; and Satan, by the allurements of false promises of happiness, is coaxing people deeper into his pit of ignorance and misery. Man should consider the whisperings of his conscience and good tendencies as the call of God within him. Conversely, he

should recognize and resist the promptings of evil thoughts and urges as the lure of Satan.

If man continuously listens responsively to the whisperings of his conscience and nascent virtues and gets used to better ways of living, he ultimately discovers the eternal good within the God-image of his soul, and through this Self-realization becomes liberated. Because Satan breaks his promises to give lasting happiness to his followers, they will all finally turn away from him to God.



Freeing the consciousness from the influence of Satan's devils

Satan's devils, the originators and pioneers of evil working through evil tendencies in man, should therefore be cast out from ignorance-haunted souls. Spiritualizing one's life through righteous behavior and especially through God-communion in deep regular meditation is the way to expel the evil entities and open up the latent perceptions of heaven within. To rid the consciousness of obsessing evil forces is the real metaphysical way of freeing a soul forever from the influences of Satan's devils that have carried on their misery-dealing work through incarnations in one who chose to misuse his power of reason.

Jesus, being omniscient, had full knowledge of how Satan and his evil forces worked in torturing human beings. Thus, he knew the metaphysical art of casting out those devils, as did his specially ordained apostles. The art is known to all masters, who then teach other souls how to be free forever from the innate influences of evil entities, by consciously establishing within themselves the preeminence of God.

Great masters can heal the ignorance in truth-seeking devotees by contact with the Christ Consciousness and transmitting to them that spiritual power. I have seen how my guru, Swami Sri Yukteswarji, cast out devils from obsessed beings and healed so-called incurable sicknesses and preached through his exemplary living. Masters who are entirely free from evil show others thereby how to be likewise free.

By the contact of God through advanced concentration and meditation, as with the Self-Realization techniques, and by spiritually developing oneself with the help of the guru, devotees can actually dislodge the originator of evil, Satan and his obsessing entities, from within the sacred sanctum of their body temple.

Illumined saints have declared how the spirit entity of evil takes shape and leaves the body permanently, after highest spiritual attainment. When the evil entity departs, the cleansed consciousness of the devotee becomes not only absolutely impervious to evil but cannot see evil in anything anymore. He sees God alone everywhere.¹⁰

In summary, the lesson to be drawn from the dramatic demonstrations of Jesus in casting out devils is not that one should concentrate on and fear possession by

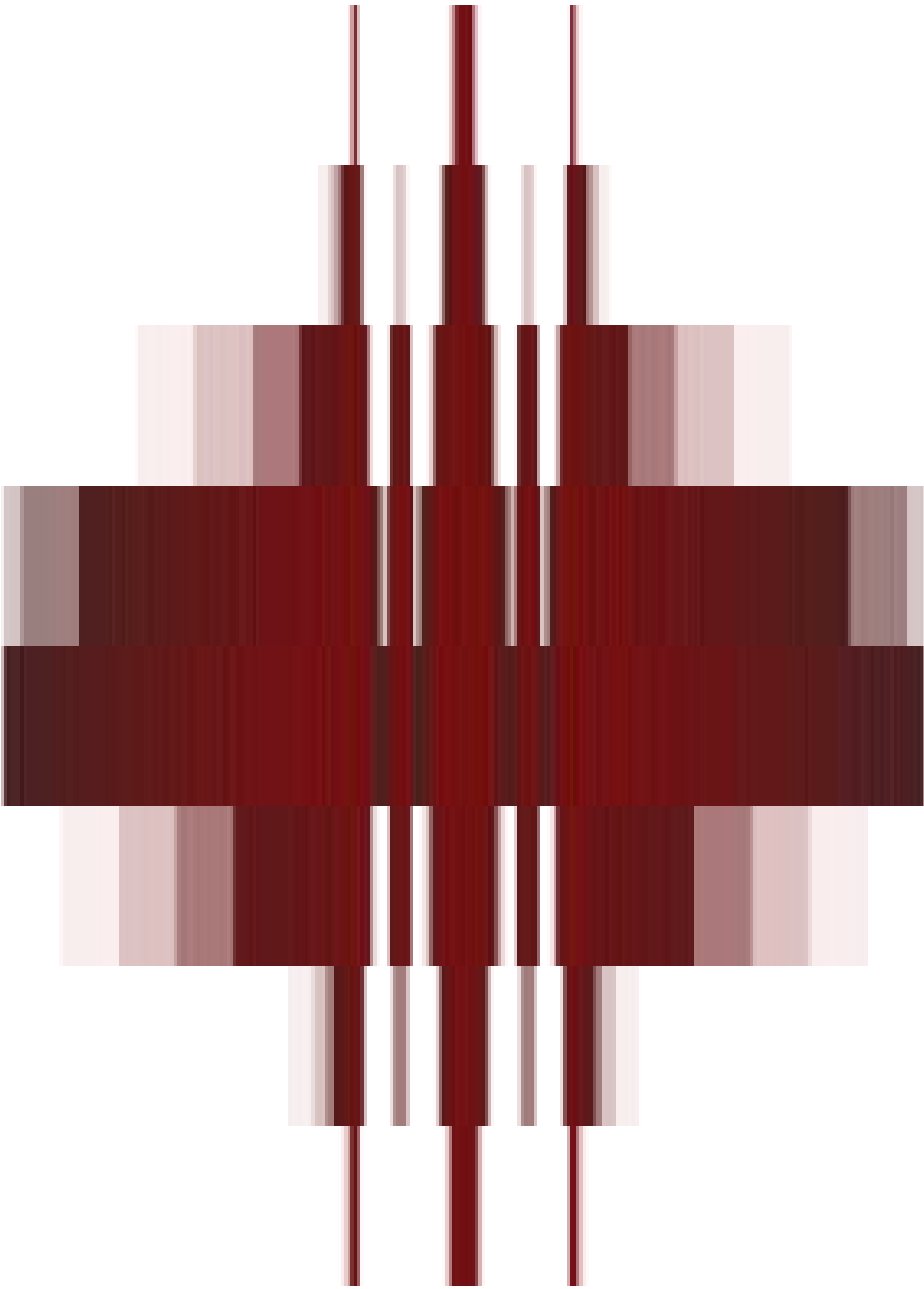
tramp souls (a rare actuality) or obsessions by Satan's evil entities (innate in the human psyche). Rather, one should have a working knowledge of and healthy respect for the ever-present delusive satanic power and thereby keep oneself wholly immune to evil influences.

Listen to the voice of God echoing in your good thoughts. These are strong intimations from God and His angelic spirits to guide and help you. Satan also is exerting his influence with his own kind of contrary mental instigations. Every time a bad thought or impulse comes, cast out that devilish entity; then Satan cannot do anything to you. Why remain a mortal captive, oscillating between good and evil? Escape into the heart of Spirit where Satan and his horde will be unable to reach you.

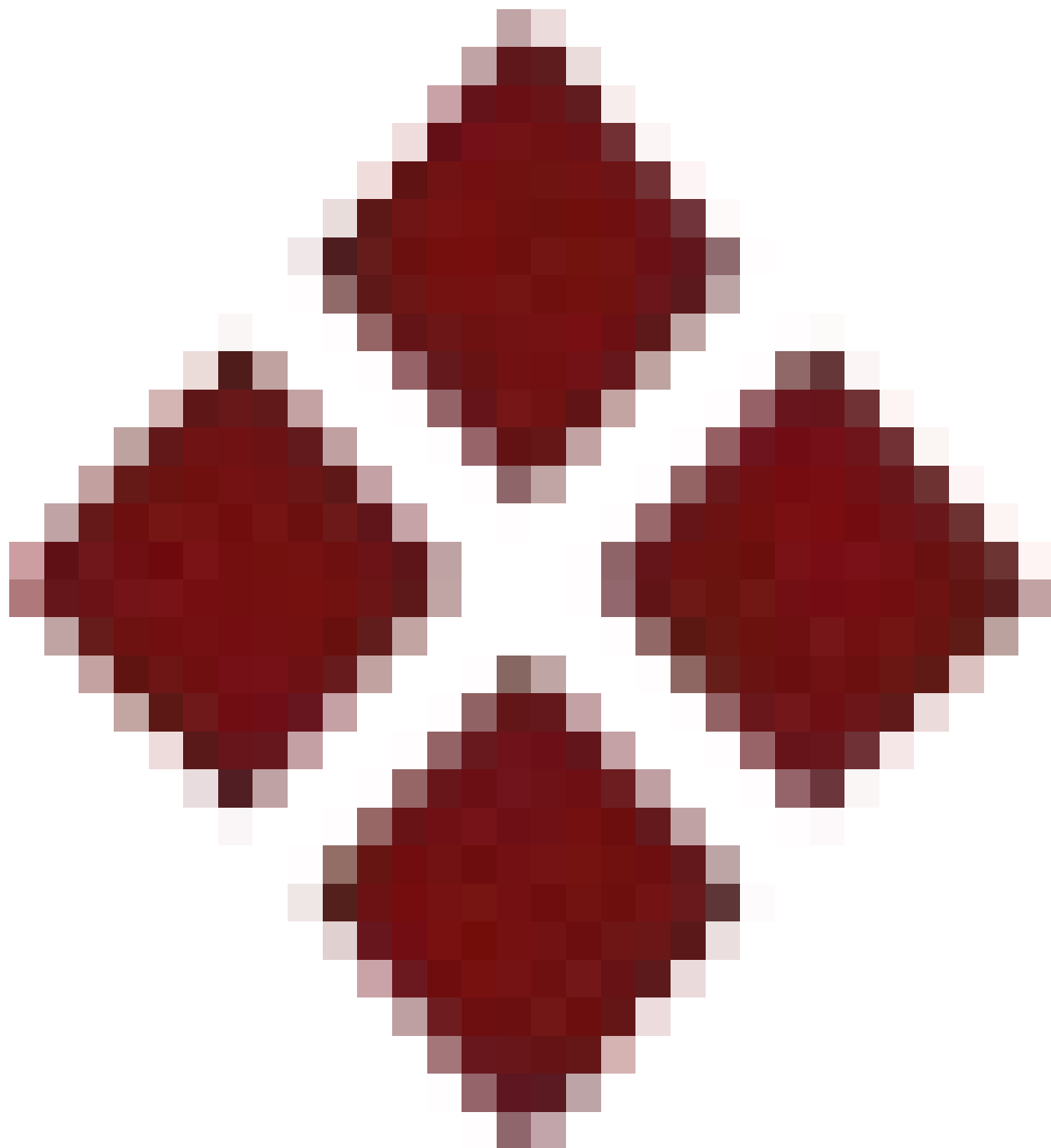


Discourse 25

Healing the Sick



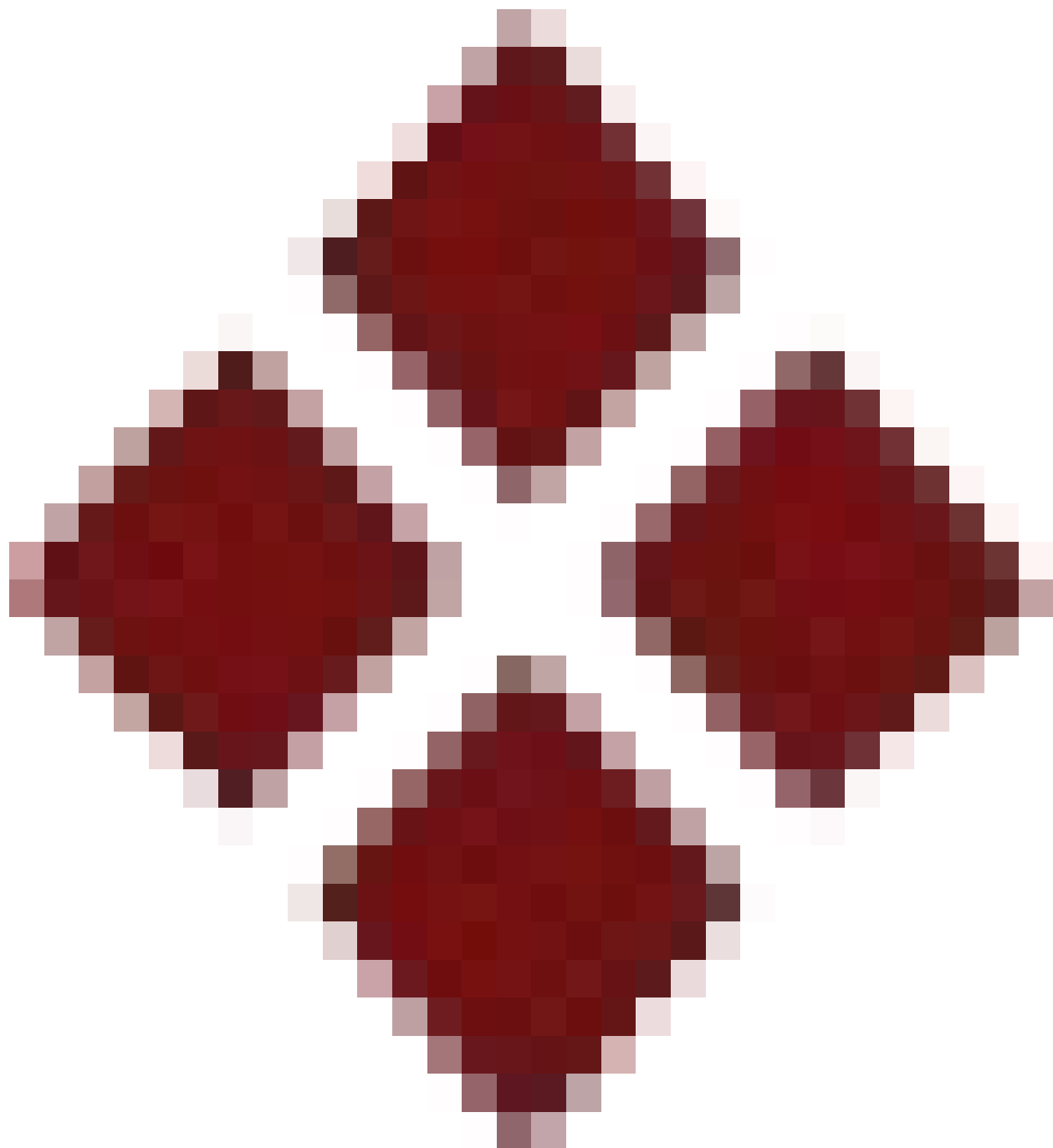
The Three Types of Afflictions to Which Man Is Subject



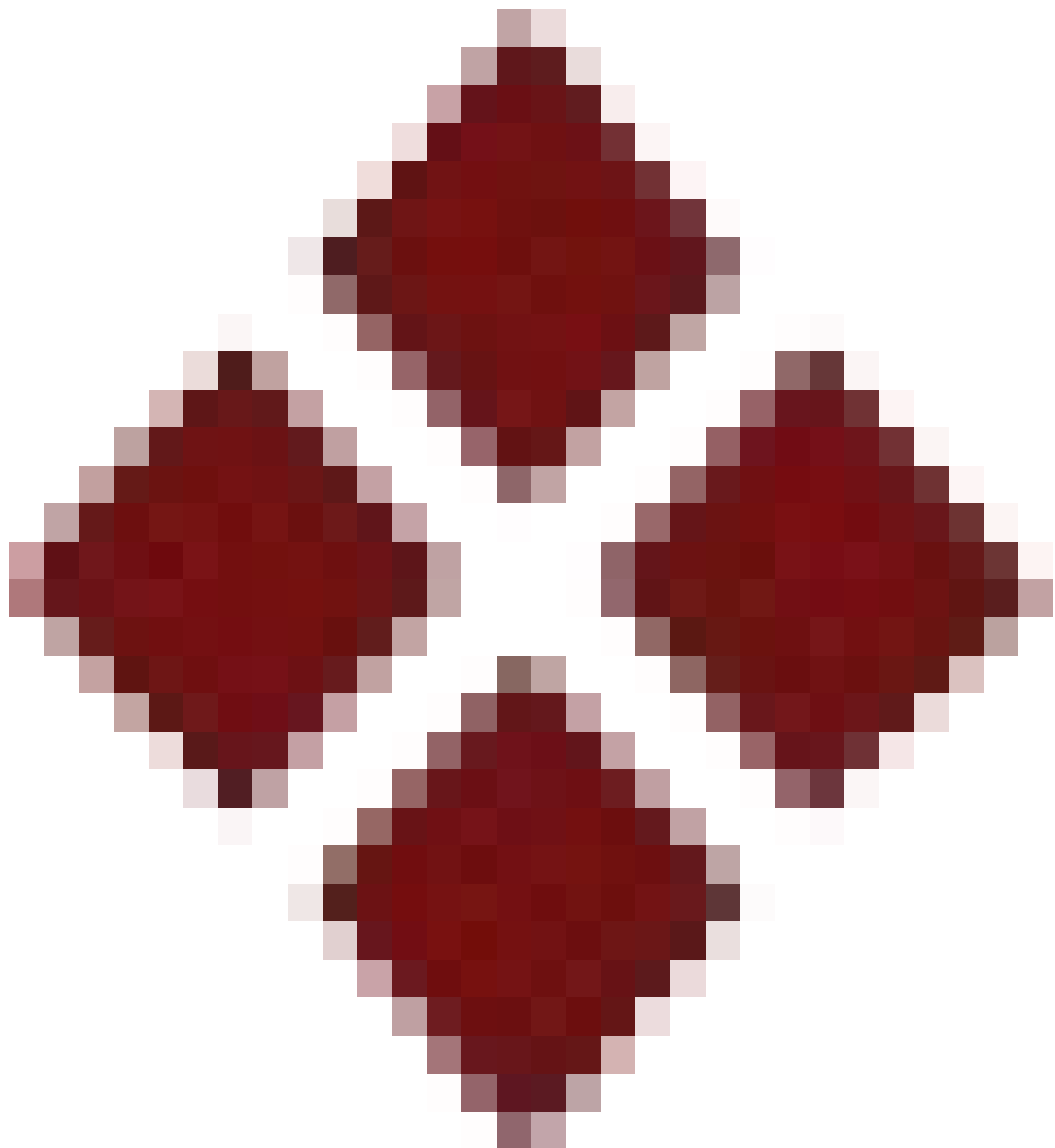
Methods of Healing the Soul of Ignorance



Cure of Psychological Diseases and Bad Habits



Physical and Mental Methods of Healing the Body



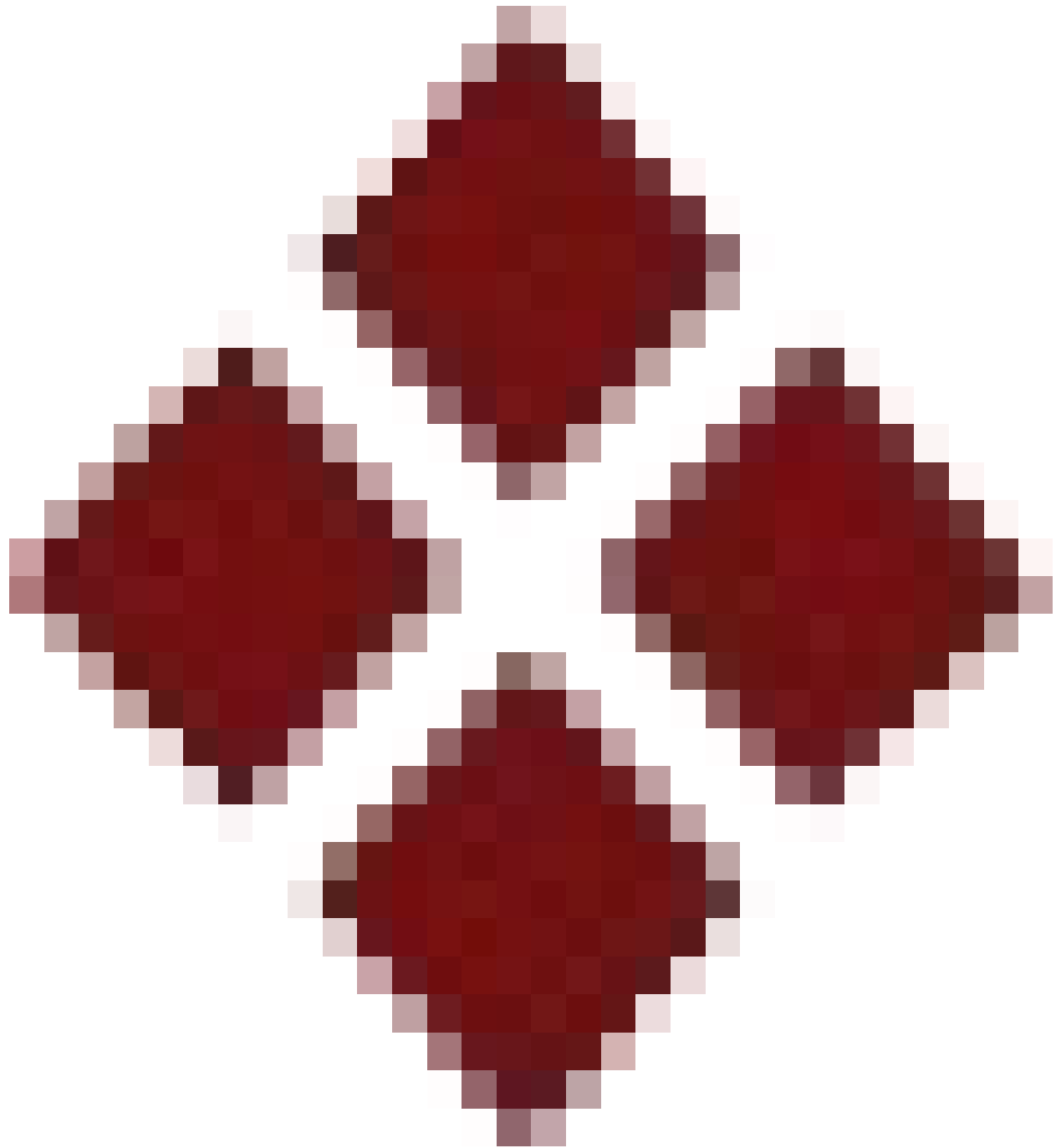
Power of the Mind to Rouse Curative Life Energy



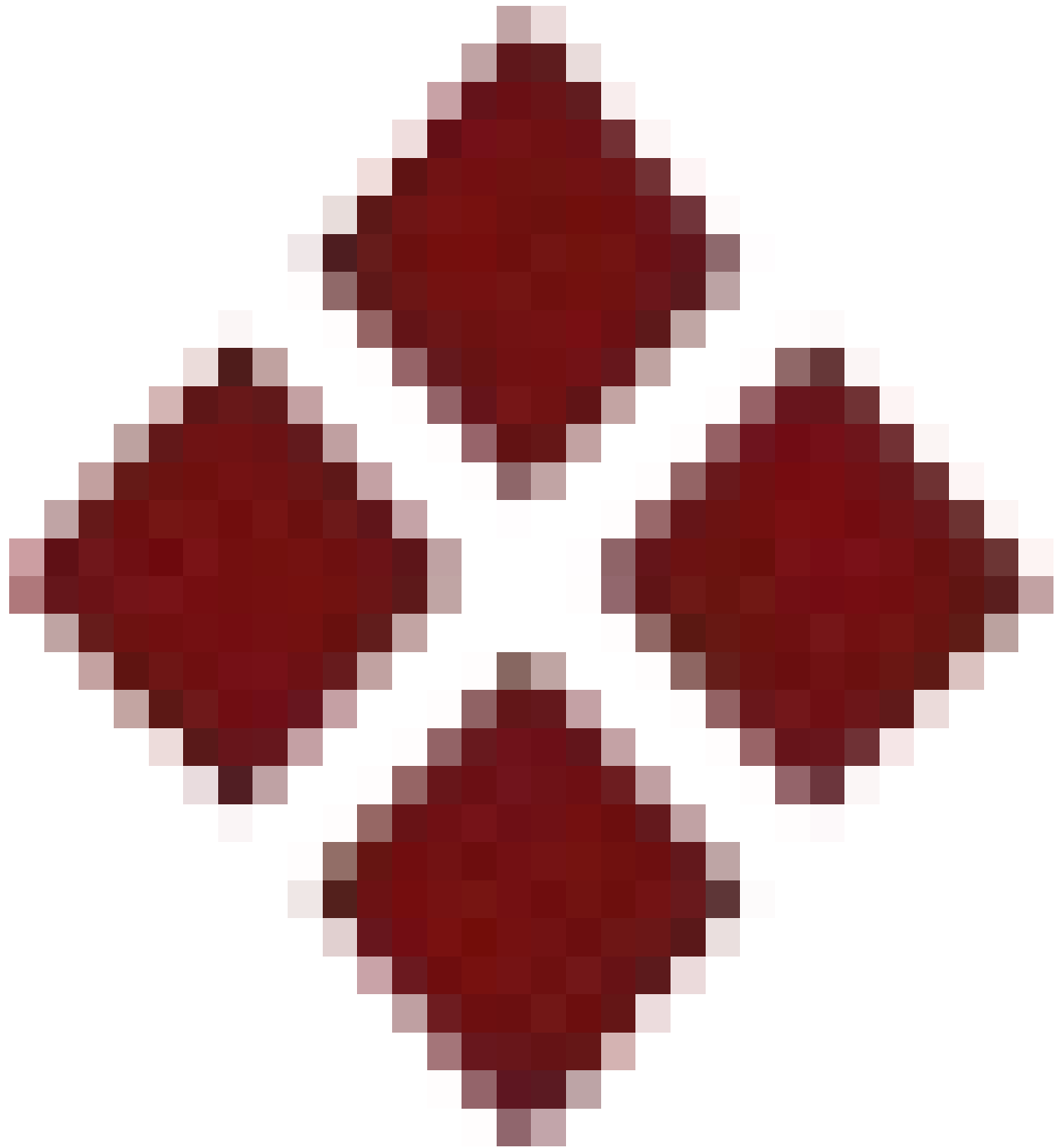
How a Master Transmits the Unlimited Healing Power of God



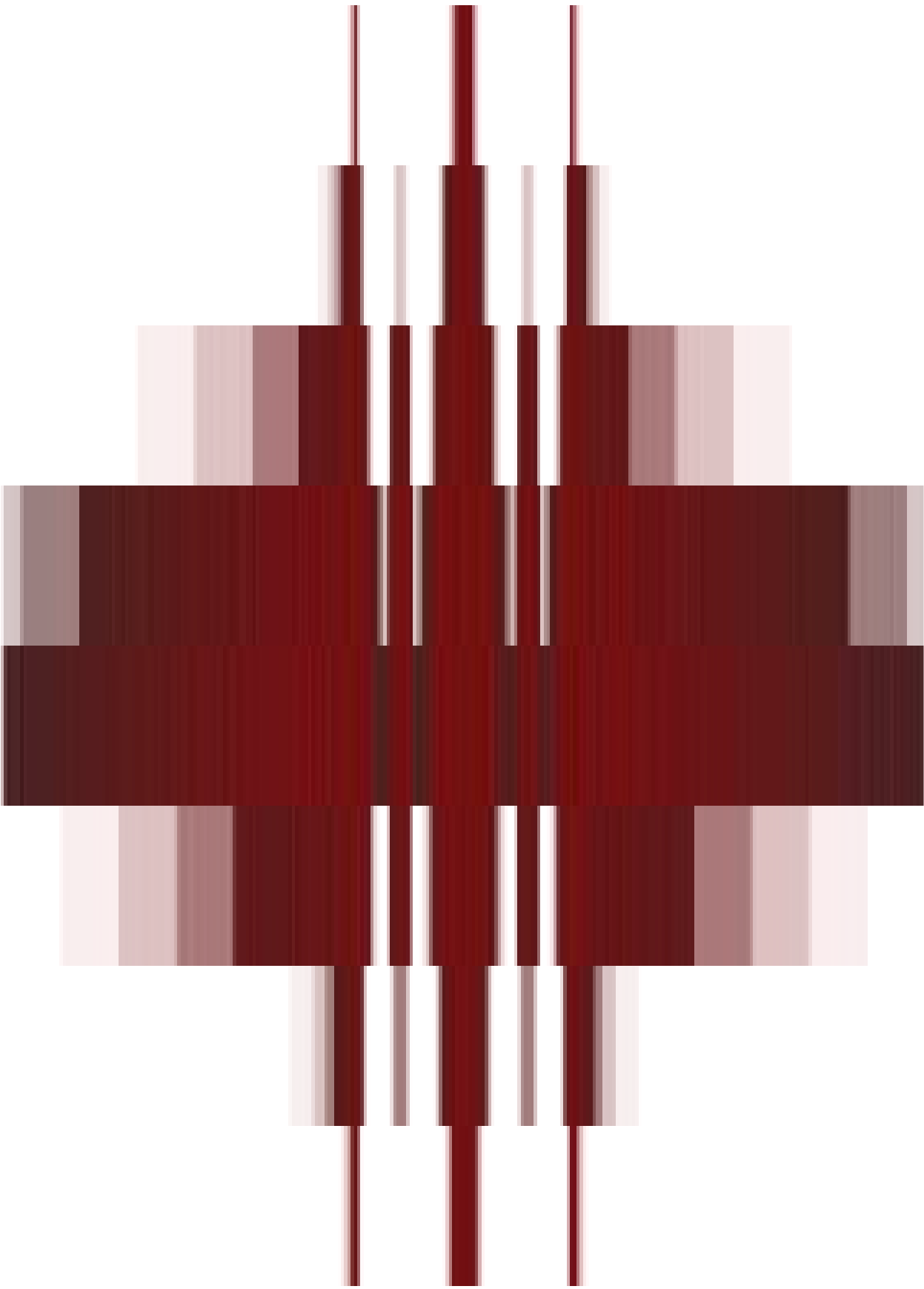
Choosing the Appropriate Mode of Healing for Individual Circumstances



Egotism: A Pitfall to Be Avoided in Practice of Spiritual Healing



How Masters Take on the Bad Karma of Suffering Individuals



*“One who knows his soul knows how to work miracles through the life force...
Jesus used various outward means of transmitting the cosmic energy.”*

■

And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils. And all the city was gathered together at the door. And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils; and suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him.

And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed. And Simon and they that were with him followed after him. And when they had found him, they said unto him, "All men seek for thee."

And he said unto them, "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth."

And he preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out devils.

—Mark 1:32 – 39



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Discourse 25

Healing the Sick

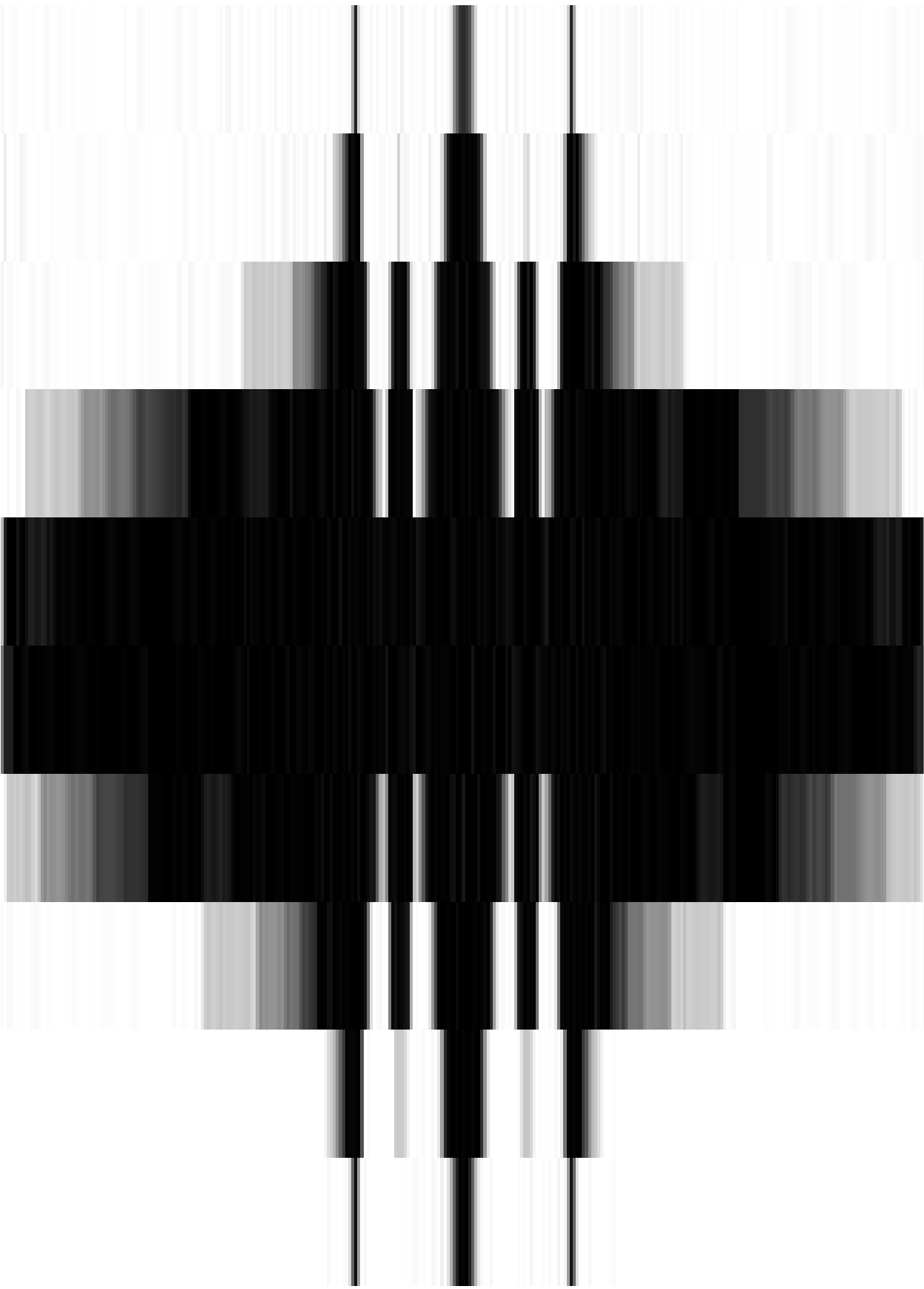


And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils. And all the city was gathered together at the door. And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils; and suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him (Mark 1:32 – 34).

Parallel references:

When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, “Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses” (Matthew 8:16 – 17).

Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them. And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, “Thou art Christ the Son of God.” And he rebuking them suffered them not to speak: for they knew that he was Christ (Luke 4:40 – 41).



The three types of afflictions to which man is subject

An understanding of the general science of the nature of disease and its cure will give an increased comprehension and appreciation of the divine law of healing as employed by Jesus. A disease consists of an inharmonious condition producing pain or unhappiness immediately or remotely in a living creature. Human beings are subject to three kinds of diseases, those that affect the body, the mind, and the soul.

The body is affected by bacteria, viruses, toxins, wounds, and organic troubles, which cause physical suffering. To free man from bodily ailments constitutes physical healing.

The mind is susceptible to infection by mental bacteria of fear, worries, melancholia, psychological nervousness, anger, greed, insatiable sensual temptations, selfishness, jealousy, and morbid tendencies, all of which produce mental discomforts and agonies. The healing of psychological diseases is called mental healing.

The soul is haunted by the disease of ignorance born of cosmic delusion, which causes man to forget his perfect divine nature and concentrate on his imperfect human nature. Ignorance creates inharmony between mind and body, soul and mind; and in addition engenders every other form of trouble.

Physical pain does not bring mental suffering if the mind is strong; martyrs whose minds are firmly fixed in devotion to God have maintained their inner serenity even while being burned at the stake. But mental suffering usually brings with it its companion of physical suffering; and when the soul cedes the expression of its powers to ignorance, body and mind are automatically subject to physical and mental ailments, for it is the disease of ignorance that produces in man the consciousness of the body and the body-identified mind.

Realized souls, who have healed themselves of ignorance, behold the body as a dream of God, frozen mind of Divinity. When the eye of wisdom is opened by meditation, the gloom of mortal ignorance and physical and mental agonies is dispelled by God's light reflected in the soul. Jesus knew the causal relation between mind and body, and between soul and God. That is how he was able to control the atomic structure of cells and harmonize psychological agitations, and

thus restore any ailing body or mind.

Body and mind, being evolutes of the immortal soul-image of God, can reflect the soul's perpetual beauty, youth, everlasting peace, and immortality. The world lauds itself for its material advancements, but has yet to discover the science and art of the highest human achievement, that celestial blessedness which Jesus and the conclave of great saints and masters have been enjoying ever since they freed themselves from mortal ignorance, and will continue to enjoy to the end of endlessness.



Methods of healing the soul of ignorance

There are various ways of healing oneself of the above three kinds of diseases. Delusion is dispelled by deeper and deeper meditation until one has ecstatic contact of the ever new bliss of God. Meditative efforts are supported and enhanced by reading true scriptures with intuitional understanding and by discriminative introspection on religious truths; by association with God-contacting saints; by attunement in thought and action with the ideals and guidance of one's guru; by devotion; by good actions of helping oneself and others to be free from physical, mental, and spiritual suffering; and by moral living. Attending religious services and keeping good company only shows that a person is interested in spirituality. Liberation from delusion must be preceded by an actual commitment to following and practicing the precepts of one who contacts God and who can teach the technique of God-contact. One should never be satisfied with dogmatic beliefs or the mere assurance of salvation promised by others. Unless one knows God, he must keep seeking Him until delusion is sundered and he becomes settled in that unquestionable realization.



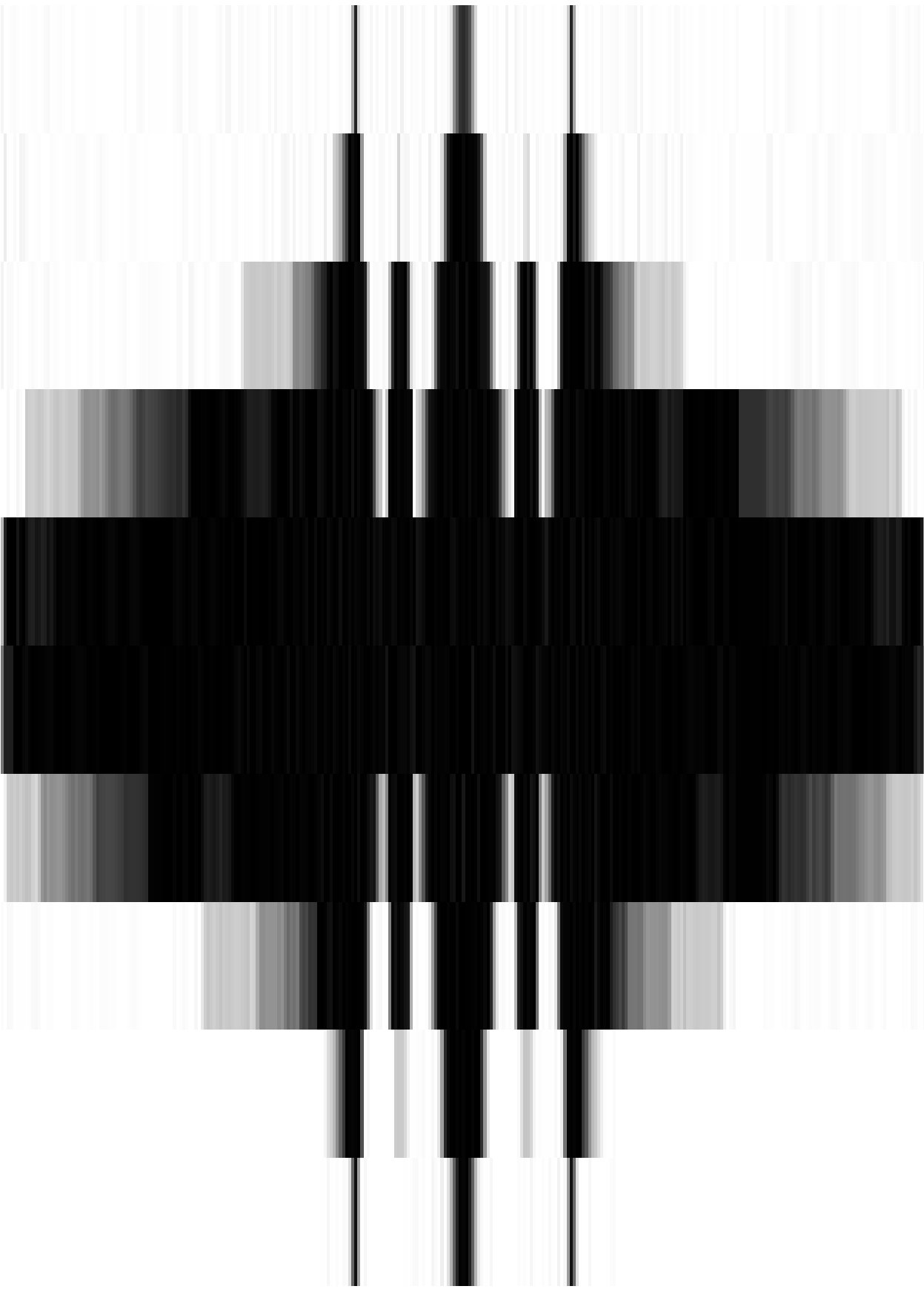
Cure of psychological diseases and bad habits

Psychological diseases receive the healing support needed from self-analysis, attentive introspection, and association with and emulation of mentally healthy people. Concentration on spiritualized thoughts in meditation actually eradicates the causes of mental diseases and corroding bad mental habits. In meditation the mind becomes interiorized and withdraws the externally activating life force from the muscles and nerves and concentrates it in the brain cells where the evil tendencies are recorded. This concentrated life energy in meditation burns out the “grooves” or patterns of mental habits that are lodged in the brain.¹

All habits are mental. They are automatic mental machines that make the performance of psychological or physical tasks easier. Attention is the needle that etches the grooves of mental good or bad habits, recording repeated experiences or actions in the brain. Whenever attention is given to these recordings, they automatically manifest themselves in mental and muscular activity. The bad patterns need to be deprived of their controlling power by the destruction of their ability to haplessly repeat themselves.

Will power and autosuggestion initiated by others can be useful in destroying mental bad habits. Will power can concentrate energy in the brain patterns with healing results. Autosuggestion, implanting in the subconscious mind a positive thought or imagery by concentrated repetition, is useful when one's will is paralyzed by the experience of continued mental disease. When the person to be healed receives a firm thought of healing from one trying to help him, and then makes that suggestion his own by concentration on its manifesting power, he can reinforce his own will power by the suggestion of another's strong will that he be healed. Autosuggestion, which is used in most forms of psychological healing, can revive the disease-paralyzed will—which then sends energy into the brain, effecting the removal of the destructive pattern lodged in the brain cells.

Mental bad habits will also yield their hold by association with persons who have good mental habits. The timid should associate with the brave, the sensual with those possessing self-control, the restless with those who have meditative habits. Exercise of will power translated into won't power, and staying away from the bad company and environment that feed a specific bad mental habit, can starve the life out of compulsions to behave wrongly.



Physical and mental methods of healing the body

Because the ailments of the body have psychological roots, and because the body itself is condensed thought, bodily afflictions can be treated in two ways: by physical methods and by mental methods. The different processes of physical healing stimulate to a greater or lesser degree the life force, which effects the cure. Medical procedures, medicinal drugs, herbal treatment, the various techniques of mental and spiritual therapy—all are valid methods of healing, effective to the degree that they harmonize and restore the proper flow of life energy in the body, which is the direct cause of healing.

One physical means of treating disease consists of judicious fasting to purify the body of toxins and to rejuvenate the life force. In fasting, the will reverts to dependence on Spirit and draws energy from the cosmic source, reinforcing and stimulating the healing energy in the body. In fasting one should be guided by expert advice as to the method and length of the fast. Most persons, in the absence of prohibitive medical problems, can benefit from fasting on orange juice, or other unsweetened fruit juice, one day a week or three consecutive days once a month.

The chemical properties and nutrients in fresh herbs have been shown since ancient times to be beneficial in healing by eliminating poisons and destroying bacteria in the blood. Medicines are synthesized from extracts from herbs and other sources in nature. Therefore, medicines also have healing power. Those who decry medicine and its beneficial effects on the human system should be as readily able to abandon food as well, for whoever eats food uses the medicinal or health-giving properties of those nature-made products.

But while I speak of the power of medicine derived from the God-created elements of nature, I must add that medicine in itself has not that power of healing possessed by the mind if one knows how to use that mental power. Those who put all their confidence in medicine weaken their minds and find that they have to live by dependence on medicine, just as some people I have known seem absolutely dependent on periodic operations (though in certain cases operations are necessary to remove diseased tissue to prevent it from affecting healthy tissue). But whatever mode of treatment one adopts, the mind in large measure may still determine the outcome, positive or negative. Doubt,

depression, pessimistic thoughts, lack of will, weaken the flow of healing life energies; the conscious direction of the mind's powers by positive thoughts, prayers, affirmations, visualization, will, cheerfulness, stimulates the natural healing processes of the body with the vital life force necessary to aid in restoring health. People should learn to draw more on the all-healing power of the mind, along with observance of healthful habits: proper eating, exercise, fresh air and sunshine, hygiene, physical and mental relaxation, and conscious recharging of the life force.

The primary medicine of the future will be rays, the vibratory nature of which is more compatible with the molecular atomic nature of the human body. Healing rays can reach into the atomic disorder of cells in chronic diseases. There is also much healing energy in the sun's rays, though the harmful effects of overexposure must be avoided.²

Spinal adjustments and massage are effective promoters of healing, for they release obstructed life force to carry out its function as the sure healer of physical diseases.

Yoga exercises, the postures or asanas of Hatha Yoga, are an excellent means of adjusting the spinal vertebrae to release the pressure on the spinal nerves and bring about the normal flow of life force in the nervous system, promoting healing of many diseases. The Energization Exercises in Self-Realization Fellowship Lessons are a method of exercise that directly awakens the all-healing life force for the maintenance of health and the direct healing of disease.³



Power of the mind to rouse curative life energy

The mental way of healing physical disease is made possible by stimulating the will, imagination, emotion, or reason in the ailing patient. The healer must be a person of great concentration who can exercise his own will, imagination, emotion, or reason on his patients. He must be an adept at reading character so that he can detect the true nature of his patients and treat them accordingly, stimulating will in the strong-willed patients, imagination in imaginative ones, and so forth.

An incident of healing by the power of intense emotion is recorded in the case of a person who had lost his power of speech. Seeing a sudden fire in the building he was in, he began to shout "Fire! Fire!" The subconscious disease-habit of his disability was healed in that instant by the strong emotions of shock and excitement roused by imminent danger.

Will, emotion, imagination, and reason have no healing power of themselves. They only stimulate the partially inactive life force in the physically sick individual. Most mental healers use methods of autosuggestion and reason to stimulate the imagination and will in their patients. The roused will and imagination in turn awaken the patient's torpid life force, which then cauterizes disease-making bacteria and other such physical causes, and brings about healing.

Most persons have no idea of the tremendous power of the mind; and concomitantly, that nothing can heal one if his life energy fails him. From a microscopic cell this body was made; everything in its physical structure has been created by this energy and mind. Those supreme companionate forces of healing are right within every being, empowered by the soul.

One should never ignore any mode of healing that operates any measure of divine law. But one should remember that the exercise of mental power is more effective than physical methods of healing alone; and it is best by faith and meditation to call into operation the unfailing, unlimited power of God for healing not only the body and mind but for awakening the potential omnipotence of the soul.

We are told that on the occasion at Capernaum cited in the above Bible verses,

Jesus exercised that power to heal the many who came to him. This was possible because they came with reciprocity and faith.



How a master transmits the unlimited healing power of God

The spirit of Jesus had control over cosmic energy. The faith of the sick allowed Jesus to send the all-healing energy out of his body to reinforce their weakened life force. The energy in the body of Jesus and the energy in the bodies of the persons healed both came from the cosmic energy of God. Jesus commanded his will to connect the cosmic energy with the energy in his brain and send it down through his hands in ever-flowing, potent rays to the body of the afflicted person.

Healing by sending energy through the hands, “He laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them,” is based on the healer’s ability to connect with and consciously direct the cosmic energy of God. The body lives in an omnipresent sea of this vibratory power. This energy sustains life and recharges the vitality of the body as it becomes depleted by physical and mental activity. The life of the body depends primarily upon the cosmic energy that flows in automatically through the mouth of the medulla, or is consciously drawn in by the tuning power of the human will. The energy derived directly from the cosmic ether, and energy derived indirectly from food and oxygen, becomes concentrated in the main cerebral dynamo of power in the head, whence it is poured into the entire body through the six subdynamos of the subtle centers in the spine. The supreme center in the brain and the six centers in the cerebrospinal axis send energy through the nerves to all the vital and sensory and motor parts of the body. So, from each body part—as the eyes, hands, feet, heart, navel, nose, mouth, and every projection from the body—there emanates current.

The nerve current radiating from the eyes, hands, and feet is stronger than from other parts. The right side of the body is a positive pole and the left side is a negative pole. The positive right side is stronger than the negative left. Though the power of these poles can sometimes be transposed in the physical sense, as is indicated in cases of left-handed people, the conformation of the “physiology” in the astral body remains the same.

The power of the life force transmitted outwardly for healing others is proportionate to the power of the will of the healer. Masters, such as Jesus, who have infinite control of their will, can radiate the all-creative healing ray of life through any organ, but especially through the hands, feet, or eyes. Simply laying the positive and negative poles of one’s hands on another person produces some

exchange of magnetism from the energy therein, but does not convey the potency necessary to heal. It is the consciously generated and directed power of the life force flowing through the hands that causes healing by employing the life-force activity, which creates, integrates, disintegrates, crystallizes, metabolizes, and produces and sustains the complex body of differentiated cells. This life force is intelligent but diminished and out of one's control in bodies governed by weak, ego-identified minds. In persons who have identified themselves with their souls, the intelligent creative life force in its full potential is controlled by the wisdom of the soul.



The various means used by Jesus to heal by cosmic energy

One who knows his soul knows how to work miracles through the life force, the master of life and death, by sending it through the hands in healing rays to burn out disease in any stricken person.

The verses cited above, as well as other accounts in the Gospels, relate that Jesus used various outward means of transmitting the cosmic energy: laying on of hands, divinely charged words of healing, transmission of energy by will through the ether, powerful thoughts broadcast to the one in need.

Absent healing typically involves the principle of autosuggestion. A powerful thought accompanied by vibratory energy is sent by the healer's will to the person to be healed, whose response to that vibration rouses his own latent imagination and will to release the healing life force within him. Instantaneous mental healings are caused when the healer and the person to be healed are perfectly tuned to each other. If the healer has a strong will and imaging power and the person to be healed has faith in the healer's ability to awaken his will and imagination, then the patient will be quickly healed through his own reanimated life force. The time element in healing arises when either the healer is deficient in his healing power or the person to be healed is not properly receptive to the healer's healing vibrations, because of lack of faith, karmic restrictions, or persistence in bad habits of thought and action whose negative vibrations counteract the positive healing vibrations.

The cosmic energy, and its individualized expression as life force in the body, is finer even than X-rays, and thus has the power to destroy not only physical germs but mental bacteria of evil tendencies and the bacteria of delusion's ignorance that obfuscates the perfection of the soul.

Jesus and great savants healed others in spite of their karma or bad mental habit patterns by sending the cosmic energy into the brain of the diseased patient, where all physical, mental, and spiritual ailments have their roots. The divine energy sent by a master unites with the partially inactive brain energy of the patient, and their combination burns away physical-disease bacteria, or diseased habits, or constraints of ignorance—all of which are lodged in the conscious, subconscious, or superconscious patterns in the brain.⁴

This divine way of healing was used by Jesus the Christ to heal possessed souls or the lame or the blind. Only masters have sufficient divine will force to use the cosmic energy, if they have God's permission, to materialize renewed body parts in the affected individual, thereby curing disabled limbs or restoring sight instantaneously. The powerful energy transmitted by a Christlike soul into the brain of a psychologically diseased individual has a similarly direct effect in burning out bad karma and entrenched harmful mental tendencies. God-realized gurus thereby free their receptive disciples from habits of ignorance that have hounded them for many incarnations.

When Jesus healed a person who was possessed, he did it by two ways. First, his consciousness being in tune with the Christ Intelligence in all creation, he used the Christ Will, which governs the astral forces and entities, to compel the unclean spirit to leave the body of the diseased individual. Second, he used his will power to send the cosmic energy into the brain of the possessed individual and destroy there the obsessions caused by the unclean spirit, as well as the karmic and habit patterns that made the person prone to possession.

In the present verses under consideration, it is related that when Jesus exorcised the devils from many, they came out crying, "Thou art Christ, the Son of God.' And he rebuking them suffered them not to speak." Since all things of the astral world are hidden according to the will of God, concealing the dynamics of the mysterious workings of material creation, Jesus did not want himself to be revealed except in the natural human way by the declaration of his works in fulfillment of the words of the prophets.



Choosing the appropriate mode of healing for individual circumstances

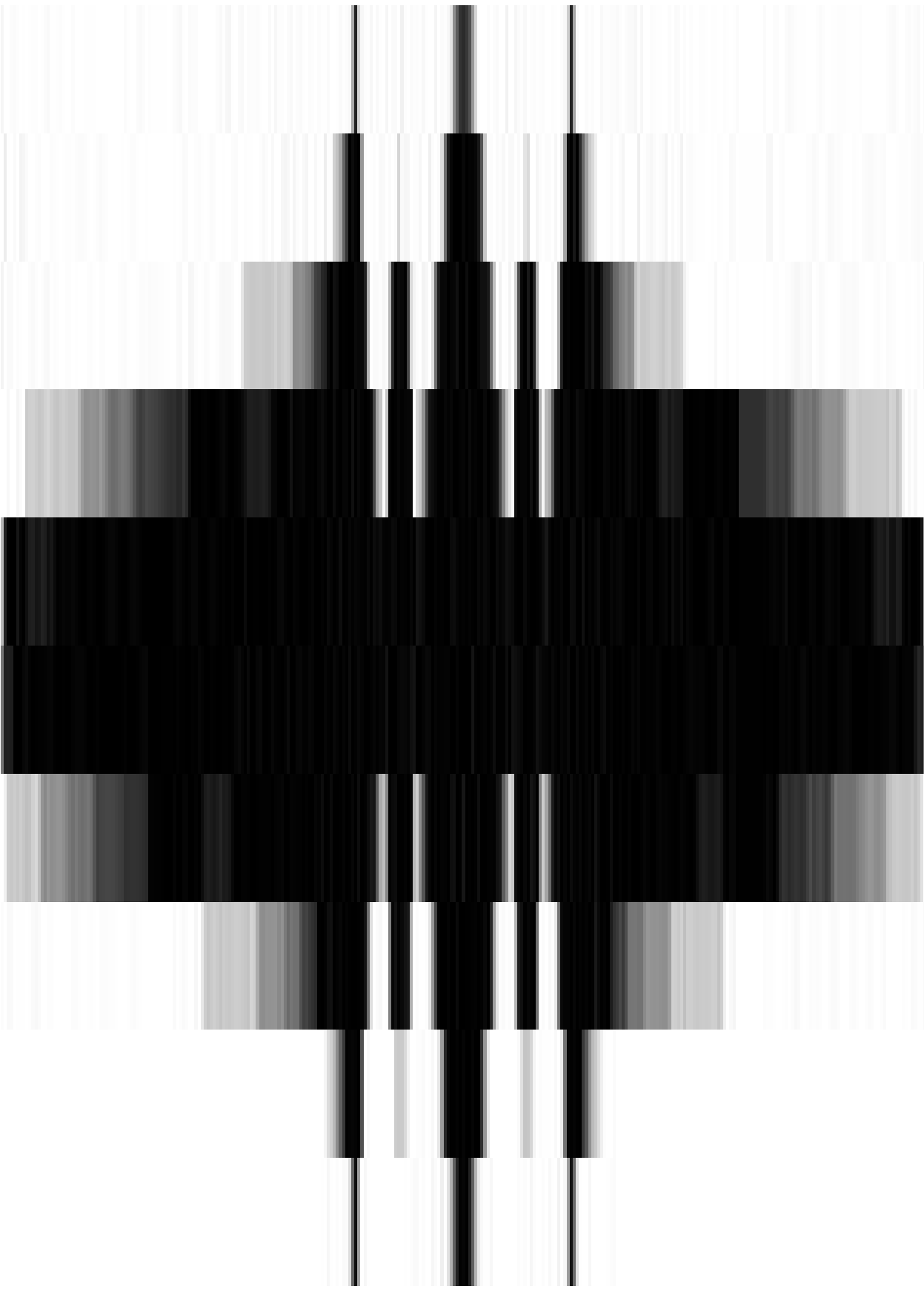
In even a cursory review of the science of various forms of healing, it is evident that the basis of every formula is the vibratory power of the life force supported by the receptivity of the person to be healed. Positive-minded confidence in the effectiveness of the remedy stimulates the healing life force. Therefore, methods of mental or physical healing should be administered to people according to their mental inclinations and mental habits. Jesus said, “Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s”—that is, in adaptation, those who believe in medical healing, let them go to the medical doctors; those who believe in healing by the methods of osteopaths or homeopaths or other “natural” remedies, let them use such methods; those who believe in mental healers, let them go to the mental healers. But above all, no matter what one’s health practices, the most important belief must be in the unlimited healing power of God and the intercession of masters who are one with God.

Jesus, being in touch with God and His all-healing, all-creative Cosmic Energy, could change the atomic structure of any diseased part of the body into a healthy atomic configuration. Ordinary healers who have no such command over the creative forces would be wise not to take onto themselves the full responsibility of handling cases of severe illness that would prudently benefit from the expertise of the material science of medical doctors. Such medical intervention should not be thought of as a negation, but rather an enhancement, of the effectiveness of continually applied mental and spiritual methods of promoting healing. Those more malleable conditions that have a psychological basis—such as nervous or emotional disorders, mild obsessions, bad habits—as well as common physical ailments that merely require an arousal or reinforcement of weakened life force, most readily respond to the healer’s and patient’s use of suggestion, divine will force, and invocation of God’s power. God created the physical laws of science as well as the underlying subtler divine laws. Belief in and application of one does not necessarily contradict the other so long as one’s faith inheres in the Creator Himself.

Only God has unlimited power of healing. Man’s power may fail, but God’s power can never fail. Yet even though our Father does not want to see us suffer from disease, He cannot heal us until we open the gates of our willingness to be healed: By misusing our God-given free choice, we shut God out of our lives; by

using it properly, we allow Him to become manifest within us. To be sure of God's healing power, one must know Him, one must feel Him deeply, in meditation daily. He is not some unfeeling Cosmic Power that one can switch on and off at one's convenience or need—with expectation of instant blessings in times of dark distress, but to which one can remain blithely oblivious in the bright contentment of good fortune. One who does not feel the need for God in the most trifling as well as significant happenings in one's life has yet to realize the indispensable connection between man and his Maker. To misuse free choice in actions that cause forgetfulness of Him is the uttermost woeful affliction of ignorance.

So, if one by deep devotion and meditation constantly tunes himself with God and with unflinching faith goes on asking the Father's help in spite of the invasion of undesirable doubts or contrary evidence, he will certainly find the desired result. But often one who lacks the concentration to tune in with the seeming intangibility of God can find quicker healing by tuning in with those saints and masters who are already united to God. As they give all their devotion to God, so also God gives to them His unlimited power for healing of body, mind, and soul. Devotees who seek to be healed of ignorance, the root cause of all maladies, should adhere steadfastly to faith in their true God-sent guru and his guidance and intercession on their behalf.



Egotism: a pitfall to be avoided in practice of spiritual healing

Jesus used only the divine power of healing; and he gave to God all the credit for those miraculous cures, for he did not feel within himself the “I” or ego-consciousness born of the identification of the soul with the physical body. Even when Jesus said, “I say unto you, arise”—become healed—he spoke not of the “I” of the ego, but of the unlimited God-consciousness with which his soul was united. Unless the soul divests itself of the “I am” ego-consciousness, by the divine intuitional consciousness of interiorized meditation, one remains ineptly disunited from Spirit. When an ordinary person says, “I will do this,” the “I” refers to his body-identified ego-consciousness. He cannot differentiate himself from his physical form, and hardly feels the deeper consciousness of his soul. But when Jesus referred to the “I” within him, he always meant his soul-consciousness united with God-consciousness.

No matter how effective one’s powers of healing, they are limited as compared to the infinite healing power of God. Hence, instead of merely commanding one’s own healing powers, one should set himself apart from the ego and invoke the unlimited divine power of God to flow through himself as a clear channel. In the practice of healing oneself or others, one should be sure of divine communion, and then completely absorb oneself in God preceding the attempted performance of every healing. A divine healing can take place only when the healer serves as a perfect medium through which God’s omnipotence can flow without obstruction. Egotism and loud declaration, and self-laudation, such as, “I healed her,” or “God is working through me,” should be strictly avoided both in speech and mind. Let the all-knowing God declare His power in the self-evident healing.

Even a sincere devotee, if not truly one with God by Self-realization, can have traces of ego hiding in him undetected when he puts himself forward as a healing instrument and says to the sick, “Be healed by God’s power.” But the superman, having transcended all separating egotism in actual God-union, speaks from perfect humility even when he declares, “I say unto thee, arise and be healed.” Here “I” signifies the “God alone” which the realized saint feels within himself.



How masters take on the bad karma of suffering individuals

The words of Isaiah's prophecy about Jesus cite an important expression of grace in divine healing: "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." Powerful healers, such as Jesus, can only wipe away the effects of evil karma in an individual according to the principles involved in the workings of the law of cause and effect. If anyone, through wrong eating, for example, is carrying a load of poison in his body, he can take a counteracting medicine to create a new cause with an effect that can destroy the virulence in the system. So Jesus, with his powerful consciousness, could by various means counteract the adverse effects of past wrongs acquired by and accumulated in erring persons. But no one, not even a Jesus, can break the law of cause and effect created by God. Nature's judgments must be compensated in kind or by a fair exchange. Certain mechanics of the law of karma can be manipulated by the wisdom of a master, and also by corrective or palliative measures taken by the afflicted—such as prayer, intense love for God, faith, yoga meditation, conscious direction of the life force by will power—to minimize or nullify adverse effects of past wrong actions. In extreme cases of deep-seated karma; or in response to the devotional faith and receptivity of a supplicant; or to hasten the spiritual evolution of a disciple, a master can take onto himself a karmic condition of a devotee, or a portion of it, and work out the effects on his own body.

Thus Jesus could stop the impending result of an evil action by astrally taking the consequences of that action upon himself, thereby sparing the person guilty of the transgression. To illustrate the principle in simple terms, suppose a frail man named John angered a more robust acquaintance, who then raised his hand to beat John; but I suddenly came between John and the well-directed blow, sparing John the hurt. I, being stronger, might be affected to a far lesser degree, or not at all, by the fistic display.

So, also, when wrong actions have condemned a person to suffer, according to the law of cause and effect, a powerful soul such as Jesus could deflect the havoc and work it out by spending its force within himself. Some saints have been known to take into their own bodies the actual diseases of afflicted persons, and thus cause the sufferers to be relieved. This does not mean that one has to suffer in order to cure by spiritual law. Only extraordinary Christlike healers and masters know the sacred method by which they can take on the physical, mental,

or spiritual sufferings of others and work them out in their own bodies. The purpose of a world savior or guru is to heal humanity of its threefold ills. Their bodily instrument having already fulfilled its purpose of expressing God-realization is then used for the sake of redeeming others by whatever means are most advantageous for the devotee.

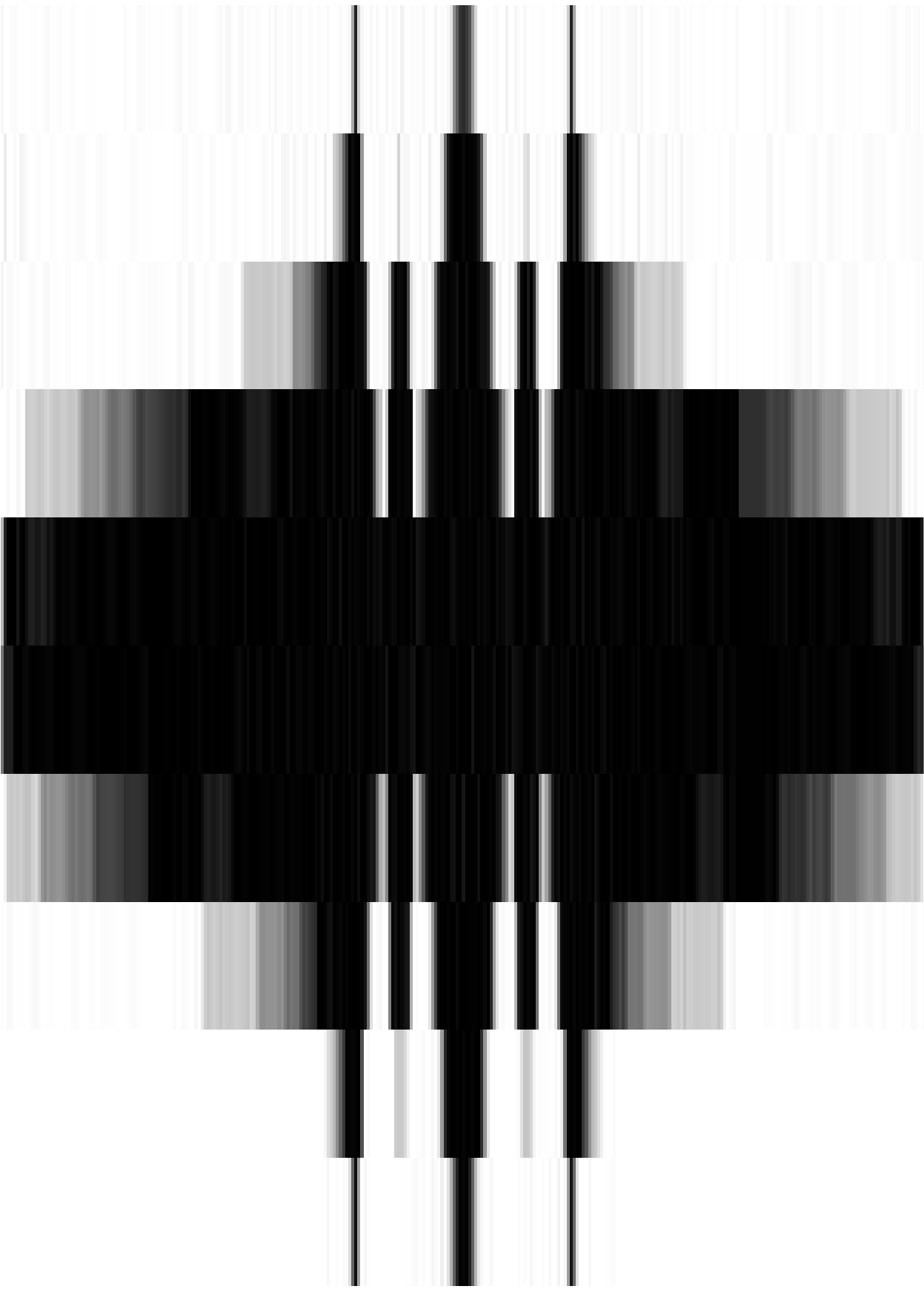
This is why it is said of Jesus that he gave himself as a ransom for many. He took upon himself the sins of his disciples, and many other souls, and let his body be crucified. He had the power to save himself by prayer to God: "...and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels. But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?"⁵ Especially by his taking on the consequences of his disciples' karma through his sacrifice, they were highly spiritualized to be able to receive the Holy Ghost that later descended on them, baptizing them with the divine consciousness and attunement to carry on and spread the mission of Jesus. Whether in the body or in omnipresent Spirit, the redeeming grace of a world savior or God-realized guru remains the same, obliging every humble entreaty of a receptive heart.

No matter what one's ailment or blessing of cure, the only way all undesirable karma can be permanently destroyed is by God-contact. The body is impermanent; even though it be granted a pardon from sickness, it must in its full season perish. The mind is pliant and can by a strong will be inured to many of the assaults of its environment; yet it too remains susceptible to the fallibilities of delusion. The ultimate healing that must be sought is freedom from the contagious disease of spiritual ignorance, the enervation of soul-expression, which is at the root of all other ills. If one removes by meditation and God-contact the disease of ignorance constraining the soul, then automatically mental and physical karmic compulsions lose their hold as well. In the kingdom of God-consciousness, the authoritative power of karmic law—which operates only as a corrective guiding force in the presence of delusion—serves no further purpose and is dissolved in Wisdom. Thus did Jesus admonish: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God (destroy delusion) and all else (the consummation of all man's prayers, including for healing of the body, mind, and soul) will be added unto you (as your divine birthright as a child of God)."



And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed. And Simon and they that were with him followed after him. And when they had found him, they said unto him, “All men seek for thee” (Mark 1:35 – 37).⁶

Even great masters seek times of solitude to renew themselves in Spirit. Though the omnipotence of the soul cannot be diminished, the bodily instrument of Jesus was heavily taxed by the multitudes—just as an electrical machine shows fatigue if run nonstop though its power from the dynamo is not lessened. The crowds drew from Jesus healing energy and spiritual strength; and as he moved among them he was in a sea of the vibrations of their worries and human emotions. He became one with them in their pains and sorrows as he uplifted them. So we see from the Gospels it was his wont to withdraw periodically into solitude and prayer—to leave behind for the moment the troublesome realm of transgressions and consequences and enter the transcendent inner blissful kingdom of God-communion.



Making time for God in silence and solitude

In this present account, Jesus arose before the morning brought upon him the press of his responsibilities, and sought out a solitary place for prayer. This is the way people in general should learn to outwit the demands that would steal all of one's attention from prayer and meditation. There is a time to be given to everything needful. People regularly eat their meals at certain hours each day to nourish the perishable body. They work many hours daily to make money to maintain themselves and others who are dependent upon them. In childhood, the "working" hours are spent in schooling to nourish the mind and prepare it for assuming life's responsibilities. Six to eight hours are passed in the restorative oblivion of sleep. What precious moments of the day survive unclaimed should be wisely apportioned. The right mental education should give each individual at least the common sense to know what methods to adopt in order to perform uniformly all the physical, mental, and spiritual duties calculated to bring real happiness. That mind-set is fruitless which makes an individual one-sided, either materially, intellectually, or spiritually. The performance of one duty should not starve out other important duties. One-sidedness is a sure formula for unhappiness. It will create a painful paucity in other aspects of one's threefold nature.

God is often the last to receive attention on one's daily agenda: "As soon as I get time, I will meditate." Where does that time go? Yet anyone who performs the highest duty of knowing God is automatically guided in accordance with God's will in the performance of the roster of other lesser duties. It is disastrous to seek prosperity at the cost of health or to seek health while entirely neglecting to strive to be successful and prosperous. But since God is the source of all power, it is right to seek Him first, for, with God, health and prosperity are added; but with the acquirement of health and prosperity alone, God is not attained. So the commitment of ardent renunciants to seek God first by forsaking material goals is the consummate life; for God, once attained, enriches one with imperishable life and eternal opulence.

Whatever be one's vocation in life, one needs to feel his connection with God. The cultivation of a spiritual life requires solitary places for divine communion. God can be felt easily in inspiring scenic surroundings free from noise. Man's mind is usually busy with the sensations of sight, sound, touch, smell, and taste.

Sound is the most distracting sensation. The sight of material objects or material activities also snares man's attention. But by closing the eyes, one can quickly get rid of the sight sensation, whereas freedom from sound sensations can best be attained by being in a quiet place. The novice devotee who attempts to meditate in noisy surroundings finds his time of "silence" entirely taken up in battling the restless thoughts the noises arouse. In a quiet atmosphere, one can go deep into the silence without any preliminary skirmish with the sensations of sounds. However, if a person makes a super effort of will, he can concentrate in spite of such distraction.

In noisy places there are also people to interrupt one's meditative endeavors. The vibrations of their restless thoughts and activities pass through the body of the meditating individual and keep his energy rushing toward the senses instead of being released to flow toward God. While it is very helpful to the beginner to meditate on quiet occasions and in solitary places, this does not mean that one should not meditate unless one has a chance to travel to a place of solitude. A room in one's home where nobody will disturb the meditation period is all that is really necessary. One should repair to that room and create his own inner quietness by deep meditation on the Infinite. Once God is contacted, no outward disturbance can bother the soul.

There is a proper time and proper place for performing one's different duties. Just as sleep takes place at night in a quiet bedroom, as business is carried on during working hours in an atmosphere of business, and as intellectual studies are carried on in scheduled times in the halls of learning or in a quiet library, so, there should be a proper time and place for meditation, or God-communion. Whatever be one's sanctuary of solitude, he will find it especially beneficial to pray and meditate any time during the following periods: from the earliest hour of dawn, from

5

to

8

a.m.; noontime from

10

a.m. to

1

p.m.; evening from

5

to

8

p.m.; and nighttime from

10

p.m. to

1

a.m. The masters of India have taught that the hours surrounding the transitional times of dawn, noon, sunset, and midnight of each solar day are conducive to the cultivation of spiritual development. The magnetic cosmic laws of attraction and repulsion that affect the body are more harmoniously equilibrated during the above four periods. This helps a meditating individual to interiorize himself in divine communion. To meditate in the quietness of the early mornings and at night is to meditate in a solitary place. During those times, most people are asleep, and the city, or one's surroundings, are quiet. The results of peace realized from meditation are easily obtained due to less noise and wrong vibrations of restless people.

On holidays and in leisure moments, instead of wasting time with senseless diversions and worldly people, the devotee-seeker enjoys time with God—taking a refreshing walk to a quiet lonely place to meditate, for example. Jesus lived in a temperate climate, conducive to his choice of outdoor solitude in nature during the early morning hours.

When the disciples found Jesus in his solitude, they called him forth: "All men seek for thee." Just as the fragrance of flowers draws the bees, so souls such as Jesus who are fragrant with God automatically draw spiritually thirsty souls unto

themselves.



And he said unto them, "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth."

And he preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out devils (Mark 1:38 – 39).

Parallel reference:

And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.

And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them.

And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan (Matthew 4:23 – 25).⁷

Jesus could not confine his preaching to one locale only. In the short span of his mission on earth, he went from place to place within the domain of the Israelites, so designated by God as the birth center of his special dispensation ⁸—to draw true souls from the crowds. His precious time could not be given to the superficial appeasing of the multitudes only. Real souls are rare and hard to find,

and it was in them he could plant the seeds of his future continuing harvest. His message was universal; his teachings were destined to spread among all spiritually needy peoples, irrespective of caste, creed, or race. He came from the Spirit to give his message to all children of the Spirit. That is what he meant by: "Therefore came I forth."



Healing the Sick

Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them.

—**Luke 4:40**

Healing by sending energy through the hands is based on the healer's ability to connect with and consciously direct the cosmic energy of God. The body lives in an omnipresent sea of this vibratory power...One who knows his soul knows how to work miracles through the life force, the master of life and death, by sending it through the hands in healing rays to burn out disease in any stricken person.

Wondrous was the love and compassion of Jesus as he journeyed through the busy cities and villages teaching in the synagogues the gospel, God's vibratory truth, and giving forth of his divine power to heal all manner of suffering. His universal heart felt for the multitude....

—**Paramahansa Yogananda**

Drawing by Heinrich Hofmann

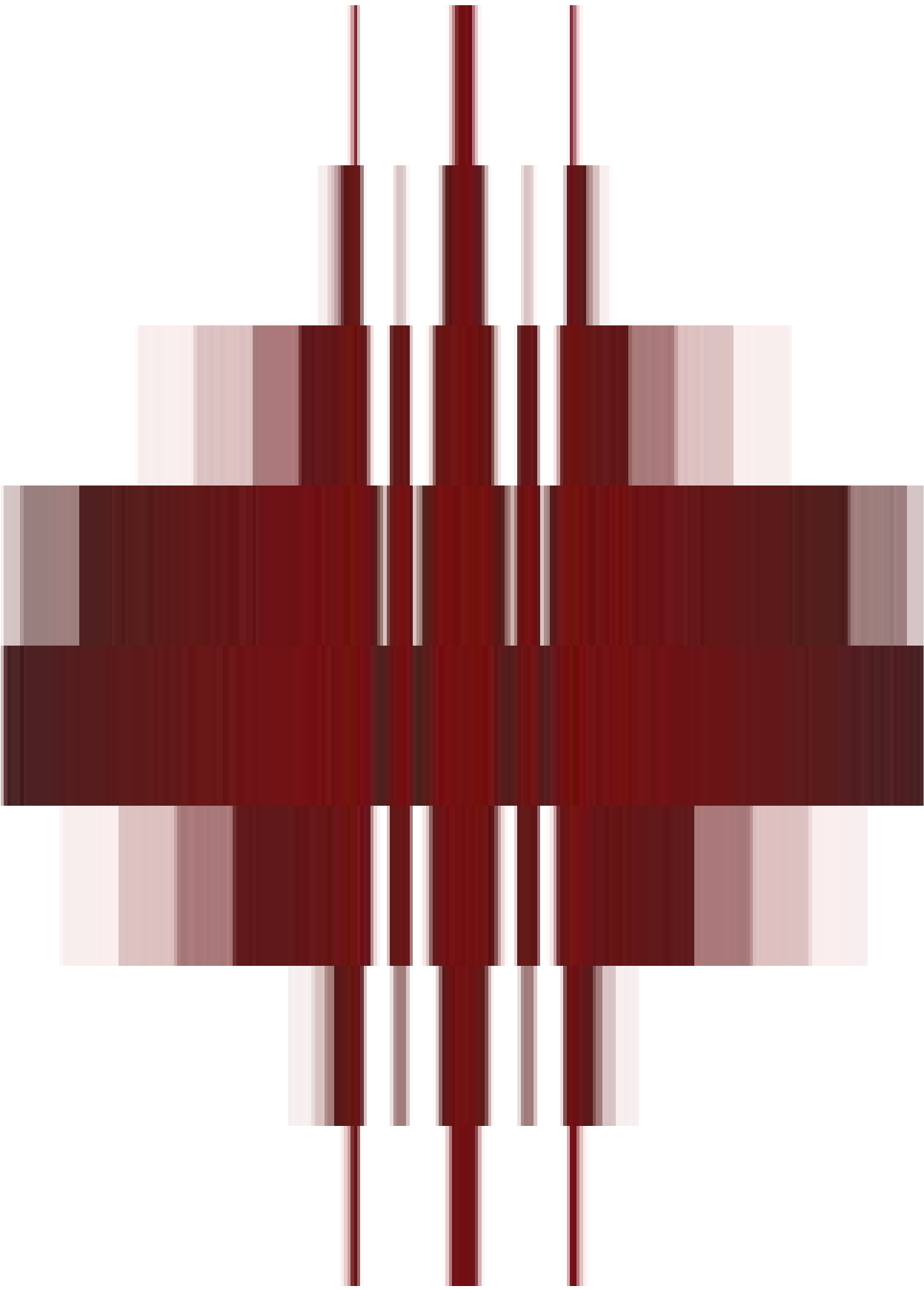




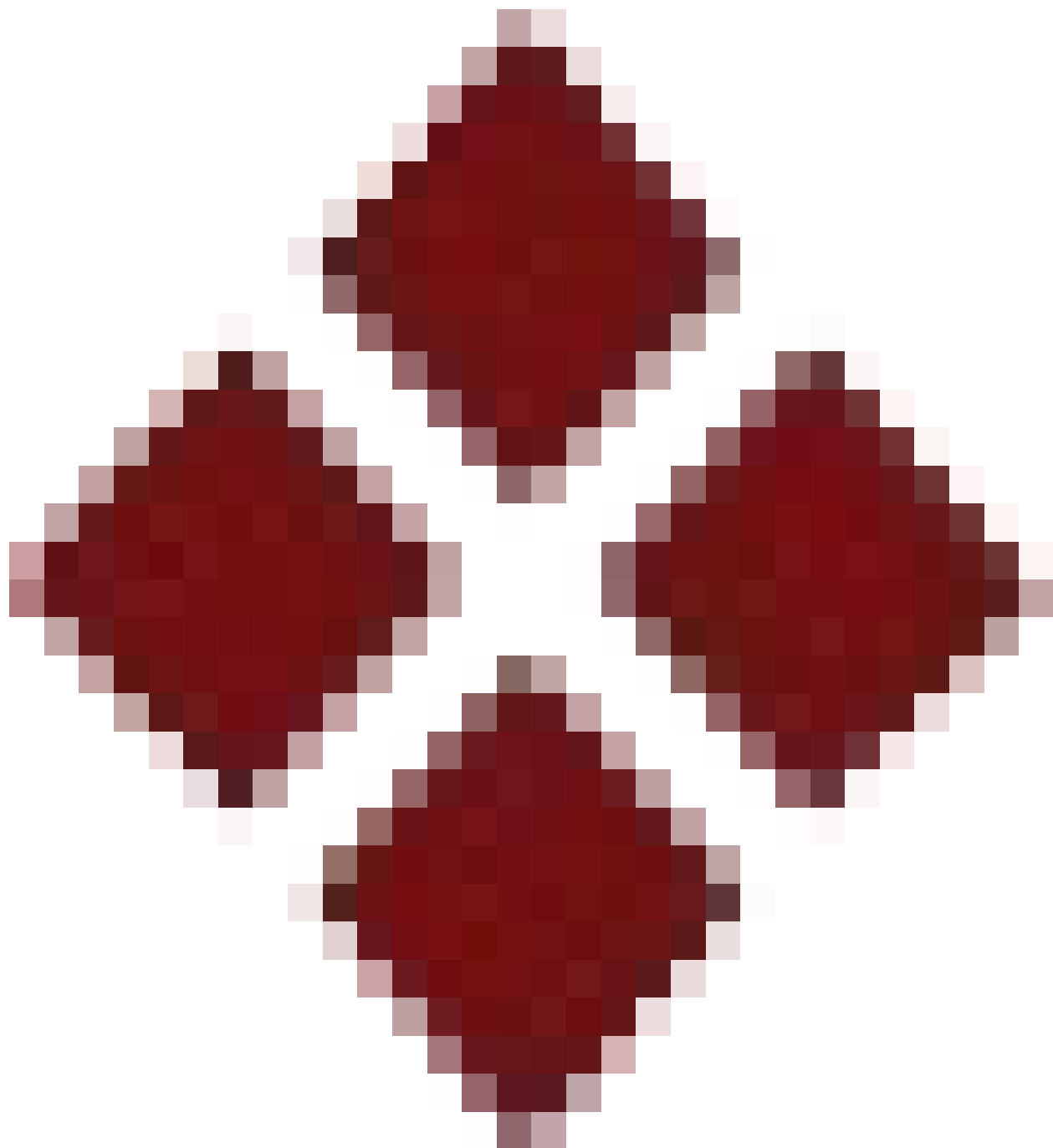
Discourse 26

The Beatitudes

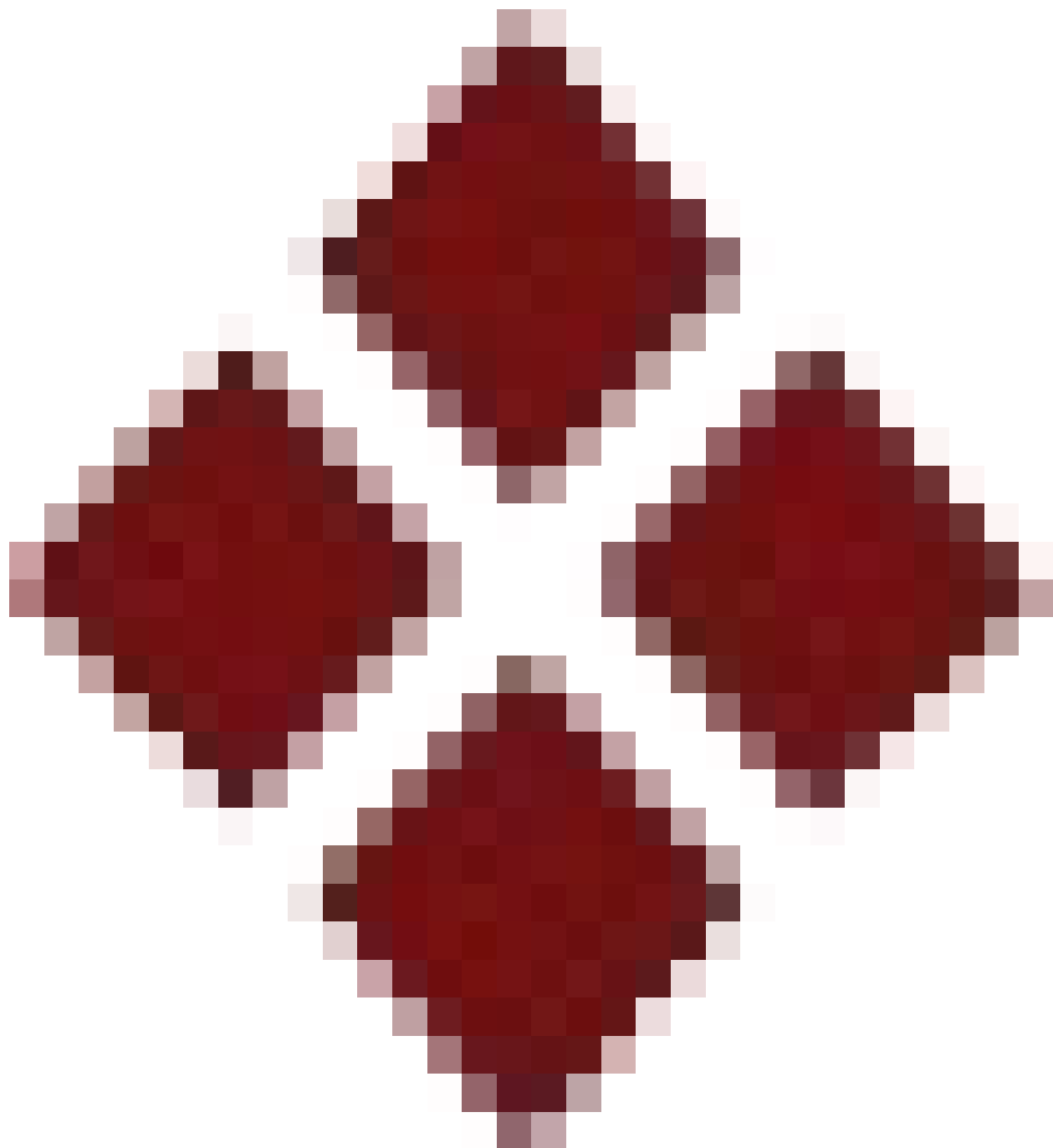
The Sermon on the Mount, Part I



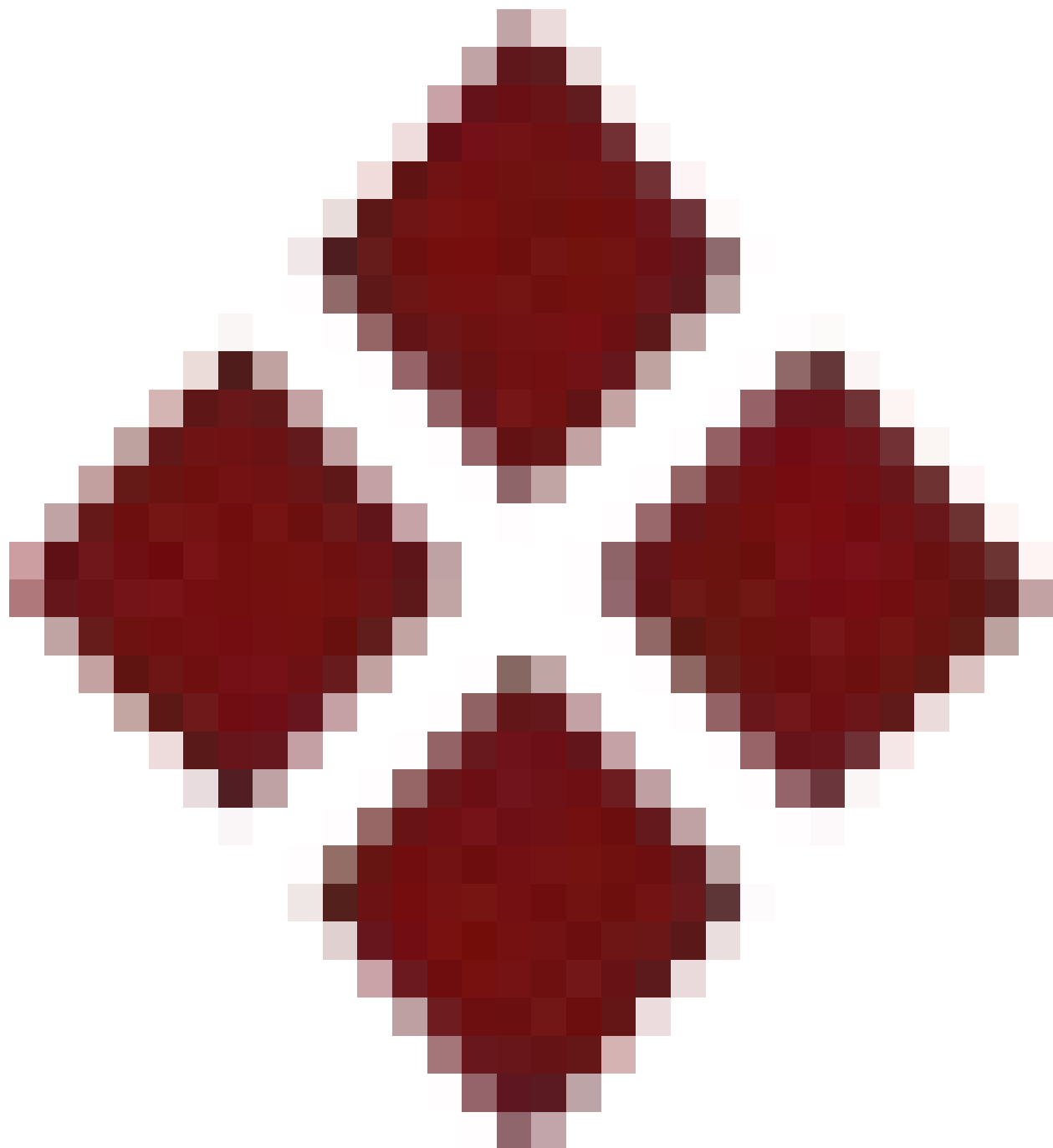
**The Bliss Known to Those Who Are Free From
Material Attachment**



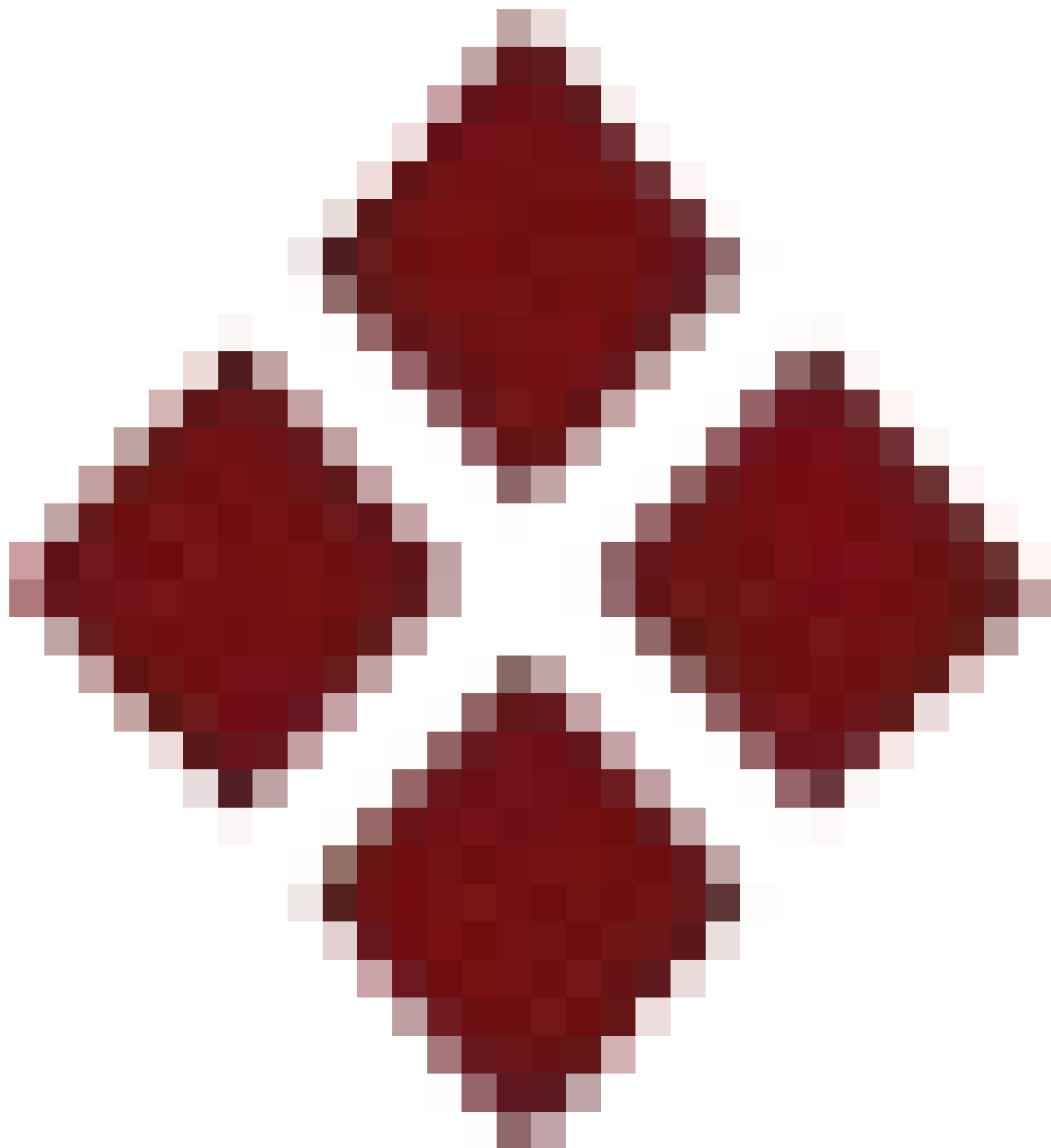
Satisfying One's Inner Hunger for Truth



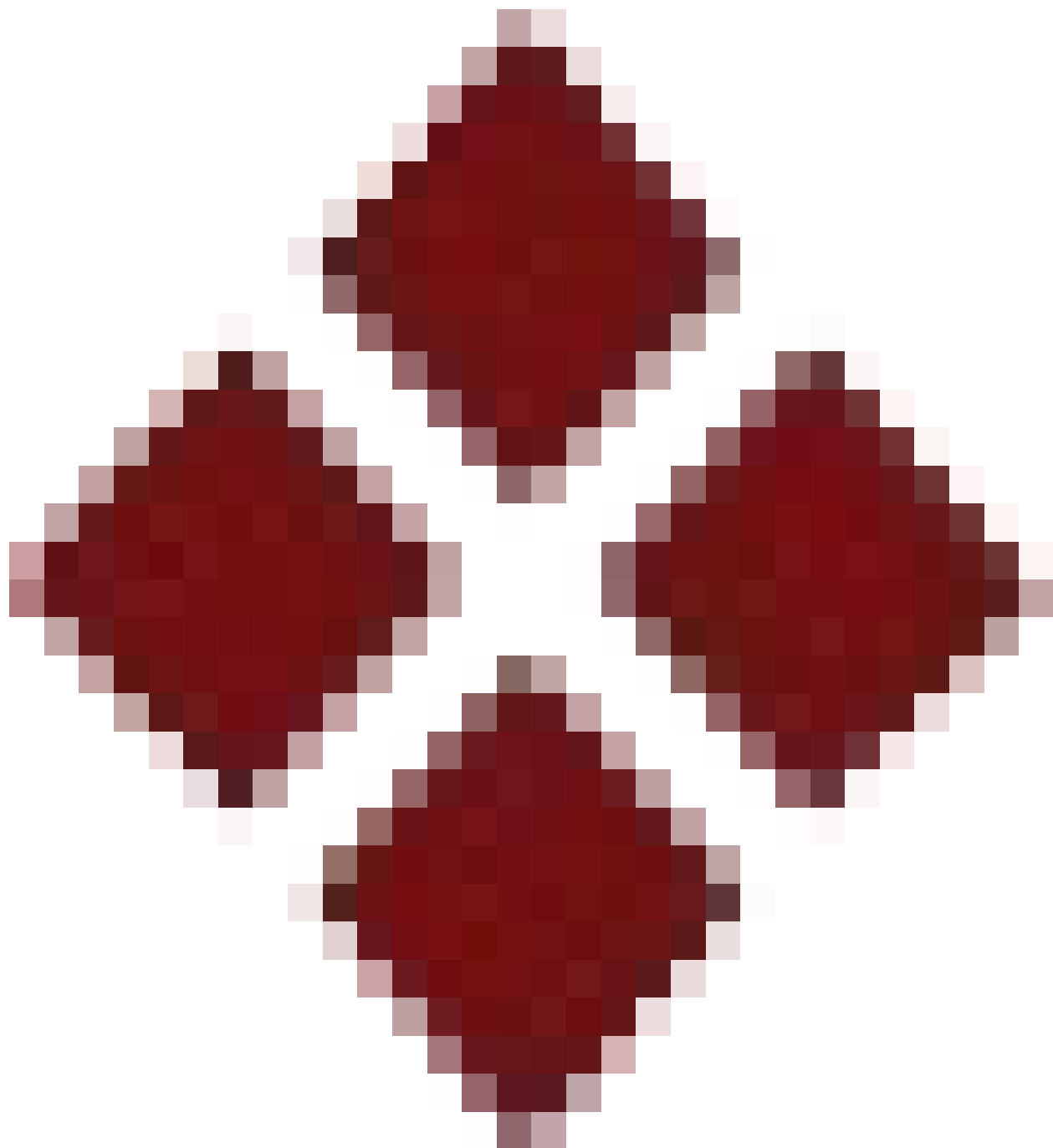
Jesus the Merciful Expressed the True Nature of God



Yoga: Purifying the Inner Being for God-Perception



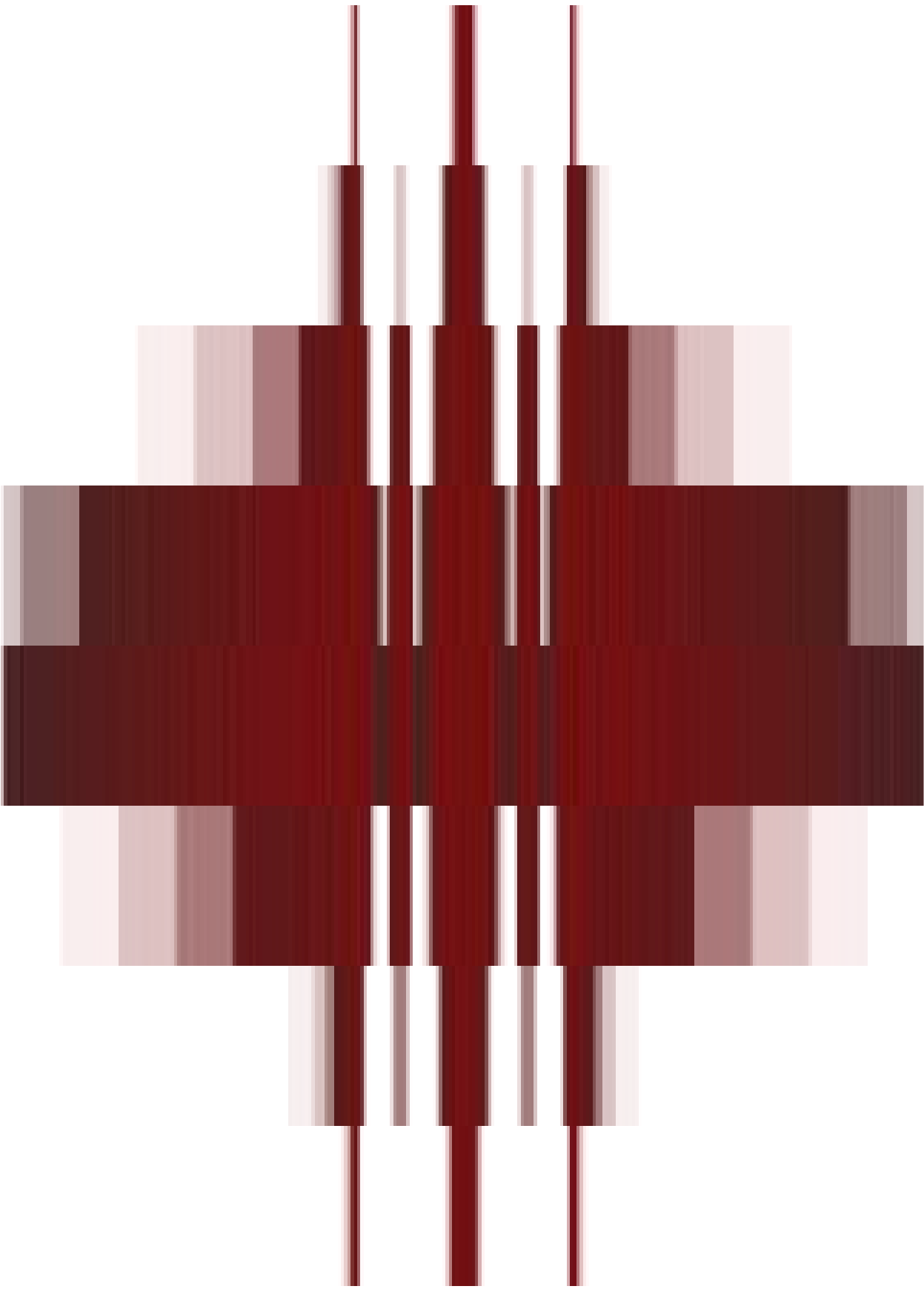
**The Real “Peacemaker”: One Who Meditates and
Follows the Christ-Method of Living**



**The Kingdom of Joy Earned by Those Who Live and
Die in Right Behavior**



**Spiritual Persons Are “the Salt of the Earth” and
“Light of the World”**



“Beatitude signifies the blessedness, the bliss, of heaven. Jesus here sets forth with power and simplicity...tenets by which man’s life becomes blessed, filled with heavenly bliss.”

■

And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

“Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

“Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

“Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

“Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

“Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

“Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

“Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

“Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and

glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

—Matthew 5:1 – 16



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Discourse 26

The Beatitudes

The Sermon on the Mount, Part I (With References From the Sermon on the Plain)



And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him (Matthew 5:1).

In a vast unmanageable throng, there is very little opportunity for a personal exchange of spiritual magnetism between a master and his disciples. Therefore, on many occasions Jesus avoided the multitudes to give his full attention to receptive disciples to whom he could impart his spirituality. He preferred the company of even one sincerely seeking soul to soul-indifferent crowds of the merely curious.



And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:2 – 3).

Parallel reference:

And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, “Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God” (Luke 6:20, Sermon on the Plain).

During his teaching, Jesus let loose, through his voice as well as through his eyes, his divine life force and godly vibration to spread over the disciples, making them calmly attuned and magnetized, able to receive through their intuitional understanding of the full measure of his wisdom.

The lyric verses of Jesus that begin “Blessed are...” have become known as The Beatitudes. To beatify is to make supremely happy; beatitude signifies the blessedness, the bliss, of heaven.² Jesus here sets forth with power and simplicity a doctrine of moral and spiritual principles that has echoed undiminished down the ages—tenets by which man’s life becomes blessed, filled with heavenly bliss.



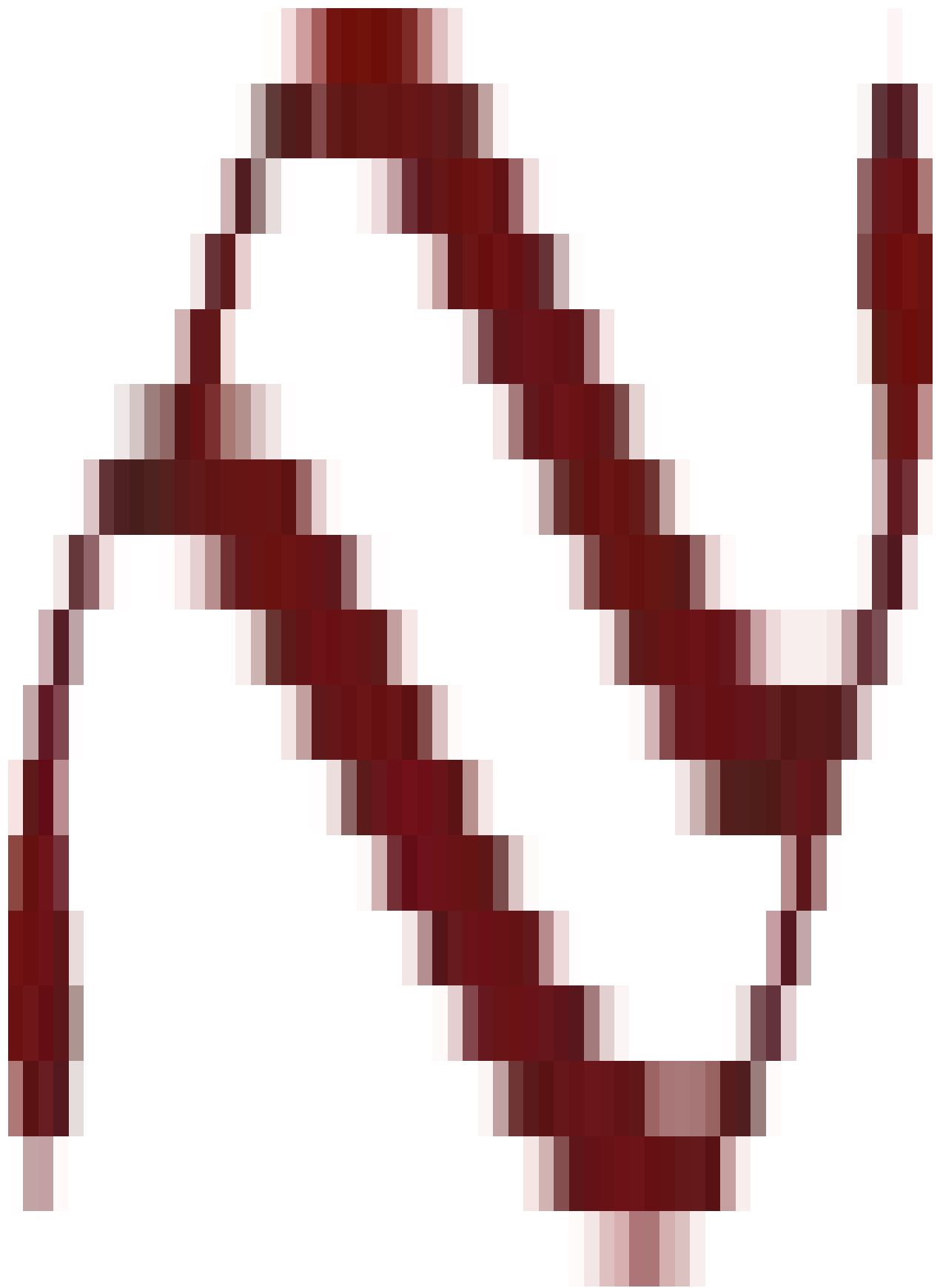
The bliss known to those who are free from material attachment

The word “poor” as used in the first Beatitude signifies wanting in any outer superficial elegance of spiritual wealth. Those who possess true spirituality never make an ostentatious display of it; they rather express quite naturally a humble paucity of ego and its vainglorious trappings. To be “poor in spirit” is to have divested one’s inner being, his spirit, of desire for and attachment to material objects, earthly possessions, materially minded friends, selfish human love. Through this purification of inward renunciation, the soul finds that it has ever possessed all riches of the Eternal Kingdom of Wisdom and Bliss, and thenceforth dwells therein in constant communion with God and His saints.

Poverty “in spirit” does not imply that one should necessarily be a pauper, lest deprivation of basic bodily necessities distract one’s mind from God. But it certainly means that one should not settle for material acquisitions instead of spiritual opulence. Persons who are materially rich may be poor in inner spiritual development if wealth gorges their senses; while those who are materially “poor” by choice—who have simplified the outer conditions of their life to make time for God—will garner spiritual riches and fulfillment that no treasury of gold could ever buy.

Thus Jesus commended those souls who are poor in spirit, wholly nonattached to personal worldly goals and fortune in deference to seeking God and serving others: “Ye are blessed for your poverty. It will open the gates to the kingdom of all-sufficient God, who will relieve you from material as well as spiritual want throughout eternity. Blessed are you who are in want and seek Him who alone can relieve your deficiencies forever!”

When the spirit of man mentally renounces desire for objects of this world, knowing them to be illusory, perishable, misleading, and unbecoming to the soul, he begins to find true joy in acquiring permanently satisfying soul qualities. In humbly leading a life of outer simplicity and inner renunciation, steeped in the soul’s heavenly bliss and wisdom, the devotee ultimately inherits the lost kingdom of immortal blessedness.



“Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted” (Matthew 5:4).

Parallel reference:

“Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh” (Luke 6:21, Sermon on the Plain).



The blessing brought by insatiable yearning for the Divine

The pangs of sorrow suffered by the ordinary person arise from mourning the loss of human love or material possessions, or the nonfulfillment of earthly hopes. Jesus was not extolling this negative state of mind, which eclipses psychological happiness and is utterly detrimental to the retention of spiritual bliss obtained by arduous efforts in meditation. He was speaking of that divine melancholy resulting from the awakening consciousness of separation from God, which creates in the soul an insatiable yearning to be reunited with the Eternal Beloved. Those who really mourn for God, who wail incessantly for Him with ever-increasing zeal in meditation, shall find comfort in the revelation of Wisdom-Bliss sent to them by God. ³

The spiritually negligent children of God endure life's painful traumas with resentful, defeatist resignation instead of effectively soliciting Divine Aid. It is the adorably naughty baby, crying continuously for spiritual knowledge, who at last attracts the response of the Divine Mother. To Her persistent child, the Merciful Mother comes with Her solace of wisdom and love, revealed through intuition or by a glimpse of Her own Presence. No surrogate consolation can assuage instantaneously the bereavement of unnumbered incarnations.

Those whose spiritual mourning is appeased by material fulfillments will find themselves grieving again when those fragile securities are snatched away by the exigencies of life or by death. But those who weep for Truth and God, refusing to be quieted by any lesser offering, will be forever comforted in the arms of Blissful Divinity.

“Blessed are you who cry for God-realization now, for by that single-minded yearning you shall attain. With the entertainment of ever new joy found in divine communion, you shall laugh and rejoice throughout eternity!”



“Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth” (Matthew 5:5).

Humbleness and meekness create in man a bottomless receptacle of reciprocity to hold Truth. A proud irascible individual, like the proverbial rolling stone, rolls down the hill of ignorance and gathers no moss of wisdom, while meek souls at peace in the valley of eager mental readiness gather waters of wisdom, flowing from sources human and divine, to nourish their flowering vale of soul qualities.

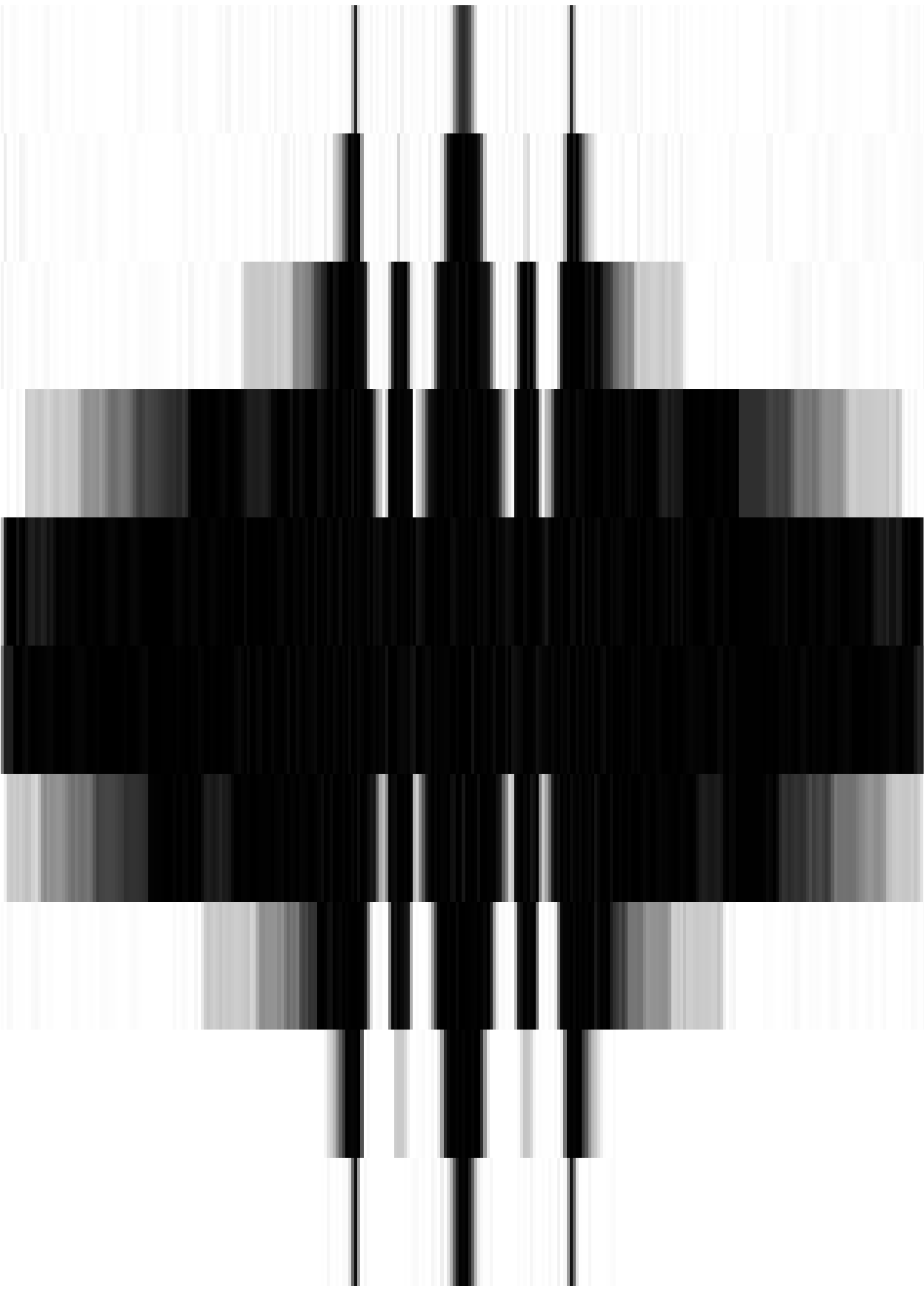
The imperious egotist is easily riled, defensive, and resentfully offensive, repelling emissaries of wisdom who seek entry into the castle of his life; but the meek and humbly receptive attract the unseen assistance of beneficent angels of cosmic forces proffering material, mental, and spiritual well-being. Thus do the meek of spirit inherit not only all wisdom, but the earth, that is, earthly happiness, along with it.⁴



“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled” (Matthew 5:6).

Parallel reference:

“Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled” (Luke 6:21, Sermon on the Plain).



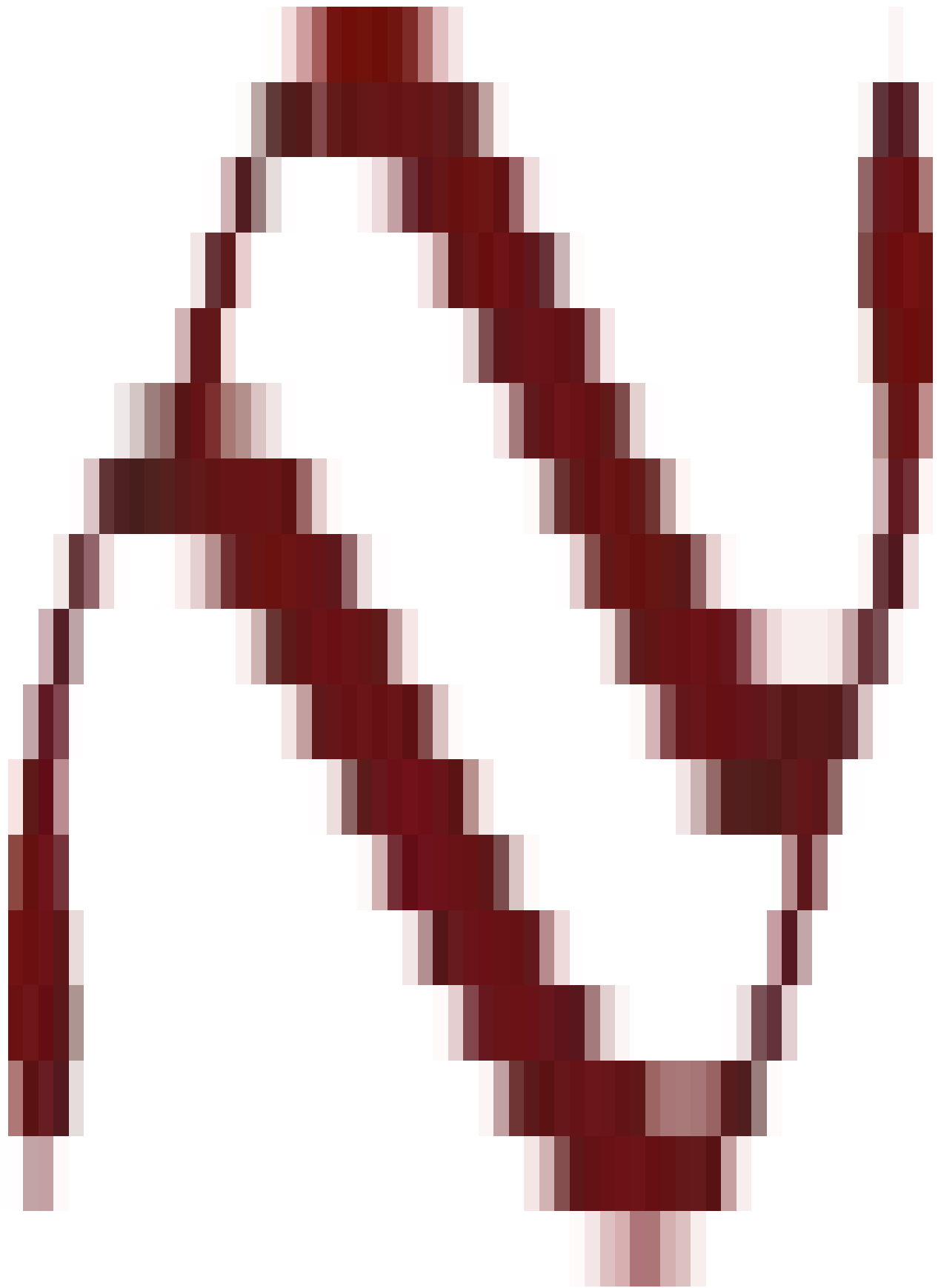
Satisfying one's inner hunger for Truth

The words “thirst” and “hunger” provide an apt metaphor for man's spiritual quest. One must first have thirst for the theoretical knowledge of how to attain salvation. After he quenches this thirst by learning the practical technique of actually contacting God, he can then satisfy his inner hunger for Truth by feasting daily on the divine manna of spiritual perception resulting from meditation.

Those who seek appeasement in material things find that their thirst of desires is never slaked, nor is their hunger ever satisfied in the acquirement of possessions. The urge in every man to fill an inner emptiness is the soul's desire for God. It can only be alleviated by realizing one's immortality and imperishable state of divinity in God-union. When man foolishly tries to quench his soul thirst with the substitutes of sense happiness, he gropes from one evanescent pleasure to another, ultimately rejecting them all as inadequate.

Sense pleasures are of the body and lower mind; they bring no nourishment to man's inmost being. Spiritual starvation, suffered by all who would subsist on sense offerings, is allayed only by righteousness—the actions, attitudes, and attributes that are right for the soul: virtue, spiritual behavior, bliss, immortality.

Righteousness means acting rightly in the physical, mental, and spiritual departments of life. Persons who feel a great thirst and hunger for fulfilling the supreme duties of life receive the ever new bliss of God: “Blessed are you who thirst for wisdom and who esteem virtue and righteousness as the real food to appease your inner hunger, for you shall have that lasting happiness brought only by adhering to divine ideals—unparalleled satisfaction of heart and soul.”



“Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy” (Matthew 5:7).



Jesus the merciful expressed the true nature of God

Mercy is a sort of fatherly heartache for the deficiency in an erring child. It is an intrinsic quality of the Divine Nature. The life story of Jesus is replete with accounts of mercy sublimely manifest in his actions and personality. In perfected divine sons of God, we see revealed the hidden transcendent Father as He is. The God of Moses is depicted as a God of wrath (though I do not believe Moses, who spoke to God “face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend,”⁵ ever thought of God as the vengeful tyrant portrayed in the Old Testament). But the God of Jesus was so gentle. It was that gentleness and mercy of the Father that Jesus expressed when, instead of judging and destroying the enemies who would crucify him, he asked of the Father to forgive them, “for they know not what they do.” With the patient heart of God, Jesus looked upon humanity as little children who did not understand. If a wee child picks up a knife and strikes you, you do not want to kill that child in retaliation. It does not realize what it has done. When one looks upon humanity as a loving father looks after his children, and is ready to suffer for them that they might receive a little of the sunshine and power of his spirit, then one becomes Christlike: God in action.

The wise alone can be really merciful, for with divine insight they perceive even wrongdoers as souls—God’s children who deserve sympathy, forgiveness, help, and guidance when they go astray. Mercy implies the capacity for being helpful; only developed or qualified souls are capable of being practically and mercifully useful. Mercy expresses itself in usefulness when the fatherly heartache tempers the rigidity of exacting judgment and offers not only forgiveness but actual spiritual help in eliminating the error in an individual.

The morally weak but willing-to-be-good, the sinner (he who transgresses against his own happiness by flouting divine laws), the physically decrepit, the mentally impaired, the spiritually ignorant—all need merciful help from souls whose inner development qualifies them to render understanding aid. Jesus’ words exhort the devotee: “To receive divine mercy, be merciful to yourself by making yourself spiritually qualified, and be merciful also to other deluded children of God. Persons who continuously develop themselves in every way, and who mercifully feel and alleviate the lack of all-round development in others, surely will melt the heart of God and obtain for themselves His unending and matchlessly helpful mercy.”



“Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God” (Matthew 5:8).

The consummate religious experience is direct perception of God, for which the purification of the heart is requisite. On this, all scriptures agree. The Bhagavad Gita, India's immortal scripture of yoga, the science of religion and God-union, speaks of the blessedness and divine perception of one who has attained this inner purification:

The yogi who has completely calmed the mind and controlled the passions and freed them from all impurities, and who is one with Spirit—verily, he has attained supreme blessedness.

With the soul united to Spirit by yoga, with a vision of equality for all things, the yogi beholds his Self (Spirit-united) in all creatures and all creatures in the Spirit.

He who perceives Me everywhere and beholds everything in Me never loses sight of Me, nor do I ever lose sight of him.⁶



Yoga: purifying the inner being for God-perception

Since ancient times, the rishis of India have scrutinized the very core of truth and detailed its practical relevance to man. Patanjali, the renowned sage of the yoga science, begins his Yoga Sutras by declaring: *Yoga chitta vritti nirodha*—“Yoga (scientific union with God) is the neutralization of the modifications of chitta (the inner ‘heart’ or power of feeling; a comprehensive term for the aggregate of mind-stuff that produces intelligent consciousness).” Both reason and feeling are derived from this inner faculty of intelligent consciousness.

My revered guru, Swami Sri Yukteswar, one of the first in modern times to reveal the unity of Christ’s teachings with India’s Sanatana Dharma, wrote profoundly about how man’s spiritual evolution consists of the purification of the heart. From the state in which consciousness is completely deluded by *maya* (“the dark heart”), man progresses through the successive states of the propelled heart, the steady heart, the devoted heart, and ultimately attains the clean heart, in which, Sri Yukteswarji writes, he “becomes able to comprehend the Spiritual Light, Brahma [Spirit], the Real Substance in the universe.”⁷

God is perceived with the sight of the soul. Every soul in its native state is omniscient, beholding God or Truth directly through intuition. Pure reason and pure feeling are both intuitive; but when reason is circumscribed by the intellectuality of the sense-bound mind, and feeling devolves into egoistic emotion, these instrumentalities of the soul produce distorted perceptions.

Restoration of the lost clarity of divine sight is the purport of this Beatitude. The blessedness known to the perfectly pure of heart is none other than that referred to in St. John’s Gospel: “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.” To every devotee who receives and reflects the omnipresent Light Divine, or Christ Consciousness, through a purified transparency of heart and mind, God gives power to reclaim the bliss of divine sonhood, even as did Jesus.

Transparency to Truth is cultivated by freeing the consciousness, the heart’s feeling and the mind’s reason, from the dualistic influences of attraction and aversion. Reality cannot be accurately reflected in a consciousness ruffled by likes and dislikes, with their restless passions and desires, and the roiling

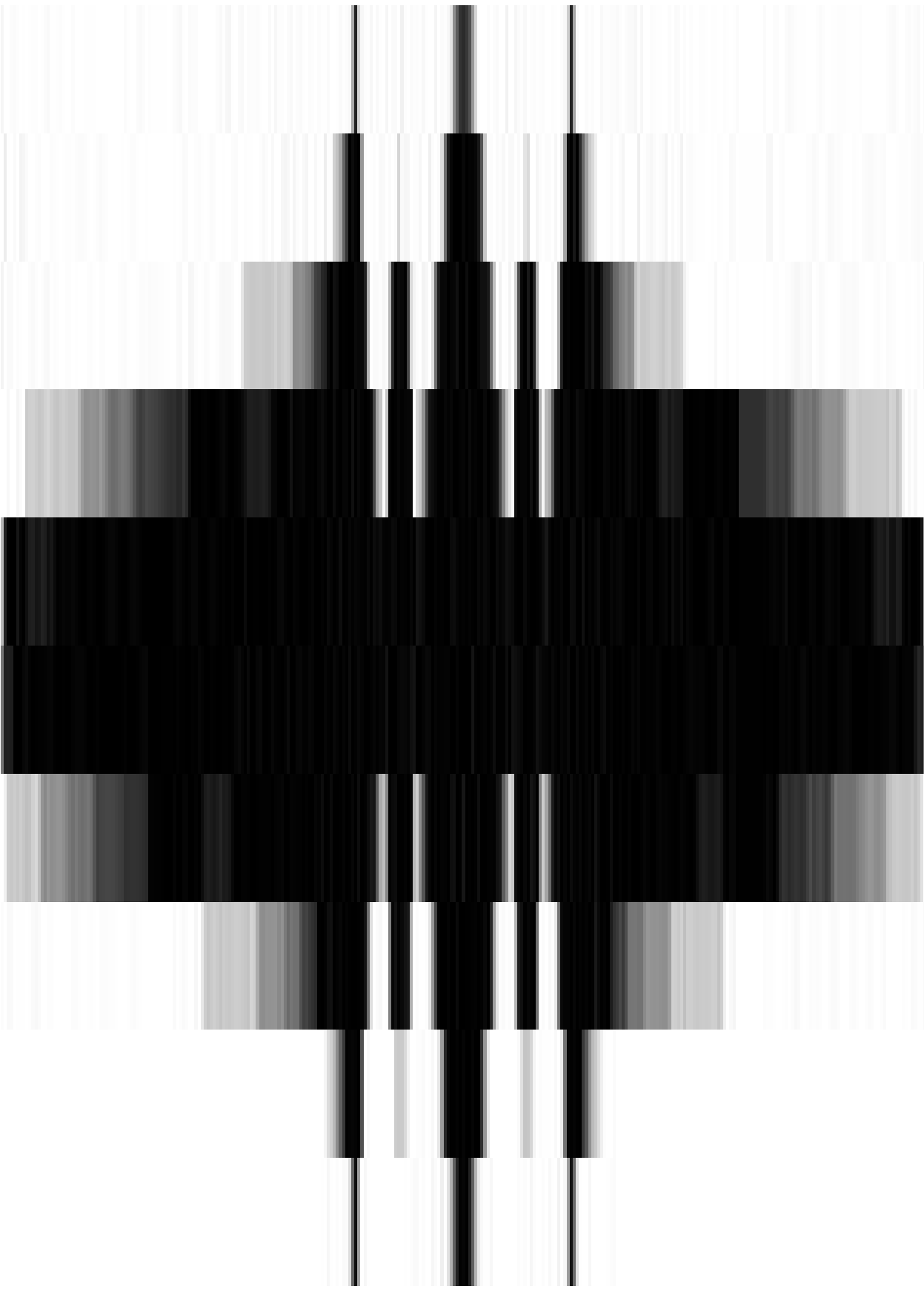
emotions they engender—anger, jealousy, greed, moody sensitivity. But when chitta—human knowing and feeling—is calmed by meditation, the ordinarily agitated ego gives way to the blessed calmness of soul perception.⁸

Purity of the intellect gives one the power of correct reasoning, but purity of the heart gives one the contact of God. Intellectuality is a quality of the power of reason, and wisdom is the liberating quality of the soul. When reason is purified by calm discrimination it metamorphoses into wisdom. Pure wisdom and the divine understanding of a pure heart are the two sides of the same faculty. Indeed, the purity of heart, or feeling, referred to by Jesus depends on the guidance of all action by discriminative wisdom—the adjusting of human attitudes and behavior by the sacred soul qualities of love, mercy, service, self-control, self-discipline, conscience, and intuition. The pure-eyed vision of wisdom must be combined with the untainted feeling of the heart. Wisdom reveals the righteous path, and the cleansed heart desires and loves to follow that path. All wisdom-revealed soul qualities must be followed wholeheartedly (not merely intellectually or theoretically).

Ordinary man's occluded vision cognizes the gross shells of matter but is blind to the all-pervading Spirit. By the perfect blending of pure discrimination and pure feeling, the penetrating eye of all-revealing intuition is opened, and the devotee gains the true perception of God as present in one's soul and omnipresent in all beings—the Divine Indweller whose nature is a harmonic blend of infinite wisdom and infinite love.



*“Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God”
(Matthew 5:9).*



The real “peacemaker”: one who meditates and follows the Christ-method of living

They are the real peacemakers who generate peace from their devotional practice of daily meditation. Peace is the first manifestation of God’s response in meditation. Those who know God as Peace in the inner temple of silence, and who worship that Peace-God therein, are by this relationship of divine communion His true children.

Having felt the nature of God as inner peace, devotees want the Peace-God to be always manifest in their home, in the neighborhood, in the nation, among all nationalities and races. Anyone who brings peace to an inharmonious family has established God there. Anyone who removes the misunderstanding between souls has united them in God’s peace. Anyone who, forsaking national greed and selfishness, works to create peace amidst warring nations, is establishing God in the heart of those nations. The initiators and facilitators of peace manifest the unifying Christ-love that identifies a soul as a child of God.

“Son of God” consciousness makes one feel love for all beings. Those who are God’s true children cannot feel any difference between an Indian, American, or any other nationality or race. For a little while immortal souls are garbed in white, black, brown, red, or olive-colored bodies. Are people looked upon as variously foreign when they wear different colored clothes? No matter what one’s nationality or the color of his body, all of God’s children are souls. The Father recognizes no man-made designations; He loves all, and His children must learn to live in that same consciousness. When man confines his identity to his clannish human nature, it gives rise to unending evils and the specter of war.

Human beings have been given potentially limitless power, to prove that they are indeed the children of God. In such technologies as the atomic bomb we see that unless man uses his powers rightly, he will destroy himself. The Lord could incinerate this earth in a second if He lost patience with His erring children, but He doesn’t. And as He would never misuse His omnipotence, so we, being made in His image, must also behave like gods and conquer hearts with the power of love, or humanity as we know it will surely perish. Man’s power to make war is increasing; so must his ability to make peace. The best deterrent against the threat of war is brotherhood, the realization that as God’s children we are one

family.

Anyone who stirs up strife among brother nations under the guise of patriotism is a traitor to his divine family—a faithless child of God. Anyone who keeps family members, neighbors, or friends fighting through fostering falsehoods and gossip, or who is in any way a maker of disturbance, is a desecrator of God’s temple of harmony.

Christ and the great ones have given the recipe for peace within and among individuals and nations. How long man has lived in the darkness of misunderstanding and ignorance of those ideals. The true Christ-method of living can banish human conflicts and the horror of war and bring about peace and understanding on earth; all prejudices and enmities must fall away. That is the challenge placed before those who would be the peacemakers of God.



“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:10).



The kingdom of joy earned by those who live and die in right behavior

The bliss of God will visit those souls who endure with equanimity the torture of the unjust criticism of so-called friends, as well as enemies, for doing what is right, and who remain uninfluenced by wrong customs or society's harmful habits. A devotee of righteousness will not bend to social pressure to drink just because he happens to be at a gathering where cocktails are served, even when others mock him for nonparticipation in their pleasure. Moral rectitude brings short-term ridicule but long-term rejoicing, for persistence in self-control yields bliss and perfection. An eternal kingdom of heavenly joy, to enjoy in this life and the beyond, is earned by those who live and die in right behavior.

Worldly people who prefer sensory indulgences to God-contact are truly the foolish ones, because by ignoring what is right, and therefore good for them, they will have to reap the consequences. The righteous devotee pursues that which is beneficial for him in the highest sense. One who relinquishes the desultory ways of the world and cheerfully stands the scorn of shortsighted friends for his idealism demonstrates that he is fit for the unending bliss of God.

The above verse also offers encouragement to those who are persecuted and tortured by sensory temptations and bad habits when they have resolved to cling to moral ideals and spiritual practices. They are righteous indeed, following the right way of self-control and meditation, which will in time defeat temptations and win the kingdom of eternal joy for the victorious.

No matter how powerful temptations are, or how strong bad habits, they can be resisted with the wisdom-guided power of self-control and by holding to the conviction that no matter what pleasure is promised by temptation, it will always give sorrow in the end. The irresolute inevitably become hypocrites, justifying wrong behavior while succumbing to the wiles of temptation. The honey of God, though sealed in mystery, is what the soul truly craves. Those who meditate with undaunted patience and persistence break the mystery seal, and uninhibitedly imbibe the heavenly nectar of immortality.

Heaven is that state of transcendental, omnipresent joy where no sorrows ever dare to tread. By steadfast righteousness, the devotee will ultimately reach that beatific bliss from which there is no fall. Vacillating devotees, not fixed in

meditation, can slip from this supernal happiness; but those who are resolute gain that blessedness permanently. The kingdom of Cosmic Consciousness is owned by the King of Heavenly Bliss, and by the elevated souls who are merged in Him. Hence it is said of devotees who unite their ego with God, becoming one with the King of the Universe: "Theirs is the kingdom of heaven."



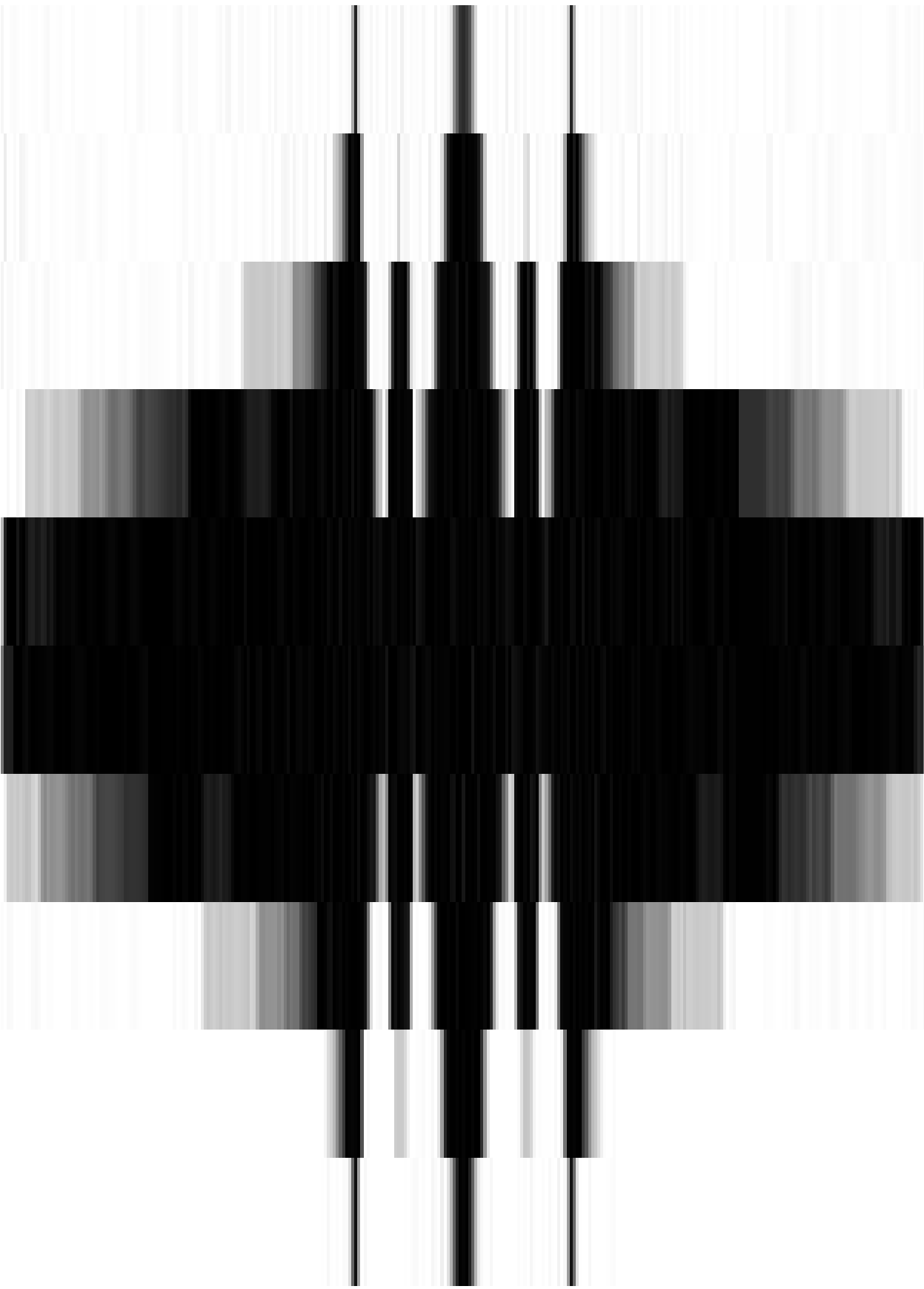
“Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

“Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you” (Matthew 5:11 – 12).

Parallel reference:

“Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man’s sake.

“Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets” (Luke 6:22 – 23, Sermon on the Plain).



Be steadfast and evenminded in the face of worldly misunderstanding

The foregoing verses do not require one to conscript a band of revilers to make one fit for the kingdom of heaven. In spite of one's best efforts for good in the world and in oneself, the barbs of persecutors will never be absent, as Jesus well knew. The ornery nature of the ego makes the undisciplined man uncomfortable and mean-spirited toward those who are morally or spiritually different from himself. The goadings of satanic divisive delusion keep the self-appointed critic ever scanning for reasons to malign others. Jesus encouraged his followers not to be dismayed or intimidated if in trying to live spiritually they find that materially minded persons do not understand. Those who can pass through the test of scorn cheerfully, and without yielding to wrong ways in order to "fit in," will gain the happiness that results from clinging to virtuous bliss-yielding habits.

It should be considered no great loss when the reproachers and haters and defamers "shall separate you from their company." Actually, persons who are thus shunned are blessed that by such ostracism their souls are kept away from the bad influence of the company of nonunderstanding, misbehaving persons.

The spiritually dedicated should never become despondent, no matter how people speak evil against them or vilify their good name in declarations of wrongdoing. Blessed are those whose name is denigrated for not cooperating with worldly or evil ways, for their names shall be engraved in the silently admiring heart of God.

The Bhagavad Gita similarly expresses the Lord's regard for such devotees: "He who is tranquil before friend and foe alike, and in encountering adoration and insult, and during the experiences of warmth and chill and of pleasure and suffering; who has relinquished attachment, regarding blame and praise in the same light; who is quiet and easily contented, not attached to domesticity, and of calm disposition and devotional—that person is dear to Me."⁹

One must follow what one knows to be right, in spite of criticism. Everyone should honestly, without egotistical bias, analyze himself; and if he is right, he should hold to his joy-producing righteous actions uninfluenced by either praise or blame. But if one is wrong, he should be glad of the opportunity to correct himself and thus remove one more obstacle to lasting happiness. Even unjust

criticism will make the disciple purer than ever and enthrone him all the more to follow the ways of inner peace instead of yielding to temptations urged by bad company.

It is in the company of God that one remains blessed. One has to find time for Him in the peace of meditation. Why waste all of one's leisure hours in frequenting the movies or watching television, or in other idle pastimes? In cultivating and adhering to divine habits, the devotee finds true impetus to rejoice in his inner contentment and in knowing he will ultimately inherit the kingdom of eternal fulfillment.

The devotee who is denounced for holding to spiritual ways should not flatter himself that being persecuted for God's sake means he is doing the Lord some great favor. "To be persecuted for my sake" or "for the Son of man's sake," signifies being chastised for holding to those practices the devotee has undertaken at the behest of his Christlike guru for the sake of acquiring attunement with God.

Jesus spoke to his disciples and followers as their God-sent guru or savior: "Blessed are you when for following the Son of man (the Christlike guru-preceptor, the representative of God) you are criticized and belittled for preferring to walk in the light of his God-tuned wisdom instead of stumbling with the masses along worldly paths of darkness and ignorance."

To be hated, ostracized, reproached, or cast out is in itself no cause for blessing if one is morally or spiritually degenerate; but when despite persecution the devotee clings to truth as manifested in the life and teachings of a Christlike guru, then he will be free in everlasting blessedness. "Rejoice ye in that day, and feel the uplifting holy vibration of ever new joy; for behold, those who will toil and labor and accept pain to follow the divine way will be rewarded in heaven with eternal bliss.

"Those who persecute you are a continuity of the successive generations of those who persecuted the prophets. Think to what great evil those forefathers came, and consider what reward in heaven the prophets received from God for bearing the persecution from ignorant persons for His name's sake. Holding on to spiritual principles, even if one has to lose his body as did the martyrs of yore, brings the reward of divine inheritance of God's kingdom of Everlasting Exultation."



Finding the “reward” of heaven even while on earth

“Great is your reward in heaven” signifies the state of eternal bliss felt in stabilizing the divine contact of God experienced in meditation: One who performs elevating good actions on earth will, according to the law of karma, reap the fruits of those deeds either in the inner heaven on earth while living, or in the supernal heavenly realms after death.

One’s store of good karma and spiritual tenacity determines one’s heavenly reward in life or in the afterlife. Advanced souls, those who by meditation are able to experience the ever-newly joyous state of Self-realization, and who can remain constantly in that inner heavenly bliss where God dwells, carry with them a portable heaven wherever they go. The astral sun of the spiritual eye begins to reveal to their consciousness the astral heaven wherein reside, in graduated spheres, virtuous souls and saints, liberated beings and angels. Gradually, the light of the spiritual eye opens its portals, drawing the consciousness into progressively higher spheres of heaven: the omnipresent golden aura of the Holy Ghost Cosmic Vibration in which are enfolded the mysteries of the finer forces that inform all regions of vibratory existence (wherein is found the “pearly gate” or entryway into the astral heaven through its pearl-like rainbow-hued firmament, or boundary wall¹⁰); the Christ Heaven of God’s reflected Consciousness shining His intelligence on the vibratory realm of creation; and the ultimate heaven of Cosmic Consciousness, the everlasting, immutably blissful transcendental Kingdom of God.

Only those souls who can keep their consciousness fixed in the spiritual eye during earthly existence, even during trials and persecutions, will in this life or the afterlife enter the blissful states of the higher regions of heaven where the most extraordinary advanced souls dwell in the delightful proximity of God’s all-freeing presence.

Though Jesus cites especially the great reward accruing to advanced souls, even a lesser measure of blissful God-communion will bring a commensurate heavenly reward. Those who make some progress and then compromise their spiritual ideals or give up meditating, because they feel inwardly persecuted by the effort required or are outwardly discouraged by worldly influences or by the criticism of relatives, neighbors, or so-called friends, lose the contact of

heavenly bliss. But those who are divinely stalwart not only retain the bliss they acquire by meditation but are doubly rewarded, finding their stability giving rise to ever greater fulfillment. This is the psychological heavenly reward resulting from applying the law of habit: Anyone who becomes fixed in inner bliss by meditation will be rewarded with ever-increasing joy that will remain with him even when he leaves this earthly plane.



Celestial bliss and beauty of the astral realm

The heavenly state of meditative bliss felt in this life is a foretaste of the ever new joy felt in the immortalized soul in the after-death state. The soul carries that joy into the sublime astral regions of celestial beauty, where lifetronic blossoms unfold their rainbow petals in the garden of ether, and where the climate, atmosphere, food, and inhabitants are made of different vibrations of multihued light—a kingdom of refined manifestations more in harmony with the essence of the soul than are the crudities of the earth.

Righteous people who resist temptation on earth, but who do not totally free themselves from delusion, are rewarded after death with a rejuvenating rest in this astral heaven among the many half-angels and half-redeemed souls who carry on a life that is exceedingly superior to that on earth. There they enjoy the results of their good astral karma for a karmically predetermined span; after which time, their remaining earthly karma pulls them back into reincarnation in a physical body. Their “great reward” in the astral heaven enables them to manifest desired conditions at will, dealing entirely with vibrations and energy, not with the fixed properties of solids, liquids, and gaseous substances encountered during the earthly sojourn. In the astral heaven, all furnishings, properties, climatic conditions, and transportation are subject to the astral beings’ will power, which can materialize, manipulate, and dematerialize the lifetronic substance of that finer world according to preference.

Completely redeemed souls harbor no mortal desires in their hearts when they leave the shores of the earth. These souls become permanently fixed as pillars in the mansion of Cosmic Consciousness, and never again reincarnate on the earth plane,¹¹ unless they do so willingly in order to bring earthbound souls back to God.



The godly traits extolled by Jesus as the way to beatitude

Such are God's prophets: souls who are anchored in Truth and return to earth at the command of God to lead others to spiritual ways by their exemplary conduct and message of salvation. The spiritual state of a prophet or savior is one of complete union with God, which qualifies him to declare God in the mysterious spiritual way. They are usually extraordinary reformers who show to mankind extraordinary spiritual examples. They demonstrate the power and superior influence of love over hate, wisdom over ignorance, even if it means martyrdom. They refuse to give up their truths no matter the degree of physical or mental persecution, dishonor, or false accusations; and just as steadfastly, they refuse to hate their persecutors or to use the expediency of revenge to quell their enemies. They demonstrate and retain the restraint and forbearance of God's all-forgiving love, being themselves sheltered in that Infinite Grace.

In all the great ones—those who come on earth to show to humanity the way to everlasting blessedness or bliss consciousness—are found the godly traits extolled by Jesus as the way to beatitude. In the Bhagavad Gita, Sri Krishna enumerates comprehensively these requisite soul qualities that distinguish the divine man:

(The sage is marked by) humility, lack of hypocrisy, harmlessness, forgivingness, uprightness, service to the guru, purity of mind and body, steadfastness, self-control;

Indifference to sense objects, absence of egotism, understanding of the pain and evils (inherent in mortal life): birth, illness, old age, and death;

Nonattachment, nonidentification of the Self with such as one's children, wife, and home; constant equal-mindedness in desirable and undesirable circumstances;

Unswerving devotion to Me by the yoga of nonseparativeness, resort to solitary places, avoidance of the company of worldly men;

Perseverance in Self-knowledge; and meditative perception of the object of all learning—the true essence or meaning therein. All these qualities constitute wisdom; qualities opposed to them constitute ignorance.¹²

By cultivation of the above virtues, then even in this material world man can live in the beatific consciousness of the soul, a true child of God. He makes his own life, and many of those he contacts, radiant with the infinite light, joy, and love of the Eternal Father.



“Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

“Ye are the light of the world” (Matthew 5:13 – 14).



Spiritual persons are “the salt of the earth” and “light of the world”

Jesu s’ metaphorical comparison of his disciples to the salt of the earth was particularly appropriate in his time when salt was considered a valuable item. Oriental people who had to travel in the extreme heat of the desert used to carry large pieces of rock salt, which they licked in order to lessen their thirst due to dehydration. If anyone shared that life-giving salt with another, it was said that the latter had “eaten his salt,” or shared his highest confidence. It was to acquire this all-important commodity that the first trading routes were established in ancient civilizations. In some areas a measure of salt was valued as fair trade for an equal weight of gold. Roman legionnaires were allotted a salarium, or disbursement of salt—from which comes the modern term “salary.”

In addition to its life-saving qualities, salt gives pleasurable flavor to food; without it, meals would be tasteless to most human beings. So, just as salt is an important commodity worldwide, similarly, man himself is the “salt of the earth,” for among all creatures the human being has the highest capacity for doing good to others.

Jesus says that if salt loses its savor, it is useless for seasoning, nor can its quality be revived; it must therefore be thrown away. Similarly, if human beings, who are made in the image of God, desecrate that image through ignorant living, they lose the essential soul qualities and thus cease to be the most serviceable beings on earth. Persons who live unspiritual lives allow themselves to be trodden under foot by uselessness and death.

“Ye are the light of the world” signifies that human beings make this earth luminously meaningful by their presence. If the stars and the moon shone on this earth and the bleak mountains kept themselves decorated with silver peaks, they would nevertheless be in perpetual oblivion if no man lived to appreciate them. If blossoms with their alluring fragrance tarried and then faded without the gaze of souls ever entering their petal-doors, who would know the mystic beauty of flowers? Not the hard-hearted mountains nor the brainless skies nor burgeoning flora, but only souls, by the light of their consciousness, reveal the wondrous presence of Nature and God. Without the light of human consciousness, the star-and moon-decked night, and the ocean, the scenery, and the sun-decked day, would live in the womb of dark aeons.

Hence, man is the light of the world. No other living creature, only human consciousness, is endowed with the all-revealing lamp of a potentially limitless intelligence.



“A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.”¹³

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 5:14 – 16).

Just as lighted candles are not meant to be covered by bushel baskets but put on candlesticks to shed their light, so also, souls are lighted with the inherent presence of God, not to be enshrouded by ignorance, uselessness, materiality, and death, but that they may, with the illumination of wisdom and goodness, enlighten spiritually darkened lives. Evil eclipses the light of the soul. As the flame of a candle is extinguished by lack of oxygen, so a soul loses its outer radiance without the vitality of goodness. Good persons should not hide their enlivened soul qualities, as expressed in Gray’s “Elegy”: “Full many a flower is born to blush unseen, and waste its sweetness on the desert air.” They ought to engage in good actions among men, so that human darkness may be illumined.

No saint likes to perform miracles or display his divine powers to prove himself to disbelievers; no true devotee likes flattery or acclaim for his goodness. But when the candle of wisdom has been lighted within the devotee, he doesn’t secret it in the back of his mind nor hide it under the bushel of indifference. He sets it on the candlestick of open and sincere living, that truth-seekers may see and profit by that light.

Awakened souls shine with the light of God; they make the invisible light of His goodness visible in their hearts and actions. Their enlightenment declares the presence of God and serves as a spiritual beacon to guide others out of the paths of darkness.

The transcendent Father, hidden behind the etheric walls of heaven, cloistered in Cosmic Consciousness, comes out of His secret place only to grace the altars of devotion templed in illumined souls. In their words, demeanor, and actions, the light within these advanced souls makes manifest the glory of the hidden Father,

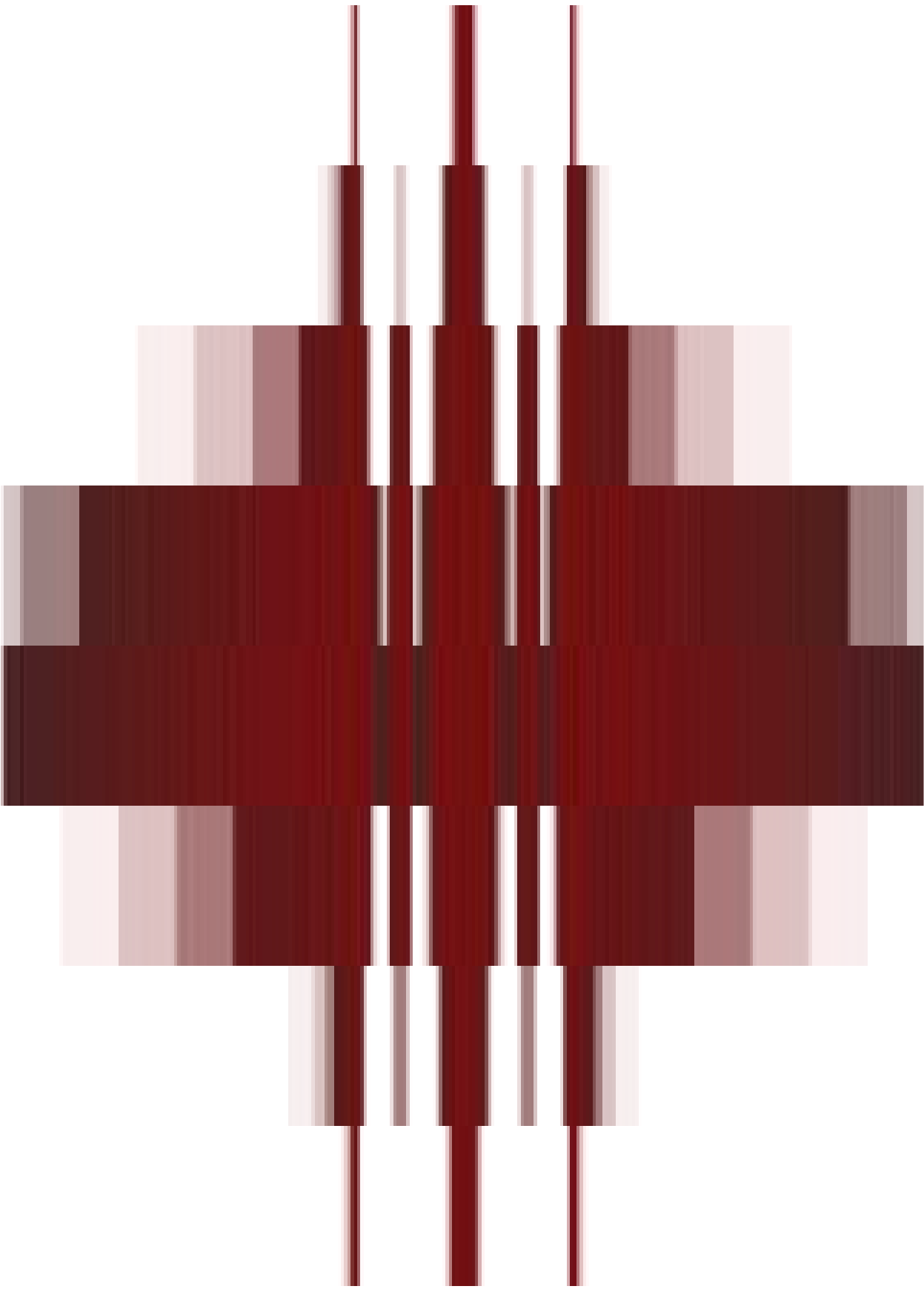
Creator of all goodness, man's sole Originator and supreme Benefactor.



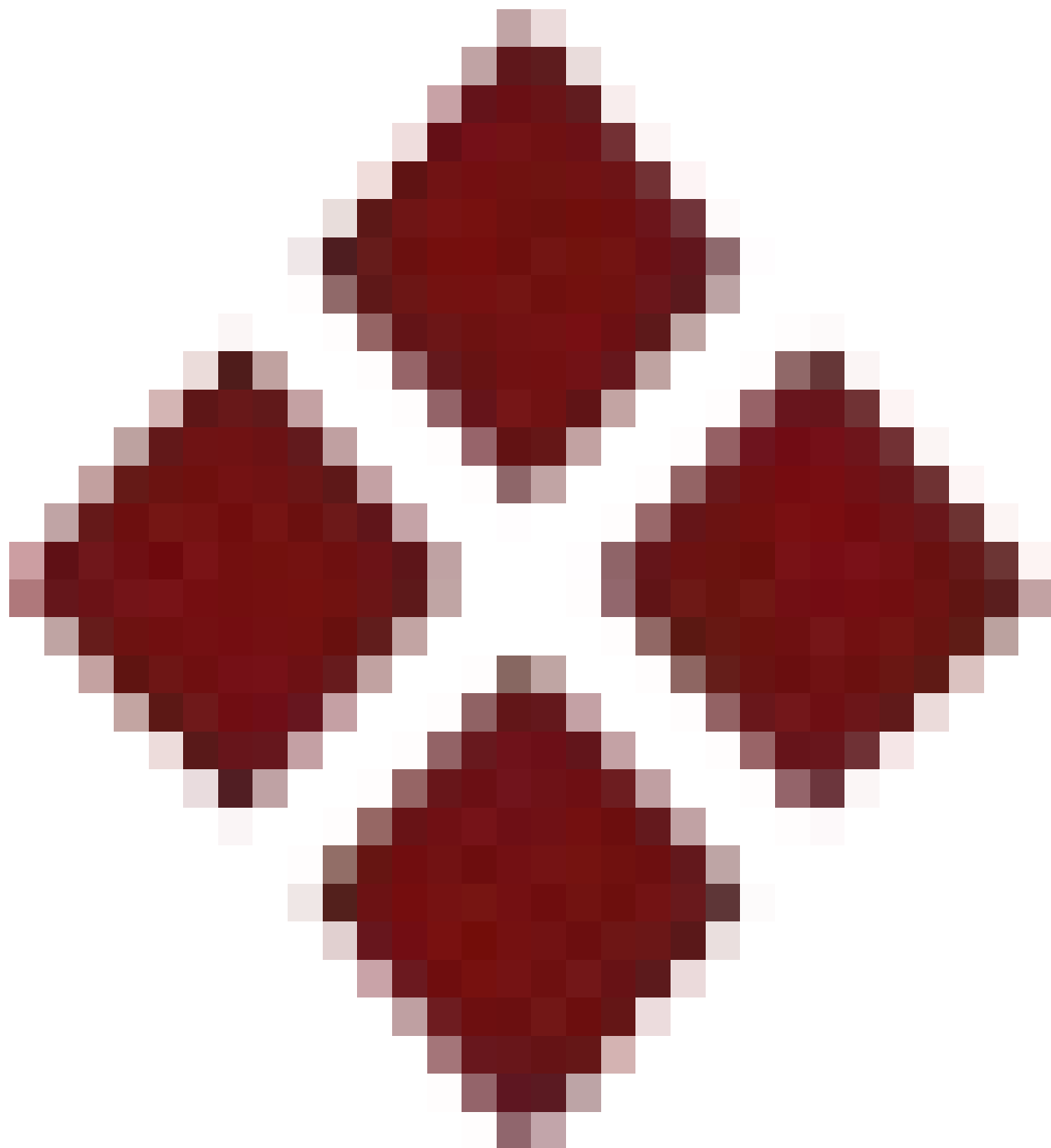
Discourse 27

To Fulfill the Law

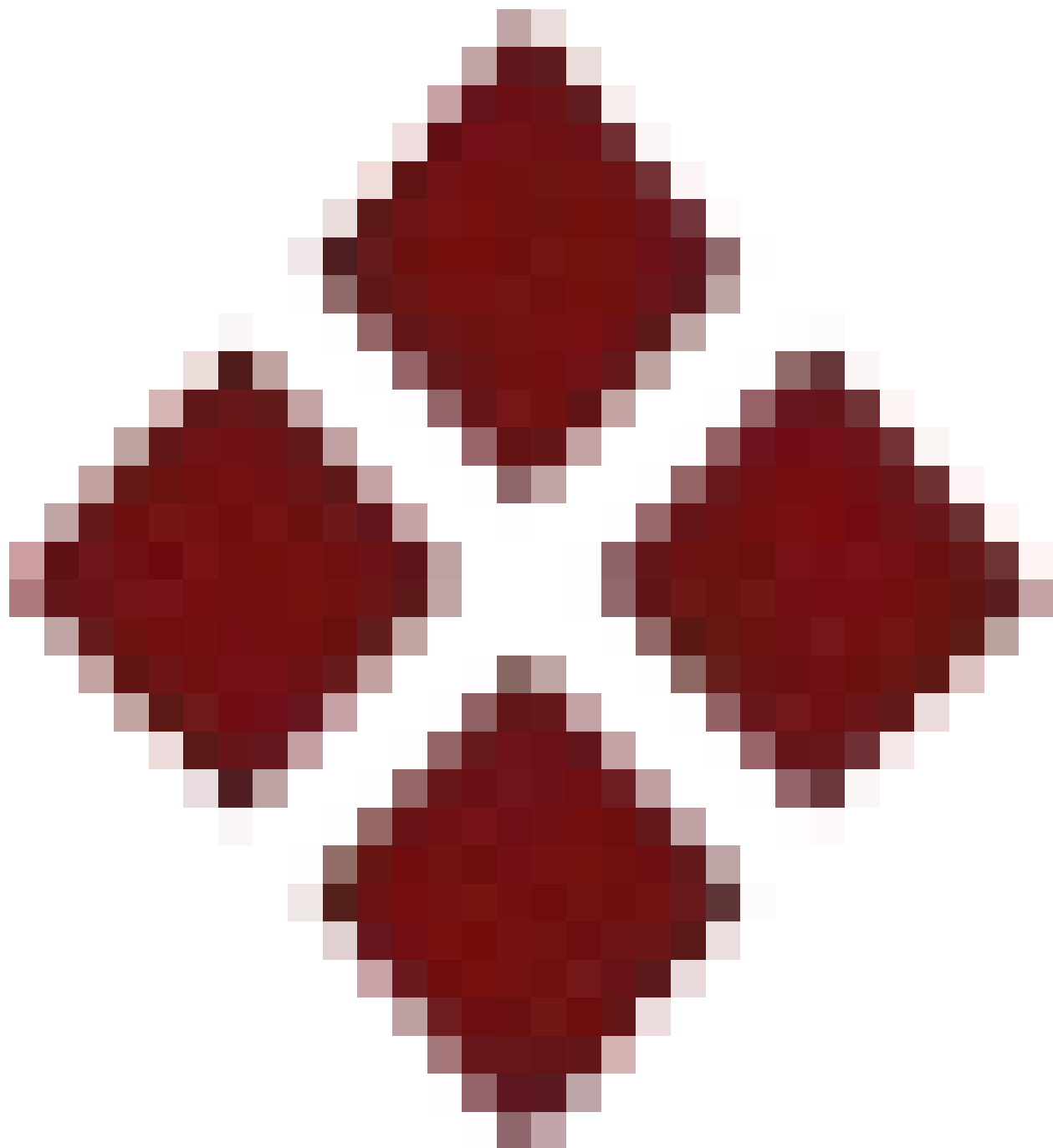
The Sermon on the Mount, Part II



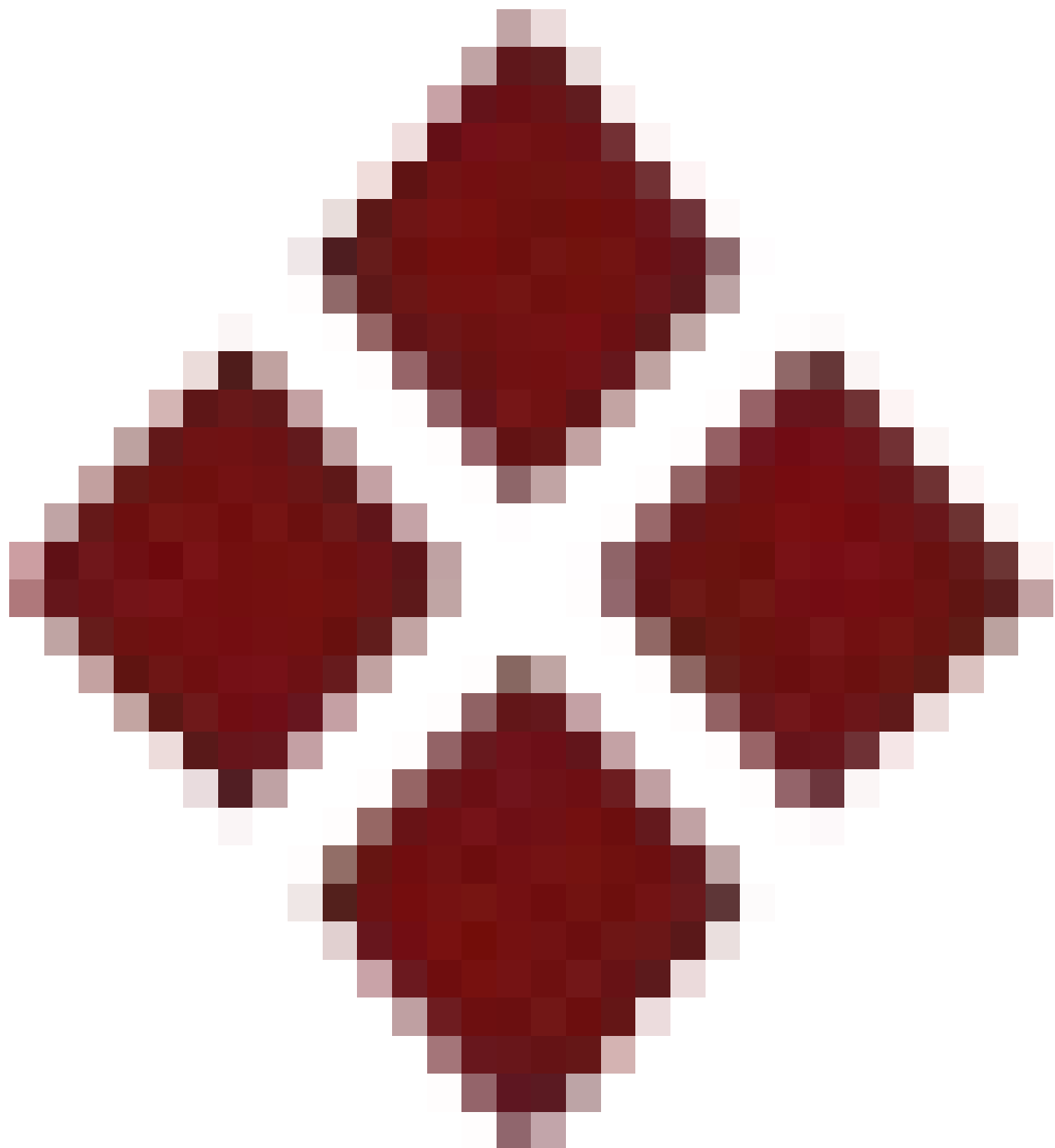
The Eternal Laws of Spirit Governing Human Life and the Cosmic Order



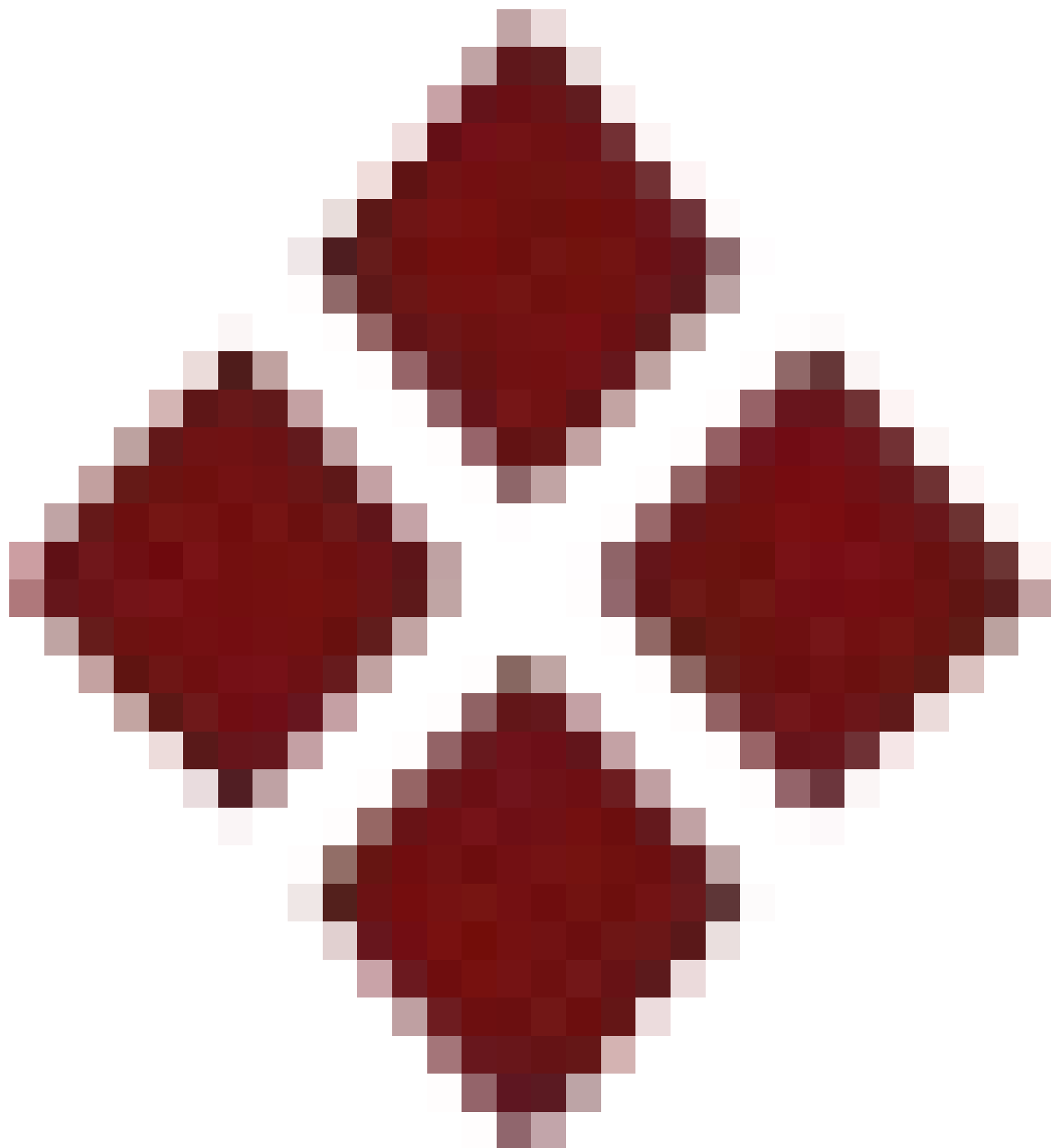
**The Fulfillment of Righteousness by Which Man
Attains Cosmic Consciousness**



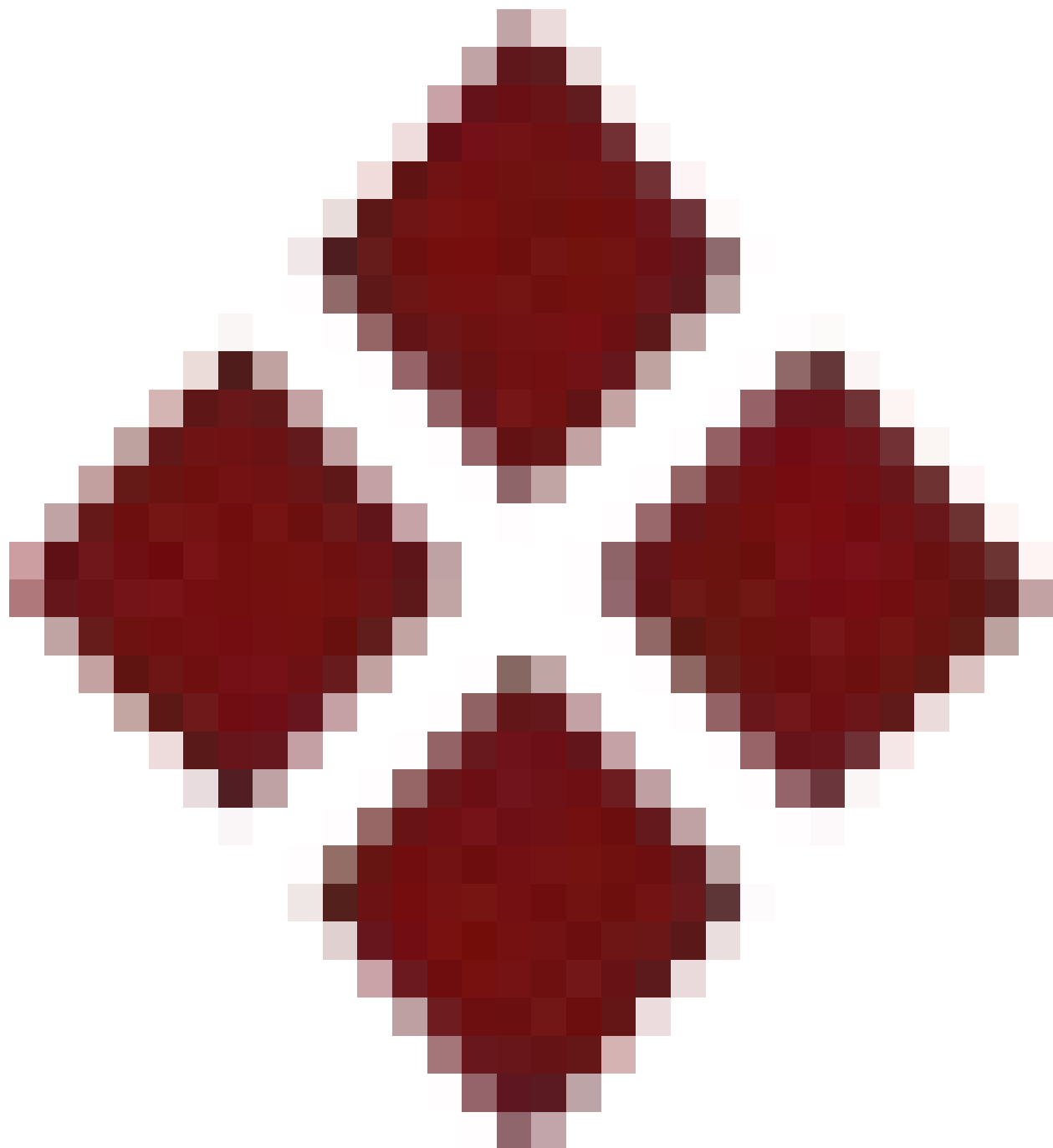
The Spiritual Dangers of Violence and Anger



Understanding the Spiritual Laws of Sexual Morality



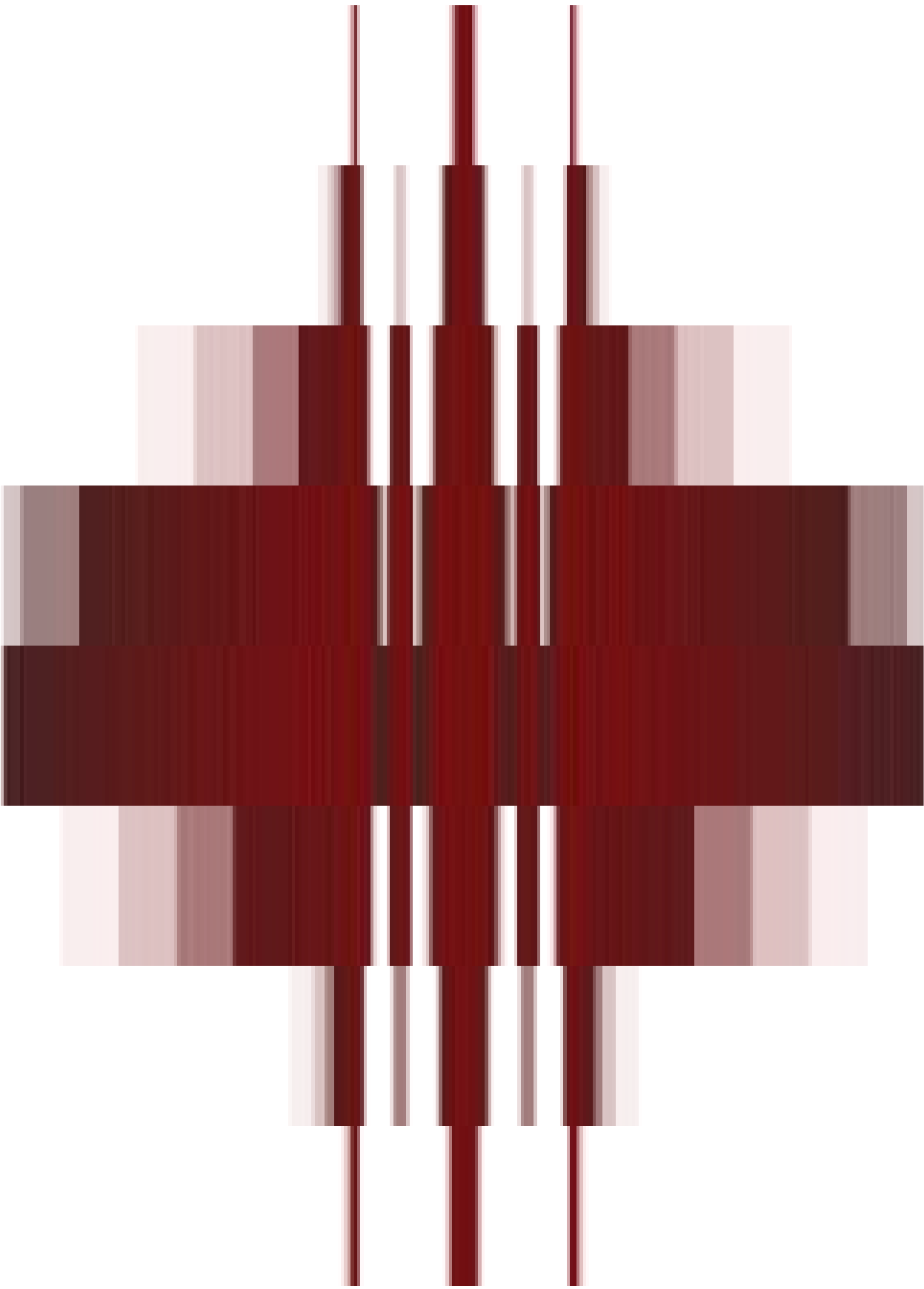
Applying the Principle of Nonviolence (Ahimsa)



The Soul Qualities of Openhearted Generosity and Sympathy for All



Christlike Ideal of Love and Forgiveness Toward Enemies as Well as Friends



“Far more than just a noble ideal, the principle of love is verily the manifestation of God in His creation...Mortals express their innate divinity when from the pure magnanimity of their soul they give love for hate, and goodness for evil.”

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“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

“Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

“For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, ‘Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment’: But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, ‘Raca,’ shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, ‘Thou fool,’ shall be in danger of hell fire.

“Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

“Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, ‘Thou shalt not commit adultery’: But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

“And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members

should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

“It hath been said, ‘Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement’: But I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

“Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, ‘Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths’: But I say unto you, swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God’s throne: nor by the earth; for it is His footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, ‘Yea, yea’; ‘Nay, nay’: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

“Ye have heard that it hath been said, ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth’: But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

“And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

“Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

“Ye have heard that it hath been said, ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.’ But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

“For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so?

“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”

—*Matthew 5:17 – 48*



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Discourse 27

To Fulfill the Law

**The Sermon on the Mount, Part II (With References
From the Sermon on the Plain)**



“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled” (Matthew 5:17 – 18).¹

Parallel reference:

“And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail” (Luke 16:17).

Jesus speaks firmly and clearly of the essentiality of upholding the eternal laws of righteousness. These divine codes are expressed to man from the Ruler of Creation through the medium of His true prophets, and made evident in the wondrous fabric of the universe. The cosmic order of universal laws that weaves the patterns of heaven and earth expresses itself in no less exactitude as the moral order governing the lives of human beings. He who would ensure his present happiness and well-being and his ultimate arrival in the kingdom of supreme beatitude must be neither a manipulator nor a scofflaw of those righteous ways.



The eternal laws of Spirit governing human life and the cosmic order

“The Law” for the Jewish people among whom Jesus was teaching was the Law of Moses—the Ten Commandments and other moral and religious precepts set forth in the Torah. From the voices of the prophets issue proclamations of the eternal truths, which are changeless, creedless, and universally applicable in all epochs; and also codes of conduct needed in a particular age or set of circumstances, an adaptation of the eternal verities to the specifics of human need. But the passage of time, the expediency of interpretation, and worldly ignorance in general causes a degeneration of holy truths. Their priceless gold is amalgamated into an alloy of partially observed religious principles tempered with the rationalizations of human weakness. Throughout history there have been times when the priesthood has sunk to virtual merchandising of religion on the one hand, and enshrouding it in autocratic theological mystery on the other hand, in order to secure a hierarchical authority over the arbitrary trends of the masses.

Great prophets expose those pseudoreligious distortions, often with the effect of arousing acrimonious response from the entrenched priestly classes, who condemn the actions of true reformers as irreligious, unscriptural, even blasphemous. To forestall such resistance from the temple hierarchy, and to warn his followers not to be swayed by false accusations, Jesus clearly emphasized: “I have not come to destroy the universal laws of righteousness, nor the ever true teachings of the prophets, but to revive and fulfill them.”

As the Christ Intelligence is the Eternal Principle governing all created manifestations, timeless, too, are the precepts of spiritual living declared by the Christ in Jesus, extending from the Biblical generations into the unseen future: “Heaven and earth shall pass away,” he proclaimed, “but my words shall not pass away.”² The eternal principles behind their adaptations should never be dragged down or compromised in order that society might feel more comfortable with them. Man should honestly acknowledge his present inability or even outright unwillingness to follow the godly ideals rather than pretending that their sanctity is subject to a “liberal” interpretation by those who deem spiritual standards unattainable or simply passé.

Moses fulfilled his special mission in the enunciation of the universal

commandments of God; Jesus came to reveal the Christ Consciousness that maintains those laws in all creation, the goodness and truth that manifests as harmony, joy, and perfection whenever those dictums are fulfilled.³

All phenomena, whether of earth or heaven, are the inconceivably numerous manifestations of one Noumena, or divine Substance. That underlying Essence, which links all things in a cosmic unity, is Truth, Reality, God reflected in creation as the Christ Intelligence. The Truth of creation, its essential divinity or goodness, erstwhile hidden by maya's macabre masquerade, is revealed by those who, like Jesus, manifest the Christ Consciousness and Its righteousness.

The universal laws (dharma) that uphold the objective manifestation of creation emanate from that all-governing Divine Intelligence. Thus Jesus declared: "I tell you that it would be easier for the inconceivably vast causal, astral, and physical universes, 'heaven and earth,' to dissolve into nothingness than for even the tiniest portion of the divine law to fail to prove its reality."

"Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." Earth and heaven alike are cosmic motion pictures, projected by the beam of God's intelligent vibratory energy. The earth is a grosser movie of material life played on the screen of human consciousness, and heaven is a subtler picture of astral existence played on the screen of soul consciousness. Jesus knew that all heavenly and earthly manifestations have one purpose: to make visible the Invisible Perfection through the active expression of the divine laws of righteousness. Jesus emphasized that until the laws of righteousness in all their details are fulfilled, as intended by God in His cosmic plan and declared by His true devotees, heaven and earth, with their congested limitations, will go on existing. The gross and subtle spheres of creation are battlegrounds where the perfect laws of God war with the patterns of imperfection introduced by Satan. When divine righteousness in its entirety becomes manifest on earth (the material cosmos) and in heaven, the delusive power of maya can no longer obtain; finite creation, having served its purpose, will be reabsorbed into the bosom of God. When the law of ideal living with its auxiliary proscriptions and prescriptions is fulfilled in the lives of all human and astral beings, as active expressions of the all-pervading Christ, these truly righteous become, as Emerson expressed it, "not virtuous, but Virtue; then is the end of the creation answered, and God is well pleased."⁴ Till then, worlds will come and go and the persistently unrighteous among men will sojourn through the seeming endlessness of the cosmic movie.



“Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

“For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:19 – 20).



The fulfillment of righteousness by which man attains Cosmic Consciousness

The kingdom of heaven referred to in this context is the state of Cosmic Consciousness, in which all dualities are abolished and the One Loving King, God the Father, reigns on the throne of Infinity. Though there is no essential difference among souls who have completely attained the state of Cosmic Consciousness, there are various grades of saints among those who have contacted God but are not yet irrevocably established in the final union—the “least” and the “great” in God’s kingdom. The first contact of God may bring to a devotee great blessing and understanding, but that does not obliterate all of the effects of past actions. With continuous experience of God’s contact, incarnations of stored-up effects of actions are gradually roasted out. The degree of completion of that purifying process is a measure of the greatness of a saint—that is, how near he is to absolute liberation in Cosmic Consciousness.

Divine laws are the patterns of God’s presence in the matrix of creation. Man weaves a life in harmony with God to the extent that he abides by the code of righteousness. The foremost in the kingdom of God automatically obey the greatest and the least laws of the life divine; because they are one with Cosmic Consciousness, their actions are in effortless accord with truth. But whosoever does not live the life of righteousness in all its details, acting from less-than-perfect attunement with truth as commanded from within by the voice of conscience and intuition, shall not be as highly regarded, according to the standards of God-known souls.

Saints who observe the highest and the least laws of truth—who teach them vocally and especially by the example of their lives—are considered of high degree by those who live in the supreme Spirit-domain of Cosmic Consciousness. Those who do not completely practice spiritual doctrines, yet try to teach others the path of salvation, are accordingly deemed inferior to those saints who show people the Godward path through their daily lives in which the minutest laws of truth are flawlessly demonstrated. Even if saintly persons have contacted God, but disregard the less mandatory truths, they are called the least when viewed from the highest standards of righteousness. Whether intentional or unwitting, the breaking of any divine law by an otherwise good person teaches the weak-minded that dereliction of righteous duty is acceptable behavior.

Jesus emphasized the difference between the superficial righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees who practiced religion by rote, and the true righteousness of a God-tuned life. Jesus saw that even good religious men of the temple who thought and spoke a great deal about holy scripture, and who were punctilious in performing their duties and prescribed sacerdotal ceremonies, nevertheless lacked inner realization of the underlying truths of their vocational practices; their righteousness was only skin-deep, touching little on the consciousness within.

Thinking about truth is good if it increases the desire to follow the laws of truth. Thinking or talking about truth but neglecting to apply its laws in one's actions and behavior is productive not of righteousness but of hypocrisy—a double life of thinking or speaking one way, but acting another. Unless one harnesses his good thoughts to the corresponding noble activities, his lofty philosophizing tends to develop an ineffectual, even vainglorious, familiarity with ideas about truth, which breeds neglect of their actual application—a know-it-all, do-nothing attitude. Superficial righteousness, akin to that of the scholars and Pharisees cited as an example in this verse, may make one loyal to a theoretical philosophy or dedicated to a set of religious practices and beliefs, but it is an extreme dilution of the spiritual panacea of lived truth, and consequently does not produce much soul development. Jesus therefore spoke of the necessity of developing the consciousness of doing right and living truth, shorn of superficiality.

The absolute of righteousness is complete identification with all truth. Harmony with all truth, and not just its part, is only possible through meditation and samadhi, or ecstasy, in which the devotee, the act of meditation, and God as the object of contemplation become one.

Millions of people do not even think about religion; and of those who do, the majority are satisfied with religious worship one hour a week or reading a few spiritual books or practicing a few religious ceremonies. They never go deeper; they never attempt by scientific meditation to commune with the infinitely loving Father about whom they hear or read. This is the palpable reason so few attain Christhood and entry into God's Kingdom of Cosmic Consciousness, the domain of the humbly reigning Royal Spirit.

Desire-propelled human beings are like uncontrolled barges rushing down the floodstream of worldly life, headed over the rocky falls of crushing experiences

into the oblivion of death. The boats of wisdom-guided lives steer out of the powerful current of social convention and customs and reach the shores of all-redeeming contentment in God.

This was a great truth that Jesus urged all to heed: “If you want to enter the kingdom of God, your righteousness must exceed the ordinariness of theoretical religious beliefs and living; it must transform your consciousness and whole being. Unless you follow the real way of actual God-communion in interiorized worship in deep meditation, your righteousness shall in no wise qualify you to enter the highest state of Cosmic Consciousness, the heavenly bliss from which you can never fall again.”



“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, ‘Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment’: But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, ‘Raca,’ shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, ‘Thou fool,’ shall be in danger of hell fire” (Matthew 5:21 – 22).

Having spoken in general of the eternal laws governing God’s creation, and of how their observance is necessary for attaining the kingdom of heaven, Jesus illustrates (in verses

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) specific adaptations of those laws—ways of fulfilling their spirit of natural righteousness.



The spiritual dangers of violence and anger

He speaks first of the ancient commandment: “Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment.”⁵ Those who destroy heaven-created human beings misuse their reason and God-given independence and will be judged accordingly by the inscrutable karmic law of cause-and-effect justice. Murderers not only counter the universal law of divine creation, but they deprive their victims of the lawful opportunity to work out independently their own karma—a preclusion of that individual’s progress in his present lifetime. God creates mortal life; to kill is to obstruct the highest divine wish of emancipating immortal souls through purification in the self-created karmic fires of mortal trials, whence they emerge transformed by freewill-initiated acts of wisdom.

Jesus pointed out that in the light of natural righteousness, evil lies not only in murderous actions, but in angry thoughts and emotions that give rise to such actions. Jesus, who taught love even for one’s enemies, warned against being angry “without cause”—and then went on to say that man should not indulge in hostility and scorn toward his brothers under any circumstances, lest he place himself in “danger of the judgment” of “the council”; and of “hell fire.” Wrath obliterates discrimination and prevents the mind from discerning the right course during a momentous issue. Anyone who is angry with his brother through the misunderstanding of facts or an emotionally perceived personal grievance is one who is angry without reason.

Anger, arising either from an actual cause or from an imaginary perception, may create sufficient provocation in a person to impel him to violence. In cases of extreme anger, people may mentally wish their enemies dead. Sometimes they voice their ire: “I could shoot that man!” Though it may not be meant literally, it is still very bad. The thought and talk of death to another are mental chemicals that can potentially explode into violent activity. The thought of killing precedes the physical act in a preconditioned response awaiting provocation. No willful killing is possible without being triggered by thought. So, to fulfill the law “Thou shalt not kill,” Jesus said, not only the act but all thoughts, speech, and actions relative to killing must be strictly avoided. He spoke in consonance with the sages of India who honor the scriptural injunction of ahimsa, inner and outer nonviolence.

Once my guru, Swami Sri Yukteswarji, watched me raise my hand to kill a mosquito that was siphoning my blood. But I suddenly changed my mind, remembering the decree of nonviolence. Master said: “Why don’t you finish the job?” In astonishment, I replied: “Why, Master? Do you advocate killing?” To that he responded: “No, but you have killed the mosquito in your mind and thus have already committed the sin.”

My Guru did not mean that whenever anybody has an impulse to kill, he should do so; he was making the point that one should not feel the desire to kill at all. Of course, it is better to suppress the desire to kill than to commit the actual act; but the greater achievement is to remain free from evil thoughts, which are the basic cause of evil actions.⁶

Thought, the forerunner of outer action, is itself action on a subtler plane. In that sense, according to the law of karma or action, righteousness and sin lie in one’s thoughts and motives as well as in his external behavior. One man commits murder and is hanged for it; another man kills many human beings on the battlefield in defense of his country and is given a medal. It is the inner motive that differentiates the two. Human moralists judge outer appearances, believing in absolute rules; but Divine Law, the true arbiter of virtue and vice in this world of relativity, judges man’s inner being. However, one’s motives must be wisdom-pure. I remember the opportunistic students in my classes who found this opening in the door of right behavior a convenient exit: “My motive justified my actions.” My response, with gratitude to the author for a succinct rebuttal, was to quote: “The road to Hades is paved with good intentions.”

The law of cause and effect bestows good or bad fruits of actions according to a person’s good or bad activities. Every action—mental or physical—produces a result in the form of a tendency, which is lodged in the mind as a karmic seed. This mental-tendency seed germinates into action when the conditions of environment provide the necessary “watering.” A good mental seed produces good action and a bad seed results in evil performance. One should be very careful how he acts, for the power of leftover corresponding tendencies makes actions repeat themselves—becoming more deeply integrated into one’s nature with each repetition. It is all right when good actions are repeated, but disastrous when evil actions insinuate themselves against the will of the performer. Every wrong action brings calamity from “the judgment”—from the result proceeding from the law of cause and effect.

One can measure one's emotional self-control by testing it on those nearest and dearest to him. If he can neutralize his impulses to become angry (or to vent any other acrid emotion) in response to provocations, then he is developing himself in the spirit of the law as admonished by Jesus. To control the external expression of anger while seething within creates an inner vibratory heat that cooks one's brain like a slowly baked potato. Lahiri Mahasaya gave those methods of meditation by which one can instead roast the seeds of wrong impulses. Scientific meditation harmonizes the whole being, creating an inner calmness of self-mastery.

Jesus makes another point in these verses: Words are very potent vibratory actions, affecting favorably or adversely the one who utters them and also the one to whom they are directed. To express contempt to any individual ("say to his brother, 'Raca'"⁷) is spiritually libelous against that individual's soul, which is ever perfect regardless of how loathsome his egoistic expression. By scorning a fellow being, one demeans his own soul's forbearing nature and subjects himself to the scrutiny of the tribunal of his conscience and its records of his many regrettable failings. It would be a humbling, if not horrific, experience if one had to face an archival reading of the shames in all of his past incarnations. The merciful God has forgiven so much in every man who is consciously struggling toward the light of wisdom; it is the awakening nobility of the soul that likewise feels patience rather than contempt for others whose actions show no such awakening.

Further, anyone who calls another a "fool"⁸ shall himself suffer from the fire of ignorance. Ignorance is hell, as it engenders all manner of evils and burns away wisdom. True knowledge and wisdom are the source of salvation from the miseries of the human condition. To inhibit the potential unfoldment of anyone's soul wisdom by a strong suggestion of ineptness is to do them a great wrong. Negating anyone's will and branding the subconscious mind with defeatist thoughts of inferior abilities is reprehensible. To foster in anyone an attitude of surrender to ignorance sets in motion the lawful principle that to pull down another human being is a sin that puts oneself "in danger of hell fire"—the fire of ignorance that consumes one's own spiritual merit in the act of willfully demoralizing, humiliating, or denigrating another person.

It is plain that Jesus spoke figuratively in his reference to hellfire.⁹ He did not mean that the omnipresent God of love has created leaping tongues of fire in a hell at some point of space to burn the disembodied souls of sinners, rife with

bad karma. The Heavenly Spirit who is the Father of all human children could not possibly roast them alive forever because they made some temporary mistakes during their sojourn on earth.



“Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.”¹⁰

“Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing” (Matthew 5:23 – 26).¹¹

Though God does not take up into Himself from the temple altar the material objects that are presented to Him, He does receive the devotion of the heart that actuates those offerings. No one can really present to God a gift from the bounty of His creation, because all things belong to Him; but to give unto God the gifts that are given by Him shows an appreciative heart. Most of all, God loves the gifts of love, peace, and devotion offered in the temple of one's own heart or through the temples of the hearts of others.

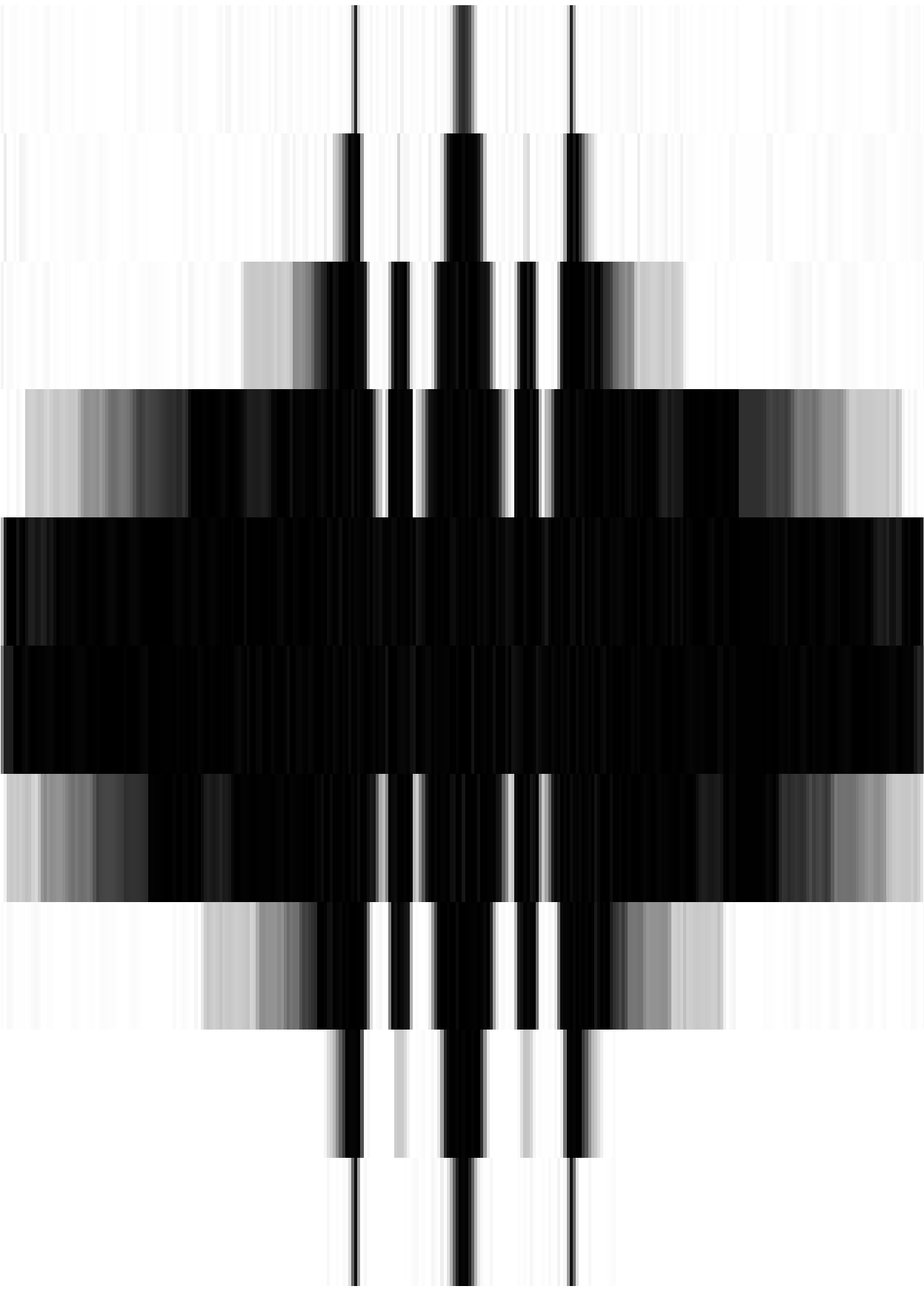
Therefore, Jesus stressed that one's heart must be made pure if one's gift to God is to be a worthy offering. Ill will toward an estranged brother is a defilement of the inner temple of harmony. To “agree with thine adversary” does not mean to condone or cooperate with his evil, but to cleanse oneself of malice and rancor. To seek reconciliation in forgiveness of wrongs is to please God in the forgiver and the forgiven.

Inharmony, resulting from enmity, is the judge and the officer which casts one into the prison of inner disturbance. Verily, no one can come out of the prison of inharmony unless he loses the last farthing of anger, resentment, and vengefulness from within himself. To behold anyone as an enemy is to eclipse the presence of God residing in that person's soul. A wise man does not lose the consciousness of the omnipresence of God by being unable to see Him in everyone, even when He is hidden behind the smoke screen of hatred with which an enemy brother surrounds his heart.



“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, ‘Thou shalt not commit adultery’: But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

“And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell” (Matthew 5:27 – 30).¹²



Understanding the spiritual laws of sexual morality

Jesus said that not only is the physical act of adultery sinful, but that, according to spiritual law, a lustful gaze involves the committing of adultery in the mind. It is a common occurrence, especially in modern permissive societies, for men and women to leer at each other with sensuous thoughts and yearning. This attraction seems to flatter the recipients, some of whom even attire themselves or adopt other ruses in order to draw that kind of admiration. It is not only sinful to bestow lustful glances, but it is equally wrong willfully to awaken sex thoughts in the opposite sex, and also to feel flattered by such attentions.

According to human law, unless there is physical adultery, there is no cause for condemnation. Human law passes no judgment on lascivious mental behavior. But the Divine Law condemns mental adultery also, because without its advent, physical adultery would not be enacted.

The Hindu scriptures speak of the following ways of committing adultery (equally applicable to women as well as men):

To think lustfully of a woman, without the woman being present before the physical eyes.

To talk about a woman with lustful desire.

To touch a woman with lustful desire.

To gaze upon a woman with lustful desire.

To hold private intimate talks with a woman with the ultimate hope of physical union.

The act of physical union without the consecration of marriage.

“Sin” requires a complex definition. It is not a transgression against an arbitrary code of behavior decreed by a whimsical God. The Creator made man a spiritual being, a soul endowed with an individualization of His own divine nature. He gave to the soul, evolved from its own Self, the instruments of a body and a mind with which to perceive and interact with the objects of a maya-manifested

universe. The soul's mental and physical instruments come into being and are held in existence by specific lawful processes of God's creative power. If man lives in perfect harmony with the machinations of these principles, he remains a spiritual being in charge of his body and mind. Sin is that which compromises that perfect self-mastery. It has its automatic negative effect to the degree of the influence of delusion within it—involving no condemnation of an irate God. Man's free-will actions simply harmonize and strengthen the expressed essence of his soul perfection, or weaken and degrade it into mortal enslavement.

Thus, how many ways there are to sin against natural law no living mortal knows. The category of sex is a particularly puzzling one. Unless the sex urge were given to man from within, by the process of evolution after the fall from Eden,¹³ he would not feel the desire. Since physical union is the law of propagation of the species, it should be treated with that regard.

Animals cannot commit adultery, even though they are indiscriminate from the human standpoint, because their sexual engagements merely obey the nature-impelled instinct to procreate their species. They do not indulge in self-created sex thoughts.

Man, being endowed with reason and free will, commits sin by adding his lascivious, insatiable, lustful thoughts to the instinct of procreation. According to spiritual law, therefore, to use the sexual instinct solely to gratify sensual desire is considered sinful, detrimental to man's godly image. A married man also commits sin, as pointed out by Jesus, if he thinks lustfully of his wife, whose feminine nature should be respectfully loved and regarded as God's motherly aspect.

Healthful hunger can be appeased by using the sense of taste to select the right foods, but greed for food can never be satisfied and compounds its ill effects by choosing an unhealthful diet. Similarly, physical union for procreation is as nature intends, but indulgence is never appeased, and is destructive to health and the nervous system, disturbing the entire mental, neural, and spiritual faculties.

The mind is single-tracked when it becomes fixated on an impulse. Once it gets used to sex habits, it is very difficult to make it move in the elevating channels of meditation. Sex-addicted persons are very nervous and restless; their minds wander constantly on the plane of the senses, making it difficult to concentrate upon the inner peace that leads the consciousness to the all-intoxicating, ever

new bliss of God-communion.

The vital essence lost in physical union contains untold atomic units of lifetronic intelligence and energy; the loss of this power, due to indiscriminate excesses, is extremely harmful to spiritual development. It exacerbates the outflow of life force through the lowest subtle center at the base of the spine, concentrating the consciousness on identification with the body and external sensory perceptions. When one is habituated to this state, no ascension of consciousness to the higher centers of spiritual realization and God-communion is possible. People who live on the sex plane with its momentary allurements and physical excitation cannot even imagine, much less desire to achieve, the incomparable bliss of Spirit in interiorized meditation. Yogis enhance their great spiritual power and realization by a natural, not suppressed, conservation of the vital essence, transmuting it into divine vibrations in meditation that awaken the higher centers in the spine with their exalted states of consciousness.

Speaking figuratively of how even looking at the opposite sex with impure thoughts arouses lust, Jesus said that it is better to lose an eye than that the whole bodily instrument be desecrated by evil—it is better to forgo illicit sensory indulgence than to lose the infinite unending joys of the soul's communion with Spirit.

Christ used a dramatic metaphor to emphasize that if the mind becomes enslaved by desires arising from any sensory perception (“eye”) or sensory action (“hand”) it profanes the divine soul-image within man, leaving him oblivious of God. Nothing in life, no matter how pleasurable, is of any value or lasting happiness if one remains ignorant of God. Without knowing Him, life becomes a “hell” of insecurity with unforeseen disasters and grievous troubles. It is better that man's misuse of the senses and his wrong actions “should perish” than to allow his passions to annihilate his entire happiness in Spirit.

How thoughtlessly people give up the kingdom of immortal bliss for their material desires for name, fame, lustful gratification, possession, money. Christ decried that shortsighted investment of one's life; it is more “profitable for thee” to cast off whatsoever casts the happiness of one's true being into a “hell” of delusive soul-oblivion.



“It hath been said, ‘Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement’: But I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery” (Matthew 5:31 – 32).

This seems to be a very drastic law to people who part from each other due to incompatibility of temper, and then decide to marry someone else.

The sin lies in marrying the wrong person, actuated by social custom or physical instinct. One should get married only when one finds soul unity with a proper mate. And the two thus united in holy vows should remain together, steadfastly loyal to one another. Proper marriage nurtures real love, union on a higher plane, and sublimates the uncontrolled lusts of living on the sex plane.

People who marry and divorce time and again never give the seeds of divine love a chance to grow on the soil of faithful commitment. The minds of such persons, being concentrated upon sex and physical attraction, remain spiritually fallow. Hence, divorce for flimsy reasons is adulterous behavior as it focuses primarily on sexual gratification as an end in itself. Marriage should be honored by husband and wife as an opportunity for nurturing growth and understanding through mutual exchange of their finest qualities. And conjugal union should be respected as a means of procreation on the physical plane (inviting the birth of souls into a proper family environment). Sublimation of a marital relationship culminates in the procreation of “children” of unconditional love and ultimate emancipation on the spiritual plane.¹⁴



“Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, ‘Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths’: But I say unto you, swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God’s throne: nor by the earth; for it is His footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, ‘Yea, yea’; ‘Nay, nay’: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil” (Matthew 5:33 – 37).

A solemn oath sworn to God or in His name was in olden times, as in the here and now, considered morally and spiritually (and in a court of law, legally) binding. In making a sacred promise to God one may not resort to evasive or outright falsehoods, or thereafter break that oath, without consequence. It had thus become a custom among the Jewish population that in mundane or trivial matters swearing was done in reference to specific creations of God rather than in direct appeal to God Himself, presuming thereby no absolute obligation.



Why Jesus spoke against the swearing of oaths

Jesus was a bold voice on behalf of the spirit of the laws that govern man's behavior. Hypocritical skirting of those principles may avoid present consequences, but the evil effects engendered in the consciousness will inevitably have their day of retribution. So Jesus was not advising against oaths taken in the proper circumstance for the proper reason, and the solemnity that should be accorded them, but rather against the flippant avowal of an insincere intent. He points out the impossibility of performing actions outside of God's presence. A person is, in principle, no less beholden if he swears in the name of heaven or earth, for heaven is God's transcendental realm of blissful retirement where He rests on His throne of Infinity, hidden behind the walls of space and light rays. The earth is the footstool of God; that is, it is a place where God as the Creator works with His "feet" of motion and activity. Neither should one swear by Jerusalem or any holy city or place which has had the sacred manifestation of the Royal God through the presence, worship, and realization of His saints. Neither should one swear by the head because it is the holy sanctuary of the soul.

From the practice of swearing frivolously to enhance one's self-perceived eminence, there has devolved the crude commonality of swearing merely to punctuate one's statements. Such swearing is the result of overworked emotion. During the mental obliteration of clear thinking caused by emotion, as in a heated argument, or anger, or a strong impulse to stress a point, one is apt to speak untruth or to make a violent false assertion. To add to impulsive untruthful statements, or even self-serving factual assertions, the sacred name of God, or by implication anything in which He is manifested, is to drag down that which is holy to support something that is wrong or egocentric or trifling.

Coarse swearing reveals weakness of character, absence of fineness, and lack of reverence. It makes one cheap and also cheapens the atmosphere around him, undermining respect for things sacred and affecting the sanctity and seriousness of good souls in his company. Swearing exposes one's mental deficiency in having to resort to emotional exclamations instead of using the clarity of reason to prove a point. A true statement firmly asserted does not need to be supported or emphasized by swearing, which rather desecrates and denigrates and may fasten upon one the habit of prevarication, exaggeration, and misrepresentation. Swearing fosters profane language, an impulsive and overbearing nature, and

hasty and impatient assertions. In conversation and argument, it is best to use “yea, yea,” or “nay, nay,” calmly or emphatically administered, as the occasion demands; that is, to be restrained, concise, and truthful. A person of devious temperament is unreliable, feeling no constraints regardless of any avowal; an upright person is always sincere and honest with or without the commandment of a sworn oath.



“Ye have heard that it hath been said, ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth’: But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

“And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

“Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away” (Matthew 5:38 – 42).

Parallel reference:

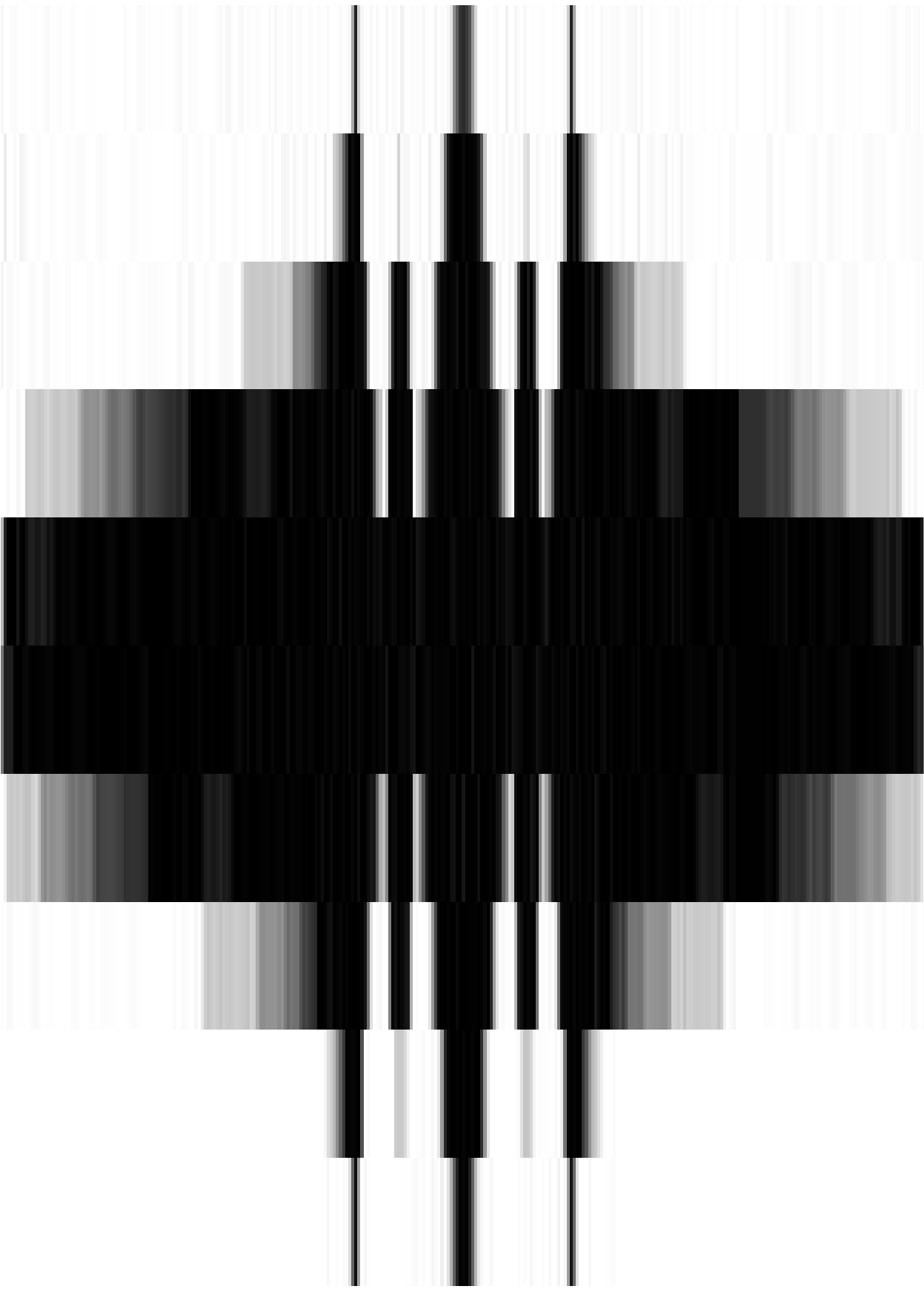
“And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloak forbid not to take thy coat also.

“Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again” (Luke 6:29 – 30, Sermon on the Plain).

The Mosaic law of “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth” was to serve not only as a punishment, but also as a deterrent to other would-be criminals by making the punishment match the crime.¹⁵ A literal reading may have been justified in the time when people, in the words of Moses, “have corrupted themselves...they are a perverse and crooked generation...neither is there any understanding in them. O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!”¹⁶ Spiritual laws are eternally true, but their application as inscribed in judgments governing a society may in different climes

and ages require more or less modification according to the nature of the environment in which they are enacted. Though no social system can survive without an orderly code of justice to restrain wrongdoers and uphold a standard of human dignity, laws best fulfill their purpose when they protect the innocent and encourage reformation of the guilty.

The “eye for an eye” law serves only the purpose of punishment for the sake of revenge. It does not teach right actions to the wrongdoer, but may well make him more hateful. To wreak vengeance does not stop the recurrence of an evil act; rather, it is more likely to foster evil thoughts and further acts of retaliation.



Applying the principle of nonviolence (ahimsa)

Therefore, Jesus again, as in the principle of nonkilling, speaks of the ideal of noninjury (ahimsa) to any human being—in word, thought, speech, or action. It enjoins freedom from the desire for revenge and not resisting evil with evil methods. Jesus advises man to conquer evil by the infinitely powerful virtue of forgiveness and love. He speaks figuratively of turning the other cheek to illustrate the influence of goodness over inimical behavior. If anybody vents his anger with a slap and receives a slap in return, it only increases his anger and desire to deliver stronger blows—and maybe a kick or a bullet! A calm response, on the other hand, is quite disconcerting and disarming. With a resentful second blow his physical wrath is quite likely to be spent. Wrath is increased by wrath as fire increases by fire, but as fire is extinguished by water, so also, wrath is subdued by kindness.¹⁷

One whose immunity of calmness and love can resist the hatred from an angry brother thereby prevents that virus of disquieting emotion from entering within himself.

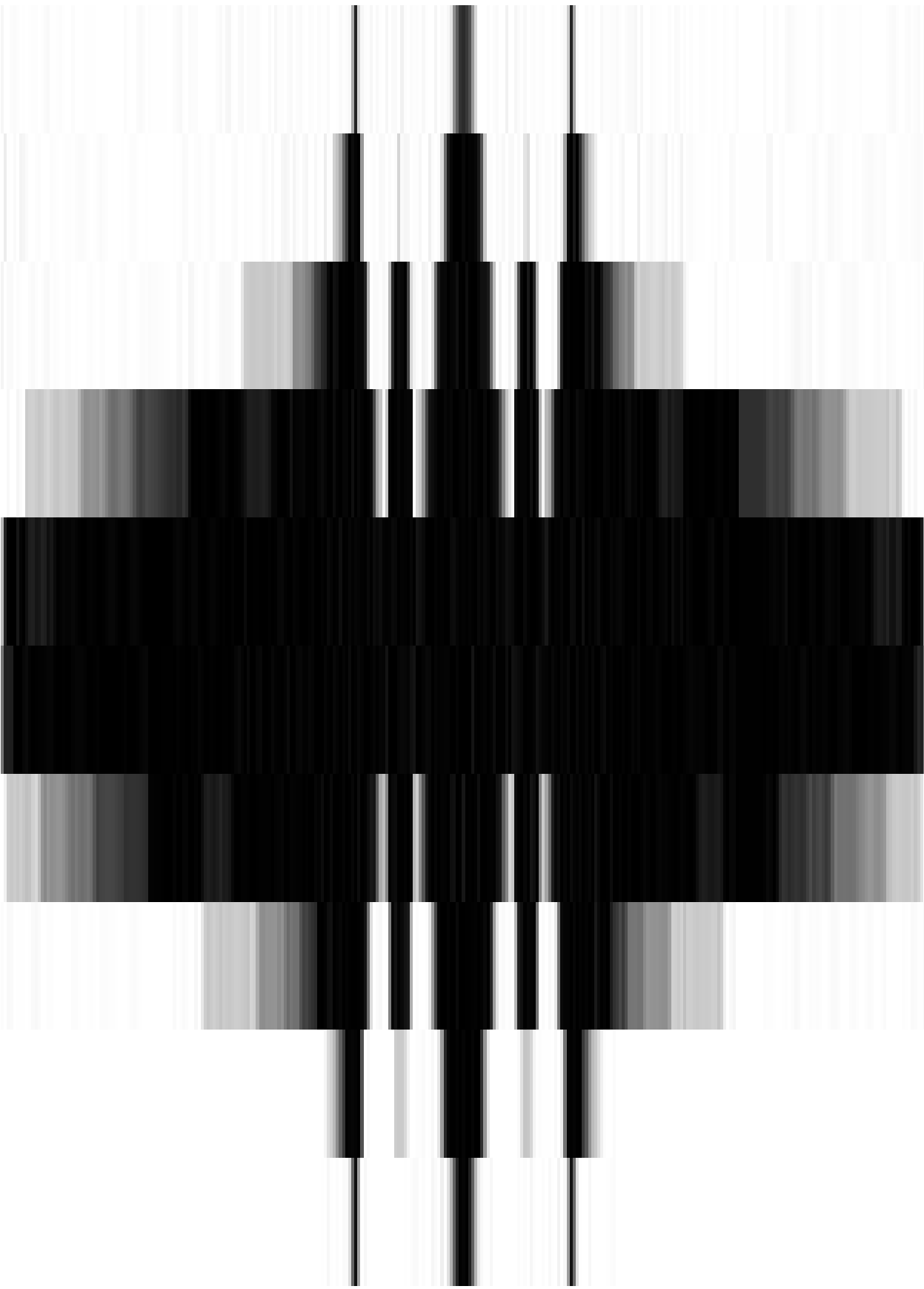
The ideal of nonretaliation does not justify supine surrender to wrongdoing or tacit approval of evil. To turn the other cheek is not calculated to make a person into a mental or moral weakling, or to suggest enduring an abusive or violent personal relationship, but to instill the strength of self-control gained by overcoming the impulse to act under the influence of revenge. It is an easy reflex to retaliate, but it requires great mental strength not to strike back. It takes a highly principled person of strong spiritual character to resist evil with virtue. Otherwise, it would seem ridiculous to allow a second blow after receiving one hard knock. Even if the aggressor does not admit it, he will be inwardly overpowered by the person of noble behavior and will know in his heart that that person was in the right.

While it is better to have courage to fight an enemy than to “forgive” him and run away through fear, if one can courageously face down an erring brother with love, that is to possess a mighty spiritual power—the transforming, healing power of divine love. A person perfected in nonviolence lets no one steal his inner peace. When by spiritual example and adamant determination he can maintain his ideal personality in spite of any robbers of disquietude, he becomes

a towering example of truth in the eyes of others.

When assailed by someone, it is hard to give love. The best way, while taking commonsense steps to remedy the situation, is to pray to God to change the heart of that person. Never ask God to punish anyone. It is surprising how sincere prayer will change the attitude of an antagonist. If that person becomes penitent, the giver of love has won that heart.

The early Christians were considered fools for their nonviolent resistance against Roman tyranny, but the kingdom of Jesus' teachings endured and flourished while the Roman empire deteriorated into oblivion.



The soul qualities of openhearted generosity and sympathy for all

A spiritual man of high order feels no grievous loss when he is parted from any of his material possessions, for whatever reason—be it from court judgments or for someone in need. His heartfelt generosity of spirit gives with an open hand. The spiritual man sees God not only in his own body but in the bodies of others. In oneness with God, he sees himself as the Self of all, and finds equal enjoyment whether he himself dons his “cloak” or takes it off from his one body and puts it on another one of his bodies. Whatever the divine person does for another, he feels by such action that he has in a nonattached way done this for himself, only in another body—just as one transfers a ring from one finger to another.

Giving away one’s “cloak” as well as one’s “coat” may seem like very unpractical advice in the modern world. No doubt, one must use discrimination. Abnegation of one’s own material needs can best be completely practiced only by saints or by people living under ideal conditions. One is under no spiritual compulsion to give his home away to an unscrupulous defrauder; instead, he is compelled to demand lawful justice from those who are unjust to him.

It would be ludicrous to offer a thief or a blackmailer more than was demanded, or for a victim to suggest to a kidnapper who has taken him forty miles away from his home, he would be willing to go forty miles further! The spiritual ideal in these words of Jesus is to be selflessly generous and openhearted, and willing to go that extra mile in helping others.

One should practice the virtue of giving to deserving people what one can afford to give without causing himself or those dependent upon him for their needs an enforced hardship. One should not “rob Peter to pay Paul.” It is not spiritual to starve one’s family in order to be a philanthropist. Mahatma Gandhi convinced his family of the virtue of sacrifice and then gave away all of his possessions without saving even any bonds or stocks for the security of his wife and children. Such action is admirable if the sacrifice is performed with the willing agreement of the other persons concerned. Gandhi had a mission to fulfill, which would be best accomplished by identifying himself materially as well as spiritually with the downtrodden masses.

Practical sympathy toward those in need dispels the darkness of separation between souls and is the light by which one can see all hearts tied together with the singular golden cord of divine love. God throbs in all hearts, suffering in the afflicted, rejoicing in those that are whole.

The same spirit of nonattachment should accompany the sharing of one's goods with would-be borrowers. It shows compassion to lend to needy people, but let not that virtue be negated by anger if the money is not returned. It is better not to lend at all than to become upset or ugly because the debtor is unable to pay back what he owes. Practical advice would be to lend only what one can afford to give away and forget all about it. Conscientious persons will make good on what they owe when and as they are able, and unscrupulous persons will not honor their debt even if they can afford to.

To lend money with the assurance of a returned favor, or the gain of a favorable interest, is ordinary business. But to lend to the needy who may or may not be able to repay—to help others without the desire for material reward; to give something without the hope of getting something better in return—is divine. Those who give of their material goods with the presumption of compensation receive temporary material things or advantages only; those who give with an open heart, just for the pleasure of giving pleasure to others, receive their repayment with a dividend of divine love.

There is nothing wrong in expecting the return of what one lends to others, not only for tending to one's own needs but for further sharing with others. But those things that one can spare, and that have been given to others to use, should not be demanded back simply to assert one's right of ownership. Possessiveness shows meanness of heart. It is delusion for one to think that his material possessions belong to him exclusively and in perpetuity. Man owns nothing on this earth; he is only given the use of things from its cosmic store. At death, everything has to be forsaken. Rockefeller and Henry Ford were not able to take with them into heaven a single dollar of their vast fortunes. If through some good actions a person has been fortunate enough to qualify for a generous loan from God of money, property, and possessions, that person should adopt the noble ideal of helping other children of God by openhanded assistance.

Thus the spirit of Jesus' admonition: "Give something, within your power, to whomever asks of you. By always exercising the soul quality of sympathy, your heart will expand to become as the heart of God, who does everything for all.

Cultivate the consciousness that whatsoever you possess belongs to God, and as such is common property to be used in serving all His children. When God sees that you are unselfish with what He has given to you, He gives you more, that your liberal capacity to share might be enlarged as an extension of His own beneficent Hand.”



“Ye have heard that it hath been said, ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.’ But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust” (Matthew 5:43 – 45).

Parallel reference:

“But I say unto you which hear, love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you....

“But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil” (Luke 6:27 – 28, 35, Sermon on the Plain).



Christlike ideal of love and forgiveness toward enemies as well as friends

Love and forgiveness form the nucleus of the Christ teachings. Far more than just a noble ideal, the principle of love is verily the manifestation of God in His creation. The universe endures by a play between good and evil. The effect of evil, delusion, is to divide and obscure and cause inharmony. Love is the attracting power of Spirit that unites and harmonizes. The vibratory force of God's love, consciously directed by man, neutralizes the power of evil. Hate, anger, revenge, are offspring of the evil force and thus serve to reinforce the evil vibration.

The millenniums of resistance of evil by retaliation in kind have never succeeded in eradicating the scourge of enmity from man's heart. God could instantly destroy evildoers; but instead, He uses love to coax created beings back to Him. In the simple words, "Love your enemies," Jesus urged man to cooperate with God in this divine plan of redemption: to love one's neighbors, and to have a place in one's love for enemies as well. A wise man beholds in the circumference of his cosmic love a galaxy of friends and also those who consider themselves to be his enemies. Naughty or good, all people are equally God's children.

Those who, under the influence of passion, think antagonistically toward others, forget that all human beings are made in the image of God and are brothers. Hatred and anger becloud the divine image in vengeful persons, and delusion makes them lose the consciousness of their inner divinity. Why give hate for hate and thus imitate the vileness of ignorance? One must cultivate the consciousness of justice and love by knowing how to separate the God-image in the soul of a person from the evil in his ego expression. Just as the subtle vibratory ether is present in dark places and in the sunlight also, so one learns to recognize God in those who love him and also in those who hate him. To see God equally in friend and enemy is a testimony to one's spiritual realization.

One who extends his love to friends and enemies alike ultimately beholds the presence of the One Love everywhere—in flowers, animals, and especially in the souls of God's human children. In order to see this omnipresence of God, the devotee must behold Him not only through the open portal of friendship, but must tear away the dark screen of hate and behold His erstwhile hidden presence

even in the heart of enemies.

It is not necessary to mix with one's enemies. It is often better to love them from a distance, unless by acts of kindly association one's love can affect a change in those persons. If one does happen to come in contact with enemies, he should remember that it is his spiritual duty to do so in love, because God is in them trying to straighten out the crookedness in their hearts.

If one talks love as a matter of diplomacy to win over an enemy, but harbors enmity in his heart, that insincerity will not work for very long. The human heart is intuitive; it is not easy to deceive its intuitive perception. The heart must absolutely give up all manner of hatred because ill will, no matter how expertly controlled outwardly, travels through the ether into the heart of the person on which it is focused. Thinking love while talking love will surely mollify and change one's enemies, even if they do not immediately recognize or admit it. Love is a divine cleanser and a lastingly effective way of winning one's enemies. Hatred may temporarily suppress and put down an enemy, but he will still remain an enemy. The poison of hate increases by hatred and can be counteracted and neutralized only by the chemical of love.

Inimical persons burn themselves with hatred and anger, consuming their inner peace. One who returns their enmity likewise burns up his own inner equanimity, his peace which offers to his entire life absolute protection from the devastation wrought by human miseries. So to hate anyone is against one's own interest.

Without any expression or feeling of malice or sarcasm, a wronged person should just say within himself: "I forgive you." It is such a healing, elevating experience. That mental expression of love also travels through the ether into the heart of a wrongdoer. It is one of the most effective ways to change an enemy. To hate an enemy is to make him stronger, whereas his enmity is weakened by kindness until he may finally realize his fault.

Thus, Jesus says: "Bless them that curse you"—that is, wish good for those who wish evil for you. If, as often as anyone wishes evil on a person, that person responds by wishing good in return, the assailant cannot long retain his evil attitude against that well-wisher. It is ordinary to think that by retaliation hateful curses can be stopped; but even if the enemy is weak and outwardly cowed down, his hatred will grow all the more, just waiting for the next opportunity to ignite it. A curse for a curse cannot stop an enemy's hatred, but to love and bless

a malicious scorner is to place before him a good example that may serve to change his attitude.

Action speaks louder than words. Thus Jesus says, “Do good to them that hate you.” Not only should one mentally love a detractor, but actually do good to him. With no trace of a “holier-than-thou” attitude, sincere gestures of goodwill are reminders of the relation of divine brotherhood that is the unifying principle among all human beings.

God is ever merciful, solely because He considers all souls as His children, placing no conditional demands on them in return. So should God’s children try to act divinely toward one another without ulterior motives. That is what Jesus urged: “Help all, and you will feel the pleasure of heartening others; help all, because God is your Father and everyone is your kin. Love and help even your enemies in that spirit of divine brotherhood. And your wisdom shall be great, for God’s divine love shall grow within you; and by that you shall know you are not delimited mortals, but the children of the Highest.”

Even if one can in no way approach those who hate him in order to do good to them in some tangible expression, it is always possible to follow Jesus’ counsel to “pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you.” Pray to the omnipresent God that He bless them with freedom from their hatred. If one cannot take away the hatred from his enemies by example and loving-kindness, God can do so, for His omnipresence is in their heart and mind. By praying for one’s antagonists, one not only uses his own loving attitude but reinforces that with God’s power to heal the error-stricken. If prayer is sincere and strong, God will be moved to help change an enemy if the intervention of His grace is the best course for all concerned.

If one’s prayer to change his enemy’s attitude is not fulfilled, then the supplicant must know that God wants him to pass the test of unconditional love, even in the throes of persecution from his enemy’s lies, hateful talk, and evil actions. In His own time God can and will remedy all inharmonious conditions. One should continue to pray to God that one’s enemies may be forgiven and spared from suffering the otherwise inevitable results arising from their evil actions. That is the divine way to pray. God recognizes the spiritual nobility in trying to rescue brothers fallen into the pit of malicious behavior, and rewards with divine wisdom and love those souls who respond to them with Christlike understanding and actions.

Anyone who wants to know God must learn to love, as He does, His virtuous and sinful children alike. The Heavenly Father knocks with His love at the heart-doors of the vicious as well as the virtuous. The virtuous man, with his ears of wisdom, hears God's summons and opens eagerly the doors of devotion that God might enter; vicious persons, their consciousness raucous with error, are insensible to the Divine Visitation. God's infinite love, undeterred, keeps knocking just the same until that wondrous moment in the soul's evolution when at last the closed mental doors will open. Ordinarily, with time, a person forgets anyone who has turned indifferent or hostile to him; but God, with "unhurrying chase, and unperturbèd pace," never stops pursuing His estranged children who forget Him.¹⁸

Those who love their enemies are surely loved by the Heavenly Father and become like Him, for God "maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." Bhagavan Krishna similarly said: "He is a supreme yogi (one united to God) who regards with equal-mindedness...friends, enemies...the virtuous and the ungodly."¹⁹

As God loves all of His children, regardless of merit, so also "that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven," the true children of God open their hearts to all their human brethren. Though God's light of mercy shines equally on the good and the evil, and the rain of His helpful powers is showered on the just and the unjust alike, this is not to be understood that the good and bad are able to reflect in equal measure God's infinite grace. Charcoal cannot reflect the same amount of sunlight that the diamond does. Similarly, dark mentalities do not reflect God as do virtuous mentalities. But God does not deprive His unjust child because of his evil ways, but rather gives to His naughty child the same measure of love and opportunity so that he may have a chance to recover his forgotten divine image. The naughty child needs access to the light of God since he lives in self-created darkness. God is worried and anxious for His wicked child, but the evil son cannot utilize his Father's spiritual gifts unless he changes his froward ways. The prodigal son has to redeem himself by penitently making his way back to God; the good son who walks in God's light is already there.



“For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so?”

*“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect”
(Matthew 5:46 – 48).*

Parallel reference:

“For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again....”

“Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful” (Luke 6:32 – 34, 36, Sermon on the Plain).

Even the ordinary man returns love for love as a natural response, and salute for salute as a common courtesy. But more is expected of the children of God—to express in every nuance of behavior the soul’s qualities of perfection endowed to them by their Perfect Father. As God is kind and helpful to all, even to His evil children, so in order to know and feel what God is, it is expected of His good children that they be merciful and sympathetic like their Father.

Mortals behave like mortals by giving in the same measure what they receive, but they express their innate divinity when from the pure magnanimity of their soul they give love for hate, and goodness for evil. By the silent giving of love to

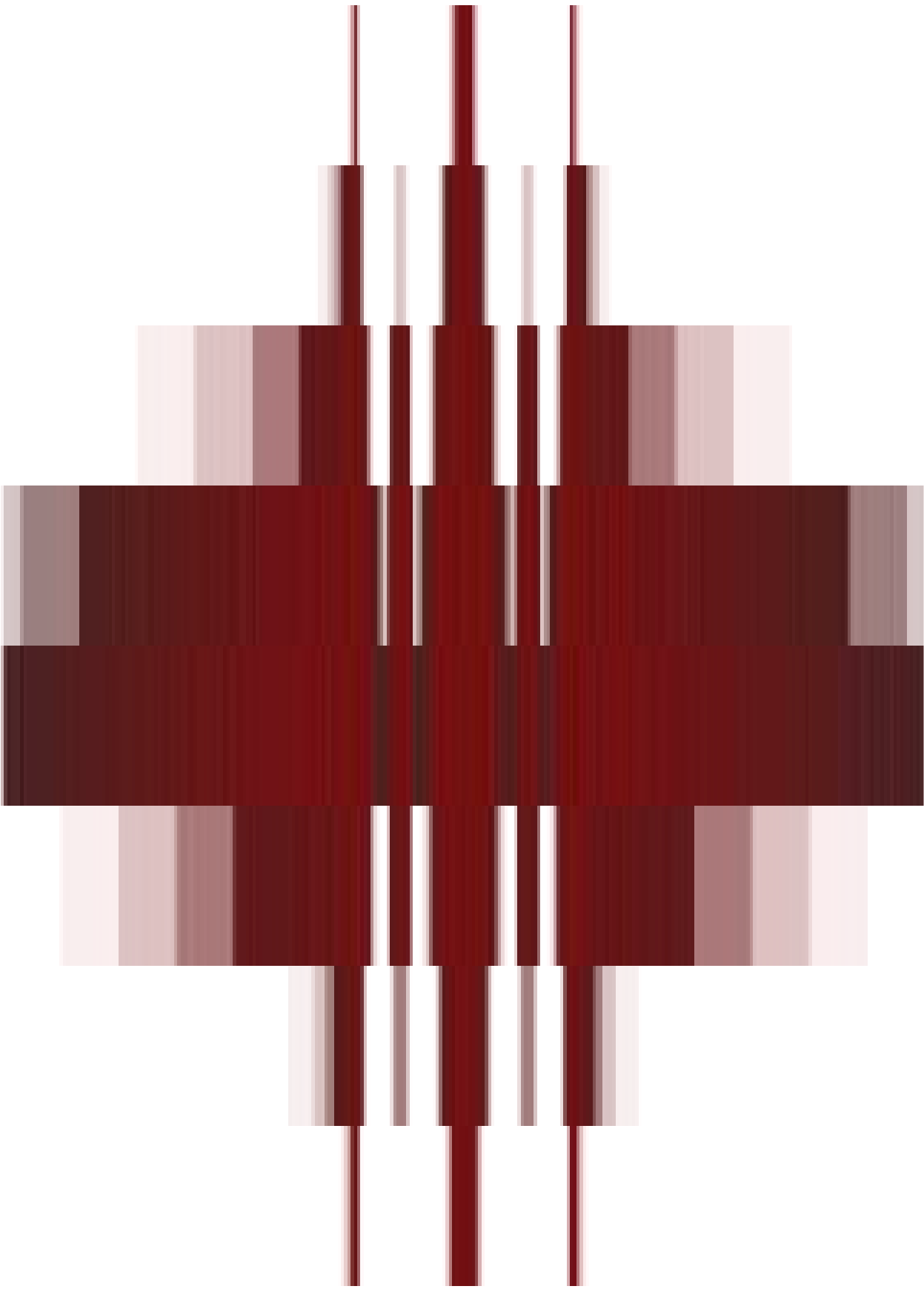
man, and lovingly talking to him through the whispers of his conscience, God is helping man's slow but sure emancipation. The more the self-deluded mortal responds to this freely given grace, the more he demonstrates Christ's command: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."



Discourse 28

The Lord's Prayer: Jesus Teaches His Followers How to Pray

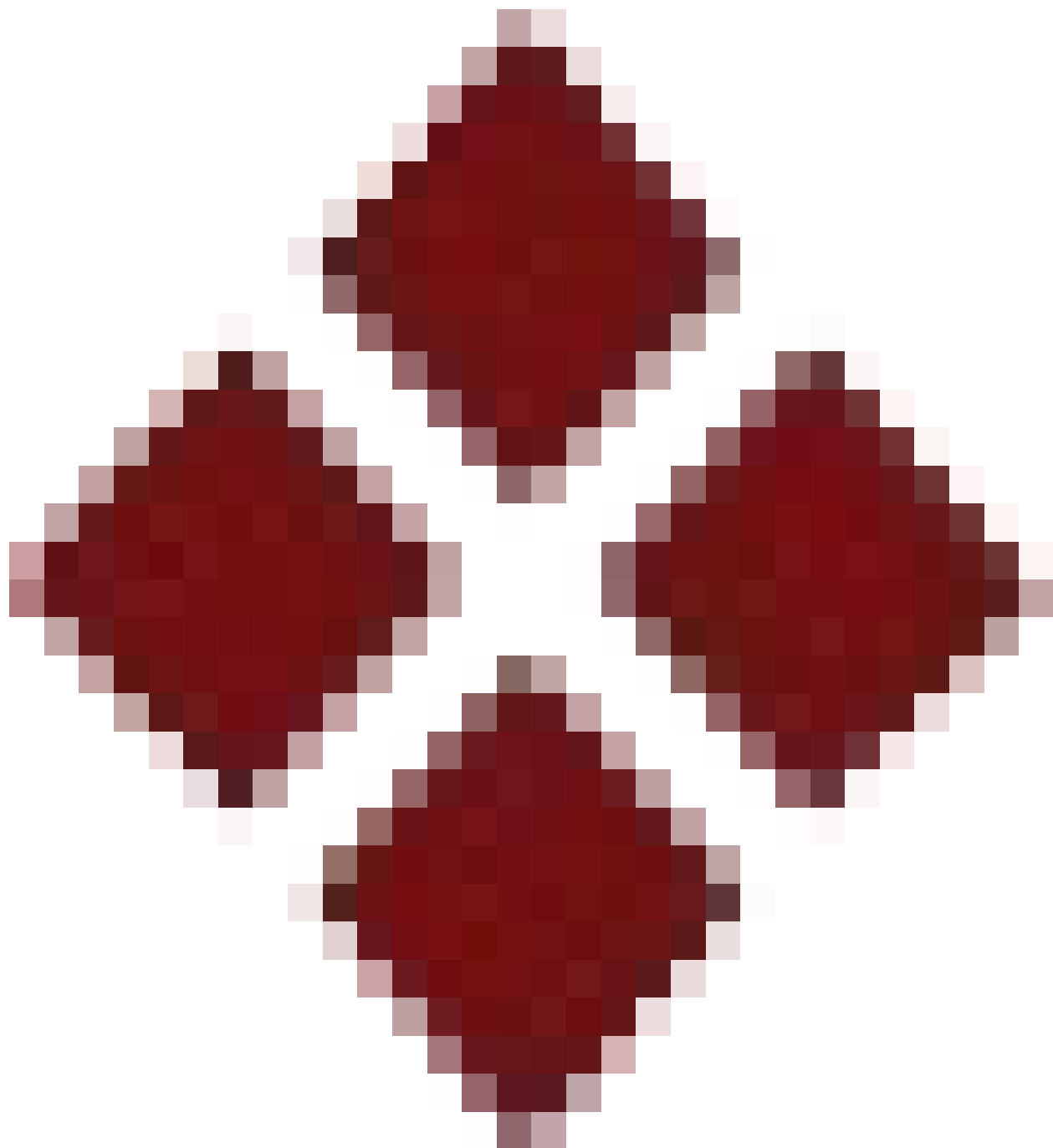
The Sermon on the Mount, Part III



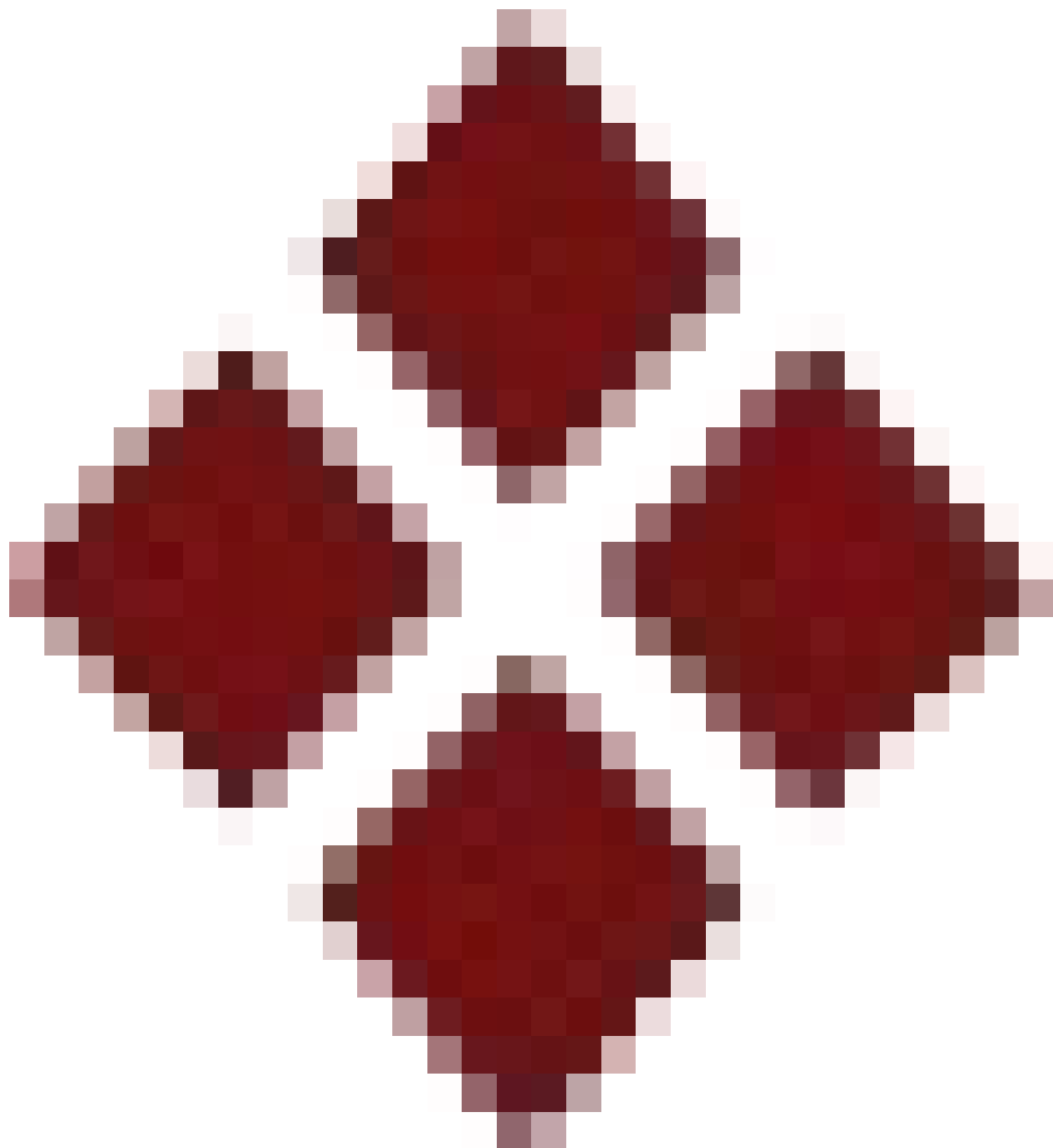
“Enter Into Thy Closet”: Practice Techniques for Attaining Inner Silence of Mental Interiorization



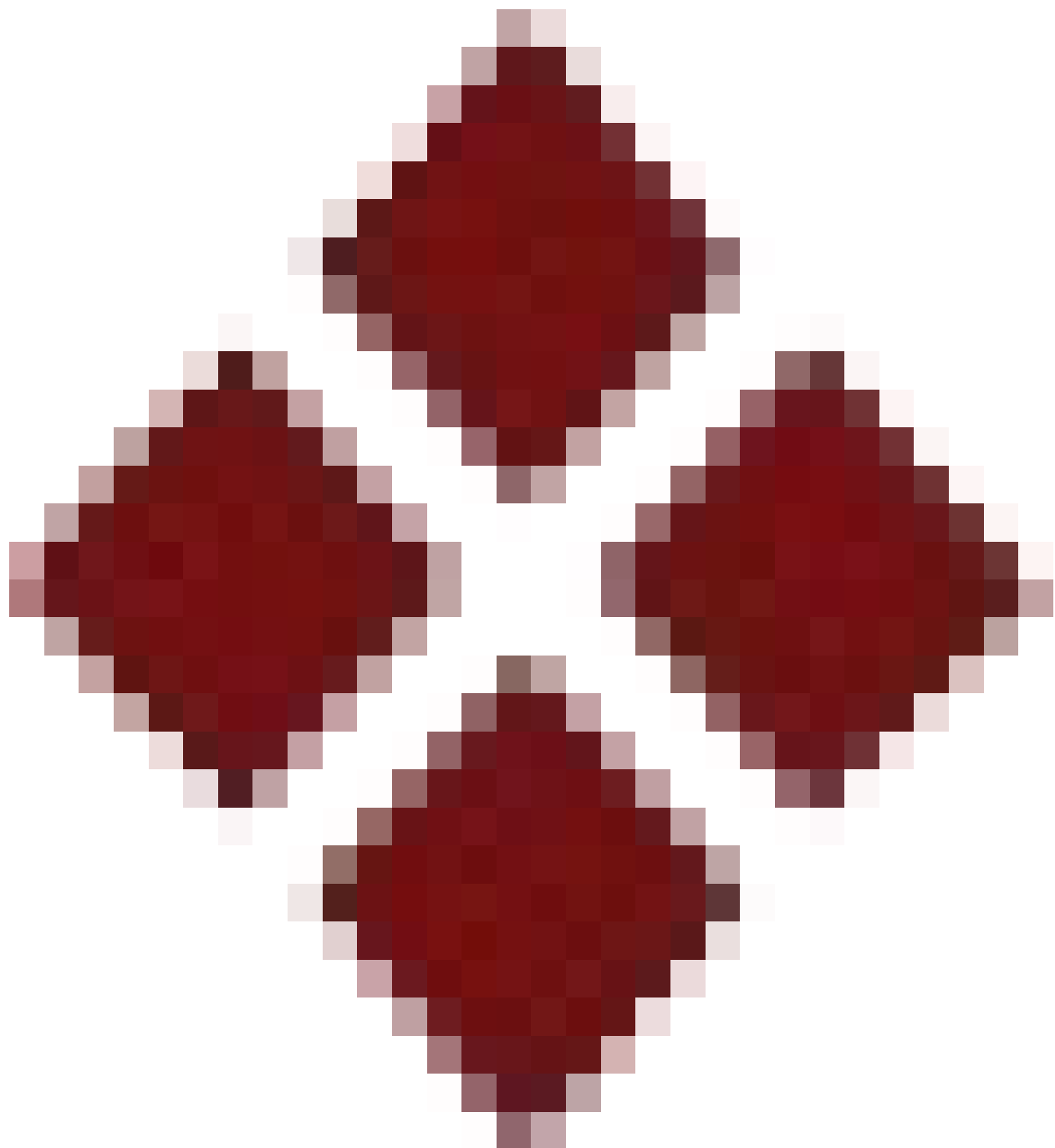
**Acquiring the Concentrated Attention and Devotion
That Make Prayer Effective**



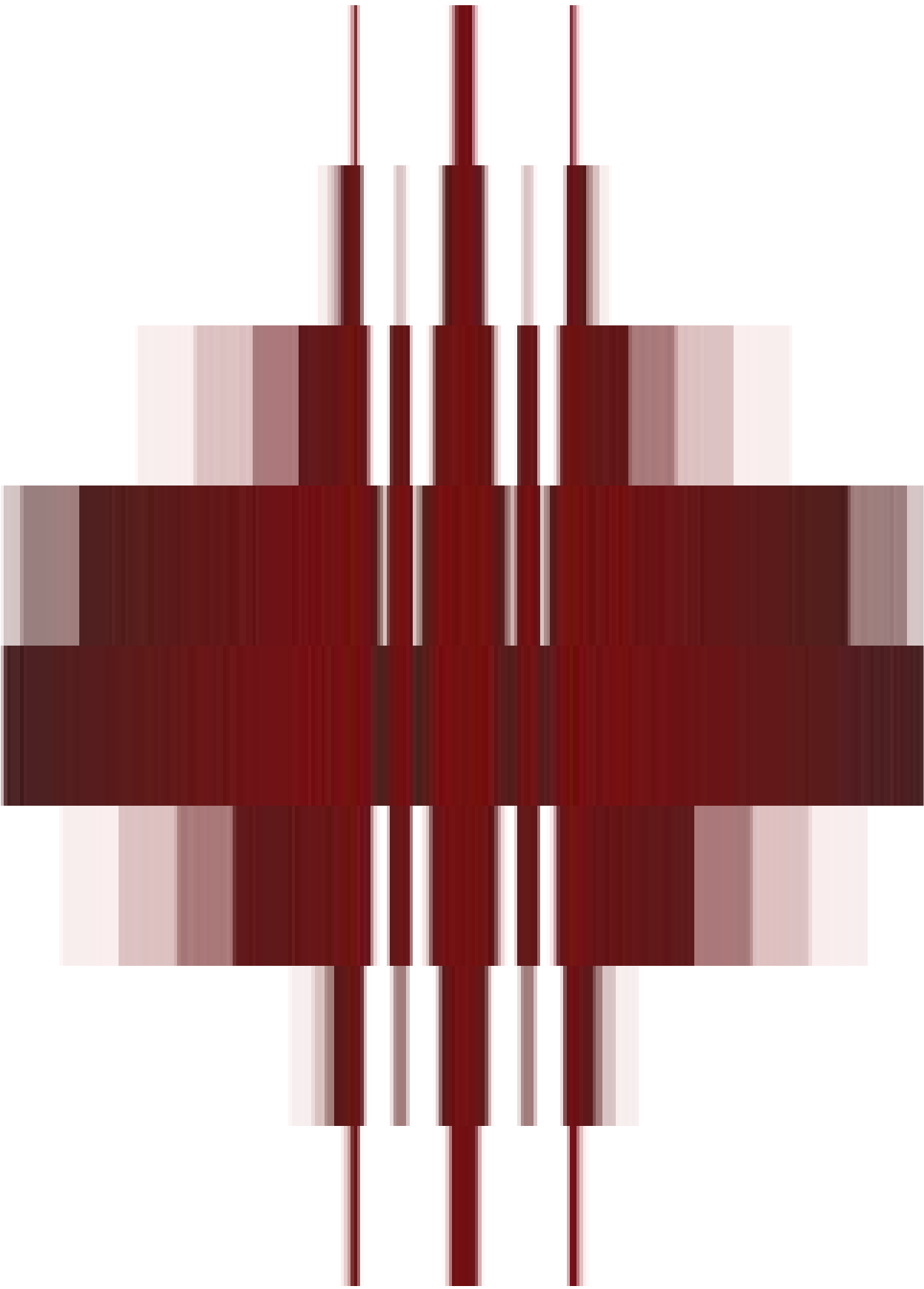
The Lord's Prayer: A Spiritual Interpretation



Suffering and Penance: A Perverted Notion of Spirituality



**The Single Eye, Through Which Man's Body and the
Cosmos Are Seen as Filled With God's Light**



“The Lord’s Prayer embodies a universal understanding of how the needs of body, mind, and soul may be fulfilled through man’s relationship with God.”

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“Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.

“Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.

“But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: that thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret Himself shall reward thee openly.

“And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.

“But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

“But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him.

“After this manner therefore pray ye:

“Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

“Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

“For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

“Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.

“But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

“The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

“But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!”

—Matthew 6:1 – 23



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Discourse 28

The Lord's Prayer: Jesus Teaches His Followers How to Pray

The Sermon on the Mount, Part III



“Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.

“Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.

“But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: that thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret Himself shall reward thee openly” (Matthew 6:1 – 4).

Even as God humbly shrouds Himself in utmost secrecy and anonymity while bestowing ceaseless munificence—sunlight, air, food, life, love, wisdom—so should His children learn from Him the gracious art of selfless, silent giving. Human beings, bound in body-confining egotism, need to expand their “I-me-mine” consciousness into divinely inclusive love for all—it is a primary lesson to be mastered in this school of mortal life.



Charity that expands one's consciousness versus that which feeds one's pride

Almsgiving is a material expression of the extension of one's feelings to others. But giving should be with a pure motive. In this series of verses, Jesus decries the use of charity—or any other religious act—to bolster one's pride. The Bhagavad Gita instructs man in the art of giving by differentiating those gifts that expand the consciousness of the giver from those that merely feed his sense of self-importance.¹ It is the spiritually degenerate individual, bereft of humility, who performs religious rites pretentiously in order to impress others. Hypocrites, who feign religiosity to gain honor and human attention, form the bad habit of using spiritual rites to acquire mundane praise instead of divine recognition. Praise received for the performance of praiseworthy deeds should serve as an impetus to perform greater spiritual deeds. Love of praise as an end in itself deviates the mind from God and centers it on the self-satisfaction of the ego.

Ostentatious givers of alms delude themselves with a false sense of superiority arising from ignorance, the conceit of personal ownership. But no human being owns anything. For the brief interlude in which man is a guest on God's earth, he is allowed the use of things—more or less according to the measure of his past karma, but always dependent upon Heaven's bounty. His own freewill-initiated actions, in this and past incarnations, earn his place in life; yet he could not get anything had God not anticipated man's needs and structured creation accordingly. It is by using the God-given gifts of intelligence, creative ability, and will power that man achieves his self-proclaimed wonders. In the final reckoning, all things are gifts of God, even though He makes man work for them that through the struggle of right endeavor he might hasten his evolution.

The evolution of even the most materially dynamic man is inconsiderable so long as he remains hidebound in self-centered concerns. Selfishness is a clamshell existence, tightly enclosing a soul in one body and one personality. Some people are so limited to their physical form and its sensations that they are little, if ever, aware of the feelings of others. Unselfishness and generosity make a person cognizant of the souls of others and the tremors of their consciousness. To serve others—by identifying their necessities as one's own and providing whatever one can in the way of material needs, psychological succor, or spiritual enlightenment—is wondrously expansive, uniting one's consciousness with the lives and hearts of others.

During the bestowal of gifts, the devotee should feel that he is serving the Indwelling Lord in the body-temples of others. Whatever God-gifted bounty he has received should be shared with God's needy children as an offering to the Father of all. Thus is God served as the extended Self in the selves of others.

It is the silent giver, presenting gifts to his brethren in secret, who receives the heavenly reward of feeling God's omnipresence in other hearts. Anyone who gives alms or words of wisdom to another and brags about it destroys the sanctity of his charitable act. To boast, "I gave..." or "I helped to redeem..." is not sanctity but sanctimony. A person who broadcasts his "piety" may receive material reward by gaining some indiscriminate admirers and some followers, but glorifying oneself will keep away wise friends and the all-wise God. The Heavenly Law does not give the reward of revelation to braggarts; the prating ego hears nothing of truth.

The braggadocio, with his desire for publicity, reaps some beneficial results from the good done to others by his bestowal of gifts; he is at least better than the miser. But the prideful giver remains limited in egotism, satisfied with its evanescent reward of the insincere applause of man. He thus denies himself the reward of Heaven, blessed expansion of self in the hearts of others. But gifts given in quiet humility joyously unite the heart of the giver with the hearts of the benefited, and with the omnipresence of the spirit of God.

The Lord is the supreme philanthropist, Bestower of all things on His mortal children—and to His good children He has even given Himself. Those liberated sons of God, one with the Infinite Giver, likewise offer whatever is available to make Him happy in the bodies of others. Everyone should embrace that example, sharing each day their kindness and at least something of their earthly good fortune with worthy, needy persons; and, on a broader scale, supporting the needs of worthy, divine causes, which benefit many.

Most people are willing to offer advice and sympathy; but when it comes to sharing their hard-earned money with others, they feel compelled to be "tightwads" with closed purse strings, believing only in family happiness—"us four and no more." A person of means who is worried about losing a hundred thousand dollars on the stock market may not stop to think of the many people who possess little or nothing at all. Some people never hesitate when it comes to buying a yacht or a new luxury car, but are miserly when it comes to giving to a legitimate needy cause. There they economize and feel righteous when donating

a token sum.

As one lovingly, naturally, joyously, remorselessly gives the best gifts to himself, without seeking publicity, so should one give to others without ostentation. Giving freely and quietly to others, one finds the divine law of supply secretly working in his life: When attachment to God is more than to God-given possessions, automatically a channel is opened through which His abundance flows.

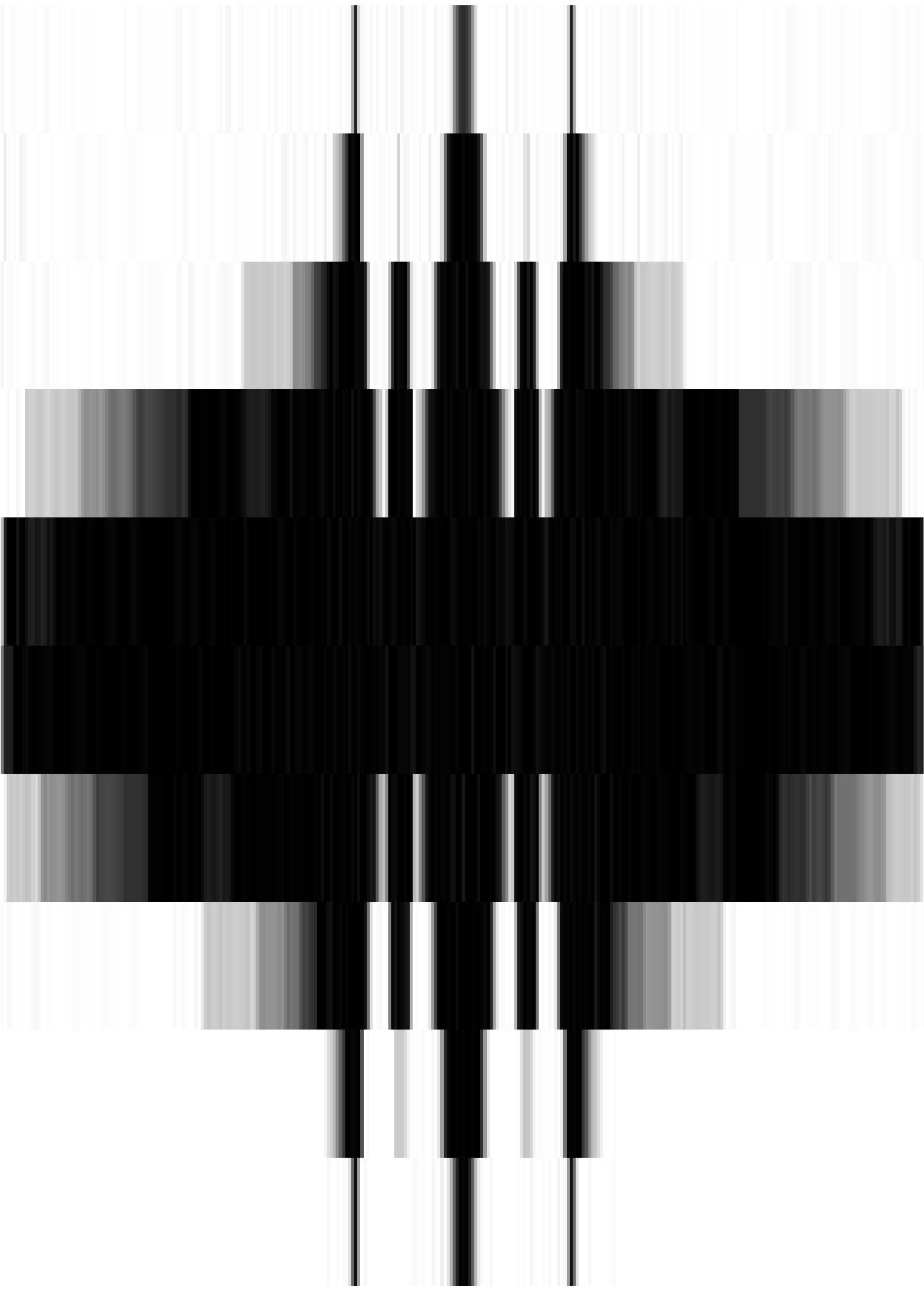
When giving to others with the right hand, or the right spirit, let not the left hand, or egotism, be conscious of it. Those who think of themselves as generous givers are not equal to those who give so openhandedly that they are hardly aware of their benevolence. If one has concern for others as he regards himself, the Spirit will reward him with the perception of Omnipresence—God's all-pervasive love and bliss sent openly into his heart.



“And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.

“But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly” (Matthew 6:5 – 6).

True prayer is an expression of the soul, an urge from the soul. It is a hunger for God that arises from within, expressing itself to Him ardently, silently. Vocalized prayers are wonderful only if the attention is on God, and if the words are a call to God out of the abundance of the soul's desire for Him. But if an invocation becomes merely a part of an ecclesiastical ceremony, performed mechanically—concentration on the form of religion rather than its spirit—God does not much like that kind of prayer.



Prayer that touches the heart of God

One who prays loudly is liable to become hypocritical if his attention is focused on the practiced intonation of his voice falling on his auditory nerves—words spoken for effect, to attract and impress others. This is the tendency of many otherwise sincere spiritual people—to show off their love for God, rather than strive to touch the heart of God alone. Unless there is simultaneously an increasing intensity of zeal and love for God, praying aloud to be heard by others can be spiritually corruptive. No matter how wonderful it is within, spiritual realization loses something of its intensity when it is expressed outwardly.

When a devotee's prayer comes from deep within, so that the words are tipsy with love for God, then others around him consciously enjoy his contact with God and drink of the contagion of love for Him. But if the devotee is not very strong, those in his presence may steal away that love from him. They begin to praise him who seems so devout; and if he feels flattered that because he has inspired others, therefore he must be great, then he becomes weakened—his love is stolen from his heart, and pride takes its place.

Sometimes, no loud or even whispered words can I pray; for when deep feeling for God possesses you, you cannot utter any words. That love is secret within, an inner communion, silently giving its oblations into the Spirit. Like a sacred fire, that love burns the darkness from around the soul, and in that light one beholds the mightiness of Spirit.

Jesus admonished those who pray not as a sincere heart-offering to God, but as a public display of devotion to manufacture a reputation of holiness. They are hypocrites, for their egotistical motives are not synchronized with their pious actions. It is reprehensibly sinful to use God and prayer to secure the devotion of people under false pretenses. By inspiring simple, trusting people in the thought of goodness, such individuals may reap a reward of earthly power and the devotion of blind followers; but God, who sees the heart and never responds to false prayers, keeps Himself remote. Hypocrites who make a show of spirituality to garner temporary prestige are foolish, for they forfeit the eternal, all-redeeming blessing of God won by a true heart's private romance with the Divine.

Most houses of worship practice demonstrative prayer. It provides some inspiration and devotion; but insofar as it keeps the attention externalized, it is, in itself, ineffective in producing actual God-communion. Public or congregational prayer should be supplemented by deep, secret, soul-loving prayers in the quietness of seclusion.

As the parlor awakens social consciousness, the library fosters reading consciousness, and the bedroom suggests sleeping, so everyone should have a room or a screened-off corner, or a well-ventilated closet, used exclusively for the purpose of silent meditation. Traditional homes in India always have such a shrine for daily worship. A sanctuary in one's home is very effective in fostering spirituality, because unlike a place of public worship it becomes personalized, and also because it is accessible for spontaneous devotional expressions throughout the day. The children in India are not forced to frequent the shrine, but are inspired to do so by the parents' example. In these home temples, families learn to find the soul peace hidden behind the veil of silence. Here they introspect, and in prayer and meditation recharge themselves with the inner power of the soul, and in divine communion attune themselves to discriminative wisdom by which they may govern their lives according to the dictates of conscience and right judgment. Interiorized prayer brings forth the realization that peace and service to divine ideals are the goal of life, without which no amount of material acquisition can assure happiness.



“Enter into thy closet” : Practice techniques for attaining inner silence of mental interiorization

Modern religion needs to rediscover and emphasize the individual search for God, the method of divine romanticism in seclusion. Important to this practice is knowledge of scientific spiritual techniques for actually communing with the Lord in the inner silence of mental interiorization. Usually, even persons who physically sequester themselves for prayer and devotions are so hounded by their restless thoughts that they fail to enter the soul sanctuary of concentrated communion, where real worship becomes possible.

Those who pray without knowing the scientific art of interiorization often complain that God does not respond to their entreaties. Such devotees may be compared to the person who retires to his study and requests a friend to call him on the telephone, but then keeps the line ceaselessly occupied with other incoming and outgoing calls. Try as he may to respond, the friend is continually thwarted by a “busy” signal!

The mind of the ordinary person is uncontrollably active with incoming messages from the five senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch; and with directing outgoing messages to the motor nerves in response. True concentration, whether on prayer or God or anything else, is impossible so long as the mind is thus outwardly distracted. Most persons experience surcease from the sensory tumult only in the state of sleep, when the mind automatically stills the flow of the life energy that activates the sensory and motor nerves. The science of yoga meditation teaches techniques of controlling the life energy consciously, enabling one to disconnect the mind at will from the intrusion of the senses. This produces not an unconscious oblivion, but a blissful transference of identity from the false reality of the body and sensory world to the truth of one’s being: the supernal soul, made in God’s image. In that interiorized silence wherein the soul’s divine sonship is no longer squandered in the prodigal outward consciousness, true prayer and divine communion with the Heavenly Father are not only possible, but dynamically effective.²

God hears all prayers; but His children do not always hear His response. In every age, those who succeeded in their efforts to commune with God were those who found entry into the inner silence.³ That is why Jesus taught: “But thou, when

thou prayest, enter into thy closet (withdraw the mind into the silence within), and when thou hast shut thy door (the door of the senses), pray to thy Father which is in secret (in the inner transcendent divine consciousness); and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly (shall bless you with the ever new Bliss of His Being).”

In all of man’s pursuits he is seeking the fulfillment of love and joy. The motive behind the evil ways of even the utmost sinner is that he expects to attain therefrom something that will lead to happiness. God is that happiness. But the urge to seek Him is drowned in the urge to indulge in sense pleasures. When that sensory compulsion disappears, then the craving for God automatically appears.

Sensations pouring in through the sensory nerves keep the mind filled with myriad noisy thoughts, so that the whole attention is toward the senses. But God’s voice is silence. Only when restless thoughts cease can one hear the voice of God communicating through the silence of intuition. That is God’s means of expression. In the devotee’s silence God’s silence ceases. For the devotee whose consciousness is inwardly united with God, an audible response from Him is unnecessary—intuitive thoughts and true visions constitute God’s voice. These are not the result of the stimuli of the senses, but the combination of the devotee’s silence and God’s voice of silence.

God has been with His children on earth all the time, talking to them; but His voice of silence has been drowned out by the noisiness of their thoughts: “Thou didst love me always, but I heard Thee not.” He has always been near; it is the consciousness of man that has been wandering away from Him.

In spite of man’s indifference and pursuit of sense pleasures, still God’s love abides, and always will. To know this, one must withdraw one’s thoughts from sensations and be silent within. Silencing the thoughts means tuning them in to God. That is when true prayer begins.

When the devotee is in tune with God, he will hear the divine Voice: “I have loved thee through the ages; I love thee now; and I shall love thee until thou comest Home. Whether thou knowest it or not, I shall always love thee.”

He speaks to us in silence, telling us to come Home.



*“But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him”
(Matthew 6:7 – 8).*



Acquiring the concentrated attention and devotion that make prayer effective

To repeat “My Lord, I love You,” countless times, sincerely, feelingly, so that with each utterance the devotee’s love and understanding of God grow deeper, is a sure method of contacting God through prayer. “Vain repetition” signifies praying aloud or mentally, “God, God, God,” while the background of the mind is occupied with something else—a vacation trip, a sumptuous dinner, how to make more money. This is using the name of God fruitlessly, ⁴ for He will never manifest Himself so long as He knows that other desires have precedence in the devotee’s heart and mind.

“Heathen” refers to persons who are engrossed in their bodies, their consciousness externalized in communion with the “gods” of sensory distractions rather than internalized in devoted worship of God “in spirit and in truth.” Their prayers are a mere physical practice of parroting or chanting the name of God with no iota of real thought about Him. Such prayers are little better than the automatic vocalizations of a parrot taught to repeat the name of God. If a young man carried a recording that played “I love you” and used it to express his love to his beloved, she would certainly say, “My dear friend, if you are trying to convince me of your love, it is in vain; you don’t mean it at all!”

An aunt of mine used beads to aid her constant repetition of prayers; no matter where she went, her fingers worked those beads. But after forty years of this practice, one day she confided to me that the Lord had never responded. Though her “prayers” may have numbered in the millions, her attention was everywhere but on God. I was glad for the opportunity to initiate her in Kriya Yoga and the true art of divine communion.

The Lord who knows each devotee’s innermost thoughts cannot be deceived by mechanically parroted prayers, no matter how polished their composition. It is better to offer a single, simple prayer from the heart—deeply, understandingly, and intensely—than a profusion of prayers consisting of thoughtless repetitions. Formulaic invocations with the mind absent creates hypocrisy, gratifying the ego with a sense of piety that in fact has little spiritualizing effect. To expect divine intervention “on demand” in answer to unthinking, unfeeling prayers is unscientific superstition.

Though God does not respond in the manner hoped for when offered such talkative, blindly repeated prayers, yet He cannot remain aloof or deny the true devotee who prays with sincerity, faith, and the determination never to give up. Elsewhere the New Testament conveys Jesus' teaching to "pray without ceasing."⁵ Unceasing prayer involves repetition—not vain or mechanical, but spiritualized with ever-increasing, thoughtful, heartfelt devotion. That devotee is sure to find divine contact who continuously keeps the mind on God, intensifying the thoughts of his prayer, unceasingly reining in the attention regardless of how many times it wanders away. The Gita similarly teaches: "On Me fix thy mind, be thou My devotee, with ceaseless worship bow reverently before Me. Having thus united thyself to Me as thy Highest Goal, thou shalt be Mine own."⁶

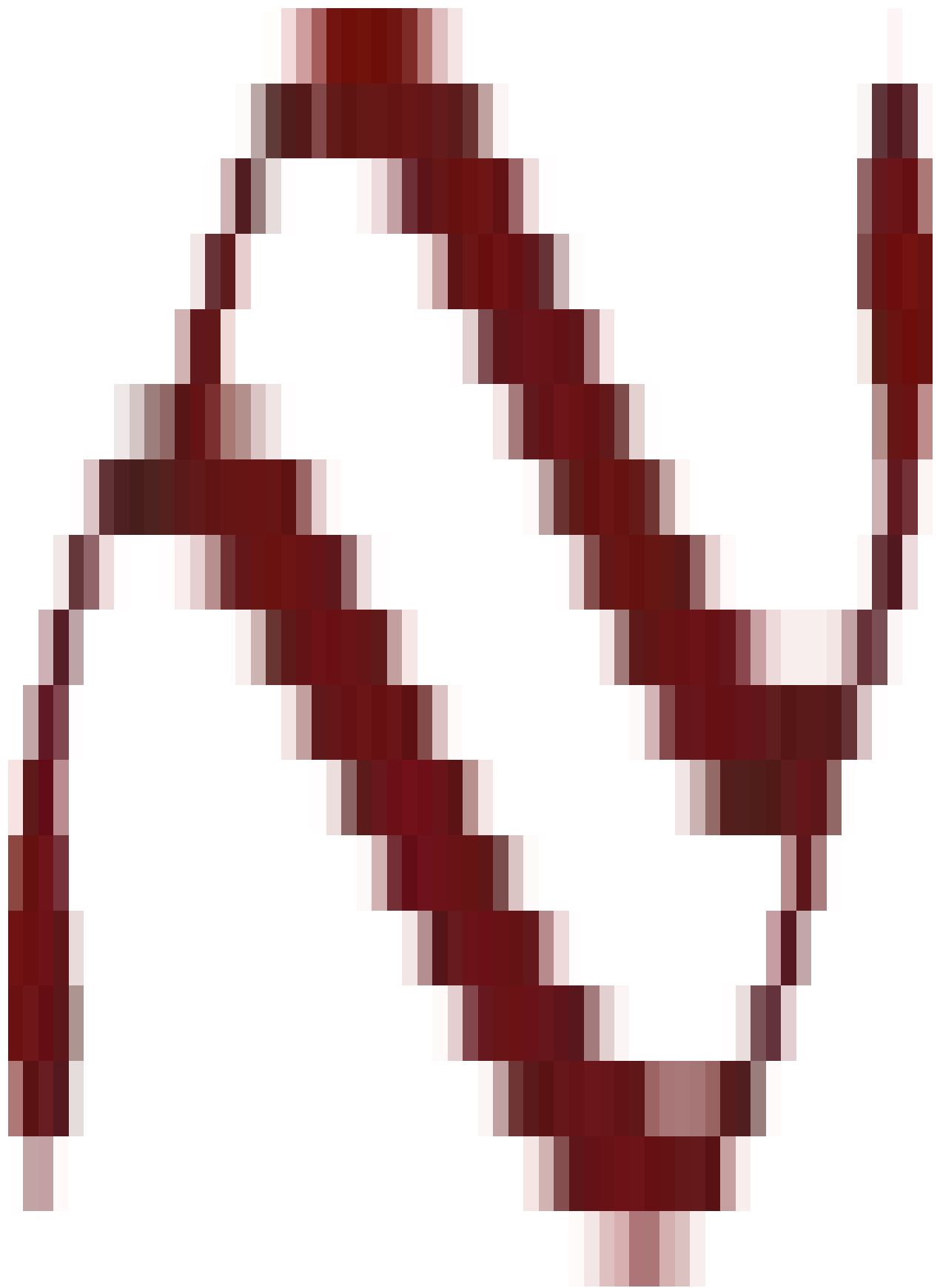
Prayers sent out soulfully once or many times, mentally or orally, bring a demonstrative response from God. To utter "God" with devotion, and increase the concentration and devotion with each repetition of His name, is to plunge the mind deeper and deeper in the ocean of His presence until one reaches fathomless depths of divine peace and ecstatic joy, the sure proof that one's prayers have touched God.

Prayer with devotion is a wonderful means of opening oneself to the freely flowing blessings of God, a necessary link of man's life to the Infinite Source of all benefaction. But it takes a long time for prayer to be effective when the mind is outwardly roaming. That is why one hour of Kriya Yoga meditation can bestow more effect than twenty-four hours of ordinary prayer. Those who practice the technique of Kriya deeply for even a little while, and sit long in meditation in the resultant stillness, find that the force of their prayer is doubled, trebled, a hundred times more powerful. If one enters the inner temple of silence and worships before the altar of God with prayer and invocation of His presence, He comes quickly. When the consciousness is withdrawn from the sensory surface of the body and its surroundings and centralized in the cerebrospinal shrines of soul perception, that is the most effective time to pray.

Jesus described as "vain" the supplications of body-bound "heathens" with their disunion from God's indwelling Essence. Ordinary man has so entangled himself in the finite law of cause and effect that it is not simple to break his consequential karmic bonds. God does not arbitrarily contravene the orderly workings of His universe. Man must work to harmonize his life and actions with God's laws, and thereby initiate favorable new effects to neutralize past errors.

However, the devotee who by pure love, faith, and divine knowing born of meditation reestablishes his consciousness of oneness with the Infinite Father transcends finitude and its laws, instantly receiving God's grace, His mitigating unconditional love. To reclaim one's soul status as a child of God is thus the sovereign way to fulfillment of prayers. Approaching the Lord not as a mortal beggar but as a loving divine son, the devotee knows that whatever the Father possesses, that also is his own.

Devotees who love God deeply, knowing He is their loving Father, never feel they have to beg Him for their daily necessities, for He will give to them what is needful without their even having to ask. God does not want His children to approach Him as beggars. Beggary prayers express doubt as to one's divine birthright as an heir to His infinite kingdom. A beggar gets a beggar's share, but a son has the right to a son's share. That is the consciousness in which to approach the Heavenly Father: He is ever ready to provide, if only His children would make themselves able to receive by fully realizing their immortal kinship with Him.



“After this manner therefore pray ye:

“Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

“Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen” (Matthew 6:9 – 13).

Parallel reference:

And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.”

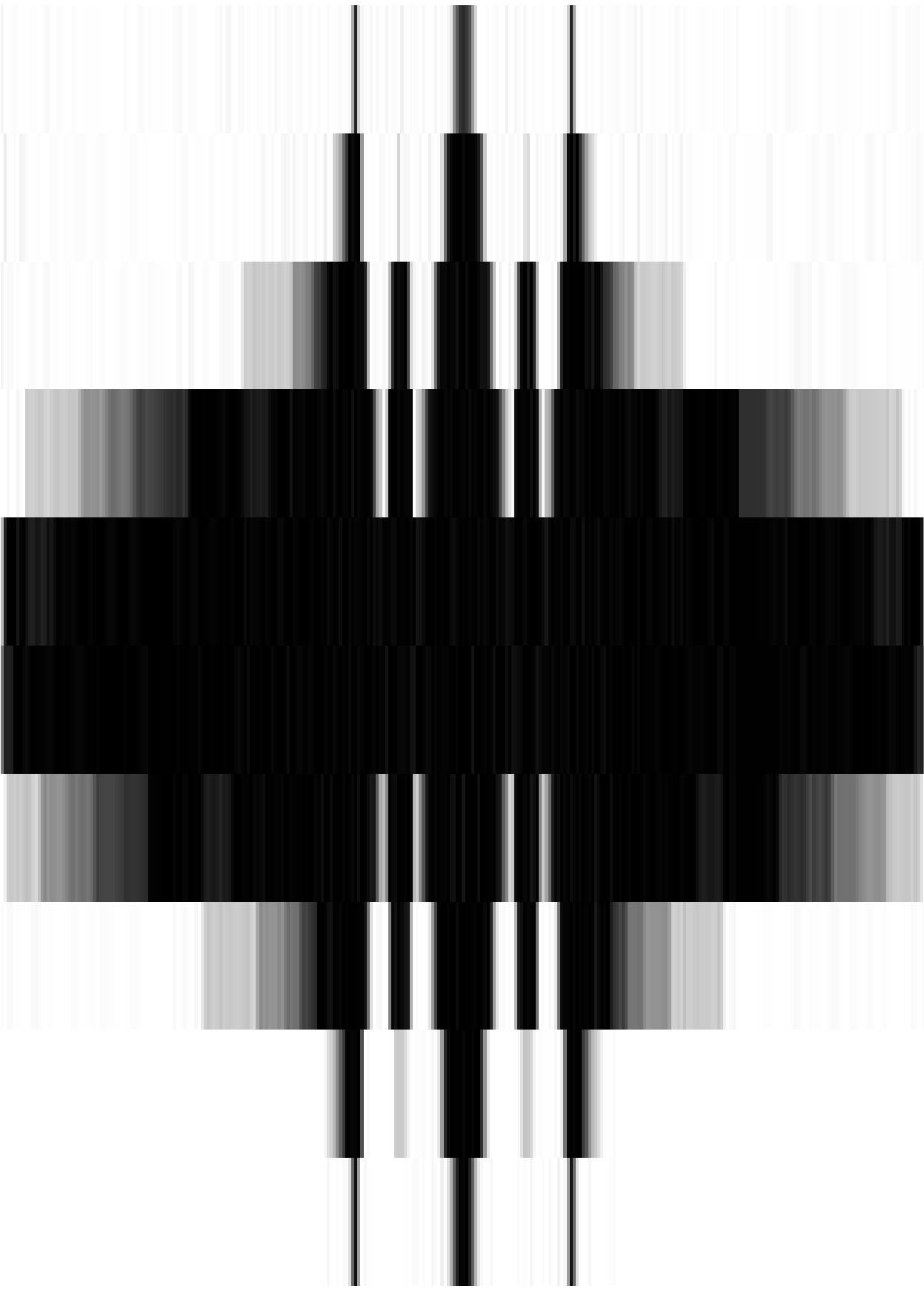
And he said unto them, “When ye pray, say,

“Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.

“Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us.

“And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil” (Luke 11:1 – 4).⁷

Jesus came on earth to remind man that the Lord is the Heavenly Father of all, and to show His children the way back to Him. The way of effective prayer, he taught, is to banish diffidence and speak to God with joyous expectancy as to a devoted father or mother. For every human being, the Lord feels a love unconditional and eternal, surpassing even the sweetest human parental solicitude. This is implicit in Jesus’ instruction to pray to “Our Father”—a Father who cares personally for each of His children.



The Lord's Prayer: a spiritual interpretation

Jesus gave a model prayer for both worldly people and spiritual people: The highly devout individual wants nothing from God but His love, and spiritual development; the materially minded person seeks God's help for all-round success and well-being in earthly life, including a modicum of spiritual achievement. "The Lord's Prayer" embodies a universal understanding of how the needs of body, mind, and soul may be fulfilled through man's relationship with God. The simple eloquence and spiritual depth of Jesus' words inspired in me the following interpretive perception:⁸

"When you pray, address God from your heart with the full attention of your mind; and in the manner I have shown to you, say:

"Our Father Cosmic Consciousness, Fountain of the consciousness of all, present in the vibrationless region of Heavenly Bliss and hidden in the depths of Heavenly Intuition, may Thy Name be glorified on earth. May Thy hallowed Name, the cosmic vibrations emanating from Thee in earthly manifestations, be consecrated for cultivating Thy consciousness and not material consciousness. Let Thine absolute royal consciousness come forth and appear in human consciousness. May Thy spiritual kingdom come and be substituted for the material kingdom of earthly consciousness. Let Thy wisdom-guided will be the guiding force of deluded human beings on earth, even as Thy will is followed by angels and liberated souls in the heavenly astral realms.

"Give us our daily bread, the physical, mental, and spiritual manna that nourishes our bodies, minds, and souls: food, health, and prosperity for the body; efficiency and power for the mind; love, wisdom, and bliss for the soul.

"Forgive, Thou, our faults, O Lord, and teach us likewise to forgive the faults of others. As we forgive a brother who is indebted to us and forget his obligation, forgive us, Thy children, for our sins of not remembering our indebtedness to Thee—that we owe our health, our life, our soul, everything to Thee.

"Lead us not into temptation, even by way of testing our limited spiritual power. And leave us not in the pit of temptation wherein we fell through the misuse of Thy given reason. But if it is Thy will to test us when we are stronger, then, Father, make Thyself more tempting than temptation. Help us that by our own

effort, through Thy spiritual force within us, we may be free from all misery-making, physical, mental, and spiritual evils.

“Teach us to behold the earth as ruled not by material forces, but by Thy Kingdom’s power and glory which abide forever. We bow to Thee through our contact with Thee as the Holy Cosmic Vibration of Aum, Amen.”

In Jesus’ words, “Hallowed be Thy name,” is the recognition that though this earth came from God’s divine vibration, it is yet to be consecrated by His name, or pure holy vibrations, because of the wickedness of the people who reject that sacred presence among them. As God’s bliss and wisdom are the only kingly powers that exist in the transcendence of Cosmic Consciousness, so in the words “Thy kingdom come” Jesus prays that those absolute powers of God may manifest in human consciousness, which is erstwhile steeped in delusion. Jesus also prays, “Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven”: As the angels and divine souls in the heavenly realms are in tune with the wisdom of God’s will, so also might earthly people willingly be guided by God’s wisdom, rather than by the rationale of their delusion-encapsulated ego.

“Give us this day our daily bread”: It might seem trifling to include a plea for bread when praying to the Almighty; yet in those days there was much poverty among the masses; they often had little to eat. Jesus knew he could not very well expect the people to hearken to a spiritual message that did not address their mundane concerns as well—a person with a hungry stomach has little incentive to strive for spiritual realization.

In any case, Jesus was referring to an all-inclusive sustenance for body, mind, and soul, not merely physical bread. He had said, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”⁹ Man cannot live solely by material means. Every moment of his existence he is dependent on the life force flowing from God’s creative Cosmic Vibration, His “word,” and on the inherent wisdom and bliss of the omnipresent Christ Consciousness that supports his own consciousness. The more attuned one is to this divine vitality and wisdom, the more he is able to draw unto himself the fulfillment of his physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual needs. So man’s first prayer should be for the spiritual bread of contact with God’s Bliss, Wisdom, and Love, which alone feeds the soul; then efficiency for the mind in order to accomplish one’s worthwhile goals; and lastly, material prosperity adequate to meet one’s physical needs.



A prayer for self-

control, mastery of temptation, and overcoming delusion

“Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil”: In these words, Jesus almost seems to make God responsible when man finds himself in the throes of temptation, having been purposively led into that predicament by his Heavenly Father. In a way it is true. God is the maker of delusion, so in that sense He is a tempter. But it would be wrong to think that God, with His wisdom, would lead mortals, who are poorly equipped with wisdom, into temptation just to test their response. That would not be fair. God is not a friendly prankster tempting man with a world of relentless enticements that may harm him. Good and evil are the light and shadows that create the contrasts necessary to produce God’s cosmic motion picture. The white purity of goodness demonstrates its virtue on the dark background of evil. God’s children are tested by this duality of maya-delusion to develop the wisdom to distinguish between good and evil, and the will to overcome all tests and thereby be free from Satan’s cat-and-mouse game of temptation.

The Lord could easily countermand the influence of satanic temptation, but to do so would negate man’s free will and make him a puppet. The intrigue of God’s drama of creation is to see if perchance His children will choose Him over the allurements of His cosmic show—not from any compulsion on His part, but solely of their own freely chosen response to His love. He wants His mortal reflections to enjoy the grand drama in this cosmic movie house with an unchanging remembrance of their innate divinity. To prove that divine nature is to pass successfully through trials and temptations that teach wayward man to bring out and manifest in every condition of his life the hidden God-identity of his soul. The Lord knows that His children will ultimately assert the power of Spirit within them to vanquish the power of temptation.

So when Jesus prayed “lead us not into temptation,” he intended no indictment of the Lord as having any part in man’s miseries. Rather, he expressed man’s need to supplicate God for help in overcoming life’s unavoidable delusions: “Leave us not in the pit of temptation wherein we fell through the misuse of Thy given reason.” Man falls headlong into the abyss of evil when he does not use properly the faculties of God-given free choice. Satan snares the unwary with

cosmic delusion, subverting reason and will with ignorance. That is how he so successfully obstructs God. Thus Jesus prayed that the Heavenly Father deliver every soul from the evil enthrallment of cosmic delusion.

The Bible says, “God made man in His own image”;¹⁰ but when one looks in the mirror he sees anything but God! Every night man becomes a god when he dumps his body consciousness in sleep; and every day he chooses to be a devil. What can the Father do? When man puts on mortal garb he should remember his divinity and not in any way ascribe mortal weakness to his soul. That is what the scriptures of India say. In the morning upon awakening, impress on the consciousness: “I am just coming out of Spirit. I am Spirit now; and I shall be Spirit evermore.” But when one has a headache, he quickly forgets his sublimity and feels very mortal indeed. If man remembers at all times his true Self, he becomes free again. Simple but true. By continuous affirmation, associating with the wise, studying the scriptures, and above all by meditation in which the conscious dream of mortal limitation is completely dissolved in the superconscious perception of the soul, the persevering devotee will know he is a god. Divine communion restores man to his original Self. He realizes complete satisfaction in all goodness in his soul, and that to crave any tempting offerings of the senses would, to his heartbreak, eclipse the incomparable divine joy.

Self-control is the master of temptation. It does not speak highly of the human race when man acts like less evolved creatures. Even beasts behave more wisely, being guided by instinct. Only in the company of human beings do they learn to live unnaturally. There is no evil in them, because their actions have no discriminative freewill motivations. Man is spiritually bound to make choices between right and wrong—beneficial or harmful. Unless he develops self-control, he will act unwisely when tempted, even against his better judgment.

Many learn self-control only after getting burned in the enticing flames of harmful indulgences. It is better to avoid painful lessons by observation of consequences inflicted on others, by obedience to spiritual teachings, and by wise discrimination. Without discriminative self-control the refined beauty of virtue is overshadowed by the gaudy tinsel of the senses.

He who says temptation is not charming lies. By temptation man is blithely led into trouble because of the hypnotic allure of evil. No one would indulge in vices if they did not give pleasure. The drug addict, the alcoholic, the sex addict, the indiscriminate overeater, had a good time indulging their habit, but at the cost of

slowly killing their happiness and themselves.

Temptation is the undue influence on the senses of something alluring that one thinks is harmless, but isn't. It is the desire to have a moment's pleasure, disregarding its future ill effects.

As counterfeit coins have no value but may be hard to differentiate from the genuine article, likewise it takes discrimination to know the difference between pleasure derived from attractive but worthless vices and real happiness, which is the valuable worth of virtue. Sincere prayer to God for help in the right use of reason and will weakens the confounding effect of delusion and prevents wrong choices between good and evil. The saints define as evil anything, no matter how nice it seems, that is subversive to God-contact and the expression of the soul's qualities, which produce true happiness.

The joy of God-communion, once tasted, is more tempting than all mundane temptations. If man tempts himself with that true pleasure, the temptation of the senses will wane. I have always prayed, "Lord, why don't You reveal Yourself in the very beginning and then there will be no suffering from seeking pleasure in harmful actions?" Because God is the supremely charming experience, it is only when man does not have that comparison that evil temptation has power. Would anyone eat rotten cheese if he had good cheese? Would anyone prefer suffering to joy? No. Man yields to temptation because of the delusion that it will bring happiness. Criminals think they will get happiness from money they steal; but they find that crime does not pay. Neither does succumbing to the temptations of the senses.

Sense perceptions are natural and necessary to man's conscious physical existence; the relentless predators of his happiness and well-being are the sensuous actions that arise from perceptions and that are ungoverned by discrimination. The senses of hearing, smell, and sight can usually be overtaxed with little ill effect. Few people are foolish enough to strain their eyes to the point of blindness. No one smells flowers or perfumes long enough to cause death. Unless the volume of sound is excessive, people do not make themselves deaf by continuously listening to good music. However, the sense of sight may be baited by attractions that result in wrong judgments and misery. The sense of hearing may mislead the weak-willed by receptivity to dulcet tones of flattery, or harsh vibrations that arouse anger. The sense of smell can stand much abuse without retaliation, but it is a powerful means of stimulating memory and habit

impulses and sexual arousal.

Dreadful consequences follow when the sense of taste or touch is overtaxed. How easy it is, when catering to the palate, to overeat or to make unhealthful choices in food, which causes disease and hastens death. How easy it is, when enslaved by desires of the flesh, to succumb to physical temptations and indiscretions that bring ill health, satiety, social ostracism, matrimonial disaster—all manner of baneful consequences. God created infinite Bliss to attract man back to his true soul-nature; Satan created the sexual pleasure of the flesh, the strongest urge in man, along with self-preservation, to keep him infatuated with his mortal existence.

The misuse of Nature's law of procreation can be overcome, not by hypocritical suppression, but only by moderation in marriage and by self-control and abstinence by the unmarried, and by joyous contact with God in meditation. When the joy of God, felt in meditation with stillness of thoughts and breath, remains continuously in the soul, physical temptation is subdued in a natural way through contrast with this higher consciousness of divine Bliss.

So it is right for the devotee to pray to God, "Do not put before my weak impulses the temptations of Your cosmic maya." Delusive sensory temptations are like seeds, and weak mental impulses are their favorite soil. When the seeds of temptation are in a fertile mind, they begin to grow. But if they are dried up by wisdom and the realization of God as the only reality, latent material desires will lose their compelling power.

Man is surrounded by fascinations that lure his interest and cloud his reason. No one is safe from giving in to wrong influences in a weak moment until all desires and habits of the past that are grooved in the brain cells are cauterized. The influence of those habits and impulses is very strong. When man submits to them he renounces his free will and good judgment. He should refuse subjugation.

Until man is free from compulsions, he cannot trust himself. He acts like an automaton, moving to the remote-control influence of his immediate environment and the company he keeps as they arouse his own innate latent tendencies. Of course, a person may become good or bad due to his own free choice, but in most cases his behavior and habits can be ascribed to prenatal causes or hidden postnatal effects of actions.

The Hindu scriptures teach that it is difficult to get away from the effects arising from physical, mental, moral, or spiritual errors made in this life or in past lives. The results of good and bad actions are stored in the superconscious and subconscious minds as seed tendencies, samskaras, ready to germinate and grow when the specific suitable opportunity arrives.

That is why man should ask the Maker of cosmic delusion to protect him from temptation: “Lead us not into places and conditions where our karmic impulses coincide with the temptations of the evils of the world. Lead us into the joyous experience of Thy contact.” Candlelight becomes lost in the light of the sun; the flicker of sense pleasures disappears in the conflagration of ecstasy. “O Lord, let us not be blinded by the proximity of the light of sense temptation so that we fail to see Thy divine effulgence spread silently over the universe.”

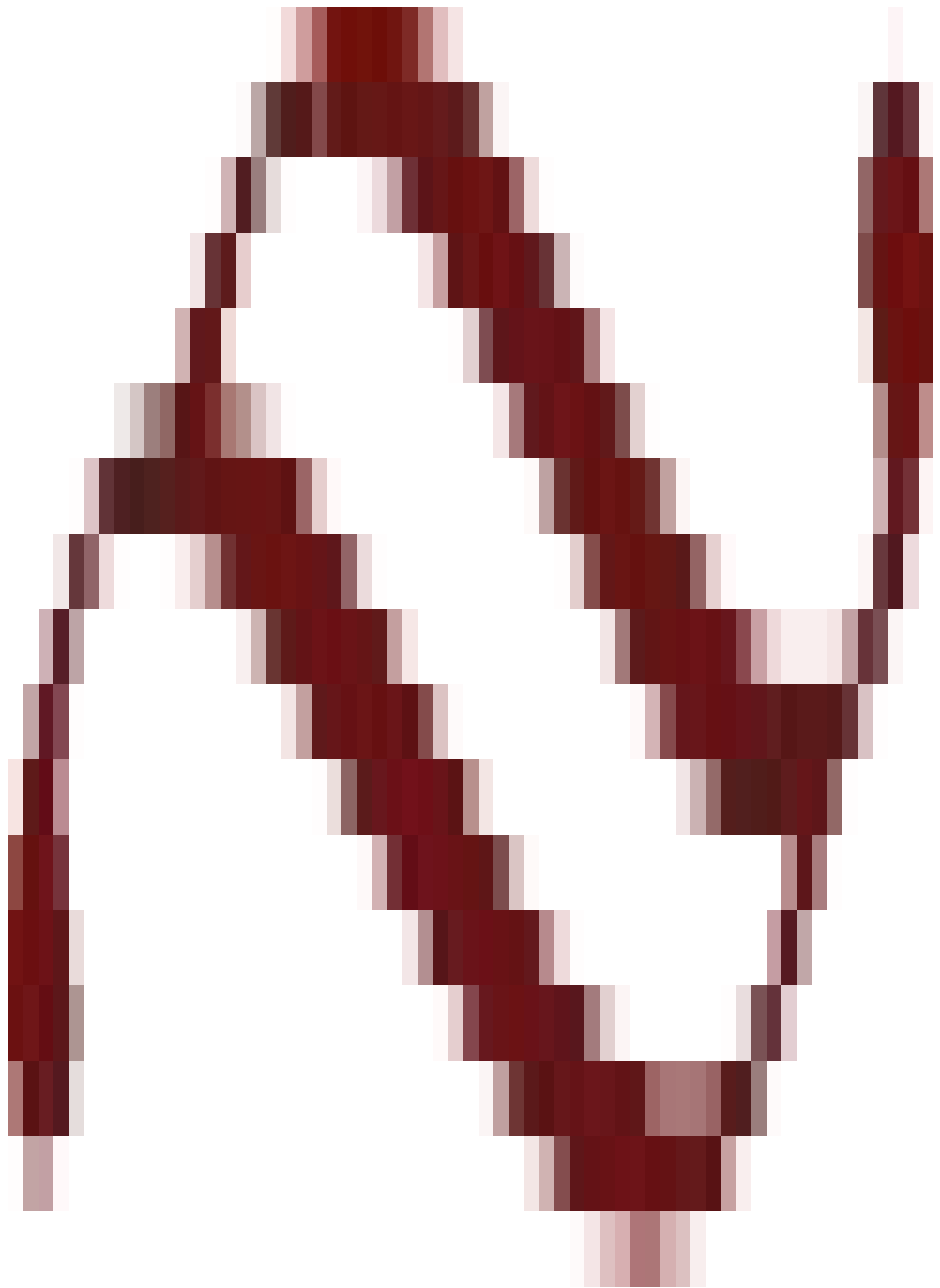
Though God allows the relativities of maya as necessary to the existence of creation, it is up to man to decide whether to side with the temptations of evil or the better temptation of God’s presence. Each person has to fight his personal battles in the war between his reason and sense impulses, to see which will win. To foolishly yield to the forces of temptation is to lose sovereignty over the kingdom of one’s life. Saints are sinners who never gave up. They never gave up rejecting the temptations of the world while continuing to tempt themselves with the greater joy of God. “I weighed Thee and temptation and found Thee more tempting than temptation.” One must be convinced in his heart and know he loves God more than temptation; then he will find God.

The ordinary person does not see, except in an objective way, the fierce resistance of Satan against the magnetic attraction of goodness and God. The devil has been known to manifest in form to tempt great saints who near liberation, but this conscious force knows it requires no such theatrics to catch the average man or the striving devotee—little subtle temptations usually suffice. The person who is trying to avoid temptation will find it suddenly “coincidental” that persons and opportunities seem to appear out of nowhere to conspire to take him from his determined path of self-control.

For every goodness and virtue, Satan has an equal storehouse of counteracting agents. God created forgiveness; Satan created revenge. God created calmness, fearlessness, unselfishness, spirit of brotherhood, peace, love, understanding, wisdom, and happiness, and for each of these Satan created its psychological opposite of restlessness, fear, greed, individual and material selfishness, war,

hate; anger, revenge, and jealousy instead of understanding; ignorance in place of wisdom; and sorrow to destroy happiness. Conscience, the voice of God, always beckons man to do right. Temptation, the voice of Satan, coaxes him to do wrong.

The existence of this host of evils is the reason Jesus prayed: “Thy kingdom come,” that man might use his independence to act rightly and thereby substitute the kingdom of God for the anarchy of evil. By perfected living, man helps to make God’s heaven from Satan’s earthly imperfections, effecting God’s patterns to nullify the evil designs of Satan. The power of Satan is transient; the reign of God—His kingdom and power and glory—is forever.



“For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Matthew 6:14 – 15).¹¹

The Divine Father patiently forgives all the bad actors in His cosmic drama; and ultimately, through their better behavior, He receives them into His blessedness. When man expresses his higher Self and likewise forgives others their wrong actions against him, he cleanses his heart of harmful caustic feelings—without which no healing from hurt can take place. Even when possessed with power to retaliate, man should refrain from vindictive feelings, notwithstanding an obligation to resist or noncooperate with evil in a proper way and time. To do what one can to prevent or halt evil is necessary, but it should not be motivated by revenge. It is the function of the Divine Law to mete out just punishment of evildoers and enemies. ¹²

When one receives praise and kindness from someone, it is easy for him to smile and respond warmly; it is when one is hurt that his spiritual character is tested. That is the time to practice forgiveness. It will not do to say, “Oh, no, I don’t mind your slapping me,” but inside seethe with vengeful thoughts. It is what one feels that matters; while one should not be a doormat, it is inner control that counts. To know that God is in all, and to forgive the deluded wrongdoers through whom God is trying, albeit as yet unsuccessfully, to express Himself, is to be a master.

“One should forgive, under any injury,” says the Mahabharata. “It hath been said that the continuation of the species is due to man’s being forgiving. Forgiveness is holiness; by forgiveness the universe is held together. Forgiveness is the might of the mighty; forgiveness is sacrifice; forgiveness is quiet of mind. Forgiveness and gentleness are the qualities of the Self-possessed. They represent eternal virtue.”



“Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.

“But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly” (Matthew 6:16 – 18).

Fasting has been practiced by devotees of every religion since ancient times as an effective means of approaching God, a form of austerity to help bring the willful body and mind under control to receive the spirit of God. ¹³



Suffering and penance: a perverted notion of spirituality

Jesus, however, pointed out the hypocrisy of those who fast or practice other austerities not to draw closer to God, but to impress others by the privations they are capable of enduring. Imagining suffering to be a prerequisite of transcendence, and self-inflicted penance to be evidence of exaltation, they attempt to hasten their ascent—if not in actuality, at least in the eyes of their public.

Such perverted notions of spirituality are one reason many persons hesitate to embrace a serious search for God, believing it will require a life of “sackcloth and ashes.” Nothing could be further from the truth! To know God is to know Joy itself. True devotees are never gloomy or morose; they know that to be cheerful is to please God. The greater one’s happiness, the greater his divine attunement. “Their thoughts fully on Me, their beings surrendered to Me, enlightening one another, proclaiming Me always, My devotees are contented and joyful.”¹⁴

My gurudeva, Swami Sri Yukteswar, did not hesitate to chastise disciples who appeared in the hermitage “sad of countenance,” as though attending a funeral ceremony. “To seek the Lord, men need not ‘disfigure their faces,’” he would say, quoting Lord Jesus. “Remember that finding God will mean the funeral of all sorrows.”



“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Matthew 6:19 – 21).¹⁵



“Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven”

Foolish is man when he focuses all his efforts and attention on accumulating perishable material prosperity or physical health, devoting no time to win the Eternal Treasure. Money, prestige, sense pleasures, material luxuries—these will be wrested from him, either by the corruptions of nature and ill fortunes of karma, or by the unstoppable thief of death. And when, passing the portals of the grave, he loses all that he has most valued, what grief will possess him when he will not even be able to remain in the glory of heaven, but will be drawn back to this mortal plane to begin again his pursuit of unfinished desires.

What little time man has on this earth, he spends thinking and planning to get the things he wants; when one desire is satisfied he begins to chase after something else. Like a dog hitched to a cart with a sausage hanging out in front on a pole, he pulls an ever-increasingly burdensome life as a slave to his cravings, always thinking, “I will be happy when I get this thing, or that thing.” When will that day come? Be happy now, this minute! As soon as the thought of God comes in the mind, grasp it with devotion, strengthen and enliven it by making all other desires subservient. Jesus renounced everything because he had that immortal prosperity in God which no earthly condition could corrupt nor thief could steal.

It is perfecting oneself in spirituality that brings real happiness here and in the life hereafter. What else did Jesus have in mind when he exhorted people to lay up for themselves treasures in heaven by being virtuous on earth?

One might gain ownership of the whole world in this life, but if he has not God, he has not happiness or peace or anything of real value. When he leaves the shores of the earth, he will have nothing he can carry into the life hereafter. But one who by utmost effort in meditation has found God, even if he has sacrificed all things material and is poor in the eyes of the world, is rich in eternal treasure. When his brief stay on earth is over, he will depart with an imperishable God-treasure of unending bliss, which will be his to enjoy unto eternity.



“The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

“But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!” (Matthew 6:22 – 23).

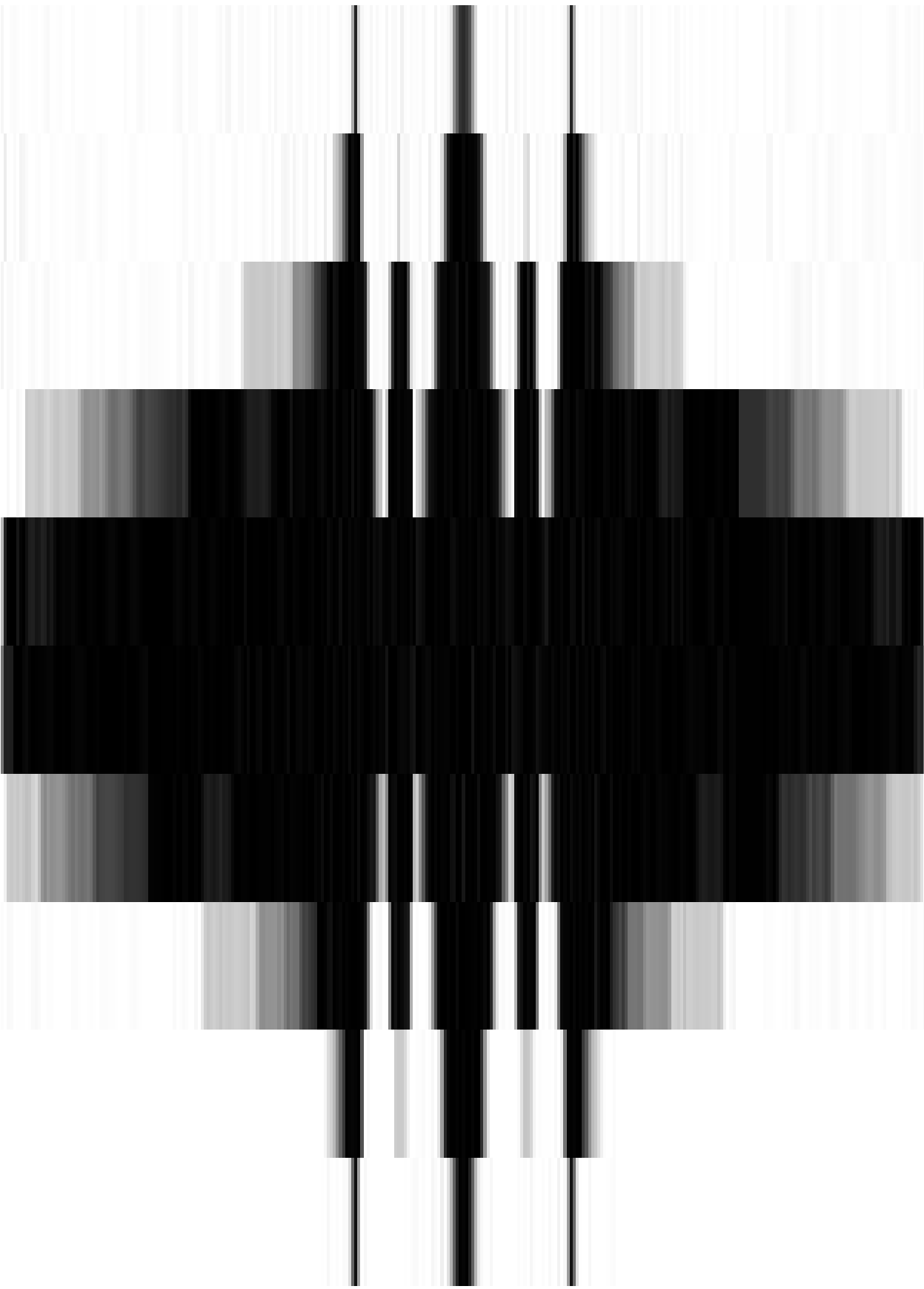
Parallel reference:

“No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light.”¹⁶

“The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness. Take heed therefore, that the light which is in thee be not darkness.

“If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light” (Luke 11:33 – 36).

The God-revealing light in the body is the single eye in the middle of the forehead, seen in deep meditation—the doorway into the presence of God. When the devotee can perceive through this spiritual eye, he beholds his whole body as well as his cosmic body filled with God’s light emanating from cosmic vibration.



The single eye, through which man's body and the cosmos are seen as filled with God's light

By fixing the vision of the two eyes at the point between the eyebrows in the interiorized concentration of meditation, one can focus the positive-negative optical energies of the right and left eyes and unite their currents in the single eye of divine light.¹⁷ The ignorant, material man knows nothing of this light. But anyone who has practiced even a little meditation may occasionally see it. When the devotee is further advanced, he sees this light at will, with closed or open eyes, in the daylight or in darkness. The highly developed devotee can behold this light as long as he so desires; and when his consciousness can penetrate into that light, he enters the highest states of transcendent realization.

But when one's gaze and mind are turned away from God and concentrated on evil motives and material actions, his life is filled with the darkness of delusion's ignorance, spiritual indifference, and misery-making habits. The inner cosmic light and wisdom remain hidden. "How great is that darkness" of the material man that he knows little or not at all of divine reality, accepting with glee or resentment whatever offerings of delusion come his way. To live in such dank ignorance is no valid life for the incarnate soul consciousness.

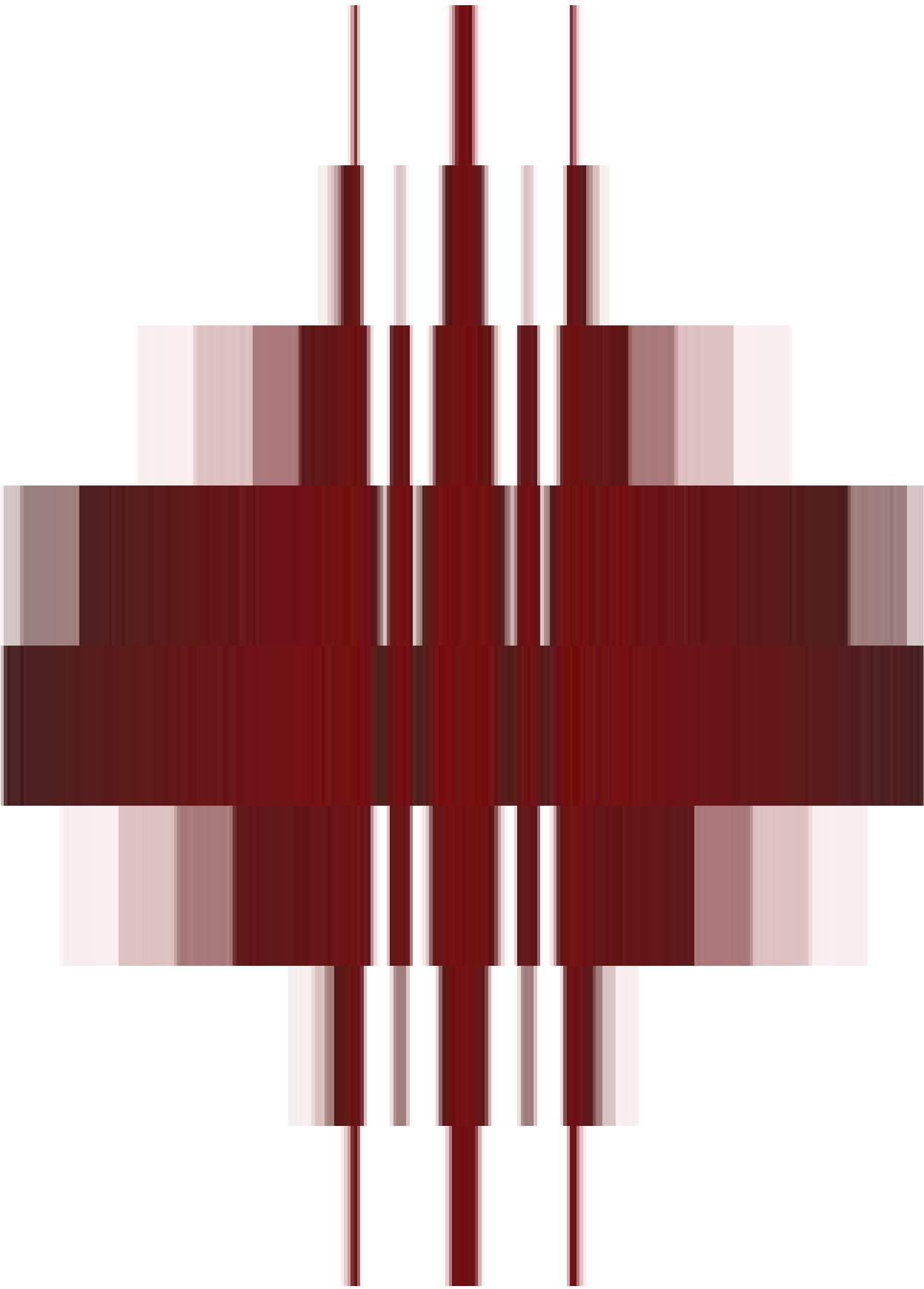
The spiritualized man—his body and mind inwardly illumined with astral light and wisdom, the shadows of physical and mental darkness gone, and the whole cosmos seen as filled with God's light, wisdom, and joy—he in whom the light of Self-realization is fully manifest, receives indescribable joy and the unending guidance of divine wisdom.



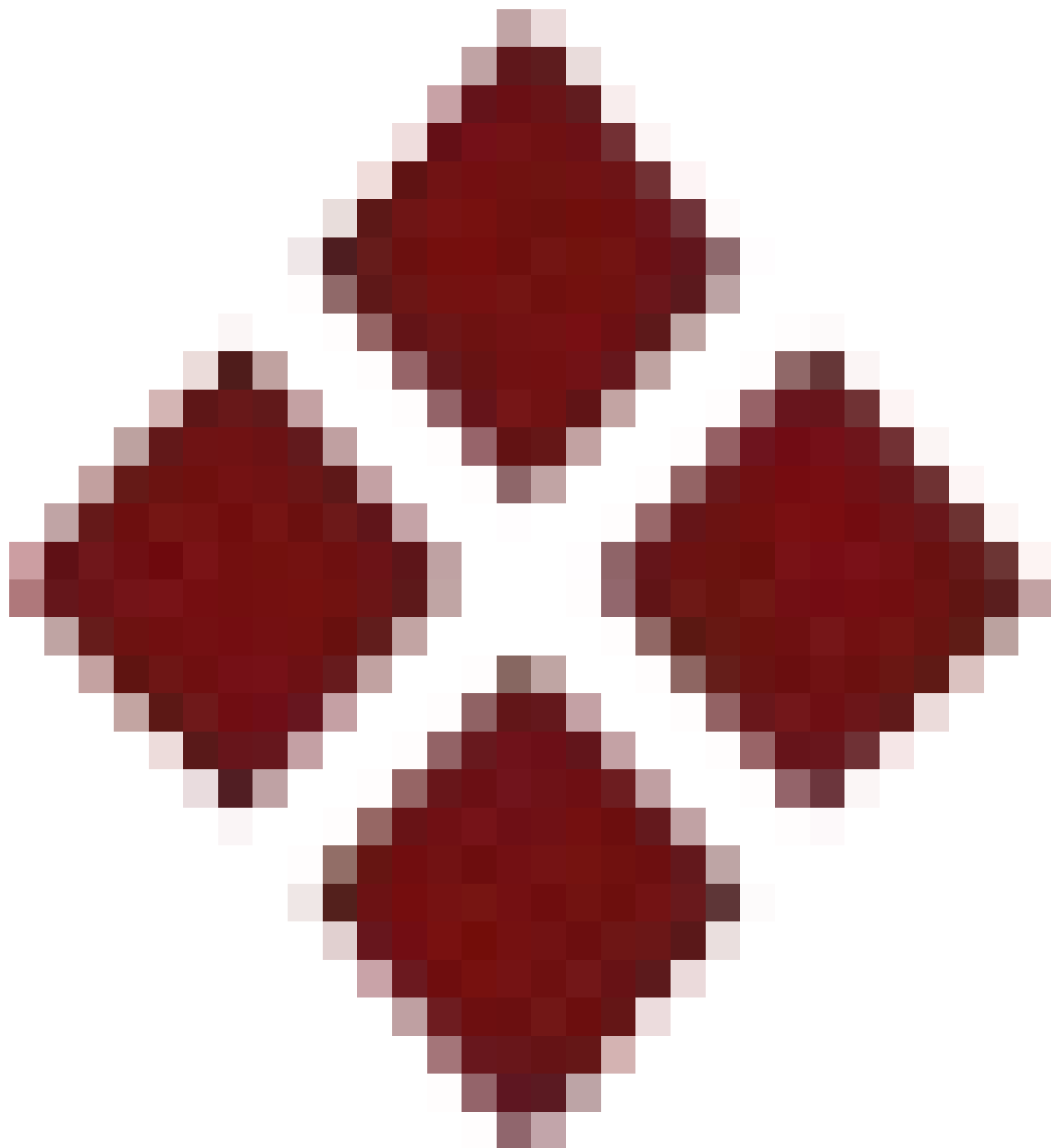
Discourse 29

**“Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God, and His
Righteousness”**

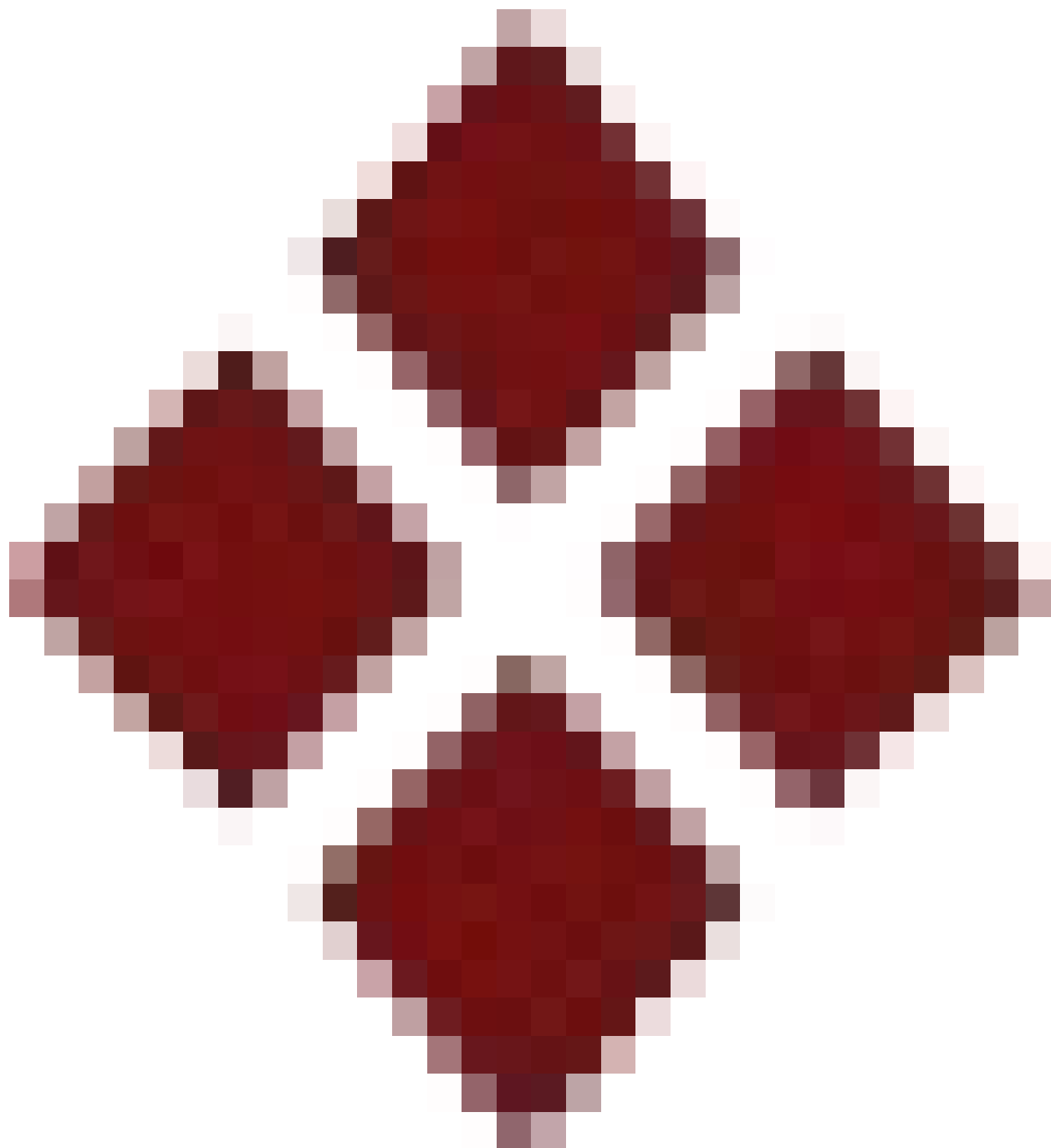
The Sermon on the Mount, Part IV



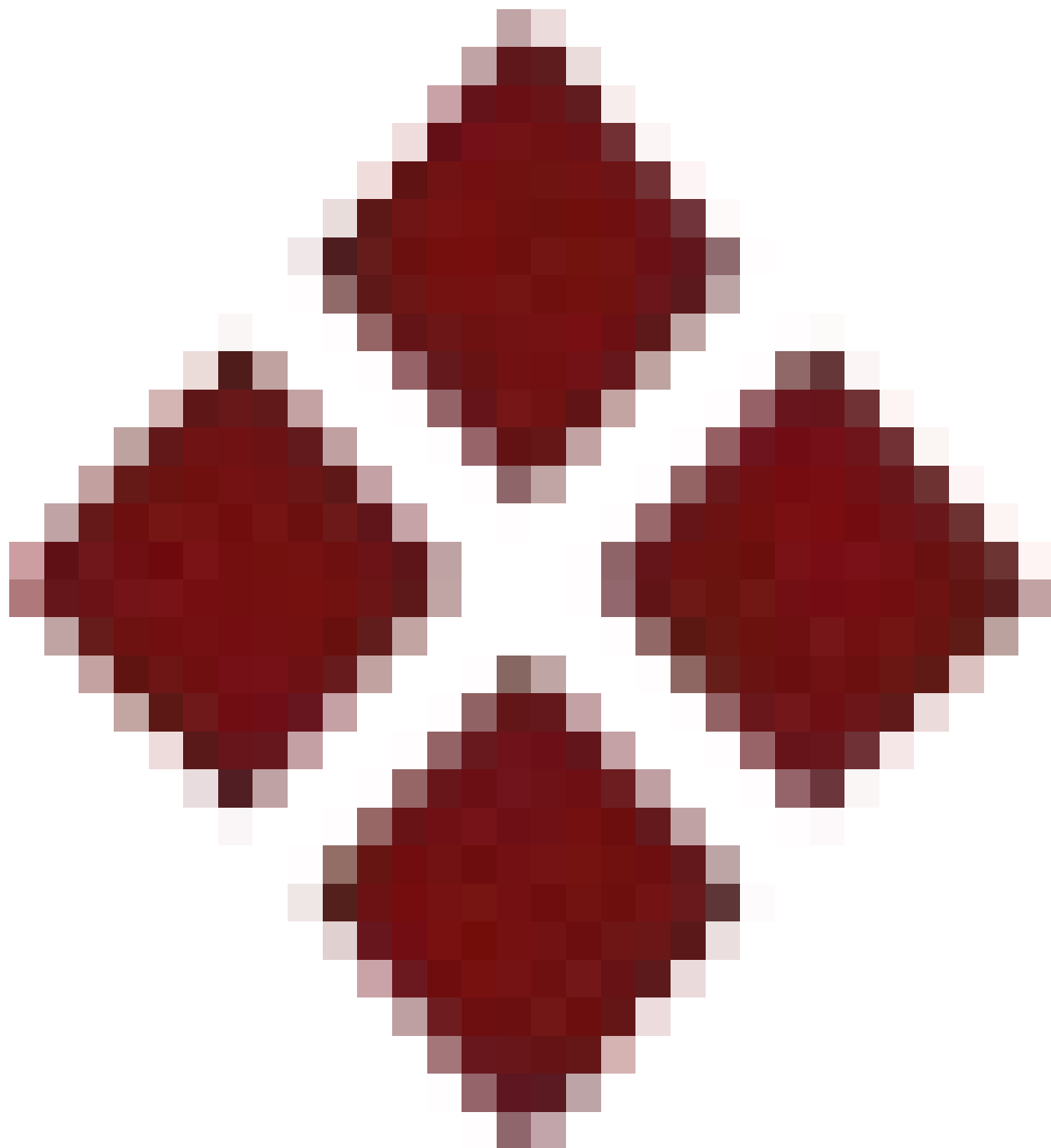
Jesus' Cardinal Message to Individuals and Nations of the World



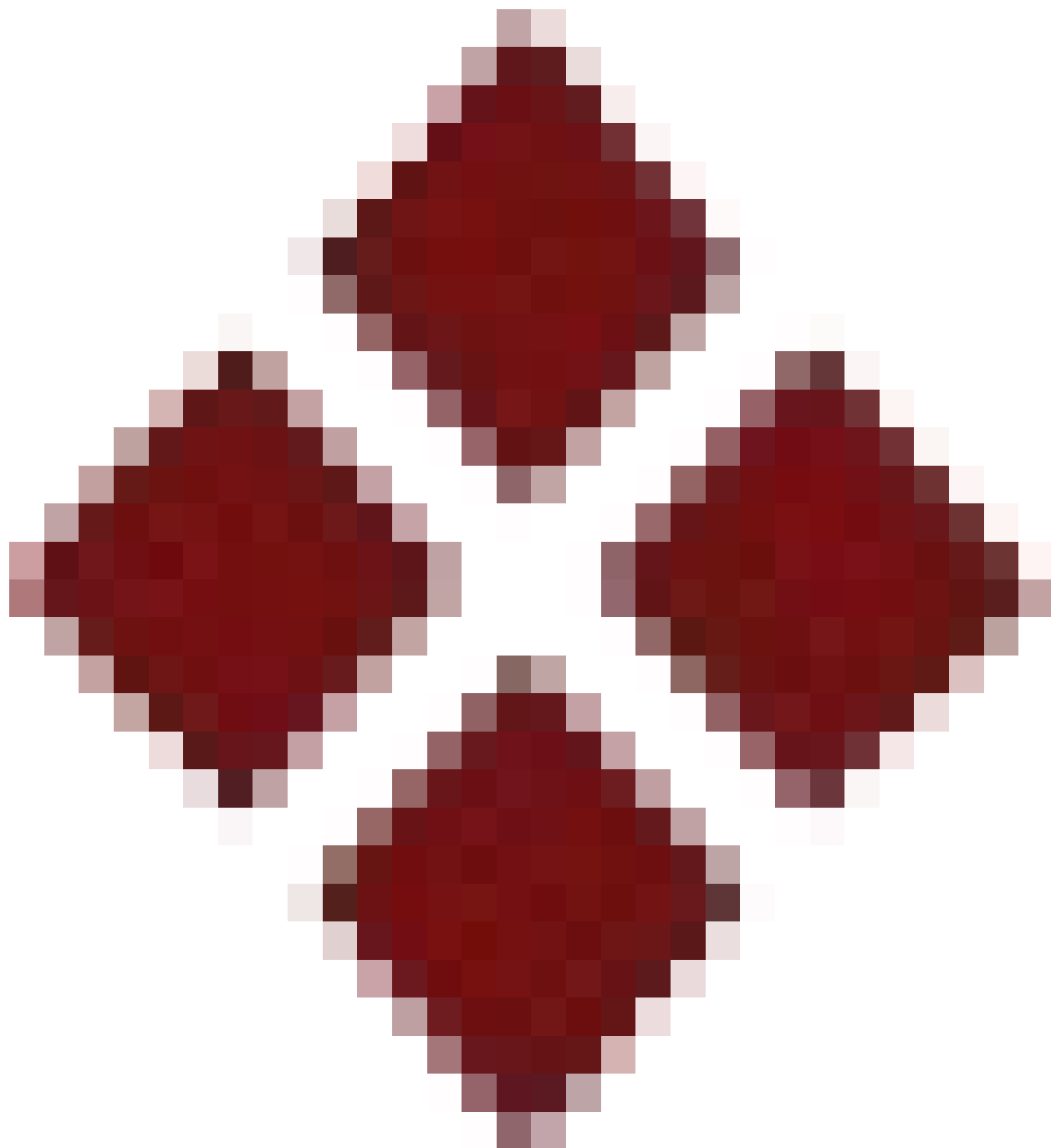
Is Renunciation of Possessions Necessary in Order to Find God's Kingdom?



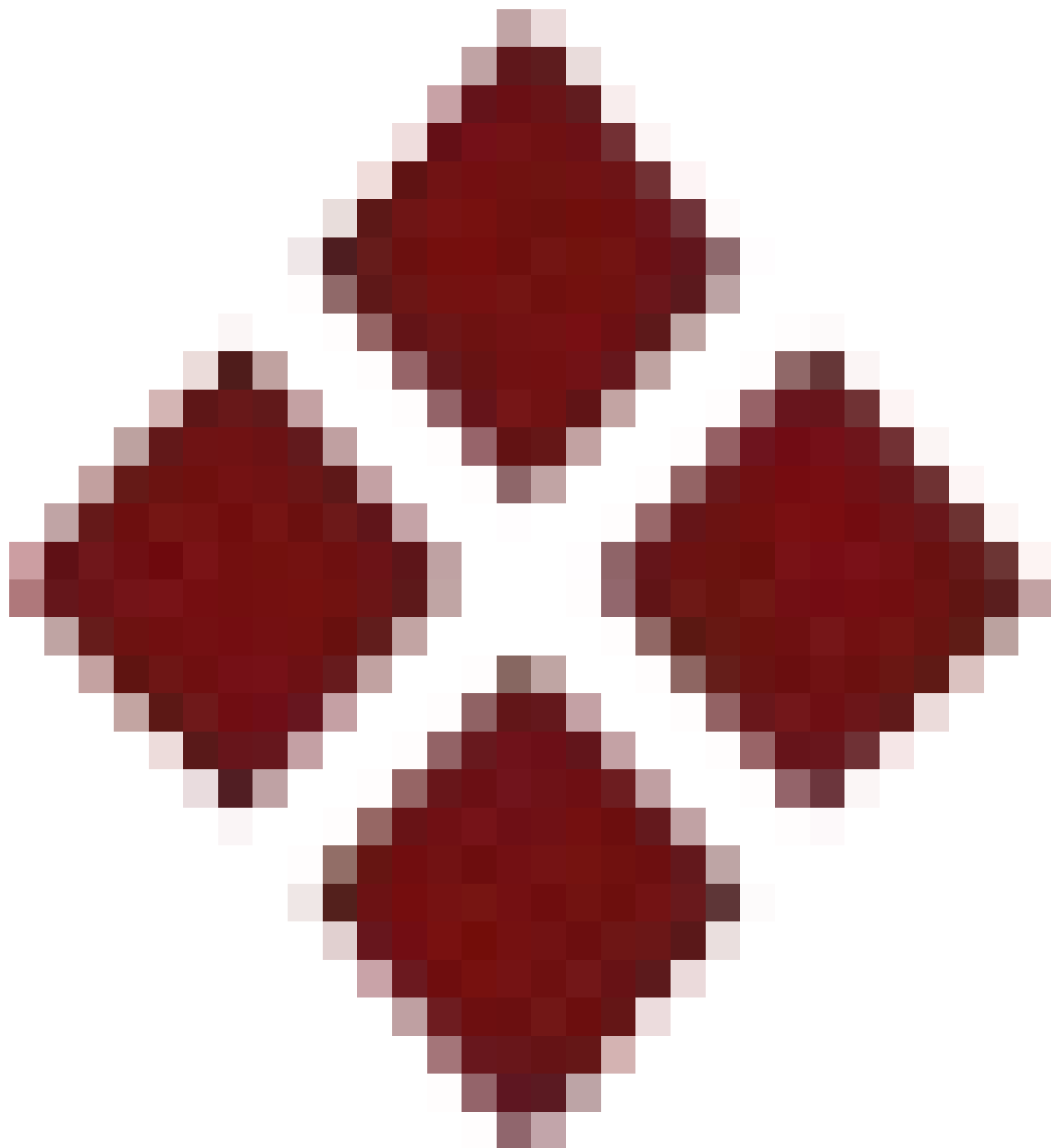
Applying Christ's Doctrine to the Conditions of Modern Life



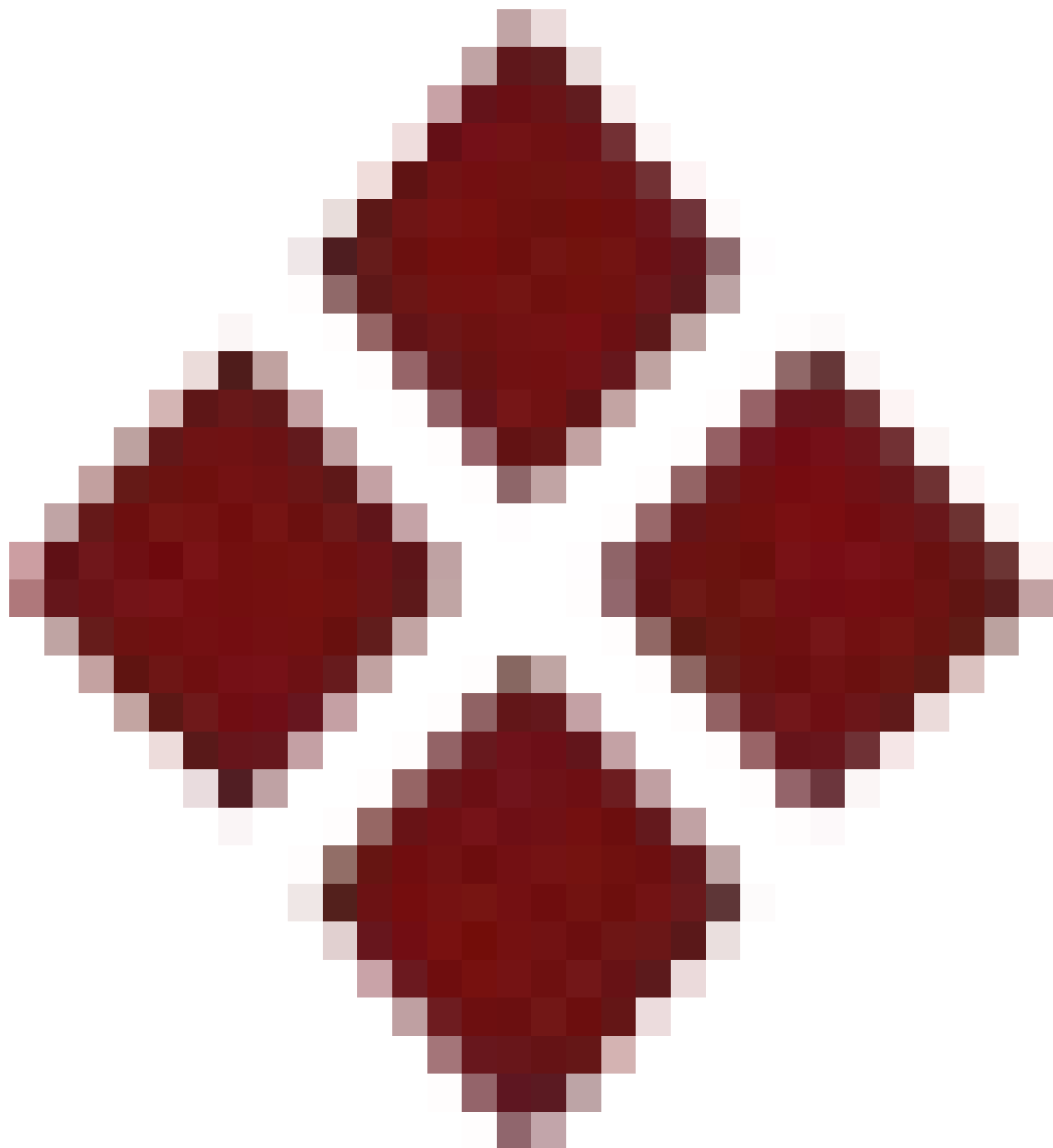
Spiritual Attitude Toward the Material Needs of the Body



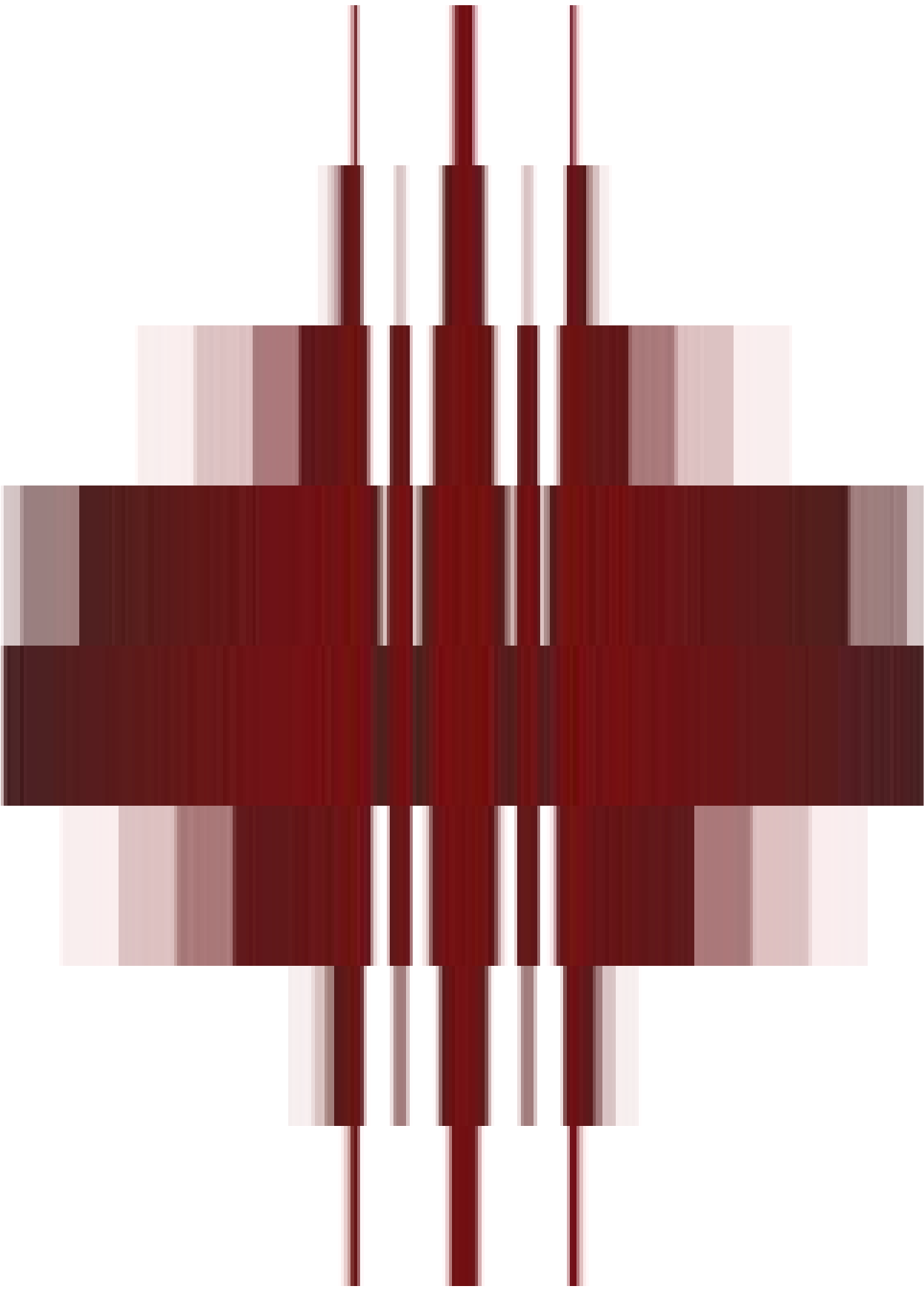
Right Way of Seeking God's Kingdom: Yoga Science of Meditation



Christ's Way to Happiness: Seeking God Within and Keeping Material Life Simple



Putting God First in One's Daily Life



“Seek God first; for to find Him is to open the door to all His gifts of health, power, financial sufficiency, wisdom. God is no miser...Man has but to learn how to receive.”

■

“No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

“Therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?”

“Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?”

“Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

“Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?”

“Therefore take no thought, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or, ‘What shall we drink?’ or, ‘Wherewithal shall we be clothed?’ (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.¹ But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

“Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.”

—Matthew 6:24 – 34²



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Discourse 29

**“Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God, and His
Righteousness”**

The Sermon on the Mount, Part IV



No one can serve two contradictory ideals with equal devotion. A full-fledged matter- and pleasure-worshiper will forget God; one who is engrossed in the bliss of God will lose the craving for material gratifications. Reality and delusion—God and mammon³—are the two contradictory ideals. Those who “hold to the one”—who are attached to the wealth of material offerings—“will despise the other”—will abhor the requisites for seeking God, fearing deprivation from loss of their best-loved pleasures.

Jesus in no wise told people to neglect acquiring material necessities; he spoke against giving to the body the soul’s entire attention, as though that were the aggregate of the purpose of existence. He averred that the Giver of Life deserves man’s principal thought, not the indifference that gives precedence to material needs and desires in utter oblivion of God. It is He who is the Creator and Owner of all commodities of nature from which man derives food, clothing, money, property, health, and vitality; it is He who gives all these things to man by which he can maintain his life on earth.



Jesus' cardinal message to individuals and nations of the world

Seeking the kingdom of God first is the cardinal message of Jesus to individuals and nations of the world, because it is the surest way to lasting individual, social, and national happiness. Perishable material possessions do not contain the immortality and everlasting bliss of the kingdom of God, but His imperishable kingdom contains in it all the goodness of the world. To possess God is to own the universe. If the ear is pulled, the head comes with it. When by devotion one pulls God into his life, then automatically eternal prosperity of immortality, wisdom, and ever new blessings are added unto him.

In the Bhagavad Gita, the Lord similarly proclaims: "To men who meditate on Me as their Very Own, ever united to Me by incessant worship, I supply their deficiencies and make permanent their gains."⁴

Man should not seek possessions first, and then God, for he is apt to lose God. The mind is like blotting paper; when it soaks up impure material desires, it becomes saturated and cannot absorb the pure Divine Essence. The foolish materialist becomes wholly accustomed to working for pleasurable perishables; owing to the enslaving habit of his mind, he is unable to concentrate any attention on seeking God. The wise do not waste their effort in acquiring what they will perforce have to give up at the time of death. Those who are successful in attaining the kingdom of God, and in manifesting His righteousness, will have ever new bliss and the realization of their immortality, not only in this life but throughout eternity; and in addition, the fulfillment of all material needs. No sensible businessman could turn down such an offer!

In the words: "Take no thought for your life," Jesus did not excuse reckless disregard for the principles of healthful, successful living. He elaborated that it takes eternal life, the Word of God, to sustain human life and not the physical nourishment of "meat" alone; and that the body was made to express soul wisdom, and not merely to be adorned with clothing and comfort. Then why concentrate all one's energy in worrying about satisfying material wants, when life itself comes from God, is sustained by Him, and begs to express His innate glory?

Jesus stirs spiritual awakening with simple appealing analogies: "Behold the

fowls of the air....” Their lives are not complicated by unnecessary desires or yearnings; though they have no storehouse nor riches in the bank, God feeds them from nature’s bounty. A child of God—who is more important than the sparrows and ravens—will also be looked after by the Heavenly Father, provided that child develops absolute faith in God as the Life behind his life, and the Divine Source of all bounty.

Man’s arrogance of self-sufficiency belies his desire to be more powerful than his mortal limitations. By a mere thought or wish he cannot “add one cubit unto his stature.” God’s laws can be made to work for the benefit of man, but those laws cannot be transcended except by God Himself and devotees who are one with Him.

Man is directly sustained by God and the abundance of nature, and indirectly by his earning capacity and physical efforts. Not by all human care can man maintain himself without the help from God, He who is the Maker of Life and the Creator of sunlight, grain, water, and air, which support human life. But because man does his share to acquire the use of God-given things, he soon forgets the direct Divine Hand in human existence. Man cannot make grain, though he wields God’s laws to propagate it; nor can he make the power of digestion to assimilate food, nor the life force that transforms the grain chemicals into his cellular tissues. Yet man is so solicitous of the wants of his body that he ornaments it and seeks to grant its every whim, seldom if ever considering that without the inherent Divinity, all he embellishes is a clod of earth.

“Consider the lilies of the field,” how they are attired by God with ethereal fragrance and beauty, even though they make no conscious effort to spin their petaled clothing, nor feverishly toil to maintain and enhance themselves. “Even Solomon in all his glory,” with his earthly powers and elegant royal robes, could not look so graceful and divine as the naive lilies clothed by God. The Creator, who has power over all things big and small, will certainly clothe with the power of divine magnetism to attract at will what is needed when man, made in His image, corrects his deficiency of faith in the immortal powers within him as a direct descendant of God. It is delusion that causes man to doubt that God will remember to care for him.

“O ye of little faith,” see how God clothes the grasses with green attire for their short span of life, so soon to be withered by the fiery sun or burnt as fuel in

ovens. All things of this earth are evanescent and meant to serve well their purpose. Man, clothed by God in a unique psychophysical form, is too important to waste his life in nothing more than temporal concerns and be cast into the fires of ignorance and misery.

As for meeting the conditions imperative to life, “your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.” He expects the God-seeking man to perform useful dutiful actions, but not as the materialist who has his eye and energies focused on selfish gain and sensuous pleasure. To “seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness” is to concentrate on the Eternal Life, the source of all lives, and to express the glory of that immortality in all interactions with the world.

Great scientists and literary savants also take care of the necessities of life, but their minds remain mostly engrossed in the subjects in which they have specialized. Similarly, as Jesus himself demonstrated, the divine man maintains his body as the temporary home of the immortal soul and fulfills all of his God-given responsibilities, but his consciousness is firmly centered in God. The ordinary man thinks only of food, possessions, and pleasure—that is all he pursues. Under the smoke screen of materiality he has totally hidden God from his perception, cutting himself off from life’s invigorating Source, depleting his happiness and draining dry the truly satisfying divine joys that inhere in his soul. To acquire everything needful with the mind resting principally on God is the sure way to happiness. To go after inflated “necessities” in a state of God-forgetfulness will certainly lead to misery.

No matter how much the worldly man acquires, he never fully enjoys his situation; for he is never satisfied, is always looking for something more, or is afraid of losing what he has. The Western nations, at the height of industrial civilization, gorged with materiality, have not succeeded in producing a society free of depression and discontentment. Houses, money, automobiles may be necessary to modern existence; but if man does not also give some time to God and meditation, the formula of his life will be missing the catalyst necessary to produce true happiness. Unless one seeks the kingdom of God and establishes within himself its righteousness, peace, joy, and wisdom, the contrasts of pleasure and sorrow in his life will foment inner discontentment, unbalance, and physical and spiritual deficiencies.



Is renunciation of possessions necessary in order to find God's kingdom?

India's civilization, in contrast to the West, became wholly absorbed in religion and God-seeking to the neglect of its material life; and so in spite of its spirituality it suffered from poverty, famine, sickness, and centuries of foreign domination. The old doctrine of complete renunciation is extreme; if the masses let go their duties, then communities, cities, and whole societies would be dens of disease and poverty.

Ideal renunciation does not require the total nonpossession of a wandering sadhu, or retreat into a mountain cave. It means giving up small delusive pleasures for the highest joys of the Spirit. By renouncing the world and its temptations and living in remote seclusion, one still might not find God, because incarnations of desires, trailing down the ages, will still be with the recluse. Few there are who can remain continuously in communion with God. When one is not meditating, it is better to keep the mind busy with wholesome work than to be idle.

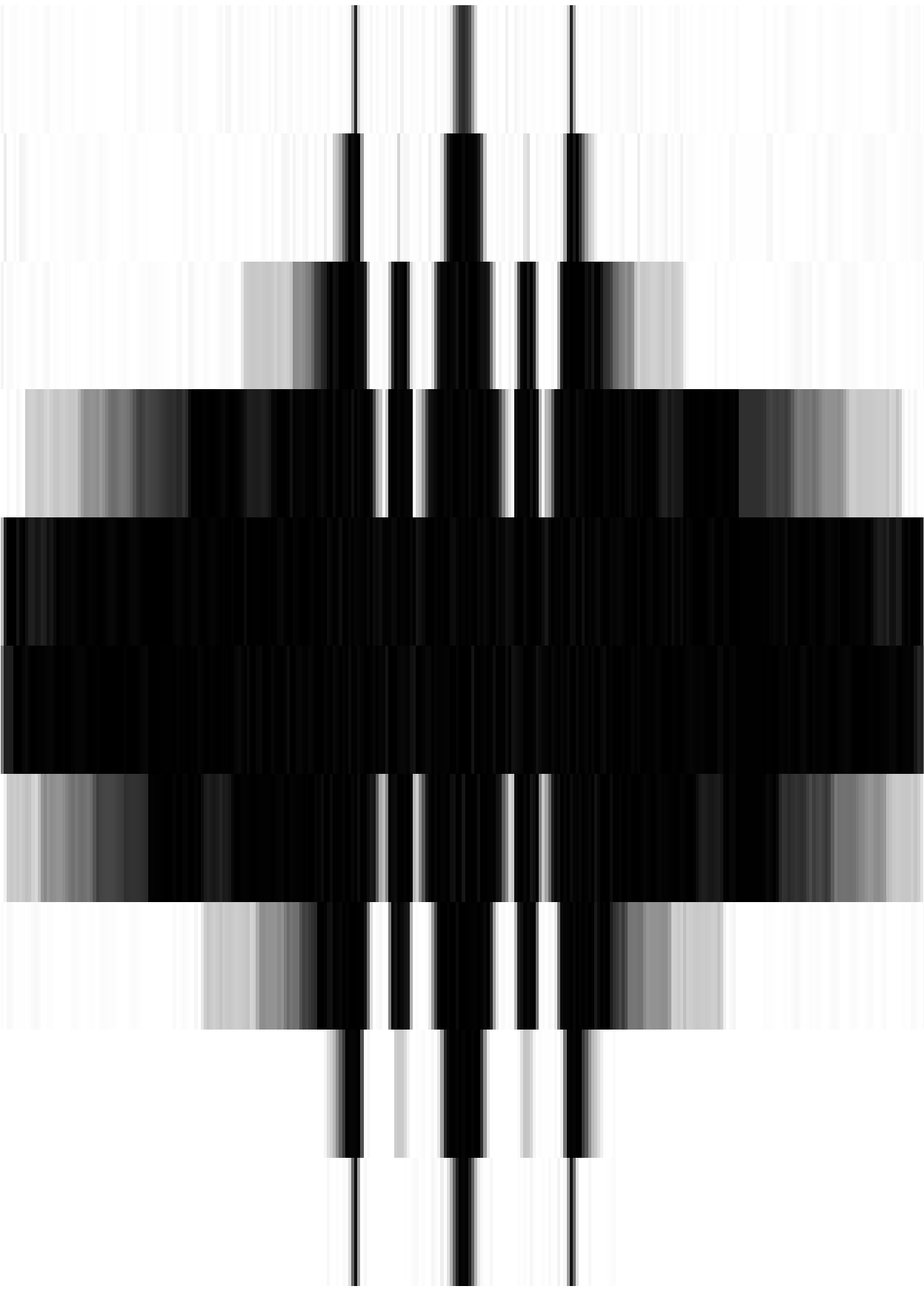
It is possible with practice to hold the major portion of one's mind on God while one's hands and external attention are performing serviceful material duties and enjoying those many material things that express the goodness of God in creation, and with which He intended His children be entertained. Certainly for the masses, that is a better way of living, the happy medium of a yogi's life—to live in the world for God, rather than becoming a monk (the high, consecrate path for which only the minority are well-suited), or at the other extreme engaging in the abandon of a sybarite.⁵

In the context of these verses, Jesus was especially addressing his disciples to exhort them to set for mankind an example of living for God and not for the body and its worldly kingdom. This lofty standard of renunciation, complete nonattachment with faith in God as the Sole Provider, is the ideal that throughout the ages many devotees have embraced as a natural response to their single-hearted spiritual yearning. Though Jesus counseled his disciples in a literal sense of renunciation, he meant the spirit of his words to apply to the lives of all believers: Seek ye God first. God's emissaries necessarily speak in absolutes, knowing the penchant of human nature to pick and choose and adapt to one's own purposes and receptivity from the tomes of scriptural guidance. If there be

men who cannot aspire to the summital applications of truth, then at least, as the prophets intend, those absolutes serve as a proper guide for man's lesser adaptations. There is nothing to keep any person from the highest benefit of Christ's words, regardless of one's station or vocation in life: deeply seeking God, caring for the bodily instrumentality of the soul that it might be used to express God's righteousness and contribute some good to others, knowing all the while that it is God who is the beneficent Divine Giver.

The Bhagavad Gita teaches: "Actionlessness [oneness with transcendent Spirit] is not attained simply by avoiding actions. By forsaking work no one reaches perfection." "He is the true renunciant and also the true yogi who performs dutiful and spiritual actions without desiring their fruits....He who has not renounced selfish motive cannot be a yogi."⁶ A man of God works diligently, performing dutiful actions to please God and to share the fruits of those actions with God's children; his efforts are not motivated by selfish desires or any influence of delusive evil.

The souls of human beings are sent on earth by God to work for Him in worthy ways that serve His cosmic drama. Hence, those who instead work for their ego and its desires become entangled in delusion's desire-filled net, entrapped for incarnations. The wise man fulfills his mortal obligations as a divine duty, because God has given him a body to look after with its related responsibilities. Such a man is free. The man who neglects his body and its environmental needs to the detriment of well-being sins against God's laws of creation; and the person who solicitously serves his body to please his vanity and mortal desires also divorces himself from God.



Applying Christ's doctrine to the conditions of modern life

Though the floral beauties of nature's garden are elegantly clothed by God and have not to toil for a wage to purchase the sunshine, air, and soil chemicals they require, in the modern civilization man has to pay for his food, clothing, shelter—even the water he drinks. Though God has provided the basic essentials of life, man could not avail himself of these without intelligent thought and striving to acquire and adapt them for his purposes. In the Orient, when Jesus taught, people lived much more simply and so had fewer basic requirements to worry about; a spiritual man of renunciation could be fed and clothed without much effort through charity or family help. Nowadays, conditions of life are changed; civilization is more individualistic and selfish; the businessman and the renunciant both have to struggle for their existence and give considerable thought to their maintenance.

Is it then impossible to apply the above Christ doctrine in modern life? No. In all eras, those who think that prosperity depends only upon man's effort and craftiness are mightily deluded. History shows that in every clime and age, the smartest, wealthiest individuals, with all their thought and effort and wit to acquire material success, have from time to time been made to wallow in the mire of poverty through the naive decree of fate. Wars, depression, failed ventures, political anarchy, natural disasters, can instantly alter the fortune of the fortunate. But the man who keeps his mind principally concentrated upon the Almighty Giver of all things will never be left destitute (unless it is a temporary test brought about by his personal karma) even in the worst of conditions that might come along.

It is all right to struggle to gain financial and material advantages, provided God is remembered as the Giver and that accrued good fortune becomes a means of rendering service and upliftment to others as well as to oneself. Those who have wealth by inheritance and need not labor for sustenance could well use that free time in cultivating their spiritual life—through meditation to achieve God-communion, good works that aid individuals and mankind as a whole, and in general elevating one's own consciousness to express God's righteousness. Alas, the rich who give only a token genuflection to God do not realize their spiritual poverty. Those who luxuriate in wantonness foolishly spend their unique opportunity in the most insecure happiness. It is a poor investment of the

favorable fruits of good karma that those who have the necessities of life, as do the majority of persons in materially advanced Western nations, think first of breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and how much money to make in order to better clothe and house themselves and have a good time—relegating God to an occasional Sunday morning church service. To be always intent on the gifts of God, rather than on the Giver, is extremely wrong.



Spiritual attitude toward the material needs of the body

If one's whole life is based on the comfort of the flesh, coddling the little body, how can one know divine happiness? Why give so much attention to something that has to be cast away at a moment's notice? To be busy day and night with the body is a bad habit. It is a delusion by which one becomes more and more attached to his physical existence.

The worst habit of man is that he thinks of himself as a mortal body; that thought, being uppermost in his mind, keeps him away from God more than anything else. Many saints think of the body as merely a useful animal under their care—Saint Francis of Assisi used to refer to his body as Brother Donkey. It must be cared for, but not so much worried about. When a disciple in the ashram would bother too much about the body, my guru Sri Yukteswarji would say cryptically, "Throw the dog a bone." If the body eats a little, all right. If it sleeps a little, all right. The more one fusses about it, the more demands it will make. One should do his duties to the body and forget it. Remember, we are sons of God; we are not the body.

Weeks and months at a time the saints are hardly conscious of their bodies, but conscious of God always. In the nectared sustenance of ecstasy with God is life and health. Jesus had not all the hygienic conveniences of modern life. He kept his consciousness free from such imperatives.

Without being senselessly rash, one should learn to depend more on mind. It does not mean fanaticism, but more exercise of that marvelous God-given power. Mind power makes it possible for God to provide directly one's needs. Mind power and faith go hand in hand. One who possesses a firm conviction that God's power can heal can more readily avail himself of mental and spiritual healing. A person who feels dependent on the care of a doctor should have faith in the power of God working through medical science. Persons who believe only in material methods of health and sustenance find after a while that their will is paralyzed. But those who depend more on the mind discover that therein lies the infinite power of God. That power is pure and strong and limitless and instant.

As long as the mind accepts the sensation of hunger and other physiological functions, one cannot say that all is delusion and ignore physical needs. Is it not

better than to eat the things that are good for the body instead of those that are harmful? If one could live solely on cosmic energy, then it would not matter. But as long as the body changes according to its nourishment, why shouldn't man save God the trouble of healing him by obeying His laws that lessen the chance of his getting sick? There is no sin in that. A person simply should not be so conscious of food and comforts that he cannot be God-conscious.

Until one is no longer bound by any of the effects of the law of duality, maya, matter does exist as more than an illusion in the mind. That is the practicality of yoga. It provides the means for actually realizing that the body and mind are a dream of God, and that He alone is caring and providing for this manifestation of His consciousness.

Ordinary man is obsessed with the limitations of his physical body and its afflictions of disease, suffering, pain, heartaches. But on the inner side of the body are the subtle centers of spiritual consciousness, with their untold powers and realization of the divine Self. When in meditation the mind follows the stream of inner consciousness, the devotee enters the supernal "kingdom of God" that exists behind physical manifestations. That is why Jesus said, "Behold, the kingdom of God is within you."⁷ In devotional interiorization, the meditator experiences true communion with God in the actual perception of His presence as light, wisdom, love, bliss.

The constant desire for health and prosperity, the fulfillment of which is the focus of so many modern religious movements, is the way to slavery. First seek God, and then find health and prosperity through Him. When a soul, instead of seeking material things and becoming a mortal beggar who receives only a beggar's pittance, seeks first to return to the kingdom of God-consciousness and once again becomes a true child of God, he receives, without asking, the heavenly share of his divine birthright.



Right way of seeking God's kingdom: yoga science of meditation

Of course, just blind belief in the kingdom of God will not suffice; nor will halfhearted prayers or a few good works. Neither will a lifetime of seeking the divine kingdom without receiving it bring the bounty of blessings promised by Jesus. The right way of seeking is through the God-given yoga science of entering the kingdom of God within, the technique of God-contact in which the sages of India have specialized. When ecstatic communion with God is an established fact, then the devotee will know that with the acquirement of the Celestial Kingdom, all things are within his reach. Jesus had that ultimate realization and could say: "I and my Father are One." That is how he could feed five thousand people with two fishes and five loaves of bread, and could re-create his body after death—achievements that no scientist has yet duplicated. Jesus had God first, so he had power over life and death, destiny, and all conditions.

Man's mortal efforts are bound by the laws of cause and effect; he cannot get more than he deserves. All his life he may make the effort to become a millionaire; but he may never get there, because the attainment of earthly goals is fraught with limitations and obstructions—karmic and environmental. But for the devotee who approaches God first, limitations are surmounted. By the method of mortal begging from Providence, no human being can ever fulfill all his proliferous desires; but by first realizing his oneness with God, man can receive everything he needs, with a sense of complete satisfaction. He will not even need to pray, to supplicate or beg, for as a Self-realized son of God he will have everything his Father has. So is it not best to know by visualization and affirmation, and above all by realization born of divine contact in meditation, that one is already perfect in health and wisdom and abundance, rather than try to succeed by begging for these necessities of life?

The wonder of man's relationship with his Heavenly Father is that he does not even have to acquire God. He has Him already. As soon as the veil of maya is pulled away, he knows instantly that God is with him.



Christ's way to happiness: seeking God within and keeping material life simple

Each mortal being has in his heart a terrible hunger for happiness, love, peace, joy, the mastery of life, immortality. When one sees the will-o'-the-wisp nature of these longings in delusive matter, and the troubles in life encountered in pursuing them, how can anyone desire anything but God? That desire by which one is first brought to the spiritual path is the desire that should be fulfilled. The Self in every being is of God, and so long as man does not express that inner divinity, becoming like Him in whose image he is made, his existence is going to be fraught with unending pains and disappointments. Why not remember the counsel of Jesus to seek the kingdom of supreme happiness first? One will then no longer have to suffer rude surprises throughout life. The masters of India similarly say: "To become one with the Supreme Being is to have destroyed all the roots of suffering." That is real freedom.

As long as God gives man life, he has an obligation to give some of that time to God. The hour will come when one's time is up; let it not have to be viewed with sadness at having been wasted. Be with God; claim that real perennial happiness. Waste not golden spiritual opportunities on the fool's gold of material glitter. Where is the time for God if it is spent in constant fussing to satisfy the body's wants for what I have termed "unnecessary necessities"? Rather simplify life and use that saved time in meditation for God-communion and real progress in attaining life's necessary necessities of peace and happiness.

Real Christ-living should consist in seeking the comfort of meditation first and in also keeping material life simple while attending to one's dutiful activities. A complex material life is only pleasing to the eyes and the status consciousness of the ego, but few realize "what price material comforts." Economic slavery, nervousness, business worries, unfair competition, dissensions, lack of freedom, disease, misery, old age, and death are the harvest of a materially compacted existence. So much is missed when there is no time left for the appreciation of beauty, Nature, and God's many expressions in life.

If anybody remonstrates to me that material happiness is better than godly happiness, or that attention given to God can come later, it is revolting to me. Such rationalization is of delusion. One needs to get his mind settled in knowing God as the highest priority, and to master his life accordingly. When he is able

through meditation and communion with God to carry a portable heaven within, he will know how to guide his life correctly. Once he has a mind that does not waver from God, whatever he does will be all right, not before. Jesus knew that when one is committed to the obligations of a material life, God flies out the back door of that person's consciousness. Thus his counsel to first strengthen one's spiritual consciousness so that no engagement in the world can take the mind away from God.

The spiritual path may be difficult until the devotee reaches the final goal; but so is the way hewed by the material man. In fact, the latter is much more difficult. Unless one has God-realization, he is still in delusion, in between two factors. On one side, love of the material pleasures of one's life, and on the other side, love of God. Love of life is annexed to miseries and death. In youth, one does not realize this, being wholly engaged in the abandon of discovering new experiences. But as the aging process of the bodily machine begins to exert a toll, the eyes begin to grow dim, the voice does not register resonant vibrations, the joints begin to creak, and the corrosive effects of disease require constant repair; one then says, "Well, life isn't the free ride I thought it was."

Relatively speaking, there is very little happiness in this world, only snatches of transient pleasure for the most part. I do not mean to paint a dark picture, but to urge those who want more from life to make themselves so spiritually strong within that it will serve as a divine bulwark against assaults of sorrow and suffering.

As long as the mind wanders haphazardly between spiritual incentives and worldly temptations, that course will be futile in producing spiritual happiness. Those who want the world, and place their faith in things that do not last, are like puppets, dancing on strings of their impulses and karma, any time to be taken away by death. Divine happiness is easier to get for it does not depend on life's fickle doles; and it is everlasting. No comparison with any rich man will be able to make the spiritually wealthy feel poor; for they know they are the richest of the rich in the kingdom of God and His righteousness within.

A master is one who understands in what lies his highest interest; he lives the words of Christ that we came on earth not for this material life, but for God. Delusive offerings are only the test of God, a learning experience to bring out the divinity of the soul. Man is not meant to remain in delusion, mesmerized by its chiaroscuro into thinking it is impractical to seek God, or that there is no time to

do so because of the urgent impositions of other pursuits. Suppose God says, “I won’t beat in your heart; I have more important things to do!” Where would man be then? Why waste time, when in a moment’s notice one will be dragged out of the body? While others sleep, be awake in God-communion in meditation; and work for Him in the daytime, performing all duties with the thought of Him. If the desire is there, one can make time to spend with God.

The body and mind are the soul’s precious instruments; they should be kept well and strong to aid one’s efforts to find God. But it should be remembered all the while that there is a superior joy hidden behind the sensory experiences of the body. The awakening man should use his life to realize this truth. It is the guiding principle that has produced saints in every religion.

Man did not come into this world of himself, by himself, or for himself; that is why when he works for his own material desires and selfish ends they will always lead him to disappointment. One person wants a luxury home, and then gets sick and cannot enjoy it. Another, weary of nervous stress, seeks the quiet and solitude of a desert residence, and then gets lonely there, nagged by desires that only city life can grant. It is best to give all one’s desires to God; and as Jesus adjured, “Seek ye God first....” Be content with what God brings, and be busy every minute doing good and becoming good.

This is the solution for every truly fulfilled existence, not only for spiritually minded people; because God alone, and “His righteousness,” is the sole Source of all tantalizing glimmers of real happiness. It is the foundation of the many commandments given by Jesus: “Ye who are wise, ye who are thinkers, seek God first; for to find Him is to open the door to all His gifts of health, power, financial sufficiency, wisdom. God is no miser willfully withholding His everythingness from His children. Man has but to learn how to receive.”

It pleases God when His children seek Him. He is hurt when they run away from Him to play with earth’s baubles, like spoiled children forgetful of the Giver. The virtuous child conscientiously seeks out the Giver to offer Him a loving, appreciative heart. No matter the difficulties, the devotee persists sincerely, alive to the fact that he must know God, and must hear from Him—without throttling his own discriminative reason—the purpose of life. When that constancy characterizes the devotee’s consciousness, then God will reveal Himself; but not until then.

God is suffering in so many souls because of their disunion from Him. Though every mortal will have salvation—no one will be lost—one person may be near liberation while others will yet inflict on themselves countless more incarnations. For whosoever wishes it delayed, it will be delayed; for those who wish to be redeemed, there is no obstacle that cannot be overcome. Desires have to be sublimated by proving to oneself that the supreme happiness is God. The devotee must absolutely convince himself of this. To take the long way to God by seeking satisfaction of desires first is a foolish way of thinking. But the devotee who meditates deeply every day, plunging his consciousness in devotion and yearning for God, who spends time with God at night if his day is too busy, who puts his whole heart and soul into seeking God, will surely find Him.



Putting God first in one's daily life

During the busy-ness of the day, the true God-seeker spiritualizes all actions with the thought of Him. He learns to keep the mind most of the time at the Christ center, the Kutastha center of the yogi, and finds the Infinite Christ pouring over his consciousness wave after wave of quiet heavenly joy. "He who watcheth Me always, him do I watch. He never loses sight of Me, nor do I lose sight of him. He looks at Me through the niches of space, and I behold him through the pores of the sky."⁸ When the devotee puts his mind on God, he will see that out of the invisible, out of the unseen skies, a perceptible Presence will speak to him. It is possible to talk to God. His voice can be heard in words, as well as through intuitive feeling, if the devotee loves Him deeply enough and refuses to give up. The desire for His response must be with all one's heart.

Whenever there is trouble or unhappiness, the highest recourse is to think of God steadily; just as the needle of a compass points northward, no matter which way the compass is turned, so must the mind be on God no matter what conditions prevail from moment to moment. There is a God of love and compassion who steals silently into the consciousness, seen only through the ever increasing light of devotion. Have faith in Him; He is ever present. None of the wonders of creation could happen without His omnipresent intelligence. This divine intelligence is the evidence, the trademark, of God—in the tree, in the flower, in the skies, in the moon, in the routine of the seasons, in one's life-supporting bodily system. How can one observe the workings of the intelligent universe and doubt the existence of God?

But no one can find God without continuous love for Him in the heart. To feel that love for God, one must practice it. It is unproductive to analyze and magnify one's defects and troubles. It is enough just to tell God, "Lord, You are the Divine Healer of all maladies; I give myself into Your charge. You are not only my doctor, but my compassionate mother, my wise father, my Creator-God. You cannot forsake me because You made me Your child. Naughty or good, I am Your loving child. Be with me." There is nothing greater than the love of God. If a devotee has found that, his work in the school of life is finished. Until then, precious time should not be wasted. Meditate daily, deeply; and work for God, performing all duties as offerings to Him.

Never give up. To the testimony of Lord Jesus, I humbly add my own: In all my life, I have never found God not to satisfy my needs or to grant my wishes. He sometimes makes me think He will not respond, but suddenly I find there is fulfillment—even more than I could have hoped for. This is not to say that God gives what we pray for if we just sit idly and wait for Him to manifest for us whatever we have requested of Him. He expects us to do our part; He makes us work—sometimes with great difficulty—to create the right conditions and opportunities for fulfillment. Then through Divine Grace, His answer to our legitimate prayers comes to pass. It isn't that I want "things" from God, but just to know He is with me. I have said to Him: "I do not ask for things from You, but when I see what You give to me, knowing my heart and my needs, I rejoice in that gift because of Your own hand behind the giving of it."

I used to ask God for things for the work He has given me to do, but I see I don't need to ask now. I have merely to think and His hand is there. I only ask for His grace: "Give Yourself to me." In the beginning, the devotee will find it is then that God becomes silent. That is the hardest prayer for God to satisfy: "If I give Myself, I have nothing left." When God gives Himself to the devotee, He has given everything—His ever-existing, ever-conscious, ever-new Bliss, Love, Wisdom—oneness with Spirit in which the mystery of life is no more. Vanished is the duality of the multiplicity in the Indivisible Unity in the devotee's awakening from the Cosmic Dream. With the realization that all things are of God—all things are His dreaming consciousness—comes the consummate fulfillment of the words of Jesus that having Him, whatsoever shall be needful for one's role in the cosmic drama "shall be added unto you."

That state of oneness with God is granted by Him only when He is convinced the devotee does not want anything else. As long as there will be a single desire in the heart for other than God, then even though He will be near the devotee, He will not be fully manifest to him. While waiting patiently for there to be room in the devotee's heart for the giving of Himself, He continues lovingly to grant the devotee's simple, legitimate prayers: "Lord, although I have to satisfy a few material desires to get along as a mortal being, still in my heart there is only You. As Your child, O Lord, I have no desire, because I already have You; and as You have everything, so have You bequeathed that divine inheritance to me." When the devotee with that devotion seeks Him and lives righteously, he cannot fail in his God-seeking.

Jesus then summarized: "Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the

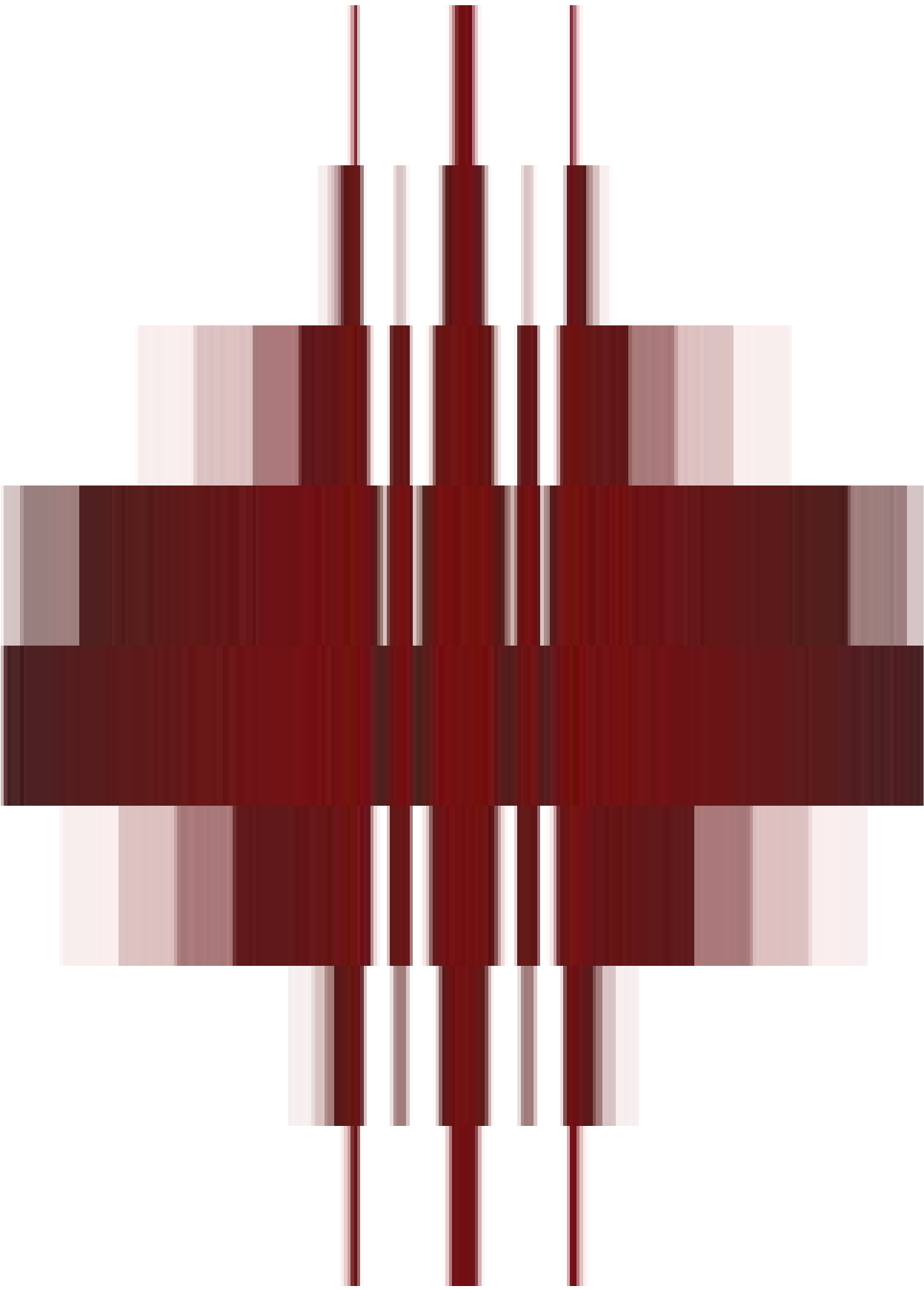
morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.” If the devotee lives with God each day, He who guides the destiny of the world, including the lives of His children, will plan the morrow for the divine seeker according to his acts of today. It is hard to get rid of the evil of material delusion, and thus cease accumulating seeds of desires and attachments for the mercurial promises of tomorrow, but it must be done sometime. Why not now?



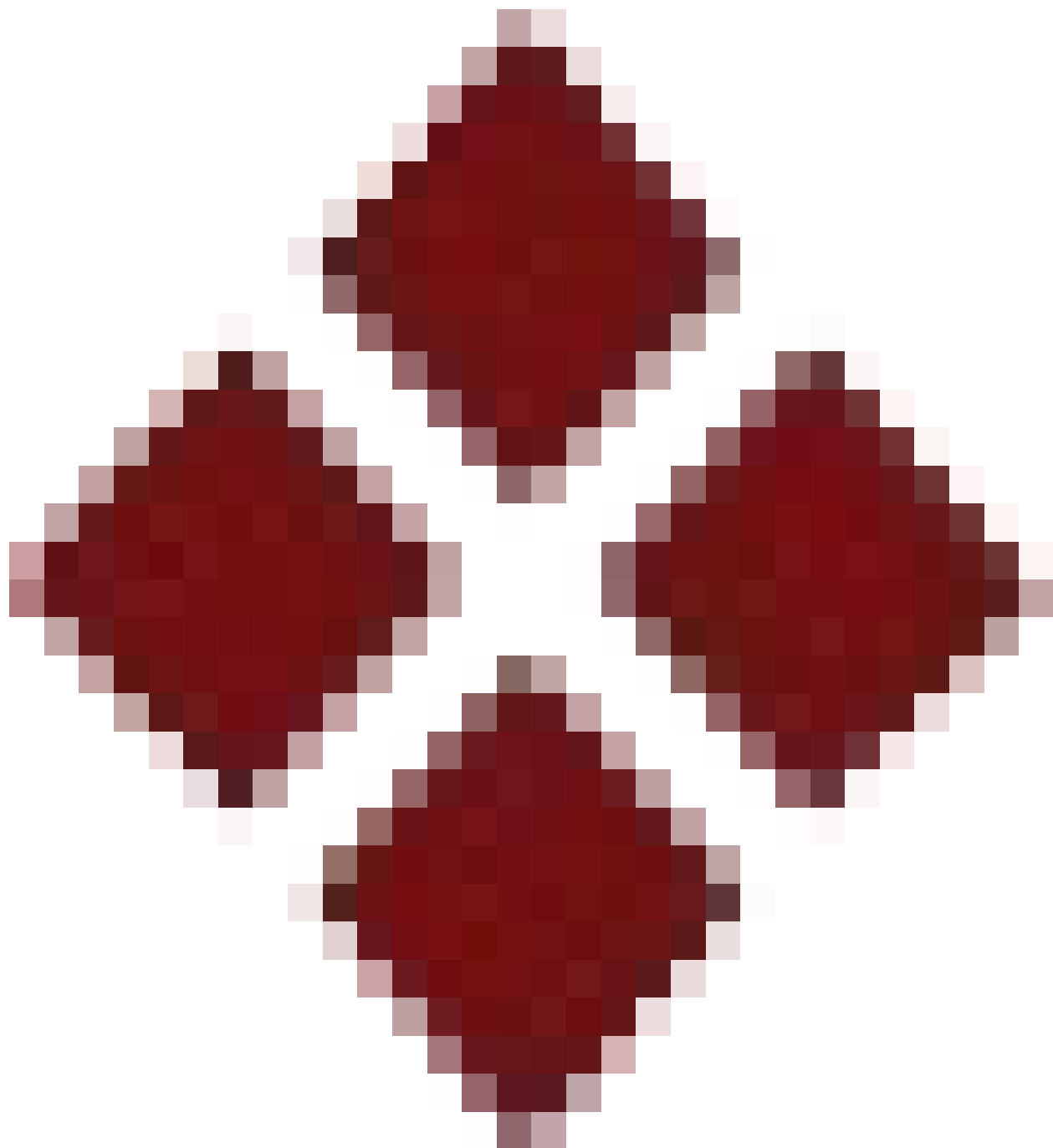
Discourse 30

To Build the House of Life Upon the Rock of Wisdom

The Sermon on the Mount, Part V



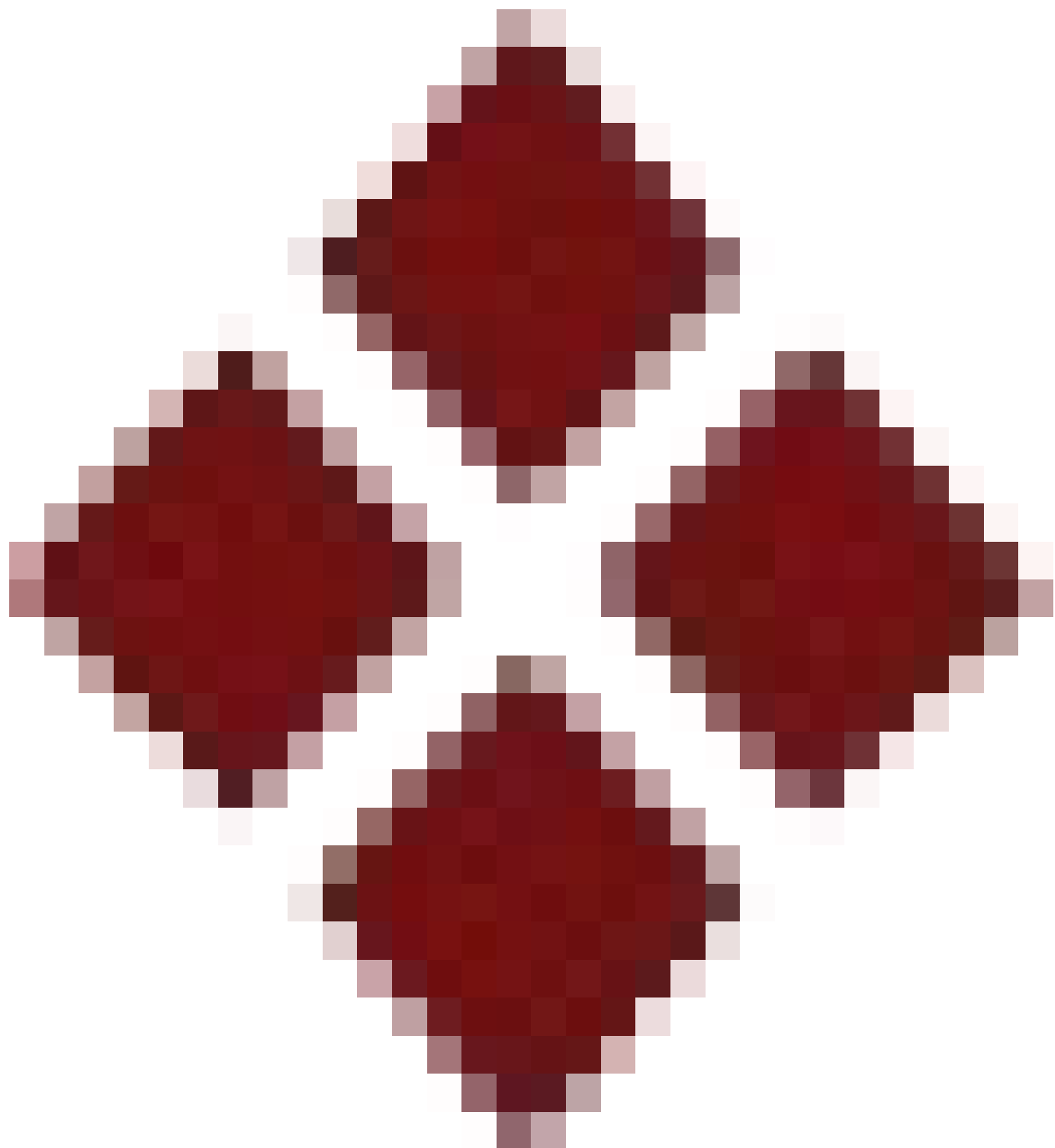
The Ideal of Being Nonjudgmental Versus One's Duty to Truth



The Spiritual and Psychological Dangers of Gossip



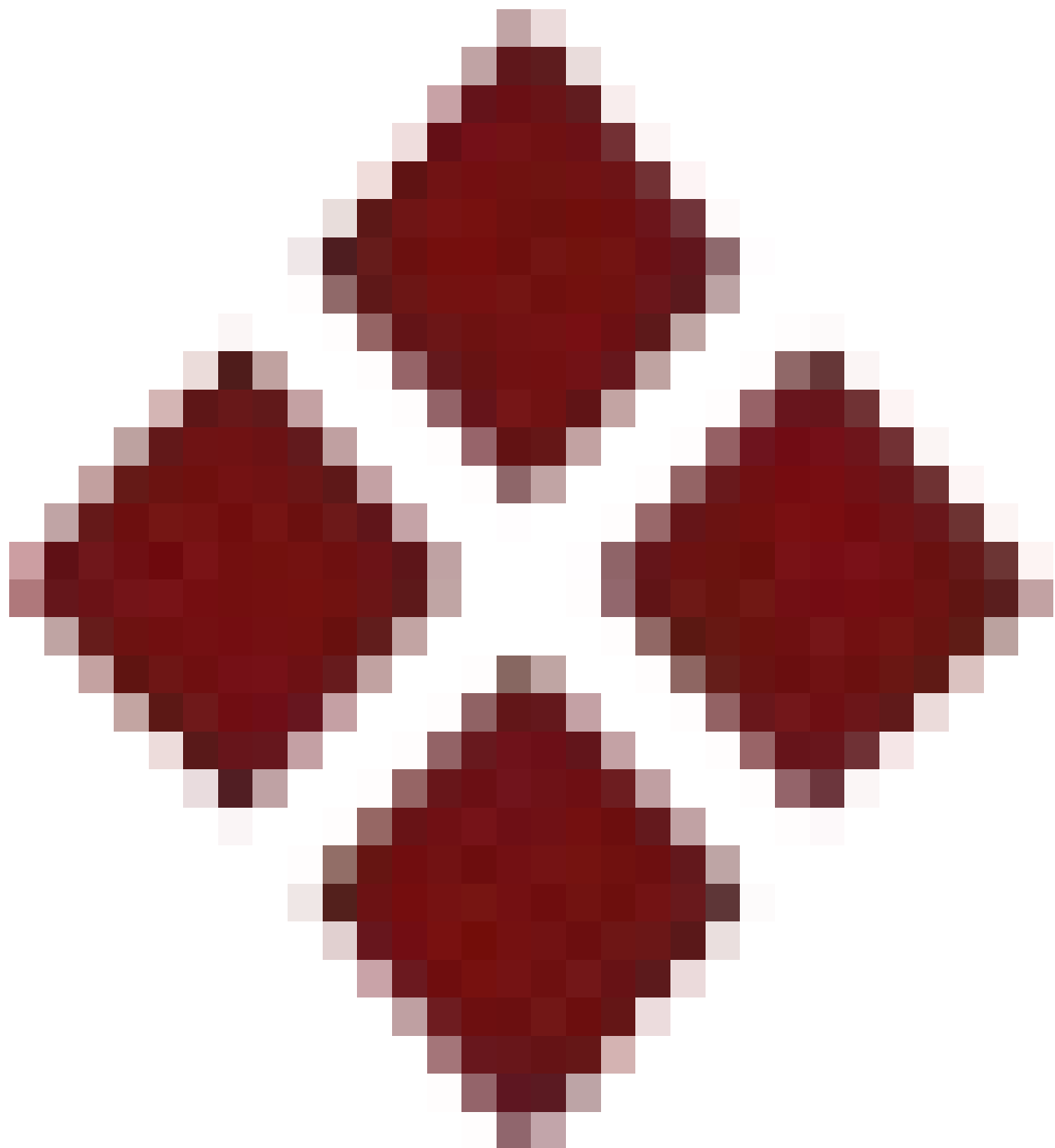
**Be Not Inwardly Critical of Others; Practice Healthy
Self-Criticism**



The Surety of God's Response to Sincere and Persevering Devotees



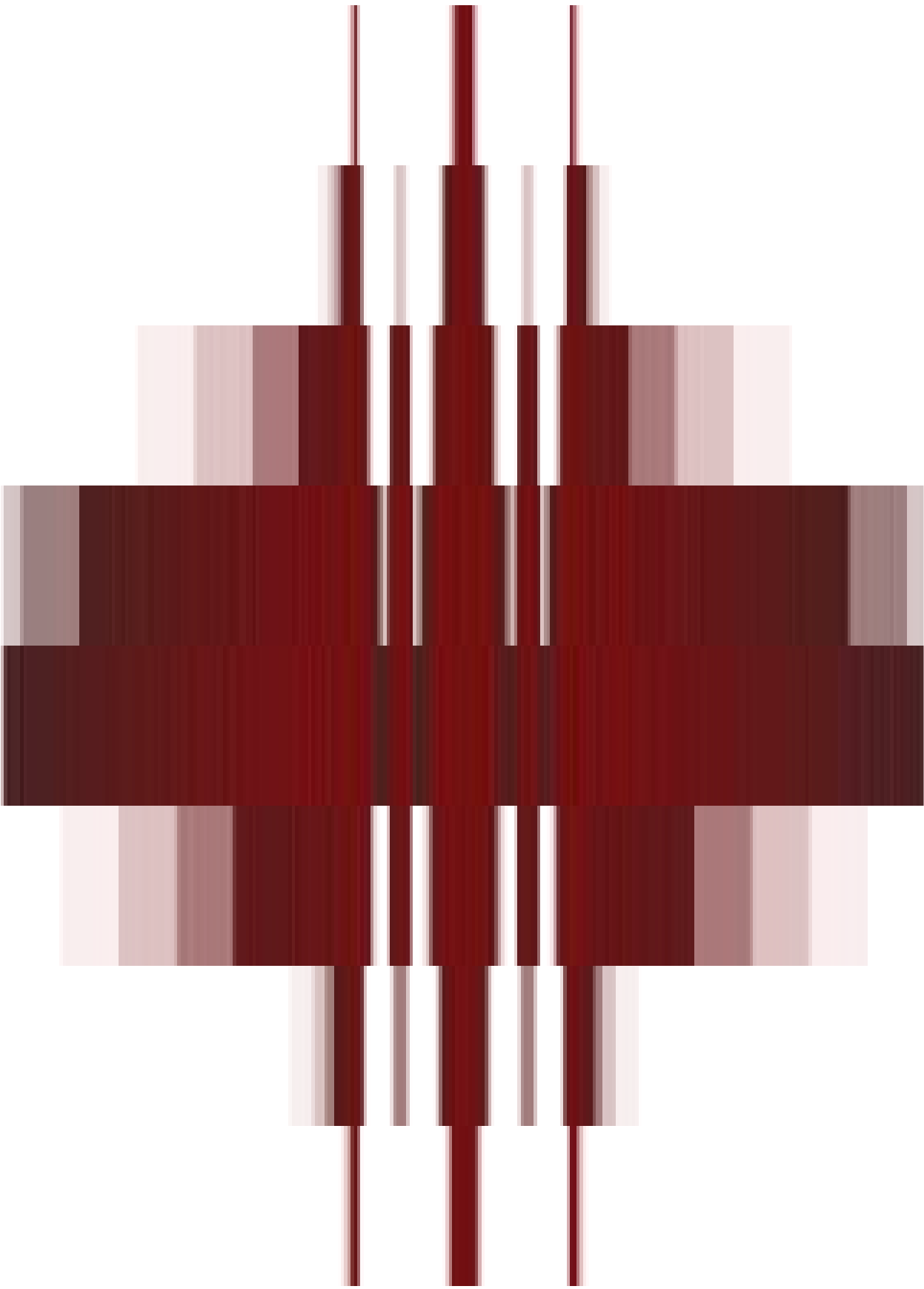
Spiritual Truth in “The Golden Rule”



A Warning to Gullible Victims of Unqualified Spiritual Teachers



Anchoring One's Life in the Unshakable Security of God-Contact



“Real Christ followers are those who embrace in their own consciousness through meditation and ecstasy the omnipresent cosmic wisdom and bliss of Jesus Christ.”

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“Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

“And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, ‘Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye’; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye.

“Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

“Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?

“If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?

“Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

“Not every one that saith unto me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

“Many will say to me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?’ And then will I profess unto them, ‘I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.’

“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

“And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.”

And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. When he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him.

—Matthew 7:1 – 8:1



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Discourse 30

To Build the House of Life Upon the Rock of Wisdom

The Sermon on the Mount, Part V, Conclusion
(With References From the Sermon on the Plain)

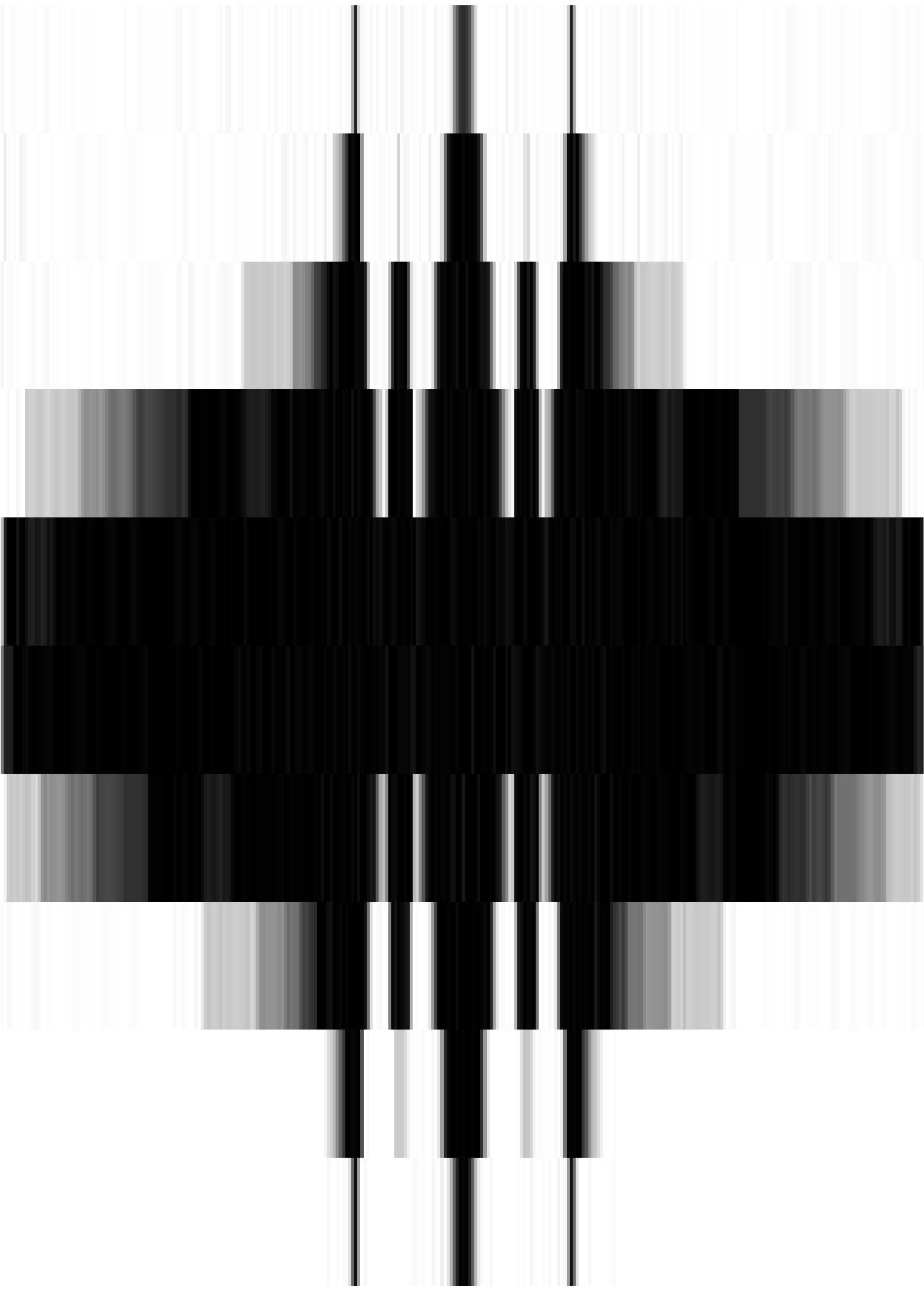


“Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

“And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, ‘Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye’; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye” (Matthew 7:1 – 5).¹

Parallel reference:

“Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven: Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again” (Luke 6:37 – 38, Sermon on the Plain).



Karmic consequences of being unkindly judgmental

Whatever judgment one gives out, the same will he attract. In this passage Jesus enunciates that cause-and-effect mechanism of the karmic law as a sort of moral threat to those who mercilessly expose the faults of others, that their own faults similarly will be brought into the light of harsh scrutiny. In the same spirit in which one judges others, the divine law judges the censurer—motivation, as well as the action itself, is an integral part of the cause-effect equation.

Punishment or reward is not imparted by God either as an act of vengeance or of special favoritism; good and evil results are the reflex outcome of good and evil actions. Since even God does not judge anyone's actions, having delegated that function to the impartial law of karma, by what right do small-minded humans presume to do so? Those who are already judged and automatically sentenced by the karmic law for their misguided actions do not need to be criticized or condemned by anybody else. A person who misuses his free choice and opens himself to evil karmic effects needs sympathy instead of criticism. It pleases God when He beholds a spiritually fortunate individual trying to rescue an unfortunate brother who is being torn by the talons of the effects of bad actions. When He sees a soul helping another soul out of the entanglements of misery-making karma, He extends mercy and all-forgiving blessings by which the sympathetic soul finds himself free from many of the effects of his own direful karma.

By the operation of the same cosmic law, to judge others cruelly is to attract malicious criticism upon oneself. If one peddles the weaknesses of others, the divine law will mysteriously bring about the publicity of his own private faults. One who is tempted to cast aspersion on anyone else should first ask himself: "Am I without error?" Judge ye not others; judge and change yourself first.

Cruel speech and behavior have their origin in cruel thoughts. If one is constantly unkind, it means his mind is a harbor for unkind thoughts. According to the psychological law of habit, the more one gives mental space to mean thoughts the more he will accustom himself to being mean-spirited, exciting and angering others by his unconscionable behavior, and thereby attracting unkindness to himself. Hence, it is insidiously undesirable to entertain judgmental thoughts about others under any circumstances, lest such inward

ugliness become an intransigent habit of meanness. He is foolish who makes himself a chronic critic of others, for he draws to himself nothing but inharmony from all sides. He is truly wise who knows when it is right to speak and when it is better to remain silent.



The ideal of being nonjudgmental versus one's duty to truth

There is a great deal of misconception about the ideal of being nonjudgmental versus one's duty to speak the truth. Discrimination is necessary. Once when I was lecturing in Trinity Auditorium in Los Angeles, someone came up to me afterward and told me that while I was speaking my assistant had left the book table to go and get a soda. I scolded the gossip for petty tattling.

On the other hand, suppose someone confides to a friend: "I am going to let loose in John's room a rattlesnake. Now don't you tell him!" Is it not the duty of the friend to inform John of the danger? Those who abide the evil of human snakes become like them.

"Judge not, that ye be not judged" does not mean that if one overlooks the crimes of other people, his own illegal activities will be excused. It is contrary to human law for one to conceal knowledge of the felonies of others, such as robbing or murdering. One who does is held liable for helping criminals to evade punishment.

Likewise, "condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned" is not meant as a promise that obliviousness to others' faults somehow frees one from the karmic sentence of one's own. What Jesus meant is that one who is sympathetic to his fellows will attract the sympathy of others and God. If John tries to help Judas extricate himself from the miseries resulting from past evil actions, by giving him succor and guiding him to the path of righteousness, then according to the law of karma John will attract some advanced soul or souls who would help him escape having to endure the full burden of his own karmic recompense.

"For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged." "What judgment" signifies that judging is of different kinds: kind or cruel, altruistic or self-serving, wise or ill-advised. The law of cause and effect, as articulated by Jesus in these verses, dictates that if one is used to judging others with kindness, and with the selfless motivation of being helpful, he receives in return the same treatment from Truth, which secretly and judiciously governs the eventual outcome of all potentialities. The divine law is thus seemingly kind or cruel in judging a person's faults to the degree that he has been kind or cruel in estimating the discrepancies of others.

Jesus' words do not signify that it is wrong through constructive criticism to warn an innocent person or a slightly immoral individual of the habit-forming dangers of continuing bad actions. It is all right to help a brother avoid a painful tumble into the same ditch of error into which one has fallen. To warn others about the hazards of evil, based on one's own bitter experience, is good if it is done in private with the sole desire of saving them from impending misery. To criticize others is hard enough on the recipients without hurting them—to no good purpose—by exposure, gossip, or malicious taunting. Self-appointed critics and informers have no right to expose others' faults publicly; it is a sin against God who dwells in the temple of the error-stricken as well as in the righteous. The stricken individual should be offered help in the form of wise counsel if such is requested, or in the form of the better example of one who is victorious over himself, or if totally belligerent he should be left alone to find his own spiritual remedy. In any case, one should never tell other people their faults in public—or even in private if they are unreceptive to being helped, unless it is positively one's duty.



Right way to give correction and help others reform themselves

In a family, it is the responsibility of the parents to guide and correct the children's behavior, but there is no need to criticize in front of the whole household. Similarly, to those who approach a guru-preceptor for help in improving themselves, the teacher generally speaks candidly but privately; and those in his spiritual family take such correction in the spirit of love and respect in which it is given. Just as a human mother wants her children to be clean and upright in demeanor before others, so is the Divine Mother wanting Her devotees to be spiritually decorous and cleansed of unbecoming traits. If jealousy, touchiness, unkindness, selfishness, are not excised from one's nature, they fester like boils and attract the flies of biting criticism from others. It is better that the psychological operation be done at home, or by the guru in the ashram, with kindness, love, and the highest interest of the "patient" uppermost in mind.

Even when punishment is justifiable, it should be administered to wrongdoers quietly and in a way that encourages them to try to reform themselves. The court judge punishes criminals for the sake of all society, as well as for miscreants' own good, so that they will not perpetrate further or greater crimes. The purpose of judgment should be curative only and not the revengeful retaliation of anger. To punish wrongdoers just to satisfy wrath, or in order audaciously to hurt them or bring them to ridicule, or for any other wrong purpose, is evil.

Cruel condemnation makes one forget that the sinner is but an error-stricken child of God whose divinity is eclipsed temporarily by ignorance. No one should be called a sinner; nor should anyone think of himself as a sinner. Hate the sin but not the sinner. The critic should treat the errant as he would hope to be treated for his own sinful mistakes. Those who are wrong do not need scornful kicks; they need a firm but loving hand extended to them. It is purposeless to rub the salt of acerbic criticism into others' character wounds. Give unto the erring the healing salve of proper sympathetic advice and appropriate support for any effort toward reformation. Give love to all, the only panacea that can redeem the world; that is the clarion call of Christ.

When one does not condemn others but tries to help them with love, then God's laws, being conscious forces, will treat that caring person likewise. "With the

same measure that ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.” One who forgives others who have wronged him will attract forgiveness unto himself. One who gives mental and material help to others with a heart overflowing with kindness will find the same coming back to him. This is the law of action applied to human hearts: that whatever one feels for others remains vibrating in the ether, attracting a return, measure for measure, of sympathies and kindnesses. The giver of negligible love receives negligible love; the greathearted giver will find the fullness of love coming back to him, now or in the future—despite any appearances to the contrary. Even if one’s noble actions are unrecognized by one’s contemporaries, the law of action unerringly insures that they will be recognized by God in this life or the life beyond. Good actions, like good treasures, once stored in the mind may remain unused, but are never lost. The karmic reward is there for the soul to use when the necessity or opportunity arises.

In telling man to forego uncharitable faultfinding, Jesus spoke primarily against sanctimonious judgment of human frailties—in particular, sexual immorality, which often grips otherwise virtuous persons despite their willingness and intention to follow the injunctions of moral rectitude. The physically compelling sex force is the result not only of metaphysical inheritance from fallen Adam and Eve, but also of bad prenatal past-life habits, which tend to influence heredity in forming the postnatal habits of an individual. That is why children are sometimes helplessly born with overstimulated appetites. The degenerating influence of bad company and environment—especially in this permissive era of prurient novels, entertainment, and advertising—is also to blame.

Some normally healthy persons habitually have little or no sex desire due to past-life moral habits; but that does not necessarily make them saints, for they may in other respects have a very wicked, insincere heart. Conversely, some otherwise very good individuals struggle day and night against the sex compulsion due to bad karma of past lives, or to inflammation or irritation of the nerves in the sex region, which may be caused by congestion of toxins in the system. Such sufferers should consult a physician, follow a healthful diet, and practice the technique of life-force control given by a true guru who has mastered every passion within himself and can teach the art of control by sublimation.

A man who can match his will power against sex compulsion and win, and who can convince the mind that the peace and moral virility of the transmuting power

of self-control is greater than sex indulgence, is a heroic conqueror of his lower self. A man who is innocent simply because of lack of exposure to temptation may harbor weakness and succumb when a sudden enticement arouses his dormant sexual instincts. Once stimulated by thought or action, sex is the most enslaving mortal habit and the most difficult sense desire to be controlled, regulated, and subjugated.

Jesus knew that some immoral persons, though mentally desirous of ridding themselves of their carnality, are extremely weak in resisting temptations of the flesh. He helped such persons by wisdom and love, and taught against increasing their troubles by unkind criticism and condemnation.

Persecution, gossip, commands, and taboos cannot remedy moral errors. There would be much less hypocrisy in the world if instead of tongue persecutions, persons were taught from childhood moral remedies, such as methods of self-control, right living, and proper hygiene, before they become the victims of evil through bad company and worldly influences.



The spiritual and psychological dangers of gossip

Gossiping about the moral weaknesses of others is a wicked spiritual crime. It breeds hypocrisy in social and individual life. How incisively Jesus made his point when he said: “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone.”² One who occupies his mind with an unholy interest in the moral weaknesses of others actually rouses and stimulates his own sleeping prenatal baser instincts.

Gossip, even among well-meaning friends, never has a favorable effect on the person talked about; it ruffles him, makes him mad, steeped in despair, ashamed, and strengthens his intractable behavior. There is a proverb that says: “The person who has lost one ear goes through the village at the side, showing the villagers his one good ear and hiding the lost ear. But he who has lost both ears goes through the center of the village, because he cannot hide his disfigurement from anyone.” Any person whose moral errors are unduly exposed becomes desperate and shameless, like the man who lost both ears; he flaunts a devil-may-care attitude and makes no effort to be better. When persons lose face as a result of gossip about their faults, they also lose the desire and incentive to change. (Of course, in rare cases, just the fear of exposure and publicity keeps some people good.)

A small weakness in a person, once publicized, tends to grow in notoriety—if not in fact—proportionate to the attention given to it. Worldly minds are morbid; they thrive on sensationalism and often distort the facts or exaggerate the words of others, or repeat them out of context with no charitable consideration of pertinent circumstances. A psychological defect common to most human beings is to repeat negative reports about the faults of another without having first given the accused person a chance to disprove the allegations.

Never be drawn into psychological muddles. My Master used to say, when anyone would approach him confidentially with some supposedly scandalous disclosure: “If it is not something I can repeat to everyone, I don’t wish to hear it.” If someone has a grievance about another, or thinks he knows a secret about him, he should confront that person directly, or keep silent, rather than maligning the alleged wrongdoer for the love of gossip or impelled by an uncontrolled habit of indiscriminate talkativeness.

Gossip seems to act like a stimulating tonic. Those who crave this titillation should satisfy that lust by loudly publicizing all the private sins they themselves have committed. They would find such disclosure unendurable even for one minute! A person who himself cannot stand such scrutiny should not in any way rejoice in exposing others. To reveal the moral weaknesses of others and bring to them senseless discomfiture is not the way of the wise.

Unscrupulous sensationalism is typical of many Western newspapers; they are uncharitable in their attitude because they are not healers of immorality, but rather scandalmongers. A spiritual crime is committed by journalists and publications that love to pickle gossip or to spice up reporting in order to sell more papers by catering to the degraded taste of gossip-loving readers.



Be not inwardly critical of others; practice healthy self-criticism

Internal criticism is the malignant twin of verbal criticism. To seethe silently with critical thoughts is very foolish, creating disturbing vibrations that affect one's inner peace and are a subtly unpleasant effluence affecting persons around him. It is best to clean the mind of such negation. To be constantly judgmental is a sad misuse of man's God-given capacities of intelligence and discrimination. The wise person observes neutrally, allowing no acrimonious feelings to distort his perceptions of truth.

To critique one's fellow beings in a spirit of intolerance or gloating over their faults is to call forth God's judgment: "In the light of My wisdom, I find no mortal perfect; and if I were to judge according to human standards of criticism, everyone who breathes My air of maya would be found wanting."

"Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye," said Jesus, "but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" Man's task on earth is to keep busy expunging from his own consciousness the original temptation inherited from Adam and Eve. It is a psychological and metaphysical error to spend time in pointing out the mental dirt in others instead of cleaning out the dirt in the mansion of one's own soul. The would-be reformer of others' behavior must live wisely himself before he can accurately discern how to plant wisdom in the lives of those persons prone to misdeeds.

Critical people lack humility and therefore cannot themselves take criticism. Self-elected judges of others quite conveniently forget to scrutinize their own inner weaknesses. They think that they are all right because they magnify the faults of others to lessen the magnitude of their own. It is insidious to hide behind such a misconceived mental smoke screen. Insincerity and hypocrisy mar the character of one who does not care to overcome his weakness, yet professes hatred for such weakness. If he delights in tearing apart persons who suffer from the same personality flaws he possesses, he is a sadist and a coward, hiding his own defects behind sneers of criticism.

The irony is that unscrupulous people who love to castigate others about their faults usually possess the same faults themselves. Whatever annoys a person most in someone else may often be found festering within himself. Because such

persons cannot look honestly at themselves without devastating feelings of guilt, they find satisfaction in scathing others to vent their frustration and snidely hide, sometimes even from themselves, their own reprehensibility. There are short-tempered people who themselves cannot stand anger in anyone else; those who are greedy, but cannot abide greed in others. Some people have bad social manners, yet disdain lack of decorum in boorish persons. One renounces the moral right to chastise others about the self-same faults that haunt oneself. There is little effect in a liar admonishing a liar; or in a confirmed immoralist passing judgment on immoral persons.

One who presumes to correct manifestations of ignorance in others should with equal zeal excise all ignorance from within himself. When one has acquired wisdom he will better perceive how to remove ignorance from the lives of those he wishes to help. Action and example will speak louder than his words. That is why Jesus said: “First cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye.”

The example set forth by Jesus is to change oneself. As one saint of India said: “Wanted: Reformers—not of others, but of themselves.”³ As one changes himself, others around him are also changed. The salutary effects of this law can be seen in the transformed and transforming lives of all great masters.

To make a habit of analyzing people is spiritually profitless; and it also makes the critic unpleasant company. It is better, as Jesus taught, to become like little children: guileless, calm, humbly sincere.⁴ One who mentally dissects and analyzes the botanical properties of a flower misses a full appreciation of its beauty. But one who focuses on how beautiful that flower is, allowing one’s intuitive feeling to respond to its pure essence, enjoys fully its loveliness.

There are times, of course, when it is prudent, even necessary, to use discrimination to find out the character of a person before entering into a close relationship or exchange—either personal or in business, and certainly before giving one’s trust to one who purports to be a guru or spiritual teacher.⁵ Otherwise, one should simply appreciate the gardens of flowering good qualities in human souls, leaving the tending of unlovely egoistic weeds and withered plants to those responsible for those fields—unless one is a qualified and duly commissioned spiritual gardener.

Effective analysis of one’s associates requires clear-sightedness with some

intuitive perception. Persons of emotional nature, without a ballast of wisdom, are likely to be prejudiced by undependable feelings, precluding objective appraisal. Intellectual types are equally susceptible to misunderstanding; owing to the activity of their hypersensitive imaginative rationalization of every nuance of behavior, they often impute wrong meanings to others' motives and actions. Such persons should balance reason with empathy, understanding that every individual life is difficult, complex, and as deserving of sympathy as their own. It is human nature to make broad allowances for one's own mistakes and shortcomings; certainly similar tolerance and understanding should be extended to others.

One should not open himself up to just anybody or everybody to critique his behavior or character. The opinions of those who are not qualified to criticize, especially those who carp and condemn in order to create disharmony or simply for the perverse pleasure it affords them, should be little noted or ignored altogether. There are two ways to disarm undeserving critics: to be abjectly indifferent to them, or to be lovingly indifferent to them. The latter is better. If one has the fault of which he is accused, no matter the source of accusation, he need not blatantly announce or confirm the disclosure of his fault, but quietly and positively remove it from within himself. If the accusation is false, he should vehemently deny it, without argumentation and without being wrathful or disturbed. It is not necessary to let anyone know about one's private faults or past failings, except if someone is qualified to give help in cases where outside intervention is needed. Psychological privacy of one's thoughts is a God-given privilege; why supply "ammunition" that might fall into the hands of unconscionable persons who enjoy misusing such information?

To conceal one's faults that harm no one but oneself is not hypocrisy so long as one tries sincerely and mightily to rectify those flaws and thus save himself from the crucifixion of condemnation and spiritual impotency. How many young people would have matured into better adults if society had not forced hypocrisy on them as a way of getting ahead. Hypocrites take pleasure in their gains acquired by posing as virtuous when they are not. Such people feel no repentance and never try to reform. They love the accolades they receive by deceiving others about themselves.

Only the sincere, kind, wise, and perfectly balanced individual is fit to assess the virtues and vices of others. But Truth and God only, the Faultless Omniscience, can judge with absolute fairness. Man's judgment is conditional. God, who

shares no base passions with man, is the Sole Impartiality in judging what is right. In His compassion, He never criticizes anyone openly—only silently, through one's conscience. The voice of an unstifled conscience is louder than words, more penetrating than sermons of human reformers. God criticizes His erring children through their reason, through their sense of moral judgment, which is instinctive, and confirms it through their conscience.

Introspection is a wonderful mirror in which to judge oneself. And even more accurate than that mirror is one's reflection in the mirror of a wise man's mind, or that of one's guru. In India, the masters undertake the guidance of a disciple only if that person is willing to undergo the discipline required for spiritual transformation. It is of utmost benefit to see oneself in the light of the wisdom of a master, to strive to measure up to the standards of his precepts and ideals. One who corrects himself according to that clear-sighted appraisal will find himself magnetically attractive and widely influential; and, most importantly, pleasing in the sight of God. It was this flawless mirror Jesus held up to his disciples. His words of wisdom expressed the perfection of soul qualities as the criteria to gauge their reflection; his divine example inspired their aspirations to become that perfect soul-image.

To be able to stand criticism is a mark of spiritual strength. It is weakness to allow resentment to conquer one's feelings when criticized. To be able humbly to stand the barbs of criticism, just or unjust, and to make continuous effort to improve one's attitudes and behavior when criticism is justified, will make one a saint.



“Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you” (Matthew 7:6).

Spiritual advice is of no avail to unappreciative persons who snap at their would-be helper with cynicism and derision. Just as swine would doltishly trample on pearls cast before them, so people who are deeply wallowing in worldly muck are insensitive to the wisdom gems of saints who speak of the priceless happiness of a self-controlled existence. Attempts to reform with helpful sermons low-minded, confirmed evil persons, or those with an intransigent mind-set, will likely be met with sneers and even attempted injurious antagonism. Jesus’ advice means that wisdom should be accorded the esteem due to something spiritually precious; it should neither be flaunted nor used as coercion. Similarly in the Bhagavad Gita the Lord mandates: “Never voice these truths to one who is without self-control or devotion, nor to one who performs no service or does not care to hear, nor to one who speaks ill of Me.”⁶ Persons caught up in evil or nonunderstanding have no wish or intention to change and only laugh at lofty principles and ridicule those who propound them.

Better it is to stay away from evil persons, and to remain reserved around the unreceptive. When an outstretched helping hand is slapped, it should be withdrawn for a time until the recipient is ready to accept it. One who gives sincerity that is not appreciated or is abused is casting away “pearls” uselessly; the wise reserve their spiritual treasure to benefit those who are receptive.



“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

“Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?”

“If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?” (Matthew 7:7 – 11).

Parallel reference:

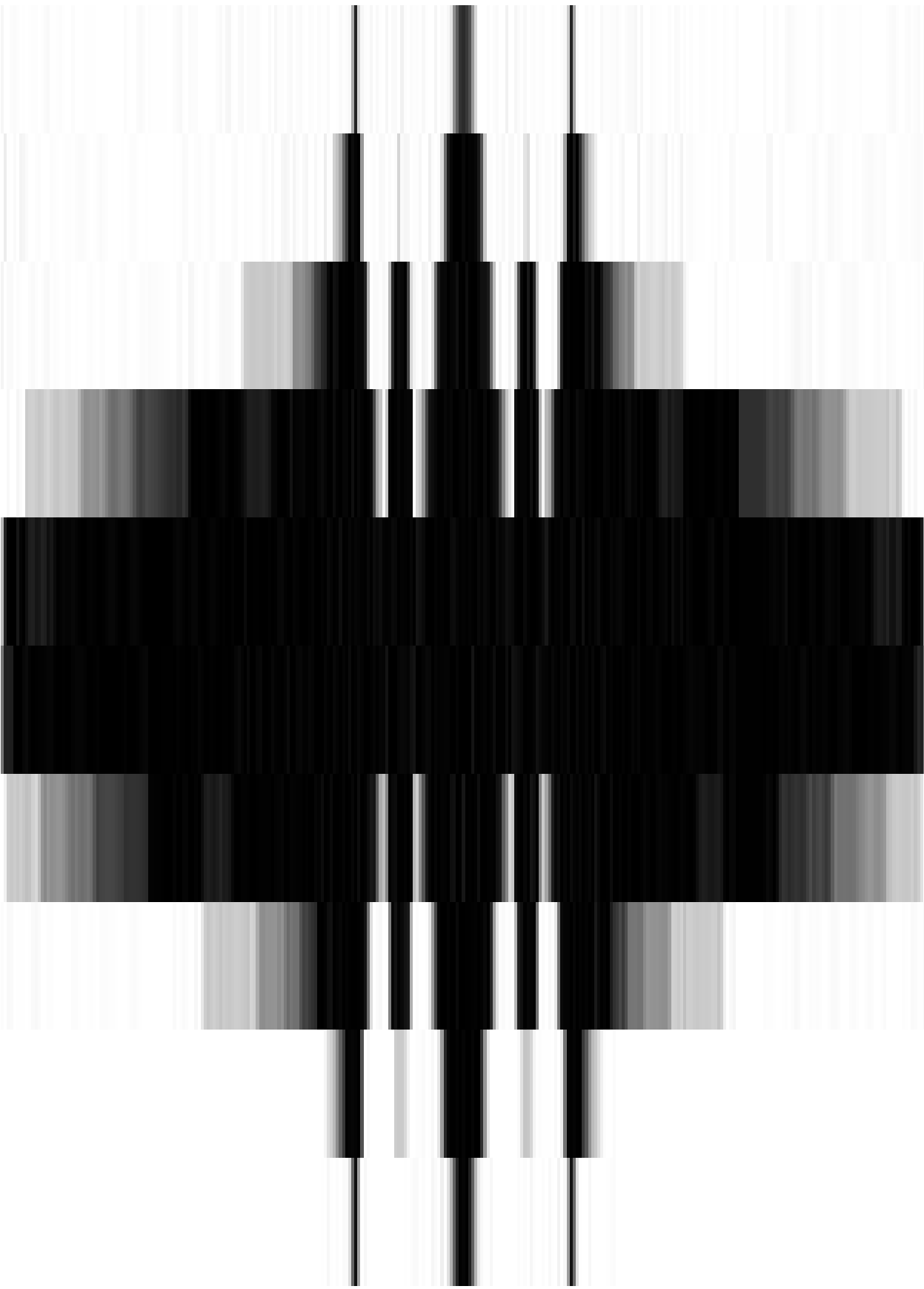
And he said unto them, “Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him?’”

“And he from within shall answer and say, ‘Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee.’ I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.

“And I say unto you, ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

“If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?” (Luke 11:5 – 13).

The devotee who persistently asks the divine truth from God will receive it from his Omniscient Father. If he seeks God perseveringly behind the darkness of closed eyes in meditation, he will find Him. By the devotee's continuous knocking with prayerful urgency at the gate of silence leading to God, it shall be opened unto him, and his consciousness will enter into the heavenly region of blissful God-communion. Every devotee who with unrelenting zeal asks for God-realization receives that enlightenment without fail.



The surety of God's response to sincere and persevering devotees

All prodigal sons of God, having run away from the bliss of God-contact into the slums of material distraction, will someday come back towards God through the interior gate of meditative peace to reenter their blissful inner home. Every child of God lost in the forest of material desires, but unflaggingly seeking a way out, will find his way back to God's Heavenly Mansion. He who knocks continuously at the door to God's presence with the throbs of his heartfelt devotion will certainly find that God will receive him. Unceasing devotion is the force that can open the gates of God's heart for the devotee to enter in.

If any human son of God asks the Heavenly Father for the bread of eternal life, He will not give him the stone of material ignorance. If the devotee asks of God the food of wisdom, God will not give him the serpent of delusion. If the devotee asks God for divine manna and all-around divine bliss, He will not give him the scorpion of restlessness and mental misery.

If even deluded human beings know how to give "good gifts" to their children, and friends willingly give of their store to needy friends, how much more will the Heavenly Father, who is the receptacle of all goodness, give to His human children the supreme gift of knowledge of communion with His creative Cosmic Vibration, the "Holy Spirit," manifest of all God's powers and infinite intelligence? God gives not only this highest wisdom and vibratory power to those children who demand it, but He also surrenders Himself unto the devotee whose desire for Him is unplaced by any lesser offering.

People do not get many of the things they pray for because they do not know how to ask God for them. One who first contacts God by the practice of meditation and then asks for legitimate material needs or for spiritual grace will receive consummation of his prayers. One's seeking must be wholehearted, minding not reverses, until he obtains his heart's desire. To the seeker of God Himself who offers continuous mental knocks of demand at the doors of inner silence—who waits patiently in the darkness of closed eyes in meditation, knocking persistently with the unabated ardor and devotion of his soul—God perforce will open those portals to admit that devotee into His infinite Kingdom of Fulfillment.

In these verses Jesus speaks of the surety of God's loving response. No true heart will be denied that "asketh" of Him, that "seeketh" Him and His wisdom trove, or that "knocketh" at the door to His Presence behind the pearly ramparts of heaven entered through the inner silence of deep meditation.



“Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets” (Matthew 7:12).

Parallel reference:

“And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise” (Luke 6:31, Sermon on the Plain).



Spiritual truth in “The Golden Rule”

That which one wants to see in others should first be manifested in oneself; for whatsoever goes forth from one's consciousness and in one's actions returns in kind. The goodness one hopes to receive from others should begin with goodness given to others. One should never behave in a way that he would abhor were he the recipient. ⁷ Persons who want people to speak kindly and understandingly to them, to behave toward them sincerely, honorably, and lovingly, must initiate such response by their own demeanor in relationships with others. The Divine Law and the prophets deal with people in the noblest way, that people in turn will learn to act always nobly. God is never cranky, mean, or spiteful even toward those of troublesome temperaments; people who feel punished by Him have rather disturbed themselves due to their own rancorous thoughts and wrong actions. The infinite voice of God is silent, yet He is always whispering gently and lovingly through one's conscience: “Child, wake up, forsake the evil way.” So even in the relationship between man and his Maker, God gives His great love to His children that they may forsake their misbehavior and learn to return love to Him from the abundance of their own hearts.



“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matthew 7:13 – 14).⁸



Outer and inner interpretation of “strait gate” and “narrow way”

The gateway of delusion is wide, opening onto the broad pathway of evil. Many fools blithely go through the gate of ignorant impulses and find themselves on the path of evil actions. It is easy to perform evil, just as it requires no effort to roll down a hill; but every evil action repeated leads one further along the wide path of evil trod by the unthinking masses.

The “broadness” of the evil path signifies the unlimited potentialities for committing evil deeds. The reckless throng, lured by temptations and compelled by iniquitous impulses, enters the easy gate of evil and follows the broad path of evil actions, arm-in-arm with their false promises of quick gratification. But as the evildoers jostle madly along, the path of evil suddenly ends in a precipitous fall into the valley of misery.

The strait gate of goodness in its restrictive singularity is less easy to pass through; and its path narrow and difficult, like climbing uphill; fewer are those who choose this more arduous path of virtuous inclinations (gate) and righteous actions (way), which leads to everlasting life. Virtue arising from spiritual aspiration, though seemingly difficult and unattractive in the beginning and shunned by the worldly minded, yet leads those who persist in pursuing the singular way of goodness into a kingdom of undreamed-of splendor and unending bliss.

Jesus enjoined on man unswerving adherence to the path of virtue and morality, a course that all human beings must follow to evolve spiritually. He reiterated this in these verses, but also addressed his close disciples in a veiled metaphor. The “strait gate” and “narrow way” refer also to the gateway in the subtle astral center at the base of the spine, which opens into the astral spine’s narrow, extremely fine pathway through which the life and consciousness ascend to the higher cerebrospinal centers of spiritual perception—the sole path to realization of God and union with Him.⁹

Conversely, when life and consciousness flow downward through this spinal channel and are dispersed outwardly through delusion’s wide gate of sensory perceptions, into body consciousness and its broad range of material actions and attachments, that is the way that “leadeth to destruction”—forgetfulness of man’s

inherent divine nature.¹⁰



“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them” (Matthew 7:15 – 20).



A warning to gullible victims of unqualified spiritual teachers

With trenchant imagery, Jesus warns people who are gullible, eager to believe anything touted as advantageous to them, to beware of so-called teachers who exploit religion as a means of gaining a profitable sheep-like following. Spiritual pretenders commit the highest sin against God, using the Master of the Universe for personal or monetary gain. Jesus describes such teachers as “ravening wolves” of evil, dressed “in shee p’s clothing” of feigned humbleness and spirituality. The qualifications of a teacher cannot be accurately judged by his outer appearance of superficial behavior. Any man in religious garb may look holy, but he cannot hide a wicked heart; it must eventually come out in his practical dealings as wicked actions. As grapes cannot be gathered from a thorn bush or figs from thistles, so goodness cannot be reaped from a dissimulating evil individual, no matter how clever his guise of piety. Undiscerning persons may be duped; but God is not deceived, nor is the karmic law.

One may argue that a beautiful lotus may be plucked from a murky pond, or that one may savor sweetmeats prepared by a person who himself subsists poorly on bowls of rice; or that one may even glean some profit by reading a good book written by an evil man. But it is an ineluctable truth that in spiritual matters, for ultimate realization and God-union, the shepherding of a “false prophet” will not do. The devotee needs to follow the path of a God-knowing person, chosen for him by God. A false prophet can never be a God-ordained guru, no matter how artfully he presumes such title. A false prophet is one who knows at heart his hypocrisy and moral weakness and yet professes goodness to attract and hold people who will follow him blindly for his own ends—financial and for gratification of his ego.

A true guru will not bring any such evil or misguidance to his followers. He can be known by his humility, uprightness, and God-attunement evidenced by his ability to enter the elevated states of God-communion in superconsciousness, Christ consciousness, and cosmic consciousness. The signs of a true guru who can enter these states at will are as follows: his eyes are still and unwinking whenever he wants them to be so; by the practice of yoga his heart and breath are quiet without his forcibly holding his breath in his lungs; his mind is calm without effort. If a man has eyelids that blink continually, lungs acting like bellows all the time, and a mind always restless like a butterfly, and he claims to

be in cosmic consciousness, his assertion is laughable. Just as a man who is running about cannot effectively pretend to be sleeping, so one with restless eyes, breath, and mind cannot convince one who knows better that he is in cosmic consciousness. Just as sleep manifests in the body by certain physiological changes, so the muscles, eyes, heart, breath, all become still during the elevated states of God-communion—and even in the highest, non-trance nirvikalpa samadhi state these conditions of total interiorization can be produced at will. The true guru is a master, not of others, but of himself.

Every false prophet in time is exposed and cut down by the axe of wise and just criticism and is cast into the fire of oblivion. By the fruits of a teacher's actions, which emanate from the tree of his inner thoughts, the discriminating devotee will know the difference between a good prophet or guru and a false one. The true guru may instruct a few persons or a great many, but his whole intention is to raise his disciples to Christlike, Krishnalike, stature.

A great prophet, or savior, is one who comes on earth as a special messenger to answer a specific need of mankind, and accordingly aspires to reform a portion of mankind or to influence the entire populace. Anyone who knows himself as only wicked, and yet outwardly makes a colossal claim to be a prophet or protégé of God, is a stupendous hypocrite and a sinner against God. In condemning false prophets and the evil they do, Jesus was not castigating the sincere, humble person still struggling against a few inner weaknesses while trying to help others spiritually. His stern warning was directed at those who make false spiritual claims about themselves and preach a false, self-serving doctrine.



“Not every one that saith unto me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

“Many will say to me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works?’ And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Matthew 7:21 – 23).



Outer worship and mere belief in Jesus

is insufficient for salvation

Hearken, ye would-be followers of Christ: It is not enough just to laud the name of Jesus as “Lord, Lord” in conversation and preaching. Professing belief in the divinity of Jesus will not of itself assure entry into the Kingdom of God.

Christians whose dedication consists merely of attending church services and absentmindedly listening to Sunday sermons and hymns reach that kind of inner heaven that bestows a degree of peace, faith, some answered prayers, and a little spiritual satisfaction—only that much and nothing more. Real Christ followers are those who embrace in their own consciousness through meditation and ecstasy the omnipresent cosmic wisdom and bliss of Jesus Christ. This is the meaning of “he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven”—the region of Heavenly Bliss.

The true devotee, in daily intense meditation, retraces his wayward footsteps from the land of delusive sense pleasures and material attachments back to his home of Cosmic Bliss in God. He who experiences oneness with God in the ecstasy of meditation retains that divine attunement and thus knows how to behave correctly during his earthly sojourn, how to act according to God’s will here.

At death, there is an instant review of one’s life. The consciousness in the soul recalls one’s attempts at virtue and tries thereby to gain the recognition of the liberating Christ Consciousness; but if one’s sins and mental desires prevail, he is turned away and cast again onto the rotating wheel of earthly incarnations. Jesus cites especially, by way of example, the reprehensible actions of the “false prophets.” Whatever presumed good works one does in the holy name of God or His divine emissaries are instead iniquitous if manipulated by impulses of self-serving motives, fraudulent claims, or the hypocrisy of pretending to be what one is not. Those who have acquired fortunes by selling the name of God, or who have cast out the devils of evil from people only momentarily in a spate of emotional imagination, or have similarly performed spiritual “miracles” according to their own deluded estimation only, will not be recognized by the Infinite Christ and granted entry into the Eternal Kingdom.

Sincere persons who have allowed themselves to become satisfied with mechanical spirituality and worship—emotional or theological—should not take for granted their salvation. Verbal praise to the Lord without actual perception of His corresponding response, and theological study without gaining Self-realization, are of little value in the eyes of God. The principles governing divine life are as exact as those of any other branch of science in God's creation. Devotees who want to be real Christ-ians, rather than just members of Christian churchianity, must know and truly feel the presence of Omnipresent Christ all the time, must commune with Him in ecstasy, and be guided by His Infinite Wisdom—and know that He is, and ever will be. If God and Jesus ever existed, They exist now and ever will. If They are perpetually existent, They are knowable—barriers between heaven and earth do not obtain in Their Omnipresence. The truth of Their Ever-Existence and Ever-Presence must be verified in the lived lives and personal realization of Their congregation of Truth-loving devotees.



“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

“And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it” (Matthew 7:24 – 27).

Parallel reference:

“And why call ye me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not the things which I say? Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like: He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock.

“But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great” (Luke 6:46 – 49, Sermon on the Plain).¹¹



Anchoring one's life in the unshakable security of God-contact

Jesus spoke: “And why call ye me Lord, without knowing my oneness with the Christ Intelligence, the Lord of all creation, and how my omnipresent Self manifests Itself in creation and in your consciousness? Because you call me Christ but do not feel my presence in your consciousness, you do not lead your life as I say unto you, or as my consciousness signifies by its Christ vibrations upholding the superconsciousness of your soul, your true Self. When you will be able to feel my Christ consciousness by awakening your superconsciousness, then you will follow the wisdom-righteousness I signify through your inner perception, but not before, when you still heed the instigations of delusion.”

The devotee who forsakes the compelling influence of matter and sensations and seeks the hidden Christ in the temple of superconsciousness can listen to the silent vibrations of that Infinite Christ; that devotee's nervous system—with its sensate, kinetic, emotional, and rational instrumentalities—will then automatically respond and act according to the perceptions of the inner divine propensities. That devotee, as the soul, builds his house of consciousness not on the shifting sands of earthly pleasures; but with the pickax of meditation and God-communion he digs deep to reach the bedrock of intuitive wisdom, and builds his house of bliss on the everlasting rock of God's Cosmic Consciousness. When the rains of difficult spiritual trials or the flood of accumulated sorrowful events or the mighty wind of death threatens with vehemence and impetuosity, the wise man's house of intuitive cosmic perception and bliss stands unshaken. The wisdom and bliss acquired by meditation becomes a permanent abode of the consciousness, which not even the most-dreaded event of death can destroy. The devotee whose consciousness does not rest on the frangible foundation of material desires will not be carried away into the plights of new incarnations. The consciousness built on the rock of God-consciousness shall not lose its divine contact in life or death, but will forever be housed in blissful immortality.

But he who gives only token praise to the Christ in Jesus, without heeding the voice of his inner higher consciousness and its intuitive wisdom-perceptions and acting according to those uplifting inspirations, is a man who has built his consciousness on a precarious foundation of earthly habits. When temptations will come to him, his house of self-control will break up and be swept away by the tide of ignorance, his temporary shelter of spiritual discipline thus

devastated.

Whosoever leads a careless life patterned after the dictates of his impulsive desires and habits, and who tries to feel security in financial acquirement and sense pleasures, will lose his happiness during the trials of life.¹² Like a house built upon treacherous sand, earthly happiness cannot prevail against the rain, floods, and wind of physical disease and mental troubles, the changes of fortune, or the ultimate storm of death. Foolish is the man who lives for earthly happiness only, for at the time of death everything he loved and considered to be everlastingly his own will be taken away from him.

The Bhagavad Gita teaches that not even the direst suffering can cause ruin to the equanimity of the wise man. Having established his happiness not on the temporal pleasures of life, but in God as perceived in meditation, he stands unshaken amidst the crash of breaking worlds. His joy is both enduring and everlasting.¹³

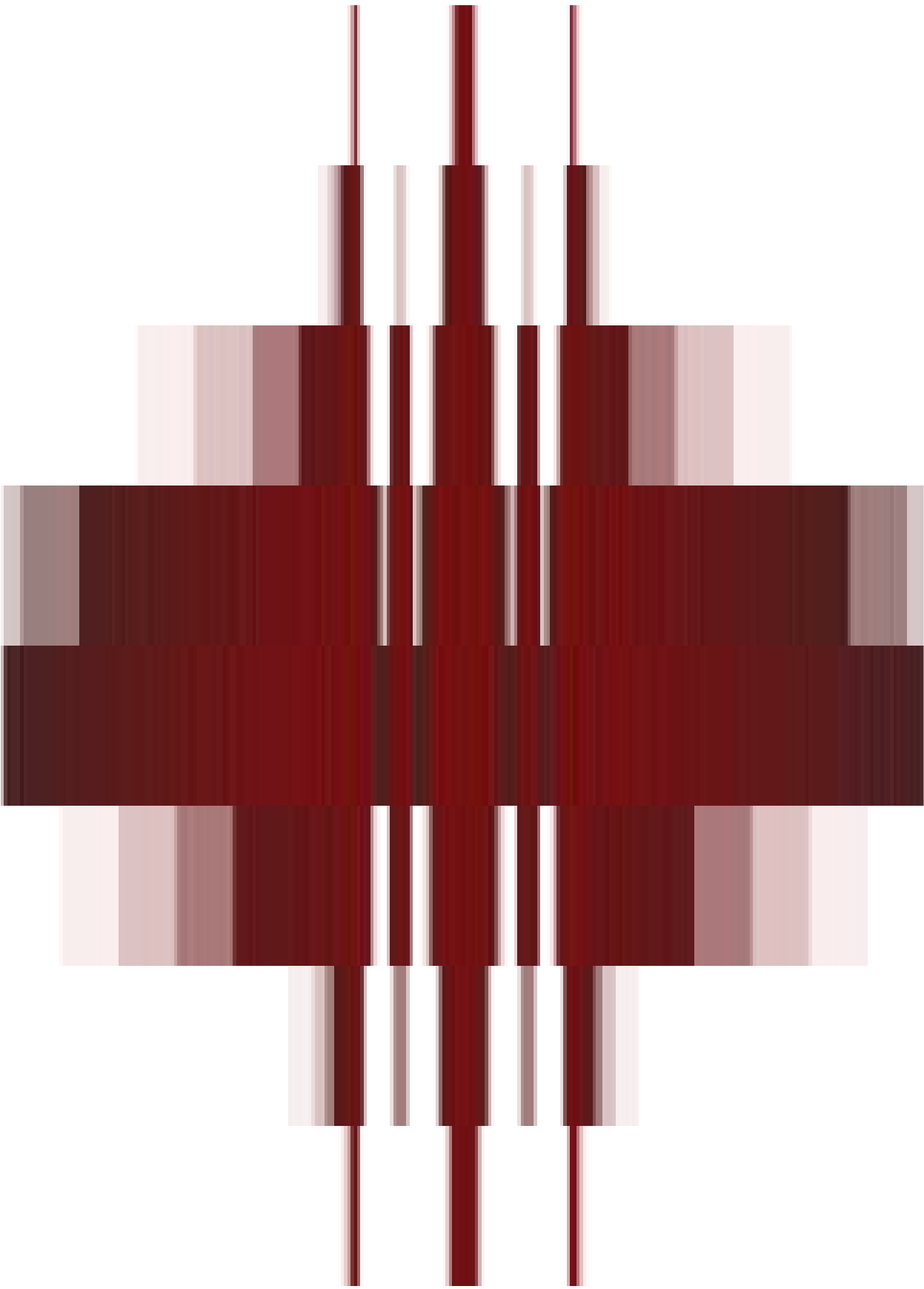


And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. When he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him (Matthew 7:28—8:1).

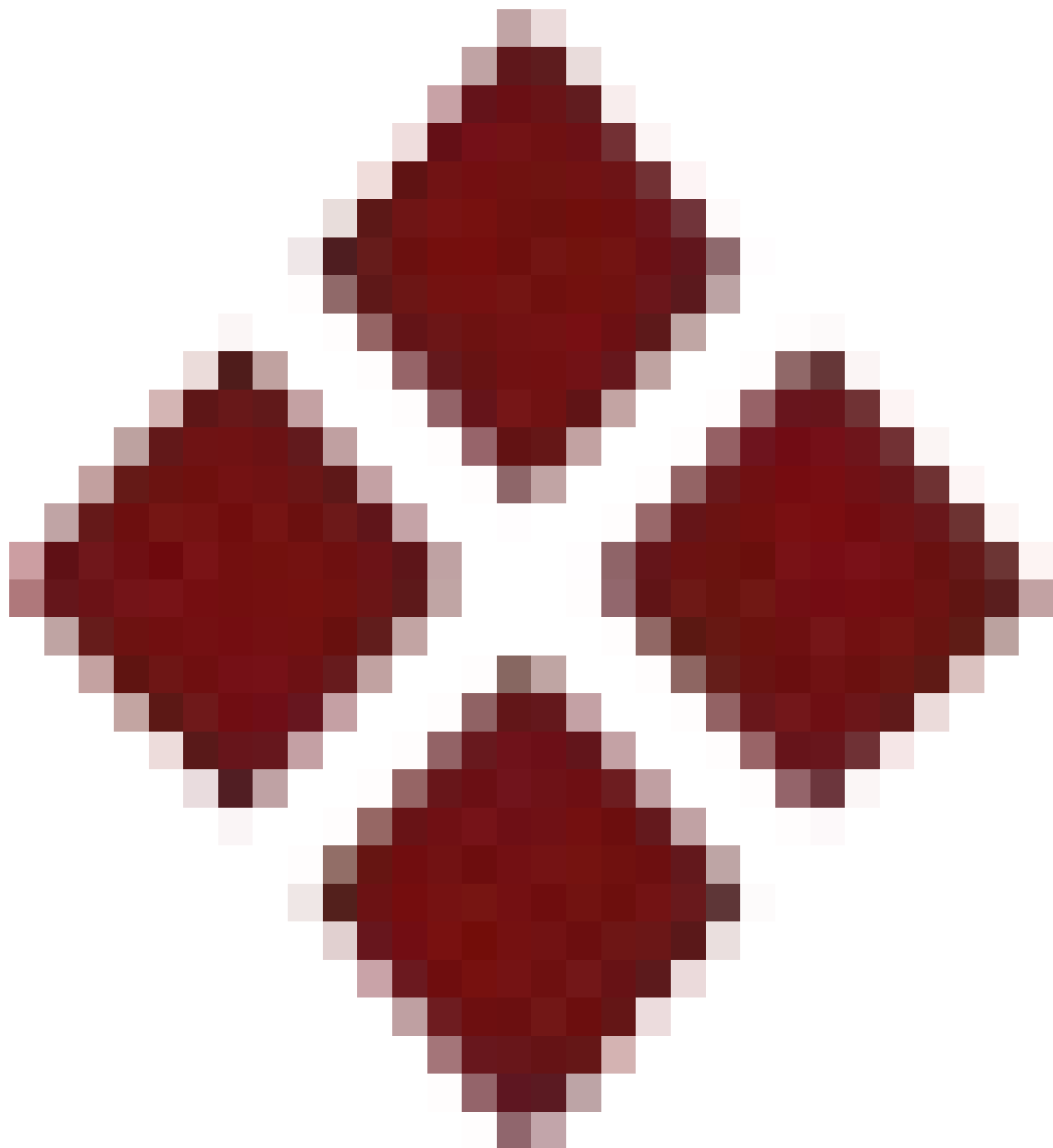


Discourse 31

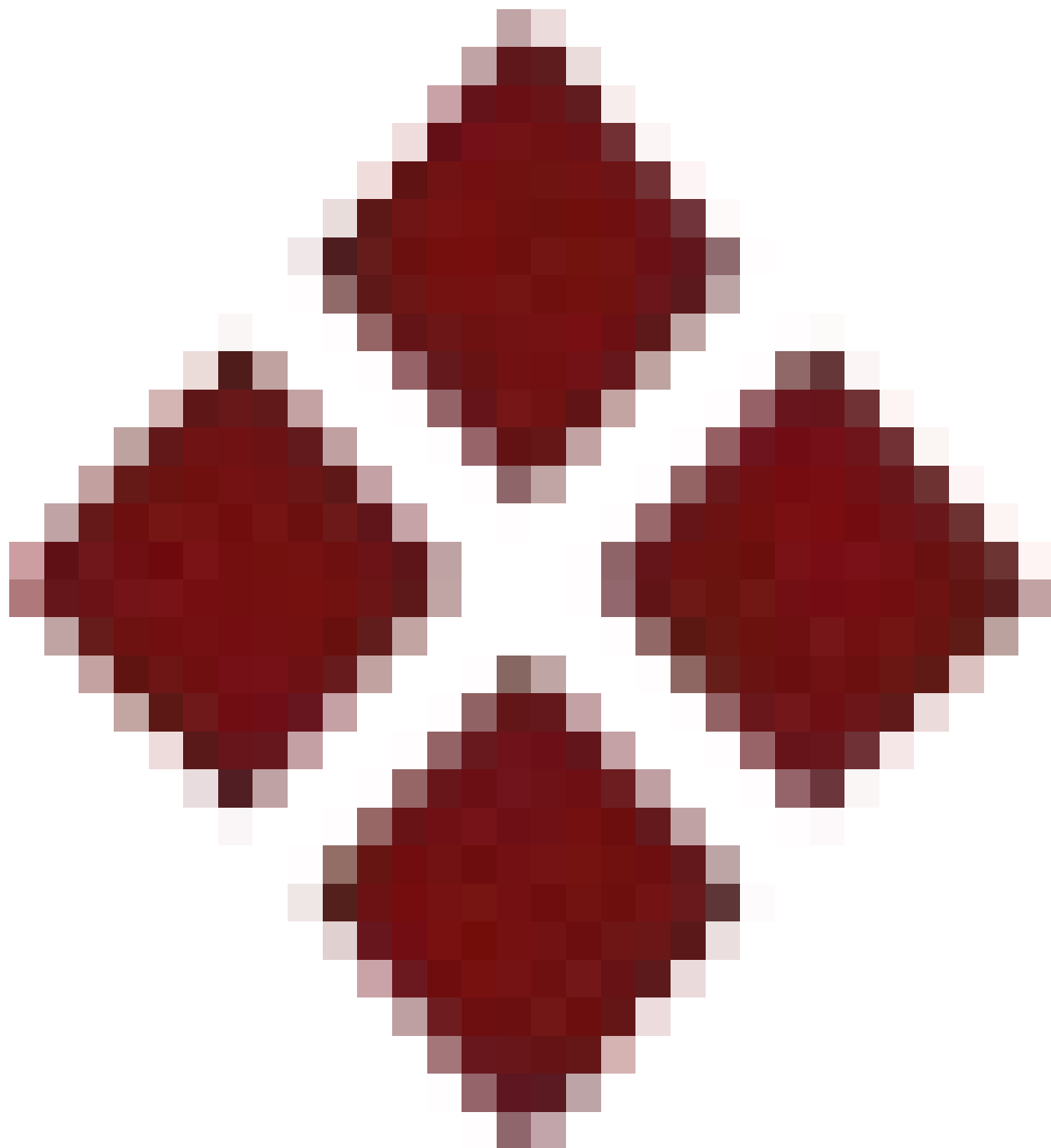
Why Jesus Mixed With “Publicans and Sinners”



Power of Human Will United to God's Will



**“Thy Sins Be Forgiven”: Removing by Divine Fiat the
Karmic Effects of Past Wrong Actions**



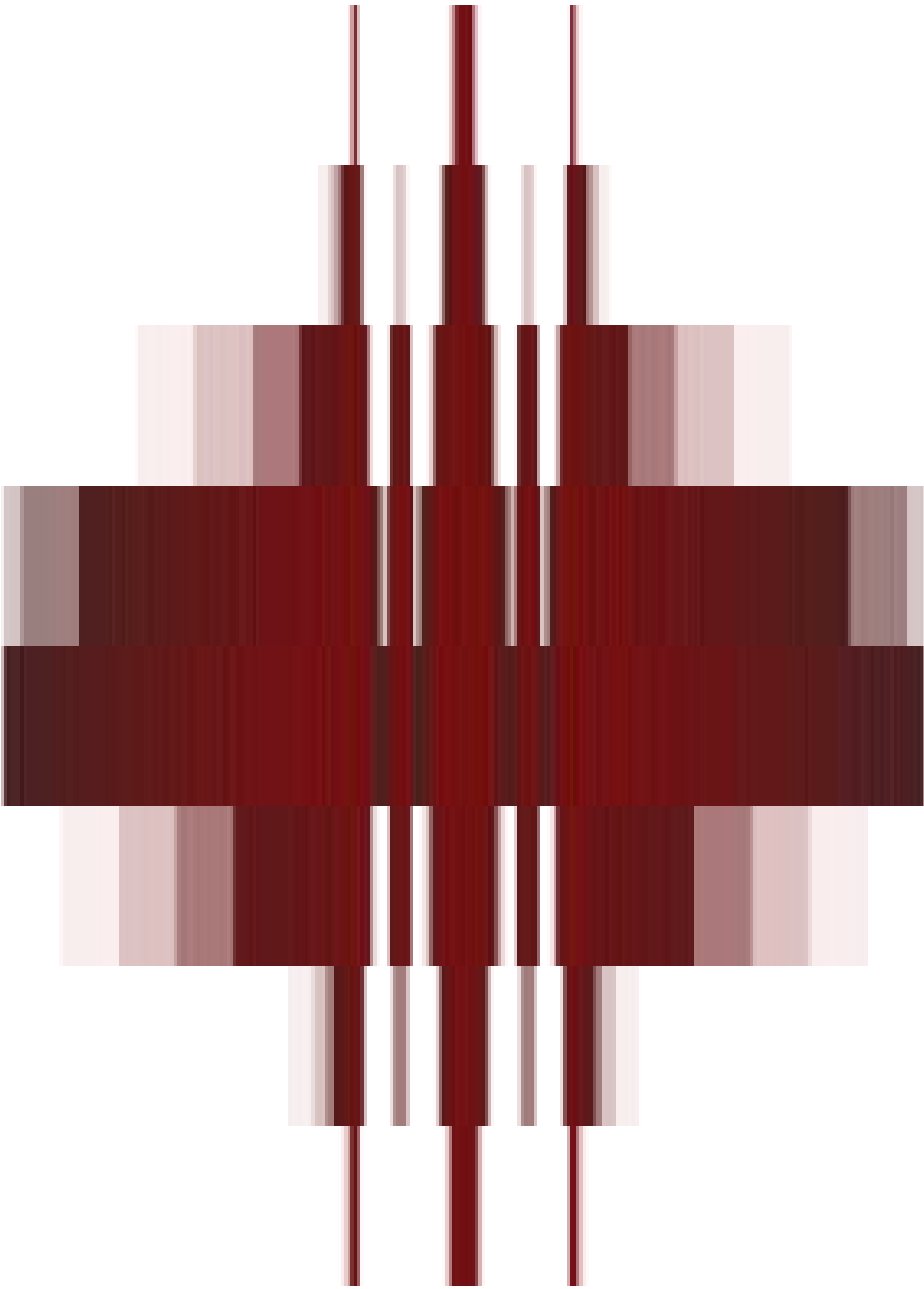
How Man Can Be Freed From the Results of His Misdeeds



The Qualitative and Quantitative Mission of a World Savior



**A Compassionate Message of God's Mercy and
Forgiveness for the Repentant**



“I will have mercy and compassion on the spiritually sick and I will not forsake them; I will try to heal and save them, rather than let them be sacrificed on the altar of their karmic destiny.”

■

And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, "If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, "I will; be thou clean."

And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed. And he straitly charged him, and forthwith sent him away; and saith unto him, "See thou say nothing to any man: but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them."

But he went out, and began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places: and they came to him from every quarter.

And again he entered into Capernaum after some days; and it was noised that he was in the house. And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them.

And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four. And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay.

When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee."

But there was certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, "Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only?"

And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, "Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, 'Thy sins be forgiven thee'; or to say, 'Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk'? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins," (he saith to the sick

of the palsy,) “I say unto thee, arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.”

And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, “We never saw it on this fashion.”

And he went forth again by the sea side; and all the multitude resorted unto him, and he taught them.

And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, “Follow me.” And he arose and followed him.

And it came to pass, that, as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples: for there were many, and they followed him. And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, “How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?”

When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, “They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

—Mark 1:40 – 2:17



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Discourse 31

Why Jesus Mixed With “Publicans and Sinners”



And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, “If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.” And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, “I will; be thou clean.”

And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed (Mark 1:40 – 42).¹



Power of human will united to God's will

“I will,” spoken by Jesus in response to the leper's prayer, signifies the human will attuned to God's omnipotent will. Human will is circumscribed by the body. It can keep the body well or plunge it into the abyss of disease or suffering, even destroying it. It can wield the bodily instrument to work changes in the world, more or less according to the degree of one's mental development, but always in a limited way. But when by ecstatic meditation the human will identifies itself with God's omnipresent will, it is able to work in all channels of cosmic forces and intelligences which govern the universe. The Self-realized devotee with his magnified will can effect any change in his extended cosmic body of the universe as naturally as an ordinary human being can will into activity his life force, nerves, and muscles to initiate desired effects in the physical body or its environs.

Jesus, being one with the omnipresent Father and all-pervading Intelligent Cosmic Energy, felt himself not only in his own little body but in all bodies, including that of the leper. He willed the cosmic energy in that body to clean out the imperfections of illness, rearranging the life vibrations to effect atomic changes in the diseased tissues and cells. The healing was instantaneous.



And he straitly charged him, and forthwith sent him away; and saith unto him, “See thou say nothing to any man: but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.”²

But he went out, and began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places: and they came to him from every quarter (Mark 1:43 – 45).

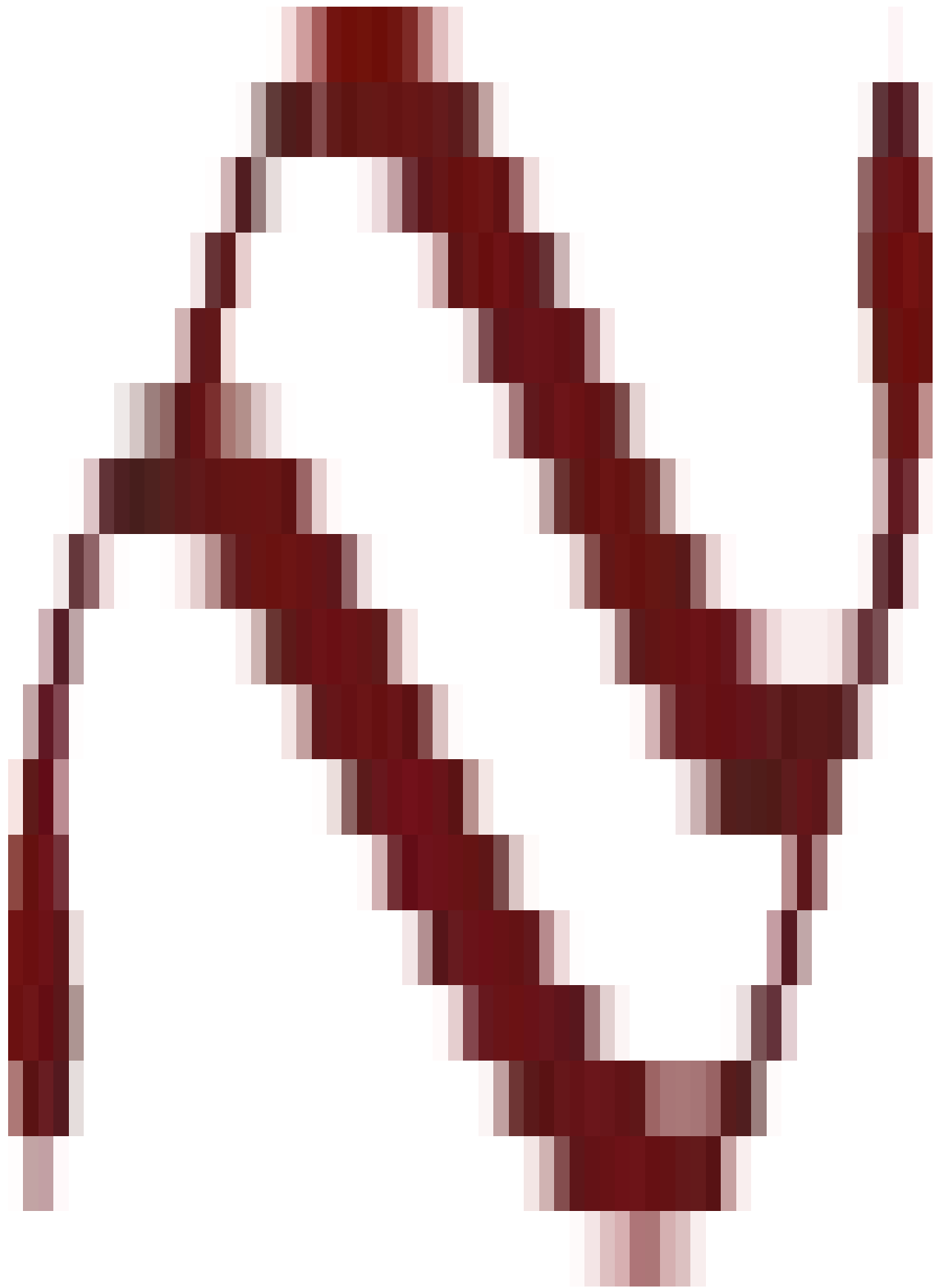
Parallel reference:

But so much the more went there a fame abroad of him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities. And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed (Luke 5:15 – 16).

Jesus, as similarly do all great prophets, came to deliver the word of God to heal the deluded soul of man; and so did not want that focus to be diminished by his compassionate phenomenal feats of physical healings. He thus enjoined the leper not to draw unwarranted attention to his miraculous cure, but to give testimony of God’s power only to the priestly authority who doubted the divine commission of Jesus. To further alleviate the doubts of the spiritual hierarchy, Jesus showed his belief in the greatness of Moses and his respect for the belief of those accustomed to the practice of Mosaic law, by instructing the leper to offer in the synagogue “for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded.”

The healed leper, however, understandably could not restrain his rejoicing and became an effective, though unsought, publicist for Jesus, so that great multitudes sought to be healed by him and to hear his holy word, making it impossible for Jesus to move about openly in the city environs. He withdrew from the pressing throng into the wilderness of the desert—and into the silent

realm of his inner being, where no restless thoughts ever dared to impose upon him—and there he communed with God to renew himself in body and in spirit.



And again he entered into Capernaum after some days; and it was noised that he was in the house. And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them.

And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four. And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay.

When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee" (Mark 2:1 – 5).

Parallel reference:

And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee" (Matthew 9:2).³



“Thy sins be forgiven”: removing by divine fiat the karmic effects of past wrong actions

While Jesus was again preaching to a multitude in Capernaum, a paralyzed man, lying helpless on a cot, was lowered before Jesus through the roof of the dwelling where the gathering was taking place—the only means of reaching Jesus’ healing presence because of the crowd. ⁴ Seeing the undiscourageable persistence and the great faith in God of the palsied man and those who brought him for healing, Jesus addressed him who lay stricken on his bed, forgiving his sins. The words of Jesus betokened removal of the karmic effects of the man’s past wrong actions that had become manifested in his present condition: “Son, be delighted in Spirit, for thy sins, which were consciously or unconsciously committed by thee in the past but are unknown to thee now, are forgiven by the mercy of God; and thereby thy sickness, the karmic effect of those sins, is healed.”

Divine channels of God, such as Jesus, can with will and cosmic energy remove from receptive persons the karmic residue of incarnations that is astrally impinged in their brains—mental and physical recordings of sin that keep on singing the evil refrain of mental and physical calamities. As acids can dissolve the grooves in a phonograph record, rendering it unplayable, so the mental and physiological “grooves” of stored karmic tracings in the brain cells can be obliterated by transmission of life force. With the burning of the inner sinful records, the misery-producing songs of evil experience cease also. The bad karma from the past that had produced in the stricken man the physical affliction of paralysis was removed by divine fiat through Jesus’ words, “thy sins are forgiven thee.”



But there was certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, “Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only?”

And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, “Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, ‘Thy sins be forgiven thee’; or to say, ‘Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk’? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins,” (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) “I say unto thee, arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.”

And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, “We never saw it on this fashion” (Mark 2:6 – 12).

Parallel reference:

And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, “This man blasphemeth.”

And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, “Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is easier, to say, ‘Thy sins be forgiven thee’; or to say, ‘Arise, and walk’? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins,” (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) “Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.”

And he arose, and departed to his house. But when the multitudes saw it, they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men (Matthew 9:3 – 8).⁵

The Pharisees and doctors of the law, materially minded intellectuals, blind to Jesus' divine stature, could not understand his right and power to forgive sins. If one human being could absolve another of reaping the self-created results of evil actions, with lawful recompense set at naught, then by "forgiveness" a person would be able to relieve another from suffering the effects of swallowing poison. When a glutton eats too much and suffers from acute indigestion, it requires more than a word of forgiveness to ameliorate the painful reaction caused by his greed.



How man can be freed from the results of his misdeeds

However, if that sufferer avails himself of a doctor's specialized knowledge and skill, and follows his prescription, he can relieve himself of the digestive distress. Likewise in the spiritual world, the psychologically sick person can be forgiven—freed from the painful results of his actions—if he follows the advice of a true teacher of wisdom, to whom he discloses his errors (confession) for the sake of spiritual diagnosis and the finding and prescribing of the proper remedy. The healing of physiological ills by a spiritual specialist—maladies whose karmic instigation is hidden in forgotten sins of the past—requires not only spiritual diagnosis and prescribed remedial actions, but also the exercise of faith in God on the part of the sufferer and the bestowal of healing blessings, forgiveness of karmic sins, by one who serves as a channel of God's grace.

Sin consists of pursuing erroneous ways. Human beings, originally patterned by the Almighty Maker after His Perfect Image, chose to desecrate and distort their individuality into a flawed mortal image by the misuse of God-given independence. They themselves rectify their misdeeds by suffering the consequences or nullifying evil karma by righteous actions. Or God, their Creator, can change a repentant ignorance-distorted mortal by the deserved grace of His transmuting forgiveness. Or Sons of God can act on behalf of God to relieve others from their sufferings of body, mind, and soul. A spiritual and mental healing current can be offered invisibly to offset the effects of evil karma, past bad actions, lodged in the brain cells. Erroneous habits in individuals can be changed to good habits. Therefore, Jesus explained why he could say to the sick either, "Thy sins be forgiven thee by God," or, "I (as the conscious reflection of the power and true image of the Heavenly Father) say unto thee, 'Thy sins be forgiven thee,'" or, "Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk (thy karmic debt has been forgiven)."

The omnipresent consciousness of Jesus felt the thoughts of the doubting scribes and Pharisees and replied to their critical feelings: "Why are you concerned about my forgiving the sins of men? Wherein is there any difference whether I relieve people of their miseries by the power of God acting through me, or by my power given unto me by God?"

Jesus spoke from his absolute unity with God, free from all illusive egotism.

Clerics or other spiritual teachers who have not found forgiveness or relief from their own sins, negating their perfect attunement with God, cannot possibly forgive or relieve other error-makers. For someone to serve as a channel of God's grace to remove karma from others, there must be no obstruction of identity with one's egoic nature. True devotees, even when fully awakened, never think of themselves as gurus or saviors of others. They behold as the Sole Doer in themselves none other than the pure God. The guru is the awakened God, awakening the sleeping God in the disciple.

The crowd of onlookers "marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men," uplifted and overjoyed to witness that Jesus, in form like themselves, could manifest the powers of the Almighty. They were filled with awe and reverential attention at these demonstrations, lessons of hope that all human children of God, including themselves, could attain God's blessing of divine transformation.



And he went forth again by the sea side; and all the multitude resorted unto him, and he taught them.

And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, "Follow me." And he arose and followed him (Mark 2:14).⁶

At the sight of Matthew, Jesus intuitively recognized a disciple whom he had known in many past incarnations. Matthew had been born at that time and place in order that God might be glorified through the apostolic assistance he was to render in the divine dispensation of Jesus. Even though Matthew was a publican (tax collector), his inner consciousness, which had been spiritually developed in a previous incarnation, remained unchanged. Jesus knew Matthew as a divine son, high in the path of Spirit, in spite of his lowly occupation, and called him with a firm, confident voice that bespoke recognition of his disciple from the past.

Physical scientists expose Nature's truth of the evolution of matter; but spiritual masters, sometimes dramatically, reveal the subtler truth of the soul's evolution through successive incarnations. Think what it means that out of the multitude of people surrounding him, Jesus glimpsed the publican Matthew, whom he had not seen before in that particular body, and immediately commanded: "Follow me." And equally remarkable—as though moments, not a lifetime, had passed—Matthew followed, not from any hypnotic spell, but because he too felt the call of past recognition. Great masters draw followers by rousing and stimulating the dormant soul discrimination and divine will in devotees by the consciousness-expanding spiritual magnetism emanating from the masters.



And it came to pass, that, as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples: for there were many, and they followed him. And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, “How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?”

When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, “They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance” (Mark 2:15 – 17).

Parallel references:

And Levi made him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them (Luke 5:29).

And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, “Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?”

But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, “They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, ‘I will have mercy, and not sacrifice’: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance” (Matthew 9:10 – 13).

Offering food to holy personages is an ancient devotional tradition in the Orient. Most spiritual observances are customarily attended by feasts. All peoples—Christians, Hindus, Jews, Muslims—have feasts in connection with certain of their holy days. Though these feasts often become the occasion in themselves, overshadowing the ceremonial purpose, they were necessary when holy persons and their disciples gathered from far and near. In the time of Christ, journey was usually by foot with little accommodation along the way. It was not only a courtesy but a blessing to offer food to a traveler, especially to a holy man. Matthew, no doubt, felt doubly blessed to fete in his home his rediscovered Master from lives past.

The soul doctor Jesus, ate, drank, and associated with the socially outcast “publicans and sinners” who needed him to cure their spiritual sickness of material habits.⁷ When the caste-conscious Pharisees and scribes, accustomed to associating with the upper classes and the devoutly orthodox, criticized Jesus for mixing with such untoward company, his reply signified:

“It is the sick in body who need the aid of a doctor, not those who are physically well. The same holds true for spiritually stricken souls. I love to be welcomed into their midst because they need mental, moral, and spiritual divine healing through the godly life manifesting through me.”

Great masters open the door to soul liberation for those righteous persons moving steadily toward God; but they also bless the world at large by sowing seeds of enlightenment in the minds of those who need to turn toward better ways. What more convincing demonstration of God’s love over evil than its power to win conversion of a wicked heart?

Spiritually virtuous people act properly and ideally in the various situations in life, in harmony with the laws of righteousness. They move along the path toward redemption through their right actions performed at the inner prompting of conscience, rewarded by a silent satisfaction from their soul. Righteous people need little or no corrective discipline, because their innate spiritual sense keeps them on the right path and prevents them from wandering into the temptations of ignorance.



The qualitative and quantitative mission of a world savior

“Sinners” are those who have defective discrimination and lack the conscience of soul attunement; they thus misuse their God-given reason to do that which is wrong. By the repetition of wrong actions, evil habits are developed, which guide sinners into inextricable labyrinthine ways of error. It is they who need the prescriptions of a Christlike spiritual doctor to help them control themselves and to restore their ravaged conscience.

The metaphysical context of these verses enunciates the God-appointed role of Jesus as a world savior. As a personal savior, he bestows qualitative, or liberating, blessings and grace on his contemporary disciples and on those of all succeeding generations who look to him for salvation. But additionally, he came to fulfill the more universal dispensation, the quantitative good, of establishing a moral and spiritual standard for all mankind—“to call sinners to repentance.” To that end, he mixed with those persons in need of healing from evil to demonstrate personally, by way of example, his quantitative ministry to the masses—to show the transforming power of righteousness that brings response from the forgiving heart of God.

Only a highly evolved soul can actually cure the soul sickness of delusive ignorance in others—and that only with their participation. In associating with sinners and publicans as well as with religious and cultured intellectual persons, and healing the physical and mental maladies of many of them, Jesus’ main purpose was to rouse in them the healing process of spiritual awakening. Each benefited according to his or her present capacity; but by contact with the holy presence and blessing of Jesus, the healing had begun. In associating with his disciples, Jesus greatly magnified their spiritual advancement; and in keeping company with sinners he worked his healing powers on their soul sickness and started them on the path of redemption.



A compassionate message of God's mercy and forgiveness for the repentant

Jesus goes on to say to the intellectually self-important scribes and Pharisees, “Learn what it means, ‘I will have mercy and not sacrifice’⁸—to care for the spiritually sick and needy, instead of catering only to the spiritually and morally healthy who make no uncomfortable demands on you. I will have mercy and compassion on the spiritually sick and I will not forsake them; I will try to heal and save them, rather than let them be sacrificed on the altar of their karmic destiny. I am here to call not only those who are already redeemed—those who have shunned evil to embrace righteousness—but especially all manner of sinners from all walks of life who in their worldly-wise ignorant conceptions of the true meaning of life remain tenaciously identified with the body and its agonies and worries. If they are not helped to see their mistakes, they will not repent, but will settle for their motley existence of pleasure and pain, unaware of the saving grace of God-contact in the unqualified bliss of inner divine communion.”

To awaken repentance in those inured to evil is to show them the way to redeem themselves. The free will irrevocably endowed to all souls enjoins on them personal responsibility for their choices. Jesus knew that to penetrate the implacable nature of inveterate malefactors he had first to awaken their spiritual reason to make them sorry for their evil actions, and thereby ultimately cause them to redress their evil with a preference for righteousness. Redemption is not forthcoming until the wrongdoer is convinced of the error of his ways. Persons who repeat evil actions usually begin to develop a strong compulsive liking for that behavior, in spite of any consequent suffering. Without an understanding and acknowledgment of the inimical nature of sorrow-producing sinful actions, those who succumb to temptation can never find in themselves the will to repent. The error-prone must first be reasoned with, so that their paralyzed discrimination may be brought back to life.

Once discriminative reason is awakened, repentance usually follows; when people feel sorry for their evil actions, they want freedom from those habits. Without repentance, those in delusion make no effort to liberate themselves spiritually. Therefore, when one sees the inanity of his evil actions, he must repent and use his free will repeatedly to perform redeeming actions that reinforce his liberating good karma.

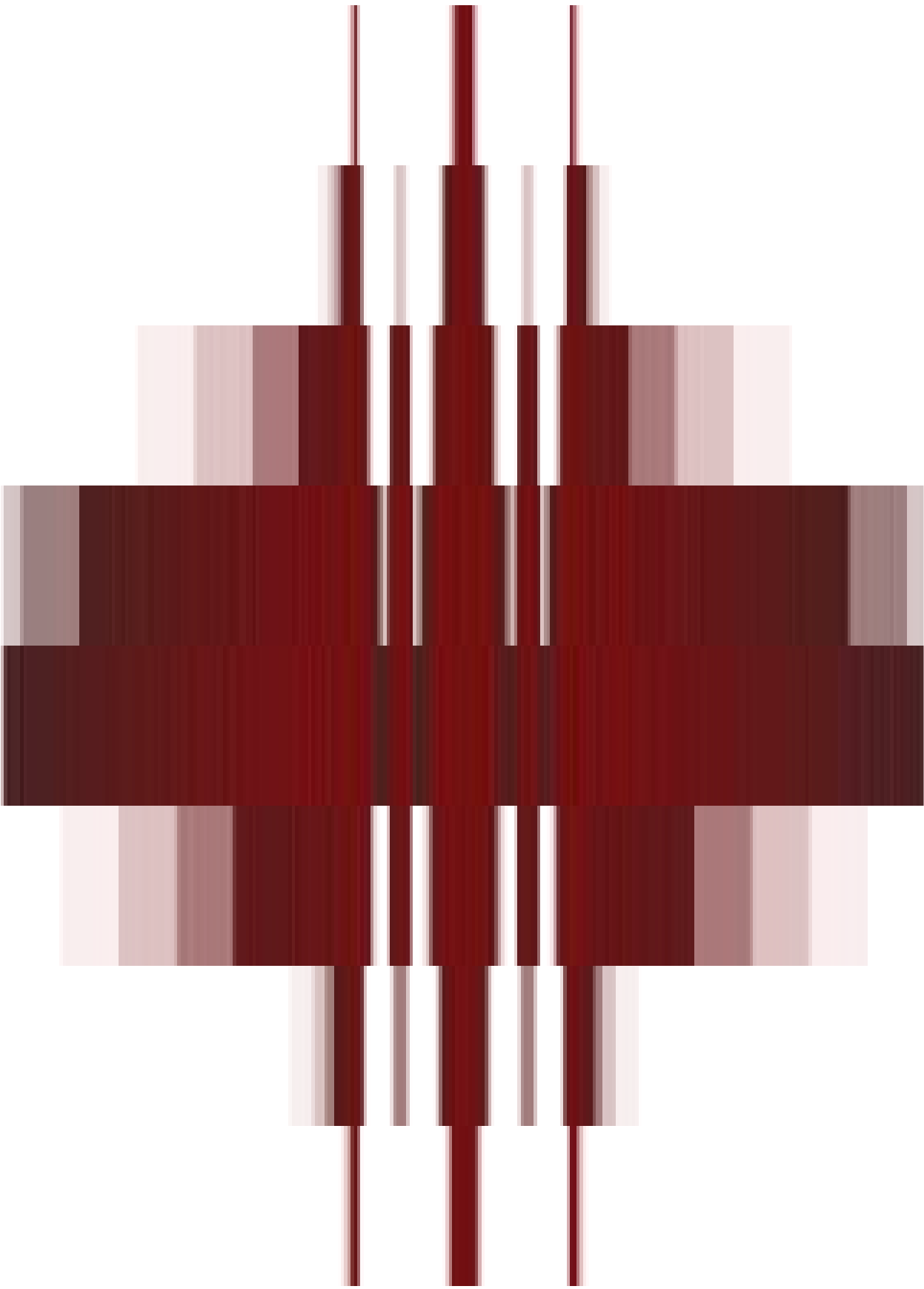
Great spiritual teachers never claim to forgive unrepentant offenders; their work is to awaken the natural righteousness in wrongdoers to the point where they will make an effort to free themselves. No one can prevent confirmed evildoers from reaping the effects of their evil actions; but if they rouse themselves to righteous efforts, the effects of their past evil actions can be neutralized by the effects of their good actions and by the intercession of divine grace.⁹

Repentance is the forerunner of spiritual liberation. It necessarily precedes any sincere and continuous effort to free oneself from evil. Great doctors of souls can inspire metaphysical truants to retrace their footsteps Godward, and support them in the journey; but the actual walking must be done by the error-stricken themselves. By convincing the heart of the folly and misery involved in delusion's nightmares of evil actions, the penitent arouses his soul, long held in that nonsensical somnolence, and with that awakening power makes a dash for spiritual liberty.

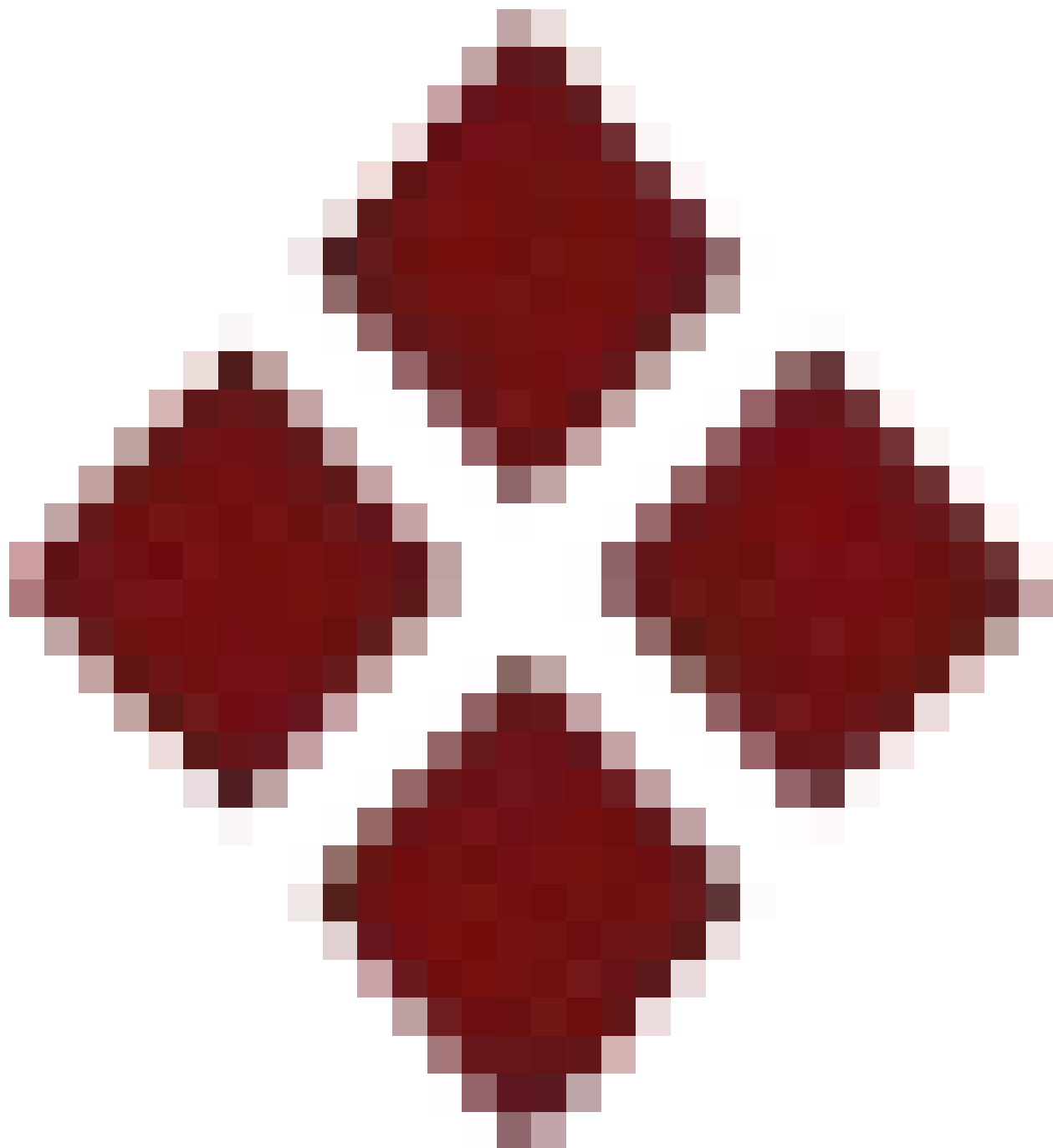


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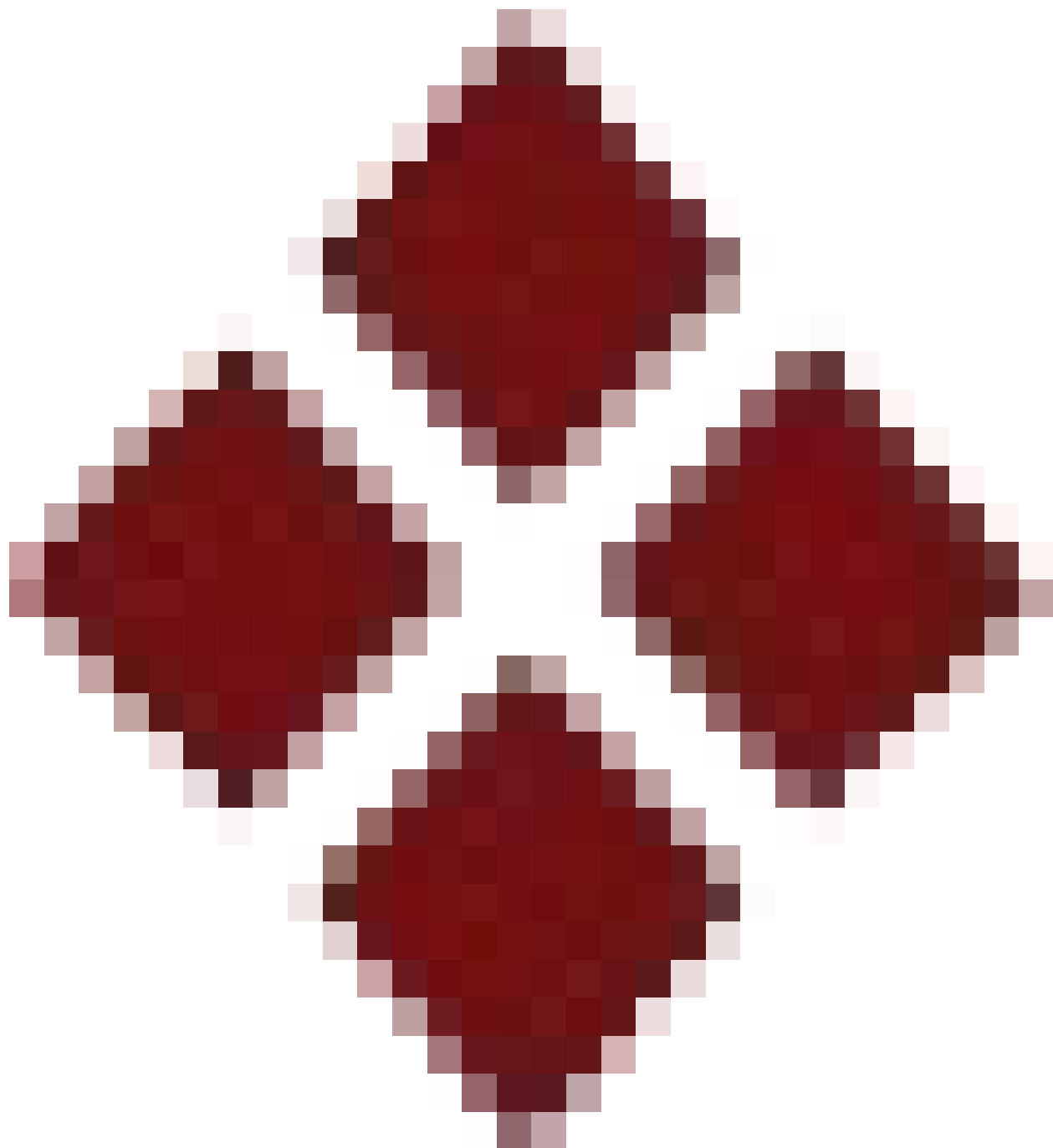
“The Sabbath Was Made for Man, and Not Man for the Sabbath”



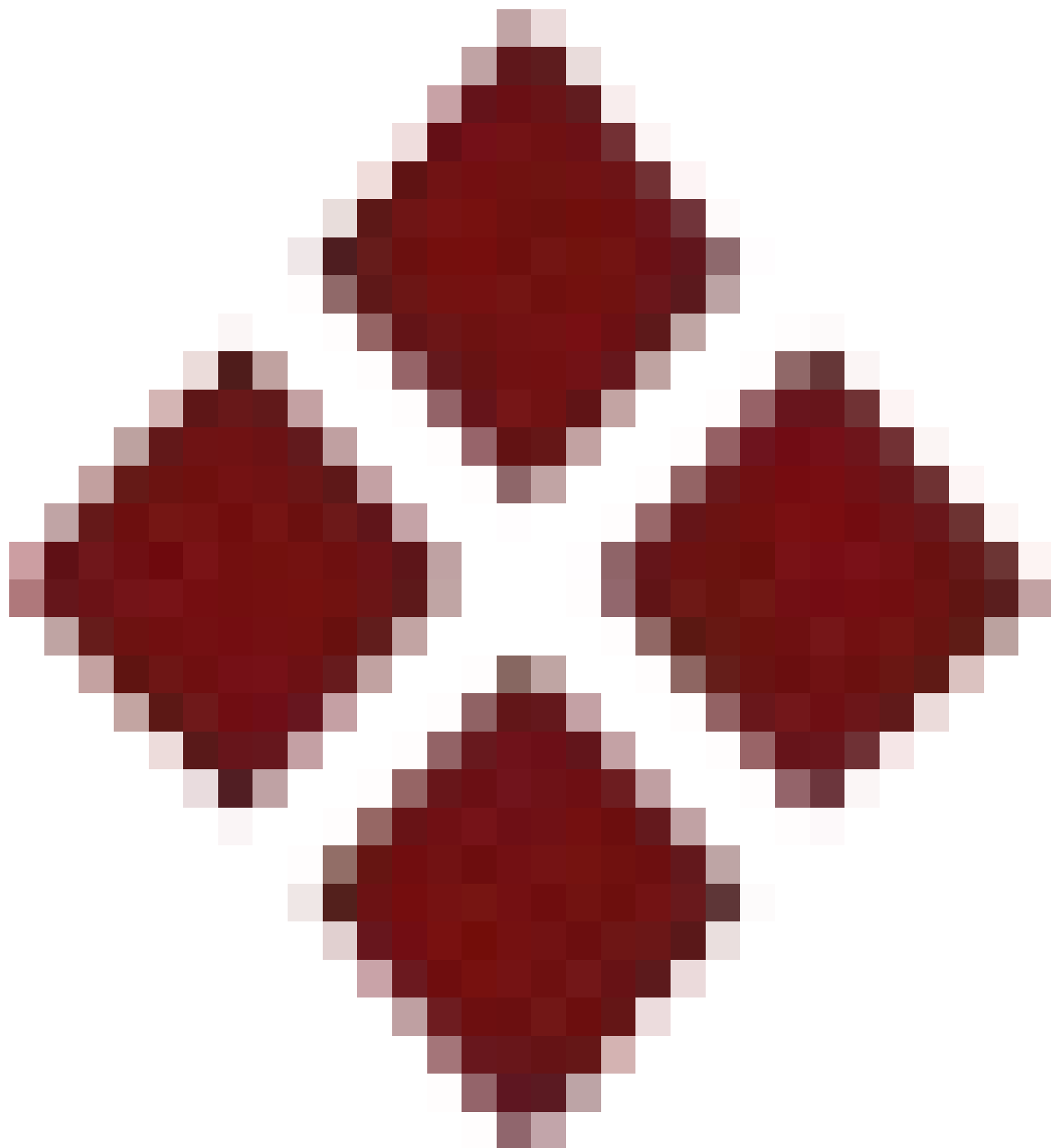
The Expansion of Consciousness Felt in the Presence of a Master



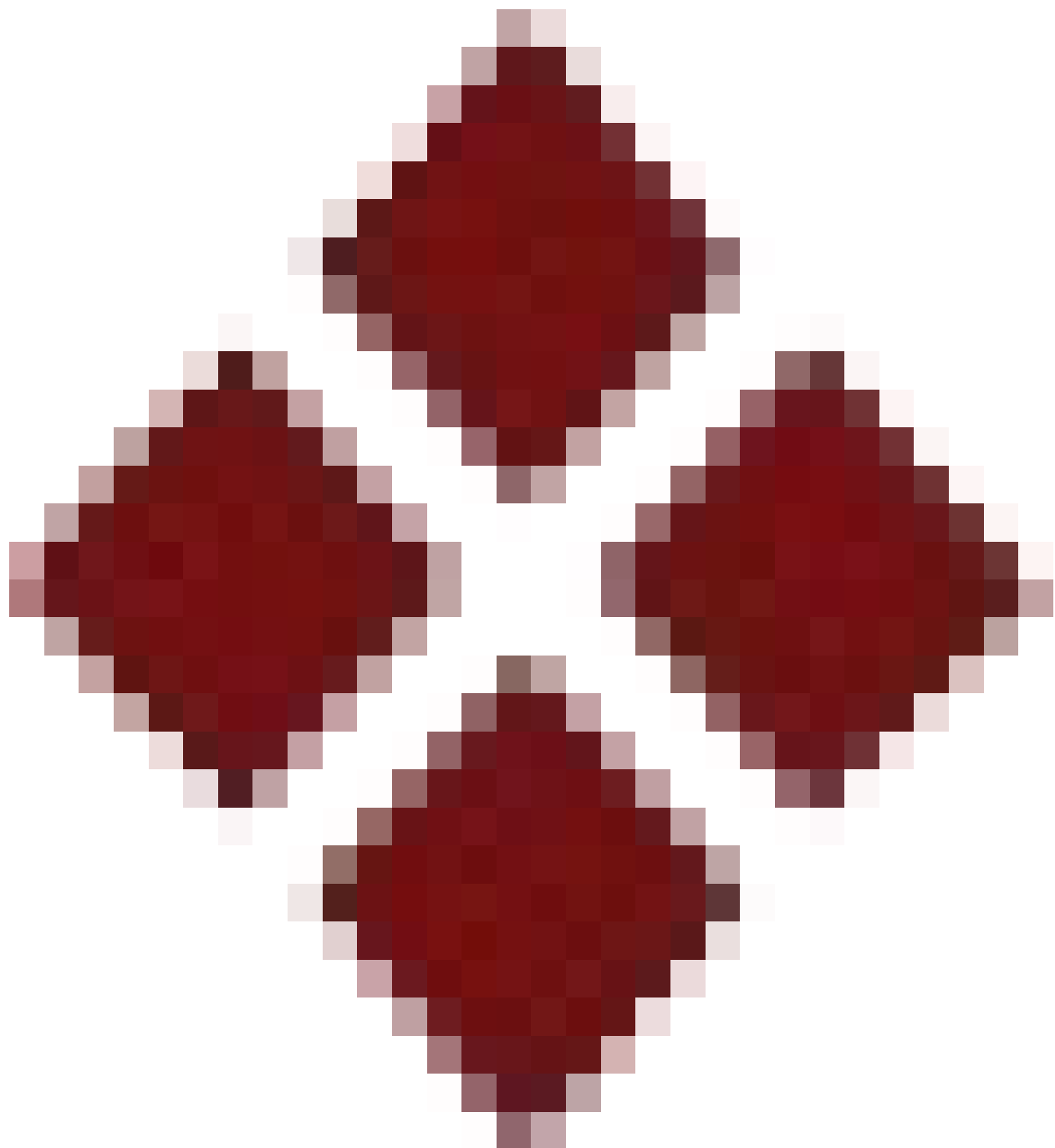
Spiritual Consciousness Is Incompatible With Small-Minded Dogmatism



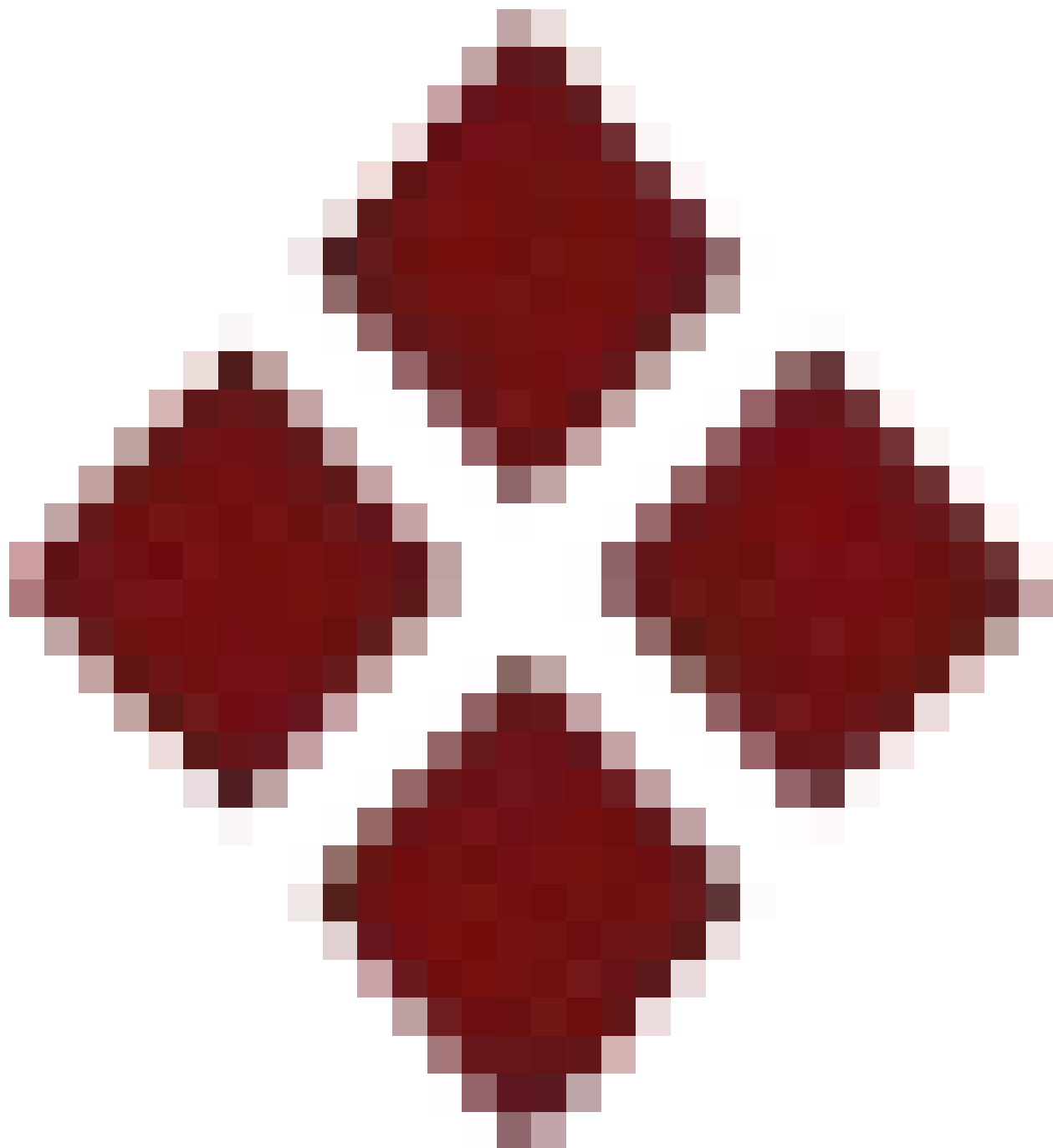
The Spirit of the Sabbath Observed Throughout Cosmic Creation



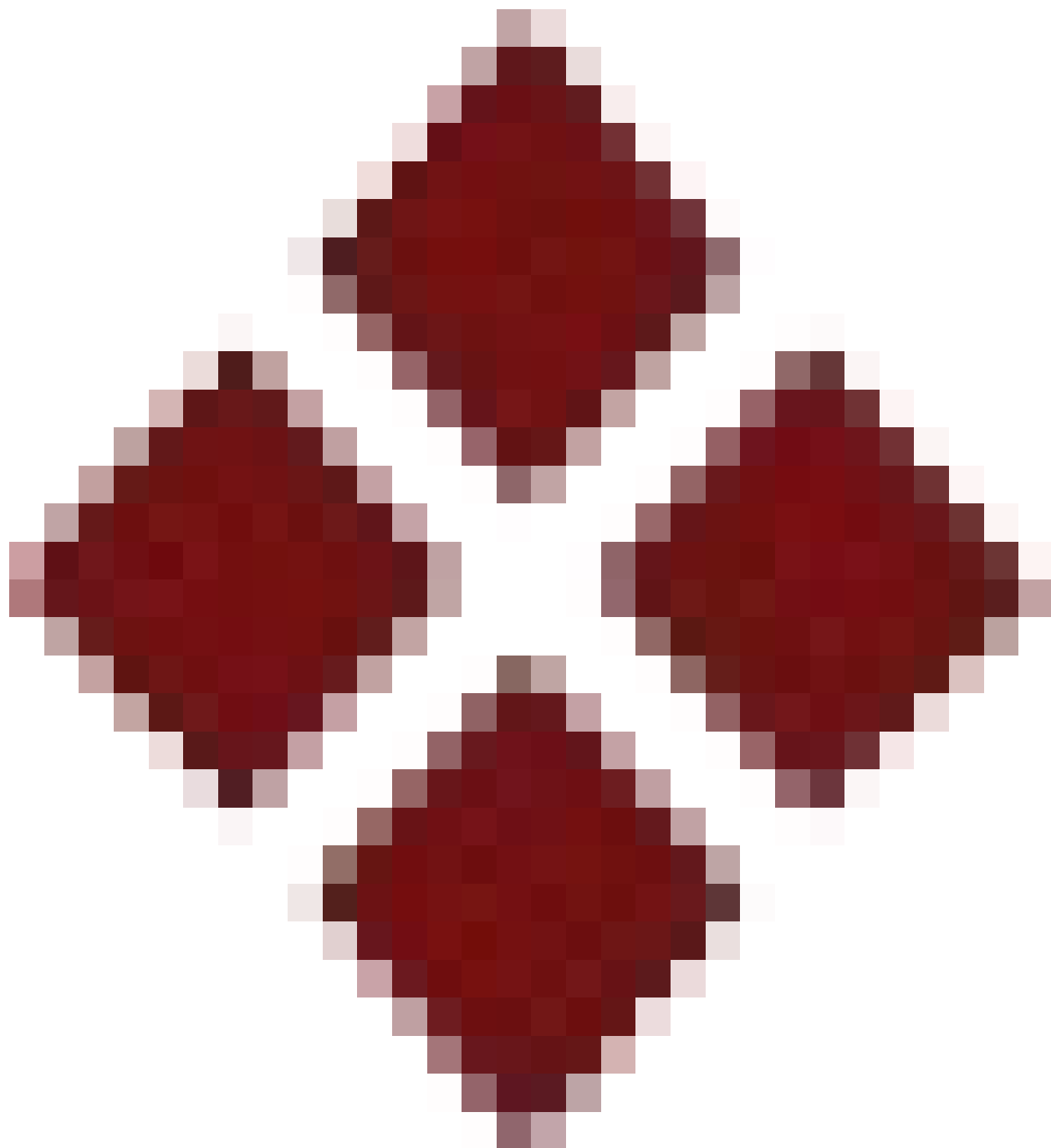
**Religious Rules Are to Be Followed With Wisdom,
Not Literalistic Blindness**



Sabbath Is a Necessary Observance for a Peaceful, Balanced Life



Real Observance of the Sabbath: Feeling God's Presence Through Inner Communion



“Jesus sometimes flouted ‘the letter of the law’ to demonstrate its inner spirit, as in his several clashes with the Pharisees over the proper observance of the Sabbath.”

■

And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast: and they come and say unto him, “Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not?”

And Jesus said unto them, “Can the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.

“No man also seweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment: else the new piece that filled it up taketh away from the old, and the rent is made worse. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles: else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine must be put into new bottles.”

And it came to pass, that he went through the corn fields on the Sabbath day; and his disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn. And the Pharisees said unto him, “Behold, why do they on the Sabbath day that which is not lawful?”

And he said unto them, “Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungred, he, and they that were with him? How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the shewbread, which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him?”

And he said unto them, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath: Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath.”

And he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand. And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the Sabbath day; that they might accuse him.

And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand, “Stand forth.” And he saith unto them, “Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill?” But they held their peace.

And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, "Stretch forth thine hand." And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other.

And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.

But Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to the sea: and a great multitude from Galilee followed him, and from Judea, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumaea, and from beyond Jordan; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him.

And he spake to his disciples, that a small ship should wait on him because of the multitude, lest they should throng him. For he had healed many; insomuch that they pressed upon him for to touch him, as many as had plagues.

And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, "Thou art the Son of God." And he straitly charged them that they should not make him known.

—Mark 2:18 – 3:12



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Discourse 32

“The Sabbath Was Made for Man, and Not Man for the Sabbath”



And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast: and they come and say unto him, “Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not?”

And Jesus said unto them, “Can the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days” (Mark 2:18 – 20).

Parallel reference:

Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?”

And Jesus said unto them, “Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast” (Matthew 9:14 – 15).¹



The expansion of consciousness felt in the presence of a master

Jesus, characteristically, answered metaphorically the judgmental query put to him, but the meaning of his retort was plain: “Would it not be unseemly for the children of the bridechamber to engage in mournful austerities rather than in rejoicing in the presence of the bridegroom? Correspondingly, in the company of a master (the bridegroom), his disciples, his spiritual children, abiding in his divine consciousness (the bridechamber) are thereby joyously uplifted and purified in a measure exceeding that afforded by any austere ritual injunctions, such as disciplinary fasting.” By virtue of being near Jesus, his disciples automatically feasted on the bliss of God-contact, manifested through the “bridegroom,” Jesus’ oneness with the universal Christ Spirit wedded to universal Creative Spirit in Nature.² His very presence among his disciples was sufficient, through the exchange of vibrations and their receptivity to his limitless store of spiritual power, to keep his disciples wrapped in the consciousness of God.

Jesus did not dismiss the value of fasting with its spiritualizing influence on the minds of men. Periodic fasting, if properly done, not only promotes health of the body and clarity of the mind, but helps to free the soul from the bondage of body consciousness. It impresses the consciousness with the knowledge that the body is not dependent on food alone for sustenance, but on the Divine Spirit.³ Fasting and meditation are thus effective aids in realizing one’s connection with God. But mental and bodily discipline are not an end in themselves; they are a means to achieve God-consciousness, necessary only until one reaches that goal. Jesus was a supreme exemplar of divine attainment, and every receptive person fortunate enough to have contact with him felt the emanations of his spiritual freedom automatically uplifting them, if even momentarily, by a grace that transcended austerities.

Jesus went on to specify, however, that more would be required of his disciples when his divinely magnetic incarnate personality would be withdrawn from earthly manifestation into the heavenly realms. They would then have to make greater personal effort in meditation and in following the spiritual mandates of fasting and other disciplines in order to retain their freedom from bodily attachment, and to maintain and heighten the elevated state of God-consciousness they had enjoyed in their Master’s presence.

All true masters are “living” even after discarding their mortal bodies. Their blessings are omnipresent, available to the ardent devotee whether or not disciple and master are incarnate on the same plane.

Disciples are those who strive for attunement with the teacher—to remain always in his spiritual “presence” whether their physical forms are proximate or apart. A vibratory blessing is actuated in the disciple who with reverent devotion makes that inward contact with his God-knowing guru. The magnetism of that subtle current helps to neutralize delusion’s effects of karma and habits, allowing a fresh influx of insightful wisdom. The “same-old-me” consciousness is nudged aside to reveal the soul potential that the Lord created him to manifest.

It is the receptivity of the disciple that facilitates and ultimately makes permanent the transference of divine consciousness from the master who is in touch with God. The guru offers the same spiritual wealth to all students; but according to their receptivity, they absorb to greater or lesser degree. Those who are already rigidly habit-formed when they come to the teacher are always dissembling and questioning the master’s wisdom, assertively defensive of the rightness of clinging to their accustomed second nature. But those who can put aside their obstinacy will find themselves wondrously reborn in spirit. Thus Jesus differentiated the responsive attitude of his close disciples, open to new revelations and bliss through direct perception, from the skeptics’ fault-finding when his ways deviated from the hand-me-down dogmas, unaccommodative to any new infusion of vitalizing truth.



“No man also seweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment: else the new piece that filled it up taketh away from the old, and the rent is made worse. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles: else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine must be put into new bottles” (Mark 2:21 – 23).

Parallel reference:

And he spake also a parable unto them; “No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was taken out of the new agreeth not with the old. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish. But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved. No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new: for he saith, ‘The old is better’” (Luke 5:36 – 39).⁴



Spiritual consciousness is incompatible with small-minded dogmatism

Jesus characterized as imprudent the use of the new inspiration emanating directly from his spirit for mending the fusty garment of spiritual customs. Patches of new cloth cannot be well-matched to worn fabric; too, the strong new pieces would pull at the old material, rending it, making it even less useful than before. Jesus was living in Truth. He was emancipating the spirit of the disciples who understood him through a dynamic revelation of truth-consciousness that was incompatible with the prevailing religious stereotypes. No patchwork grafting of new perceptions onto the threadbare cloak of dogma worn by the general populace would suffice for the robes of realization he would offer to his followers. New inspiration, new ways of living truth, replaced the superficially interpreted theology of spiritual codes, rituals, and observances.

As new wine put into old containers may well burst the fragile vessels by its expanding power, so new, powerful inspiration poured into dogma-worn minds is sure to shatter old beliefs and cause mental rebellion. Jesus' new inspirations needed receptacles of newly enthusiastic, spiritually powerful souls capable of being filled brimful with the divine revelations of Spirit.

So Jesus signified: "It would be foolish for my disciples to bottle up their divine wisdom of new revelations of truth in an old atmosphere of mechanical rules of popular superstitions and dogmatic codes of conduct. As new wine should be kept in new bottles, so my disciples have been given a new consciousness, a new atmosphere of spiritual living, within which to preserve their new realizations. In their God-intoxication, they are already experiencing that for which rules were made."

Jesus further noted that persons used to the wine of old dogma would not have a taste for new revelations of truth. They would say, "Oh, I know it all. The customary practices of the forefathers (no matter how antiquated) were good enough for them, so they are good enough for me." Through force of habit they would prefer the old ways of dogmatic living to new habits of spiritual emancipation.

Jesus brought a new dispensation, and trained his disciples accordingly. "God hath made us able ministers of the new testament," wrote Saint Paul, "not of the

letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.”⁵ Jesus sometimes flouted “the letter of the law” to demonstrate its inner spirit, as in his several clashes with the Pharisees over the proper observance of the Sabbath.



And it came to pass, that he went through the corn fields on the Sabbath day; and his disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn. And the Pharisees said unto him, “Behold, why do they on the Sabbath day that which is not lawful?”

And he said unto them, “Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungred, he, and they that were with him? How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the shewbread, which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him?” (Mark 2:23 – 26).

Parallel reference:

At that time Jesus went on the Sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, “Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the Sabbath day.”

But he said unto them, “Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him; How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests?”

“Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the Sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless? But I say unto you, that in this place is one greater than the temple. But if ye had known what this meaneth, ‘I will have mercy, and not sacrifice,’ ye would not have condemned the guiltless” (Matthew 12:1 – 7).⁶



The spirit of the Sabbath observed throughout cosmic creation

Through Moses came the scriptural command: “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within the gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it” (Exodus

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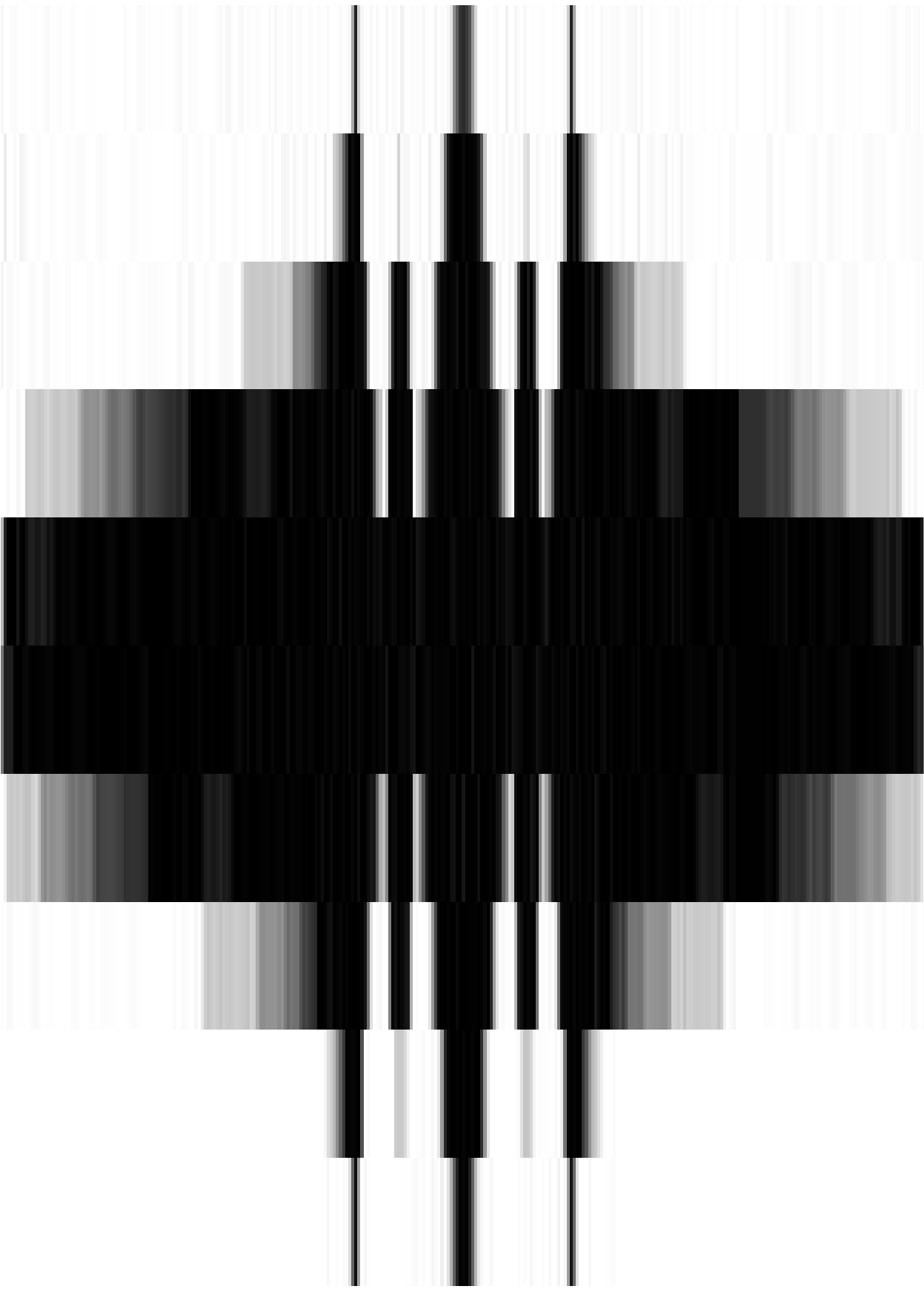
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The Sabbath day is meant to be a time of rest and repose, to balance man’s outwardly active nature by contact with the transcendental stillness at the core of his being. It is the seventh day, or day of rest, following six days of hard material activity, in imitation of God’s supposedly six days of creative activity followed by a seventh day of rest.⁷ (Of course, the seven days were not solar days, but consisted of aeonic cycles.) The creation of the earth, as also its galactic neighborhood, took untold measures of time to make it habitable for man. When the divine schema and its operational laws and the ideations of forms and beings had been brought into existence under the direction of the active intelligence of God, the Father of creation, the directly active intelligence of God became inactive or indirectly active, allowing His reflection as the Universal Christ Intelligence, and His active Cosmic Creative Vibration of Holy Ghost (Mother Nature), to continue the process of evolving the cosmic plans. Thus, when most of the desires of God to create had been ideated, His will and intelligence could take a rest while the universe continued under its own momentum of cosmic law and His divine agencies of Reflective Intelligence and Creative Vibration. All

creation has inherited the pattern of a rest period after intense creative activity. It is evident in the birth and death of stars, the solar and lunar cycles, the seasons, plant life, and in animals and man. It seems as if we and the universe in which we are situated share a kindred vibration in which rest is needed after activity. Therefore was the Sabbath made for man—a time not just for physical relaxation, but a transcendent spiritual rest for the rejuvenation of the indwelling spirit.

Jesus upheld the scriptural commandments given by the prophets; but he taught that it is the spirit of the laws laid down in the holy books that is to be followed, lest a literal following of a rule lead to perversion of its purpose.



Religious rules are to be followed with wisdom, not literalistic blindness

The dogmatic priest of ancient times might be so fanatical about observing the Sabbath day that he would not leave his home and take a carriage to bring a doctor for his dying brother, servant, or guest.⁸ To follow the Sabbath law while forswearing justified and critical needs, such as to ignore giving aid to a helpless person, is a sin, for it breaks a higher law of divine love and service and disregards the dictates of conscience, which in turn disturbs inner harmony with God. To take rest on the Sabbath for communion with God, occasionally breaking the vow of interiorization for a legitimate purpose, would not contradict the spirit of observing that holy day. That is why Jesus taught his disciples that rules of conduct are for their betterment and thus should not be followed blindly, but may be modified with strict reason (though not license) when necessary.

Jesus defended his disciples who were inwardly observing the Sabbath in his holy company and service, even though from hunger they had plucked and eaten a few ears of grain as a matter of necessity. Jesus thereto reminded the critics about the story of David, who lived in the grace of God, and who, when he was in need and hungry, went into the house of God and asked of the priest the sacred shewbread for himself and his companions, even though it was contrary to the law for anyone to eat it but priests in God's service.⁹ If a literal adherence to scriptural injunction could be set aside for spiritual David in order to serve a higher purpose, how much more did Jesus, who was one with God, have the right to disregard outward nuances of the law when he saw that its spirit was truly fulfilled.

Jesus then also cites the priests who were exonerated from the sin of activity on the Sabbath in regard to work done by them in the environs and service of the temple. The transmuted spiritual vibration of Jesus, in whom the Holy Spirit was incarnate, was greater than the exculpatory sanctity of the temple; that is why he said to the Pharisees: "If you knew that the Spirit within me has made my body temple holier by far than the atmosphere of the ancient temple, and that the wisdom of Spirit guides all my actions and through me the actions of those who are with me, you would not condemn my disciples who stand faultless in the eyes of God and in the judgment of His eternal laws. Understand that God seeks not your rituals and sacrificial judgment of human behavior, but rather your compassionate wisdom and divine understanding. Then would I return your

mercy, and wisdom would not be sacrificed on the altar of your ignorance.”¹⁰



And he said unto them, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath: Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27 – 28).¹¹

The spiritual code of conduct for observance of the Sabbath, especially as a day of divine communion, was created for the advantage and spiritual upliftment of man; the Sabbath was not created as some special entity that man is bound to observe blindly, without rhyme or reason. Indeed, an unenlightened following of a dogmatically delineated Sabbath may at times, contrarily, be disadvantageous.

Thus Jesus declared that the Son of man, his physical incarnation with its discriminative wisdom, was the determinative Lord as to the application of the Sabbath injunctions. The Sabbath well serves busy worldly people, giving them one day out of each seven days for freedom from busy-ness, that their outwardly active material nature may be replenished from within by soul calmness and bliss. Sunday (Sun’s day, or Wisdom’s day) should be spent in God-awakening activities, in keeping with the true purpose of the Sabbath.¹² To perform distracting material work on the Sabbath day instead of engaging in spiritual contemplation and communion with God may be in nonconformance with the Sabbath; but equally so if the businessman compliantly remains outwardly inactive yet is inwardly engrossed with business thoughts. A spiritual man who meditates every day, and fasts regularly, and who strives to remain conscious of God during every activity, and yet may be occasionally lax on the so-called one-day Sabbath, may apparently transgress the law, but in spirit he does not. The Sabbath is serving him; not he the Sabbath.

A rule consists of a system of mandated actions initiated to produce certain physical or mental results. For the most part, they are conditioned by time and the social and evolutionary state of man. Hence they are variable in accordance with man’s environmental changes. Physical, hygienic, social, mental, and spiritual disciplines were temporarily or permanently engendered to suit the development of man and civilization. With due regard to the implacable essence of truth in God’s universal laws of righteousness that rules are formulated to uphold, dictums may have to be modified and diversely applied according to the changing needs of man with changing times and cultures.

Jesus points out that if ordinary men can, without transgression, modify rules of conduct on the Sabbath, certainly the Son of man (his spirit within his body) was also master of the Sabbath day and could adapt its observance to accommodate the physical and spiritual needs of himself and his disciples with no diminution of the spirit of the law.



Sabbath is a necessary observance for a peaceful, balanced life

Jesus upheld the Sabbath as essential for man to recharge his vitality by the restful silence of interiorization. The worldly person saturates himself with worries and bombardments of sensory stimuli throughout the week, and loads his body with excessive ill-chosen foods and their unassimilated poisons. A day of fasting and introspective silence, tapping the peaceful wisdom reservoir of the soul, gives each individual a chance to think things over and reorganize his life into a balanced mode. Sermons and periods of silence and meditation on the Sabbath recharge body, mind, and soul. This peace, if deeply infused into the consciousness, may last throughout the whole week, helping man to battle his restless moods, temptations, and financial worries. If the worldly person gives six days of the week to moneymaking pursuits, eating, and amusements, should he not give at least one day to the thought of God, without whom his very life, brain function, physical activity, feeling, and enjoyment of entertainments are impossible?

Observance of the Sabbath as a day given to God and spiritual culture signifies the willing cessation of all activities that scatter and divert the mind into material channels. To close theaters and other venues of entertainment on the Sabbath would be only a token formality, meaningless unless religionists willingly stay away from materialistic diversions to spend the day in God-reminding, spiritually rejuvenating activities. With so many material enticements kept alive on Sabbath days, the minds of people run riot. Where is the time for restorative calmness, introspection, and creative thinking to adopt the best actions for an all-round existence during the coming week? A Sabbath well spent in silence, meditation, and creative thinking (not frantic reasonings but a stilling of thoughts, which are then replaced with intuitive perception) affords the soul reinforcement with harmony, peace, and mental and physical strength to use discrimination to develop physically, mentally, and spiritually in the best possible way. The inveterate worker who goes at it nonstop seven days a week lets his soul become subject to mechanical activity. Such a person loses his ability to govern his activity by free will, discrimination, and peace. He becomes a physical and mental wreck, shorn of spiritual happiness. Activity and calmness both must be cultivated and kept in balance, one with the other, in order to produce peace and happiness during periods of activity as well as silence.

The reader may say that to observe the real spirit of the Sabbath by spending it in seclusion, fasting, introspection, and meditation is impossible in modern times. I would reply: "You might just as well say that it is impossible to be peaceful in modern times." Peace and God-realization come with a price: giving the time necessary to their cultivation. Mahatma Gandhi, one of the great modern spiritual and political reformers, a man of intense activity, nevertheless spent one day a week in complete silence. From this he drew power to lead the whole nation of India to freedom.

One reason why the modern generation is so restless is because children are not nurtured in spiritual ideals and practices. Instead, to get them out of the house they are sent off to the movies or other restless activities following a short, uninteresting Sunday School class in the morning. Spirituality needs to be encouraged (not forced as a discipline) from an early age. The example should be set in every home.

Spiritual endeavor in the beginning seems difficult unless approached with enthusiastic anticipation that generates a perpetual motion of divine ardor. The time comes when one's Sabbath becomes the most interesting and desirable experience by complete ecstatic communion with God. There is no happiness that excels the joy contact of God in deep meditation.



Real observance of the Sabbath: feeling God's presence through inner communion

In my classes and lessons I have urged Self-Realization Fellowship students and disciples to celebrate the true spirit of the Sabbath, on whatever day of the week possible commensurate with their responsibilities. Even if they cannot devote the whole day to silence and divine communion, I suggest they give at least six hours solely to spiritual contemplation and deep meditation. God does not keep a calendar and make Himself available on only a specific day of the week. There are no time slots in eternity. So neither does He keep a clock to determine when the Sabbath begins and ends. The Sabbath is any day or hours of the day of interior communion with God, no matter what one is doing exteriorly, so that other days or hours of the day, though filled with life's responsibilities, may be inwardly converted into a Sabbath by feeling the presence of God during all activity. This is the spirit of the Sabbath law about which Jesus spoke, in contrast to the rigid literal interpretation simply involving cessation of work. In any case, physical inactivity does not stop the functional work of the body or control its involuntary movements or still the racing of inner thoughts, all of which involve activity that ties man's consciousness to the world.

The science of yoga defines the true meaning of the actionless state that lifts the soul to God-communion. The teaching of the Bhagavad Gita about action and nonaction—the “workless” state of union with Spirit in the vibrationless realm beyond active creation—parallels the true understanding of inner versus outer observance of the Sabbath:¹³ “Actionlessness is not attained simply by avoiding actions. By forsaking work no one reaches perfection. Verily, no one can stay for even a moment without working; all are indeed compelled to perform actions willy-nilly, prodded by the qualities (gunas) born of Nature (Prakriti). The individual who forcibly controls the organs of action, but whose mind rotates around thoughts of sense objects, is said to be a hypocrite, deluding himself. But that man succeeds supremely, O Arjuna, who, disciplining the senses by the mind, unattached, keeps his organs of activity steadfast on the path of God-uniting actions [yoga meditation].”¹⁴

So long as man's mind and life force are tied to the senses, he is at work. It is when he learns to switch off the life-force currents in the nerves that connect the mind to the senses that he attains the true inactive state of transcendental Spirit.

If “inactivity” is the measure of proper Sabbath observance, therefore, only the yogi who has reached the savikalpa samadhi state, wherein all bodily activity is suspended in the ecstatic trance of God-union, can be truly said to honor that commandment.

The Gita points out an even higher state: the ultimate stage of divine communion, nirvikalpa samadhi, in which the yogi retains his conscious oneness with Spirit without necessarily suspending outer activity. Perfectly identified with God as the Sole Doer, he is said to be “inactively active”—his outer bodily instrument engaged in doing the Lord’s will, his inner being free of all desire-born entanglement in the world:

“He is a yogi, discriminative among men, who beholds inactivity in action and action in inaction. He has attained the goal of all actions (and is free).” And, “Like unto the lotus leaf that remains unsullied by water, the yogi who performs actions, forswearing attachment and surrendering his actions to the Infinite, remains unbound by entanglement in the senses.”¹⁵

Special Sabbath days are necessary for people who are continuously entangled in material affairs and who do not take any time for God. Jesus was always filled with the Spirit; to him every minute of every day was a Sabbath, whether he moved in the marts of men or retired into transcendent stillness. Hence, on any day of the week he could perform legitimate action, such as appeasing hunger or healing, without violating the spirit of the Sabbath.



And he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand. And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the Sabbath day; that they might accuse him.

And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand, "Stand forth." And he saith unto them, "Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill?" But they held their peace (Mark 3:1 – 4).

Parallel reference:

And when he was departed thence, he went into their synagogue: And, behold, there was a man which had his hand withered. And they asked him, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath days?" that they might accuse him.

And he said unto them, "What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days" (Matthew 12:9 – 12).¹⁶

Jesus knew the thoughts of the Pharisees, that they wanted to entrap him. Yet he boldly commanded the afflicted man: "Rise up and stand forth in the midst of the throng in full view so that they can behold the good works of God of healing on the Sabbath day."

And when the man stood up, Jesus addressed the throng as to whether observing the Sabbath day precluded the performing of good actions. Jesus, by his question, implied that since observing the Sabbath day was itself a good action, it was contradictory to outlaw other good actions on Sabbath days. The Pharisees

could not answer him without entrapping themselves, and so remained quiet.

Jesus made his point that none soever among that throng would refrain from rescuing his one valuable sheep fallen into a pit on the Sabbath day; how much greater the necessity, then, to lift an even more precious man from the pit of trouble. As the Sabbath was made to increase man's spiritual consciousness, how can it be anything but lawful to do any activity that enhances that consciousness?



And when he looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, "Stretch forth thine hand." And he stretched it out and his hand was restored whole as the other (Mark 3:5).¹⁷

Ignorance is regrettable; ignorance that hardens the heart is despicable. The callousness that obliterated compassion roused in Jesus spiritual indignation—not base anger, but the will force of righteousness. He said to the man whose hand was withered, "Stretch forth thine hand."

A person to be healed must do something to make his mind and spirit receptive. The man's volition of putting forth his hand was an act of faith in the divine healing power coming from Jesus. The command of Jesus signified: "Make an effort of your will to stretch forth your heretofore useless hand and send the all-healing energy there. If you do so and are in tune with me, my divine will, controlling the cosmic energy of the universe, also present in your will and your bodily energy, will heal you."



Jesus reiterated his point about good works on the Sabbath on another occasion, as related in the Gospel According to St. Luke:

And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And, behold there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself.

And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, "Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity." And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath day, and said unto the people, "There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day."

The Lord then answered him, and said, "Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?" And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him (Luke 13:10 – 17).



After Jesus had healed the withered hand of the afflicted man, the temple authorities were outraged at what they perceived as Jesus' defiance of scriptural law:

And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.

But Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to the sea: and a great multitude from Galilee followed him, and from Judea, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumaea, and from beyond Jordan; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him.

And he spake to his disciples, that a small ship should wait on him because of the multitude, lest they should throng him. For he had healed many; insomuch that they pressed upon him for to touch him, as many as had plagues.

And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, "Thou art the Son of God." And he straightly charged them that they should not make him known (Mark 3:6 – 12).

Parallel reference:

Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him.

But when Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from thence: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all; and charged them that they should not make him known: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying,

“Behold My servant, whom I have chosen; My beloved, in whom My soul is well pleased: I will put My spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets.

“A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory. And in his name shall the Gentiles trust”
(Matthew 12:14 – 21).

With plots brewing to destroy him, Jesus did not want to rouse further excitement about his ability to perform spiritual miracles lest the overwrought inimical forces feel threatened by his powers. So, prudently, he withdrew with his disciples to the sea, removing himself for a time from the proximity of the controversy. But as a great multitude had followed him, Jesus told his disciples to have a ship ready onto which he could retire from the press of the throng. After he had ministered to the crowd and healed the many, he wanted to have refuge in solitude. Even the greatest of the great, who serve mankind with their spirit wholly united to God, never forget their highest duty and joy of solitary ecstatic communion. From the adulation of crowds, Jesus turned away to bask in the sole meaningful approbation of the Heavenly Father—without whose power he could not heal the afflicted, and from whom he derived the grace of his strength, love, and inspiration.



Understanding Isaiah's prophecy about Jesus' mission and dispensation

With his very life in danger and his mission yet to be consummated, Jesus asked those who were healed and who were witnesses to his miraculous powers to keep those blessings to themselves, lest they only increase the ire of his enemies. Matthew elaborates on the unfolding events by citing the ancient prophecy of Isaiah enunciating the future conditions surrounding the appearance and dispensation of Jesus on earth.¹⁸ God speaks to the prophet Isaiah that He will send His servant, “My beloved in whom My soul is well pleased”—God’s beloved child Jesus, of divine stature, chosen by God to act as His servant in bringing to the world a great message that will redeem many souls. God also promised, “I will put My spirit upon him”—God’s will and blessings and wisdom will grace the harmony-tuned soul of Jesus, that he might show to the people of the world divine judgment of salvation bestowed by wisdom and righteous living.

God signified further to Isaiah that this messenger would be no ordinary saintly soul still having to “strive” for spirituality and to “cry” in the darkness of delusion for wisdom, but that Jesus, in his coming Christ-consciousness incarnation, will be already spiritually reinforced with the will and wisdom of God. Even so, “neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets”—the divinity of Jesus, cloaked in mortal garb, will not be obvious to ordinary human beings, walking the streets of matter; they would not be able to hear the voice of the cosmic vibration of the Spirit of God encased in the body of Jesus.

“A bruised reed shall he not break”—the transcendent consciousness of Jesus as the Son of God would not be at all affected, even though his spirit was encased in the fragile reed of a body that might be bruised, or crucified. “Smoking flax shall he not quench”—his spirit, burning with wisdom like smoking flax, would not be quenched or suppressed by the persecution of the flesh. “Till he send forth judgment unto victory”—though reviled and threatened, he would not give up the body until he had sent forth, or expressed, his judgment of the soul-liberating justice of wisdom in complete victory of the fulfillment of his God-given dispensation. The triumph of Jesus would be punctuated with his return to earth after death, declaring the ultimate victory of Spirit over matter. He would not leave his incarnation on earth until he had declared to the world that he, even during crucifixion of his body, could retain the magnanimity and the God-

conscious qualities of the soul untouched by the tortures of flesh and the hatred of man—and the final insult of death.

Isaiah prophesied that “the Gentiles,” the world at large outside of Israel, would in a far-reaching measure come to accept Jesus as their guru or savior. Even when he was no longer incarnate, they would intuitively realize Spirit as the Christ in Jesus. The concluding words of the prophecy (Isaiah

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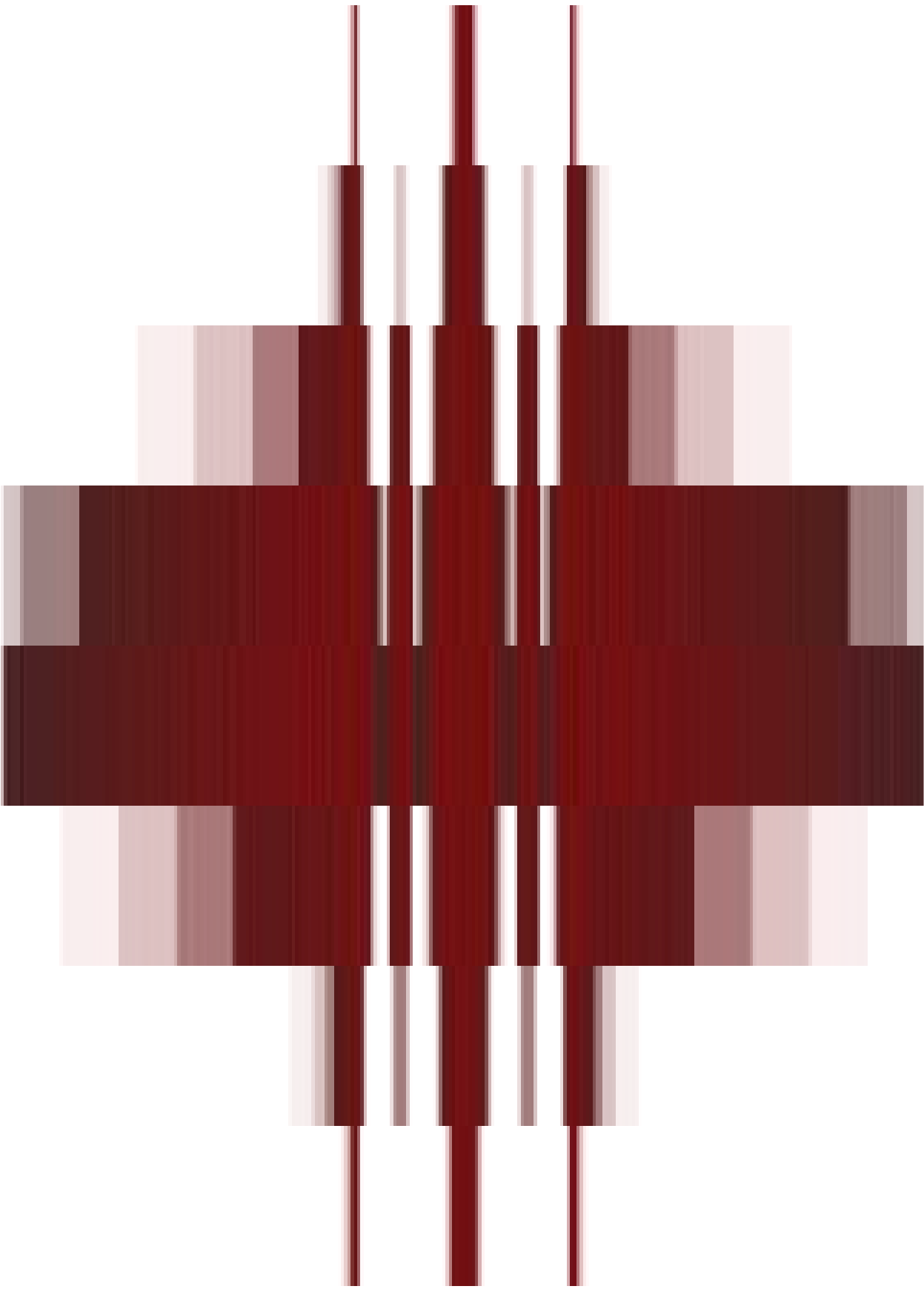
) confirm this stature of Jesus as a world savior: “He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment (the codes of righteousness) in the earth: and the isles (all continents) shall wait for his law.”

Prophecies of the great ones can be understood and correctly interpreted only through the Self-realization and developed intuition of true devotees. Intellectuals write philosophical discourses that can be understood by all intelligent people. But the sayings of Jesus and the utterances of prophets are born of their pure Self-realization, not from the uncertain meanderings of reason. As such, they can never be grasped fully by the mere intellect of man; their meaning can be only inferred by reason. The Self-realization revelations of saints and prophets become fully meaningful only when intuitively felt and understood by those who have meditated and developed their own Self-realization with its direct perception of truth.

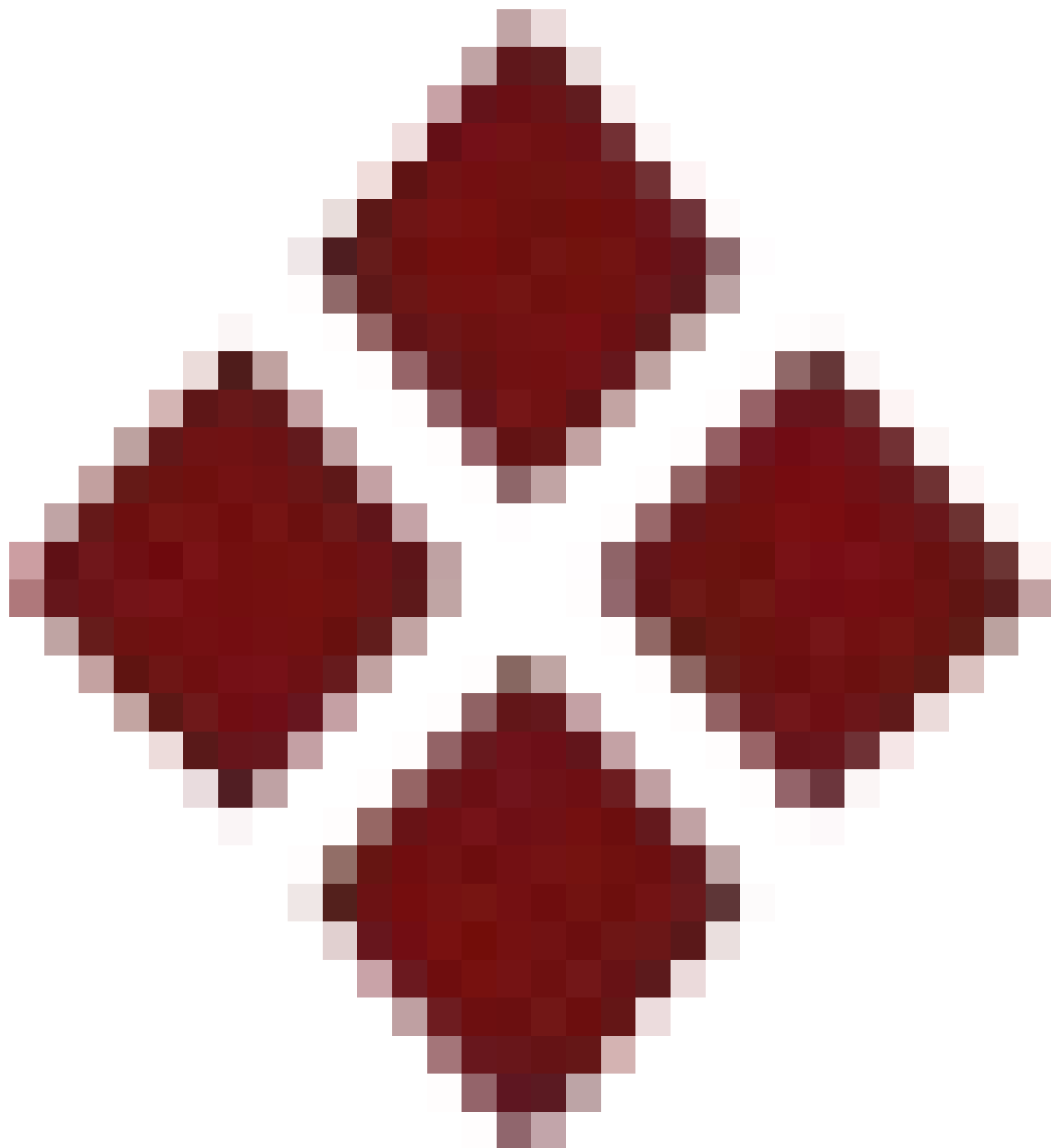


Discourse 33

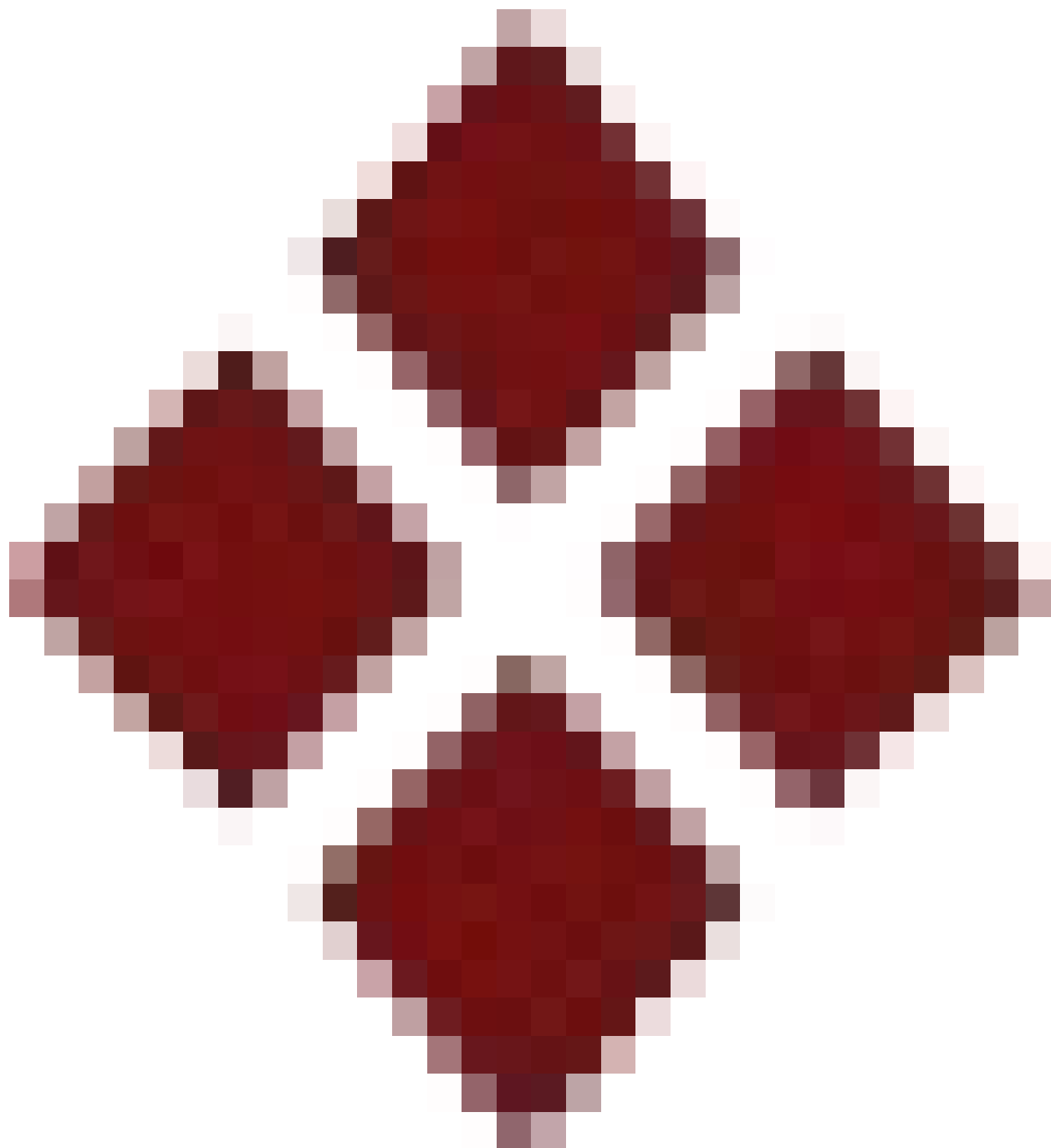
Ordination of the Twelve Apostles and Sermon on the Plain



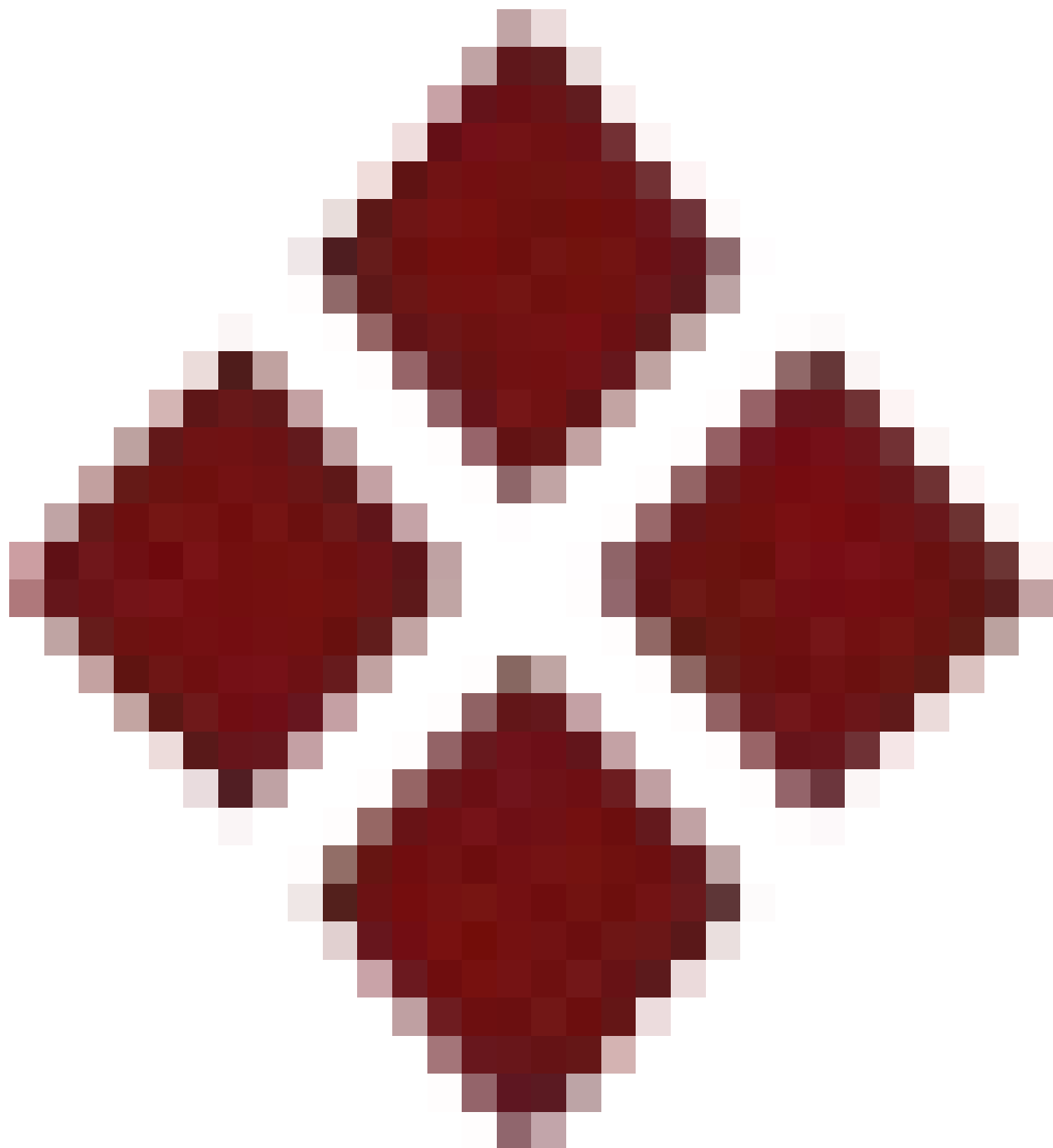
A God-realized Master’s “Spiritual Children”: The Inner Circle of Disciples



Why Did Jesus Include the Traitor Judas in the Select Group of Apostles?



Jesus' Warnings to Those Who Shun the Wisdom of Seeking God



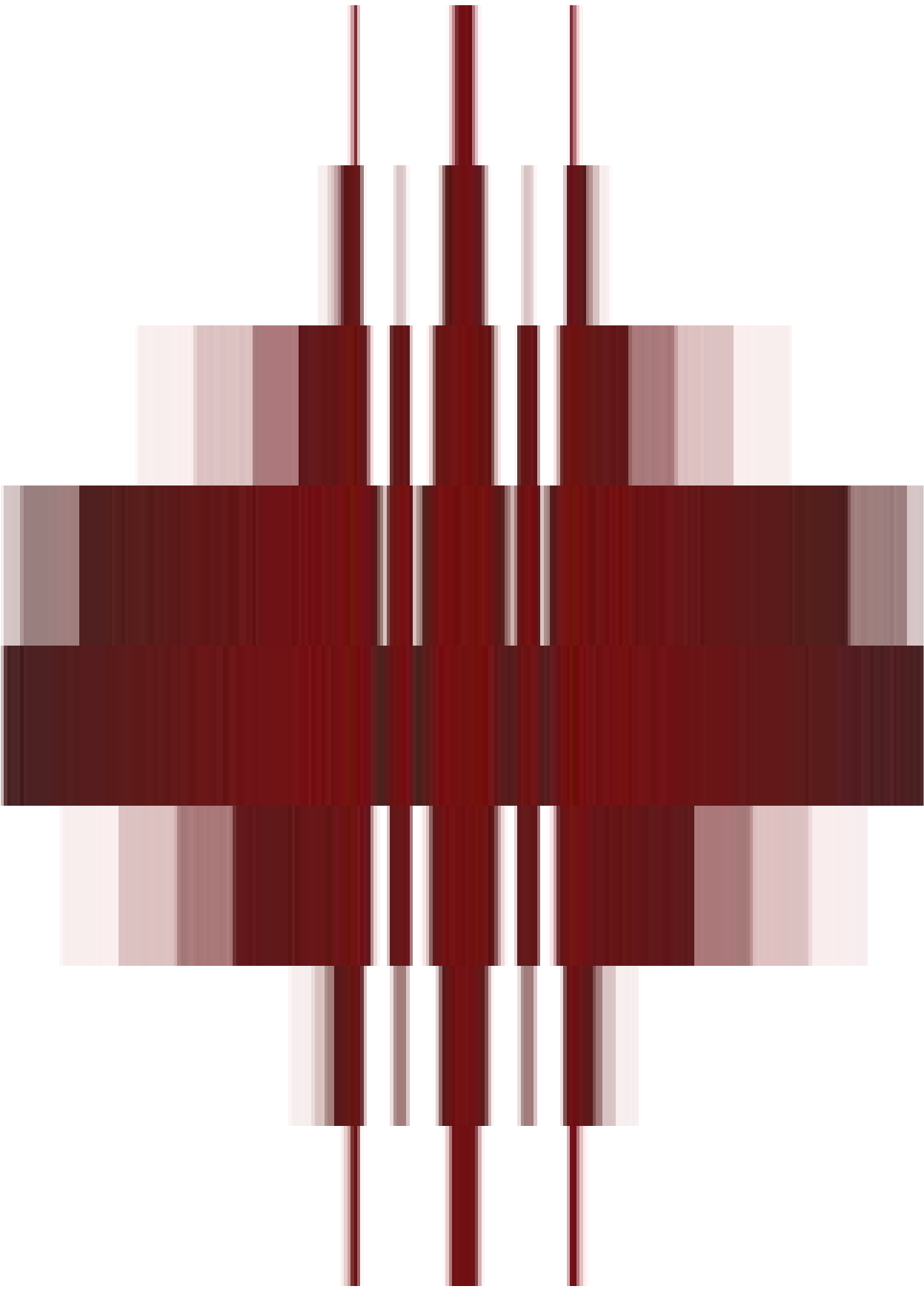
**Restoring Spiritual Sight to Those Whose
Discrimination Is Blinded by Ego**



How Man's Tree of Life Grows Good and Evil Fruits of Sensations and Desires



The Yoga Science of Freeing the Heart From Evil



“The disciples chosen by the guru become his expanded family responsibility until all are liberated in God. Jesus followed this tradition. And though one betrayed him, eleven carried on his work.”

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And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.

And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles; Simon, (whom he also named Peter,) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor.

And he came down with them, and stood in the plain, and the company of his disciples, and a great multitude of people out of all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases; and they that were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed.

And the whole multitude sought to touch him: for there went virtue out of him, and healed them all.

And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, "Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh.

"Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.

"But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation. Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep. Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.

"But I say unto you which hear, love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.

“And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloak forbid not to take thy coat also. Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again.

“And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.

“For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again.

“But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.

“Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.

“Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven:

“Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.”

And he spake a parable unto them, “Can the blind lead the blind? Shall they not both fall into the ditch?

“The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master.

“And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Either how canst thou say to thy brother, ‘Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye,’ when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother’s eye.

“For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree

bring forth good fruit. For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes.

“A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

“And why call ye me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not the things which I say? Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like: He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock.

“But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great.”

—Luke 6:12 – 49¹



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Discourse 33

Ordination of the Twelve Apostles and Sermon on the Plain



And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.

And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles; Simon, (whom he also named Peter,) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor (Luke 6:12 – 16).

Parallel reference:

And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto him whom he would: and they came unto him. And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils:

And Simon he surnamed Peter; and James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and he surnamed them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder: And Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed him: and they went into an house (Mark 3:13 – 19).²

It was time for Jesus to choose from among his disciples the twelve whom he would “send forth” as apostles to spread his message. ³ Preliminarily ensconced in the solitary high reaches of the nearby mountains, Jesus passed the night in ecstatic prayer and God-communion, so deeply engrossed in his union and joy

with God that he did not notice the silent passage of the hours into dawn. Ordinary worshipers engage in their devotions with their minds marking the measured pace of time, but Jesus prayed with his mind concentrated in the eternity of the Infinite Bliss of Spirit.

Mountaintops and caves are always sanctioned by the masters as quiet places for meditation. Legendary are the Himalayan yogis whose endeavors, lofty in clime and spirit, silently bless the world with their holy vibrations of God-communion. The Biblical history of the Holy Land refers often to sacred mountains frequented by the prophets. God first spoke to Moses on Mount Horeb (Exodus

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ff.), and gave to him the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai (Exodus

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ff.). Mount Carmel is referenced in association with Elijah and Elisha and other prophets. And Mount Gerizim and the worship thereon of the forefathers is cited in the story of the woman of Samaria [Discourse

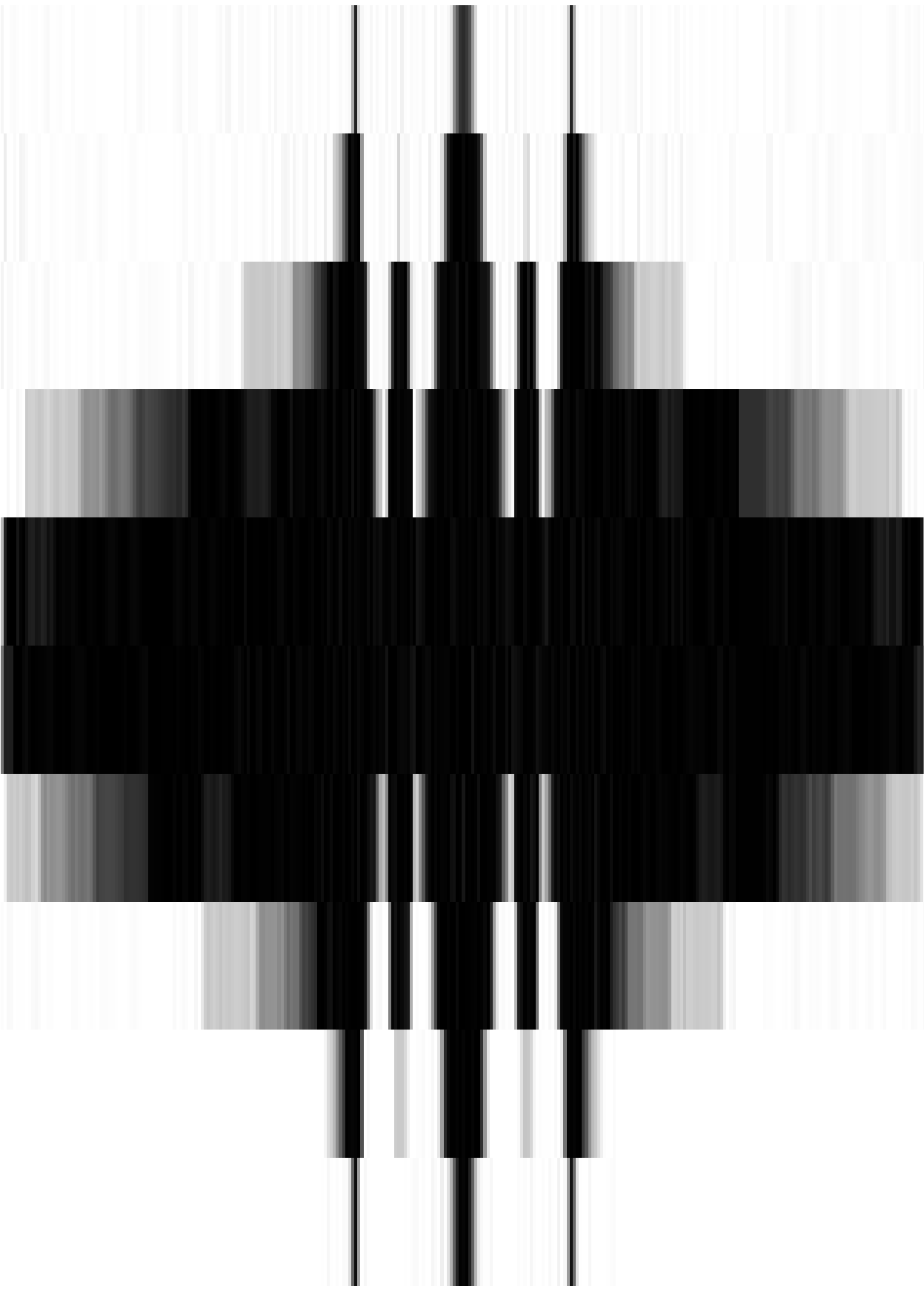
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Persons who seek opportunity to meditate in sequestered mountains find that locale free not only from the noise but also from the noxious vapors of the city. A high elevation assists the meditator with a rarefied atmosphere that is freer from gross gases. The physical and astral bodies of man become harmoniously adapted to a finer atmosphere than the denser air of low elevations. Highly charged oxygen in the mountains helps the practice of breathing exercises calculated to remove carbon waste from the system, quiet the heart, and switch

off the life current from the five senses so that sensory stimuli cannot cause mental restlessness and distract the meditative attention from God.⁴

Aesthetically, mountains have a spiritualizing effect as they lift the vision of man from the confinements of man-made edifices to the vast, limitless sky, the spacial physical embodiment of the Infinite.



A God-realized master's "spiritual children": the inner circle of disciples

The choosing of the twelve apostles by Jesus from among his disciples has a very significant meaning. In the guru-disciple tradition in India, each great master who attains God-consciousness has two kinds of devotees who come to him for spiritual training. Those, married or unmarried, who come for general instruction are called students; but those students who dedicate their entire lives to the pursuit of God-realization and who are thereby enjoined to propagate the teaching of the master to the world through the example of their spiritual development as manifested in their lives are called disciples.⁵ From among the disciples are those who, in many orders, renounce the world in a single-hearted divine quest within a structured spiritual life and service to the work of the master. They help to disseminate his teachings not only through the example of their lives but also as ordained teachers, whether serving behind the scenes in the ashram or in public. The very act of living for God alone is in itself a sermon to the world, eloquent beyond the finest oratory. The duly ordained teacher who possesses both a holy life and a clarity in conveying truth is a true "apostle" of the master, "sent forth" to serve for him as a pure voice of his God-given message.

As worthy children endeavor to add to their family name prestige in the world, so disciples as the spiritual children of a master seek to extol his name by the virtue of their lives. When a father brings forth a son into the world, the child inherits by nature and environment the family traits, good or bad. Even if a child turns out to be problematic, or a criminal, he has still to be contended with by the family. Parents have no choice as to the kind of children they bring on earth (unless they know the spiritual art of procreation by which a good soul from the astral world can be invited to be born into their family by an act of super-will power and meditation). A master, on the other hand, has the advantage of being able to select qualified disciples, his spiritual children, from a vast number of followers, and to implant in them the seed of his spiritual vitality so that they can perpetuate the influence of the master's life.

In the case of Jesus, he not only selected a particular group as his inner circle of disciples, but he chose them from among those souls he had known in a previous incarnation. That is why Jesus, on seeing Simon, told him, "Follow me," and without hesitation Simon followed him.⁶ Jesus selected his disciples for three

reasons: First, because they had not reached, but were near, the final state of realization; and therefore he wanted to assist them in the attainment of perfection. Second, after reawakening their past spiritual potential for reaching the final state of emancipation, Jesus required their assistance as apostles or model disciples who could be pioneers to propagate the message of Christhood to the masses through ideal living. Last of all, Jesus knew, according to the plan of the Heavenly Father, that he would have twelve disciples, these particular twelve, to carry out his message to the world. His mission as a world savior, assisted by twelve apostles, had been symbolically foreshadowed in his previous incarnation, when as Elisha he was the chosen disciple of the prophet Elijah: “So he [Elijah] departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him” (I Kings

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When accepting a disciple for spiritual training, a master sometimes changes that individual’s family name, which perpetuates a worldly lineage and kinship, to one signifying the disciple’s new role in helping to perpetuate the master’s spiritual lineage and the life of his ideals and teachings. Simon, whom Jesus renamed Peter, “the rock,” was to represent the adamant faith that would be the foundation of Jesus’ ongoing mission; that is why later Peter was taken to task for denying Jesus three times under the impulse of fear.⁸ Jesus changed the surnames of James and John, the sons of Zebedee, to Boanerges (“the sons of thunder”), to denote their power to fulfill their apostolic roles as disciples of their omnipotent master.

There is a popular adage that says, “blood is thicker than water”; it was once quoted to me as a purported reminder that one should think first of one’s family’s wishes in preference to giving one’s life to God. I say that is not true. Blood may

be thicker than water, but spiritual blood is thicker still. The spiritual relation of souls united in seeking God is stronger and more binding than any other relation. Each person is born into a particular family for one lifetime only; but he or she who forms a spiritual bond with kindred souls will walk together the path to God through many lifetimes. Out of numerous children of numerous families, the disciples chosen by the guru become his expanded family responsibility until all are liberated in God. Jesus followed this tradition. And though one betrayed him, eleven carried on his work.



Why did Jesus include the traitor Judas in the select group of apostles?

The coming of Judas into the company of the chosen of Christ distinctly shows that a disciple is given every spiritual opportunity of a master's blessings, yet has independence to work against the will of God. The omniscience of God surely has at least presumptive knowledge according to a person's karmic inclinations as to how that person is going to use his free will—whether he will exercise it properly or misuse it. Jesus knew the law of cause and effect and the evil propensities of the karma of Judas, so he could predict the probability of his betrayal;⁹ and still Jesus chose him as a disciple. It should be clearly understood that it was not the God-ordained fate of Judas to betray Jesus; rather that Judas insinuated himself into that villainous role according to the lawful effects of his prenatal actions that predisposed him to be the cause of the betrayal of Christ, which set the stage for Jesus' test and sacrifice on the cross. Under the divine influence of Jesus, Judas had the opportunity to change his karmic pattern; but he heeded the voice of his egoic satanic ignorance rather than the guidance of Christ-wisdom. God puts his devotees through great tests, and Judas failed this one miserably. Yet, such is the paradox that it was Judas who precipitated the culminating victory of Jesus' life that showed to the world for the ages to come Christ's immortality as a world savior and eminent exemplar of the love and forgiveness of God. For his ill-chosen part in the drama of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection, Judas became his foremost publicity agent; but woe unto Judas for his perfidious act of betrayal.



And he came down with them, and stood in the plain, and the company of his disciples, and a great multitude of people out of all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases; and they that were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed.

And the whole multitude sought to touch him: for there went virtue out of him, and healed them all (Luke 6:17 – 19).

And Jesus, in divine glory, with his twelve disciples, stood in the plains amidst a great multitude of people, gathered to hear the gospel and to be healed. The crowd thronged to touch Jesus, for virtue, or life force, went out from his body, drawn by the faith of the sick. The all-healing energy, dormant present in the afflicted, was roused by their faith and reinforced with the power coming from Jesus. That energy, finer than the finest of gross rays, emanates from the cosmic energy of God with power to destroy not only physical germs and physiological malfunctions, but mental bacteria of evil tendencies, and spiritual infectious agents of ignorance.



And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, “Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh.

“Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man’s sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.

“But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation. Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep. Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets” (Luke 6:20 – 26).



Jesus' warnings to those who shun the wisdom of seeking God

The Beatitudes, the enunciation of those who are blessed, are enumerated more extensively in the Gospel of St. Matthew, already commented on.¹⁰ Having pointed out in The Beatitudes the practical behavior requisite on the path to heavenly bliss, Jesus' words in the "Sermon on the Plain" then gave warning to those who would shun that counsel. In contrast to the blessed ones who seek the rewards of heaven, woe unto those who are so satisfied with their material rewards that they foolishly do not seek the all-misery-quenching fountainhead of Everlasting Bliss.

Jesus had some rich followers. By his words, "Woe unto you that are rich," he condemned not the possession of wealth but attachment to earthly treasure, and selfish hoarding without sharing with others in need. Possessiveness makes one callous to the sufferings of others and gives one a false sense of security. Riches cannot prevent the advent of disease or catastrophe or death. To be satisfied with wealth gives one the false consolation that he has everything, whereas he really has very little—and even that is only given to him for his temporary use, to be instantly taken away when the time comes to leave this world. The only prosperity one takes with him is his treasure trove of wisdom and bliss from the realization of truth in meditation. Hence, Jesus warns man to beware of material wealth that it not act as an opiate to deaden the desire for God, who alone can give eternal satisfaction and security.¹¹

Woe unto those who are content with material offerings and earthly pleasures, feeling no real hunger for God and truth. Someday with the approach of death, or through loss before death, there will be pangs of hunger for security and for alleviation of helplessness or innumerable wants.

Woe unto those who are smiling in satisfaction with material pleasure, for that will be short-lasting, followed by regret that precious time was lost in evanescent follies instead of being well spent in seeking the everlasting rejoicing of the soul.¹²

It was not to threaten or condemn that Jesus gave voice to his Father's loving wisdom-admonitions, but to help man to avoid the ignorant behavior that ends in suffering. Lord Krishna too in the Bhagavad Gita describes the woeful self-

determined fate wrought by one who worships not God and His expression in the soul, but material wealth, power, and pleasures:

Believing that fulfillment of bodily desires is man's highest aim, confident that this world is "all," such persons are engrossed till the moment of death in earthly cares and concerns. Bound by hundreds of fetters of selfish hopes and expectations, enslaved by wrath and passion, they strive to provide for physical enjoyments by amassing wealth dishonestly.

"This I have acquired today; now another desire I shall satisfy. This is my present wealth; however, more shall also be mine. I have killed this enemy; and the others also I will slay. I am the ruler among men; I enjoy all possessions; I am successful, strong, and happy. I am rich and well-born; can any other be compared with me? Ostentatiously I will give alms and make formal sacrifices; I will rejoice."

Thus they speak, led astray by lack of wisdom. Harboring bewildering thoughts, caught in the net of delusion, craving only sensual delights, they sink into a foul hell.¹³

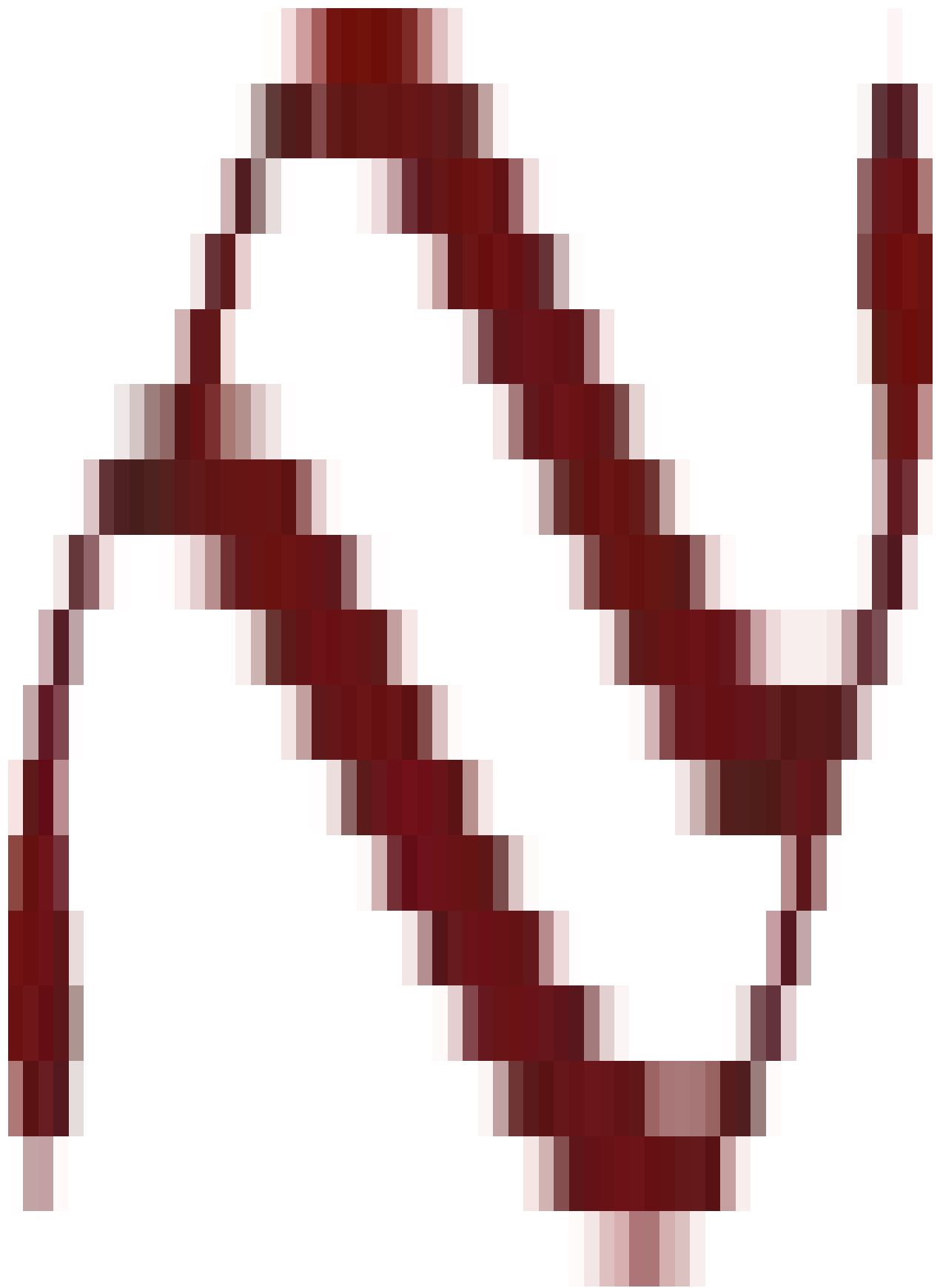
A deluded individual, trying to the end of life to fulfill his numerous unslakable desires, is a victim of endless worries and frustrations. Such a person builds castles in the air, acquiring and maintaining a surfeit of possessions, vainly anticipating a continuity of happiness from sense enjoyments.

The desire alcoholic, besotted with one draught of longings after another, is never appeased. His ever-gorged but still unquenched thirst receives respite only temporarily in death. He is soon reborn with his insatiable material desires intact, bringing in their wake new sufferings and cares. The one-track-minded individual, worshiping the gratification of human lusts, moves deeper and deeper into the mire of miseries.

Good activities and right behavior are the direct way to happiness. The pathways of desires and sensory gratifications are a confounding maze of troubles. Pursuit of material goals as the be-all and end-all of life takes man farther and farther from true soul happiness; he carries a self-created portable hades of misery within himself wherever he goes. Pursuit of divine activities leads straightway to the recovery of man's lost blessedness.

Jesus was not counseling a doleful existence when he said: "Woe unto you that laugh now." It is not that one should not laugh at all: Righteousness is the crucible of joy. But material pleasures must not counteract desire for spiritual pleasures; in fact, material enjoyments should be governed by spiritual standards. Unless enjoyment of the good and beauty in the world is spiritualized with right behavior, one becomes satiated with the intoxication of sense pleasures. The heart, so sated, all the more feels the contrast of pain at the loss of enjoyment. It is a psychological fact that pleasure is born of a desire fulfilled and pain is born of a desire unfulfilled. Both are crests of waves. Man is constantly tossing atop these contrasting extremes. In the hollow between the two waves is the state of indifference or boredom. He who rides on the crest of material pleasure must also invariably ride on the crest of pain, since relativity is the law of the physical world. Man must neutralize these relativities within himself by mental transcendence. Those who float on the still waters of inner peace never have to undergo the pain of unfulfillment. "He who is everywhere nonattached, neither joyously excited by encountering good nor disturbed by evil, has an established wisdom."¹⁴

Woe unto those of whom men of worldly standards speak well, acclaiming them for their material wealth and hedonistic life. Such commendation drowns one's conscience and power of judgment. Evil people encourage with praise those who glorify and prosper in evil; worldly people praise those who are engrossed in materialism; fanatics praise false prophets who speak not truth but what followers want to hear. All these are steeped in ignorance, like blind men leading blind men, stumbling into a common pit of error. Praise is harmful when it colors a person's perception of himself so that he does not recognize his faults. Praise is pernicious when it overestimates the good in a man, cloaking him in a false and hypocritical image. But praise is good when it correctly estimates one's virtues and inspires him to be even more virtuous. Praise in itself does not make anyone better and blame does not make anyone less than what he is in reality. Blame is helpful if it spurs one to correct himself; and praise is beneficial when it injects enthusiasm to be worthy.



[Verses 27 – 38 omitted here, as they are commented on in Discourses 27 and 30 as parallel to those in the Sermon on the Mount.]

And he spake a parable unto them, “Can the blind lead the blind? Shall they not both fall into the ditch?”

“The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master.”¹⁵

“And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Either how canst thou say to thy brother, ‘Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye,’ when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother’s eye” (Luke 6:39 – 42).¹⁶



Restoring spiritual sight to those whose discrimination is blinded by ego

If persons who are physically or mentally or spiritually blind try to lead others who walk in similar darkness, all will fall into the same ditch of physical, or mental, or spiritual ruin. A master has intuitive divine sight and safeguards his disciples by guiding them around pitfalls and obstacles on the path of their progress. The soulfully diligent disciple in time finds discriminative sight returning to his ego-blinded vision. But he does not all at once become like the master, as is too often prematurely assumed from brief flashes of insight. A master is he who is perfected in the art of contacting God. Only when an advanced disciple similarly attains God-realization does he become “not above his master” but “as his master.”¹⁷ Even so, an advanced disciple always gives reverential deference to his master who has been for him a messenger of God and the portal to soul freedom. Jesus so honored John the Baptist as his guru of former incarnations.

How can a self-elected spiritual guide justify saying to his brothers, “I know the art of pulling out ignorance from your soul,” when he has not rid himself of ignorance? Dislodging maya’s deeply embedded ignorance is not an easy job. It requires practical realization and practical living of the life divine. If one is not a qualified jeweler, how can he accurately teach others to distinguish between good and faulty jewels or detect imitations mixed up with authentic gems? Similarly, how can one who has no direct experience of truth teach others to distinguish between ignorance and wisdom?

To pull out the “motes” of ignorance from others’ souls presupposes that one has to some successful degree qualified himself by having pulled ignorance out from his own soul first. Jesus castigates as a “hypocrite”—one who is insincere in his actions—one whose own vision is befogged by ignorance yet who presumes with that blurred understanding to be a guide and healer of others suffering from inner blindness.



“For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes” (Luke 6:43 – 44).



How man's tree of life grows good and evil fruits of sensations and desires

The reference to a tree and its fruit has not only a literal connotation, as already explained [in Discourse

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], but a metaphysical meaning as well. A human being is a composite of three kinds of trees: (

1

) The physical nervous system with its roots in the brain and the trunk in the spine (the cerebrospinal axis) and efferent and afferent nerves branching out from it, with the senses and their sensations at the end of the nerve branches as the fruits.¹⁸ (

2

) An astral tree of life with its roots as the thousand-petaled rays in the brain, its trunk of life force in the sushumna, the astral spine, and burgeoning branches of life force with their life-giving fruits of vitality and subtle perceptions. (

3

) The tree of consciousness, which has its roots in the intelligence in the brain; its trunk consists of the mind, and its branches consist of reason, will, and feeling; it bears fruits of evil and good desires. As an aggregate, these three systems of nerves, life energy, and consciousness constitute the tree of life in man.¹⁹

The human tree of nerves yields good or bad sensations according to the nature of the individual who owns and tends the tree of the nervous system. When an individual administers polluted waters of evil stimuli to the roots in his brain of this tree of life, he produces fruits of evil sensations hanging from the branches of different nerves. That is, when a person feeds his brain with evil thoughts, howsoever aroused, that stimulus in the consciousness creates desire for evil sensations. When those desires are acted upon by the will, the endings of the

optical branch nerves, or the auditory, or tactual, or olfactory, or gustatory branches of the nervous system become laden with fruits of evil sensations in response to contact with desired objects, such as the wish to see unwholesome sights, listen to words of flattery or evil gossip, engage in lustful sensations of touch or smell, or indulge an unbridled appetite. Conversely, a brain that is fed with good thoughts produces good fruit on the tree of life, from good habits and cravings for good sensations.

The roots of every tree of life grow deep in the soil of consciousness to tap the wellspring of Cosmic Consciousness. As such, the human nervous system was originally created by God to attract and enjoy good sensations only. But man, through misuse of his freedom of will, has converted his tree of life into a bearer of fruits of evil sensations. Once a nervous system is conditioned to producing desire for evil sensations, it is very hard to change its character. A good nervous system will not easily produce fruits of desire for evil sensations, nor will an evil-inclined tree of life produce of itself fruits in the form of desires for good sensations.

The astral tree, whose branches spread subtly throughout the physical nervous system, is fed by Cosmic Energy. If this astral tree is not impacted by vitiating evil physical habits, it produces fruits of fine inner perception which the advanced devotee can pluck and enjoy. As a person cannot partake of the fruits of an undiscovered mango tree hidden in a garden, so a devotee who is yet to see with the light of ecstasy this astral tree of life cannot even imagine the enjoyment to be had from its Elysian fruits: perceptions of subtle forces; possession of miraculous powers; seeing visions, which are true to life; listening to the celestial sounds beyond the reach of human ears, feeling sensations of the bodies of others, inhaling astral fragrance, savoring astral taste; and possession of the power to dislodge the astral body from the physical body (and to return at will), to magnify or decrease the size of the astral body—these are but a few of the wonders of having discovered one's heavenly astral body.

Behind the tree of astral life is the tree of consciousness. When this tree of consciousness is fed with the water of divine thoughts and intuition springing from the fountain of meditation, it becomes an entirely good tree bearing only fruits of good desires, spiritual aspirations, and wisdom.

Hidden beneath these three trees of the physical nervous system, of astral life, and of consciousness, is their creator and upholder, the superconsciousness of

the soul.

Superconsciousness is rooted in the Cosmic Consciousness of God. It sustains the trunk of the threefold tree of life, as also its branches of superconscious perception, subconscious perception, and conscious perception.

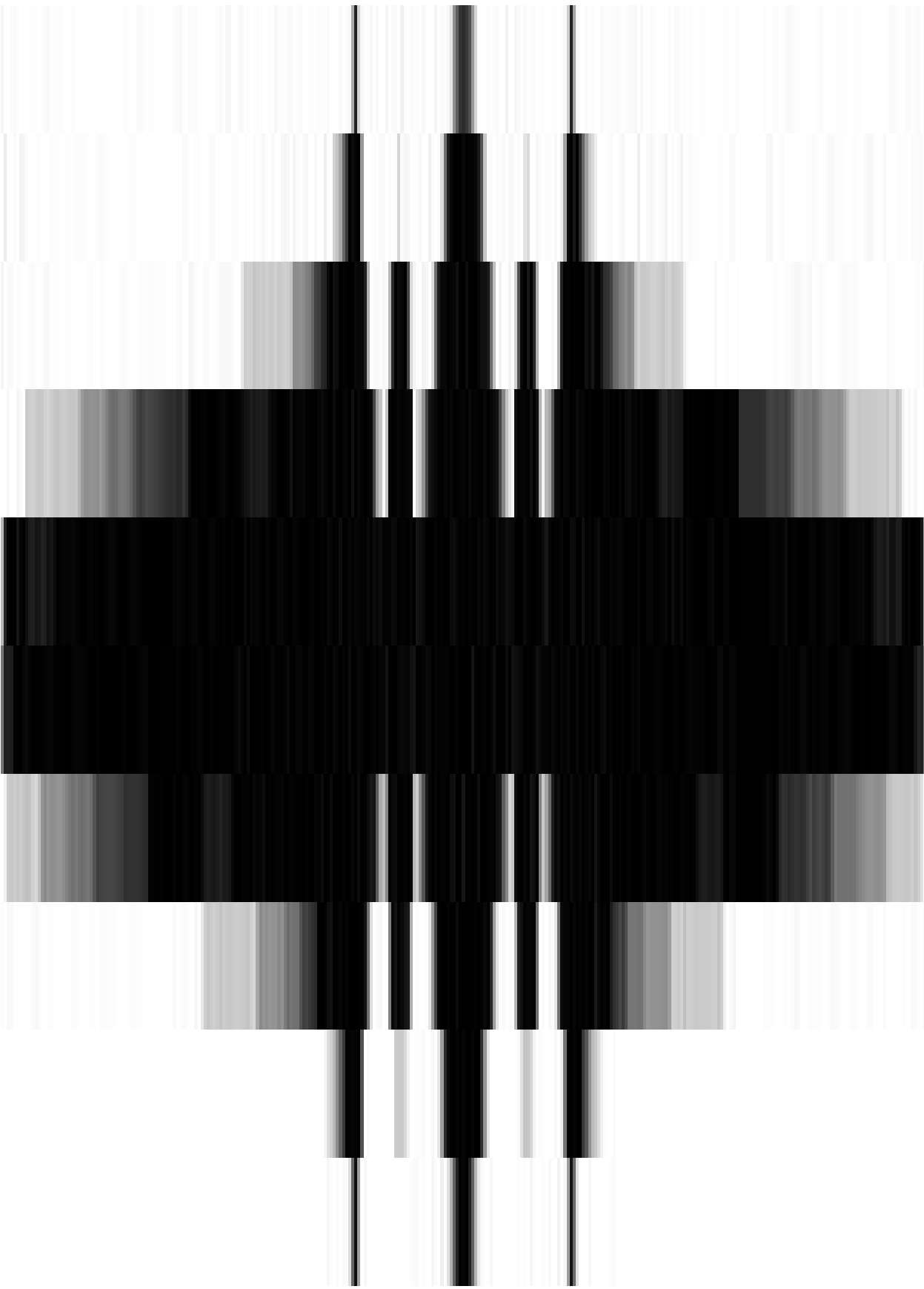
Superconsciousness, when perceived, will be found to be the source of the fruits of superconscious intuition and of subconscious spiritual dreams and of all good sensations and sentiments.

On a macrocosmic scale, God can be spoken of as the root of the universal tree of life; the Cosmic Energy can be spoken of as the trunk; and all rays shooting out of this Cosmic Energy for the creation of universes can be called the branches. The worlds and universes of causal, astral, and physical constitution are the fruits of the tree of Cosmic Consciousness.

God originally planned that this tree of Cosmic Consciousness should bear only fruits of good vibrations; but through maya, or cosmic delusion, Satan put some poison of his evil desires in the life-giving sap of Cosmic Energy. That is why we find earthquakes, dissolutions of planetary systems, and all manner of harsh collisions marring the harmony of matter, including the devastations of the evils in man.



“A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh” (Luke 6:45).



The yoga science of freeing the heart from evil

A good heart will express itself in good actions; evil feelings will express themselves in an evil way. The use of the word heart by Jesus is esoterically significant here. The great master and exponent of Yoga, Patanjali, says that it is the heart, or chitta, the feeling aspect of man's consciousness, that has to be controlled in order to attain God-realization.²⁰ As the moon reflected in a pot of whirling water looks distorted, so also the blessed image of man's true nature as the soul is distorted when reflected in the sensation-disturbed mental waters of the bodily consciousness. Patanjali says that when, by meditation, the waves of sensations are stilled, then the pure blessedness of the soul can be perceived.

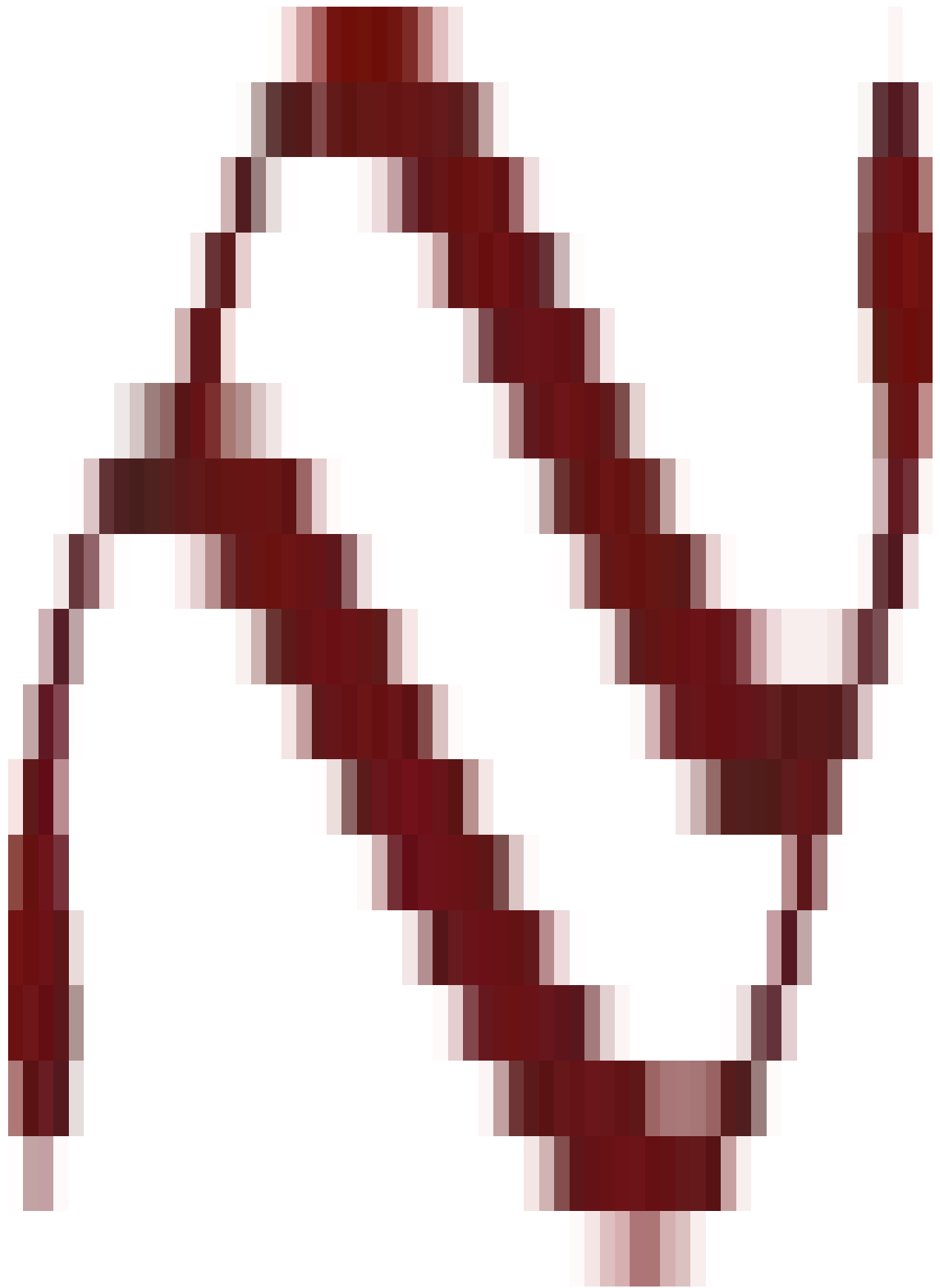
Experiences invading the mind do not create disturbance or restlessness until the heart, or feeling, is touched. If all experiences remained within an individual as academical knowledge, they could not hurt or bind him. It is the heart, with its duality, that becomes intimate with all experiences by having feelings of attraction or repulsion for them. If an individual observed his life's experiences as one unaffectedly watches motion pictures, he would go from this earth a free master. Instead, the heart through likes and dislikes binds an individual to the wheel of birth and death and mortal suffering. The heart therefore is the archives of an individual's life in which he stores his treasure of good or evil. The good person who is accustomed to do good actions and have good thoughts stores good habits in his heart, and his words and actions reflect that goodness. An evil individual, by evil actions, creates evil habits and a liking for evil in his heart; and when he speaks or acts, evil is expressed therein.

Thus, the good or evil entering a man's brain does not automatically make him good or bad; but when that stimulus lodges as feelings of attraction or repulsion within his heart, then it will manifest accordingly as good or evil. Man lives in an atmosphere fraught with evil, but no evil experience or perception can influence him to evil unless he absorbs the evil as a liking for it in his heart. That which comes out of the heart of man declares and affects him rather than that which merely goes into his brain as knowledge.²¹

When Jesus said, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," he meant that speech is an index to the contents of the heart. The vibrations of the heart reverberate in the vibration of the voice. An individual's speech, no matter

how dressed up with polished language, resonates with the inner tendencies abiding in that person's heart. In the tone and vibration of the voice is the echo of one's heart-experiences. A bad man may imitate the voice of a good person, but the evil in his heart will certainly vibrate in his pretending voice.

Through the tone and vibrations of mildness or harshness of an individual's voice one can recognize the nature of the hidden feelings in that person's heart. The whole history of an individual as to how he lives his life within himself and with his family and associates is revealed in his voice. The prenatal and postnatal story of one's life is written also in the eyes of an individual; but those who cannot read those signs in the eyes of others can, with the perception of calmness, intuit the evil or good hidden in the vibratory nature of an individual's voice.

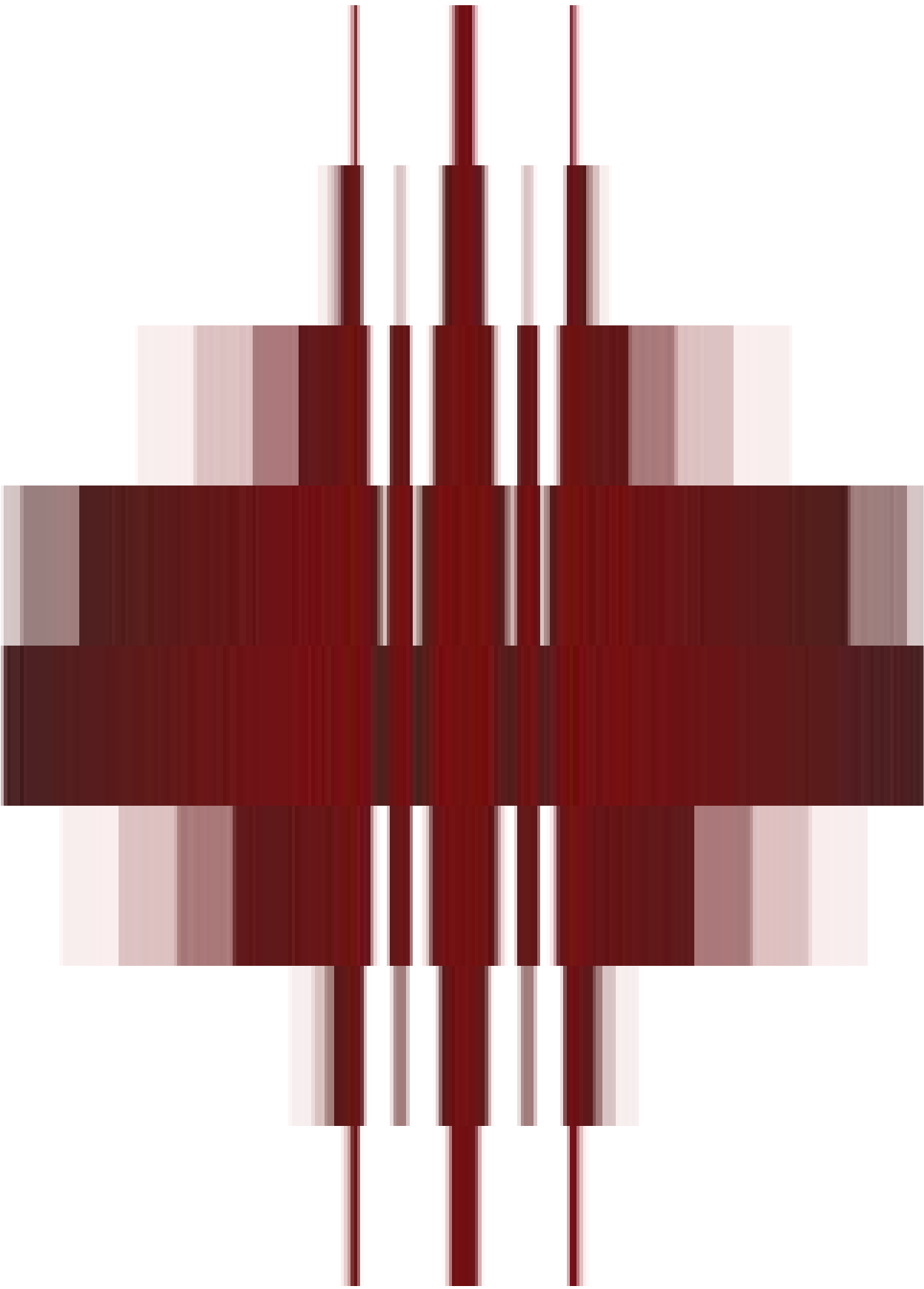


For commentary on verses of Luke 6:46 – 49, see parallel verses in the Sermon on the Mount according to the Gospel of St. Matthew [Discourse 30].

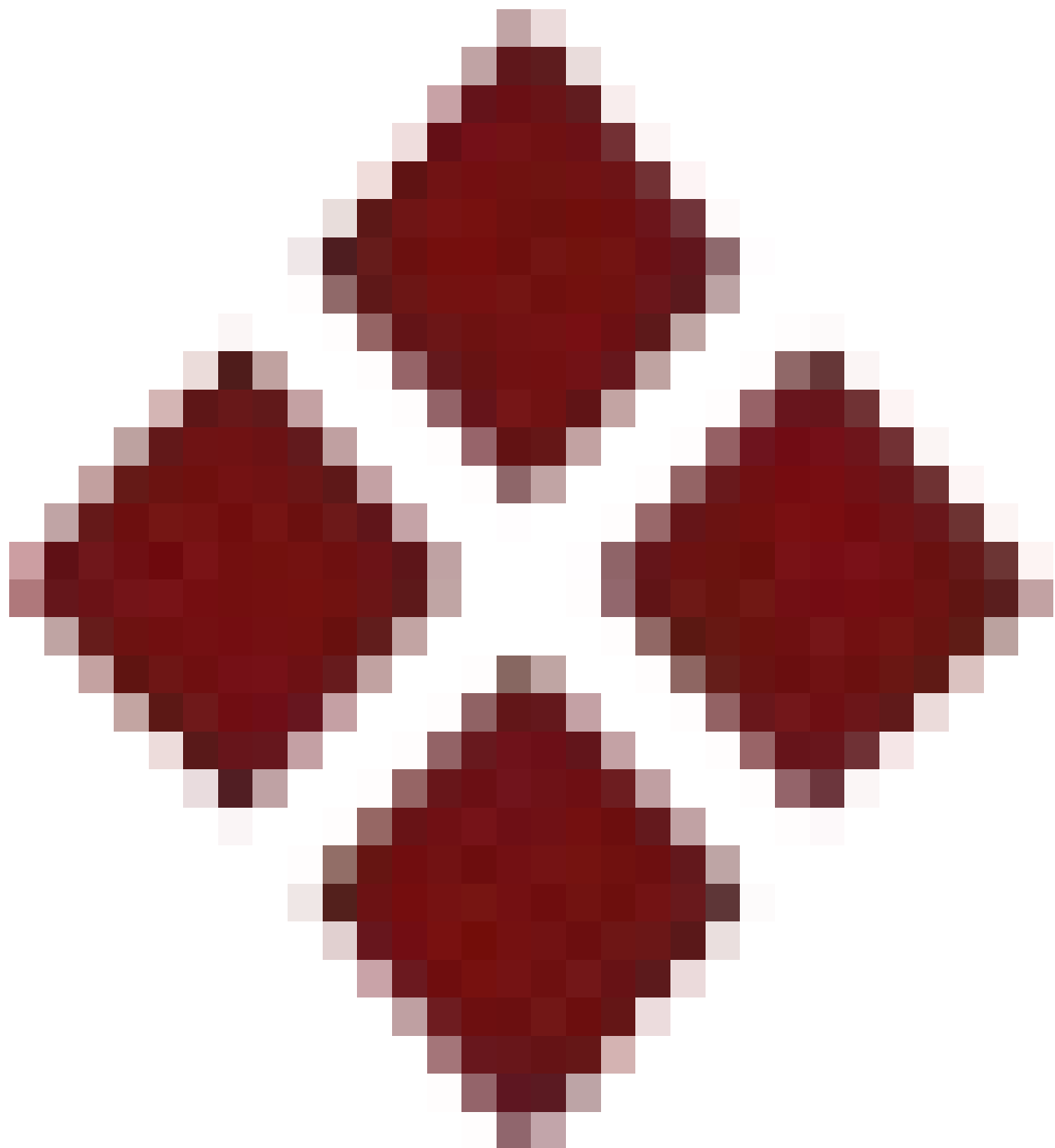


Discourse 34

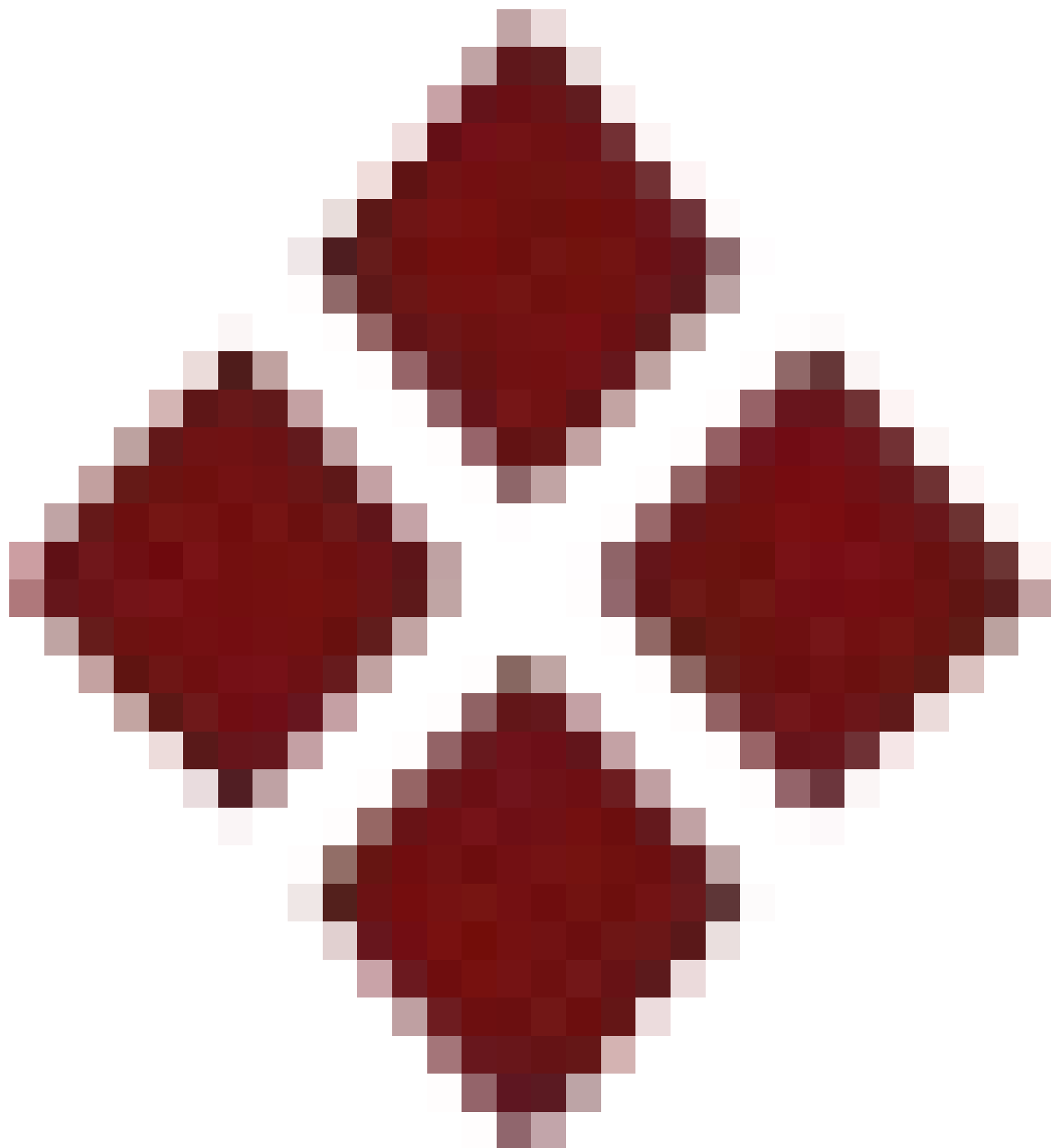
**Jesus Cites His Wondrous Works in Testimony to
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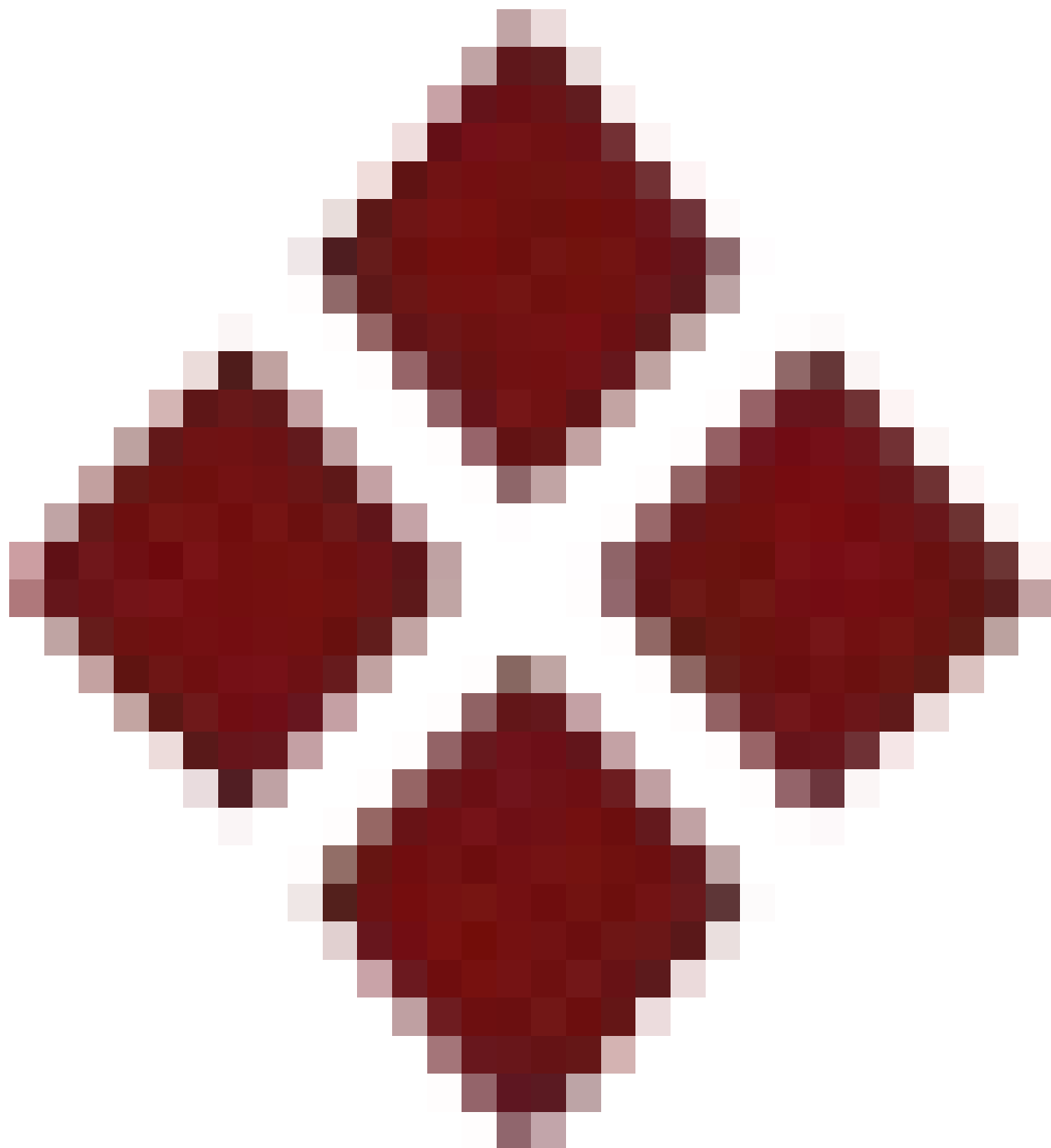
The Dynamics of Faith: Connecting One's Life With an Unseen Higher Power



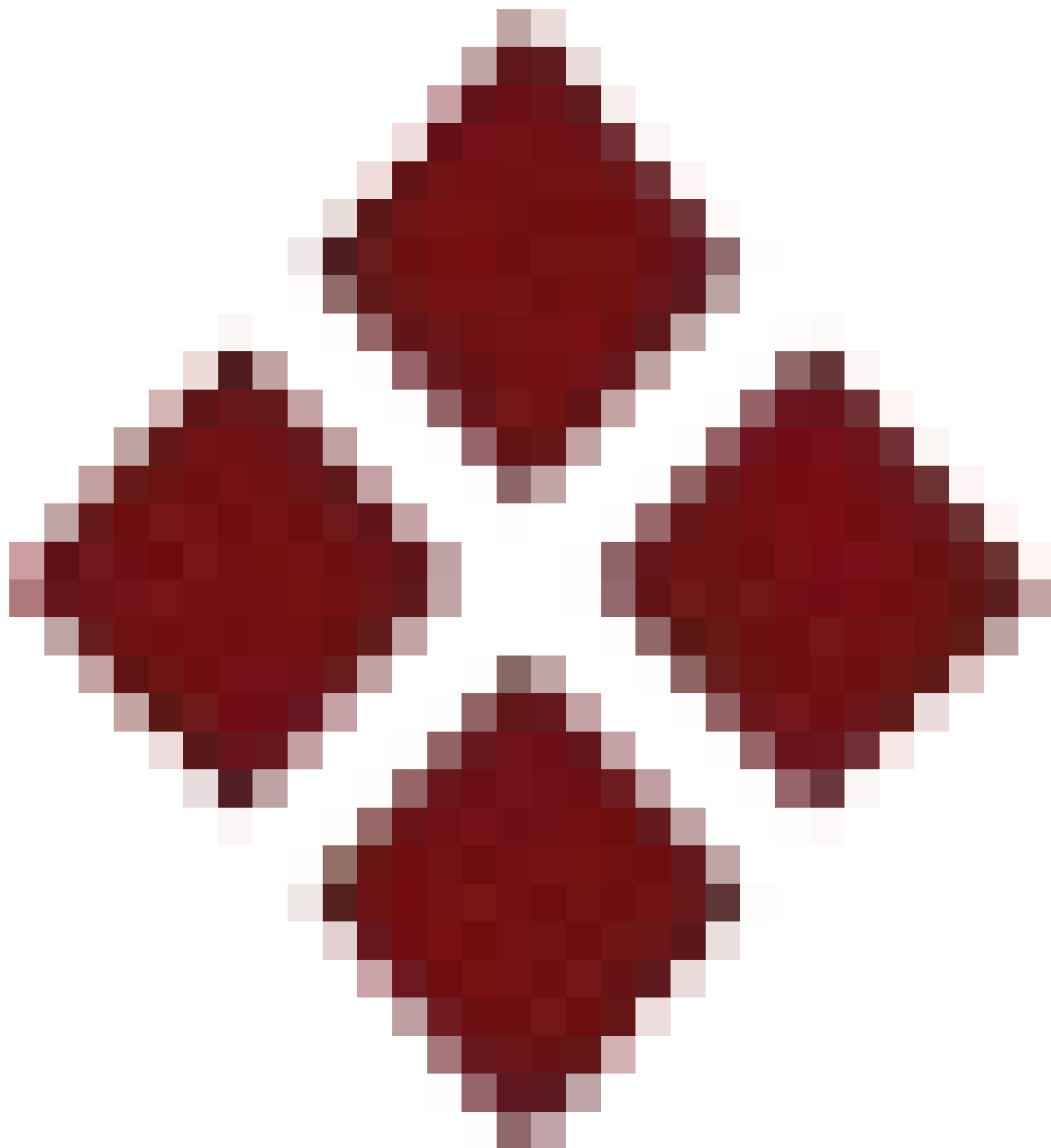
How Yoga Frees Man From Subjection to the Law of Cause and Effect (Karma)



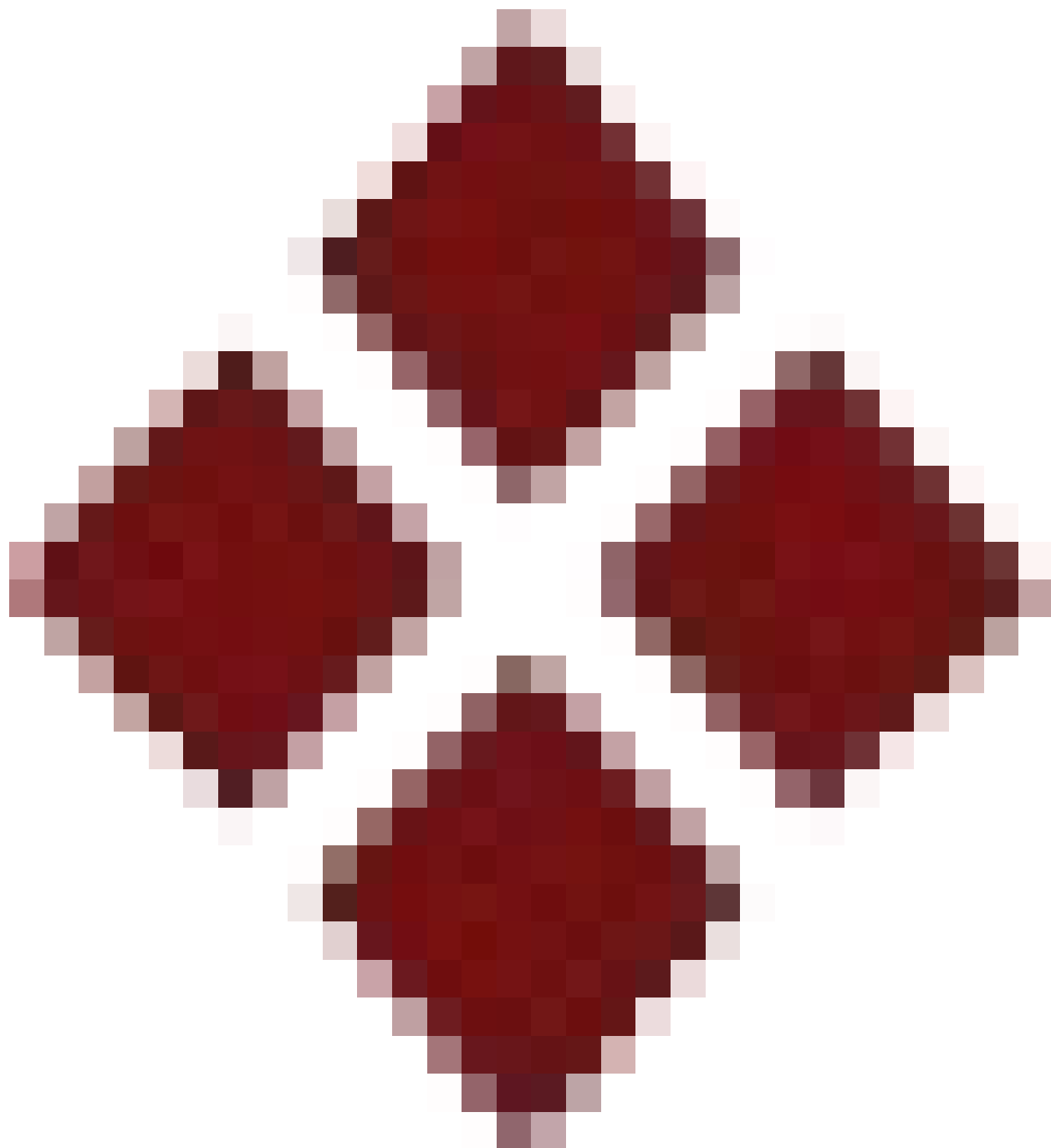
Parallels Between Jesus' Miracles and Those of His Past Life as Elijah's Disciple



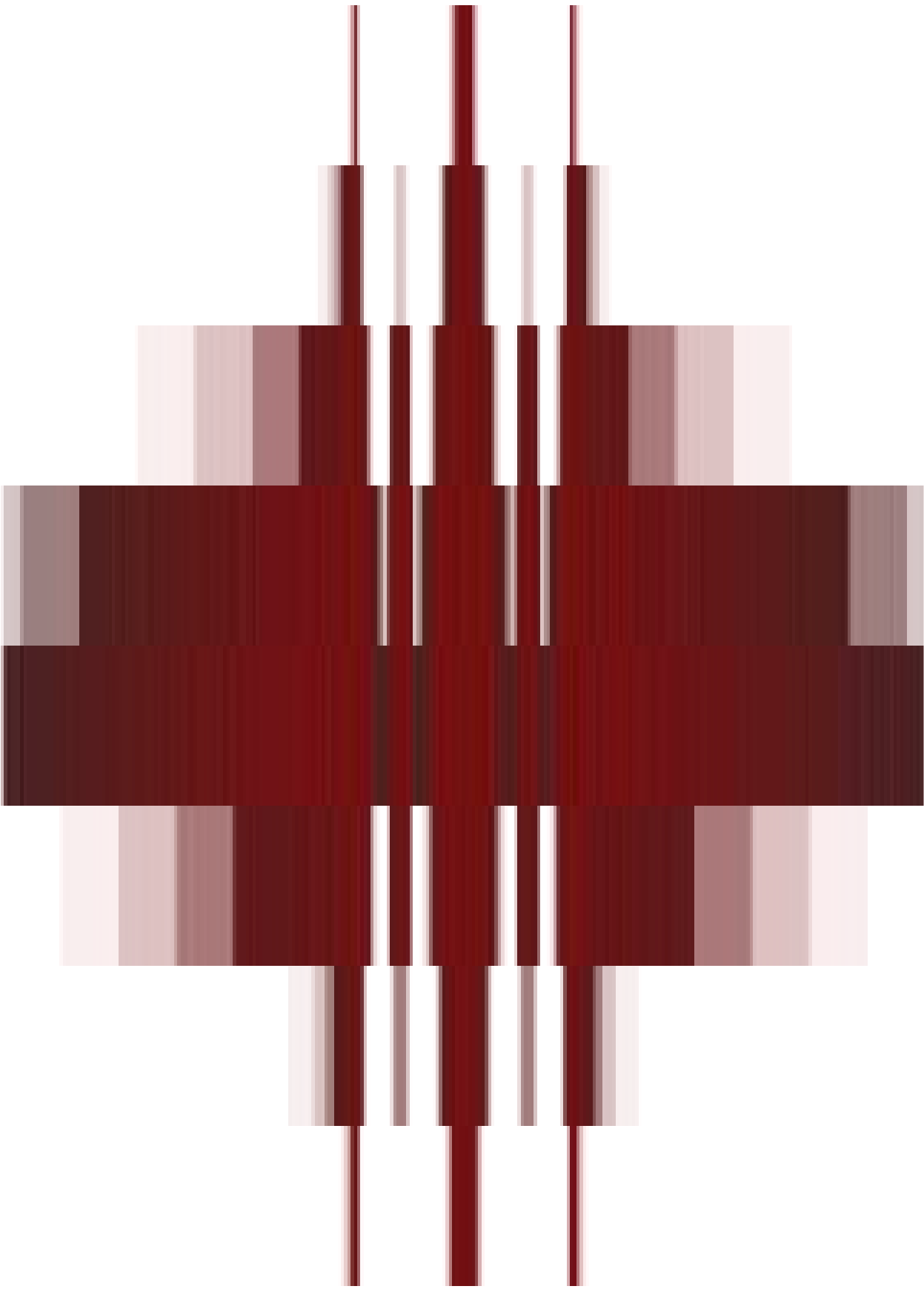
Jesus Positively Identifies John as the Reincarnation of Elijah



Jesus' Analogy of the Childishness of the Spiritually Idle



What Is the Real “Day of Judgment”?



“Jesus honored John with highest acclaim—he who had appeared in his previous incarnation as the God-realized Elijah.”

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Now when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum. And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die. And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant.

And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, that he was worthy for whom he should do this: For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue. Then Jesus went with them.

And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, "Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof: Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, 'Go,' and he goeth; and to another, 'Come,' and he cometh; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he doeth it."

When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, "I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."

And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.

And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain; and many of his disciples went with him, and much people. Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her.

And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, "Weep not." And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, "Young man, I say unto thee, arise." And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother.

And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, that a great

prophet is risen up among us; and, that God hath visited His people. And this rumour of him went forth throughout all Judea, and throughout all the region round about.

And the disciples of John shewed him of all these things.

And John calling unto him two of his disciples sent them to Jesus, saying, “Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?”

When the men were come unto him, they said, “John the Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, ‘Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?’ ”

And in that same hour he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave sight. Then Jesus answering said unto them, “Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.”

And when the messengers of John were departed, he began to speak unto the people concerning John, “What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously appavelled, and live delicately, are in kings’ courts.

“But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet. This is he, of whom it is written, ‘Behold, I send My messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.’

“For I say unto you, among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.”

And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.

And the Lord said, “Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? And to what are they like? They are like unto children sitting in the marketplace, and calling one to another, and saying, ‘We have piped unto you,

and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept.'

"For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, 'He hath a devil.' The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, 'Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!' But wisdom is justified of all her children."

—Luke 7:1 – 35

Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not:

"Woe unto thee, Chorazin! Woe unto thee, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you.

"And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: For if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee."

—Matthew 11:20 – 24



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Discourse 34

**Jesus Cites His Wondrous Works in Testimony to
John the Baptist and Extols John's Greatness**



Now when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum. And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die. And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant.

And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, that he was worthy for whom he should do this: For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue. Then Jesus went with them.

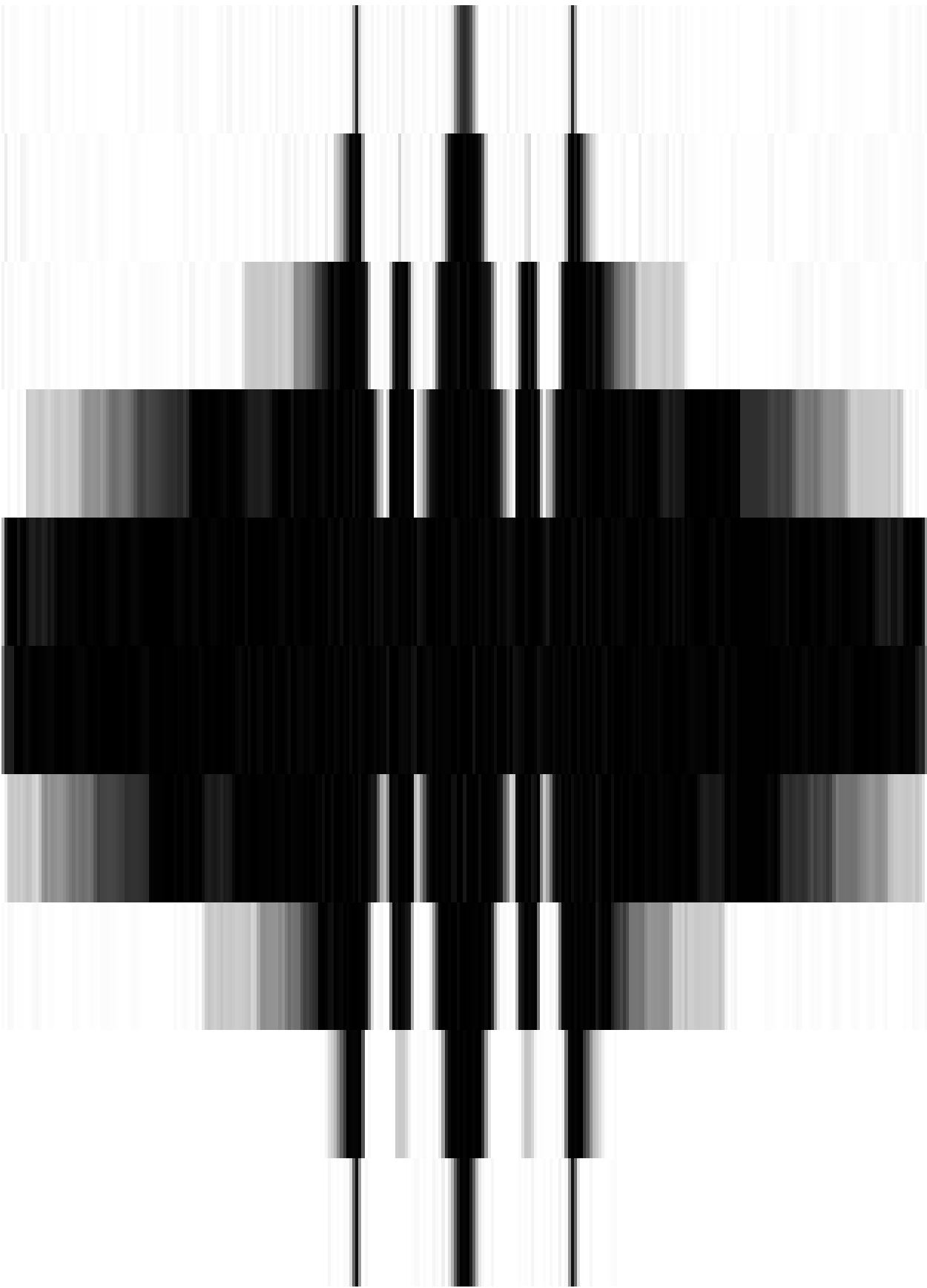
And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, "Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof: Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, 'Go,' and he goeth; and to another, 'Come,' and he cometh; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he doeth it."

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And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick (Luke 7:1 – 10).

Parallel reference:

And Jesus said unto the centurion, "Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee." And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour (Matthew 8:13).¹



The dynamics of faith: connecting one's life with an unseen Higher Power

To heal the near-fatal affliction of his well-loved servant, which would not yield to application of physical methods of healing, the Roman centurion sought the superphysical help of a master. A man acquainted with authority, he appealed to Jesus as being one who could command the very laws governing heaven and earth. In reverent awe of Jesus' sovereign power, the centurion felt himself unworthy even to have the Lord enter his home. Jesus, being deeply moved by the humility and great faith of this man outside the Hebrew congregation, commanded the instantaneous healing that the centurion sought.

A Sanskrit name for the Lord in His aspect of Cosmic Ruler is Ishvara (from the root is, "to rule"), the Universal Spirit who holds the universes on a pinpoint of thought, revolving their workings on the spindle of His will. The Roman officer, in addressing Jesus as "Lord," spoke with intuitive certainty of Jesus' manifest divinity. He knew that Jesus had only to "say in a word, and my servant shall be healed." A command from Jesus, being united to the Word, cosmic Aum or Amen, carried the manifesting power of Omnipotence. In the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, Aum (the Word) is spoken of as the "symbol" (manifestation) of Ishvara, the creative power by which the entire cosmos of matter and energy is brought into being.² At one with the omnipotent Lord, Jesus surcharged his word with the cosmic vibratory Word, which endowed him with the authority to heal, or to manifest any other condition in the material world.

God as the Ruler of Creation originally brought forth all phenomena by direct command of His will. He is the supreme sovereign authority; yet having manifested from His ideations the multifarious cosmic dream creation, He cedes the tedious governing authority to His universal laws. The power of maya, delusion, makes possible the effective operation of law, and by its very nature obscures the underlying and all-pervasive Sovereign Spirit. The Sole Reality, the Doer behind all cosmic happenings, seems absent from His universe. But with the eyes of faith, intuitive knowing, He can be espied, immanent and responsive.

Faith reveals a God who is intimately near, just behind the throb of the heart, a God who listens to every word of prayer. His eyes and ears are everywhere, His consciousness attuned to every particular of thought and condition. In His good time He will respond to every sincere entreaty—faster than one may think, when

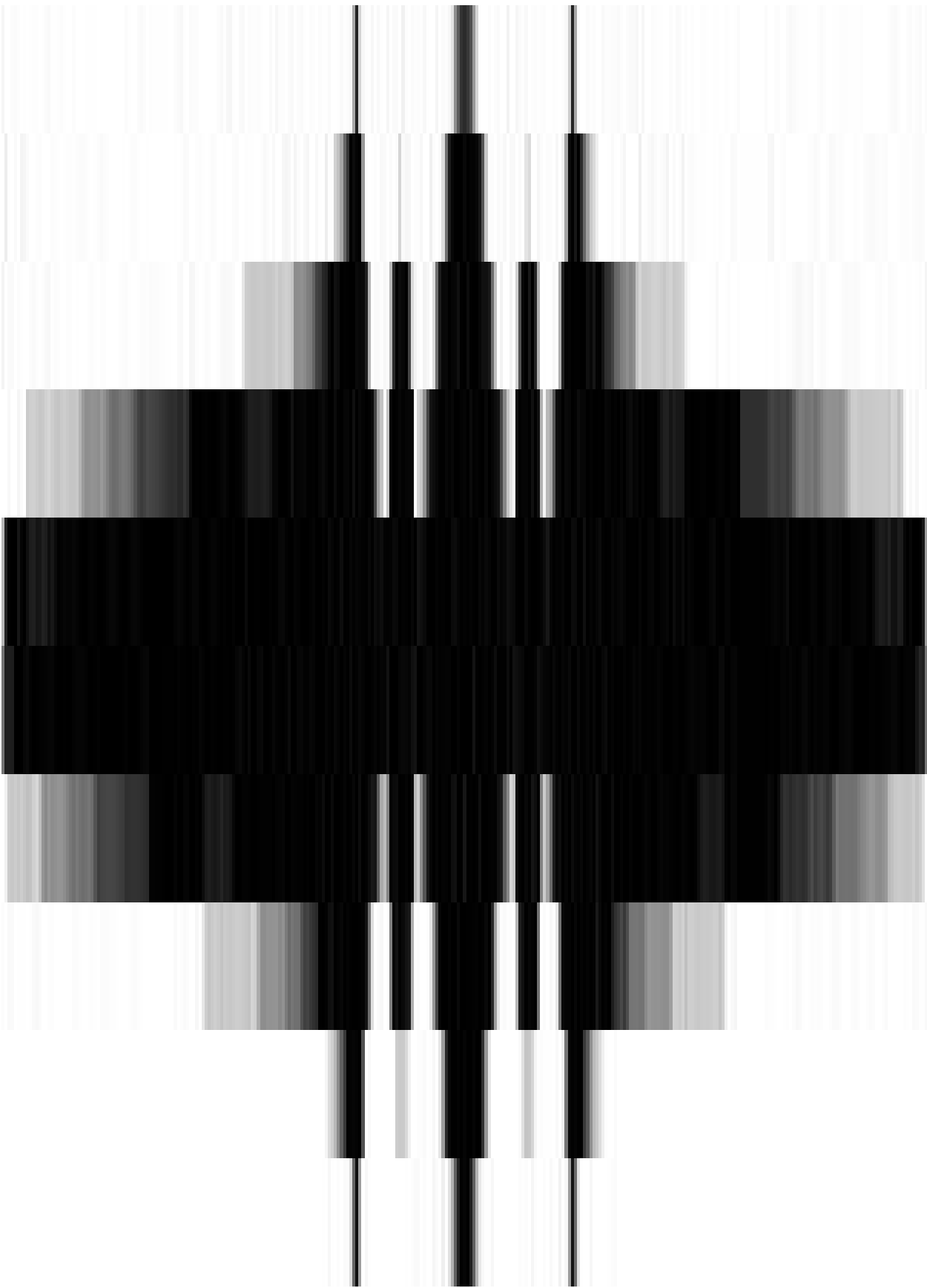
He is appealed to with implicit faith. It is doubt that makes Him seem far away. Offering halfhearted prayers, with the mind in the octopus-clutches of doubt, counteracts receptivity with an undercurrent of “Oh, He will probably not even hear me, let alone respond to my needs.” His help is virtually obstructed by that kind of prayer! He must let the karmic law work its impartial justice for good or ill. But appeals made with love, confidence, and faith can transcend law and bring results that astonish. Faith means total trust—intuitive conviction, a knowing from the soul, that God is real and that His help is ever ready to flow into man’s life. That is the faith extolled by Jesus, the open channel through which he could heal many of the afflicted, and change the lives of countless believers.

Despite man’s vaunted advances in science and the healing arts, he cannot get away from the fact that in every department of life he is ultimately dependent on a Power higher than himself. In some respects, modern man enjoys a more secure existence than his ancestors; but still his days are fraught with terrible uncertainties. One never knows when accident or disease, financial failure or natural disaster will strike. Sooner or later, a time arrives in every person’s life when a connection with that Higher Power suddenly becomes of utmost urgency, bringing him to his knees through painful desperation or worshipful devotion—the choice is his—in recognition that not a beat of the heart nor an inspiration of breath transpires without the supportive will of the Lord. That consciousness of total dependence on God is the power behind the dynamics of faith. Such reliance is not a submissive cowardice that paralyzes one’s own constructive will, but an act of consecrated deference to God through love for Him and veneration of His supremacy.

Thus Jesus cited the exceptional faith of the Roman centurion over the rational skepticism among his own people. The soldier had the humility to bow to an authority superior to his own intellect and station, and the faith to recognize divine power and higher laws, unseen though they were, so that Jesus could say to him, “As thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee.”

All creation operates under the law that the effect is equal to the cause. The faith of the centurion was great enough to act as sufficient cause to result in the healing of his servant—through the help of Jesus, who quickened the fruition of the above-mentioned cause. According to metaphysical law, healing power can be transferred from one soul to a consonant soul.³ In this case, the centurion’s faith was a conduit through which the healing power of Jesus was received and

transferred through the centurion's soul to his servant with whom he shared a warm affinity.



Materialists perceive the working of natural laws, but deny their Author

Depending on the development of his faculties of perception, man cognizes to greater or lesser degree the gross and subtle workings of cosmic law. A rank materialist acknowledges the physical operation of cause and effect: he knows that if he puts his hand in a fire, he will be painfully burned. Yet he tends arrogantly to disavow the subtler workings of moral laws of right action that would hedge the indulgence of his sense-bound desires; and scoffs at the suggestion that there are even higher laws of thought, free will, and expansion of consciousness that give spiritual purpose to his life. Knowledge of the Transcendent Author of all material, moral, and spiritual governance, the Law Framer, is utterly beyond his ken. Unlike the centurion, he egotistically proclaims himself—either overtly by his disrespect or tacitly by his indifference—unsubject to divine authority.

One Sankhya⁴ aphorism reads: Ishvar asiddhe (“A Lord of Creation cannot be deduced” or “God is not proved”). My guru, Sri Yukteswar, explained: “The verse is not atheistical. It merely signifies that to the unenlightened man, dependent on his senses for all final judgments, proof of God must remain unknown and therefore non-existent.”

Materialists, accustomed to rationalizing all phenomena in terms of cause and effect, often find no place in their philosophy for a God who transcends the lawful workings of creation. It is irony that rational man distrusts God because of the manifest workings of God’s own law of cause and effect! Even a little reflection on the fact that there must be an Author of that law would suffice to start man on the quest for Ultimate Truth.

To accept nothing beyond the laws that govern maya is to remain bound in that realm of delusion—to become subject to rather than a ruler of the law of cause and effect. By identifying himself with creation rather than with the Transcendent Creator, man abdicates the authority given to him with his soul to have dominion over the cosmic phenomena. During sleep man cognizes himself as free from physical constraints; in his dreams he does not need to eat anything, nor earn money, nor go to the doctor, nor experience birth and death, because (subconsciously at least) he is contacting the all-sufficient, ever-living soul. But immediately upon awakening he regains the consciousness of having a body,

which is either young or old, sick or healthy, wealthy or poor. He limits himself so convincingly that those perceptions begin to make him what he is.

The phenomena imposed on man's belief are demarcated by the forces of causation he is capable of understanding—unless, like the centurion, he possesses faith in that which exists beyond the annals of intellect. Scientists have probed the causes of many wonders in creation that previous generations regarded as unexplainable; their application of that understanding has given us such modern “miracles” as radar, atomic energy, television, supersonic travel. Yet because they are unable to identify any known causality in the miracles performed by saints and masters, they deem them to be preposterous superstition.

Men of deeper insight, such as Einstein, James, Bose, and Jeans—all those who have intuitively touched the ultimate science and philosophy—realize that there is a supreme Power or Intelligence behind the varied forms of matter. What is preposterous is the assumption that the various forms of life and the grand potentials of the consciousness in man are just accidents of nature. It is by understanding the laws of life and of our individuality, which are invariably linked, that we find the homogeneity and harmony among all forces. The body is nothing but materialized life. Life is materialized consciousness. Consciousness comes from God.



How yoga frees man from subjection to the law of cause and effect (karma)

This world, existing in God's suggestion of a relativity of time and space, is merely a condensed thought of God. The wonder I behold is that everything in this universe God has created out of nothing but His own dream, His own ideations. Man's difficulty is that this dream is imposed upon him, like a cosmic hypnosis. When he supinely surrenders his own will to delusive somnolence, he has little or no control over the dream happenings.

Under maya's laws of causation, so many operations are necessary in order to achieve something. For us to have bread to eat, a farmer must plant the wheat and water it and tend its growth; then thresh it, grind it, and deliver it to a store. Then the baker has to buy it from the store, make it into dough, and put it in the oven to bake. Man thinks that by applying the material laws of cause and effect he has been able to produce that bread. But who created the life in the grain that makes the wheat? And who created the earth in which the wheat grew; and who created the heat in the fuel that stokes the oven?

It is God's consciousness that has given life to everything. It is the vibration of His thought that has been condensed into light; and that light has been condensed into life force; and that life force has been condensed into electrons and protons; and they have been condensed into molecules and atoms out of which the earth and man's body and everything in this universe is composed. When one, like Jesus, realizes the unity of the Self with God, and that Self as a manifestation of the one Cosmic Light, and beholds everything as a manifestation of that Light, one can control these cosmic radiations, even as God does. Jesus demonstrated that power and proclaimed: "Ye shall do even greater things than these I do."⁵ By deeper and deeper meditation, the aspirant frees himself from maya in the Light beyond the atoms. Only by thus awakening from this daydream of delusion will man know he has been dreaming. When he can dissolve this dream in the ecstasy of God, he will be able to command the universal order to perform any miracle.

The Roman officer recognized in Jesus the divine authority to make matter obey his will—to supersede the processes that under the physical law of cause and effect would be necessary to heal the servant. Only supremely God-realized masters, as was Jesus Christ, can operate in a sphere unconditioned by any

constraints of causality. United to the omnipotence of the Creator, they can bring into being any object or condition by direct materialization, with no precedent cause other than their act of divine will.

There is no law of causation when one knows the law of the Infinite. He who is in tune with God's mind can do anything.⁶ As an earthly emperor may cause all his subjects to obey the laws of his kingdom without himself being bound by them, so the Absolute Monarch of the realm of manifestation has made all the laws needed for the orderly operation of His finite creation, including the law of cause and effect, but He is not subject to them.

That is how Lord Krishna counseled his disciple Arjuna: "The ultimate wisdom of Sankhya I have explained to thee. But now thou must hear about the wisdom of Yoga, equipped with which, O Arjuna, thou shalt shatter the bonds of karma."⁷

Sankhya philosophy explains the orderly principles by which God's cause-and-effect creation is evolved from His undifferentiated Being and maintained as an objective (though delusive) dream reality.⁸ Yoga science gives man the key to freeing himself from subjection to those laws: The way out of the prison of karma consists in banishing—through definite techniques of soul-awakening meditation—the delusion of being a mortal whose actions are governed by creation's law of karma.

So long as man considers himself a created being, he is servile to all the companionate forces of cause and effect. As a mortal man he is a creation made by God; as an immortal being of realization, he will know himself as a part of God, possessed of the Father's creative will and lordship over the cosmos.

Once having awakened to the truth that mortal enslavement is not his true lot, the prayer of every prodigal child of God should be to try to realize:

"Thou art my Father, I am Thine offspring. Thou art Spirit; I am made in Thine image. Thou art Creator and Owner of the universe. Good or naughty, I am Thy child, with the right to command the cosmos....

“By Thy grace I shall rediscover my true nature, that of omnipresent Spirit, and have dominion⁹ over the world of matter.”¹⁰

In the ecstasy of meditation, God makes the humblest of His servants to sit on a sovereign throne.



And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain; and many of his disciples went with him, and much people. Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her.

And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, “Weep not.” And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, “Young man, I say unto thee, arise.” And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother.

And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, that a great prophet is risen up among us; and, that God hath visited His people. And this rumour of him went forth throughout all Judea, and throughout all the region round about (Luke 7:11 – 17).

The power to restore life to the dead was with Jesus in his incarnation as Elisha, as recounted in II Kings

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Parallels between Jesus' miracles and those of his past life as Elijah's disciple

“And it fell on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread. And so it was, that as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread. And she said unto her husband, ‘Behold now, I perceive that this is an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually. Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick: and it shall be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither.’

“And it fell on a day, that he came thither, and he turned into the chamber, and lay there. And he said to Gehazi his servant, ‘Call this Shunammite.’ And when he had called her, she stood before him. And he said unto him, ‘Say now unto her, “Behold, thou hast been careful for us with all this care; what is to be done for thee?”’ ...And Gehazi answered, ‘Verily she hath no child, and her husband is old.’ ...And he said, ‘About this season, according to the time of life, thou shalt embrace a son.’ ...And the woman conceived, and bare a son at that season that Elisha had said unto her, according to the time of life.

“And when the child was grown, it fell on a day, that he went out to his father to the reapers. And he said unto his father, ‘My head, my head.’ And he said to a lad, ‘Carry him to his mother.’ And when he had taken him, and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and then died.

“And she went up, and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut the door upon him, and went out. And she called unto her husband, and said, ‘Send me, I pray thee, one of the young men, and one of the asses, that I may run to the man of God, and come again.’ ...So she went and came unto the man of God to mount Carmel....

“And when Elisha was come into the house, behold, the child was dead, and laid upon his bed. He went in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the Lord.

“And he went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and stretched himself upon the child; and the flesh of the child waxed warm.

“Then he returned, and walked in the house to and fro; and went up, and stretched himself upon him: and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes.

“And he called Gehazi, and said, ‘Call this Shunammite.’ So he called her. And when she was come in unto him, he said, ‘Take up thy son.’

“Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and took up her son, and went out.”



John the Baptist, even after being imprisoned, followed the ministry of Jesus with keen interest.¹¹

And the disciples of John shewed him of all these things.

And John calling unto him two of his disciples sent them to Jesus, saying, “Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?”

When the men were come unto him, they said, “John the Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, ‘Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?’”

And in that same hour he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave sight. Then Jesus answering said unto them, “Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached” (Luke 7:18 – 22).

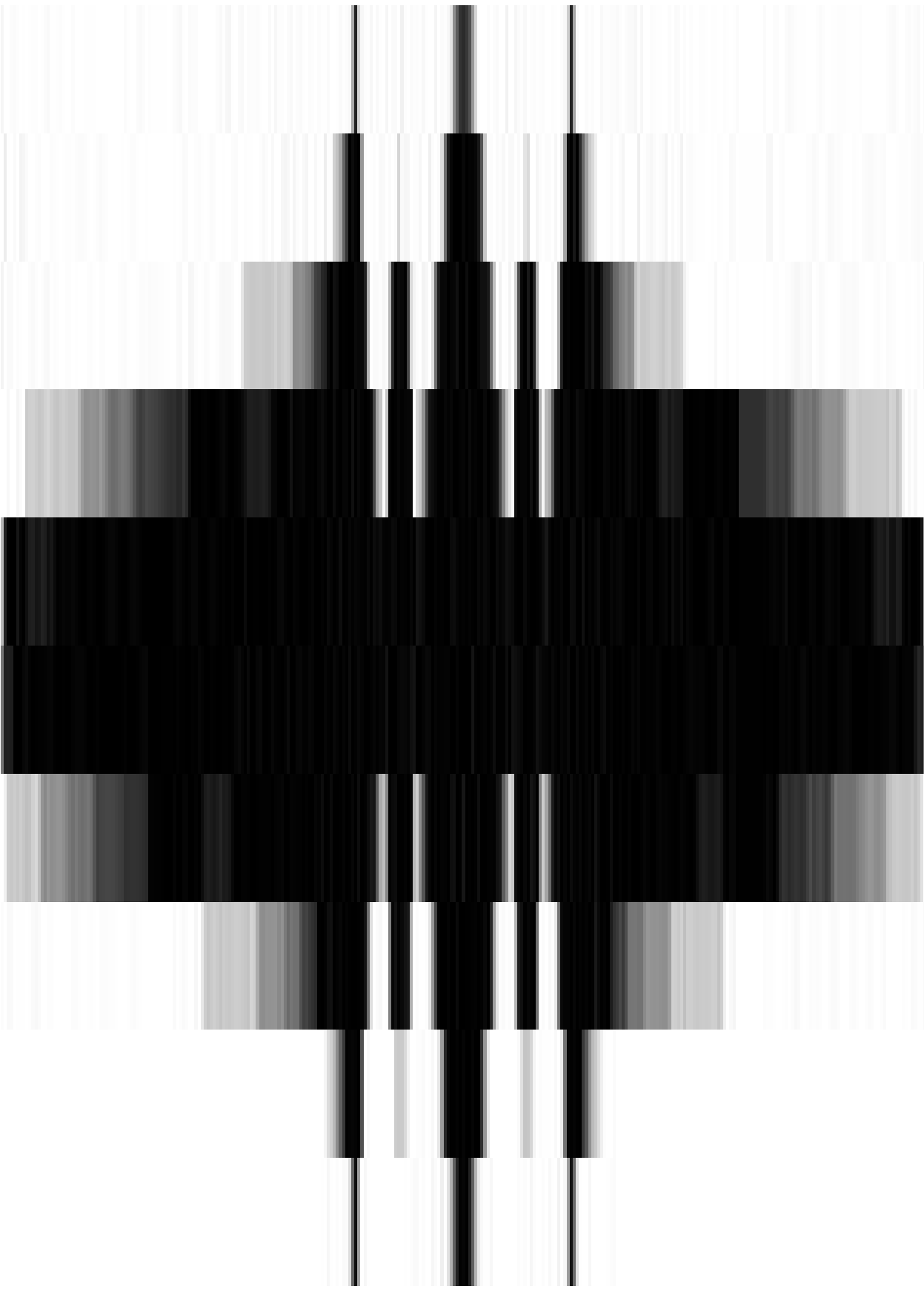
Parallel reference:

Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, and said unto him, “Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?”

Jesus answered and said unto them, “Go and shew John again those things

which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them” (Matthew 11:2 – 5).

John in no wise questioned or doubted that Jesus was the savior prophesied to incarnate in that era. John had already proclaimed this to his disciples and the masses. But in the brutal confines of prison, John's mortal nature reached out for the solace of confirmation from Jesus' own lips. Further, he sought this testimony to be heard directly by his disciples for their own spiritual continuity. John faced certain death, and he desired that the faith of his followers be strengthened in God's word through Jesus. ¹²



Why John the Baptist asked Jesus to confirm that he was the prophesied savior

The answer Jesus gave to the disciples of John the Baptist, to be relayed to the imprisoned prophet, verified by example of his godly works his Christ incarnation. “Relate all you have seen and heard about the demonstrations of God through me: The physically and spiritually blind receive physically sighted eyes or spiritual inner sight. The lame walk; physical, moral, and spiritual lepers are physically healed and inwardly cleansed by wisdom. The physically deaf get back their hearing; the spiritually deaf hear the voice of wisdom. The physically dead are enlivened again through cosmic energy; the spiritually dead are resurrected by wisdom and spiritual baptism. The poor in spirit receive the living contact of God-wisdom and God-vibration.”

Jesus speaks of his message vibrating with God-consciousness (“the gospel”—God’s vibration of Truth).¹³ No one can preach God-vibrating truth unless he experiences it within himself. Ordinary spiritual teachers speak from book-learning and rote, but masters such as Jesus speak truth that is vibrantly alive with the wisdom of God within their consciousness.



“And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me” (Luke 7:23 and Matthew 11:6).

“And blessed is he who does not misjudge my exceptional works as blasphemy, finding fault with me in accusations that I perform miracles to serve my own purposes and egotistically extol my own glory. Blessed is he who instead appreciates the spiritual miracles I perform through the sanction and will of God to alleviate suffering and bring deluded souls unto Him.”

Phenomenal powers possessed by semi-developed souls might well delude their yet immature spiritual consciousness, which is easily spoiled by the praise of admirers. They begin to see themselves as the doers of holy works, forgetting that all glory and honor belong to God alone. Phenomenal powers exert some influence on the operation of natural laws, but no miracles that transcend such laws can be performed without God-consciousness. So it is foolish to revel in self-laudation.¹⁴ The devotee in the course of his higher spiritual development receives the gift of miracles, but to use that God-given divine power without the sanction of God is sin and involves spiritual degradation.

Jesus saw how the display of miracles was looked upon by the priestly caste as a divine offense; but whosoever recognized that his performance of miracles was to declare the glory of God was blessed, for that inner perception of Jesus as a channel of God was the awakening in them of divine realization.



And when the messengers of John were departed, he began to speak unto the people concerning John, “What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously appavelled, and live delicately, are in kings’ courts.

“But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet. This is he, of whom it is written, ‘Behold, I send My messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee’” (Luke 7:24 – 27).¹⁵

In commendation of John the Baptist, Jesus addressed the crowd—many of whom were followers of John who had sought him out in his ascetic haunts in the wilderness:

“When you went out into the wilderness, it was not to see the reeds along the riverbank, or in anticipation of finding a man clothed with soft silk garments, but to seek John the Baptist, nature-clad only in skins, a divine reed vibrating with the wind of God. You did not expect him to be gorgeously attired as a man of political authority such as could be found in a king’s court. You went to see a spiritual man of greater authority than possessed by any in earthly courts of kings.¹⁶ Yea, you went to see a prophet who declares God. But he is much more than an ordinary prophet, for he was specially ordained by God (not only to be my preceptor in a former incarnation, but also) to perform an eminent and predestined part in the divine plan, to come on earth at this time to declare the Son of God in me.”

In confirmation, Jesus quotes from the scriptures, “Behold, I (God) send My messenger (John the Baptist) before thy face (in advance of thee), which shall prepare thy way before thee (and it is ordained that My divine messenger John shall open the minds of the people to recognize the Christ in thee, O My son Jesus).”¹⁷

Even though God has given independence to all creation, yet in this Satan-

disordered cosmos God has implanted certain patterns to defeat the influence of Satan and reestablish His kingdom. Prophets from time to time give foreknowledge of those plans. Hence Jesus declares that the appearance of John the Baptist to introduce him to the world was ordained by God long before, as expressed in the Scriptures, and therefore John was “much more than a prophet”; he was God-blessed and chosen as a part of God’s grand scheme.



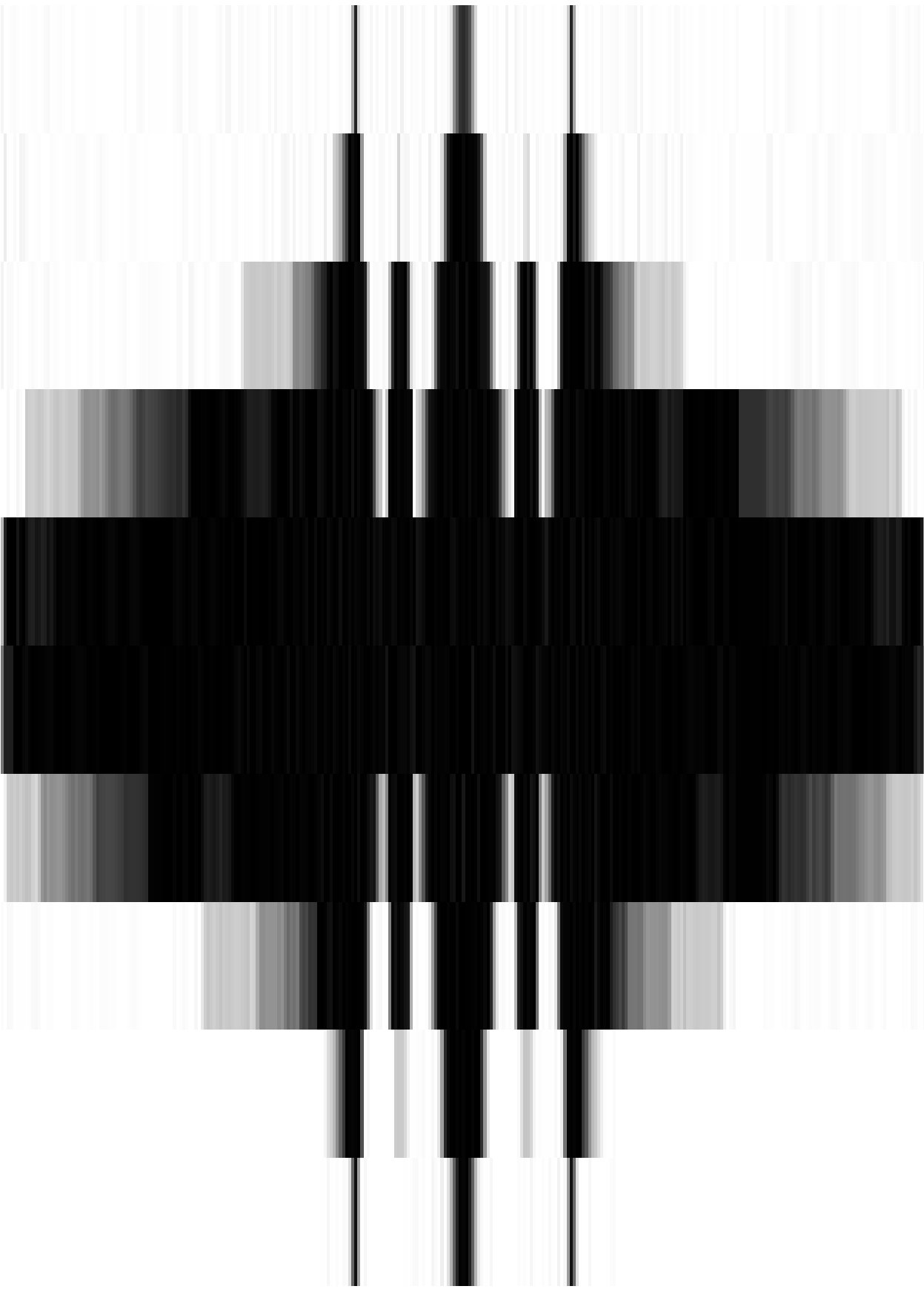
“For I say unto you, among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.”

And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him (Luke 7:28 – 30).

Parallel references:

“Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of Heaven is greater than he. And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye will receive it, this is Elijah which was for to come. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear” (Matthew 11:11 – 15).

“The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it” (Luke 16:16).



Jesus positively identifies John as the reincarnation of Elijah

“Verily, I say unto you all that among the lineage of holy prophets, there has been none greater than John the Baptist.” Jesus therewith honored John with highest acclaim—he who had appeared in his previous incarnation as the God-realized Elijah, and who was in his present role selected by God to baptize in Spirit Christ Jesus, reformer of a world cycle.

Jesus then distinguishes—with no intended denigration of John’s greatness—between John the Baptist’s Self-realization in earth life and the Self-realized state of the individual soul when it is fully liberated in the kingdom of God—one with the Absolute Spirit—with no necessary submission to the cosmic compulsories of habitation in any of the three bodily confines and their interaction with the manifestations of God’s threefold dream creation.

From the time preceding John the Baptist “the prophets and the law prophesied,” enunciated God’s will in law and prophecy. “Since that time, the kingdom of God is preached,” when John proclaimed, “The kingdom of God is at hand,” and Jesus followed after in preaching, “The kingdom of God is within you.” From then until this present time and all future times “the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence (allows itself to be seized by will and determination),” and every true man has sought entry into that kingdom. Jesus says with the great yogi Patanjali that the “violent take it by force,” that determined devotees achieve salvation and the heavenly blissful state by throwing their vision, life force, and concentration on God. As stated by Patanjali: “The attainment [of the goal of yoga—divine union with God] is nearest to those possessing *tivra-samvega*, divine ardor (fervent devotion and striving for God, and extreme dispassion toward the world of the senses).”¹⁸

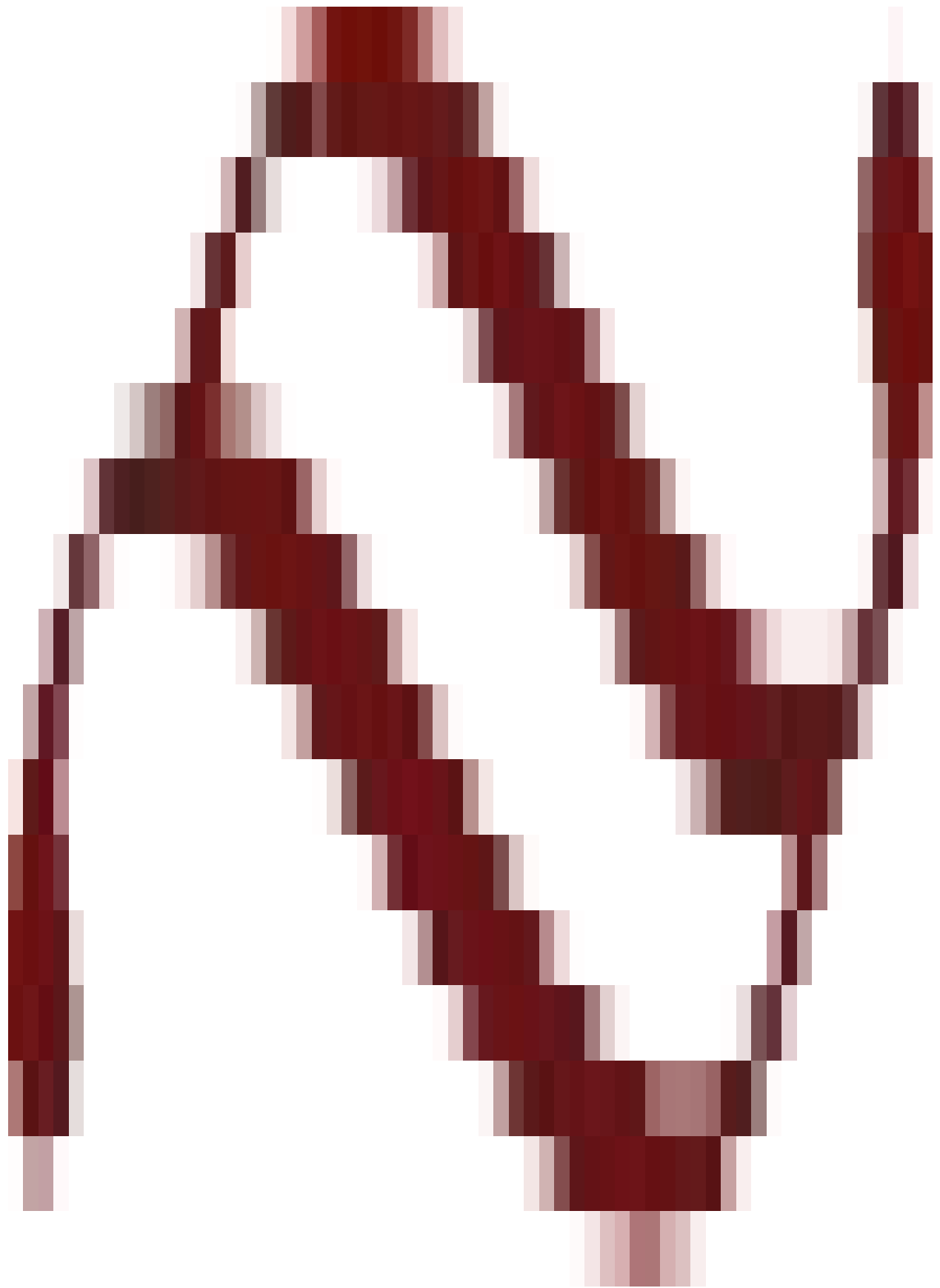
One who deeply, intensely, and continuously meditates, being guided by one’s guru, or savior, knows how with divine will-force to release quickly his consciousness from the body through the gates of the inner heavenly kingdom and allow it to join the cosmic life present in all space. The soul is thus freed from the bodily prison and unites with the omnipresence of the Universal Christ Consciousness in the realization, “I and my Father are one.” The expeditious attainment of the heavenly kingdom by spiritually ardent aspirants was fully characterized in John the Baptist, who seized the kingdom of God by his extreme

asceticism and the vehemence of his will.¹⁹

Then Jesus again confirms that the incarnation of John the Baptist was no fortuitous happening, but that in truth it was the fulfillment of the prophecy: “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.”²⁰ Jesus unequivocally proclaims: “And if ye will receive it, this is Elijah which was for to come. He that has ears to hear, let him hear.” That is, “All those who have the power of understanding, let them hear, receive, and realize the truth that John the Baptist is none other than Elijah of a former incarnation.”

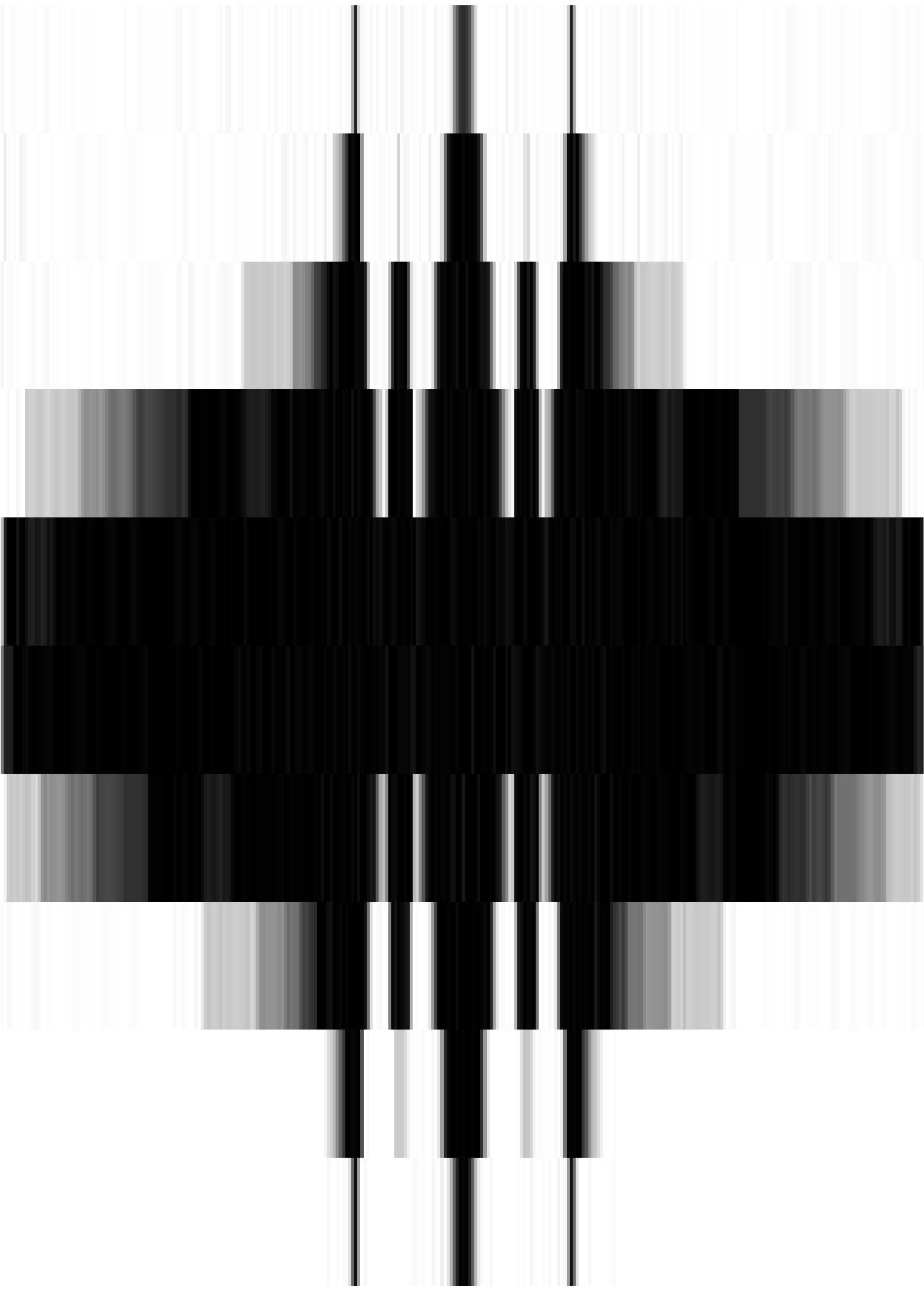
Jesus here definitely acknowledges reincarnation. This grand philosophy alone explains how souls who are taken by death and leave the shores of life without attaining salvation can again strive and attain final emancipation through a succession of other human incarnations. Liberated souls or those liberated from mortal karma but still advancing in the astral or causal worlds reincarnate on earth not from karmic compulsion but with a special God-ordained mission for the blessing of mankind. The return to earth life of the soul of Elijah in a body called John the Baptist was to perform those activities in support and declaration of the divine plan made manifest in the tremendous world mission of Jesus.

When Jesus addressed the receptive souls in the crowd, “He that hath spiritual ears to hear and feel the vibration of truth, let them realize the truth behind my words,” he knew that many others present were nonbelievers seeking cause to condemn him. Most of the people who heard Jesus justified the word of God proclaimed by him because they had received baptism and spiritual preparation from John the Baptist. But the nonbelievers, “the Pharisees and lawyers” who were not among the avowed followers or initiates of John, rejected outright the revelations of God coming through Jesus, counsel that would have awakened their torpid consciousness.



And the Lord said, “Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? And to what are they like? They are like unto children sitting in the marketplace, and calling one to another, and saying, ‘We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept.’

“For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, ‘He hath a devil.’ The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, ‘Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!’ But wisdom is justified of all her children” (Luke 7:31 – 35).²¹



Jesus' analogy of the childishness of the spiritually idle

The purveyors of wisdom, whose minds access the graduate tomes of truth, must perforce view the spiritually unlettered masses as children, their understanding and behavior constrained within their accustomed, often petty, ways. Jesus so likens those of his unenlightened generation. He compared spiritually vacuous men to children sitting idly in a marketplace, neither engaged in acquiring useful commodities nor busy with joyous play, nor feeling repentant for whiling away uselessly the valuable, evanescent moments of time. Metaphorically, Jesus described the world as a marketplace where people choose from its variety and acquire with their labors things material or spiritual. But all too few heed the exhortation of those who are wiser to be engrossed in what is truly worthwhile. The industrious accuse the lazy for their fault in not being progressive, saying, "We played the flute of opportunity, but you did n't dance to its tune of offerings." Jesus came and offered the way to the kingdom of heaven; but ignorant people, instead of busying themselves with spiritual endeavor, continue to while away their time in physical and mental laziness. Some casually mourn for the careless loss of life's treasured time, while others, not learning from any example of remorse, never shed a tear for fruitlessly idling away their life.

Conscientious devotees, realizing the worth of that something else that exists beyond the norm, are busy investing in spiritual qualities; some persons superficially revel in spiritual matters; some do not rejoice in spiritual culture at all. Some whose deeper thoughts are stirred by suffering or a sense of emptiness mourn for not finding the truth of existence; others never weep for not perceiving truth because they do not connect life's miseries with their spiritual ignorance.

Jesus' analogy also alludes to the childishness of persons who set expectations for the behavior and beliefs of others, accusing the nonresponsive for not being spiritually progressive according to those standards. Jesus by inference cites the nonbelievers and skeptics, themselves spiritually indolent, yet accusing one another about their faults of omission. Being thus engrossed in the foolishness of false superiority, and pomposity rather than religiosity, they failed to recognize and take advantage of the wisdom and grace brought to them by God through the Christ in Jesus.

Jesus went on to point out the flawed reasoning of those nonunderstanding minds: “You who are busy whiling away your time in life’s marketplace, where you could find God, have shown yourselves to be ignorant, indifferent, blind, and so mentally scattered that you could not recognize the spiritual greatness of John the Baptist and the inestimable good he could do unto you. You foolishly judged him to be possessed of a devil, because unlike your comfort-loving selves he is austere self-controlled and abstemious in food and drink. If you can think of his holy asceticism as indicative of being possessed, then how can you justify by that standard your criticism of one who comes amongst you eating and drinking and socializing in the manner of the times? Yet you malign me as a greedy man, a wine taster, and one who consorts with publicans and sinners. No doubt you could not recognize in me the son of God hidden behind the son of man, or human nature. You know not that all children of God’s wisdom, whatever they do, even though outwardly not understood, are justified by the subtle and immutable laws of their God-realization.”

In the dark era of Jesus’ time, scientific techniques for attaining God-communion and God-union were hidden from the masses. Those who reached that spiritual pinnacle found the way to interiorization primarily through intense devotion and discipline of the body and mind. In portraying his less advanced role as John the Baptist, the prophet set the severe standard of devout self-discipline of fasting and observance of certain physical laws and spiritual rites. Jesus, however, came exemplifying God-consciousness; his participation in the normal social customs involved only his physical nature (son of man) and did not touch his spiritual nature as manifested in him as the Son of God. The Son of God, the inner Christ, was completely detached from the actions of the son of man, the external personality of Jesus. Jesus signified that the critics of both himself and John the Baptist were so spiritually blind that they could not recognize either the spirituality of the outwardly ascetic nature of John the Baptist, nor the Christ in Jesus hidden behind the apparently unmodified ordinary habits of his simple life.

Jesus supported his actions of association with “publicans and sinners” as being guided by wisdom. His sociability was to break down caste barriers; and to minister, without reservation, to all those who needed him; to show how the redeeming power of God could help and uplift the error-stricken by their confidence in his instrumentality, born of his compatibility and compassion.



Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not:

“Woe unto thee, Chorazin! Woe unto thee, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you.”²²

*“And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: For if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee”
(Matthew 11:20 – 24).²³*



What is the real “day of judgment”?

“O ye inhabitants of Chorazin and Bethsaida, you were favored to have seen the mighty works of God’s power, you witnessed spiritual demonstrations of what God’s grace and blessings could do for you; but you have failed to profit enough to change your ways. Your unreceptive attitude will ultimately lead you on paths of error into pits of misery. Even the people of ancient Tyre and Sidon, though not of your spiritual heritage, would have been more receptive than you have been. Had they witnessed such divine demonstrations, they would have deeply repented their evil ways in acts of penance. I prophesy unto you that when I will leave this body and am in my Christ Consciousness I shall watch the souls of the deceased inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon lifted to a higher region of vibratory existence than shall be your lot when you are judged by your actions.”

The “day of judgment” is not fixed by God at a certain period of eternity, but in general is the period after death when a disembodied soul receives the judgment or fruits of actions according to the accumulated actions of previous lives.

All of life is a school, and whether he knows it or not, each person is preparing for a “final examination” on the last day of his earthly incarnation. In social life it may be difficult to judge a person’s character by his outward appearance (unless one knows the intuitive art of reading personality); but at death the facade of pretenses is stripped away from every man and he stands utterly revealed before the self-administering tribunal of “the last judgment.”

“For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he.”²⁴ Each soul, though in essence purely divine, has put on a mask of outer personality and character—a vibratory encasement that is the composite of all thoughts, feelings, sensory experiences, desires, and habits a person has harbored in his life. Every individual is unique unto himself; no two vibratory expressions are identical, for each one’s thoughts, choices, and reactions in the school of life are his own. From childhood until his last breath, all these experiences are stored as vibratory patterns, tabloid records, in the brain. These karmic tendencies influence each person’s behavior, personality, and life experiences.

Most people have difficulty remembering even major happenings of daily life after sufficient time has passed; the conscious mind usually begins to forget the

details of events after a few minutes, and most of them wholly vanish over the course of a few days, months, or years. But behind the conscious mind is the subconscious mind; there all outstanding experiences of one's life are registered and can be recalled with the proper stimulus. Even deeper is the superconscious mind, which never forgets anything a person ever does, in this or prior incarnations. Body-bound man, in ordinary waking consciousness, usually has no access to the superconscious realm. But at the time of death, when life force and consciousness are withdrawn into the spine and brain in order to leave the mortal frame, the tabloid karmic "recordings" of every act, thought, feeling, and desire since childhood are activated and made visible. In a flash, the soul is presented with a review of that entire incarnation—all of the good and all of the evil that person has done, no matter how thoroughly he has "forgotten."

Viewing the sum total of the use he has made of that incarnation, the dying person is overwhelmed by a concentrated composite of his predominant feelings and desires. If he has led a basically good life, there will be consciousness of happiness or satisfaction; if the primary "accomplishment" of his life has been to cause pain to himself or others, his mind will be overcome by great remorse or guilt. The overriding impression—whether strongly positive or negative or somewhere in between—created by this life review is the "judgment" that determines where he will go in the astral interlude between incarnations as well as the conditions of his rebirth in a physical body.²⁵

The overall tenor of a person's thoughts and feelings during his earth life thus renders the "verdict" on "the day of judgment." The final impression left in one's consciousness, the distilled essence of his predominant habits of a lifetime, is thus the karmic judge that at the sound of "Gabriel's trumpet" announces a man's next destination.²⁶

The day of judgment, therefore, is a time after death when souls, according to their individual karma, receive judgment from the cosmic law as to what kind of rebirth or spiritual promotion they should have on earth or another higher sphere of existence.

"And that is why I know and can foretell to you, O inhabitants of Chorazin and Bethsaida, that because of your spiritual indifference you will reap poor fruits on the day of judgment of your karma after death. My consciousness—which is omniscient, perpetual, and uninterrupted by death—now sees all that will happen in future to you for the spiritual opportunity you scorned. I prophesy that I surely

shall grieve on your day of judgment for your folly.”

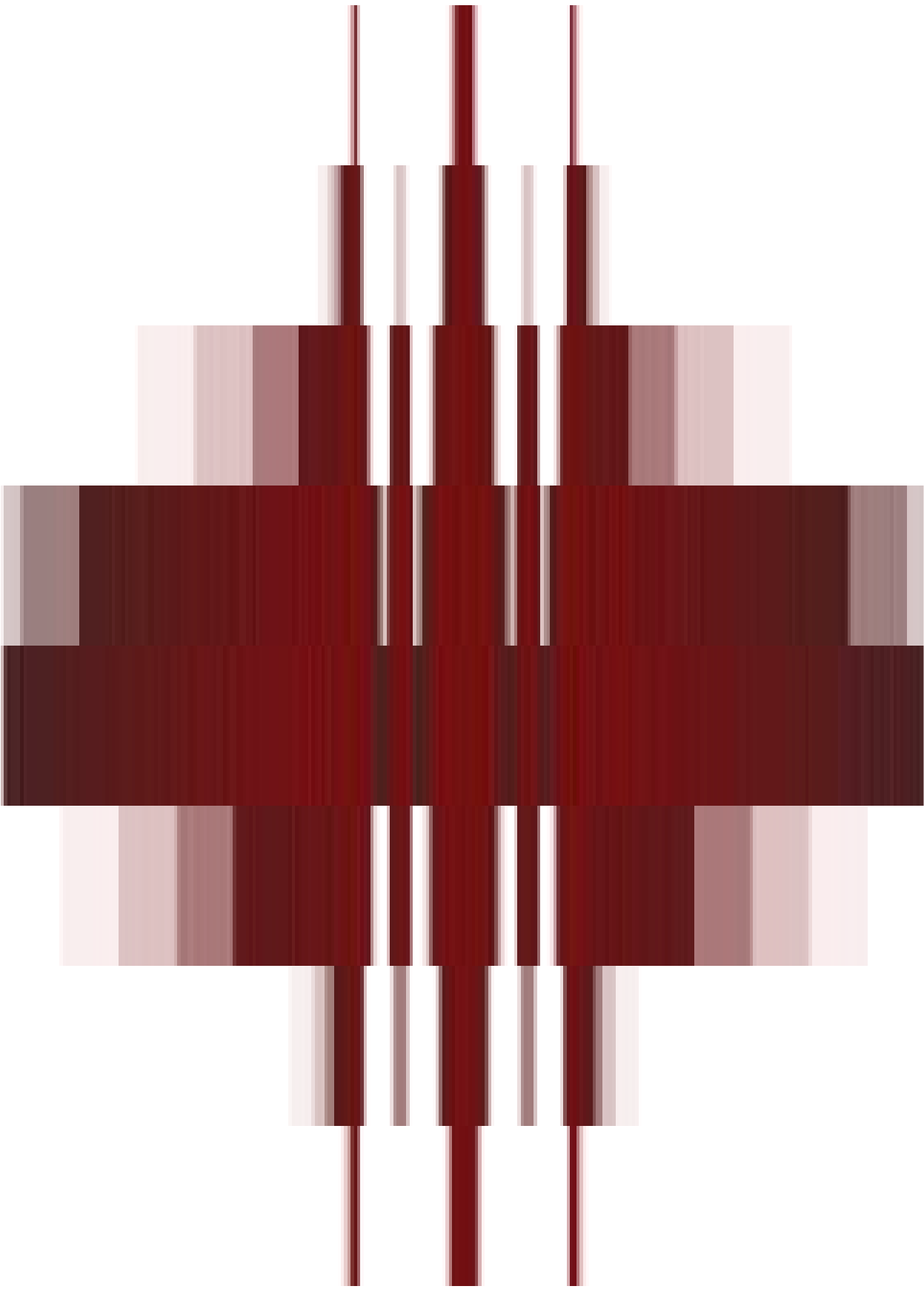
Jesus speaks similarly concerning Capernaum (his stated abode during his public life—thus the city most favored by God, “exalted unto heaven”) as to how she will suffer in the future because of the individual and mass karma of her spiritually unappreciative inhabitants. Had the peoples of even the condemned Sodom seen such demonstration of the glorification of God in the life and works of Christ, their better response would have resulted in the continued preservation of the city and secured her inhabitants a better state in the hereafter.²⁷

The point is made that the Cosmic Law dispenses karmic effects commensurate with causative actions; but in addition to the action itself is motivation. Ignorance does not stay the law; but a willful and knowing rejection of a righteous course once it has been made evident increases the resultant karmic burden. Thus the judgment of the Cosmic Law against the ignorant evildoers of Sodom would be less severe than the judgment of that Law against those spiritual offenders in Capernaum who blaspheme God by rejecting and vilifying a supreme representative of Christ Intelligence sent to them by God.

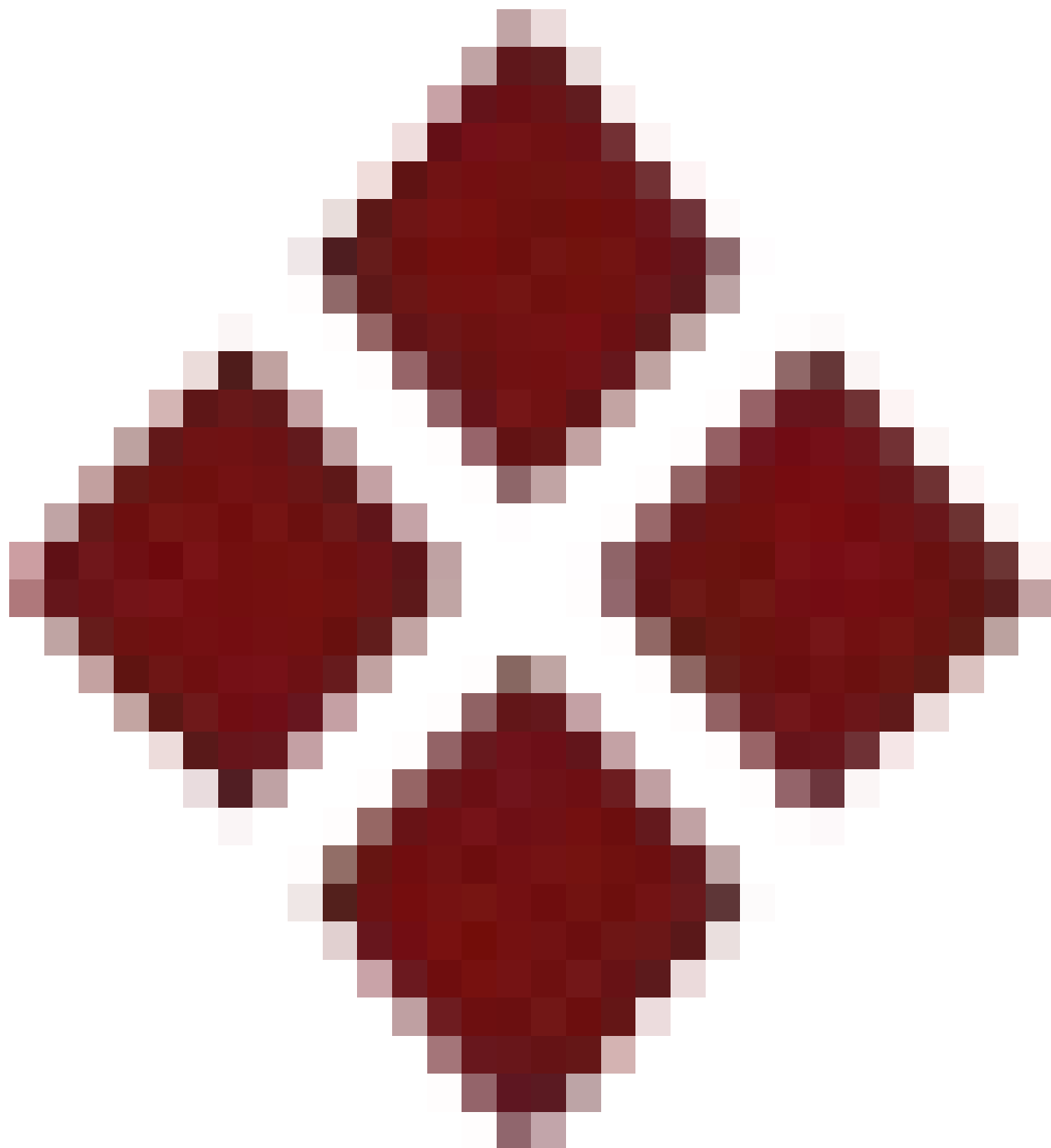


Discourse 35

The Forgiveness of Sins



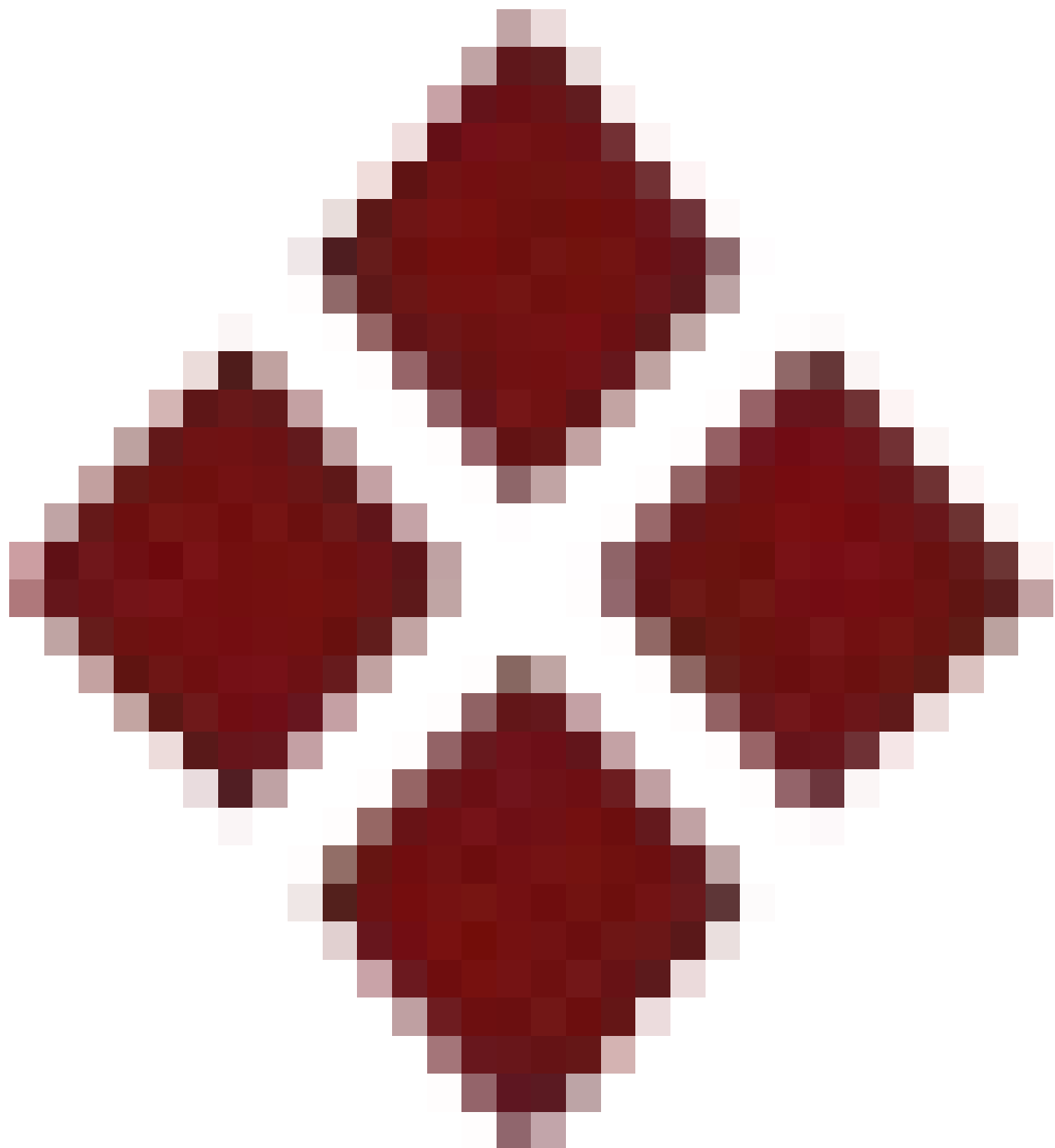
Biblical Concept of Sin Has Been Misunderstood for Centuries



**Realization of the Soul's Divinity Frees One From
Effects of All Past Wrongs**



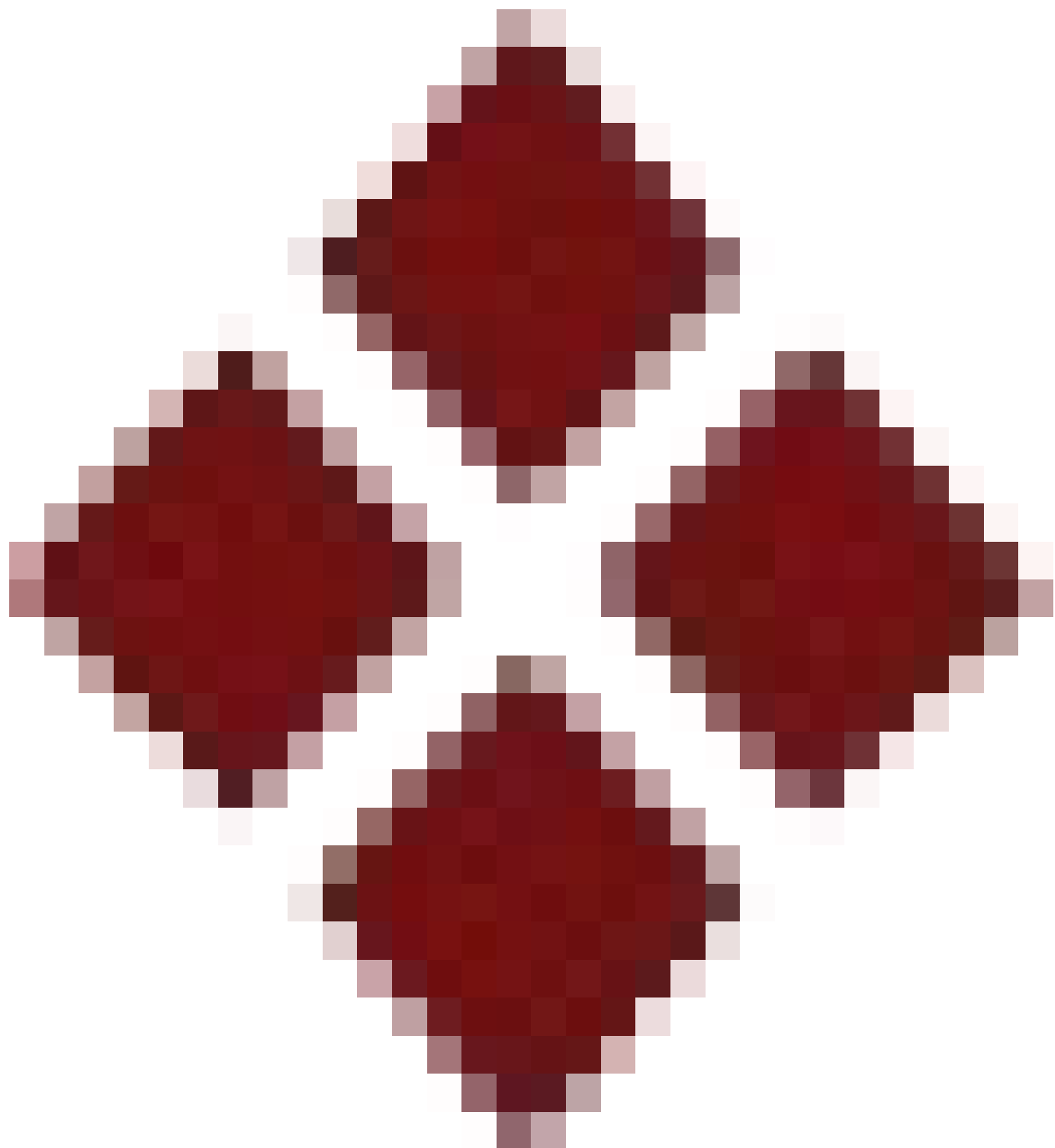
How Pure Love for God Brings Forgiveness of Sins



Jesus' Compassion and Wisdom in Dealing With the Woman Taken in Adultery



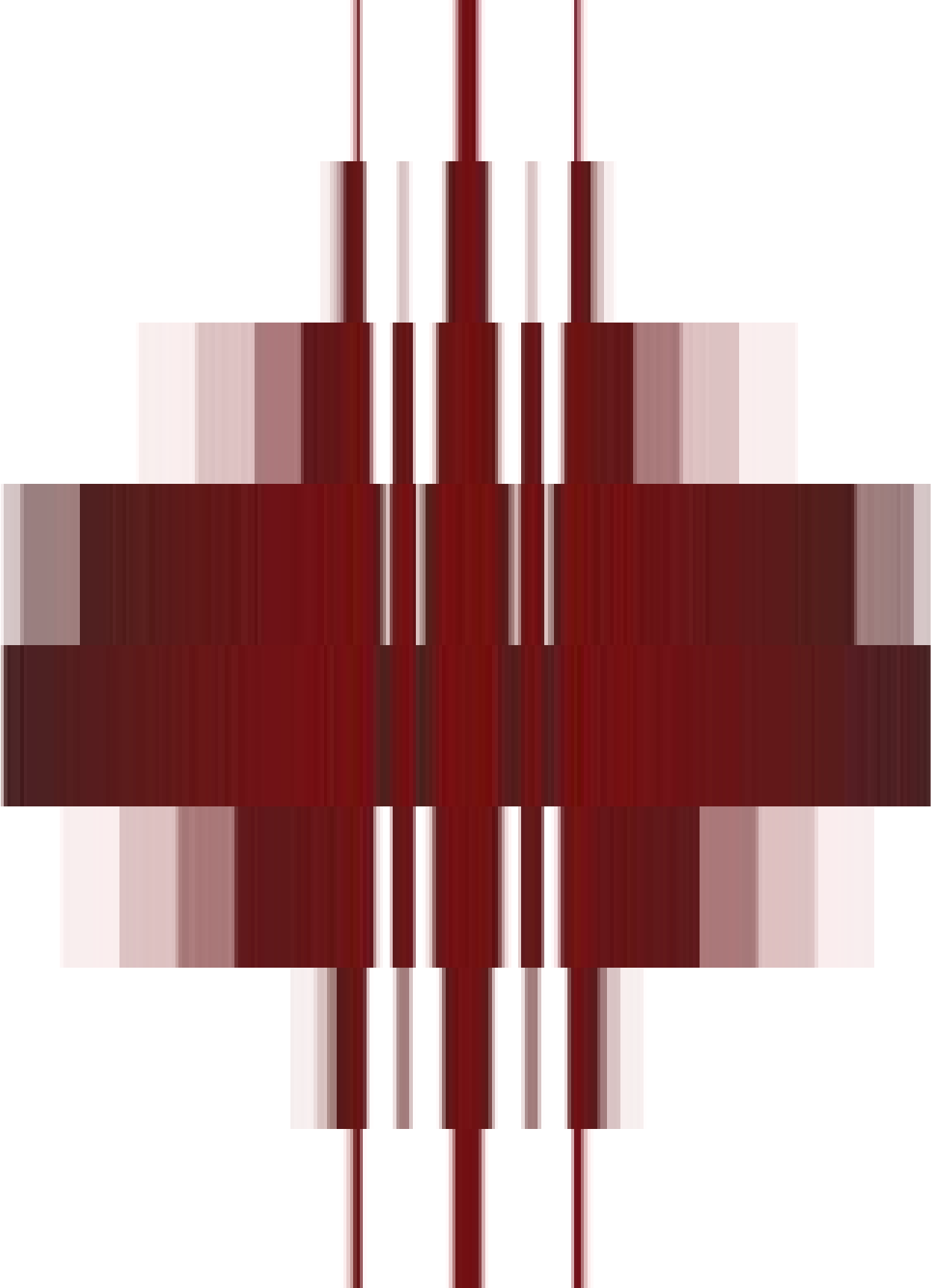
**A Forgiving Attitude Toward Others Attracts God's
Forgiveness for Oneself**



**When One Forgives a Hurt, Does It Free the Offender
From Karmic Consequences?**



Five Methods for Obtaining Absolution From Karmic Effects of Wrong Actions



“Man is essentially and eternally made in the image of God; the sins of a million lives cannot erase the perfection of his soul.”

■

And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.

Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, "This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner."

And Jesus answering said unto him, "Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee." And he saith, "Master, say on."

"There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most?"

Simon answered and said, "I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most." And he said unto him, "Thou hast rightly judged."

And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, "Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little."

And he said unto her, "Thy sins are forgiven."

And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, "Who is this that forgiveth sins also?"

And he said to the woman, “Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.”

—Luke 7:36 – 50¹



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Jesus Forgives the Sinful Woman

“Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much....”

And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, “Who is this that forgiveth sins also?”

And he said to the woman, “Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.”

—Luke 7:47, 49–50

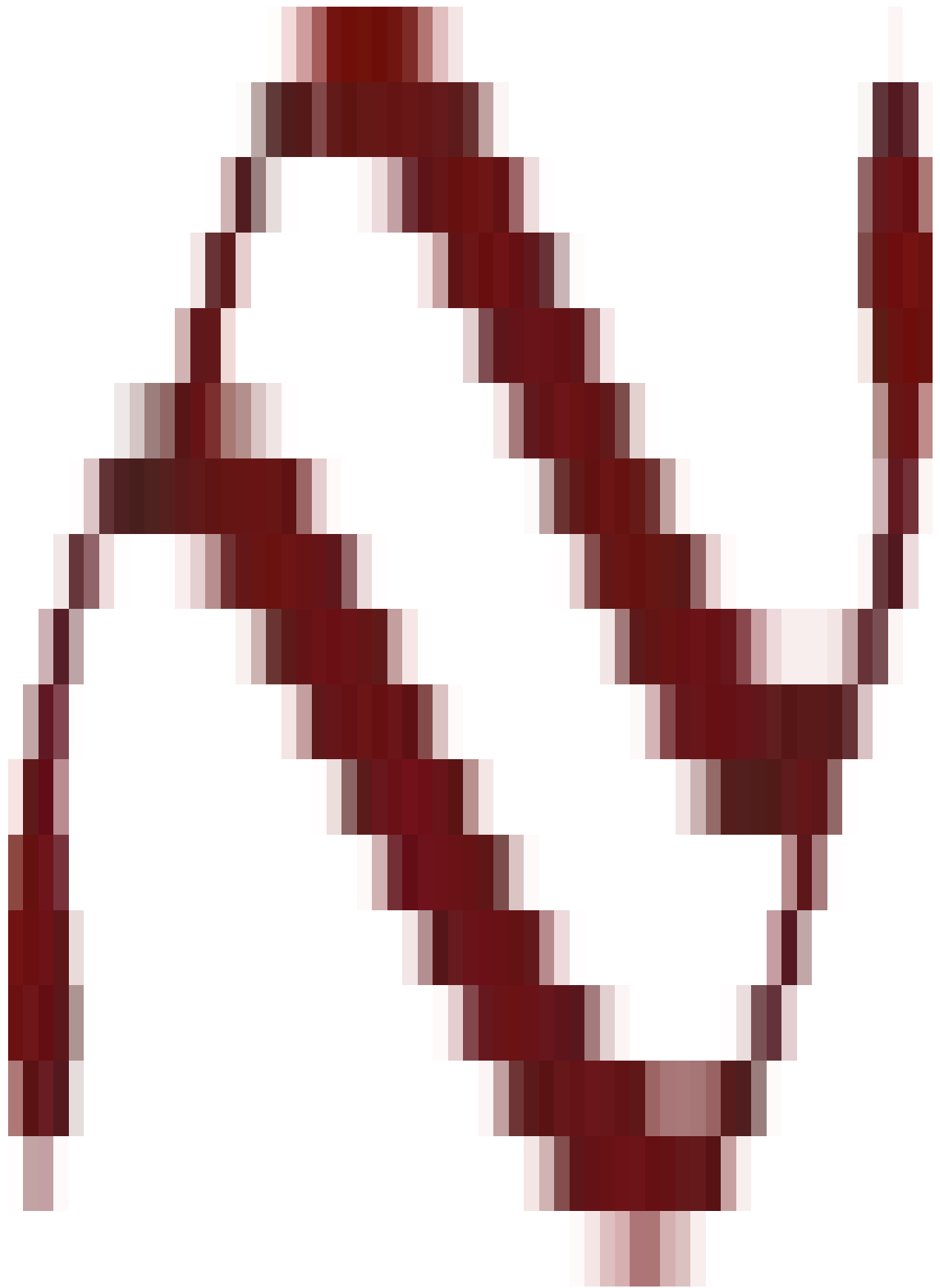
The all-forgivingness of divine love was demonstrated time and again in those who made themselves devotionally receptive to the Christ in Jesus. His words to the woman of sinful repute gave voice to the redeeming compassion of God that responds in full measure to a devotee’s heart-offering that is singularly replete with love....

Centuries of misunderstanding of Biblical concepts of sin and its supposed abomination in the sight of God have created a popularly accepted image of the Almighty whose wrath against sinners is heartless, exactingly and vengefully severe....But saints of all religious persuasions who have entered the Divine Presence in interiorized personal communion universally declare that His omnipotence is expressed not as vengeance but as compassion, love, and goodness....

There is no doubt about this divine assurance: Any sin, and its consequence, can be forgiven the repentant devotee who loves God deeply enough, and thereby puts his life in tune with the all-compassionate Lord.

—Paramahansa Yogananda

Drawing by Heinrich Hofmann



Discourse 35

The Forgiveness of Sins



The all-forgivingness of divine love was demonstrated time and again in those who made themselves devotionally receptive to the Christ in Jesus. His words to the woman of sinful repute gave voice to the redeeming compassion of God that responds in full measure to a devotee's heart-offering that is singularly replete with love. This freely given grace is similarly expressed by the Lord in the Bhagavad Gita: "Even a consummate evildoer who turns away from all else to worship Me exclusively may be counted among the good, because of his righteous resolve. He will fast become a virtuous man and obtain unending peace." ²



Biblical concept of sin has been misunderstood for centuries

Reigning over every action of an individual is the law of karma. Good begets good results; evil begets evil consequences. An evil action against society is a crime; an evil action against the welfare of the soul is a sin. The operation of cosmic law in regard to human actions differs from the operation of human law. A criminal is punished by the human law if and when detected and properly convicted; but if undetected he is able to go free. But the law of karma works unfailingly; it knows all and metes out its judgment accordingly. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."³

Centuries of misunderstanding of Biblical concepts of sin and its supposed abomination in the sight of God have created a popularly accepted image of the Almighty whose wrath against sinners is heartless, exactingly and vengefully severe. Intimidated man is made to cower before the judgment of his Maker. But saints of all religious persuasions who have entered the Divine Presence in interiorized personal communion universally declare that His omnipotence is expressed not as vengeance but as compassion, love, and goodness.

Though God is the Creator and Sustainer of man, He has ordained the law of cause and effect, or karma, to govern life so that man himself is the judge of his own actions. By good action he compels the law of karma to reward him. When he chooses to act evilly, it is then according to his own decree and invitation to the law of karma that he creates his own suffering.⁴

When a man works evil there is no conscious force ready to pounce upon and destroy him. The cosmic law makes no conscious decisions regarding an individual's fortune or misfortune. "The All-Pervading takes no account of anyone's virtue or sin. Wisdom is eclipsed by cosmic delusion; mankind is thereby bewildered."⁵ As man gropes his way through the bewildering offerings of delusive creation, he fashions his own rewards from virtuous decisions or punishments from sinful choices inasmuch as his acts are in consonance with or contrary to cosmic law.

When a soul is identified with the body and its sense pleasures, it forgets its divine nature. This forgetfulness in the throes of indiscriminate indulgences is

sinful, because the consciousness turns away from God and follows the path of ignorance. Man thereby sins by acting against the interest of his own true Self. Hence, when a child of God chooses to be identified with the senses and sensory happiness, he is a sinner against his soul, a violator of his soul's divine happiness. To love sensual pleasures to the exclusion of the blissful contact of the God-knowing soul in meditation is the basic sin that begets, through ignorance, all other manner of sinful behavior. He who fails to seek and find the superior happiness of ever new bliss present in the soul, which can be experienced in meditation, will forget his divine Self in the material lusts of the ego, the delusive pseudoself. If a prince squanders all his treasury on wining and dining his wicked, pleasure-mad friends, then he sins against his own interest. Similarly, when man forgets his princely soul-nature and caters to the temporary pleasures of the egoistically controlled body, he loses his right and ability to access the innate wealth of everlasting ever new bliss kept hidden from him in his sovereign Self.



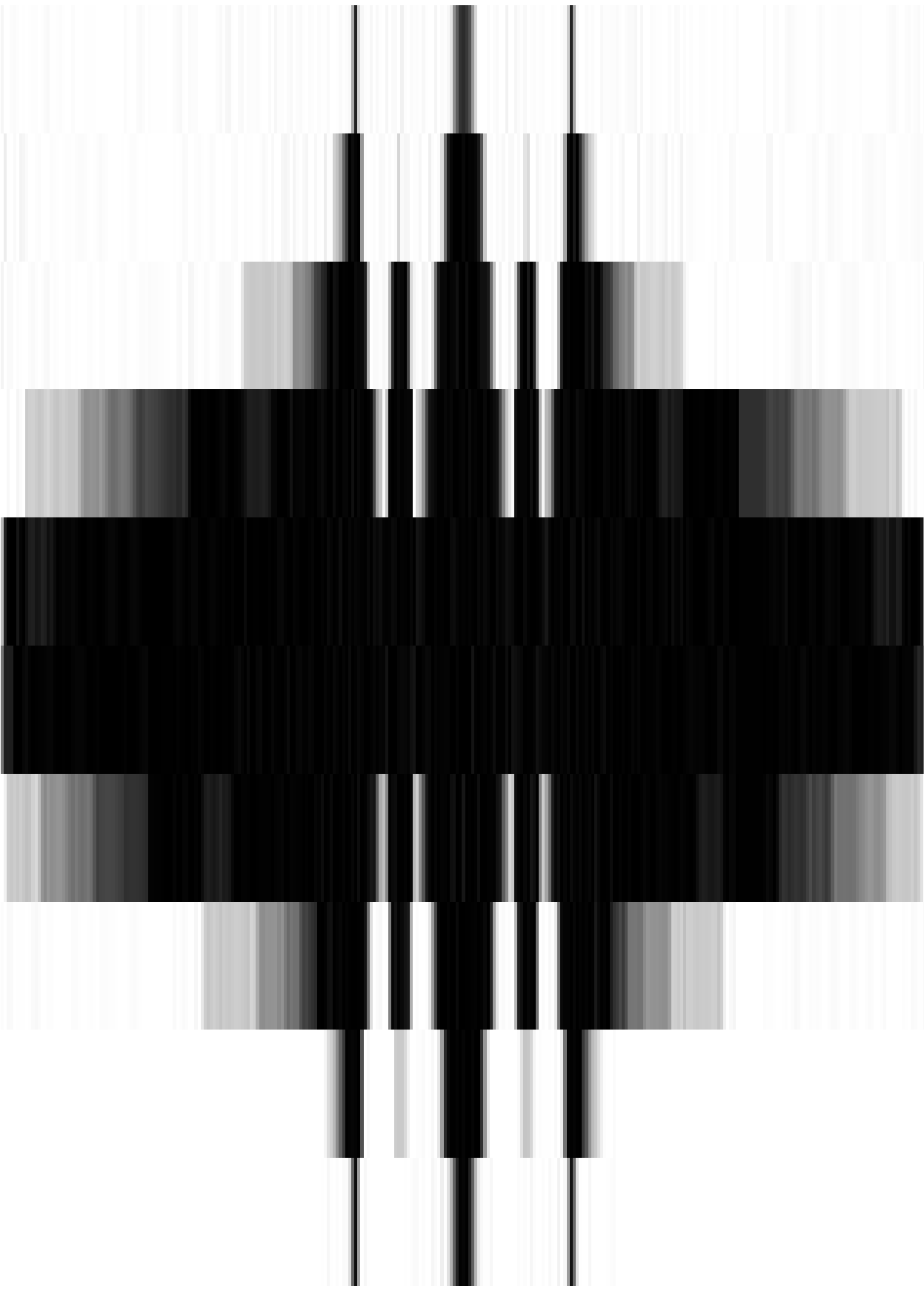
Why God seems so remotely distant from human affairs

When afflicted with the painful consequences of his errors, sin-beset man cries pitifully for God's mercy. That mercy has been given to each soul, but man's egoic individualism enshrouded in ignorance prevents him from accepting it. The worldly man thus thinks that God has forgotten him—or that He is so remotely distant from human affairs that man's travails are of no account to Him. The opposite is true: God is the nearest of the near, ever lovingly concerned and working silently for the welfare of His children; it is man who maintains a distant aloofness from God by forsaking Him in preoccupation with material pursuits. And when man then suddenly and urgently needs God's help, he no longer recalls how to make connection with that Divine Immanence.

Originally, when God created man He did not deny him the knowledge or revelation about Himself. As recounted in scripture, communion between God and man in primeval creation was natural and fraught with no obstruction. But man transgressed the law of God and thereby raised the walls of sin and ignorance, shutting out his perception of God. Adam and Eve in the beginning met the Beneficent Creator in their daily walks of life. The Lord never denied them His visit, until they knowingly transgressed His code of conduct. In point of fact, God did not drive them away; Adam and Eve drove themselves out of Paradise by their disobedience. Their own action created around themselves the walls of sinful transgression, through the opacity of which they could no longer view the Resplendent Spirit.

Man's persistence in error is why he is ostracized, banished from God-consciousness. But it would be wrong to blame God as being selfish, sitting on a celestial golden throne, enjoying the cream of His creation, while consigning the earth's poor fellows to till the hard soil of life. The truth is, if God is omnipresent, then He suffers in those who weep, toils in those who labor, rejoices in those who realize the bliss of the soul. The Great Spirit wished Himself to be many, hence He has become the many; but the many acknowledge Him not. They have segregated themselves by their individualism. Clinging to the delusion of separate ego-existence, they are utterly forgetful that their individuality is but a bubble upon the Cosmic Sea. Salvation lies in breaking that delusion of individualism, so that the little bubble may merge itself in the ocean of Spirit.

Each soul, pristinely fashioned after its Creator, remains ever immutable no matter how apparently sinful the externalized ego consciousness as expressed through the instruments of body and mind. Sin only acts like a crust that encapsulates the soul and prevents its manifestation of oneness with Spirit. When that crust of sin is broken, the ever pure soul becomes the predominating consciousness as it reexpresses the realization of its identity with God.



Realization of the soul's divinity frees one from effects of all past wrongs

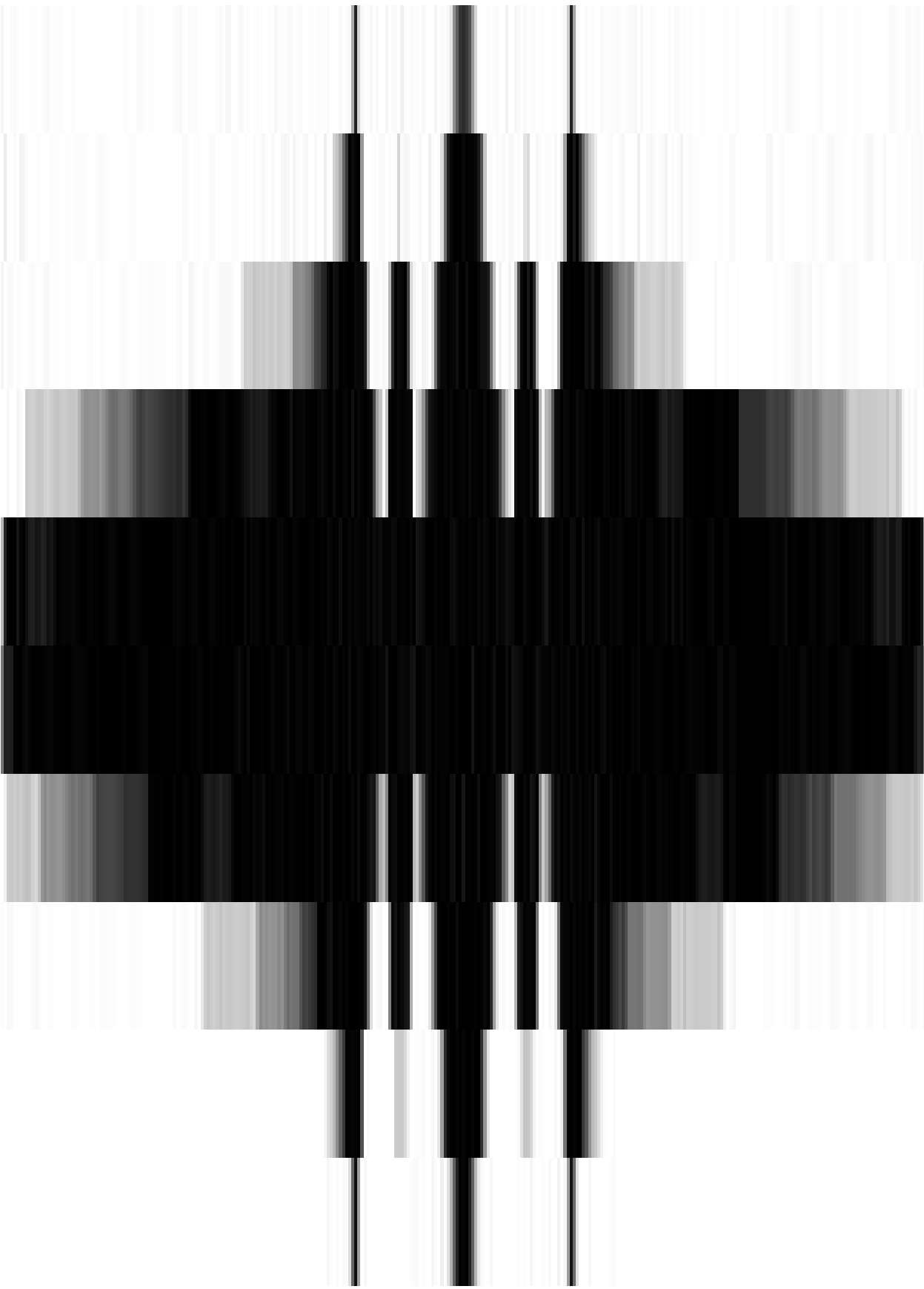
When the soul again realizes itself as a son of God, a true child of the Immaculate Infinite, and that through dream delusion it only temporarily imagined itself to be a sinner, then the consciousness feels an engrossing faith in that reality. The conviction of being a sinner is imaginary and changeable; the latent conviction that the soul is a son of God is permanent and unchangeable, even though temporarily hidden in a mortal matrix of sin. When one has faith in the divinity of his soul and its all-powerful God-attuned nature, he finds quick freedom from the results of past sinful actions.

If a chamber is dark for a thousand years, that darkness cannot be driven away by beating it with a stick. But if a light is brought in, the aeonic blackness is dispelled at once. Similarly, when a soul is in the darkness of incarnations of ignorance and evil actions, if the light of wisdom and faith in the soul and God is introduced, then all that delusive obscurity vanishes instantly.

Thus the consummate way that human beings can escape reaping the results of their past wrong actions is to change their status from a human being to that of a divine child. The evil actions of a soul identified with the body (that is, as the ego) will have to suffer punishment according to the law of karma. But if the soul, by ecstatic meditation, becomes fully liberated from its identification with the body and beholds itself as a pure image of Spirit, it is no longer subject to punishment for any mistakes it made in its human state.

Consider the postulate that a powerful monarch of a country disguised himself, went into a tavern belonging to his estate, got drunk, quite forgetting his status, and started a vicious brawl with one of the patrons. The innkeepers took him to a judge, appointed to that post by the king. As the judge was about to sentence the monarch, he came to his senses, threw off his disguise, and exclaimed: "I am the king who appointed you as the judge, and I have the power to cast you into prison. How dare you presume to convict me?" Similarly, the ever perfect kingly soul during its identification with the body may commit an evil and may be convicted as guilty according to the judge of karma; but when that soul identifies its consciousness with God, the Creator of the karmic judge, that royal soul is no longer under the jurisdiction of such judgment regarding its past dereliction.

The more one establishes one's identity with the Absolute and never deems himself a sinner, the more he will feel God's mercy.



How pure love for God brings forgiveness of sins

Love for God, surrender to God, will destroy in man the karma of ignorance. Pure love, divine love, removes the barriers between man and his Maker. The sinful woman who “loved much” found herself transformed by its sanctifying touch.

“I am impartial toward all beings,” the Lord declares in the Bhagavad Gita. “To Me none is hateful, none is dear. But those who give Me their heart’s love are in Me, as I am in them.”⁶

God is love. Every soul, even when the outward consciousness is deluded or in a wicked state, is a holy receptacle filled with this divine love. No matter how deeply error-stricken man is identified with sensuous pleasures, when by meditation he consciously feels the love of God within himself, he begins to rise above his bad habits. Regardless of the intensity of his sins, when man turns his mind within and sincerely seeks and finally attains God’s bliss and love templed in the soul, he does not have to undergo the suffering linked to his previous sense attachment. This is the grace that was bestowed on the woman who loved much. With her own consciousness permeated with the love of God within herself, and with the help of Jesus Christ, her consciousness became free from her habit of sin, of being identified with the compulsive pleasures of the flesh.

Jesus forgave her as a potential divine child made in the image of God. In spite of her many sins, she realized from the teachings of Jesus that the power of God was within herself, and that the power of Jesus could awaken within her that God-consciousness which would release her from the consequences of those past transgressions. This is what is meant by the forgiving of sins.

When a criminal breaks a city ordinance, he is condemned according to the provisions of that law. But the governor of the state is empowered in extenuating circumstances to pardon the offender. Likewise, God, being all-powerful, and also His saints who are tuned with Him and who exercise their divine will force, can stop the fruition of evil karma in any individual. Only God and realized sons of God can completely or partially forgive an individual’s sins against his soul, provided that person is devotedly sincere in seeking forgiveness, not through mere supplication, but through divine love.

Shallow prayer and selfish fear of consequences will not cause God arbitrarily to contradict the just and sanctioned working of His karmic law. This would in effect permit man to continue in error without consequences. Nor can God be moved by fitful emotions of praise or bartered deals of good behavior for past misdeeds. Man's recourse to the intercession of the grace and forgiveness of God, saving him from his self-created fate at the merciless bar of law, is that God is both law and love. The devotee who seeks redemption by attuning his actions to the righteous guidance of divine law and also implores with pure devotion and faith the unconditional love of God, will be transformed in God's light of forgiveness. There is no doubt about this divine assurance: Any sin, and its consequence, can be forgiven the repentant devotee who loves God deeply enough, and thereby puts his life in tune with the all-compassionate Lord.

Love is greater than law; it is the unifying thread that attaches the devotee's heart to the unconditional heart of God. Law is based upon impersonal justice weighed according to the principle of cause and effect; but love claims God as our own forgiving Father-Mother whose all-embracing mercy abides whether or not the full measure of the law has been met.⁷

The sinful woman forgiven by Jesus loved much because despite the magnitude of her sins, in the presence of divine love she felt no condemnation but rather faith in its redeeming power. And like the man in the parable who was forgiven his greater debt relative to the debtor forgiven little, her love was magnified by the awesome forgiveness she received through the medium of her devotion and faith and the blessing of the Christ in Jesus.⁸

The removal by God's grace of a small karmic debt may be less noticed and responded to by a complacent righteous man secure in his love for God, whereas the effect of overwhelming love and gratitude is roused in a man whose devotion and faith has merited a divine reprieve from some dire karmic consequence of his own sinful making.

Thus one who loves much is forgiven much; and one who is forgiven much, loves even more.

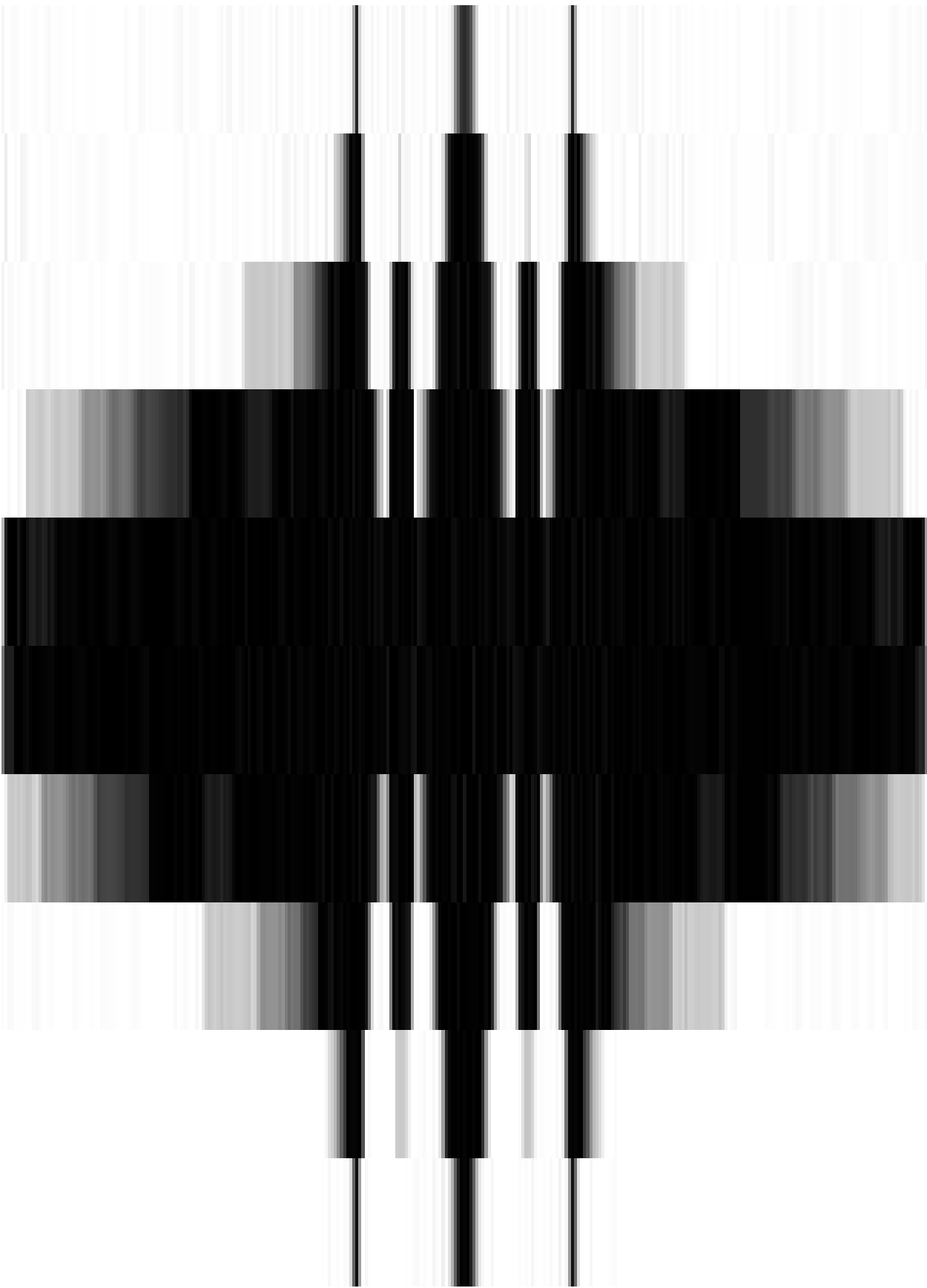


And he said unto her, “Thy sins are forgiven.”

And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, “Who is this that forgiveth sins also?”

And he said to the woman, “Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace” (Luke 7:48 – 50).

Jesu s’ several pronouncements of his forgiveness of sins was a source of consternation to the people of his time who believed that only God could forgive the sins of an individual. They could little understand the power of Jesus as manifesting his oneness with God, enabling him to do all wonders sanctioned by the Divine Will.



Forgiveness of sins means erasing karmic patterns left in the brain by wrong actions

As stated previously, only God and the highly advanced saints can forgive others and free them from suffering the results of their transgressions; this is because they understand the exact relation of mind, habits, and the brain of individuals and can change the nature of a person's brain cells and mind, favorably altering karmic patterns.⁹ Some credulous wrongdoers consider it sufficient to confess their sins to an ordinary cleric to receive divine amnesty from their evil deeds. Because confession confers on them a sort of mental consolation and because they cannot see the subtle operation of the law of karma—whose punitive judgments may not be discernibly linked in time or condition to their cause—they deem themselves forgiven.

The idea of confession provides some measure of restraint and unity of moral purpose, but even better than confessing to human beings is confession to the Lord in a contrite surrender of pure love. It is unseemly to say to God "I am a sinner." What God wants to hear is that man remembers his true relationship with his Heavenly Father-Mother: "Lord, I am Thy child. You brought me into a world that is fraught with delusion and temptations. Though I might have made mistakes, I am Thy child just the same." We came from God, fashioned from His own One Being, and in Him we will ultimately merge again. Faith in this belief, this conviction, alone can bring soul freedom.

Jesus said to the woman who was forgiven of many sins that it was her faith that saved her. Her faith, made strong by the humble deference of her love, released her mind from the grip of her senses and focused it within on her true Self. When Jesus found that she was willing to quit her identification with her dissolute behavior, he stimulated with his cosmic energy the life energy concentrated in her brain and erased or "forgave" the evil tendencies with which her mind had become saturated.

In Jesus' pronouncement, "Thy sins are forgiven," he emphasized that God's energy passing through him into the woman had been the principal factor in the healing. He then said, "Thy faith hath saved thee," emphasizing that her receptivity, her conviction in the unlimited power of God, was the second requisite.

The divine power of Jesus roused the omnipresent Divine Will to send the healing cosmic energy to the brain cells of the sinful woman. The concomitant release of the latent healing life energy in her brain cells was due to her “faith,” the revival of her sin-paralyzed will in response to the divine will of God through Jesus.

“O woman, thy faith in the infinite power of divine healing charged your sin-paralyzed will with Divine Will, causing a release of stored-up energy in the brain which, reinforced with the cosmic energy from me, has cauterized the sinful tendencies lodged in your brain cells. Now, freed from the automatic reaction and compulsion of evil habits and sense slavery, you can be conscious of the revived peace of your soul—‘Go in peace.’”



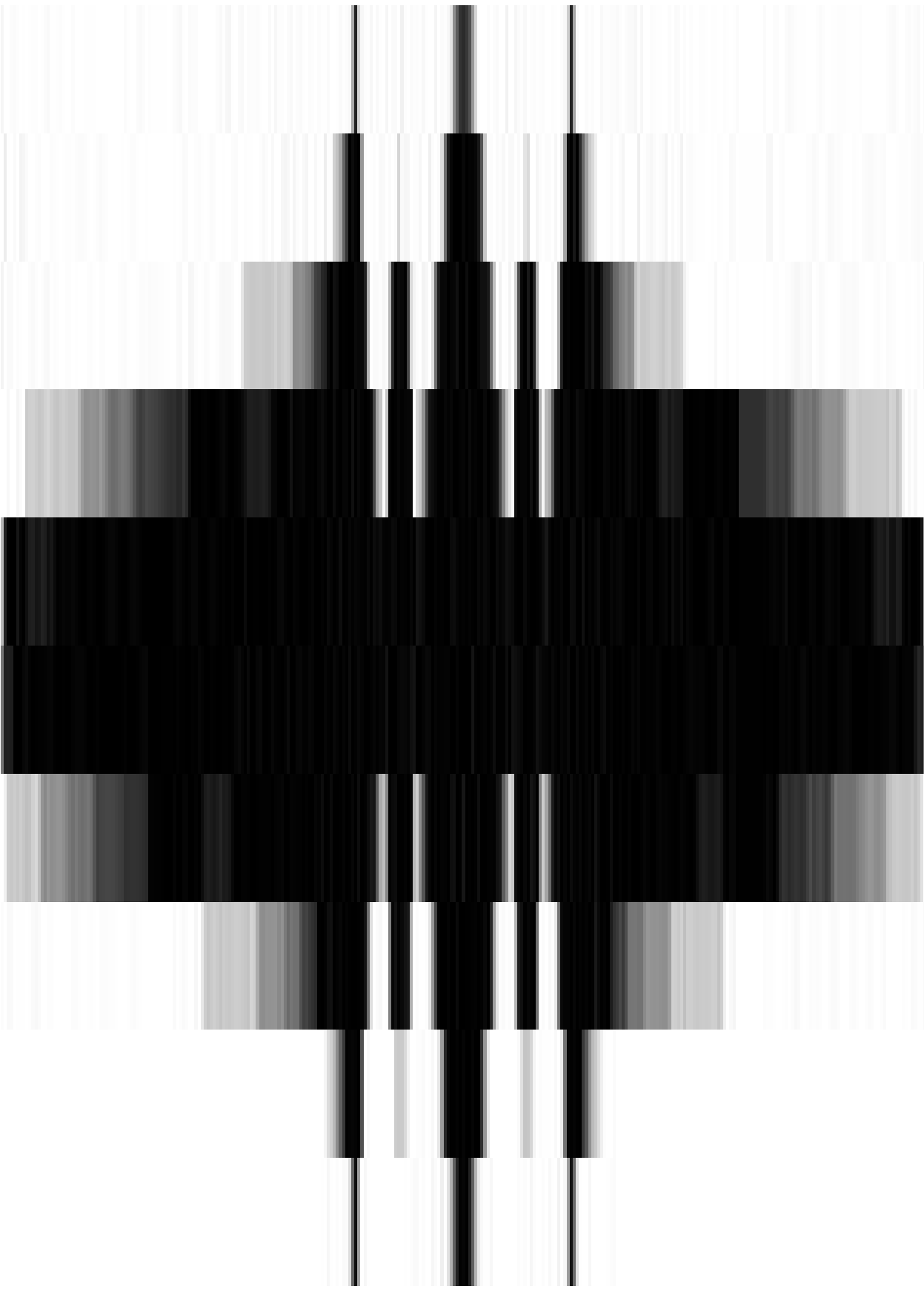
In another incident, recounted in the Gospel According to St. John, Jesus dramatically illustrated the divine attitude toward erring children of God:

And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, they say unto him, "Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?" This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not.

So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, "Woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?"

She said, "No man, Lord." And Jesus said unto her, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more" (John 8:3 – 11).



Jesus' compassion and wisdom in dealing with the woman taken in adultery

In this highly charged confrontation, Jesus displays divine wisdom, compassion, and spiritual skill in handling a most difficult situation. He threw an explosive countercharge amidst the sanctimonious hypocrites who hid their own sins and came to condemn the guilty woman and also to implicate Jesus in lawbreaking if he dared to show mercy to her and thus ignore the law of Moses. Jesus shamed them by suggesting, "No one among you is free from sin; should you not cast aspersions of guilt and stones of condemnation first at yourselves?"

The words of Jesus are variously applicable in the practical affairs of life: (

1

) Only the highly spiritual man who is free from sin himself is justified in casting the stone of criticism at the materially minded man in order to awaken him. (

2

) Any person who is successfully reigning in with self-control his own sin may cast a stone of helpful warning at an unrestrained sinful individual. (

3

) Stones of criticism should not be cast at anyone for any fault if the accuser also harbors that fault within himself. The spiritually ignorant have no right to criticize others about their spiritual ignorance. Individuals with specific sense attachments ought not to criticize others who possess that same weakness. Only persons who do not make social mistakes themselves are justified in critiquing others' social errors.

Jesus said in effect: "No one in the crowd was sinless and therefore could not with a clear conscience condemn you. Nor do I, with my divine perception and wisdom, condemn you before God, even though you have ignorantly sinned. Henceforth, follow the path of righteousness. The Christ Consciousness in me has saved you from reaping the consequences of your past adulterous actions. Never again identify your mind with those insatiable lusts that were devastating to your true soul joy. If you repeat your sinful actions, they will fast become a

habit again that will compel you to act sinfully, even against your will. In that hapless slavery, you will suffer dire social, mental, moral, spiritual, and physical condemnation from which it will be very difficult for you to be forgiven, or freed through your own efforts or the help of others.”

Adultery is not only a social crime but also a sin against divine happiness. Adulterous behavior leads to marital disruptions, social disharmony, and loss of the true values of love. Those who engage in sexual promiscuity rather than transmuting sex energy into constructive purposes devitalize their body of energy, their minds of peace and happiness, their souls of divine bliss and wisdom.

Jesus understood human nature and its weakness of yielding to sex transgressions. He knew that social or religious persecution cannot stamp out unhealthy sex habits deep-rooted in the brain and the mind; but that these detrimental compulsions can be overcome by a repentant individual who thoroughly impresses the mind with understanding of the destructive effects of those habits on himself, and who adopts the proper measures of self-control, will power, good company, and meditation to eliminate them. Once such a repentant individual becomes free from the enthrallment of sex habits by accumulation of life energy in the brain through deep meditation, which also summons the intercession of one's guru, or savior, and the redeeming grace of God, the penitent should not revive those habits and their attendant miseries by sowing fresh seeds of illicit sex activities on the tender soil of his mind. Thus the blessing and admonition of Jesus: “Neither do I condemn thee. Go and sin no more.”

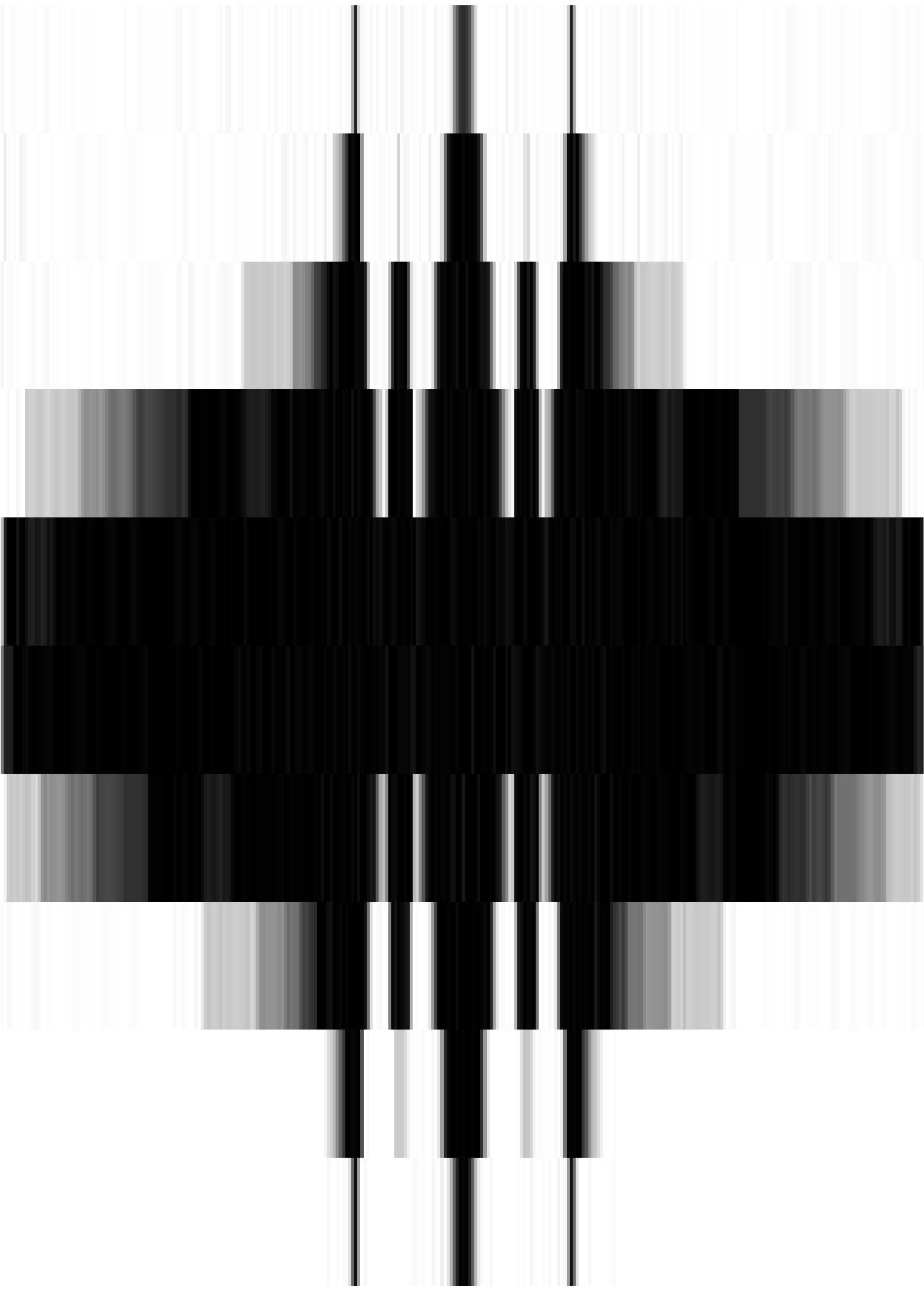
The law of karma should not make people fatalists, but should enable them to diagnose scientifically all the hidden seeds of self-created potential miseries, that they may in time be properly destroyed or at least their growth mitigated by physical, mental, and spiritual means. Seeds of evil actions that have been depowered cannot suddenly germinate to cause suffering in one who is unprepared.

According to the legal statutes of a country, a judge might sentence a young criminal to three years in a reformatory school. But the judge usually has the privilege to commute that sentence to probation if the young offender repents and promises good behavior. So, according to the law of karma, a person who acts evilly must reap the consequences of his actions. But if that evildoer corrects his misbehavior and by intense devotion, prayer, and meditation appeals

to God for pardon, then God, being the Maker of the law of karma, can grant him amnesty from punishment, allowing him instead to work out his sentence through the amelioration of such counteracting ways as righteous actions and consciousness-transforming meditation.



*“And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses”
(Mark 11:25 – 26).¹⁰*



A forgiving attitude toward others attracts God's forgiveness for oneself

Here Jesus points out another truth pertinent to the devotee seeking forgiveness from past wrong actions: If one is forgiving toward those who have offended him, then the omniscient Father, the invisible but ever present Cosmic Consciousness, which enfolds the devotee as he prays for redemption, will also forgive that petitioner's spiritual offenses. But if the omniscient Father finds an unforgiving attitude toward those who have offended His child, then He, likewise, may withhold forgiveness for that child's own spiritual sins. It is not that God whimsically plays tit for tat with His children. Rather the cosmic law of cause and effect is active even in man's relationship with God, particularly in the beginning stages when divine union has not been irrevocably established. Man begets the causes that bring forth God's response.

Man's soul is a reflection of God, and when he misuses his free will to behave contrary to his divine soul-image, he creates a distortion in his consciousness in which God reflects to him a response of his own making. It is the nature of the soul to express unconditional love. When connate forgiveness is withheld by resentment and ill will toward an offender, God likewise does not show Himself as forgiveness to that person of vengeful disposition. But when soul-forgiveness is beneficently manifested outwardly to one's fellow beings, no matter how they have offended him, then he is imbued with the corresponding reflection of God's redemptive forgiveness.

Jesus is pointing out that the code of human conduct should not be enforced by justice alone, but be tempered by forgiveness and love—a plea the devotee would be wise to heed. It is the duty of federal or civil law to deal with crime; it is not for an individual to try to punish a person who has offended him—even if it is obvious that he justly merits it. The divine way is to try to forgive him, because he is a child of God, although an erring brother, whose immutable soul has no part in man's mischief. No doubt, a wronged person, also, is responsible for many offenses toward God and man. But if the omniscient Father finds that one of His sons forgives an offending brother, then because of that mitigating divine love He will relax the determinate law of cause and effect and forgive some of the forgiver's spiritual offenses, even as he forgave his errant brother.



“Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespasses against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, ‘I repent’; thou shalt forgive him” (Luke 17:3 – 4).

“Take heed of the following truths: If your brother acts against your noble wishes and good principles, discipline him by telling him the effects of his evil actions; and if he truly repents of his evil ways, forgive him—even if he repeats his offense seven times in a day.”

This is an affirmation by Jesus that no matter how many times a man falls prey to evil, the divine image within him remains untarnished and is worthy of consideration. As soon as the evildoer repents, the covering of evil is pushed aside to reveal the shining true Self. When an evildoer repents, but is not forgiven and is still accused and made to feel guilty of his forsaken error, the consciousness of wrongdoing is replanted in him. If his will is weakened by discouragement and absorbs that suggestion, he may again succumb to error. Therefore the psychology of forgiveness consists in helping the wrongdoer to remove permanently the mask of evil from his soul by encouraging in him the cultivation of good karma.

Though one should not hold unforgiving feelings in his heart, neither should he express forgiveness to a wrongdoer who does not truly repent of his evil actions; otherwise it would only justify to him deliberate repetition of his evil behavior. But a brother should forgive an error-stricken brother as many times as possible if the offender really tries to forsake his evil ways yet falls occasionally due to weakness of will and strength of fleshly physical habit. To extend repeatedly the hand of forgiveness to a repentant brother is to mirror the example of the Heavenly Father who forgives us all countless, infinite, times.



Then came Peter to him, and said, “Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?” Jesus saith unto him, “I say not unto thee, until seven times: but, until seventy times seven.

“Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, ‘Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.’ Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

“But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, ‘Pay me that thou owest.’ And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.’ And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.

“So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, ‘O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?’ And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.

“So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses” (Matthew 18:21 – 35).

The above story of the king and his servants is yet another illustration of the operation of the law of karma, cause and effect, in which Jesus points out that the effects of already performed evil actions can be modified by the neutralizing power of prayer and good actions. But along with receiving the mitigating grace of divine help and forgiveness, the recipient also incurs an obligation to learn to forgive the sins against him of his repentant brothers.

When human beings tune themselves to God by deep prayer in meditation and realize their divinity, the perfect soul-image within them, they need not suffer for their past human errors. But if after this ecstatic experience their consciousness reverts to mortal habits, they lose that freedom from karma and again subject themselves to be governed by the exacting law of cause and effect.

Jesus used the example of forgiveness of one's debts to indicate the wiping away of karmic debt—that one can escape the law of karma by identifying himself with God through faith, love, and ecstatic prayer, even as the servant was forgiven his debt when he petitioned his king. But if after finding divine forgiveness from one's own karma by meditation, one again becomes meanly human by unforgiveness toward his brothers who sin against him, his reidentification with human life and behavior binds him again to the inexorable laws of limiting karma. Having been forgiven as a divine child of God, the devotee should conscientiously strive to retain his identity with his true soul-image, remaining continuously forgiving and loving like his Father-God.



When one forgives a hurt, does it free the offender from karmic consequences?

The question arises: If a man performs an evil action against his brother and repents and is forgiven by him “until seventy times seven,” then is the transgressor free also from the operation of the law of karma? The answer is very complicated. One must consider the mechanism by which man is bound by his karma.

Persons who think that repentance alone will atone for their evil habits, and who keep repenting after each repetition of the evil deed, will not thereby receive amnesty from their sinful behavior, no matter how often they are forgiven by man. Repentance is not a cure for the consequences of evil actions. It serves only to keep the mind consciously acquainted with the painful results of evil deeds, with the hope of preventing further repetition of evil experiences. After repentance, one must forever relinquish the evil habit.

Repentance is not accomplished by beating one’s breast in self-condemnation or uselessly “crying over spilled milk”; it means to so impregnate the mind with the consciousness of the repugnance of evil that one will automatically shrink from even the thought of evil deeds, not to speak of the evil deeds themselves. Unless the mind learns to abhor evil actions, it is very difficult to keep it proof against the allurements of temptation.

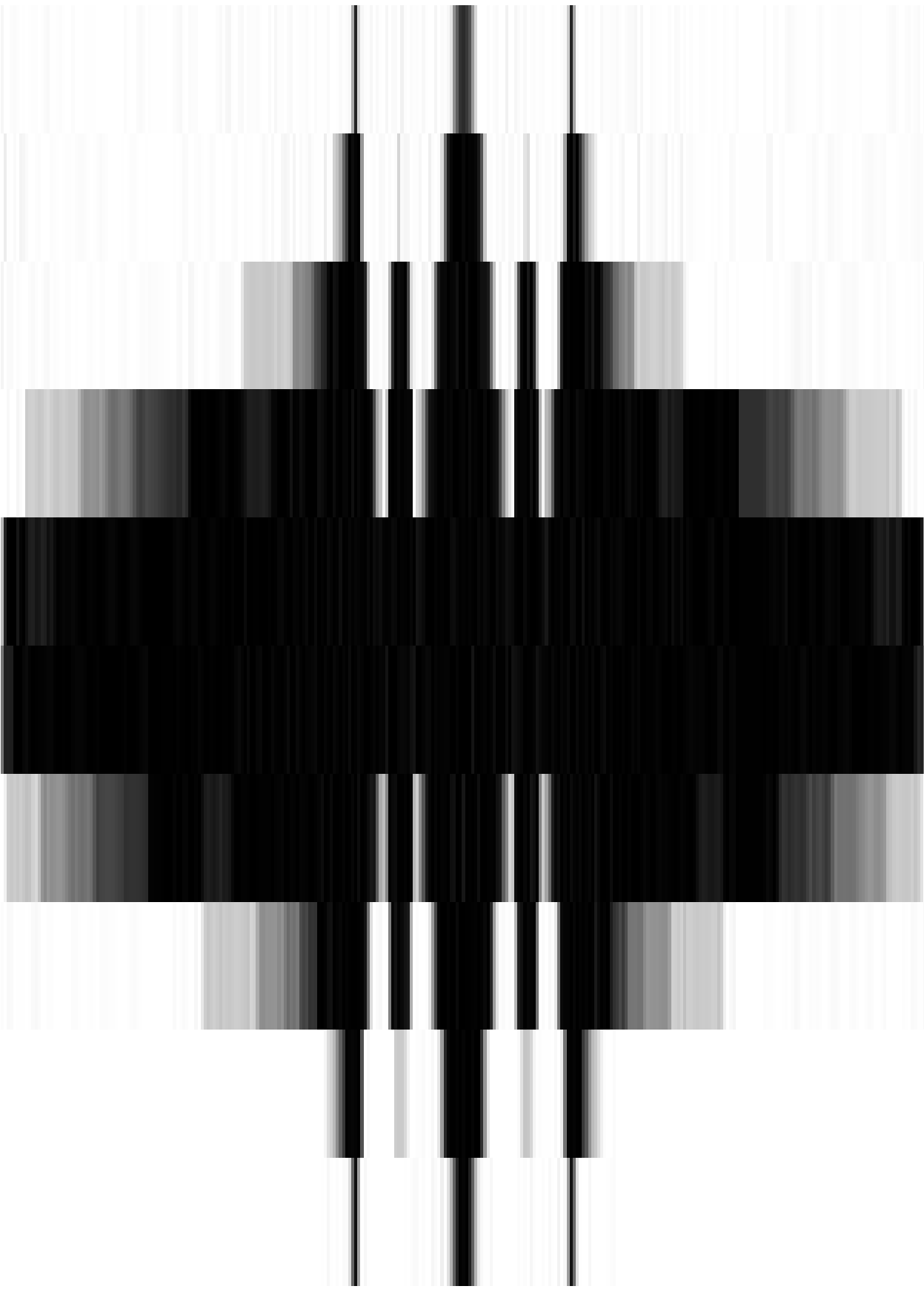
Basically, if a guilty man, being forgiven, repents and does not repeat his evil actions, then he may eventually be free from acting erroneously again through the influence of subconscious traces left by the evil activity. He thereby incurs no further bad karma from repetition of that action, and the resulting good karma from improved behavior may at least partially lessen the effects of his past wrong actions. But it is evident that if a man finds forgiveness for his evil actions from his fellow being, that may not necessarily assure exemption from suffering from the law of karma which governs his past misbehavior.

The only sure way for a person to find freedom from the effects of his bad actions is to strike at them at their roots. The karmic patterns of evil consequences one has created in his brain cells and mind must be cauterized either by divine intervention or by consciously engaging one’s will power and life force to erase therein all traces left by evil activities.

In addition to faith, devotion, intense prayer, and good actions—as already explained—scientific techniques of meditation are the surest way that man can help himself to burn up all traces of his past evil actions. In deep meditation the mind becomes interiorized and contacts the superconsciousness of the soul. This stimulates the impressions of good actions stored up in the consciousness and subconsciousness of the brain and counteracts the traces of evil actions there.

Attention and life energy are inseparable forces working in the brain and the nervous system during all physical and mental activities of man. When the attention is centralized on a particular sense attraction, then energy goes outward and becomes identified with that specific sense pleasure. But by deep concentration, whether on a good or an evil thought, the attention becomes interiorized. When an evil thought becomes interiorized by concentration—such as when one broods on a lustful desire, or on a vengeful feeling—it stimulates the impressions of evil actions in the brain, invigorating their fruition while diminishing the effectiveness of good karmic patterns. When a good thought becomes interiorized by deep meditation, the inwardly focused mind withdraws life force from the nervous system and centralizes it in the brain cells; the peaceful, powerful character of the concentrated life force stimulates the harmonious traces of good actions and burns up at the roots the inharmonious traces of evil actions.

In summary, there are several methods of overcoming the effects of past evil actions, of receiving “forgiveness of one’s sins,” absolution from the karmic effects of actions contrary to the welfare of one’s true Self or that otherwise in any manner bring untoward consequences:



Five methods for obtaining absolution from karmic effects of wrong actions

1

. Divine meditation—especially as the devotee advances to the higher states of soul-realization and God-consciousness—is the surest way of burning up the prenatal and postnatal traces of all evil actions and of stimulating the traces of good actions.

2

. An effective though slower way to neutralize bad karma gradually is to bring all of one's physical and mental actions into harmony with the eternal laws of righteous behavior, including the practice of deep prayer, devotion, and faith.

3

. An advanced soul, or an emissary of God as was Jesus, has the power by will force to charge the brain of the receptive devotee with cosmic energy, which cauterizes the roots of past karmic evils and of wicked habits lodged in the brain cells and saturated in the mind.

4

. There is an exceptional metaphysical technique by which great masters and advanced yogis can do away with the accumulated traces of many, many lives of binding karmic actions. When such an advanced soul in the ecstasy of deep meditation identifies his consciousness with God, he changes his status from a human being with karma to a perfect image of God or divine soul. But unless he is completely liberated, he has to revert to human status when he comes down from his meditative ecstasy. So the law of karma with its determinative judgment comes to bring punishment to the temporarily changed individual. But that individual says to the intelligent law: "You can't punish me for the faults of a human being who through delusion I dreamed I was before. By wisdom I have regained consciousness of my true Self, a perfect image of God free from the chains of karma." But the law of karma insists: "Whether you are a master now or were an ordinary human being before, you are still the same individualized being and therefore must pay for your uncompensated past human karma."

The master, finding himself thus confronted, adopts an ingenious method to “pay up” and satisfy all karmic debt against himself. The master or yogi enters a state of soul realization and finds in the archives of his superconsciousness exactly all binding karmic traces of his past actions. He then proceeds to work them out in one or two or many bodies, which he creates in a vision—a true-to-life experience. For example, if for five incarnations the yogi led a worldly life in which material habits were not overcome or desires were yet unfulfilled, in his vision he creates five bodies which undergo the necessary experiences and play out the parts of those five different lives in a matter of hours. Then the master says to the law of karma: “There in the vision, by the intensity of my concentration and divine consciousness, I have experienced in the materialized five lives all results of my karma; now I am free.”

As soon as the karmic effects of evil actions have been manifested and experienced, whether in a self-created conscious dream or vision in a few minutes or hours, or in the ordinary events of life in a number of years, the karmic law has been satisfied and the penitent man is “forgiven,” freed from that particular karmic debt.

Souls who are bound by ignorance do not learn the redeeming lesson of an experience even when it is repeated several times during many years—or lives! But the wise man by deep concentration attains realization of the truth in an experience in a few minutes.

This unique vision-method of working out one’s karma is not an option available to the ordinary aspiring devotee; it can be performed only by the highly advanced who are in tune with the Cosmic Consciousness and thus have complete control over the all-creative Cosmic Energy, by which they can materialize visions or copies of actualities by the power of will. Occasionally, highly developed souls, by the same method, can offer their advanced consciousness to work out karma of others in a condensed, accelerated, manner.

5

. There is a fifth way by which great masters can work out the traces of their actions when they have also taken onto themselves the karma of others. Masters and saviors such as Jesus can offer their bodies to experience not only their own karma but also the karma of others to help them toward liberation. The crucifixion of Jesus informs us of one such example. Jesus was not crucified by

the will of God to fulfill some dramatic cosmic plan. His suffering on the cross was due to some of his own actions and the taking onto himself of some of the consequences of the sinful actions of his disciples and followers. Jesus knew that his preaching the truth in defiance of political authority and against the canons and traditions of religion would inevitably attract the karma of death; in his incarnate work, he had created a cause that would by the law and purview of the times command a fatal consequence. He also knew that by forgiving the evil actions of his disciples and others he had taken on their karmic debt which he would have to pay with suffering in his own body. He consciously, for the sake of highest gain in God-consciousness for himself and others and for working out the karma of himself and others, permitted his body to be crucified. By that supreme sacrifice, he was freed from the cosmic constraints of his mortal incarnation and regained immortality for himself and others. On the higher plane of his immortality and omnipresence, Jesus, as a world savior, as with other saviors and great masters, continues his mission of redeeming souls.

It is evident there is much involved regarding the forgiving of sins by God and by the advanced consciousness of man.

The salient consolation is that every human being has absolute surety about his final emancipation if he tries his utmost to help redeem himself. Man is essentially and eternally made in the image of God; the sins of a million lives cannot erase the perfection of his soul. There is no reason why he should continue an existence of ignorance and suffering. In the Bhagavad Gita the Lord declares: "To those thus ever attached to Me, and who worship Me with love, I impart that discriminative wisdom (buddhi yoga) by which they attain Me utterly. From sheer compassion I, the Divine Indweller, set alight in them the radiant lamp of wisdom which banishes the darkness that is born of ignorance."¹¹ By the methods of advanced meditation and the grace of divine forgiveness man can quickly work out the errors of his many past lives and become free, regaining the lost and forgotten perfection of his soul and its immortality in God.



The Woman Taken in Adultery

And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, they say unto him, “Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?”...

When they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.”

—John 8:3–5, 7

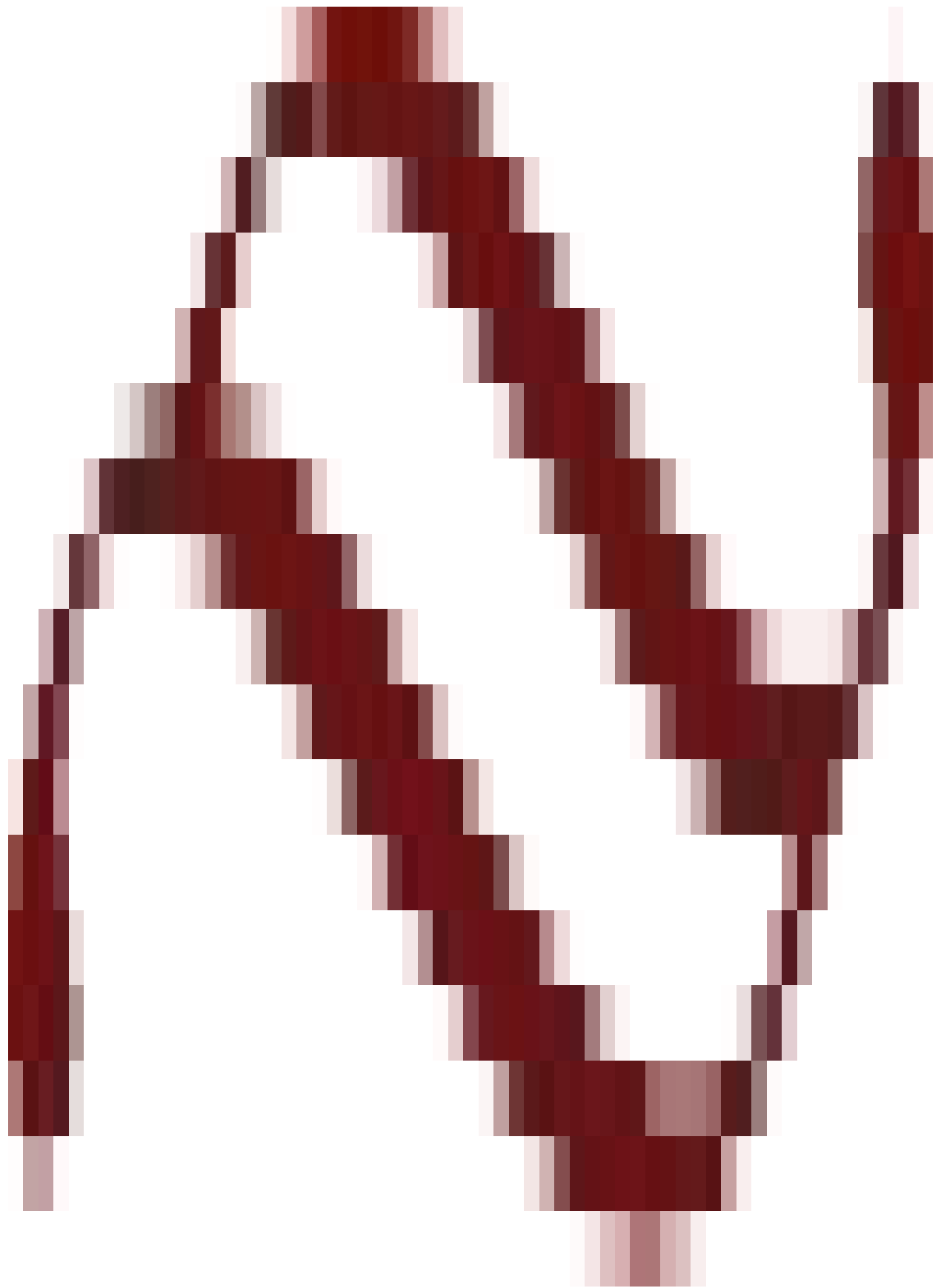
Jesus threw an explosive countercharge amidst the sanctimonious hypocrites who hid their own sins and came to condemn the guilty woman and also to implicate Jesus in lawbreaking if he dared to show mercy to her and thus ignore the law of Moses. Jesus shamed them by suggesting, “No one among you is free from sin; should you not cast aspersions of guilt and stones of condemnation first at yourselves?”...

Jesus understood human nature and its weakness of yielding to sex transgressions. He knew that social or religious persecution cannot stamp out unhealthy sex habits deep-rooted in the brain and the mind; but that these detrimental compulsions can be overcome by a repentant individual who thoroughly impresses the mind with understanding of the destructive effects of those habits on himself, and who adopts the proper measures of self-control, will power, good company, and meditation to eliminate them.

...Thus the blessing and admonition of Jesus: “Neither do I condemn thee. Go and sin no more.”

—Paramahansa Yogananda

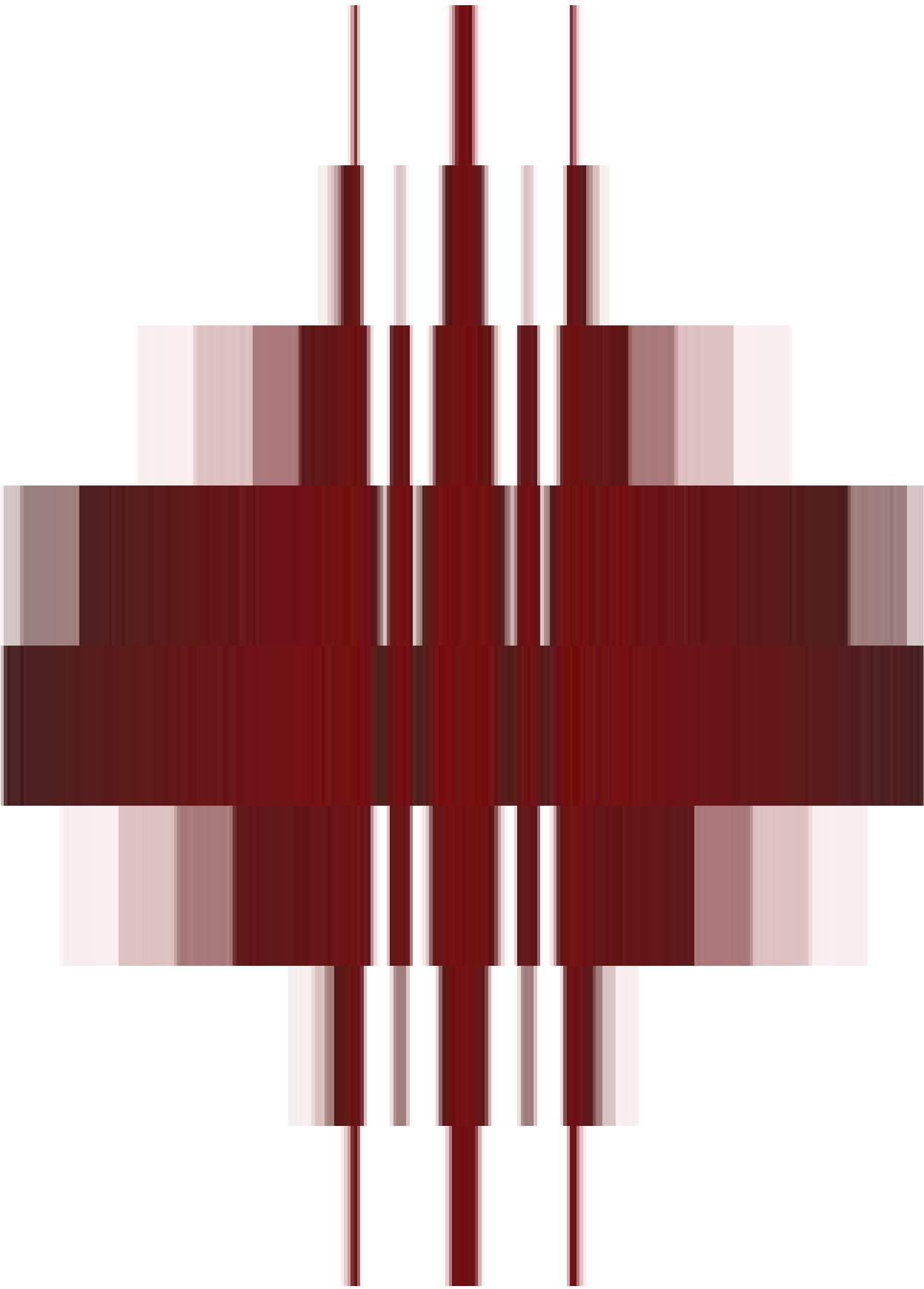
Drawing by Heinrich Hofmann





Discourse 36

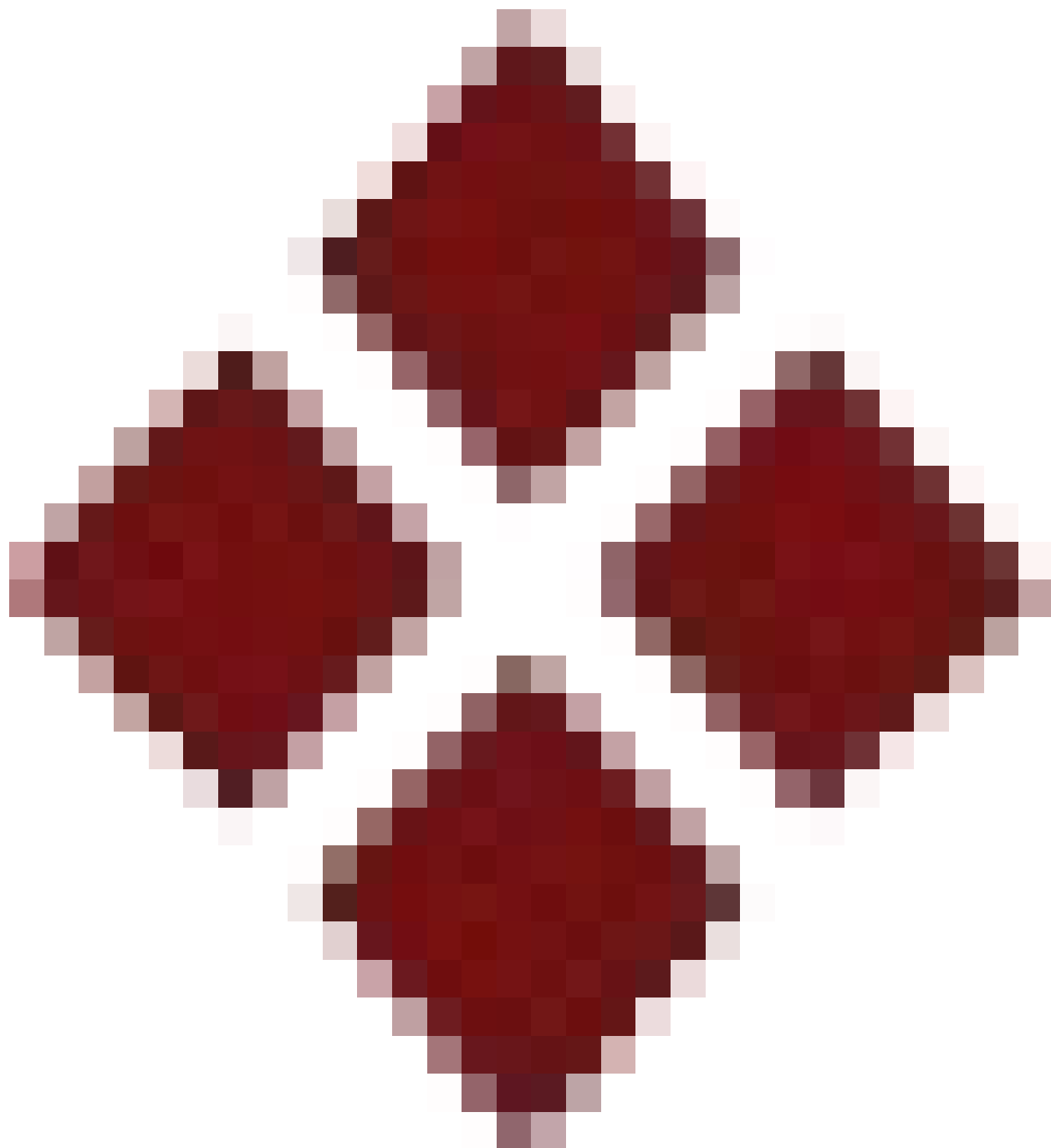
What Is Blasphemy Against the Holy Ghost?



Angelic and Devilish Spirits Both Influence Man's Life



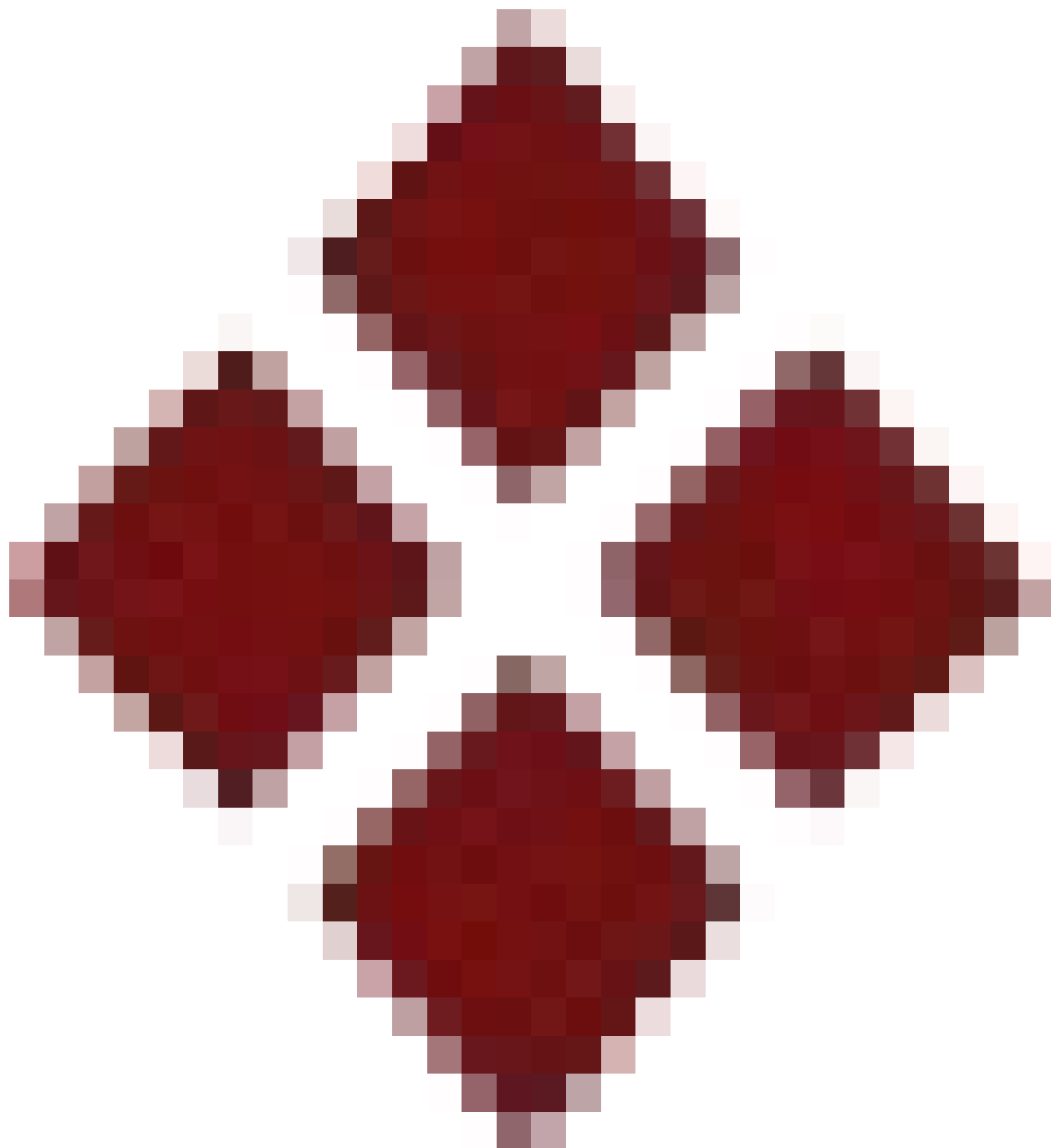
The Evil Works of Satan in Conflict With the Redeeming Works of the Holy Ghost



**Reverent Contact With the Holy Ghost Frees One
From Delusion and Suffering**



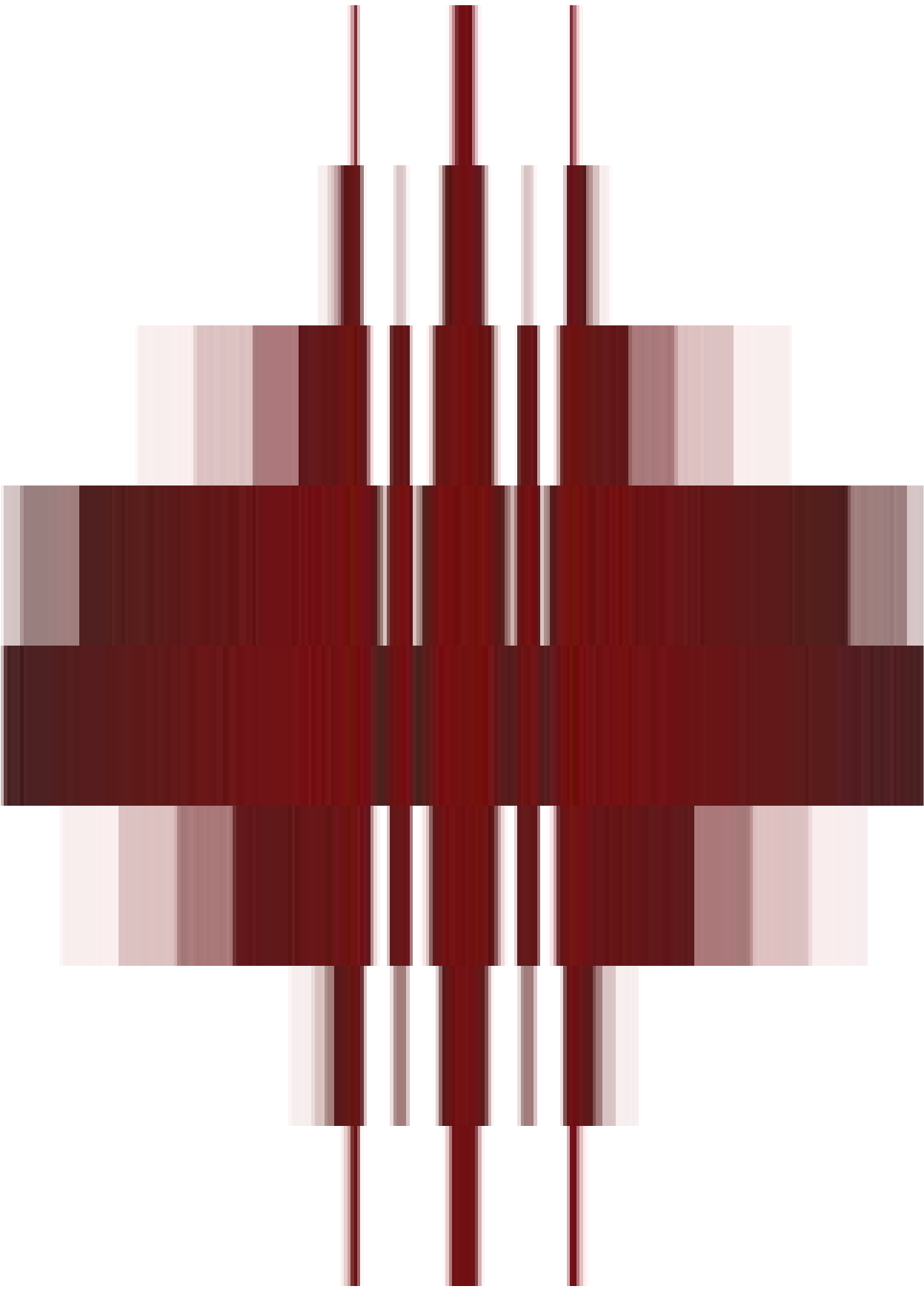
“The Sign of Jonah”: Jesus Predicts the Miracle of His Resurrection



Spiritual Dangers of Arrogant Self-Sufficiency and Pride



Jesus Upholds Love for God Above Attachment to Family



“One who never meditates rejects the prime means of attuning his life with the saving Christ Consciousness inherent in the Cosmic Aum Vibration. By deliberate deeper acts of meditation...regain bliss consciousness through vibratory contact of God as Holy Ghost.”

■

And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him, and certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, and Joanna the wife of Chuza Hero d's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance.

—Luke 8:1 – 3

Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. And all the people were amazed, and said, "Is not this the son of David?" But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, "This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils."

And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.

"Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house. He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.

"Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.

“Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit. O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.”

Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, “Master, we would see a sign from thee.”

But he answered and said unto them, “An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah: For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and, behold, a greater than Jonah is here.

“The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.

“When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, ‘I will return into my house from whence I came out’; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.”

While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. Then one said unto him, “Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee.”

But he answered and said unto him that told him, “Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?” And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, “Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the

will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.”

—Matthew 12:22 – 50¹



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Discourse 36

What Is Blasphemy Against the Holy Ghost?



And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him, and certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, and Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance (Luke 8:1 – 3).

Jesu s' preaching manifested the divine inspiration and authority of his God-realization, distinct from pedantic theology. His consciousness at one with the consciousness of God transcended every thought of selfish personal comfort in his itinerant life devoted to revealing the ever-newly joyous state attainable in the kingdom of God—in the inner meditative state of Cosmic Consciousness. The holy company that journeyed with Jesus included the twelve apostles and some of the devout women who had been healed by him, including Mary Magdalene, who had been relieved of seven devils—seven evil forces that had obsessed her at different times. ²



Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb; and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. And all the people were amazed, and said, "Is not this the son of David?" But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, "This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils" (Matthew 12:22 – 24).

Parallel reference:

And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, "He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils" (Mark 3:22).



Angelic and devilish spirits both influence man's life

When Jesus healed the possessed person, restoring his sight and speech, the people were amazed and said, "Is this the son of David? One with the power to perform such divine works can be no ordinary man, belonging to an ordinary human family." Supported by scripture, they conjectured whether indeed this was the one prophesied to come out of the house of King David, born of his seed, or lineage. ³ Notwithstanding the popular acclaim, Jesus' adversaries (commonly denoted as the Pharisees and scribes) accused him of casting out devils, evil spirits, not by divine fiat but by the power of Beelzebub, the prince of the devils. ⁴

The ensuing discourse by Jesus contrasts the unseen intelligent evil force, or Satan, with God's omnipresent invisible power in creation, the Holy Ghost.

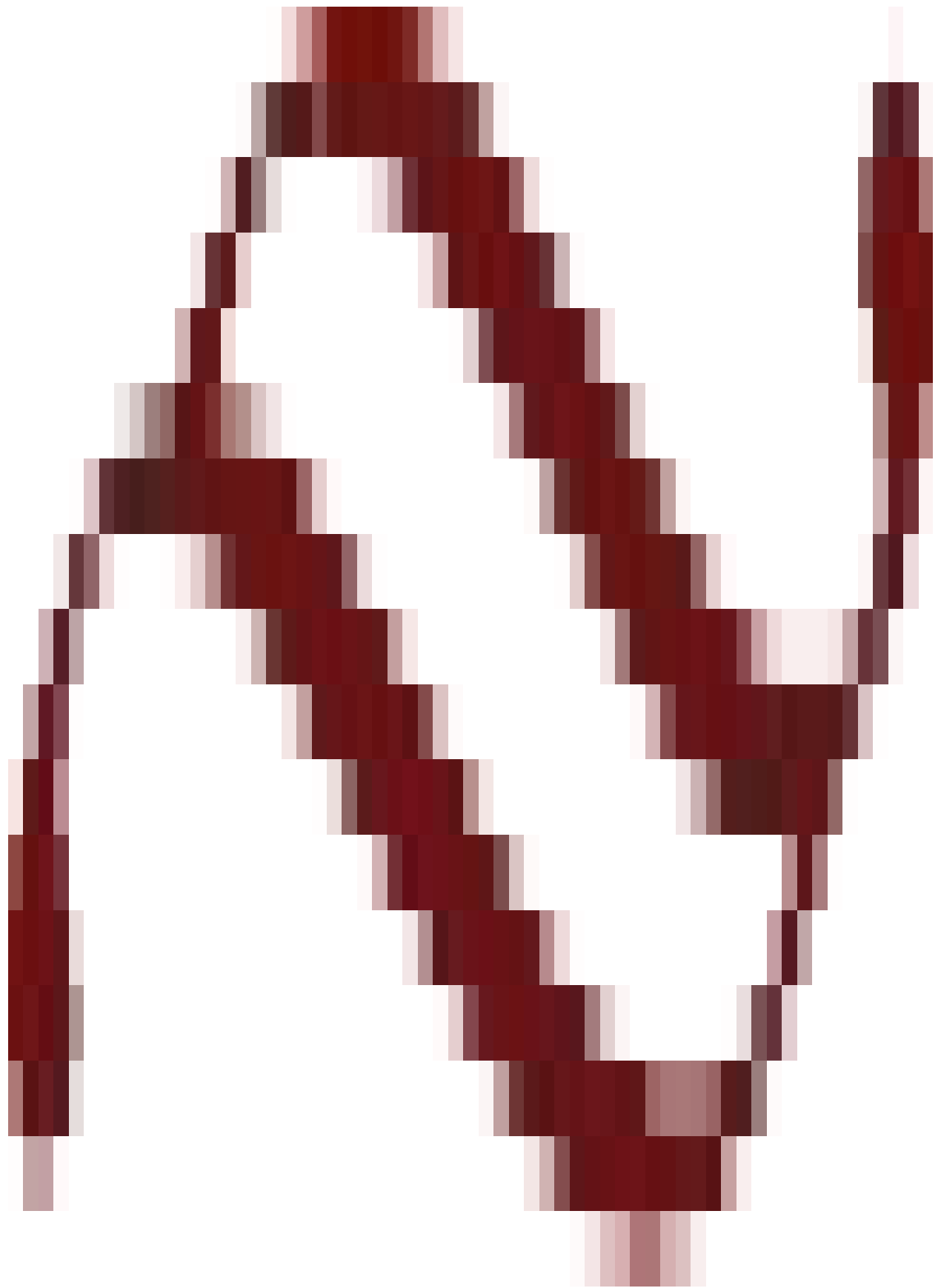
As explained [see Discourse 1 and Discourse 7], by the command of the Holy Ghost—Cosmic Vibratory Force; the Word, Aum or Amen—all things are created. Immanent in the Holy Ghost is the conscious reflection of Deity, the Christ Intelligence, by which that Cosmic Vibratory Power is guided to evolve all manifestations of goodness in the world. The conscious Satanic Power spawns and directs the evil forces of the world, fighting to obstruct the pattern of Holy Ghost and using the enticements of delusion in order to keep finite creation from dissolving back into Spirit.

Though God is the Aggregate Creator—nothing can exist outside His consciousness—still He has given man freedom to align himself with either the divine Christ Intelligence in creation or the demonic intelligence of Satan. In that sense, man participates actively in the perpetuation of evil. The lives of individuals declare their good or evil nature by the degree of their seeming separation from blissful immortal Spirit—that is, the degree to which they respond to and absorb the redeeming power of Holy Ghost or the outgoing force of cosmic delusion. Through gradual evolution in repeated incarnations on earth and in the heavenly astral spheres, souls who respond to the divine-love pulls of Christ-imbued Holy Ghost progress to ultimate Self-realization, the perfect manifestation of the image of the Divine within them.

Increase of delusive separation from God, and consequent evils of suffering

manifesting from the bad karma created by an individual's careless or willful wrong choices and actions, are the fate of those who attune their lives with the outgoing satanic force. Extremely evil individuals, who continue to pull to the farthest depths away from God, karmically draw themselves after death to dark astral spheres of nightmarish demonic horrors and conflicts—or in rare cases reincarnate on earth for one lifetime in animal forms of suitable expression for their self-chosen evils. As animals have no free will, being guided primarily by instinct, they accrue no karma for their actions; therefore, this temporary devolution of a degraded soul burns out some of its evil karma without the acquirement of further sin.

As there are various kinds of angelic beings in the astral world due to souls' different degrees of Self-realization attained during earth existence, so also there are various kinds of degraded astral beings: petty evil spirits and powerful evil spirits, whose wicked behavior has consigned them—for a karmically determined span of time—to a hellish after-death state. Both angelic beings and devilish spirits do at times come to aid or to harm, respectively, virtuous or misbehaving persons on earth. Jesus' detractors, unable to deny his manifest supernatural power to relieve the afflicted from evil, yet being unwilling to credit it to the intervention of God's grace, defamed his works as being in collusion with "the prince of the devils."



And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: and if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you” (Matthew 12:25 – 28).⁵

Why would Satan, the Cosmic Evil, cast out the devil entities and forces which were under his influence, and which were carrying out his nefarious wishes in the cosmos? If the controlling powers in a kingdom are divided in their aims and act contradictorily, their domain would disintegrate. It is Satan who, working on the evil karma of individuals, plagues them with bacteria and intelligent agents of sickness and infirmity. ⁶ How could Jesus use the same satanic or Beelzebub force to destroy Satan-produced devil-possession and diseases? This view is untenable and unreasonable.



The evil works of Satan in conflict with the redeeming works of the Holy Ghost

It is similarly indefensible that God, the Source of all good and who is Goodness itself, could send, in any way—no matter what the offense—disease and suffering to human beings. It is not God but Satan who bedevils this relativistic world with every form of evil. Good health, reason, self-control, peace, desire to meditate, every thought of welfare for the body, mind, and soul come from God. And every physical, mental, or spiritual ailment that infects the well-being of man comes from Satan. Satan is trying to perpetuate the separation of finite creation from Spirit by evil; God is trying to redeem all creatures by good. It is owing to the evil temptations of Satan that souls come back to material existence again and again until they divest themselves, through wisdom, of all imperfect desires and karmic consequences of misuse of their free will in choosing evil. The Archangel of God, the outgoing cosmic delusive force endowed to create the dream spectacle of the cosmos, became the rebellious perpetuator of finitude, Satan, by engendering reincarnation, determined by the law of cause and effect, which dictates that every earthbound desire and attachment produces an earth-reincarnating effect. By succumbing to the compelling temptations of physicality, deluded man is kept imprisoned by Satan behind the bars of flesh. But all the while, God is opening door after door of goodness and righteousness that beckons souls to enter their native kingdom of omnipresence in Spirit. The life of Jesus demonstrated the constant choices that man must make between good and evil; as when he was mercilessly cursed and abused by evil people, he nevertheless did not use his divine force to destroy them. Instead, he summoned his love and infinite divine compassion to say, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

Jesus pointed out the obvious flaw in the accusation that he used the power of Satan to cast out from persons the evils of Satan; such a divided purpose, working against itself, could not long endure. Beelzebub certainly does not want individuals to be free from the miseries perpetrated by his evil forces, which in effect makes his palliative offerings of material gains and pleasures all the more tempting and desirable.

Jesus further cautions that if they impute to him the casting out of devils by Beelzebub, then they imply the same must be true of other healers; those wise persons belonging to their community who have healed others and cast out

devils must likewise have done so by the power of the prince of devils. When these doers of good works hear this, they will certainly condemn those accusers who maintained that devils are cast out and sickness healed by the power of Beelzebub. Jesus then avers: “But if I cast out evil disembodied souls or heal other afflictions caused by the evil force by awakening the invisible all-flowing power of the spiritual presence of God, then those so healed will feel in their consciousness not only release from evil, but the presence of the Almighty Cosmic Consciousness.”

Jesus’ pronouncement that “Every kingdom...city or house divided against itself shall not stand” is a great law that governs all successful households, cities, business and religious organizations, nations, and races. If a group of people wants to retain its individuality and achieve its goals, each one should act in agreement with the collective aims. When there is division among those members, there is trouble, disharmony, and disintegration. Harmony even amidst differences should be the breath of life governing all communities of individuals, all secular and religious organizations, and all nations.



“Or else how can one enter into a strong man’s house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house. He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.

“Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men” (Matthew 12:29 – 31).⁷

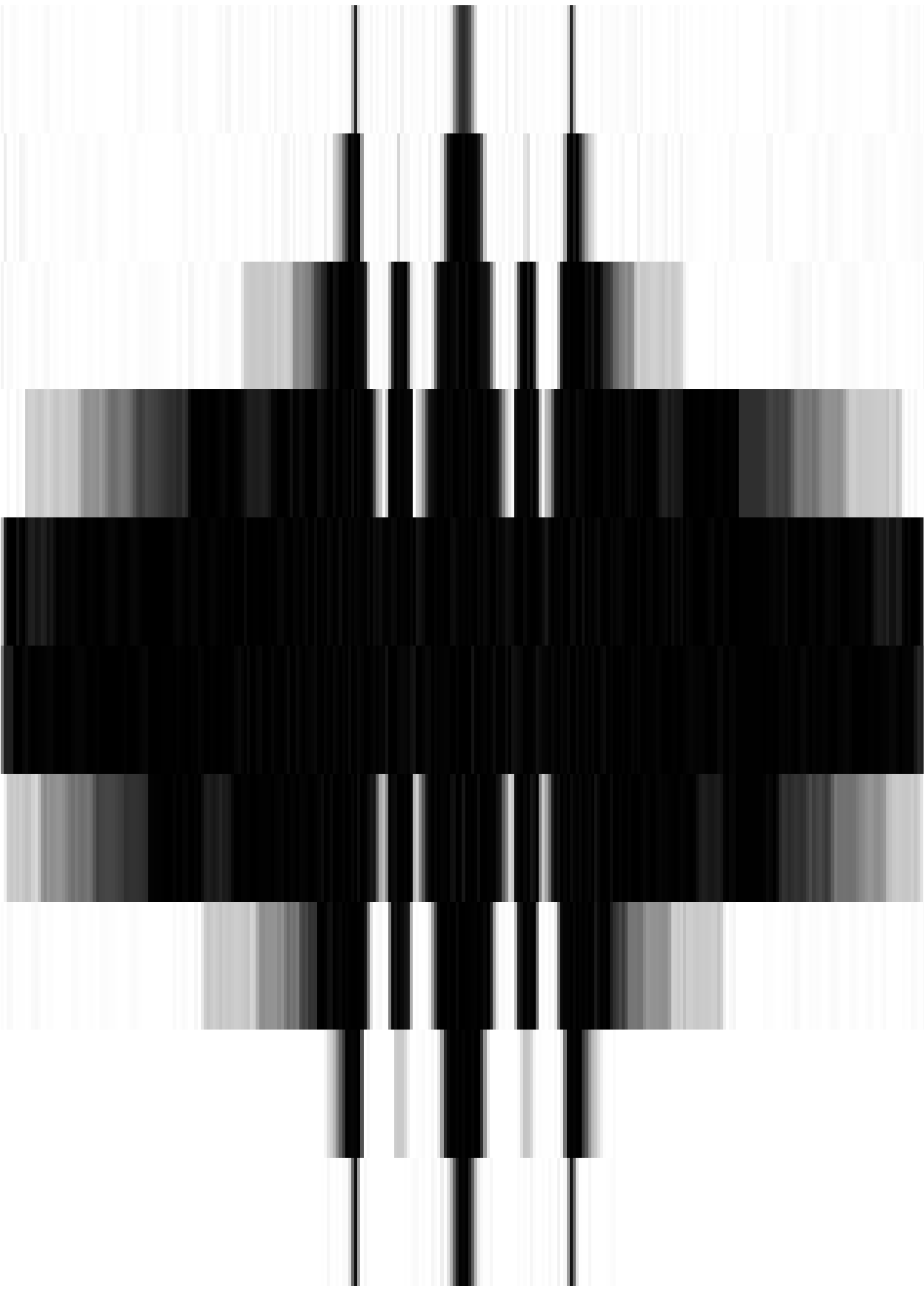
Jesus elaborates on his God-given power and the reverence owed to the Holy Ghost manifestation of God: “How else can I enter into the strong organization of Satan in the cosmos and destroy his evil works in nature and wicked influence in men except that I bind Satan by my wisdom? It is because I consciously behold Satan and use my will against him that I am able to cast out from possessed persons his evil spirits and temptation-entities. Beelzebub, not being with me, is against me. Likewise are all souls who are not in harmony with the Christ Consciousness in me; they act against the laws of that Omnipresent Intelligent Harmony, and thereby suffer.

“Every soul who does not know how to gather wisdom by contacting that Christ in meditation scatters his concentration in the antics of the body and remains distracted, suffering from restlessness. He who has interiorized his consciousness by meditation gathers wisdom and bliss with the help of my Christ Consciousness within his soul. But he who is not identified with that indwelling Divine Presence diffuses his consciousness in the flesh and sense pleasures and is full of disquiet and trouble.

“That is why I declare the truth unto you that all kinds of errors—physical, mental, and moral—belonging to those who in body-identified spiritual blindness unknowingly act against God will be forgiven, when by repentance and awakening soul wisdom they receive the inner realization of God’s all-pervading, karma-dissolving presence in the Holy Ghost.

“But those who have consciously felt the holy cosmic vibration of Aum (Holy Ghost) in meditation and ridicule it as a physical sound, or deliberately ignore its

transforming power and regress into worldly consciousness, will not be forgiven the effects resulting from their errors—that is, their karma of ignorance will not be washed away by the healing blessings of God flowing through that Divine Vibration.”



Reverent contact with the Holy Ghost frees one from delusion and suffering

When one contacts the Holy Vibration and feels the ever new joy in it, and then wantonly rejects that joy by reverting to an inharmonious life, he “blasphemes against the Holy Ghost” and cannot be saved from reaping the results of his bad karma. This presupposes that no one can commit blasphemy against the Holy Ghost who does not first know that manifestation of God as the Cosmic Sound heard in meditation or as the Infinite Peace or Joy subtly vibrating within the God-tuned consciousness. If one willfully chooses the worldly offerings of the senses after having had the comparison of finer joys through this inner communion, he will have to endure the consequences of his actions. He will have to work out by his own effort the karma of his bad-habit – controlled life and distracted mind, having shut himself off from the uplifting grace of God and Christ flowing freely into the consciousness of those who are attuned to the Holy Ghost. By ignoring the intuitional guidance of this cosmic sound in meditation —“the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost,...shall teach you all things”⁸—he sentences himself to inner restlessness and to continued witless entrapments in delusion and suffering.

All manner of physical and mental errors can be forgiven, and their karmic fruits modified or destroyed altogether, by the blessings of great souls; but no one can remove the restlessness of a distracted devotee who blasphemes against his perception of Cosmic Vibration and bliss. Not even a master can give the contact of Cosmic Vibration and joy of meditation unless the devotee forsakes his restlessness by his own effort of will. Those who are indolent in seeking the vibratory contact of God through the Holy Ghost must make the effort in deep meditation to remove their irreverence of indifference toward this divine manifestation of the Infinite Creator.

Restlessness, the outgoing dissipation of the soul’s attention, is the most disabling weapon employed by the Evil Perpetuator of changeful delusion. A restless body and mind are the playground of Satan, who loves to perform there his wily dance of distraction to divert man’s consciousness from the Immutable Spirit and Its calm reflection in the depths of the soul. But one who regularly and deeply interiorizes the mind through devotional meditation is aided by the uplifting vibrations of the Holy Ghost and finds himself immersed in God all the time—in the redemptive grace of divine peace, love, and joy.

Unwillingness to meditate should be recognized as among the foremost enemies of man's physical, mental, and spiritual well-being; that "blasphemy" against the inner magnetic pull of the Holy Ghost should be consciously excised from the mind. One who never meditates rejects the prime means of attuning his life with the saving Christ Consciousness inherent in the Cosmic Aum Vibration. By deliberate deeper acts of meditation each seeker must remove his restlessness in order to regain bliss consciousness through vibratory contact of God as Holy Ghost, his introduction to the Infinite Christ and the cosmic consciousness of Spirit.



“And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come” (Matthew 12:32).⁹

Whosoever uses wrong language against the “son of man” (the bodily manifestation of any individual, by which Jesus included himself) will find forgiveness from God and the masters if he seeks it and is repentant. But anyone who contacts the inner peace and joy of the Holy Ghost in meditation but then thinks or talks in a way that vibrates evilly in contradiction to that spiritually harmonious vibration will forego that meditative state and set up an inner conflict from which he will suffer restlessness and inner turmoil in this world and in his next incarnation as well. The outer man must be disciplined to conform to his harmonious inner spirit. If he persists in his contradictory behavior, he will form the habit of mental restlessness so deep in his “son of man” consciousness that he will feel as if eternally condemned to be restless and to be denied recovery of the ever-new blessed contact of the Holy Vibration of Spirit in his soul consciousness.



“Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit. O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things” (Matthew 12:33 – 35).

Because the Pharisees insinuated that the good works of Jesus were performed by the power of evil, he countered with the argument, “If you admit that the results of my healing actions are good, then you must also concede that I work with the power of goodness. If, as you say, I am evil, then how could I produce these good fruits of divine healing? Evil can only bring forth evil. As a tree is known by its fruit, so you must discern by my actions that within me is the spiritually laden tree of divine knowledge. O ye human vipers filled with the poison of ignorance and self-created evil karma, how can you rightly declare what is true? According to the contents of your heart your mouth speaks.¹⁰ You bring forth from that evil hoard that which is evil, rather than bringing forth from the treasure of goodness that lies within your soul, hidden under the debris of your evil actions.”



“But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned” (Matthew 12:36 – 37).

A spoken word is a threefold composite of vibrations, consisting of physical energy (sound), life force activated by the speaker's will, and thought. Man's every utterance leaves good or evil vibrational traces in his physical body and brain; in his astral body of life energy, which mediates between flesh and consciousness; and in his mind, his consciousness, as tabloid tendencies. The sum total of all mental tendencies resulting from evil thoughts and good thoughts determines a good or bad rebirth for a soul after death.

Thus Jesus' meaning: “I declare unto you that every useless word (heedlessly spoken without regard to truth and righteousness) that men will speak will retain its effect in the brain and the mind; and when the soul leaves the body, its existence in the astral world and eventual reentry into another life on earth will be modified and governed by the judgment of his evil karma resulting from those damaging words. By good words expressed by a good mind you will store good results to be reaped by your soul, and by evil words actuated by an evil mind you will amass evil effects that will return to you in lives to come.”



Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, “Master, we would see a sign from thee.”

But he answered and said unto them, “An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah: For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” (Matthew 12:38 – 40).



“The sign of Jonah”: Jesus predicts the miracle of his resurrection

The all-powerful Heavenly Father, being endowed with all grace, is infinitely humble. So also are His devotees who manifest His perfect image. Divine souls such as Jesus do not demonstrate miracles or signs to oppose man’s wickedness or to satisfy the unthinking curiosity of disbelieving people, but use their powers only as a benign helping force humbly expressing the hidden mightiness of God.

When the Pharisees sought from Jesus a sign of his divine authority, he retorted, “O ye generation who are addicted to the evils of ignorance and sensual habits, what right have you to seek a miraculous sign, which is merited only by virtuous and deserving souls? No sign will be given to you except what has been already given by the prophet Jonah, who showed that he had attained God-consciousness and thereby his life, saturated with immortal life, could remain in a state of suspended animation in the belly of a whale.”¹¹

Whether the tale of Jonah is literally or metaphorically true, there are numerous records in India of yogis or ecstasy-tuned souls who were known to have remained buried alive in a suspended state under water or the earth. Two well-known cases concern Trailanga Swami of India, who periodically used to remain for very long periods beneath the waters of the Ganges;¹² and the well-documented case of the eighteenth-century Sadhu Haridas, who placed his body in suspended animation and was buried for several weeks, and then revived himself when disinterred [cited earlier in Discourse

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Such feats are not intended by God to be commonplace in an age yet reaching for enlightenment, but they are evidence of the ability to live in a breathless state and thereby to master life and conquer death. Jesus related that the story of Jonah—“Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights”¹³—was prophetically analogous to Jesus’ crucified body remaining entombed in the earth three days and nights and then coming forth alive. Jesus foretells that the greatest sign he would give to the world would be the resurrection of his physical body—his demonstration of complete victory over death.

Jesus speaks of his entombment as referring to his body, the “son of man”—a body connected with a generation of human beings or family tree. The Son of God, which was encased in the body of Jesus but also omnipresent, certainly could not be buried in the heart of the earth. It was the physical body of Jesus and its resurrection after three days that would declare to mankind the almighty power of God.¹⁴

By material science man builds wondrously fast and serviceful airplanes; but when a plane crashes, and passengers are horribly converted into a broken mass of bones and flesh, science cannot tell man how to conquer his ultimate weakness—the Satan-imposed delusion of death and physical destruction. By the higher science of God-realization, man can know that body and soul, both being the reflections of Spirit Immortal, are immortal too. Jesus showed that by following the laws of superphysical existence and understanding the relation of matter and mind, the soul could conquer the delusion of body consciousness, or, if desired, register its immortality in its physical vehicle. When man fully realizes the relation between consciousness and the body, he will understand why the separation of consciousness and life from the body disintegrates the bodily cells, and will know how to remodel the body by introducing life and mind into it at will, even if it has undergone physical death. The attainment of conscious immortality as evidenced in the resurrection of his physical body is the foremost “sign” and metaphysical demonstration that Jesus has shown to the world for all times, to awaken faith and give courage and hope to those who would strive and earn by meditation their own immortality in the kingdom of God.



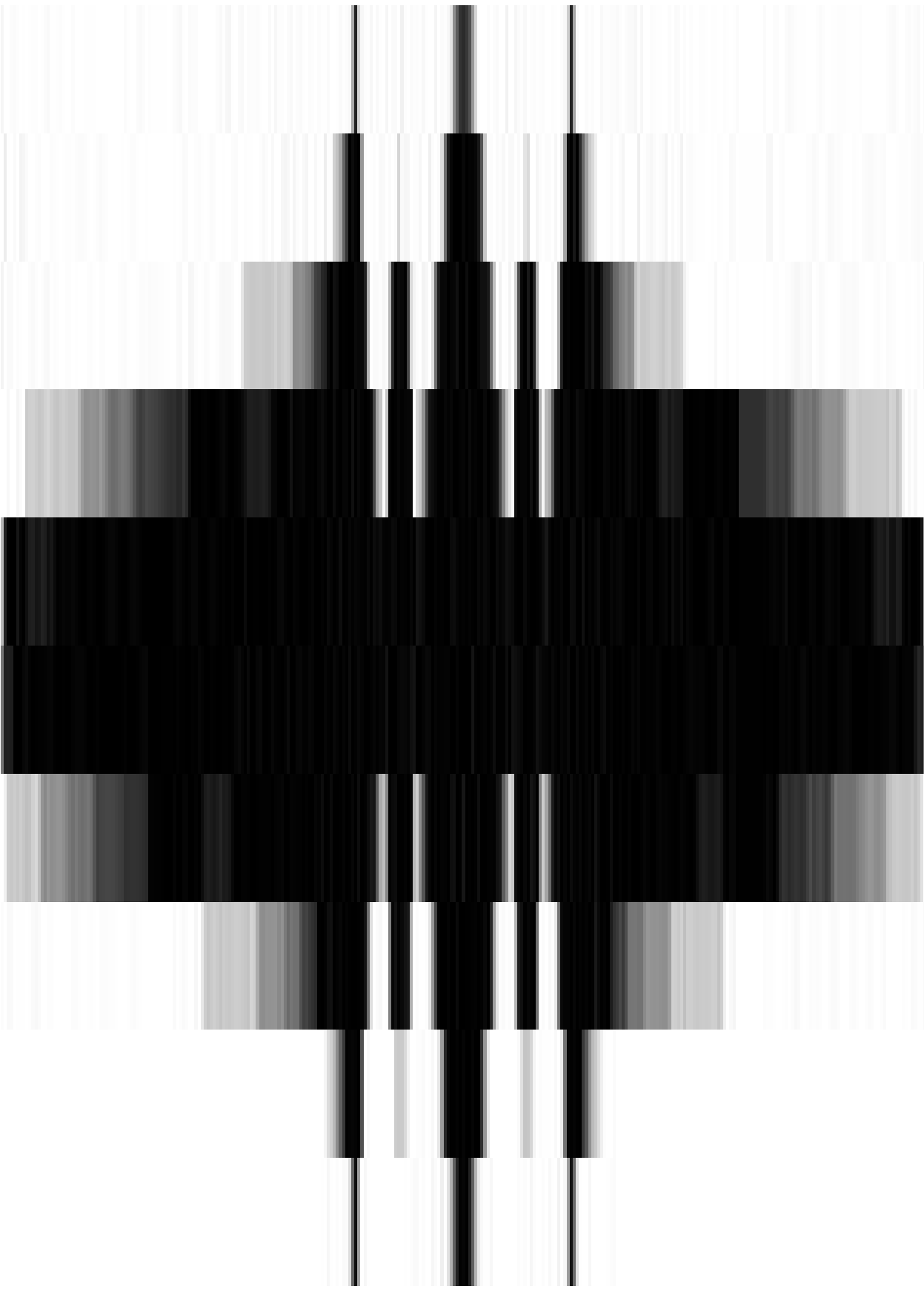
“The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and, behold, a greater than Jonah is here.

“The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here” (Matthew 12:41 – 42).

Jesus emphasized that the men of Nineveh who repented of their material habits and awakened their spirituality in response to the preaching of Jonah would judge and condemn the generation of Jesus for not appreciating the Christ amongst them, greater than Jonah, fully awakened in Spirit. The Queen of Sheba who came from a distant land to hear the wisdom of Solomon ¹⁵ would likewise condemn Jesus' generation for not responding to the Christ whose wisdom outshone even that of the proverbially wise Solomon. Though all souls, ordinary laymen and masters alike, are potentially the same perfect images of God, their differences are manifestations of the degree of their realization and expression of soul qualities. Jesus Christ fully manifested all the qualities of soul and Spirit; the spiritual consciousness of Solomon and Jonah had yet to attain that perfection.



“When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, ‘I will return into my house from whence I came out’; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation” (Matthew 12:43 – 45).



Spiritual dangers of arrogant self-sufficiency and pride

Jesus here is referring to tenuous spiritual gains that degenerate into the arrogance of a false superiority. He saw that some souls among the people of his time had attained sufficient spiritual development to contact the inner vibratory blessing of the Holy Ghost, which removed some of their spiritual blemishes and cast out the inner devil of sense attachment. But Jesus notes that although they had temporarily exorcised the devil of material attachment, their egregious attitude toward him, and prejudicial failure to recognize the Spirit in him, would bring back not only their material consciousness but even greater devils of ignorance, sense attachment, pride, self-sufficiency, spiritual indifference, and lack of spiritual appreciation and spiritual judgment, when by spiritual receptivity they could instead have transformed themselves with the enlightening help of Jesus.

Jesus admonishes: “O ye people of this generation, your erstwhile spiritual development has made you self-complacent and stagnant so that you do not avail yourselves of the God-sent opportunity of redeeming your souls by attunement with the Christ-manifestation within me. Because of your ill-conceived arrogance, you will suffer even greater ignorance from its possessing devils than you had before.”

Jesus points out that man is a free agent and that by appreciation and contact of great masters he can develop himself; or, by spiritual indifference to God’s emissaries and their teachings, he can remain as ignorant as ever; or, by becoming hidebound in narrow theological beliefs and traditions, he can imagine himself to be self-sufficient, ignoring the salvation-yielding teachings of great masters.



While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. Then one said unto him, “Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee.”

But he answered and said unto him that told him, “Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?” And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, “Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother” (Matthew 12:46 – 50).¹⁶

Parallel reference:

Then came to him his mother and his brethren, and could not come at him for the press. And it was told him by certain which said, “Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to see thee.” And he answered and said unto them, “My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it” (Luke 8:19 – 21).

“Those devotees who are receptive to the inspiration of God as coming through me and who act accordingly, and who feel God-consciousness manifested as the Word or ever-new-bliss-saturated Cosmic Sound heard in meditation, are tuned to my one Father, the one Cosmic Consciousness; because of sharing this common perception with me, they are my real relatives. All women with God-consciousness are my mothers and sisters, and all men with God-consciousness are my brethren.”



Jesus upholds love for God above attachment to family

Jesus did not teach disrespect to parents; elsewhere (Matthew

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) he cited the divine commandment “Honor thy father and mother.”¹⁷ His point was that while everyone should give due respect to parents, honoring in them the Divine Father-Mother’s gifts of protecting wisdom and love, one should not be so attached to them that if they blaspheme and ask him to desist from his sincere spiritual aspirations—whether in following the path of renunciation or in meditation on God—he would submissively obey them and forsake God. The teaching of Jesus, and all great masters, is that God should come first, before every desire and before everyone. The engagement with God in meditation must be one’s most important consideration, for no one can keep any other engagement in life without borrowing brain activity and energy, mental and muscular power, from God.

No human love should be held as greater than love for God; for it is God who is the Giver of all those we love. If we love our relatives dearly for their lovable natures, how much more should we love God who wisely selected for us those loving parents, brothers, and sisters. We should not forget that God is our perpetual Parent in the past, present, and future times, who during many incarnations looks after us through the instrumentality of countless parents and other familial relations. Those who adore family in utter forgetfulness of God within those persons will be disillusioned when death will sever those family ties. It is the tie with God, invisible but invulnerable, that is everlasting.

Jesus wanted to emphasize in the minds of the multitude his realization of this truth when they cried out, “Behold, thy mother and thy brethren.” God alone, whom he perceived everywhere, was his real and only Relative behind all incarnation-imposed family relations.

Reflect, if one dies and is reborn to the family next door to his previous home,

his dearly beloved former family would treat him as a stranger. The mysterious workings of reincarnation are meant to make it absolutely evident that it is God alone who, by instilling instincts of affection in the earthly mother and father, Himself looks after the baby through that parental affinity. And by extension, when one is attuned to God one will find again in Him all those soul-expressions of God whom he thought were lost to him.

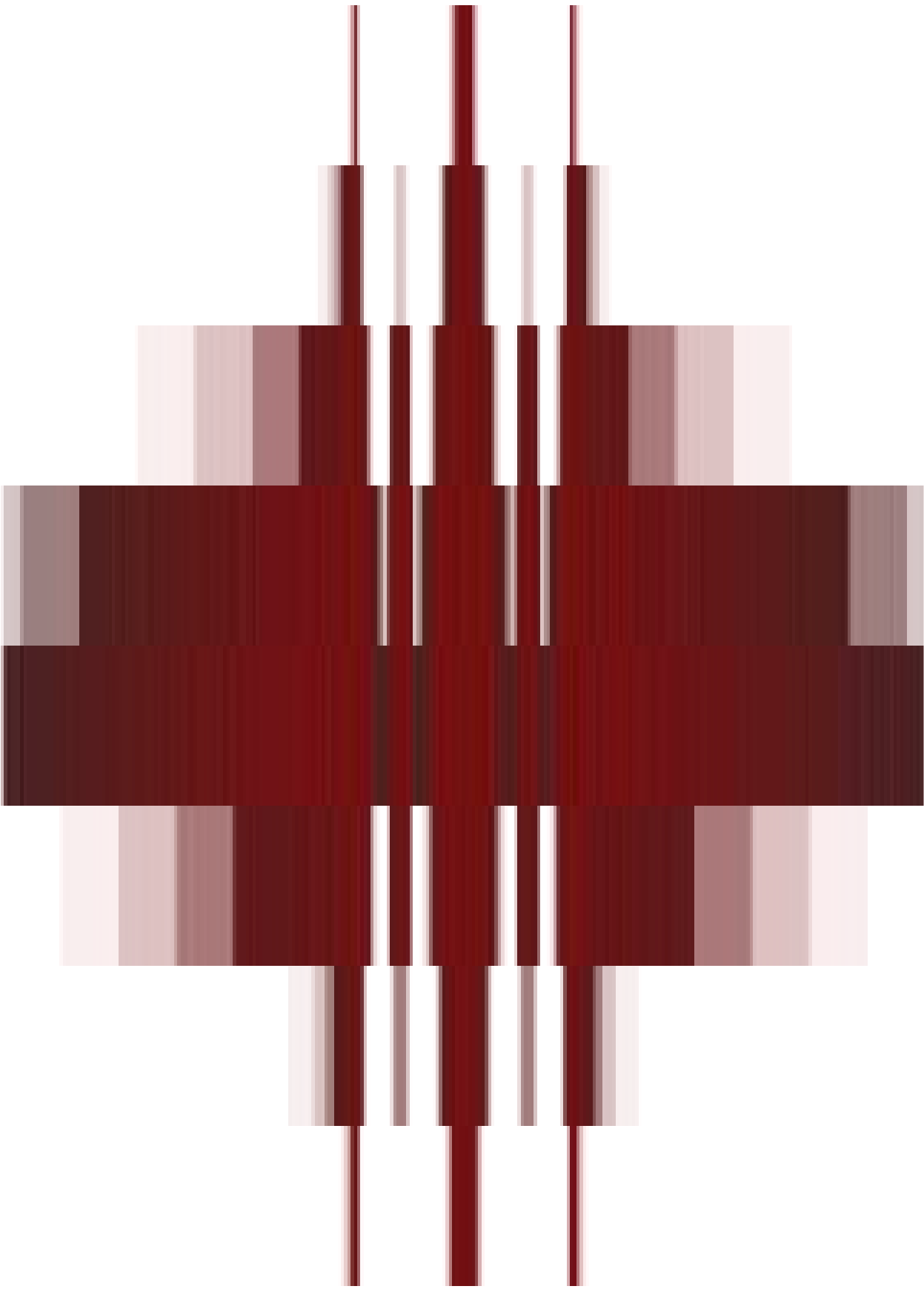
Jesus wanted to express his consciousness that he could consider none other than God Himself as his Heavenly Father-Mother, and that whosoever lived in tune with God he considered as his divine relative. Jesus thereby affirmed not only the Fatherhood of God but also the brotherhood of man. All devotees who feel God as their own common Heavenly Father find themselves united by the familial divine cord of lasting universal brotherhood.



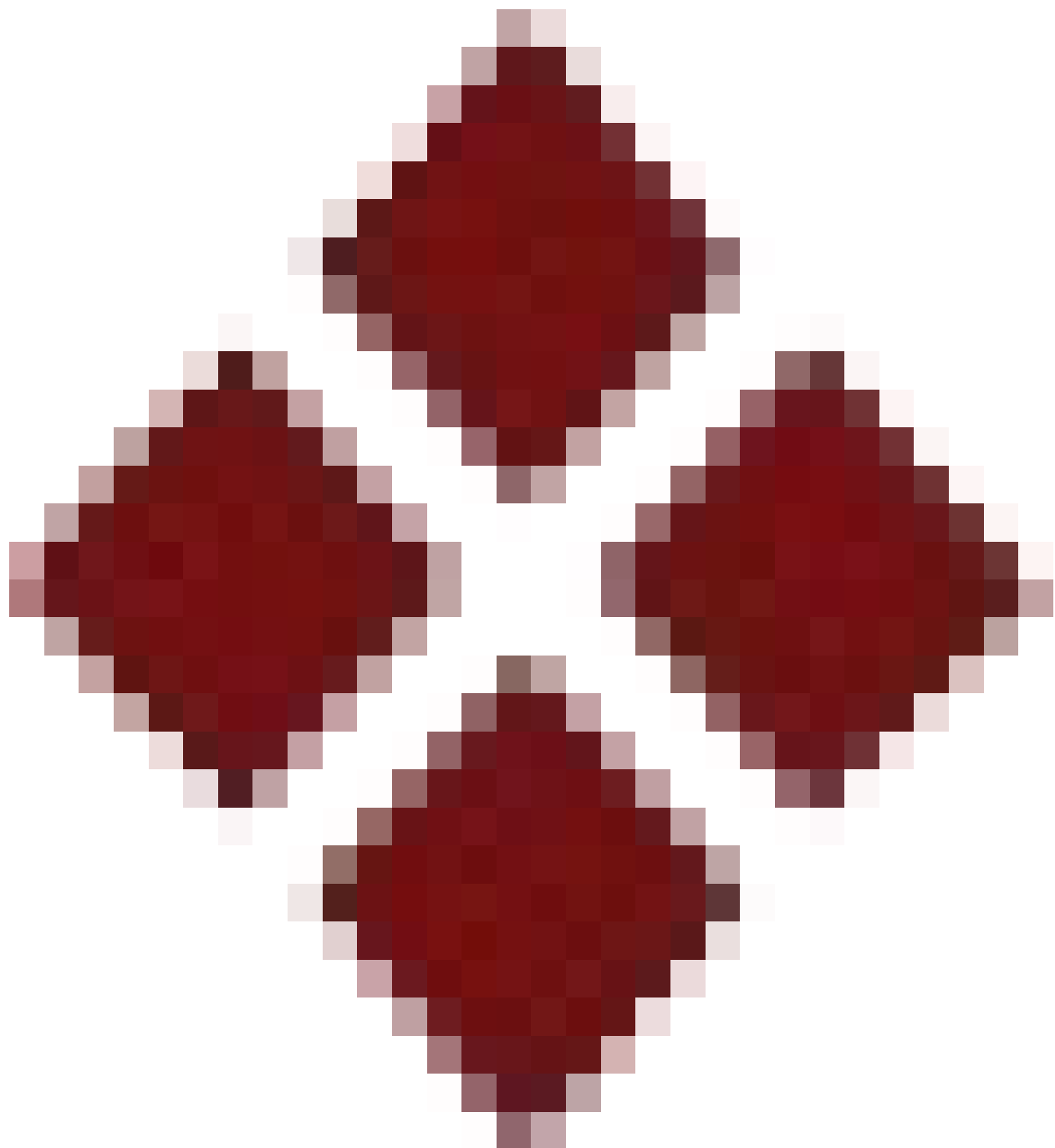
Discourse 37

**“And He Spake Many Things Unto Them in
Parables”**

Jesus’ Sermon About the Kingdom of Heaven



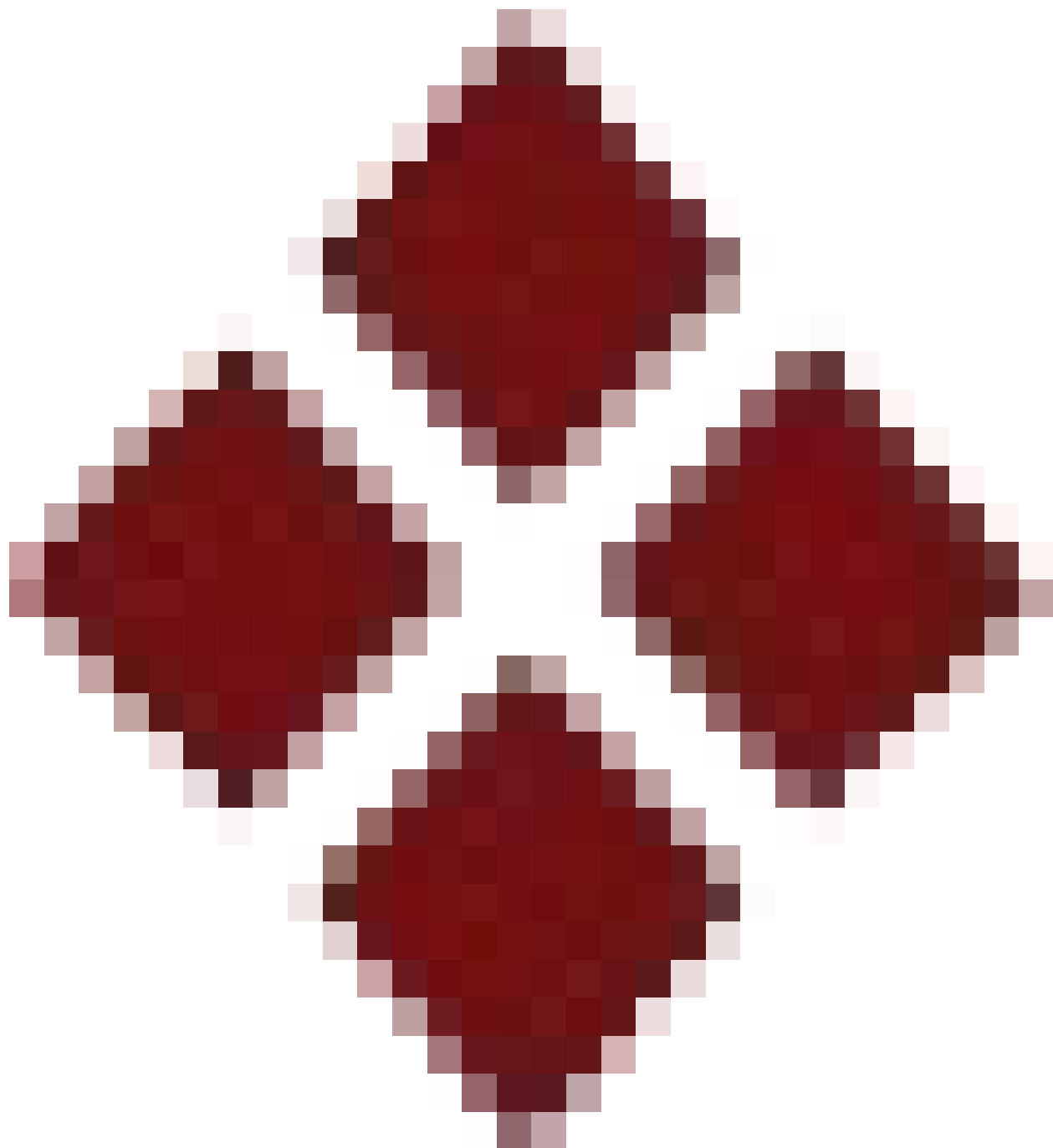
**Parable of the Sower: Spiritual Truths Bless Man to
the Degree of His Mental Receptivity**



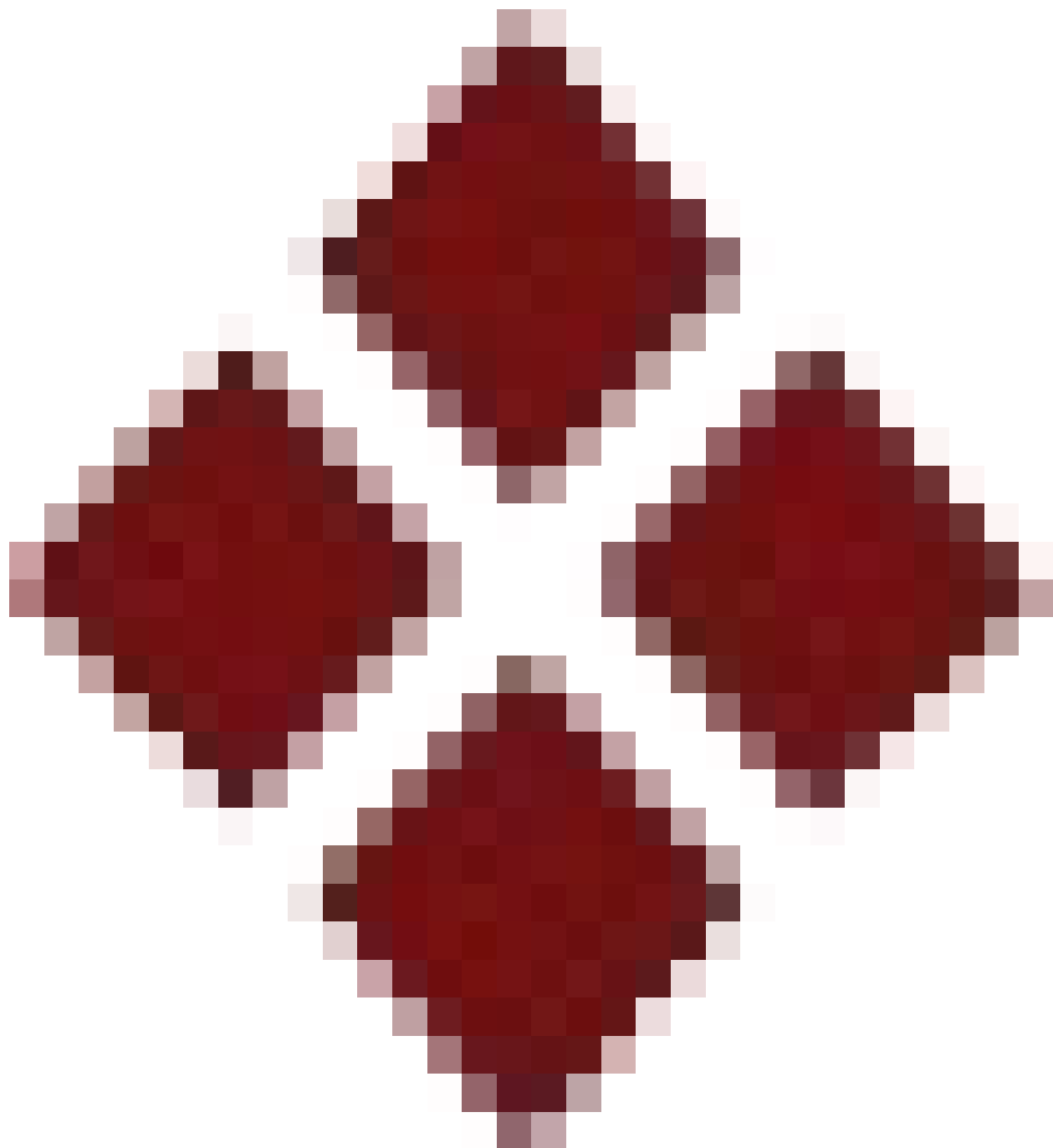
**Jesus' Deeper Explanation: The Vibratory Seed of
Wisdom Received Through Contact With Aum**



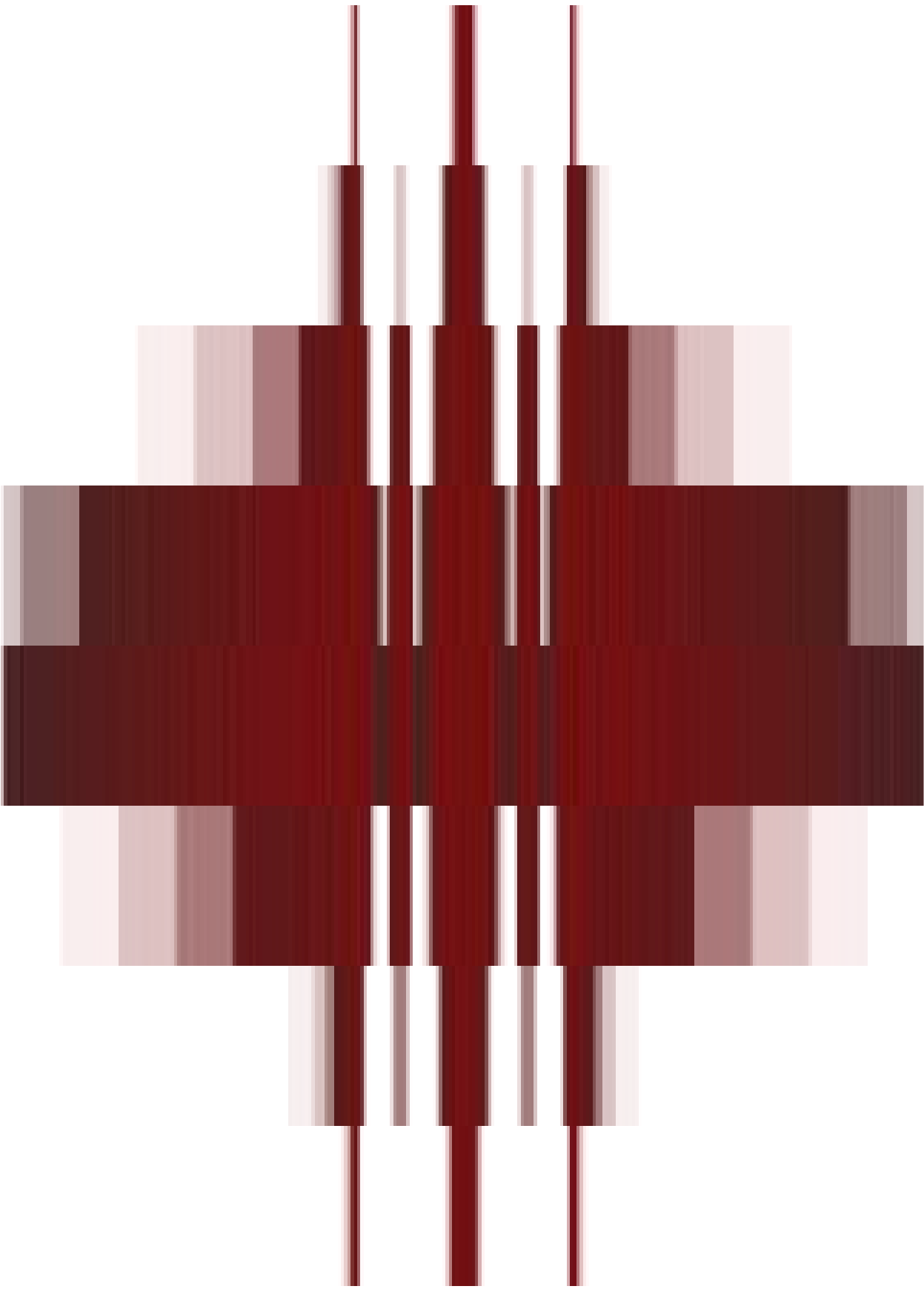
The Wheat and the Tares: Destroying the Weeds of Bad Habits in the Subconscious Mind



**The “Leaven” of Meditative Joy Uplifts the
Conscious, Subconscious, and Superconscious Minds**



**The “Harvest” of Good and Bad Karma Reaped at
“the End of the World”**



“Unto those souls that are yet wholly identified with their physical bodies, all these subtle perceptions about the states of heaven, Christ Consciousness, and Cosmic Consciousness are explained in coverings of parables, lest those persons scorn, for lack of understanding, that sacred knowledge of fully revealed truth.”

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The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side. And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore. And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, "Behold, a sower went forth to sow; and when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.

"Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."

And the disciples came, and said unto him, "Why speakest thou unto them in parables?"

He answered and said unto them, "Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.

"Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which saith, 'By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:

" 'For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.'

"But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.

“Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.

“He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.”

Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

“So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, ‘Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? From whence then hath it tares?’ He said unto them, ‘An enemy hath done this.’ The servants said unto him, ‘Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?’ But he said, ‘Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, “Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.” ’ ”

Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.”

Another parable spake he unto them: “The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.”

All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, "I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world."

Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, "Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field." He answered and said unto them, "He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; the field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field."

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it."

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

Jesus saith unto them, "Have ye understood all these things?" They say unto him, "Yea, Lord." Then said he unto them, "Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old."

And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed

thence.

—*Matthew 13:1 – 53*



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Discourse 37

**“And He Spake Many Things Unto Them in
Parables”**

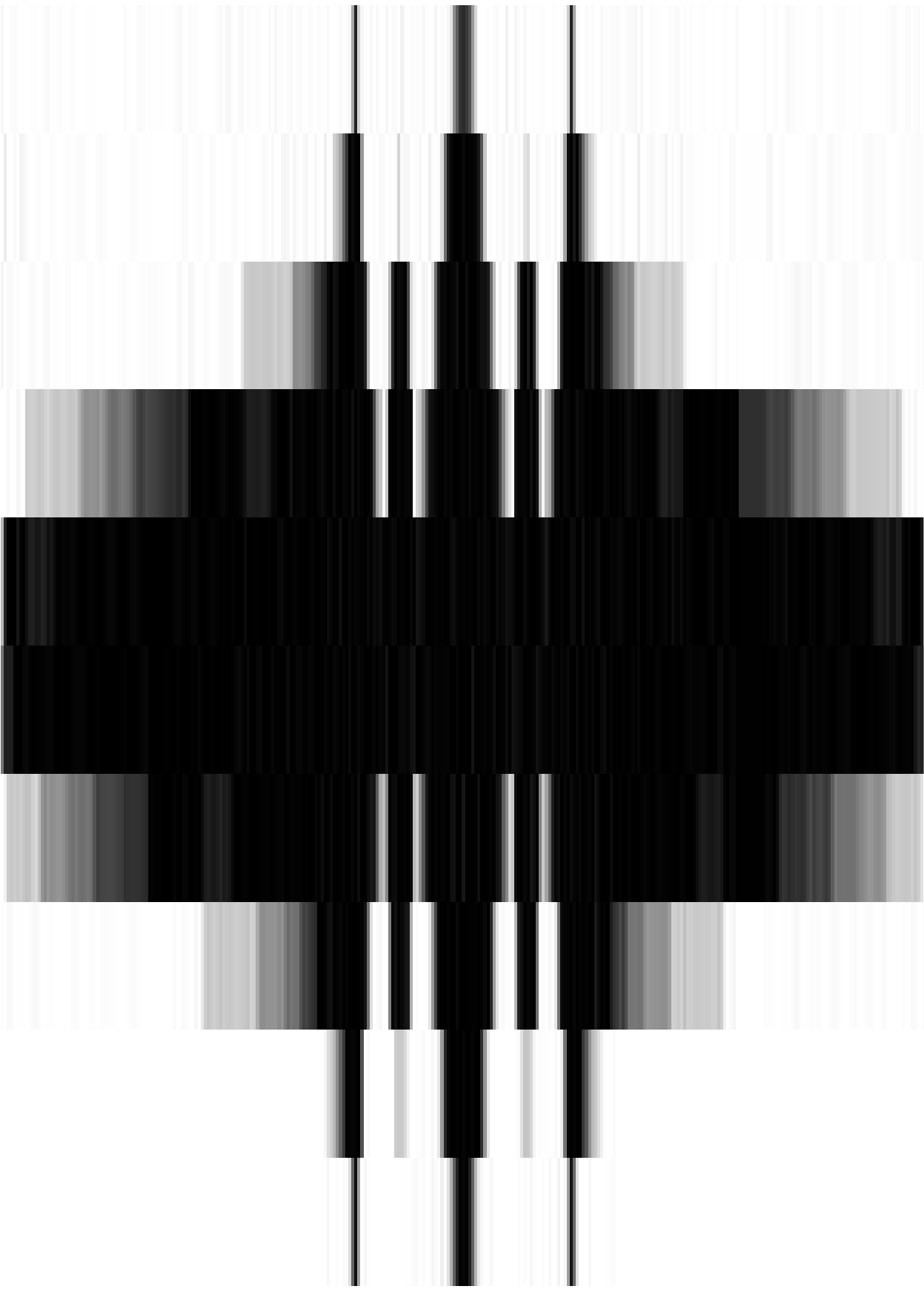
Jesus’ Sermon About the Kingdom of Heaven



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“Who hath ears to hear, let him hear” (Matthew 13:1 – 9).¹

In the well-known parable of the sower, the seed, and the ground, Jesus illustrates how divine seeds of truth grow or perish according to the mental soil, or faith and receptivity, of the spiritual aspirants on whom the seeds have been sown: “Hearken attentively, with wisdom, to the truth that here among you are devotees with varying degrees of receptive minds on which have been sown the seeds of my teachings.



Parable of the sower: Spiritual truths bless man to the degree of his mental receptivity

“Some seeds of truth fell by the wayside of the spiritual indifference of curiosity seekers. Those seeds of potentially enlightening intuitional experiences were trodden by the animals of material habits and devoured by the fowls of doubts flying in the atmosphere of the mind.

“Some seeds of my teachings fell upon the rocky terrain of materially crude minds with only a little soil of skin-deep spiritual perception and appreciation. In such persons, the teachings sprouted into some short-lived, but not deep-rooted, spiritual experiences. When the sun of daily material habits rose, those experiences were fatally scorched. Because they did not form deep-rooted habits in the superconsciousness of the soul, they withered away due to the lack of nourishment of continued devotion and spiritual aspiration in new acts of meditation and fervent effort.

“And some seeds of my teachings were sown on the mental soil of persons filled with prolific thorns of spiritual distrust and theological doubts. Thus, though those seeds sprouted somewhat in such theoretically inquisitive minds, those spiritual inspirations could not survive when choked by the overwhelmingly predominant thorns of theological skepticism. The ill-fated plants of inspiration could bear no fruits of divine wisdom or God-contact.

“Other seeds of my teachings fell on the soil of mentalities furrowed and ploughed by receptivity, watered with continuous goodness and regular, deep spiritual effort at meditation, and hedged in by good company so that the animals and birds of material minds and doubts could not invade and destroy the burgeoning garden of soul qualities. In those protected, receptive minds, the seeds of truth grew into trees laden with the fruits of Self-realization. These human trees, strong and sturdy, could withstand any onslaughts while providing an increasing yield of wisdom, ever new bliss, and advancement in divine attainment of spiritual qualities—thirty, sixty, one hundredfold.”

Jesus’ analogy makes it plain that a true disciple, by virtue of a dedicated spiritual life, is fertile ground in which a God-sent guru’s teachings can be successfully sown. When the proper seed of instruction is planted in the

receptive heart-soil of a sincere, determined student who nurtures it with deep daily meditation, devotion, and self-discipline in following the sadhana, spiritual practices, prescribed by the guru, that seed will sprout and grow into the infinity-branched tree of God-realization.

What makes the difference in receptivity is whether one's desire and effort to know truth are strong. The most responsive are those who have an ardent desire for God.

The parable of the sower and the seed points out how the various good or bad habits of persons affect whether the soil of their minds is fertile or stony. Even if one feels thwarted by bad habits that are already formed, that opposition can be overcome by one's strong spiritual desire and faithful adherence to the guru's teachings. The highest intelligence is to be able to change what needs to be changed in one's life so that continual soul progress is possible.

Receptive students will definitely make progress with the help of the guru. Resistance from bad habits of the past may make it difficult to obey the divine teachings, but if sincere students make the effort in spite of the inclination to resist, they change. Resistance is formidable if they listen to their moods; but if instead they listen receptively to the wisdom of their guru, who wants for them only their highest good, every seed of divine awakening he plants within them will take root in their fertile consciousness.

“Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.” Jesus meant: “He who is receptive and hears with spiritual understanding what I say, let him appreciate the truth in my words and live by them for complete soul-emancipation.” It is useless to listen haphazardly to the teachings of Jesus or give them only scant attention. A follower of Christ should be earnest and diligent like a spiritual husbandman, employing the art of growing plants of Self-realization by plowing and seeding the consciousness with the proper technique of meditation and moral and spiritual living. The yield will be the fruits of divine wisdom, bliss, and complete spiritual liberation.



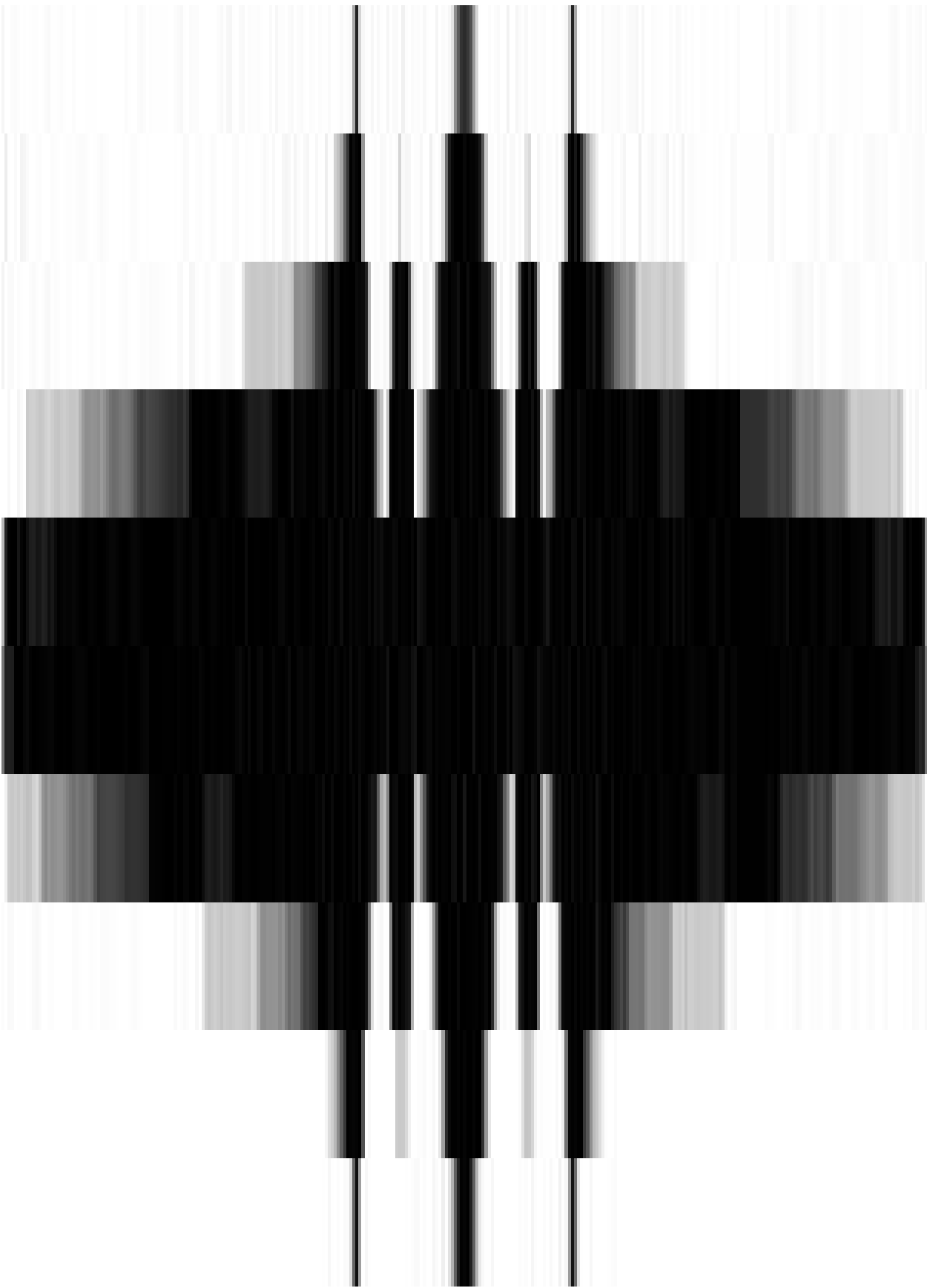
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“Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand” (Matthew 13:10 – 13).²

Parallel reference:

And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable. And he said unto them, “Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them” (Mark 4:10 – 12).



To the receptive, Jesus revealed heavenly truth; for the masses he cloaked it in parables

When Jesus was asked by his disciples why he taught the people in the subtle illustrations of parables, he answered, “Because it is so ordained that you who are my real disciples, living a spiritualized life and disciplining your actions according to my teachings, deserve by virtue of your inner awakening in your meditations to understand the truth of the arcane mysteries of heaven and how to attain the kingdom of God, Cosmic Consciousness hidden behind the vibratory creation of cosmic delusion. But ordinary people, unprepared in their receptivity, are not able either to comprehend or to practice the deeper wisdom-truths. From parables, they glean according to their understanding simpler truths from the wisdom I send out to them. By practical application of what they are able to receive, they make some progress toward redemption.

“Because you are receptive and advanced in spiritual thought, the expanded cup of your understanding can hold the oceanic revelations of truth which I have poured into you from my own realization in the state of Christ Consciousness and Cosmic Consciousness, the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God.”

The state of Cosmic Consciousness is called the kingdom of God because it is the infinite kingdom of the one King of Absolute Existence, Absolute Consciousness, and Absolute Bliss untouched by vibratory manifestations. The kingdom of heaven is the wondrous astral realm of heavenly forces and beings, imbued with the omnipresent Christ Consciousness. The state of Cosmic Consciousness can be felt by souls who in meditation have withdrawn their minds from the region of the body and gone beyond the subconscious and concentration on the superconscious bliss perceptions of the astral kingdom of heaven and the immanent Christ state. But unto those souls that are yet wholly identified with their physical bodies, all these subtle perceptions about the states of heaven, Christ Consciousness, and Cosmic Consciousness are explained in coverings of parables, lest those persons scorn, for lack of understanding, that sacred knowledge of fully revealed truth. Unreceptive persons would not even try to fathom the deeper truths by which they could be free from their bad habits of materiality, “lest they should be converted” from body-identified souls into spiritual beings, through the grace of God and their own effort.

Jesus then cites an exact law that governs all habits. “Whosoever hath” created a habit of spirituality shall attract perceptions of Self-realization from within himself; and having the taste of soul wisdom and bliss, shall grow more spiritual habits, attracting greater manifestations of soul unfoldment. “But whosoever hath not”—that is, cares not to possess or create spiritual habits of meditation and living—must lose, owing to the lack of tasting the spiritual joy of Self-realization felt in meditation, any spiritual habit that might be latent within him.³

How do the receptive perceive truth, whereas the unreceptive “seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand”? The ultimate truths of heaven and the kingdom of God, the reality that lies behind sensory perception and beyond the cogitations of the rationalizing mind, can only be grasped by intuition—awakening the intuitive knowing, the pure comprehension, of the soul.

“Therefore, O ye my disciples, I speak in parables, covering the meat of truth with the shell of mystical words, esoteric illustrations. Just as a bird does not know the use of a nutcracker to get at the kernel within the nutshell, so ordinary minds do not see the way of using intuition to break through the shells of the parables and get at the wisdom hidden therein. Such persons, lacking intuitive inner perception, do not hear the revelations of truth accompanying my words, even though they hear that wisdom falling from my lips. It is as though they never heard it at all.”



“And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which saith, ‘By hearing ye shall hear, and shalt not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:

“For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.’⁴

“But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them” (Matthew 13:14 – 17).

Parallel reference:

And he turned him unto his disciples, and said privately, “Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see: For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them” (Luke 10:23 – 24).



A consciousness darkened by materiality is blind and deaf to spiritual perceptions

Jesus alludes to the divine perception of the prophet Isaiah, who foresaw how the law of cause and effect would govern those whose spiritual perceptions were uncultivated over many incarnations. Even as they were in his own time, the souls of those people in the large gatherings who listened to the words of Jesus remained unreceptive. Though hearing the words of Jesus, they could understand them only superficially. Though they saw the awesome powers manifested by Jesus, they remained spiritually blind to his divine stature. Their hearts, their inner feelings or consciousness (chitta), for incarnations inured to the inharmonious vibrations of materiality, could not resonate to the ring of truth vibrating in the words of Jesus. Because the minds of such persons are habitually responsive to the restlessness and desires of the senses, their inner sight of spiritual receptivity and desire to meditate is confined to darkness, their ears deafened to the Christ teachings. They will not open their eyes of insight or hear with spiritual reason or receive the pure feeling of intuition in the heart lest at some time they see truth with their eyes of wisdom, and understand truth by listening to the words of Jesus, and realize truth with the intuitive feeling of their hearts and be transformed from material beings groveling in misery into spiritual beings engrossed in the unending joy of ecstasy. They are so enamored of their material delusion that they fear the message of Jesus, which proposes to take them out of their long-lived familiar existence in ignorance. ⁵

Jesus praised, in contrast, the consciousness of his disciples: “Blessed are your eyes of wisdom, for they see the truth; and blessed are your ears of receptivity, for you listen understandingly to truth. Verily the Christ Consciousness within me declares unto you that in many ages numerous prophets who have seen and foretold the plan of God, and numerous kingly men, powerful in morality and righteousness, have desired to see those divine demonstrations which, because of your good karma, you are now seeing in my life; but they have not been fortunate enough to observe such miracles of God, or to hear as you have heard the liberating wisdom words of the silent God as are coming directly through my Christ Consciousness.”

It is rare to witness the living God made manifest in the life and wisdom of a God-knowing soul. Many devotees have longed for such an opportunity, but

relatively few have been able to have that privilege. It is only from time to time, in select ages, that great souls are sent by God with a special mission to declare His glory. That is why Jesus reminded his disciples that they were extraordinarily blessed to behold the manifestation of God's divine love and powers, which are seldom demonstrated as openly as in the life of Jesus—and of a few great masters of India.



“Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.

“He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty” (Matthew 13:18 – 23).

Parallel reference:

And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable...And he said unto them, “Know ye not this parable? And how then will ye know all parables?”

“The sower soweth the word. And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts. And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; and have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word’s sake, immediately they are offended.

“And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word. And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.

“And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred” (Mark 4:10, 13 – 20).⁶

Having conveyed to the crowd the parable of the sower and the seed in words of easily discerned interpretation applicable to their mentality, Jesus later explained the parable to his disciples as denoting a deeper metaphysical concept, which they had inferred but not grasped—thus their request for elaboration.



Jesus' deeper explanation: the vibratory seed of wisdom received through contact with Aum

Jesus mildly remonstrated: "Do you not understand this parable? Then how will you understand the subtle teachings I am giving to you in all of the other parables spoken by me? Hear ye, now, the parable of the sower explained in a new way for you.

"The seed is the 'word,' the vibration of wisdom and cosmic sound coming from Cosmic Consciousness as felt by the devotee through his intuition in meditation.⁷ Only those who have experienced the ecstasy of an interiorized consciousness by deep meditation on the holy sound of the Aum, or Amen, can feel the vibratory wisdom of God and hear His Cosmic Vibration thrumming throughout the universe. God as Spirit, formless and infinite, does not commonly speak in words but vibrates His consciousness as perceptions through intelligible vibratory sound understood only by devotees with developed intuition.

"The sower, the advanced devotee, is one who has attained contact with the Cosmic Sound and Wisdom in meditation. Those by the wayside where the word is sown are devotees who have temporarily meditated deeply and for a little while have received in their consciousness through the intuition-permeated feelings of the heart, the Vibratory Wisdom and Cosmic Sound proceeding from within. But after a time, not fully realizing those perceptions as the vibrations of God Himself, they became spiritually indifferent in maintaining that contact. Then Satan as cosmic delusion came to them, immediately bringing back the consciousness of the body and taking away from within them the perception of that Vibratory Wisdom and Cosmic Sound, which had come to free them, but which they had failed to appreciate as a manifestation of the blessed Cosmic Consciousness of God.

"When the seed of Cosmic Vibration was first perceived by less prepared devotees in whose minds were stony-hard material habits, contact with the strange wisdom-vibrations and cosmic sound in meditation gave delight to those devotees. But they did not meditate long enough and continuously enough so that they could feel the Cosmic Vibration not only in their conscious mind but in the deeper levels of their subconscious and superconscious minds.

“Such devotees, meditating for a relatively little while on the vibratory manifestation of God, find that afterward, when tempted by their habits of material pleasures, or when afflicted with diseases of the body, or persecuted by poverty or spiritual tests, they ceased to meditate, and the diverse sprouts of inner vibratory communion, having formed no deep roots, withered and fell away.”

Those devotees who hear the Cosmic Vibration and experience temporarily the pleasure in it, often undergo a mental comparison between the joy of meditation and the pleasures and habits of the body; but uncommitted devotees, not persevering long enough to become strongly accustomed to the perception of God as the Cosmic Wisdom and Cosmic Bliss of meditation, succumb to the long-familiar sensory demands and pleasures of the body.

“And there are some devotees whose mental field is filled with the thorns of temporal interests and worries. These devotees who succeed in contacting the cosmic vibratory manifestation of God in meditation are subject to being gradually overwhelmed by the influences of the world, with its concerns and lures of happiness promised by wealth and the pleasure-giving lusts of life. Those devotees who succumb, kill their meditation perceptions of the vibratory peace-manifestations of God before they can become fruitful with ultimate wisdom and emancipation.

“Lastly, there are those supremely successful devotees whose mental ground is made fertile and tilled by good company and good thoughts and consistency in deep meditation. Their contact with the sacred vibratory manifestation of God in meditation, with honest sincerity and pure intuitive perception of the heart, becomes a continuing experience of the ecstasy of divine communion. By patient perseverance in contacting God as the joy of His vibratory presence in the ecstasy of meditation, these devotees reap the harvest of manifold wisdom and conscious immortality, far beyond their dreams.”



In the verses recorded in the Gospels According to St. Mark and St. Luke, Jesus goes on to emphasize in additional metaphors how important it was for his disciples to understand, through their own intuitive Self-realization, the deeper truths hidden in his parables:

And he said unto them, “Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed? and not to be set on a candlestick? For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; neither was any thing kept secret, but that it should come abroad. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.”

And he said unto them, “Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given. For he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath” (Mark 4:21 – 25).

Parallel reference:

“No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed; but setteth it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light. For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither any thing hid, that shall not be known and come abroad. Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have” (Luke 8:16 – 18).



No truth is hidden from one who kindles the inner light of intuitive Self-realization

“No devotee who has kindled the candle of intuitive perception of truth by the taper of meditation keeps it ignorantly hidden under a bushel of restless thoughts, or obscured by forgetfulness under the bed of his subconsciousness. Rather, he keeps that flame of Self-realization burning constantly on the candlestick of his conscious mind, so that all the thoughts that enter his consciousness are illumined by his light of inner realization. One who continuously keeps his candle of Self-realization burning on the candlesticks of his consciousness and memory will find that no truth will remain hidden from him; all will be manifested or revealed in the perception of inner illumination. A devotee of advanced realization, through telepathy and feeling the presence of God everywhere, can feel all secrets of human hearts and nature vibrating in the ether. There is nothing concealed in the universe that will not be known to a devotee with inner light. Every truth hidden in the deepest bowels of mysteries will perforce be brought out in the devotee’s illuminating inner vision.

“If anyone has a keen perception and receptive ears of spirituality, let him hear these truths of awakening Self-realization and live them.

“Take care to practice the truths you hear from me and meditate upon them. As much as will be your efforts to know the truth, so much wisdom will you receive from my words. Those of you who will meditate deeply and live by my sermons will receive greater Self-realization; and those who will pay less attention to practicing my teachings will receive commensurately less.

“That willing devotee who thus grows in Self-realization shall, because of his receptivity, receive ever more truth, given unto him through his inner superconscious contact with Cosmic Consciousness. But he who does not care to be receptive and is negligent in applying my teachings will find that even those spiritual tendencies he now possesses, brought over from past incarnations, will erode away.”



Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

“So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, ‘Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? From whence then hath it tares?’ He said unto them, ‘An enemy hath done this.’ The servants said unto him, ‘Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?’ But he said, ‘Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, “Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn”’” (Matthew 13:24 – 30).⁸



The wheat and the tares: destroying the weeds of bad habits in the subconscious mind

The kingdom of heaven, the perceptions and realizations of God in superconsciousness, can be compared to a man who by daily deep meditation sowed and cultivated good seeds of spiritual experiences in the field of his consciousness; but while he slept (that is, while his “men” or physical abilities were rapt in their daily active dreams of delusion, unmindful of his spiritual perceptions) his enemy of subconscious materialistic habits sowed weeds of materiality among the wheat seeds of Self-realization. This enemy emerged from and then secretly disappeared again within his subconscious mind. In the course of time when the blades of spiritual development grew appreciably, beginning to produce fruits of divine bliss and wisdom, there appeared concurrently an abundance of tares of inner doubts, vexations, fears, and a sense of hopelessness about being able to attain God-communion and solve the mysteries of life.

So the servants of self-control and spiritual discipline belonging to the household or consciousness of the devotee arose within him and vibrated their question unto him, “O devotee, did you think that you sowed only seeds of Self-realization in your field of consciousness? Then whence did these weeds of spiritual obstacles arise in you?” The devotee, in introspection, spoke unto his spiritual self-control and divine aspiration: “An enemy of subconscious bad habits has secretly grown these weeds along with the crop of my spiritual habits.”

Through introspection, the spiritual servants, with their desire to meditate, intimated unto the devotee: “O master of the household of your consciousness and thoughts, do you desire us to busy ourselves in weeding out from the subconscious mind the deep-rooted tares?”

The devotee responded: “O ye, my servants, do not waste time in concentrating on the negative habits, which engender discouragement, for in doing so you might uproot some spiritual habits as well for lack of attention to their growth. Cultivate the spiritual habits; when the harvest of divine ecstasy arrives with its joy and wisdom contact of God, I will ask the expert reapers of spiritual perception and realization to go deep into my subconscious mind and gather up the weeds of bad habits of all past incarnations and consign them to the fire of

the instantaneously annihilating power of wisdom and of the life energy accumulated in the brain through the interiorization of the mind.”

In meditation and sleep the mind and energy retire into the spine and brain cells and obliterate habits of worries and disquietude. In sleep, the subconscious mind, being mechanical, uses the retired energy to dispel only temporarily the troublesome mental aberrations. In deep meditation the superconscious mind uses the relaxed energy concentrated in the brain to penetrate into the brain grooves where habits are secreted, consciously seeking out and cauterizing the unwanted evil proclivities.

“O ye divine perceptions, having separated out and destroyed all the tares of spiritual obstruction, gather up the wheat of divine wisdom and bliss grown in the field of consciousness and store it in the expansive receptacle of my superconsciousness.”



Additional correlative parable included in the Gospel According to St. Mark:

And he said, "So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come" (Mark 4:26 – 29).



How seeds of heavenly astral perceptions grow into full realization of Cosmic Consciousness

The kingdom of God is the region of Cosmic Consciousness where God the Father dwells beyond the precincts of vibratory creation wherein the sole reflection of God the Father inheres as the universal Christ Consciousness. The kingdom of heaven, situated within the astral vibratory region of pure manifestations, hidden behind the physical vibrations of electrons, protons, and matter, is a lesser state realized by the devotee than that of the kingdom of God.

In the foregoing parable of the wheat and the tares likened unto the kingdom of heaven, Jesus speaks of the devotee who can feel the subtle vibrations of the astral world in superconscious ecstasy, but who has a mixed consciousness of both heavenly perceptions and material attachments. But in the mention of the kingdom of God in this present verse, Jesus speaks of the advancement of those devotees who go beyond the heavenly contact of vibratory creation to become one with God the Father Consciousness, Cosmic Consciousness, the Blissful Infinity beyond all creation.

Jesus relates metaphorically how the kingdom of God is attained. When the spiritual man sows the seeds of superconscious ecstasy—oneness with the supersensory realizations of the heavenly forces of the astral regions—into the soil of his consciousness, and feels that state of astral ecstasy equally during sleep and wakefulness, he will find that the astral ecstasy will mature into contact with the Christ Intelligence hidden in all vibratory creation and only thinly veiled in the manifestations of Heaven. Automatically, the Christ state will grow into the cosmic consciousness of God the Father lying beyond creation; for the “earth,” or astral perception within the body, brings forth by astral ecstasy the fruit of the consciousness of Christ Intelligence and gradually of the consciousness of Cosmic Consciousness beyond vibratory creation.

The devotee develops through various stages, just as a seed of corn develops into the blade, then the ear, and then the full corn. The blade refers to the superconsciousness of astral ecstasy with its perception of divine lights and vibrations, the first manifestations in the consciousness of the advancing devotee.

The second stage is marked by the contact of Christ Intelligence in all vibration, which is referred to in the parable of the corn as “the ear.”

In the third state, the devotee contacts God’s consciousness beyond creation, which is the “full corn” in Jesus’ metaphor.

When the fruit of the highest ecstasy of God-consciousness is harvested in the consciousness of the devotee, he uses his “sickle” of wisdom to sever his human consciousness from finite perception and to commingle his human consciousness, filled with the harvest of vibratory astral ecstasies and ecstasies in Christ Consciousness, with the ecstasy of the Blissful Absolute, the God the Father consciousness of vibrationless infinitude.



Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof” (Matthew 13:31 – 32).

Parallel reference:

And he said, “Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? Or with what comparison shall we compare it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth: but when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it” (Mark 4:30 – 32).⁹

“The kingdom of heaven, the ecstasy of superconsciousness with its perceptions of the heavenly vibrations of the divine astral regions, is as a mustard seed of ever new happiness when sown in the field of one’s consciousness. These nascent ecstasies of superconsciousness, becoming firmly rooted in the ‘earth’ of daily ecstatic meditation, begin to grow and become a potentially effectual part of the conscious and subconscious makeup of the physical body. Such perceptions may seem preliminarily to be less significant than all other seeds of sense happiness or material experiences, but when the tiny ‘mustard seed’ of the inspiration and joy felt in daily meditation matures within the soil of human consciousness, it becomes supremely predominant in its influence over all other herbs of human sense perceptions.

“It shoots its superconscious branches of joy into the conscious and subconscious perceptions and experiences of one’s everyday existence, proliferating until it becomes ‘a tree’ of cosmic joy and wisdom. The ‘birds of the air,’ the thoughts and perceptions of one’s mental atmosphere, converge in the branches of this ecstatic joy, which spreads throughout the entire

consciousness of man.

“In time, the superconscious perceptions expand into Christ Consciousness, and ultimately into Cosmic Consciousness, the kingdom of God. There is nothing similar with which to compare that state, except to say that its potential realization lies as if in a relatively infinitesimal spiritual ‘mustard seed’ with its burgeoning power of proliferation. He who has attained the supreme ecstasy of Cosmic Consciousness in the kingdom of God the Father, transcending all vibratory creation, he alone knows. No one else can know. The human mind, with its limitation, cannot comprehend that state of ecstasy. The mind and human consciousness must become expanded into oneness with Cosmic Consciousness in order to realize the kingdom of God.”



Another parable spake he unto them: “The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened” (Matthew 13:33).¹⁰



The “leaven” of meditative joy uplifts the conscious, subconscious, and superconscious minds

“The kingdom of astral ecstasy and superconscious joy of meditation is like unto ‘leaven’ which the devotee introduces into the ‘three measures of meal,’ the three divisions of consciousness—conscious, subconscious, and superconscious. As leaven raises or increases the three measures of meal, so the leaven of the ecstatic astral bliss of meditation, when experienced daily, spreads throughout the entire consciousness, subconsciousness, and superconsciousness—thence expanding the body-confined consciousness into the experience of Cosmic Vibration, Christ Consciousness, and the Cosmic Consciousness kingdom of God.”

In the “kingdom of heaven” ecstasy, the astral forces that govern creation are perceived; initially in this superconscious ecstasy one perceives occasional lights and sounds and bliss—the most significant being the variations of the light of the spiritual eye and of the sound of the holy Aum vibration with their effusion of peace and joy. In subconscious “ecstasy,” as in the state of sleep, the devotee experiences an imaginary or pseudo state of unconscious joy. In cosmic ecstasy, the ecstasy of Cosmic Vibration, the devotee joyously feels all vibratory creation as his own body. In Christ ecstasy, the devotee feels himself merged in the transcendent reflected image of God’s Intelligence as Christ Consciousness omnipresent in creation. In God the Father ecstasy the devotee feels one with the infinity of Cosmic Consciousness beyond vibratory creation, with its indescribable state of joy: “He who knows, knows. Naught else knows.”



All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, "I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world" (Matthew 13:34 – 35).¹¹

Parallel reference:

And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it. But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples (Mark 4:33 – 34).

These spiritual interpretations as they have come to me through the inspiration of Jesus Christ convince me that some of the most profound truths he expounded to the world have not been given in such simple terminology since the beginning of the whirl of this world cycle, or yuga.

Jesus conveyed in terms and illustrations familiar to his generation the eternal verities he received directly from God. The ordinary people of his time could not understand, for example, the differences between the kingdom of heaven attained by superconscious ecstasy and the transcendent kingdom of God-consciousness. Jesus taught the deeper truths to his disciples when they were alone with him, the same truths he guarded with parables when given to the nonunderstanding masses, but discernable to all deserving advanced souls who could hear the underlying wisdom with ears of intuition.



Without soul intuition, the ultimate truths remain a mystery to man

Ordinary people, to whom deep metaphysical truths were unintelligible, received the parables as simple illustrations from which guidance they could better their lives and rouse their faith in God. To this day, the words of Christ are received similarly, with varying literal and theological interpretations around which have grown so many denominations and sects. The reference of Matthew to “things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world” declares the ultimate nature of truth as provable only by the infallible perception of soul intuition, the direct experience of truth by becoming one with it. Without this inner realization, truth remains a mystery to man, only dimly imagined or otherwise surmised by the intellect. Thus, to understand the one and only one perception of Jesus Christ behind the words of his teachings, devotees must be able to perceive through their intuition in the sanctuary of meditation the revealed mysteries of which he spoke in parables.

The very fact that it was to his close disciples alone that Jesus “expounded all things” of those truths he had hidden in the parables given to the multitudes tells modern would-be disciples of Christ that they need not be satisfied with receiving the same revamped superficial sermons at Sunday morning church services. A minister with mere theoretical knowledge of the scriptures is gratified if he can momentarily inspire his congregation with what he infers or imagines to be the truth taught by Jesus Christ. But a real divine spokesman, meditating to become imbued with Christ Consciousness, inspires others to become with him a disciplined band of truth demonstrators who by meditation congregate in the inner sanctuary of silence to learn from God, who speaks through the lips of the devotee’s intuition, the mysteries of life and soul liberation.

A true house of God will not be satisfied only with preaching theories about God; it will teach the art of God-contact, of how to make the soul of man an illuminated temple wherein God Himself will come and deliver sermons through His voice of intuition to the sincerely seeking devotional thoughts of the devotee.



Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, "Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field." He answered and said unto them, "He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; the field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that soweth them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Matthew 13:36 – 43).



The “harvest” of good and bad karma reaped at “the end of the world”

The parable of the tares is explained to his close disciples by Jesus in an expanded metaphorical imagery: “He who cultivates the good seed of God-wisdom (the good children) in his own consciousness (the world) finds the body (son of man) attuned with Cosmic Consciousness (the kingdom); even as my body (the Son of man) is attuned, and as I have come to sow my teachings and my life in the field of the world consciousness.

“But the cosmic delusion of Satan implants ignorance, the weeds of worries, anger, fear, mental darkness, in the minds of evil-bent individuals.

“The inimical cosmic ignorance is the devil, the archangel of God who misused his independence and created the seeds of all evils to entrap man in delusion. When souls leave this earth at the ‘end of the world’—after finishing earthly existence at the time of death, or by otherwise transcending worldly consciousness—they reap the harvest of their good or bad karma. The reapers are the truth-revealing bright angels of soul intuition.

“In the after-death state, the astral-bodied consciousness of souls with evil karma, gathered together in the astral world, will burn in the fire of sorrows resulting from their own ignorance. The Son of man, the visible form of Jesus or any being with Christ Consciousness, will send forth angelic messengers of light, or come themselves, to receive souls in their after-death state. They will gather the astral-bodied souls who offend or create wrong vibrations wherever they are and who are full of iniquity or bad karma, and these astral beings shall be made to realize consciously that the searing fire of their misery is their self-created conflagration of evil and ignorance. They will wail and remonstrate about their errors and the sad state of their astral existence. Those that can draw on their store of subverted good karma and spiritual desire, and will repent and consciously try to embrace righteousness, will shine forth as the sun of wisdom manifested in their soul through contact with the consciousness of God.¹² Those who have ears to hear, let them hear; God is not a God of vengeance but of redemption, who aids souls whether they punish or reward themselves according to their own activities.”

A kind and merciful God would never throw a sinner into an eternally

tormenting furnace of fire; even the greatest sinner in the after-death state is an immutable, immortal soul and has a luminous astral body that cannot be burned by any physical fire.¹³ Souls encrusted with wicked karma not only can repent and heal the burns of their evil ways in this life by the salve of wisdom and peace found in meditation, but also, in the after-death state, they can find redemption when they are awakened by the angels of God and are given the opportunity in their astral existence to repent and resurrect their buried good karma. Evil-bound souls usually die in an unconscious transition from the body, but the after-death unconscious state is temporarily removed by angels of God to give souls suffering subconsciously in the fire of their own wicked tendencies a chance to strive toward God-consciousness by astral meditation. If they are overwhelmed by their habitual preference for ungodly mortal ways, that door of opportunity is quickly closed, leaving them closeted in their karmic destiny.

This parable is ambiguously complex in its broad scope of meaning of “the end of the world,” as intended by Jesus. The literal end of the world could refer either to the extinction of the earth after it has completed its aeonic cycles of usefulness to creation; or further, to the dissolution of the entire universe when Spirit ceases Its creative dreamings after trillions of years of manifestation. The vast extent of these two possibilities is hardly relevant, though true in principle, to the warning given by Jesus to evildoers to change their ways.

The “end of the world” is more usefully understood as applied to that time when the world ends in the consciousness of each individual, temporarily or permanently, as the case may be. This occurs in the following ways: In deep sleep when the superconsciousness of the soul becomes semiconscious, reminding the subconscious of man’s essential perfection hidden in the tares of worldly consciousness; in righteous freedom from earthly desires and attachments, breaking karmic bonds that tie man to the world; in death, when the world recedes from one’s consciousness, being replaced by astral perceptions; in samadhi meditation when God alone is experienced as the Sole Reality; and in the highest nirvikalpa samadhi state in which one transcends delusion even while engaged in material activities. The metaphor given by Jesus applies to any and all of these ways to experience the end of the world, and to the condition of man pertinent to each.

In consequence, the above parable can also be explained as follows: The devotee who sows the good seeds of wisdom in his consciousness and in his bodily activities becomes a good example in the world, and all his children of good

tendencies are saturated with the blissful state of the soul's intrinsic contact with Cosmic Consciousness. And the tares or weeds are those mental tendencies of selfishness, greed, lust that spring up as children of wicked ignorance born of sense contact with Satan's delusive temptations; they arise in the consciousness of man without his participation in creating them, only in succumbing to them. In creating these evils, Satan fights God everywhere, in man and in nature, resisting and marring God's perfection and harmony at every opportunity. At the end of worldly consciousness, the devotee will gather in his divine harvest through his reapers of angelic intuition, Self-realization and wisdom. He will burn in the newly kindled fire of his wisdom the tares or weeds of accumulated karmic effects of his past evil actions.

The God-saturated son of man, the devotee, will send his angels of intuitive perceptions deep into the subconscious and superconscious minds to gather all hidden offending and sinning tendencies of past lives and these will be burned in the flames of the devotee's fiery wisdom spread throughout his conscious and subconscious and superconscious minds. His evil inner tendencies will wail and rebel at being consumed in the fire of wisdom. Then the pure righteousness of the devotee will come out from behind the clouds of all past evil karma and shine forth as the sun of cosmic wisdom, ablaze with pure transcendental consciousness in the kingdom of God the Father, felt in the union of the body, mind, and soul with Christ Intelligence in creation and Cosmic Consciousness beyond creation.¹⁴ Those who have spiritual ears, let them hear and absorb into their consciousness through direct experience the truth of these words.



“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it” (Matthew 13:44 – 46).



God-realization: the “pearl of great price”

“The astral kingdom of heavenly forces and heavenly perception, experienced by the devotee in superconscious ecstasy, is filled with rich spiritual treasure, angels of God, departed saintly souls and masters, revelations of the mysteries of life and death and of the comings and goings of all manifestations, hidden behind the field of material consciousness and sense perception. When the physical consciousness of man finds these truths revealed, he secretes these treasures deep within his consciousness and in great joy disposes of all his material desires and by the power of his deep devotion and good karma he secures the possession of that superconscious field of truth.

“Yet again, when the heavenly kingdom of the astral forces is revealed unto a devotee, he becomes a divine merchantman of these prized pearls of truth, seeking until he finds the one peerless pearl of God-wisdom in divine realization, of priceless value. When his consciousness goes out again into the world after this discovery, he forsakes all his material desires and with accumulated power of desire-free transcendent meditation, he possesses that all-surpassing pearl of God-wisdom.”



“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth” (Matthew 13:47 – 50).

“The devotee, with his net of Self-realization cast into the sea of meditation, gathers astral perceptions and also insight into the proclivities of his bad karma. When he finds in the net of his introspection this mixed catch, which he has pulled onto the shores of his outer mind, he sits down to the task in meditation of gathering up the good things which he found in the net of his devotion, and casting out by the force of wisdom all hidden evil tendencies.

“All devotees will find this experience at ‘the end of the world,’ that is, when they have finished their earthly desires. Those devotees will find the angels of intuition and Self-realization come out of the depths of their consciousness to sever all wicked karma from their acquired good tendencies, casting the evil propensities into the utterly consuming fire of inner wisdom. These die-hard evil karmic predispositions, born of bad habits, offer woeful inner resistance; but in spite of their remonstrances, they will surely be consumed by the fire of wisdom kindled by the devotee.”



Jesus saith unto them, "Have ye understood all these things?" They say unto him, "Yea, Lord." Then said he unto them, "Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old" (Matthew 13:51 – 52).

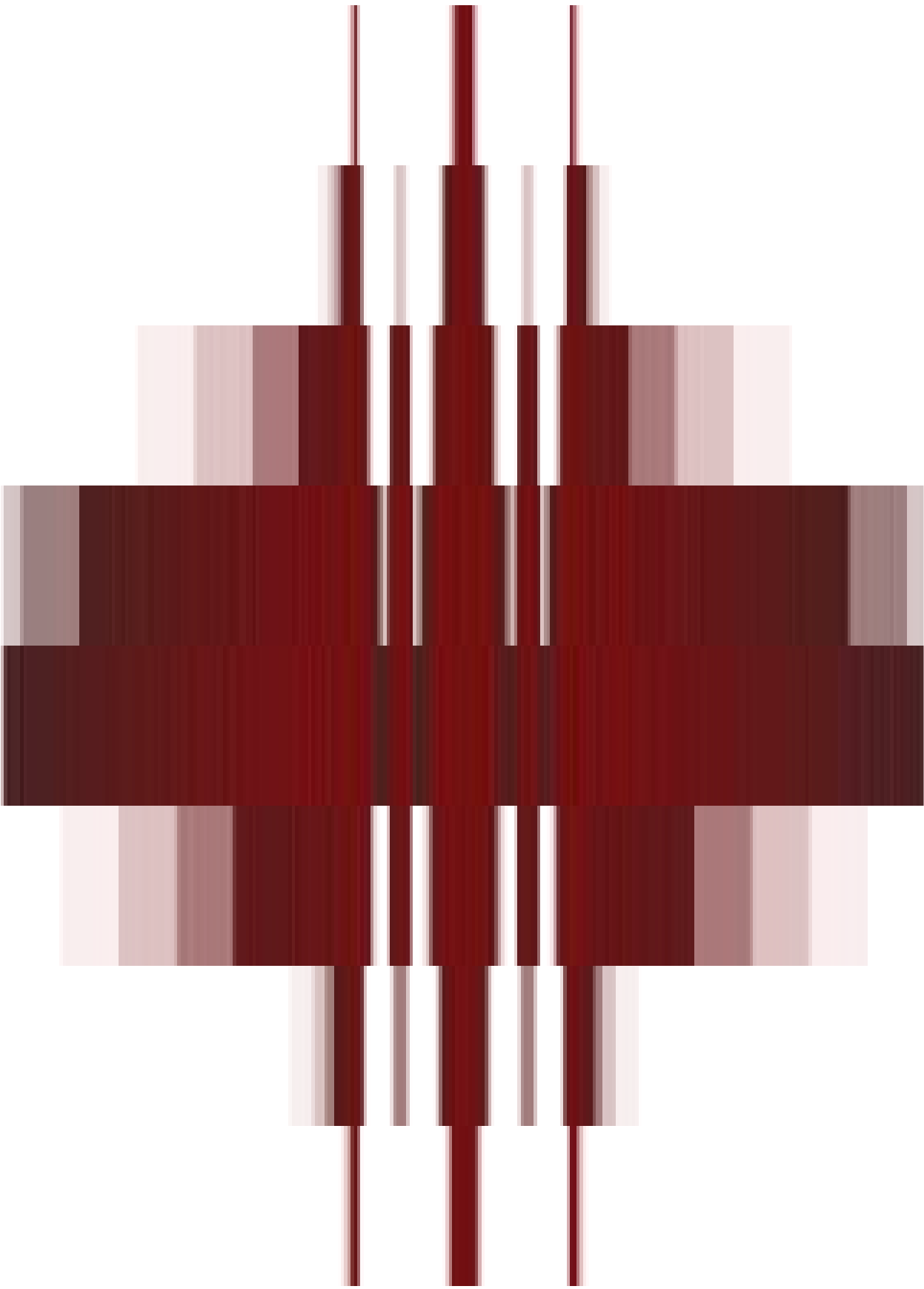
“T herefore, every person who finds the heavenly kingdom of astral superconsciousness by meditation is an accomplished devotee, a divine householder of his bodily existence, with precious treasure from which he brings forth out of this spiritual acquisition new revelations of truth and old truths expressed newly.”



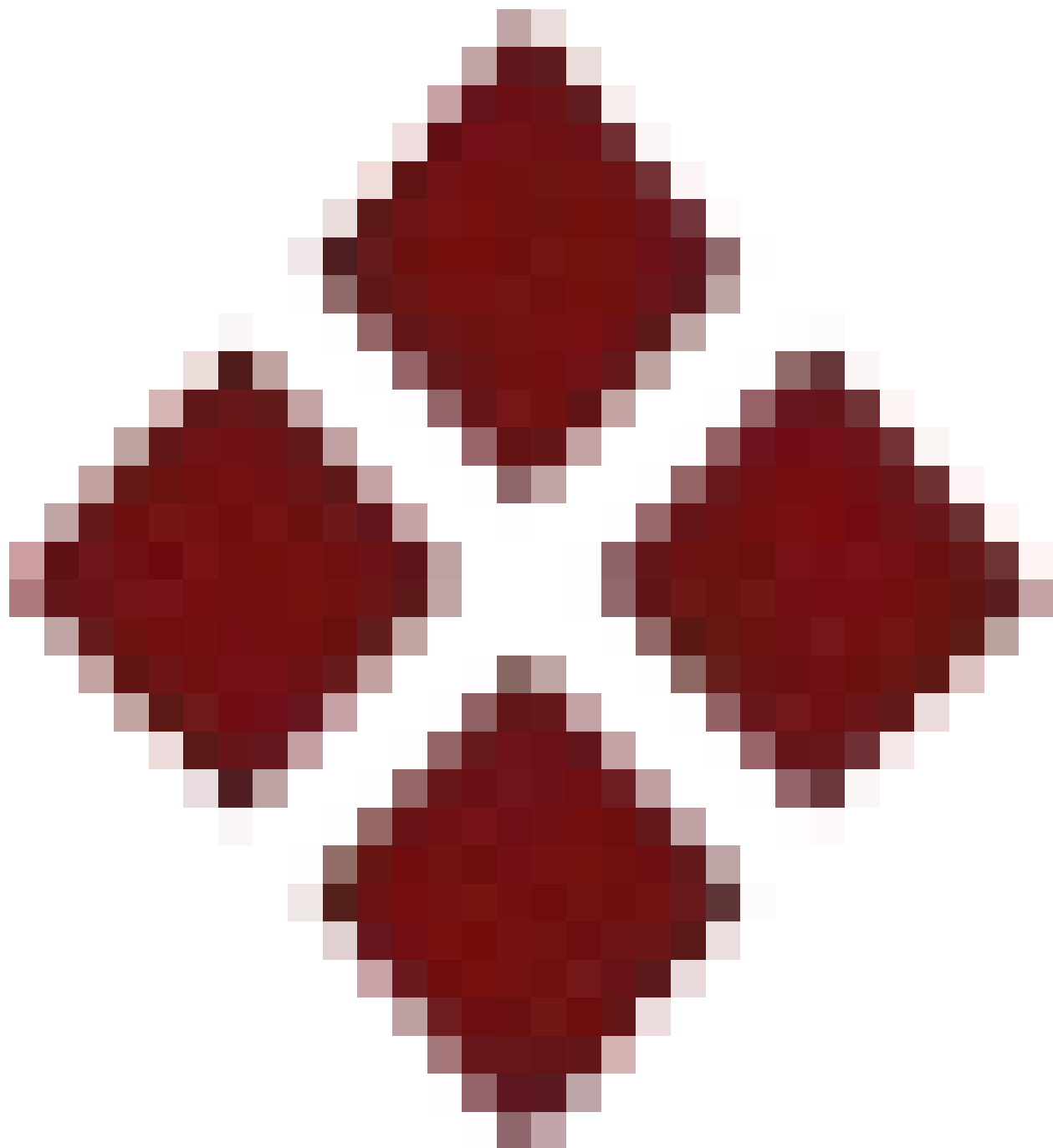
Discourse 38

“Thy Faith Hath Made Thee Whole”

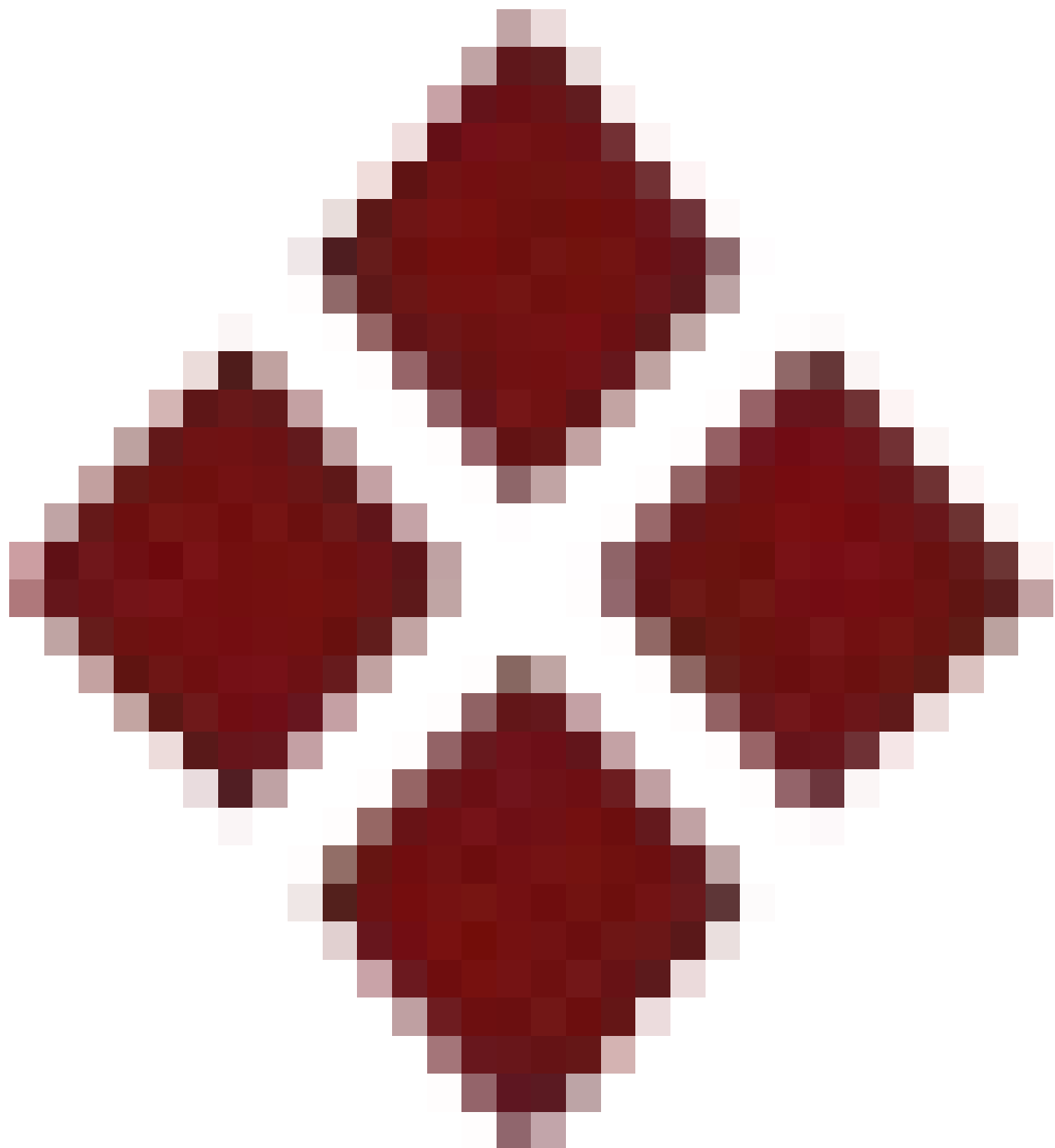
**Storm, Disease, Devils, Death, Bow to the Will of
Jesus**



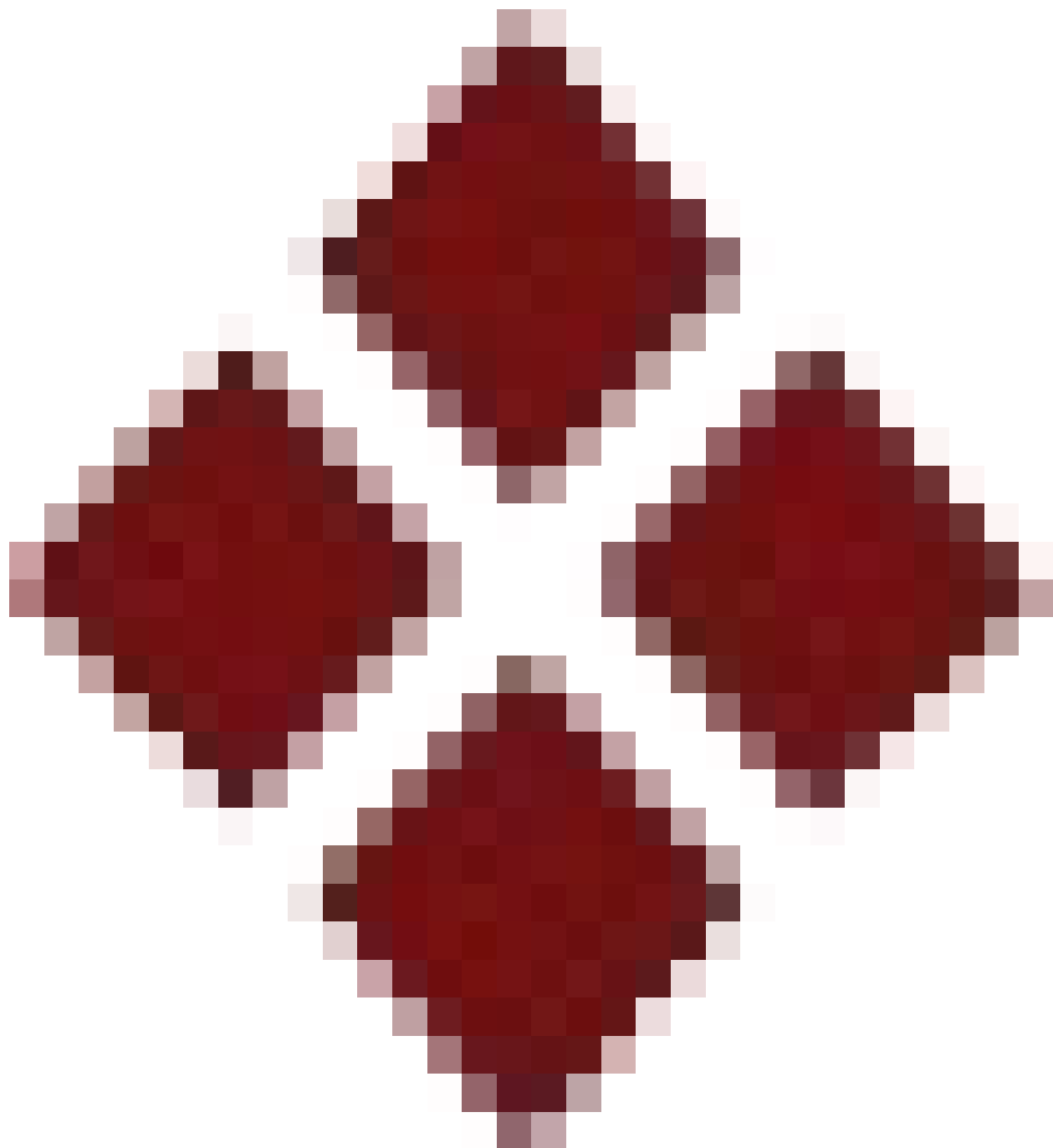
The Ever-Wakeful Omniscience of Illumined Masters



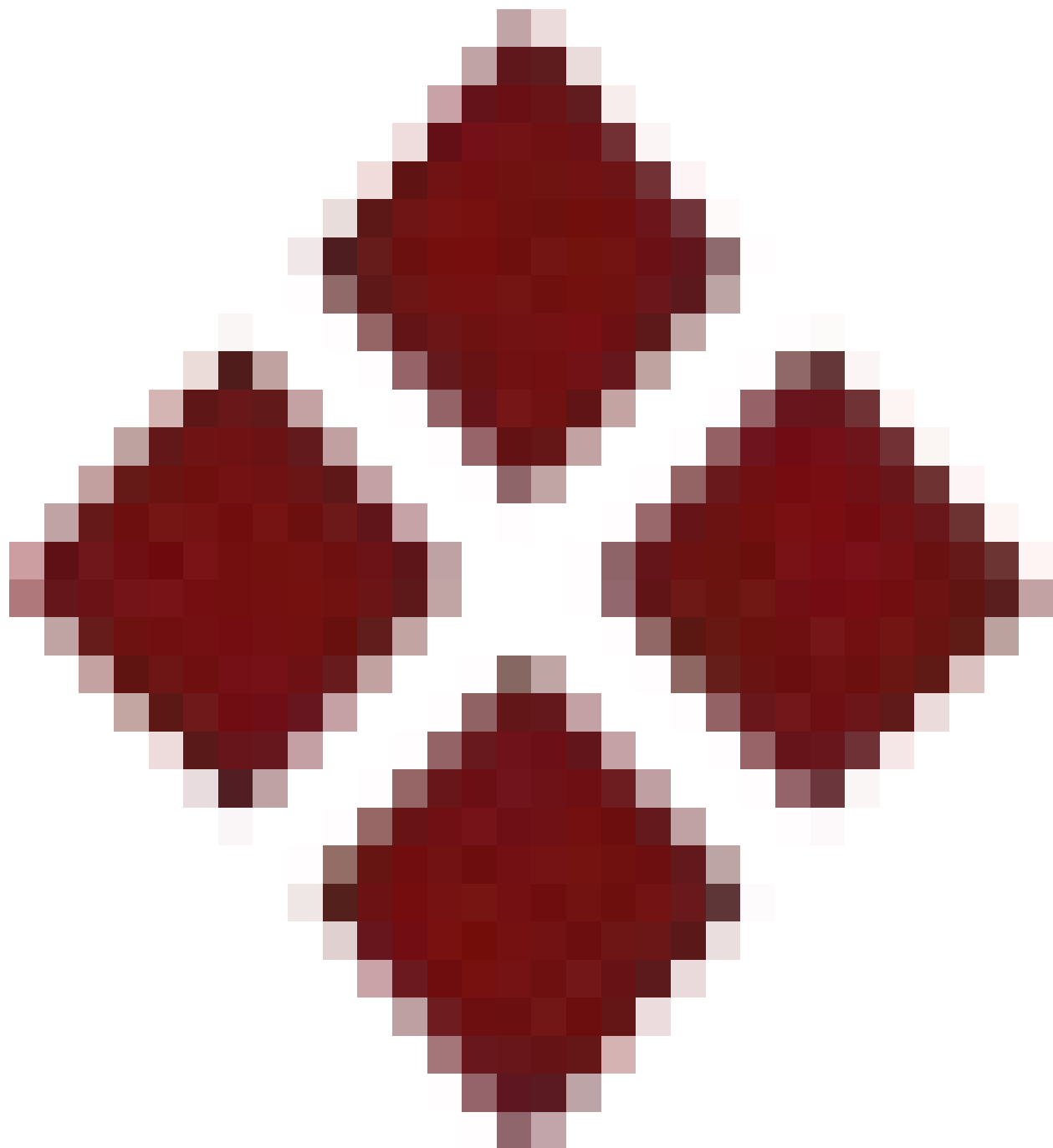
**All Forces of Nature Subject to the God-Given Power
in Man's Soul**



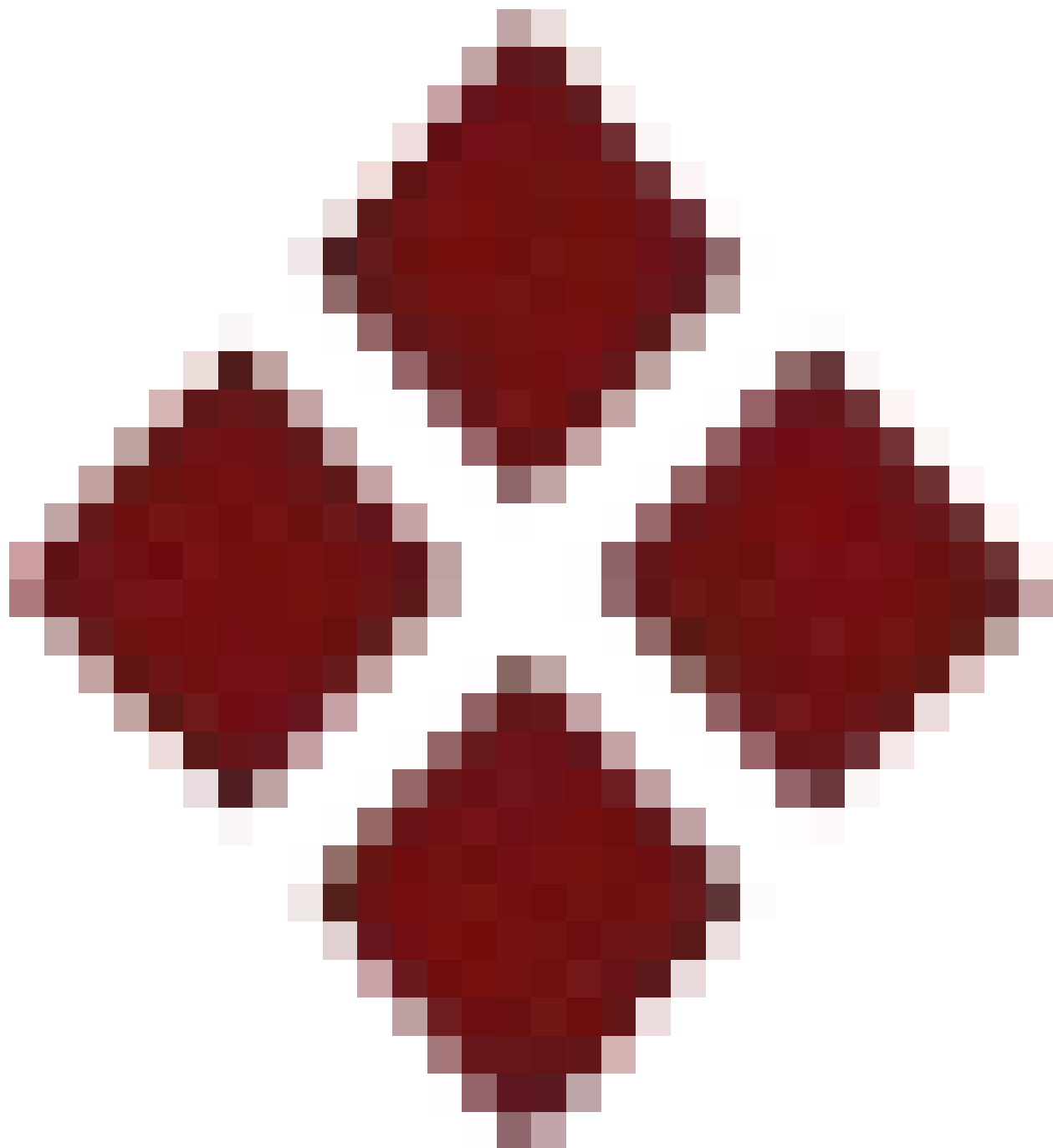
**A Remarkable Exorcism of “Unclean Spirits” or
“Tramp Souls”**



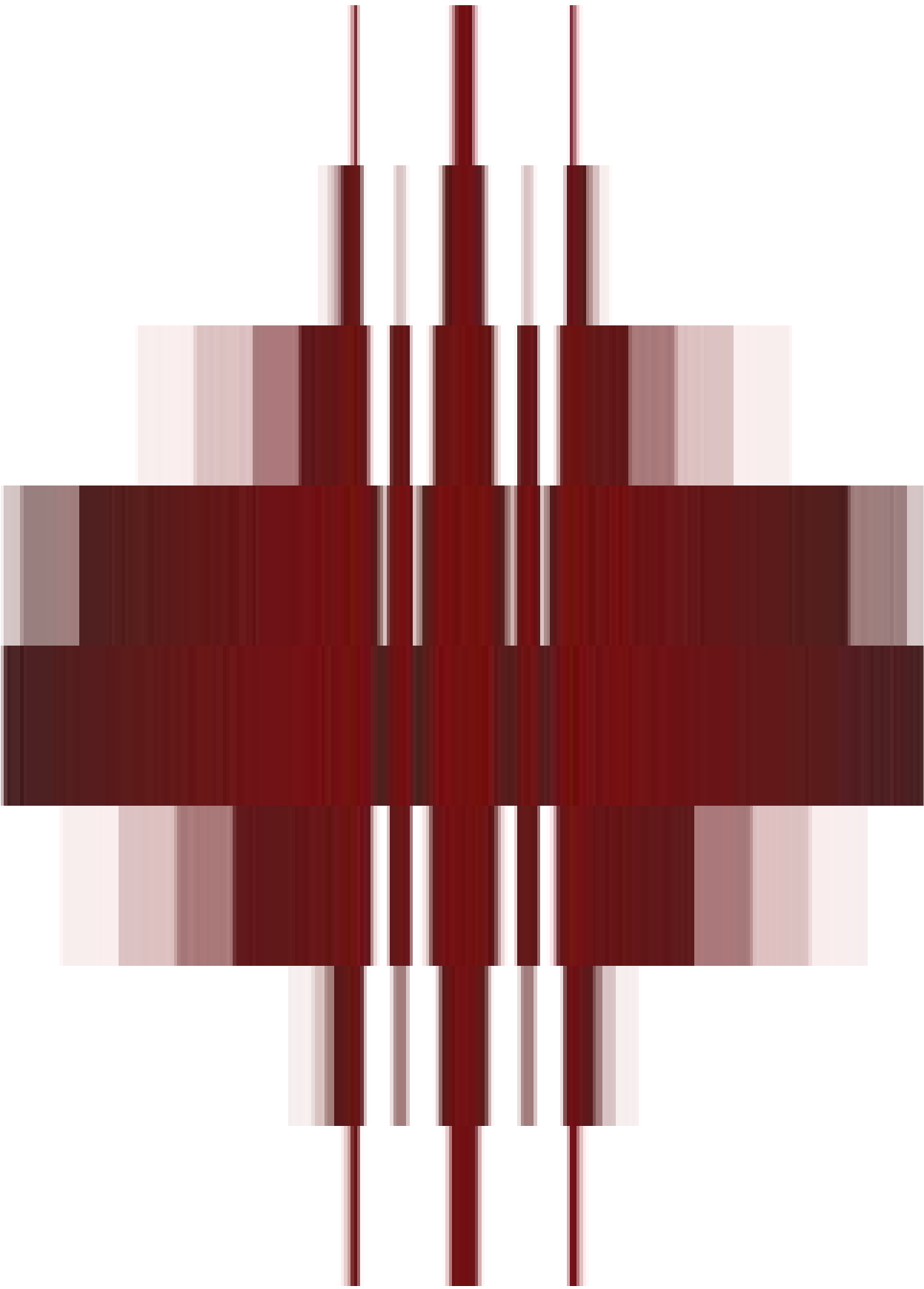
How Faith Can Draw “Virtue” or Healing Energy From Divine Personages



Jesus Raises Jairus' Daughter From the Dead



How Spiritual “Laborers” Can Reap the “Plenteous Harvest” of God-realization



“Wondrous was the love and compassion of Jesus as he journeyed through the busy cities and villages teaching in the synagogues the gospel, God’s vibratory truth, and giving forth of his divine power to heal all manner of suffering.”

■

Now it came to pass on a certain day, that he went into a ship with his disciples: and he said unto them, "Let us go over unto the other side of the lake." And they launched forth. But as they sailed he fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy. And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, "Master, master, we perish."

Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm.

And he said unto them, "Where is your faith?" And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another, "What manner of man is this! for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him."

And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee. And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs.

When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, "What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not." (For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness.)

And Jesus asked him, saying, "What is thy name?" And he said, "Legion": because many devils were entered into him. And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep.

And there was there an herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And he suffered them. Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked.

When they that fed them saw what was done, they fled, and went and told it in the city and in the country.

Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid. They also which saw it told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed. Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about besought him to depart from them; for they were taken with great fear: and he went up into the ship, and returned back again.

Now the man out of whom the devils were departed besought him that he might be with him: but Jesus sent him away, saying, "Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee." And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him.

And it came to pass, that, when Jesus was returned, the people gladly received him: for they were all waiting for him. And, behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought him that he would come into his house: for he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying.

But as he went the people thronged him. And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any, came behind him, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanchèd.

And Jesus said, "Who touched me?" When all denied, Peter and they that were with him said, "Master, the multitude throng thee and press thee, and sayest thou, 'Who touched me?'"

And Jesus said, "Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me."

And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him, she declared unto him before all the people for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately. And he said unto her, "Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace."

While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, "Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master."

But when Jesus heard it, he answered him, saying, "Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole." And when he came into the house, he suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden. And all wept, and bewailed her: but he said, "Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth."

And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead. And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, "Maid, arise." And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat.

And her parents were astonished: but he charged them that they should tell no man what was done.

—Luke 8:22 – 56

And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, "Thou son of David, have mercy on us."

And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, "Believe ye that I am able to do this?"

They said unto him, "Yea, Lord."

Then touched he their eyes, saying, "According to your faith be it unto you." And their eyes were opened; and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, "See that no man know it." But they, when they were departed, spread abroad his fame in all that country.

As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil. And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, "It was never so seen in Israel." But the Pharisees said, "He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils."

And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and

every disease among the people. But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.

Then saith he unto his disciples, “The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.”

—Matthew 9:27 – 38



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Discourse 38

“Thy Faith Hath Made Thee Whole”

**Storm, Disease, Devils, Death, Bow to the Will of
Jesus**



Now it came to pass on a certain day, that he went into a ship with his disciples: and he said unto them, "Let us go over unto the other side of the lake." And they launched forth. But as they sailed he fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy. And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, "Master, master, we perish."

Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm.

And he said unto them, "Where is your faith?" And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another, "What manner of man is this! for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him" (Luke 8:22 – 25).

Parallel reference:

And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, "Let us pass over unto the other side." And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships. And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full.

And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, "Master, carest thou not that we perish?"

And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, "Peace, be still." And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

*And he said unto them, “Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?”
And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, “What manner of man is
this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?” (Mark 4:35 – 41).¹*



The ever-wakeful omniscience of illumined masters

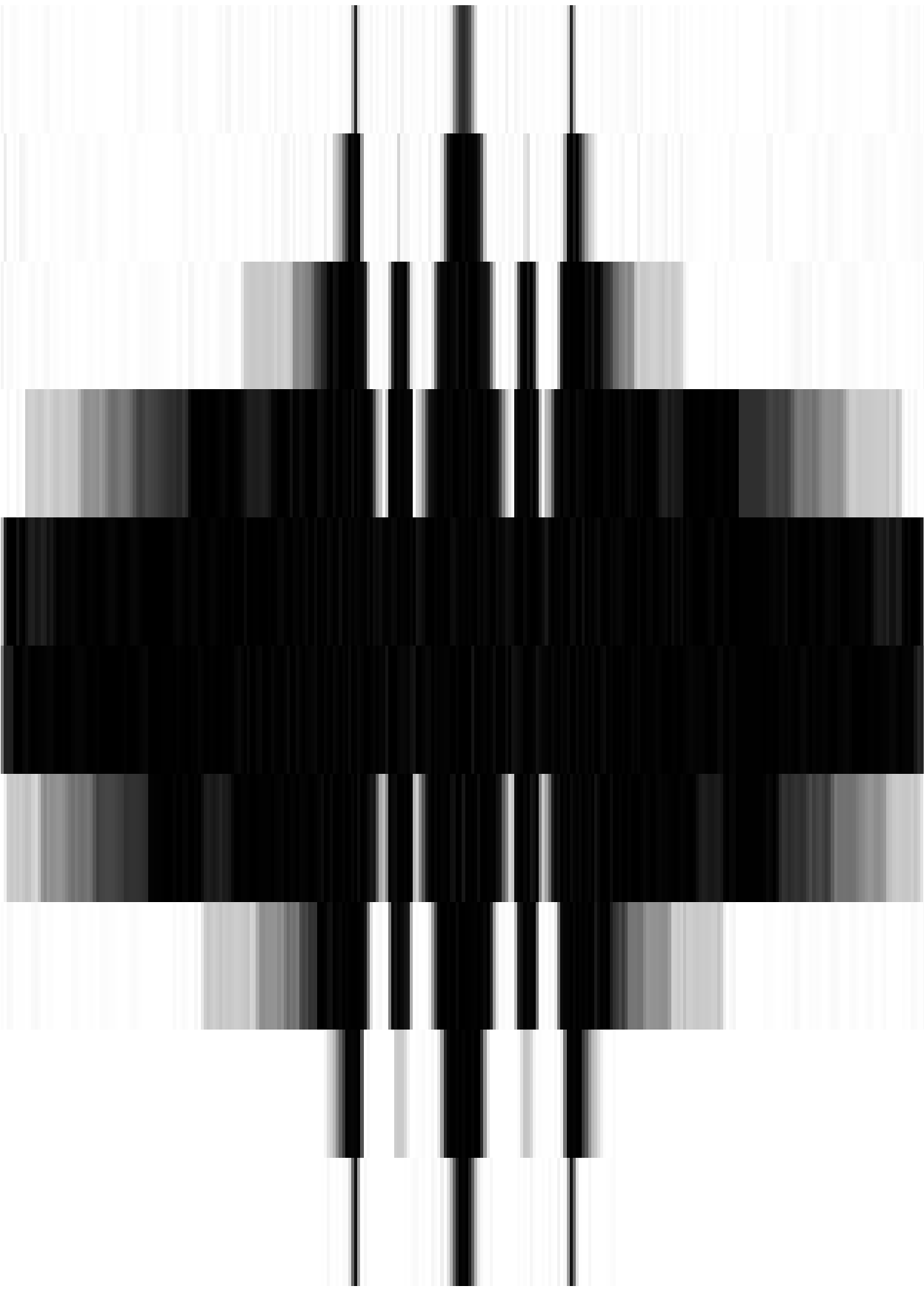
Although the body of Jesus was asleep, his inner consciousness was awake in the ever-knowingness of God's omnipresence. The center of an individual's consciousness is in the conscious mind during wakefulness, the subconscious mind during sleep, and in superconsciousness during deep meditation. When an individual is concentrated in the state of wakefulness, his subconsciousness and superconsciousness remain in the background. When he is asleep, his consciousness and superconsciousness remain in the background. But a master like Jesus, whose center of consciousness is Cosmic Consciousness, is omniscient in Spirit whether his body is awake or asleep. He is able to watch his body sleeping and to be aware of any present or far-flung condition or circumstance, even as God watches all human beings and notes equally the grandeur of evolving universes and the fall of a single sparrow.

God's omnipresent consciousness knows the life and death, the sleep and wakeful activities, of all creatures present in Him, even as we know all our thoughts within our one mind. A human being with his one self-contained life is conscious of the sensations of his body or of pain that may occur in any conglomerate of the twenty-seven thousand billion cells of his body; God's consciousness, encompassing all space, knows every happening, even in any one of the tiniest atoms among the multitudinous creations in the cosmos.

Jesus questioned his disciples' faith because they did not realize that, even though his body slept, his consciousness was awake with the Father in the storm, in the boat, in the disciples—in everything. If the disciples had had faith in the omnipresent consciousness of Jesus, they would have known his inner consciousness was aware of their plight and that he was, even in that dire moment, protecting them.

To reanimate their paralyzed trust, Jesus admonished: "Why do you permit ignorance to assault you with fear and steal away your faith in the all-protecting omnipresent power and consciousness within me?" With the sanction of the Divine Will to prove the omnipotence of God within him, Jesus rose and addressed the sea, commanding the forces of nature, winds and water: "O ye boisterous wind and tumultuous sea, governed by cosmic forces, you who are created and active according to the will of God, the Father with whom I am One,

I command you to change your vibration and be peaceful and quiet.”



All forces of nature subject to the God-given power in man's soul

“Peace, be still.” As soon as Jesus, with his omnipresent consciousness and the omnipotent will of God within him, vibrated peace, the God-guided forces of nature immediately followed his example, becoming still in vibrations of calmness. It seems to ordinary persons that the elemental processes of nature are the result of the workings of coincidental blind forces without any plan. But it is evident that the harmony in nature, the routine of seasons, the mathematics of planetary order, the sustenance of life, reveal an intelligent law and cosmic plan of God by which they are governed. Only an obstinate rationalist ascribes to chance the law and order in the universe and in the tidy life-supporting generosity of this earth; the divine man consciously perceives God in everything upholding by His divine will the scrupulous laws and forces of His wonderworks.

Hence, Jesus, being a master, not in imagination but by Self-realization of his oneness with Spirit, could evoke the will of God manifested in his own will to control the raging storm and waves.

I was blessed to witness the control of nature by my great master, Swami Sri Yukteswarji. Once when I was with Master at his seaside ashram in Puri on the Bay of Bengal, he asked me to lead his students in a summer solstice procession along the beach and through the streets of the town. The weather boded the expected seasonal heat, with not the slightest prospect of rain or clouds. I remonstrated with Master that it would be next to impossible for the disciples to maintain any decorum while walking barefoot on the fiery sands and city streets. Master replied, “I will tell you a secret. The Lord shall send an umbrella of clouds; you all shall walk in comfort.”

As soon as the religious procession started, the entire sky became overcast as though by magic, and a very light rain fell, cooling the streets and scorching seashore. To the astonishment and immense gratitude of all, the comforting rain continued throughout the two-hour procession; but the instant we returned to the hermitage, the sky burned again with the oriental sun and the parade route seared with hostile intent. Master ascribed no personal credit to his part in the many miracles I saw him perform. As to taming the relentless Indian sun, he remarked simply, as was his wont: “You see how God feels for us. The Lord responds to all and works for all. Just as He sent rain at my plea, so He fulfills any sincere

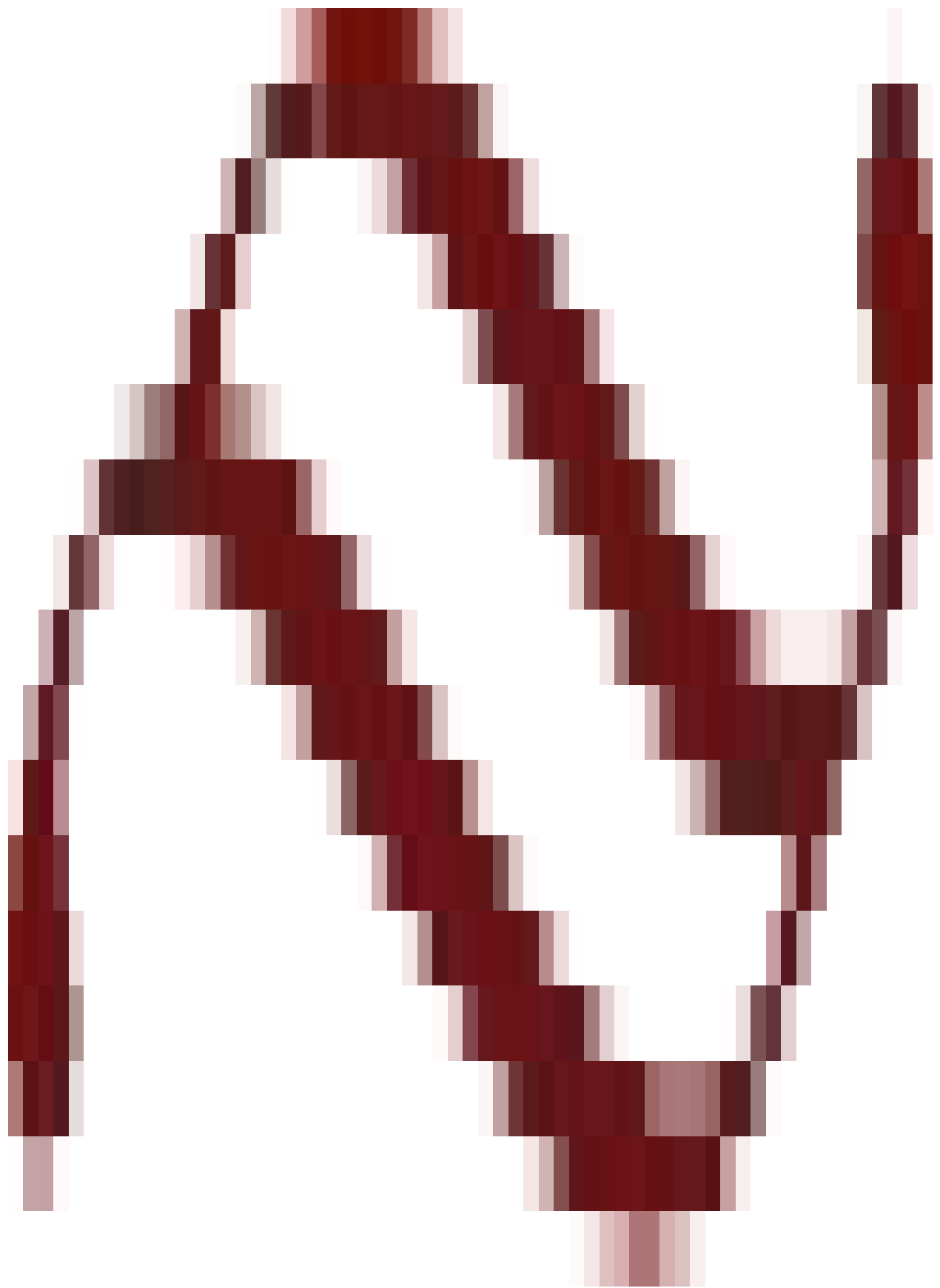
desire of the devotee. Seldom do men realize how often God heeds their prayers. He is not partial to a few, but listens to everyone who approaches Him trustfully. His children should ever have implicit faith in the loving-kindness of their Omnipresent Father.”

Whether a master prays for a specific response from God, or in divine attunement with God wills that desired effect, he activates the manifesting power of the Lord’s creative vibration. Long before Western science recognized the vibratory essence of matter, the rishis of ancient India spoke of the whole spectrum of nature as an objectification of Aum, the Primal Sound or Vibratory Word. They showed that all natural phenomena can be controlled by the manipulation of vibration through the use of certain mantras or chants.² Historical documents tell of the remarkable powers possessed by Miyan Tan Sen, sixteenth-century court musician for Akbar the Great. When ordered by the Emperor to sing a night raga at midday, Tan Sen intoned a mantra that instantly caused the whole palace precincts to become enveloped in darkness.

Man was made to be lord over nature, and the forces of nature in turn work together to serve man. Man negates his lordship by faulty, self-serving stewardship of his earthly environment. He guides nature, though usually unknowingly, not only by his actions but also by the vibrations of his thoughts. The calamitous effects of floods, tornadoes, earthquakes, and all other natural disasters are results of the cumulative evil actions and thoughts of earth’s human beings. The evils of war, for example, create tremendous negative vibrations that unbalance the forces of nature and release unrestrained energy. Conversely, man’s goodness promotes peace, prosperity, well-being. When man becomes master of himself, sublimating the evil vibrations within himself, he reclaims the God-given power in his soul by which he can command from servant Nature—with God’s sanction—whatever he so wills.

Several thousand years hence in the fourth yuga, the spiritual age of this present world cycle, there will be greater control of the elemental processes of nature, both in the earth’s environment and in people’s lives in general. In the heavenly spheres of the astral world, it is common to control the atmosphere and one’s individual state of being. (The astral beings in the lower strata have no such control.) In the higher regions they can manipulate the lifetronic light-images and forces according to the power of their will. In the gross material world when one doesn’t want rain, it rains; and when the earth needs rain, the sun shines. Imagine living in a world where you can command the storm to come and snow

to melt. By control of the astral forces that empower nature, Jesus could calm the ravaging storm and Sri Yukteswarji could cool with clouds the searing rays of the sun. While there is a certain degree of uniformity in nature, there is also tremendous vagrancy—unpredictable extremes meant to bring out the conqueror in man, to encourage him to look behind the apparent disorder and to spiritualize his will with God's will in the malleable heavenly astral forces that activate the workings of the material universe.



And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee. And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs.

When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, “What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not.” (For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness) (Luke 8:26 – 29).³



A remarkable exorcism of “unclean spirits” or “tramp souls”

In rare cases, lunacy is not due to some derangement in the brain, but to possession by tramp souls, some of which are demonic evil spirits, which can be exorcised or driven out by healers like Christ. Thus Jesus had commanded: “O thou disembodied soul, an erstwhile reflection of Spirit now vile with unclean evil karma, you must give up your unlawful possession of this man’s body; you have tormented him and deprived him of all sane sensibilities.” When Jesus so spoke, an evil spirit in the madman fearfully implored Christ not to dispossess it from its now-accustomed habitat.

As previously explained, a tramp soul of demonic nature is often a disembodied spirit of a murderer or other such vicious criminal or licentious person, a “devil.”⁴ Because of a profane disregard for the sanctity of life, his own karma condemns his spirit to a nightmarish existence in the lower spheres of the astral world, where he remains “earthbound,” roaming disconsolately in the dark regions of astral etheric space. Such spirits, not finding a much-desired quick rebirth, seek out and possess demented minds of persons whose bad karma attracts that particular fate. Masters who can distinguish between spirit possession and ordinary mental disorders have the power to consciously evict tramp souls from the human bodies they have seized.

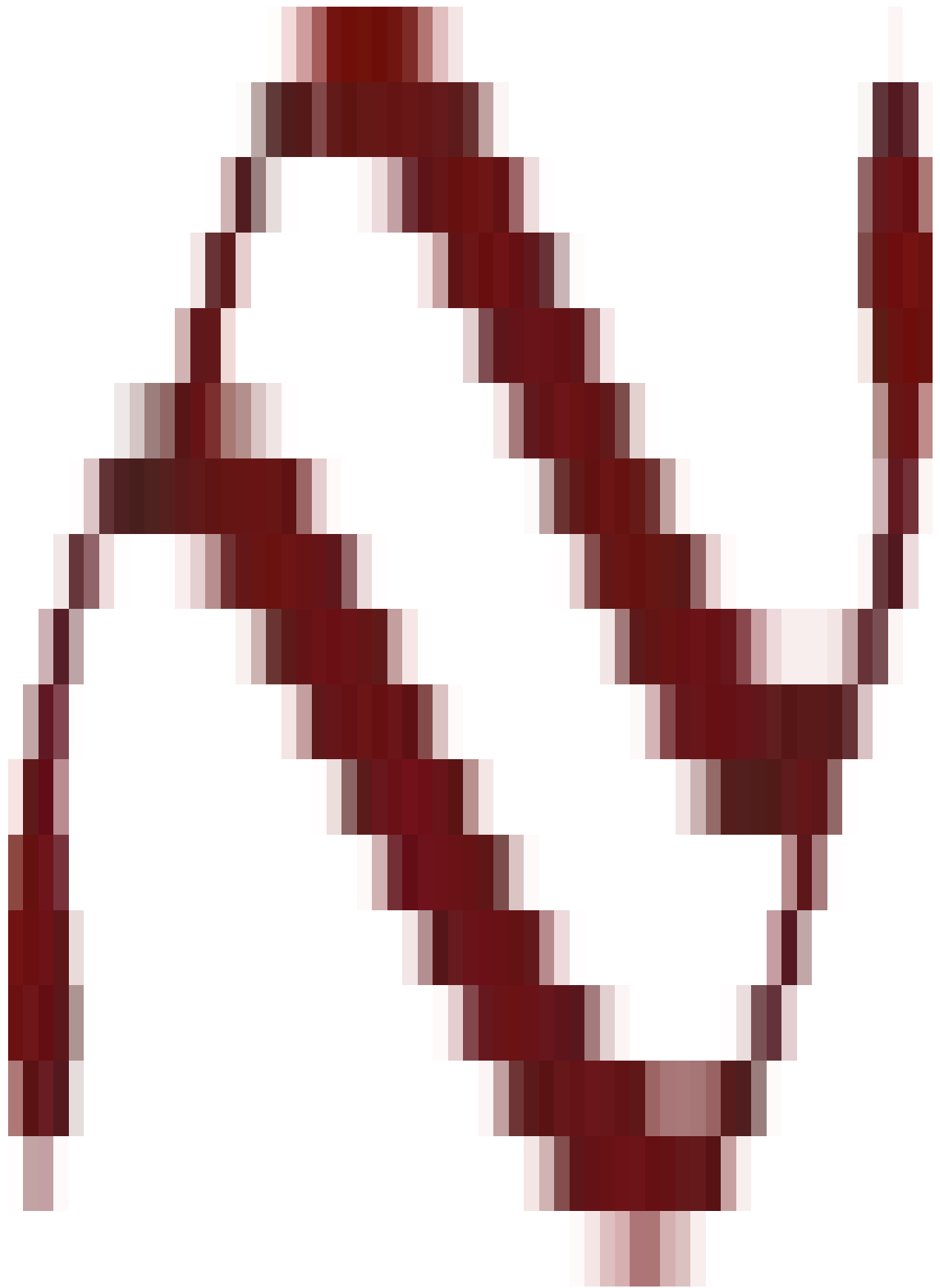


And Jesus asked him, saying, "What is thy name?" And he said, "Legion": because many devils were entered into him. And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep (Luke 8:30 – 31).

Evil spirits in the astral world are controlled by Satan, with each having a distinctive name and features. That is why Jesus asked the spirit that addressed him to identify itself. The leader of the agglomerated spirits in the madman replied that his name was Legion, which signified that many devils, wicked disembodied spirits, were crowding and disordering the one mental house of this madman. As many thoughts can remain in one mind, and various moods and various personalities can be displayed by the same actor, so various disembodied spirits, being subtle, not physical, could occupy the same one mind and body of the possessed Gadarene.

These disembodied astral beings knew the influence of Jesus Christ's consciousness in the astral world. They knew of his power over evil spirits; so they begged him not to condemn them to roam again, without the consciousness of a physical body, in the oceanic depths of black space where they were trammelled in the torments of their own visions of a nightmare existence without a light to guide them.

These diabolical spirits crowding the brain of their host were highly delighted with their freedom to run riot among the perceptions of a world full of definite objects, enjoying through the brain of this possessed individual the sensations of sound, light, taste, smell, and touch. They feared being denied a further joyride in the fleshly vehicle, which they sent careening through a land of physical sensations and sceneries, and being thrown back into the Hades and nightmare of dark subconscious existence, "the deep."



And there was there an herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And he suffered them. Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked (Luke 8:32 – 33).

Since Jesus Christ, by his divine power, was compelling the unclean spirits to leave the body of the madman, they implored him to let them enjoy instead the lesser sensibilities in the bodies of a nearby herd of swine, preferring a transition from the feeling of human sensations to the feeling of animal sensations rather than suddenly to be whirled back into the dark subconscious Hades to which they were condemned by their evil karma.

Jesus acquiesced. Through his help, the unclean spirits then left the brain of the possessed individual and entered the bodies of the herd of swine. The takeover by the evil spirits, and their wanton excitement in experiencing the perceptions of animal pleasure, deranged the normal instinctive behavior of the swine. In maniacal behavior, they ran violently into the lake and were drowned. The unclean spirits, along with the souls (the individualized evolving consciousness) of the swine, were driven back into the dark astral region of undeveloped beings—the wicked spirits were thrust again into their subconscious state of self-created nightmares; the souls of the swine were soon to incarnate in higher life-forms according to the natural order of upward evolution.



When they that fed them saw what was done, they fled, and went and told it in the city and in the country.

Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid. They also which saw it told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed. Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about besought him to depart from them; for they were taken with great fear: and he went up into the ship, and returned back again (Luke 8:34 – 37).

It was foolish of the people of Gadara to be afraid of Jesus because of their nonunderstanding. What they should have feared was their own ignorance. Had they realized the redeeming power of Jesus, they would have asked him how they could be free from being possessed by ignorance, the devil of devils.

Circumspection in spiritual matters is wise, but closed minds are deplorable. Even in modern times, in the absence of many once-prevalent bizarre superstitions, there are still otherwise educated people who remain skeptical, even fearful, of a true master who can demonstrate as well as teach the art of attaining advanced states of consciousness in ecstatic meditation—as also the God-given powers accompanying those elevated states. There is nothing akin to superstition, magic, self-hypnosis, mediumistic spiritualism, witchcraft, or any such practices in the spiritual science of God-realization and God-union—yoga—as taught by a God-knowing master. It is the purest of sciences, for it opens naturally all inner doors for the expression of the potentials innate in the soul, the image of God in man, his true Self.

Fixity in spiritual ignorance is the cause of lost opportunity for soul progress, just as the uncomprehending fears of the Gadarenes two thousand years ago incited them to command Jesus to depart from their shores instead of asking from him the way to salvation.



Now the man out of whom the devils were departed besought him that he might be with him: but Jesus sent him away, saying, "Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee." And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him (Luke 8:38 – 39).

Jesus was without ego—the remarkable hallmark of true masters. He spoke not of his own powers of healing, but of the Divine Power that manifested through him: “how great things God hath done.” Jesus asked the man dispossessed of the legion of devils to serve as living publicity, that other afflicted souls might be encouraged to seek help from the unlimited divine power. Publicity used for material gain yields material results. Publicity for spiritual purposes is useful to broadcast truth and divine demonstrations for the inspiration and guidance of souls; but its use for self-laudation and personal material gain is pernicious and repugnant to the spiritual man.



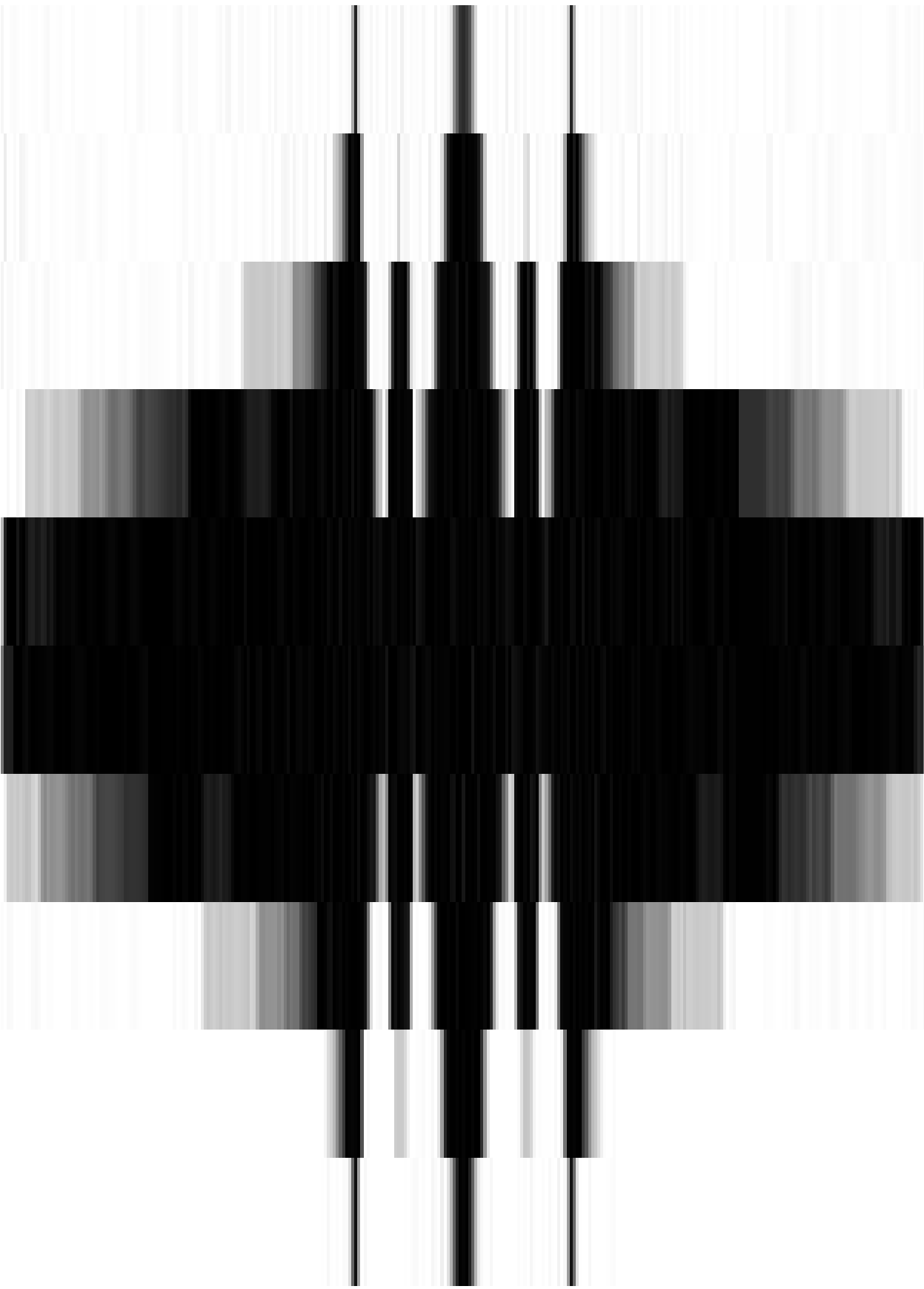
And it came to pass, that, when Jesus was returned, the people gladly received him: for they were all waiting for him. And, behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought him that he would come into his house: for he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying.

But as he went the people thronged him. And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any, came behind him, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanchèd.

And Jesus said, "Who touched me?" When all denied, Peter and they that were with him said, "Master, the multitude throng thee and press thee, and sayest thou, 'Who touched me?'"

And Jesus said, "Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me."

And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him, she declared unto him before all the people for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately. And he said unto her, "Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace" (Luke 8:40 – 48).⁵



How faith can draw “virtue” or healing energy from divine personages

The omnipresent Christ Consciousness in Jesus, being conscious of the astral world and its subsistent life force in all bodies, knew that among the throng pressing upon him, one particular woman, by her faith-enhanced will power, through her hands reverently contacting the hem of his garment, had drawn some life force from his body into her body. Like a powerful X-ray of energy, it had burned out her pernicious disease. As a diseased person touching the electrodes of an electrical medical apparatus may be benefited by the stimulus of the current, so the woman desiring healing made contact with the magnetism of Jesus and reinforced the impaired life force in her own body with the subtle aura, or astral current, emanating from and surrounding his body.

In the cure of every diseased human body, medicine or mental healing only rouses and supplements the inert life force, the direct cause of healing. A sick person can energize his healing life force by his will power revived by the strong will of a healer, or the sick person may by faith draw life force from a divinely magnetic individual's body and thereby rouse and reinforce his own all-healing life force to effect the healing. It was the latter case that caused Jesus to say, “Some subtle faith, seeking healing, has touched my astral emanation by an astral hand and has withdrawn virtue, or life force, from me.”

When Jesus said, “Virtue is gone out of me,” he emphasized the healing power that went out of him; when he said, “Thy faith hath made thee whole,” he emphasized the receptivity of the woman who was healed. Both are necessary. Healers must be sure of the presence of these two factors in divine healing—the faith of the person desiring to be healed and the ability of the healer to charge himself with divine healing power by daily deep God-contact in meditation. The virtue, or conscious cosmic energy that Jesus always felt within himself and that emanated from him, was absorbed by the faith of the woman, producing healing in her. It is noted in the Gospel that in Jesus' own country, some people could not be healed of their sickness because they were too material to receive the blessing of the omnipotent consciousness of God manifested in him.⁶

When Jesus felt “virtue is gone out of me,” he expressed the principle of darshan in which a divine personage, with or without conscious intention, bestows blessings on those who approach the indwelling Divinity with a pure heart and

mind. Receptive devotees thereby attract instant blessings from the mere sight or touch of a holy person.

Doubt is insidious static that disturbs the reception of the vibration of healing, no matter how strong the power of the healer. An individual must tune his consciousness, radio-like, with faith and proper mental attitude in order to receive the broadcastings of distant or direct healing vibrations from the healer. Jesus' words, "Thy faith hath made thee whole," signified, "Thy mental receptivity to the divine power in me has made it possible to produce the desired healing."



While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, "Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master."

But when Jesus heard it, he answered him, saying, "Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole." And when he came into the house, he suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden. And all wept, and bewailed her: but he said, "Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth" (Luke 8:49 – 52).

Parallel reference:

While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's house certain which said, "Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further?" As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, "Be not afraid, only believe."

And he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James. And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly. And when he was come in, he saith unto them, "Why make ye this ado, and weep? The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth" (Mark 5:35 – 39).



Jesus raises Jairus' daughter from the dead

Jesus was admonishing: “Do not fill your mind with the fear of hopelessness, but believe in the all-powerful divine will within me, and your daughter shall awake from her death sleep.”

Owing to the serious condition of the maiden, in which the grip of death itself was to be loosened, Jesus did not want his mind to be intruded upon by any inharmonious thoughts from the crowd; so he asked only his advanced disciples, Peter, James, and John, to follow him into the home of Jairus. To those in the household who were weeping and wailing, he said, “Why are you making such a fuss and show of despair? Although your physical eyes behold the child as dead, I see that she is only sleeping in God and that she can be awakened through His will.”



And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead. And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, "Maid, arise." And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat.

And her parents were astonished: but he charged them that they should tell no man what was done (Luke 8:53 – 56).

Parallel reference:

And they laughed him to scorn. But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying.

And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, "Talitha cumi"; which is, being interpreted, "Damsel, I say unto thee, arise."

And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was of the age of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment. And he charged them straitly that no man should know it; and commanded that something should be given her to eat (Mark 5:40 – 43).⁷

Jesus freed himself from all occlusive vibrations of doubt by sending away from his environment those who had surrendered their thoughts to the testament of death. Then, with his body filled with dynamic cosmic energy, Jesus took the hand of the dead damsel in his right hand and vibrated his life-giving power within her, commanding, "Damsel, by the God-consciousness and cosmic

vibration that are equally present within me and your dead body, I vibrate and will with my cosmic will that you be conscious of this life-giving cosmic energy and forsake your deathly sleep. Awake!”

Jesus, through the Christ Intelligence, which governs all astral forces and beings, commanded by his universal will the astral-bodied soul of the damsel to reenter her physical body, which he had recharged with life force from cosmic energy. The child was healed instantly and arose from her bed. The parents were at once elated and in awe as they witnessed the reanimation of their lifeless daughter. Jesus, in respecting the secrecy and seriousness of divine healing of the dead, sanctioned only rarely by God, asked those present not to discuss the matter with others.

Jesus then instructed that the girl be given something to eat to help her consciousness reaccustom itself to the feel of her physical body after her brief experience as an astral being in the astral world of light and vibratory energy. Saints, after coming out of a deep ecstasy, often drink water or take light nourishment in order to revive the consciousness of the body.

Awakening the physically dead by recalling the soul to reenter its discarded body and awakening the spiritually dead by bestowing God-consciousness are considered the highest forms of healing performed by a God-realized master. Greater even than healing the physically dead is the changing of a person who is materially minded into a God-minded soul. By a special technique of will, and with divine permission, great masters can transmit God-consciousness into advanced disciples.⁸



And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, “Thou son of David, have mercy on us.”

And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, “Believe ye that I am able to do this?”

They said unto him, “Yea, Lord.”

Then touched he their eyes, saying, “According to your faith be it unto you.” And their eyes were opened; and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, “See that no man know it.” But they, when they were departed, spread abroad his fame in all that country (Matthew 9:27 – 31).⁹

The cosmic energy sent by the will and the touch of Jesus into the eyes of the blind men, being an intelligent, all-powerful, all-creative force, rearranged the astral lifetrans and the atomic electrons and protons—which had been deranged in the diseased eyes—and brought about the required healing, so ordered by the command: “According to your faith be it unto you.”

After they had received the healing Jesus said, “Take care that no materially minded men hear about your healing; for such persons, no matter what spiritual demonstrations they behold, habitually cherish their disbelief in the almighty power of God that can work contrary to their concepts of the norms of nature.”



*As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil. And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, "It was never so seen in Israel." But the Pharisees said, "He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils."*¹⁰

*And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd (Matthew 9:32 – 36).*¹¹

Wondrous was the love and compassion of Jesus as he journeyed through the busy cities and villages teaching in the synagogues the gospel, God's vibratory truth, and giving forth of his divine power to heal all manner of suffering. His universal heart felt for the multitude of scattered lives pursuing their moment-by-moment mechanical busy-ness of existence in a delusion-imposed stupor. Like sheep without a shepherd, they had no spiritual guide or guru to lead them through the wilderness of the world to the kingdom of Cosmic Consciousness.



Then saith he unto his disciples, “The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest” (Matthew 9:37 – 38).¹²

“The harvest of cosmic consciousness is plenteous, nay endless, but very few are the devotees who will labor in meditation to sow the seeds of this harvest in order to reap its fruits. Pray therefore that God, the giver of cosmic consciousness, may bless you to become true aspiring devotees that through His grace and your spiritual efforts you may attain the full measure of that divine harvest.”



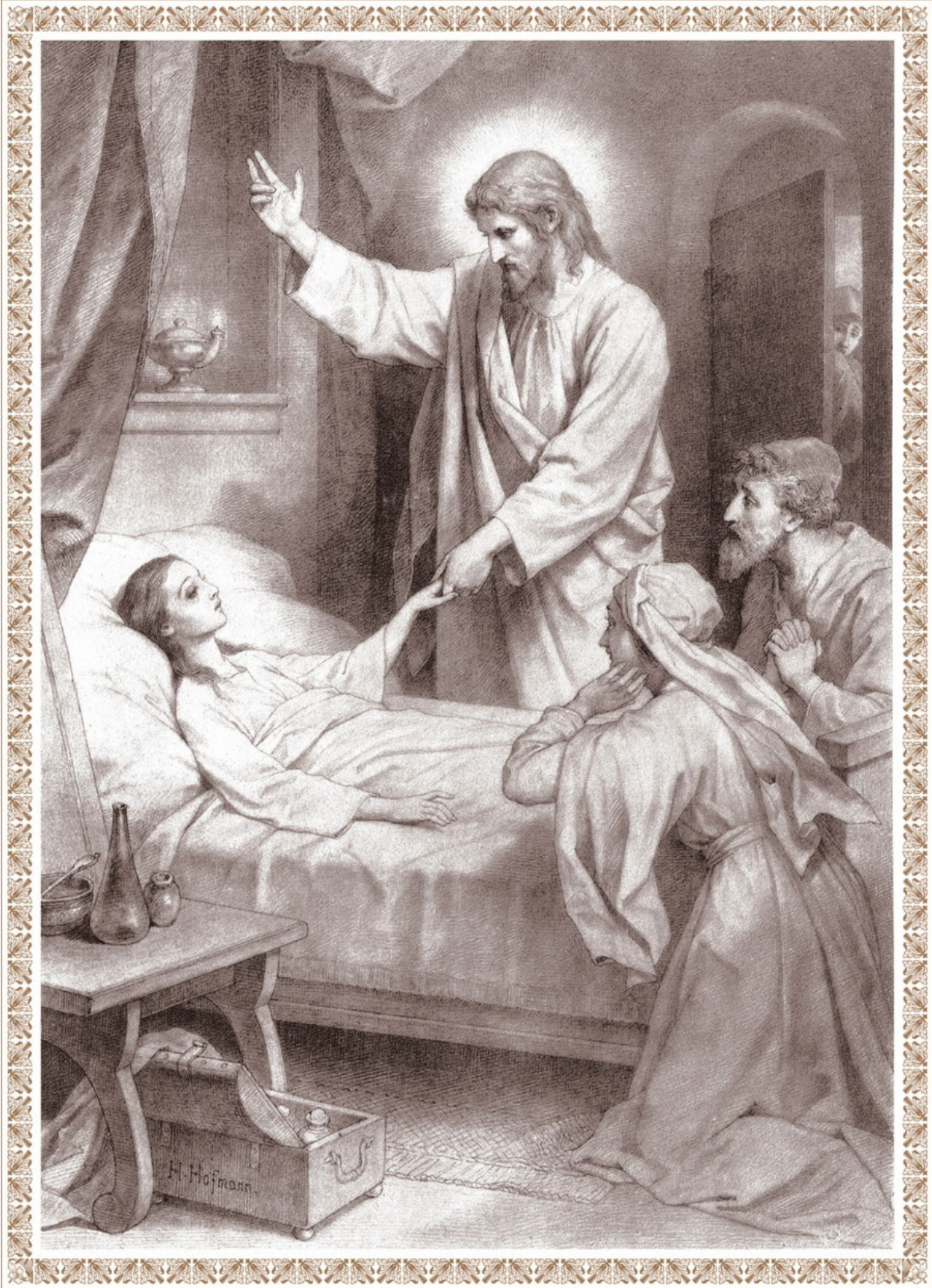
How spiritual “laborers” can reap the “plenteous harvest” of God-realization

The harvest of God-realization is abundant beyond measure: eternal wisdom, eternal ever new bliss, eternal consciousness and immortality. But there are very few human beings who will live a life of discipline and continuity in meditation from which they may reap in the short season of life the everlasting harvest of God-contact.

God-realization comes to the devotee not only owing to his efforts to manifest Self-realization, but also because of the Lord’s divine compassion. That grace is withheld from the devotee who with pride by reason of his spiritual realizations demands of God to surrender Himself. Egotism is the cause of many difficulties in reaching the ultimate spiritual goal; even though one may attain phenomenal powers, there is certain danger of falling from grace without the support of humility.

Neither does a devotee receive divine mercy if he blindly professes belief in God but deliberately breaks the spiritual laws voiced by God’s prophets. To scorn the eternal verities in a desultory life on the assumption that God’s mercy will save an unreformed sinner anyway is a false hope indeed. That is why Jesus expressed that God is the Lord who grants the final harvests, but it is for the devotee laborers to grow their spirituality on the soil of their meditative life.

Christ, in concert with the masters of India, taught that each devotee should regularly practice all the step-by-step methods of higher realization, and at the same time with deepest devotion pray unto his own Father-God to grant him final liberation. “Pray unto God, who can grant salvation, to give His blessings that you may become divine laborers tilling the soil of your consciousness with meditation and sowing in it the seeds of wisdom and Self-realization, that in the end you may reap the richest harvest of liberating God-contact.” The Lord of the harvest can be attained not by proxy, blind beliefs, nor a sudden unmerited divine visitation of enlightenment, nor by expecting to be in His presence by the virtue of death, but by the spiritual labor of scientific meditation, righteous living, and the Lord’s bestowal of divine grace.



Jesus Raises Jairus's Daughter From the Dead

And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, "Talitha cumi"; which is, being interpreted, "Damsel, I say unto thee, arise."

And straightway the damsel arose, and walked.

—Mark 5:41–42

Part of Jesus' mission was to make visible God's healing mercy. Through his public miracles, Jesus demonstrated that even "incurable" diseases and "insoluble" problems can be surmounted, sometimes instantly, by attunement with Divine Will. The purpose of these miraculous healings was not to glorify the perishable body, but to rouse faith in the omnipresence of God and in man's innate ability to contact and personally know his Heavenly Father....

Jesus showed what it is to be in touch with the Cosmic Dynamo. When one feels God's presence, His vibratory energy, the strength of His infinite power, any thought he declares will materialize.

—Paramahansa Yogananda

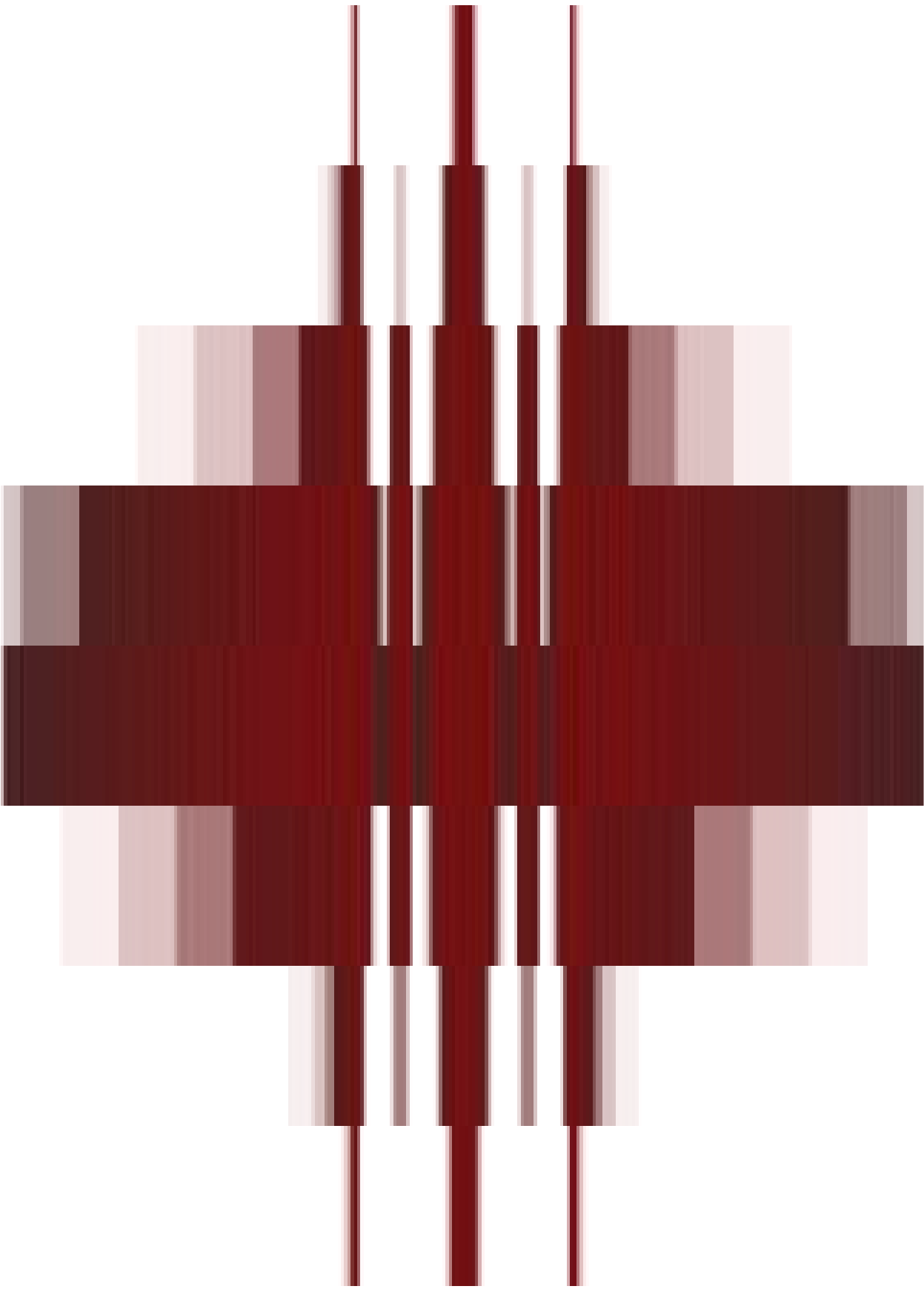
Drawing by Heinrich Hofmann



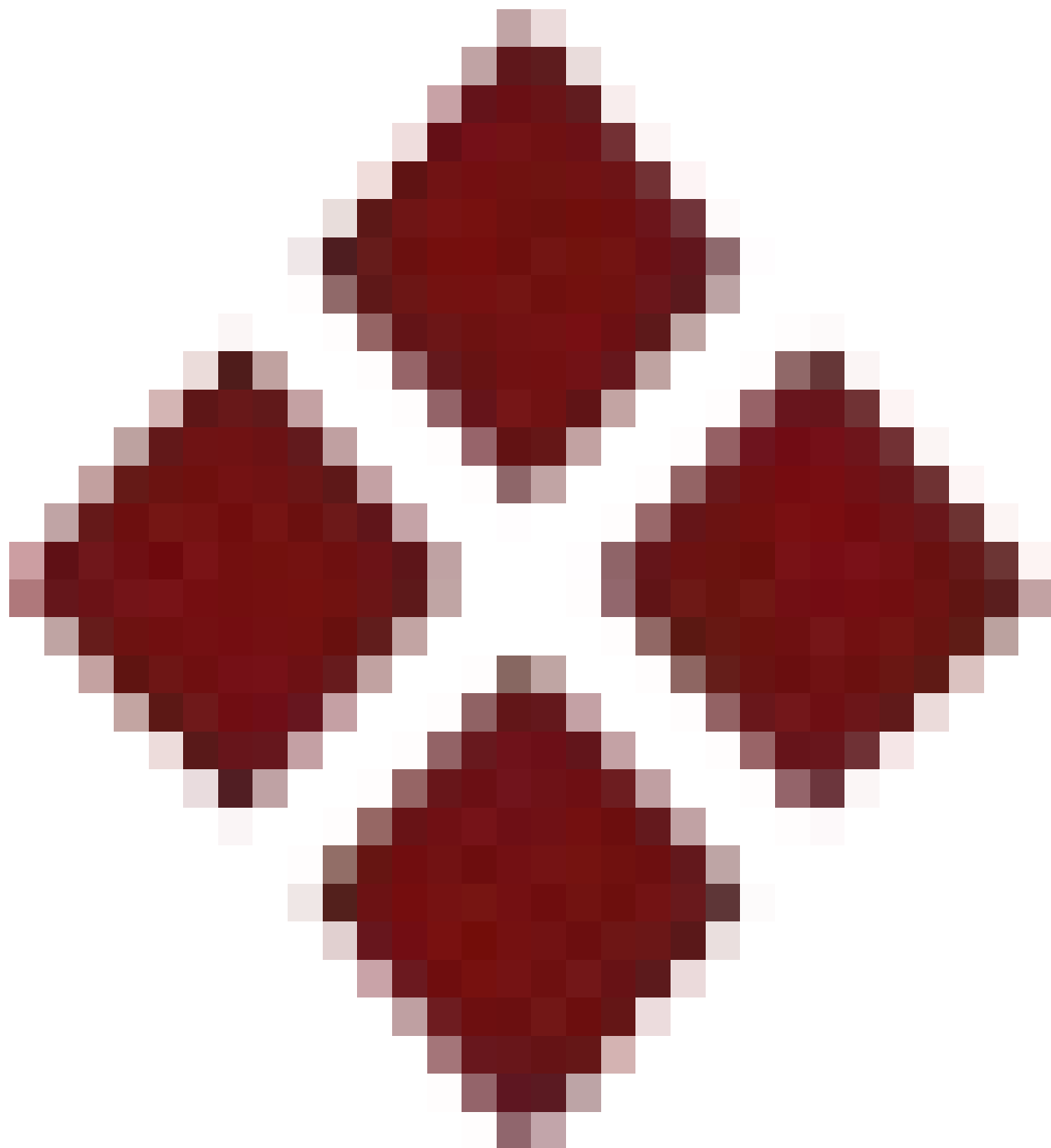


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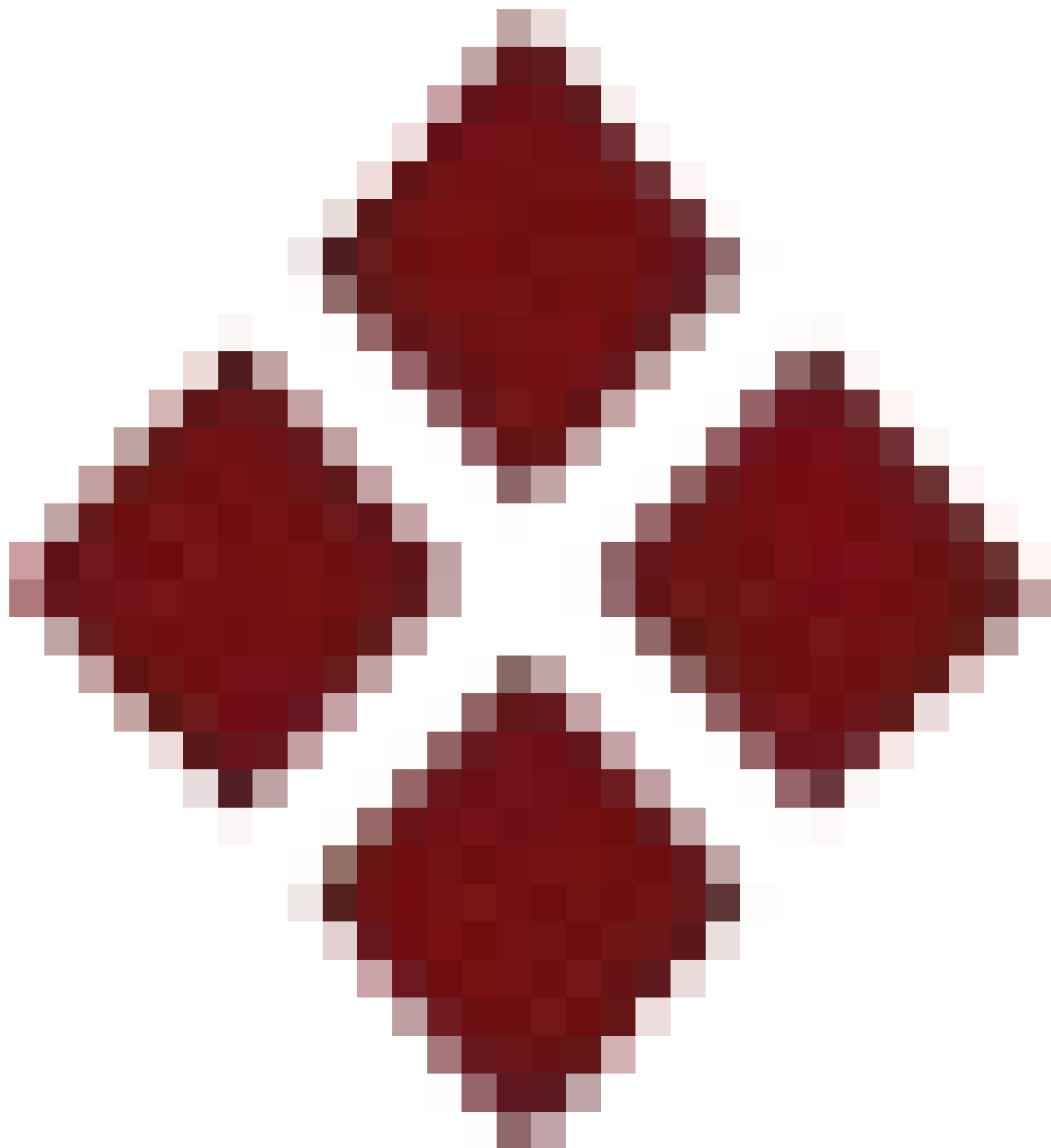
“A Prophet Hath No Honor in His Own Country”



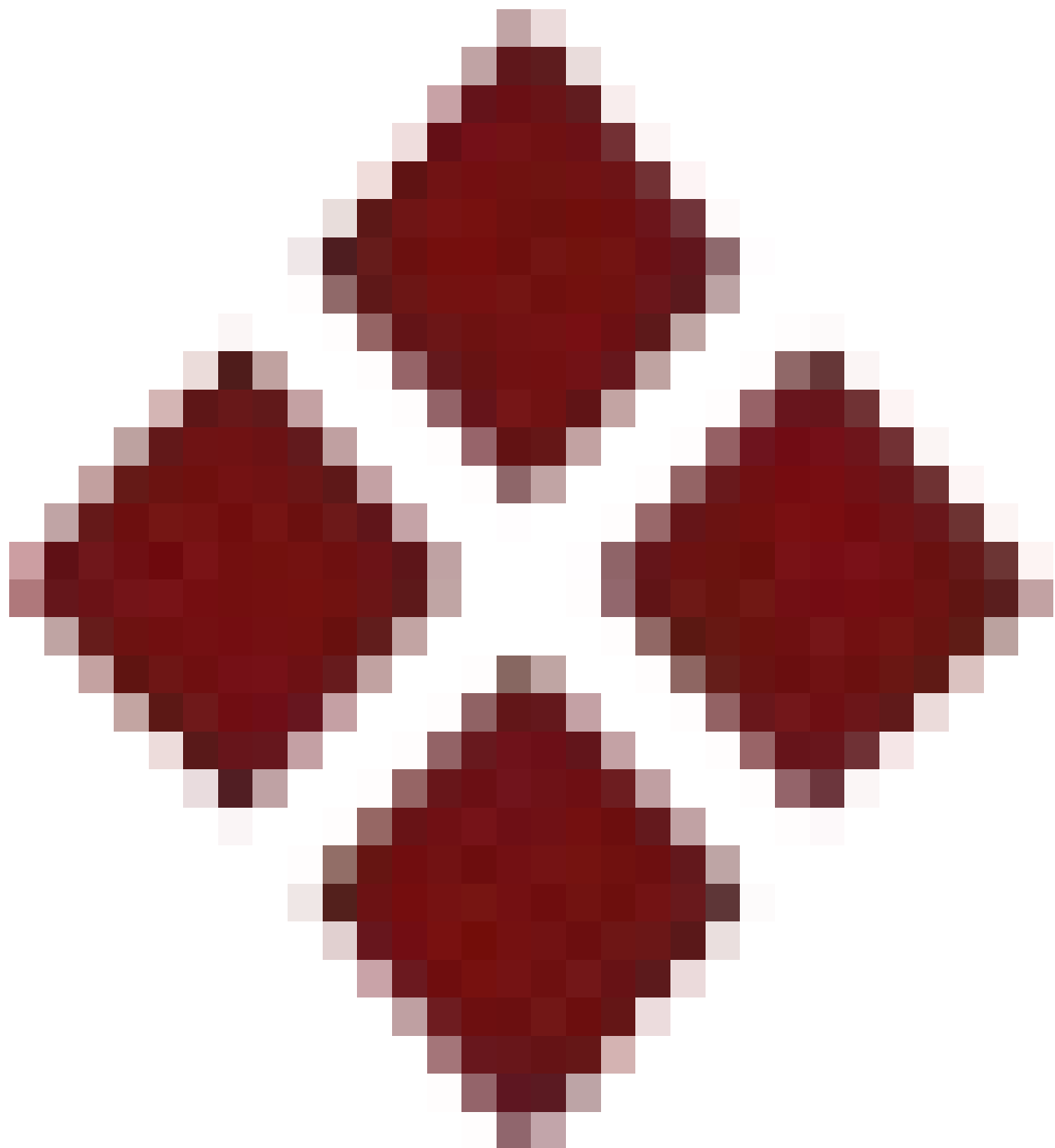
The Value of Establishing Regular Times for Communion With God



The Christ in Jesus Fulfilled Isaiah's Prophecy of Healing and Salvation



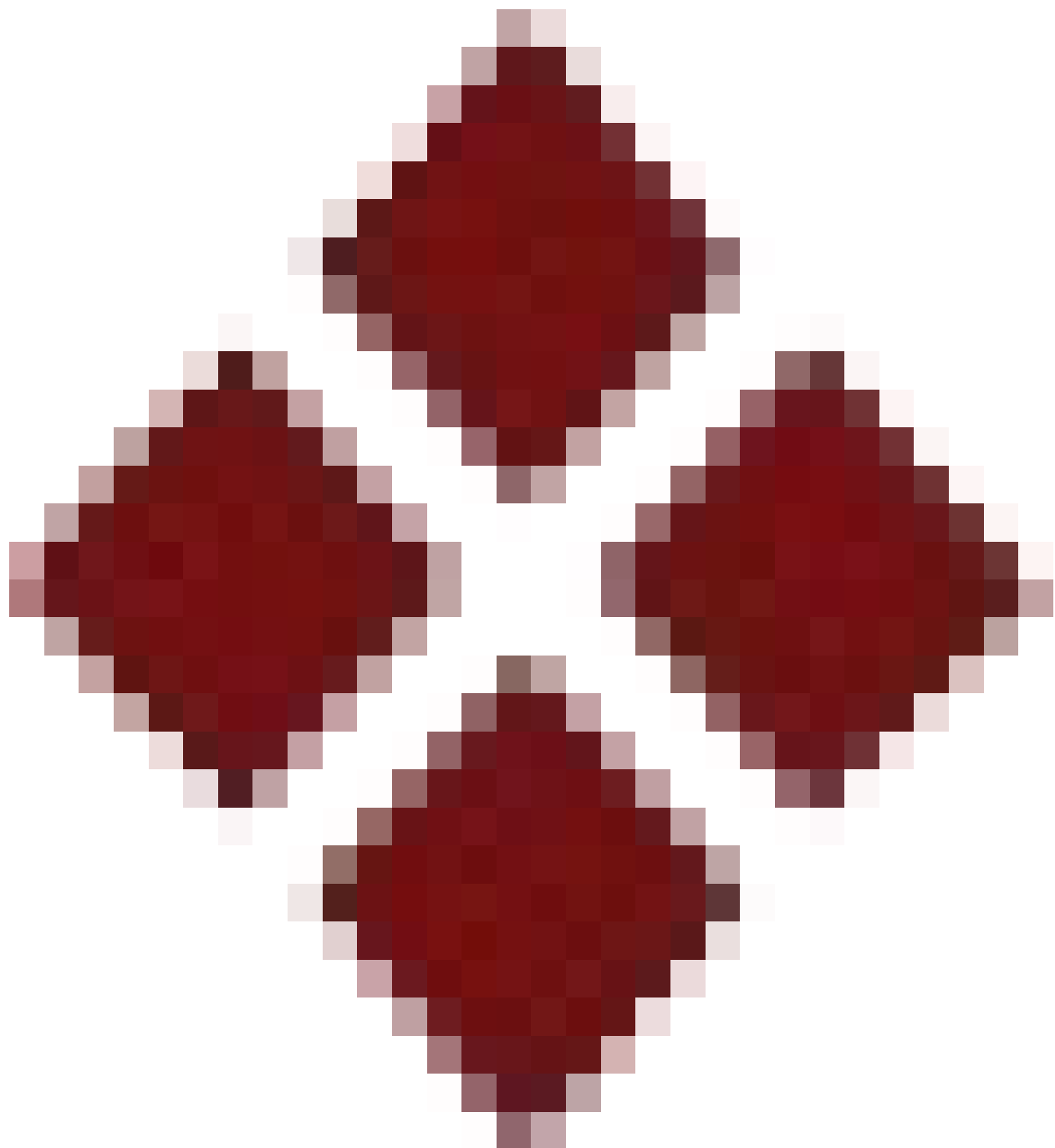
**Without the Receptivity of Faith, Man Shuts Divine
Power out of His Life**



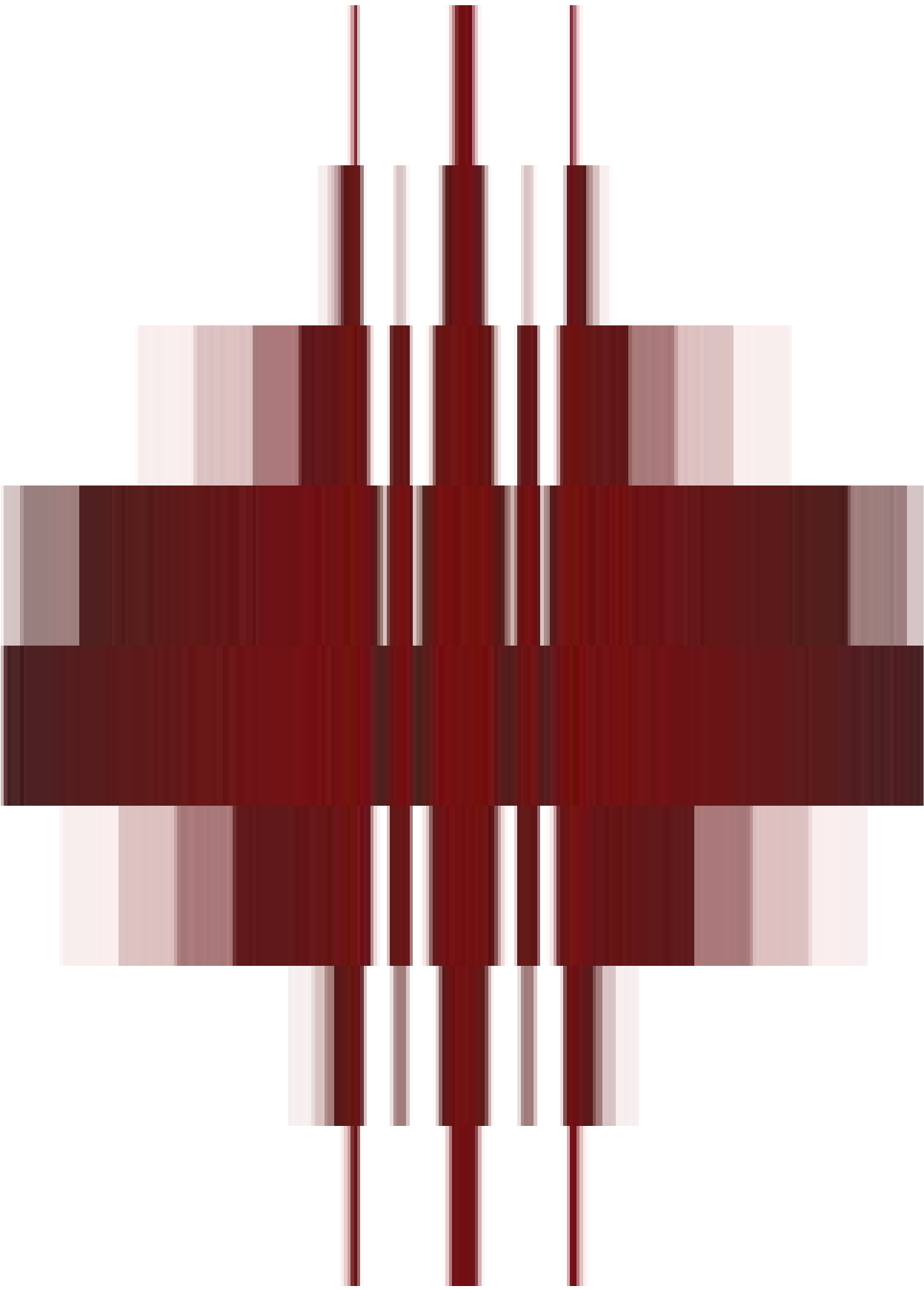
**Reverent Devotion, Avoiding Overfamiliarity, Makes
One Receptive to a Master's Blessings**



Jesus Cites From His Past-Life Experience the Divine Laws Governing Miracles



True Devotees Win Honor in the Heart of God



“Vision clouded by familiarity cannot pierce to the celestial expanses of a godly soul. Devotion is required to apprehend the measureless reaches of a master’s consciousness.”

■

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.”

And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, “This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.”

And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, “Is not this Joseph’s son?”

And he said unto them, “Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, ‘Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country.’ ” And he said, “Verily I say unto you, no prophet is accepted in his own country.

“But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; but unto none of them was Elijah sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.”

And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. But he passing through the midst of them went his way.



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Discourse 39

“A Prophet Hath No Honor in His Own Country”



And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day (Luke 4:16).¹



The value of establishing regular times for communion with God

Though Jesus taught that the consummate worship of God is in the inner temple of silent meditative communion, it was “his custom” to go to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, upholding by his example the value of congregational worship. “Whatever a superior being does, inferior persons imitate,” the Bhagavad Gita points out. “His actions set a standard for people of the world.”² Though Sabbath observances at the synagogue were unnecessary for Jesus, whose consciousness was united to Spirit every moment of every day, weekly church or temple worship provides for the sense-habit-driven masses a vitally needed soul-recharging respite from their environment of materialistic concerns and pursuits. By joining the congregation for scripture reading and prayer, Jesus signified that all human beings should set aside definite times—at the very least once each week—for God-reminding worship that will revivify in their lives the peace and wisdom of their souls.

The average churchgoer, for whom worship is a Sunday-only affair, usually finds the eroding influence of material habits predominant on the remaining six days, and can seldom retain sufficient of the sacred influences of the worship service to keep his consciousness spiritualized until the following Sunday. Of course, a dime is better than no money at all. Even once-weekly Sunday sermons help the materially minded person acquire some spiritual ballast from the peaceful effects of scriptural wisdom, prayer, and silence. However, to feel appreciably throughout the week an undiminished inspiration of Sunday peace one ought to make each day a real “Sun’s Day” or Wisdom’s Day by basking in the light of the Sun of Wisdom and cultivating a regenerating inner peace through a regular habit of meditation in the early morning, at noontime before lunch, in the evening before dinner, and especially during the quiet time before sleep. The true peace-church into which Jesus sought to lead his followers is the inner sanctuary of silence wherein one is spiritually restored in the obliging wisdom and joy of the soul. If anyone, even twice daily, during the hours of dawn and in the depth of night, worships God in the temple of meditation for fifteen minutes to one hour, he will find the spiritual habit of peace diminishing his worry-producing material habits.

But there will be those who cannot bring themselves to set aside even a half hour out of twenty-four to meditate: the so-called too-busy person—busy until death

with a myopic foolish pursuit of perishable treasure to satisfy unsatisfying desires. Stocks and bonds and vain accumulations cannot pass through the pearly gates of the afterlife, leaving the astral being to rue its paucity of spiritual wealth. Such persons ought at least to make their best effort weekly to commune with God at church or temple or other place of worship—not merely bringing the body to services while the heart and mind are rehashing the worries of the business week, but giving one’s devotion to God with attentive sincerity, a calm body, and a quiet mind. The temporary upliftment brought by this minimal fulfillment of the divine command to “remember the Sabbath day”³ may eventually incline the worshiper to make his Sunday peace more lasting by devoting a time to meditation every day.

Scheduling the important things in one’s life creates the willingness and facilitates the ability to perform those actions. The body assimilates food more equably when breakfast, lunch, and dinner are partaken at the same hours each day. Consistency in worshiping on the Sabbath develops the habit of thinking of God and spiritual cultivation at least once a week. Regularity in the repetition of any material or spiritual action—eating, efforts at business success, churchgoing, meditation—is bound to create a physiological, and consequently psychological, habit.

In general, people are ruled by their habits. When their bad material habits hold sway, they may wonder why, in spite of their continued willingness to get rid of these despots, they are still dragged by them into undesirable behavior. Bad habits cannot be stopped by merely wanting to eradicate them, but only by reconditioning oneself physiologically and psychologically with contravening good habits. Willingness is not enough. One must act according to that willingness, not only once or a few times, but repeatedly and continuously until the opposite good habit is installed. Only then can one expect the demise of the tyrannical bad habit. Achievement lies in continued regularity of activity. Knowing the law of habit that governs human nature, Jesus set the example by his customary attendance at the synagogue on the Sabbath day.



He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.”⁴

And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, “This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears” (Luke 4:16 – 21).



The Christ in Jesus fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy of healing and salvation

Jesus used the medium of a passage from the book of Isaiah that tallied with the works of his divinely ordained mission to proclaim distinctly thereby that his coming had been foretold in the Hebrew scriptures. Of course, charlatans may quote scripture to serve their own nefarious ends; but Jesus knew he was the promised Messiah, the Christ, spoken of by the holy ones of centuries past. In his meek way, Jesus read the words of Isaiah to declare that he was not an ordinary religious teacher, but was chosen and empowered by the Lord, "He hath anointed me," for a preordained mission. ⁵

"The Spirit of the Lord (the Infinite Intelligence of Christ Consciousness, which directs all creation) is upon my soul," not through symbolical baptism with water by man, but through immersion in the Ocean of Spirit. When one restores his mortally identified soul to union with the infinite Spirit, he is baptized with illimitable spiritual wisdom and thus can ably and fittingly "preach the Gospel," the intuitively perceived truths of God, "to the poor," to humble recipient minds.

Likewise, only God-saturated souls can permanently "heal the brokenhearted"—human hearts sorely wounded with disillusionment and despair by dependence on treacherous expectations of material satisfaction. As immortals, souls are sent on earth to be entertained by the Lord's cosmic drama; but when delusion captures and holds man's consciousness with its subtle nuances of pretense, the divine nature loses itself in identification with the physical form and its love of material pleasures. Matter can never satisfy spirit; sooner or later this is a hard-won realization. Then God-knowing souls come to the rescue of the brokenhearted by illuminating the way of return to the imperishable happiness of Spirit hidden within one's own soul.

God-empowered souls, attuned with the Source of all power, can restore sight to the sightless, by exercising matter-controlling Divine Will to remodel the disorganized atoms in a blind man's eyes, and also bring "recovery of sight" to the spiritually blind.

God-perceiving souls alone can offer "deliverance to the captives" of mortal bondage, and "set at liberty" those who have been long bruised by woes, worries, and the faithlessness of inconstant friends. None but God-sent saviors

can forgive those who are willing to repent, and to them impart assurance of salvation in the here and now (“the acceptable year of the Lord”).⁶

The human race goes through repeated fourfold cycles of evolution and degeneration, its mental and moral capacities developing gradually from the darkness of the material age to the enlightenment of the spiritual age, and then falling through long decline back to the material again.⁷ Though the Lord works through His God-realized devotees at all times, in all ages, to redeem His erring children, from time to time during dire periods of world civilization when the misery of ignorance envelops man’s existence in darkness, God sends a special manifestation of Himself, an incarnate emissary of the divine Christ Consciousness, or Son, to redeem the faithful and reestablish the divine pattern of reformation. Jesus, knowing the prevalence of false prophets, wanted the people to know that he was not a self-elected, self-serving teacher but the God-ordained Christ-messenger promised in the scriptures long before, evidenced in his bringing divine healing of body, mind, and soul to God’s children as prophesied in the book of Isaiah. That is why he declared: “This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.”



And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, "Is not this Joseph's son?"

And he said unto them, "Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, 'Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country.'" And he said, "Verily I say unto you, no prophet is accepted in his own country" (Luke 4:22 – 24).

Parallel reference:

And many hearing him were astonished, saying, "From whence hath this man these things? And what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?" And they were offended at him.

But Jesus said unto them, "A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house."

And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them. And he marvelled because of their unbelief (Mark 6:2 – 6).⁸

All those who heard the words of Jesus and felt the magnetism of the sacred power with which he spoke of the fulfillment of prophecy perceived the ring of truth in his gently delivered profound utterances. Yet even while they sat in

wonderment, their human habit of familiarity consciousness returned with discrediting doubts: “Oh, how could the son of our Joseph, someone from our own community whom we have known since childhood, be anything other than an ordinary person like the rest of us? Though he is reputed to perform mighty works, is it not audacious, if not blasphemous, for him to claim power to interpret scripture as a prophecy applicable to himself?”



Without the receptivity of faith, man shuts divine power out of his life

When prophets incarnate in this world, though they are usually born in a good, devout family, it is often in an environment that is less than receptive, even rebellious, because they come to bring light to those who are in the darkness of delusion. That is why in the Bhagavad Gita, the Lord says: “Whenever there is a decline of virtue and a predominance of evil-doing, I incarnate to give help to the virtuous and protect them from the wicked.”⁹ So it is that Jesus came to minister in a dark time amidst ignorance and corrupted religiosity. He performed only good works, but his spiritual reforms met with a nonunderstanding populace that led to his cruel crucifixion—and it seems that those in his own hometown have been cited as among the least receptive.¹⁰

Replying to their unvoiced challenge, Jesus signified: “My dear people, you expect me to furnish you with proof of my words by performing divine healings here just as I healed the sick at Capernaum. You wonder why, as a spiritual physician, I heal people in other towns, but not those of my own community. It is because you do not accept that God’s power works through me. Acceptance signifies faith; and without the good soil of faith, no healing seed can be brought to fruition even by a man of God. The Almighty subjects His prophets to His inculcated spiritual laws. We are constrained to honor the code that gives man free will, which God Himself does not contradict. There can be no greater healer than omnipotent God. He is trying to heal His mortal children from all troubles; but since He gave independence to man, man is free to shut divine power out of his life or to allow it to shine through the window of faith.

“Divine healing is based on the law of reciprocity. Here in my own town you are used to thinking of me as an ordinary mortal man; and consequently you have no faith in the Divine in me. Without your faith, I cannot heal you. The irrevocable gift of free will permits man successfully to resist divine influences, including the intercession of saints.”

A street lamp sheds light in all directions except directly beneath its housing, where there is shadow. Similarly, a prophet illumined with God sheds light unto all and is widely appreciated except, often, by those who are near to him in a family or social, but not devotional, relationship. Shortsighted overemphasis on the human relationship blinds them to the spiritual greatness in a divine

personage.



Reverent devotion, avoiding overfamiliarity, makes one receptive to a master's blessings

A judge whose authority and admonitions are feared or admired in the courtroom is divested of that power at home with his wife; indeed, subject to admonishment by her! It is a psychological fact that familiarity without respect breeds contempt. It is a natural worldly tendency for persons living in close relationships to evaluate each other not as souls but in terms of one's own expectations, resulting in erosion of mutual regard, lack of courtesy, overfamiliarity, suspiciousness, insulting speech or acts. In distant closeness love lives. In wrong familiarity love dies.

One should never take others for granted and thereby fail to appreciate the divine uniqueness of every soul. Persons who live amidst the scenic grandeur of the magnificent Himalayas little appreciate the uplifting vistas because their attention is on their home life; they become so used to their extraordinary venue that they consider it as "nothing special." But to visitors who come from distant lands with an eager attitude of mind, the majestic vastness of the lofty peaks are an awesome experience. Similarly, the family members of a prophet, or his communal associates, accustomed to relating to him as one of their own among the many, lack the respectful attention that would perceive the greatness hidden behind his human personality that merits their regard and honor. Vision clouded by familiarity cannot pierce to the celestial expanses of a godly soul. Devotion is required to apprehend the measureless reaches of a master's consciousness.

Sincerely seeking devotees, whether from nearby or afar, come to associate with a holy person not in the casual way of human relatives or social acquaintances, but to absorb with reverent attention the presence of God within him. Their devotion imbues them with the proper appreciation for their master, and hence, full receptivity to his blessings.

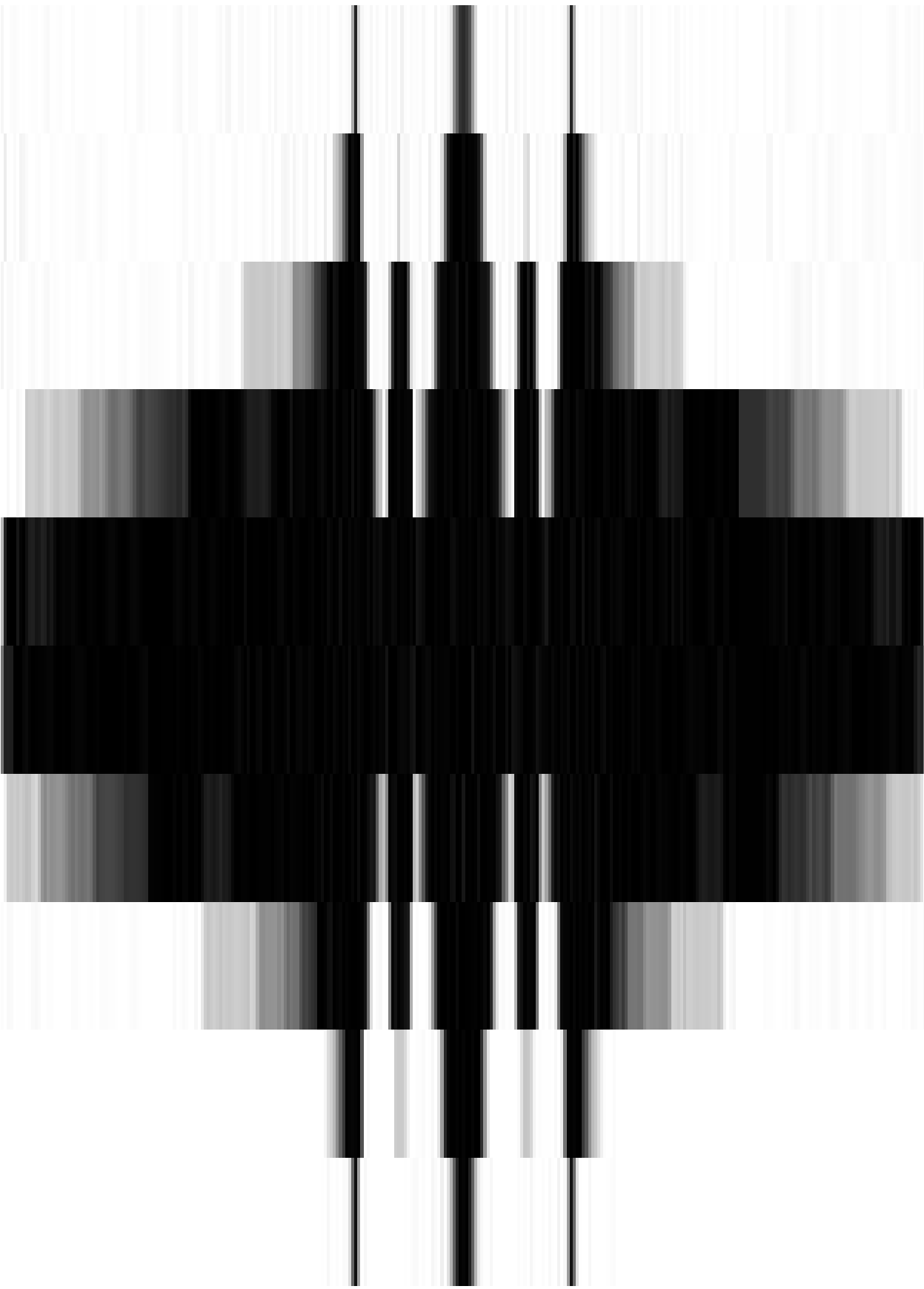
Because of the unbelief of the people of his own town, Jesus "could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands on a few sick folk, and healed them"—he used the positive-negative poles of his hands to send forth the cosmic energy to heal those few who had faith in God's power in him. Divine law did not sanction miracles for the benefit of the many in the place where Jesus had grown up because, even as powerful as he was, the seed of healing could not sprout on

the rocky soil of disbelieving minds.

Jesus observed that since his reputation of performing miraculous cures had preceded him, most persons in the gathering around him were little more than spiritual thrill-seekers who wanted him to demonstrate his fabled feats as if he were a spectacle in a circus. He wanted them to understand that the miracles of prophets are sacred and are enacted not to satisfy their own or others' whims, but only according to the will of God. He cited from his previous-life experience that the works of the prophets Elijah and Elisha were governed strictly by what God directed them to do, not necessarily what they were capable of doing. His past-life guru, Elijah, and himself, as Elisha, had been supremely endowed with healing power and could have cured thousands, yet they healed only those God commanded them to heal, in accordance with His divine laws.



“But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; but unto none of them was Elijah sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian” (Luke 4:25 – 27).



Jesus cites from his past-life experience the divine laws governing miracles

Sincerity of faith and devotion, not presumed obligation to family or community, is the sufficient condition for divine intercession—as illustrated when God permitted Elijah to bring no miraculous aid to the many suffering in his own country, but only to a spiritually deserving widow of a foreign land.¹¹ Similarly with the many lepers in Israel during the time of Elisha: He bestowed divine healing only on one from another country.¹²

The crowd at the Nazareth synagogue was unknowingly tempting Jesus to go against the will of the Father in order to prove himself. Giving no countenance to any special claim on him as being one of their own, he cut them short by his reference to the honored prophets Elijah and Elisha. He spoke truthfully from the memory of his past incarnation, that when the accumulated destructive vibrations of evil actions of the masses prevented the harmonious functioning of the heavenly laws controlling all forces of nature, resulting in devastating drought and famine, there were many needy widows in Israel, but Elijah worked no miracles for them. Only one—a foreigner—because of her faith received God-ordained spiritual aid from Elijah.

Without directly accusing the cynics at Nazareth, Jesus indicated that he would perform for them no feats of divine healing, for the same reason that Elijah brought no aid to his famine-stricken country. Even the God-illuminated prophet, with all his power, was helpless to stop the devastation caused by mass karma, the willful misdeeds of the people.¹³

Jesus was not speaking fatalistically: Widespread human evils such as wars, moral iniquity, or spiritual degeneration disrupt the subtle astral forces behind the physical mechanisms governing earth's climate and other environmental conditions, wreaking so-called natural disasters on good and evil persons alike. These are not "fate" or "acts of God," but the outcome of the karmic law, that man must suffer the consequences of his actions if he does not invoke and make himself receptive to the intercession of God's aid and forgiveness when he has fallen. The masses of people in Elijah's time did not exercise their free choice to cultivate repentance and faith, and therefore had to undergo the ravages of three-and-a-half years of famine.

Then Jesus, with subtle insinuation, spoke of himself as the Elisha of yore, who was similarly constrained from healing the many lepers of his time, with the exception, at God's command, of one honorable Syrian named Naaman. By citing these stories from the scriptures, Jesus elucidated the divine laws that work in justice and secrecy, producing both karmic consequences of man's actions and the intervention of God's contravening mercy if man is receptive through repentance, devotion, and faith:

“My dear countrymen, you do not understand how divine laws operate; you yourselves by your irreverent faithlessness have decreed that I cannot work multiple wonders of healing in my own country. As the prophet Elisha healed one Syrian leper but not the multitude of lepers in Israel, so also I do only what God's will operating through His spiritual laws influences me to do.”



And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. But he passing through the midst of them went his way (Luke 4:28 – 30).



*True devotees win honor in the heart
of God*

The congregation in the synagogue became irate at the intransigent words of Jesus spoken by him in scriptural affirmation of his God-ordained mission, and in condemnation of their unreceptive consciousness. In wrathful frustration that Jesus would exhibit no phenomenal feats to prove himself, they rose up as a murderous mob, desirous of his death for blasphemy in proclaiming himself the chosen one of God prophesied in the scripture. They led him to a high precipice to throw him down to his death; but strange as are the decrees of God, Jesus was protected by Invisible Divine Power. God cast oblivion in the hearts of these adversaries of Jesus, allowing him to walk right through their midst before they could regain the presence of mind to carry out their violent intent. ¹⁴

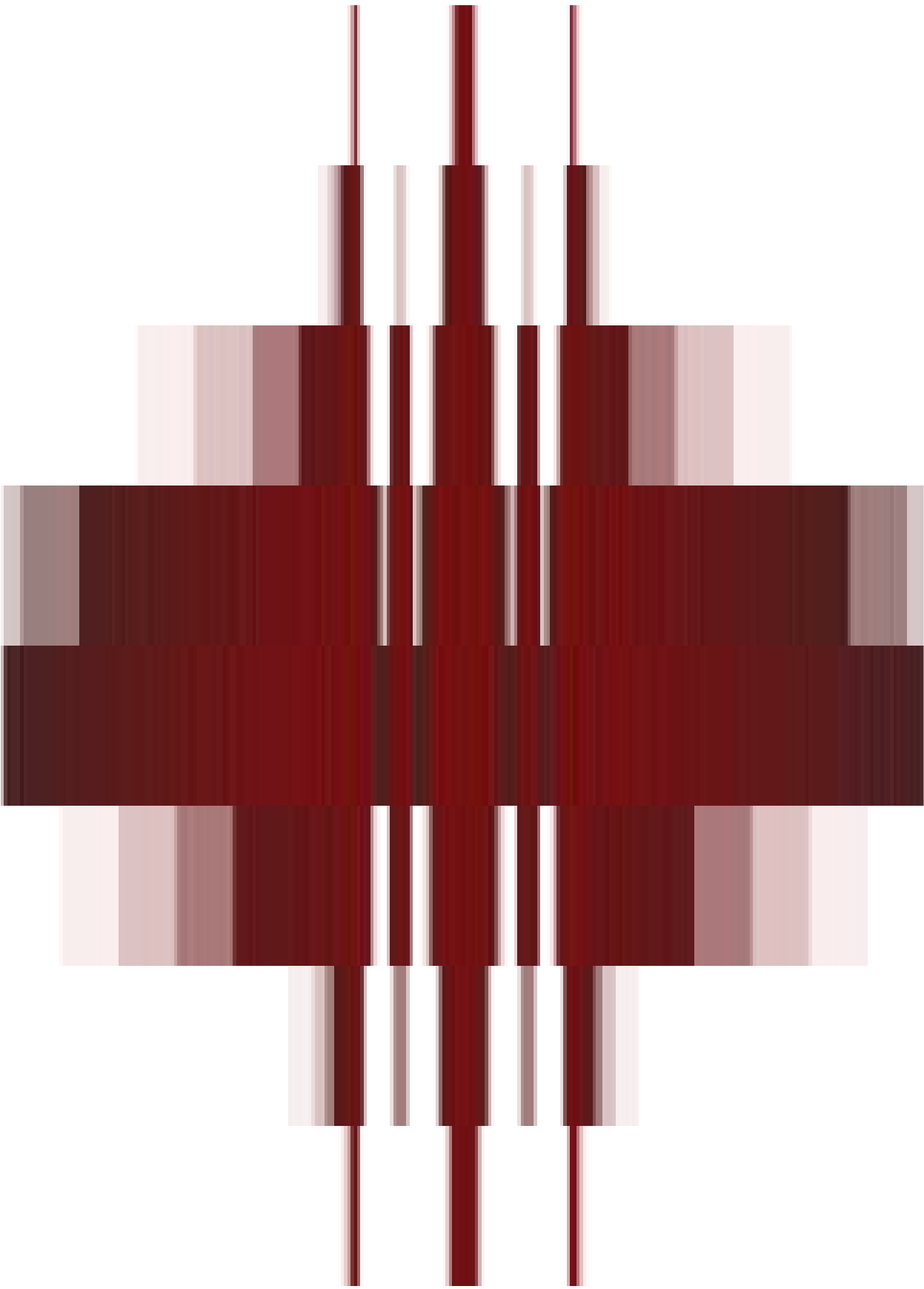
Though “a prophet hath no honor in his own country,”¹⁵ he has the blessing of God to accomplish his work according to the will of God. He is moved neither by the accord nor condemnation of man. Whosoever seeks honor from man or is self-aggrandizing inevitably reaps dishonor; but one who unconditionally loves and obeys God, and serves God in all, receives immortal honor. Human fame elicits only empty words of praise, and perhaps a statue for the passing birds to roost on and soil. The God-known devotee secures a living monument in people’s hearts. That is the true shrine of honor for every great one of God who has graced this world. In the heart of God, and in the hearts of millions down the centuries—that is where Jesus Christ is enshrined.



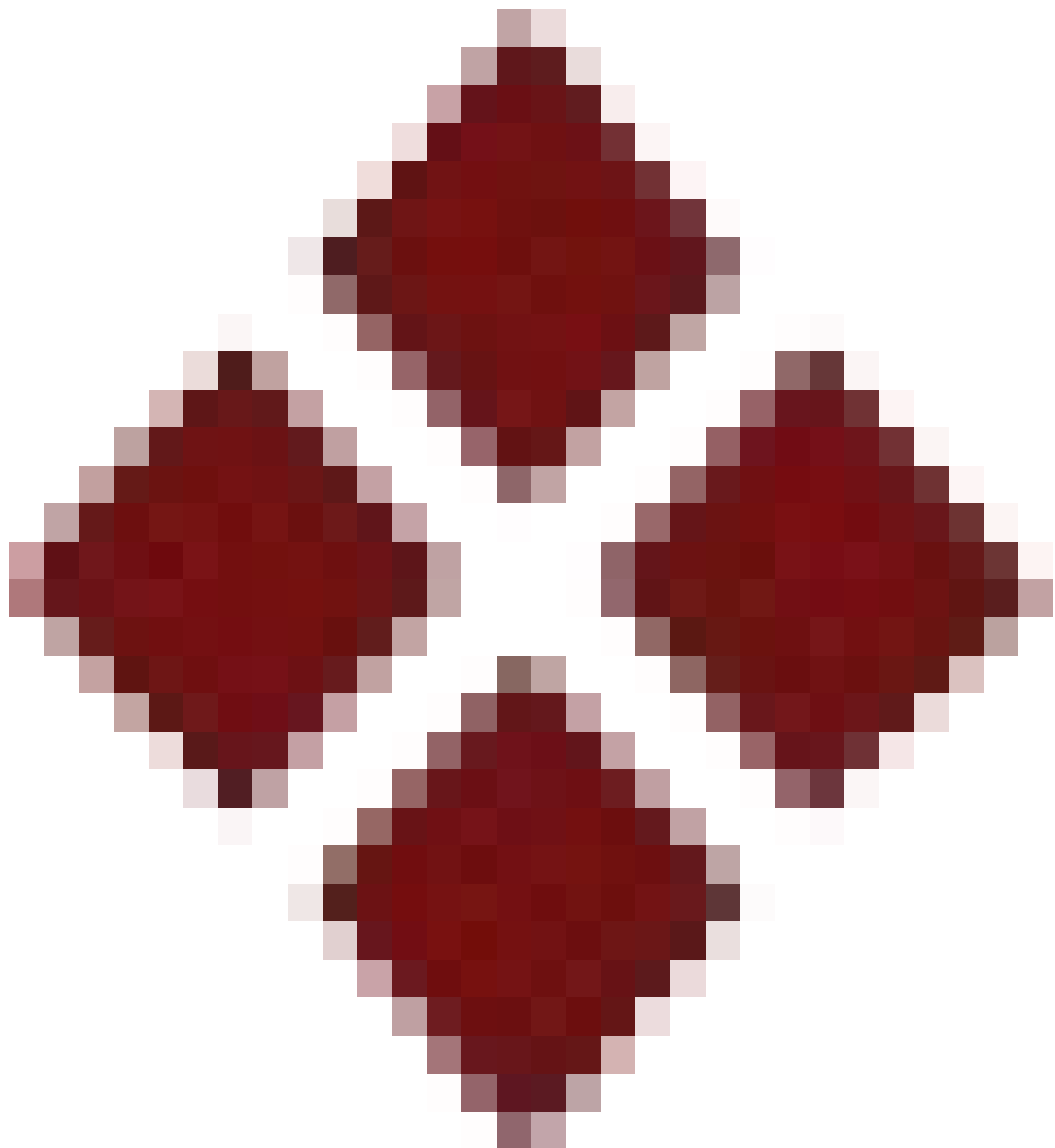
Discourse 40

Jesus' Counsel to Ministers of God's Word

(Part I)



A True Minister Teaches Actual Contact of God to His Congregation



**Churches Should Emphasize Inner Development
More Than Oratory and Social Activities**



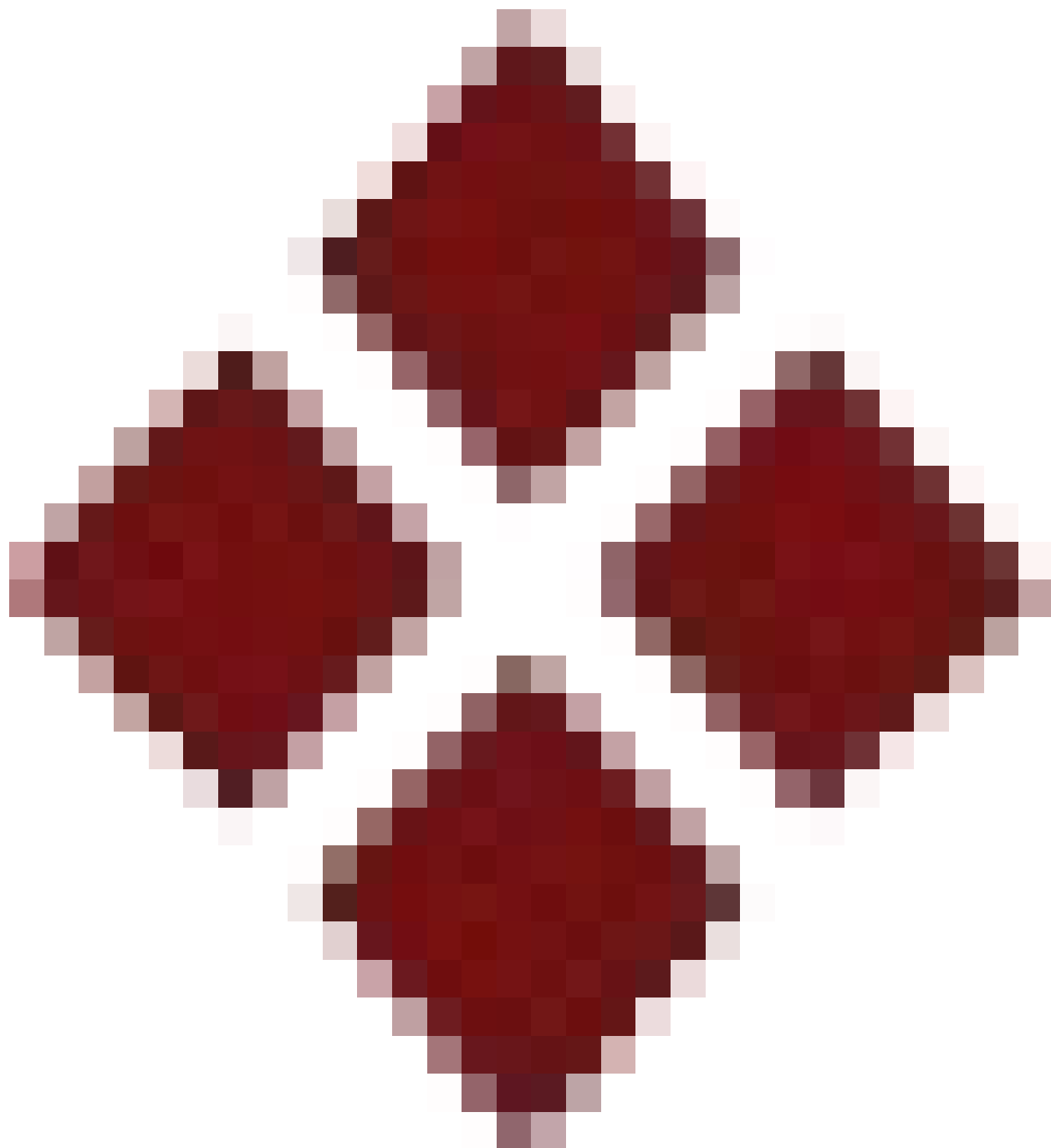
The Difference Between Christianity and Churchianity



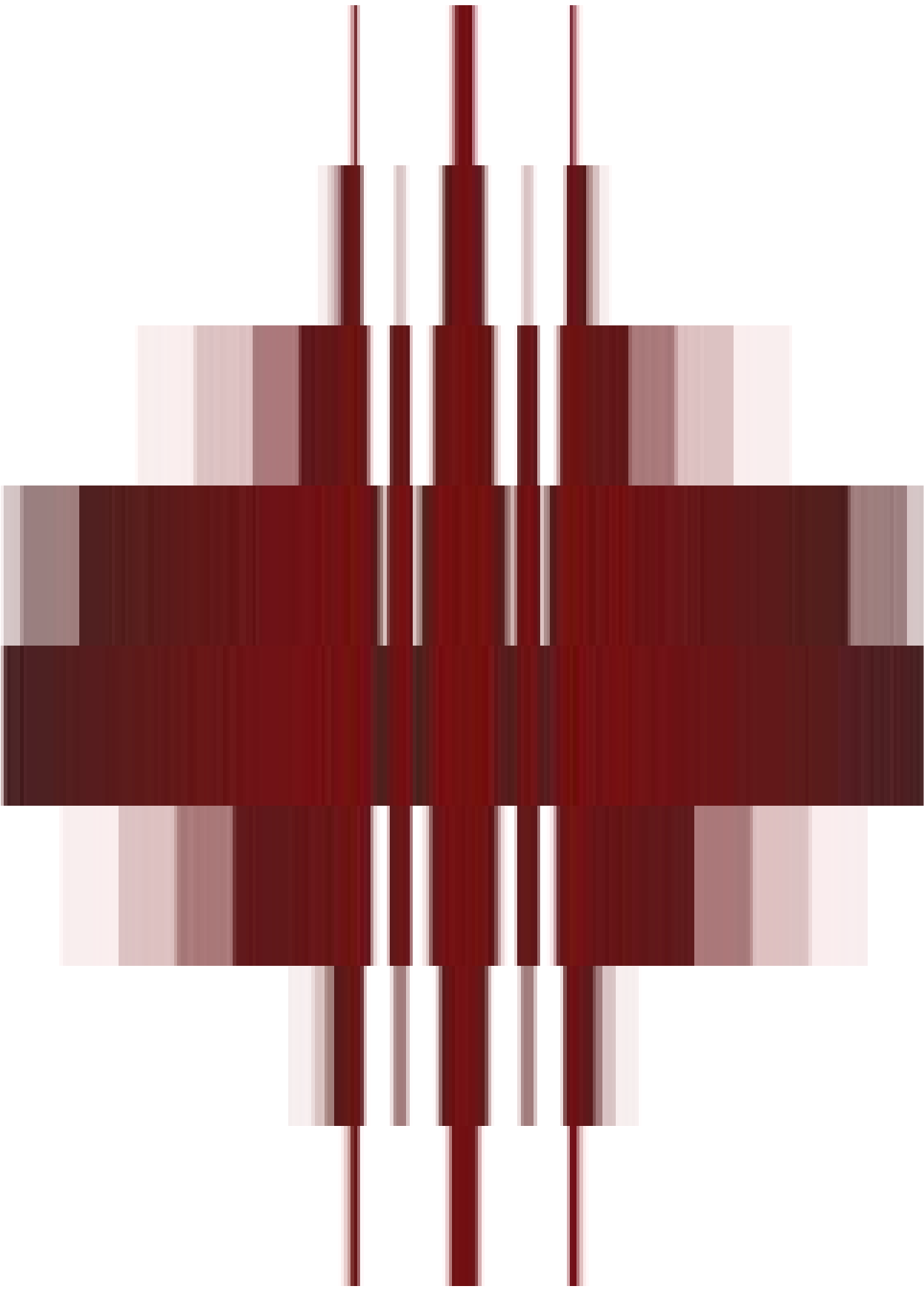
**“Hives” of Organized Churches Should Be Filled
With the Honey of God’s Presence**



The Paths of Outer and Inner Renunciation



**Avoiding Commercialism in Religion: Jesus'
Instructions on Money in the Ministry**



“Jesus did not send out his disciples with theological degrees, but equipped them to preach the gospel through the example of their spiritual lives and with power born of God-contact felt in meditation.”

■

And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.

Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; the first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus; Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, “Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

“Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat.

“And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence. And when ye come into an house, salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city.”

—Matthew 10:1 – 15

After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come. Therefore said he unto them, “The harvest truly is great, but the

labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.

“Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves. Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way.

“And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, ‘Peace be to this house.’ And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again.

“And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house. And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you: And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, ‘The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.’

“But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say, ‘Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.’ But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city.”

—Luke 10:1 – 12¹



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Discourse 40

Jesus' Counsel to Ministers of God's Word

(Part I)



And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease (Matthew 10:1).²

As wealthy people can transfer their funds during their lifetime or after they are gone to anyone they choose, so also great prophets of Self-realization can by certain techniques transfer at will their spiritual ecstasies, God-wisdom, and healing power unto their true disciples. Jesus did not send out his disciples with theological degrees, but equipped them to preach the gospel through the example of their spiritual lives and with power born of God-contact felt in meditation, and the blessing of the grace he bestowed upon them.

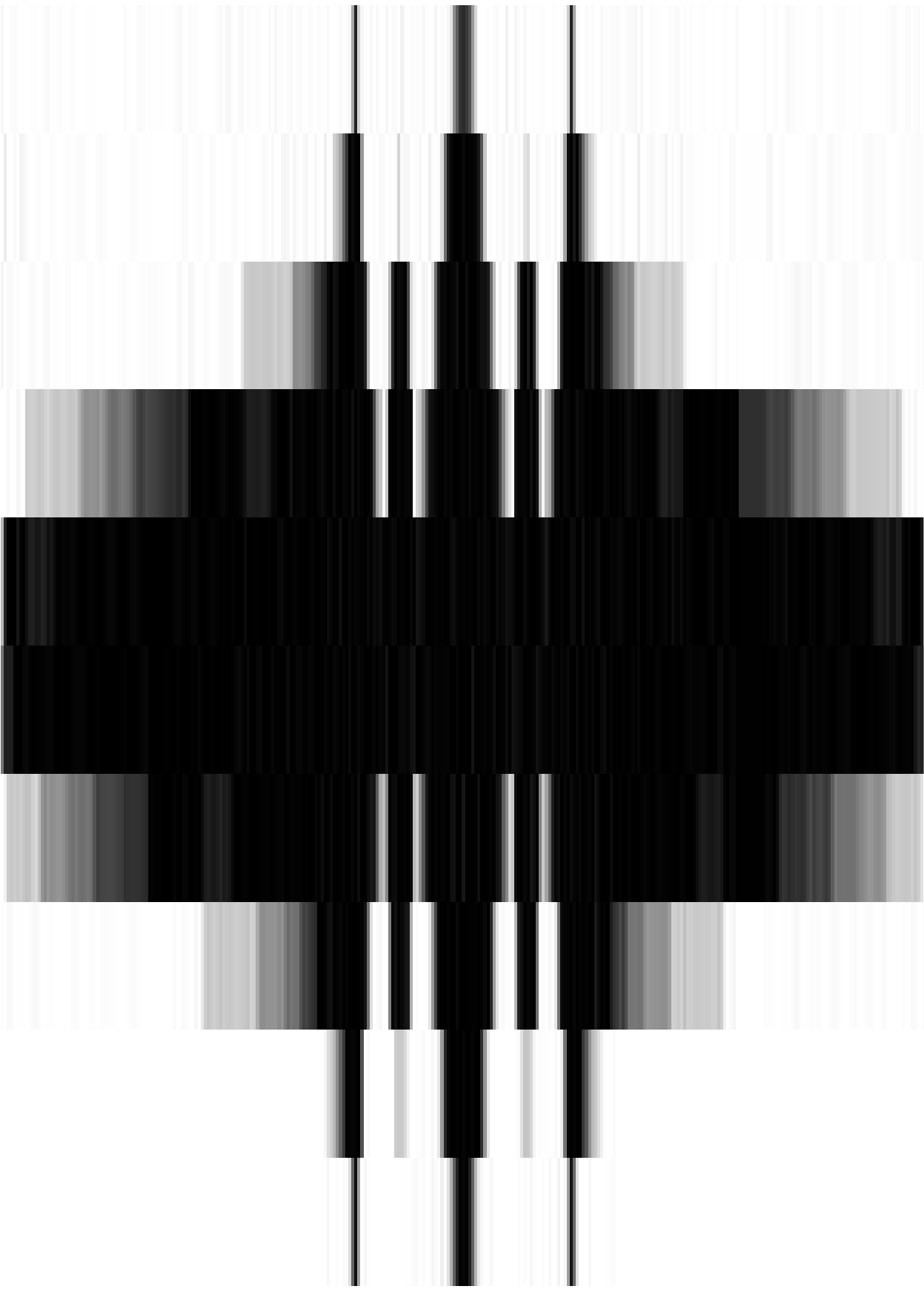


Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; the first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus; Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him (Matthew 10:2 – 4).³

Jesus gave his divine power to Judas along with the other eleven; but instead of using his free will to take advantage of his spiritual opportunity, Judas succumbed to delusion and became an instrument of evil. Even though Jesus gave to his disciples in equal measure, they each received and manifested his teachings differently according to their various degrees of spirituality and good and bad karma. The advanced disciples, such as Saint John, were completely liberated during the lifetime of Jesus; but Judas had to work out through many incarnations the evil karma of his act of betrayal of Jesus. According to certain great masters in India, Judas has been working out his sins for twenty centuries and was finally liberated in India in this twentieth century. The bad karma of Judas was prodigious because he not only sinned through an act of treachery against his Master, but also blasphemed against the Holy Ghost and God the Father (Cosmic Consciousness) manifest within the Christ in Jesus.



These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, “Go not into the way of the Gentiles and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give” (Matthew 10:5 – 8).⁴



Jesus endowed his disciples with divine power

Jesus knew he had come on earth to establish a great movement to uplift mankind. To disseminate his message, he chose twelve disciples to be apostles who could go forth to preach the truth and declare it by example. He blessed them with his spirit to demonstrate God's power by healing sickness of the body resulting from bad physical habits, mental sickness due to psychological errors and wrong thinking, and soul sickness effected by delusive ignorance; and to cast out devils and banish metaphysical ignorance lodged in the three bodies of man, and also to free souls from the possession of Satan's evil agents.

In the modern world, preaching only in theory the staid dogma of theology or one's own imaginations about truth is quite the vogue. There are few real teachers left in the world who live the life—those who are in tune with God and who know how to heal physical, mental, and soul sickness by God's power, and who can cast out Satan's satellites present in the ignorance engulfing man's soul, in the psychological aberrations of anger, greed, lust, and other bad habits, and in the karma-engendered ailments of the body.

Jesus endowed his disciples with divine power so that they in turn could instill that power in true, receptive devotees to heal them, first and foremost, of ignorance, the primal cause of all human misery. Jesus also taught his apostles the art of developing dynamic will power for healing by cosmic energy and innate life force the afflicted bodies and minds of people who above all wanted spiritual awakening, but found themselves too enervated by their physical and psychological defects.

Jesus counseled his apostles as he prepared to send them out to serve other souls: "Do not follow after the Gentiles ('heathens or pagans,' being interpreted as spiritually indifferent worldly people), nor enter into any city of the rigid-minded Samaritans, but rather go to the shepherdless, truth-seeking, innocent souls of the true Israel, those who are pure lovers of God. Preach that the blissful kingdom of heaven is within every soul, and thus within reach of everyone. Heal the spiritually sick as well as the physically sick. Cleanse the lepers and those who are unclean with sinful habits. Raise the spiritually dead; and raise also, after you have judged their good and bad karma, any whom the Heavenly Father tells you should be brought back to life from physical death. Cast out Satan and his

satellites from obsessed souls. You have received truth through the eagerness of your free will and by my free will; give this truth freely to those who spontaneously, without persuasion or compulsion, are willing to receive it.”



A true minister teaches actual contact of God to his congregation

The succeeding generations of Christian denominations and teachers have done much good in keeping alive the thought of Jesus by recitation of his life and words, but rarely have they given actual God-contact to their congregations. For the most part, ministers and religious leaders are chosen according to their physical personality, oratorical power, organizing ability, or theological degrees, and not according to the quality of their Self-realization. Jesus and his disciples, possessing no theological degrees or intellectual college education, nor instruction in elocution, preached what they knew from direct God-contact: “We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen” (John

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How different are those who speak from realization from the many missionary types, both in the Orient and the Occident, who come forth from theological training to preach to others with the purpose of converting and holding followers with dogma. Appointed or self-elected soap-box orators can create intellectual or emotional upheavals in the minds of listeners to be sufficiently convincing, but they cannot save or uplift souls. To save others, one must first save oneself. To heal others, one must have healing power. Only those who are thoroughly grounded in meditation so that there is real contact of their hearts, minds, and souls with God (whether or not they have book learning) are qualified to teach. Intellectual or emotional preaching through the power of a good memory or creative imagination bears no comparison with spiritual preaching through example of a God-attuned life and consciousness.

Contact with God is evidenced in a holy life. The ego is diminished and replaced with an ever-increasing love for God and desire to follow His will alone. A truly holy person touches one’s whole being with a “peace which passeth all understanding”⁵ and radiates to all as kindness and goodwill. God-contact in deep meditation opens the channel of soul intuition and speaks through the inner

guiding voice of conscience. God uses His great prophets to proclaim revelations; He speaks personally to His true devotees those revelations that will change them into God-loving beings who inspire others to become likewise. The exultations, visions, and divine oneness of God-contact come in good time to the advanced devotee who perseveres in deepening meditation; but God's presence is no less real in its subtle transforming power of inner peace, joy, understanding, and divine love.

A true minister of truth hears the voice of God as inner intuitive inspiration and does not depend solely on running to a library to prepare undigested, un-lived sermons. Jesus preached extensively to the masses; and in between gatherings, he retired to the seclusion of the desert or mountaintops to commune with God. Renewed in body and spirit, he came back to give his reinforced God-consciousness to the true seekers.

Ministers of churches and leaders of religious organizations should be selected according to their devotion to God and Self-realization attained through meditation. Persons of shallow spirituality, whose lives and understanding lack at least some degree of actual God-contact, can do little more than lead their followers down the path of ignorance; their ministry consists primarily of worrying themselves with the financial problems and fund-raising of their organizations. But those who are themselves settled in God are the true ministers who can successfully transmit God to other souls.

Even business ethics demand that one should not attempt to sell a product without a thorough acquaintance with the article and a sincere belief in its usefulness. How unethical it is, then, to try to sell God to others without an inner intuitive perception of God and faith in what God is, and how in a supreme way He is essential to all.

The age-old tradition of India is that every would-be spiritual teacher must first learn to contact God and live a life of discipline under the tutelage of a divine teacher. They must be worthy disciples before they can be teachers of others. Any accredited disciple of a great teacher who lives and upholds his master's ideals is a person considered fit to teach.

It is exemplary when great teachers not only instruct their disciples in the ways of physical and mental healing by the system of dietetics and methods of concentration and prayer, but also initiate them in the highest technique of

meditation to cure spiritual sickness by driving away the ignorance of delusion. Real divine ministers can teach spiritually advanced devotees more advancement and spiritually sick true seekers the art of healing themselves.



Churches should emphasize inner development more than oratory and social activities

Religious denominations, in their modern form, do well in reminding people of the necessity of knowing God and truth; but to really serve, they should be universities of spiritual discipline and offer comprehensive practical training in God-contact as well as in spiritual living. A house of God should not be a social and moral organization only, but primarily a spiritual academy for training in actual God-perception. Realization of God is the true and only purpose of churches and temples; all activities should be subservient to that cause. Genuine seekers fall away from congregational worship if they do not receive a real experience of God.

The usual method of most religious denominations has been to hold their people by inbred churchgoing habits, or by dogma and threats of eternal perdition, or by stimulating lectures and musical or festive entertainments. Congregations are often built on the personalities of oratorical ministers, trained like actors to effectively deliver the lines of their theoretical sermons. In the absence of that intellectual or emotional oratory, as also practiced musical performances and supplemental socials, the members in time lose interest if they have not received fulfillment in an inner experience of God-contact in meditation. The church cannot compete with professional entertainment and should not try to do so; the temple of God is a unique place where souls should come together to share the joy of God-communion.

Nor should huge sums of money be tied up in church edifices just to attract class-conscious persons with the grandeur of architecture, offering scarcely more than a place to see and be seen. There is nothing wrong in dedicating to God beautiful places of worship. But structural hives, regardless of their magnificence, are useless unless they are filled with the honey of God's presence.

As with churches in the West, many elaborate Hindu temples in India have become places of mechanical chanting and ritualism. Holy temples at first were places of meditation and worship for saintly souls and those who came for their blessings; but after their passing, priests or trustees with ambition for power and financial gain seized control and desecrated the sacred sanctuaries with their

unspiritual commercial methods. Owing to this monopoly, great masters now avoid the temples in favor of sequestered nooks and simple mandirs where they teach the methods of attaining Self-realization to selected students, less by preaching and more by meditating with them in the inner temple of God-contact. Sermons may create the desire to know God, but meditation with great saints or according to their methods gives one the knowledge and bliss of actual God-communion.



Teach universal moral and spiritual truths instead of untested dogmas

Holy ones of God illumine the way, but ascendancy to God is through the eager striving of the devotee, along with divine blessings. As one cannot satisfy his hunger if somebody else eats for him, so a master's intercession and guidance prepares the divine feast of God-realization, but it is for the devotee to partake of the blessed manna. What is the use of unqualified teachers of religion coercing followers to believe blindly in untested dogmas which the propounders themselves have not assimilated and proven within their own experience to be true? Instead of stuffing dogma into the trusting minds of their congregations, religious leaders should nourish those minds with greater love and eagerness for God-realization, and with stimulating truths of universal wisdom. Rather than conducting only stilted services and scripture classes in which the members are passive recipients, the congregation should be reorganized to do more of their own introspective thinking and silent prayer and meditation.

It would be a more peaceful, harmonious world if the various religions and religious denominations ceased condemnation of paths different from their own. Instead of fighting about the infallibility and exclusivity of their respective dogmas, they should foster a spirit of unity based on the commonality of the real meaning of life and man's relationship with his Creator. The universal moral and spiritual codes of discipline for right human behavior that are basic to all true religions would be found to be a universal spiritual treatise on the art of moral and spiritual living. It would be a "Code Book of All Religions," of the psycho-ethical laws that can really daily uplift and help humanity to come together in brotherhood under the one Fatherhood-Motherhood of God.

Sankhya, Yoga, and Vedanta, three comprehensive philosophies of India, are pragmatic and meant directly to discipline human activity so that it will yield the highest wisdom and final emancipation. The Sankhya philosophy teaches that the cardinal necessity of man consists in destroying the roots of the threefold suffering of body, mind, and soul so that there is no possibility of recurrence. It describes the spiritual cosmology of creation and man's place in the divine schema. Yoga is the science of the step-by-step-methods of progressive Self-realization that lead directly to God. According to the highest Hindu scripture, the Bhagavad Gita, Yoga is the supreme way, for it is the science of salvation. Vedanta is the doctrine of the Ultimate; it describes the goal of God-realization

and the singularity of Spirit—of the One in the many and the many as naught else than the One. Yoga provides the technique by which the Ultimate Goal is realized. Vedanta describes the contents of the mine of divine wisdom; Yoga is the way to mine that knowledge for human use. In the combined religious experiences of these three philosophies, humanity will find the highest standard of right living that alone can produce ideal citizens of the world and of the kingdom of God.⁶



External forms of congregational worship are of limited value for God-communion

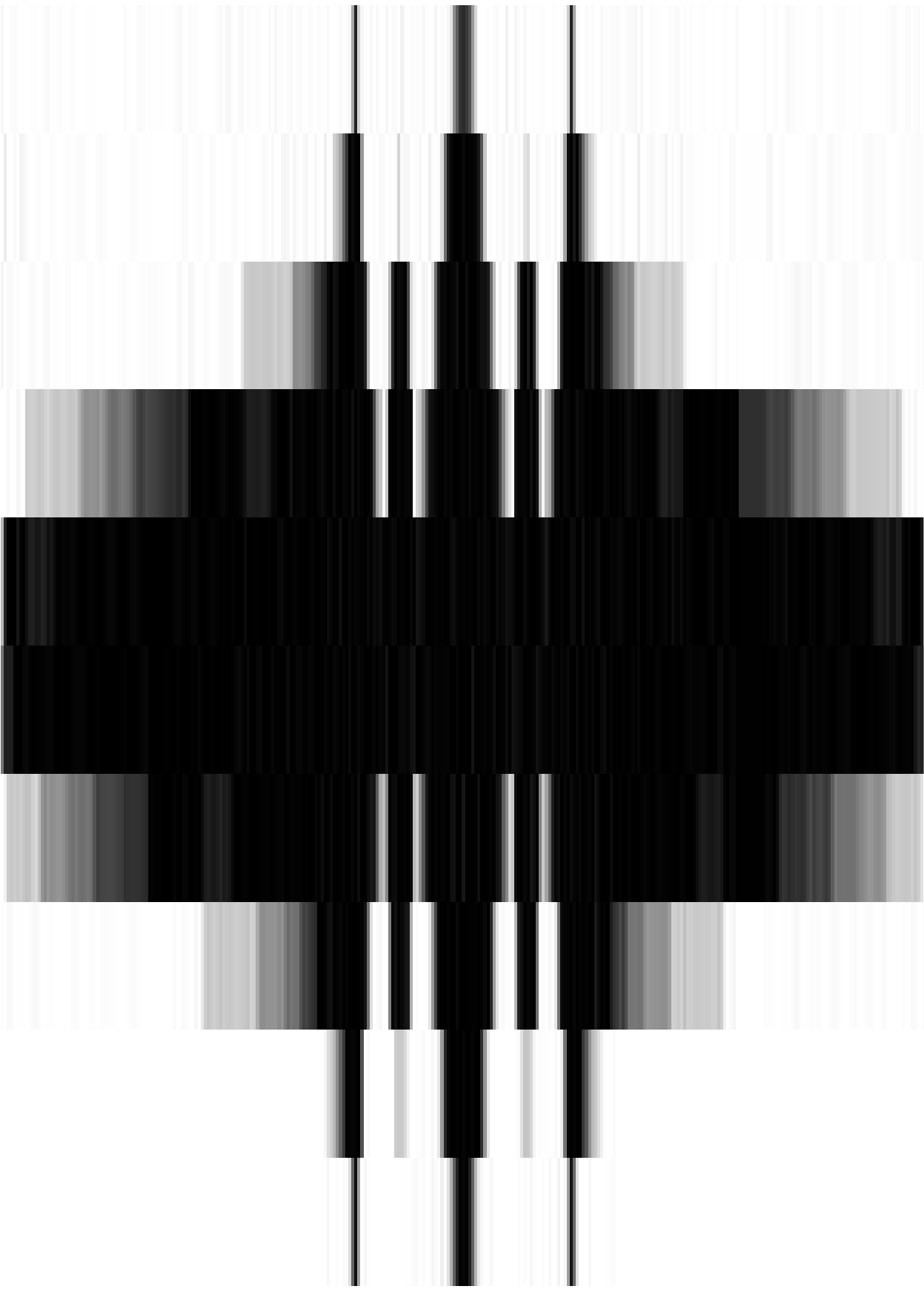
The purpose of a church is to give God-contact. If it claims to meet that criterion, then it must do so or it will cease to exist as a spiritual force. Toward this end, it is the paramount duty of all clerics to improve themselves by daily deep scientific meditation for communion with God, and to reform their congregations likewise with spiritual habits and the joy of divine communion. The Self-realization of true seekers would spontaneously, without urging, hold those members to their respective path that is leading them to God. A strong congregation is united in uncoerced loyalty born of each member's Self-realization garnered from the inner discipline and meditation taught by the church or temple.

Services should not consist so much of various rituals of the body and mind required in chanting and choirs, standing up and kneeling down, intoned prayer, scripture recital, and other external ceremonial practices. Congregational worship should stress primarily meditation, interiorization with cessation of bodily motions, absence of mental restlessness, and the presence of God-contact. When bodily motions cease and thoughts become quiet, God begins to appear as the blessedness of stillness and divine bliss on the altar of peace and changelessness.

Congregational recitation of chants and prayers keeps the mind external. They may do some good, no doubt, to those whose concentration on the meaning is sincere and devout. But the effect remains limited unless supplemented by deep, secreted, soul-loving prayers in the quietness of solitude. The lack of individual prayer and communion with God has divorced modern Christians and Christian sects from Jesus' teaching of the real perception of God, as is true also of all religious paths inaugurated by God-sent prophets whose followers drift into byways of dogma and ritual rather than actual God-communion. Those paths that have no esoteric soul-lifting training busy themselves with dogma and building walls to exclude people with different ideas. Divine persons who really perceive God include everybody within the path of their love, not in the concept of an eclectic congregation but in respectful divine friendship toward all true lovers of God and the saints of all religions.⁷

When church paraphernalia creates a top-heavy, scantily useful organization, it loses the spirit of Christ. His teaching emphasizes universal love and brotherhood; but that is not what one thinks of when one sees Christian sects disparaging one another over contradictory doctrines, or maligning non-Christian denominations as heathen. Where is Christ's ideal of deeds of mercy and goodness? Sermons about Jesus, but without the revealed essence of the message of the great Master, make the house of God just a place for worshiping the personality of God's earthly representative, or just a refuge from mundane responsibilities where one can soothe his worries in intellectual or emotional sermons, or a comfortable place to be temporarily stirred by ritual and good music without any self-effort to center one's thoughts upon God. Whatever be the practices in the Lord's house, they should not be to the neglect of direct individual communion with God. Otherwise, the holy precincts are changed into a den where thieves of restless material thoughts and vibrations of dogmatic bigotry disguised in holy robes hold supreme sway. "It is written, 'My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.'"⁸ Silent inner prayer of pure devotion to God is the common denominator that can unite the denominations of all religions in the love of God.

In the hermitages of India where great masters live, there is very little of that form of preaching in which the master does most of the thinking for the disciples—as it is done in the Western churches. Instead, in India's hermitages that follow the ancient tradition of her lineage of saints, the master and the disciple often sit together to discuss spiritual principles; and then together, or individually, through proven techniques of concentration and meditation, they try to commune with God and to realize truth through the direct experience of soul intuition.



The difference between Christianity and churchianity

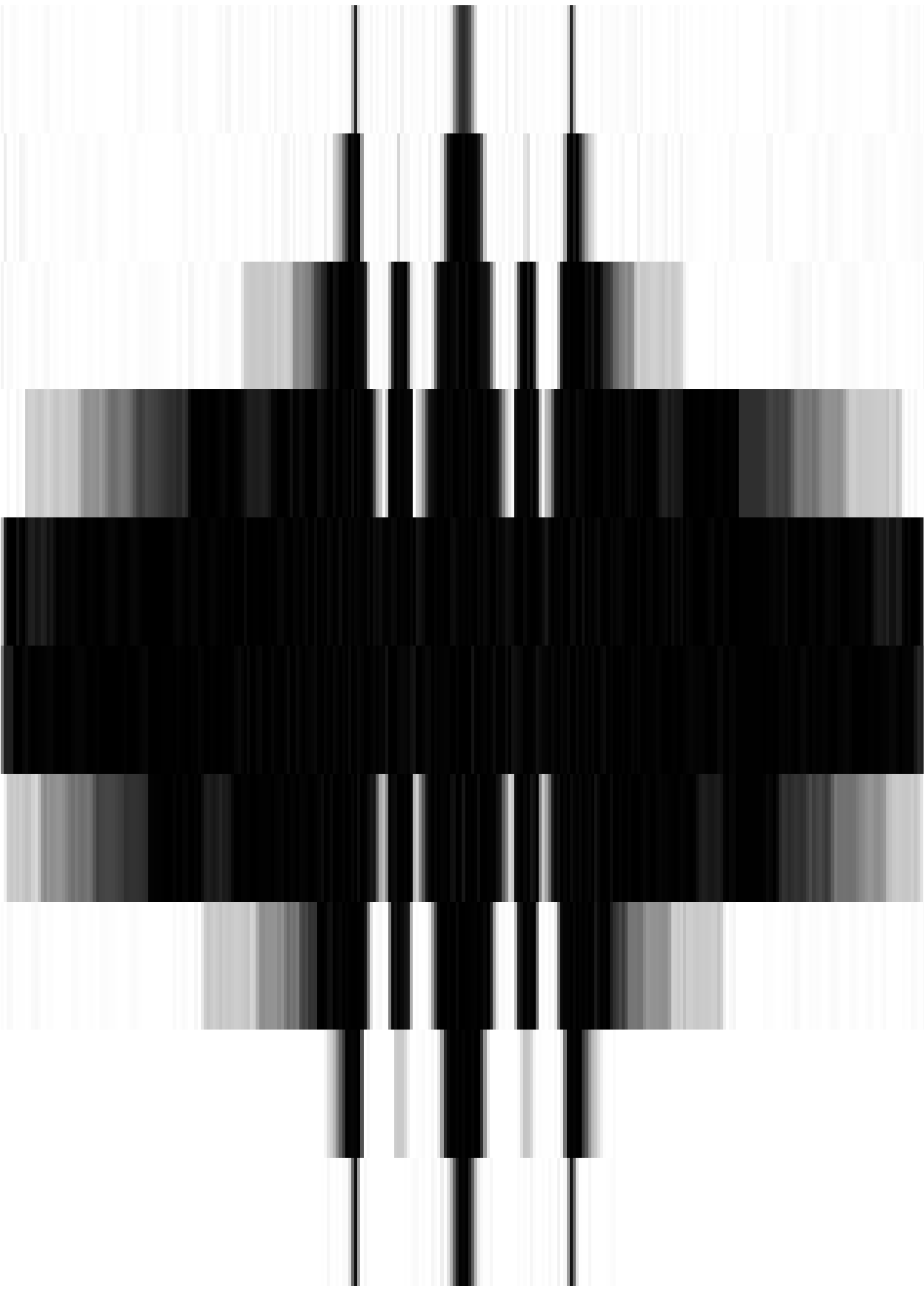
Western churches will profit spiritually when they have become temples where both leaders and members in unison can commune with God and with the Christ Consciousness that was manifest in Jesus. Therein is where Christianity is different from churchianity. Establish Christ first in the hearts of men, then he will reign in the church also.

“In the churches, temples, tabernacles, mosques, the realization of Christ Consciousness is with me; no limitations bind me. I am of the Infinite Christ, the blissful Kutastha Chaitanya.” That is the chord of unity around which all melodies of life can be played in harmony. “I want to pray to God with the language of the soul and the yearning of all hearts. Then, O Lord, thousands will hearken and follow Thee.” Christ cannot be monopolized by any self-selected group claiming to be the only true followers. Christ belongs to all, regardless of religion, race, or generation. Every devotee of Jesus should ask himself if he is truly a modern-day Christian. Those who are sincere should discipline the body and soul with divine communion. In the morning and in the darkest, quietest hours of night in meditation, they should open the soul as a lotus bud. Then they can say, “Come! Him whom I feel in my heart, of him I preach. Come, follow the Christ which is in my heart and in my actions.”

In the West, one who aspires to be a spiritual teacher by virtue of his personality or intellect often starts his career by first desiring to build a church and a denomination of his own. From the beginning he involves and entangles himself in financial difficulties, obliging him to concentrate primarily on fund-raising. Money and desire for the fame and false glory of claiming many followers have kept the churches and temples in spiritual stagnation. Instead of first concentrating on the building of ornate edifices with heavy mortgages, teachers should establish the temples of Self-realization in the souls of their followers.

What is necessary for the revival of true churches of Christ is not new denominations, but the real teachings of Christ and the living of those teachings, improving the quality of church members by meditation, and the selection of God-known, God-contacting ministers. The failings of churchianity can be abolished and real Christianity be brought back into the church if the churches are made places of worship by members who practice meditation in their homes

and also as part of their congregational services. The atmosphere of nonsectarian meditation for deep inner God-communion would change churches from the divisiveness of churchianity into the heaven of Christ Consciousness or Christianity.



“Hives” of organized churches should be filled with the honey of God’s presence

Every spiritual teacher should pass his life more in meditation, and in order to be able to transmit spirituality to real seekers—those whom he meets through the will of God and proper moral publicity—regularly meditate with them whenever he can, in small groups, preferably in quiet or secluded centrally located places. If churches get together and follow the above practice they will bring about a real revival of Christ Consciousness in the hearts of true worshipers. In deeply meditating together in small sincere groups, such seekers will find that the Christ Consciousness which was in Jesus will manifest in them and bring about in their consciousness the Second Coming of Christ.

If this spiritual nucleus of devout devotees then wants to build a church, it is commendable; for they will then be qualified to fill that hive with the honey of God’s presence. The leader should be under no constraint to cater to or flatter others for monetary gain. He must faithfully make time daily to keep his most important engagement with God in meditation. The pure vibrations of a true minister draw those devotees who really seek God. Such souls, by receiving the blessing of their own realization, will give loyal support to a leader whose spiritual demeanor and moral behavior give sincere evidence of his communion with God.

God makes no distinction between rich and poor, fame or no fame. A successful minister is often equated with an elaborate church in an aristocratic neighborhood, attended by a rich, influential congregation. In sending forth his first apostles, Jesus gave a hint to all generations as to where churches should be built and to whom the teachings should be given. Suitable areas, aristocratic or poor, are those in which there is spiritual interest. That is where to build a foundation, wherever people repent of their earthly folly and like lost sheep are sincerely seeking return to the fold of God-consciousness.

Thus did Jesus command his disciples that they should not go to the self-satisfied worldly people, “the Gentiles,” worshipers of gods of fame and fortune, or to the Samaritans, fixed in their convictions, but rather to the truth-seekers who are repentant for having strayed away from God. “Vibrate into them your God-realization and show them that the kingdom of heaven, the state of attunement with the heavenly powers of astral vibration, wisdom, bliss, and

God-consciousness, lies within their reach, just behind the human consciousness of wakefulness and subconsciousness, in the state of superconsciousness and God-contact as realized in deep meditation. As you heal the soul of material consciousness by establishing the kingdom of heaven or God-consciousness there, so also heal the ailments of the bodily instrument of the soul.

“Free the truly repentant God-seekers not only from physical sickness but also from mental, moral, and spiritual sickness. Raise spiritually dead people into the consciousness of God; and by transmitting your God-power, release them from devils and obsessions of cosmic delusion and Satanic ignorance and evil disembodied souls. Bring to life the good departed souls who have more good than evil karma, or at least equal good and bad karma, because such acts are now sanctioned by the Heavenly Father to assure benighted mankind that all things are possible with God’s true devotees and followers of the path of goodness. The worthy souls you resurrect will do much good on earth.

“You have received by your own free accord, through your uninfluenced, spontaneously spiritual free will, and through my own free will and God’s divine compassion, the God-consciousness transmitted into your self-disciplined meditating lives. In the way you have grasped God-consciousness, teach the same to the people. You exercised your divine ardor, reason, and free will to meditate and advance spiritually, and so you awakened the spontaneous response in God and desire in me to transmit into you Our divine consciousness. Likewise teach other devotees to rouse their free will and to meditate and thereby receive the God-consciousness freely available to them.”

Truth cannot be received just by listening to dogmatic, moral, or scriptural sermons, but must come by the above law of the spontaneous, uncoaxed spiritual ardor and spiritual labor of the devotees and the responding divine compassion of God in granting them Self-realization.



“Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat.

“And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence. And when ye come into an house, salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace be upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you” (Matthew 10:9 – 13).

Parallel references:

And commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in their purse: but be shod with sandals; and not put on two coats. And he said unto them, “In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place” (Mark 6:8 – 10).⁹

After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come. Therefore said he unto them, “The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.

“Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves. Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way.

“And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, ‘Peace be to this house.’ And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again.

“And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house. And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you: And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, ‘The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you’” (Luke 10:1 – 9).



Jesus sent out his disciples not as salaried preachers but as selfless renunciants

Jesus was saddened that most people were satisfied just to join the services in the synagogue, but there were few spiritual laborers who deserved to reap the rich harvest of eternal abundance in God's kingdom. ¹⁰ To awaken the people from their doldrums of delusion, he sent his disciples before him to preach the gospel, not as salaried missionaries, but as selfless adepts who would live the life as preached by Christ, and similarly preach the truth in word and deed. Under whatever conditions one speaks the word of God, what matters most is the example of a holy life.

“After being true devotee-laborers who have reaped the harvest of wisdom and God-contact, go forth to the world to share your divine realization with others. In your travels, do not burden your consciousness with dependence on material things; take no monies in your purse nor extra clothing. Do not salute any man on the way, tarrying in useless conversations; keep your mind within on thoughts of God, giving Him the highest respect of your undivided attention.

“Into whatever city or town you enter, find out who are spiritual and worthiest to receive your message of salvation; there abide in the harmonious vibration of that household, accepting their hospitality as your ministerial wage, until you have finished your counsel in that area and are ready to go elsewhere to help others. Into whatever house you enter, salute its inhabitants humbly as manifestations of God. If that house be spiritually deserving, then bless it to feel your soul's peace. But if you find it unreceptive and unappreciative, pray for those who dwell therein, but let your rejected gift of peace return into your soul.

“Wheresoever they receive you, eat and drink whatever is given you, heal the sick, and tell them God's kingdom of heavenly bliss lies hidden very near, just behind their waking consciousness. Teach them by meditation to enter into the Cosmic Consciousness of that divine kingdom.”

In the above verses, Jesus tells the way his disciples should live in the world during the time they preach his gospel to his people. It parallels the uniting of the two distinct paths followed in India by spiritually aspiring devotees. First, the school of outer renunciation; second, the school of yoga, which enjoins mental renunciation and nonattachment while living in the world.



The paths of outer and inner renunciation

A follower of the path of outer renunciation leaves the world, does not marry, divests himself of personal possessions and human relations, and seeks a secluded place, such as an ashram, where undisturbed by worldly intrusions, the devotee can pursue his sadhana for attaining God-realization. The Order of Swamis belongs to the path of renunciation, akin to monastic orders in the West.¹¹

The path of yoga, the uniting of the soul with Spirit through the practice of scientific meditation techniques of God-contact, can be followed by devotees in all walks of life. A yogi does not necessarily have to be in the world as a householder or to leave the world as a monastic. Whether yogis live in the civilized jungle of physical luxury or in the primitive conditions away from material influences and comforts, by tuning in with the Infinite they seek to become so concentrated on divine bliss that automatically their minds will rise above and inwardly renounce the desire for material fulfillments.

A true yogi is a practitioner of real renunciation, even if he lives in the world and to outer appearances looks like any ordinary person of the world. The advanced yogi, having inwardly renounced all desires and attachments, remains intoxicated with God. Such yogis do not mind obeying fastidiously, as well, the laws of outward renunciation. Lahiri Mahasaya was a sublime exemplar of a householder yogi; he took no formal vows of renunciation but no taint of worldly consciousness dared touch his sanctity.

The devotee of outer renunciation, on the other hand, forswears all material luxuries in the beginning to accustom his consciousness to the simple life and the nonattachment native to his soul—the prerequisite renunciation of worldly pleasures and worldly ways of living before one can know God. But though an aspirant renounce everything outwardly, he may yet remain inwardly attached to mundane objects and be haunted by sensual desires. The yogi says, “Have God-contact first through meditation; and then through attachment to God the attachment to material objects will drop away.” The yogi who practices the scientific meditation technique of actual God-contact belongs to the highest spiritual path. The physical austerities of renunciation alone without the yoga of God-union is unnecessarily arduous. Therefore, even the devout renunciant

ought to be a yogi as well.

The path of outer renunciation is successfully followed only by the few; the path of yoga can be followed by all. Devotees may choose the path of renunciation or the path of yoga as suitable according to their differing temperaments; but to be a yogi as well as a renunciant is wonderful. Outward as well as inward renunciation is ideal for those with a single-hearted yearning for God—for those devotees of God who, without the obligations and entanglements of a family, can give their full time to seeking God through yoga and unreserved service to God and all mankind.

Jesus was a yogi, constantly engaged in divine union, and a man of renunciation as well. He not only contacted God in his spirit and inwardly rose above all material attachments, but he also practiced nonattachment to material things in his outward life. He instructed his apostles likewise to be men of renunciation along with the inner wisdom and Self-realization they possessed. Jesus Christ first empowered his disciples with God-consciousness and then advised them: “O my disciples, who are divinely charged and permeated with God and His healing powers, show your exalted spiritual example of having overcome the world by taking nothing for your journey that would indicate a sense of luxury for the body or dependence on material security for your needs.”

As similarly advocated by Jesus, the Buddhist monks of India from pre-Christian times and the members of the Swami Order in India confined their possessions chiefly to a staff and simple dress; and most of the time they went barefoot or wore wooden or woven-straw sandals—shoes made from the hides of slaughtered animals being considered unclean and unholy.

Jesus’ instructions to his disciples were apropos to the times and climate, presenting a truly holy example for the people of his country. I am sure Jesus, or any Oriental teacher, would greatly modify the dress code and other rules of renunciation to be followed by those disciples who live under different conditions or in cold countries.

Barefooted or sandal-shod swamis in India who are clad only in simple cotton dhotis when in the warm regions dress sensibly in warmer attire when they go to the cold regions of the Himalayas. Even so, I have seen some great swamis and yogis in secluded haunts of the frigid mountain regions bare-bodied without suffering from cold or any effects of exposure to extreme weather. The garb one

wears, or the lack of it, and other external expressions of renunciation do not necessarily make one spiritual. I have always stressed to the monks and nuns of Self-Realization Fellowship who have chosen to follow the path of renunciation I have embraced: “First make your heart a hermitage and your robe the love of God.”



Avoiding commercialism in religion: Jesus' instructions on money in the ministry

Jesus further instructs his disciples as to how they should maintain themselves: "O ye divine renunciants, remember that just as the skilled workman earns his honest livelihood by his labor, so you, as divine workmen giving to people the highest spiritual service and salvation, deserve to receive your bodily maintenance from those you help. Even though I ask you to live humbly by the grateful charity of the people you serve, always retain the consciousness that you are not beggars, but divine children made in the almighty image of God." A spiritual man who is sincerely engaged in offering the public the highest service, that of saving souls, lives very honorably even though he exists by alms and the goodwill of those he serves.

In the West, owing to the high cost of living, ministers receive salaries. But the one baneful result of this subsistence is that the minister is often thereby controlled by the trustees or board of a church; and if he, as an employee, does not agree to the course outlined by his "employers," he runs the chance of being discharged, just as a clerk in an office may be discharged for refusal to obey his superior.

In the centers of religious concentration in India, there are institutions where swamis and yogis may freely board without any obligations whatsoever. This arrangement is intended to foster the growth of real teachers who want to devote themselves exclusively to the cause of spiritual welfare, without the time-devouring distractions of gainful ordinary employment. The concomitant evil that arises is from abuse of this beneficence by persons who simply do not care to put forth the effort to maintain themselves; they don the garb of renunciants to enjoy free board and lodging from such religious institutions. Nevertheless, this provision for real spiritual teachers immensely helps the growth of advanced souls by freeing them from the control of a board of trustees or philanthropic gifts compromised with conditions.

In the Western world, sometimes religious teachers who are not satisfied with their limited ministerial salary try to utilize various other means of fund-raising in the guise of providing for God's work, but from which they personally benefit. There is no sin for ministers or religious teachers to arrange to maintain themselves financially so that they can be free to help without interruption the

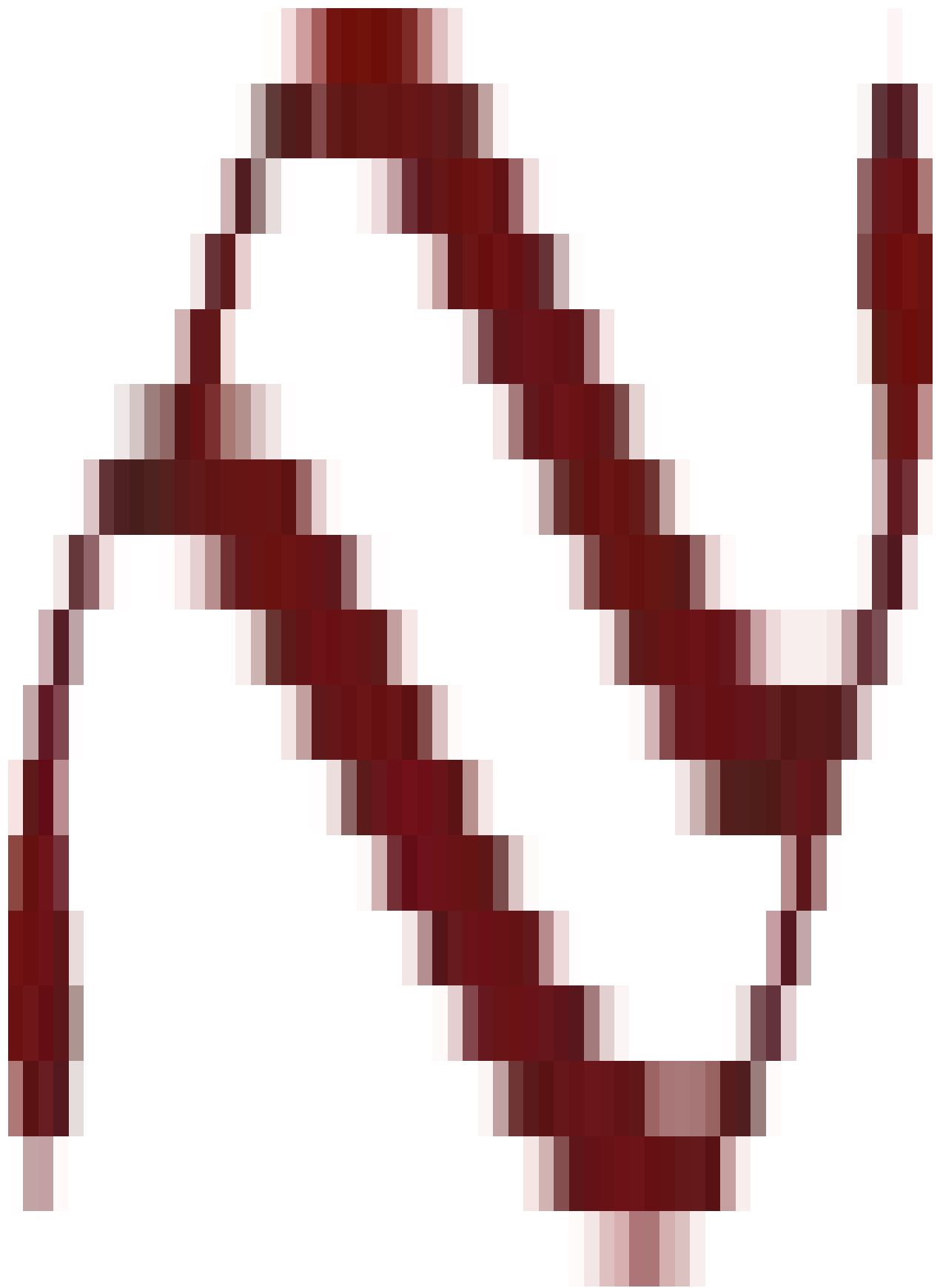
growth of spirituality in the world, provided that neither God nor their followers are exploited for that purpose. I have always maintained that it is all right in the modern world to use business methods in religion, but that it is blasphemy and a grievous spiritual sin to use religion for business or to trade upon the sacred name of God or dupe sincere devotees to satisfy one's personal ambition for financial gain and luxurious habits.

Teachers who promote their self-envisioned greatness by publicizing falsehoods claiming contact with God and that they have been commissioned by masters and saints are no more than metaphysical racketeers. If truth-seekers of the West followed the discriminating method of India, that only those teachers are qualified who truly live the spiritual life and who are definitely known to have practiced and achieved self-mastery under a great living master or bona fide lineage established by such a master, they would avoid being disillusioned by the antics of self-elected pseudoprophets.

The aim of false prophets is always the same, to gratify their ego with the adoration of a large following and to reap financial gain from their trusting flock. Maintaining a church or religious organization by freewill offerings received at services and religious meetings and from funds received from book sales and other media of disseminating truth is spiritually legitimate if the money is used for propagating the spiritual cause and for the reasonable livelihood of the teacher who gives all his life to the spreading of the divine work. However, it is condemnable if such funds are diverted to line the pockets of unscrupulous pseudoprophets and their acolytes.

The instruction of Jesus to the apostles he sent forth made these spiritual ideals of ministry unequivocally clear. Times change, as well as the external modes of expression; but the ideals are invariable. A teacher of God's word must be an exemplar of the highest ideals of self-abnegation for the greater love of serving God and truth-seeking souls. Concentration was to be on those who were "worthy," receptive, regardless of their station—high or low, rich or poor, certainly not just the wealthy or influential from which favors can be sought.

The commercial religious teacher uses his students to further his own ends; the true spiritual teacher guides the attention of devotees to bring them unto God.



“And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrhah in the day of judgment, than for that city” (Matthew 10:14 – 15).

Parallel reference:

“But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say, ‘Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.’ But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city” (Luke 10:10 – 12).¹²

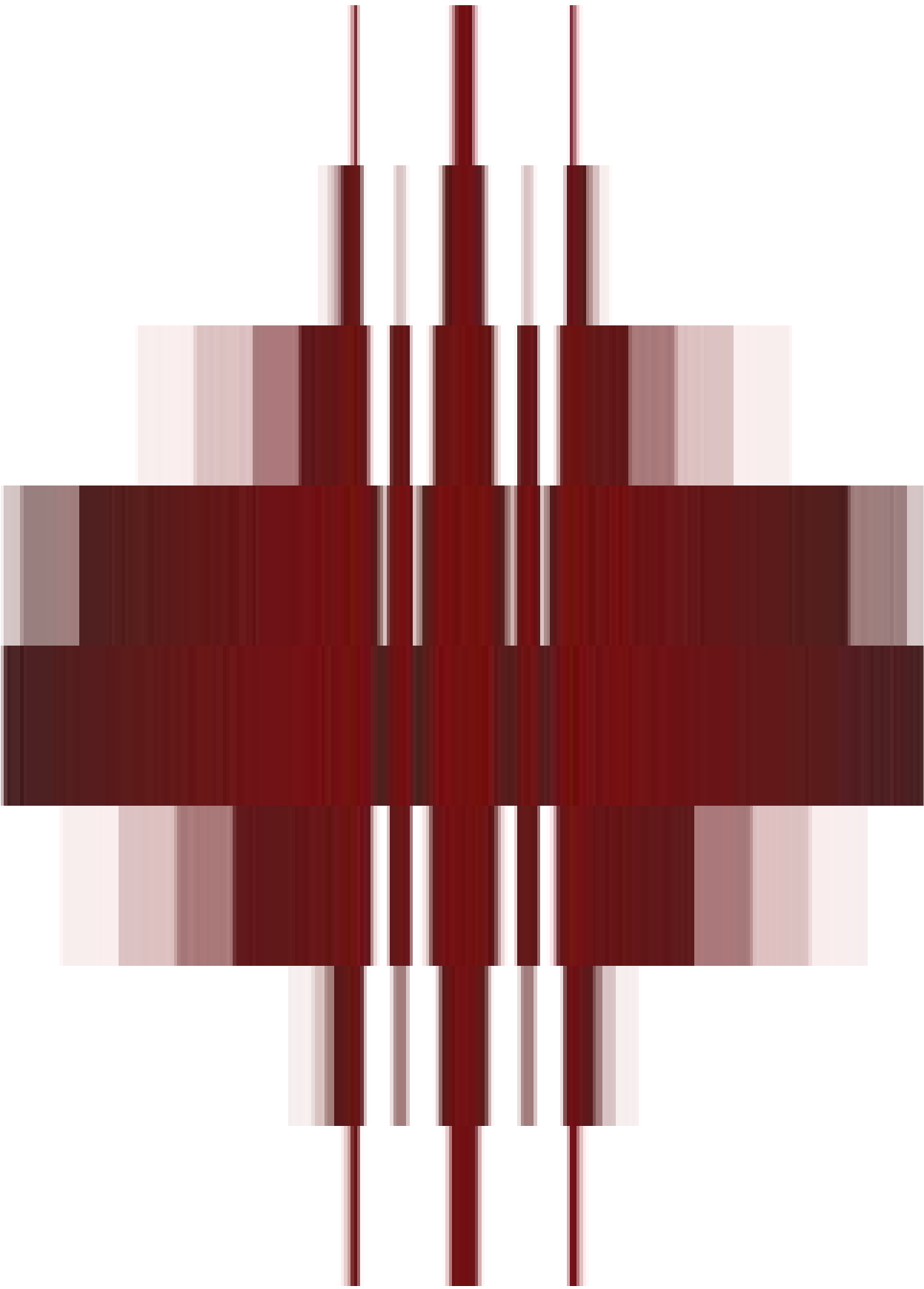
“And whosoever will not appreciate your exemplary lives, nor receive your message of divine liberation, nor listen to your words of wisdom, depart you, without anger or arrogance, from that house or city and shake off the dust of their disbelief and disdain; let not their evil vibrations cling to you. Let your humble act of response to their rejection and scorn be a testament before their own conscience of the folly of the ignorance of their evil natures. Verily I say unto you that the law of karma will record and punish that city or home that refused your soul-liberating message—in which you demonstrated ‘that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you’— even more than Sodom or Gomorrhah suffered due to the effects of their ignorance-induced misdeeds. The judgment of the Cosmic Law will be severe against those spiritual offenders who blaspheme against God by not recognizing you who are divine representatives of the Christ Intelligence and God the Father.”



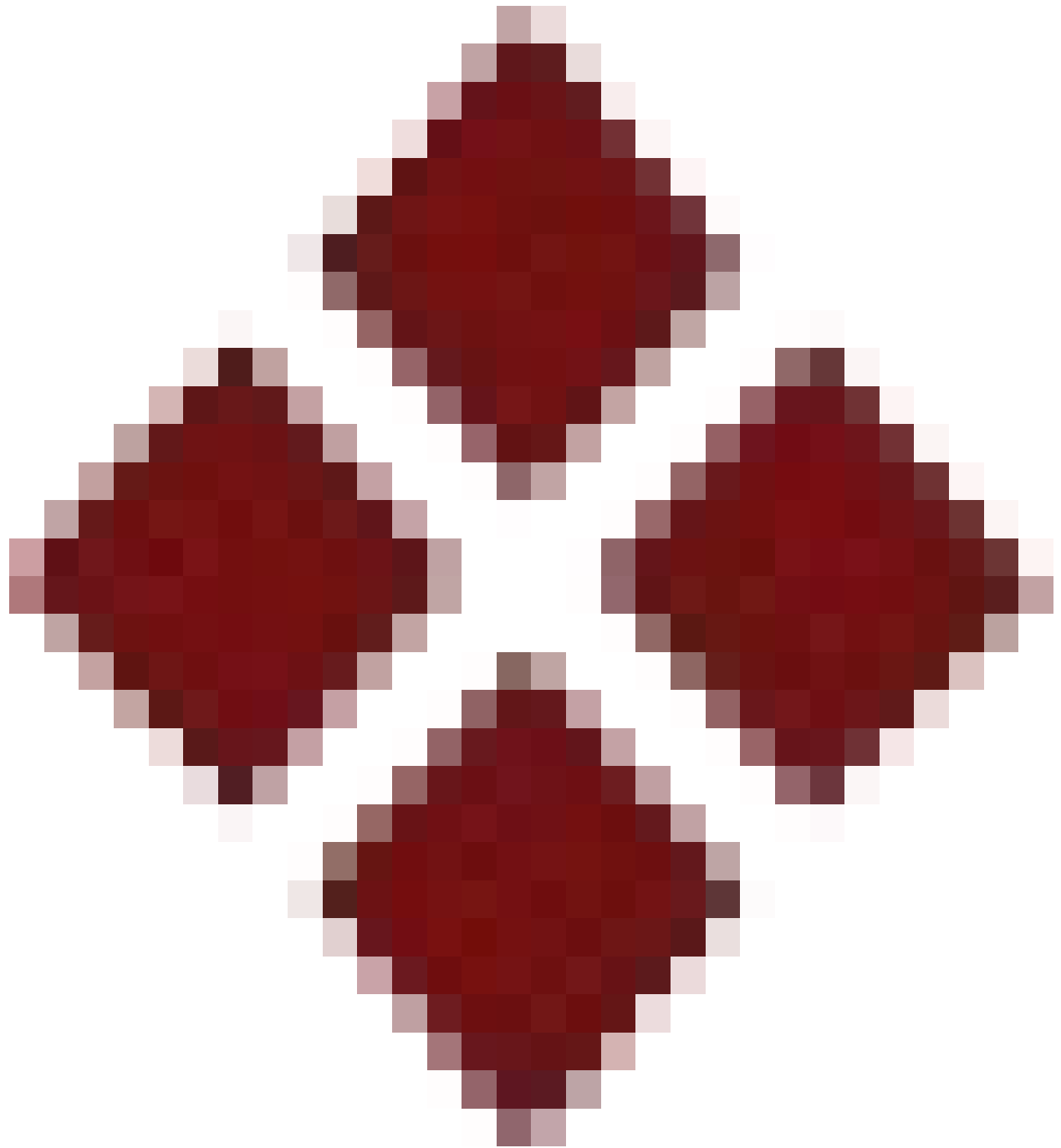
Discourse 41

Jesus' Counsel to Ministers of God's Word

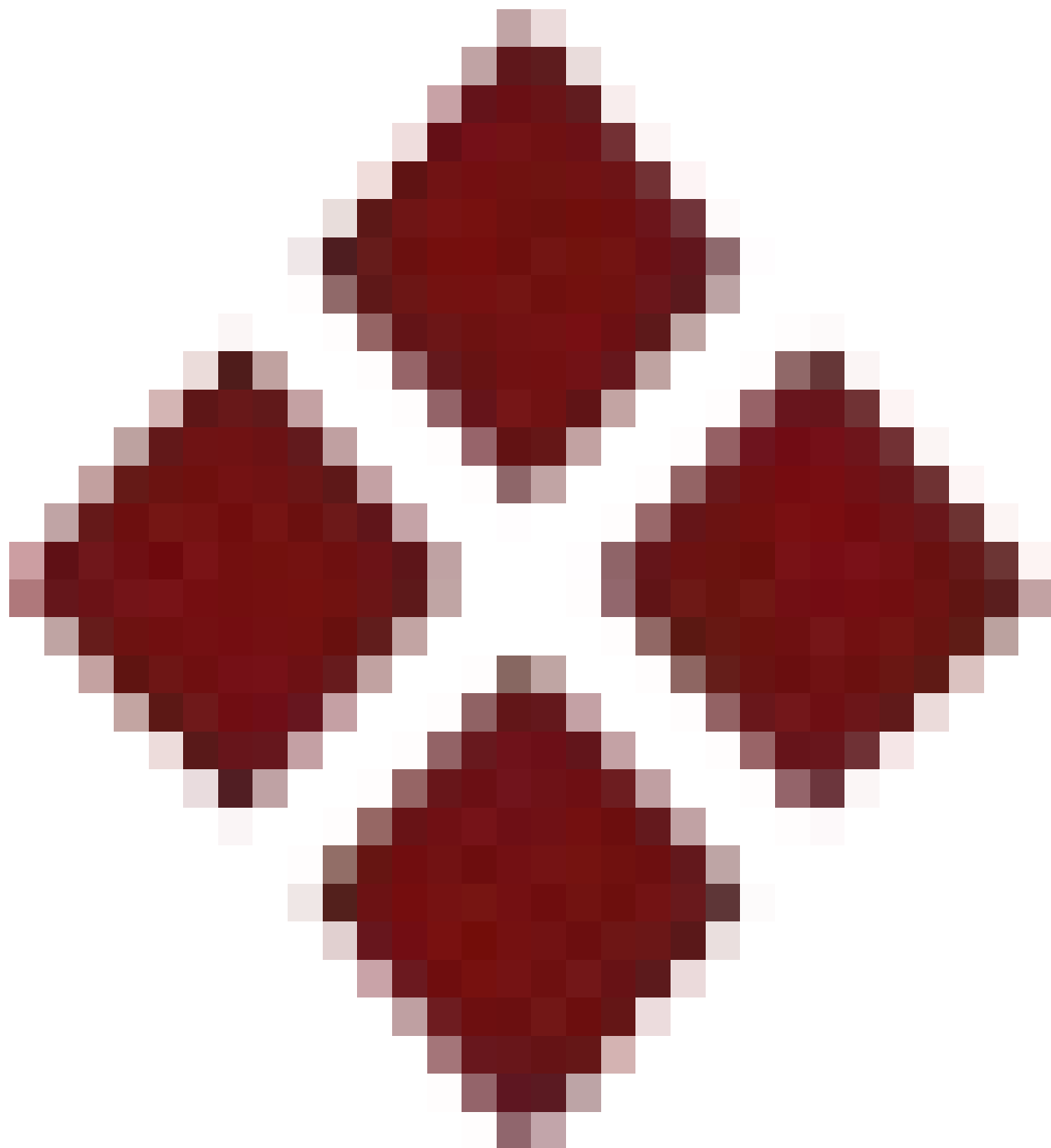
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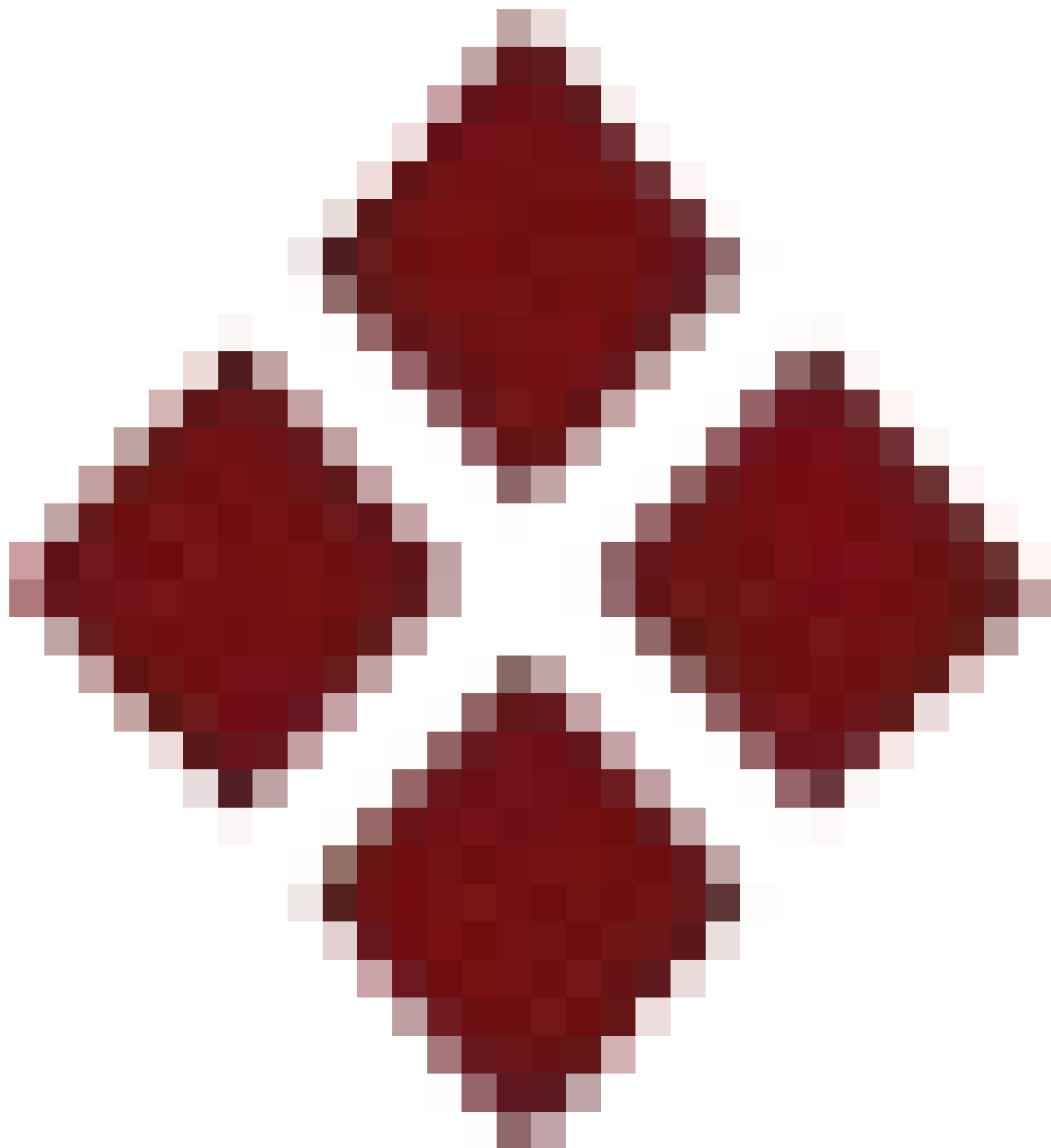
The Wisdom and Peace Bestowed by Awakening of Kundalini and the Spiritual Eye



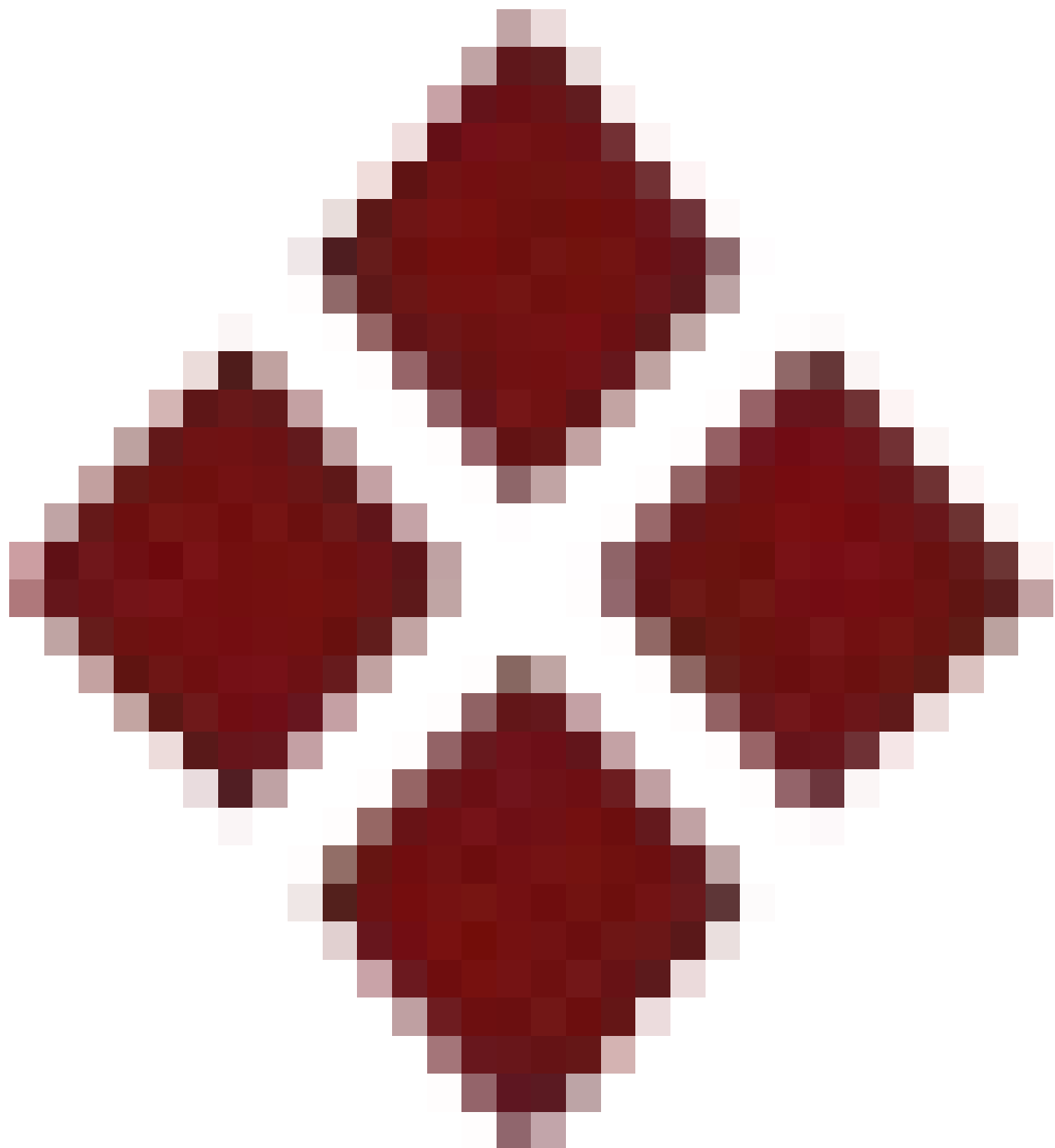
Overcoming Trials and Persecutions in the Spiritual Path



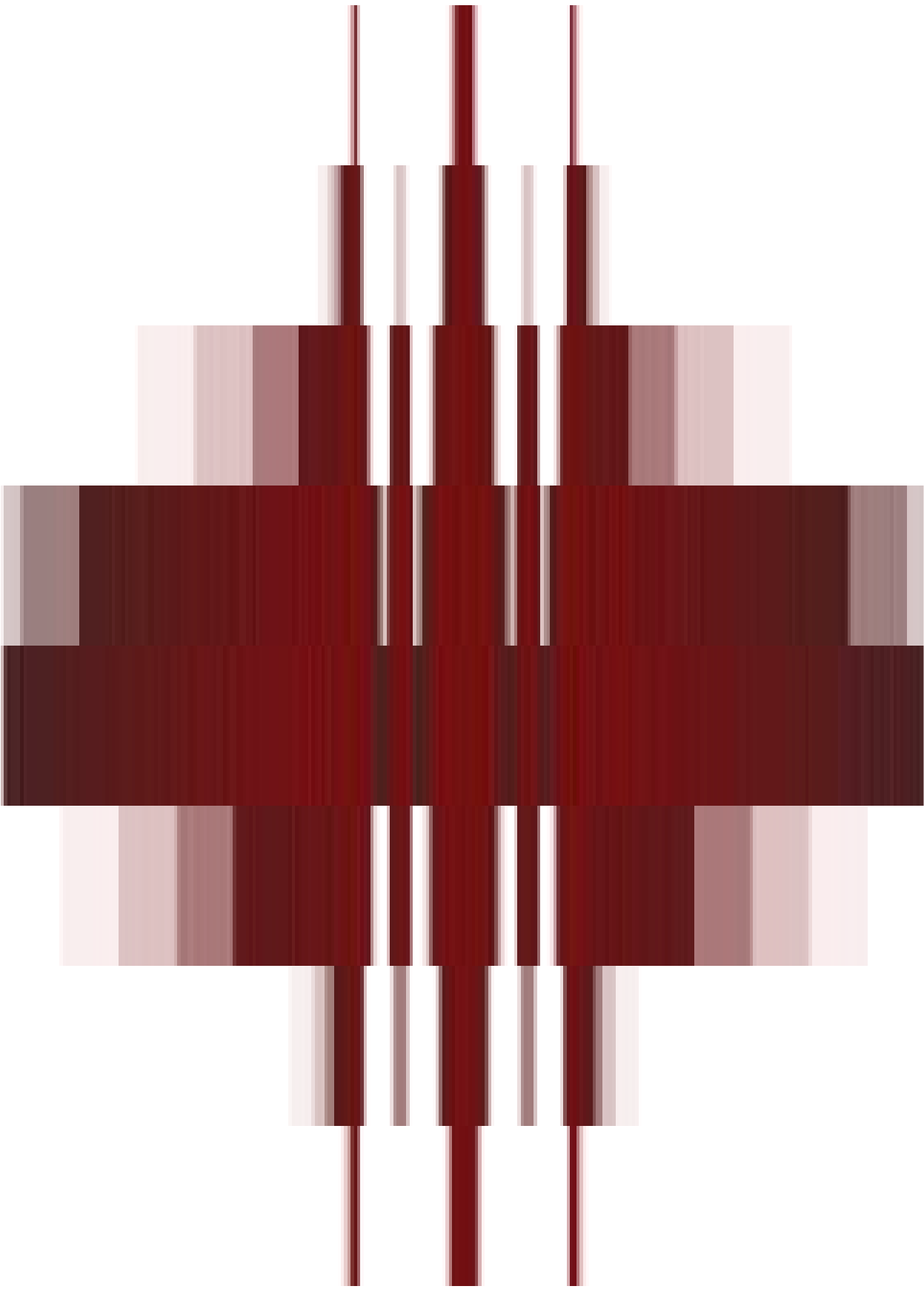
The Sword of Wisdom and Self-Control to Fight Unspiritual Temptations and Influences



Conquering Satan Who Fell Like Lightning From Heaven



**God Is Revealed Not by Intellectuality, but by Pure
and Guileless Devotion**



“Jesus lovingly urged all spiritual aspirants to ‘Come unto me’ (the Christ Consciousness) and ‘Take my yoke upon you’—follow the step-by-step methods of self-discipline that lead to Christ Consciousness and that assure ultimate liberation in God’s kingdom.”

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“Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; and ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.

“And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

“But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come. The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?

“Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known. What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops.

“And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

“Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.

“Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.

“Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

“He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth Him that sent me. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet’s reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man’s reward.

“And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.”

And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities.

—Matthew 10:16 – 11:1

And they went out, and preached that men should repent. And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them....¹

And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught. And he said unto them, “Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while”: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.

—Mark 6:12 – 13, 30 – 31

“He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth Him that sent me.”

And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, “Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.”

And he said unto them, “I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.”

In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, “I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight.

“All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him.”

And he turned him unto his disciples, and said privately, “Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see: For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.”

—Luke 10:16 – 24²

[Matthew 11:25 – 27 parallels Luke 10:21 – 22, but in a slightly different context of time and place, concluding with:]

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

—*Matthew 11:28 – 30*



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Discourse 41

Jesus' Counsel to Ministers of God's Word

(Part II)



“Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves” (Matthew 10:16).

Parallel reference:

“Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves” (Luke 10:3).



The wisdom and peace bestowed by awakening of kundalini and the spiritual eye

“Wherever you go, my consciousness must be manifest in you; keep yourselves always humble, inoffensive, unvengeful, like meek lambs, even when you are surrounded by ravenous wolves of ruthless, conscienceless people and predacious satanic sense temptations that are everywhere present in worldly environments. Abide at all times in great wisdom and calmness born of the divine realization you have received by awakening your serpent force (the coiled divine energy that rises up in the spine and opens the astral cerebrospinal centers of spiritual perception) and in the peace you have acquired by concentrating your consciousness in the peace-producing, dovelike spiritual eye.”

It is not generally understood what Jesus meant when he spoke of being wise as serpents and harmless as doves. Ordinary serpents have no wisdom, are quick to anger, and are stupid enough to court their own death by biting people. Doves are not altogether harmless, for they can spread mites and disease. Even though the dove might be traditionally a symbol of peace for its peaceful looks and behavior, the serpent certainly does not look wise or inspiring. Since Jesus was addressing his advanced disciples, he used these words metaphorically, in an esoteric sense.

As previously explained [in Discourse

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], the Oriental scriptures employ the simile of a serpent to illustrate the kundalini or astral life force in the body, which, when awakened with the help of an advanced technique of Self-realization, passes through a serpentine coiled passage at the base of the spine upward to the highest spiritual centers in the brain, bestowing divine consciousness. The dove symbolizes the tricolored spiritual eye—the mouth of the dove representing the white star in the middle of the spiritual eye; the blue and gold spherical rings surrounding the star symbolizing the wings of the dove.³

A person in ordinary consciousness, identified with the minutiae of his little ego's senses, reason, and feeling, perceives himself circumscribed by his body, family, society, country, world, and a certain portion of space. But when by scientific meditation he awakens his serpent force, he reverses the searchlight of

his awareness from physical sense consciousness to divine consciousness. Taking his kundalini force upward through the cerebrospinal centers and penetrating his life and consciousness through the spiritual eye, he beholds himself as omnipresent. His perception is restricted no longer to a limited sphere of matter and the sensations in one body, but expands into perception of the infinite reaches of space and awareness of the sensations of all beings.

The devotee who perceives through his spiritual eye his omnipresent existence, who feels an ineffable peace and attunement with every thing and every living creature, and who beholds all selves as manifestations of his own being, becomes harmless to all, equally loving the different parts of his own cosmic body. Awakened in eternal wisdom, the realization of his true Self, he cannot in any wise be inwardly disturbed or incited to evil actions no matter how provoked by trials and temptations.

Jesus knew that his advanced disciples had awakened their higher consciousness by rousing the kundalini divine life energy through practice of the methods of meditation he had taught them. Therefore he reminded them to retain the deep wisdom and calmness bestowed by kundalini awakening when confronted with opposition and persecution. Anyone who has lifted up this coiled life energy and thereby elevated his human consciousness into Christ Consciousness by penetrating through the spiritual eye has acquired tremendous miraculous power; such a one could destroy by divine will force his would-be enemies, as well as satanic temptations.⁴ That is why Jesus warned his disciples not to use their powerful awakened energy in vengeful retaliation when confronted by the wickedness of erring children of God; but rather to overcome enemies with the celestial power of God's infinite peace and love, with which they were blessed in the baptism of their consciousness by the spiritual eye, the dove of light.⁵

All Christlike souls aspiring to attain the kingdom of God must behave divinely and resist evil only by soul force, even as God resists Satan by divine forces of goodness. Evil cannot be conquered by the evil use of spiritual power. To use divine power for evil purposes is blasphemy and conducive to spiritual downfall. The soul force acquired by arduous meditative effort is quickly lost if one employs it under the influence of the intoxication of delusion to wreak vengeance against one's own divine brethren.⁶

Jesus wanted his disciples to set a different example for habitually belligerent human beings, that the indomitable wisdom and peace of the meditation-

awakened soul is stronger than the mightiest forces of evil.



“But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; and ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles” (Matthew 10:17 – 18).⁷

Jesus prophesied as to the persecutions his disciples would meet at the hands of uncomprehending men: “You will be delivered up to the judges and be whipped in the synagogues for preaching the gospel of divine freedom. You shall be taken to task before governors and kings for living the principles of my path of truth. Materially minded men, ‘t he Gentiles ,’ and the political forces who thus oppose you will themselves be condemned before a higher tribunal. Their evil treatment of you, when for my sake you will give testimony to the truth in me, will remain as evidence that will testify against them during the judgment delivered by Cosmic Law.”



“But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you” (Matthew 10:19 – 20).

Parallel references:

“But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost” (Mark 13:11).

“And when they bring you into the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: for the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say” (Luke 12:11 – 12).

“Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist” (Luke 21:14 – 15).



Be guided not by ego but by intuitive directions from God-contact

Jesus tells advanced devotees to use their attunement with the Holy Ghost Cosmic Vibration and its wisdom, and not the ego with its limitations, for general guidance of conduct in critical moments. The speech of most persons in such situations is guided by selfishness, fear, and penchants of their ego. Hence the effect of their words often brings disaster to them. Advanced souls guide their intelligence and free will and speech by the wisdom in the Holy Ghost. All true devotees who have felt in meditation this Cosmic Vibration, the Aum sound of the Holy Ghost, can in all problems of life fruitfully guide their actions according to the intuition-bestowed direction of infinite wisdom.

“When they arrest you, do not use your calculating human reason, but let God speak through your intuition and the instrument of your voice. Let not your human ego speak, for its tongue is tied with rationalizations of personal motives; but let the wisdom of your Father speak through your inner surrender to Him. The intelligent Cosmic Vibration, the materializing manifestation of God, will drop the specific needed wisdom within your developed intuition at the time you are required to speak in defense of truth and of yourself, living for its cause.”

Here Jesus is outlining how God-guided people should act when confronted with persecution. In such matters as business and lawsuits, people plan with definite self-interest their activities and their words in all transactions; but Jesus points out that souls who are in tune with “the Spirit of your Father,” Cosmic Consciousness vibrating through the Holy Ghost, are guided by higher wisdom and all-seeing intelligence in their senses, thoughts, feelings, intellect, and intuitions, instead of depending only on the studied preparedness of limited reason.

Cosmic Consciousness does not reason with devotees, it rather drops truths in their intuitions. Intuition is the father of reason and can satisfy all the demands of reason.

Reason is based on sense experience and is limited by it. If the sense experience is misinterpreted, reason proves to be erroneous. A person beholding wind-blown dust on a distant hill might be led to think that the hill is on fire and emanating a cloud of smoke. Sensory-dependent reason from immediate

observation or from memory conditioned by repeated past experiences can blunder if the sensory observation or experience is faulty or incomplete.

God has no senses, nor reason dependent on sensory perceptions; He Himself is the Knower, the process of knowing, and the wisdom to be known. He knows the truth about all things through His cosmic intuition, His feeling present in everything. Likewise do His true devotees, being in tune with the Spirit of their Heavenly Father, depend on the unlimited power and guidance of intuitive God-perception and not on limited reason when confronted with persecutions or human problems.

In the context of the reference in Luke cited above (

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), as also in St. John (

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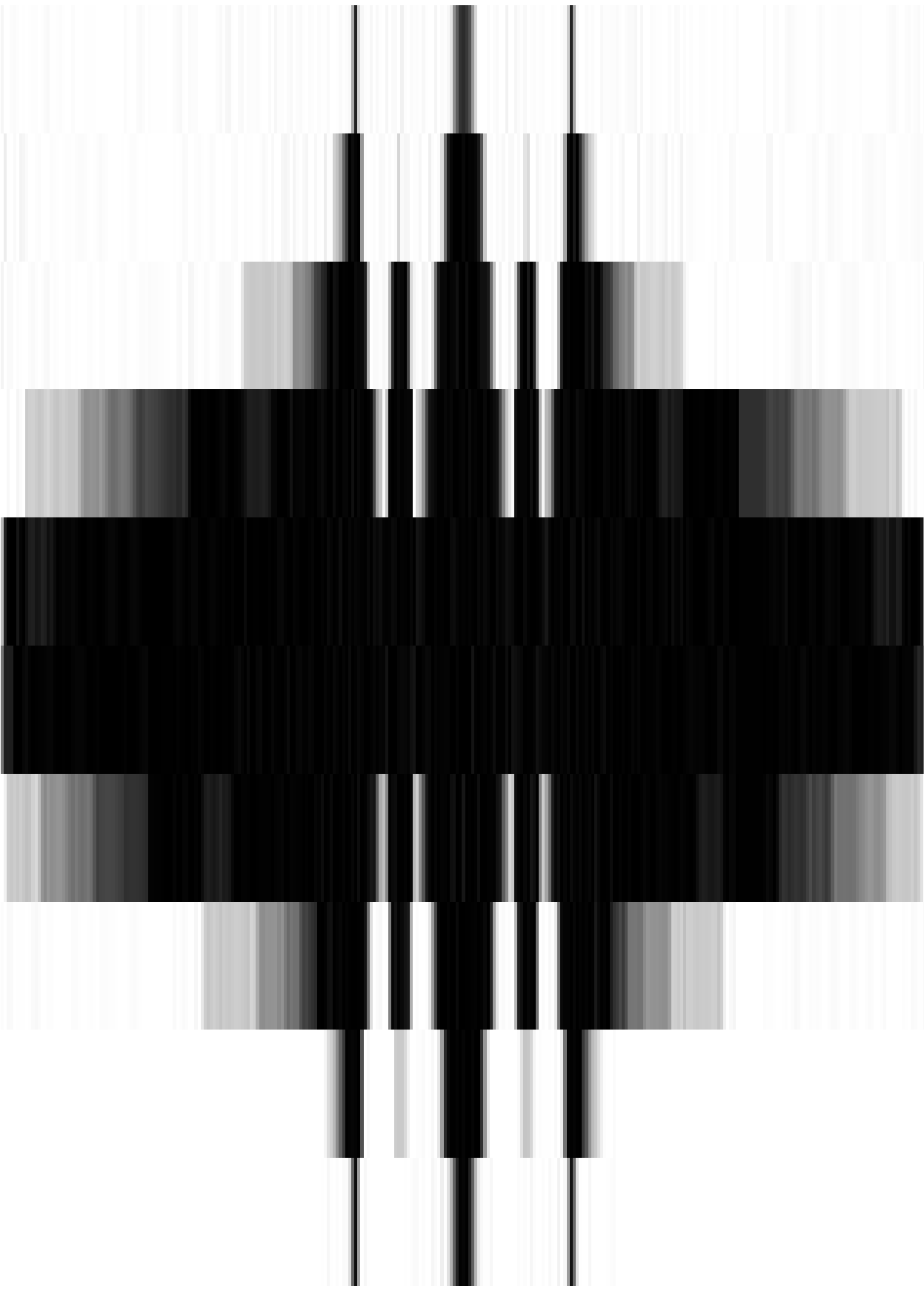
), Jesus assures his disciples of his intercession in times of need: “I will give you a mouth and wisdom’—you will feel my spirit of Christ Consciousness with you, manifesting in ‘the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost...he shall teach you all things.’”



“And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved” (Matthew 10:21 – 22).⁸

Parallel reference:

“And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake. But there shall not an hair of your head perish. In your patience possess ye your souls” (Luke 21:16 – 19).



Overcoming trials and persecutions in the spiritual path

Jesus further prophesied of those who would live and preach his truth: “Satan will create great mischief and will rouse a material brother to persecute a spiritual brother and the unspiritual father to persecute the spiritual child. The unspiritual children will rise up against their parents who believe my truth and will put them into trouble and be the cause of their great suffering and death. And for manifesting the subtle pure light of Christ Consciousness in your actions, you will be scorned by materially minded men who are used to living in the darkness of ignorance. And some of you shall be condemned to death, but not a hair of realization of your head of wisdom shall perish or be lost sight of in the eyes of God.

“That devotee who overcomes trials and persecutions in the spiritual path, not only for a little while, but to the end of life—who is patient and endures difficulties, temptations, and spiritual disappointments of not finding God by ardent prayers or years of meditation—shall possess the eternal life of the immortal soul. He shall be permanently saved from enforced trialsome reincarnations that are the lot of desire-bound individuals.”



“But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come” (Matthew 10:23).

“But when they persecute you in one city for preaching God’s message, waste not your time and counsel in resisting the unreceptive. Use common sense, and in divine meekness seek out another city in which to preach His word. Verily, by the all-seeing power of spiritual vision, I declare and prophesy that you will not have finished preaching in the cities of Israel until the works and message delivered through my body (Son of man) have become fully known throughout the world.”



“The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?” (Matthew 10:24 – 25).⁹

Jesus emphasizes that the persecution of his disciples would be as flagrant if not more so than he himself would endure. “Beloved ones, you know that even a masterful disciple is not honored like his master, no matter how spiritually advanced the disciple is; nor is a glorified servant ever regarded more highly than his lord. It is sufficient before the eyes of God that the disciple become equal to his master and that the servant develop inner lordly qualities akin to his lord; but the same evaluation is not true in the eyes of the people. Thus, when the materially minded people and the Pharisees have called the Master of the house of Christ teachings “Beelzebub” (Prince of Devils), ¹⁰ then how much more shall they condemn you all whom they regard as less than myself, as being followers rather than originators of the truth that has been revealed through my Christ Consciousness?”



“Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known. What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops” (Matthew 10:26 – 27).¹¹

“O ye, my beloved ones, though I ask you to be meek and humble when subjected to maltreatment, and to follow the course of least resistance during your preaching campaigns, fear not your critics, that you may serve the true seekers to whose receptive consciousness all truth covered from the gaze of the spiritually ignorant must be uncovered. There is no wisdom that will remain forever hidden from the awakened consciousness and spiritual hunger of those devotees. All things that the spiritually dark, ignorant people cannot perceive will be perceived by those who are developed in intuitional Self-realization. The esoteric truths that I convey to you in the darkness of secrecy, which are hidden from the gaze of the unregenerate masses, and that I vibrate within you in the secrecy of your souls, I ask you to reveal with the light of your Self-knowledge to others who are in light, highly advanced due to their past good karma, that they may understandingly perceive those truths. And the truths that you have heard me speak openly, and those that I shall reveal in your intuitional ears within through my Christ Intelligence, for public dissemination, you can proclaim loudly to all without distinction.”

It is here noted that Jesus asks his disciples to spread two kinds of teaching—first, the hidden higher teachings to the selected spiritually refined people; second, the general teachings for the public at large.



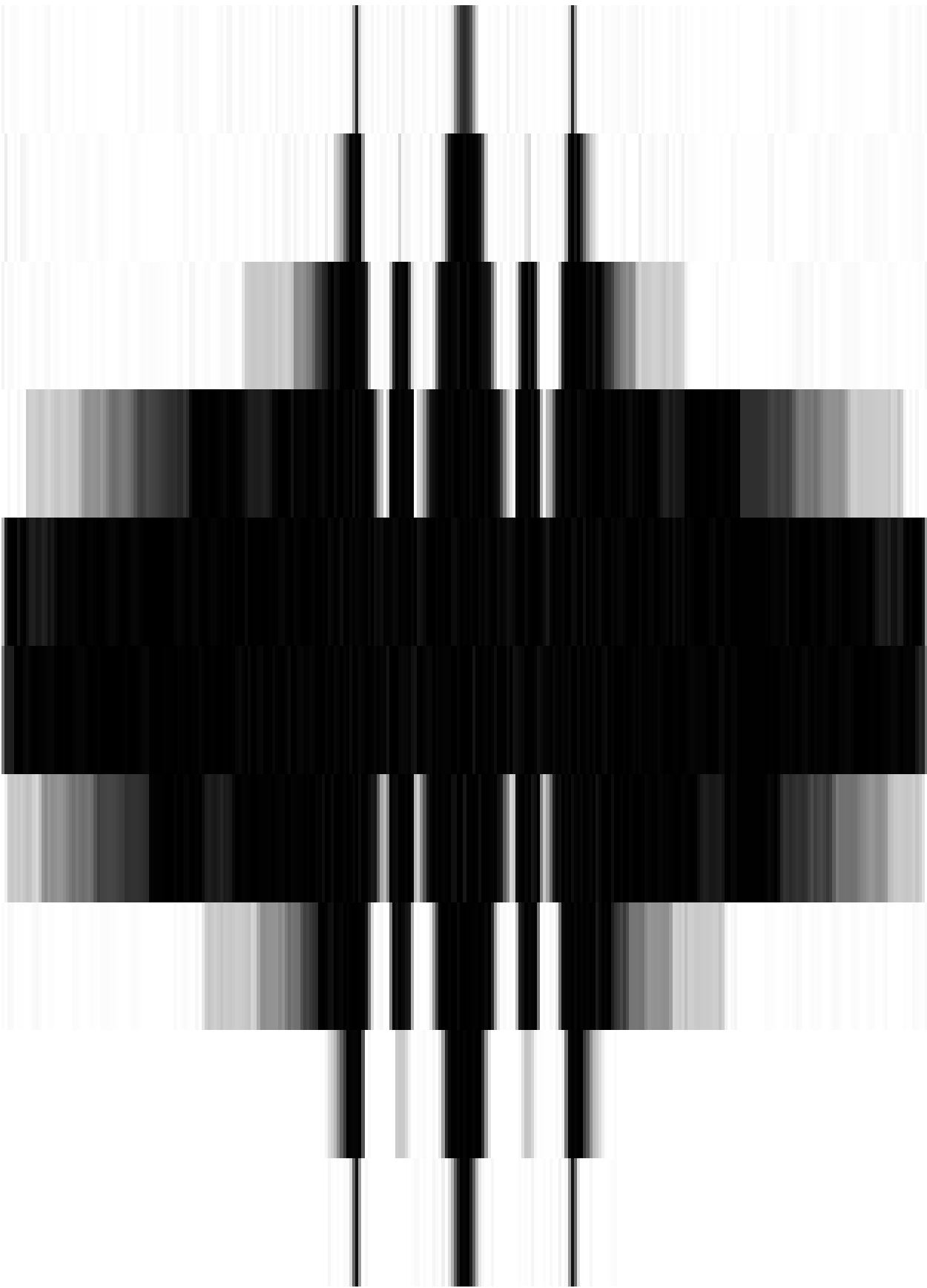
“And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him, which is able to destroy both body and soul in hell.

“Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows” (Matthew 10:28 – 31).

Parallel reference:

“And I say unto you, my friends, be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear Him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear Him.

“Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows” (Luke 12:4 – 7).



Moral and spiritual courage to uphold divine principles

“I vehemently declare unto you, my friends (friends elected through the choice of my Father’s love in my heart and not imposed upon me by nature, as are relatives), do not fear those who would threaten you with death, for they who would kill your body would have no further power over you. They cannot destroy or cause grief to your divine consciousness nor dissolve your indestructible, immutable soul. But I warn you, and all who are wicked, that you must learn to stand in respectful and loving awe before God—the Almighty One who through His law of cause and effect evolved your soul and body from His own Self, and who alone upholds your existence and perpetuates by His divine will the immortality of your soul. His divine law of karma is empowered, after the death of your body, to prevent the expression of your soul’s peace and joy and to make your astral-bodied consciousness suffer your accumulated wickedness of one life or many lives. Therefore, rather fear your wicked actions, which can compel the divine law to make you conscious of a self-created after-death hell of the effects of your burning conscience and wicked tendencies, which even in life will torment with its fires the inner being as well as the outer health and other conditions necessary to a happy existence.

“Fear not, therefore, even if you have to sacrifice the body. That sacrifice will not bring destruction to the soul, but the sacrifice of a spiritual principle might bring disaster to the soul as well as to the body.”

Jesus is emphasizing to his disciples the necessity of moral and spiritual courage, that it is a great sin if one, for fear of man, acts against the cosmic law. Persecution may destroy the body, but acting against the laws of truth affects both the body and the soul. The miseries of the body end in death, but the agonies accruing out of an individual’s evil actions continue to confine the soul in the sufferings of its astral body in the after-death state.



Concept of “hellfire and brimstone” created by man’s own vindictiveness

The conception of hell as a place where souls are literally burned everlastingly with fire and brimstone is ridiculous. It is the propensity for vindictiveness in man’s own heart that assumes such awful cruelty as the revenge of a Creator offended by the misdeeds of man. Poor God! That is a terrible declaration against Him—the Father-Mother who created all things in love, sustains them on the Infinite Bosom of love, and draws them back to Everlasting Bliss by the forgiveness of love. The transmigration of the soul through the matrix of reincarnation with its transforming opportunities for better efforts precludes any justification for an everlasting punishment meted out for man’s temporary lapses into ignorance and evil. The evil man in time becomes again the perfect soul. At what point would a just God suddenly cancel an individual’s divine birthright to keep striving toward the potentials of his true Self, to suffer instead an everlasting hell? It is untenable that Jesus, who was love, mercy, forgiveness incarnate, would support and preach such a doctrine. The context of his whole life and teachings forbids a literal reading of references to hell as a place of eternal fiery torment.

Material fire can produce sensations of burning on the physical body, but the soul itself is incorporeal and cannot be tortured by physical sensations. Its astral-bodied consciousness, however, if afflicted with hellish wicked tendencies acquired in earth life, can undergo for a time a mental hell of torture that who can gainsay might be worse than a physical fiery hell.

The mental hell of wickedness can persist in the after-death state indefinitely until one gains a new opportunity to improve himself in a new incarnation, or otherwise repents and prays for release. An individual’s stubbornness and doggedness to be wicked, even in the after-death state, can make his self-created mental hell as everlasting as he permits it to be.

Jesus continues: “Beloved ones, remember your eternal connection with the ever watchful Heavenly Father. God, being omniscient and omnipresent, does not fail to direct the destiny of insignificant sparrows—‘one of them shall not fall on the ground without (the consciousness of) your Father.’ How much more does He protect and appreciate the work of the devotees who are self-sacrificing, even martyred, for the sake of truth.

“God is conscious of all things throughout the present, past, and future, even of every hair on your head. Therefore, fear not for your life and actions, as the children of God are of more concern to the Father than the mechanical life of the sparrows who, insignificant though they are, are lovingly attended to by Him.”

These high expectations Jesus placed before his disciples are absolutes of faith and surrender to God, lofty above the uncomprehending common man's compliance. The devotee is asked to embrace unconditionally the truth that this universe with all its detail is planned by the intelligence of the Cosmic Father. When man will know Him, he will understand the why of all inexplicable circumstances and happenings and will marvel at the wisdom of the Father, whose love, present in everything, tries to foil the inharmonious doings of Satan's cosmic delusion. Man, being made in the image of God, has no cause to fear negligence on the part of the Divine; with surety He will help the efforts of every soul to retrace its footsteps to His Kingdom of Eternal Bliss.



“Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 10:32 – 33).

Parallel reference:

“Also I say unto you, whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God. But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God” (Luke 12:8 – 9).¹²

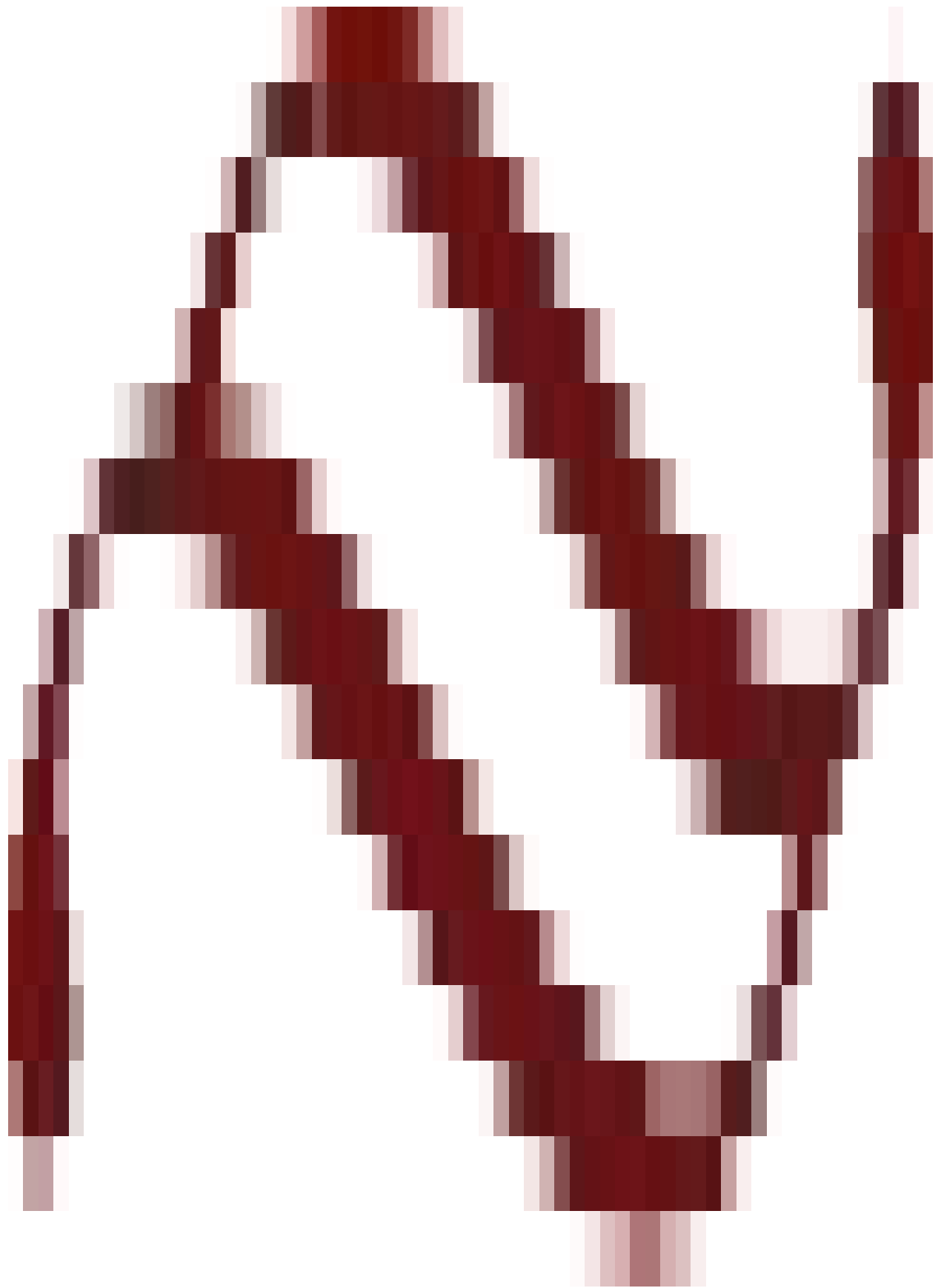


Receiving the blessing of the guru's divine intercession

“Whoever shall avow before materially minded people and persecutors that he is in tune with my consciousness and my teachings shall find me also in tune with him; and I shall intercede with the Father about taking him into His kingdom of luminous infinity, even though he may have sins of evil karma. Every soul who will suffer physical death as the consequence for teaching my truth will find his sins expiated thereby; his consciousness will pass through the Christ Intelligence in Cosmic Vibration to the transcendent sphere of Cosmic Consciousness.

“That individual of little faith and devotion who, for fear of persecution, will deny before materially minded people his attunement with the Christ Consciousness in me, or will deviate or desist from Christ living, will find, when he reaches the blissful Christ Intelligence state after death, that consciousness weakening within him (due to his weakness of denial), preventing him from remaining in the Christ Intelligence and from ascending higher into the God-the-Father state of Cosmic Consciousness.”

Jesus here speaks to his disciples of the importance of his divine intercession—the blessing of the guru—that will strengthen the nascent experience of the Christ Consciousness within them. He then cautions that they must not lose that blessing by diminishment of their attunement with the Christ Consciousness in him, under duress of obstacles or spiritual persecution, or through succumbing to selfish motives. The fortitude of faith and of perseverance in divine attunement brings forth upon the devotee the liberating grace of the “Father which is in heaven,” and the assistance of the heavenly forces of “the angels of God.” But Jesus warns that devotees who are deterred from their course of personal advancement and of helping to uplift the consciousness of others, intimidated by fear of worldly condemnation or cowed by temptation, will forfeit divine aid, suffer loss of their contact with Christ Consciousness, and be unable to advance further.



“Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it” (Matthew 10:34 – 39).¹³

Jesus speaks to his disciples not only of the divisive conditions that will accompany the establishment of his message of spiritual reformation, but also of the inevitable obstacles faced by those who seek to tread the single-hearted path to God in a world intent on human relations and material values.



The sword of wisdom and self-control to fight unspiritual temptations and influences

“Think not that I came to bring material peace for souls to be settled complacently in earthly life. I came not to offer short-lasting material happiness, but to give to the valiant spiritual soul a two-edged sword of wisdom and self-control, divine strength and determination by which he can sever the compulsions of material passions and temptations and successfully resist any unspiritual familial influence that might obstruct his attainment of everlasting happiness and freedom.

“The eternal truth that I preach and that is manifested within you will variously affect people according to their various good and bad karma: A spiritually inclined devotee of mine might not agree with his materially minded father, or a daughter attuned to Christ Consciousness might not be in harmony with her unspiritual mother, and the spiritual daughter-in-law might act against the material wishes of her mother-in-law, and a man enjoying the ecstasy of Christ Consciousness in his meditations might find the members of his material family inimical to him owing to their own contrary karmic tendencies.

“Since parents are given by God through His laws of nature, the devotee’s love for them must not be in forgetfulness of the greater love he owes to his Heavenly Parent. Similarly with attachment to son or daughter; to be worthy of God is to meditate upon Him until one knows Him as the supreme Cosmic Lover—the Love behind all human loves.”

Jesus certainly does not mean that his teachings will not bring peace in family life amidst truth-seeking family members. Rather, he is admonishing all who set their sights on the kingdom of God not to remain steeped in the ignorance of a material life, but to use the sword of wisdom he brought to them to destroy their delusions of earthliness.

Family environment and familial love exert a strong force on even the most stalwart devotee. Jesus therefore stresses that if a devotee finds his family members dissuading him or trying to obstruct his efforts to cultivate God-consciousness, he should not yield but continue undeterred and undismayed. The devotee should remember that he alone has to reap the consequences of his

actions; he should not let any perversity on the part of his earthly family turn him against his Heavenly Father. The firm words of Jesus point out that those who overcome all obstacles create good karma and tendencies that will automatically lead them to the attainment of Cosmic Consciousness, the kingdom of God.

Jesus was unequivocal; on another occasion, he said, “If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple” (Luke

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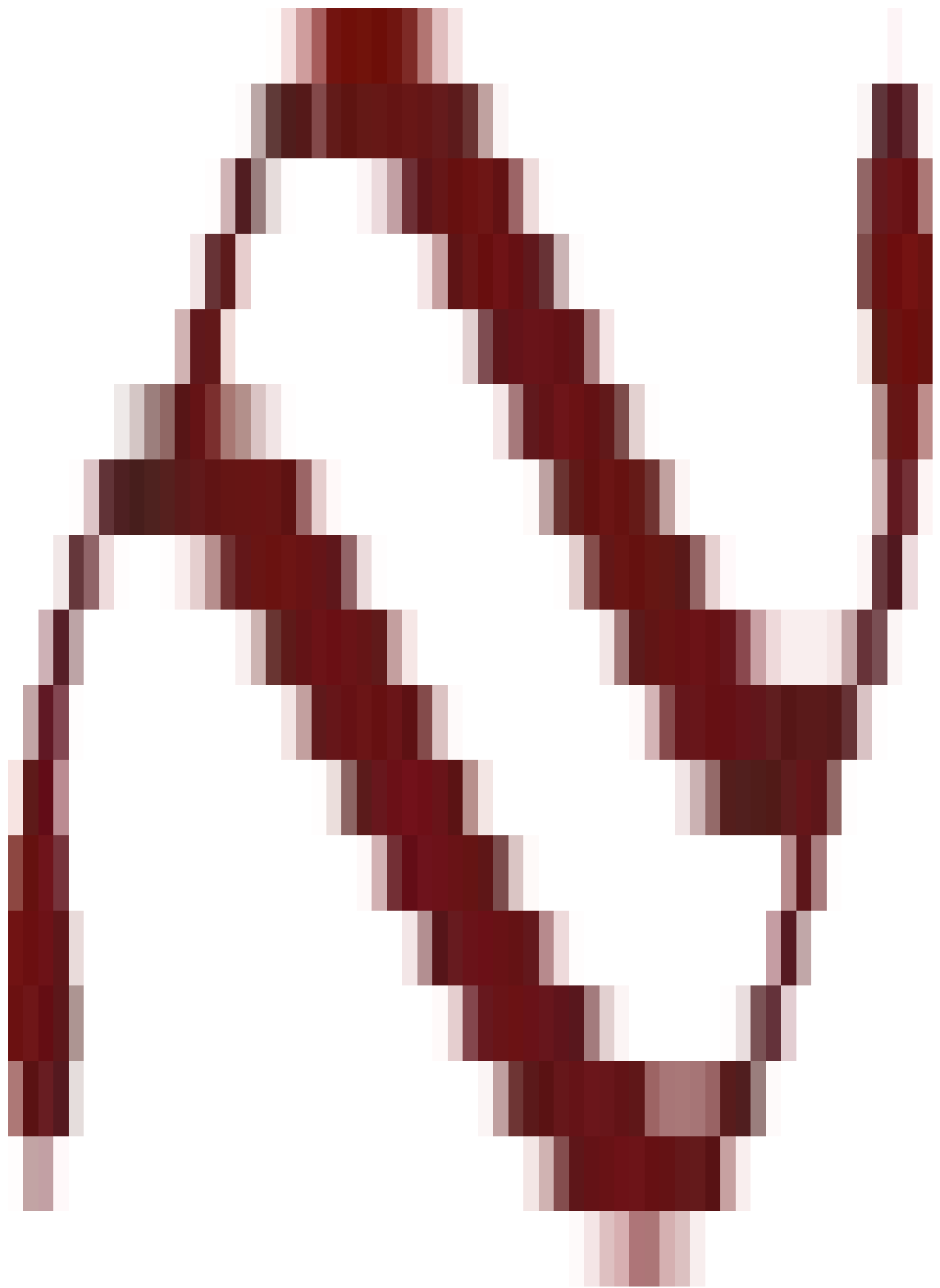
). He does not mean literally that all devotees should hate their parents and relatives or detest their own life. As he pointed out elsewhere: “Who is my mother and who are my brethren?...Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven.”¹⁴ And also, “Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on....But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”¹⁵ Jesus is citing the truth that no one can perform his duties to his parents, spouse, or other relatives, or to his own body and life, without the gifts of understanding, life, and action, which come from God alone. Anyone seeking God must be able to forsake the inordinate human love for God-given gifts, for the sake of attainment of God Himself. The price of material attachment is usually forgetfulness of God accompanied by unending miseries; the price of God-realization is primarily absolute mental renunciation and secondarily, in apt cases, renunciation of all material possessions and bodily attachments as well. In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna speaks similarly: “Forsaking all duties, think of Me alone. As no duties can be performed without the human faculties borrowed from Me, I will forgive you the sins of nonperformance of lesser duties provided they are forsworn in order to seek Me alone.”¹⁶

“He that taketh not his cross and followeth after me”—who fights not temptations with self-discipline and in meditation uplifts his mind from the plane of senses to enter the star door in the spiritual eye that leads to Christ

Consciousness—“is not worthy of me,” of my divine Christ-kingdom. He who in daily life is not prepared to hold his Christ-peace of meditation at all times—during the crucifixion of calmness by restlessness, of self-control by temptation, of divine loyalty by persecution—does not merit the attainment of Christ Consciousness, and to pass from the painful repetitions of incarnate earth life into the eternal life of ever new bliss.

“He that findeth his life”—puts material happiness as the goal of his life—“shall lose it”—shall perforce lose whatever temporary satisfactions he has garnered when death dissolves his tenuous hold on material existence. “He that loseth his life for my sake”—sacrifices his desires for material pleasures to purify his consciousness for contact with the blissful Christ Consciousness in meditation —“shall find” the everlasting happiness of the divine life.

“O ye disciples, remember that he who discovers only the material pleasures of his mundane life will lose the divine joys hidden behind that externalized consciousness. He who finds and establishes the cosmic joy of meditation in his life loses the hankering that compels attachment to the passing fancies of material life. He finds the Christ Consciousness within, and with it the everlasting joys hidden behind the facades of materiality. That devotee, divested of desires for the pleasures of the body, will find in the ever new joy of ecstasy in Christ Consciousness in meditation that material prosperity and earthly happiness will be added unto him; but he who seeks material happiness only will lose it because of the rudeness of its short-lasting nature.”



“He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth Him that sent me. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet’s reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man’s reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward” (Matthew 10:40 – 42).

“He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth Him that sent me” (Luke 10:16).

“To receive” and “to hear” denote the ability to absorb the God-wisdom transmitted by a true divine guru, or a disciple in tune with him, by expanding the capacity of one’s own consciousness and inner attunement with the guru’s God-consciousness.



Blessings of attunement with a God-realized master or his faithful disciples

“O ye disciples, any devotee who listens to your teachings as I have imparted them to you, and who follows you, follows me. My Christ Consciousness is with you through your devotion and meditation, and anyone who will be in tune with you will be in tune with my Christ Consciousness. Those devotees who receive of your consciousness through their intuition and attunement, my beloved disciples, will gradually, through your aid and the spiritual vibrations emanating from your meditations, contact the Christ Consciousness within themselves. Those who will be able by deep meditation to be one with the Christ Consciousness in all vibratory creation (the Son) and will discipline their lives under your tutelage, will ultimately be able to be one with Cosmic Consciousness beyond creation (God the Father), whose reflection is present in the Christ Intelligence within me.

“He who is in tune with Christ-tuned disciples is automatically in tune with Christ Consciousness. And he who can receive Christ Intelligence in his expanded consciousness is in tune with the Cosmic Consciousness out of which Christ Consciousness emanates. Anyone who hates you who faithfully represent me hates my Christ Consciousness, ignorantly rebelling against it; he is further out of tune with Him who sent me, the Cosmic Consciousness whose reflection I am.”

Jesus is emphasizing how truth-seekers can reach the Cosmic Consciousness of God by tuning in their consciousness with true God-realized gurus, who in turn have been trained by their Christlike teachers. Through the hierarchy and lineage (guru-parampara)¹⁷ of true gurus, a truth-seeker is properly introduced to God.

Jesus continues: “A person in tune with the spiritual vibrations (‘the name’) of a prophet, or of a righteous man, or of the serviceful acts of mercy of a faithful disciple will receive the prophetic qualities and wisdom accorded to a prophet, or the reward of happiness reaped by the virtues of a righteous man, or divine mercy, respectively, according to the merits of his actions.

“The devotee who has supremely expanded his consciousness by meditation in order to receive Christ Consciousness, a prophet’s consciousness, will be in tune with the Cosmic Intelligence in all vibratory creation; and he who tunes himself

with the consciousness of a righteous individual, and lives his own life righteously, according to the law of cause and effect will be a righteous man. And he who thoughtfully gives drink to the thirsty—or who offers a cup of the cool waters of wisdom or uplifting truth vibrations in the selfless spirit of a disciple, to quench the thirst of the ‘little ones,’ beginners on the path of God who seek relief from the thirst of unslaked material desires—‘shall in no wise lose his reward’; he will acquire good karma and heavenly tendencies that will eventually lift him toward Christ Consciousness.”

The above words of Jesus Christ have a distinct parallelism with some verses in the Bhagavad Gita: “Those individuals who worship different deities and different embodiments of the qualities of God attain what they desire, but those devotees who want Me (God) come unto Me.”¹⁸ Jesus similarly pointed out that all good actions are rewarded, and followers of different forms of virtue attain their objectives according to the focus of their innate desires. But those who strive for attunement with the God-realization of a prophet, who want to achieve Christhood, attain their goal and become Christlike, according to their heart’s desire.



And they went out, and preached that men should repent. And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them (Mark 6:12 – 13).

Having instructed his disciples in the proper dispensation of their ministry, Jesus sent them forth. Accordingly, they preached about the vibrations of God-consciousness emanating from Jesus and echoed his call for people to repent and forsake their material attachments in order to attain God-consciousness, the kingdom of God, through spiritual awakening. By the power of their developed will, the disciples freed many people from obsessions and healed many of the sick of their various diseases—anointing them with oil blessed by the rites of prayer, even as people in India are anointed with drops of holy water from the sacred rivers or otherwise blessed in spiritual rites. The disciples by their services akin to those of their Master proved themselves as far more than products of a theological school. They actually lived the truth, and thus by their spiritual examples and instrumentality did great good to mankind by healing bodies of physical and mental diseases and souls of ignorance.



And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught. And he said unto them, “Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while”: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat (Mark 6:30 – 31).

On the return of the apostles from their successful journeys, Jesus pointed out that preachers of truth should always be equipped with divine consciousness. They should condition themselves in meditation so that they are steeped in God before going out to spread the gospel; and when they feel themselves spiritually depleted after active periods of teaching others, they should again retire to quiet places and recharge themselves through God-contact in meditation before they resume their ministry.



And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name."

And he said unto them, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:17 – 20).



Conquering Satan who fell like lightning from heaven

The seventy disciples, also, which Jesus had sent out at a later time to teach, returned and reported to their Master, marveling at the powers expressed through them in his name. When citing especially their command over devils, Jesus spoke to them of Satan as the source of evil, and of how the evil force can be conquered within oneself.

“While I was in my omnipresent Christ Consciousness, I beheld satanic delusion as a conscious cosmic force, a lightning-like creative energy, repulsed out of heavenly Cosmic Consciousness. Behold, I give you divine power by which you will be able to conquer Satan and his minions; by overcoming delusion, nothing shall in any way harm you. Through my Christ Consciousness, I will give you the will power by which you shall be able to control the coiled serpent force at the base of the spine. The creative life force flowing outward into the body feeds sexual desires and ‘scorpions’ of tormenting, poisonous, evil instincts. When you master the technique of withdrawing the coiled serpent force upward through the awakened astral centers in the spine to the celestial astral region in the cerebrum, then you will have full self-control over the unruly passions of sex and all evil desires that obstruct the attainment of divine bliss. Be less elated that you have power to control evil spirits and evil forces in healing others, and rather rejoice more that your souls have attained a sufficient degree of Self-realization to access the heavenly region of Cosmic Consciousness.”

As was explained in previous verses,¹⁹ Satan was originally an archangel, an intelligent force of God’s creative cosmic energy, endowed with power to create in tune with Divine Intelligence perfect heavenly manifestations in material creation. This force came out of Maha-Prakriti, Great Nature, the Holy Ghost, the primal creative aspect of Spirit. The informing power of the Mother of Creation is maya, cosmic delusion, that transforms the One Spirit into myriad manifestations. With a thin veil of maya, Prakriti’s pure nature, Para-Prakriti, works in harmony with God’s reflected Christ-Kutastha Intelligence to produce the divine laws and forces informing all manifestations of the heavenly astral-causal realms. A denser pall of cosmic delusion was required to generate the gross vibrations necessary to beget a sustained material creation from this underlying astral-causal matrix. Because these gross vibrations of cosmic delusion distort and eclipse the true nature of matter as made of God’s

consciousness, this outflowing creative power is referred to as Prakriti's impure nature, Apara-Prakriti. It is this aspect to which Satan is equated, depicted as an archangel fallen from divine grace, a creative force not guided by heavenly vibrations—a force that rebelled against God-consciousness, obscuring the Innate Divinity, in order to preserve his own kingdom of humankind through self-perpetuating misuse of free will.

Thus, heaven is not only transcendental Cosmic Consciousness, but also that region of manifestation in which the pure Cosmic Intelligent Energy works in tune with the creative will of Cosmic Consciousness, God the Father of Creation. And the sphere of space in which there is the creation and presence of imperfect manifestations is the field wherein the conscious cosmic force of Satan, the energy fallen from heavenly attunement into deception, spawns tantalizing delusions of bondage to oppose the hidden essence of the intercessional, liberating works of the pure Divine Intelligence.

Similarly, in the human body there is the transcendent and heavenly region and the region of delusion or satanic influence. The heavenly region extends from the astral dorsal or heart center up to the transcendental cerebral center of Spirit. The region of satanic influence and the receptacle of baser instincts extends from below the heart, through the lumbar, sacral, and coccygeal centers (notwithstanding that when these very centers are spiritualized by meditation and righteous action, their soul-attuned functions then aid the devotee, respectively, with self-control, adherence to spiritual observances, and resistance to untoward sensory temptations).²⁰ When the energy from the senses is concentrated by meditation in the divine astral center in the brain, the devotee is spoken of as having attained heaven. But in most people, those who do not meditate nor behave in harmony with their soul qualities, their consciousness is tied to the life force flowing downwards, falling from the heavenly astral cerebral region to the region of the senses.

The satanic or delusive force in every human being keeps the lightning-like life force continuously descending toward the senses, allowing the searchlight of sensory perceptions to reveal the attraction of sense objects only. This, Jesus also observed in the seventy disciples he was addressing. Unlike the more advanced among his twelve apostles, they had yet to master fully the art of pranayama, life-force control. So Jesus taught them—"I give unto you the power"—by meditation and will power to reverse the life force—"to tread on serpents and scorpions" of sensory passions—and thereby enjoy the heavenly consciousness

and divine perceptions of the kingdom of God within them.

Thus Jesus said to these disciples that they should rejoice, not only for being able to control the devils or evil passions aroused when the force at the base of the spine flows outward to stimulate lust and other sensory passions, but for the power they had been given to withdraw the energy upward, through the coiled serpent-like passage at the base of the spine into the cerebrospinal region of heavenly forces and heavenly bliss.

By self-mastery “over all power of the enemy,” acquired by obedience and meditation, Jesus assured them, “Your names are written in heaven”—having secured their consciousness in the kingdom of heaven within, they would be qualified to be recalled to the infinite wall-less mansion of the blissful Cosmic Consciousness of the Heavenly Father.



In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, “I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight” (Luke 10:21).²¹

“I thank Thee, O Heavenly Father, Thou Infinite Lord pervading as Cosmic Consciousness behind all heavenly manifestations and in the vibrationless region beyond creation (‘L ord of heave n’) and as Christ Consciousness existing in all vibratory creation (‘L ord of...eart h’), that although You have hidden Yourself and Your omniscience from egotistically wise and theoretically prudent individuals, You have revealed the mystery of truth unto Your simple, guileless children, even though they are but babes in wisdom before Your incomparable Infinite Mind. Heavenly Father, the revealing of Yourself and ultimate truth unto Your devotees who are humbly simple and sincere—spiritual babes who surrender their sensate intelligence unto the unlimited intuitional inspiration that comes from Thee—is in accord with Thy proper judgment.”



God is revealed not by intellectuality, but by pure and guileless devotion

Though Jesus' disciples were mostly uneducated in scholarly matters, he found them receptive to a higher knowledge than that of the rationalizing intellect. Divine realization, perception of the Infinite, is unrelated to academic degrees. It is good to have knowledge befitting a professor in preference to a doltish brain of an ignorant man; but if one's intellect is so complacent in its scholastic distinction that one feels no need to seek wisdom in God, the evolution of that soul is laggardly compared to an illiterate who has devotion to the Lord. By drawing his disciples from among the common populace—even “publicans and sinners” and unlettered fishermen such as Peter, James, and John—Jesus showed that it was possible for any devotee to attain divine realization, for God is not a respecter of persons as to their status. As the little and big fingers equally belong to one's hand, so all souls—whether or not they are significant in the eyes of the world—belong to God. Whoever approaches Him with pure devotion will attain Him.

God reveals Himself unto those who completely surrender themselves unto Him, those who have no intellectual or emotional resistance to Him. Before God, the most accomplished of humans is but a child; even the most brilliant scientist does not know why or how God created this world. The Lord is not interested in how much one knows, but in how much one loves Him. The only way to touch Him is by the ardent devotion of the heart.

Jesus lauded the childlike qualities of his disciples over the “wise and prudent” who loved to use their erudition and logic to find fault with his teachings. A closed-minded critical attitude is spiritually stultifying. Attunement with the guru through devotion enables the devotee to progress steadily toward God-realization; doubters and habitual criticizers fall by the wayside. A guru does not seek to silence the disciple's reason; but he can only help those who are willing to be taught, not those who self-assertively “know it all.” That devotee becomes filled with intuitive wisdom who is childlike in guilelessness, free of presumption and doubt, full of sincerity, humble and receptive. That devotee finds God.



“All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him.”

And he turned him unto his disciples, and said privately, “Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see: For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them” (Luke 10:22 – 24).²²



Freedom from body consciousness necessary to know Christ and Cosmic Consciousness

“The omniscience and omnipotence of Cosmic Consciousness, God the Father of creation, are transmitted to the omnipresent reflected Christ Consciousness so that the laws of all manifestation can be intelligently governed by truth and wisdom. No materially minded man knows the Christ Consciousness (Son); only the Cosmic Consciousness, which is the Father of Christ Consciousness. And no one knows the Cosmic Consciousness (Father) except through the Christ Consciousness (Son). Devotees realize Cosmic Consciousness only by first experiencing Christ Consciousness in meditation.”

Jesus elsewhere said: “I and my Father are one.” He realized the Christ Consciousness within his consciousness as perfectly united with the Cosmic Consciousness. As the reflection of the moon in the lake and the moon in the sky are essentially the same image, so Cosmic Consciousness mirrored in all cosmic vibration as Christ Consciousness is the same as the Cosmic Consciousness existing beyond the vibratory realm.

The ordinary man is bound by the consciousness of the body and its relation to the material world, but by advancement in meditation he does away with the circumscriptions of bodily attachments and realizes an unfathomable depth of bliss, which lies beyond his conscious and subconscious experiences in the superconsciousness of the soul.

When the devotee, through protractive devout endeavor, is able to enter the ecstasy of meditation and become one with the superconscious state, he then attains, with the help of his guru and advanced techniques, an expanded ecstasy in which he perceives himself as a vast light and endless consciousness in which he finds all galaxies, star rivers, and vibratory objects glimmering like glowworms within his omnipresent Self. When the devotee by passing his consciousness through his inner spiritual eye experiences this vast cosmic vision, he is spoken of as having attained Christ Consciousness. The whole vibratory universe, and everything in it, is felt as his own Self, just as he feels all the cells and the different parts of his own physical body.

After attaining Christ Consciousness, the devotee goes further, beyond all

vibratory space, into an indescribable state of Cosmic Consciousness of pure ever new Joy, Consciousness, and Existence. Here in this Cosmic Consciousness no eddies of vibration or change can disturb the absolute bliss of the consciousness of the devotee merged in divine union with God.

In the very highest ecstasy that an incarnate soul can experience, nirvikalpa samadhi, the supremely advanced devotee finds his consciousness simultaneously merged in the vibrationless Cosmic Consciousness and the ocean of Cosmic Vibration with its bubbles of planets, nebulae, comets, stars, and universes. Jesus attained this state; hence he said, “The Father (Cosmic Consciousness) knows the Son (Christ Consciousness), and the Son knows the Father.”

No one can suddenly jump from limited body-consciousness and its attachment to earthly surroundings directly to realization of the Transcendental Infinite, God the Father. Even though man’s soul itself is an individualized reflection of the Christ Intelligence, the soul consciousness is entangled in a cluster of electronic and lifetronic vibrations of the physical and astral bodies. The soul consciousness of man must first leave the limited region of the senses and bodily consciousness. Like a little wave being reabsorbed into the sea, the consciousness then encounters expansion in the vast Holy Ghost Cosmic Vibration. As the expanded soul is baptized in that sacred Vibration of Spirit, it experiences the immanent Christ Intelligence. Only then, blessed by this Reflected Presence, does the consciousness go beyond to the vibrationless infinitude, the kingdom of God the Father, Cosmic Consciousness.

If Jesus were speaking of his body as the Son of God, one would have to conclude that no souls were ever redeemed before the birth of Jesus—neither Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Elijah, nor any of the prophets. The true meaning of this verse (and similar ones²³) is that spiritually evolved souls, of whom many existed before the time of Jesus and would continue to be born after him, have to pass their consciousness through the Holy Ghost Cosmic Vibration and the Son or Christ Intelligence existing in it before they can ascend to the transcendent kingdom of His Heavenly Majesty, God. Thus the emphasis of Jesus that it is the Son or Christ Consciousness alone that can reveal God the Father to any soul.



“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28 – 30).

In oneness with the infinite Christ Intelligence, Jesus lovingly urged all spiritual aspirants to “Come unto me” (the Christ Consciousness) and “Take my yoke upon you”—follow the step-by-step methods of self-discipline that lead to Christ Consciousness and that assure ultimate liberation in God’s kingdom: ²⁴



The yoga of self-discipline that most easily brings liberation to the soul

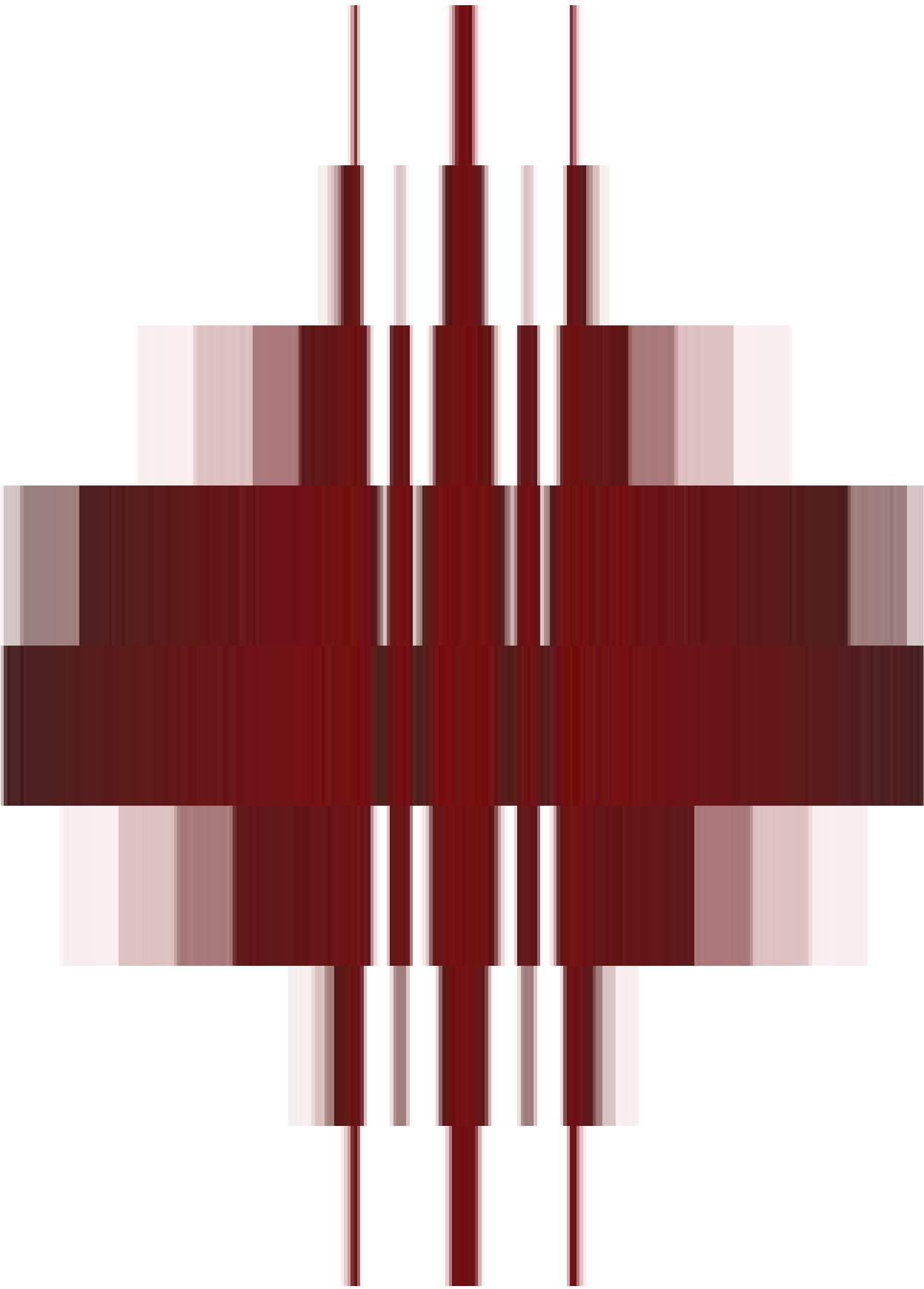
“O ye aspiring souls who are heavily laden with bad karma and are struggling to free yourselves from the self-created prison of evil actions: Tune your consciousness in deep meditation with the all-pervading, ever new bliss of Christ Consciousness, which surpasses the semijoyous state of subconsciousness in sleep and the ever new joyous state of superconsciousness beyond the state of deep sleep. Then you will forever rest in my Infinite Consciousness, never again to be forced to reincarnate on the misery-making earth. Take upon your consciousness my consciousness and expand your consciousness to Christ Consciousness. The materially proud concentrate on physical experiences and do not perceive my Christ Intelligence meekly and humbly lying within the hearts of all souls; but those who know me and my way rest their souls in the depths of inner concentration and find me as the Infinite Christ which has abided always within themselves, never demanding recognition or advertising my own being.

“Those who are yoked to material consciousness find their burden of karma very heavy, to be worked out through copious struggles of many incarnations. But those who attune their consciousness to Christ Consciousness discover that the burden of my Consciousness on their consciousness is not heavy with suffering but light with freedom and joy everlasting. They find the spiritual ease and freedom of a consciousness no longer weighed down with materiality, and a baptism of their soul in the all-freeing light of the Holy Ghost vibration, Christ-wisdom, and the Father’s Eternal Bliss.”

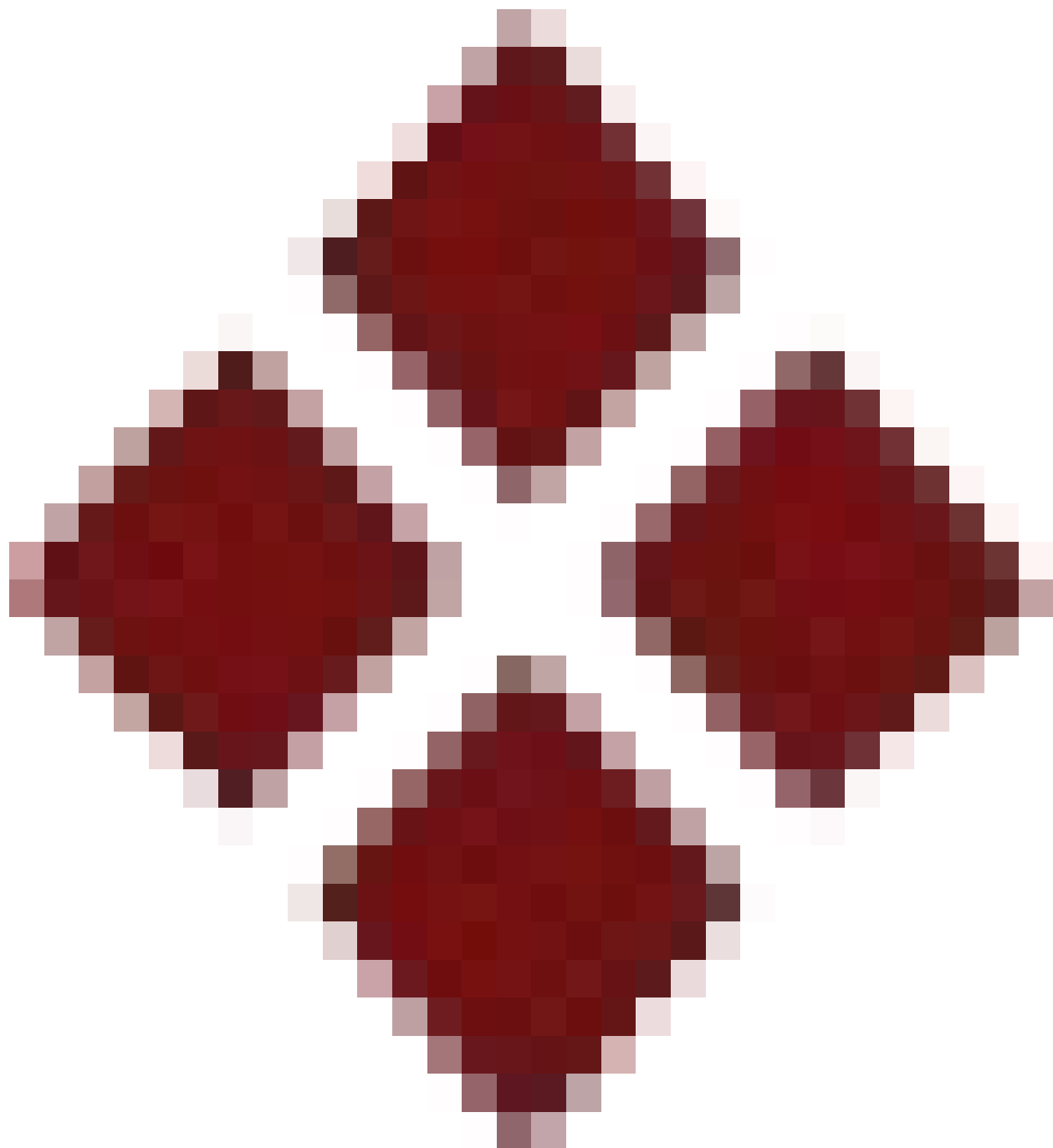


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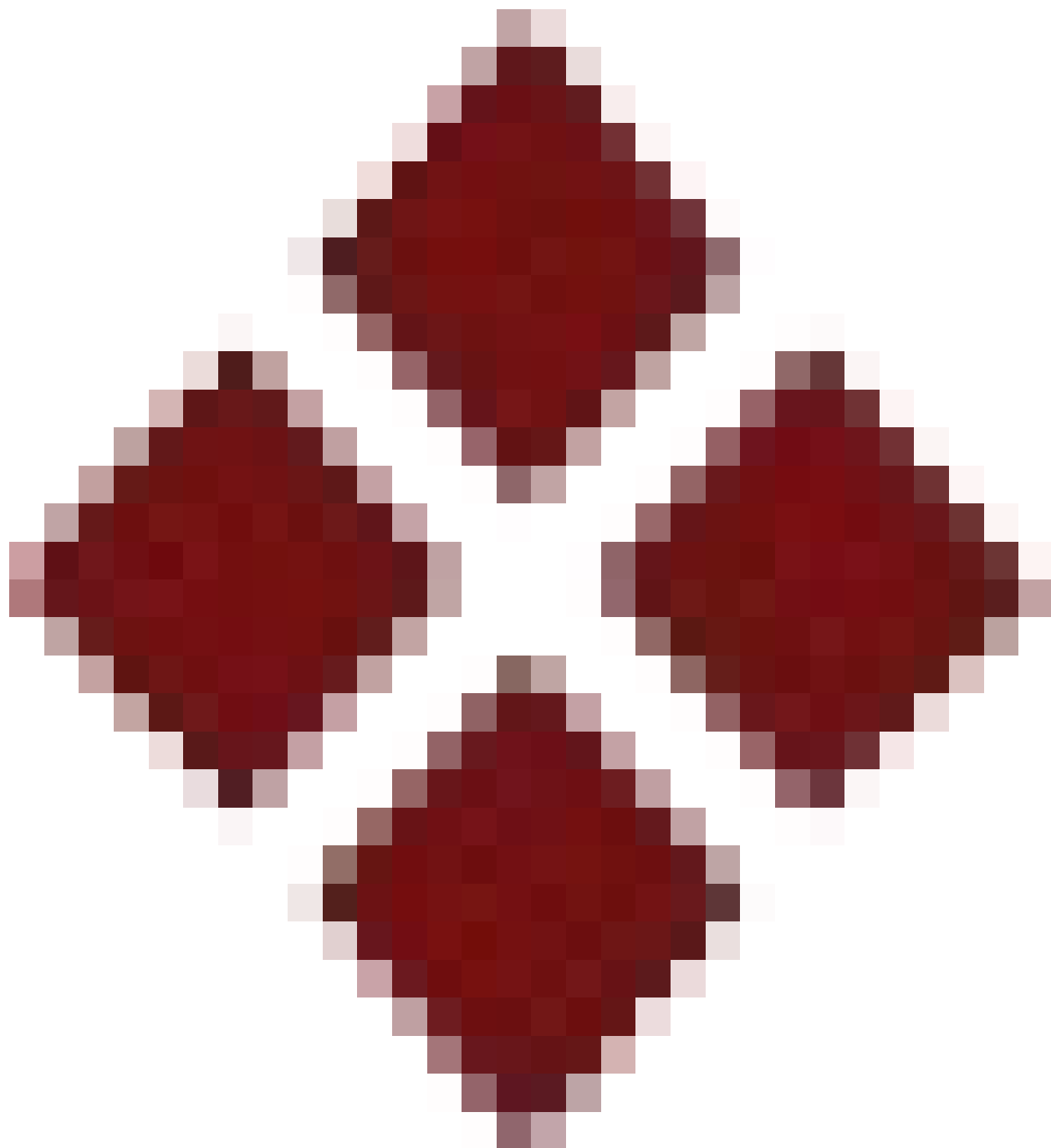
Jesus Performs the Miracle of the Loaves and the Fishes, and Walks on the Sea of Galilee



Miracles: How Masters Work With Subtle Forces From the Astral and Causal Planes of Creation



Jesus' Use of the Powers of Mind and Life Energy in Feeding the Five Thousand



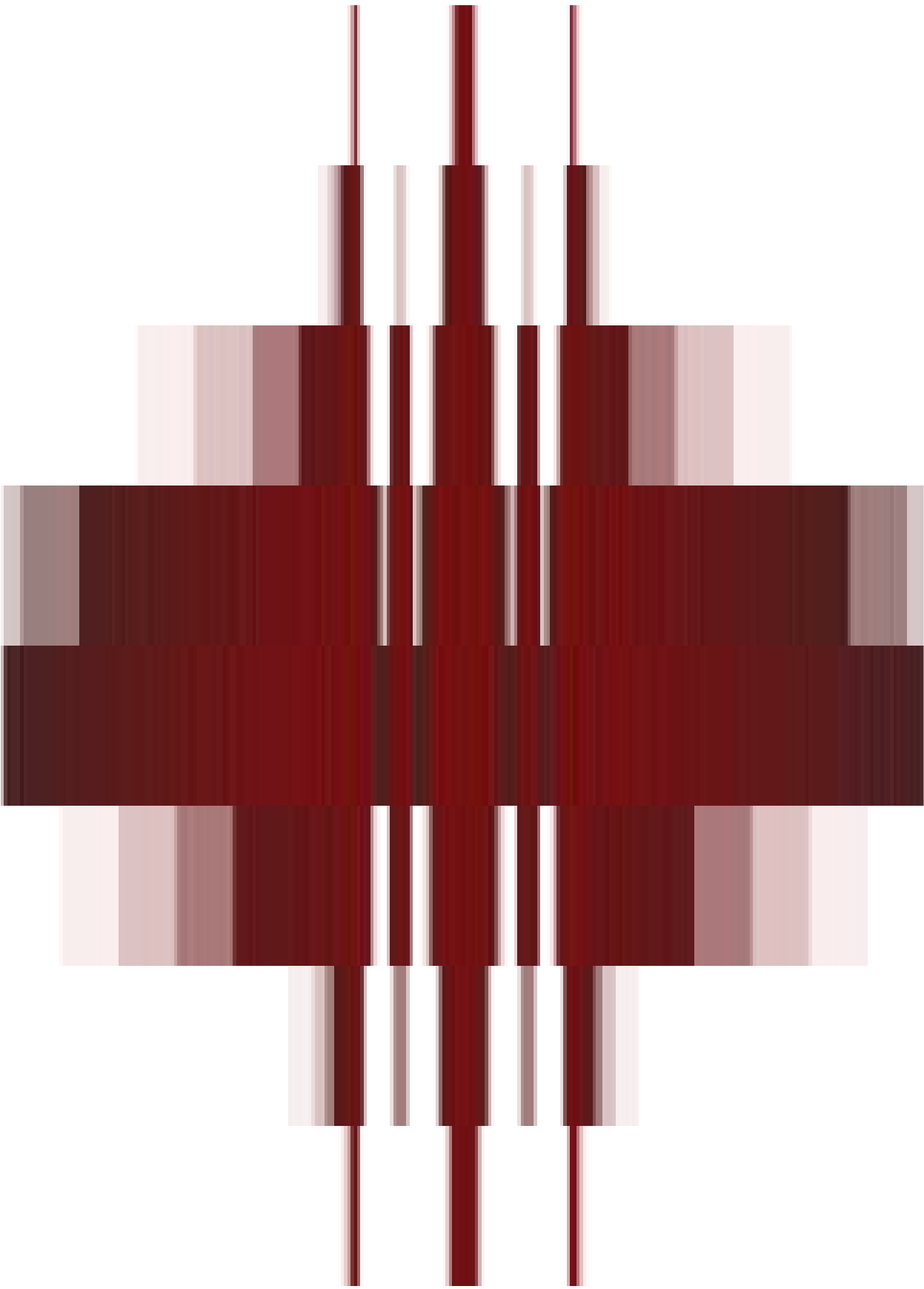
Is a Vegetarian Diet Necessary for Spiritual Progress?



Jesus' Mastery Over the Electronic Composition of Matter and Its Relation to Consciousness



From Material to Divine Consciousness: Yoga and the Mystery of the Breath



“When man understands scientifically the spiritual nature of creation and the mastery over its underlying laws possessed by illumined souls, he can accept not only the possibility of miracles, but that there are numerous ways by which they can be performed.”

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At that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus, and said unto his servants, "This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him." For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison...and beheaded John in the prison....

And his disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus. When Jesus heard of it, he departed thence by ship into a desert place apart: and when the people had heard thereof, they followed him on foot out of the cities.

—Matthew 14:1 – 3, 10, 12 – 13¹

After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias. And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased. And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples. And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh.

When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, "Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.

Philip answered him, "Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little."

One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him, "There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?"

And Jesus said, "Make the men sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.

And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would.

When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost." Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.

Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, "This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world." When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone. And when even was now come, his disciples went down unto the sea, and entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them.

And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew. So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid.

But he saith unto them, "It is I; be not afraid."

—John 6:1 – 20

And Peter answered him and said, "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water."

And he said, "Come."

And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, "Lord, save me."

And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" And when they

were come into the ship, the wind ceased. Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, “Of a truth thou art the Son of God.”

—Matthew 14:28 – 33

Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.

—John 6:21



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Discourse 42

**Jesus Performs the Miracle of the Loaves and the
Fishes, and Walks on the Sea of Galilee**



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twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten (John 6:1 – 13).

Parallel reference:

And the apostles, when they were returned, told him all that they had done. And he took them, and went aside privately into a desert place belonging to the city called Bethsaida. And the people, when they knew it, followed him: and he received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing.

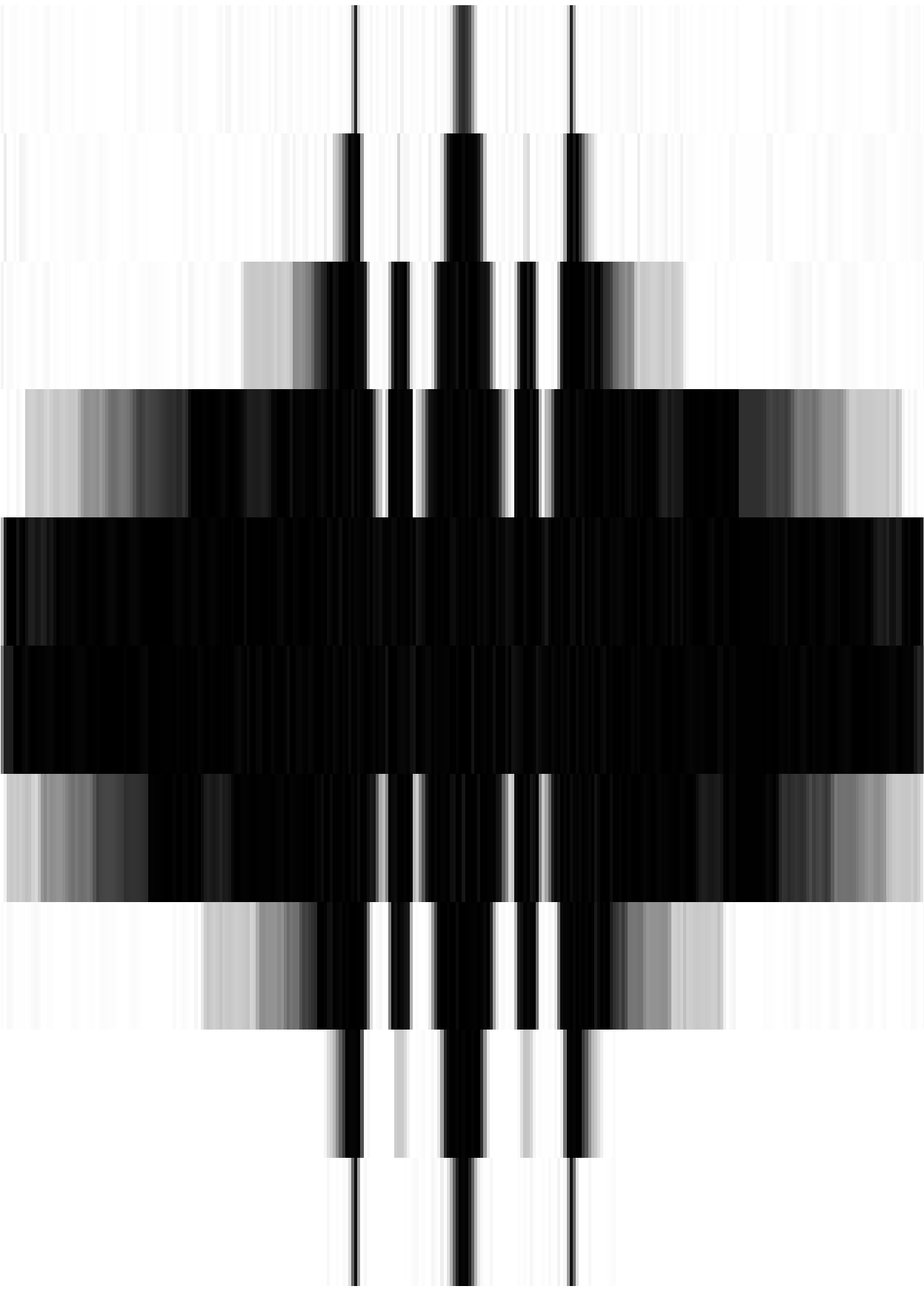
And when the day began to wear away, then came the twelve, and said unto him, “Send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge, and get victuals: for we are here in a desert place.”

But he said unto them, “Give ye them to eat.” And they said, “We have no more but five loaves and two fishes; except we should go and buy meat for all this people.” For they were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, “Make them sit down by fifties in a company.” And they did so, and made them all sit down.

Then he took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed them, and brake, and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude. And they did eat, and were all filled: and there was taken up of fragments that remained to them twelve baskets (Luke 9:10 – 17).⁴

According to the physical laws governing the universe, it would be impossible to apportion a meager five loaves and two fishes to satisfy the hunger of five

thousand people. How did Jesus perform this miracle?



Miracles: how masters work with subtle forces from the astral and causal planes of creation

A miracle is a super-law in operation—the effectual working of subtle powers from the manifesting principles of God’s astral and causal realms of creation. How these subtle forces support and impinge on physical phenomena is unknown to ordinary persons. The incomprehensibility of the miracles recorded in the Bible thus reduces otherwise intelligent minds to blind dogmatism or scornful skepticism. But why should there be cause for doubt when Nature constantly excites man with new revelations? Jesus prophesied: “Greater works than these shall ye do.”⁵ He knew that the law of cause and effect was creating in this world an evolution of consciousness through which future generations would possess in incremental measure the means to bring about accomplishments theretofore considered miraculous. Amazing advancement will be witnessed as this present ascending evolutionary cycle continues toward its apex.⁶ Scientific and spiritual knowledge will work more and more in harmony and ultimately in unity when humanity will gain the knowledge of the subtle laws that operate in the inner cosmos of consciousness. The spiritually evolved human being, gaining access to the microcosm of the spiritual eye, dissolves delusion’s vibratory boundaries encapsulating the physical universe and brings on earth the superphysical capabilities of heaven.

Already many of Jesus’ phenomenal feats can be deemed credible because of modern physics, at least in defining principles long known to masters who manipulate these cosmic formulas as easily as a scientist mixes elemental substances to create new compounds in his laboratory. Avant-gardes of science, true seers in their fields, have pried open the agelong-sealed core of the sacrosanct grossness of matter to reveal its electromagnetic structure, and to glimpse the startling wonders of matter sublimated into scintillas of light metamorphosing into consciousness, mind-stuff.

“What impresses our senses as matter is really a great concentration of energy into a comparatively small space,” writes Professor Einstein.⁷ And the renowned astrophysicist Sir Arthur Stanley Eddington explains: “The world we see and experience in everyday life is simply a convenient mirage attuned to our very limited senses, an illusion conjured by our perceptions and our mind. All that is around us (including our own bodies) which appears so substantial is ultimately

nothing but ephemeral networks of particle-waves whirling around at lightning speed, colliding, rebounding, disintegrating into almost total emptiness—so-called matter is mostly emptiness, proportionately as void as intergalactic space, void of anything except occasional dots and spots and scattered electric charges.”⁸

In *The Mysterious Universe*,⁹ Cambridge University physicist Sir James Jeans declares: “Today there is a wide measure of agreement, which on the physical side of science approaches almost to unanimity, that the stream of knowledge is heading toward a non-mechanical reality; the universe begins to look more like a great thought than like a great machine. Mind no longer appears as an accidental intruder into the realm of matter; we are beginning to suspect that we ought rather to hail it as the creator and governor of the realm of matter—not of course our individual minds, but the mind in which the atoms out of which our individual minds have grown to exist as thoughts....

“The old dualism of mind and matter...seems likely to disappear, not through matter becoming in any way more shadowy or insubstantial than heretofore, or through mind becoming resolved into a function of the working of matter, but through substantial matter resolving itself into a creation and manifestation of mind.”

“To put the conclusion crudely, the stuff of the world is mind-stuff,” Eddington summarizes.¹⁰ Boldly forthright about the limitations of merely material investigations, he has written: “In regard to the nature of things, [scientific] knowledge is only an empty shell—a form of symbols. It is knowledge of structural form, and not knowledge of content. All through the physical world runs that unknown content, which must surely be the stuff of our consciousness. Here is a hint of aspects deep within the world of physics, and yet unattainable by the methods of physics.”¹¹

When man understands scientifically the spiritual nature of creation and the mastery over its underlying laws possessed by illumined souls, he can accept not only the possibility of miracles, but that there are numerous ways by which they can be performed, as noted in the various modes of healing employed by Jesus.



Jesus' use of the powers of mind and life energy in feeding the five thousand

As to feeding the five thousand, one of the methods Jesus would have found effective is mental suggestion or mass hypnosis. A very powerful mind can impose on the mental processes of a crowd a belief in any suggested phenomena. Those who fall under such influence do not become unconscious in all their other faculties and areas of reason, but are susceptible only to the particular suggestion of the hypnotist. If someone with very powerful magnetism impresses on a hungry person the positive thought that his stomach is full and his appetite satisfied, the feeling of hunger will vanish. Professor James of Harvard demonstrated that it is possible to produce actual blisters on the skin by the power of hypnotic suggestion. Mind is the main mechanism in the body. Once the mind becomes convinced about a thing, the body reacts accordingly. So Jesus, with his tremendous will power, could have used mass hypnosis to satisfy the hunger of the five thousand; but I doubt that he even considered it!

Jesus instructed his disciples to see that the people were comfortably seated on the grass-carpeted ground, from which they would receive some magnetism of the earth. Jesus then took the loaves and fishes and gave thanks to God, "and looking up to heaven, he blessed them"—he charged the offering of food with condensed cosmic energy drawn from the astral region through his spiritual eye, so that even small portions were a satisfying meal.

By his magnetic energy, Jesus also charged the partakers of the repast with magnetism, so that the cosmic energy he cast into the hungry stomachs of the multitudes opened the sluice gates of the reservoirs of energy in their brains and flesh, assuring no dearth of satisfaction.

After the miracle, the disciples gathered up and filled twelve baskets with leftover morsels, evidence that Jesus actually materialized additional bread and fishes even as the blessed food was being distributed.

Though bread is made by man and fish is caught by him from the ocean or lake, the wheat and the fish, and all things, were originally special creations by God, brought into being by His divine will and Cosmic Creative Energy. While science has proved the quiddity of the universe as electromagnetic radiations, coalesced into various forms, it has yet to devise instruments subtle enough to

register the underlying source of electromagnetic phenomena: finer-than-atomic astral life energy and even finer thoughtrons, vibrations of an infinite consciousness. Masters such as Jesus know creation as God knows it and can manipulate intelligent cosmic energy to create at will any desired effect from its primal cause.

In dreams, the mind of every person uses thought and life energy to become a prolific creator. Dreams are condensed thoughts, made visible by the life energy withdrawn from the sensory organs into the brain during sleep. In the world created in his dream state, a sleeper can plant wheat, raise it, harvest it, grind it, and bake it into bread. He can eat of the dream bread, taste it, feel its fresh texture in his mouth. But all things in that dream—the seed, the soil, the oven, the bread, the body that eats and enjoys it—are only modifications of the dreamer's consciousness.

Suppose a person dreams of five thousand people and has only five dream loaves of bread to feed them. If he has the power of conscious dreaming, he can command his mind, "Since these five loaves are only materializations of my thoughts, I shall multiply them by visualization until I have adequate to serve all the people." To produce dreams consciously and at will is one of the first powers attained by the advancing yogi. An accomplished master perceives how God has condensed His creative thoughts to produce all phenomena of this dream world, and by the cosmic hypnosis of maya has suggested those dreams so powerfully to our human consciousness that we accept the cosmic chimera as material reality.

Jesus had the power to condense his thoughts not only as visible mental images as does an ordinary dreamer, but as material dream-realities, even as God does. By the command of his divinely attuned will, he could cause the cosmic energy to condense into electrons, protons, atoms, and molecules of any kind, of any density and specific gravity, informed into whatsoever he willed. After his crucifixion, he re-created his body; thus it was a simple matter for him to create a few more loaves of bread—the process is the same. He had only to command electromagnetic radiations to multiply the food as the five thousand people were consuming it. Such feats can be done by anyone who has complete mastery of the mind. Mind is everything.

If a small eyedropper were connected to a large reservoir of water, the eyedropper would continuously drip one drop of water at a time. Thousands of

persons could drink of that water even though the water came in tiny drops, but continuously. The five loaves and two fishes, broken up into tiny fragments, were charged continuously with the replicating power of the creative lifetronic energy drawn by Jesus from the infinite reservoir of the astral realm—morsel by morsel, until all were fed.

From the story of the loaves and the fishes, we see also the practicality and precision of Jesus, who always looked to the comfort of the people. Lest anyone be bypassed in the disarray of the throng during the distribution of the food, he had his disciples divide the multitude by fifties, throughout the grassy area. In instructing his disciples to gather up all remnants after everyone had eaten, he was not only stressing economy in not wasting bounty given by God, but also citing the reverence with which one should treat blessed food (referred to in India as *prasad*), which on this occasion was a special creation of God.¹²



Is a vegetarian diet necessary for spiritual progress?

It is evident that according to the custom and food supply of the time, Jesus did not sponsor strict vegetarianism. The cultivation of fruits, grains, and vegetables was relatively sparse in the desert places where he preached. His mission on earth did not require him to be a nutritionist, but to saturate people with God-consciousness.

It is true that those who are yet in the developmental stage of spiritual discipline ought to favor a vegetarian diet. But to great masters who have attained God-consciousness, dietary restrictions have little meaning; they see the whole world as nothing but the manifestation of God's ideas. To them, all forms of physical experiences are but the different acts of consciousness under the influence of the cosmic dream. To the man of realization, the very consciousness of giving reality to any form of diet is delusion. He who has awakened from the dream delusion of the cosmos realizes he is Spirit; his mortal body and its physical experiences existing only as amorphous ideas of consciousness.

Nevertheless, the various forms of diet and their dissimilar effects on the body should not be brashly denied. Theorizing about the delusive nature of the body, while simultaneously supporting the delusion by gratifying hunger and engaging in other activities that reinforce body consciousness, is quite incongruous. When an individual achieves spiritual ecstasy and God-contact, there will be no vitiation of his realization that the universe with all its experiences is God's dream, dreaming through him. Until the spiritual aspirant reaches that state of release from all delusive compulsions, he needs to lead a life of spiritual discipline, observing the more healthful vegetarian diet—and other health-maintaining behaviors—to keep the body fit for meditation and spiritual service to God. Persons who claim to possess the realization of sainthood and on those false credentials flaunt the ordinary rules of a salutary physical and spiritual life are courting an inescapable rebuff from the karmic law.

Jesus had said before, that he, the bridegroom, the divine master, and his disciples did not need to fast for spiritual purification from the consciousness of the body, as they were already saturated with transcendent consciousness. But he also added that when his physical presence would be taken away, the disciples would have to adhere to a life of stricter discipline in order to retain attunement

with his spiritual vibrations.¹³

Great teachers adopt the lifestyle and some of the customs of the place and time in which they incarnate; it does not mean that every detail of their way of life is forever sanctified for all generations to follow! Some persons reason, “Jesus partook of meat and wine, therefore I should do the same.” But I say to them, first become like Jesus; then whatever you ingest in that consciousness is pure Spirit and as such will have no ill effects. For non-illuminated body-bound persons, a diet reliant on animal products contributes heavily to many sicknesses, including heart disease and cancer; it is detrimental to physical, psychological, and spiritual health. If people were to follow a proper vegetarian diet, many of the fatal diseases most prevalent in modern civilization would be gone.

Whatever diet people follow, their prayer and affirmation should be: “Heavenly Father, teach us to realize that we live by Thy consciousness; that birthless and deathless we are waves of Thine infinite ocean of life, of Thine immortal energy and immutable consciousness.”



Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, “This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.” When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone (John 6:14 – 15).

Parallel reference:

And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away. And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone (Matthew 14:22 – 23).

“The prophet that should come into the world” was a reference to Moses’ foretelling in Deuteronomy

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: “The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken.”

Many of the Jewish people expected that the coming prophet, or Messiah, would also be an earthly ruler of the royal house of David.¹⁴ Jesus had no wish to be declared a king of a temporal material kingdom; being one with God, he was already a Prince of the Universe, a true king above all kingdoms of the earth.

The periodic withdrawal of Jesus into solitude [as explained in Discourses

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] was a necessary retreat from the demands of the multitudes. God does not need to pray or meditate, because He is omnipresent and is seeking nothing beyond Himself. He is engrossed in His joy and need not attain any higher state than His own consciousness. The transcendent liberated master enjoys that same blissful freedom; still he may seclude himself for solitary prayer and meditation to recharge his mortal body, which is needed for his work on earth. In this instance, Jesus also sought to escape a cordon of enthusiasts to disabuse them of their notion to make him their king.



And when even was now come, his disciples went down unto the sea, and entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them.

And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew. So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid.

But he saith unto them, "It is I; be not afraid."

Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went (John 6:16 – 21).

Parallel reference:

But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It is a spirit"; and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid" (Matthew 14:24 – 27).

"Be not fearful but elated that you are able to witness this miracle of God working through me; that I, not as a spirit, but with my solid natural body, can walk on this rough sea and speak to you with the voice you know well. It is I, the same as you have always seen me, with the same physical body. The Spirit in me

is your Redeemer from all earthly troubles, even from these wind-surfed waves that are carelessly tossing you about. Why should my appearance in this way cause you to be afraid?”



Jesus' mastery over the electronic composition of matter and its relation to consciousness

As with the materialization of the loaves and fishes, walking over water, as Jesus did in view of his disciples, is a miracle that can be performed when one understands the electronic composition of matter and its relation to mind. A master who by actual realization perceives the entire cosmos as a dream of God, and all matter as condensed lifetronic light and consciousness, rises above the laws governing material creation and can modify any material object by his divinely attuned creative will.

The human mind is deluded into thinking that liquid will drown man's solid body, gas will choke him, solids will hurt him; but as soon as that delusion is gone, he can do anything he wants to with matter. He realizes that the whole world is energy, as scientists tell us.

Man thinks of his mortal form as solid flesh and bone. That is a concrete delusion. The body is an amalgam of countless infinitesimal subatomic particles; these particles are made up of finer-than-atomic lifetronic energy and ultimately of thoughtrons, sparks of consciousness whose source is Cosmic Consciousness.

Everything existing in nature is energy in a more or less compact stage of vibration, exhibiting weight according to its mass or distinguishing gravitation. In the material world, liquid vibration, such as water, will sink a solid vibration, such as the human body, whose density gives it a specific gravity¹⁵ greater than the liquid. Jesus realized that the energy composing the solid body has specific gravity only because of its compact formation, as also the specific gravity of the less dense mass of the liquid vibration of the sea. Specific gravity is delusion because the density of matter is reducible to its quintessence of energy (weightless, permeable light). Human consciousness that transcends this delusion perceives the physical body as essentially ethereal, infinitely united to and consisting of the same substance as the Cosmic Body of God: energy, mind, Spirit.

In *Autobiography of a Yogi* I have devoted an entire chapter to a comprehensive explanation of "The Law of Miracles." Modern science has gratifyingly supplied terms and processes of cosmic laws that, intentionally or reluctantly, formulate a

science of the age-old art of miracles known alike to generations of Vedic, Biblical, and contemporary masters. Let me quote an extract from the book apropos to this present Discourse:

From science, then, if it must be so, let man learn the philosophic truth that there is no material universe; its warp and woof is maya, illusion. Under analysis all its mirages of reality dissolve....

In his famous equation outlining the equivalence of mass and energy, Einstein proved that the energy in any particle of matter is equal to its mass or weight multiplied by the square of the velocity of light. The release of the atomic energies is brought about through annihilation of the material particles. The “death” of matter has given birth to an Atomic Age.

Light velocity is a mathematical standard or constant not because there is an absolute value in

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miles a second, but because no material body, whose mass increases with its velocity, can ever attain the velocity of light. Stated another way: only a material body whose mass is infinite could equal the velocity of light.

This conception brings us to the law of miracles.

Masters who are able to materialize and dematerialize their bodies and other

objects, and to move with the velocity of light, and to utilize the creative light rays in bringing into instant visibility any physical manifestation, have fulfilled the lawful condition: their mass is infinite.

The consciousness of a perfected yogi is effortlessly identified not with a narrow body but with the universal structure. Gravitation, whether the “force” of Newton or the Einsteinian “manifestation of inertia,” is powerless to compel a master to exhibit the property of weight: the distinguishing gravitational condition of all material objects. He who knows himself as the omnipresent Spirit is subject no longer to the rigidities of a body in time and space. The imprisoning “rings-pass-not” have yielded to the solvent: I am He.

The cohesive property of maya’s creative vibration holds together every iota of matter sporting its presence in the universe. Sand mixed with water and fashioned into a sand man looks enduringly solid; but when the water is evaporated out of it, that illusion falls apart. Likewise, the illusion of a seemingly solid human form is held together by the adhesive power of delusion working through the mind.

The relationship between consciousness and the body is such that at death the body disintegrates because the mind and consciousness depart; but as long as consciousness remains in the body it works hard to hold together the atoms, cells, and organs—in spite of the effects of disease and aging. The body’s mass of dancing electrons—light, energy—when compacted and integrated by mind as a creative sensory instrument of maya, suggests itself as a solid entity. Applying the physical processes described by Einstein, however, scientists could convert the body into its constituent energy; but they lack the ability to do it by mind power, as Jesus did. A master who realizes that the mind controls the body, and who possesses complete control over the mind, can partially or fully disintegrate the atoms of the body—changing its specific gravity or completely dematerializing it—and then restore the bodily composition to its customary solidity at will.

Superconscious realization that the body is made of informed energy, a dream image of mind-stuff, instantly frees one from the delusion of specific gravity;

without the density of mass, there is no weight. But as long as the conviction of corporeal solidity persists in one's mind, the body will surely sink if one tries to walk on the unsupportive lesser density of a body of water.

If a sleeping man dreams he is drowning, his consciousness would suffer a painful sense of suffocation. But if he knew the art of controlling his dreams at will, he could save his dream self simply by changing his dream thoughts to behold his dream body floating safely on the dream waters. Jesus, perceiving his body, the sea, and the conglomerate world as differentiated dream waves of consciousness manifesting as various electromagnetic waves of material forms, could by mere willing change the specific gravity or the electronic composition of his body so that weightlessly it could walk on water as naturally as the solid body of an ordinary man strides the solid earth.

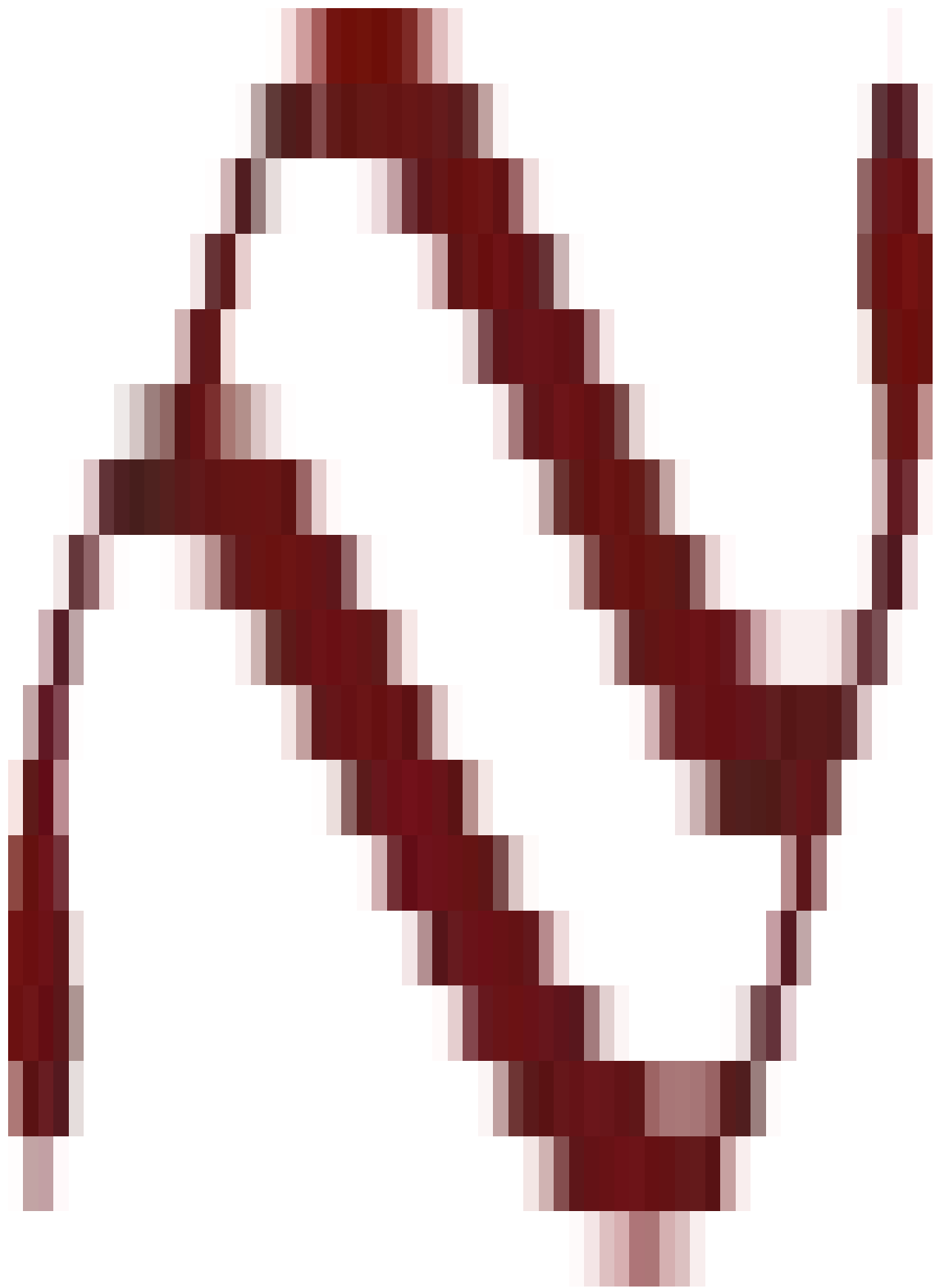
A small cork tied to a heavy piece of iron will be submerged if dropped in a pot of water; but if the cork were separated from the iron, it would float. The body is similarly weighted down with material consciousness. When maya's illusions of the perdurability of matter are disengaged from the body by meditation, the body can dance on water, walk through solid substances, levitate or fly in the air at will. As easily as any person can change his thoughts, a superman can change his experience of the world just by changing his material convictions into intuitive divine realizations. Among the yogis of India that I have personally known to demonstrate these truths was the saintly Nagendra Nath Bhaduri, about whom I have written in my *Autobiography of a Yogi*.¹⁶



From material to divine consciousness: yoga and the mystery of the breath

The Kriya Yoga meditation techniques of pranayama, life-force control that transmutes breath into subtle lifetronic energy, bring positive realization that the composition of the body is pure cosmic energy. In the adept practice of Kriya, the body is oxygenated and its atoms etherealized until it becomes light as a feather. Man has no idea how much power comes into the body when he has mastered the mystery of the breath. Kriya practice brings a regulated, continuous inflow of oxygen into the body, the atoms of which, by the process of pranayama, are transmuted into life force, reinforcing the subtle currents in the spine, which in turn awaken the astral cerebrospinal centers and spiritualize the entire body. After years of successful practice, the body of the advanced Kriya Yogi becomes so spiritualized that in exalted states he can hardly feel it touch the ground. The suffusion of life force becomes so powerful that the whole body loses its delusive solidity and actually levitates. I can testify to that from my own experience. But the beginner should not expect to jump weightless tomorrow! Modern man is accustomed to getting results quickly; his industry and technology manufactures products so rapidly that he thinks there should be a convenience package of concise spiritual progress as well. A presumption of instant spiritual achievement is perhaps more than a bit audacious considering the innumerable lifetimes already spent in making oneself an unspiritual being. Even a lifelong practice is little to be required. Nevertheless, the Kriya Yoga science and art of meditation are not drudgery, because gradual transforming results are felt from the very beginning.

All this has been explained by the great yogis of India.¹⁷ Jesus Christ certainly had mastered that yoga science, by which he converted the vibratory density of his body into weightless light. Most persons do not live the truth in the Bible; they are satisfied with mere theological belief or their own philosophical vagaries, which get them nowhere. If one follows the scientific spiritual way, the results are definite and can be proved by one's own transition from mortal consciousness to divine consciousness.



And Peter answered him and said, "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water."

And he said, "Come."

And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, "Lord, save me."

And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased. Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, "Of a truth thou art the Son of God."¹⁸

And when they were gone over, they came into the land of Gennesaret. And when the men of that place had knowledge of him, they sent out into all that country round about, and brought unto him all that were diseased; and besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment: and as many as touched were made perfectly whole (Matthew 14:28 – 36).



Spiritual advancement brings faith realization of the immaterial nature of the body

Peter, by the power of faith and mental concentration, became momentarily attuned to the consciousness of Christ, free from the material dream-delusion of matter. Thus he was buoyed by divine consciousness when he stepped out of the ship to approach Jesus. But when the violent winds shook Peter's concentrated faith with fear, his habit of beholding matter as real came back into his mind and immediately he felt his body sinking.

Jesus' touch restored the disciple's faith and brought him to safety. But he scolded Peter for his precarious spiritual instability: "O Peter, why did you diminish with doubt your Self-realization, your intuition-born, Christ Consciousness – stimulated faith, and revive your consciousness of matter? Unless your faith remains always firm in your Christ attunement with Cosmic Consciousness, the steady realization that God is all, you will repeatedly contradict your divine perceptions with frightful experiences of delusive matter."¹⁹

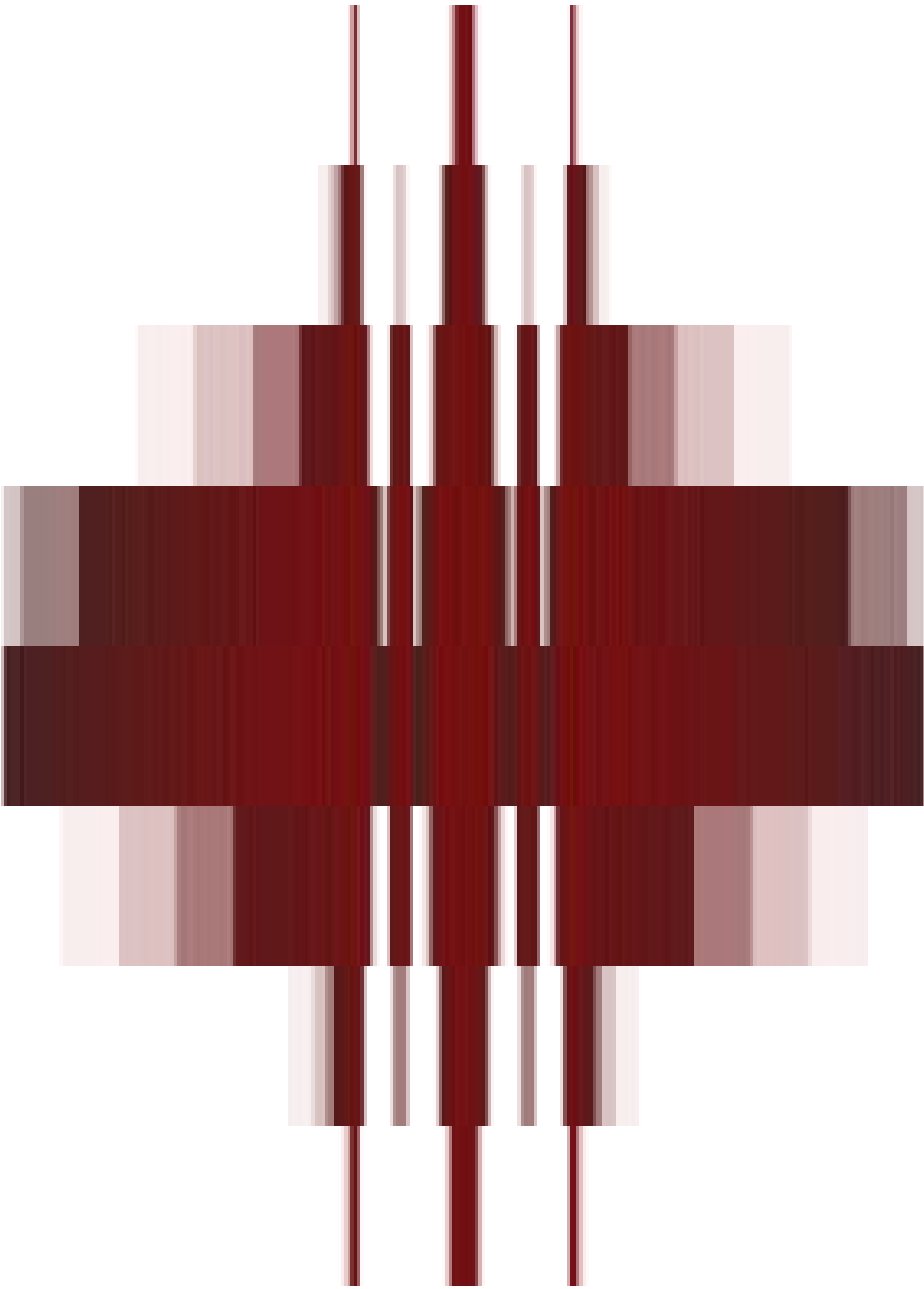
By faith Jesus did not mean mere mental belief, which evaporates at the slightest contact with contrary evidence. Faith is absolute conviction; its proof lies in the intuitive knowing of the soul. God-consciousness and its unlimited powers are available to those ardent devotees who steadily develop themselves by meditation until they form an unwavering faith in the omnipotent nature of God and His manifestation in themselves.

One who is always conscious of the body is not conscious of Spirit. In sleep bodily consciousness is forcibly, though temporarily, cast off from the soul. But in meditation the delusion of the body is consciously removed; and during ecstasy attained in deeper states of meditation, the devotee acquires real faith—a deep intuitive realization—about the electromagnetic, lifetronic, and mental nature of the body. The more advanced one is on the spiritual path, the greater is his faith or meditation-born conviction about the immaterial nature of matter and his own body.²⁰



Discourse 43

The True “Bread of Life”



How One Can “Work the Works of God”



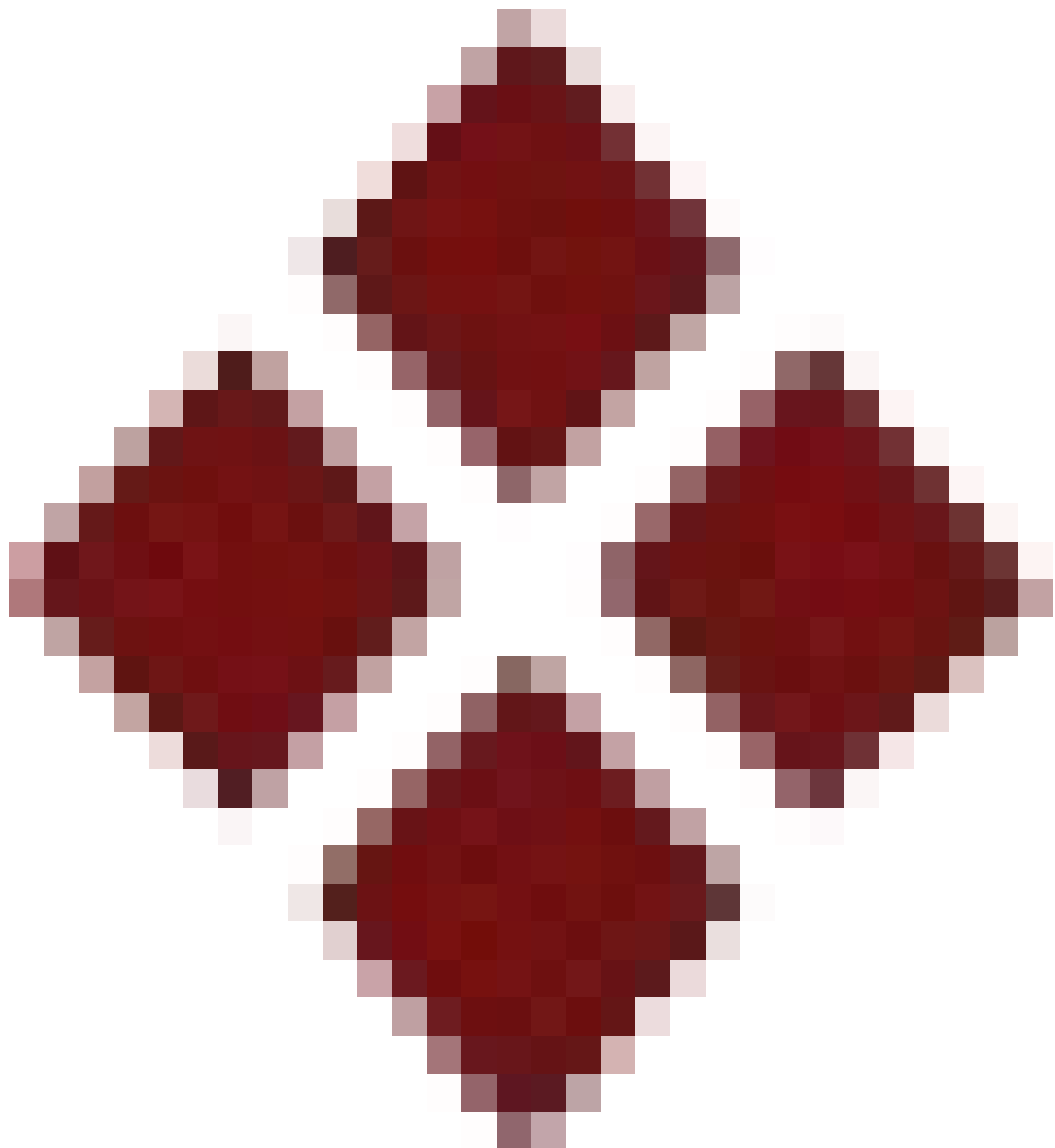
**The Christ Intelligence: “Bread From Heaven,” the
Divine Sustenance of All Creation**



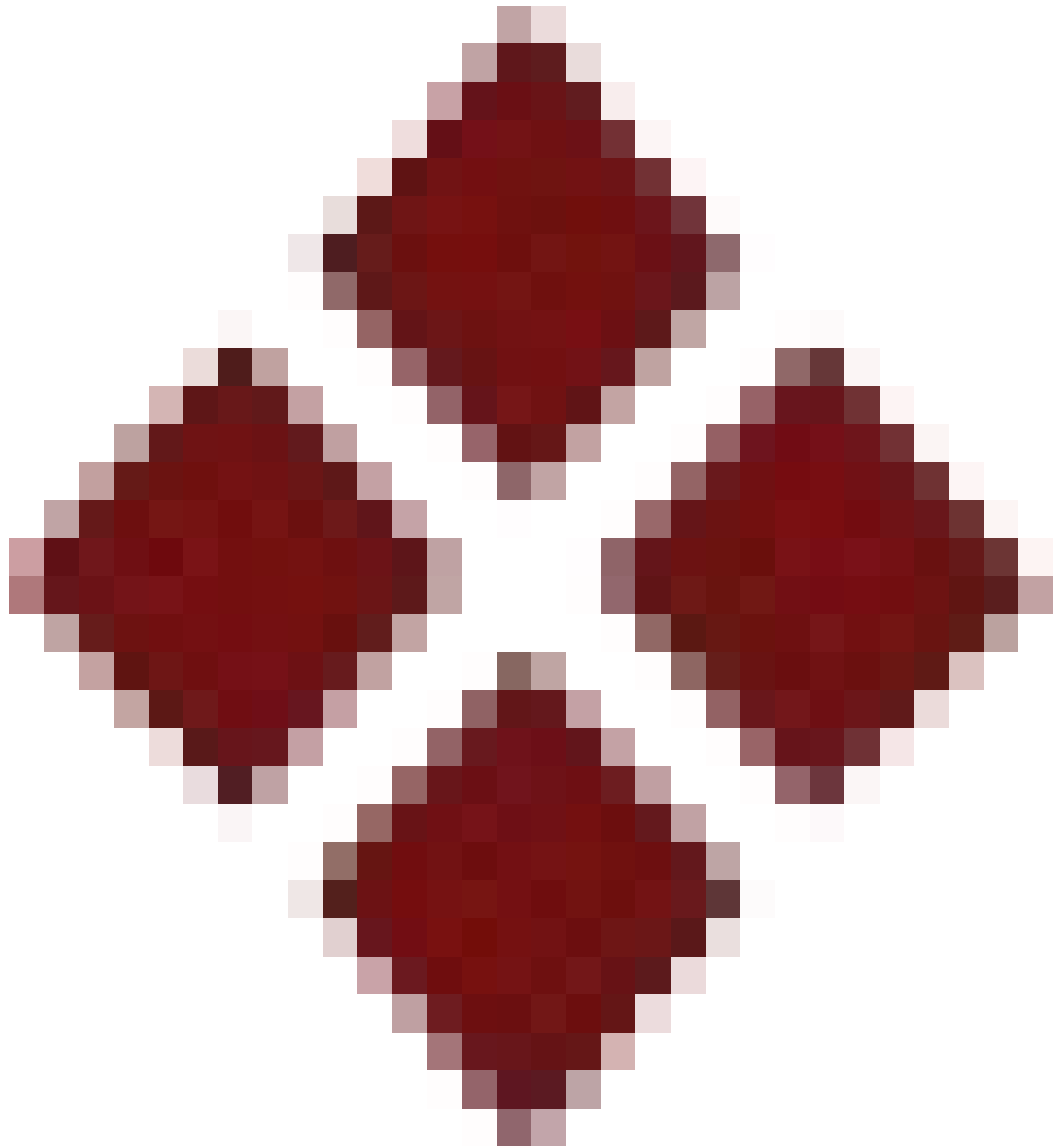
**Earthly and Spiritual Hunger Satisfied Forever by
Partaking of Christ Consciousness**



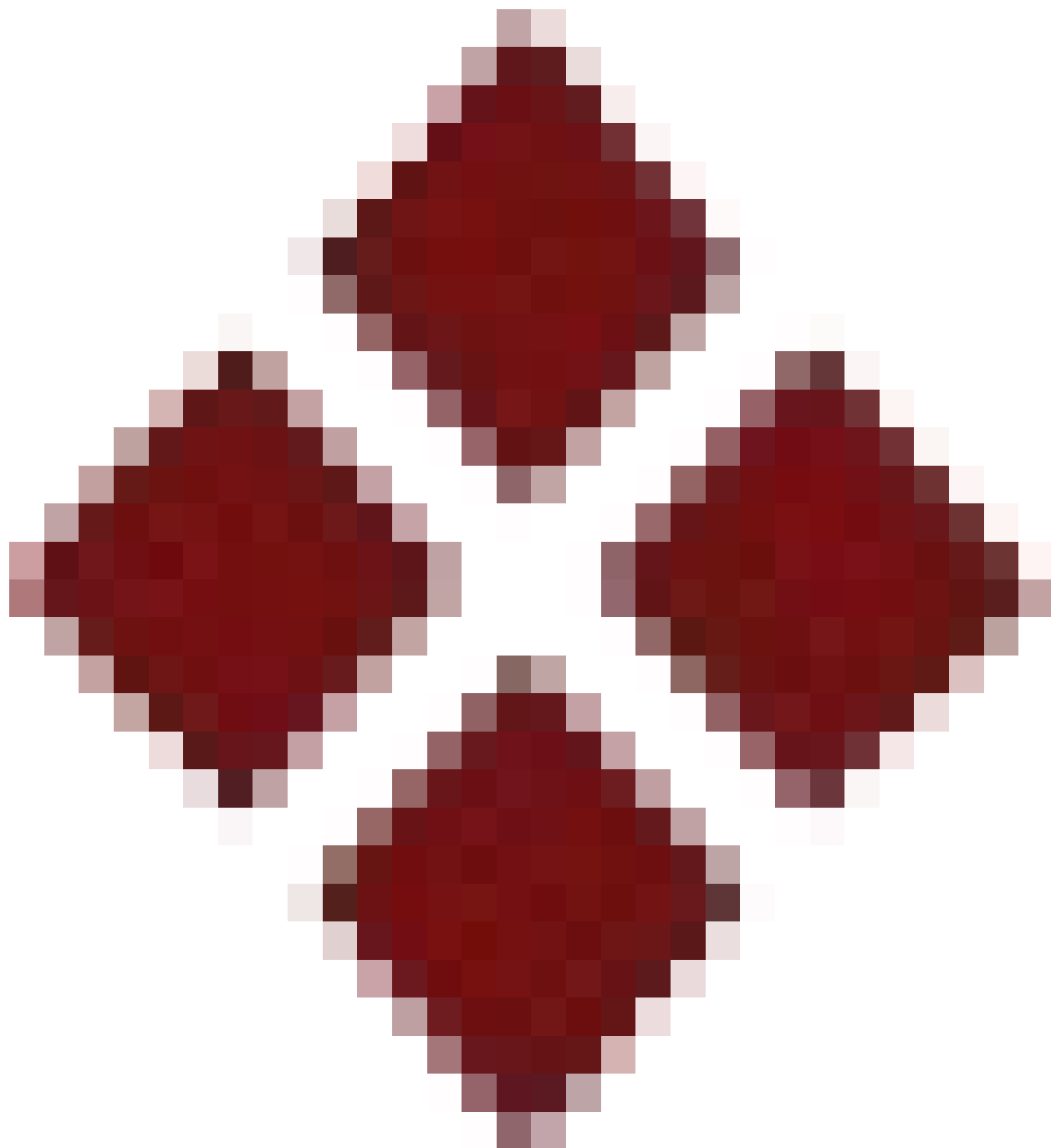
**Did Jesus Promise Salvation to All Who “Believeth on
Him”?**



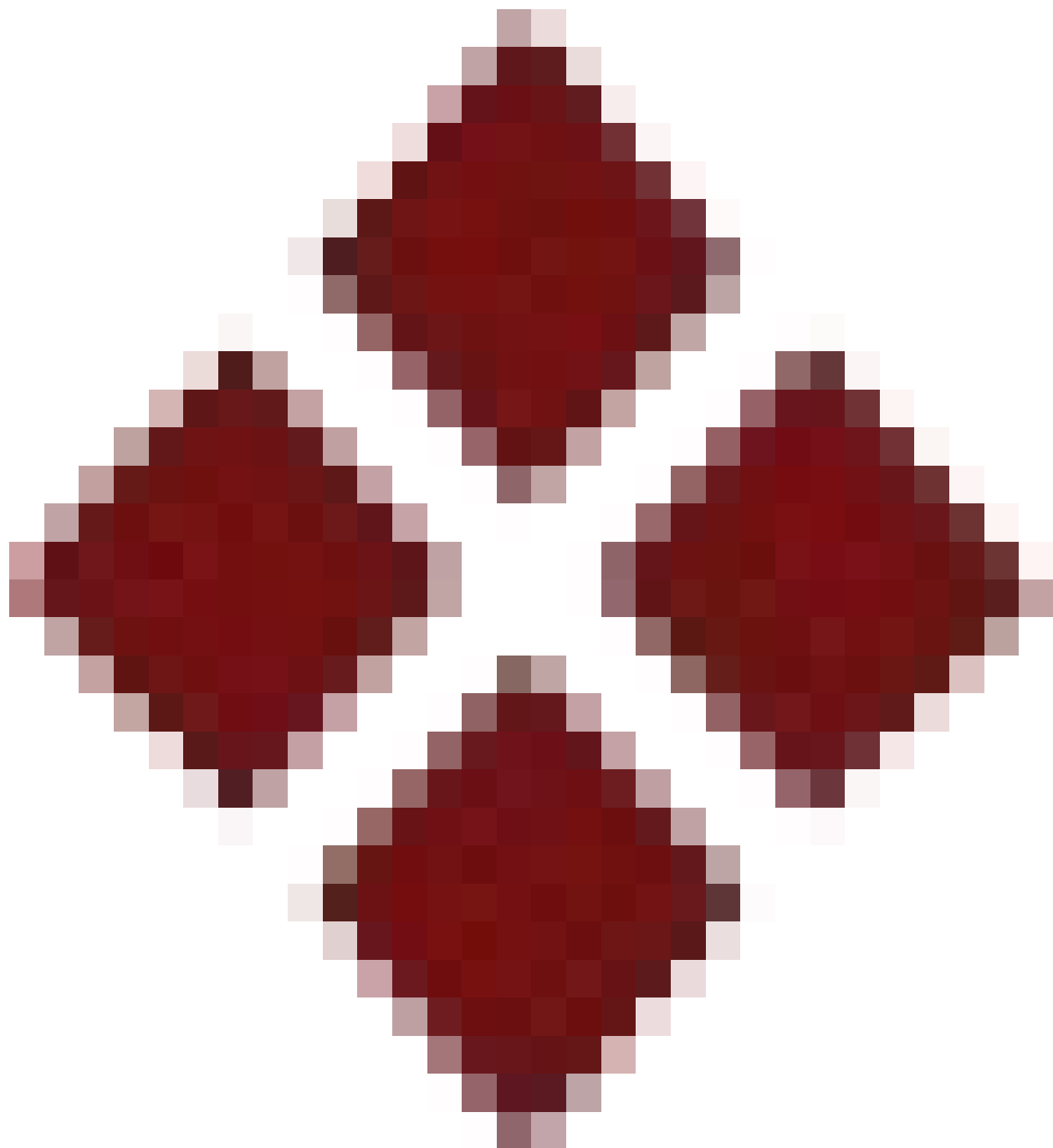
Doubt-Filled Materialistic Persons Cannot Know God or Christ



**“Eat My Flesh”: Nourish One’s Life With the
“Bread” of Christ Consciousness**

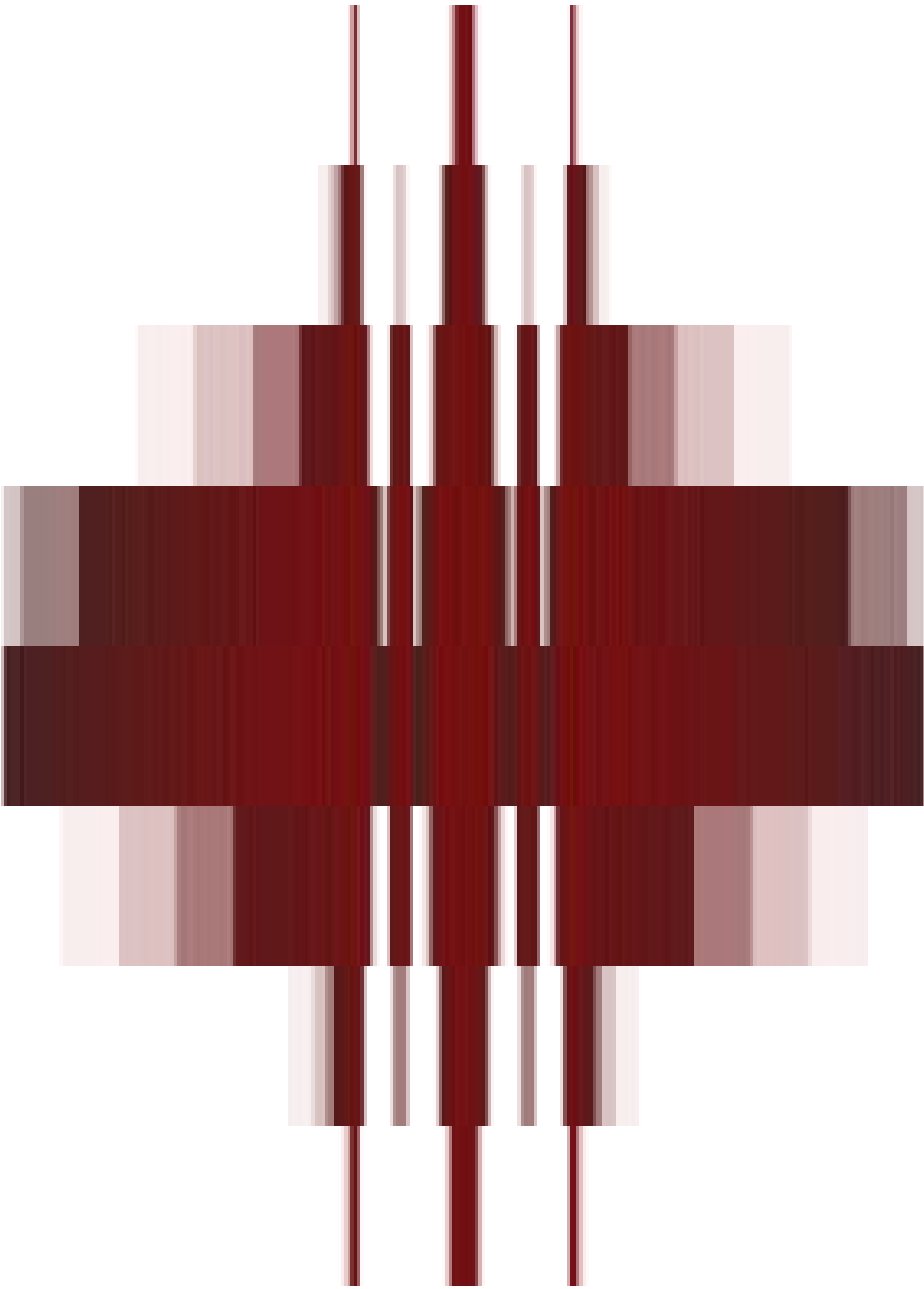


**“Drink My Blood”: Absorb the Immortalizing Cosmic
Energy or Holy Ghost Vibration**



**Jesus Spoke Cryptically; But Rightly Interpreted, His
Words**

“Are Spirit, and They Are Life”



“Any one of you who by deep meditation absorbs in his consciousness the Christ Consciousness (bread) will find his life united to eternal life.”

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The day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but that his disciples were gone away alone; (howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks:)

When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus. And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, “Rabbi, when camest thou hither?”

Jesus answered them and said, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.”

Then said they unto him, “What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?”

Jesus answered and said unto them, “This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom He hath sent.”

They said therefore unto him, “What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? What dost thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’ ”

Then Jesus said unto them, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.”

Then said they unto him, “Lord, evermore give us this bread.”

And Jesus said unto them, “I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

“But I said unto you, that ye also have seen me, and believe not. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me. And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which He hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of Him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.”

The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, “I am the bread which came down from heaven.” And they said, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that he saith, ‘I came down from heaven?’ ”

Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, “Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall be all taught of God.’ Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”

The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?”

Then Jesus said unto them, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this

bread shall live for ever.”

These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum. Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, “This is an hard saying; who can hear it?”

When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, “Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you that believe not.” For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.

And he said, “Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.”

From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, “Will ye also go away?”

Then Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.”

Jesus answered them, “Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?” He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.



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Discourse 43

The True “Bread of Life”



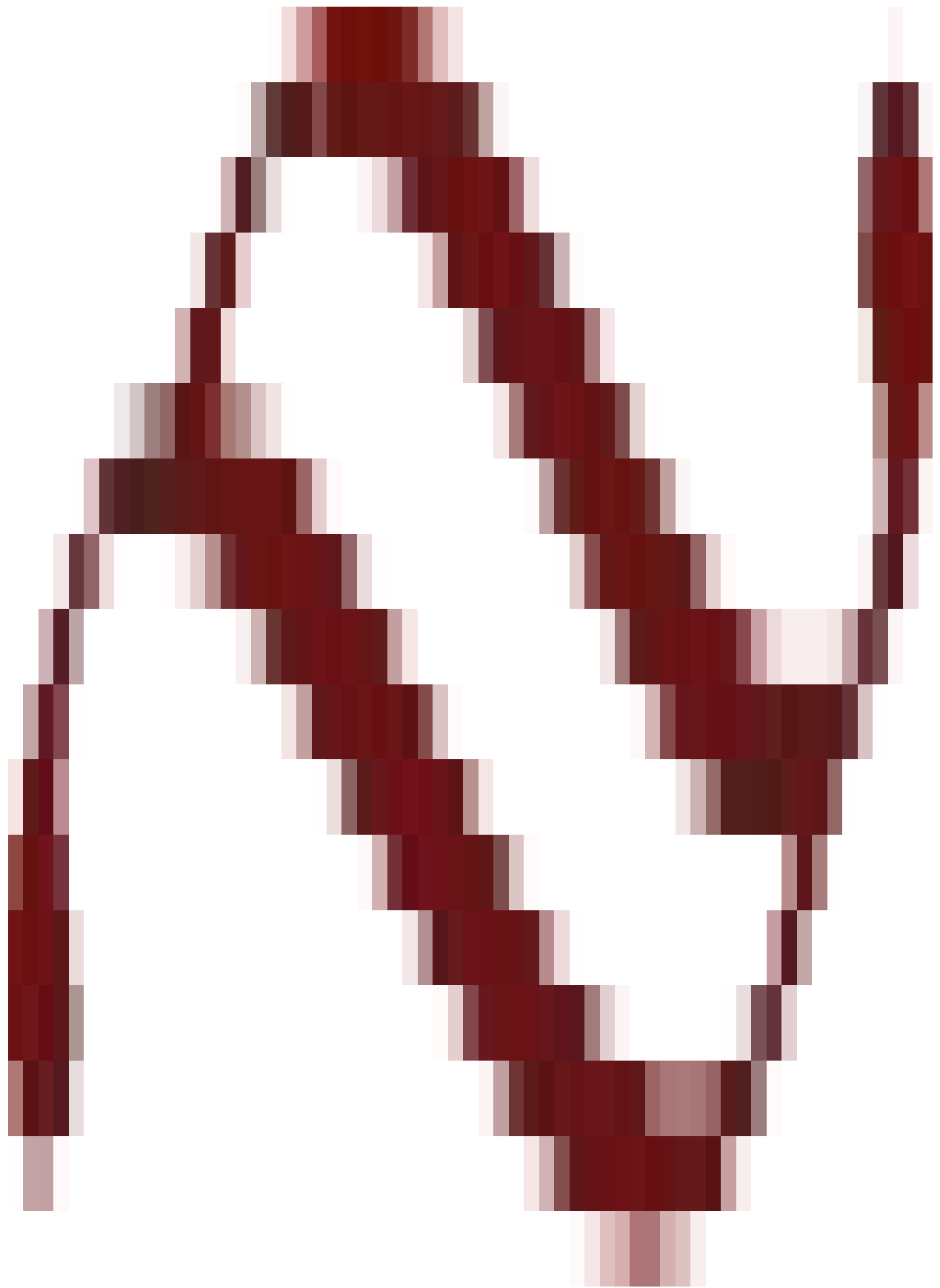
The day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but that his disciples were gone away alone; (howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks:)

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Jesus signified to the people: “I feel your thoughts, that you seek me not because my miracles roused in you a desire to find God through me, but because of your interest in the novelty of quelling your hunger with morsels of the divinely produced loaves. I say unto you that it is foolish to concentrate unduly on the perishable subsistence of a perishable body. Rather seek that sustenance ‘w hich endureth unto everlasting lif e’— the wisdom and ever new bliss of God that, once acquired, forever satisfy the immortal soul and are its imperishable nourishment. The Spirit within the Son of man (my body) can teach you how to obtain that divine food, ‘f or him hath God the Father seale d’: Transcendental God the Father has vested in the Christ Consciousness all secrets and powers of life; and with that Consciousness incarnate in my body (Son of man) He has ordained me to grant the salvation-giving, immortality-bestowing bread of divine wisdom and bliss to all devotees who strive deeply in meditation to contact the

Christ Intelligence in their own souls. This you can learn to do by following the teachings sent through me.”¹



Then said they unto him, “What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?”

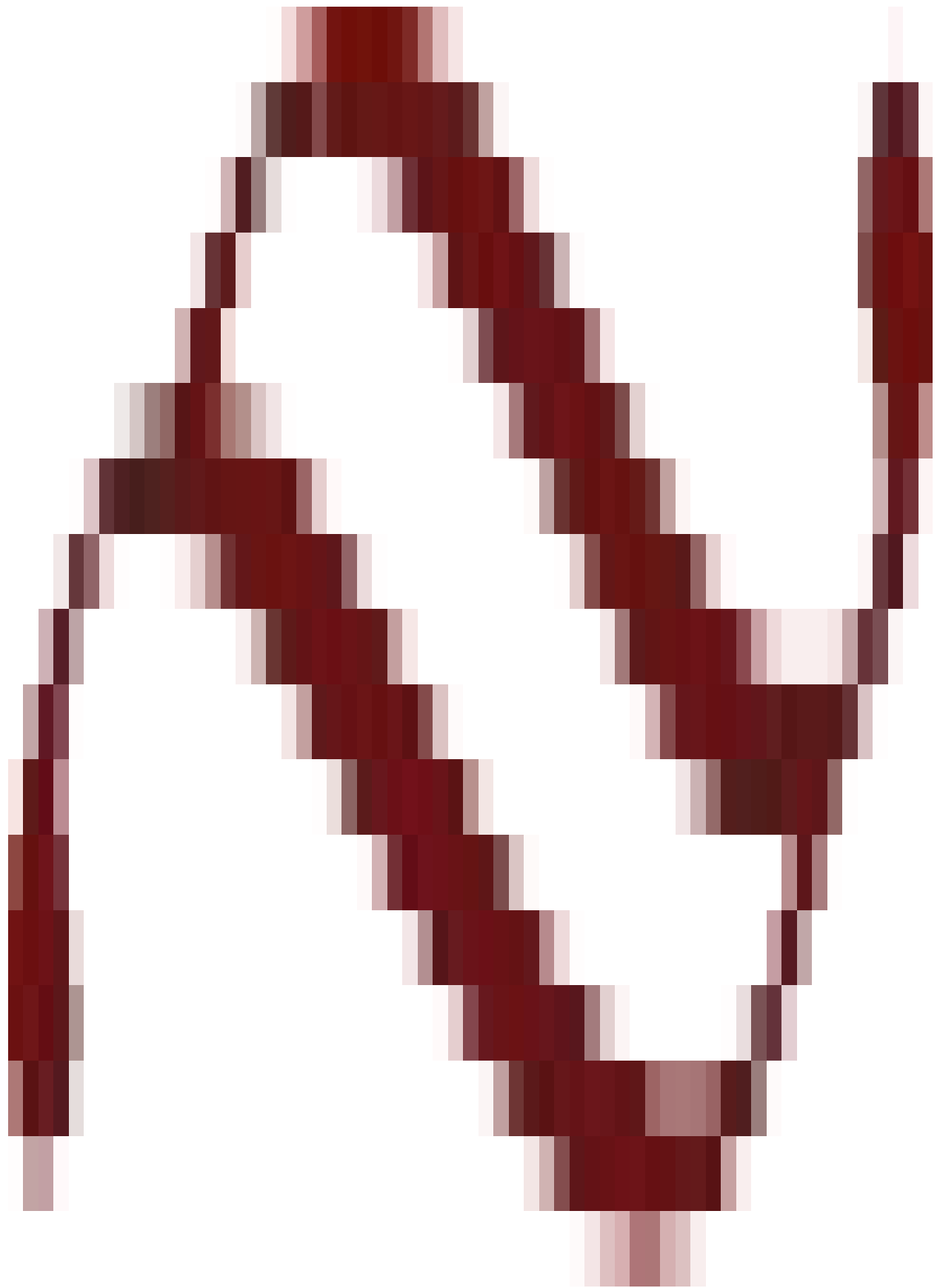
Jesus answered and said unto them, “This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom He hath sent” (John 6:28 – 29).



How one can “work the works of God”

“When there is widespread suffering on earth, God responds to the soul call of His devotees by sending a divine son who by his exemplary spiritual life of expressing Christ Consciousness can teach people to cooperate with His work of salvation in their lives. God’s work in creation is to draw, through evolutionary promptings of the Christ Intelligence, all beings back to conscious oneness with Himself. Therefore anyone who wishes to ‘work the works of God’ should by meditation attune himself with Christ Consciousness manifesting through a God-sent savior; he would then find himself becoming godlike, furthering the will of God in his own life.”

Jesus pointed out that since God had sent him, those who would believe in him and practice his teachings would thereby indeed “work the works of God.” He thus emphasized the divine decree that anyone who wants to work God’s truth in his life must follow a true guru, a divine emissary—one who has striven for and attained oneness with God, and who has been sent by Him to lead others to that liberating consciousness.



They said therefore unto him, “What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? What dost thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”²

Then Jesus said unto them, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world” (John 6:30 – 33).



The Christ Intelligence: “bread from heaven,” the divine sustenance of all creation

In these words, Jesus elaborated on what he meant when he exhorted the people (in verse

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above) to seek that nourishment which would give them everlasting life. By “the bread of God” Jesus signified the Christ Intelligence emanating from God, which is present in Cosmic Energy working the work of creation, giving “life unto the world”—the divine sustenance of all animate and inanimate objects and forces in creation.³ By this analogy, Jesus was telling the people that through his own presence on earth “my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven,” in that he had come to bring to them the way to realize, as did he, that the body is not sustained by ordinary human consciousness but by the infinite Christ Intelligence that is within them, and which gives consciousness and life to all living creatures. Only divine souls such as Jesus, who are sent to earth not merely to uplift people with inspirational teachings but with a distinct mission to manifest the Christ Intelligence and impart it to others, can show devotees the art of expanding their consciousness into that Universal Consciousness.

“By the omniscient insight within me, I declare unto you that Moses gave you spiritual inspiration and divine law, but did not show to the unprepared masses that followed him how to get ‘the bread from heaven,’ the all-redeeming Christ Intelligence inherent in Cosmic Vibratory Energy. It is the transcendental Cosmic Consciousness present beyond vibratory creation who, as a conscious Personality (my Father), sends to you through me contact with Christ Intelligence, which descended to earth from the infinite heavenly region behind the creative vibrations of Cosmic Energy and became manifested in my human body. Anyone who by meditation will be in tune with my life will be in tune with the everlasting source of life, Christ Intelligence, which is the true ‘bread’ or Substance that sustains all creation and all living things.”



Then said they unto him, “Lord, evermore give us this bread.”

And Jesus said unto them, “I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst” (John 6:34 – 35).



Earthly and spiritual hunger satisfied forever by partaking of Christ Consciousness

“The Christ Intelligence and the enlightened I-Am (the divine ego or spiritualized human consciousness) in me are one; thus the Christ Consciousness in me, being the same as the Infinite Christ, is the source of life and consciousness of all living beings. Because I am ever consciously attuned to the Christ Consciousness manifest in my life, any devotee who comes to me with a receptive attitude and who disciplines his life according to my teachings so that he permanently connects his human consciousness with the Christ Consciousness, which is present within me and within his own soul, shall find all the hunger and cravings of his earthly and spiritual desires fulfilled forever. The devotee who occasionally is in tune with the Christ Consciousness, and who believes or is convinced of being able to unite with that Consciousness and the ever new bliss in it, will find that, unlike the ordinary man, he will no longer thirst for the temporary joys of material effects.”

It is to be noted that the two phrases “cometh to me” and “believeth on me” have different significance. “He that cometh” signifies a soul who becomes one with Christ Consciousness, and “he that believeth” signifies one who has only occasional contact with Christ Consciousness in meditation.



“But I said unto you, that ye also have seen me, and believe not.⁴ All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.⁵ For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me. And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which He hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of Him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6:36 – 40).

“But I say unto you that you who have seen only my physical form, and have not felt the Christ Consciousness within it, have not believed as to what I am.



Did Jesus promise salvation to all who “believeth on him”?

“Whatsoever my Father gives to me, that is what shall come to me. And whosoever comes to me, sent by the Father, and who tunes in his devotion and attention with my consciousness, I will never forsake, no matter how sinful or error-stricken he is. He is my brother, even though unknowingly hiding the image of God’s consciousness beneath his temporarily delusion-stricken mind.

“I have come from the heavenly realms of my Father to do the will of Him who sent me. Most people come on earth being compelled by the seeds of actions of their past lives. But in this incarnation as Jesus, I come not only to demonstrate my own final liberation and immortality in Spirit, but to do the will of my Father in helping others to liberate themselves by showing them in my own life the art of contacting Christ Consciousness and Cosmic Consciousness.

“As the Christ Intelligence in all creation is in tune with the will of God the Father existing beyond creation, so is my will tuned with His will. The will of God the Father vibrates within my human consciousness and intimates to me that all the power of Christ Consciousness that was reflected in me during my earth life must be consciously used by me, without my losing any iota of it during the physical crucifixion of my body, and retained after death when I will lift my Christ Consciousness and unite it with God the Father’s Consciousness.

“On the last day, after attaining the final victory over all the karma I have taken on myself in relieving the sins of others, my human consciousness and my resurrected body, having overcome the delusion of crucifixion and being in tune with the ultimate Cosmic Consciousness of God the Father, will also find immortality.

“I will perceive my body not as a part of temporary change, but as an emanation of the Changeless Immortality; and then my body will also dissolve in the Cosmic Consciousness, retaining its individuality, materializing anywhere, anytime, at my will or in response to a real soul-call from a true devotee.

“And this also is the will of God the Father who is the Creator of my body and the Christ Consciousness in it, that every advanced devotee who in the light of his meditation-developed intuition becomes one with the only-reflected (begotten) Son, the Christ Intelligence in creation, and is able to retain that

consciousness of unity (believing in the Christ Consciousness attained in meditation), will be lifted up forever on the last day by my universal Self, the Christ Consciousness, when all his stored-up karmic seeds of action in his physical, astral, and causal bodies will be disentangled from around his soul. That liberated soul will find his life forever one with the Everlasting Life.”

When Jesus speaks of “everyone which seeth the Son,” by the word “seeth” he means the perceptive power of intuition or feeling which can see, hear, smell, taste, or touch without the intermediary of the senses. It is quite evident that all people who saw Jesus Christ during his incarnation on earth were not automatically saved thereby; and there are many Christians today who have yet to be saved by consciously knowing him through intuitive wisdom developed in regular, deep meditation and divine communion in which the Son or Christ Consciousness is realized.

Jesus was here pointing out to devotees that a mere belief in him without living and realizing his truth in life could not possibly rescue them from the implacable tentacles of cosmic delusion.



The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, “I am the bread which came down from heaven.” And they said, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that he saith, ‘I came down from heaven?’”

Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, “Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall be all taught of God.’⁶ Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father” (John 6:41 – 46).

“Do not murmur or vibrate with doubt, thus distorting the divine understanding I am trying to transmit among you. You are too material to understand who I am.



Doubt-filled materialistic persons cannot know God or Christ

“You are perplexed because I said, ‘I am the bread which came down from heaven.’ You all think of your earthly parents as the cause of your human birth, but I know that even though my mortal form was born to the house of Joseph, still my bodily temple and the Christ Intelligence in it came on earth directly through the will of the Father to fulfill a mission of liberating souls.

“Although you are so near my body, you cannot ‘come to me,’ you cannot realize the Christ Intelligence in me. No one who is identified with his mortal consciousness can be one with me in Christ Consciousness. Only devotees who deeply seek God are blessed and are so directed by Him that they find the right teachings and through the upliftment of consciousness in meditation go beyond the conscious, subconscious, and superconscious states to be one with the Christ Consciousness. All who are close to my body have good karma by which the Heavenly Father sent you to me. Every devotee who meets a divine personage has been blessed by the Heavenly Father responding to that devotee’s spiritual cravings.

“Every devotee who by the earnestness of his spiritual desire and who by deep meditation communes daily with Christ Consciousness, will find, on the day when all his seeds of actions of all lives will be burned in the fire of his Christ-wisdom, that I, the Christ Intelligence present in him, will lift his consciousness from the domain of matter to the kingdom of completely liberating Cosmic Consciousness.

“The prophets of old who communed with God wrote that all those who will come near me will be taught the way of communing with God the Father through Christ Intelligence. Every truth-seeking devotee who has heard the Cosmic Vibration in meditation emanating from the Cosmic Consciousness will learn from that voice of God that he has to feel the Christ Consciousness in all creation before he can finally realize the Cosmic Consciousness beyond all creation.

“But I say unto you, no man who is identified with his body and its limited ego can possibly see or be one with God the Father. Only those attain God-realization who have lifted their inner being from consciousness,

subconsciousness, superconsciousness, and Christ Consciousness to Cosmic Consciousness by conscious ecstasy in deep meditation. He who has mastered the art of communing with God the Father by hearing, with the all-perceptive power of his developed soul-intuition, the Cosmic Vibration and feeling the Christ Consciousness in it, is of God and has 'seen' or become one with Cosmic Consciousness, the Father."



“Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world” (John 6:47 – 51).



“Eat my flesh”: Nourish one’s life with the “bread” of Christ Consciousness

“V erily, through oneness with the Cosmic Consciousness of my Father, I declare unto you all, that the devotee who really believes in the Christ Intelligence by communing with that Infinite Christ within himself in daily deep ecstasy finds his life tuned to everlasting life. The spiritualized human consciousness in me (the ‘I -A m’ or divine ego of ‘I am that bread of lif e’) is one with the Christ Consciousness (bread) which sustains the souls and lives of all.

“Your forefathers ate the manna of divine inspiration in the wilderness and still they are dead—that is, their souls have not eternally awakened in wisdom and thus become freed from the human cycle of births and deaths. I know this from my omniscient Christ Consciousness, which knows the history of all souls on earth. The Christ Consciousness (bread), which was hidden behind the heavenly ramparts of Cosmic Energy and is manifest now in my body, can produce deathlessness not only in me, but in all true devotees who can with their human consciousness eat of, or absorb into their consciousness, the omnipresent Infinite Christ.

“I am the living bread which came down from heaven: The I-am human consciousness in me is united with the ever-living Christ Intelligence, which is omnipresent behind the subtle, heavenly screen of the ubiquitous Cosmic Energy and is fully manifested in me. If any devotee continuously nourishes his life with this bread of Christ Intelligence, his life also will be united forever with everlasting life. And the bread, or Christ Intelligence, manifesting as my flesh, or condensed Cosmic Energy, I (the Infinite Christ) will give to the true devotee that he may unite it with the life force in his body (which is the ‘life of the world’) and thereby realize his own immortality.

“For the masses in general, that they might be stirred to seek awakening of the everlasting life in them, I, Jesus, will sacrifice on the cross my flesh of condensed Cosmic Energy, which after three days will be quickened into Christ Consciousness and immortality.”

If a man in a dream foresees that he will be crucified and is then actually crucified in the dream, he realizes on waking that his dream-perceived body, before and after his dream crucifixion, was an inseparable manifestation of his

own consciousness. So when Jesus Christ was foretelling that he would give up his flesh in crucifixion as a symbol to the world that sinful material pleasures of the body must be sacrificed for the attainment of spiritual bliss of the soul and everlasting life, he realized that the Christ Consciousness within his body and the body as well were both everlasting, being nothing but the emanations of one God Consciousness.



The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?”

Then Jesus said unto them, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever”
(John 6:52 – 58).

The people were dismayed: “Is this man advocating cannibalism by offering us his flesh?” Jesus persisted, though their doubting materialistic minds were unable to understand his wisdom concealed within the esoteric metaphor:



“Drink my blood”: Absorb the immortalizing Cosmic Energy or Holy Ghost Vibration

“Unless the devotee eats and absorbs the ‘flesh’ of Christ Consciousness hidden in the Son of man, or human body, and drinks and absorbs his ‘blood’ of vitality-giving Cosmic Energy present also in the body, he cannot feel the everlasting life templed within him.

“Most of you are the living dead, the walking dead; you neither perceive the everlasting life in you nor do you charge your life with the holy vibration of Cosmic Energy and your consciousness with the Christ Consciousness hidden behind your body consciousness.

“Any devotee who by ecstasy can absorb in his human consciousness my Christ Consciousness (flesh) and who can unite his life force in the body with my omnipotent Cosmic Energy (blood), will find his consciousness immortal and his life eternal. For my flesh of Christ Consciousness present in all souls is the real meat or sustenance that can forever satisfy one’s hunger for wisdom—the all-knowingness of divine realization. And my blood of Christ Intelligence – guided Cosmic Energy is the only vitality that can charge human life with immortality, and quench the thirst of all earthly life desires.

“That devotee who by deep ecstatic meditation has absorbed my Christ Consciousness in his human consciousness and recharged his life force with the Christ Consciousness – guided Cosmic Energy is united in his being with Christ Consciousness—‘he dwelleth in me and I in him.’ As the ever-living God the Father (Cosmic Consciousness present beyond vibratory creation) has ‘sent me,’ reflected His everlasting life as the Christ Intelligence (present in all vibratory creation), and the Christ Consciousness ‘lives by the Father,’ Cosmic Consciousness, so also that devotee who absorbs (eateth) the Christ Consciousness finds that his consciousness and life are sustained forever by that Infinite Intelligence, which is equally present in the body of the devotee and my body which is called Jesus.

“This Christ Consciousness is the bread that is hidden behind heavenly Cosmic Energy (‘which came down from heaven’) and is manifest in this body called Jesus. Your fathers who ate the manna of temporary spiritual inspiration are still

bound by delusion and its sequential rebirths and deaths, but any one of you who by deep meditation absorbs in his consciousness the Christ Consciousness (bread) will find his life united to eternal life.”

In the metaphorical words in these Gospel verses, Jesus enunciates very profound truths. To recapitulate, Jesus refers to his flesh as bread, meaning the Christ Consciousness present in all vibratory creation, and to his blood as Cosmic Energy. Christ Consciousness and Cosmic Energy are inseparable, as Christ Consciousness is the reflection in creation of Cosmic Consciousness (which is beyond creation) manifested as Cosmic Energy or vibratory creation.

God the Father and Cosmic Consciousness are synonymous; Christ the Son and Christ Consciousness are one and the same. God the Father emanated from Him His son, Christ Intelligence, and Cosmic Energy, the Holy Ghost. As a son is conceived with the dual instrumentality of the father and the mother, so Christ Intelligence would not exist without the dual instrumentality of God the Father and Cosmic Energy (Holy Ghost or Cosmic Mother Nature). With God the Father remaining transcendent beyond creation, Christ Intelligence, the bread or flesh, and the Cosmic Energy or blood, being inseparably together in creation, work to manifest the different forms extant in the universal spectacle.

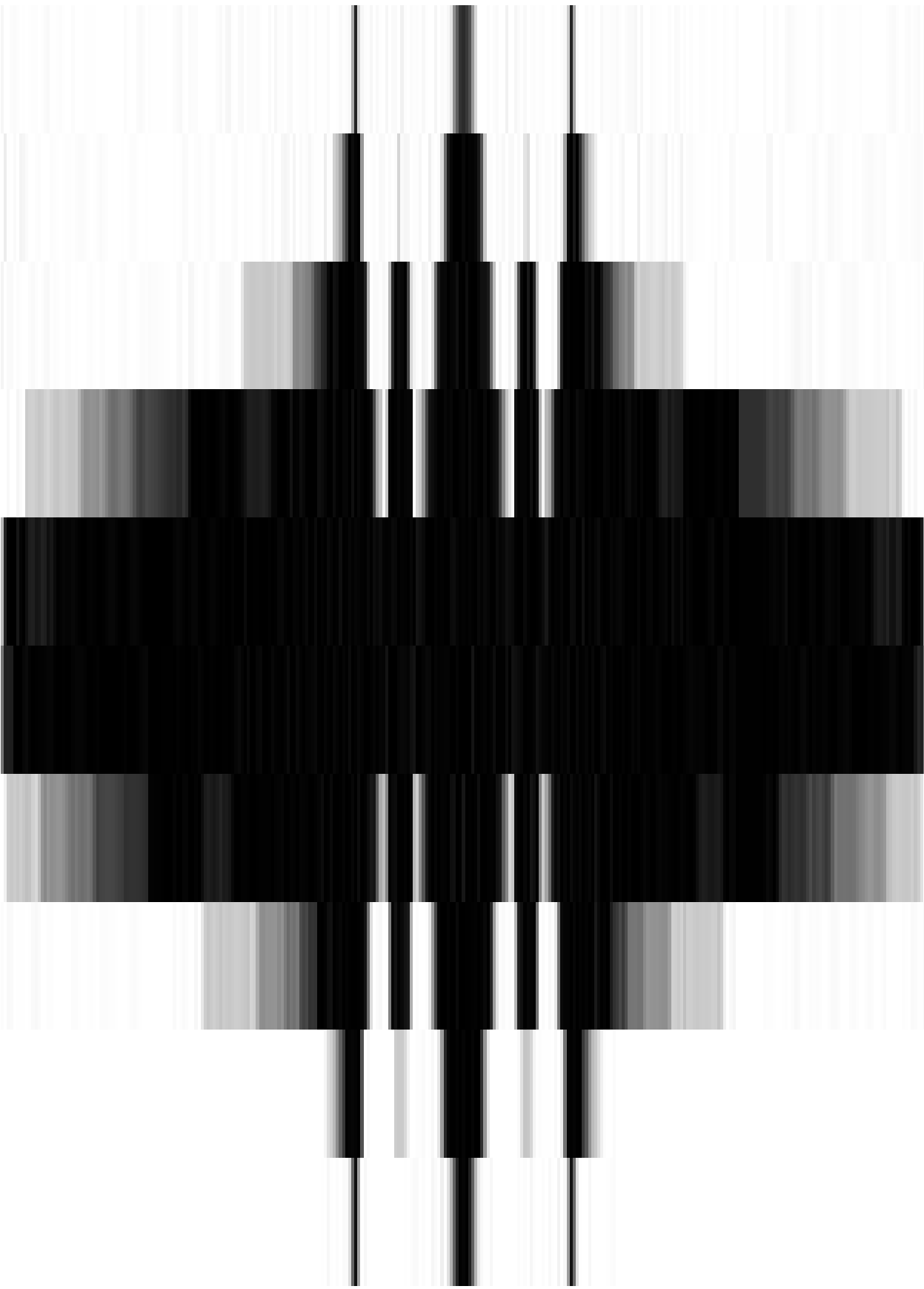
Jesus Christ speaks of the bread and the flesh as one and the same thing. The flesh of the Son of man refers to the Christ Consciousness present in the body of Jesus as well as in the body of any individual. “Eateth my flesh” refers to the act of absorbing the Christ Consciousness into one’s human consciousness. “Drinketh my blood” refers to the Cosmic Energy (blood) to be consciously united with the bodily life force—both of which are present in the human body and can be united by wisdom, divine realization—thus recharging the life in the body with the Holy Ghost Vibration of Cosmic Energy.

The sacramental rites in Christian churches, in which people partake of blessed wine as the blood of Jesus Christ and blessed bread as his flesh, are symbolical. Sainly souls have transcended the symbology and experienced in ecstasy the true receiving of Christ communion. Sincere devotees should learn the technique of interiorizing the consciousness in meditation for actual realization of the Christ Consciousness in their consciousness.⁷



These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum. Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, "This is an hard saying; who can hear it?"

When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, "Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you that believe not." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him (John 6:59 – 64).



Jesus spoke cryptically, but rightly interpreted his words “are spirit, and they are life”

In much of the text recorded in the Gospel of John, Jesus conveys challengingly recondite truths in such cryptic analogies and metaphors that modern-day theologians who interpret scripture for the masses find themselves not far removed from the disputatious learned men of Jesus' time! Sometimes Jesus confounded even his disciples; save for a few: “I am amazed that you who have followed me thus far still do not understand with intuitive receptivity the priceless wisdom I give to you; rather you are murmuring your misunderstanding among yourselves. You doubt my words and wonder at my sayings, but how much more astonished you would be if you were to see my body, the Son of man, go back to the Christ Consciousness whence it came?”

The consciousness of Jesus was tuned already with Christ Consciousness; and here Jesus alludes obliquely to his foreknowledge that his body, though visibly apart from Christ Consciousness, but being an emanation of that Consciousness, would consciously merge in it when the proper moment arrived.

Jesus tells his doubting disciples that if they wonder at his amazing sayings, they would have cause to be wholly astonished when they would behold his body after crucifixion return to life and be received by Heavenly Christ Consciousness. Jesus thereby promised his doubting disciples a demonstration of spirit and life contained in the truth of his words.

“When you concentrate on the Spirit, you understand that the Infinite Immortality can enliven your temporary life with eternal life. It is the flesh consciousness, the doubting material consciousness within you, that will yield you no profit, no lasting happiness. It is spiritual understanding that can quickly lead you to eternal emancipation.

“The words of wisdom I speak unto you ‘are spirit, and they are life,’ they are charged with the Cosmic Consciousness of the Spirit and can give life to the spiritually dead, as are some of you. I know those among you who believe not that the universal panacea for human suffering lies hidden behind the words of my wisdom, if they are truly applied and fully realized.”

When Jesus speaks of his words being “spirit and life,” he implies the truth that

every word has two aspects—the consciousness contained in it and the energy it produces. When a psychologically sick man is repentant and hears the word “peace” from a saintly individual, he becomes saturated with the consciousness of peace and with mental encouragement from an infusion of life-giving energy. Toward this end, Jesus made it clear to his disciples that if they were in tune with him they would feel the Christ-wisdom of Spirit behind his words and the life-giving energy contained in them.

The words of Jesus were not bookish dissertations, but emanated directly from the wisdom fountain of Cosmic Consciousness and the life-sustaining Christ Consciousness – guided Cosmic Energy. The wise and the spiritually inclined retire every day from the cacophonous busy-ness of thoughts and secrete themselves in the caves of silence deep in the clefts of contemplation. There the true devotee drinks from the fountain of Spirit and Life. Great masters who are tuned with Christ Consciousness give forth their teachings, like Christ, charged with the Cosmic Consciousness of Spirit and Cosmic Life.

Owing to his all-seeing wisdom, which could trace the law of cause and effect governing the actions of any individual, Jesus knew from the beginning who among his followers believed in him and who would be likely to forsake him:

And he said, “Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father” (John 6:65).

“From my omniscient consciousness I know those of you who have stored up good karma from your past good actions and have earned the divine grace of my Father by which you have been drawn to me and will be actuated to follow me faithfully. I know also those with the inclinations of bad karma who will leave me. No materially minded man can reach and be in tune with the Christ Consciousness within me unless by his devotion he has appealed to the Supreme God, the Father.”

Thus Jesus pointed out to his disciples that it was no small achievement for one to recognize and be able to follow the Christ Consciousness in him; it was a blessing earned by that individual who had gained previous good karma and the

cooperation of the Cosmic Law, and the grace of God.



From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, “Will ye also go away?”

Then Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.”⁸

Jesus answered them, “Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?” He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve (John 6:66 – 71).

Jesus was not in doubt about his chosen twelve disciples, but he respected their free will and reminded them that from the freedom of their hearts they must choose to remain with him.

Devotees ordain the happenings of their lives according to prenatal and postnatal seeds of action (karma); therefore, when Jesus said, “Have not I chosen you twelve (according to your karma) and one of you is a devil?” he did not speak of this as an inevitable arbitrary ordinance of God. He told this from his intimate knowledge of the inner life of each of his twelve disciples.

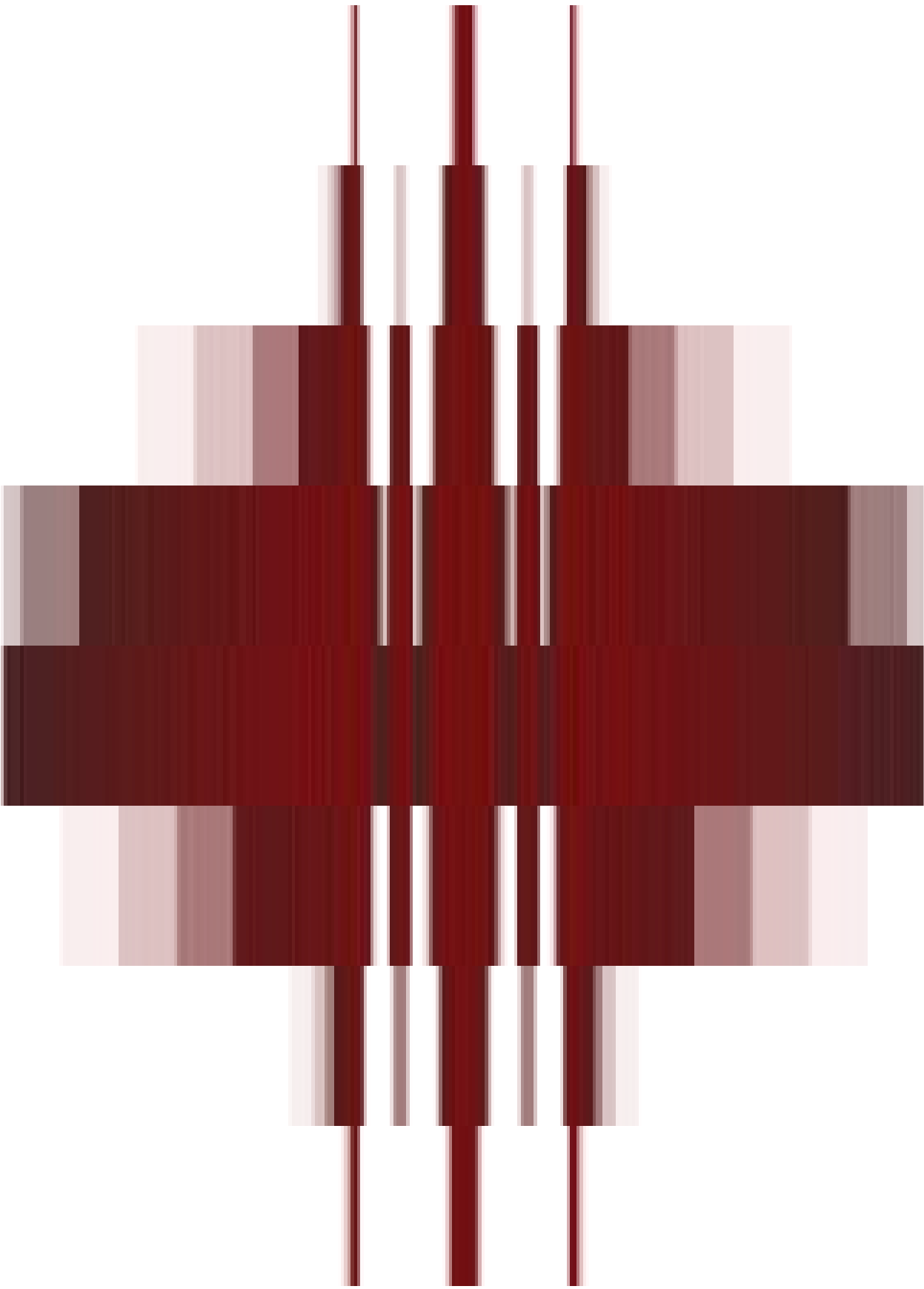
If Jesus were sure that all his twelve disciples were prisoners of destiny and that eleven were ordained to remain faithful to him, he would not have asked: “Will ye also go away?” Jesus knew that the disciples, though influenced by karma and cosmic law, still had free will to be with him or to forsake him. In fact, Jesus predicted his betrayal at the hands of Judas in order to warn him, that he might correct his karmic predisposition and refrain from doing the evil act.



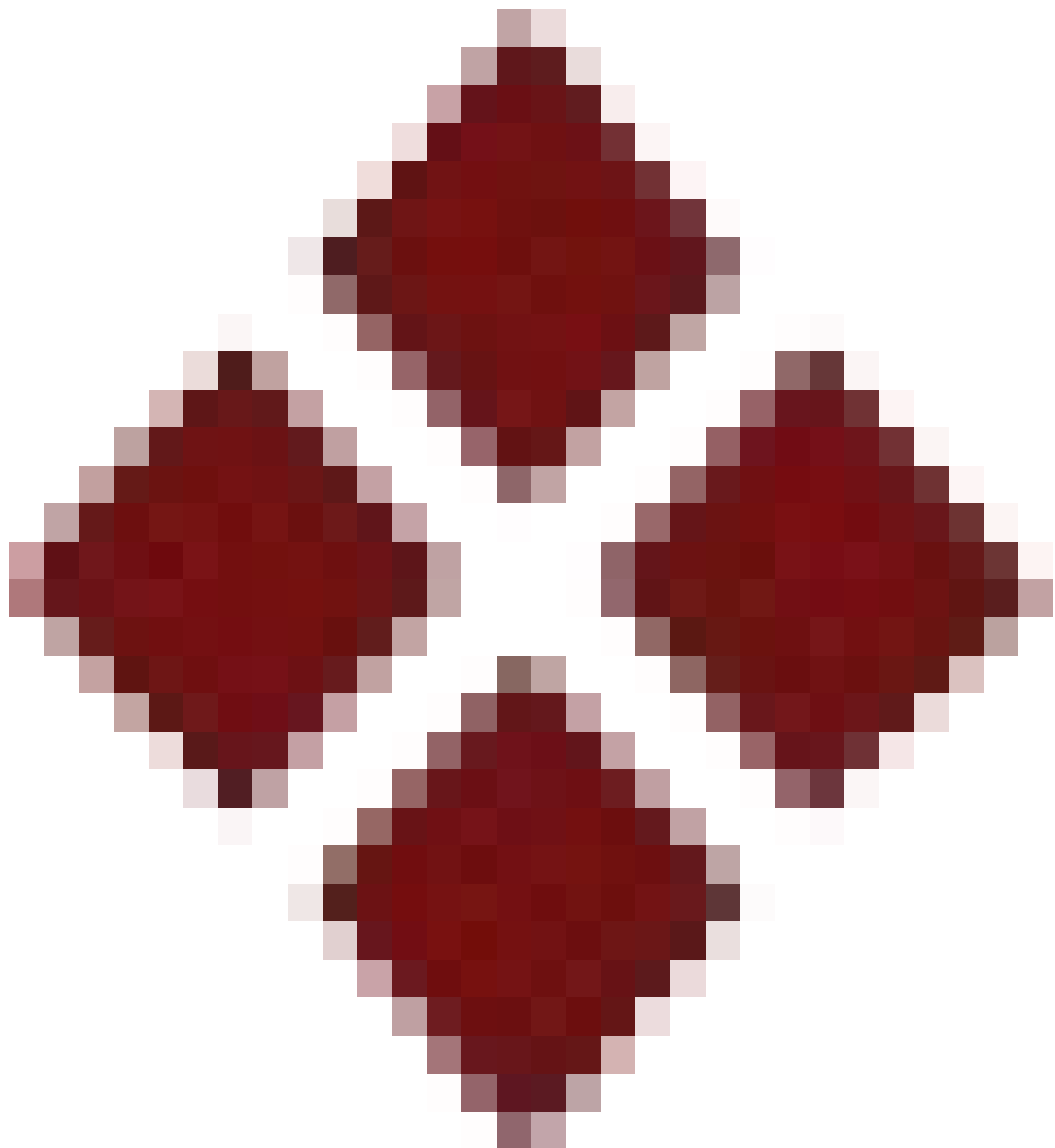
Discourse 44

“The Signs of the Times”

Jesus’ Works and Words in Testimony of His Special Dispensation



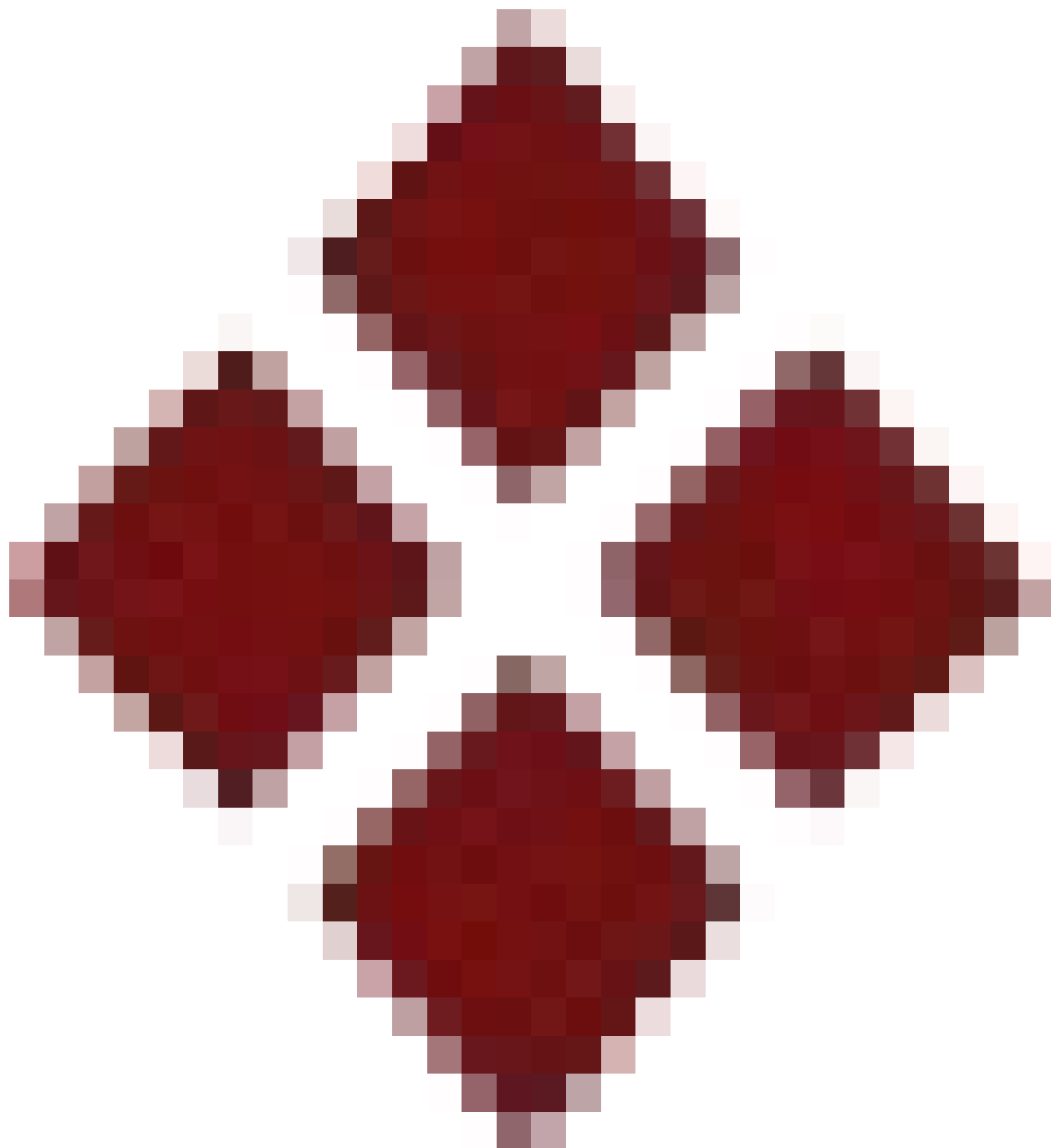
Hypocrisy of Observing External Rites While Ignoring the Spirit of Divine Principles



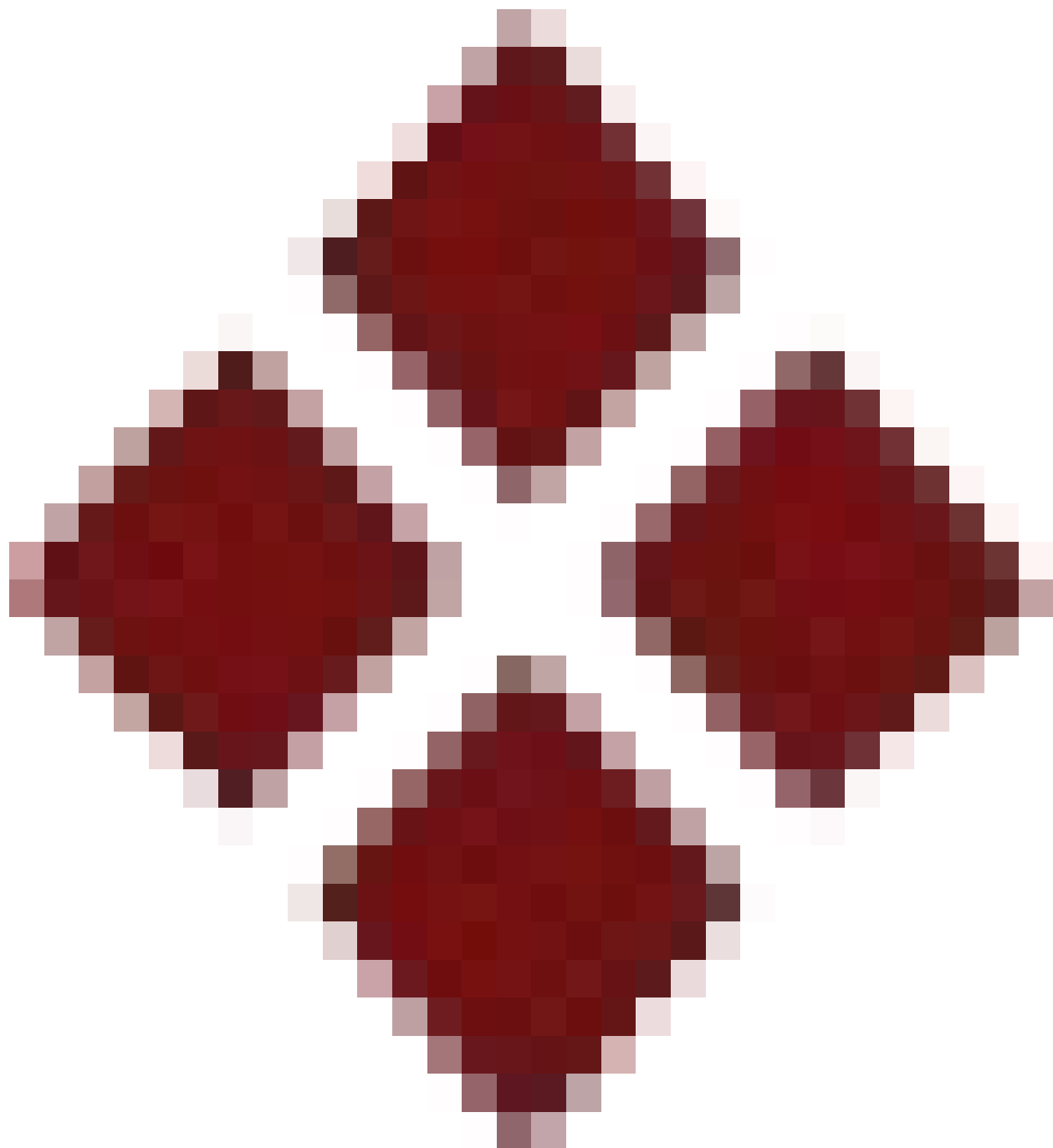
**Inner Purity, Not Outer Observances, Are the Gauge
of One's Spirituality**



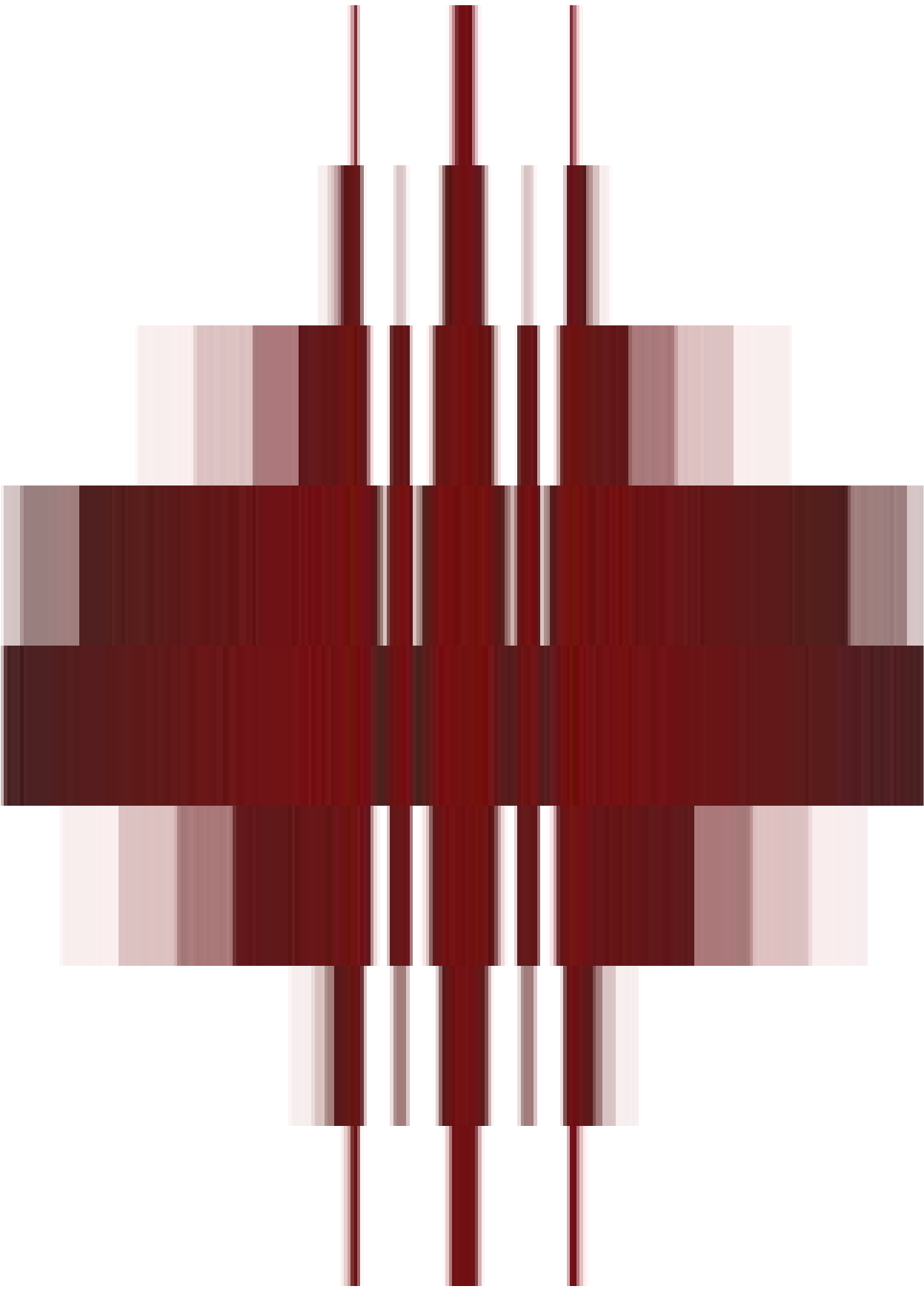
Why Jesus and Patanjali Warned Against Egoistic Likes and Dislikes



Jesus' Special Dispensation Was to Minister to the Israelites; Thence It Was Destined to Spread to All



**Masters Use Various Means of Projecting the Life
Force for Transmission of Divine Power**



“You cannot read in my life the obvious signs of the times, the divine message given to man in this present age...and cannot recognize the divine sign already given to you, evidenced in the miraculous works of God performed through me.”

■

Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, “Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they wash not their hands when they eat bread.”

But he answered and said unto them, “Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? For God commanded, saying, ‘Honour thy father and mother’: and, ‘He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death.’ But ye say, ‘Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, “It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me”; and honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free.’ Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.

“Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, ‘This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honoureth Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me. But in vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.’ ”

And he called the multitude, and said unto them, “Hear, and understand: Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.”

Then came his disciples, and said unto him, “Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?”

But he answered and said, “Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.”

Then answered Peter and said unto him, “Declare unto us this parable.”

And Jesus said, “Are ye also yet without understanding? Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man.

“For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but

to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.”

Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, “Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.” But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, “Send her away; for she crieth after us.” But he answered and said, “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

Then came she and worshipped him, saying, “Lord, help me.”

But he answered and said, “It is not meet to take the children’s bread, and to cast it to dogs.”

And she said, “Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.”

Then Jesus answered and said unto her, “O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt.” And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

—Matthew 15:1 – 28

And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, he came unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coast of Decapolis. And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to put his hand upon him.

And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue; and looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, “Ephphatha,” that is, “Be opened.” And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain.

And he charged them that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it; and were beyond

measure astonished, saying, "He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak."

—Mark 7:31 – 37

And Jesus departed from thence, and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee; and went up into a mountain, and sat down there. And great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet; and he healed them: Insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: and they glorified the God of Israel.

Then Jesus called his disciples unto him, and said, "I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way."

And his disciples say unto him, "Whence should we have so much bread in the wilderness, as to fill so great a multitude?"

And Jesus saith unto them, "How many loaves have ye?" And they said, "Seven, and a few little fishes." And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground.

And he took the seven loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks, and brake them, and gave to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets full. And they that did eat were four thousand men, beside women and children.

And he sent away the multitude, and took ship, and came into the coasts of Magdala. The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven.

He answered and said unto them, "When it is evening, ye say, 'It will be fair weather: for the sky is red.' And in the morning, 'It will be foul weather today:

for the sky is red and lowering.’ O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times? A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah.” And he left them, and departed.

And when his disciples were come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. Then Jesus said unto them, “Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.” And they reasoned among themselves, saying, “It is because we have taken no bread.”

Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, “O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread? Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees?”

Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

—Matthew 15:29 – 16:12

And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him. And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought. And he looked up, and said, “I see men as trees, walking.”

After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly. And he sent him away to his house, saying, “Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town.”

—Mark 8:22 – 26



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Discourse 44

“The Signs of the Times”

Jesus’ Works and Words in Testimony of His Special Dispensation



Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, “Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread.”

But he answered and said unto them, “Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? For God commanded, saying, ‘Honour thy father and mother’: and, ‘He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death.’ But ye say, ‘Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, “It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me”; and honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free.’ Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.

“Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, ‘This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honoureth Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me. But in vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men’” (Matthew 15:1 – 9).¹

Parallel reference:

Then came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem. And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen, hands, they found fault. For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brasen vessels, and of tables.

Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, “Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands?”

He answered and said unto them, “Well hath Isaiah prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, ‘This people honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. Howbeit in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.’ For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.”

And he said unto them, “Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. For Moses said, ‘Honour thy father and thy mother’; and, ‘Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death’: But ye say, ‘If a man shall say to his father or mother, “It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me”; he shall be free.’ And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye (Mark 7:1 – 13).



Hypocrisy of observing external rites while ignoring the spirit of divine principles

A common fault in the structure of religion, East and West, is the subordination of the spirit of divine principles by the expediency of man-made traditions of rules and rites. Traditionalists among the ancient Hebrews enlarged their code governing offerings to God, corban, to permit a man who promised to give his earthly goods to the service of the temple to thereby disavow his duty to support his parents, even though he might have made the promise of this gift to God in a fit of anger against his parents or with otherwise wicked or selfish intentions. By merely declaring “ Corban ” regarding any of his material property, he could become free from any inconvenient obligation to his parents that was otherwise demanded by law, albeit they might be destitute and his withheld goods might never be utilized for the temple. ² Resorting to this perversion of corban law made by man amounted to disobedience to the fifth commandment of God. Jesus by his criticism pointed out how the adoption of this degenerate ceremonial law had led to the violation of divine law:

“Tell me, why are you so conscientious in upholding your localized customs and yet flaunt God’s commandments? Which is a greater sin—to ignore tradition and yet be faithful to God’s commandments, or to denigrate God’s commandments for your own useful purposes under the auspices of religious custom? You know full well that in order outwardly to appear holy you engage in your elaborate traditions and utterly reject the commandments of God when an adaptation is more self-serving.

“God vibrated His law and wish through prophet Moses’ intuition: ‘Honor your father and mother (with the devotion of your heart, as they are the divine instruments of your creation)’; and, ‘he that curseth (he who uses vile language or thinks evil thoughts or commits abuses against) father or mother, let him die the death’³—that is, let him be remorseful with the agony as intense as death, and let him change himself and his consciousness even as one is changed in death.”⁴

Parents are the physical instruments of God who manifests on earth as the parental love that creates and protects the child. Therefore, an offspring who blasphemes against his parents blasphemes against God. Jesus reviled the

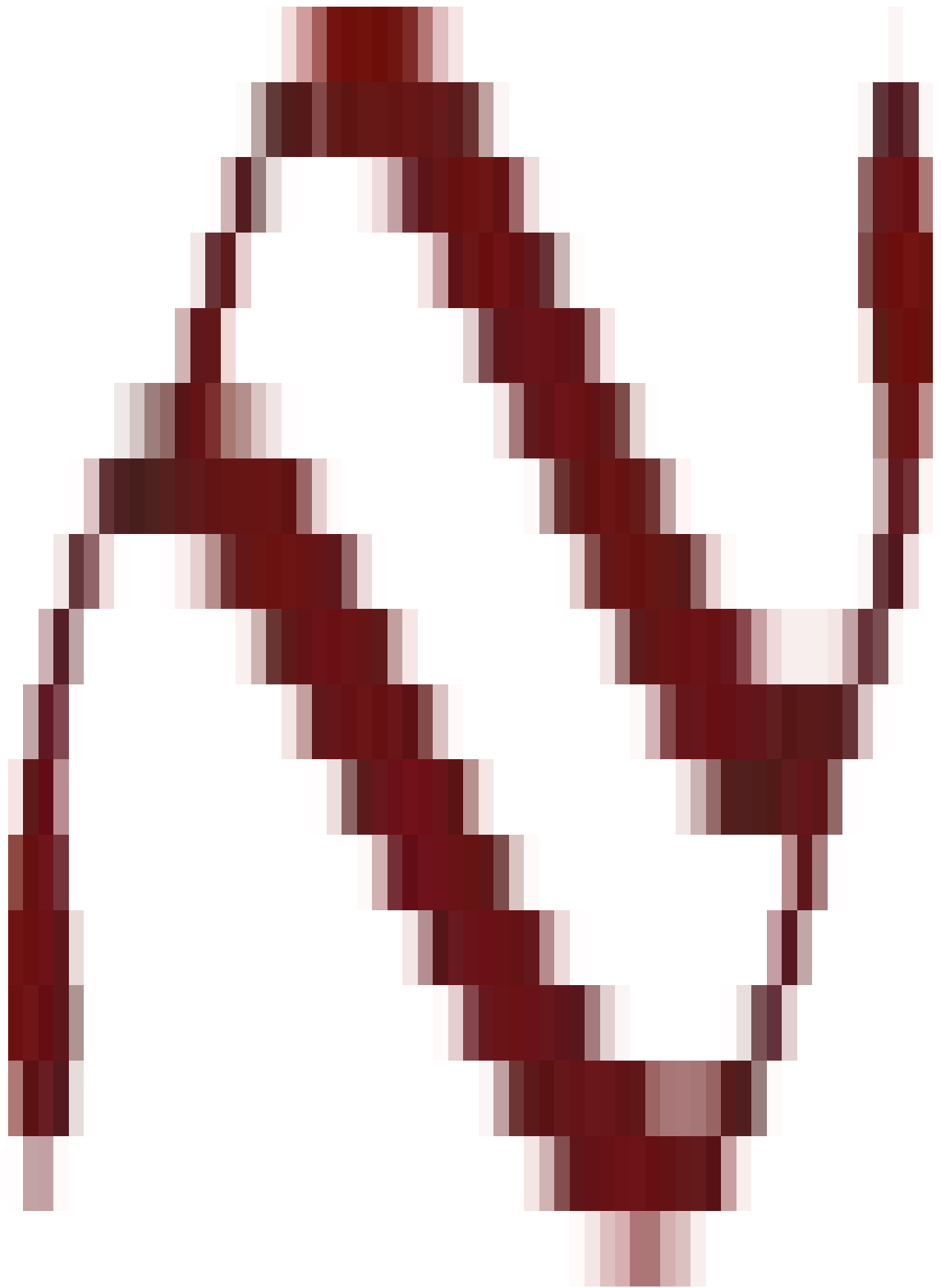
Pharisees for having made a law that enabled a man to be free from his parental obligations, even in instances detrimental to them.

“O ye hypocrites, who are outwardly holy and inwardly wicked, how fittingly Isaiah prophesied about you after feeling these truths from his consciousness of the intelligent cosmic vibration of God’s thoughts. Indeed he prophesied correctly about the nature of those who come to masters with sweet language and respectful utterances but with hearts sunk deep in the depths of insincerity. In vain do such men worship God, since they ‘teach for doctrines the commandments of men’ in preference to the commandments of God.

“You have laid aside at your convenience the laws of God for perfect living as revealed through the prophets and have clung to useless traditions of men, such as your elaborate rituals of hand-washing, for the nonobservance of which you scorn my disciples.⁵ It is better that you should cleanse your inner selves by following God’s purifying laws of righteousness as revealed through the seers rather than indulging so fervently in the external pseudopurification traditional customs that produce no lasting spiritual result.”

Observance of man-made customs does not in itself bring one closer to God. One should observe normal hygiene, moral behavior, and a reverent decorum in worship. But when setting aside time for God, elaborate preparations for worship by punctilious attention to prescribed rules and preliminary rituals may leave little or no time, or desire, for the quiet interiorization of deep meditation and divine communion. External observances are intended to engage the mind so that it is cleansed of worldly thoughts. But meditation itself is the true purifier of man’s being that makes his consciousness receptive to divine contact.

“Outward ritual cannot destroy ignorance, because they are not mutually contradictory,” wrote Swami Shankara. “Realized knowledge alone destroys ignorance.”⁶



And he called the multitude, and said unto them, “Hear, and understand: Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man” (Matthew 15:10 – 11).

Parallel reference:

And when he had called all the people unto him, he said unto them, “Hearken unto me every one of you, and understand: There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear” (Mark 7:14 – 16).

“Lend me your attention, all of you, and by tuning your attention with the God-wisdom in me try to understand: Neither a person’s omission of some outer man-made custom nor any vile condition in which he lives has inherent power to taint his inner being. It is the experiences and thoughts that are allowed to gain foothold in one’s mind and feelings and saturate his consciousness with evil and then come forth as evil desires and actions that desecrate him. If any man has ears of understanding, let him hear and understand.”



Inner purity, not outer observances, are the gauge of one's spirituality

Jesus defends the action of his disciples of partaking of food without observing the ritual washing of hands as having no ill effect on the purity of their hearts and souls. The Pharisees and scribes who religiously practiced outward customs without corresponding inner efforts at godliness gained nothing more than a hypocritical pretense of spirituality.

Jesus sought to convey the understanding that no matter what one's outer environment, good or bad, "nothing from without a man" affects him as surely as the good or bad in his own heart. A strongly virtuous person in a bad environment usually remains good, and an entrenched wicked person in a good environment is likely to remain evil.

This does not mean that environment has no influence on man; its effect requires repeated remedial acts of will. Nevertheless, Jesus emphasizes that it is the inner environment of man that is of primary importance. My master Swami Sri Yukteswarji used to remind me: "Always be watchful of your company—the company of your friends and the company of your thoughts." A person who hosts evil thoughts is in evil company. But even if one is surrounded by ungodly associates yet holds the mind to good and positive thoughts, that evil influence is powerless to affect him.

Thus one's primary aim should be to establish virtue firmly within his heart and mind: To think and feel goodness is a powerful force that will attract a good environment and produce a natural, unpracticed spiritual behavior. By contrast, one whose emphasis is on adherence to prescribed outer customs, with no care taken to root out evil from his inner self, remains encircled by his company of evil thoughts and propensities, inevitably unable to thwart their insistence to express outwardly their deleterious nature—"the things which come out of him...that defile the man."

A person should be judged not by his actions alone, but according to the springs or motives of his actions. It is the evil motive of a man that actuates the iniquity coming out of him, nothing else. Of course, there are some evils committed by children through imitation, or by the mentally ill devoid of any power of reason, in which case they cannot be held responsible. But when a child or an adult does

evil through his own innate motivation or desire, he is defiled thereby and that action portends an increasingly evil disposition.



Then came his disciples, and said unto him, “Knoweth thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?”

But he answered and said, “Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: They be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch” (Matthew 15:12 – 14).⁷

Jesus answered indignation with indignation. The obtuseness of the Pharisees made them incapable of accepting the truth of his words. “Every ‘p lan t’ of imperfect human rule of conduct that man has expediently cultivated in the soil of tradition will in time be found to be a weed, useless to mankind; hence it shall be destroyed by the Cosmic Law. All God-made eternal rules of life that the prophets have declared through their cosmic consciousness as necessary to mankind will endure to the end. Leave the Pharisees and their acolytes in their much-loved attachment to their self-created darkness. If the spiritually blind lead people who are also blind with ignorance, together they must fall into the ditch of error with its consequential miseries.”



Then answered Peter and said unto him, “Declare unto us this parable.”

And Jesus said, “Are ye also yet without understanding? Do not ye yet understand that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man.

“For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man” (Matthew 15:15 – 20).

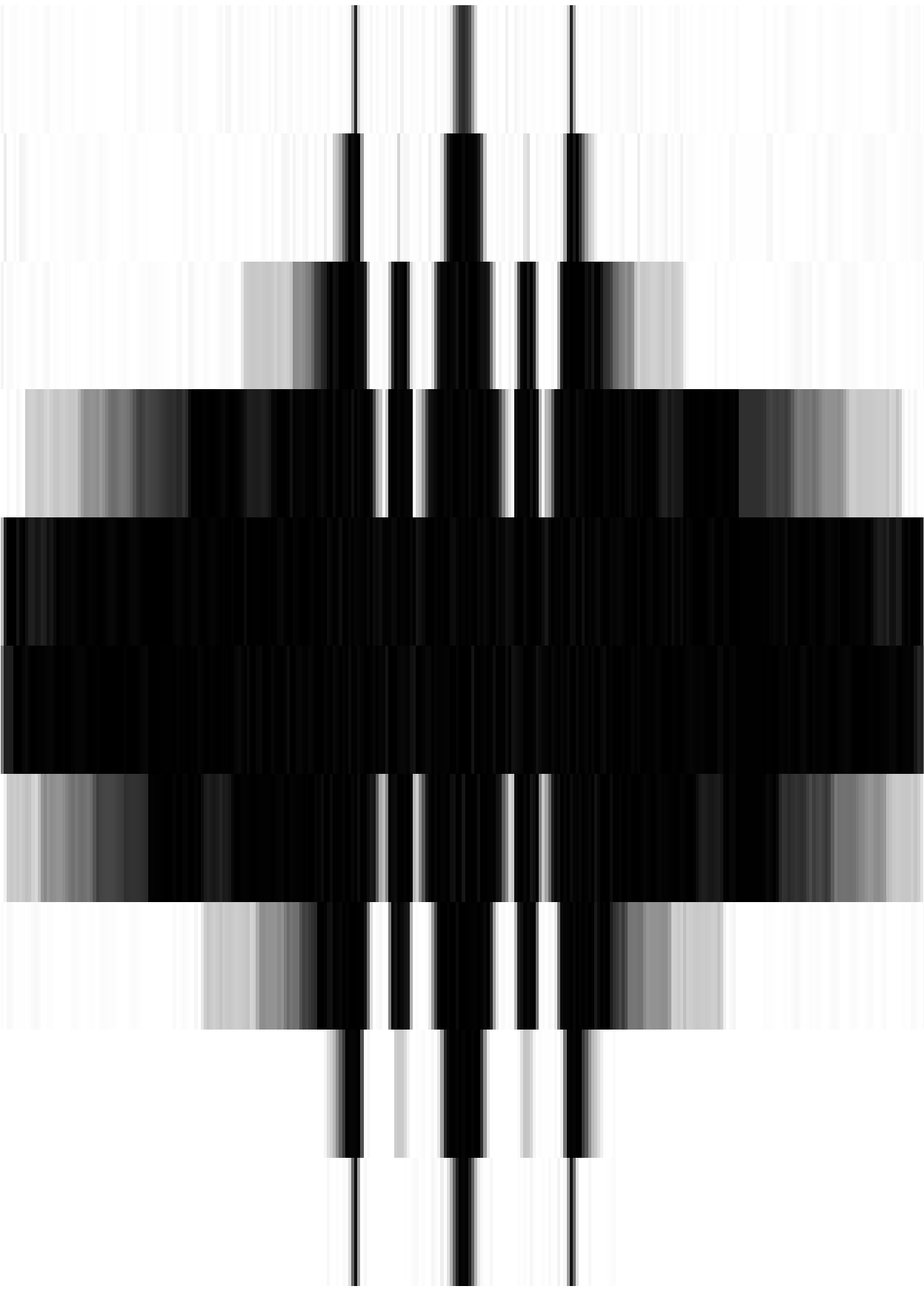
Parallel reference:

And when he was entered into the house from the people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable.

And he saith unto them, “Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him; Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats?” And he said, “That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man” (Mark 7:17 – 23).

“O my true disciples, are you also without divine understanding? Do you not

comprehend that just as ingested food affects only the body, not the inner being of man, so external outward customs and rites, observed or nonobserved, neither exalt nor spoil one's spirit? His character is revealed by what proceeds from the feelings he nurtures in his heart."



Why Jesus and Patanjali warned against egoistic likes and dislikes

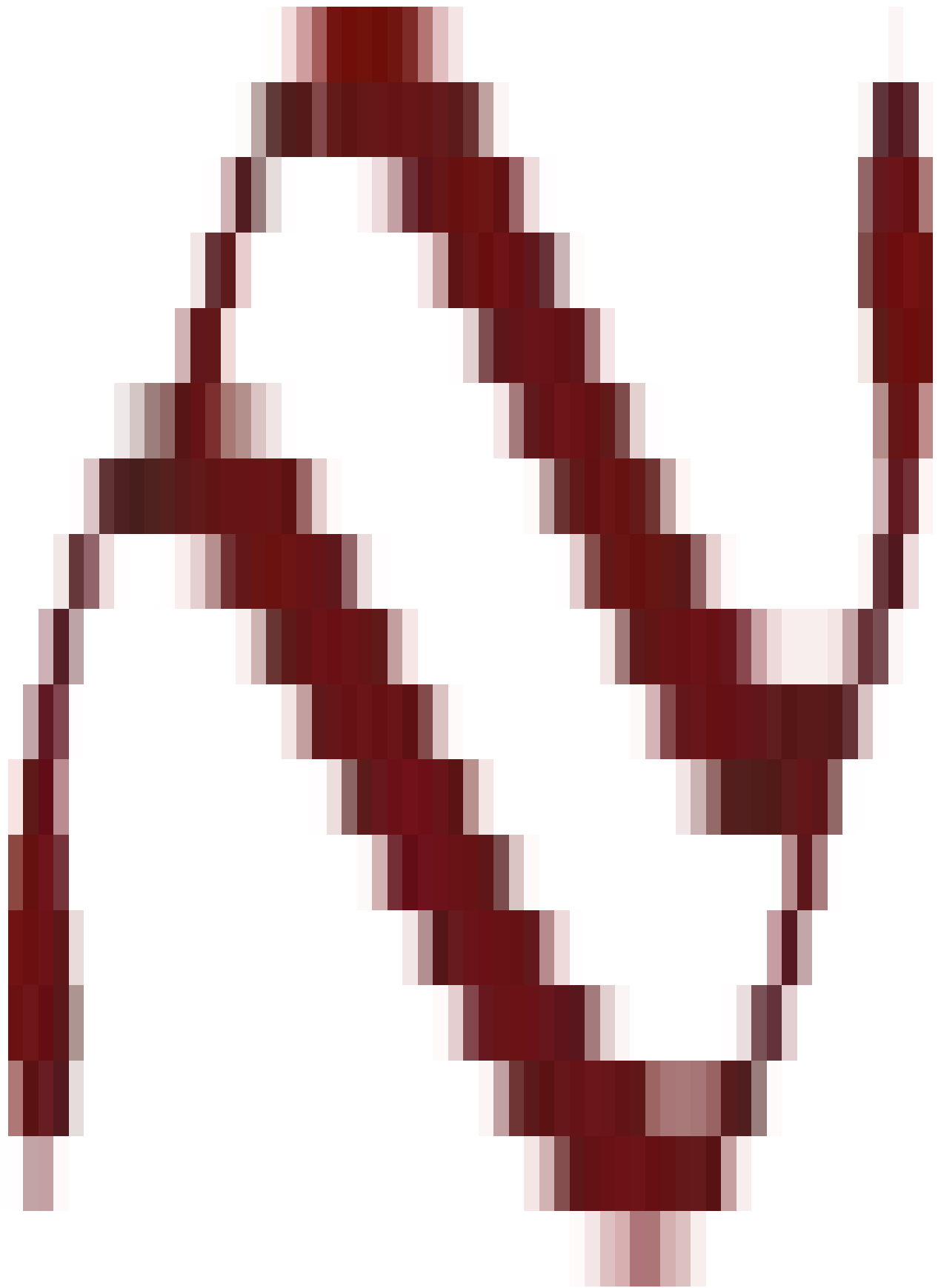
According to the great sage Patanjali, the feelings of the heart (chitta) are responsible for all our entanglements in earthly lives.⁸ A man of little understanding blames God for the ills and evils into which he is born. But the scriptures of India explain wherein lies the real responsibility. Souls are sent on earth as perfect images of God to be entertained there, to witness and experience the wonders of creation with the attitude of a divine being. But when man subverts his transcendent soul-nature with egoistic involvement of the feelings of his heart in likes and dislikes—indiscriminate attractions and repulsions—about material things and experiences, those distortions of consciousness become insidious entanglements that make him a part of, rather than a being apart from, delusion. Accruing in his consciousness lifetime after lifetime, the desires, attachments, and tendencies of the likes and dislikes in his feelings compel him to reincarnate in a physical body that has been customized by his own design. If these proclivities are evil, they will surely proceed from the feelings of the heart into actions that defile man's innate nobility.

That is why Jesus emphasized the difference between external and internal methods of purifying the heart: "Out of the evil karmic tendencies stored up in the heart of men (chitta or feeling), all evil thoughts and actions spring. Adulterous lusts and adulterous actions, sexual temptations and fornications, murderous inclinations and murderous actions, thievish thoughts and thieving actions, covetous thoughts and covetous actions, penchant for lying about others and the act of bearing false witness, desires to deceive and deceitful actions, lascivious thoughts and lascivious actions, power to inflict harm by an evil eye and use of that power, impulses to curse and acts of cursing, thoughts of blasphemy and blasphemous actions, feelings of pride and boastful actions, and all foolishness, are the offspring of the wicked tendencies stored up in the heart of man, through his ignorant actions of this life and past existences. All these evil tendencies, if not curtailed and spiritually sublimated, defile man with multiform miseries."

Evil thoughts are a smoke screen of ignorance that hides from the conscious mind the purity and everlasting joy of the soul. One who looks at life through this pollution of feeling is unable to perceive the subtle beauty of the image of God hidden within him. Living in this darkness, man makes himself wholly

vulnerable to all manner of delusive afflictions—physical, mental, and spiritual.

One who ennobles and beautifies his inner feeling with bright and cheerful thoughts and spiritual aspirations, and most important, who performs daily the highest purificatory rite of cleansing the consciousness in divine wisdom through meditation, finds that through the transparency of his inner luminous living all the exultant excellence of his God-reflecting soul pours forth and shines into his conscious mind.



Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, "Send her away; for she crieth after us." But he answered and said, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 15:21 – 24).⁹



Jesus' special dispensation was to minister to the Israelites; thence it was destined to spread to all

“From time to time, the Heavenly Father sends an emissary to minister to a particular community, race, or nation of people in whom he can rekindle the flame of truth and open forgotten portals of salvation. Although my teachings are universal and will be applicable and useful to all lives on earth at all times, ¹⁰ still I am not sent for all at present, as I have been especially ordained by the Heavenly Father to act as the spiritual shepherd to the bewildered ‘sheep’ or spiritual seekers belonging to the house of Israel. The Israelites once were deeply virtuous, as seen in their prophets; the accumulated power of their good karma sent out a silent call to the Heavenly Father. In response to that call He has sent me in this cycle as the promised savior to the Israelites.”

Jesus' mission was one of world significance. But it is not surprising that since he had only the short span of three years to establish the influence of his life and teachings, he concentrated the whole of his power in one relatively limited locale and people, “I am sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” This is where the stage had been set for the beginning of his world ministry.

The coming of one such as he had been prophesied in the Hebrew scriptures—a Messiah, a man of Nazareth born in Bethlehem. Further, he was of the lineage of the Old Testament Hebraic prophets in his life as Elisha, disciple of Elijah. Perhaps most significantly, of the civilizations of the world in the time of Jesus, the doctrines of the Hebrew nation—with the exception of India—constituted the only monotheistic religious tradition espousing God as One Supreme Spirit.¹¹ The territories bordering the land of Jesus' birth, as also the Roman Empire that conquered and ruled in Israel, were polytheistic, pagan worshipers of many gods as powers from which favors could be propitiated. The Roman and Greek gods were often anthropomorphic, immortals made in man's image, from which concept even the Roman Caesars and Egyptian Pharaohs were elevated to the hierarchy of gods.

Had Jesus taught and performed his miracles extensively among the pagans, the intermixing of perspectives would surely have handed down to succeeding generations a different view of his teachings. For the message God had given him to give to the world, he found a perfect harmony in the atmosphere of the

wisdom of the Hebrew prophets, India's Advaita-Yoga science of God-communion and ultimate union with Spirit, and the Buddhist emphasis on the law of karma and divine love and compassion for all beings. Certainly he had enough opposition to balk in the priestly castes of Israel without also confrontations with pagan priestly hierarchy.

Jesus knew that the concentrated power of his teaching would go forth in its own time to the farthest reaches of human hearts through the instrumentality of his spiritually blessed and well-indoctrinated apostles and their succession of sincere followers.

This is the pattern of all God's divine messengers. They are born in a particular place at a particular time and establish their influence in the locale decreed by God—be it communal or universal. Each dispensation bears its own stamp of the will of God.



Special dispensations sent by God through divine emissaries down the ages

Among the divine emissaries who have blessed and enlightened mankind may be noted the following, whose special dispensations were relative to their predecessors:

Bhagavan Krishna appeared in India many centuries before Jesus to redeem the virtuous Pandava people of India who were oppressed by the wicked Kurus. He was a purnavatara, full incarnation of Divinity, able to manifest all the qualities of God in his life.¹² Through the sage Vyasa he gave to India and to the world one of the greatest scriptures, the Bhagavad Gita, the yoga science of the soul and its path to liberation in Spirit.

Later, Gautama Buddha incarnated in India when the message of mercy was sorely needed. It has been said of him that he restored the heart to the religion of India, which had degraded into priestly practices of rituals and mechanical ceremonies. He emphasized the law of righteous action as the way to escape the ever-rotating karmic wheel of birth and death, as also the necessity of developing compassion for all creatures by feeling the presence of Divinity in all life. Through Buddha's influence many animal sacrificial rites were stopped.

Five centuries after Buddha, Jesus Christ appeared to bring the message of faith and devotion for attaining the kingdom of heaven. By his performance of miraculous healings of the bodies, minds, and souls of so many, he demonstrated the ever-present divine love and forgiveness of God to be had by all who make themselves receptive.

In the seventh century

a.d.

, Swami Shankara (Adi Shankaracharya) incarnated to bring the teaching of the Supreme Spirit as ever-existing, ever-conscious, ever-new Bliss. This positive conception of God was much needed for the overintellectualized classes of India, who through a corruption of Buddha's teaching had developed a doctrine of annihilation as the ultimate end of life. This fallacy arose from a misinterpretation of the idea of nirvana, the cessation of ego consciousness and its consequent reincarnations. The real teaching of Buddha, in accord with all

great prophets of India, was that egoistic desires cause rebirth, and that any soul who overcomes material desires finds liberation—not extinction! Swami Shankara reasserted the eternal truth that a soul who overcomes material desire becomes united to the positive state of ever-existing, ever-conscious, ever-new Bliss. He pointed out that God, Spirit, is that ever-new Bliss, and as such is a universal necessity and the highest goal of life, to be sought through discrimination and meditation on the inner Self, the secret shrine of the blissful Infinite Spirit in man.

In the twelfth century, Sri Chaitanya came in India to ignite in men's hearts an ardent love for God. His path of bhakti or all-surrendering devotion restored the primacy of actually experiencing a personal relationship with God, a concept demeaned by the abstrusely philosophizing pundits and scholars who influenced the practice of religion at that time.

In the modern era, Mahavatar Babaji gave to the world through Lahiri Mahasaya the Kriya Yoga science with its techniques of concentration and meditation by which God-contact can be realized. Lahiri Mahasaya emphasized that religionists should rise above their superficial differences, concentrate on the universal principles of morality, and learn the science and art of interiorizing the mind and tuning it with the Infinite. His doctrine of Kriya Yoga is unique in the fact that, apart from advice on moral culture and self-discipline, it gives definite techniques of meditation for step-by-step ascension to Self-realization. Through attainment of universally experienced successive states of superconsciousness, Christ Consciousness, and Cosmic Consciousness, the soul ultimately merges in the Supreme Being. The consciousness of the followers of all religions, by whatever means, must pass through these states to attain God-union. Lahiri Mahasaya's teaching is especially suited to the modern age because it does not ask anyone to believe dogmatically, but rather by practice of the proven techniques of Kriya Yoga to discover by personal realization the answer to the eternal question, "What is truth?"—about oneself and God.

The above masters or saviors had progressed through the different degrees of manifestation of God's qualities. It is when masters are fully or almost fully spiritually developed that they come on earth through the will of God to carry out His special dispensations. God Himself, as God, never comes down to dwell on earth in a human body. By definition the Illimitable Infinite cannot be confined to any one form with its inherent limitations.

An essential equality exists among all masters who have fully regained God-consciousness within themselves; but they are sometimes differentiated according to their qualitative and quantitative works on earth. Masters are distinguished qualitatively according to the number of souls they have helped to elevate to Christhood, and quantitatively according to the number of people they have inspired during their stay on earth. Jesus created eleven masters from his twelve disciples. Lahiri Mahasaya similarly created many masters; one of them was my God-realized guru Sri Yukteswarji.

Thus we see that Jesus said, “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel” in order to declare the incipient unfoldment of God’s grand design for Jesus’ special dispensation on earth, and not because of any narrow partiality to the Israelites. John the Baptist’s declaration, “But that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore I am come baptizing with water” (John

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) confirmed that Jesus’ divine consciousness was to be revealed first to the Israelites. His spiritual influence as a world savior was both qualitative and quantitative: to work first for the awakening of those who lived in the land of his birth at that time—especially in a qualitative way for liberating the advanced souls who were his close disciples; and second, by his teachings, example, and omnipresent blessings to inspire on the path to God-realization all people for all time.



Then came she and worshipped him, saying, “Lord, help me.”

But he answered and said, “It is not meet to take the children’s bread, and to cast it to dogs.”

And she said, “Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.”

Then Jesus answered and said unto her, “O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt.” And her daughter was made whole from that very hour (Matthew 15:25 – 28).

Parallel reference:

But Jesus said unto her, “Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children’s bread, and to cast it unto the dogs.”

And she answered and said unto him, “Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children’s crumbs.”

And he said unto her, “For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter.” And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed (Mark 7:27 – 30).

“Let the divinely ordained children, the Israelites, be first spiritually served by me, according to the will of God. During the short period I am on earth it is not fitting for me to offer the bread of divine consciousness to any of the more materially minded peoples whose pagan beliefs seek only the miracles of physical healing, not the spiritual transformation of consciousness.”

Jesus realized his lifetime was too short to give of his divine consciousness to broader arenas of an unready world. He must first serve those whose spiritual background made them more receptive, and whose good karma had attracted the grace of God. Nevertheless, when the woman—who was “a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation”¹³—displayed the sincerity of her eagerness, he did not refuse to heal her daughter. To her he said: “O woman, the pulling power of your will and conviction draws the all-healing cosmic energy from me; so let your will be fulfilled. Go your way; you will find that the cosmic energy, roused by your faith and my will, has dislodged the evil spirit from the life of your daughter.”



And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, he came unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coast of Decapolis. And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to put his hand upon him.

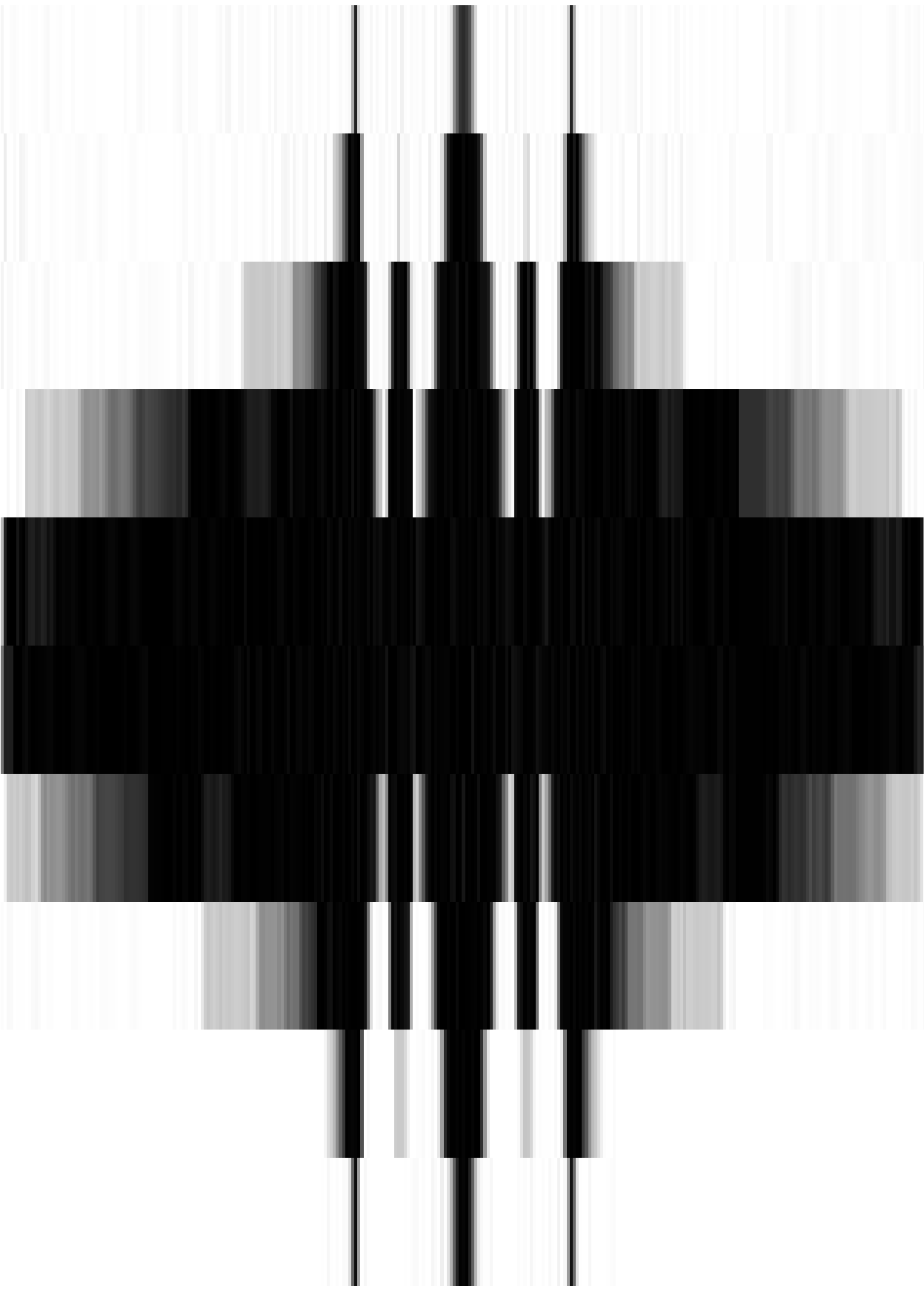
And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue; and looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, “Ephphatha,” that is, “Be opened.” And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain.

And he charged them that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it; and were beyond measure astonished, saying, “He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak” (Mark 7:31 – 37).

And Jesus departed from thence, and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee; and went up into a mountain, and sat down there. And great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus’ feet; and he healed them: Insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: and they glorified the God of Israel (Matthew 15:29 – 31).

“By the divinely charged power flowing as nectarous energy into my mouth from the astral reservoir of cosmic life force within me, infusing my whole body and empowering the vibration of my words, and by my sigh of the almighty

breath of life, I absorb within me your evil karma and its resultant effects of your sorrow and sickness. I have commanded the all-healing heavenly energy to fall upon you and your brain and send the healing vibrations to loosen up the defective auditory and speech nerves. Be healed!”



Masters use various means of projecting the life force for transmission of divine power

Masters are able to control all physical, astral, and spiritual processes of the body. They know various methods for generating and concentrating divine power in their bodies to surcharge themselves or to be used as projected vibrations to heal others or to manifest some supernatural phenomenon. Transmuting the atoms of breath into all-powerful lifetronic energy is one such means—“looking up to heaven (into the spiritual eye), he sighed.” Another technique known to advanced yogis causes a divine nectar of tremendous power to be secreted into the throat. It enables accomplished yogis to remain in motionless ecstatic states for prolonged periods of time, with their bodies spiritually electrified with vibrant power. This nectarous energy is also one means by which they can sustain their bodies with little or no food, as has been demonstrated by great saints and yogis—“Man shall not live by bread alone...” [See Discourse 8.] In a master of the supreme stature of Jesus, this powerful secretion can be summoned by will power to divinely charge any process of the body, as also his spittle, to be a medium of healing. Other examples of this are recorded in Mark 8:22 – 26 [Discourse 44] and John 9:6 – 7 [Discourse 52]. It is likely that Jesus used this concentrated nectar of astral energy in these unusual healings; as he himself had noted, otherwise, it was an abominable offense worthy of damnation for one even to say to another: “Raca—‘I spit on you.’” [See Discourse 27.] This same principle employed by Jesus of transmission of divine power concentrated in the mouth (as well as in the hands, feet, and eyes) of a master, is the basis of the tradition in India that any remnant of food left uneaten by a divine personage or food given to someone by him from the plate from which he has eaten is considered as prasad, imbued with blessings.



Then Jesus called his disciples unto him, and said, “I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way.”

And his disciples say unto him, “Whence should we have so much bread in the wilderness, as to fill so great a multitude?”

And Jesus saith unto them, “How many loaves have ye?” And they said, “Seven, and a few little fishes.” And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground.

And he took the seven loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks, and brake them, and gave to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets full. And they that did eat were four thousand men, beside women and children.¹⁴

And he sent away the multitude, and took ship, and came into the coast of Magdala. The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven.

He answered and said unto them, “When it is evening, ye say, ‘It will be fair weather: for the sky is red.’ And in the morning, ‘It will be foul weather today: for the sky is red and lowering.’ O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times? A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah.” And he left them, and departed (Matthew 15:32 – 16:4).¹⁵

“O you hypocrites, you can read on the face of the sky whether the weather will be evil or good, yet you cannot read in my life the obvious signs of the times, the divine message given to man in this present age. As ignorant people cannot discern the weather in the countenance of the sky, so this wicked generation has lost its spiritual vision and cannot recognize the divine sign already given to you, evidenced in the miraculous works of God performed through me.”

Jesus signified that the miracles worked through him by God were ample sign and testimony of God’s approval and commission of him. By his reference to Jonah, he also prophesied about his own coming trial and resurrection three days after death, which would prove his immortality and divine heritage for all time and all peoples.¹⁶

Jesus, being human as well as divine, felt deep sorrow, envisioning the misery that his wicked contemporaries would have to go through because of their bad karma and refusal to be spiritually cleansed by him.



And when his disciples were come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. Then Jesus said unto them, “Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.” And they reasoned among themselves, saying, “It is because we have taken no bread.”

Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, “O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread? Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees?”

Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees (Matthew 16:5 – 12).¹⁷

“O beloved disciples, why do you, by the confusion of your rationalizing mental restlessness, confound your faith, your Self-realization born of meditation, so that you fail to understand through your all-seeing intuition what I say? Why do you not feel my words in your intuition and then understand it in your reason?

“Why have you so little divine conviction that you worry about material bread when you have already witnessed how the Divine in me fed multitudes with a few loaves? I would not be warning you about the leaven of the bread of the Pharisees and Sadducees. It is of their false doctrines that you must beware, which are not the pure bread of life you find in my teachings. Their specious religious dogmas and customs sicken with ignorance one’s spiritual life.”



And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him. And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought. And he looked up, and said, "I see men as trees, walking."

After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly. And he sent him away to his house, saying, "Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town" (Mark 8:22 – 26).

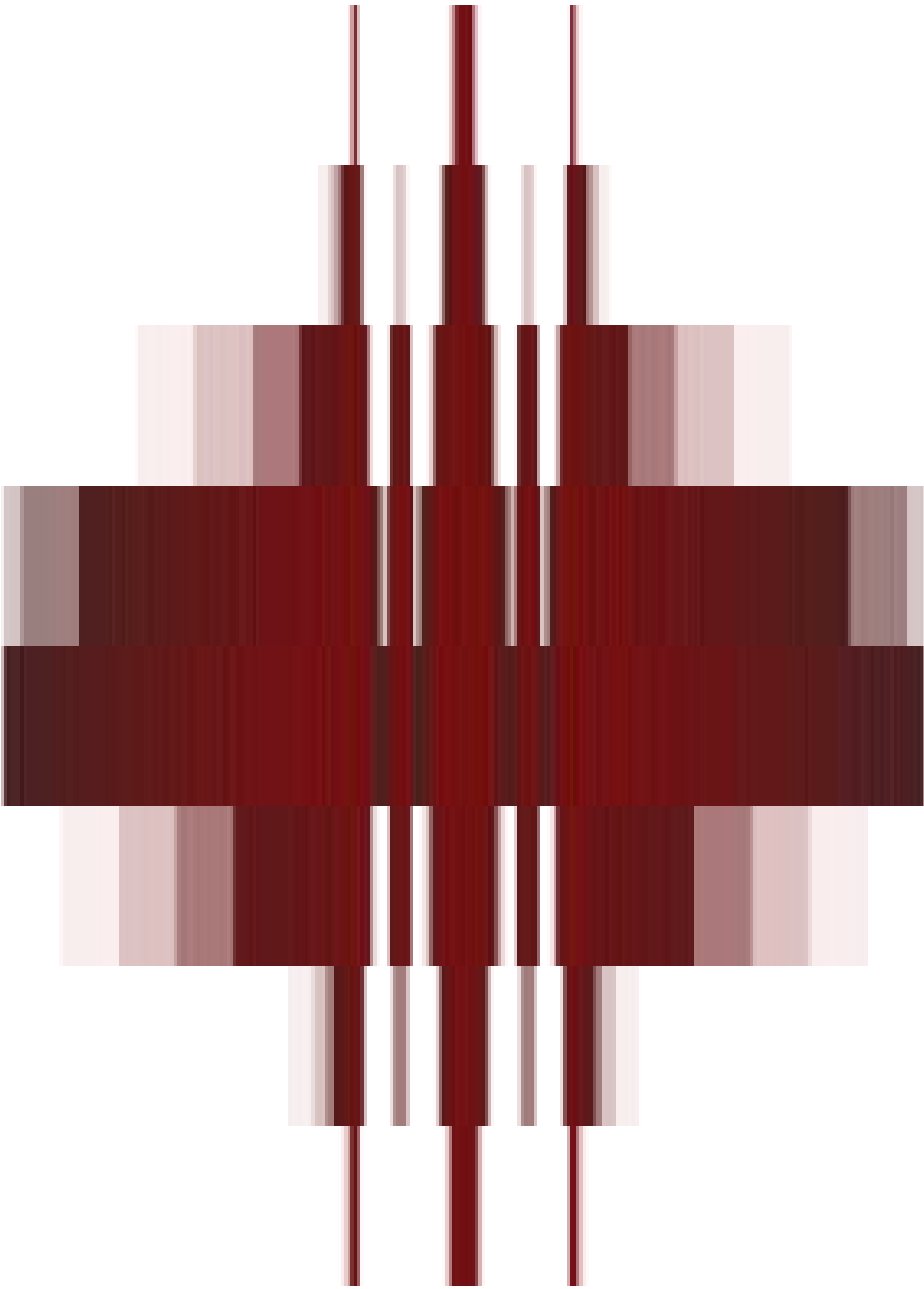
Jesus would not heal the man inside the town of Bethsaida, nor permit the man to testify to the healing in that town, because Bethsaida had rejected Jesus, and he had said of it: "Woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you." ¹⁸

Jesus felt every particle in his body, including his sputum, charged with the high voltage of all-healing cosmic energy. He took the divinely charged secretion from his mouth and applied it to the eyes of the blind man and electrified them with the positive-negative current flowing from his hands. Then Jesus asked him if he saw clearly. The man replied, "I see men as walking trees." Then Jesus gave a second healing to the man's eyes and told him to look up at the point between the two eyebrows where the spiritual eye is located. When the blind man lifted his eyes there he made a contact with cosmic energy, which flowed from the single divine eye into his two eyes healing them completely so that he "saw every man clearly."



Discourse 45

Peter's Inspired Recognition of the Christ, and Jesus' Transfiguration



The Inner Meaning of Jesus' Words to Peter About Leading His Church



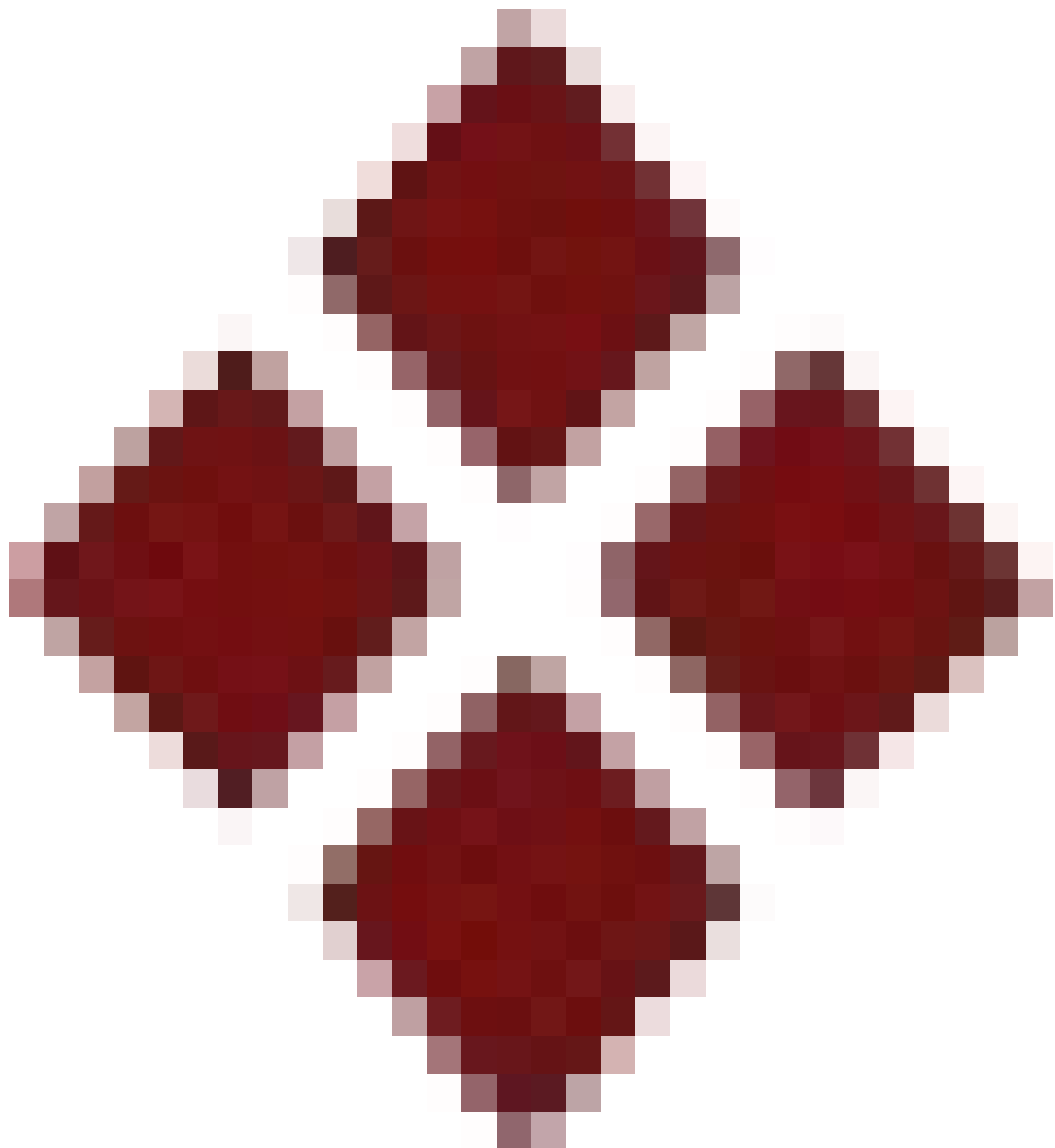
**Jesus' Message Has Survived Not Through
Institutional Power, but Through God-Knowing
Devotees**



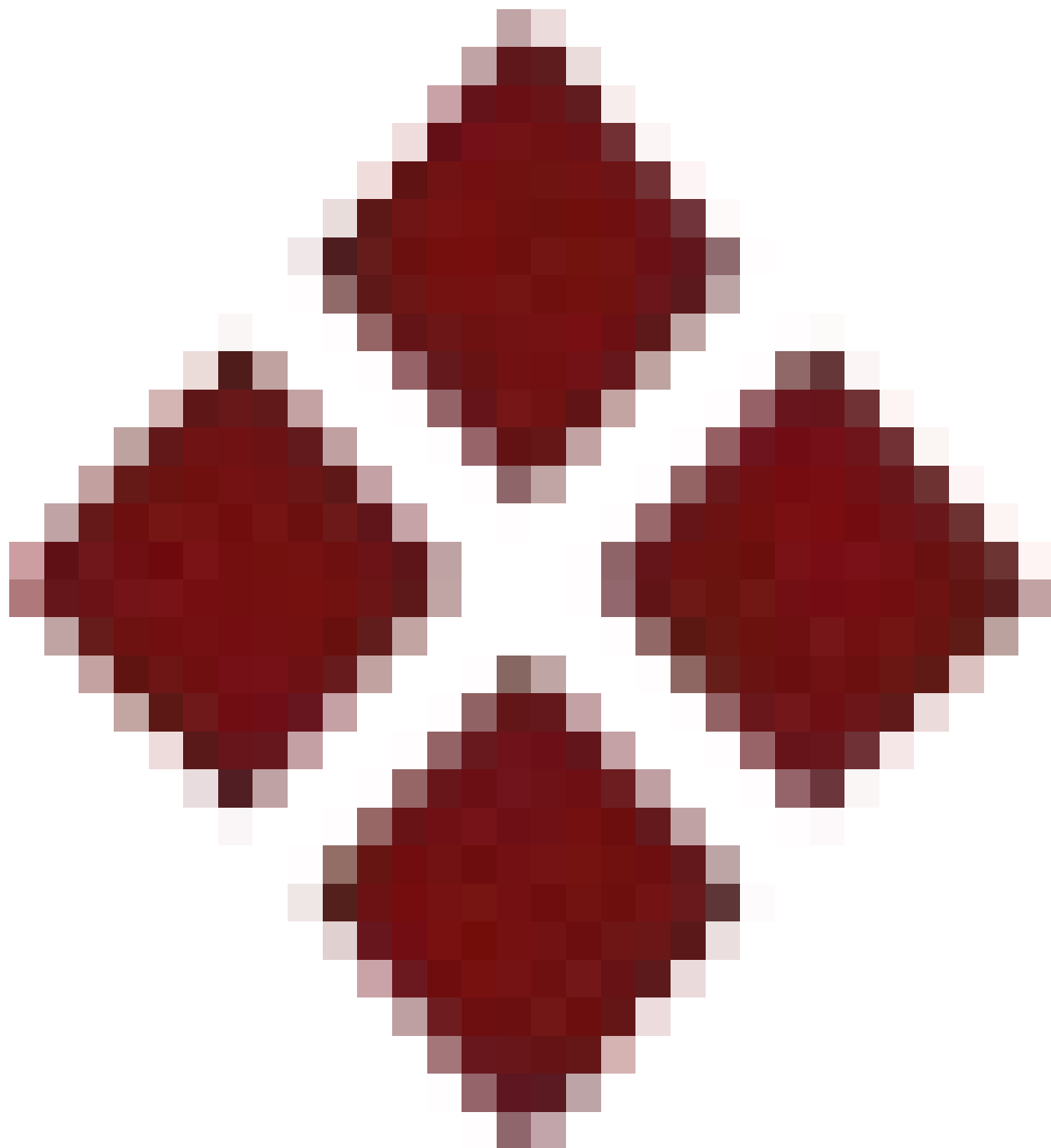
Spiritual Discipline for Attaining Christ Consciousness



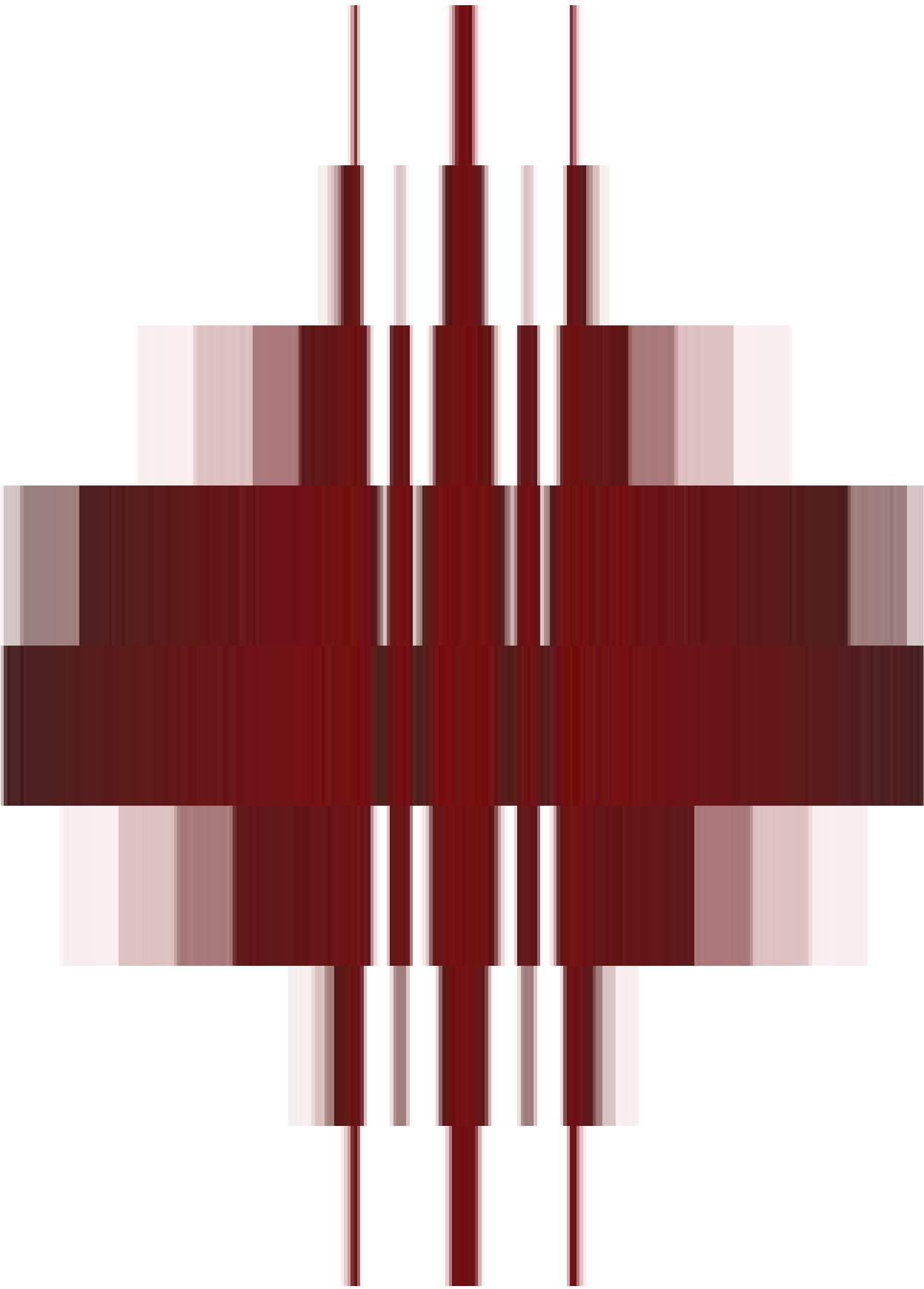
What Jesus Meant by Predicting “the Son of Man Coming in His Kingdom”



The Transfiguration of Jesus' Body Into the Glory of God's Light



Spiritual Significance of the Presence of Elijah and Moses With Jesus



“The commission Jesus gave to Peter and the other Apostles, and all who would carry on his mission, was to attain God-contact themselves, and from that inner divine attunement to preach through the example of their lives.”

■

When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, “Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?”

And they said, “Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.”

He saith unto them, “But whom say ye that I am?”

And Simon Peter answered and said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

And Jesus answered and said unto him, “Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.

From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, “Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.”

But he turned, and said unto Peter, “Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.”

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own

soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

“For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.”

And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elijah talking with him.

Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.”

While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.”

And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid.

And Jesus came and touched them, and said, “Arise, and be not afraid.”

And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.

And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, “Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.”

And his disciples asked him, saying, “Why then say the scribes that Elijah must first come?”

And Jesus answered and said unto them, “Elijah truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, that Elijah is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them.”

Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.

—*Matthew 16:13 – 17:13*



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Discourse 45

Peter's Inspired Recognition of the Christ, and Jesus' Transfiguration



When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, “Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?”

And they said, “Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.”

He saith unto them, “But whom say ye that I am?”

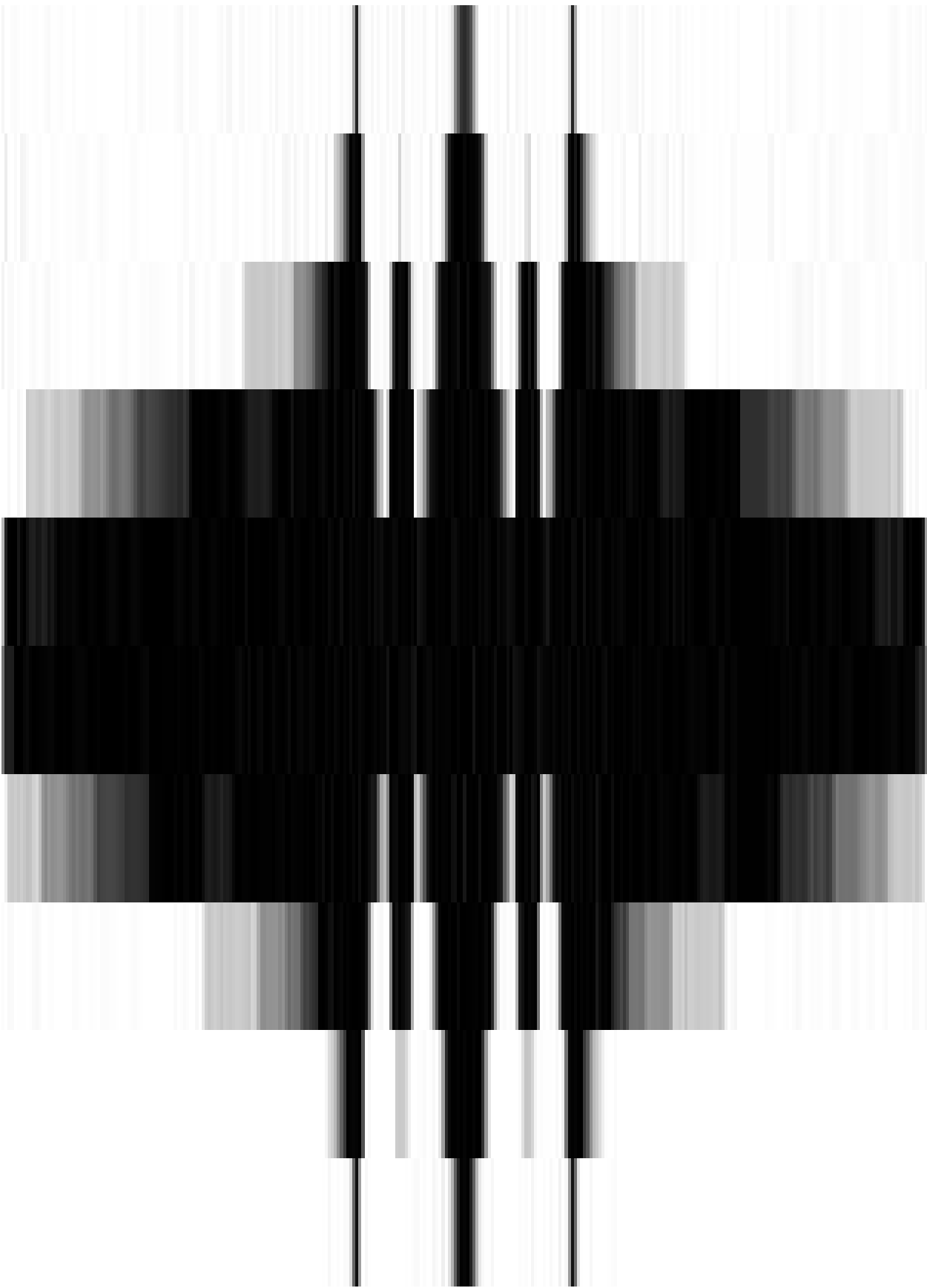
And Simon Peter answered and said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

And Jesus answered and said unto him, “Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ (Matthew 16:13 – 20).¹

Jesu s’ question and his disciple s’ reply indicate the common knowledge and acceptance in Jesu s’ time of the law of reincarnation, evidenced also in several other passages of the Gospels. ²

Jesus' words to his disciples were a sincere inquiry into their understanding and attunement: "I care not what the populace in general thinks of me, but tell me what you realize." Simon Peter answered: "In thee is the manifestation of Christ Consciousness, the only begotten Son, the only reflection in all vibratory creation of God the Father beyond creation."



The inner meaning of Jesus' words to Peter about leading his church

Jesus responded: “You are blessed by your own good karma and the grace of the Father that through your intuition He has revealed unto you the truth about me. No one whose consciousness is limited by identification with the body (‘flesh and blood’) can realize the Spirit hidden within the physical form; such a one could never perceive the Christ Consciousness within me. It was not through any bodily instrument of knowledge that you have received this understanding; rather, through your exalted consciousness, the Father, omnipresent in His heavenly Cosmic Consciousness, has made known to you the manifestation of His presence as Christ Consciousness within me.”

From the time of their first encounter in this incarnation [see Discourse 9], Jesus had christened Simon the son of Jona with the name by which he would be known to the ages: Peter, the rock.³ Pleased with Simon Barjona’s intuitive perception of the Christ in him, Jesus commended him and spiritually anointed him to become the preeminent leader of the early faithful congregation of devotees: “And I say also unto you, that thou art a rock—your consciousness is one with the Father’s Cosmic Consciousness, That which is the sole solid foundation of all that exists. You have intuitively perceived the eternal verity: ‘Thou art That’ (‘Tat tvam asi,’ the declaration of Swami Shankara and the hoary Vedas of the soul’s inseparable oneness with Spirit). On the firm rock of your wisdom united to the Cosmic Father, I will build a temple of my inner teachings, a church of God-consciousness in which, through your ministry, a congregation of seeking souls will find God on the altar of the divine communion of deep meditation.⁴ The wide-open gates of delusion, decorated with glittering promises of fulfillment in sense pleasures, lead unsuspecting souls into a spiritually dark hell of mortal misery. But they will not be able to lure sincere devotees who have once experienced the divine joy of sanctuary in Christ Consciousness within the inner church of my teachings, whose lived truths you have realized and will make manifest for the inspiration and guidance of others.

“Through your perception of the Christ Consciousness within yourself, even as you recognized the Christ in me, you will find that the methods of God-contact I have given you are the keys to the kingdom of heaven—the way to pass through Christ Consciousness into Cosmic Consciousness, that heavenly infinitude where God the Father reigns as the only King. I leave with you these keys, these

techniques of divine union, for you to give to any devotee who is in tune with your consciousness, ready and deserving of entering the kingdom of Cosmic Consciousness.

“Whatever laws of superconscious living you shall give to discipline, ‘bind,’ God-seeking souls on earth will be those sanctioned by the Cosmic Consciousness, the Heavenly Thou-Art-That consciousness, which you have realized within yourself. And whatever laws governing attainment of superconscious freedom you will instill in material-minded earthbound souls, laws that will liberate, ‘loose,’ souls, will likewise be the ones that governed the souls who have become emancipated in Cosmic Consciousness.”

Jesus’ proclamation that “upon this rock I will build my church” had primarily an inner meaning—for Peter as an individual as well as for successive generations who would perpetuate Jesus’ teachings. His singling out of Peter was in the tradition of guru-parampara, appointment of a master’s spiritual successor.⁵ The commission Jesus gave to Peter and the other Apostles, and all who would carry on his mission, was to attain God-contact themselves, and from that inner divine attunement to preach through the example of their lives and the lived truths of their verbal teachings.



Jesus' message has survived not through institutional power, but through God-knowing devotees

The heart of the great dispensation of Jesus has survived not necessarily in any temporal power of an outer institution, but in those great devotees and saints whose protracted devotions and meditations established within them temples of Christ Consciousness and God-communion.

The fourth-century Saint Anthony, for example, prevented a disintegrating schism among Jesus' followers by the sheer power of divine realization in his simple words: "I have seen him!" In medieval times the God-knowing Saint Francis of Assisi, who beheld in his nightly prayers his master Jesus in living form, brought a renaissance of Christ spirit to Christianity after being commanded in a divine vision to rebuild the crumbling edifice of the church when it had lost the essence of Jesus' teachings. Centuries later, when the church was in dire need of another life-giving reform, the ecstatic Saint Teresa of Avila taught the true worship of Christ in the church of divine communion: the "interior castle" entered by taking the mind and life force within in deep meditation.

Christ has lived also in the realization of those of other religious persuasions; Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa of India undertook the sadhana of different religions to prove they all lead to the same realization; he had ecstatic communion with Jesus, whom he saw as "the Christ, who shed His heart's blood for the redemption of the world, who suffered a sea of anguish for love of men...the Master Yogi, who is in eternal union with God...Love Incarnate."⁶ Mahavatar Babaji commissioned my guru Swami Sri Yukteswar to write from his enlightened consciousness a treatise (The Holy Science) on "the underlying harmony between Christian and Hindu scriptures." "Quoting the words of the blessed Lord Jesus," my Guru said, "I showed that his teachings are in essence one with the revelations of the Vedas."

It is such saints and masters who have actually communed with God—those known to history as well as countless anonymous true souls devoted to Christ, hidden in monasteries and convents in wholehearted consecration—who have verily been the "rock" on which Jesus' inner church of Christ communion has endured these two thousand years.



From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, “Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.”

But he turned, and said unto Peter, “Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men” (Matthew 16:21 – 23).⁷

“O satanic delusion, speaking through the sympathy of Peter, drop away from my consciousness and remain behind, forsaken and unheeded as I march resolutely toward my Father’s kingdom of Cosmic Consciousness. As I shall exchange temporary bodily suffering on the cross for everlasting joy in Spirit, I am offended, O Satan, at thy words. Even though they are garbed with Peter’s voice and sympathy, they clearly vibrate not with the wisdom of Cosmic Consciousness but with the deluded perception of worldly persons, who ‘savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.’”

The strong retort of Jesus emphasized that to yield to the thought of banishing his coming ordeal would be to embrace delusion and thus weaken his preparedness to perform the divine sacrifice of his body as had been revealed to his vision. He thus rejected Peter’s sympathy, knowing that in the echo of those words was the temptation of Satan who wanted to thwart the plan of God.



Then said Jesus unto his disciples, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matthew 16:24 – 26).

Parallel reference:

And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, “Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Mark 8:34 – 37).⁸



Spiritual discipline for attaining Christ Consciousness

“Any devotee who would attain my Christ Consciousness must by meditation rise above the consciousness of his physical self, ‘deny himself,’ and keep his attention constantly focused in Christ peace, ‘follow me,’ even while he is daily crucified by trials and his spiritual aspirations tormented by restlessness and distractions. For whosoever will ‘save his life,’ keeping it familiarly identified with the body’s comforts and demands, and foolishly coddle the body’s unwillingness to make the necessary spiritual effort in the struggle to meditate, shall find that ultimately he will ‘lose his life’ of temporary joys that he sought to protect. But the devotee who is prepared to ‘lose his life for my sake,’ to give up bondage to a solely material existence for the sake of attaining Christ Consciousness realized in deep meditation, will certainly find the life of his true Self, eternally endowed with the ever new bliss of Spirit.

“Any devotee who lives the Christ life and preaches about it ‘for my sake and the gospel’s,’ sharing with others the vibrations of his divine perceptions and setting an example of moral and spiritual behavior, forgoing the life of the body if necessary, will attain immortality. Even if a man ‘gains the whole world,’ its surfeit will profit him little, for he can benefit from only an iota of its comforts. The kingdom of every monarch, no matter how opulent and powerful, will be lost to them at the time of death.

“The material man finds at the end of his life that he is without riches as well as without God-consciousness; by his unspiritual life, he will ‘lose his own soul’ in the mires of delusion. Nothing he gains in gratifying earthly pleasures, however great, will suffice to compensate for the lost immortal happiness of his true soul-consciousness, redeemable only in the transcendence of meditation.”



“For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom” (Matthew 16:27 – 28).

Parallel reference:

“Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”⁹

And he said unto them, “Verily I say unto you, that there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power” (Mark 8:38—9:1).¹⁰



What Jesus meant by predicting “the Son of man coming in his kingdom”

“When the glory of the Cosmic Consciousness of the Father with its angelic joys and wisdom are revealed to the Son of man, the soul consciousness dwelling in and working through the instrumentality of the body, then the devotee who has faithfully toiled in meditation to reap the harvest of God-consciousness knows that everyone is rewarded according to his own spiritual labors.” ¹¹

Owing to the law of cause and effect (one’s karma), which governs the outcome of all actions, every devotee finds himself farther from or nearer to God commensurate with the degree of his efforts in meditation. “Corresponding to the depth of his meditation, the devotee finds the angels of different states of Self-realization revealed in his human consciousness (Son of man) through ecstatic communion with Cosmic Consciousness. Advanced devotees can also perceive in the light projected from Cosmic Consciousness the luminous angelic forms of liberated and saintly souls who dwell in the glorious heavenly regions of the Father’s infinite consciousness.



The devotee's duty to inspire other souls

“Whosoever steps out of the commonality of delusion and experiences Christ Consciousness and its revelations of truth, ‘me and my words’—which the devotee contacted within during his ecstasy of Cosmic Consciousness, with its sacred angels of inspirations springing from it—but is reluctant, ‘shall be ashamed,’ to give testimony to the joy and wisdom of this state to body-identified, divine-bliss-deserting nonbelievers for fear of persecution or ridicule, will find a diminishment of the Christ Consciousness within him: ‘of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed,’ he shall be considered unworthy of that consciousness.”

Jesus knew that his message of spiritual reform would antagonize the polity and religious traditionalists. Not only he but his followers would be maligned. He thus emphasized the necessity of courage in one's convictions—to dare to be different, not from motivations of ego or overworked imagination, but from actual experience of truth in ecstatic divine communion.

There is a further implication in this Gospel passage. In the divine scheme, God has decreed that there is a duty man owes to man—the strong to aid the weak, the affluent to assist the needy, the healthy to serve the stricken; above all, the enlightened to illumine the path of the benighted.

Devotees who are not courageous and unselfish in trying to share the uplifting effects of their ecstatic joys with spiritually nescient souls will find their own consciousness returning to the limited confinement of the ego. By contrast, he who inspires other souls with his ecstasy will find himself expanding. A soul who feels his joy in other souls gradually feels himself as the Self of all, ultimately identified with the omnipresent consciousness of God the Father.

Self-appointed “saviors” are not implied, just humble souls who unassumingly reach out to inspire in others love for God and the desire to seek Him by transmitting their consciousness through the vibratory power of their example, words, thoughts, and prayers.

Devotees who contact Christ Consciousness in earth life but for fear of derision do not try to serve spiritually their ignorant brothers will find, after death, that they have no permanent place in Christ Consciousness. Spiritually selfish souls,

visiting Christ Consciousness in the after-death state, are again sent back to earth to learn to share their spiritual attainments with body-bound mortals who also are children of God, albeit yet sleeping in delusion. The divine law is that one's own final liberation requires that the God-realized devotee has also helped to liberate others.

Jesus concludes: "I truthfully declare unto you that there are some advanced devotees who are standing around me now who shall feel the all-powerful Cosmic Consciousness, 'the kingdom of God,' within their human consciousness, within 'the Son of man kingdom' of soul consciousness, before they make a transition from their present bodily existence to another plane."



And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart. And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elijah talking with him.

Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.”

While he yet spake; behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.”

And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces, and were sore afraid.

And Jesus came and touched them, and said, “Arise, and be not afraid.”

And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only (Matthew 17:1 – 8).

Parallel reference:

And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as he prayed, the

fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening.

And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elijah: who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him.

And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, “Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah”: not knowing what he said.

While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud. And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son: hear him.”

And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone (Luke 9:28 – 36).¹²



The transfiguration of Jesus' body into the glory of God's light

The way by which Jesus was transfigured, and by which Elijah and Moses materialized themselves and came to him, was through transcendence of delusion's superimposed grossness of matter to reveal the underlying electrical nature of the body and the universe. When Jesus was praying on the mountaintop, consciously communing with Cosmic Consciousness, the delusive human consciousness in him and his disciples, through which the lifetronic essence of the universe appears as matter, completely vanished. The body of Jesus, its very atoms shorn of the mask of delusion and the consciousness of solidity, appeared luminous and ethereal. ¹³

The intensified prayer of fervent devotion and meditation produces the ecstasy of oneness with Cosmic Consciousness. A master who experiences this highest ecstasy of God-consciousness actually sees his body and all material forms as made of the glory of God's light. He can simultaneously transfer his perception to his very advanced disciples that they too will behold the delusion-fused atomic structure of matter as made of creative electrical energy dancing in a harmonious rhythm to the bliss songs of God's ideations, the Everything of the Formless Eternal.

Vanish the grosser lights into eternal rays

Of all-pervading bliss....

Four veils of solid, liquid, vapor, light,

Lift aright.

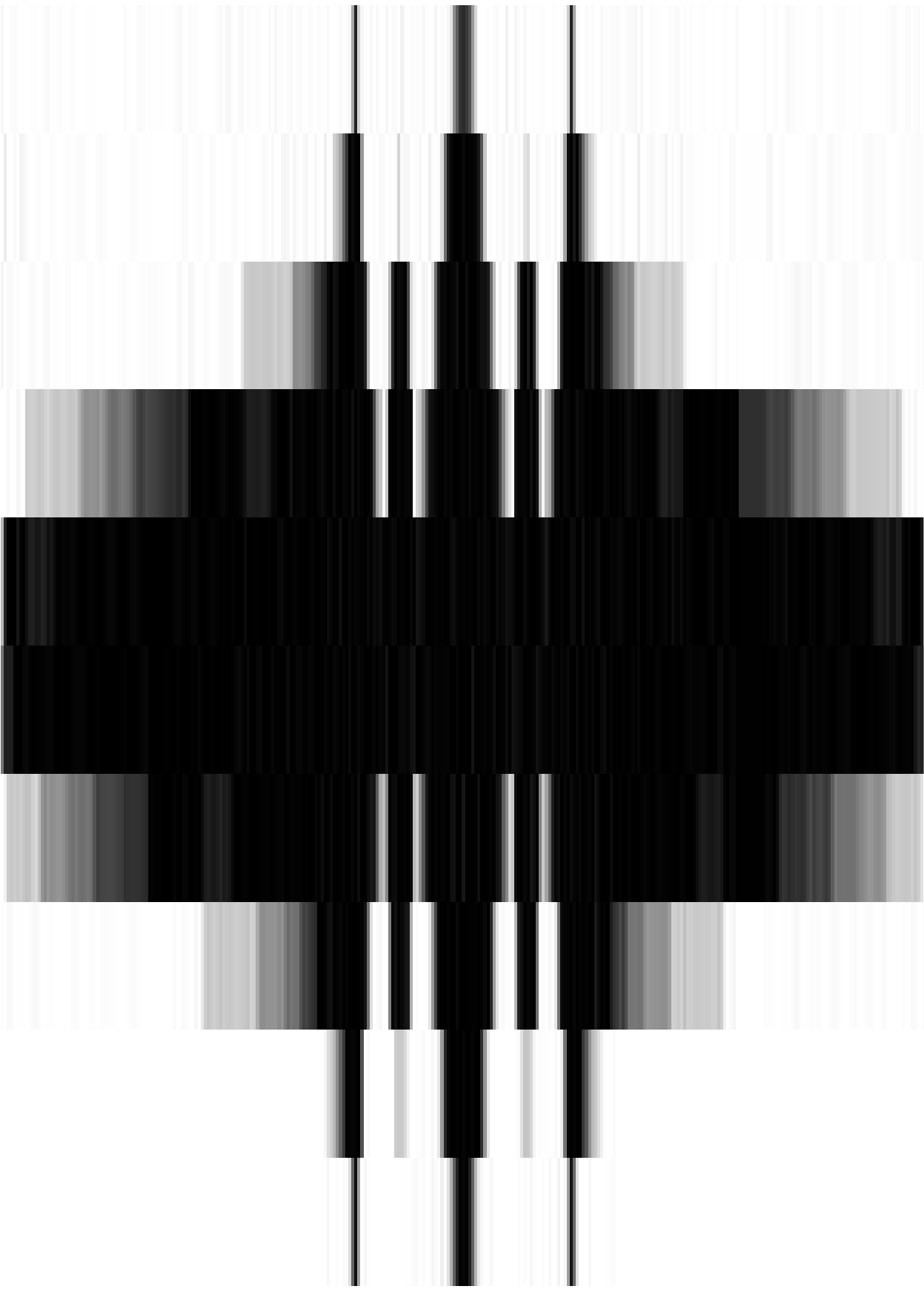
I, in everything, enter the Great Myself.

Gone forever: fitful, flickering shadows of mortal memory;

Spotless is my mental sky—below, ahead, and high above;

Eternity and I, one united ray....¹⁴

Liberated masters who discard all three bodily encasements of the soul and merge in God's infinitude of Cosmic Consciousness still retain their individuality so that by mere willing they can come out of the Cosmic Essence in materialized forms in any way they choose—as informed visions of light or in bodies true to the perception of the five senses. Thus it was that Elijah and Moses, being liberated souls, formless in Spirit, materialized the visage of their earthly forms and appeared on the mountaintop in conversation with Jesus according to divine ordinance—in support of the special dispensation given to Jesus by God and witnessed by the disciples who would give testimony to the world.



Spiritual significance of the presence of Elijah and Moses with Jesus

The appearance of Elijah with Jesus was very significant, in that Elijah, as noted earlier, was none other than the guru-preceptor of Jesus in Jesus' former incarnation as Elisha. The appearance of Elijah on the mountaintop when Jesus was transfigured happened after John the Baptist was beheaded, and by this ordeal the soul of Elijah, incarnate for a time as John, was released in complete liberation in Spirit. The soul of the great prophet Elijah, at the end of that incarnation when he consciously ascended into Spirit "in a fiery chariot" of the metamorphosis of matter into electrical scintillations,¹⁵ was reborn as John the Baptist to play a lesser role on earth as the herald of Jesus and his special dispensation. With the death of John the Baptist, the subordinate consciousness temporarily assumed by Elijah was cast off. That is why he appeared to Jesus as Elijah, and not in his lesser role as John the Baptist, on the Mount of Transfiguration.

The relationship between Elijah and Jesus had spanned many incarnations, not known to man. In confirmation of that bond, Elijah appeared to Jesus Christ to give him his spiritual strength that he might, without wavering, overcome his uttermost ordeal of the sacrifice of his body on the cross.

Moses appeared also as he was the spiritual leader of the Jews, the people among whom Jesus was born and to whom primarily he preached his message of salvation. The appearance of Moses and Jesus together shows their inseparable connection in the spiritual path and that they had been connected in divine work in many incarnations. Moses the Master of the Jews, and Jesus the Master of the Christians, having appeared together on the Mount of Transfiguration in divine glory, ought to be an inspiration to the Jewish and Christian people alike to find and establish harmoniously their brotherhood in God.

Moses and Jesus, in heaven now, consciously watch with grief the clannish differences that have arisen between the Jewish and Christian children of God. Moses showed his recognition and support of Jesus when he appeared with Jesus and Elijah. Their united presence was a divine beacon lit by God in the distant past that it might shine through future ages to dissolve the dark differences of denominationalism that exist between His Jewish and Christian children.

The vibrating voice of the Father and the celestial cloud that enveloped the three masters and the disciples of Jesus distinctly reveals that the Heavenly Father had a special message for the world through the united liberated lives of Jesus, Moses, and Elijah.

The appearance of Elijah with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration is a reassuring attestation of the everlasting bond of the guru-disciple relationship through which all truth-seeking souls find liberation, and in which pact, sealed by God, each finds from the other the help needed as new roles and missions are undertaken in the sequels of God's drama. Jesus himself gives voice to this in the following verses.



And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, “Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.”

And his disciples asked him, saying, “Why then say the scribes that Elijah must first come?”

And Jesus answered and said unto them, “Elijah truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, that Elijah is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them.”

Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist (Matthew 17:9 – 13).

Parallel reference:

And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead.

And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean.

And they asked him, saying, “Why say the scribes that Elijah must first come?”

And he answered and told them, “Elijah verily cometh first, and restoreth all things; and how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought. But I say unto you, that Elijah is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him” (Mark 9:9 – 13).

In the above words and other noted references, Jesus clearly acknowledges the truth of reincarnation, the only sound law of a compassionate Creator that can justify the seeming inequities of the human race. The prophets of the Old Testament did not merely believe in reincarnation, as evidenced in the prediction of Elijah's reincarnation, but knew through divine intuition how to foretell future events by reading the signs of the law of cause and effect.



Jesus predicts that his death would be similar to that of Elijah, reincarnated as John

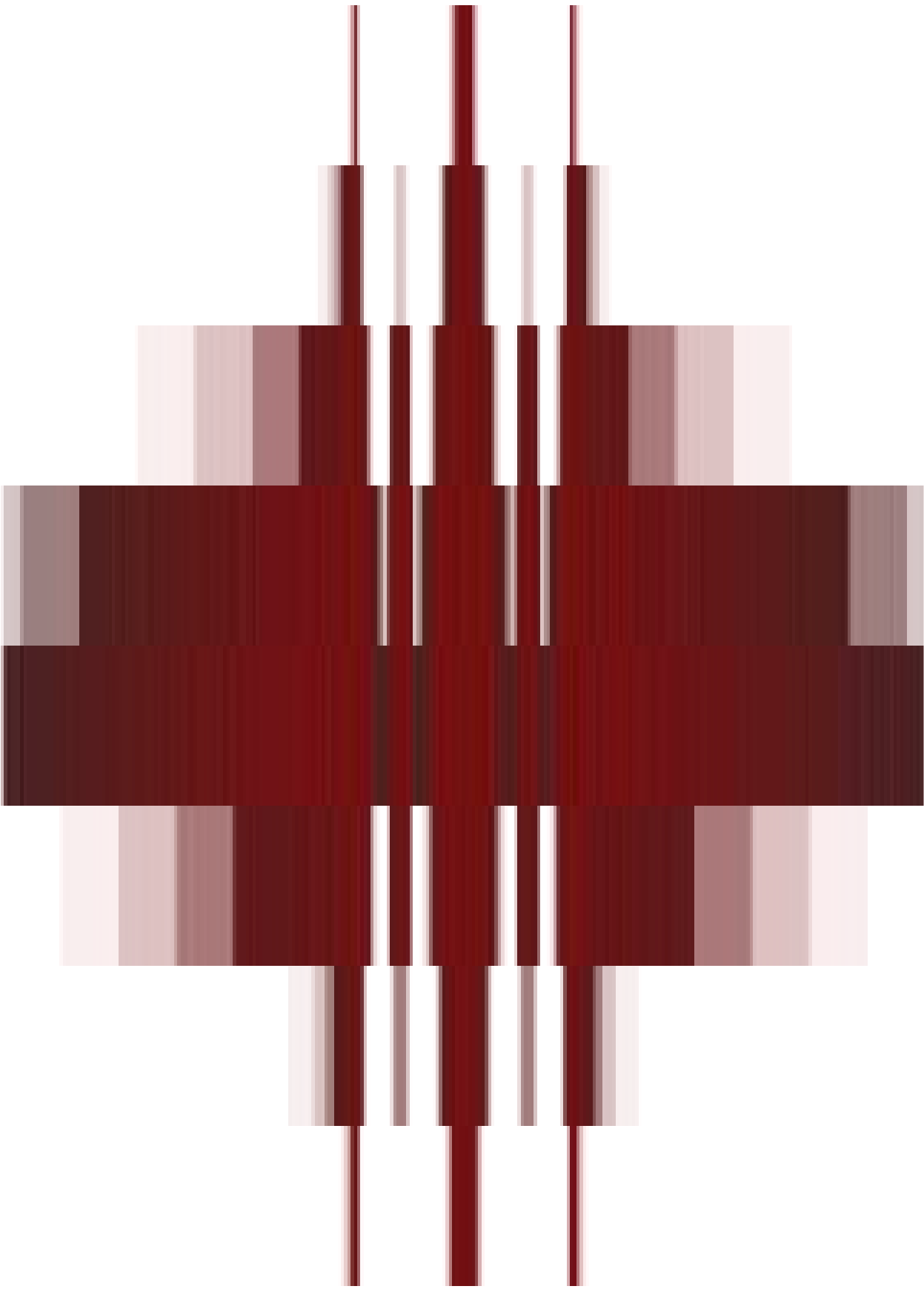
The disciples of Jesus were often confounded by their master's enigmatic statements. They did not yet understand what Jesus meant about "rising from the dead." Furthermore, they pondered the prophecy in the scriptures that declared that Elijah the prophet would come again before the promised Messiah.¹⁶ Knowing Jesus to be that foreordained savior, the disciples questioned him about that prophecy concerning Elijah.

Jesus explained: "It has also been written in the scriptures how the Son of man, my physical self, would suffer many trials and find resistance from the people he would teach.¹⁷ By the Christ Consciousness in me, I know and declare unto you that Elijah has already come before me, reborn as John the Baptist, who was then vilely treated, beheaded, and received back into heaven in the state of final liberation as Elijah—him whom you saw with me on the mount. The people did not recognize John the Baptist as the exalted prophet Elijah, thus they have killed him. I tell you that at the hands of ignorant people my body also will suffer an ignominious death, as did the blessed John the Baptist."

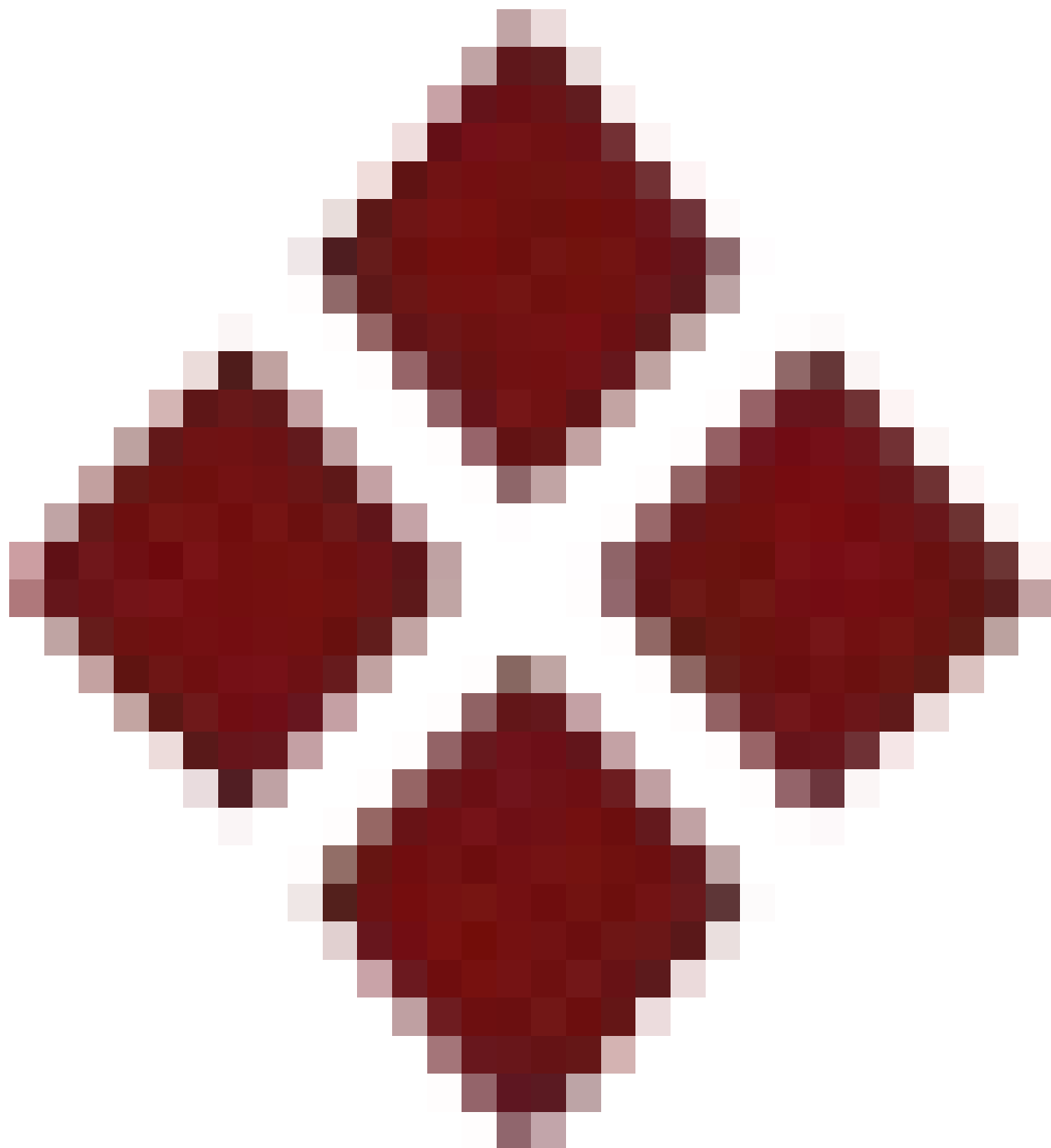


Discourse 46

**“If Ye Have Faith, Nothing Shall Be Impossible Unto
You”**



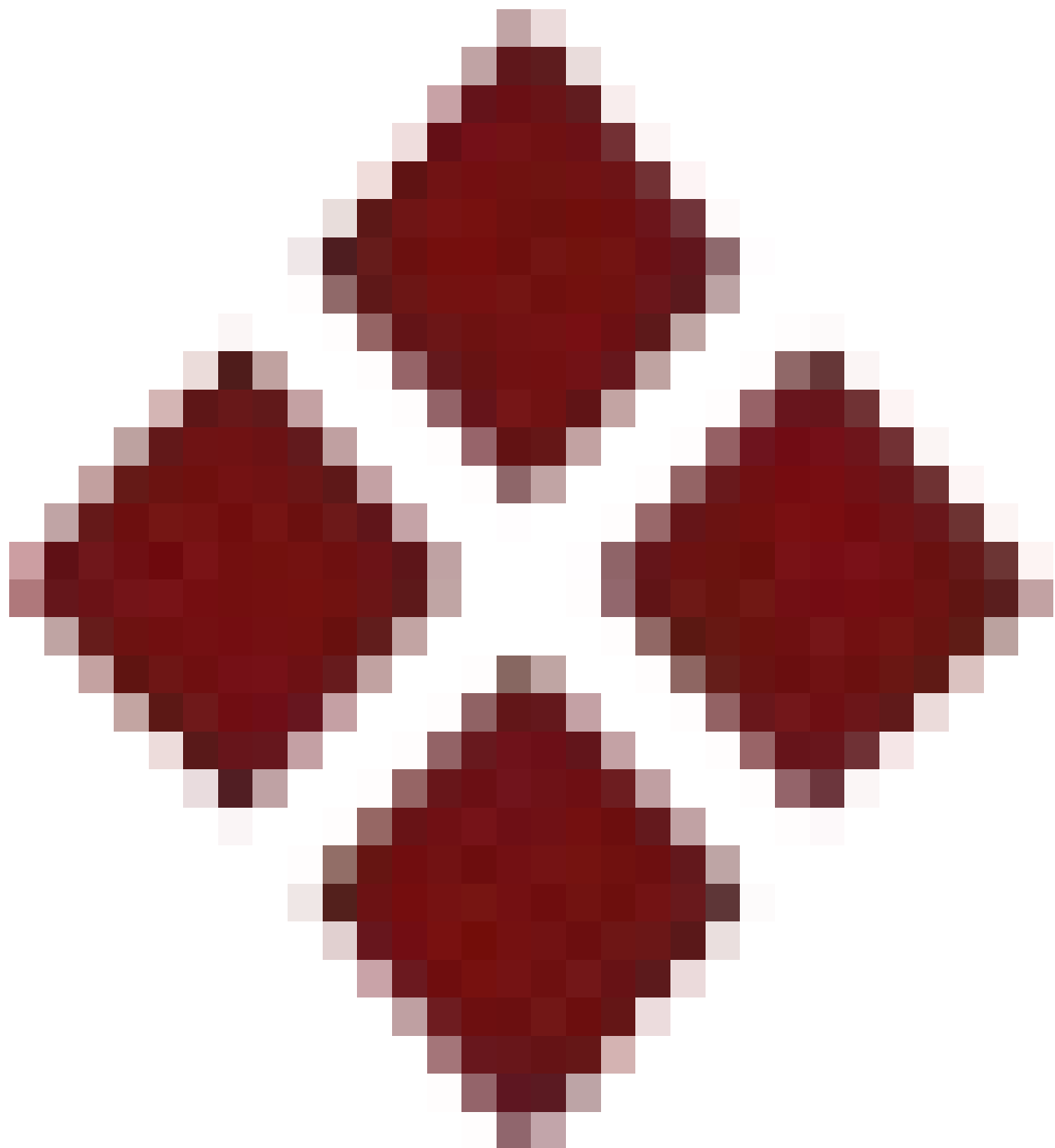
Jesus Mitigated the Evil Karma of Many



Divinely Effective Faith Comes Through Meditation and Self-Discipline



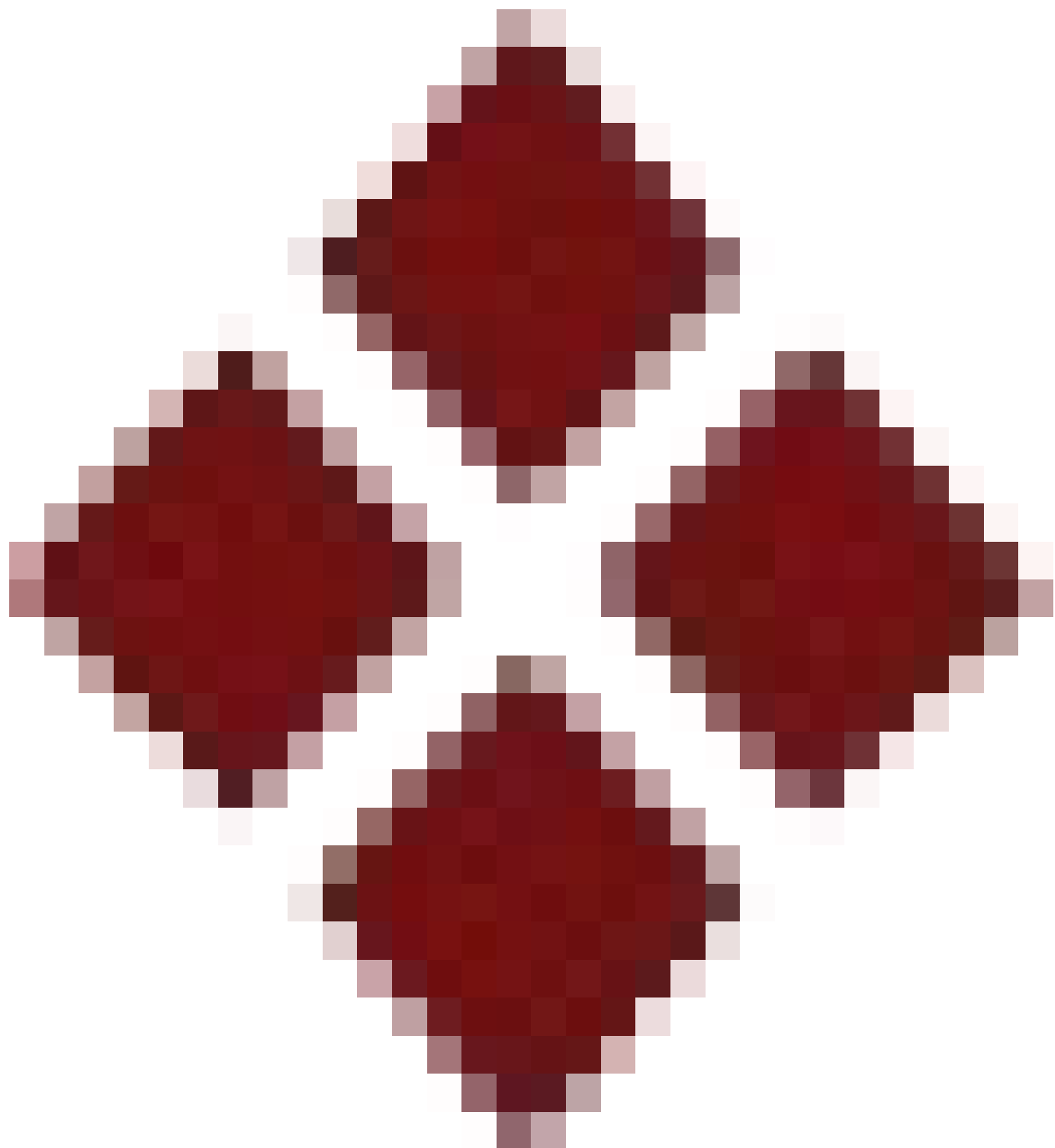
Faith Gives Man Supernatural Sovereignty Over the Natural Order



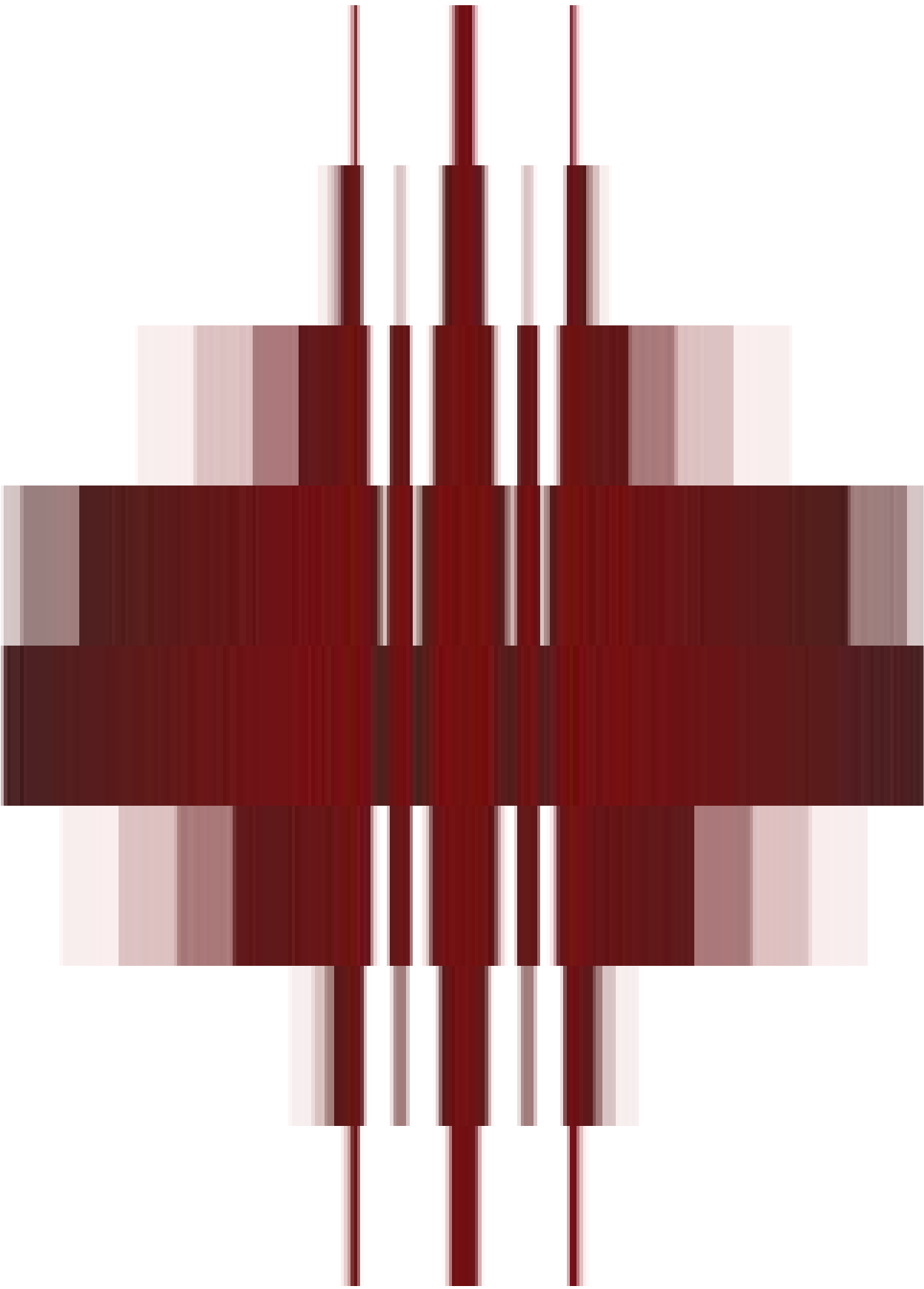
**Definition of Faith: That Which Perceives God's
Invisible Cosmic Creative Powers**



**Using Faith to Resolve Minor Difficulties as Well as to
“Move Mountains”**



**A Child of God Should Never Accept Domination by
Mortal Limitations**



“Have faith, not blind belief but intuitive conviction of the omnipotent presence of God within the enlightened Self, and doubt not that His Presence and power are within.”

■

And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying, “Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatick, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him.”

Then Jesus answered and said, “O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? Bring him hither to me.”

And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour.

Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, “Why could not we cast him out?”

And Jesus said unto them, “Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, ‘Remove hence to yonder place’; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.”

—Matthew 17:14 – 21



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Discourse 46

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You”**



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Then Jesus answered and said, “O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? Bring him hither to me” (Matthew 17:14 – 17).

Parallel reference:

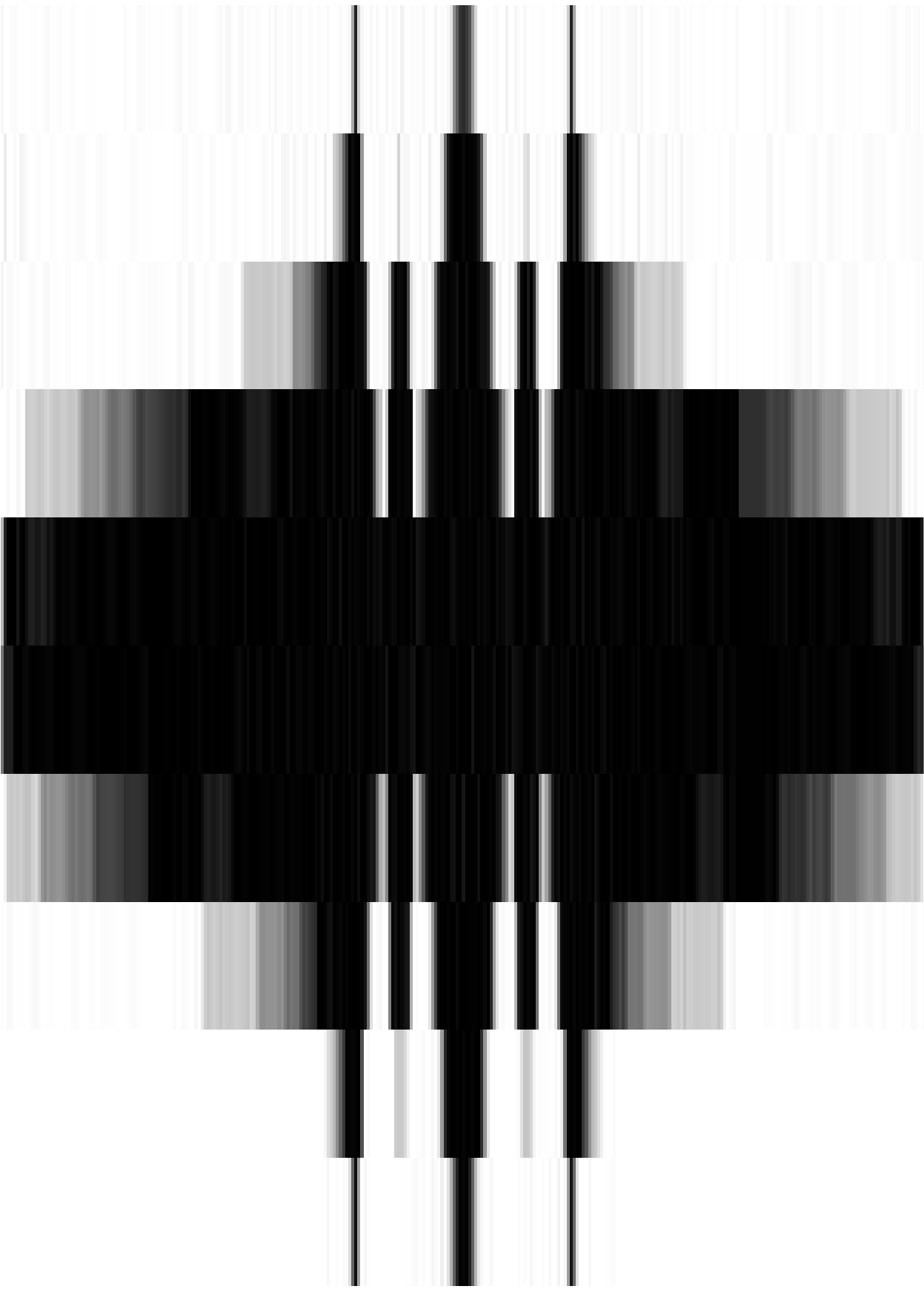
And when he came to his disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them. And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to him saluted him.

And he asked the scribes, “What question ye with them?”

And one of the multitude answered and said, “Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; and wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not.”

He answereth him, and saith, “O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? Bring him unto me” (Mark 9:14 – 19).¹

“O ye generation of people filled with ignorance and without Self-realization of Spirit, I have been so long with you, notwithstanding your lack of appreciation; how long shall I bear with you your agonies, as also taking onto myself your evil karma? Nevertheless, bring your son to me.”



Jesus mitigated the evil karma of many

In the above, Jesus expressed the sorrow of endurance that attended the constant overburdening of himself with the evil karma of others. As a rich man might save a debtor from imprisonment by assuming the debt himself, so great souls by their will power can work out the karmic sufferings of others by taking it onto their own souls. But this fortuitous blessing by the intervening presence of a master happens only to repentant persons whose otherwise good karma attracts this mitigation of their karmic obligations.

Further, Jesus knew that by accumulating the evil karma or sinful actions of others it would ultimately be at the high cost of his own life. He offered up man's dearest possession, his body, for working out the karma of others by the terrible ordeal of his crucifixion; and then by superior soul force he resurrected his body and proved his victory over all constraints of Nature. Even though Jesus realized that to cure the serious deep-seated condition of the man's possessed son meant that he himself would have to carry much evil karma of the boy, still, out of his infinite compassion, Jesus agreed to heal him.



And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour (Matthew 17:18).

Parallel reference:

And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming.

And he asked his father, "How long is it ago since this came unto him?"

And he said, "Of a child. And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us."

Jesus said unto him, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth."

And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief."

When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, "Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him."

And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose (Mark 9:20 – 27).²

Jesus remonstrated: "O wicked disembodied spirit, condemned to be deaf and dumb in the astral world because of your evil karma, why are you conjuring more evil karma for yourself by vilely possessing this child before me, instead of rightly working out the effects of your past evil actions? I command you to come out of this boy's body and to possess him no more."

Many are the torments that disembodied wicked spirits may experience in the after-death state according to their store of evil accumulated in earth life. In this instance, Jesus recognized a malevolent spirit that was karmically deaf and dumb who possessed an earthly body in order to regain auditory and vocal powers. However, so exacting is the immutable law of cause and effect that the vocal cords and auditory nerves of the unlawfully possessed body, though otherwise healthy, were rendered useless.

Owing to this boy's being possessed since childhood, his nervous system was completely exhausted. Thus, when the devilish spirit was cast out of him by Jesus, the child appeared as dead. But Jesus took him by the hand, charging him with cosmic energy as he lifted him up; and immediately the cured boy was fully restored.



Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, “Why could not we cast him out?”

And Jesus said unto them, “Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, ‘Remove hence to yonder place’; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting” (Matthew 17:19 – 21).³

Comparable references to the power of faith spoken on other occasions:

And the apostles said unto the Lord, “Increase our faith.”

And the Lord said, “If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, ‘Be thou plucked by the root, and be thou planted in the sea’; and it should obey you” (Luke 17:5 – 6).

And Jesus answering saith unto them, “Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain, ‘Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea’; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them” (Mark 11:22 – 24).⁴

Jesus explained to his disciples: “To cast out the evil spirit long lodged in the afflicted boy required steady faith. When you witnessed the frightfulness of his condition and failed to heal him by one or two attempts, you disbelieved; your wavering faith was unable to draw sufficient power from the Cosmic Source of all accomplishment and healing. Through my Christ-Consciousness perception, I declare unto you that if by inner divine communion you have even the smallest seed, as a grain of mustard, of real intuitive conviction of Go d’s power, any mountain of difficulty will be removed at your command.



Divinely effective faith comes through meditation and self-discipline

“But I strongly admonish you that this all-accomplishing power of faith cannot come by mere belief or intellectual conviction, nor by halfhearted or intermittent efforts at Self-realization. It comes by constant intense prayer-demands for Cosmic Consciousness in deep meditation and by nonattachment to the body through the discipline of moral living and regular purificatory fasting. When you are intuitively guided by communion with God in ecstatic meditation, your will and faith will then be one with the Father’s limitless power.”

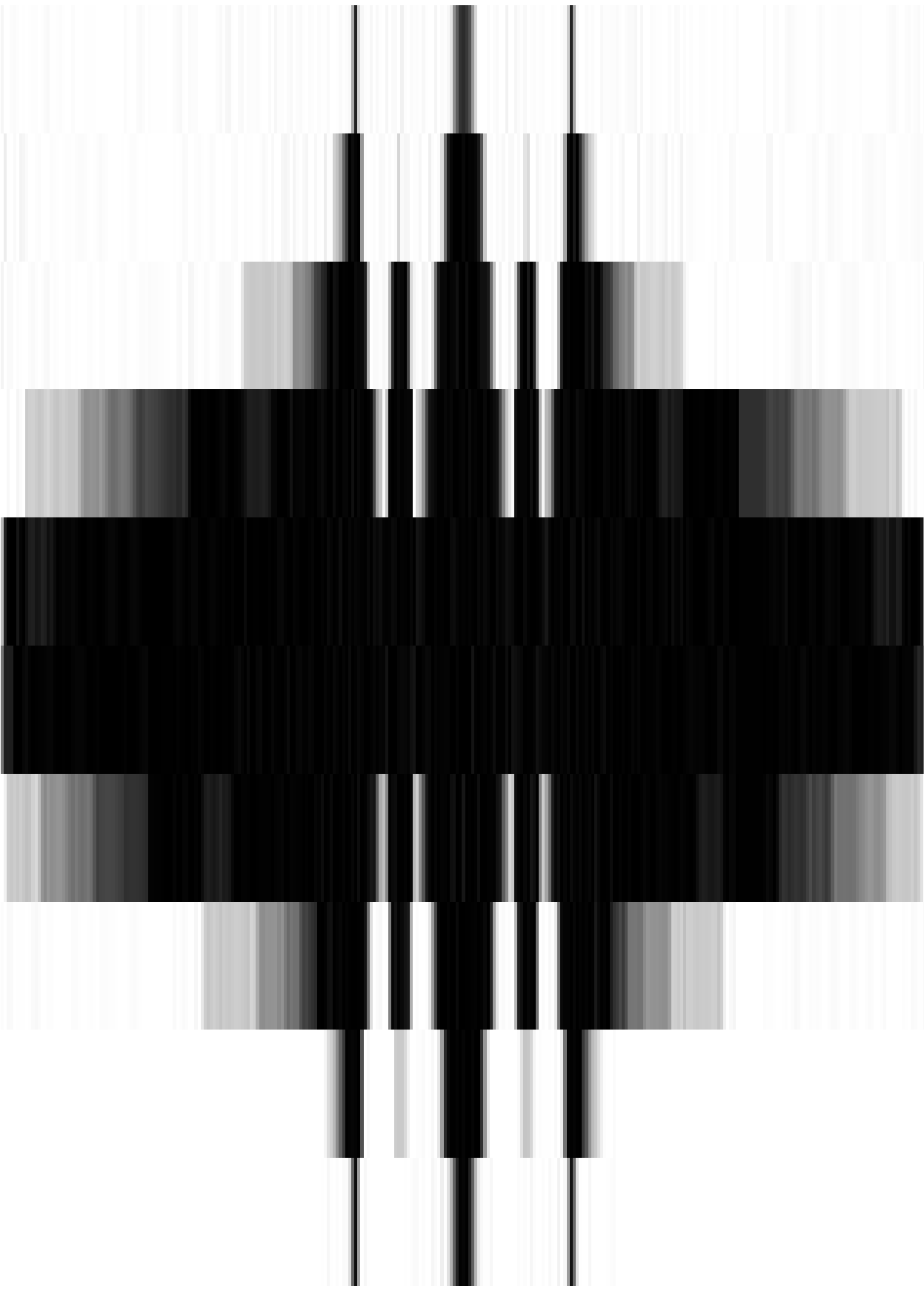
Jesus sought to awaken in languid man the cosmic conviction possessed by God, the power of His absolute knowing, by which He created stars, planets, human beings—the universe and everything therein. Through His self-evolved power of divine will and self-evolved confidence in the all-creative force of His thought and ideations, He has “frozen” into being the infinite manifestations of matter and intelligence. God knows by the incontrovertible immediacy of omniscience that He is all-powerful. With this almighty conviction, nothing is impossible to Him; whatever He thinks, He can do by divine fiat or by so ordering the workings of His cosmic laws.



Faith gives man supernatural sovereignty over the natural order

Being made in God's image, man too has that omnipotent will and self-confidence hidden within his soul, empowering him to create or accomplish anything he can imagine. When one dislodges from his soul the octopus grip of human habits and hereditary beliefs, replacing impossibility consciousness with the realized power of faith, one gains over the natural order a supernatural sovereignty. It is by deeper and deeper meditation that one can unite his intuitive imaging power with the almighty conviction of God and realize the relation of intuition and matter. All manifestations of cosmic vibration are controlled and guided by God's ideated intuitions. When by God-communion the convictions of advanced souls are attuned with God's conviction of His own omnipresent omnipotence, that faith creates vibrations so potent that if so willed it can literally uproot a mountain and cast it into the sea.

Jesus was thus not speaking merely allegorically. He actually meant that even as God causes mountains to rise from beneath the seas, or continents to sink from sight, so liberated souls who are in tune with Him are in touch with that unlimited power—as was Jesus, and also Bhagavan Krishna, of whom it is told he once suspended an entire mountain in the air, like a protective umbrella, to shelter his people from a devastating storm. The consciousness of an ordinary man is omnipresent in the microcosm of his body; he can will that consciousness to move any part of the body. Similarly, one who has faith realization of his identity with the omnipresent Cosmic Consciousness can, by divine will, govern any aspect of the macrocosmic body of the universe—but he is unlikely to find an engaging interest in rearranging the Lord's cosmic scenery.



Definition of faith: that which perceives God's invisible cosmic creative powers

“Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.... Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.”⁵ The phenomena of material creation can be apprehended by man's intellect and senses, but not the supersensory astral and causal vibratory forces that underlie and structure the physical world. The light of intuition is required to reveal the subtle workings of the heavenly powers. That light is the soul's realization of truth, which expresses itself through intuitive knowing, and the resultant conviction is faith. Thus, faith is the term used by Jesus to denote that which perceives the invisible cosmic creative powers, and God as the final Substance. Faith in, i.e., intuitive knowledge of, Cosmic Consciousness as the prime mover of all atomic creation bestows power to act on any portion of the universal structure.

The sense-dependent, matter-worshipping man is a consummate infidel—disavowing, because he has no “evidence of things not seen,” the invisible forces of an invisible God that would bestow on him all “things hoped for.” Nevertheless, even ignorance-blinded individuals possess some degree of faith: a latent intuition of God's presence and power within that gives birth to all human hopes and incentive to achieve. This unconscious faith is the secret fountainhead of man's expectations of fulfillment of his copious dreams. Human hope, if used rightly as motivation to cultivate higher potentials of mind, imagination, and will, ultimately produces true faith, the intuitive realization of the divine powers in the soul.



How to develop a belief into the absolute conviction of faith

“Lord, increase our faith,” the disciples petitioned Jesus. Even a little intuitive faith can accomplish wonders, far more than mere belief or the enhancing power of imagination. One who does not meditate or contact God might stand in front of a tree and with all his human belief, abetted by a strong imagination, say: “I command you, be thou plucked by the root, and be thou planted in the sea.” Naturally, it will not do so. Miracles cannot be demonstrated by conditional belief or imagination, but by uniting the Self with God.

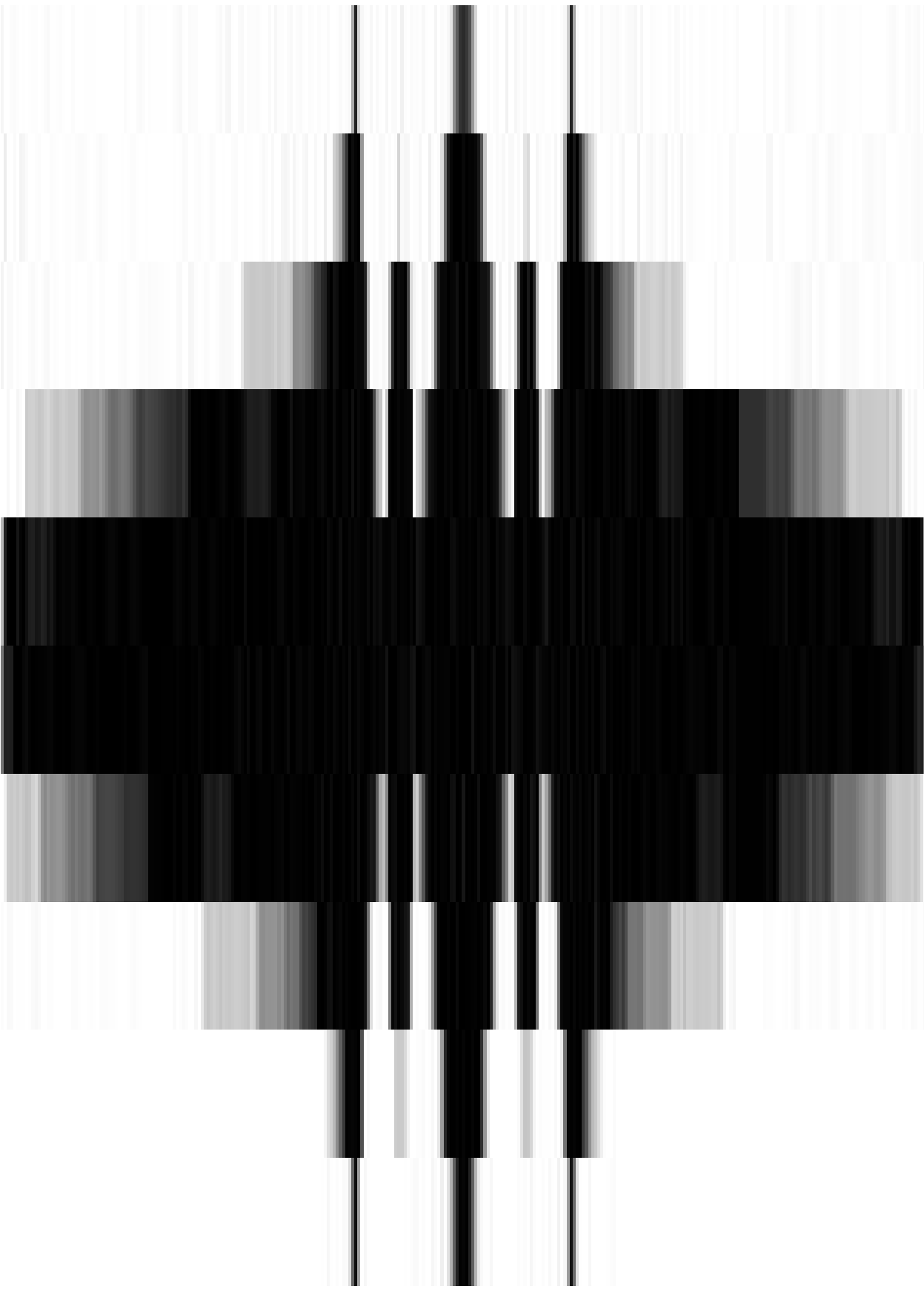
There is a way to cultivate belief until it becomes faith or absolute conviction. Belief is the initial recipient attitude of the mind necessary for planting the seed of a hoped-for outcome. As a successful farmer learns the laws of planting for a good harvest, so a truth-seeking individual must learn how to cultivate the soil of belief so that it may yield the desired result. When the seed of his aspiration is continuously watered with belief in the Self and in the intercession of a master—as when the disciples appealed to Jesus—it sprouts into faith that the desired result will inevitably be accomplished.

Jesus knew the laws of truth; he was equipped with almighty God-consciousness and knew that anyone who trusted in him and his words would create a channel through which he could easily transfer to the supplicator the powers within his Christ Consciousness. Ordinary spiritual teachers cannot surcharge people as Jesus did, because they themselves are not always convinced of the power of divine will and intuition-born faith and are thus lesser conduits for its transmission to others.

Jesus taught from his own experience and example that soul intuition and its supremely accomplishing power of faith develop in those who meditate deeply and do not stimulate body consciousness by constant dependence only on material sustenance.⁶ When the soul continuously remains identified with the delusive dream-body, it puts on the weaknesses of that mass of matter and forgets to exercise the all-powerful faith hidden within itself. Faith is lost by sorrowing over or being elated by the changing conditions of sickness and health that invade the body. The soul can neither be sick nor healthy, for it is made in the bodiless image of perfect God. Anyone who is jubilant because of the dream health of the body or grieved by its dream sickness, or who is afraid of disease

and distressed when it comes, is dreaming the cosmic delusion and is not inwardly free. Hence every devotee should meditate on his transcendent blissful Self and preserve that ever newly joyous state of consciousness. It is greater to realize the perfection of the soul, which is immortal, than just to acquire by mental power health of the temporal body, which has to be cast away at the call of death. When the consciousness of the devotee is finally united to Cosmic Consciousness, which sustains and controls the medley of dream forms in the cosmic dream universe, then through that consciousness “all things are possible to him.”

Jesus stressed to his disciples that the way to rouse the power of faith is to realize the presence of God within one’s own Self. To produce difficult supernatural healings or other miraculous phenomena, it is necessary first to accomplish the supreme miracle: uniting the soul with God to the conscious satisfaction of the Self and the Divine Father.



Using faith to resolve minor difficulties as well as to “move mountains”

It is in the nature of faith to create anything it wants. One who believes very strongly in the fulfillment of a desire will sooner or later find it comes to pass. But before one can move mountains, he must be able to demonstrate that divine power in little accomplishments in life. One should develop faith by working it to resolve minor difficulties; he will thereby prepare himself to cut through the Gordian knots of life's most recondite troubles.

“Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.” Those who concentrate prayerfully and continuously on any goal will see that no matter how daunting its attainment they will be led to the means of receiving what they seek. One's strong faith can work miracles by superimposing helpful thoughts in the brains of others. For example, before seeking employment or negotiating for something desired, one should concentrate his thoughts and prayers strongly in a positive way. God will respond by dropping into the minds of others those thoughts that are in harmony with whatever one is seeking. It is true that this is not direct materialization as Christ was able to demonstrate. Still, strong thoughts create conditions in kind; they set in motion the minds of others who will later step forward to assist in realizing the goal one is visualizing. And when faith becomes very powerful, God Himself will so order the sought-for attainment. Why not? He created everything in the beginning by special creation. He told the flowers to be flowers and water to be water and electrons to be electrons. If anyone can image his wants and will them with indomitable strength, and unwaveringly “believe that ye receive them, ye shall have them”—but not otherwise.⁷

It is helpful to practice cultivating concentrated visualization. One way is to sit quietly in a totally darkened room and visualize the surroundings. Try to think of all the various items in that room, mentally seeing them in minute detail. Then turn on the light and see how accurately and completely you were able to identify the decor while sitting in the dark. Now turn out the light again and visualize everything in another room. Concentrate deeply until you see every corner and every object in that room. This simple practice works. As one develops the power of visualization, it can, within reason, bring to pass anything one wishes. Nearly everyone at some time has had the experience of attaining

something they had long envisioned and wished for, even though fulfillment was unlikely. Concentration is the key, along with faith.

However, concentration and visualization alone are not sufficient; merely to think of oneself as having the status of a millionaire will not make it so. In addition to positive thoughts one must have adamant will power and unshakable faith. The will must be made so strong that it can bring whatever one visualizes into reality through one's applied concerted effort. Remember, "God helps him who helps himself."

One's goals must be within the bounds of wisdom. When Jesus urged unfaltering belief as the way to achieve what one asks for in prayer, he did not mean that if all people prayed and thoroughly believed they would be as rich as Croesus within a year, their desire would be granted. They could not so expeditiously change their habits, the karma of their present and past lives, and their environmental opportunities, just by prayer and belief, to suddenly become opulent. According to the present karmic conditions on earth such a happening is impossible. Human prosperity requires human meriting and is conditioned by environment. There are in this world scores of people who have superior mentalities and more will power than Henry Ford; but they are not placed in a similarly favorable environment, with the same karmic background, that made it possible for Henry Ford to amass his fortune. In fact, the average person of today will likely have to work hard for many more lives before the law of financial evolution would permit him to enter the millionaire class. All human achievements have to be karmically earned, all human faculties of merit acquired. There are many abilities to be cultivated besides that of making money, many forms of karmic evolution more important to one's welfare than financial evolution.



Fulfillment of Jesus' promise comes with realization of God's presence within

Nevertheless, by prayer, meditation, and good actions all human beings can develop spiritually and attain communion with God and intuitive conviction of His almighty presence within themselves. Because man as the immortal soul is made in the image of God, he can in a short time—even within one life—regain his consciousness of oneness with the Divine. Anyone established in that unity can make himself immeasurably wealthy and powerful if he wants to be. But, paradoxically, material gain is never a goal of the enlightened man!

Jesus realized, “I and my Father are one.”⁸ He could perform miracles, heal the sick, and raise the dead because he was established in his identity with God. Sometimes people pray unwisely or irrationally, asking for things their karma and stage of evolution do not permit them to have at present, believing that their prayers will be fulfilled. But when their desires are not granted, their belief—which was in fact more of an expression of their importunate wants rather than an exercise in faith—turns into doubt about the efficacy of prayers and the existence of a caring God who responds to man's needs.

People blunder into this negative state of false reasoning because they take the saying of Jesus, “All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive,”⁹ without its context: “If ye have faith and doubt not...”¹⁰ One must have faith, not blind belief but intuitive conviction of the omnipotent presence of God within the enlightened Self, and doubt not that His Presence and power are within. If one first has this intuitive realization of God, through meditation and communion, then one cannot have doubts about the responsive immediacy of His almighty power. Therein lies the truth of Jesus' words. After attaining God-consciousness, then whatever one prays and believes, he can accomplish.

These words of Jesus instruct believers in prayer that because of the instability of their faith, there is no assurance that all prayers will be answered in the manner desired. So long as one is in a state of disunion with God, it is not enough merely to “believe” and pray laboriously. The devotee should first seek contact with God; and even after experiencing God-communion, he must take care to believe—“shall not doubt in his heart”—that whatever he desires as he prays is even then coming to him through the almighty power of God; then he

shall receive it.

A human beggar receives a beggar's pittance, but a divine son who is one with God receives the son's share. That is why man as a human beggar should not expect his prayers for the divine inheritance of great powers of fulfillment to be granted. But when by meditation man dissociates himself from his physical limitations and concentrates on the unlimited power of his soul, then he acknowledges his immortality and changes his status from that of a deluded mortal, subsisting on the chance crumbs of his karma, to that of divine sonhood, with heaven and earth at his command.



A child of God should never accept domination by mortal limitations

The follower of the scientific path of freedom from material limitation works at developing mental power. By yoga techniques of meditation, affirmation, and visualization, and by unshakable will power and faith, the power of mind can gradually be made to exceed the delusion-imposed limitations of body consciousness. When the thoughts are brought under control, they become veritable miracle workers. The advancing devotee can use that mind power to heal the body and to relieve its suffering. It is tragic to think of persons who endure years and years of cancer or other forms of wretchedness. Man's susceptibility to suffering comes through ignorance of his innate divinity; how indolently he neglects the development of the power that can master the body and keep it in the palm of the hand of his soul. By control of the mind he could become indifferent to the condition of the body, in health as well as disease, even as a person under anesthetic can be operated on without feeling any pain. The germ of every trouble starts in the mind; yet in that mind is also the Infinite Power that most persons have never used.

We are children of God with all His powers latent within us; we must never part with those powers by supinely accepting domination by the mortal self. Life is not just prosperity and health; life is battle. Saint Francis was blind and suffered numerous ailments and deprivations, yet he was able to heal the sick and raise the dead, and to rejoice in communion with God and Christ. Those who realize their oneness with God become inwardly free from the seeming ills of this dream life, and behold health and sickness, gain and loss, life and death, only as interesting phases of the dream. Of course, it would be foolish to presume such aboveness until one actually realizes that all matter is energy and that energy is the thought of God. One who strikes his dream head against a dream wall will get a dream fracture!

The body is man's cross and he has to bear it bravely and mentally rise above its complaints. Those who love the body and are attached to its happiness rebel against God as soon as suffering comes. Jesus was nailed to the cross and was suffering with all his sensibility; yet he prayed, "Father, forgive them." He could have destroyed his enemies with the power in his spiritual eye; he had the divine forces of God at his command. But by this singular act of love he demonstrated his greatest miracle as one proclaimed by God as a true divine son.

In Jesus there was no trace of egoity with its body-identified attachments and enslavement to desires, anger, and vengefulness. By gradual steps, each man has a soul destiny to rise to a Christlike life—to practice the universal Christ principles at all times. Life is a laboratory and testing ground in which man is to learn from his divine potentials how to be happy even when bruised by trials and grievous offenses.

Man's tests are not sent by God as punishment; His law is not "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." If God fights man, then He is not God. He knows He got us into this mess and He wants us to get out, and the way is to endure our tests and conquer. Each person must learn to bear his cross while never losing faith in God. When the body suffers and one is yet able to say, "I am all right," he is transcending the body.

In this world, nature constrains man to live as an ordinary human being, but within we must be gods. Jesus, like ordinary men, ate and slept and wept. In a moment of weakness and pain on the cross he cried out in his humanness, "My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" But inside he was divine. He had bridged that gulf between human life and the divine life, and was established in his divinity. God made every man in His image so that by that potential he too might overcome his many tests and become established in his innate divinity.

Life is an anomaly; but no matter how hard it is to understand, man ought not to blame God for his ills. The book of life is like a novel. It is read with laughter and weeping and excitement almost to the end, with still many questions left unanswered until in the last chapter all the puzzles are solved. This book of life is written by the Master Novelist. The full meaning of His masterpiece will not be understood by anyone who has not himself become one with the Master, able then to read His thoughts between the divinely scripted lines. Until you know the wisdom and love that interlaces the plot of life, have faith in God.

Live the life divine: Conquer bad habits and do not cater all the time to the body. Give it to God. The devotee says: "Lord, You are the creator and owner of this body, so it is for You to help me care for it; and I know You will." A person with a hundred years of prosperity and health, but with no spiritual realization, is not as fortunate as one who is crippled, deaf, blind, and forsaken, but who has God in his heart.

To meditate and practice Kriya Yoga is the scientific way of solving the mystery

of life and its inscrutable problems, by first solving the mystery of the Self and its relationship with Spirit. Gradually one attains; through the science of the Spirit comes power to do all miracles. To anyone trained in the methods of the masters the knowledge of the masters comes, fulfilling one's hope—the hope of all mankind—to set the spirit free.

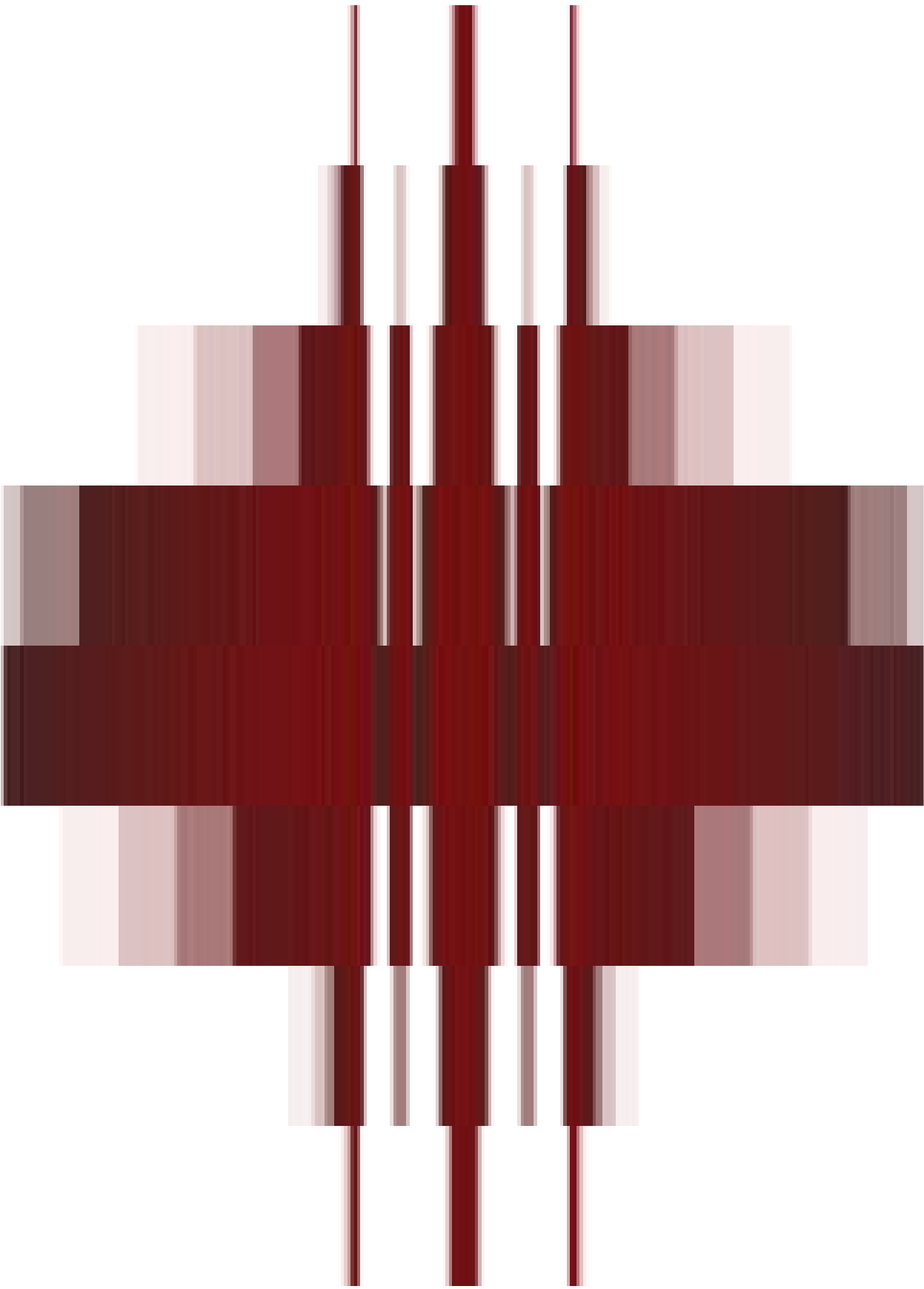
“If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed....” Immortal words! spoken to shatter the bonds of doubt-enslaved mortals and rouse their native all-conquering will: “Beware, O ye mountains! Stand not in my way. Your ribs will be shattered and tattered today!”¹¹

To those who know God, everything is possible. God who strews star flowers of milky ways in the garden of space, God who lights the spark of life in the lamps of countless creatures, God who created every atom and feeling and thought in all sentient beings—what could be beyond His power? And what could be denied His devotees who are one with Him? Jesus meant exactly this. Removing difficulties by affirmations, visualization, and belief in the power of the mind, as persons of strong will power do, is nothing unusual. What Jesus taught is far greater: to tune the human will to the Divine Will and thereby destroy mortal limitations. This can be accomplished only by conscious communion with the all-powerful God and by realizing the inseparable union of soul and Spirit. Those who have such communion can never doubt that the almighty power of God resides in their hearts. They know that with divine inevitability whatever they wish will be fulfilled—will materialize—and whatever they say “shall come to pass.”

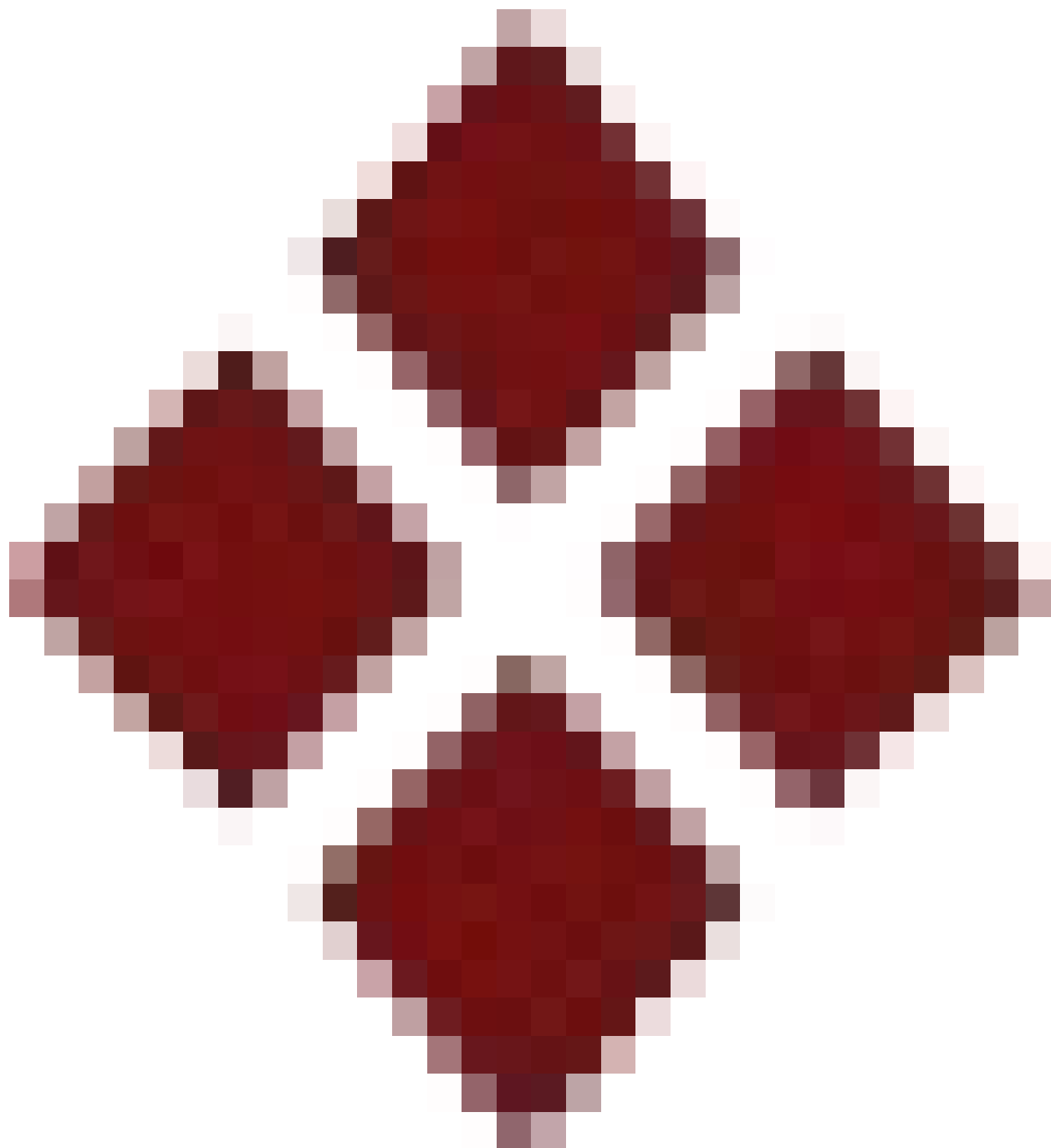


Discourse 47

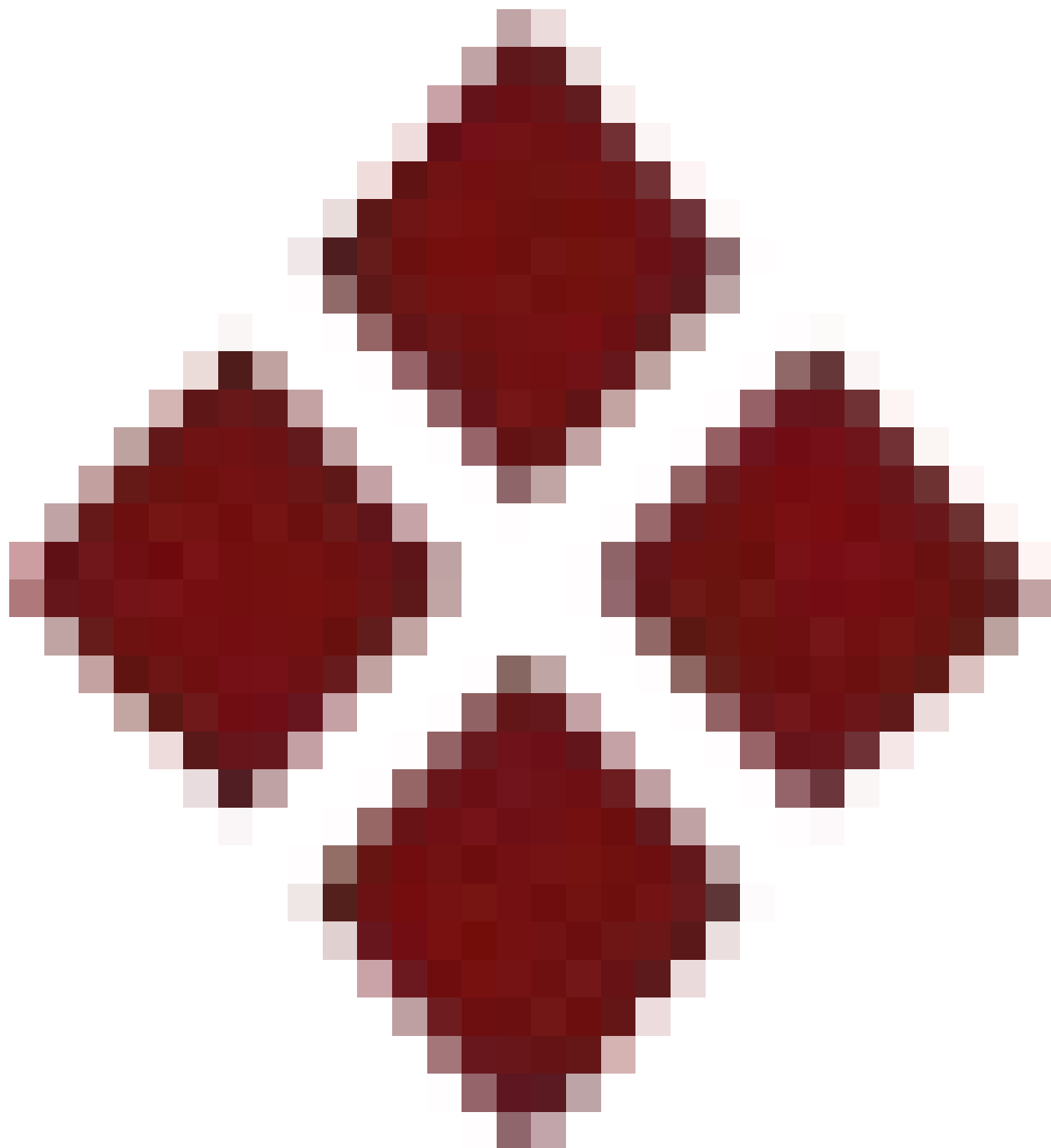
**“The Greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven”: Humble
Servants of All**



Love and Humility Win the Heart of God



**“Become as Little Children”: Express the Pure,
Childlike Heavenly Qualities**



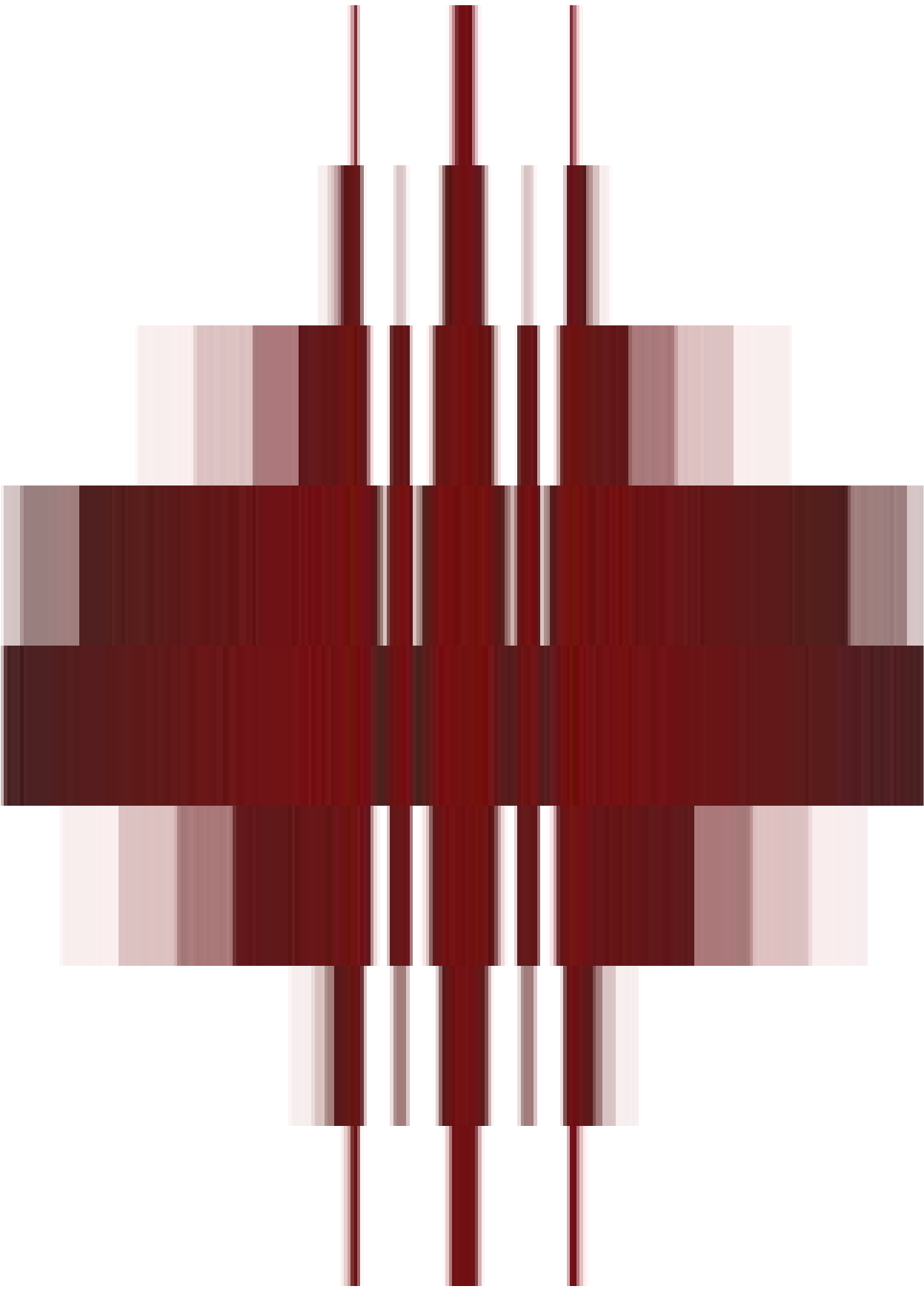
Real Humility: Transcending the Ego and Freeing the Soul to Identify With God



Egotism: The Surest Sign of Ignorance



Jesus' Ideals of Self-Sacrifice and Universal Service



“He who is veritably among the greatest considers himself the least....He who gives of himself in ministering to all sits as a king on the throne of love in their hearts.”

■

And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, “The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men: And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again.” And they were exceeding sorry.

And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute money came to Peter, and said, “Doth not your master pay tribute?”

He saith, “Yes.” And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, “What thinkest thou, Simon? Of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers?”

Peter saith unto him, “Of strangers.” Jesus saith unto him, “Then are the children free. Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.”

At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”

And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, “Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.

“But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.”

[In a later incident, en route to Jerusalem for the last time, Jesus spoke again about the qualities of humility and service as the mark of spiritual greatness:]

Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him.

And he said unto her, "What wilt thou?"

She saith unto him, "Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom."

But Jesus answered and said, "Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"

They say unto him, "We are able."

And he saith unto them, "Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father."

And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren. But Jesus called them unto him, and said, "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

—Matthew 20:20 – 28



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Discourse 47

**“The Greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven”: Humble
Servants of All**



And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, “The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men: and they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again.” And they were exceeding sorry.¹

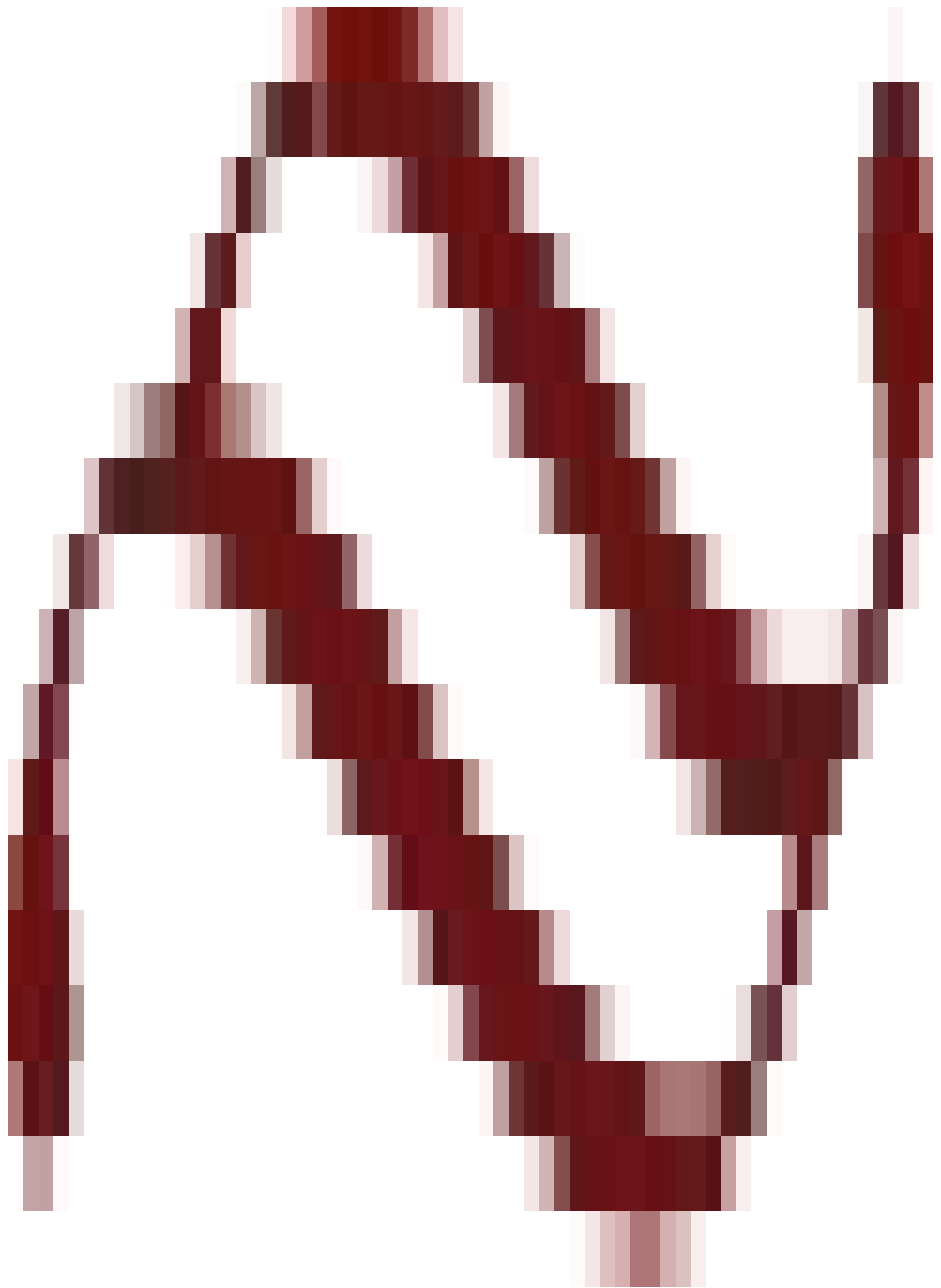
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Jesus addressed the question of taxation: “The kings of the earth gather tribute from their subjects, not from their own children, who go free. Likewise, those who are subject to the materiality of the world needs must give taxes to the earth’s kingly authorities; but we, fully realizing ourselves as the children of God, consider all things as belonging to God and to us as His heirs. The Sovereign of the Cosmos, our Father, asks from us no compensation.

“Nevertheless, lest we offend the order of the world, let us do our part in paying taxes. Dear Simon, that you may see the glory of God as it shines upon me, His child, He will free me from the earthly obligation of this present taxation by miraculously sending to me the money required, a coin you will find in the mouth of a fish you will catch in the sea.”²



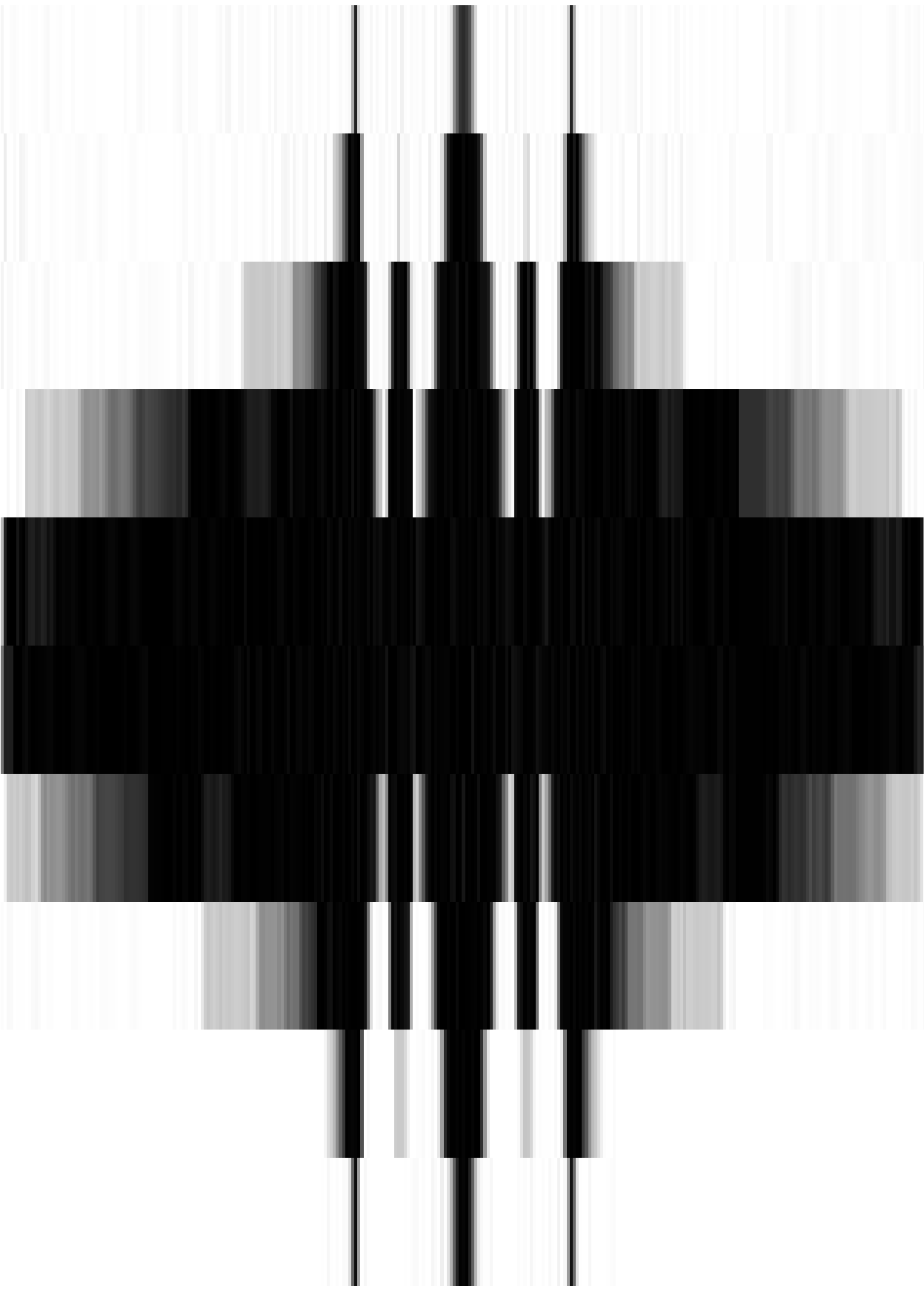
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Parallel reference:

And he came to Capernaum: and being in the house he asked them, “What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?” But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest. And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, “If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all.”

And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them, “Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but Him that sent me” (Mark 9:33 – 37).³



Love and humility win the heart of God

“If any devotee aspires to be favored in God’s eyes, he should desire to be the least and humblest in the world’s estimation, utterly forswearing egotism and selfishness. He should outwardly keep his consciousness ready to be of loving service to all, and inwardly endeavor, as long as he lives, to contact in meditation the Christ Consciousness inherent in the Holy Ghost Cosmic Vibration (‘m y nam e’). Anyone who by ecstatic communion absorbs in his Cosmic Vibration – saturated consciousness the divine childlike qualities—humility, purity, love, joy—receives me; that is, gradually attunes himself with and manifests my Christ Consciousness. And he who receives my Christ Consciousness pervading the finite cosmos ultimately receives the transcendent Cosmic Consciousness that sent the Christ Intelligence as Its pure reflection in vibratory creation. That soul, having been released from its egoistic body consciousness and having become united with the infinite Cosmic Consciousness is, in the eyes of metaphysical law, the greatest in the kingdom of heaven—one with the Peerless Spirit.”

There is none greater than God, yet He does not push Himself forward as foremost in the cosmos. He silently serves all creation and all creatures to the end of eternity, without asking anything in return. His nonpareil greatness lies in His being in love with all and feeling His oneness with the throb of life in all things and creatures. Anyone who seeks acclaim in the universal order will be so judged if he is humble like God and eternally attuned with Him.

The egotist is soon cast down from the lofty seat of commendation in others’ hearts and set at the lowest point of their estimation. But the person whose character bespeaks his unconditional love and spirit of service without selfish motive becomes a consummate emperor of benevolent power enthroned on all hearts within his kingdom of influence. There is nothing greater than love to draw to the worthy the love and esteem of others. Love, affirmed by humility, conquers human hearts and wins the heart of God. In the consciousness made humble and receptive through devotion, God and the Great Ones will manifest. But to one who flaunts his merits to receive worldly recognition, They will not come. Humility and love alone can attract the divine response—nothing else.⁴



“Become as little children”: Express the pure, childlike heavenly qualities

It is a literalistic nonunderstanding of these verses to think that one receives Christ just by the loving acceptance of children in Jesus’ name. Receiving the Divine is not such a simple matter! Jesus meant that anyone who is in tune with his Christ spirit, and who with wisdom recognizes and receives into his own heart the childlike heavenly qualities and guileless mentality innate in pure-hearted little ones, will dispossess his consciousness of the meanness of ego and open himself to the presence of Christ Consciousness.

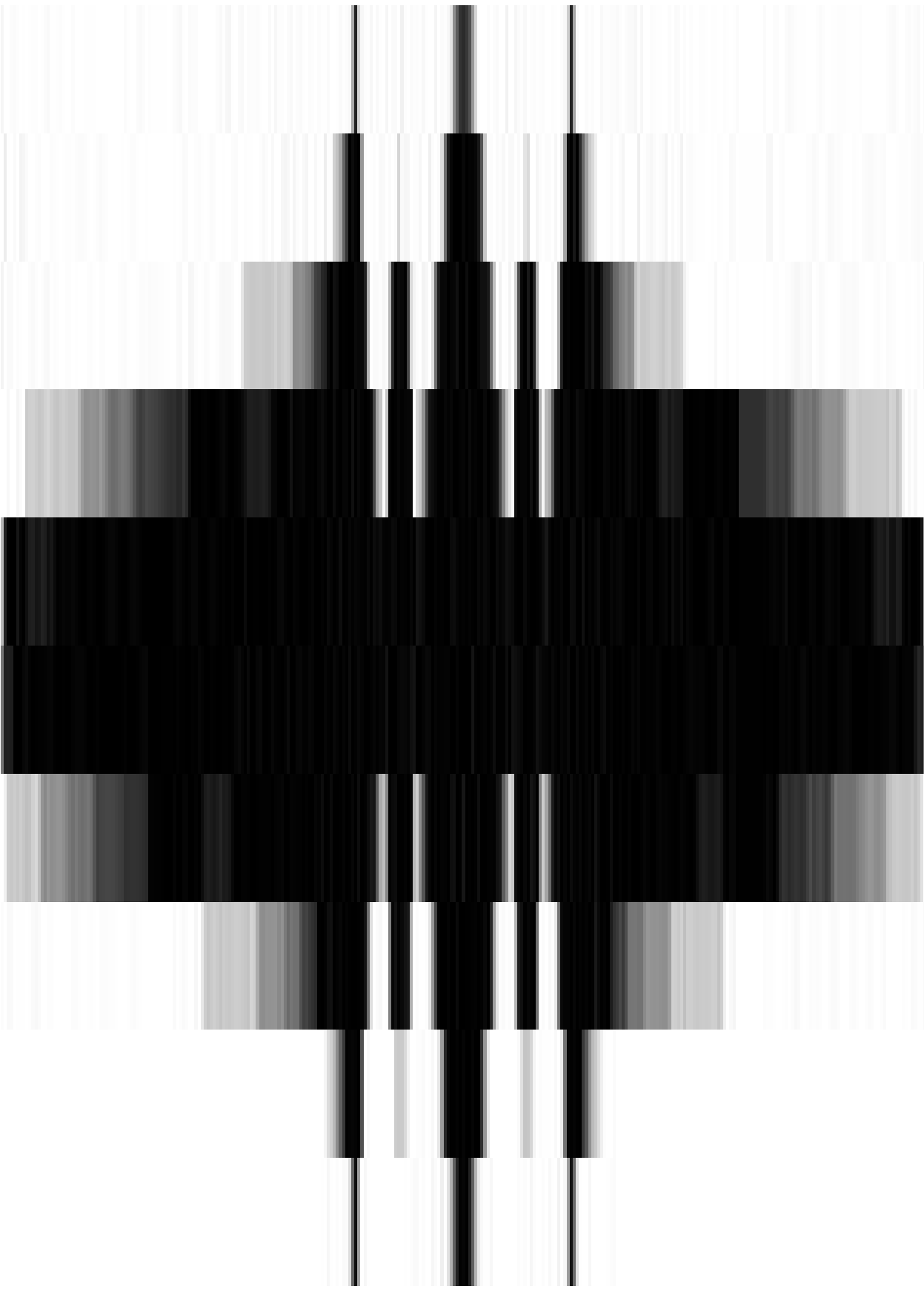
In children, before the age when indiscriminate willfulness and past karmic tendencies take control, one can see the natural manifestation of some of the attributes of Christ Consciousness. Therefore Jesus cites the example of children as a reminder to the devotee of the childlike qualities so often subverted in the adult mentality and habits—lack of egotism, body consciousness, selfishness, and attachment; and presence of purity, guilelessness, innocence, obedience, humbleness, meekness, love, trust, and joy. Only when a devotee becomes possessed of these qualities through deep meditation and practice of self-discipline does he prepare himself to receive and manifest Christ Consciousness.

The pure child’s mind is by nature centered in the paradise, the elevated consciousness, of the spiritual eye; but with sexual arousal and the strong urgings of the senses for gratification, the mind is thrown out of the higher potentials of paradise and descends into identification with the fleshly senses and their absorption in the physical world. As a result, “Adam and Eve” (reason and feeling) are being expelled from Eden with each new generation of children as they are ensnared by delusion.⁵ The heavenly consciousness with which souls were intended to enjoy earth life devolves into the dualistic perceptions of good and evil with their fleeting pleasures and recurring pains that are the fated lot of the body-bound.⁶

On this axiom, Jesus taught those who seek greatness on earth or in heaven: “Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”⁷

“Through the verification of my divine knowledge, I declare unto you that unless, by meditation and the proper guidance and help of a true guru, you

change your ego-guided worldly nature into the soul-guided childlike nature, you will not be able to rise above your body-consciousness and let your inner Self enter into the ever-new bliss state of Christ Consciousness.”



Real humility: transcending the ego and freeing the soul to identify with God

On the mountain peak of ego consciousness the raindrops of divine mercy do not remain. But in the expansive valley of childlike humbleness (unegotistical mentality) the mercy drops of divinity gather into a vast lake of wisdom.

An egotistical person identifies his unlimited soul consciousness with his various capabilities as derived from certain physical, mental, or astral powers and thus creates around himself a hedge of limitation which shuts out the greater part of Cosmic Consciousness. The almighty Heavenly Father does not limit Himself by egoistic identification of His consciousness with the possession of powers. He does not consider His powers as a dichotomy of Himself, and thus He is not even conscious of them. His infinite attributes are infinitely absorbed in the fathomless ocean of His humbleness. All good and beautiful children of the Father, devotees who have been “converted” from ego consciousness, are humbly unaware of their priceless qualities. “Whosoever therefore shall humble himself,” shall transcend the ego and free the soul to identify with God, “the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven,” being one with the Supreme Being in His heavenly kingdom of bliss.

The Hindu scriptures say that one who knows Brahma or Spirit is Spirit; all souls came from God and will again become one with Him. But even after uniting with God, liberated masters preserve their individuality throughout eternity. They know that they come out of God to undertake new missions in new incarnations, and that they will merge again in Him; but never egotistically proclaim while incarnate that they are God. They fully realize, rather, that it is He who has become their many selves, manifesting as Christ, Krishna, Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, Sri Yukteswarji, and all other avatars and masters.⁸

There is no competition among souls who know God as to who is greater, for all are equal among those who are one with God. Yet disciples often dissent by exalting their own teacher above others. Many Hindus, for instance, say that the Lord Krishna is God’s supreme incarnation; Christians accord that honor to Jesus Christ. But what would Jesus himself say? “He that is least among you all, the same shall be great.”⁹ The soul that has lost all egotism of the possessive little self, utterly humbled of I, me, and mine, knows only its identity with God, the One and Only, in whom there is no higher or lower.

A liberated saint, however great he appears in his earthly role, never claims to be God incarnate. Even Jesus, though he was one with God, said, “What my Father knows, I know not.”¹⁰

The wave cannot say, “I am the ocean,” for the ocean can remain without the wave, but the wave cannot remain without the ocean. It is all right for a fully liberated master to say, “God has become myself,” but he would never say, “I am God.” The ocean has become the wave, but the wave is not the ocean. God is the Creator and sustainer of all liberated souls, and His grace grants them to feel, as did Jesus: “I and my Father are One”; but His true children never presume on that identity by asserting, “I am God.”

Once as a youth in India I met a teacher of high repute. Many of his followers had told me he was God Himself. In expectant awe and reverence I went to see him, and bowed down before him. But as soon as I looked straight into his eyes, he sought to impress me further and thundered, “I am God!” and I shouted back, “You don’t say so!”

To counter my defiance, which he had never heard from those who followed him blindly, he became ridiculously supercilious. “How dare you blaspheme my presence,” he shouted. “I am God!” I took a little mirror out of my shoulder bag and held it up to his face. I said, “Look at yourself! You are not God, but a plain egotist and anger slave.”

I rose and, turning my back, started to leave. He followed me for some distance, entreating me, “Young man, come back!” I turned back, and looking into his eyes, I said, “Please do not utter this great blasphemy by proclaiming, ‘I am God.’ Though God may not expose your audacity, you hurt yourself by assuming a right to the throne of your Maker.” To be sure he understood, I added, “If you sit on fire, claiming that you are fire, your body will be burned up, even though the fire doesn’t want to harm you. So be forewarned. You who must live on food and drink and have not overcome death, do not be so foolish as to present yourself as the transcendent Supreme Creator of the Universe.”

The saint’s eyes welled up with tears. He took hold of my hand and said, “You have taught me a lesson in humbleness, and from today I shall try my utmost to become a true servant of God. I assure you, I shall never again say to anyone, ‘I am God.’”

We embraced and parted in tears of joy, having mutually profited by each other's company. He must have been a real saint to have so readily, and humbly, recanted his fault.



Egotism: the surest sign of ignorance

Egotism is the surest sign of an ignorant man. A childlike humble nature in a wise man is the surest sign that he contacts God. There is a proverb that a few fish in a small vessel make a lot of splashing noise, but the movement of whales and large denizens in the ocean creates no such commotion. So egotists with their small minds in small waters of consciousness create a lot of clamor in bragging about their self-perceived merits; but great masters whose consciousness encompasses the divine vision of the whole cosmos, held in the twinkling of an eye, hardly speak of their spiritual powers. Like the beloved God with whom they identify, they never use their powers for the sake of displaying their awesome spiritual nature.

Humbleness is not an assumed meekness; a pretense of humility does not make one a humble being. A person who remains busy within, perfecting himself in God's eyes and to the satisfaction of his own soul, is so intent in so doing that it leaves no scope for any desire to impress others with his accomplishments. Thus, when a person is wholly absorbed in being great and in selflessly doing great things so that he never thinks to talk about it as a personal achievement, he is truly humble. Conversely, the egotist remains mentally and physically idle in self-improvement, imagining that he graces the world with his mere presence and small doings; he loses no opportunity to convince others how great he is and to join in a chorus to sing his praises.

A wonderful child blooms like a flower, with no conscious intent to advertise its unfolding fragrance or beauty. So is the would-be divine man: he absorbs himself in expressing the glory of God, unaware, like a child, of his own qualities.

The truly great master-minds of India that I have seen are divinely childlike, displaying the qualities that are natural to a pure mind—sincerity, frankness, nonattachment, universality, uniformity of action-thought-speech, forgiveness, truthfulness, calmness, sweetness, laughter, and freedom from worry—minus the child's ignorance.

A person who does not cultivate the above-mentioned attributes latent in the soul is constantly beset with selfishness, suspicion, worries, fear, and attachment,

which steal away his peace and leave him in misery. As a well-adjusted child lives happily, confidently secure in the protecting power and love of parents, so a divine man with childlike trust relinquishes fear, worldliness, and egotistical living by completely depending on the all-protecting power and divine love of God.¹¹



“But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea” (Matthew 18:6).¹²

Jesus used the epithet “little ones” to refer not only to innocent children but also metaphorically to humble, pure-minded devotees—significantly, his own disciples.

“Whosoever shall persecute in any way a faithful disciple who manifests the spiritual purity of a humble child of God and who is in tune with the Christ Consciousness in me makes himself an instrument of the Evil Force and will attract to himself evil consequences. His spiritual and physical misery will be far greater than if a millstone be hung around his neck and he be cast into the sea.”

Jesus typifies little children as the incarnation of undiluted divine purity and innocence, as also their counterpart in pure-minded saintly persons. Anyone who physically, mentally, or spiritually maltreats those in whose qualities God’s nature is manifest acts against the Divine Manifestation itself. Thus Jesus points out that persecution of innocent children and saints, through whose purity God is distinctly manifest, is blasphemy against God Himself.

There is frequently a metaphorical as well as literal meaning intended in the words of Jesus: “Any person of misconduct who by egotism and inordinate kowtowing to his physical body deliberately offends one of the soul’s childlike divine attributes, which are manifestations of my Christ Consciousness, will feel the millstone of misery heavy in his life, drowning him in the dark depths of the sea of ignorance.”

This world is vast, peopled with such diverse mentalities that it is impossible to prevent incursions of wrongdoing against innocent children and saintly souls; but the law of karma knows all, and its intransigent judgment is dire toward anyone who deliberately offers himself to be a medium of wronging God’s “little ones.”



Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him.

And he said unto her, "What wilt thou?"

She saith unto him, "Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom."

But Jesus answered and said, "Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"

They say unto him, "We are able."

And he saith unto them, "Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father."

And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren. But Jesus called them unto him, and said, "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:20 –

28).

Parallel reference:

And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.

And he said unto them, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? But I am among you as he that serveth” (Luke 22:24 – 27).¹³

“Y ou know not what a stupendous thing you are asking. Are you able to drink wisdom from the cup of Cosmic Consciousness of which I shall drink? Have you prepared your consciousness to be baptized with Cosmic Bliss, the baptism with which I am baptized?”



Jesus' ideals of self-sacrifice and universal service

They said to him, "We are able." And Jesus replied, "You are worthy to drink wisdom from the same cup, and you will be baptized with the same cosmic bliss of the vibration of the Holy Ghost with which I am baptized. But to sit on my right hand or on my left hand, as in some seat of authority in a kingdom in some specific point of space cannot be arranged by me, because the Heavenly Father enthrones all spiritualized souls in omnipresence."

Biblical scholars who profess to find no description of heaven by Jesus in the Gospels do not understand the hidden sense of his words. In this passage, Christ rejects any notion of his kingdom as a limited locality, thus indicating its omnipresent nature—in Christ Consciousness and Cosmic Consciousness.

When the other disciples heard the request favoring James and John, they were indignant against these two brothers. But Jesus called all of them to him and said to them, "You know how appointed rulers exercise dominion over the Gentiles and how their superiors assert authority over those rulers. But among you who are the children of God, equal in His eyes, there should be no posturing for authority over one another.

"Anyone who wants to be great among you shall minister to all and be the servant of all; the same shall hold true for whosoever in heaven's eyes would merit a seat of honor in God's kingdom. The Christ Consciousness in me came not to be served but to serve, and to offer divine light through the example of sacrifice and ideal living, that others following may be redeemed and attain the infinite kingdom of Cosmic Consciousness."

All souls, as with the disciples of Christ's teachings, who are able to attain the perception (baptism) of the Holy Ghost Cosmic Vibration and the wisdom and bliss of Christ Consciousness will be enthroned in the equalizing omnipresence of the one and same eternal God.

Jesus points out that the Christ Consciousness in him did not materialize on earth to gather the adoration of people, but to offer the highest service to them by demonstrating divine consciousness in acts of supreme physical, mental, and spiritual sacrifice. By his example Jesus extolled as a cardinal principle in his teachings—frequently quoted, but rarely followed—this ideal, this grand truth,

that he who is veritably among the greatest considers himself the least, and the servant of all. Chief among leaders is the person who inspires the best in others by his own acts of selfless service. Persons who equate greatness with the gratification of their desire for praise and approval from people receive only a superficial status and little sincere admiration. But he who gives of himself in ministering to all sits as a king on the throne of love in their hearts.

In the so-called civilized world, the one who is served by others, “he that sitteth at meat,” is usually considered of a higher social standing than “he that serveth”; but it is different in heaven. By illustration and example Jesus stressed that according to divine law the superior position is that of service. Heavenly beings find supreme joy, not in receiving empty adoration, but in helping one another serve the universal order as God’s angels and in aiding in the upliftment and liberation of souls.



“Become as Little Children”

“Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.”

—Matthew 18:4–5

Jesus cites the example of children as a reminder to the devotee of the childlike qualities so often subverted in the adult mentality and habits—lack of egotism, body consciousness, selfishness, and attachment; and presence of purity, guilelessness, innocence, obedience, humbleness, meekness, love, trust, and joy. Only when a devotee becomes possessed of these qualities through deep meditation and practice of self-discipline does he prepare himself to receive and manifest Christ Consciousness.

—Paramahansa Yogananda

Drawing by Heinrich Hofmann

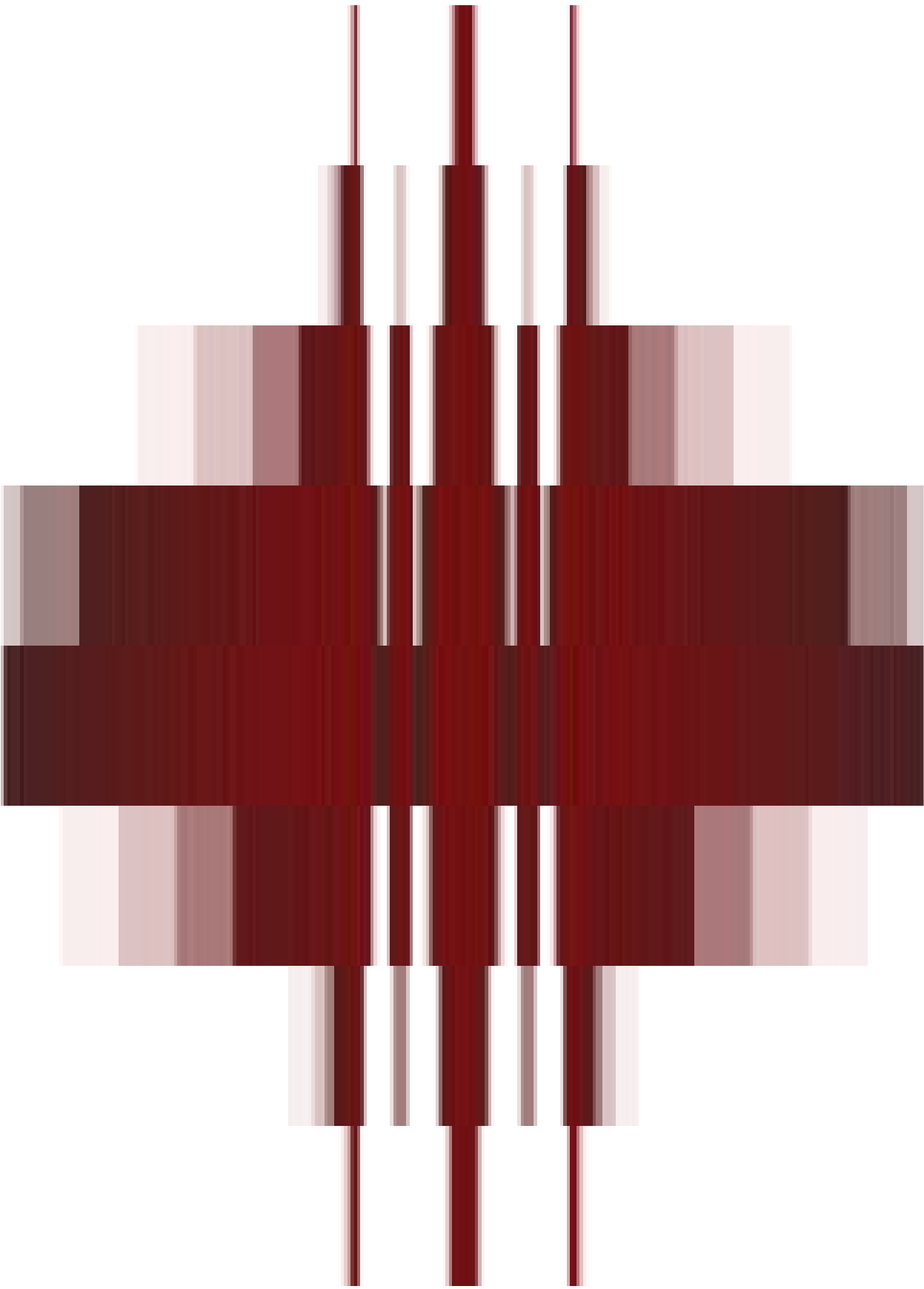




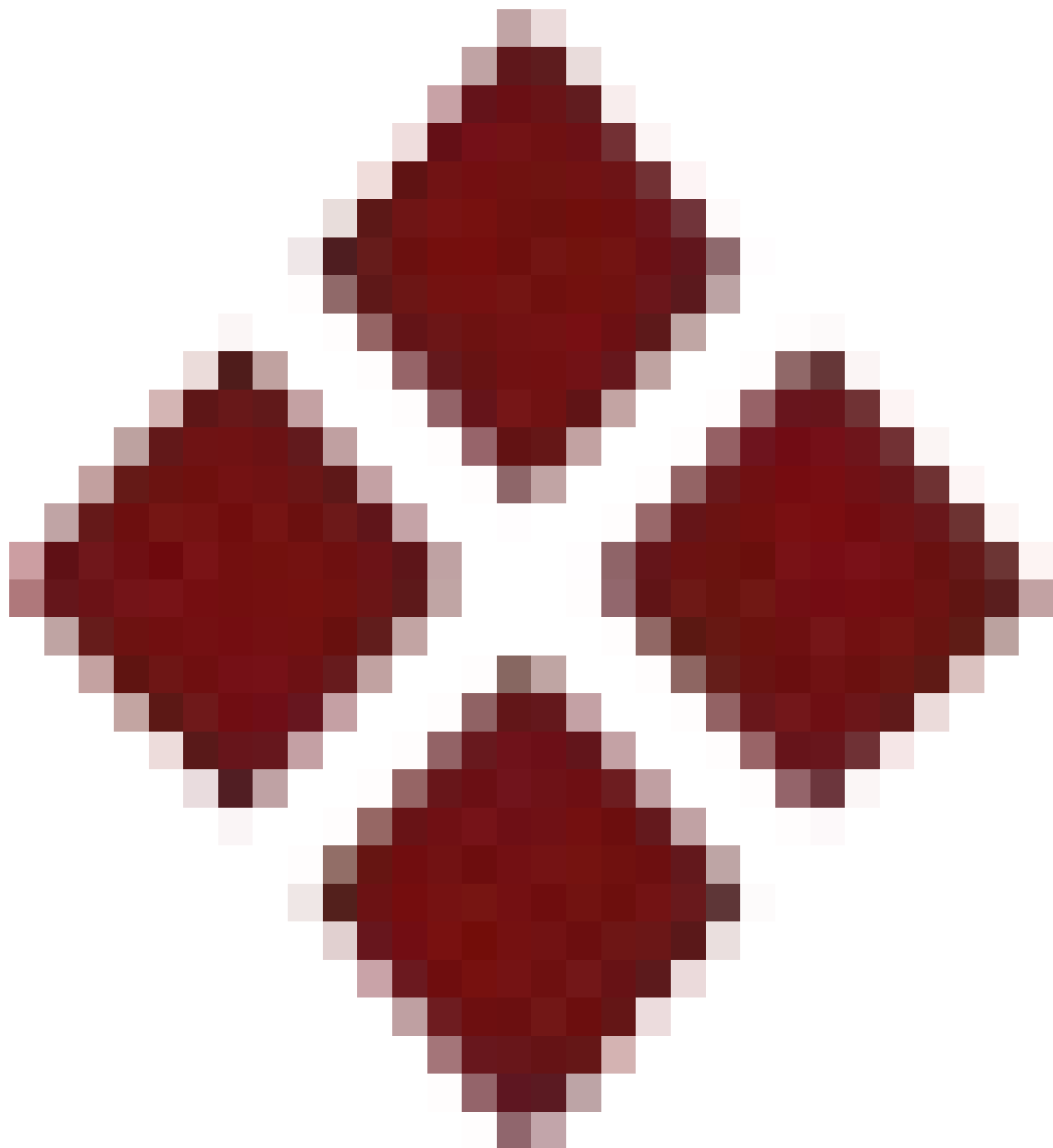
Discourse 48

“If Thy Hand or Thy Foot Offend Thee, Cut Them Off”

Jesus’ Counsel on Renunciation of Evil



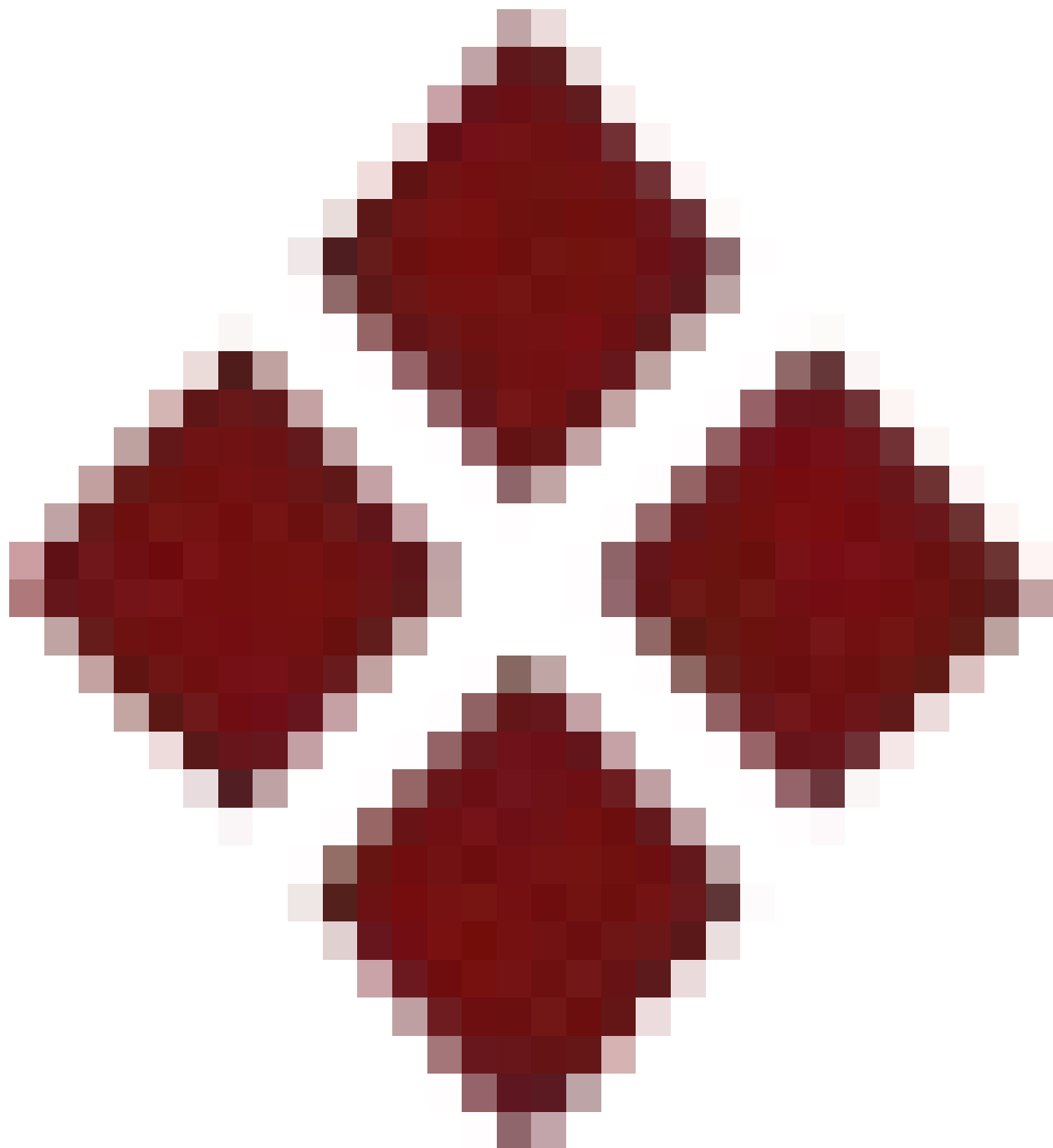
Neutralizing the Real Cause of Physical Evils and Subversion of the Soul



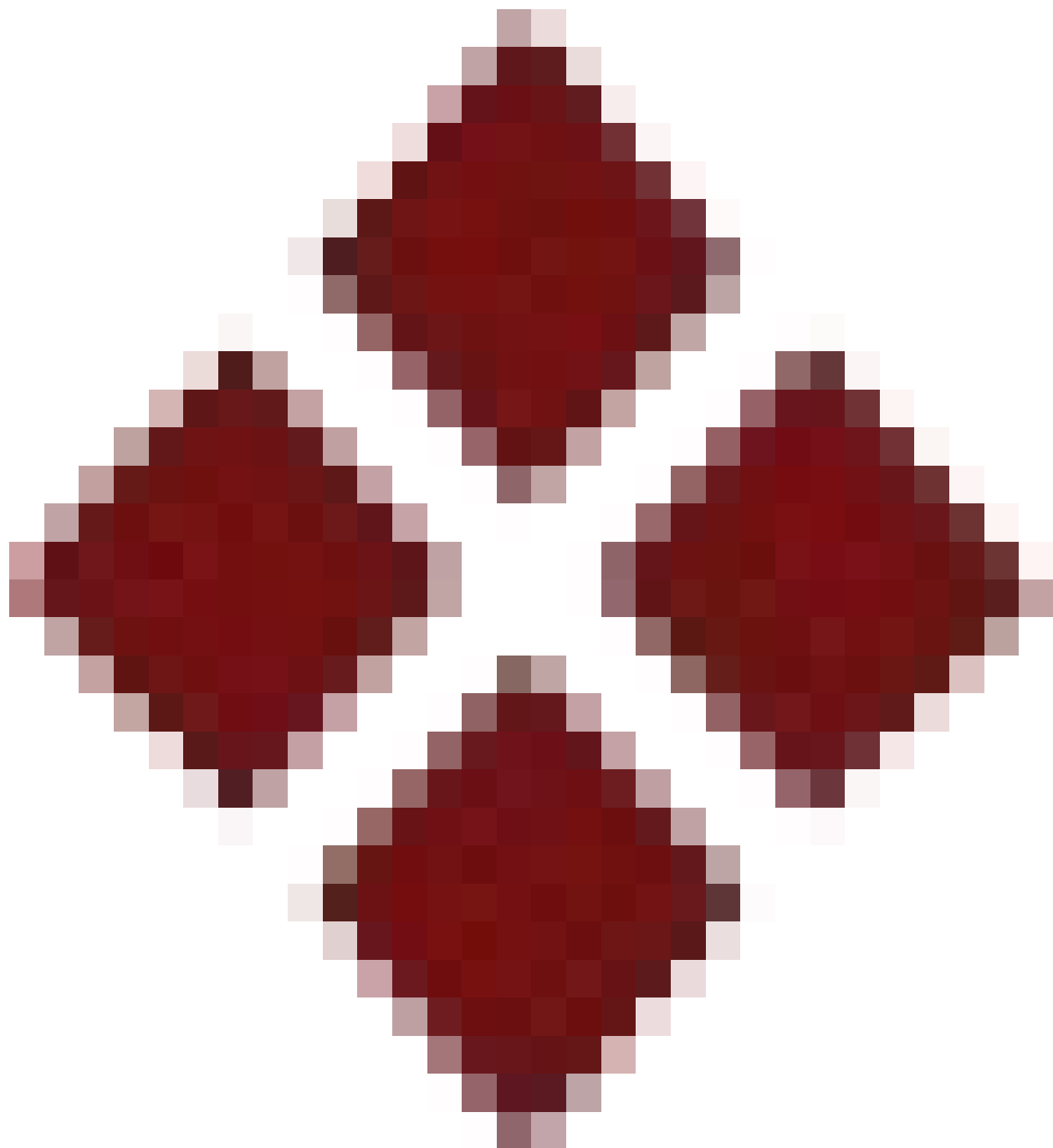
How the Science of Yoga Bestows Victory Over Immoral Impulses



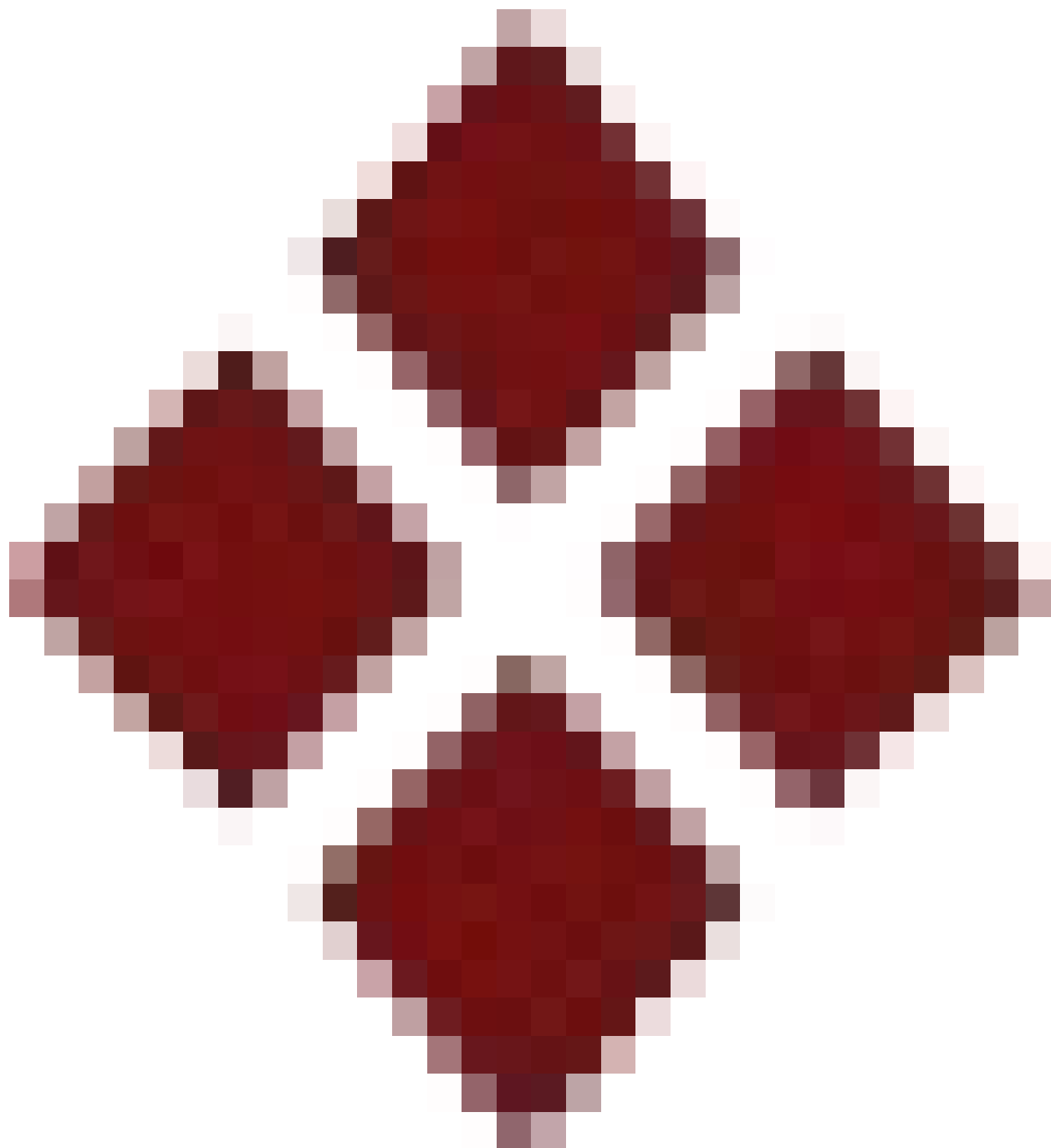
The Orthodox Notion of Eternal Hellfire: An Utterly False Precept



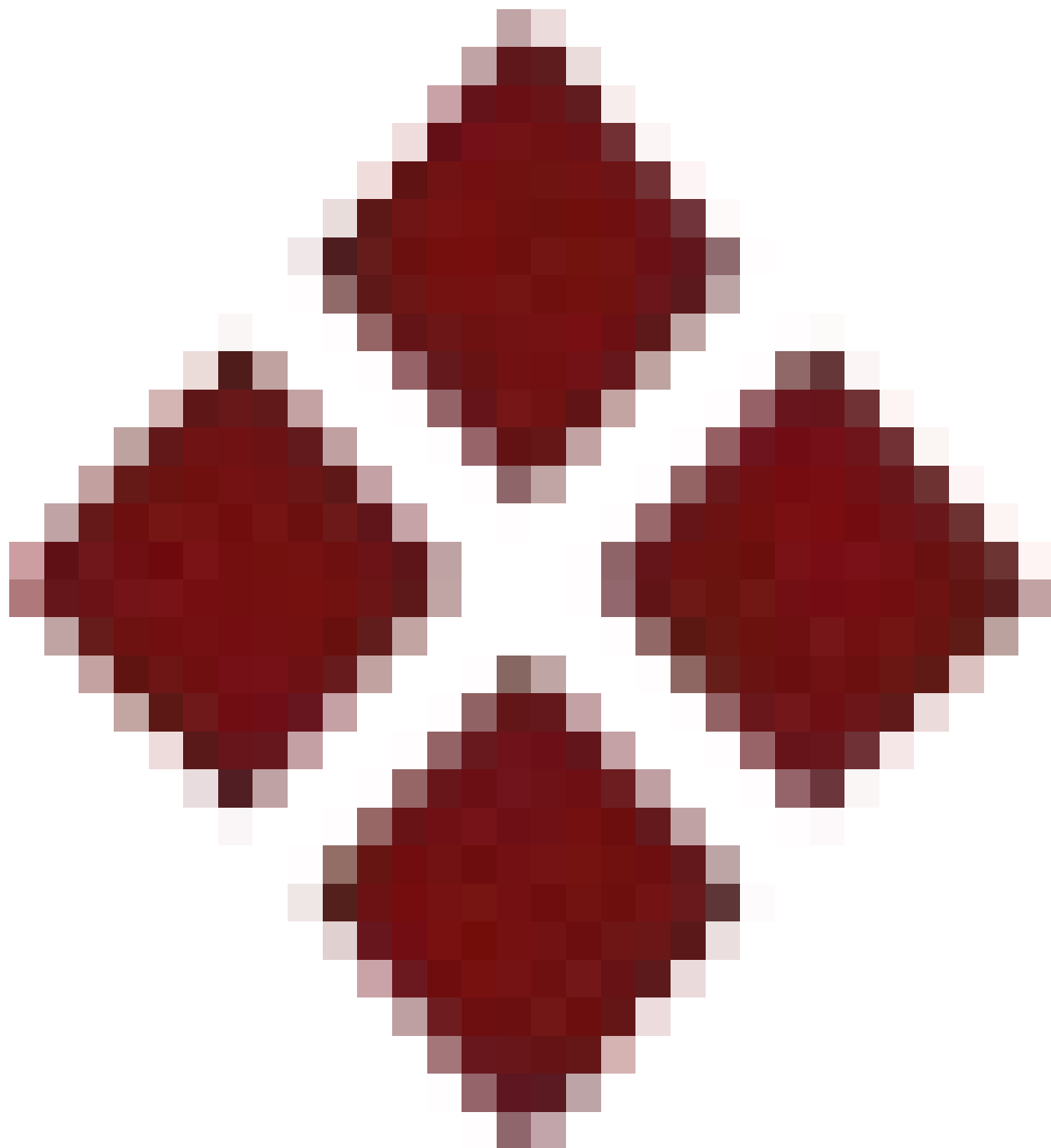
Advice for Aspirants Experiencing Temporary Spiritual Deterioration



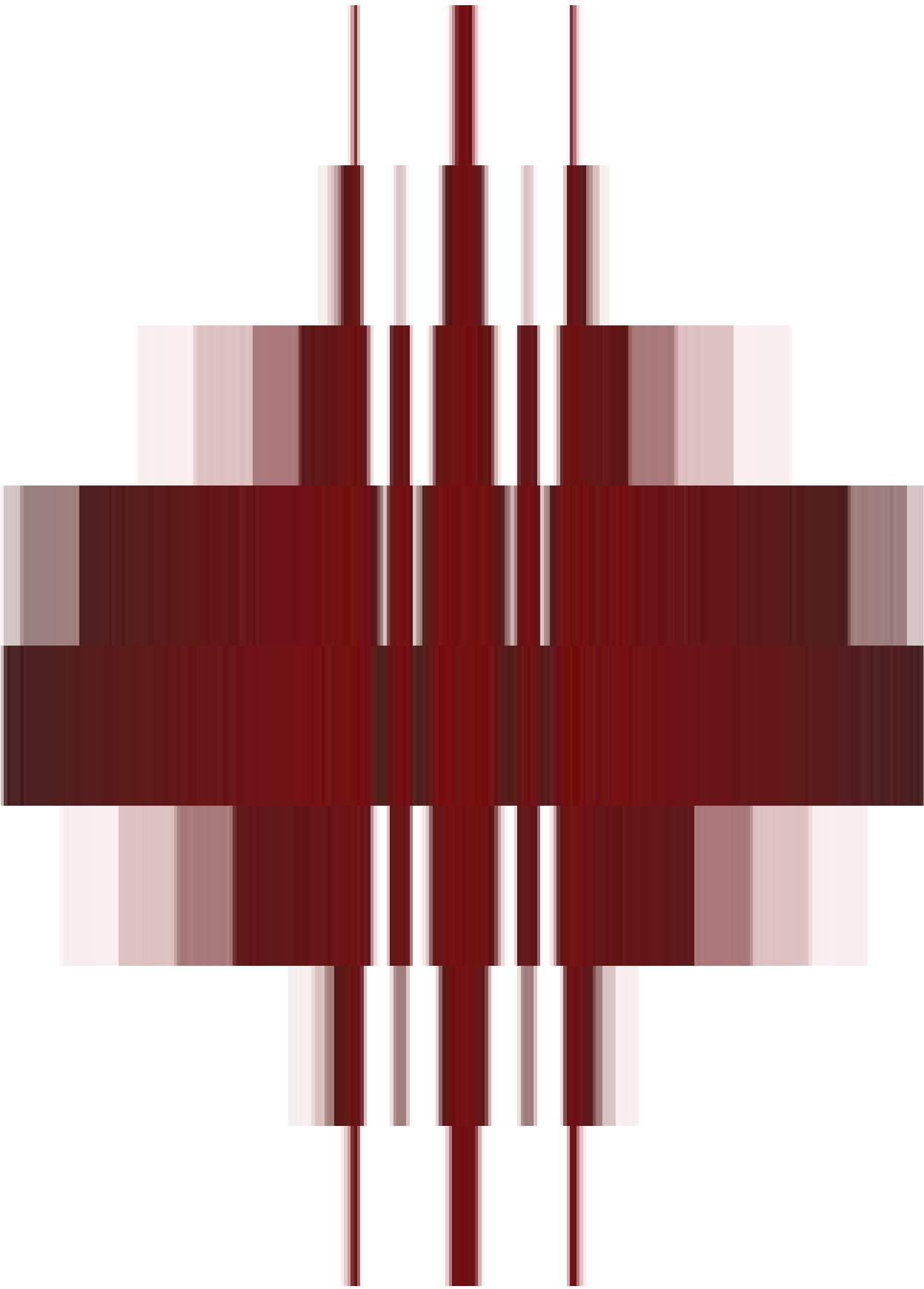
The Heavenly After-Death Experience of Pure-Hearted Persons



God Permits No Soul to Become Forever Lost in Ignorance



**“Where Two or Three Are Gathered in My Name”:
The Power of United Concentration**



“By self-control and the power of concentration...switch off the delusive inclinations that would offend or obstruct your indwelling God-consciousness.”

■

“Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!

“Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.

“Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

“For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost. How think ye? If a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

“Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

“Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

“Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”

—*Matthew 18:7 – 20*



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Discourse 48

“If Thy Hand or Thy Foot Offend Thee, Cut Them Off”

Jesus’ Counsel on Renunciation of Evil



“Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!” (Matthew 18:7).¹

Jesus emphasizes that even though in this world there will always be evil—that which divorces man’s consciousness from God—that is no reason for a person deliberately to make himself a perpetrator of such offenses. Man in delusion often excuses his evil by rationalizing, “So many others are doing wrong and leading riotous lives, so it is all right for me to do likewise.” Wisdom consists in recognizing that it is in one’s own interest to stay away from Satan’s enticements. Evil propositions man under the fair guise of pleasure, but its temporary satisfactions end in misery and woe.

Thus, Jesus’ words signified: “Physical, mental, and soul sufferings and woes ensue from the ignorance created by Satan’s cosmic delusion. Because of Satan’s rebellion against God’s Word (Holy Vibration), the presence of evils, ‘offences,’ is unavoidable so long as this delusive world of duality exists.² Man did not create anger, greed, selfishness, lust; their potential was implanted in him by Satan to counter the divine qualities bequeathed to him in his God-created soul. But each human being has free will to make a choice: either to follow the wisdom of the soul and embrace its attributes of goodness or to align himself with the evil passions stimulated within him by cosmic delusion. Everlasting joy and liberation are the blessings of goodness. Woe and threefold misery are the lot of the physically identified man who, acting in response to the urges of delusion, vents the evil propensities within him and lets them flow outward as noxious actions.³

“That is why whenever your hands, feet, eyes, or any other organ of sensation and action are used or incited to be used as instruments of evil, you should cut off the attention and currents of life energy that actuate them, employing will power and inner self-control.”

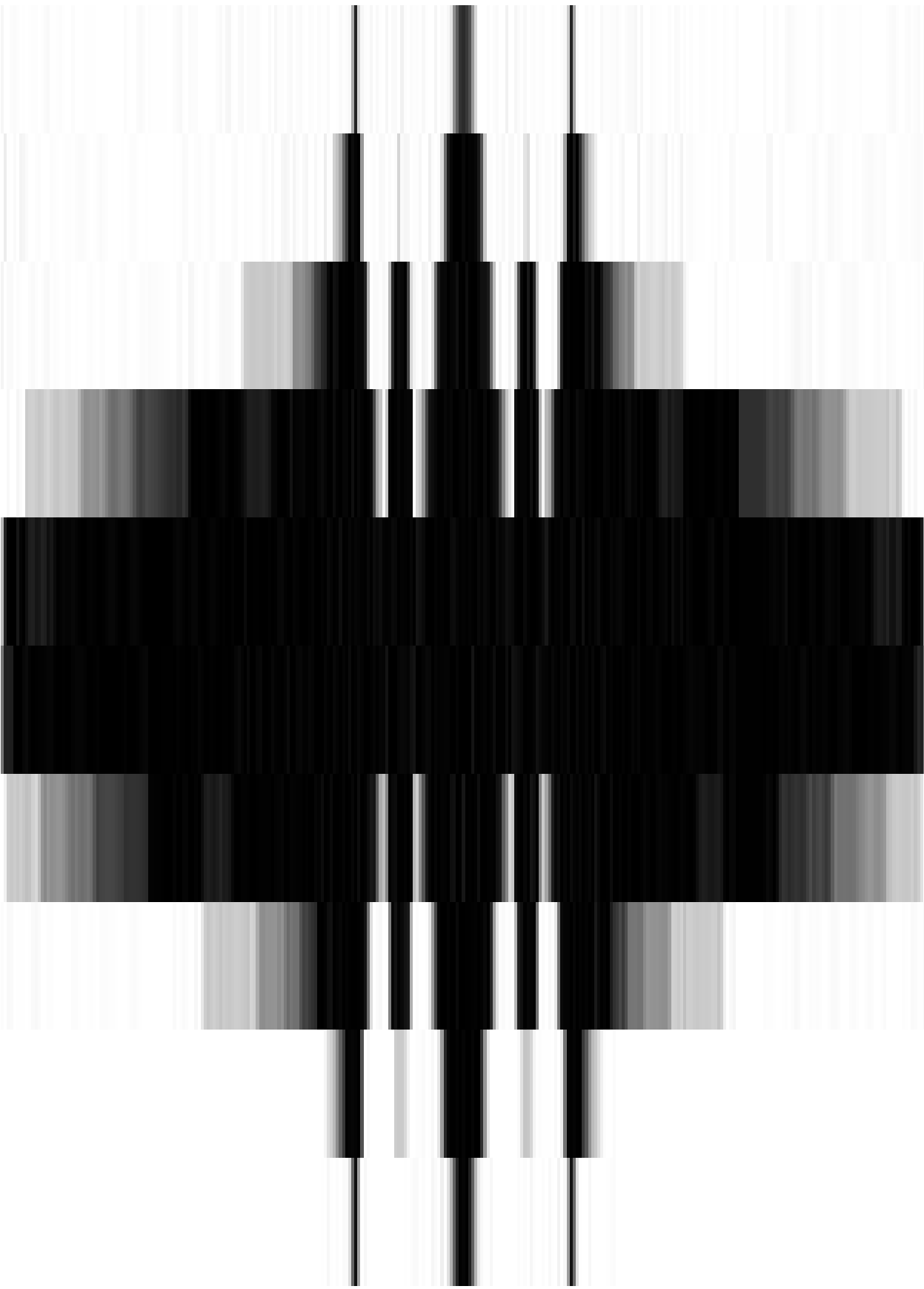
“Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two

hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire” (Matthew: 18:8 – 9).⁴

Parallel reference:

“And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

“For everyone shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt. Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another” (Mark 9:43 – 50).⁵



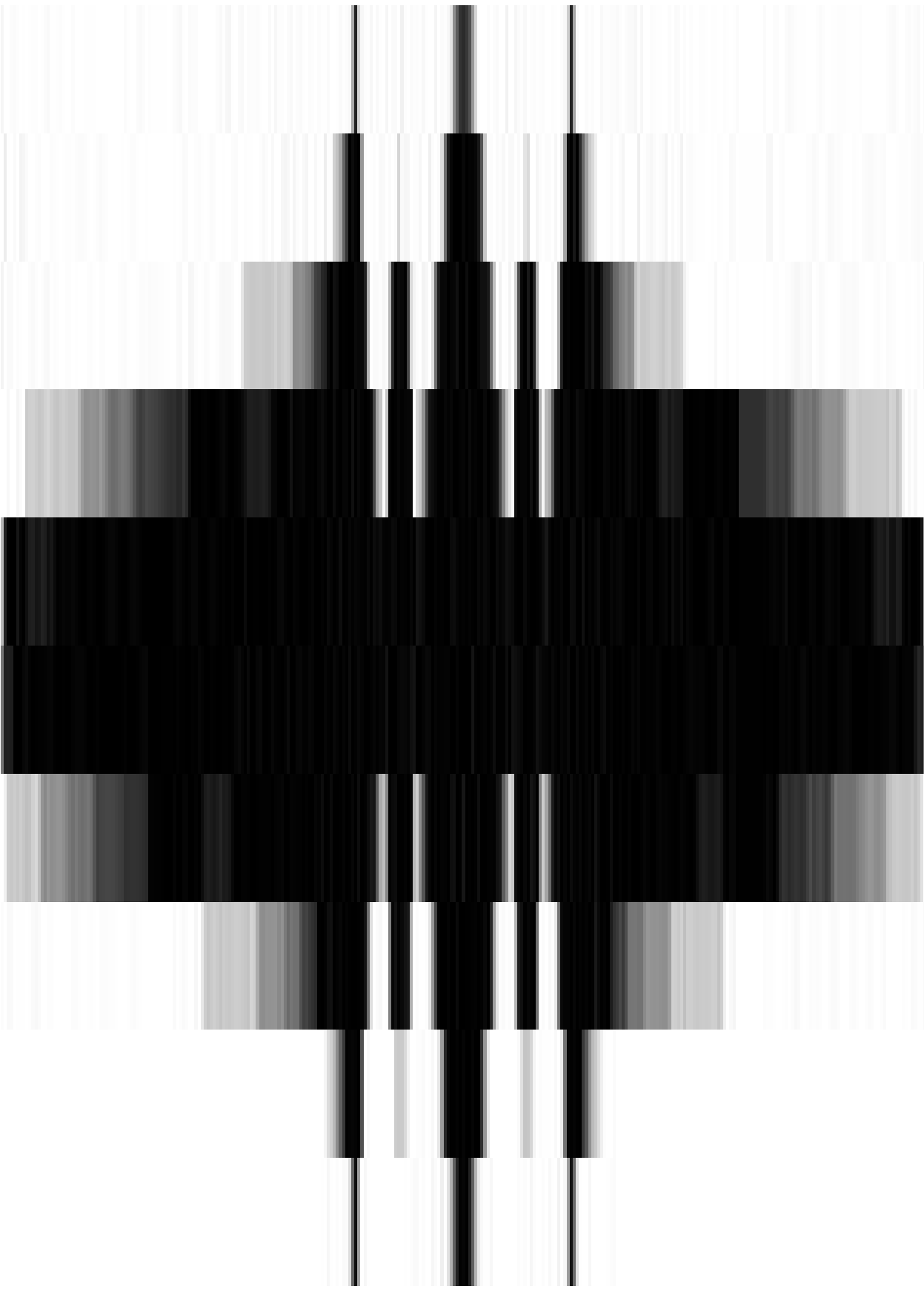
Neutralizing the real cause of physical evils and subversion of the soul

With graphic imagery, Jesus exhorts his followers: “Cut away anything and everything that keeps you enmeshed in the evils of ignorance! Unless you use discriminative wisdom to become attuned to God, your life will be a veritable hell of burning unfulfilled desires and gnawing worms of fears, worries, and troublemaking ungodly tendencies, which will torment you incarnation after incarnation. Excise from your life those impulses that impede your attempts to unite with Eternal Life—giving up even the body itself if that should be necessary. Brook no obstruction in your path to supreme everlasting happiness!”

The astonishing counsel of Jesus is primarily, of course, metaphorical:

“I am not telling you to dismember yourself if you have committed wrong actions; for by doing so you would destroy only the instruments of evil, not the mental tendencies and desires that willed and actuated the offense. Physically maiming innocent bodily organs might preclude some physical acts of evil, but would not neutralize or prevent mental evils, the real cause of physical evils and of the subversion of the godly qualities of the soul. Evil must be destroyed from within. Cut off the mental impulse that activates the motor nerves (‘hands and feet’) and pluck it from the sensory nerves (‘eye’) when you are led to see and desire evil or to act evilly. By self-control and the power of concentration that lifts the thoughts to divine perceptions, switch off the delusive inclinations that would offend or obstruct your indwelling God-consciousness, and then forever cast them off from your being.

“It is better for you to be halt or maimed of temporary sense pleasures in material life by sacrificing desire for these indulgences in order to enter into the consciousness of divine joy and eternal life, rather than to remain slavishly identified with the body, allowing the sense organs and nervous system to burn continuously with physical lust, greed, and material cravings. Sensuality, being everlastingly insatiable, constantly stirs the fire of the misery of unfulfillment. If you do not forsake your evil mortal habits during your earth life, you will carry those torturing worms of harmful tendencies into the astral world at death, and thence into a new incarnation—perpetuating or making everlasting the ‘fire that never shall be quenched.’”



Threefold application of Jesus' counsel on rejecting evil

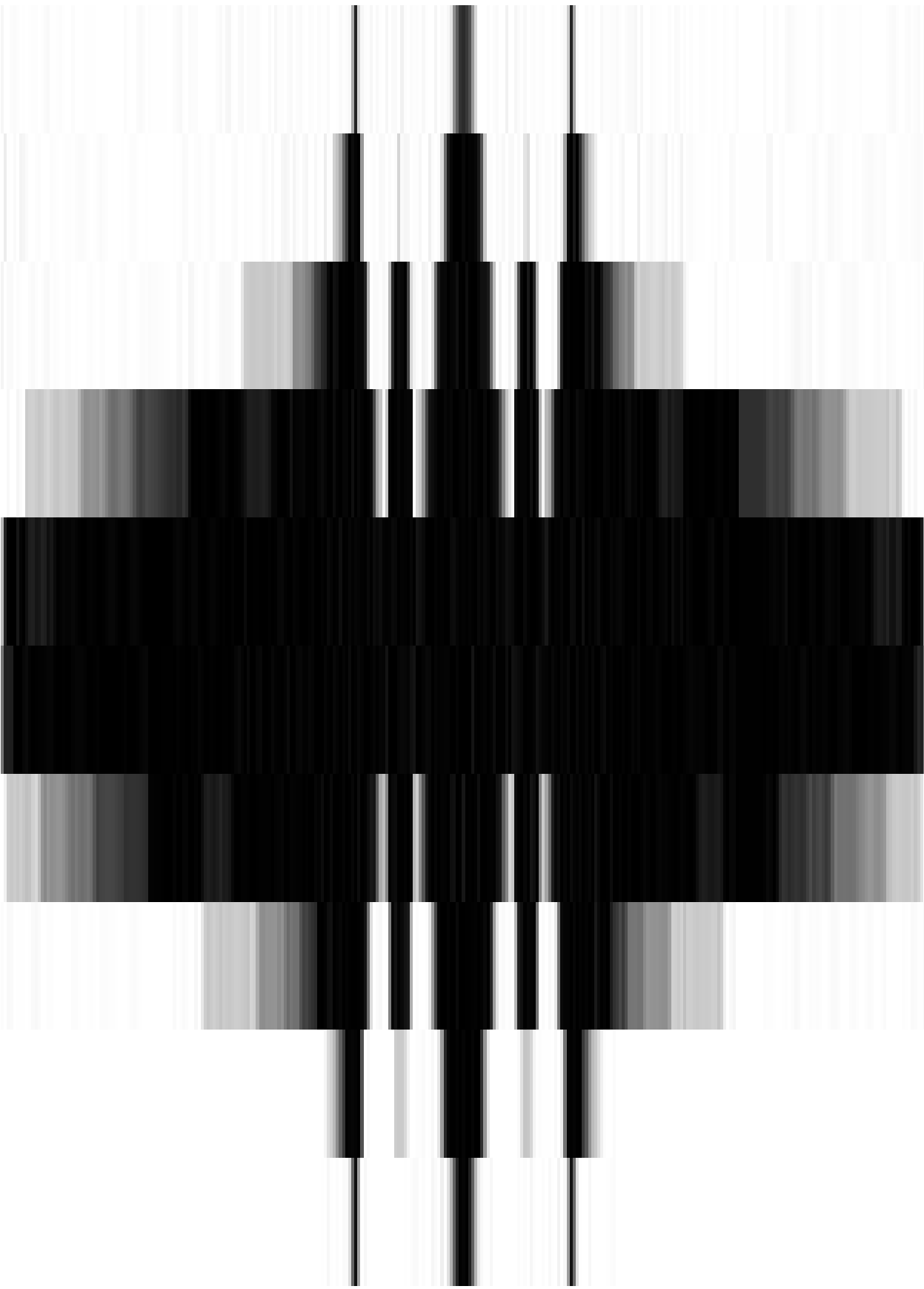
The message in these verses is threefold—addressed, respectively, to the Christlike martyr, the ordinary person in need of moral precepts, and the yogi who practices meditation for God-communion, as follows:

1

. Jesus' words have been a source of strength and inspiration to saintly martyrs whose role it is actually to sacrifice their physical body for a divine cause. Cranmer, sixteenth-century martyr, wrote with his right hand several recantations, under torture, of religious convictions that had caused him to be sentenced to be burned at the stake. Later, repenting of his faithlessness, he declared to his codefendant: "Latimer, my unworthy hand shall burn first!" When taken to the stake to be put to death, Cranmer smilingly held his right hand in the fire to be consumed first, and then consecrated his whole body to the flames, consciously ascending into the heavenly region of Spirit.⁶

Jesus himself had set an uttermost example in the literal observance of bodily sacrifice on the cross to do the will of his Father. Even though physically maimed, he was gloriously resurrected and gained everlasting life. If instead he had listened to the temptations of satanic delusion and chosen bodily safety and material happiness and protected himself from crucifixion, it would have contemptuously "offended" his Christ-conscious soul, which led him to cooperate willingly with the foreordained divine plan for the offering of his body in recompense for the offenses of many.

Few souls are called upon to embrace the truth in these verses in such a dramatic way. Nevertheless, none escape the essential lesson applicable to all. Those for whom the well-being and gratifications of the body supplant the desire to meditate and be in God-consciousness are foolish, "offending" one's true Self, the soul, by forsaking eternal happiness and immortality in preference for the short-lasting physical pleasures—with attendant miseries—of a few years of bodily existence on earth.



An exhortation to destroy material greed, restlessness, and ignorance

2

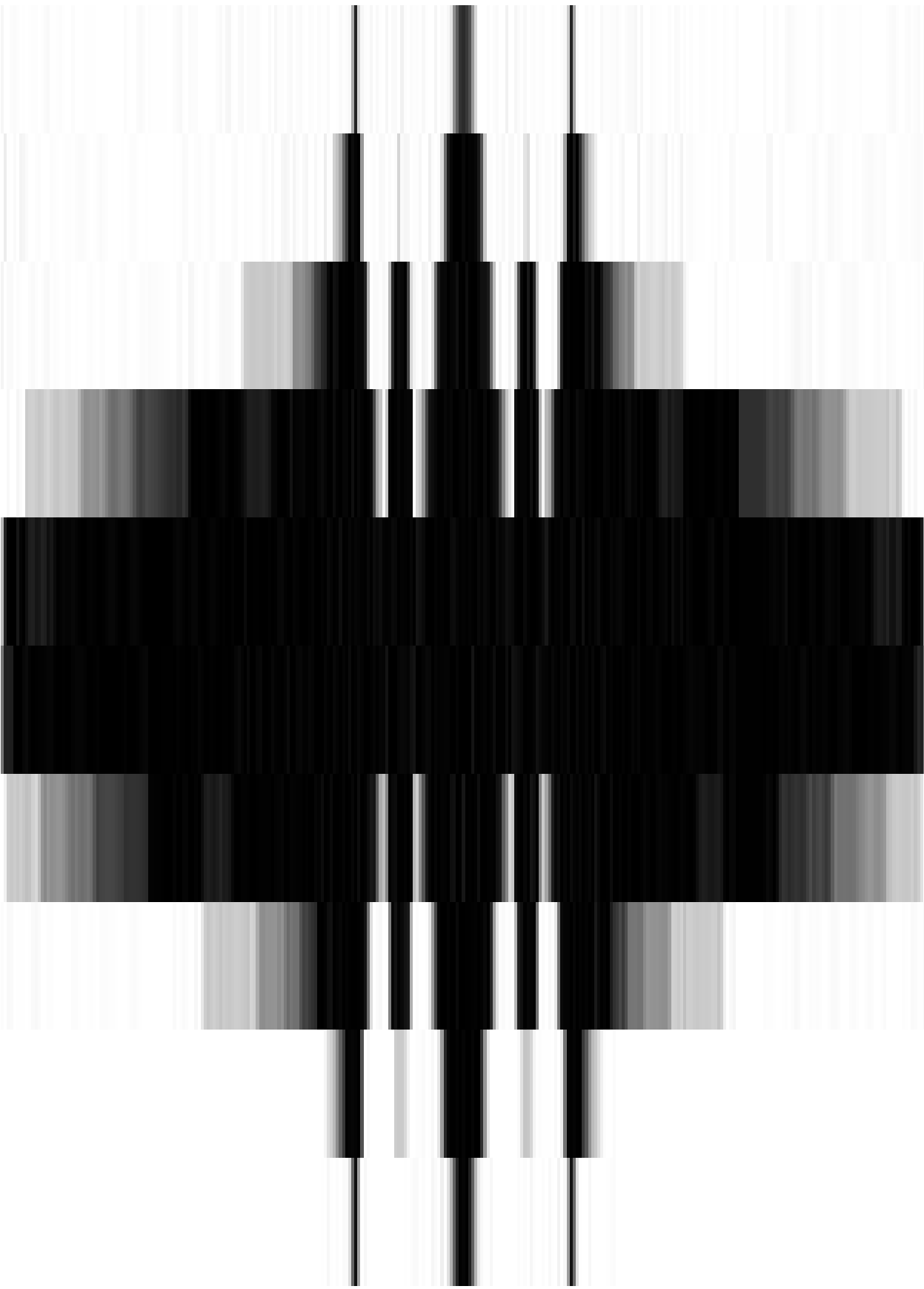
. Therefore, applied to the moral conduct enjoined on all human beings, Jesus' words are an exhortation to cut off the offending "hand"—avaricious love of money, material acquisitiveness; and likewise the misguided "foot"—attachment to the material activities of life; and to pluck out the "eye" of shortsighted worldly understanding, in order to gain the enduring joy of a spiritual life:

"If your 'hand' of greed for money and possessions offends the divine law by keeping you from attaining spirituality, do not hesitate to destroy that unspiritual acquisitiveness. It is preferable that you temporarily endure deprivation of inordinate material perishables in order to have everlasting joy, rather than consign yourself to the misery of an inferno of insatiable earthly cravings.

"If material activity, the 'foot,' prevents you from meditating and attaining the kingdom of ever new joy felt in meditation, then by all means cut off the excesses of obstructing worldly pursuits. Far better it is to gain the fulfillment of eternal life than transitory gratification through restless outward striving and busy-ness—which fan an ever-increasing flame of never-to-be-satisfied material desires, spreading from one incarnation to another.

"If any devotee finds his material 'eye' of understanding beclouded by ignorance, in conflict with his spiritual aspirations, he should give up that defective vision. It is better to enter by meditation into the kingdom of eternal joy with one intuitional eye of wisdom than, having two material eyes of duality and relativity, to remain burning in the hellfire of miserable unsatisfying material consciousness.

"Anyone who remains engrossed in material activities and desires, failing to attain divine wisdom and heavenly happiness, and passes from mortal life in that state, will find after death the voracious worms of worries, unsatisfied cravings, and material ignorance clinging to him from one lifetime to another. They will bother him in the astral world and in new earthly incarnations with continuous tendencies of restless distraction and compulsive sensory desires."



How the science of yoga bestows victory over immoral impulses

Moralists stress the outward giving-up of all sinful actions: “Don’t be greedy! Don’t be restless! Don’t act witlessly against your own highest welfare!” Yet centuries of scriptural commandments, holy threats, and social persecution have been unable to impart to man true freedom from the activating impulses of satanic delusion. Someone once told me of a woman who, hoping to destroy her evil habit of stealing, followed literally the words of Jesus and cut off both her hands. Her physical act of maiming herself had no effect on the entrenched mental habit that made her a compulsive thief; soon she began to pilfer things with her toes and mouth!

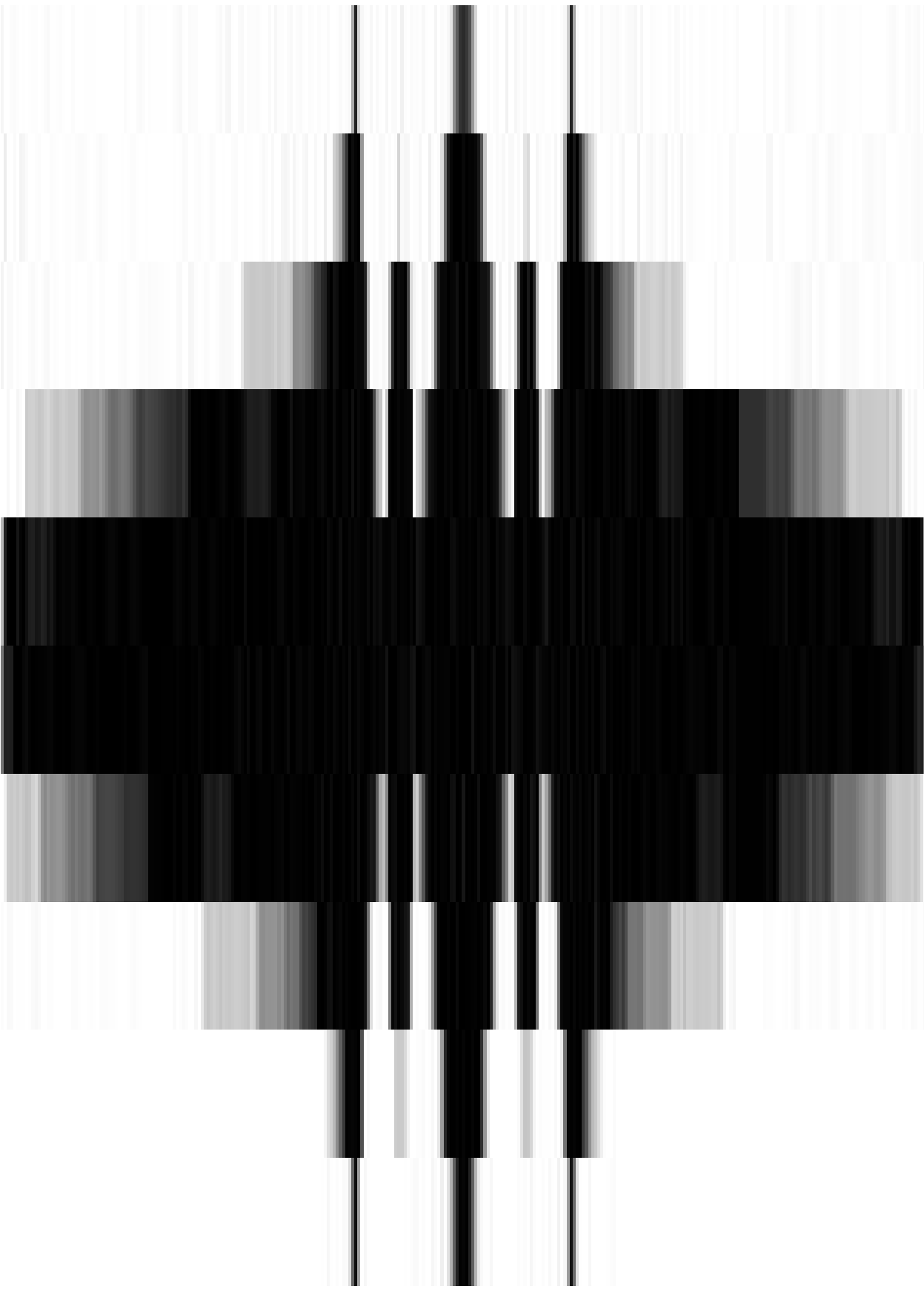
In the Bhagavad Gita, the Lord declares: “The individual who forcibly controls the organs of action, but whose mind rotates around thoughts of sense objects, is said to be a hypocrite, deluding himself. But that man succeeds supremely who, disciplining the senses by the mind, unattached, keeps his organs of activity steadfast on the path of God-uniting actions (yoga).”⁷ The scientific yoga method of self-control bestows on man the power to sever the strings that make his body, with all its sensory and motor parts, a puppet dancing to the tune of prenatal and postnatal habit-tendencies and material desires engendered by the Evil Force. “The man who physically fasts from sense objects finds that the sense objects fall away for a little while, leaving behind only the longing for them. But he who beholds the Supreme is freed even from longings.”⁸ Yoga, divine union with God, is the only sure way to overcome bondage to delusion. Jesus Christ and the masters of India taught that this freedom comes from controlling the life force flowing out to the senses and directing it inward to concentrate the consciousness in communion with the consummate bliss of God.

3

. Thus, to the yogi (any devotee who is striving scientifically to unite his soul with Spirit) Jesus’ words intend the following message: “Meditation— withdrawing the mind from the senses and outer world—is the only way to attain the eternal happiness of divine contact. If while striving for that interiorized communion, the bodily sensations of physical discomfort or the sirens of tempting sensory thoughts try to invade the brain and distract the attention from its focus of attaining ecstatic union in the bliss of God-consciousness, then cut

them off by disconnecting the attention from the sensory nerves—not unconsciously as during the state of sleep, but consciously by yoga techniques of mental concentration and pranayama (life-force control) by which body consciousness is transcended and God-union attained.

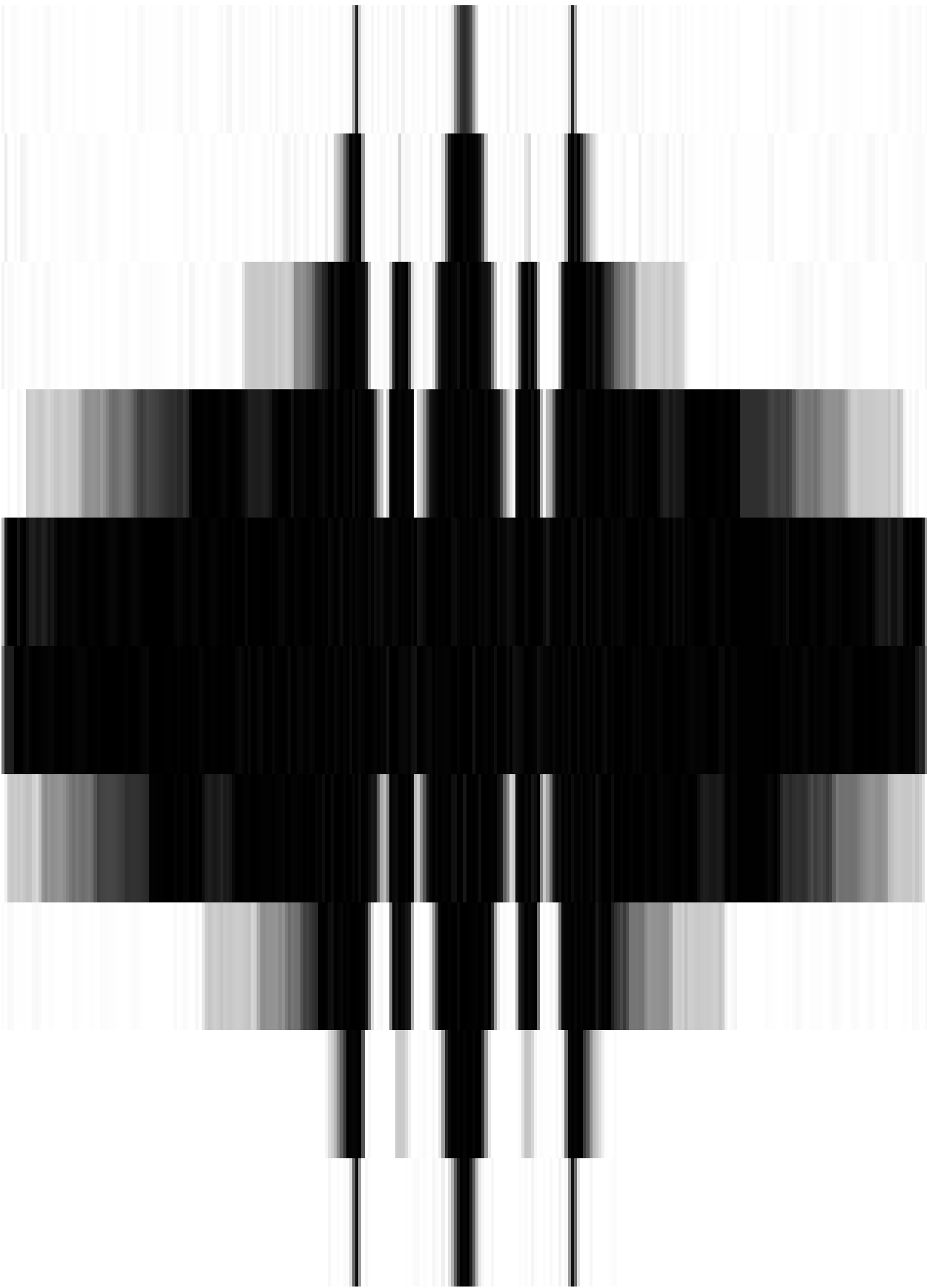
“When by deep meditation you become enwrapped in the ecstasy of God-communion, you realize that it is far better to have maimed yourself—to have silenced your physical self by detaching your consciousness from sensations of sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch—in order to enter this inner kingdom of divine joy than to cast yourself out of God’s kingdom by living only in the realm of sensory experiences. Having gained scientific self-control, you will have mastery over all evil impulses that would impel your hands and feet to do evil or your eye of ignorance to deceive you with delusive perceptions. The craving for physical indulgences, which keeps you burning with the hellfire of material desires and tormented by the worms of parasitic tendencies that entrench themselves in your consciousness and devour your peace, will be sublimated in Everlasting Bliss.”



The orthodox notion of eternal hellfire: an utterly false precept

The orthodox notion of eternal hellfire and damnation is an utterly false precept; it arises not from God or His true prophets but from man's own unforgiving wrath against the evil actions of his brethren. It is nothing but satanic delusion that makes man ascribe to the all-loving God, who is equally the Father of all, a revengeful, vindictive spirit that creates hells and purgatories. As Jesus himself pointed out, the truth is that God in His Infinite Love is helping His children continuously to come back to His eternal kingdom of Bliss.⁹

“Hellfire” is self-created by the wrongs perpetuated by a man. Those who act evilly create evil tendencies that smolder unseen in the brain, ready to pour out fiery suffering at a suitable time. The word hell is from the Anglo-Saxon root *helan*, “to conceal.” Therefore, the word hellfire is very appropriate to depict the concealed flames of agony which stored-up tendencies can produce in earthly life or in the afterlife in the astral world.¹⁰ Just as an evildoer with any iota of rationality burns with evil conscience during wakefulness and with subconscious terror during sleep, so the consciousness of a man of evil conscience suffers from hellfire or agony in the “wakeful” state of human life, and after death suffers the effects of bad karma in the form of “fiery” nightmare-like experiences in the astral world. Physical misery ends with death; but spiritual misery born of ignorant actions continues in the after-death state and on into new physical incarnations, until by virtuous deeds and renunciation of evil that bad karma is expiated.



Advice for aspirants experiencing temporary spiritual deterioration

Thus Jesus goes on to say: “Every devotee by meditation must saturate, ‘salt,’ himself with the fire of realization, that he may be acceptable to God on earth and in the astral world. Everyone who makes a spiritual sacrifice of material indulgences for God-communion will find his soul ‘salted’ or saturated with divine realization. As salt bestows good flavor on food and also preserves it, so when the human consciousness is salted with divine realization it is saved from the delusion of decay and death and savors its native immortality. But if by concentrating on material pleasures and egotism the preservative flavor of the divine salt is lost, so also is lost all goodness it could impart in the seasoning of the soul.

“A true disciple is like good salt. He seasons his own life and the lives of others by his spirit of renunciation and his cultivation of divine qualities and realization. Just as unsavory salt cannot be used for anything, so a disciple who loses the focus of his renunciation and his sense of self-discipline is useless to himself and to others, until he acquires the fresh salt of Self-realization by daily meditation and by absorbing through attentive good fellowship the divine peace of the Self-realization expressed by other God-seeking souls.”

In this passage, Jesus alludes to the temporarily diminished realization of some of his disciples brought about by their competitive desire for preeminence—a spiritual deterioration evidenced in their inability to heal the child possessed of an evil spirit.¹¹ Even highly advanced souls may be momentarily cast down from their lofty attainments by the strong habits and temptations of the ego. The devotee may have wondrous perceptions and realizations in meditation—as also the gift of spiritual powers—and yet suddenly, or by slow erosivity, be entrapped by some silently lurking egoic karmic tendency. Stability in the Changeless Spirit requires years—even incarnations—of moral and spiritual discipline and repeated experiences in the ecstasy of God-communion until the devotee’s consciousness realizes no loss of God-perception and attunement during the fulfillment of his dutiful activities in the world. Thus Jesus advises the disciples that they would regain their full Self-realization by renunciation of egotistical desires and especially by meditation-bestowed power to free themselves at will from the ego’s whimsical bondage to the attractions and repulsions of delusion.¹² Then with the newfound salt of Self-realization they could saturate their human

consciousness with soul-immortality in Christ Consciousness.



“Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 18:10).

“Take care that you do not disdain the simple, humble consciousness of children. Cosmic Vibration, which I feel within me, and the heavenly Cosmic Light, which I behold within me, reveal that the astral bodies of children, ‘their angels,’ who passed on from the earth with no free-will opportunity to acquire wisdom get a chance between incarnations with their simple unworldly consciousness to behold the materialized form of any being or saint in whose face shines the consciousness of God the Father.”



The heavenly after-death experience of pure-hearted persons

“Angels” here refers to the astral bodies or luminous forms of nineteen elements in which souls with their past karmic patterns remain encased after death.¹³ The “Father which is in heaven” signifies the presence of God in the transcendental realm behind the astral light and the finer causal light of wisdom. A person identified with his physical body and its material surroundings cannot see that the whole world is light and not matter, and thus cannot be conscious of the underlying presence of God. Saints who through meditation have awakened the superconsciousness can perceive the Heavenly Father hidden behind and transcendent within His dream vibrations of light and consciousness. Also blessed to glimpse the “face of my Father” are children with pure consciousness who die before becoming fully identified with the material body and the sensory consciousness with its ignorance-perpetuating karma.

God is often conceptualized as a Venerable Being in masculine form with a hoary beard, sitting on a grand throne in a point of space called heaven. It is mistakenly supposed that all good souls who reach this heavenly region see God as this benevolent Elder. “Face of my Father” does not signify that God has a body with distinctive physical features and countenance akin to man’s form. Under no circumstances could God withdraw His omnipresence from infinity and remain confined within the limitations of one form; His cosmic body of universes would disintegrate without the sustaining presence of His conscious everywhere-ness. Thus God has never created a finite human-like form for Himself in which He invariably appears to souls in the astral heaven, or to saints in this world when they can penetrate their consciousness into His heavenly kingdom.¹⁴

Nevertheless, just as cold can freeze invisible hydrogen-oxygen gas into an iceberg, so by the materializing power of God’s will and the devotee’s devotion the Heavenly Father who has materialized all forms out of His being can assume any form—that of Jesus, Krishna, or any other master or saint dear to His devotee; or that of an angelic deity-form such as Divine Father or Mother. The souls of children, ascending prematurely to an astral sphere, typically perceive the Heavenly Father as reflected in astral visions of angelic beings and in the forms of saints or masters. After being thus blessed by God’s power, the souls of these little ones reincarnate on earth to continue to work out their karma to the

ultimate end of joining the host of liberated souls who have returned to God. Young children, before their minds become saturated with material consciousness, often speak of their heavenly experiences and having seen God's angels.



“For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost. How think ye? If a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish” (Matthew 18:11 – 14).¹⁵

“C hrist Consciousness appeared in my body named Jesus so that through my consciousness and teachings many souls who have lost themselves in the wilderness of the material desires of their earthly lives could be rescued and led back home to the Father.



God permits no soul to become forever lost in ignorance

“God has a multitude of virtuous souls on earth who remain within the fold of His sheltering presence; but when He sees that a soul, by the misuse of free will and succumbing to the influence of bad company, has lost itself among the treacherous crags of egotism and the brambles of extreme body consciousness to the neglect of serious spiritual endeavor, God becomes much concerned for that soul. Owing to that person’s previous good karma of having made some spiritual effort before going astray, God sends unto him some form of spiritual aid or a true guru to shepherd that wanderer back into His fold of divinely virtuous living.

“Even in the astral world after death, all ‘little ones’—souls who are little in wisdom as well as souls of little children who have not worked out their karma on earth—receive the guidance of God’s will to assist them out of their karmic miseries. By His divinely arranged help, God aids them to reincarnate in conditions conducive to resolving their karmic plight and which provide them with fresh opportunity to liberate their souls by wisdom and spiritual transformation in meditation. All souls belong to the fold of God; none is outside the attention and care of the Invisible Shepherd. When a soul becomes lost in ignorance, God does not permit that soul to perish; He is always watchful that the sinner somehow returns to the fold of the virtuous.”

Man can go astray into an evil environment and behavior for a while, but no amount of sin can change his eternal soul-nature of divinity. Sin is a crust of ignorance accrued during man’s lost wanderings that hides the perfect soul; when by meditation the soul is led back to God, the crust is washed away and the perfection is revealed.



“Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican” (Matthew 18:15 – 17).

Jesus speaks not only of purifying one's own behavior of offenses, but of how a virtuous person should respond to one who commits offenses against him:

“If your brother in any way acts wrongly against you, take him aside and tell him his faults quietly. If he listens to you, then you have regained the good will and love of your brother. If you speak of the faults of your brother in public, you will rouse his ire and forfeit his trust in you, thus turning him into a permanent enemy; whereas, if you confer privately with him, he will know you intend no ridicule, but are trying with love to remove the cause of ill will.

“If he will not listen to you alone, then in the interest of truth take with you one or two or more trusted friends and with good intentions try to reform the mindset of your brother. This will establish in the purview of witnesses your honest purpose. If your brother in wickedness persists in turning a deaf ear to you, then pray for him in the holy precincts of your place of worship and in the inner temple of your consciousness. Also bring his actions to notice before the elders of your religious congregation (‘church’ 16) who may help to settle the differences between you and your brother. But if your brother spurns this advice also, then let him remain unto you a disbeliever in truth, a heathen and an outcast (‘publican’) before the tribunal of his own conscience.”

In the above, Jesus emphasized the virtue of using the influence of one's own good intentions and those of honorable persons and religious teachers to awaken the sleeping conscience of any error-stricken brother, that he might reform. If he remains recalcitrant, at least the erroneous one would find himself convicted by his own conscience, stimulated by the loving entreaty and thoughts of the brother, good people, and religious teachers. When the wicked brother refuses to be awakened by any good method, it is better to let him alone with his

conscience and the strict disciplinarian of the karmic consequences of his behavior.



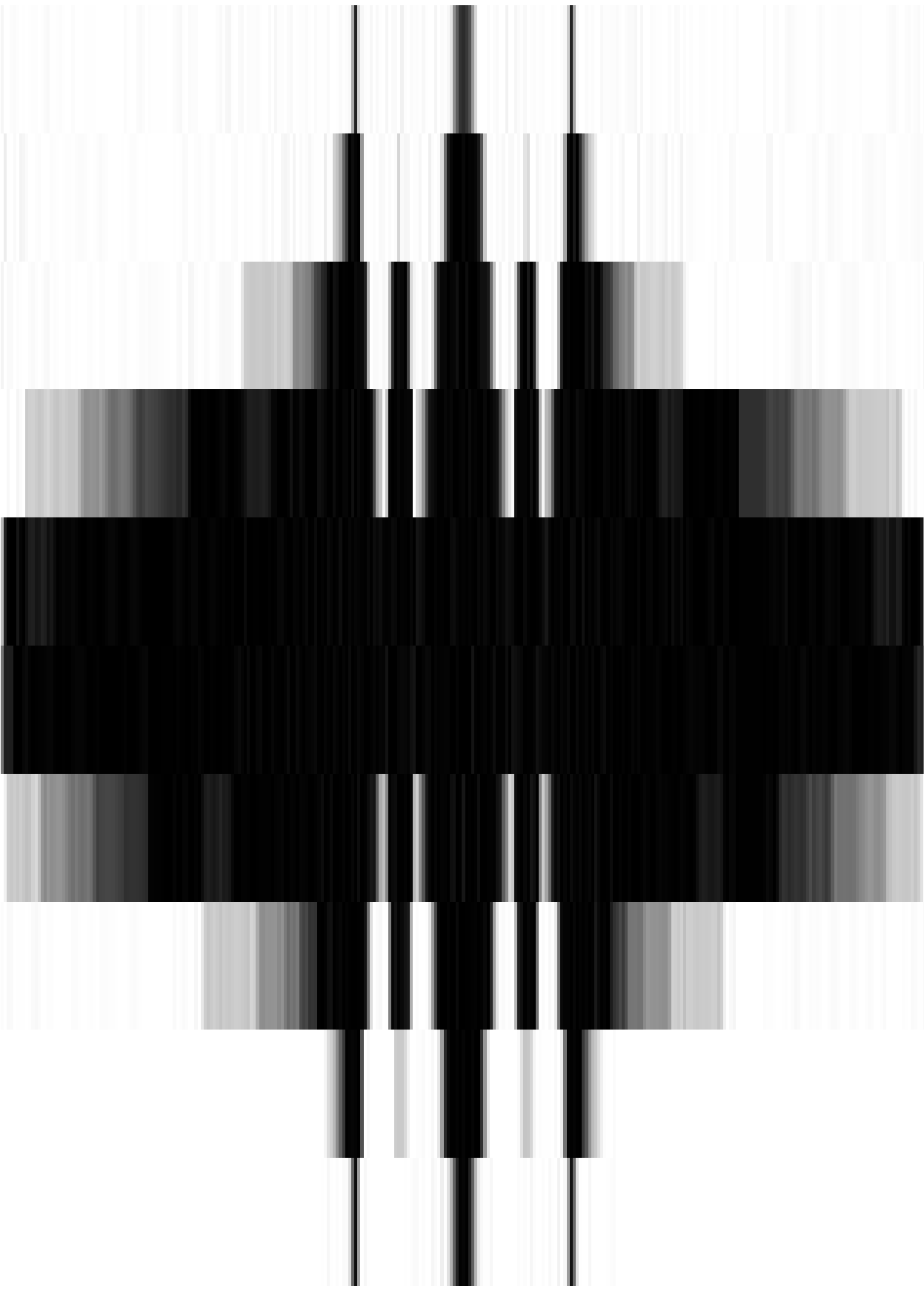
“Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matthew 18:18).¹⁷

“By the testimony of Cosmic Vibration and truth within me, I declare unto you that whatever bad tendencies you create on earth will limit your earth life, and after death those tendencies will also limit your soul in the astral world. Whatever good tendencies you will loosen within your soul, the same vibration of your good tendencies will also expand the freedom and heavenly experiences of the soul after death in the astral world. This is the law of karma, cause and effect, whose judgment of souls holds true on earth and in the astral world.

“Evil actions performed on earth will be carried within the consciousness into the astral world and thereafter into the next incarnation in an environment apropos to evil consequences. Earthly good qualities carried into the astral world after death bring the opportunity of reincarnation in a good earthly environment. Good actions done on earth ultimately free the soul to be with God in the hereafter.”



“Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:19 – 20).



“Where two or three are gathered in my name”: the power of united concentration

“Again I declare unto you, if two of you shall unite your concentration, ‘agree,’ and very deeply pray for the realization of any wholesome desire, your Father in heaven will know of it and by His Will shall grant your wish on earth. But your united concentration must be strong and continuous to reach that level of the Father’s presence that brings from Him a conscious direct response in fulfilling your good wish. Wherever two or three devotees gather together ‘in my name,’ listen in meditation to the Cosmic Vibration within them, there in that vibration they shall feel my Christ Consciousness.”

When Jesus said, “If two of you shall agree,” he emphasized that when one’s human will is reinforced by the will of another, it becomes stronger. When the strong will of two or more people is united in deep meditation on God, their will becomes charged with the all-powerful, all-accomplishing Divine Will.

Man’s will is the activating faculty of consciousness that makes him a vital, thinking, creative, accomplishing being. Every soul is a child of God and a reflection of God’s omnipotent will, but by egoity man isolates his will from the Divine Will and thus limits it. But when a devotee reinforces his will by deep concentration and union with the strong will of other devotees he transforms his will into God’s will, recollecting his identity with God and thus recovering his divine heritage, possessing the illimitable material or spiritual power of his Heavenly Father. The devotee ought not to expect the full realization of the power of his will and prayer until he has strengthened them by divine company and God-contact.

When Jesus said, “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I,” he stressed the power of united concentration: When two or a few devotees come together for inner worship of God, the stronger divine concentration of one person strengthens the weaker concentration of another. But if such gatherings are merely a cause for discussion and gossip, halfhearted recitation of prayers, or absentminded rituals, with no real inner communing with God, it is unlikely that the Divine Guest of Honor will be felt in their midst. Jesus’ exhortation was a call for sincere devotees to unite the depths of their meditation in hearing “my name,” Cosmic Vibratory Sound, Aum, announcing

that “there am I,” Christ Consciousness, “in the midst of them.” In the Cosmic Vibration they will feel the Christ Intelligence become manifest within their own uplifted consciousness.

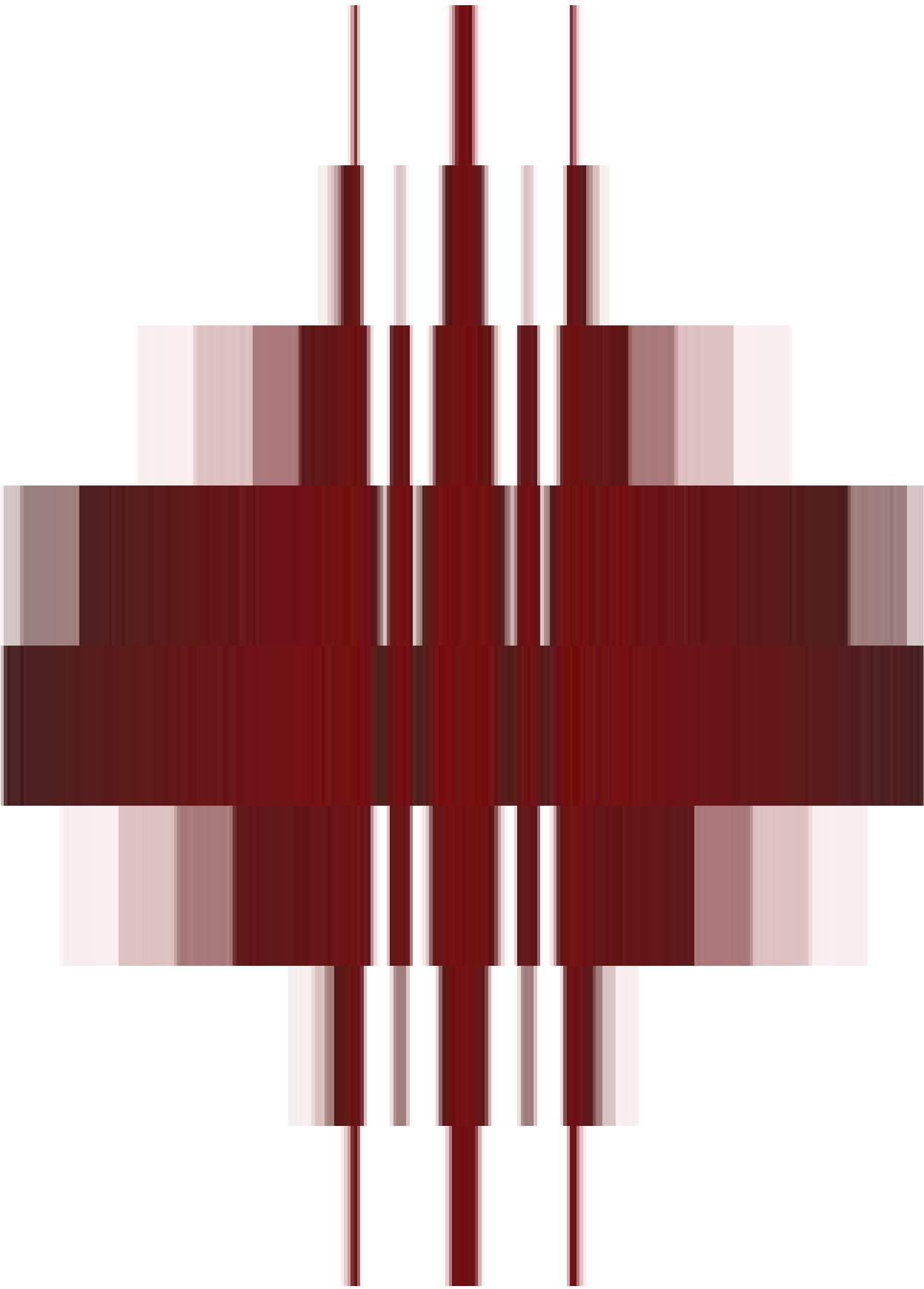
Saint John in the Book of Revelation said: “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet.”¹⁸ The “voice as of a trumpet” signifies the great cosmic sound of Aum, which the devotee hears in meditation as he approaches Spirit. The “Lord’s day” signifies the occasion when the Christ Consciousness, Lord of all vibratory creation, dawns upon the consciousness of the devotee in deep meditation.

The modern ideal of worship consisting of vast congregations with heterogeneous minds has changed the temple of God into a lecture hall. The huge assemblages with their restless thoughts want to be entertained by the charisma and intellectual expositions of an eloquent minister. While the inspiration imparted by congregational worship has its place, there need to be also small groups of souls who gather together in quiet places to unite their will in meditation and in listening to the Cosmic Sound of the Holy Ghost vibrating behind the throbs of the heart, awakening their intuitive perception of the universal consciousness of Christ. Instead of being held together in vast congregations by music and the personality of a religious elocutionist, a few earnest seekers who gather together to meditate deeply and commune with the voice of God within, feeling themselves in the presence of Christ Consciousness, will be divinely bound together in God by their own Self-realization.

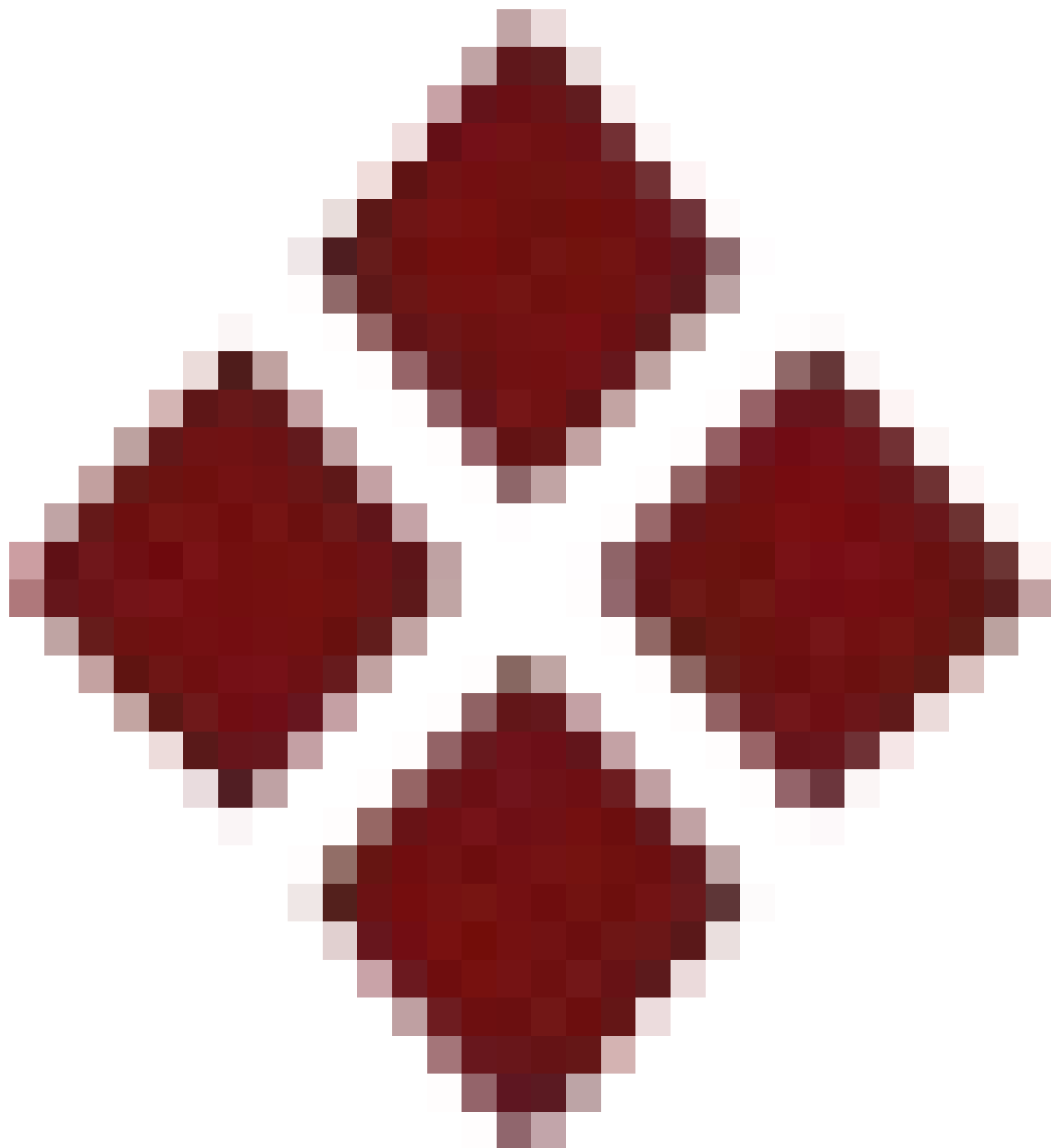


Discourse 49

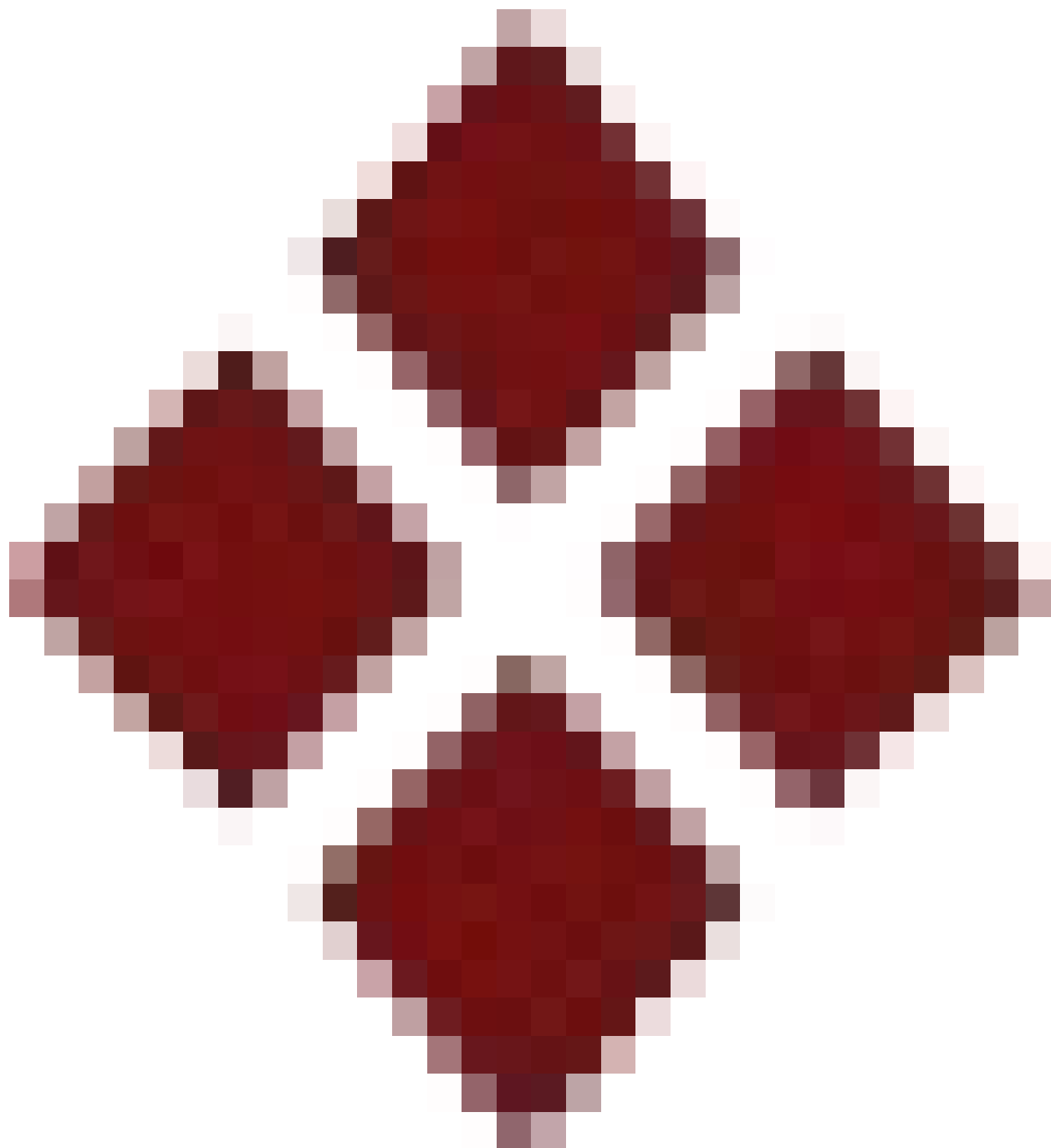
“Follow Me”: Further Counsel From Jesus on Inner and Outer Renunciation



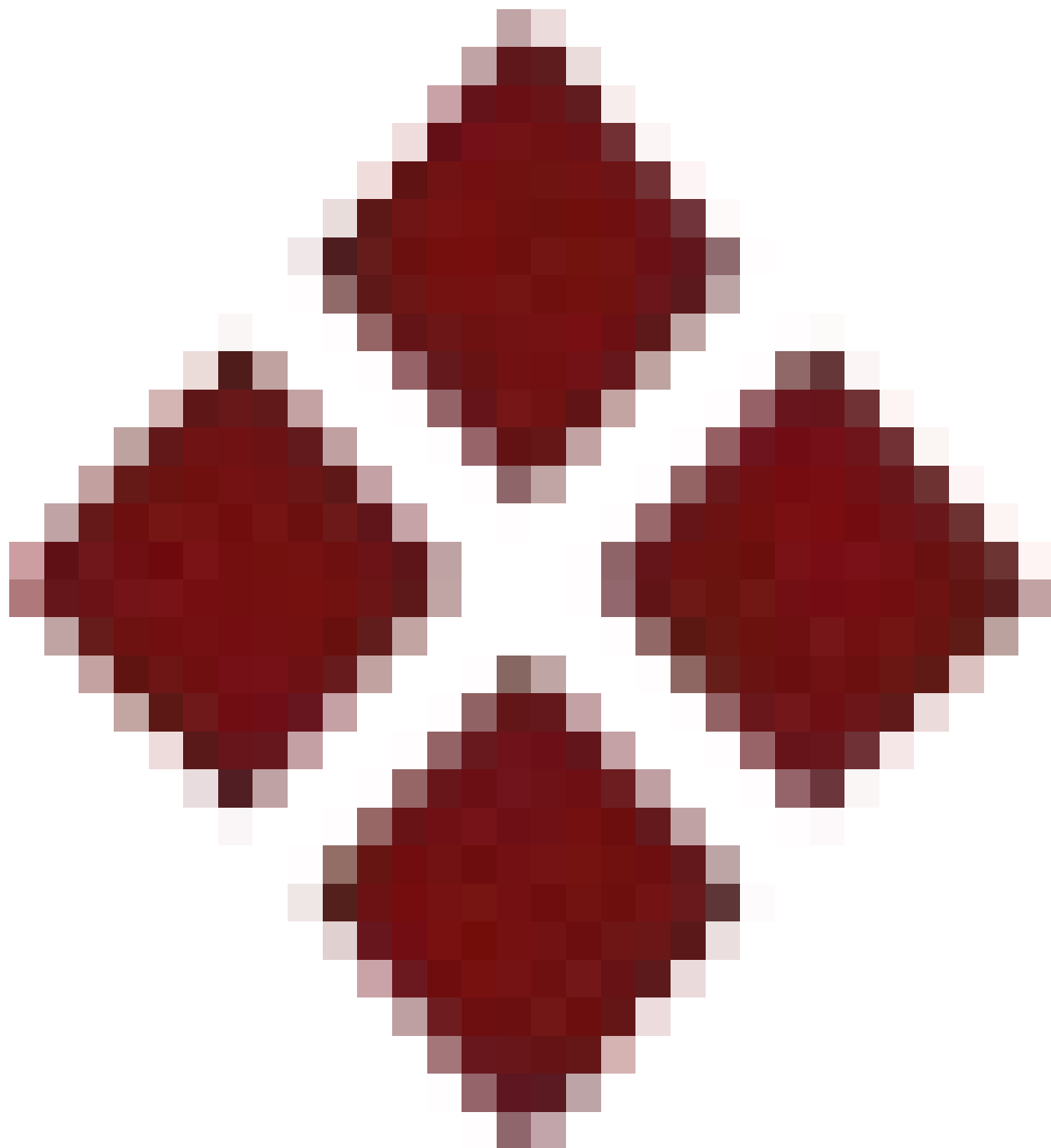
**All Who Are in Tune With Christ Consciousness
Work in Harmony**



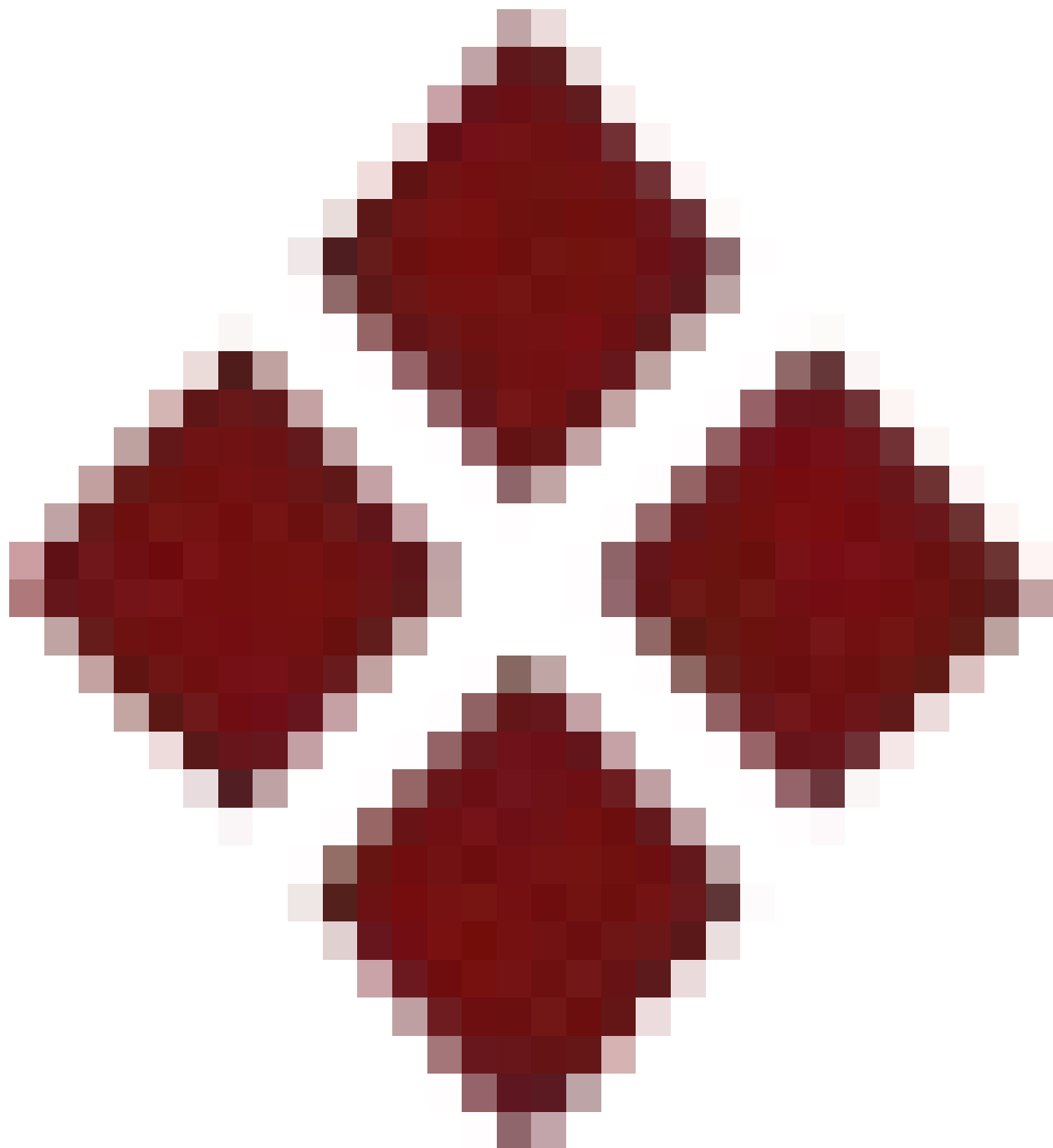
A Warning About Using Spiritual Power for Ignoble Purposes



God Uses Love, Not Force, to Reform Evildoers



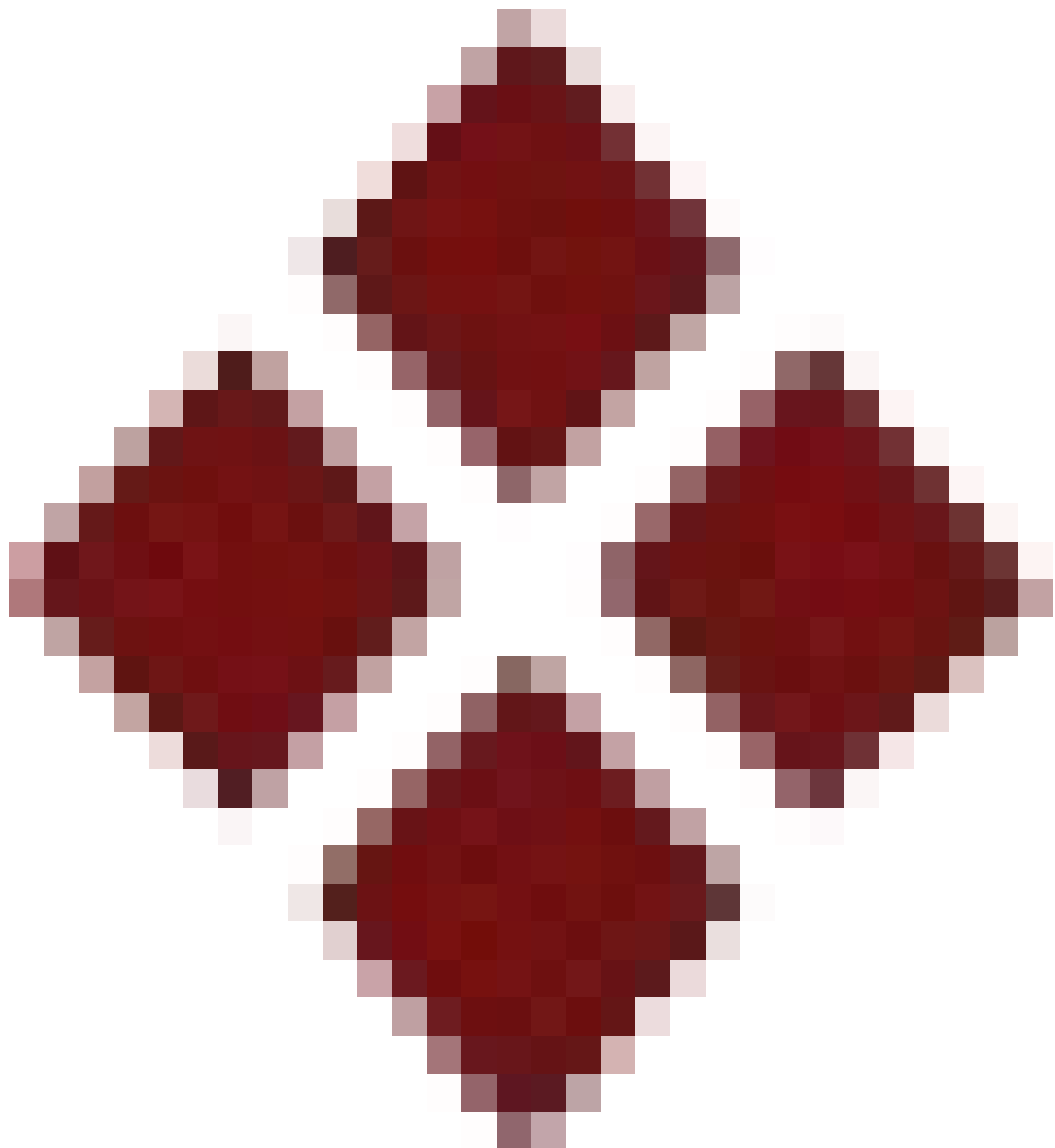
**Jesus Felt the Universe as His Body and
Omnipresence as His Home**



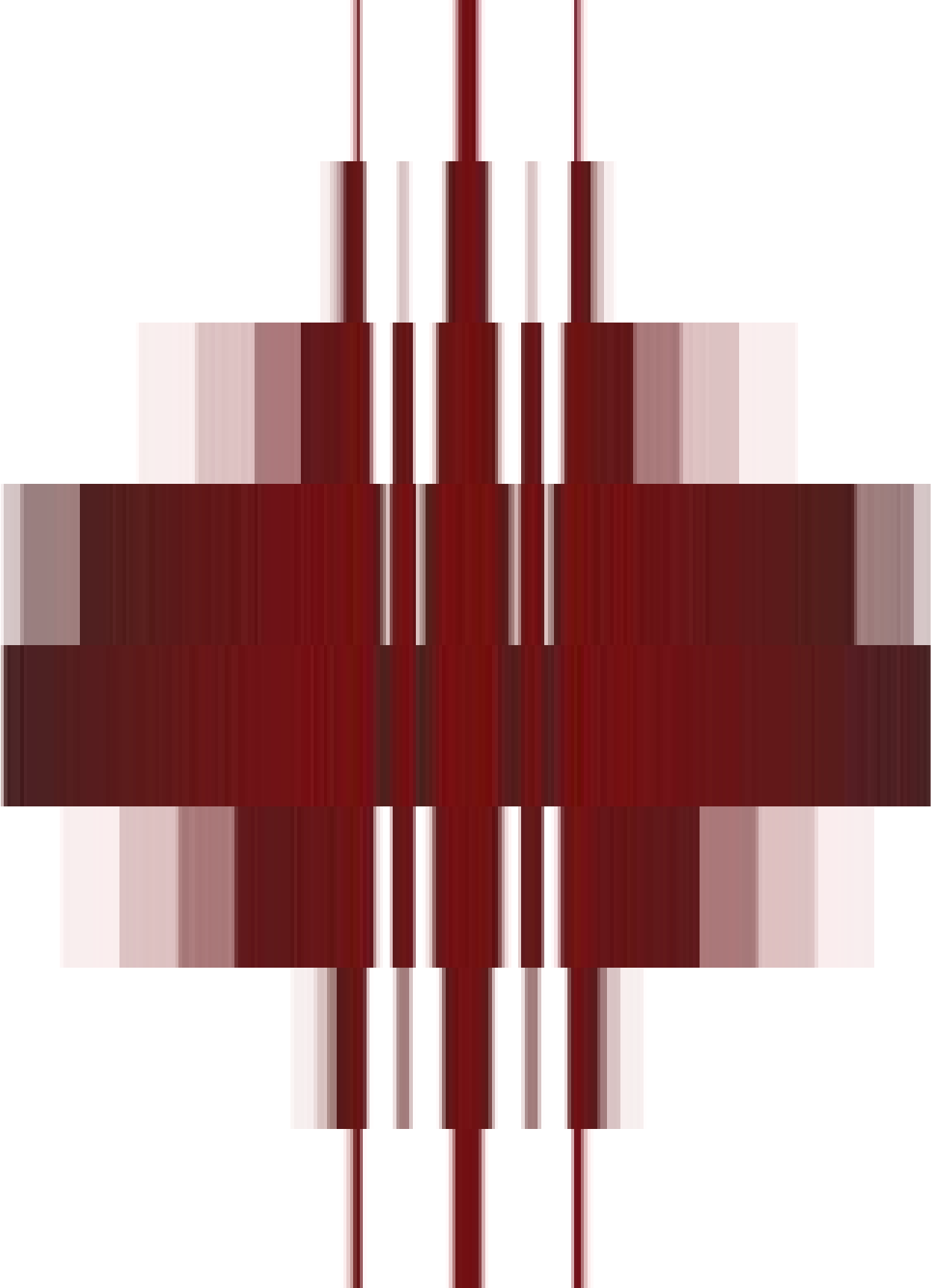
India's Ideal of Complete Renunciation Exemplified in the Life of Jesus



**Duty to God Should Take Precedence Over
Attachment to Family**



The Psychology of Inner and Outer Renunciation



“All devotees, householder or renunciant, must realize that mental renunciation is of primary importance in the attainment of God....The path of yoga teaches every aspiring devotee to commune with God while living in the world or as a renunciant.”

■

And John answered and said, "Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbad him, because he followeth not with us."

And Jesus said unto him, "Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us."

And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, and sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.

And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elijah did?"

But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." And they went to another village.

And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, "Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest."

And Jesus said unto him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head."

And he said unto another, "Follow me."

But he said, "Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father."

Jesus said unto him, "Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God."

And another also said, "Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house."

And Jesus said unto him, "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

—*Luke 9:49 – 62*



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Discourse 49

“Follow Me”: Further Counsel From Jesus on Inner and Outer Renunciation



And John answered and said, “Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbad him, because he followeth not with us.”

And Jesus said unto him, “Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us” (Luke 9:49 – 50).

Parallel reference:

And John answered him, saying, “Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us; and we forbad him, because he followeth not us.”

But Jesus said, “Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is on our part. For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward” (Mark 9:38 – 41).



All who are in tune with Christ Consciousness work in harmony

“Beloved disciples, do not reprobate any man who is working healings in my name—through the power of Cosmic Vibration emanating from Christ Consciousness—just because he does not otherwise associate himself with us. It does not matter whether or not he outwardly follows us; as long as he is in tune with the Christ Consciousness, he is one with me and with all of us and is justified in administering divine healings to stricken children of God. The law of divine healing by the Christ Consciousness – imbued cosmic vibratory power is universal and not subject to the exclusive control of anyone.

“Whoever performs miraculous healings through Christ Consciousness will not in any way speak against me, in whom the Christ Consciousness is fully manifested. If he does not practice anything against our principles, then he is in truth in tune with us.

“Whoever shall perform any service in the spirit of Christ Consciousness will not lack a reward therefrom. If he helps you even with a cup of water when you are thirsty, he will gain from that act because of the responding Christ Consciousness manifested in you—as also present in the consciousness of all. Those who act in sympathy with you tune in with the Christ Consciousness present in you and will be rewarded by expansion of their consciousness, automatically attracting unto themselves through that attunement the qualities of Christ Consciousness.”

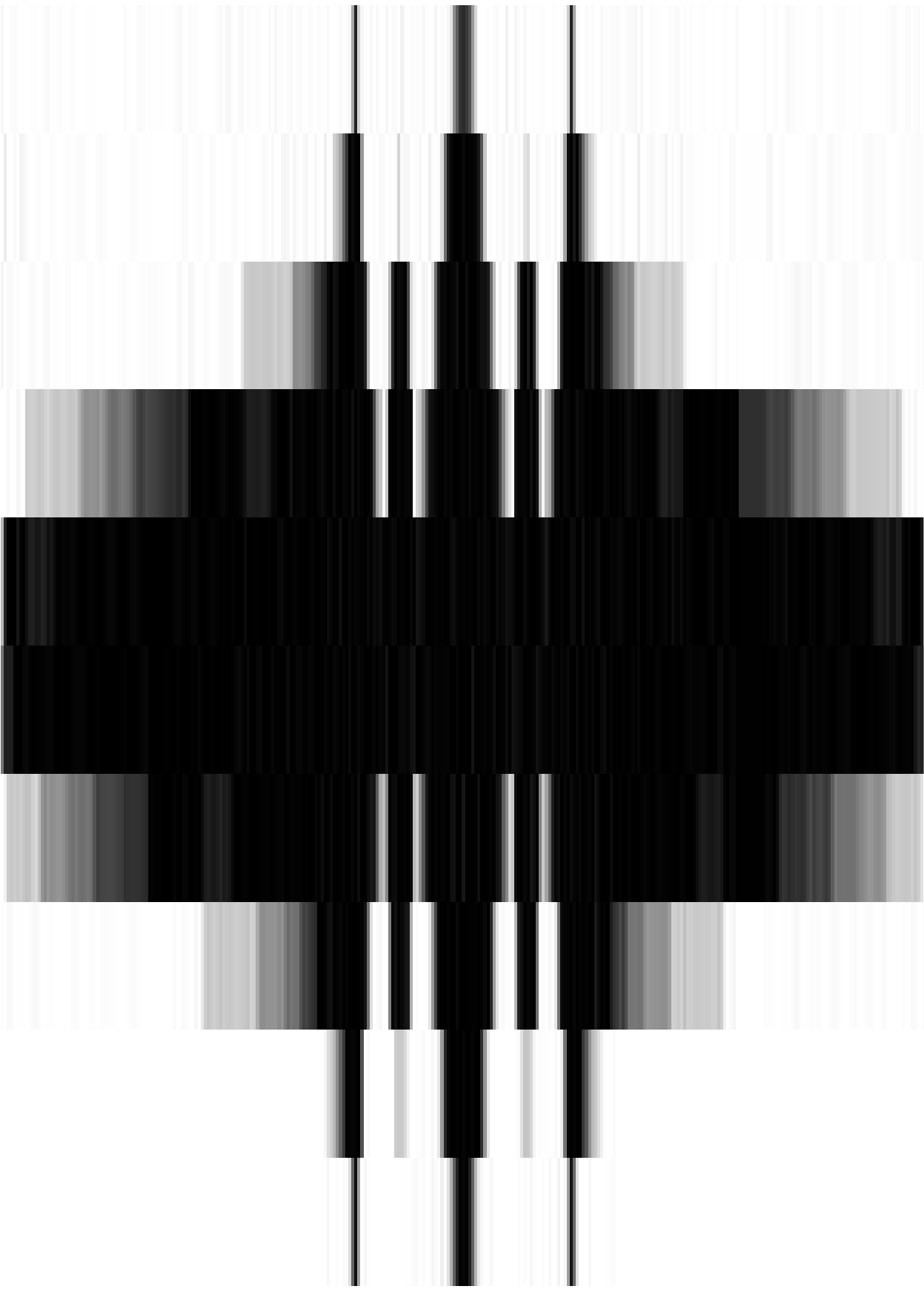
Truth, like God, is one. Those who have attained real knowledge of truth through the actual experience of intuitive realization do not in essence contradict one another. However, because God-realized souls express wisdom in various modes as appropriate for their clime and time and the purpose of their mission, disciples of limited understanding lose sight of the underlying unity of truth and emphasize the superficial differences. Hence the multiplicity of religions and sects within those religions, each intent on invalidating other paths. How necessary it is that “my way is the only way” religionists concentrate on acquiring Self-realization, that by the incontrovertible perception of God and truth the walls of divisiveness and intolerance are thrown down to accommodate the all-inclusive One Truth, which seeks a home in the shrines of every faith.



And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, and sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.

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But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, “Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.” And they went to another village (Luke 9:51 – 56).



A warning about using spiritual power for ignoble purposes

“You are behaving as though you are not aware of the divine image in which you are made. Otherwise you would feel no spirit of revenge when ill-treated, for it is not your soul nature but the Evil Force that incites satanic emotions. The Christ Consciousness is manifest in my body (the Son of man), and potentially in yours, not to destroy the lives of those who do evil but to redeem them from bondage to death and delusion by the superior power of divine ways.”

Jesus earlier had warned his disciples to refrain from wrongly or vengefully using the tremendous power bestowed on them with the spiritual awakening of inner divine forces.¹ Here again he reminds them to discriminate constantly as to whether their motivations are from attributes native to the soul or from satanic tendencies that gained entry into the consciousness through the channel of ignorance. He wanted the disciples to realize that to please God they must bring out by good actions the Father’s quintessential goodness in their souls. Too often is the Divine Presence in man eclipsed by Satan-implanted incitements to anger, jealousy, revenge, destruction—Evil’s host of influences that should be destroyed and expelled from one’s being.²

Jesus came to expand human lives into the consciousness of eternal life in God, not to destroy into the oblivion of death those lives fraught with evil. To succumb to temptation to use divine force for revenge, or for any selfish purpose, is to become Satan’s instrument. When Jesus was arrested by his enemies to bring him before the high priest Caiaphas, he said: “Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?”³ With the forces of heaven at his command, emanating power through his spiritual eye, Jesus could have annihilated his enemies. Instead, he forgave them. By that act, his life became a channel of God’s light for all ages to come.

To respond to hate with more hate, to fight evil with more evil, is to support the strength of the Evil Force. The power of Satan can be conquered solely by the good force of God. It is a common human blunder to resist anger with anger. The annals of history are rife with wars fought to suppress evil people by fire and sword; but the use of force alone is not lastingly effectual. Their bodies may be conquered by destructive means, but the evil and anger in their hearts will seethe

and unless healed will grow stronger, in time finding new outlets for that pent-up hostility. People can be restricted but not wholly controlled by force. The ultimate influential power is God's love given through a genuine heart. Only love can truly destroy enmity in malevolent persons. The vibrations of divine love are a silent force that subtly works palliative transformations.

When one steadfastly refuses to give a slap for a slap, allowing animosity no foothold in one's being, a tremendous power of love develops in the heart. That love and its attendant forgiveness is the first budding of the bliss of God, without which there is no soul freedom. So long as spiritual power is sought or used to control or harm other people, that abuser of power will never find liberation.



God uses love, not force, to reform evildoers

One who would know God must behave like Him. No matter how evil a person is or how much he acts against divine laws, God never uses His omnipotence to destroy the malefactor. The evil person destroys himself by the consequences of his own sins. Though millions of persons pander to their evil inclinations, we do not see them dramatically punished by bolts of power sent from heaven; God prefers to reform them by love and wisdom, whispered to them through their conscience. He does not interfere with man's free will to choose between good and evil by forcibly stopping evil actions. For those who are slow to learn from God's inner whispers, there is nevertheless the snail-paced evolutionary unfolding of inner wisdom through the time-honored process of incarnations of trial and error, action and reaction—often painful but always with the underlying magnetic pull of God's love.

God is love. His silent loving call eventually draws every wrongdoer back to the Divine Home. He tries to hasten the awakening of His error-stricken children through the influence of the humble forgiving personalities of His true saints and devotees. Christlike souls who commune with God have distinctly declared, by precept and by example, that anyone who aspires to know Him must learn to demonstrate the godliness of conquering evil by good, hate by love, revengeful actions by the loving forgiveness of helpful actions, unkindness by kindly thoughtfulness, harshness by graciousness, pride by humbleness, cruelty by kindness, unrighteousness by righteousness, falsehood by truth, jealousy by love, temptation by self-control and meditation, restlessness by calmness, harsh speech by considerate words, evil behavior by exemplary conduct, selfishness by openhearted selflessness, theological arrogance by Self-realization.

Christlike souls use their divine power like the Heavenly Father, only to win, never to harm, God's erroneous children. Darkness can be dispelled only by light. Sin can be dispelled only by righteousness, nurtured by forgiveness and love, which heals the wounds, the ignorance, and the rage in errant hearts. Jesus set a wondrous example of grand, humble, almighty godliness to light man's way out of darkness.



And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, “Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.”

And Jesus said unto him, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head” (Luke 9:57 – 58).⁴



Jesus felt the universe as his body and omnipresence as his home

Jesus was not sorrowing over any sense of lack or bemoaning his itinerant life. All great masters who are one with Spirit feel the Infinite as their sole consciousness, pervading the whole physical cosmos in which their human forms are included. To Jesus, the universe was his body and wall-less omnipresence his home. He did not care to identify himself with a little physical form or to house it in one fixed point of space with mundane collectibles; everywhere was his abode, everything a part of his overarching Christ Consciousness:

“Instinct teaches the foxes to live in holes and birds of the air to make their dwelling in nests; but the Christ Consciousness present in my body (the Son of man), being omnipresent, confines itself to no particular point of space wherein to rest the wisdom (head) present within it.”

As the animals are at home in their dens, and birds in their nests, so the man of limited consciousness restricts his thought of home to a particular place. The liberated man, on the other hand, no longer feels stranger or alien to any place in the cosmos or beyond.

The Persian seer Omar Khayyam wrote of the liberated soul's unfettered being in his acclaimed Rubaiyat. In the bliss of oneness with God (the eternally unchanging “Moon of Delight”), the poet exults:

Ah, Moon of my Delight, who know'st no wane,

The Moon of Heav'n is rising once again:

How oft hereafter rising shall she look

Through this same Garden after me—in vain!⁵

“The little garden of the outward universe can no longer accommodate my being, spacious with omnipresence. Moon of heaven, sun, stars, all natural manifestations, ever bound by the rising and falling alternations of duality, look for me no more within the confines of a transient cosmos. I am one with transcendent Spirit.”

Jesus expressed this absolute freedom to the scribe who vowed to follow him “whithersoever thou goest”: “My home is the measureless infinitude of my Father’s consciousness. Follow me there, you who would be my disciple!”



India's ideal of complete renunciation exemplified in the life of Jesus

Jesus' words also addressed his lifestyle of complete renunciation, akin to the ancient tradition in India of wandering mendicants. In accord with the tenets of these monastic renunciant orders that have existed continuously in India since ancient times, Jesus considered no dwelling place as his home and amassed no money for food or clothing; he did not marry or acknowledge his earthly relatives as his sole family. He required of his apostles, also, the strict life of renunciation: "And commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in their purse: but be shod with sandals; and not put on two coats" (Mark 6:8 – 9; see Discourse 40). "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:33; see Discourse 58). "Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Luke 12:33 – 34; see Discourse 56). The corollary of outer renunciation is the nonattachment of inner renunciation: "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on" (Matthew 6:25; see Discourse 29). That is, consider your body a part of God and do not emphasize the material consciousness in it; spiritualize it by tuning your consciousness with God-consciousness, and you will realize that your life is sustained directly by your Creator.

A God-surrendered, God-supported life has been extolled by some of India's greatest prophets, including Lord Buddha, Swami Shankara, and Sri Chaitanya. Initiates of the Swami Order, reorganized by Swami Shankara, and of the Buddhistic monastic order (predating the Christian era), follow the above-mentioned tenets of renunciation.⁶

People in the West tend to forget that the Bible is an Oriental scripture and that Jesus was an Oriental. He is, therefore, in many ways, more understood in the Orient than in the Occident, where the Christian scriptures are generally interpreted with ample accommodation for a lifestyle that is spiritually less demanding. Jesus lived the life of a renunciant and celibate, but the West little cares to follow that. They take from his teachings as much as they can adapt without inconveniencing their mode of living. Some Catholic monastics and a

few others in the West do live the single-hearted renunciant life enjoined by Christ (becoming sainted examples); but in the East this ideal has been emphasized both in the material and the spiritual life.

In the West and in the East there are those who have exemplified the requisite inner spirit of renunciation in secular life as well as in the hermitages. Bhagavan Krishna, a godly king to whom are ascribed the sublime yoga teachings of the Bhagavad Gita, emphasized how to live in the world without being attached.⁷ King Janaka, a ruler in ancient India who was an illumined saint of perfect inner renunciation, also demonstrated this ideal. In the modern era, the life of Lahiri Mahasaya offered the same example.

Swami Shankara extolled wisdom and renunciation; Jesus emphasized devotion and renunciation. Jesus, like Shankara, was a sannyasi, follower of the path of complete outer and inner renunciation. The Sanskrit word sannyas, from roots meaning “to cast aside,” denotes one who divests himself of all encumbrances of identification with a limited body, mind, and ego, acknowledging no other self but Spirit. Jesus, who had expanded his love beyond the exclusivity of family ties and attachments, said: “Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?” Shankara similarly expressed his transcendent freedom: “No birth, no death, no caste have I. Father, mother, have I none.” The great swami went on to say: “Mind, nor intellect, nor ego, chitta; sky, nor earth, nor metals am I. I am He, I am He; blessed Spirit, I am He.”⁸ Jesus likewise averred: “I and my Father are One.”

A follower of the monastic renunciant life forsakes his family name. The family name is indicative of the nation and particular family to which a person belongs; but members of monastic orders are invested with new names indicating their aspiration to achieve identity with God, or to manifest one of His holy qualities, or to emulate one of His saints. The name “Yogananda” is derived from yoga, meaning divine union, and ananda, meaning bliss. “Bliss through divine union”—he who is united with the bliss of Spirit. The original family name was forsaken when I took the sacred vows of sannyas from my Guru and received from him this new designation as a member of the ancient Swami Order.

Some swamis adopt the practice of nonattachment by constantly moving from one place to another, never remaining for more than three days in one dwelling, in order to observe the truth that since God is everywhere, every place is their home in Him. Even when swamis live in monasteries or hermitages, they are

enjoined to keep their consciousness free of personal attachment, caring for the sacred precincts as a place consecrated to seeking and serving God, and remembering the Spirit as their real Home and Refuge.

A devotee who localizes his consciousness to one body or dwelling place loses sight of the omnipresent Spirit within him. Attachment to one's body and locale humiliates the soul with rude limitations. The yogi is the paradigm of renunciant wanderers. His peregrinations are in the infinitude of Spirit. He closes his eyes and consciousness to mortal perimeters and meditates on the uncircumscribed eternal sphere of Spirit—above, beneath, and all around him; his soul in ecstatic joy reclaims its forgotten identity with the One who is all-pervading. “Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool: what house will ye build Me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of My rest? Hath not My hand made all these things?”⁹

To devotees following the path of complete outward as well as inward renunciation, as did Jesus, he said: “Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life” (Matthew

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And he said unto another, "Follow me."

But he said, "Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father."

Jesus said unto him, "Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:59 – 60).¹¹

"Follow my living spirit and everlasting-life-giving teachings and let the spiritually dead take care of the burial rituals of your physically dead father. As my disciple, you acknowledge God as your Father and that your first duty is to Him and to His work of bringing souls to His kingdom; let this not be superseded by social or family expectations."



Duty to God should take precedence over attachment to family

Jesus had elsewhere quoted the divine injunction: “Honor thy father and mother”
(Matthew

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); he was not here advocating that a son disrespect his father. Jesus said to his disciple, “Let the dead bury their dead,” only to change in the disciple’s consciousness his priorities as regards his family relation and his divine relation with Jesus in which he assumed a greater obligation to serve the spiritual needs of the expanded cosmic family of Christ. The master was reminding the disciple that it was more important to answer the call to God-realization by being in tune with Christ Consciousness than to tarry in the delusion-imposed sense of obligation to tend to the burial of the father. There were so many spiritually dead people bound to mortal traditions, heedless of a higher call to God, who were ready and capable of doing the necessary for a no longer useful dead body.

In India it is the custom for the son to cremate his father or mother. He is the first one to put the fire in the funeral pyre. But a swami, who renounces ties to his personal family and becomes identified with God’s universal family, is enjoined to forswear this obligation as regards any of his deceased relatives. Since in this cosmic motion picture of the world drama he no longer cabins himself in only one family unit, and since in his consciousness he belongs to God’s family and does not officiate at the death of all members of that family, why should he single out the dead of the family into which his body was born?

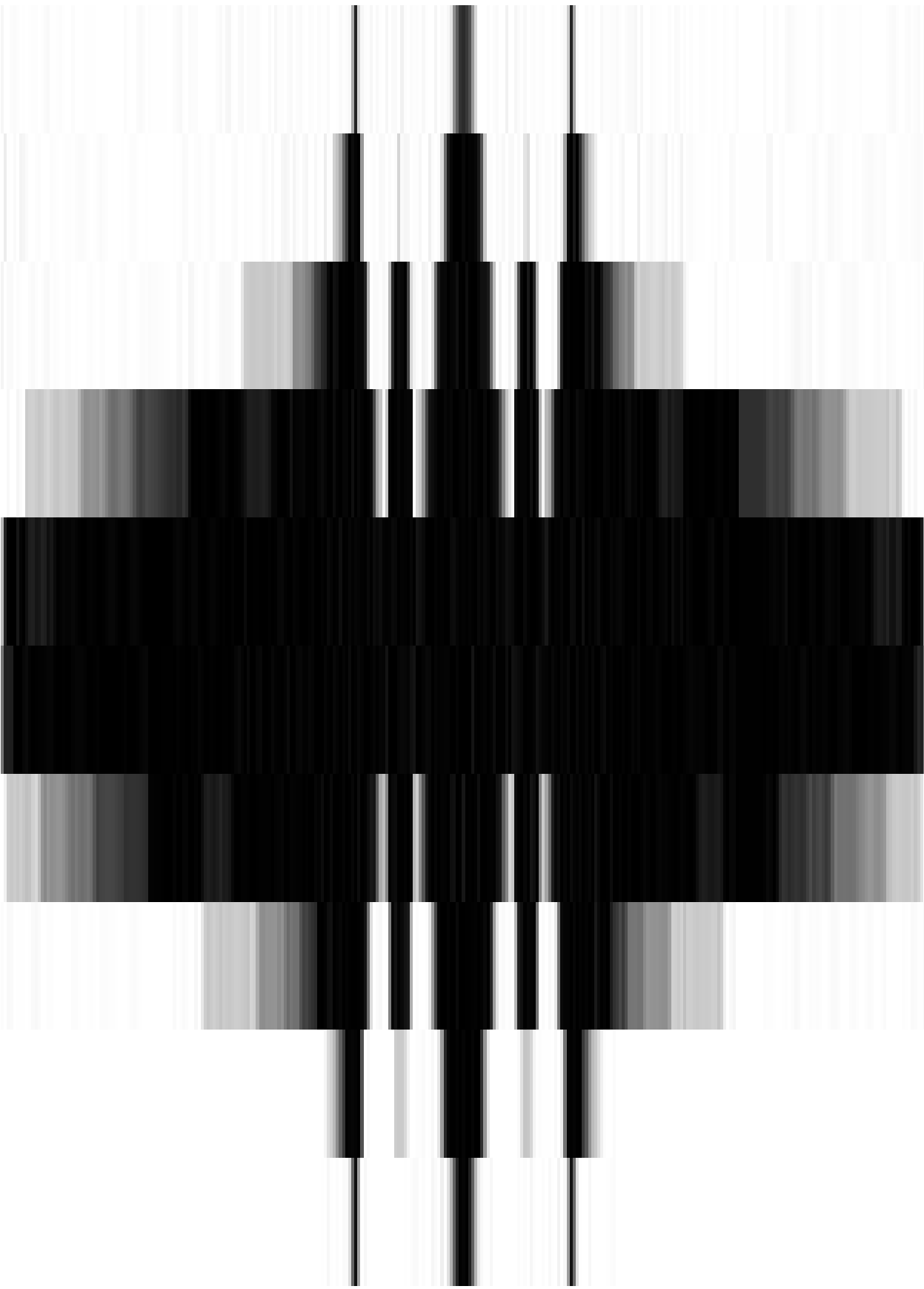
Spiritually, it is not a sin for a swami to perform the last rites for his relatives; even the founder of the Swami Order, Swami Shankara, overstepped the letter of the rule of his order and cremated the body of his mother. Because there was no one else to perform that duty, it is said that Swami Shankara came and produced divine fire to consume his mother’s earthly form. The injunction serves not to prohibit a swami from doing the necessary for any of his deceased relatives if there is no one else to do so, but is a reminder not to identify himself exclusively

with the family in which he was born nor to feel obligated to follow its traditions, having altered his consciousness from belonging to a singular family to become a member of the universal family, of which his birth family is but a part.

A first step in expanding one's love begins in one's home in loving one's family, growing from purely self-interest to caring for family members. Renunciants go beyond that circumscription of spousal and familial caring to love and serve their expanded family. This is a higher ideal of life in that spiritual nurture by sincerely dedicated saintly souls works permanent beneficial changes in individuals and the world community that cannot be wrought by mundane measures alone.

This is the principle Jesus was teaching his disciple, the reason to consider God first and to spend the precious moments of one's life in God-contact, rather than allocating to God and meditation a secondary place. It was not the burying of the disciple's dead father that Jesus reprehended, but the flawed attitude with which that devotee could so casually set aside a divine summons to satisfy a mortal attachment. Jesus sought to stir in that dulled consciousness the understanding that the Heavenly Father is the giver of the earthly father, and to Him should be given at all times supreme honor and attention.

The call of Jesus to the disciple to take up a higher cause was an assurance to the disciple that by following him, who held the keys to the mysteries of life and death, the disciple could do greater service to the soul of his dead father by his spiritual good will and devotion to God than he could by merely officiating at the burial of his father's physical frame. It is said in the scriptures of India that the sanctified life of one who is single-heartedly seeking God will automatically spiritually bless seven generations of that devotee's family—a far greater and lasting bequest than any material offering.



The physically living may be spiritually dead

In his perceptive play on words, Jesus emphasized with incisive wit an important truth: Not only are the physically deceased dead, but the spiritually dead are dead also, and do not even know it. He was pointing out that the spiritually dead were more to be pitied than the physically dead; for the physically dead, having lost their earthly lives, could not awaken themselves to the truth-teachings of Christ, but the spiritually dead could hardly be pardoned for deliberately making themselves insentient to the life-giving, emancipating message brought to them by Jesus.

When one is conscious of God he is really living. Until this awakening, the body is a tomb in which the soul is encased, as if dead and buried and awaiting resurrection. To be alive with life everlasting—that is the life that Jesus taught. How many, then, can be said to live even one year during their span on earth? If we posit a lifetime of sixty years, it is safe to assume that, on average, about thirty years are spent in sleeping, eating, and pursuing the comforts of the body. Another fifteen years are consumed in working, to keep the wolf from the door. Of the fifteen remaining years, it is not unusual for people to waste two-thirds of that time in unproductive socializing and entertainments, and in gossiping about others and putting their finger in somebody else's pie. Only five years out of a lifetime may be left; how many people use them to think of God? Perhaps a few minutes at night are spared to parrot the Lord's Prayer, or to ask for some needed blessing, or to perform some brief ritual of worship, while the mind is longing to go to bed, wanting to get this requisite moment of devotion over with as quickly as possible. "Please, Lord, take care of me and my loved ones, but now I want to sleep." Thus the time spent with God, the time spent really living, is practically nil. Yet people expect to enter the everlasting life of the kingdom of God!

Those also who have lost their ambition in life, their will to change and improve themselves and their surroundings, are the walking dead. Whenever one's will is lethargic, that person is not fully alive. It is will that draws fresh supplies of cosmic energy into the body. The self-satisfied inertia-bound worldly masses are those of whom Jesus said, "Let the dead bury their dead"; while to the spiritually willing he extended the promise of eternal life.

The would-be disciple in these verses was inspired by his contact with the

consciousness of the living God that Jesus was manifesting. Therefore Jesus perceived that it was a spiritually auspicious time for the man to realize that his foremost duty was to respond to that inner divine urge lest he risk losing his zeal for God-consciousness—hard-won by good karma and easily lost in the company and influence of worldly vibrations. Jesus knew the importance to all spiritual aspirants of associating with persons who are vibrantly alive with wisdom and God-contact. Thus his words signified: “Enliven yourself in the consciousness of the ever-living presence of God within you. Gain that realization, then share your divine joy with others by telling them—by your example and your words—of the kingdom of everlasting Bliss that you feel within you.”



And another also said, “Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.”

And Jesus said unto him, “No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:61 – 62).

Here Jesus chides the irresolute devotee, the spiritual aspirant who outwardly renounces a material environment in order to plough his consciousness with discipline and wisdom, but who looks backward with attachment and longing for his forsaken worldly comforts, pleasures, and companionships. Without the inward renunciation of mortal limitations, the devotee is unable to concentrate on the attainment of the vast kingdom of Cosmic Consciousness.



The psychology of inner and outer renunciation

In the above words, Jesus describes very clearly the strict path of the man of renunciation. Single-hearted devotees who are fit to embrace this path know that to renounce material entanglements for the attainment of God-consciousness is wise, because nothing can be enjoyed without the consciousness borrowed from God. At the call of death, everyone is compelled to leave everything instantaneously, often without notice. It is wiser, for those who are able, to leave everything voluntarily for a life devoted to the attainment of God, until God is realized. If He is paramount in the consciousness, the performance of material duties cannot produce misery. To take on worldly responsibilities with a spiritually untrained human consciousness is to be a victim of greed, anger, selfishness, disease, misery, worry, fear, and ignoble death. The exalted consciousness of saints justifies their having placed God first in their lives, for by attaining Him they know what it is to be really happy, spiritually and materially, no matter what material duties they perform.

In ancient times, there was adherence to the advice in the scriptures of India that children should leave their material home environment and live until young adulthood in the company of wise spiritual teachers. After receiving an education and thorough spiritual training they would return to the world to lead the lives of householders, ideal examples in society who had learned to govern their material lives by spiritual discipline, self-control, and divine happiness. Among these students, some chose to remain renunciants throughout life. Jesus himself lived by that ideal of renunciation, never marrying nor identifying himself with family ties and worldly ambitions. His parental attachment was to God and his kingdom was the boundless tracts of infinity.

Anyone who outwardly renounces material duties and aspirations and retires in solitude but inwardly keeps imagining the joys of a material environment and its offerings is a pretender and not fit to understand the importance of forsaking the transitory pleasures of a worldly life for the everlasting bliss of Spirit.

The psychology of renunciation consists in evicting from the mind confrontational material desires in order to create an inner temple of God-consciousness. Jesus pointed out, as did Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita, that a person should not presume divine attainment by outwardly renouncing material

pleasures while inwardly nurturing a longing for them. Such a person does not receive the benefit of God-contact. Along with outward renunciation, there must be inward renunciation as well. When that is accomplished, the mind, free from the habits of sensory indulgences, begins to be established in the kingdom of bliss in meditation.

It is a psychological and metaphysical impossibility to be free from a bad habit by material renunciation alone. Evil habits are banished only when they are cast off from the domain of thought as well as actions. Since thought is the spring of action, thinking evil may be as dangerous as acting evil. All devotees, householder or renunciant, must realize that mental renunciation is of primary importance in the attainment of God. It is better to practice attaining inner renunciation in the world than, without preparation of purifying the heart to desire God supremely, to run away from the world and remain brooding over forsaken earthly joys. By spiritual techniques of meditation, the path of yoga teaches every aspiring devotee to commune with God while living in the world or as a renunciant, precluding mere outward renunciation. Escapists are afraid to struggle for a living or to face life's challenges, so they renounce worldly life for the sustenance and security of an ashram or monastery. They are not true renunciants, but social parasites, depending for food on the earnings of hardworking worldly people. They become physically, mentally, and spiritually indolent, and never attain God-consciousness.

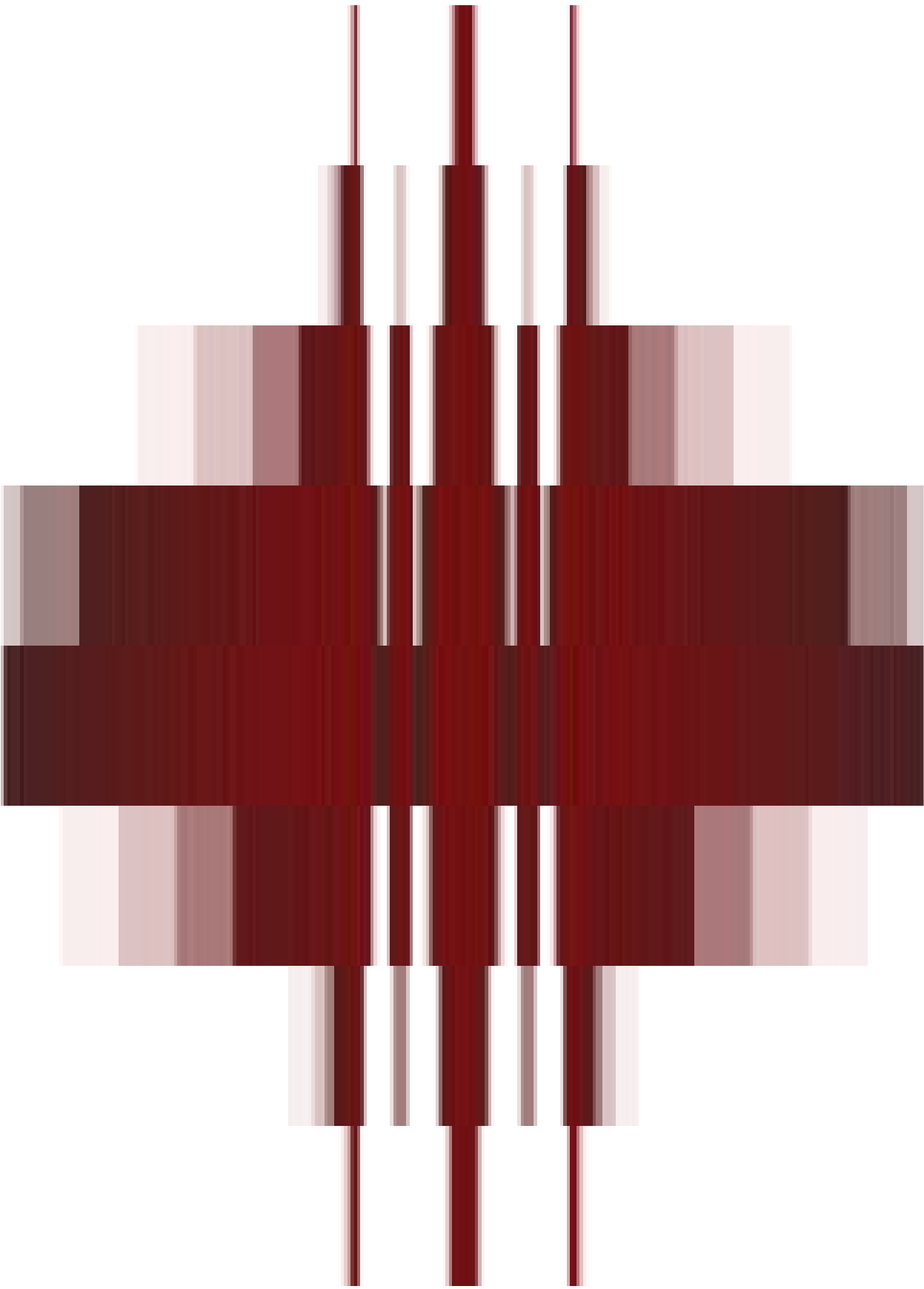
Only those who leave everything because they are inwardly impelled by the sincere love of God are justified in their renunciation. They are the select who have been called and chosen by God to seek and serve Him in unique selflessness. Such renunciants do not shrink from whatever tests or hardships assail them, or care whether they starve or die for the love of God. Their souls are in the holy company of great teachers who renounce the world to offer high spiritual service, as were the disciples of Jesus. In renouncing the lesser duties of a family life they embrace a higher duty to God's greater human family and a responsibility to make themselves "fit for the kingdom of God."



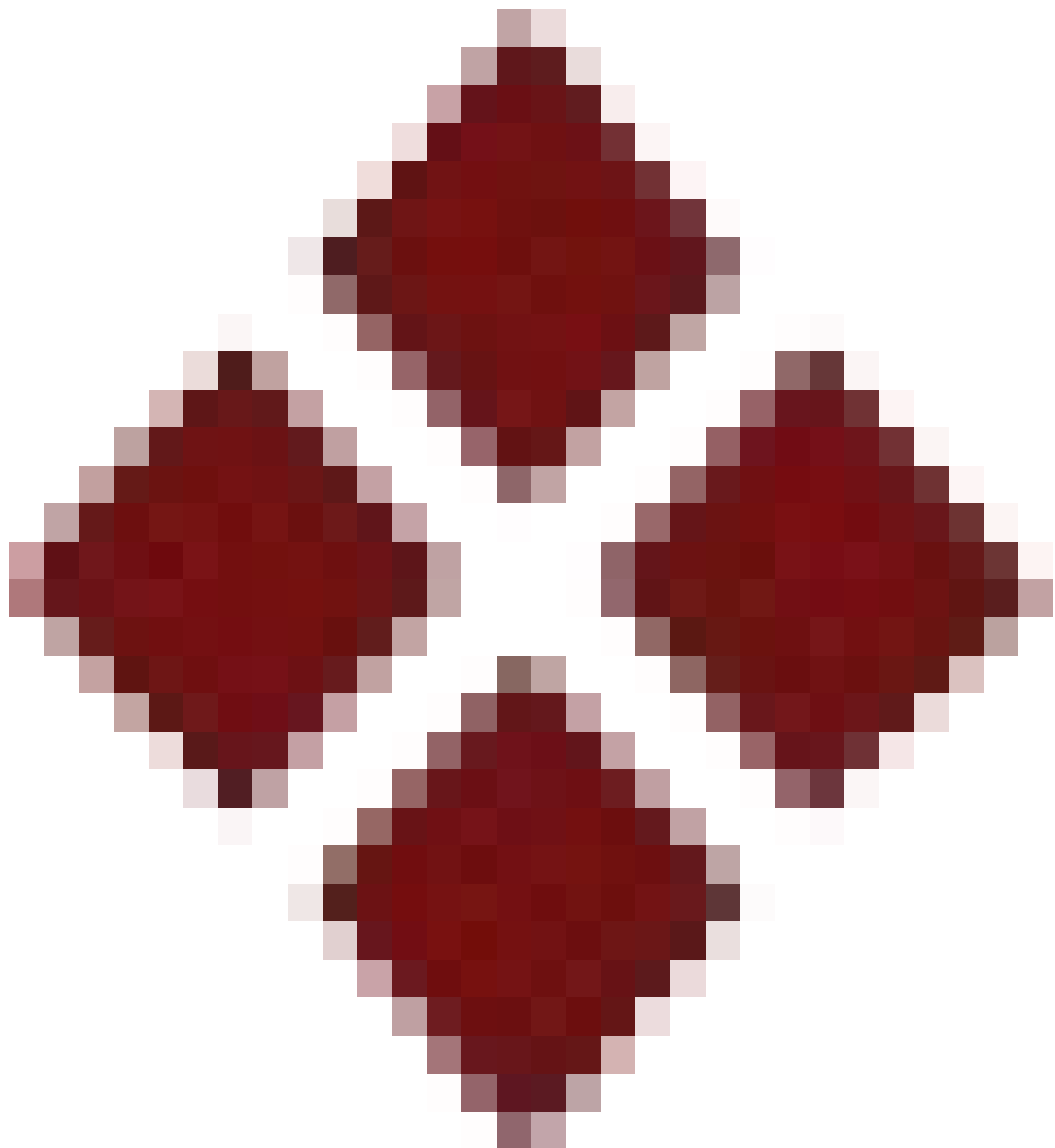
Discourse 50

“Never Man Spake Like This Man”

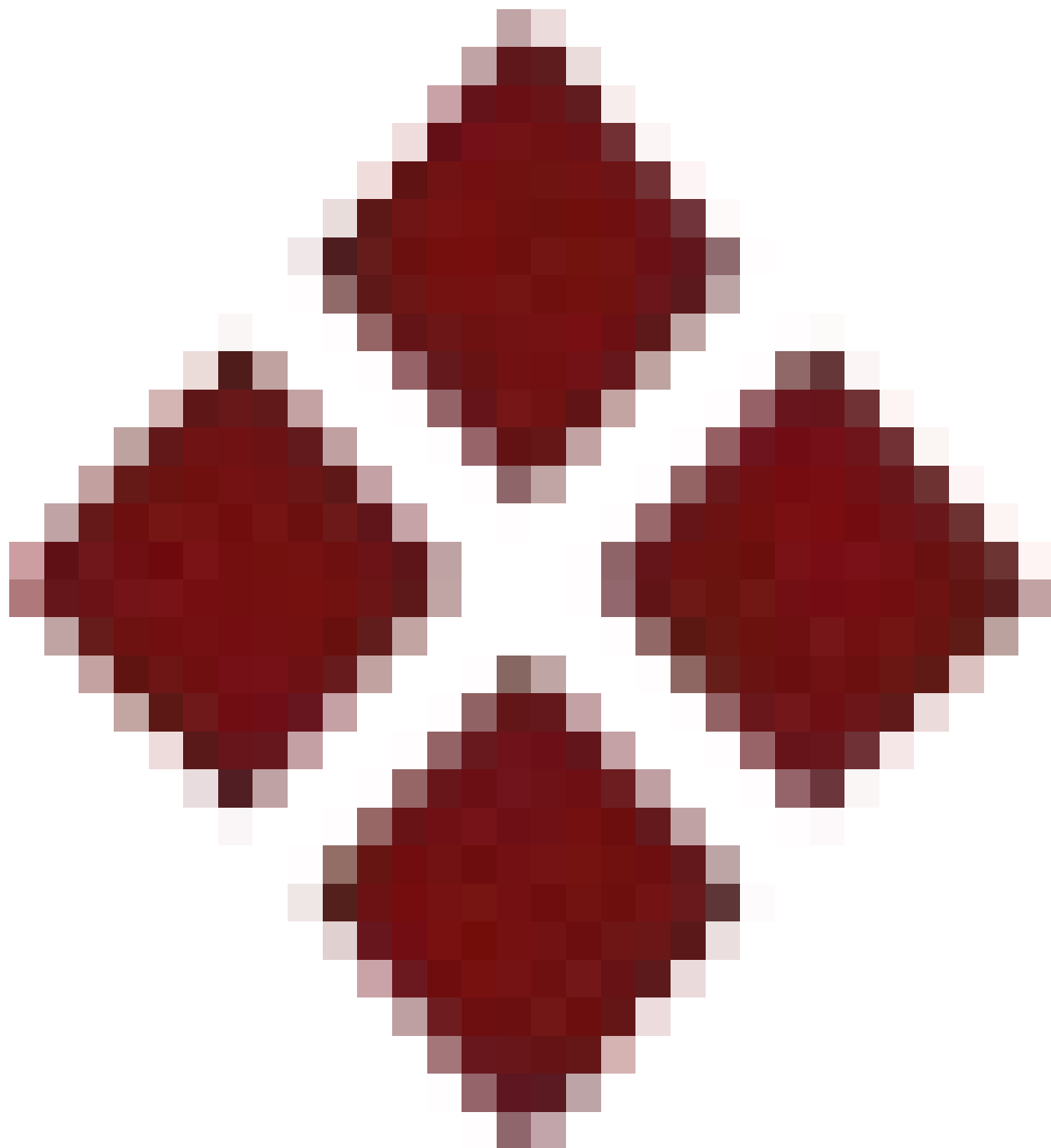
Jesus Confounds His Critics in Jerusalem



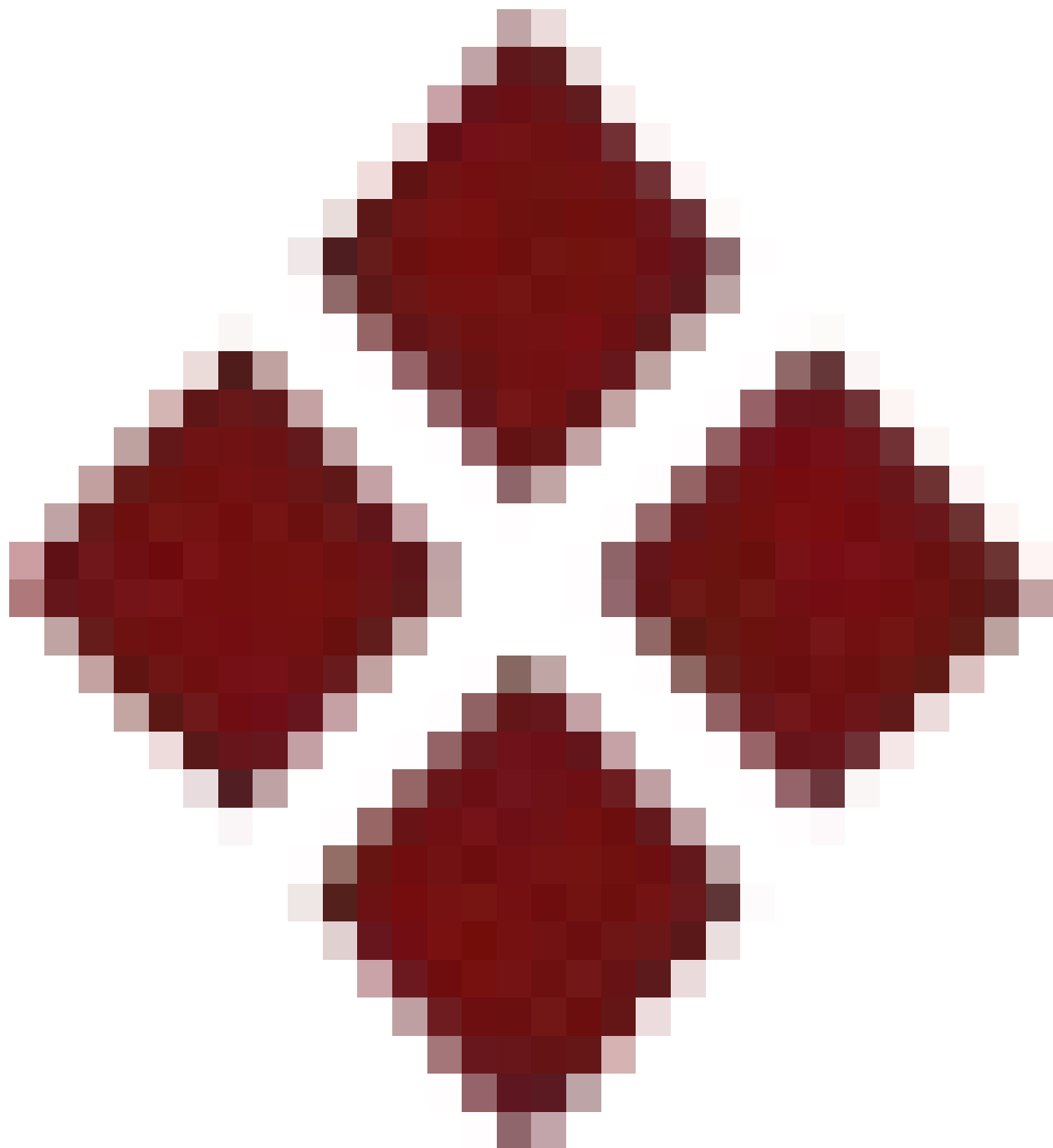
**A Divine Life Is Guided by God's Wisdom Received
Through Intuition**



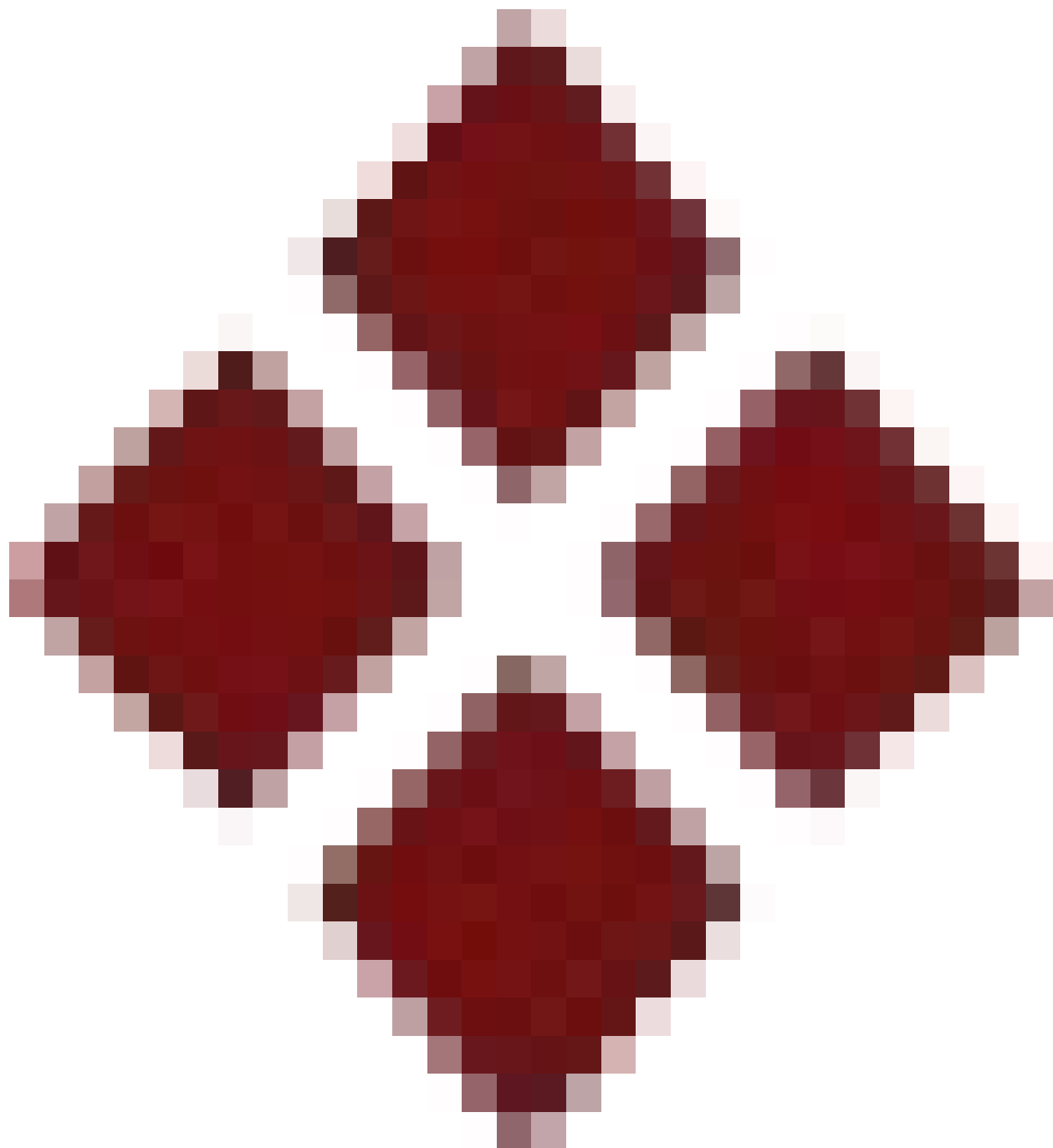
Jesus' Knowledge Came From Soul Contact With the Infinite Wisdom



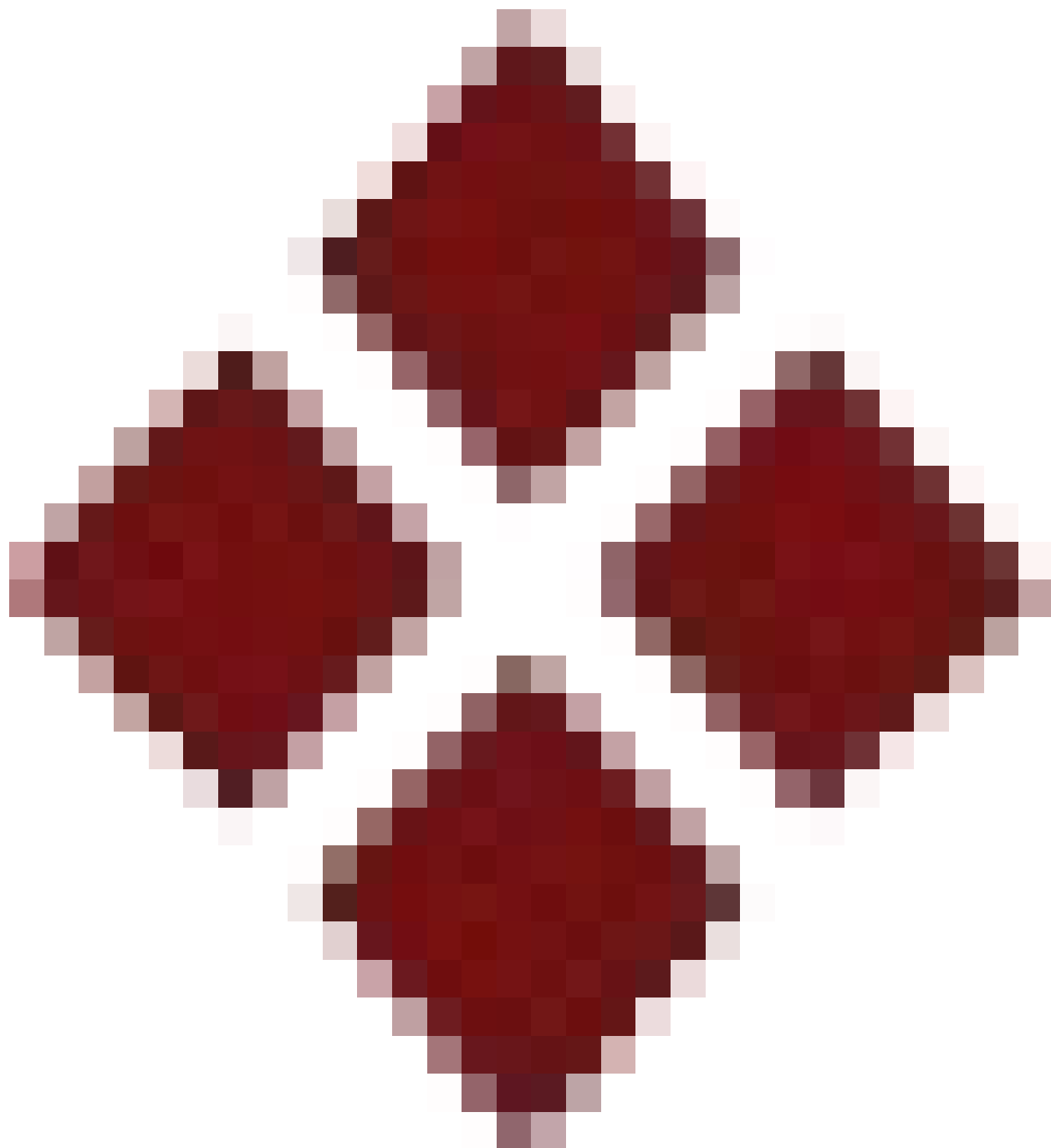
**Jesus Incarnated as a Free Soul, Sent on Earth by the
Will of God**



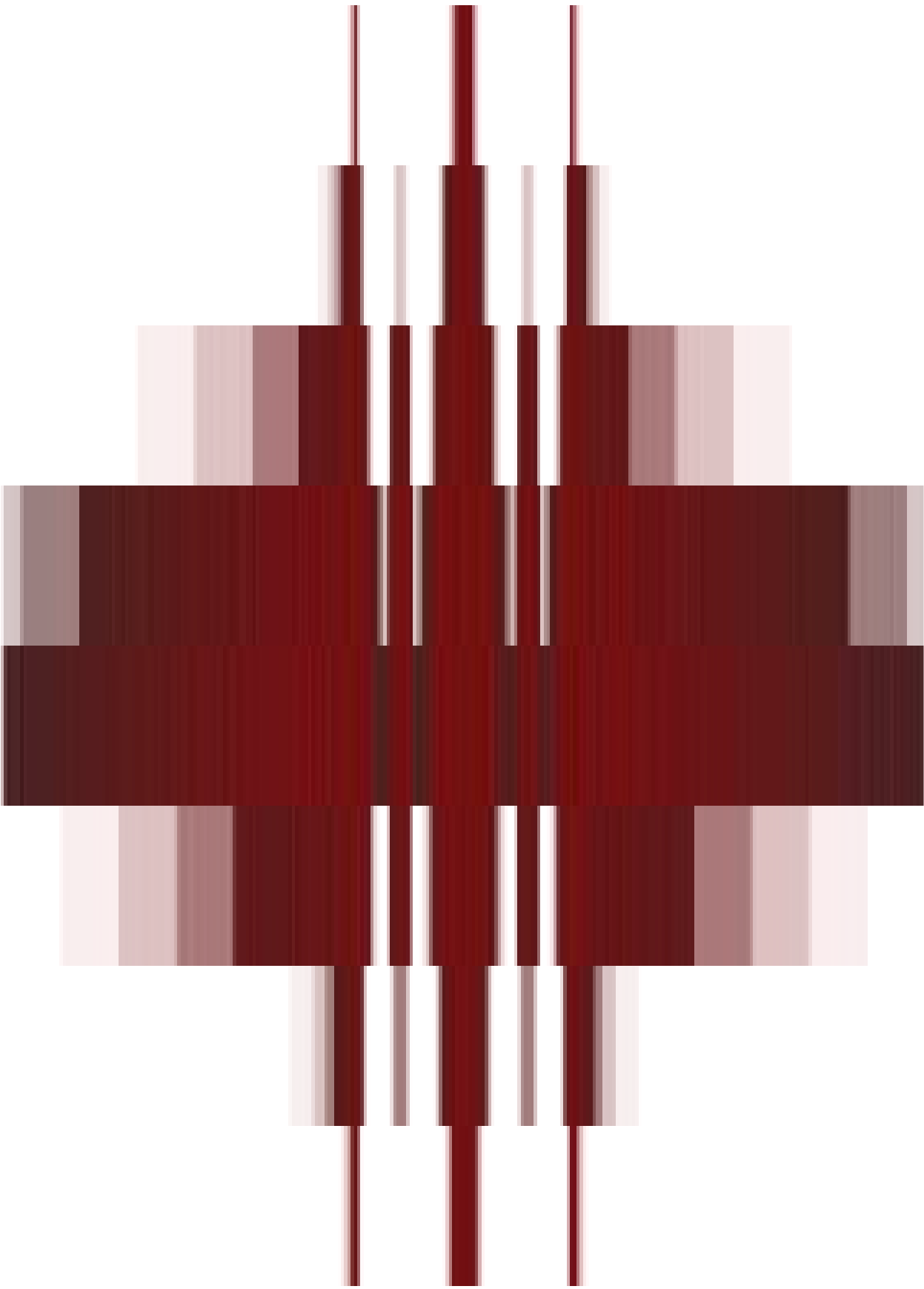
Christ Consciousness Lives in the Eternal Now



**“Rivers of Living Water”: Ascent of Life Force and
Consciousness Through the Spinal Centers**



Scientific Yoga Meditation Quenches Man's Spiritual Thirst



“Not understanding the inner meaning of the above sayings of Jesus, his critics began to conjecture...In so many ways, and in so much of his teaching, Jesus had to bear the contumely of uncomprehending minds.”

■

After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him. Now the Jew's feast of tabernacles was at hand. His brethren therefore said unto him, "Depart hence, and go into Judea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest. For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world." For neither did his brethren believe in him.

Then Jesus said unto them, "My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready. The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil. Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come." When he had said these words unto them, he abode still in Galilee.

But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret. Then the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, "Where is he?" And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, "He is a good man": others said, "Nay; but he deceiveth the people." Howbeit no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews.

Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught. And the Jews marvelled, saying, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?"

Jesus answered them, and said, "My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me. If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh His glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him. Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me?"

The people answered and said, "Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee?"

Jesus answered and said unto them, "I have done one work, and ye all marvel. Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision; (not because it is of Moses, but

of the fathers;) and ye on the Sabbath day circumcise a man. If a man on the Sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the Sabbath day? Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.”

Then said some of them of Jerusalem, “Is not this he, whom they seek to kill? But, lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ? Howbeit we know this man whence he is: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is.”

Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, “Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of myself, but He that sent me is true, whom ye know not. But I know Him: for I am from Him, and He hath sent me.”

Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come. And many of the people believed on him, and said, “When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?” The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him; and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him.

Then said Jesus unto them, “Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto Him that sent me. Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come.”

Then said the Jews among themselves, “Whither will he go, that we shall not find him? Will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles? What manner of saying is this that he said, ‘Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come’?”

In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, “If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, “Of a truth this is the Prophet.” Others said, “This is the Christ.” But some said, “Shall

Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the scripture said, that Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?" So there was a division among the people because of him. And some of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him. Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, "Why have ye not brought him?" The officers answered, "Never man spake like this man."

Then answered them the Pharisees, "Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him? But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed." Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,) "Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?" They answered and said unto him, "Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." And every man went unto his own house.

—John 7:1 – 53



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Discourse 50

“Never Man Spake Like This Man”

Jesus Confounds His Critics in Jerusalem



After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry,¹ because the Jews sought to kill him. Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand. His brethren therefore said unto him, "Depart hence, and go into Judea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest. For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world." For neither did his brethren believe in him.

Then Jesus said unto them, "My time is not yet come: but your time is alway ready. The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil. Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come." When he had said these words unto them, he abode still in Galilee (John 7:1 – 9).



A divine life is guided by God's wisdom received through intuition

In addition to Jesus' inner circle of disciples, there were many curiosity-seekers—including some of his own relatives, “brethren”—who followed Jesus in expectation of seeing him perform extraordinary works, but who did not believe in his divine mission as Messiah. The brethren sought to persuade him to go to the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem and there proclaim himself by demonstrating before all, not just to believers, what mighty works he could do. If Jesus were who his followers claimed him to be, surely he should seek to be known openly. But Jesus could not be tempted to demonstrate his miracles like a salesman advertising material goods; on all occasions he acted with divine dignity and according to God's command. He meekly but wisely answered his disbelieving brothers that whatever he did, even when incomprehensible to coarsened mentalities, was consonant with divine guidance:

“All aspects of my life, the minute details of my plans and actions, are governed by the influence of the will of God on the free choices made by my will. The time when He will command me to go to the feast has not yet arrived. My actions are in accord with His wisdom; but you do whatever you please at any time, because you are guided by worldly desires and the instigations of your environment and habits. My time is precious and divinely planned; but your time is unimportant to you, and thus you are always ready to spend it indiscriminately according to the impulses and desires of the moment. The world will not criticize or bother you, because you are not interested in taking the responsibility of recognizing and removing from yourselves the defects of worldly consciousness, or of pointing out to others the folly of a whim-led existence oblivious of the divine intent. But the world, pervaded by satanic ignorance and its acolytes of worldly persons, actively resists my mission ‘because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.’ Nevertheless, I love the world and want it to be saved, so I mind not the penalty I shall pay for daring to expose its faults.”

Persons who do not plan their lives according to divine wisdom lead a rudderless existence, swept hither and thither by the currents of delusion, uncertain of the destination and real purpose of their lives. Jesus was guided by the wisdom of his loving Father, whispered constantly to his awakened intuition. Through that intuition he was also able to discern the most auspicious time for his actions as determined by the cosmic law of cause and effect. Ordinary body-identified

persons cannot apprehend how subtly the causes they initiate ordain the karmic outcome of their actions. Some persons even study astrology to try to ascertain the influence of their karma as expressed through the medium of planets in an attempt to counteract evil influences by astrological foreknowledge. But masters go beyond the uncertain messages of the stars to the guidance of the Divine Wisdom that governs the laws that operate the stars and all human lives and their actions.

Happiness, success, and peace of mind accrue by striving in everything to attune oneself through meditation and prayer with God's will, the power that harmoniously interknits all life with the universal play of cosmic forces. The devotee subdues the domination of his wayward ego with its merciless misadventures and throughout the day offers all his actions unto God to please Him and to contribute to His divine plan.



But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret. Then the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, "Where is he?" And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, "He is a good man": others said, "Nay; but he deceiveth the people." Howbeit no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews.

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The people answered and said, "Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee?" (John 7:10 – 20).



Jesus' knowledge came from soul contact with the Infinite Wisdom

“My discourses are not a contrived concoction of my intellect and imagination. Though expressed through me, my teachings are not mine ‘but His that sent me.’ My words, my mind, my intelligence, my intuition, my consciousness spread throughout creation, are all inspired by the consciousness of the Father through whose will I am here on earth in order to declare His message. Any person who is in tune with God’s will shall know that I am attuned with His will and that I preach the truth as desired by Him, not of myself or according to my own ideas born of ego consciousness.”

Jesus did not acquire his knowledge from pedantic traditions of ordinary or religious schooling. His wisdom was from the infinite scroll of God-consciousness, holy writ enshrined in his soul in previous incarnations.² He challenged his critics that if any one of them were to gain actual experience of God and attunement with His consciousness and will, that person would be qualified to judge his Gospel teachings—to “know of the doctrine, whether it be of God or whether I speak of myself.”

Jesus emphasized that his entire life and works were to declare God, not himself: “He who teaches actuated by ego consciousness always seeks personal fame and glory. But he who feels the presence of Cosmic Consciousness behind his individualized consciousness seeks only to glorify and declare God as his Creator. He is a real prophet of the Lord who thus is loyal to Him. He who is true to God, having shunned the ego, and who feels God constantly, continuously demonstrating God’s consciousness through his life, can never do anything that is not in harmony with divine righteousness.”

Jesus went on to point out the irony of his being criticized by the hypocrites in the crowd who outwardly gave lip service to the laws set forth by Moses but inwardly harbored evil intentions: “Didn’t Moses give you the law not to kill? How be it that you obey not that commandment, as is evidenced by your desire to kill me? I know this intent is in your mind, though you deny it and say I am deranged by a devil for so accusing you.”



Jesus answered and said unto them, "I have done one work, and ye all marvel. Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision; (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers;) and ye on the Sabbath day circumcise a man. If a man on the Sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the Sabbath day? Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (John 7:21 – 24).

Jesus, referring here to his having "done one work," meant the healing of the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda, on the Sabbath, which had provoked the murderous wrath of the authorities against him: "And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the Sabbath day." ³

Though the Mosaic law forbade working on the Sabbath, circumcision was permitted on that day. Jesus points out the inconsistency of his critics in allowing the lesser purification symbolized by the rite of circumcision, while opposing the total physical and spiritual rejuvenation accomplished on the Sabbath by the Lord for the man who had "had an infirmity thirty and eight years."

"Judge not actions of others from a hasty, superficial standpoint, but judge wisely according to the righteousness of the motive behind them."



Then said some of them of Jerusalem, “Is not this he, whom they seek to kill? But, lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ? Howbeit we know this man whence he is: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is.”

Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, “Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of myself, but He that sent me is true, whom ye know not. But I know Him: for I am from Him, and He hath sent me” (John 7:25 – 29).

Knowing that the Pharisees sought Jesus' life, the people wondered why he was openly teaching at the Feast of Tabernacles. Had the rulers become convinced that Jesus was the Messiah? Many wondered, but others, referring to some traditional belief that the family origin of the Messiah would be mysterious (“no man knoweth whence he is”), refused to believe in Jesus as Christ, since they were acquainted with the commonality of his family at Nazareth.



Jesus incarnated as a free soul, sent on earth by the will of God

Jesus' words signified: "You all know me as the son of Joseph and you know the place of my earthly home; but you do not know my true origin, the omnipresence of the Father. I did not come on earth in the way of ordinary mortals, compelled by reincarnation-making earthly desires or by the necessity to work out seeds of past karma. My desire to come on earth was to act as a message-bearer of my Father, having been chosen by Him to fulfill a divine mission.

"My Father is immanent in all space, even though your constricted consciousness does not feel Him in your life or understanding. But my Christ Consciousness is a reflection of the Cosmic Consciousness of my Father, therefore I know Him. The omnipresence of my universal consciousness comes from my realization of His Infinity."

Jesus was hinting to the people not to doubt that he was the Messiah based on their rationalizations about where he came from. However, when he said "I am from Him [God], and He hath sent me," he did not mean that he had been specially created as a perfect being who was then sent to earth by God. Through past lives his soul had made the remarkable journey of everyman, wending its way back to God. But long since, he had attained that high state of consciousness that had freed him and fitted him to serve as a divine incarnation, an emissary of the Infinite, a world savior for many lost souls.

All beings originally were sent to the earth through the will of God. Those who do not realize this truth misuse their God-given free will to wander in a maze of mortal desires, reincarnating again and again as they thread their way in circuitous routes toward ever elusive fulfillment. But those who live a life guided by divine will and wisdom find the opening back to God after completing their God-given purpose on earth.⁴



Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come. And many of the people believed on him, and said, “When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?” The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him; and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him.

Then said Jesus unto them, “Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto Him that sent me. Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come.”

Then said the Jews among themselves, “Whither will he go, that we shall not find him? Will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles? What manner of saying is this that he said, ‘Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come’?” (John 7:30 – 36).



Christ Consciousness lives in the Eternal Now

“It is now only a little while that my body will be on earth with all of you. Then my soul, and the Christ Consciousness in it, will mingle in the Cosmic Consciousness from which it came. When I am gone, some of you will realize the importance of my life and will belatedly wish you had sought me out while I was easily accessible on earth, but it will be too late. I will have ascended to the abode of my Father in Cosmic Consciousness, where your worldly consciousness cannot reach. Even in the present moment, I feel my Christ Consciousness as the Eternal Now that your consciousness cannot comprehend, just as I will when my soul leaves the transient body after crucifixion and merges in Eternity. My Christ Consciousness is now and will ever remain the same, knowing the Eternal Now in which, though I am absent from the earth yet shall I be ever present. All this is beyond the grasp of your material consciousness, which through the stingy openings of delusive time and space sees only snippets of eternity.”

Jesus pointed out to the people the unique good fortune they had in him as an embodiment of Christ Consciousness. Ordinary people are ignorant of Christ Consciousness; but even in their ignorance the people in the time of Jesus had the opportunity to behold with their eyes and receive the blessing of that Infinite Reflected Intelligence of God manifested in the body of Jesus. Owing to their perversity, they did not utilize this grand moment to avail themselves of his direct intercession. He said that many would awaken spiritually after he was gone and would seek him but not find him. They would have to uplift their consciousness to “where I am” in order to know him, for so long as they remained in worldly consciousness, “thither ye cannot come.”

In these verses, Jesus speaks of the universal consciousness present in him as consciousness of the Eternal Now. In Spirit there is no past or future, only the everlasting Present. It is in the relativistic consciousness of persons under the influence of maya that Eternity appears separated into past, present, and future. God always is, and His immortal omniscience is not compartmentalized by the dimensional delusions of time and space; He beholds everything as happening in the infinitude of His Being now. Jesus expressed that consciousness by saying, “where I am,” instead of “where I will be after the death of my mortal body”; and later when he said: “Before Abraham was, I am.”⁵

Jesus knew that whether he was in the body or in the Spirit after crucifixion he would always feel the Eternal Now. This consciousness of the Eternal Presence, unreachable by ordinary mortals, is known to the advanced devotee who is able to feel the ever-existing nature of God. Past and future vanish from within him. He realizes he is forever, not that he was or will be existing forever. That is why Jesus said, “Where my consciousness is, experiencing the Eternal Now, that state your consciousness has not realized.”

Not understanding the inner meaning of the above sayings of Jesus, his critics began to conjecture: “Where will he go that we may not be able to find him—perhaps to the Jews living in foreign lands?”⁶ In so many ways, and in so much of his teaching, Jesus had to bear the contumely of uncomprehending minds.



In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, “If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified) (John 7:37 – 39).



“Rivers of living water”: ascent of life force and consciousness through the spinal centers

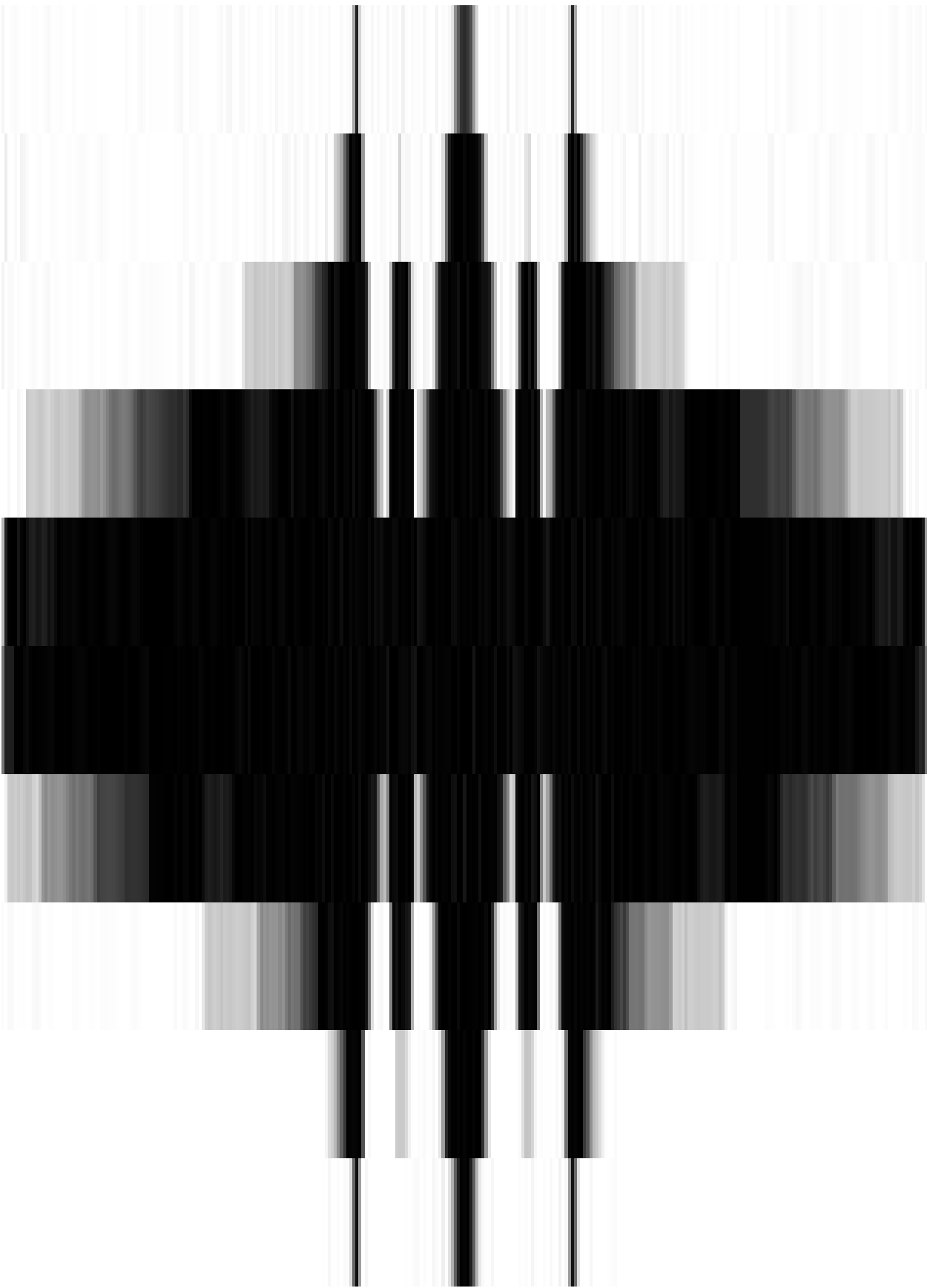
In this recondite passage, Jesus makes an evident reference to the yogic science of God-communion that was the esoteric core of his original teaching to his close disciples. This verse in the Gospel According to St. John plainly states that Jesus was speaking “of the Spirit”—that is, of the Holy Ghost vibration of Spirit realized when life force and consciousness ascend from body consciousness as “rivers of living water” through the spinal centers to God-consciousness. The meaning of this saying would be understood not by those who only believed emotionally or intellectually in Jesus but by those who would be in tune with his Christ Consciousness (through receiving the Holy Ghost Cosmic Vibration, which he would send to them “that believe on him” after his resurrection and ascendant glorification in Spirit).

Any devotee practicing the science of meditation can satisfy the thirst of mortal desires, as India’s great yogis have proved for millenniums, by inner renunciation and by reversing the outwardly flowing currents of consciousness and life energy and uniting those currents with the everlasting, ever new bliss of God. To the ordinary person the saying of Jesus, “He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water,” may be only a metaphor for abstract conjecture, but literally meaningless. However, these words are very clear to the yogi who scientifically meditates to unite his consciousness with the Divine Source of consciousness.

As a mighty river that brings fertility to the plains has its source in the mountains high above, so the source of the river of consciousness is Cosmic Consciousness, Spirit, the ever-existing, ever-conscious, ever-new Bliss that transcends creation. Descending into creation—into every particle of thought, life energy, and matter constituting the causal, astral, and physical realms—Cosmic Consciousness is called Christ Consciousness (Kutastha Chaitanya). Flowing into the soul and pure mind of man, it is called superconsciousness. Carried on the current of life energy down through the subtle spinal centers (chakras), losing its divine awareness in body identification, it is called subconsciousness, operating the body-mechanism through the life energy in the physical brain, spine, and viscera. Descending further, out into the muscles and senses, the river of consciousness settles in the level of the ordinary waking state, enlivening the

muscular and sensory activities of the body, and creating desires for and attachments to material experiences.

How far the river of consciousness in worldly persons has fallen from its pristine fount in Spirit! Mired in the brackish lowlands of physical consciousness, in the outflowing energy of the lower three chakras of the spine, man tries vainly to quench the thirst of desires from the wells of sensory experiences. But worldly pleasure is like salt water: Instead of quenching desire, it creates a greater thirst.



Scientific yoga meditation quenches man's spiritual thirst

Jesus declared: "If any man is maddened with desires and has not found peace; if any man is thirsty for the kingdom of God-consciousness and everlasting bliss, let him tune his consciousness with the Christ Consciousness, as is manifest within me. Then, as the scripture has said, he will drink of the immortal waters of bliss whose source is the all-satisfying Spirit. Any person who will tune his consciousness with Christ Consciousness by attentive concentration and devotion will find that out of 'his belly'—the ganglia of nerves with their astral energy in the solar plexus and in the lumbar, sacral, and coccygeal regions in the spine—many rivers of light or life force, relaxed from the senses by meditation, will flow up through the spine, floating his consciousness through the spinal centers of consciousness to the nectar-bliss of Spirit in the brain, from which his thirst of desires of all incarnations will be quenched forever."

The devotee who masters the technique of yoga meditation knows that when concentration becomes interiorized he finds his life force and attention withdrawn from the motor nerves, sensory nerves, and heart and accumulated in the subtle astral center in the coccygeal region of the spine. Then during deep meditation this accumulated life force floats his consciousness upward through the subtle sacral, lumbar, dorsal, cervical, and medullary centers to the highest center of divine perception, the abode of Spirit in the thousand-petaled lotus of light and consciousness in the brain.

The downward-flowing astral life energy and consciousness in the three lower chakras (the lumbar, sacral, and coccygeal) feed the spine, brain, and organs of the physical body with sensory and motor powers, which under the influence of delusion promote worldly consciousness. The yogi devotee in deep meditation spiritualizes his consciousness and life force and reverses their downward trend to flow upward in the form of luminous rivers of light from the coccygeal, sacral, and lumbar regions (collectively, "the belly"), to the ocean of light of Spirit in the brain. The devotee sees his wondrous self coursing with these luminous rivers of life forces and consciousness ascending from the dark sensory regions to the effulgent bliss of Spirit.

Simply stated, the consciousness flowing with the life force through the senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch makes man conscious of matter. But by

meditation when consciousness and life force are withdrawn from the five senses, the astral nature of the life force, along with the consciousness and many other aroused divine forces in the spinal centers, look like rivers of light flowing upward toward the ocean of light of Spirit in the brain.

Earlier Jesus had said: “But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” And: “I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.”⁷ In the present verses, Jesus makes clear that the way man can find that satisfaction of his soul thirst and hunger is to control the outgoing river of life and consciousness to free himself from bondage to mortal ignorance and sensory desires.

“He is full with contentment who absorbs all desires within, as the brimful ocean remains unmoved by waters entering into it—not he who lusts after desires.”⁸ Though most persons are unaware of the scientific way to reverse the flow of consciousness back toward Spirit, unconsciously they accomplish this to a limited degree each night in sleep, when the life force in the body withdraws from the muscles and senses in the deep dreamless state and the consciousness is transported from the material realm to the land where the soul feels the ever calm Spirit. One realizes he is made in the peaceful, joyous image of God after reversing the outward flow of consciousness from the body to the soul. Yogis can do that at will; and Jesus Christ was one of the greatest yogis who ever lived, demonstrating his God-union and mastery of the principles of life and consciousness.



Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, "Of a truth this is the Prophet." Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the scripture said, that Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?" So there was a division among the people because of him. And some of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him. Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, "Why have ye not brought him?" The officers answered, "Never man spake like this man."

Then answered them the Pharisees, "Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him? But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed." Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,) "Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?" They answered and said unto him, "Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." And every man went unto his own house (John 7:40 – 53).

That Christ would come from the house of David and out of the town of Bethlehem was predicted in the Judaic scriptures.⁹ Thus Jesus, born to the house of David at Bethlehem, fulfilled the messianic expectations of the chief priests and the Pharisees; but without ascertaining this fact, they were quick to accuse Jesus as an impostor, considering him as only from Galilee, knowing that the family home where he had been raised was in Nazareth.

The officers who had been sent by the Pharisees to arrest Jesus came away marveling instead at his wisdom and divinely magnetic presence, saying, "Never man spake like this man." They were scorned by the temple hierarchy, who were proud in the conviction of their infallible authority, and spoke contemptuously of the acclaim accorded Jesus by the less-educated populace "who knoweth not the law."

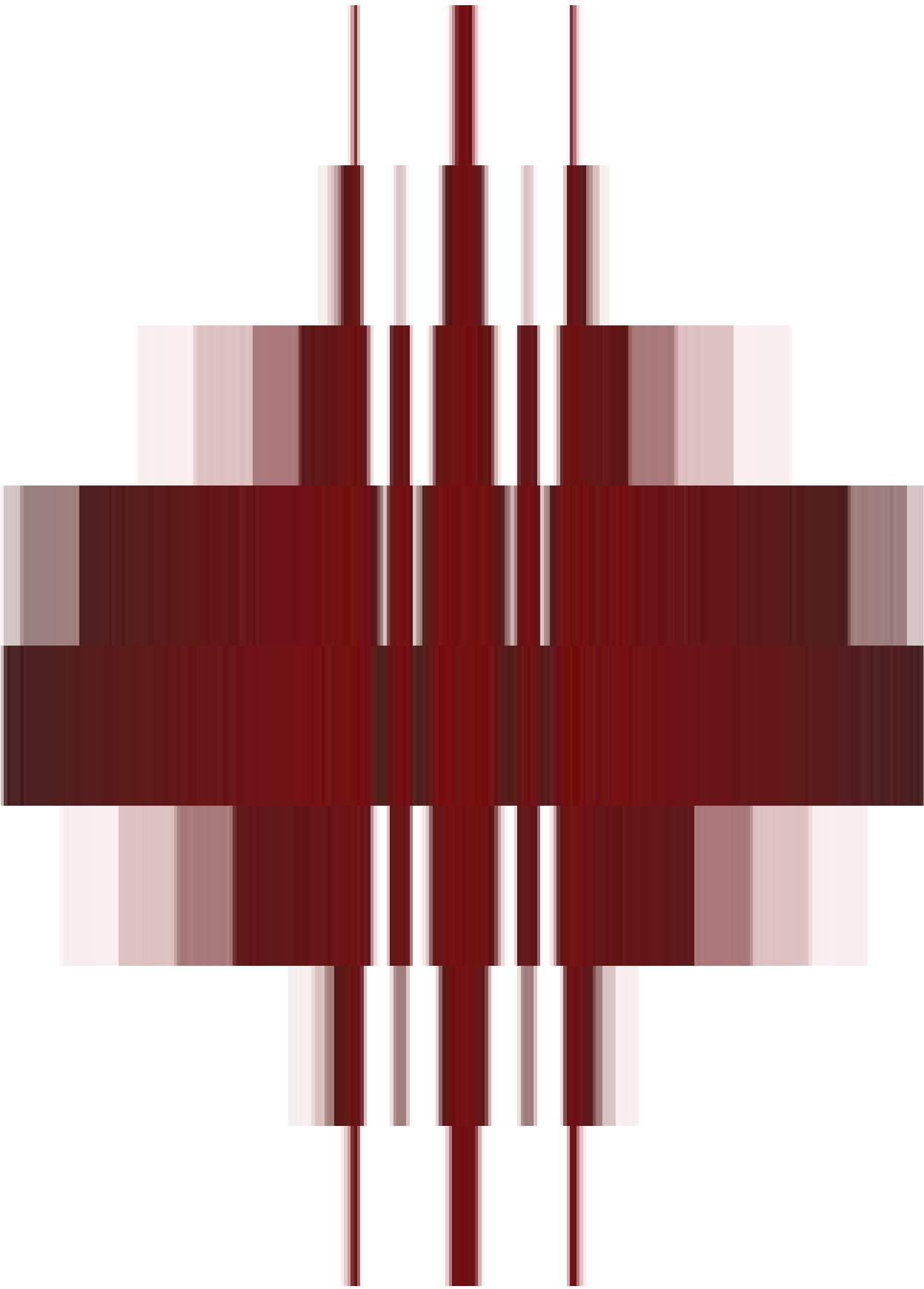
Nicodemus the Pharisee, who worshiped Jesus in secret,¹⁰ ventured a mild defense of the Lord and those who believed in him, but his timid remonstrations

could not influence those who were determined to condemn Jesus.



Discourse 51

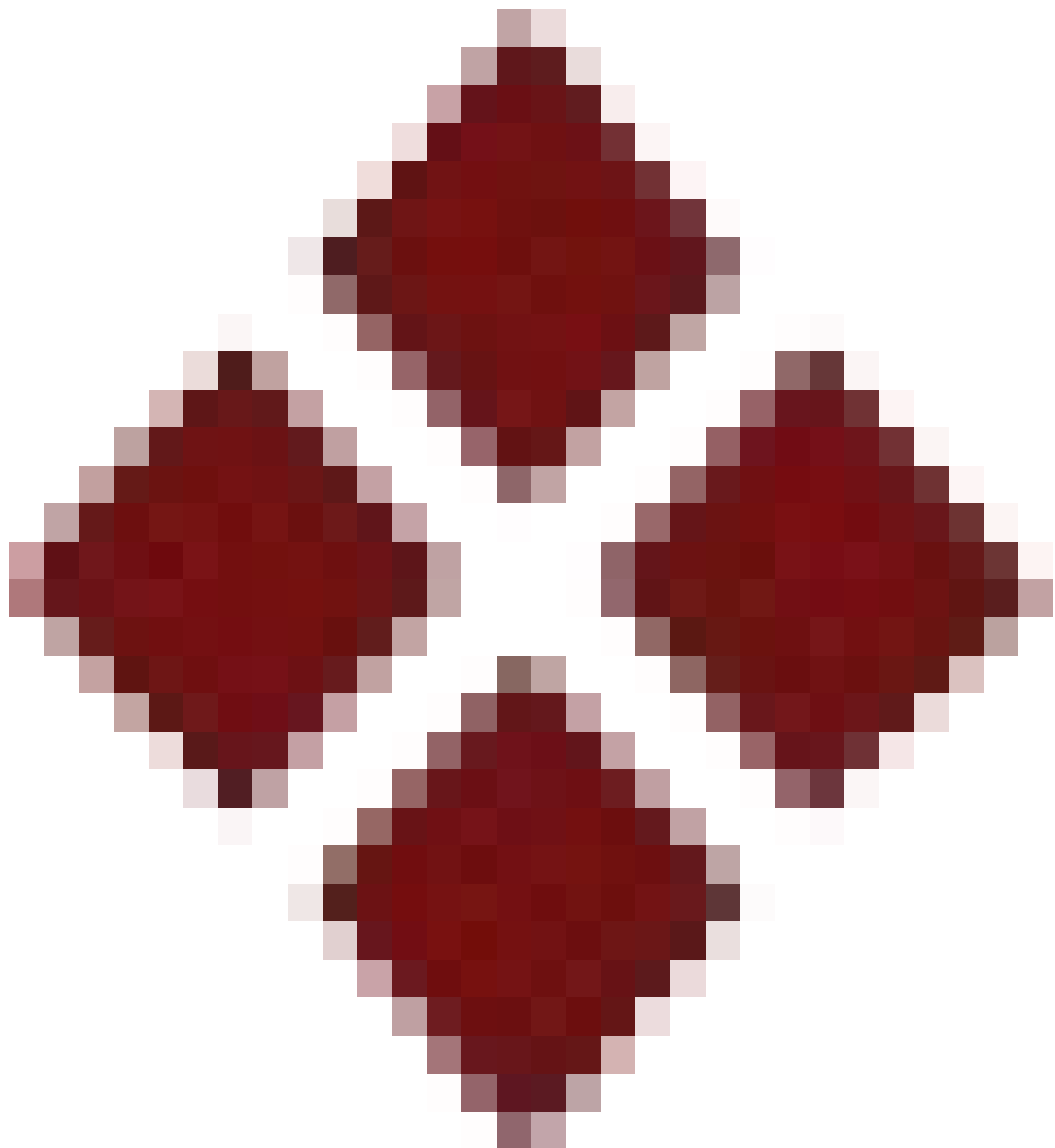
**“I Am the Light of the World....Before Abraham
Was, I Am”**



**Jesus Extolled Not His Bodily Form but the Universal
Consciousness Within It**



“I Am He”: Oneness With Absolute Being (Brahman)



Jesus' "Way of Light" to Liberation in Spirit



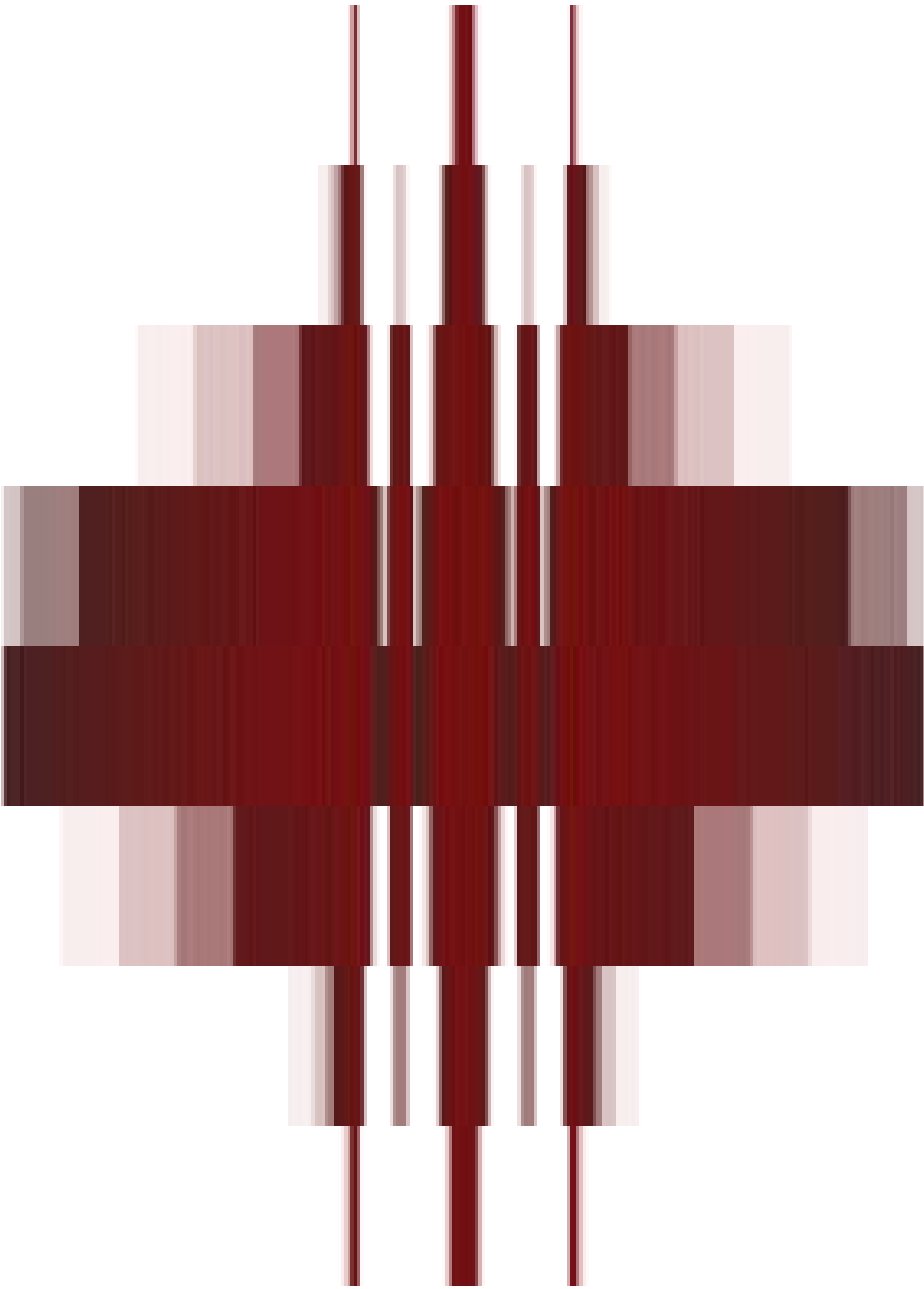
**“Lift Up the Son of Man” or Physical Consciousness
to Christ and Cosmic Consciousness**



**“Continue in My Word”: Attunement With Cosmic
Vibration Through Meditation**



**Attunement With Christ Consciousness Makes One
Free From All Karma**



*“Jesus again gives a scientific statement and definition of the Spirit within him.
...Beholding God as Infinite Glory within himself, he could not extol his
individualized ego consciousness.”*

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Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

The Pharisees therefore said unto him, "Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true."

Jesus answered and said unto them, "Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go. Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man. And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me."

Then said they unto him, "Where is thy Father?"

Jesus answered, "Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also." These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come.

Then said Jesus again unto them, "I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come."

Then said the Jews, "Will he kill himself? because he saith, 'Whither I go, ye cannot come.'"

And he said unto them, "Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world. I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."

Then said they unto him, "Who art thou?"

And Jesus saith unto them, "Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning. I have many things to say and to judge of you: but He that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of Him." They understood not that he spake to them of the Father.

Then said Jesus unto them, "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. And He that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please Him." As he spake these words, many believed on him.

Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

They answered him, "We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, 'Ye shall be made free'?"

Jesus answered them, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father."

They answered and said unto him, "Abraham is our father."

Jesus saith unto them, "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father."

Then said they to him, "We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God."

Jesus said unto them, "If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but He sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God."

Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, “Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?”

Jesus answered, “I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me. And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth. Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.”

Then said the Jews unto him, “Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, ‘If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death.’ Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? And the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?”

Jesus answered, “If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that He is your God: Yet ye have not known Him; but I know Him: and if I should say, I know Him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know Him, and keep His saying. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.”

Then said the Jews unto him, “Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?”

Jesus said unto them, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am.” Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

—John 8:12 – 59¹



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Discourse 51

**“I Am the Light of the World....Before Abraham
Was, I Am”**



Then Jesus spake again unto them, saying, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12).



Follow the vibratory light of God perceived in inner communion of meditation

“From the Christ Intelligence, which I behold as my own expanded Self, emanates the objectifying creative light of Cosmic Energy out of which ‘the world’—the physical cosmos—has been evolved. The devotee whose consciousness follows this vibratory light in the inner communion of meditation is led through increasingly blissful conscious, subconscious, and superconscious states, and ultimately arrives at the blessedness of Christ Consciousness. Such devotees no longer ‘walk in darkness,’ blinded by ignorance engendered in limited human consciousness by cosmic delusion. Their life force unites with the Cosmic Light, Cosmic Energy: the Word or Holy Ghost Creative Power that is the source and life principle of all living beings—and of all objects, in which life is potentially present.”

The deep meanings of “light” and “darkness” according to metaphysical science were explained in the commentary on earlier verses in St. John’s Gospel: “In him [the Word] was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not....That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.”

“And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.”²

In the present verse, Jesus again gives a scientific statement and definition of the Spirit within him.

An ordinary person is aware of his consciousness and life force as limited by the body; Jesus and spiritually advanced souls feel the physical universe as their body, with all-pervading Cosmic Energy as the life in the veins of their universal form, and infinite Christ Consciousness as their indwelling Self.

Jesus’ words “I am” in the context of this verse thus refer to Christ Consciousness—the subjective Intelligence of the universe. The “light of the world” refers to Cosmic Energy, the Word or Holy Ghost, which informs the physical cosmos, endowing all beings and objects therein with the life of intelligent vibratory power—each element from atom to sage manifesting that intelligent life according to its evolutionary potential.

The material world is spoken of in the scriptures of East and West as “darkness” because therein the effulgent Spirit-essence of all things is obscured. By deep meditation, the devotee gains the divine perception of his spiritual eye at the Christ Consciousness center in the forehead; in the light of that “single eye” the darkness of delusion is dispelled. He walks in a world that is no longer an environment of gross matter, but a wondrous structure of luminous cosmic energy and intelligence.³

Scriptural literalists who are bound by the dogma of their intellectually interpreted theological doctrines, and who do not meditate, can understand only by analogous conjecture why Jesus called himself the “light of the world” and what kind of spiritual seeking would lead them to the fulfillment of Jesus’ promise: “he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness.” Thus Jesus prophesied: “Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come.”⁴ Theoretical and emotional suppositions open no portals to the presence of Christ. The consciousness of the seeker must be actually lifted from the physical realm to the plane of Christ Consciousness where he is to be found.

Christians of merely theological understanding picture Jesus Christ as limited by a form and the beautiful features of a human figure; but souls who by meditation have identified their consciousness with the universal, omnipresent consciousness that was manifest in Jesus behold the cosmos as the body of Christ and the energy in it as his life and the Intelligence secreted within that life as his Christ Consciousness.

It is by worshiping Christ in the self-erected temple of meditation with its high altar of Self-realization that one can bring within his own soul a “second coming” of the Christ Consciousness that was in Jesus.



The Pharisees therefore said unto him, “Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true.”

Jesus answered and said unto them, “Though I bear record of myself; yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go. Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man. And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me” (John 8:13 – 18).



Jesus extolled not his bodily form but the Universal Consciousness within it

“Because my mind is not limited by a body-identified ego, I know through divine memory how my incarnate consciousness came from Christ Consciousness and thus will ultimately merge again in that formless Omnipresent Omniscience. I can therefore testify all about myself, the nature of my Christ Consciousness, without the truth being distorted by the unreliable witness of the physical ego. Egotistical persons extol themselves as something more than they are. But my true Self, being the Christ Consciousness manifest through my consciousness, cannot exaggerate or speak untruth when it proclaims itself. Because you know not how Christ Consciousness descended in my bodily form called Jesus, or where that manifestation will vanish after my body is no more on earth, you are judging after the manner of the flesh—a worldly judgment that sees no further than bodily limitations.

“The Christ Consciousness in me beholds every soul made after the image of the Infinite; therefore I do not judge or measure man according to his physical or mental attributes. Yet if I use my omniscient Christ Intelligence, I know how much a soul is identified with its physical form and human characteristics, and that judgment is unerringly accurate. If my consciousness were ‘alone,’ isolated from God-consciousness, then my judgment would be limited and subject to error. But since my consciousness is charged with the divine wisdom of the Father, my judgment about everything is true.

“It is described in your human law that the consonant testimony of two individuals is acceptable as truth.⁵ I (my human consciousness manifesting the Christ Consciousness) am one witness to the truth I speak; and the Father (Cosmic Consciousness beyond all vibratory creation) that sent me (the Christ Consciousness that is His manifestation in creation) beareth witness of me.”

Egotistical persons are wont to exaggerate their merits. But since Jesus spoke from his oneness with the Father, any of his statements that seemed to extol himself were in fact impersonal references to the Cosmic Consciousness of his Heavenly Father. Therefore, it was entirely proper for Jesus to declare himself through his ego-disengaged divine wisdom.



Then said they unto him, “Where is thy Father?”

Jesus answered, “Ye neither know me, nor my Father: If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.” These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him, for his hour was not yet come (John 8:19 – 20).

“Y ou have not communed with the Christ Consciousness behind my consciousness, nor with the Cosmic Consciousness, my originator and Father. If you had communed by meditation with the Christ Consciousness, you would have realized its presence within me; then automatically you would also have perceived the Cosmic Consciousness whose only reflection in creation is the Christ Consciousness.”



Then said Jesus again unto them, "I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come."

Then said the Jews, "Will he kill himself? because he saith, 'Whither I go, ye cannot come.'"

And he said unto them, "Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world. I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:21 – 24).



“Ye are of this world; I am not of this world”

“I follow the way as is directed by the Christ Consciousness in me; and some day when I am gone from the earth, you shall try to follow me, but not finding me, you will die with your bad karma and be subject to reincarnation. Unless you seek me in the elevated states of deep meditation, you cannot comprehend in the present state of your consciousness the Christ Consciousness wherein my human consciousness has merged.

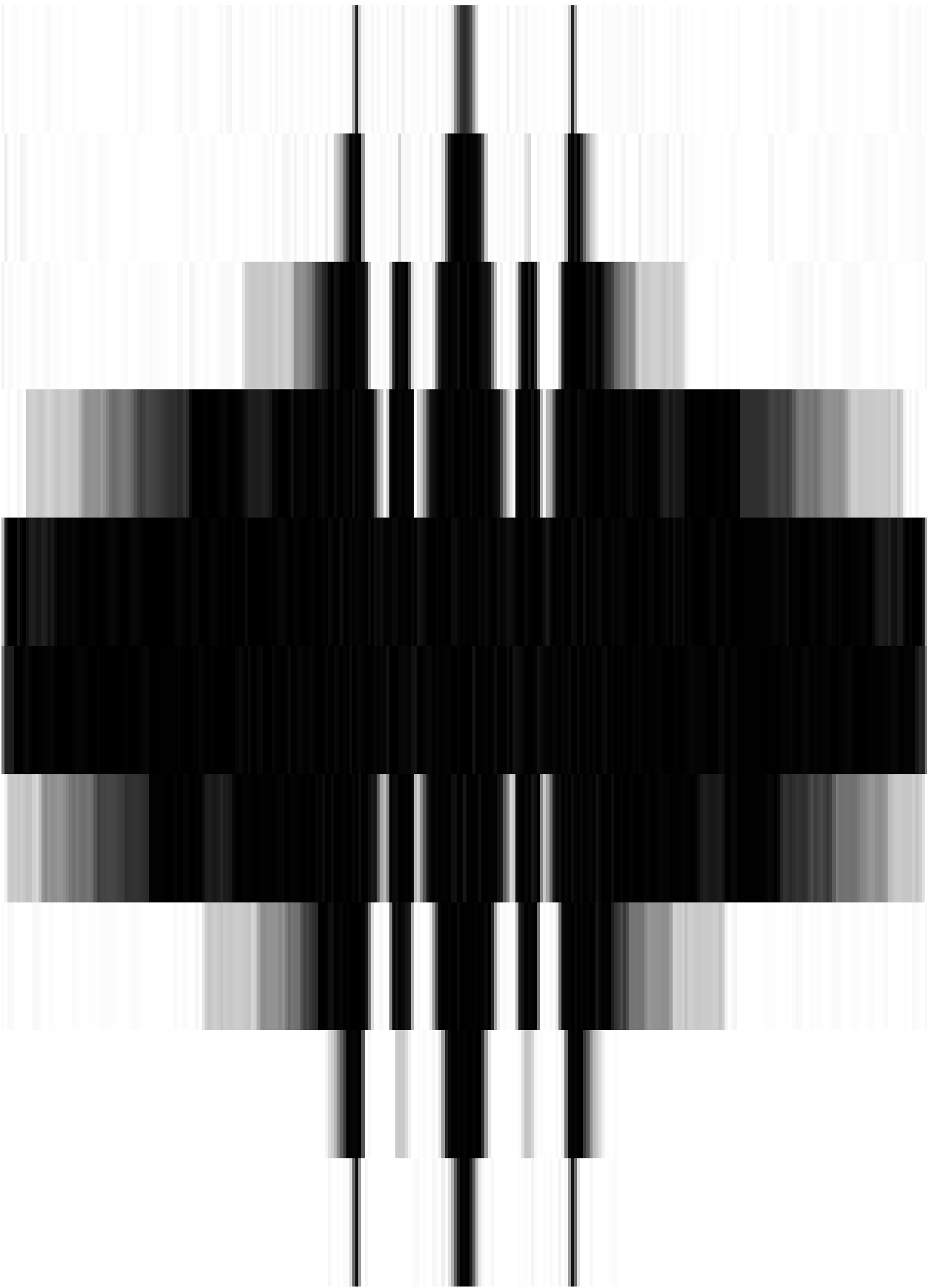
“You are ‘of this world,’ being bound to the earth by entanglements of material desires and delusive imaginings; your captive souls reincarnate repeatedly on this plane of gross vibration. But my Spirit-liberated soul, although voluntarily encased in a body moving on this earth, is ‘from above’ and does not belong to the God-obscuring material plane.

“That is why I told you that you would ‘die in your sins’: Although your souls are immortal, still the law of karma and reincarnation will force you to experience death of the physical body with each rebirth impelled by your mortal attachments. As long as you cling to body consciousness, your spiritual lives will be dead, entombed in the sepulchre of your errant sinful actions. Because you have not believed in the Christ Consciousness in me and that it is the reflection of the Cosmic Consciousness of my Father, you will not make the effort to realize Divinity in your own souls. This sin of omission will keep your souls buried beneath self-perpetuated delusions of mortality.”

Jesus speaks of persons in delusion as “from beneath” and “of this world,” referring to the fact that, owing to their material karma, such persons remain through numerous successive incarnations in the lower or physical plane of God’s creation, beneath or under the influence of earthly vibrations and the material laws of nature.

The word “above” in “I am from above” signifies the finer astral and causal regions of vibration where dwell those advanced souls who have freed themselves of physical karma, and the vibrationless sphere of oneness with God that is the abode of fully liberated masters. By saying “I am not of this world,” Jesus signifies that his Christ Consciousness was omnipresent in the triune physical-astral-causal cosmos and not tied to one tiny clod of earth in physical

space called “the world.”



“I am He”: oneness with Absolute Being (Brahman)

The words “I am He” used by Jesus are a declaration of ultimate truth that has similarly been ecstatically realized and uttered by master minds of India who lived before and after the time of Jesus. The Isha Upanishad says: “That absolute Self abiding in the transcendental effulgence, verily, I am He.” Elsewhere in the Upanishads we find, similarly, the sacred truth-affirmations Aham Brahmasmi (“I am Brahman—Spirit”), Ayam Atma Brahma (“This Self is Spirit”), and Tat Tvam Asi (“Thou art That”). The scriptural mantra Aham-Sa or ’Ham-sa (literally, “I am He”) are potent Sanskrit syllables that possess a vibratory connection with the incoming and the outgoing breath. Thus with his every breath man unconsciously asserts the truth of his being: I am He!

Jesus—as did all liberated masters qualified to make such self-declarations—meant that he knew by direct realization that the Christ Consciousness (Kutastha Chaitanya) within himself was one with Cosmic Consciousness—the Father or Absolute Being (Brahman).⁶

When Jesus said, “For if ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins,” he meant that those who are identified with their bodies and do not attain the transcendent states in meditation cannot know that their true Self, the soul, is a reflection of Spirit (“I am He”). Divine souls who live on earth identified with Cosmic Consciousness create no human desires or binding karma and thus, at death, become one with Spirit. But persons who pass their lifetime satisfying the body and gratifying the ego, unaware of the Divine Image in themselves, amass earthly karma or sins. When they die with those unresolved karmic consequences and with unfulfilled earthly desires, they must reincarnate again and again to resolve all mortal entanglements.



Jesus' "way of light" to liberation in Spirit

As Jesus said, "I go my way...whither I go, ye cannot come," so also Bhagavan Krishna in the Gita, instructing his disciple Arjuna, delineated the paths traversed at death by enlightened and earthbound souls respectively: "I shall now declare unto thee, O Arjuna, the path, traversing which at the time of death, yogis attain freedom; and also the path wherein there is rebirth....These two paths for exiting from the world are reckoned eternal. The way of light leads to release, the way of darkness leads to rebirth."⁷

Jesus declared (in verse

12

, above) that those who would follow him "shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." The Gita describes how at the time of physical death the soul follows either the "way of light"—the opening of the spiritual eye, the awakening of the subtle cerebrospinal centers, and the ascension of life force and consciousness through them to Cosmic Consciousness and liberation in Spirit—or the "way of darkness" that is the descension or return to body consciousness or rebirth of those yet unable to open fully all the cerebrospinal doors that lead ultimately to Spirit. That way is followed by yet-to-be perfected souls who are "of this world," of whom Jesus said, "Whither I go, ye cannot come."

Saint Paul testified, "I protest by our rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily."⁸ He was able "daily" in transcendent inner communion to make this inner ascension to the realization of Spirit.



Then said they unto him, “Who art thou?”

And Jesus saith unto them, “Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning. I have many things to say and to judge of you: but He that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of Him.” They understood not that he spake to them of the Father (John 8:25 – 27).

“I told you from the beginning that ‘I am He ,’ and of truth I am that. I have many truths to declare unto you; and must pass judgment, according to the standard of my intuitive wisdom, about your conduct and life in general. I declare unto you that the great God who is invisible and thus unreal to you, because you cannot perceive Him through your senses, truly exists. Through the infallible intuitive realization within me I know and testify of His Absolute Existence. Sense perceptions give you knowledge of the appearance of things, but the intuition within you can give you realization of the Substance behind appearances. All the utterances of wisdom that I have come to give to the world are illumining emanations of Cosmic Vibration flowing through me from the Infinite.”



Then said Jesus unto them, “When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. And He that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please Him.” As he spake these words, many believed on him (John 8:28 – 30).

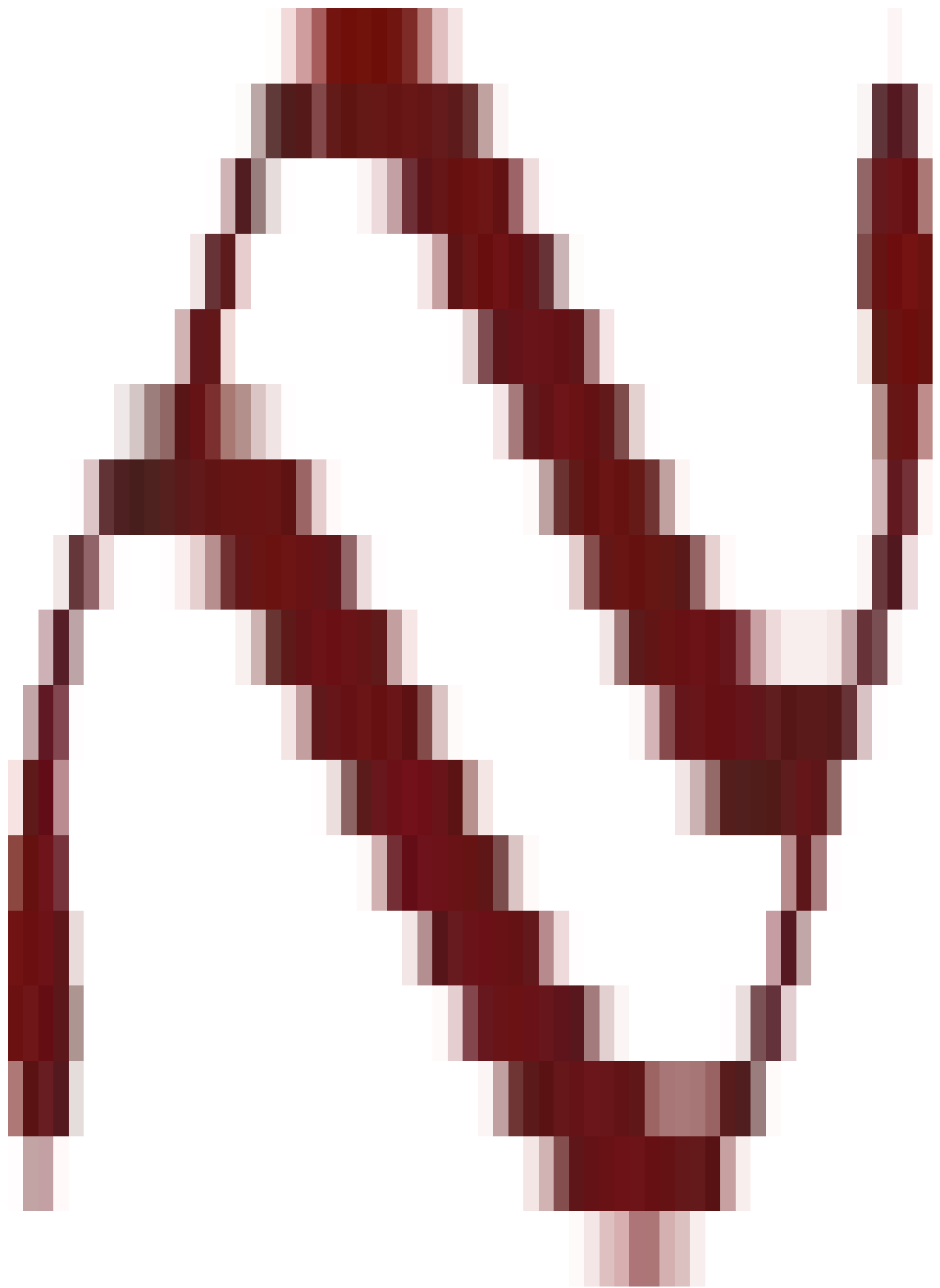


“Lift up the son of man” or physical consciousness to Christ and Cosmic Consciousness

The esoteric meaning of Jesus’ words “when ye have lifted up the Son of man” was explicated in the commentary on earlier verses in St. John: “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up.”⁹ Thus these words in the present verses signify:

“When by deep meditation you will lift your consciousness from the son of man or physical body, then you will be able to realize the universal Christ Consciousness, which is present within you and me. Realizing that, you will further perceive that this inherent Christ Consciousness is the reflection of the Cosmic Consciousness. And when you realize the Christ Consciousness within yourself and myself, then you will know why I say I perform no bodily nor mental actions actuated by the ego or human consciousness. As my Father or Cosmic Consciousness has transmitted His wisdom to the Christ Consciousness in me, so my consciousness reveals that wisdom alone.

“The Cosmic Consciousness, which projected and materialized my body, is inseparably with me, just as the wave is informed and indispensably sustained by the ocean. The wave cannot exist without the ocean behind it; so also the Heavenly Father has not isolated my body from Him but always remains behind my consciousness, sustaining it. Those who are tuned to their human desires guide their bodies and minds according to the dictates of those impulses. But my consciousness is continuously aware of the presence of the Father in me; thus my human consciousness always manifests those actions that please the Father and are in tune with His wishes.”



Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, “If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:31 – 32).

“If you will persist in attunement with the Cosmic Vibration (as heard in meditation) and with the Christ Consciousness in that sacred sound, then indeed you may consider yourselves my disciples, disciplined and guided by my word or Christ Intelligence within you.



“Continue in my word”: attunement with Cosmic Vibration through meditation

By this you will be able to know all truth—about yourself, the mysteries of life, and the drama of the cosmos. You will no longer identify yourselves with human desires and the consequent bondage of karma, thereby freeing your soul from delusion and reincarnations.”

By “continue in my word,” Jesus advised his followers to heed conscientiously his words of wisdom about faithfully practicing the meditation technique of contacting the Holy Cosmic Vibratory Sound and the Christ Consciousness in it, thus becoming his true disciples.¹⁰

Jesus spoke to the populace in parables and metaphors to awaken their curiosity for truth, but to the disciples he taught plain truths and techniques of meditation for entering the inner kingdom of God.

It is evident that merely believing in the words of Christ does not make one a qualified disciple of Christ. Jesus wanted true aspirants to strive to manifest the Christ Consciousness which was present in him, to be one who feels continuously in his daily life the guiding presence of the Infinite Christ that frees the soul from ignorance and bestows salvation.



They answered him, “We be Abraham’s seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, ‘Ye shall be made free’?”

Jesus answered them, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. I know that ye are Abraham’s seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father” (John 8:33 – 38).

“With the certainty of truth, which I intuitively feel within myself, I declare unto you that anyone who performs erroneous, or sinful, actions against the happiness of his soul creates sinful habits. Any individual working under the influence of a strong, sinful habit becomes its bond servant in the bodily dwelling.



Attunement with Christ Consciousness makes one free from all karma

“But even if an individual is bonded in servitude to a sinful habit, that enslaved consciousness is only a temporary condition. Sinful habits, no matter how strong, cannot forever occupy the soul’s bodily mansion of consciousness. Every individual in thrall to sinful habits must remember that his everlasting consciousness is the immortal soul in which the Son, or Christ Consciousness, is templed. The devotee who knows that the real Master who abides forever in the true Self, the soul, is the Christ Consciousness, or the Son (and not sin), and who tunes his consciousness with Christ Consciousness, becomes free from all human karma. Therefore, if through the exercise of your volition you make the spiritual effort to find freedom from cosmic delusion, and thereby know me as the Christ Consciousness present in you, that Consciousness will free you from all human vassalage.

“I know that you are the descendants of Abraham, and more importantly that you are made after the image of my Father; but because you do not receive the all-seeing wisdom of my words, you have become the servant of sin in your desire to kill me. Therefore, being temporarily servile to sinful thoughts, you are in bondage. If you would only be in tune with my word, the Cosmic Vibration, you could be free, no longer the servant of sin. My words are of the wisdom of the Heavenly Father, which I intuitively feel within myself, whereas you speak and act according to the limited understanding and behavior of mortal consciousness, as do your earthly parents.”

Jesus points out to the descendants of Abraham that they had lost the quality of their good ancestry by succumbing to ignorance, sinful thoughts, and following tradition and family habits instead of God’s laws and truth.

Some high-caste Brahmins of India also boast of their divine parentage, as do the hierarchy of many cultures. But Jesus points out that physical good birth in itself is not an adequate credential. Each soul, though an image of God and notwithstanding good parentage, can temporarily become the servant of sinful habits, as Jesus admonished the descendants of Abraham. But while Jesus speaks of their degradation, he also reminds them that they could not remain in servitude to sin forever, but should realize that they are eternally made in the image of God.

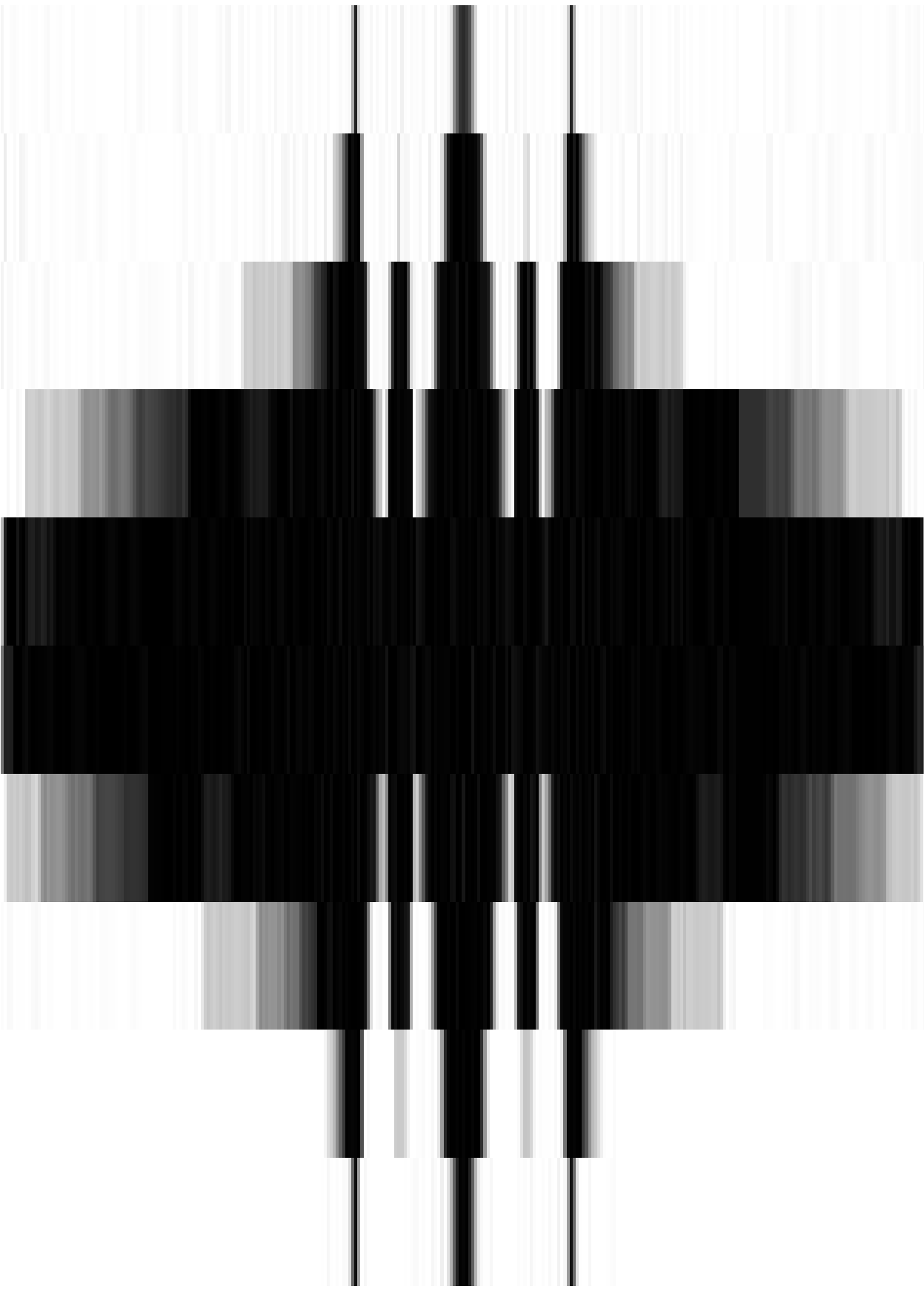


They answered and said unto him, "Abraham is our father."

Jesus saith unto them, "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father."

Then said they to him, "We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God."

Jesus said unto them, "If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but He sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God" (John 8:39 – 47).



Persons under the influence of satanic delusion cannot comprehend higher truth

“If by meditation you knew God as your Father, you would love me, for the Christ Consciousness in me is the reflection of God the Father, and my body in which that consciousness is encased also came from Him. I was not born of myself—reincarnated because of personal desires; He has sent my body to the earth that the Christ Consciousness reflected in me might rouse sleeping souls and remind them of the Christ Consciousness present also in them.

“Do you realize why you cannot understand my speech? It is because your consciousness is not tuned to the Cosmic Vibration, the Word; therefore you do not comprehend the truth I speak, which is inspired by Christ Consciousness within that Cosmic Vibratory Word. You live in oblivious forgetfulness of the Spirit within you; and by creating evil habits you are possessed by satanic ignorance, which acts as your guiding advisory father. In succumbing to the lustful tendencies implanted within you by your pseudofather, you culture satanic habits that become the impelling force of your actions. Satan and his cohorts of satanic habits are the murderers of soul happiness from the beginning of creation; they do not manifest truth because it is shut out of their very nature of cosmic delusion. Satan speaks lies, works delusion, ‘of his own’—because of the rebellious misuse of his God-given creative free choice. Satan is the father of all cosmic delusion, the consummate liar about the nature of God and truth.¹¹

“Through your evil habits you have invited the cosmic delusion of Satan to guide you; his skill at hiding truth has confounded your belief. None of you has proven any sin on my part, so why should you not be convinced of the truth as I have clearly presented it to you?

“All great ones, such as Abraham and the prophets, who are true devotees of God, tuned their consciousness by the interiorization of meditation to the Cosmic Vibration—God’s word within them. You have never entered that interiorized meditative state; therefore you have not heard the Cosmic Vibration and felt the presence of God therein. Thus you have no real concept of the consciousness of one who realizes he has come from God.”

Jesus warns that lust or evil tendencies are implanted in man by Satan, and anyone who acts according to the dictates of these incitements invites Satan to

be his guiding force. Jesus describes Satan as a liar, for by cosmic delusion he makes God disappear from man's sight behind the illusions of gross matter. The true devotee, who feels the presence of God within himself, is not deceived by the prevarications of cosmic delusion; he perceives God as the Only Existing Substance in nature, space, and infinity.

Though all men and women are created in the image of God, still Jesus says that some—those who meditate regularly and deeply—are “of God,” perceiving His presence within them as Cosmic Vibration, the Word; whereas others, being identified with their satanic habits, are “not of God,” oblivious to His immanence.

“The devil sinneth from the beginning,” wrote Saint John in his first Epistle to the early followers of Jesus. “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.”¹² That is, the manifestation of Christ Consciousness within man's own being effortlessly destroys the illusions or “works of the devil.”



Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, “Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?”

Jesus answered, “I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me. And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth. Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man keep my saying, he shall never see death” (John 8:48 – 51).

“I, being aware of the Christ Consciousness within me, am not susceptible to any devil acolytes of Sata n’s cosmic delusion. Rather I, Christ Consciousness, live up to the expectations of God the Father whose reflection I am; yet you dishonor that righteousness. My human consciousness seeks no earthly glory, but is glorified with the Christ Consciousness within me. There is one Cosmic Law that seeks to glorify the Father by rewarding the manifestations of goodness and chastening those of evil; and to that end this law judges people according to their good or bad karma.



The changeless state, free from the changeful illusions of life and death

“Verily by the truth within me, I declare to every one of you that if a devotee keeps my saying—that is, if by daily meditation he contacts the Cosmic Vibration and Christ Consciousness, even as I feel it within myself, and follows my teachings and becomes fixed in the Absolute Changeless—he shall never find his inner vision dismayed by the disturbing mutations (‘death’) affecting the body and all matter ruled by the relentless law of change.”

The inner eye of wisdom in Jesus was open, making it impossible for the darkness of any devil of delusive ignorance to be within him. Beholding God as Infinite Glory within himself, he could not extol his individualized ego consciousness.

Most people, measuring themselves in terms of their material and mental acquisitions and family relations, magnify their mortal egos. But when a devotee detaches his soul consciousness from the body and its relationships, he beholds within him nothing but God and rejoices to glorify naught else but Him. Thus Jesus points out that while he did not seek to glorify himself, the Cosmic Law seeks the glory of God in the virtues of men and declares its judgment about them.

When Jesus uses the words “keep my saying,” he distinctly emphasizes that one has daily to live his teachings and methods of contacting the Cosmic Vibration in order to remain continuously in Christ Consciousness, free from the torpor of delusion (“death”).¹³ When a man is tossing on buffeting waves, he has no time to see the whole ocean; but if he gets out of the breakers and stands on the shore, he can have a clear overall perspective. Similarly, an ordinary individual who is frantically engaged in coping with the changes affecting his body and environment cannot perceive the Immutable Infinite within him. But when the devotee removes himself from outer turmoil by meditation and tunes his consciousness with the Cosmic Vibration and Christ Consciousness within him, he beholds the Eternal Changelessness free from the changeful illusory visions of life.



Then said the Jews unto him, “Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, ‘If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death.’ Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? And the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?”

Jesus answered, “If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that He is your God: Yet ye have not known Him; but I know Him: and if I should say, I know Him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know Him, and keep His saying. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad” (John 8:52 – 56).

“If I honor my ego and its bodily connections, that acclaim is of little value to the world or God. It is the Heavenly Father within me who has been pleased to accept my life and actions, who has made my life of value to the world. The same God whom you declare as your own God recognizes the truth in me and wants you all to recognize that truth that you might be benefited therefrom.

“You speak of your God about whom you know nothing, but I know that I know Him; if I were to satisfy you by saying my human consciousness is not cognizant of the Cosmic Consciousness within it, I would be speaking untruth as you in your ignorance are used to doing. But I know the Heavenly Consciousness within me and I observe all the divine rules (‘keep His sayings’) in my life, which I receive from the inner vibrations of that Supreme Consciousness.

“Your enlightened father, Abraham, being inwardly tuned to Christ Consciousness, was filled with divine bliss beholding ‘my day’—the light within him of the Christ Consciousness which is now within me. Abraham ‘saw it’—the wisdom in Christ Consciousness (which I and all liberated souls behold)—and was filled with divine delight, the same joy in which I rejoice.”

Jesus expressed deep truths when he said, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.” Jesus with his Christ Consciousness and inner vision could distinctly see all past, present, and future in his Eternal Now consciousness. Ordinarily, the consciousness of mortals is interrupted, cut off, by

the punctuation of death; but Jesus, having attained the Absolute, could feel exactly what the liberated soul of Abraham felt centuries earlier—the eternity-spanning Christ Consciousness that Jesus experienced within himself, the joy of Christ Consciousness felt uniformly the same by any advanced or liberated soul.

Jesus does not say whether he lived in another form in the time of Abraham (“rejoiced to see my day”), but that with the power of the infinite omniscience of his eternal Christ Consciousness he could feel exactly what Abraham felt in the “day,” or light of Abraham’s divine realization, long before the body of Jesus was born on earth.



Then said the Jews unto him, “Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?”

Jesus said unto them, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am.”

Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by (John 8:57 – 59).

“Verily, by the eternal, ever present Christ Consciousness within me, I behold no division of past, present, or future in my consciousness of the Eternal Now, which is aware of all happenings before the time of Abraham, all happenings after him, and all happenings yet to come throughout eternity.”



Consciousness of the Eternal Now: “Before Abraham was, I am”

In the Christ Consciousness of Jesus, the divisions of past, present, and future were annihilated. His omnipresent consciousness pierced the accommodative mayic veils of time and space. Whatever he felt was as a part of his universal Self united with God. He realized that naught exists in reality but God, with all happenings and all things as manifestations of God, taking place within God and within his God-united Self, and everlastingly imprinted on the film of Infinity. Thus with a cosmic breath of awe Jesus could proclaim: “Before Abraham was, I am.”¹⁴

Since nothing can exist without the consciousness of God, an advanced devotee whose consciousness is tuned to the universal Christ Consciousness ubiquitous in the sphere of creation realizes that the light of his God-consciousness illumines and reveals—simultaneously at all times—the objectified dimensions of space and the chambers of past, present, and future. “O Arjuna, I am aware of the creatures of the past, the present, and the future; but Me no one knows.”¹⁵ The individual who is yet subject to delusion is denied perception of the Ever Present as he beholds all events as happening in the continuum of time, and sensory objects existing in relation to one another as occupying dimensions of space.

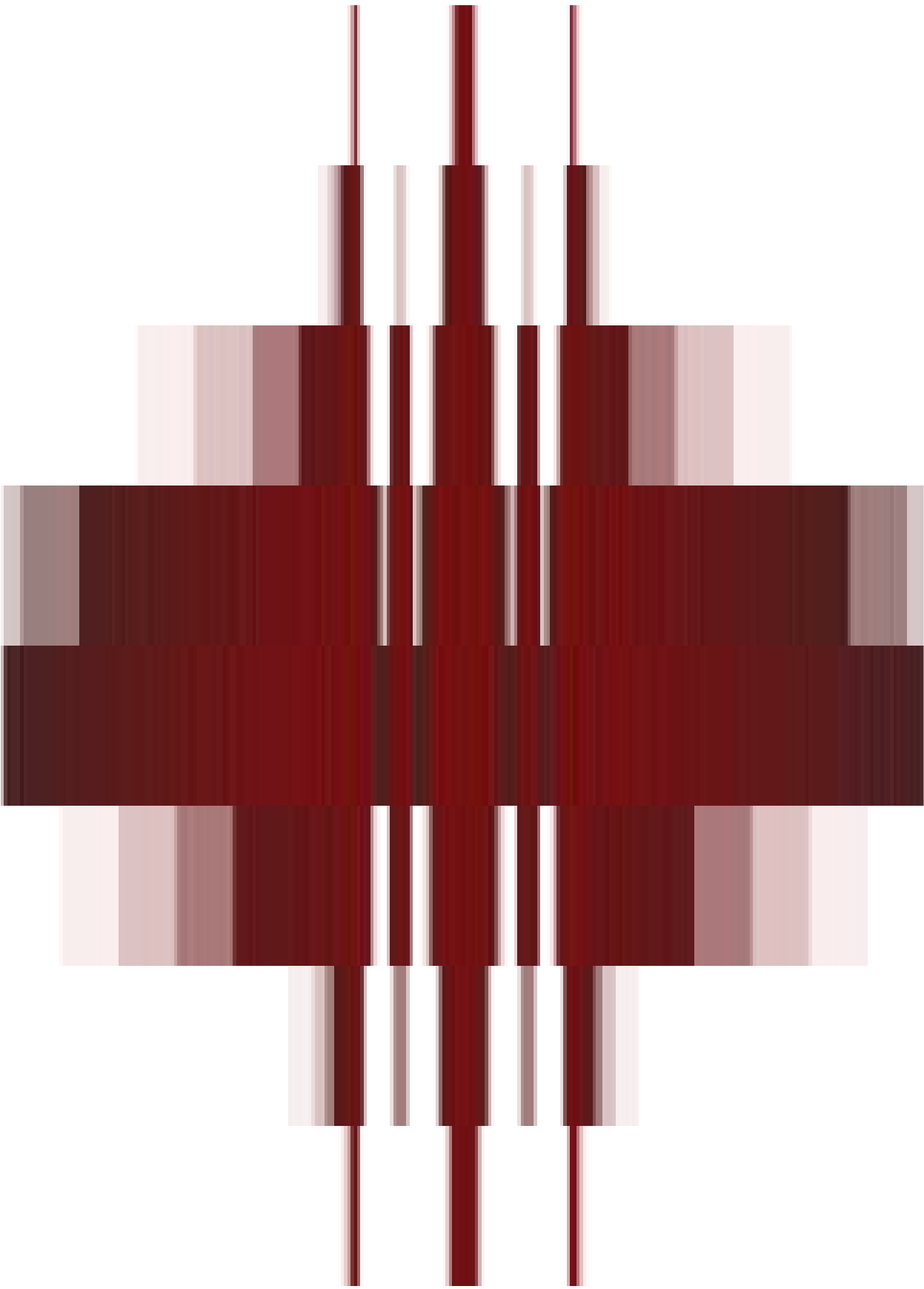
If a man dreams he is making a world tour by bicycle in a span of several years, he creates a consciousness of space and time in his own imagination that does not exist when he awakes. The vast mileage and its scenery occupied the limited space of his mind; the events of his tour, unfolding one upon another, transpired in a fraction of the time of his perceived experience. Jesus and great masters who have awakened in God and forsaken the cosmic dream find space and time and their captive objects and happenings all sustained in the imaginings of God and thus, though temporarily evident, are essentially unreal.

In order to be a part of God’s dream-drama, the divine man outwardly adapts to the nature of the dream while inwardly seeing his Spirit-identified Self as an eternal existence of omnipresent consciousness: “I am present before Abraham was, I am present in the here and now, and being all-pervading I am conscious of my presence in the infinite future.”

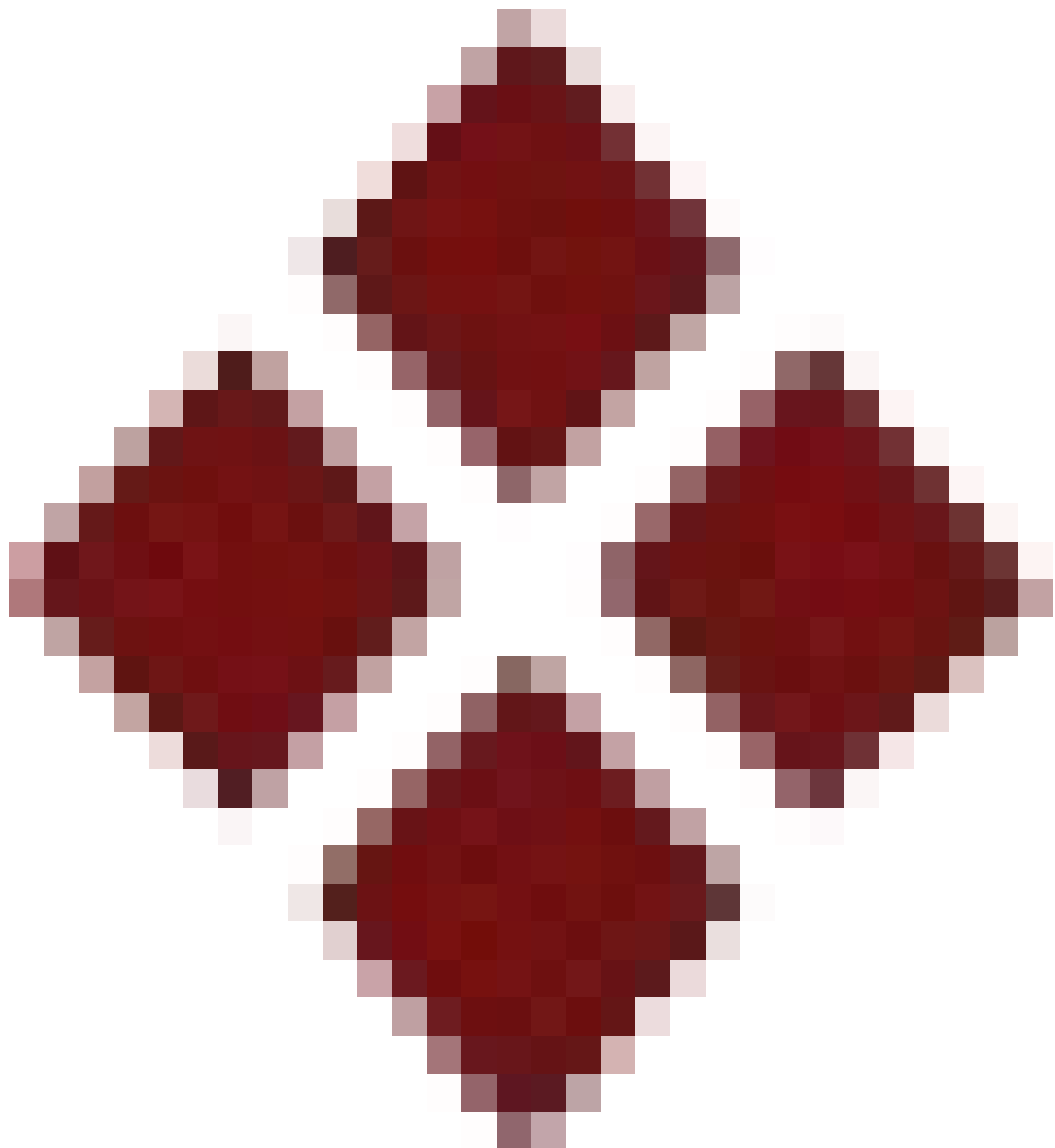


Discourse 52

“I Am the Door....I Am the Good Shepherd....I and My Father Are One”



Cause of Misfortunes: Individual Karma or Mass Karma



“While It Is Day”: The Cosmic Cycles of Creation and Dissolution



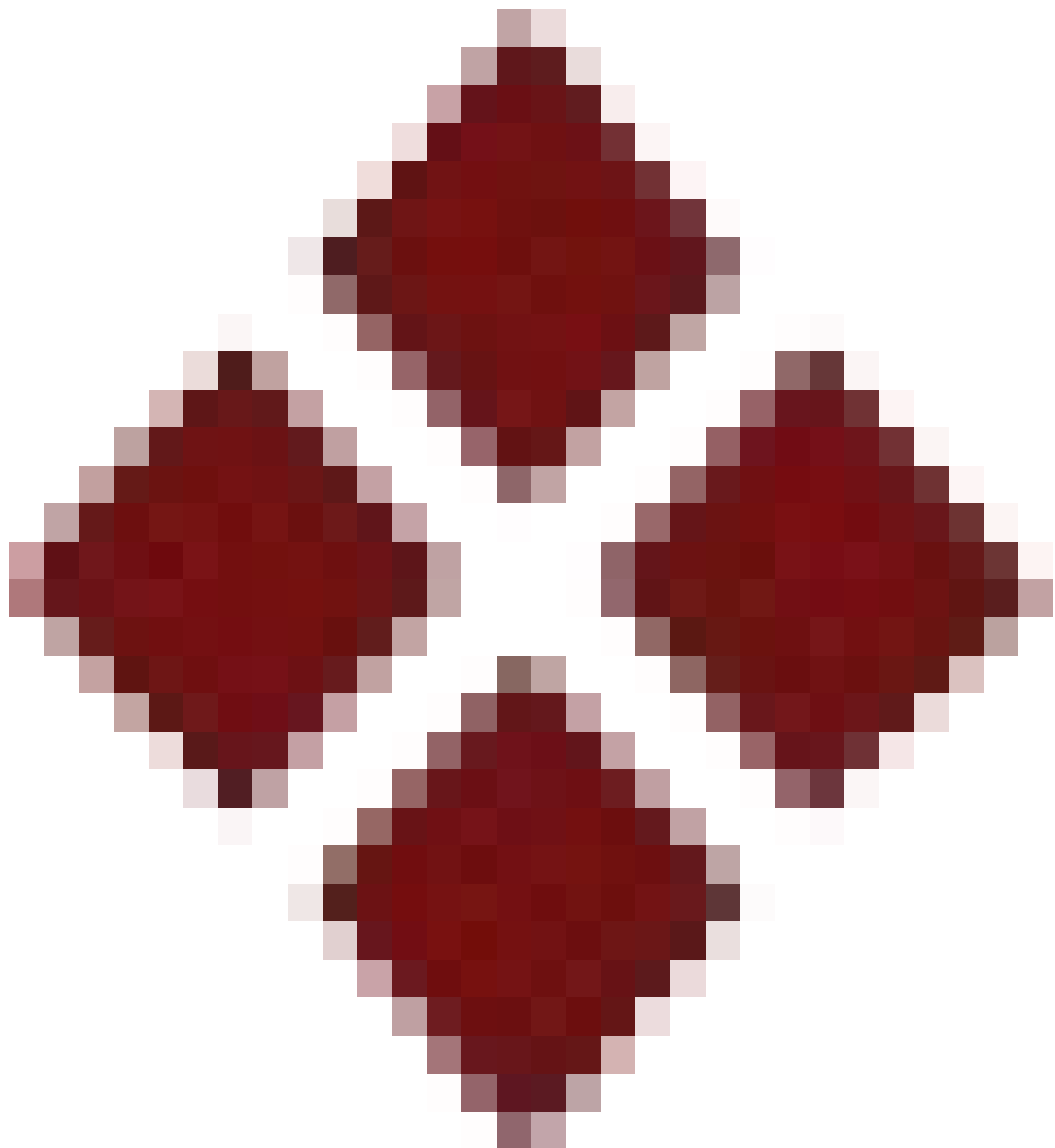
Distinguishing True Shepherds of Souls From False Prophets



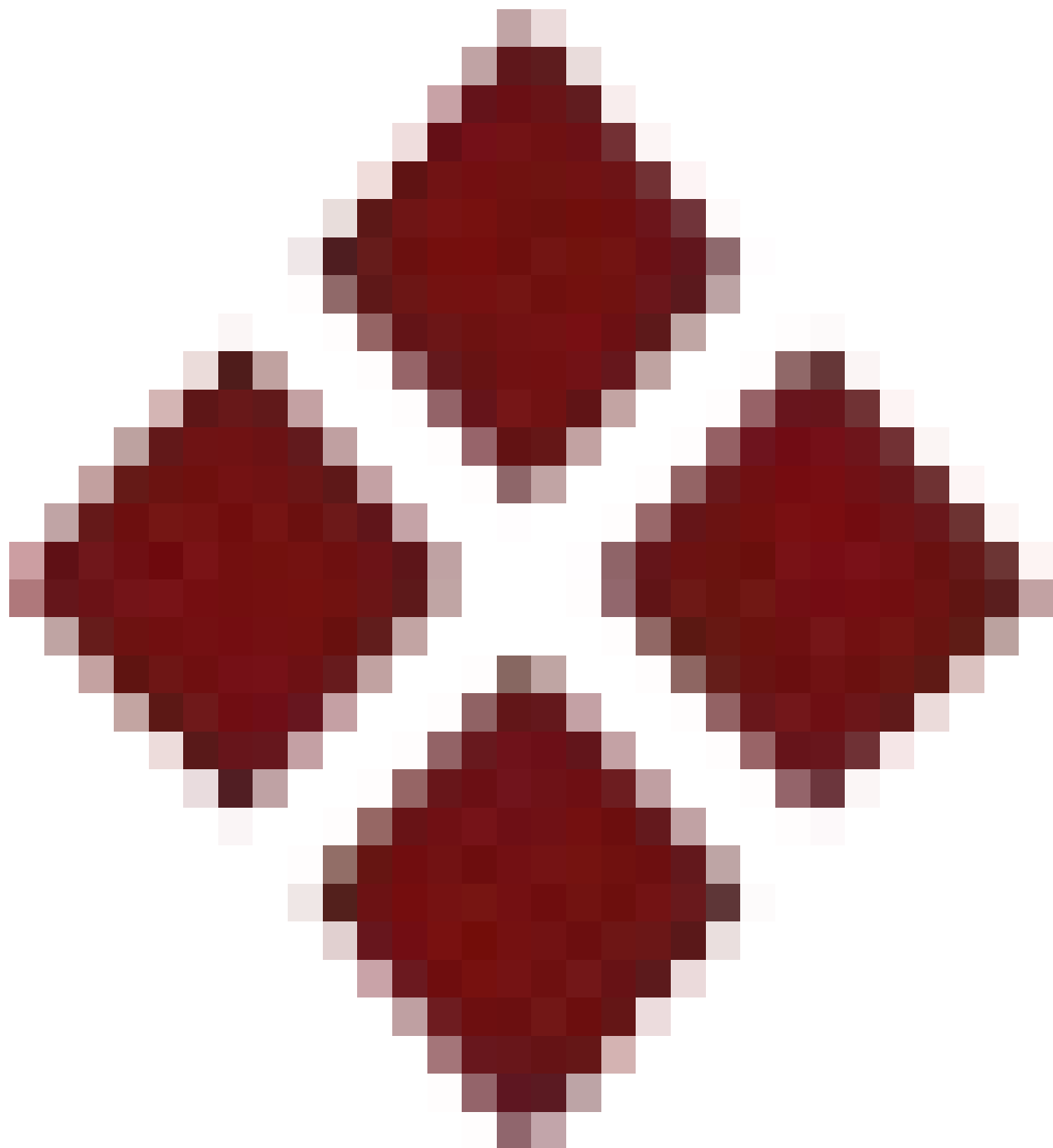
Christ Consciousness Is the Only Portal to Liberation



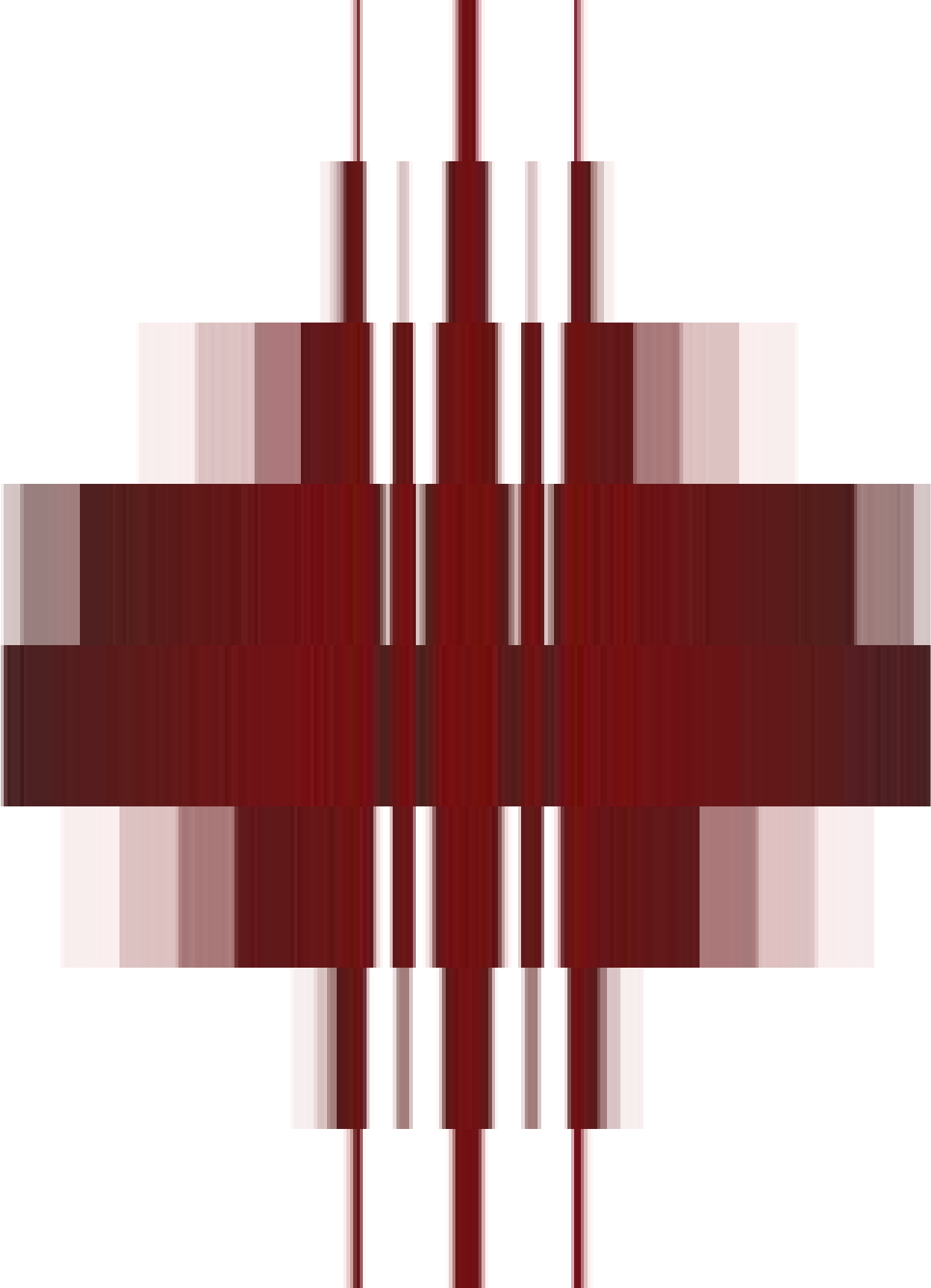
**“The Good Shepherd”: A True Guru Attuned to
Christ Consciousness**



“I and My Father Are One”



**“Ye Are Gods”: All Souls Are Made in the Pure
Divine Image**



“The guru bestows spiritual baptism on the devotee, by which God unlocks the entryway of the spiritual eye through which the devotee follows the ‘voice’ (the Holy Ghost vibration) of the shepherd of Christ Consciousness to the Cosmic Consciousness of God.”

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And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, "Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?"

Jesus answered, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam," (which is by interpretation, Sent). He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, "Is not this he that sat and begged?" Some said, "This is he": others said, "He is like him": but he said, "I am he." Therefore said they unto him, "How were thine eyes opened?" He answered and said, "A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, 'Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash': and I went and washed, and I received sight."

Then said they unto him, "Where is he?" He said, "I know not." They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. And it was the Sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, "He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see."

Therefore said some of the Pharisees, "This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath day." Others said, "How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?" And there was a division among them.

They say unto the blind man again, "What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet." But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. And they asked them, saying, "Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? How then doth he now see?" His parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our son, and

that he was born blind: But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself.”

These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. Therefore said his parents, “He is of age; ask him.” Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, “Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner.” He answered and said, “Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.” Then said they to him again, “What did he to thee? How opened he thine eyes?”

He answered them, “I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? Will ye also be his disciples?” Then they reviled him, and said, “Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses’ disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is.”

The man answered and said unto them, “Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth His will, him He heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.” They answered and said unto him, “Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us?” And they cast him out.

Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, “Dost thou believe on the Son of God?”

He answered and said, “Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?”

And Jesus said unto him, “Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.”

And he said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshipped him.

And Jesus said, “For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.”

And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said

unto him, "Are we blind also?"

Jesus said unto them, "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, 'We see'; therefore your sin remaineth.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers."

This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.

Then said Jesus unto them again, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

"Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."

There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings. And

many of them said, "He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him?" Others said, "These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?"

And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch. Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, "How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly."

Jesus answered them, "I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one."

Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, "Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?"

The Jews answered him, saying, "For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God."

Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, "Ye are gods" '? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, 'Thou blasphemest'; because I said, 'I am the Son of God'? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in Him."

Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand, and went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized; and there he abode.

And many resorted unto him, and said, "John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true." And many believed on him there.

—*John 9:1 – 10:42*



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Discourse 52

“I Am the Door...I Am the Good Shepherd...I and My Father Are One”



And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, "Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?"

Jesus answered, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world" (John 9:1 – 5).



Cause of misfortunes: individual karma or mass karma

Jesu s' statement that the man was born blind not because of his sin or the sin of his parents is a source of bewilderment to many, who think he meant that God arbitrarily denied sight to the man in order that His divine healing power might be manifested through Jesus. To those who know God as the All-Compassionate Father, it is inconceivable that He would make one of His children suffer for years merely to create an opportunity for a miraculous display. Rather, Jesus meant that the man's affliction was linked to hidden causes formulated in his past lives that brought him to his present condition, and not by anything he or his parents had done in their current incarnations. In any case, since the man was born blind, there was no opportunity for any sin in his present existence to be the cause of his malady. ¹ Nevertheless, being good in his present life, and drawing from past-life virtues, he had accrued sufficient good karma "that the works of God should be made manifest in him"—that is, to merit a miracle of divine healing by his coming in contact with God's emissary, Jesus.

Evil conditions that befall man may be caused not only by the individual karma of sin, but by mass or universal karma: man-made or natural calamities arising from conditions influenced or triggered by universal forces or the cumulative vibrations and actions of the masses in general. For example, suppose all of the passengers die in the crash of an airliner caught in a thunderstorm; that would not necessarily imply that all those persons were karmically predisposed to perish in that disaster. It was an act of nature affecting that area at that time, and the fact that the passengers happened to have chosen that flight. Though no specific past sin was necessarily directly related to their death in that way, the positive side is that at least some adverse personal karma of each individual was consummated by the tragedy. But consider alternatively that there was a miracle survival of one of the passengers, and of some interference that prevented another person from boarding that flight; some intervening personal good karma specifically saved those individuals. It could be concluded that these persons were spared "that the works of God should be made manifest"—that God expresses His compassion and protection in the workings of the karmic law by which the effects of one's personal good actions can neutralize or mitigate in oneself the consequences of some otherwise devastating mass disaster.

The mass karma of the time and clime of Jesus subjected newborns to various

illnesses and deformities, and the blind man's birth under those conditions, in general determined by his past life actions, was perhaps the natural cause of his defect. But through divine grace, activated by his good karma, he was blessed to receive the healing gift of sight from Jesus "who must work the works of Him that sent me."



“While it is day”: the cosmic cycles of creation and dissolution

When Jesus said, “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world,” he was speaking impersonally of his oneness with Christ Consciousness, the light of divine intelligence that guides the cosmos.² His words about doing God’s work “while it is day” because “the night cometh, when no man can work” must also be considered from the point of view of his cosmic Christ Consciousness. In this connection Jesus intimated two meanings—one personal, the other universal. The first—an allusion to the short span that his individual incarnation of divinity would remain on the earth plane—may be fully grasped only by understanding the broader metaphysical significance of his words, as follows:

In the universal sense, “day” means the period during which Spirit manifests creation, and “night” signifies the period of cosmic dissolution, during which naught exists but Unmanifested Absolute Spirit—alone, undifferentiated, adorned with no tremor of creative vibratory activity (“work”).³ As long as vibratory creation exists, throughout the long cyclic span of universal manifestation, God exists as the Father (the transcendent Creator), the Son (Christ Consciousness, the reflected Intelligence of the Father omnipresent within creation), and Holy Ghost (Cosmic Vibration, maker and substance of every manifestation in creation). By periodic universal dissolution (mahapralaya, complete cosmic dissolution, greater than Noah’s Flood, which was only partial dissolution, khanda pralaya), God withdraws the Holy Vibration, dissolving all creation; then automatically God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are resolved into the one Unmanifested Absolute Spirit, there to remain absorbed until the dawn of the next “day” or cycle of manifested creation.⁴

Thus Jesus signified: “While it is day (that is, so long as all creation is in manifestation), the Christ Intelligence must carry on the work of maintaining order in creation, shepherding it and all beings within it to an ever greater harmony and ultimate perfection. But when the night or cosmic dissolution of all creation arrives, the reflected Christ Consciousness, devoid of the vibratory receptacle in which it is reflected, will be withdrawn in the transcendental God the Father, even as a moonè reflection becomes united with the skyey moon at the removal of a mirror. The Christ Consciousness will then have nothing to work through, owing to the dissolution of all creation in God. But so long as the world or cosmic creation exists, so long the Christ Consciousness throughout the

universe and in me shall remain as its guiding light, its intelligent principle.”

In addition to conveying these cosmic truths applicable to the universal Christ Consciousness, Jesus’ mention of “day” and “night” were also a personal reference hinting at the brevity of his physical incarnation. Relative to the individual soul, “night” or dissolution refers to the dissolving of delusive material body consciousness, which also may be either partial or complete—unconsciously through sleep (partial dissolution) or death (complete dissolution); and consciously through spiritual transcendence in the lesser or greater forms of samadhi.⁵

Jesus therefore implied that the “day”—the period of manifestation of his mortal body as a receptacle for the infinite Christ Consciousness—would last only for a little while and that he must utilize all his opportunity on earth to do the works of God. When “the night cometh”—when his earthly form and Christ Consciousness would be dissolved in Spirit in the great nocturnal state of complete liberation in Cosmic Consciousness—he would not be readily manifest to the afflicted people of this earth.⁶ That is why, while his body was yet present in the world, Jesus wanted to do all the good he could to establish his mission of divine love and lifting souls into God’s presence through Christ Consciousness.



When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam," (which is by interpretation, Sent). He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing (John 9:6 – 7).

Jesus needed neither the clay nor the waters of the pool of Siloam to accomplish this cure. He directed the blind man's attention to these physical intermediaries to stimulate and focus the man's faith, thus rousing a greater receptivity to the real, invisible healing force, which he imparted to the man and with which he charged the clay through his spittle.⁷ Afterward he sent the man to wash in the pool of Siloam, whose waters were considered holy; all places of pilgrimage wherein many people gather and concentrate on thoughts of God possess divine vibrations and also help to create faith in persons desirous of healing.⁸ Jesus was sure of the seed of healing power he would transmit to the blind man, but he was not sure of the fertility of the man's soil of faith. That is why he engaged in the outward ritual of creating the clay ointment and asking the man to wash his anointed eyes in the purifying waters, whereupon the healing became evident.



The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, "Is not this he that sat and begged?" Some said, "This is he": others said, "He is like him": but he said, "I am he." Therefore said they unto him, "How were thine eyes opened?" He answered and said, "A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, 'Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash': and I went and washed, and I received sight."

Then said they unto him, "Where is he?" He said, "I know not." They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. And it was the Sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, "He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see."

Therefore said some of the Pharisees, "This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath day." Others said, "How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?" And there was a division among them.

They say unto the blind man again, "What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet." But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. And they asked them, saying, "Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? How then doth he now see?" His parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself."

These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. Therefore said his parents, "He is of age; ask him." Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, "Give God the

praise: we know that this man is a sinner.” He answered and said, “Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.” Then said they to him again, “What did he to thee? How opened he thine eyes?”

He answered them, “I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? Will ye also be his disciples?” Then they reviled him, and said, “Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses’ disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is.”

The man answered and said unto them, “Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth His will, him He heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.” They answered and said unto him, “Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us?” And they cast him out.

Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, “Dost thou believe on the Son of God?” (John 9:8 – 35).

“Dost thou believe in the Christ Consciousness which is the only begotten reflection, or Son, emanating from God the Father?”



He answered and said, “Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?”

And Jesus said unto him, “Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.”

And he said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshipped him (John 9:36 – 38).

“Thou hast seen the body in which is encased the Christ Consciousness. It is the Christ Consciousness, the Son of God, who is behind the speech of the man called Jesus.”

The above words reflect the natural humbleness of Jesus. He never spoke of his ego as the Christ; he obliquely referred to the Christ Consciousness as the reflection of God within him.



And Jesus said, “For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind” (John 9:39).

“I am the Christ Consciousness omnipresent in the cosmos to give it the judgment of cosmic law to guide it intelligently. ⁹ Also, the same Christ Consciousness is manifest in my body that I may give discriminating wisdom to those who, though spiritually ignorant, yet confess their unknowing and try their utmost to perceive truth. The wisdom manifest in my life will help to open the eyes of those who think they know truth but are blinded by ignorance. By my wisdom the humble, spiritually blind aspirant will see truth; and the light of my wisdom will reveal the blindness of worldly-wise, spiritually ignorant persons who think they see truth and do not.”



And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, “Are we blind also?”

Jesus said unto them, “If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, ‘We see’; therefore your sin remaineth” (John 9:40 – 41).

“If you acknowledged your spiritually blind mentalities, you would be helped by me to be free from the sin of ignorance; but as you arrogantly say ‘We see,’ while you do not perceive truth, sin yet abides with you.”

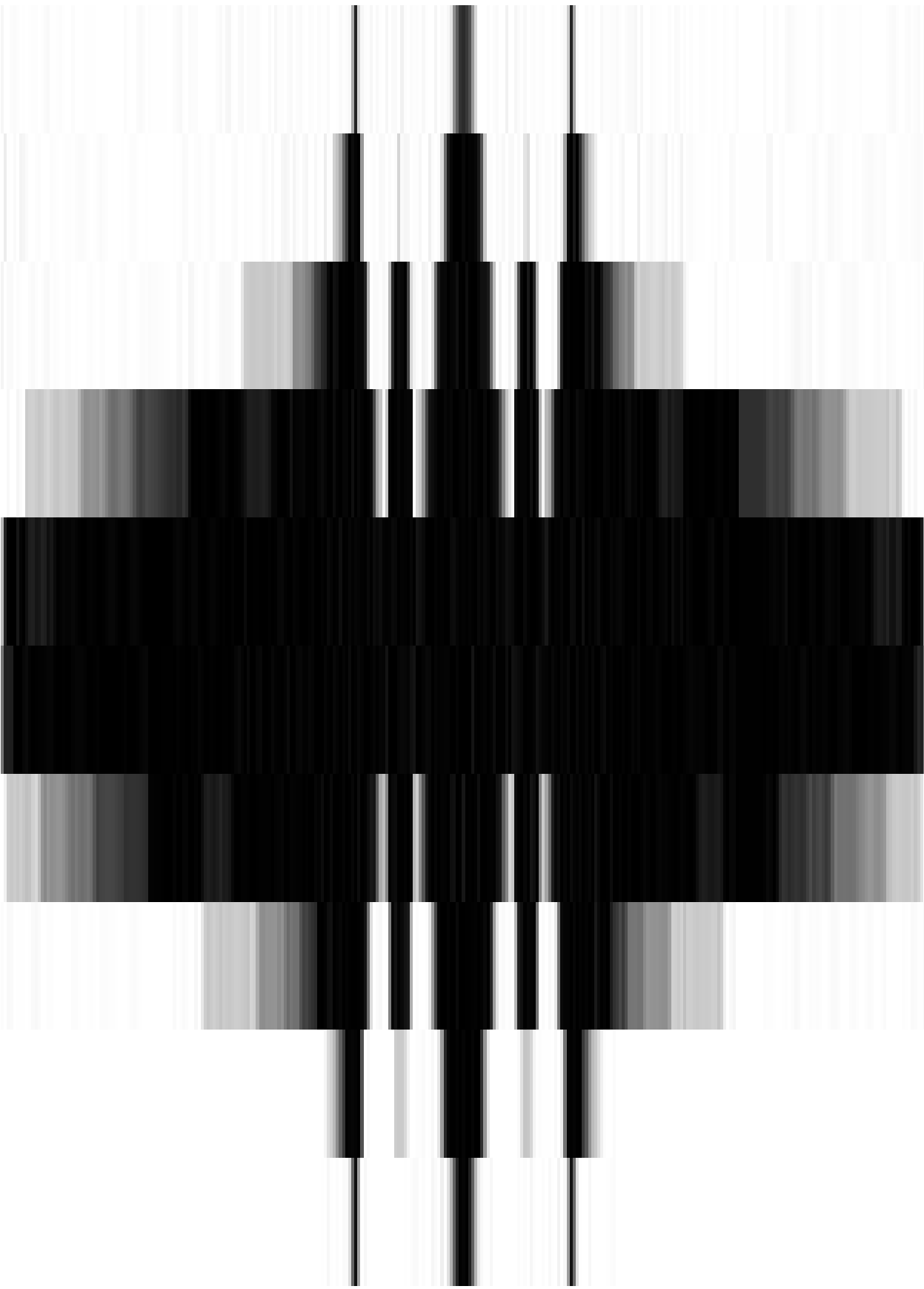
Jesus points out that those who try to heal their spiritual blindness with the help of a true guru will be cured of their sightless ignorance. But those who stubbornly persist in their beclouded spiritual vision will remain in their self-perpetuated dark delusions.



“Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.”

This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them (John 10:1 – 6).

Jesus here again cites false prophets and charlatans who claim empowerment to bestow enlightenment and liberation, but offer only self-fancied ways that have no foundation in truth or the backing of the will of God. Jesus decries those who confound seekers with untruths, themselves lacking in God-communion or in attunement with the wisdom teachings of a God-recognized spiritual emissary. His analogy of “the shepherd” and “the door” alludes to his own Christ Consciousness and God-realization as meeting the criterion of one qualified for ordination by God as a satguru (supreme channel of God’s blessing and guidance) and as a jagadguru (a God-knowing emissary with a worldwide mission of saving souls):



Distinguishing true shepherds of souls from false prophets

“With the assurance of the intuitive truth that I feel within me, I declare unto you that any so-called spiritual teacher who has not taken his consciousness through the inner door of realization into Christ Consciousness and Cosmic Consciousness cannot be considered a real shepherd of souls, a savior, able to guide devotees to the kingdom of God. The spiritual leader who ascends to his position ‘by some other way’ (pretension, false personality, animal magnetism, assumed spirituality, and insincere oratory devoid of Self-realization to attract to himself the attention of the sheepfold of sincere truth-seekers) is a metaphysical ‘thief and robber’ who by egregious misrepresentations steals for himself the devotion of seekers, which rightfully belongs only to God.

“Unlike the false teacher who feeds his ego with the purloined adoration of his followers, the true spiritual shepherd—a God-knowing master, or guru—is a clear, pure channel, unobstructed by ego, relaying to God all the devotion of his disciples.

“To the true guru-shepherd, the Heavenly Porter opens the door to all divine secrecies, through which the guru leads his obedient, truth-seeking, meek, lamblike followers.

“Devotees whose souls are consciously drawn to the guru and who remain in tune with his vibrations (‘voice’) are successful in following his leadership. In divine attunement with their guru, they intuitively feel his vibrations as they try to adhere to his guidance and emulate his spiritual example. When the spiritual teacher leads the consciousness of his devotees toward God in meditation, he himself goes ahead of them in deep ecstasy, calling them toward Cosmic Consciousness through the Holy Ghost vibration in his Christ Consciousness. Earnest devotees, meditating with their ecstasy-tuned guru or in spiritual attunement with him through practice of the methods he has taught them, gradually learn to follow his consciousness to liberation in Cosmic Consciousness.

“True devotees will not follow ‘a stranger’—a so-called teacher not recognized as such by God. They will avoid self-elected spiritual guides, feeling no attunement with those who are lacking in divine realization and appointment by

God.”

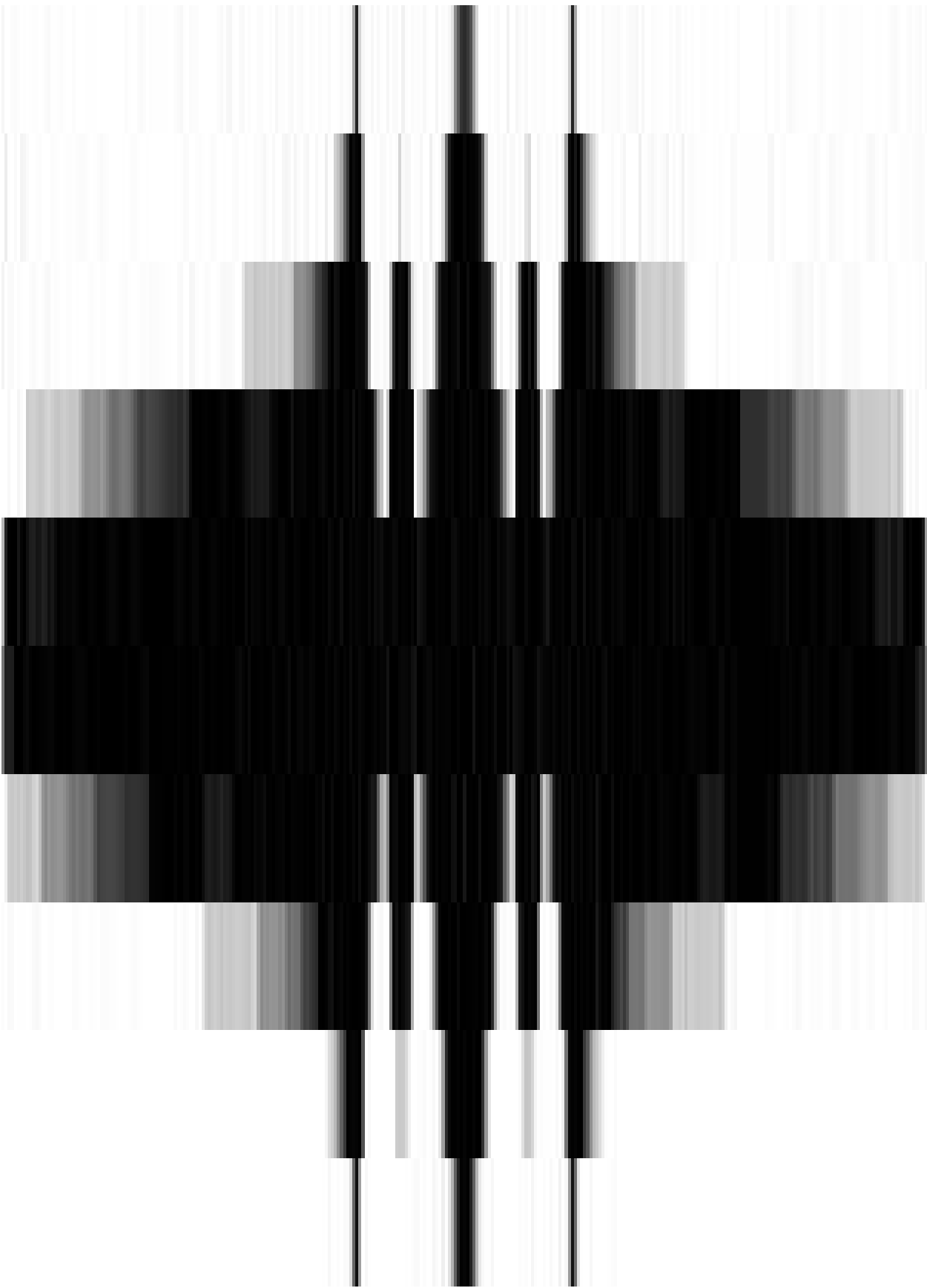
Jesus reiterates that true spiritual teachers and true devotees are brought together by God, in contradistinction to the unspiritual material means used by self-elected lecturers for gathering a host of followers. Jesus had said before: “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.”¹⁰ Therefore, it is evident according to Jesus that true devotees are not attracted to false teachers, however popular they may be.

When a devotee prays intensely to God to know truth, God sends him a true guru to guide him. This divine grace comes to the devotee when he demonstrates his desire for liberation by sincere constancy in supplication to God. If the devotee is persistent in his prayer and in faith, God will surely respond by sending that soul a true guru through whose wisdom teachings and vibrations of God-consciousness the Divine Porter will open for the devotee the inner door of salvation. The guru bestows spiritual baptism on the devotee, by which God unlocks the entryway of the spiritual eye through which the devotee follows the “voice” (the Holy Ghost vibration) of the shepherd of Christ Consciousness to the Cosmic Consciousness of God.¹¹

Only a true guru is empowered by God to establish with disciples a divine relationship by which he leads those in his care out of the common sheepfold of delusion to freedom in the Elysian pastures of God-consciousness.



Then said Jesus unto them again, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (John 10:7 – 10).



“I am the door”: Christ Consciousness is the only portal to liberation

“In truth, I declare unto you that the Christ Consciousness in me, and in all other liberated souls, is the only door through which devotees can enter into Cosmic Consciousness. ¹² That realization identifies every truly great teacher; but those so-called spiritual teachers ‘who ever came before me’—that is, who exalt their ego and personality to attract devotees before they have attained any realization of Christ Consciousness—are metaphysical thieves and robbers stealing for themselves the devotees’ devotion meant for God. But those who thus elevated themselves, eclipsing with egotistical human consciousness the Christ Consciousness in their souls, could not get true devotees (‘the sheep’) to listen to their empty rhetoric.

“Christ Consciousness is the door; if any devotee by meditation enters in—that is, realizes the Christ Consciousness in me also present in his own soul—he shall be saved. He will have the privilege of consciously going ‘in and out’ through the pranic star door in the spiritual eye, of escaping eternally from the misery of reincarnations into the absolute freedom of Cosmic Consciousness, or of willingly returning to the world to help mankind. He will find the pasture of eternal happiness.

“The universal thief is ignorance (maya, delusion), which has come into the world solely to steal man’s consciousness from God, and to make him a mortal through the experience of death, and to destroy with misapprehension his divine inheritance of soul wisdom and joy. False teachers, themselves victimized by delusion, partner in this thievery. They do not know God and therefore cannot impart His consciousness to others; rather, in their ignorance they not only destroy their own potential wisdom, but that of their hapless followers as well. The Christ Consciousness, omnipresent in the world, has appeared in my body that true seekers may have evidence that in the Infinite Christ they will find Eternal Life and its divine abundance.”

When Jesus said, “All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them,” he certainly did not mean that Abraham, Moses, Elijah, Buddha, John the Baptist, and other great masters who came before him were all thieves and robbers. It is a regrettable theological misunderstanding to think that Jesus meant to discredit all prophets and masters who preceded his

coming into the world. The divine incarnations of Bhagavan Krishna and Gautama Buddha, born centuries before the time of Jesus, brought complete spiritual liberation to many disciples, and continue to work their works of redemption. Elijah, who came long before Jesus, was another true shepherd of souls, including that of Elisha who was Jesus in a former incarnation. Therefore, Jesus would never have spoken disparagingly of these and other great prophets and seers who lived prior to his time on earth.



“I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth: because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep” (John 10:11 – 15).



“The Good Shepherd”: a true guru attuned to Christ Consciousness

“The Christ Consciousness in me is the receptacle of all goodness and the shepherd of true seekers, able to guide deeply meditating devotees to Cosmic Consciousness. The spiritual shepherd, a true guru attuned to Christ Consciousness, transmits his eternal life to his receptive, humble disciples and is ready to sacrifice himself as necessary for their salvation.

“But ‘he that is an hireling’—the professional religionist who teaches only to make a living—has no power as does the shepherd ordained by God to spiritually protect in the fold of Christ Consciousness those seekers in his care. Feeling no real commitment, as in the God-bonded relationship between a guru-shepherd and his sheep, the hireling flies away in helplessness (feeling no great responsibility) when the flock is attacked by the wolf of ignorance and of material and spiritual difficulties. Unprotected, the followers are caught by the wolf and scattered in the realm of delusion; with no shepherd to lead them to pastures of liberation, they may wander through many trackless incarnations.

“The Christ Consciousness in me recognizes true spiritual seekers sent to me to shepherd, and the true seekers recognize the Spirit in me. The Father, Cosmic Consciousness, knows the Christ Consciousness in me and the Christ Consciousness in me knows the Cosmic Consciousness. The Christ Consciousness has come in me to offer through the sacrifice of my life its eternal life for the liberation of my sheepfold of true devotees.”



“And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

“Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father” (John 10:16 – 18).

Jesus starkly differentiated himself from ordinary teachers when he declared that he was able to take care of the spiritual progress of souls not only during one life on earth but in their after-death state and future incarnations. Being empowered by God and the ever-living spirit of a true guru-shepherd, a savior, he could say: “There are other souls whom I know from past incarnations, but who do not belong to the fold or group of disciples of this life. Them also, as well as other souls God will send to me in times to come, I must bring through my voice, Cosmic Vibration, to the Heavenly Father, Cosmic Consciousness. All devotees who aspire toward liberation belong to the one fold of truth, and they shall have one shepherd, the Christ Consciousness.

“The Heavenly Father loves me because I serve His devotees with eternal life through the body called Jesus and also after that body will be taken away from the earth. No human being can destroy the eternal life in my Christ Consciousness or even the life in my body except that I am voluntarily surrendering my bodily life for the service of all. The Heavenly Father has given me the power to surrender the life in the body called Jesus and also to resurrect it after death. I received this commandment and power from my Heavenly Father.”



There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings. And many of them said, "He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him?" Others said, "These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?"

And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication,¹³ and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch. Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, "How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly."

Jesus answered them, "I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one" (John 10:19 – 30).



“I and my Father are one”

“I told you who I am and you believed me not. The miraculous works of healing bodies and souls that I have performed in the name of my Heavenly Father bear testimony to the Christ Consciousness in me. But you do not believe in me because you lack the devotion and awakened consciousness of my disciples who, by meditation, hear my voice of Cosmic Vibration and feel the Christ Consciousness within them. Likewise, the Christ Consciousness in me is ever in tune with my true devotees who strictly follow me.

“When my devotees fully contact the Christ Consciousness in me, they will never experience death as a fearsome sense of finality, as do ordinary humans, but will recognize the eternal life within their souls. Neither shall any man, nor any material desire, be able to pluck them away from my Christ Consciousness (‘my hand’) when they are once established therein by continuous deep meditation and ecstasy.

“My Father, the Cosmic Consciousness, who emanated the Christ Consciousness and manifested it in me—and as felt by all deep devotees—is greater than the sum of everything He has made. Once devotees reach through Christ Consciousness the domain of Cosmic Consciousness (‘my Father’s hand’), they cannot be compelled to reincarnate on earth through the power or enticement of any possible material desires of past incarnations.

“As the Christ Consciousness present in my body and omnipresent in vibratory creation is one with transcendent Cosmic Consciousness, I have truly told you, I and my Father are one.”

Bhagavan Krishna similarly spoke of his Universal Consciousness (Kutastha Chaitanya) as one with the transcendental Absolute when he declared: “For I am the basis of the Infinite, the Immortal, the Indestructible; and of eternal Dharma and unalloyed Bliss.”¹⁴

When Jesus said, “Ye are not of my sheep,” he meant that the persons who doubted and opposed him had not merited the divine grace to be redeemed at that time through Jesus. Here, as again and again, Jesus emphasizes that no one finds God until he has become a true seeker and is drawn by God to a God-ordained guru qualified to serve as his savior.



Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, “Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?”

The Jews answered him, saying, “For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.”

Jesus answered them, “Is it not written in your law, ‘I said, “Ye are gods”’? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, ‘Thou blasphemest’; because I said, ‘I am the Son of God’? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in Him” (John 10:31 – 38).

“Is it not written in your holy books exactly what I said—that not only I but all of you are gods? ¹⁵ If the scriptures call all people gods because they are born of the Cosmic Vibration emanating from God the Father, that truth cannot be nullified by your disbelief. Then how can you speak of blasphemy to me who have been sanctified and sent by God to the world as a perfect godly example?



“Ye are gods”: All souls are made in the pure divine image

“Because I truthfully made a statement that Christ Consciousness in me is the Son, or the only reflection, of God the Father, you grievously err in concluding that I indulge in blasphemy. If I do not manifest the divine actions as inspired by the Cosmic Consciousness reflected in my Christ Consciousness, then do not believe me. But if I do the works as inspired by Cosmic Consciousness, then notwithstanding your disbelief in me, believe at least in the Divine manifested in my works. By focusing your belief on the divine work I do, it is quite possible that you may thereby know that ‘the Father is in me, and I in Him’—that Cosmic Consciousness is reflected in the Christ Consciousness within me and that my Christ Consciousness is eternally one with Cosmic Consciousness.”

When Jesus quotes the scripture that “ye are gods,” he signifies that all souls are made in the pure image of God, the Father. If one hundred people are basking under the sun, ten with their eyes wide open and ninety with their eyes closed, all are revealed by the sun. But the ninety who have their eyes closed see neither the sun nor themselves as do the ten whose eyes are open. Similarly, souls with open eyes of wisdom behold themselves as emanations of God, while others, even though they too are “children of the most High,” do not realize it because their eyes of wisdom are closed. Thus, although the scripture says of all humans “ye are gods,” there is a difference of perception among them according to the degree of their Self-realization.

Jesus, who had fully realized Spirit as manifested within him, did not speak of his human nature as God, so there was no blasphemy in his saying, “I and my Father are one.” Persons identified with their human egoity lack that realization; even though they are potential gods, they have no actual perception of the presence of God within themselves. Jesus never said: “I am God,” but by his divine works he manifested the realization that his consciousness, having emanated from God, was one with Him.



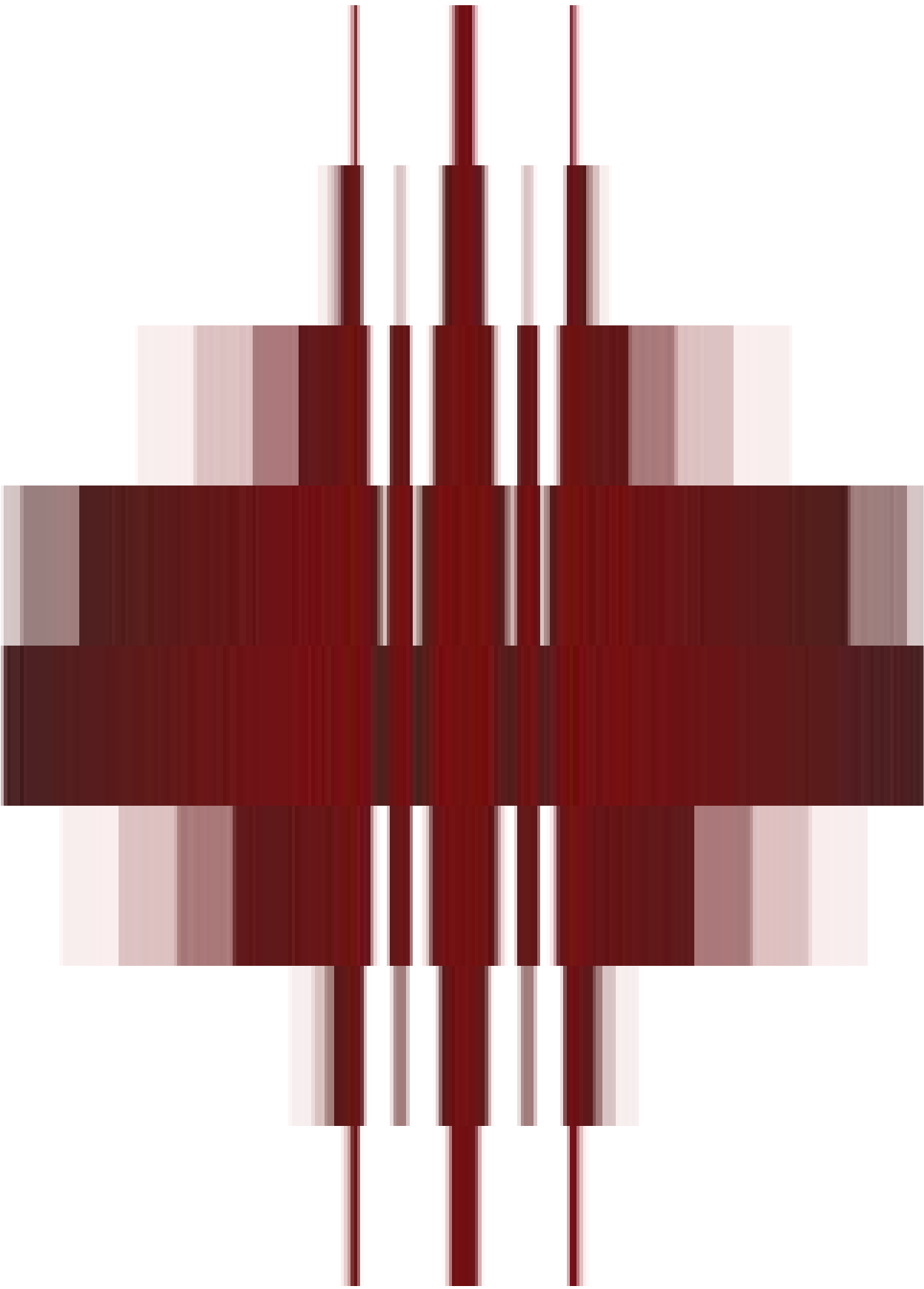
Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand, and went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized; and there he abode.

And many resorted unto him, and said, “John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true.” And many believed on him there (John 10:39 – 42).

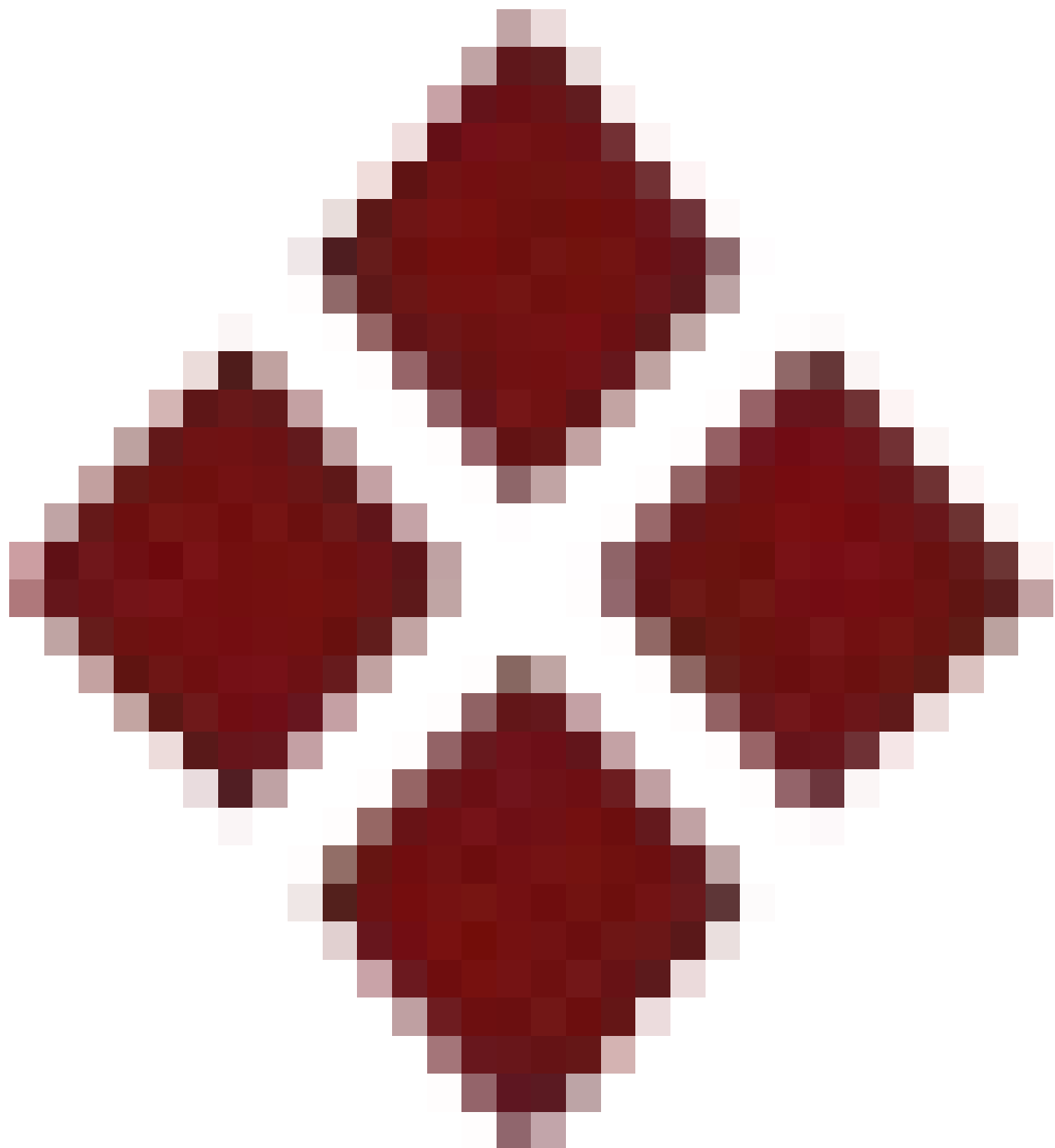


Discourse 53

Fulfilling the Two Greatest Commandments



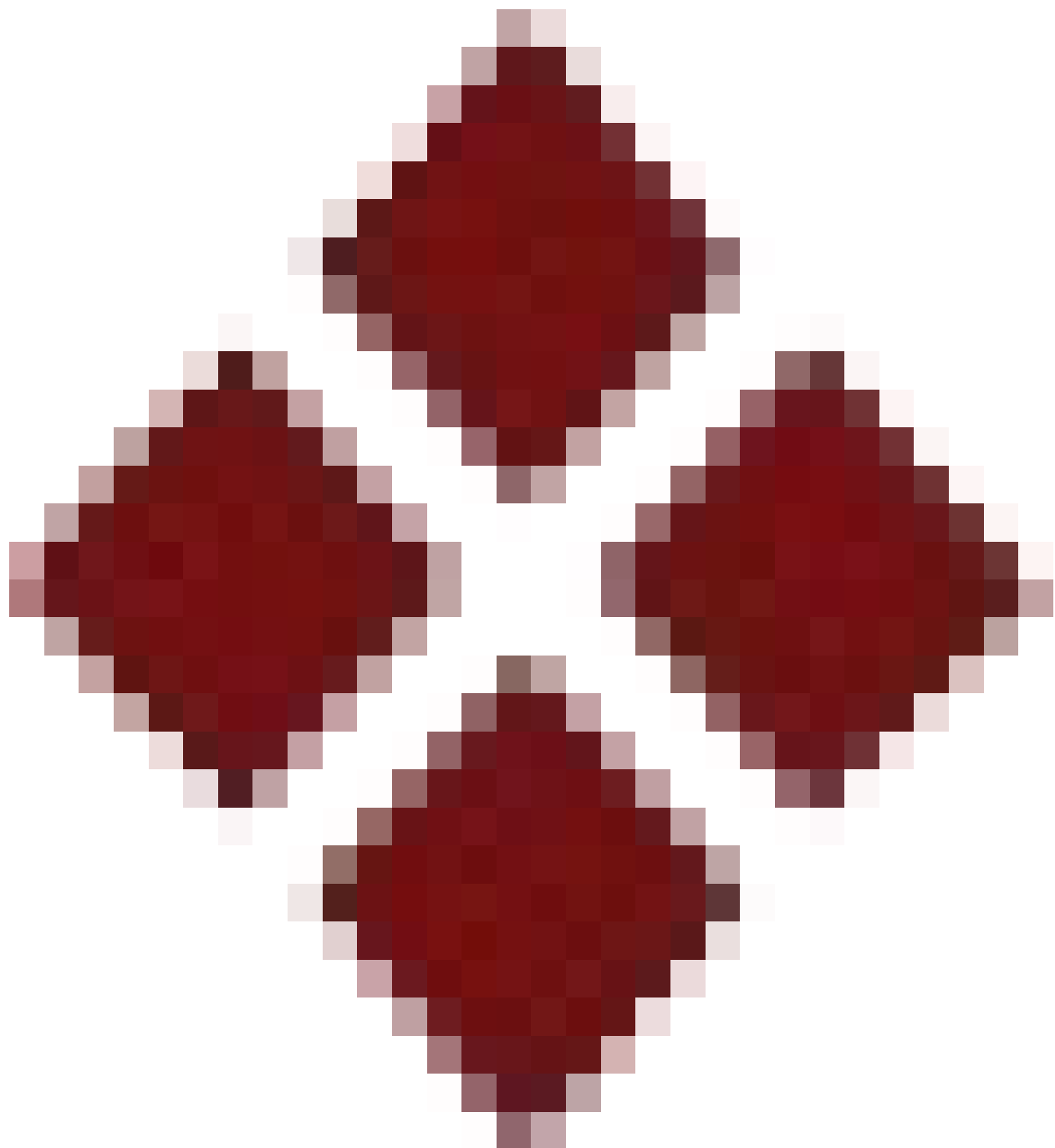
Why Love for God Is the Preeminent Cosmic Law for Soul Liberation



**“With All Thy Strength”: Interiorization of Life
Energy Through Pranayama**



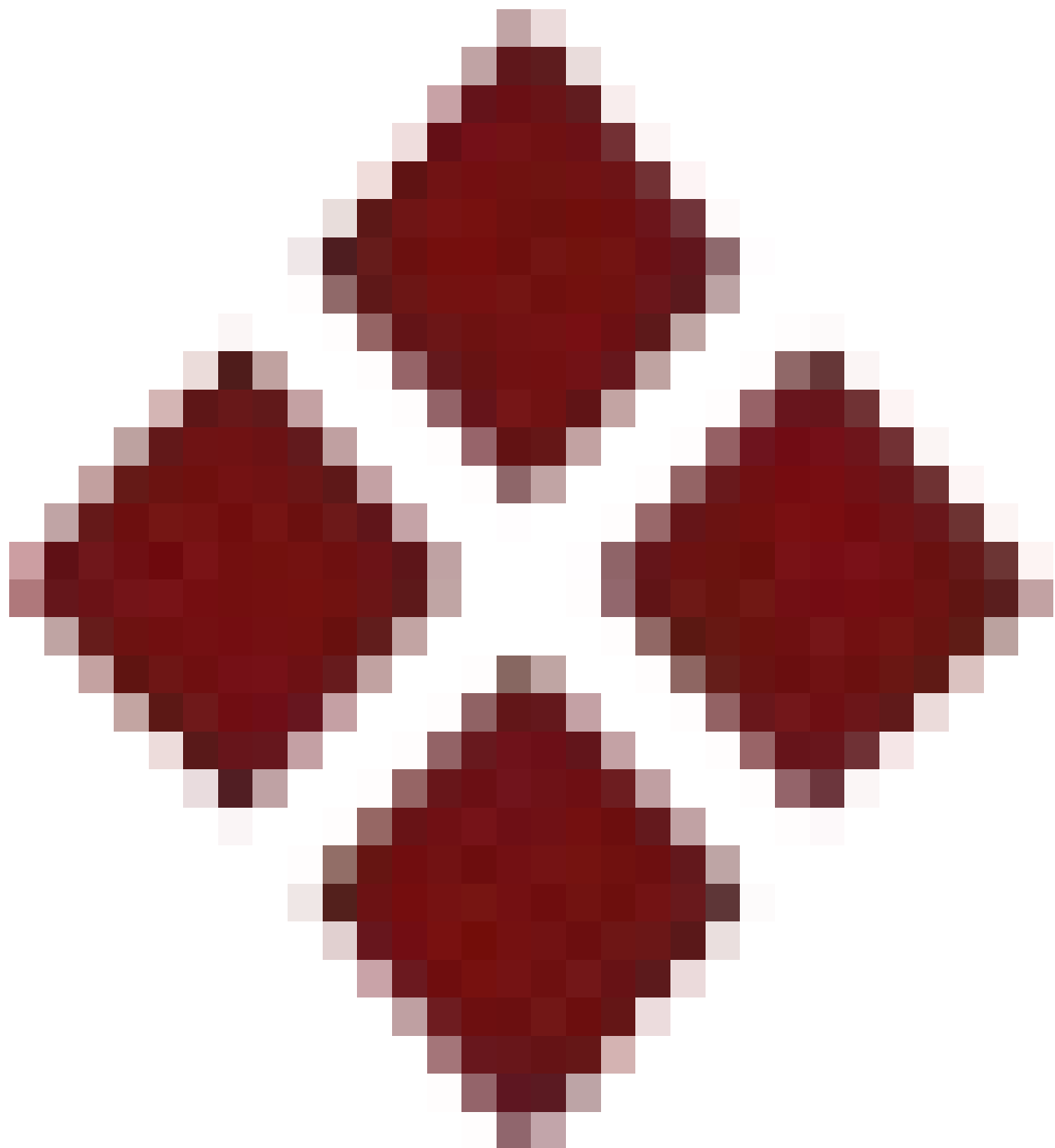
Expansion of Love for All Beings by Seeing God in Everyone



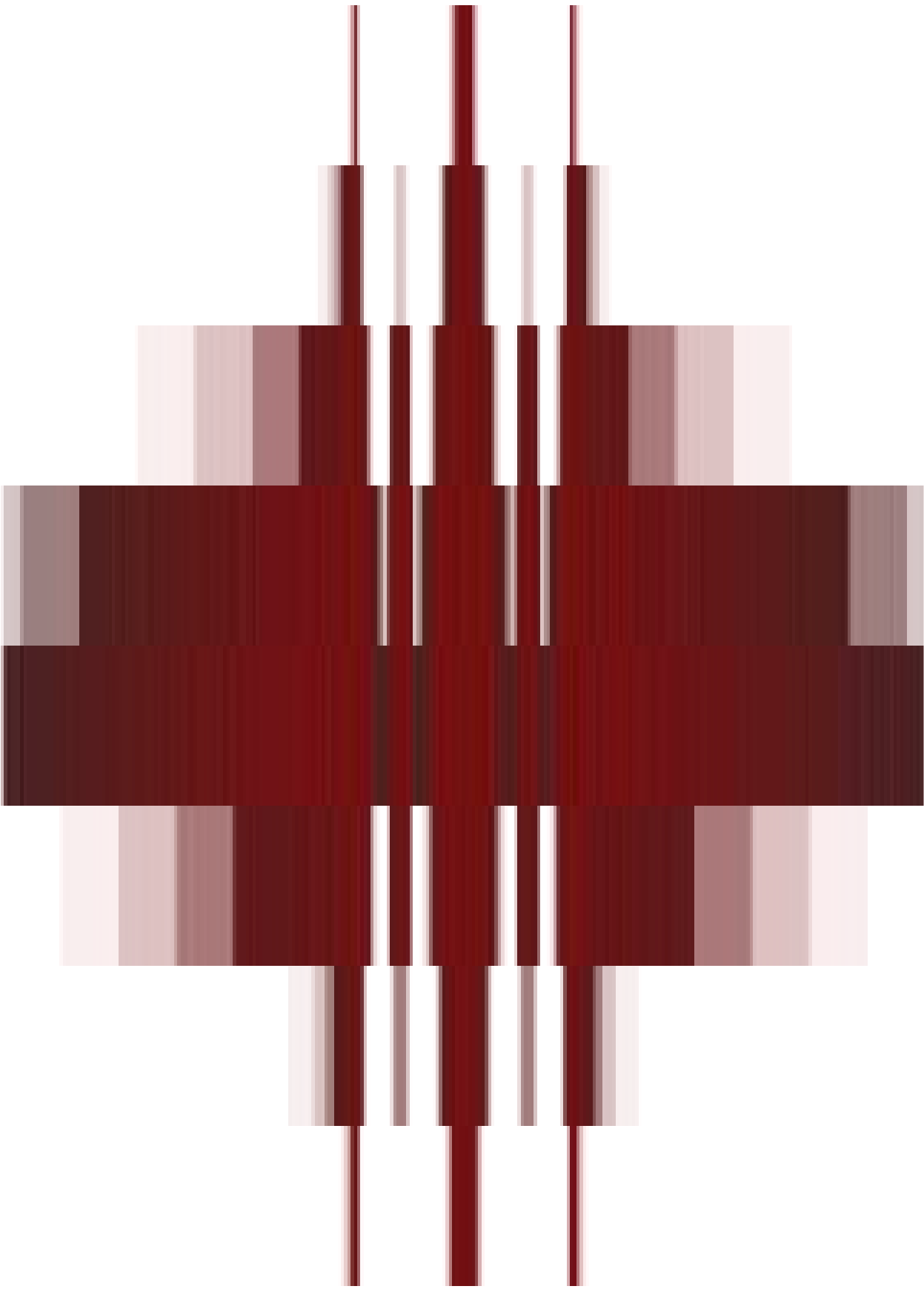
**Love for God, and for God in All, Is the Essence of
Spiritual Law for Man's Salvation**



The Good Samaritan: Understanding One's Duty to Serve and Give Aid to Others



Mary and Martha: Balancing Material Duties With Devotional Communion



“There is an inner meaning to the exhortation to love God with all one’s heart, mind, soul, and strength. Jesus used these simple scriptural terms, but projected his understanding that in them is the whole science of yoga, the transcendental way of divine union through meditation.”

■

And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

He said unto him, "What is written in the law? How readest thou?"

And he answering said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself."

And he said unto him, "Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live."

But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, "And who is my neighbour?"

And Jesus answering said, "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, 'Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.' Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?"

And he said, "He that shewed mercy on him."

Then said Jesus unto him, "Go, and do thou likewise."

Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, "Lord,

dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me.”

And Jesus answered and said unto her, “Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”

—Luke 10:25 – 42



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Discourse 53

Fulfilling the Two Greatest Commandments



And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, “Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”

He said unto him, “What is written in the law? How readest thou?”

And he answering said, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.”

And he said unto him, “Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live” (Luke 10:25 – 28).

Parallel references:¹

Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, “Master, which is the great commandment in the law?”

Jesus said unto him, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets” (Matthew 22:35 – 40).

And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, “Which is the first commandment of them all?”

And Jesus answered him, “The first of all the commandments is, ‘Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength’: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.’ There is none other commandment greater than these.”²

And the scribe said unto him, “Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but He: And to love Him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.”

And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, “Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.” And no man after that durst ask him any question (Mark 12:28 – 34).

The whole purpose of religion—indeed, of life itself—is encapsulated in the two paramount commandments cited by Lord Jesus in these verses. In them lies the essence of eternal truth distinguishing all bona-fide spiritual paths, the irreducible imperative that man must embrace as an individualized soul separated from God if he would reclaim the realization of oneness with his Maker.

“This do, and thou shalt live,” Jesus told the lawyer who had asked how to obtain eternal life. That is: “If you can love God wholly in actual communion in

daily meditation, and show by your actions your love for your neighbor (your divine brother) even as you love yourself, you will rise above the mortal consciousness of this delusive plane of life and death and realize the eternal changeless Spirit existing within yourself and in Its everywhere-ness.”



Why love for God is the preeminent cosmic law for soul liberation

“On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets,” proclaimed Jesus to the lawyer mentioned in Matthew.³ And to the scribe in Mark who asked which divine commandment was preeminent, Jesus answered: “The Cosmic Sovereign and our Protector, our one God, is the sole Lord and Master of all creation. He created you as one of His children, made in His image and bearing the divine relation ordained by Him. It behooves you to love spontaneously your Creator with the love He implanted in you—with all the divine love in your heart, with all the intuitive perception of your soul, with all the attention of your mind, and with all the strength of your mental determination and physical energy.”

This, Jesus declared, is the foremost of all cosmic laws ordained by the Spirit for soul upliftment and liberation; for through the portal of man’s love God enters into oneness with him, a union that liberates him from the bondage of delusion. To love God supremely is to receive from Him eternal contentment and fulfillment, with freedom from all human desires that irresponsibly provoke continuous births and deaths with their unforeseen miseries.

Jesus praised the understanding demonstrated by the scribe, and assured him that he was near to attaining a high degree of spiritual consciousness, because this man realized that to love God in His supremacy and in His innate intimacy in all beings is “more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.” To worship the Creator through outward religious formalities is to maintain a separateness between the worshiper and Worshipped; but to love Him is to become His friend, His son, and one with Him.⁴

For God to command that man love Him above everything else might seem unbecoming of an all-powerful Deity. But all avatars and saints have known in their hearts that this is not to appease some quixotic whim of God, but is rather a necessity through which the individualized soul can make a conscious connection with its Source. God can live without man’s love; but as the wave cannot live without the ocean, so it is not possible for man to exist without the love of God. The thirst for love in every human heart is because man is made in God’s image of love. So the avatars and saints call upon mankind to love God, not because of compulsion or commandment, but because the ocean of His love

surges behind the little wave of love in every heart.



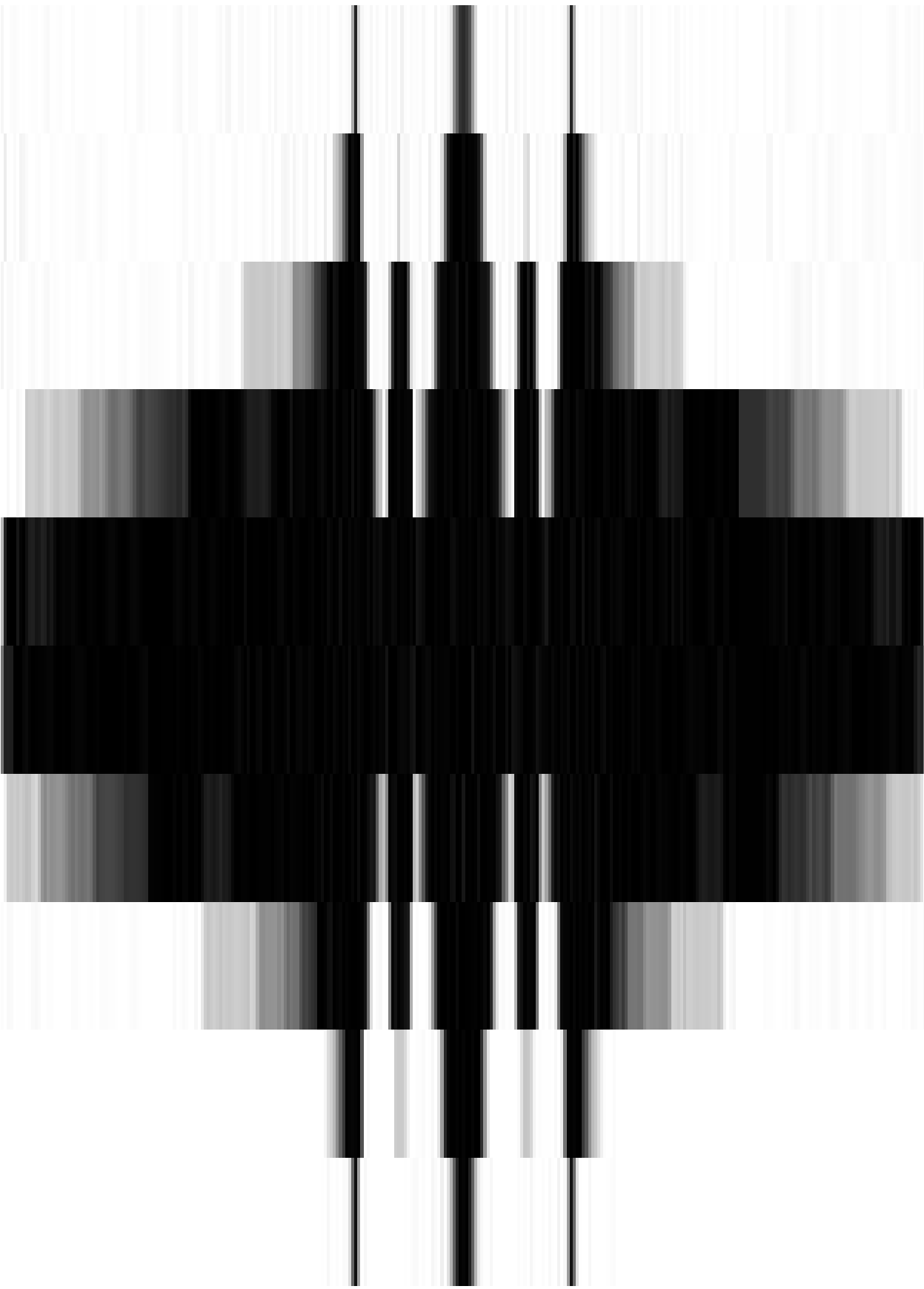
Experience of God in meditation automatically brings love for Him

A great saint of India⁵ said: “He is the cleverest who wholeheartedly seeks God first”; for in finding Him, he receives, along with Him, everything that is of God. To love God is to contact creation’s Munificent Provenance. Many a worldly man foolishly engages his heart, mind, soul, and physical strength in the pursuit of money or human love or earthly power, only to lose them—if perchance he had found them—at the time of death. The wisest use of life is to invest it in seeking God, the one treasure that satisfies forever and can never be lost or diminished.

Though one must love God in order to know Him, it is equally true that one must know God in order to love Him. No one can love anything of which he is entirely ignorant; no one can love a person who is completely unknown to him. But those who meditate deeply do “know,” because they find proof of the existence of God as the ever new Joy felt in meditation, or the Cosmic Sound of Aum (Amen) heard in deep silence, or the Cosmic Love experienced while concentrating devotion in the heart, or the Cosmic Wisdom that dawns as inner enlightenment, or the Cosmic Light evoking visions of Infinity, or the Cosmic Life felt during meditation when the little life is joined to the greater Life in everything.

Any devotee who even once has sensed God as any one of His tangible manifestations in meditation cannot help but love Him when thus touched by His thrilling qualities. Most people never really love God because they little know how lovable the Lord is when He visits the heart of the meditating devotee. This actual contact of the transcendental presence of God is possible to determined devotees who persist in meditation and continuous soulful prayers.

There is but one Originator of all capabilities of man: God is the Creator of our love with which we love, of our souls with which we claim immortality, of our minds and mental processes with which we think and reason and accomplish, of our vitality with which we engage in the activities of life. We should use all these gifts in a supreme energetic effort in meditation to express our love to God until we feel consciously His responding manifestation.



Not theology but scientific yoga provides the means to fulfill the first commandment

The average religionist rationalizes the fulfillment of his spiritual obligation through absentminded prayers or mechanical rituals, or circuitous wanderings in the forest of theology and dogma. He may attempt to feel love and devotion for God in his heart, and to put his mind on God as best he can during times of prayer; and he may try to love God “with all his strength” by vigorously singing, dancing, or even rolling on the ground as do some sects of “Holy Rollers.” When it comes to loving God with all his soul he is at a loss, as he does not even know what the soul is. The only time he knows something of his soul (and then only in an unconscious way) is in deep, dreamless sleep. In that state, the “strength” or life energy is switched off from the five senses and withdrawn inward; the consciousness of oneself as a physical being is gone. At night human beings have a glimpse of their real Self, the soul; each morning upon awakening the majority again take up their mistaken identity as a mortal man or woman.

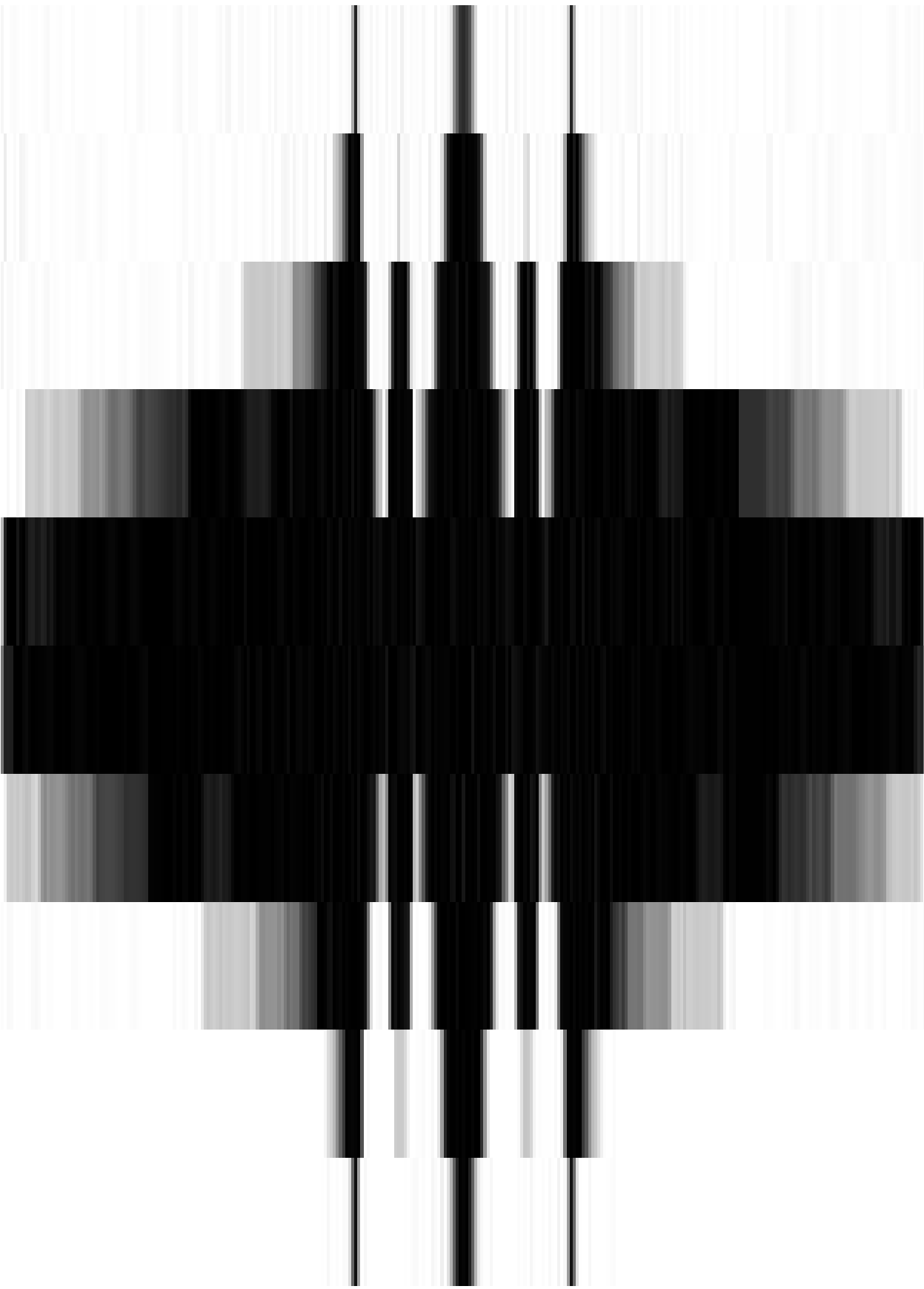
Outward attempts to apply Jesus’ teaching usually yield only minimal external satisfaction, not God-realization. But there is an inner meaning to the exhortation to love God with all one’s heart, mind, soul, and strength. Jesus used these simple scriptural terms, but projected his understanding that in them is the whole science of yoga, the transcendental way of divine union through meditation. In India, where spiritual understanding had developed for thousands of years before the time of Jesus, God-knowing sages elaborated these concepts as a comprehensive spiritual philosophy to guide devotees systematically on the path to liberation. When a person makes the effort in meditation to know God, using the sincerity of his heart and deepest feelings, and the intuition of his soul, and all the powers of concentration of his mind, and all his interiorized life energy, or strength, he will surely succeed.

That system of spiritual culture whereby one learns to “love God with all your heart” is known in India as Bhakti Yoga—union with God through unconditional love and devotion. The bhakta realizes that whatever is in a person’s heart, that is where his concentration is—on the thing he loves. As the lover’s heart is on the beloved and the drunkard’s is on his drink, so the devotee’s heart is continuously absorbed in love for his Divine Beloved.

To “love God with all your mind” means with focused concentration. India has specialized in the science of concentrating the mind one-pointedly through definite techniques, so that during the time of worship the devotee is able to keep his whole attention on God. If while offering prayerful devotions the mind is constantly flitting to thoughts of work or food or bodily sensations or other diversions, that is not loving God with all the mind. The Bible teaches: “Pray without ceasing”;⁶ India’s yoga science gives the actual methodology to worship God with that fully concentrated mind.

To “love God with all your soul” means to enter the state of superconscious ecstasy, direct perception of the soul and its oneness with God. When no thoughts cross the mind, but there is a conscious all-knowingness, when one knows through intuitive realization that he can do anything just by so ordering it, then one is in the expanded state of superconsciousness. It is the realization of the soul as the reflection of God, the soul’s connection with the consciousness of God. It is a state of exceeding joy: the soul’s crystalline perception of the omnipresent Spirit reflected as the joy of meditation.

To love God with all the soul requires the complete stillness of transcendent interiorization. This cannot be achieved while praying aloud, moving the hands this way and that, singing or chanting, or doing anything else that activates the sensory-muscular apparatus of the body. Just as in deep sleep the body and senses become inert, that inner withdrawal is characteristic also of superconscious ecstasy—only ecstasy is much deeper than sleep. Ten million sleeps do not describe the joy of it. That is the state in which one can know the soul, and with that true Self wholly adore Him who is Love Itself.



“With all thy strength”: interiorization of life energy through pranayama

The fulfillment of the divine command to love God with all one’s heart, mind, and soul is made possible by the science that enables the devotee to “love God with all thy strength.” Yoga teaches that science. When one sleeps, the conscious mind is inactive; the strength is withdrawn from the sensory-motor apparatus of the brain and from the muscles and nerves and is concentrated in the faculties of the subconscious mind. One cannot go into the sleep state of subconsciousness unless, usually passively, the life force has been switched off from the conscious sensory and motor nervous system; and one cannot go into the superconscious state, transcending the subconsciousness, without consciously switching off the life energy from the senses and muscles.

The mastery of life energy that enables one to love God with all one’s strength begins with posture (asana, training the body to maintain with ease and without restlessness the correct posture for motionless meditation) and breathing exercises for life-force control (pranayama, techniques to quiet the breath and heart). By such practice, the heart becomes quiet, effectively switching off the energy from the senses and stilling the restless breath that keeps man tied to body consciousness. The yogi is able to focus on God without the intrusive pull of the flesh. The mind, disconnected from sensations, becomes transcendently interiorized (pratyahara). The devotee can then use that free mind in a communion of love for God. When the devotee can love God with an inwardly concentrated mind, he begins to feel that love for God in his heart, exquisitely permeating every nuance of his feelings with the presence of God. The God-saturated heart then feels the Beloved Lord in the deepest recesses of the soul where the little love meets and is enfolded by the Great Love. The feeling of God in the soul expands into realization of God in His everywhere-ness (the samyama of yoga: dharana, dhyana, samadhi).

Jesus went very deep in teachings that appear on the surface to be simple—much deeper than most people understand. That he taught the entire yoga system, the scientific method of union with God, is evidenced in the Book of Revelation in the mystery of the seven stars and seven churches with their seven angels and seven golden candlesticks. God-realization is attained by opening the “seven seals” of these centers of spiritual perception to attain mastery over all astral powers of life and death through which the soul ascends to liberation.⁷

Jesus emphasized that salvation begins with those practices that enable the devotee truly to love God with the supreme offerings of heart, mind, soul, and strength. In India's greatest scripture of yoga, the Bhagavad Gita, the Lord speaks in words that parallel the scriptural commandment cited by Jesus: "Again listen to My supreme word, the most secret of all. Because thou art dearly loved by Me, I will relate what is beneficial to thee. Absorb thy mind in Me; become My devotee; resign all things to Me; bow down to Me. Thou art dear to Me, so in truth do I promise thee: Thou shalt attain Me!"⁸



Expansion of love for all beings by seeing God in everyone

The First Commandment leads the devotee into observance of the second great spiritual law, “like unto it.” As one strives to feel God within, he has also a duty to share his experience of God with his neighbors: “Thou shalt love thy neighbor (all races and creatures anywhere with whom one comes in contact) as thyself (as you love your own soul)—because you see God in everyone.” Man’s neighbor is the manifestation of his greater Self or God. The soul is a reflection of Spirit, a reflection that is in every being and in the vibratory life of all animate and inanimate cosmic decor. To love parents, relatives, associates, countrymen, all races of the earth, all creatures, flowers, stars, which live in the “neighborhood” or range of one’s consciousness is to love God in His multifarious tangible manifestations. Those persons yet unable to love God as His subtle expressions in meditation can nurture their love for Him as manifested in nature and in all beings they contact or sense in any way.

It is God who becomes the father to protect the child, the mother to love the child unconditionally, and friends to help that incarnate soul without the limitation of familial instincts. It is God who has become the adorned earth with its canopy of stars to amuse His children with wonder. It is He who has become the food and the breath and the sustaining life functions of the multitude of mortal forms. When God’s immanence penetrates man’s understanding, it awakens man to his duty and privilege to worship God templed in himself (through meditation), and templed in all beings and things in the universe (through love of his neighbor in the proximity of his cosmic home).

Even saints who love God in transcendental ecstasy in meditation find complete redemption only after they have shared their divine attainment by loving God as manifested in all souls in the omnipresent neighborhood of their soul.

Encouraged by love for God in meditation, one might best begin soul neighborliness by reaching out in helpfulness to persons who are outside one’s family, yet are nearer than the world at large. Persons instinctively show preference in giving to their families rather than to strangers; and the idea of “the world” itself is a concept far removed and abstract. But when a person lives just for himself and the select few he chooses to favor as his own, he chokes the expansion of his life, and from the spiritual standpoint he does not live at all. On

the contrary, when a person extends his sympathy and caring from the “us four and no more” consciousness to his neighbors and to the world, his little life flows into the greater life of God and becomes the Eternal Life—the second requisite in answer to the question put to Christ by the lawyer, “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?”

Most people live in narrow walls of selfishness, never feeling the throb of the universal life of God. Anyone who lives without knowing that his life comes from the eternal life, who abides a solely material existence, dies and reincarnates forgetful of past lives, has not really lived. His mortal consciousness wandered through delusive dream experiences, but his true Self, the soul, never awoke to express its godly nature and immortality. By contrast, any devotee who by meditation realizes the eternal life behind his mortal life lives forever, never losing his conscious existence at the time of death, or from one incarnation to another, or in the eternity of soul freedom in God.



Love for God, and for God in all, is the essence of spiritual law for man's salvation

Saints and sages who fulfill the two preeminent commandments are no longer subservient to the discipline of other commandments, for in loving God in transcendental meditation and as manifested in others, the righteousness in all cosmic laws is honored automatically. In the devotee with God-contact, the Framers of Cosmic Law work as a natural intuitive goodness that keeps him always in harmony with the universal codes of God. Millenniums of darkness gathered around the soul may be dispelled gradually by little flames of observance of numerous rules of conduct. But when, by supreme effort of the heart, mind, and strength, the all-pervading light of God visits the soul, then darkness is no more; the advent of the Great Light engulfs the flickering illumination of disciplined actions. Therefore, to love God through continuous prayer and meditation, and to love God through physical, mental, and spiritual service to His manifestations in one's universal family of neighbors, is the support and essence of the entirety of other laws of human conduct and liberated lives.

Whether one has been righteous or reprehensible, love of God is one's salvation. Each soul should make its rightful claim to God's loving help: "Lord, naughty or good, I am Thy child; You made me in Your image. I may have been naughty, but that is when Your child needs You even more." He is the utmost sinner who turns away from God; he is the utmost sinner who says, "Changing oneself from vice to virtue cannot be done." But he quick becomes a virtuous man, even if scarred with the sins of the world, who says from the sincerity of his heart, "God, I love You." He is safe.

A great lover of God, Saint Mirabai, wrote:

"If by bathing daily God could be realized

Sooner would I be a whale in the deep;

If by eating roots and fruits He could be known

Gladly would I choose the form of a goat;

If the counting of rosaries uncovered Him

I would say my prayers on mammoth beads;

If bowing before stone images unveiled Him

A flinty mountain I would humbly worship;

If by drinking milk the Lord could be imbibed

Many calves and children would know Him;

If abandoning one's wife could summon God

Would not thousands be eunuchs?

Mirabai knows that to find the Divine One

The only indispensable is Love.”⁹

No one can find God without love, for love given freely from the heart of His children is the only thing man's Maker is seeking. He has everything else. The pangs of unrequited love and of separation from loved ones at death are not to torture man, but that he might at last seek the Lover that is waiting for him—a Lover that is not a man or a woman but the great God who has masqueraded before him as father, mother, friend, incarnations of lovers. It is He who is calling you; He who will never abandon you. He came to Saint Anthony, the desert anchorite in Egypt, centuries ago, when the saint was being severely tried and tormented by the devil and his legions of demons in extraordinary attempts to wrest from him his faith. Saint Anthony cried out defiantly: “Satan, do your worst! Nothing will ever separate me from Christ!” The demons attacked; the walls of the cave shook with such ferocity that their collapse and the death of the saint seemed imminent. At the last moment, suddenly the radiant splendor of Christ appeared, and Anthony was safe. He said to the Lord, “Where were you, my Jesus? Why did you not come sooner to assist me?” And the voice out of that Light replied: “Anthony, I was with you all the time.”¹⁰ So never forsake God. The fiercer the tests of life's adversities, the more strongly the devotee clings to Him, even as the child clings more tightly to the mother's skirt when she is scolding him, at last to be gathered in the arms of her unconditional love.

To the devotee who wants God badly enough, He will come. He will free that seeker from all false notions of the dream world He has created. He knows delusion and its temptations are sometimes terrible for His unenlightened children. They are the test of God, but He never tests beyond the capacity of His devotee's endurance and conquering spirit. Even when the devotee thinks he can stand no more, the Lord is ever with him as He was with Saint Anthony, silently strengthening and supporting the devotee's every effort.

When the heart is afire with the longing born of the sorrows of incarnations of separation, the Lord will reveal Himself. And the bliss that engulfs the soul at that meeting, no human tongue can tell. The heart breaks a thousand times—a

million times. Saint Teresa was sorely afflicted—ravaged twenty-five years with all kinds of disease, writing in the nighttime shivering in a cold room—but such was her love in communion with Christ that she did not care. One day an angel pierced her heart with a breath of fire—not for cruelty, but to show her that pain could not hurt her anymore; she was above all pain. In that experience her heart became tremendous with the ecstasy and joy of God. She said: “It seemed I couldn’t endure it and then suddenly I was filled completely with the great love of God.” That is the eternal romance: the little spark of life consumed in a flame of divine love. Many times over the years Teresa beheld her Lord—in form and as formless. The body of Christ became the ocean of Infinite Consciousness, which Teresa felt—the realization of the Christ Consciousness in Jesus, that which declared, “I and my Father are one.”¹¹

Those unions of love are the real romance. They are eternal. Human romance is an ephemeral fantasy. Romance with God is a true and everlasting joy of the Life of life, the Love of all loves. God has so much love to give to His devotee that it will burst all boundaries of the heart.

When that love of God fills one’s being, it embraces everyone in a universal consciousness of love, service, and compassion. As Jesus’ great disciple John wrote: “Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.”¹²



But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, “And who is my neighbour?”

And Jesus answering said, “A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him. And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, ‘Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.’ Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?”

And he said, “He that shewed mercy on him.”

Then said Jesus unto him, “Go, and do thou likewise” (Luke 10:29 – 37).



The Good Samaritan: understanding one's duty to serve and give aid to others

In the poignant parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus has pragmatically illustrated the meaning of a neighbor in the basic sense of every man's duty to his fellowman. Regardless of the evolving magnanimity of one's love, Jesus recognized the mortal limitation of anyone in trying to look after one's own duties and also those of the stricken people of the world. Human life is short and one can do only so much. Even Jesus explained that he came mostly to minister to the needs of a certain segment of people during his limited span on earth.¹³

Though Jesus and the masters schedule their time in a manner most helpful to true devotees, still their liberating teachings can be universally followed through all times. Thus, Jesus intimated that though the ordinary man cannot physically or by material means ameliorate widespread afflictions, he should do whatever he can within his power and means to help any person whose need has been definitely placed in his path, as symbolized in the parable of the Good Samaritan.

To relieve someone's distress is to render help as one would like to be helped if he were in the same position. Whether the needy person be someone in one's own vicinity or in a distant foreign land, anywhere, anyone who comes in close relationship with a person physically, mentally, or spiritually, that person is a neighbor.

Man's duty to help his fellow beings does not necessarily consist of material aid. To give physical help to a neighbor is good, to give him mental and moral help so that he can help himself is better, and to give him God-consciousness and freedom from ignorance through spiritual upliftment is best. One should serve his neighbor appropriately in accordance with these criteria.

In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus contrasted the callousness of the priest and the Levite¹⁴—who were accorded high spiritual status because of their ceremonial and hereditary positions—with the compassion of the Samaritan, who demonstrated the true spirit of religion despite belonging to a social caste commonly disdained as spiritually inferior. Whatever be man's social titles of race, religion, nationality, they are his defining characteristics for only a little while; but all souls are gods forever. At death, man is rudely divested of his

mortal adornments; so before he leaves this earth, he should declare his pure nobility as a child of God. Jesus was not proud because he was born of the kingly house of David, but because he was a son of God. If there were no boundaries fancy-frozen by man, all peoples of the earth would have sufficiency in the nurturing bounty of nature. A rebirth of loving God and loving one's neighbor as urged by Jesus Christ would bring a spirit of oneness to heal the ills of the world.

Only by fellowship with God will harmony and fellowship come on earth. When one actually perceives the Divine Presence in his own soul, he is inspirited with love for his neighbor—Jew and Christian, Muslim and Hindu—in the consciousness that one's true Self and the Selves of all others are equally soul-reflections of the one infinitely lovable God. Utopian social and political agendas will have little long-lasting benefit until humanity learns the eternal science by which followers of any religion may know God in the oneness of soul and Spirit communion.

To observe the “first commandment,” as cited by Jesus, is the centric obligation of human life, subordinating and making servile to it the host of demanding responsibilities man gathers unto himself. Jesus supported the scriptural command to “Honor thy father and mother” but love God supremely. Father, mother, friends, beloved ones, are gifts of God. Love the One Love that hides Himself behind all kindly masks. Love Him first and foremost, or times without numbering He will visit the heart and slip away unrecognized and unwelcomed.

To be with God now is of utmost importance. His love is the only shelter in life and death. Time should be utilized to its best advantage; why shouldn't it be to reclaim oneness with the Creator of this Universe, our Infinite Father?

One of the most earnest prayers given to me by God, a universal prayer of divine love, is: “Heavenly Father, may Thy love shine forever on the sanctuary of my devotion and may I be able to awaken Thy love in all hearts.”



Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, "Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me."

And Jesus answered and said unto her, "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:38 – 42).



Mary and Martha: balancing material duties with devotional communion

“M artha, you are conscientious about material things and duties, which cause you worry and scatter your mind. What is needful is to see to your highest spiritual duty of keeping your mind on God while tending to the performance of your various tasks. Mary has chosen that good single-heartedness of absorption of her thoughts and love in God alone, inspired by my words of wisdom. Thus her desire, which has quite withdrawn her mind from these other present concerns, shall not be taken away from her.”

Jesus here addresses all seekers of God, whether they live a secular life in the world or a renunciant life in a hermitage. He extols the “better part” of God alone chosen by Mary, but commends the dutifulness of Martha provided she remember that “one thing is needful”: to perform her material duties with the thought and love of God.

Some renunciants mistakenly think that if they tend to their duties in the hermitage, that alone would qualify them as being spiritual. Other renunciants think they can attain God-consciousness by neglecting serviceful activities to engage only in the spiritual duty of meditation.

The primary purpose of an ashram environment is to offer a haven in which to seek God. Renunciants who are so engrossed in their work that they neglect meditation and the inner practice of the presence of God during activity are not justified to live in a hermitage and receive the benefits provided for those who are sincerely seeking God. If some devotees can become so immersed in the God-communion of samadhi meditation that they consequently neglect their material duties, such omission is forgivable; but rare is that soul who qualifies for such exception. (For the most part such attempts are no more than false piety.) Serviceful duties in a hermitage have to be performed by members of the community, and when devotees engage in those dutiful actions with the thought of serving God, and give Him also their undivided attention in regular deep meditation, they are on the right path to receive the grace of God. But those who lose themselves in busy-ness, forgetful of God and negligent in meditation, receive no spiritual satisfaction and begin to doubt the purpose of a renunciant’s life as compared to the offerings of the world.

It is better to live a life of service to the world in a spiritual environment conducive to high ideals and thoughts of God than in a material environment fraught with evils. Nevertheless, any environment can be spiritualized with the presence of God. Thus Jesus warned Martha, and by extension all disciples engaged in secular responsibilities, that though she was commendably and necessarily tending to material duties, she was missing the blessing of her service because her mind was so distracted by external demands it accommodated no thought of God. Jesus upheld the action of Mary because it was from no deliberate wish to shun household work, but from sincere devotion that engrossed her mind wholly in God and the God-uniting wisdom of Jesus.

If Martha's works had been infused with Mary's devotion, Jesus would have made no distinction between the two sisters. Both were serving Jesus, one spiritually and the other seeing to his physical needs; but Mary's devotion pleased him more. Had Martha similarly absorbed his spirit, Jesus would have allowed Mary to assist Martha; but he did not want Mary to imitate her sister's material ways, rather that Martha should follow the devotional example of Mary.

That is what yoga teaches: In spite of one's duties to the world, the mind should be with God. Duty or no duty, if one tries his utmost to know God as his prime responsibility, that is the highest virtue; for no duty can be performed without borrowing the powers of God.

Every truth-seeker, whether living the secular life of a householder or that of a renunciant in a hermitage, should be able to express alternately as needful the dual nature of Martha and Mary: performing dutiful actions with the thought of God, and devoutly engaging daily in the spiritual duty of absorbed meditation on God. No member of a household or ashram, by a pretense of meditation, should neglect material duties, as no member should disturb another spiritually inclined member when that individual is worshipfully engrossed in God.

That spiritual aspirant reaches perfection who serves with a devout heart and willing spirit both God and man, receiving quickly enlightenment and divine grace.



Jesus With Mary and Martha

“Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”

—Luke 10:41–42

“Mary has chosen that good single-heartedness of absorption of her thoughts and love in God alone, inspired by my words of wisdom. Thus her desire, which has quite withdrawn her mind from these other present concerns, shall not be taken away from her.”...

Jesus extols the “better part” of God alone chosen by Mary, but commends the dutifulness of Martha provided she remember that “one thing is needful”: to perform her material duties with the thought and love of God...That is what yoga teaches: In spite of one’s duties to the world, the mind should be with God. ...Every truth-seeker, whether living the secular life of a householder or that of a renunciant in a hermitage, should be able to express alternately as needful the dual nature of Martha and Mary.

—Paramahansa Yogananda

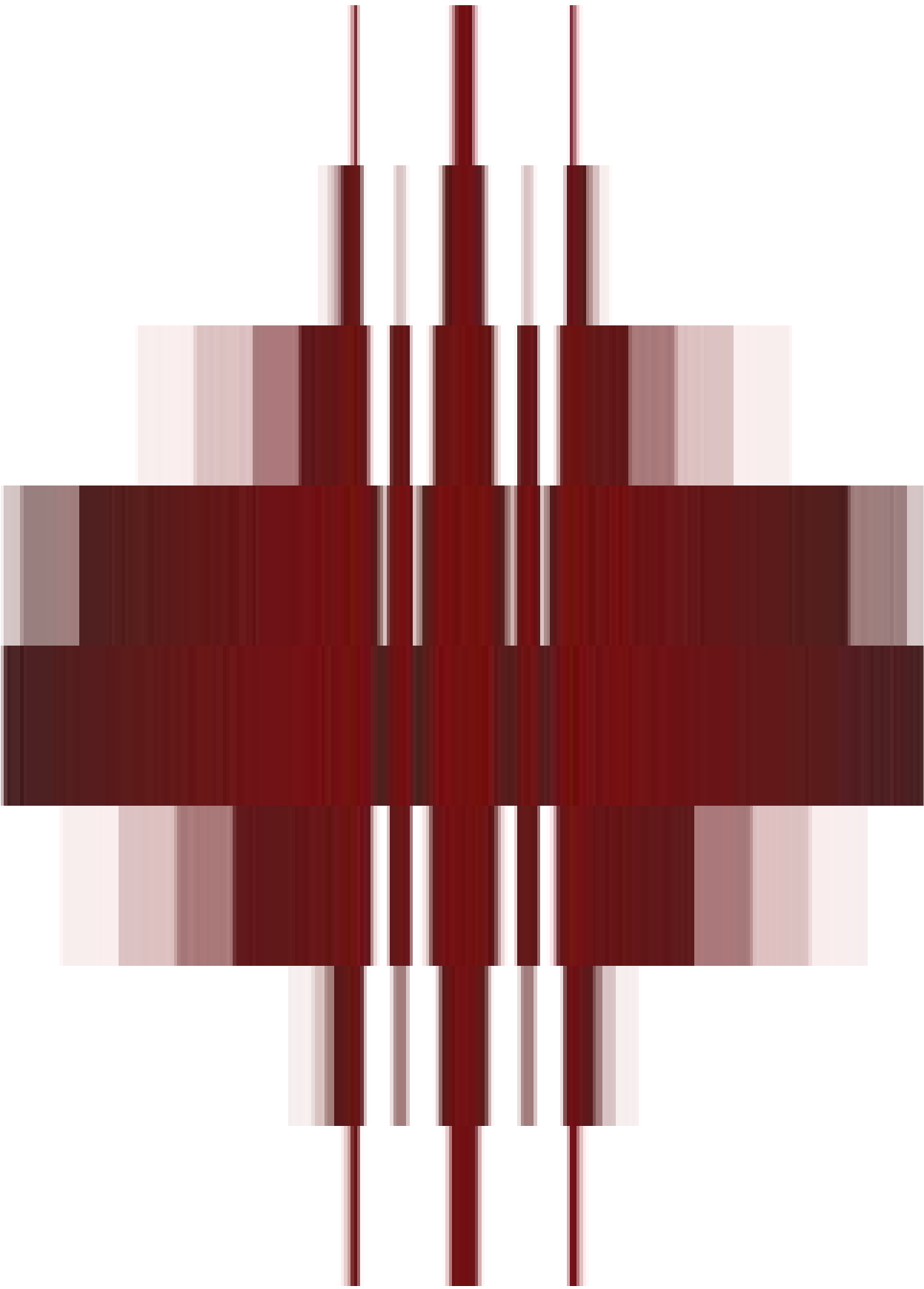
Painting by Heinrich Hofmann



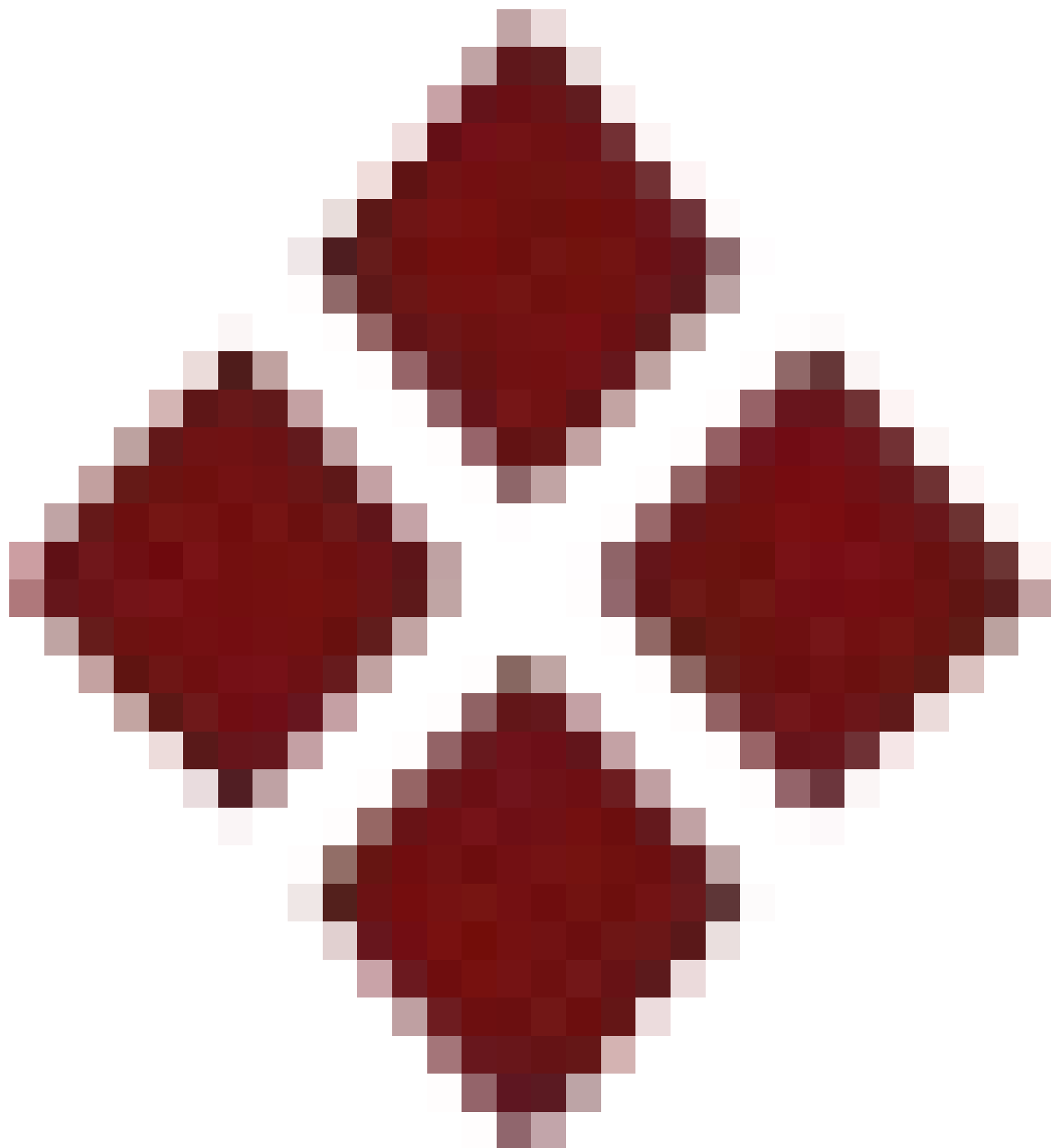


Discourse 54

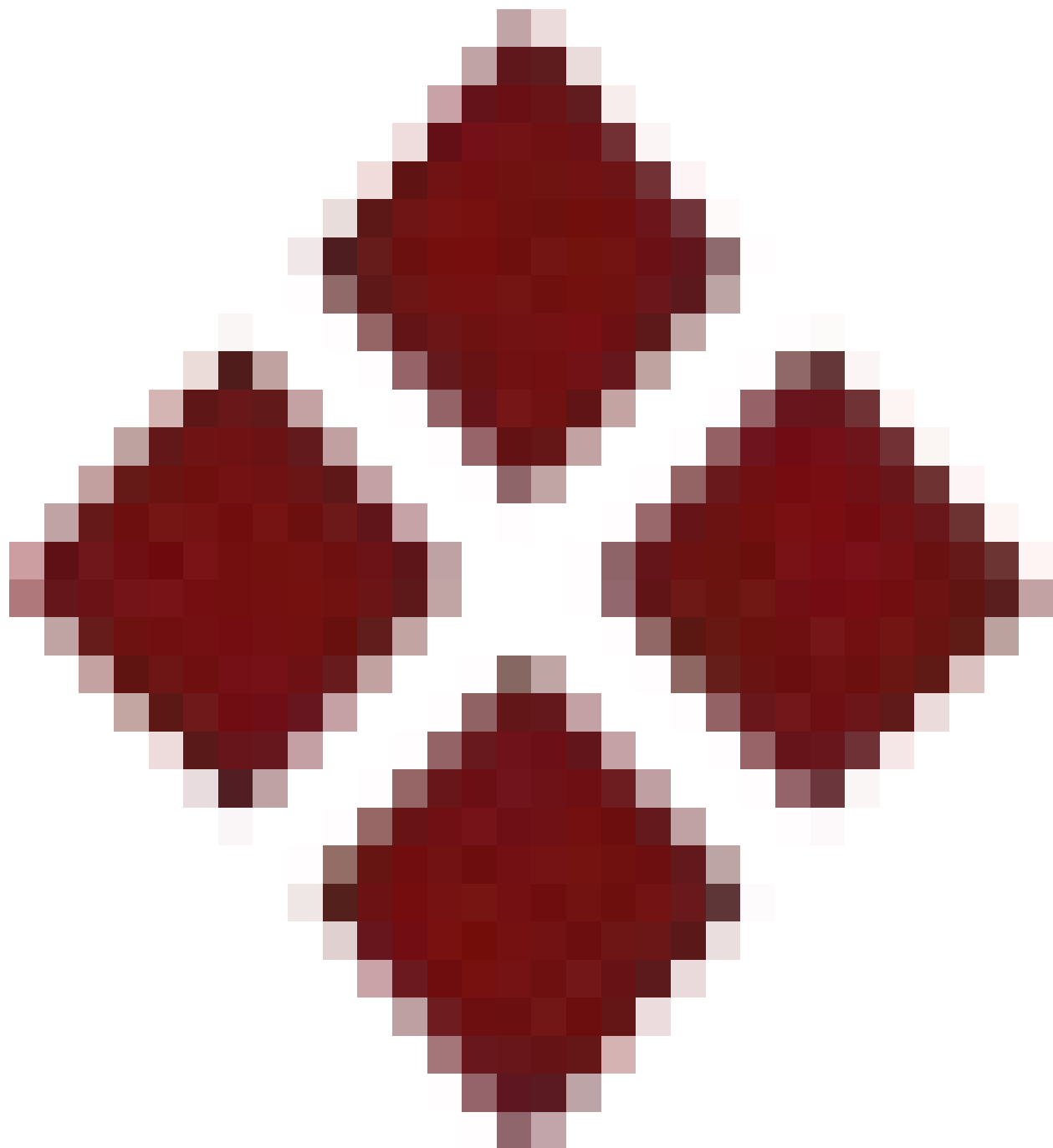
An Esoteric Perspective on The Lord's Prayer



**“Our Father”: The Jnana Yoga Realization of Spirit
as the Only Reality**



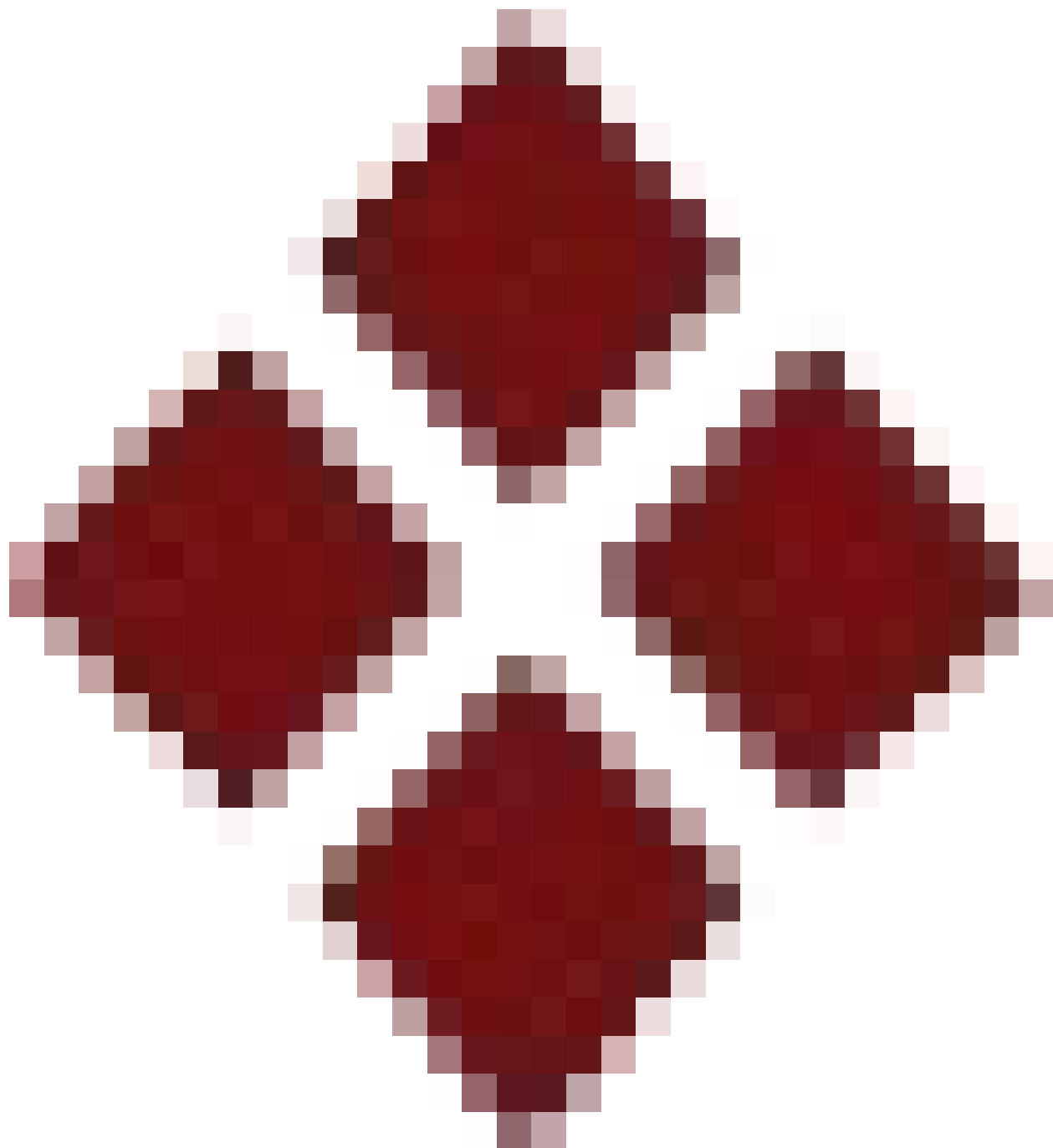
**“Hallowed Be Thy Name”: The Holiness, Beauty, and
Joy Pervading God’s Creation**



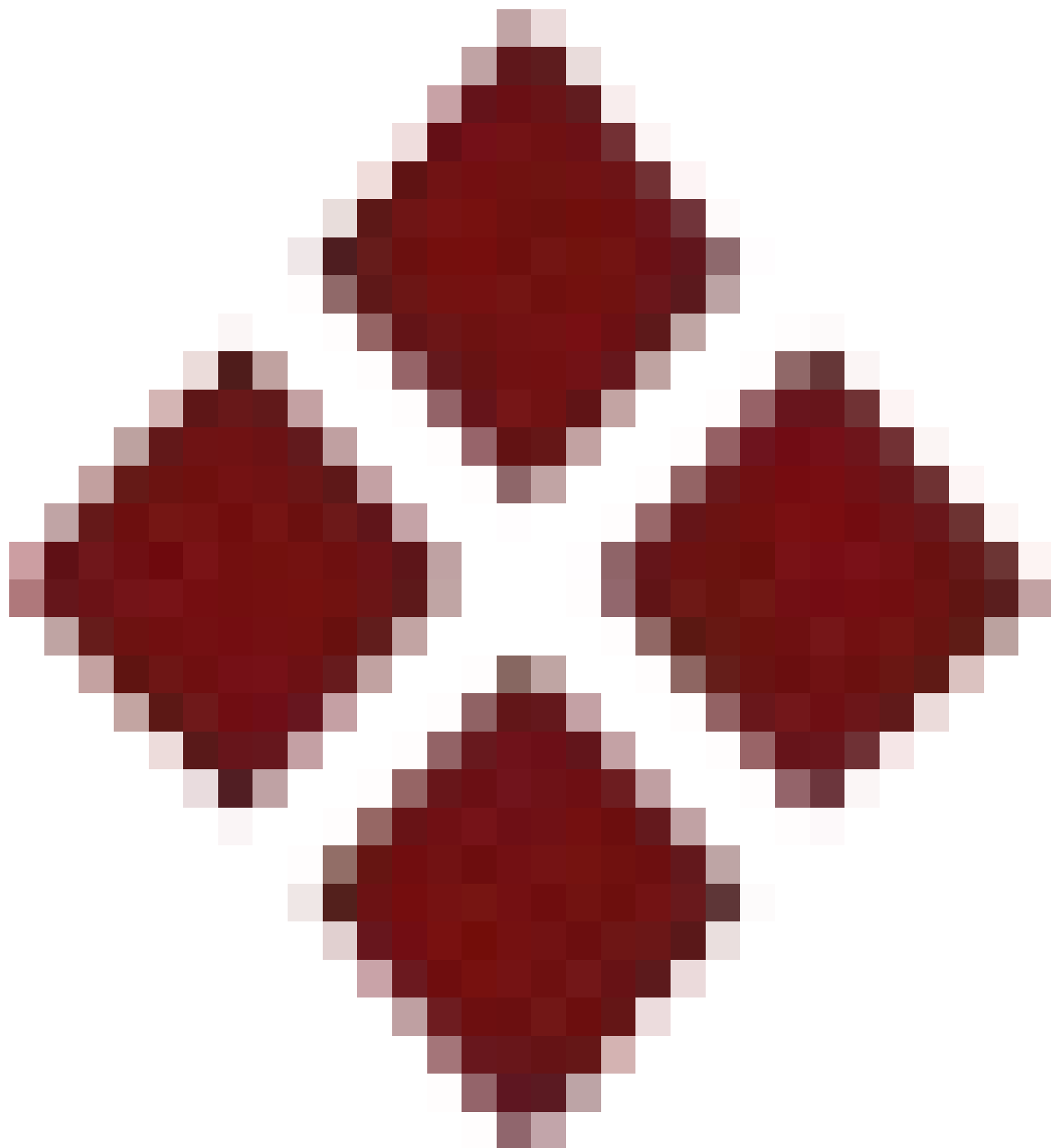
The “Why” of Creation Is a Divinely Mystical Mystery Beyond Human Comprehension



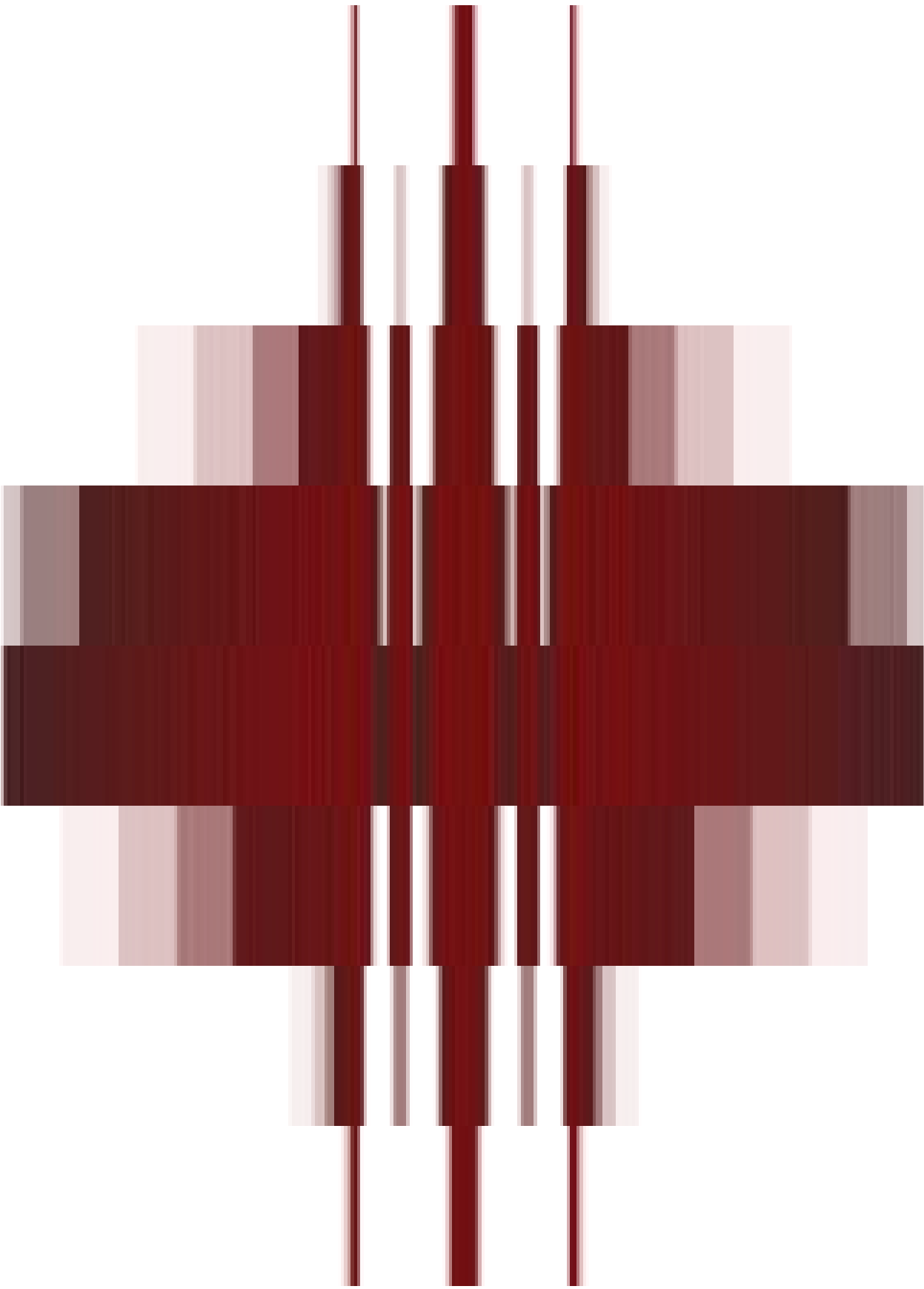
**“Thy Will Be Done”: The Karma Yoga Way of
Manifesting God in Action**



Forgiveness and Deliverance: The Prayer of the Bhakti Yoga Devotee



**“The Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory”: The
Universal Experience of God-realization**



“Each phrase offered by Jesus in this profound prayer resonates a perfect harmony with the cosmic idealism of the ancient sacred scriptures of India...the cosmic truths that validate the defined systems of Jnana, Karma, and Bhakti Yoga.”

■

And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.”

And he said unto them, “When ye pray, say, ‘Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.’ ”

—*Luke 11:1 – 4¹*

And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, “Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked.”

But he said, “Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.”

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Discourse 54

An Esoteric Perspective on The Lord's Prayer



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Parallel reference:

“Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen” (Matthew 6:9 – 13).²

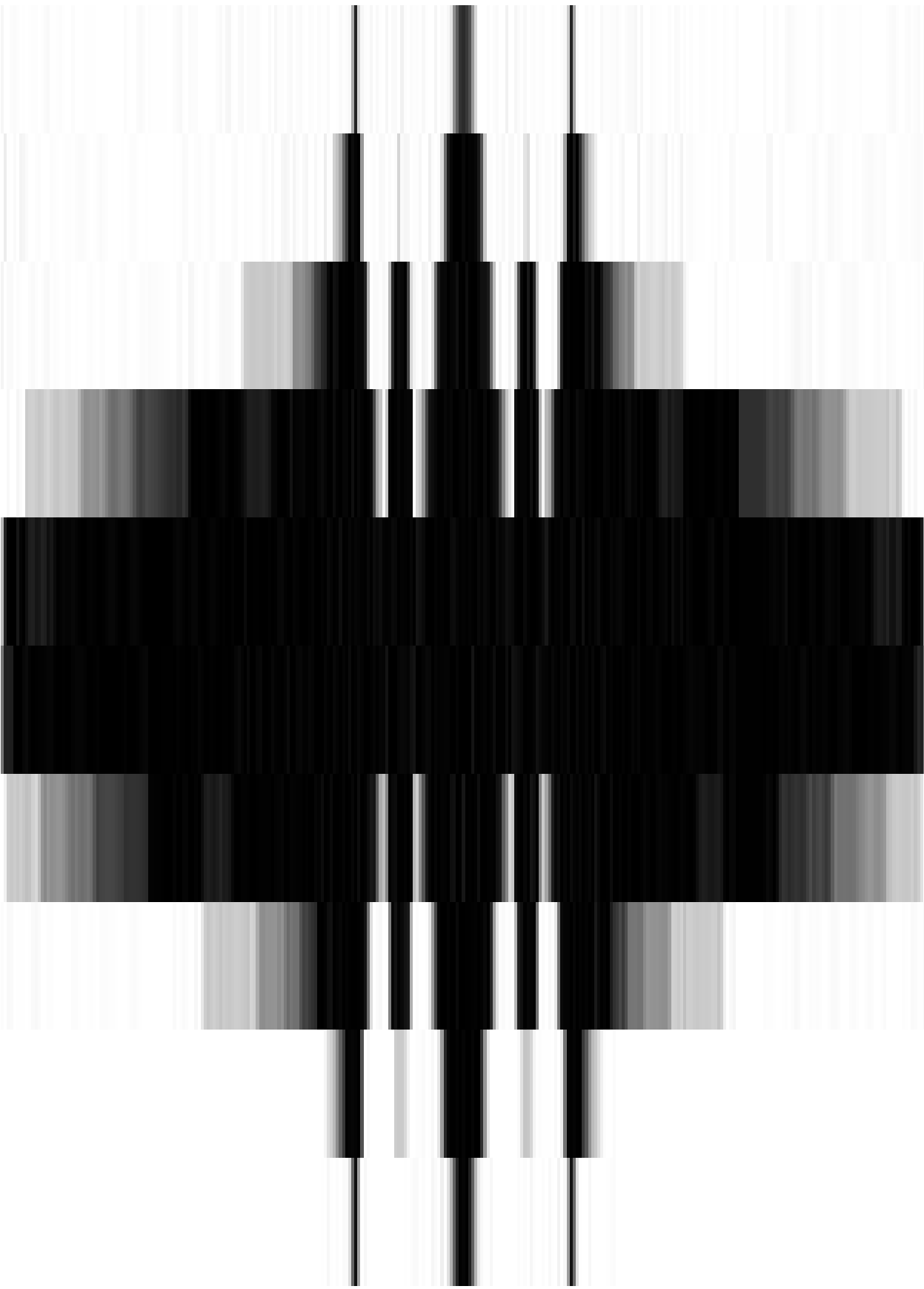
The Lord's Prayer is the summital paean of Christendom, often quoted in worship, but seldom experienced as a personal realization. In simple words, each phrase offered by Jesus in this profound prayer resonates a perfect harmony with the cosmic idealism of the ancient sacred scriptures of India, the essence of which is grandly epitomized in the Bhagavad Gita.

The prayer can be analyzed as consisting of four distinct parts, the whole of which addresses both the transcendence and immanence of God, and man's relationship with Him as the Heavenly Father of all. The first three parts convey, respectively, the cosmic truths that validate the defined systems of Jnana, Karma, and Bhakti Yoga—union with the Infinite through wisdom, right action, and divine love. The fourth, concluding segment is a summary obeisance to the

Infinite Spirit as the omnificent God the Father.

1. “Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come.”
2. “Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.”
3. “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”
4. “For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever.”

The first part will be easily understood if one applies the basis of the philosophy of Jnana Yoga: the realization of Spirit as the only Reality. Jesus’ concept of God was one of pure idealism—as is that of the highest Sankhya-Yoga-Vedanta metaphysics of India. To follow fully the path of God-knowledge that Jesus followed, the path he evidenced to all the world, that the whole of common life revolves around a common center and that that center is God, is to find supreme inspiration from his idealism.³



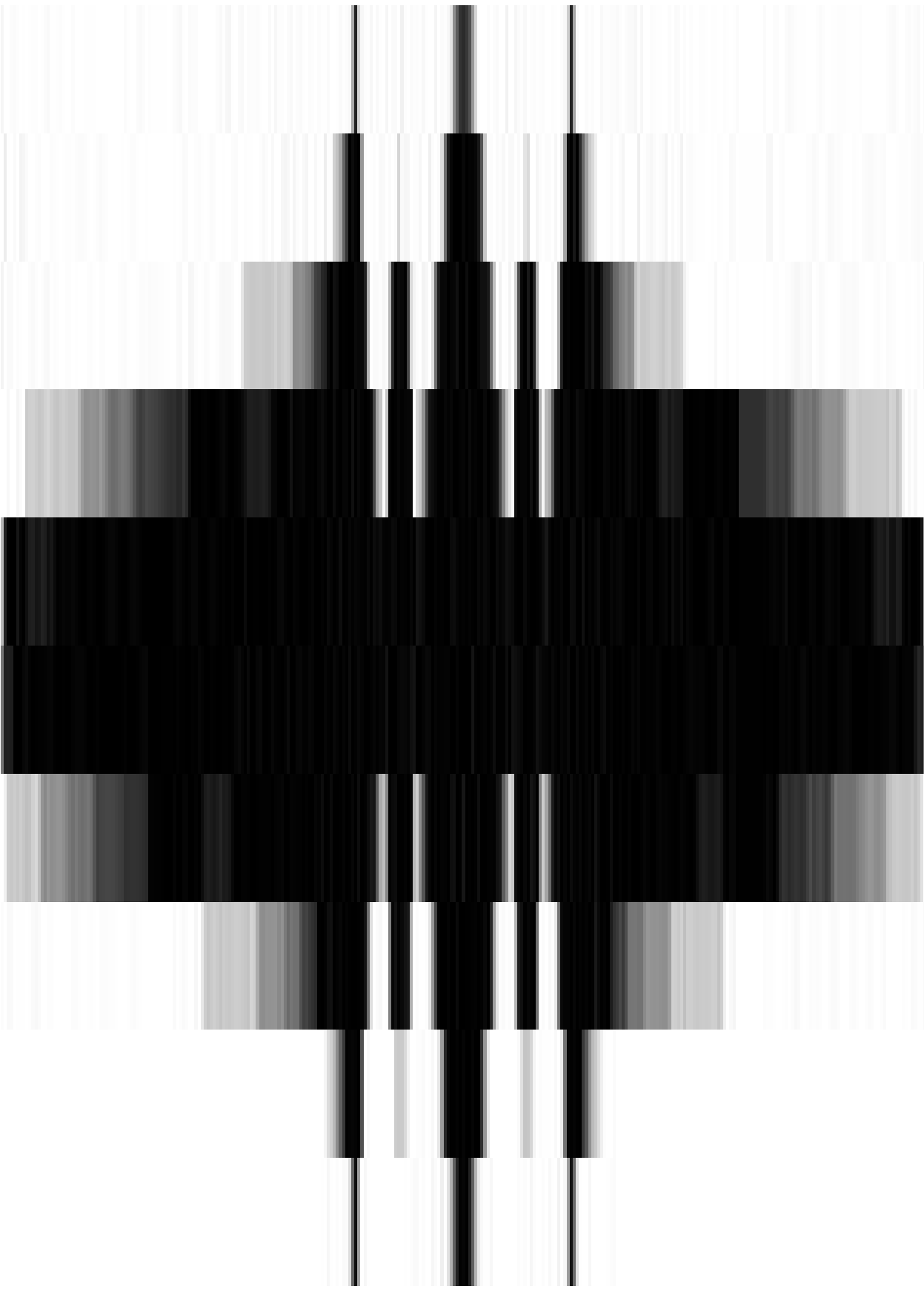
“Our Father”: the Jnana Yoga realization of Spirit as the only Reality

What is God, so far as Jesus himself was concerned? He did not worship an anthropomorphic God—one conceived as having a personal form. He was not thinking of a supreme personage seated somewhere away in some unknown region above the cosmos. That personalized God could not appeal to his universal spirit; such an idea was not explicated in his words or his sermons, or by implication harbored in his thoughts. His realization embraced the knowing of the Absolute Reality of God as Spirit.⁴ Jesus’ lofty philosophy was, to a certain extent, the cause of his being marked as a spiritual revolutionary against many of the orthodox concepts of his own Hebrew people. To him God could not be limited by any parameters of creation—time, space, causality, form, personality—nor codified by man-made credos. God transcends them all.

The expression in the Lord’s Prayer, “Father...in heaven,” thus refers to the Creator in transcendental infinity who Himself is that Eternal Transcendent Consciousness. That Maker of all becomings spins forth the multifarious causal, astral, and physical creations from His One Being and is yet ever untouched by them. In this opening invocation to God, Jesus at once lifts our consciousness to the knowledge—the vision, understanding, realization—of the transcendental God. Perhaps if he were talking in our language today he would have said, “Our transcendental God” rather than “Our Father which art in heaven.”

Now, the idea of a transcendental Deity by itself would naturally foster in man a sense that God is unreachably remote, apart from the affairs of His creatures and creation. That God has no relationship with the souls He created could not possibly be true, or the whole of the cosmos would indeed be absurdly purposeless. Jesus emphasized the eternal, inseparable relationship between God and humanity with the use of the word “our.” He directs the worshiper’s attention not merely to “The Father in heaven” but “Our Father in heaven”—your God, my God; God of Jesus, Moses, Krishna, Buddha, Mohammed; of all human beings, righteous and unrighteous, saviors and sinners. Not in an ordinary sense but with purposeful thought Jesus used that word “Our Father” to bring out the interrelationship between the transcendental God and the created being. The whole philosophy of the connection between the human soul and God is embodied in that one little word our. This God is the Source of all beings, hence He is the Father. Here “Father” is a symbol of Jesus’ pure idealism: Spirit, the

transcendental God, as the source, the Primal Progenitor, of all cosmic creation. From Him all things have come into manifestation, and in His own cosmic omnipotence they find their perfection: a Father. Under His guiding omniscience, all things move in their appointed course: a Father. In His beneficence and love, created beings find their inner strength and joy: a Father. Jesus expressed these metaphysical concepts in understandable language: “Our Father which art in heaven,” the transcendental God inseparably related with all created beings: the source, the sustenance, and the salvation of all. The whole of this vast concept is given in this opening phrase of the Lord’s Prayer.



“Hallowed be Thy name”: the holiness, beauty, and joy pervading God’s creation

Jesus continues: “Hallowed be Thy name.” The meaning of the word name is better understood in the Vedic philosophy; it means creation. As a person’s name is an outer symbol of who he is, so vibratory creation declares the transcendent Creator. The Sanskrit term nama-rupa (nama, akin to English name) translates as “name and form.” “Hallowed be Thy name” means hallowed is Thy creation, holy is Thy manifestation, spiritual is Thy Self-revelation through the outwardly working Holy Ghost, the Word or cosmic vibration of Aum (Amen). God’s creation is divine; it is the spiritual resemblance, spiritual expression, of the Cosmic Reality.

But the true nature of creation as a divine emanation of God can be fully known only by ecstatic oneness with God through the opening of the spiritual eye. Such was the grace bestowed on the devotee Arjuna, as recounted in the Bhagavad Gita:

“Thou canst not see Me with mortal eyes. Therefore I give thee sight divine....”

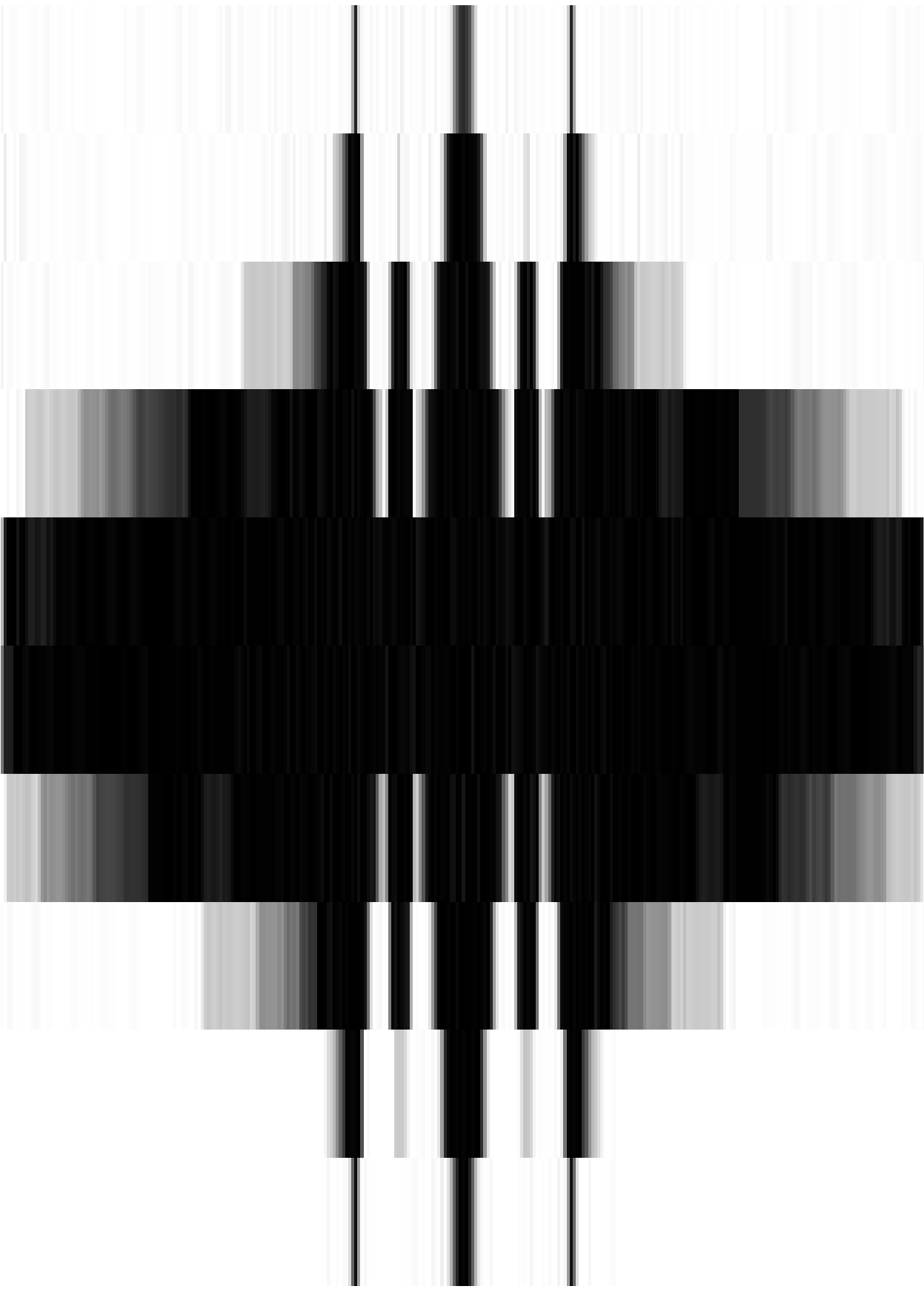
“Arjuna saw the multifarious marvelous Presence of the Deity—infinite in forms, shining in every direction of space, omnipotence all-pervading, adorned with countless celestial robes and garlands and ornaments, upraising heavenly weapons, fragrant with every lovely essence, His mouths and eyes everywhere!

“If a thousand suns appeared simultaneously in the sky, their light might dimly resemble the splendor of that Omnific Being!

“There, resting within the infinite Form of the God of gods, Arjuna beheld the entire universe with all its diversified manifestations.”⁵

No slightest shadow of doubt about the immediacy of God can remain in the mind of the devotee who perceives the whole manifested universe as the Creator's resplendent raiment.⁶ In Cosmic Consciousness, one realizes that the underlying Reality has cloaked Itself in the ceaselessly transforming cosmos, declaring Itself without revealing Itself, just as the various costumes with which humans adorn themselves bespeak their changing roles and fancies, not their essential nature. A person's raiment may change or be discarded, but this does not alter the wearer. Birth, maturity, old age; life and death; creation and change; sorrow and suffering; joy and happiness; pain and pleasure—to divine vision all are shimmering undulations in the fabric of time and space belonging to the domain of duality, not to the Supreme Unity. Though God's universe-garment is constantly changing, He remains ever the same; as individualizations of His Being, we too are to partake of that changelessness. The purpose of each soul's sojourn on earth is to learn to see beyond the evanescence of phenomena to the Eternal Reality. No matter how compelling or enticing are the outer trappings of mayic manifestation, let them not lure the attention away from the Infinite Lord who sports the gossamer cosmos as a mere costume of masquerade. The devotee who transcends the myopia of body consciousness sees with the superior vision of divine intuition, and resolves all formerly incomprehensible dualities in the ecstatic perception of creation as Beauty and Joy.

How expressively the Gita extols this truth: "adorned with countless celestial robes and garlands and ornaments"—the stars are His crown jewels; the earth His footstool; the lightning, thunder, storms, and cataclysms the flash of His accoutrements and snap of His cloak as He dances in joy the whirling rhythms of creation, preservation, destruction. Everything in the objective world is an added decoration to beautify the cosmic garment of God; behind all these is the hidden Divine Reality. Such was the devotee Arjuna's realization in the eleventh chapter of the Gita; and it is in this connection that we are to understand the wisdom philosophy of idealism represented by Jesus Christ in the Lord's Prayer.⁷



The “why” of creation is a divinely mystical mystery beyond human comprehension

Yet there remains the question that has always begged an answer: Why creation? Is the cosmos accidental, something God created out of His own whimsy? Why did He do it? The Bible states: “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created.”⁸ But how can one justify His pleasure with human misery; or His lila, play, when it necessitates the painful dualities of the world? The Vedas and Upanishads explain that the One wanted to enjoy Its infinite, immortal Bliss-consciousness through the many: “Eko ’ham bahu shyam—I was One; I wanted to be many.” But man, in his persistent quest for reasons, asks what happened to Him that He wanted to be many and caused all this misery and sorrow. Theological answers do not satisfy the rational mind. The boldest, truest answer ever given is that we do not know. It is maya—not an illusion, not a hallucination, but a divinely mystical mystery beyond the mental comprehension, the intellectual rationalization, of the human being. As a philosopher beautifully put it: “Whenever an honest attempt has been made to unravel the mystery of the many and the One, mysticism seems to be the only or final answer.” Can a tiny cup measure the ocean? The limited human intellect can little fathom the Cosmic Reality and never reach the why of God’s creation. Thus it is said of those who in ecstasy have entered the secret vaults of the heart of God and have perforce returned with no words to tell: “He who knows, he knows; naught else knows.”

Then Jesus says: “Thy kingdom come.” Here he affirms the transcendence of the Ultimate Reality made manifest as the Immanent Essence of the universal divine imagings of the Creator-Father.

“Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come.” So sublime, so spiritual, so philosophic is this prayer! Transcendental God, immanent God, and creation as God’s divine manifestation—all are expressed in the first section of the prayer, a grand statement of the Jnana Yoga truth realization of ultimate wisdom.



“Thy will be done”: the Karma Yoga way of manifesting God in action

The key to the second part of the prayer is the word “will.” “Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.” In this second part is expressed the philosophy of causation and manifestation—karma, as it is referred to in the Bhagavad Gita.⁹ The whole creation is God’s karma, God’s action of manifestation—the expression of His will. Actions are always preceded and sustained by will. Material science declares that all things in the universe are different manifestations of energy; the yogi, a spiritual scientist, discerns also the subtler underlying energy of prana, life force. But what is energy; what is prana? Energy is the gross manifestation of will, and will is the power or manifesting faculty of consciousness.

Though all creation came from God’s divine vibration, the rebel Satanic Delusion has usurped the material expression of God’s “kingdom,” abetted by the sinful actions of the masses over whom has been cast the pall of ignorance that shuts out the light of God’s presence. Thus the words “Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven”: Make manifest in the material vibrations of earth the pristine perfection of the Holy Creative Vibration that went forth from Thy taintless transcendence by the divine fiat of Thy Will.

“Give us this day our daily bread”: “Bread” means cosmic energy, the all-sustaining cosmic vibration of Aum.¹⁰ Again, a reference to karma, cosmic action by which God sustains all life.



Forgiveness and deliverance: the prayer of the Bhakti Yoga devotee

“And forgive us our debts (our sins), as we forgive our debtors.” In that sentence is expressed the karmic law of cause and effect as applied to human life. Earlier Jesus had said: “For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”¹¹ In Hindu philosophy there is no room for salvation by blind faith or by chance; in individuals and in nature, every result has a cause, either approximate or distinct. The devotee who would find God actively initiates those causes that result in soul unfoldment and divine union: Karma Yoga, which unites man’s fallible will with the omniscience of God’s Divine Will.

Thus, in this second part of the Lord’s Prayer is contained the whole philosophy of karma, the action of creation and of the universal law of cause and effect.

“Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” This third section of the prayer is pure bhakti, devotion. For intellectuals it is a longstanding perplexing question how God could lead man into evil temptation, and why.¹² But followers of the devotional way to God (Bhakti Yoga) focus on a simple truth: The easiest way to overcome finiteness is to give oneself completely to God, with the totality of one’s faults and one’s virtues. How quickly whatever is negative within one’s character is resolved by love of God! Love, in a most wonderful way, transforms and spiritualizes wherever it appears. By patiently cultivating devotion, the bhakta eventually finds that no matter what temptation of desire arises in his life, it is at once transcended when he sincerely gives that desire to the Divine. By the responding touch of God’s perfection, all the negativeness trying to infiltrate the devotee’s heart can be instantly overcome.

Through everything beautiful and desirable in this world, it is the Cosmic Lover who is calling to man. The lure of worldly offerings is a test of choices, whether God’s children want Him or material gratifications. So long as one chooses God’s playthings and not Him, so long will that soul have to reincarnate, unfulfilled, in mortal entanglements. But the devotee who turns his face Homeward, recognizing behind all lesser desires the desire of the soul for the love of God, is on the path to true and lasting happiness. He transmutes every temptation into the one divine yearning for God.

Hence, the principle expressed in this part of the Lord's Prayer is not that God leads us into temptation, but that by devotional will one can transform a temptation into a source of spiritual illumination by bringing into it the greater power of God. This yoga of absolute resignation—unqualified devotion and divine love, bhakti—is invoked in this supplication: "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

Thus Jnana, Karma, and Bhakti, corresponding to the processes of (

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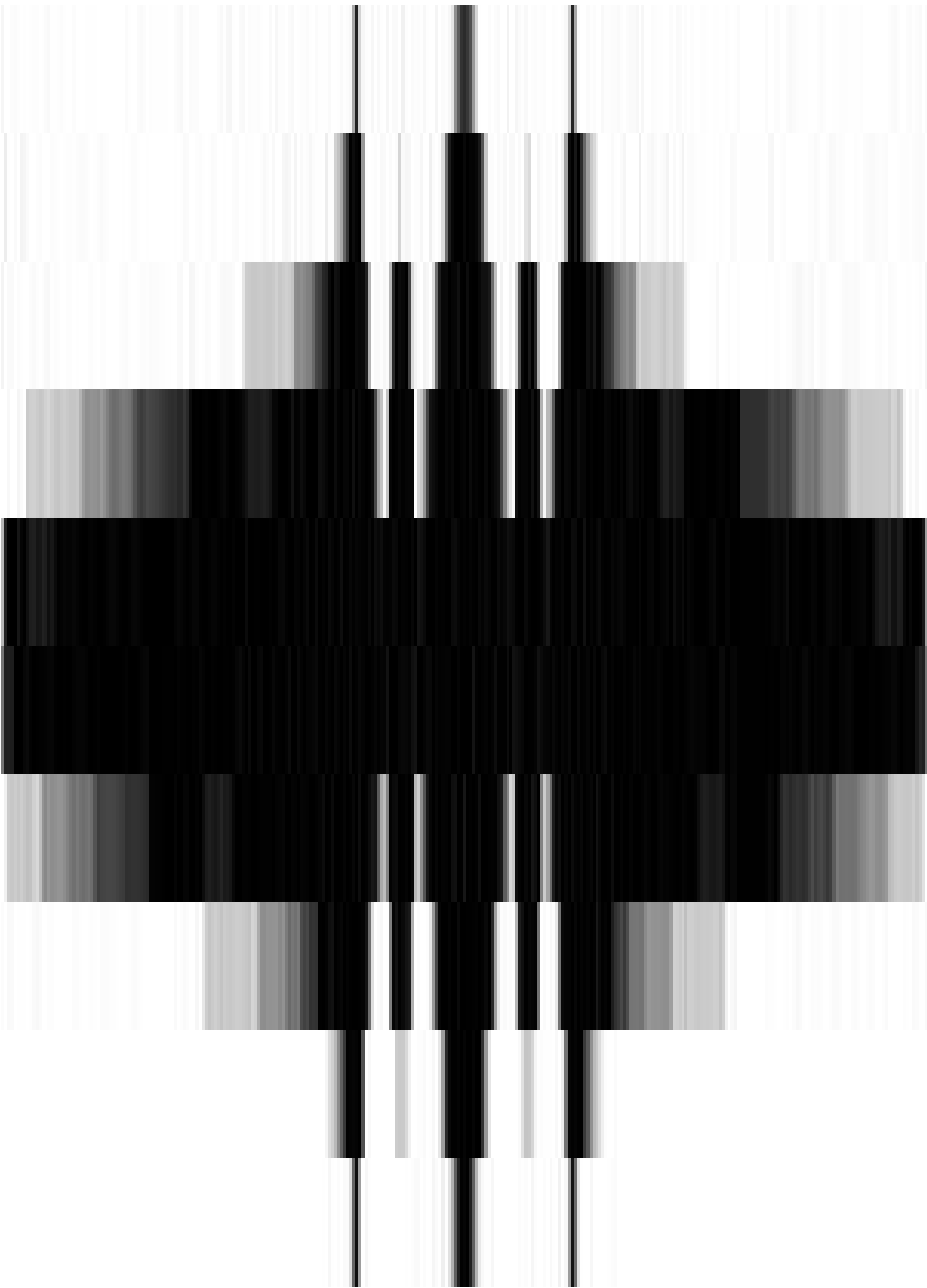
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) feeling, are the basis of the first three parts of the Lord's Prayer, making this prayer inclusive of the highest philosophy of human life. After all, what is the purpose of life? To attain oneness with God, by purifying human reasoning or intellect with the wisdom consciousness of God; attuning human will to be an instrument of God's will; oblation of human love in God's universal love. Thought, volition, and feeling are faculties of the soul; prayer spiritualizes them. Prayer is the lifting up of the soul, of the entire being of man, to God. The Lord's Prayer in its completeness addresses the spiritualization of the whole spectrum of life.

Jesus then concludes with a worshipful encomium in summation: "For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever."



“The kingdom, the power, and the glory”: the universal experience of God-realization

“The kingdom” is the overspreading transcendent-immanent Cosmic Consciousness of God the Father, the Infinite Intelligence that is the sole Reality of all manifestation. “The power” is the omnipotence of God’s divine will. And what is the greatest “glory” of God but His love? Thus we have God’s pure intelligence, God’s pure will, God’s pure love—the kingdom, power, and glory, all of God. Man’s rationalizing mind cannot conceive God as the Nameless Absolute; but He is comprehensible in the concept of a triune nature consisting of consciousness, existence, and divine love or bliss.

1. Consciousness: all-pervading Omniscience;
2. Existence: cosmic will expressing as the objectification of life and all manifestation;
3. Bliss (divine love): Love perfected is bliss. Bliss, love, and beauty—these terms synonymously complement one another. Beauty is the harmonious manifestation of love; the perfection of love is bliss.

As Jesus referred to the kingdom, power, and glory of God, so the rishis of India invoked God as Truth, Good, and Beauty.¹³ God’s consciousness is Truth, the ultimate reality and substance of everything. God’s existence as manifestation and life is Good; God’s bliss or love is Beauty. God is Consciousness, Existence, Bliss; Truth, Good, and Beauty; God is Intelligence, the Divine Conceiver of Universes; God is Life, the mystery of the many in the One; God is Love, Beauty, Bliss.

Thus the true revelation of the meaning of the climax of the prayer—“the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever”—shows an underlying unity of the universal experience of God realized by Jesus, Krishna, and illumined prophets of all religions.



And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, “Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked.”

But he said, “Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it” (Luke 11:27 – 28).



Hearing the word of God in meditation on Aum, the Cosmic Sound

“Blessed are those true devotees who hear in meditation the divine revelations of the Cosmic Sound, the omniscient word of God—and know how to keep in tune with it continuously—for its guidance will transform their human life into the life divine.”¹⁴

In speaking of hearing the word of God, Jesus was referring not only to the divine truths he was conveying to the world, but of how God talks to each of His devotees personally in the here and now, as He did with the prophets of old. Jesus taught his understanding disciples how to contact God through communion with the Word or Holy Ghost—the Cosmic Sound of Aum, defined by Patanjali, India’s great sage and exponent of yoga, as God’s symbol or manifestation. Through the centuries, however, because of secrecy protecting sacred techniques, this knowledge as given by Jesus has gone out of Christian living. Self-Realization Fellowship is reviving that esoteric knowledge, teaching for the first time in the western world the specific techniques of tuning in with God through the Holy Ghost.

Every devotee who enters interiorized silence, whether by the sheer intensity of devotion or by practice of a yoga technique, discovers, when the mind grows calm and the concentration is deep, the comforting vibratory presence of Aum, the Cosmic Sound.¹⁵ God’s Intelligence, immanent in the Aum Vibration, intimates divine guidance or inspiration through the devotee’s intuitive feeling, hearing, or vision. Aum is the mother of all sounds in the universe, including all human languages; and also of all types of rays in the cosmos. Any manifestation presupposes the inherent presence of the Cosmic Vibration. During the devotee’s meditation, Aum can vibrate the response or wishes of the Divine in words of any intelligible language in audible form or in luminous letters revealed to the devotee’s inner gaze. The etheric sounds or letters may be audible or visible to a single devotee or to a group of devotees, according to the wish of the Divine.

Thus when a certain woman, uplifted in Jesus’ company, praised his mother for having given to the world such a divine son, he used that opportunity to stress the importance, above all human achievements, of knowing God through His Holy Word: “Better than bearing divine children on the physical plane is the knowledge of how to receive personally the blessing and presence of God

through hearing the Cosmic Sound and remaining in tune with it.” He made it plain that listening once or twice to the Word of God is not enough, but that one must also “keep it”—that is, through regular divine contact in meditation, to keep the consciousness permanently attuned to the guidance and blessings of Aum, and discipline his life by its inner intuitive directions.



The ten principal manifestations of God

Unscientific prayer and mechanical religious observances leave many devotees bewildered and uncertain as to how—or even whether—God responds to them. There are ten principal manifestations of God by which the devotee may know that God has revealed Himself. First among them is the expression of Aum or Holy Ghost, Cosmic Vibration. This in turn manifests as Cosmic Sound and Cosmic Light. The others are: Cosmic Intelligence, Cosmic Wisdom, Cosmic Devotion, Cosmic Love, Cosmic Peace, Cosmic Calmness, Cosmic Bliss.

Any devotee who in meditation beholds not just glimmers of light but the brilliant overspreading Cosmic Light—or the luminous tricolored spiritual eye which epitomizes Cosmic Vibration, Christ Consciousness, and Cosmic Consciousness—assuredly has God-contact. Cosmic Light may also take the form of some personal aspect of Deity; or, out of that Light the great ones—such as Jesus, Krishna, Buddha, the God-knowing masters and saints—may manifest themselves unto the devotee who is deeply in tune.

One who contacts God as Cosmic Intelligence knows the infinity of Christ Consciousness and perceives the working of the divine laws of order and harmony that govern all creation. In Cosmic Wisdom, manifested Intelligence or Truth, one may set aside the study of books; he receives all knowledge through the direct perception of the intuition of his soul.

When God manifests as Cosmic Devotion, the devotee is absorbed in sweetest divine longing for and reverential worship of the Lord as Father, Mother, Friend, or in some other ideal relationship. In the manifestation of Cosmic Love, the devotee and God merge as one in unending thrills of ecstasy—the love of millions of human loves combined—expanding the devotee’s heart to hold the Infinite Love that unites all creation.

Any devotee who feels God as Cosmic Peace (usually experienced in the first contact with Aum, the Comforter), as Cosmic Calmness (“Be still, and know that I am God”), or as intoxicating ever new Cosmic Bliss—or as any of the ten manifestations singly or in combination—can be certain that he is contacting God.

Steadfast practice of meditation techniques of communion with Aum opens the

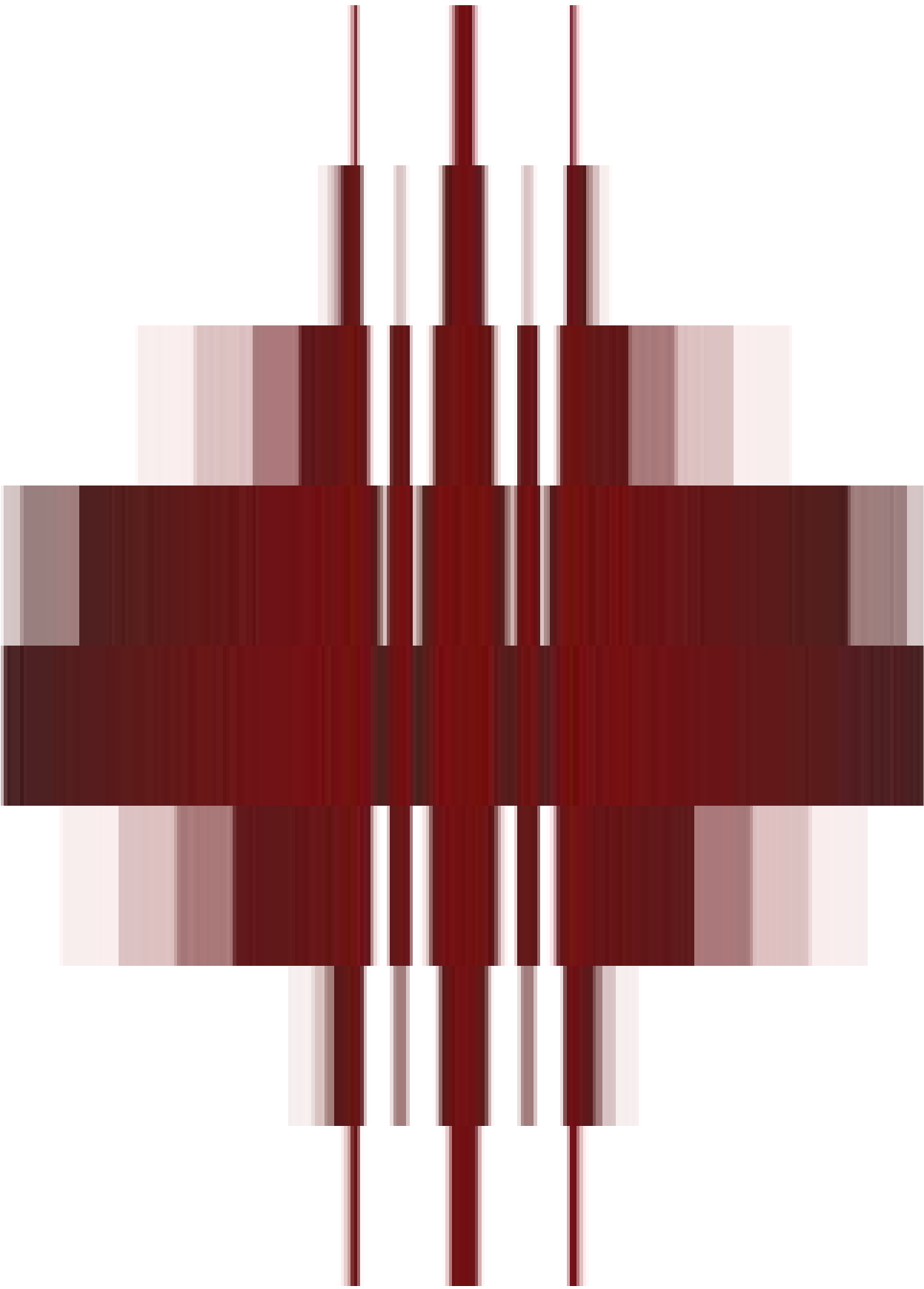
portal to unending realizations of God-consciousness. Communion with Aum is the best way to worship a personal concept of God (any specific manifestation of the Unmanifested Absolute). To focus one's worship on an image or mentally conceived depiction of God in form is to limit the Illimitable unless the devotee also includes communion with Aum, the vibratory manifestation out of which emerge all "forms" of the Divine Presence. Continuous meditation on Cosmic Aum expands one's consciousness in that all-pervading Vibration, attuning the devotee to the omniscience and omnipresence of God reflected therein, revealing the Infinite in His cosmic forms and aspects, and bestowing realization of Spirit as Satchitananda: ever-existing, ever-conscious, ever-new Bliss.

Those who fill their consciousness with Aum are intoxicated with the joy felt in the Cosmic Sound, as were the disciples of Jesus after receiving the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost.¹⁶



Discourse 55

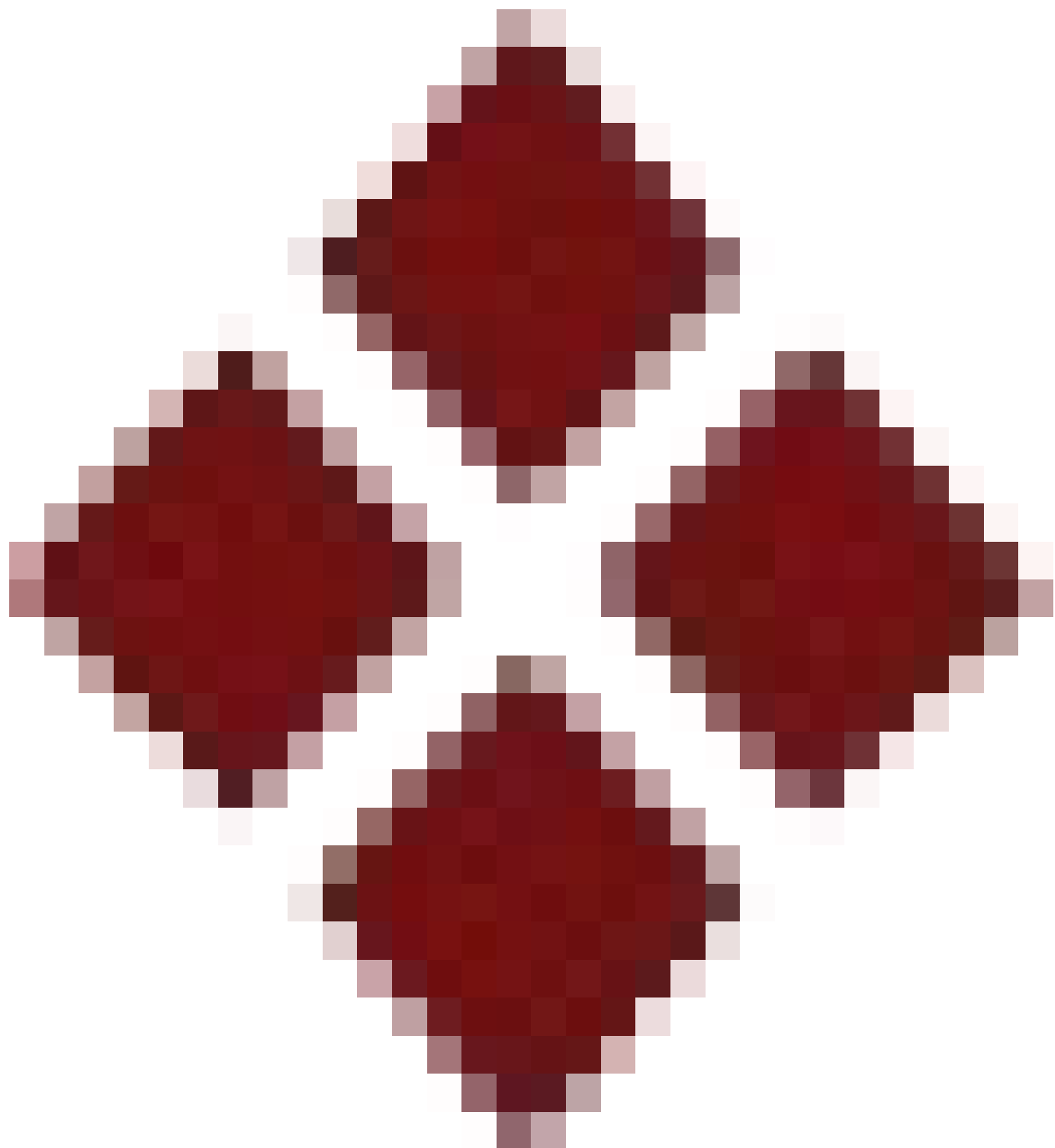
Jesus Condemns Hypocrisy and Self-Serving Judgment in Religion and Law



The Hypocrisy of Outer Religious Observance Without Inner Purification



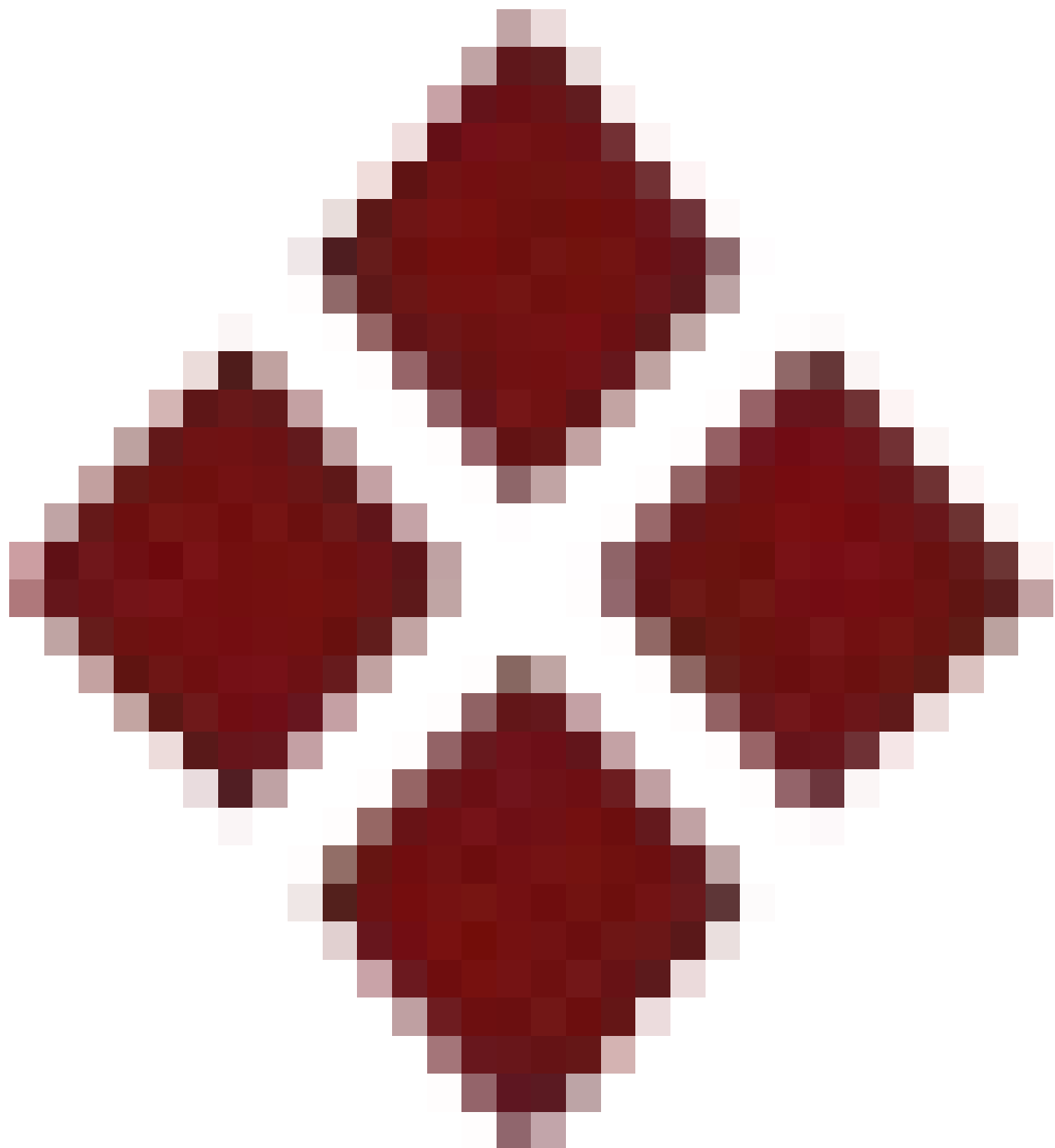
**“Woe Unto You” Who Seek Acclaim Through
Pretentious Displays of Superficial Spirituality**



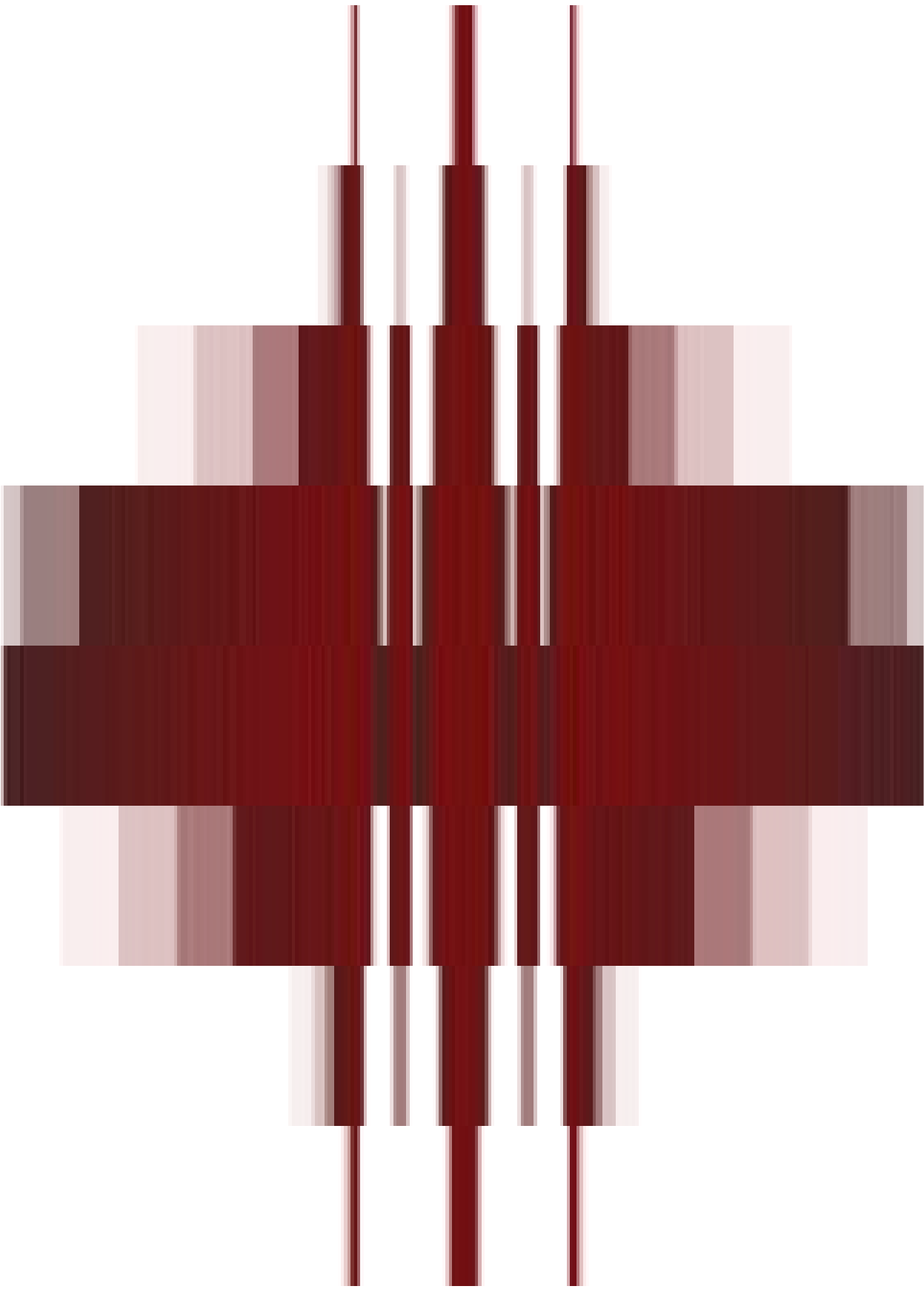
Who May Rightly Use the Honorific of “Rabbi” or “Master”?



How the Cumulative Effects of Good and Evil Actions Affect the Destiny of Nations



**“Woe Unto You” Who Defile the Altar of the Body
and the Temple of the Soul by Evil**



“Anyone who uses religion for business, ‘holiness’ for personal acquisition, and exploitation of God for material gain creates baneful evil karma....He who is truly great, but cloaks himself in a natural humility, will be exalted before others and in the approbation of God.”

■

And as he spake, a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him: and he went in, and sat down to meat. And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed before dinner.

And the Lord said unto him, “Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness. Ye fools, did not He that made that which is without make that which is within also? But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you.

“But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

“Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets.

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them.”

Then answered one of the lawyers, and said unto him, “Master, thus saying thou reproachest us also.”

And he said, “Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers.

“Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres. Therefore also said the wisdom of God, ‘I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute’: That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; from the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zechariah, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, it shall be required of this generation.

“Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye

entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.”

—Luke 11:37 – 52

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.

“Woe unto you ye blind guides, which say, ‘Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor!’ Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? And, ‘Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty.’ Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon. And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by Him that dwelleth therein. And he that sweareth by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by Him that sitteth thereon.”

—Matthew 23:15 – 22

And as he said these things unto them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things: Laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him.

In the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, “Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear

in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.”

—Luke 11:53 – 12:3



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Discourse 55

Jesus Condemns Hypocrisy and Self-Serving Judgment in Religion and Law



And as he spake, a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him: and he went in, and sat down to meat. And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed before dinner.

And the Lord said unto him, “Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness. Ye fools, did not He that made that which is without make that which is within also? But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you.

“But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone” (Luke 11:37 – 42).

Parallel reference:

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also” (Matthew 23:23 – 26).



The hypocrisy of outer religious observance without inner purification

“O you hypocrites, you are diligent to display the physical cleanliness of the outer vessels of your life, but their content consisting of your inner life is unclean with ‘ravening and wickedness’ and evil thoughts. Know you not in your foolishness that God made both the outer physical utilities of the body and its inner mental and spiritual faculties? You should purify your outer life by good actions and your inner life by good thoughts and meditation. Your body, mind, and soul-image of God should be kept uniformly sanctified by inner and outer discipline. ¹

“You should not so concentrate on the outer purificatory disciplines that you neglect the more important cleansing of your inner life of the covetousness of ‘extortion and excess’ that you may rather be a giver of alms to others of the finer spiritual qualities untapped within you—‘such things as ye have.’ By bringing into manifestation through wisdom and meditation your innate God-made divine qualities, and giving of those to others, you yourself become pure and make others pure. When the consciousness is pure, ‘behold, all things are clean unto you’—you find the whole cosmos filled with purity, replete with the taintless presence of God.

“But O you hypocrites, blind with ignorance, you will instead reap much woe owing to your evils. To appear admirable, you pay token tithes, but have omitted observance of ‘the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith.’ You ought not to forget the karmic law of cause and effect that divinely judges the actions of all men; nor should you be derelict in love for God in divine communion in meditation, and in cultivating faith in the redeeming power of His mercy—‘These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.’ It is the duty of your office to thereby cleanse your own life, and by example teach the populace the importance of inner as well as outer purity.”

Jesus declared that spiritual ignorance is evident in all who ceremoniously pay great attention to the practice of the externals of religious observances, but omit the far more important obligations of inner discipline leading to divine wisdom: following the cause-effect spiritual laws of righteous behavior, practicing divine forgiveness, and developing the unshakable conviction of faith by intuitive contact of God in meditation. Religious clerics who are circumscribed by

theological prescriptions and proscriptions, and who have not purified their souls, are blind guides who fight to prevent the swallowing of the little “gnat” of transgression of religious ceremony, while unwittingly swallowing the big “camel” of ignorant spiritual transgression! It seemed they feared exaggerated consequences of neglect of theological observances more than the actual dire suffering of acute indigestion of ignorance resulting from lack of inner spiritual purification.



“Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets” (Luke 11:43).

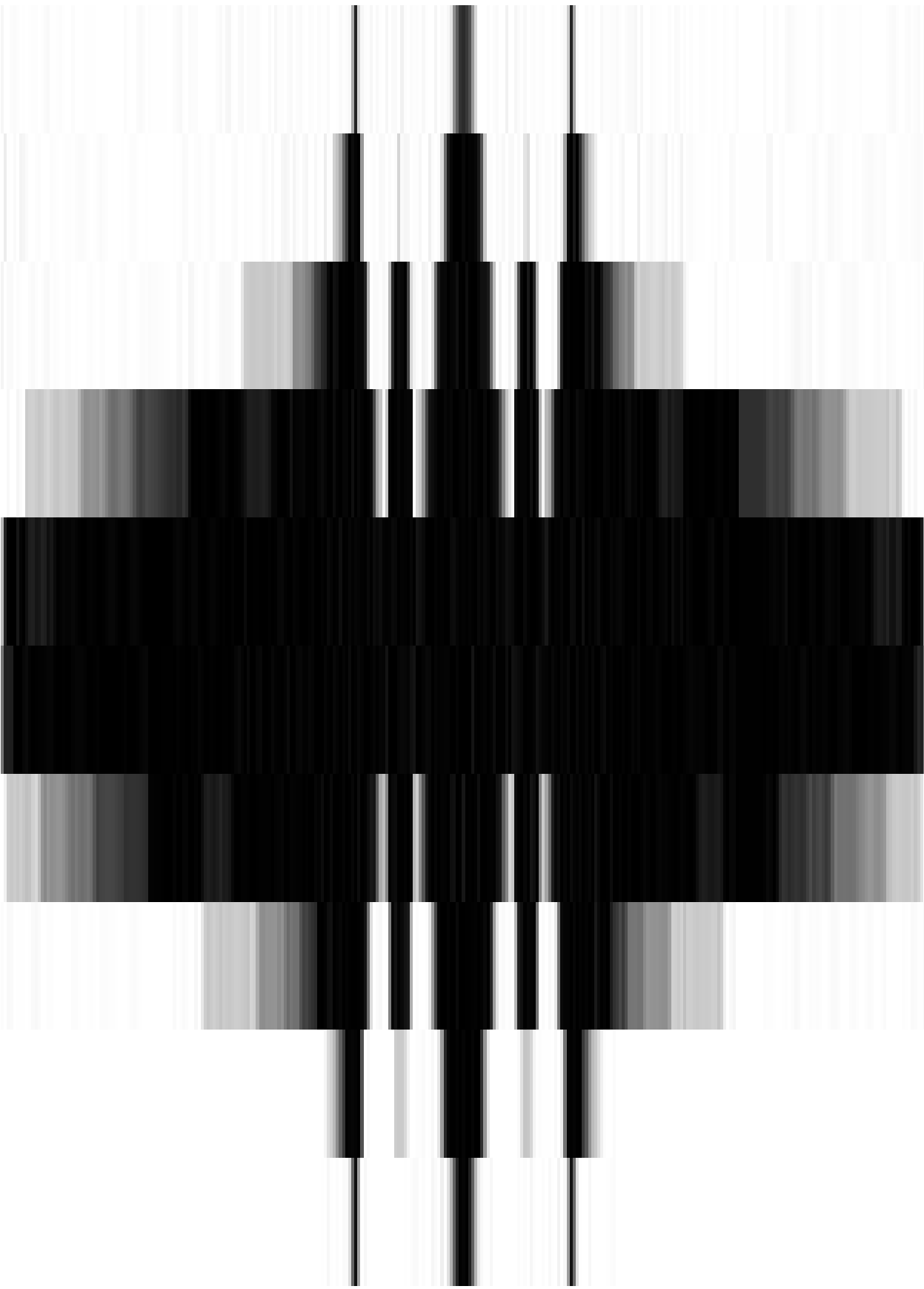
Parallel references:

And he said unto them in his doctrine, “Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the marketplaces, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts: which devour widows’ houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation” (Mark 12:38 – 40).²

“But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, and love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, ‘Rabbi, Rabbi.’

“But be not ye called ‘Rabbi’: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ.

*“But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.
...³*



“Woe unto you” who seek acclaim through pretentious displays of superficial spirituality

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows’ houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation” (Matthew 23:5 – 12, 14).

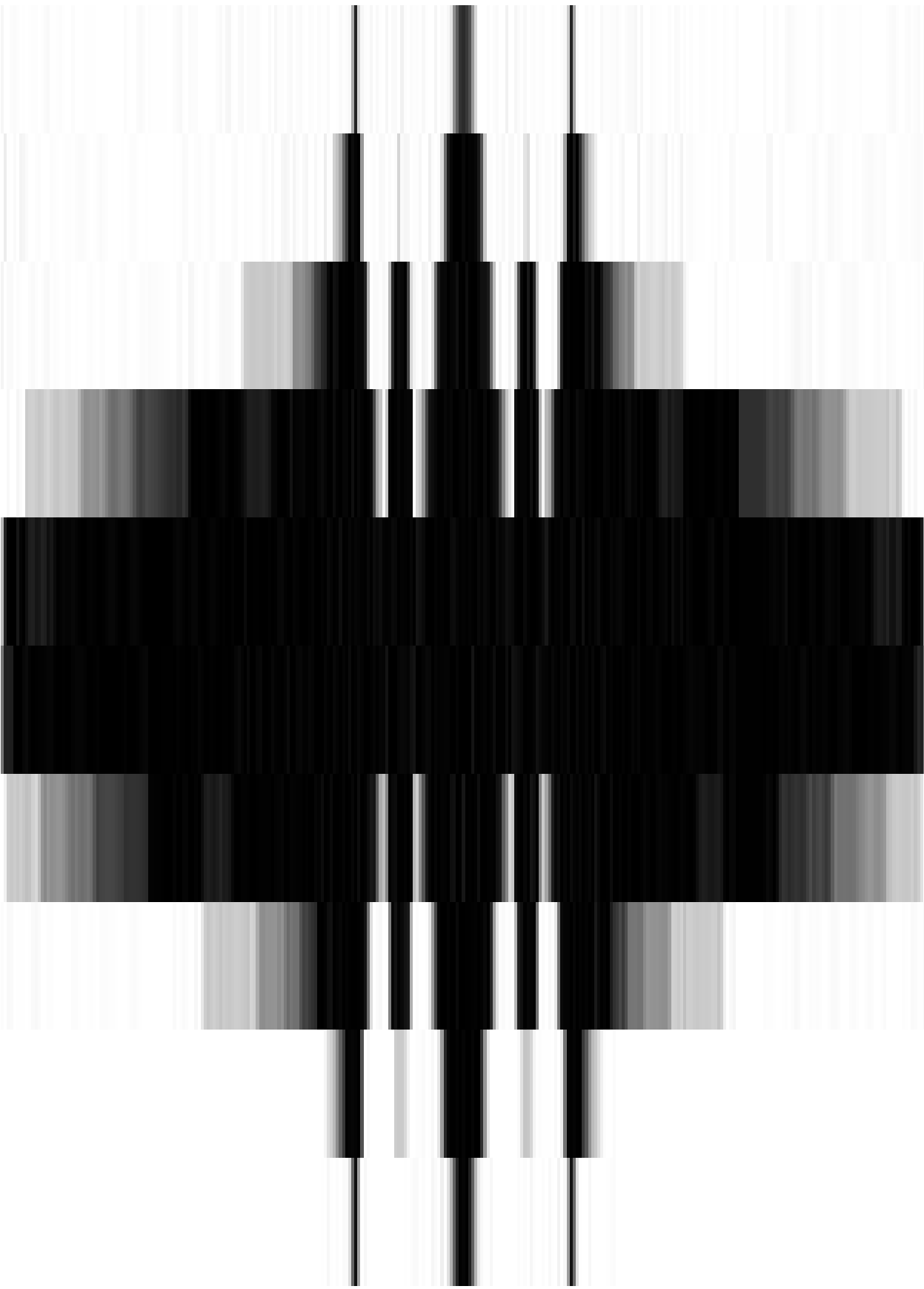
“O you hypocrites, you will attract misery unto yourselves through your love of man’s recognition, having no conscience as to your standing in God’s eyes. Desire for human praise motivates the affected discipline of your outer life, which you put on obvious display, while hypocritically you conceal your failure to pay attention to the spiritualization of your inner life. Woe unto you who forget to cultivate the joys of an earned eternal life, settling instead for a short-lived pretentious status.

“Ignorantly you covet the prominent seats in the synagogues and the uppermost rooms at feasts, and array yourselves in elaborate apparel denoting your station that you might receive the honorific greetings of the people in the marketplaces who feed your vanity.”

Jesus abhorred hypocrisy as noxiously devastating to spirituality. Servants of God should not, out of love for human praise, make a false show of piety in their eagerness to gather the flattery and acclaim of spiritually blind devotees. Jesus cited the tawdry sham of the “scribes and Pharisees” who sought to appear impressive by “making broad their phylacteries”—carrying on their persons large religious scrolls, as amulets—and wearing showy, wide-bordered garments; and reserving always for themselves the most conspicuous and prestigious places of honor. Jesus warned his followers to be wary of those whose insincerity is displeasing to God—to Him who sees the hearts of all. Jesus saw the religious hypocrites of his time as men who used their garb of holiness to obtain the money and property of widows and other naive unprotected persons. They pretended to be pious by making long prayers, which attract the attention of men but draw no notice from God. According to the law of karma, such hypocritical, speciously pious persons can have only one fate—“greater damnation.” That is, they will be steeped in even greater self-created delusion;

the karmic consequences of their hypocrisy and wanton misuse of spiritual authority will condemn them to be far away from God.

Hypocritical behavior is not uncommon among priests, preachers, and teachers of all climes and times. The unscrupulous use any manner of preaching and prayer in an exaggerated show of fervor before their congregations in order to convince others of their holiness—and thus to receive popularity, adulation, and financial largess. Anyone who uses religion for business, “holiness” for personal acquisition, and exploitation of God for material gain creates baneful evil karma. By words and acts such persons blaspheme against God and His laws, and thus attract unto themselves added delusion and a heavy judgment of misery.



Who may rightly use the honorific of “rabbi” or “master”?

To his disciples, in the verses of Matthew, Jesus spoke words of caution as to how titles of honor should not be desired as a means of elevating the status of one’s ego. Exalted titles carry with them exalted responsibility. Jesus reminded the disciples of the onus behind such honorifics as “rabbi” or “master,” for “one is your Master, even Christ”: There is only one Master of all creation and created things, the omnipresent God, whose universal reflection is the Christ Consciousness. All are brethren in that Infinite Christ Consciousness. And as we are all children of God, “Call no man your father upon earth”: Do not limit your paternity as from an earthly father, for the one transcendent God who gave your father to look after you is your true eternal Father.

God works through channels of pure souls as He so chooses, so Jesus reminded the disciples that they must never desire, or appoint themselves, to be called “master,” for Christ Consciousness in everything is the one divine Master, a reflection of God as the Supreme Guru of gurus. But anyone who is fully in tune with the Christ Consciousness, even as Jesus was, is a true master qualified to serve as a guru, if God so wills, to guide disciples to liberation.

In most scriptures the terminology is not precise. But the sages of Hindu scripture were peerless experts in carefully using Sanskrit words according to their nuances of meaning. To understand any scripture, it is necessary to understand the definite meaning of the words, not only from their etymology, but also from the philosophical truth they are intended to convey.

Master means one who is the master, not of others, but of himself. He has complete wisdom-control of his senses. He is not a master who dominates the actions of others by the power of his commanding voice and will, but he who is the owner and wise ruler of his own actions. God is the ultimate owner, and therefore the Supreme Master, of the universe. Those who are one with Him are themselves masters, and can rightly be honored with that title by others. Being established in divine consciousness—in fact, not imagination—they can proclaim their godly state as Christ affirmed his, and not in any way be egotistically affected by it. Having completely subdued the ego, a master neither covets nor flaunts an exalted title as his own. His whole being rather than his words declares his divine consciousness. He who says he is not a master is probably

not a master; and he also is not a master who finds it necessary to declare to others that he is a master.

Essentially, as Jesus pointed out, “Ye are gods”;⁴ but it is spiritually presumptuous to present oneself as such until he has actually realized his divinity and behaves accordingly. One who has not mastered his moods, emotions, and sensory temptations; and who is bothered by life’s many irritants, losing inner peace because others can “get his goat” by a few words of annoyance, is far from expressing himself as a god or a master.

A master may be a jivanmukta, literally, “freed while living.” He has conquered all desires for mortal life, thus destroying the root cause of reincarnation. Even so, there may be subtle traces of karma of past lives not yet fully consumed in the fire of wisdom. The jivanmukta employs his spirituality to free himself, through various measures (as in samadhi meditation), from karma and hidden desires of past lives as well as the present. Jivanmuktas are kings among mortals. In their divine aloofness they can never be hurt no matter what is denied to them.

Once a jivanmukta is completely free from past and present karmic bondage, he is said to be a siddha, “a perfected being.” Perfected beings on earth may be Christlike souls (their consciousness united with the universal Christ Consciousness); they may manifest the paramahansa state, able to enter nirvikalpa samadhi in which they remain conscious simultaneously of the world as well as of God—performing the most exacting duties with no loss of God-perception (as contrasted with the lesser savikalpa samadhi experience of God-perception in trancelike interiorization).

Every master has a mission of spiritual works to perform, boldly in a public arena or in quiet obscurity away from the masses. When a master has a God-given special mission to do on earth, he is a messiah or an avatar, a world savior whose life and message is a lasting legacy of soul-liberation for others. Many masters of God-realization have graced this world, but only a few were messiahs or avatars.

So Jesus was making a very important point when he cautioned his disciples not to be called masters, unless and until they were one with God as Christ Consciousness. That status with its responsibility is no simple matter. Jesus then reminded his disciples: “The greatest among you is he who is humblest and the most serviceful.” This is the truest testimony of attunement with God.

“Whosoever shall exaggerate the merit of his ego in order to attract peoples’ praise and favor will instead be found out and draw to himself criticism and deprecation, and will be abased in the eyes of God. He who is truly great, but cloaks himself in a natural humility, will be exalted before others and in the approbation of God.”



“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them” (Luke 11:44).⁵

Parallel reference:

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity” (Matthew 23:27 – 28).

“Because of your hypocritical action of feigned holiness for effect, you will attract much anguish through the deepening of your ignorance. As the outer surface of a grave is made to look nice, while its inner content is a corruption of flesh and bones, so by your outer veneer of holiness you put on a grand appearance of righteousness, while your inside is filled with a life of decay and despoiled wisdom. People see your beautiful facade, unaware of your inner defilement.”

External purity can hardly influence inner purity, but purity of the inner life invariably brings about purity of the outer life. To hold appearance and superficial actions paramount is to use hypocritical religious manners to hide the gross, unhappy, ungodly, misery-making habits within.



Then answered one of the lawyers, and said unto him, “Master, thus saying thou reproachest us also.”

And he said, “Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers” (Luke 11:45 – 46).

Parallel reference:

Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, saying, “The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers” (Matthew 23:1 – 4).

The lawyers, or scribes, held a privileged position in society during Jesus’ time, respected as authorities on the interpretation of Mosaic Law in religious as well as secular affairs. Fulfilling the dual role of theologian and lawyer, they expounded the Torah to keep the populace in mind of the rules and regulations governing daily life.

Jesus denounced these scholarly experts in religious law as being the kind of teachers who bind heavy duties and financial burdens, hard to be borne, on the shoulders of passively compliant devotees under the pretense of making them spiritual. But the scribes and Pharisees themselves could not bear any burden of such religious disciplines—not practicing what they preached. In their hearts they were not spiritual, performing their religious works and ceremonies only for favorable effect and admiration.

It is no secret that in modern times as of old, there have been unscrupulous lawyers who for mercenary gain and winning their case have obscured truth by clever arguments and legal loopholes, freeing criminals and even sentencing the innocent to ruin or death. The law should be applied with wisdom as a means of supporting divine justice in society, not used as a self-serving expedient that subverts truth and causes suffering to good men.

Jesus noted that the scribes and Pharisees who nominally professed fealty to Moses and his precepts now occupied the Mosaic seat of authority in the temple, supposedly as custodians of the teachings of Moses. Therefore, Jesus advised his disciples to observe whatever good rules they were asked to follow (good rules are good rules even when imposed by unworthy teachers), but not to copy the hypocritical example of those teachers who emoted but emitted no actual works of piety.



“Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres. Therefore also said the wisdom of God, ‘I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute’: That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; from the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zechariah, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, it shall be required of this generation.”⁶

“Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered” (Luke 11:47 – 52).

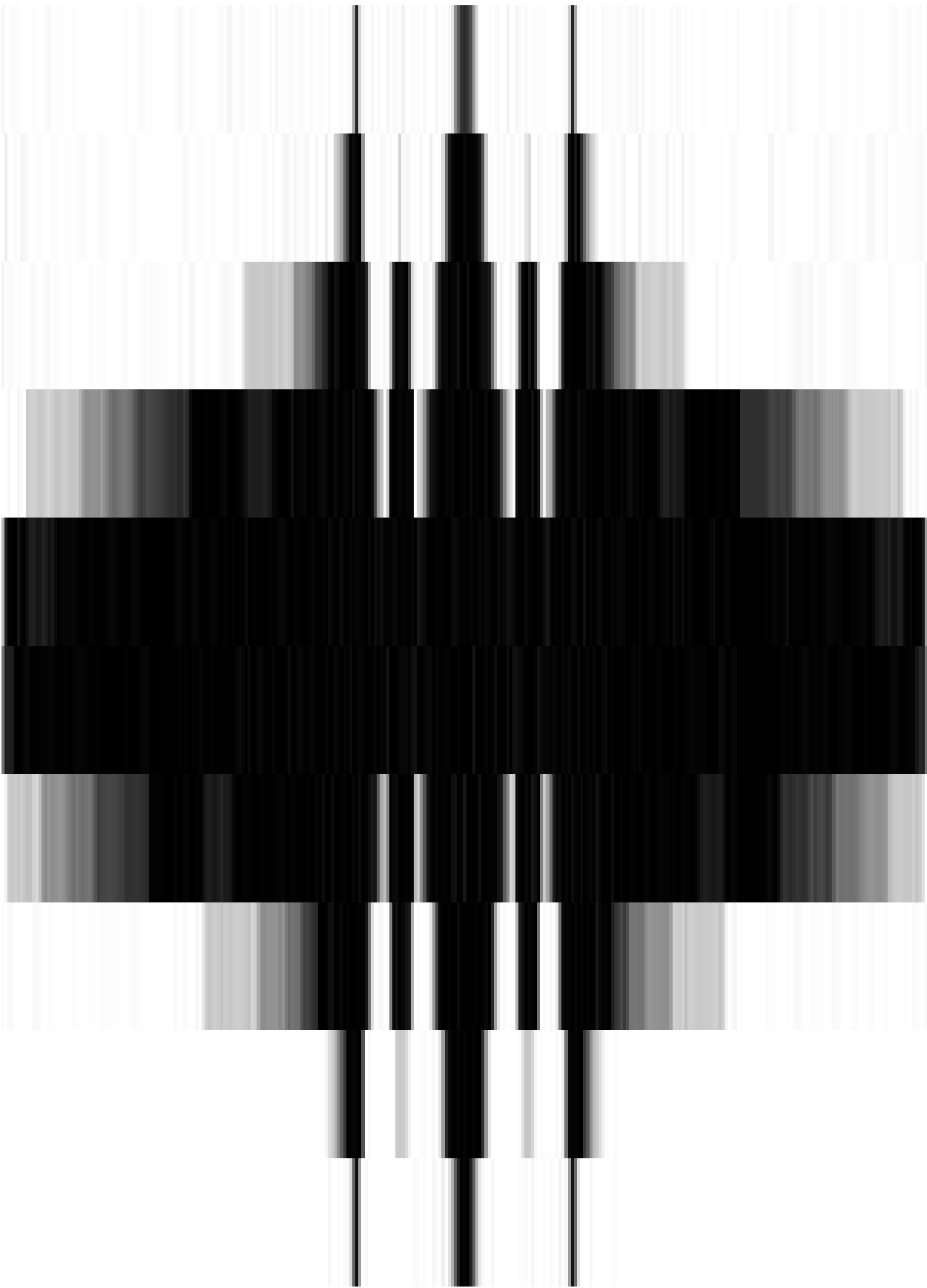
Parallel reference:

“But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in....”

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, and say, ‘If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.’ Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?”

“Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and

some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zechariah son of Berechiah, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this generation” (Matthew 23:13, 29 – 36).⁷



How the cumulative effects of good and evil actions affect the destiny of nations

Jesus then further accused the scribes and Pharisees of hypocrisy “because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous”—those whom their fathers had slain—in an ostentatious sham of disowning the deeds of their forefathers. All the while, they harbored those same instincts inherited from their predecessors—was it not their intention to do the same to Jesus? He saw through their false posturing and compunctious disavowal of the bloody actions of their fathers: “If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers of the blood of the prophets!” However, their wicked tendencies akin to those of their forefathers seethed within them. Their own bad karmic propensities ordained them to attract a birth and socioreligious power in the tradition of their prophet-killing forefathers.

“You human serpents, you generation of evildoers, you shall not escape the many hellish miseries gathering to beset your bodies, minds, and souls. According to the law of karma, the sins accruing from the wickedness born of the shedding of the righteous blood of prophets since the foundation of the world—from the blood of Abel and of Zechariah who perished before the altar of the temple—vibrates in the ether upon this present wicked generation and will cause untold miseries.”

Evil apparently imbibed through heredity or the environment and status of one’s birth is actually due to a person’s own evil acts of past lives. The self-created tendencies thus brought into this life cannot be overcome by hypocritical, pompous, religious rites and observances; they can be erased only by repentance—the giving up of hypocrisy and bad habits—and by concentrating daily on the purification of the soul in devout meditation.

The cumulative evil effects (karma) resulting from the sins of evildoers against righteousness, so long as they remain uncorrected and uncompensated, vibrate in the ether through generations, a chief cause and exacerbation of famines, fires, epidemics, pestilence, earthquakes, wars, bloody feuds and strifes, debauchery and wickedness.⁸ Just as disease germs spread by an unhygienic clan may persist and remain in a community even after the clansmen migrate away, so the sinful vibrating thoughts and tendencies created by the people of one generation in a place persist and continue in the next or many later generations. All the different

modern races of people and nations and societies of the earth are composed in great part of the good and evil vibrations of their forefathers since the earth began.

As an individual is responsible for all the seeds of actions of his past lives, subtly stored up in his subconscious mind, so every individual race and nation and social and familial component thereof is heir to the past actions of its forefathers subtly accumulated in the subconscious mind—the mind-set—of that segment of humanity. For example, this is what contributes to racial differences—the Americans, utilitarians; Hindus of India, spiritual seekers; the English, colonists; the French, liberals; and so forth.

The Hindus love peace because their forefathers loved peace; and some of the Western nations are prone to dissension and fighting because of their warlike and unforgiving ancestry. Every generation suffers or prospers more or less according to some of the past actions of its forefathers. That is the principle Jesus referred to when he said: “The blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world...shall be required of this generation.”

Jesus spoke sternly to the scribes and Pharisees, in effect warning them: “Your hypocrisy and ill intent is drawing unto you untold sorrow and trouble! Through your ignorance and evil example that you impose on others, you close the door of opportunity for those around you who wish to enter the kingdom of heavenly Cosmic Consciousness. You throw away the key of divine knowledge I have offered to you, yourselves not trying to enter the heavenly kingdom by deep meditation and discipline, and thereby you also hinder others ‘that were entering in.’”



“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.

“Woe unto you ye blind guides, which say, ‘Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor!’ Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? And, ‘Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty.’⁹ Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon. And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by Him that dwelleth therein. And he that sweareth by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by Him that sitteth thereon” (Matthew 23:15 – 22).

“According to your evil karma, O you hypocritical leaders, you will attract great misery. You move heaven and earth to make a spiritual convert, but after he has followed your example he is twice as ignorant as yourselves—for the unfortunate one who follows your evil example adds to his ignorance the ignorance of your wicked ways.”

The apparent practice of the religious authorities was to place paramount importance on the material offerings that filled their coffers—the gold used in the temple, the gifts upon the altar. Jesus viewed this practice as blameworthy and therefore corrected the misconception of “ye fools and blind.” Though his response specifically addressed the Pharisees’ perverted judgment about the relative sanctity of different types of oaths, metaphorically he intended a deeper lesson:



“Woe unto you” who defile the altar of the body and the temple of the soul by evil

“Spiritual woe befalls those ignorant spiritual guides who say that when anyone swears by the body, that is, when by evil habits one defiles the sanctity of the body-temple of the soul, it is of no evil consequence (because he apparently, or visibly, loses nothing). How foolish and blind are they who consider transgressions concerning gold (which is only physically useful) as more binding than the transgressions against the body temple, which alone gives value and usefulness to gold!

“Anyone who by evil actions or words defiles the altar of the body also defiles the Spirit’s gift of soul therein. How can you believe that the altar of the body, which holds the soul-gift, is insignificant? Whoever defiles the altar of the body also dishonors the soul enshrined there. Likewise, whoever profanes the temple of the soul automatically treats sacrilegiously the Spirit which dwells there; and that person who by evil actions, words, or thoughts blasphemes against the vibrationless heavenly infinity, the throne of God, also blasphemes against God Himself who reigns there. The altar of the body and the soul residing there, and the temple of the soul and the Spirit in it, and heaven and the Heavenly Father therein—all are important; hence no one in action, words, or thought should transgress against their laws.”



And as he said these things unto them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things: Laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him.

In the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, “Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops” (Luke 11:53—12:3).

To his disciples, Jesus spoke words of warning against the veiled cunning of hypocrisy: “As leaven secretly works in the rising of bread, so hypocrisy secretly inflates the ego and destroys minds and souls. No matter how people keep wickedness hidden behind the mask of feigned goodness, as do the Pharisees, still that wickedness will burst out from the guise that hides it and will make itself manifest to the world.

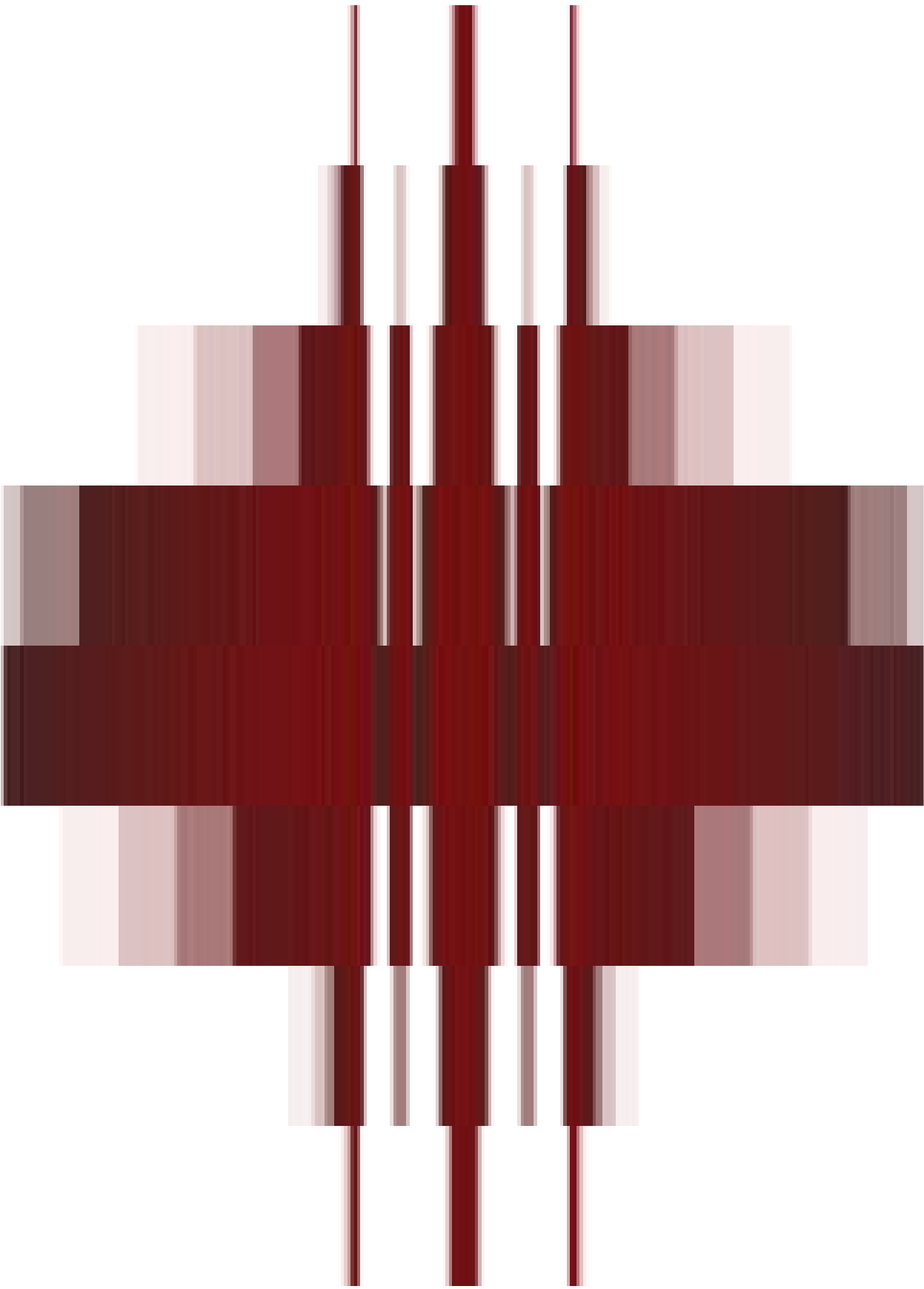
“Nothing can be hidden which will not be known. All good and bad motives and effects are ultimately revealed. Even wicked thoughts that people think and speak within themselves in the dark privacy of their minds vibrate in the ether and are registered there. Evil cannot contain itself; even when spoken or whispered in closets of secrecy, it is apt eventually to be known publicly.”

God, who is omnipresent and omniscient, knows all things good and bad that quietly come and go in human minds and secret acts. There is nothing that can be hidden from Him; for even when a man takes with him to the grave long-held secrets, they are openly read by the all-seeing God. He who is the Mind of all minds and the Life of all the cosmos, knows everything that arises and dies in human consciousness, and in each tremor that happens in nature and in every speck of His empyrean universe.

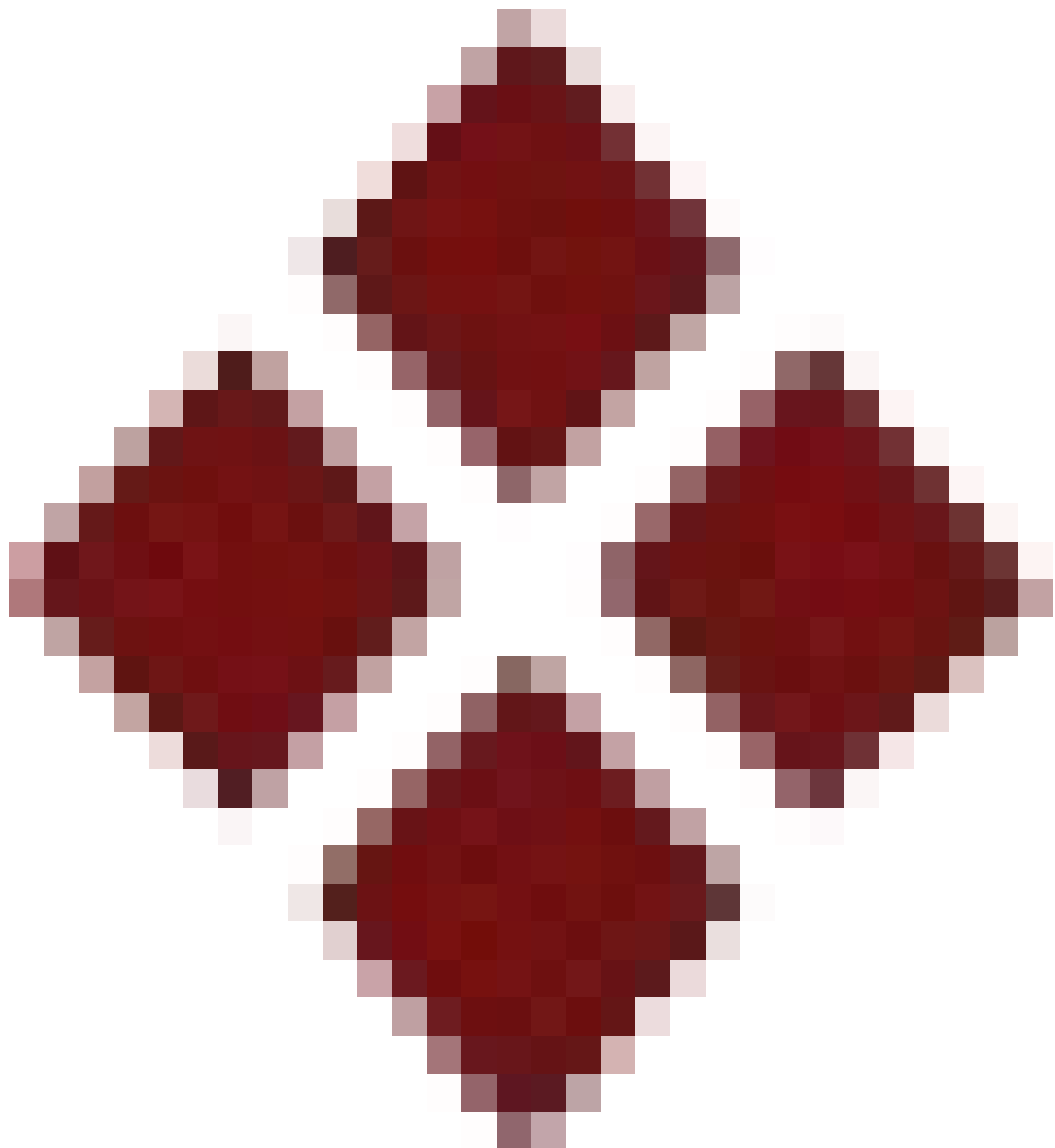


Discourse 56

God-realization: The Heavenly Treasure of Individuals and Nations



**“God First”: The Best Recipe for Individual,
National, and International Well-Being**



**Chaos and Calamities Can Be Averted by Practice of
the Heavenly Ideals of Brotherhood**



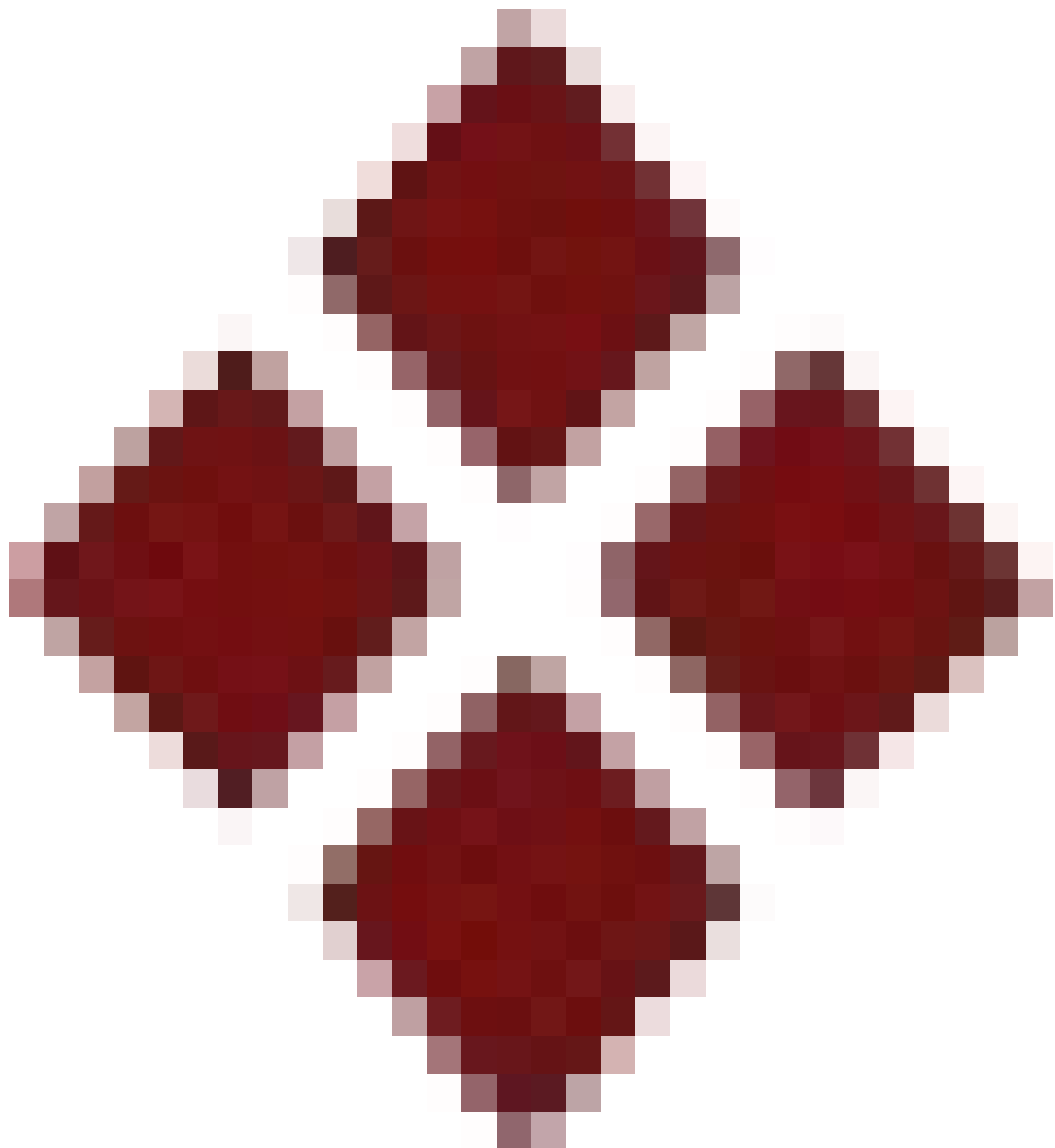
**The Father's "Good Pleasure": Divine Grace That
Bestows Spiritual Emancipation**



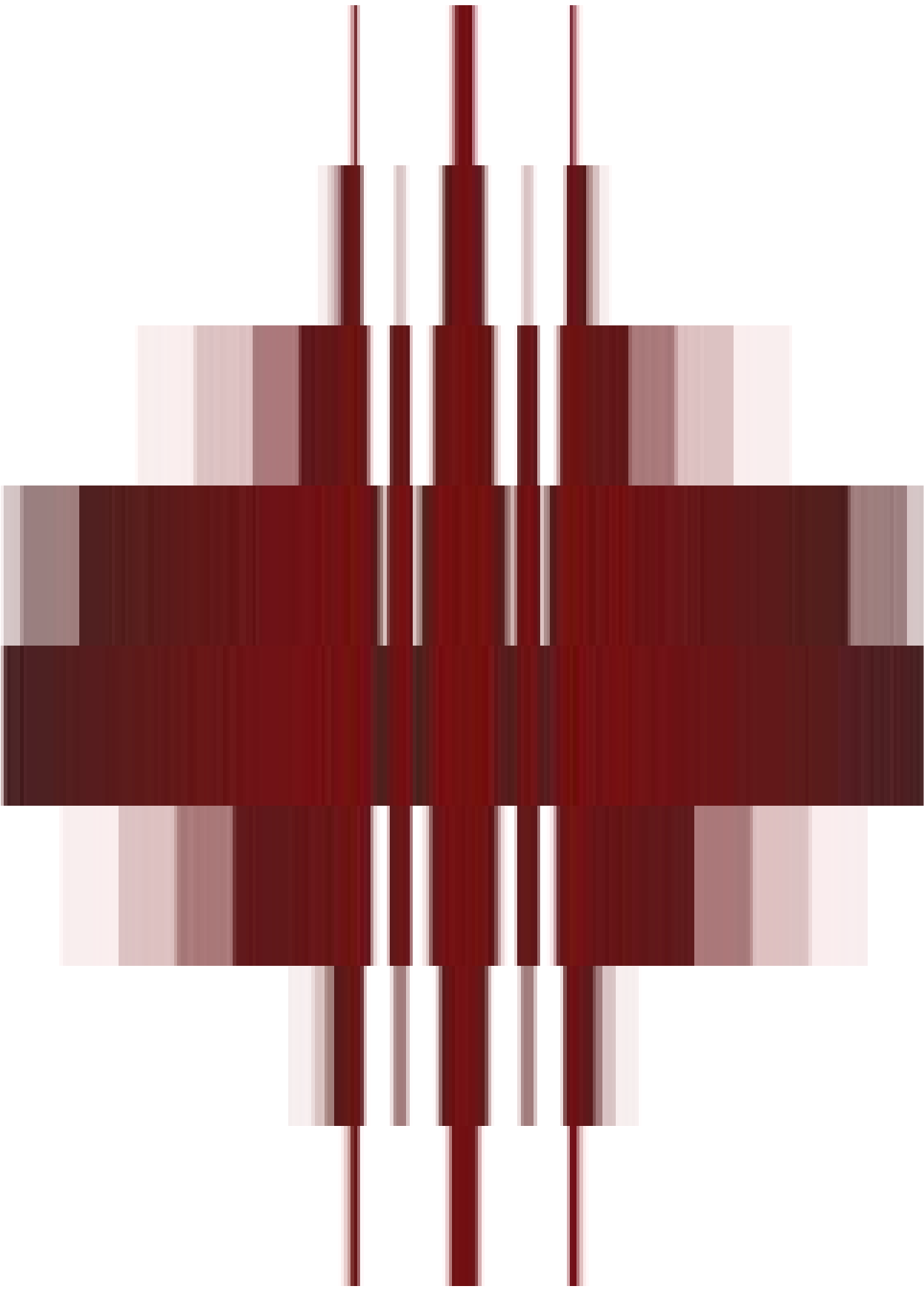
Spiritual Meaning of the Parable of the Faithful and Wise Steward



Watching the Bodily House to Prevent the Entry of the Thief of Delusion



How to Retain a Watchful Awareness of the Inner Presence of God



“The earth would be a veritable heaven if nations as well as individuals would heed Jesus’ admonition to make God the primary aim of life.”

■

And one of the company said unto him, “Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.”

And he said unto him, “Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?”

And he said unto them, “Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.”

And he spake a parable unto them, saying, “The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?’ And he said, ‘This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, “Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.””

“But God said unto him, ‘Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?’ So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

And he said unto his disciples, “Therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment.

“Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls? And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?

“Consider the lilies, how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothe the grass, which is today in the field, and tomorrow is cast into the oven: how much more will He clothe you, O ye of little faith?

“And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But rather seek ye the

kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.

“Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

“Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

“And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.”

Then Peter said unto him, “Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all?”

And the Lord said, “Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath. But and if that servant say in his heart, ‘My lord delayeth his coming’; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; the lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. And that servant, which knew his lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

“I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished! Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, nay; but rather division: For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.”

And he said also to the people, “When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say, ‘There cometh a shower’; and so it is. And when ye see the south wind blow, ye say, ‘There will be heat’; and it cometh to pass. Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time? Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?

“When thou goest with thine adversary to the magistrate, as thou art in the way, give diligence that thou mayest be delivered from him; lest he hale thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and the officer cast thee into prison. I tell thee, thou shalt not depart thence, till thou hast paid the very last mite.”

—Luke 12:13 – 59



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Discourse 56

God-realization: The Heavenly Treasure of Individuals and Nations



And one of the company said unto him, “Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.”

*And he said unto him, “Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?”
(Luke 12:13 – 14).*

“Materially minded man, God and your karma judge your merit regarding the division of the inheritance in question. I am not come on earth to bother about the disposition of properties.” God gave man a mind and a will to so order the welfare of his life. Jesus succinctly points out that God uses the precious lives of His prophets to grant spiritual enlightenment and liberation, not to relieve man of his own initiative and constructive activity to fulfill his worthy desires and make of his life what it should be.



And he said unto them, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:15).

Why covet material extravagance? It is quite usual for people who are excessively endowed to be also excessively unhappy; for their nervous system is entangled in caring for and worrying about their possessions, never feeling quite complete and satisfied, unable to enjoy what they do have. ¹ Jesus also points out the great fallacy in thinking that life is made secure by possessions. He illustrates that point by the following parable.



And he spake a parable unto them, saying, “The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?’ And he said, ‘This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, “Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.””

“But God said unto him, ‘Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?’ So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God” (Luke 12:16 – 21).



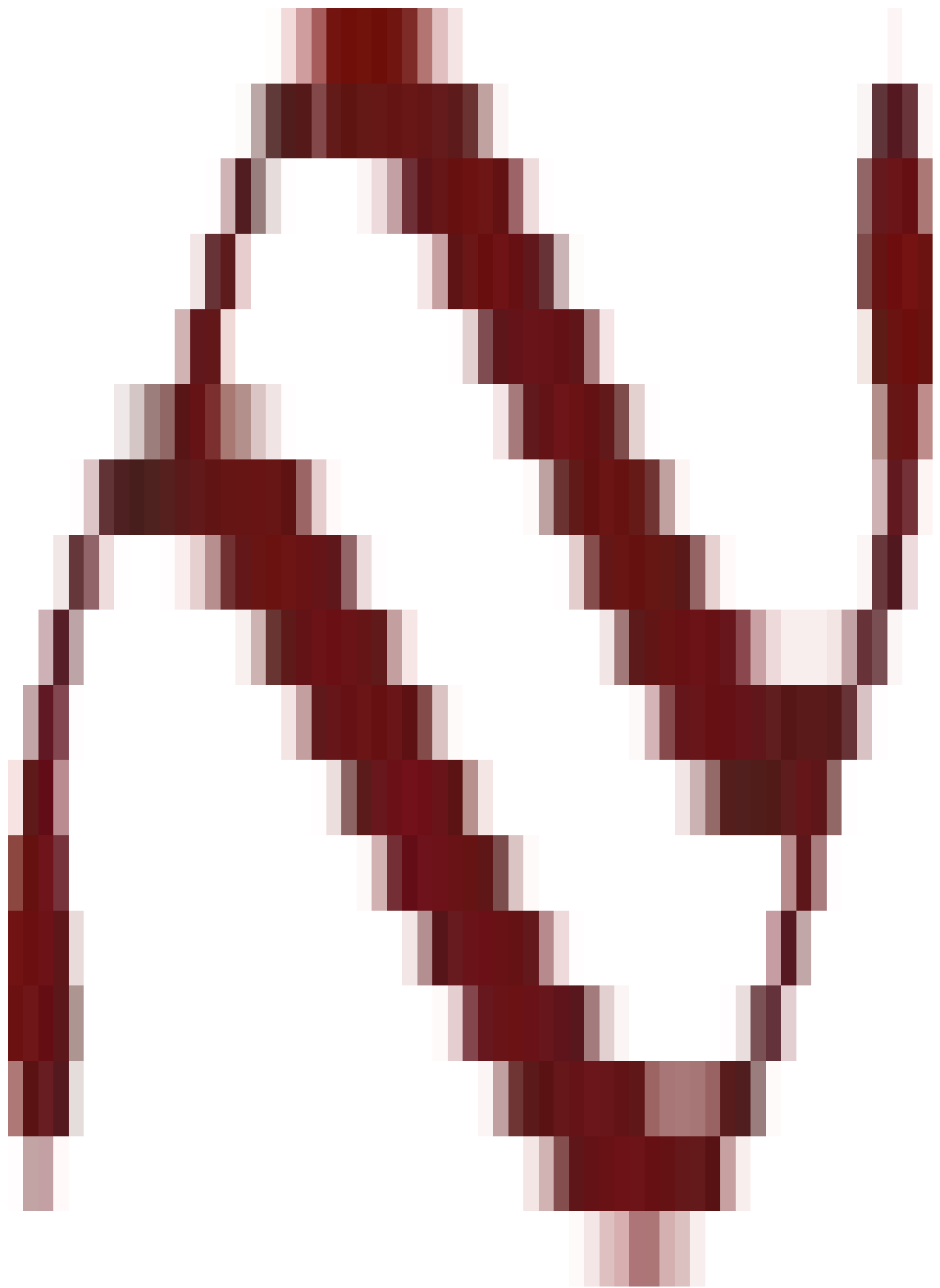
Jesus warns of the false security imparted by material wealth

They are dupes of delusion who are lulled into spiritual complacency by the false security imparted by material wealth. Such persons are unwilling to learn from the millions who have labored hard in the world for the rewards of possessions and prosperity, perhaps accumulating vast fortunes, only to find that affluence has made no significant deposits in the coffers of inner peace and joy. How foolish it is to store up treasures for the fleeting body, which at any moment can be taken away by death; it is wise to give one's primary effort to acquiring soul riches of lasting bliss, wisdom, and divine qualities through daily meditation and service to others, for this is an imperishable wealth from which one is never parted.

Material riches may attract coveted status in the eyes of the world, but they are useless at death. Spiritual riches may not engage worldly admiration, but they guarantee to the soul in the after-death state the true security of eternal freedom and happiness.

The covetous man wants to have more than the next person; but when he has it he is not satisfied, because inevitably he finds someone else with still more than he. People live in a bedlam of misery created by their desires. Materially, the average American has far more than the average citizen of Europe or India or any other nation; but still he is not happy! His satisfaction is seared with anxiety and worry and unending wants.

The very nature of maya conditions man to crave material acquisitions, when even a little observation would reveal their emptiness. Why waste one's years in pursuit of this or that, only to be disillusioned? Be happy now in contact with the inner kingdom of God. That is what Jesus urged; he lived that truth. His happiness was conditioned by nothing; even the body he willingly surrendered. In that inner detachment one is completely free, unaffected by either riches or poverty—changeless within, regardless of circumstances. Such a one enjoys whatever the Lord provides, yet knows in his inner self: "If I never see it again, that is all right." His soul is ever secure in a divine superabundance.

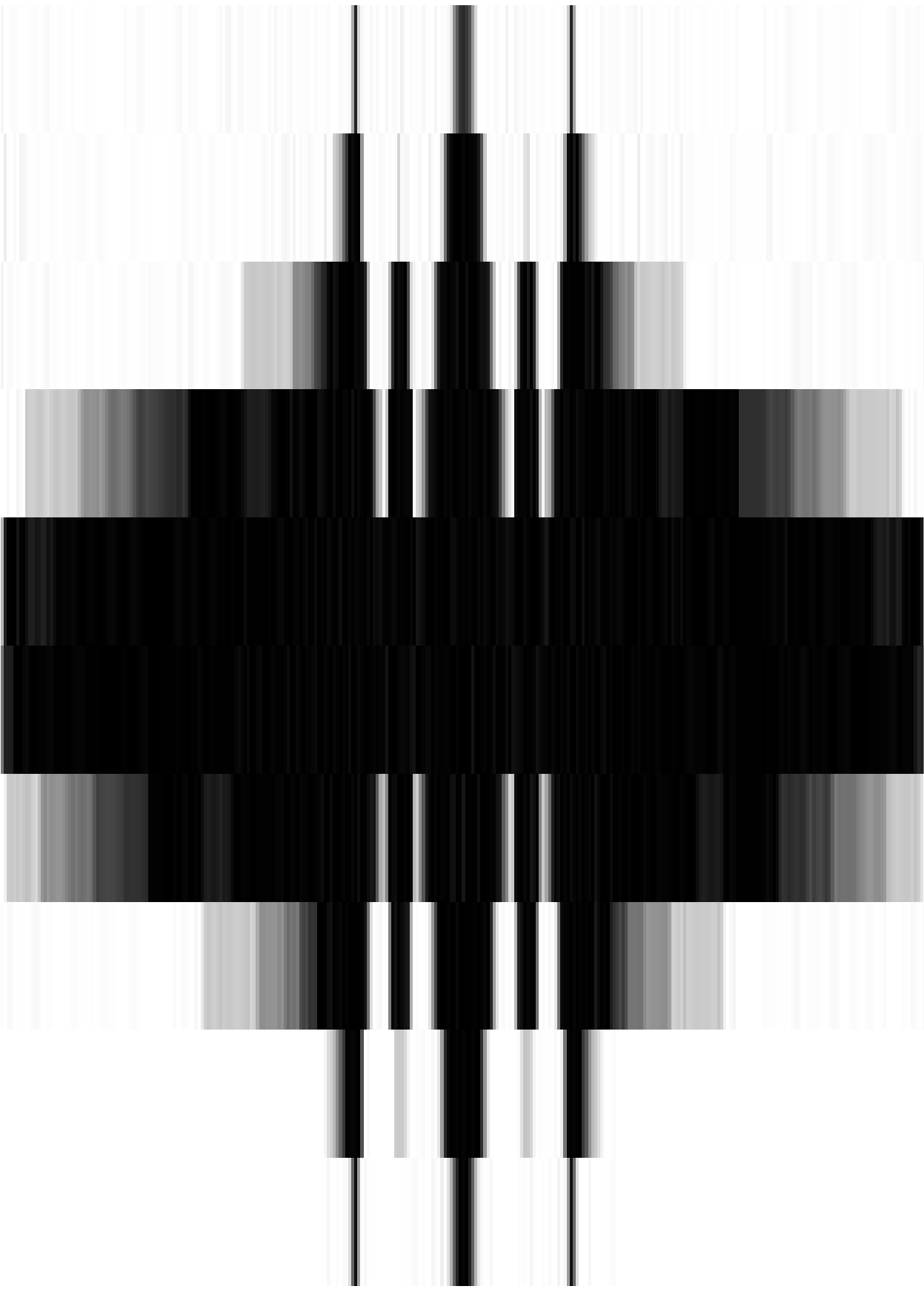


And he said unto his disciples, “Therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment.

“Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls? And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?

“Consider the lilies, how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothe the grass, which is today in the field, and tomorrow is cast into the oven: how much more will He clothe you, O ye of little faith?

“And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Luke 12:22 – 31).²



“God First”: the best recipe for individual, national, and international well-being

The earth would be a veritable heaven if nations as well as individuals would heed Jesus’ admonition to make God the primary aim of life. When people concentrate on political and business selfishness for national and personal accumulation of power and luxuries at the expense of others, the divine law of happiness and prosperity is broken, creating disorder and want in the family, the nation, the world. If the leaders of different nations, instead of extolling aggression and patriotic selfishness, turned the minds of their citizens toward the acquirement of inner peace, love of God and neighbor, and bliss of meditation, then material prosperity, health, and international harmony would automatically be added unto the spiritual treasures of the nations.

Jesus pointed out the supreme wisdom of “God first” as the best recipe not only for individual happiness but also for national and international well-being: “The nations of the earth seek inordinately and selfishly after material prosperity and power, which inevitably leads to hurtful inequities, wars, and destruction. Let them rather seek God and add His principled righteousness to their endeavors, and live harmoniously beneath the canopy of international spiritual brotherhood.³ On nations who live in peace with one another, and in pursuit of God-consciousness, the Heavenly Father bestows lasting prosperity, well-earned by aid to the world family, goodwill, and international business cooperation. God, who is the Provider of the cosmos, knows the needs of individuals and nations; if He feeds the raven and clothes the lily, how much more would He provide everything to the individual and the nation who are in tune with His ideals!”

The state of money-mad modern civilization distinctly shows that selfishness wrecks individual and national happiness. The excessive competitiveness of business life is pernicious because each one tries to take away the possessions of others. Thus in a community of

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enemies and competitors. Jesus urged people to share their possessions with all; when that law is observed, each person in a community of

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Survival in the present-day cutthroat commercial environment is so demanding that the businessperson is run ragged and is unable to concentrate on making his life truly and spiritually happy. Business is made for the happiness of man; man was not made for business. Only that much enterprise is necessary which does not interfere with the spiritual development of man. Advancement in science and technology is to be applauded when used for the betterment of the human race; but in practical application, nations of the earth could enhance the happiness of their citizens if they advocated a consciousness of plain living and high thinking—concentrating their minds more on spiritual development, inspirational literature, philosophy, knowledge of the wonders and workings of creation, and less on frenetic technologies that encourage money-madness.



Chaos and calamities can be averted by practice of the heavenly ideals of brotherhood

If the nations of the earth did not complicate civilization by industrial selfishness, which leads to overproduction and overconsumption in rich countries, and exploitation and parsimony toward weaker nations, then all peoples would have plenty to eat and to live well. But since patriotic selfishness and material superiority are the aims of almost all developed nations, regardless of the needs of their neighbors, the world suffers episodes of chaos and confusion of isms resulting in famine, poverty, and the avoidable miseries of wars. The events that have marked the first half of this twentieth century have manifestly shown that national security and prosperity can never be assured by patriotic and industrial selfishness, which have brought on economic disasters, two world wars, unemployment, fears, insecurity, starvation, and the natural calamities of earthquakes, hurricanes, droughts (which by the operation of mass karma are the indirect offspring of the accumulated evil actions of individuals and nations).

Modern chaotic conditions the world over are the result of ungodly living. Individuals and nations can be protected from self-generated utter destruction if they live by heavenly ideals of brotherhood, industrial cooperation, and international exchange of earthly goods and spiritual experiences. The present economic system of profiteering and exploitation has failed; a brotherhood of nations and a brotherhood of necessary industries and industrialists can alone bring lasting prosperity to the world.

The Great Depression of the

1930

s humbled many millionaires who were sure of their financial acumen to preserve their mighty fortunes. Even the shrewdest businessmen became bewildered children in the hands of destiny and depression, knowing not which way to turn. The spiritual laws of “unselfishness” and “including the prosperity of others in one’s own prosperity” were broken; hence, the worldwide collapse of the industrialist economic system. Industrial selfishness was precipitated from dire human greed for gold, leading to unfair suicidal competition and the

dumping of prices to destroy the competitor. When the materially minded businessman's brain is befuddled with greed, his intelligence institutes plans that fail one after the other. This is the price all materialistic God-forgetting egotists are bound to meet sometime or other.

By giving artificial monetary value to industrial production, man has created strife between capital and labor, systematically causing recurrent inflations and depressions. Capital and labor, like brain and limbs, should cooperate for the overall welfare of the body and soul of the nation, rather than fighting each other and thereby ensuring their own mutual destruction. Brain and hands both cooperate to maintain the body and share the food in the stomach; so also capital (the brains of society) and the labor (its hands and feet) must cooperate to make life prosperous and to share the bounty they produce. Neither capital nor labor should get special preference, avoiding the pitfalls of both imperialistic and socialistic forms of government. Capital and labor each has its confirmed place and both must do their respective duties in equality. Everybody should be provided food, clothing, shelter, education, and medical care through sharing of the national wealth; or everybody should equally shoulder the burden of poverty if it comes unavoidably through the inclemencies of nature. There should be no inequitable distribution of basic necessities for a progressive material, mental, and spiritual existence; the have-nots against those who have is the root cause of crime, greed, selfishness, and other untold social evils.

A family member who becomes sick or disabled is not an object of charity, but honorably partakes of the family food and financial means. The same should hold good for each member of the world family. No one should starve because he is unable to find employment or because he is old or disabled. If the nations of the earth wanted to please God, they would live according to Christlike principles as brothers in a United States of the World, exchanging commodities so that no individual would suffer from lack, famine, or poverty.

It is imperative now that individuals and nations forsake selfishness to feed and clothe the international body. National citizenry should subdue preoccupation with self-interest and learn to acquire wisdom, and to meditate and be in tune with the Infinite, so that they collectively feed the national soul with all-round happiness. Nations living in tune with God and His ideals of brotherhood and peace can endure for centuries without wars or famine, in perpetual prosperity and spiritual happiness.⁴ Nations who are rich in prosperity but lacking in wisdom and God-bliss may lose their top-heavy materiality through civil war,

fight between capital and labor, and troubles with envious neighbors jealous of their prosperity. One nation possessing abundance side by side with another nation starving to death can never be a formula productive of peace on earth.

Nations must look after one another or they are doomed. That is why Jesus speaks to the nations of the earth: "O you nations, do not be selfish and think only of food, industry, and raiment, in utter forgetfulness of brotherhood and God, the Giver of all things, or you will bring self-created disaster on yourselves through your ignorance and its attendant wars, pestilence, and other miseries."

Prosperity often dulls the social conscience: "What do we care for other nations: We worked to create our prosperity so that we could roll in plenty! Why should they not do the same?" Callous arrogance is shortsighted. Enduring national prosperity depends not only upon natural resources and the initiative of the nation's citizens, but primarily upon the moral conduct, harmony, and spiritual living of the people. No matter how successful a nation may be, if it becomes debauched, selfish, and inharmonious, it will have civil wars, treachery, and foreign aggression to disrupt its complacency and good fortune.

Hence, the admonition of Jesus that no individual or nation should be selfish and give entire thought to food or raiment or acquirement of earthly treasure, but should be humble, share prosperity with needy brothers, and acknowledge God as the only Owner and Giver of all the gifts of the earth.



“Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Luke 12:32 – 34).⁵

“F ear not, my little band of disciples, for through your devotion you have justified yourself to the Father and He is pleased to give you the kingdom of Omnipresence, your birthright as His children, whom He has made in His image.”



The Father's "good pleasure": divine grace that bestows spiritual emancipation

Jesus' words point out that though the devotee's personal effort is required to realize the image of God within his soul, spiritual emancipation is ultimately dependent upon divine grace, "your Father's good pleasure." No one can wrest the spiritual kingdom from God solely by following spiritual law, for the Heavenly Father reserves the right to give salvation when He thinks fit. Every man is bound to recover his divinity, even though he be deeply buried beneath the debris of incarnations of delusion. It has been the "good pleasure" of the Heavenly Father to stamp His perfect image in the soul of all His human children; and when they forsake their identification with their human nature and bring out their perfect divine image, then and then only the Heavenly Father is pleased to receive His prodigal children back in His kingdom of immortality.

Jesus goes on to enunciate the duty of the devotee of absolute renunciation who seeks God alone, and toward that end forsakes everything else:

"As your single-hearted desire is to know God, for which you have chosen to follow the path of renunciation, divest yourself of your earthly entanglements, sell your property and give the proceeds to serve a greater good and to help the poor and the needy. Do not put your trust in bags of material possessions that age and decay with use. Carry with you the ever new receptacle of meditation-woven intuition in which you store heavenly treasures of imperishable divine qualities—wisdom, bliss, consciousness of Omnipresence—which will never fail you. Such treasure cannot be pilfered by the thief of death or destroyed by the moth of time. Worldly people look for security in the uncertainties of material pleasures and acquisitions, but let your heart be concentrated on your meditation-acquired everlasting joy of God-realization."



“Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; then when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

“And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.”

Then Peter said unto him, “Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all?”

And the Lord said, “Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath. But and if that servant say in his heart, ‘My lord delayeth his coming’; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; the lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. And that servant, which knew his lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more” (Luke 12:35 – 48).

Parallel references:

“But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, that he shall make him ruler over all his goods. But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, ‘My lord delayeth his coming’; and shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matthew 24:43 – 51).

“Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, watch” (Mark 13:33 – 37).



Spiritual meaning of the parable of the faithful and wise steward

“Keep your spiritual will ready and concentrated within on the lights, or stars, in the spinal centers by which you can lead your consciousness from finite body identification to the Infinite—sending your consciousness and life force through these centers of light into Spirit. Be true devotees waiting attentively for the divine Cosmic Consciousness to be manifest in your bodily house, after that Cosmic Consciousness returns from its wedded unity with all nature and thus distinctly makes itself manifest through your consciousness without the hidden covering of nature’s manifestations.

“When the Cosmic Consciousness comes and knocks at the gates of the devotee’s intuition, it must be expectantly received with devotion. Those devotee-servants of God are blessed with eternal emancipation when the Cosmic Consciousness arrives in their consciousness and finds them diligently alert with wisdom and watchfulness, ready to receive God and disband ignorance.

“Verily I declare by the truth that I feel within me, when God shall thus come to those faithful devotees, He will serve them with a repast of true wisdom and divine communion. And when He comes twice or thrice and is received in the same watchful consciousness of the devotees, they will be blessed with spiritual freedom for having passed all the tests of divine communion.

“That devotee is a worthy servant who keeps his bodily and mental house well guarded with wisdom, allowing no opportunity for the thief of ignorance suddenly to break through his consciousness and steal his spiritual qualities. Just as a stealthy thief is unable to take by surprise a watchful servant, so also the faithful devotee remains at all times ready for any sudden, subtle coming of the “Son of man,” a manifestation or experience of the Christ Consciousness, or realization of the infinite Christ Consciousness as incarnate in the body as the soul, the divine Self through whose emergence and intuition God is realized.

“The true devotee is always patient and persevering, devotionally prepared for the Divine Visitation, no matter when it comes unannounced; but the fitfully wise devotee, sometimes attentive but then slipping into restless inattention, often misses the opportune moment of spiritual manifestation. That servant who is unceasingly faithful and constantly wise and watchful is made master by the

Lord God of the spiritualized bodily and mental house, with the duty of overseeing the servant-senses, controlling and sustaining them with the proper dole of the meat of wisdom. That servant-devotee who is consistent in governing all his faculties with wisdom finds complete self-mastery over himself by the permanent contact of the innate Lordly Christ Consciousness.

“But the careless and whimsical devotee does not meditate dutifully every day, thinking that his lapses matter little because of a delay in the manifestation of God-consciousness. Sensing no immediate need to resume his laborious spiritual obligations, he rather momentarily regresses and ill-treats his servant-senses and insults and misuses the maidens of his fine feelings to enjoy sense objects and therewith becomes drunk with delusion. Because of the devotee’s intermittent worthy endeavor, the innate Christ Consciousness may come someday to manifest consciously to him; but finding him spiritually negligent and unheeding, will instead separate and go away from the careless consciousness. That devotee, whose devotion had erstwhile given him some contact of God but which was now lost through negligence, becomes classed with the unbelievers who never have God-communion.

“The devotee who intuitively felt God’s will and did not prepare himself to obey that will and to meet the divine tests in order to do so, shall find himself lashed by self-doubts and the acute remorse of losing God after finding Him. But that devotee who errs because he is yet unmindful of the joyous fulfillment of God’s coming will suffer less. Much watchfulness and spiritual sanctity is required of devotees with wisdom, just as men expect much from responsible social leaders.”



Three classes of spiritual advancement

First, Jesus speaks of advanced devotees who should never lower their consciousness by giving undue attention to the body, but should concentrate on the seven receptacles of divine consciousness and energy in the spine and brain so that they might never be invaded by ignorance, but be always ready to receive the manifestation of God. The Lord is hidden behind His consort, Nature, busy with creation, but He will disband all delusions of natural phenomena and reveal Himself as light and Cosmic Consciousness to the true devotee “when He will return from the wedding” of Spirit and Nature.⁶

Secondly, Jesus speaks of those devotees who have some God-perception, but whose spiritual equilibrium is yet unstable. God may come, owing to the devotee’s spasmodic devotion, but go away if He finds the devotee at that moment negligent and careless, and indulging in the senses. Those devotees who have consciously experienced the manifestation of God and yet toy with sensory temptations find that in their dereliction they have missed an unexpected visitation of God because of His precipitous departure from their unprepared consciousness. For having found God, the Emancipator of the universe, and then suddenly losing Him, the mental suffering of the slothful devotee is acute —“That servant, which knew his lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.”

God always responds to the devotee’s devotion; but if the devotee mixes his spiritual aspirations with an unspiritual life, God goes away after granting the devotee a mere glimpse of Himself. Even so, that tantalizing touch of the Lord should encourage a more sustained divine effort. Multitudes do not believe that the actual contact of God is possible; but the accomplished yet careless devotee knows differently, even if for only a little while. His suffering at losing God is a reminder that he will be able to know God permanently by forsaking wayward unspiritual habits.

Then Jesus speaks of the third class of devotees, those who follow spiritual rules mechanically—“he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes.” If by chance such devotees contact God for a trice in meditation, they do not suffer much for losing Him, because of lack of depth in their spiritual feeling for God.

God never inflicts “stripes” on His devotees, but they cause themselves pangs of suffering through their own folly in which they lose God after once having some contact with Him.

It is not difficult to attract some inner perception or feeling of God’s presence when the devotee’s devotion is ripe. But to maintain constant contact with God, the devotee must be ever watchful of his consciousness, practicing the presence of God in wakefulness and remaining in that awareness even in the states of deep sleep and dreams. Any devotee who emphasizes any bodily or mental activity that preempts an inner focus of wholehearted concentration on God cannot retain Him permanently.



Watching the bodily house to prevent the entry of the thief of delusion

The soul has the authority to discipline its servant-senses. Each sense is given a special assignment, and the intuition has the important work of watching the bodily house to prevent it from being invaded by the thief of cosmic delusion. The “Son of man,” the Christ Consciousness incarnate and operative in the body as the soul, is ever present though hidden deep behind cosmic delusion. The servant-senses should be kept alert for that unknown hour when the master, the Christ within, owner of the bodily house, manifests, lest it find the servant-faculties sleeping the sleep of delusion.

The sincere devotee is duty-bound to keep the bodily house impervious to invasion by the thief of delusion, preventing it from being broken into and ravaged by misery and ignorance. The faithful and wise devotee becomes the divinely appointed chief steward over his household of senses, and nourishes them with the meat of discipline and wisdom when they have reached the “season,” or state, of soul willingness to be good. Blessed is that devotee when the Christ Consciousness manifests and finds him meditating and properly governing his sensory servants. That spiritually watchful devotee, having rightly guided all the senses, will also have control of the properties of soul qualities, and with them all requisite material power.

By contrast, the negligent devotee succumbs to a feeling that his meditation is useless, as God continues to delay manifesting within him. He thus starts smiting his well-behaved senses with the rod of temptations, and goads them to enjoy sense pleasures, joining with them in drunken delusion. If a Divine Visitation manifests within him due to his past good actions, at that time when he is least expectant and prepared that experience will be summarily severed from his consciousness. He will find himself classed as a hypocrite because he made a pretense of performing appointed spiritual duties and yet in his heart he was not convinced that spiritual perseverance would result in God-consciousness. He will weep and be furious at himself for the weaknesses that have led to his isolation from God.

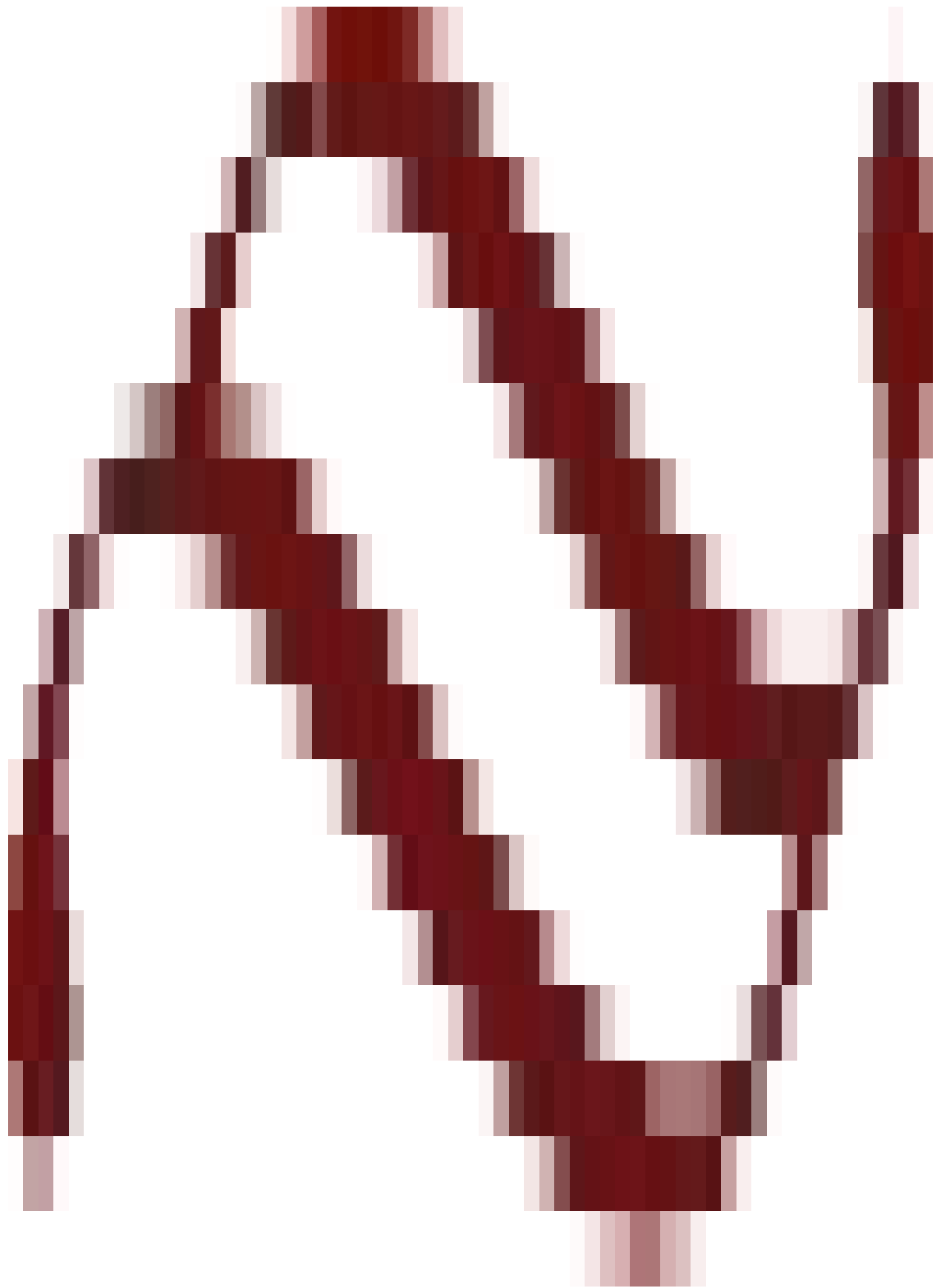


How to retain a watchful awareness of the inner presence of God

The highest spiritual habit by which the devotee can retain a watchful awareness of the inner presence of God is to keep the consciousness always centered on the spiritual eye. The ordinary person's mind is habitually restless, given primarily to worldly matters, which by their changeful kinetic nature dissipate the attention. What is necessary is to balance life's duties with meditation on God, by which one learns to focus the mind in a most wonderful way. When a spiritually equilibrated person wants to accomplish a task, he is able to concentrate the full power of his disciplined attention on it, and it is done! When the concentration is fixed on God, its outward expression is a dynamic force for accomplishment.

Earnest devotees must create the spiritual habit of thinking of God throughout the day. Even when working or talking or mixing with others, one can keep the mind resting in Him. There is an inward stillness and peace that the world cannot ruffle. When one is cushioned in the habit of practicing the presence of God, the sharp barbs of mortal habits of body consciousness have no piercing effect. Each night in meditation, the devotee should close his eyes to the world and practice deep meditation and prayer: "Lord, I have been dragging the body all day long. Give me freedom in Thy consciousness." The mind will argue that meditation is a drudgery in darkness, but one must persevere. He who with faith and perseverance enters the silence each night, and again each morning, will find great reward of abiding peace and calmness, precursor to the unveiled manifestation of the Infinite Presence.

Therefore it behooves all devotees to be determined acolytes of meditation, and always to keep the altar of devotion aglow in the temple of the soul, so that no matter when God suddenly manifests, His subtle coming will be detected and received by the devotee. The sage-poet Tagore wrote: "Have you not heard His silent steps? He comes, comes, ever comes."⁷ It is the perpetual spiritual vigil and devotional magnetic expectation of the devotee that hears these silent steps of God's presence.



“I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished! Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, nay; but rather division: For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.”

And he said also to the people, “When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say, ‘There cometh a shower’; and so it is. And when ye see the south wind blow, ye say, ‘There will be heat’; and it cometh to pass. Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time? Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?” (Luke 12:49 – 57).⁸



Messengers of God's wisdom bring the fiery vibration of manifested Truth

“I am come on earth to spread the fire of wisdom, which will mercilessly burn all barriers of ignorance. Now that fire is already kindled; how can I feel satisfied until the flame of wisdom conflagrates all dark delusion that shuts God out from the lives of His earthly children? Some of you think that I have come on earth only to give peace; you are mistaken, for my wisdom is going to create also division between the good and the bad. Those who follow me in truth and understanding will separate themselves from those who live in darkness. Peace cannot reign in a family where some members follow my Truth teachings and others persist in views fostered by satanic delusion. ⁹

“O you who so easily read the signs of nature to foretell the coming weather, why do you not understand the significance of this time of revelation of God's word through me; and why do you not judge for yourselves, uninfluenced by the ignorance of others, what is right?”

Divine messengers are God's living fire on earth. They are as a flame of enlightenment, not of chastisement; thus Jesus prevented his disciples when they wanted to “command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them”¹⁰ who opposed the works of Jesus. The wisdom-fire of which Jesus spoke was the Christ Intelligence incarnate in him. In that manifested Wisdom is the vibratory light and power of Spirit, the true “baptism to be baptized with.” John the Baptist had said of Jesus: “He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”¹¹

Wisdom, the fiery vibration of manifested Truth, gives peace and emancipation to those who are in tune with it, but burns those who behave contrarily.¹² A fire handled properly gives warmth and light, but scorches any who touch it in careless disregard for its power. True devotees harmonize themselves with truth by raising their vibration through spiritual discipline, and thus remain in tune with its blessings. But ignorant persons who go against truth by wrongdoing make themselves miserable by friction with the universal law of cause and effect.



“When thou goest with thine adversary to the magistrate, as thou art in the way, give diligence that thou mayest be delivered from him; lest he hale thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and the officer cast thee into prison. I tell thee, thou shalt not depart thence, till thou hast paid the very last mite” (Luke 12:58 – 59).¹³

Jesus warns of the karmic consequences of wrongdoing, acting without spiritual discrimination. Any devotee who in his introspection finds that his adversary, his bad karma from past evil actions, has arraigned him before the magistrate of the cosmic law of cause and effect, must pray for deliverance from reaping the results of his bad actions; for most people condemned by the judge of cosmic law are delivered into the prison of suffering by the officers of karmic tendencies arising from evil actions. Jesus then admonishes: “I tell you that you cannot get away from the tribunal of the cosmic law of cause and effect governing all human actions until you have paid fully by working out your evil karma through suffering, reformation, and prayer.”

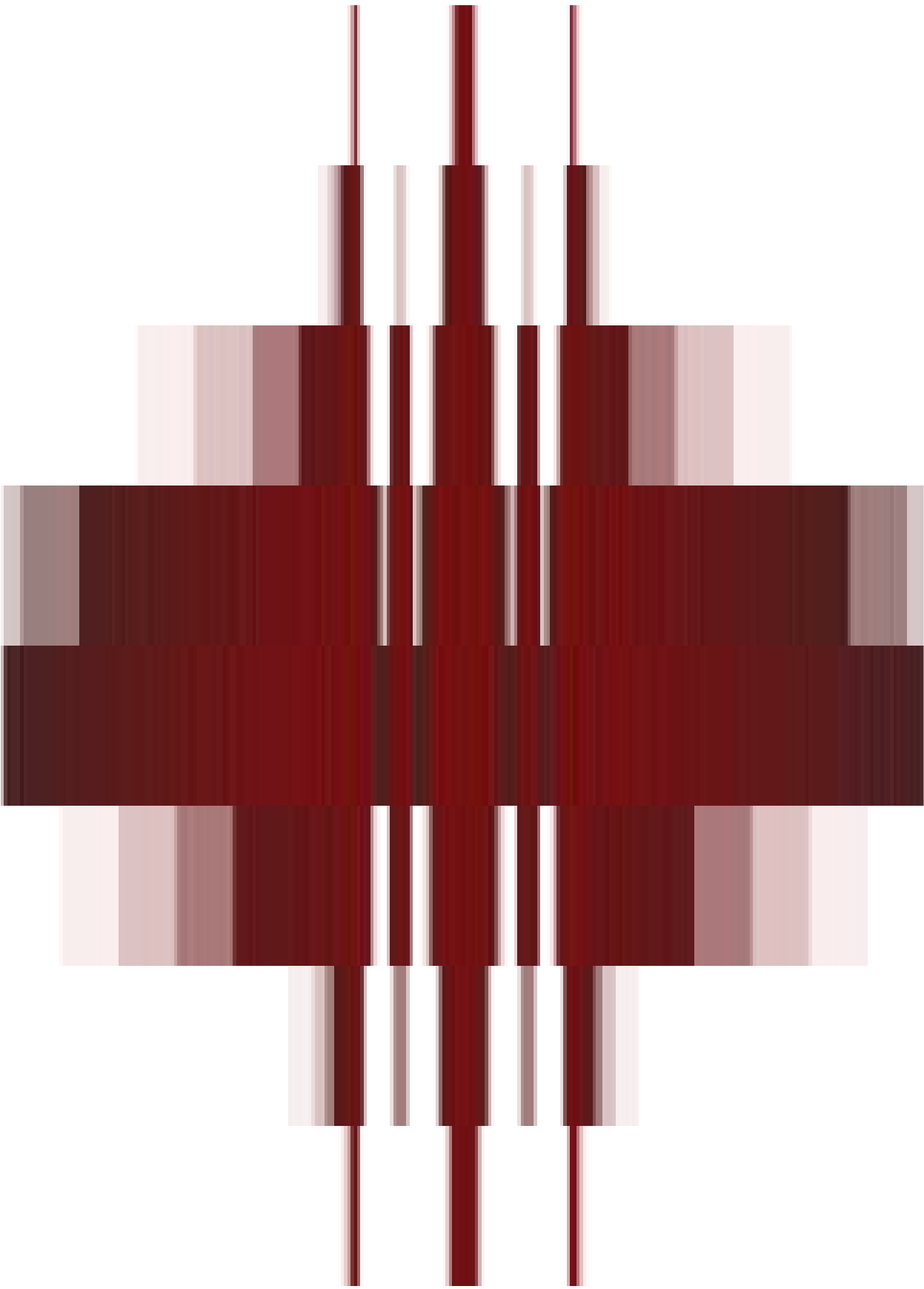
Man can be partially and in time wholly free from the effects of his evil karma if with sincere devotion he continuously prays deeply for pardon to the framer of cosmic law, the Supreme Divine Jurist, man’s ultimate recourse to contravening grace and redemption.



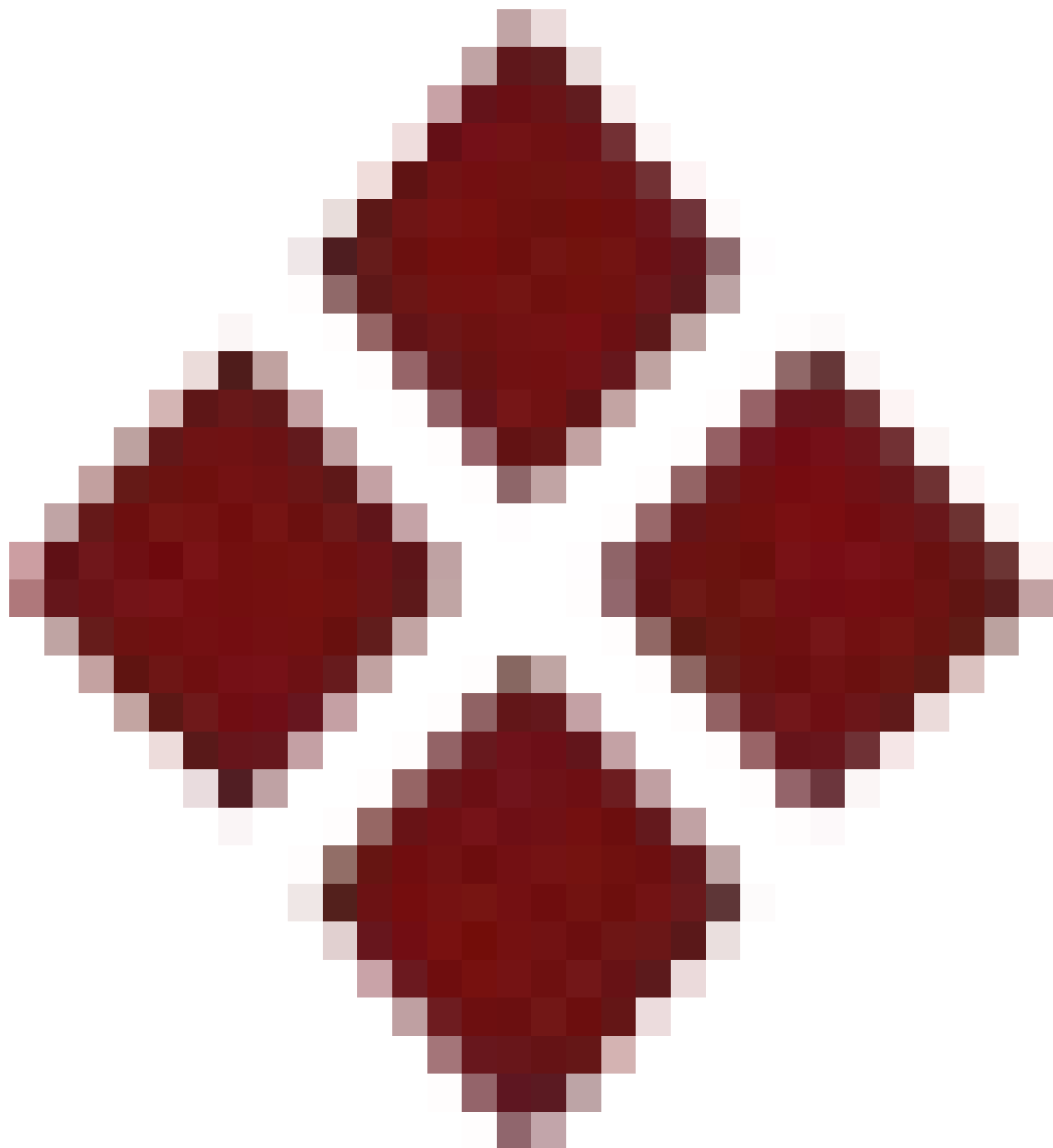
Discourse 57

Will Few or the Many Find Salvation?

**Jesus Affirms the Role of the Guru in the Disciple's
Liberation**



How the Intercession of a Guru Mitigates the Effects of Past Bad Karma



**Without the Saving Grace of the Guru, the Disciple Is
Unable to Enter God's Kingdom**



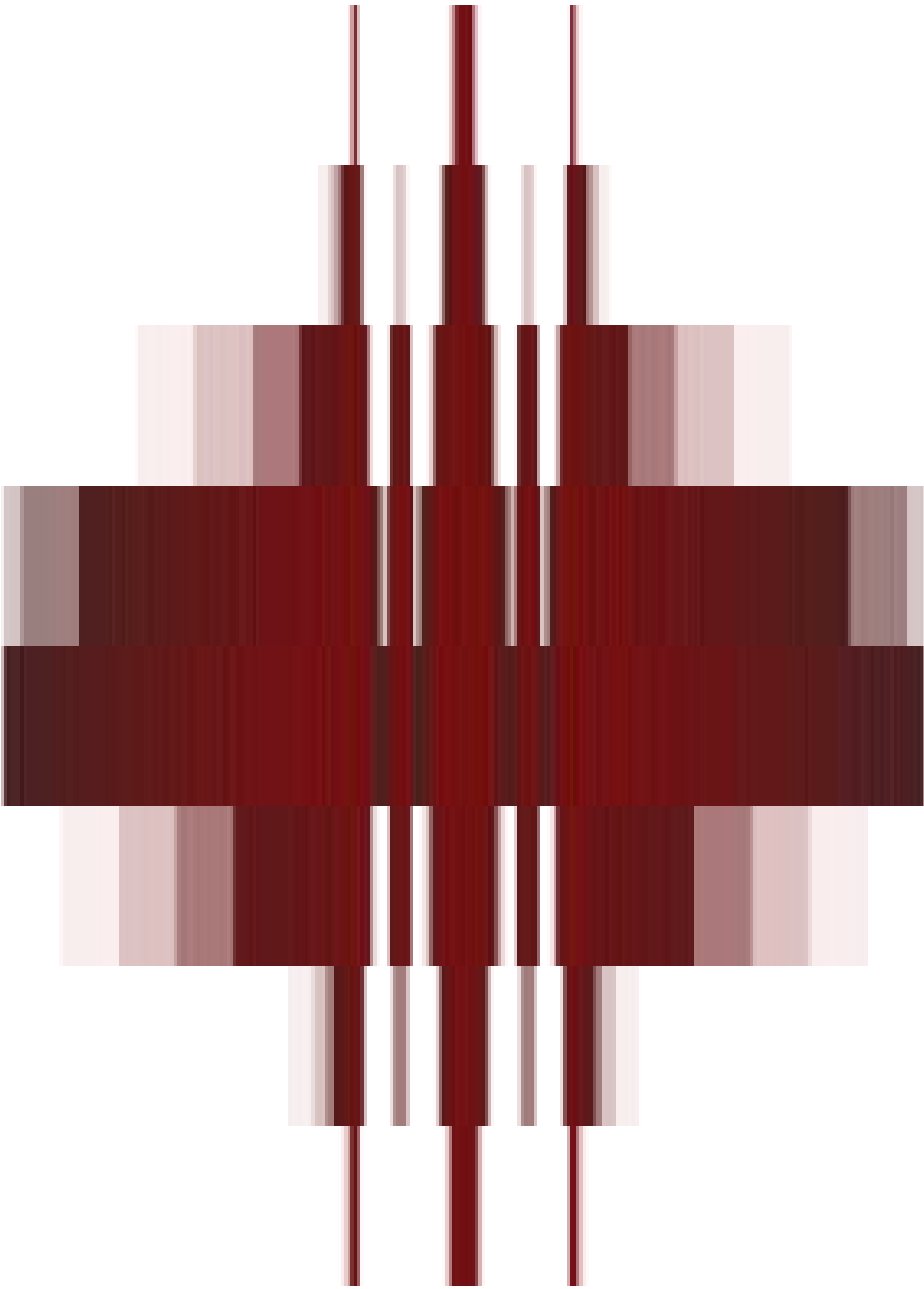
The Fate of Devotees Who Ignore the Guidance of a God-Ordained Guru



**Heaven Can Be Attained by All, Regardless of Race,
Caste, or Creed**



**Do Liberated Masters Accrue Karma for the Work
They Do on Earth?**



“All who strive to enter into the kingdom of Cosmic Consciousness by availing themselves of the help of a guru and his liberating spiritual techniques will find the strait gate and narrow way of Self-realization into the Infinite.”

■

There were present at that season some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

And Jesus answering said unto them, “Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”

He spake also this parable; “A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, ‘Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?’

“And he answering said unto him, ‘Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.’ ”

And he went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem. Then said one unto him, “Lord, are there few that be saved?”

And he said unto them, “Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open unto us’; and he shall answer and say unto you, ‘I know you not whence ye are’:

“Then shall ye begin to say, ‘We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.’

“But he shall say, ‘I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me,

all ye workers of iniquity.’

“There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.”

The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him, “Get thee out, and depart hence: for Herod will kill thee.”

And he said unto them, “Go ye, and tell that fox, ‘Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.’ Nevertheless I must walk today, and tomorrow, and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem.

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, ‘Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.’ ”

—Luke 13:1 – 9, 22 – 35¹



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Discourse 57

Will Few or the Many Find Salvation?

**Jesus Affirms the Role of the Guru in the Disciple's
Liberation**

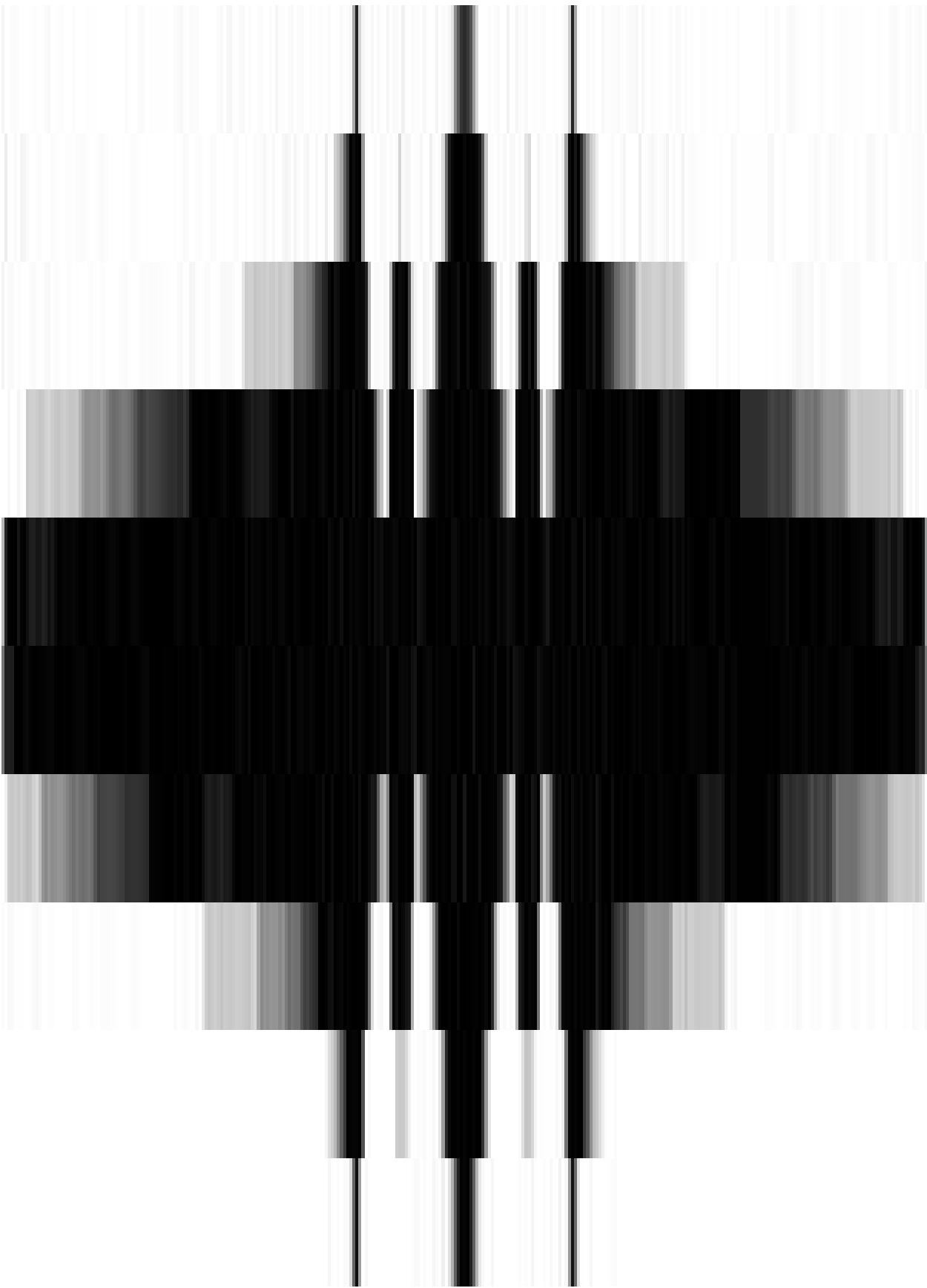


There were present at that season some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

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Jesus, elucidating the operation of the karmic law of cause and effect, here corrects an error of supposition in those who thought that the persons who had died at the hands of Pilate or because of the falling of the tower must have been great sinners to have met such a fate. Jesus knew that the persons to whom he was speaking were themselves transgressors, and that justice according to the karmic law awaited them.

Uncaught lawbreakers should not think themselves less guilty than those convicted and punished for their crime, for they will perforce pay the commensurate penalty when apprehended.



The karmic recompense of sin is not physical death, but spiritual death

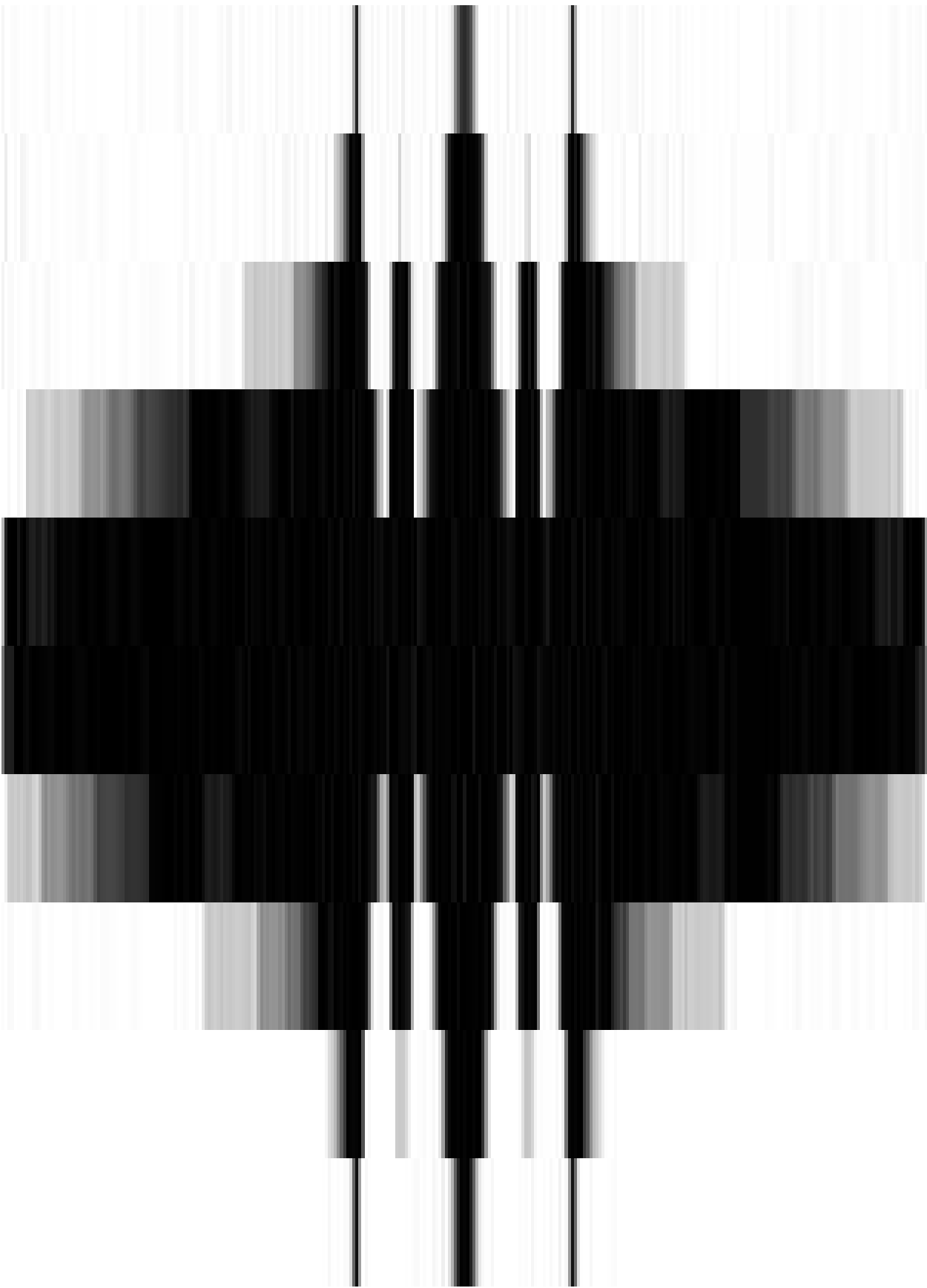
In fact, Jesus' words were intended to disabuse his listeners of the notion that the mere circumstances of a person's death, whether resulting from the decree of society's laws or from an accident, could simplistically be interpreted to gauge one's sinfulness. The removal of one's physical body from the earth plane by death, freeing that soul to move on to the astral realms, obviously is not always the result of iniquity. Nor does the sole prescribed God's law of karma mandate an unnatural physical death as punishment for all offenders of righteousness. Some who live for years, even endowed with health and prosperity, might in fact be more egregious transgressors against divine law than those whose bodies suffer or are killed.

However, sin certainly causes spiritual death: obliviousness to the bliss and immortality of the soul. Sin brings torture of conscience and corroding inner mental punishment, suffering that is sometimes more painful than physical death. So Jesus cautions, "Do not presume that the slain individuals were greater sinners than yourselves. Unless you mend your ways and forsake your evil actions, your iniquities will be the death of your spiritual life." His words are a warning against the complacency of persons who assume they are sufficiently virtuous because they have thus far been spared misfortune visited upon others. Asleep in ignorance, they never analyze themselves or make an effort to spiritualize their lives until rudely awakened by physical, mental, or spiritual suffering—karmic recompense that could assuredly be lessened or averted by repentance and cultivation of God-consciousness now.



He spake also this parable; “A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, ‘Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?’

“And he answering said unto him, ‘Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down’” (Luke 13:6 – 9).



How the intercession of a guru mitigates the effects of past bad karma

“A sinner, through repentance and prayer and the grace of God, gained the companionship of a guru-preceptor and his band of virtuous devotees. God expected that sinner to augment the good karma that had brought him into that spiritual environment (adding to it as necessary to merit remaining there) by reforming himself and producing some tangible fruits of virtue in his life. But when after some time had passed and the devotee evinced no improvement, the Lord, through His law of karma, spoke or vibrated into being the circumstances that were the lawful consequence of that devotee’s slothfulness: ‘It is needless to keep the unheeding sinner in the company of the good. Let him be thrown out.’

“But the God-sent guru, the embodiment of the Heavenly Father’s noble wish to redeem His children, prayed that the sinner, further stimulated with inspirations and divine grace, be allowed to dwell with the virtuous devotees for one more year, giving that devotee another chance to produce in himself the fruits of Godward progress: ‘Heavenly Father, I will specially implant some of Your wisdom in this errant soul, and fertilize his spiritual growth with discipline and with divine love. If he does not improve or repent within a year, then I will have to let his karma take its course and send him away.’”

In this parable, Jesus illustrates the power of the guru to intercede and help a misguided disciple from suffering dire results of past evil actions. The “vineyard” refers to the good disciples; the “fig tree” represents the lagging disciple; and the “dresser” symbolizes the guru, whose discipline carefully tends to the cultivation of the fruits of God-realization on the boughs of their lives.² The intercession of the guru who is in tune with God can mitigate past karma that might otherwise hold back or even destroy a disciple’s spiritual life.

The importance of the guru’s blessing I learned early as a youth (before I met my own Master) from a true story told to me by Swami Pranabananda, a great disciple of Lahiri Mahasaya (guru of my guru).³ He and another disciple used to meditate together for eight hours every night, when silence reigned over the bustling city of Banaras. He had had visions of saints and other wondrous perceptions, but there was always some barrier that kept from him the final vision of God.

Lahiri Mahasaya continued to encourage him to “Meditate deeply; the obstructions of past karma must be overcome.” But after so many years of ever-increasingly deepening meditation, still the longed-for “final irrevocable union” was not forthcoming; he began to feel an unbearable spiritual anguish.

One night he was determined to wrest from his Guru a promise of divine intercession on his behalf. A promise of God-union, tearing away obscuring veils of delusion by forgiveness of past errors, is not given lightly. Lahiri Mahasaya tried to stave off his disciple’s persistence with his accustomed response: “What can I do? You must meditate more profoundly.” But Pranabananda’s yearning could not be deterred. He continued to make his case, lovingly demanding as a son would do to convince his mother to gain from her some favor. After long hours of his imploring the guru, at last Lahiri Mahasaya blessed him and said, “You may go now and meditate. I have interceded for you with Brahma.”⁴

The uplifted disciple returned to his home. “In meditation that night,” he told me, “the Goal of my life was achieved. Never from that day has the Blissful Creator remained hidden from my eyes behind any screen of delusion.” For the illumined Swami, even meditation was no longer requisite for the perception of Spirit.

The Hindu scriptures say, “The flower falls when the fruit appears.” The flowers of meditation and prayer must be conscientiously nurtured to blossom in the garden of the devotee’s consciousness; but when the fruit of God-realization comes, the flowers of meditation and prayer, having served their purpose, wither away. The Self-realized devotee who has arrived at the very last state of Cosmic Consciousness in nirvikalpa samadhi no longer has to engage in the meditative process of divine attainment. The avatar Bhagavan Krishna asked one of his devotees, the sainted Draupadi, why she did not meditate, the yoga way of divine union for attaining salvation. She replied, “O Krishna, my mind is day and night so engrossed in the Lord fully manifest in you that I cannot pull my thoughts away to practice meditation.” The devotee, having perfect oneness with the Spirit in omnipresence and as incarnate in Krishna, had transcended the need for further application of the yoga science.

That being said, it should also be noted that even fully realized masters, especially if actively engaged on the outer world stage, continue the practice of prayer and meditation to set an example of guidance and inspiration, and to rejuvenate the bodily instrument through which they bestow great power of

spiritual blessing and healing energy on those they serve. This has oftentimes been cited in the story of Jesus.

Devotees who have not reached the final union must not cozy themselves in illusions of God-attainment, imagining they have earned a retirement pension from the labors of cultivating God-consciousness. Swami Pranabananda, for example, did not attain emancipation just by eight years of long hours of deep meditation. His liberating karma had been accruing for several lives of devout endeavor. Even so, his final union with the Infinite remained obstructed by some stubborn bonds of past negative karma until the intercession of Lahiri Mahasaya, the guru sent by God to lift his soul into the Infinite Presence.

Devotees who in their present life have a strong inclination to seek God and are attracted to the path of meditation have surely meditated and practiced inner divine communion in one or more of their recent past lives. Conversely, there are millions who never think of meditation, or are otherwise loath to attempt its discipline, owing to unwillingness born of materialistic living of past incarnations. Anyone blessed with spiritual tendencies ought to be very much encouraged to further with more and more concentrated meditation the accumulated devotional efforts of incarnations that will surely in time yield the longed-for contact of God.⁵

No devotee can bargain with his meditative efforts to convince God to manifest Himself. The devotee must forsake metaphysical egotism, which consists in thinking: "I have meditated so much, and God is therefore obliged to reveal Himself." Along with deep, sustained meditation, there must be devotion and surrender to God. It is when the devotee casts the net of unconditional love again and again in the depths of meditation that God can be caught as a willing captive. Becoming steadfast in repeated experiences of God-contact, and with the aid of the guru's blessing, the devotee receives at last ultimate emancipation and irrevocable union with the Infinite Beloved.



And he went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem. Then said one unto him, “Lord, are there few that be saved?”

And he said unto them, “Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open unto us’; and he shall answer and say unto you, ‘I know you not whence ye are’:

“Then shall ye begin to say, ‘We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.’

“But he shall say, ‘I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity’” (Luke 13:22 – 27).



Without the saving grace of the guru, the disciple is unable to enter God's kingdom

In these verses, Jesus highlights the importance of following on e's divinely ordained guru, he who stands as the savior or redeemer of on e's soul from delusion. The blessing, the intercession, of the guru is of paramount importance. The guru—one who is “master of the house” in his unity with the universal Christ Consciousness— opens the inner “door” to transcendence and salvation. ⁶ “Enter in at the strait gate,” for without the saving grace of the guru, “many... will seek to enter (into the heavenly kingdom of Cosmic Consciousness) and shall not be able.”

“Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it,” Jesus had said in the Sermon on the Mount.⁷ The Hindu scriptures similarly speak of the path to liberation as being as narrow as a razor's edge. Successful progress demands single-hearted focus on the goal, for one never knows when some distracting lure of delusion will activate dormant tendencies of the seeker's past bad karma and try to lead him astray. Satan works constantly to divert the devotee from the do's and don'ts of the Godward path, insinuating the thought that one is thereby exercising his independence. But persons in thrall to the ego with its karmic accumulation of habits and desires are anything but independent, and are rarely able to adopt the right course for themselves. Nevertheless, an even more potent influence than one's karma is the help and blessing of a God-knowing guru. Through reverent observance of the guidance of a master, one can free himself from all embedded compulsions of past karma.

To be faithful to the principles of the divinely ordained guru-disciple relationship is the sure way to reach God. Whereas the unguided devotee wanders into spiritual difficulties and disillusionment, the disciple who gives loyalty and obedience to one who has found God makes the spiritual path simple and straightforward. His devotion and faith establish constant inner attunement, so that regardless of any assaults of Satan, he can rely on the hidden and open aid of his Christlike master to keep him safe and steady in his progress toward freedom.

That is the basis of Jesus' response to the question, “Lord, are there few that be

saved?” The reply signified: “All who strive to enter into the kingdom of Cosmic Consciousness by availing themselves of the help of a guru and his liberating spiritual techniques will find the strait gate and narrow way of Self-realization into the Infinite. But there will be many, I say unto you, who will seek to enter the kingdom of God by themselves, after ignoring the God-given guru sent to them. They will not succeed because they did not heed God’s divine messenger.



The fate of devotees who ignore the guidance of a God-ordained guru

“When once the ‘master of the house,’ the Christlike guru, is taken away from the earth, he has to shut the door of his teaching—no further revelations or personal guidance issue from his silenced voice. Those who had the opportunity to benefit from his physical presence, but who failed to cultivate enduring attunement with the master, because of abject rejection of him, disloyal or treacherous behavior, or preference for the company of their bad habits and inclinations, will find the master’s channel of intercession has been shut to them.⁸ If some then belatedly knock at the door of prayer, the master replies through their conscience, ‘You had the opportunity to receive me, but you did not; wherefore I cannot now accept you.’ Then shall those persons remind the master of their erstwhile acquaintance with him, ‘Lord, we ate and drank in your presence when you taught in our midst. Why should you not respond to our prayers?’ The master will intimate through the conscience of the supplicators, ‘Because you rejected me and would not enter the door of salvation I opened for you, I know you not as sincere and faithful devotees. You are banished by the iniquity of your own works of ignorance.’”⁹

Jesus sought to awaken those of his time to the magnitude of divine blessing afforded them in the readily accessible presence of God in his incarnate Christ Consciousness. To follow a master with Christ Consciousness who has lived and taught in an earthly incarnation is the only way to receive the sure guidance and intercession necessary for final introduction into the kingdom of God. The Lord does not teach seekers from His Formless Omnipresence, but uses the speech, mind, and consciousness of an illumined master in whom His Christ Intelligence has been incarnated. True masters have fully surrendered themselves to God, so He also surrenders Himself as infinite wisdom and love to these masters; He calls undeveloped truth-seekers to come unto Him through these perfect divine representatives.

Oftentimes guru and disciple are incarnate at the same time or in a close proximity of time. But masters with a world mission (or sometimes with many disciples in divergent stages of development) leave on earth a legacy of their teachings and ideals when they shed their mortal forms. For masters who can span the infinity of omnipresence, there is no difference between their seen and unseen presence, or in the blessings they bestow on disciples who are in tune,

whether during or after the earth life of the master.

Thus Jesus could not have meant that the door of his divine intercession would be closed after he had left the body. Rather he warned that when a disciple spurns a God-sent guru owing to his own unsettled mental state of disbelief, or the fickleness of a change of heart, or inner weakness that yields to the iniquities of the delusion-loving ego, then that devotee's salvation is delayed. He has to roam one or more incarnations until karmically he prepares himself to locate the same discarded God-ordained guru-messenger. To dishonor the messenger of God is to dishonor God Himself. No doubt the Lord says to wayward devotees who appeal to Him for guidance, "Why are you seeking My aid again, when you refused the help I already sent to you through your guru?"

Those devotees who ignored the channel of salvation sent to them by God will in time realize, in an anguish of fruitless seeking, that they are bereft of divine guidance, not only in that life, but in the heavenly astral afterlife as well. However, if in the next life, or in some succeeding incarnation, that self-inflicted punishment of spiritual unfulfillment causes a devotee to renew and sustain his spiritual efforts, preparing himself to be a worthy, receptive disciple, then he will find through earnest prayer and meditation that God has again sent His divine messenger for that devotee's redemption.

Jesus said, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day."¹⁰ This is a true statement of a guru, and seekers should realize its importance. Every emissary of God has God behind him. The guru does not issue a summons to souls to become his disciples; it is God who calls and ordains that sacred relationship. When a soul, thus called by God, follows the guidance of the representative of God, that soul is bound to reach the Beloved Infinite. Out of this material world and dance of life and death, the Eternal Father is persistently trying to bring His children unto Himself again. Those who have ears to hear, let them hear; for this is divine truth, the only way by which one receives final liberation in God. The blind cannot lead the blind; only those who are fully illumined with the presence of God can be true shepherds of souls. Superficial seekers, wandering from one pasture of new ideas to another, become lost and spiritually malnourished while gorged with an undigested mixture of half-truths and useless dogma. Jesus decried those unstable devotees who failed in their blind ignorance to recognize and receive him as a savior sent in their own time to open the way to God.



“There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out” (Luke 13:28).

No one can even casually meet his God-ordained guru without possessing good karma. Therefore, even a negligent devotee who has ignored the full measure of his guru's guidance, if he later repents and desires sincerely to know God, may have a sufficient store of good karma, or develop it by persistency in meditation and cultivation of spiritual qualities, to draw close to heaven. Such a devotee may have a glimpse of higher heavenly realms when he leaves the body at death; but that is all he can get. He may behold liberated saints and advanced devotees who followed their guru—“Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets”—permanently lodged in Cosmic Consciousness, but he himself will not be able at that time to enter that highest kingdom of God. He will in great anguish of spirit be “thrust out,” back to earth—the place of spiritual repentance and endeavor contrived for man to perfect himself. There he must embrace again the disciplinary path of his God-given guru and pray for his intercession to find salvation.

Devotees who in the afterlife in the astral world have even a glimpse of the supernal heavens are blessed thereby with an intense longing to attain the kingdom of God. When such souls reincarnate, they have from birth an innate compelling desire to know God. By prayer and good action and spiritual seeking, their yearning draws them again to where they left off in their relationship with their rightful guru, who stands ever ready to show them the path into the Heavenly Kingdom.



Matthew

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offers a comparable variant of this verse in Luke:

“And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matthew 8:11 – 12).

This rendering alludes to devotees who are sufficiently advanced to enter the highest spheres of heaven inhabited by divine souls. But after some time in the blissful kingdom, their unfinished earthly karma casts them again into the “outer darkness” of the delusive region of material embodiment. Entrapped again on earth, these souls are filled with a melancholy of dim unformed remembrances of paradise lost. They feel subconsciously a resentment, a dispassion, toward the sham offerings of the world—a spiritual agony of divine longing, which the saints refer to as sweet sorrow—which turns them toward deeper spiritual endeavor.



“And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last” (Luke 13:29 – 30).¹¹



Heaven can be attained by all, regardless of race, caste, or creed

“I prophesy that in future many devotees shall arise in the eastern part of the world, in the western part of the world, in the northern part of the world, and in the southern part of the world, and by their devotion they will be drawn to true gurus and learn the proper science of meditation by which they will place their consciousness in the cosmic consciousness of God the Father. And behold, among those devotees there will be many that ‘are last,’ slower than others to start on the path to liberation, but who will persevere so devoutly in meditation that they ‘shall be first’ among their spiritual contemporaries to enter into the kingdom of Cosmic Consciousness. And there will be many that ‘are first,’ eagerly starting early on the spiritual path, but who will not be regular and deep in their meditation; they ‘shall be last,’ long delayed but ultimately successful if they persist, in final attainment of Cosmic Consciousness.”

In the above words, Jesus gives hope of heaven to all prodigal children of God, in each of whom—regardless of race, caste, or creed—is hidden the potential Divine Image. Responding to the question, “Can only a few enter the kingdom of God?” he did not limit the number or make heaven the monopoly of a few spiritual aristocrats. Nor does he speak of God’s kingdom as the exclusive reward of members of any particular faith. Rather, Jesus included sincere seekers after Truth who would be found in all the four corners of the earth and who would attract to themselves a God-sent guru through whose guidance and intercession they would “enter in at the strait gate” and be led through the spiritual-eye door into Cosmic Consciousness.

They will attain who remain resolute in the divine path from the time they first start until they successfully reach the end. According to Jesus, what matters is not whether one begins early or late on the spiritual path, but one’s conscientious perseverance.

In a competitive examination, many who were first to enter the course may be the last to pass, and many who are last to register may stand first in the examination, through earnest application. Devotees whose spiritual enthusiasm is uniform and constant from start to finish will be the “first” to attain Cosmic Consciousness. But those devotees who are first in eagerness to enter the spiritual path and then become slothful might take more than one incarnation to

at last enter Cosmic Consciousness and attain final emancipation.

Jesus assures truth-seekers that they all will surely find God, and that their progress begins when they give up their prodigal roaming in the land of ignorance and material consciousness and follow the lead of their God-knowing guru. All human beings, even the blatant sinners, will in time repent when they understand their folly. Those who forsake their evil actions and fervently try to follow the spiritual path will certainly be ushered by their God-given savior into the transcendental state of Cosmic Consciousness; they will finally be able “to sit down in the kingdom of God,” to permanently establish their consciousness in Cosmic Consciousness.



The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him, “Get thee out, and depart hence: for Herod will kill thee.”

*And he said unto them, “Go ye, and tell that fox, ‘Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.’
Nevertheless I must walk today, and tomorrow, and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem.”¹²*

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, ‘Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord’” (Luke 13:31 – 35).¹³

With divine foreknowledge, Jesus replied: “Go and tell that cunning Herod that I have come to cast out ignorance and devils during a certain period of time as ordained by the Heavenly Father; and after that, but not before, I will be crucified. Then I shall be perfected through the help of the Father, ‘o n the third da y’ of curing myself in the astral world, unloosening the threefold karmic bonds of my physical, astral, and causal bodies that held my soul incarnate. In spite of the wicked Herod and all his power, I will walk free ‘t oday, and tomorrow, and the day followin g’ and so on until the time of my death comes, for none can balk me until that divinely foretold karma-ordained moment has arrived.”



Do liberated masters accrue karma for the work they do on earth?

Jesus' statement, "On the third day I shall be perfected," makes evident his dual human-divine nature, the condition of every master who descends to earth for a God-given mission. All souls are in essence divine, but as long as they are in fleshly embodiment they are constrained by characteristic imperfections of delusive manifestation—to a greater or lesser degree depending on the individualized being's state of spiritual evolution. Undeveloped worldly persons, because of their bodily attachments and desires, amass much karma of delusion. Even divine incarnations, though their souls have been fully liberated, must subject themselves to at least some measure of cosmic delusion simply to maintain a finite form separate from Spirit.

The "karma" thus accrued by liberated masters is the natural working of the cause-effect principle governing all actions in the realm of manifestation; it may also consist of unfinished works of their previous incarnations, such as helping to liberate their advanced disciples, or to state anew and revive truth, or even to toy with some passing fancy, renounced and forgotten, but which God in loving, whimsical wisdom deigns to fulfill.¹⁴ Masters can work out or otherwise negate their karma by prayer and acts of divine will in meditation or in the afterlife spiritual realms, both of which forms of release were employed by Jesus.

Thus the "karma" of masters does not bind their liberated souls, but rather serves as earth ties that cling loosely to saviors who choose to spend their freedom doing good on earth, either from God's heavenly kingdom or by periodic reincarnations. Their human karma may be said to be like burnt rope; it appears to bind, but when so willed it falls away in ashes.

Jesus was conscious throughout his mission that according to the law of cause and effect his divine works and words (taking the karma of many he cured and offending the laws of both religious and secular authorities) would surely lead to crucifixion of his body. His divine nature was inwardly established in the consciousness of "I and my Father are one"; but his human nature acknowledged that the irrevocable attainment of absolute unity with the Father would not occur until he dissolved the voluntarily assumed delusion-matrix of his physical, astral, and causal embodiments—and the karma they had accumulated—the final effort of which would take place during the three days, or stages of purification,

following his crucifixion.

Jesus regretted that the people of Jerusalem, a city hallowed by prophets of God, had great opportunity in those divine messengers and in himself to be saved, but they did not care to listen to wisdom:

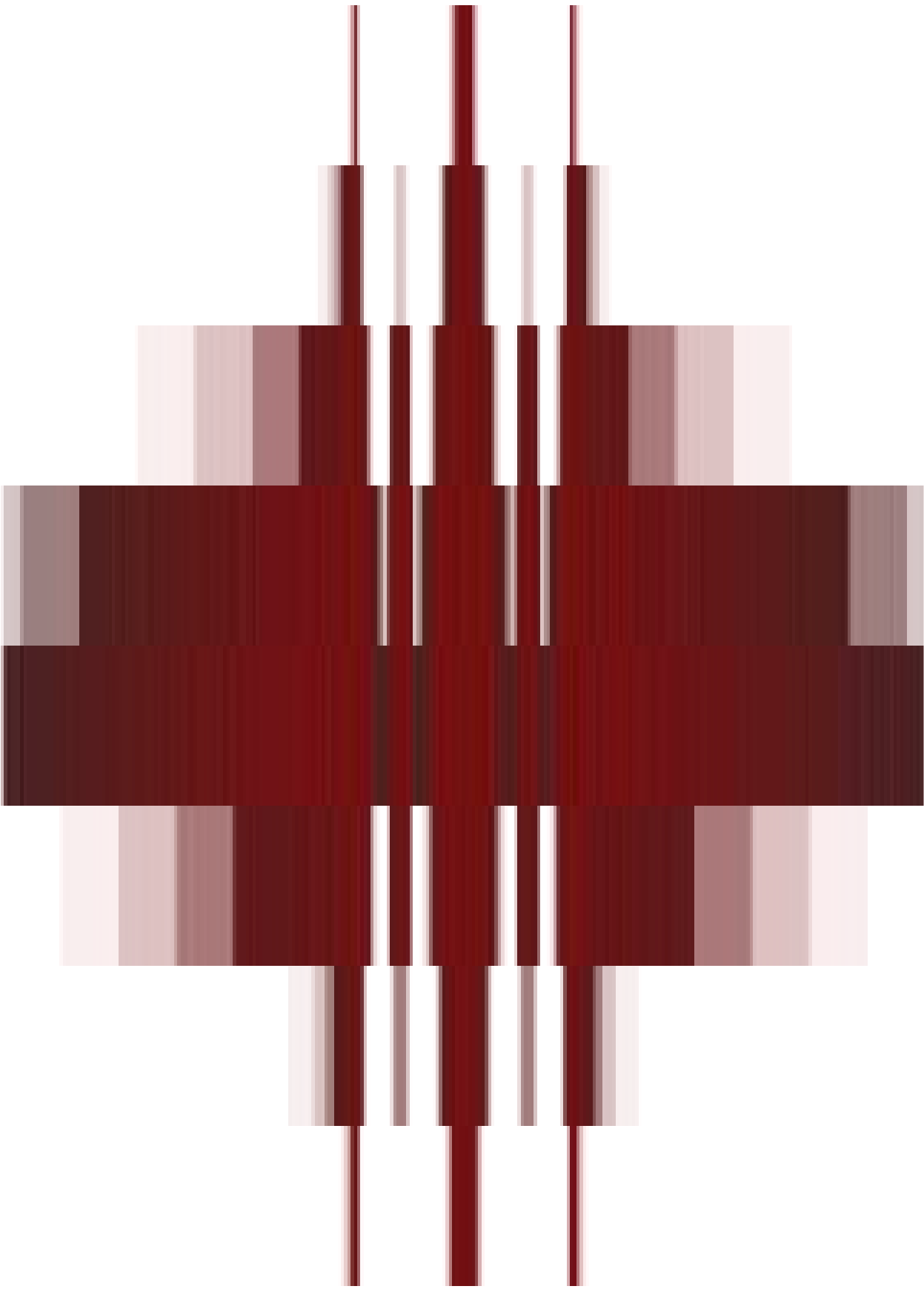
“O people of Jerusalem, marked with a history of killing prophets and stoning those who are sent by God,¹⁵ how readily I would have gathered you under my divine protection, as a hen would protect her brood under her wings! But you were unwilling to be saved from the ravages of your ignorance. Because of this, you will find the houses of your lives left empty and desolate, for you will be unable to feel me as the Christ Consciousness in everything with the fullness of Its infinite love, wisdom, and bliss.

“O Jerusalem, ye people of the world who do not appreciate me as the Infinite Christ incarnate in this body called Jesus, someday you will seek me as that Christ Consciousness, but you will not be successful until you have repented of your material ways and attained spiritual development. The omnipresent Christ Consciousness, which appeared in the consciousness of this body of Jesus, will henceforth remain unmanifested to you until through meditation you expand your own consciousness sufficiently to say, ‘Blessed is he (the bliss-filled Christ Consciousness) who cometh (is revealed to the intuitive perception of the devotee who has attuned himself) in the name of the Lord (through the Holy Ghost Aum Vibration, heard in the inner stillness of meditation).’ The Christ Consciousness, which became manifest in me in this age, will manifest a second time in your meditation-expanded consciousness. Then and then only will you be able to realize my true infinite nature, as well as have a vision of my body in which Christ Consciousness has been templed.”

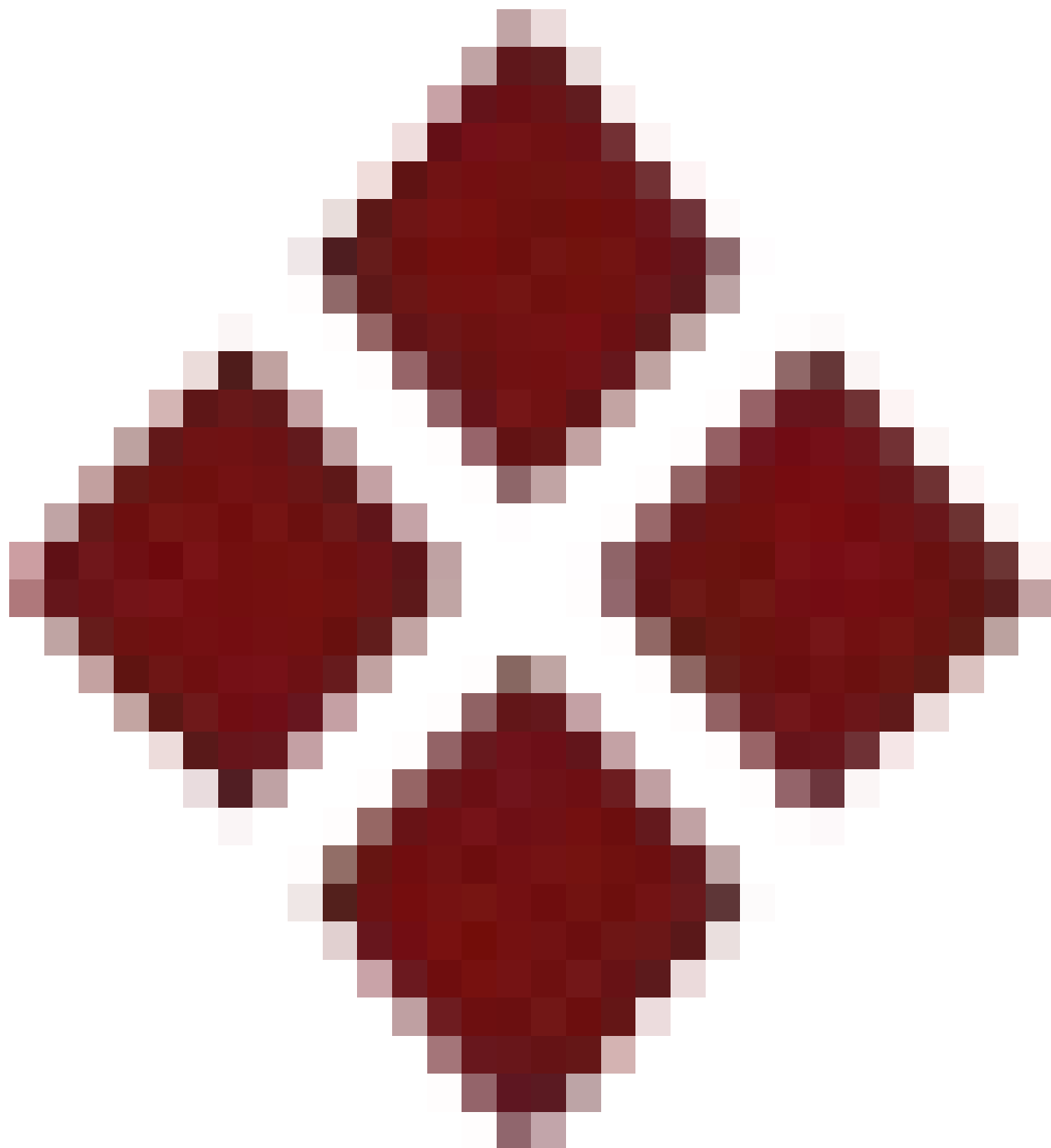


Discourse 58

Jesus' Parables on Humility and Discipleship, and the Parable of the Prodigal Son



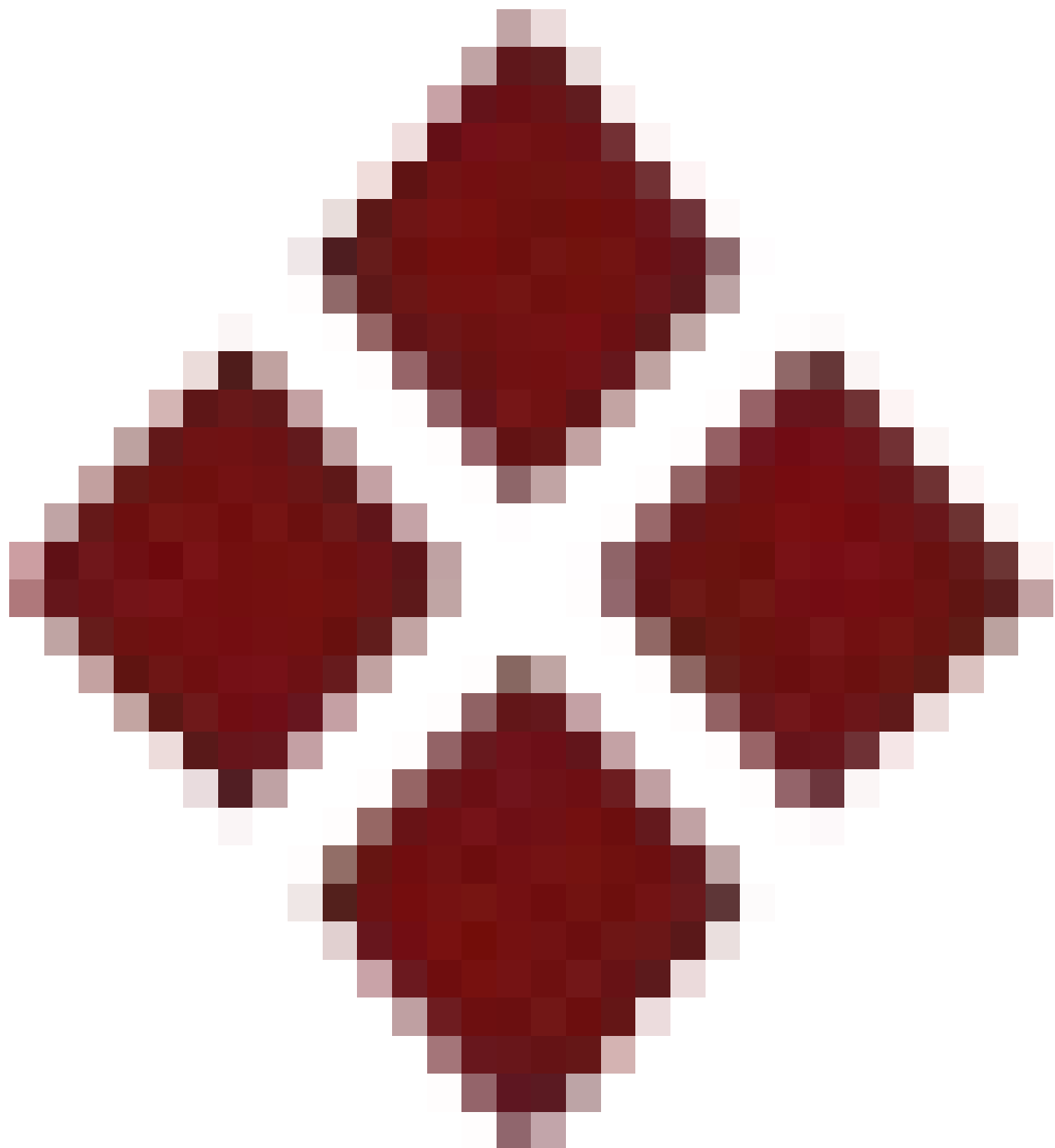
**Humility Is the Natural Expression of Every Soul
Who Knows God**



**Responding to God's Invitation to Partake of the
Feast of Liberating Wisdom**



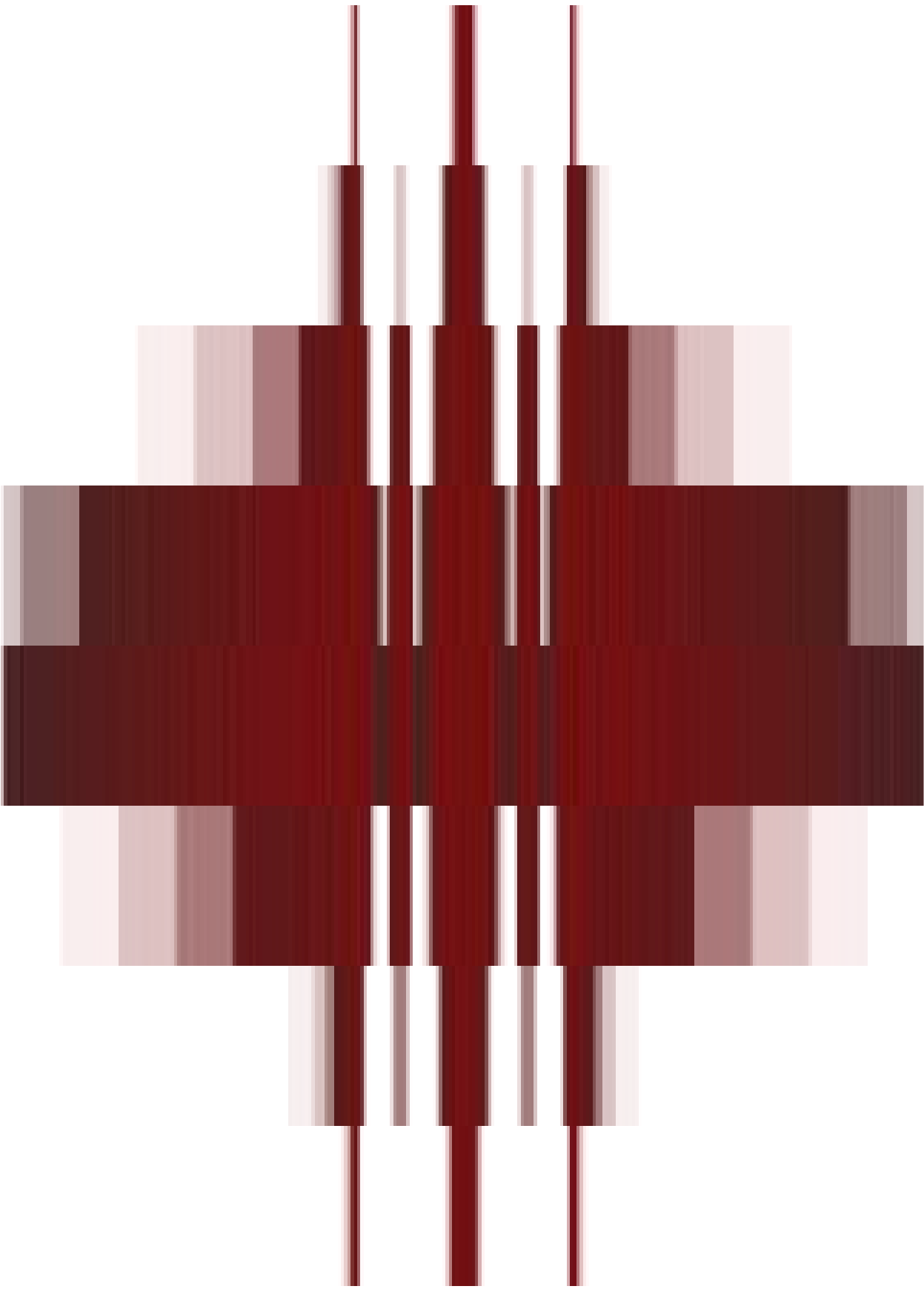
**There Is Rejoicing in Heaven When an Error-Stricken
Soul Turns Toward God**



Deeper Spiritual Meaning of the Parable of the Prodigal Son



**Even the Most Wicked Person Can Become a Saint by
Unshakable Resolution to Find God**



“Being both Father and Mother...unconditionally, wholeheartedly, God loves His untold generations of children and becomes anxious when even one of them becomes temporarily lost. The great love of God for his devotees is beautifully and wondrously expressed by Jesus.”

■

And it came to pass, as he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the Sabbath day, that they watched him. And, behold, there was a certain man before him which had the dropsy.

And Jesus answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?" And they held their peace. And he took him, and healed him, and let him go; and answered them, saying, "Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the Sabbath day?" And they could not answer him again to these things.

And he put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them, "When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him; and he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, 'Give this man place'; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, 'Friend, go up higher': then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee. For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Then said he also to him that bade him, "When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just."

And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God."

Then said he unto him, "A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, 'Come; for all things are now ready.' And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, 'I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused.'

“And another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused.’ And another said, ‘I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.’ So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things.

“Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.’ And the servant said, ‘Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.’

And the lord said unto the servant, ‘Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.’ ”

And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, “If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, ‘This man began to build, and was not able to finish.’

“Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace.

“So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.”

Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, “This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.”

And he spake this parable unto them, saying, “What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he

hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, 'Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.'

"I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

"Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, 'Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost.' Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

And he said, "A certain man had two sons: And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me.' And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

"And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

"And when he came to himself, he said, 'How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants."' And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

"And the son said unto him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let

us eat, and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.’ And they began to be merry.

“Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard musick and dancing. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. And he said unto him, ‘Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound.’

“And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and entreated him. And he answering said to his father, ‘Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.’ And he said unto him, ‘Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.’ ”

—Luke 14:1 – 15:32



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Discourse 58

Jesus' Parables on Humility and Discipleship, and the Parable of the Prodigal Son



And it came to pass, as he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the Sabbath day, that they watched him. And, behold, there was a certain man before him which had the dropsy.

And Jesus answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?" And they held their peace. And he took him, and healed him, and let him go; and answered them, saying, "Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the Sabbath day?" And they could not answer him again to these things (Luke 14:1 – 6).

To the many in the assembly who were hypocritical in their pretensions about strict Sabbath observance, Jesus pointed out that there is no time unsuitable to do good; he then refuted their silent opposition and healed the sick man.



And he put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them, “When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him; and he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, ‘Give this man place’; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, ‘Friend, go up higher’: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee. For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted” (Luke 14:7 – 11).¹



Humility is the natural expression of every soul who knows God

Divine law is the revealer of truth and the exposé of deceit: He who pretends to be greater than he is will surely be found out in the mirror of public criticism; while he who is truly great, but whose nobility is hidden beneath a veil of humbleness, will be discovered and admired. Everyone whose “greatness” is fabricated by his own grandiose imagination will sooner or later find his pretensions exposed and dishonored before the scrutinizing gaze of the very persons whose attention he draws to himself. He who is naturally humble in the satisfaction of his soul is saturated with divine magnetism; even though seeking no acclaim, he automatically attracts to himself the appreciative recognition of man and God.

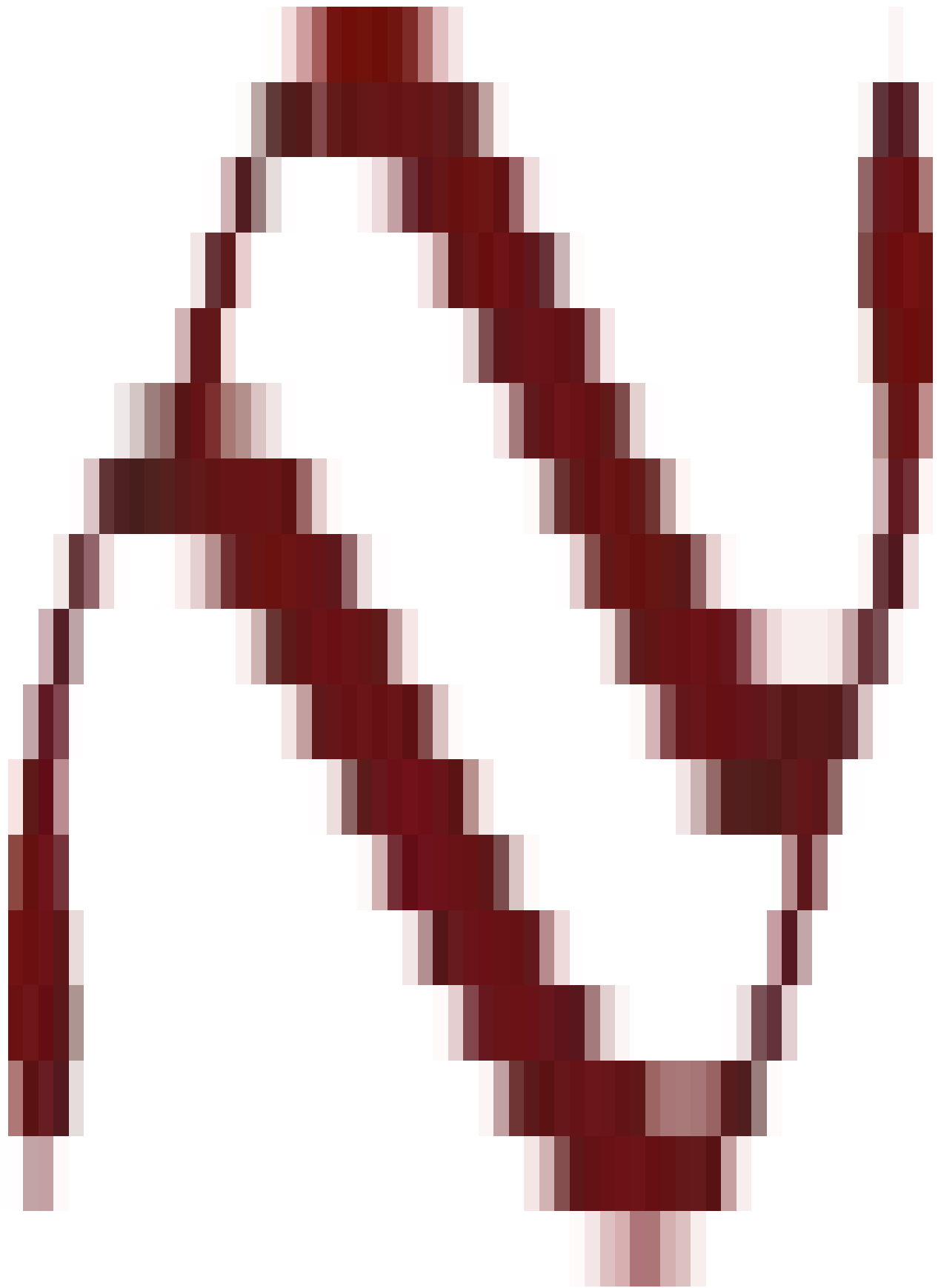
The sincere devotee is interested in the approbation of the Lord, not the esteem of mortals. Those who put themselves forward as spiritual paragons, whether as devotees or teachers, are effectively declaring their lack of godliness, for “God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.”² The minute one becomes puffed up, God flies away.

Jesus chided the status-seeking dinner guests, pointing out that the satanic delusion of egotism debases a man, while humility elevates him. The Omnipotent Lord, great as He is, never puts Himself forward—humbly concealing His majesty and all-powerful will lest in awe His children fear to use the freedom of choice He has given to them.³ The ignorant cast Him aside; but He is exalted and praised as the Most High in the heart-shrine of the devotee’s freely given love. Humbleness flows like a fountain from the realization of God, expressing naturally through every soul consciously identified with Spirit.

As a person who appears to be humble may not in fact possess real humility, so also a person who objectively remarks about his attainments or is conscious of his good qualities cannot necessarily be accused of egotism. In contrast to persons who put on a veneer of humbleness in order to pretend to be great when they are not so, people who are honest and straightforward, without affectation, may speak impersonally of their qualifications without egotistically overestimating themselves or fostering conceit.

King Janaka, a great saint of India, was worshipfully offering flowers at the

shrine of God, when suddenly he started putting flowers on his own head, saying, "I bow to myself. I am the sustainer of the universe." That was not egotism; in ecstasy, he suddenly saw God in everybody and in himself too. The responsibility of all souls is to know in every circumstance that they are reflections of the Supreme. Egotism steals away all possibility of that realization; there must be complete renunciation of the ego in Spirit. When one identifies no longer with his little self but with his divine Self, he rejoices, as does God, to be the servant of all.



Then said he also to him that bade him, “When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just” (Luke 14:12 – 14).

Jesus speaks of the spiritual uselessness of the then-prevailing custom of holding big feasts for the sake of social vanity, just to please and curry the favor of those who need no feeding. He decries concentrating on fickle social prestige through gala events that are socially profitable—favor for favor—but are of no spiritual benefit.

Rather, to use the money, time, and labor to feed the poor and aid the needy, from whom no reciprocity is possible, is to recognize and serve God selflessly in the body temples of the unfortunate.

In the words “resurrection of the just,” Jesus points out that in due time, when the just actions of those who serve the poor and afflicted will be weighed and judged by the law of cause and effect, those unselfish ones will be karmically rewarded with power to attract goodwill and prosperity for themselves.



And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God."

Then said he unto him, "A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: and sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, 'Come; for all things are now ready.' And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, 'I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused.'

"And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused.' And another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' So that servant came, and showed his lord these things.

"Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.' And the servant said, 'Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.'

"And the lord said unto the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.'"⁴

And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever does not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath

laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.'

“Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace.

“So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:15 – 33).



Responding to God's invitation to partake of the feast of liberating wisdom

“God sends from time to time a specific master who arranges a great spiritual feast of wisdom, and through the servant of magnetic divine vibrations he invites truth-seekers to attend. But the propitious opportunity is declined by many who make excuses because of preoccupation with material interests and engagements. When they intimate their inability to join the spiritual feast of wisdom offered by the master, he is sad for those invited truth-seekers who chose lesser material satisfaction in preference to being feted with unending spiritual happiness.

“Then the master sends forth his servant of spiritual vibrations to invite selectively to his wisdom feast those who suffer the poverty of material disappointments but are spiritually rich in desire for God, those who are physically in need of healing but are spiritually whole in faith, those who are physically halt but spiritually progressive, those who are blinded by physical delusion but are eager for spiritual vision. The devoted servant of divine magnetism does as bidden, and still there is room for more in the vast feast of the master's wisdom.

“The master's servant of spiritual vibrations goes forth not only in the ether but in the devotee who has absorbed the master's teachings. He says to such devotees: ‘Wherever you go, in the busy highways and in the fields, with the compelling power of your spiritual example and words bring other truth-seekers to share in the great feast of wisdom I offer. All attending truth-seekers will be happily surfeited as I busy myself in serving them; but there shall be no partaking of the feast by those who were invited to join but spurned my offer to assist them, being preoccupied with their worldly attachments.’”

To those who followed after him, Jesus continued to elaborate the meaning of this parable:

“Thus if any person is invited to seek the universal intelligence of Christ Consciousness as made manifest in me, but is loath to give up his attachment to parental or conjugal or filial ties or to the duties and aspirations of material life, he cannot be a disciple-guest fit to be entertained with the all-emancipating divine wisdom. Whoever is not ready for the supreme sacrifice of his material consciousness, even unto martyrdom on the cross of his trials, cannot be my

disciple-guest rejoicing in the feast of Spirit.⁵

“Anyone who sets out to build a tower and does not first calculate the price required to finish it, and who after laying the foundation stops because of lack of funds, is an object of ridicule. Likewise, a prudent king considers whether his army of ten thousand soldiers is able to fight successfully the twenty thousand soldiers of his enemy, or whether instead he must make overtures of peaceful concession.

“Similarly, every devotee who wants to make of his life a heaven-reaching tower of wisdom must reckon with the price to be paid in renunciation, self-discipline, and meditation. Every devotee who would retain the kingship of his soul must know how, with the help of God and the wisdom of a master, to develop his strength by meditation and spiritual company to fight and defeat his evil enemy habits and the powerful hordes of baneful tendencies invading his mind and body.

“Anyone who desires invitation to the sumptuous feast of liberating wisdom offered by a master must be able and willing to pay the price: sacrifice of ‘all that he hath’ in social, political, worldly, and physical ties with their mental and bodily habits of bondage. He is called a disciple who by self-discipline forsakes whatever material engagements oppose his joining the master’s feast of wisdom.”



Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, “This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.”

And he spake this parable unto them, saying, “What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, ‘Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.’”⁶

“I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

“Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, ‘Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost.’ Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth” (Luke 15:1 – 10).

“Is there any divine shepherd, even though he has a hundred obedient followers, who, finding one of them lost in the wilderness of temptation, does not search out, find, and save the lost one? Is it not natural for the guru, if he succeeds in finding and saving the lost disciple, to embrace him and rejoice for having rescued him from delusive destruction?”



There is rejoicing in heaven when an error-stricken soul turns toward God

One's God-appointed guru is usually born around the same time as some of his unredeemed disciples from past incarnations. He rejoices when he finds them. When he finds one who has been long lost in the wilderness of incarnations, he rejoices greatly.

“As a guru feels joy in recovering a lost disciple, so the Heavenly Father and liberated souls in heaven are filled with gladness when an error-stricken soul repents of past evil ways and tries to go back to the heavenly kingdom. The Heavenly Father rejoices over all virtuous souls, but it evokes a special joy in Him when He finds a lost soul returning to His kingdom.

“Just as a woman shares her gladness with her friends when she finds her lost coin with the aid of light from a candle, so God, losing a soul in the darkness of delusion, sends the light of good company, inner inspiration, and the guidance of the guru to save that soul when it longs to go back to the home of the Father. And when that soul returns to the kingdom of God-consciousness, having repented of past errors, the rejoicing of God is shared by His liberated souls in heaven.”

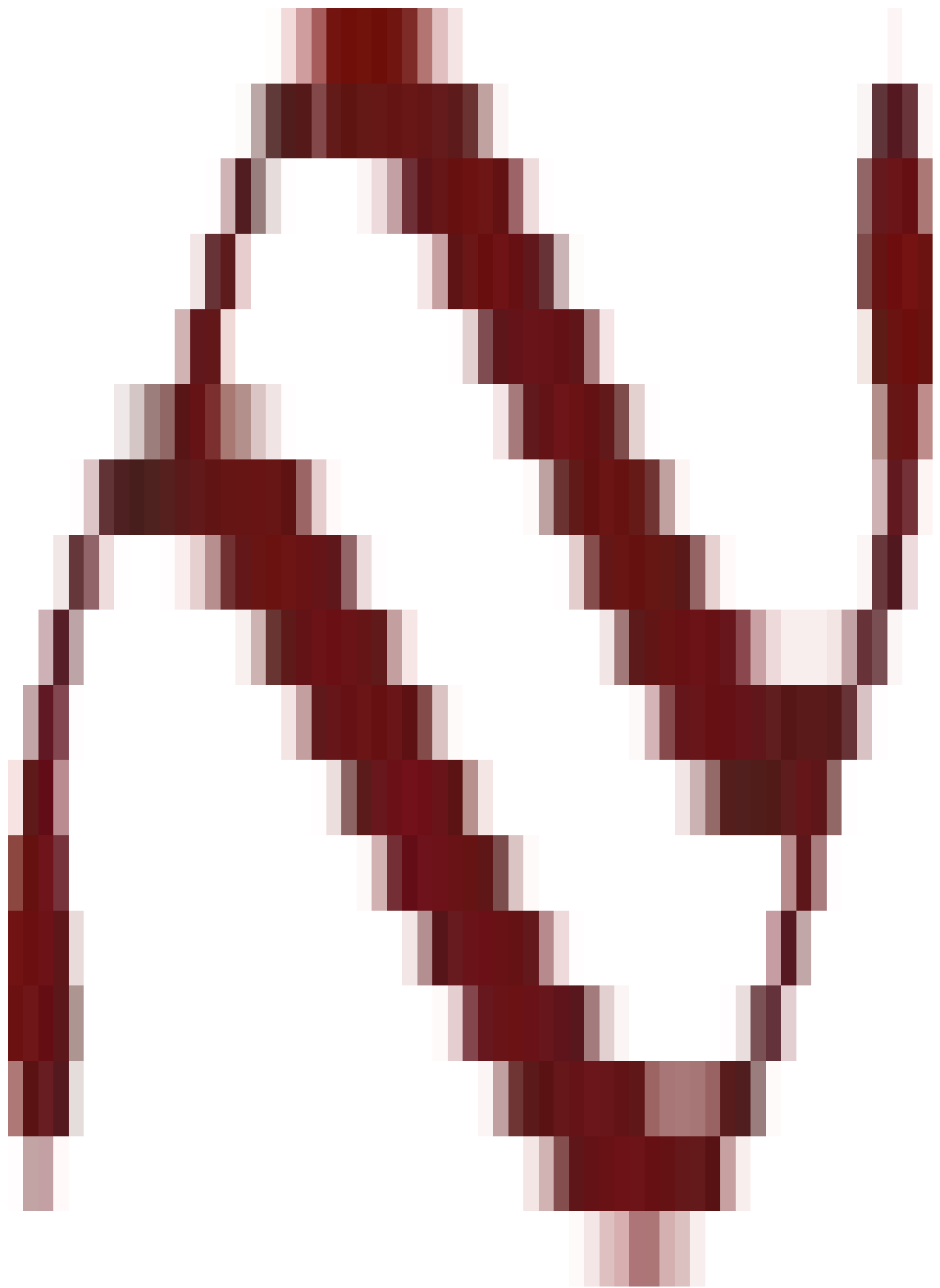
Jesus compares the guru and his disciples to a shepherd and his sheep. The metaphor appealingly illustrates the protecting nature of the guru, who saves his disciples from the predation of the wolves of delusion and bad company. The disciples are compared to sheep for they follow the wise guidance of the master obediently, meekly, and humbly, joyously and innocently, with perfect faith. God desires His devotees to have these qualities of sheep, but not their animal stupidity!

The shepherd with a hundred sheep is happy with his flock; but if he loses one and then finds it, he has additional joy. The same holds true with a divine shepherd who rescues a disciple who has been lost in the world through disobedience, temptation, evil surroundings, and hidden bad karma.⁷

Jesus uses the metaphor of the woman and her pieces of silver to illustrate the feminine quality of deep feeling. A woman who cherishes with real feeling a little hoard of ten silver coins is emotionally upset at missing even a single piece, insignificant though the loss may seem; and she is exceedingly glad when she

recovers it. When a man loses some money, his masculine quality of reason is intellectually aware of the extent of his loss, and if it is inconsequential, he does not feel concerned. Likewise Spirit, being both Father and Mother, is not only aware of the loss when one of His children wanders from His kingdom and knows objectively that that soul by cosmic law will in time return to Him; but also as the loving Mother, God feelingly desires to recover that child from delusion. Unconditionally, wholeheartedly, God loves His untold generations of children and becomes anxious when even one of them becomes temporarily lost.

The great love of God for his devotees is beautifully and wondrously expressed by Jesus in the revelation that the Lord, with His liberated angels and saints in heaven, rejoices when a sinning child repents of his follies and makes sincere effort to return to God's kingdom. This is illustrated also in the parable of the prodigal son as told by Jesus:



And he said, "A certain man had two sons: and the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me.' And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

"And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

"And when he came to himself, he said, 'How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants."' And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

"And the son said unto him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to be merry.

"Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard musick and dancing. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. And he said unto him, 'Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound.'

“And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and entreated him. And he answering said to his father, ‘Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.’ And he said unto him, ‘Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found’”
(Luke 15:11 – 32).



Deeper spiritual meaning of the parable of the prodigal son

Apart from the obvious, time-honored moral of repentance and forgiveness, this parable bears also a deeper spiritual implication:

“Two devotees were born on earth with great wisdom inherited from their spiritual actions of past lives and the grace of the Heavenly Father. The younger devotee was proud to possess the wealth of wisdom that fell to his lot and became overly confident and careless. With the riches of wisdom cached in his bosom, he journeyed into the far country of delusion and temptation and there wasted his virtuous qualities by identifying himself with the sense pleasures of the body. When he was long in delusion, under the influence of bad company, he encountered the mighty famine of inner suffering and longed to be nourished again by some food of wisdom, but could not find it in his drought-stricken life.

“He sought refuge with a good man who had devoted himself to disciplining a few unruly animalistic souls (‘swine’) by training them with some elementary moral instructions. The young devotee who had lost his wealth of wisdom by riotous living was so deeply repentant of his evil ways that he was willing to receive even the ‘husks’ of rudimentary discipline; but it seemed that he could not find anything to satisfy his gnawing hunger for divine bread.

“When the young man by continued repentance forsook his identification with the senses and concentrated on his inner Self (‘came to himself’), he introspected thus: ‘My Heavenly Father has the inexhaustible supply of the bread of wisdom and divine bliss, and here I perish with hunger for peace, wisdom, and bliss. Now I will arise, lift my consciousness from the plane of sensations, and go back to my Father in the kingdom of Cosmic Consciousness and vibrate my inner intuitive prayers to Him: “Father, Heavenly Father, I have acted against the laws of heavenly happiness by indulging in sensory promiscuity. I have darkened with ignorance Thy true soul-image within me. So in my present consciousness, I cannot worthily call myself Thy son. Take me back and give me whatever insignificant position and duties I can do on earth to atone for my evil deeds.”’

“Then this young devotee arose, lifted his consciousness toward Cosmic Consciousness (Father). When he was yet a great way off from the goal of

Cosmic Consciousness due to his past debauchery, the Heavenly Father saw him resolutely advancing toward His kingdom. With unconditional love for that prodigal devotee, He showered him with divine consciousness of His blessed Presence, enveloping him with the omnipresent embrace of celestial bliss.

“The Heavenly Father thus received back the prodigal devotee into His glorious astral kingdom where countless advanced and liberated devotees reigned with His Heavenly Majesty. The Heavenly Father commanded His angels to bring forth for the young devotee the best robes of astral lights and inner perceptions to decorate his soul. The devotee was adorned with the diamond ring of truth; his feet shod with eternal power. There was festivity in the astral world for the return of the prodigal devotee, and he was offered the fatted calf of wisdom and divine bliss. The Heavenly Father told his angels, ‘Let us all rejoice in communion with this devotee, for this My prodigal son was spiritually dead and is alive again evermore in My Cosmic Consciousness. He was lost in delusion and now is found, having retraced his consciousness to My home of Cosmic Consciousness.’ And they all communed in the joy of blessedness.

“Now the elder brother of the young devotee was also roaming in the field of cosmic vision. As he went deep and came nearer to the astral rejoicing, he heard the music of the spheres and the dancing of angels. In his vision he called one of the angels and asked why there was this special festivity in heaven. The angel replied, ‘Thy prodigal brother who roamed in delusion has come back to the divine kingdom, and thy Heavenly Father has given him eternal blessings of wisdom and ever new bliss. The Heavenly Father is glad because your younger erring brother has regained his heavenly consciousness and is safe from long imprisonment in the karmic cycles of reincarnation.’

“When the elder devotee heard this he was puzzled and would not go near the presence of the Father. Therefore the Cosmic Consciousness approached him through his intuition with some spiritual thoughts and inner perceptions. But the elder devotee in his vision vibrated his perplexity: ‘Heavenly Father, behold these many years I have honored and worshiped Thee faithfully in Cosmic Consciousness; never have I broken Thy commandments nor transgressed Thy divine laws by even a desire for sense attachment, yet Thou never gave me such a demonstration of Thy blessings. But as soon as this prodigal son arrived in Thy kingdom, he who spoiled Thy gifts of wisdom by his profligacy, Thou hast offered him the fatted calf of wisdom to enjoy undeservedly.’

“The Heavenly Father vibrated the following intuitive wisdom into the heart of the misunderstanding advanced devotee: ‘Devotee son, you are ever in My Cosmic Consciousness; and the feast of truth, including the fatted calf of wisdom, has always already been yours. You should not feel less because We felt it fit and proper to especially celebrate with cosmic joy for your own lost brother who was spiritually dead and is now divinely alive, back again in Our kingdom, enhancing Our joy as well as your joy. Rejoice!’”

In this parable, Jesus points out how greatly it pleases the Heavenly Father to see His children, once lost in material pleasures, back again in the heavenly bliss of deep meditation and celestial ecstasy. When Jesus says of the prodigal son: “When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him,” he gives great assurance to suffering mankind that the Heavenly Father meets at least halfway the devotee who diligently and continuously prays to go back to the heavenly kingdom.

Jesus further notes that devotees who are already graced by God with divine consciousness should not compare their portion with the bestowal of the gifts of grace on any other devotee. Measure for measure the unconditional love of God metes out in a timely manner that which is the divine inheritance reserved for each soul.



Even the most wicked person can become a saint by unshakable resolution to find God

Every devotee who makes a supreme effort to know God will find, sooner or later, the Divine consciously responding to his prayers. It is to be remembered that God secretly answers every sincere prayer and blesses every spiritual aspiration and endeavor; it is the devotee who fails to recognize that response because it may not always be according to what he expected or hoped for. No devotee should feel discouraged if he receives no visible demonstration of God in response to his prayers. Only when God is convinced of the devotee's utmost sincerity and complete surrender will He consciously and demonstratively respond. Ceaselessly entreating the Lord to reveal Himself, the devotee should not be satisfied with one-sided prayers, but should continue until he consciously knows beyond doubt that his prayers have been heard and answered by the Heavenly Father.

“Even a consummate evildoer who turns away from all else to worship Me exclusively may be counted among the good, because of his righteous resolve. He will fast become a virtuous man and obtain unending peace. Tell all assuredly, O Arjuna, that My devotee never perishes! Taking shelter in Me all beings can achieve the Supreme Fulfillment.”⁸

Thus does the Bhagavad Gita offer divine hope to fallen prodigal children of God, seemingly helpless through misdeeds. No matter how noxious their evil, they can never destroy their inherent goodness. It is God who has become the finite expression of each soul. No matter how far man's life is pulled away from its divine Source by the outgoing force of evil, if he makes a conscious effort at righteous behavior he will be drawn back to God by the stronger magnetism of God's love.

Thus even a wicked man, much abused by evil pleasures, may become a saint by sacred unshakable resolution. He reclaims his soul identity with God by single-minded meditation, by abandoning his ungodly ways (foregoing wrong company from without and wrong inclinations from within), and by withholding his attention from the bewitching sirens of material desires.

Such a person, by deeply meditating with adamant determination, gradually

remembers the true divine image ever present within him. By continuous vigilance, he sheds the temporarily grafted evil from his outer body-bound consciousness. He forgets the acquired “second nature” of wickedness as soon as he realizes in ecstasy his eternal nature of goodness.

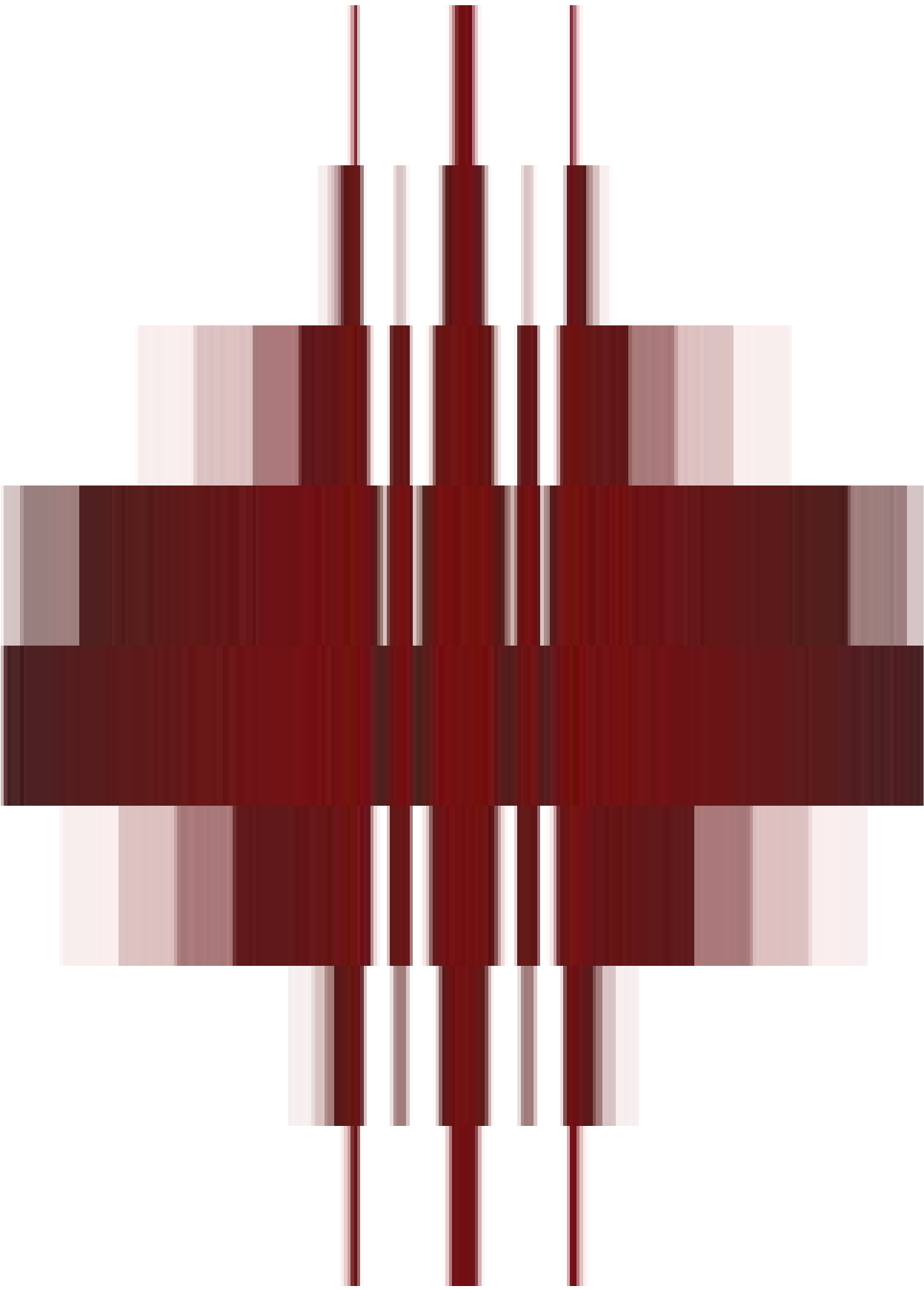
No matter how long a dreamer in dreamland deems himself a wicked man, on waking he becomes free from that identity. Even if a soul has passed through many incarnations of evil, its delusive habits fall away and are forgotten instantaneously as soon as that soul wakes up in ecstasy in realization of its ineradicable goodness. Every being came from God, and even in the forgetful dream of mortality everyone remains a potential sleeping God. Forsaking his lifelong obsessive imaginings of being a hopeless renegade, man should awaken himself in God.



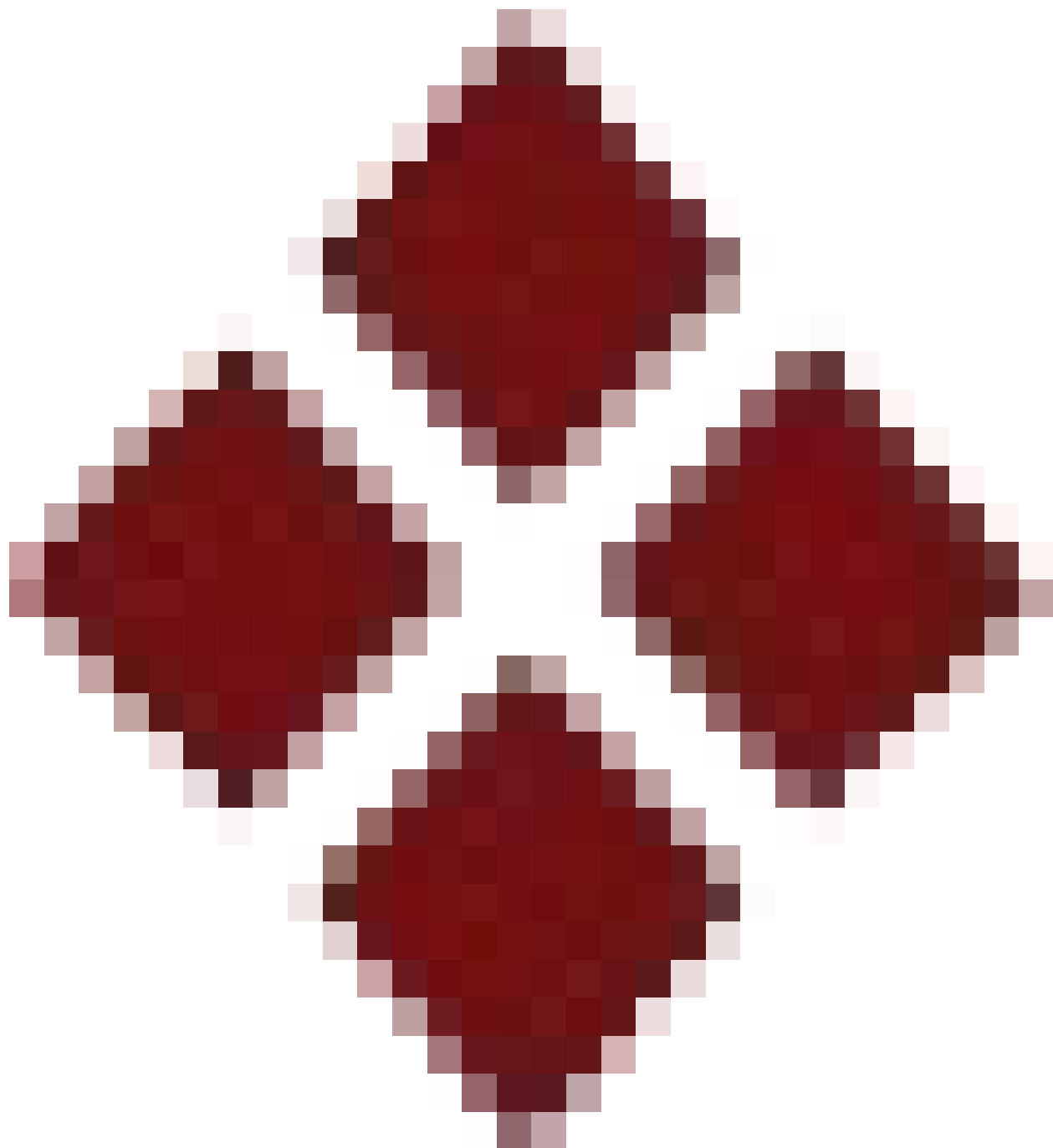
Discourse 59

“Ye Cannot Serve God and Mammon”

The Use and Misuse of Wealth



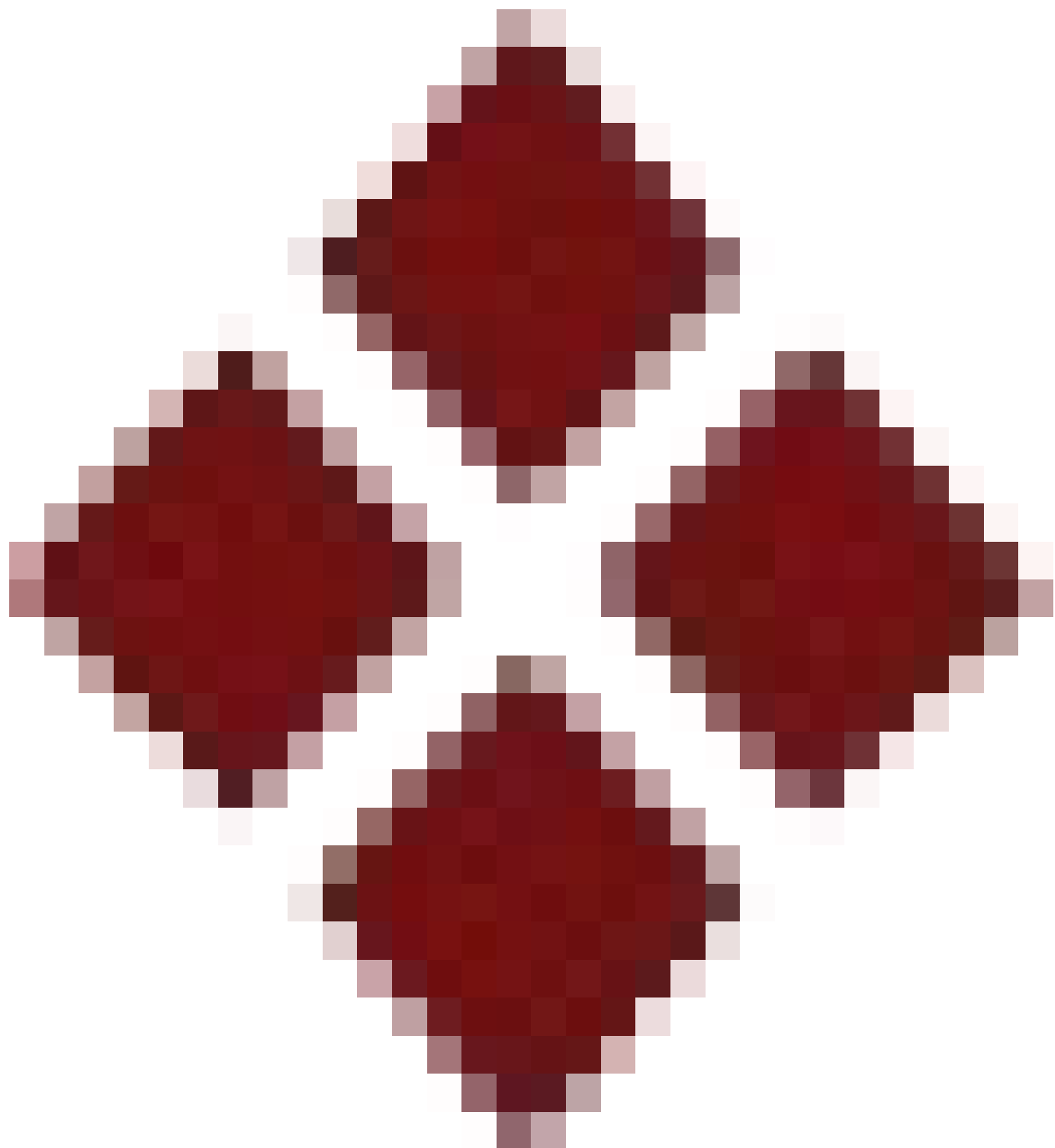
Divine Principles and Cosmic Laws of Material Success and Prosperity



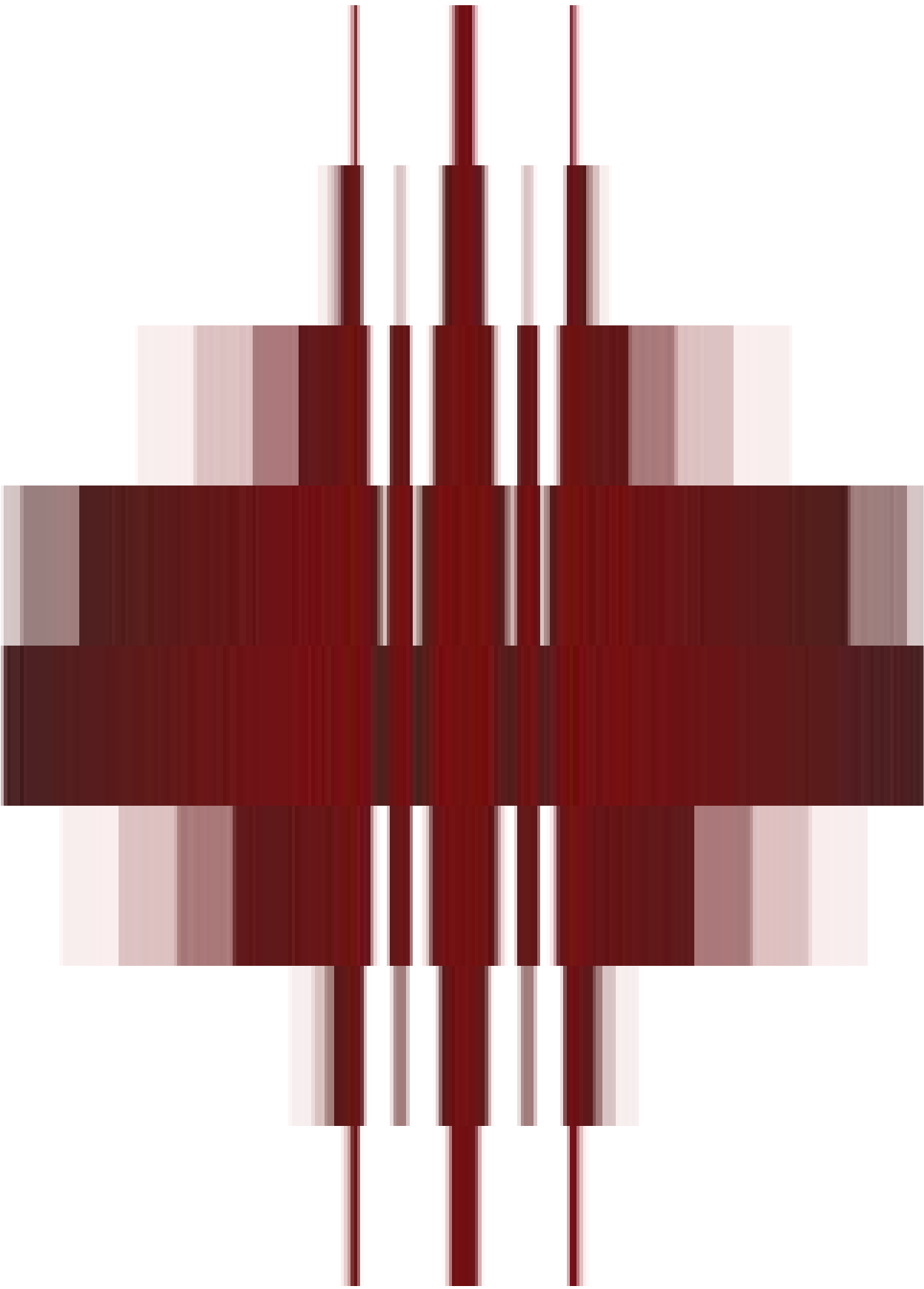
**In the Modern World, Love of Money Is the Principal
Tool of Delusion**



The Different Vibratory Regions of the Astral World to Which Souls Go After Death



Understanding the “Heaven” and “Hell” Experienced in the After-Death State



“Shortsighted people of the world pursue God’s ephemeral mundane gifts of material objects and pleasures in complete neglect of the Giver...Wise children of the Heavenly Father who discover that they are made in His image seek first His kingdom of eternal happiness hidden within.”

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And he said also unto his disciples, “There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. And he called him, and said unto him, ‘How is it that I hear this of thee? Give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.’”

“Then the steward said within himself, ‘What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed. I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.’”

“So he called every one of his lord’s debtors unto him, and said unto the first, ‘How much owest thou unto my lord?’ And he said, ‘An hundred measures of oil.’ And he said unto him, ‘Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty.’”

“Then said he to another, ‘And how much owest thou?’ And he said, ‘An hundred measures of wheat.’ And he said unto him, ‘Take thy bill, and write fourscore.’”

“And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.

“And I say unto you, make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations. He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man’s, who shall give you that which is your own?”

“No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”

And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him.

And he said unto them, “Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.”...¹

“There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

“And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

“And he cried and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.’

“But Abraham said, ‘Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.’

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“And he said, ‘Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.’

“And he said unto him, ‘If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.’ ”

—*Luke 16:1 – 31*



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Discourse 59

“Ye Cannot Serve God and Mammon”

The Use and Misuse of Wealth



And he said also unto his disciples, “There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. And he called him, and said unto him, ‘How is it that I hear this of thee? Give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.’

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And he said unto them, “Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God” (Luke 16:1 – 15).



Divine principles and cosmic laws of material success and prosperity

Among the medley of profound truths Jesus wove into the simple eloquence of his parables, the above verses focus on the requisite virtue of material uprightness for gaining everlasting spiritual riches. The dishonest steward, about to lose his position after his untrustworthy behavior is exposed, extended his unscrupulous ways in dishonest schemes that benefited others in order to obtain from them favors that would secure his own future. So adroitly clever was the steward that his rich employer (himself skilled in the materialistic ways of success) could not but admire the shrewdness of his employee, even as he removed him from opportunity to embezzle further from his own treasury. The world lauds successful persons who follow its ways, but it will not share responsibility for the consequences.

Jesus points out that materially minded persons, “the children of this world,” unethical and morally reprehensible though they may be, often exhibit more cleverness about practical affairs than spiritual persons (“the children of the light”). Thus Jesus counsels his followers not to be dullards in fulfilling their dutiful responsibilities and satisfying their material needs. God made this a bounteous universe to provide for His children. But ill-gotten gains are thievery from the infinite store; they bear a heavy price in compensatory forfeit of everlasting spiritual treasure.

“I say unto you,” Jesus admonishes, “that since wealth (‘unrighteous mammon’) is a necessary resource in the conduct of material affairs, make yourselves friends of the divine principles and laws of material success and prosperity, that by attunement with those cosmic forces, no matter what setbacks may come to you, your good karma will always see to your welfare in this world and in the ‘everlasting habitations’ of heaven.

“Be faithful to God and Truth in small matters and you will cultivate the uprightness to be faithful under all conditions. But if you are dishonest in little things, you will be dishonest when tempted by more grievous offenses. If you have been corrupt in tending to your material affairs, succumbing to selfishness, avarice, and deceit, neither man nor God will entrust to you true riches. And if you have not been faithful in the use of the cosmic gifts of life, sharing and aiding others to receive their rightful succor from the universal wealth, you will

not be worthy to receive on earth or in heaven the manifestation of your own divine inheritance of all-fulfilling soul qualities.

“No one can be devoted to both righteousness and unrighteousness. You cannot follow God’s way of truth, love, and service to all while simultaneously engaging in the unscrupulous pursuit of money or worldly power for selfish purposes. If you give yourself to the service of instant gratifications promised by the wealth of materialistic offerings, you will feel no significant aspiration for God-realization. But if you love God supremely, the evils of the world cannot hold you.”²



In the modern world, love of money is the principal tool of delusion

Among the onlookers who had listened to the above words of Jesus to his disciples were Pharisees whose love for wealth and social standing belied their professed devotion to God. When they scorned Jesus' admonitions, he had additional words especially for them:

“You hypocrites, you justify your disreputable covetousness before the eyes of spiritually blind men. But Omniscient God, who is present right within your hearts, knows and judges your inner being. Earthly riches and human glory, esteemed so highly among materially minded people, are held basely insignificant by the wisdom of God. And those who attain wealth and social eminence by vile unethical means are considered by Him to be very low.”

Jesus mentions both the good as well as the evil that may result from material wealth. Money itself is brainless; it cannot be blamed as inherently evil. It brings good or evil only according to the noble or reprehensible use that people make of it. Money is used by both saints and bandits. Virtuous persons attract money by applying the divine laws governing material prosperity, and convert its value into sustaining life and helping others materially, mentally, and spiritually. Evildoers and the sense-enslaved pursue monetary gain by any expedient means, regardless of the harm or destruction inflicted on others, and employ their acquisition in all manner of selfish indulgence and depravity.

God-knowing sages have declared that the three strongest temptations of man are money, sex, and intoxicants. In earlier eras in undeveloped civilizations, sex and wine were the primary pitfalls; in our industrial age, with its dependence on finance in individual life and society at large, it may be said that money is the principal tool of delusion, for it buys wine, stimulates indulgence in evil sensory passions, and exerts a powerful hypnosis of self-importance and false security. Scriptural wisdom, which condemns worship of “unrighteous mammon,” needs to be heeded by money-mad modern man.

Saint Paul echoed the teachings of Jesus: “They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil.... But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness,

godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called.”³



“There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: and there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

“And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom.

“And he cried and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.’

“But Abraham said, ‘Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.’

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“Abraham saith unto him, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.’

“And he said, ‘Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.’

“And he said unto him, ‘If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead’” (Luke 16:19 – 31).

In the parable of the rich man and the beggar, Jesus alludes to the different vibratory regions of the astral world to which the virtuous and the wickedness-encrusted souls are attracted after death according to their self-earned merits or demerits:



The different vibratory regions of the astral world to which souls go after death

“The helpless beggar—a virtuous soul, though apparently forsaken by all—after death was conveyed by divine vibrations of the Holy Ghost (‘angels of God’) into the high astral regions where spiritual souls are received by advanced beings and liberated prophets—‘Abraham’s bosom.’ But the rich man, who lived riotously with no effort to cultivate God-consciousness, found himself, in the after-death state, in the darksome vibratory region of the lower astral world where wicked or materially desirous souls undergo the torment of restless nightmares after the oblivion of astral sleep that is the first stage after death.⁴

“In somnolent vision, the sinful man saw from afar with his astral perception the land where the astral body of Lazarus roamed with great souls, and his soul cried out through his astral voice, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy and send Lazarus to me that by his astral presence and his finger of will dipped in the cooling waters of wisdom he may comfort me and cool my tongue of self-created wrong material vibrations that I brought here from my past wrongly lived earth life. I am tormented by the flames of my unfulfilled material desires and attachment cravings for fleshly existence.’

“Abraham replied, ‘Son, remember that on earth you received your heart’s desire for material prosperity; but being engrossed and engorged in it, you forgot God. Lazarus, though plagued with physical suffering, did not neglect to cultivate God-consciousness by the inner communion of prayer and meditation. The law of cause and effect ordains that as you did not labor for God-happiness in your earth life, you cannot claim a harvest of blessedness in the after-death state; while Lazarus now ‘is comforted,’ reaping the result of his spiritual actions: the ever new joy of the Great Comforter (the Holy Ghost, the Holy Vibration of God made manifest).

“‘Besides, there is a great impervious gulf of dividing vibration that separates the dark grossly vibrating region of the slums of the astral land, to which you have been attracted, from the celestial vibratory realm where Lazarus and I dwell. Through your own evil actions, you chose your abode in the region where you have to live and breathe the stifling vibrations of your unfulfilled desires. Only by repentance and reformation will you find your freedom from recurrent cycles of wastrel living and consequent afterlife confinement in your darksome

astral prison. As fish are conditioned to the gross vibration of water and cannot live in the rarefied gaseous atmosphere on dry land, so at present you cannot forsake your self-chosen astral region of gross vibrations and move to the fine astral region, where we live and breathe supernal vibrations of divine light and love and bliss. You are used to gross vibrations, so you have to remain in that stratum until you resolve to improve yourself and thus deserve to be promoted to a more spiritual earth existence, and thence to the higher existence where we are. Astral beings of finer vibrations who live with us cannot reach you without divine permission, nor can any of you living in the lower regions come here without divine decree.’”



A graphic warning to body-bound sense slaves who neglect to develop spiritual consciousness

Describing the fate of the sense-attached rich man in this parable, Jesus gives a graphic warning to body-bound persons who are misusing the gifts of God by inordinately indulging material desires in utter forgetfulness of their need to regain their Father's everlasting kingdom of bliss. According to the law of cause and effect, in the after-death state such persons will live for a karmically determined time in a self-created hell in the astral world, bemoaning the loss of their sensate physical body, its comforting breath, sensory pleasures, unfulfilled desires, and the accustomed sustenance of favored tasty foods (referred to in the parable in which the rich man "fared sumptuously every day"). They are unable to enjoy the divine state of ever new heavenly bliss they could have realized in the after-death state.

Shortsighted people of the world pursue God's ephemeral mundane gifts of material objects and pleasures in complete neglect of the Giver who is everlastingly useful to His seeking children. Wise children of the Heavenly Father who discover that they are made in His image seek first His kingdom of eternal happiness hidden within, and material things afterwards, realizing that no spurious material substitutes can ever alleviate the true happiness-thirst of the soul. That is why Jesus had said, "Bread the men of the world seek after; but ye who are wise, seek ye the kingdom of God first." He counseled all souls on earth to learn to live "not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God," so that in the after-death state they would be already consciously familiar with living by the word of God, or Cosmic Vibration, and Cosmic Bliss.⁵

Great saints who voluntarily practice fasting, breathlessness and heart-control in the samadhi state of meditation, inner renunciation, body-aboveness, and other disciplines find that in the afterlife, rather than experiencing the loss of the body as a sort of anguish in the denial of earthly sensations and comforts, they consciously enjoy unfettered perceptions of wondrous bliss and freedom. Body-bound persons, on the other hand, who expect to find soup and crackers when they arrive beyond the Pearly Gate, must adjust to much subtler fare in that finer atmosphere; they cannot expect to leave here after lunch and arrive there in time for a hearty dinner!



Understanding the “heaven” and “hell” experienced in the after-death state

Most persons can look forward to a glorified experience of peace, freedom, and blessed relief from life’s burdens and afflictions when the spirit leaves the body at the time of death.⁶ However, those such as the rich man in this parable who are strongly attached to their physical forms are aghast at being wrenched away from their bodily instrument with its much-indulged materialistic capacities. As the life energy empowering all the senses and organs moves toward the medulla and then out of the physical form, desires urge the ego-bound soul to try to draw the consciousness back into the body. Such persons try again and again unsuccessfully to operate the lungs and other organs or to move the muscles with their disembodied will, but at last surrender their fruitless effort and enter a sort of dreamless sleep, a period of rest from the travails of life.

After the initial astral sleep, souls who left the body with powerful bad habits and dissipation of the senses of the physical form partially awaken in intermittent dreamlike astral experiences of unrequited craving to indulge the sense-desires of the lost physical vehicle. This frustration of unfulfillment and unslaked mortal thirsts causes a mental agony that is the real hell experienced in the afterlife.⁷ When the karmically ordained period of astral suffering or reward is over, the soul wakes up in another body in a new incarnation on earth, endowed with the physical instrumentalities to pursue once again its desires and learning experiences—this time, it is to be hoped, with at least a little more wisdom learned from previous painful lessons.

The physical body and world are perceived through the two physical eyes; the heavenly astral body and cosmos are purely seen through the intuitional power of the one spiritual eye. “If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.”⁸ It is by opening the “single” or spiritual eye that one can perceive the luminous pranic forces that compose the astral body and astral cosmos.

Extremely materialistic persons, those who have led a terrible life, are unable after death to awaken fully into the consciousness of the wondrous potentials of their astral body. Their beclouded consciousness remains aware only of a region of darkness and mental distress.

Even while incarnate on earth, advanced souls who meditate deeply experience

through their spiritual eye the all-knowing intuition of the soul as an illuminating lightless light that dispels the darkness of closed eyes; with that single power they can see, hear, smell, taste, and touch in the inner astral world. Thus when they die, intuition comes to their aid as a revealing light by which they can perceive the shining beauty of the astral world and their astral body. Only those who have developed soul intuition and have cultivated before death the body transcendence of God-consciousness can attain conscious ascendance into, and full awareness of, the highest regions of the heavenly astral world; and they can also, if they so desire, see across the vibrational gulf that divides heaven from earthly life.

Everything one has done to develop the “sixth sense” of intuition while on earth helps one after death. Since it is the degree of realization and the amount of virtue one has expressed on earth that determines one’s experience in the astral region, there is much work to be done to purify the indwelling consciousness by God-contact and by persistence in exercising the godly virtues.

In depicting the astral ascension of the afflicted beggar Lazarus, Jesus gives comfort to suffering virtuous persons by the assurance that they should not feel discouraged, nor should they envy those with material advantages. Earthly blessings, if improperly used, may be followed by experiences of extreme discomfort in the after-death state. Righteous persons who retain their goodness until the end of their lives, no matter what suffering or deprivation they endure, will find when they leave the body that they have earned a heavenly freedom and joy in the astral kingdom. God does not wish suffering on His children, and certainly has not made it a prerequisite for attaining His kingdom; nevertheless, no pain that one suffers consciously goes without reward, the purifying effect of having burned off a measure of past karma or of having kindled an inner illumination that awakened and consolidated a nascent soul virtue. Every sacrifice performed on the altar of the body is recognized by God.⁹ Those who suffer in the course of service to God and His children, and willingly sacrifice all for Him as Jesus did, will surely attain God-bliss.



Can souls on earth or in the lower-astral hades receive help from heavenly beings?

Jesus explains in the parable, through Abraham's comments to the rich man, why Lazarus could not be sent to solace him in his astral sufferings. Abraham makes reference to the "gulf" of dividing vibration separating the astral vibratory spheres one from the other. As the material universe is divided into the principal vibratory regions of earth, water, air, and fiery energy, so there are several distinct regions of the subtler cosmos, each of which has many subdivisions, with the exception of the highest plane—there all is one. Ether-filled space acts as a vibratory rampart that prevents materialistic persons on earth from entering the heavenly astral kingdom; likewise, increasingly subtle vibratory forms of etheric space divide the lower from the higher astral regions, and the even finer causal realm from the astral.¹⁰ Thus, the astral realm to which the rich man was consigned was separated by a vibrational barrier from the finer heavenly abode to which Lazarus's spiritual karma had drawn him, "so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence."

The more advanced a soul is, the freer its movement within the vast territory of God's kingdom. Fully liberated souls have no boundaries of movement. But karma-restricted souls cannot move freely from one sphere into another sphere. People who are dark with delusive ignorance, crimes, or other wrong acts and have thus attracted temporary residence in the "slums" of the astral land after death would not even be able to stand the finer vibrations of a higher sphere and its residents of spiritual souls, just as in this world evil ones cannot bear to be in spiritual environs or in the company of saintly persons. On earth people cannot touch a high-voltage electric current without being burned; similarly, in the astral realm souls whose consciousness is of low vibrational quality experience energy shocks when they come in contact with higher vibrations. As man suffers in this world from collision with matter, so the astral body suffers in that world from collision with vibrations higher than its own.

Nevertheless, God in His mercy does not leave suffering souls in any region of creation bereft of help. In the astral world there are advanced good souls who help repentant bad ones to work out their karmic penances—as also do the prayers and goodwill that reach them from their loved ones on earth. Only those

who have sufficiently developed their spiritual consciousness and the enlightenment of intuition during their earthly incarnations are consciously able to devote themselves to the good works of helping others in the astral world, and are also able to give invisible assistance to souls on earth.

In the afterlife, as on earth, souls must either ascend or descend; none can remain stationary until the permanence of God-union is attained. Those who have gone into the astral world at physical death with material desires must return to the gratifying playground of the physical world. Souls who have freed themselves from earthly karma, and who continue to develop in God-consciousness in the astral world, ascend into the supernally blissful causal heaven.

Most average persons, those whose sins are venial and few, are reborn on earth relatively sooner than more advanced souls; after their soul-renewing sojourn in the astral, they wake up in a new physical body with fresh opportunities to progress. Sinful persons are often confined longer by the force of their karma to whatever astral sphere is most conducive to learning the lessons that will prepare them for ultimate redemption. Virtuous souls may stay longer in the astral than do ordinary souls, reaping the blessed rewards of their good karma.

Although the rich man in the parable was caught in the self-created hades of his dissolute ways and unfulfilled desires and failed to gain alleviation of his miseries, he was generous enough in spirit to ask Abraham to send Lazarus to warn his wayward brothers and thereby save them from a similar fate. Even though divine law did not permit Abraham to comply with that wish, the implicit lesson in the story is that the rich man's repentance and marked unselfishness in thinking of his brothers' freedom, even while in the throes of his own torment, would aid in working out the effects of his own profligate actions and help to liberate him from his lower-astral suffering. As in the physical world man can either act wrongly and move toward the dungeon of ignorance and misery or act rightly and thus move toward freedom, so souls in the astral world can either intensify their evil by rebellious thoughts or expiate their evil karma by repentance, prayer, and conscious virtuous resolution.

Abraham's refusal to send Lazarus to earth to warn the five brothers of the rich man about the consequences of riotous living was in accord with divine decree that God does not impose spectacular intervention of His powers to coerce the free will of man. Nor does He send the dead as His spokesmen.¹¹ His way is to send divine prophets whose message, exalted lives, and spiritual service

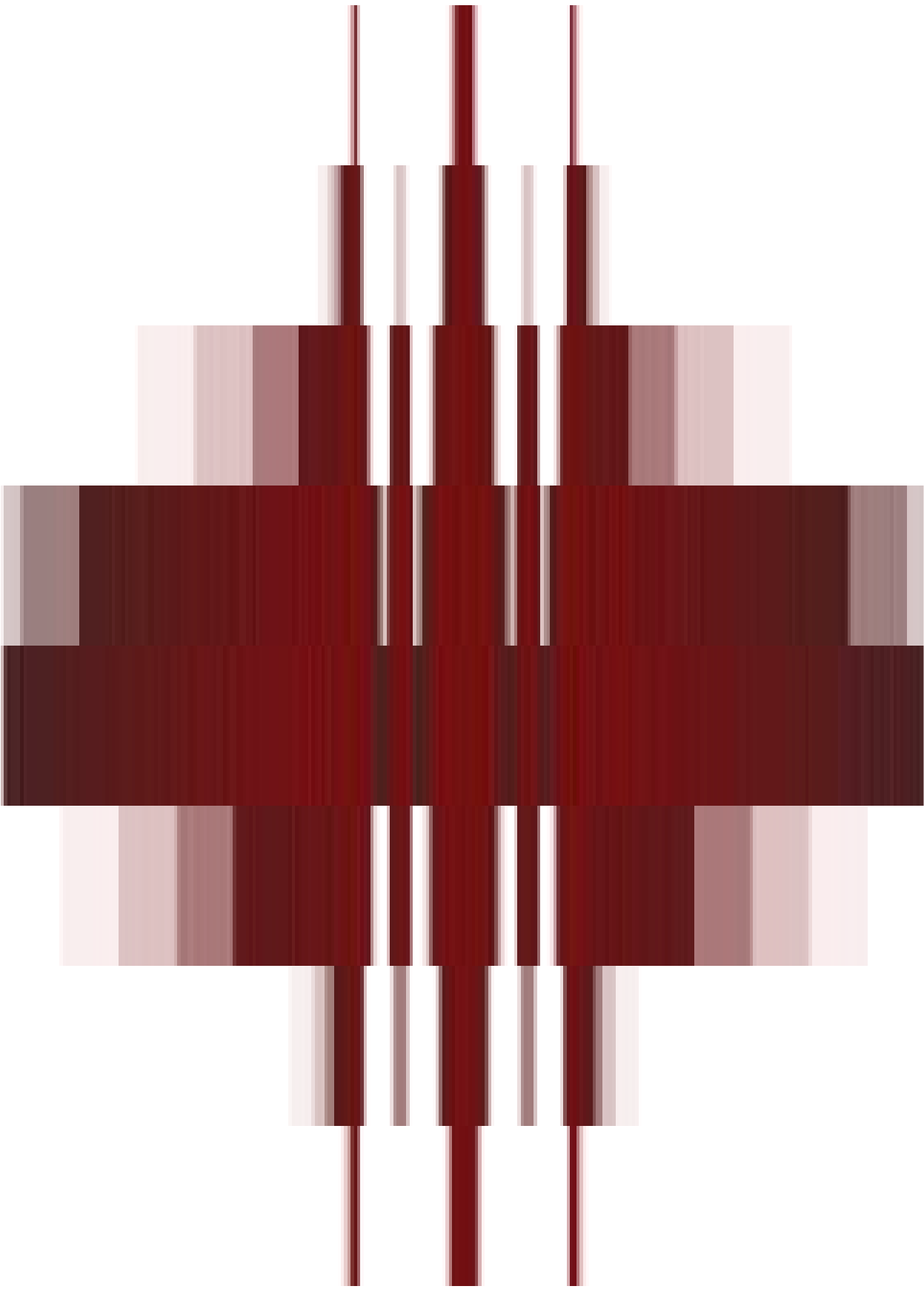
encourage His error-led children to realize the rewards of following liberating paths of righteousness. If man be so inured to ignorance that he cannot be moved by the wisdom, love, and holy bliss-vibrations of God's chosen emissaries, neither would lasting beneficial change be effected by the testimony of any lesser spirit appearing from the astral world. Man of his own free will must make a resolute choice to attune his life with the teachings and blessings of God-sent gurus, saints, and prophets.



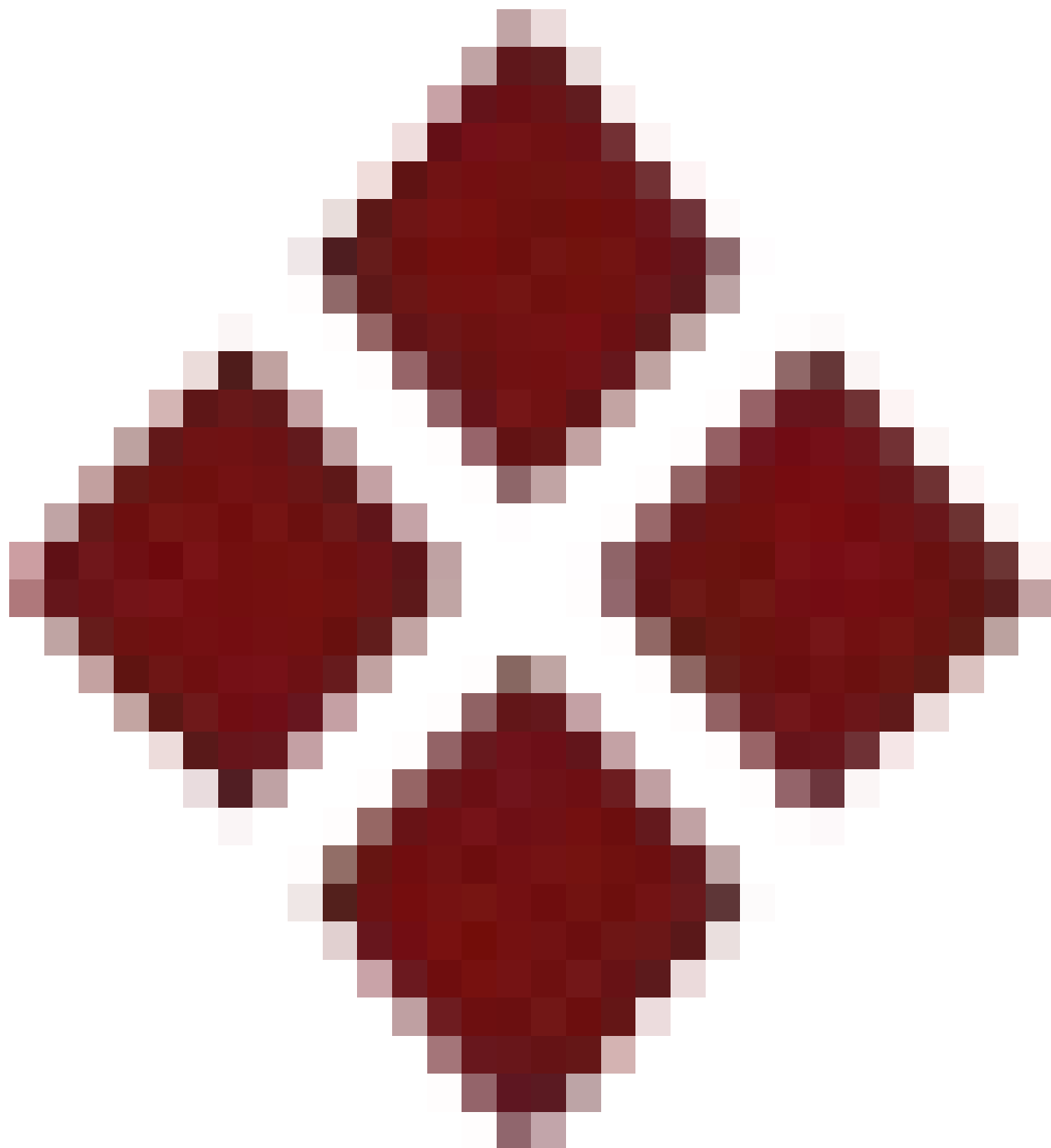
Discourse 60

“I Am the Resurrection and the Life”

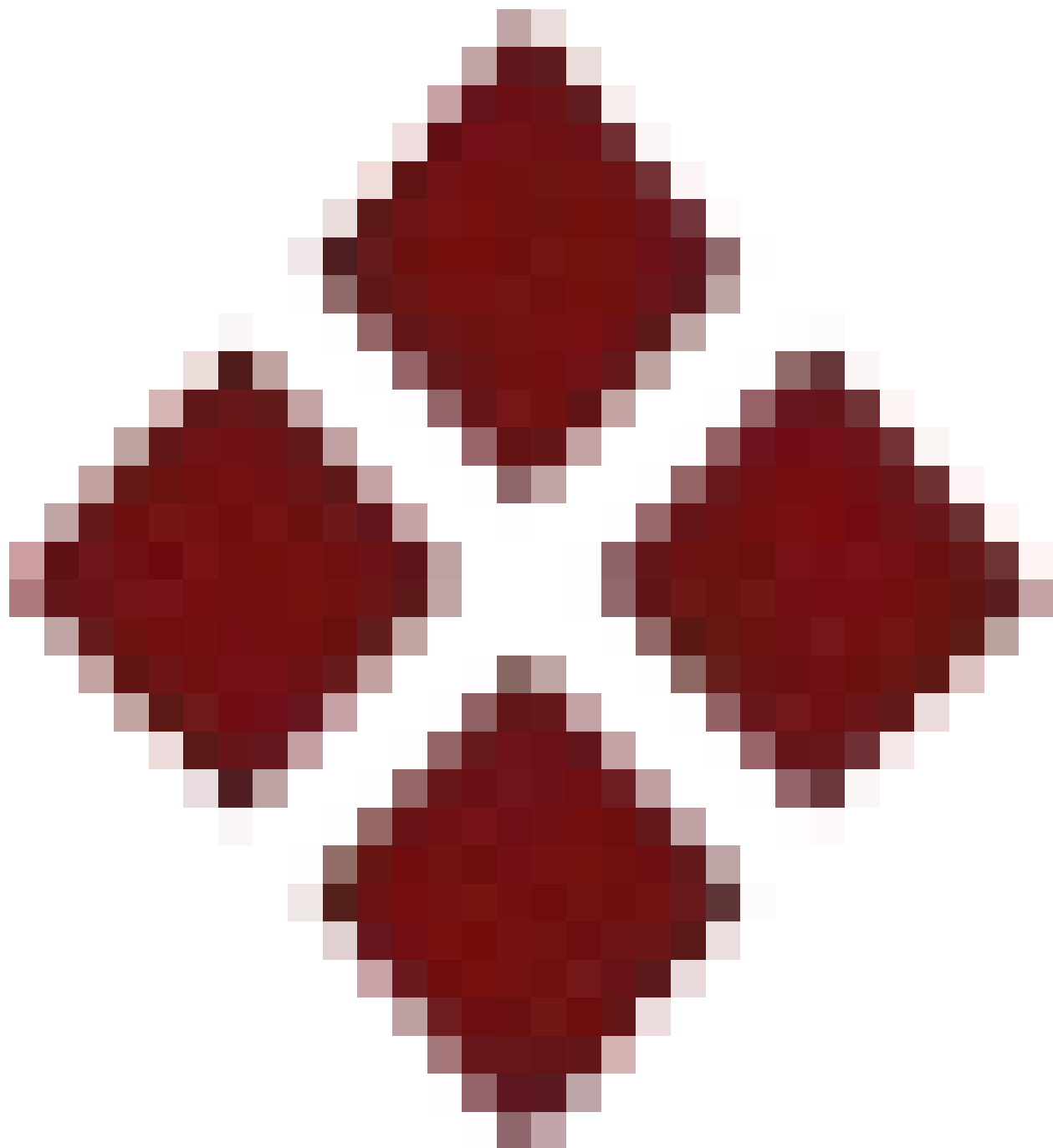
Jesus Raises Lazarus From the Dead



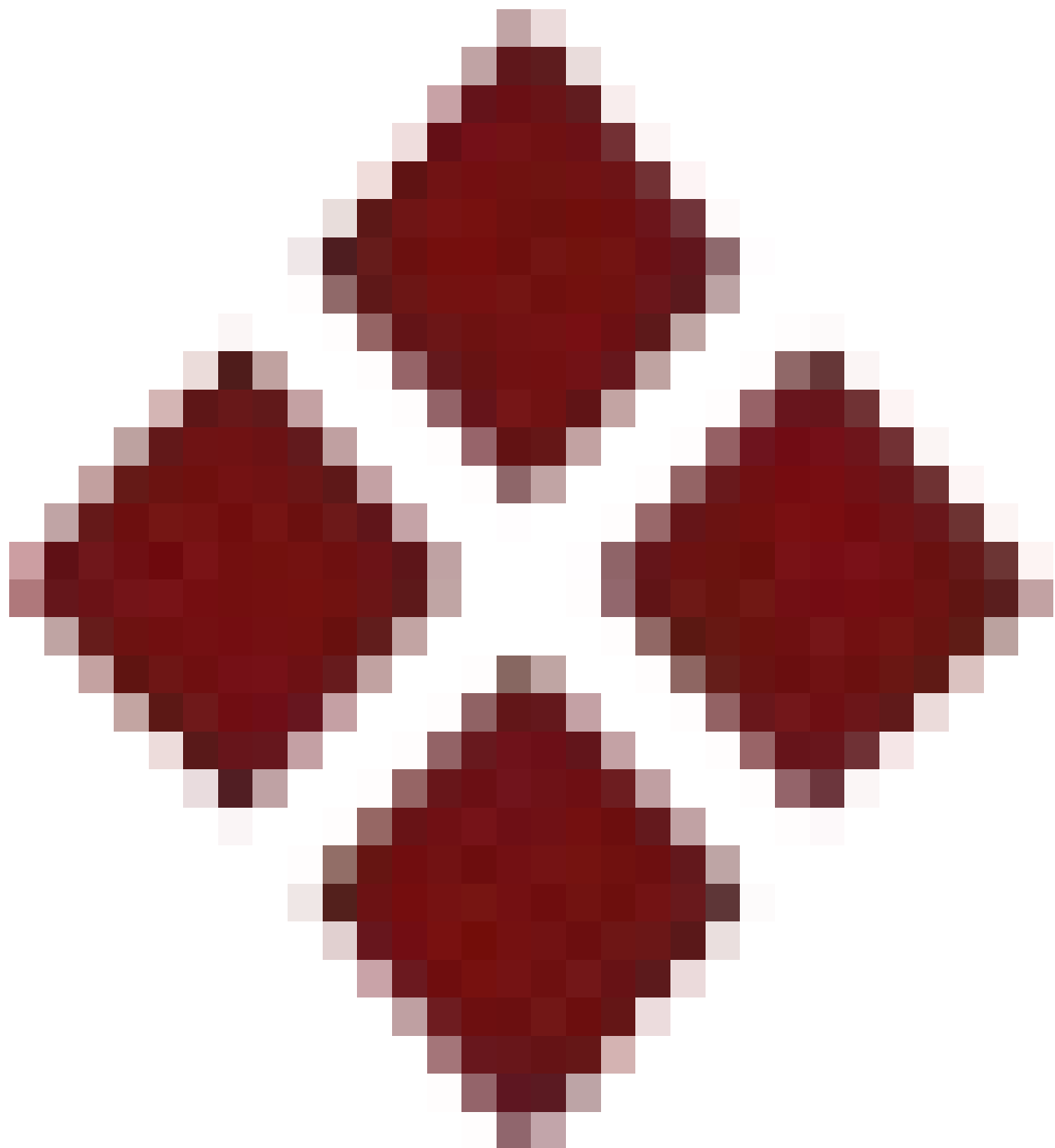
**Advanced Souls Are Directed by “the Light of the
World” in All That They Do**



The Physical, Astral, and Spiritual Meanings of Resurrection



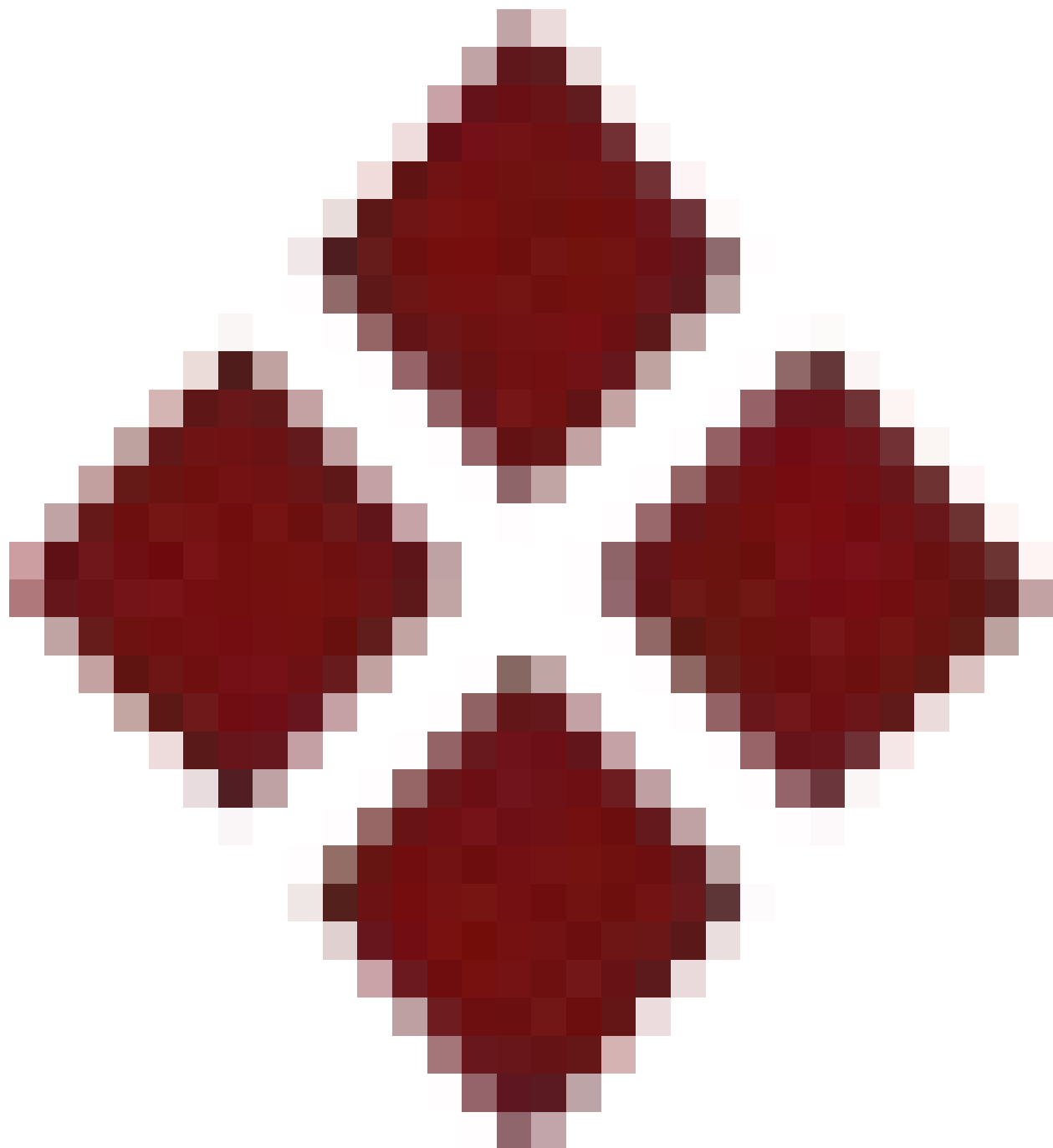
**True Meaning of Jesus' Words, "I Am the
Resurrection and the Life"**



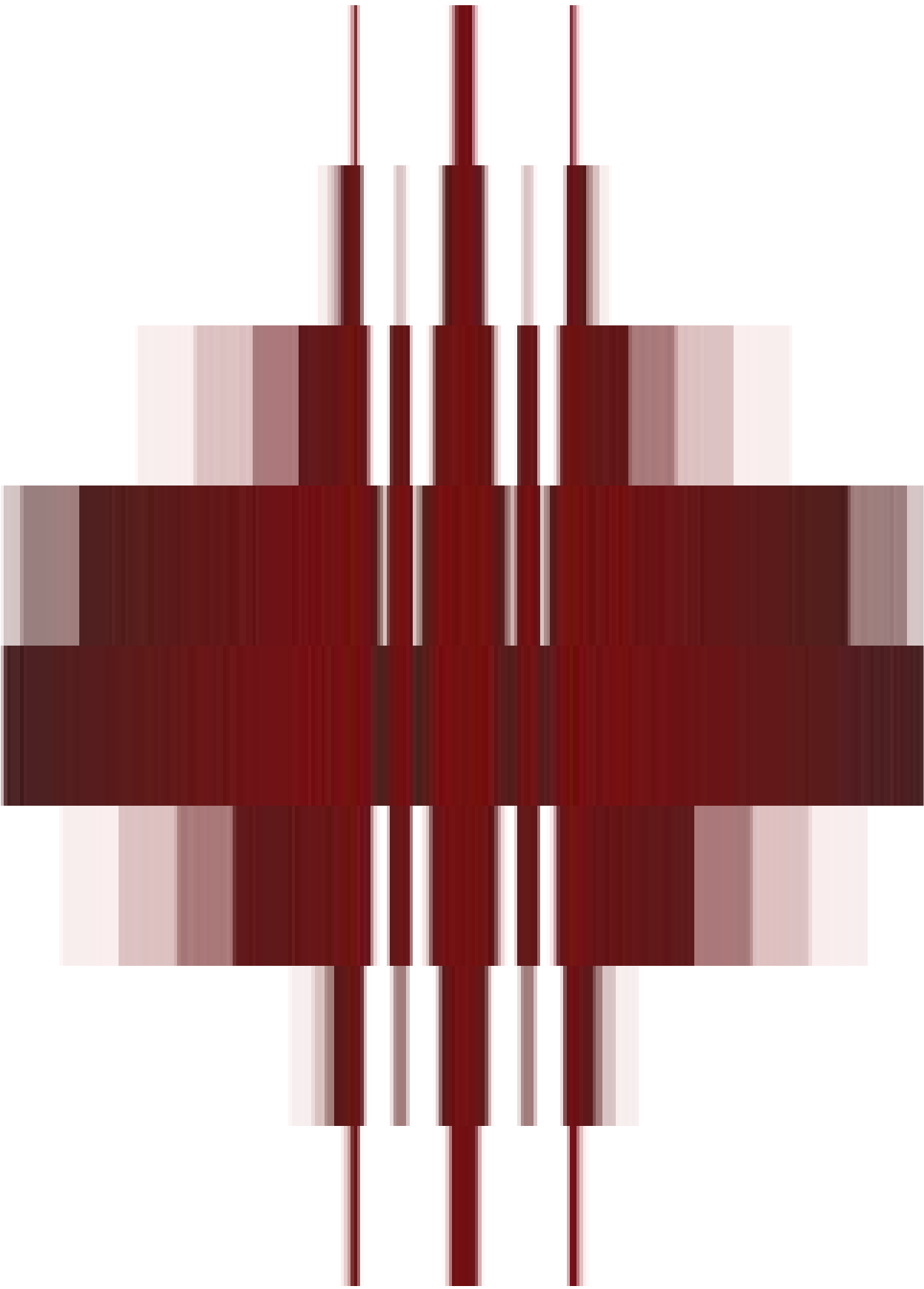
**One in Tune With Christ Consciousness Overcomes
Physical and Spiritual Death**



**Jesus Addressed God as a Warmly Personal and
Supremely Kind Father**



Scientific Process by Which Jesus Restored Lazarus to Life



“Jesus performed this healing...to prove yet again that latent within every soul is potential power over every circumscribing mortal condition, and that there is no such thing as an unalterable fate.”

■

Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.) Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick."

When Jesus heard that, he said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby."

Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was. Then after that saith he to his disciples, "Let us go into Judea again."

His disciples say unto him, "Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?"

Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him."

These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep."

Then said his disciples, "Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well." Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep.

Then said Jesus unto them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him."

Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellowdisciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already.

Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off: And many

of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house. Then said Martha unto Jesus, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee."

Jesus saith unto her, "Thy brother shall rise again."

Martha saith unto him, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

Jesus said unto her, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?"

She saith unto him, "Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world."

And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, "The Master is come, and calleth for thee." As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him. Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him.

The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, "She goeth unto the grave to weep there." Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled.

And said, "Where have ye laid him?"

They said unto him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, "Behold how he loved him!"

And some of them said, "Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?" Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.

Jesus said, "Take ye away the stone."

Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, "Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days."

Jesus saith unto her, "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?"

Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid.

And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard me. And I knew that Thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent me."

And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, "Loose him, and let him go."

Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him. But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done.

Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, "What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation."

And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, "Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not." And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.

Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death. Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples.

And the Jews' Passover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves. Then sought they for Jesus, and spake among themselves, as they stood in the temple, "What think ye, that he will not come to the feast?" Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that, if any man knew where he were, he should shew it, that they might take him.

—John 11:1 – 57



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Discourse 60

“I Am the Resurrection and the Life”

Jesus Raises Lazarus From the Dead



Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)¹ Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, “Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.”

When Jesus heard that, he said, “This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby” (John 11:1 – 4).

“T his sickness of Lazarus, though it may bring death, shall not end in death. Lazarus shall live, that the power of God as manifested in the Son of God might be gloriously revealed to bring the hope of immortal life to death-hounded man.”

Jesus was not implying that Lazarus’ death was prearranged merely to provide an occasion “for the glory of God” to be demonstrated.² Rather, Jesus had seen through his prophetic eye of omniscient intuition that his disciple’s karma had destined him to be the victim of a fatal illness, which would afford an opportunity, sanctioned by the Heavenly Father, for the manifestation of the divine power of resurrection through the Son, the Christ Consciousness incarnate in Jesus.



Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was. Then after that saith he to his disciples, “Let us go into Judea again.”

His disciples say unto him, “Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?”³

Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him” (John 11:5 – 10).



Advanced souls are directed by “the light of the world” in all that they do

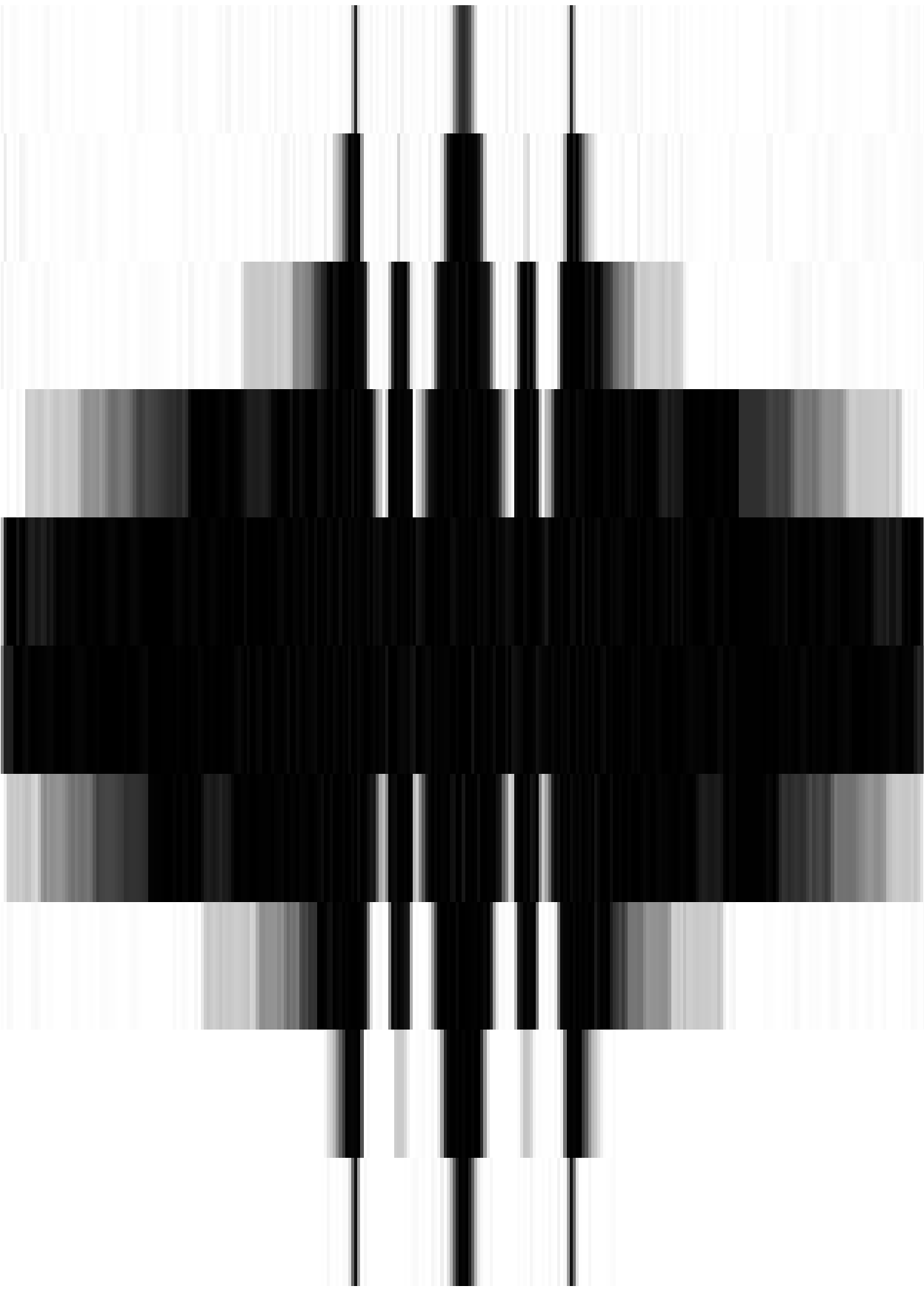
When the disciples expressed concern about Jesus’ decision to return to Judea, where his life might be endangered, he assured them that his steps were divinely guided: “As the daylight enables one to walk a difficult path without stumbling, so he who sees by inner perception the great light that governs the cosmos (the omnipresent intelligence of Christ Consciousness, and the Cosmic Vibration that informs and illumines the universe) walks in wisdom and avoids errors in choosing his course of action. But a person wandering in the night of delusive ignorance blunders and stumbles through life, having within him no guiding light of God-wisdom.”

Advanced devotees are directed in all that they do by “the light of the world”—Christ-imbued Cosmic Energy, which they perceive as an inner light of intuitive understanding or as the guidance of wisdom they hear vibrated by the Cosmic Sound of Aum.



These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, “Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.”

Then said his disciples, “Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.” Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep (John 11:11 – 13).



Jesus' knowledge came from Christ Consciousness, not psychic powers or telepathy

Jesus, miles away across the Jordan, knew when Lazarus died in Bethany. He had not received this information through any conventional means, as is clear from his companions' bewilderment. His certainty came through the universal Christ Consciousness manifesting in him, by which he felt himself present not only in his own body but in the body of his distant friend.

Persons with some measure of spiritual awakening can discern the thoughts and experiences of others at a distance through mental telepathy. Jesus' knowledge, however, came not through psychic powers but through his omnipresent Christ-feeling—a far greater state of consciousness. His expanded awareness, spread over the vast universal circumference, could feel every event on the earth's surface or within it, or anywhere in the material universe, or in any of the finer spheres of vibratory creation.

A person jostled by others in a crowd can feel exactly when and where on his body each touch falls, even if he does not see each contact. The Heavenly Father, through His ubiquitous Christ Consciousness, is aware of everything occurring in His immense body of the cosmos. Lord Jesus, Bhagavan Krishna, all souls imbued with Christ Consciousness, Kutastha Chaitanya, likewise possess that universal feeling of all-pervading Infinite Intelligence, by which they can be instantaneously aware of distant happenings, even as Jesus was cognizant of the death of Lazarus.

When Jesus said to his disciples, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth," he signified: "Lazarus is sleeping the delusive sleep of death. I am going to him so that the Christ Consciousness in me can rouse him from the delusion of his death dream."

Sleep is a temporary death, in that it bestows partial freedom from mortal body consciousness; and death is but a prolonged "sleep," the astral rest between physical incarnations.⁴ Both ordinary slumber and the sleep of death are a part of cosmic dream delusion superimposed on the consciousness of the soul. As in a nocturnal dream a person can walk or sleep or die, so human beings under the influence of the cosmic dream behold their dream images as vitally alive, or

sleeping the sleep of death, or waking in the after-death state. Christ knew the universe as a cosmic dream, so he said: “I see the soul of Lazarus is dreaming the sleep of death. I will make his soul dream life instead of death.”



Then said Jesus unto them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him."

Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellowdisciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

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Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off: And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house. Then said Martha unto Jesus, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee."

Jesus saith unto her, "Thy brother shall rise again."

Martha saith unto him, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day" (John 11:14 – 24).



The physical, astral, and spiritual meanings of resurrection

“The soul of Lazarus has left his physical body; and it is beneficial for the strengthening of your faith that I was not there to prevent his death, for then you would not be able to witness the ultimate miracle of resurrection. The intent is that by the raising up of Lazarus through the will of God you will then understand the Heavenly Father’s glory and power.”

With Jesus’ resolve to go to Bethany, about two miles from Jerusalem, the disciples knew he was returning to a hostile area and resolved, “Let us go also, that we may die with him.”

Martha, distraught over the death of her brother, met Jesus partway with recrimination that had he come sooner he could have healed Lazarus, but also with faith that even now Jesus could command of the will of God the uttermost concession of unloosening the bonds of death.

“Resurrection at the last day” is not a fixed day in time when all souls will reappear in their dead bodies at the sound of Gabriel’s trumpet. It is that particular time when any soul after death is judged by the cosmic law of action (karma) and accordingly is resurrected to live in one of the astral regions or on earth in a new incarnation.⁵ Resurrection in that context signifies the rising of souls from the after-death state of sleep or rest to the wakefulness in higher or lower astral spheres, or to the transition of a soul from one body to another on earth, as Elijah was reborn as John the Baptist.

Resurrection can also mean the revival of life in a dead body, as illustrated in the case of Lazarus.

In addition, resurrection indicates the elevation of consciousness from lower to higher states—especially from body identification to superconsciousness, Christ Consciousness, or Cosmic Consciousness through communion, respectively, with the Holy Ghost Aum Vibration, the Infinite Christ, or Spirit.



Jesus said unto her, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?"

She saith unto him, "Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world" (John 11:25 – 27).



True meaning of Jesus' words, "I am the resurrection and the life"

“My soul, not being identified with bodily life, is not limited by the ‘I am’ of ego consciousness. Rather, the ‘I am’ of my consciousness, my individualized spirit, is one with the Christ Consciousness and the Cosmic Life in it; with this omnipresent consciousness, I witness souls resurrected in various ways from the after-death state of sleep to the wakefulness in higher or lower spheres of being, or in a new life on the earth plane, or into transcendent states of consciousness.

“That devotee who by meditation communes with the Christ Consciousness and Cosmic Life will also believe in their manifestation in me. Even if he be physically or spiritually dead, he may resurrect his life and consciousness through Christ Consciousness to resuscitate his dead body or to lift his soul from the sleep of death to God’s heavenly kingdom, or spiritually to resurrect his consciousness from the conditions of delusion to the realization of Cosmic Consciousness. Any advanced soul who learns to feel permanently the eternal life, as is incarnate in me, and who believes in, communes with, the Christ Consciousness that is in me, and in himself, shall transcend mortal death: he shall never again be forced to reincarnate and experience the consequent ignoble change of death that befalls the physical body. Dost thou believe all this I say?”

Whenever Jesus speaks of “I am,” it is from the consciousness of his soul being one with Christ Consciousness.⁶ In contradistinction, when the ordinary person says, “I am,” he refers to his body, his ego consciousness and its physical possessions or intellectual acquisitions; as for example, “I am strong,” or, “I am rich,” or, “I am a specialist in literature or philosophy.” Whenever he says, “I am sick,” or, “I am full of vitality,” he speaks of his life as limited by the condition of his body.

When Jesus says, “I am the resurrection,” he means, “I am Christ Consciousness in which souls rise from a lower state of consciousness to a higher state of inner development.” When Jesus says, “I am the life,” there is no taint of egotism in his voiced realization of “My life is one with the Cosmic Life in everything, whereby I feel all living creatures are born out of me and sleep in me.”⁷

“He that believeth in me” refers not to those who merely believe in the physical existence and works of Jesus, but to those advanced devotees who have begun to

realize the expansion of their consciousness to the Christ Consciousness in everything.



One in tune with Christ Consciousness overcomes physical and spiritual death

“Though he were dead” relates to both physical death and spiritual death. “Yet shall he live” refers to the resurrection of life in the physical body or the resurrection of a soul from a lower sphere to a higher sphere of consciousness.

One who is in tune with Christ Consciousness can re-enliven and reappear in his formerly dead body if he wishes. But repairing and reanimating the same deceased clod of earth is an unnecessary trouble and conservancy of the limitless creative substances of life. Unless they have a specific exceptional purpose, resurrected masters rather re-create a body in the likeness of their discarded physical form, equally true to the material specifications of their former image, as was the living manifestation of my master Sri Yukteswarji in his after-death appearance to me.⁸

One who is temporarily spiritually dead in the dream of delusion can regain by divine endeavor his soul’s unity with Christ Consciousness.

“Whosoever liveth and believeth in me” refers to anyone who permanently communes with Christ Consciousness within him and hence believes or is convinced of the immortal Christ Consciousness equally present in himself as in Jesus.

“Shall never die” refers both to spiritual and physical death. All souls who can permanently commune with Christ Consciousness will never witness spiritual death through ignorance, or physical death through forced reincarnations. Souls who are identified with their bodies create human desires that bring them back to earth many times until those desires are worked out. Liberated souls, those who overcome material desires, become pillars in the mansion of God and “go no more out”; they are unloosed from the exigent cycles of alternate births and deaths. Nor will souls who are one with Christ Consciousness, though they live and move among the deluded masses, ever experience the death of wisdom through ignorance.⁹

Martha, being an advanced disciple in attunement with Jesus, understood what he meant when he said, “I am the resurrection, and the life”; and thus, unlike the ordinary blind believer, she spoke with realization and justification: “Yes, Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God manifest in this body named

Jesus.”



And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, "The Master is come, and calleth for thee." As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him. Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him.

The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, "She goeth unto the grave to weep there." Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled.

And said, "Where have ye laid him?"

They said unto him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, "Behold how he loved him!"

And some of them said, "Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?" Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it (John 11:28 – 38).

When Jesus, human and divine as he was, saw Mary and her companions weeping, the universal sympathy within his great spirit felt the vibrations of their sorrow. Jesus wept not because he was emotionally overcome with his own sadness, but because his tender, divinely sensitive heart felt the overwhelming grief of his beloved disciples, Mary and Martha, and of their friends.

Sympathy is a natural outreach of God's love in one who has begun to experience Christ Consciousness. Genuine feeling for others is a throb of the heart of that great consciousness, a feeling that should be cultivated continuously until it wells up within as Christlike compassion desiring to bring solace and comfort to those who are in pain or suffering.



Jesus said, "Take ye away the stone."

Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, "Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days."

Jesus saith unto her, "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" (John 11:39 – 40).

"Did I not tell you and make you feel the vibrations of my divine will that if you are convinced of the omnipotent Christ Consciousness in me you will be able to behold the power and glory of Cosmic Consciousness, to be manifested shortly?"

Jesus' reference to "the glory of God" signifies not that God seeks the recognition of man by a display of His glory, but that He grants to devotees advanced in faith and merit a privileged demonstration in which they may behold His glory, the active manifestation of His power on earth.



Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid.

And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, “Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard me. And I knew that Thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent me” (John 11:41 – 42).

“O ever-conscious, ever-wise, ever-responding Father, infinite Cosmic Consciousness, I thank Thee that Thou hast vibrated Thine absolute power in the Christ Consciousness in me. With no reservation of doubt, I know with certainty and intuition that Thou dost always vibrate Thine omnipotence of Cosmic Consciousness in response to the vibrating divine wishes in my Christ Intelligence. But for the benefit of the people around me, I declared that Thou hast heard me, that they may know my Christ Consciousness is the reflection of Thy Cosmic Consciousness, which has become manifest in my body called Jesus through Thy sovereign wish.”



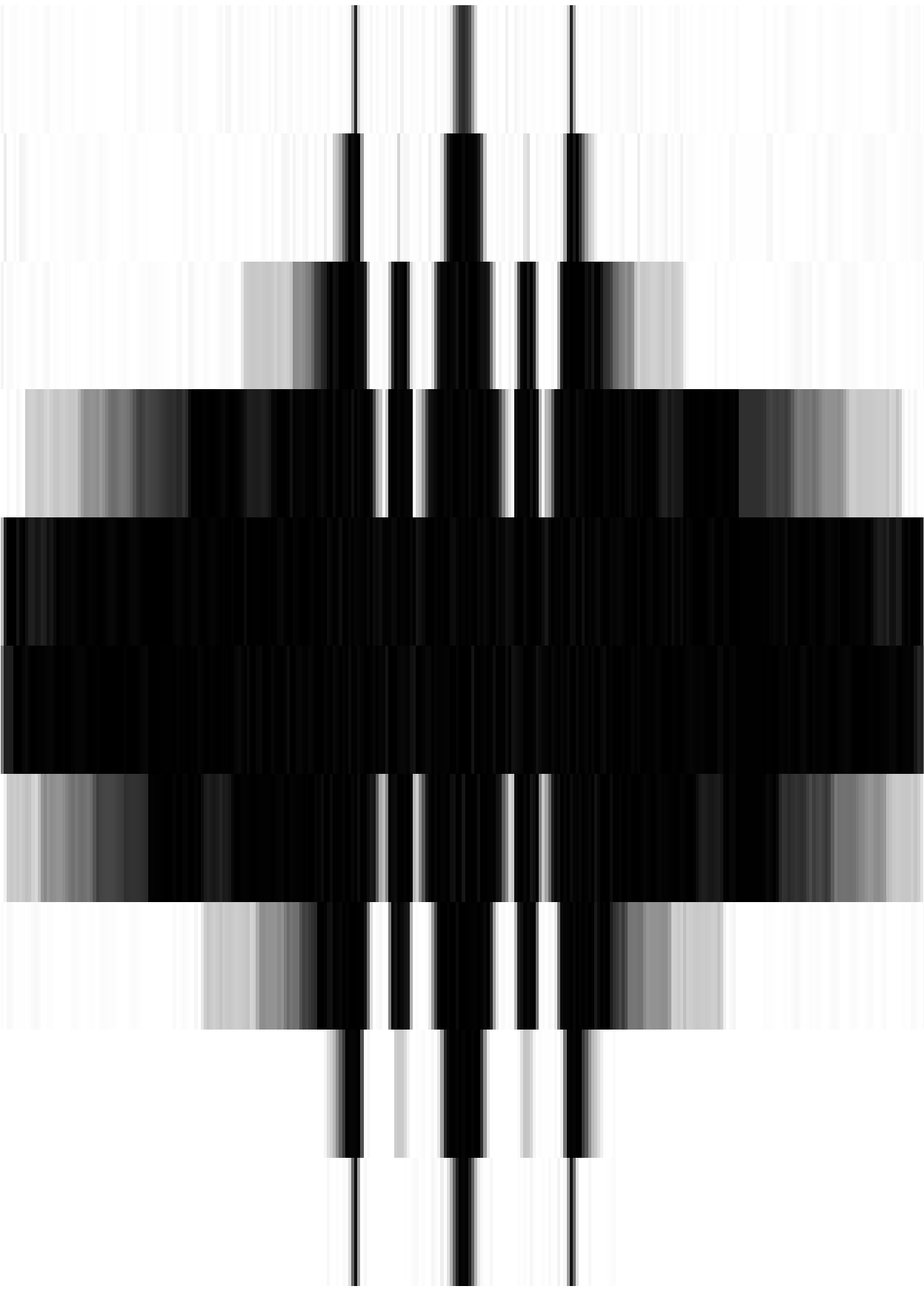
Jesus addressed God as a warmly personal and supremely kind Father

When Jesus said, “Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard me,” he teaches all mankind that God is not only an impersonal Spirit, but also a warmly personal Father who responds to the devotion of those who love Him. The human father’s kindness to the child is but a limited reflection of the Heavenly Father’s infinite kindness. How much more caring, then, is the Heavenly Father to all His human children! When Jesus says, “I knew that Thou hearest me always,” he signifies that the Christ Intelligence, which he felt within himself, intelligently directs the work of all creation through power received from Cosmic Consciousness. “Always” indicates that throughout eternity the Christ Consciousness is working the will of Cosmic Consciousness in the universe.



And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come forth.” And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, “Loose him, and let him go” (John 11:43 – 44).

“O ye disembodied soul of Lazarus, reappear in the body made whole by the Cosmic Energy of God!”



Scientific process by which Jesus restored Lazarus to life

Reinforcing Jesus' peremptory command "Lazarus, come forth!" was his mastery of hidden divine laws applied to accomplish this ultimate feat of healing. In doing so, he demonstrated that death is not the dread finality feared by worldly persons—and that even seemingly irreversible decrees of karma are subject to mitigation by God and by saints who are one with Him. Jesus allowed Lazarus' karma to take its destined course; even after learning that his disciple had been severely stricken with illness, "he abode two days still in the same place where he was," until after Lazarus had died. The decree of the karmic law having thus been carried out, Jesus arrived to perform his miracle of resurrection.

By the time Jesus reached Bethany, the body of Lazarus had begun to decay, "for he hath been dead four days." Several steps were therefore necessary. First Jesus made contact with Lazarus in the astral world, so that he could call him back again. Then, projecting his own divinely invulnerable consciousness into the dead body of Lazarus, he absorbed and neutralized, by taking onto himself, the force of the specific karma that had compelled Lazarus' soul to leave that form. Once that karmic imprint of death on the bodily cells was no longer operative, Jesus was able by command of his God-united will to direct Cosmic Energy to restore the viability of the cells, so that they were capable once again of accommodating a living soul with its astral and causal faculties of life and consciousness. Finally, he invited the soul of Lazarus to reinhabit its renewed fleshly residence; in effect, resurrecting it from the state of inert matter by reinvesting it with the powers of knowledge and action, mind and energy, that had fled with the departure of the astral and causal bodies. "And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, 'Loose him, and let him go.'"

Jesus performed this healing not only because of his compassion for his beloved disciples Mary and Martha, but to prove yet again that latent within every soul is potential power over every circumscribing mortal condition, and that there is no such thing as an unalterable fate.



Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him. But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done.

Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, “What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.”

And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, “Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.” And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.

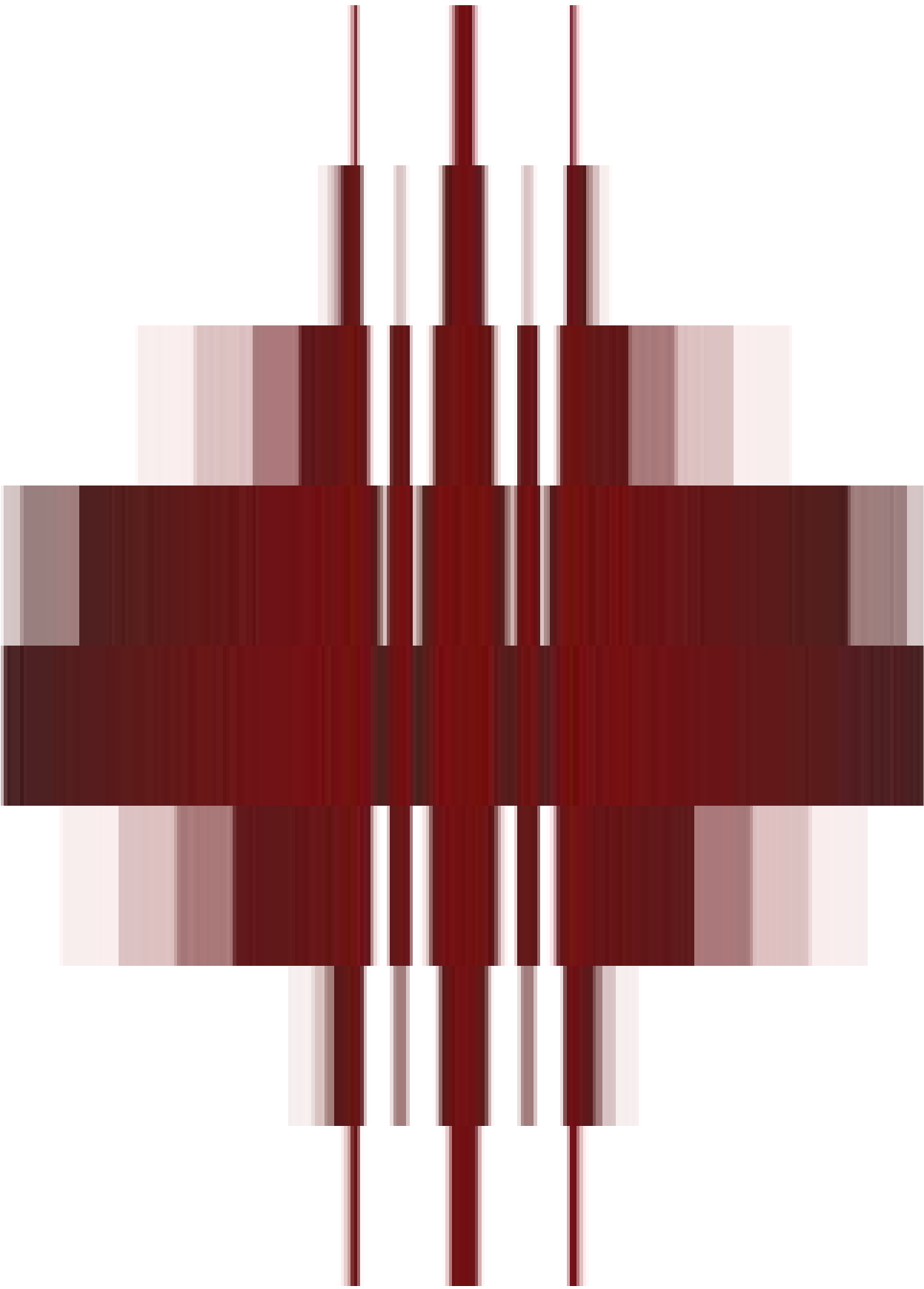
Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death. Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples.

And the Jews’ Passover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves. Then sought they for Jesus, and spake among themselves, as they stood in the temple, “What think ye, that he will not come to the feast?” Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that, if any man knew where he were, he should shew it, that they might take him (John 11:45 – 57).



Discourse 61

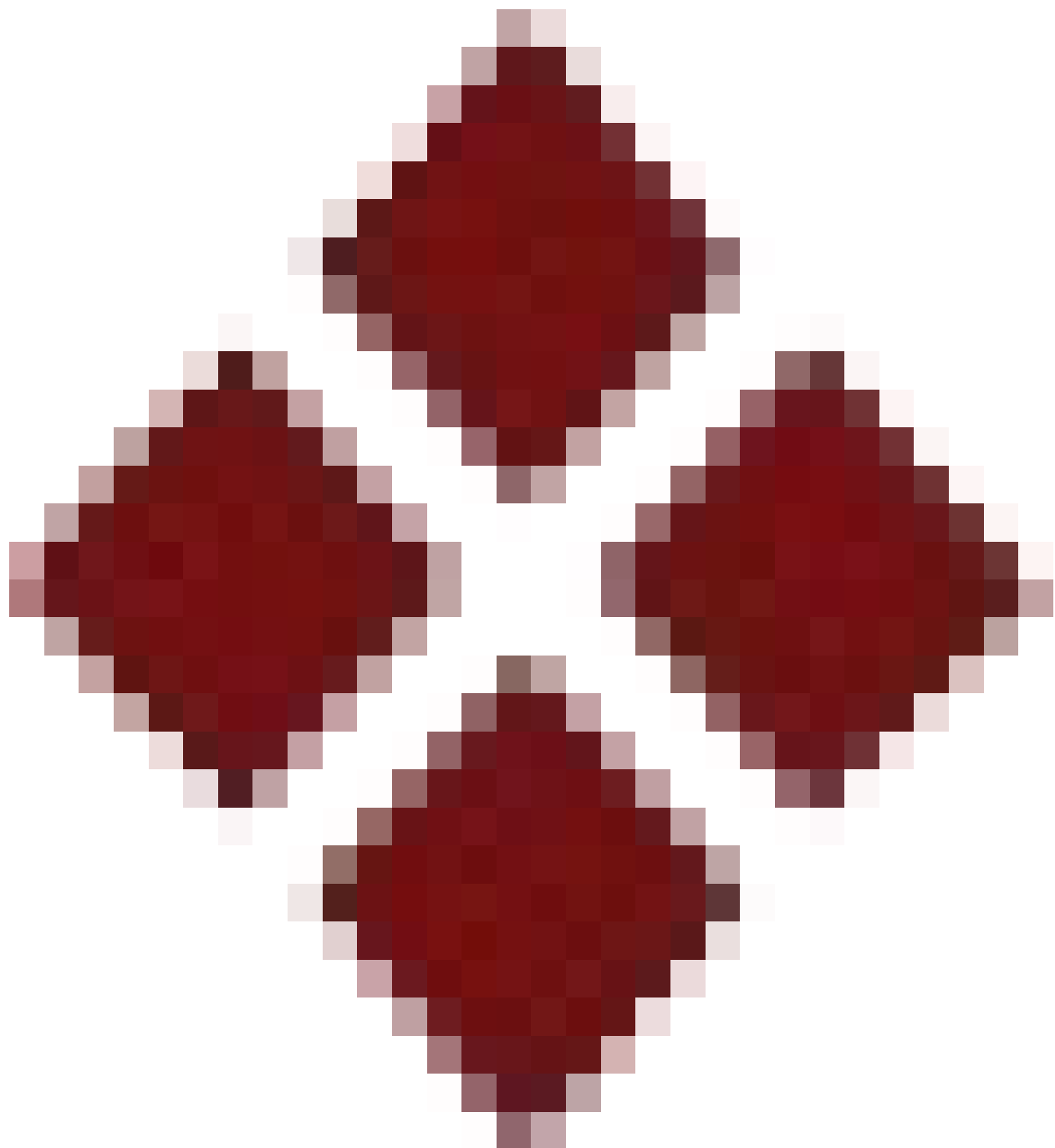
“The Kingdom of God Is Within You”



Jesus' Teachings About God's Kingdom: The Core of His Message to the World



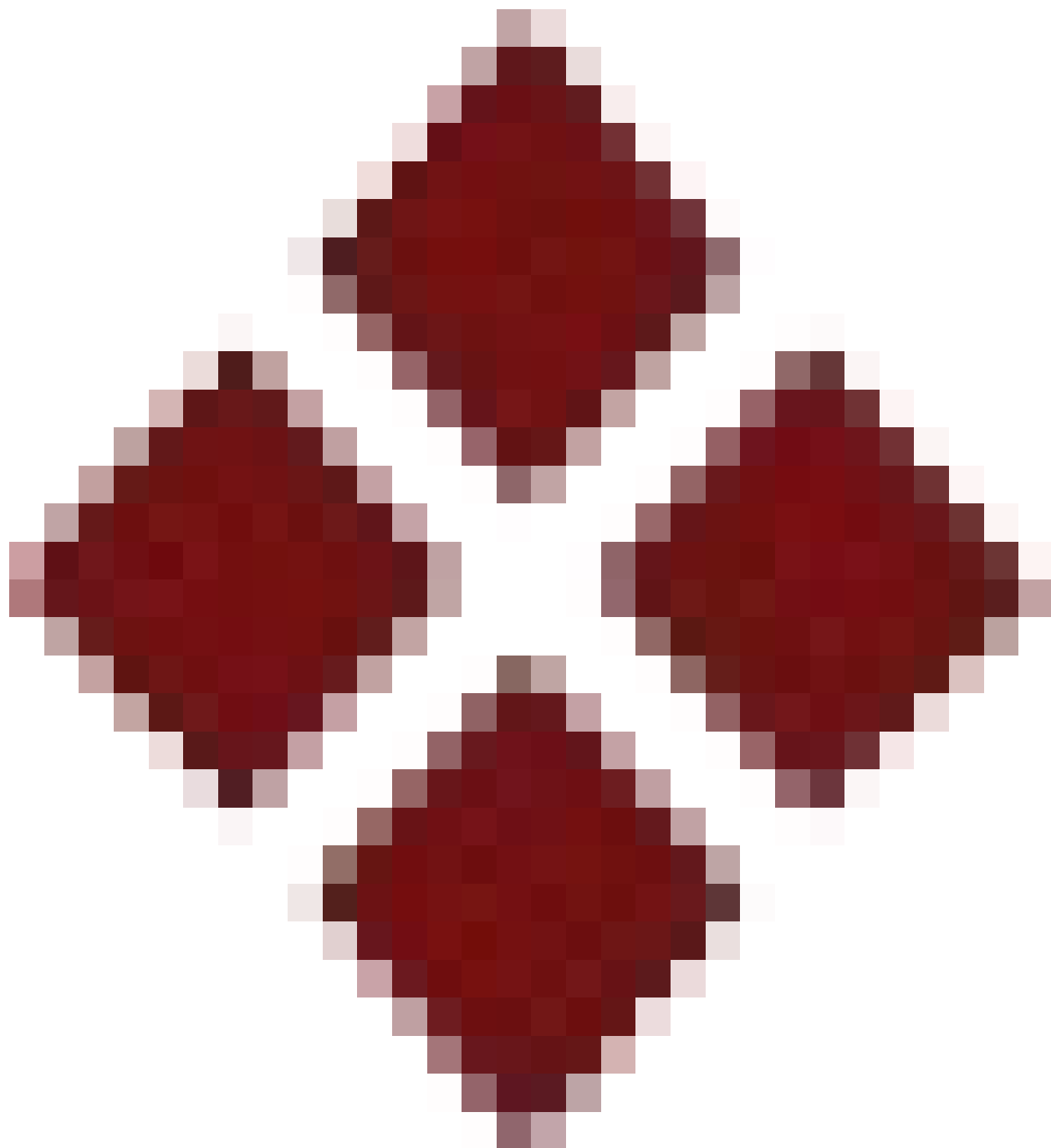
**Cosmic Consciousness Lies Within and Behind the
Layers of Matter, Energy, and Thought**



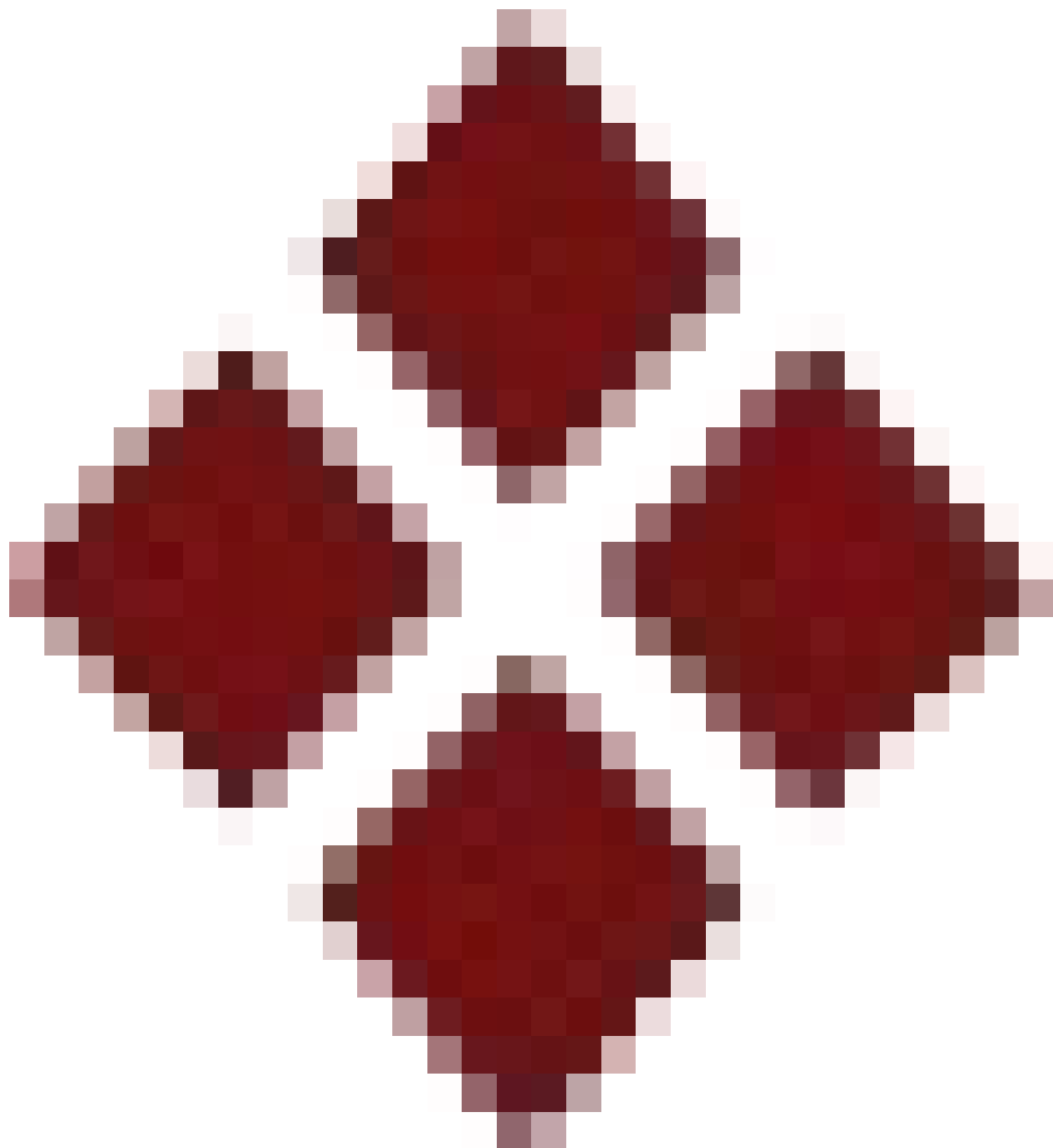
**Heaven Is Found by Turning Within to the
Cerebrospinal Centers of Spiritual Consciousness**



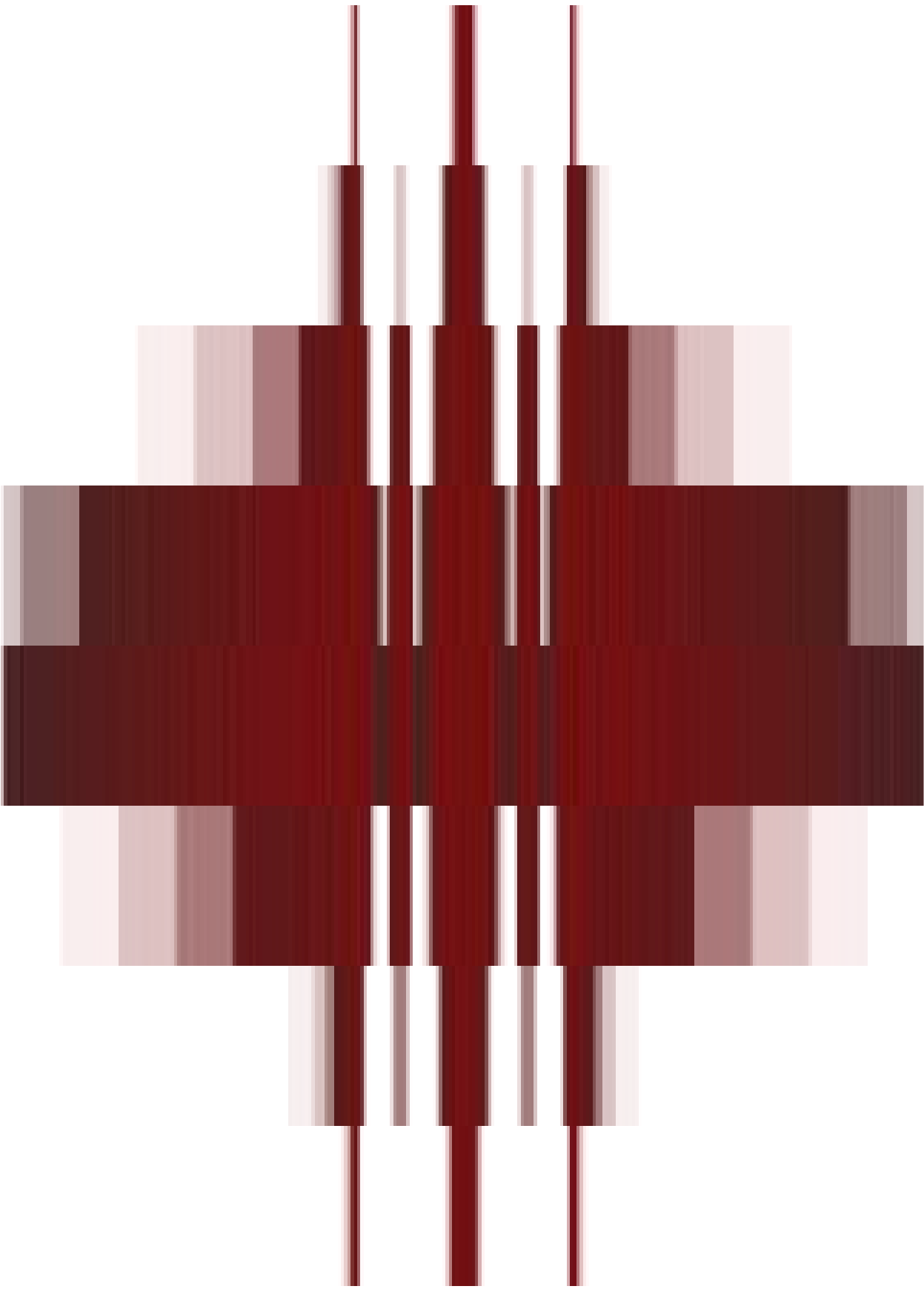
Raja Yoga: Royal Science of Realizing the Kingdom of God Within Oneself



**Through Meditation, One Gains Access to the Interior
Infinitude of God's Kingdom**



**God's Kingdom of Supreme Happiness Is the
Birthright of Every Soul**



“When man is settled in that inner kingdom of divine consciousness, the awakened intuitive perception of the soul pierces the veils of matter, life energy, and consciousness and uncovers the God-essence in the heart of all things.”

■

“But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, ‘Go and sit down to meat’? And will not rather say unto him, ‘Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink’? Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not.

“So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.’”

And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: And they lifted up their voices, and said, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.”

And when he saw them, he said unto them, “Go shew yourselves unto the priests.” And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.

And Jesus answering said, “Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.”

And he said unto him, “Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.”

And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, “The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, ‘Lo here!’ or, ‘lo there!’ for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.”

And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; saying, “There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, ‘Avenge me of mine adversary.’ And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, ‘Though I fear not God, nor regard man; yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.’ ”

And the Lord said, “Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?”

And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: “Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.

“The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank Thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.’

“And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, ‘God be merciful to me a sinner.’

I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”

—Luke 18:1 – 14



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Discourse 61

“The Kingdom of God Is Within You”



“But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, ‘Go and sit down to meat’? And will not rather say unto him, ‘Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink’? Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not.

“So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do’” (Luke 17:7 – 10).

Jesus speaks of the principle that no devotee should feel elated or self-righteous, or expect gratitude and honor from the Heavenly Father, just because he follows the divine path and obeys its commandments. Such behavior is for his own good and leads to his own emancipation; it is no favor rendered to God, but rather man’s bounden and privileged duty as one who lives under the cosmic regime of the Divine Ruler.



And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: And they lifted up their voices and said, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.”

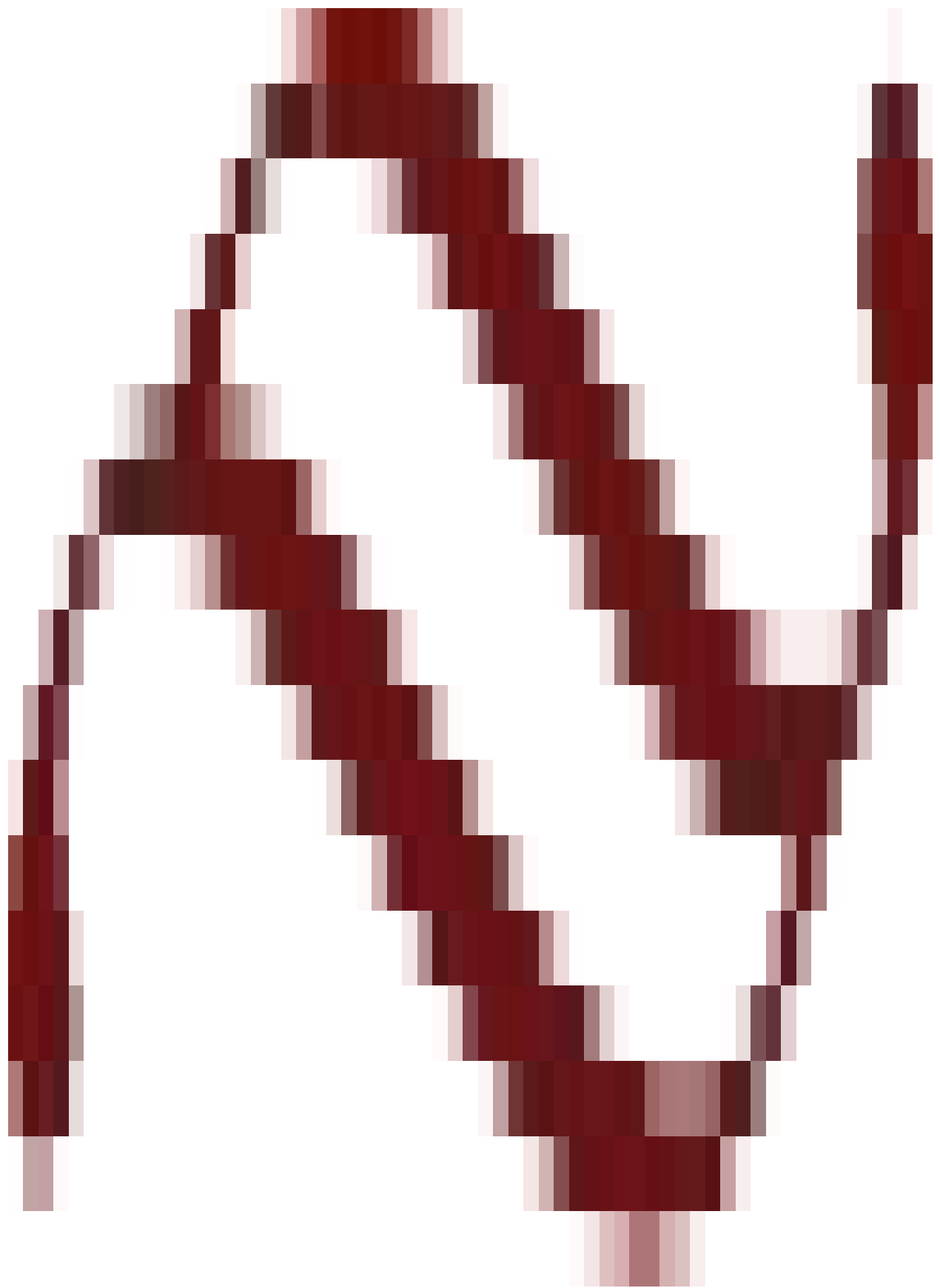
And when he saw them, he said unto them, “Go shew yourselves unto the priests.” And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.

And Jesus answering said, “Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.”

And he said unto him, “Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole” (Luke 17:11 – 19).

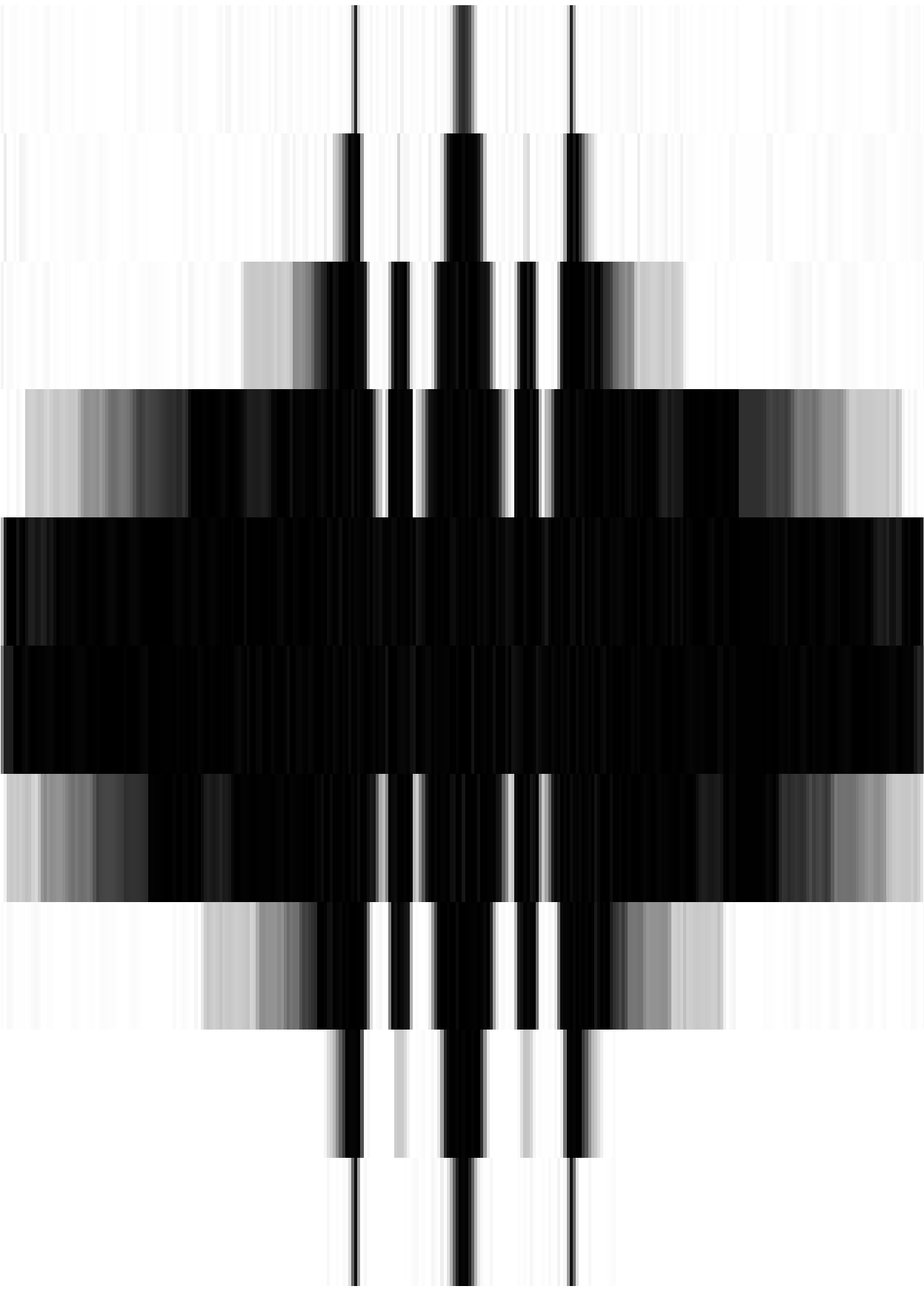
Jesus is pointing out the material nature of most people, who, even when they are the beneficiaries of providential gifts, rejoice in their good fortune but remain thoughtlessly lacking in recognition of the Giver. Just imagine! out of the ten lepers who were blessed with instantaneous healing of their insidious disease by the divine power in Jesus, only one was moved to express due gratitude.

The purist Jews in the time of Jesus esteemed themselves and their religious traditions as spiritually superior to their contemporaries. So Jesus made an issue of the fact that it was a “stranger” to those traditions, a “low-caste” Samaritan of mixed race and customs,² who had the spiritual sensitivity to thank Jesus and glorify God.



And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, “The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, ‘Lo here!’ or, ‘lo there!’ for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:20 – 21).

Jesus addresses man as the perennial seeker of permanent happiness and freedom from all suffering: “The kingdom of God—of eternal, immutable, ever-newly blissful Cosmic Consciousness—is within you. Behold your soul as a reflection of the immortal Spirit, and you will find your Self encompassing the infinite empire of God-love, God-wisdom, God-bliss existing in every particle of vibratory creation and in the vibrationless Transcendental Absolute.”



Jesus' teachings about God's kingdom: the core of his message to the world

The teachings of Jesus about God's kingdom—sometimes in direct language, sometimes in parables pregnant with metaphysical meaning—may be said to be the core of the entirety of his message. The Gospel records that at the very outset of his public ministry, “Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God.” His exhortation to “seek ye first the kingdom of God” is at the heart of his Sermon on the Mount. The only prayer he is known to have given his disciples beseeches God, “Thy kingdom come.” Again and again he spoke of the kingdom of the Heavenly Father and the method of its attainment:

“Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”³

“Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”⁴

“No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up.”⁵

“And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.”⁶

“I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.”⁷

“I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”⁸

Taken together, these and Jesus' other declarations about the kingdom of God provide for a comprehensive understanding of the simple statement in the present verses that God's kingdom is to be found not by “observation”—use of the matter-tuned senses of sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch—but by interiorization of the consciousness to perceive the Divine Reality “within you.”

“The kingdom of God does not come in response to sensory observation; neither can they find it who say, ‘Behold, it is here or there somewhere in the clouds.’

Rather, concentrate within and you will find the sphere of God-consciousness hidden behind your material consciousness.”



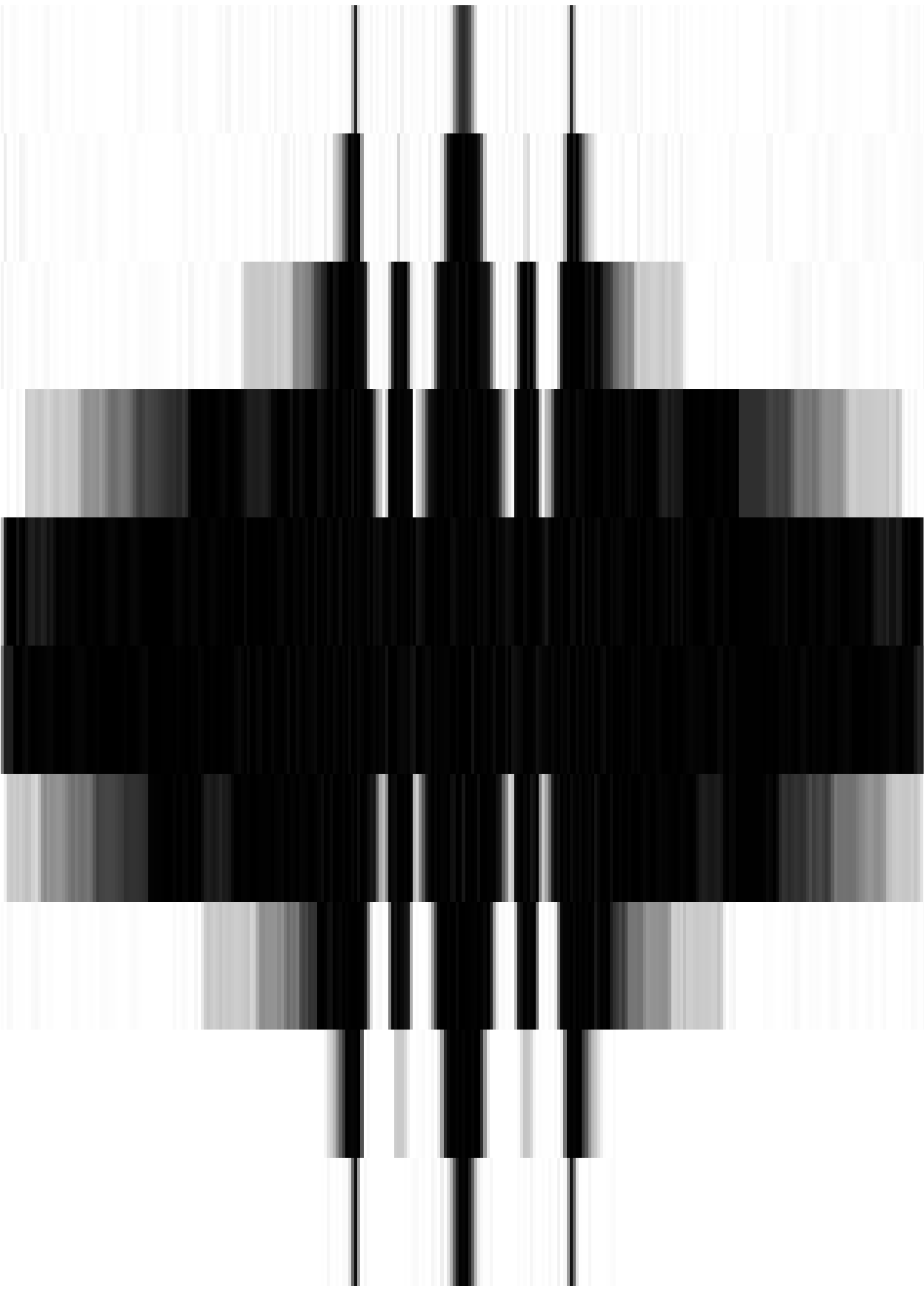
Cosmic Consciousness lies within and behind the layers of matter, energy, and thought

Many people think of heaven as a physical location, a point of space far above the atmosphere and beyond the stars. Others interpret Jesus' statements about the advent of the kingdom of God as referring to the coming of a Messiah to establish and rule over a divine kingdom on earth. In fact, the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven consist, respectively, of the transcendental infinitudes of Cosmic Consciousness and the heavenly causal and astral realms of vibratory creation that are considerably finer and more harmonized with God's will than those physical vibrations clustered together as planets, air, and earthly surroundings.⁹

Material objects cognized as sensations of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch are constituted of a play of forces originating and existing beyond the observational capabilities of human consciousness. The incipient origin of all material forms and material vibrations lies in Cosmic Consciousness. Matter is condensed physical energy; physical energy is condensed astral energy; and astral energy is condensed prototypic thought force of God. Hence Cosmic Consciousness lies hidden within and behind the layers of matter, physical energy, astral energy, and thought or consciousness.

As in the macrocosm, so in the microcosm of the human body: Cosmic Consciousness, which is marked by ever new joy and immortality, is the creator of human consciousness and as such lies within it. From the infinite Cosmic Consciousness, individual souls were conceived; these individualized ideations of the thought of God were cloaked in two further layers of external manifestation by condensation of magnetic causal forces of consciousness into the astral body of luminous life energy and the mortal body of flesh and blood.

Thus the kingdom of God is not separate from the kingdom of matter, but is both within it—pervading it in subtle form as its origin and sustainer—and beyond it, existing in the infinite mansions of the Father beyond the circumscribed physical cosmos.¹⁰



Heaven is found by turning within to the cerebrospinal centers of spiritual consciousness

That is why Jesus said it is futile to look for heaven with the consciousness concentrated on material vibrations—identified with bodily sensations and pleasures and earthly comforts.¹¹ In the kingdom of matter and body consciousness man finds disease and mental and physical suffering; but turning within to the inner kingdom he finds the Comforter, the Holy Ghost or Cosmic Vibration of Aum, manifesting in the subtle cerebrospinal centers of spiritual consciousness. To be carried along the outgoing stream of material consciousness is to be swept willy-nilly into the hades of Satan's kingdom—the realm of earthly attachments and limitations of the mortal body; to follow the inwardly flowing stream of consciousness by meditating on Aum is to reach the blissful kingdom of God that exists behind the opaque obstruction of the physical being.

Communion with the holy Comforter brings attunement with Christ Consciousness indwelling in the body as the ever perfect soul. Through deeper communion with the Christ Consciousness comes realization of the soul's oneness with omnipresent Spirit—the little Self expanding to its infinite Self to encompass the boundless divine kingdom of ever-existing, ever-conscious, ever-new Bliss.

For every body-circumscribed soul the kingdom of God awaits discovery by those who delve within in meditation to transcend human consciousness and reach the successively higher states of superconsciousness, Christ Consciousness, and Cosmic Consciousness. Those who meditate deeply, concentrating intensely within their state of silence, or neutralized thoughts, withdraw their minds from material objects of sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch—from all bodily sensations and disturbing mental restlessness. In this focused stillness within, they find an ineffable sense of peace. Peace is the first glimpse of the inner kingdom of God.

Devotees who at will can thus interiorize their minds and concentrate fully within the resultant peacefulness will definitely find entry into the kingdom of God-consciousness. That realization gradually unfolds itself as omnipresence, omniscience, ever new bliss, and visions of the realms of eternal light in which

all liberated souls move in God, materializing or dematerializing themselves at will. No one can enter this heaven of Cosmic Consciousness unless through the gates of devout concentration and meditation he can penetrate his consciousness deeply within himself. That is why Jesus said unequivocally, "The kingdom of God is within you," that is, within the transcendent states of your soul perceptions.



Raja Yoga: royal science of realizing the kingdom of God within oneself

There is a beautiful accord between the teachings of Jesus Christ to enter the “kingdom of God within you” and the teachings of yoga set forth by Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita to restore King Soul, the reflection of God in man, to its rightful rulership of the bodily kingdom, with full realization of the soul’s godly states of consciousness.¹² When man is settled in that inner kingdom of divine consciousness, the awakened intuitive perception of the soul pierces the veils of matter, life energy, and consciousness and uncovers the God-essence in the heart of all things.

He dwells in the world, enveloping all—everywhere, His hands and feet; present on all sides, His eyes and ears, His mouths and heads;

Shining in all the sense faculties, yet transcending the senses; unattached to creation, yet the Mainstay of all; free from the gunas (modes of Nature), yet the Enjoyer of them.

He is within and without all that exists, the animate and the inanimate; near He is, and far; imperceptible because of His subtlety.

He, the Indivisible One, appears as countless beings; He maintains and destroys those forms, then creates them anew.

The Light of All Lights, beyond darkness; Knowledge itself, That which is to be known, the Goal of all learning, He is seated in the hearts of all.¹³

Raja Yoga, the royal way of God-union, is the science of actual realization of the kingdom of God that lies within oneself. Through practice of the sacred yoga techniques of interiorization received during initiation from a true guru, one can find that kingdom by awakening the astral and causal centers of life force and consciousness in the spine and brain that are the gateways into the heavenly regions of transcendent consciousness. One who achieves such awakening knows the omnipresent God in His Infinite Nature, and in the purity of one's soul, and even in the delusive cloaks of changeable material forms and forces.

Patanjali, India's foremost ancient exponent of Raja Yoga, outlined eight steps to be followed for ascension into the kingdom of God within.

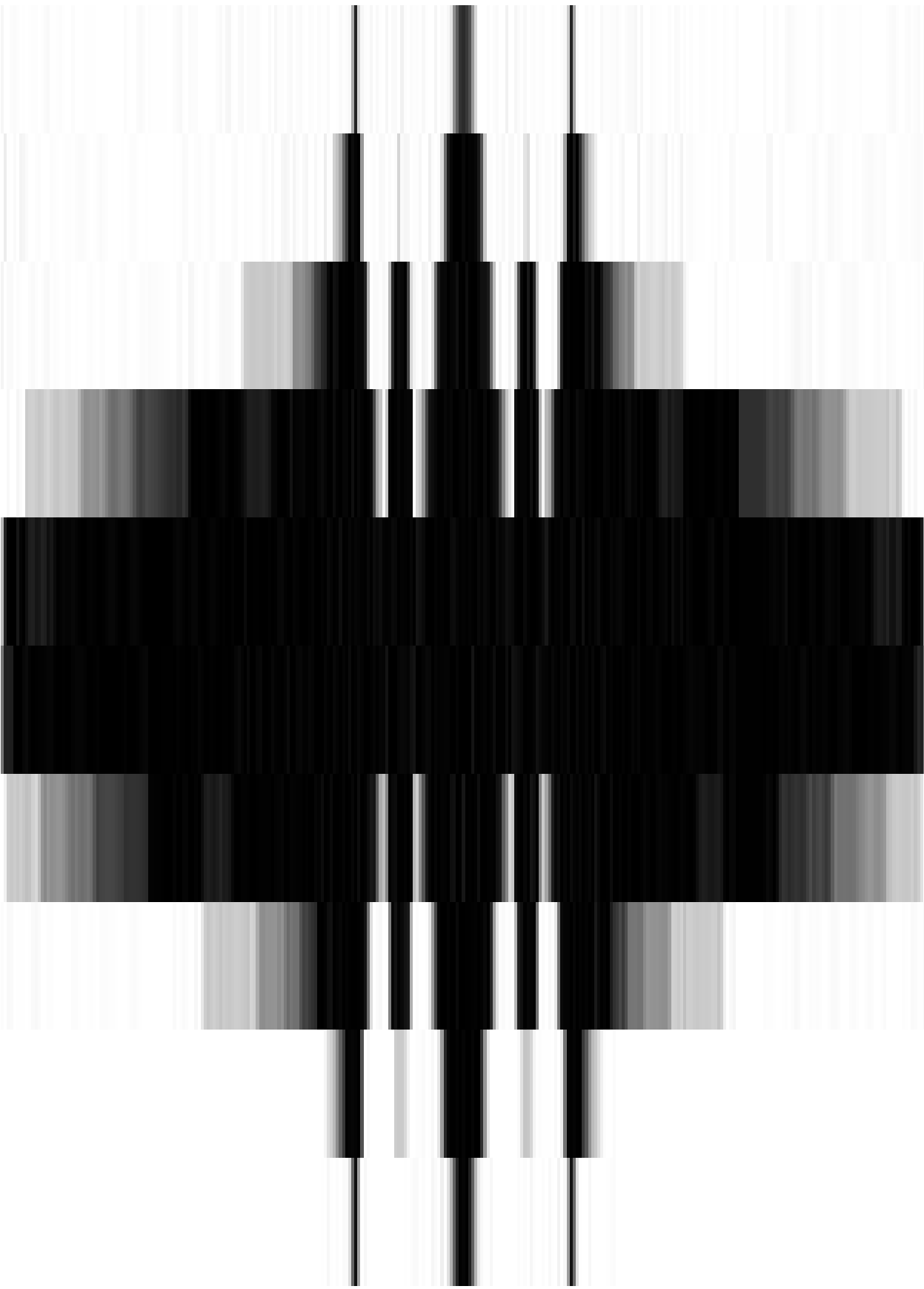
1. Yama, moral conduct: abstaining from injury to others, falsehood, stealing, incontinence, and covetousness.
2. Niyama: purity of body and mind, contentment in all circumstances, self-discipline, self-study (contemplation), and devotion to God.

These first two steps yield self-control and mental calmness.

3. Asana: disciplining the body so that it can assume and maintain the correct posture for meditation without fatigue or physical and mental restlessness.
4. Pranayama: techniques of life-force control that calm the heart and breath and remove sensory distractions from the mind.
5. Pratyahara: the power of complete mental interiorization and stillness resulting from withdrawal of the mind from the senses.
6. Dharana: the power to use the interiorized mind to become one-pointedly concentrated upon God in one of His aspects through which He reveals Himself to the inward perception of the devotee.
7. Dhyana: meditation deepened by the intensity of concentration (dharana) that

gives the conception of the vastness of God, His attributes as manifested in His endless expansion of Cosmic Consciousness.

8. Samadhi, union with God: the full realization of the soul's oneness with Spirit.



Through meditation, one gains access to the interior infinitude of God's kingdom

All devotees may find the door to the kingdom of God by concentrating on the spiritual eye, the Christ Consciousness center at the point between the eyebrows. Long and deep meditation as taught by a true guru enables one gradually to convert the consciousness of the material body into that of the astral body, and with the awakened faculties of astral perception to intuit deeper and deeper states of consciousness until one reaches oneness with the Source of consciousness. Entering the door of the spiritual eye, one leaves behind all attachments to matter and the physical body and gains access into the interior infinitudes of God's kingdom.

The tissues of the physical body are made up of cells; the tissue of the astral body is composed of lifetrans—intelligent units of light or life energy. When man is in a state of body attachment, characterized by tension or contraction of life energy into atomic components, the lifetrans of the astral body become compacted, circumscribed by identification with the physical form. By metaphysical relaxation, the lifetrans structure begins to expand—the grip of the flesh on one's identity loosens. By deeper and deeper meditation, the energy frame of the astral self expands beyond the boundaries of the physical body. The lifetrans body, being of a sphere of existence unconfounded by the delusional stricture of the three-dimensional physical world, has the potential to become one with the Cosmic Energy pervading the whole universe. God as Holy Ghost, Holy Vibration, is the Light of Cosmic Energy; man, made in the image of God, is composed of that light. We are that Light compacted; and we are that Light of our Universal Self.

As a first step toward entering the kingdom of God, the devotee should sit still in the correct meditation posture, with erect spine, and tense and relax the body—for by relaxation the consciousness is released from the muscles. The yogi begins with proper deep breathing, inhaling and tensing the whole body, exhaling and relaxing, several times. With each exhalation all muscular tension and motion should be cast away, until a state of bodily stillness is attained. Then, by concentration techniques, restless motion is removed from the mind. In perfect stillness of body and mind, the yogi enjoys the ineffable peace of the presence of the soul. In the body, life is templed; in the mind, light is templed; in the soul, peace is templed. The deeper one goes into the soul the more that peace

is felt; that is superconsciousness. When by deeper meditation the devotee expands that awareness of peace and feels his consciousness spreading with it over the universe, that all beings and all creation are swallowed up in that peace, then he is entering into Cosmic Consciousness. He feels that peace everywhere—in the flowers, in every human being, in the atmosphere. He beholds the earth and all worlds floating like bubbles in that ocean of peace.¹⁴

The inner peace first experienced by the devotee in meditation is his own soul; the vaster peace he feels by going deeper is God. The devotee who experiences unity with everything has established God in the temple of his infinite inner perception.

In the temple of silence, in the temple of peace,
I will meet Thee, I will touch Thee, I will love Thee,
And coax Thee to my altar of peace.

In the temple of samadhi, in the temple of bliss,
I will meet Thee, I will touch Thee, I will love Thee,
And coax Thee to my altar of bliss.¹⁵

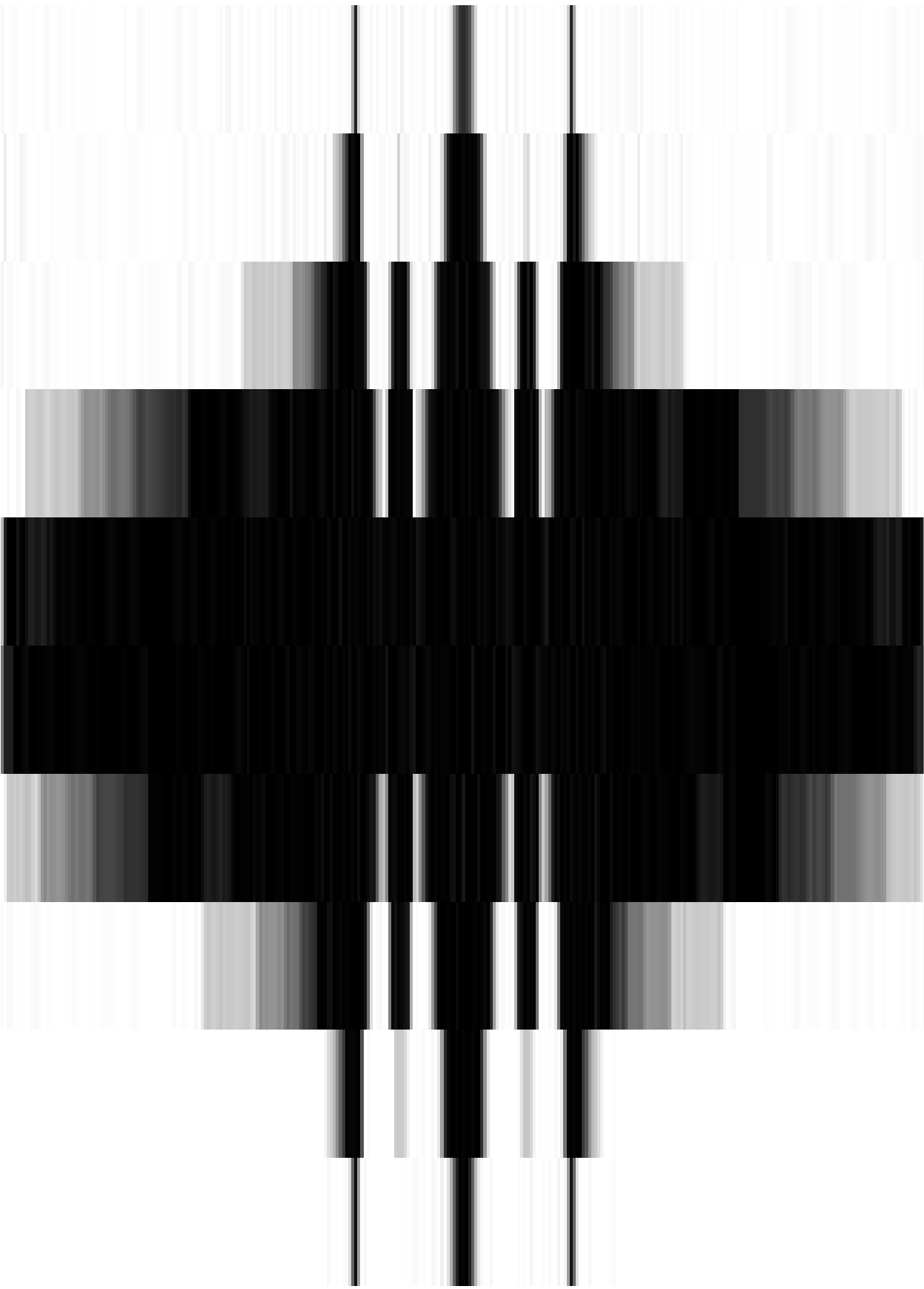
When restless thoughts have been banished, automatically the mind is made into a sacred temple of peace. God intimates Himself in the temple of silence and then in the temple of peace. The devotee first meets Him as peace flowing out of the mental state in which all thoughts have become transformed into pure intuitive feeling. He touches the Lord with his heart's love and feels Him as joy; his pure love entices God to manifest Himself on the altar of the perception of peace. The advancing devotee feels God not only in meditation, but keeps Him always on the altar of peace in his heart.

In the temple of samadhi, oneness with the peace that is God's first manifestation

in meditation, the devotee finds a state of ever new bliss, a joy that never grows stale. Bliss is a much deeper state than peace. As a mute person drinking nectar imbibes but cannot describe the ambrosial flavor, so the rapture of bliss found in the temple of samadhi moves the experiencer to wordless eloquence. That joy alone can satisfy the innate craving of the human heart. In patient, persistent meditation, day after day, year after year, the devotee lovingly demands of his Lord: “Come to me as joy in samadhi-oneness, and remain forever in my heart on the altar of bliss!” When in our hearts, in harmony with the hearts of all who love God in the interior temple of silence and bliss, we rejoice in the joy of our one Beloved, that united joy is a vast altar of God.

It is incumbent on man as a soul to practice that inner silence; to find God now. In the use of the senses amid the exigencies of daily life, the devotee holds to the consciousness: “I am sitting on the peace throne of inner silence.” In the midst of activity, he remains inwardly recollected: “I am the god of silence sitting on the throne of each action.” His equanimity is upset by no unruly feelings: “I am the prince of silence sitting on the throne of poise.” His inner Self, at one with eternity, in life and in death rejoices: “I am the king of immortality reigning on the throne of silence. Destruction of the body, delusion’s insults to the soul, impositions of restlessness, trials of life—these are but dramas I am acting in and watching as divine entertainment. I may play for a little while; but always, from the inner refuge of my silence, I behold the unfolding script of life with the calm joy of immortality.”

If through practice of meditation one keeps knocking on the doors of silence, God will respond: “Come in. I whispered to you through all guises of nature; and now I say to you, I am Joy—the living Fountain of Joy. Bathe in My waters—wash away your habits, cleanse yourself of fears. I dreamed a beautiful dream for you; but, My child, you made of it a nightmare.” God wants His children to be no longer prodigal sons, but to play their roles in life as immortals, that when they leave the stage of this earth they can say, “Father, that was a nice entertainment, but now I am ready to come Home.”



God's kingdom of supreme happiness is the birthright of every soul

It is a sin against the divine nature of the Self to think that there is no chance of being happy, to abandon all hope of attaining peace—these must be exposed as psychological errors born of Satan's interference in the human mind. Infinite happiness and peace are always at hand, just behind the screen of man's ignorance.¹⁶ How could it be possible for anyone to be forever barred from the kingdom of God, when that divine realm is right within him? All one has to do is turn from the darkness of evil and follow the light of goodness.

The proximity of happiness is as close as one's own Self; it isn't even a matter of attaining, but only of lifting the soul-shrouding veil of ignorance. The very word "attaining" implies something one wants but does not have—a metaphysical error. Bliss is the irrevocable divine birthright of every soul. Tear away the intrusive veil, and at once there is contact with that happiness supreme. Spirit is happiness. Soul is the pure reflection of Spirit. Body-bound man fails to perceive this because his consciousness is distorted: The lake of his mind is constantly roiled by the incursion of thoughts and emotions. Meditation quiets the waves of feeling (chitta) so that God's reflection as the joyous soul is clearly mirrored within.

Most beginners on the path to the inner kingdom of God find that their meditation is entrapped in restlessness. That is Satan's lair. The devotee must escape by perseverance in yoga practice and devotion. "Whenever the fickle and restless mind wanders away—for whatever reason—let the yogi withdraw it from those distractions and return it to the sole control of the Self.... Undoubtedly the mind is fickle and unruly; but by yoga practice and by dispassion, O Arjuna, the mind may nevertheless be controlled. This is My word: Yoga is difficult of attainment by the ungoverned man; but he who is self-controlled will, by striving through proper methods, be able to achieve it."¹⁷

The habit of being inwardly in the calm presence of God must be developed, so that day and night that consciousness will remain steadfast. It is worth the effort; for to live in the consciousness of God is to be done with enslavement to disease, suffering, and fear. Just be with God; that is the be-all and end-all of life. If one resolves never to go to sleep at night without meditating and feeling the Divine Presence, into one's life will come happiness beyond all expectation. Effort is

necessary, but that effort will make one a king enthroned in the kingdom of peace and joy. Time spent in the pursuit of extraneous material things is a waste of man's precious opportunities to know God. I am telling you this from my heart: Blessed is he who makes up his mind never to rest until he has found God.

A subsistent inner happiness unconditioned by any external influence is evident proof of the responding presence of God. Progress in divine communion comes only by meditating with regularity and with deep concentration and devotion. Every day's meditation must be deeper than yesterday's. The devotee who makes the divine quest his overriding concern will find in the kingdom of God eternal safety; no tremor of trouble or trials can cross the threshold of his sanctuary of silence wherein naught is allowed ingress but the blissful, all-loving Father-Mother God.

One who finds within himself that "secret place of the most High" becomes suffused with supreme happiness and divine security.¹⁸ Whether he is mixing with friends or sleeping or working, he keeps that place only for God. With his consciousness centered in the Lord, he finds maya's concentric veils suddenly lifting; in joy the devotee sees God playing hide-and-seek with him in the blossoms, and the stars shining with a stronger Light, and the sky smiling with the Infinite. When his eyes are spiritually opened, the devotee beholds, peering at him through the eyes of everyone, the eyes of the Infinite. Behind the kind or unkind voice of everyone he hears the truthful voice of the Infinite. Behind the wise or helter-skelter will of everyone he perceives the constancy of the will of God. Behind all human loves he feels the supreme love of God. What a wonderful existence, when all of God's disguises are cast off and the devotee is face to face with the Infinite, in blissful oneness of divine communion!

Be always intoxicated with the Divine, with the wave of your consciousness ever at rest on the bosom of the Eternal Sea. When one is kicking and splashing about in the water, there is little consciousness of the ocean itself, but of the struggle. But when one lets go and relaxes, the body floats; it feels in its buoyancy the whole sea lapping around it. That is the way the calm devotee feels God, with the whole universe of Divine Happiness rocking gently beneath his consciousness.

God's kingdom is within you; He is within you. Just behind your perceptions, just behind your thoughts, just behind your feelings, He is. Every grain of food you eat, every breath you take, is God. You are not living by food or oxygen, but

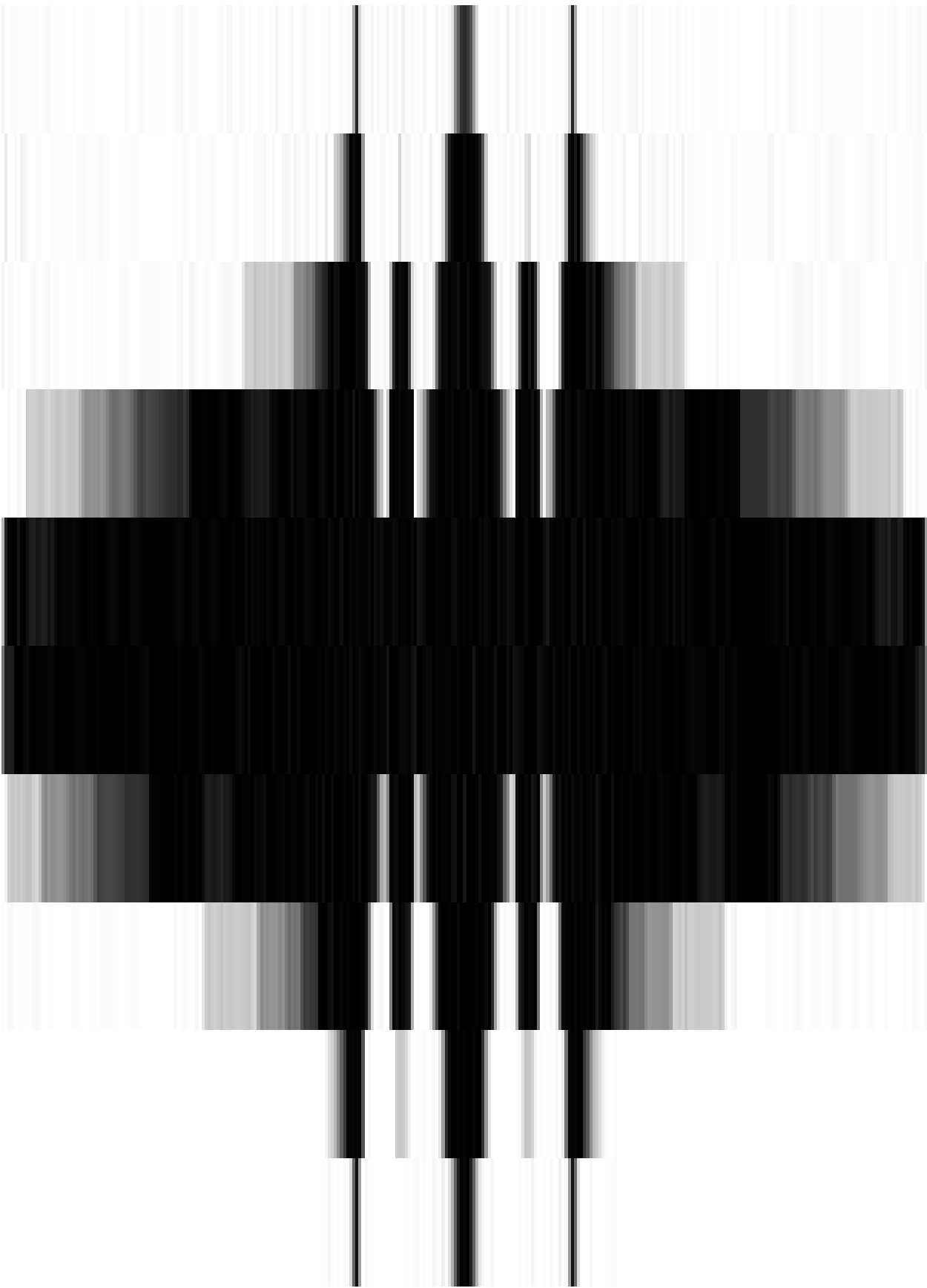
by the Cosmic Word of God. All powers of mind and action that you use are borrowed from God. Think of Him all the time—before you act, while you are engaged in activity, and after activity. In fulfilling your duty to man, remember foremost your duty to God, without whose delegated power no duties are possible. Feel Him behind your senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. Feel His energy in the arms, and legs, and feet. Feel Him as life in each exhalation and inhalation. Feel His power in your will; His wisdom in your brain; His love in your heart. Wherever God's presence is consciously felt, mortal ignorance melts away.

Those who are wise never miss their daily engagement with God in meditation. They make it the consuming goal of their existence to contact Him. All who persist with that sincerity shall enter the kingdom of God in this life; and to abide in that kingdom is to be eternally free.



And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; saying, “There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, ‘Avenge me of mine adversary.’ And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, ‘Though I fear not God, nor regard man; yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.’”

And the Lord said, “Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:1 – 8).



All devotees who seek with sincerity, intensity, and perseverance will receive God's response

“Bear in mind, if an unjust judge will respond to unrelenting petitions, how much more so will God, the Just Judge of all judges, punish the satanic enemy of His select devotees whose prayers have night and day cried out for spiritual help, and which He has long patiently heard, bearing with those devotees their anguish. I say unto you, when the call of the continuous prayers of true devotees reach the zenith of sincere intensity, He speedily responds by destroying the inimical satanic ignorance that tortures their minds with misery and unhappiness. Likewise, the Christ Consciousness embodied in me has come in response to the soul cries of true devotees on earth who want to be rid of misery-making satanic delusion. Those who are found to have faith in divine power shall be delivered from the scourge of this adversary.”

Jesus tells all devotees not to be discouraged (“not to faint”) in their efforts if it seems that God is not responding to their prayers. By way of illustration, he posits a case in which a hard-hearted, indifferent judge finally acquiesces to the relentless petitioning of a beleaguered widow; even so, he promises, God in His infinite kindheartedness will respond far more readily to sincere, unceasing prayers.

True devotees in continuous prayer seek deliverance from the torment of sly satanic delusion, desiring that enemy to be punished by banishment from the precincts of the mind so that their worship of God may be without taint of distraction.

Jesus notes that during his time on earth, he will find faith there—that is, he will find receptive devotees with developed soul intuition, or faith; these advanced devotees justify his incarnation.

As cited in the Bhagavad Gita, God from time to time manifests Himself by coming to earth in the body of an avatar, or savior, to redeem souls and uplift world consciousness. It was the need of a troubled world, and also the faith or intuitive conviction of highly advanced devotees such as Peter and John, that acted as a magnet of continuous prayer to draw God's response by sending Jesus Christ on earth in that particular time and place.

Jesus repeatedly emphasizes the importance of faith in receiving and understanding God's response. Belief is uncertain, the initial condition of the mind when it tries to speculate about God; but faith is the ultimate immutable conviction attained after the devotee knows God for certain by contacting Him in meditation.

When a devotee deeply meditates and intensely prays, he intuitively knows the presence of God as a feeling of unsurpassed joy that comes over him. By repeated intuitive communion with God as tangible ever new Joy, this blissful Presence in meditation inspires in the devotee an expanded faith or intuitive conviction of the infinite existence of God in His absolute Essence.



And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: “Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.

“The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank Thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.’

“And the publican, standing off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, ‘God be merciful to me a sinner.’

“I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted” (Luke 18:9 – 14).¹⁹

The publican, though of less virtue than the Pharisee, nevertheless had humbleness and sincerity and thus created the good karma by which he was justified to receive the purifying vibration of God.

The proud Pharisee could not gather and hold on the mountaintop of his ego the raindrops of divine blessings showered equally over him and the publican, whereas the drops of mercy settled copiously in the deep valley of the publican’s humble heart.

A pretentious man who imagines himself to be great is a fool in the eyes of God and of his own soul. He who is saturated with a natural humility exudes a divine magnetism, that special something throbbing behind his eyes and demeanor, that draws appreciation and recognition both human and divine.

Jesus, in upholding the sincere prayer of the sinful publican and depreciating the

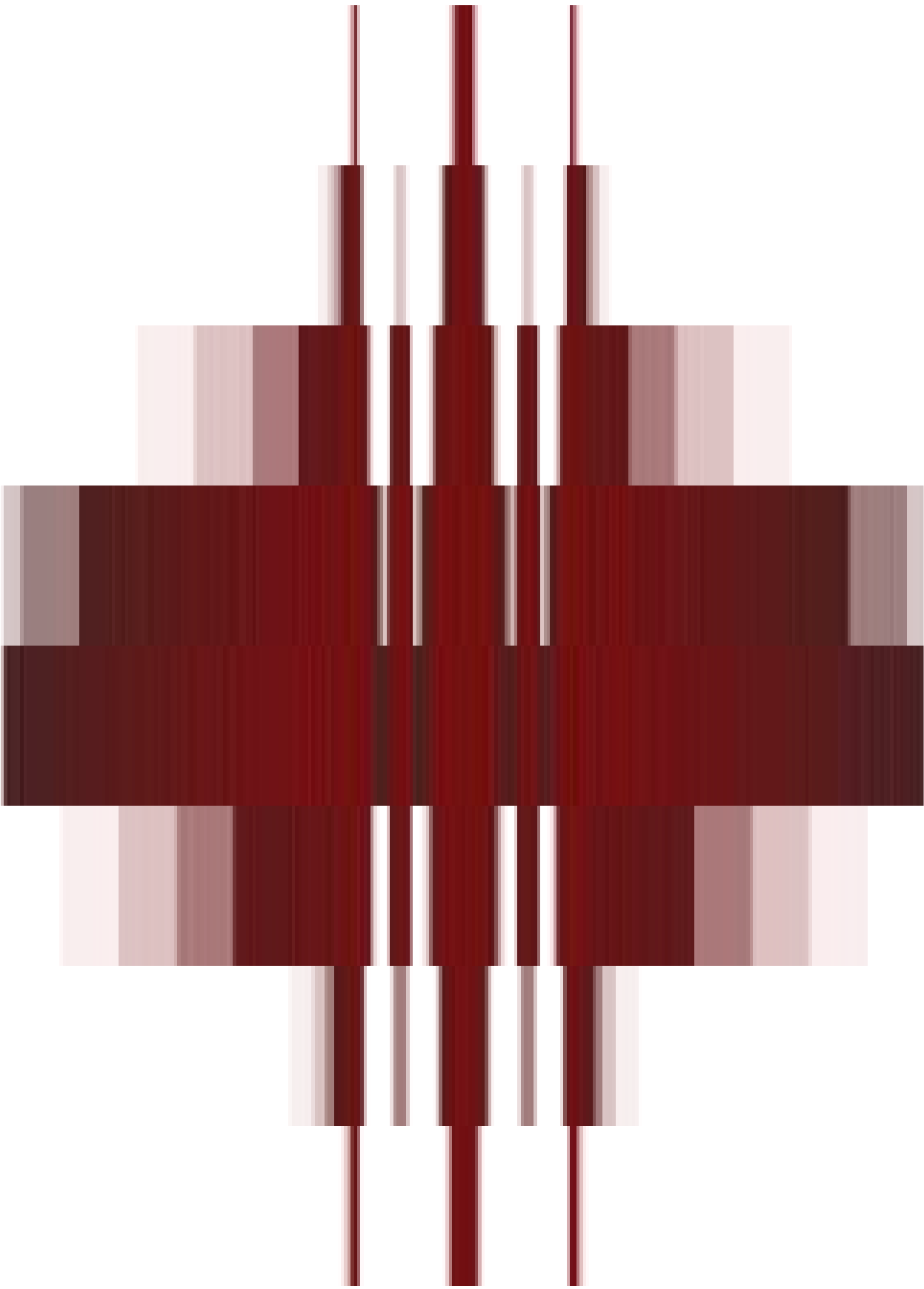
egotistical prayer of the Pharisee, does not imply that the opprobrious publican was superior in virtue to the law-abiding Pharisee. Jesus meant only to emphasize the value of humility in attracting divine mercy. To be both law-abiding and humble is to cultivate one's ideal soul-nature.



Discourse 62

Jesus Speaks of Soul Union as the Original Purpose of Marriage

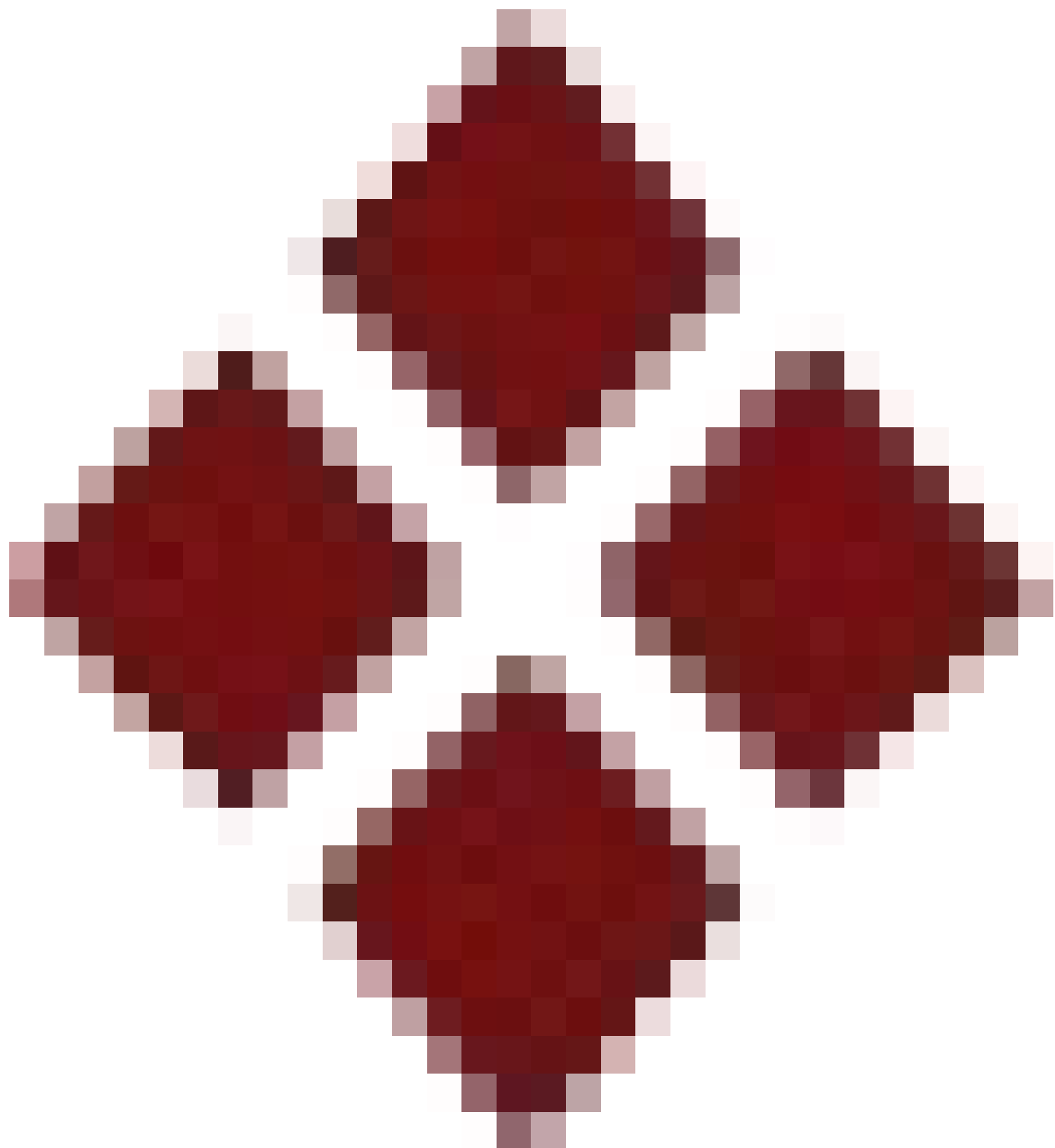
“He that is able to receive it, let him receive it”



Understanding the Deep Metaphysical Truths Behind Jesus' Teaching on Marriage



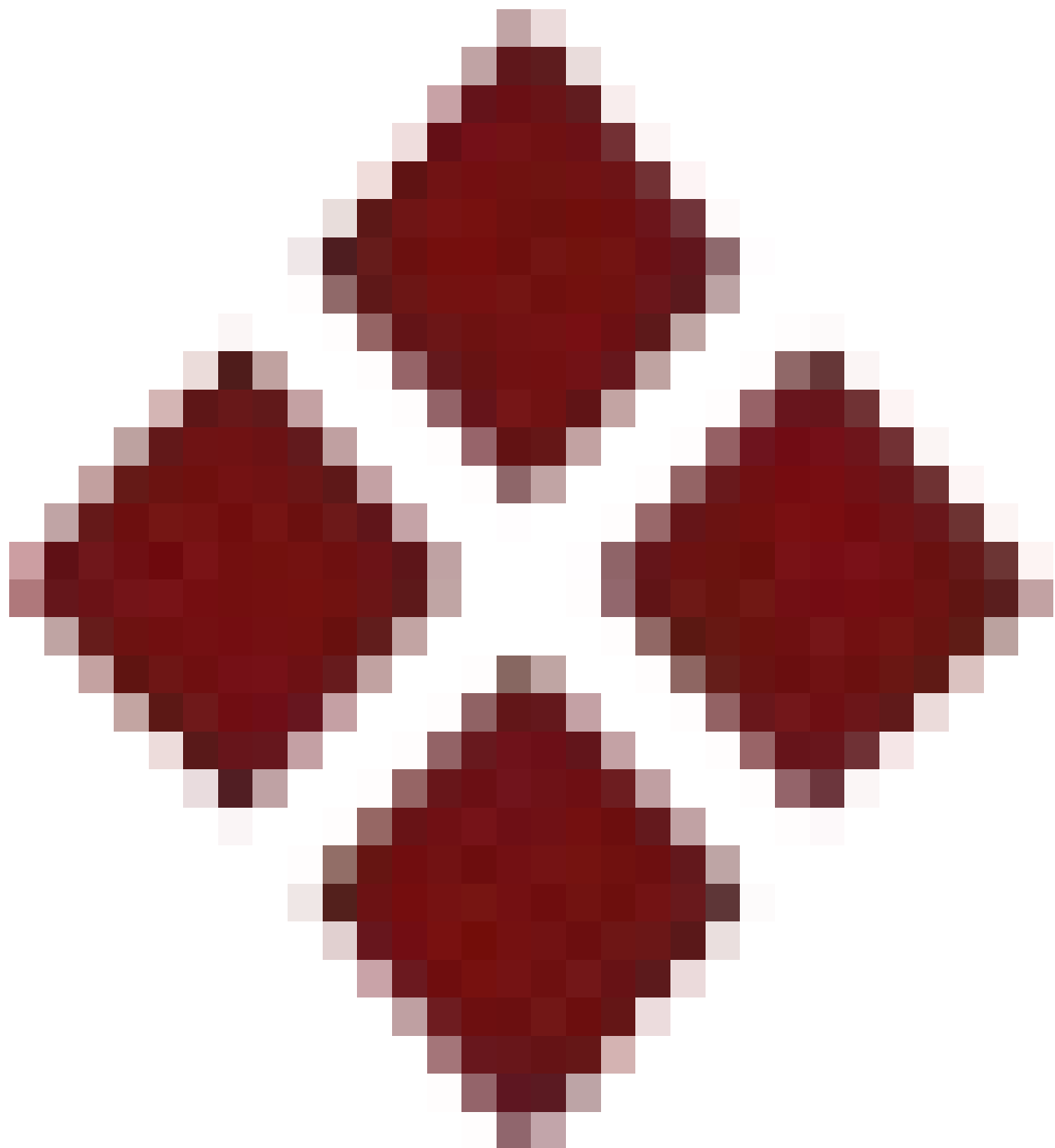
Ideals for a Spiritually Harmonious Marriage



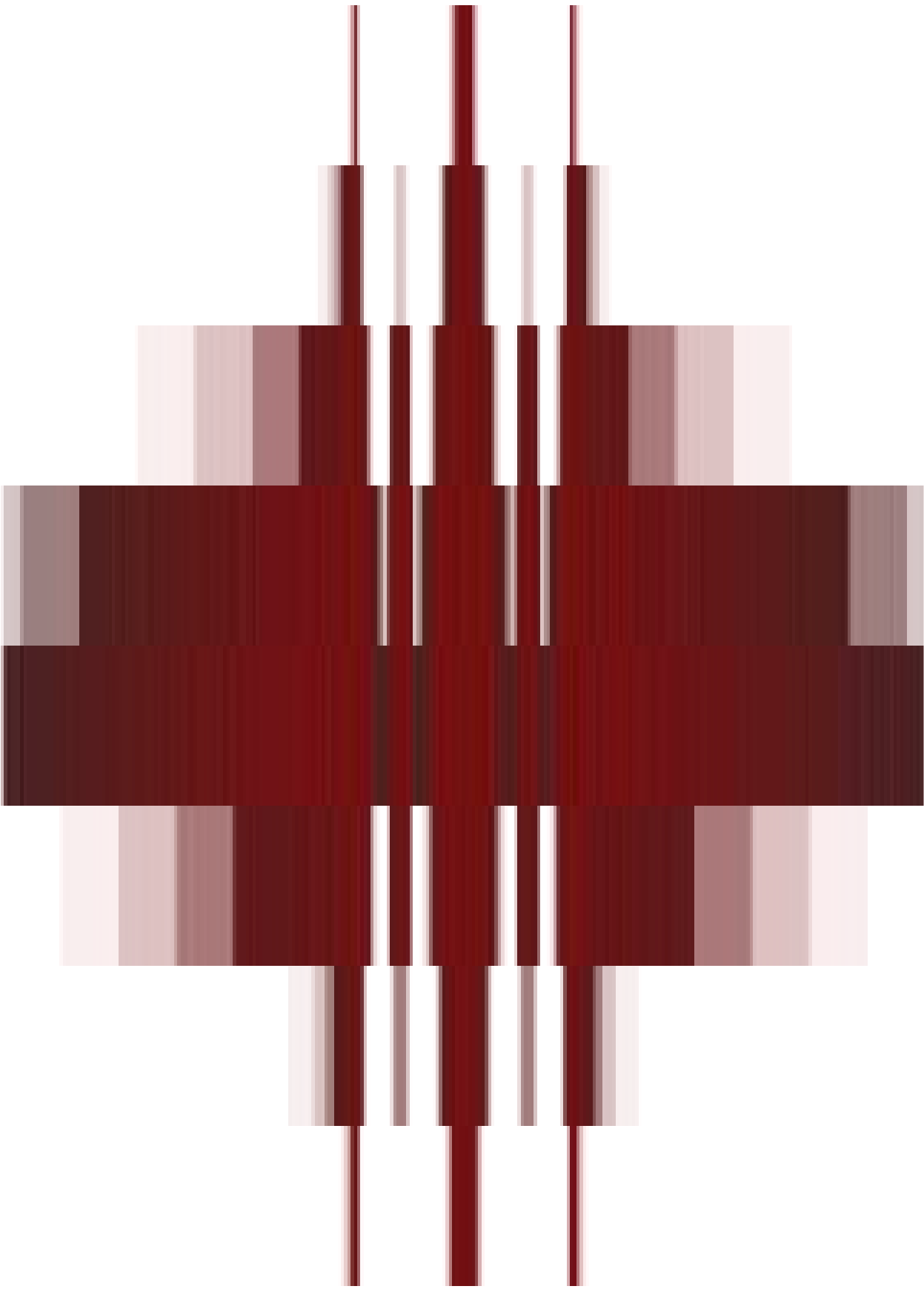
**Highest Form of “Spiritual Marriage”: Union of the
Soul With Spirit**



**By Meditation One Can Regain the Purity of “Little
Children” and the Lost Eden of Bliss**



Jesus' Reply to the Sadducees: Does the Marriage Relationship Endure After Death?



“True marriage serves as a spiritual device for perfecting the full expression of souls and freeing them into God...through restoration, realization, of their divine nature assisted by the companionship of the ideal helpmate.”

■

The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, “Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?”

And he answered and said unto them, “Have ye not read, that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh’? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”

They say unto him, “Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?”

He saith unto them, “Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.”

His disciples say unto him, “If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry.”

But he said unto them, “All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother’s womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.”

Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them.

But Jesus said, “Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence.

Then come unto him the Sadducees, which say there is no resurrection; and they asked him, saying, “Master, Moses wrote unto us, if a man’s brother die, and leave his wife behind him, and leave no children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. Now there were seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and dying left no seed. And the second took her, and died, neither left he any seed: and the third likewise. And the seven had her, and left no seed: last of all the woman died also. In the resurrection therefore, when they shall rise, whose wife shall she be of them? For the seven had her to wife.”

And Jesus answering said unto them, “Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God? For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven. And as touching the dead, that they rise: have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, ‘I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err.”

—Mark 12:18 – 27



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Discourse 62

Jesus Speaks of Soul Union as the Original Purpose of Marriage

“He that is able to receive it, let him receive it”



The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, “Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?”

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The ideal of soul mates and the origin of divorce

“Have you not read that from the beginning of creation, God created soul mates among males and females and signified that due to the divine soul attraction between a man and his mate, he will leave father and mother and cling to his wife? When a man and wife are united as true soul mates they will be one flesh, they will act in harmony and unison in body, mind, and soul; their souls will not act with different ideals, but as two bodies, two minds, two souls, with one ideal.

“Therefore, when a true male soul mate is united to his true female soul companion as the mundane way of liberation by spiritual union that perfects the expression of the complete Spirit-nature of each soul, then according to divine decree, let that law be not desecrated and nullified by an ignorant man’s mistaken interpretation of the law of divorcement given by Moses. Because you have lost the pure love and feeling God placed in your heart and your soul, Moses gave you a bill of divorcement. He found that you no longer possessed the divine magnetism required to draw your soul mates unto yourselves and instead found your impure hearts attracting wrong companions, resulting in matrimonial troubles; so he gave you the law of divorcement lest you maltreat your mismated wives.

“In the beginning when God created man and woman, there was no law of divorcement necessary, because original man and woman were to lead natural lives with uplifted spiritual consciousness free from the dangers of sex-motivated mismating and necessity of separation.



Understanding the deep metaphysical truths behind Jesus' teaching on marriage

“Anyone who puts away his or her properly mated spouse, except it be for sex transgression, and marries another, commits adultery; that is, such a person breaks the law of love in soul union for the sake of sexual stimulation by a new mismated physical marriage. Likewise, anyone who marries someone who was divorced because of infidelity, being attracted to that licentious person for the satisfaction of lust, instead of trying to find and marry one's own soul mate, is also guilty of adultery.”

In these verses, Jesus cites the original divine law that marriage should be the union between soul mates who are attracted to each other by divine magnetism and not by the animal magnetism of sex. To understand rightly the meaning of his words about marriage, divorce, and adultery, one must know the profound metaphysical truths concerning the creation and divine purpose of man. These were enunciated by the Vedic rishis and also encapsulated in the Book of Genesis, whose verses Jesus himself referred to in replying to the Pharisees.

As explained in the commentary on the opening verses of Saint John's Gospel —“Genesis According to Saint John”³—before the beginning of creation the Spirit was One: ever-existing, ever-conscious, ever-new Bliss. But He thought within Himself: “Verily, I am Joy; but there is none to enjoy Me.” As He thought this, He became divided into Creator and created, Transcendent Spirit and Cosmic Vibratory Nature. By cloaking a portion of His unmanifested consciousness with the illusion of difference, or particulars, Spirit manifested finite objects, using the law of duality and relativity to differentiate His One Consciousness and Cosmic Energy into countless pairs of polarized forces and forms: positive and negative elements, male and female, man and woman.

The universal everything is made of the singular consciousness of God. When a spark of that consciousness is individualized by God, it becomes a soul, capable of ultimately expressing the God-image in which it is made. In essence, the soul is perfect and complete, an exact reflection of God's ever-existing, ever-conscious, ever-new bliss. But when incarnate, it takes on the dualistic nature of creation, outwardly expressing primarily either a masculine or feminine, positive or negative, half of its essence.

This is why it is said in Oriental scriptures that when God reflected His consciousness in created forms, they became “half-souls” by taking on through identification the qualities of the manifested units of creation—positive or negative, reason- or feeling-impregnated, male or female. These dual qualities are “soul mates” of each other to be eventually reunited—“they twain shall be one flesh” in order for the fully expressing soul to find liberation in Spirit.

God’s creative manifestation is Omnipotent Force (God’s Bliss stirred by the will to create) and Consciousness (Omniscient Feeling). These produce the Intelligent Cosmic Energy from the womb of which is born all manifestation. The souls of man and woman are made of these divine potentials, perfect individualized reflections of this threefold essence. The incarnate being experiences these as reason (discriminative will), feeling (that which makes man conscious and able to enjoy), and energy (the substance that creates and activates the bodily instrument).



Marriage is to bring out the hidden feeling in man and the hidden reason in woman

When God divided Himself as man and woman, both dualities expressed the same unified consciousness, rather than the differentiation or polarity necessary to sustain the illusion of individuality in the manifested world. So He conceived a clever plan, a trick to keep man and woman different from each other and separate from Himself: He created superficial distinctions in their bodies and minds. When He made man, He used reason and feeling and cosmic energy, keeping reason uppermost and feeling hidden; that is why man's features manifest dispassionate reason. God made woman by using feeling, reason, and cosmic energy, keeping feeling uppermost and reason hidden; that is why her features express softness and call forth feeling. Reason, being aggressive, made man positive with positive sexual processes; and woman, with deep feeling, was negative and thus formed deep sexual recesses.⁴

The ideal spiritual union between man and woman was ordained that man might bring out the hidden reason in woman, and that the woman might help man uncover his hidden feeling. By so aiding each other to develop a perfect balance of these pure divine soul qualities, they would transcend their delusive differentiation as man and woman and realize their true nature as inviolate souls. Liberation was to be accomplished by their becoming united first to each other in divine friendship, the purest expression of God's love shared between two individuals; and then, thus perfected, ready for the ultimate union with God.

It is clear from Jesus' references to Genesis in these verses that he was citing the law of true soul mates, the immutable law of spiritual love, which should motivate all marriages. This was, as Jesus emphasized, the divine law "at the beginning": that for every true man there was a true woman, and each one who lived rightly on earth would automatically be drawn together in soul-companionship with a mate by the operation and decree of this law. True marriage serves as a spiritual device for perfecting the full expression of souls and freeing them into God by proper union—a process of evolution through which souls projected away from God into creation would be brought back through restoration, realization, of their divine nature assisted by the companionship of the ideal helpmate.



Essential nature of each soul is complete and perfect, free from sex and duality

The concept of soul mates is entirely misleading without knowledge of the basic truth that it is only on the plane of creation, where the law of relativity prevails, that a soul identified with a form (jivatman) may be considered as being a male or female “half-soul.” The true nature of the Self (the pure atman) as a reflection of Transcendent Spirit beyond the delusive requisites of the created worlds is free from sex and duality.

In Chapter

1

of Genesis, cited by Jesus in these verses, we read: “Male and female created He them...” (Genesis

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). This refers to the creation of these two natures in the spiritual (causal/astral) body, in which male and female natures were united—“at the beginning,” Jesus emphasized. God created man and woman, the first pairs of ideal beings, as soul companions. Every vibratory particle, whether material or etherically spiritual, has a positive or a negative force or quality (male or female); and, whereas these were united in the spiritual body of divine beings,⁵ these characteristics became separated, or differentiated, when God created the material human body. This dichotomy of masculine and feminine and their intended reunion by spiritual marriage is described in Chapter

2

of Genesis, from which Jesus also quoted: “And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made He a woman, and brought her unto the man.... Therefore shall a man leave

his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Genesis

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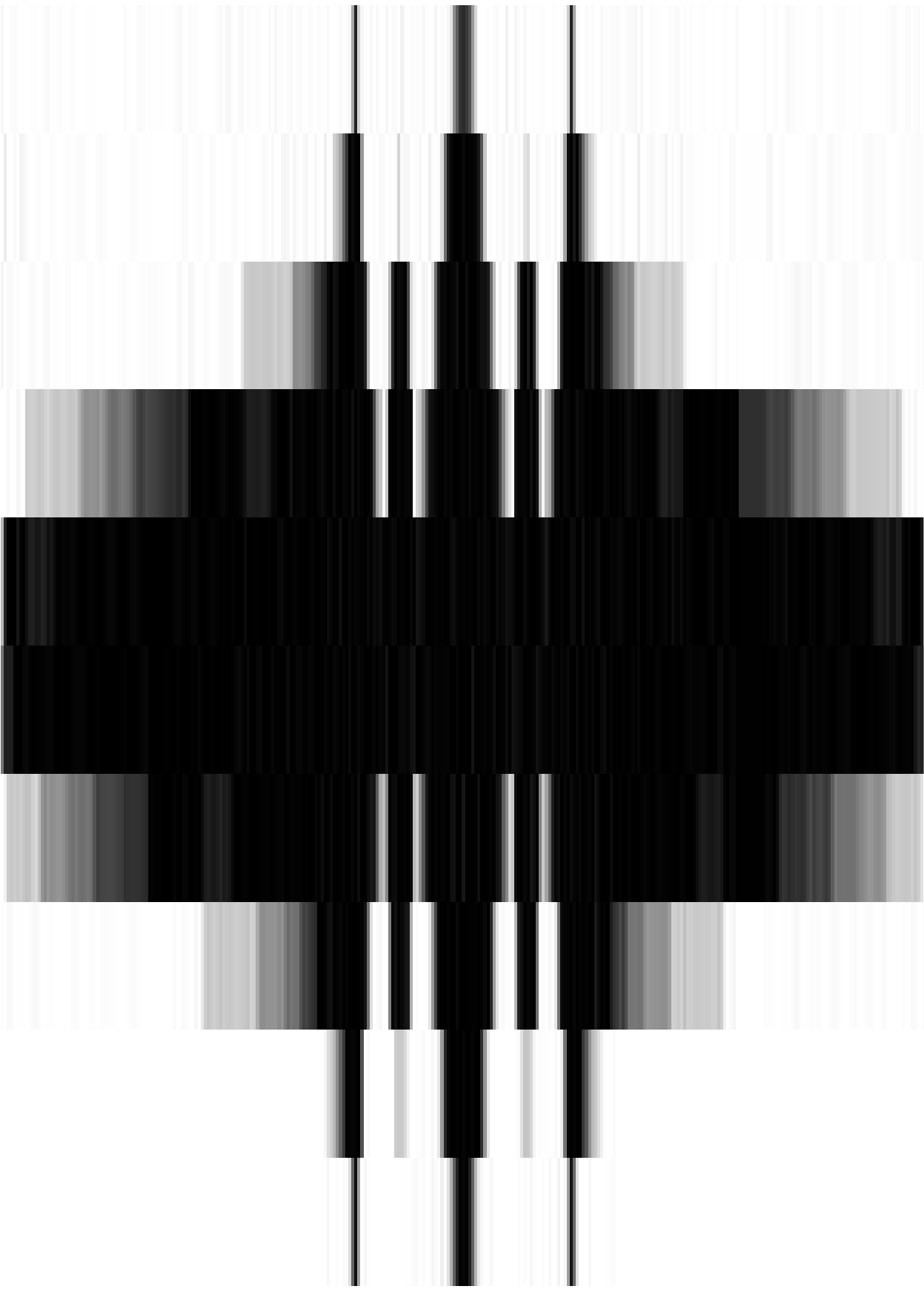
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He slept refers to the power of avidya (individual illusion as opposed to maya, or universal delusion), by which differentiation is made between man and woman. Rib means vibration. From the vibration of God-force that created man, or Adam, manifesting a reason-predominant nature, God drew forth a rib or feeling-predominant vibration to create woman.

Thus man and woman are the two natures of God—reason (knowledge) and feeling (consciousness, emotional reaction)—expressed on the material plane in differentiated bodies. God gave the first human beings the power to commune with Him in spite of this delusion-imposed dual consciousness. He placed them in paradise—the unified consciousness of the soul manifesting in the awakened spiritual eye and the pure divine expression of the causal-astral body. In the original plan of creation, man and woman, ideal soul mates, were to lead a heavenly life by keeping their minds in the divine region of Bliss-Will in the forehead. Spiritual marriage consisted in the feminine force or feeling uniting with the masculine force or reason and thus becoming whole in oneness with God. The souls that went out of God were to be brought back to God by the process of harmony in body, mind, and soul.

The harmonious balance of reason and feeling leads to intuitive perception and the ability to know what is Truth. Achieving this balance, men and women become gods. In the unbalanced human consciousness, the feminine quality, or feeling, loses its calm intuitive powers under the influence of the restlessness of body consciousness and emotional excitation; and the masculine attribute, or reason, loses its calm intuitive powers when it succumbs to the restlessness of

body consciousness and egotistical self-sufficiency. The original man and woman fell from the awareness of their divine state by physical misuse of the sex force, forfeiting the heavenly union of reason and feeling and becoming identified with their material body rather than their heavenly causal-astral consciousness with its faculty of intuitive perception of God and knowledge of their souls as one with Him.⁶



The contrasting roles of soul union and sex union in spiritual marriage and social marriage

When two souls come together and bring out the wholeness in each other and ultimately unite with Spirit, that union is a true marriage between soul mates. Soul companions, being primarily united in Spirit and love, find the ever new joy of God as the breath of their existence. The more strongly they become united in Spirit the less they concentrate on sex life. Soul companions in perfect marriage—even if they have sexual union for the propagation of spiritual children to bring good souls to earth—have their minds primarily engaged and engrossed in the perfect love of God.

The culmination of marriage between soul mates is distinguished by the fact that the husband and wife no longer live on the sexual plane—not by forced abstinence, but in transcendence. Being together in perfect love, they become united with God. Any so-called soul mates who have not yet extinguished their sexual appetites are not truly united as soul mates. A marriage that is very harmonious but without God-realization may be a moral marriage, an ideal socioreligious relationship on the human level, but falls short of being an actual spiritual marriage between soul mates, the end of which is liberation in God.

In his words to the Pharisees, Jesus automatically assumes that any tie between man and woman rightfully called marriage is to be primarily based on the spiritual laws of divine union. He meant that a mismated union—one in which man and woman come together principally for the satisfaction of lust—is not a real marriage as intended by God: a divine institution for propagation of the species and to offer ideal soul mates liberation into the spiritual world. Matrimony without a foundation of spiritual life is not true soul-marriage but chance union as exists in the animal kingdom. By indiscriminate opportunistic breeding, animals produce perfectly good offspring and propagate their own kind; but the original marriage institution decreed by God for man—His special creation, above the animals, capable of expressing divinity—was formulated by the Divine Father of creation on a basis of spiritual love. A marriage without spiritual love remains on the level of Nature's law of animal union and cannot be termed a divine true marriage, a union of souls.



Spiritual meaning of Jesus' words about adultery and divorce

The foregoing must be remembered in reading Jesus' words about divorce. Though it was permitted by the law of Moses, Jesus again emphasizes that "from the beginning it was not so." Improper marriages and consequent separations were not a part of God's original plan. Divinely enlightened beings of advanced vanished civilizations in higher ages, unknown to history, lived more natural, spiritual lives in harmony with God's will. Men and women were mated rightly so there was no cause for or necessity of divorce. But with the decline of civilizations, in cosmic aeonic cycles of rising and falling, people became materially minded, due to the misuse of their will and reason. Owing to the impurity of their hearts, they could not draw unto themselves their rightful soul companions.

This was the condition in Moses' time, for which he found it necessary to give the conditional law of divorcement as the means of saving mismated wives from the tyranny of abusive husbands and to protect husbands from their mismated cruel wives—specifically for either partner being guilty of fornication in mind or body.

"Fornication" implies coition wherein partners are not married to each other. However, when Jesus said, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery," he was speaking more specifically of true spiritual marriage, as described above. He meant: "If any soul, having found and joined with a true spiritual soul companion according to the divine purpose of marriage, forsakes that mate under the influence of temptation and marries another for the satisfaction of lust, he or she breaks the law of holy union in God and is thrown into the pit of the sin of adultery with its karmic consequences."

Ordinarily, persons go through a process of selection of companions and the misery and trials of a wrong marriage or marriages until they spiritualize their consciousness sufficiently to attract a true soul companion. It is only after soul mates have come together in spiritual marriage—whether for the first marriage or after the experiences of untenable wrong marriages—that if they separate through sex temptations they commit adultery and foil the only purpose of all spiritual marriages: liberation in God by real matrimonial union.

The very word “adulterate” means to debase, corrupt, or make impure. Great prophets warn against improper use of sex not because the procreative force is inherently evil—having become nature’s way of propagating the species when man lost his spiritual creative power of direct materialization—but because when dissipated indiscriminately it vitiates the heavenly soul consciousness and deludes man by identification with the sensual physical body and material world.

Consequently, Jesus implies that when a man and woman have coition primarily to satisfy sexual instincts, it is, metaphysically speaking, “fornication.” The intended union of souls, the true mating, is forsaken to cohabit instead with the senses of the physical body—unfaithfulness to the true marriage partner, the soul, by lustful cohabitation with the body. The minds of the parties involved, being wholly concentrated on the sensual physical expulsion of life force, fall from the heavenly joy of spiritual union. The stronger the sex union, the more the disunion in Spirit. Adulterous union is diametrically opposed to the divine union of soul mates in spiritual marriage. In the state of consciousness from which Jesus was speaking, on the high esoteric plane of truth, marriages that are not spiritual marriages between ideal soul companions and in which sexual indulgence eclipses the higher goal are “adulterous,” and are to be spiritualized if a married man and woman are to find divorce-free lasting happiness and soul evolution together. Thus, socioreligious marriage alone does not free one from metaphysical adultery; but spiritual marriage, which has as its object a gradual rising above sexual impulses to lift up the consciousness and reenter the Eden of God-union, ultimately frees one from the “original sin” of the fall of Adam and Eve inherited by ensuing adulterous generations.



Right interpretation of absolute truths for the present stage of human evolution

This is neither to disparage the modern institution of marriage, nor to discourage the practice of its noble ideals as commonly understood in man's present state of evolution. Some structure of commitment sanctified by vows before God is not only commendable but essential to constrain spiritually man's wayward inclinations. Comparatively few beings are able to outstrip the snail pace of natural evolution and live ahead to the time when the commonality on earth will be a return to the lost Eden of divine consciousness.

Nevertheless, Eternal Verities that were breathed forth in the pure ideas of God that informed the cosmos need to be reilluminated from age to age, though their pristine character intrude without welcome on the mindset of a generation comfortable in its socially acceptable norms. Spiritual progress moves at a pace commensurate with man's willingness to displace effortless convenience of pleasurable impulses with higher aspirations. Absolutes light the way, though attainment be less than instant!

Thus, Jesus' statements express the pure absolutes of God's idealism in sending forth creation, extant in the beginning and in the highest evolutionary spiritual cycles (referred to in Hindu scriptures as Satya Yuga—in which man again lives in his soul essence). But the application of those absolutes, having devolved with the fall of man's consciousness, as noted by Jesus, requires in each age an interpretive code that, while highlighting and honoring immutable truth for those capable of such aspiration, acknowledges the current evolutionary stage of man's understanding and capacities. The Ten Commandments as expressed through Moses are an example of eternal spiritual laws adapted to assist man in regaining his lost pure divine consciousness of the soul. In obeying the "Thou shalt not" of physical adultery, man takes the requisite step of fealty that empowers his self-control toward the attainment ultimately of self-mastery, soul realization.

Neither Jesus nor any other great master would expect celibacy from persons unprepared spiritually and emotionally for such lofty discipline (Jesus speaks of this discipline in the verses that follow).⁷ Wise counsel is rather that of gradual overall sublimation of physical consciousness, including sex, into spiritual consciousness through daily practice of scientific methods of meditation along with cultivation of pure soul qualities. In marriage, spiritual aspirants should

observe moderation in physical relations, and above all the culture of a spirit of love, service, loyalty, and divine friendship between husband and wife.



Ideals for a spiritually harmonious marriage

The spiritual purpose of family life is to expand one's consciousness through cultivation of purifying divine love and friendship that is not conditioned by sex or any selfish motivation. In marital coition, love should be uppermost. In time, as real love is cultivated, sex consciousness will wane naturally, replaced by the supreme joy of soul bliss and communion. When love, respect, and friendship are uppermost, the relationship will be successful and will progress surely toward fulfillment of the high divine purpose of marriage.

To love one's spouse with the pure love of God, and to share a marriage blessed by self-control through mental development, and to create spiritual children, is a noble way to live. To be drowned by material cares, weariness, overwork, greed for money, overindulgence in amusements, buying more things, and slaving for more money and saving no time for God leads marriage partners to the misery kingdom of Satan. A happy, contented, simple, harmonious married life of self-control and meditation leads them to God.

Success in marriage is very difficult if partners expect too much from their spouses. When each demands fulfillment from the other and that demand is not met, they become enemies. That is why I believe that a lasting and fulfilling marriage is in most cases impossible without spirituality—without a mutual effort to seek satisfaction of the soul's yearning for perfect love and the joy of fulfillment where alone it can be found: God-communion.

The animal instinct of uncontrolled sexual appetites is the chief reason for failure of modern marriages. Those modern marriages that are born on the sexual plane usually end in some form of physical or mental separation when the sexual desires are sated. Wrong marriages, with disunion in love and soul compatibility, lead to misery and the destruction of families, the very fabric of society.

Errors in choosing matrimonial candidates, divorces, and multiple marriages are frantic misguided efforts arising from the soul's pure desire to find one's real life companion. Selfishness, lust, physical attraction, external beauty, financial lure in marriage, animal magnetism of the opposite sexes—these are the evil forces that misdirect a person from traveling in the right path that leads to the discovery of a proper soul companion.

Man and woman should lead ideal lives and marry only when they are sure they are compatible as soul companions. If man and woman are more spiritual and follow the law of soul attraction and not sex attraction, they will find the right marriage and progress toward freedom in God. Only then will divorces become fewer and fewer until they vanish.

Jesus previously warned that adultery is committed in mind as well as in body.⁸ Delusion's temptation of untransmuted sexual attraction to someone other than one's own marital companion so distorts reason that it becomes a mental obsession, continuous and nearly unforsakable. If chronic and unrepented, this mental adultery, as surely as physical adultery, leads to irreconcilable disharmony and disunion, justification for divorcement from the erring spouse. Purity in body and mind is the only sure formula for union of true soul mates.



Jesus did not condemn justifiable divorce and remarriage of a spiritual mate

A husband and wife should be loyal to each other and try to make each other happy in every way. The spiritual wife should not forsake the unspiritual husband, nor should the spiritual husband forsake the unspiritual wife; they should try to influence and help each other as long as it is possible to do so. However, in speaking about divorce, Jesus never meant that a husband or wife who puts aside an ill-chosen wrong spouse, after having exhausted all efforts to bring spiritual harmony into a ruinous marriage, commits adultery if he or she later marries a true soul companion.

I know one very famous lady who was persuaded by her parents in her younger days to marry a man whom they incorrectly thought would be a good husband for her. But he wasted all her money and was lustful and never lived up to the vows of matrimony. One day in a spate of temper he tried to hit her with an upturned chair. In the strength of divine innocence she fixed the spiritual power of her gaze deep into the personality of her husband and saw him for what he was, and that she was united to a wicked person. In a firm voice she said, "I recognize you now; get out." The upraised hands of the husband froze; he dropped the chair and ran out of the home, in utmost dread and fear, never to return again. He could not stand the penetrating magnetic spiritual vibrations of the wife.

Long afterward, this lady developed greatly in spirituality and attracted an ideal soul companion. By my protracted observations I found that their marriage was a real union between soul mates. After temporarily living on the sexual plane, they have for years been living on the plane of love and spiritual communion, absolutely without sex relations. Every day they are as eager to see each other as though newly married; and when they come together they feel in their unity the God within them. I am certain that Jesus would not have condemned this just divorce, and would have blessed her spiritual remarriage.

However, the truth about spiritual marriages and soul companions—that in every man and woman there is a pattern whose counterpart exists somewhere in another person—should not be abused by anyone. Lustful individuals indulge and consequently stimulate their sex consciousness by seeking new sexual companions—often under the guise of searching for their soul mates. Such persons even discover "soul mates" in the alleys, saloons, and dance halls of

questionable repute. The instinctive desire to find the perfect soul companion, being heaven-born, can never be satisfied by any amount of lustful experiences. Promiscuity is disgraceful and degrading to the pure image of God in man's soul.

As the fulfillment of the union of soul mates is spiritual and not physical, the consummation does not necessarily require the coming together in a marriage partnership on the material plane. Sometimes even a chance meeting between soul mates fills one with a sense of completeness and pure love that wholly vanquishes all sense of need for physical union. This is true of relationships that have evolved through past lives as soul helpmates. One such instance was brought about by the intercession of my guru, Sri Yukteswarji. A man tormented with debauched desires sought the help of Master. He told the man, "When you find your soul companion, you will lose all consciousness of lust." One day he was with Master at the railroad station. There was a train on the siding in which a beautiful girl was sitting at one of the windows. Master exclaimed to the man, "There she is, the one you have been seeking. Look at her!" The man was transfixed in an emotion of joy. From that time on, he led a saintly life devoted to God.

Soul mates living on different parts of the earth, or even if one is on earth and the other in the astral world, may come together in a liberating union of God's love. The ideal man or woman who does not live on the sexual plane develops a spiritual magnetism by which he or she can attract the right soul mate on the earth plane or the dream plane or astral plane or the plane of conscious visions experienced in deep meditation. In the meeting of one's soul mate by whatever means, there will be no further desire to live according to worldly norms on the material plane. The reunion of masculine-feminine, positive-negative, reason and feeling, brings forth the immutable image of God in the soul. There is no necessity for physical marriage at all. It will be consummated right within one's heart.



Highest form of “spiritual marriage”: union of the soul with Spirit

There is an even higher way of fulfillment than spiritual union of soul companions on the physical plane: union with God by divine communion in meditation and ecstasy. Seeking soul liberation through union with a soul mate is a spiritually dangerous course for those who are not already advanced in wisdom, for temptation may cause them to sink into the delusion of wrong living that will take them away from God into the karmic bondage of further reincarnations. But once the soul of man or woman is united with God, the Consummate Soul Mate, that soul never can fall from liberation. This is why Jesus, Swami Shankara, and other saviors have shown this highest path of liberation by uniting their souls directly with God alone.

This method of perfection and matrimony with God is the holiest marriage, between soul and Spirit, where God is the Divine Beloved, positive and masculine, and all human souls are negative and feminine, beloved spouses of God. This concept is posited on the duality of the cosmic creative principle: Spirit and Nature. Spirit, being the source and upholder of manifestation, is the Positive Masculine Absolute, whose active creativity is His outgoing Negative Feminine Power, Nature, of which all incarnate souls are a part. Together, Positive Spirit and Negative Nature with their offspring of masculine and feminine forms and forces propagate the grand universal scheme.

Essentially, therefore, we are all the brides of God. He is the Divine Lover perpetually wed to every soul, never forsaking any soul though it forsake Him in its adulterous roaming in delusion. God as the Perfect Lover pursues each soul through incarnations until it returns to Him. Of all the love that has ever been promised, pure love, love that is eternal, is found at last in God. He is all the love of all the lovers that ever loved. When the soul meets Him, it knows He is the One it was waiting to meet.

If one lives rightly and learns the higher forms of meditation, one develops the spiritual magnetism that neutralizes the animal magnetism of the physical body. With freedom from the “original sin” of sex attraction, one finds the true soul mate in a spiritual marriage on earth, or in a dream or vision, or in the astral world; or supremely, in direct union with God. The love and friendship with the Divine cultivated in the bower of meditation can never be lost. It shall last

beyond the portals of the tomb unto Eternity.

The full implication of the words of Jesus, an impossible view for body-bound spiritually nearsighted persons, is best understood by those who meditate deeply and merge their concentration in the Christ Consciousness which Jesus possessed. Otherwise, much truth is lost in misinterpretation, mistranslation, or shallow cognition.



His disciples say unto him, “If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry.”

But he said unto them, “All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother’s womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it” (Matthew 19:10 – 12).



Jesus extols the self-mastery of celibacy for those who are capable of it

“All men and women cannot grasp this precept of which I speak except those who are worthy, being physically, mentally, and spiritually fit to live up to it. There are some eunuchs that were forced to be so since they were born that way from their mother's womb. And there are some eunuchs which were made so by other men through artificial means of operation.

“And there are eunuchs who have of their own free will made themselves celibate by withdrawing their minds, will, and energy from the sex region, that with the elevation of their life force and consciousness, forsaking temporary sex pleasure created by satanic delusion to keep man body-bound, they may receive the everlasting joy of God's kingdom of Cosmic Consciousness. Anyone who is worthy and able to understand this precept, let him follow it and he will find the kingdom of God.”

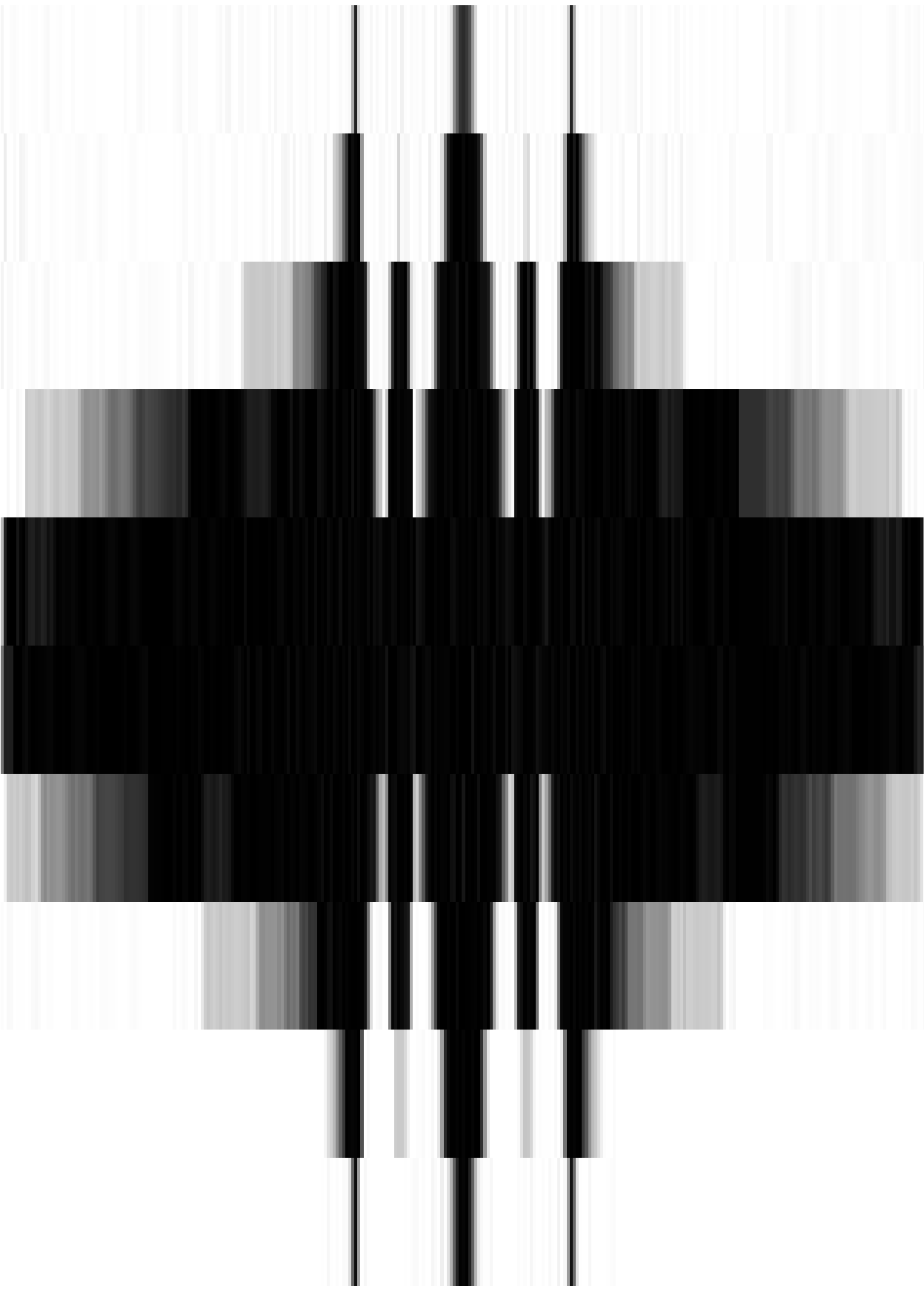
After alluding to the original ideal of spiritual marriage (for attaining soul union and perfect love in God as one means of liberation for worldly people), Jesus goes on to commend those men and women who completely renounce the husband-wife relationship of marriage and seek direct union with God through the self-mastery of celibacy.

A man or woman, singly, by completely renouncing sex pleasure and practicing those spiritual disciplines that unite the soul with God, finds perfect divine love and liberation in that consummate union. In linking celibacy with the attainment of the kingdom of God, Jesus emphasizes that the consciousness of sex must be sublimated by all people, married as well as celibate, in order to free the life force from this compelling impulse that binds the consciousness to the physical body. Spiritual eunuchs are those who withdraw their will, energy, desire, and sex force completely from the sex nerves by proper methods of natural sublimation, such as yoga, so that they no longer feel any overbearing physical impulse of sex. Spiritual eunuchs are not those who maim their sex power and become eunuchs because of impotency, but are those who attain self-mastery by such means as daily meditation and ecstasy and thereby never permit sexual desires to rouse their physical sex nerves.

All persons may learn to govern sex urge by wisdom, the pure intuitive

intelligence that discriminates in guiding the will to choose the liberating bliss of Spirit “for the kingdom of heaven’s sake” instead of the enslaving sensual pleasure of the gross physical body. Anyone who practices physical culture exercises with deep concentration during times of temptation can transmute the sex energy into muscular energy and general vitality. Or during the appearance of sex consciousness in the body, one may sublimate that force into great mental power by concentratedly engaging the attention in creative work, such as writing or music or art. Or the wayward sex force may be used propitiously to create the spiritual power of self-control, mastery of body consciousness, by being transmuted in meditation—the taintless life force then being absorbed in the higher states of consciousness in the subtle centers in the spine and brain.⁹

Jesus himself embraced a life of celibacy, never allowing intrusion of the pleasures of the flesh that would pull his consciousness from its seat in the inner kingdom of God. The Order of Swamis in India also emphasizes the renouncement of sex consciousness for the attainment of the everlasting joy of Cosmic Consciousness.



Those who renounce family life should give unselfish service to society

When I asked my guru, Swami Sri Yukteswarji, to make me a swami, he tested my resolve and asked my reasons for not marrying. I thought of a lot of reasons; but principally I somehow felt I had outgrown it—I could not allot God a secondary place in my life. Master spoke of the many who renounce the world and lead selfish lives dependent on society to look after them while offering nothing in return. Married people, he said, have to renounce much in sacrifice for each other and responsibility for the welfare of their families. The family unit is a micro-organization in which all must do their part. The world itself could not go on if everyone were selfish and did not participate in the services essential to the harmony and welfare of society. After Master had made these points, he concluded, “Remember that he who rejects the usual worldly duties can justify himself only by assuming some kind of responsibility for a much larger family.”

I started with a residential school that quickly grew into a family of three hundred children. I cared for them as father-mother-friend-spiritual instructor. I was on call to their needs day and night. I had never imagined in all my dreams what our parents go through for us. The mother sleeps just a little bit; and then the baby wakes up and cries, and the mother has to renounce her need for rest to respond. With what patience and tender love most of our mothers have raised us, and the sacrifices our fathers made to support us. We do not realize that until we have children of our own. If we do not choose family life, that does not condone a selfish existence. Those who are single can work out their evolution by extending their interests in service to others among God’s children. The propagation of the species means not only to give birth through one’s own body, but to leave in others something of one’s nobler ideals and example—just as it is the duty of parents to instill the better part of themselves in their children. The teacher does likewise; he leaves to posterity his thoughts and ideas propagated in others. An exemplary life of service and love for God is a divine inheritance bequeathed to the world.

The privilege of life God has given to us bears with it a great responsibility. I well understood what this entailed when I identified my life with caring for the children of my How-to-Live School. They metaphorically took half of my life; half of my salvation I had to give to them. Now with the many souls God has sent into my large world family, I save nothing for myself. My gain is in my loss

for others, because they are my own self. This is the way to liberate oneself in unmarried life, uniting feeling and reason—love and will—by giving oneself to others, just as Jesus did. For those who are able to receive Jesus' edict to remain unmarried "for the kingdom of heaven's sake," service to humanity is their work. Their obligation is to be even more busy than are family members in their compact unit of society.

By God-contact in meditation and selfless service that gives birth in others to some of one's noblest ideas, one not only unites feeling and reason in oneself, but cultures in one's expanded family of spiritual children, feeling to balance the reason in men, and reason to balance the feeling in women. This is spiritual marriage, liberation through union with God in ecstatic meditation, and renouncing the little self to serve Him as one's greater Self in others.



The healthy attitude toward sex relations for married persons on the spiritual path

Jesus does not say it is wrong to marry and to bring good children into the world by Nature's ordinary law of procreation. But it is to be remembered that this creative principle is one of God's holiest laws. We must not think that there is sin in it, but there is inherent physical and spiritual danger in its misuse to stimulate and gratify sex consciousness for its own sake. That is detrimental to the nervous system and weakens the vitality and immune system in the body. Spiritually, it is impossible to lift the consciousness into the kingdom of heaven, the Eden of the higher centers of God-perception, without raising the life force from the lower spinal centers of sensual compulsions.

Mastery in the marital state begins with moderation and self-control and the joyous contact with God in meditation. Hypocritical renunciation, attempted abstinence by the sense-tortured individual, is unnatural, even harmful; that is why Saint Paul said: "It is better to marry than to burn."¹⁰ Moderation in married life, supported by tasting of the Infinite Bliss of deep meditation and the unconditioned divine love of God in the soul, transmutes the consciousness in a natural way. When the joy of God, felt in meditation with stillness of breath, remains continuously in the soul, then the physical temptation vanishes forever through contrast: The joy in God becomes more tempting than all temptations. One can even love husband or wife with the love of God and not love of flesh, as did Lahiri Mahasaya (my Guru's Guru). His marriage was to show people how the consciousness of God can tame temptation and how God's love can spiritualize and transmute conjugal love. When one is irrevocably established in union with Divine Bliss, that consciousness can exist under all conditions of life. Real freedom can be accomplished in no other way.



Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them.

But Jesus said, “Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence (Matthew 19:13 – 15).¹¹

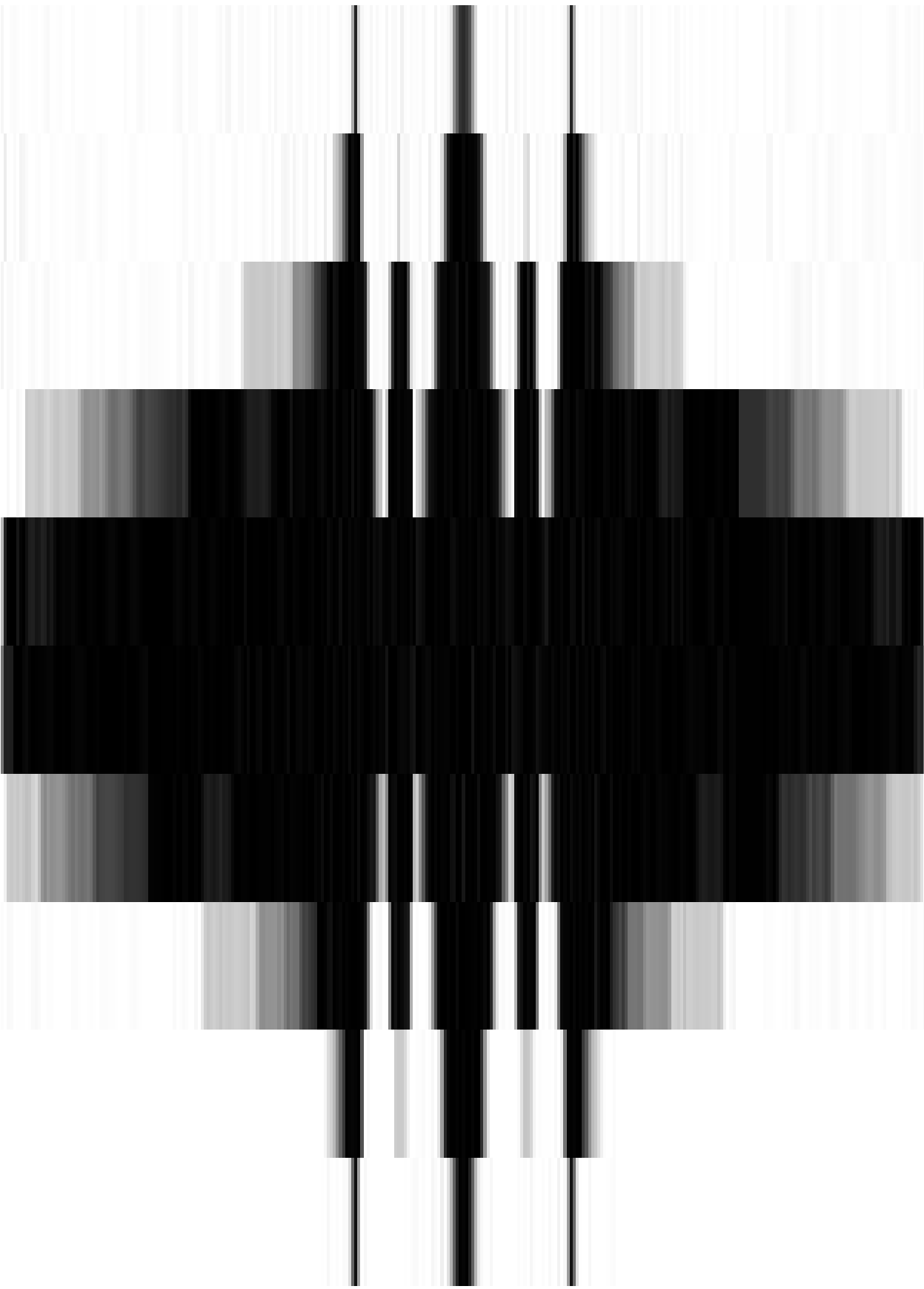
Parallel reference:

And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them.

But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, “Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.”

And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them (Mark 10:13 – 16).¹²

“Allow little children to come unto me; do not keep them away. All men who have attained God’s kingdom of Cosmic Consciousness are children in their simplicity and pure minds. Of truth I say unto you, anyone who tries to attain Cosmic Consciousness without being simple, nonattached, truthful, good, and trustful like a little child, cannot attain that divine state.”



By meditation one can regain the purity of “little children” and the lost Eden of Bliss

Pure reason (Adam) and pure feeling (Eve) in the growing boy and girl live in the Eden of Bliss in attunement with the all-creative Divine Will in the spiritual eye, but as soon as youth indulges in dissolute thoughts, behavior, and sexual experiences it falls from the Divine Center of Bliss and becomes identified with the limitations of the restless desires of the flesh. Youth loses its paradise, casting itself out into the mortal hades of the sensual bondage of delusion, governed by the life force and consciousness being pulled downward and outward through the subtle coccygeal center in the spine. Only by spiritual thoughts and actions and by meditation on God can one reverse this contrary force and restore the consciousness to its native Paradise.

The Vedic ideal during the Golden Age in India was that every day even from earliest years spiritual consciousness was to be cultured in the child. Children were placed under qualified masters who taught them how to live by truth and self-control. At maturity, even if they then decided to marry, they maintained practice of those soul qualities as applied to marriage and householder responsibilities, never allowing their material life to bring them down from heaven. They married for love, and their souls entered into an ideal life. When their family duties had been met, with their own children settled in life, the parents retired to a forest hermitage or other place of spiritual seclusion for meditation; many also gave of themselves in service to humanity. In a God-centered life there is liberation.

Adults should learn by their own and society's mistakes and help children to understand and observe the spiritual purpose of marriage and the creative sex force. They are taught mathematics, history, literacy, but academic education does not give them the art and science of discriminative behavior and self-control of sex. That should be taught in the schools everywhere and exemplified in the home. Out of such training and influences, ideal people will come.

When spiritual marriage of soul union in God is understood and cultured in unmarried or married life, sex is so completely and naturally sublimated in a greater joy of divine love that man and woman become again as “little children...for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” Pure reason (Adam) and pure

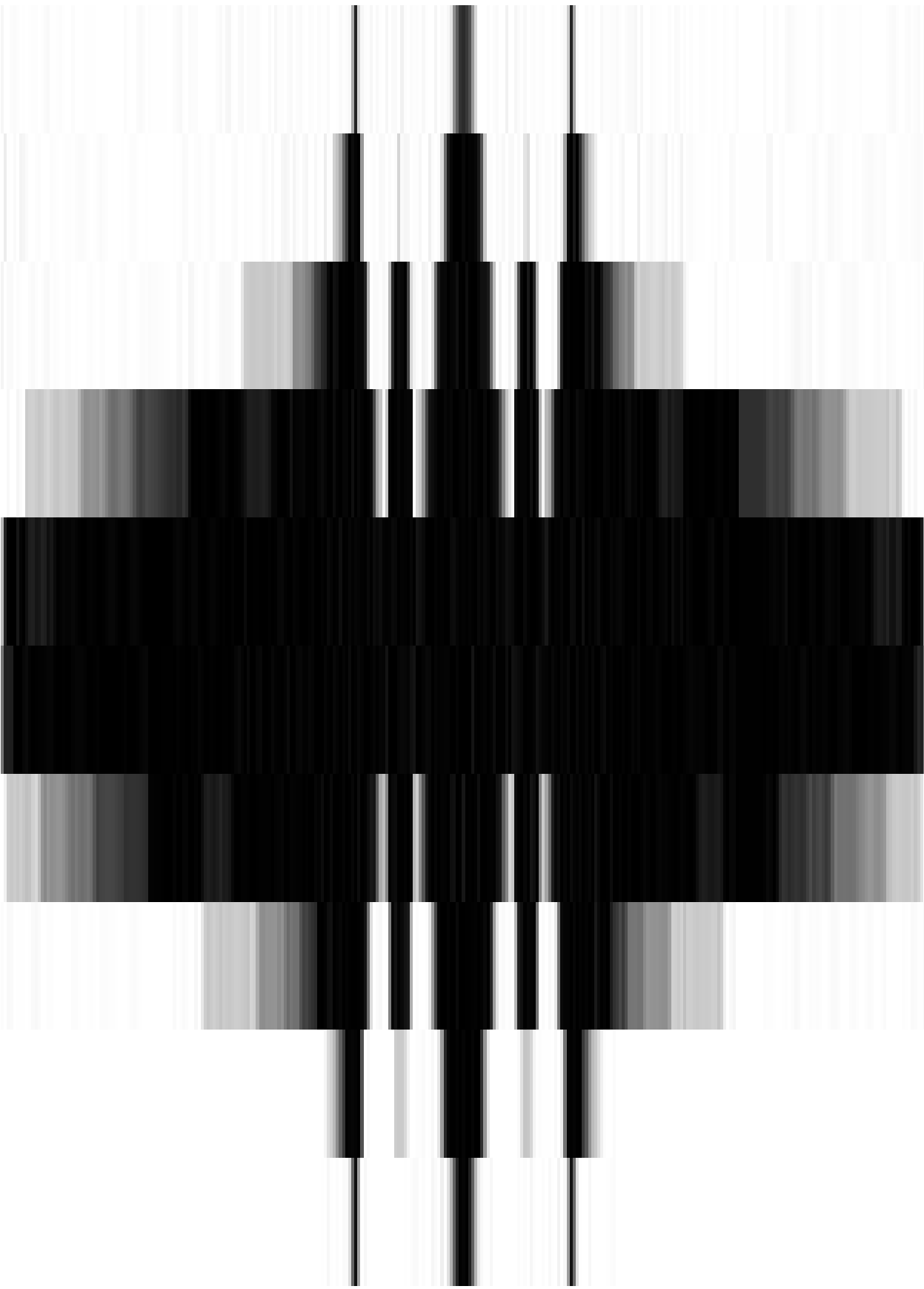
feeling (Eve) reunite in soul consciousness in union with the Will (reason) and Consciousness (feeling) that went out of God to create man and woman. The two are no longer so differentiated; in liberation from bodily identification, they are perfect children of God, made in the one and same immortal image of their Divine Creator.¹³



Then come unto him the Sadducees, which say there is no resurrection; and they asked him, saying, “Master, Moses wrote unto us, if a man’s brother die, and leave his wife behind him, and leave no children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. Now there were seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and dying left no seed. And the second took her, and died, neither left he any seed: and the third likewise. And the seven had her, and left no seed: last of all the woman died also. In the resurrection therefore, when they shall rise, whose wife shall she be of them? For the seven had her to wife.”

And Jesus answering said unto them, “Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God? For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven. And as touching the dead, that they rise: have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, ‘I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err” (Mark 12:18 – 27).¹⁴

Jesus chided the Sadducees for having made a rudimentary blunder by mixing earthly edicts with heavenly experiences. They understood neither the scriptures they quoted nor the transcendent power and wisdom of God, and so their assumption was faulty in trying to link earthly with heavenly matters.



Jesus' reply to the Sadducees: Does the marriage relationship endure after death?

Physical marriage practiced in this world is meant for the self-controlled propagation of the species and for assisting one another to learn the selflessness of love in faithfulness, giving, and sharing; and for the advanced few, it is one means of soul union for liberation after finding the perfect love of God by intense spiritual discipline, sexual sublimation, and meditation. Couples learn many lessons in the marriage partnership, such as uniting feeling and reason (positive and negative) to make two flesh as one through mutual respect and unselfish cooperation. But the resurrection Jesus referred to in his response to the Sadducees was of souls that have already found liberation in the perfect love of God and can enter into heaven freed from further reincarnation on earth. Hence, the physical discipline of marriage—or even divine seeking in meditation—is wholly unnecessary for those souls who have become immortals in “heaven.” When the fruit comes, the flower falls. Human experiences of marriage, love, success, study, meditation, exercise, discipline, all are necessary to produce the fruit of Self-realization. But when enlightenment is attained, and subsequently liberation, all human experiences in the realm of delusion, having served their purpose, are no more.

Every liberated soul in heaven is married to God. Hence there can be no question of physical marriage for those souls who are complete and perfect in their union with the eternal love of God—the One Perfect Soul Mate.

Souls liberated from earthly ties and promoted to live in the finer vibration of the astral heaven enjoy that sphere with exquisitely refined astral sensibilities. They are able to create according to their slightest desire any object, scene, or luminous atmospheric condition by the sheer exercise of their will. Through the powers of their supramental astral bodies they can materialize other astral bodies by will power. Only on the earth plane is sexual union a requisite for physical birth. In the heaven of liberated souls, all have the same spiritual status—immortality—and are equal in the eyes of God. Jesus was certainly speaking of these supremely resurrected beings when he said they “are as the angels which are in heaven.”

Of the other many souls in the various regions of heaven, or the astral world, they are there only temporarily to rest awhile before returning to earth's

disciplinary experiences to continue the struggle for liberation. For example, the hypothetical woman mentioned in the question posed by the Sadducees—a childless widow of the seven brothers—would in the astral world be a sexless soul with an astral body, and thus she could not be the wife of any one man there. Indeed, throughout her numerous earth incarnations she no doubt would have been the wife of many, many husbands (or even a husband herself in some incarnations as a man!). If during her earth life this widow had not found spiritual emancipation, then, after a karmically predetermined respite in the after-death state, she would have to reincarnate on earth, most likely as a woman. She would have a fresh opportunity to live rightly, perhaps to find the perfect love of God and liberation with the aid of a soul companion, or in direct union with God through concentrated spiritual endeavor.

The souls of all men and women in reality belong to God alone—in spite of certain spiritual affinities between soul companions. Hence, in the after-death astral state, the souls of men and women are reminded of their sexless immortality; “marriage,” with all its mortal connotations, becomes impossible there. Nevertheless, souls who are deeply in love with each other or who share bonds of pure friendship during their stay on the earth plane will recognize each other and continue to feel the love and divine friendship imprinted on their souls, even in the astral world after death.

It is said that the Sadducees were especially antagonistic toward the doctrine of resurrection preached by Jesus. He put forth the argument that all things coming out of the living God must themselves be “living,” even after so-called death. When souls pass through the portals of physical death, they merely change place and form, resurrected into that new existence. Jesus tried to make the Sadducees understand that as the prophets such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, are not dead but living in God, so all souls who pass from this world are everlasting in the ever-living God, either in heaven or in reincarnated forms on earth. Souls cannot die.

Jesus reminded the priests that the book of Moses relates how God vibrated His presence as the ever-burning light of wisdom igniting the bush of ignorance in the consciousness of Moses. Through His vibrations, God signified to Moses: “I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob who were incarnate on earth. Though their physical forms returned to the dust of mortality, their souls are living in Me. I am Life Eternal and all things coming out of Me are ever-living.” Jesus concludes, “Hence, He is not the God of the dead, but of the living.”



“Suffer the Little Children to Come Unto Me”

And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them.

But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, “Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.”

And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.

—Mark 10:13–16

Pure reason (Adam) and pure feeling (Eve) in the growing boy and girl live in the Eden of Bliss in attunement with the all-creative Divine Will in the spiritual eye, but as soon as youth indulges in dissolute thoughts, behavior, and sexual experiences it falls from the Divine Center of Bliss and becomes identified with the limitations of the restless desires of the flesh. Youth loses its paradise, casting itself out into the mortal hades of the sensual bondage of delusion, governed by the life force and consciousness being pulled downward and outward through the subtle coccygeal center in the spine. Only by spiritual thoughts and actions and by meditation on God can one reverse this contrary force and restore the consciousness to its native Paradise.

—Paramahansa Yogananda

Drawing by Heinrich Hofmann

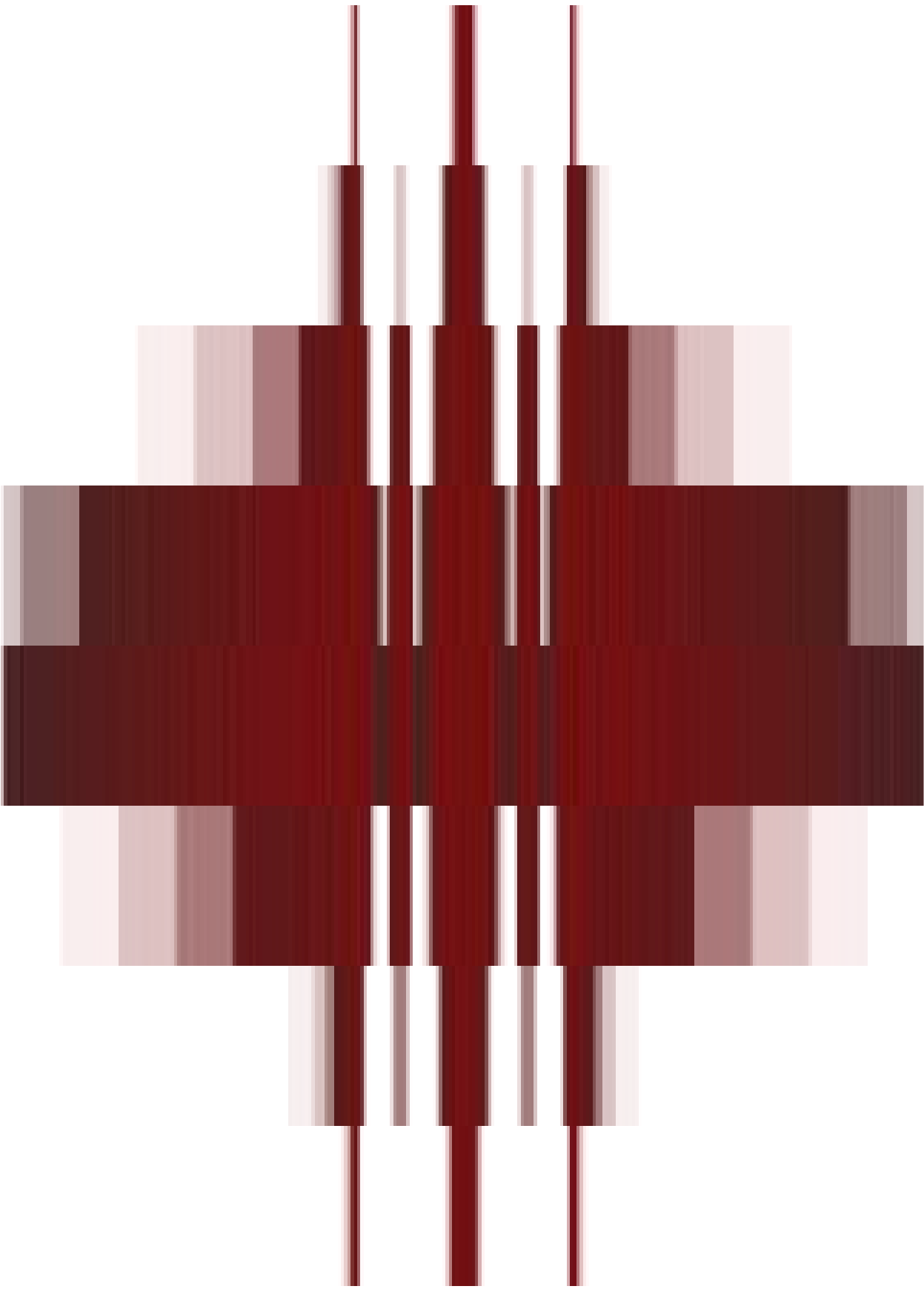




Discourse 63

Exchanging Temporal Wealth for the Riches of God's Kingdom

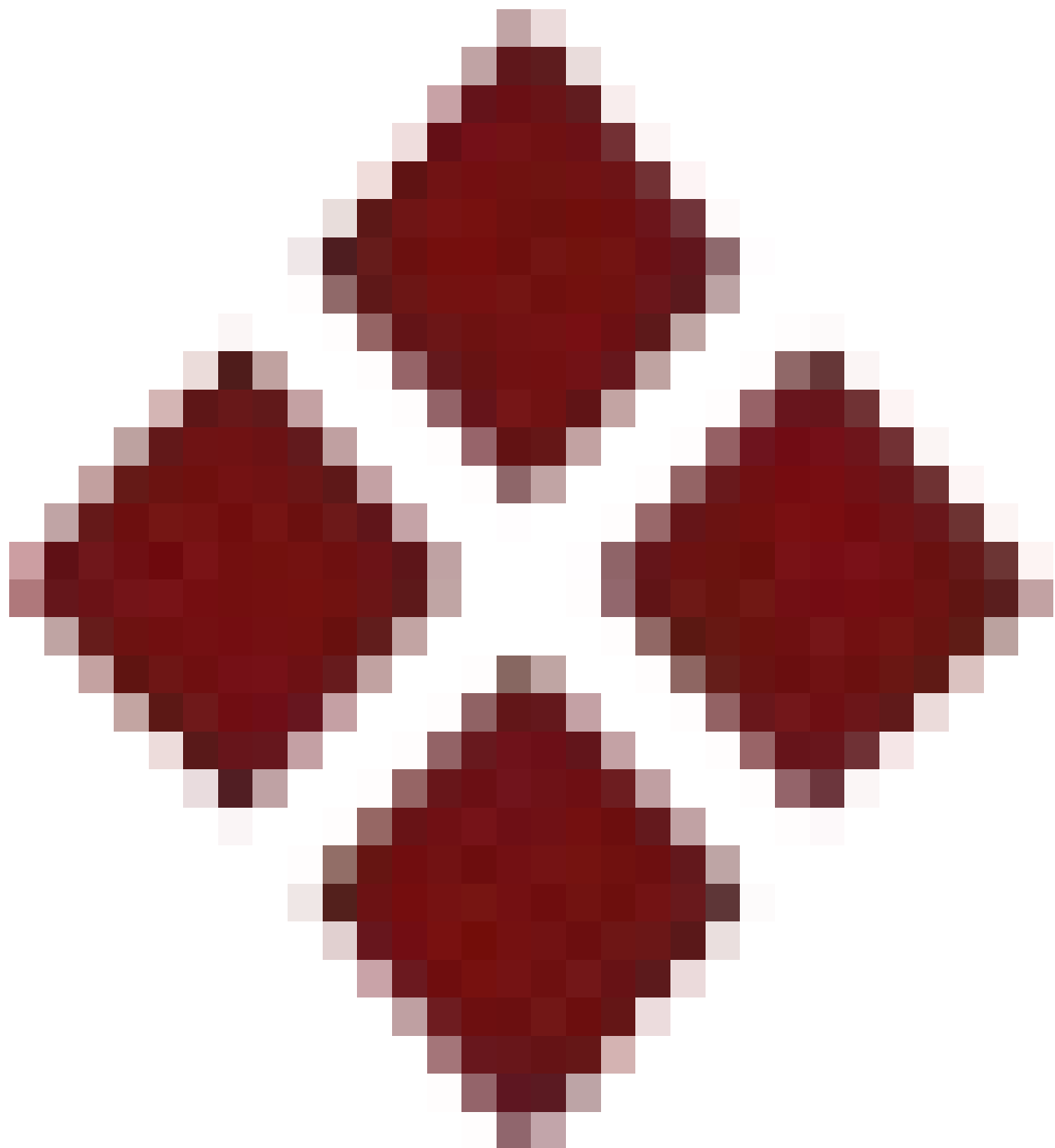
The Blessings Inherent in God's Commandments



**Universality of Rules of Conduct Taught by Moses,
Jesus, and India's Science of Yoga**



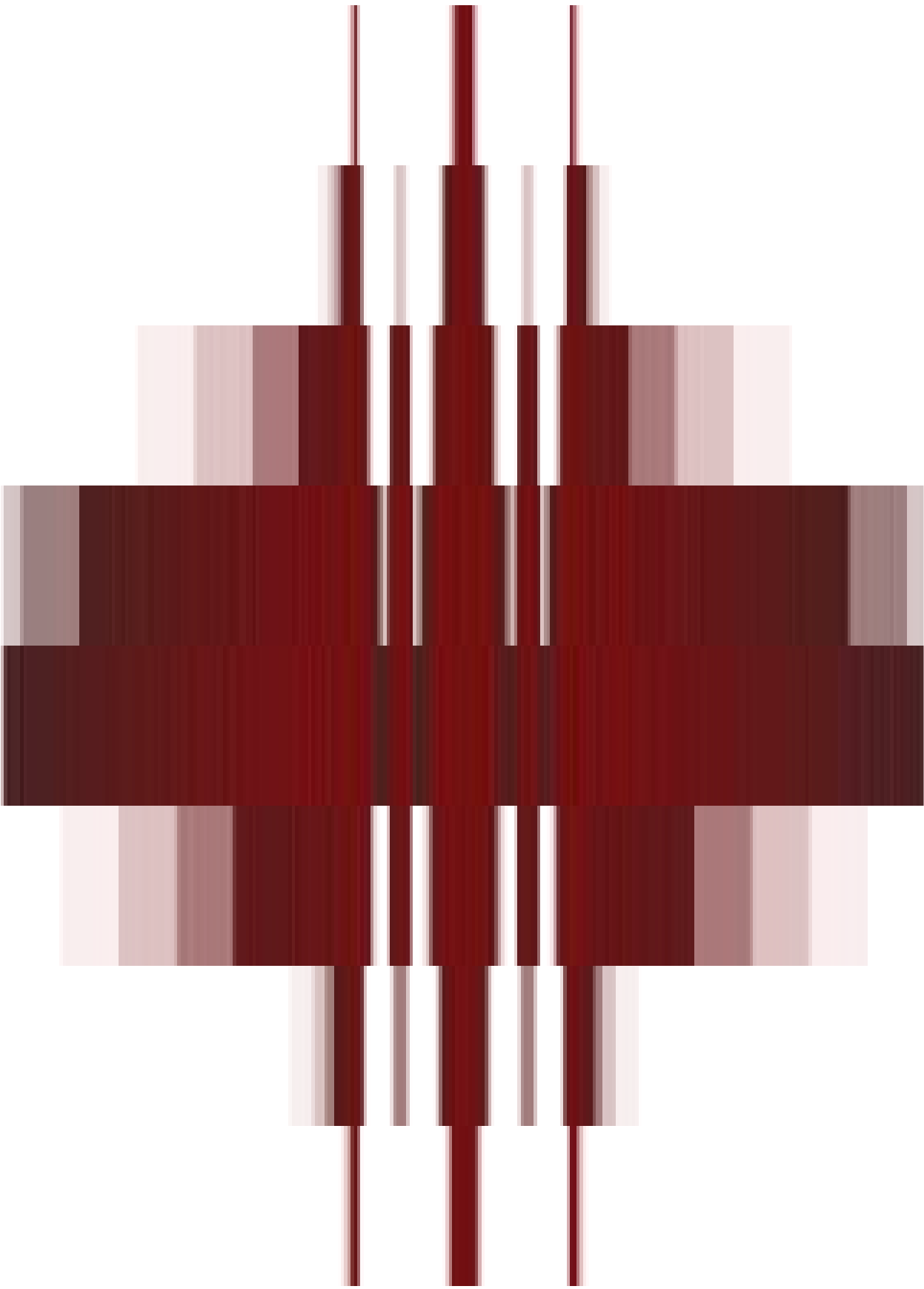
Yoga Begins With Moral Rules, and Gives the Further Practices Needed for God-realization



**“Take Up the Cross”: The Practice of Inner
Renunciation, Self-Discipline, and Nonattachment**



The Spiritual Powers or Stage of Enlightenment Conferred by Mastery of Each Commandment



“Divine laws...are given to enable man to live in this world of cosmic delusion and satanic temptation as God’s child, manifesting His image of divine qualities, rather than being helplessly identified with the flesh.”

■

And, behold, one came and said unto him, “Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?”

And he said unto him, “Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.”

He saith unto him, “Which?”

Jesus said, “ ‘Thou shalt do no murder,’ ‘Thou shalt not commit adultery,’ ‘Thou shalt not steal,’ ‘Thou shalt not bear false witness,’ ‘Honour thy father and thy mother’: and, ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.’ ”

The young man saith unto him, “All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?”

Jesus said unto him, “If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.”

But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, “Verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.”

When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, “Who then can be saved?”

But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, “With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.”

Then answered Peter and said unto him, “Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?”

And Jesus said unto them, “Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his

glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life. But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first.

“For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard.

“And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and said unto them; ‘Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you.’ And they went their way. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise.

“And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, ‘Why stand ye here all the day idle?’ They say unto him, ‘Because no man hath hired us.’ He saith unto them, ‘Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive.’

“So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, ‘Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first.’ And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny.

“And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house, saying, ‘These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.’

“But he answered one of them, and said, ‘Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?’

“So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.”

And Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the way,

and said unto them, “Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again.”

—Matthew 19:16 – 20:19

And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich. And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way.

And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, “Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at thy house.”

And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, that he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.

And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord: “Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.”

And Jesus said unto him, “This day is salvation come to this house, forso much as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.

He said therefore, “A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, ‘Occupy till I come.’ But his citizens

hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.'

"And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. Then came the first, saying, 'Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.' And he said unto him, 'Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.' And the second came, saying, 'Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds.' And he said likewise to him, 'Be thou also over five cities.'

"And another came, saying, 'Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin: For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow.' And he saith unto him, 'Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow: Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?'

"And he said unto them that stood by, 'Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds.' (And they said unto him, 'Lord, he hath ten pounds.') *'For I say unto you, that unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him. But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.'* "

And when he had thus spoken, he went before, ascending up to Jerusalem.



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Discourse 63

Exchanging Temporal Wealth for the Riches of God's Kingdom

The Blessings Inherent in God's Commandments



And, behold, one came and said unto him, “Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?”

And he said unto him, “Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.”

He saith unto him, “Which?”

Jesus said, “‘Thou shalt do no murder,’ ‘Thou shalt not commit adultery,’ ‘Thou shalt not steal,’ ‘Thou shalt not bear false witness,’ ‘Honour thy father and thy mother’: and, ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.’”

The young man saith unto him, “All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?”

Jesus said unto him, “If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.”

But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, “Verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into

the kingdom of God.”

When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, “Who then can be saved?”

But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, “With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:16 – 26).

Parallel reference:

And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, “Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?”

And Jesus said unto him, “Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, God. Thou knowest the commandments, ‘Do not commit adultery,’ ‘Do not kill,’ ‘Do not steal,’ ‘Do not bear false witness,’ ‘Defraud not,’ ‘Honour thy father and mother.’”

And he answered and said unto him, “Master, all these have I observed from my youth.”

Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, “One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.”

And he was sad at the saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.

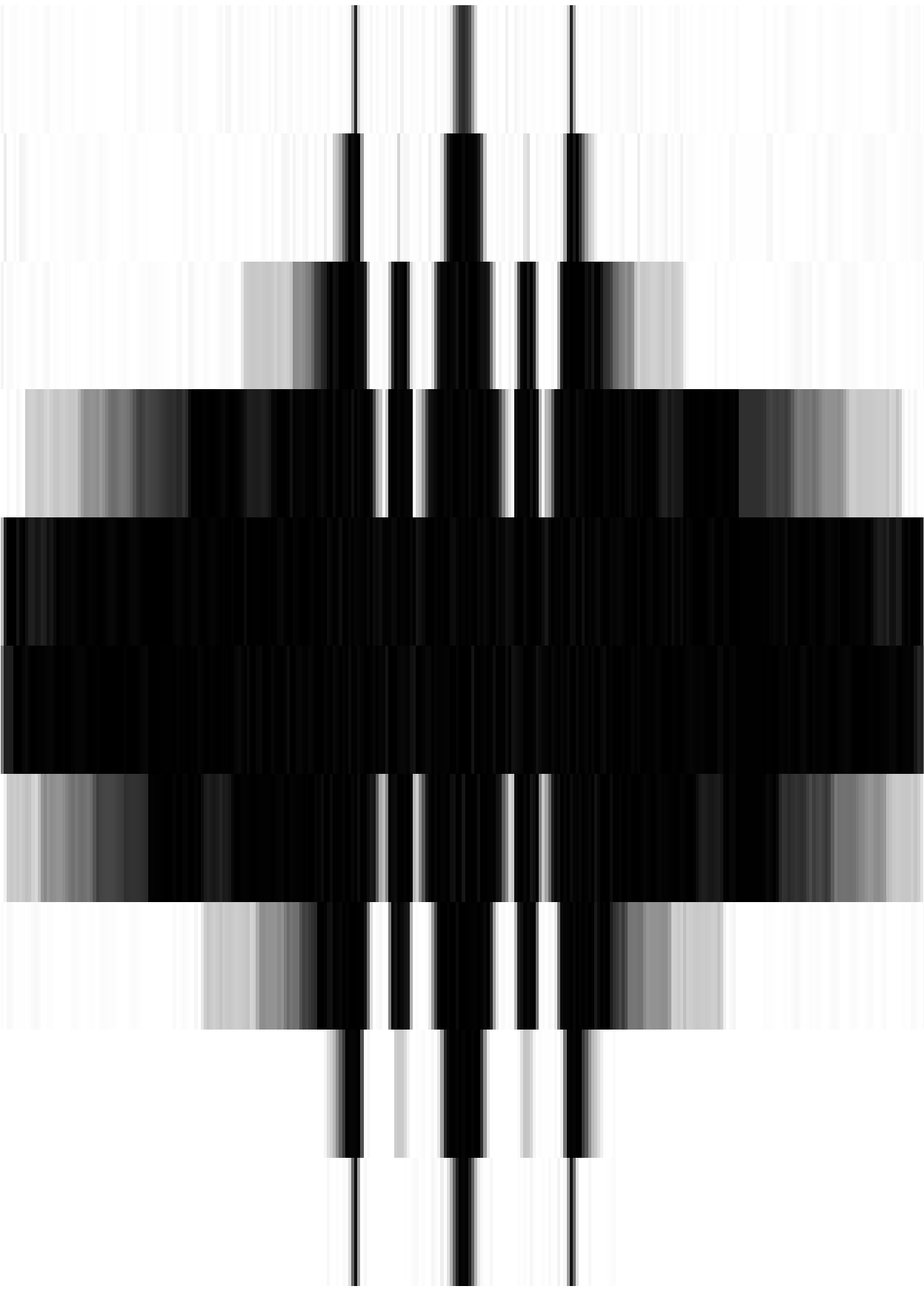
And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, “How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!”

And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus, answereth again, and saith unto them, “Children, how hard it is for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.”

And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, “Who then can be saved?”

And Jesus looking upon them saith, “With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible” (Mark 10:17 – 27).¹

“Why are you calling me good? Give credit to God, the Sole Good without whom no good can exist. If you want to reunite your life with Everlasting Life, follow the commandments, the eternal laws of goodness by which ordinary life-and-death consciousness can be spiritualized into consciousness of immortality.



Purpose of moral commandments is fulfilled by freeing the consciousness from materiality

“You know the moral commandments of righteous behavior: Commit not murder, which bespeaks your loss of cosmic love for all, the power to see God in all. Commit not adultery, for by identifying yourself with sex pleasure you are deluded into forgetting the ever new bliss of the perfect image of God present within your soul. Steal not, for it casts you into the pit of selfishness, and you lose sight of the vast Self that can be recognized only through sympathy and giving. Bear not false witness, for when you put a veil of falsehood over your consciousness, it shrouds the presence of divine truth within you. Defraud no one, for the delusion of insincerity overclouds the insight of the discriminative wisdom of your soul. Honor your father and mother, for they are the physical manifestation of God who looks after you through the fatherly reason and the unconditional love of the mother. Love your neighbor as your own self; be not concentrated on your little self, but united with the Spirit in all by loving all.²

“Though you say you have obeyed these dictums, you find something yet lacking. To regain the innate perfection of your soul, go and sell everything you have and give the proceeds to the poor; deny the power that materiality wields over your consciousness, and you will obtain the treasure of Cosmic Consciousness and its everlasting bliss. Take up the cross—adopt the mental attitude and determination to renounce mortal attachments—and follow my ways of spiritual discipline so that you may realize the God-oneness of the Christ Consciousness in your own soul as in me.³

“Verily I say unto you, my disciples, that—as you see by the mentality of the rich young man who is loath to give up his temporal possessions for everlasting opulence in God—as long as man is satisfied with his outer abundance, it is difficult for him to advance toward the kingdom of God.

“It is extremely hard for those who are engrossed in material comforts and pleasure to picture the superior, everlasting happiness to be found in Cosmic Consciousness! It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a man, corpulent and humped like a camel with his accumulation of material attachments, to pass through the subtle gate of meditation that leads to Cosmic Consciousness. Habits of coarse physical pleasure, well adapted to the gross

material body, do not readily yield to the cultivation of the divine habit of meditation with its surpassingly fine soul joy.

“Though the restlessness and bad habits of materially minded persons make it impossible for them to enter into the kingdom of God, still, if they pray earnestly, persistently for God’s help, those obstacles can be removed with the aid of His blessings. What is impossible for man to attain by himself can be accomplished by attunement with God’s grace and almighty power.”

Jesus, whose consciousness was absorbed in God’s love existing within himself and everywhere, perceived all that is praiseworthy as a manifestation of the Heavenly Father; and thus he would not credit the good in himself apart from its oneness with God. There was no intrusion of egotistical separation between his Self and Spirit.



Universality of rules of conduct taught by Moses, Jesus, and India's science of yoga

Divine laws bequeathed to humanity as the foundation principles of all true religions—such as the Ten Commandments conveyed by Moses and cited in part here by Jesus, or the yama-niyama principles enumerated by Patanjali in the Yoga Sutras—are not arbitrary edicts of a Cosmic Autocrat. They are given to enable man to live in this world of cosmic delusion and satanic temptation as God's child, manifesting His image of divine qualities, rather than being helplessly identified with the flesh and its capricious senses, which are subject to delusive evil. The rules of conduct stressed by Jesus so closely parallel the moral laws prescribed more anciently by India's yogis because they are expressions of eternal universal principles—rita, the divine order that upholds the cosmos and defines man's bounden duty in participating in its governance.

The examples of actions from which one is to abstain evoked by Jesus in these present verses have an exact or implicit correspondence with the five injunctions of the first step of Patanjali's eightfold path of Yoga, codified as yama, restraint, the thou-shalt-nots.⁴

“Do not kill”; “Thou shalt do no murder”—Patanjali's ahimsa, “harmlessness, noninjury.” In the Indian epic Mahabharata, ahimsa is defined as “virtue entire” (sakalo dharma). It is behavior governed by the recognition of the One Life omnipresent in all beings. It is the inspiration to be helpful and serviceful to others, without which one is tacitly, in some way, doing harm to them by such omission. Murder is highlighted as a heinous form of injury, a mortal offense to the Indwelling Spirit. Murder is committed through identification with greed, selfishness, anger—all of which are satanic qualities and destroy the consciousness of soul peace. To kill is to perpetuate the evil example of killing, inviting wrath and impulses of murderous revenge from the relatives and friends of the victim and the aggregate social conscience. To kill is to destroy the God-created temple of life belonging to the soul. A life cut short deprives man of the karmic learning experiences by which the soul can expand its influence and spiritualize the temple of life to find God therein. It is a cruelty that inflicts great suffering on a brother soul. Such cruelty to others creates an alienation between the perpetrator and God.

“Thou shalt not commit adultery” is elevated by Patanjali to its purest connotation as brahmacharya, “continence, self-restraint.” Promiscuous behavior, in or out of wedlock, is abuse of Nature’s sacred creative force, limiting the consciousness to identification with the physical body with loss of the consciousness of the soul’s transcendent omnipresence.

“Thou shalt not steal” is closely allied to another of the Ten Commandments, “Thou shalt not covet...anything that is thy neighbour’s.” Corresponding to these are Patanjali’s proscriptions of asteya, referring to any form of misappropriation; and aparigraha, “noncovetousness”—absence of greed and possessiveness. Far from enriching one’s life, acquisitions obtained through stealing and greed develop an extreme impoverishment of selfishness and loss of the consciousness of all-possession that comes from the inner assurance of divine contact. Misbegotten, covetous acquisitions, be they of money, property, reputation, friends, or someone else’s husband or wife, inflicts misery on others; one who causes grief to another excludes himself from the ever joyous aura of God’s presence.

“Thou shalt not bear false witness,” and “Defraud not” (added in the account of Mark), are tantamount to Patanjali’s satya, “truthfulness,” avoidance of falsehood in all of its aspects. Bearing false witness develops spiritual blindness with loss of intuitive perception of truth. Defrauding develops mental insincerity, which obtrudes itself as a veil between human consciousness and divine consciousness. Fact may bear little relationship to truth. Truth is exact correspondence with reality, unconditioned by the imposition of man’s attenuating suppositions or rationalized motives. To know truth, man must begin by purifying his discrimination, purging himself of deviousness and egoistic rationalizations and schemes.

“Honor thy father and thy mother” and “Love thy neighbor as thyself” are umbrellaed under the realization that recognizes the One who has become the many. “With a vision of equality for all things, the yogi beholds his Self (Spirit-united) in all creatures and all creatures in the Spirit....The best type of yogi is he who feels for others, whether in grief or pleasure, even as he feels for himself.”⁵

One who honors father and mother honors in them the presence of the Divine Father-Mother, who protects and nurtures the child by manifesting as reason and feeling in the physical forms of the human parents. Expansion of love beyond

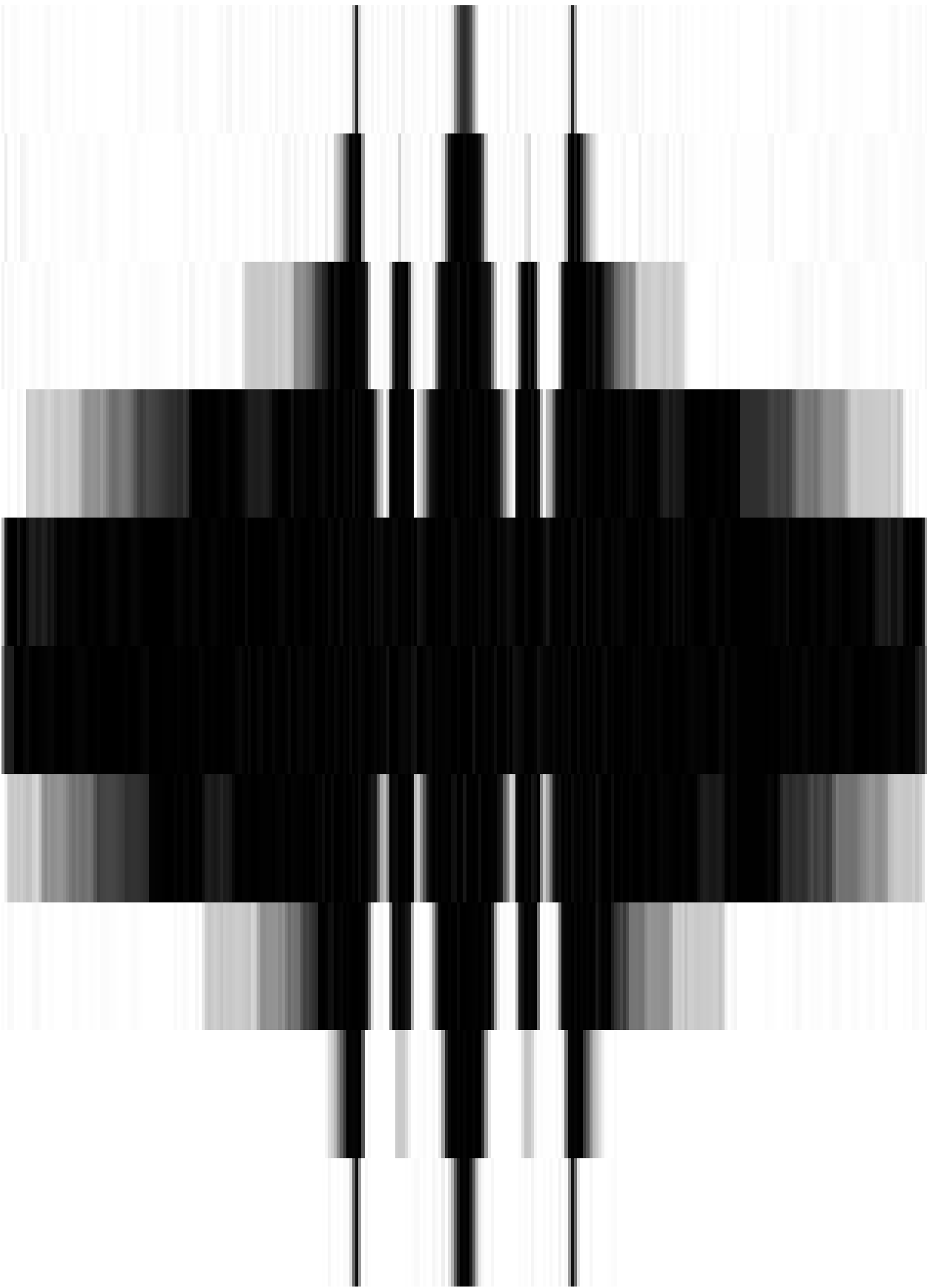
the confines of self-centeredness begins with family—the role of parents provides the initial instinctive introduction to reaching outside of oneself.

One who can then love his neighbors—human beings, birds, animals, flowers, every living thing existing in the neighborhood of the Self, his soul—as expressions of God feels the Divine Presence in them all. To love these expressions of the One Life as one loves the Self is to know the presence of the Infinite Self, the Spirit, as all-pervasive. He whose love contracts in divisive self-interest shuts out of his consciousness the universal consciousness of God. He whose mind is prepared to love his fellow beings as he loves himself experiences the joy of feeling his little self expanding in the omnipresence of God.



Yoga begins with moral rules, and gives the further practices needed for God-realization

Though scriptural commandments are the irreducible beginning point of a lastingly happy life, outward moral and religious observances in themselves afford man only a very slow means of elevating human consciousness to divine consciousness. That is why yoga, the complete science of purifying the inner consciousness for God-awareness, specifies the further practices of asana (bodily discipline), pranayama (control of life energy), and pratyahara (interiorization) for achieving actual contact of God in the meditative states of dharana, dhyana, and samadhi.⁶ Like the rich young man who approached Jesus for guidance in attaining everlasting life, many followers of exoteric religion progress no further than the proscriptive and prescriptive commandments. Religious efforts that encompass these rudiments may produce a measure of inner peace and good karma, and are doubtless far better for a person than flouting the do's and don'ts altogether. But full awakening of man's divine consciousness requires a deeper discipline for refining and spiritualizing the soul's body-mind vehicle with its karmic accumulation of psychological and emotional tendencies, habits, and desires.⁷



“Take up the cross”: the practice of inner renunciation, self-discipline, and nonattachment

Jesus analyzed the young man who had obeyed the commandments yet lacked God-consciousness: he was in bondage to materialistic attachments. Jesus counseled him, succinctly and candidly: “Sell whatever thou hast” and “take up the cross”—adopt the liberating attitude of inner renunciation and those methods of self-discipline and meditation that free the mind from bondage to body and possessions; “and follow me”—follow the path my consciousness has taken through the door of the spiritual eye into Christ Consciousness, that you may join me in God’s kingdom of everlasting life and bliss.

Though he was morally upright, the young man’s attachment to his earthly treasures precluded acceptance of Jesus’ admonition: “He was sad at this saying, and went away grieved.” Jesus then explained to his disciples: “Those who are satisfied with temporal pleasures feel no inclination to seek the subtle everlasting happiness of God-consciousness.”⁸ He pointed out that materially minded rich persons who identify their souls with idle habits of indulgences find their wonted ways obstructing the cultivation of spiritual habits. Even as a camel cannot go through the eye of a needle, so “spoiled aristocrats” inured to restlessness-producing luxuries and extravagances are unmotivated, and find it difficult, if not impossible, to quiet the mind and focus it within for God-contact in meditative calmness.⁹ The more hedonistic one’s habits are, the less sensitive one is to God-consciousness; the more one develops God-consciousness, the fewer materialistic habits remain.

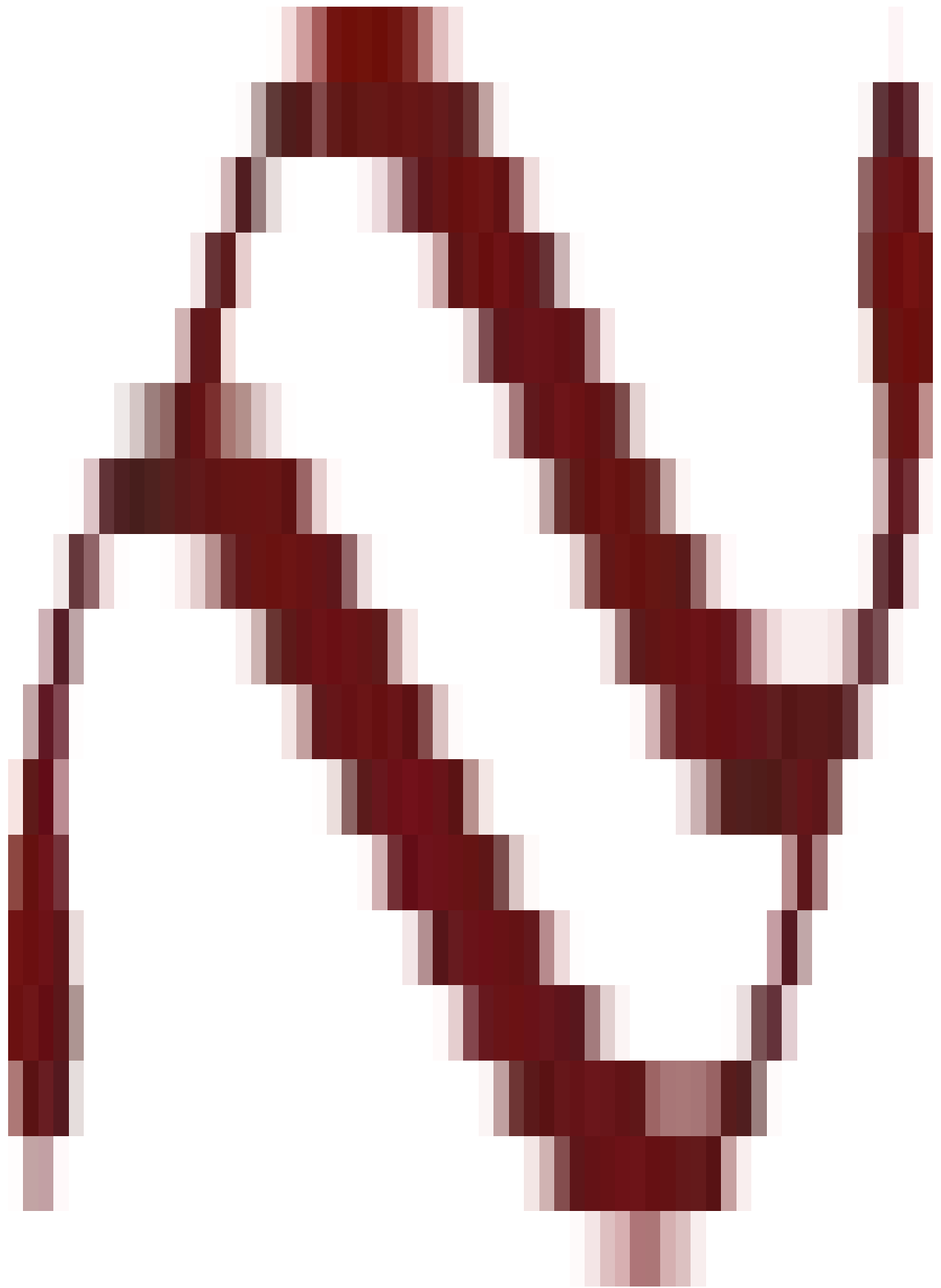
Attachment to wealth consists of not being able to live simply and contentedly without the luxurious surroundings and accoutrements that cater to self-indulgent desires and pleasures. However, merely because one lives in a palatial residence among material comforts does not necessarily imply dependence on them. It is not the possessions of a rich man that destroy his God-consciousness, but his mental enslavement of being possessed by his possessions. Jesus condemned the material habits of the rich man and not his wealth per se, for there are persons who have been blessed with prosperity who serve as examples of true seekers of God-consciousness, and who with Christlike compassion help to relieve the miseries of others. They utilize their good fortune in the right way.

Jesus used the term “rich man” to indicate a person who is deluded with an inflated sense of possession when in reality he is but a debtor, a recipient of a temporary loan from God’s cosmic treasury. It is when a person of wealth becomes so intoxicated with his temporal power that he forgets to acquire the imperishable riches of divine attainment that he is to be censured. Pride of possession, as well as the presumption of security it produces, is foolish, as even the most mightily endowed discover when all is taken away by death, if not sooner.

He is truly rich who owns everlastingly the full realization of his soul qualities of immortality, divine bliss, omniscience, and omnipresence. Jesus points out that man should free himself from shortsighted attachment to materiality by cultivating the remembrance of his divine endowment as a child of God, which makes him able easily and naturally to renounce the consciousness of temporal positions and possessions to reclaim the eternal kingdom of Cosmic Consciousness.

A close observation of the habits of most materially enhanced persons makes it easy to understand why Jesus spoke as he did. Too often they are perpetually busy thinking of money and acquisitions, no matter how much they have, and devising new avenues of physical enjoyment. It is next to impossible to concentrate on God in meditation and prayer when excitement-addicted thoughts constantly waver and flit toward the numerous allurements available to them.

Yet Jesus also gives assurance that regardless of what is seemingly impossible, “with God all things are possible.” Materially minded persons—those who possess little as well as those who possess much—whose bad habits and slavish engrossment in worldly temptations make them despair of ever finding God must remember: With the help of Him who is almighty, they can and will pass through the gate to the divine kingdom—provided they seek that help through repentance and perseverance in meditation. The bestowal of salvation is fifty percent the grace of God, never withheld when the devotee has done his utmost.



Then answered Peter and said unto him, “Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee: what shall we have therefore?”

And Jesus said unto them, “Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life. But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first” (Matthew 19:27 – 30).

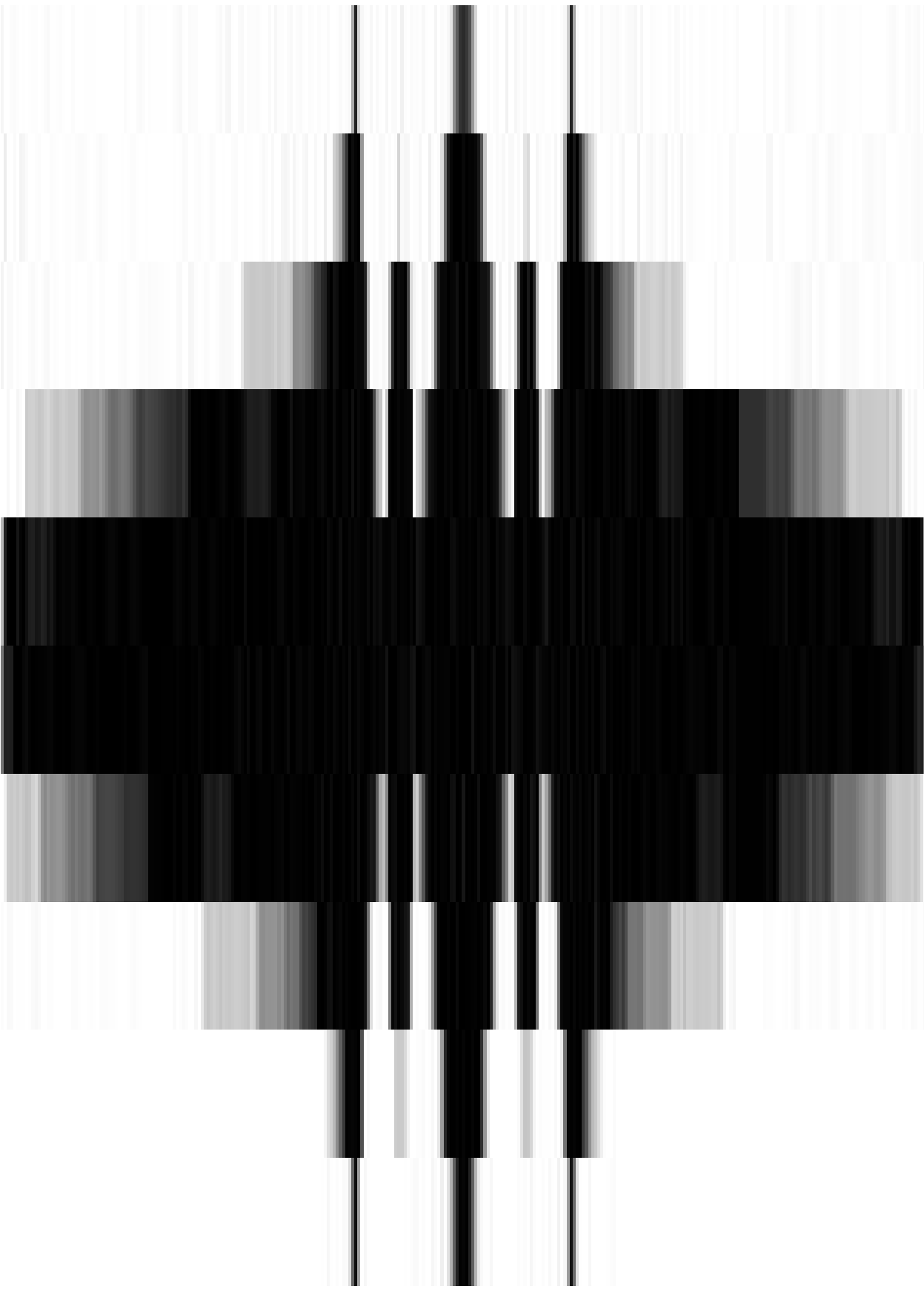
Parallel references:

“Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Luke 22:28 – 30).

Then Peter began to say unto him, “Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee.”

And Jesus answered and said, “Verily I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel’s, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in

this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life. But many that are first shall be last; and the last first” (Mark 10:28 – 31).¹⁰



The reward of renunciation and self-denial for the purpose of attaining Cosmic Consciousness

“With the conviction of the realization of truth I say unto you that you who have followed me, who have attained my Christ Consciousness by deep prayer and meditation, shall find after the resurrection of the Son of man (the spiritualization of my physical body into cosmic Spirit) that my Christ Consciousness, having been glorified on earth by ecstasy, will rest on the throne of omnipresent Cosmic Consciousness. Your souls shall also rest on a throne of Cosmic Consciousness. You will be liberated at twelve different times according to the span required for working out all seeds of actions of your past lives. (Liberation for Judas will come only after numerous incarnations because of his betrayal of the Son of man.)

“When your souls become one with Christ Consciousness and are fully liberated into Cosmic Consciousness, in your omnipresence you will see the destiny of the souls of the twelve tribes of Israel, all generations of the various races of human beings, during their human existence and in the after-death state, and how they are judged in the astral world according to their actions of earthly life, ultimately attaining liberation in God or repeatedly reincarnating on earth to work further for their spiritual freedom.

“Even as I am one with the Christ Consciousness that is God’s reflected intelligence effecting and witnessing all creation, so you, my disciples, shall be as apostles of the Christ Consciousness, witnessing the ingress and egress of souls between the vibrationless Infinity of God the Father and the sphere of manifested creation.¹¹

“Through your divine vision, you shall see that according to the law of cause and effect, everyone who has sincerely forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake—having loosened the bonds of attachment by mergence of the consciousness in the spiritualizing vibration of the Holy Ghost and the Christ Consciousness within it—shall receive a hundredfold, even in this earthly life. They shall be blessed with spiritual comforts, divine relations, spiritual-son disciples, divine friends—along with persecutions by the cosmic satanic delusion, which will try to shake their resolution and faith in God. Those who are successful in renouncing

everything—possessions, sense pleasures, human attachment—to attain God-consciousness will regain realization of the eternal life that has so long been hidden in their souls.¹²

“However, some who have begun the spiritual path first may nevertheless be the last to attain liberation—their slower progress being the result of their present degree of realization and karmic burden, and a lack of spiritual intensity and tenacity. Those devotees who have come later to the path but who follow it with greater zeal, may be first to enter into Cosmic Consciousness and eternal freedom. In any case, those whose spiritual enthusiasm and love for God last to the end of life will be among ‘the first’ to enter liberation in God’s kingdom.”¹³

Jesus gives assurance that renunciation of material possessions, self-denial, and acceptance of persecution in order to attain Cosmic Consciousness are not in vain. Those who forsake mundane life to devote themselves wholeheartedly to the spiritual life will find everything—God as well as the necessities of material life.¹⁴ The end of renunciation is not a negative existence or a misery resulting from self-torture, but the positive attainment of the Eternal Treasure. However, Jesus warns that all renunciants, even though rewarded on earth and in heaven, must be prepared to meet persecutions and temptations of the flesh due to the power of cosmic delusion, which tries relentlessly to block the progress of seekers. But once they conquer mortal seductions, they will attain the joys of unbroken, eternal, ever new happiness in the bosom of Cosmic Consciousness.

Jesus clearly acknowledges that those to whom he was speaking were the faithful ones—having continued to follow him through tribulations and trials generated by the temptations and tests of satanic delusion—and that he was preparing to receive them in the kingdom of Christ Consciousness, even as his Father had previously ordained that he be received. There, he promises, they would commune (“eat”) and be permeated with Divine Bliss (“drink”), for they would be on his plane of existence (“at my table in my kingdom”) enthroned in Cosmic Consciousness in the kingdom of Christ Consciousness. Each would sit on the throne of his own divine perception and be able to behold the resplendent workings of God’s manifesting power sending forth universes and souls governed by the evolutionary operation of the law of cause and effect; they would comprehend the karmic judgment as applied to the descendants of the twelve tribes of Israel, symbolically the various races of humanity.



“For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard.

“And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace. And he said unto them: ‘Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you.’ And they went their way. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise.

“And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, ‘Why stand ye here all the day idle?’ They say unto him, ‘Because no man hath hired us.’ He saith unto them, ‘Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive.’

“So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, ‘Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first.’ And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny.

“And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house, saying, ‘These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal to us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.’

“But he answered one of them, and said, ‘Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?’

*“So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen”
(Matthew 20:1 – 16).*



“The last shall be first”: spiritual meaning of the parable of the laborers in the vineyard

“For the kingdom of God is known by a master who comes on earth and, like a divine householder, calls people from the material world to labor spiritually in the vineyard of superconscious meditation and self-discipline, thus earning the wages of liberating wisdom.

“The master called truth-seekers who stood idle, having renounced attachment to material possessions to serve their greater desire for God but were yet lacking fulfillment. He told them, ‘Come, in the first morning of my appearance on earth I invite you to work in my vineyard of self-discipline, and I will give you wisdom for your labor.’

“And the master went out in the third hour and saw more truth-seekers and would-be renunciants standing inactive in the marketplace of material activity, unable to find God and the right guru to lead them on the divine path. So the master spoke to them, ‘Go into the vineyard of my discipline, and whatever wisdom is rightfully your due according to your spiritual labors shall be given unto you’; and those truthseekers followed him.

“Again the master went out for the sixth and the ninth times and gathered more disciples who were willing to work in the vineyard of self-discipline to receive the wages of wisdom. Long after, the master went out for the eleventh time and found yet more inactive renunciants; they, too, lacked a spiritual preceptor to guide them. He asked them to work in his vineyard of discipline and assured them that they would receive wisdom according to the intensity of their work.

“Then the master of the vineyard called the steward—the cosmic law of cause and effect—and commanded that the spiritual laborers from the last to the first be given their wages of liberating wisdom. Owing to their spiritual intensity, the disciples who came last received the same divine illumination as those who first joined the master. But those who had come first reasoned that they should have received more and voiced their feelings: ‘O good master of the household of God, we expected to be given more of your store of wisdom, for we have been with you longer and have borne longer the heat of trials and self-discipline than those who came last. How is it that you have given equally to the latecomers and

to the earliest spiritual laborers?’

“The master answered, ‘All truth-seekers, being the divine children of God, are given the same liberating wisdom whether they come first or last—provided their spiritual enthusiasm is intense. Go your way in peace and be satisfied with what you have received, even though you had to labor longer for it. According to the wish of the Heavenly Father, it is lawful for me to open the way to divine attainment for all who have an ardent hunger for spirituality; whether they come first or last they equally deserve to receive the same liberating realization. Because God’s wisdom flows through me, I intuit His perfect justice, which actuates my impartiality. Therefore, the last to enter the spiritual path may, through intensity, become the first to receive wisdom; and the first, if besotted with halfhearted enthusiasm, may be the last to receive emancipation.’

“That is why many may be called to a master because of their spiritual desire, but few are chosen to receive liberation in Cosmic Consciousness unless and until they fulfill the requisite of intensity in their superconscious meditations and earnest practice of spiritual discipline. Every devotee has equal, impartial opportunity; each determines when he shall be among those ‘chosen.’”

Jesus wanted to convey to all truth-seekers that it does not matter whether a spiritual aspirant enters the divine path early or late in life, or attains Cosmic Consciousness within a short time or in a protracted period of effort; for, in the final attainment, all are glorified in the same infinite wisdom, ever new bliss, and immortality in God.



And Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them, “Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again” (Matthew 20:17 – 19).

Parallel reference:

Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, “Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again.”

And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken (Luke 18:31 – 34).¹⁵



Jesus predicts to his disciples how the karmic law would mandate his crucifixion

“Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all predictions that have been made by the prophets concerning my physical body—in which the Christ Consciousness is encased—will come to pass. My physical body shall be delivered by treachery into the hands of the chief priests and the scribes. They shall condemn it to death; and they shall deliver it to the Gentiles who shall mock my presence, scourge my physical body, spit on it, and ultimately crucify it. But on the third day, after freeing my spirit from the threefold karmic imperatives that held it incarnate in its physical, astral, and causal bodies, my physical body will be spiritualized by divine energy and resurrected.”

Jesus mentions for the first time to his disciples the predictions of earlier prophets about his future life. For centuries, God-knowing prophets of Israel had intimated Jesus’ life and mission as a messiah or savior of his people, and had foretold that he would be put to death as recompense for the sins of many.¹⁶

The prophets could foresee the mass karmic evolution of the future, unto the advent of the incarnation of Jesus. The circumstances of that future era, and the effect it would have on the coeval timely appearance of a messiah with a message of liberation into the kingdom of God, formed a pattern of eventuality that could be clearly read by the prophets and keenly known by the intuitive Christ-perception of Jesus.

Jesus himself had prophesied: “Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.”¹⁷ To any master who is one with God, the law of cause and effect that applies to his body of a particular life can be seen very clearly. Sometimes the masters speak of it to others; sometimes they do not. Jesus had been liberated long before his advent in that incarnation; he came as a special messenger of the Heavenly Father and to give demonstrative evidence of an exemplary life on earth. As his mission was oftentimes contrary to the political and socioreligious laws and traditions of his times, Jesus saw how the karmic law of action and its effects would mandate his crucifixion; he also foresaw his God-ordained glorious resurrection. Thus the Father permitted him to reveal these events to his disciples. Though the import of his words “was hid from them” at the time, their truth would echo as the foretold events were made manifest.

It is significant that Jesus did not say “the Son of God shall be delivered.” “Son of man” referred to his human body; his God-united Christ consciousness (“Son of God”), being immortal and invulnerable, was subject to no such iniquity.



And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich. And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way.

And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, “Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at thy house.”

And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, that he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.

And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord: “Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.”

And Jesus said unto him, “This day is salvation come to this house, forso much as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:1 – 10).

As Jesus passed through the crowds in Jericho, he telepathically felt the eager soul-call of Zacchaeus striking a responsive chord in his heart. This seemingly unlikely but fortuitous encounter illustrates Jesus' former statement: “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.”¹⁸ Even as Zacchaeus was anxious to meet Jesus, so the Christ Consciousness in Jesus was responding to this pure-hearted seeker in fulfillment of the inward promptings of

the Heavenly Father: “Zacchaeus, I recognize your thoughts about me. Now make haste in coming down from the tree, for it is the wish of the Father that I come to your home.”

Jesus plainly declared to Zacchaeus, “This day salvation is come to this house... for the Son of man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” He signified that Zacchaeus and his family members were worthy descendents of Abraham, devoted children of God, who through some delusion had been lost in the deserts of incarnations; and that now, through divine decree, he had been sent as their God-chosen guru-savior to deliver them from further blind wanderings to spiritual emancipation.



And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.

He said therefore, “A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds,¹⁹ and said unto them, ‘Occupy till I come.’ But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, ‘We will not have this man to reign over us.’

“And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. Then came the first, saying, ‘Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.’ And he said unto him, ‘Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.’ And the second came, saying, ‘Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds.’ And he said likewise to him, ‘Be thou also over five cities.’

“And another came, saying, ‘Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin: For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow.’ And he saith unto him, ‘Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow: Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?’

“And he said unto them that stood by, ‘Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds.’ (And they said unto him, ‘Lord, he hath ten pounds.’) ‘For I say unto you, that unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him

that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him. But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.’”²⁰

And when he had thus spoken, he went before, ascending up to Jerusalem (Luke 19:11 – 28).

This parable was to disabuse the people of the false notion that the kingdom of God of which Jesus spoke would be established by him as a sovereign realm on earth. Jesus admonished that God’s kingdom would be built within themselves by their realizing their soul potentials through the proper use of the spiritual endowment he had given to them in his teachings. Soon he would be absent from them in body, working elsewhere for the liberation of souls; but when in Christ Consciousness he “returned” in Spirit, he would judge their endeavors. Some would wisely earn their spiritual rewards, others would by their sloth forfeit the grace that had been offered to them to advance in all-fulfilling Self-realization.



Parable of the ten pounds: proper use of the spiritual wealth in a master's teachings

The parable thus interpreted is as follows:

“A master, born on earth to redeem many souls, had ten devotees in his hermitage. He summoned them one day to say that he was going to preach his message to another group, a materialistic people who lived in delusion, far from truth. The master declared that after he had established his soul teachings in that distant kingdom, he would return to the hermitage. He instructed his disciples to follow strictly the moral and spiritual precepts and commandments, and to keep their consciousness engaged with the holy vibrations of peace permeating the hermitage. With a wealth of blessings, symbolized by a parting gesture of the ten pounds, he left. He knew his disciples would meet with many temptations during his absence, because the worldly people of the city in which the master had his hermitage were scornful of his ideals. They even sent to the master after his departure a message of derision, hoping he would not return.

“But after some time, he appeared again at the hermitage and examined the state of spiritual health of his disciples. He found one of them to be far advanced, tenfold. The master said: ‘Thou hast been a good disciple, improving thyself and others. Because of thy faithfulness to truth and discipline, thou wilt become master over ten spheres of divine powers.’

“The master observed that another disciple had also grown in spiritual stature, fivefold. In praise, the master said, ‘Thou wilt come into possession of five spiritual powers.’

“The master was grieved to note that another disciple had made no spiritual progress. As an excuse, the disciple said: ‘I have not forgotten your disciplines and technique of meditation which you left with me, but I have kept them unused, secure within myself. I was afraid I could never be austere and strict like yourself. I thought I could not aspire to reach your high state of spiritual eminence in which, without observing the human law of cause and effect—endeavor for rewards—you are able to acquire everything by your will power.’

“The master was displeased and said: ‘I will judge you by your own words. You know in your heart that it was by great austerities that I have attained this state of

transcendence above the ordinary laws of nature. My methods of discipline, though difficult, would have brought you great results if you had followed them as I instructed you. Even if you had mechanically practiced them, they would have circulated deep into the bank of your subconscious mind and would thus have yielded you—and consequently me, as your teacher and well-wisher—an increase in spiritual experience.’

“The master then said to the assembled group: ‘Behold this disobedient disciple; because of his mental folly, he did not stimulate his spiritual desire by my methods of discipline. Therefore, what little spirituality he ever had is going away from him, due to the enlarging strength of bad habits. On the other hand, my beloved disciple who has broadened tenfold his spiritual capacity will receive from me the additional spiritual wealth I would otherwise have been able to bestow on this erring one, for whom I can now do nothing. For I say unto you: Every disciple of truth who has acquired spiritual habits by deep meditation and self-discipline shall attract unto himself more and more spirituality; but the disciple who is irregular and neglectful shall lose what little spiritual power he starts with; it will wither away through lack of nurturing.’”



The immense power of good and bad habits to elevate or degrade one's life

Jesus illustrates in this parable the great force of habit. A person who possesses good habits, and practices those habits in his life, will attract unto himself even more goodness; while a person who has a latent tendency toward virtue, and does not encourage it by daily acts of goodness, will find in time that he loses that inner incentive to become good. Similarly, if a person has evil habits, he will create an exclusive taste for the temporary pleasures of sense-attachment; and the more he indulges his sensuous tastes, the more his evil habit will grow upon him. With the increase of evil habits, he will attract abundant evil experiences unto himself. But if a person has an evil tendency and does not care to feed that inclination with further acts of the temporary pleasures of evil, then he will find in time that his evil tendency has disappeared.²¹

While stressing the spiritual application of the attracting power of habit, Jesus used in metaphor one of man's most common longings—the desire for financial security. Whether one is seeking God, the betterment of oneself, or the abundance of material prosperity, the following analysis will illustrate the paramount importance and influence of the law of habit:

A wealthy person, having made habitual those actions that bring financial success, will attract, by fresh acts of creative ability, more riches unto himself. But a person with a latent conviction that he could be financially successful, and who has a little money but who cares not to buttress his optimistic outlook by daily acts of creative financial effort, will lose even the little financial means he has as well as his inner conviction that he can succeed.

Jesus' words do not mean that only those who have riches will grow richer and that the poor will become ever more destitute. The law of karma governs all departments of life. A person who (owing to past good karma) is born wealthy, and has the tendency and inborn conviction of prosperity, will attract more riches in this incarnation because of two reasons: (

1

) his prenatal habits of financial success stimulating his will to succeed, (

2

) his exercise of free will and determination in further success-producing actions in this life.

Many people who are very creative and are determined to succeed financially nevertheless do not do so because in this life their financial-failure karma of past incarnations has placed them in circumstances not conducive to prosperity. Some are born in this life with a powerful determination to succeed financially because of failure in their previous life. Such persons achieve prosperity after a long struggle, during which their latent prenatal habits of financial failure and past poverty-karma are overcome. Therefore, a person who is poor in spite of many attempts to succeed must continuously make greater efforts for financial success, so that he can overcome the influences of a latent poverty consciousness carried from a prenatal existence.

This same principle is to be applied by all spiritual seekers of the kingdom of God. If a person meditates regularly and consistently and still does not attain Self-realization, he should realize that—owing to past karma of failure to create and sustain successful habits of meditating in past lives—his determination to succeed in meditation has to be newly created in this life, perhaps stimulated only when he encounters some misery. Therefore, instead of giving up the practice as impossible, he should apply himself to deeper and deeper endeavor until the meditation habit is firmly established and begins to bestow the joyous experiences of Self-realization. These will create in him even stronger habits of meditation, which in turn will attract abundant ever new bliss of God-contact.



The spiritual powers or stage of enlightenment conferred by mastery of each commandment

The reward of ten cities, or five cities, mentioned in the parable, refers symbolically to the powers that develop in the devotee who strictly follows God-given spiritual commandments. To receive the hidden blessings of these commandments—whether scriptural, such as the Ten Commandments or Patanjali's yama-niyama; or injunctions of sadhana, the spiritual discipline outlined by one's guru—they must be adhered to not only as nominal observances of abstention or application, as the case may be, but wholly integrated into one's being so as to be realized in their fullest intent as a veritable part of one's self. With each virtue that is mastered, as with every step of ascension the consciousness achieves, there is bestowed on the devotee a corresponding power or stage of enlightenment—revelations of the soul's innate omnipotence and omniscience.

Thus, for example, referring to the commandments cited by Jesus in the earlier story of the rich man [in the opening verses of this Discourse]:

By destroying the instinct or impulse to kill, one gains a divine magnetism by which he secures the confidence of man and even beasts and birds. Saint Francis of Assisi was one such exemplar, as are great yogi-ascetics who live in secluded haunts in perfect harmony with otherwise fearsome cobras and tigers.

One who physically and mentally overcomes all sex temptations becomes filled with divine bliss and constant spiritual enthusiasm impregnated with tremendous transmuted life energy that imbues him with the magnetism of self-mastery.

One who has banished from his mind and actions all desire to steal (to misappropriate anything not rightfully his), or to possess wealth by any unscrupulous or selfish means, will by his freedom from material bondage attract to himself whatever he needs in life.

One who has removed all impulse to misrepresent or distort truth, never bearing false witness in any circumstance for any personal motive or advantage, establishes within himself a great power whereby his words always come true.

He who is never duplicitous and deals justly in mind and deed with everyone

acquires a discernment and a divine simplicity and insight into all human nature. Such a one, having completely conquered the desire to defraud, or to conceal or manipulate facts or events for his own advantage, cannot be deluded by any human being nor even by maya, the cosmic delusion employed by the Prince of Liars.

He who honors his father and mother finds in all parents the protecting incarnation of God; he has taken a first step toward universal consciousness. Any person who loves his family, his country, all nations, birds, beasts, and all living creatures, as neighbors or equal sharers of the world, develops the consciousness of omnipresence and omniscience.

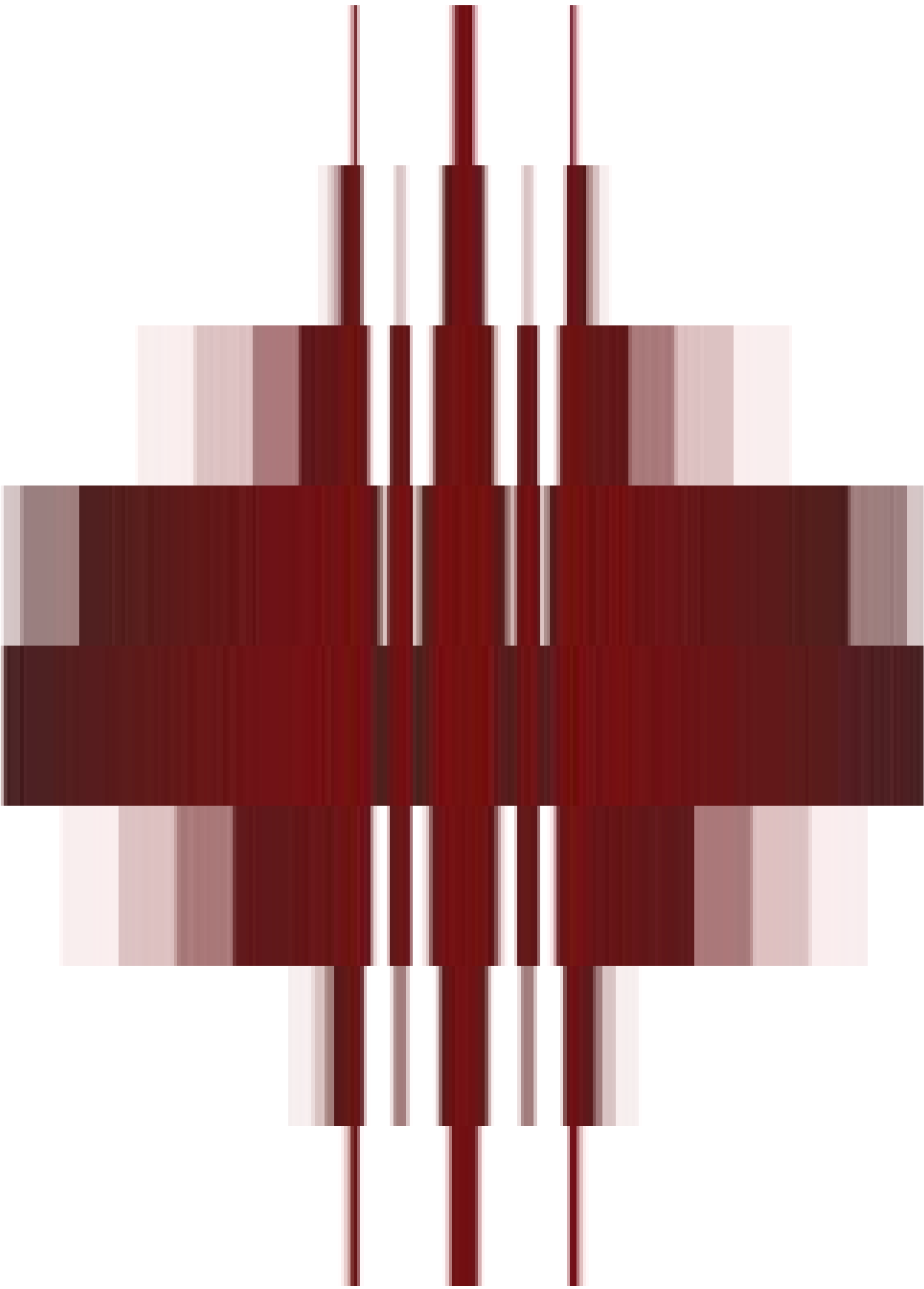
Devotees who have mastered the moral precepts, or commandments, and who successfully meditate on God in fulfillment of the supreme commandment to love God with heart, mind, soul, and strength, find themselves possessors of all spiritual powers.

In the parable, the master or “nobleman,” speaking of “mine enemies” in his closing words, referred to worldly people who were loath, inimical, to the cultivation in themselves of Christ Consciousness by meditation and self-discipline. “Slay them” does not mean physical death, but the destruction of spiritual perceptions from lack of soul sight. Those who refuse to cultivate their true soul nature will surely find their spiritual life annihilated. “Before me” refers to the Cosmic Consciousness of a master, who can behold all spiritually rebellious people as ready to be slain by delusion.



Discourse 64

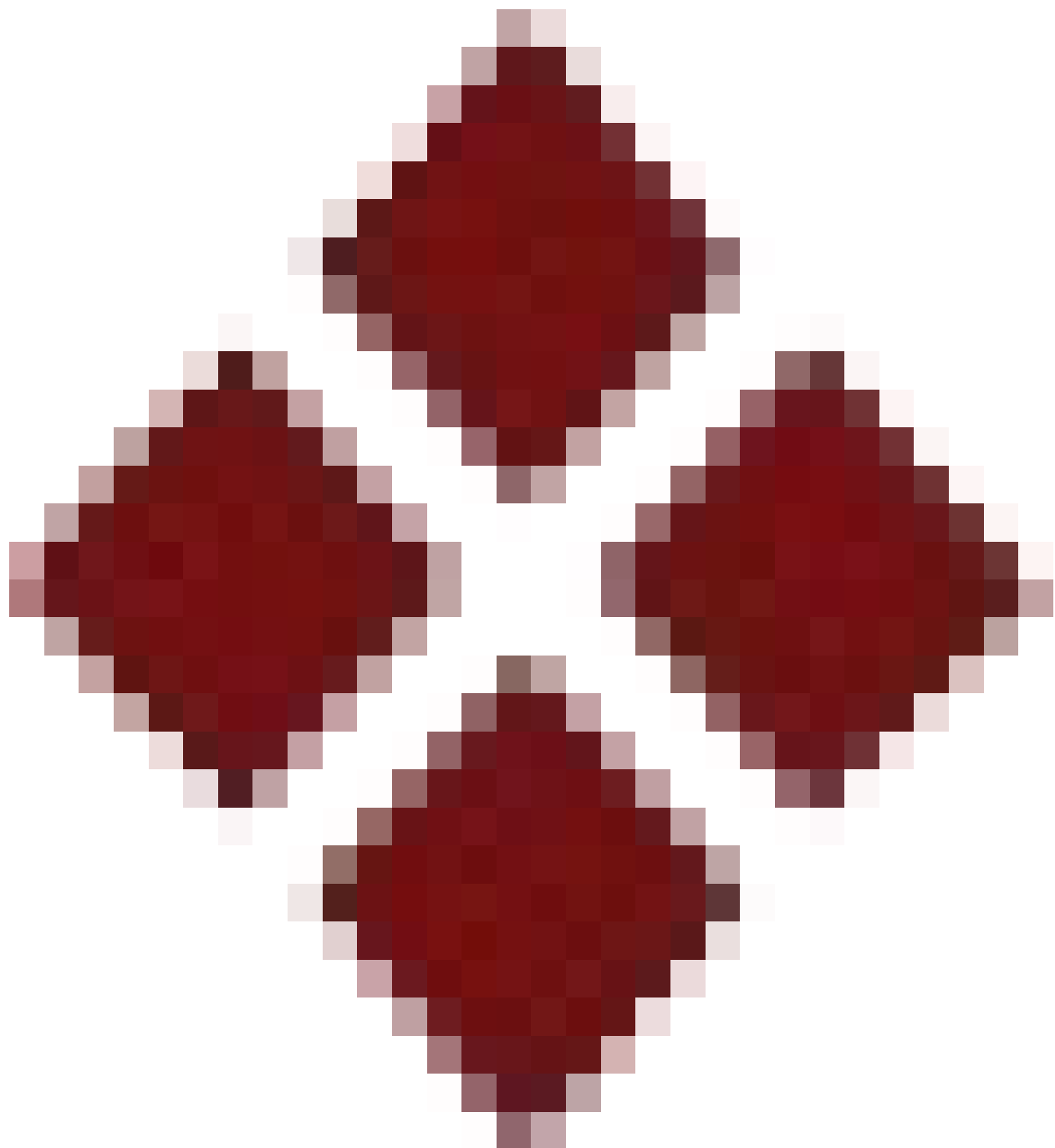
The Triumphal Entry Into Jerusalem



The Relative Priority of Fulfilling One's Spiritual Duties to God and to Humanity



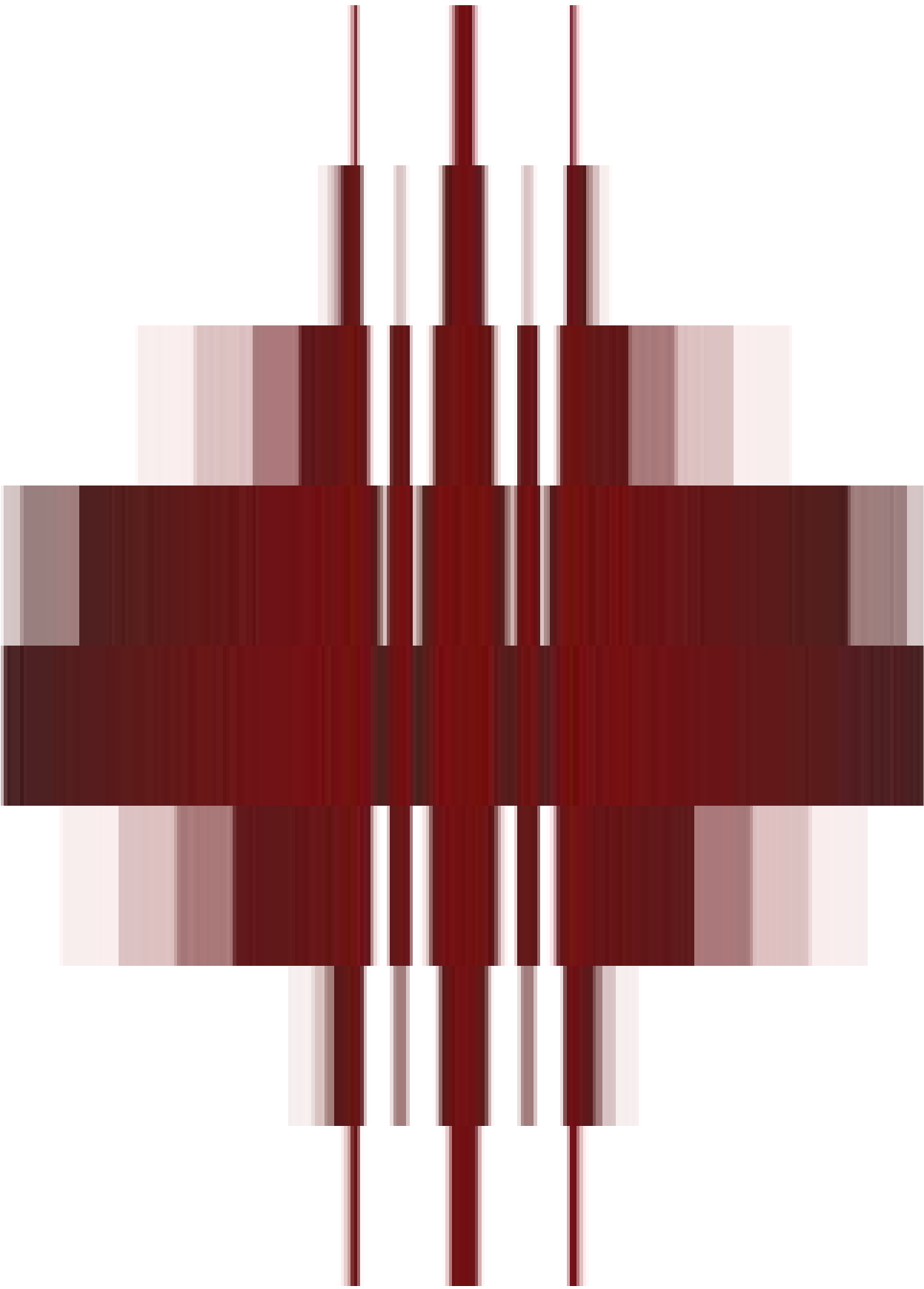
The Beautiful Spiritual Symbolism in Jesus' Entry Into Jerusalem



**Peace Draws Its Strength and Support From the
Universal Order of God's Creation**



Jesus' Withering of the Fig Tree: A Glimpse of His Contrasting Human and Divine Natures



“The Prince of Peace, whose only battle cry could be: Victory to the Meek! rode no fiery charger amidst a panoplied army....[He] demonstrated once again that a son of God celebrates his dominion in meekness and lowliness of pride.”

■

And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head. And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, “Why was this waste of the ointment made? For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor.” And they murmured against her.

And Jesus said, “Let her alone; why trouble ye her? She hath wrought a good work on me. For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always. She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying. Verily I say unto you, wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.”

And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests, to betray him unto them. And when they heard it, they were glad, and promised to give him money. And he sought how he might conveniently betray him.

—Mark 14:3 – 11

And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, saying unto them, “Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me. And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, ‘The Lord hath need of them’; and straightway he will send them.”

All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, “Tell ye the daughter of Sion, ‘Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.’”

And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them, and brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon. And

a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strewed them in the way. And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, “Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.”

And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, “Who is this?” And the multitude said, “This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.”

And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, and said unto them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be called the house of prayer’; but ye have made it ‘a den of thieves.’”

And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them. And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, “Hosanna to the son of David”; they were sore displeased, and said unto him, “Hearest thou what these say?”

And Jesus saith unto them, “Yea; have ye never read, ‘Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise’?” And he left them, and went out of the city into Bethany; and he lodged there.

Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered. And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, “Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever.” And presently the fig tree withered away. And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, “How soon is the fig tree withered away!”

Jesus answered and said unto them, “Verily I say unto you, if ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, ‘Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea’; it shall be done. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.”



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Jesus' Entry Into Jerusalem

And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strewed them in the way. And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, "Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest."

—Matthew 21:8–9

The Prince of Peace, whose only battle cry could be: Victory to the Meek! rode no fiery charger amidst a panoplied army, but sat a gentle steed, small and serviceable to the daily ways of peace. His "warriors," no ostentatious stalwarts, were only an unimposing band of selfless disciples. Verily, this King, before whom the multitudes spread their branches of palm, demonstrated once again that a son of God celebrates his dominion in meekness and lowliness of pride.

—Paramahansa Yogananda

Drawing by Heinrich Hofmann



Discourse 64

The Triumphal Entry Into Jerusalem



And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious;¹ and she brake the box, and poured it on his head. And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, “Why was this waste of the ointment made? For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor.” And they murmured against her.

And Jesus said, “Let her alone; why trouble ye her? She hath wrought a good work on me. For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always. She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying. Verily I say unto you, wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.”

And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests, to betray him unto them. And when they heard it, they were glad, and promised to give him money. And he sought how he might conveniently betray him (Mark 14:3 – 11).

Parallel reference:

Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.

Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon’s

son, which should betray him, “Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?” This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.

Then said Jesus, “Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.”

Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus’ sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead. But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death; because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus (John 12:1 – 11).²



The relative priority of fulfilling one's spiritual duties to God and to humanity

Jesus bestowed his recognition of the woman's perpetual honor for one reason only—the sole reason that ruled his every action on earth. This was his instancy of acceptance that God alone can be the highest Goal of life. Good works for the poor, compassion for the suffering, can only complement, but never supplant, man's need for acknowledgment of dependence on his Creator.

Saint John, in recording that this significant incident took place in the home of the resurrected Lazarus (rather than “in the house of Simon the leper” as stated in Matthew and Mark) identifies the woman who anointed Jesus as Mary, sister of Martha and Lazarus—she whose single-hearted devotion Jesus had commended earlier: “Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”³ Because the woman had the spiritual discrimination to offer openly her homage to God—whose reflection she saw in Jesus—in preference to man, even the poor, Jesus gave her his praise as a discerning devotee whom the ages would finally acclaim.

Jesus, nonattached as he was to his body, had no desire for attention or honor, or for man's extravagances of adorning and perfuming a mere clod of clay. He was not extolling the personal devotion given him by Mary, but was commending her sagacity in worshiping the great God of the universe whose presence he consciously felt in his Christ Consciousness. He pointed out impartially Mary's wisdom in offering adoration to the holiest of all holy manifestations: the Christ Consciousness that was templed in him—the living reflection of the One Giver of all life, all consciousness, and all virtue, including charitable impulses to help the poor. Thus when Judas and others of materialistic attitude and hypocritical morality asserted that Mary would have done better had she sold the ointment and used the income to aid the poor, Jesus reminded them that they have a perpetual opportunity to attend to the poor, but they would not readily have another chance of showing devotion to a visible manifestation of God's presence in a bodily form; for such is a rare occurrence on earth.

Jesus' words emphasize that devotees should wisely grade their spiritual duties and righteous actions, keeping God as the first and supreme object of adoration. Mary with her instinctive divine devotion knew exactly what she was doing—that, first, it was her sacred privilege to honor the visible Christ in whom was the

reflected manifestation of God; and, secondly, to serve God in others. She did not hesitate to anoint her Lord with the costly ointment, knowing that there is nothing in this world precious enough to show adequate reverence to the Supreme Beloved of all souls.

Jesus saw clearly how men's minds are open to every form of sidetracking, prone to any commandeering by a detail. There is only one problem in human life—establishment of unity with God—but this prime simplicity has been befogged by a million issues. Man will not give a monotheistic love to God, and disguises his infidelities by punctilious respect before outward shrines of charity. These humanitarian gestures are virtuous, since for a moment they divert man's attention from himself, but they do not free him from his single responsibility in life—his sense of gratitude to God. This responsibility, assumed with man's first breath of an air freely bestowed by his only Benefactor, was discharged by the woman whom Jesus so powerfully upheld, silencing the thousand illogics that would put man before God.⁴

By his commendation of Mary, Jesus signified, as at countless other times, that God alone is worthy of all honor, not of outward ointments merely, but of every ego-sacrifice the love-filled hearts of devotees can devise as token of their joy in Him.

As Jesus well knew every scene to be unfolded in the divine drama of his life, he made two prophecies on the occasion of this repast at Bethany. His crucifixion was very nigh, since it was from this table that Judas went forth to bargain with priests for the price of his Master's life. That is why he declared of Mary, "She is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying."

His second reference to the future, "wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world," made clear that he was aware of the destined scope of his mission. Though his teachings were then known only to sections of a small Jewish province, they would ultimately spread in all lands.



And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, saying unto them, “Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me. And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, ‘The Lord hath need of them’; and straightway he will send them.”

All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, “Tell ye the daughter of Sion, ‘Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.’”

And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them, and brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon. And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strewed them in the way. And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, “Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.”

And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, “Who is this?” And the multitude said, “This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee” (Matthew 21:1 – 11).

Parallel reference:

And it came to pass, when he was come nigh to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called the mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying, “Go ye into the village over against you; in the which at your entering ye shall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man sat: loose him, and bring him hither. And if any

man ask you, ‘Why do you loose him?’ thus shall ye say unto him, ‘Because the Lord hath need of him.’”

And they that were sent went their way, and found even as he had said unto them. And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said unto them, “Why loose ye the colt?” And they said, “The Lord hath need of him.”

And they brought him to Jesus: and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they set Jesus thereon. And as he went, they spread their clothes in the way.

And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen; saying, “Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.”

And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, “Master, rebuke thy disciples.”

And he answered and said unto them, “I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.”

And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, “If thou hadst known, even thou, at last in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation” (Luke 19:29 – 44).⁵



The beautiful spiritual symbolism in Jesus' entry into Jerusalem

Spiritually interpreted as relevant to man in every age, Jesus' triumphant entry into the city of Jerusalem inspires a beautiful symbology. Man's consciousness is that city of Jerusalem; his thoughts and feelings are the inhabitants. Jesus' coming into Jerusalem evokes the opening of the gates of man's devotion to receive the entrance of Christ Consciousness, in its omniscient power, into the bodily kingdom, with all its citizens rejoicing: "Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest."

The literal event, this striking day in Jesus' life, speaks once again of his cosmic Christ Consciousness in which nothing was outside his perception and command. With a few simple words, he directed two of his disciples to an exact distant location where they would find an as-yet unridden colt, and further empowered his messengers to procure the owner's permission to take the beast by offering nothing more than the ambiguous explanation: "Because the Lord hath need of him."

In every exigency of his life, Jesus proved that he had no need for the persuasion of gold; he ever found ready to his hand all material accessories to his plans.

The drama of this day in Jerusalem, as the disciples later came to realize,⁶ was centered in its literal fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy (Zechariah

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Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass. And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth.

Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem was in very truth one in which the daughters and sons of Zion did "rejoice greatly" and "shout" as they beheld, and saluted by title, their King, "riding...upon a colt the foal of an ass," as Zechariah had anciently foretold.

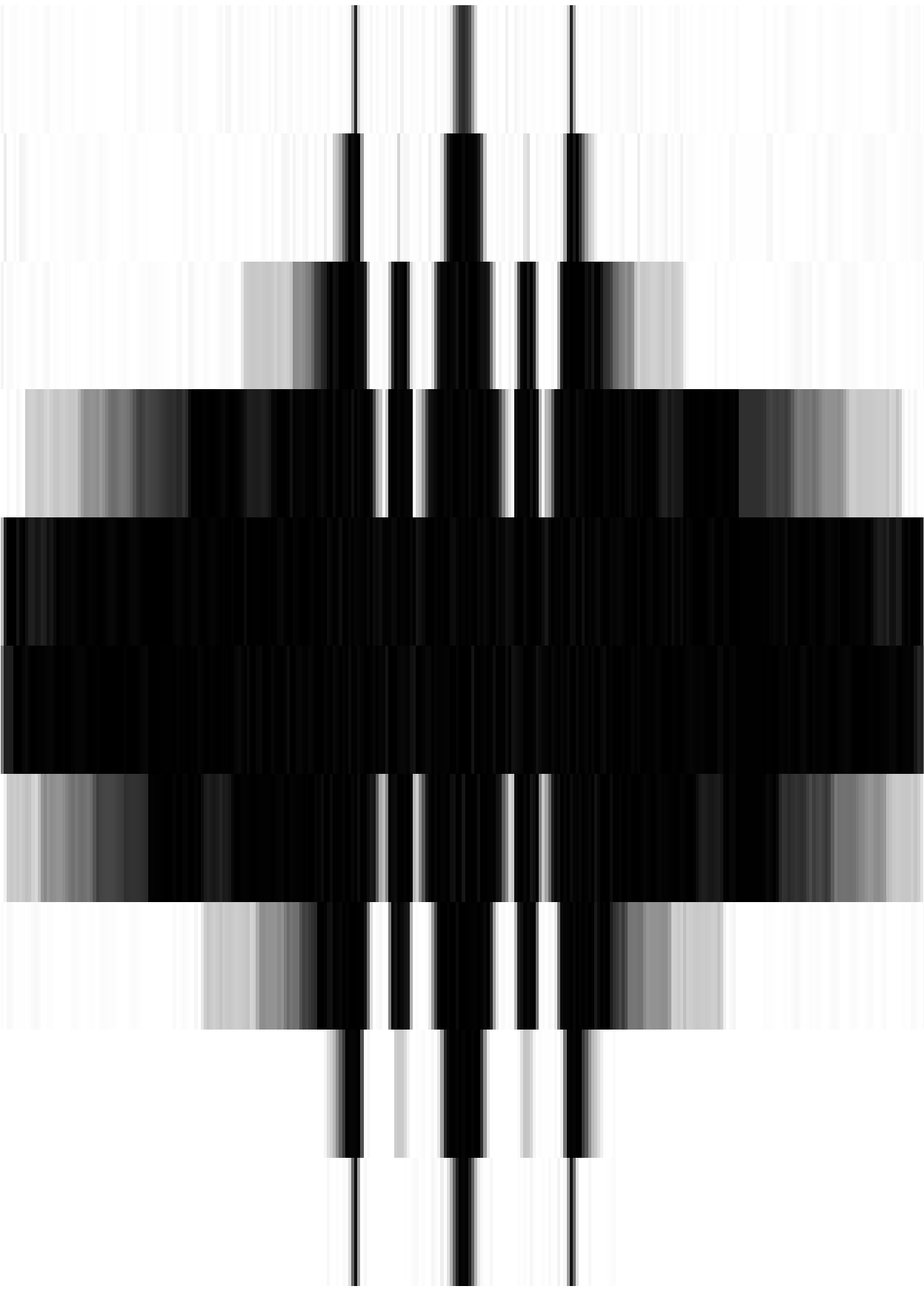
That Christ would choose the lowly ass for his mount is as symbolic of his way of life as that he was born in a stable. Zechariah spoke truly of a Messiah who would "cut off the chariot...the horse...and the battle bow...he shall speak peace unto the heathen."

The Prince of Peace, whose only battle cry could be: Victory to the Meek! rode no fiery charger amidst a panoplied army, but sat a gentle steed, small and serviceable to the daily ways of peace. His "warriors," no ostentatious stalwarts, were only an unimposing band of selfless disciples. Verily, this King, before whom the multitudes spread their branches of palm, demonstrated once again that a son of God celebrates his dominion in meekness and lowliness of pride.

When Jesus rebuked the Pharisees, he meant that scripture must be fulfilled this day; that Zechariah's words, which required the multitudes to "rejoice greatly" and "shout," should come to pass. If men were forced to "hold their peace," the very stones—permeated too with God, essential in every atom of creation—would be empowered to hold faith with the scriptures.

Men of divine realization, like Jesus and John the Baptist, know that God alone upholds the structure of the universe, and that He can flame forth from every clod and molecule. Because to mortal eyes a stone appears inert and Spiritless, both Jesus and John used it, on similar occasions of public rebuke, as a challenge to faith. The story concerning John is as follows:

Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, “O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, ‘We have Abraham to our father’; for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham” (Luke 3:7 – 8).



Peace draws its strength and support from the universal order of God's creation

There is a further interpretation of Jesus' reference to the stones. If the cosmos is against might, if the sun wars not with the planets but retires at dueful time to give the stars their little sway, what avails our mailed fist? Shall any peace indeed come out of it? Therefore, Jesus implied, by his repudiation of the Pharisees' request, that divine justice is no figurative abstraction, and that a man of peace, though his tongue be torn from its roots, will yet find his speech and his defense in the bedrock of creation, the universal order itself.

Jesus said to the Pharisees, "How think you to silence men of peace? As well may you hope to throttle the voice of God, whose very stones sing His glory and His omnipresence. Will you demand that men not celebrate peace, but war only? Then make your preparations to overtopple the foundations of the world; for it is not gentle men alone, but stones, or earth, and water and fire and air that will rise up against you to bear witness of His ordered harmony."

Thus, as Zechariah had long ago foreseen, Christ on this occasion spoke "peace to the heathen," proclaiming that not cruelty but goodwill arms the universal sinews. He who "is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass" will know the endless fruits of victory, sweeter to the taste than any nurtured on the soil of blood.

"O Jerusalem, I weep for you! If you only knew at the present time all the political, social, and divine peace you are enjoying due to my presence! But you fail to see this great opportunity the Divine Father is giving you to acquire everlasting peace. The day will arrive, O people of Jerusalem, when the wisdom of you and your children will be shrouded beneath the soil of ignorance and the edifice of order and harmony will disintegrate into stony rubble because you neither know nor appreciate this visitation of the Divine—as expressed in me—which was ordained for your benefit and upliftment."

The sorrowful compassion Jesus expressed was not spoken egotistically, but as an impersonal glorification of the presence of God made manifest within himself. He grieved that the people of Jerusalem did not realize the importance of the magnanimous grace of this divine manifestation through which liberation was offered to them. He observed that their blinded intelligence and foolish

misuse of free will could neither appreciate nor receive the unlimited Divine Power of salvation within him. Because of this lack, precluding their redemption, Jesus prophesied that the people of Jerusalem in the future would be pestered by war, famine, and increasing spiritual darkness.⁷



And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, and said unto them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be called the house of prayer’; but ye have made it ‘a den of thieves.’”⁸

And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them. And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, “Hosanna to the son of David”; they were sore displeased, and said unto him, “Hearest thou what these say?”

And Jesus saith unto them, “Yea; have ye never read, ‘Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise’?” And he left them, and went out of the city into Bethany; and he lodged there (Matthew 21:12 – 17).

“Have you never read in the scriptures that out of the mouth of God’s littlest ones, sincere and guileless, shall burst forth praise of Divinity in power to quell inimical dissenters of truth?”⁹

In citing the Psalm of King David, Jesus chided the arrogant priestly authorities who took offense at the children in the temple glorifying the Divine Presence he manifested, hailing him as the son of David, the prophesied savior. (“Hosanna”—a joyous shout of devout acclamation, from the Hebrew hoshi ‘anna, “pray save” us.) Jesus pointed out that praise is perfected into a mighty force when it is a genuine response to truth. The minds and speech of pure children that are yet unsullied by politics, insincerity, manipulateness, and falsehoods have a responsive appreciation of truth through a clearer innate intuition that is not distorted by prejudicial rationalizations.



Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered. And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever." And presently the fig tree withered away. And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, "How soon is the fig tree withered away!"

Jesus answered and said unto them, "Verily I say unto you, if ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, 'Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea'; it shall be done. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matthew 21:18 – 22).¹⁰

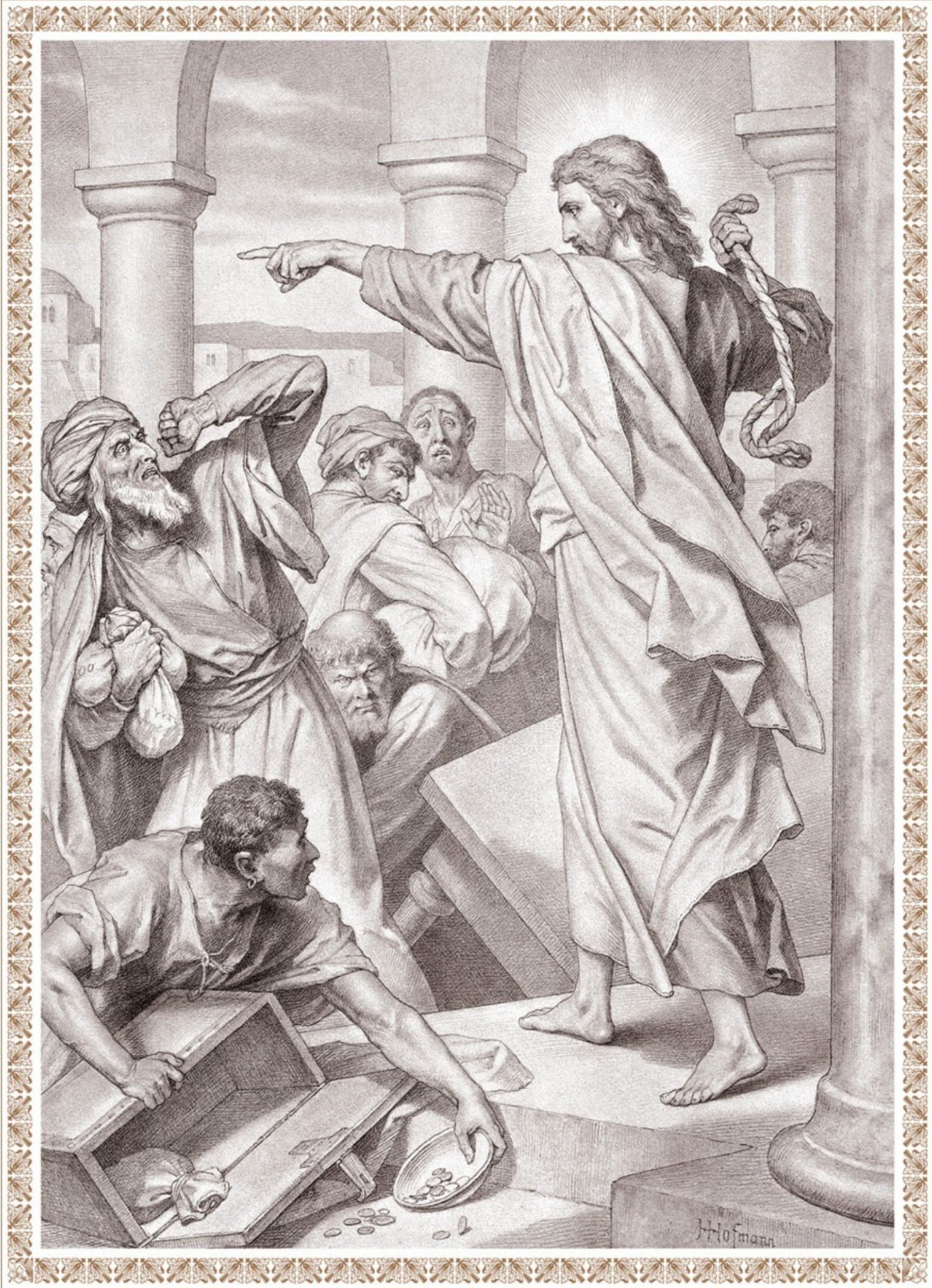


Jesus' withering of the fig tree: a glimpse of his contrasting human and divine natures

In the incident of the hapless fig tree we have a provocative contrast between the human and the divine, manifesting simultaneously in one man: human reaction at a disappointment, taking form in divine power. Jesus was hungry and looked for fruit on the leafy fig tree, but at the wrong season. ¹¹ Finding no figs, he just willed the tree to cease to exist! The will and life force present in the body of Jesus, being in tune with the Cosmic Will and Cosmic Life, simply withdrew the life and will that erstwhile had sustained the fig tree. Just as an electrical engineer who has access to all the switches of the main dynamo that controls the electricity in a city can put off or on at will a single light or all the lights, so Jesus, being one with the Cosmic Electrical Engineer, was able to switch on life in the extinguished lamp of the lifeless body of Lazarus, or switch off the life that coursed through the fig tree.

Though rationally viewed as unreasonable for Jesus to expect the fig tree to yield fruit during the off-season (for it produced in accordance with nature's laws, instituted by the Creator), still the impulsive act was yet another demonstration to show the disciples that the God-image in man is unconstrained by even the irritating implacability of the material universe. Man owns the omnipotence of God, provided he forsakes delusion and, by meditation, lifts his consciousness from the body and unites it with God's perfect reflection within him. The Hindu scriptures say that one who knows the Spirit becomes the Spirit. Jesus demonstrated that oneness with Spirit by his Spirit-united dominion over all things.

When the disciples expressed surprise at the prompt response of the fig tree to this sentence of destruction, Jesus spoke of the power of faith—not blind faith, but perfect conviction born of God-realization and the personal command of great metaphysical laws that have the power to move mountains and grant any prayer.¹²



Driving the Money Changers Out of the Temple

And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, and said unto them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.’”

—*Matthew 21:12–13*

A true exemplar of peace is centered in his divine Self. All actions arising therefrom are imbued with the soul’s nonpareil vibratory power—whether issuing forth as a calm command or a strong volition...The actions of divine personalities, however, are sometimes willfully startling to shake complacent minds out of their vacuous acceptance of the commonplace. An accurate sense of spiritual propriety in a world of relativity requires a ready wit and a steady wisdom....

Spirituality abhors spinelessness. One should always have the moral courage and backbone to show strength when the occasion calls for it.

—*Paramahansa Yogananda*

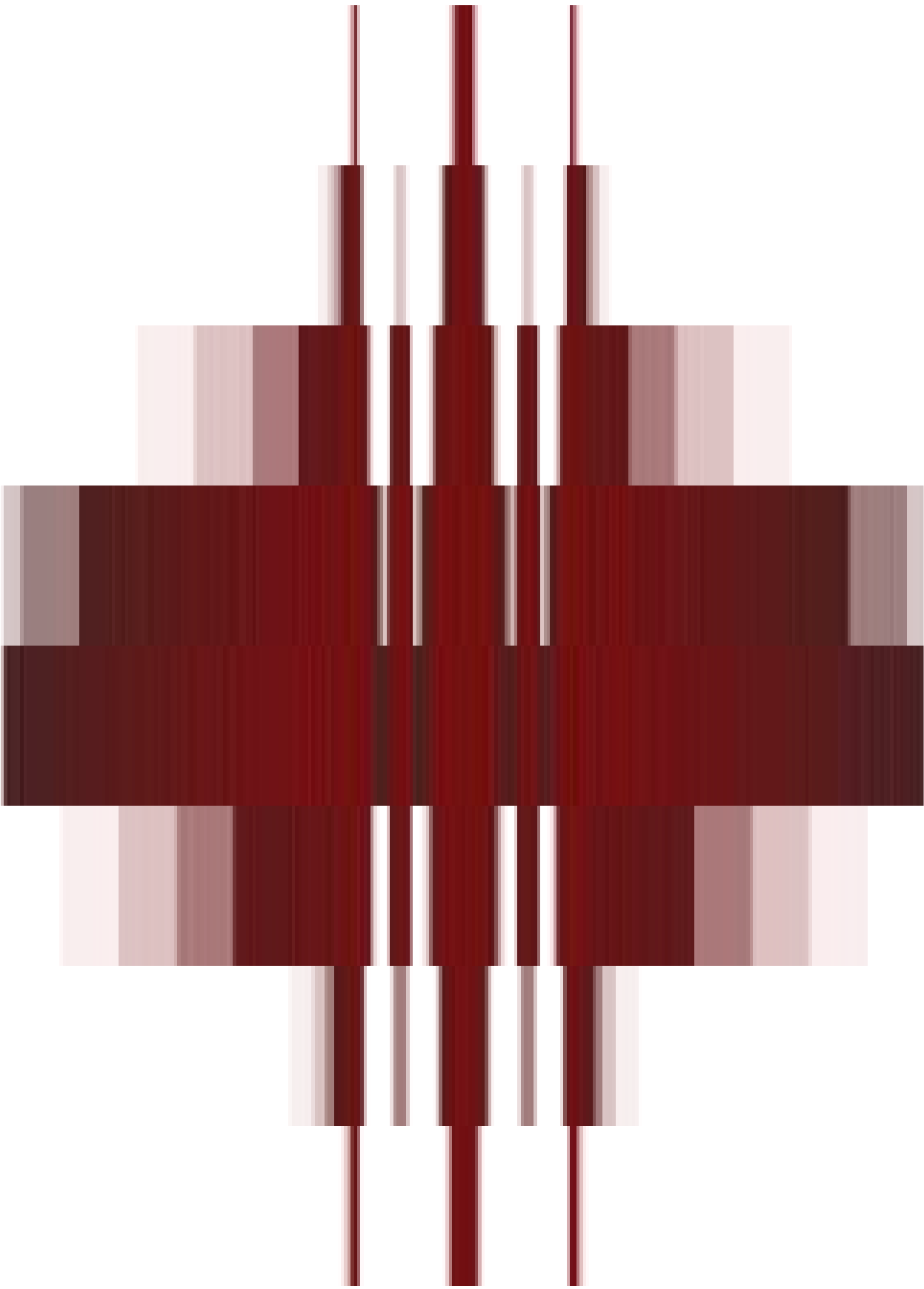
Drawing by Heinrich Hofmann





Discourse 65

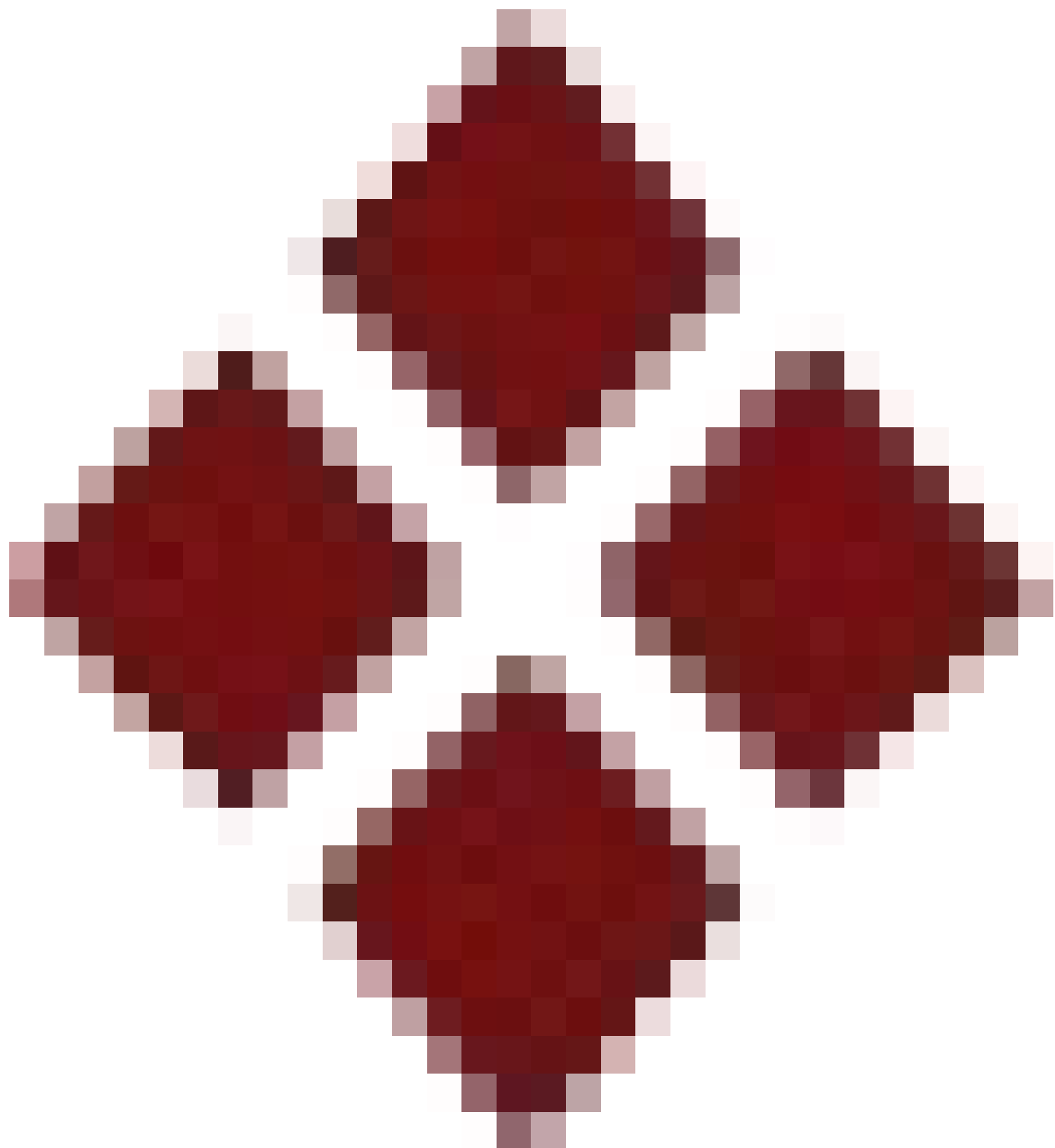
Jesus Teaches in the Temple at Jerusalem for the Last Time



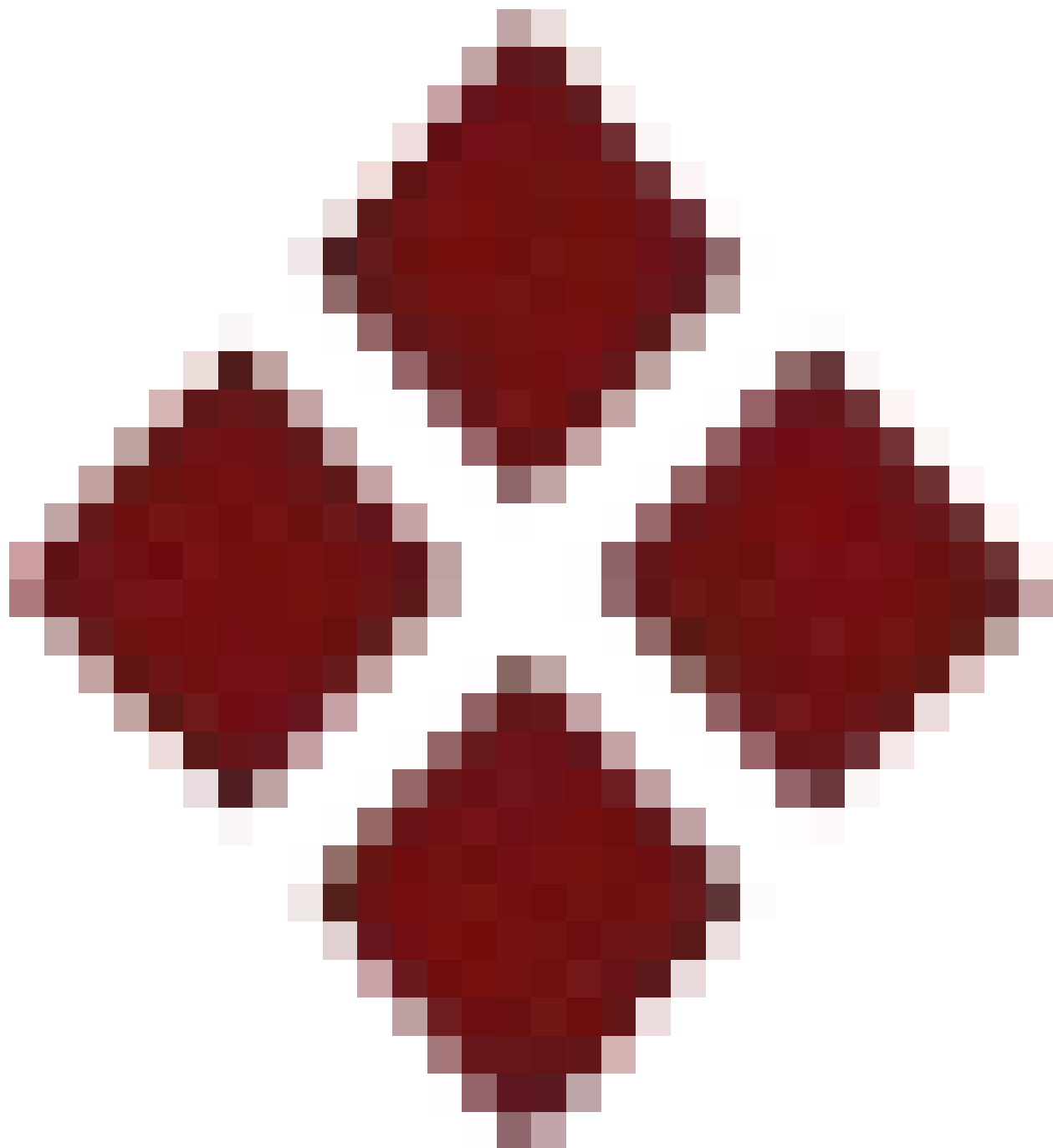
**Jesus Extols the Advancement of Repentant Sinners
Over That of the Spiritually Arrogant**



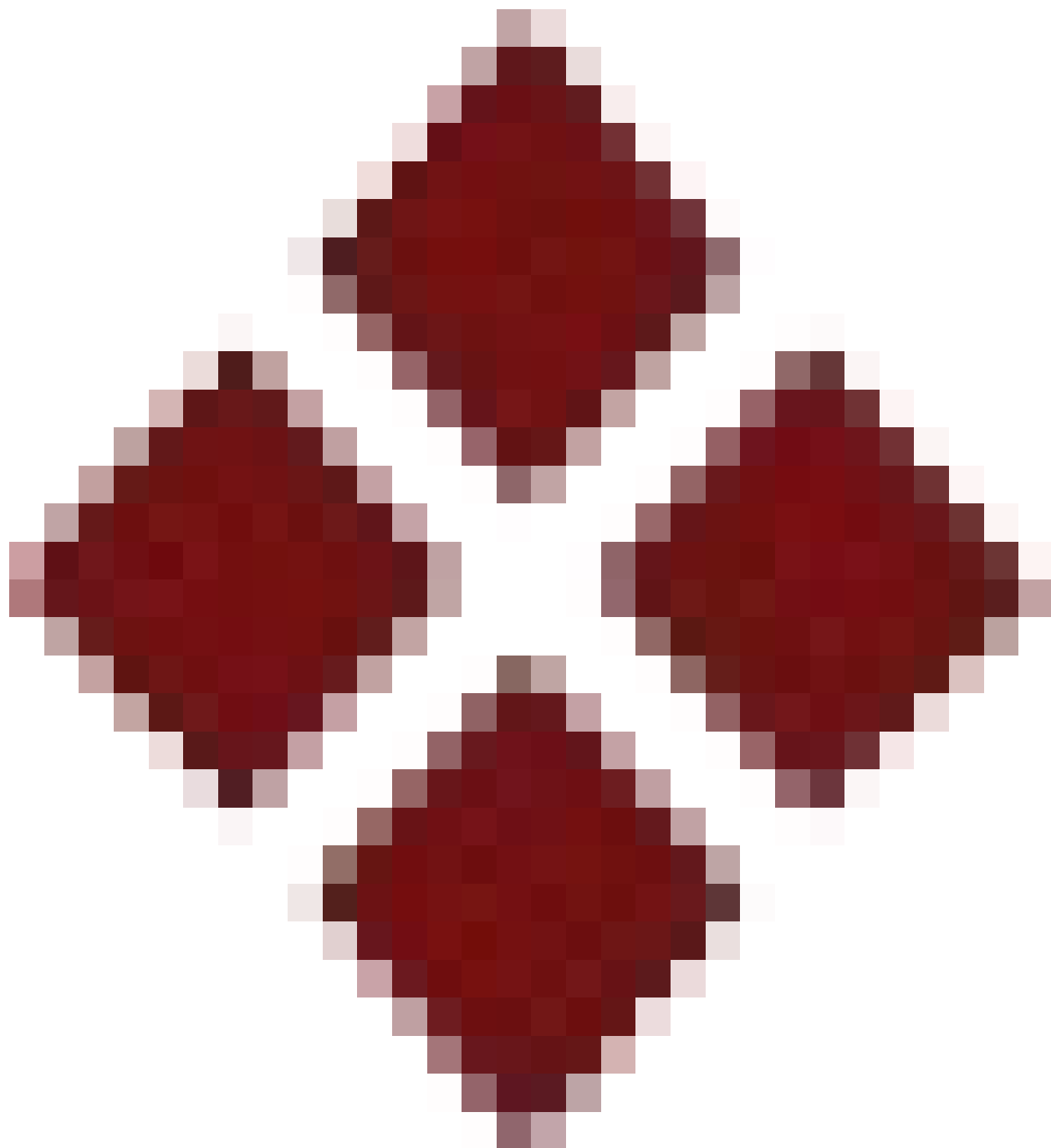
**A Parable of God's Plan of Heavenly Harmony for
Souls on Earth, and Man's Obstruction of It**



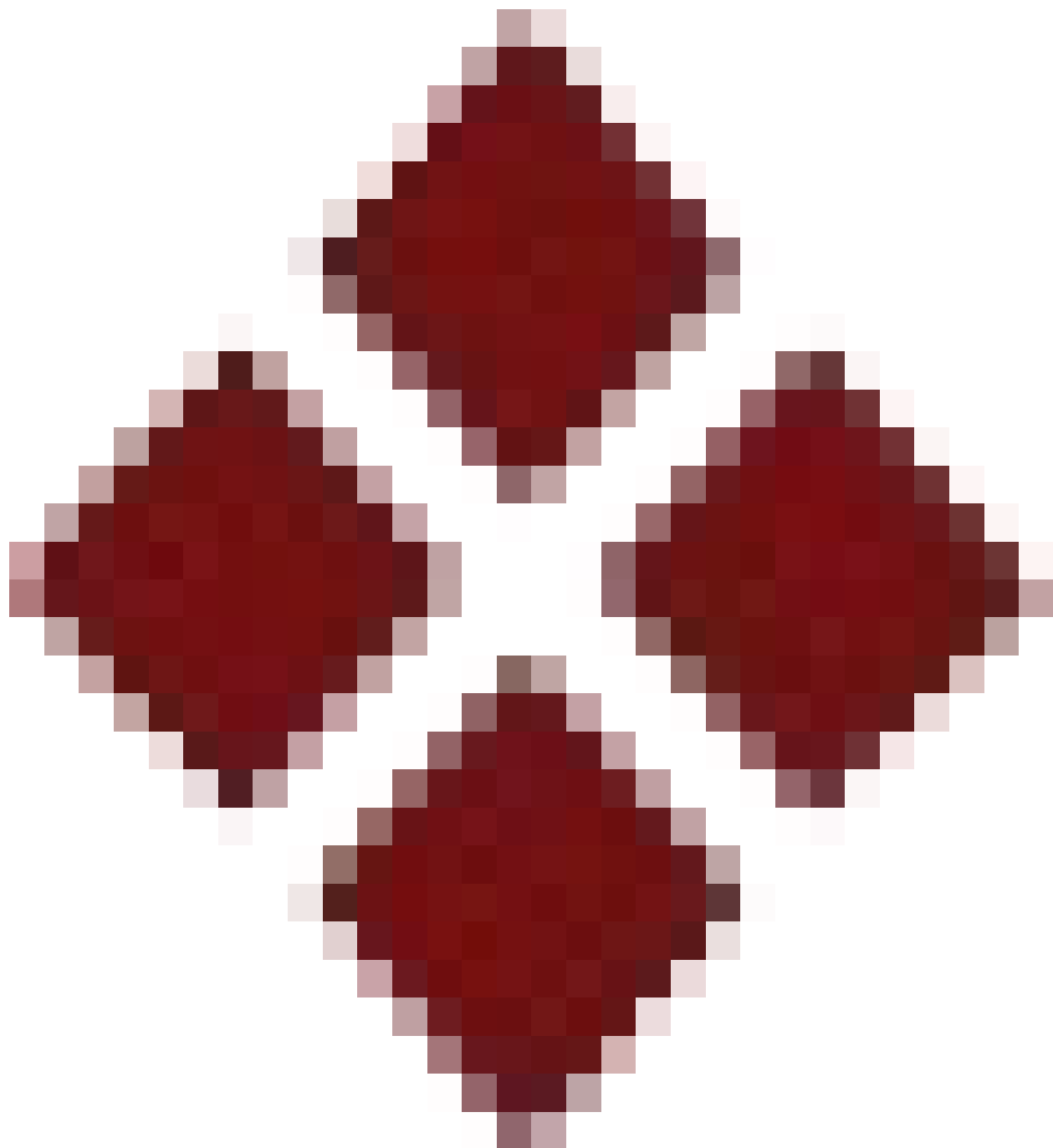
**Jesus Describes the Karma Reaped by Those Who
Accept or Reject God's Messengers**



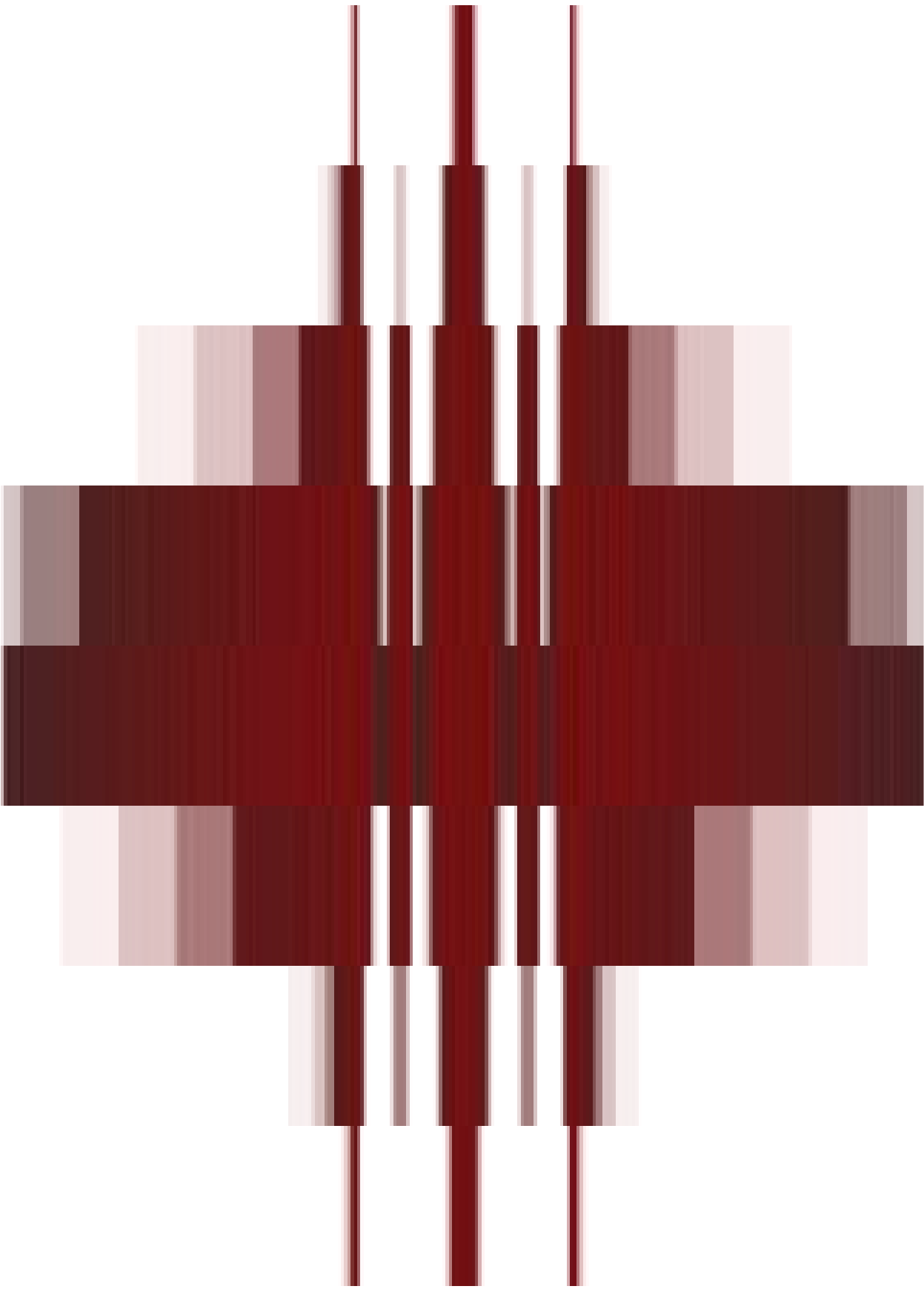
**“Render Unto Caesar”: The Spiritual Attitude
Toward Fulfillment of Worldly Duties**



Son of God or Son of David: Christ Consciousness in the Messiah



The Widow's Mite: Spiritual Value of Giving With Heartfelt Devotion



“Jesus’ adversaries in the temple...were actively seeking opportunity to apprehend him....Jesus then made clear to them, by means of a parable, the searing truth that their arrogant priestly and social consciousness had denied them the blessing of salvation.”

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And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, "By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?"

And Jesus answered and said unto them, "I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men?"

And they reasoned with themselves, saying, "If we shall say, 'From heaven'; he will say unto us, 'Why did ye not then believe him?' But if we shall say, 'Of men'; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet." And they answered Jesus, and said, "We cannot tell."

And he said unto them, "Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things. But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, 'Son, go work today in my vineyard.' He answered and said, 'I will not': but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, 'I go, sir': and went not.

"Whether of them twain did the will of his father?"

They say unto him, "The first."

Jesus saith unto them, "Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.

"Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise.

“But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, ‘They will reverence my son.’ But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, ‘This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance.’ And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?”

They say unto him, “He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.”

Jesus saith unto them, “Did ye never read in the scriptures, ‘The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes’? Therefore say I unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.”

And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them. But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet.

—Matthew 21:23 – 46

And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said, “The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, ‘Tell them which are bidden, “Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage.” ’ But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them.

“But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then saith he to his

servants, ‘The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.’ So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.

“And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, ‘Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

“For many are called, but few are chosen.”

Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk. And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, “Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men. Tell us therefore, what thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?”

But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, “Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? Shew me the tribute money.” And they brought unto him a penny. And he saith unto them, “Whose is this image and superscription?”

They say unto him, “Caesar’s.”

Then saith he unto them, “Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s.” When they had heard these words, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way.

—Matthew 22:1 – 22¹

And Jesus answered and said, while he taught in the temple, “How say the scribes that Christ is the son of David? For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, ‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit thou on My right hand, till I make

thine enemies thy footstool.” ’ David therefore himself calleth him ‘Lord’; and whence is he then his son?” And the common people heard him gladly.

And he said unto them in his doctrine, “Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the marketplaces, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts: Which devour widows’ houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation.”

And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing.

And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, “Verily I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.”

—Mark 12:35 – 44



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Discourse 65

Jesus Teaches in the Temple at Jerusalem for the Last Time



And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, "By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?"

And Jesus answered and said unto them, "I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men?"

And they reasoned with themselves, saying, "If we shall say, 'From heaven'; he will say unto us, 'Why did ye not then believe him?' But if we shall say, 'Of men'; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet." And they answered Jesus, and said, "We cannot tell."

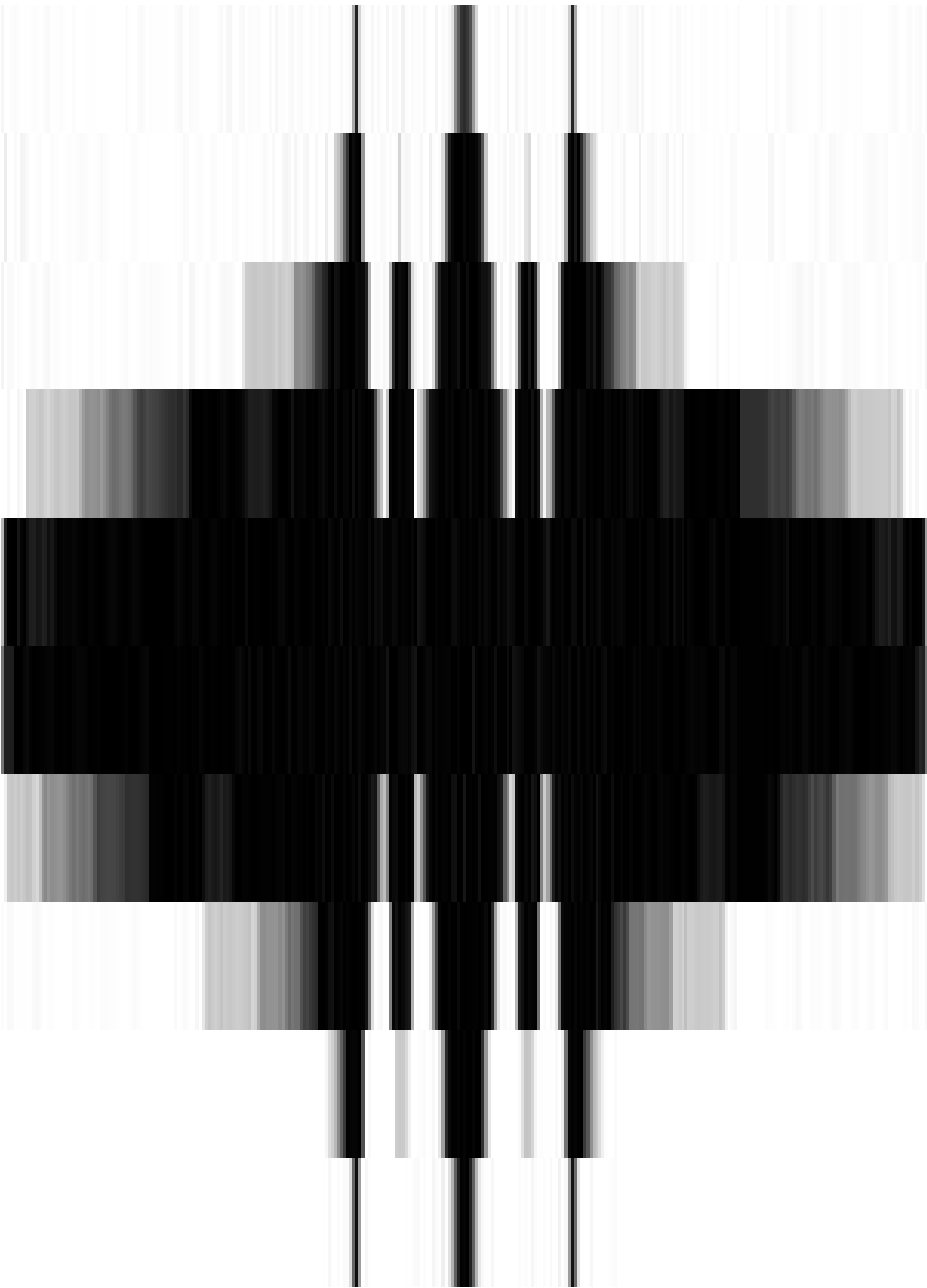
And he said unto them, "Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things. But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, 'Son, go work today in my vineyard.' He answered and said, 'I will not': but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, 'I go, sir': and went not.

"Whether of them twain did the will of his father?"

They say unto him, "The first."

Jesus saith unto them, "Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots

believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him” (Matthew 21:23 – 32).²



Jesus extols the advancement of repentant sinners over that of the spiritually arrogant

Jesus' adversaries in the temple (long concerned about his growing popular acclaim generated by his miraculous healings, and about his defiant actions such as castigating the religious hierarchy and casting out the money changers and merchants from the temple precincts, and his nonconformist teachings) were actively seeking opportunity to apprehend him. Aware of their conniving, Jesus deliberately chose not to answer the chief priests and scribes when they asked him to declare by whose authority he did these works. He knew their query was to press him to proclaim before them, as he had to others, his oneness with the Father, grounds on which to arrest him on charges of blasphemy.³ By answering their question with his simple question concerning the source of the powers of John the Baptist, he effectively balked his attackers: To admit John's divine authority would draw a deserved rebuke from Jesus as to why, then, they had not treated John as a holy prophet; and to deny that John's authority was heaven-bestowed would arouse the anger of the people.

Having confounded his enemies into silence, Jesus then made clear to them, by means of a parable, the searing truth that their arrogant priestly and social consciousness had denied them the blessing of salvation through John:

“A master had two devotees on earth, and he said to one of them: ‘Son, go into the vineyard of meditation and labor there to grow the precious grapes of divine realization. After successful cultivation, those ripened fruits will yield to you the intoxicating wine of unending divine bliss.’ But the devotee, succumbing to a temporary spate of delusion, replied: ‘I will not meditate, for I am not in the mood to do so!’ Yet after due deliberation, he shook off his spiritual inertia, recognizing it as foolish disobedience to the master whose command had been given only for the devotee's good. With deep devotion and resolve, he became faithful in his practice of meditation.

“Then the master came to the second devotee and asked him also to cultivate the fruits of meditation. The devotee answered readily, ‘I will do so, Lord,’ but failed utterly to keep his promise. Now, is it not evident to you which of them obeyed the will of the master?”

They all agreed that the first stubborn devotee, who had mended his ways, was the obedient one; not the courteous devotee whose compliant words were not expressed in action. Jesus then pinpointed the issue at hand: “Out of the truth within me, I declare unto you that even the publicans and harlots are superior to you in realization. For the great master John came to all of you, and yet you did not understand or accept him. But those you call sinners—who formerly had not listened to the voice of truth—deliberated when John came to them, then shook off delusion, repented, and began with faith to seek God through inner divine communion and obedience to His commandments. That is why they will soon work out the effects of their past evil actions and enter the kingdom of Cosmic Consciousness, long ahead of all of you chief priests and elders who proudly hold yourselves as superior by dint of your effete titles.

“Even after you had seen the change John wrought in erstwhile sinners—proof of his righteous life and God-wisdom—still you did not repent and enter the vineyard of meditation to labor for God-communion. No, you believed not in him nor his advice; neither did you repent of your haughty disobedience that you might be saved by following his example. Now you can judge for yourselves why the publicans and harlots who tuned in with the God-saturated John, can enter into the kingdom of God before you.”

Jesus’ words are an assurance to repentant transgressors of divine law: By following a God-inspired guru and by forsaking the ways of delusion, they can surely be received into the kingdom of God. Indeed, they will find salvation more quickly than will persons whose vanity about their own limited understanding and presumed moral sufficiency makes them disdain the help of the God-sent guru, being egotistically misled into thinking they have no need for such assistance in order to attain entry into God’s presence in Cosmic Consciousness.



“Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise.

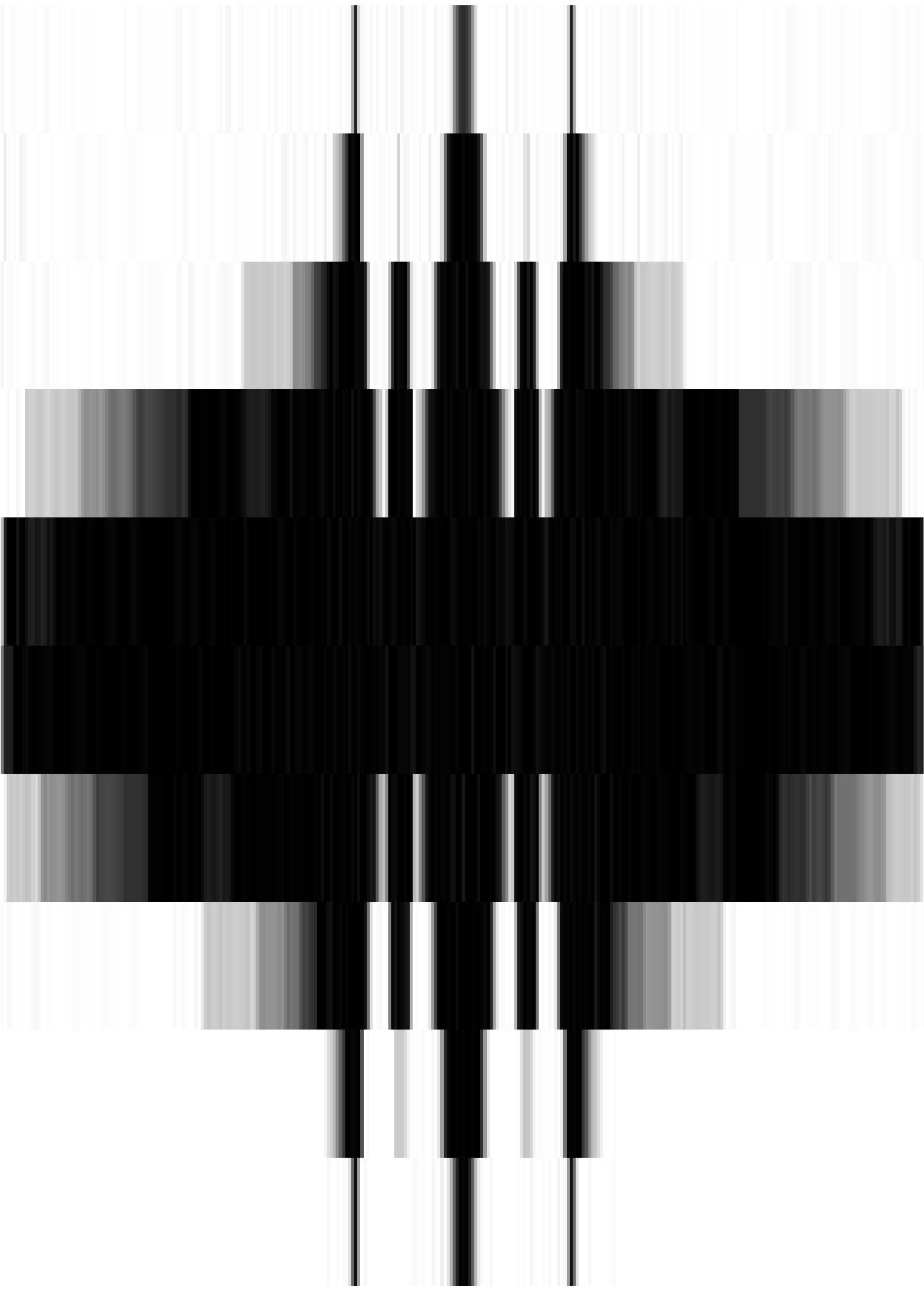
“But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, ‘They will reverence my son.’ But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, ‘This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance.’ And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?”

They say unto him, “He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.”

Jesus saith unto them, “Did ye never read in the scriptures, ‘The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes’?⁴ Therefore say I unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.”

And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them. But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet (Matthew 21:33 – 46).⁵

In a simple parable of metaphysical truths, Jesus related how the Cosmic Householder, at the beginning of an aeons-long cycle of universal creation, made this earth as a fertile vineyard wherein His human children—soul-reflections of His own one Being—were to labor as “husbandmen” to cultivate and enjoy the fruits of all-freeing wisdom. He hedged in the earthly vineyard with the aura of His divine vibrations, and He dug into human consciousness a winepress of intuition and built there a tower of spiritual vision. He then gave this vineyard into the care of His incarnate soul-laborers and “went into a far country,” hid Himself in the transcendent plane of Cosmic Consciousness for the duration of that cycle of creation. ⁶



A parable of God's plan of heavenly harmony for souls on earth, and man's obstruction of it

Then, “when the time of the fruit drew near”—when God expected that the tillers of the vines of wisdom to whom He had lent the fruitful vineyard would reap the harvest of many beautiful experiences—He sent out His prophets to gather from them some of their harvest of wisdom-nurtured love and gratitude. But the people of the earth, their pristine soul consciousness having devolved under the influence of delusion, refused to accept God's divine messengers, rejecting them violently. Many other prophets were sent to the earth and likewise were maligned and killed. One of these came in the form of John the Baptist. He too was treated shamefully.

Finally, the Lord of the vineyard resolved to send to the unappreciative, cruel people of the earth His sole reflection in all vibratory creation—the Son or Christ Consciousness—made manifest in the form of an avatar. God expected that His ungrateful people would now acknowledge Him by revering His son. But the people were drunk with delusion. In their perversity they wished to enjoy the blessings of the earth without interference of the guiding precepts of God or His emissaries. Notwithstanding the evidence that this son was “the heir,” a true representation of God in whom His Consciousness was fully expressed, they slew him, hoping “to seize his inheritance,” to rule the earth according to their own desires instead of according to the ways of righteousness.

Of course Jesus was now speaking of himself, foretelling the crucifixion that would climax the ill-treatment these self-serving officials had given him, and the result that would inevitably follow: The Lord of the vineyard of the earth through Cosmic Law would punish those responsible for the evil done to His son, and would give the vineyard to other tenants who would try to grow the fruits of wisdom cultivated and offered in grateful worship. When his listeners of malign intent had heard these parables and their omen of punishment, they “perceived that he spake of them.”⁷

The “other husbandmen,” those who would render to the Lord of the Vineyard “the fruits in their seasons,” refers to future generations of devotees who would reverence Jesus' exemplary life and teachings. By devotion to the Christ Consciousness in this divine son, they would reap from their labors in the

vineyard of the earth a bountiful harvest of God-wisdom: realization of the divine kingdom within them as a region so exceedingly abundant in bliss that they would willingly return to the Lord, in the form of praise and worship, the fruits they had gleaned.

Jesus went on to prophesy that the Christ Consciousness, which the builders of his own civilization rejected, would be the principal stone required in constructing the temple of a heavenly life on earth. ““This is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes,’” he quoted from scripture. “Therefore I say unto you that because you rejected the Christ Consciousness and me in whom that reflection of the Father was sent to you, the kingdom of God-consciousness will not manifest in you; but it will be manifest in those persons who will in future appreciate my message by establishing these truths in their consciousness. Anyone who shall resist the adamant stone of these truths will find his life broken up with delusion, disharmony, and unhappiness. And those who will deliberately lead wrong lives, and willfully defile my teachings and persecute those who are my true followers, will find that through their own folly the Cosmic Law inherent in this stone will fall upon them to their utter destruction.”

Anyone who strikes a stone with his fist is hurt through his own unwise action and not because of any desire of the stone to harm him. Likewise, Jesus warned that anyone who is foolish enough to resist consciously the unbreakable truths set forth in his teachings will hurt himself by activating the Cosmic Law to destroy his spiritual life and delay his evolution toward salvation.



And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said, “The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, ‘Tell them which are bidden, “Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage.”’ But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them.

“But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then saith he to his servants, ‘The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.’ So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.

“And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, ‘Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

“For many are called, but few are chosen” (Matthew 22:1 – 14).⁸

How the kingdom of heaven can be entered by the appreciative devotee, through a proper response to the invitation of God, was illustrated by Jesus in the following way:

The Heavenly Father (“a certain king”) sent one of His liberated devotees (the

king's "son") to be born on earth so that, when the proper time came—when he had spiritually prepared his incarnate human instrumentality to accord with his God-ordained mission—his wedding with divine wisdom could be celebrated as an example for mankind, and earnest devotees might learn something of the joys of divine union through witnessing in his God-united life this sacred marriage.⁹ Just as the wedding ceremony of an ideal couple inspires guests who are attuned with them with a moving example of love, so also, the ideal truth-wedded life of a saint or prophet inspires truth-seekers with the desire for their own union with wisdom.



Jesus describes the karma reaped by those who accept or reject God's messengers

Whenever a prophet is ready to begin his work on earth, God sends forth vibratory messengers to call all who are aware of these high vibrations to follow the illumined soul. It is a spiritual law that God Himself thus celebrates the Divine Union on earth of a liberated devotee truly wedded to truth and exalted principles, usually (except if the work of the liberated one is carried on behind the outward scenes of man) by means of these servants of magnetic vibrations issuing forth from Him in different directions as determined by the purpose of the prophet's mission. Seekers are thereby drawn to join the joyous festivities of spiritual feasting in honor of the liberated one wedded with the lovely Spirit of Truth.

So, in the instance of this parable, the initial invitation to "them that were bidden to the wedding" was wholly ignored. Then the Divine Father sent forth again the magnetic, vibratory messengers to signify to truth-seekers that they might join the ecstatic celebration of the prophet's God-united life, during which the choice delicacies of wisdom would be offered for all. But many of those invited remained heedless out of sheer spiritual carelessness, failing to recognize this invitation as a response of God to their former prayers. They dishonored God's call to attend the soul-liberating event and continued with their material occupations. Others, superficial and rigid in their ignorance, stifled ("killed") outright the messengers of divine vibration that radiographed the announcement to their hearts.

When the Heavenly Father felt the wrong vibrations of rejection emanating from those He had sought to bless, He could not stay the armies of cosmic and karmic laws that govern all human actions. These laws punish willful "murderers" of good vibrations by igniting the city of their consciousness with the unseen fire of purifying discipline. In some who ignore an invitation from God, their spiritual sense is destroyed for a long time, until they repent and merit another opportunity.

As cited in the parable, the Gracious Lord yet a third time sent His invisible vibratory servants to speak to the hearts of other seekers. In response to the announcement of this ignorance-quelling ceremony, many would-be followers—

of both high and low caliber—from the highways of life came to witness the liberated prophet's wedding with Truth.

Sincere souls on the path of Self-realization appreciate and are receptive to a prophet and his teachings. But among the throng there are also hypocrites who associate themselves with great masters—and with organizations promulgating their paths of truth—just for the glamor and festivity, or for personal prestige. So the implication of the parable is that the Divine Father came, as the Host, to examine the guests who had been attracted by His invitation. He discovered that a hypocrite had joined the devotees; he wore not a wedding garment of sincerity. When the Host accused him of hypocrisy, he could make no reply in his defense and remained speechless.

So the Omnipotent Host had the powerful spiritual vibrations force out this hypocrite whose understanding had not evolved sufficiently to join the good company of devout seekers. He was cast back into the land of self-created darkness. Too late the hypocrite bemoaned his ignorance, and wept and gnashed his teeth at his lost chance to attain light in his darkened state.

Many truth-seekers, owing to the varying degrees of intensity of their spiritual urges, intermittently draw the attention of God and receive His invitation into the heavenly consciousness within them; but only those few are chosen to enter into God's kingdom of Cosmic Consciousness who are meritorious according to their earnest, sustained interest in truth and in God, shown through their sincere efforts to spiritualize their lives by unceasing prayer and deep meditation.



Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk. And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, "Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men. Tell us therefore, what thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?"

But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, "Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? Shew me the tribute money." And they brought unto him a penny. And he saith unto them, "Whose is this image and superscription?"

They say unto him, "Caesar's."

Then saith he unto them, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's." When they had heard these words, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way (Matthew 22:15 – 22).¹⁰



“Render unto Caesar”: the spiritual attitude toward fulfillment of worldly duties

“Give to your earthly king Caesar the earthly things, such as monetary tribute, that he thinks belong to him,” Jesus told the Pharisees, “but in your heart give to God all homage and credit, for He is the Supreme Sovereign, the real owner of all things material and mental, earthly and heavenly.”

Jesus thus counsels all devotees to obey the customs of their country and abide by its laws, such as paying taxes. But even while fulfilling worldly obligations, they should inwardly pay their soul’s homage to God alone, to Him who is the King of kings, who as Creator of one’s native land, earth, heaven, is Owner of all things therein of whatsoever nature—familial, social, national, international, and cosmic.

Jesus had upheld this same principle on a previous occasion, cited in Matthew

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.¹¹ His words and their miraculous sequel on that occasion illustrated that man’s proper fulfillment of heavenly laws automatically aids him in satisfying his liability to edicts made by man.

True religion is an art of living that harmonizes all aspects of man’s dharma, righteous duty—material, mental, social, moral, and spiritual—neglecting nothing needful for balanced harmony in body, mind, and soul. Jesus’ words, “Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s; and unto God, the things that are God’s,” are a reminder that as long as one lives in the material world, to shirk material responsibilities is to be lacking in wisdom. Bhagavan Krishna, by fulfilling perfectly his demanding material, social, and spiritual roles as both avatar and earthly king, without letting one duty interfere with the others,

exemplified in a unique way this equilibrated consciousness. The serenity of a saint in Himalayan solitudes is not ruffled by conflicting crosscurrents of social and spiritual duties; but greater is the devotee whose spiritual attainments can pass undiminished through all tests of the world's harsh proving grounds.

Jesus' statement is also a warning to persons whose thoughts and desires entangle them in worldly life: They will have to "render unto Caesar what belongs to Caesar." Material involvements create material obligations, exacted according to the law of karma; but one whose heart and mind are fixed on God alone, the Utter Simplicity, is only minimally involved in the obligatory give-and-take of human existence.



And Jesus answered and said, while he taught in the temple, “How say the scribes that Christ is the son of David? For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, ‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit thou on My right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool.”’ David therefore himself calleth him ‘Lord’; and whence is he then his son?” And the common people heard him gladly (Mark 12:35 – 37).

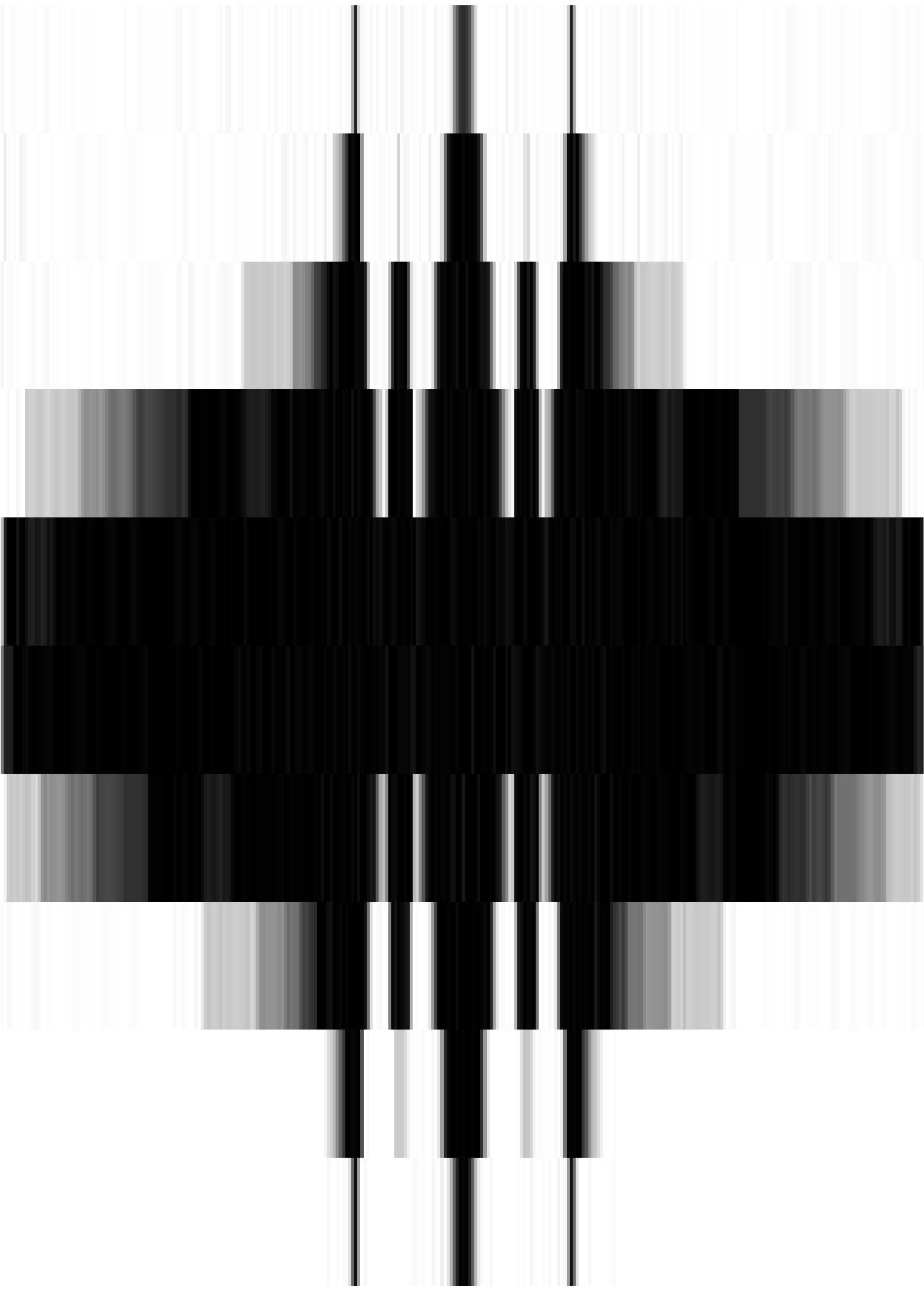
Parallel reference:

While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, “What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he?”

They say unto him, “The son of David.”

He saith unto them, “How then doth David in spirit call him ‘Lord,’ saying, ‘The Lord said unto my Lord, “Sit thou on My right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool”’?¹² If David then call him ‘Lord,’ how is he his son?”

And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions (Matthew 22:41 – 46).¹³



Son of God or son of David: Christ Consciousness in the Messiah

The scribes and Pharisees, as likewise many Christian believers to this day, did not understand the difference between “Jesus” (“Son of man”) and “Christ” (“Son of God” or “only begotten Son”)—between the incarnate Messiah and the infinite Christ Consciousness he embodied. Jesus’ intent was not to deny that the human body of the Messiah or Christ was descended from King David, as both he and his listeners knew had been prophesied in scripture;¹⁴ but to make clear that the all-pervading Christ Consciousness could not be limited to the physical body of a son of David or any other human being.

Jesus spoke to the Pharisees from his realization of the “Christ” as the Universal Consciousness present in all vibratory creation, and fully reflected in his own body, known as Jesus—and also that the Christ Consciousness was manifest to David through a vision, described in the Book of Psalms.

David “in spirit”—after spiritual upliftment by the Cosmic Vibration of the Holy Ghost—wrote that the Lord God (the Father existing beyond all vibratory creation) expressed His will to the Christ Consciousness (the Lord of Creation). The Father’s vibratory message articulated in interpretation might be expressed thus: “The Lord said unto my Lord, ‘Be Thou the Abiding Existence of My true reflected Presence in creation, enthroned by My side in My consciousness of Immutable Righteousness and Truth. Exert Thy reigning influence over all workings in creation until, through My almighty power of love in You, I make Your satanic enemies of delusion—who constantly obstruct Your perfect works—Your footstool and Your slaves.’”

Jesus made the indisputable point that David would not have used the title “my Lord” in speaking of a son.¹⁵ David clearly perceived the distinction between the Universal Christ and its manifestation in human form as the Messiah.

The interchange of the Intelligence between the Transcendent and the Immanent “Lords” (Cosmic Consciousness and Christ Consciousness) manifested only temporarily in the consciousness of David by means of a vision. But since the Christ Consciousness was steadily and fully reflected in the life and consciousness of Jesus, he let himself be called “Christ,” but explained that the Christ Consciousness in him could not accurately be called the son of David.



And he said unto them in his doctrine, “Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the marketplaces, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts: Which devour widows’ houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation.”¹⁶

And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing.

And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, “Verily I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living” (Mark 12:38 – 44).¹⁷

Jesus was not only observing the people and the amount of their offerings, but with his intuitive perception he was also analyzing their motivating spirit. He called to the attention of the disciples the action of the widow because her generous spirit made her tiny gift shine before God. Jesus cited the incident as a beautiful illustration of a divine principle: Although this poor widow put only a farthing in the temple treasury, her devotion magnified her offering; in the eyes of God she gave far more than all the rich and indifferent people who gave greater amounts but with no reverence or devotion in their hearts. Those who made impressive contributions were disbursing only a token of their abundant riches, at no inconvenience to themselves. But the widow, notwithstanding her own needs, gave unto God’s cause all she had, even unto her very livelihood.



The widow's mite: spiritual value of giving with heartfelt devotion

There is spiritual profit in heeding the lesson Jesus' disciples learned that day: to give unto God's cause in a reverent spirit of selflessness, not pride. A rich man whose bequests are motivated not by devotion but by pride in his wealth will no doubt earn some good karma by benefiting the temple, but such an act does not meet the criteria of a great virtue according to Cosmic Law. It will not elevate the giver's consciousness in God nor activate the law of karma to yield spiritual fruits.¹⁸ In contrast, when a person of meager means gives to God's cause even a few coins from a charitable heart, that offering, though small materially, is spiritually enriched and enriching.

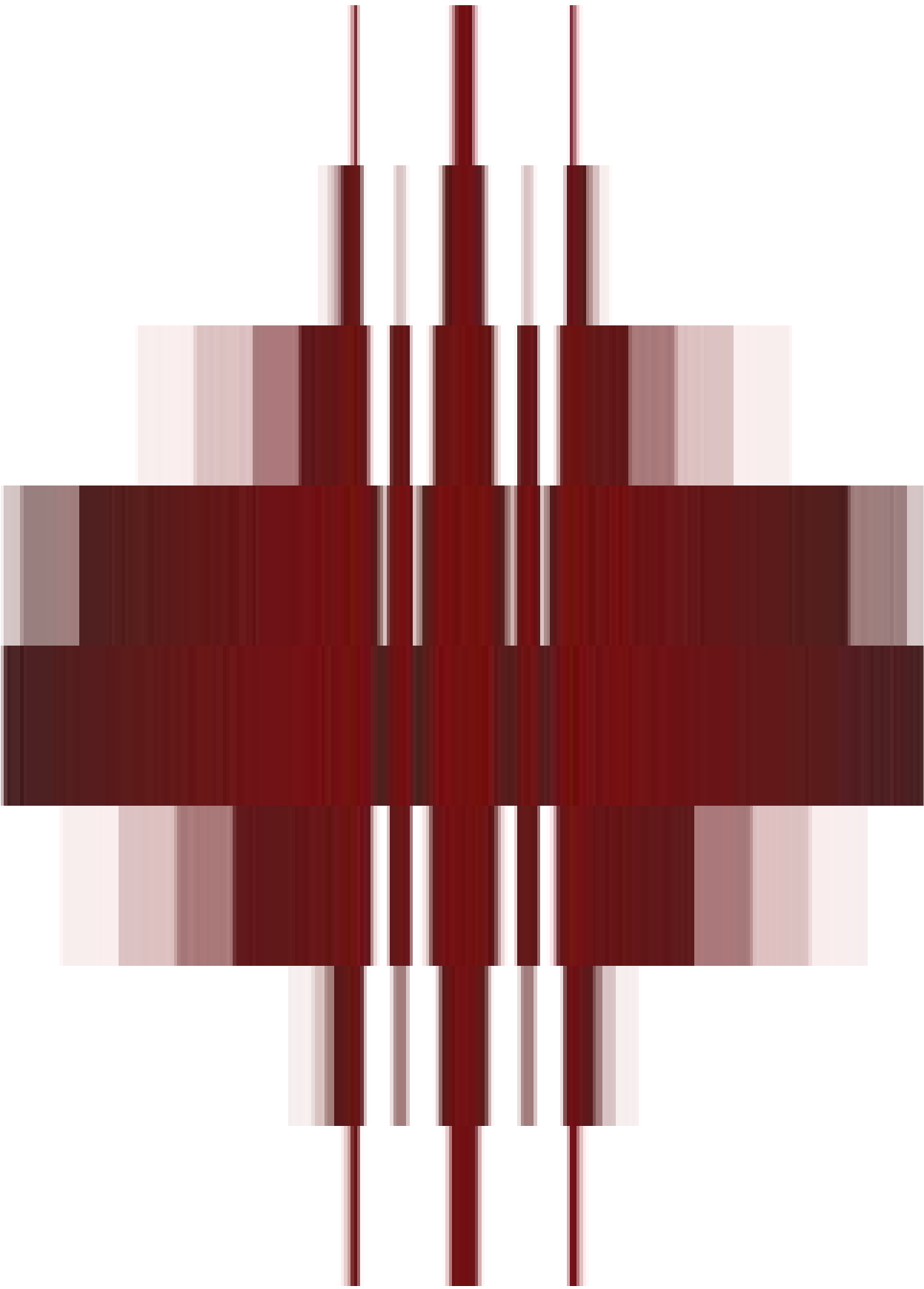
God recognizes not the quantity of the gifts given to His cause, but the quality of devotion accompanying them. Giving more does not necessarily signify greater devotion, nor does a smaller gift signify less devotion. Nevertheless, when a well-to-do person gives generously from his largess with pure devotion and no ulterior motive, the gift is accepted by God and reciprocated with blessings, and when a less-endowed person gives of his little store but prides himself that it was well given considering his means, or gives that pittance with an indifferent attitude, then his act, unlike the widow's, is spiritually devalued. A temple or church welcomes all benefactions; but God especially blesses those that are given in a spirit of sacrifice, love, and devotion.

In Oriental temples, flowers, fruits, and monetary donations are given as offerings to God. These help to maintain the temple, and God Himself receives the devotion that rises from sincere human hearts expressed in those gifts purely offered as symbolic oblations.¹⁹



Discourse 66

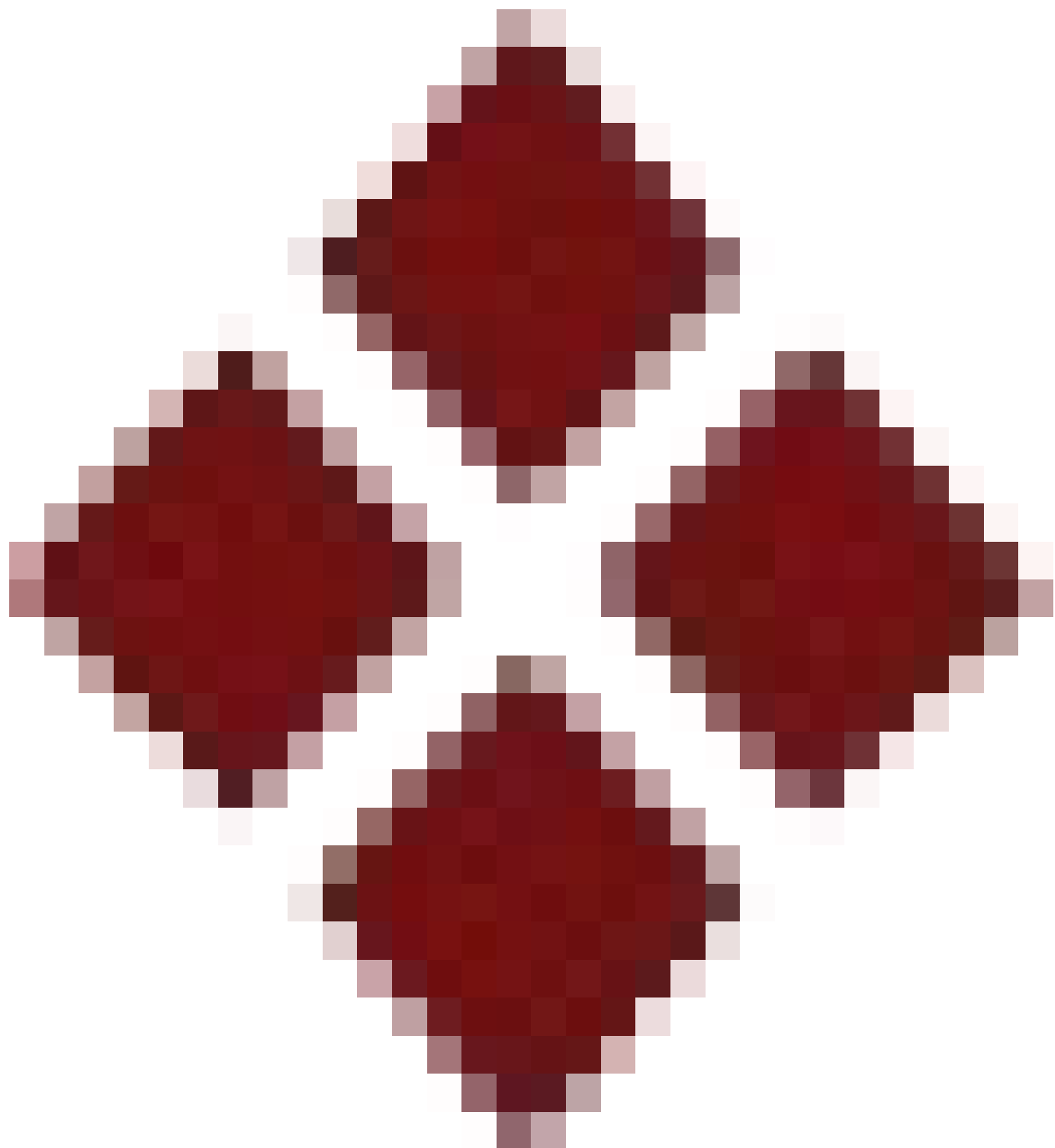
**“The Hour Is Come, That the Son of Man Should Be
Glorified”**



Jesus Speaks of How His Sacrifice on the Cross Would Benefit the World



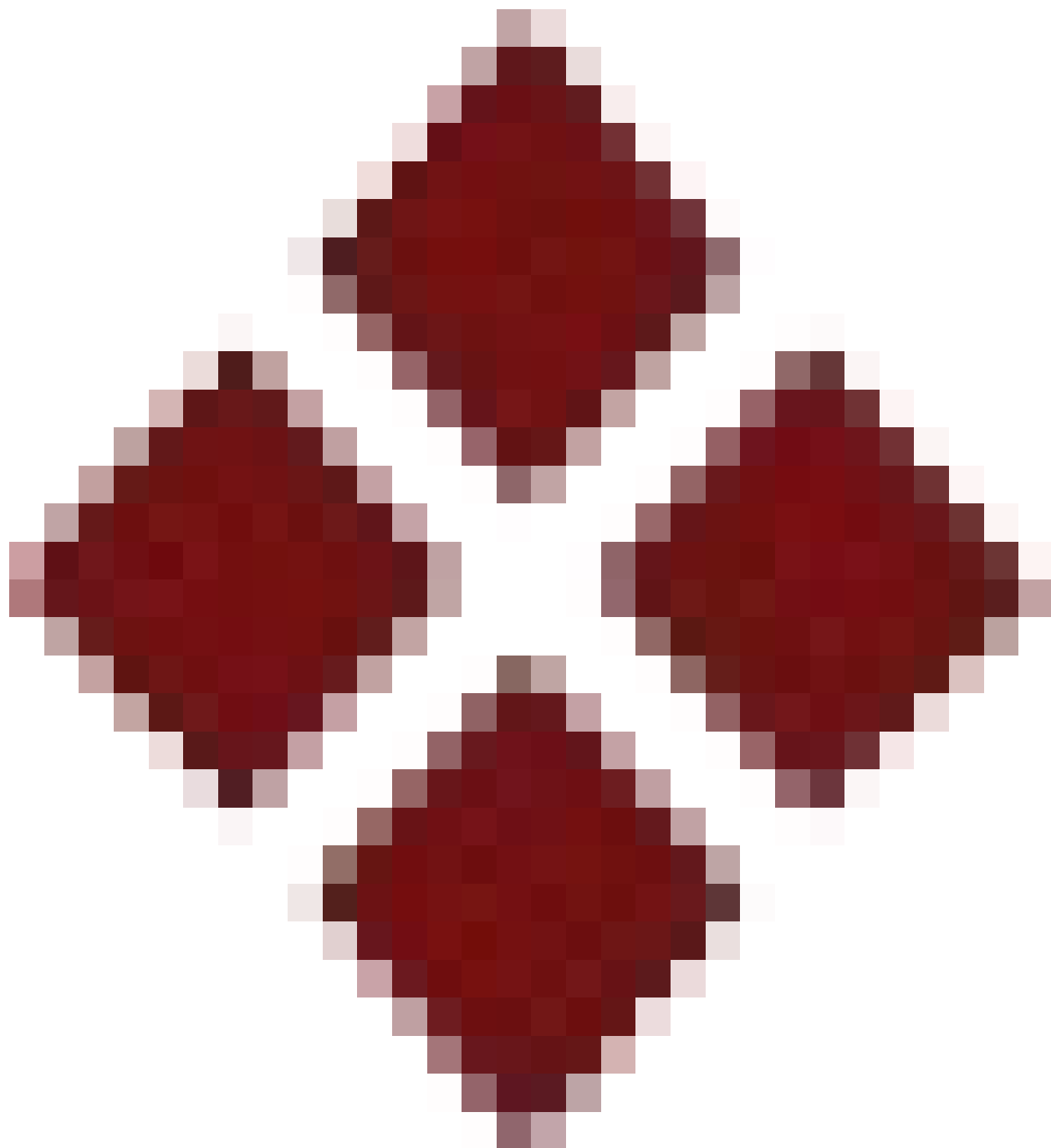
**“Shall I Pray to the Father to Save Me From This
Hour?”**



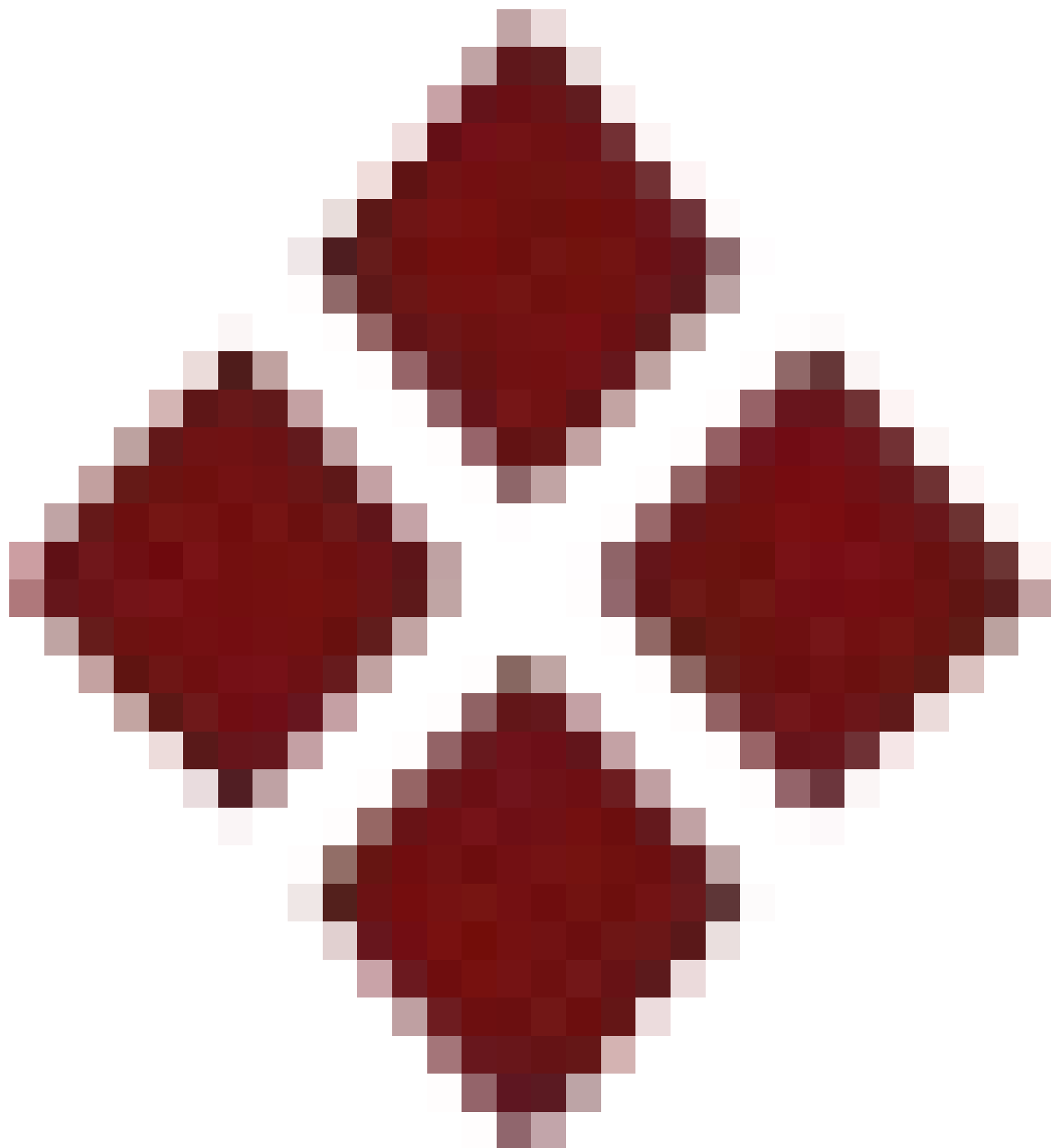
The Voice of God Responds



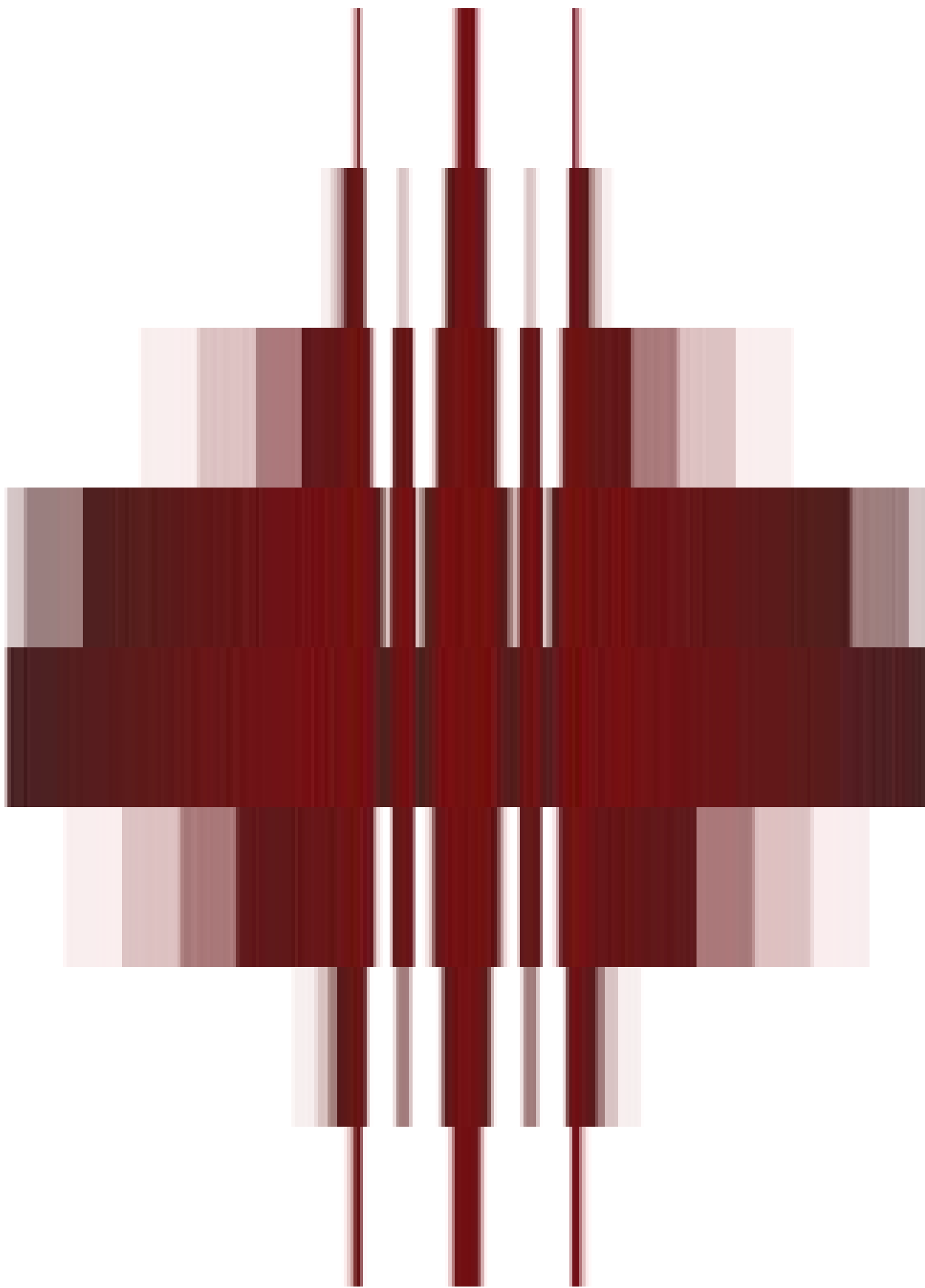
The Illuminating Guidance of a Guru's Wisdom



Did Isaiah Prophecy God's Vengeance?



**“I Came Not to Judge the World, but to Save the
World”**



“In Jerusalem, in the days before the Passover feast, Jesus spoke again of the impending culmination of the divine drama of his life.”

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And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast: The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, "Sir, we would see Jesus." Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus.

And Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.

"Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name."

Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."

The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, "An angel spake to him."

Jesus answered and said, "This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes. Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." This he said, signifying what death he should die.

The people answered him, "We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, 'The Son of man must be lifted up'? Who is this Son of man?"

Then Jesus said unto them, "Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light." These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.

But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: That the saying of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, “Lord, who hath believed our report? And to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?” Therefore they could not believe, because that Isaiah said again, “He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.” These things said Isaiah, when he saw His glory, and spake of Him.

Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

Jesus cried and said, “He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on Him that sent me. And he that seeth me seeth Him that sent me. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.

“And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, He gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.”



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Discourse 66

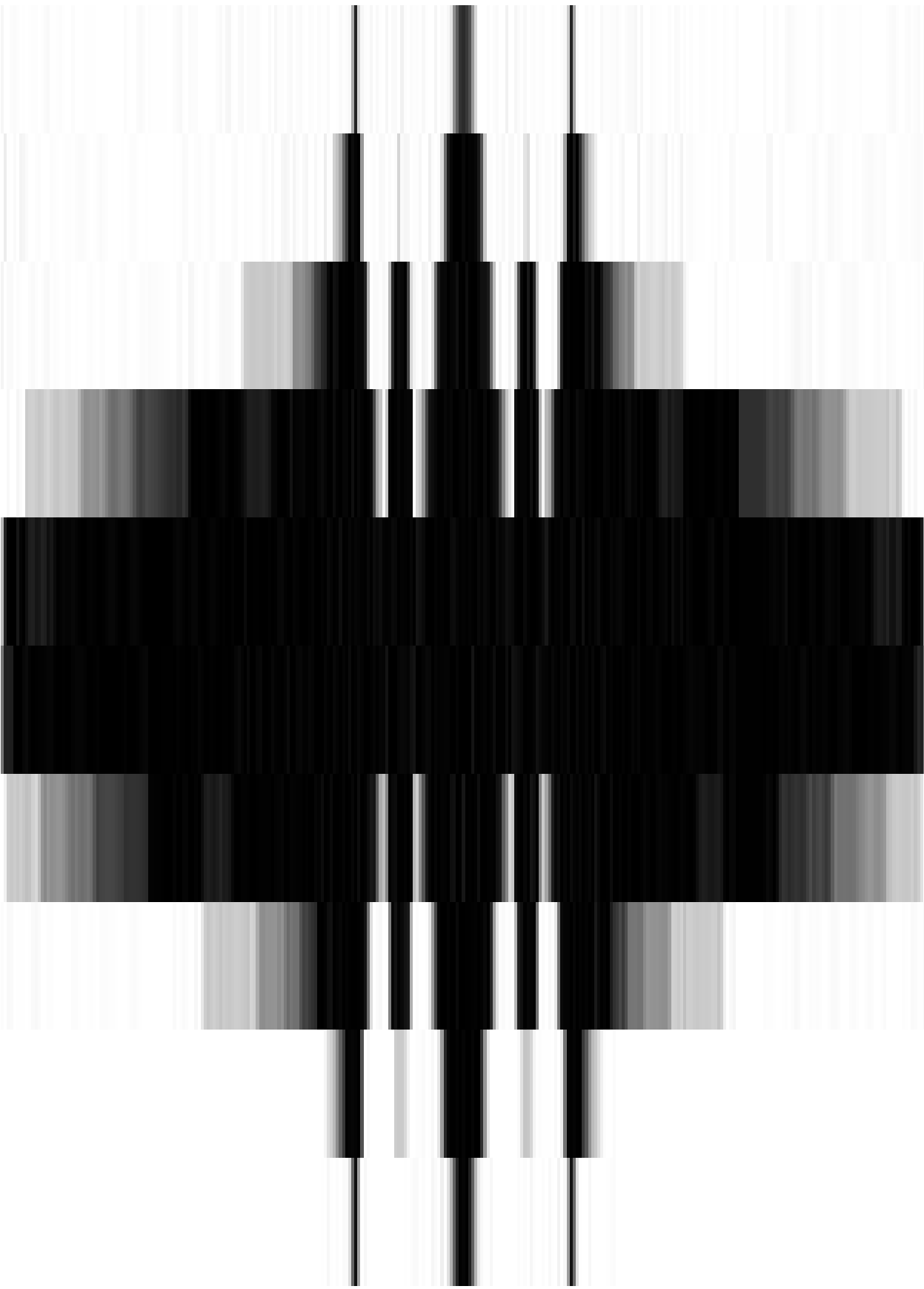
**“The Hour Is Come, That the Son of Man Should Be
Glorified”**



And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast: The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, "Sir, we would see Jesus." Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus.

And Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour" (John 12:20 – 26).

In Jerusalem, in the days before the Passover feast, Jesus spoke again of the impending culmination of the divine drama of his life: "The time is nigh when my body will be glorified into Spirit. But first—well remember what I declare unto you—unless a grain of wheat is thrust into the ground and dies, it cannot multiply itself; but if the grain is buried, it will rise anew as a plant abundant in fruit." ¹ Jesus was apprising them of his foreknowledge that by the sacrifice of himself and the victory of his rising up over the finality of death the divinity in him would be magnified for the benefit of the world. If he sacrificed his body for truth, as he had lived for truth, he would not only enter into the eternal life of his infinite Self, but would show to others by his exemplary presence on earth and in omnipresence the way to their own eternal life.



Jesus speaks of how his sacrifice on the cross would benefit the world

A selfish existence focused on the self-preservation of one's own ego, with its attachment to the body and its love of all things temporal, is a mental hedge that prevents the soul from enlarging into Spirit. Jesus thus continued: "He who loves his physical life, giving undue solicitude to his body, will nevertheless lose the body and all its material trappings in the oblivion of death. But he who sacrifices attachment to the familiar comforts of this physical life to seek the Everlastingness behind the facade of matter will find his consciousness transmuted by salvation into Eternal Life."²

Responding to the devotion of his disciples, Jesus added: "If any devotee desires to serve the Spirit, which is within me, let him follow my Consciousness." (Only by meditation can the devotee lead his consciousness from the physical plane of the senses through subconsciousness and superconsciousness to Christ Consciousness.) "Any devotee who is in tune with me will be present on the plane of Christ Consciousness where I reside always, and he will be recognized and uplifted by the Father—the Transcendental Cosmic Consciousness."



“Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name” (John 12:27 – 28).



“Shall I pray to the Father to save me from this hour?”

After Jesus offered this assurance, his mind dwelt again upon the immediate future of his present incarnation, and he confided: “Now my soul is troubled because the time of my great ordeal is nearing. But what shall I say? Shall I pray to the Father to save me from this dark hour? I might—yet for this hour was I born!” The wrenching ignominy of Jesus’ death followed by the glory of his resurrection would impact ensuing generations of the world with unforgettable recognition of his divine life and message of salvation into the kingdom of God. He would prove the victory of Spirit over body, of divine forgiveness over brutal human force, of compassion over cruelty, of the divine power of spiritual meekness over the contrasting egotism of temporarily triumphant material might. His humble submission at the cross would demonstrate the gentleness with which the Father stays His omnipotent hand when challenged by man’s evil; the forgiveness Jesus expressed during the crucifixion of his body would bear witness of the loving and forgiving nature of the Father. With the courage of acceptance of his commission from God, Jesus declared: “Rather must I pray: ‘Heavenly Father, inspire my wishes to conform to Thy wishes. Let Thy Name be glorified—let Thy Presence as the power of salvation in Thy Holy Ghost Vibration that lifts souls into Thy kingdom be made manifest through my ordeal.’”



Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."

The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, "An angel spake to him."

Jesus answered and said, "This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes. Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." This he said, signifying what death he should die (John 12:28 – 33).



The Voice of God responds

When Jesus prayed, “Father, glorify Thy name; manifest the glory of Thy presence through the all-pervading Cosmic Vibration,” immediately the disciples heard the Holy Vibration emanating from the silent ether, audible as significant sounds. This Voice, God’s response through the Cosmic Vibration (the quintessential medium of all manifestation), declared: “I have glorified My name as the Holy Ghost Vibration revealed in your life and all your works,³ and I will glorify It again in your death and resurrection.” But those around Jesus were confused concerning the source and meaning of the sounds: Some heard the words and said an angel had spoken; others heard only a rumble as of thunder.

Then Jesus clarified that the ethereal voice of God which had spoken was not for his sake but to prove the truth of the testimony of his life as God-ordained. This is a thrilling account in that only rarely through the passing centuries does the usually taciturn God speak other than individually to His devotees in the secluded sanctuary of their souls; yet here, at the prayerful call of Jesus, He instantaneously broke His silence and, like a human father, within the hearing of many, assured the disciples and the faithful that Jesus truly represented His divine majesty.

Jesus went on to prophesy that according to the cosmic law of karma (the “judgment” visited upon this world), “the prince of this world” (the Christ Consciousness, God’s reflection reigning in the material cosmos) would be “cast out” (ejected from bodily manifestation in Jesus). In this reference to “what death he should die” Jesus also added, “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me”: If during the painful death by crucifixion (his body elevated above the earth on the cross), his soul were lifted by the grace of God from the body and consciousness of its earth-imposed limitations into the infinite Christ Consciousness—victorious in spirit over death—word of his divine life and teachings would then attract the attention of all peoples for all times, and would be a beacon light of wisdom to lead receptive souls to freedom from cosmic delusion and its miseries.⁴

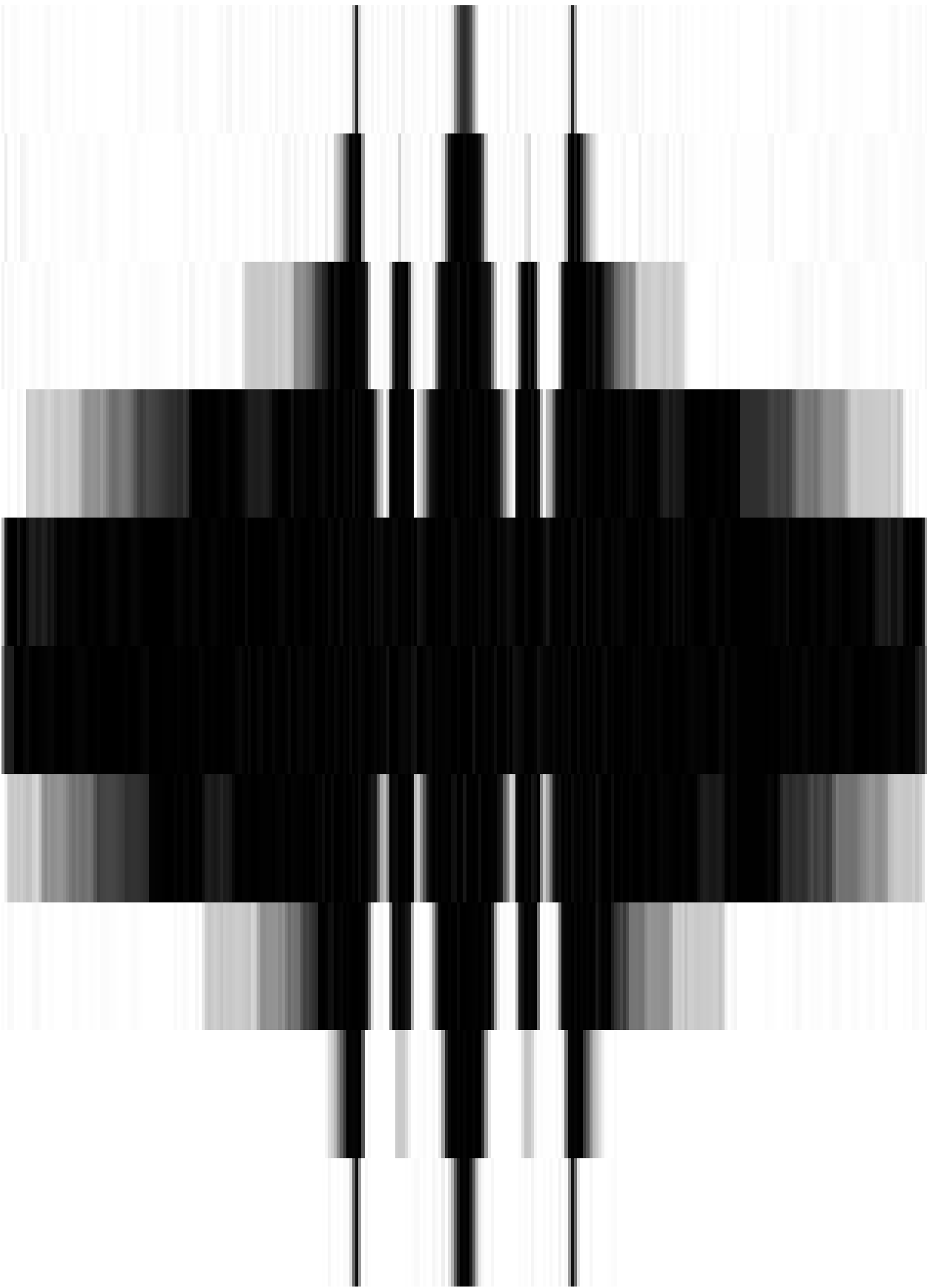
A struggle between the physical and divine natures of Jesus is indicated in his expression of uncertainty concerning final victory over the flesh. The words, “if I be lifted up,” loom significant. They bespeak the distinct certainty that this

climactic event in the life of Jesus, even though foretold by the prophets of the coming Messiah, could have been changed at this time if Jesus had succumbed to the temptation of mortal weakness and used his free will to pray to the Father to “save me from this hour.”



The people answered him, “We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever:⁵ and how sayest thou, ‘The Son of man must be lifted up’? Who is this Son of man?”

Then Jesus said unto them, “Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.” These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them (John 12:34 – 36).



The illuminating guidance of a guru's wisdom

In their unwillingness to believe in Jesus, the people would not grasp the distinction between the Christ, who “abideth forever,” and “the Son of man,” who must be “lifted up” into the divine light of Christ Consciousness, even though Jesus had clearly pointed it out to them when speaking about whether Christ was the son of David. ⁶ Previously, when he had taught in the temple at Jerusalem, he had told them: “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” ⁷ Thus on the present occasion, refraining from answering the intellectually disputatious questions of these unreceptive individuals, Jesus instead emphasized to his disciples that for only a little while would the light of Christ Consciousness continue to manifest in his body. He advised them to hasten along the path in the aureole of his divine presence, lest the darkness of delusion come upon them and try to prevent them from reaching the kingdom of Cosmic Consciousness.

A devotee who presumes to follow the spiritual path without the illuminating guidance of a guru's wisdom “walketh in darkness [and] knoweth not whither he goeth.”⁸ Therefore, Jesus urged his disciples, “With all your might strive to be one with the Light in me, that you also may be children of divine wisdom and immortality as I am.” He was saying that all devotees who “believe in the light”—the Christ light that was in him—would be in tune with him, and hence with God, and would come to know themselves as “children of light,” individualized reflections of the Divine Splendor, in essence like unto God their Father.



But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: That the saying of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, “Lord, who hath believed our report? And to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?”⁹ Therefore they could not believe, because that Isaiah said again, “He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.”¹⁰ These things said Isaiah, when he saw His glory, and spake of Him.

Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God (John 12:37 – 43).



Did Isaiah prophesy God's vengeance?

The references to Isaiah in the above passage are easily misinterpreted unless one understands that God never deliberately or revengefully—for any reason—causes deterioration of human beings in punishment for their sins. When Isaiah wrote about the people's eyes having been blinded and their hearts hardened, it was rather that they themselves, by their own wrong materialistic actions, had obscured their fine, God-given faculties of intelligence and feeling, rendering themselves incapable of apprehending the manifestations of His presence and the working of His laws in creation—unwilling even to turn to Him so that He could heal them. ¹¹

Most human beings carry within them the seeds of past-life erroneous actions in the form of present tendencies and effects. These products of their own deliberate wrong behavior make them—to greater or lesser degree, depending on their karma—blinded or crippled in understanding and intuitive perception, unable to grasp divine wisdom and act accordingly. It was those who saw, yet did not see, God's wonders in the life of Jesus, discounting and even persecuting him, that Saint John cites as fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy.

Illumined saints and prophets such as Isaiah perceive God directly and proclaim His holy word: "He saw His glory, and spake of Him." Yet of the many who hear, "who hath believed our report? And to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?" That is, who has the receptive heart of intuitive feeling to recognize the almighty arm of the Lord's will—His Righteousness made manifest in His cosmic laws and conveyed through the voice of His emissaries?

"The Lord hath made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God....Behold, My servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high....So shall he sprinkle many nations..." (Isaiah

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). These and the succeeding verses, through the entirety of Isaiah chapter

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,¹² are prophetic references to the coming of Christ, foretelling also the spiritual blindness of the people that would cause him to be rejected.

Though demonstrated proof of the divine credentials of Jesus stirred belief in many of the ruling class, they were not forthcoming in openly following and supporting him, lest they lose their social standing in the synagogue at the judgment of the Pharisees.

In all times and places, it seems, public persons similarly secure themselves from unfavorable scrutiny and ostracism by maintaining the “right” profile of religious practices and affiliation, notwithstanding their inner conviction and acceptance of deeper truths—such as the practice of the yoga science of meditation for personal experience of God and the ultimate verities. Man loses much of the grace of God when he gives preference to insubstantial human esteem over the perdurable, everlastingly worthy and fruitful appreciative recognition of God.



Jesus cried and said, “He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on Him that sent me. And he that seeth me seeth Him that sent me. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.

“And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, He gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak” (John 12:44 – 50).



“I came not to judge the world, but to save the world”

Jesus gave repeated testimony to his devotees and followers of his union with God the Father: that within his physical self was Christ Consciousness, and behind that was Cosmic Consciousness; and that all who tuned in with his inner Self, or Christ Consciousness, would realize his true nature and be led from the pall of delusion and misery into the eternal light of God’s kingdom.

He who was an incarnation of the Father’s forgiving, compassionate nature was careful to explain that he came with no commandment to punish those who would not believe in his words; rather he came to save those worldly people who would listen to him—even those who rejected him at first but became believers afterwards.¹³ His words of divine power and truth, even if initially disdained, would remain as latent vibratory seeds in potentially receptive subconscious minds. That is why Jesus said, “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day”: At the end of their lives, those who had heard truth and spurned it would realize the folly of their evil actions contrasted with the wisdom carried in their memories. Too late to reform, they would see that they had punished themselves by the karmic judgment of their actions. Jesus addressed especially those to whom he gave the blessed opportunity to receive the grace of God-contact. Any truth-seeker who rejects communion with the Christ Consciousness by turning away from the teachings of one who is imbued with that Consciousness, creates his own punishment of bad karma that will long condemn him to lightless ignorance.

“For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, He gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak”: When the Christ Consciousness uttered words of wisdom through Jesus, it was because the Cosmic Consciousness, from which all things emanate, vibrated Its wishes as a great commandment concerning what should be expressed to the world through the lips of Jesus, as speeches and parables to the multitude, and sayings and advice with deeper explanation to the disciples.¹⁴

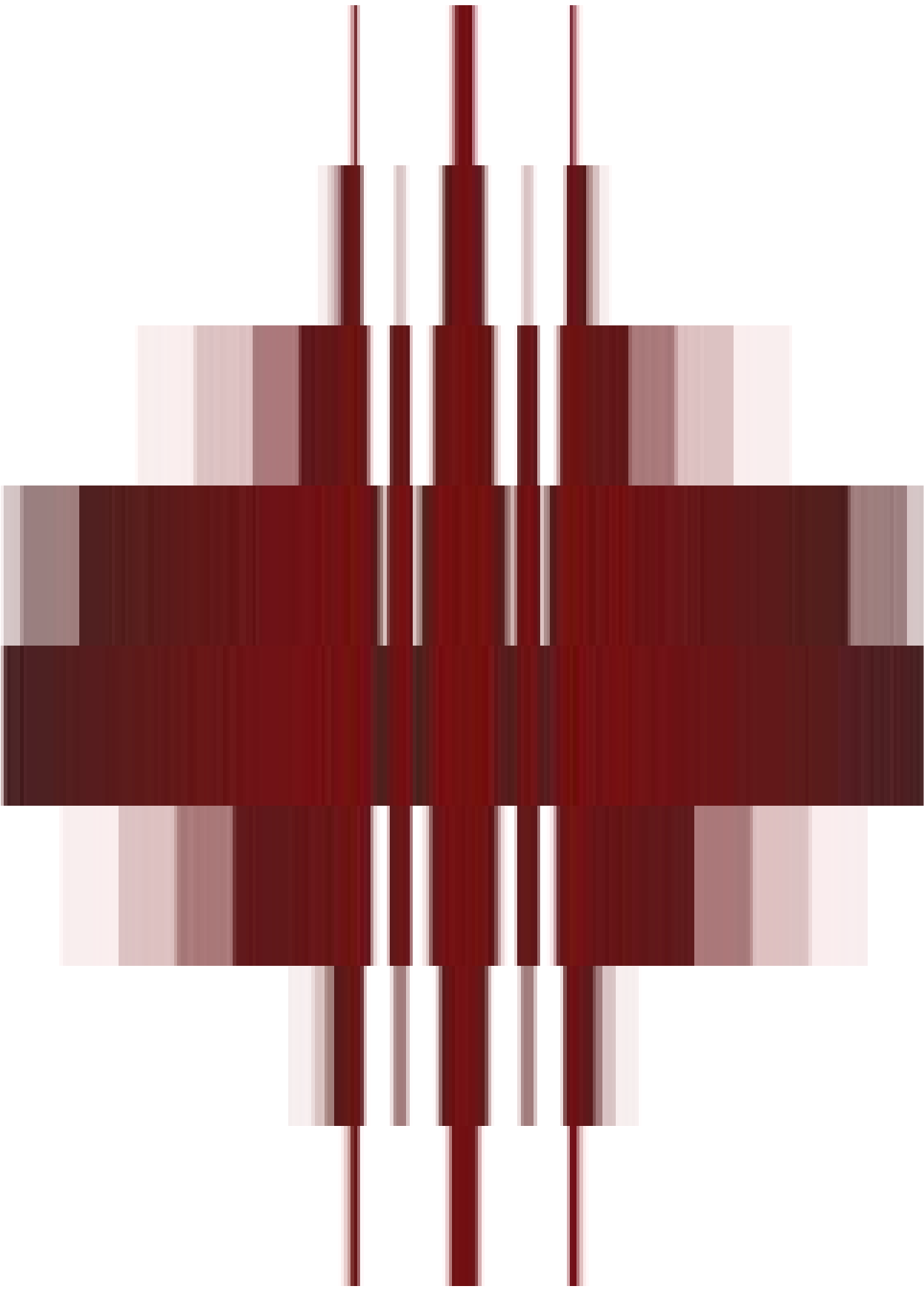
“And I know that His commandment is life everlasting”: The wisdom dropped into the Christ Consciousness of Jesus from the Cosmic Consciousness, and formulated into words by him, is eternally true and will give unto all the

enlightenment of life everlasting. “Whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak”—whatever the physical self of Jesus uttered at the prompting of the Christ Consciousness in him was what the Cosmic Consciousness vibrated as a commandment to him to be given for the guidance of the world.



Discourse 67

**Did Jesus Prophecy His Second Coming and the End
of the World?**



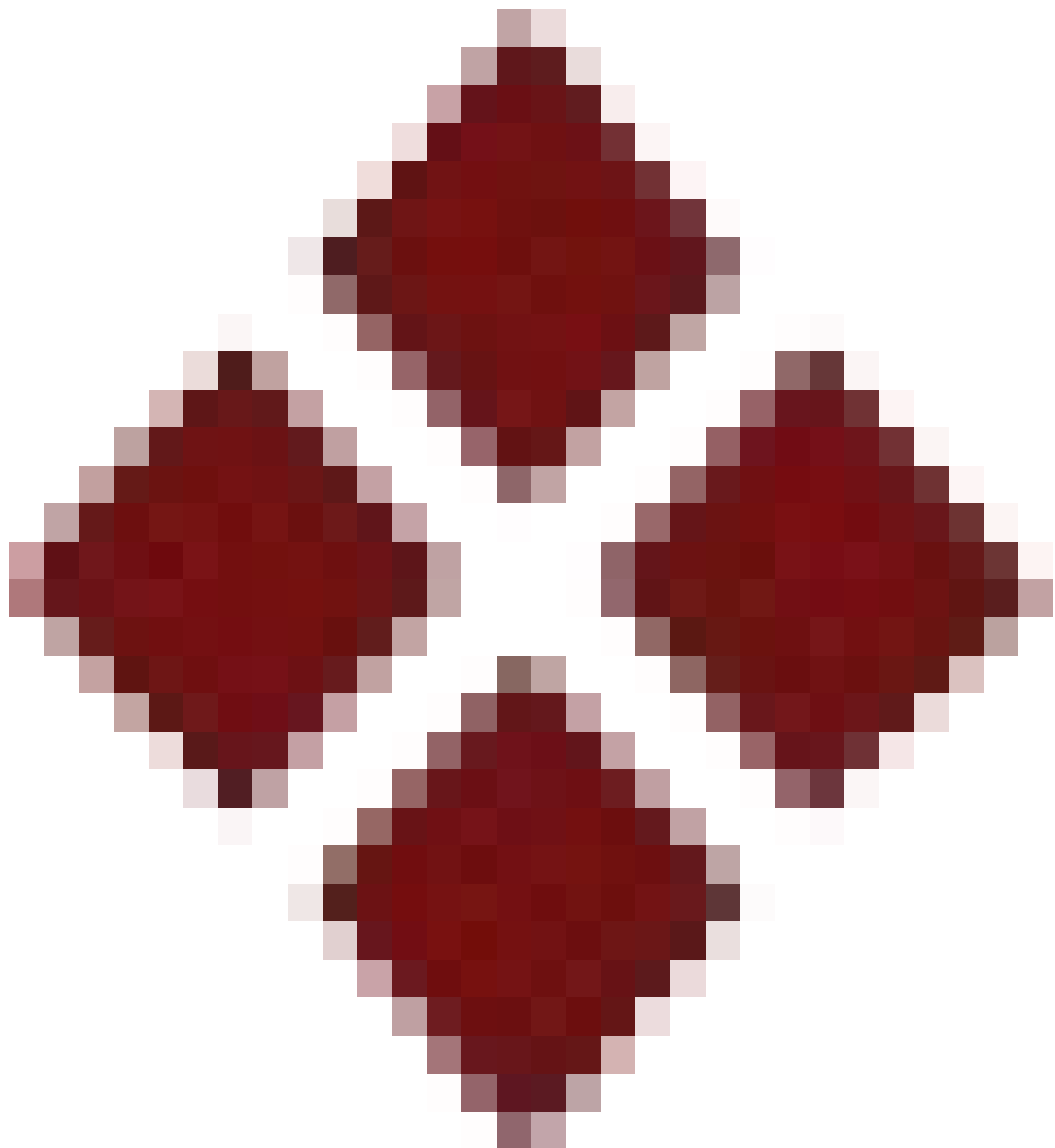
True Significance of Jesus' Words About "the End of the World"



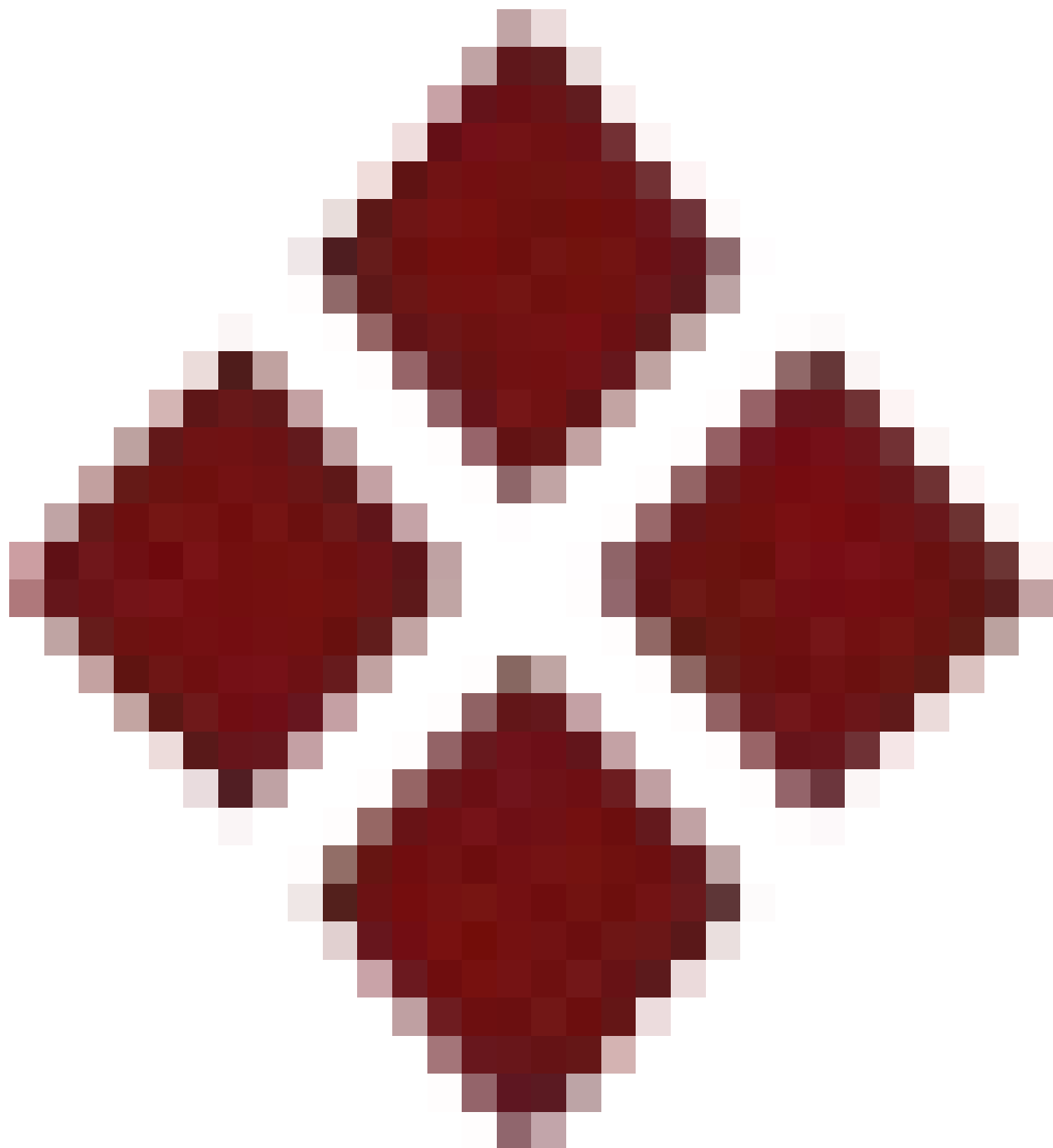
The Metaphysical Cause of Wars, Famines, and Natural Catastrophes



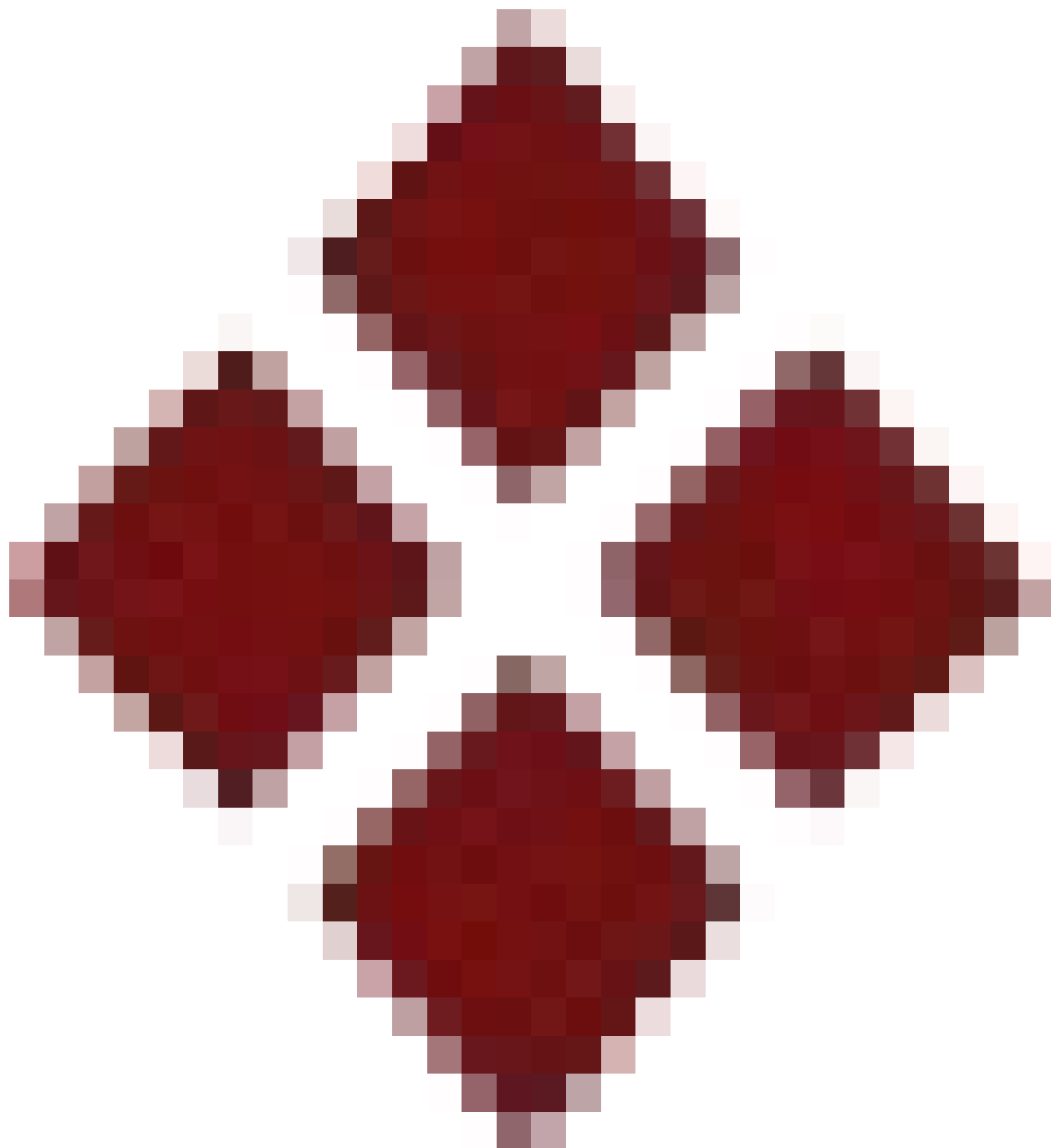
**The True “Second Coming” of Christ: In Each
Devotee’s Own Consciousness**



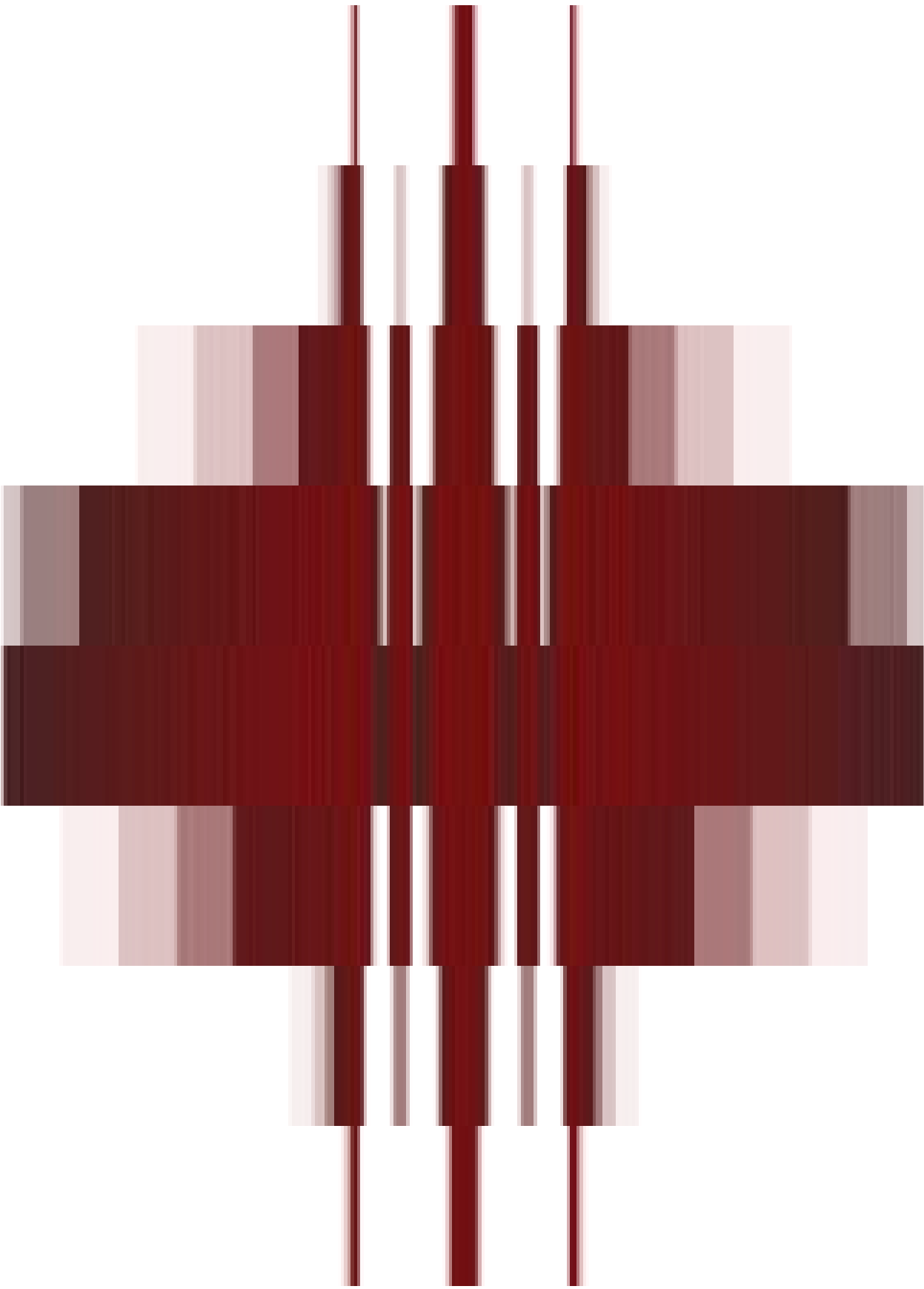
How Devotees Can Recognize the Signs of Approaching Liberation



“As in the Days of Noah”: The Sorry Fate of the Spiritually Heedless



Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins: The Need for Continuous Spiritual Zeal



“Jesus in a masterly fashion, in intermixing prophecy and metaphor, answered the questions of his disciples...These predictions...had obviously a deeper metaphysical meaning.”

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And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple.

And Jesus said unto them, "See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

And Jesus answered and said unto them, "Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, 'I am Christ'; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

"For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.

"Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

"When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

"And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those

days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day: For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

“And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.

“Then if any man shall say unto you, ‘Lo, here is Christ, or there’; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, ‘Behold, he is in the desert’; go not forth: ‘Behold, he is in the secret chambers’; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

“And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

“Now learn a parable of the fig tree; when his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.

“Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

“But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the

coming of the Son of man be.

“Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.”

—Matthew 24:1 – 42¹

“Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.

“And at midnight there was a cry made, ‘Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.’ Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, ‘Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.’ But the wise answered, saying, ‘Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.’

“And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us.’ But he answered and said, ‘Verily I say unto you, I know you not.’ Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.”

—Matthew 25:1 – 13²



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Discourse 67

**Did Jesus Prophecy His Second Coming and the End
of the World?**



And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple.

And Jesus said unto them, “See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down” (Matthew 24:1 – 2).³

Jesus saw in his mind's eye that the monumental structures so impressive to his disciples would in a future time, without fail, crumble to pieces, their every stone tumbling down to disintegrate in the earth. ⁴ So he reminded the disciples of the short-lived nature of even the grandest and most formidable works of man. Famous edifices amassed of many seemingly perdurable stones, as also celebrated human lives built of innumerable valued thoughts and experiences, all would in time be reduced to dust and cosmic invisibility. Why be overawed by Jerusalem's temple or any other transient accomplishment of men or nations? Rather, Jesus wanted his followers to focus their attention within on the everlasting kingdom of God.



And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples⁵ came unto him privately, saying, “Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?”

And Jesus answered and said unto them, “Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, ‘I am Christ’; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

“For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.

“Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Matthew 24:3 – 14).⁶

Jesus in a masterly fashion, in intermixing prophecy and metaphor, answered the questions of his disciples: When would the destruction of the temple occur? What signs would announce his coming and the end of the world?



Jesus tells his disciples of their future persecutions and ultimate salvation

Addressing the question of his own reappearance, he warned (in the above verses and again in verses

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) that even during the lifetime of the disciples many false prophets would claim to be the returned Christ, and that the disciples must not give any credence to these manifestations of the influence of cosmic delusion. Adding to his prediction of the destruction of the temple, he foretold that “wars and rumours of wars” would continue, as also “famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.” He counseled his disciples not to lose their untroubled consciousness of soul immortality even when they witnessed such dire events, which “must come to pass” due to the effects of mass evil actions.

Jesus also spoke of the persecutions—and ultimate reward—that awaited his faithful disciples: “Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake....But he that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved.”

A similar prediction made by Jesus to his disciples is recorded in the Gospel According to St. Luke: “And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake. But there shall not an hair of your head perish. In your patience possess ye your souls”⁷—(“neither by persecution nor death will anyone be able to destroy a single spiritual hair on your head of wisdom; in patient, undisturbed calmness, and with will power to remain inwardly unaffected, you will repossess the forgotten consciousness of your immortal soul”).

Thus when Jesus said, “Then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another,” he was foreseeing not only the outrage against his immediate disciples, but also the mass denunciation and persecution

of early Christians,⁸ how un-Christian members of the same family would turn against their Christian relatives and even cause their death. Yet all devotees have his assurance that by patiently concentrating on the immutability of their souls—even during persecution or death—they will ultimately realize their immortality and peace in God, the salvation earned by those “that shall endure to the end.”

Jesus’ prophecy that after his passing “some of you shall they cause to be put to death” materialized with fearful accuracy as, one by one, most of the twelve were martyred—stabbed, crucified, beheaded, stoned, flayed alive, or pierced with arrows.⁹ But he foretold that in spite of all such persecutions and their seemingly ominous portent, through the sacrifices of the faithful and because of the decree of God, his teaching would be preached among all nations. Indeed, the message of Jesus has been proclaimed to receptive souls worldwide; the New Testament itself has been translated and published in most of the languages of the world.



True significance of Jesus' words about "the end of the world"

These predictions, as being linked to the end of the world, in answer to the disciples' last question, had obviously a deeper metaphysical meaning. Jesus knew that the purpose for which the world was created would not be fulfilled so long as physical disturbances marred earth life. He intimated that disruptions in the potential harmony of nature presuppose human imperfection; and as long as human beings nurture their flawed mortality in desires for the pleasures of this world and misuse of their free will, they will be bound to cycles of birth and death on earth. Hence, as long as the earth is needed for the evolutionary reincarnation of souls, so long it has to bear its burdensome existence. But when all souls are liberated by manifesting Christ Consciousness, they will then be held in the bosom of God, and the captive swirling atoms of the uninhabited earth will be freed. All this Jesus signified when he said that the wars and catastrophes he prophesied would not be signs of the end of the world, but rather warnings of great human sorrow: "But the end is not yet" or (as recorded in Luke) "the end is not by and by."

Jesus was also referring to the culmination of the earth's usefulness when he said: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." Jesus made his point by setting forth the proposition that when the teachings of Christ Consciousness saturated with the vibrations of Cosmic Consciousness—Spirit's omnipresence, Kutastha Chaitanya, reflected in the universe and in every soul—will be "preached," lived, in all parts of the world by Christlike disciples and followers of realized truth, their exemplary lives will be the highest testimony, witnessing unto all nations, of the way to liberation. When their ideally free lives will lead peoples of the earth to curb their waywardness and seek their own liberation through the attainment of Christ Consciousness, then and then only would the purpose of the world be fulfilled. Universal salvation—for which the world was created—being accomplished, the earth atoms would then be recalled in God.¹⁰

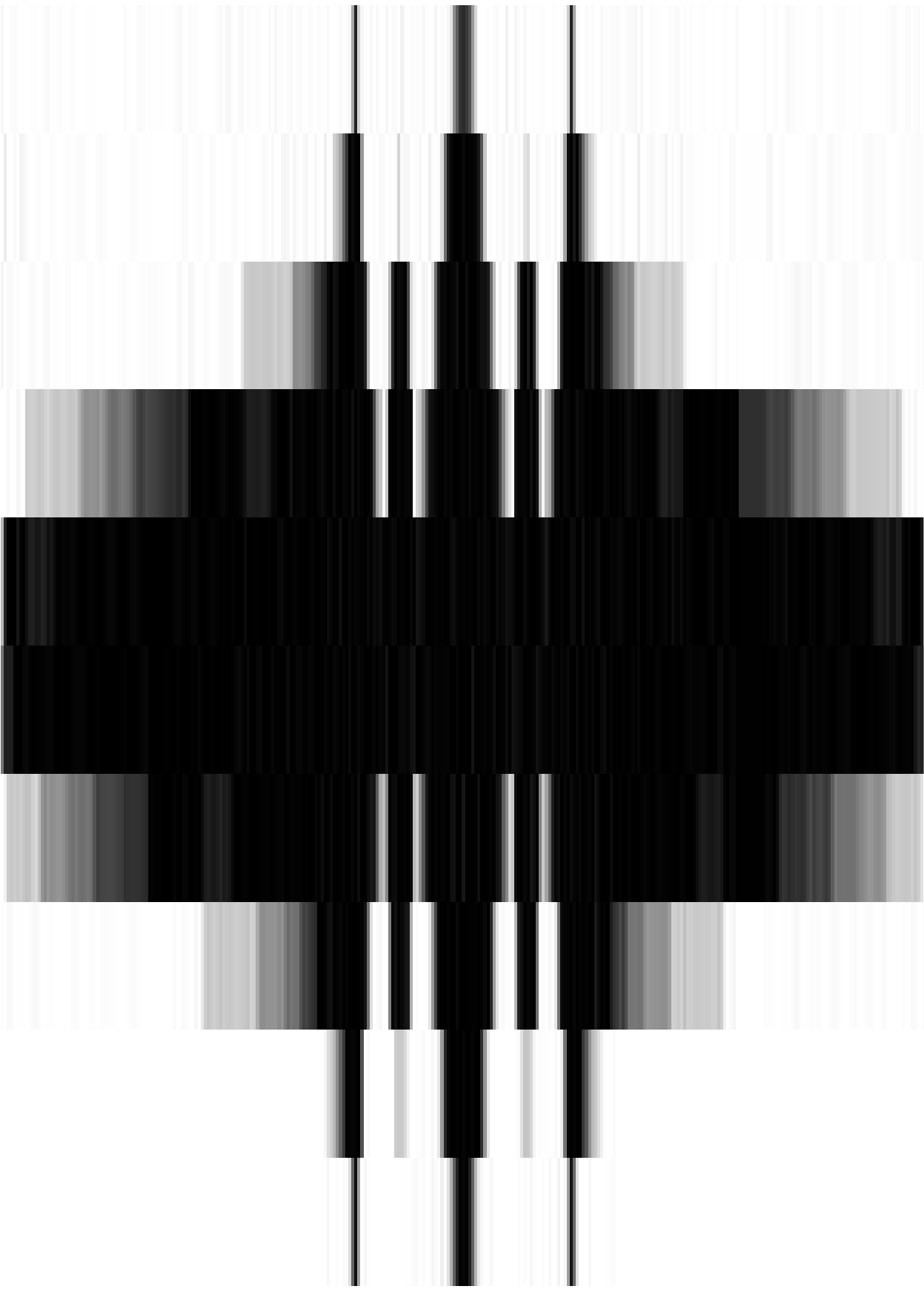
This explanation, which Jesus Christ dropped in my consciousness, reveals the misguided imagination of many so-called prophets who, every few years, prophesy to their credulous followers the end of the world—coming on such-and-such a date in such-and-such a year. No wonder Jesus warned about false prophets!

In a celebrated case in

1925

, a fanatic self-elected reformer told his disciples that they should sell their properties, or give them away, and await the end of the world on a mountaintop near New York City. He promised that they would be received into heaven, while the rest of a spiritually disenfranchised humanity would perish in a great flood. On the appointed day, the followers, angelically garbed in long, flowing robes, waited in vain throughout the long day and night for the end of the world and their salvation. When the “prophesied” time had passed, the disillusioned acolytes left their mountaintop vigil and came back “down to earth” again—in more ways than one!—regretting the loss of properties from which they had dispossessed themselves. Then, being disappointed in their heavenly aspirations, they tried by lawsuits to recover their possessions of earthly happiness.

Gullible persons who hearken to periodic predictions that the end of the world is imminent might as well wake up and take notice of the prophecy of Jesus that the end shall come only when teachings inspired by the Christ Consciousness (God’s Universal Intelligence, Kutastha Chaitanya, which visits the earth again and again in avatars) liberate all of God’s children.



The metaphysical cause of wars, famines, and natural catastrophes

When Jesus said that “nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom,” he was sadly foreseeing the near-continuous campaigns of mass violence and bloodshed brought by warring clans and countries against each other—a prophecy that in the centuries since the time of Jesus has been (and will continue to be) fulfilled repeatedly. Man’s ignorance-born prejudice, greed, and sense-enslaved selfishness are the true cause of his inability to live in peace with his fellows. Jesus knew that until these were checked, they would inevitably result in the race wars, religious wars, and the innumerable bloody conflicts over land and material resources that have with horrifying regularity wrought destruction and misery among the nations.¹¹ He further perceived that the veritable deluge of negative vibrations released into the ether by wars (as by the other evils of worldly civilization, to greater or lesser extent) would generate additional catastrophes: “And there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.” Again, history confirms the accuracy of Jesus’ words; tragic instances are recorded from every era and every portion of the earth. In this twentieth century, for example, the Spanish influenza epidemic immediately following World War I killed more people than did the fighting. And after World War II, millions starved during famines in various parts of the world created by crop failures—the result not only of wartime conditions, but of “natural” causes such as plant diseases, flooding, and severe storms.

Rarely has a decade gone by without devastating earthquakes, floods, conflagrations, and other disasters that have ravaged man’s life and livelihood. Such fearful experiences have been severe warnings sent by the heavenly cosmic law to the people of the earth that they might realize the uncertainty of life and do their part to stabilize it by changing their ways. The vibrations of the evils of earthly civilizations accumulate in the cosmic blueprint of the astral regions and adversely affect the subtle energies and laws that empower the forces of the earth. These effects of man’s collective folly and evils are stored in the ether as hidden vibratory bombs ready to explode in the form of nature’s inclemencies or national disasters.¹² Jesus prophesied truly that these wars and troubles are only “the beginning of sorrows,” unless people heed these portentous signs and reform their thoughts and actions.

The admonition of Jesus concerning the law of habit governing individuals

applies equally to the earthly habits of civilizations: “Unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.”¹³ If the people through their collective evil karma generate wars and miseries, such calamities will by their perfidious nature keep on multiplying; whereas if people did not persistently create evil karma and its proliferation of suffering, even those evil inclinations that remain would diminish and vanish.



“When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

“And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day: For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

“And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened” (Matthew 24:15 – 22).¹⁴

Parallel reference:

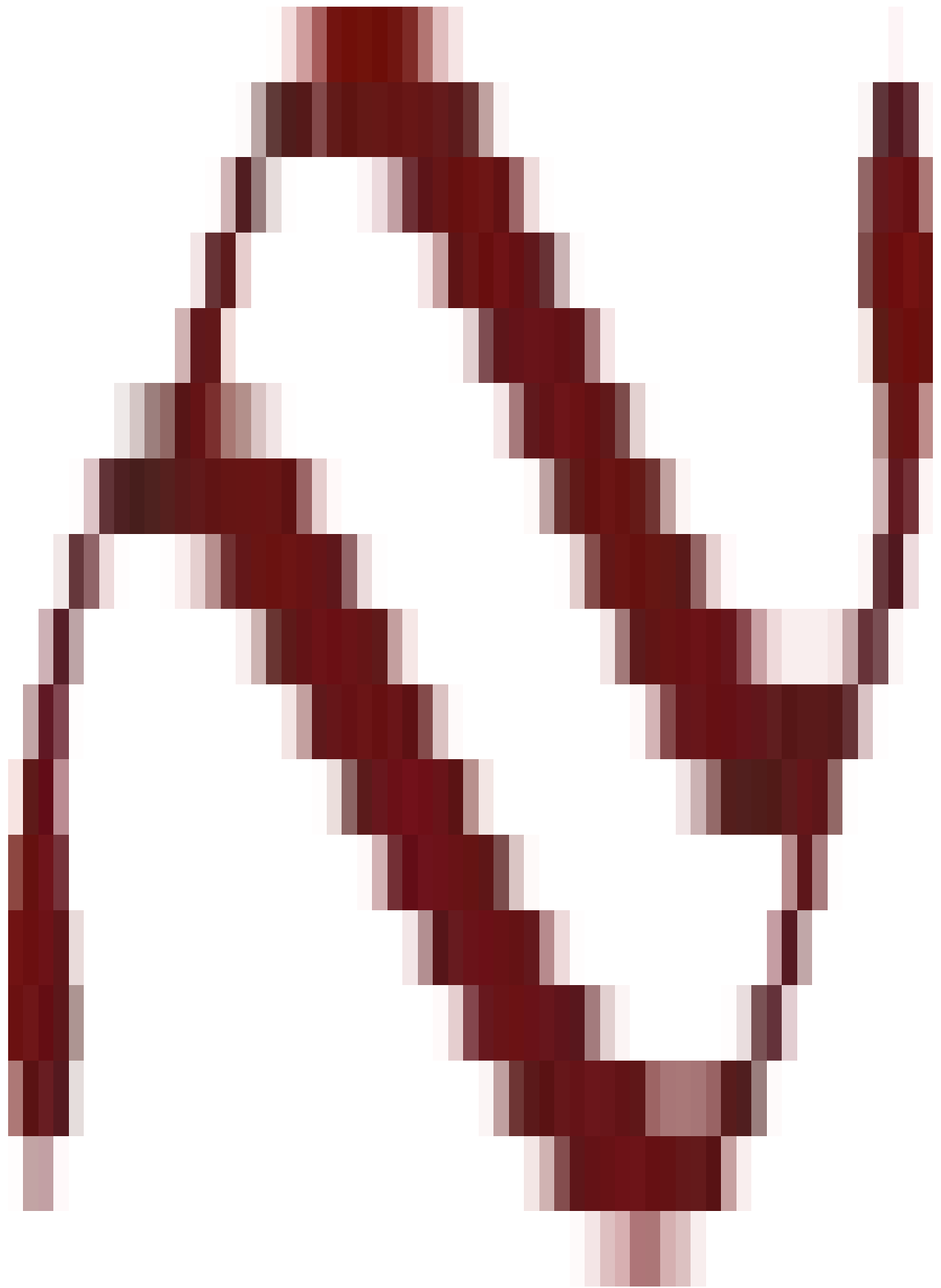
“And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

“But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled” (Luke 21:20 – 24).

When Jesus spoke of Daniel's prophecy of "the abomination of desolation," the desecration of the "holy place," he was foreseeing the invasion of Jerusalem by many nations—not only the devastation wrought by the Romans during the lifetime of that generation, but for centuries to come.¹⁵ There were to be wars in that land between the Christians and the non-Christians, wars between the Crusaders and the Saracens. The tribulations he describes show again the workings of the law of karma.

With no true safety to be found in a world of shocking desolations, Jesus adjures the faithful to "stand in the holy place"; Matthew adds "whoso readeth, let him understand": be firmly concentrated in Cosmic Consciousness in the holy temple of Spirit in the highest cerebral center of transcendent divine perception. This sheltering Presence is the only true sanctuary impermeable to human affliction.

"But for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened," promised Jesus. Then, or today, if man had to pay all the karma accrued through incarnations "there should no flesh be saved." But, as he explained, even if true devotees have seeds of past evil actions in them, they will find that, because of their virtue and the grace of God, much of their karma is allayed and the term of suffering lessened.



“Then if any man shall say unto you, ‘Lo, here is Christ, or there’; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, ‘Behold, he is in the desert’; go not forth: ‘Behold, he is in the secret chambers’; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together” (Matthew 24:23 – 28).¹⁶

Parallel reference:

And he said unto the disciples, “The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it. And they shall say to you, ‘See here’; or, ‘See there’: go not after them, nor follow them. For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of one part under heaven shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day. But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation” (Luke 17:22 – 25).



Jesus speaks of the divine law of loyalty to the guru as a God-sent messenger

“The time will come after my passing when you will be very anxious to see a Son of man, or human body, manifesting Christ Consciousness like this form of mine; but you will not find it (because such a complete manifestation of Christ Consciousness as is incarnate in my body occurs rarely, once in a long while—after many, many years or centuries). Ignorant enthusiasts will tell you, ‘Look, we have found a great teacher here, or there in that land.’ Be sure not to go after those false prophets, even though they show spectacular signs and wonders. Cling to your God-given Guru-savior through whom you are to be redeemed according to divine ordinance.”

Jesus reiterated that his true followers must guard against the temptation of listening to false prophets claiming to be Christlike teachers and trying to draw a following by magical or hypnotic tricks and “miracles” of spiritually useless phenomenal feats.¹⁷ However, though Jesus denounced imposters, he never claimed that Christ Consciousness was manifested only in his body, called Jesus, and could not be manifested in any other Christlike soul at any other time.

Jesus spoke in the perfect humility of attunement with God in telling his disciples that they did not need any other spiritual guide, for in him was made manifest the fullness of God: “As the lightning starts from one part under heaven and shines to the most distant part, so the illumination of Christ Consciousness (the reflection of God in creation, ‘under heaven’) has become manifest in my body from Cosmic Consciousness, complete and absolute as was never in anyone else during this generation.” “In his day,” in the lifetime of Jesus, in “the Son of man,” his physical life, the highest qualities of God were actualized. Thus the disciples had no cause to seek out any other prophets, lest in diffusing their spiritual focus they break the divine law of loyalty to him, their God-sent messenger, ordained to be their Guru-savior, who would look after them until they attained final emancipation.¹⁸ The promise of the guru, as Jesus intimated to the disciples, is that “If you are loyal to me, then even when my body is gone from the earth I will guide and protect you through my omnipresent consciousness.”



The true “second coming” of Christ: in each devotee’s own consciousness

“As lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west,” so the Christ Consciousness that entered into the body of Jesus and illumined his whole being and his teachings would spread out to enlighten not only the minds of his immediate disciples, but all humanity for all time:

“Although my body, the Son of man in which the Christ Consciousness is personified, has to go through persecution and crucifixion and will be rejected by this generation, the significance of my life and teachings—because of their universality, completeness, and all-satisfying nature—will be accepted later throughout the world, as lightning covers the entire heavens. And just as eagles from far off locate a carcase and gather around to feast on it, so because of the Christ-essence arising from the sacrifice of my life, people from far parts of the earth will sense a filling repast in my teachings and gather about them to experience in their own consciousness the manifestation of Christ Consciousness, ‘the coming of the Son of man.’”¹⁹

On a personal level, the disciples were to understand that whosoever, of whatever generation, would interiorize their consciousness in deep meditation would experience the coming of the Son of man—a manifestation of Christ Consciousness—through the Christ light in the spiritual eye (“the lightning which cometh out of the east”) illumining and spiritualizing their whole being (“shining even unto the west”). Souls thus transformed from material body consciousness to refined soul realization find that the eagles of desires that feed on sensory temptations have fled, and in their stead the heretofore distant eagles of divine yearnings are attracted to feast on truth realizations.²⁰

Alas, through the misinterpretation of the above passages, many think that Jesus will return to earth again like lightning out of heaven. The Christ Consciousness of which Jesus spoke can come a second time in anyone, at any time—provided that devotee enlarge the cup of his consciousness until it can hold the infinite ocean of Christ Consciousness. A thousand Christs sent to earth would not redeem its people unless they themselves became Christlike by purifying and expanding their individual consciousness to receive therein the second coming of the Christ Consciousness, as was manifested in Jesus. It is futile to look for another coming of Jesus out of the clouds of the sky (see pages following). God,

who is taciturnly humble, though almighty, will never permit such a spectacular demonstration of His glory before the undevotional gaze of wicked people. But by moral discipline, continuous devotional prayer, and deep meditation, God can be contacted in inner silence as Ever New Joy. This joy felt in meditation denotes also contact with Christ Intelligence in its essential oneness with God. When the devotee feels God and His reflected Christ-Son as the tangible bliss of meditation, he should offer the unctuous worship of his love on the altar of that divine perception—with all the devotion of the heart, with all the intuition of the soul, with all the undivided concentration of the mind, and with all the strength of the life energy of the body. Thereby the devotee fulfills the highest commandment, the paramount law required to know God. Contact with this Consciousness, experienced in the ever new joy of meditation, will be the real second coming of Christ—and it will take place right in the devotee's own consciousness.



“Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

“And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

“Now learn a parable of the fig tree; when his branch is yet tender and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.

“Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. But of that day and hour knoweth no man, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only” (Matthew 24:29 – 36).

Parallel reference:

“And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

“And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.”

And he spake to them a parable; “Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.

“Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

“And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man” (Luke 21:25 – 36).²¹



World disasters and man's subsequent spiritual awakening prophesied by Jesus

Jesus predicted: Immediately after disastrous tribulations have pervaded the earth because of its mass evil karma, “the beginning of sorrows,” still greater troubles will ensue as the result of an escalation of evil. Through the destructive vibrations of the nations which are spread out over her, the earth's natural harmony will be lost, so that even the life-giving energy and light of the sun and moon will temporarily be diminished, and great “falling stars” of meteors will break loose from their orbits and fly into the atmosphere of the earth, creating geographic disturbances and arousing anxiety in the minds of nations. Owing to the disruption of the normally benign electromagnetic rays of the sun and moon, the many seas will be roiling with upheavals and tidal waves. Materially minded men's hearts and minds will be fearfully affected upon beholding the earthly upsets and the disarrangement of the heavenly forces brought on by man's own wrong vibrations. ²²

And then as the people, heeding these warnings of the cosmic law, repent and through prayer and meditation gradually increase in spirituality, those who become sufficiently developed will behold “the sign of the Son of man in heaven,” the tangible vision (sign) of Christ through the opening up of the awakened spiritual eye, leading into Christ Consciousness. They will be granted visions of embodied Christ Consciousness, materialized out of the mysteries of the heavenly astral region of light-forms, manifesting the power and glory of Cosmic Consciousness. “Then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn (repent), and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”²³ The true devotees of all nations—those who had repented of past errors and developed spiritually—would be able to look into the spiritual eye and lift the consciousness from the peripheral bodily senses to the highest center of inner divine perception in the cerebral region, where they could see the embodied Christ Consciousness (Jesus) coming out of the ethereal clouds of the darkness of closed eyes into the Christ light of the spiritual eye, his form radiant with luminous heavenly power and great glory.

The devotees will also behold angels or liberated souls vibrant with the Cosmic Vibration (“a great sound of a trumpet”). And such devotees will also behold, in the light of their awakened Christ Consciousness, a gathering of the manifested presence of liberated souls (the “elect” or selected) from the four directions, or

uttermost corners of the earth, and from distant parts of the astral heaven.²⁴

In this revelation to his disciples, and to any future devotees, Jesus spoke of the science of yoga. “Look up and lift up your heads”: When devotees will have looked up into the spiritual eye and lifted the consciousness to the cerebral throne of light (sahasrara or thousand-rayed lotus of life and light in the brain, which shines like a thousand suns in its power and glory) they could behold, through the manifestation of the above-mentioned visions, some materialized form of Christ Consciousness, and perhaps see liberated souls as angels in the astral world. Then such devotees would know that they were spiritually advanced enough to be redeemed soon from earthly miseries and reincarnations —“your redemption draweth nigh”—to become lodged in the sorrowless, fear-free, ever-new joyous state of Cosmic Consciousness.



Jesus will not come out of the clouds to punish the wicked and rule a kingdom on earth

This veiled promise given by Jesus has created great misunderstanding among many Christian sects. These firmly believe that God will literally produce Jesus out of the clouds in the sky in a glorious display and with His power will destroy the “wicked” (non-conforming) people of the earth and give redemption to selected worshipers. Jesus said, “This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.” Yet, twenty centuries have passed, and Jesus has not yet come out of the clouds openly before the different nations, “tribes.” Many true devotees throughout the ages, however, have in ecstatic states of devout meditation seen Jesus coming out of the clouds of darkness of their closed eyes, resplendent in great power and glory. Saint Francis, who saw Jesus many times and talked with him in the woods of Assisi, testifies to all mankind by his own experience—as have other saints—the fulfillment of the prophecy of Jesus that devotees of any clime or time who transmute material pursuits into spiritual advancement will witness Jesus Christ, and angels and liberated souls, in their visions. But it is a sadly futile wait for those who expect at some future time for Jesus to come out of the clouds to establish and rule an ideal kingdom in this world (or for that matter, to take only a select few from earth to such a kingdom patterned after a glorified earth in heaven).

Jesus reigns everlastingly in God’s kingdom of Infinity, redeeming souls who look to him for help in making their way to God. It is an absurd proposition—not least, a selfishly unkind one—to want the infinite consciousness in Jesus to be confined forever in a limited form to rule a kingdom on earth (or in heaven) of a chosen few from the multitudes of God’s children, the masses of which (even perhaps one’s own beloved kin) would perforce forever thereafter exist in torment in perdition. That would not be an act of the Almighty God I know whose love has filled my heart, nor the judgment of the exquisitely compassionate Jesus who forgave and blessed those who had fallen into sin.

From his home in Infinity, Jesus observes with omnipresent awareness, along with other of God’s angels and liberated masters, the affairs of man and the ordered destiny of the cosmic drama. The presence of Jesus and the Great Ones in the immanent Christ Consciousness responds to any outreach of man’s heart, and maintains a constant pull toward God in the tug-of-war with the outgoing

influence of satanic power. Redemption is nigh at any time for those who loosen their souls from the bonds of maya and absorb their consciousness in the uplifting power of divine intercession and God's grace.



How devotees can recognize the signs of approaching liberation

To illustrate how the devotee recognizes the signs of the unfoldment of Self-realization, Jesus spoke of the young leaves of the fig tree that appear as a certainty of summer's approach. So, likewise, a disciple or true devotee who sees through the awakened spiritual eye any materialized vision of Christ or of liberated souls or of some manifested attribute of the Infinite can then know through pure intuition that the tree of his salvation has put forth tender branches of realization and leaves of divine perception, and that the summer of his final liberation is near at hand.

Jesus foresaw that even his contemporary generation would not pass away before some had begun to experience these signs of approaching liberation through his teachings. But to emphasize that his message was for all time, he affirmed that the truth of his words as a path to salvation—being the reflection of Cosmic Consciousness—would outlast even the dissolution of earth and astral worlds. Truth, and its manifest expression of wisdom, are changeless and eternal; creation and its forces are subject to change and extinguishment. The words of Jesus embody eternal truth and hence they will abide to outlive the presumptuous perdurability of all created things.

When Jesus said of the signs of the advent of liberation: "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only," he was praising the singular grandeur of Almighty God who alone can know certain things, concealed even from His greatest devotees. God is the sole Knower unrestricted by the consequential relativities of time and space, cause and effect; everything is revealed in His consciousness of the Eternal Now, while even the angels have a conditional existence and overview in their purpose of serving the universal order through cosmic law. As has been explained, the time of liberation of an individual is entirely problematic, dependent upon the use of one's free will and subject to the acquired spiritual merits and the degree and depth of the devotion with which one imbues one's efforts. Therefore, since the devotee himself determines the day and hour of liberation, according to his spiritual ardor and quality of meditation, which can quicken it or delay it, only the Cosmic Consciousness within Itself knows and can foretell that auspicious moment. Liberated souls, however, who can say with Jesus, "I and my Father are one," can thereby realize in a transcendent state the omniscience of God's

Cosmic Consciousness; but this knowing is not always immediately relatable to the here and now of a tedious cause-and-effect cosmos of conditional perspective.

“Take heed therefore, continuously pray, meditate, and watch the tricks of the fickle mind to see if it is centered on God or not; for you know not when trials and delusions will overtake you and test you as to whether you are qualifying for liberation.”



“But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (Matthew 24:37 – 39).

Parallel reference:

“And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.

“Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.

“In that day, he which shall be upon the house top, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field let him likewise not return back. Remember Lot’s wife.

“Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it” (Luke 17:26 – 33).



“As in the days of Noah”: the sorry fate of the spiritually heedless

“Even as people rejected Noah’s warning and unconcernedly went about their commonplace preoccupation with eating, drinking, and marriage festivities, so will this ignorance-drunk generation reject me. Those who disdained Noah did not realize their mistake until they were inundated by the deluge, while Noah floated safely away on the crest of the flood; so also this careless generation will not realize the consequences of its wickedness until I depart, taken up in the divine ark of Cosmic Consciousness. With the disappearance of Noah, the people’s only means of safety was gone; so with my disappearance the wicked people of this generation will have lost the opportunity for the quickening of their salvation through the direct intercession of my physical presence among them (the coming of the Son of man), and they will instead be swept away by the flood of ignorance.”

As in Noah’s day, so ordinary people today let themselves be engulfed by the flood of delusion; they refuse an opportunity to be saved by entering the ark of meditation designed according to a proven formula of techniques designated by a true guru who is a savior of souls. As Noah was divinely guided to carry with him a multitude of worthwhile animals and the dove of peace—and all on the ark were thereafter saved by the Lord—so must the devotee carry into his ark of meditation all his precious perceptions and earthly experiences and the dove of aspiration to be transported to the safety of Self-realization.

“Similarly in the days of Lot, the people heedlessly ate, drank, bought, sold, planted, and built; but the same day that the Lord guided Lot and his family out of Sodom, it rained fire and meteors from heaven and destroyed the city and all its inhabitants.²⁵ Even thus shall it be on the day that my body (the Son of man) shall be taken out of the earth and revealed in heaven. The fire of ignorance and brimstone of misery will befall those who led materialistic lives during the time when I preached the kingdom of God.

“In the aftermath of my departure, those advanced disciples who have lifted their consciousness above the bodily house, let them not come down from Cosmic Consciousness to reidentify themselves with enjoyment of bodily pleasures. Let him who has been roaming in the fields of God-communion in Cosmic Consciousness not turn back to identification with material consciousness when

my voice of spiritual warning will be hushed in silence. Remember Lot's wife, who was somewhat spiritually advanced and was fleeing from the fire of ignorance and the brimstone of misery: When she turned back and put her attention on bodily sensations and desires, her spiritual life was turned into stone, completely destroyed.²⁶

“Whosoever shall be persistently concentrated on saving and protecting his physical life shall lose it in the forgetfulness of death and in the fogs of reincarnations; but whosoever shall give up his life to the search for God in meditation will find the consciousness of his mortal life prolonged and preserved into the everlastingness of the soul's eternal life.”

Jesus warns that anyone who is overly solicitous of the temporary manifestation of physical life will lose sight of the infinite life behind it. On the contrary, whosoever is prepared to sacrifice everything of an obstructive delusive nature in his physical life in order to gain realization of the Infinite will find human life changed into eternal life.²⁷



“Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come” (Matthew 24:40 – 42).

Parallel reference:

“I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.”

And they answered and said unto him, “Where, Lord?”

And he said unto them, “Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together” (Luke 17:34 – 37).



The truth about how each individual's karma and desires determine after-death fate

When Jesus spoke of two being in the field, and one being taken, the other left, he referred to the commonality of human beings— perhaps outwardly of comparable vocations and general countenance, whereas inwardly similarities give way to uniqueness, differing according to the quality of their inner life and thoughts. One person may be a great devotee of God and the other, very material. God bestows salvation (Self-realization) upon people not according to any outward condition or attainment, but commensurate with their inner spiritual qualifications.

Hence, out of two working in the field, or at the mill, the virtuous would be taken into heaven (saved, or freed from reincarnating), and the materially minded would be left on earth, lifetime after lifetime, until he had worked out his karmic bondage. Therefore, Jesus pointed out that since God's subtle law of karma decrees just judgment on people without being influenced by their social status or earthly acclaim, but as to what they are within their real selves and as to their accrued mental tendencies, it is up to the earnest devotee to meditate and be vigilant about the divine character of his inner consciousness. The spiritual aspirant must continuously ward off the invasion of delusions as he awaits the hour when Cosmic Consciousness and Christ Consciousness will visit him —“when your Lord doth come”—to offer final liberation.

In Luke, when Jesus said “one shall be taken and the other left,” the disciples inquired, “Where, Lord?” and Jesus replied: “Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.” The verses in this context convey a further metaphysical truth:

“In that night—when the night of confusion and karmic dissolution will come (when one's day of earthly activities is karmically dissolved in the bewildering mystery of the nighttime of death)—then of two souls sleeping on one bed, at rest in the after-death state in the astral world, the virtuous one will be taken toward liberation, and the unvirtuous left behind ready to reincarnate again on earth. Of the souls of two women in the after-death state who were striving to work out their karma, the successful one will be liberated, and the one of inferior accomplishment left to reincarnate on earth to continue to work out her karma on

the earth plane. And of two devotees roaming in the field of meditative divine communion after death, the advanced one will be taken into Cosmic Consciousness, and the other left to reincarnate for further spiritual endeavor on earth.

“Wherever the soul is encased—in the physical body or in the astral body or in the causal body—there the eagles of desires will gather to keep the soul a prisoner.”

A soul, being invisible, can only be distinguished by the presence of its body, whose existence is made possible by desires, the cohesive force of the three bodies.

If salt water is encased in a jar, and that jar sealed within a second jar, and the two sealed within a third jar and immersed in the ocean, the imprisoned salt water, though within the ocean, cannot contact it.

If the outer jar is broken, still the salt water cannot contact the ocean water. Only when the two other jars are broken also, can the salt water, freed from its containers, become one with the sea.

The soul (individualized Spirit) is similarly encased and imprisoned in three bodies, existing one within the other. The soul is enveloped in the causal body, a matrix of thirty-five elemental ideas of consciousness, which in turn is encased by the astral body of nineteen elements, which itself is surrounded by the physical body of sixteen elements.²⁸

In earthly life, when one's will is broken by trauma that severs the desire to live, death comes. The soul, however, remains encased in the astral and causal bodies, which are held together by the power of unfulfilled physical desires.

The soul must work out all physical, astral, and causal desires in order to break the limitations that keep it imprisoned. Only then can the soul mingle with the eternal Spirit.

Thus Jesus signified, in reply to the inquiry of the disciples, that the location of a soul can be known according to the presence of its bodies. Invisible souls can be distinguished, as to whether they are in the physical, astral, causal, or in the cosmos, according to their encasements in the three little bodies or the great cosmic body. Where there is a gathering of the eagles of physical desires, the

soul is evidenced in a physical body. Where there is a gathering of the eagles of astral desires, a soul will be found wearing an astral body. The presence of a causal body signifies a soul tenuously imprisoned therein under the influence of the eagles of causal desires.

When the soul is liberated from its three small limiting bodies, it becomes united to its omnipresent cosmic body, where the eagles of noble perception soar high in the infinitude of Cosmic Consciousness. Whereas the three little bodies are held together by their distinguishing physical, astral, and causal desires, the cosmic body of infinitude is manifest in the Divine Will.

The eagles of desires are both material and spiritual. So Jesus signified that the eagles of physical desires gather around the physical body to feast on sensory temptations. The eagles of desires in the astral body thrive on finer astral sensations. Everything is enjoyed as wondrously changing and manipulatable forms of light and vibration. Astral beings see, hear, smell, taste, and touch all forms of astral creation as mutable vibratory light.

The eagles of causal desires consist of enjoying everything by exquisitely keen perceptions of pure consciousness only. Souls encased only in the causal body know the whole of creation to be materialized dream ideas of God. Souls awake in the causal body can materialize anything they desire in thought forms more “real” than any physical sensation or astral perception, which are grossly dull and stifling to the soul’s fine causal sensibilities. Souls encased in the thin veil of the causal body work out their desires by manifesting them into dreams or condensed imagination, even as the Heavenly Father holds into being all creation as a cosmic dream.

As man transcends physical desires and progresses to the finer consciousness of astral and causal desires, he is endowed with a deeper realization of reality in his mastery of materializing anything in terms of astral light or in terms of condensed thoughts or dreams. He feels less tempted and bound by astral perceptions or the even finer causal perceptions than one experiences when attacked by the gross physical temptations endemic in the denser vibrations of material delusion.

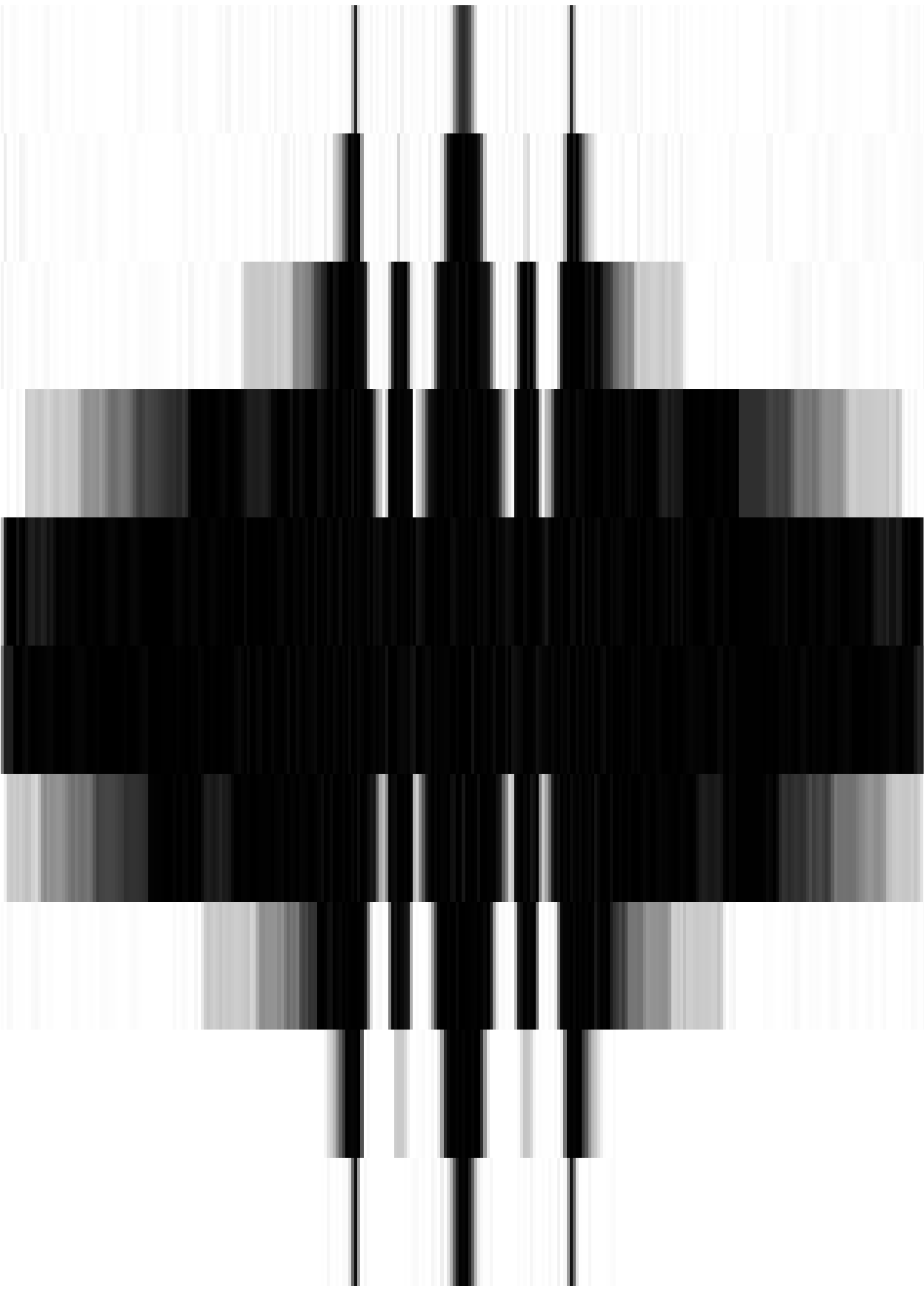
When the soul has overcome all desires and leaves the imprisonment of the three bodies, the eagles of superconscious perceptions soar in the Infinite in the soul’s cosmic body, one with the cosmic-bodied Spirit.²⁹



“Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.

“And at midnight there was a cry made, ‘Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.’ Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, ‘Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.’ But the wise answered, saying, ‘Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.’

“And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us.’ But he answered and said, ‘Verily I say unto you, I know you not.’ Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh” (Matthew 25:1 – 13).³⁰



Parable of the wise and foolish virgins: the need for continuous spiritual zeal

Continuing to exhort the disciples to be ready for the coming of the Son of man—for when the manifested Christ Consciousness will come to uplift them into final liberation in Cosmic Consciousness—Jesus related the following metaphorical parable:

The kingdom of heaven was craved by ten renunciants who, in meditation, had once lit the lamps of their consciousness with the light of Self-realization and had gone forth in expectation to meet the bridegroom of Christ Consciousness.³¹ Five of these celibates were wise in their preparation, while the other five were foolish in spiritual negligence. Those who were foolish had started well with their lamps of Self-realization, but they had been careless in their efforts to assure adequate oil of devotion and regularity in meditation in order to keep their lights burning indefinitely. The wise devotees had secured within their hearts enough oil of spiritual enthusiasm and deep regular meditation to keep steadily aflame their lamps of wisdom.

When the bridegroom of Christ Consciousness delayed manifesting itself in the ten devotees, they all “slumbered and slept,” remained for awhile in partial delusion, unconscious of the hiatus in their progress. But at the middle state—when they had moved partway toward the dawn of divine attainment—there was a vibration from within their souls that signified the approach of the bridegroom, the manifestation of Christ Consciousness, and that they must lift the light of their consciousness to meet him.

The prepared celibates lifted their lighted lamps of Self-realization, but the five foolish devotees remained in darkness. Then they requested of the wise ones, “Please give to us some of the oil of your devotion and vibrations of good habits, for the light of our Self-realization has gone out for lack of continuous spiritual enthusiasm.”

But the wise renunciants answered, “It cannot be done. The oil of devotion cannot be transferred. This precious fuel cannot be obtained unless you yourself acquire it by your daily spiritual practices.”

So while the unprepared devotees were busy trying to attain the necessary devotion to reillumine their darkened lamps of Self-realization, the bridegroom

of Christ Consciousness manifested in the consciousness of the five devoted celibates who were prepared and able to follow him to the realm of Spirit. There within their own consciousness they witnessed and participated in the uniting of the Christ Consciousness to Cosmic Consciousness, forever wedded to the Blissful Absolute.

And then the door of divine manifestation was closed for awhile, so that when the five foolish devotees—trying to relight their delusion-extinguished devotion—prayed: “Lord Christ Consciousness, manifest yourself in our consciousness,” the inner voice replied, “Verily, you are not yet ready to know (contact) the Christ Consciousness within you.”

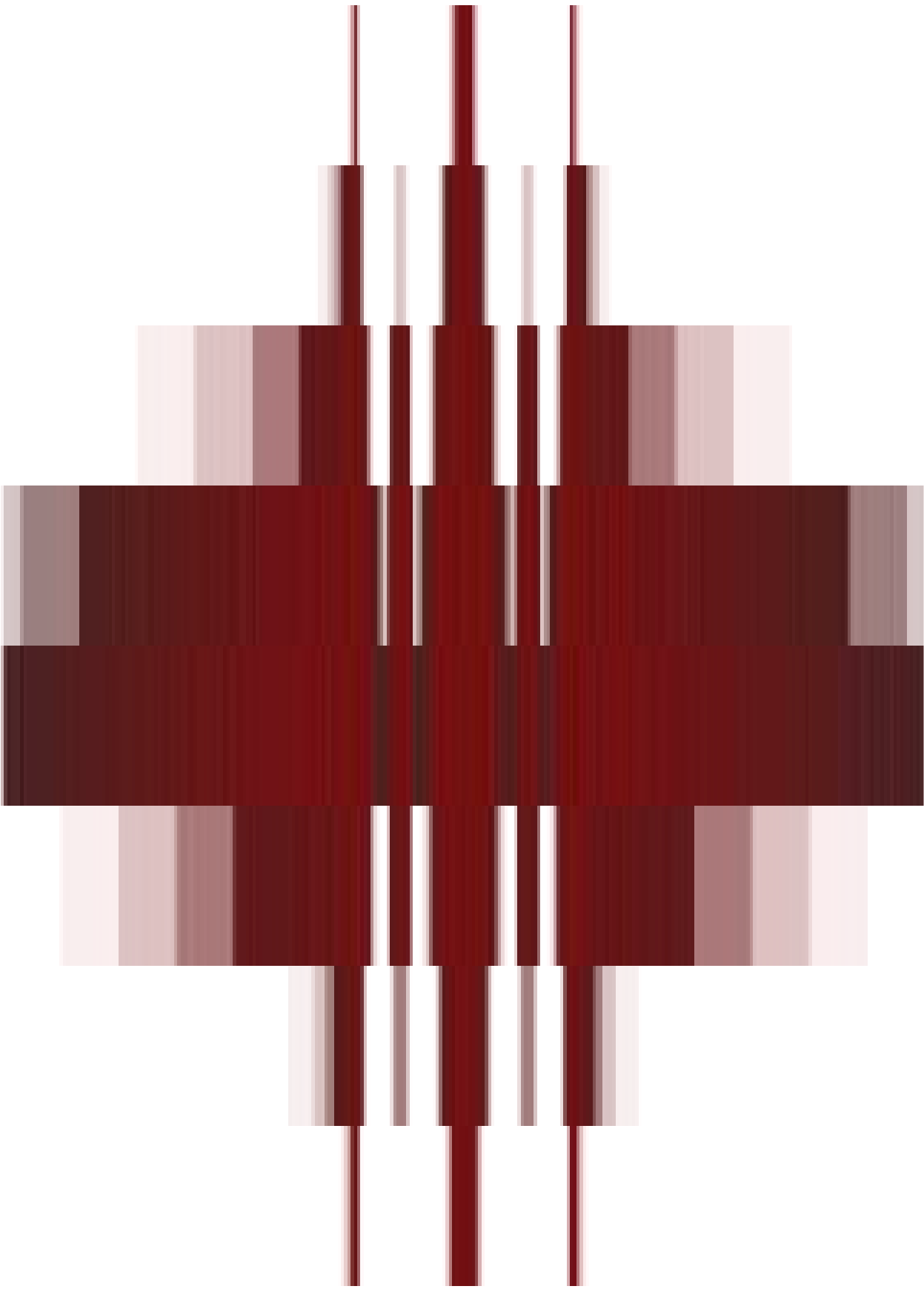
Lest any sincere aspirants be found wanting, it behooves them to meditate deeply and devoutly to keep the intuitive inner consciousness always watchful and prepared for the unknown day or hour when the Son of man, the manifestation of Christ Consciousness, will manifest to them.

When Jesus related this parable of the ten virgins, it was to emphasize that even austere celibate renunciants cannot receive God with only a momentary illumination in their lamp of Self-realization; they must also have the oil of devotion and constant meditation and spiritual zeal to keep the inspiration of Self-realization continuously burning. All who maintain the steady flame of spiritual ardor will surely be ready and able to receive the Divine One when unexpectedly He enters the inner chamber of consciousness perpetually lighted by the devotion of the heart and the wisdom of Self-realization.

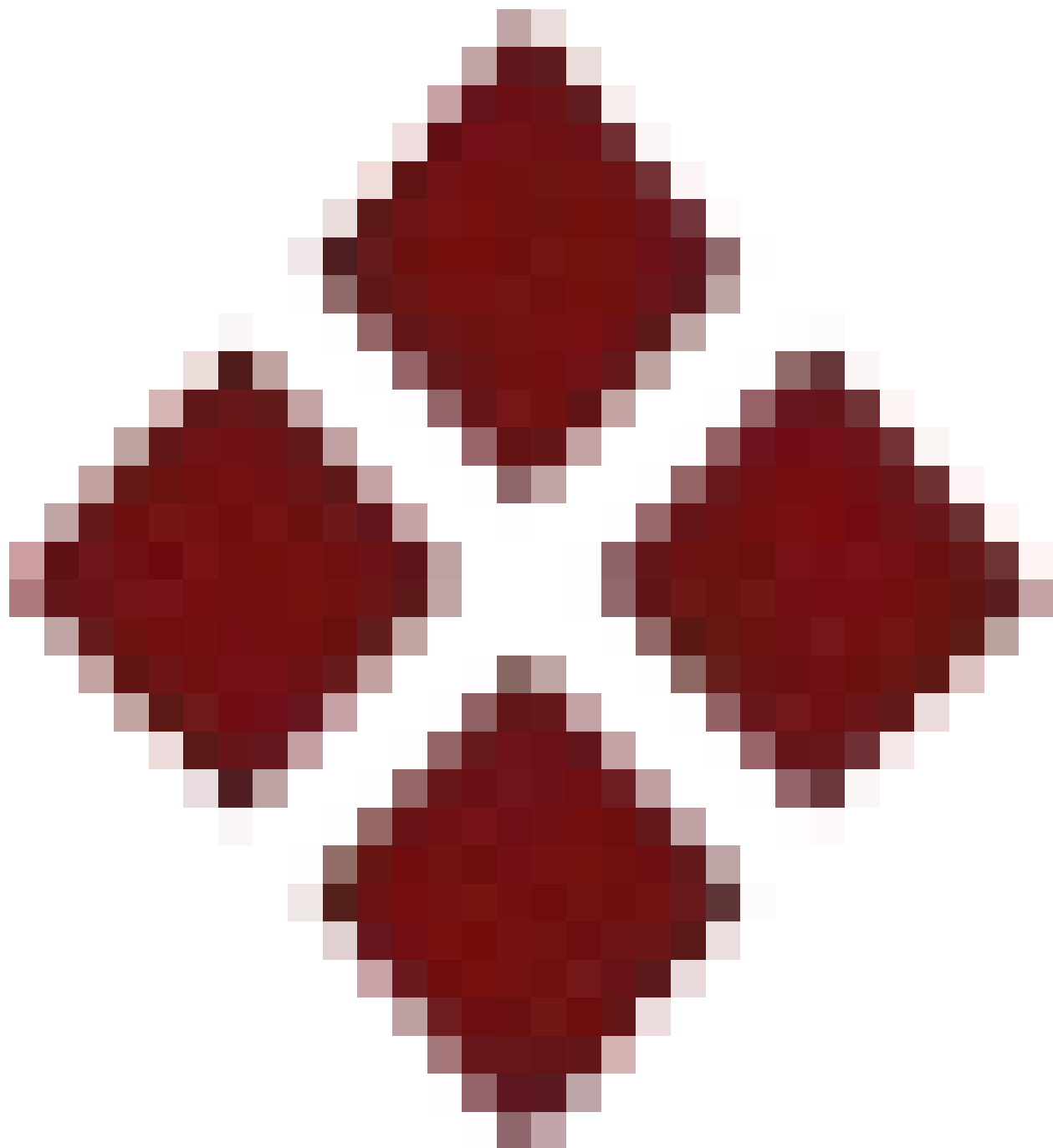


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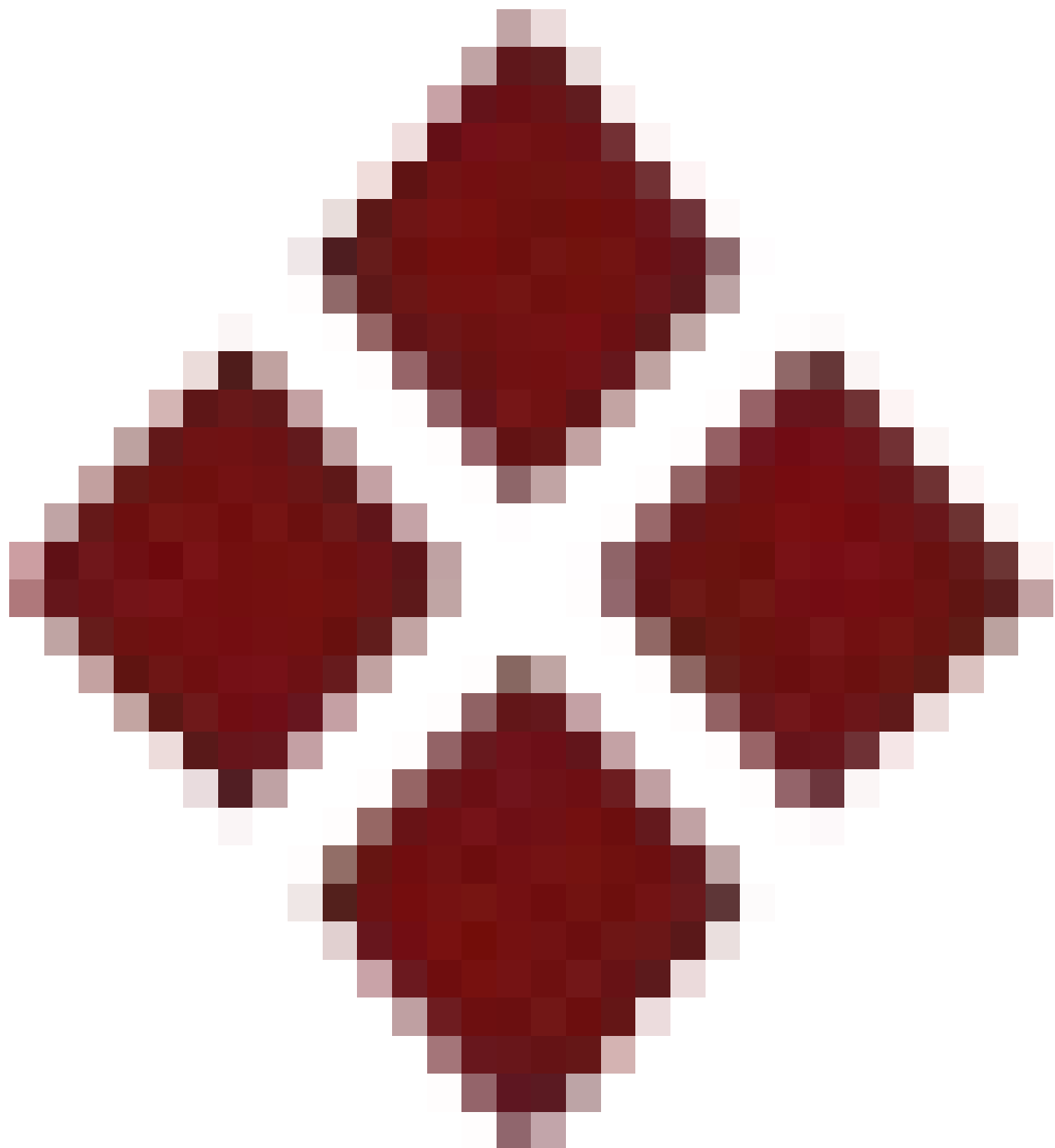
What Jesus Meant by “Everlasting Punishment”



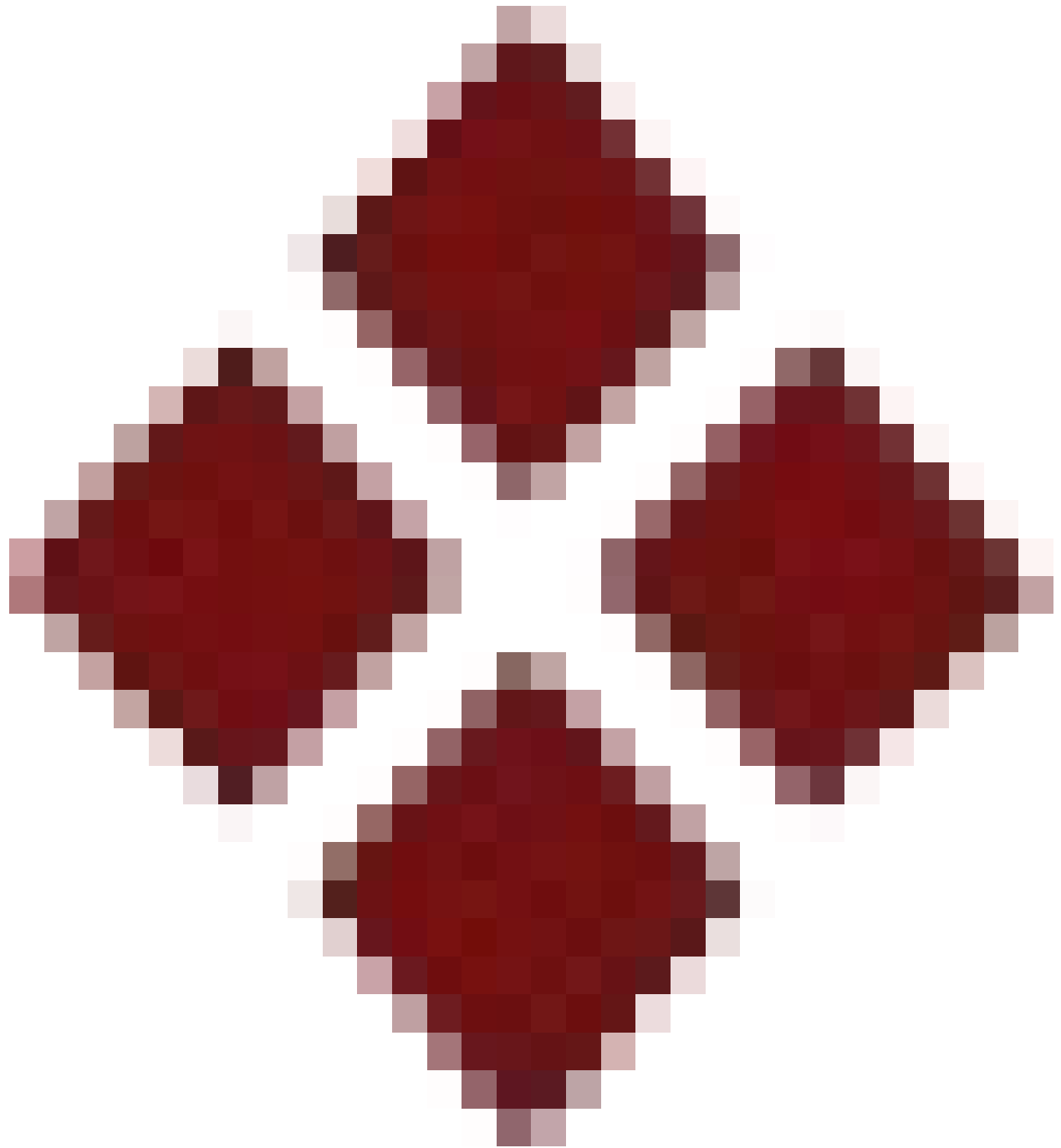
**The True “Day of Judgment” for the Righteous as
Well as the Evildoers**



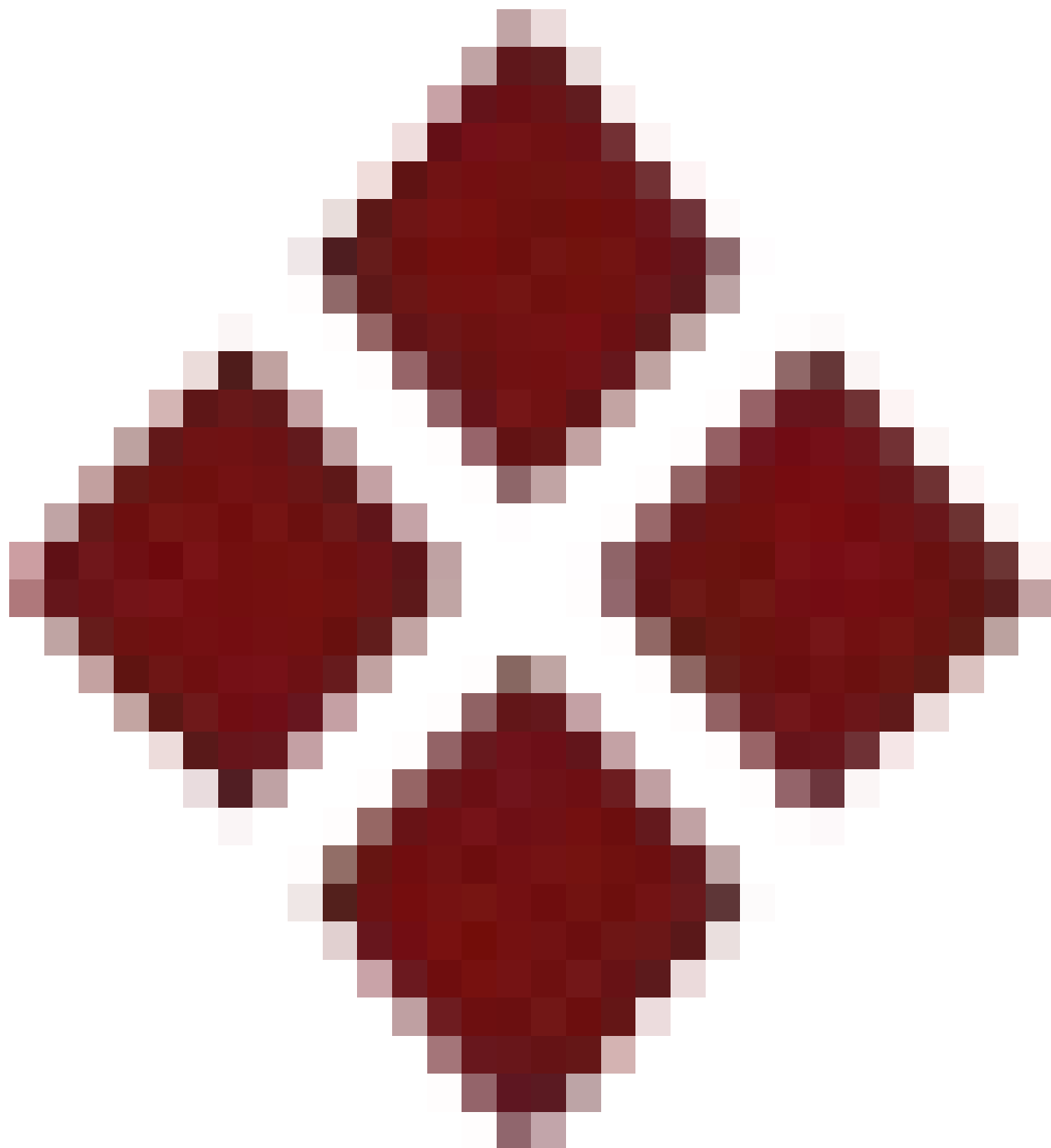
**Serving the Christ Spirit in the Hungry, the Sick, and
the Destitute**



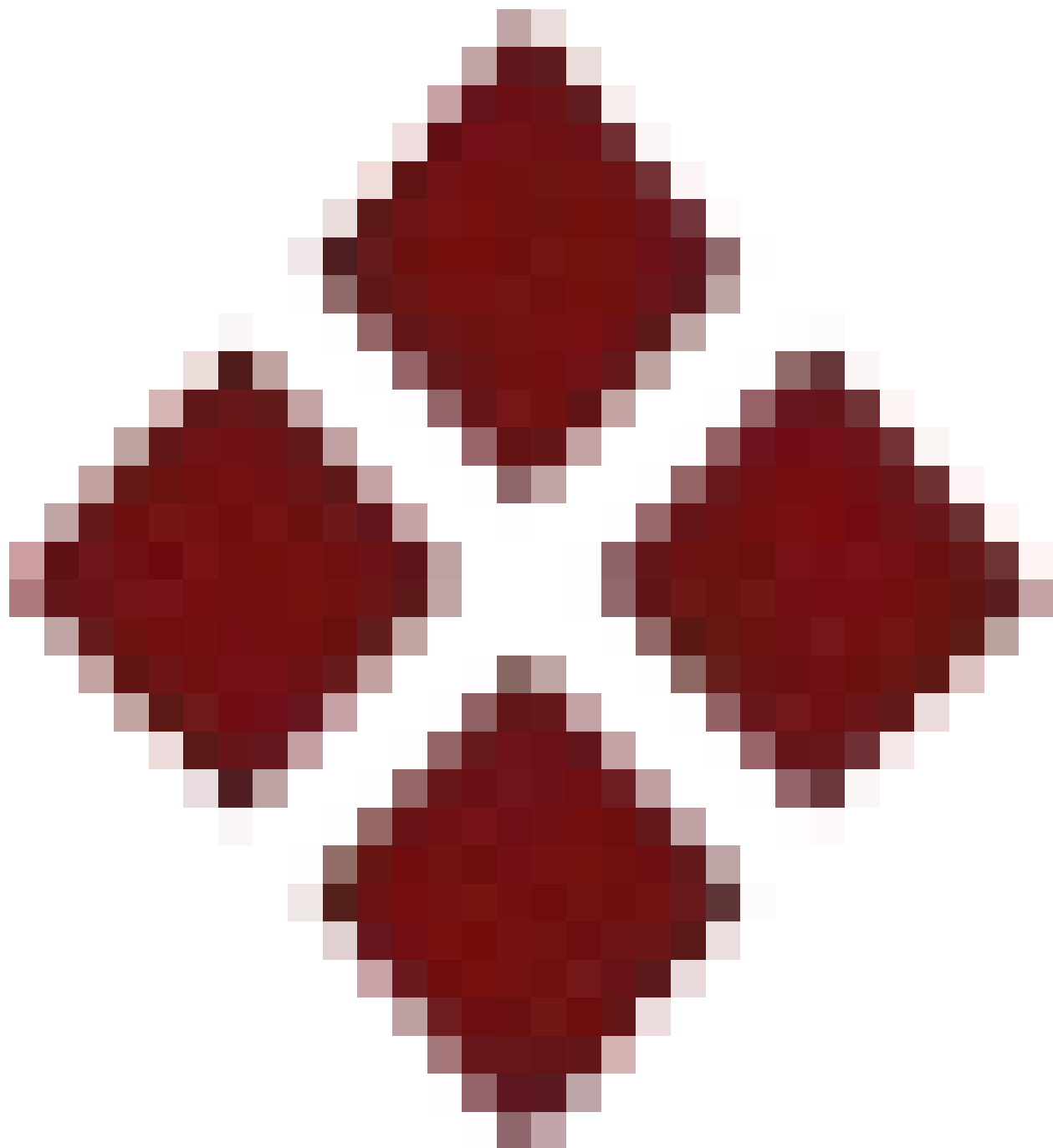
**Selfish Unsympathetic Persons Cannot Remain in the
Astral Heaven of Beauty and Freedom**



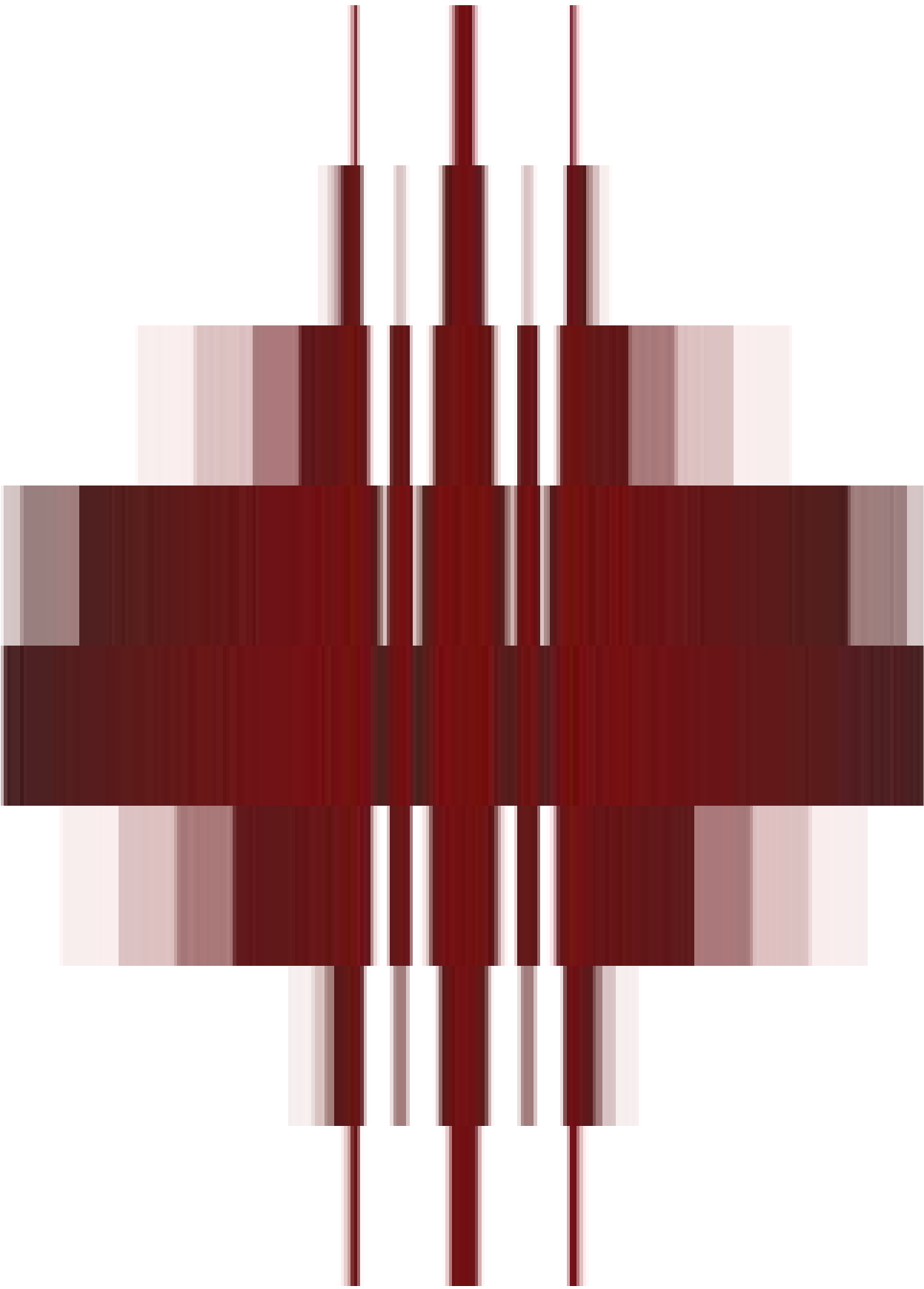
**God Is Not a Merciless Judge Who Condemns Souls
to “Everlasting Fire”**



**Man Decrees His Own Punishment When He Accedes
to the Evil Influence of Satanic Delusion**



**All God's Children Are Given Unending
Opportunities to Find Salvation**



“Even aeons of ignorance and wrong actions could not change the eternal soul’s intrinsic divine nature...Since the soul is an emanation of God’s own Being, it is manifestly impossible for man’s true Self to be degraded into an evil entity meriting everlasting damnation.”

■

“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

“Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, ‘Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.’

“Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?’ And the King shall answer and say unto them, ‘Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.’

“Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, ‘Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.’

“Then shall they also answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?’ Then shall he answer them, saying, ‘Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.’ And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”



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Discourse 68

What Jesus Meant by “Everlasting Punishment”





The true “day of judgment” for the righteous as well as the evildoers

“When the Son of man (this incarnation called Jesus) shall be glorified in heaven by mergence in Cosmic Consciousness with all the holy angelic liberated souls, my everlasting Christ Consciousness shall be enthroned in the glory of Omnipresence, at one with the Infinite Christ Intelligence that is the witness and supreme judge of all persons of all nations. ¹ When souls leave the earth at death, they are arraigned before that Infinite Intelligence, which will ordain through cosmic law that those who have humbly followed the ways of virtue, the ‘sheep,’ be kept in the fold of righteousness in heaven’s bliss; and that all the scapegoats who bear the sins of many incarnations, ² evildoers, be consigned to lower regions of the astral world, thence to reincarnate on earth to continue working out the effects of their wrong actions.”

These verses are commonly interpreted as describing the “last judgment” purportedly to be pronounced upon the masses at the time of the “second coming” of Jesus predicted by church belief. As earlier explained [Discourse

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], the “day of judgment” is not a cosmic event decreed by God to occur at some specific future time. Rather, it takes place for all individuals after each one’s death when they arise in the astral world. The Christ Consciousness discerns their accumulated good and evil karma, and the cosmic law of cause and effect emanating from that Universal Intelligence sorts them according to the next-life destination earned by their meritorious or reprehensible deeds.³ Eminently virtuous ones are elevated to higher celestial realms, or are liberated by being lifted into Cosmic Consciousness; the others, because of their material desires and lingering imperfections created by past wrong actions, are reborn into variously good or bad families and environments on earth,⁴ a place of perpetual delusion of insatiable desires and continuous punishment from the effects of proliferating evil karma—a torture of constantly burning fires of misery.⁵

Jesus had said before in similar words but with a different emphasis: “For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with His angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.”⁶ On a personal spiritual level Jesus was citing the experience of the advanced devotee in meditation whose

soul is uplifted to God-perception. That devotee realizes God’s infinite Christ-Kutastha Intelligence with its judgment of the cosmic law of cause and effect reflected right within his own Son-of-man soul consciousness. From the devotee’s divine “works” of persistence in devout meditation, he receives the reward of his spiritual endeavors when the glory of the Cosmic Consciousness of the Father with its angelic joys and wisdom are revealed to the Son of man, the soul consciousness dwelling within his body.

The consciousness of most individuals is far removed from the inner revelations of such ecstatic states of realization. However, even body-bound persons experience a superconscious perception during the body-transcendent “ecstasy” of death: When the life force and consciousness are withdrawn into the spine and brain to exit the body, the superconsciousness of the soul—the reflection of Christ Consciousness in the body (“the Son of man”)—perceives in a flash all the “works,” karma-producing actions, performed during that person’s lifetime. The overall connotation of those works activates the cosmic law of karma to decree the next phase of existence for that soul.⁷ This is a universal human experience, applicable to “all nations,” as stated by Jesus in the present verses (Matthew

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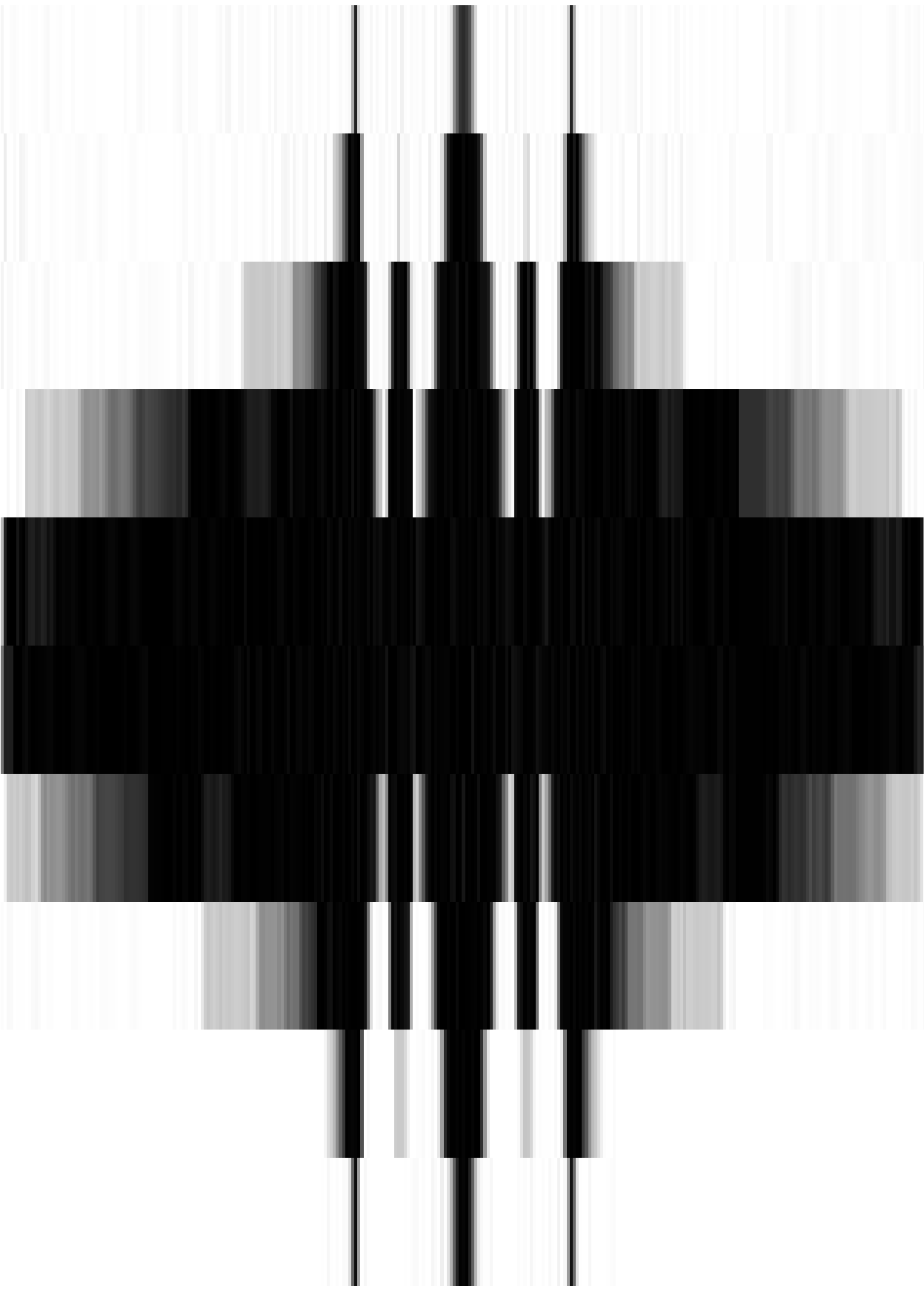
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), irrespective of race or religious belief.



Serving the Christ Spirit in the hungry, the sick, and the destitute

In his many parables, Jesus spoke metaphorically of requisites for a devotee's salvation—including faithfulness in regular meditation for spiritual development; devotion; constancy in governing the senses, habits, and material desires. In these present verses, he explains further as to why virtue-illuminated souls are liberated and evil-besmirched souls are sent back to earth: Liberation can come to a spiritual seeker only when he realizes the presence of Christ Consciousness within himself, and when by expanded realization he honors that Christ Spirit in others.

Virtuous devotees—those who are truly successful in meditation—not only behold Christ Consciousness within their own souls, but know also that it is equally present in all others. That is why, after serving Christ with devotion in the temple of meditation, they go on with a willing spontaneity to serve the Christ Spirit in the hungry, thirsty, forlorn, poor, sick, and imprisoned sufferers of the world. At the end of their earthly sojourn, when they are separated from those who must reincarnate on earth, Christ Consciousness, the King of all creation, will vibrate the command to them through cosmic law:

“Come, all you virtuous souls on My right hand, enthroned in righteousness and blessed with Cosmic Consciousness! Inherit the kingdom of eternal bliss which has been intended for you from the very inception of the cosmos. When I, Christ Intelligence, was present in the souls of the hungry, you gave Me food. When I was thirsty in earthly bodies, you gave Me drink. You took Me in though I appeared a stranger, My divinity hidden in a poor human mold. When you clothed the destitute, it was I who received your care. When you visited the sick, you ministered unto Me indwelling in them. When I was present in the bodies of prisoners who were confined and hopeless, you came to cheer Me. Since My presence inheres in all earthly brethren—the greatest and the least—whenever you offered physical, mental, or spiritual help to any of them, you actually served Me. Being consciously present in all children of My Father, I am mindful of every act of beneficence they received from you. By loving Me in My every-form, you are everlastingly in My eternal love and eternal protection!”

Selfish unsympathetic persons cannot remain in the astral heaven of beauty and freedom

Then Jesus speaks of those persons who never meditate and thus are oblivious of the presence of Christ within themselves. Consequently, neither do they realize the Christ Spirit present in the hungry, the thirsty, and all other burdened, trial-ridden human beings. He declares that such ignorant and unsympathetic persons, when they escape from the body prison at death, find no lasting place for themselves in the astral spheres of celestial beauty and freedom. The Christ Intelligence through cosmic law vibrates its decree to them wordlessly, but it might be verbally expressed as follows:

“Depart from my presence revealed to the righteous in the astral world, all of you on my left who are separated out and cursed by your own actions to burn in the interminable fire of worldly desires—created when dark devilish mentalities as well as angel-bright intellectuals succumb to the ignorance imposed by ‘the devil and his angels.’ Though the Christ Intelligence is equally present in you and all your great and insignificant earthly brother-beings, you neither realized your own soul potential nor rendered help to that Presence in those who were in need. A deluded, selfish life is a wicked life. Now you will have to return to earth;⁸ there is no heavenly kingdom nor liberation in Spirit for you until you have neutralized your past bad karma with the antidote of realizing the Eternal Life and Consciousness within you and serving that Divine Presence in all.”



God is not a merciless Judge who condemns souls to “everlasting fire”

The references in these verses to “everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels”—a place of “everlasting punishment”—have created in the minds of millions a fear of the Divine as a merciless Judge who would condemn His children to damnation for all eternity in the torturous sufferings of hell, without possibility of relief. But Jesus never meant that there is a special region where souls after death agonize in an eternity of imprisonment and punishment for the mixed transgressions and virtues of one life consisting of a few dozen years. Such a concept is totally illogical! Even an earthly judge has sense enough to sentence a criminal according to the nature and degree of his crime. Certainly the impartially righteous Judge of judges, the Cosmic Law, ordains rewards or punishments commensurate with one’s karmic behavior on the earth plane. A million years of persistent sin could attract a million years of vile incarnations, no more. But even aeons of ignorance and wrong actions could not change the eternal soul’s intrinsic divine nature. Man may sport in the misuse of his free will for a time and wear the pseudomoniker of a mortal, but that temporary delusion can never erase the mark of immortality and perfection of God’s image imprinted on his soul. Since the soul is an emanation of God’s own Being, it is manifestly impossible for man’s true Self to be degraded into an evil entity meriting everlasting damnation.

Once, near Seattle, Washington, I had been sitting by the ocean, whose vastness engulfed my mind in thoughts of God. After a time I felt hungry, and went to a nearby farmhouse to buy some cherries. Here I met an elderly man with rosy cheeks. He had a cheerful countenance, and showed me warm hospitality.

But a divine impulse came over me and I said, “Dear sir, though you look very happy, there is a hidden suffering in your life.”

He inquired, “Are you a fortune-teller?”

I answered, “No; but I tell people how to mend their fortunes.”

The conversation shifted to spiritual matters. To my surprise, the man suddenly cried out, “We are all sinners! The Lord will burn our souls in hellfire and brimstone.” I appealed to his common sense. “How,” I asked him, “could a man who at death loses his body and becomes an invisible soul be burned in a fire

created by material brimstone?”

The man became angry. He kept insisting, “It’s true. We shall all burn in hellfire.” Then I inquired cajolingly, “Did you receive a radiogram from God about this matter, that you are so certain He will burn us in hellfire?”

“Blasphemy!” the old man cried, more excited than ever.

I then spoke soothingly, and quietly changed the subject. Presently I asked him, “What about your unhappiness over that wicked son of yours?” My host was astonished at my words and admitted that he experienced a constant sorrow over a wastrel son whom he seemed to be helpless to correct.

“I have a remedy for your misery,” I said. Now the man’s eyes gleamed with hope, and he smiled.

“If you can do anything for me—anything,” he said, “I shall be grateful to you for the rest of my life.”

With a mysterious air, as if about to reveal a precious secret, I asked him in a low voice, “Have you a stove with a large oven?” With my hands I described the dimensions I wanted.

He replied, wonderingly, “Why, yes.”

“Good,” I said. “I shall ask you to heat it red-hot. Now, have you two friends whom you can trust never to betray your secrets to anyone, no matter what you do?”

“Why, yes, but—”

“Good!” I interrupted him. “You’ll need their help. Now, have you several yards of strong rope?”

“Yes, I have,” the old farmer replied, with mounting suspicion. “But why am I going to need that?”

“Please be calm, dear friend. Didn’t I promise you I would give you a remedy for your troubles?” Hopefully but cautiously the man dismissed his misgivings and listened to what more I had to say. I then asked him casually, “Your son is

quite a heavy sleeper, isn't he?"

"Yes," came the sorrowful reply. "He comes home so full of liquor."

"Excellent!" I cried, in a tone of exultation. "Now then, tonight I want you to call your two friends over. Heat your oven as hot as possible. Keep your friends quiet until your son is sound asleep. Then slip quickly into his room, bind him securely, carry him downstairs and shove him into the oven!"

"Fiend! Murderer!" the old man shouted, shaking his fist at me. "Is that your remedy?"

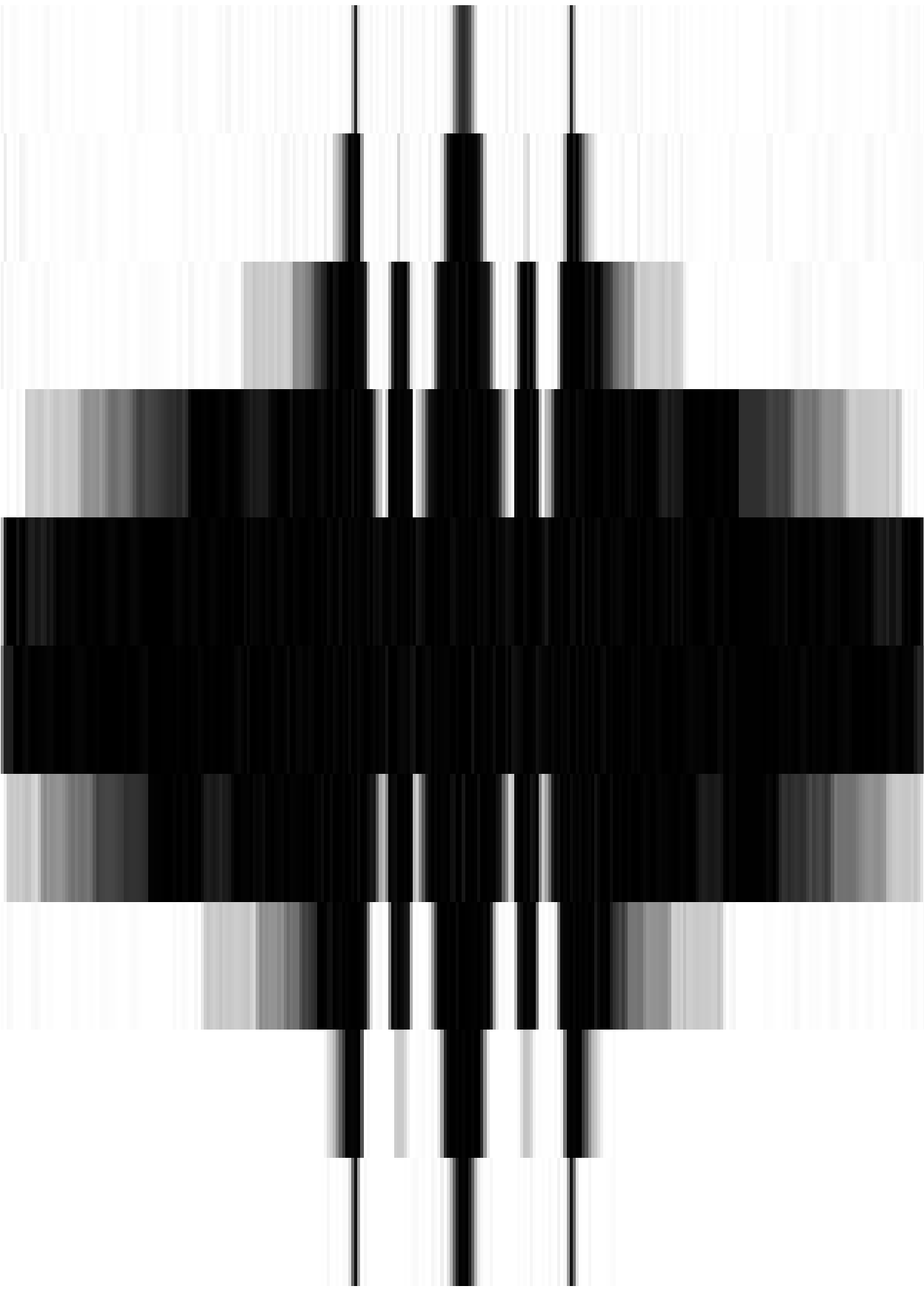
"Isn't that what your son deserves?" I asked. "Just think, you will never be troubled by him again."

"This is outrageous!" cried the man. "Whoever heard of a father burning his son? I wouldn't do such a terrible thing even if my boy were ten times as wicked as he is!"

"Of course you wouldn't!" I replied sternly. The man looked at me quizzically, taken aback at the new trend of my words. "Now," I continued, "think what I have been trying to tell you. You, who are human and far from the perfection of God, cannot bear to inflict torture on your son, no matter how evil he may be. Where did you acquire this instinct of love, if not from your Heavenly Father? Even a human father could not abide the cruel thought of punishing an erring son by roasting him alive. How, then, can you think of your supremely loving Heavenly Father as one who burns His own children in eternal hellfire and brimstone? God's love is infinitely greater than your fatherly affection!"

The gentleman's eyes filled with tears of understanding. With new tenderness, he looked at me gratefully and said, "Of course—I have always thought of our Heavenly Father as a God of love. He would not punish us forever for our ignorance."

I concluded, "We alone punish or reward ourselves here on earth by the effects of our own actions."



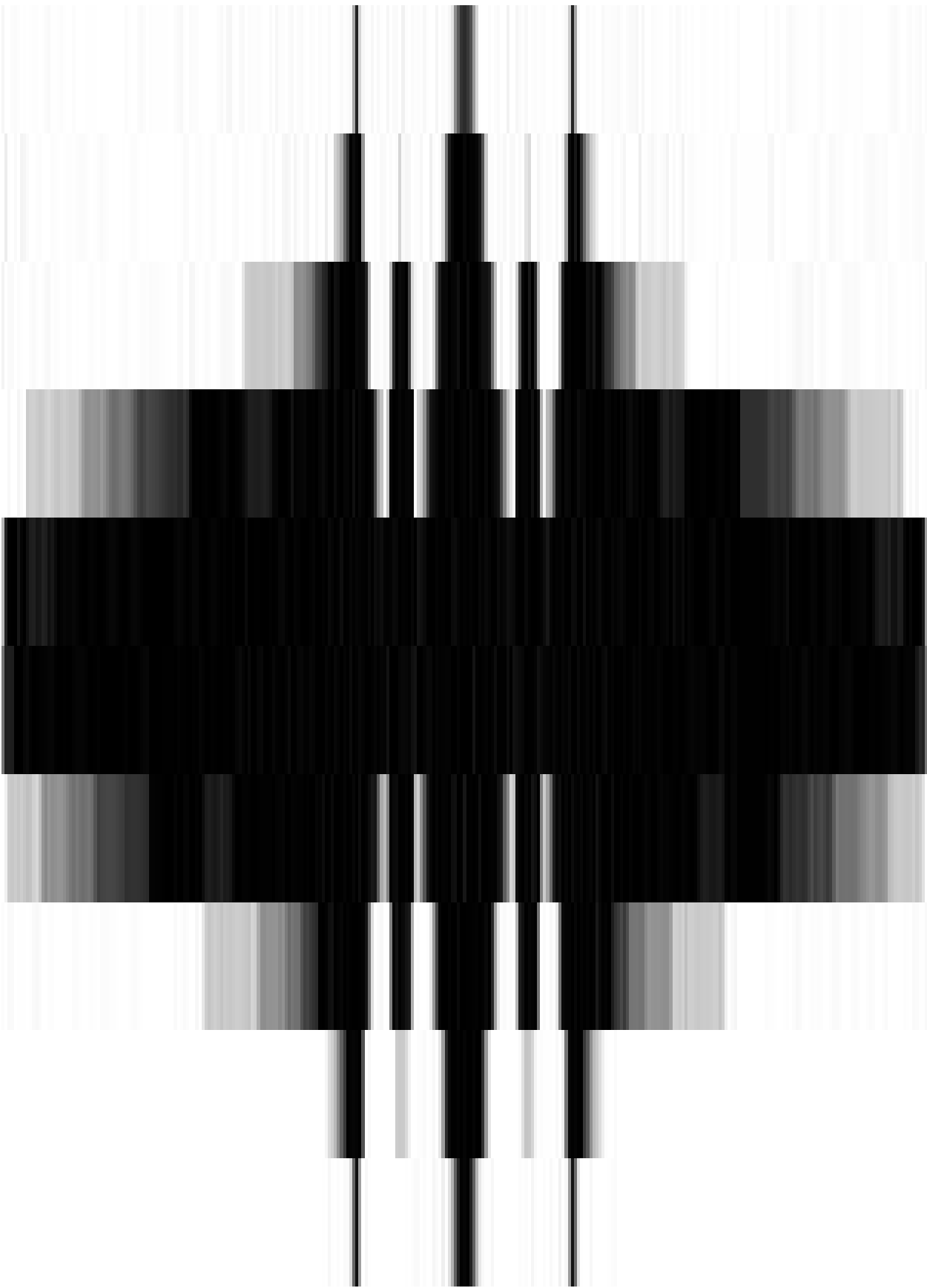
Man decrees his own punishment when he accedes to the evil influence of satanic delusion

When a man works evil, the seed tendencies of his sinful actions become lodged in the deep recesses of his consciousness, ready to germinate in the soil of favorable circumstances, and thence to sprout into evil habits in the present or a future incarnation. Once evil tendencies become evil habits, they compel one to more evil actions. In this way, a sinner creates for himself an endless hell of generative, compulsive tendencies that drive him to desperate depths of evil. He experiences in this cycle of torment what is meant by eternal damnation.

Temptation to perform ignoble acts arises in man's consciousness through cosmic delusion, the influence of Satan and his agents of evil: anger, lust, greed, selfishness, and the myriad other enemies of godliness. By choosing to accede to malevolent promptings, man allows the devil a place in his life—the more heinous the act, the greater the inroads made by satanic forces. Subtly ensconced in the ignorance that enshrouds man's soul, they stimulate ever-increasing evils of delusion and stoke the constantly burning fires of material craving in all unenlightened minds. Thus the Christ-imbued cosmic law's after-death decree of reincarnation on earth for the evil-obsessed: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels"—Satan and his agents and those mentalities, good as well as bad, they hold in the ignorance of delusion.

Under human law a murderer, when apprehended, may be executed; but he goes free if his guilt is undetected. No such escape is possible under the all-seeing cosmic law; from the very time the crime is committed, that evil couches itself in the perpetrator's consciousness as a cause-effect imprint that foreshadows an inevitable justice. This is not to say that the killer will necessarily be killed by some other individual; the divine law does not write its verdicts according to the tit-for-tat policy, "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth." Instead, the murderer begins to punish himself continuously, through conscience and a subconsciously present inner terror of the consequences for failure to act according to the law: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." He is haunted, perhaps only with searing subconscious effect, with the burning mental horror of the physical pain and loss of life he inflicted on his victim, now turned inward as applicable to himself. If he does not free himself by repentance and spiritual reformation in meditation, prayer, and God-communion, or at least satisfy his

conscience by giving himself up unto the law, then, even if he goes scot-free in that incarnation, in his next life he will carry within his consciousness a karmic bomb of murder tendency, as well as a subconscious fear of being victimized himself. Under the influence of anger or other violent emotion, that habit bomb might explode into another sudden homicidal impulse, wherein he, in turn, might be slain. The circumstance of his death would not be decreed by the cosmic law for his past crime. Rather, the murderer would have attracted that death unto himself by his own wrong actions born of stored-up tendencies from the past.

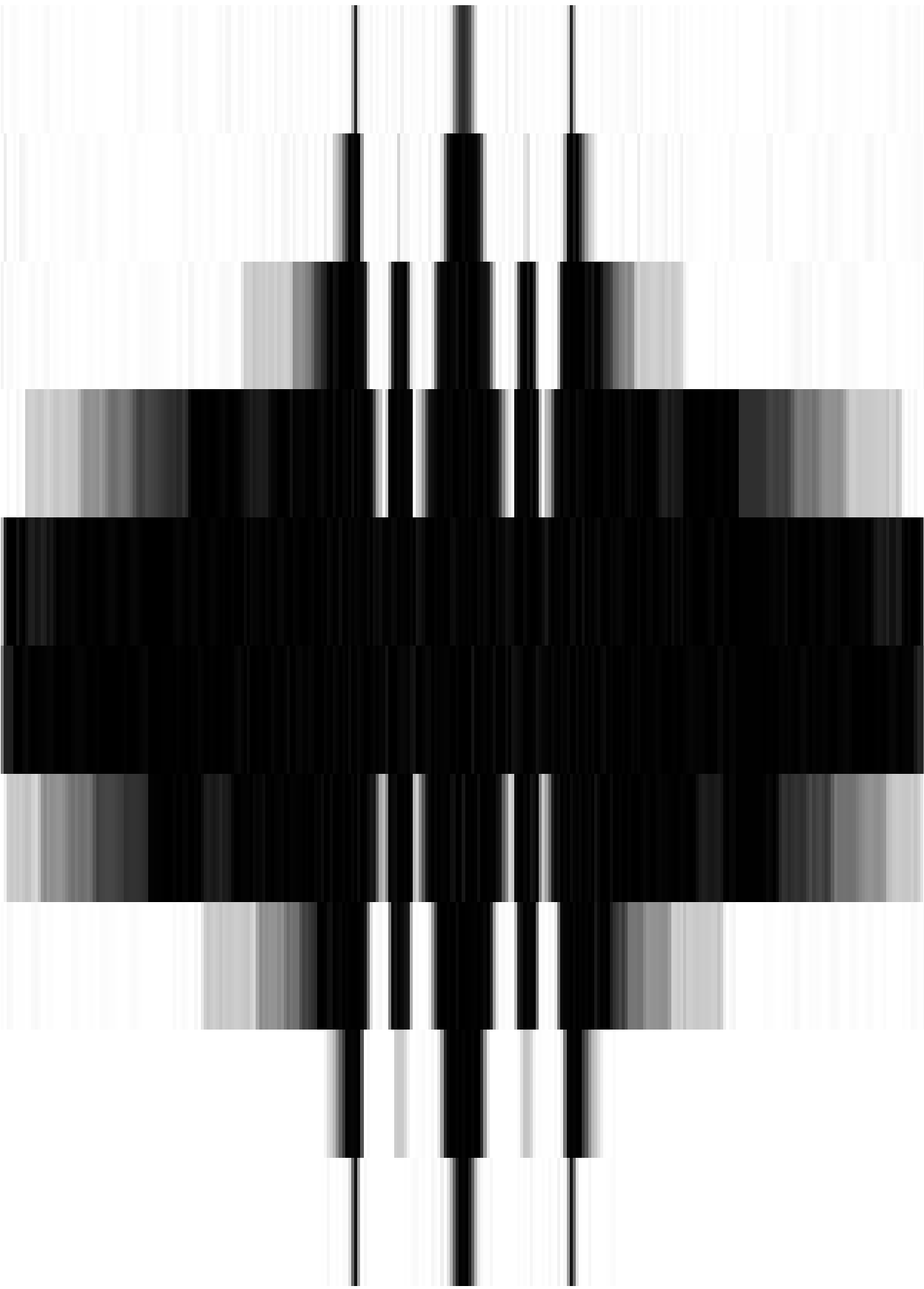


All God's children are given unending opportunities to find salvation

A person with a deep-seated bad habit—the inveterate smoker, the drunkard, the drug addict, the palate slave, the sex addict, the servant of anger, jealousy—feels so helplessly caught in the tentacles of his diabolical habit that he fears himself doomed to perform those untoward actions and to reap their painful results despite any desire to reform. However, it is only that sinner's surrender to a sense of helplessness that condemns him to remain under the damning influence of “the devil and his angels.”

There is no sinful habit, however strong, that cannot be broken by good company, meditation, and continuous effort to adopt the counteracting transmuting power of an opposite good habit. A person with pernicious habits tends to forget that that mind-set was formed through repeated performance of wrong actions. Thus, even if former evildoers are very willing to be good, they should not expect that by one or a few good efforts they can be free from their past. But if they persist in right behavior and shun evil company and evil thoughts, which stimulate evil actions, they will certainly in time replace iniquitous habits with virtues.

All erring children of God are given as many incarnations on earth as they need to work out their karma, until they become liberated by realizing and manifesting the perfect image of God within them. But instead of using their lifetimes to seek salvation, they create and feed the singeing fires of continuous earthly desires that keep the soul on designated rounds of incarnations on earth, a place of everlasting, or at least continuous, misery due to the constant presence of cosmic delusion. In that sense, the words “everlasting punishment” do describe earth. If man recalled all the sorrows and sufferings of his countless past lifetimes, he would know he has already endured the fires of hell and that now is the time to seek the everlasting heaven in God.



All evil is only a temporary graft on the immutable perfection of the soul

If, however, the errors of one or many lifetimes are insufficient to warrant eternal damnation, how can virtuous actions of one or more incarnations merit eternal liberation? The answer lies in the immutable perfection of man's soul, which becomes only temporarily identified with a mortal body. So long as a person thinks he is mortal, so long must he suffer the taunting challenges of the dualities of mortal existence. The delusion of mortal consciousness may distort the outer expression of the soul for a few or many incarnations; but sooner or later, through self-effort and evolutionary law imbued with God's uplifting grace, the soul regains its expression of wisdom.

All evil accruing to man's nature is a passive graft, a transitory parasite on the tree of life, which can be incised with the scalpel of wisdom. As soon as man realizes that evil promises happiness and results only in unhappiness, he begins to wish for emancipation and starts in earnest his search for God. The desire for goodness and freedom invites God to come into one's life with His guidance and blessings.

By soul-revealing meditation and right action (observing God's moral laws and the exhortations of His emissaries), the devotee progresses surely toward Self-realization—the awakened consciousness of his soul and its oneness with God. Thus illumined, his age-old darkness of mortal ignorance vanishes. He returns to his home of Cosmic Consciousness to be liberated forever by the Father.⁹

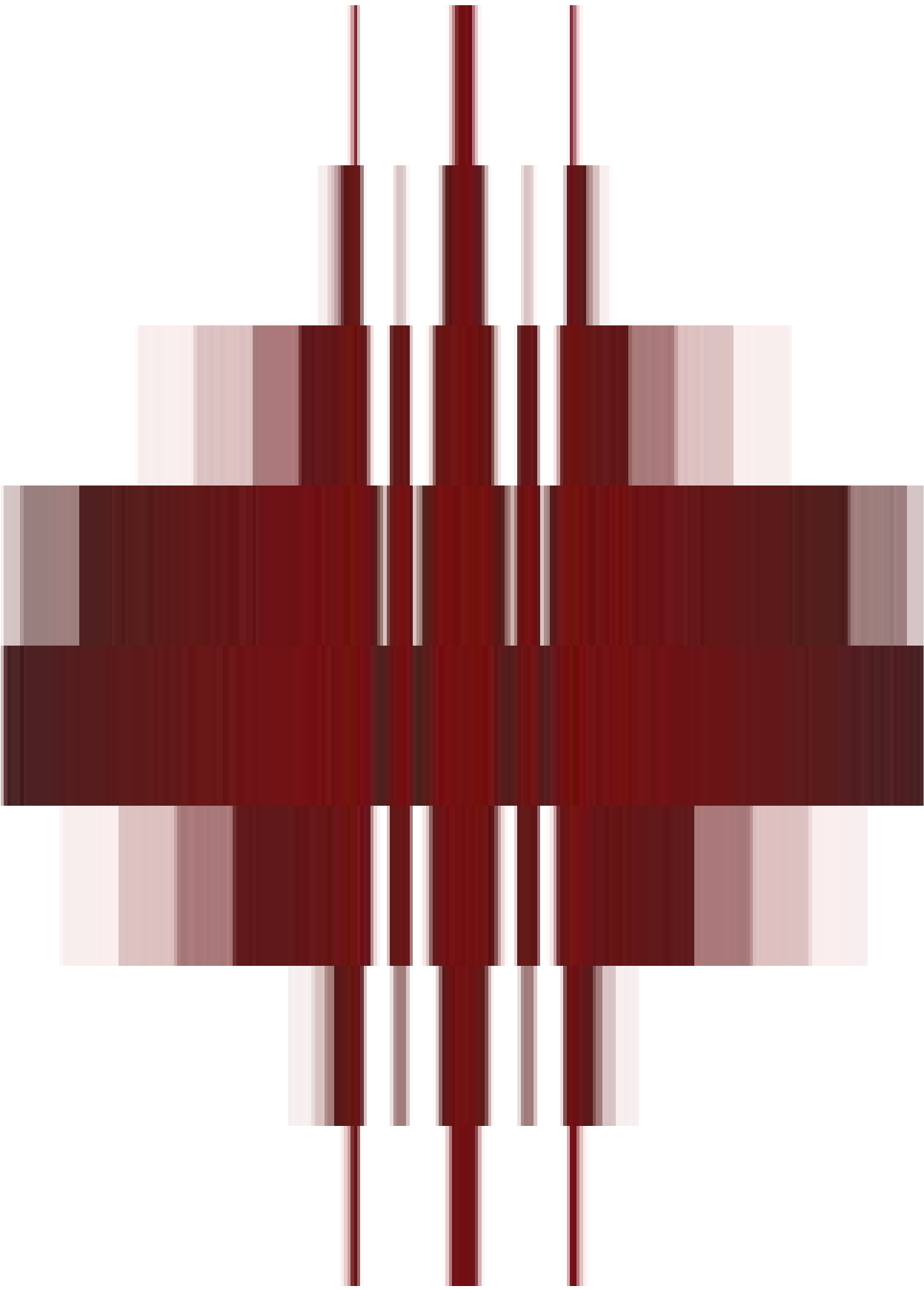
So although the notion of everlasting hellfire and damnation is untenable and should be banished from the superstitious minds of men, the existence of an Eternal Heaven in God is incorruptibly true. At the end of the trail of reincarnations, along which man has been led by his wandering material desires, he will find the blissful Heavenly Father waiting to receive His children into His ever new Joy of "life eternal."



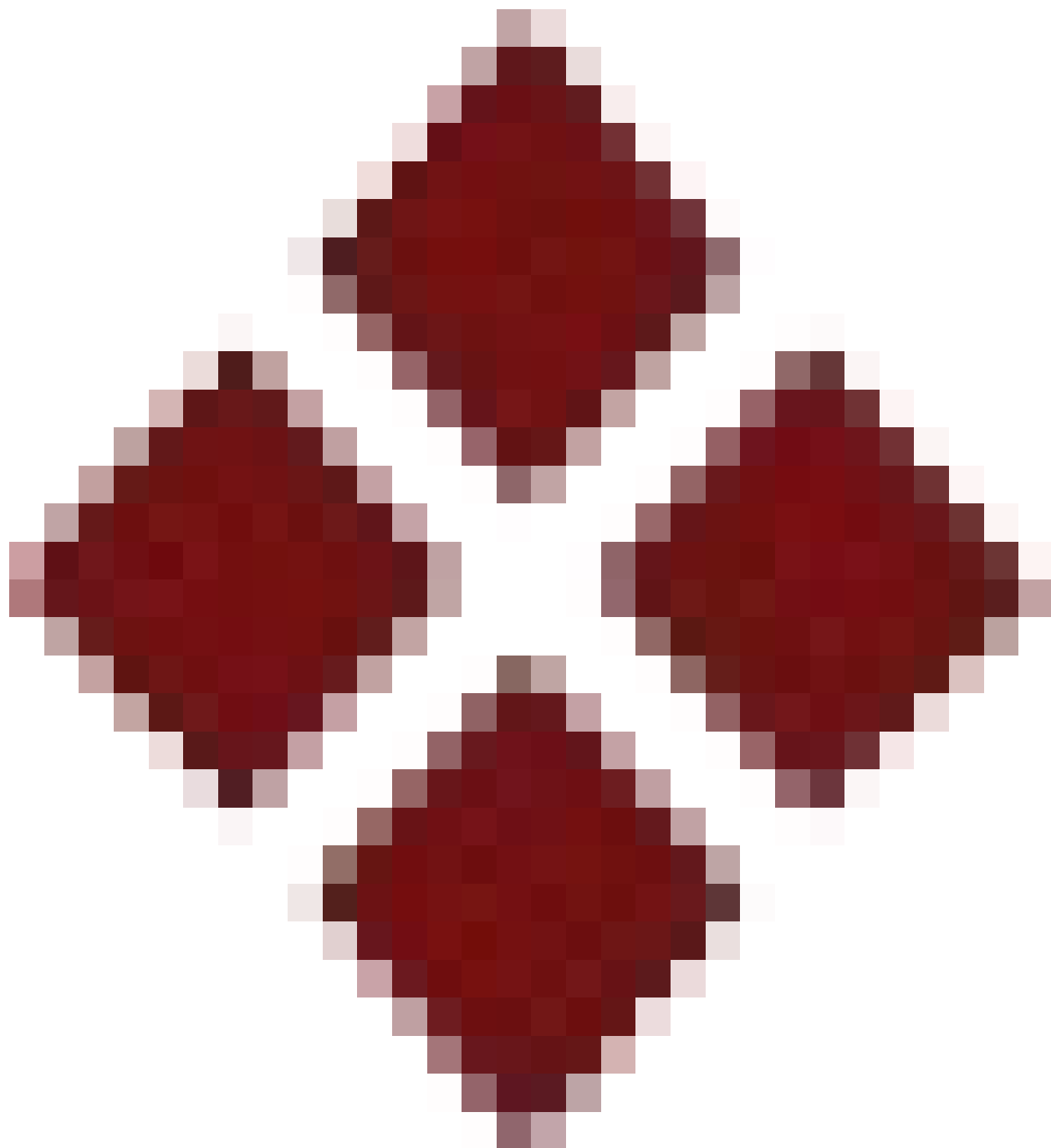
Discourse 69

“This Do in Remembrance of Me”

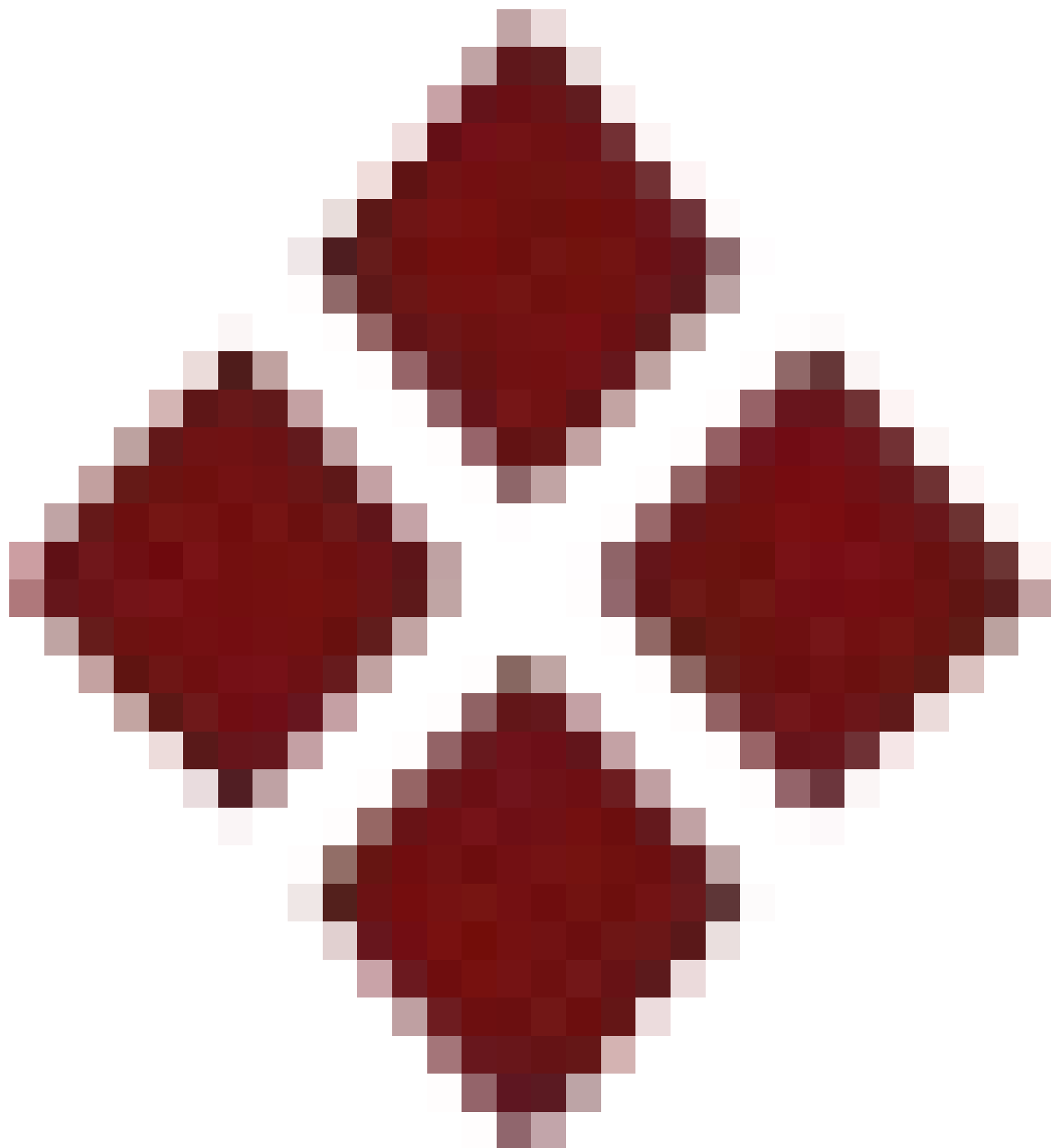
The Last Supper, Part I



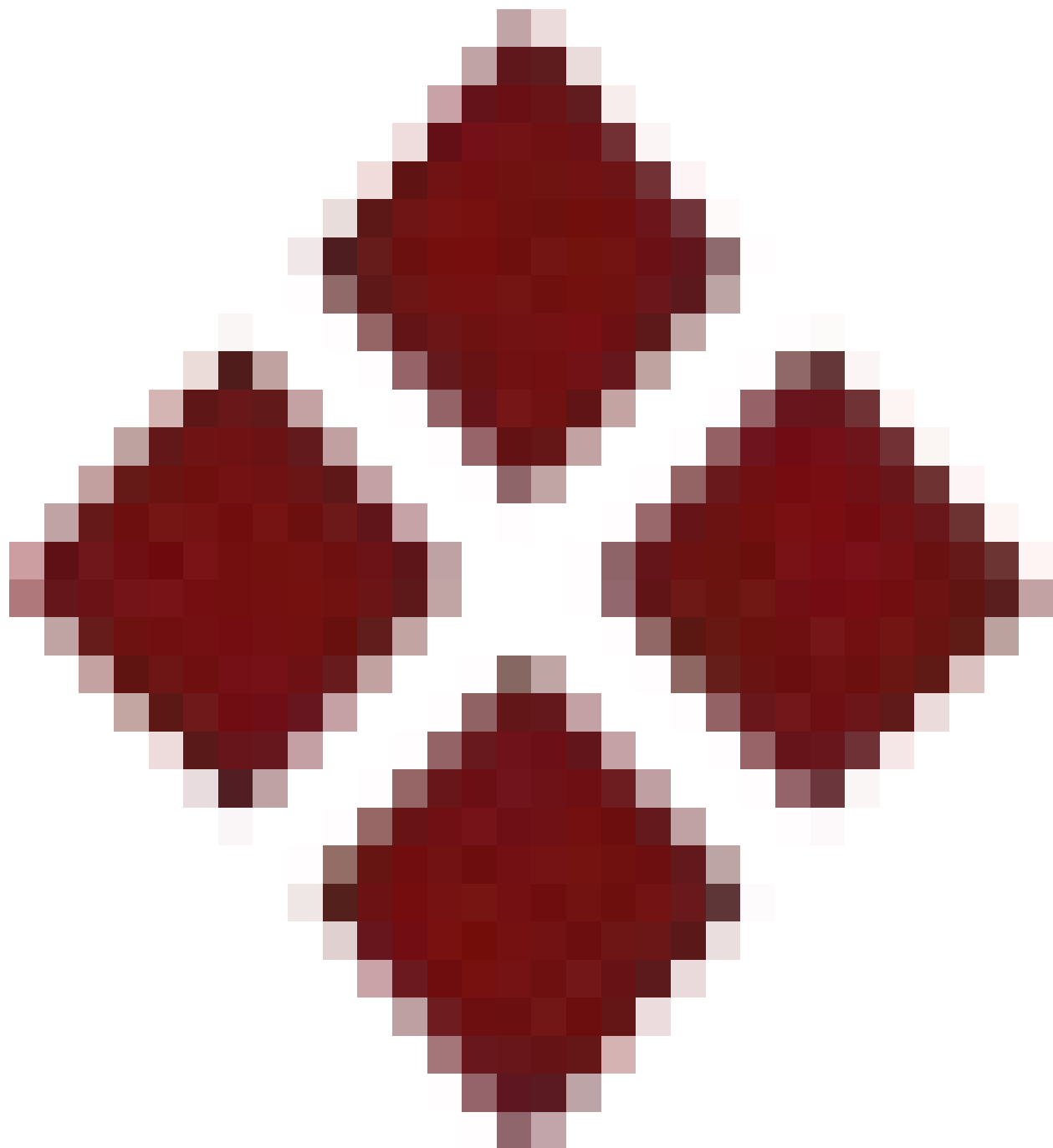
The Esoteric Significance of Jesus' Sharing the Bread and Cup at the Last Supper



How the Shedding of Jesus' Blood on the Cross Worked for the Remission of Sins



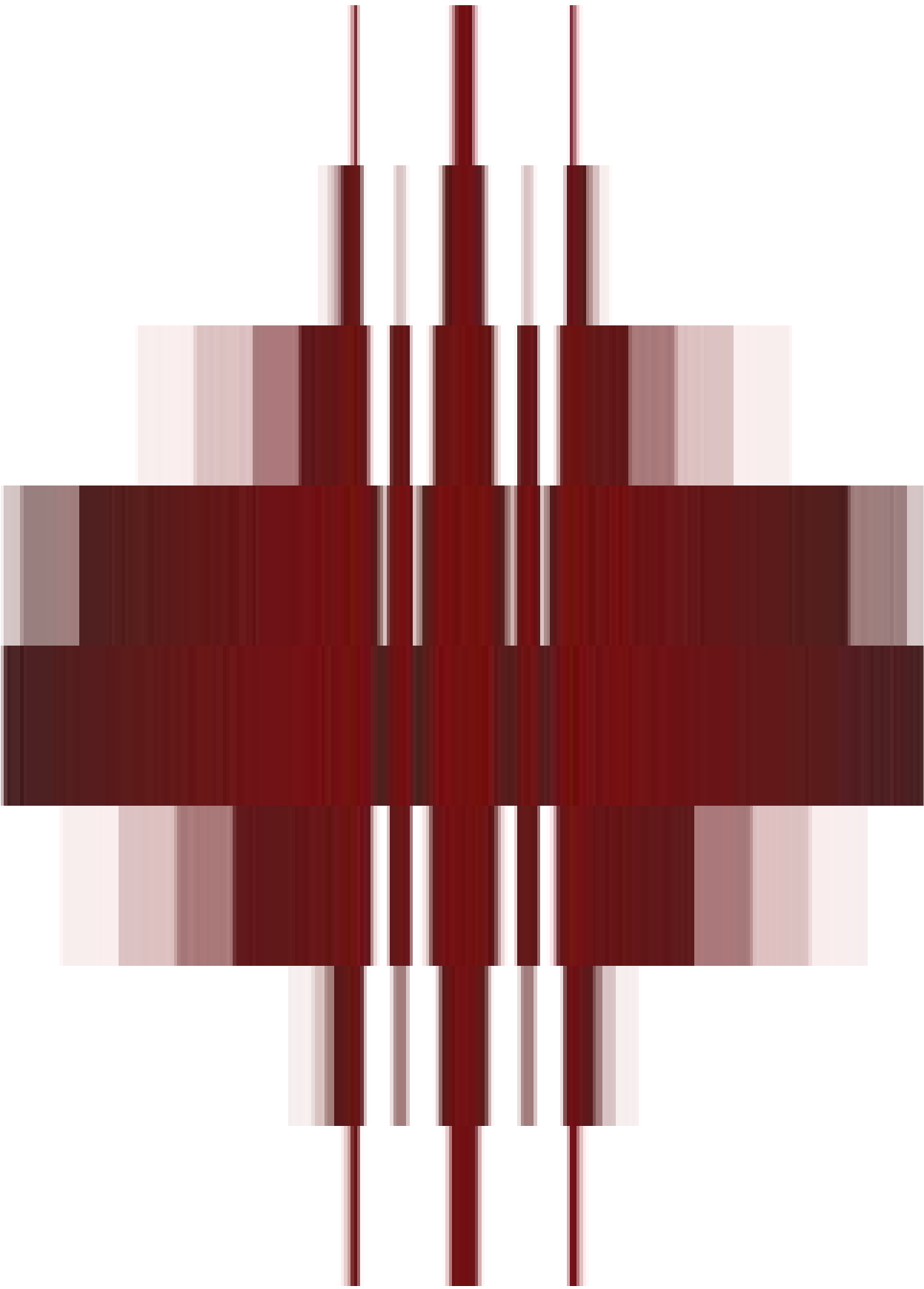
The Real Import of “the New Covenant” and Partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ



**The Law of Karma in Relation to Jesus' Crucifixion
and the Fate of His Betrayer**



Jesus' Practical Wisdom in Applying Spiritual Truths in the World of Relativity



“Those who have true communion with Christ can perceive Jesus not merely in a ritualistic symbolic form, but in his formless infinitude as one with the all-pervading Christ Consciousness and universal light of the Holy Ghost Cosmic Energy.”

■

Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the Passover must be killed. And he sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare us the Passover, that we may eat."

And they said unto him, "Where wilt thou that we prepare?"

And he said unto them, "Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in. And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, 'The Master saith unto thee, "Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the Passover with my disciples?"' And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished: there make ready."

And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the Passover. And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him.

And he said unto them, "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God."

And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come."

And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, "This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me."

Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you."

"But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table. And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!" And they began to enquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing.

And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted

the greatest. And he said unto them, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? Is not he that sitteth at meat? But I am among you as he that serveth.

“Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

And the Lord said, “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.”

And he said unto him, “Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death.”

And he said, “I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.”

And he said unto them, “When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing?”

And they said, “Nothing.”

Then said he unto them, “But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one. For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, ‘And he was reckoned among the transgressors’: for the things concerning me have an end.”

And they said, “Lord, behold, here are two swords.”

And he said unto them, “It is enough.”



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Discourse 69

“This Do in Remembrance of Me”

The Last Supper, Part I



Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the Passover must be killed. And he sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and prepare us the Passover, that we may eat.”

And they said unto him, “Where wilt thou that we prepare?”

And he said unto them, “Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in. And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, ‘The Master saith unto thee, “Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the Passover with my disciples?’”’ And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished: there make ready” (Luke 22:7 – 12).¹

Jesus repeatedly demonstrated to the disciples, not merely by words, but by actions, his omniscience and omnipresence. The Christ Consciousness in Jesus, at one with the Evolver-Knower of All, was thereby able to perceive with countless eyes in every speck of space—past, present, and future—the sequence of events that would lead Peter and John to a suitable place for Jesus to celebrate his Last Supper with the disciples.



The infinite extent of Jesus' consciousness

It is impossible to translate explicitly into human language the state of Jesus' consciousness. It was everywhere; it was everything—present in the thoughts and minds of the disciples, on the road they walked upon to go into the city, in the city itself, in the man with the pitcher, even in the pitcher, and throughout the subtle vibratory ether between his body, the city, and all differentiated forms. Like every God-ordained shepherd of souls, Jesus was attentive not only to the disciples in his immediate presence, but even to distant devotees who were in tune with him and ready to carry out his wishes. He wished to observe the feast of the Passover in the house of an especially devoted disciple, who made available the choice upper room in his home at his Master's request.²

It is a custom in India, when great souls prepare to leave this earth, to celebrate with a banquet their release in Spirit. Jesus, too, just before his passing, observed this Oriental custom when he sent Peter and John to prepare, for him and the twelve disciples, not only the traditional Passover but also a last supper.



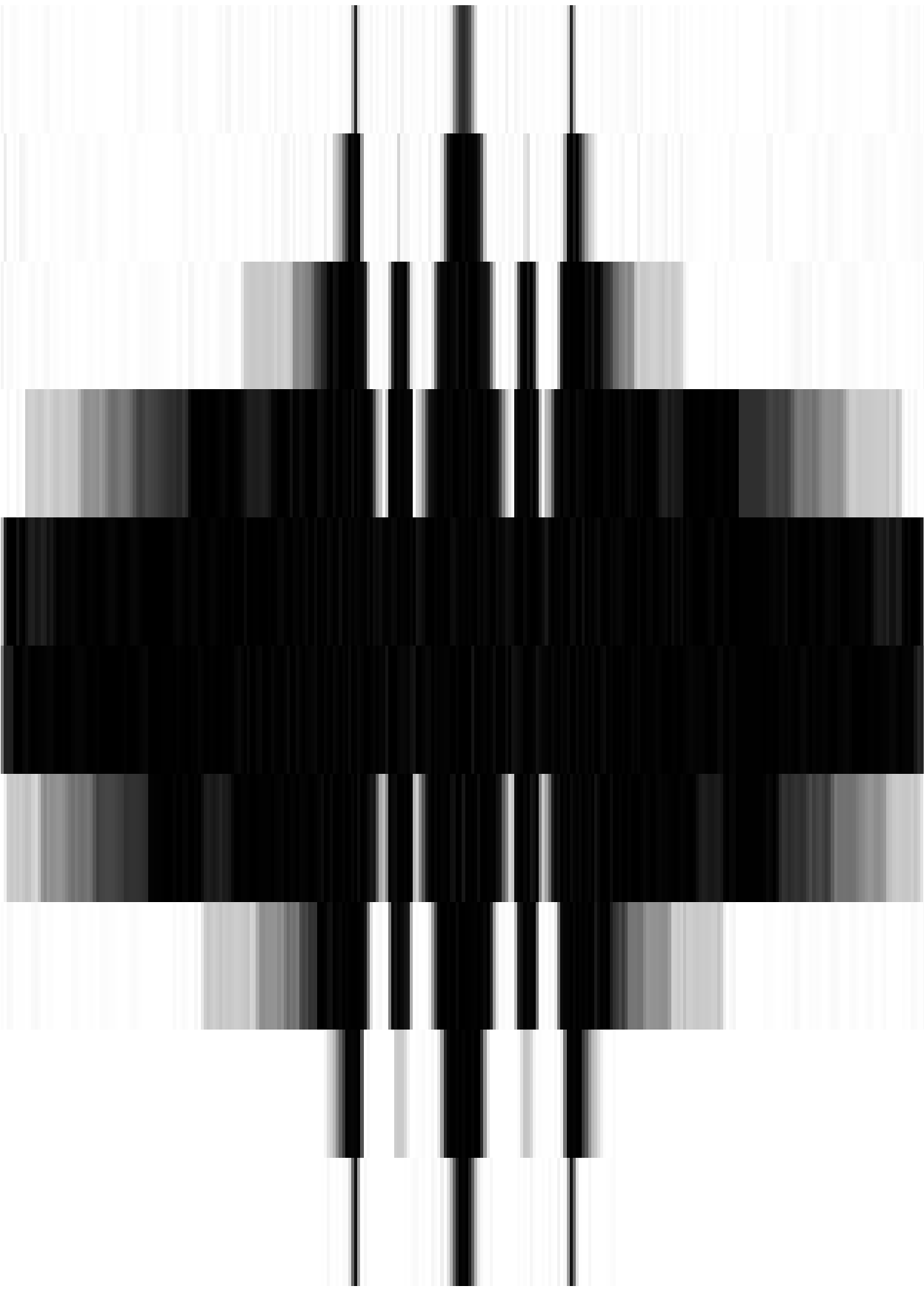
And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the Passover. And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him.

And he said unto them, “With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.”³

And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, “Take this, and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come” (Luke 22:13 – 18).

Parallel reference:

“But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom” (Matthew 26:29).⁴



Jesus' touchingly human desire to share a farewell supper with the disciples

“With conscious desire, born of my own free choice, I have desired to act with the sentiment of a human among humans and eat the Passover supper with you as a token of farewell—my last repast on the earth before my body suffers on the cross. For I say unto you, I will not partake of material food again until the prophesied culmination of my life—my crucifixion and resurrection—be fulfilled, and I have entered the kingdom of God, freed completely in Cosmic Consciousness. After I am fully risen in Spirit in the perfection of freedom from all mortal constraints of cosmic law, and I have resurrected my soon-to-be shattered form, then I shall meet you again and we shall eat together as before, in the consciousness of my Father's presence.”⁵

“Divide the drink in this cup among yourselves, for I say unto you, I will not drink the juice of the grape until after my crucifixion and resurrection, when, manifesting the Cosmic Consciousness of my Heavenly Father's kingdom, I will come again in flesh and blood and drink with you the fruit of the vine and the wine of wisdom pressed from my fully attained transcendence.”

It touches the heart's deepest feelings to know that even though Jesus was divine, he was human, too. He felt the pangs of approaching bodily separation from his beloved disciples, and thus had the poignant desire to eat a farewell meal with them before his great ordeal.

The sharing of a cup of “the fruit of the vine,” passed among those attending the Passover feast, was a customary part of the ritual observance. Whether Jesus and the disciples drank wine, or water mingled with wine, or unfermented grape juice,⁶ the “cup” he asked his followers to share had a deeper meaning (as explained in the next segment of verses). In any case, Jesus and the disciples in the aura of his blessings were in such an advanced state of consciousness that a little wine could have no ill effect on them; they were under the influence only of the wine of ecstasy in the ever new joyous contact with God. Grossly inferior material intoxicants stimulate the senses, obliterate reason, and bring spiritual degradation. Satan invented the temptation of wine and sensual indulgence to delude people with counterfeit substitutes for the infinitely satisfying bliss of God-contact found in deep meditation. Seekers of divine ecstasy are adjured to abstain strictly from inebriating substances and sensual stimulants, which keep

the life force and consciousness bound in body consciousness and easily become habit-forming. Sense-enslaved persons who are controlled by habits of wine or sex find themselves unable to partake of the supersensory, supremely intoxicating ecstasy of God-communion.

The contents of the cup offered to the disciples was charged by Jesus with his divine vibrations of Holy Ghost Cosmic Energy, that the disciples might feel an upliftment and purification as they celebrated together the rites of Passover (liberation from bondage).⁷



And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, “This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.”

Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you” (Luke 22:19 – 20).

Parallel reference:

And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.”

And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, “Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Matthew 26:26 – 28).⁸

Jesus had earlier declared the metaphorical nature of the sacrament of his flesh and blood, so the apostles understood the full esoteric significance of the symbolic “bread” and “cup” offered by Jesus at the Last Supper. ⁹ This is implicit as he relates that symbology to his crucifixion and “the new testament.”



The esoteric significance of Jesus' sharing the bread and cup at the Last Supper

“As I break this bread and give it to you for your physical nourishment, likewise I offer my little body called Jesus to be broken and crucified, that through the example of my life and my sacrifice your spiritual life can be nourished. So whenever you break bread and give thanks to God and eat, remember my breaking bread for you on the eve of my sacrifice; celebrate it as a symbol of my offering this body for the sake of your spiritual development and that of all humanity.

“In the cup I give to you, receive the new testament sent by God through me for your liberation: His message for which my blood is shed for you. It is the spirit of willingness to sacrifice everything, even life itself, for the sake of attaining eternal liberation in God-consciousness. This shall be signified by my crucifixion. Drink the immortalizing wisdom from the cup of my supreme sacrifice on the cross, which is to inspire you and all peoples of the world to make those sacrifices necessary to attain God-consciousness. Thereby, you will have found the way to liberation from suffering the cause-effect consequences of your past sinful actions.”

Jesus spoke of his sacrifice on the cross as the cup,¹⁰ and of the spiritual lesson involved in his crucifixion as the contents of the cup of sacrifice. When he asked his disciples to drink all of that cup, he did not mean that literal physical crucifixion is necessary in order to know God—nor that physical crucifixion alone bestows Christhood. To manifest his exalted state, Jesus had crucified ignorance by wisdom, restlessness by meditation, desires by renunciation, sense temptations by interiorization of his consciousness, hatred by love, selfishness by unselfishness, before he was ready to take on victoriously the sufferings of the cross. These are the important prerequisites to Christhood. Anyone who can crucify physical attachment by God-communion will reach the state wherein even bodily crucifixion, in whatever form, can be endured, if necessary, for God and truth.

Jesus' request that his disciples share the cup, therefore, was an exhortation to absorb into their own being his “blood of the new testament” that would awaken in them the Christ Consciousness—imbued qualities of his exemplary life. His selfless sacrifice on the cross was the ultimate demonstration of his immortality-

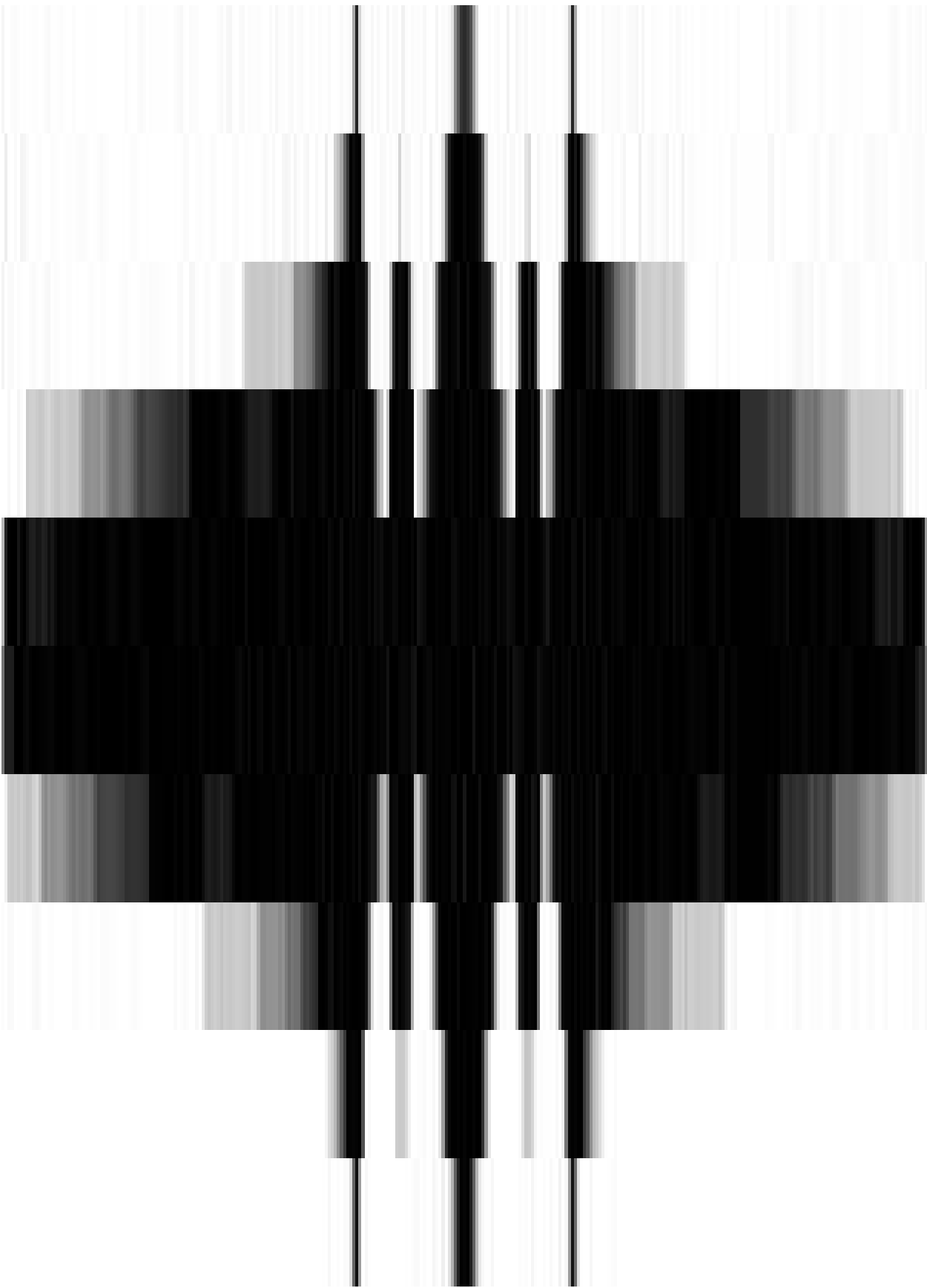
bestowing teachings of forgiveness, divine love, unshakable fortitude, wisdom, judgment, will power, supreme love of God, love and compassion for God's children, overcoming brute force by spiritual force, self-surrender (supplanting the wishes of the little ego-self by obedience to the will of God).



How the shedding of Jesus' blood on the cross worked for the remission of sins

In saying that his blood was to be “shed for many for the remission of sins,” Jesus never meant that his crucifixion could wash away the sins of mere “believers” for all time to come. Such a possibility suggests a profound nonunderstanding of the complexity of “sin” and its roots in the universal law of karma. Obtaining forgiveness is more than a matter of belief. It requires the neutralization of the residual tendency seeds—and their potential for painful consequences—left in a wrongdoer’s consciousness by his sinful actions. Certainly a master can partially or wholly free repentant devotees from the fruition of such seeds, cauterizing them by use of divine will force and cosmic energy, or working out the associated karmic burden on his own body. But it is a metaphysical error to think that merely because of professed belief in Jesus as Savior, one can feel free to act in any way one pleases within variably broad moral constraints—behaving in worldly ways and clinging to material desires and attachments—and yet be saved from after-death consequences by the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross nineteen hundred years ago. The awe-inspiring selflessness of his suffering and death no doubt absorbed and mitigated much of the karma of his disciples.¹¹ However, in his reference to the remission of sins Jesus was stating primarily that the extraordinary example of his sacrifice on the cross, through which he attained complete liberation in Cosmic Consciousness—freedom from the willingly accepted bonds of his mortal incarnation—would serve to inspire earnest truth-seekers to forsake inferior material attachments for the supreme attainment of God-consciousness. Reaching this state, they would be free from all sins, from the law of karma that keeps souls chained to the wheel of births and rebirths with their compensatory miseries from past wrongdoings.

In all of the above ways did the glorified example of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection reveal the new teaching, “the new testament” or covenant between God and man,¹² which had been foretold by the prophet Jeremiah:



The real import of “the new covenant” and partaking of the body and blood of Christ

“Behold, the days come,’ saith the Lord, ‘that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which My covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them,’ saith the Lord:

“But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days,’ saith the Lord, ‘I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people.’”¹³ Jesus proclaimed this new covenant throughout his teachings, summarized in his clear declaration: “Behold, the kingdom of God is within you.”¹⁴

“And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, “Know the Lord”: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them,’ saith the Lord: ‘for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.’”¹⁵

Literal interpreters down the centuries have bequeathed to churchgoers the belief that, “for the remission of sins,” Jesus during this Passover feast asked that people believe that they actually partake of his body and his blood—“the blood of the Lamb” (Revelation

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), “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John

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), who “washed us from our sins in his own blood” (Revelation

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). During the original Passover each Hebrew family sacrificed and partook of the flesh of a lamb, and the lamb’s blood with which they marked their homes procured their safety during the divine punishment visited upon the Egyptians. Jesus used the familiar symbology of the Passover rites to declare the new testament, the covenant brought to the world through his life. Jesus would not have alluded to a practice even metaphorically equated to a concept of cannibalism [as cited in Discourse

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People desecrate the name of Jesus more than honor it by such superstition. He showed again and again that his “body” was not himself. He was Spirit; he could pass through walls and walk on water because he knew the real substance of his form to be consciousness. So “flesh of Christ” means his consciousness. “Blood” means the life of Christ, the Holy Ghost Cosmic Energy that is the life and the light of his little body called Jesus and his cosmic body of the universe. The outward ritual of symbolically celebrating the Lord’s Supper or Holy Communion with bread and wine blesses sincere churchgoers with devotional upliftment and inspiration; but those who have true communion with Christ can perceive Jesus not merely in a ritualistic symbolic form, but in his formless infinitude as one with the all-pervading Christ Consciousness and universal light of the Holy Ghost Cosmic Energy.¹⁶

Teresa of Avila spoke of seeing the formless Christ. She was much persecuted by the church officials for this abstruse assertion, until they discovered that centuries earlier the great church philosopher Saint Thomas Aquinas had also written of communion with the formless Christ. The body of Jesus was only a little speck of matter, but behind that was the infinite Christ Consciousness and the infinite energy of Vibratory Cosmic Light.¹⁷

Saint John wrote to his contemporary followers of Jesus: “This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son [the purifying power of the Holy Ghost vibration flowing from Christ Consciousness] cleanseth us from all sin.”¹⁸

Anyone, of any religion or any era, who sees that Sacred Vibratory Light of God and His reflected Christ Consciousness, finds that immediately that Light changes the brain cells. This is the real import of partaking of the blood of Christ. By bathing in that Light, which was and is his manifest life and power, deeply meditating devotees are cleansed in the “blood” of divine energy that cauterizes their ignorance, bad habits, and seed tendencies of past karma. And those who tune in with his consciousness have truly tasted his “flesh” of Christ Consciousness, “the bread which came down from heaven” of which “he that eateth...shall live for ever.”¹⁹

It is this that Jesus desired all devotees to do “in remembrance of me.” But among those who were with him at that Last Supper, not all had ears to hear.



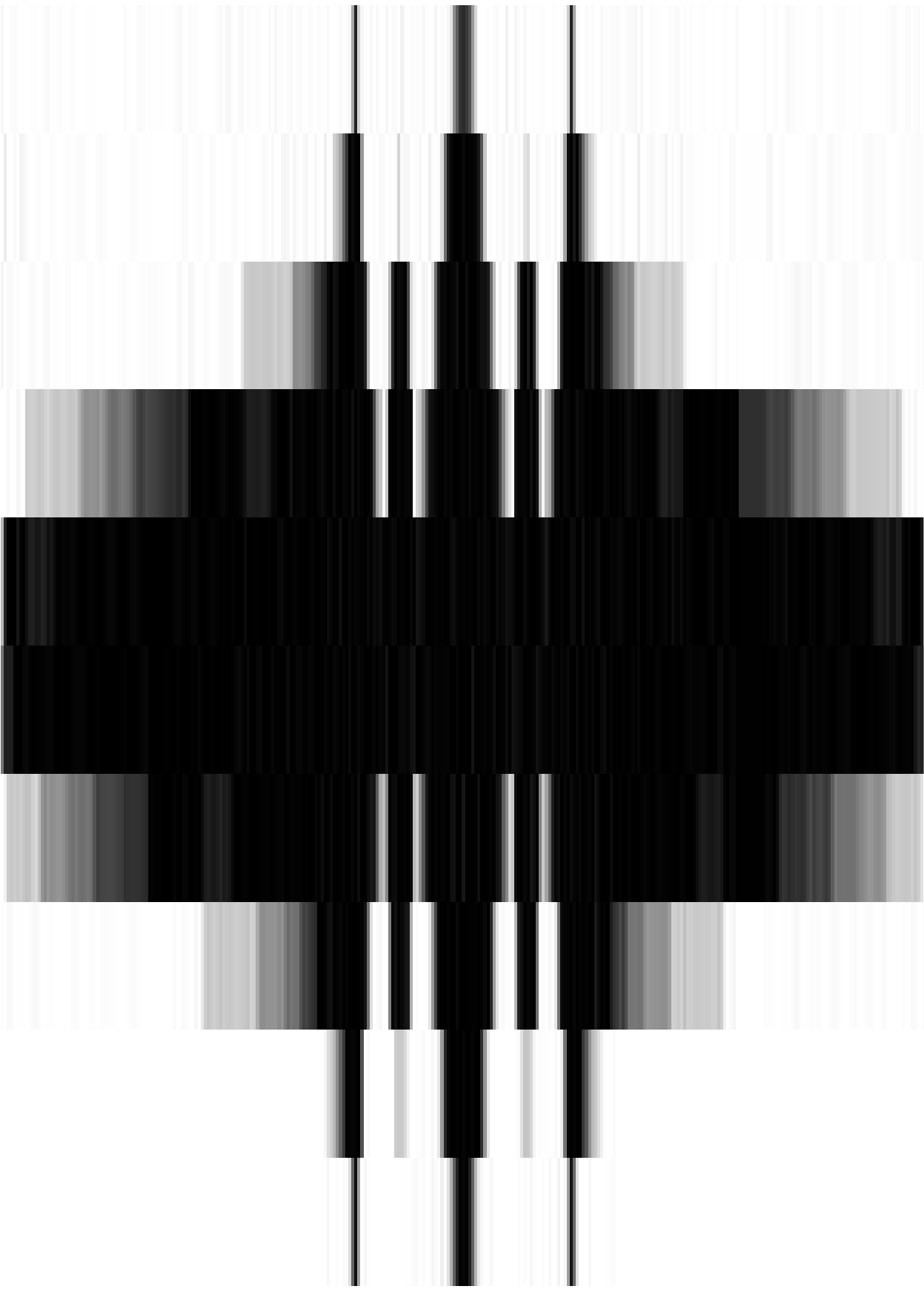
“But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table. And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!” And they began to enquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing (Luke 22:21 – 23).

Parallel references:

“He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me” (Matthew 26:23).

“The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! Good were it for that man if he had never been born” (Mark 14:21).²⁰

“Behold, the hand of him who will betray me is with mine on the table. In truth my body (Son of man) is ready to go to the cross, as has been determined by the law of cause and effect affecting my body called Jesus and prophesied in the scriptures. But that same law of compensation governs the life of my betrayer. So great will be the misery resulting from this transgression of the spiritual law that sanctifies the relation between master and disciple that the treacherous one will think it would have been better for him if he had never been born.”



The law of karma in relation to Jesus' crucifixion and the fate of his betrayer

When Jesus said that he would go “as it was determined” and “that this that is written must be yet accomplished in me,” he did not mean that God had absolutely planned for him to be crucified. As explained earlier [Discourses

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], Jesus was fully aware that his death “was determined” karmically by his own actions: taking onto himself the burden of many sins of his disciples and followers, and inviting retaliation by his defiance of the man-made laws of the social and religious hierarchy. The scriptures predicted the ordeal of Jesus because the prophets intuitively calculated the karmic effect to be incurred in carrying out his God-given mission. Jesus himself made it clear that he could have chosen at any time, even up to the moment of his crucifixion, to avert his fate. It was his own free choice, gladly made, to offer himself in supreme sacrifice for the healing and ultimate salvation of many by alleviation of their karmic burden.

Jesus' words in the above verses emphasized that Judas, too, must perforce bear the responsibility as well as the consequences of his own choices. The karmic law would decree fearsome retribution on Judas for voluntarily choosing to act

as a tool of Satan's delusion and evil in betrayal of his God-given master. Jesus readily bestowed understanding and forgiveness on the woman taken in adultery, telling her accusers, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." And on the cross he asked God's mercy even for those who carried out his torturous execution. But of the traitor Judas he said: "Woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! Good were it for that man if he had never been born." Clearly, treachery is an extreme sin. Man's culpability in sins of the flesh is mitigated because he is enslaved by the maya-imposed compulsion of the senses. But treachery is deliberate, willful—the most heinous sin before the tribunal of God's cosmic law. One who vows loyalty to his guru, and then breaks that vow in an act of betrayal, commits the ultimate treachery. God's laws deal severely with anyone who thus turns against one's God-sent messenger; it is thereby a betrayal of God Himself.

Yet even in such an egregious case of wrongdoing, Jesus did not forsake this soul he had accepted long before as one of his spiritual sons in the unconditional divine relationship of guru and disciple. Though the karmic law decreed that Judas's act as Satan's agent would destine him to return to the earth to learn painful lessons in many reincarnations, I know from authentic information that Judas at last attained salvation in this twentieth century in India—owing to the direct intercession of Jesus—through the instrumentality of one of India's great masters.²¹



And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. And he said unto them, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? Is not he that sitteth at meat? But I am among you as he that serveth."²²

"Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."²³

And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:24 – 32).



How Jesus perceived the weakness and reinforced the good in his disciple

In looking at Simon Peter through the eyes of intuition, Jesus saw all that lay hidden in that disciple's inner being. He perceived that Peter would be susceptible to Satan's cosmic delusion because of certain tendencies born of past negative karma that would influence him to succumb temporarily to mental weakness. But Jesus also beheld the good tendencies and wisdom in Peter and reinforced these by heavenly power, even as Satan was poised to work his evil influence on Peter's tendencies of weakness.

Perceiving that the combined influence of satanic delusion and Peter's own past karma might shake the wisdom from Peter's consciousness as wheat is sifted from the chaff, Jesus prayed to the almighty Father. He asked that his disciple's intuitive conviction of wisdom be not dislodged by the shakings of temptation. Then he instructed Peter that when—through the grace of God, Jesus' intercession, and the influence of Peter's stored good tendencies—he became free from delusion, he should strengthen his brother disciples and truth-seekers with the power of his renewed wisdom and faith.



And he said unto him, “Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death.”

And he said, “I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me” (Luke 22:33 – 34).

Parallel reference:

Then saith Jesus unto them, “All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, ‘I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.’²⁴ But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.”

Peter answered and said unto him, “Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.”

Jesus said unto him, “Verily I say unto thee, that this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.”

Peter said unto him, “Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee.” Likewise also said all the disciples (Matthew 26:31 – 35).²⁵

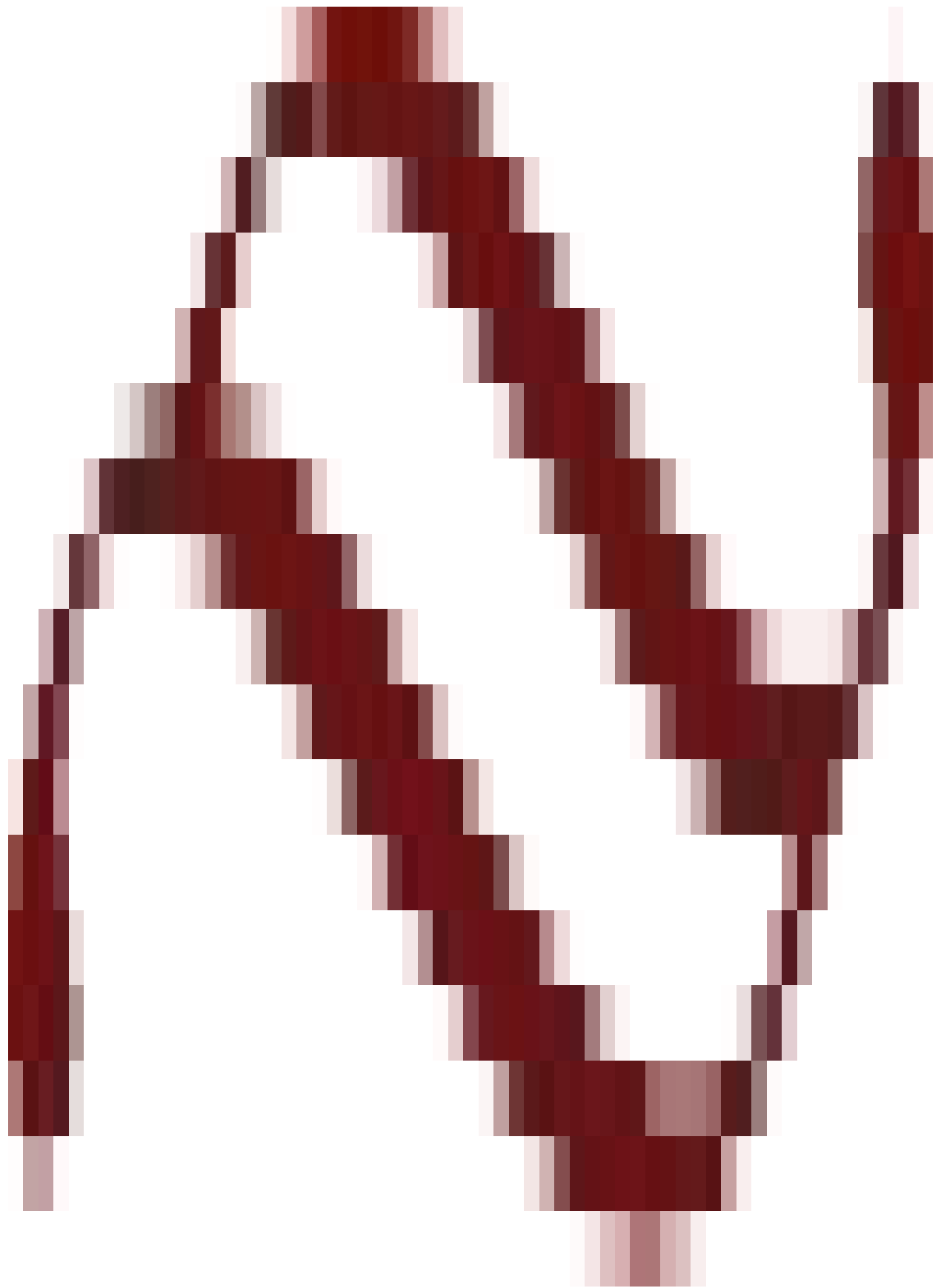
After discerning how Satan’s influence would work on Peter’s past weakness tendencies, Jesus predicted that Peter would thrice deny him before the cock

crowd. Because Jesus' knowing power was coextensive with all space and time, he perceived occurrences of past, present, and future in a seamless continuum actuated by the universal law of causation.



The awareness of Jesus encompassed past, present, and future

There are many ways of divining the future, of varying reliability. For example, a person's future may be foretold by observation of his character, by astrology, or by tracing his actions of present and past lives. The latter method involves the power of omniscience; Jesus used only this power in prophesying future events. Ordinary insightful individuals may partially predict the behavior of another person by using the observational and inferential powers of the intellect. But there are inherent defects in this method, inasmuch as the conclusion may be entirely wrong if there is the slightest mistake in discerning that person's behavior or underlying motives. Astrological analysis is likewise inexact when practiced by those of unawakened intuition. However, predictive knowledge is invariably true when derived through attunement with God's all-knowing divine consciousness, by which illumined seers can directly perceive not only a person's past-life actions and their mathematical effect, but also the circumstantial details of impending events in which such effects will play out.



And he said unto them, “When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing?”²⁶

And they said, “Nothing” (Luke 22:35).

Jesus here reminds his disciples that renunciants who forego worldly pursuits to devote themselves to God's work, unconcerned about material necessities, will find divine help in everything. With a love omniscient and omnipresent the Lord reciprocates the selfless service of devotees; His silent command vibrating through all nature brings about the fulfillment of their every need, often in mysterious ways.



Then said he unto them, “But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one. For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, ‘And he was reckoned among the transgressors’: for the things concerning me have an end.”

And they said, “Lord, behold, here are two swords.”

And he said unto them, “It is enough” (Luke 22:36 – 38).



Jesus' practical wisdom in applying spiritual truths in the world of relativity

“As long as my manifestation of Christ Consciousness has been with you, through my attunement with divine abundance your material needs have been looked after and you have been protected. But now, as the time of my passing draws nigh, you must be watchful; keep at hand a travel bag and some money if you have them. And if you have no sword, buy one; for as the scriptures have foretold, I will be classified as an ordinary criminal.²⁷ All things predicted about me have a meaning that must be accomplished during my manifestation on earth; and their fulfillment is soon to be concluded.”

Intuitive wisdom, though transcending ordinary knowledge, does not make one otherworldly or impractical; it is the parent of common sense, which is simply intuitional reaction to one's environment. Practical wisdom prompted Jesus in the above verses to emphasize the necessity for commonsense adaptability in applying spiritual truths rightly in the world of relativity. He pointed out that high-minded, advanced disciples experiencing the manifestation of Christ Consciousness need neither personal possessions nor any mode of protection; all their needs are supplied through their attunement with that Universal Intelligence. Such devotees never worry about taking care of the body, what they shall eat or what they should put on, for all these things shall be added unto them as a part of their divine realization. They are fully satisfied in the nonchalant sufficiency of having much or little. But Jesus further notes that persons whose consciousness is not yet settled in God-consciousness should exercise common sense and good judgment in supplying themselves with bodily necessities and reasonable protection. He knew that when the aureole of his divine presence would be withdrawn, his disciples would go through many tests and trials, which might demand the use of money—or even the appearance of protection in the carrying of a sword.

Jesus signified that the God within him would be humbly unmoved, even though classified, in the eyes of ignorance, as an ordinary criminal. Everything in his life and his death would accomplish a divine purpose. Against the dark background of human nonunderstanding that reckoned him “among the transgressors,” the light of his divinity would shine all the more brilliantly.

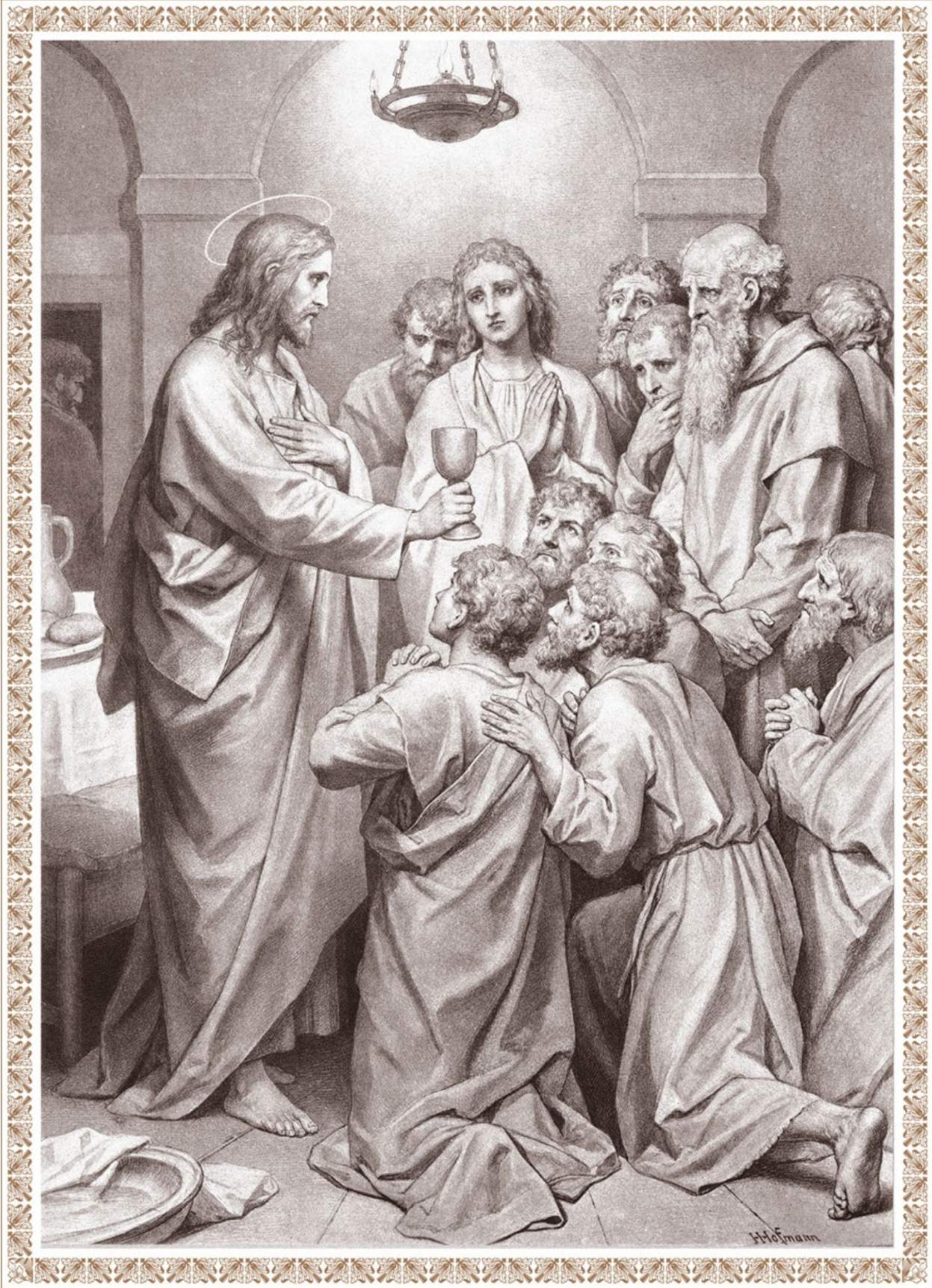
Jesus' practicality foresaw that if his disciples carried visible weapons they

would have reasonable protection from unscrupulous persecuting fanatics. But he did not want all of his faithful apostles to be equipped like soldiers! Their most powerful protection lay in their virtue and wisdom, not in swords. Two swords would be a sufficient statement of their courage that would deter cowardly persecutors. That, in reality, was the purpose Jesus wanted the swords to serve; he never desired that they be used for bloodshed.

Deeply spiritual persons who, by the very nature of their practices, are meek and humble within do not allow themselves to be inwardly distressed by persecution. Nevertheless, they need not offer themselves as doormats to be unnecessarily trampled upon by the ignorant. Righteous persons should display righteous thoughts and fearlessness to overcome their abusers. Jesus foresaw that Peter's fierce loyalty to his master would result in the regrettable use of a sword to cut off the ear of one of the guards who came to arrest Jesus.²⁸ Though Jesus did not wish for such violence, he preferred his disciples to be courageous in righteous indignation rather than to fly away through cowardice. He well understood that the impending persecution would strike terror into the hearts of some of his disciples, and he wanted to prepare their consciousness to be strong and fearless in defending the divine cause.

Jesus had already taught the disciples that to conquer evil by spiritual force is the highest way—to turn the left cheek when slapped upon the right one.²⁹ But he points out here that it is sometimes necessary to resist evil by a show of physical force if the power to resist evil spiritually is lacking. To flee from evil through fear is cowardly and unspiritual; to resist evil by physical force is better than that; but to conquer evil by superior spiritual force is the consummate ideal.

These verses speak of Jesus' pragmatic application of divine wisdom. To his advanced disciples he generally advised absolute renunciation. But he recognized that even renunciants may sometimes require material practicalities according to their circumstances. So in a broader perspective, persons with material responsibilities should adapt to their environment and accommodation of their needs, but without compromising spiritual principles.



The Last Supper: “And He Took the Cup...”

And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.”

And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, “Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”

—**Matthew 26:26–28**

Jesus showed again and again that his “body” was not himself. He was Spirit; he could pass through walls and walk on water because he knew the real substance of his form to be consciousness. So “flesh of Christ” means his consciousness. “Blood” means the life of Christ, the Holy Ghost Cosmic Energy that is the life and the light of his little body called Jesus and his cosmic body of the universe....

Anyone, of any religion or any era, who sees that Sacred Vibratory Light of God and His reflected Christ Consciousness, finds that immediately that Light changes the brain cells. This is the real import of partaking of the blood of Christ. By bathing in that Light, which was and is his manifest life and power, deeply meditating devotees are cleansed in the “blood” of divine energy that cauterizes their ignorance, bad habits, and seed tendencies of past karma.

—**Paramahansa Yogananda**

Drawing by Heinrich Hofmann

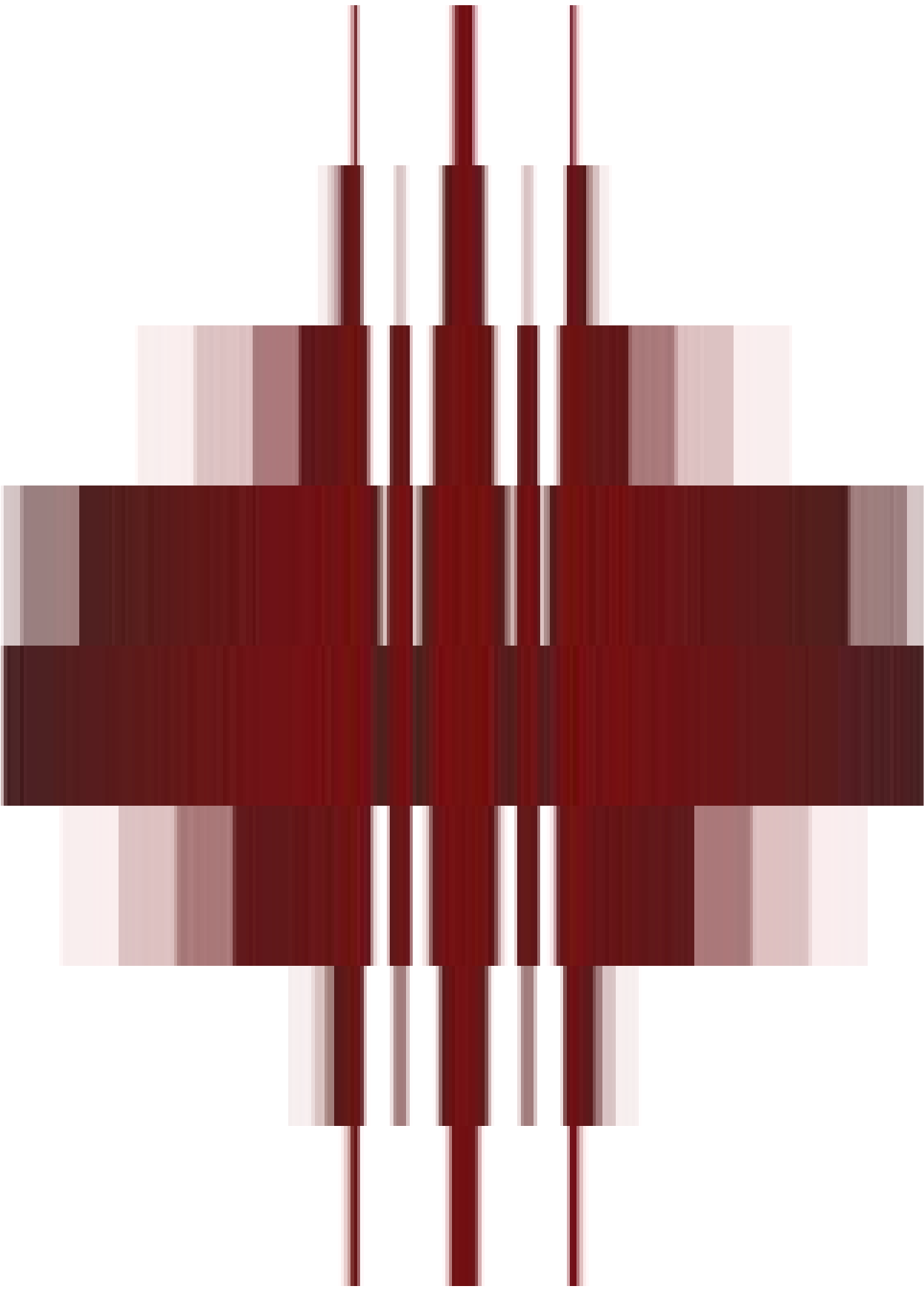




Discourse 70

“Love One Another as I Have Loved You”

The Last Supper, Part II



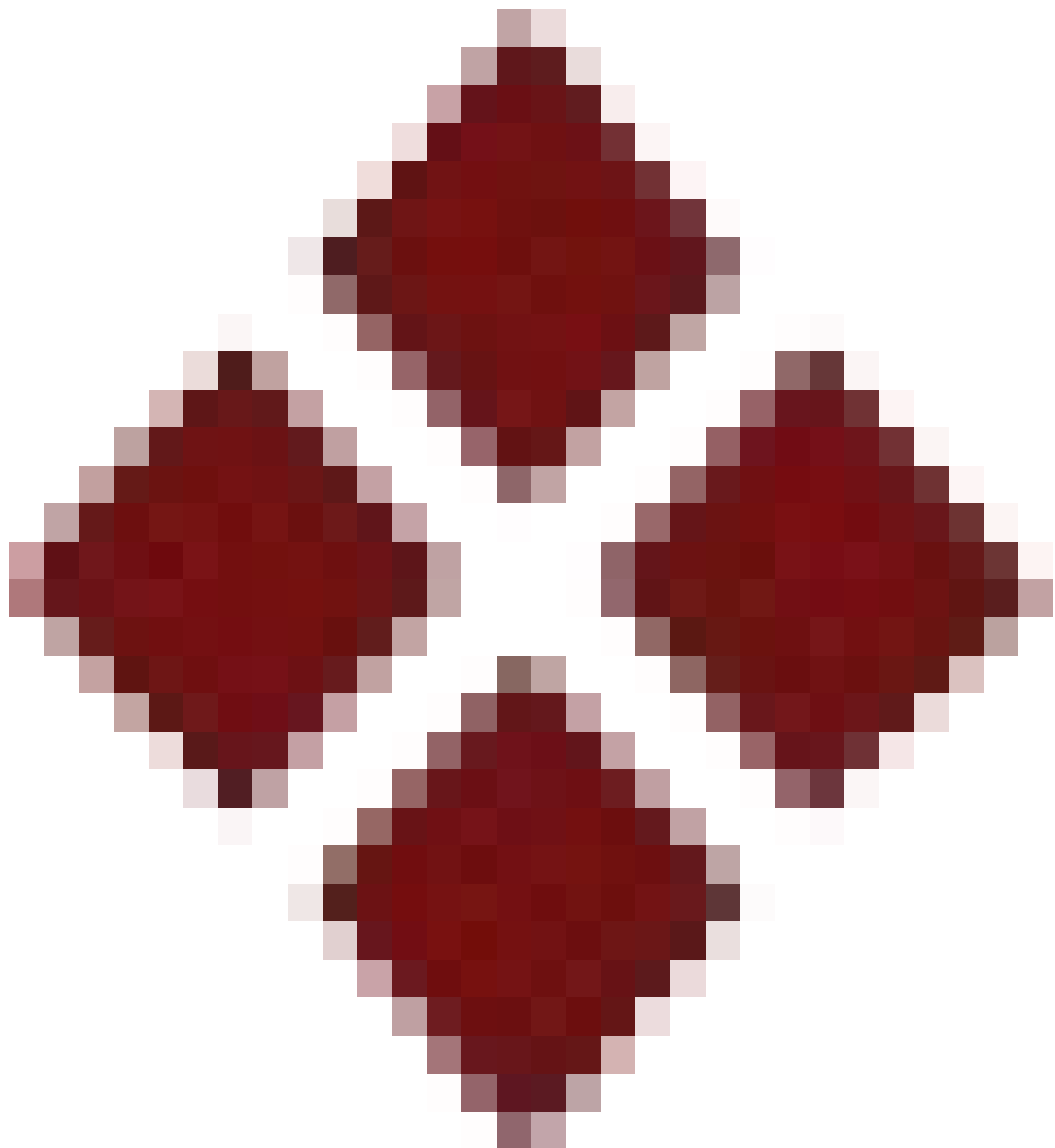
Jesus' Divine Example of Humble Service to All



**Through Intuition, Jesus Knew the Treacherous
Intent of Judas**



**The Guru Leads His Disciples to a Better Place in the
“Many Mansions” of the Astral Realm**



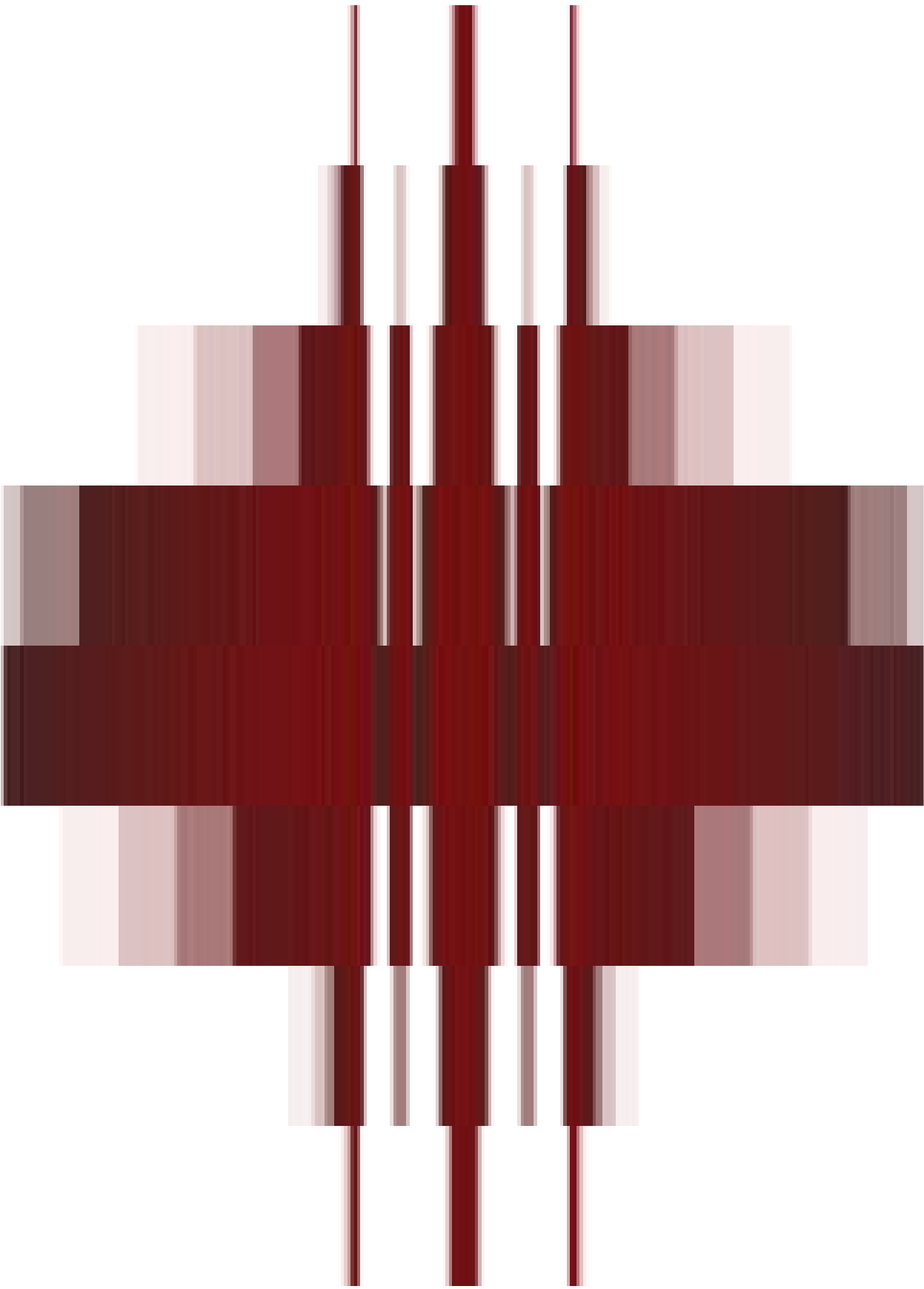
**“I Am the Way”: Attunement With Christ
Consciousness Is the Only Way to the Father’s
Kingdom**



**Contact With “the Comforter, Which Is the Holy
Ghost” Imparts Divine Wisdom and Bliss**



**Through Yoga Techniques of Meditation on Aum, One
Receives the Second Coming of Christ**



“Jesus told the beloved advanced disciples that although his body would soon be gone, yet he would leave with them the art of contacting the great comforting Bliss present in Cosmic Vibration.”

■

And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him; Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; he riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.

Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, "Lord, dost thou wash my feet?"

Jesus answered and said unto him, "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter."

Peter saith unto him, "Thou shalt never wash my feet."

Jesus answered him, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me."

Simon Peter saith unto him, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head."

Jesus saith to him, "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all." For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, "Ye are not all clean."

So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, "Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

"I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, 'He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.' Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth Him that sent me.”

When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.” Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake.

Now there was leaning on Jesus’ bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. He then lying on Jesus’ breast saith unto him, “Lord, who is it?”

Jesus answered, “He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it.” And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.

And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, “That thou doest, do quickly.”

Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him. For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, “Buy those things that we have need of against the feast”; or, that he should give something to the poor. He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night.

Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, “Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify him.

“Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, ‘Whither I go, ye cannot come’; so now I say to you.

“A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”

Simon Peter said unto him, “Lord, whither goest thou?”

Jesus answered him, “Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards.”

Peter said unto him, "Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake."

Jesus answered him, "Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, the cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice."

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know."

Thomas saith unto him, "Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?"

Jesus saith unto him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him."

Philip saith unto him, "Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us."

Jesus saith unto him, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, 'Shew us the Father'? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake."

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it."

"If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you."

“Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.”

Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, “Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?”

Jesus answered and said unto him, “If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father’s which sent me. These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you.

“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Ye have heard how I said unto you, ‘I go away, and come again unto you.’ If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, ‘I go unto the Father’: for my Father is greater than I.

“And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe. Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.”

—John 13:2 – 14:31



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Discourse 70

“Love One Another as I Have Loved You”

The Last Supper, Part II



And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him; Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; he riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.

Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, "Lord, dost thou wash my feet?"

Jesus answered and said unto him, "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter."

Peter saith unto him, "Thou shalt never wash my feet."

Jesus answered him, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me."

Simon Peter saith unto him, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head."

Jesus saith to him, "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all." For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, "Ye are not all clean."

So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments and was set down again, he said unto them, “Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them” (John 13:2 – 17).



Washing the feet of the disciples: Jesus' divine example of humble service to all

Jesus had several purposes in washing the feet of his disciples. Primarily, it was to show them the ideal of humbleness expressed in selfless service. “You call me Lord of creation and Master or Guru; and you say it truthfully, for so I am because of my Father’s wish. If I, as your guru and as a true manifestation of the Christ Consciousness that rules all creation, have in humbleness washed your feet, then you ought to serve each other likewise. For I have given you an example, that you should do unto all as I have done to you.”

Since the spiritual servant, the disciple, is not greater than his master or guru as regards his state of realization, and is not equal until he attains final liberation and becomes one with the consciousness of his master in Cosmic Consciousness, so also neither Jesus nor his disciples, who were sent on earth by God, could be greater than God. And if God in Jesus served the disciples (who, being created by God, were subordinate to Him), it certainly behooved them to follow the divine example by humbly serving all, even to the least, no matter how high their own spiritual status.

With this compelling demonstration, Jesus hoped that his disciples, in turn, would be inspired not only to “wash the feet” of each other—to treat each other in the same spirit of love and respect he had shown to them—but also to extend that spirit of service to all people, physically, mentally, and spiritually. He assured the disciples that if they understood and remembered the lessons he had taught them, and governed their lives accordingly, they would realize the immutable spiritual happiness of a life sheltered in the pure humility of selflessness.

Even the Heavenly Father serves impartially in silent humbleness: He has created the water in the well, and as the indwelling Spirit in the water and in every person, it is He who washes the feet of His children—even the egotistical and materialistic persons who never honor Him.

By washing the feet even of Judas, who was going to betray him, Jesus intimated that those disciples who would be like their master ought to act like him by ministering unto others without discriminating as to whether they were friends or enemies—to render help to everyone alike whenever they were in dire need.

It was because of his foreknowledge of the impending betrayal by Judas that Jesus said, "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." He wanted to bring out, through the drama of washing the feet of each one of the disciples, the fact that one among them was spiritually unclean.

When Peter refused to be ministered to in this way, Jesus admonished him: "If I wash you not, you are not spiritually connected with me as a disciple is with his master."¹ Jesus was emphasizing the importance not of physical washing but of spiritual cleansing as first and foremost. This is made evident by his saying, in effect: "He who is spiritually washed needs only an occasional physical cleansing to be clean in every way. Most of you are spiritually clean, but not all of you." Thus he dramatically foretold his knowledge of the betrayal of Judas.



“I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, ‘He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.’² Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth Him that sent me.”

When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.” Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake.

Now there was leaning on Jesus’ bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. He then lying on Jesus’ breast saith unto him, “Lord, who is it?”

Jesus answered, “He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it.” And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.

And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, “That thou doest, do quickly.”

Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him. For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, “Buy those things that we have need of against the feast”; or, that he should give something to the poor. He then having received the sop went immediately out:

and it was night (John 13:18 – 30).



Through intuition, Jesus knew the treacherous intent of Judas

“I am not speaking of all of you as being defiled by ignorance and traitorous intent; I know whom my intuition has detected (‘c hose n’) from amongst you as the one who would voluntarily through evil karma and influence of delusion betray me. The prophets who knew about my coming on earth and intuitively calculated the law of karma affecting me, my good disciples, and the bad one who would betray me, wrote in the scriptures of my crucifixion. He who eats bread with me is ready to strike me. I am foretelling now about the crucifixion so that you may know when that event actually happens that I am Christ about whom the crucifixion has been predicted.

“Of the truth which I feel within me, I declare unto you, he who receives (listens and obeys) anyone whomsoever I send to preach the truth actually listens to and obeys me; and he who receives me—he who is in tune with Christ Consciousness—is automatically in tune with Cosmic Consciousness, whose reflection I am.”³

When Jesus said, “I know whom I have chosen,” he did not intimate that he had chosen Judas as a fit mechanical vehicle for carrying out a divine mandate in order to play the drama of life and death and resurrection. Jesus merely stated that his divine intuition detected the malign thoughts of Judas whose intent was to betray him, being under the influence of satanic delusion.⁴

The love of God that characterized the greatness of Jesus responded to the pure immediacy of John’s devotion, so that notwithstanding the usual reserve in the presence of divinity, this beloved disciple was often allowed by Jesus to lean on his breast—as would a child seeking succor from its mother. This divinely human nature of Jesus, an avatar in whom God was fully manifest, was so tenderly loving that it shows how intimately personal is the love of God that can be received by anyone who loves God deeply, as John did. The love shown by Jesus is the love of God; this Jesus expressed in one of his greatest sermons, when he said (in the next series of verses): “A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you.” Jesus thus conveyed to the disciples that he loved them as God loved them; and that it was of no use for them to love him with a selfish love that did not include love for one another as he loved them. Divine love is a transcending power, elevating and all-embracing;

mundane love is self-seeking and circumscriptive. Jesus taught his disciples not only to feel God as the great manifestation of love and ever new joy in meditation, but also to love God in His tangible presence in the temples of human bodies.

In answer to John's query as to the identity of the betrayer among them, Jesus said he would point out the malefactor by giving him a piece of bread he had dipped. Jesus' words after giving the bread to Judas signified:

“O Judas Iscariot, you are possessed by satanic cosmic delusion due to your evil karma; therefore, do quickly what you have made up your mind to do and get it over with, lest you harbor your evil impulse longer and become ready to do greater evil.”



Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, “Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify him.

“Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, ‘Whither I go, ye cannot come’; so now I say to you.

“A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”

Simon Peter said unto him, “Lord, whither goest thou?”

Jesus answered him, “Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards.”

Peter said unto him, “Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake.”

Jesus answered him, “Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, the cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice” (John 13:31 – 38).⁵

“Now my body, which is going to be crucified for the sake of preaching truth, is

glorified and honored by the blessing of God. And through my sacrifice on the cross God's glorious qualities are to be made manifest. If God be thus glorified through my bodily sacrifice, then shall He also lift me in His consciousness and thereby glorify me in Himself.

“Little children of wisdom, my body will be with you now for but a little while. And then when my body is gone, you will seek Christ Consciousness in me; and as I said unto the Jews, ‘The omnipresent place wherein my consciousness will commingle, your consciousness cannot yet reach, because at present you lack sufficient spiritual advancement.’⁶



Jesus' new commandment to his disciples: Be exemplars of God's love

“I am giving you a new commandment of spiritual law, that as disciples you should love one another. As I have loved you with divine love, so also with the same divine love you should love one another.⁷ This love, if expressed by you, would be the spiritual insignia by which the people of the world can recognize you as my disciples—exemplars of the message of God's love for which I lived and died.”

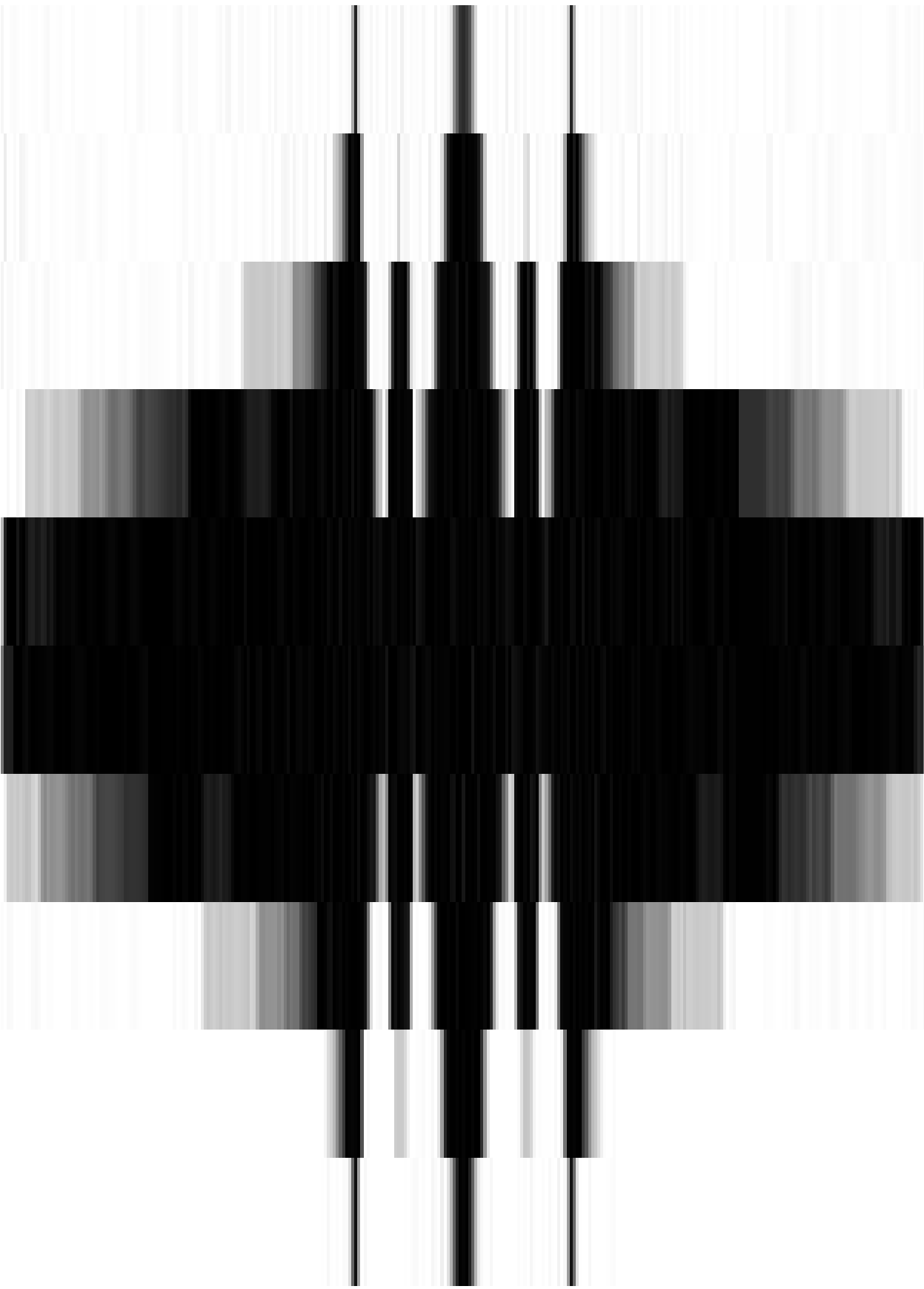
Jesus' answer to Peter's query, “Lord, whither goest thou?” conveyed to his disciple: “I leave this body to unite the consciousness of my body permanently with the Christ Consciousness in everything. At the present stage of your spiritual development you cannot meditate deeply enough to raise your consciousness through subconsciousness and soul-superconsciousness in ecstasy to follow me into the omnipresent Christ Consciousness. But the time will come, after you have been able spiritually to refine your consciousness, that you will be able to follow me through the many corridors of the Christ Consciousness indwelling in everything.”



“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know” (John 14:1 – 4).

What Jesus meant by this advice and these promises might be more fully expressed as follows: “Do not trouble your heart, the feeling aspect of your consciousness, no matter what trials come to you. Keep your meditation-born spiritual perception fixed on the imperturbability of Cosmic Consciousness beyond creation and Christ Consciousness present in all creation. Regardless of troubles, remain securely focused on the Divine Consciousness on both planes—in the cosmic vibratory region and in the quiescent realm beyond all vibrations.

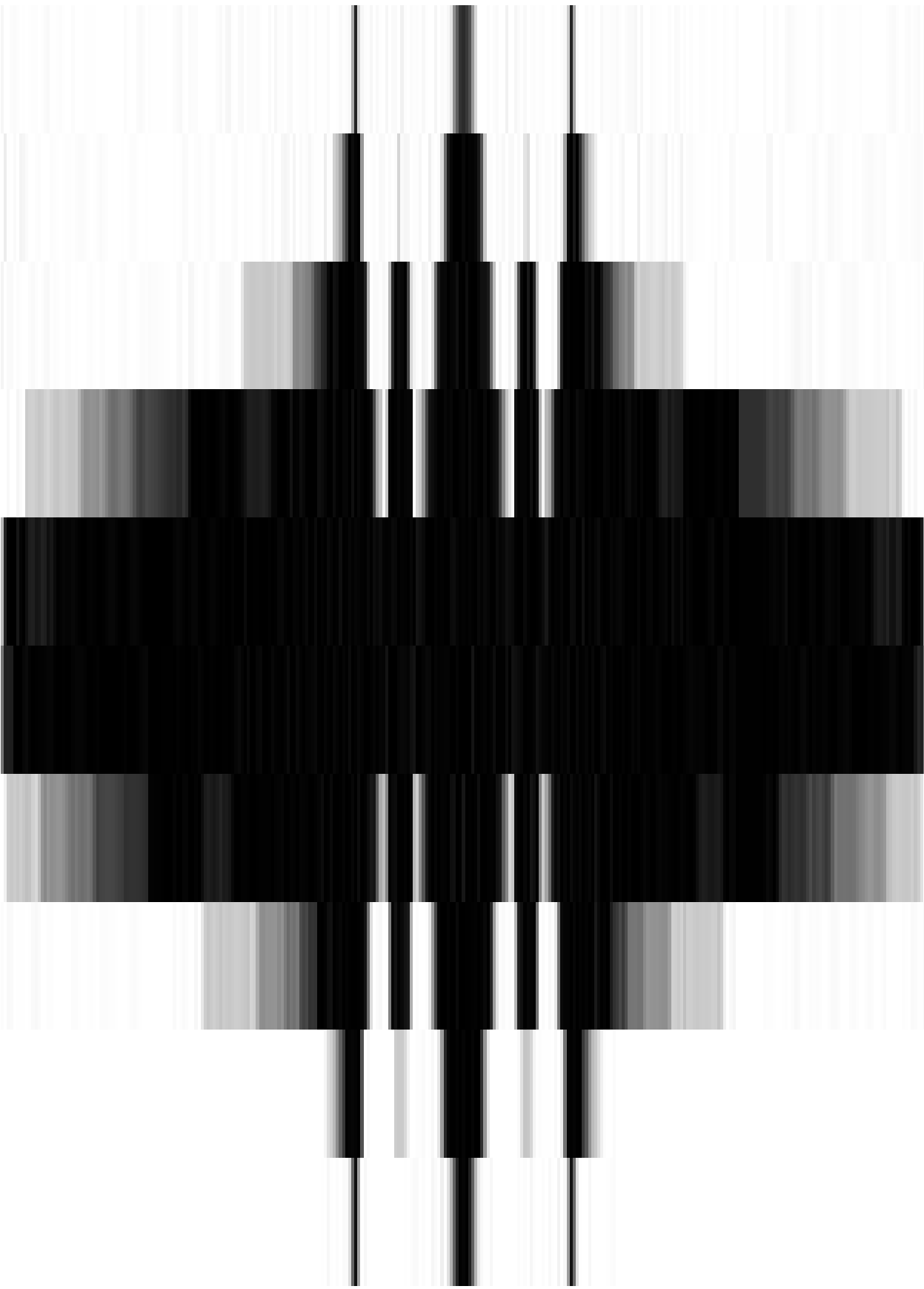
“In the kingdom of Cosmic Consciousness and cosmic creation (the Father’s house) there are many mansions, regions differing in their vibrations, where souls dwell according to their earth-acquired good or bad vibrations. If this were not so I would not have told you. As your guru-savior, divinely appointed to lead you to God, I will go ahead of you to merge with the Cosmic Consciousness and prepare a place for you in accordance with your spiritual attainments. And when the Christ Consciousness in me has thus merged in Cosmic Consciousness, I will try to bring you there. My Christ Consciousness, attracted by your devotion and ecstasy, will come again—be manifest a second time in your consciousness—and merge your body-born consciousness in Itself, that you, too, may become omnipresent. When this occurs, then you will know where my embodied Christ Consciousness has gone. It is going there soon—when I dissolve the body after resurrection. And once you know the abode of Christ Consciousness as omnipresence, you will know the way to commune consciously with that Universal Intelligence at any time.”



The imperturbable calmness advised by Jesus and the science of yoga

When Jesus said, “Let not your heart be troubled,” he voiced an exact parallel to a profound spiritual aphorism in the Yoga Sutras, the preeminent ancient treatise on Raja Yoga. There the illumined sage Patanjali says that yoga, union with God, is possible only by stilling the restlessness of the heart (chitta, the feeling faculty of consciousness).⁸ The restless disturbances of chitta that distort man’s perception of his real Self, the soul-image of God within, are agitations born of the likes and dislikes of the body-bound ego, or pseudosoul. The mind made restless by the attractions and repulsions of the senses cloaks the soul in an appearance of imperfection; but the soul, being an individualized reflection of Spirit, is immutably ever perfect. The divine nature of that Self is clearly perceived as soon as the heart, the responses of feeling, becomes perfectly calm. This is what Jesus intended, advising his disciples to take the entirety of human experiences calmly, like the Oriental yogi, without forming egoistic likes and dislikes—attraction to what is pleasant, aversion to what is painful or difficult.

Souls are sent on earth by God to watch His cosmic motion picture with a calm, nonattached consciousness befitting souls made in His divine image. But when they respond to earthly experiences with the permutations of likes and dislikes, they lose their immortal consciousness. Any soul who forgets its spiritual status during its earthly sojourn forms mortal attachments, and thus has to reincarnate until the mundane desires are worked out and the lost divine consciousness is regained. That is why Jesus and Self-realized yogis advise all truth-seekers to pass through trials, fortunes and misfortunes, struggling for righteousness with an undisturbed state of heart, as the way of attaining salvation, Cosmic Consciousness.⁹



The guru leads his disciples to a better place in the “many mansions” of the astral realm

Thus when Jesus says, “In my Father’s house are many mansions,” he warns his disciples that unless they attain Cosmic Consciousness, after death they would have to dwell on one of the variously graded planes of existence where unredeemed souls go according to their merits and demerits. His promise, “I go to prepare a place for you,” refers to the fact that the blessings of a true guru can help his disciples to gain a better place in the many-mansioned vibratory spheres in the after-death state. In my autobiography I have recounted how, during my experience of the resurrection of my guru, Swami Sri Yukteswarji, he described his dwelling as a savior in a supernal region of the astral heaven inhabited by souls who have overcome earthly ties. His words were a wondrous assurance: “There you and your exalted loved ones shall someday come to be with me.”¹⁰

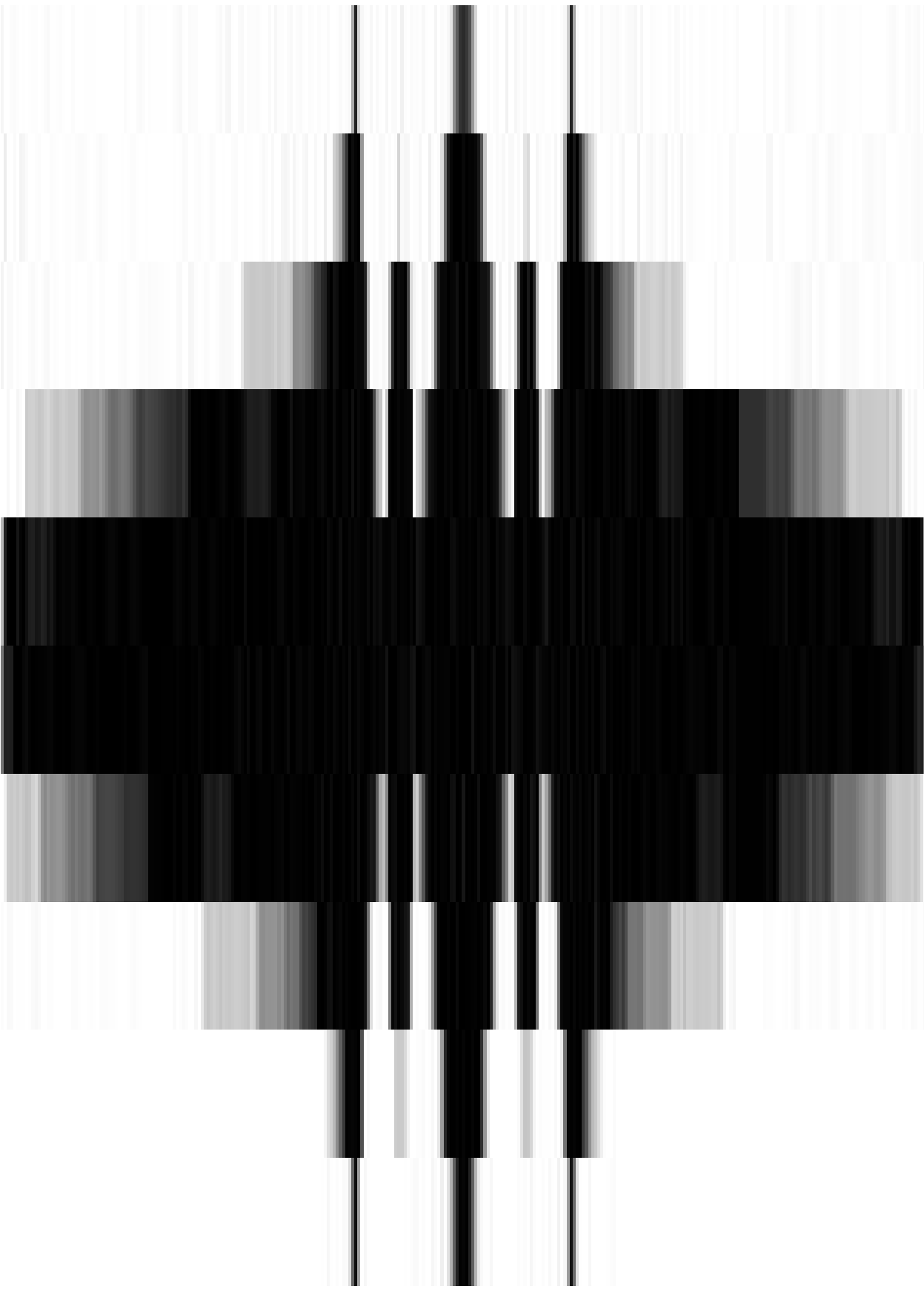
So when Jesus said he would prepare a place for his disciples, he signified his role as their guru who, even after his passing, would continue to help them toward their attainment of Cosmic Consciousness. Thus he said, “I will come again”—not that he would have to reappear in person to his disciples in order to assist them toward liberation, but that through their communion with Christ Consciousness in spiritual ecstasy his consciousness would appear a second time in their consciousness. Thereby their consciousness would expand into the omnipresence of Christ Consciousness, “receive you unto myself,” through which they would attain final liberation in Cosmic Consciousness.

When Jesus says, “Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know,” he reminds his disciples that the abode of Christ Consciousness is omnipresence, and the way to that abode lies in the art of keeping the heart untroubled by earthly experiences, remaining settled in the omnipresent Christ Consciousness in the soul, and thereby uniting human consciousness with Cosmic Consciousness.



Thomas saith unto him, “Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?”

Jesus saith unto him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him” (John 14:5 – 7).



“I am the way”: Attunement with Christ Consciousness is the only way to the Father’s kingdom

Explaining these verses, my revered guru Sri Yukteswarji said: “Jesus meant, never that he was the sole Son of God, but that no man can attain the unqualified Absolute, the transcendent Father beyond creation, until he has first manifested the ‘S o n’ or activating Christ Consciousness within creation. Jesus, who had achieved entire oneness with that Christ Consciousness, identified himself with it inasmuch as his own ego had long since been dissolved.”

The Christ Consciousness present in Jesus, and in all vibratory creation and phenomena, is the noumenon, “truth,” the primary substance and essence of life of everything in creation. No human being who is a part of vibratory creation can take his consciousness to Cosmic Consciousness, “the Father”—which lies beyond vibratory creation and the immanent Christ Consciousness—without first experiencing the Christ-imbued Cosmic Vibration, or Holy Ghost, that manifests vibratory creation, then passing through the God-reflection of Christ Consciousness. In other words, to “come unto the Father” every human consciousness has to expand and attain realization of the Cosmic Vibration first, and then know Christ Consciousness, in order to reach Cosmic Consciousness.

Jesus went on to say that everyone who had “known” him (contacted the Christ Consciousness in him) should realize that they had also automatically contacted the Cosmic Consciousness (the “Father”), for the Cosmic Consciousness and Its only begotten reflection omnipresent in creation—the Christ Consciousness—are one.

Here Jesus clearly explained his inner Self as Spirit. He never emphasized his body, always the omnipresent Spirit within the body. It is important to remember the above point as a basis of understanding the spiritual cosmography: that the Christ Consciousness is the primary substance and essence, “the truth, and the life” of vibratory creation—the noumenon existing behind every phenomenon. When Jesus said: “Ye know Him, and have seen Him,” he never meant that the thousands of people who saw the body of Jesus realized that here was a manifestation of Christ Consciousness, and therefore of the Father. Only those advanced disciples who attuned themselves with Christ Consciousness by deep meditation could realize the presence of the Father as one with the Christ

Consciousness manifested in the incarnate form of Jesus.



Philip saith unto him, “Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.”

Jesus saith unto him, “Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, ‘Shew us the Father’? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works’ sake.

*“Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it”
(John 14:8 – 14).*



“I am in the Father, and the Father in me”

The disciples still did not understand. It is evident that Philip had not yet fully “known” Jesus, had not perceived the Christ Consciousness so long manifested in the body of Jesus. So when Philip asked to see the Father, Jesus explained once more; he spoke briefly, meaning: “He who has, by ecstasy, contacted the Christ Consciousness in me, my true Self, has automatically also contacted the Cosmic Consciousness whose reflection I am. Then how is it that you ask me to show you the Father when you cannot contact Him without first contacting the Christ Consciousness, even that which is with you in myself?” Since one must raise the consciousness by the degrees mentioned above, Jesus repeated the same thought as when he declared, “No man cometh unto the Father, but by me,” telling Philip that the Christ Consciousness in him was in the Cosmic Consciousness and that the Cosmic Consciousness was reflected in that Christ Consciousness.

Jesus went on to say that the words of wisdom uttered through his voice were actuated not by himself, but by the vibrations of Cosmic Consciousness to which his consciousness was attuned. Most human beings are guided by their ego working behind the instrumentalities of the body; but Jesus recognized that the Cosmic Father, dwelling behind his Christ Consciousness, was the sole Doer working through his body and Christ mind. He suggested that the disciples should first believe that his Christ Consciousness was one with the Cosmic Consciousness, and thus that he was “in the Father, and the Father in me,” knowing that they could then in time realize this truth by their own experience in meditation. But meanwhile, if they could not fully conceive that the Father was in him, he asked that they at least believe in the Father’s divine manifestation in all the sacred and good works manifested through his life.



Jesus foretells miraculous works to be revealed through future saints and savants

Then—by the totality of the present, past, and future truth which Jesus perceived within himself—he prophesied to the disciples that any devotee who, by deep meditation, realizes the presence of the omnipotent Christ Consciousness in himself, as it was in Jesus, shall be able to perform the miraculous acts of healing, raising the dead, and every manner of good works that were manifested through the body called Jesus. This prophecy included future devotees, for he meant that all who were (and all who are now or will be) in tune with Christ Consciousness would perform what he had done, and even greater miracles than he had demonstrated.

Jesus foretold these truths because he knew that his Christ Consciousness was soon to be released from the body to be united with the Cosmic Consciousness. He wanted to assure the world through his disciples that the manifold miraculous happenings of his life were not the end of the wondrous works of God. Since God is infinite, His miraculous works are infinite; and they would from time to time be revealed through the lives of great saints and in the patient researches of generations of scientists. Jesus' words foreshadowed the miracles of modern aviation, radio, television, submarines, control and cure of diseases, the unraveling of the mysteries of the atom—as well as the reason-defying miracles of great saints who are in tune with the omnipresent Christ-Kutastha Intelligence. In *Autobiography of a Yogi* I have written of many God-knowing saints whose powers yet confound the known scientific norms by the workings of higher laws whose secret chambers are still to be unlocked to common knowledge. Yoga refers to divine powers as siddhis. One who overcomes the bondage of delusion is said to possess the eight principal powers, or maha siddhis—the aishvaryas, “ascetic majesties.”¹¹

The potential in the soul, the God-image in man, is limitless once it breaks the bodily circumscriptions and unites with its infinite Self. The soul's manifesting powers increase with its expanding identification with its superconscious cosmic body, then with the infinite Christ Intelligence, and ultimately with Cosmic Consciousness. In the mastery of absolute oneness with Cosmic Consciousness, the uncircumscribed Consciousness has God's own manifesting power; it can even create planets for habitation by beings superior to human creatures.

In higher evolutionary ages, there will be undreamed-of demonstrations on earth by saints yet to come. And scientists will discover the method of carrying on interplanetary communication, and far better ways of treating human maladies. So many yet-to-be revealed marvels are what Jesus referred to when he spoke of the “greater works” that would in some future time be manifested.

Science has already done great things; but still it has very little control over the nervous system and mind for elevating the human consciousness, which can be attained by the science of yoga as taught by God-realized masters, as also by Christ to his disciples. Their path of God-realization is not one of negative deprivation, but renunciation of delusion’s petty offerings in order to realize the all-inclusiveness of God’s kingdom. The miracles of Jesus were not an end in themselves, but to convince people that finding God is much greater than any worldly accomplishment. His wonders were not to entertain people or just to give them temporary succor—or to so establish himself that for the centuries to come generations would adore his name and build churches in his honor, while never understanding what he meant for them to learn: that they also are intended to achieve oneness with the omnipotent Christ Consciousness.¹²

When Jesus declares, “Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do,” it is not so simple as just saying, “Jesus, please make me as spiritually great as Saint Francis”; or, “Jesus, make me as rich as Henry Ford,” and it will be so. The words “in my name” signify the creative Cosmic Vibration in which the Christ Consciousness is hidden. The devotee must know the technique of listening to the Cosmic Vibration—the great Aum or Amen, the voice of the Holy Ghost—and be able also to feel the omnipresence of that Vibration with its immanent Christ Consciousness.¹³ In perfect accord and communion with that Holy Vibration and immanent Christ Consciousness, the devotee can accomplish anything by appealing to those forces. That is why Jesus promised that whatever a devotee asked while intuitively perceiving the Cosmic Vibration and the Christ Consciousness in him (in his “name”), he would materialize, that the Cosmic Consciousness (“the Father”) might be glorified through its all-powerful reflection in the Christ Consciousness (“the Son”).



“If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

“Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him” (John 14:15 – 21).



A promise of eternal love and blessing to all who follow the way of Christ-discipline

Today the same admonition applies that Jesus gave to his immediate disciples. If a devotee loves him (that is, loves contact with the Christ Consciousness in him) then he or she must faithfully follow the commandments—the laws of bodily and mental discipline and meditation—which are required to manifest the Christ Consciousness in the individual's own consciousness.

Then Jesus said that if their love was actively expressed in the ardor of spiritual endeavor, he would pray, intercede, for his disciples, and all truth-seekers, that by their deep meditation they might contact another Comforter of all human sorrows—the Holy Ghost or Cosmic Vibration which exists in every human soul forever and forever. The “Spirit of truth” is the Cosmic Consciousness manifesting Itself as the Holy Ghost imbued with Its reflection of Christ Consciousness. Cosmic Consciousness is an oceanic Presence that cannot be received in the small cup of worldly human consciousness. But when the devotee hears within himself in deep meditation the cosmic sound of the Holy Ghost vibration and then merges his consciousness in that vibration, he experiences an expanding consciousness and awareness that this sound is the repository of Truth expressing the presence of the Infinite. The devotee at first has moments of intuitive perceptions of Cosmic Consciousness dwelling within his soul, and in time learns to be aware of it constantly.

Finally, Jesus told the beloved advanced disciples that although his body would soon be gone, yet he would leave with them the art of contacting the great comforting Bliss present in Cosmic Vibration; and through that contact, the Christ Consciousness would be revealed to them a second time.

“Yet a little while my body will be present in the world, and then the world shall lose sight of this body and the Christ Consciousness in it. But those of you who are advanced, contact the Christ Consciousness; in it you will find my life and your life and know that Infinite Intelligence to be the condition of all life existing in the cosmos and in the hereafter.” Jesus added that on the day divine wisdom manifested in them through an expanded consciousness, they would know that all forms are related: Christ Consciousness is in the bosom of Cosmic Consciousness and the devotee's consciousness is manifested in Christ

Consciousness and Christ's life can manifest in the awakened devotee's life.

Jesus then declared that any truth-seeker who is in tune with his commandments of self-discipline, and practices them in every aspect of his life, will eventually be able to contact and devotedly love the Christ Consciousness that was present in Jesus (and is within everyone). And any devotee who loves the Christ Consciousness receives the love in that Consciousness and also the love present in the Cosmic Consciousness, manifesting itself to him through his divinely attuned consciousness.



Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, “Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?”

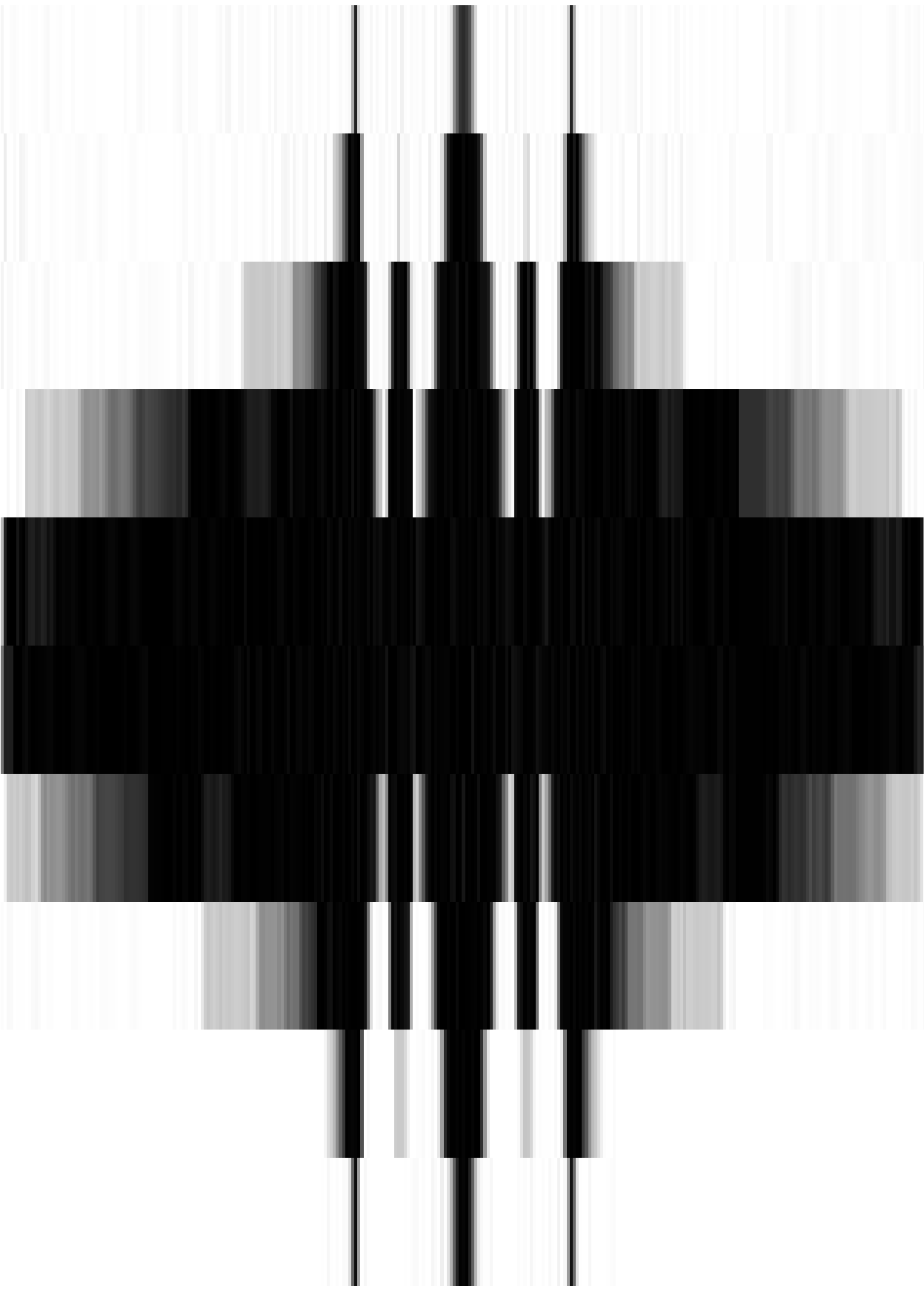
Jesus answered and said unto him, “If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father’s which sent me. These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you.

“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 14:22 – 26).



How the devotee's consciousness becomes an altar of Christ and Cosmic Consciousness

Jesus knew that his body was not ordained to appear, after resurrection, to the people of the world en masse. So he said that after resurrection he would be visible only to his advanced disciples and enlightened followers—those who “love me” and “will keep my words.” Further, it was important for them to realize that he was not speaking primarily of his physical body and its appearance to devotees. Rather, whenever a devotee loves the Christ Consciousness, the reflection of the Heavenly Father that was in Jesus, and wishes to contact that manifestation through meditation, he will surely follow Jesus’ words of wisdom and the forms of self-discipline that will lead to such contact. The devotee who can regularly contact the Christ Consciousness will also feel the love of the Cosmic Consciousness, “the Father,” and both will appear in the consciousness of that devotee; and Their united vibrations, which bring forth manifestations of Their Divine Presence, will permanently dwell in him. But the person who does not follow the teachings of contact with the Cosmic Vibration, “keepeth not my sayings,” finds no realization of the Christ Consciousness within himself, and thus feels no attachment to it, “loveth me not.” When Jesus said, “We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him,” he specifically cited the advanced devotee who by meditation attains the state of Christ Consciousness and holds on to it with an increasing fervor of divine love, and who thereby gradually feels the state of Cosmic Consciousness. Such a devotee can experience Christ Consciousness in all creation and Cosmic Consciousness beyond all creation. His consciousness becomes an omnipresent altar where both reign—and both “make Their abode” with him. Just as a man can have both great wisdom and devotion for God, so the advanced devotee is endowed with many differing exalted states of consciousness. He feels the Holy Ghost as great bliss, Christ Intelligence as great wisdom, and Cosmic Consciousness as the essence of bliss, love, wisdom, and everything that is in the cosmos and in Infinity. The ordinary man is guided by his book knowledge, worldly experience, and habits acquired in past incarnations; but the advanced devotee is guided by the omniscient intelligences of God, Christ, and the Holy Ghost.



Contact with “the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost” imparts divine wisdom and bliss

Again Jesus reminded the disciples that the Cosmic Vibration or “word which ye hear,” the Holy Ghost whose sound they heard within themselves, was not a manifestation of his power, “but the Father’s,” the emanation of Cosmic Consciousness, “which sent me,” which also reflected Itself as the Christ Consciousness present in him. By divine ordinance, Jesus revealed many truths to the disciples while he was present with them, but promised that when, by meditation, they contacted the Holy Ghost, the Cosmic Vibration made sacred by the presence of Christ Consciousness within it, then they would know that the Father was sending that Cosmic Vibration, or Comforter, “in my name.” And from this Holy Vibration that they were to contact in meditation would emanate the great Christ Bliss present in it, to comfort them in all miseries.

Jesus further stated that the Christ-imbued Cosmic Vibration would not only give them great comfort and bliss, but would bring them the knowledge of all things and recall from their memory the wisdom he had implanted within them, for the Holy Ghost is the source of all materialized creation and hence of all earthly and astral wisdom. It was that Cosmic Vibration which manifested in the disciples on the day of Pentecost:

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

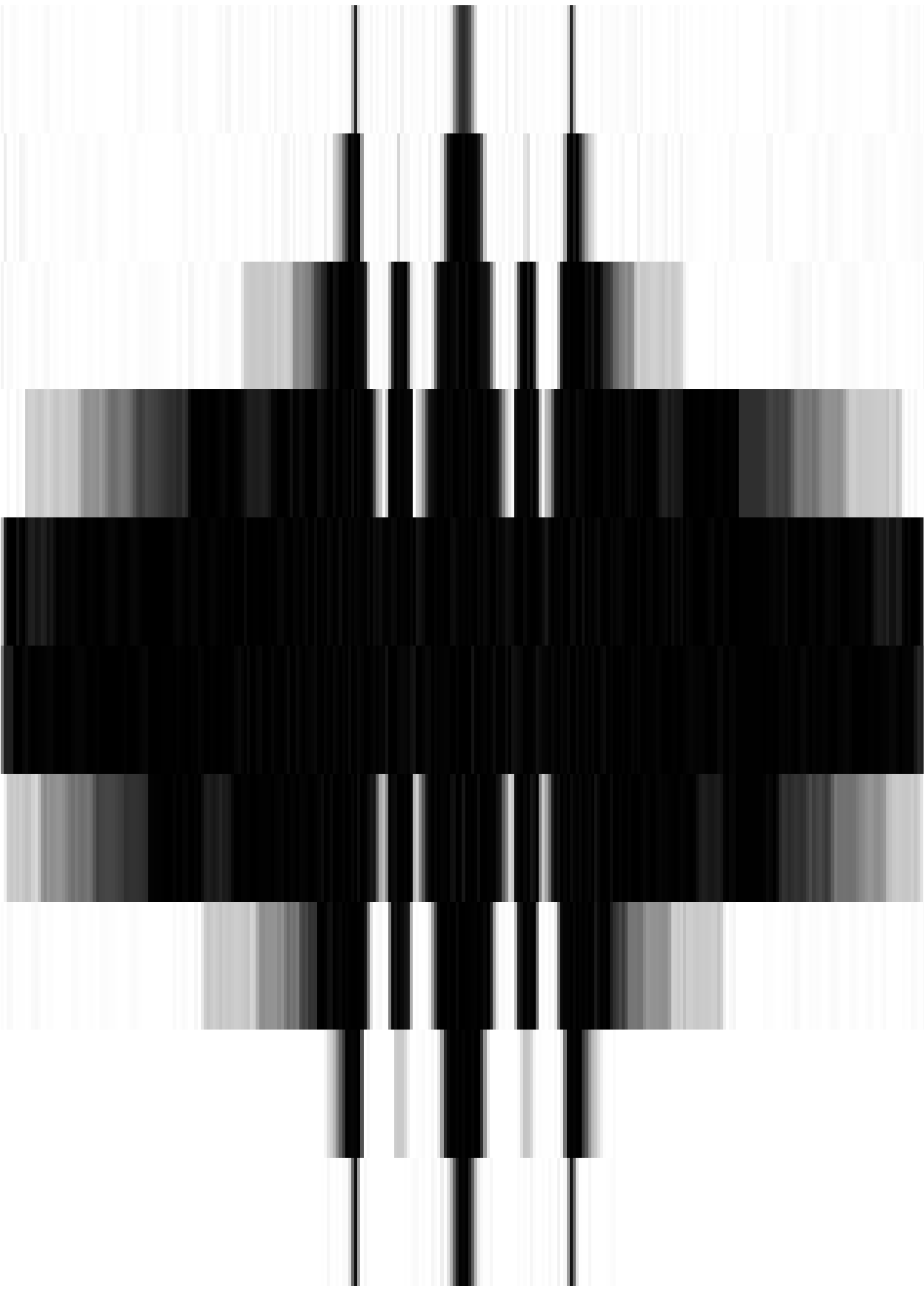
And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another,

“Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?”...Others mocking said, “These men are full of new wine.”

But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, “Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; ‘And it shall come to pass in the last days [the culmination of divine realization], saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh...And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved’” (Acts 2:1 – 21).

In this experience, the apostles received baptism in the Holy Ghost Cosmic Vibration, the great Amen or Aum (“a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind”), which had been promised to the faithful disciples by Jesus.¹⁴ It bestowed on them the awakening of the spiritual eye: “There appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them”—the cleft rays of life energy, pranic light, emanating from the astral center in the medulla oblongata (ajna chakra) converged into the single divine eye of superconscious perception ablaze in their foreheads.

The astral center in the medulla is the switch that transmits life-force currents into the two physical eyes. These two currents, concentrated outward through the physical eyes, empower their perception of the material world. When the eyes are upturned, their gaze fixed at the point between the eyebrows in meditation, they become supernaturally still; then the bifurcated life currents flowing from the medullary center into the two eyes converge as one at the Christ-Kutastha center, producing the vision of the luminous single eye. Penetrating the inner portals of this astral eye of light, one can cognize, successively, all physical, astral, and ideational qualities and vibrations of the Holy Ghost realm of Cosmic Nature; Christ Consciousness reflected in that universal sphere; and Spirit beyond all form and vibration.



In tune with the Cosmic Source of all sound, the disciples could speak in any language

The Holy Ghost Cosmic Vibration, being the source of all sounds and hence of every language, enabled the disciples to speak in diverse tongues. The ultimate wisdom in Cosmic Vibration appears in advanced devotees as one intuitive feeling. These devotees in ecstatic communion with the Cosmic Vibration can translate this intuitive feeling into any language, not only the one they have been used to since birth. Every baby, before he becomes familiar with a particular language and learns to vocalize it, is already equipped with thought and sensations. Babies throughout the world cry out in the same language and same sounds. Sensations of light, sound, smell, taste, and touch produce certain thought perceptions and the baby tries to express those thoughts in language.

Universal emotions of pain and joy, love, anger, all such feelings, were originally expressed in the same language. Gradually, mispronunciation, geographical separation, and climatic conditions with their influence on the bodily instrument of speech, gave rise to diverse languages. Yet at the bottom of these languages is a commonality of sensation and thought.

God, and His emanations of Christ Consciousness and Cosmic Vibration, are the conscious intelligent forces behind the consciousness of all beings. Having no constraints of evolutionary verbiage, these Intelligences instantly know and decipher the thoughts and languages of the different nations of the earth. Any devotee who is as advanced as the disciples of Christ, and can in a state of ecstasy tune in with the Cosmic Vibration, can likewise know the thoughts of all men and translate them into any language. This is how the disciples on the day of Pentecost, being filled with the Holy Ghost, manifested omniscient knowledge and could vocalize their thoughts in diverse tongues.



“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Ye have heard how I said unto you, ‘I go away, and come again unto you.’ If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, ‘I go unto the Father’: for my Father is greater than I.

“And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe. Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence”¹⁵ (John 14:27 – 31).

Unlike the world, which gives only perishable things, Jesus left with his disciples imperishable Christ-peace. That peace he gave to all who were able to attain it, so that they could enjoy it always in meditation and ecstasy.



“My peace I give unto you”: Let not your heart be troubled or afraid

The heart is the center of the emotions, so Jesus referred to it in telling his disciples to keep their feelings free from the roiling vibrations of restlessness and fear, so that the lake of consciousness might remain calm to reflect the Christ Consciousness without distortion. He then reminded them, as he had told them before, of his departure and return (his impending crucifixion and resurrection), and of the final dissolving of his body into Spirit, from which time on his Christ Consciousness would manifest in each devotee’s meditating consciousness.¹⁶ He added that if they loved the Christ Consciousness in him, they would rejoice for his sake because he was going to be reunited with the Cosmic Consciousness, absolute liberation in Spirit, greater than his incarnate state of universal Christ-Kutastha Consciousness.¹⁷

“I have prophesied to you about the things that will come to pass, that when they happen it will strengthen your faith in the truth of whatsoever I have said to you. I have told you everything necessary, and thus hereafter I will not talk much to you; for now I must be ready for the great ordeal. Christ Consciousness, the prince of cosmic creation, is manifesting fully in my consciousness and absorbing my human consciousness—leaving little power for outward expression in words. The Christ Consciousness in me will manifest such actions as would declare my utmost love for the Father. And as the Father, Cosmic Consciousness, revealed ideal wisdom within me, so I reveal to you that wisdom, the commandments and laws that should govern your actions.”



Through yoga techniques of meditation on Aum, one receives the Second Coming of Christ

When Jesus said, “I go away, and come again unto you,” and also in the several references in preceding verses—“I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter...I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you...He will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and We will come unto him. ...the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things”—Jesus clearly assures his disciples that the passing of his body was not the end of his relationship with them. Instead, Jesus was describing himself as not the body but omnipresent Christ Consciousness. Uncircumscribed by the physical body, the real body of Jesus is the Holy Ghost manifested as Cosmic Vibratory Creation, and the soul of Jesus is the Christ Consciousness present in all creation.

Jesus conveyed to his disciples that even though he would appear to them after resurrection in the physical body, still that was not the real Second Coming of Christ. The Second Coming is possible when any devotee expands his consciousness by deep meditation and can feel the body of Jesus as the Cosmic Vibration or Holy Ghost, and the spirit of Jesus as the Christ Consciousness. Many who saw Jesus after resurrection did not realize the true Spirit-essence of Jesus. They were satisfied to behold Jesus’ spirit materialized as the familiar human body of the Master. So it is today with all who utter prayers to the Holy Ghost and Christ without ever realizing them in their consciousness. They are satisfied with ceremonies that they believe bring the contact of Holy Ghost and Christ. But earnest devotees who by a specific scientific yoga technique of meditation on Aum contact the Holy Ghost as the most blissful, all-comforting, all-sorrow-destroying Cosmic Sound truly know what Holy Ghost means. Advanced devotees who not only hear in meditation the blissful cosmic sound of the Holy Ghost, the Word, the holy Aum vibration, but merge their consciousness in the omnipresence of this sound, and feel the universal Christ Consciousness in it, they are the ones who witness the second coming of Christ in their consciousness. Though Jesus can and has informed Christ Consciousness to appear in his Jesus-form to God-realized saints, it is neither necessary nor a fact that Jesus will appear in body again before souls can be redeemed. When he manifests as the Cosmic Sound and the Christ Consciousness in the devotee, then that is the true redeeming Second Coming of Christ of which Jesus spoke.

As a human being has a soul, mind, and body, so also God is the inactively active soul of the universe, Christ Intelligence is the active mind of God planning and guiding the work in creation, and the Cosmic Vibration materialized as the physical cosmos is the physical body of God. Any devotee who wants to bring Christ Intelligence a second time in his consciousness and through that Christ-wisdom reach the Father, or the Cosmic Consciousness, must first master the technique of communing with the Holy Ghost Cosmic Sound, and then realize the Christ Intelligence in it. Simply believing in the Trinity could not give anyone the God-realization of Cosmic Consciousness.

The Holy Ghost Cosmic Vibration appears to the devotee during meditation as Cosmic Light, Cosmic Sound, Cosmic Joy, and Cosmic Wisdom. The devotee must not be satisfied to be merely an observer of these inner glories, thinking thereby that everything has been attained. When the devotee can see the divine Light spread over the whole cosmos, feel the Sound of Aum thrumming throughout the cosmos, merge in the Joy in every atom and particular of the universe, intuit the wisdom of Christ Intelligence in every speck of space, then he has communion with the Holy Ghost. This contact of Holy Ghost will be found by the advanced student to be an Incomparable Comforter, giving inner freedom from physical, mental, and soul miseries, and awakening in the soul the intuitive omniscience of Christ-wisdom—as was promised and emphasized by Jesus.



[An ecstatic experience of Paramahansa Yogananda in communion with the Holy Ghost Cosmic Vibration of Aum:]

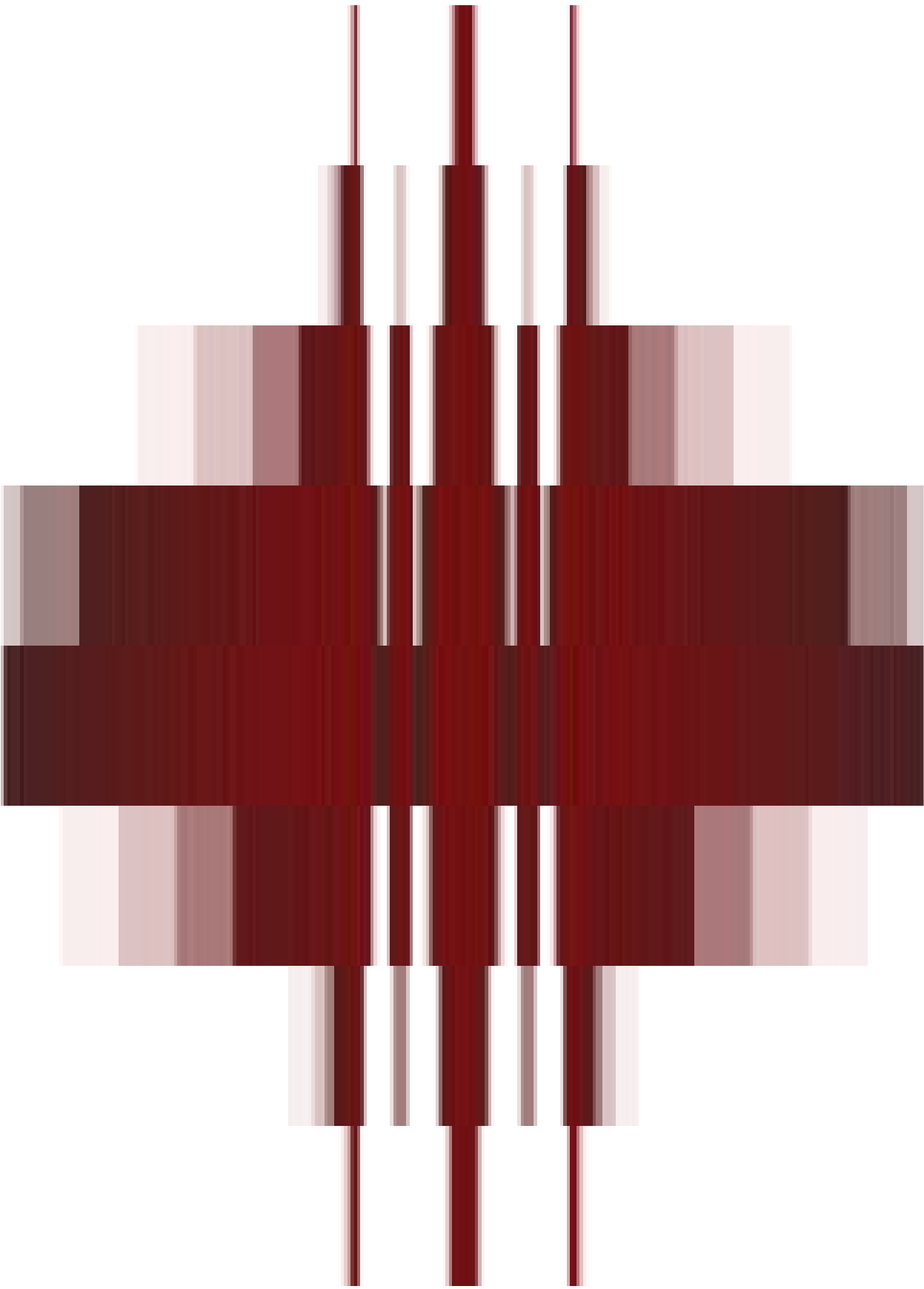
“When sensory perceptions vibrate their pleasures in the body, I experience a heaviness; a weighty load hangs on the bosom of my soul, and I feel drawn down to matter. But, O elevating Aum, when Thou dost vibrate within me, oh, what exultant joy and lightness I feel. I soar above the body. I am drawn toward Spirit. O great Aum, rolling ocean of Aum, vibrate long within me so that I may remain awake to Thine infinite presence, broadened into identity with the Universal Spirit. Oh, this is the Voice of Heaven. This is the Voice of Spirit. Aum, Thou art the source of all life, of all expressions of creation in the universe. So let me feel Thee, O great Mother Vibration, rolling within me as a part of Thy Cosmic Self. Receive me; make me one with Thee. Never leave me; be always rolling within me like a mighty spiritual ocean, calling to me and revealing Thine oceanic presence. O Mighty Vibration, O Mighty Truth that percolates through every atom of my flesh, peace and harmony eternal, bliss and wisdom eternal, come with Thy presence, with Thy universal resonance! Oh, these tiny joys, these tiny tonics of sensual vibrations, I wish to forsake. Enfold me in Thy vibration and carry me along with Thy rolling sound. Let me be free from the bondage of flesh; let me roll on with Thine infinite vibratory ripples of omniscient joy, O great Aum. Be with me, possess me, absolve me in Thee.”



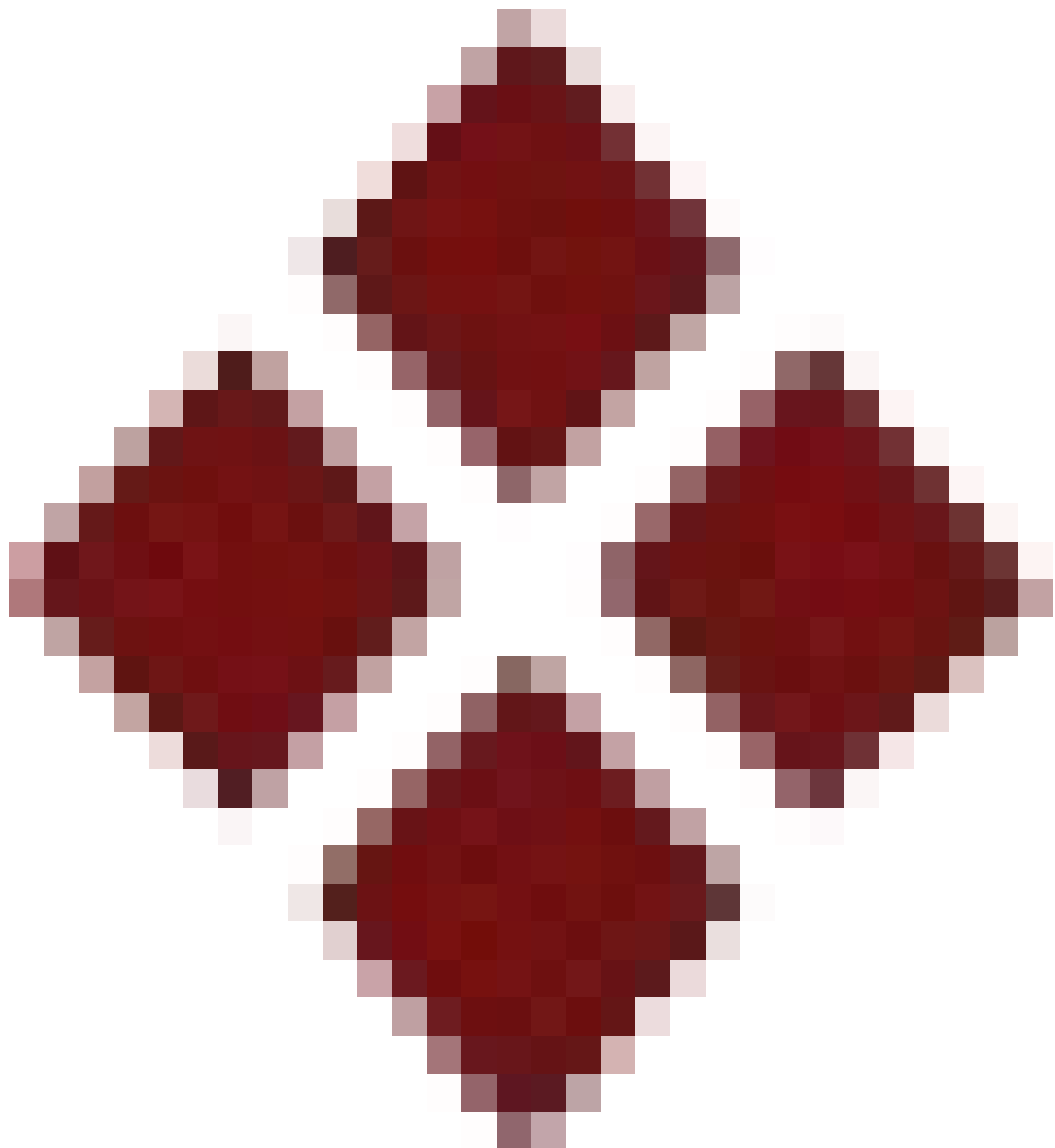
Discourse 71

“Abide in Me....Continue Ye in My Love”

The Last Supper, Part III



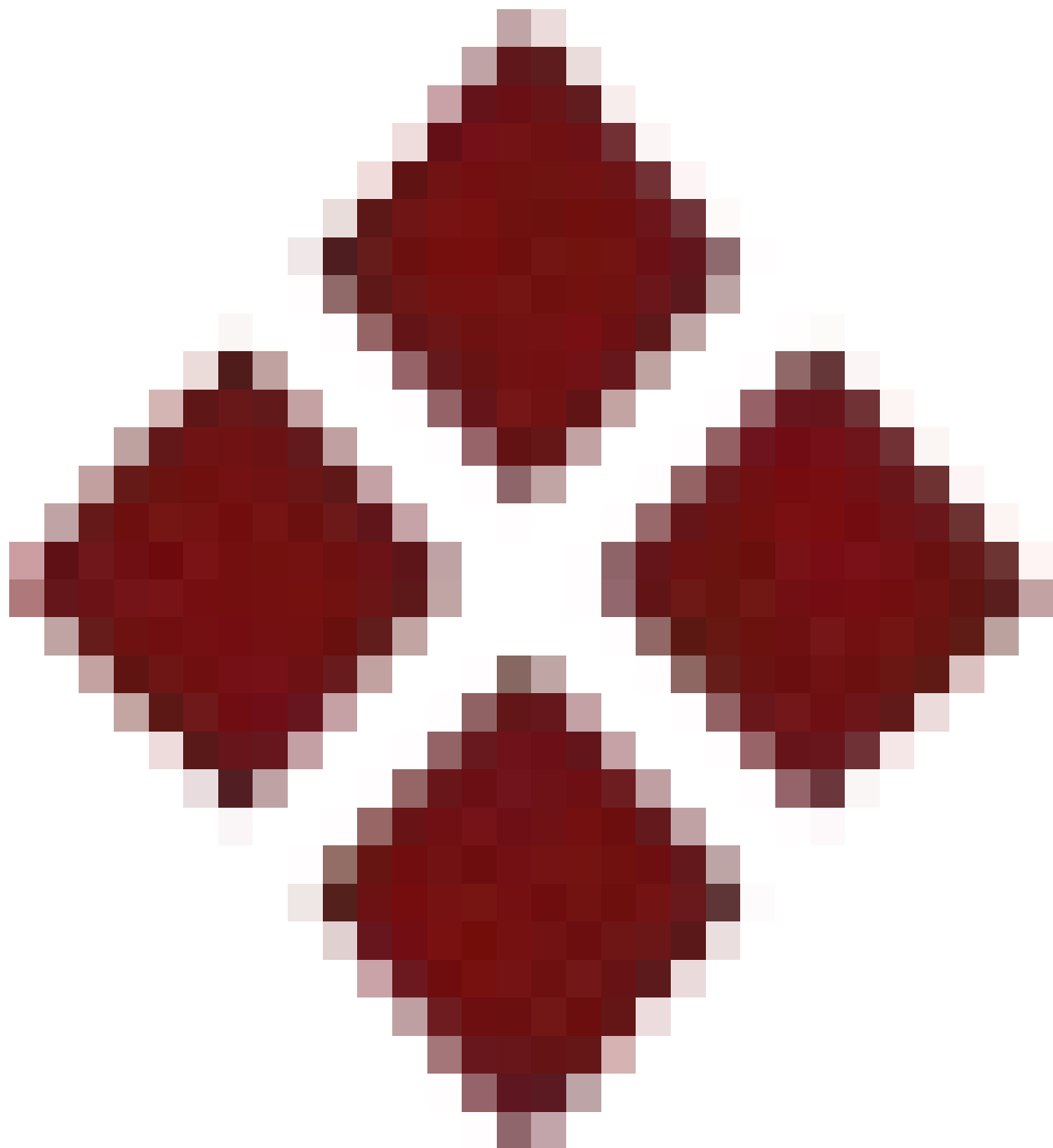
“Abide in Me”: Know by Realization That You Are Sustained by the Immanent Divinity



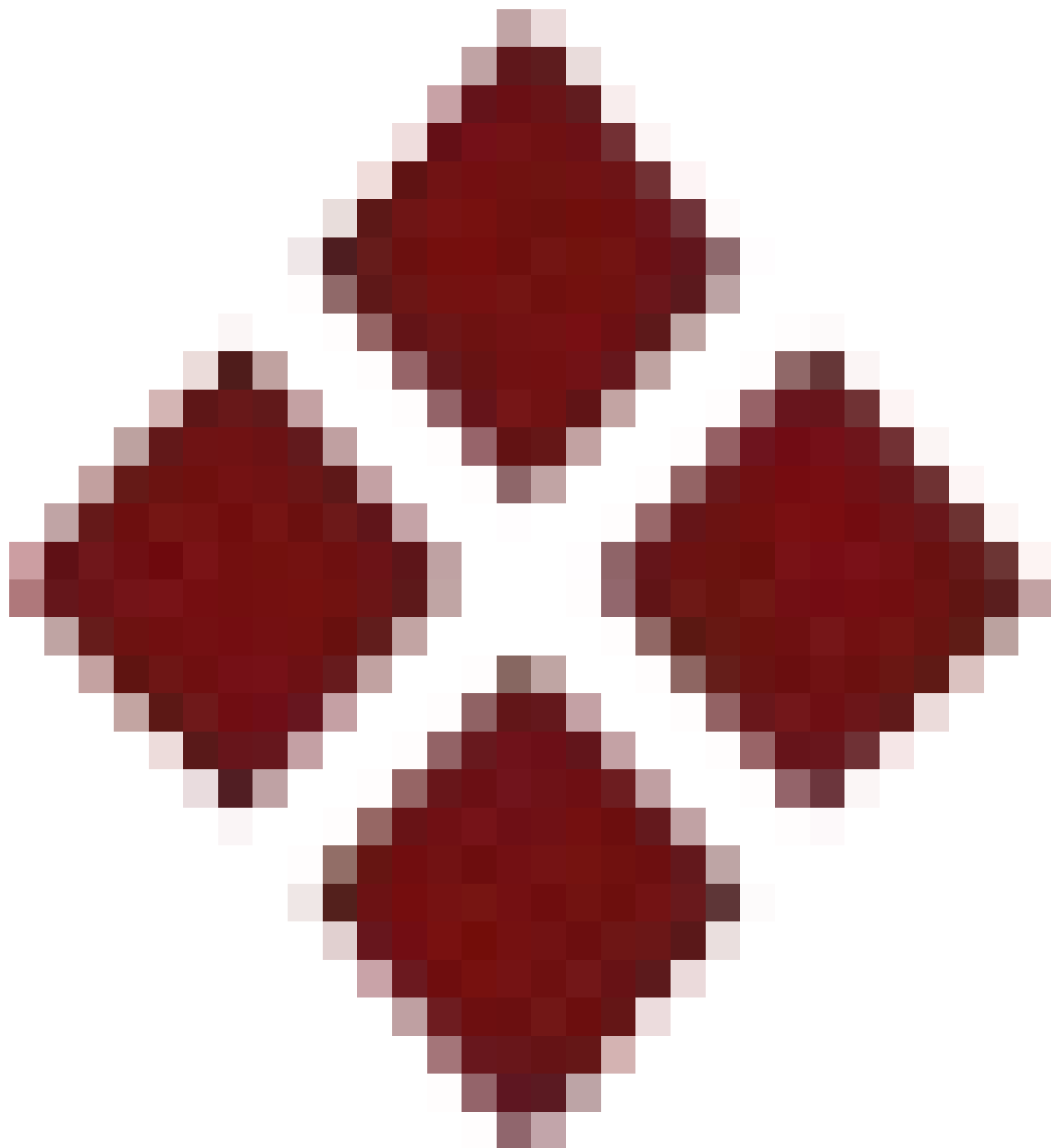
How a God-realized Guru Elevates the Consciousness of His Disciples to His Own Level



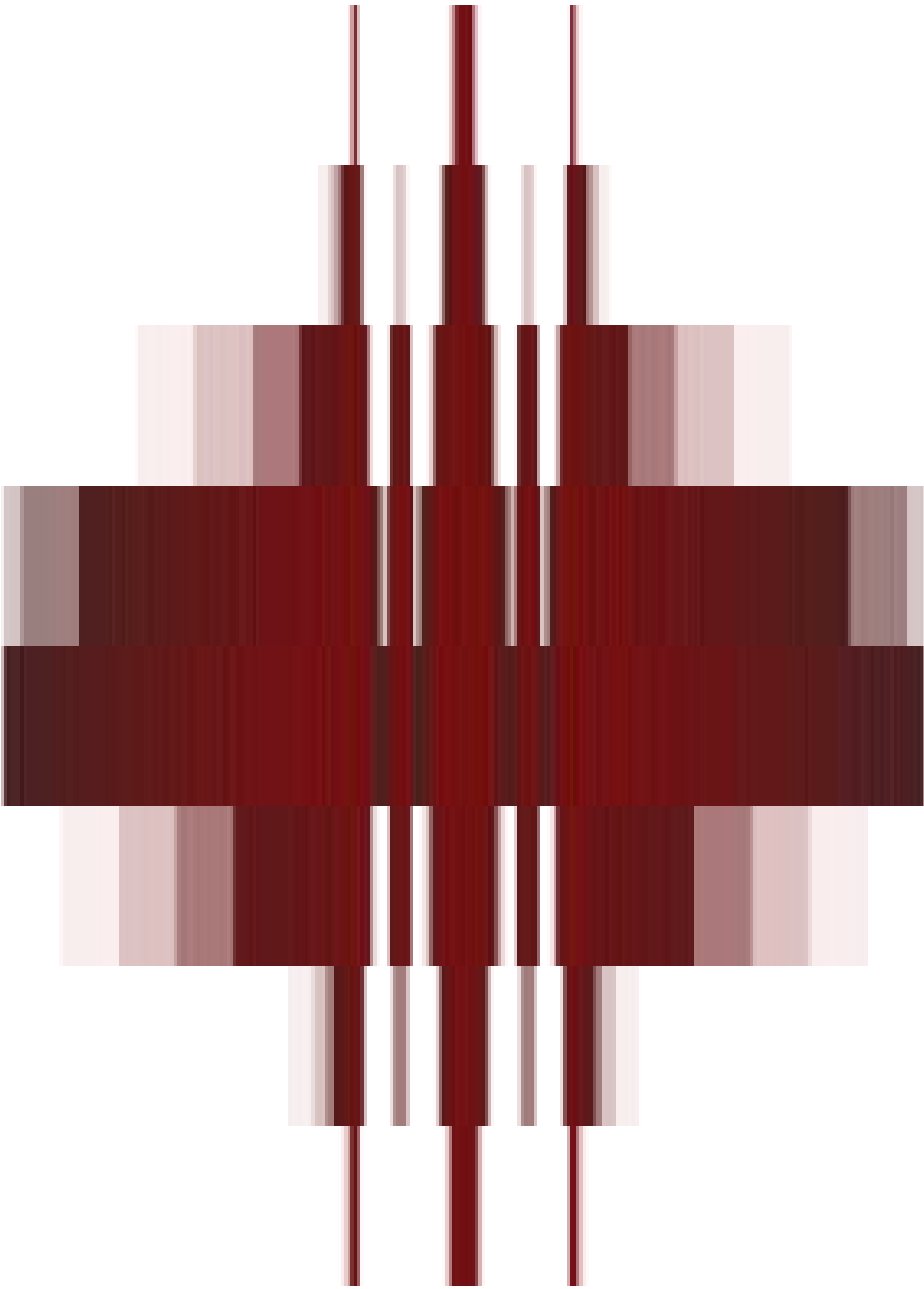
**Those Who Contact the Holy Ghost Cosmic Vibration
Are the Real “Witnesses” of Truth**



Jesus Prepares His Disciples to Carry On Without His Physical Presence



**All Knowledge and Joy Come to Those Who
Commune With the Comforter in Meditation**



“What love could be greater than the love that Jesus expresses here?... Human love requires human meriting and is subject to whims of feeling; but God’s love is unconditional, eternal, unchanging.”

■

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit He taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

“If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

“As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in His love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

“This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, He may give it you.

“These things I command you, that ye love one another. If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, ‘The servant is not greater than his lord.’ If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name’s sake, because they know not Him that sent me.

“If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, ‘They hated me without a cause.’

“But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.

“These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you.

“But now I go my way to Him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, ‘Whither goest thou?’ But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

“I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

“A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father.”

Then said some of his disciples among themselves, "What is this that he saith unto us, 'A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me': and, 'Because I go to the Father'?" They said therefore, "What is this that he saith, 'A little while'? We cannot tell what he saith."

Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, "Do ye enquire among yourselves of that I said, 'A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me'? Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy."

"A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you."

"And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father."

"At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: For the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father."

His disciples said unto him, "Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God."

Jesus answered them, "Do ye now believe? Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

—*John 15:1 – 16:33*



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Discourse 71

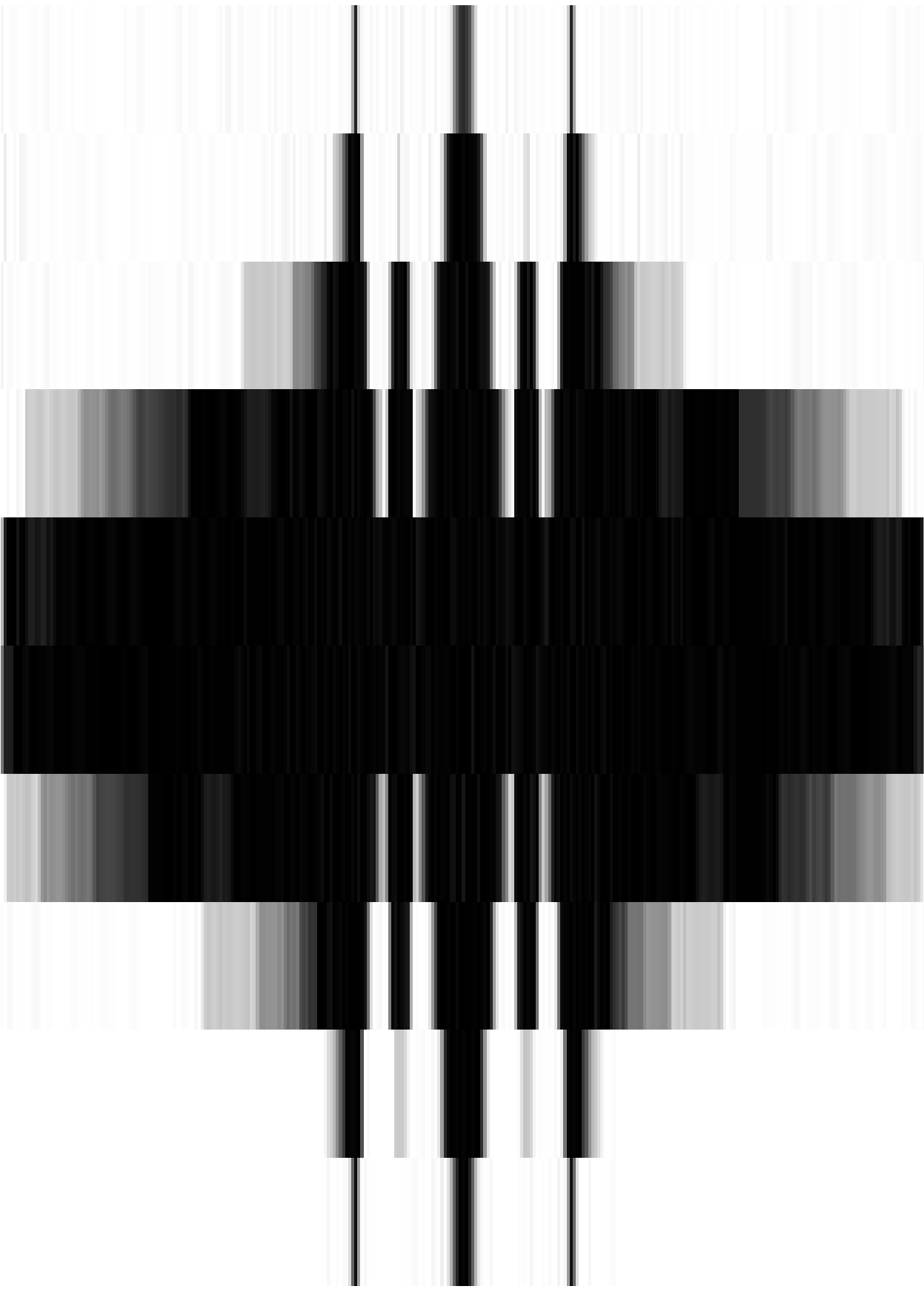
“Abide in Me...Continue Ye in My Love”

The Last Supper, Part III



“I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit He taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned” (John 15:1 – 6).

The Christ Consciousness, with which Jesus was perfectly identified (“I am”), is the “true vine” of cosmic life and substance, with infinite branches from which hang the clusters of universes, planetary and stellar systems, atoms and electrons, and all created things. This vine of Christ Consciousness is planted and cultivated by the almighty “Husbandman,” the supreme Cosmic Consciousness of the Father-Creator, in the garden of Cosmic Vibration; it has shoots running into the tiniest specks of all forms of matter, energy, and life force. The Cosmic Consciousness removes and then reforms, through death and rebirth, anything or any being that, owing to ignorance or some other cause, does not bear the fruit of proper manifestation. And with the sickle of spiritual tests, the Cosmic Consciousness prunes every branch of human intelligence whose maturity brings forth the choice fruits of wisdom, that by such husbanding it might produce more abundantly divine realization, love, and bliss.



“Abide in me”: Know by realization that you are sustained by the immanent Divinity

The disciples of Jesus were very fortunate because he had cleared their consciousness of the evil karma and wrong vibrations of incarnations through “the word which I have spoken unto you”—the all-comforting Cosmic Vibration, which he had caused to manifest within them. He now urged them, on this last evening spent with them before his crucifixion, to continue to abide in the consciousness he manifested while he was with them, that even after the passing of his physical form that consciousness could continue to abide in them and ensure their salvation. No devotee can mature the fruits of wisdom (knowledge of God) as an isolated self, a branch of human consciousness cut off from the vine of omnipresent Christ Consciousness. But any devotee who practices meditation and repeatedly attains ecstatic communion—feeling himself by intuitional realization abiding in the Christ Consciousness, and that Christ Intelligence manifesting in him—draws into himself Its immortal-life power that nurtures the growth of the fruits of imperishable wisdom and divine bliss.

It is clear that Jesus was not speaking as a man, nor intimating that the beginning and the end of God’s manifestation on earth coincided with the birth and passing of his body. He spoke from the realization that the Christ Consciousness within him was the same universal guiding Intelligence of the Infinite Cosmic Energy that lights the lamps of atoms and all lives. Thus he could say of his universal self, “Without me ye can do nothing.” To some degree, the power of universal Christ Consciousness is manifested in all persons, for without conscious or unconscious contact with the Christ Consciousness hidden behind ordinary human consciousness, man could not live, breathe, see, hear, smell, taste, touch, think, will, or feel, let alone produce the fruits of Self-realization.

Jesus’ exhortation to his disciples to “abide in me...for without me ye can do nothing” declared to them the way to gain their salvation. In the Bhagavad Gita, this empyrean truth is similarly proclaimed by Sri Krishna, who likewise speaks from oneness with the Universal Christ (Krishna) Consciousness: “Those who venerate Me, giving over all activities to Me (thinking of Me as the Sole Doer), contemplating Me by single-minded yoga—remaining thus absorbed in Me—indeed, O Arjuna, for these whose consciousness is fixed in Me, I become before long their Redeemer to bring them out of the sea of mortal births. Immerse thy

mind in Me alone; concentrate on Me thy discriminative perception; and beyond doubt thou shalt dwell immortally in Me.”¹

In saying, “If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered,” Jesus meant that it is not sufficient that Christ Consciousness sustains all human beings; each must know, by conscious realization through intuitive perception in meditation, that he is sustained by that immanent Divinity. Persons who live in obliviousness of the Source that maintains their lives eventually find their happiness withered due to lack of spiritual communion, just as an isolated branch shrivels away because it does not receive nourishing sap from the vine of which it is a part. Spiritually desiccated through lack of conscious connection with Christ Consciousness, such ignorant materialists are “cast into the fire, and they are burned”—not consigned to destruction in some mythical hellfire, but temporarily tormented in the self-created searing flames of misery kindled and fed through wrong living. But throughout his teachings Jesus also gives assurance that even materialistic individuals, no matter their present suffering in the hades of delusion, can be saved by good company, meditation, loyalty to a worthy guru, and communion with Christ Consciousness.



“If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

“As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in His love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full” (John 15:7 – 11).

“If your consciousness is in tune with my Christ Consciousness and the emanations of Cosmic Vibration coming from me, you will be able to accomplish whatever you wish due to your will working through the Cosmic Intelligence and Cosmic Vibratory Energy, the creative Word of God.”

Jesus promised his disciples that “if ye abide in me, and my words abide in you”—if their consciousness were perfectly in tune with the Christ Consciousness and Its emanations of Cosmic Vibration—they would be able to demonstrate untold wonders through operating the universal creative principle. Any devotee, of any era, who is in tune with Christ Consciousness materializes the glory and wisdom of Cosmic Consciousness (the Father) hidden in and beyond all creation. Those who would discipline their consciousness for expansion into Christ Consciousness—such were considered by Jesus to be his real disciples.



“As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you”

Then Jesus spoke to them precious words, none dearer to the devotee’s heart, that he loved them with the same divine, impartial, undying love with which the Heavenly Father loved him. Even as he felt God’s love within himself always, so would they abide always in God’s love flowing through Christ Consciousness if they continued to keep His commandments. What love could be purer; what love could be greater than the love that Jesus expresses here for his disciples? Human love requires human meriting and is subject to whims of feeling; but God’s love is unconditional, eternal, unchanging.

Try to imagine the love spoken of by Jesus in these verses. Close your eyes, put your attention on the heart, and feel the greatest love that you ever felt for another person. Let that love saturate every cell of your body. Now expand the feeling of love, like an encircling sphere embracing your family, friends, all your loved ones. Feel your love ever increasing; include in that sphere all the people in your city, then all of your country. Now everything in the world is bathed in that love. The whole earth, the solar system, the far-flung galaxies and island universes—everything is floating in this vast sphere of love. Feel, meditate on, merge yourself in that love which permeates and upholds the infinitudes of manifestation—a demonstrable presence of God’s heartbeat of bliss, setting the pace of cosmic harmony and unity, and known to the devotee as the All-in-all fulfillment.

The love felt in the heart at the beginning of this visualization is human love. And the love that expanded until it encompassed everything is the universal love of Christ, the infinite love of God. The love that most persons feel for dearest family and friends, Jesus felt for the whole world and every living being. The Christ Consciousness that encompasses everything in its love was born in the body of Jesus, in the body of Krishna, in the body of Buddha.

Only one who has had the perception of the Infinite can fathom that indescribable love of God that suffuses all creation—the Christ-love, the divine power of attraction that draws all beings into an ever greater harmony and ultimately reunites them with God. It is a love unflawed by any selfishness or physicality or mortal instinct, uncircumscribed by the limitations that taint even the grandest human love. The love that dwells in the souls of all creatures—the

sum and perfection of the love of all mothers, all fathers, all friends, all lovers—that is Christ-love: the love of the Father reflected in the consciousness of Jesus and every God-united master.

To feel that soul-love of all pure hearts is to be transported in an ecstasy of joy so great, so overwhelming, that it cannot be contained—a charge of bliss passing through one's being, a thousand million volts of rapturous power. This divine emotion is beyond description—a communion of unutterable sweetness with the Infinite Grace, the Indescribable Glory, the Eternal Protection. That is the love of God which Jesus felt, and in which he sheltered his disciples: “As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.”



“Continue ye in my love”: Fulfill the two foremost laws of love for God and neighbor

Jesus wanted to be sure that when his body passed away the disciples would continue to be aware of the divine love he had helped them to feel within their hearts. Many kindle a little light of desire for God and then fail to give it fuel, and the fire dies. The flame of love and yearning must be fueled again and again with daily practice of meditation and self-discipline. Jesus pointed out that any devotee would be able to abide in the unending divine love in the bosom of Christ Consciousness and God by following the laws of God he had emphasized: primarily, as he himself had demonstrated to them, by loving God as the joy of meditation, with all the heart’s devotion, mind’s concentration, soul’s intuition, and body’s “strength” (withdrawing the energy from the senses to focus the attention on Him); and loving Him as present in the souls of all living creatures (“neighbors,” all those one happens to meet).²

By keeping those two foremost commandments of the Father, Jesus, and all liberated devotees, abide eternally in the Lord’s unending, ever joyous, ever new love. “These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full”: The truths by which the disciples would be able to abide in Christ-love were vibrated by Jesus into their receptive consciousness through the Holy Ghost Cosmic Vibration, that God’s ever new Bliss present in him and omnipresent in the Cosmic Vibration might remain with them permanently after his body had been dissolved in Spirit. He wanted them, through the unshakable communion attainable by deepest meditation, to transmute the conditional joy of their current stage of realization into the full, absolute joy of Spirit.³

The Gospel preserves a record of Jesus’ words on this holy occasion; but readers should realize—and try to feel within themselves as though they, too, were present—that behind those words was the tangible vibratory presence of God. During times of divine fellowship (satsanga) such as Jesus’ Last Supper with his disciples, those who are receptive feel transported into a higher consciousness of God-perception pouring into their hearts and minds as the master speaks. This attunement imbues the devotee’s consciousness, in the highest way, whenever he summons the guru’s grace in the inner temple of deep, worshipful meditation.



“This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, He may give it you” (John 15:12 – 16).

Repeatedly in this final dissertation addressed to his disciples, Jesus emphasized his loving command to them: “Love one another with the divine, unconditional love with which I have loved you.” He wanted them to uphold the ideal of love in its most sublime human aspect: divine friendship.



The highest form of human love: divine friendship between a guru and his disciples

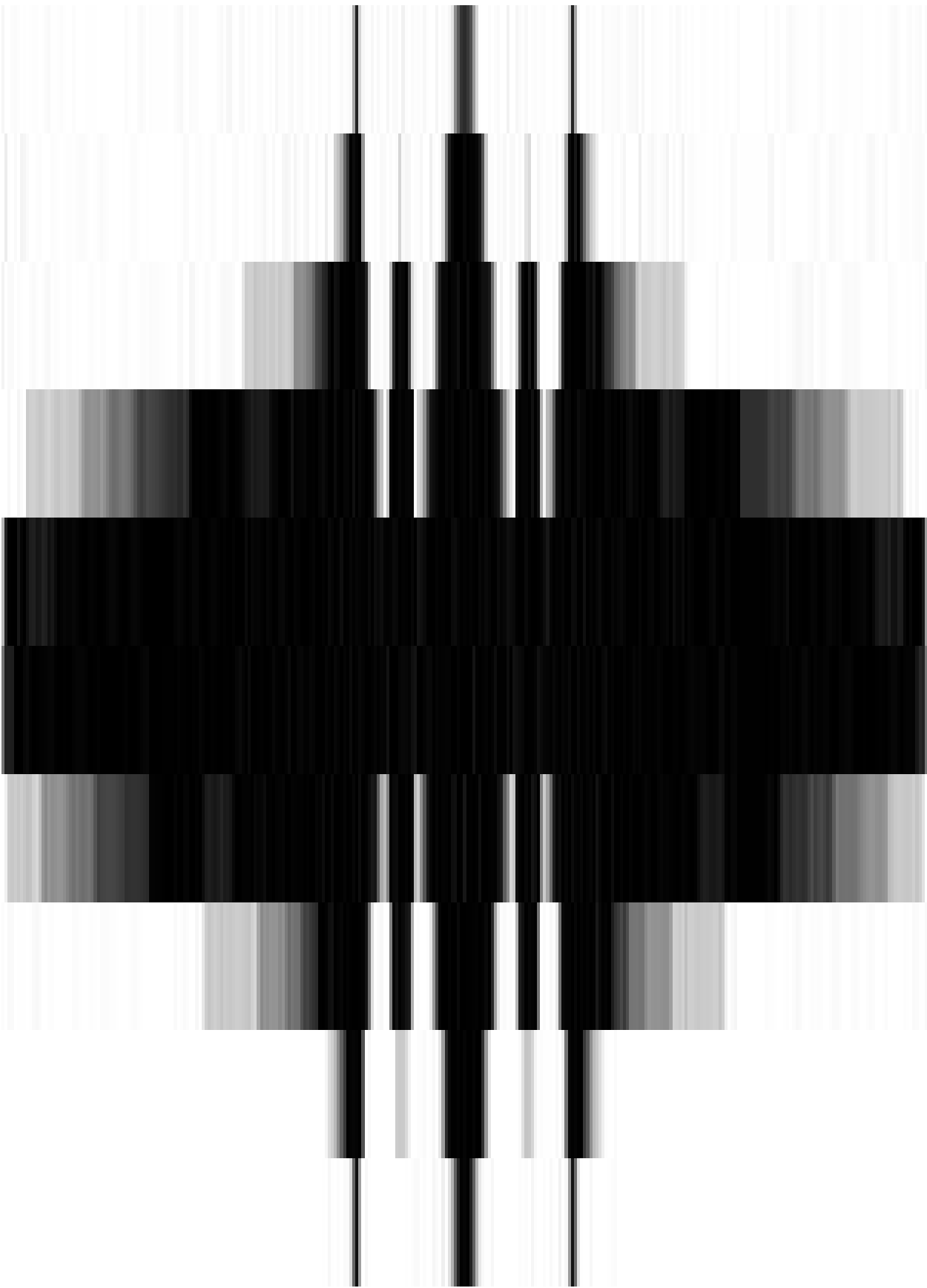
Friendship is the purest human expression of God's love, because it springs not from any dictates of biological or social instincts but from the free-will choice of the heart. All other forms of love—between parent and child, husband and wife, brother and sister, lover and beloved, master and servant—are partially motivated by instinctive compulsions and prospect of selfish gain, and, as such, are imperfect. Blood relatives are imposed upon an individual, but one is free to choose his friends. The love of friends, which grows from the spontaneous mutual attraction of hearts, affords the possibility of a relationship truly based on unselfishness; it therefore more nearly approximates the perfect love—that between God and His devotees, between soul and Spirit.

It was that consummate, unselfish love which Jesus bestowed on his disciples by addressing them as friends, souls whom he highly esteemed. Poignantly, facing his own death on the morrow, he affirmed to them: "Greater love hath no man than that he sacrifice his life for the highest good of his friends." Such friendship is truly of God, for purely selfless sacrifice is possible only when human love partakes of God's love. When one can express the almighty power of intoxicating divine love, it awakens the living heart of God's love in the lives of others.

The preeminent instinct in man is to love himself first. When there is danger of any kind, one's first impulse is to save oneself. Spirituality begins with the effort to place the well-being of someone else above one's own interests. The smallness of ego's self-centeredness must be resurrected into the largeness of caring and self-sacrifice, by which others are felt as a part of one's own expanded self. The friendship of close human relationships all too often degenerates through overfamiliarity or taking selfish advantage of one another. But in divine friendship each one thinks only of the highest welfare of the other; that was the friendship Jesus demonstrated.

The supreme expression of friendship is the relationship between a true guru and his disciples. In a Christlike guru, the love of God Himself is made manifest in human form. In the pure love of friends one glimpses God the Invisible made partially visible, but in the guru He becomes manifest in actuality. Through the

guru, God the Silent talks openly. What greater satisfaction could one have, than when the heart is aflame with yearning for the unknown God and He actually comes as guru? What greater consolation could one receive, than to find that when one's devotion is strong and incessant the Inconceivable Infinite manifests in the visible form of guru? God commingles His desire for the devotee's liberation with the desire of the guru to help the disciple forsake the ways of darkness and follow the illumined path to God. He who follows a God-sent guru walks in the everlasting light of God. The Silence becomes expressive through the voice of guru; the Intangible becomes tangible in the God-realization of guru.



How a God-realized guru elevates the consciousness of his disciples to his own level

The unconditional divine friendship between guru and disciple, the most sacred of all human loves, is the love of which Jesus spoke in calling his disciples, not servants or inferiors, but friends. When he told them, “Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you,” he signified that those who follow the Christ commandments of meditation and self-discipline, and thereby attain God-consciousness, he would call friends, accepted on the basis of divine equality, for the Christ Consciousness in him and which is manifested in all awakened souls was one and the same.

Devotees who by transparent purity of mind and heart receive and reflect the impartially shining sunlight of God’s love are true sons of God. Jesus knew that disciples who would follow his commandment to “love one another, as I have loved you”—who could feel the love of God in all—would find their consciousness transmuted into Christ Consciousness. To those who were in tune with him, he had conveyed “all things that I have heard of my Father”—transmitted the wisdom vibrations he received from Cosmic Consciousness. Therefore he would henceforth not speak of his advanced disciples as “servants”—those who serve the Master but are ignorant of the ways of the Master (the Christ Consciousness, the Lord of all creation)—but as divine friends who shared with him the knowledge of Christ Consciousness.⁴

Souls in the divine kingdom are equal in God-realization and hence enjoy equally the fulfillment of infinite happiness. But people in the kingdom of the earth are draped in delusions of inequalities and fraught with jealousy, trouble, and discontentment. Souls who have overcome delusion and have attained the complete enlightenment of Self-realization are honored in the divine kingdom as equals in the eyes of God; only ignorant disciples argue the superiority of some masters over others. (Of course, there are differing degrees of Self-realization of advancing devotees; but once they reach the pinnacle state of liberation in Cosmic Consciousness, there is no longer any difference. Completely liberated prophets of different religions cannot be accurately judged according to the outer expressions of wisdom they give for a particular clime and time, for inwardly they possess the same Self-realization and God-consciousness.)

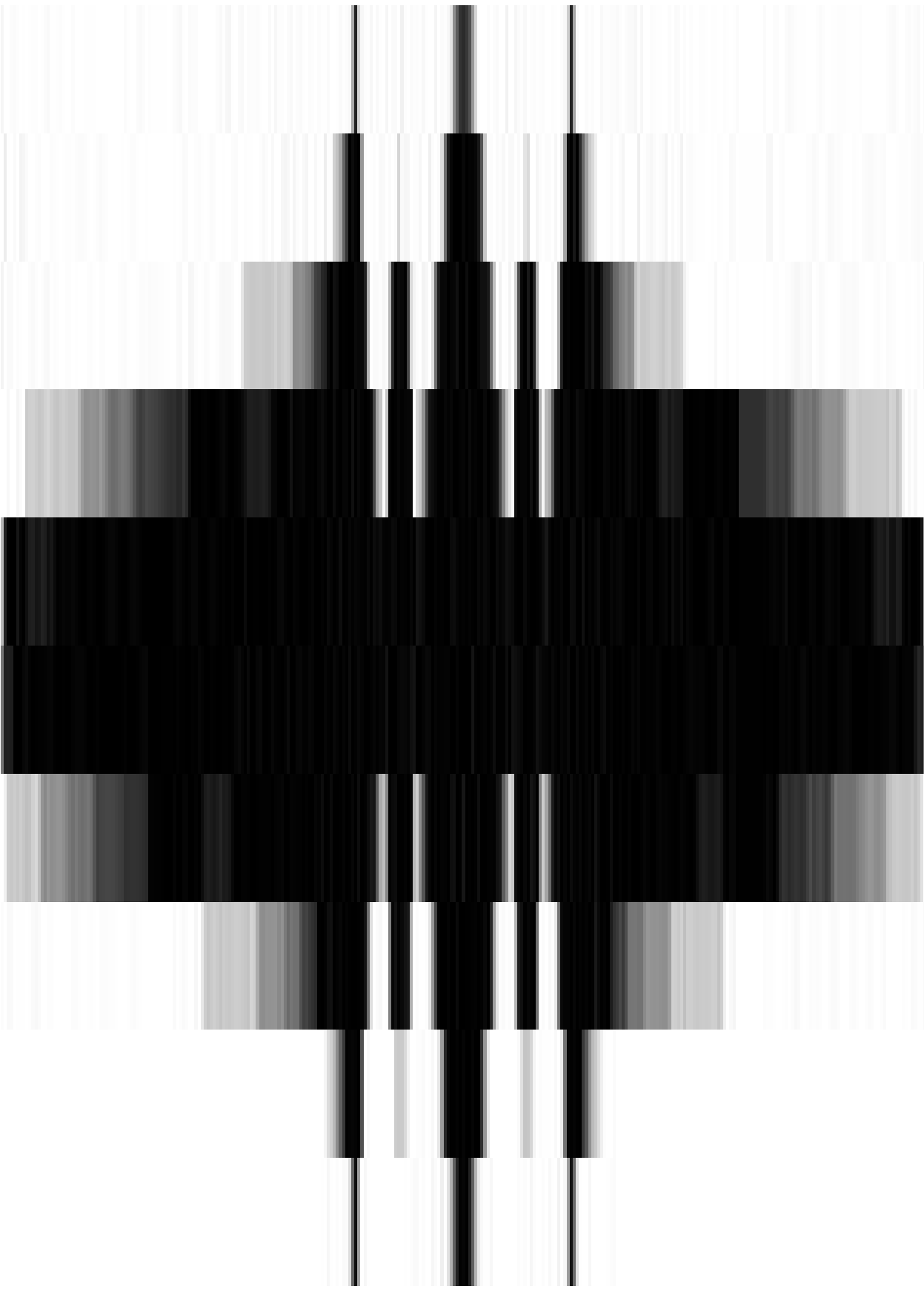
Jesus earlier had said, “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.” The guru does not call any soul to himself. It is God who calls. God uses the vehicle of the guru to bring the devotee to eternal freedom. Thus Jesus pointed out that the disciples did not choose him, but that, in response to their prayers of many lives and to the will of the Heavenly Father, his particular incarnation of Christ Consciousness had been chosen to guide them in the soul path. They did not know that he was coming to them, but he came intentionally, as their God-sent guru, for the sake of their souls’ liberation.

Acting in accord with the command of God, Jesus recognized and consciously selected the disciples; that is why he said, “I have chosen you, and ordained you. ...” That is, “My Christ Consciousness has chosen to guide you through my form called Jesus, and to saturate you with divine ardor by means of which you will be able to go into deep ecstasy and bring forth the flawless fruit of wisdom, wisdom that will remain with you forever. For when you are in tune with my Christ vibrations and you ask from Cosmic Consciousness whatever you want through me, that you shall receive.”



“These things I command you, that ye love one another. If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, ‘The servant is not greater than his lord.’ If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name’s sake, because they know not Him that sent me.

“If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, ‘They hated me without a cause’” (John 15:17 – 25).



All spiritual aspirants meet with resistance from deluded worldly minds

In exhorting his disciples to love one another with his all-freeing Christ-love while carrying out his commandments as his apostles, Jesus was warning them of the importance of being united in the power of divine love when they would be the objects of resentment of maya -deluded individuals. If persons who were worldly hated them, it was because of the disciples' spirituality; such persons had already fixed their hearts on hatred of truth and Jesus and would no doubt extend that enmity to his followers. If the disciples had been predominantly materially minded, the masses would have accepted them as kindred spirits. But their interests and values were of a higher order, "not of the world," for Jesus had chosen to guide them out of worldliness. Therefore he prophesied that they would be reviled, solely because they were "different."

Jesus reminded the disciples of a previous lesson: "The servant is not greater than his lord";⁵ and said that since worldly people had persecuted him, the master, they would also persecute his disciples. While persons who lived Jesus' teachings would also be willing to follow the spiritual advice of his ordained disciples, those who were inimical to Jesus and the truth he preached would persecute his followers for manifesting his Christ vibrations and bliss—"for my name's sake"—because they did not know that the consciousness in him was the reflection of God's Cosmic Consciousness—the reflection of "Him that sent me."

Jesus then took up a point that has since caused much theological discussion and has often been grossly misinterpreted. "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin....If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin...." To understand his words one must keep in mind the meaning of "sin" and "evil."



Difference between sin (ignorance of God) and evil (rejection of God)

Sin means ignorance, individual delusion (avidya). It is the misuse of free choice, influenced by the cosmic delusion of satanic evil, to perform those actions that take man away from the kingdom of God. The sins of most persons are worldly; few are categorically evil. To be worldly means being foolish, giving undue importance to materiality and gratification of the senses, and staying away from God out of ignorance. But outright evil is a deliberate sin of turning one's back on the Lord. It was that sin which Jesus condemned in those who witnessed the divine manifestation in his life, and yet rejected him and his message from God.

These verses certainly do not imply that the ignorant people of the world were sinless before the advent of Jesus. Rather, if the Christ Consciousness in Jesus had not been made manifest unto the world by his open declaration of his personal realization of the Cosmic Father and demonstrations of God's immanence in the miracles he performed, then the worldly persons who disbelieved in God as manifested in and through Jesus and his teachings—those who “know not Him”—would not have been guilty of the evil of deliberately ignoring God in defiance of such evidence. But after the testimony given by Jesus, and beholding or becoming acquainted with his demonstrations of God's power and grace, the people of the world—in his time and for all futurity—would, he declared, have no excuse to hide behind a cloak of ignorance their careless indifference to God and their spiritual duty to Him as the Giver of life's blessings.

If the Lord never manifested Himself and His message on earth through the instrumentality of an avatar, as was Jesus, it would be an understandable error for man to reject God because of having insufficient evidence of His existence and essentiality. This, Jesus tells his disciples, referring to the significance of his own God-given mission. “Since the invisible, silent Almighty God distinctly and abundantly demonstrated Himself and His commandments for self-discipline through me, those who were ignorant before have no excuse now in which to hide their guilt for not following the spiritual path, nor justification for forgetting God on the pretext that He is too elusive, mysterious, unattainable, hidden, or perhaps even nonexistent.

“He that hateth me (that spurns the demonstrations of God’s existence and glory shown through my life) hateth my Father also (the Cosmic Consciousness that sent me to earth to declare God’s presence in a powerful but humble way).” Jesus knew that through his resurrection the omnipotence of God was to be revealed, while his crucifixion would exemplify the humbleness of God who wants to teach His ignorant, rebellious children by love only. If Jesus had not performed divine miracles to glorify the existence, power, and love of God as no ordinary being ever did or could, then the disbelievers could not have been accused of deliberately shunning God. But after having seen the manifestation of Divinity through Jesus’ life, they were guilty of the sin of hating God when they hated Jesus in whom Divinity was templed.

Jesus spoke emphatically, for to ignore God (either willfully or out of sheer ignorance) is a paramount sin; it is submission to cosmic delusion, the father of all sins and consequential physical, mental, and spiritual discontentments and suffering. To forget God is to lose sight of one’s real nature. A soul in ignorance of its inherent divinity remains entangled in incarnations of mortal miseries enforced by unfulfilled desires. In contradistinction, the realization of God fulfills all the desires of the human heart and liberates the soul forever.

Jesus’ forewarning to the apostles of the masses’ enmity acknowledged fulfillment of the prophecy “that is written in their law, ‘They hated me without a cause.’” Usually people despise a wrongdoer for his evil acts, but Jesus was hated for his divine works in the name of God. It is often the fate of prophets to be vilified for no other reason than that they are saintly, a stark contrast that offends the reigning status quo of the common man.



“But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning” (John 15:26 – 27).



Those who contact the Holy Ghost Cosmic Vibration are the real “witnesses” of Truth

Though materially minded worldly persecutors would attempt to defame him and denounce the evidence of his Christ Consciousness, Jesus gave assurance of irrefutable testimony to be received by the disciples: “When my body will be gone, the Christ Consciousness in me will send to you the great comforting Holy Ghost Cosmic Vibration. In deep meditation, the Bliss of Holy Vibration will be revealed to you as an emanation from my Christ Consciousness and from the Father, or Cosmic Consciousness. Through the all-convincing power of intuition, you will know the Spirit of Truth proceeding from the Father—the Cosmic Consciousness manifesting Itself as the Holy Ghost Cosmic Vibration—and that through its comforting bliss it is declaring the presence of the Christ Consciousness within it.”

Jesus repeatedly stresses to his disciples that he is Christ Intelligence and not a physical body, and assures them that when they would feel the Cosmic Vibration of Spirit within them, they would absolutely know that he is the Christ Intelligence existing forever in every timbre of that Holy Vibration.

Jesus declared not only that this truth would be testified by the Holy Ghost —“the faithful and true witness”⁶—but told his disciples that “ye also shall bear witness”: “Your souls will be the witness of these eternal truths, because your souls, being emanations of the Christ Consciousness that is also in me, ‘have been with me from the beginning,’ when the Infinite engendered Its vibratory effluence.”

“From the beginning” signifies the insemination of finite creation. In Spirit there is no beginning and no end. The category of beginning and end applies to the waves of creation that arise on the bosom of the Infinite Ocean and then end in It after the storm of cosmic delusion is withdrawn at the sovereign command of God. Jesus gives assurance that every soul emanated from Christ Consciousness in the beginning of the finite creation of worlds and planets; and that therefore man as a pure soul deserves to be reunited with the Christ Intelligence after seeming separation through long incarnations of delusion. All souls, before delusion or maya enshrouded them, knew Christ Intelligence as their Source; and when advanced devotees have freed their souls from delusion, they give

testimony of their inseverable forever-connection with Christ Consciousness.

A belief in the Holy Ghost is one thing; actual contact with the Holy Ghost is something else! In the past centuries, great saints such as Francis of Assisi and Teresa of Avila knew the art of contacting the Holy Ghost and the Christ Consciousness and the Cosmic Consciousness—the trifold Unity—by the interiorized intensity of pure devotion.

But by sending the Self-Realization teachings to America, the great Yogavatar Lahiri Mahasaya has given to the world the actual technique of true contact with the Holy Ghost—the all-permeating Cosmic Vibration heard in meditation as the Cosmic Sound of the mighty Aum or Amen, and which in the exalted state is attended by indescribable divine comfort in Spirit. Devotees who contact the Holy Ghost Cosmic Vibration, and are filled with its eternal electrifying bliss, are indeed the real witnesses of the Spirit of Truth and knowers of the Infinite Christ.⁷



“These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you.

“But now I go my way to Him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, ‘Whither goest thou?’ But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

“I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

“A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father” (John 16:1 – 16).



Jesus prepares his disciples to carry on without his physical presence

Jesus said: “I am forewarning you about what is to befall you, that you may not be offended and discouraged when trials come to you as tests of your spiritual strength. Your persecutors will put you out of the orthodox congregations; they will even murder some of you, my disciples, thinking they serve God thereby, as though He were bloodthirsty, appeased by the sacrifice of perceived heretics. In their blind ignorance, these religious leaders know nothing of the Father, the wisdom of Cosmic Consciousness, nor of the Christ Consciousness that is fully manifested in me. ⁸

“I have waited until now to tell you of the persecutions that await you, because, so long as I have stayed by your side, God’s protection has been ever with you; there was no need for alarm. My Christ Consciousness visibly manifest in this body was with you to protect you from evil by vocal advice and power of my authority.

“But now the Christ Consciousness in me will follow the inner way to Cosmic Consciousness whence it came; my outward embodied mission is nearly over. Yet none of you ask where I am going. Rather, because I have told you about dreadful future happenings, your hearts are filled with fear and sorrow. Even though you are wondering why I depart, seemingly abandoning you to the fury of my enemies, still I have ventured to speak the truth for your own highest good, that you may be better prepared with spiritual fortitude to meet your trials when they come.

“The truth I would impress on you is this: It is to your benefit that my body is taken away from you, for so long as you are attached only to this form, you will not seek my universal formless Self. If my body is not taken away, you will continue to perceive me as this limited form; and the unlimited Cosmic Vibration, imbued with the comforting Christ-wisdom omnipresent in creation, will not be manifest to you. I do not want you to think of me as a little physical body; know my vast body as the whole cosmos emanating from the Cosmic Vibration of the Holy Ghost, and my soul as the Christ Consciousness present in every cell of my Cosmic Vibratory Body. The little body that holds your attention now will go away, and your minds will be able to concentrate on and receive Aum, the Holy Ghost—the bestower of everlasting comfort by removing

from within you all wrong vibrations of delusion.

“Because my little physical body is departing, I will manifest within you in my Christ and my Cosmic Consciousness; the Vibration of Aum will dislodge all your grief and fear. In the state of omniscient consciousness that will soon descend on you, you will understand how the divine law (karma) will operate to punish the sin in wicked worldly persons that has made them persecute me and plot to deprive my disciples of the righteousness of my presence among them. They think to judge me, not knowing that the Christ Consciousness in me is the Omnipresent Judge of all men!

“I have yet many truths to reveal to you, which, in your present mortal state of consciousness, you will not be able to grasp. However, when the Spirit of Truth, the Holy Ghost, will manifest in your consciousness, It will guide your minds away from material appearances to truth itself. This Cosmic Vibration does not speak of its own power, but faithfully transmits the vibrations of the Christ Intelligence present in it. The Holy Ghost will instruct you through visions and through your intuition; it will reveal to you every secret of the past, present, and future. The Holy Ghost Cosmic Vibration manifests fully the wisdom and glory of the Christ Consciousness. The omniscience of the Father or Cosmic Consciousness is also inherent in the Son or Christ Consciousness. Therefore, I have said that the Holy Ghost will transmit to you from me all knowledge which I, in turn, have received from the Father, or Cosmic Consciousness.

“I am present with you now, but in a little while you will not see my body—for that will have been crucified. And again, a little while after crucifixion, you will behold my resurrected body. Whether I appear before you, or disappear from mortal sight, I am ever-living in the Father’s Cosmic Consciousness.”

Why Jesus wanted the disciples to concentrate not on his form, but on his infinite consciousness

In this, his last long discourse with his disciples, Christ reveals many beautiful metaphysical truths. When he said: “I go my way to Him that sent me,” he signified, macrocosmically, that the Son or Christ Consciousness in all creation must ultimately be merged in the Father, the supreme Cosmic Consciousness. Similarly, speaking of God-union relative to the microcosm of the individualized soul, “my way” refers to Jesus’ earlier declaration, “I am the way...no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”⁹ Jesus was telling the disciples that soon the outward manifestation of his life would be withdrawn into the formless infinite Christ Consciousness immanent in Holy Ghost Cosmic Vibration, and thence into transcendental Spirit (“the Father”; “Him that sent me”)—thus following the “way” that all souls must travel to reach the ultimate goal of Cosmic Consciousness.

Jesus warned his disciples that if they knew him only as the material body, they would suffer when that body would be taken away. If they concentrated only on his little form called Jesus, they would not know his vast Cosmic Body, which consists of countless cells of stars, atoms, ions, and life force of all vibrations. Disciples who would fail to commune with Jesus as Spirit would be rudderless when his body passed away. Disciples who realized Jesus as Spirit would find him to be the same living Lord throughout eternity.

No prophet is allowed by God to remain on earth before the public gaze forever. Mahavatar Babaji has kept his body indefinitely, but he is not permitted to flaunt that special dispensation before the world. That is why he is not available to mankind, except through the silent bestowal of his blessings. Though ever-living, he is ever-hiding.¹⁰ So is Jesus. Whether with a body or without, liberated souls are ever-living in Spirit. They can openly appear anytime and anywhere they wish, but are not allowed to remain visibly accessible to the masses. God does not permit any master to do that, for it would create a compulsion that would disrupt the cosmic order based on man’s free will. People would idolize the phenomenal personality and forget the Spirit. They would attempt to confine God to a human form and complacently neglect to seek His omnipresent, immortal, formless Self. Furthermore, the general populace would flock to that one prophet, but the many who disbelieved in that particular divine aspect would

be left behind. God does not want that; through His various emissaries He fulfills His commitment to the needs of all His children on all evolutionary levels. His message, always the same eternal truths, is yet ever new in terms essential to the time and place. As soon as a saint fulfills his own unique mission, God pulls him away to serve from behind the cosmic scene. I have heard great saints in India say, "I am giving too much. God will pull me away." None would presume to tamper with God's ways.

There are millions of Christians who know Jesus the Christ as a divine historical personage; they worship his image and they worship the cross as his symbol. But those who adore Jesus solely as a personality do not know Christ as a savior. Of the many who call themselves Christians, not all have been accepted by Christ. Those who show the valiancy of spirit and continuity of prayer and meditation necessary to commune with the Infinite Consciousness, they are the accepted ones who know Christ as savior.

To perceive the formless Christ is the greatest Christ-ianity—to behold not just a man engaged in a little body-frame, but the effulgence of Christ glory spread over the stars and wheeling universes, shining in every atom and throb of vibratory force. The devotee can talk to that Power, and It can take any form to respond. One who feels that Power realizes that God is both personal and impersonal. That Power is the conscious, intelligent Light of the world—not of this world alone, but of the whole universe. One who communes with that Light Eternal, that Light which can hear, speak, smell, taste, move, take a form, a thousand forms—that devotee knows the formless Christ. It is the formless Spirit that we should worship, and worshiping Him we become free.¹¹

Jesus in the above verses therefore tells his disciples not to think of him as a body subject to death, but as the eternal Spirit. His body, he says, must be removed in order to free them from the delusion that he was a physical being. Only after the withdrawal of that delusion could his disciples be able to tune in with his vast body of Cosmic Vibration, the great Comforting Holy Ghost.

By these words: "When he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment," Jesus signified that through the omniscient Christ Intelligence inherent in the Holy Ghost Cosmic Vibration, his disciples would receive the spiritual insight that would reveal the karmic consequences of the evil actions of those who had persecuted and judged Jesus and thereby opposed the law of righteousness.

Jesus calls the Holy Ghost “the Spirit of Truth” because it is the essence of all vibratory law as manifested in the cosmos. The Cosmic Vibration is the Invisible Power which, through variations of vibration in accord with cosmic order, materializes and maintains the outward forms of all created things. Jesus explains that the Holy Cosmic Vibration does not declare anything of itself, but faithfully manifests whatever it receives from the guiding Christ Intelligence. In other words, the variations in Cosmic Vibration are created by the Christ Intelligence in it. The Holy Ghost Cosmic Vibration does not act of itself (is wholly free from the egoistic principle); it is solely guided by Christ Intelligence.¹² That is why Jesus says: “For he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak.”

When Jesus says: “All things that the Father hath are mine,” he signifies that Christ Consciousness is the complete and perfect reflection of Cosmic Consciousness, and that devotees who attain Christ Consciousness by deep meditation receive, further, all the wisdom and power of Cosmic Consciousness. Every human being who discards the consciousness of the limited ego and identifies himself with Cosmic Consciousness will claim as his own possession the universe and all things in it.



Then said some of his disciples among themselves, “What is this that he saith unto us, ‘A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me’: and, ‘Because I go to the Father’?” They said therefore, “What is this that he saith, ‘A little while’? We cannot tell what he saith.”

Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, “Do ye enquire among yourselves of what I said, ‘A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me’? Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.

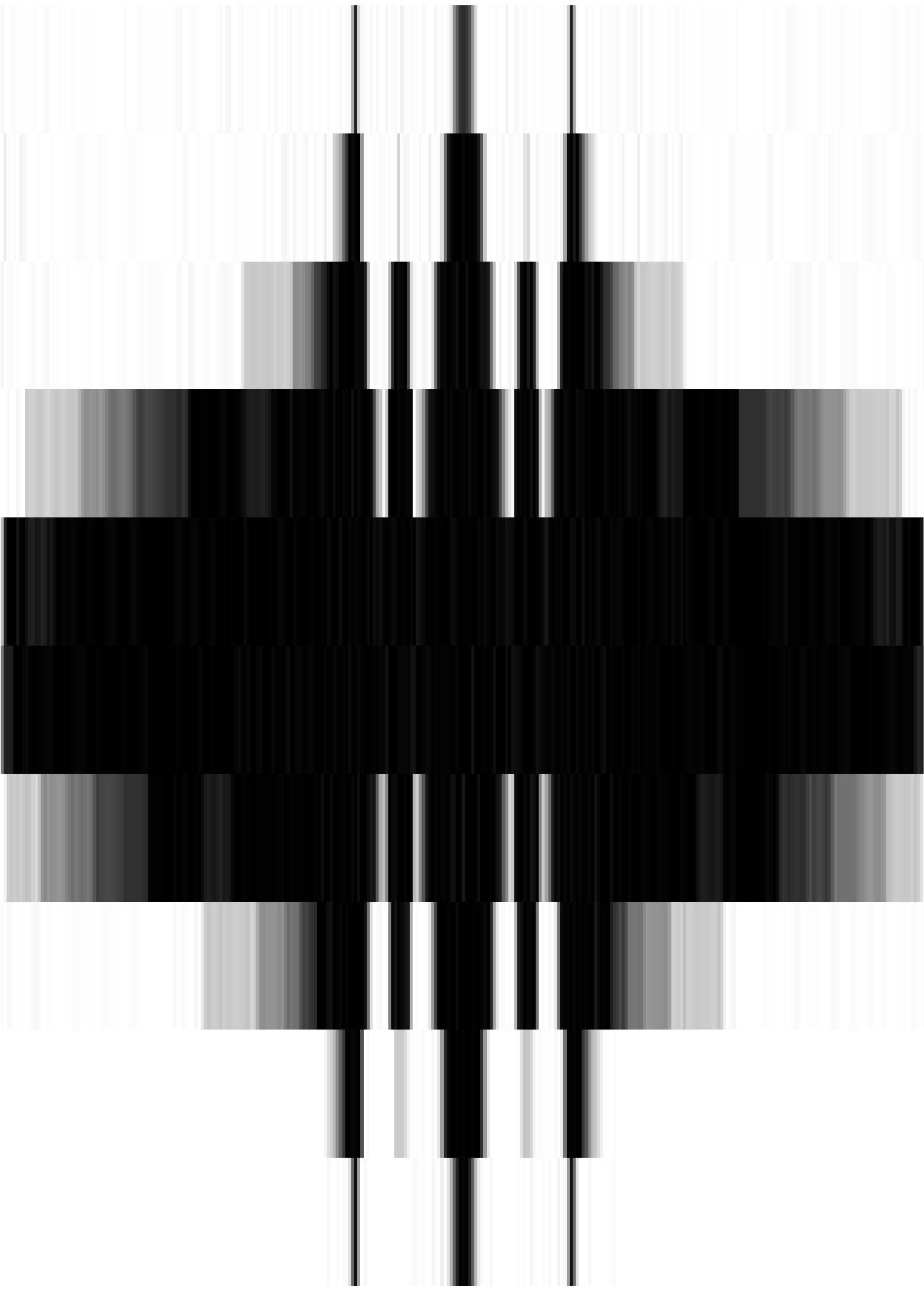
“A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.

“And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father.

“At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again I leave the world, and go to the Father” (John 16:17 – 28).

Jesus said: “Are you discussing among yourselves as to what I meant? Verily, by the truth which I foresee, I declare unto you that you will weep and lament when I shall be crucified, while the wicked world will rejoice. But your sorrow will be turned into joy, for you will see me again in flesh and blood after I have been resurrected by the grace of the Heavenly Father.

“You will lament, giving me up for dead; but what rejoicings you will know to find me resurrected! Just as a woman is in pain during childbirth, but forgets the anguish when she sees the new being who has come into the world, so will my disciples be grief-stricken until they behold the miracle of my resurrected body, born out of the travails of my physical suffering. You sorrow now, but your sorrow will vanish and your hearts will rejoice with an irrevocable joy eternal!



All knowledge and joy come to those who commune with the Comforter in meditation

“You question among yourselves now, but soon, in your omniscience, you will ask nothing; whatever wisdom you require will be given you from Cosmic Consciousness through the Cosmic Vibration and the Christ Consciousness in it. Up to this time you have not felt the full manifestation of the Holy Ghost, and therefore have not asked anything of it. But in the state of Cosmic Consciousness you will receive all knowledge; you will know the fullness of the joy of Spirit. Hitherto I have had to teach you by words and proverbs. But a time will soon come when I will show you all the wisdom of the Father, which will manifest itself plainly in your consciousness.

“When the Comforter comes to you and you pray in my name—in oneness with Christ Consciousness in the Cosmic Vibration—my prayers to the Father on your behalf will no longer be necessary. The Father Himself will manifest His Cosmic Consciousness and His love within you, because you have felt the universal love of the Christ Consciousness in me and have realized that my Christ Consciousness came out of Cosmic Consciousness. I became manifested from the Cosmic Father and I am now in the world; soon I shall leave the world and merge again in the Cosmic Father.”

When Jesus said: “Ask the Father in my name, and He will give it to you,” he signified that if devotees desire their prayers to be always fulfilled, they must learn to commune with the Cosmic Vibration and the Christ Consciousness in it through deep meditation.¹³

When he said: “I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father,” he gave certainty to divine seekers that those who unceasingly search for God will ultimately commune consciously with Him and meet Him face to face. The mind of the devotee will then no longer be the seeker in the game of hide-and-seek with God played in the labyrinth (“proverbs”) of questions and doubts. Jesus assures us that God is real and can be contacted without being hidden behind the screen of mystery and mystical symbolization of the scriptures. This plain declaration given by Christ of contacting the Heavenly Father should inspire every truth-seeker to redouble his efforts and enthusiasm for seizing God, so long concealed behind the veil of intellectualized

uncertainties.



His disciples said unto him, "Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God."

Jesus answered them, "Do ye now believe? Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:29 – 33).



“In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world”

Jesus now solemnly states: “The hour has come in the drama of my life when through satanic delusion you will all be scattered, every man distractedly thinking of himself, and leaving me alone to suffer. And yet I am never alone, because the Cosmic Consciousness is ever manifest through my Christ Consciousness. These things I have spoken unto you that you might find peace by contacting the Christ Consciousness present within you and within me. In this world you will know persecution, but be of good cheer! later you shall have eternal joy. I have attained that everlasting bliss of the Father by overcoming all temporal pleasures born of worldly desires.”

Jesus asked his disciples to be of good cheer because, though they would meet earthly persecution in the beginning, they would merit the eternal life of heavenly perception.

When he said, “I have overcome the world,” he sought to strengthen the spiritual determination of his disciples by citing the example of his own victory over the delusions of his human incarnation. Though tempted by Satan and the physical demands of bodily limitations, he overcame every temporal desire by choosing the imperishable bliss of God-consciousness.

Of all such supremely victorious devotees, the Gita says:

Their thoughts immersed in That (Spirit), their souls one with Spirit, their sole allegiance and devotion given to Spirit, their beings purified from poisonous delusion by the antidote of wisdom—such men reach the state of nonreturn....

The relativities of existence (birth and death, pleasure and pain) have been overcome, even here in this world, by those of fixed equal-mindedness. Thereby are they enthroned in Spirit—verily, the taintless, the perfectly balanced Spirit.

The knower of Spirit, abiding in the Supreme Being, with unswerving discrimination, free from delusion, is thus neither jubilant at pleasant experiences nor downcast by unpleasant experiences.

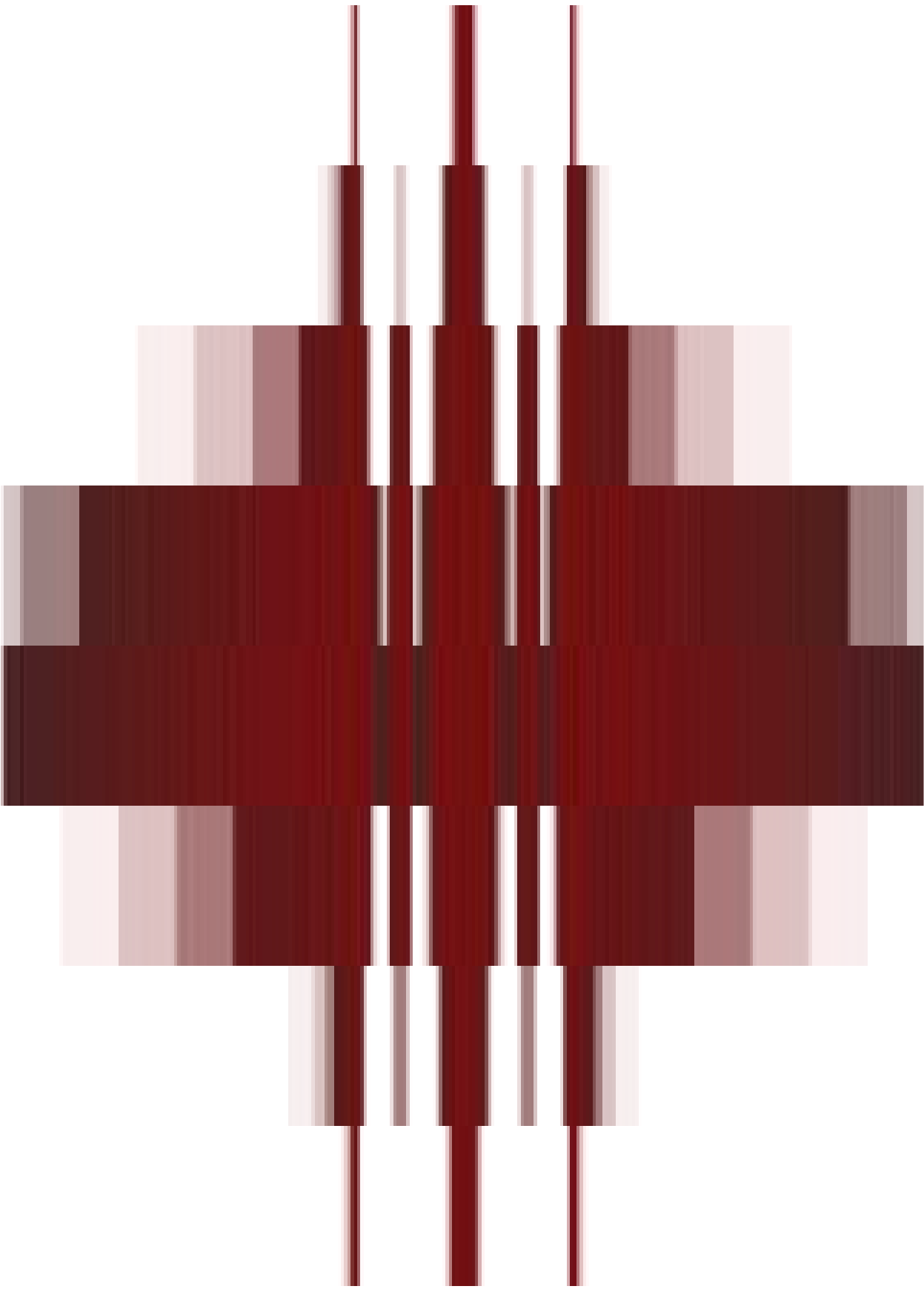
Unattracted to the sensory world, the yogi experiences the ever new joy inherent in the Self. Engaged in divine union of the soul with Spirit, he attains bliss indestructible.¹⁴



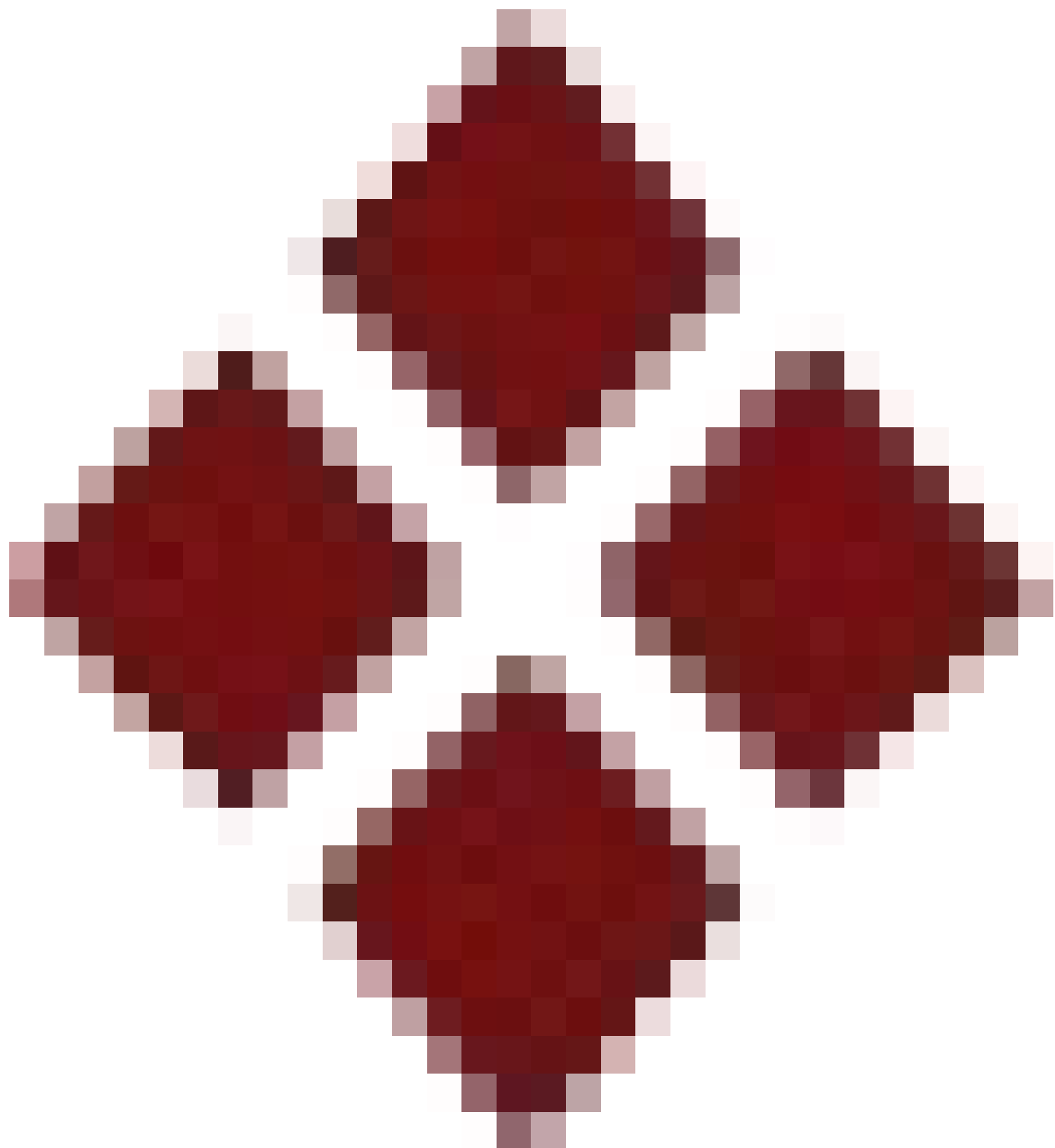
Discourse 72

**“Father, I Have Finished the Work Which Thou
Gavest Me to Do”**

The Last Supper, Part IV (Conclusion)



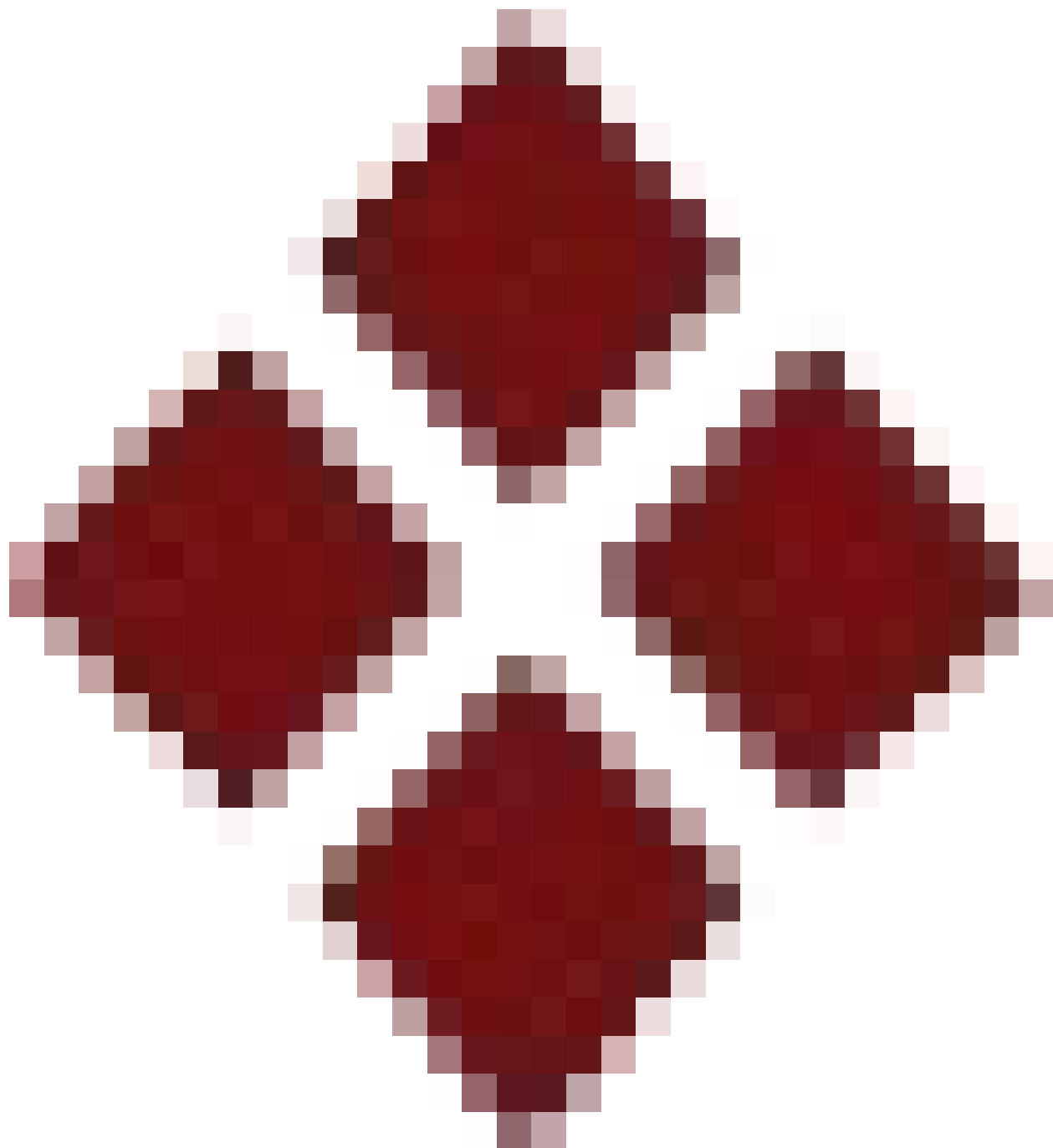
Jesus Prepares to Dissolve His Consciousness in the Absolute



**“I Have Manifested Thy Name” by Teaching the Art
of Contacting the Holy Ghost in Meditation**



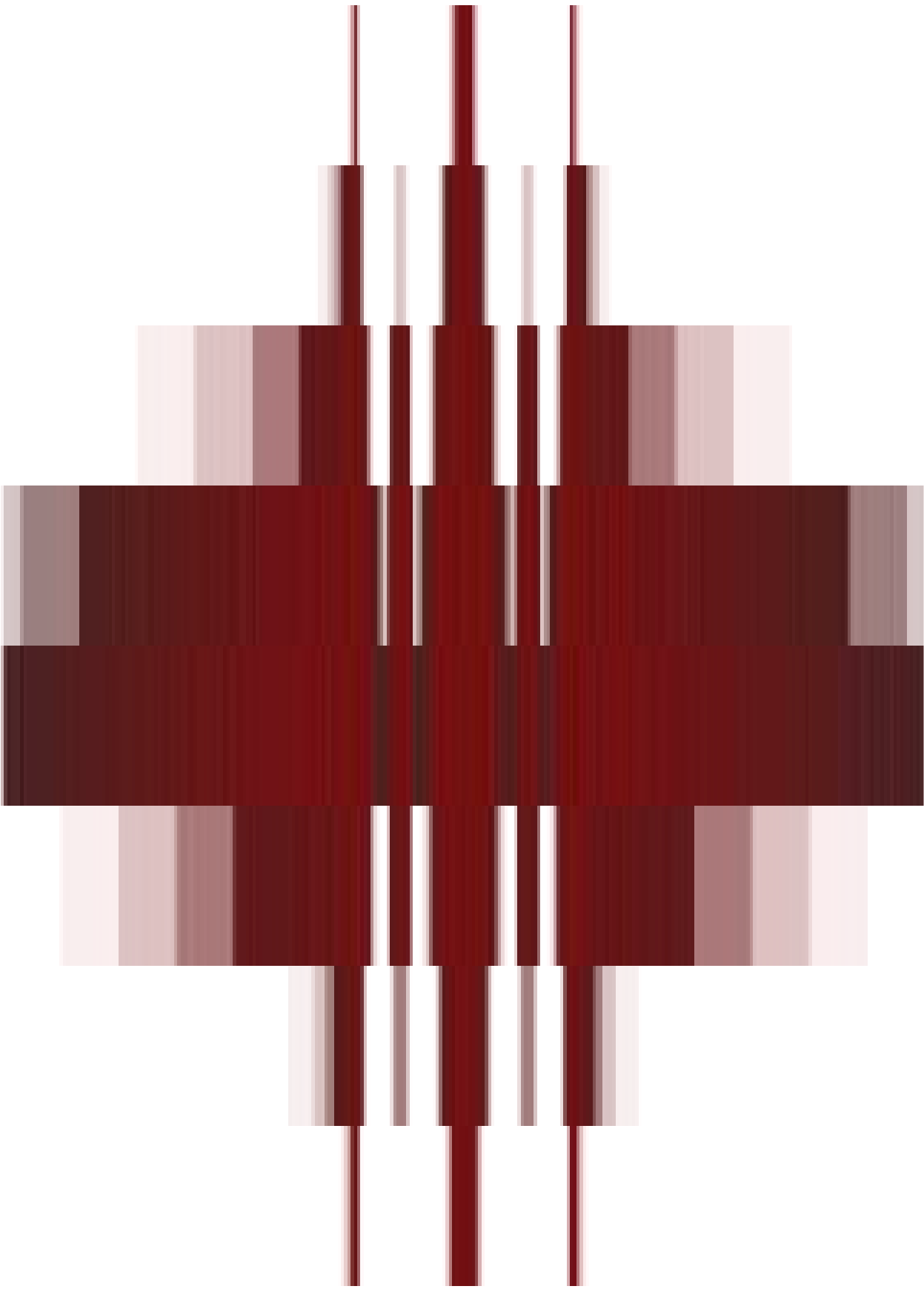
Jesus' Intercessory Prayer for His Disciples



The Role of Judas's Past Karma and His Free Will in Betraying Jesus



Jesus Identifies His True Followers as Those Who Contact Christ Consciousness in Meditation



“Jesus, in preparing to leave his body, prayed that all delusion, which he had voluntarily taken on in order to appear in incarnate form, be dissolved from his consciousness, that he might return to absolute oneness with Spirit.”

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These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee: As Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent. I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do.

"And now, O Father, glorify Thou me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.

"I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest me out of the world: Thine they were, and Thou gavest them me; and they have kept Thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever Thou hast given me are of Thee. For I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send me.

"I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given me; for they are Thine. And all mine are Thine, and Thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given me, that they may be one, as We are.

"While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Thy name: those that Thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to Thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

"I have given them Thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

"Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth. As Thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me.

“And the glory which Thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one: I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved me.

“Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which Thou hast given me: for Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

“O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee: but I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith Thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

—John 17:1 – 26



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Discourse 72

**“Father, I Have Finished the Work Which Thou
Gavest Me to Do”**

The Last Supper, Part IV (Conclusion)



These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, “Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee: As Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent. I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do.

“And now, O Father, glorify Thou me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was” (John 17:1 – 5).

“O Father, through my Christ Consciousness in communion with Thy Cosmic Consciousness, Thou art telling me that the hour of my trial is nigh. Exalt Thy Son (the Christ Consciousness incarnate in this body called Jesus) with the transcendent power of Thy Cosmic Consciousness, that Thy Son may successfully glorify Thine absolute power and presence as a testimony to the whole world. Heavenly Consciousness, Thou hast imparted to Thy Son, the Infinite Christ Consciousness, power over all beings and matter, so also that through this flesh of Jesus he may be able through Thy grace to give eternal life to these disciples and all else who are sent to him by Thee.



Jesus prepares to dissolve his consciousness in the Absolute beyond creation

“And this is the eternal life that I desire for them: that by meditation and prayer they attain, through my intercession as their God-sent guru, contact and oneness with the Holy Ghost, the Christ Consciousness within it, and the Cosmic Consciousness of the one and only true Spirit beyond them both, which manifests Itself as the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Through the Christ Consciousness in me, I have declared Thy hidden glory definitely and tangibly to the doubting people of the earth. Heavenly Father, I have finished the work which Thou entrusted to me for the redemption of Thy true lovers.

“And now, O Father, through the limitless power of Thy Cosmic Consciousness, surcharge my Christ Consciousness; make it absolutely one with Thy Cosmic Consciousness as it was originally before the cosmos and the Christ Consciousness in it were separated and projected from Thee. Destroy the limitations of separation by dissolving my Christ Consciousness in Thy Cosmic Consciousness.”

Jesus is here referring to the Absolute that exists without the cosmos—the one true ever-existing, ever-conscious, ever newly blissful Spirit. The Spirit was, when nothing else existed. When the Spirit projected vibratory creation out of Itself, It became three—God the Father, or Cosmic Consciousness existing beyond Vibratory Creation; the Cosmic Vibration or Holy Ghost; and the Christ Intelligence or “only begotten Son” working in and through Aum or the Holy Ghost. The Cosmic Vibration and the Christ Consciousness in it, being separated from the infinitude of God in the circumscription of the cosmos, became limited in power; Jesus therefore said: “O Father, glorify Thou me with Thine own self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.” “Glory” refers to Infinite Power, the Omnipotent Splendor. “Before the world was” signifies before Cosmic Vibration and the Christ Consciousness in it were projected out of God. Jesus here prays for undivided unity with Spirit without any limitation whatsoever. The mere existence of any form of finitude presupposes some degree of the delusion of diminution and separation from God—the workings of maya and its laws of duality and relativity. Thus Jesus, in preparing to leave his body, prayed that all delusion, which he had voluntarily taken on in order to appear in incarnate form, be dissolved from his consciousness, that he might return to absolute oneness with Spirit and realize the same power his soul

possessed before it was projected into embodied separation from the Cosmic Father.



“I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest me out of the world: Thine they were, and Thou gavest them me; and they have kept Thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever Thou hast given me are of Thee. For I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send me” (John 17:6 – 8).



“I have manifested Thy name” by teaching the art of contacting the Holy Ghost in meditation

“The Christ Consciousness in me has manifested Thy vibratory Name (Aum; the Word or Holy Ghost) to the truth-seekers who were selected from out of the worldly people to come to me through Thy grace and the force of their own devout prayers. Those truth-seekers were Thy devotees; Thou hast turned them over to me so that I could tell them about Thy wishes through my tangible human form. Heavenly Father, they have tuned themselves with the Cosmic Vibration and thus have followed Thy wishes in their lives. And now these disciples realize that all wisdom which has been made manifest through my Christ Consciousness originates in Thy Cosmic Consciousness.

“The Christ Consciousness in me has taught these devotees how by daily meditation to be in tune with the emanations of Thy Cosmic Vibration (‘words’), which Thou gavest to the Christ Consciousness to carry on Thy holy work of creation. And since these devotees by expanding their consciousness have experienced the omnipresence of Cosmic Vibration, they have felt the universal Christ Consciousness in it and thus have known that the Christ Consciousness in me came out from Thee—out of Thy Cosmic Consciousness, sent by Thee.”

When Jesus says, “They have kept Thy word,” he signified that the devotees by tuning in with Cosmic Vibration succeeded in feeling and following the guiding wisdom of God transmitted through the vibration of the Holy Ghost. It is seldom God’s way to speak audible words to the devotee; rather, He vibrates His response to the devotee’s intuition through the Holy Ghost Cosmic Sound.

“I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest me, and they have received them,” signifies that the devotees by expanding their consciousness and concentration have been able to intuit the guiding wisdom within the Cosmic Vibration emanating from Christ Consciousness and Cosmic Consciousness. Jesus’ emphasis on tuning in with the Cosmic Vibration requires every devotee to learn how to attain true communion with the Holy Ghost in deep meditation.



“I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given me; for they are Thine. And all mine are Thine, and Thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given me, that they may be one, as We are” (John 17:9 – 11).



Jesus' intercessory prayer for his disciples that they may be one with God

“I specially pray for those who are truly seeking Thee, not for the worldly people who lack interest in knowing Thee. I am praying for the redemption of those whom Thou sent to me for guidance and deliverance to Thy kingdom, for they belong to Thee, owing to their awareness of Thee. All devotees who belong to me belong to Thee; and all who are Thine I also embrace as my own. My Christ Consciousness is glorified in the glory of Thy power manifested in these Thy true devotees.

“And now my body and the manifestation of Christ Consciousness in it will go beyond the reach of men; these truth-seekers will be left in the world of delusion without the inspiration of beholding Thy manifestation in me. So I pray that Thou wilt help them all in my absence. Heavenly Father, keep Thy vibrations of love, wisdom, and bliss present in these disciples that they also may be one with Thee even as I am.”

Jesus humanly feels the responsibility for the attainment of his disciples during his absence. He knew that after his departure, Satan would seize on any karmic weakness within them and use it to try to destroy their spiritual lives. So Jesus makes the fervent plea to the Father: “Thou gavest the disciples to me, they belong to Thee and me, and that is why Thou must protect them from the influence of evil during my absence. For I want successfully to carry out Thy wishes in helping them to save themselves by finishing their earthly karma.”

Jesus asks the Father to keep the disciples in His holy presence “through Thine own name”—through the Cosmic Vibration emanating from God, which is heard by the devotees in meditation—that “they may be one, as We are,” in attunement and oneness with the intrinsic unity of Christ Consciousness and Cosmic Consciousness. In the manner of a true guru-savior, Jesus prays that all his disciples enjoy the same divine communion that he has.



“While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Thy name: those that Thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to Thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves” (John 17:12 – 13).

“While I was present on earth with the disciples, I taught them the method by which they could be in tune with Thy Cosmic Vibration. Those disciples whom Thou sent to me to be taught and redeemed, I have kept in the vibrations of Thy Consciousness; none of them is lost in evil except the one (Judas) who has acknowledged himself the son, the ally, of Satan (Cosmic Delusion). And now the time is come when the Christ Consciousness within me will be united with the Cosmic Consciousness within Thee. These things I announce to the world that the disciples may know my joy and manifest that unending joy of Spirit in themselves and behold Its glory.”



The role of Judas's past karma and his free will in betraying Jesus

When Jesus speaks of Judas as the “son of perdition,” he signifies that Judas willingly allied himself with Satan, and left the path of God for the path of delusion.¹ When Jesus says “that the scripture might be fulfilled,” he did not mean that Judas had been selected by some heavenly decree to betray Jesus, but that the intuitive spiritual vision of the scriptural prophets could see into the distant future and observe the mathematical karmic law of cause and effect that would influence the life and betrayal of the prophesied Messiah.

Just as a doctor by analysis of the constitution of a baby may predict whether the child will grow to be weak or robust at the age of forty, so Christlike masters by inner vision can discern the exact influence of the effects of already performed actions in men through many incarnations. However, the karmic outcome is conditional on certain circumstances; events can be changed by the interjection of the strong influences of free will and power of yoga concentration. On more than one occasion, Jesus distinctly told Judas that he was going to betray him.² Judas, by the exercise of free will and prayer, could have freed himself from that karmic compulsion to succumb to evil. Jesus did not mention the betrayal to torment Judas, nor to provide him with a justification of inevitability, but to warn him against the treachery that his karma was fomenting within him. Through his omniscient knowledge, Jesus scanned the inner nature of Judas and his karma of past incarnations, and thus lovingly gave Judas a chance to change his malevolent karmic pattern.

Jesus had said: “Woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! Good were it for that man if he had never been born.”³ Jesus thereby told Judas that he would reap untold misery by choosing to betray him. But Judas was so intoxicated with the delusion of his own preconceived ambitions that he ignored the opportunity to save himself from evil and went ahead with the work of betrayal. It is clearly seen in this drama of events that man is the architect of his own destiny; he is free to act as he pleases, for good or ill.

No matter the greatness of a master, he cannot influence the God-given free will of an individual in order to save him unless that individual wishes to use his free will to help save himself. The guru is constrained to disavow responsibility for any disciple who places himself outside the aura of the guru's grace, until

through repentance and reformation—sometimes requiring many lifetimes—the disciple demonstrates his readiness to rejoin the master’s liberating presence. When one’s delusion-empowered ego becomes one’s “guru,” even God Himself cannot force open any door of receptivity to truth and divine guidance in a fallen disciple.

Neither Christ nor Satan can influence an individual unless he chooses to be influenced. Judas, through his vastly accumulated evil of past lives and insufficient spiritual effort in this life, was impervious to the holy influence of Jesus. But later Judas did repent of his evil karma and in devastating remorse hanged himself.⁴

(It must not be inferred that hanging helped Judas to be free from the heinous sin of betraying Jesus, but his self-destruction was evidence of his repentance. Suicide is a very serious spiritual crime. Judas would have done much better had he chosen to live and confirm his repentance in a life of reparation, spiritually expiating his sin by transmuting the evil in his consciousness through redemptory acts of righteousness and devout meditation. Weak-minded people who want to commit suicide are foolishly hoping to get away from manfully shouldering the burden of life through which they free themselves from their bad karma. Suicide only increases the karmic burden instead of banishing it. A troubled person, by meditation and prayer, should patiently work at neutralizing his evil karma by spiritualizing the inner self with soul awakening and God’s grace.)

Because of his betrayal of Jesus, Judas had to roam through numerous incarnations to gain his salvation. It was only after twenty centuries that Judas was redeemed in India, through one of the great saints of modern times. Jesus appeared to the saint and sanctioned Judas’s release, saying, “His sin is paid for.”

The incarnation of Jesus Christ was at a time and place of great ignorance and wickedness among the people around him. He plucked from among the spiritually sincere ones twelve of the best, chosen to be his apostles because he had known and trained them as disciples in former lives. Now they were to serve as his messengers to work out the will of God during Jesus’ last incarnation on earth, and by their spirituality spread his cause into the world.



Why Jesus chose one who would betray him to be among his closest disciples

Judas was one of the twelve because Jesus had accepted him as a spiritual son in a former incarnation. Just as a father does not forsake a wicked son born of his own blood, so a guru cannot forsake a spiritual son who becomes wicked, so long as there remains a possibility to save him from evil. Judas had been a good disciple; but at the end of his former life, just before his death and rebirth as Judas, his mind had become dark with egoistic greed and desire for power, evil temptations to forsake his better nature. Nevertheless, Judas had within him a plenteous store of good karma by which he attracted in his present life the blessing of close association with Jesus.

As a spiritual doctor, Jesus diagnosed the life of Judas as a composite of his good and evil actions and tendencies in many incarnations. He knew of the latent seeds of evil hidden in Judas's subconscious mind, which would dispose him to be the foretold betrayer of the Messiah. Foreknowledge of the potential betrayal did not prevent the magnanimous heart of Jesus from accepting Judas in the divine family of his disciples. In his love for Judas, Jesus gave him an unparalleled opportunity of being better, of overcoming the evil within him in the environment of the Christ in Jesus and the company of his other disciples.

In the life of Jesus, as with that of all divine incarnations who come on earth with a world mission, there was a cosmic drama to be played out between good and evil, God and Satan. The Cosmic Evil Force was arrayed against the manifestation of God in Jesus for what he was going to do to destroy the kingdom of delusion. This conscious force of evil focused on the weakness of Judas to betray Jesus and thereby initiate the events that would lead to the crucifixion of the Christ.

God and Christ in turn knew how Satan could influence Judas through the invitation of his own bad karma. But though the satanic forces of evil would cause the death of Jesus, Christ would attain final victory over the powers of satanic delusion by liberating his soul through the sacrifice of the body, and then by resurrecting his body through the soul power of his freed spirit.

God did not overthrow Evil by the evil of material force. Jesus did not exercise his prerogative to use supernatural force against Satan; instead, he played out the

human drama to demonstrate the spiritual power of good over evil in every man. Resisting evil with evil entangles one in the toils of evil; but overcoming evil by good conclusively brings victory over all evil.

Evil destroys itself. Evil ultimately becomes a tool of God in an indirect way. For evil, trying to destroy good, makes it a martyr and thus immortalizes it.

“All things work together for good to them that love God.”⁵ Jesus, by holding with steadfast faith to the unequalled power of God’s love during his suffering and death on the cross, transformed the perfidious betrayal of Judas into the occasion of his greatest victory—a supreme demonstration of godliness for the inspiration of humanity. In that sense, Judas may be said to have been Jesus’ best “publicity agent,” insuring that word of his life and message would be broadcast throughout the world as an example for all mankind for the ages to come.



Jesus continues his prayer to God, interceding for the disciples:

“I have given them Thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

“Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth. As Thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth” (John 17:14 – 19).



Jesus prays that the disciples sanctify themselves through meditation on the Holy Ghost

“These disciples have received Thy wisdom by attunement with Thee through the Cosmic Vibration intuitively felt in meditation. The worldly people have listened to me only with their ears, with no inner perception of truth. Because of their ignorance and wrong living they have hated my followers who are not attached to the false values of the world, even as I am above the temptations of worldly delusion. I do not pray that the disciples be taken from the world into their own salvation, for they yet have work to do in declaring Thy glory; I pray that they be saved from being tempted by delusion while they remain in the world to redeem others through their own exemplary lives. The disciples, having spiritualized their consciousness, do not belong to the domain of the delusive world, even as the Christ Consciousness in me is transcendent, above all cosmic delusion.

“Heavenly Father, by the manifestation of the substantial joy of Cosmic Vibration, the Spirit of truth, purify the disciples from any lurking past karmic desires—love for material phenomena or passing earthly pleasures. As the Christ Consciousness incarnate in me has been reflected from Thy Cosmic Consciousness into the cosmos to guide it, so also It has emanated the souls and forms of the disciples and all others into the world. For the sake of the disciples and for setting a true example for them as Thy representative, I have purified my human incarnation of all earthly desires and karmic entanglements. May the disciples also do so by contacting the Spirit of truth, the Holy Ghost, in meditation.”

In the above passages, the words “truth” and “word” signify the Holy Ghost, Christ-imbued Cosmic Vibration, which is the quiddity or truth underlying all changeable vibratory phenomena. As the Christ Consciousness emanated from Cosmic Consciousness, so have all beings emanated from Christ Consciousness, informed by Cosmic Vibration. Thus Jesus wanted his disciples to realize the wonder of sanctifying themselves by meditation on the Holy Ghost Spirit of truth, and by following his sanctified life, inspired by his ideal example.



“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me.

“And the glory which Thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one: I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved me.

“Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which Thou hast given me: for Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world” (John 17:20 – 24).



Jesus identifies his true followers as those who contact Christ Consciousness in meditation

“N either do I pray for these disciples only, but for truth-seekers of all times—those who will be my followers not in name only but in feeling my Christ Consciousness ‘t hrough their word ,’ through the Cosmic Vibration they feel emanating from the lives of these and future perfected disciples—that all devotees may at last in their common Self-realization become one with Thy Cosmic Consciousness. As Thy Cosmic Consciousness is present in my Christ Consciousness and my consciousness in Thee, I pray that the souls of true devotees also be one in Our consciousness; and that the devotees by reflecting divinity in their own lives may make the disbelieving world realize that Thy Cosmic Consciousness has been glorified through Its manifestation in me.

“The glory and the power that I have received in my Christ Consciousness from Thee, I transmit to my disciples that they may be one with Thee even as Thou and I are one. My Christ Consciousness manifest in the devotees and Thy Consciousness manifest in me will make the disciples perfect. I pray that worldly people know that Thy Cosmic Consciousness is manifest in me, and that Thou lovest these disciples, and all the peoples of the world, even as Thou lovest me.

“Heavenly Father, I also pray that the disciples whom Thou sent to me may attain the Christ Consciousness wherein my human consciousness will be dissolved, that they may thus behold the fullness of Thy glory as manifest through me. Heavenly Father, ever hast Thou loved me in the Christ Consciousness since the nascent stirrings of Thy cosmic dreaming ere the world began.”

The universal consciousness of Jesus lovingly prays not only for his immediate disciples but for truth-seekers of all generations. He identifies his true followers as those who would believe in him not in name only but through actual contact with Christ Consciousness in the Cosmic Vibration felt in meditation. They are the ones who can be “saved.” Jesus also prayed for all the people of the world, that they might know God loves them; and that in sending Jesus to earth, He had manifested through him His divine love.

When Jesus said: “Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world,” he signified that when the Cosmic Vibration and Christ Consciousness were emanated from God, His love was present in Christ Consciousness even before creation became more than a mere concept in the Heavenly Father’s cosmic mind.



“O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee: but I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith Thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them” (John 17:25 – 26).

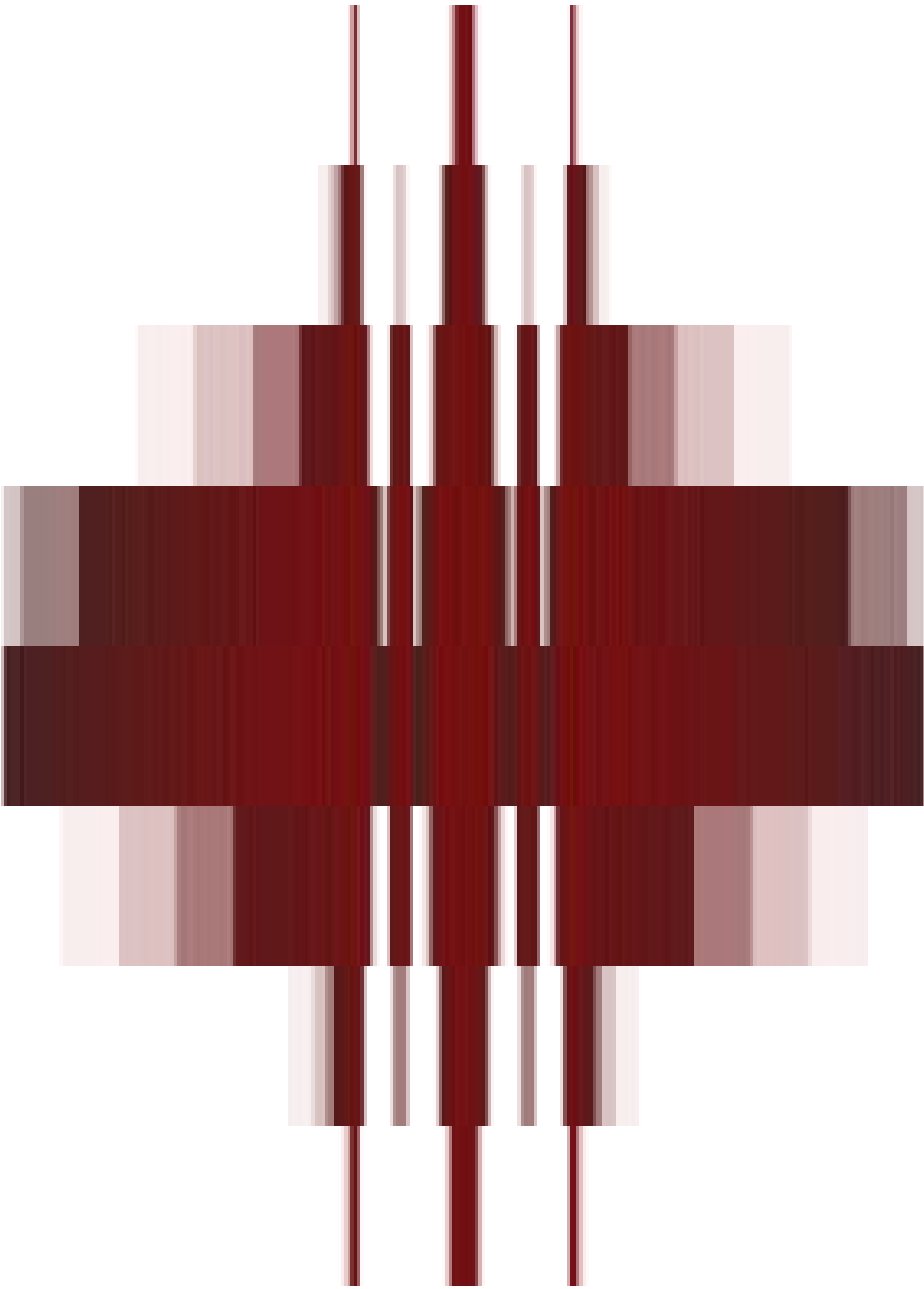
“O Most Just Heavenly Father, Thou art unknown to worldly people who have not contacted Thee; but the Christ Consciousness in me knows Thy Consciousness, and these my disciples are aware that Thou hast sent me and that I did not come on earth for any personal need or motive. I have made Thy Vibratory Presence manifest in the disciples, and through the Christ Consciousness in the Cosmic Vibration I will always declare Thee to all truth-seekers. I pray that the unconditional, all-powerful, ever-intoxicating love with which Thou hast loved me may be manifest in the disciples along with my Christ Consciousness.”

In the above words: “I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it,” Jesus defines the duty of a true guru—one who is sent by God in response to the prayers of sincere devotees—to turn toward God all the devotion awakened in the disciple by the guru’s divine personality. The egotistical teacher covets for himself the worship of his students, but the true guru draws reverence from his followers so that he can reinforce it with his intercession and direct that love wholly to God alone.



Discourse 73

Jesus' Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, and His Arrest



Attuning Human Will to the Wisdom-Guidance of God's Divine Will



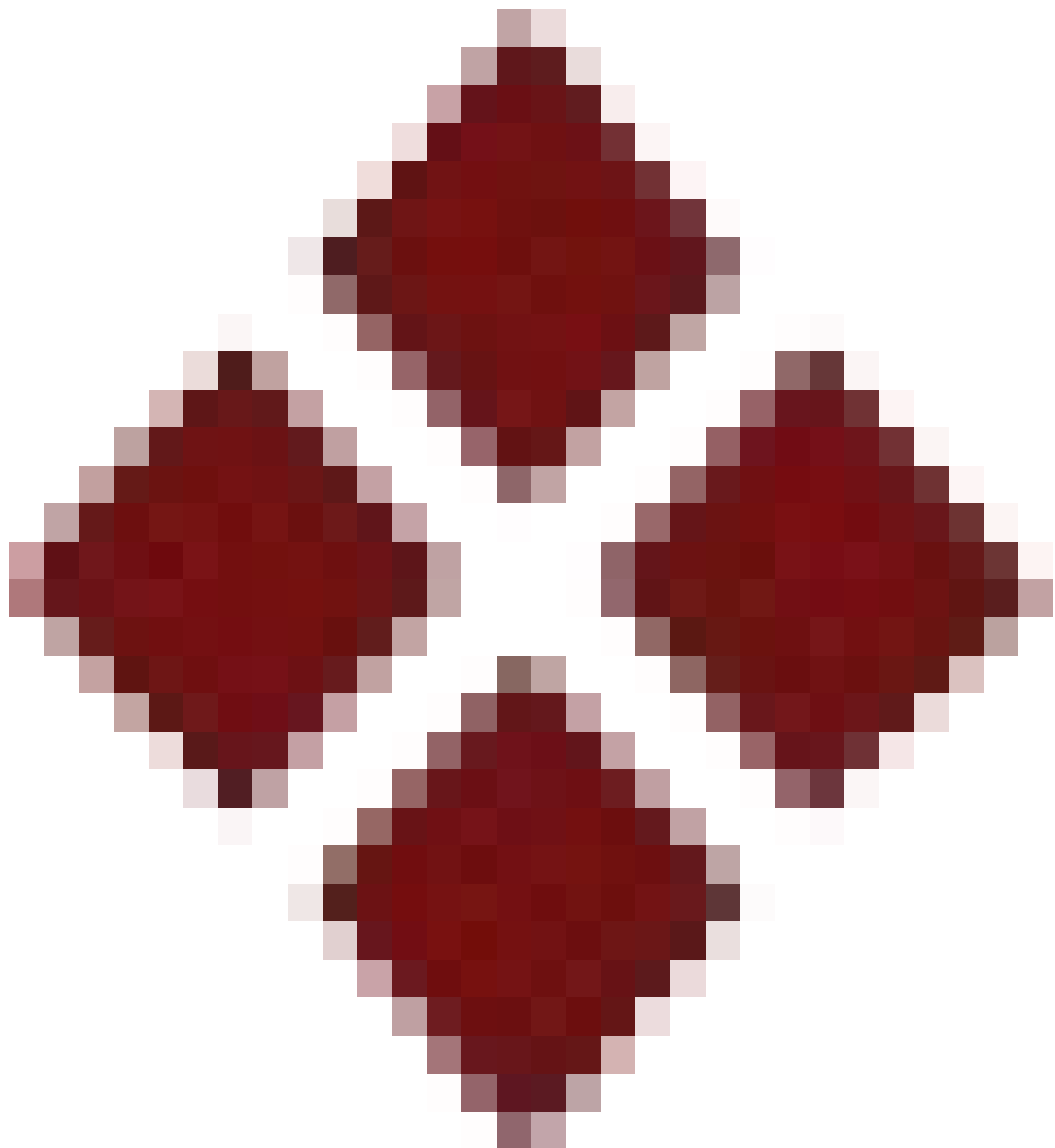
The Importance of Introspective Watchfulness to Guard the Mind Against Delusion



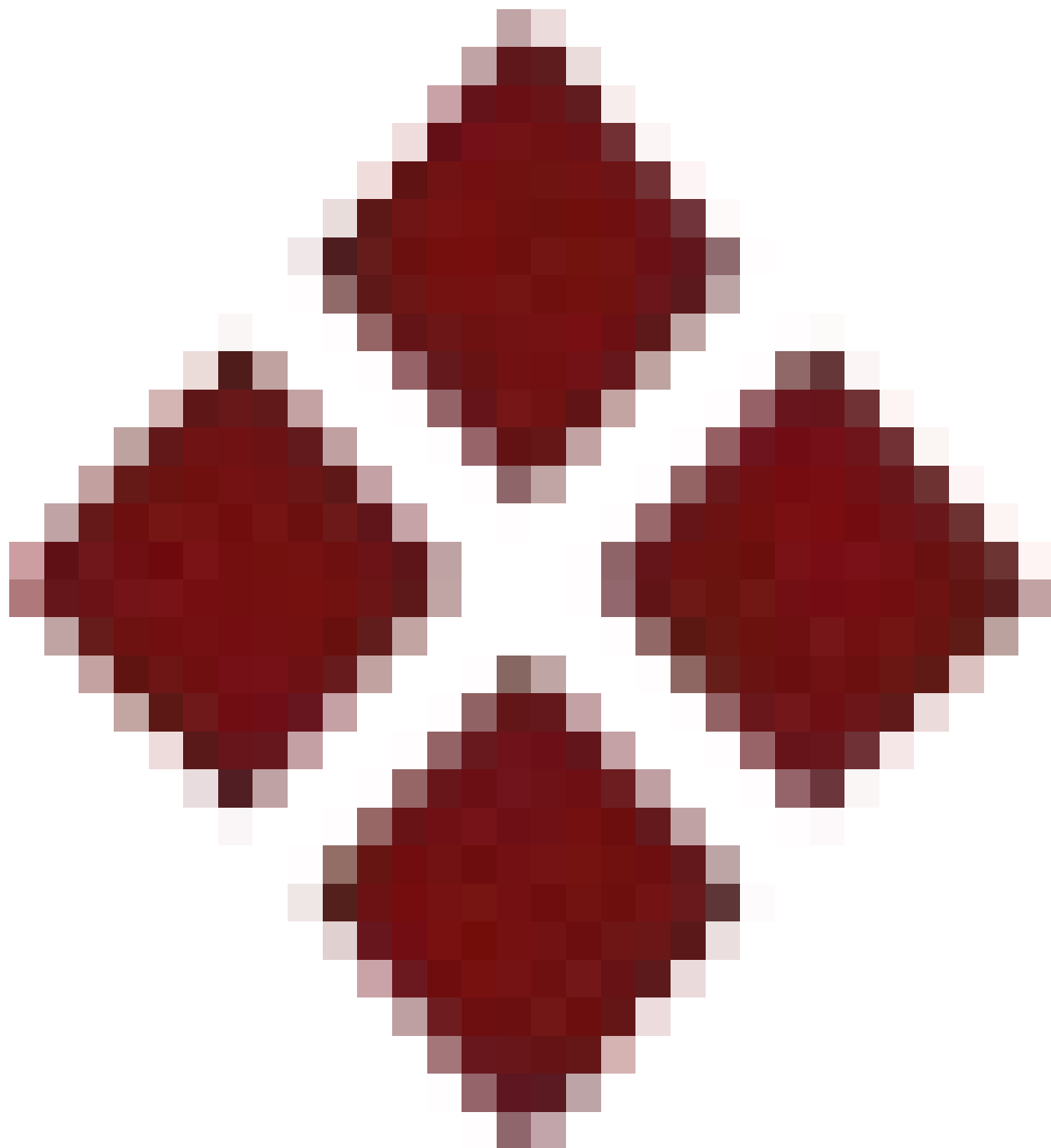
**Jesus Commends the Attitude of Willingness to
Meditate and Pray**



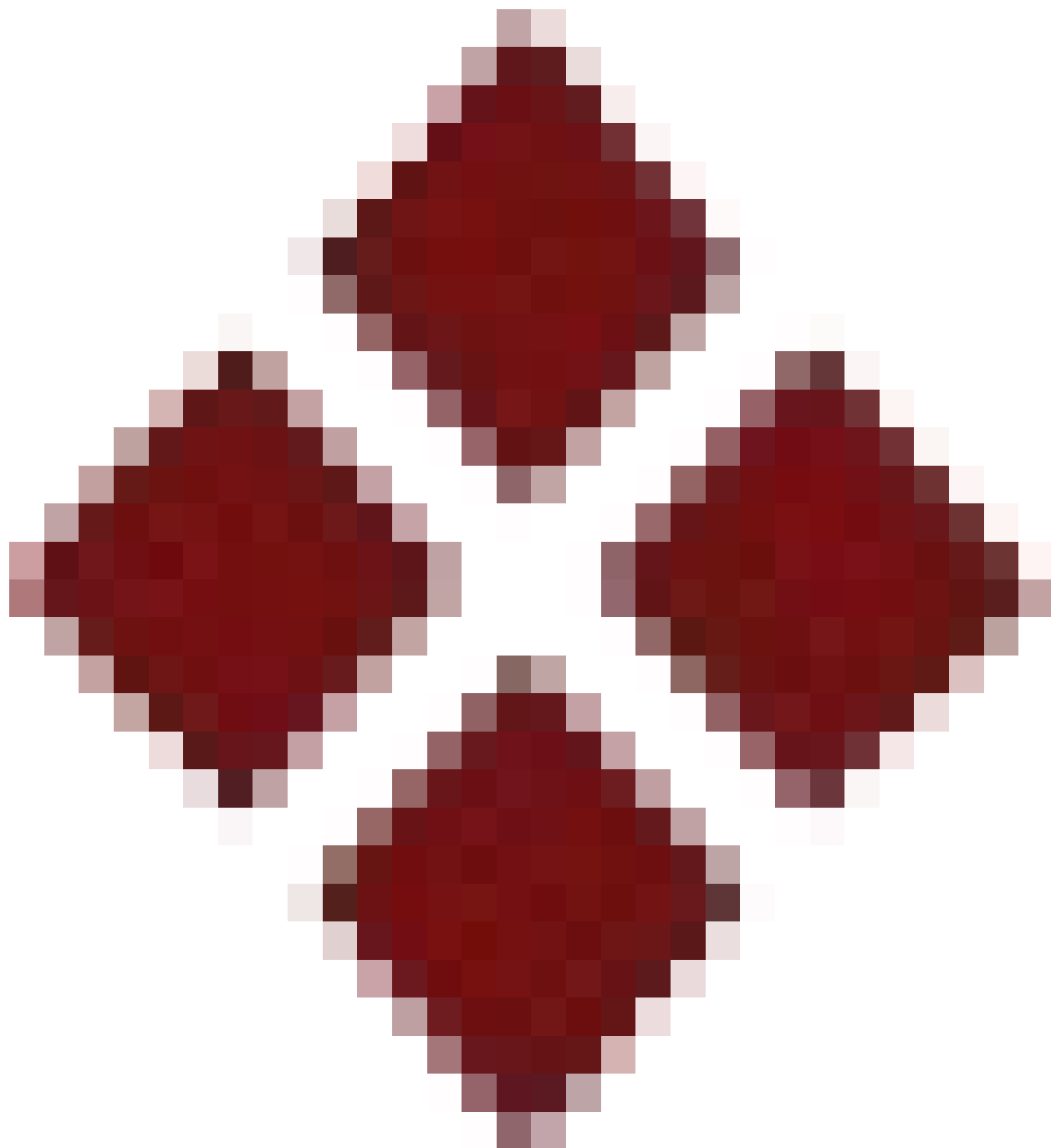
**The Divine Friendship of Jesus Persisted Even in the
Face of Severest Provocation**



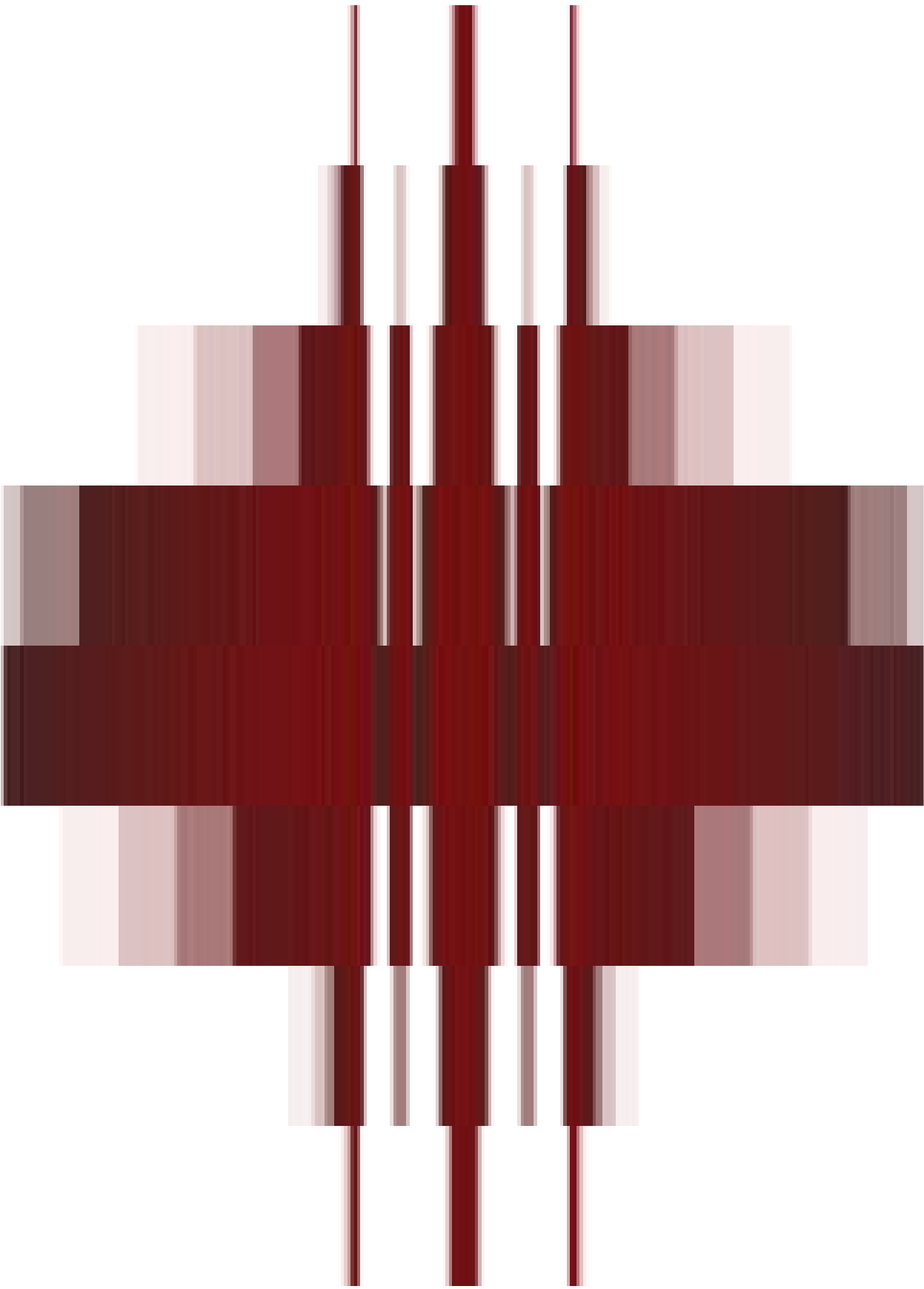
**“All They That Take the Sword Shall Perish With the
Sword”**



The Karmically Determined Time When Satan Could Successfully Assail Jesus



Meaning of “the Son of Man Coming in the Clouds of Heaven”



“Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but Thine, be done.”

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When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples.

—John 18:1

Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, “Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.”

And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith he unto them, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.”

And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt.”

And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, “What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, “O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, Thy will be done.” And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy.

And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, “Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.”

And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the

people. Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, "Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast."

And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, "Hail, master"; and kissed him.

And Jesus said unto him, "Friend, wherefore art thou come?"

Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus and took him. And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear.

Then said Jesus unto him, "Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?"

In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, "Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me. But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled."

Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled. And they that had laid hold on Jesus led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. But Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end.

Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death; but found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. At the last came two false witnesses, and said, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.'"

And the high priest arose, and said unto him, "Answerest thou nothing? What is it which these witness against thee?"

But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God."

Jesus saith unto him, "Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."

Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, "He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. What think ye?"

They answered and said, "He is guilty of death."

Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands, saying, "Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, who is he that smote thee?"

Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, "Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee." But he denied before them all, saying, "I know not what thou sayest."

And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, "This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth." And again he denied with an oath, "I do not know the man."

And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, "Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee."

Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, "I know not the man." And immediately the cock crew. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, "Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice." And he went out, and wept bitterly.

When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death: And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor.

Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood."

And they said, "What is that to us? See thou to that." And he cast down the

pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.

And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, “It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood.” And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter’s field, to bury strangers in. Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, “And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value; and gave them for the potter’s field, as the Lord appointed me.”

—Matthew 26:36 – 27:10



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Discourse 73

Jesus' Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, and His Arrest



When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples (John 18:1).

Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, “Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder” (Matthew 26:36).

Parallel reference:

And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him. And when he was at the place, he said unto them, “Pray that ye enter not into temptation” (Luke 22:39 – 40).¹

“Pray unto God that you do not misuse your God-given independence by giving preference to the temptations of satanic delusion instead of heeding the voice of God speaking from your soul through your conscience.”

Jesus uses the word “temptation” to denote that state of mind wherein one has become intoxicated with a harmful evil impulse—picturing it as yielding happiness, so blinding himself by this thought that he cannot see in what actions lie his highest good and true, lasting happiness. Jesus warns his disciples to reinforce their will with divine power, accrued from prayer and meditation, that their free will be not swayed and influenced by the insinuations of Satan, knowing that this night would be the beginning of great tests for all of them.



And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith he unto them, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me” (Matthew 26:37 – 38).²



Jesus' human nature was temporarily tormented by the fearsome prospect of crucifixion

“So great is my trial that my heart is sorely tested; I am so weighted with sorrow that death here and now would be a welcome release to my soul. Wait here and pray with me; inwardly watch with the intuitive eyes of Christ Consciousness, that satanic delusion may not enter us unnoticed. Be vigilant; with the sword of wisdom, slay at sight any encroaching mental agent of evil.”

Even with all the wisdom and self-control of his divine nature, the incarnate human nature of Jesus was yet temporarily tormented by the delusion of the fearsome trial of crucifixion he was to face.

The great yogi Patanjali, in Yoga Sutras

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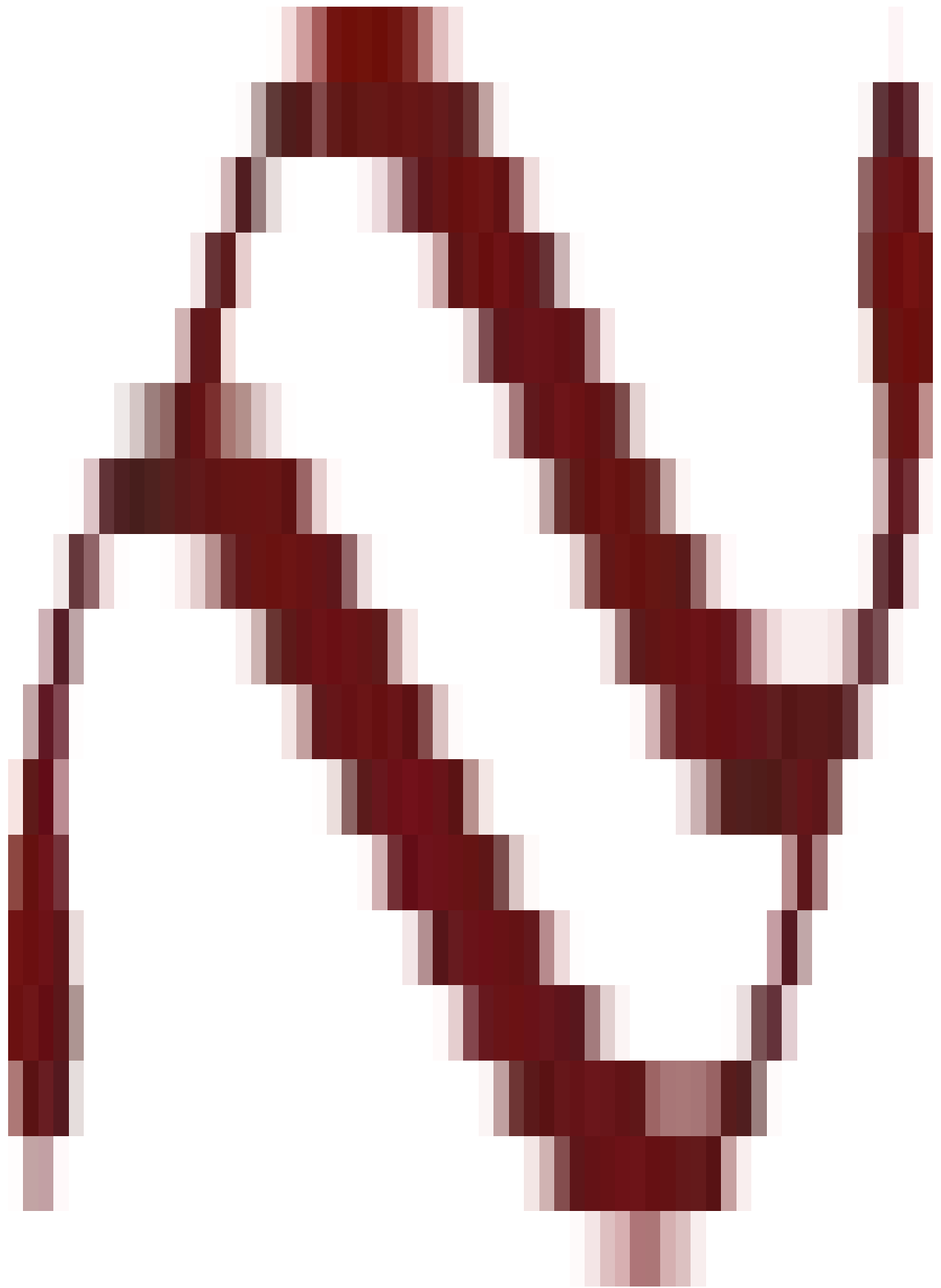
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, enumerates five forms of “trouble” (klesha) that inhere in all incarnate beings: avidya (ignorance, individual delusion), asmita (ego, the body-identified state of the soul), raga (attachment, attraction to what one likes), dvesha (aversion, dislikes), abhinivesha (body attachment). Jesus had to overcome the ego's body-circumscribed human nature, the delusion at work in the dreadful events ahead of him, his attachment to his disciples and his love of serving those who sought his help, the natural human aversion to bodily suffering, and lastly, the primal psychological fear accompanying the prospect of death.

Patanjali further points out that even sages of divine realization feel some delusion and temporary attachment at the approach of death.³ My guru, Swami Sri Yukteswar, often gave the following analogy: Just as a long-caged bird habituated to its confinement is reluctant to leave when offered freedom through an opened door, so also the soul-bird of paradise, on the threshold of transcendence in death, must overcome an instinctive unwillingness to forsake its accustomed captivity and dare the vastness of its native omnipresence. The soul afflicted with this delusion-engendered primal attachment is like the captive

bird, preferring to remain in the bodily enclosure and to flutter with the restlessness of mortal activities within its narrow confines.

Aware of the susceptibility of all flesh to Satan's pervasive delusions, Jesus enjoined the disciples to "watch with me," signifying that they should tune in with his Christ Consciousness and keep vigil to thwart any encroachment of mortal ignorance in him and in themselves.



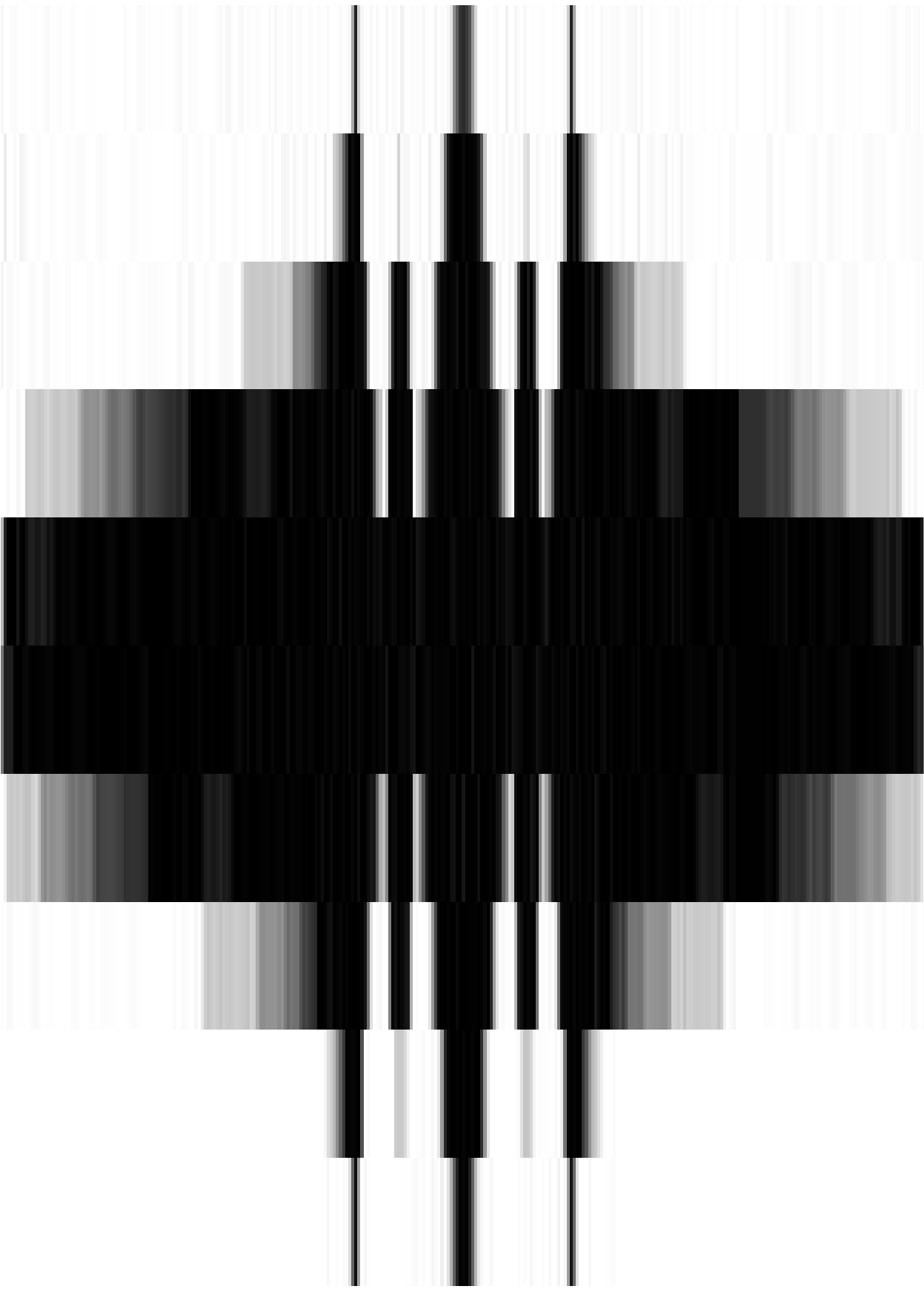
And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt” (Matthew 26:39).

Parallel references:

And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said, “Abba, Father, all things are possible unto Thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what Thou wilt” (Mark 14:35 – 36).

And he was withdrawn from them about a stone’s cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, saying “Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but Thine, be done.”

And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground (Luke 22:41 – 44).



Attuning human will to the wisdom-guidance of God's divine will

Jesus entreated God: "Abba, Almighty Father, You can do all things. As Your child, O beloved Father, I pray that if it be possible according to Your laws, and if You are willing, remove this cup of trial, so bitter for my consciousness to experience. But despite my wish to avoid this terrible ordeal, let not my will, but Your will be done."

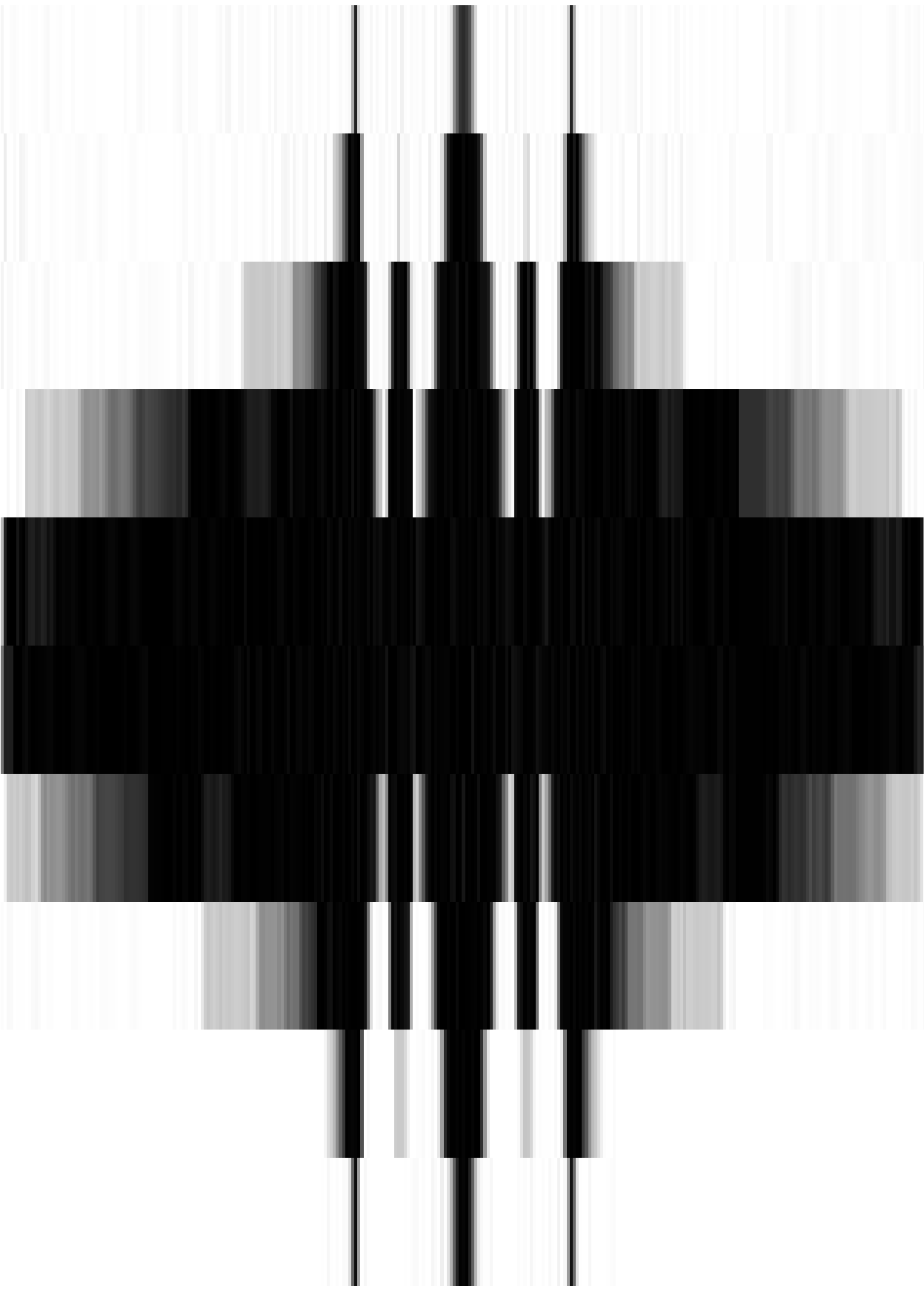
Jesus endearingly prays to the transcendental Father hidden behind the etheric walls of heaven, just as a favorite son in an earthly family would trustfully entreat his father: "Heavenly Father, as You can do everything, why not take this cup of crucifixion away from me?" But even as he prayed to be spared from the tyrannical workings of Cosmic Delusion, Jesus recognized the promptings of inner weakness and immediately added: "Nevertheless, let not my human will, fearful to meet the trial, be granted; let Your wisdom-guided divine will find fulfillment in my life."

Many persons misunderstand Jesus' saying: "Not my will, but Thine, be done." He never advised that God's children should renounce their soul-endowed independence of will and become unthinking mechanical tools, like a hammer that stays where it is put until picked up and wielded by the builder. Jesus' example, rather, showed that man is to use his God-given freedom to consciously choose to exercise his will in seeking to fulfill the Lord's wishes on earth. By cooperation with the Divine Will, man permits into his life the ready-and-waiting inflow of God's wisdom, power, love, joy. Jesus had taught his disciples to beseech the Father, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."⁴ To attune one's error-prone human will to God's will is to abide in the freedom and joy of an inner heaven on earth.

It was when Jesus found his will being sorely tempted and temporarily swayed by mortal pangs of delusion that he uttered the above prayer. He thus used his free will to shake off delusion and be guided only by the wisdom of the will of the Father.



And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, “What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matthew 26:40 – 41).⁵



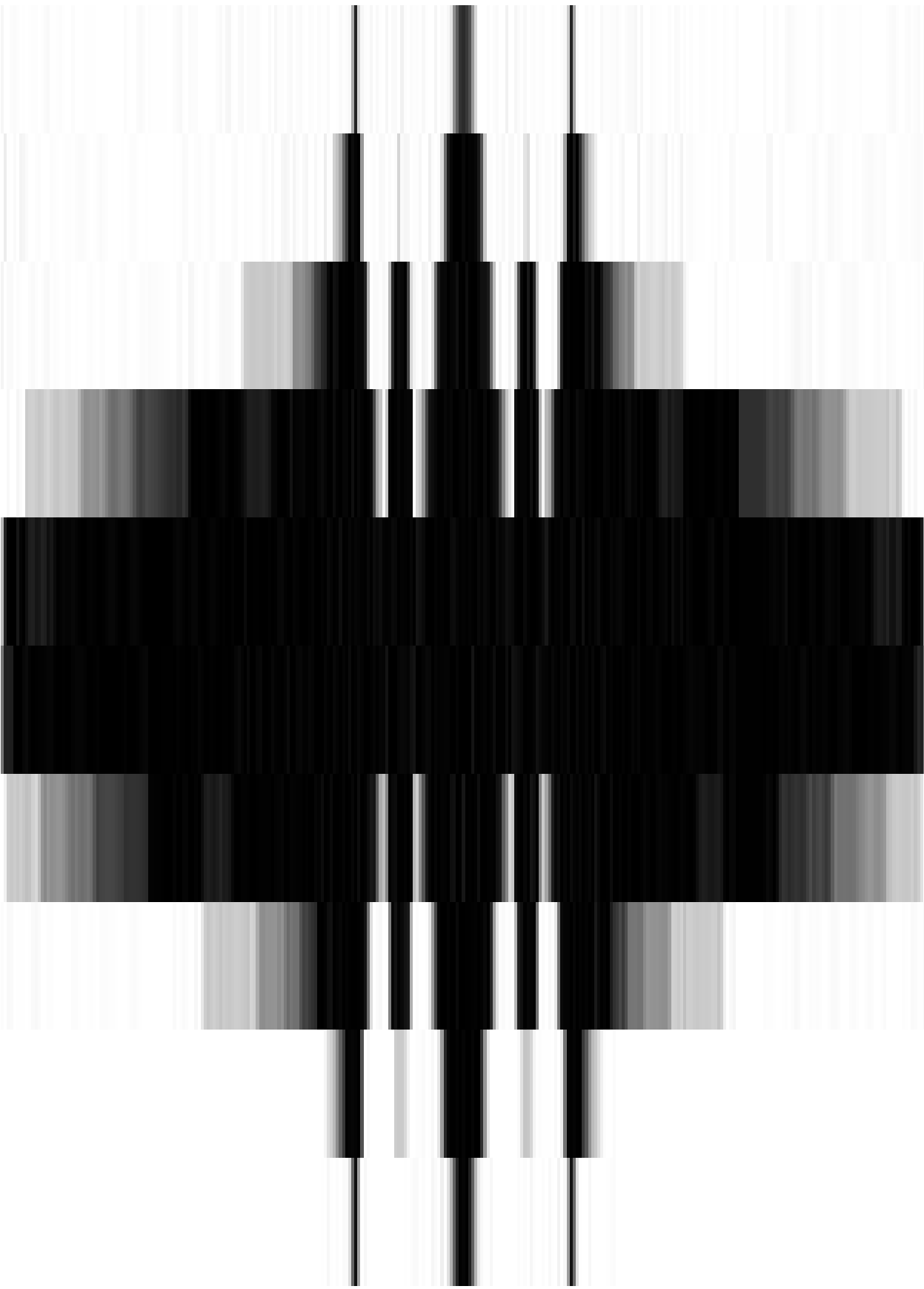
The importance of introspective watchfulness to guard the mind against delusion

“Simon, are you sleeping? How strange, you cannot muster your will power for even an hour of prayer, and of watchfulness with your eyes of intuition, to guard the temple of the mind against the entering of satanic delusion! Watch with your eyes of inner wisdom, and pray with love to your Heavenly Father, that you do not abuse your God-given freedom and yield willingly to the temptations and weaknesses of the body. I find in you that your spirit and innermost inclination is spontaneously willing to watch with wisdom and to pray to God with faith, but the physical limitations imposed by body consciousness and its habit of sleep are yet hampering that willingness.”

Jesus expressed dismay that Peter, owing to the impulse of physical frailty, could not keep awake for even one hour of watchful wisdom so that at this critical time he could reinforce his mind against the influence and vibration of Cosmic Satan. “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.” In these words, Jesus also signified that an evil impulse or Satan cannot force a person to yield to wrong promptings; “enter not” implies a free-will act of rejecting temptation.

All devotees, until final liberation is attained, are occasionally subject to diverse temptations that impede progress toward God. Delusion may easily steal unnoticed into the mind, influencing one’s behavior consciously or subconsciously; thus the devotee must always maintain a constant introspective watchfulness of his mental and emotional states and their subtle incitements to good or bad actions.

The worldly person, identified with the senses, responds more or less unthinkingly to the suggestions of bodily habits and temptations. The God-seeker, on the other hand, who keeps his awareness concentrated at the spiritual eye, is guided by the promptings of conscience and intuition. Thus his discrimination and self-control are ever awake and alert, able to recognize and quash incitements of harmful impulses and habits intimated in his body-identified consciousness by cosmic delusion.



Jesus commends the attitude of willingness to meditate and pray

Jesus expressed sympathy for Peter (and all sincerely striving aspirants): “I am glad that you are willing to pray, even though your yet-to-be-mastered body is demanding to sleep.” He commended the inner willingness of spirit that, out of love for God and goodness, makes an intense effort to pray and meditate even when the body disobeys. That state is far better than the hypocrisy of keeping the body outwardly posed in meditation and prayer while being inwardly rebellious and unwilling. The rebellion of the body and bad habits against the soul’s desire to meditate is not as adverse as the rebellion of the inner mind against meditation.

Unwillingness of the body to meditate is much easier to remedy than is resistance of the inner spirit. Physical frailties indulged mechanically out of mortal habit, against the will of the inner spirit, only affect the devotee temporarily; those habits may be removed by consciously cultivating the will to mastery. But inner unwillingness to make such effort is the sign of one’s spirit steeped in ignorance, which can be removed only by sincere, unceasing spiritual practice and self-control, never by mere outward pretense. Worst, of course, is when habits of weakness beat down both the spirit and the body. That state is much more detrimental than if only the flesh is resistant and the spirit is courageously willing to strive; eventually the spirit will infuse strength into the recalcitrant body, for if the spirit is truly willing, the flesh will be made strong.



He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, “O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, Thy will be done.” And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy.

And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, “Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me” (Matthew 26:42 – 46).⁶

“O Father, if this cup of trial may not be taken away from me without my experiencing it, let Thy wisdom-guided will about me be fulfilled and let not my persecution-overwhelmed will prevail.”

A second and a third time Jesus returned to the disciples and found them asleep; whereupon lastly he signified: “Your bodies need rest, so sleep on now. In spite of sleep, whenever you have willingly prayed, that is sufficient to please God and to destroy bad karma. Behold, the cosmic law – appointed time is near at hand when the Son of man, my physical body, is to be deceivingly delivered into the hands of Satan-governed and deluded souls. Rise and prepare to go; behold, Judas comes—he who will betray my body to the sinners.”



And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people. Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, “Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast.”

And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, “Hail, master”: and kissed him.

And Jesus said unto him, “Friend, wherefore art thou come?” (Matthew 26:47 – 50).

Parallel references:

And while he yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him. But Jesus said unto him, “Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?” (Luke 22:47 – 48).

Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons. Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, “Whom seek ye?”

They answered him, “Jesus of Nazareth.”

Jesus saith unto them, “I am he.” And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them.

As soon then as he had said unto them, “I am he,” they went backward, and fell to the ground.

Then asked he them again, “Whom seek ye?”

And they said, “Jesus of Nazareth.”

Jesus answered, “I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way”: That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, “Of them which Thou gavest me have I lost none” (John 18:3 – 9).⁷

“With friendly spirit I greet you, Judas, and ask you to declare openly why have you come—is not your seemingly brotherly kiss a deception to deliver me over to those who consider themselves my enemies?”



The divine friendship of Jesus persisted even in the face of severest provocation

Jesus addresses Judas as “friend” even though Jesus knew the treacherous intent of this disciple. Jesus could not help but see God in the soul of Judas and could thus greet him genuinely with a friendly spirit. The resentment an ordinary person would feel against someone who harms or maligns him found no entry into the consciousness of Jesus. His calmness, friendliness, love, and all divine qualities never left him, notwithstanding the most severe provocation. Even as a sheep looks with trustful eyes at the butcher who is about to kill it, so Jesus felt only a continuity of unblemished friendship and sympathy for this lost disciple.

In the Bhagavad Gita, the Lord says: “He who is free from hatred toward all creatures, is friendly and kind to all, is devoid of the consciousness of ‘I-ness’ and possessiveness; is evenminded in suffering and joy, forgiving, ever contented; a regular yoga practitioner, constantly trying by yoga to know the Self and to unite with Spirit, possessed of firm determination, with mind and discrimination surrendered to Me—he is My devotee, dear to Me.”⁸

Jesus behaved as a friend of all, in spite of the fact that others chose to feel inimical toward him. In the most heartrending kindness, and with divine compassion, Jesus says, “Beloved friend, Judas, is it right of you to betray me into the hands of my cruelest enemies with a false gesture of friendliness?”

Jesus also calls Judas “friend” to accord him equal regard as a child of God, to remind him that as such he had full power of free choice, as did Jesus, to do as he pleased for good or ill.

Jesus speaks of “the Son of man” being betrayed because, materially speaking, the body of Jesus could be betrayed; but the Christ Consciousness in him (“Son of God”) could not be subjugated or harmed by anyone.

The inviolability of the divine consciousness of Spirit that inhabited the body of Jesus was demonstrated in the exchange between Jesus and the arresting guards as recorded by Saint John. When the weapon-bearing mob announced whom they sought, Jesus confronted them with the simple declaration: “I am he.”⁹ That is, “I am the Christ Consciousness manifested in the body of Jesus which you want for persecution.” Though roused and ready to seize the master with violence, instantly the crowd “went backward, and fell to the ground,” by the

sheer power emanating from Jesus as he thus declared his divinity.

He then acknowledged that he was Jesus of Nazareth whom they sought: “If therefore you are seeking my body, let these my disciples go their way in freedom.” This was the beginning of his sacrifice of great love for his disciples in which he bartered their freedom, physically and spiritually, by giving his body over to the Satan-ordained, karma-ordained trial of crucifixion.



Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him. And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear.

Then said Jesus unto him, "Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" (Matthew 26:50 – 54).

Parallel references:

When they which were about him saw what would follow, they said unto him, "Lord, shall we smite with the sword?" And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear.

And Jesus answered and said, "Suffer ye thus far." And he touched his ear, and healed him (Luke 22:49 – 51).

Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.

Then said Jesus unto Peter, “Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?” (John 18:10 – 11).

Jesus decries the use of the sword in his defense: “Although the terrible treatment that I am receiving in the hands of my enemies is causing much righteous indignation in you, Peter, you must learn to tolerate it, even if my enemies go thus far to maltreat me in spite of my innocence.



“All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword”

“Put your sword into the sheath, for all individuals and nations who use the sword against others, being under the influence of anger, revengefulness, territorial greed, national selfishness, or industrial covetousness, will find themselves inviting the use of swords against themselves. The bitter cup of the spiritual test that my Father has given me I must drink. But never dare to think that my loving Father would not hear my prayer and leave me helpless; for if I pray, He will instantaneously send more than twelve legions of angels to protect me. But then the scriptural prophecy about the fructification of the law of karma in my life, which I have offered as a ransom for many, would not be fulfilled.”

Jesus admonished individuals and nations of the world that those who rely on the power of swords will themselves ultimately perish by the sword. In human nature, hatred rouses hatred: If anyone in anger, or in any wise under the influence of evil, lashes out with a sword against his enemy, he will find a sword drawn against himself. Evil is like a boomerang; a murderous person attracts a commensurate hurtful vibration against himself.

A “sword” may be any instrument of killing or aggression. Gangsters who keep themselves armed with guns, and who are ready to use them, inevitably face the same threat of death by gunshots. Those who try to kill others will themselves become targets of murderous assaults. Likewise, when one nation brandishes its armaments against a brother nation, the latter invariably is roused to array its weapons against the perceived aggressor. Jesus asked the nations to put up their swords of hatred in the sheath of self-control and abolish the gunpowder of revengefulness. Modern-style warfare—in which the unarmed populace far from the front lines is a target for long-range bombs and destruction just as much as the combat troops—is a grim testimony that aggressive wars of conquest bring to the invaders as grievous losses as to the invaded. All conquerors and aggressive nations, take heed, for those who use the sword shall perish by the sword!¹⁰



Jesus proved his divinity by acting like a god, not like a man

Whereas the sword most likely will defeat its purpose, love, when administered timely with wisdom, never fails to produce, sooner or later, the desired result. In the tumult of the moment, Jesus reminds his disciples that, if he chose to do so, he could escape the spiritual test of crucifixion by borrowing from God the very angels of heaven for his protection, or he had the power also simply to dematerialize his body. With the amplitude of his spiritual mastery, notwithstanding his incarnate status, he could completely contravene the law of karma, which was playing out its role of cause and effect; but he preferred not to demand special privileges. He had long known what would result from his divine fortitude in preaching God's truth and resisting social evils. However, for the sake of the wicked people he wanted to reform, and the souls his sacrifice would save, he had determined to suffer the consequences—even as an ordinary man would suffer under similar circumstances—in order to demonstrate the power of love and God's nature of love and forgiveness. Though the magnitude of the power he could summon to flow through his bodily instrument was akin to God's omnipotence, Jesus did not want to use any force other than the power of love to conquer the wickedness of his human brothers.

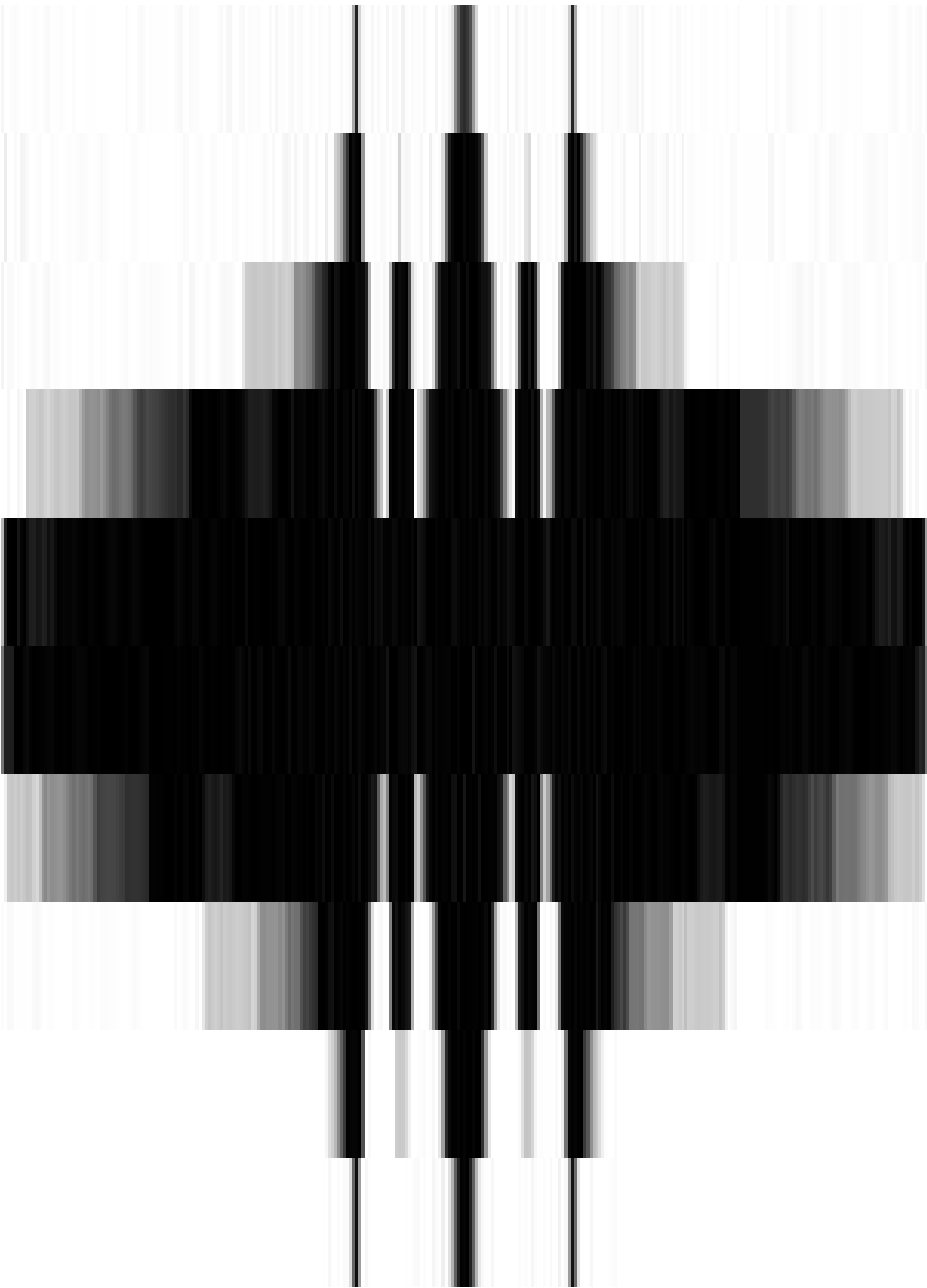
Moments earlier Jesus had fervently prayed that the cup of suffering be removed; now, his self-mastery fully reestablished, he chides the well-meaning Peter: "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" He admonished the disciple to express soul qualities even when severely tested by unjust treatment. To give a slap for a slap is human behavior; to give kindness for slaps is godliness. Jesus proved his Son of God identity by acting like a god and not like a man. Even in the moment of struggle when he was seized and the disciples were in a fury, he did not lose his soul calmness and self-possession or forget to be divine.¹¹ What is amazing is that Malchus, and those who witnessed Jesus' instantaneous healing of the servant's ear, as also his love for an afflicted enemy, were not thereby moved to soften their delusion-hardened cruel hearts, creating God-awakening within themselves. Yet such was the grip Satan had on their consciousness in that hour when the satanic "power of darkness" was given by the law of karma temporary ascendancy even over the miracles of Christ-love.



In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, “Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me. But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled” (Matthew 26:55 – 56).

Parallel reference:

Then Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and the elders, which were come to him, “Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves? When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness” (Luke 22:52 – 53).¹²



The karmically determined time when Satan could successfully assail Jesus

Jesus shames his persecutors by his fearless innocence: “Why did you feel the necessity of arming yourselves in order to seize my humble self, as though you were out to catch a ruthless thief? Why did you not arrest me when daily I sat with you in the temple? It is because this is the karmically ordained hour when my body is made vulnerable to capture by Satan’s power.”

Jesus points out that his destiny was perfectly timed; that up until that hour, the evil force was powerless against him, as evidenced on previous occasions when he had evaded harm and capture by divine protection.¹³ Here Jesus signifies that when he was performing sanctified works of preaching and healing in the temple under the protecting power of Goodness, nobody had dared touch him; but that the karmically determined time had now arrived when he would submit himself to the spiritual test of the evil “power of darkness.”

Satan, the Cosmic Delusive Intelligence, could punish Jesus only according to the law of karma. Having failed to turn Jesus against God by luring him with earthly temptations, Satan bided his time until, by Jesus’ actions against the evils of the prevailing hierarchy, sufficient cause and effect had accrued that Satan was able to assail him through the instrumentality of the ignorance of the chief priests. That is why Jesus distinctly contrasts the two periods of his life’s mission: the first, when he was freely preaching in the temple protected by the power of God; and second, when the satanic power, by using the law of karma set in motion by Jesus’ actions, was causing his arrest and leading him to crucifixion. It is important to understand these little-understood deep meanings within the words of Jesus.



Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled. And they that had laid hold on Jesus led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. But Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end (Matthew 26:56 – 58).¹⁴

Parallel reference:

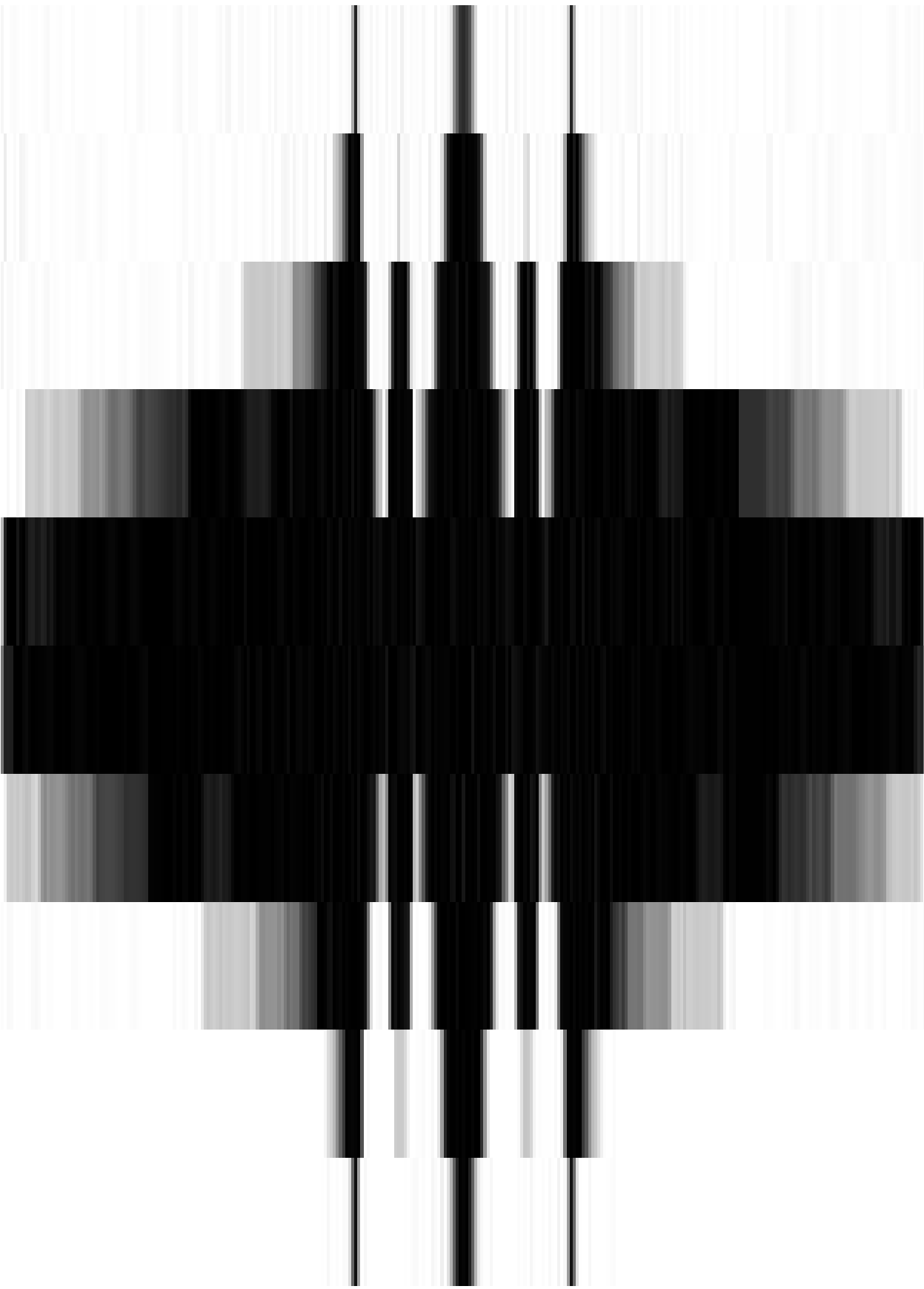
Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him, and led him away to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year. Now Caiaphas was he, which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.¹⁵

And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest. But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter....

The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine. Jesus answered him, "I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? Ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said."

And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, "Answerest thou the high priest so?"

Jesus answered him, “If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?” (John 18:12 – 16, 19 – 23).



Jesus' godlike behavior when interrogated by the high priest

“I have spoken openly to the world my soul-uplifting teachings, in the synagogue and in the temple where people are always present. I have said nothing in secret, since only evil needs hiding. Because of the divine nature of my words, they needed no secrecy. Why are you asking me? Ask them who heard me what I have said to them; hear their testimony and you will see that they know everything I said.”

Jesus had taught nothing but good, and he knew that the faithful ones who had heard him could speak of his teachings as solely beneficial. He preferred that the high priest receive their testimony rather than defend his teachings himself. Also, he was disappointed that his disciples had left him at his hour of trial; he wanted to find out if any were left who would stand up for him.

Of course, Jesus did not mean that he never gave private spiritual instruction to his disciples. To his closest advanced disciples he taught the esoteric science of meditation, giving to them “in secret” what the general populace in that dark era was not spiritually prepared to understand—“Therefore speak I to them in parables.”¹⁶ So when Jesus said, “In secret have I said nothing,” he meant that nothing he had said or taught, in public or in private, was evil and needed to be concealed—nor had he ever covertly conspired against the country's laws.

When one of the officers struck him for his reply, Jesus meekly and yet firmly displayed his impeccable spiritual character. Jesus, who had power over all creation through his Christ Consciousness, who had raised the dead and healed the sick, and to whose prayers the Heavenly Father Himself replied through the clouds, was yet humbly nonresistant to the ignominious slap of an ignorant little man. The Christ Consciousness in Jesus, the Electronic Engineer controlling the lamps of all lives, could at the command of Jesus switch on or switch off life force from any person. Even as he had by a mere word caused the fig tree to wither, so could he have removed the life from his enemies in Jerusalem, or from all the people in the world if such a course were necessary and proper. Instead, Jesus, like God, behaved with humility, and meekly submitted his great self to the tyranny of a few wicked people. As God though all-powerful does not raise His hand in wrath to punish anybody who blasphemes Him, so He expects a faithful devotee to behave like Him. It was because of Jesus' preeminent desire

that his life in all ways should please God that he behaved in a godlike manner when he was abusively struck by an officious ordinary individual.

Jesus had a perfect sense of justice; he did not fail to apply it impartially even in judging himself. He calmly points out to the offensive human brute: "If I have spoken evil, hold that against me; but if I have spoken well, wherefore do I deserve to be smitten?" All "kings" of earthly empires, all egotists, remember! If Christ, with power over the entire cosmos, could yet be so humble, how much more should you strive for humility, you who are so far inferior in achievement! It is indeed evident from the life of Jesus that humbleness is one of the requisite signs of God-contact.



Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death; but found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. At the last came two false witnesses, and said, “This fellow said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.’”¹⁷

And the high priest arose, and said unto him, “Answerest thou nothing? What is it which these witness against thee?”

But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, “I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.”

Jesus saith unto him, “Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven” (Matthew 26:59 – 64).

Parallel reference:

And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes came together, and led him into their council, saying, “Art thou the Christ? Tell us.”

And he said unto them, “If I tell you, ye will not believe: and if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go. Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God.”

Then said they all, “Art thou then the Son of God?”

And he said unto them, “Ye say that I am” (Luke 22:66 – 70).



Humbly yet fearlessly, Jesus acknowledges that he is indeed the Christ

Jesus in a remarkably selfless way confirms to his enemies his true Self by letting them declare it. (See also Mark

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in which he replies simply, “I am.”) In this oblique manner he affirms: “Thou hast truly said what I am—the prophesied Christ, the Son of God in whom is incarnate the Christ Consciousness, the reflection of the Father, Cosmic Consciousness.” He could have in truth openly declared to them, “I am the Christ.” Instead, in an ingenious avoidance of any appearance of egotism, which would have set an uncharacteristic bad example, Jesus was shyly diffident in expressing the full measure of the greatness and power of the God-realization within him. Nevertheless, he fearlessly acknowledged the truth in his humble way, even though he knew that the consequence would be death. According to the account in the Gospel According to St. Luke, Jesus added, in effect: “If I tell you that the Christ Consciousness is in me, you won’t believe, for you do not know what I am. And if I ask you what I am, you will not be able to answer me, nor let me go free. So to what end is my saying anything to you?”



Meaning of “the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven”

“After the drama of this bodily existence is over, the Son of man, my body after resurrection, will be beheld in the astral world by advanced devotees as a manifestation of the Christ Consciousness that upholds the vibratory realms of all creation. All those who are able to perceive through their eye of wisdom will see my Christ-saturated body manifest in a vision ‘sitting on the right hand of the power of God’—the projection of myself in an astral body ensconced in meditative ecstasy, with its cerebrospinal centers, the main channel of God’s eternal power in the body, fully awakened and united in omnipotent oneness with the Universal Christ Consciousness reflected from God’s Cosmic Consciousness. The vision will appear to the devotee as though coming out of the dark clouds of closed eyes, which theretofore had hidden the glory of the realms of heaven.”

In these verses, “hand” signifies working power and authority, and “right hand” signifies the principal working power, the reflected Intelligence of God working in creation. “Right hand of the power of God” therefore signifies the Christ Consciousness that emanates from God and is the principal working intelligence that activates and energizes all creation through the creative Cosmic Vibration.

Jesus’ reply did not mean that in the future the people of the world, ignorant and wise, would see him “coming in the clouds of heaven.” God, who is moving universes in space, has no need to impress earth-dwellers into submission by such a demonstration. If God so desired, He could cause collisions of all the island universes roaming in space and dissolve them into Himself amidst a colossal burst of flame. Or He could people all space with angels. But God, whose way is love and who suffered Jesus Christ to be crucified on the cross rather than send “twelve legions of angels” to protect him by creating fear in the hearts of the evildoers, would not countenance a spectacular reappearance of Christ coming out of the clouds, thus terrorizing people into subjugation.

In so answering the chief priest, Jesus was in fact giving a message to seekers of all times: Any true devotee who opens his spiritual eye can not only see a vision of Jesus, but also know the Christ Consciousness in himself as the “right-hand” power of God. Just as an owner of a factory has his “right-hand man,” so the Owner of the universe, the transcendental Cosmic Consciousness, has Its “right-hand man” in the Christ Consciousness omnipresent in creation. This Christ

Intelligence is the immanent channel of God the Father of creation, the sole medium through which the power of Cosmic Consciousness materialized into creation—God, reflected as Christ Consciousness, as the Essence of all that is.

As the transcendent region of Cosmic Consciousness is hidden behind the “clouds” or darkness beheld with closed eyes, and as the clouds in earth’s atmosphere seen with open eyes hide the regions beyond, so also the darkness of closed eyes and the dark depths of the sky as seen with open eyes both act as walls that hide the luminous region of the astral heaven, concealed behind the transparent yet opaque vibratory rampart of the ether. True visions may be seen with open or closed eyes. Every highly developed spiritual devotee who can look through his telescopic spiritual eye finds that the clouds of darkness of closed eyes and the etheric firmament obstructing the perception of open eyes thereby vanish into the nothingness of their illusory essence. When the devotee through the aid of the spiritual eye thus banishes the inner darkness of closed eyes and the outer opacity of the skyey firmament, the heavenly astral cosmos appears, revealing the angels of God and many luminous wonders.¹⁸

Jesus signified that after his earthly incarnation, he would exist not only as Spirit but as a materialized form, perceptible in vision to any devotee in attunement, coming out of the darkness of closed eyes from the heavenly astral region whose elements of light and life force provide the substantive appearance of all visions. Jesus gave his answer to the chief priest to attest that as a son of God he had all power and could abide as Spirit or could materialize his body as the Son of Man or as a Christ body, any time—even after death from crucifixion.



Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, "He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. What think ye?"

They answered and said, "He is guilty of death."

Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands, saying, "Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, who is he that smote thee?"

Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, "Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee." But he denied before them all, saying, "I know not what thou sayest."

And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, "This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth." And again he denied with an oath, "I do not know the man."

And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, "Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee."

Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, "I know not the man." And immediately the cock crew. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, "Before the cock crew, thou shalt deny me thrice." And he went out, and wept bitterly (Matthew 26:65 – 75).¹⁹

Even though in his hour of trial Jesus was abandoned by Peter and other of the disciples, most of them later repented of their weakness and atoned for their sin; strengthened in their recollected realization of the grace and blessings Jesus had bestowed on them, they regained their faith and courage. Tradition holds that Peter, who was eventually killed for preaching Christ's truth, asked his persecutors to crucify him with his head down and his feet up, for his sin in having thrice denied Christ when, as Jesus had predicted, Peter fell temporarily under the influence of satanic delusion.



When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death: And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor.

Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood."

And they said, "What is that to us? See thou to that." And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.

And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, "It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood." And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value; and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me" (Matthew 27:1 – 10).²⁰

Thus did Judas meet the culmination of his infamous role, overwhelmed by the guilt of his betrayal of his Master and cast out of the company of Jesus' personally chosen apostles by his own treacherous behavior. As is recorded in the Biblical book of "The Acts of the Apostles":

"And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty), 'Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this

ministry. Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood. For it is written in the book of Psalms, “Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishopric let another take”” (Acts

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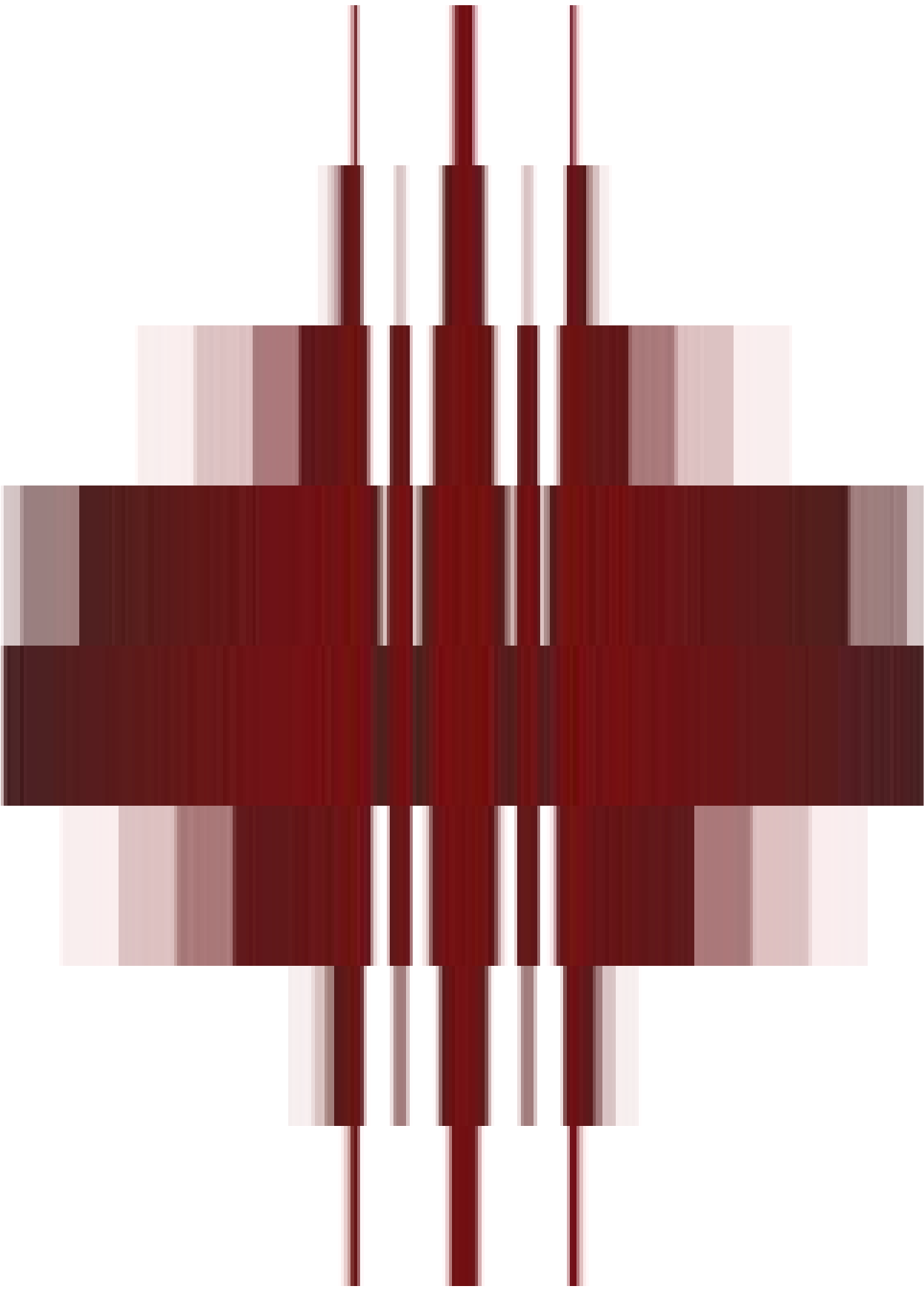
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Discourse 74

The Crucifixion



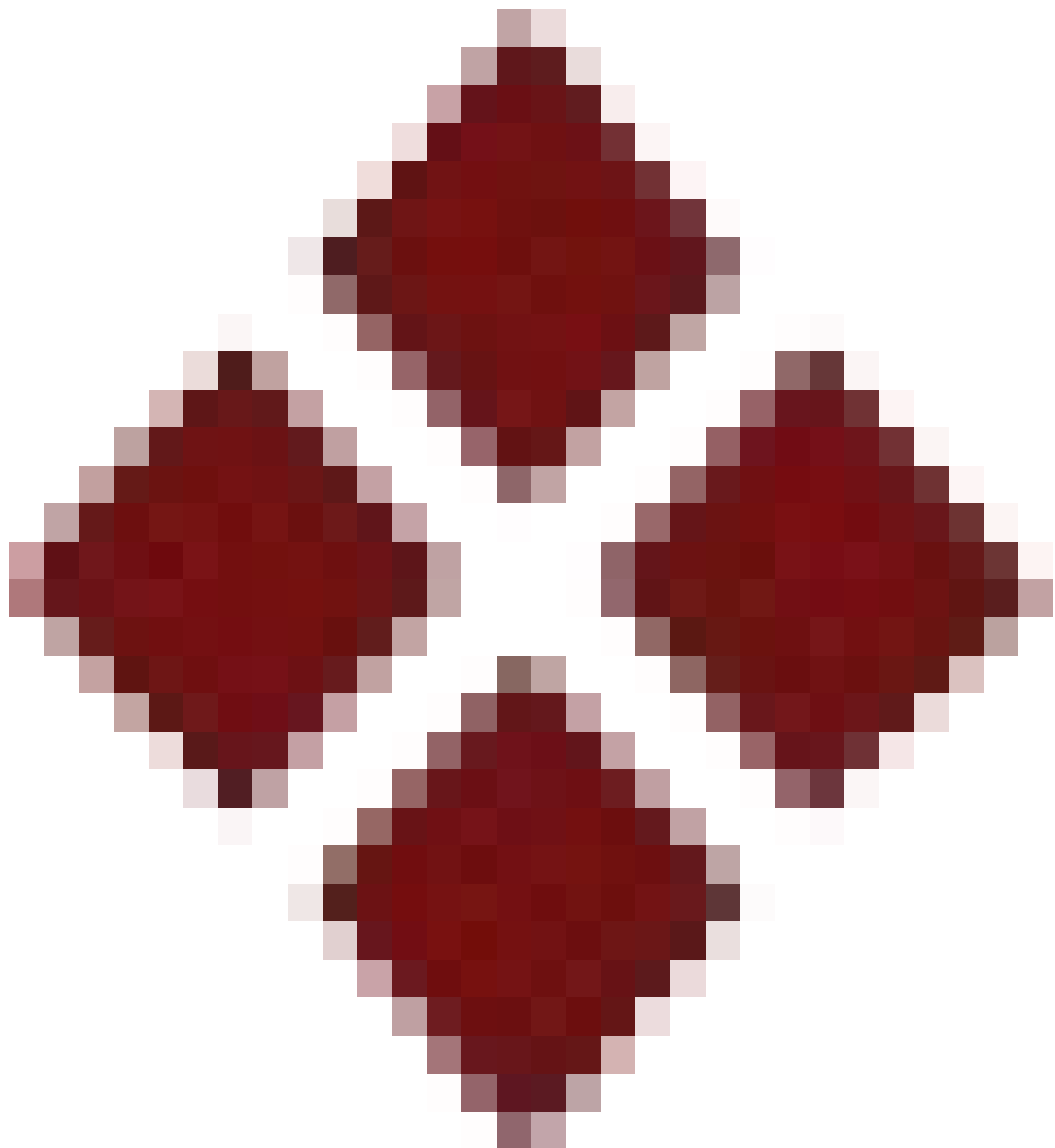
Who Was Responsible for the Crucifixion and Death of Jesus?



**Jesus' Compassionate Concern for Others Expressed
Even on His Way to Be Crucified**



**Greatest of All Miracles Performed by Jesus: The
Love He Expressed on the Cross**



The Wonder of Divine Intercession: A Promise of Paradise for the Repentant Thief



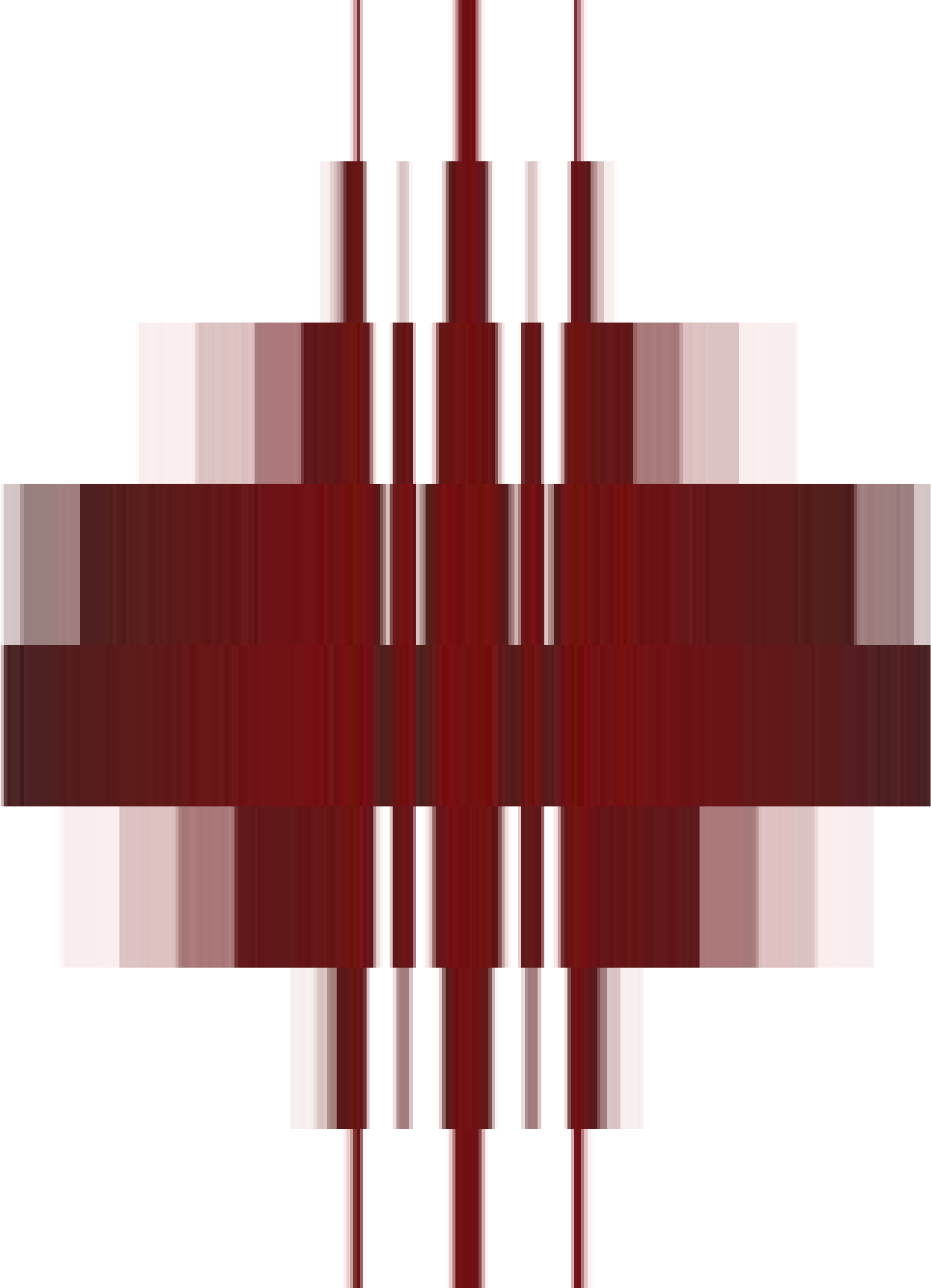
**Jesus' Human Struggle on the Cross: "My God, Why
Hast Thou Forsaken Me?"**



**When Jesus Cried Out to God, the Satanic Dream
Delusion of Bodily Suffering Was Defeated**



**Jesus Consciously Launches His Liberated Soul Into
Absolute Spirit**



“The God in Jesus showed Himself as meek, humble, unconditionally loving, and ever willing to help His children.... ‘Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.’ These words have created in human hearts an everlasting monument to Christ-love.”

■

Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the Passover. Pilate then went out unto them, and said, "What accusation bring ye against this man?"

They answered and said unto him, "If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee."

Then said Pilate unto them, "Take ye him, and judge him according to your law."

The Jews therefore said unto him, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death": That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die.

Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, "Art thou the King of the Jews?"

Jesus answered him, "Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?"

Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: What hast thou done?"

Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence."

Pilate therefore said unto him, "Art thou a king then?"

Jesus answered, "Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."

Pilate saith unto him, "What is truth?"

And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, "I find in him no fault at all. But ye have a custom, that I should release

unto you one at the Passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?"

Then cried they all again, saying, "Not this man, but Barabbas." Now Barabbas was a robber.

Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him. And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe, and said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and they smote him with their hands.

Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, "Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him."

Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, "Behold the man!"

When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, "Crucify him, crucify him."

Pilate saith unto them, "Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him."

The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God."

When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid; and went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, "Whence art thou?" But Jesus gave him no answer.

Then saith Pilate unto him, "Speakest thou not unto me? Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?"

Jesus answered, "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin."

And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, "If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar."

When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. And it was the preparation of the Passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, "Behold your King!"

But they cried out, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him."

Pilate saith unto them, "Shall I crucify your King?"

The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar."

Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away. And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha: where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.

And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was

Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews

. This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin.

Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, "Write not, 'The King of the Jews'; but that he said, 'I am King of the Jews.' "

Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written."

Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout.

They said therefore among themselves, "Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be": that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, "They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots." These things therefore the soldiers did.

Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his

mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, "Woman, behold thy son!" Then saith he to the disciple, "Behold thy mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.

After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, "I thirst." Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth.

When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, "It is finished": and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day, (for that Sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him.

But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, "A bone of him shall not be broken." And again another scripture saith, "They shall look on him whom they pierced."

And after this Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus. And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.

Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.

—*John 18:28 – 19:42*



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Discourse 74

The Crucifixion



Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the Passover.¹ Pilate then went out unto them, and said, “What accusation bring ye against this man?”

They answered and said unto him, “If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee.”

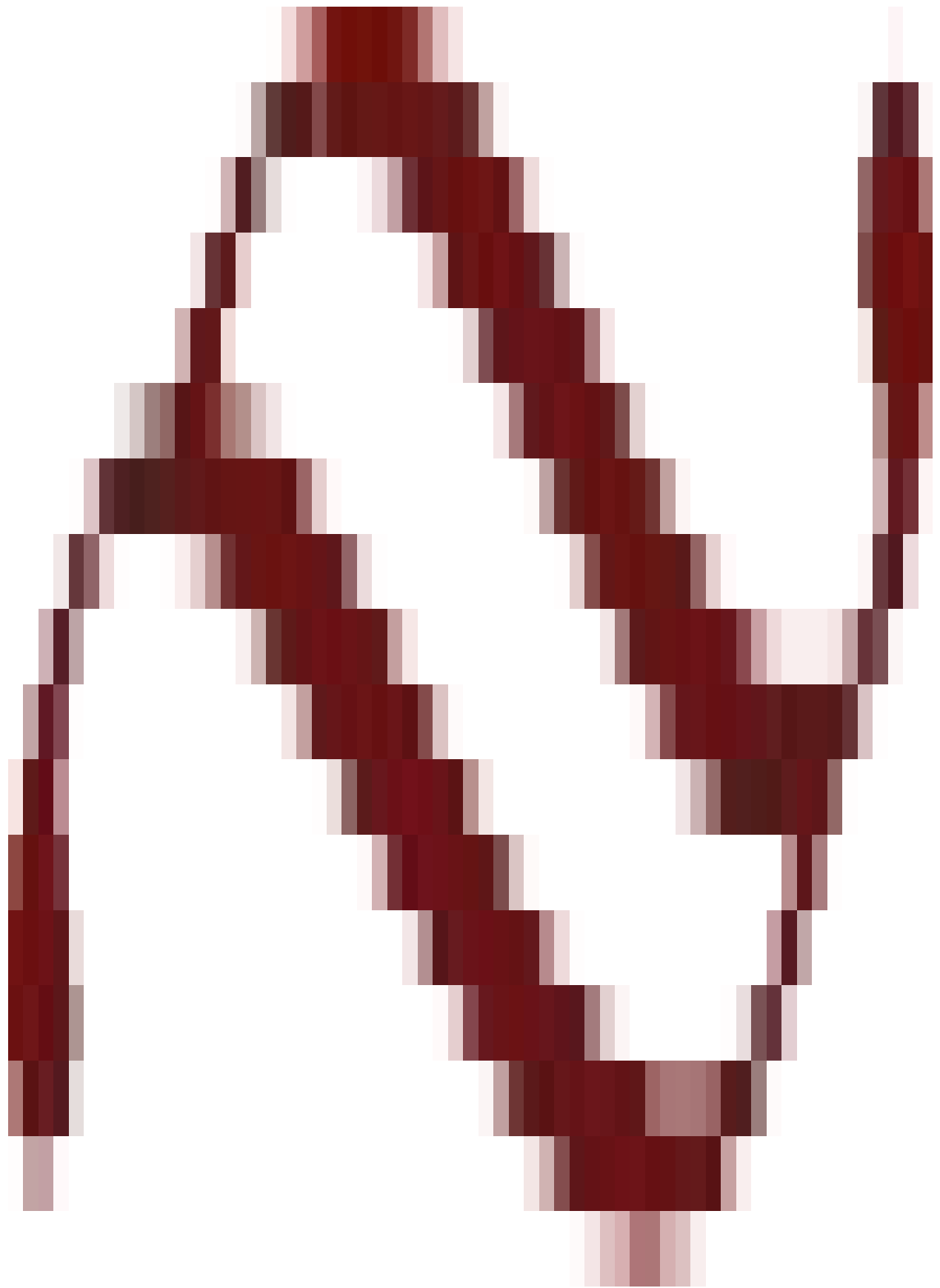
Then said Pilate unto them, “Take ye him, and judge him according to your law.”

The Jews therefore said unto him, “It is not lawful for us to put any man to death”: That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die.²

Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, “Art thou the King of the Jews?”

Jesus answered him, “Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?” (John 18:28 – 34).

Jesus wished to escape answering, over and over, the demeaning queries about his God-given divine credentials. Thus in his reply to Pontius Pilate, he sidesteps the question by shaming the Roman governor for having asked at the prompting of those who were his subjects.



Pilate answered, “Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?”

Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence” (John 18:35 – 36).



“My kingdom is not of this world”

“The sovereign kingdom of my universal Christ Consciousness is Omnipresence and thus cannot be circumscribed by this earthly sphere—much less some small portion of it as might be ruled by a mortal monarch. If my claim were to royal status in this temporal world, then my followers would fight as soldiers to save me from being turned over to those who want to kill me. But my kingdom is ‘not from hence’—not here in a particular time and place in this material creation. Kings of a little tract in finite space-time find their dominion demarcated by delusory boundaries of past, present, and future; and marred by the ravaging hand of change. But ‘now is my kingdom’: My Christ Intelligence is enthroned everlastingly in the unchangeability of the Eternal Now, as Lord of the overarching causal and astral realms as well as the subordinate fiefdom of matter.”

In a few potent words Jesus illumines the difference between the earthly and the divine kingdom. Because he was one with the Supreme Intelligence governing the whole cosmos, he had no inclination to fight for an earthly kingship and its impermanent power. His consciousness omnipresent in myriad universes with their countless suns and moons and planets, he could not even dream of aspiring to a delimited regality. Divinely humble rather than humanly domineering in his possession of supreme power, his life on earth manifested the quintessential humility of the Cosmic Sovereign.

By meekly allowing himself to be crucified, which set the stage for his resurrection, Jesus would prove his immortality and that of all souls. What conceivable fascination with an impermanent mortal kingdom could prevail when one is consciously heir to the empire of Eternity? Therefore Jesus’ reply to Pilate meant that, being the ruler of an imperishable super-realm, he had trained his disciples not to fight for temporal power or for the purpose of saving a perishable earthly life. By precept and example he inspired in them the supreme wisdom of sacrificing mortal life for the sake of gaining eternal life and bliss.

The lesson inherent in his words: “Since my kingdom is omnipresence, I teach my disciples to fight the delusion of earthly attachment to the body and possessions, and thus to secure their own reign in the infinite kingdom. Those who fight for an earthly domain may or may not receive earthly power. In those

who desire worldly dominance there is no interest in the spiritual quest to acquire immortal invincibility; in those who are interested in acquiring omnipotence in Spirit, there is no inclination to fight for material power and possessions only to lose them quickly at death. Therefore, it is better, if necessary, to forfeit the body and its inconstant treasures to gain realization of the immortality of the soul and its perpetual happiness. It is foolish to waste the precious moments of life in conquests for the impermanent body and its pleasures in utter negligence of the acquisition of everlasting life.”

This world is a place of ambiguity and imperfection; man was not meant to find lasting peace and happiness here. Rather, souls are sent on earth to slough off their delusive mortal guise and regain expression of their divine nature by learning to behave according to the teachings of such exemplars as Jesus Christ, Bhagavan Krishna, the Lord Buddha. The histrionics of life are a motion picture shown in the movie house of God; His individualized selves are the actors who have become lost in identification with their portrayals. Jesus accepted his painful role of death on the cross to show that the earth was not his kingdom—and that for all souls the material world is not their kingdom—by proving his immutability despite the body’s crucifixion. He demonstrated for all human beings their own immortality—that they too cannot be destroyed by the light-and-shadow elements of fire or sword or any other means.³



Pilate therefore said unto him, “Art thou a king then?”

Jesus answered, “Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.”

Pilate saith unto him, “What is truth?” (John 18:37 – 38).

Parallel reference:

And Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, “Art thou the King of the Jews?”

And Jesus said unto him, “Thou sayest” (Matthew 27:11).⁴

Once again Jesus confirms his status in his reticent way: “Though it is true that I am a king, you are saying it—not I.



The Christ Intelligence as the ruling principle of cosmic creation

“It was for this purpose that my Christ Intelligence, the Universal Intelligence with which I am one, was born out of Cosmic Consciousness: to be the cause and ruling principle of the cosmos. Christ Intelligence was reflected in creation to bear witness of the only truth, Cosmic Consciousness present beyond creation. Every devotee who is in tune with Truth, Cosmic Consciousness, has reached that attainment through hearing the Cosmic Vibration of Aum, Holy Ghost, which emanates from and is the voice of my Christ Intelligence.”

The kingly Christ Intelligence, appointed by the transcendental God to govern all creation, is the witness, the reflection, of the Truth—the Cosmic Consciousness of the transcendental Father which is the only Substance out of which came all that exists. Jesus points out that every advanced devotee who contacts Truth, the Cosmic Consciousness, has first to contact the Holy Ghost or Cosmic Vibration and the Christ Consciousness present in it.

[In his Autobiography of a Yogi,⁵ Paramahansaji addresses the subject of the traditionally acknowledged silence maintained by Jesus in response to Pilate’s question:]

All great prophets have remained silent when requested to unveil the ultimate secrets. When Pilate asked: “What is truth?” Christ made no reply. The large ostentatious questions of intellectualists like Pilate seldom proceed from a burning spirit of inquiry. Such men speak rather with the empty arrogance that considers a lack of conviction about spiritual values to be a sign of “open-mindedness.”

“To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth my voice.” In these few words Christ spoke volumes. A child of God “bears witness” by his life. He embodies truth; if he expound it also, that is generous redundancy.

Truth is no theory, no speculative system of philosophy, no intellectual insight. Truth is exact correspondence with reality. For man, truth is unshakable knowledge of his real nature, his Self as soul. Jesus, by every act and word of his life, proved that he knew the truth of his being—his source in God. Wholly identified with the omnipresent Christ Consciousness, he could say with simple finality: “Everyone that is of the truth heareth my voice.”

Buddha, too, refused to shed light on the metaphysical ultimates, dryly pointing out that man’s few moments on earth are best employed in perfecting the moral nature. The Chinese mystic Lao-tzu rightly taught: “He who knows, tells it not; he who tells, knows it not.” The final mysteries of God are not “open to discussion.” The decipherment of His secret code is an art that man cannot communicate to man; here the Lord alone is the Teacher.

“Be still, and know that I am God.”⁶ Never flaunting His omnipresence, the Lord is heard only in the immaculate silences. Reverberating throughout the universe as the creative Aum vibration, the Primal Sound instantly translates Itself into intelligible words for the devotee in attunement.



And when he [Pilate] had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, "I find in him no fault at all. But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the Passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?"

Then cried they all again, saying, "Not this man, but Barabbas." Now Barabbas was a robber.

Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him. And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe, and said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and they smote him with their hands.

Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, "Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him."⁷

Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, "Behold the man!"

When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, "Crucify him, crucify him."

Pilate saith unto them, "Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him."

The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and by our law he ought to die,

because he made himself the Son of God.”

When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid; and went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, “Whence art thou?” But Jesus gave him no answer.

Then saith Pilate unto him, “Speakest thou not unto me? Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?”

Jesus answered, “Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin” (John 18:38 – 19:11).⁸

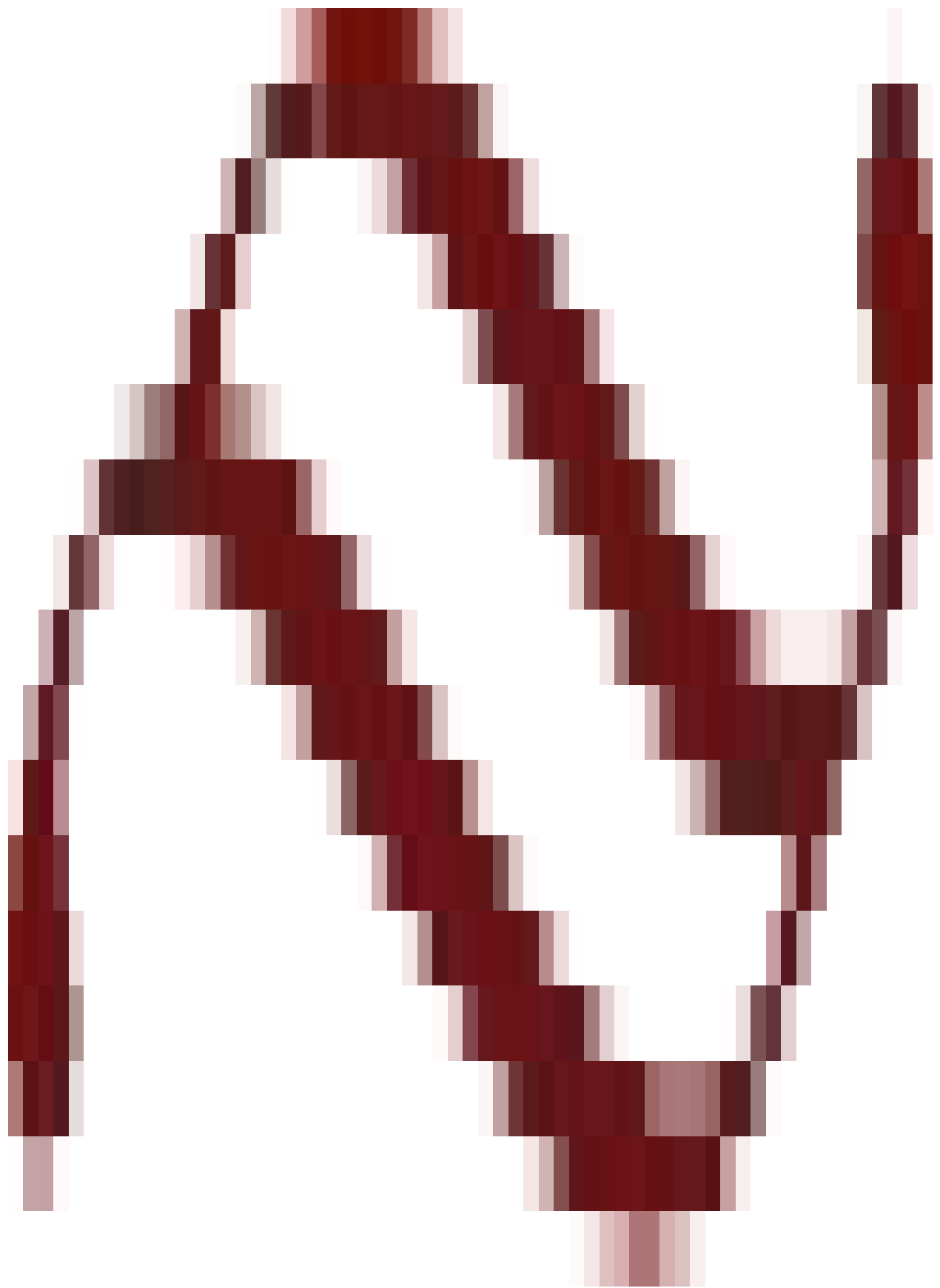


Who was responsible for the crucifixion and death of Jesus?

“O Pilate, you could have no power over me whatsoever if this situation had not been so devised by the Evil Force of cosmic delusion. It is Satan, with his overarching influence— ‘f rom abov e’— who has caused me to be delivered unto you through Judas, and has possessed your authority to make you act according to his will in condemning me wrongly to crucifixion. Therefore Satan, and Judas as his instrument, have the greater responsibility for this heinous crime against the God in me.”

Jesus knew that even though Pilate was the ruler in the land of Judea, he would be powerless to free him because the dominating Satanic Force was invisibly masterminding circumstances leading determinately to the cross. So completely was Pilate’s judgment thereby clouded that even an extraordinary intervention could not sway him: “When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, ‘Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.’ But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus.”⁹

Pilate surrendered to the tide of events, denying his culpability,¹⁰ though every soul under the duress of evil is yet free to shun the promptings of Satan and to receive the power and guidance of God. Regardless, Jesus in his wisdom acknowledged that according to divine law Pilate was secondarily responsible for the crucifixion, having failed to exercise inner strength to resist evil; but that Satan and his instrument Judas bore the primary guilt.



And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, "If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar."

When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. And it was the preparation of the Passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, "Behold your King!"

But they cried out, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him."

Pilate saith unto them, "Shall I crucify your King?"

The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar."

Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away (John 19:12 – 16).

Parallel reference:

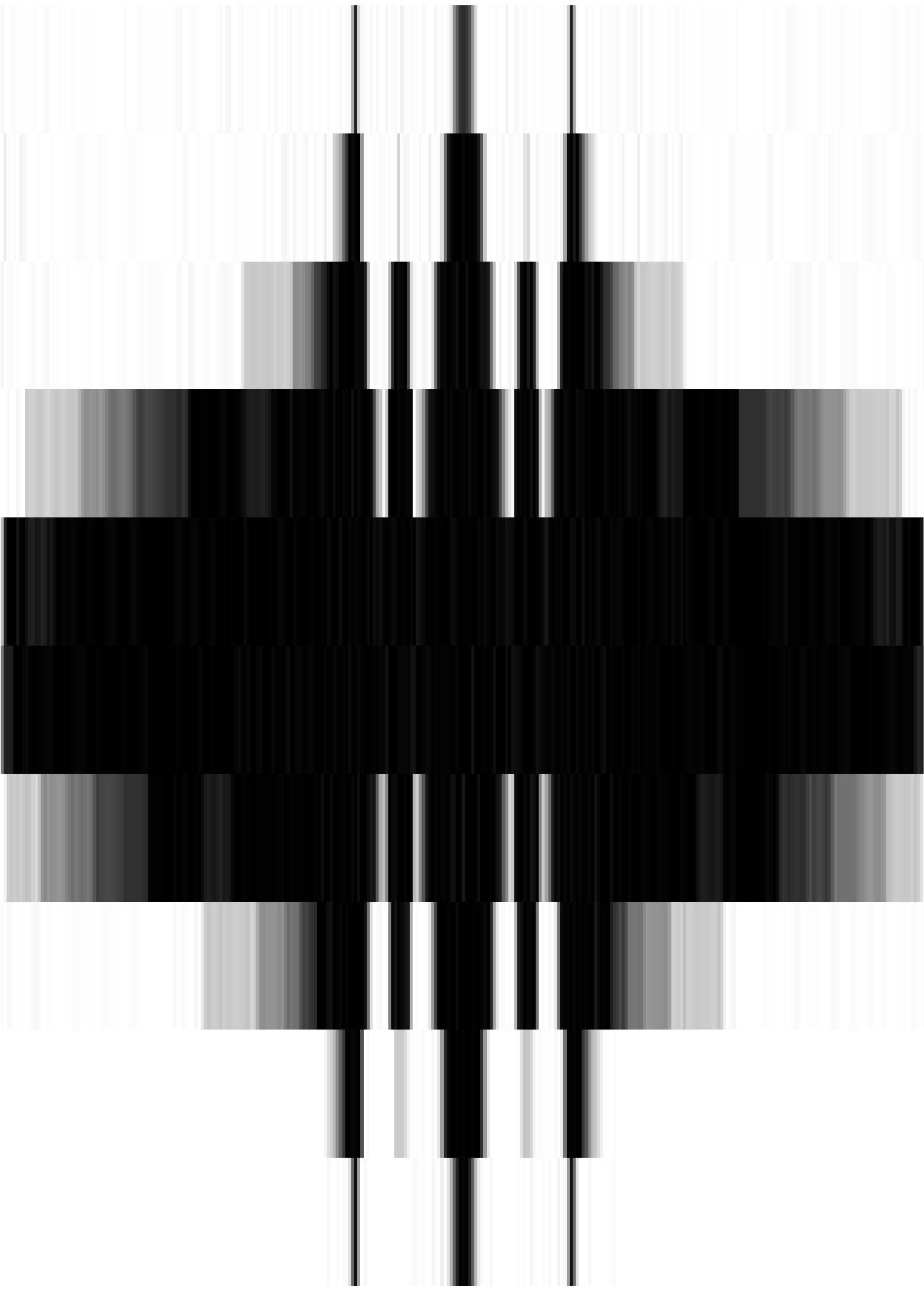
Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them. But they cried, saying, "Crucify him, crucify him."

And he said unto them the third time, “Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let him go.”

And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed. And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required. And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will.

And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus. And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him.

But Jesus turning unto them said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, ‘Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck.’ Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us’; and to the hills, ‘Cover us.’¹¹ For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?” (Luke 23:20 – 31).¹²



Jesus' compassionate concern for others expressed even on his way to be crucified

“Daughters of Jerusalem, do not grieve for me, for I shall abide eternally in the safe arms of God. Rather, weep for yourselves and your children, and repent; for though you stand in apparent safety lamenting my crucifixion, yet I see that a dire fate awaits you in future. The time is coming for Jerusalem when, through the law of individual and mass karma, the accumulation of ignorance and past evil actions will yield a harvest of suffering—so much that unless there is a spiritual awakening of your souls, the resultant misery will make you rue that you and your children had ever been born.

“The suffering of sinful persons will be so intense—their consciousness burning with self-inflicted torment—that they will wish the mountains to fall on them and the hills to cover and bury them. They will crave death rather than to live and endure such misery. If the forces of the cause-and-effect sequences of the karmic law bring suffering even to those lives that are vitally green with virtues, then how great will be the effect on those whose extreme sinfulness has left their spiritual life withered and dry!”

The divine wisdom and inner attitude of Jesus remained unflinching even on his way to crucifixion. He accepted his suffering knowing that it was not because of any wrongdoing, but that he was martyring himself for the sake of truth. In exchange for the temporarily painful sacrifice of his body he would receive unqualified eternal bliss for fulfilling his God-given mission.

Thus Jesus refused to cower in feeling sorry for himself, and instead warned those who were weeping for him that they should pity themselves. His words showed no lack of appreciation for the sympathy of the women who wailed for him; on the contrary, he was moved by their sympathy to advise them to take steps of spiritual reformation and reparation to alter the course of the impending evils of their own future.



And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha: where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst (John 19:17 – 18).

Parallel reference:

And there were also two other, malefactors, led with him to be put to death. And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.

Then said Jesus, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:32 – 34).



Jesus intercedes with the Father to be merciful to his murderers

“Heavenly Father, let not the exacting cosmic law of cause and effect punish these Thy children who in ignorance are crucifying this body; they do not know the dire result attendant on their dreadful actions.”

In here addressing God as “Father,” Jesus appeals to the personal heart of Divinity: “Heavenly Father, You have created human fathers and endowed them with instincts of kindness for their children, instincts born of Your infinitely greater Love; bestow that Benevolence on Your erring children, my brothers who are so wrongfully persecuting me.”

“Forgive them” means: “Heavenly Father, being Almighty, You alone can stay Your cosmic law and forgive my persecutors from suffering the results of their terrible sins committed against me.”

“For they know not what they do” means that all sins, consciously or unconsciously performed, are committed under the influence of innate human ignorance. Any soul who has attained divine wisdom will do no evil.

In this act of expressing divine forgiveness under the most intense provocation of malefic treatment, Jesus lifted himself up so far above the average human nature that he felt in himself fatherly feelings toward all humanity; and thus when some of the grown-up-in-age-but-infantile-in-wisdom human children were crucifying him, he could only feel pity for them in their ignorance. In picturing the magnitude of their fateful, self-created suffering, he ignored his own. Instead of praying for surcease of his own torment, with infinite compassion he interceded with the Heavenly Father on behalf of his murderers.

It is a fair certainty that most people would not commit a sin if they could exactly picture the results of their evil deed. But wrongful behavior is often expedient and usually pleasant because ignorance prevents obvious connection between causes and consequences; direful events evoke the proverbial cry of “Why?” A man of wisdom thus never wants to stray from attunement with God’s love and God’s laws.



The example of Jesus shows that God is all-forgiving and that man need never fear Him

Jesus was a visible and audible example of the love and forgiveness of God. Silently and invisibly our Creator shows infinite forbearance, despite the transgressions of His children—every day of every year in a lifetime, and for all of each one's many lifetimes—sins committed by the misuse of God-given free will. Jesus elsewhere told his followers to forgive their enemies “seventy times seven.”¹³ I used to feel confidently virtuous for forgiving my enemies even up to ten times, so I was amazed when I first read those words of Jesus. I couldn't understand how we could get along in this world if we were to express such a forgiving nature to enemies who deliberately and repeatedly try to injure us. In answer to my prayers, I heard the Divine Voice speak to me: “Behold, how many times I forgive man every day of every year throughout countless incarnations!” I could but humbly acknowledge that it is not too much to ask all to forgive their enemies seventy times seven. (To forgive does not mean to cooperate with or condone evil, but rather to harbor no feelings of hatred or vengefulness nor engage in acts so motivated.)

Nearly all persons unknowingly sin against God every day. It is easy to break, or at least bend, His laws and commandments to satisfy impulses and desires. It is not that we should be forgiven because He made us weak human beings and left it to us to somehow become perfect. Rather, He has placed within us, within this imperfect bodily instrument, the perfection that belongs to Him. That is why He is so exacting, and why He forgives us with repeated opportunities to reclaim our true soul nature. At last He takes us back in spite of all the transgressions of misspent lifetimes. Thus it is said, “Saints are sinners who never gave up.” They keep on trying and trying until they conquer. God's standard of perfection—His own image in which He has made us—is absolute, but nevertheless attainable because man's flawed human consciousness is only a graft on his divine consciousness. Those who concentrate steadily on manifesting their native divinity will one day be so overwhelmed by the perfection of their soul nature that they will wonder how they ever behaved so sinfully as human beings!

Multitudes of God's children would little know how loving and forgiving the Heavenly Father is, but for the example of Jesus' spirit of forgiveness on the cross. That Jesus, who fully represented almighty God, did not retaliate with his

miraculous powers even though he was sorely tried by his persecutors, was an assurance to all mankind that God is ready to forgive His children in spite of their sins and errors. They need never fear their Heavenly Father nor think themselves unworthy to repent and seek His kingdom. The God in Jesus showed Himself as meek, humble, unconditionally loving, and ever willing to help His children no matter how egregious their offense against Him, His laws, and their own well-being.



Greatest of all miracles performed by Jesus: the love he expressed on the cross

Of all the miracles performed by Jesus, none was equal to that mightiest miracle of the spiritual victory of divine love over evil: “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” These words have created in human hearts an everlasting monument to Christ-love.

Jesus could not be tempted to use divine power or any other means except love to conquer the hatred of his wicked brothers. With his spiritual eye opened to Christ and Cosmic Consciousness, Jesus was able consciously to wield power over all creation, and could have easily disintegrated his enemies. Satan’s intent in the crucifixion of Jesus was that it serve as a final temptation, that he might use his miraculous power to save his temporal body. The ever presumptuous Satan expected that the spirit of Jesus would break down under the test on the cross, succumbing to inner weakness of fear or revengefulness that would make him forsake his God-consciousness and thus come under the dominion of delusion. But Jesus defeated Satan with the superior powers of his God-united spirit. He conquered with godliness and thus forever banished satanic delusion from the precincts of his soul.

Though Satan succeeded in getting Jesus crucified, still the Evil Force had no victory. Jesus used the Satan-created ladder of crucifixion to ascend from all satanic delusion into transcendental freedom in God. His act of forgiveness on the cross was the utterance of a divinely human Jesus who had attained final victory over flesh and cosmic delusion and passed the greatest test to which the flesh can be subject. Even while the dearest thing in life, the human body, was suffering the pangs of torment and imminent death, Jesus did not falter in manifesting his divine nature. No matter the tortures of the flesh and the severity of the indignity, mockery, and hatred, still he did not succumb to the promptings of human nature. Out of the limitations of flesh he manifested the power of his unlimited spirit and the image of God within him.

There are martyrs who have willingly, even smilingly, undergone the tortures of death; but there have been few spiritually advanced enough to possess and yet not to use their miracle power to bring evildoers to their senses. Jesus never gave signs of his powers or miracles to dissuade his enemies from crucifying him. He gave up his body but never yielded his spirit.

The forgiving spirit of the Heavenly Father so perfectly demonstrated by Jesus manifests in all who have attained the Christ Consciousness that he had. Here and there on rare occasions we find expressions of that spirit in great devotees of God.



And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was

Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews

. This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin.

Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, “Write not, ‘The King of the Jews’; but that he said, ‘I am King of the Jews.’”

Pilate answered, “What I have written I have written.”

Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout.

They said therefore among themselves, “Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be”: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, “They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots.”¹⁴ These things therefore the soldiers did (John 19:19 – 24).

Parallel reference:

And they parted his raiment, and cast lots. And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided him, saying, “He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God.” And the soldiers also mocked him,

coming to him, and offering him vinegar, and saying, “If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself.” And a superscription also was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew,

This Is the King of the Jews

.

And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, “If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.” But the other answering rebuked him, saying, “Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.” And he said unto Jesus, “Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.”

And Jesus said unto him, “Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:34 – 43).¹⁵



The wonder of divine intercession: a promise of paradise for the repentant thief

“By the truth that I feel within me, I promise unto you that today after I leave my body thou shalt be in the visible presence of my astral body in the astral world of celestial bliss.”

We see the wonder of divine intercession in how a thief, by his prayer to the almighty Lord manifest in Jesus, was granted liberation in Spirit. Amazing also is that Jesus, though consumed in his own suffering on the cross, did not fail to respond to the appeal of the conscientious thief crucified beside him. One would fain be crucified by the side of Jesus, that he could appeal to Christ for final emancipation and be instantaneously assured, “Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.” The evil actions of an individual, when he is repentant in an opportune time, can be forgiven by great masters who are the Lord’s channels. Thus it is that the thief had almost paid his karmic debt for his sins by being crucified. And at this juncture, when he was extremely repentant and prayed for redemption in the presence of Christ, he forthwith found it at the hands of Jesus. No matter how great one’s sins, they will be forgiven if the devotee loves God deeply enough: “enough” is the decisive factor.



Reality of the Bliss-Abode where Jesus took the thief after death

Jesus' words speak not only to the thief, but to all humanity about the definite presence of God and His omnipresent abode of bliss ("paradise"), where virtuous souls in the after-death state gather before His Heavenly Majesty and all the liberated saints. In heaven, unlike earth where every being is recognized by his form, souls do not necessarily see God in the form of a human personage. But if they have sufficient good karma, they may behold Him as a Light, or a Voice, or as a blissful Presence speaking through the intuition of all assembled astrally embodied souls. Advanced souls visiting the astral land may see, according to their devotion and degree of Self-realization, any materialized form of the infinitely aspected Father their hearts desire. Just as invisible hydrogen and oxygen gas can be frozen into ice, so also the invisible Spirit can be frozen into a form by the condensing power of deep devotion.

Jesus meant that on that very day, after his soul and that of the thief had transcended their physical bodies by death and gone on to the astral realm, by his divine power he would summon the astral body of the thief into the blissful presence, the realized perception, of the Father.

Jesus knew that the thief, because of his evil actions, was headed for a lower region of the astral land; but when he found him wholly repentant, he promised him a journey to the higher astral realm, or paradise.

The better regions of the astral world, where everything is controlled by the will power of the mind independent of physical forces, are free from the limitations and miseries of the material earth; nevertheless, its inhabitants are subject to some karmic constraints. The supreme, untrammelled paradise is the state of Cosmic Consciousness and Cosmic Bliss. Advanced souls may experience Cosmic Consciousness in deepest samadhi; but it is only on becoming established in this state that the soul attains absolute oneness with Spirit and is never again compelled to reincarnate on earth.

After death of the physical body, the soul that is not fully released in Spirit retains its visible luminous astral body of nineteen supramental and lifetronic elements and its invisible causal body of thirty-five thoughtronic elements. In the three days between his crucifixion and resurrection, Jesus freed his soul from all

ties to his incarnate physical, astral, and causal bodies.¹⁶ When the soul is liberated from the bondage of all three bodies, it merges with Spirit and remains invisibly present in Infinitude, retaining a formal individuality but in essence becoming one with Spirit.

But every soul immediately after physical death has to go first into the astral paradise of certain limitations. From this paradise, souls may be promoted to the supreme paradise of Cosmic Consciousness, or the super-paradise of the causal world, or demoted to earthly reincarnation. It was in the astral paradise that Jesus promised to meet the thief, where both of them would be “today,” immediately after physical death. After Jesus reached the supreme state by ascending out of his astral and causal bodies into Cosmic Consciousness, he could then also take the soul of the redeemed thief into the abode of the completely liberated.

A person with the divine integrity of Jesus Christ would not have promised the thief paradise unless that Bliss-Abode actually existed. Hence each rationally intelligent human being, instead of remaining stupefied with doubt and spiritual indifference, should try with utmost fervor in meditation to break through the static of material restlessness and tune in with the higher realities of the astral paradise, and with the invisible aid of God’s angels and liberated saints who dwell there to assist God in the governance of creation and the evolution of souls toward liberation. All devotees who are crucified by evil tendencies and miseries should ask and pray to their Christ Consciousness within, which is crucified by ignorance, for the redemption of the soul from the physical world and its limitations into the greater freedom of consciousness of astral existence, and the eternal paradise of complete liberation in Spirit.



Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, "Woman, behold thy son!" Then saith he to the disciple, "Behold thy mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home (John 19:25 – 27).

Jesus, feeling a deep spiritual state as he was about to leave his body, spoke to his mother concerning the beloved disciple John, who was with her at the foot of the cross: "Woman, behold thy son." That is, "Take my disciple as your spiritual son." He could not think of Mary as "mother" because in his spiritual consciousness he knew that God alone is Father, Mother, Beloved. Thus Jesus called his mother "woman"—a God-created woman.

In asking her to adopt his beloved spiritual disciple, Jesus was trying to console this exceptional woman who had born his body. Then saying, "Behold thy mother (behold her as your mother)," he sought to please the grief-stricken disciple with the solace of regarding as his own mother the one who had born the incarnate Christ.



After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, “I thirst.” Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth (John 19:28 – 29).¹⁷

Parallel reference:

Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?” that is to say, “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?”

Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, “This man calleth for Elijah.” And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. The rest said, “Let be, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him” (Matthew 27:45 – 49).¹⁸



Jesus' human struggle on the cross: "My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"

Jesus foresaw much of what was to happen to him, not only through the prophecy of the scriptures but through his own intuition and the analysis of the law of karma governing his life. He had willingly accepted the role God had asked of him. Still, on the cross he unmistakably showed the signs of human struggle against the last tortures and tests of flesh before he entered Spirit. His humanness does not detract from the greatness of Jesus; rather, it exalts him in human eyes. It also infuses hope in frail hearts that by the exercise of sheer will force over the body and its temptations man can conquer the flesh and, as did Jesus, rise from the human to the divine plane.

If it is reasoned that Jesus was purely divine, or God descended on earth, then it must be concluded that he did not truly feel the agony of sorrow and struggle on the cross. God, being pure Spirit, could not be affected by the tortures of flesh, mere dream changes in a dream body in His dream-created world. It would be hypocrisy or ridiculous dramatization for Jesus to say, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" If Jesus were God, how could he feel he was separated from Himself? Or if Jesus were a divine being fashioned in perfection by the Creator and sent to earth only to carry out a preordained exemplary mandate, still in his intensity of suffering he would have been merely playacting. Why would God, who is a God of truth, send Jesus to do or to say something that was just a sham?

A veritably human and divine Jesus who struggles with the tortures and temptations of flesh, and by dint of soul force attains victory over them and inherits eternal life, is a great source of inspiration and assurance for weak, sorely tempted human beings. A divine, temptationless Christ who comes on earth to play out mechanically a prearranged part of goodness assigned to him by the Heavenly Father could not strike that spark of hope in human hearts. A mortally transcendent god can conquer temptation because he is not tempted at all; but how could that be expected of a weakling of flesh who is constantly subject to inner and outer temptation, from the very beginning of his life, without any definite warning from God except the feeble voice of indistinct conscience? It would be easy for an immortal god, wearing a body but being unaffected by it, to play out a part of sorrow, forgiveness, and crucifixion; but it is formidably difficult for an innocent human being to conquer hatred of others

with love, and to accept and endure an unjustified bodily crucifixion at their hands.

Jesus, by his divine nature, vanquished the promptings of flesh conjured by satanic temptation.¹⁹ In his human nature, he felt the excruciating pain in the flesh due to the influence of the satanic intelligence, which never waned in its efforts to make Jesus forget God. Thus when the suffering on the cross was intense, Jesus for a while felt God slipping from his consciousness, and in exceedingly great sorrow he cried out, “Father, Father, why hast Thou forsaken me?”

God played hide-and-seek with Jesus, concealed for a moment behind the pangs of Jesus’ suffering. And Jesus, childlike, desiring nothing but his Father, was prompt in crying out for his Father’s reassuring presence. Just as a little child led by the hand by his father in a dark forest cries out when he momentarily loses his grasp and the sight of him, so also did Jesus when he felt the guiding hand of his Heavenly Father, which had led him through the dense forests of incarnations, slip away in the darkness of suffering. When Jesus’ agony became more intense than his awareness of God’s presence within himself, he voiced his anguish: “My God, why am I feeling this pain more than Thy presence? Come to me immediately.”

Jesus addresses God as his very own: “My God, my God”—“my own Father-God.” God is a truer friend to man than man is to Him. Though continuously ignored by man, God constantly thinks of him and helps him with power to live, think, feel, and enjoy. He is the Relative of all relatives, without whom we cannot love any kin nor can they love us. For the most part, man’s indifference forces God to remain incognito. But to His devotees, as with Jesus, God is known, personal. He comes out of His hiding place in human desires and the folly of delusion and lives on the altar of the devotee’s conscious devotion. Thus when in the mordant gloom of physical pain Jesus felt the personal contact of God slip away, he prayed, “My God, You whom I have known consciously to belong to me always, why have You forsaken me?”



When Jesus cried out to God, the satanic dream delusion of bodily suffering was defeated

That mortal consciousness of separation from God was Satan's test of delusion, opportunely seized upon when God had slipped away to see if Jesus would miss Him. But as soon as Jesus cried out for God, Satan's delusion was defeated. God quickly revealed Himself and restored Jesus' divine consciousness with the realization that the suffering on the cross was a delusive mental dream with no intrinsic reality, and that he was Spirit, everlastingly untouched by suffering.

In a dream the solid physical body, the luminous astral body, and the ideational causal body can be perceived as real; when the dreamer completely awakens, those "realities" are understood to be a dream, the result of frozen mind, or materialized imagination. Likewise, in the cosmic dream Jesus was bound by his physical, astral, and causal bodies with their functional instrumentalities of perception and consciousness. It was only when Jesus was completely awake in God, three days after the crucifixion, that the cosmic dream was totally banished in the realization that Spirit alone exists. But that did not ease the difficulty for Jesus while he was on the dream cross and under the influence of the cosmic dream. Pain in a dream causes very real suffering to the dreamer. Only when Jesus lifted his consciousness into Christ Consciousness and Cosmic Consciousness was his suffering on the cross dissolved in the bliss of Spirit, in a rejoicing that his life and travails on earth served then and everlastingly to help awaken other souls in Spirit.

God creates the universe in thought and then materializes it into a dream; but He is able at will to revert the material dream into a universe of pure thought. Devotees who are in tune with God can realize the thought-dream essentiality of the universe—a dream universe that can be seen as a universe of thought in ecstasy of deep God-communion in meditation.

Just as it is impossible to convince a man having a nightmare that he is not suffering, until he is awake, so also it is very difficult to convince any human being under the influence of this cosmic dream that he is dreaming delusion. But by continuous good company, ever increasingly deep meditation, forsaking evil habits, associating with God-realized saints by emulating their lives and teachings, a spiritual aspirant can awaken in Spirit and prove to himself that this

cosmos is a dream. Anyone who would live the teachings of Christ, and keep his godliness intact when crucified by temptation and the unkindness of misunderstanding people, would realize the dream delusion of the body and its limitations and would find emancipation in God.

Jesus proved that he was ready to relinquish the delusive dream, in that he did not want his consciousness of God to be even for an instant obliterated by his giving reality to the body and its painful torture on the cross. While he was capable of accepting the most intense physical suffering, he could not stand the pain of even a moment's separation from God. Jesus showed to all humanity that no matter how great the temptations and tortures of the flesh, if one would continuously cling to God he would surely find ultimate response from Him and complete emancipation. Jesus demonstrated the human qualities of the Heavenly Father, in that He readily responds to human heart-appeals, even as the earthly father is moved by the entreaties of his child.

God does not expect man to be completely free from delusion so long as he wears a human body; but that is not an excuse to surrender to body consciousness. Everyone has in his soul the same power that God has to destroy this delusion; therefore, one must not yield to its incursions, but courageously resist it. It is best to stay away from evil influences by use of the soul power of discrimination, and to commune regularly with the inner Self so that one will know and experience the stronger power of the soul's bliss. God-consciousness is hard to attain, but it is unceasing throughout eternity once it is made one's own.

Rather than giving in to the body in any way, one should endure with evenmindedness every experience that comes. It is not that suffering should be invited, but that the mind should be kept strong when pain and misfortune do come. One who conquers mentally finds there is no more suffering. While entertaining the delusive dream of the body, Jesus felt forsaken by God; but when with all his soul force he summoned the Divine Presence, he regained the realization that the body was made of energy and the nails were made of energy—there was no more suffering. He was free. The more one cedes reality to suffering, the more one will suffer; there will be no end to it until that dream is transcended. Jesus underwent the terrible ordeal on the cross to show us all that experiences of earthly life have no more power to affect us than our nightly dreams when we realize God.²⁰



When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, “It is finished”: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost (John 19:30).

Parallel references:

Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.

And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent....

Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, “Truly this was the Son of God.”

And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him: Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee’s children (Matthew 27:50 – 51, 54 – 56).

And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst.

And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, “Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit”: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.

Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, “Certainly this was a righteous man.” And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned. And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things (Luke 23:44 – 49).²¹

When Jesus said, “It is finished,” he was declaring, “My work on earth as manifested through this body called Jesus is finished.”



Jesus consciously launches his liberated soul into Absolute Spirit

Jesus surveyed in an instantaneous intuitive perception the general effect of his life's work, performed by his own free will; and he examined it to see how much he had succeeded in carrying out the wishes of his Heavenly Father. Jesus then was satisfied that his life and works had been approved and blessed by God, and that his spirit had overcome satanic delusion and the tests of the flesh and of the Heavenly Father. He then became ready to withdraw his soul from the body and plunge it into Spirit.

“O transcendental God the Father, into Thine omnipotent presence (‘Thy hands’), in Cosmic Consciousness existing beyond all creation, I unite my Christ consciousness (‘commend my spirit’) felt in this body and throughout the cosmos—lifting it out of the delusive confinement of this bodily cage.” Thus Jesus describes his final experience, in which he withdraws not only his bodily consciousness and life force, but also his acquired Christ Consciousness, his omnipresence in creation, to merge in the Father’s Cosmic Consciousness beyond.

After death, ordinary persons experience a sort of deep sleep, checkered by certain astral experiences and visions according to the degree of their good karma. (Vicious people, owing to their violent and passionate earthly existence, have nightmarish experiences.) But divine devotees who by successful meditation and pure devotion to the Lord have freed their souls from the attachment of worldly desires find that death opens a portal to ascension into the blissful omnipresence of the infinite transcendental Father.

When Jesus was to launch his soul into Spirit, all nature recognized the event. The rending of the temple veil, symbolically interpreted, signifies that the spiritually victorious life of Jesus tore aside the veil of mystery that hides the ultimate truth. In a poetic sense it can be said that when Jesus, who was omnisciently present in the cosmos as well as in the temple, passed away and was lost to the physical gaze of the world, even the temple veil could not hide its sorrow: its atoms burst forth and let loose their hidden grief—as did the trembling earth and the darkened sun.

During earthly existence an ordinary individual is only conscious of his body,

which, moving from one place to another, sees during the state of wakefulness different portions of materially circumscribed space. However, even the ordinary individual during the state of sleep perceives the higher power of mind working in dreams, unfettered by constraints of the normal laws of physics; and also, during the state of deep dreamless sleep, a limited sphere of the quiescent joy of the soul. In contrast, the Christlike person, even during earthly existence, sees not only limited portions of space through his physical eyes, but also beholds through his spiritual eye of intuition the entire manifested cosmos, illumined by the astral light and Christ Consciousness, with all the planets and stars like glowworms glimmering in the immeasurable vastness of space-time.

Nevertheless, even a saint with Christ Consciousness has certain limitations, in that his awareness embraces all creation—the inconceivably varied maya-show of forms and forces interacting in the cosmic matrix of sattvic, rajasic, and tamasic qualities—but not the vibrationless transcendent realm where the Creator Himself abides. In the Bhagavad Gita, the Lord declares: “It is difficult indeed to go beyond the influence of My divine cosmic hypnosis, imbued with the triple qualities. Only those who take shelter in Me become free from this power of illusion.”²² Jesus Christ demonstrated the utmost fulfillment of this divine promise, lifting his God-surrendered soul into full transcendence with the words: “Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit.”

God the Father is not limited to the transcendental infinitude; He is simultaneously conscious of the eternal void beyond the manifested cosmos as well as every atom and vibratory force within it. Great saints and masters in transcendent states of samadhi can commune with the Father present in all creation, but when they reach the final state their “communion” is oneness with the Absolute within and beyond creation.

Cosmic Consciousness or God the Father exists in its pure state beyond all creation, and in secret as the Christ Consciousness in all creation. Spirit, in order to manifest creation, divides Itself into the Father-Creator who transcends creation, the Son or reflected Christ Consciousness within creation, and Cosmic Vibration or Holy Ghost, the substance of creation. Since God has thus created Himself into these three aspects, and into the cosmos and all its creatures, human beings seeking to reunite with Him first have to rise by meditation from the consciousness of plurality to the consciousness of trinity: Holy Ghost, Christ Consciousness, and God the Father. After that, the devotee must attain the final realization of the trinity or triune manifestations of God as the One Absolute

Spirit—the ever-existing, ever-conscious, omnipresent, ever-new Bliss.

While incarnate in his human body, Jesus with his Christ Consciousness could feel his omnipresence in the entire cosmos and knew that Christ Consciousness to be a reflection of God's Cosmic Consciousness; but embodiment precluded complete unity with God the Father as the transcendental Absolute. After working out through certain ecstatic purification rites the remaining seeds of his physical, astral, and causal incarnate karma in the three days after crucifixion, Jesus was able to merge his Christ Consciousness with the Cosmic Consciousness, or God the Father, the Absolute beyond all delusory relativities of vibratory manifestation.



The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day, (for that Sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him.

But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, “A bone of him shall not be broken.” And again another scripture saith, “They shall look on him whom they pierced.”²³

And after this Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus. And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.

Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand (John 19:31 – 42).

Parallel reference:

And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus. And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead. And when he knew it of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph.

And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre. And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses beheld where he was laid (Mark 15:42 – 47).²⁴



The Crucifixion

And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him....

Then said Jesus, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

—Luke 23:33–34

Of all the miracles performed by Jesus, none was equal to that mightiest miracle of the spiritual victory of divine love over evil: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." These words have created in human hearts an everlasting monument to Christ-love....

His act of forgiveness on the cross was the utterance of a divinely human Jesus who had attained final victory over flesh and cosmic delusion and passed the greatest test to which the flesh can be subject. Even while the dearest thing in life, the human body, was suffering the pangs of torment and imminent death, Jesus did not falter in manifesting his divine nature...He gave up his body but never yielded his spirit.

—Paramahansa Yogananda

Drawing by Heinrich Hofmann

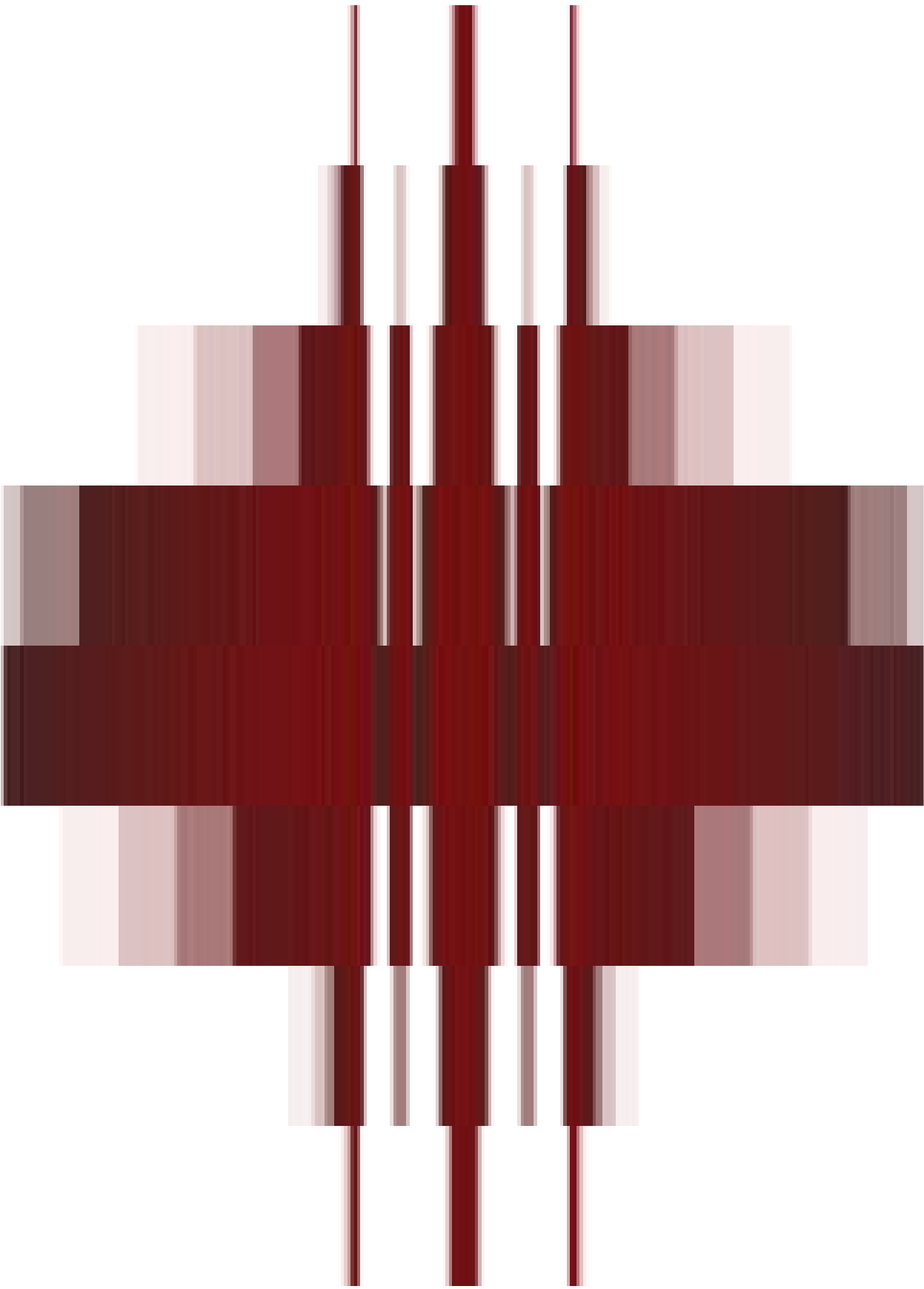




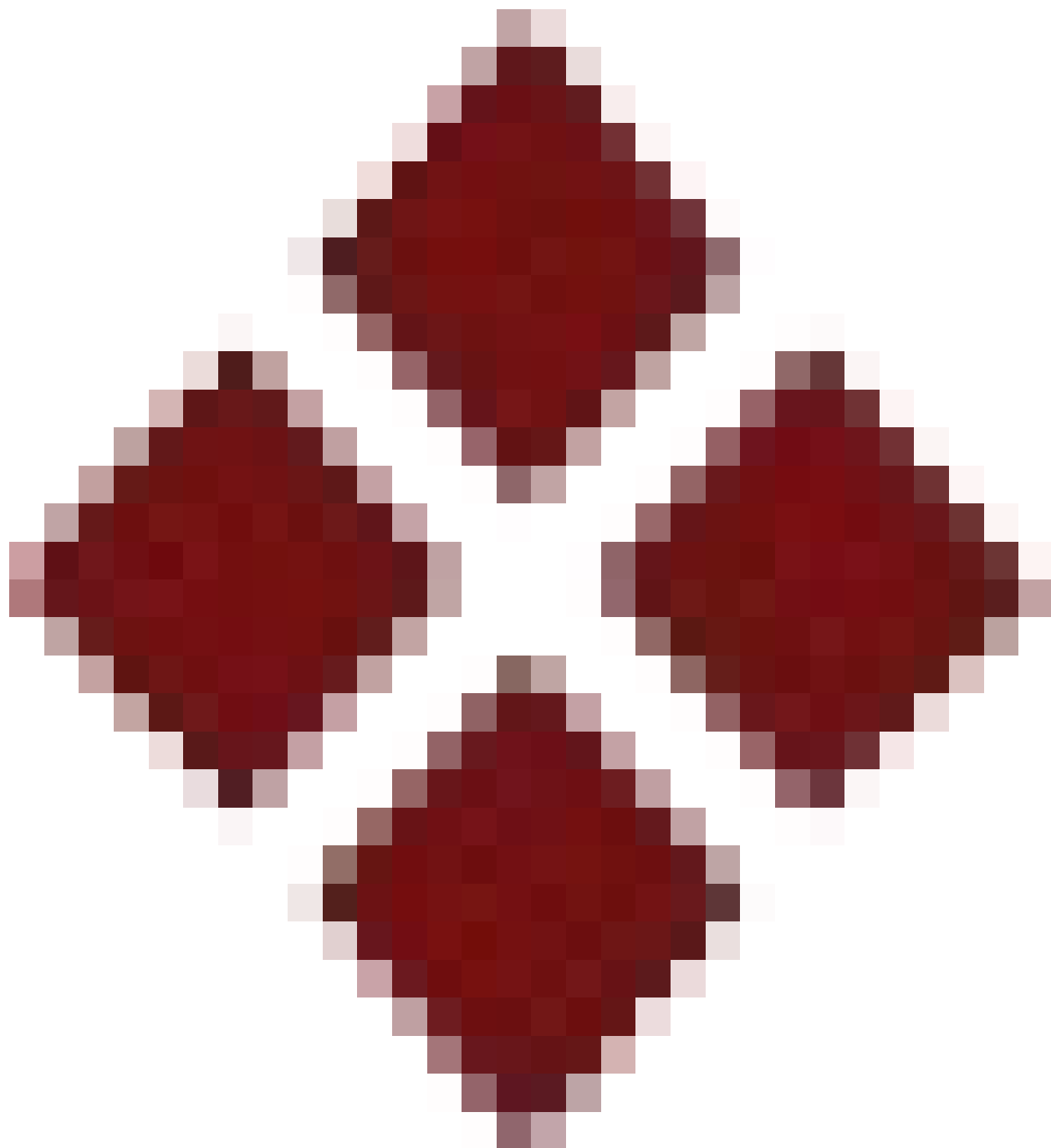
Discourse 75

“Lo, I Am With You Always”

**The Resurrection of Jesus, and His Ever-Living
Presence**



Three Stages of Jesus' Ascension Into Spirit After Death



Jesus' Transmission of Spiritual Consciousness to His Disciples While on Earth and Afterward



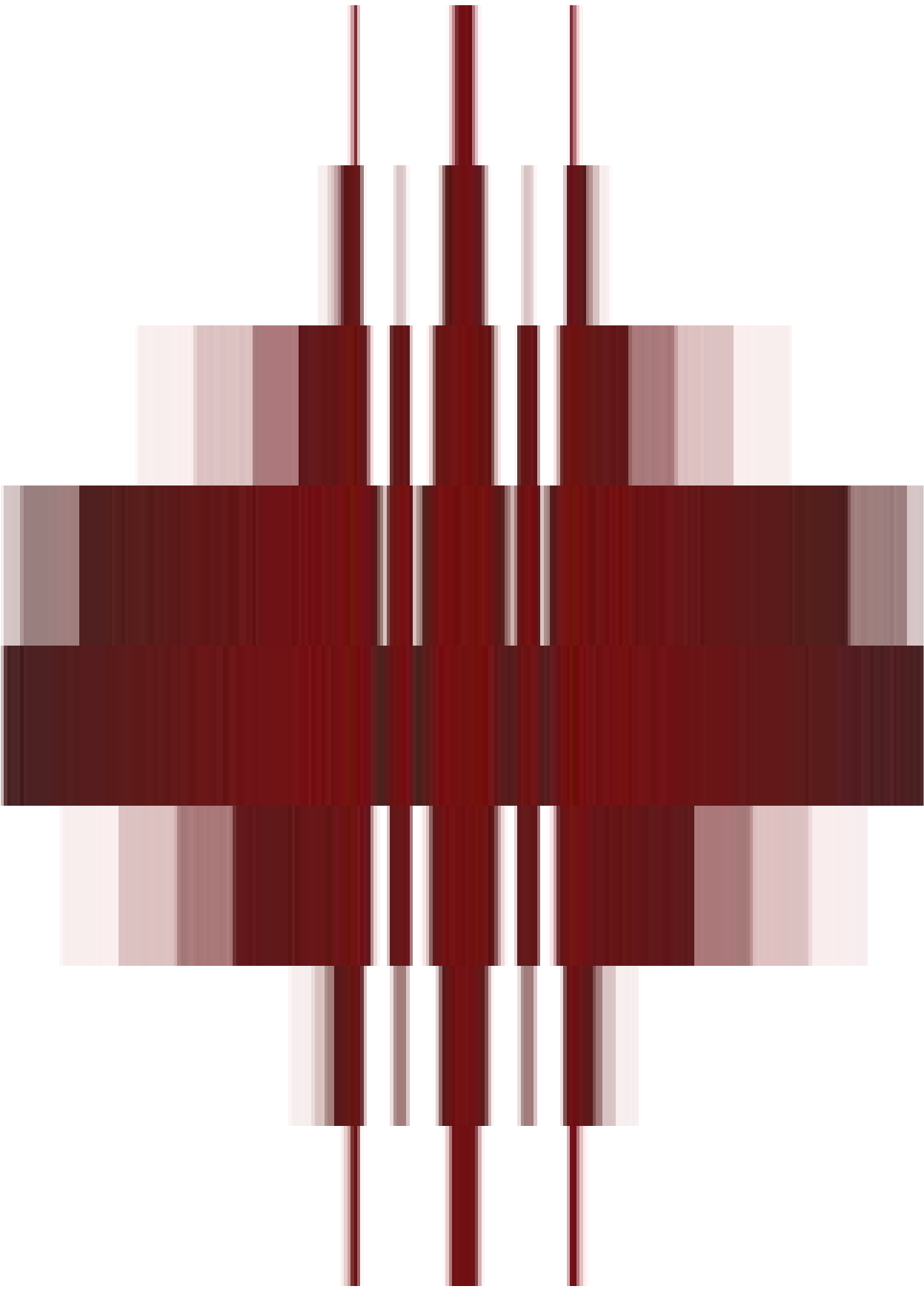
**Science of Yoga Provides the Means of Resurrection
and Ascension to Every Soul**



Jesus' Final Instructions to and Blessings on His Disciples, and His Dematerialization Into Spirit



**The Universality of the Message That Christ Wanted
His Disciples to Preach Worldwide**



“Liberated souls such as Jesus, whose mission continues beyond their incarnation, are able to materialize their bodies at will...today or unto thousands of years after their ascension...Any true devotee can see him as Jesus Christ or know him as one with the Infinite Christ.”

■

The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre. Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, “They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.”

Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in.

Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, and the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.

Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed. For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.

But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, and seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, “Woman, why weepest thou?” She saith unto them, “Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.”

And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

Jesus saith unto her, “Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?”

She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, “Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.”

Jesus saith unto her, “Mary.”

She turned herself, and saith unto him, “Rabboni”; which is to say, Master.

Jesus saith unto her, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God."

Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her.

—John 20:1 – 18

[Variant telling recorded in the Gospel According to St. Luke:]

Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.

And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments: And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, 'The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.'" And they remembered his words, and returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest.

It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles. And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.

Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld

the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.

And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him.

And he said unto them, "What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?"

And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, "Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?"

And he said unto them, "What things?"

And they said unto him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; and when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not."

Then he said unto them, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further. But they constrained him, saying, "Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." And he went in to tarry with them.

And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it,

and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.

And they said one to another, “Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?”

And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, “The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.” And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.

And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, “Peace be unto you.” But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.

And he said unto them, “Why are ye troubled? And why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.” And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet.

And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, “Have ye here any meat?” And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them.

And he said unto them, “These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.” Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, and said unto them, “Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.”

[Additional details recorded in the Gospel According to St. John:]

Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, "Peace be unto you." And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.

Then said Jesus to them again, "Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you."

And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."

But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, "We have seen the Lord."

But he said unto them, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe."

And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace be unto you."

Then saith he to Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing."

And Thomas answered and said unto him, "My Lord and my God."

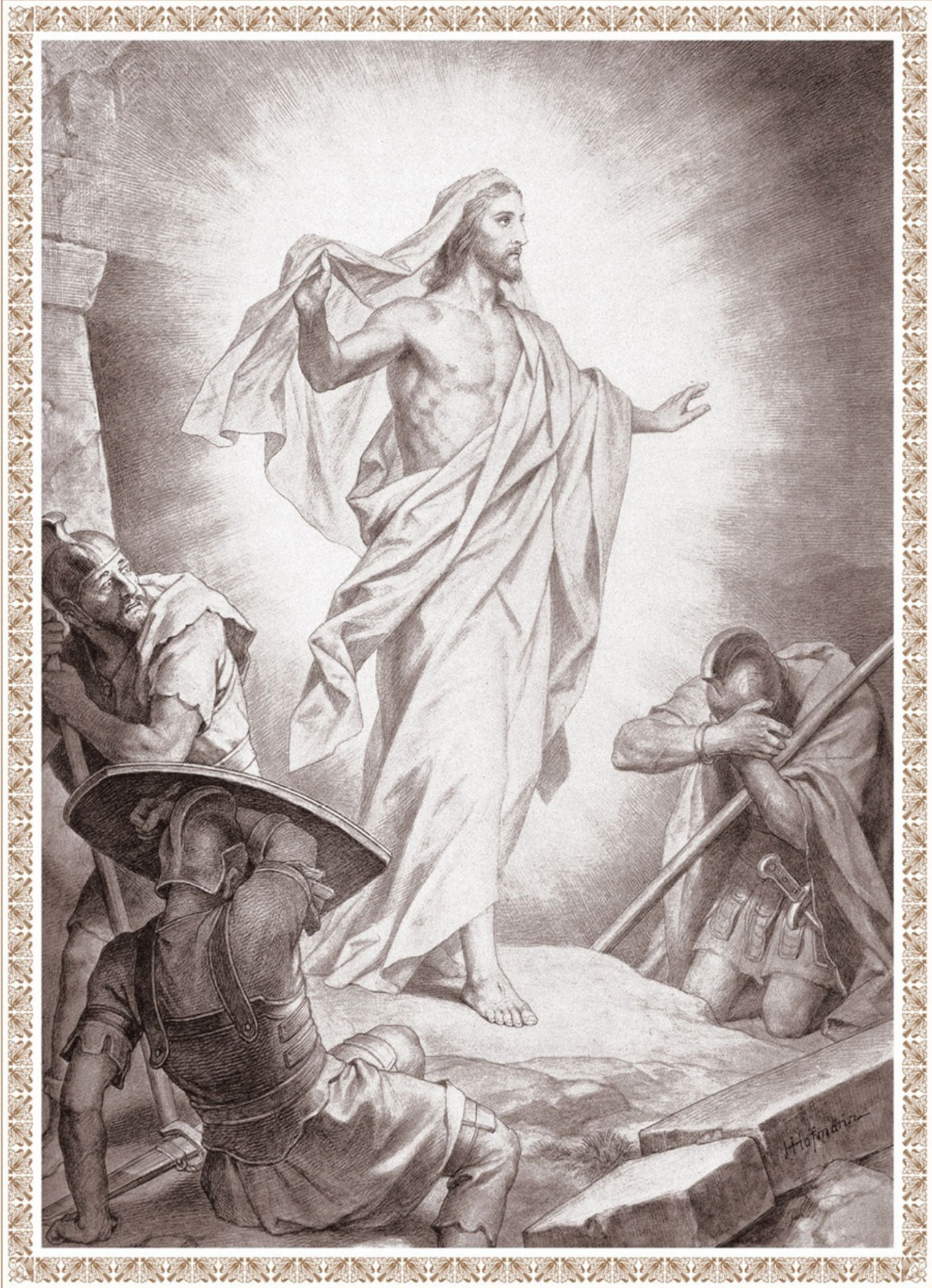
Jesus saith unto him, "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

—John 20:19 – 31



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The Resurrection

“The Lord is risen indeed.”

—*Luke 24:34*

The whole drama of Jesus’ life was a testament to the supremacy of man’s spirit over matter. He had willingly incarnated in a human form, partaking of its inherent limitations, to show matter-bound souls the way to conquer every form of delusion imposed on them by the overreaching power of Cosmic Satan. Jesus’ resurrection demonstrated the consummation of that victory: “The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.”

—*Paramahansa Yogananda*

Drawing by Heinrich Hofmann



Discourse 75

“Lo, I Am With You Always”

**The Resurrection of Jesus, and His Ever-Living
Presence**



All things are possible unto God and His great devotees. In the resurrection of Jesus we have the assurance of our Creator that God-realized devotees, if they wish, can find not only immortality of the soul but also of the body.

The whole drama of Jesus' life was a testament to the supremacy of man's spirit over matter. He had willingly incarnated in a human form, partaking of its inherent limitations, to show matter-bound souls the way to conquer every form of delusion imposed on them by the overreaching power of Cosmic Satan. Jesus' resurrection demonstrated the consummation of that victory: "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."²

Resurrection means "to rise again." What rises again—and how? Though restoring life to a deceased body, as Jesus did for Lazarus, is indeed one form of resurrection, what Jesus evidenced after his crucifixion was much higher. It was the resurrection of the soul into oneness with Spirit—the soul's ascension from delusory confinement of body consciousness into its native immortality and everlasting freedom. Lazarus and others whose bodies were raised from the dead by Jesus gained new life, new opportunity for spiritual advancement; but Jesus' resurrection lifted his consciousness beyond all relativities of vibratory creation and merged his Self with the transcendental Father, Absolute Spirit.

After attaining oneness with the Absolute, Jesus infused his Spirit-expanded soul back into his crucified body, immortalizing it, and returned to his bereft disciples in physical form.

Jesus accomplished this ascension in definite steps after his crucifixion. To Mary Magdalene, who was the first disciple to see him on Easter morning, Jesus said: "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God."



Three stages of Jesus' ascension into Spirit after death

Why did he tell Mary not to touch him? What did he mean when he said, “I am not yet ascended to my Father”? There is deep significance here. Jesus had prophesied that he would rise again after “three days” or “on the third day” after his crucifixion: ““Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.’...He spake of the temple of his body.”³ “Three days” means in three periods. Jesus was not emphasizing in a literal sense the twenty-four hours in each day, but three phases of expression required to liberate his soul from the physical to the astral plane and then to the spiritual or causal plane, and from there to complete merger in the Cosmic Consciousness of the Father. Many incarnations are required for an unevolved soul to accomplish this. But Jesus knew the process of descent into flesh that had been required for the incarnation on earth of his previously liberated soul, and with this knowledge and power he needed simply to employ the creative principles that would reverse that process. Thus he would quickly be able to free his soul again from physical, astral, and causal limitations by three distinct efforts, and would be able to reunite it with the omniscience and omnipotence of the Spirit.

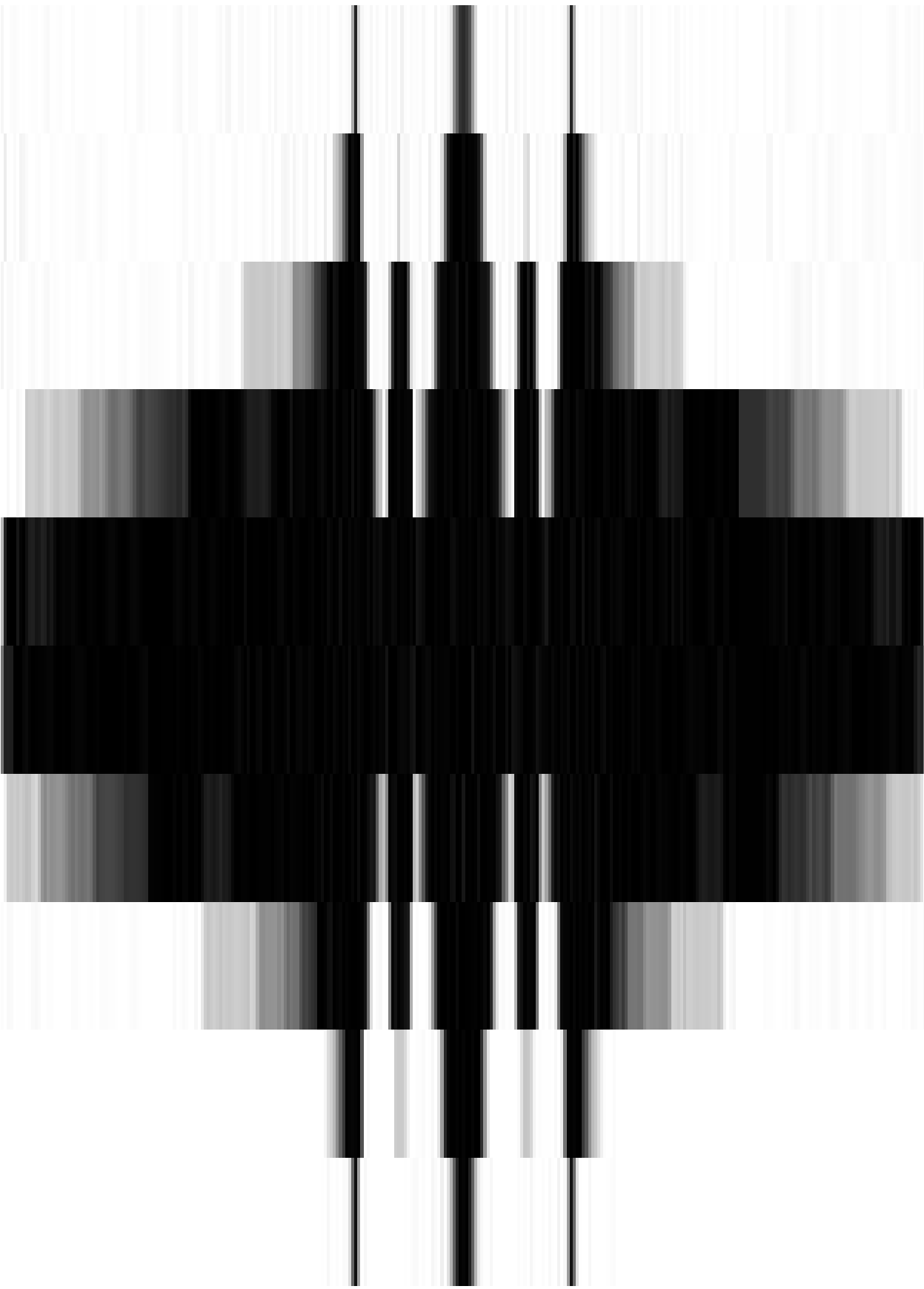
When the consciousness experiences oneness with the Infinite Consciousness of God in a state of deep samadhi while the soul yet retains its residence in the physical body (or in the astral form encasing the causal body after death), the transcendent ecstatic consciousness will inevitably return to its bodily habitation (physical or astral as the case may be). Similarly, when Jesus entered mahasamadhi, a God-realized soul's conscious ascension from the physical body at the time of death, he merged his consciousness in the blissful presence of the Cosmic Consciousness of God the Father and thence returned to his yet-to-be relinquished heavenly garbed astral form. Therein in Christ ecstasy he began expeditiously to unloose, with the supreme soul-science of liberation, the knots of life and consciousness that both enabled and resulted from his earthly incarnation.

Expressed succinctly, human nature is an interaction of the three gunas or essential creative and motivating qualities of Cosmic Nature, identified in the scriptures of India as sattva, tamas, and rajas—the good or elevating mode, the evil or grossening mode, and the activating mode.⁴ The seeds of one's past actions, actions that were stimulated by the good, bad, and activating qualities,

remain subtly lodged in the astral and causal bodies of the physically dead individual. As the Bhagavad Gita states: “All action is universally engendered by the attributes (gunas) of primordial Nature (Prakriti)...Deluded by the attributes of primordial Nature, the ignorant must cling to the activities engendered by those gunas.”⁵ Overcoming the sattvic, rajasic, and tamasic karma invading the three bodies of man is required for any incarnate soul to disengage from Nature’s delusive domain and return to oneness with the eternal bliss of Spirit. “The gunas inherent in Prakriti—sattva, rajas, and tamas—imprison in the body the Imperishable Dweller...Having transcended the three modes of Nature—the cause of physical embodiment—a man is released from the sufferings of birth, old age, and death; he attains immortality.”⁶

When Jesus first appeared to Mary Magdalene, he had raised his body from the tomb, yet he said, “Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father.” That is, his soul had not finished working out all the entangling interactions of the three gunas imprinted in his astral and causal bodies so that he could leave their limitations in oneness with Spirit. That accomplished, he would have the freedom and omnipotence of Spirit to remain merged in Infinite Consciousness or to assume his immortalized familiar form, tangible to mortal senses but unsubject to incarnate circumscriptions. Until he was thus completely resurrected in Spirit, he did not want any physical vibration with its material grossness to have contact with his manifested form that was highly spiritualized with astral lifetronic vibrations. Such was the superphysical nature of the body of Jesus that Mary did not at first even recognize the form as that of Jesus.

By the power of his Christ-wisdom and the sattvic karma accrued through his free-will governed righteous actions on earth,⁷ Jesus burned out the last traces of karmic residue left by his flesh-engendered fear of death when he said: “Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but Thine, be done”; and when on the cross he cried: “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” The delusion of his painful mortal death was so persuasive that for a moment Jesus lost touch with the reality that an Omnipresent God, his own Divine Father, could never forsake him. Delusion-imposed metaphysical weaknesses, no matter how tenuous, have to be expunged before complete liberation in Spirit is attained, even by such superlative incarnate souls as Jesus.



The esoteric science of liberation from the physical, astral, and causal forms

If a man is locked in a room, it requires the opening of just one lock to get him out. But if someone locks him in three rooms (one inside the other), it will require the unlatching of three locks to free him. At death the soul withdraws its life and intelligence from the physical body, but still remains locked up within the astral and causal bodies.

The soul, encased in its informing astral and causal bodies, enters the physical body through the medulla oblongata “mouth of God,”⁸ the potential of which is in the primary cell of life formed at conception. It is the soul’s causal-body instruments of consciousness and intelligence and its astral-body instruments of life force, mental perception, and action that enliven and sustain the fleshly form. The soul and its astral and causal bodies are knotted to the physical form in the seven subtle cerebrospinal centers. When the mortal karmic sentence determining one’s lifespan is over, the astral- and causal-bodied soul is loosed from those knots in the seven centers that had tied it to that physical body.

When the ordinary person dies, his life and consciousness withdraw from the physical spine and exit the material body through the medulla oblongata—remaining in an astral body in the astral world until his karma ordains graduation to the higher causal world or reincarnation on the physical plane. But the yogi who has opened his spiritual eye perceives with it that hidden in the physical spine are four concentric tubes or tunnels—three lifetronic and one of ideational magnetism—through which his soul has descended into the causal body, the astral body, and finally the material body. The yogi reverses this descension by taking his soul through these four tunnels and seven secret obstructing doors or centers, ascending to freedom beyond encasement in all three bodies.

Within the physical spine is the outermost astral spine or sushumna, with its outward-branching astral nadis, the subtle counterpart of the physical nervous system. Within the sushumna is the vajra lifetronic tunnel, and within that is the chitra lifetronic tunnel. By transitioning through the threefold astral spine of sushumna, vajra, and chitra, the yogi is freed from the astral body and is then in a causal body, an ideational matrix of magnetized consciousness, in the causal world. By further advancement, he frees himself from the causal body by transition through the causal “spine,” the innermost channel, or brahmanadi—

ascending out of his causal form into the Infinite Brahman or Spirit.⁹

“He attains the Supreme Effulgent Lord, O Arjuna, whose mind, stabilized by yoga, is immovably fixed on the thought of Him. At the time of death a yogi reaches the Supreme Effulgent Lord if, with love and by the power of yoga, he fully penetrates his life force between the eyebrows (the seat of the spiritual eye), and if he fixes his mind unwaveringly on the Being who, beyond all delusions of darkness, shines like the sun—the One whose form is unimaginable, subtler than the finest atom, the Supporter of all, the Great Ruler, eternal and omniscient.”¹⁰

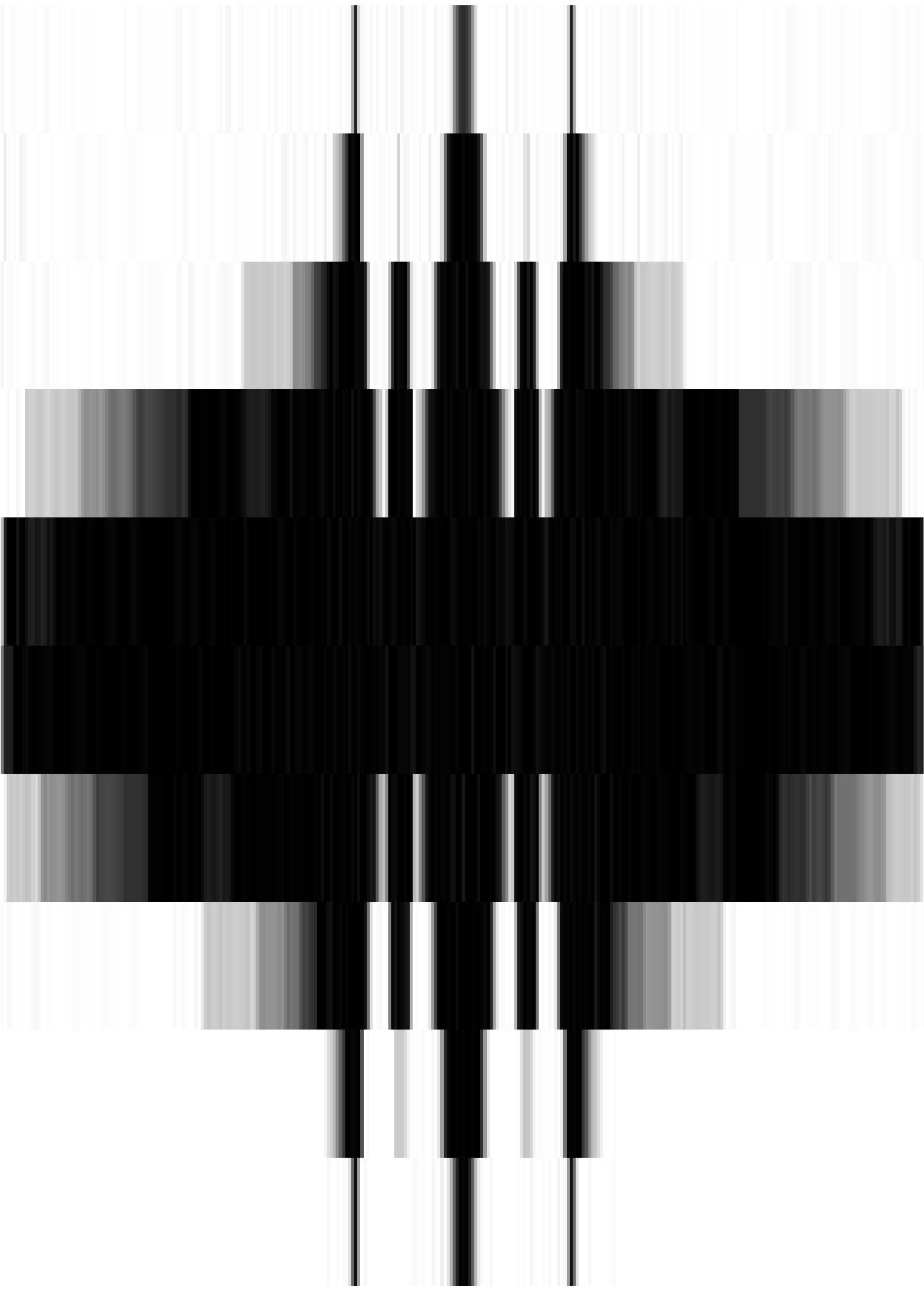
This transcendent freedom can be achieved by the yogi who has not only opened his spiritual eye, but by further concentration has discovered its inner mechanism—when one is sufficiently advanced to leave the body through the blue Christ-sphere and the star door to Cosmic Consciousness in the spiritual eye. Otherwise one passes only through the outermost, golden ring of the spiritual eye and exits the material body through the astral center in the medulla oblongata at the base of the skull. But departure can also be through the top of the head, through the occult portal known as the Brahma-randhra, Brahma’s Door. This is in the seventh astral center, the sahasrara or “thousand-petaled lotus” in the cerebrum. It is closed in the ordinary individual; but when one is highly advanced this Brahma’s Door opens. Through it one reaches Brahma directly; by exiting consciously through that opening in the thousand-petaled lotus center of Cosmic Consciousness one ascends directly to the God the Father region.

The golden disc is the portion of the telescopic eye through which all astral creation is visible. To reach the astral universe, one must go through the gold of the spiritual eye. Through the blue of the spiritual eye, Christ Consciousness present in all creation is revealed. To reach the causal universe one must go through the blue region of the spiritual eye. When one can enter the tiny silvery white star of the spiritual eye, then through the brahmanadi one ascends higher than the medulla or spiritual eye, beyond the physical, astral, and causal vibratory universes.

In the astral region is the reigning Holy Ghost or Aum Vibration. In the causal is God the Son, or the Christ Consciousness. And the vibrationless infinitude beyond, reached through the star in the spiritual eye, is the boundless region where Cosmic Consciousness, God the Father, dwells.

It is impossible with mere intellect to comprehend fully the intricacies of the astral and causal passageways to liberation and their correlation with the spiritual eye. They are gradually revealed to intuitive perception by the practice of Kriya Yoga. What is important is to be so absorbed in the spiritual eye and divine bliss of meditation that when the time comes to leave the body, through the blessings of God and guru the yogi knows how to take his soul through the spiritual eye and the spinal centers and break out of the jail of embodiment into the freedom of Spirit.

Ascension to liberation is not a simple matter of a few affirmations, prayers, or desultory attempts at meditation. It can only be achieved by persistent practice of scientific methods of penetrating the spiritual eye. No soul, no saint, no Christ or Buddha has resurrected himself—at the time of death or in the highest samadhi states of meditation—without entering this inner door to transcendent consciousness. As soon as one frees the soul from the physical, astral, and idea bodies, he can merge with the Formless Absolute or experience oneness with the Great Light of the universe. That is the light of the Infinite Christ, the God-essence and sustenance of all creation.¹¹



How Jesus re-created his deceased body after ascending in Spirit

So resurrection does not mean only resurrection of the body, but the ascension of the soul from all three bodily encasements to live immortally in oneness with the Spirit that is manifesting as the whole universe. When after death Jesus had neutralized the mechanism of the three gunas, and had burnt all karmic seeds resulting from his incarnate cause-effect actions, he ascended from the three bodies straightway into the bosom of God. Then he had power even as God has. From that supreme state, Jesus could put on his body again or cast it off at will.

A liberated master such as Jesus need not depend on the natural way of returning to earth by the slow process of rebirth and growth into maturity. When one becomes Spirit, he can materialize a body and lock himself in it, then dematerialize it any time he chooses. If a person comes down a stairway and somebody locks the door behind him, he cannot go back up. But if he possesses the key, he can go up and come down as he pleases. So Jesus, having unlocked his soul from the physical, astral, and causal forms, could not only ascend into Spirit but also come down again and bring a new body with him. Even as God by special creation formed the bodies of the first Adam and Eve, so ascended masters, after they rise above the limiting confines of the three bodies, can create a body that they had in any incarnation; or can remodel the bodies that they left behind in death, as Jesus' body was, and make them immortal. Thus Jesus after crucifixion could appear among his disciples for forty days, materializing and dematerializing his form before their eyes.

Rationalizing minds have proposed that when Jesus was crucified he did not actually die, but remained in a temporary state of suspended animation and later revived himself (or was taken from the tomb and revived by his disciples). That is not so. In suspended animation, the soul does not exit fully from the body; life remains in the spine and the brain, sustaining the body, even though breath and heart are completely suspended. When the soul, with its astral and causal bodies, goes away completely from the cerebrospinal plexuses, withdrawing the guiding intelligence and life force that empowers the specialized functions of life energy in the bodily cells, then the cells begin to disintegrate and the body begins to decay.¹² As long as the soul is still in the body, the body does not decay even when all outwardly observable vital functions cease.

It is known that there are various kinds of bodily suspension from which “resurrection” is possible. Sadhu Haridas, for example, as cited earlier, was buried forty days in a deathlike trance, and was then disinterred and revived.¹³ But it is nonsense to suggest that Jesus was only in a state of suspended animation. Spiritually I know that after crucifixion Jesus completely left his body. His life and consciousness fled not only from the physical muscles and heart, but also from the spine and brain. He gave up the ghost; soul and life were completely out of that body. The gruesome way that his body was crucified—pierced in many places, including the heart—made it impossible for the highly organized physiological life to remain in that body. That is why Saint John testified: “Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.”¹⁴

The human body is not like a plant, which can be cut in different pieces, each of which will grow into a plant. In all those parts there is life and intelligence sufficient to generate a new organism. But in the human body, life is highly centralized in the medulla. From this “mouth of God,” the specialized life forces needed to maintain the intricately organized human body, endowed with intelligence from the superconsciousness of the indwelling soul, flow out into the body through the subdynamos of the spinal plexuses aided by the subsidiary switchboard of the heart. Though in suspended animation life is withdrawn from the heart and other bodily organs, if the medulla or the heart is somehow damaged while the body is in the trance state then life cannot be reintroduced, and death ensues.

It cannot be physically proved that the soul has gone out of the body unless the body has been destroyed or its vital organs irreparably damaged, or (as mentioned above) decay has started. When decay sets in, the soul ordinarily cannot return to that body. But Jesus understood the relation between Cosmic Life and the specialized life in the body. That is why he could revive Lazarus after his disciple’s body had been decaying for four days;¹⁵ and why he could say of himself: “I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.”¹⁶ That Jesus was able to rebuild his body at will after death had claimed it was possible only

when his soul was liberated from the three bodies. Having attained complete ascension in Spirit, he had the creative power of Spirit to bring specialized life back into his deceased body to regenerate its cells and resurrect that form to live and breathe again.

Now Jesus had the option to resurrect his crucified body or to dematerialize that form and create a new body composed of new atoms for his reappearance after resurrection. As Spirit, he perceived his old body as Infinite Consciousness, ideationally formed of Cosmic Light, existing as a material illusion in the merest tremor of the Creator's thought. An illusion and its duplicate are equally the same. Grossness, light, consciousness, all are of the sole essence of Spirit, as real or as insubstantial as the delusion of cosmic manifestation deems them to be. To the Spirit-united Jesus, his form was only a dream image of malleable thought subject to the command of his divine will. He was able to infuse his life into his spiritualized flesh-and-blood form, coursing into the body through the mouth of God in the medulla, down through the spine, and out into the vital nerves and organs. He did it scientifically, through the creative Cosmic Vibration of Holy Ghost and oneness with the Christ Consciousness Intelligence of God in every atom and creative principle of cosmic manifestation.

Medical scientists work to achieve bodily healing and reconstruction from the outside; but some injuries and diseases defy cure, because the doctors do not understand the combined interaction of lifetronic currents that forms new flesh and tissues. But one who has control of Cosmic Life as well as specialized life can bring the intelligent Cosmic Energy into the physical form to reinforce and rouse the specific bodily life forces. As soon as that is done, the cells begin to throb with life and to repair or dispel damaged and dead cells. That is what Jesus did. And when the body was renewed, he lived again in his resurrected form.



Knowing the reality of the physical body as divine light

Man thinks of his body as compact, solid matter; but science now defines the body as waves of electromagnetic energy. Matter has been dissolved down to photons. But what is the difference between light and consciousness; and what is the relation of consciousness and the body? The decipherment of that arcanum of cosmic being is the principal challenge confronting future generations of broadened scientific minds.¹⁷ The body is nothing but electrons and their subatomic magnetic companions whirling in empty space. We can release them and dissolve that illusion of solidity, but even the most advanced laboratory cannot restructure that body. Resurrection means to bring the body back again by the power of will after it has been disintegrated, as Jesus did when his resurrected form repeatedly appeared and disappeared before many of his disciples. He had that control of the electricity of the entire cosmos, with its constituent lifetronic creative cosmic energy.

Jesus said, "If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." By taking his consciousness through the spiritual eye, he entered the reality of his fleshly body as divine light, the resurrection of flesh into the Infinite Christ and God. In deep meditation on the inner spiritual eye, one can experience this transcendence: By consciously withdrawing the life energy and consciousness from the senses and muscles and nerves, one can perceive the sublimation of the body into the rays of the spiritual eye, transforming the consciousness of flesh into the consistency of light. The light of the body is resurrected into the Cosmic Christ Light, the mind into Cosmic Consciousness, the human will into Divine Will, the mortal life into Eternal Life, the joy of the soul into the Bliss of Spirit.

The ocean is behind all individual waves. So is God behind the cells of our body, behind every thought, behind every breath and beat of the heart. He is the Light and the body is a flicker of that Light; its fibers, rays of radiant energy. That is what Jesus realized. He could resurrect his body because he knew its atoms and subatomic particles were nothing but radiations of that Great Light. With control of that Infinite Power and Intelligence, he condensed it into astral lifetronic energy to renew and vitalize the cells and nervous system of his crucified body to make it a fit habitation in which his soul could dwell again, in fulfillment of the divine demonstration of resurrection he had been commanded by his Father

to give to the world.



Bodily resurrection as understood and demonstrated by India's masters

Resurrection has been well understood by accomplished yogis of India since the dawn of the highest ages. Jesus himself was a realized yogi: one who knew and had mastered the spiritual science of life and death, God-communion and God-union, one who knew the method of liberation from delusion into the kingdom of God. Jesus showed throughout his life and death his power of complete mastery over his body and mind and the oft-recalcitrant forces of nature. We understand resurrection in its true sense when we comprehend the yoga science that clearly defines the underlying principles by which Jesus resurrected his crucified body into the freedom and light of God.

Legendary are the God-knowing masters of India who raised their bodies after death. The revered medieval master Kabir had a devout following that included both Hindu and Muslim disciples. A story is told that at the time of his death there was a divisive quarrel regarding the funeral rites. The Hindus argued that it would be proper to consign the body to the ceremonial fires of cremation, and the Muslims insisted on their tradition of burial. Their discord was so distressing to their master that he broke the after-death paramount vow of silence. He rose up and in a voice of rebuke and of assurance of his ever-living presence he told his disciples: "Half of my remains should be buried with Muslim rites. Let the other half be cremated with a Hindu sacrament." When the disciples lifted the shroud that had covered Kabir's form, they found that their master had dematerialized his body and left in its stead an array of flowers. Dutifully, half of the blooms were cremated by the Hindus, and the remaining half buried by the Muslims.

In modern times, authoritative eyewitness accounts bore testimony that the Yogavatar Lahiri Mahasaya consciously left his body before a gathering of devotees in Banaras; and then appeared again in the flesh in three different cities the day after his discarded body had been cremated.¹⁸ I myself was blessed to receive the visitation of my resurrected guru Sri Yukteswarji, who appeared to me in flesh and blood more than three months after his death in

1936

.¹⁹ Other masters, such as Mahavatar Babaji, choose to retain their bodies

indefinitely to best fulfill their service to humanity, their earthly immortality revealed to only a spiritually elite few. Mahavatar Babaji, his soul fully resurrected in Spirit, works for the upliftment of the world in omnipresent oneness with the Infinite God and as the specific finite body he inhabits.

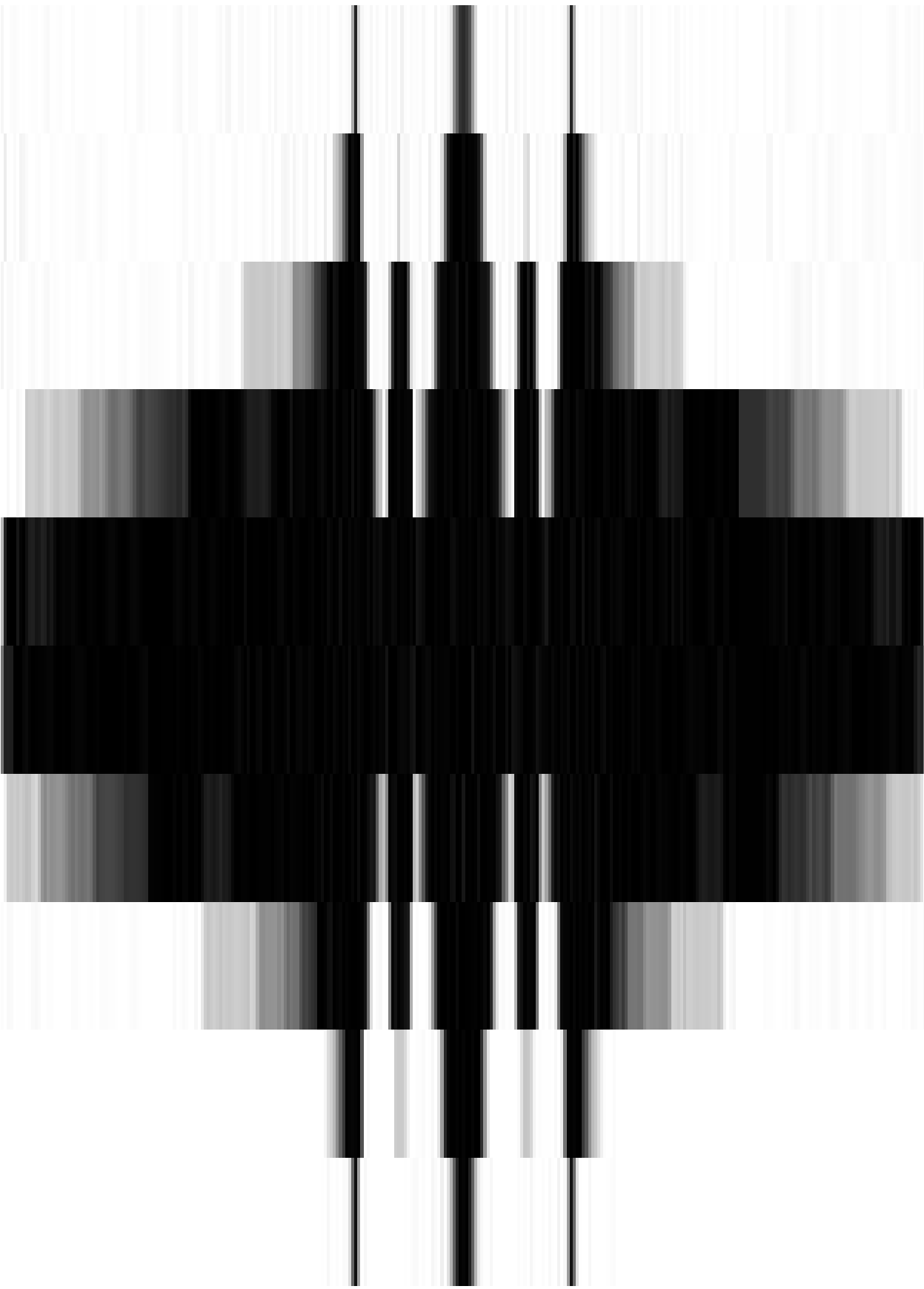


The divinely manifested form in which Jesus appeared after resurrection

Just as in the exalted state of nirvikalpa samadhi the soul realizes perfect unity with Spirit yet does not lose its individuality, so the resurrected Jesus—having ascended from the confinement of his physical, astral, and causal bodies into the Infinite-bodied Cosmic Consciousness—manifested his Jesus form not apart from Spirit but as the Infinite who has become Jesus, all individualized souls, and all manifestation. In his oneness with Spirit, he perceived through Infinite Consciousness his Jesus body, and the bodies of all others, acting their parts in the cosmic dream-drama, with the power of cosmic delusion designating form and egoity but no longer hiding the connection between God’s dream and the personalized dream of individual existence. With his consciousness translated into God’s consciousness, he could change the dream of his crucified body into a remodeled resurrected dream form in God’s cosmic dream.

Though Jesus returned to his disciples for forty days after his resurrection, reappearing in the physical body so familiar to his followers, his divinely manifested flesh prevented them from easily recognizing him.²⁰ His resurrected body was indeed possessed of its customary solidity, though during those forty days he repeatedly resolved its atoms into the Cosmic Light—“he vanished out of their sight”—and at other times rematerialized it before his astonished disciples: “And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them.” “Then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, ‘Peace be unto you.’”

Rejoining the apostles on the evening of his resurrection day, Jesus ate with them broiled fish and honeycomb, an act of confirmation of his physical reality. Thereby he also kept his promise made to them at the Last Supper: “I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God,” until the prophesied culmination of his life—his crucifixion and resurrection—had been fulfilled, and he had been freed completely in the immortality of the Cosmic Consciousness of the Father.



Jesus' transmission of spiritual consciousness to his disciples while on earth and afterward

“Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures.” Jesus transmitted to them from his own omniscient consciousness an awakening of their intuitive soul-perception. Just as a rich man can share his wealth with those he deems worthy, so great masters possessing spiritual abundance can, by sheer divine grace, enlarge their faithful disciples' endowment of God-realization. Jesus had demonstrated this during his incarnation, when he imparted to his apostles “power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.”²¹ After his resurrection, he again spiritually baptized them with the Cosmic Vibratory Power of Aum: “He breathed on them, and saith unto them, ‘Receive ye the Holy Ghost.’”

Liberated masters are unrestrained in the omnipresence of the Infinite, fully capable of bestowing their blessings even after physical death. Not only did the contact of Jesus in his resurrected form confer on his disciples an uplifting baptism in the Light of Spirit, he also gave his assurance of further grace to be received by them on the day of Pentecost after his departure: “And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.”²²

To the degree that their consciousness was immersed in the Holy Ghost Aum Vibration, the disciples would be able to serve as channels for Christ to impart that baptism or initiation to others, lessening or removing the bondage of their bad karma: “Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them.”

The disciple Thomas was not present on the first occasion of Jesus' appearance to the assembled disciples; he was unwilling to acknowledge Jesus' resurrection without the proof of personal experience. When he had that opportunity eight days later, the Master declared to him: “Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.”²³ Though “doubting Thomas” has since become a proverbial aspersion, it should be noted that on other occasions Jesus extolled the high state of consciousness that Thomas had attained.²⁴ Followers of all spiritual paths ought to appreciate the fact that doubt, constructively applied, is what keeps true religion free of the superstition of dogma and the fanaticism of blind belief. Religion should be

treated as a science; it is right that it be subjected to the test of experience. For millenniums in India, the rishis, as spiritual scientists, employed reason, observation, and systematic investigation to arrive at definite and replicable proof of divine truths. When religion is approached scientifically, belief matures into realization—a direct knowing by soul intuition that bestows the blessed certitude of unshakable faith even upon “they that have not seen,” independent of the physical senses.



Science of yoga provides the means of resurrection and ascension to every soul

Jesus' resurrection was little understood, and much disbelieved even though he made himself visible to hundreds of people—not only to his close disciples.²⁵ In those days they comprehended only that Jesus was dead and then he was alive, but they did not understand the science and art of ascension and resurrection, as is defined in the timeless scriptures of Yoga. No other science has detailed the descent of the individualized consciousness of God as the soul into man and its evolutionary and spiritual ascent back into Spirit. In this modern age, Kriya Yoga has been brought forward after being lost in the dark ages, as a definite method to hasten the spiritual evolution of human consciousness and open the inner cerebrospinal pathway of ascension, releasing the soul through the spiritual eye into the kingdom of the Holy Ghost, the Christ Consciousness, and the Cosmic Consciousness of God the Father.

The life and consciousness of an ordinary person is so tied to the sensibilities and attachments of the flesh that he cannot begin to ascend from the delusion of the body until he falls asleep or until death removes that body cage. Entering the subconscious state that underlies the outer waking consciousness, every night man partially ascends from bodily identification, but not enough. He reaches the borderland touching superconsciousness in deep dreamless sleep, but upon awakening goes back into the body tomb again. In death one ascends a little farther; but as in sleep, this release from the sepulchre of the body is involuntary and temporary. One must incarnate again and again until he has finished his fascination with the desires and attachments of physical existence. Why not learn to transcend body identification consciously and permanently? In the science of yoga, God-union—specifically, the technique of Kriya Yoga, the precise application of that science—India's masters have given the key to resurrection, the key to the kingdom of God.

An adept of Kriya Yoga conquers death by taking the soul beyond identification with the physical body, consciously and at will; and then returning to the consciousness of the mortal form again. By this process, he experiences the body as merely the material dwelling place of the soul. He can remain therein as long as he wants; and after that body has fulfilled its usefulness, he can quit it at will without suffering physical pain or mental pain due to attachment, and enter his omnipresent home in God.

Saint Paul said, “I protest by our rejoicing which I have in Christ...I die daily.”²⁶ Kriya Yoga, or a similar technique, was known by Saint Paul; through this science of ascension, he was able to withdraw his life force and consciousness from the body into the bliss (“rejoicing”) of Christ Consciousness. In transcendent meditation he could experience daily the state of conscious death when the soul does away with body consciousness and its physical and mental restlessness and activity, and the breath and heartbeat slow down to almost nothing or cease altogether. After mastering the breathless superconscious state, the soul can ascend through the spine, make contact with the Christ Consciousness, and return again to the body—switching the life force on and off at will from external bodily senses and activity. That devotee who thus practices transcending the consciousness of the body by daily meditation will say with Saint Paul, “I die daily”—“I am resurrected daily.” He will certainly retain his consciousness when death comes upon him and he ascends from the body into the heavenly joy of the after-death state.

Everyone eventually has to ascend, to free the soul into the divine kingdom of higher consciousness after death, and thence into its origin in the Infinity of Spirit. There is only one escape and that is to commune with God. This requires not only conscientious continuity in practicing the esoteric meditation methods of transcendence, but also application of the equally essential Christlike principles of moral and spiritual behavior, which provide the substructure enhancing, supporting, and making firm the devotee’s gains in meditation. The foundational steps of the yoga science enumerated as yama and niyama by Patanjali in his Yoga Sutras, and the soul qualities of the devotee advancing in God-realization set forth by Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita,²⁷ merge in harmonious illumination of the way of Christ perfection taught by Jesus in his Sermon on the Mount and other discourses. These emissaries of God speak with a united voice that the way to ascension is to love all, forgetting oneself in selfless service and upliftment of others; to disengage oneself from attachments to the senses, to possessions, and to the emotions that keep one body- and ego-bound (anger, fear, lust, greed); and to love God supremely and meditate so deeply that one can at will enter the ecstasy of superconsciousness—the portal to the final states of ascension in Christ (Kutastha Chaitanya) and Cosmic Consciousness (Sat-Chit-Ananda).

Practice the edicts of the great ones; do not insult their offering of the gift of liberation by merely mouthing what they have said. It is by Christlike behavior, and by constancy in deep meditation, that the aspiring devotee can go beyond the

physical self, the astral self, and the shell of consciousness with which the soul is burdened, and find blissful resurrection in Spirit.

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After these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he himself. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples. Simon Peter saith unto them, "I go afishing." They say unto him, "We also go with thee." They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing. But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.

Then Jesus saith unto them, "Children, have ye any meat?"

They answered him, "No."

And he said unto them, "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find." They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.

Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, "It is the Lord." Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea.

And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes. As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.

Jesus saith unto them, "Bring of the fish which ye have now caught."

Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.

Jesus saith unto them, "Come and dine." And none of the disciples durst ask him, "Who art thou?" knowing that it was the Lord.

Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise. This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.

So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?”

He saith unto him, “Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee.”

He saith unto him, “Feed my lambs.”

He saith to him again the second time, “Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?”

He saith unto him, “Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee.”

He saith unto him, “Feed my sheep.”

He saith unto him the third time, “Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?”

Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, “Lovest thou me?” And he said unto him, “Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee.”

Jesus saith unto him, “Feed my sheep. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, when thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.” This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, “Follow me.”

Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper and said, “Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?” Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, “Lord, and what shall this man do?”

Jesus saith unto him, “If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me.”

Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, “He shall not die”; but, “If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?”

This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true. And there are also many other things

which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.

—John 21:1 – 25

[Jesus' final words to the disciples, and his ascension into heaven, as recorded in Matthew and Mark:]

Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Amen.

—Matthew 28:16 – 20

And he said unto them, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs

following. Amen.

—*Mark 16:15 – 20*



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The immanent-transcendent consciousness of the resurrected Jesus was purely of God though inhabiting a body visible on earth. At one with the Infinite Dreamer of the cosmic dream-drama, he could superimpose his presence into the projected dream scenes being enacted on the screen of shared experiences of his disciples' consciousness—the ship, the water, the abundant haul of fish he drew into the net, were to him all made of dream consciousness which he could manipulate at will to interact again with his disciples in his earthly form. He was the same, yet enigmatically not the same, for which reason the perplexed disciples “knew not that it was Jesus” until he repeated the miracle of their first meeting of filling their empty nets with fishes. Even then, when he beckoned them to dine with him, the highly refined Spirit vibrations of his resurrected form gave them pause so that “none of the disciples durst ask him ‘Who art thou?’ knowing that it was the Lord.”



Jesus' final instructions to and blessings on his disciples, and his dematerialization into Spirit

After dining, Jesus turned to unfinished business with Peter. On the night before his crucifixion, Jesus had prophesied that Peter, succumbing to karmic inner weakness and the temptation of delusion, would three times deny his association with Jesus: "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." In a final confirmation of that intercessory blessing, in this poignant scene on the shore of the sea of Galilee (Tiberias), three times Jesus asked Peter to reaffirm his love for his master, and his dedication to shoulder the mission of the Good Shepherd of souls: "Feed my sheep." And with his disciple's positive response, three times Jesus reinforced Peter's faith that would sustain him when his hour of persecution would come.

The words of Jesus to Peter: "When thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not," foretold the martyrdom of Peter. But of John he said that he "will tarry till I come." John had a unique contribution to make in the mission of Jesus. The storied account of the fate of the Apostles relates that while most of them were martyred, John miraculously survived his persecutors and eventually retired to the isle of Patmos, where he lived to a very old age. There he wrote in vivid imagery The Book of Revelation, his own personal realization of the esoteric teachings of Jesus that, when its metaphor is deciphered, is in full accord with the ancient yoga science of meditation and God-realization.

According to the Gospels of Saints Matthew and Mark, Jesus emphasized in his last instructions to the Apostles their part in his ongoing work of salvation: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." And: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." That is, any person, of any race or nationality who "believeth" (knows through his own Self-realization) and who receives the spiritual baptism of immersion in the Holy Ghost Cosmic Vibration, the great Comforter or Aum, which uplifts the soul to Christ Consciousness ("the Son") and Cosmic Consciousness ("the Father") "shall be saved." Those who cling to ignorance and thereby shut out the redeeming power condemn

themselves to remain in the “hell” of the sufferings inherent in material consciousness.

Jesus further declares that those who observe the holy precepts of eternal truth, as he has commanded, will be in tune with the Infinite Christ and therein find him ever with them, “even unto the end of the world.” In his oneness with the Christ Intelligence eternally omnipresent in creation, Jesus’ guidance and protection would continue to shelter those disciples who kept in tune, as long as the manifested cosmos endures.

Jesus also promised that those who would have communion with Christ Consciousness through the Holy Ghost Cosmic Vibration, “in my name,” would have healing power to cast out devils of satanic delusion and disease from themselves and others. “They shall take up serpents” means that by remaining “in my name,” in the Christ-imbued Holy Vibration of Aum, they would find their own ultimate ascension by uplifting the subtle kundalini “serpent force” through the awakened astral centers of the spine and brain to attain God-consciousness. Whosoever realizes his unity with Spirit can demonstrate immunity to “any deadly thing,” manipulating its harmful vibration into one of benign neutrality.

Jesus then fulfilled a prophecy made earlier to his disciples: “Ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before.”²⁸ Having delivered his final discourse, he “was received up into heaven,” dissolving his body (“Son of man”) into the ineffable, all-pervading Christ Consciousness “on the right hand of God”—the principal working Intelligence, the reflected Intelligence of the Father in manifested creation.

“And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.” Thus does the beloved disciple John end his Gospel. Reading these words, I smile in sympathetic understanding born of my own attempts to chronicle the deeds of Christlike masters. As I wrote in my autobiography, “In recording the lives of Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, and Sri Yukteswar, I have thought it advisable to omit certain miraculous stories. I could hardly have included them without writing, also, an explanatory volume of abstruse philosophy.” In this commentary on the New Testament, and especially in my interpretation of the yoga science in the Bhagavad Gita, I have sought not only to provide a more complete view of the metaphysical laws operative in the

miracles performed by these Yogi-Christ, but especially to elucidate the esoteric principles and techniques of salvation taught to their disciples—which in the Gospels and in the Gita were only hinted at or presented in recondite scriptural metaphor. Saint John's own mastery of that deeper science, evident in his highly symbolic Book of Revelation, was doubtless part of what he was referring to in the closing sentence of his Gospel.



The universality of the message that Christ wanted his disciples to preach worldwide

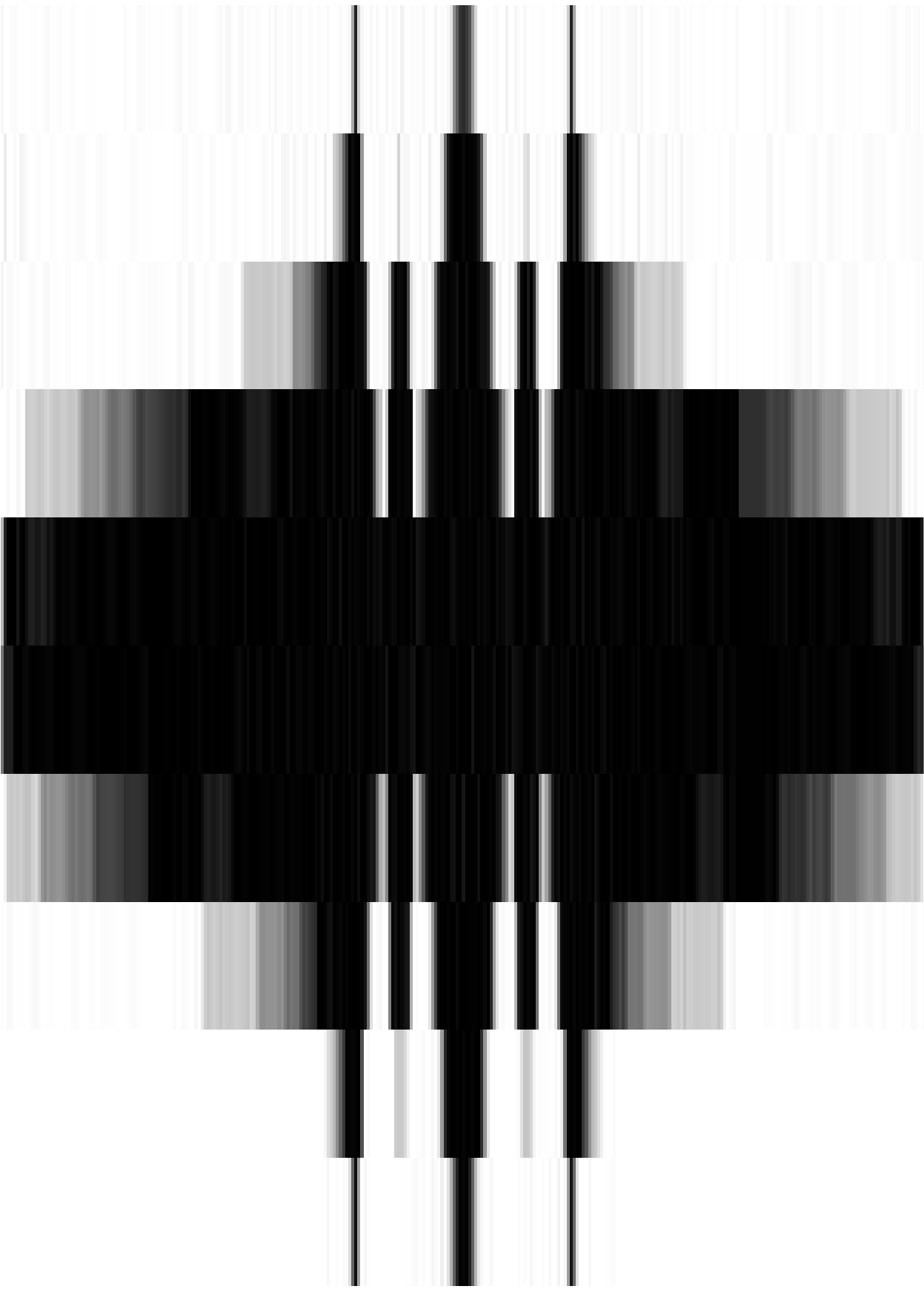
Truly speaking, the Bible does not exhaust Christianity nor do India's scriptures exhaust the totality of Hinduism's Sanatana Dharma. The essence of religion cannot be codified in hoary books; it lives in self-sacrificing known and unknown men and women, and in soul-intoxicated saints. The brand of a particular faith is put on man by birth, geography, or dogma, and if one or more of these determines a person's religion he has very little to boast about. An imposed myopic perspective disdains as heathenism the use of any different form of prayer or worship or terminology than one's own in approaching the Deity. Heathenism, rather, lies in the absence of expression of soul qualities, no matter one's faith.

If man would feast his mind fully on the soul qualities, the goodness in his fellow beings, there would be no appetite left for indigestible differences. This appreciation is the foundation of tolerance, which underlies the recognition of the brotherhood of man under the one Father-Mother-Friend Beloved God. This is Christ's teaching. This is the universal spiritual undertone of Jesus' command to his apostles, "Go and preach my message to the whole world." Whether his message is rudimentally understood as a way to salvation based on a spiritual morality and love for God and one another, or comprehended in its highest intent as extolling the science of soul ascension, it is inclusive of the expression of soul qualities fostered in all good customs, traditions, and faiths.

All prophets who sang truth through their lives, in the different ages, were fountains of the One Divine Source. It was God who spoke through the Vedas and Upanishads, the Bible and the Koran, the Dhammapada, Talmud, and Granth Sahib. Whenever darkness has ravaged the earth, those that groped in it sent forth muffled cries. This anguish of millions of benighted souls silently passed through the ether of human consciousness. Divine souls, those who have dispelled from within themselves the darkness of delusion and have become transparent channels as sons of God, arise at Divine Command from the womb of time to render help and redeem souls entombed in the sepulchre of ignorance.

The message of some prophets addresses the needs of a particular culture and age; but those emissaries who are commissioned with a God-given world

mission deliver universal truths that resonate throughout all ages in timeless relevancy. Such was the spoken and lived message of Jesus, as also the ageless yoga science immortalized in scripture in its citation by Bhagavan Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita, opening the door to soul liberation since ancient times.



“Lo, I am with you alway”: perceiving Jesus in form and as the infinite formless Christ

Liberated souls such as Jesus, whose mission continues beyond their incarnation, are able to materialize their bodies at will anywhere in the astral heavens or in the physical world at any time—today or unto thousands of years after their ascension. That is why Jesus could say in truth to his disciples: “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” He immortalized his body as well as his spirit. Any true devotee can see him as Jesus Christ or know him as one with the Infinite Christ. Saint Francis, born centuries after Jesus, used to see him every night in Assisi. Saint Teresa of Avila knew him both in form and as the Formless Christ. Numerous divinely attuned souls have seen him. He has come to me many, many times—whenever I so desire, he appears to me, with his wondrous eyes in which universes revolve, emanating the love of God omnipresent in the Christ Consciousness. Any devotee whose concentration is very deep and whose devotion is pure and persistent can see him by peering through the omniscient spiritual eye at the Christ Consciousness center in the forehead. Intensity and perseverance are necessary; most devotees pray a little while, but soon get discouraged and give up. To such lukewarm effort, Jesus will not respond. Even so, he is listening to every prayer, waiting for the devotee to become receptive and consciously welcome his presence.

It is not a matter of visualizing him or attempting to produce the form of Christ through imagination. That will result in an image being projected by the subconscious mind, just as figures are created in nightly dreams—and it will not be the Christ. Rather, one must pray without ceasing, as Jesus taught. By the practice of Kriya Yoga, taking the consciousness into the kingdom of God within, and then praying again and again for Christ’s appearance, the devotee can behold the real Christ right in front of him. At first it will be in a vision perceptible to the sense of sight. When the vision can be seen with open as well as with closed eyes, then by even higher development in the intensity of devotion and concentration, the presence of Christ will manifest as a materialized form. That is the ultimate vision, in which one can touch the body of Jesus and talk with him, just as truly as when he walked the earth. The intimately real sensation of touching the materialized form is not the same as contact with the gross matter of an incarnate form, but the realization of the true essence of the body as a combination of spiritually magnetic vibrations informed

from the Cosmic Bliss ideations of God, imparting a wondrous elevating thrill of joy and blessing.

Jesus was born in a human body; he was crucified; and he resurrected himself. He rebuilt his body, and his soul entered that resurrected form. But he did not re-create a body to remain confined in it. Though he appeared in physical form to his disciples many times after crucifixion, he dissolved that body again. To understand him only as incarnate in a body that was crucified and then resurrected is not appreciably to understand Christ as he is. Incarnate or after resurrection, Jesus was not only a physical personality, but a vessel of the infinite Christ Consciousness. While he resurrected himself in the body, he resurrected his spirit from the confinement of form into omnipresent Spirit. In oneness with the Infinite Christ, he is resurrected in every newborn body, and in you and me, and in all people of the earth, and in everything that has life. He is resurrected in the winking stars, in the planets, and in the cosmic blue. He is resurrected in all things that grow from the earth—in the grass and in the tenderest rose. He feels his resurrection in every form that exists. He is risen in every atom and cell of the capacious cosmos.²⁹

In the Bhagavad Gita (

xiii

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13

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17

), Lord Krishna, from his own oneness with God's Universal Consciousness, lauds this immanent-transcendent Omnipresence of Spirit:

He dwells in the world, enveloping all—everywhere, His hands and feet; present on all sides, His eyes and ears, His mouths and heads;

Shining in all the sense faculties, yet transcending the senses; unattached to creation, yet the Mainstay of all; free from the gunas (modes of Nature), yet the Enjoyer of them.

He is within and without all that exists, the animate and the inanimate; near He is, and far; imperceptible because of His subtlety.

He, the Indivisible One, appears as countless beings; He maintains and destroys those forms, then creates them anew.

The Light of All Lights, beyond darkness; Knowledge itself, That which is to be known, the Goal of all learning, He is seated in the hearts of all.

This is how Jesus wants his devotees to know him: not to limit him to a form, but to understand his resurrection in omnipresence, to perceive him as one with the Infinite Light of Christ Consciousness. Through the spiritual eye, the worshiper can behold not only the Christ with form, but the formless Christ felt in the vastness of inner perception, because Christ is already present at that divine center of consciousness in all human beings. To experience Christ as the Cosmic Intelligence is far more wonderful than just seeing an image informed out of that Infinite Christ. That is the transcendental Christ which is the “only begotten Son,” the only begotten reflection of the Heavenly Father’s Cosmic Consciousness in all creation.

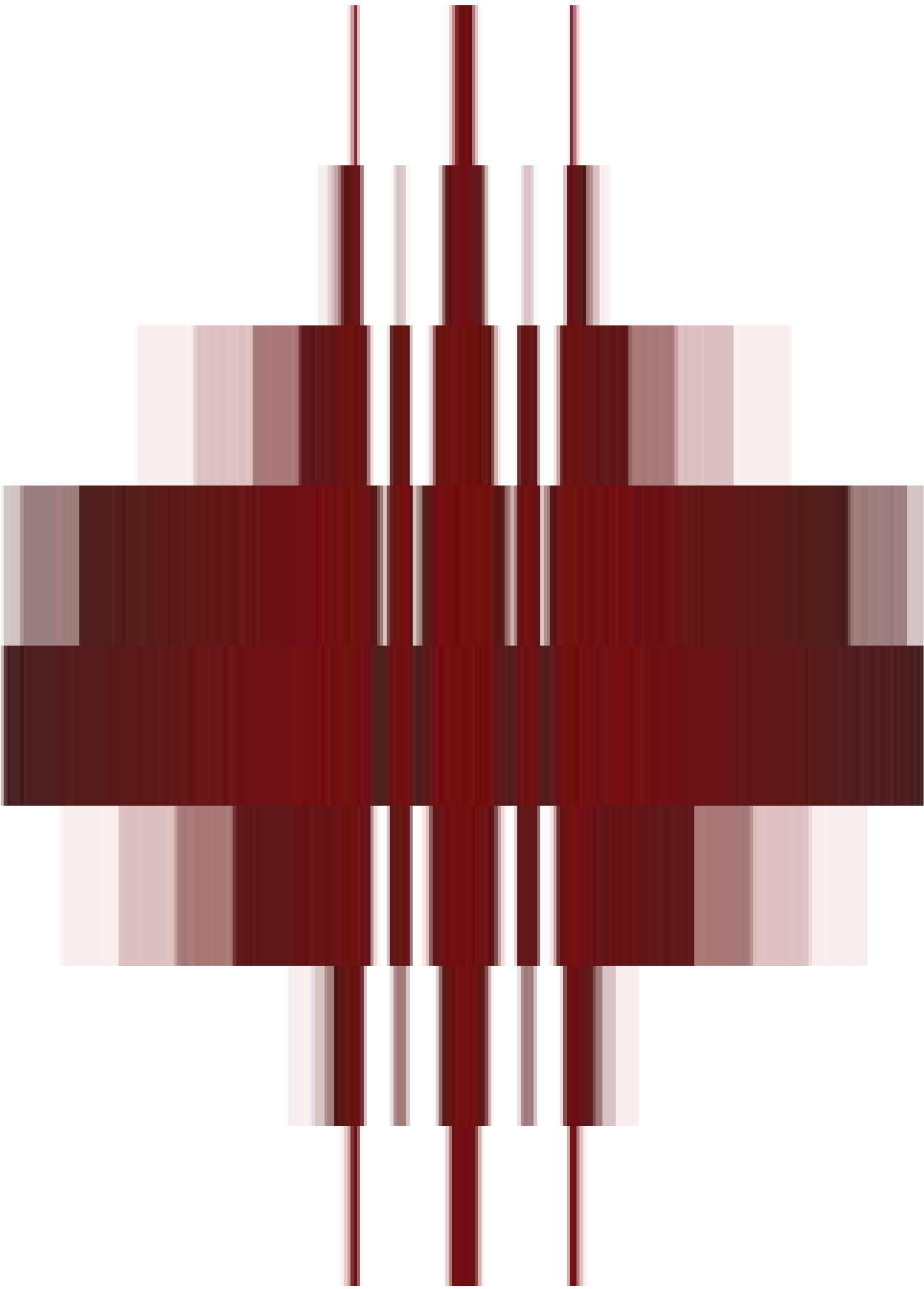
“Behold, he cometh with clouds (he shall come out of the clouds of ignorance) and every eye (spiritual eye) shall see him” (Revelation

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). It is the Spirit behind the body of Christ with which one should strive to be united—to rise from the tomb of ignorance and realize in the ascension of the soul the resurrection of the Christ within.

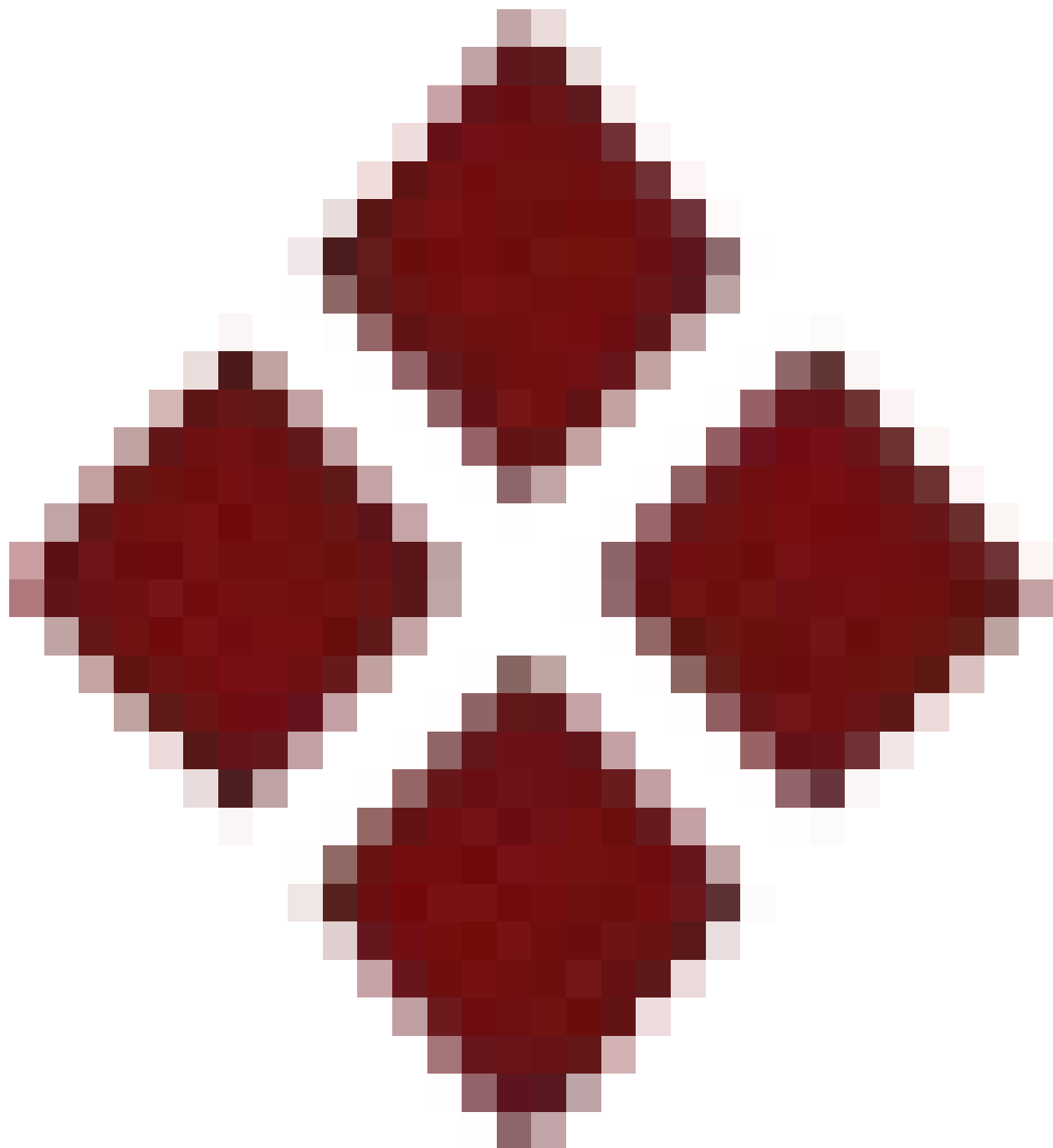
Addenda



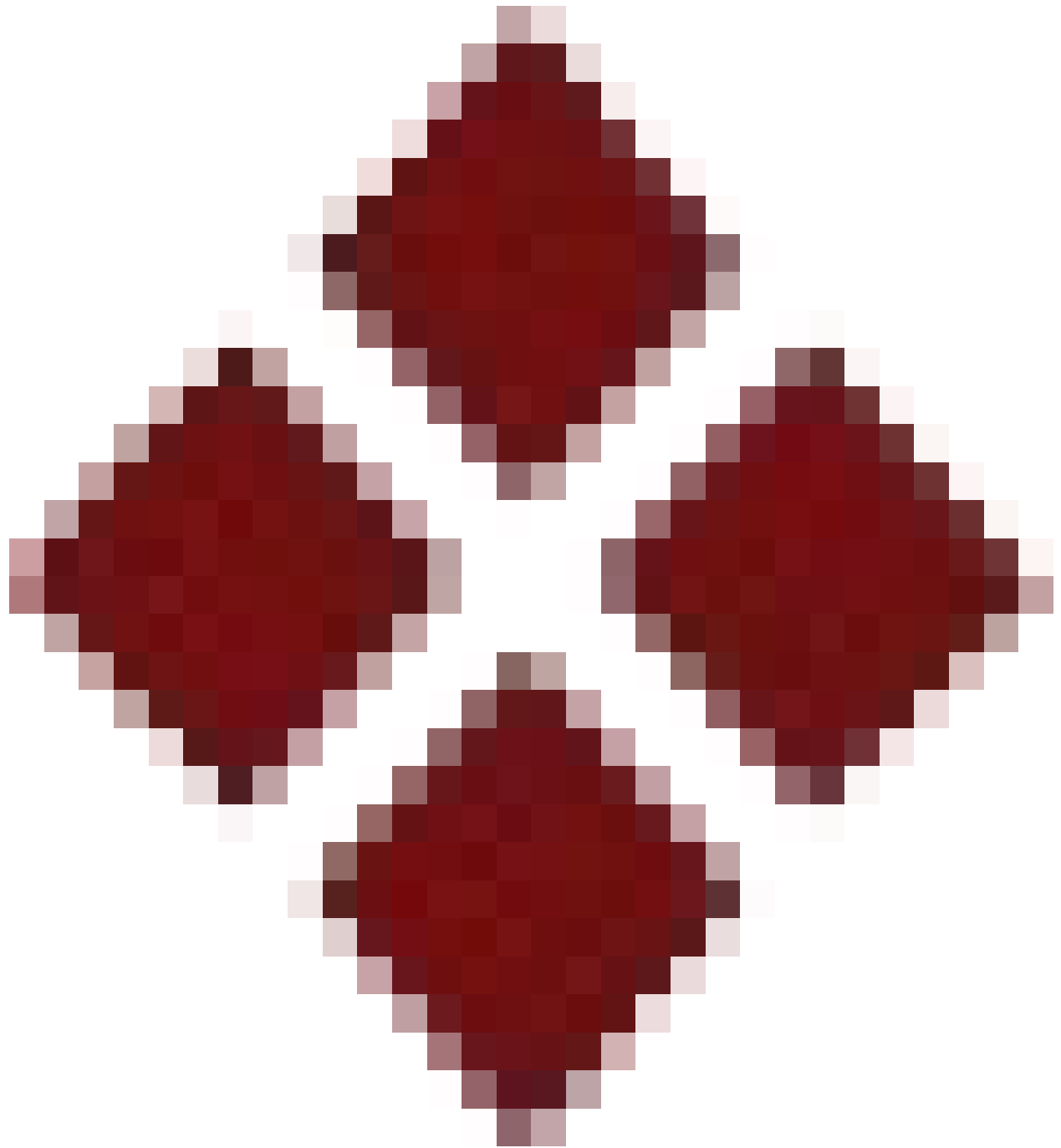
Inspirational Readings for the True Worship of Christ

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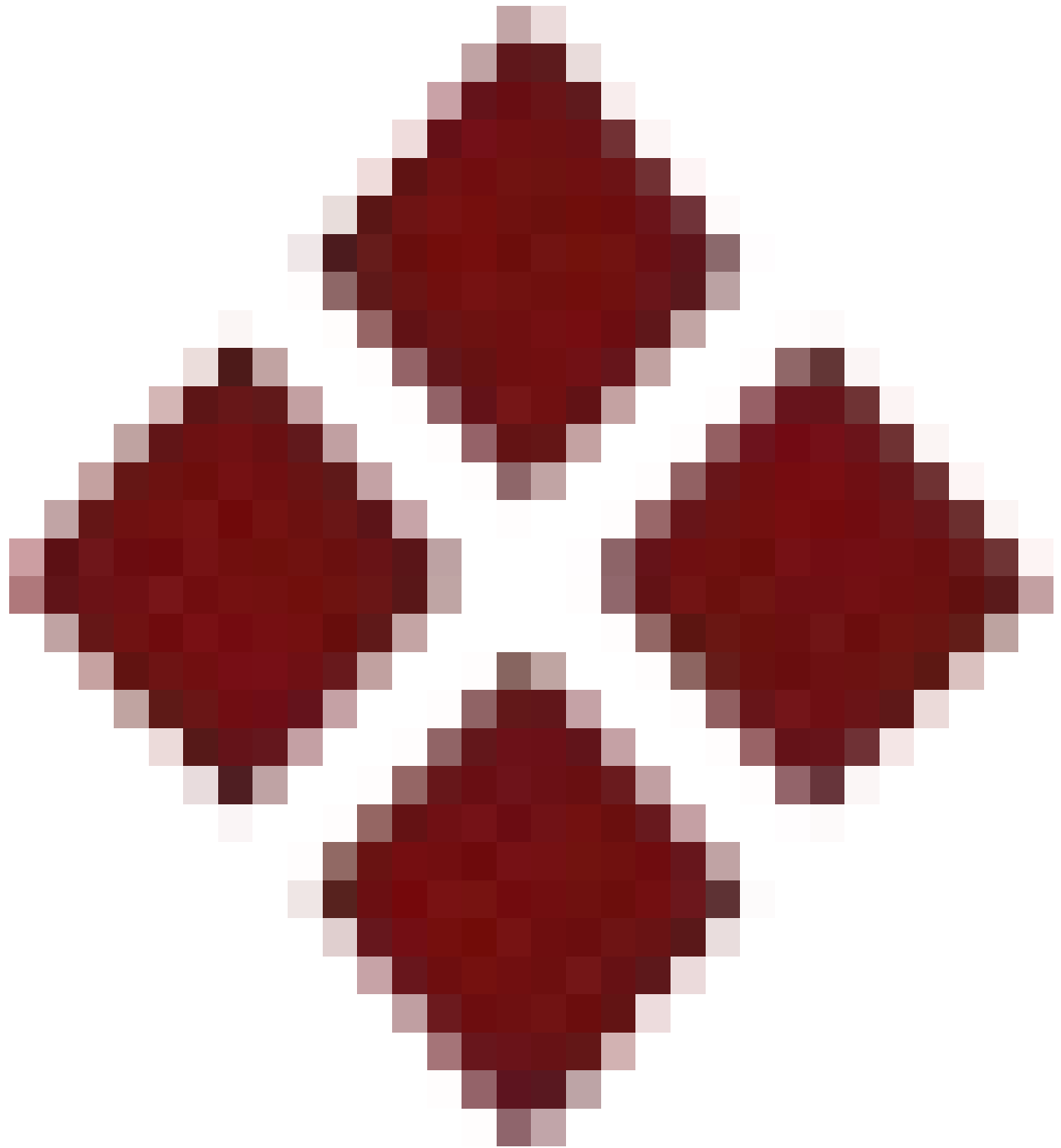
Part II, Easter



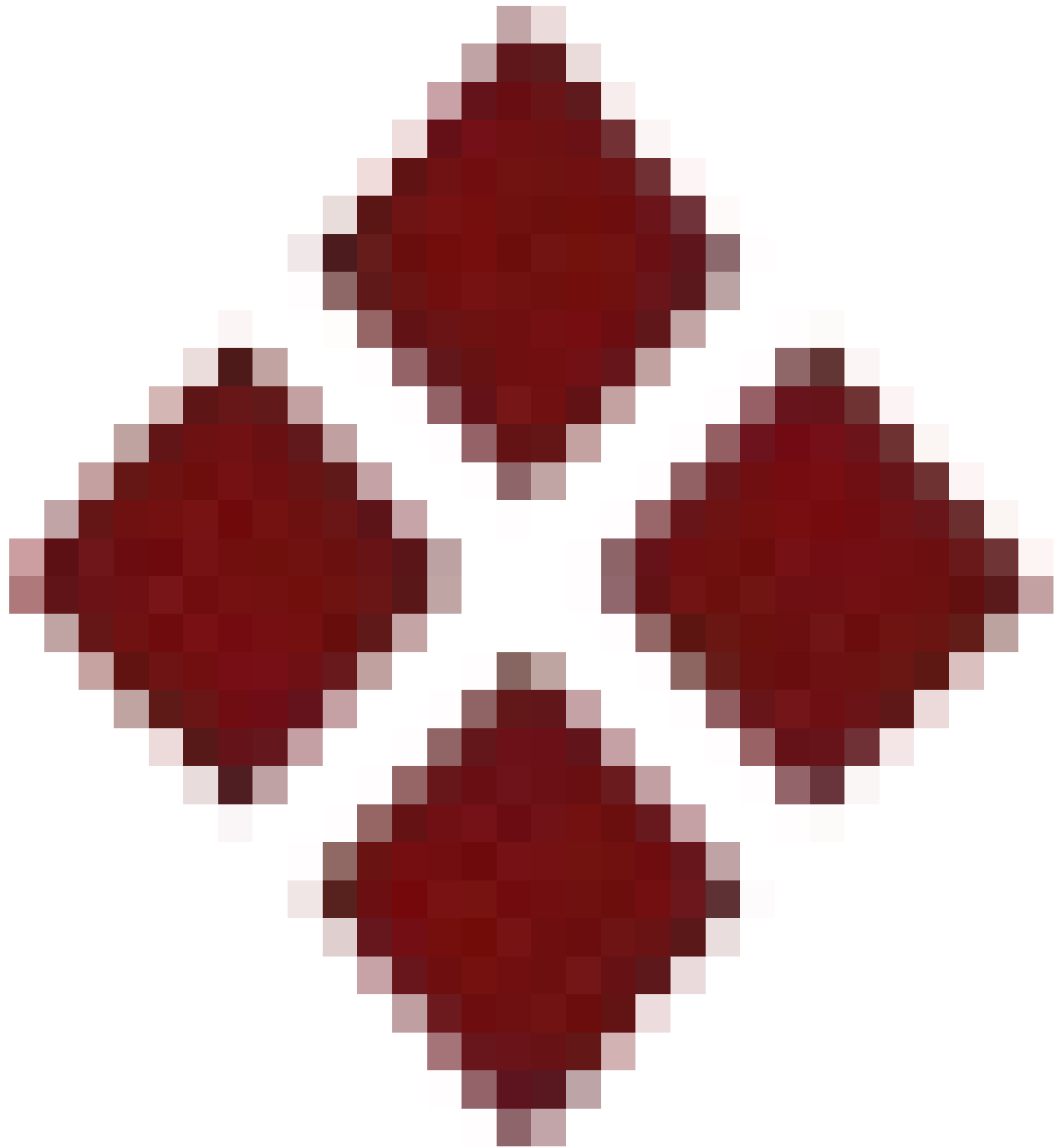
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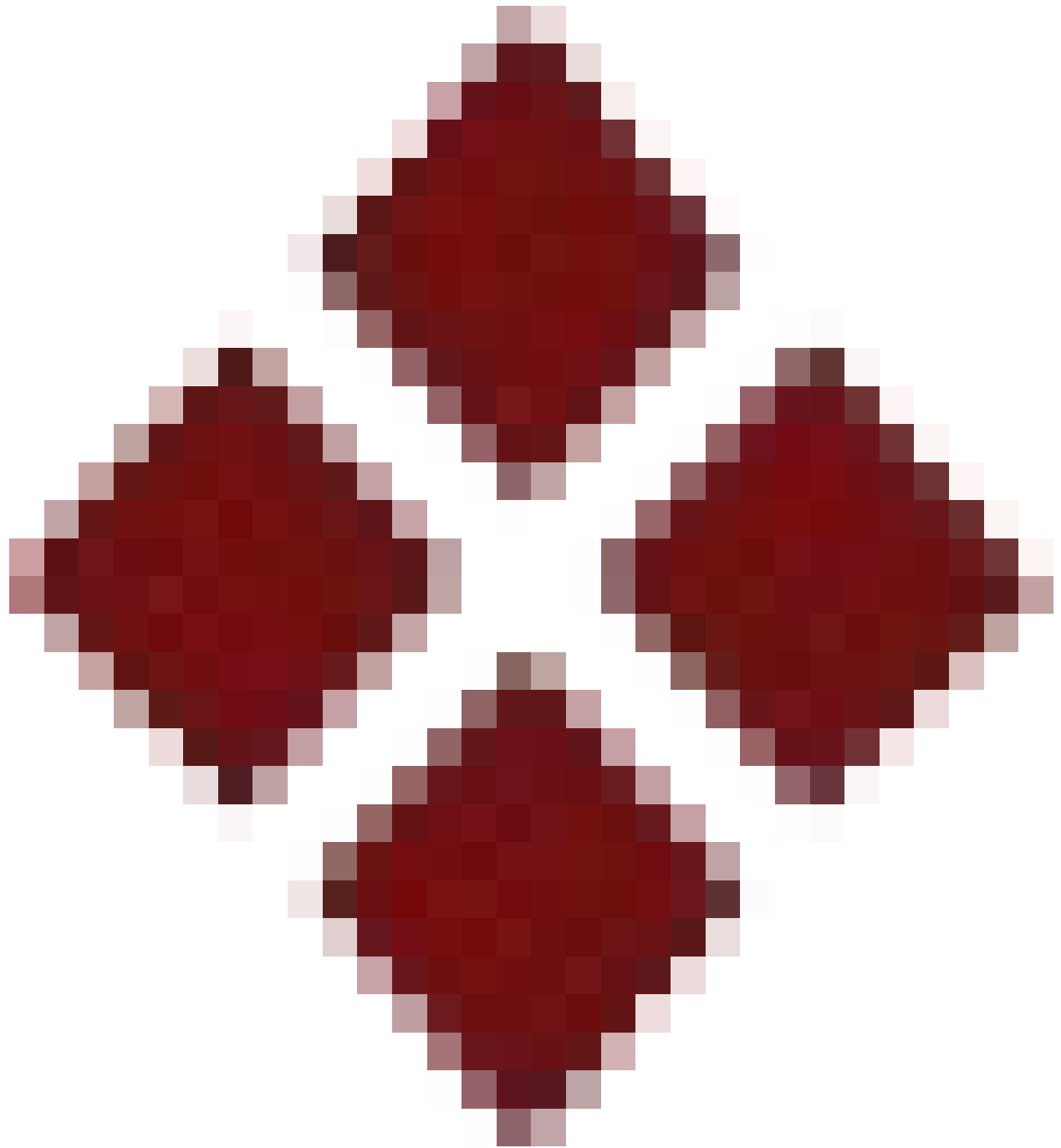
Aims and Ideals of Self-Realization Fellowship



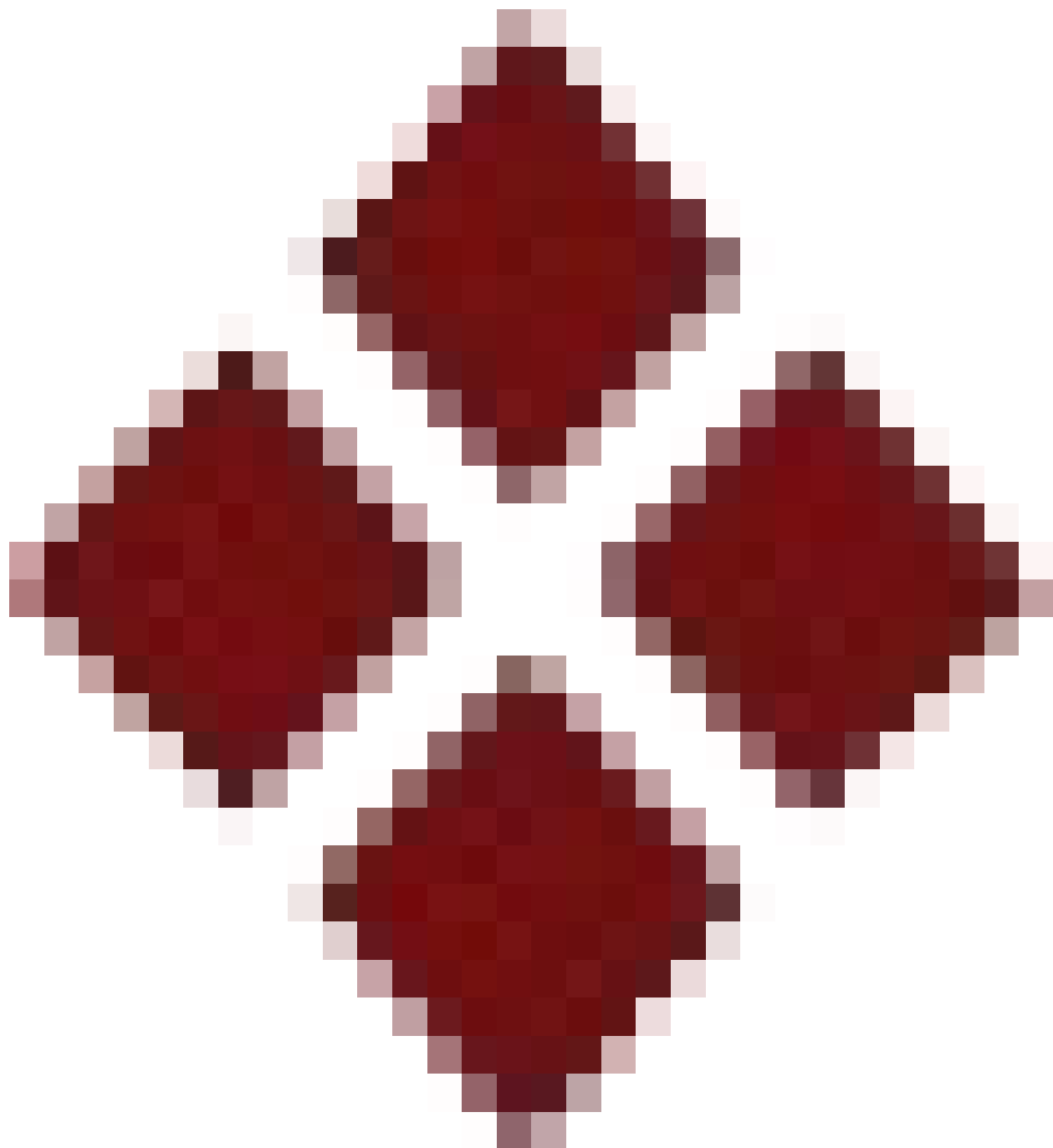
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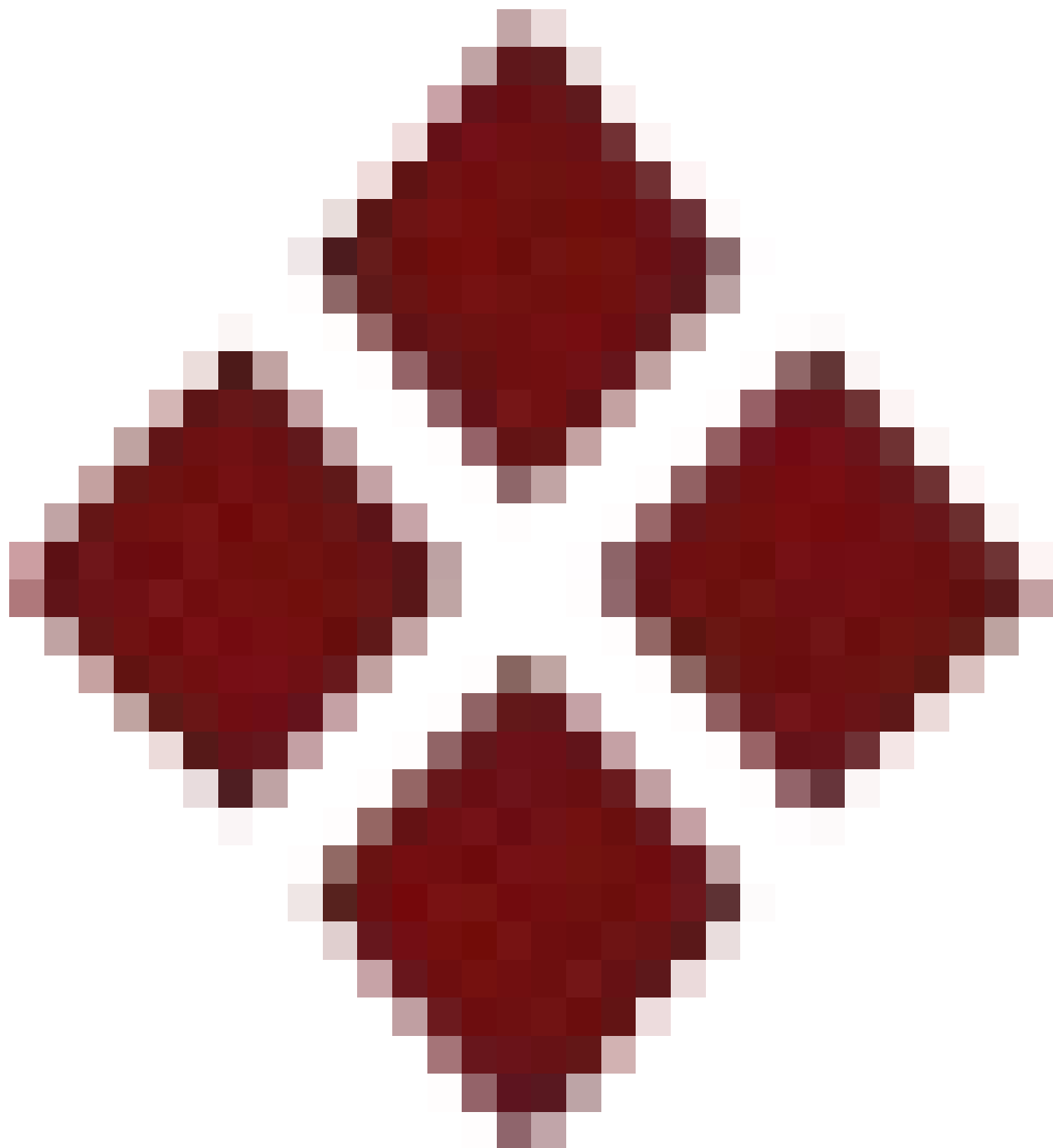
Glossary



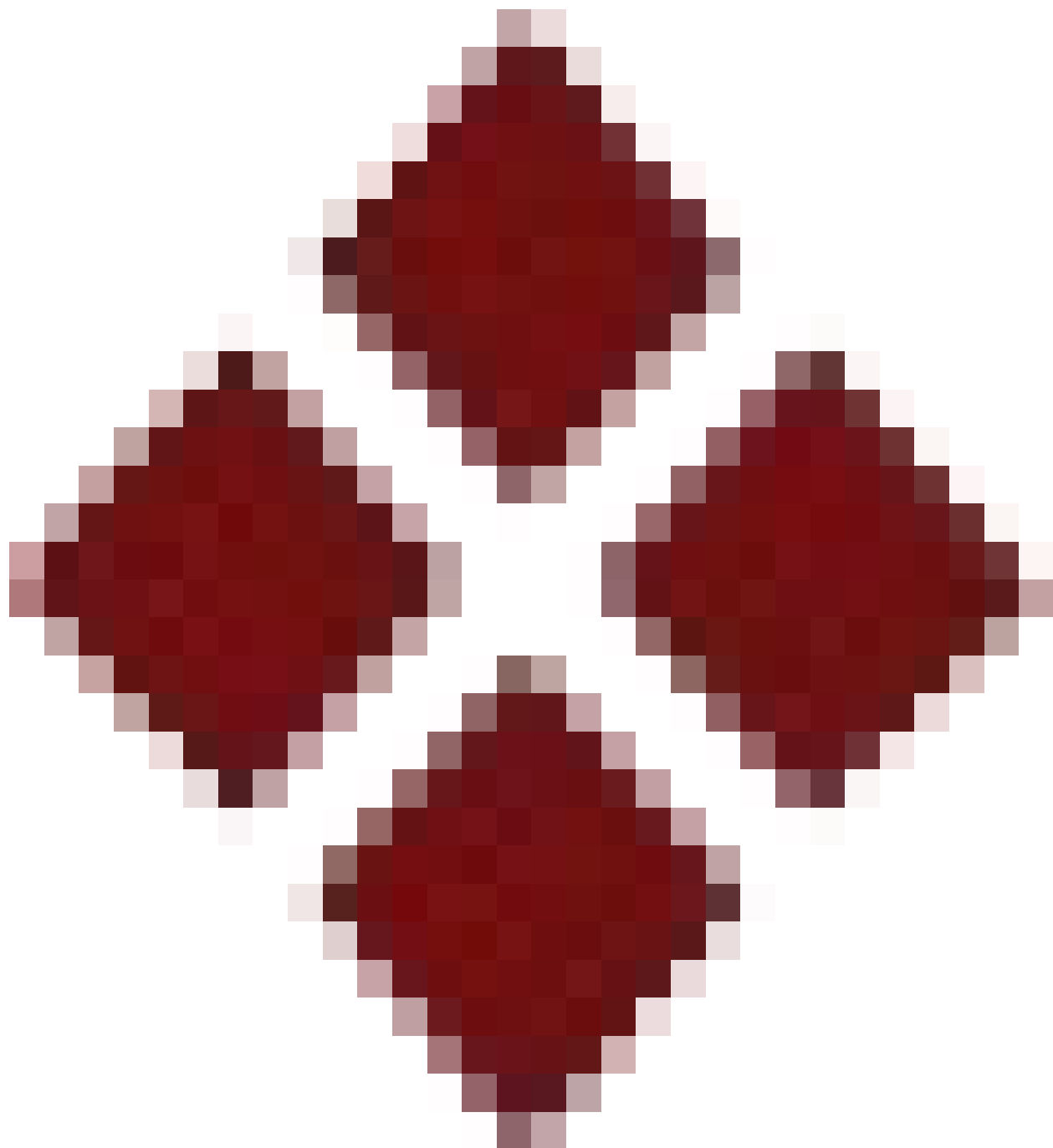
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Notes

Inspirational Readings for the True Worship of Christ

*Selections from the talks, devotional meditation services, and writings of Paramahansa Yogananda in commemoration of Christmas and Easter. A number of other inspirations from these holy seasons are to be found in his multi-volume *Collected Talks and Essays* published by Self-Realization Fellowship. In addition, several such selections are available from Self-Realization Fellowship on rare archival recordings in Paramahansaji's own voice.*

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Part I

A Christmas Message

Celebrating Christmas in the Consciousness of Christ

[A description of the first all-day Christmas meditation service held at Self-Realization Fellowship International Headquarters]

When Christmas comes, people usually think of buying gifts for their loved ones. A few think of the beauties of Christmas music and church services. Most celebrators revel in the festivity of the Christmas tree, with its glimmering electric “stars” and tinsel and the gaily wrapped gifts beneath its branches. It is good to celebrate the birth of Christ with songs, dinners, and the exchange of gifts; but if material festivity becomes the only purpose of all the Christmas celebration, it is a pity, and nothing of spiritual value is gained.

Let us learn how to make our celebration of Christmas a real commemoration of the holy life of Christ, a truly spiritual and uplifting experience. Once I saw a shotgun adorning a Christmas tree, and I remarked to my hostess: “Madam, that gift for your son is an insult to the Christ who preached ‘Thou shalt not kill.’ A gun means death, murder, revenge, brother fighting brother. For that reason it is out of place in the celebration of the birthday of the ‘Prince of Peace.’” The lady took the gun away, and placed there instead a beautiful edition of a children’s Bible. On Christmas Day we should exchange not only useful gifts, but God-reminding gifts as well.

The original meaning of religious symbols and holy days is often forgotten. Thus, most people think of Christmas as an ordinary holiday festivity and forget

Christ, the master of ceremonies. When used only as an occasion for festivity, the great spiritual significance of Christmas is lost sight of. As in a motion-picture show, the principal attention of the audience is on the story and not on the music, so in Christmas entertainment, the principal attention is on the material celebration, and Christ, though a most necessary part, is pushed into the background.

We should rejoice that such a holy being as Christ was given to serve as an ideal of perfection for deluded mankind to follow. Indifferent, unconscious honor shown to him will not do us any good. Christmas should be so observed that it may materially, mentally, and spiritually give us, at the least, a new impetus to start in the Christ-path of truth with the beginning of the new year.

We did this last year [

1931

] at the Self-Realization Fellowship Mother Center. A short description of the way we observed Christmas will give some suggestions as to how spiritual people should celebrate the coming Christmas.

To begin with, we did our Christmas shopping early. Every resident, and all others invited to the Christmas festivity, received a gift. However small in monetary value, it was rich with our love. Everyone in our divine family is considered close to us because of a spiritual tie, which is even stronger than a material tie of compulsion. We are gathered together in the name of our One Father, and have recognized ourselves as His children made in His image.

We knew that getting dinner for a hundred people, adorning the Christmas tree, and making all the arrangements, would take much time, and that in the din of activity Christ might slip away unnoticed from the altar of our attention. So the day before Christmas we fasted on fruits and suspended all cooking and other preparations for Christmas Day. We sat around the exquisitely decorated Christmas tree and alternately chanted and meditated deeply, from

8

a.m. until

4

p.m. We ate a supper of fruit and meditated again until

11

p.m. As we retired, many guests, with tears in their eyes, said: “We have felt Christ and God today. We never knew before what the deep diving into Cosmic Consciousness meant. Most of us swam on the surface of the sea of silence, but never dived to get the beautiful pearls of God-contact.”

Christmas morning we began with a meditation, and then the final preparations were completed and the long-looked-for dinner came. After that was the opening of the mystery packages, then a closing meditation and singing until late at night. So it was that our Christmas began in the consciousness of Christ and ended in his Expanded Consciousness.

With the coming of Christmas, do not let your consciousness sink into the well of turkey dinners, exchange of gifts, dances, festivities, and cocktail parties. A well of material thoughts is not a fit place in which to celebrate Christ’s birthday. Instead, take your consciousness from the confines of mere material festivities and with closed eyes enter the secret door of meditative silence to behold the vast altar of peace spread eternally above, beneath, to the left and to the right, in front and behind, within and without.

If you go deeper, you will meet Christ coming to you in his flaming robes of bliss, like the rising aurora, and your joy will dance in every atom of space. Then open your eyes, behold your little body, and say: “The Christ-Bliss is descending on the altar of my thought, feeling, and devotion.” Meditate upon the affirmation: “Christ-Peace is descending into every tissue and cell of my body as health.”

Place Christ on the altar of your business and possessions. Say: “I possess these things in Christ.” Then meditate on the affirmation: “My Christ-Peace has descended upon every member of my family, upon my country, and upon my world.” Behold Christ-Peace descending upon your body, your possessions, and extending to your neighbors, to all countries, and onto the united altar of all hearts and all creatures. Let Christ-Bliss extend from your body to all lands, to North America, South America, Asia, Europe, Australia, every continent and island; to the solar system, to the island universes, and to all beings. Meditate upon the following: “My Christ-Peace is descending upon every living thing,

upon every living star, upon every speck of matter and space.”

Celebrate Christmas upon the altar of the vast inner silence; in the sanctuary of every desire, every living thing in the world, in all the cosmos, celebrate the birth of Christ. Then will you know Christ as the Divine King ruling in the heart of all finite creation.

A Christmas Message

A Cradle for the Christ of Everywhere

During this coming Christmas season, open a new portal of sublime devotion so that the Christ Omnipresence will be able to come anew within your consciousness. Every day, every hour, every golden second, Christ has been knocking at your dark gates of ignorance. Now, in this august sacred dawn, Christ is especially coming in answer to your inner call, to awaken his Christ Consciousness Omnipresence within you.

Weave a cradle of tender perceptions with the threads of your meditation and make it commodious enough to hold the baby Infinity within its welcoming vastness. Christ is born in the viridescent blades; His gentleness is cradled in all fragrances. The opalescent sea-decked globe, the star-spangled savanna of the blue, the crimsoned love of the self-sacrificing martyrs and saints, have vied with each other in offering a dwelling place for the all-pervading baby Christ.

This Christ of Everywhere is sleeping in the breast of Eternity; He loves to take new birth at any time, anywhere, especially in the warmth of your true affection. Though the Infinite Christ is present in every speck of space as the splendor of ever new wisdom and creative expression, you can never see Him unless He chooses to be seen in the cradle of your unceasing devotion.

The cozy crib of your heart has for a very long time been small, holding self-love alone; now you must make it enormous, so that social, national, international, creatural, and Cosmic Christ – love may be born there and become One Love.

Christmas should be celebrated not only by appropriate festivities and the exchange of material gifts, but also by deep, continuous meditation, making your consciousness a cosmic cathedral for Christ. You should offer therein your most precious gifts of love, goodwill, and service to uplift your inimical brothers, as well as your friendly brothers—physically, mentally, and spiritually.

The Infinite Christ is everywhere; worship His nativity in Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, Moslem, Jewish, and other true religious temples. Every expression of Truth flows from the All-pervading Christ perception, so learn to worship that sacred Universal Intelligence in every pure religion, belief, and teaching. Since the Cosmic Christ dreamed into existence the divine being that is man, you should celebrate the birth of Christ in your newly awakened equal love for every nationality and race.

All new-blown blossoms and astral twinklings are images of the Infinite Christ; garland each one with your love. Behold in your love the birth of an intoxicating Christ-love for your parents, friends, relatives, neighbors, and all races. In the sanctuary of your soul, invite your restless thoughts to assemble and still themselves in a service of deepest united love for Christ.

When the Christmas packages are placed around the family tree, make every thought an altar of Christ, and saturate the gifts with your goodwill. Worship Christ as born in all creation: in the star, in the leaf, in the blossom, in the nightingale, in the nosegay, and in your velvet devotion. Unite your heart with all hearts, so that Christ may be born there and remain forever and forever.

A Christmas Message

When Will You Know That Christ Is With You?

Jesus was born in the cradle of Christ Consciousness twenty centuries ago. His universal Christ Consciousness is reborn in every wise man. Are you ready in the coming Christmas to expand your soul to behold within yourself the birth of the Omnipresent Christ?

To observe the birthday of Jesus with gifts and festivities shows some respect and attention to the ideals of his life. But to meditate and prepare your mind for the holy occasion of Christmas, that you may experience within yourself the birth of a new consciousness of universal brotherhood and love for all living creatures, is to really celebrate Christmas. Drive away from your mind all pride and prejudices, that you may fittingly hold the omnipresent Christ Consciousness in your love-expanded bosom.

If at Christmas you find your strong will unconquered by the tests of temptations, know that Christ is born within you in reality.

If in the coming Christmas you can maintain inner peace when crucified with disquietude, know that Christ is with you.

If at Christmas you can meditate with deep joy in spite of the restless horde of invading thoughts, know that Christ as the divine joy of meditation has manifested within you.

When you cannot be roused to wrath by crucifixion through others' wickedness, know that you are ready for Christ. When you feel love for all in spite of any hatred toward you, know that an altar for Christ is created within you.

When all the time you can feel within you the ecstasy of unbroken joy of meditation, know that Christ is with you evermore, and that within your deathless consciousness you will celebrate the true Christmas experience every moment, every minute, every day, every year, unto eternity.

A Christmas Message

Realizing the Christ Presence

Do not think of Christ in the manger at Bethlehem as a helpless little baby; for even as the tiny infant Jesus, within his consciousness was omnipresent God. How else could he, when only a young boy, talk in a manner that startled even the wise men of the temple? While he had a little-boy brain, behind it and manifesting through it was the almighty spirit of God. The universal spirit of Christ Consciousness was with him from the beginning.

That is the real reason why we should celebrate his birthday—to remind ourselves of the divine qualities of Jesus, and to awaken ourselves to a realization of the enlightening, loving Christ Presence in our own consciousness. It is a pity that so many people forget entirely the real purpose of the Christmas celebration and lose themselves in the material side only of the joyous festivities.

Christ has been unknown to you because you have kept the gates of your devotion closed. Take this Christmas celebration seriously and through deep and sustained meditation invite the Christ to manifest himself to you. His beloved disciple Saint John said: “As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.” Then why not make yourself ready to receive him now? It is easier at this season than at any other time, for a spirit of goodwill, love, and peace radiates throughout the world. The entire cosmos celebrates this season of joy for the Light that permeates all space.

Remember what Jesus was in reality. But he came on earth as a human being and went through all the struggles and suffering of a human being and came through victoriously. That is why he can be an example for us, an ideal toward which we may strive. If he could succeed, we may also.

We must live life unselfishly as he lived it and must faithfully practice the method of interiorization for realizing the presence of that Almighty Grace within—the method of persistent meditation. Christ must come in that cathedral

of inner silence. Go so deep within the great silence that you feel the one Life that pervades all creation. Then you will find the Christ Presence.

Christ is born in the cradle of each loving heart. So you must prepare your consciousness to receive him. Instead of enjoying just the material aspects of this Christmas celebration, make your heart a cradle where Christ can be born again.

Be sure that love and goodwill accompany the gifts you give, and recognize the spirit and the hand of the Father in those you receive. Give extra time to meditation for at least the week preceding Christmas, devoting several hours to divine communion on one of those days; and be sure to meditate on Christmas morning. Accept this great gift of the life of Jesus, which the Father meant for you. Do not let Jesus' living and his suffering be in vain. He came to bring you joy, and glory, and peace, and light. These he offers to you always, but with especial tenderness and love at this holy season. Wake up and accept the Christ-gifts of life.

Christ is the joy felt in meditation. Christ is the perception realized in the deepest hours of silence. Clear away all the bars of material desire and let Christ into your heart. Open the portals of devotion and meditate until the Christ child is born within you.

May you have a very merry Christmas, and may you receive the greatest gift that anyone can wish for you—the perception of the Christ spirit in your own heart. May you feel his presence on Christmas Day and every day throughout the new year. Open your hearts to receive the wonderful gift of Light. Meditate. Meditate until you get results. The answer is sure if you persist. Love, serve, meditate.

Christmas Meditation Service

Come to the Land Where Christ Reigns

[An inspirational talk given during one of the all-day Christmas meditations conducted by Paramahansaji at Self-Realization Fellowship International Headquarters—one day prior to the festive social celebrations on Christmas Day.]

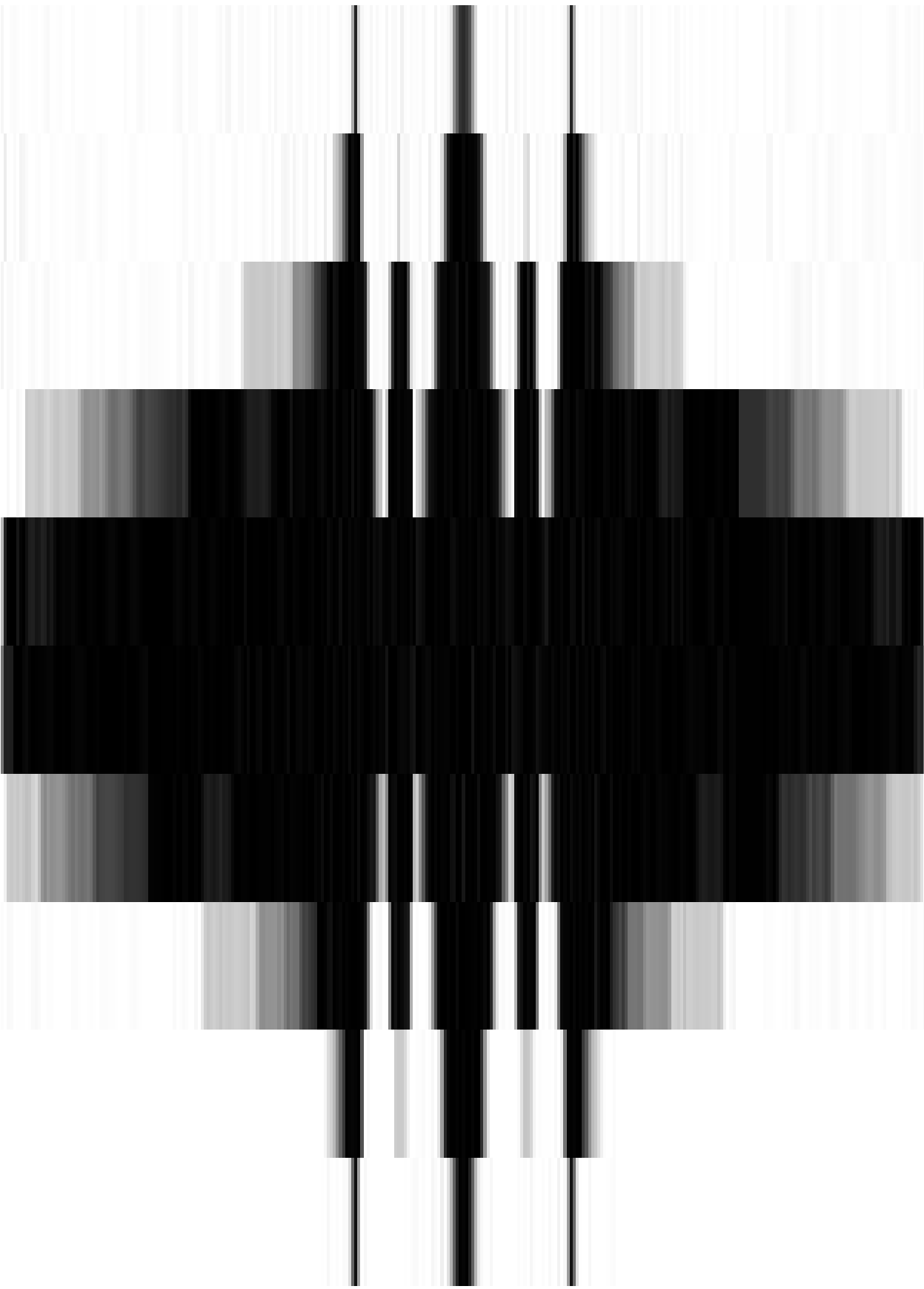
Today we celebrate Christ in Spirit; tomorrow we celebrate the coming of Christ in the body of Jesus. We shall prepare our minds and consciousness that in true understanding we may observe Christmas as the birth of Christ in the cradle of our souls and in all mental and physical expressions of our lives.

Thousands around the world are celebrating Christmas; for most it is primarily a time for festivities and the exchange of presents. But Christmas is far more than a holiday celebration for the masses. For me, Christmas has a greater meaning: the consciousness of the significance of Christ—an individualistic consciousness wherein I find Christ as the Universal Spirit manifesting in my own consciousness. That is what is most important—to bring the actual realization of Christ into our observance of Christmas.

When a great personality has come on earth, it is customary for a special day to be set aside to honor that figure, often in a social or material way. If this is the only manner in which one observes the birth of Christ, I think it is an insult to him, and is not a proper celebration. I have often said that Christ was crucified at the hands of ignorant people not only once, but that he is being crucified all the time by those who do not know the true meaning of the life and teachings of Christ. Ignorant people desecrate their souls by nonunderstanding and their own misguided actions.

Of course, homage paid to Christ in whatever manner always does some good.

Christmas festivity evokes the sentiment of the peace of this divine soul who came into the world to serve as a beacon of light to guide stray hearts. There is also the spirit of joy that abounds in traditional Christmas observances. Perfect joy, joy that is connected with purity, is the joy of God. Those who celebrate even from the material standpoint will experience something of this joy. They will find, at least for a time, a certain sense of freedom from their cares and sorrows, and from some of the inimical and evil thoughts that have tainted the feeling in their hearts. And there is an essence of love in the elements of sacrifice and friendship experienced in the giving of gifts. Love, the divine love of God, is the most inspiring truth that Jesus demonstrated; it was the power by which he could return love and forgiveness for the hatred he received. To express hate for hate is easy and basely human, but to love in the face of enmity and unkindness is greatness. Love is the stronger weapon; it can destroy hatred. The remembrance of the exemplary divine goodness of Jesus that was manifested in all he did, the thought of the Divine Love he gave, and that in that Love he lived and died to uplift the world—that is the spirit predominant at Christmastime. All this is what Christmas stands for.



Prepare for Christ the cradle of your consciousness

I give you this talk that you may know the purpose of this our Christmas meditation day. It is the preparation to receive the Baby Christ on the altar of our awakened spiritual consciousness. But the Baby needs a cradle. His presence is spread over all the stars and universes—omnipresent, in everything. But he loves the cradle of hearts, the cradle of our own divine consciousness. And so, we prepare that cradle for him today.

The divine way Christ in the form of Jesus came on earth, the way he was tested to bring mankind a new Light, a new Glory—showing that by attunement with the Invisible Light that leads to God the human heart may be freed of all despair and mortal darkness—that is what we should remember today as we make ready the inner cradle of consciousness to receive and hold him.

You must plunge deeper and deeper into the spirit of meditation, to where the mind crosses the entrenchments of bad habits of physical and mental restlessness and arrives at the sanctuary of peace and bliss. The deeper the meditation, the easier it becomes to perceive Christ. Those who are intimidated by the effort required, and hence give up, never get beyond the obstacles of the body and mind. The greatest victory to be achieved is over our own selves; it lies in the conquering of our mental deficiencies and wrong habits. I want you to go with me to the land beyond, where Christ reigns. It is very easy for me. Every day is a Christmas, for I revel in the glory of the Lord, and I find that the Baby Christ as Christ Consciousness is cradled always in my own consciousness. I want you to have that realization.

What is Christ Consciousness? Christ is God's Infinite Intelligence that is present in all creation. The Infinite Christ is the "only begotten son" of God the Father, the only pure Reflection of Spirit in the created realm. That Universal Intelligence, the Kutastha Chaitanya or Krishna Consciousness of the Hindu scriptures, was fully manifested in the incarnation of Jesus, Krishna, and other divine ones; and it can be manifested also in your consciousness. You, too, are a child of God. That same consciousness can be yours. That is what you must always remember. I give you the testimony of Saint John, who spoke of receiving that divine consciousness which was in Jesus: "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God."

So it is true that Christ is the only begotten son of God—not the body, but the Christ Consciousness that was in Jesus.

I have seen Christ Jesus as he lived on earth. But greater than the body is the consciousness of Christ, which is one with God or Cosmic Consciousness. Christ remains unknown to those who know him solely as a body. He is known truly only to those who perceive him as Spirit.

The divine power of Christ realization is an internal experience; it may be received through unalloyed devotion for God and for His pure reflection as Christ. The power of church and temple will vanish. Real spirituality shall come from the temples of great souls who are day and night in the ecstasy of God. Such souls as I have seen in India surpass the glory of all the temples. Remember, Christ seeks the temples of true souls. He loves the quiet shrine of devotion in your heart where you abide with him, there in the sanctuary aglow with the vigil light of your love. Those who meditate devoutly will receive Christ on the altar of calmness in their own consciousness.



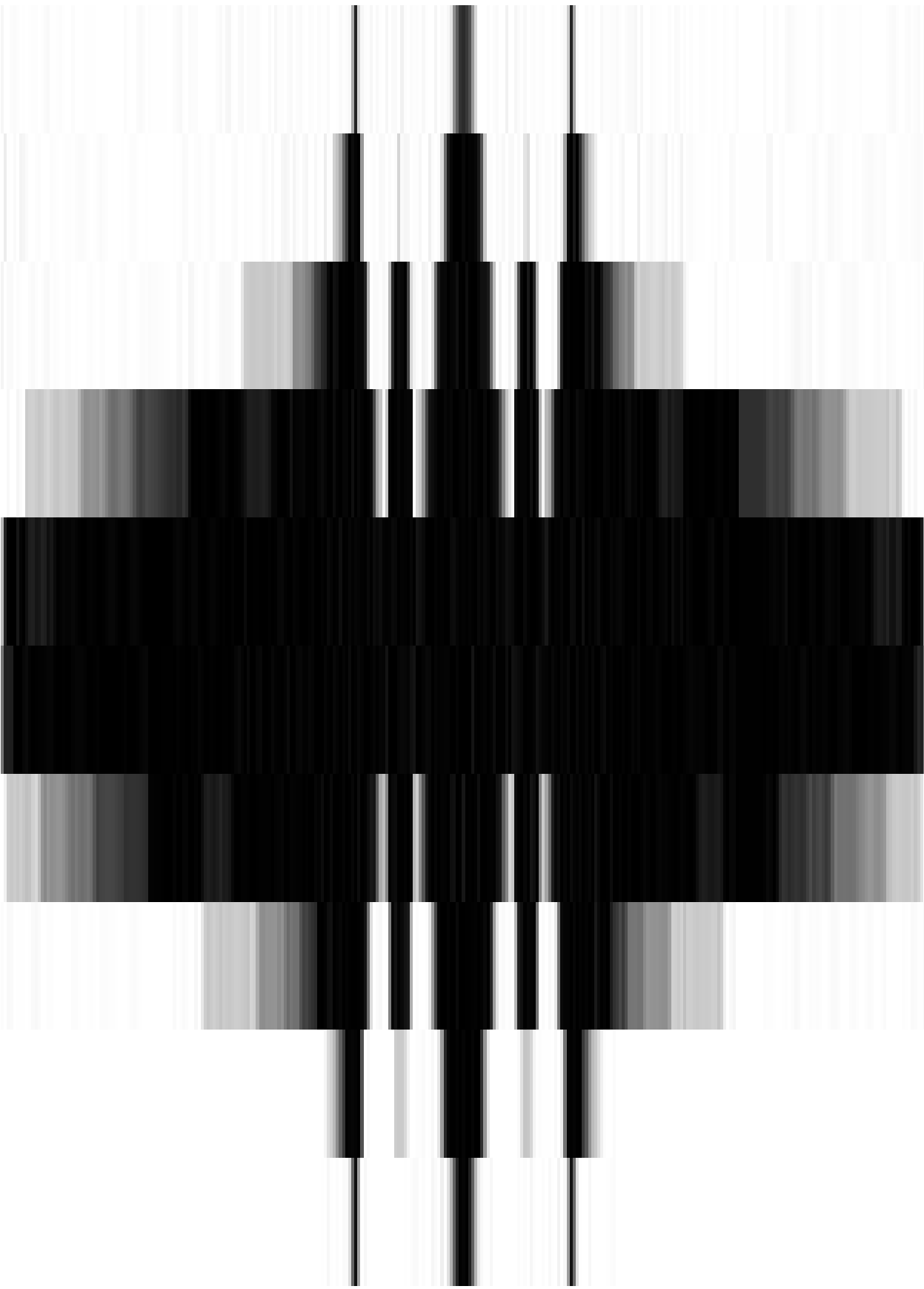
The star of the East that leads to Christ

The star of the East that led the Three Wise Men to Christ was no physical star, but rather a spiritual star. It would be impossible for such a planetary body to suddenly appear and remain so close to the earth without a collision.

Absence of the visible material light is darkness. But behind material darkness is the spiritual light, which is everywhere. When you pierce the darkness of closed physical eyes, you behold the light of the spiritual eye—the intuitive, all-seeing eye of the soul. Through that spiritual eye you can enter the sphere of awakened silence. It is there, behind the clouds of darkness, that you perceive Christ. Today we will prepare our minds by meditation until our entire consciousness passes through that telescopic eye and beholds the overspreading divine consciousness of the Infinite Christ.

Just imagine! If you were living in this one room all of your life, having no contact with or knowledge of what is beyond these walls, you would say that this is the whole of your world. But if someone were to take you into the world outside, you would realize how infinitesimal your “world” was. So it is with the perception of Christ Consciousness. The scope of mortal consciousness by comparison is like observing only the area of a tiny mustard seed to the exclusion of the rest of the cosmos. Christ Consciousness is Omnipresence, the Lord spread over every pore of infinite space and permeating every atom. When in deep meditation we peer through the spiritual eye, we behold God’s creation-evolving spiritual light afloat in the vast sphere of our awakening in Christ.

Let us today prepare our consciousness to celebrate spiritually the birth of Christ. Let Christ, who is the only pure reflection in creation of the Consciousness of God the Father, enter into our consciousness.



A vision of Christ

All those who have attained Christhood can retain the physical likenesses of their incarnations on earth, and they can manifest those forms to their true devotees. If you are not able to see Jesus when you pray to him, it is because you do not really try. If you want to perceive Christ, the way is through intensity and perseverance in meditation. Sacrifice sleep, discipline the body, control the mind; burn the darkness of closed eyes with your meditation. Then you will have Christ with you. As God is true, your prayer will be answered if you make the right effort.

Many times I have seen Christ manifested in form. Once in Boston, during a very busy period, I suddenly felt that for three days I had forgotten God. I was wholly engaged in His work, forgoing sleep and everything. So it seemed that by lack of meditation I had left God out. This thought was so painful to me that I packed up my belongings and said to Him: “I am going to walk out of all this activity. It is for You that I am doing all this; yet because of it, I have forgotten You!” What is the use of having a spiritual organization if God is not there? It is just like preparing a banquet for an honored guest and having that person absent from the table. I sat to meditate, and prayed to God: “I am going now!”

His voice replied: “No.”

I argued: “But what is the use of all this if it causes me to forget You?”

The voice of God answered: “I am with you always.”

I wanted from God some demonstration of that assurance: “All right, if You are with me always, I would like to see You as Krishna and Christ and all their disciples walking on a sea of gold.” As I said this, that very vision unfolded before me—Krishna and Christ and their disciples walking toward me on a shimmering golden sea. My mind said: “Maybe this is a hallucination. If the person who is meditating here with me sees the vision also, then I will believe.” At that moment, this person saw the same manifestation that I was perceiving. The room became filled with a wonderful fragrance that remained all day long and was perceptible to everyone who entered the room.

Such experiences are not imagination. As you progress on this path you shall see

the wonders of God. Sometime during January I shall give a demonstration of the power of mind over the body. Even as a child, I used to show that power; but I gave it up because my desire was for God's love and not His miracles. I show His power only when He has given me permission to do so. My interest is in spiritual healing, more than in any other kind of healing or phenomenal demonstration. My wish is to draw those who love God. I prefer a soul to a crowd, and I love crowds of souls. Many times it seemed that my love's labor was lost, but then I would be amazed to see the development of some sincere students. This I can say: No one who comes to me with an open mind and spiritual reciprocity shall go away without some perception of God.



Know that God is your own

Many lack faith in God unless they receive evidence of His powers. Faith is very important, because receptivity to divine power is shut off by negative thoughts and doubts. Faith grows as you exercise it; and when you have faith, you can do everything. If you can hold on to an idea long enough, and do not give up when opposed by contrary evidence, even if the whole world says it is impossible; if you can fight the negative thoughts of people and keep your own thoughts strong while working toward your goal, it will manifest.

When we wish for God, there is nothing we have to create or acquire. We have Him already. He is with us, buried beneath the debris of doubts and unbelief. All you have to do is know that God is your own. With material things, you do not own anything; you have to beg for everything you get. Why degrade yourself to the status of a beggar when you are a child of God? Do not go on desiring too many things. Just say to the Lord: “I am having a good time participating in Your cosmic drama, and I am happy with whatever You send to me.” That is living in the real spirit of Christ.

Anything you enjoy apart from God is potentially destructive to your true happiness. If the senses are connected with God they will serve you; but if they are not settled in God, they will destroy you. To remain drunk with materiality is to be tossed about like waves in a storm; but when you are safe on the Divine Shore, then you will see all waves of life as a part of the Ocean of God—the Sea of Christ Consciousness. Ordinary people are buffeted about by the winds of emotions and desires, unable to see the Infinite Ocean as the essence of their life and being. Meditation gives you a chance to realize that we are all waves of life dancing on the Sea of Christ Consciousness in God. Do not live in ignorance; do not die in delusion.

I used to pray urgently to God: “Hours are passing, days and years will go by, but I will not give up until You come to me; I want You, my Beloved, only You.” He came at last, and is always with me now. Nothing can take Him away. It does not matter to me whether the world accepts or forsakes me, or whether friends support or leave me. I have God. When He is with you, He makes you fearless, secure in His love.

The best time to make love to God is at night when you are free and the world is asleep. Take your heart away from everything and give it only to God in deep meditation. I practiced that. Now, no matter what I am doing, working or meditating, my mind is on God. So it must be with you. When you become drunk with God you don't lose your balance even in the midst of troubles and activities.

Never go to bed until you have made real contact with God. Then in the daytime you will be able to conquer all the temptations and destructive forces that confront you. Nobody can take your peace away from you. Nothing can take away that divine love between you and God. Be determined!

The Lord is waiting to see if perchance we use our God-given freedom to seek Him, our own Beloved. When we do, that pleases Him more than anything else. If instead we use our freedom to cast Him away, then He is filled with sorrow. When freely we give our love to Him—not because He is great and all-powerful, but because He is our own, and because we are His children, expressions of His One Consciousness—that is what He loves.

If you want to see God, who is formless, He will come as Christ Consciousness in form—as was manifested in the body of Jesus, in the body of Mahavatar Babaji, or other of the great ones.



“My first love—for Krishna—was responded to!”

I remember one evening in my boyhood years in India, a friend and I sat for meditation, and I vowed: “We will see Krishna tonight!” My desire to see him was adamant. I made up my mind that my prayer to know Krishna would be answered. Unless you have that kind of devotion and determination, what is the use of praying? Your mind will remain busy with restless thoughts. As the night wore on, my friend became restless because he didn’t cross over the trenches that lie in the path of meditation. Finally he said, “Let us go to bed now.” But I was in joy of expectation of the coming of Krishna. I wasn’t seeing anything; yet I felt I was on the right track. Six o’clock in the morning came, and my friend again urged, “Come on, let’s go to bed!” But I returned, “I shall never give up!” Just as I said that, fulfillment came. With open eyes I saw Lord Krishna! My friend couldn’t see him but he felt the divine presence. When I reached out and touched my companion, he also saw what I saw. My first love—for Krishna—was responded to!

If you want to see any particular saint or avatar, you must cultivate the divine consciousness to receive that manifestation. Right here in this chapel while I was giving a sermon, Saint Francis of Assisi once came to me; and from that experience I wrote the poem, “God! God! God!”¹ And so I tell you, it is wonderful to live in that all-encompassing Christ Consciousness. You must realize Christ in Spirit first, and then you can see Him in form.

Self-Realization Fellowship is awakening that divine consciousness in true souls. Those who will meditate and receive Christ in their consciousness, they will be the real saints.

And so on this Christmas meditation day, with adamant heart prepare your mind. In divine perception, everything will melt into the sea of Christ Consciousness. To me, everything is One—afire with the same one consciousness of God. Today meditate so deeply and so fervently that you feel Christ, that you know he is real, and not just a scriptural idea spread by the intellectual exultation of others. Let Christ today become a reality in your consciousness, that your life may reflect Christ to all whom you contact. Christ is real. He must come to you.

A Christmas Message

Let Us Rejoice

Let us make this Christmas a real celebration of the birth of the holy child by striving to realize the consciousness which he attained.

Let us make this celebration an uplifting and spiritual experience.

Let us not for a moment forget the one whose birthday is being commemorated while in our zeal we go about the joyful and exciting preparation of the happy festivities.

Let us use this occasion as a new impetus to inspire us on the Christ-path of truth and love.

Let us use it as an opportunity to express the Universal Christ-love for all people and all creatures—exalted and lowly, near and far, large and small, known and unknown.

While we are remembering the physical birth of the baby Christ Jesus, let us realize his eternal loving presence in omnipresent Christ Consciousness, which is always with us no matter where we are or what we are doing.

Let us resolve anew to discipline ourselves—to control our bodies, our minds, and our emotions—and to strive ever toward Christ understanding.

Let us establish the Prince of Peace consciousness as our inner ruler, that we may meet our crosses and tests of life with power, victory, and tranquility.

Let us meditate until we perceive the Infinite Christ reigning in our own hearts.

Let us learn to love those who love us not; and to forgive those who do ill against us.

Let us break all our mental boundaries of color, creed, and nationality, and receive all—even our inanimate and animal brothers—in the endless, all-embracing arms of our Christ Consciousness. This will be a true and fitting celebration of the coming of Jesus Christ to this earth.

Let us rejoice and give thanks for this wonderful gift of light and love from the Great Giver.

Peace. Joy. Peace.

A Christmas Message

How Shall We Celebrate Christmas?

For twenty centuries, the world has celebrated in various ways the birth of Christ. Many count the coming of Christmas as an occasion for family gatherings and the exchange of colorfully wrapped gifts. Young children look upon Christmas as the time when Santa Claus will give them new toys and other things they are wishing for. They hang their stockings by the fireplace, and Santa is said to slip down the sooty opening of the chimney to fill them with the longed-for articles. With what anticipation the little ones lie awake the night before, waiting for Christmas morn, till they drift off into happy dreams! The mothers and fathers delight in decorating the family Christmas tree and loading it with gaily wrapped presents.

Many who have no home and family look forward to Christmas as perhaps one time in the year when they will be invited to a special home-cooked hot dinner. The worldly minded enjoy their social rounds, and drink themselves into oblivion as their way of celebrating the birth of Christ.

To the practical-minded, Christmas has also a mercenary side. Churches count on the spirit of the season to bring bigger collections to support their work; and on the same basis merchants encourage spending in anticipation of higher profits. There is nothing wrong in using business methods to advance the spiritual work of Christ to establish his ideals in receptive souls; but it is blasphemous to use Christ and his ideals merely as a means for increasing business.

Christmas in many churches means great festivity, and is observed with music, plays, ceremonies, socials, and often extra charitable works. In special religious services the congregations fervently thank God for sending His beloved son "to redeem the sin-laden world." Those who are deeply spiritual, such as the sincere monks and nuns sequestered in their monasteries and convents, celebrate Christmas even more seriously and fervently, by meditating on Christ.

Superficial celebrators turn his hallowed day into little more than an expensive social occasion. They at least get out of Christmas a few gifts, the kindness and love behind those gifts, and some passing moments of joy. But how few receive its fullest blessings, by really celebrating Christmas in the thought of Christ! Most people do not know how to celebrate the coming of Christ on earth: by beholding the divine Christ Consciousness, which was manifest in Jesus, born anew in the cradle of their own spiritual awakening in deep meditation.

The question is, which is right? to observe the birth of the Christ Jesus with worldly rejoicings expressed in bright decorations, festive dinners, and the exchange of gifts; or to worship him in spirit only?

Birthday celebrations are meant to make the one who is being honored feel that his life is of value to those observing his birth anniversary. Such observances also serve to focus the attention of others on qualified souls whose lives are worthy of appreciation and emulation. Jesus does not need our celebrations to gratify and uplift him. But it is right and appropriate that we celebrate his birthday every Christmas, because his life is permanently useful and inspiring to all humanity in all ages. We certainly need to celebrate his coming in order to remind ourselves of his exemplary, abiding, uplifting life, so that perchance our deeper thought of him may encourage us to remold our lives, and to pattern them through all futurity after his divine life.

Millions are planning to celebrate this coming Christmas in their usual way, as a purely social event. Who is looking forward to using this special time for spiritually remembering Christ and for exchanging gifts of soul and heart qualities?

Will Christmas be for you just a romanticism of religious and social festivity, or will you observe the real meaning of Christmas? I urge you to celebrate truly the birth of Jesus: by realizing within yourself his universal love, forgiveness, character, renunciation, and devotion, and by feeling Christ-love for all brother races and all living creatures. Unless you make the effort this coming Christmas to get truly acquainted with the ever-living Christ—born within you as new wisdom, new happiness—I am afraid you will let yet another precious instructive season pass without heed.

I am not asking you to omit the social observances of Christmas. What I want to see is that you do not, like the millions who forget God, omit in your celebration

the paramount spiritual factor. Add to your social festivities the bringing of Christ a second time—in your meditative consciousness. There is only a suggestion of Christ in Christmas festivities; but in the cradle of divine ecstasy in meditation he is seen and felt as an everlasting, ever joyous reality.

Prepare yourself to celebrate Christmas in the real way:

Make your heart an altar of Christ-love—which lives in all races and loves them equally—so that you may love all people, seeing in their body-temples the dwelling place of omnipresent Christ.

Forgive all your enemies—real and imaginary—even as Jesus forgave his adversaries. Fill your heart with compassionate understanding for those who crucify you with unkind actions, words, or ingratitude in exchange for the good you give them. Let your prayer be: “Father, teach me to love my error-stricken brethren, who know not what they do. Let me not by unkindness drive them deeper into evil, but rather let my love persuade them to better ways of living.”

Govern all the actions of your life with the honesty and fearlessness of Jesus Christ.

Overcome sorrow-producing temptations by self-control, even as Jesus overcame the temptations of Satan. Develop a preference for all things good. Forego the temporary pleasures that derive from misuse of the senses, and pursue the lasting, true happiness of the soul.

Give to others good for evil, understanding for misunderstanding, kindness for unkindness. Within yourself, substitute peace for disquietude, calmness for restlessness, and lasting bliss for material pleasure.

Give the spiritual gifts of your outstanding good qualities to those who need them, and receive ennobling soul qualities from the great ones, who love you for your own good.

Remember that Christ can be born again every Christmas, or at any other time, in your meditation-awakened consciousness. Behold the omnipresent, ever-living Christ born anew in your devoted attention. Make the unknown Christ known to you by communing with him as the ever-new, ever-increasing joy of your daily deep meditation. Love Christ as this joy of meditation, and in this way celebrate every day the spiritual Christmas: his second coming, within yourself.

See the rebirth of Christ in the magnificence of all nature, in your awakened wisdom, in everything that wears true beauty, and in everyone who is saturated with the fragrance of Christ qualities.

Enjoy whatever you do at Christmas with the thought of Christ, in the peace of Christ.

Exchange gifts as offerings to the Christ in all; and on the Christmas tree of your calm consciousness, richly decorated and glistening with divine soul qualities, place for him the gift of your heart. There receive from Christ the gift of himself.

Through the portal of meditation, let your imprisoned joy escape to, and rest in, the heart of Christ, which is in everything. Let your joy dance in the farthest planets, over the vastness of the blue, and in the wavelets of souls you have met and loved, and who are nearest to you. Then you will behold Christ cradled in every manifestation of creation. You will discover the omnipresent joy of Christ in all saints, in all men, in all creatures, in the star-studded cosmos, and in the cradle of your thoughts and the temple of your soul.

A Christmas Message

Be a True Christ-One

This is my Christmas Song to you, that by daily meditation you so prepare the cradle of your consciousness that you behold the Infinite Baby Christ laid there anew. During this holy season pray deep and long until every day becomes a true Christmas occasion of divine communion.

Spiritualize the social ceremonious celebration around the Christmas tree of material gifts by exchanging with one another, and with all true souls in a spirit of universal brotherhood, spiritual gifts of soul qualities: love, peace, forgiveness, and joy.

Kindle in the fireplace of patriotism a glamorous light of love for all nations of the earth to drive away the gloom of wars and misunderstandings. As a true Christ's son, make a solemn vow within: "I will love all God's people as I love my own people."

Live Christ's unifying influence at home, in business, in the church, in society, in politics, in international understanding; and Lord Jesus will be with you. You will be a Christ-ian—a Christ-one—one with Christ.

My Christmas Message
to All Nations of the Earth

My Christmas Message to All Nations of the Earth

[During World War II]

O Christ, the birth of thy love in the hearts of all nations was never so urgently needed as now. May thy birth as the Prince of Peace be felt in all hearts in this coming Christmas and every day.

Why are the nations of the earth casting all their resources and young lives into the flames of destruction, when they could use them to destroy disease, poverty, and ignorance and bring heavenly happiness on earth?

Though thy children nations have forgotten they are brothers, offspring of common material parents, Adam and Eve, and of the one Spiritual Heavenly Father-God and have not heeded thy warning, O Christ, that he who uses the sword must fall by the sword, still I pray that thou be manifested in their darkened hearts, showing them a quick way of recovery from the fever of war and hate. Bring them into the light of lasting peace and prosperity. Bless thy children nations that they may inwardly cooperate with the governing laws of the Universal Christ Intelligence and quickly end this war and its attendant sufferings. Make us all realize that the Christ Consciousness in which thou art is the best shelter from all harm; and teach us to be devoted to our Father like thee, O Christ.

May our prayer ever be: “In health or disease, in success or failure, in joy or sorrow, in praise or blame, in fame or crucifixion, in companionship or bereavement, in victory or defeat, in peace or war, in security or disaster, life or death, we will stand immutably, unalterably loyal, devoted and loving to Thee, our Heavenly Father, ever and forever.”

A Message From the Loving Heart of Christ

Christ sends this message of Christmas inspiration, through me: “As the husband and wife sacrifice for each other, as parents sacrifice for their children, as families sacrifice for their countries, so should each country sacrifice for the United World Family of all humanity.

“Let this Christmas season be one of joyous sacrifice for one another. Deny yourself many unnecessary things that others may have the necessities of life. I will accept those gifts as personal offerings to me, made in the temple of your loving appreciation.

“Celebrate this Christmas by being with me on Christmas Eve, in meditation, and on Christmas Day in festivity.

“Though I was born so many centuries ago, I am born anew in the cradle of your love, whenever you call on me with ceaseless devotion. I am with you at Christmas and in reality at all times, if you call me in the secret depths of your heart.”

Christmas Day Address

The Inner Celebration of Christmas

Free your mind; let all restless thoughts disappear from within. Make your temple of devotion a fitting sanctuary for Christ, the Infinite Baby Christ, to be born with new awakening power that you may feel His presence in your consciousness.

“O living Infinite Christ, present in the body of Jesus and us all, manifest Thyself in the trueness of Thy glory, in the sovereign power of Thy light, and in the omniscience of Thy wisdom. Out of the womb of all creation, be born in the cradle of our consciousness that we may worship Thee in truth and understanding in the all-revealing light of wisdom. O Christ, purify our consciousness that it may embrace all space and enfold the songs of birds and the symphony of the dawn spreading over the sky and hills, warming us with Thy vitality in the sunshine. O Thou the only pure reflection of God within us, manifest Thyself unto us; for Thou and we and God are one. Make us realize this.

“O Christ, especially on this sacred morning, manifest Thy consciousness within us, reveal Thine omnipresence all around us, that we might understand and perceive Thee as Thou art, behind the veil of nature, and cradled within us.

“Aum. Peace. Amen.”

Many seek the passing glory of material things. Those who seek the Infinite, not delaying their search until tomorrow, will reach the blissful Goal of their seeking. As I have said, it is not in the interest of a spiritual organization that we seek you. I am trying to point out to your consciousness that it is you who must seek from the eagerness of your own will. The teacher asks nothing from the disciple, lest in depending on the student the guru isn't free to offer soul-

liberating discipline.

For the unconditional relationship I have with my guru, Swami Sri Yukteswarji, I shall ever be grateful. Now I realize why most of the great masters keep silent—drawn out only rarely by those who are in tune. Their standard of truth is so high and so sincere that it is very difficult for other people to understand them. I can never be unmindful of what my guru has done for me. Any pride or ego touching my soul he drove away; God's glory reigns there. I am very happy that some of you also have come here for your own highest good. Our purpose is to try to hold you only by your own Self-realization.



Do not take lightly the celebration of Christmas

So many are celebrating Christ's Day without knowing at all the purpose for which they should be celebrating. Neither does Christ recognize those observances. Some make Christmas a merely social affair: they engage in the festivities with glassy smiles, and then Christmas is over and they are glad of it. The material celebration of Christmas has some good points and some bad. To a certain extent Christ comes into your consciousness when you are happy and loving and giving. But the purely material way of honoring Christ's birth by gifts and social events defeats its purpose if Christ is absent.

Do not take lightly the celebration of the birth of Jesus. These holy days should remind you of that great Christ—the divine life manifested by Jesus. That is the spiritual side of this holiday.

In most all spiritual celebrations, including those in the Orient, there is some material rejoicing, such as in the enjoyment of a special repast with loved ones; but that should not be the foremost thing. In the exchange of gifts also, there is a sharing of love and a feeling of expansion. What you give with the sincerity of your heart Christ himself accepts. But if you give grudgingly or with pride, Christ goes away. And do not give anything that is associated with wrongdoing.

I always prepare my mind for Christmas—everything that I do is with great happiness—and Christ has come with an even greater force in my consciousness. If Christ comes, if He honors you with His presence, if He accepts your hospitality, you shall never say, "I am tired of Him"—as you inevitably say of material pleasures. The Infinite Christ is unending joy, boundless happiness; how can that tire you? He knocks at the gates of your consciousness, but it is locked with ignorance. How can He get in? You must prepare yourself so that you can let Him in to be born a second time as the awakened Christ Consciousness in you.



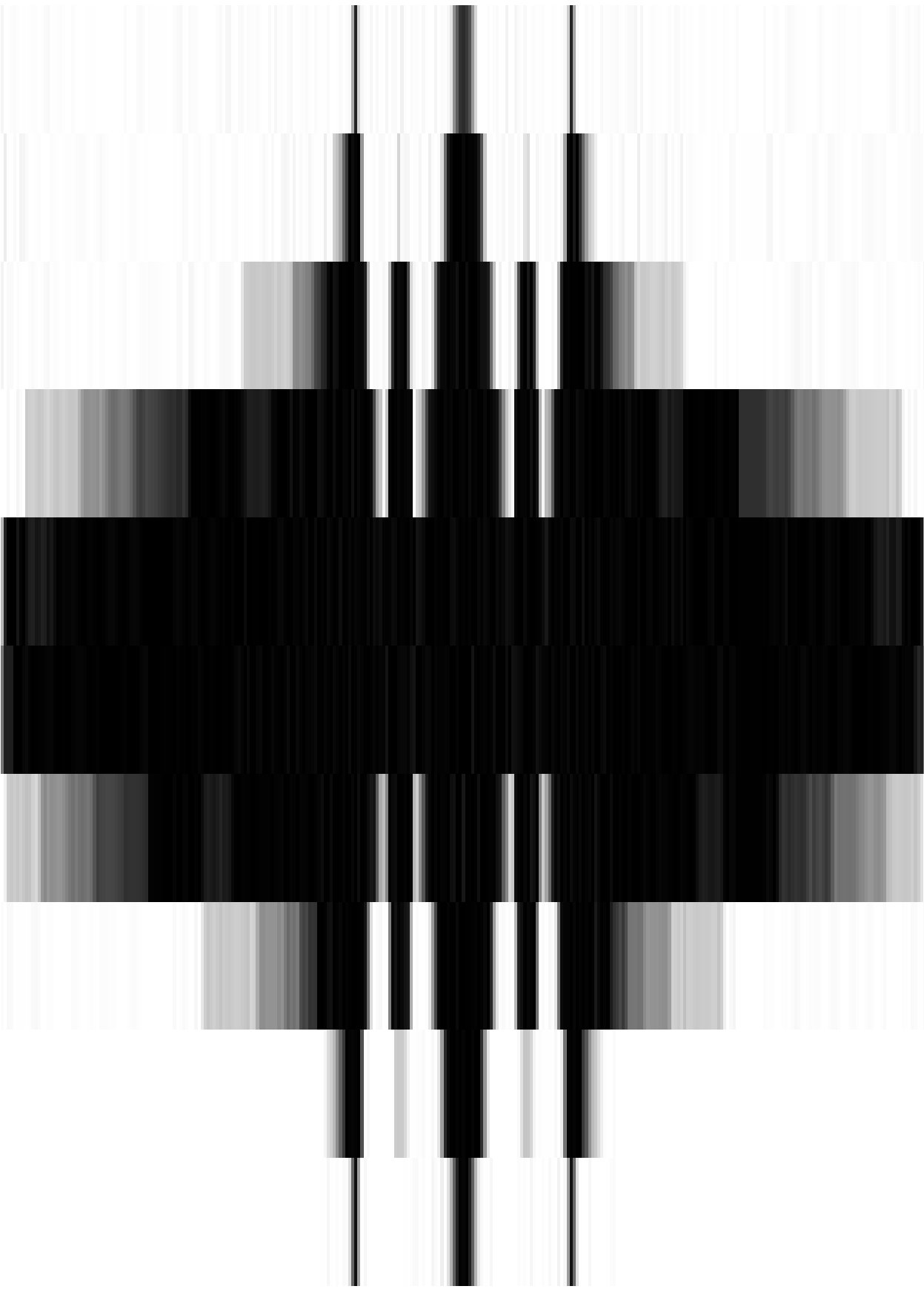
What is the “Second Coming”?

The first coming of Christ was at the birth of creation.² Christ was born not only in the body of Jesus; Christ Consciousness was already manifest in all creation. Jesus tuned in with and manifested that Christ Consciousness.

So we celebrate today the birth of Jesus the Christ—Jesus who knew what “Christ” meant. What was Christ, then?

Aeons ago in the land of Eternity, when God was alone as the ever-existing, ever-new Joy, He mused: “I am alone, with nobody to enjoy Me.” He breathed a wish, and the Holy Ghost (symbolized in the Virgin Mary) was born. The Holy Ghost or Mary carries within its womb the Christ Consciousness (symbolized in the Son)—the reflection of the Cosmic Consciousness (God the Father) in and beyond all creation.

Thus Christ Consciousness has actually come a second time already, in the body of Jesus. It has also come in the bodies of Mahavatar Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, Sri Yukteswar, and all the great ones; and that same Christ must be born again in your consciousness. That is the meaning of the “Second Coming” of Christ.



Break the walls of all limitations

Jesus was a model of the omnipresent Christ Consciousness. His life shows that he had broken all limitations and had found his oneness with God in everything. In his omnipresent consciousness, he knew about the death of Lazarus and could say, "Lazarus sleepeth," and bring him forth alive from the tomb. Those who look upon life externally take it at face value. But when it is seen internally, behind its gross manifestation, then we behold the one Eternal Life everywhere.

Break the walls of limitations that shut the Christ Consciousness away from you—greed, selfishness, caste, race. God wants to be the only love in all creeds and nationalities, no matter the mode of worship or the color of the skin. Christ wants to come in all human hearts, but He cannot penetrate through the barriers of selfishness and prejudice. Yes, the Infinite Christ Consciousness is present everywhere invisibly, but if you want to experience the manifestation of God visibly, you must break these walls of ignorance. God has given you the freedom to shut Him out or let Him in. The barrier is not in your vision, but in your consciousness. Christ is already with you; He has already come, but prejudicial limitations obscure that divine presence. If you want Christ to come in a perceptible way in your consciousness, you must break down all obstructions. They are the walls of Satan.

Sunder all limitations that the cradle of your consciousness may be big enough to hold the Infinite Baby Christ.



The gifts of Christ Consciousness

As soon as you will meditate in the yogic way on the centers of spiritual perception in the spine, Christ Consciousness will bestow on you the presence of calmness. Calmness is one of the greatest gifts of God; it is the eye of the Spirit, the pure intuitive perception of the soul. Any time you do wrong, it is because you were not calm. Pray that you may always have this inner soul-calmness.

Forgiveness is another quality of the Infinite Christ. Though omnipotent Christ Consciousness was fully manifest in the body of Jesus, he let himself be crucified; but with that great power he had in the consciousness of Christ, by forgiveness he has held the hearts of people these many centuries. He had the power to destroy his enemies, and yet he said, "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do." That is a gift of the Christ Consciousness—love that can never be killed by any anger or hatred. Those who do wrong to you, give them that Christ-love silently; and once their hearts feel that love, the devil of hate shall pass out from them, and they will be healed.

Satan has his influence everywhere. But if you can destroy evil from your heart and can make it an altar of forgiveness and divine love, then Christ shall come and reign there.

Nobility of heart and a spirit of service—to be big enough to behave nobly in every situation, and to serve all—these also come as gifts of Christ Consciousness. To serve all means to be conscious that you are in everybody, not just in the one little body you call your own—for we are all made of the one same omnipresent consciousness of God. Selfishness is the root cause of war and of all forms of divisiveness; it is also the death of spirituality. When you limit your consciousness to your own body, and regard everything in terms of yourself, you shut out Christ Consciousness. You must begin to look upon others as an extension of yourself. "It is myself that is suffering in that body; it is myself that is filled with happiness in that body." Service is one of the best investments for expansion of consciousness. When you do for others just as you are doing for yourself, then that is one way, the social way, to cultivate Christ Consciousness.

Real Christ-love comes to open those Christmas packages that are expressions of

an awakening spiritualized consciousness. That bliss you feel when Christ comes is not the emotional happiness aroused by receiving material things. Blessedness is the consciousness that comes by the contact of that Christ within. That is the Christmas celebration I want to impress on your consciousness.



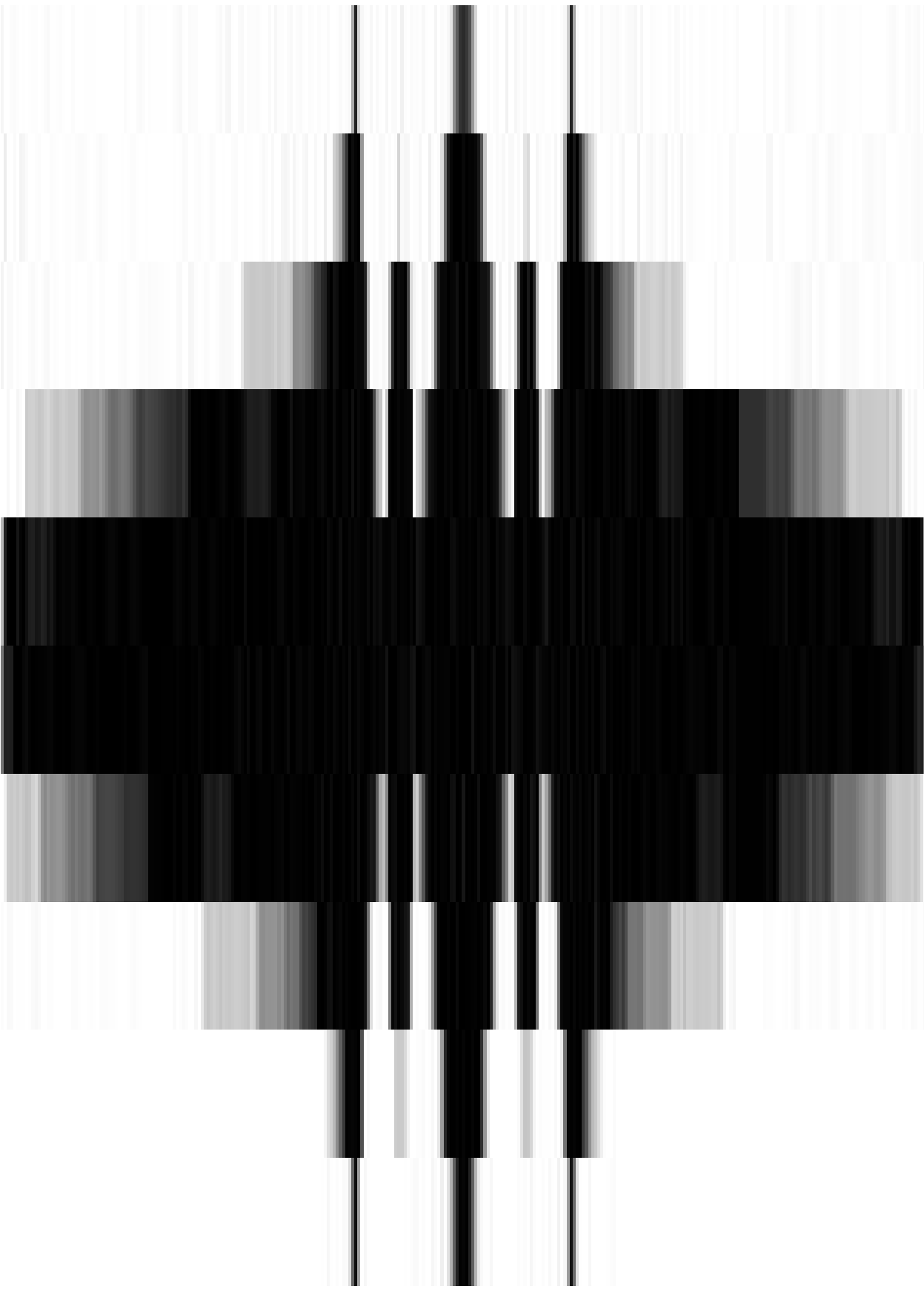
Celebrate the astral Christmas in the spiritual centers of the spine

To enjoy a real Christmas you should celebrate the birth of Christ Consciousness in the spiritual centers of divine perception in the brain and spine. In deep meditation you behold all the astral lights of the spinal centers, and there is an exchange of the Christ Consciousness and your consciousness. That is the real Christmas festivity.

When the Christ Consciousness comes to you, you find within you the whole cosmos, with whirling worlds and universes hanging like ornaments around the Christmas tree of the spine. That is how Jesus celebrated “Christmas,” the birth of Christ Consciousness within him.

How many men today are walking about with Christ in their breasts as Jesus did? The beauty of the stars and the glory of the moon—all were born in the mind of Jesus. Everything is contained in the Christ Consciousness that was manifest in Jesus. He celebrated that Christ Consciousness in his spinal awareness.

If you want really to know Jesus, meditate on the Christ Consciousness in him. Then you will be able to say tomorrow, “O yes! I celebrated Christmas in the real way.” Tomorrow will tell the story. And why let today slip by, if you can find Christ today? And even if you cannot perceive Christ today, remember that every day He comes; but you must be able to receive Him. The blind man does not know the beauty of the sun. Christ is present in you, but you don’t know it. You must prepare yourself for His coming by silence and meditation.



Two ways to be one with Christ

Just be happy with everything. Feel good will toward all. Cast off prejudicial limitations. Make up your mind to be good morally. Then Christ will be always with you. This is one way of being in tune with Christ Consciousness, of celebrating Christmas.

But the second way, the deeper way, of celebrating Christmas is through the uplifting of your consciousness through the spine into the higher centers of consciousness in the brain. This is the greatest way to celebrate the birth of Christ, in the silence of your soul, where no man knows what you prize nor what you love. Sing to Christ a glorious song unheard by any, a song of bursting love, an undying prayer from your heart; then Christ shall manifest Himself a second time. You shall behold the Christ of the churches, the Christ of centuries sacred lore. The Man nobody knows, the Christ nobody knows, shall be known inwardly by you.

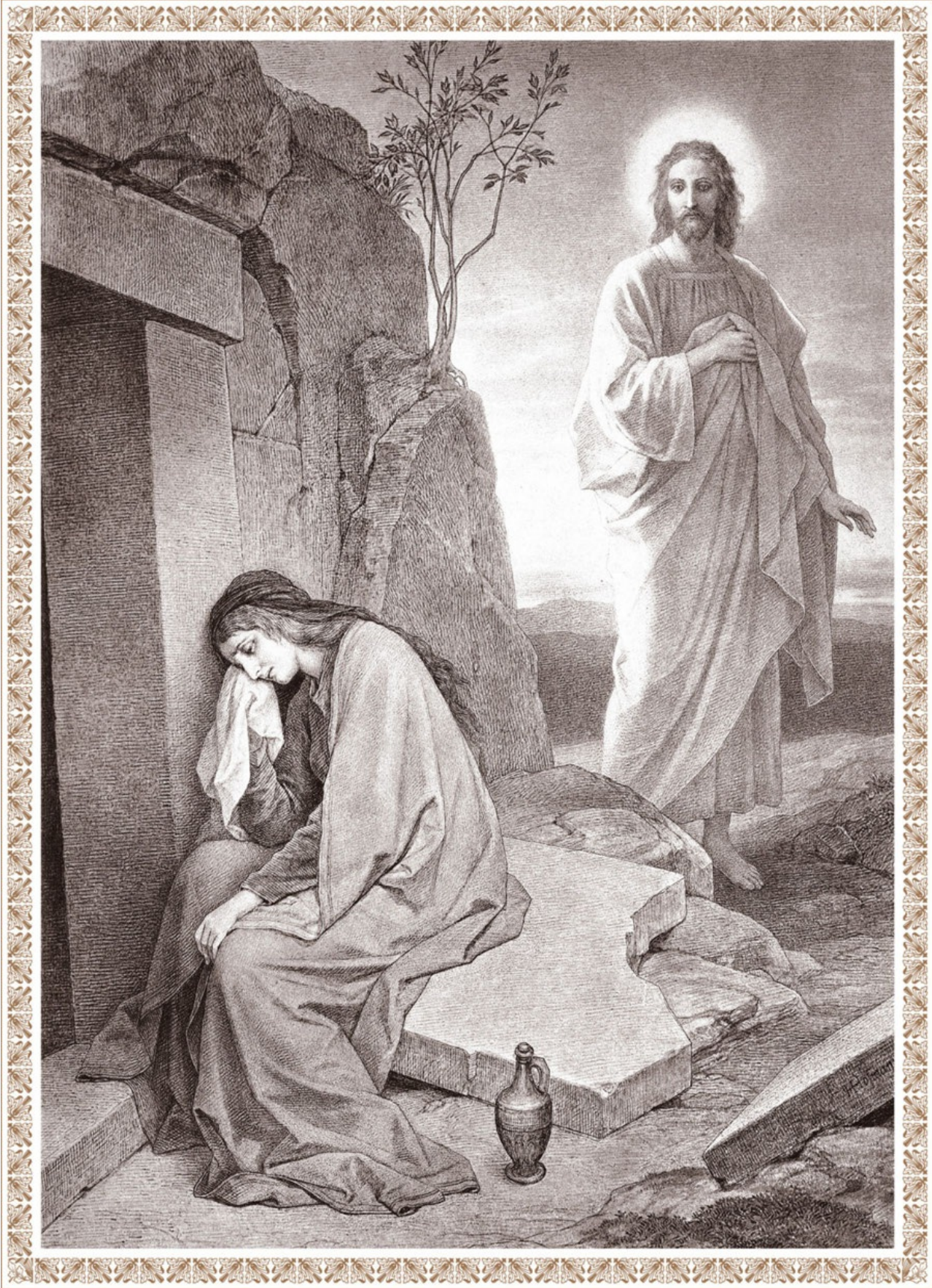
Make a resolution today to find that Christ. Open the gates of your heart; expand yourself in serving others materially, morally, and spiritually. And as you become calm through deep meditation, and as the fire of your devotion waxes stronger and stronger, you shall see the face of Christ.

Remember—the glowing fires of devotion, not the old way of lukewarm prayers. Crucify your spiritual ignorance. Stop the storms of mental discord. Christ must come to you, for it is of utmost importance to your happiness. Make this vow to Christ: “My life shall not slip away this time without my knowing Thee, O Christ.” Let Him not come and silently vanish without your being aware of it.

Somebody once said, “Where is progress? Are we not walking slowly toward death?” It is true of those who do not know Christ. But those who know Him see that they are moving, not toward the valley of the shadow of death, but toward the peaks of Christ Consciousness wherein there lies no death. They see the flicker of Christ’s omnipresent light and joyously exclaim, “O Christ, by my meditation and prayer You are coming into my life again.” And they shall feel Him everywhere—in the hearts of men, in the fragrance of flowers, and in all other created things.

May Christ come in your consciousness a second time as prosperity, as health, as

the perception and fulfillment of all your hopes in the divine consciousness. And may Christ come to you in finding divine love through the perfection of your love in some human relationship, and in finding omnipresence in your human consciousness. May Christ come, bringing to you infinite bliss, infinite wisdom, infinite joy, as He is born in the cradle of your heart. May Christ come to you a second time in the vibration of your body as the Aum out of which all bodies, all universes, have been created. May He come a second time—to you—and be established in your consciousness forever.



Jesus With Mary Magdalene at the Tomb

Jesus saith unto her, “Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?”

She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, “Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.”

Jesus saith unto her, “Mary.”

She turned herself, and saith unto him, “Rabboni”; which is to say, Master.

—John 20:15–16

Jesus’ resurrection lifted his consciousness beyond all relativities of vibratory creation and merged his Self with the transcendental Father, Absolute Spirit. After attaining oneness with the Absolute, Jesus infused his Spirit-expanded soul back into his crucified body, immortalizing it, and returned to his bereft disciples in physical form....

Liberated souls such as Jesus, whose mission continues beyond their incarnation, are able to materialize their bodies at will anywhere in the astral heavens or in the physical world at any time—today or unto thousands of years after their ascension. That is why Jesus could say in truth to his disciples: “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”

—Paramahansa Yogananda

Drawing by Heinrich Hofmann



Part II

An Easter Message

Resurrect Yourself!

As Christ resurrected his consciousness from the sepulchre of mortal limitations, so must you learn to resurrect your mind by meditation from the tomb of material desires and body confinement to the consciousness of omnipresence.

Resurrect your calmness from beneath the soil of restlessness; resurrect your wisdom from the enshrouding earthliness of ignorance; resurrect your love from beneath the sod of mundane human attachment—with its limited love for family, society, and country—to divine love for all.

As Jesus withdrew his mind from the body by ecstasy and united it with all-pervading Spirit, so through the consciousness of Christ developed within yourself by constant meditation unite your soul with omniscient Spirit, your life with Eternal Life.

An Easter Message

My Easter Wish for You

While life is templated in the body, it constantly resurrects old tissues by filling them with the buoyancy of new cells. Similarly, Christ Consciousness keeps on remodeling and revivifying the deathly-change-infected cosmos, its universes and all the bejewelled stellar and solar systems, the earth—every created thing. It resurrected the body of Jesus, the Son of man, after he was crucified. As the Son of God, Jesus knew that his life was one with the all-reviving Cosmic Life; thus he proclaimed: “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”

This is my Easter prayer. May all true devotees of God, uplifted by the transparent purity of their lives, begin to radiate the Infinite Light, equally present in all, even as Jesus did, and remember the long-forgotten truth that they are all potential Sons of God.

May each one of you be so inspired and sustained by the results of Kriya Yoga that you will follow the path of Self-Realization all the way, and learn to resurrect the delusion-entombed soul and commingle it in the ever new vitality of Spirit. May you thus be able to lift the soul beyond the conscious and sleep states and expand it into God in the superconscious sphere.

Behold thine immortal Self resurrected with Christ in the illuminating Light of Christ Consciousness, present in every soul, every flower, every atom.

An Easter Message

Resurrect Your Soul Consciousness in God

Christ is risen from the sepulchre of your indifference, if you would but behold Him in the light of your devotion.

He is risen from the imprisoning walls of flesh if you, a sleeping son of God, would come out of your bodily prison into the freedom of Spirit.

Crucify your ignorance and hidebound evil customs and rise from the tomb of narrowness into the openness of Cosmic Brotherhood.

Resurrect your soul from the entombment of reincarnations.

Christ fragrance is ascending from the living graves of the human consciousness of true devotees everywhere, and descending on the sanctuary of their devotion. Cleanse the altar of your heart with tears of repentance, so that Christ Consciousness, love of all races, all creatures, may be resurrected and made manifest within you.

When your body is crucified with disease, ascend into the consciousness of health.

When your mind is crucified with trials and temptations, arise into the sphere of self-control.

When you are entombed in sorrow, resurrect yourself into happiness.

When you are buried beneath restlessness, resurrect your mind into continued calmness in deep meditative silence.

Your God-love has long remained hidden within you, crucified by your inner indifference. By daily deep meditation, awaken your spiritual ardor and resurrect it into the consciousness of the Absolute Bliss.

An Easter Prayer

Resurrect Me in Thee

O Spirit, command my soul to arise from the sepulchre of littleness into Thy vastness of everywhere.

Lift its matter-caged consciousness into omnipresent freedom in Thee.

Teach me to resurrect my wisdom from beneath the debris of ignorance,

And to resurrect myself from dogmatism to the everlasting life in Thy Wisdom.

Awaken my divine sympathy from beneath the shroud of selfishness.

Resurrect my divine love from beneath the mound of attachment.

Bless me, that I may bring my soul out of the gloom-grave of evil into the light of perpetual goodness.

Teach me to resurrect my soul from the tomb of temporal pleasures into Thine everlasting happiness.

From beneath the soil of sorrow take my buried soul up into Thy Joyous Self.

Awaken me, that I may arise from the tomb of flesh into the consciousness of my cosmic body, extricating my soul from the bodily clod to become omnipresent in Thee.

Resurrect my consciousness from the sepulchre of ever thirsty, mad, earthly desires into the omnipresent, ever-abiding, ever-satisfying Christ-Peace within me.

Even as Jesus, in only three days, resurrected himself from all circumscriptions of his mortal body, so bless me that I may ere long resurrect myself forever from

the tomb of all my bad habits into freedom in the Christ-Wisdom within me.

Pluck the lotus of my devotion from the mire of earthly forgetfulness and wear it on Thy breast of ever awake remembrance of me.

Resurrect me in Thee.

An Easter Prayer

Bless Us, O Christ

With solemn reverence we offer homage today unto thee, our great Lord Jesus, in whom was manifest the Universal Christ, and whose grace descended upon us. We offer unto thee, O Christ, thought-flowers that symbolize the fragrance of our hearts' devotion.

Throughout eternity the event of thy resurrection is celebrated by the gods and in our souls, that our consciousness also find resurrection in Christ Consciousness; that we rise above our ignorance and manifest the highest wisdom of that Infinite Intelligence.

Bless us this morning, O Christ, that we may realize the universal significance of thy resurrection: that our souls, reflections of Christ Consciousness, be resurrected in thine Immortal Consciousness evermore.

O Universal Christ, be awakened within us! We have crucified Thee with our ignorance. Be resurrected within us again as everlasting Christ-Wisdom and perennial bliss.

Lead us from darkness to light, lift us from ignorance to wisdom, resurrect us from sorrow to eternal bliss in Thee, O Infinite Christ!

An Easter Prayer

The Christ of Cosmic Easter

O Jesus, thy soul polished off the dust of death and wore the glistening jewels of lifetrans in a resurrected body. But as the Christ Omnipresence, thy spirit doth constantly renew all luminaries—the cosmic gems of lucent stars, physical and astral universes, gross and luminous planets, human and angelic beings, molecules, atoms, electrons, protons, lifetrans—and dost place these ever-dazzling ornaments upon thine Infinite Being.

Jesus, thou didst live and, crucified, lived again in a reawakened body. The Christ Consciousness, ceaselessly crucified by pharisees of change, reappears in renewed universes, reincarnated beings, in an earth of matter, and the brilliancy of heaven.

From winter's tomb of lifeless blossoms, thou, O Christ, art resurrected in new buds of roses, marigolds, bluebells, jasmine, and worldful varieties of flowers. Ever-mutating, multicolored flowers of lifetrans growing in the gardens of the astral land are fragrant thrones of thy Presence. New nations—emerging from the tomb of self-created war, atomic destructions, evolutions, revolutions—all bring out new phases of thine Indestructible Being. Beneath the transparent tomb of creation's ever-changing waves, we behold thy never changing Oceanic Presence.

On this Easter we celebrate thee as Jesus and as the Christ of Cosmic Easter.

An Easter Prayer

Resurrect Us From the Darkness of Delusion

Easter may bring its delights of traditional Easter lilies, gift-bearing bunnies, and variously decorated eggs. But I pray that as you celebrate Christ's resurrection these be symbolic of the lily of Christ-wisdom opening in purity in the garden of your soul; that you taste the sweetness of Christ-love in your heart and enjoy the infinitely colored eggs of its blessings of true happiness; and that, like the fast-footed bounteous bunny, you may quicken your pace toward the Divine Home.

Pray to Christ the following prayer in the secret inner temple of deep meditation:

“Thou didst resurrect thyself from the bondage of flesh, karma, ignorance, and reincarnation to inspire us with thine invisible omnipresent wisdom, that we may know how to resurrect the divine image within us from the bodily confinement of sense lures. From the miasma of doubt, resurrect our vision into the region of invincible understanding. From the atmosphere of mental smallness teach us to resurrect our largeheartedness in the kingdom of love for all.

“From the darkness of delusion resurrect us into the sphere of Thy lambent effulgence. From race and class prejudices teach us to resurrect our spirit of brotherhood in the oneness of universal union. Bless us, O Christ, that from this moment we use our inner sense of intuition's discrimination to follow all the mental, moral, and spiritual laws by which we can resurrect our souls from the enthrallments of cosmic delusion into the everlasting freedom of God-contact.”

An Easter Message

Easter Awakening

The little wavelet of Christ Life played helpfully over the bosom of the Cosmic Life for a while, and then it vanished within the Ocean's tenderness, not to die, but to be feted with eternal Ambrosia, and to come back again to declare the immortality of even its finite existence. The ocean of God throbbed once more in the resurrected Prince Jesus.

Flowers fade never to return; but Jesus only slept to obey the sweet command of Nature, and woke again to declare his mastery over her.

Jesus has silenced the laughter of multitudes with their unbelieving eyes, and the audacious poetic assertion that no traveler has ever returned from death's bourne, by coming back from the place of no return.

With the appearance of the risen Jesus in this mundane domain, a hope buried in the immortality of every soul was resurrected in the hearts of a thousand million mortals—the hope that they, too, could wipe away the sting of death from their breasts of everlastingness.

Christ hid himself again to show that he could not only resurrect his eternalness in the body of Jesus, but also in every blossom, and in every living being that would ever smile in the garden of creation through endless aeons.

Christ was resurrected not only on Easter morn; at-one with the Infinite Christ Consciousness he reanimates himself in the dawn of each soul's awakening. Our souls die every day, whenever we are buried in the tomb of ignorance; we resurrect ourselves again in Cosmic Wisdom.

Banish the death consciousness perceived during the sleep of delusion, and resurrect your soul in the ever-reigning Light of Immortality. Let this be your Easter awakening.

A Meditation on Resurrection

Christ is risen. He is risen from the limitations of the physical body, the astral body, and the causal body into Omnipresence. One with omnipresent Christ Consciousness, Jesus is risen in the heart of every flower, every ray of sunshine, every noble thought. He is risen in the atomic age, and all its devastations will not hide the birth of his spirit of new life, new humanity, rising from the cradle of wisdom and universal love.

He is risen in our minds, our hearts, our souls—there is no separation between him and us. He is walking in the garden of our love, in the garden of our sacred devotion, in the garden of our meditation and Kriya Yoga.

He is risen in every atom and cell, he is risen in the clouds, he is risen in all planets. He is risen in the universes and the wandering radiations around the universes, and in the cool light beyond. He is risen from the universes into the quiet of Cosmic Consciousness. And he will rise again in you, through your devotion and Kriya Yoga. When your wisdom shall awaken, you will behold the resurrection of Christ within you. And through your meditation and divine communion you shall be resurrected with him, from the sepulchre of the body and mortal consciousness into the ever blissful infinitude of Spirit.

“O Christ, thou art resurrected in Spirit. We rejoice in thy resurrection, and in its reassurance of thy promise: that as children of God, having descended into the sepulchre of flesh, we too shall reascend into our Father’s kingdom. On this Easter, all our devotion, all the cries of our hearts, all the perfume of goodness within us, we lay at thy feet of omnipresence. We are thine, receive us! Through the Christ Consciousness, resurrect us with thee in the Eternal Spirit. Keep us in that kingdom of Bliss ever and forever.”

About the Author

Paramahansa Yogananda was born Mukunda Lal Ghosh on January

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1893

, in the north Indian city of Gorakhpur, near the Himalaya mountains. From his earliest years, it was clear that his life was marked for a divine destiny.

According to those closest to him, even as a child the depth of his spiritual awareness and experience was far beyond the ordinary. In his youth he sought out many of India's sages and saints, hoping to find an illumined teacher to guide him in his spiritual quest.

It was in

1910

, at the age of seventeen, that he met and became a disciple of the revered Swami Sri Yukteswar. In the hermitage of this great master, he spent the better part of the next ten years, receiving Sri Yukteswar's strict but loving spiritual discipline. After he graduated from Calcutta University in

1915

, his Guru bestowed on him the formal vows of a monk of India's venerable monastic Swami Order, at which time he received the name Yogananda (signifying bliss, ananda, through divine union, yoga).

In

1917

, Sri Yogananda began his life's work with the founding of a "how-to-live"

school for boys, where modern educational methods were combined with yoga training and instruction in spiritual ideals. Three years later he was invited to serve as India's delegate to an International Congress of Religious Liberals convening in Boston. His address to the Congress, on "The Science of Religion," was enthusiastically received.

For the next several years, he lectured and taught on the East Coast and in

1924

embarked on a cross-continental speaking tour. To the tens of thousands of Westerners who attended his lectures during the decade that followed, his discourses on the unity of "the original teachings of Jesus Christ and the original Yoga taught by Bhagavan Krishna" were a revelation. The Los Angeles Times reported on January

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1925

: "The Philharmonic Auditorium presents the extraordinary spectacle of thousands...being turned away an hour before the advertised opening of a lecture with the

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-seat hall filled to its utmost capacity. Swami Yogananda is the attraction. A Hindu invading the United States to bring God in the midst of a Christian community, preaching the essence of Christian doctrine."

Later that year, he established in Los Angeles the international headquarters of Self-Realization Fellowship, the society he had founded in

1920

to disseminate his teachings and perpetuate the work he had begun.

“Paramahansa Yogananda brought to the West not only India’s perennial promise of God-realization, but also a practical method by which spiritual aspirants from all walks of life may progress rapidly toward that goal,” wrote Quincy Howe, Jr., Ph.D., Professor of Classics at Scripps College. “Originally appreciated in the West only on the most lofty and abstract level, the spiritual legacy of India is now accessible as practice and experience to all who aspire to know God, not in the beyond, but in the here and now....Yogananda has placed within the reach of all the most exalted methods of contemplation.”

The Cincinnati Enquirer reported on December

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1926

: “Yesterday in the Hotel Sinton, Swami Yogananda was greeted by over a thousand men and women, hundreds being turned away. In this enthusiastic throng, there were litterateurs, medical men, leaders of fashion, clergymen, and indeed followers drawn from many walks of life. The Swami was continually interrupted with responsive applause, his words being listened to with profound attention.” And according to the Washington Post, January

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1927

: “Approximately

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000

persons crowded the auditorium to hear his initial lecture...at the Washington Auditorium, where the Swami has broken all records for sustained interest.”

After fifteen years of teaching in the West, Sri Yogananda returned to India in 1935

. There he had a long-awaited reunion with his guru, Swami Sri Yukteswar, who honored him with India’s highest religious title, Paramahansa, bestowed on those deemed to have achieved irrevocable union with God. While in his native land, he traveled and lectured and met with many spiritual luminaries, including Mahatma Gandhi, who requested initiation in Kriya Yoga from him.

Returning to America at the end of

1936

, Paramahansaji began to withdraw somewhat from his nationwide public lecturing to devote himself to building an enduring foundation for his worldwide work and to the writings that would carry his message to future generations. His life story, *Autobiography of a Yogi*, was published in

1946

and substantially expanded by him in

1951

. Recognized from the beginning as a landmark work, the book has been in print continuously through Self-Realization Fellowship since its publication fifty years ago, inspiring new readers decade after decade.

On March

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1952

, Paramahansa Yogananda entered mahasamadhi, a God-illuminated master’s

conscious exit from the body at the time of physical death. His passing occasioned an outpouring of reverent appreciation from spiritual leaders, dignitaries, journalists, friends, and disciples all over the world. The former religion editor of the Los Angeles Times, Dan Thrapp, stated in

1992

: “All through history you can find people who come along—Jesus, Buddha, and other people—who are inspired, and who have a way of expressing it and have charisma with other people, so that their influence spreads. I think Yogananda was one of those people....He was inspired...one of the greats. He showed the way for people into a purer, unadulterated type of faith, a universal faith.”

The Government of India issued a commemorative stamp in honor of the renowned guru in

1977

, which was accompanied by these words: “The ideal of love for God and service to humanity found full expression in the life of Paramahansa Yogananda.... Though the major part of his life was spent outside India, still he takes his place among our great saints. His work continues to grow and shine ever more brightly, drawing people everywhere on the path of the pilgrimage of the Spirit.”

Scholars and journalists have echoed this appraisal of Sri Yogananda’s continuing influence. “Few books have had a greater impact on popular theology than Paramahansa Yogananda’s *Autobiography of a Yogi*,” notes Phyllis Tickle, former religion editor of *Publishers Weekly*. His teachings “made an indelible mark on the course of American spirituality,” wrote Dr. Robert S. Ellwood, former chairman of the University of Southern California’s School of Religion. “Yogananda has become an image—a remarkable, deep, sweet, poetic, ecstatic man enraptured of cosmic life—who has changed the map of American religious life.”

Today, the spiritual and humanitarian work begun by Paramahansa Yogananda continues under the direction of Brother Chidananda, president of Self-Realization Fellowship/Yogoda Satsanga Society of India.³ In addition to publishing Paramahansa Yogananda’s books and his other writings, lectures, and informal talks—including his *Self-Realization Fellowship Lessons*, a comprehensive series for home study; and a quarterly magazine, *Self-Realization*

—the society guides members in their practice of Sri Yogananda’s teachings; oversees temples, retreats, and meditation centers around the world, as well as the monastic communities of Self-Realization Fellowship monks and nuns; and coordinates the Worldwide Prayer Circle, which serves as an instrument to help bring healing to those in physical, mental, or spiritual need and greater harmony among the nations.

An award-winning documentary film about Paramahansa Yogananda’s life and work, *Awake: The Life of Yogananda*, was released in October

2014

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Paramahansa Yogananda: A Yogi in Life and Death

Paramahansa Yogananda entered mahasamadhi (a yogi's final conscious exit from the body) in Los Angeles, California, on March

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1952

, after concluding his speech at a banquet held in honor of H.E. Binay R. Sen, Ambassador of India.

The great world teacher demonstrated the value of yoga (scientific techniques for God-realization) not only in life but in death. Weeks after his departure his unchanged face shone with the divine luster of incorruptibility.

Mr. Harry T. Rowe, Los Angeles Mortuary Director, Forest Lawn Memorial-Park (in which the body of the great master is temporarily placed), sent Self-Realization Fellowship a notarized letter from which the following extracts are taken:

“The absence of any visual signs of decay in the dead body of Paramahansa Yogananda offers the most extraordinary case in our experience....No physical disintegration was visible in his body even twenty days after death....No indication of mold was visible on his skin, and no visible desiccation (drying up) took place in the bodily tissues. This state of perfect preservation of a body is, so far as we know from mortuary annals, an unparalleled one....At the time of receiving Yogananda's body, the Mortuary personnel expected to observe, through the glass lid of the casket, the usual progressive signs of bodily decay. Our astonishment increased as day followed day without bringing any visible change in the body under observation. Yogananda's body was apparently in a phenomenal state of immutability....

“No odor of decay emanated from his body at any time....The physical

appearance of Yogananda on March

27

th, just before the bronze cover of the casket was put into position, was the same as it had been on March

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th. He looked on March

27

th as fresh and as unravaged by decay as he had looked on the night of his death. On March

27

th there was no reason to say that his body had suffered any visible physical disintegration at all. For these reasons we state again that the case of Paramahansa Yogananda is unique in our experience.”

Aims and Ideals of Self-Realization Fellowship

As set forth by Paramahansa Yogananda, Founder

Brother Chidananda, President

To disseminate among the nations a knowledge of definite scientific techniques for attaining direct personal experience of God.

To teach that the purpose of life is the evolution, through self-effort, of man's limited mortal consciousness into God Consciousness; and to this end to establish Self-Realization Fellowship temples for God-communion throughout the world, and to encourage the establishment of individual temples of God in the homes and in the hearts of men.

To reveal the complete harmony and basic oneness of original Christianity as taught by Jesus Christ and original Yoga as taught by Bhagavan Krishna; and to show that these principles of truth are the common scientific foundation of all true religions.

To point out the one divine highway to which all paths of true religious beliefs eventually lead: the highway of daily, scientific, devotional meditation on God.

To liberate man from his threefold suffering: physical disease, mental inharmonies, and spiritual ignorance.

To encourage "plain living and high thinking"; and to spread a spirit of brotherhood among all peoples by teaching the eternal basis of their unity: kinship with God.

To demonstrate the superiority of mind over body, of soul over mind.

To overcome evil by good, sorrow by joy, cruelty by kindness, ignorance by wisdom.

To unite science and religion through realization of the unity of their underlying principles.

To advocate cultural and spiritual understanding between East and West, and the exchange of their finest distinctive features.

To serve mankind as one's larger Self..

Also published by Self-Realization Fellowship...

Autobiography of a Yogi

By Paramahansa Yogananda

This acclaimed autobiography presents a fascinating portrait of one of the great spiritual figures of our time. With engaging candor, eloquence, and wit, Paramahansa Yogananda narrates the inspiring chronicle of his life—the experiences of his remarkable childhood, encounters with many saints and sages during his youthful search throughout India for an illumined teacher, ten years of training in the hermitage of a revered yoga master, and the three decades that he lived and taught in America. Also recorded here are his meetings with Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Luther Burbank, the Catholic stigmatist Therese Neumann, and other celebrated spiritual personalities of East and West.

Autobiography of a Yogi is at once a beautifully written account of an exceptional life and a profound introduction to the ancient science of yoga and its time-honored tradition of meditation. The author clearly explains the subtle but definite laws behind both the ordinary events of everyday life and the extraordinary events commonly termed miracles. His absorbing life story thus becomes the background for a penetrating and unforgettable look at the ultimate mysteries of human existence.

First published in 1946 and enlarged by Paramahansa Yogananda in 1951, the book has been kept in print continuously by Self-Realization Fellowship. It has been translated into numerous languages and is widely used as a text and reference work in colleges and universities. A perennial best-seller, *Autobiography of a Yogi* has found its way into the hearts of millions of readers around the world.

“A rare account.”

—THE NEW YORK TIMES

“A fascinating and clearly annotated study.”

—NEWSWEEK

“There has been nothing before, written in English or in any other European language, like this presentation of Yoga.”

—COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS

“Sheer revelation...should help the human race to understand itself better...autobiography at its very best...told with delightful wit and compelling sincerity...as fascinating as any novel.”

—NEWS-SENTINEL, FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

“Paramahansa Yogananda is...a man whose inspiration has been reverently received in all corners of the globe....There is something inexpressibly beautiful in the spiritual teaching which comes out of the East. It is able to heal and change the soul of the West. It is the teaching of Self-Realization.”

—RIDERS REVIEW, LONDON

Other Books by Paramahansa Yogananda

Available at bookstores or online at

www.srfbooks.org

God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita—A New Translation and Commentary

In this monumental two-volume work, Paramahansa Yogananda reveals the innermost essence of India's most renowned scripture. Exploring its psychological, spiritual, and metaphysical depths, he presents a sweeping chronicle of the soul's journey to enlightenment through the royal science of God-realization.

Man's Eternal Quest

Volume I of Paramahansa Yogananda's collected talks and essays includes 57 selections, covering many aspects of his "how-to-live" teachings. Explores little-known and seldom-understood aspects of meditation, life after death, the nature of creation, health and healing, the unlimited powers of the mind, and the eternal quest that finds fulfillment only in God.

The Divine Romance

Volume II of Paramahansa Yogananda's collected talks and essays. Among the wide-ranging selections: How to Cultivate Divine Love; Harmonizing Physical, Mental, and Spiritual Methods of Healing; A World Without Boundaries; Controlling Your Destiny; The Yoga Art of Overcoming Mortal Consciousness and Death; The Cosmic Lover; Finding the Joy in Life.

Journey to Self-realization

Volume III of the collected talks and essays presents Sri Yogananda's unique combination of wisdom, compassion, down-to-earth guidance, and encouragement on dozens of fascinating subjects, including: Quickening Human Evolution, How to Express Everlasting Youthfulness, and Realizing God in Your Daily Life.

Wine of the Mystic: The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam—A Spiritual Interpretation

An inspired commentary that brings to light the mystical science of God-communion hidden behind the Rubaiyat's enigmatic imagery. Includes 50 original color illustrations. Winner of the 1995 Benjamin Franklin Award for best book in the field of religion.

Where There Is Light: Insight and Inspiration for Meeting Life's Challenges

Gems of thought arranged by subject; a unique handbook to which readers can quickly turn for a reassuring sense of direction in times of uncertainty or crisis, or for a renewed awareness of the ever present power of God one can draw upon in daily life.

Whispers from Eternity

A collection of Paramahansa Yogananda's prayers and divine experiences in the elevated states of meditation. Expressed in a majestic rhythm and poetic beauty, his words reveal the inexhaustible variety of God's nature, and the infinite sweetness with which He responds to those who seek Him.

The Science of Religion

Within every human being, Paramahansa Yogananda writes, there is one inescapable desire: to overcome suffering and attain a happiness that does not end. Explaining how it is possible to fulfill these longings, he examines the relative effectiveness of the different approaches to this goal.

The Yoga of the Bhagavad Gita: An Introduction to India's Universal Science of God-Realization

A compilation of selections from Paramahansa Yogananda's in-depth, critically acclaimed translation of and commentary on the Bhagavad Gita, God Talks With Arjuna, this book presents truth-seekers with an ideal introduction to the Gita's timeless and universal teachings. Contains Yogananda's complete translation of the Bhagavad Gita, presented for the first time in uninterrupted sequential form.

The Yoga of Jesus: Understanding the Hidden Teachings of the Gospels

A selection of material from Paramahansa Yogananda's highly praised two-volume work, *The Second Coming of Christ*, this concise book confirms that Jesus, like the ancient sages and masters of the East, not only knew the principles of yoga but taught this universal science of God-realization to his disciples. Sri Yogananda shows that Jesus' message is not about sectarian divisiveness, but a unifying path by which seekers of all faith traditions can enter the kingdom of God.

In the Sanctuary of the Soul: A Guide to Effective Prayer

Compiled from the works of Paramahansa Yogananda, this inspiring devotional companion reveals ways of making prayer a daily source of love, strength, and guidance.

Inner Peace: How to Be Calmly Active and Actively Calm

A practical and inspiring guide, compiled from the talks and writings of Paramahansa Yogananda, that demonstrates how we can be “actively calm” by creating peace through meditation, and “calmly active”—centered in the stillness and joy of our own essential nature while living a dynamic, fulfilling, and balanced life. Winner of the 2000 Benjamin Franklin Award—best book in the field of Metaphysics/Spirituality.

To Be Victorious in Life (How-to-Live Series)

In this powerful book, Paramahansa Yogananda shows how we can realize life’s highest goals by bringing out the unlimited potential within us. He provides practical counsel for achieving success, outlines definite methods of creating lasting happiness, and tells how to overcome negativity and inertia by harnessing the dynamic power of our own will.

Why God Permits Evil and How to Rise Above It (How-to-Live Series)

Paramahansa Yogananda provides strength and solace for times of adversity by explaining the mysteries of God’s lila, or divine drama. Readers will come to understand the reason for the dualistic nature of creation — God’s interplay of good and evil — and receive guidance on how to rise above the most challenging of circumstances.

Living Fearlessly: Bringing Out Your Inner Soul Strength (How-to-Live Series)

Paramahansa Yogananda teaches us how to break the shackles of fear and reveals how we can overcome our own psychological stumbling blocks. Living Fearlessly is a testament to what we can become if we but have faith in the divinity of our true nature as the soul.

How You Can Talk With God

Defining God as both the transcendent, universal Spirit and the intimately personal Father, Mother, Friend, and Lover of all, Paramahansa Yogananda shows how close the Lord is to each one of us, and how He can be persuaded to “break His silence” and respond in a tangible way.

Metaphysical Meditations

More than 300 spiritually uplifting meditations, prayers, and affirmations that can be used to develop greater health and vitality, creativity, self-confidence, and calmness; and to live more fully in a conscious awareness of the blissful presence of God.

Scientific Healing Affirmations

Paramahansa Yogananda presents here a profound explanation of the science of affirmation. He makes clear why affirmations work, and how to use the power of word and thought not only to bring about healing but to effect desired change in every area of life. Includes a wide variety of affirmations.

Sayings of Paramahansa Yogananda

A collection of sayings and wise counsel that conveys Paramahansa Yogananda’s candid and loving responses to those who came to him for guidance. Recorded by a number of his close disciples, the anecdotes in this book give the reader an opportunity to share in their personal encounters with the Master.

Songs of the Soul

Mystical poetry by Paramahansa Yogananda—an outpouring of his direct perceptions of God in the beauties of nature, in man, in everyday experiences,

and in the spiritually awakened state of samadhi meditation.

The Law of Success

Explains dynamic principles for achieving one's goals in life, and outlines the universal laws that bring success and fulfillment—personal, professional, and spiritual.

Cosmic Chants: Spiritualized Songs for Divine Communion

Words and music to 60 songs of devotion, with an introduction explaining how spiritual chanting can lead to God-communion.

Audio Recordings of Paramahansa Yogananda

- *Beholding the One in All*
- *Awake in the Cosmic Dream*
- *Be a Smile Millionaire*
- *The Great Light of God*
- *To Make Heaven on Earth*
- *One Life Versus Reincarnation*
- *Removing All Sorrow and Suffering*
- *In the Glory of the Spirit*
- *Follow the Path of Christ, Krishna, and the Masters*
- *Self-Realization: The Inner and the Outer Path*
- *Songs of My Heart*

Other Publications From Self-Realization Fellowship

The Holy Science by Swami Sri Yukteswar

Only Love: Living the Spiritual Life in a Changing World by Sri Daya Mata

Finding the Joy Within You: Personal Counsel for God-Centered Living by Sri Daya Mata

Enter the Quiet Heart: Creating a Loving Relationship With God by Sri Daya Mata

God Alone: The Life and Letters of a Saint by Sri Gyanamata

“Mejda”: The Family and the Early Life of Paramahansa Yogananda by Sananda Lal Ghosh

Self-Realization (a magazine founded by Paramahansa Yogananda in 1925)

DVD Video

Awake: The Life of Yogananda

A film by CounterPoint Films

*A complete catalog of books and audio/video recordings—including rare archival recordings of Paramahansa Yogananda—is available at
www.srfbooks.org.*

Additional Resources on the Kriya Yoga Teachings of Paramahansa Yogananda

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Glossary

(The following succinct definitions are provided as a ready reference for the reader unfamiliar with Sanskrit terms and yoga philosophy as delineated in the teachings of Paramahansa Yogananda. Further discussions of the salient concepts can be located in the text by using the Index.)

Apara-Prakriti. See **Prakriti**.

Arjuna. The exalted disciple to whom Bhagavan Krishna imparted the immortal message of the Bhagavad Gita (q.v.); one of the five Pandava princes in the great Hindu epic, the Mahabharata, in which he is a key figure.

ashram. A spiritual hermitage; often a monastery.

astral body. Man's subtle body of light, prana or lifetrans; the second of three sheaths that successively encase the soul: the causal body (q.v.), the astral body, and the physical body. The powers of the astral body enliven the physical body, much as electricity illumines a bulb. The astral body has nineteen elements: intelligence, ego, feeling, mind (sense consciousness); five instruments of knowledge (the sensory powers within the physical organs of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch); five instruments of action (the executive powers in the physical instruments of procreation, excretion, speech, locomotion, and the exercise of manual skill); and five instruments of life force that perform the functions of circulation, metabolization, assimilation, crystallization, and elimination.

astral light. The subtle light emanating from lifetrans (see prana); the structural essence of the astral world. Through the all-inclusive intuitive perception of the soul, devotees in concentrated states of meditation may perceive the astral light, particularly as the spiritual eye (q.v.).

astral world. The subtle sphere of the Lord's creation, a universe of light

and color composed of finer-than-atomic forces, i.e., vibrations of life energy or lifetrans (see prana). Every being, every object, every vibration on the material plane has an astral counterpart, for in the astral universe (heaven) is the blueprint of our material universe. At physical death, the soul of man, clothed in an astral body of light, ascends to one of the higher or lower astral planes, according to merit, to continue his spiritual evolution in the greater freedom of that subtle realm. There he remains for a karmically predetermined time until physical rebirth.

Aum (Om). The Sanskrit root word or seed-sound symbolizing that aspect of Godhead which creates and sustains all things; Cosmic Vibration. Aum of the Vedas became the sacred word Hum of the Tibetans; Amin of the Moslems; and Amen of the Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Jews, and Christians. The world's great religions state that all created things originate in the cosmic vibratory energy of Aum or Amen, the Word or Holy Ghost. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God....All things were made by him [the Word or Aum]; and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John

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Amen in Hebrew means sure, faithful. "These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God" (Revelation

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). Even as sound is produced by the vibration of a running motor, so the omnipresent sound of Aum faithfully testifies to the running of the “Cosmic Motor,” which upholds all life and every particle of creation through vibratory energy. In the Self-Realization Fellowship Lessons (q.v.), Paramahansa Yogananda teaches techniques of meditation whose practice brings direct experience of God as Aum or Holy Ghost. That blissful communion with the invisible divine Power (“the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost”—John

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) is the truly scientific basis of prayer.

avatar. From the Sanskrit avatara, with roots ava, “down,” and tri, “to pass.” Souls who attain union with Spirit and then return to earth to help mankind are called avatars, divine incarnations.

avidya. Literally, “non-knowledge,” ignorance; the manifestation in man of maya, the cosmic delusion (q.v.). Essentially, avidya is man’s ignorance of his divine nature and of the sole reality: Spirit.

Babaji. See Mahavatar Babaji.

Bhagavad Gita. “Song of the Lord.” An ancient Indian scripture consisting of eighteen chapters from the sixth book (Bhishma Parva) of the Mahabharata epic. Presented in the form of a dialogue between the avatar (q.v.) Lord Krishna and his disciple Arjuna on the eve of the historic battle of Kurukshetra, the Gita is a profound treatise on the science of yoga (union with God) and a timeless prescription for happiness and success in everyday living. The Gita is allegory as well as history, a spiritual dissertation on the inner battle between man’s good and bad tendencies. Depending on the context, Krishna symbolizes the guru, the soul, or God; Arjuna represents the aspiring devotee. Of this universal scripture Mahatma Gandhi wrote: “Those who will meditate on the Gita will derive fresh joy and new meanings from it every day. There is not a single spiritual tangle which the Gita cannot unravel.”

The quotations from the Bhagavad Gita in these Second Coming volumes are from Paramahansa Yogananda's own translation, *God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita—Royal Science of God-Realization* (published by Self-Realization Fellowship).

Bhagavan Krishna. An avatar who lived as a king in India ages before the Christian era. One of the meanings given for the word Krishna in the Hindu scriptures is "Omniscient Spirit." Thus, Krishna, like Christ, is a spiritual title signifying the divine magnitude of the avatar—his oneness with God. The title Bhagavan means "Lord." In his early life, Krishna lived as a cowherd who enchanted his companions with the music of his flute. In this role Krishna is often considered to represent allegorically the soul playing the flute of meditation to guide all misled thoughts back to the fold of omniscience.

Bhakti Yoga. The spiritual approach to God that stresses all-surrendering love as the principal means for communion and union with God. See Yoga.

Brahma-Vishnu-Shiva. Three aspects of God's immanence in creation. They represent that triune function of the Christ Intelligence (Tat) that guides Cosmic Nature's activities of creation, preservation, and dissolution. See Trinity.

Brahman (Brahma). Absolute Spirit. Brahman is sometimes rendered in Sanskrit as Brahma (with a short a at the end); but the meaning is the same as Brahman: Spirit, or God the Father, not the circumscribed concept of the personal "Brahma-the-Creator" of the Brahma-Vishnu-Shiva triad (which is rendered with a long ā at the end, Brahmā). See Brahma-Vishnu-Shiva.

breath. "The influx of innumerable cosmic currents into man by way of the breath induces restlessness in his mind," Paramahansa Yogananda wrote. "Thus the breath links him with the fleeting phenomenal worlds. To escape from the sorrows of transitoriness and to enter the blissful realm of Reality, the yogi learns to quiet the breath by scientific meditation."

caste. Caste in its original conception was not a hereditary status, but a classification based on man's natural capacities. In his evolution, man passes through four distinct grades, designated by ancient Hindu sages as Sudra, Vaisya, Kshatriya, and Brahmin. The Sudra is interested primarily

in satisfying his bodily needs and desires; the work that best suits his state of development is bodily labor. The Vaisya is ambitious for worldly gain as well as for satisfaction of the senses; he has more creative ability than the Sudra and seeks occupation as a farmer, a businessman, an artist, or wherever his mental energy finds fulfillment. The Kshatriya, having through many lives fulfilled the desires of the Sudra and Vaisya states, begins to seek the meaning of life; he tries to overcome his bad habits, to control his senses, and to do what is right. Kshatriyas by occupation are noble rulers, statesmen, warriors. The Brahmin has overcome his lower nature, has a natural affinity for spiritual pursuits, and is God-knowing, able therefore to teach and help liberate others.

causal body. Essentially, man as a soul is a causal-bodied being. His causal body is an idea-matrix for the astral and physical bodies. The causal body is composed of thirty-five idea elements corresponding to the nineteen elements of the astral body (q.v.) plus the sixteen basic material elements of the physical body.

causal world. Behind the physical world of matter (atoms, protons, electrons), and the subtle astral world of luminous life energy (lifetrans), is the causal, or ideational, world of thought (thoughtrons). After man evolves sufficiently to transcend the physical and astral universes, he resides in the causal universe. In the consciousness of causal beings, the physical and astral universes are resolved to their thought essence. Whatever physical man can do in imagination, causal man can do in actuality—the only limitation being thought itself. Ultimately, man sheds the last soul covering—his causal body—to unite with omnipresent Spirit, beyond all vibratory realms.

chakras. In Yoga, the seven occult centers of life and consciousness in the spine and brain, which enliven the physical and astral bodies of man. These centers are referred to as chakras (“wheels”) because the concentrated energy in each one is like a hub from which radiate rays of life-giving light and energy. In ascending order, these chakras are muladhara (the coccygeal, at the base of the spine); svadhisthana (the sacral, two inches above muladhara); manipura (the lumbar, opposite the navel); anahata (the dorsal, opposite the heart); vishuddha (the cervical, at the base of the neck); ajna (traditionally located between the eyebrows; in actuality, directly connected by polarity with the medulla; see also medulla and spiritual eye);

and sahasrara (in the uppermost part of the cerebrum).

The seven centers are divinely planned exits or “trapdoors” through which the soul has descended into the body and through which it must reascend by a process of meditation. By seven successive steps, the soul escapes into Cosmic Consciousness. In its conscious upward passage through the seven opened or “awakened” cerebrospinal centers, the soul travels the highway to the Infinite, the true path by which the soul must retrace its course to reunite with God.

Yoga treatises generally consider only the six lower centers as chakras, with sahasrara referred to separately as a seventh center. All seven centers, however, are often referred to as lotuses, whose petals open, or turn upward, in spiritual awakening as the life and consciousness travel up the spine.

chitta. Intuitive feeling; the aggregate of consciousness, inherent in which is ahamkara (egoity), buddhi (intelligence), and manas (mind or sense consciousness).

Christ. The honorific title of Jesus: Jesus the Christ. This term also denotes God’s universal intelligence immanent in creation (sometimes referred to as the Cosmic Christ or the Infinite Christ), or is used in reference to great masters who have attained oneness with that Divine Consciousness. (The Greek word Christos means “anointed,” as does the Hebrew word Messiah.) See also Christ Consciousness and Kutastha Chaitanya.

Christ center. The Kutastha or ajna chakra at the point between the eyebrows, directly connected by polarity with the medulla (q.v.); center of will and concentration, and of Christ Consciousness (q.v.); seat of the spiritual eye (q.v.).

Christ Consciousness. The projected consciousness of God immanent in all creation. In Christian scripture, the “only begotten son,” the only pure reflection in creation of God the Father; in Hindu scripture, Kutastha Chaitanya or Tat, the universal consciousness, or cosmic intelligence, of Spirit everywhere present in creation. (The terms “Christ Consciousness” and “Christ Intelligence” are synonymous, as also “Cosmic Christ” and “Infinite Christ.”) It is the universal consciousness, oneness with God, manifested by Jesus, Krishna, and other avatars. Great saints and yogis know it as the state of samadhi meditation wherein their consciousness has

become identified with the divine intelligence in every particle of creation; they feel the entire universe as their own body. See Trinity.

consciousness, states of. In mortal consciousness man experiences three states: waking consciousness, sleeping consciousness, and dreaming consciousness. But he does not experience his soul, superconsciousness, and he does not experience God. The Christ-man does. As mortal man is conscious throughout his body, so the Christ-man is conscious throughout the universe, which he feels as his body. Beyond the state of Christ consciousness is cosmic consciousness, the experience of oneness with God in His absolute consciousness beyond vibratory creation as well as with the Lord's omnipresence manifesting in the phenomenal worlds.

Cosmic Consciousness. The Absolute; transcendental Spirit existing beyond creation; God the Father. Also the samadhi-meditation state of oneness with God both beyond and within vibratory creation. See Trinity.

cosmic delusion. See maya.

cosmic energy. See prana.

Cosmic Intelligent Vibration. See Aum.

Cosmic Sound. See Aum.

dharma. Eternal principles of righteousness that uphold all creation; man's inherent duty to live in harmony with these principles. See also Sanatana Dharma.

diksha. Spiritual initiation; from the Sanskrit verb-root diksh, to dedicate oneself. See also disciple and Kriya Yoga.

disciple. A spiritual aspirant who comes to a guru seeking introduction to God, and to this end establishes an eternal spiritual relationship with the guru. In Self-Realization Fellowship, the guru-disciple relationship is established by diksha, initiation, in Kriya Yoga. See also guru and Kriya Yoga.

Divine Mother. The aspect of God that is active in creation; the shakti, or power, of the Transcendent Creator. Other terms for this aspect of Divinity

are Aum, Shakti, Holy Ghost, Cosmic Intelligent Vibration, Nature or Prakriti. Also, the personal aspect of God embodying the love and compassionate qualities of a mother.

The Hindu scriptures teach that God is both immanent and transcendent, personal and impersonal. He may be sought as the Absolute; as one of His manifest eternal qualities, such as love, wisdom, bliss, light; in the form of an ishta (deity); or as Father, Mother, or Friend.

egoism. The ego-principle, ahamkara (lit., “I do”), is the root cause of dualism or the seeming separation between man and his Creator. Ahamkara brings human beings under the sway of maya (q.v.), by which the subject (ego) falsely appears as object; the creatures imagine themselves to be creators. By banishing ego-consciousness, man awakens to his divine identity, his oneness with the Sole Life: God.

elements (five). The Cosmic Vibration, or Aum, structures all physical creation, including man’s physical body, through the manifestation of five tattvas (elements): earth, water, fire, air, and ether (q.v.). These are structural forces, intelligent and vibratory in nature. Without the earth element there would be no state of solid matter; without the water element, no liquid state; without the air element, no gaseous state; without the fire element, no heat; without the ether element, no background on which to produce the cosmic motion-picture show. In the body, prana (cosmic vibratory energy) enters the medulla and is then divided into the five elemental currents by the action of the five lower chakras (q.v.), or centers: the coccygeal (earth), sacral (water), lumbar (fire), dorsal (air), and cervical (ether). The Sanskrit terminology for these elements is prithivi, ap, tej, prana, and akasha.

Energization Exercises. Man is surrounded by cosmic energy, much as a fish is surrounded by water. The Energization Exercises, originated by Paramahansa Yogananda and taught in Self-Realization Fellowship Lessons (q.v.), enable man to recharge his body with this cosmic energy, or universal prana.

ether. The Sanskrit word akaśa, translated as both “ether” and “space,” refers specifically to the vibratory element that is the subtlest in the material world. (See elements.) It derives from ā, “towards” and kasha, “to

be visible, to appear.” Akasha is the subtle “background” against which everything in the material universe becomes perceptible. “Space gives dimension to objects; ether separates the images,” Paramahansa Yogananda said. “Ether-permeated space is the boundary line between heaven, or the astral world, and earth,” he explained. “All the finer forces God has created are composed of light, or thought-forms, and are merely hidden behind a particular vibration that manifests as ether.”

evil. The satanic force that obscures God’s omnipresence in creation, manifesting as inharmonies in man and nature. Also, a broad term defining anything contrary to divine law (see dharma) that causes man to lose the consciousness of his essential unity with God, and that obstructs attainment of God-realization.

gospels. The word gospel comes from the Old English godspel, “good news.” It has the same meaning as the Greek evangelion—literally a “good message” or “good tidings”—the word used for Jesus’ teachings in Greek, the language in which the New Testament was originally written.

In the years immediately after Jesus’ ascension, historians state, stories of his life circulated primarily by word of mouth; different communities of the evolving Christian movement had varying collections of narratives and sayings. Though Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection took place in

a.d.

30

, the first of the four canonical gospels (which most scholars believe to be Mark’s) was not written until about forty years later. (Early Christians considered the Jewish scriptures to be their holy books; and, since many expected the imminent return of Jesus to earth, they apparently felt no need for additional written teachings. Though the first epistles, or pastoral letters, of the Apostle Paul were written around the year

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or

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, no systematic narrative of Jesus' life and teachings was written until Mark's appeared around the year

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Historians generally agree that both Matthew and Luke drew from Mark; and both of them, in addition, had access to material from other sources. Scholars attribute further differences in the content and emphasis of the four gospels, which were written at different times between

a.d.

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and

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, to the particular events and concerns faced by the independent Christian communities—some of Jewish ancestry, some of Gentile—scattered in different regions of the eastern Roman Empire as the movement gradually evolved from its Jewish roots to a fully separate religion. (The Gospel of Thomas, also cited herein, is thought to have been compiled during the same period as the four canonical gospels—within a few decades after Jesus' ascension.)

Regarding the authors of the four New Testament Gospels, Matthew and John, of course, are names of two of the original twelve apostles of Jesus. Mark, according to Papias, bishop of Hieropolis in Asia Minor (ca.

130

), was the assistant and "interpreter" of Jesus' disciple Peter; and wrote down what he heard Peter relate about the sayings and deeds of Jesus. Luke is identified in early accounts as the traveling companion of Paul, who had personally known Peter, John, and Jesus' brother James. An overview of what historians know about the authorship of the Gospels may be found in *Three Gospels* (New York: Simon and Schuster,

1997

), by Duke University professor Reynolds Price.

gunas. The three attributes of Nature: tamas, rajas, and sattva—obstruction, activity, and expansion; or, mass, energy, and intelligence. In man the three gunas express themselves as ignorance or inertia; activity or struggle; and wisdom.

guru. Spiritual teacher. Though the word guru is often misused to refer simply to any teacher or instructor, a true God-illuminated guru is one who, in his attainment of self-mastery, has realized his identity with the omnipresent Spirit. Such a one is uniquely qualified to lead the seeker on his or her inward journey toward divine realization.

When a devotee is ready to seek God in earnest, the Lord sends him a guru. Through the wisdom, intelligence, Self-realization, and teachings of such a master, God guides the disciple. By following the master's teachings and discipline, the disciple is able to fulfill his soul's desire for the manna of God-perception. A true guru, ordained by God to help sincere seekers in response to their deep soul craving, is not an ordinary teacher: he is a human vehicle whose body, speech, mind, and spirituality God uses as a channel to attract and guide lost souls back to their home of immortality. A guru is a living embodiment of scriptural truth. He is an agent of salvation appointed by God in response to a devotee's demand for release from the bondage of matter.

“To keep company with the Guru,” wrote Swami Sri Yukteswar in *The Holy Science*, “is not only to be in his physical presence (as this is sometimes impossible), but mainly means to keep him in our hearts and to be one with him in principle and to attune ourselves with him.” See master.

Gurudeva. “Divine teacher,” a customary Sanskrit term of respect that is used in addressing and referring to one's spiritual preceptor; sometimes rendered in English as “Master.”

Gurus of Self-Realization Fellowship. The Gurus of Self-Realization Fellowship (Yogoda Satsanga Society of India) are Jesus Christ, Bhagavan Krishna, and a line of exalted masters of contemporary times: Mahavatar Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, Swami Sri Yukteswar, and Paramahansa Yogananda. To show the harmony and essential unity of the teachings of

Jesus Christ and the Yoga precepts of Bhagavan Krishna is an integral part of the SRF dispensation. All of these Gurus, by their universal teachings and divine instrumentality, contribute to the fulfillment of the Self-Realization Fellowship mission of bringing to humanity a practical spiritual science of God-realization.

The passing of a guru's spiritual mantle to a disciple designated to carry on the lineage to which that guru belongs is termed guru-parampara. Thus Paramahansa Yogananda's direct lineage of gurus is Mahavatar Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, and Swami Sri Yukteswar.

Before his passing Paramahansaji stated that it was God's wish that he be the last in the Self-Realization Fellowship line of Gurus. No succeeding disciple or leader in his society will ever assume the title of guru. "When I am gone," he said, "the teachings will be the guru....Through the teachings you will be in tune with me and the great Gurus who sent me."

When questioned about the succession of the presidency of Self-Realization Fellowship/Yogoda Satsanga Society of India, Paramahansaji stated: "There will always be at the head of this organization men and women of realization. They are already known to God and the Gurus. They shall serve as my spiritual successor and representative in all spiritual and organizational matters."

Hinduism. See Sanatana Dharma.

Holy Ghost. The sacred Cosmic Intelligent Vibration projected from God to structure and sustain creation from Its own vibratory Essence. It is thus the Holy Presence of God, His Word, omnipresent in the universe and in every form, vehicle of God's perfect universal reflection, Christ Consciousness (q.v.). The Comforter, Cosmic Mother Nature, Prakriti (q.v.). See Aum and Trinity.

"Holy Ghost" is synonymous with "Holy Spirit"—the term used in many modern English versions of the Bible. Both are translations of the same Greek and Hebrew words. Ruach in Hebrew and pneuma in Greek are used to signify a range of concepts: spirit, breath, and wind—in general, the life principle of man and the cosmos. (Similarly in Latin, in which inspiration refers to the inflow of breath as well as of divine or creative spirit; and in Sanskrit, in which prana denotes the breath as well as the subtle astral life energy that sustains the body,

and the universal Cosmic Vibratory Energy that underlies and upholds every particle of creation.) At the time of the King James translation of the Bible, both “spirit” and “ghost” in English conveyed the same meaning as ruach and pneuma; the everyday connotation of “ghost” has changed in the centuries since then. The King James rendering, used in this book, avoids confusion between Spirit (the transcendental God the Father) and Its activating Creative Vibratory Energy (Holy Ghost).

intuition. The all-knowing faculty of the soul, which enables man to experience direct perception of truth without the intermediary of the senses.

ji. A suffix denoting respect, added to names and titles in India; as, Gandhiji, Paramahansaji, Guruji.

Jnana Yoga. (Pronounced gyana yoga.) The path to union with God through transmutation of the discriminative power of the intellect into the omniscient wisdom of the soul.

karma. Effects of past actions, from this or previous lifetimes; from the Sanskrit kri, to do. The equilibrating law of karma, as expounded in the Hindu scriptures, is that of action and reaction, cause and effect, sowing and reaping. In the course of natural righteousness, each man by his thoughts and actions becomes the molder of his destiny. Whatever energies he himself, wisely or unwisely, has set in motion must return to him as their starting point, like a circle inexorably completing itself. An understanding of karma as the law of justice serves to free the human mind from resentment against God and man. A man’s karma follows him from incarnation to incarnation until fulfilled or spiritually transcended. See reincarnation.

The cumulative actions of human beings within communities, nations, or the world as a whole constitute mass karma, which produces local or far-ranging effects according to the degree and preponderance of good or evil. The thoughts and actions of every man, therefore, contribute to the good or ill of this world and all peoples in it.

Karma Yoga. The path to God through nonattached action and service. By selfless service, by giving the fruits of one’s actions to God, and by seeing God as the sole Doer, the devotee becomes free of the ego and experiences

God. See Yoga.

Krishna. See Bhagavan Krishna.

Krishna Consciousness. Christ Consciousness; Kutastha Chaitanya. See Christ Consciousness.

Kriya Yoga. A sacred spiritual science, originating millenniums ago in India. It includes certain techniques of meditation whose devoted practice leads to realization of God. Paramahansa Yogananda has explained that the Sanskrit root of kriya is kri, to do, to act and react; the same root is found in the word karma, the natural principle of cause and effect. Kriya Yoga is thus “union (yoga) with the Infinite through a certain action or rite (kriya).” Kriya Yoga is praised by Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita and by Patanjali in the Yoga Sutras. Revived in this age by Mahavatar Babaji (q.v.), Kriya Yoga is the diksha (spiritual initiation) bestowed by the Gurus of Self-Realization Fellowship. Since the mahasamadhi (q.v.) of Paramahansa Yogananda, diksha is conferred through his appointed spiritual representative, the president of Self-Realization Fellowship/Yogoda Satsanga Society of India (or through one appointed by the president). To qualify for diksha Self-Realization members must fulfill certain preliminary spiritual requirements. One who has received this diksha is a Kriya Yogi or Kriyaban. See also guru and disciple.

kundalini. The powerful current of creative life energy residing in a subtle coiled passageway at the base of the spine. In ordinary waking consciousness, the body’s life force flows from the brain down the spine and out through this coiled kundalini passage, enlivening the physical body and tying the astral and causal bodies (q.v.) and the indwelling soul to the mortal form. In the higher states of consciousness that are the goal of meditation, the kundalini energy is reversed to flow back up the spine to awaken the dormant spiritual faculties in the cerebrospinal centers (chakras). Also called the “serpent force,” because of its coiled configuration.

Kutastha Chaitanya. Christ Consciousness (q.v.). The Sanskrit word kutastha means “that which remains unchanged”; chaitanya means “consciousness.”

Lahiri Mahasaya. Lahiri was the family name of Shyama Charan Lahiri (

1828

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1895

). Mahasaya, a Sanskrit religious title, means “large-minded.” Lahiri Mahasaya was a disciple of Mahavatar Babaji, and the guru of Swami Sri Yukteswar (Paramahansa Yogananda’s guru). Lahiri Mahasaya was the one to whom Babaji revealed the ancient, almost-lost science of Kriya Yoga (q.v.). A Yogavatar (“Incarnation of Yoga”), he was a seminal figure in the renaissance of yoga in modern India who gave instruction and blessing to countless seekers who came to him, without regard to caste or creed. He was a Christlike teacher with miraculous powers; but also a family man with business responsibilities, who demonstrated for the modern world how an ideally balanced life can be achieved by combining meditation with right performance of outer duties. Lahiri Mahasaya’s life is described in Autobiography of a Yogi.

life force. See prana.

lifetrans. See prana.

mahasamadhi. Sanskrit maha, “great,” samadhi. The last meditation, or conscious communion with God, during which a perfected master merges himself in the cosmic Aum and casts off the physical body. A master invariably knows beforehand the time God has appointed for him to leave his bodily residence. See samadhi.

Mahavatar Babaji. The deathless Mahavatar (“great avatar”) who in

1861

gave Kriya Yoga (q.v.) initiation to Lahiri Mahasaya, and thereby restored to the world the ancient technique of salvation. Perennially youthful, he has lived for centuries in the Himalayas, bestowing a constant blessing on the world. His mission has been to assist prophets in carrying out their special dispensations. Many titles signifying his exalted spiritual stature have been given to him, but the mahavatar has generally adopted the simple name of Babaji, from the

Sanskrit baba, “father,” and the suffix ji, denoting respect. More information about his life and spiritual mission is given in Autobiography of a Yogi. See avatar.

man. The word is derived from the same root as Sanskrit manas, mind—the uniquely human capacity for rational thought. The science of yoga deals with human consciousness from the point of view of the essentially androgynous Self (atman). As there is no other terminology in English that would convey these psychological and spiritual truths without excessive literary awkwardness, the use of man and related terms has been retained in this publication—not in the narrowly exclusive sense of the word man, denoting only half of the human race, but in its broader original meaning.

Mantra Yoga. Divine communion attained through devotional, concentrated repetition of root-word sounds that have a spiritually beneficial vibratory potency. See Yoga.

master. One who has achieved self-mastery. Also, a respectful term of address for one’s guru (q.v.).

Paramahansa Yogananda has pointed out that “the distinguishing qualifications of a master are not physical but spiritual....Proof that one is a master is supplied only by the ability to enter at will the breathless state (savikalpa samadhi) and by the attainment of immutable bliss (nirvikalpa samadhi).” See samadhi.

Paramahansaji further states: “All scriptures proclaim that the Lord created man in His omnipotent image. Control over the universe appears to be supernatural, but in truth such power is inherent and natural in everyone who attains ‘right remembrance’ of his divine origin. Men of God-realization...are devoid of the ego-principle (ahamkara) and its uprisings of personal desires; the actions of true masters are in effortless conformity with rita, natural righteousness. In Emerson’s words, all great ones become ‘not virtuous, but Virtue; then is the end of the creation answered, and God is well pleased.’”

maya. The delusory power inherent in the structure of creation, by which the One appears as many. Maya is the principle of relativity, inversion, contrast, duality, oppositional states; the “Satan” (lit., in Hebrew, “the adversary”) of the Old Testament prophets; and the “devil” whom Christ described picturesquely as a “murderer” and a “liar,” because “there is no

truth in him” (John

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Paramahansa Yogananda wrote: “The Sanskrit word maya means ‘the measurer’; it is the magical power in creation by which limitations and divisions are apparently present in the Immeasurable and Inseparable. Maya is Nature herself—the phenomenal worlds, ever in transitional flux as antithesis to Divine Immutability.

“In God’s plan and play (lila), the sole function of Satan or maya is to attempt to divert man from Spirit to matter, from Reality to unreality. ‘The devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil’ (I John

3

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8

). That is, the manifestation of Christ Consciousness, within man’s own being, effortlessly destroys the illusions or ‘works of the devil.’

“Maya is the veil of transitoriness in Nature, the ceaseless becoming of creation; the veil that each man must lift in order to see behind it the Creator, the changeless Immutable, eternal Reality.”

meditation. Generally, interiorized concentration with the objective of perceiving God. True meditation, dhyana, is conscious realization of God through intuitive perception. It is achieved only after the devotee has attained that fixed concentration whereby he disconnects his attention from the senses and is completely undisturbed by sensory impressions from the outer world. Dhyana is the seventh step of Patanjali’s Eightfold Path of

Yoga, the eighth step being samadhi, communion, oneness with God. See Patanjali.

medulla oblongata. This structure at the base of the brain (top of the spinal cord) is the principal point of entry of life force (prana) into the body. It is the seat of the sixth cerebrospinal center, whose function is to receive and direct the incoming flow of cosmic energy. The life force is stored in the seventh center (sahasrara) in the topmost part of the brain. From that reservoir it is distributed throughout the body. The subtle center at the medulla is the main switch that controls the entrance, storage, and distribution of the life force.

paramahansa. A spiritual title signifying a master (q.v.). It may be conferred only by a true guru on a qualified disciple. Paramahansa literally means "supreme swan." In the Hindu scriptures, the hansa or swan symbolizes spiritual discrimination. Swami Sri Yukteswar bestowed the title on his beloved disciple Yogananda in

1935

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Patanjali. Renowned exponent of yoga, a sage of ancient times, whose Yoga Sutras outline the principles of the yogic path, dividing it into eight steps: (

1

) moral proscriptions (yama), (

2

) right observances (niyama), (

3

) meditation posture (asana), (

4

) life-force control (pranayama), (

5

) interiorization of the mind (pratyahara), (

6

) concentration (dharana), (

7

) meditation (dhyana), (

8

) union with God (samadhi).

Prakriti. Cosmic Nature; in general, the intelligent, creative vibratory power projected out of Spirit that both objectifies and becomes the triune manifestation (causal, astral, and physical) of the universe and the microcosm of man.

Specifically designated: Maha-Prakriti is the primal Undifferentiated Creative Intelligence of God, Creative Mother Nature or Holy Ghost, that through Cosmic Vibration of Its own Self brings into manifestation all creation. Para-Prakriti (Pure Nature) and Apara-Prakriti (Impure Nature) correlate with the Christian terminologies of Holy Ghost and Satan—respectively, the creative power that expresses the immanence of God’s vibratory Presence in creation, and the dark power of cosmic delusion that obscures the Divine Omnipresence.

prana. Sparks of intelligent finer-than-atomic energy that constitute life, collectively referred to in Hindu scriptural treatises as prana, which Paramahansa Yogananda has translated as “lifetrans.” In essence, condensed thoughts of God; substance of the astral world (q.v.) and life principle of the physical cosmos. In the physical world, there are two kinds of prana: (

1

) the cosmic vibratory energy that is omnipresent in the universe, structuring and sustaining all things; (

) the specific prana or energy that pervades and sustains each human body through five currents or functions. Prana current performs the function of crystallization; vyana current, circulation; samana current, assimilation; udana current, metabolism; and apana current, elimination.

pranayama. Conscious control of prana (the creative vibration or energy that activates and sustains life in the body). The yoga science of pranayama is the direct way to consciously disconnect the mind from the life functions and sensory perceptions that tie man to body consciousness. Pranayama thus frees man's consciousness to commune with God. All scientific techniques that bring about union of soul and Spirit may be classified as yoga, and pranayama is the greatest yogic method for attaining this divine union.

Raja Yoga. The "royal" or highest path to God-union. It teaches scientific meditation (q.v.) as the ultimate means for realizing God, and includes the highest essentials from all other forms of Yoga. The Self-Realization Fellowship Raja Yoga teachings outline a way of life leading to perfect unfoldment in body, mind, and soul, based on the foundation of Kriya Yoga (q.v.) meditation. See yoga.

Rajarsi Janakananda (James J. Lynn). Exalted disciple of Paramahansa Yogananda, and first successor to him as president and spiritual head of Self-Realization Fellowship/Yogoda Satsanga Society of India until his passing on February

20

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1955

. Mr. Lynn first received Kriya Yoga initiation from Paramahansaji in

1932

; his spiritual advancement was so swift that the Guru lovingly referred to him as "Saint Lynn," until bestowing on him the monastic title of Rajarsi Janakananda

in

1951

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reincarnation. The doctrine that human beings, compelled by the law of evolution, incarnate repeatedly in progressively higher lives—retarded by wrong actions and desires, and advanced by spiritual endeavors—until Self-realization and God-union are attained. Having thus transcended the limitations and imperfections of mortal consciousness, the soul is forever freed from compulsory reincarnation. “Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out” (Revelation

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rishis. Seers, exalted beings who manifest divine wisdom; especially, the illumined sages of ancient India to whom the Vedas were intuitively revealed.

sadhana. Path of spiritual discipline. The specific instruction and meditation practices prescribed by the guru for his disciples, who by faithfully following them ultimately realize God.

samadhi. The highest step on the Eightfold Path of Yoga, as outlined by the sage Patanjali (q.v.). Samadhi is attained when the meditator, the process of meditation (by which the mind is withdrawn from the senses by interiorization), and the object of meditation (God) become One. Paramahansa Yogananda has explained that “in the initial states of God-communion (savikalpa samadhi) the devotee’s consciousness merges in the Cosmic Spirit; his life force is withdrawn from the body, which appears ‘dead,’ or motionless and rigid. The yogi is fully aware of his bodily condition of suspended animation. As he progresses to higher spiritual states (nirvikalpa samadhi), however, he communes with God without

bodily fixation; and in his ordinary waking consciousness, even in the midst of exacting worldly duties.” Both states are characterized by oneness with the ever new bliss of Spirit, but the nirvikalpa state is experienced by only the most highly advanced masters.

Sanatana Dharma. Literally, “eternal religion.” The name given to the body of Vedic teachings that came to be called Hinduism after the Greeks designated the people on the banks of the river Indus as Indoos, or Hindus. See dharma.

Satan. Literally, in Hebrew, “the adversary.” Satan is the conscious and independent universal force that keeps everything and everybody deluded with the unspiritual consciousness of finiteness and separateness from God. To accomplish this, Satan uses the weapons of maya (cosmic delusion) and avidya (individual delusion, ignorance). See maya.

Sat-Chit-Ananda. Sanskrit term for God that expresses the essential nature of Spirit as eternal Being or Truth (Sat), infinite consciousness (Chit), and ever new Bliss (Ananda).

Sat-Tat-Aum. Sat, Truth, the Absolute, Bliss; Tat, universal intelligence or consciousness; Aum, cosmic intelligent creative vibration, word-symbol for God. See Aum and Trinity.

Self. Capitalized to denote the atman or soul, as distinguished from the ordinary self, which is the personality or ego (q.v.). The Self is individualized Spirit, whose nature is ever-existing, ever-conscious, ever-new joy. Experience of these divine qualities of the soul’s nature is achieved through meditation.

Self-realization. Paramahansa Yogananda has defined Self-realization as “the knowing—in body, mind, and soul—that we are one with the omnipresence of God; that we do not have to pray that it come to us, that we are not merely near it at all times, but that God’s omnipresence is our omnipresence; that we are just as much a part of Him now as we ever will be. All we have to do is improve our knowing.”

Self-Realization. An abbreviated way of referring to Self-Realization Fellowship, the society founded by Paramahansa Yogananda, often used by him in informal talks; e.g. “the Self-Realization teachings”; “Self-

Realization headquarters in Los Angeles”; etc.

Self-Realization Fellowship. The international nonsectarian religious society founded by Paramahansa Yogananda in the United States in

1920

(and as Yogoda Satsanga Society of India in

1917

) to disseminate worldwide the spiritual principles and meditation techniques of Kriya Yoga, and to foster greater understanding among people of all races, cultures, and creeds of the one Truth underlying all religions. (See “Aims and Ideals of Self-Realization Fellowship.”)

Paramahansa Yogananda has explained that the name Self-Realization Fellowship signifies “fellowship with God through Self-realization, and friendship with all truth-seeking souls.”

From its international headquarters in Los Angeles, the society publishes Paramahansa Yogananda’s writings, lectures, and informal talks— including his comprehensive series of Self-Realization Fellowship Lessons for home study and Self-Realization, the magazine he founded in

1925

; produces audio and video recordings on his teachings; oversees its temples, retreats, meditation centers, youth programs, and the monastic communities of the Self-Realization Order; conducts lecture and class series in cities around the world; and coordinates the Worldwide Prayer Circle, a network of groups and individuals dedicated to praying for those in need of physical, mental, or spiritual aid and for global peace and harmony.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lessons. The teachings of Paramahansa Yogananda, sent to students throughout the world in a series of lessons, available to all earnest truth-seekers. These lessons contain the yoga meditation techniques taught by Paramahansa Yogananda, including, for those who qualify, Kriya Yoga (q.v.).

Self-Realization Fellowship Monastic Order. Paramahansa Yogananda wrote (in his commentary on Bhagavad Gita

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1

): “For those on the path I have followed who also feel called to complete renunciation in a life of seeking and serving God through the yoga ideals of meditative and dutiful activities, I have perpetuated in the monastic order of Self-Realization Fellowship/Yogoda Satsanga Society of India the line of sannyas in the Shankara Order, which I entered when I received the holy vows of a swami from my Guru. The organizational work that God and my Guru and Paramgurus have started through me is carried on not by worldly hired employees, but by those who have dedicated their lives to the highest objectives of renunciation and love for God.”

Monks and nuns of the Order reside in the society’s ashram centers and serve Paramahansa Yogananda’s worldwide work in many capacities, including: conducting Self-Realization Fellowship temple services, retreats, classes, and other spiritual and ministerial functions; providing individual counsel to Self-Realization Fellowship students on their practice of Paramahansa Yogananda’s teachings and techniques; and administering the society’s various charitable activities.

Self-Realization Magazine. A quarterly journal published by Self-Realization Fellowship, featuring the talks and writings of Paramahansa Yogananda; and containing other spiritual, practical, and informative articles of current interest and lasting value.

Shankara, Swami. Sometimes referred to as Adi (“the first”) Shankaracharya (Shankara + acharya, “teacher”); India’s most illustrious philosopher. His date is uncertain; many scholars assign him to the eighth or early ninth century. He expounded God not as a negative abstraction, but as positive, eternal, omnipresent, ever new Bliss. Shankara reorganized the ancient Swami Order, and founded four great maths (monastic centers of spiritual education), whose leaders in apostolic succession bear the title of Jagadguru Sri Shankaracharya. The meaning of Jagadguru is “world

teacher.”

siddha. Literally, “one who is successful.” One who has attained Self-realization.

soul. Individualized Spirit. The soul is the true and immortal nature of man, and of all living forms of life; it is cloaked only temporarily in the garments of causal, astral, and physical bodies. The nature of the soul is Spirit: ever-existing, ever-conscious, ever-new Joy.

spiritual eye. The single eye of intuition and omnipresent perception at the Christ (Kutastha) center (ajna chakra) between the eyebrows. The deeply meditating devotee beholds the spiritual eye as a ring of golden light encircling a sphere of opalescent blue, and at the center, a pentagonal white star. Microcosmically, these forms and colors epitomize, respectively, the vibratory realm of creation (Cosmic Nature, Holy Ghost); the Son or intelligence of God in creation (Christ Consciousness); and the vibrationless Spirit beyond all creation (God the Father).

The spiritual eye is the entryway into the ultimate states of divine consciousness. In deep meditation, as the devotee’s consciousness penetrates the spiritual eye, into the three realms epitomized therein, he experiences successively the following states: superconsciousness or the ever new joy of soul realization, and oneness with God as Aum (q.v.) or Holy Ghost; Christ consciousness, oneness with the universal intelligence of God in all creation; and cosmic consciousness, unity with the omnipresence of God that is beyond as well as within vibratory manifestation. See also consciousness, states of; superconsciousness; Christ Consciousness.

Explaining a passage from Ezekiel (

43

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1

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2

), Paramahansa Yogananda has written: “Through the divine eye in the forehead, (‘the east’), the yogi sails his consciousness into omnipresence, hearing the word or Aum, the divine sound of ‘many waters’: the vibrations of light that constitute the sole reality of creation.” In Ezekiel’s words: “Afterwards he brought me to the gate, even the gate that looketh towards the east; and behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east; and His voice was like the noise of many waters; and the earth shined with His glory.”

Jesus also spoke of the spiritual eye: “When thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light....Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness” (Luke

11

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Sri. A title of respect. When used before the name of a religious person, it means “holy” or “revered.”

Sri Yukteswar, Swami. Swami Sri Yukteswar Giri (

1855

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1936

), India’s Jnanavatar, “Incarnation of Wisdom”; guru of Paramahansa Yogananda, and paramguru of Self-Realization Fellowship Kriyaban members. Sri Yukteswarji was a disciple of Lahiri Mahasaya. At the behest of Lahiri Mahasaya’s guru, Mahavatar Babaji, he wrote The Holy Science, a treatise on the underlying unity of Christian and Hindu scriptures, and trained Paramahansa

Yogananda for his spiritual world-mission: the dissemination of Kriya Yoga (q.v.). Paramahansa has lovingly described Sri Yukteswarji's life in *Autobiography of a Yogi*.

superconscious mind. The all-knowing power of the soul that perceives truth directly; intuition.

superconsciousness. The pure, intuitive, all-seeing, ever blissful consciousness of the soul. Sometimes used generally to refer to all the various states of samadhi (q.v.) experienced in meditation, but specifically the first state of samadhi, wherein one drops ego-consciousness and realizes his self as soul, made in the image of God. Thence follow the higher states of realization: Christ consciousness and cosmic consciousness (qq.v.).

swami. A member of India's most ancient monastic order, reorganized in the ninth century by Swami Shankara (q.v.). A swami takes formal vows of celibacy and renunciation of worldly ties and ambitions; he devotes himself to meditation and other spiritual practices, and to service to humanity. There are ten classificatory titles of the venerable Swami Order, as Giri, Puri, Bharati, Tirtha, Saraswati, and others. Swami Sri Yukteswar (q.v.) and Paramahansa Yogananda belonged to the Giri ("mountain") branch. The Sanskrit word swami means "he who is one with the Self (Swa)."

Trinity. When Spirit manifests creation, It becomes the Trinity: Father, Son, Holy Ghost, or Sat, Tat, Aum. The Father (Sat) is God as the Creator existing beyond creation (Cosmic Consciousness). The Son (Tat) is God's omnipresent intelligence existing in creation (Christ Consciousness or Kutastha Chaitanya). The Holy Ghost (Aum) is the vibratory power of God that objectifies and becomes creation.

Many cycles of cosmic creation and dissolution have come and gone in Eternity (see yuga). At the time of cosmic dissolution, the Trinity and all other relativities of creation resolve into the Absolute Spirit.

Upanishads. The Upanishads or Vedanta (lit., "end of the Vedas"), which occur in certain parts of the four Vedas, are essential summaries that form the doctrinal basis of the Hindu religion.

Vedanta. Literally, "end of the Vedas"; the philosophy stemming from the Upanishads, or latter portion of the Vedas. Shankara (eighth or early ninth

century) was the chief exponent of Vedanta, which declares that God is the only reality and that creation is essentially an illusion. As man is the only creature capable of conceiving of God, man himself must be divine, and his duty therefore is to realize his true nature.

Vedas. The four scriptural texts of the Hindus: Rig Veda, Sama Veda, Yajur Veda, and Atharva Veda. They are essentially a literature of chant, ritual, and recitation for vitalizing and spiritualizing all phases of man's life and activity. Among the immense texts of India, the Vedas (Sanskrit root vid, "to know") are the only writings to which no author is ascribed. The Rig Veda assigns a celestial origin to the hymns and tells us they have come down from "ancient times," reclothed in new language. Divinely revealed from age to age to the rishis, "seers," the four Vedas are said to possess nityatva, "timeless finality."

Yoga. From Sanskrit yuj, "union." The highest connotation of the word yoga in Hindu philosophy is union of the individual soul with Spirit through scientific methods of meditation. Within the larger spectrum of Hindu philosophy, Yoga is one of six orthodox systems: Vedanta, Mimamsa, Sankhya, Vaishesika, Nyaya, and Yoga. There are also various types of yoga methods: Hatha Yoga, Mantra Yoga, Laya Yoga, Karma Yoga, Jnana Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, and Raja Yoga. Raja Yoga, the "royal" or complete yoga, is that which is taught by Self-Realization Fellowship, and which Bhagavan Krishna extols to his disciple Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita: "The yogi is greater than body-disciplining ascetics, greater even than the followers of the path of wisdom or of the path of action; be thou, O Arjuna, a yogi!" (Bhagavad Gita

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). The sage Patanjali, foremost exponent of Yoga, has outlined eight definite steps by which the Raja Yogi attains samadhi, or union with God. These are (

1

) yama, moral conduct; (

2

) niyama, religious observances; (

3

) asana, right posture; (

4

) pranayama, control of prana, subtle life currents; (

5

) pratyahara, interiorization, withdrawal of the senses from external objects; (

6

) dharana, concentration, (

7

) dhyana, meditation; and (

8

) samadhi, superconscious experience; union with God.

yogi. One who practices Yoga (q.v.). Anyone who practices a scientific technique for divine realization is a yogi. He may be either married or unmarried, either a man of worldly responsibilities or one dedicated to formal religious vows.

Yogoda Satsanga Society of India. The name by which Paramahansa Yogananda's society is known in India. The Society was founded in

1917

by Paramahansa Yogananda. Its headquarters, Yogoda Math, is situated on the banks of the Ganges at Dakshineswar, near Calcutta. Yogoda Satsanga Society has a branch math at Ranchi, Jharkhand (formerly Bihar), and many branch

centers. In addition to Yogoda meditation centers throughout India, there are twenty-two educational institutions, from primary through college level. Yogoda, a word coined by Paramahansa Yogananda, is derived from yoga, union, harmony, equilibrium; and da, that which imparts. Satsanga is composed of sat, truth, and sanga, fellowship. For the West, Sri Yogananda translated the Indian name as “Self-Realization Fellowship.”

yuga. A cycle or subperiod of creation, outlined in ancient Hindu texts. Sri Yukteswar (q.v.) describes in The Holy Science a

24

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000

-year Equinoctial Cycle and mankind’s present place in it. This cycle occurs within the much longer universal cycle of the ancient texts, as calculated by the rishis of aeons past and discussed in Autobiography of a Yogi, Chapter

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Notes

Preface

[1 Mahavatar Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, and Swami Sri Yukteswar \(see glossary\).](#)

[2 East-West magazine, founded by Paramahansa Yogananda in](#)

1925

; he later renamed it Self-Realization (the name under which it continues to this day) to clearly identify it as the official organ of his Self-Realization Fellowship organization, which had been known as Yogoda Satsanga Society in earlier years.

[3 First successor to Paramahansa Yogananda as president and spiritual head of Self-Realization Fellowship/Yogoda Satsanga Society of India \(until his passing on February](#)

20

,

1955

). See glossary.

[4 Ananda Mata, a faithful disciple of Paramahansa Yogananda since](#)

1931

. She entered his monastic order in

1933

at the age of

17

; she served as an officer and member of the Board of Directors of SRF/YSS until her passing in

2005

.

[5 Tara Mata \(Laurie V. Pratt\) served as editor-in-chief of Self-Realization Fellowship publications, and as vice president and a member of the Board of Directors, until her passing in](#)

1971

.

[6 Foreseeing that Tara Mata would not live long enough to complete the editorial work on all his writings, Paramahansaji designated Mrinalini Mata as her successor, and personally tutored her in the editing of his teachings for publication and worldwide dissemination. She had met the Guru in](#)

1945

and entered his ashram as a nun shortly thereafter; I observed how from the very beginning the Guru drew her deep into the path and nurtured her to assume that responsibility. To this day Mrinalini Mata continues to devote herself to the editorial work entrusted to her by the Guru, as well as serving as vice president of Self-Realization Fellowship. [Publisher's note: Mrinalini Mata succeeded Sri Daya Mata as president of SRF/YSS from 2011 until her passing in 2017.]

Introduction

[1 See Discourse](#)

1

for detailed commentary on this verse.

[2 “Self” is capitalized to denote the soul, man’s true identity, in contradistinction to the ego or pseudosoul, the lower self with which man temporarily identifies through ignorance of his real nature.](#)

Self-realization is the knowing—in body, mind, and soul—that we are one with the omnipresence of God; that we do not have to pray that it come to us, that we are not merely near it at all times, but that God’s omnipresence is our omnipresence; that we are just as much a part of Him now as we ever will be. All we have to do is improve our knowing.

[3 God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita—Royal Science of God-Realization \(published by Self-Realization Fellowship\).](#)

[4 John](#)

14

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6

[\(see commentary, Discourse 70\).](#)

[5 The thousands of books and articles about the modern scientific search for “the historical Jesus” by archaeologists, linguists, historians, anthropologists, and other experts have been valuable in illumining the cultural context in which Jesus lived, and—even more importantly—how the interpretation of his teachings by diverse groups of followers changed and evolved in the centuries after his death. None of these works, however, has supplanted the New Testament Gospels as the richest and most complete resource available about what Jesus actually said and did.](#)

Professor Luke Timothy Johnson of Emory University writes in *The Real Jesus* (HarperSanFrancisco,

1996

): “Haven’t all the archaeological discoveries of the past forty years opened up exciting new sources for the historical analysis of earliest Christianity?...The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in

1947

was revolutionary because it provided previously unavailable and precious insight into the varieties of Judaism in first-century Palestine, and into the workings of a sectarian Judaism making claims analogous to those made by the Christians. But the sober conclusion of the best-informed scholars...is that the Dead Sea Scrolls do not shed any direct light either on Jesus or on the development of Christianity.” Regarding the collection of Gnostic Christian manuscripts discovered at Nag Hammadi in Egypt in

1945, Professor Johnson writes: “The compositions in the library, scholars agree, do not come from a period earlier than the mid-second century....[Thus] it turns out that the canonical writings of the New Testament remain our best historical witnesses to the earliest period of the Christian movement.” (Publisher’s Note)

[6 Heinrich Hofmann \(](#)

1824

–

1911

).

This artist created many paintings and drawings depicting the life of Jesus. The painting of Jesus used on Self-Realization Fellowship altars (see page xii) is derived from one of them. (Publisher’s Note)

[7 Autobiography of a Yogi, Chapter](#)

.

[8 The book written by Sri Yukteswarji at Babaji's behest is The Holy Science \(published by Self-Realization Fellowship\). See also Discourse 2 about Sri Yukteswar.](#)

[9 See also Discourse 5.](#)

A wealth of evidence for the primacy of India's spiritual culture in the ancient world is presented by Georg Feuerstein, Ph.D., Subhash Kak, Ph.D., and David Frawley, O.M.D., in *In Search of the Cradle of Civilization: New Light on Ancient India* (Wheaton, Ill.: Quest Books,

1995

): "The old saying *ex oriente lux* ('From the East, light') is no platitude, for civilization's torch, especially the core sacred tradition of perennial wisdom, has been handed down from the eastern hemisphere....The Middle-Eastern creations of Judaism and Christianity, which largely have given our civilization its present shape, were influenced by ideas stemming from countries farther east, especially India. Of all these Eastern traditions, by far the oldest continuous religious heritage is, without question, that of Hinduism....

"It would appear that none of the world's extant traditions are as old and comprehensive as the Vedic-Hindu tradition. It is so embracing that it seems to contain all the different approaches to the Divine, or ultimate Reality, found in the other traditions. Every spiritual means—from simple devotional surrender to complex visualization to postural variation—has been systematically explored in this great tradition." (Publisher's Note)

[10 "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever...But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" \(John](#)

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[11 Aramaic was the language of daily usage in Jesus' homeland. \(He would also, of course, have received education in Hebrew, in which the Jewish scriptures were written.\) The earliest known records of the Gospels were written not in Aramaic or Hebrew, but in Greek, the lingua franca of the eastern part of the Roman Empire at that time. Thus the translation of Jesus' words began even with this primary written form.](#)

For his commentaries on the Gospels, Paramahansa Yogananda used the King James translation (the “Authorized Version” of

1611

). Reynolds Price, Professor of English at Duke University, has compared the King James Bible with later English translations of the original Greek text of the Gospels. In *Three Gospels* (New York: Simon and Schuster,

1997

) he writes: “We now have in English several popular versions of the gospels that constitute what are well-intended but almost certainly major distortions of their originals....King James’s translators proceeded under a single guiding principle (one word of the original in the fewest equivalent words of English, with the preservation when possible of at least some suggestion of the Greek word order).

...

“Five minutes spent even today in the Bible section of an ordinary bookstore will show that no later version has equaled the King James in popularity; and in many conservative churches still, it is the only version consulted, as it is in a thousand college courses on ‘The Bible as Literature.’ And while it is customary to say that such enduring popularity derives from the King James’s sonorous diction and stately syntax—the diction of Shakespeare and Ben Jonson—a close comparison of its language to that of the originals will very often show that the

power and memorability of the King James is an almost automatic result of its loyal adherence to principles of literalness and the avoidance of paraphrase. Nearly four centuries of Greekless readers have sensed, unconsciously perhaps but with considerable accuracy, that...the language of the King James is truer to its strange originals than any of its successors.” (Publisher’s Note)

[12 Jesus’ words are recorded in the noncanonical Gospel of Thomas, verse](#)

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“ ‘Compare me to someone and tell me whom I am like.’

“Simon Peter said to him, ‘You are like a righteous angel.’

“Matthew said to him, ‘You are like a wise philosopher.’

“Thomas said to him, ‘Master, my mouth is wholly incapable of saying whom you are like.’

“Jesus said, ‘I am not your master. Because you have drunk, you have become intoxicated from the bubbling spring which I have measured out.’ ”

Elsewhere in the Gospel of Thomas (verse

108

), Jesus declares: “He who will drink from my mouth will become like me. I myself shall become he, and the things that are hidden will be revealed to him.” (Translation by Thomas O. Lambdin, in *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, James M. Robinson, ed.; HarperSanFrancisco,

1990

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Fragments of this Gospel were discovered in the late

1800

s; but the complete Gospel, including the portion cited here, was not discovered until

1945

. It was part of a collection of Coptic manuscripts from the second century, unearthed at Nag Hammadi in Egypt, and was not translated into English until

1955

. (Paramahansa Yogananda left his body in

1952

.) However, it was in

1937 that Paramahansaji made the above statement that the words spoken by Jesus to him conveyed the same message as Jesus' words to Thomas.

(Publisher's Note)

[13 John](#)

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[\(see commentary in Discourse 14\).](#)

[14 "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known" \(I Corinthians](#)

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Discourse 1

1 From Paramahansa Yogananda's Whispers from Eternity (published by Self-Realization Fellowship).

2 "Which being interpreted is, 'God with us'" (Matthew 1:23).

3 John 15:13 (See Discourse 71.)

4 John 4:24 (See Discourse 18.)

5 Omitted here are verses 6 – 8; these are discussed in Discourse 6. In the beginning segment of Saint John's Gospel, he relates encapsulated profound truths of universal creation; appropriately for this revelation, these verses in the original Greek are written as poetry. In verses 6 – 8 and 15, however, Saint John digresses briefly to anticipate his historical narrative of the life and activities of Jesus by making reference to Christ's forerunner, John the Baptist; these verses, written as prose, depart from the poetic style of the rest of this opening passage. About these first eighteen verses of John 1, scholars observe: "With the exception of verses 6 – 8 and 15, which seem to be interruptions, this prologue is in the form of Semitic poetry."—Robert J. Miller, ed., The Complete Gospels: Annotated Scholars Version (HarperSanFrancisco, 1994). (Publisher's Note)

6 "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways,' saith the Lord. 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts'" (Isaiah 55:8 – 9).

7 See also Discourse 7, regarding maya.

8 Though official church doctrine for centuries has interpreted "the Word" (Logos in the original Greek) to be a reference to Jesus himself, that was not the understanding originally intended by Saint John in this passage. According to scholars, the concept John was expressing can best be understood not through the exegesis of much-later church orthodoxy, but through the scriptural writings and the teachings of Jewish philosophers of John's own period—for example,

[the Book of Proverbs \(with which John and any other Jewish person of his time would have been familiar\). Karen Armstrong in A History of God: The 4,000-Year Quest of Judaism, Christianity and Islam \(New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993\) writes: “The author of the Book of Proverbs, who was writing in the third century](#)

bce

...personifies Wisdom so that she seems a separate person:

“Yahweh created me [Wisdom] when his purpose first unfolded, before the oldest of his works. From everlasting I was firmly set, from the beginning, before earth came into being...when he laid the foundations of the earth, I was at his side, a master craftsman, delighting him day after day, ever at play in his presence, at play everywhere in the world, delighting to be with the sons of men” (Proverbs 8:22 – 23, 30 – 31; The Jerusalem Bible)...

“In the Aramaic translations of the Hebrew scriptures known as the targums, which were being composed at this time [i.e., when John’s Gospel was written], the term Memra (word) is used to describe God’s activity in the world. It performs the same function as other technical terms like ‘glory,’ ‘Holy Spirit’ and ‘Shekinah’ which emphasized the distinction between God’s presence in the world and the incomprehensible reality of God itself. Like the divine Wisdom, the ‘Word’ symbolized God’s original plan for creation.”

The writings of early Church Fathers also indicate that this was the meaning intended by Saint John. In Clement of Alexandria (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1914) John Patrick states: “Clement repeatedly identifies the Word with the Wisdom of God.” And Dr. Anne Pasquier, professor of theology at Université Laval, Quebec, writes in *The Nag Hammadi Library After Fifty Years* (John D. Turner and Anne McGuire, editors; New York: Brill, 1997): “Philo, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen...all associate the Logos with the word of God in the Old Testament accounts of the creation when ‘God spoke and it was done.’ The Valentinians do likewise....According to the Valentinians, the prologue to John’s Gospel depicts a spiritual genesis, the model for the material

one, and it is seen as a spiritual interpretation of the Old Testament accounts of the creation.” (Publisher’s Note)

9 Revelation 3:14. Aum of the Vedas became the sacred word Hum of the Tibetans, Amin of the Moslems, and Amen of the Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Jews, and Christians. The meaning of Amen in Hebrew is “sure, faithful.”

10 “My womb is the Great Prakriti into which I deposit the seed (of My Intelligence); this is the cause of the birth of all beings” (God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita XIV:3).

11 Recent advances in what theoretical physicists call “superstring theory” are leading science toward an understanding of the vibratory nature of creation. Brian Greene, Ph.D., professor of physics at Cornell and Columbia Universities, writes in *The Elegant Universe: Superstrings, Hidden Dimensions, and the Quest for the Ultimate Theory* (New York: Vintage Books, 2000):

“During the last thirty years of his life, Albert Einstein sought relentlessly for a so-called unified field theory—a theory capable of describing nature’s forces within a single, all-encompassing, coherent framework....Now, at the dawn of the new millennium, proponents of string theory claim that the threads of this elusive unified tapestry finally have been revealed....

“The theory suggests that the microscopic landscape is suffused with tiny strings whose vibrational patterns orchestrate the evolution of the universe,” Professor Greene writes, and tells us that “the length of a typical string loop is...about a hundred billion billion (10²⁰) times smaller than an atomic nucleus.”

Professor Greene explains that by the end of the twentieth century, science had determined that the physical universe was composed of a very few fundamental particles, such as electrons, quarks (which are the building blocks of protons and neutrons), and neutrinos. “Although each particle was viewed as elementary,” he writes, “the kind of ‘stuff’ each embodied was thought to be different. Electron ‘stuff,’ for example, had negative electric charge, while neutrino ‘stuff’ had no electric charge. String theory alters this picture radically by declaring that the ‘stuff’ of all matter and all forces is the same.”

“According to string theory, there is only one fundamental ingredient—the string,” Greene writes in *The Fabric of the Cosmos: Space, Time, and the Texture of Reality* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004). He explains that “just as

a violin string can vibrate in different patterns, each of which produces a different musical tone, the filaments of superstring theory can also vibrate in different patterns....A tiny string vibrating in one pattern would have the mass and the electric charge of an electron; according to the theory, such a vibrating string would be what we have traditionally called an electron. A tiny string vibrating in a different pattern would have the requisite properties to identify it as a quark, a neutrino, or any other kind of particle....Each arises from a different vibrational pattern executed by the same underlying entity....At the ultramicroscopic level, the universe would be akin to a string symphony vibrating matter into existence.” (Publisher’s Note)

12 A subtle change in the meaning intended by Saint John, but one with far-reaching implications, is evident in most translations of this and the preceding verses. All nouns in Greek are either masculine, feminine, or neuter in gender. The noun logos (“word”) is masculine, apparently leading English translators to use the masculine pronoun “him” when referring to “the Word.” However, since English does not differentiate the gender of nouns such as “word,” the correct pronoun in translation would be “it”—unless referring to a person, in which case the personal pronoun “him” would be appropriate. Thus, the use of “him” reflects a theological interpretation by the translator that “the Word” in fact signifies a person: Jesus.

This interpretation became accepted as church orthodoxy in large part through the efforts of Irenaeus, second-century bishop of Lyons and author of the influential work *Against Heresies*. Dr. Elaine Pagels, professor of religion at Princeton University, writes in *Beyond Belief* (New York: Random House, 2003): “Irenaeus tells us that Valentinus’s disciple Ptolemy, reading these words [John 1:1 – 3], envisioned God, word, and finally Jesus Christ as, so to speak, waves of divine energy flowing down from above; thus, he suggests, the infinite divine Source above reveals itself in diminished form in the divine word, which reveals itself, in turn, in the more limited form of the human Jesus....Irenaeus challenges Ptolemy’s interpretation of John’s prologue and argues instead that ‘God the Father’ is equivalent to the word, and the word is equivalent to ‘Jesus Christ.’...What Irenaeus’s successors would derive from this was a kind of simple, almost mathematical equation, in which God=word=Jesus Christ. That many Christians to this day consider some version of this equation the essence of Christian belief is a mark of Irenaeus’s accomplishment—and his success.... Because Irenaeus’s bold interpretation came virtually to define orthodoxy, those who read John’s gospel today in any language except the Greek original will find

that the translations make his conclusion seem obvious.”

However, the “Word” (as also “the only begotten Son”) came to signify the person of Jesus only through a gradual evolution of doctrine brought about by complex theological and political influences. It was not until the fourth century, writes historian Karen Armstrong in *A History of God* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993), that the church came to “adopt an exclusive notion of religious truth: Jesus was the first and last Word of God to the human race.” (Publisher’s Note)

[13 See Discourse 7, which explains the dual nature assumed by the Cosmic Creative Vibration: pure Holy Ghost in tune with God’s will; and obstructive Cosmic Satan, originator of all evil, which tries to divorce all creatures from their Creator.](#)

[14 John 3:16, commented on in Discourse 15.](#)

[15 John 1:12 \(explained in more detail later in this Discourse\).](#)

[16 “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” \(John 14:6\). That is, no man can reach the transcendent Father beyond creation without first attuning himself with the ‘Son’ or Christ Consciousness within creation. \(See Discourse 70.\)](#)

[17 In India’s sacred tradition of spiritual succession \(guru-parampara\), Paramahansa Yogananda’s direct lineage of gurus is Mahavatar Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, and Swami Sri Yukteswar. Each of these masters is renowned for his remarkable spiritual stature, about which Paramahansaji has written in Autobiography of a Yogi \(published by Self-Realization Fellowship\). See also individual entries in the glossary. \(Publisher’s Note\)](#)

[18 See “ether” in glossary.](#)

The Sanskrit word akasha, translated as both “ether” and “space,” refers specifically to the vibratory element that is the subtlest in the material world. “Ether-permeated space is the boundary line between heaven, or the astral world, and earth,” Paramahansaji said. “All the finer forces God has created are composed of light, or thought-forms, and are merely hidden behind a particular vibration that manifests as ether.”

Frank Wilczek, Ph.D., professor of physics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, writes in *Physics Today* (January 1999): “There is a myth, repeated in many popular presentations and textbooks, that Albert Einstein swept [the ether] into the dustbin of history....The truth is more nearly the opposite: Einstein first purified, and then enthroned, the ether concept. As the twentieth century has progressed, its role in fundamental physics has only expanded. At present, renamed and thinly disguised, it dominates the accepted laws of physics.”

Physicists investigating the ether—now also called the quantum vacuum, the quantum field, and the zero-point field—have realized that “the very underpinning of our universe [is] a heaving sea of energy, one vast quantum field,” writes Lynne McTaggart in *The Field: The Quest for the Secret Force of the Universe* (New York: HarperCollins, 2002). “What we believe to be our stable, static universe,” she explains, “is in fact a seething maelstrom of subatomic particles fleetingly popping in and out of existence....Largely because of Einstein’s theories and his famous equation $E=mc^2$, relating energy to mass, all elementary particles interact with each other by exchanging energy through other quantum particles, which are believed to appear out of nowhere, combining and annihilating each other in less than an instant....The fleeting particles generated during this brief moment are known as ‘virtual particles.’... Every exchange of every virtual particle radiates energy. The zero-point energy in any one particular transaction in an electromagnetic field is unimaginably tiny—half a photon’s worth. But if you add up all the particles of all varieties in the universe constantly popping in and out of being, you come up with a vast, inexhaustible energy source...all sitting there unobtrusively in the background of the empty space around us.”

“Indeed, calculations of the quantity known as the zero-point energy suggest that a single cubic centimeter of empty space contains more energy than all of the matter in the known universe,” states Will Keepin, Ph.D., in “Lifework of David Bohm: River of Truth” (*ReVision* magazine, Summer 1993). Keepin writes that for Bohm, who is regarded as one of the twentieth century’s greatest physicists, “this enormous energy inherent in ‘empty’ space can be viewed as theoretical evidence for the existence of a vast, yet hidden realm....The vast physical universe we experience is but a set of ‘ripples’ on the surface of the implicate order. The manifest objects that we regard as comprising ordinary reality are only the unfolded projections of the much deeper, higher dimensional implicate order, which is the fundamental reality.” (Publisher’s Note)

19 Many scholars have puzzled over why, in the original Greek of the Gospel, the masculine pronouns “he” and “him” are used to refer to the neuter noun “light” (phos)—even though grammatically the masculine pronoun does not agree with this neuter noun. Biblical historian and linguist Charles H. Dodd writes in *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge University Press, 1968): “There seem to be two possibilities: either (a) the propositions in question really refer to the masculine logos, here considered in its aspect as light; or (b) the thought of incarnation is already in the evangelist’s mind, and the propositions of verses 9 – 12 refer to Christ as incarnate.” As church doctrine evolved over the centuries it became common to presume the latter. However, the question is resolved in favor of the first of these possibilities when one realizes, as is clear from Paramahansa Yogananda’s commentary, the relationship of “light” and “word” (logos) in this context—primal expressions of God’s cosmic vibratory energy in creation. See also footnote 7 in this Discourse. (Publisher’s Note)

20 The original Greek in which this Gospel was composed used kosmos; the King James version translates it as “world” instead of in its broader sense as “the universal order.”

21 Patanjali’s date is unknown, though many scholars assign him to the second century

b.c.

His renowned Yoga Sutras presents, in a series of brief aphorisms, the condensed essence of the exceedingly vast and intricate science of God-union—setting forth the method of uniting the soul with the undifferentiated Spirit in such a beautiful, clear, and concise way that generations of scholars have acknowledged the Yoga Sutras as the foremost ancient work on yoga.

22 That Jesus knew and taught the yoga science of meditation to his close disciples may be deduced from the highly metaphorical Revelation of St. John and other Gospel references, as will be noted in the various Discourses throughout this book.

23 “The creation myths of almost every culture show sound as the mechanism by which Spirit gives birth to the physical world,” write Robert Gass and Kathleen Brehony in *Chanting: Discovering Spirit in Sound* (New York:

[Broadway Books, 1999\). “The New Testament tells us: ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.’ Since the original Greek word logos \(here translated as ‘word’\) also means ‘sound,’ it would be also accurate for this famous passage to read: ‘In the beginning was the Sound, and the Sound was with God, and the Sound was God.’”](#)

Gass and Brehony quote the Greek philosopher Pythagoras as saying “A stone is frozen music, frozen sound.” Recent data collected by astrophysicists correlates remarkably with what the ancient seers perceived. In *Mind Over Matter: Conversations With the Cosmos* (New York: Harcourt, 2003) K. C. Cole reports that in 2000 a team of astronomers led by Andrew Lange of the California Institute of Technology “published the most detailed analysis yet of the cosmos’s primordial song: a low hum, deep in its throat, that preceded both atoms and stars. It is a simple sound, like the mantra ‘Om.’ But hidden within its harmonics are details of the universe’s shape, composition, and birth.”

Those harmonic “notes,” reported *The Independent*, London, April 30, 2001, “rang out like a bell in the first fractions of a second after the Big Bang. Cosmologists believe these minute ripples of sound became the ‘seeds’ of matter, which eventually led to the formation of stars, galaxies, and planets such as Earth.”

Through painstaking computer analysis, writes Cole, Lange and his colleagues produced “graphic depictions of the sound” made by the universe in the first few hundred thousand years after its creation in the Big Bang. In that primordial period, the data shows, “nothing existed but pure light, sprinkled with a smattering of subatomic particles. Nothing happened, either, except that this light-and-matter fluid, as physicists call it, sloshed in and out of gravity wells, compressing the liquid in some places and spreading it out in others. Like banging on the head of a drum, the compression of the ‘liquid light’ as it fell into gravity wells set up the ‘sound waves’ that cosmologist Charles Lineweaver calls ‘the oldest music in the universe.’”

Scientific American, July 2000, says that as the universe aged those sound waves “developed on ever larger scales, filling the heavens with a deepening roar.” About 300,000 years after the Big Bang, the universe cooled down to the point where electrons and protons condensed into atoms of hydrogen—and separated from the vibrating light (photons). “The photons went their separate ways, and the universe abruptly went silent.”

“The rest,” concludes K. C. Cole, “is the history of the universe: The particles joined each other to form atoms, stars, and everything else, including people.”
(Publisher’s Note)

[24 The work of this great Indian physicist and plant physiologist \(1858 – 1937\) is discussed in Autobiography of a Yogi, Chapter 8.](#)

[25 The content of John 1:15 is repeated in verses 27 and 30 and is explained in greater detail in that fuller context in Discourse 6.](#)

Discourse 2

[1 “Gift of God.” Smith’s Bible Dictionary says it is “the same name as Johanan, a contraction of Jehohanan, ‘Jehovah’s gift.’”](#)

[2 Malachi](#)

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[3 Cited later in this Discourse and in subsequent ones. Search “reincarnation” for list of references.](#)

[4 “Understanding of the law of karma and of its corollary, reincarnation, is displayed in numerous Biblical passages; e.g., ‘Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed’ \(Genesis](#)

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). If every murderer must himself be killed 'by man,' the reactive process obviously requires, in many cases, more than one lifetime. The contemporary police are just not quick enough!

“The early Christian church accepted the doctrine of reincarnation, which was expounded by the Gnostics and by numerous church fathers, including Clement of Alexandria, the celebrated Origen (both

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rd century), and St. Jerome (

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th century). The doctrine was first declared a heresy in

a.d.

553

by the Second Council of Constantinople. At that time many Christians thought the doctrine of reincarnation afforded man too ample a stage of time and space to encourage him to strive for immediate salvation. But truths suppressed lead disconcertingly to a host of errors. The millions have not utilized their 'one lifetime' to seek God, but to enjoy this world—so uniquely won, and so shortly to be forever lost! The truth is that man reincarnates on earth until he has consciously regained his status as a son of God.”—Autobiography of a Yogi

[5 Reincarnation of liberated or nearly liberated saints for a divine mission is implicit in God's declaration to Jeremiah: “Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations” \(Jeremiah](#)

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6 Published by Self-Realization Fellowship.

7 The names of certain individuals from the Old Testament appear in modified form in the New Testament, where the Greek rather than Hebrew form of the names is used. Thus, Elijah is called Elias in the New Testament, Elisha is called Eliseus, Isaiah is known as Esaias, and so on. To avoid the confusing use of two names for the same individual, in this publication the Old Testament spellings have been used. (Publisher's Note)

8 "The advanced yogi transmutes his cells into energy. Elijah, Jesus, Kabir, and other prophets were past masters in the use of Kriya Yoga or a similar technique, by which they caused their bodies to materialize and dematerialize at will" (Autobiography of a Yogi, Chapter

26

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9 Jesus and John the Baptist echoed their previous incarnations by outer roles as well as by their inner spirituality. According to Smith's Bible Dictionary: "In almost every respect Elisha presents the most complete contrast to Elijah.... Elijah was a true Bedouin child of the desert. If he enters a city it is only to deliver his message of fire and be gone. Elisha, on the other hand, is a civilized man, an inhabitant of cities. And as with his manners so with his appearance. The touches of the narrative are very slight; but we can gather that his dress was the ordinary garment of an Israelite...that his hair was worn trimmed behind, in contrast to the disordered locks of Elijah." (Publisher's Note)

10 The prophecy is in Isaiah

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11 The snail, *Potamopyrgus antipodarum*, is found in freshwater lakes in New Zealand. The asexual reproduction of frogs by inserting nuclei from embryonic cells into unfertilized eggs was first accomplished in

1951

; however, the experiment was carried on only until the newborn frogs had grown to the tadpole stage.

National Geographic News, September

26

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2002

, reported: “A female white spotted bamboo shark at the Belle Isle Aquarium in Detroit surprised zookeepers in July by giving birth to two babies. Why the surprise? It was a virgin birth: She hadn’t been near a male for six years....The births have raised questions among scientists as to whether sharks may be able to reproduce parthenogenetically, a mode of reproduction in which the egg is not fertilized. These so-called virgin births are common in invertebrates like snails, but are unusual in higher vertebrates. ‘Parthenogenesis has been documented in many reptiles,’ said Doug Sweet, curator of fishes at the Belle Isle Aquarium. ‘There are at least five or six species of snakes, and it’s been known in salamanders, lizards, and even a breed of turkeys.’” (Publisher’s Note)

12 “While the Genesis story in the Bible focuses on the fall of original man, the Hindu scriptures extol the first beings on earth as divine individuals who could assume corporeal forms and similarly create offspring by divine command of their will. In one such account, in the hoary Purana, Srimad Bhagavata, the first man and woman in physical form, the Hindu ‘Adam and Eve,’ were called Svayambhuva Manu (‘man born of the Creator’) and his wife Shatarupa (‘having a hundred images or forms’) whose children intermarried with Prajapatis, perfect celestial beings who took physical forms to become the progenitors of mankind. Thus, entering the original unique human forms created by God were souls that had either passed through the upward evolutionary stages of creation as Prakriti prepared the earth for the advent of man, or were pristine souls that had descended to earth specifically to begin the world’s human population. In either

case, original man was uniquely endowed to express soul perfection. Those ‘Adams and Eves’ and their offspring who maintained their divine consciousness in the ‘Eden’ of the spiritual eye returned to Spirit or the heavenly realms after a blissful sojourn on earth. The ‘fallen’ human beings and their ‘fallen’ offspring were caught in the reincarnational cycles that are the fate of desire-filled, sense-identified mortals” (God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita, commentary on

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13 “Unto the woman [God] said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children...” (Genesis

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14 The spiritual significance of the Adam and Eve story in Genesis is explained in more detail in Discourse

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15 Symbolizing pure divine wisdom and royalty. In the Bhagavad Gita, the Lord says: “Among stallions, know Me to be the nectar-born Uchchaisravas; among elephants, Indra’s white elephant, Airavata; and among men, the emperor” (God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita

x

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27). The elephant is a symbol of wisdom. Significantly, Airavata is referred to as the guardian or supporter “of the east quarter” (in man’s body, the “east” or center of wisdom in the forehead). The word Indra [“king of the gods”] implies one who is a conqueror of the senses (indriya). Wisdom is the vehicle of the yogi who has conquered his senses. God is indeed prominently manifested in the colossal wisdom of the sense conqueror.

[16 The Harvard Classics, Volume](#)

45

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: Buddhist Writings, trans. Henry Clarke Warren (New York: Collier,

1909

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Discourse 3

[1 According to nonbiblical historical records, Herod died in 4 b.c. Most modern scholars therefore believe that Jesus’ birth occurred sometime between 7 and 4 b.c. \(Publisher’s Note\)](#)

[2 The prophecy referred to is in Micah 5:2.](#)

[3 Philippians](#)

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[4 See also Discourse 5.](#)

“Tradition pictures the world of Jesus as a peaceful and pastoral place, governed by the ancient rhythms of field and farm. But recent archaeological evidence has revealed a different environment,” reports the PBS television documentary *From Jesus to Christ* (Frontline,

1998

). In the early

1970

s, archaeologists began to excavate the ruins of the ancient city of Sepphoris, the capital of Galilee, located less than four miles from Jesus’ hometown of Nazareth—within an hour’s walking distance. “What the excavations at Sepphoris suggest,” says Professor Holland L. Hendrix, president of Union Theological Seminary, “is that Jesus was quite proximate to a thriving and sophisticated urban environment that would have brought with it all of the diversity of the Roman Empire.”

Professor D. P. Singhal writes in *India and World Civilization* (Michigan State University Press,

1969

, Vol. I): “The traditional account of Christian origins concentrates almost exclusively on the incidents connected with the rise of Christianity, giving the impression that nothing else was happening at that time in the area. Actually the situation was vastly different. It was a period of intense political activity and diverse religious practices, and it would hardly be an overstatement to suggest that in every city and village in the Roman Empire there were activities, customs, and rituals that eventually played a part in the moulding of Christianity.

...

“Hinduism, though not a proselytizing religion, had also reached western Asia. A Hindu settlement was established in Armenia in the Canton of Taron in the second century

b.c.

under the patronage of King Valarasaces of the Arsacidæ dynasty. These Hindus built fine cities and temples, but the temples were destroyed early in the fourth century by St. Gregory the Illuminator.” Dr. Singhal cites the Syrian writer Zenob as saying that by “early in the fourth century

a.d.

there were about five thousand followers of Krishna in Armenia.”

Dr. Singhal further avers: “Jesus, no doubt, principally enlarged and transformed the Jewish conceptions but he did so in the light of personal experiences in a cosmopolitan area where a variety of cultures, including that of India, had intermingled to produce a distinct religious environment.” (Publisher’s Note)

[5 Matthew](#)

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(See Discourse 27.)

[6 The words of the Gospel give no specific information about the origin of the Magi \(or even their number\); opinions as to their native land vary from Babylon, Arabia, Chaldea, or Persia—the latter deriving support from the fact that the Zoroastrian priests of the Persian religion were known as Magi. However, in The Story of the Magi \(Bombay: Society of St. Paul,](#)

1954

), Henry Heras, S.J., Director of the Indian Historical Research Institute, St. Xavier’s College, Bombay, presents an extensive array of historical information

to support the view that the Wise Men were in fact Hindu rishis from India. (Father Heras's work was held in high repute; he was honored by the Government of India in

1981

with a commemorative stamp for his outstanding contribution to historical research and archaeology.)

According to Father Heras, in the Gospel the word magoi is not used to identify the Wise Men as Zoroastrian priests, "for if that were so, all the patristic tradition would have acknowledged Persia as the country of the Magi, which is not the case.... St. Matthew uses this name with reference to the gift of wisdom in general, that is to say, partakers of the gift of wisdom, sages. The English translation of this passage, 'Wise Men,' seems to give precisely the meaning intended by the author. But from what country did the Wise Men hail?... Everything seems to indicate that the Wise Men were Indians, certain rishis of this country who from immemorial times made the quest of Truth—the eternal breath of this most ancient nation...."

Long before the time of Christ, India had trade relations with Palestine; much of the commerce between the Orient and the Mediterranean civilizations (including Egypt, Greece, and Rome) passed through Jerusalem, the western terminus of the ancient Silk Road and other important caravan routes to China and India. East-west commerce is also referred to in the Bible (II Chronicles

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), which records that the "ships of Tarshish" brought to King Solomon "gold, and silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks" and "algum [sandalwood] trees and precious stones" from Ophir (Sopara on the Bombay coast). Furthermore, scholarly and Christian tradition agree that Christianity arrived on the western coast of India

very shortly after the time of Jesus, reportedly brought in person by one of Christ's twelve apostles, Thomas, who spent the last years of his life in India. Father Heras quotes an ancient Christian text called the *Opus Imperfectum in Mattheum*, which "locates the preaching of St. Thomas the Apostle in the land of the Magi. Ancient Oriental writers knew very well that India was the field of the ministry of this Apostle. St. Jerome writes that St. Thomas preached the Gospel to the Magi and finally slept, that is died, in India."

Father Heras points out: "If therefore the Magi were rishis of India, the traditional land of wisdom, it is not to be wondered at that they offered gold, frankincense, and myrrh to the infant and his mother, since these were precisely the gifts that from the most ancient times were offered in India to the parents of the newly born.... The custom of offering these three gifts to the parents of the recently born does not now exist in Persia; nor do scholars know that any such custom ever existed in that country."

Centuries-old traditions in India itself refer to the Wise Men as having come from that land. Fernao do Queyroz, a seventeenth-century Portuguese Jesuit priest who lived in Goa (Portuguese colony on the west coast of India), cited the work of earlier historians (Manuel dos Anjos and Jeronimo Osorio, both of the sixteenth century) who wrote that when the famous Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama reached India in May

1498

, he found at Calicut on the western coast a Hindu temple dedicated to the Virgin Mary. According to these Portuguese historians, da Gama was told that the annals of the Malabar Kingdom relate that the temple was founded by Chery Perimale ("Chera Perumal"), an ancient emperor of Malabar who also founded the city of Calicut. Da Gama was informed that Perimale "was a Brahmin, one of the wisest in India, and was one of the three Magi who went to Bethlehem" to adore the baby Jesus; on his return to Calicut he had the temple erected.

Another account is found in the writings of Joao De Barros, a sixteenth-century Portuguese historian, who mentions the Malabar tradition that a king from South India named "Pirimal" went to Mascate and thence with others to Bethlehem to adore the infant Jesus. (Publisher's Note)

[7 In the Hindu scriptures the forehead in man is called the "eastern" part of his](#)

body. Even as the earth’s directional compass points are derived from the north and south magnetic poles, and from the earth’s rotation on its axis which makes the sun appear to rise in the east and set in the west, so yoga physiology speaks symbolically of north, south, east, and west in relation to the microcosm of the human body. “North” and “south” are the positive and negative poles of the cerebrospinal axis. Life energy and consciousness are magnetically drawn either upward to the higher spiritual centers in the brain (“north”) or downward to the lower spinal centers associated with material consciousness (“south”). “East” and “west” refer to the orientation of man’s life and awareness either inward (“east”) through the intuitive spiritual eye to perceptions of the subtle divine realms or outward (“west”) through the senses to interaction with the gross material creation. The “star in the east” thus symbolizes the spiritual eye in the forehead—the sun of life in the human body and doorway to the inner kingdom of God.

Ezekiel said: “Afterwards He brought me to the gate, even the gate that looketh toward the east: and, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and His voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with His glory” (Ezekiel

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). Through the divine eye in the forehead (east), the yogi sails his consciousness into omnipresence, hearing the Word or Aum, divine sound of “many waters”: the vibrations of light that constitute the sole reality of creation.

8 Luke

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(See Discourse 61.)

[9 Matthew](#)

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(See Discourse 28.)

[10 Saint John Chrysostom \(c.](#)

347

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407

, bishop of Constantinople, Doctor of the Church, greatest of the Greek Church Fathers) wrote in his “Sixth Homily on the Gospel of Saint Matthew”: “It seems to me that not only was it not one of the many stars, but that it was not a star at all; it was rather, in my belief, a certain invisible power that looked like a star.... This star appeared not only by night but also during the day when the Sun shone over the skies.... Had it been in the high skies, it could hardly guide the travelers...for it is impossible that a star can show the place in which a cottage stands; much less still, the place in which the Babe lay down.”

[11 Among Westerners who concur that the Wise Men came from India is the great twentieth-century mystic and stigmatist Therese Neumann of Konnersreuth, Germany, who experienced weekly visions of Jesus’ passion and crucifixion, the “stations of the cross.” \(See Autobiography of a Yogi, Chapter](#)

39

.) In Therese of Konnersreuth: A New Chronicle, by Friedrich Ritter von Lama (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company,

1935

), the following incident is related:

“The visit to Konnersreuth in September,

1932

, of His Excellency Bishop Alexander Chulaparambil of Kottayam, India, with the Reverend Father Theccanat, the rector of the Bishop’s seminary, afforded interesting evidence of Therese’s ability in the state of ecstasy and corporal blindness to recognize what must be unknown to her in a normal state. The companion of His Excellency wrote me as follows: ‘Neither Therese nor the pastor knew of our coming....Therese had just witnessed the Station in which Simon of Cyrene appears and now, in a period of rest, was talking of what she had seen and heard....and repeated in Syrian (that is, Aramaic) the words “Slanlak Malka de Judae!” (Hail, King of the Jews!) We were of course astounded at hearing these words. The Bishop, who belongs to the Syro-Malabarian Rite, repeated them, but Therese corrected his expression, saying: “Perhaps you speak the words as they are written, but I heard them this way,” and she repeated them. Thereupon we recognized the mistake we had made. We had used a short a in the last syllable of the first word, whereas it ought to be a long a, as Therese used it....After a few minutes Father Naber motioned to His Excellency to come close to the bed. When the Bishop touched Therese’s left hand, she held it fast. “This is a high pastor from the land whence the Kings came to worship the Christ Child,” [she said.]’” (Publisher’s Note)

Discourse 4

[1 The texts to which Paramahansaji refers were a part of The Apocryphal New Testament, edited and annotated by William Hone \(fourth edition, published in London in](#)

1821

). The book's title page identifies it as "being all the gospels, epistles, and other pieces now extant, attributed in the first four centuries to Jesus Christ, his apostles, and their companions, and not included in the New Testament by its compilers." Two "infancy gospels" are included in Hone's volume. The first, now called The Arabic Infancy Gospel, was translated into English in

1697

by Henry Sike, professor of oriental languages at Cambridge University, from an Arabic manuscript, which current scholars believe was derived from an earlier version in the Syriac language (a dialect of Aramaic). Some of the stories therein also appear in the Koran.

The second Infancy Gospel included in Hone's book is a short fragment of The Infancy Gospel of Thomas. A manuscript of this gospel that is more complete than what Hone reproduced was later discovered and is readily available in works by later scholars; indeed, much of the material in the Arabic Infancy Gospel is now thought to have come from the earlier Infancy Gospel of Thomas. The very early origins of the material in Thomas' text are attested to by a reference to them in writings by the church father Irenaeus in

a.d.

185

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Interestingly, Hone mentions the fact that in

1599

it was discovered that the Arabic Infancy Gospel was in use by a congregation of Nestorian Christians active in the mountains of Malabar on the coast of India. Traditionally, this is the area associated with the missionary activity of the apostle Thomas himself (see footnote 4 in Discourse 3). (Publisher's Note)

[2 "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written" \(John](#)

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Andrew Bernhard, author of *Jesus of Nazareth in Early Christian Gospels*, writes: “Comments such as the conclusion of the Gospel of John (

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) make it clear that early Christians had no shortage of stories about Jesus. They undoubtedly spoke often of their recently departed master, sharing all that they remembered of him with each other and anyone else who was willing to listen. When it became evident that Jesus’ memory could not be preserved forever by oral traditions dependent on the recollections of first-hand witnesses, some of his followers decided to write down what they believed about him for posterity. According to the Gospel of Luke (

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), ‘many’ ancient writers endeavored ‘to draw up an account’ of the activities of Jesus. Although many of these accounts did not ultimately become New Testament gospels, they are identified and described in the writings of numerous early Christian authors, such as Origen (*Homily on Luke*

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[3 John Jortin, Remarks on Ecclesiastical History, Vol. II.](#)

[4 The first appearance of the specific compilation of books that today are known as the New Testament was in](#)

a.d.

367

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For centuries, the existence of many of the texts that were suppressed and destroyed was virtually unknown to scholars and believers alike. Some of them came to light in the famous discovery at Nag Hammadi, Egypt, in

1945

. Because of the Nag Hammadi discoveries, writes Elaine Pagels, Ph.D., professor of religion at Princeton University and a renowned scholar of early Christianity, “we now begin to see that what we call Christianity—and what we identify as Christian tradition—actually represents only a small selection of specific sources, chosen from among dozens of others....

“By

a.d.

200

...Christianity had become an institution headed by a three-rank hierarchy of bishops, priests, and deacons, who understood themselves to be the guardians of the only ‘true faith.’...The efforts of the majority to destroy every trace of heretical ‘blasphemy’ proved so successful that, until the discoveries at Nag Hammadi, nearly all our information concerning alternative forms of early

Christianity came from the massive orthodox attacks upon them....Had they been discovered

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years earlier, [these] texts almost certainly would have been burned for their heresy....Today we read them with different eyes, not merely as ‘madness and blasphemy’ but as Christians in the first centuries experienced them—a powerful alternative to what we know as orthodox Christian tradition.”—Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels* (New York: Vintage Books,

1981

). (Publisher’s Note)

[5 London: W. Bulmer and Co.,](#)

1795

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[6 In a note to his edition of *The Apocryphal New Testament* \(1821\), William Hone writes of a tradition traceable to Peter, third-century bishop of Alexandria, who purportedly said that “the place in Egypt where Christ was banished is now called Matarea, about ten miles beyond Cairo; that the inhabitants constantly burn a lamp in remembrance of it; and that there is a garden of trees yielding a balsam, which were planted by Christ when a boy.” \(The *Infancy Gospel* itself refers to the balsam trees as having grown on that site after Mary washed Jesus’ clothes there in a spring that gushed forth at the command of the divine child.\)](#)

[7 “It is written in the Bible \(II Kings](#)

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) that a crowd of children ridiculed the prophet Elisha. He then ‘cursed them in the name of the Lord. And there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them.’ As a prophet of God, Elisha was acting as His instrument. The curse was karmically ordained through God’s law; hence Elisha cannot be accused of causing the mutilation of the children. They suffered because of their own wickedness—the accumulation of their wrong thoughts and actions of past lives. Their seemingly childish taunting was the timely fruition of their past evil, which precipitated its inevitable consequence. The ‘curse’ that issued forth from the instrumental Elisha was the ‘high voltage’ of his spiritual vibration, operating with no selfish intent to harm.

“If a man disregards a warning not to touch a live wire and is electrocuted, it is not the live wire but the man’s foolishness that is responsible for his death. The same truth applies in the case of the wicked children who mocked Elisha. It is the story of all evil opposition to the righteous will of God: Evil eventually causes its own destruction.”—God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita

[8 “King” is most likely a reference to Archelaus, ruler until](#)

a.d.

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. (Publisher’s Note)

[9 A story about the infant Krishna likewise recounts his ability to alter the shape of material objects. He was adored by all the village milkmaids and indulged in his sweet misbehavior, especially in helping himself to their store of fresh curds. But one day this had gone too far, and in order to get at the curds he broke the container in which his mother Yashoda had been churning fresh milk into butter. Thinking to anchor him to a mortar stone and thereby put at least a temporary halt to his pranks, she fetched a length of rope to fasten around his waist. When she tried to tie the knot, however, she was surprised to find the rope too short. She got a longer piece and tried again, only to find this one too short as well. Eventually, all the rope in the household had been brought, but still it proved insufficient to tie up the divine child! After a crowd had gathered and was chuckling at the plight of poor Yashoda, Krishna took pity on his mother and permitted himself to be fastened securely to the mortar stone.](#)

Discourse 5

[1 Swami Abhedananda \(](#)

1866

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1939

) was vice president of Ramakrishna Math and Mission from

1921

to

1924

. He had traveled in America teaching Vedanta from

1897

until

1921. While there, he had read Notovitch's book; and in

1922

he visited the Himis Monastery. With the help of one of the lamas, he made his own translation of some of the Tibetan verses about Issa, which he published in Bengali in

1929

. The English translation, Journey into Kashmir and Tibet, is published by Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, Calcutta,

1987

. (Publisher's Note)

[2 Nicholas Roerich \(](#)

1874

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1947

), renowned artist, explorer, and archaeologist, born in St. Petersburg, Russia.
From

1923

to

1928

he headed the Central Asiatic Expedition through India, Tibet, Sikkim, Chinese Turkestan, and Mongolia Altai. Reports about the expedition, which mentioned Roerich's recountal of the evidence for Jesus' trip to India, appeared in The New York Times May

27

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1926

, and other newspapers and magazines.

[3 Roerich, Heart of Asia \(New York: Roerich Museum Press,](#)

1929

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[4 Roerich, Altai-Himalaya \(New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co.,](#)

1929

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[5 Roerich, Altai-Himalaya.](#)

[6 See also footnote 9 in the Introduction. “On the basis of archaeology, satellite photography, metallurgy, and ancient mathematics, it is now clear that there existed a great civilization — a mainly spiritual civilization perhaps — before the rise of Egypt, Sumeria, and the Indus Valley. The heartland of this ancient world was the region from the Indus to the Ganga — the land of the Vedic Aryans,” state N. S. Rajaram and David Frawley, O.M.D., in *Vedic Aryans and the Origins of Civilization* \(New Delhi: Voice of India,](#)

1997

).

The scriptures of India “are the oldest extant philosophy and psychology of our race,” says renowned historian Will Durant in *Our Oriental Heritage* (The Story of Civilization, Part I). Robert C. Priddy, professor of the history of philosophy at the University of Oslo, wrote in *On India’s Ancient Past* (

1999

): “India’s past is so ancient and has been so influential in the rise of civilization and religion, at least for almost everyone in the Old World, that most people can claim it actually to be the earliest part of our own odyssey....The mother of religion, the world’s earliest spiritual teachings of the Vedic tradition contains the most sublime and all-embracing of philosophies.”

In his two-volume work *India and World Civilization* (Michigan State University Press,

1969

), historian D. P. Singhal amasses abundant documentation of India’s spiritual nurturing of the ancient world. He describes the excavation of a vase near Baghdad that has led researchers to the conclusion that “by the middle of the third millennium

b.c.

, an Indian cult was already being practiced in Mesopotamia....Archaeology thus has shown that two thousand years before the earliest references in cuneiform texts to contact with India, she was sending her manufactures to the land where the roots of Western civilization lie.”

India’s spiritual influence extended not only west, but east. “India conquered and dominated China for

20

centuries without ever having to send a single soldier across its border,” observed Dr. Hu Shih, former chancellor of Beijing University and Chinese ambassador to the United States. And Professor Lin Yutang, the famous Chinese philologist and author, says in *The Wisdom of India* (New York: Random House,

1942

): “India was China’s teacher in religion and imaginative literature, and the world’s teacher in philosophy....India is a land overflowing with religion and with the religious spirit. A trickle of Indian religious spirit overflowed to China and inundated the whole of Eastern Asia.”

The high civilizations of the Americas, as well, show definite evidence of India’s influence. “In ancient times, no civilization spread abroad more extensively than that of India,” Professor Singhal writes. “And thus, occupying a central position in the cultures of the world, India has contributed enormously to human civilization. Indian contacts with the Western world date back to prehistoric times.” He goes on to quote the illustrious scientist and explorer Baron Alexander von Humboldt, founder of the systematic study of ancient American cultures, who was convinced of the Asian origin of the advanced pre-Columbian civilizations in the New World: “If languages supply but feeble evidence of ancient communication between the two worlds, their communication is fully proved by the cosmogonies, the monuments, the hieroglyphical characters, and the institutions of the people of America and Asia.”

“The traces of Hindu-Buddhist influence in Mexico...correspond in kind precisely to those cultural elements which were introduced by Buddhist monks and Hindu priests in Southeast Asia,” Dr. Singhal observes, and cites the

conclusion of Professor Robert Heine-Geldern in *The Civilizations of the Americas* as follows: “We have little doubt that a sober but unbiased comparative analysis of the Mexican religions will reveal many traces of the former influences of either Hinduism or Buddhism or of both....to such an extent, both in a general way and in specific details, that the assumption of historic relationship is almost inevitable.” (Publisher’s Note)

[7 Cf. Swami Abhedananda’s translation of this verse from the Tibetan: “At this time his great desire was to achieve full realisation of godhead and learn religion at the feet of those who have attained perfection through meditation.” — Journey into Kashmir and Tibet](#)

The Lost Years of Jesus Revealed, by Rev. Dr. Charles Francis Potter
(Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett,

1962

), observes: “Many Hindus believe that Jesus’ ‘Lost Years’ were, partly at least, spent in India, getting much of his best teaching from the Vedas. Didn’t he say ‘Take my yoga upon you and learn of me, for my yoga is easy?’ Both yoga and yoke are pronounced as one syllable, with the final vowel silent, and both are the same word, zeugos, in Greek.” [And in Sanskrit, for the generic meaning of Sanskrit yoga is “yoke.” — Publisher.]

Dr. Potter continues: “Fanciful as it may seem to an American, the thought of any connection between Jesus’ teaching and India is rendered less fantastic not only by the scrolls from the Qumran caves [the so-called Dead Sea Scrolls], but especially by the new find of many Gnostic Christian books [at Nag Hammadi] in Egypt....The first part (and several other parts) of John’s Gospel — ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ...’ — is pure Gnosticism. Gnostic mysticism had come to the Jews from the East, from India and Persia and Babylon; it had appealed to them in their Babylonian captivity, and they had brought much of it back home with them in the Return....

“Lest we should undervalue Gnosticism because its terms, symbols, and vocabulary differ so from ours, it should be stated that Gnosticism was Egyptian Christianity for the two hundred years that the leaders of the new faith were working out its theology. It was gradually pushed out by orthodox Catholic

Christianity and its books were burned. Similarly, Essenism was the early form of Palestinian Christianity....At Qumran and at Chenoboskion [Nag Hammadi], hidden for centuries, were the great libraries of these early forms of Christianity, which now so suddenly and dramatically have been restored to us. And Essenism and Gnosticism were much alike: if you doubt it, read the canonical Gospel of John, especially the first chapter, where you will find both Essenism and Gnosticism, blended with and sublimated into the Christianity more familiar to us.” (Publisher’s Note)

[8 Records of Jesus’ years in India were preserved in Puri, according to His Holiness Sri Jagadguru Shankaracharya Bharati Krishna Tirtha, spiritual head of that city’s ancient Gowardhan Math and, until his passing in](#)

1962

, seniormost of the reigning Shankaracharyas (ecclesiastical heads of orthodox Hinduism; apostolic successors to Swami Shankara, ancient reorganizer of the venerable Swami Order). His Holiness visited America on a speaking tour of major universities in

1958

; his historic tour — the first time any Shankaracharya had traveled to the West — was sponsored by Self-Realization Fellowship. Sri Daya Mata, president and spiritual head of Self-Realization Fellowship (

1955

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2010

), wrote: “In my discussions with His Holiness during my visits with him in India, he told me that there is proof positive, to which he had access, that as Paramahansaji has stated, Jesus Christ was in India as a young lad and received training in the monasteries there. The Shankaracharya further told me that, God willing, it was his hope to translate these documents and write a book about this period in the life of Jesus. Unfortunately this could not be accomplished owing to the advanced age and fragile health of this saintly Shankaracharya.”

(Publisher’s Note)

9 Notovitch recorded that the manuscripts he saw at the Himis monastery in Ladakh were a translation into the Tibetan language from the original stored at a monastery near Lhasa, which was written in the Pali language. In Pali (and in Sanskrit), Isa (pronounced ee-sha) means “lord, owner, ruler” — as does the related word Issara (Pali version of Sanskrit Ishvara). Issa, on the other hand, means “jealousy, anger, ill-will” in Pali — obviously not the meaning intended by the Buddhist scribes who composed the scrolls. (Publisher’s Note)

10 See also footnote 6 in Discourse 21.

11 Jesus’ name is pronounced and spelled in different ways in various languages, but it has the same meaning. In the Koran (written in Arabic), the name used for Jesus is Isa or Issa — the same as in the Tibetan texts discovered by Notovitch. Only through changes by speakers in many lands did his name come to be pronounced Jesus. That English word is relatively modern; prior to the sixteenth century it was not spelled with a “J” but with an “I,” as in Latin and Greek (Îêsous). Even today, in Spanish, though spelled with a “J,” Jesus is pronounced “Hay-soos.”

The Biblical account, given in the Gospels of Luke and Matthew (see Discourse 2), is that both Mary and Joseph were instructed by an angel that the divine child was to be named Yeshua, “savior” (in Greek, Îêsous; in English, Jesus): “...thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins” (Matthew

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). The Hebrew word Yeshua is a contraction of Yehoshua, “Yahweh (Jehovah, the Creator) is salvation.” However, the language of daily use for Jesus and his fellow Galileans was not Hebrew, but the related dialect Aramaic, in which his name would have been pronounced “Eshu.” Thus, strangely enough, the name predicted for Jesus by the angel, and given to him by his family, was remarkably akin to the more ancient Sanskrit name bestowed by the Wise Men. Aside from the phonetic similarities, there is an underlying unity of meaning of the words Isha and Yeshua — the two appellations bestowed on the one revered by millions as “Lord and Savior.” (Publisher’s Note)

12 The yugas, or world cycles of civilization, are explained in Discourse

39

13 With the passage of time, Buddha's doctrines also fell prey to the limited understanding prevalent in Kali Yuga; his teachings degenerated into a nihilistic philosophy: The state of nirvana, or cessation of dualistic existence, was misinterpreted as extinction of the self. Buddha, however, meant extinction of the deluded ego, or pseudoself; the little self must be overcome in order that the real, eternal Self may achieve liberation from human incarnation. This perversion of Buddha's doctrine, with its emphasis on a negative state of nonbeing (extinction), was later supplanted in India by the doctrine of Swami Shankara, founder of the time-honored monastic Swami Order, who taught that the goal of life is the positive attainment of the ever-conscious, ever-existing, ever-newly blissful state of oneness with Spirit.

14 Through the remarkable discovery of early Christian gnostic texts at Nag Hammadi, Egypt in

1945

, one may glimpse something of what was lost to conventional Christianity during this process of "Westernization." Elaine Pagels, Ph.D., writes in *The Gnostic Gospels* (New York: Vintage Books,

1981

): "The Nag Hammadi texts, and others like them, which circulated at the beginning of the Christian era, were denounced as heresy by orthodox Christians in the middle of the second century....But those who wrote and circulated these texts did not regard themselves as 'heretics.' Most of the writings use Christian terminology, unmistakably related to a Jewish heritage. Many claim to offer traditions about Jesus that are secret, hidden from 'the many' who constitute what, in the second century, came to be called the 'catholic church.' These Christians are now called gnostics, from the Greek word *gnosis*, usually translated as 'knowledge.' For as those who claim to know nothing about ultimate reality are called agnostic (literally, 'not-knowing'), the person who does claim to know such things is called gnostic ('knowing'). But *gnosis* is not

primarily rational knowledge....As the gnostics use the term, we could translate it as 'insight,' for gnosis involves an intuitive process of knowing oneself.... [According to gnostic teachers,] to know oneself, at the deepest level, is simultaneously to know God; this is the secret of gnosis....

“The ‘living Jesus’ of these texts speaks of illusion and enlightenment, not of sin and repentance, like the Jesus of the New Testament. Instead of coming to save us from sin, he comes as a guide who opens access to spiritual understanding....

“Orthodox Christians believe that Jesus is Lord and Son of God in a unique way: he remains forever distinct from the rest of humanity whom he came to save. Yet the gnostic Gospel of Thomas relates that as soon as Thomas recognizes him, Jesus says to Thomas that they have both received their being from the same source: ‘I am not your master. Because you have drunk, you have become drunk from the bubbling stream which I have measured out....He who will drink from my mouth will become as I am: I myself shall become he, and the things that are hidden will be revealed to him.’

“Does not such teaching — the identity of the divine and human, the concern with illusion and enlightenment, the founder who is presented not as Lord, but as spiritual guide — sound more Eastern than Western?...Could Hindu or Buddhist tradition have influenced gnosticism?...Ideas that we associate with Eastern religions emerged in the first century through the gnostic movement in the West, but they were suppressed and condemned by polemicists like Irenaeus.”
(Publisher’s Note)

[15 The following was written in](#)

1932

by Dr. W. Y. Evans-Wentz, renowned author and Oxford University scholar of comparative religion:

“Glorious are the spiritual legacies of Egypt and Greece and Rome, but even more glorious are the spiritual legacies which India is offering to the peoples of Europe and America through the agency of its Wise Men of the East, of whom Swami Yogananda, the illustrious creator of the Yogoda [Self-Realization] system, is but one in a long dynasty that extends unbrokenly to our own epoch from the dim prehistoric ages. The Swami has come to the nations of the West to expound the supreme science of life, which each of his dynastic predecessors,

one after another, from century to century, has expounded.

“It has remained for the illuminated sons of India of this generation to free the Oriental-born Christ from the prison-house wherein the theologies of the Occident have kept him imprisoned throughout the centuries; and to proclaim anew, as he did, the ancient yet ever-new message of worldly renunciation and selflessness, and to reveal the One Path to Self-realization, to liberation and world-conquest, which all of the founders of the great historical faiths of mankind have trod and revealed....” (Publisher’s Note)

[16 John](#)

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Discourse 6

[1 See Discourse 64, for commentary on these verses, Matthew](#)

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[2 This verse is paralleled in Matthew](#)

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and is commented on in that context in Discourse

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[3 For this entire group of verses, cf. parallel references in Mark 1:1 – 8 and Luke 3:1 – 18. See Discourse 56 for commentary on verse 12.](#)

[4 See Luke 1:80, Discourse 2: “And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.” The Bible gives no further information on the childhood and youth of John the Baptist. The Essenes were an ascetical Jewish sect extant from about](#)

150

b.c.

until the end of the first century

a.d.

The Jewish historian Flavius Josephus (c.

a.d.

37

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100

) describes the Essenes in his Antiquities of the Jews (Book

18

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, No.

2

). The Roman scholar Pliny the Elder (

a.d.

23

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79

) wrote that the Essenes lived near the Dead Sea in the hills above Ein Gedi (where in

1998

Israeli archaeologists excavated what are believed to be ruins of an Essene community). Many similarities exist between what historians know of the Essene way of life and that of John the Baptist described in the Gospels. In addition to purificatory baptism by water, there is also evidence that they adhered to a vegetarian diet. They maintained monastic-like communities in the desert in order to separate themselves from what they saw as the corrupt and worldly practices of the priests and populace.

“The Essene, like the Indian yogi, sought to obtain divine union and the ‘gifts of the Spirit’ by solitary reverie in retired spots,” wrote archaeologist Arthur Lillie in *India in Primitive Christianity* (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner,

1909

). Historian D. P. Singhal writes in *India and World Civilization* (Michigan State University Press,

1969

): “Numerous authorities, such as Hilgenfeld and Renan, maintain that there was Buddhist influence on the Essene doctrines. And it was through this Jewish sect that Buddhist influences reached Palestine and later filtered through to Christianity....The life led by the Essenes,” he says (quoting historian Sir Charles Eliot in *Hinduism and Buddhism: An Historical Sketch*) “was ‘just as might have been evolved by seekers after truth who were trying to put into practice in another country the religious ideals of India.’” (Publisher’s Note)

[5 See Discourse 2.](#)

[6 Elaborated here.](#)

[7 The above reference to John the Baptist by the apostle John served as both a factual record of the role of the Baptist and also as a metaphorical medium to express esoterically, in the context of the opening verses of the Gospel According to St. John, the underlying spiritual nature of the coming-forth and subsistence of God’s creation. \(See elaboration, Discourse 1.\)](#)

[8 Matthew 11:11 \(see Discourse 34\).](#)

[9 “Whatever a superior being does, inferior persons imitate. His actions set a standard for people of the world” \(God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita](#)

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[10 Cosmic energy in the body works as five specialized currents, empowering the performance of the crystallizing \(prana\), assimilating \(samana\), eliminating \(apana\), metabolizing \(udana\), and circulatory \(vyana\) activities of the body.](#)

[11 Cf. parallel references in Mark](#)

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and Luke

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12 “Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; the mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches” (Revelation

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). “And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, ‘Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose

the seals thereof?” (Revelation

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). Yoga treatises identify these centers (in ascending order) as: muladhara (the coccygeal, at the base of the spine); svadhisthana (the sacral, two inches above muladhara); manipura (the lumbar, opposite the navel); anahata (the dorsal, opposite the heart); vishuddha (the cervical, at the base of the neck); ajna (seat of the spiritual eye, traditionally located between the eyebrows; in actuality, directly connected by polarity with the medulla oblongata); and sahasrara (“thousand-petaled lotus” in the uppermost part of the cerebrum). The seven centers are divinely planned exits or “trap doors” through which the soul has descended into the body and through which it must reascend by a process of meditation. By seven successive steps, the soul escapes into Cosmic Consciousness. Yoga treatises generally refer to the six lower centers as chakras (“wheels,” because the concentrated energy in each one is like a hub from which radiate rays of life-giving light and energy), with sahasrara referred to separately as a seventh center. All seven centers, however, are often referred to as lotuses, whose petals open, or turn upward, in spiritual awakening as the life and consciousness travel up the spine.

[13 The identifying emblem of Self-Realization Fellowship/Yogoda Satsanga Society of India depicts the spiritual eye, showing the white star and surrounding rings of blue and golden light at the point between the two eyebrows, situated within a golden lotus flower. It signifies the meditating devotee’s goal of opening the eye of divine perception, just as the open lotus is an ancient symbol of awakened spiritual consciousness.](#)

[14 The Holy Science, published by Self-Realization Fellowship.](#)

[15 Luke](#)

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[16 Isaiah](#)

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: “The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, ‘Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.’”

[17 “And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it....but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away” \(Isaiah 35](#)

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[18 The causal body, the idea-matrix for the astral and physical bodies, consists of](#)

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idea elements,

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of which constitute the astral body and

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of which correspond to the chemical elements of the physical body. Hindu scriptures identify the

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astral-body elements as: intelligence; ego; feeling; mind (sense-consciousness); five instruments of knowledge (the sensory powers within the physical organs of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch); five instruments of action (the executive powers in the physical instruments of procreation, excretion, speech, locomotion, and the exercise of manual skill); and five instruments of life force that perform the functions of circulation, metabolization, assimilation, crystallization, and elimination.

[19 Scientific discovery of the electromagnetic energy that forms an organizing template for the physical body is described in Vibrational Medicine \(Rochester, Vermont: Bear and Company,](#)

2001

), by Richard Gerber, M.D.: “Neuroanatomist Harold S. Burr at Yale University during the

1940

s was studying the shape of energy fields”—which he termed “fields of life” or “L-fields”—“around living plants and animals. Some of Burr’s work involved the shape of electrical fields surrounding salamanders. He found that the salamanders possessed an energy field roughly shaped like the adult animal. He also discovered that this field contained an electrical axis which was aligned with the brain and spinal cord. Burr wanted to find precisely when this electrical axis first originated in the animal’s development. He began mapping the fields in progressively earlier stages of salamander embryogenesis. Burr discovered that the electrical axis originated in the unfertilized egg....Burr also experimented with the electrical fields around tiny seedlings. According to his research, the

electrical field around a sprout was not the shape of the original seed. Instead the surrounding electrical field resembled the adult plant.”

In *Blueprint for Immortality: The Electric Patterns of Life* (Essex, England: Saffron Walden,

1972

), Professor Burr describes his research: “Most people who have taken high-school science will remember that if iron filings are scattered on a card held over a magnet they will arrange themselves in the pattern of the ‘lines of force’ of the magnet’s field. And if the filings are thrown away and fresh ones scattered on the card, the new filings will assume the same pattern as the old.

“Something like this—though infinitely more complicated—happens in the human body. Its molecules and cells are constantly being torn apart and rebuilt with fresh material from the food we eat. But thanks to the controlling L-field, the new molecules and cells are rebuilt as before and arrange themselves in the same pattern as the old ones.

“Modern research with ‘tagged’ elements has revealed that the materials of our bodies and brains are renewed much more often than was previously realized. All the protein in the body, for example, is ‘turned over’ every six months and, in some organs such as the liver, the protein is renewed much more frequently. When we meet a friend we have not seen for six months there is not one molecule in his face which was there when we last saw him. But, thanks to his controlling L-field, the new molecules have fallen into the old, familiar pattern and we can recognize his face. Until modern instruments revealed the existence of the controlling L-fields, biologists were at a loss to explain how our bodies ‘kept in shape’ through ceaseless metabolism and changes of material. Now the mystery has been solved, the electro-dynamic field of the body serves as a matrix or mould, which preserves the ‘shape’ or arrangement of any material poured into it, however often the material may be changed.” (Publisher’s Note)

[20 Psalms](#)

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[21 The Mahabharata, Vana Parva \(](#)

312

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117

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[22 Available in the Self-Realization Fellowship Lessons.](#)

[23 Paramahansa Yogananda daily prayed for and sent healing energy to all who had asked for his help, and taught his disciples a special technique of sending the healing power of Aum to aid others in overcoming physical, mental, and spiritual difficulties. This service is continued today by the Prayer Council at Self-Realization Fellowship International Headquarters, joined by the thousands of members of the SRF Worldwide Prayer Circle in praying for those in need and for world peace. See footnote 4 in Discourse 25. \(Publisher's Note\)](#)

[24 A sacred spiritual science embodying techniques for withdrawal of life and consciousness from the senses upward through the gates of light in the subtle cerebrospinal centers, dissolving the consciousness of matter into life force, life force into mind, mind into soul, and soul into Spirit. Kriya Yoga, an ancient form of Raja \("royal" or "complete"\) Yoga, is extolled by Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita and by Patanjali in his Yoga Sutras. As recounted in Autobiography of a Yogi, Kriya was revived in this age by Mahavatar Babaji, who ordained me to spread the liberating science worldwide. Kriya Yoga is taught to students of the Self-Realization Fellowship Lessons who fulfill preliminary spiritual requirements.](#)

Discourse 7

1 The details of Jesus' temptation by Satan are discussed in Discourse

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2 Matthew 10:29 (see Discourse 41).

3 These five evolutionary stages are referenced in yoga philosophy as koshas, "sheaths" that are progressively unfolded as creation evolves from inert matter back to pure Spirit. (See God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita, commentary on

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4 Since India gained her independence, the original Indian spellings have been restored to many words that had become anglicized during British rule. Thus Banaras is now more commonly spelled Varanasi, or is referred to by its more ancient name, Kashi. (Publisher's Note)

5 The aspect of God that is active in creation; the shakti, or power, of the Transcendent Creator. In this context, the reference is to the personal aspect of God embodying the motherly qualities of love and compassion. The Hindu scriptures teach that God is both immanent and transcendent, personal and impersonal. He may be sought as the Transcendent Absolute; but as the Bhagavad Gita

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points out, “Those whose goal is the Unmanifested increase the difficulties; arduous is the path to the Absolute for embodied beings.” Easier for most devotees is to seek God as one of His manifest eternal qualities, such as love, wisdom, bliss, light; in the form of an ishta (deity); or as Father, Mother, or Friend. Other terms for the Mother aspect of Divinity are Aum, Shakti, Holy Ghost, Cosmic Intelligent Vibration, Nature or Prakriti.

[6 Reference to the summer flood along the Yangtze during July – August](#)

1931

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51

million people were affected (one-fourth of China’s population).

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million people perished due to disease, starvation, or drowning. This flood was preceded by a prolonged drought in China during the

1928

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1930

period, causing a famine in which

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million people died, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric

Administration's National Climatic Data Center. (Publisher's Note)

[7 Isaiah](#)

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[8 God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita](#)

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[9 See also later in this Discourse.](#)

[10 “We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, ‘Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die’” \(Genesis](#)

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11 “The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.’...The woman said, ‘The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat’” (Genesis

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12 “So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, ‘Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it’” (Genesis

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13 “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (Genesis

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14 “Now the serpent (sex force) was more subtil than any beast of the field (any other sense of the body)” (Genesis

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15 “And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there He put the man whom He had formed” (Genesis

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“Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken” (Genesis

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The divine man first made by God had his consciousness centered in the

omnipotent single eye in the forehead (eastward). The all-creative powers of his will, focused at that spot, were lost to man when he began to “till the ground” of his physical nature.

16 The fall of man from his native state of divine consciousness under the influence of Satan is understood in Yoga to be the descent of his life energy and awareness from the centers of heavenly perception in the upper portion of the cerebrospinal axis down to the base of the spine, whence the consciousness flows outward to the senses and body identification (mentioned in Discourse

6

). The meaning of Satan “falling like lightning from heaven” in this microcosmic sense is explained in Discourse

41

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The deeper spiritual meaning of the Bible has been woefully trivialized at the hands of nonunderstanding literalists. I once talked to a very orthodox Christian missionary, asking him how the serpent could influence Eve to take a bite of the apple. “Well,” he confidently asserted, “in those days serpents could talk!”

17 “The Supreme Spirit, transcendent and existing in the body, is the detached Beholder, the Consenter, the Sustainer, the Experiencer, the Great Lord, and also the Highest Self” (God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita

xiii

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18 “The influence of the force of avidya [the individuality of the ego] is such that no matter how irksome the illusion, deluded man is loath to part with it.... The confirmed materialist, captive in his own realm of ‘reality,’ is ignorant of his deluded state and therefore has no wish nor will to exchange it for the sole

Reality, Spirit. He perceives the temporal world as reality, eternal substance—insofar as he is able to grasp the concept of eternity. He imagines the grossness of sensory experience to be the pure essence of feeling and perception. He fabricates his own standards of morality and behavior and calls them good, irrespective of their inharmony with eternal Divine Law. And he thinks that his ego, his mortal sense of being—with its inflated self-importance as the almighty doer—is the image of his soul as created by God....

“Ordinary man is dumbfounded by the enticing propositions of illusory sense experiences, and clings to delusive material forms as though they were the reality and the cause and security of his existence. The yogi, on the other hand, is ever conscious inwardly of the sole Reality, Spirit, and sees maya and avidya—universal and individual delusion—as merely a tenuous web holding together the atomic, magnetic, and spiritual forces that give him a body and mind with which to play a part in the cosmic drama of the Lord’s creation” (God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita, commentary on

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19 “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world...”
(Ephesians

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[20 Commented on in Discourse](#)

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Discourse 8

[1 Jesus is quoting Deuteronomy](#)

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. Cf. parallel references in Mark

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and Luke

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[2 “What we eat is radiation; our food is so much quanta of energy,” Dr. George W. Crile of Cleveland told a gathering of medical men on May](#)

17

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1933

, in Memphis. “This all-important radiation, which releases electrical currents for the body’s electrical circuit, the nervous system, is given to food by the sun’s rays,” he pointed out.

Someday scientists will discover how man can live directly on solar energy. “Chlorophyll is the only substance known in nature that somehow possesses the power to act as a ‘sunlight trap,’” William L. Laurence writes in The New York Times. “It ‘catches’ the energy of sunlight and stores it in the plant.... We obtain the energy we need for living from the solar energy stored in the plant-food we eat or in the flesh of the animals that eat the plants. The energy we obtain from coal or oil is solar energy trapped by the chlorophyll in plant life millions of years ago. We live by the sun through the agency of chlorophyll.”—
Autobiography of a Yogi

[3 Man’s intelligence, or mind, is not a simple single faculty. Yoga has minutely analyzed its physiological, psychological, and spiritual components, defining it as a conglomerate of the ego principle \(ahamkara\)—the agent or subjective doer and perceiver; the consciousness or feeling and awareness \(chitta\); the sense mind \(manas\) consisting of the enlivening power of the five senses of knowledge \(smell, taste, sight, touch, hearing\) and five senses of action \(locomotion, exercise of manual skill, speech, elimination, and procreation\); and discrimination \(buddhi\). From these principles evolve the five life energies, the fivefold function of prana responsible for empowering the performance of the](#)

crystallizing, assimilating, eliminating, metabolizing, and circulatory activities of the body. Man is thus a highly complex aggregate of intelligent energies and consciousness, all of which derive from the soul and its source in the Cosmic Consciousness of God.

4 When Paramahansa Yogananda put forth this hypothetical metaphor, it was necessary to add water regularly to wet batteries to replace that which was lost in evaporation. The more recently developed sealed batteries, common to most users today, require no such water replacement. (Publisher's Note)

5 Amanzil was reprinted from the Catholic Universe Bulletin, Cleveland, Ohio (eleventh edition).

6 In Autobiography of a Yogi, Chapter

39

, "Therese Neumann, the Catholic Stigmatist," Paramahansa Yogananda relates in detail his meeting with this modern-day mystic and his personal experience of her ecstatic vision of Christ's Passion. Therese Neumann passed away in

1962

. (Publisher's Note)

7 Among other Christian saints who lived without eating (they were also stigmatists) may be mentioned Saint Lidwina of Schiedam, Blessed Elizabeth of Rent, Saint Catherine of Siena, Dominica Lazzari, Blessed Angela of Foligno, and the nineteenth-century Louise Lateau. Saint Nicholas of Flüe (Bruder Klaus, the fifteenth-century hermit whose impassioned plea for union saved the Swiss Confederation) was an abstainer from food for twenty years.

8 See Autobiography of a Yogi, Chapter

46

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9 In Thirty-five Years in the East (London: H. Bailliere,

1852

), Dr. John Martin Honigberger, physician to the Court of Lahore, India, writes of the feats of Sadhu Haridas, which he gathered from eyewitness accounts.

[10 Consciousness as a factor in human sustenance is demonstrable in the phenomenon of sleep. The human mechanism must periodically be recharged by retiring into the subconsciousness in the state of sleep, wherein the consciousness and body cells are revived by contact with the superconsciousness of the soul. The rejuvenating effects of sleep are due to man's temporary unawareness of the body and breath. The sleeping man becomes a yogi; each night he unconsciously performs the yogic rite of releasing himself from bodily identification, and of merging the life force with healing currents in the main brain region and in the six subdynamos of his spinal centers. Unknowingly, the sleeper is thus recharged by the Cosmic Energy that sustains all life.](#)

[11 See Discourse 2: "...there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire...and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven" \(II Kings](#)

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[Kabir was a great sixteenth-century saint in India. See Discourse 75.](#)

[12 "Recent Indo-German studies have revealed that fasting can prolong life span," reports an article in The Deccan Chronicle, Hyderabad, India, January](#)

23

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1995

. "The experiments, carried out by the Hyderabad-based Centre for Cellular and

Molecular Biology (CCMB) in collaboration with the Max Planck Institute for Experimental Endocrinology (Germany) noted that fasting conserved a lot of energy. This excess energy could be utilized for carrying out other functions of the human body or for keeping the body fit, thus increasing longevity.

“During the experiments, which subjected rats to fasting, it was found that the turnover or replacement of internal lining cells, which requires a lot of energy, was completely stopped. There also was no physiological cell death, and intestinal cells became more efficient in absorbing nutrients, Dr. P. D. Gupta, Deputy Director of the CCMB and leader of the study group, said.

“Dr. Gupta said there were instances of Jain munis fasting for more than

200

days. However, it was found that fasting up to three days stopped ‘physiological cell death’ completely. Fasting for one or two days intermittently over a period of one month was always beneficial, the study found.” (Publisher’s Note)

[13 My guru, Swami Sri Yukteswar, concisely set forth principles of the ideal diet natural to man as being vegetarian, based on an analysis of “the formation of the organs that aid in digestion and nutrition, the teeth and digestive canal” and “observation of the natural tendency of the organs of sense—the guideposts for determining what is nutritious—by which all animals are directed to their food.” \(The Holy Science, Chapter](#)

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; published by Self-Realization Fellowship.)

[14 In his replies to the devil, Jesus is quoting Deuteronomy](#)

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16

and

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. Cf. parallel reference in Luke

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[15 Luke](#)

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Discourse 9

[1 “John” in this verse refers to John the Baptist. See Discourse 6 for discussion of “Lamb of God.” \(Publisher’s Note\)](#)

[2 “Fools dwelling in darkness, wise in their own conceit, and puffed up with](#)

vain knowledge, go round and round staggering to and fro, like blind men led by the blind” (Mundaka Upanishad I.ii.

8

, translated by Max Muller, Sacred Books of the East, Volume

15

,

1884

).

Jesus said: “Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch?” (Luke 6:39). See commentary in Discourse 33.

3 Published by Self-Realization Fellowship.

4 See Discourse 5.

5 The date of Sri Krishna’s incarnation is uncertain. Though archaeologically indefinite, a popular concept is that he lived sometime between

1500

and

900

b.c.

6 There are many derivations given to the word Krishna, the most common of which is “dark,” referring to the hue of Krishna’s complexion. (He is often shown as dark blue to connote divinity. Blue is also the color of the Christ Consciousness when epitomized in the spiritual eye as a circle of opal-blue light surrounding the star-opening to Cosmic Consciousness.) According to M. V. Sridatta Sarma (“On the Advent of Sri Krishna”), of the various other meanings given to the word Krishna, several are found in the Brahmavaivarta Purana. He states that according to one of these derivations, “Krsna means the Universal

Spirit. Krsi denotes a generic term, while na conveys the idea of the self, thus bringing forth the meaning ‘Omniscient Spirit.’” In this we find a parallel to the Christ Consciousness as the Intelligence of God omnipresent in creation, the Kutastha Chaitanya. It is of interest that a colloquial Bengali rendering of Krishna is Krista (cf. Greek Christos and Spanish Cristo). (Publisher’s Note)

7 The word “Messiah” comes from the Hebrew Mashiakh, “Anointed,” the expected King and deliverer of the Hebrews. Translated into Greek, “anointed” became Christos, “Christ.”

8 Revelation

22

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6

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9 God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita

xi

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10 “To the Jews of Palestine, this special sign of giving someone a new name— as in Genesis God had changed the name Abram to Abraham and Jacob to Israel—indicated that the person was chosen for a divine mission. Once again, Jesus harked back to Old Testament tradition even as he inaugurated his revolutionary movement of spiritual renewal.”—from Jesus and His Times, Kaari Ward, ed. (Pleasantville, New York: Reader’s Digest Association,

1987

). (Publisher’s Note)

Discourse 10

[1 See God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita](#)

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[2 Nathanael is commonly thought to be also known as Bartholomew, a disciple among the “inner circle” of Jesus’ followers chosen as one of the twelve apostles.](#)

[3 Unique to St. John’s Gospel are numerous statements by Jesus emphatically and solemnly prefaced by “verily, verily”—“Amen, Amen” in the original Greek and Hebrew. Cf. Revelation](#)

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: “These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness....”

[4 A gloriously comprehensive description of the astral and causal worlds is given in Autobiography of a Yogi, Chapter](#)

. (Publisher's Note)

[5 Since the divergence of science and religion in centuries past, scientists have typically greeted the idea of "higher dimensions" with skepticism. At the forefront of advanced physics today, however, is the theory of superstrings—a theory that not only allows for additional dimensions but requires them, writes Brian Greene, Ph.D., in The Elegant Universe: Superstrings, Hidden Dimensions, and the Quest for the Ultimate Theory \(New York: Vintage Books,](#)

2000

).

Furthermore, reports Los Angeles Times science writer K. C. Cole, scientists acknowledge that cosmic forces as yet unnamed by physics may well exist in the other dimensions required by string theory. "If so," she writes in *The Hole in the Universe* (New York: Harcourt,

2001

), "they could have far-reaching effects, and perhaps even explain some of physics' most difficult puzzles."

String theorists explain that we don't detect the additional dimensions in the universe because even though forces emerge from them, spatially they are tightly "curled up" to almost infinitesimal size. Other scientists, including William Tiller, Ph.D., professor of materials science and engineering at Stanford University, maintain that higher dimensions remain invisible not because they are small but because they are "inaccessible to the physical sensory system, or to present-day instrumentation."

A proposal that is all the more remarkable in that it comes from a Nobel Prize – winning physicist has been put forth by Professor Brian Josephson of Cambridge University, renowned for key discoveries in subatomic quantum mechanics: "Mystical experience by self-development through meditation, etc., is not only the key to one's own development but also the key...to putting this attempt to synthesize science and religion on a solid foundation....If we follow this path of a synthesis of science with religion (using meditation as an observational tool),

what we are doing is using our own nervous systems as instruments to observe the domains in which God works. Ordinary scientific instruments like telescopes, galvanometers, and particle detectors are not going to be good in this context because they are designed to function in the material domain. Our nervous systems, on the other hand, are designed to allow us to interact not only with the material level of existence but also with the spiritual levels....All the different levels are open to exploration if we develop our nervous systems so that they tune in. One can imagine that this would be a part of the scientific training of the future.”—from Nobel Prize Conversations With Sir John Eccles, Roger Sperry, Ilya Prigogine, Brian Josephson (Dallas: Saybrook Publishing Company, 1985

). (Publisher’s Note)

[6 Yoga explains that the two physical eyes are an externalization of the finer forces in the single spiritual eye of the astral body. From the seat of the spiritual eye in the subtle center in the medulla, a bifurcated current of life energy flows into the physical eyes, giving the dual or dimensional perception of matter. In deep meditation, when the gaze of the two eyes is concentrated at the point between the eyebrows, the dual positive and negative currents flowing from the medulla into the two eyes reunite, and the meditator beholds the “single” or spiritual eye.](#)

Modern scientific evidence that our two eyes begin as a single structure is found in the research of molecular neurobiologist Yi Rao of the Washington University School of Medicine, reported in Discover, May

1997

. Dr. Rao studied eye development in frog embryos and isolated the so-called “Cyclops” gene, which may control eye development. By the time the embryo is twenty-one hours old, the two dark spots that later form into the eyes are visible. Dr. Rao found that these two spots had originated as a single band. His experiments demonstrated that if the brain does not signal cells in this “single band” to shut down and allow two separate eyes to form (which happens in normal development), one-eyed tadpoles are the result. Furthermore, his research suggests that this process “is general to all vertebrate species.” (Publisher’s Note)

7 “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened” (Matthew

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8 See Discourse 24.

Discourse 11

1 Jewish tradition called for water to be available for ritualistic washing of hands and feet before eating, without which one was considered unclean. See, for example, Mark

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, in which the Pharisees criticized Jesus’ disciples for eating bread before observing this ceremony. The capacity of each of these vessels, described in English as “two or three firkins” (Greek metreta, “measure”) is uncertain.

2 John

19

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26

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27

. See also Matthew

15

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(Discourse

44

) in which Jesus chides the Pharisees for not upholding the divine command to honor one's parents.

[3 “The rise of science served to extend the range of nature’s marvels, so that today we have discovered order in the deepest recesses of the atom and among the grandest collection of galaxies,” writes Paul Davies, Ph.D., well-known author and professor of mathematical physics, in Evidence of Purpose: Scientists Discover the Creator \(New York: Continuum Publishing,](#)

1994

).

Systems theorist Ervin Laszlo reports in *The Whispering Pond: A Personal Guide to the Emerging Vision of Science* (Boston: Element Books,

1999

): “The fine-tuning of the physical universe to the parameters of life constitutes a

series of coincidences—if that is what they are....in which even the slightest departure from the given values would spell the end of life, or, more exactly, create conditions under which life could never have evolved in the first place. If the neutron did not outweigh the proton in the nucleus of the atoms, the active lifetime of the Sun and other stars would be reduced to a few hundred years; if the electric charge of electrons and protons did not balance precisely, all configurations of matter would be unstable and the universe would consist of nothing more than radiation and a relatively uniform mixture of gases....If the strong force that binds the particles of a nucleus were merely a fraction weaker than it is, deuteron could not exist and stars such as the Sun could not shine. And if that force were slightly stronger than it is, the Sun and other active stars would inflate and perhaps explode....The values of the four universal forces [electromagnetism, gravity, and the nuclear strong and weak forces] were precisely such that life could evolve in the cosmos.”

Notes Professor Davies: “Quite a list of ‘lucky accidents’ and ‘coincidences’ has been compiled....For a recent review see *Cosmic Coincidences* by John Gribbin and Martin Rees (New York: Bantam,

1989

.)” Davies estimates that if—as some scientists maintain—there were no inherent guiding intelligence and cosmic evolution were governed only by the chance operation of strictly mechanical laws, “the time required to achieve the level of order we now meet in the universe purely by random processes is of the order of at least

101080

years”—inconceivably longer than the current age of the universe. Citing these calculations, Laszlo wryly observes: “Serendipity of this magnitude strains credibility,” and concludes: “Must we then face the possibility that the universe we witness is the result of purposeful design by an omnipotent master builder?” (Publisher’s Note)

[4 See, for example, John](#)

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. Jesus declined to demonstrate his powers when challenged by onlookers after evicting the money changers from the temple, discussed in Discourse

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[5 See Discourse 1.](#)

[6 Similar views are now espoused by visionaries of modern science. The renowned work of Dr. David Bohm, late professor of physics at the University of London, has provided “an entirely new way of understanding the fundamental nature of the physical universe, as glimpsed through the data and laws of physics,” writes Will Keepin, Ph.D., in “Lifework of David Bohm: River of Truth” \(ReVision magazine, Summer](#)

1993

). “Prior to Bohm, science had generally regarded the universe as a vast multitude of separate interacting particles. Bohm offers an altogether new view of reality... ‘unbroken wholeness in flowing movement.’ What is remarkable about Bohm’s hypothesis is that it is also consistent with spiritual wisdom down through the ages.”

In quantum physics, the notion of matter being composed of definite particles has now been superseded by the discovery of an all-pervading “field” of powerful invisible forces. This discovery, writes K. C. Cole in *The Hole in the Universe: How Scientists Peered Over the Edge of Emptiness and Found Everything* (New York: Harcourt, 2001

), showed that “particles of matter were in themselves rather irrelevant; they were only the spigots through which various forces flowed. A solid object, if you like, was something like a fountain composed of intersecting cascades of water, all flowing from tiny pointlike orifices. The ‘real’ stuff of matter was the flowing

water, or forces.”

“The concept of field,” Cole explains, “was a huge revolution in thought that remains completely unknown to most laypeople....[But] Einstein called the ‘change in conception of reality’ from particles and empty space to fields ‘the most profound and fruitful one that has come to physics since Newton.’... Matter, in this view, is simply a place where some of the field happens to be concentrated. Matter condenses out of field like water droplets condense out of water vapor in a steamy bathroom. Particles of matter are concentrations of field that travel through the field like ripples in a rope or a wave in water. The essential ‘stuff’—that is to say, the rope or the water—does not travel from place to place. Only the kink travels....

“This view of matter explains, among other things, why every electron in the universe is exactly the same as every other electron, every top quark the same as every other top quark. A particle doesn’t really exist in its own right. It is only a particular manifestation of a field. And globally speaking, the field is everywhere the same.”

Professor N. C. Panda, Ph.D., sums up the implications in *Maya in Physics* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass,

1991

): “Science has discarded the concept of pluralism and has accepted field or space as one and a single continuous entity as the basis of the appearance of the multifarious world. This basic entity is one and continuous; it is the source of the heterogenous manifestation of the universe. The one gives rise to many; the invisible gives rise to multifarious invisible-cum-visible ones; the formless gives rise to pluralities of forms. Thus monism is established in science.” (Publisher’s Note)

[7 “Be still, and know that I am God” \(Psalms](#)

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Discourse 12

1 Cf. additional parallel references in Mark 11:15 – 17 and Luke 19:45 – 46. St. John’s Gospel places this incident at the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry; the other three Gospels relate it near the end of Jesus’ life, during his last visit to Jerusalem (see Discourse 64). Though no definitive explanation for this can be given, some scholars believe that these were two separate incidents, occurring three years apart. (Publisher’s Note)

2 Matthew

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. See Discourse 27.

3 “Many disciples have a preconceived image of a guru, by which they judge his words and actions. Such persons often complained that they did not understand [my guru] Sri Yukteswar. ‘Neither do you understand God!’ I retorted on one occasion. ‘If a saint were clear to you, you would be one!’”—Autobiography of a Yogi

4 “Anger breeds delusion; delusion breeds loss of memory (of the Self). Loss of right memory causes decay of the discriminating faculty. From decay of discrimination, annihilation (of spiritual life) follows” (God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita

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5 The disciples were quoting Psalms

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6 Meditation—concentration upon God—is the portal through which every seeker of every faith must pass in order to contact God. Withdrawal of the consciousness from the world and the senses for the purpose of communing with God was taught by Christ in these words: “But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet (draw the mind within), and when thou hast shut thy door (the door of the body and senses), pray to thy Father which is in secret (within you)” (Matthew 6:6; see Discourse 28).

7 For example, Hosea

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8 “Tegh Bahadur (b.

1621

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1675

, Delhi), ninth Sikh Guru....ran afoul of the Mughal authorities by giving aid and shelter to some Hindu holy men from Kashmir who had been ordered by the emperor Aurangzeb to accept Islam. The Hindus sent word to the Emperor that they would accept Islam if the Guru became a Muslim. Tegh Bahadur was arrested and confined to the fortress in Delhi. Rivals at court, wishing to harm him further, accused him of having worldly desires because he gazed constantly at the emperor's harem, which lay to the west of the prison. When confronted with this charge, the Guru allegedly replied: 'Emperor, I was not gazing at your queen's apartments. I was looking in the direction of the Europeans who are coming from beyond the western seas to destroy your empire.' Aurangzeb, his patience at an end, ordered the Guru to embrace Islam or perform a miracle. Tegh Bahadur refused to do either and, after the Guru recited the Japji (the most important Sikh scripture), the executioner decapitated him."—Encyclopaedia Britannica

[9 “And great multitudes were gathered together unto him....And he spake many things unto them in parables....And the disciples came, and said unto him, ‘Why speakest thou unto them in parables?’ He answered and said unto them, ‘Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given’” \(Matthew 13:2 – 3, 10 – 11; see Discourse 37\).](#)

Discourse 13

[1 In the Buddhist scrolls discovered in a Tibetan lamasery and published by Nicholas Notovitch \(see Discourse 5\), Jesus is quoted as saying:](#)

“Put not your faith in miracles performed by the hands of men, for He who rules nature is alone capable of doing supernatural things, while man is impotent to

arrest the wrath of the winds or cause the rain to fall.

“One miracle, however, is within the power of man to accomplish. It is, when his heart is filled with sincere faith, he resolves to root out from his mind all evil promptings and desires, and when, in order to attain this end, he ceases to walk the path of iniquity.”

[2 See Paramahansa Yogananda’s Wine of the Mystic: The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam—A Spiritual Interpretation \(published by Self-Realization Fellowship\).](#)

[3 Enneads, iv.](#)

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[4 Porphyry, Life of Plotinus](#)

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[5 “Let no one suppose,” says the Theologia Germanica, “that we may attain to this true light and perfect knowledge...by hearsay, or by reading and study, nor yet by high skill and great learning.” “It is not enough,” says Gerlac Petersen, “to know by estimation merely: but we must know by experience.” So Mechthild of Magdeburg says of her revelations, “The writing of this book was seen, heard, and experienced in every limb....I see it with the eyes of my soul, and hear it with the ears of my eternal spirit.”—quoted in Mysticism, by Evelyn Underhill, Part I, Chapter](#)

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[6 An overview of exponents of intuitional experience in Christianity may be found in The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism, three volumes, by Bernard McGinn \(New York: Crossroad,](#)

1991

). (Publisher's Note)

[7 "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect" \(Matthew 5:48; see Discourse 27\).](#)

[8 Nicodemus, as mentioned in the Bible verses above, was a Pharisee. The first-century Jewish historian Josephus records the following about the Pharisees' beliefs: "They say that all souls are incorruptible, but that the souls of good men only are removed into other bodies, but that the souls of bad men are subject to eternal punishment" \(Wars of the Jews, ii,](#)

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). Some religious scholars hold that this is a reference to reincarnation; others claim it is merely a statement of the Pharisees' doctrine of the ultimate resurrection of the virtuous. Regardless, there is ample evidence that many Jews believed in reincarnation.

The German encyclopedia Meyers Konversationslexikon states: "At the time of Christ most of the Jews believed in the transmigration of the soul. Talmudists thought that God had created a limited number of Jewish souls that would come back as long as there were Jews...However, on the day of resurrection they would all be purified and rise in the bodies of the righteous in the Promised Land."

"The fact that reincarnation is part of Jewish tradition comes as a surprise to many people," writes Yaakov Astor in *Soul Searching: Seeking Scientific Foundation for the Jewish Tradition of an Afterlife* (Southfield, Michigan: Targum Press,

2003

). "Nevertheless, it's mentioned in numerous places throughout the classical texts of Jewish mysticism....The Zohar and related literature are filled with references

to reincarnation....The Bahir, attributed to the first-century sage, Nechuniah ben Hakanah, used reincarnation to address the classic question of theodicy—why bad things happen to good people and vice versa:... ‘This is because the [latter] righteous person did bad in a previous [life], and is now experiencing the consequences.’”

That the concept of reincarnation was known to the Jews is evidenced in several New Testament passages, as when the “priests and Levites” ask John the Baptist, “Art thou Elijah?” (John 1:21, Discourse 6); and when Jesus’ disciples tell him, “Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets” (Matthew 16:14; see Discourse 45). (Publisher’s Note)

9 Nowhere in the four Gospels is it specifically stated that Jesus instructed his disciples to practice the ritual of water baptism. However, the Gospel According to St. Matthew quotes Jesus as issuing to his followers, after his resurrection, what Christian theologians call the “Great Commission”: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Matthew

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The nature of the baptism intended by Jesus is apparent in John the Baptist’s declaration that though John baptized with water, Jesus “shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.” (See Discourse 6.)

10 See elaboration in Discourse 7.

11 “O Arjuna, by the knowers of truth, this body is called kshetra (‘the field’ where good and evil karma is sown and reaped); likewise, that which cognizes

the field they call kshetrajna (the soul). Also know Me to be the Kshetrajna (Perceiver) in all kshetras (the bodies evolved out of the cosmic creative principle and Nature). The understanding of kshetra and kshetrajna—that is deemed by Me as constituting true wisdom” (God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita

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12 Man’s angelic astral body of light and life energy, which possesses an invisible counterpart for all the physical organs and which interfaces with the fleshly body through the brain and the intricate physical and astral pathways of life energy, helps to explain the so-called “phantom limb phenomenon,” known to persons who lose a limb through accident or surgery. Though physically missing, that limb may remain intact in the astral body, causing amputees to feel sensations and movements in the missing limb exactly as if it were still part of the body. “For nearly

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percent of them their missing arms, hands, legs, or feet continue to experience all-too-real feelings of pressure, pain, warmth, cold, tingling, or other sensations,” according to *The Mind and the Brain* by Jeffrey M. Schwartz, M.D., and Sharon Begley (New York: HarperCollins,

2002

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In Phantoms in the Brain: Probing the Mysteries of the Human Mind (New York: HarperCollins,

1998

), Professor V. S. Ramachandran, M.D., Ph.D., Director of the Center for Brain and Cognition at the University of California at San Diego, describes the complex neurological mechanism behind this phenomenon. His research has revealed how amazingly lifelike are the sensations and kinesthetic reality maintained by the brains of those with phantom body parts. These experiments, he says, “have helped us understand what is going on in the brains of patients with phantoms....But there’s a deeper message here: Your own body is a phantom, one that your brain has temporarily constructed purely for convenience....

“For your entire life, you’ve been walking around assuming that your ‘self’ is anchored to a single body that remains stable and permanent at least until death. Indeed, the ‘loyalty’ of your self to your own body is so axiomatic that you never even pause to think about it, let alone question it. Yet these experiments suggest the exact opposite—that your body image, despite all its appearance of durability, is an entirely transitory internal construct....merely a shell that you’ve temporarily created.”

In summing up the implications, Dr. Ramachandran quotes the Vivekachudamani (“Crest Jewel of Wisdom”) of Swami Shankara: “You never identify your self with the shadow cast by your body, or with its reflection, or with the body you see in a dream or in your imagination. Therefore you should not identify yourself with this living body, either.” (Publisher’s Note)

[13 All human beings experience three states: waking, dream-broken slumber, and dreamless sleep. The latter, even when brief, is revivifying; man is then unconsciously resting in his soul nature. Hindu scriptures also speak of turiya, literally, in Sanskrit, the “fourth” or superconscious state. Persistent yogis and all other great devotees of God enter the turiya state: conscious, unforgettable realizations of soul as one with Spirit.](#)

[14 “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” \(I Corinthians](#)

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[15 Cf. God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita, commentary on](#)

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[16 True meditation \(dhyana, the seventh step of the Eightfold Path of Yoga as delineated by Sage Patanjali\) is spoken of as giving “conception of the magnitude of Aum,” the Biblical Holy Ghost or Word. In The Holy Science, Swami Sri Yukteswar writes:](#)

“What is needed is a Guru, a Savior, who will awaken us to Bhakti (devotion) and to perceptions of Truth....Any advanced sincere seeker may be fortunate in having the Godlike company of some one of such personages, who may kindly stand to him as his Spiritual Preceptor, Sat-Guru, the Savior. Following affectionately the holy precepts of these divine personages, man becomes able to direct all his organs of sense inward to their common center—the sensorium, Trikuti or Sushumnadwara, the door of the interior world—where he comprehends the Voice...[the Cosmic Vibration that is] the Word, Amen, Aum. ...From the peculiar nature of this sound, issuing as it does like a stream from a higher unknown region and losing itself in the gross material creation, it is figuratively designated by various sects of people by the names of different rivers that they consider as sacred; for example, Ganga by the Hindus, Yamuna by the Vaishnavas, and Jordan by the Christians. Through his luminous body, man, believing in the existence of the true Light—the Life of this universe—becomes baptized or absorbed in the holy stream of the sound. The baptism is, so to speak, the second birth of man and is called Bhakti Yoga, without which man can never comprehend the real internal world, the kingdom of God.”

Discourse 14

1 See Discourse 6 regarding the subtle anatomy of the spine.

2 By the same power, a master who realizes that the body is a manipulatable mass of light and energy can replicate his material form in order to appear simultaneously in two or more places in identical bodies. This phenomenon, known as bilocation, has been demonstrated by numerous Christian saints down the ages. In The Story of Therese Neumann (Bruce Pub. Co.), A. P. Schimberg describes several occasions on which this Christian saint has appeared before, and conversed with, distant persons needing her help. In Autobiography of a Yogi I have recounted several instances in the lives of Hindu masters I have known.

3 Reference is to Exodus

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. When in the wilderness God spoke to Moses out of the burning bush, Moses asked of God some sign of spiritual authority by which he could be recognized as sent by God to accomplish the tasks to which God had appointed him. “And the Lord said unto him, ‘What is that in thine hand?’ And he said, ‘A rod.’ And He said, ‘Cast it on the ground.’ And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent....And the Lord said unto Moses, ‘Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail.’ And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand.”

The “rod” is the spine, in which reside the subtle astral centers of life and consciousness that are the dynamos not only of all physical vitalities, but of all divine powers and spiritual perceptions when awakened by the lifting of the fiery

serpent of life force at the base, “tail,” of the spine. The metaphors of the “serpent” and “rod” are variously repeated in the story of Moses, in keeping with scriptural tradition of linking historical events with esoteric symbology. The rod, or staff, of Moses was the medium through which he demonstrated miraculous powers according to the will of God in carrying out his special dispensation to free the Israelites from thralldom in Egypt—such as the oft-cited parting of the Red Sea; and the saving of the people, in the wilderness, from death by fiery serpents created by their misdeeds, to counteract which the Lord directed Moses: “Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and...every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live” (Numbers

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). Spiritual death results from the misuse of the animating fiery life force; spiritual life is the blessing bestowed when the life force and consciousness are uplifted to the highest center of divine consciousness in the body at the top of the spinal “pole” in the cerebrum, where God dwells as the soul.

A similar analogy exists in the scriptures of India, citing the serpentine life force at the base of the spine, as described in this Discourse, and the spine itself referred to as meru-danda. Mt. Meru is the loftiest of mythological mountains; and danda, “a rod, a staff,” is representative of the spine with its spiritual centers, the crest of which is referred to as the holy Meru, the highest center of divine consciousness. Many yogis honor this symbology by keeping among their sparse ascetic accoutrements a danda, staff, in recognition of the spine as the symbolic scepter of the soul’s sovereign power over the kingdom of the body.

[4 In](#)

1953

, scientists discovered that DNA, the basic molecule of life, is also constructed in

a helical shape. The deep-seeing Italian mathematician Leonardo Fibonacci (

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1250

) perceived that countless patterns in nature conform to a spiral shape mathematically expressed as a logarithm deriving from the so-called Fibonacci numbers (

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, etc.), where each number is the sum of the two preceding in the series. This exact spiral appears in such seemingly disparate manifestations as the pattern of petals in sunflower blossoms and of leaves in pineapples, artichokes, and many trees; the progressive volume of chambers in a nautilus seashell; the light-years-wide sweep of spiral galaxies.

Philosophers down the centuries have inferred the intelligence of a Divine Architect from the fact that the further one progresses in the Fibonacci series, the closer the terms come to expressing “the golden mean” or “golden ratio” (

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) and its derivative “golden rectangle” and “golden spiral”—a “sacred geometry” observable throughout nature. In Atomic Vortex Theorem of Energy Motion, quantum physicist Derek Bond discusses the theory that all energy expresses in a vortex pattern: “This is evidenced to us constantly from the largest things, such as our spiral galaxies and the very curve of space-time itself, to the very smallest as evidenced by the miniature atomic vortices created by atomic particles. The vortical flow in particles’ atomic path vortices, as imaged by the CERN

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meter bubble chamber, when measured, is in accordance with ratio of

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. This ratio is a never-ending decimal and is a perfect pattern for infinite flows in time/space. This ratio will repeat the same proportion infinitely. Many spiral galaxies' arms and these atomic particle paths make a perfect match with the 'golden ratio' and prove that these particles are traveling in infinite flows."

The golden ratio is considered to be the basis of harmony and beauty of form in classical art, architecture, and design—identified as such by (among many others) Pythagoras, Plato, Leonardo da Vinci, and the builders of the Great Pyramids at Giza. (Publisher's Note)

[5 See also Discourse 41.](#)

Discourse 15

[1 The writings of many gnostic Christians from the first two centuries](#)

a.d.

, including Basilides, Theodotus, Valentinus, and Ptolemaeus, similarly express an understanding of the "only begotten Son" as a cosmic principle in creation—the divine Nous (Greek for intelligence, mind, or thought)—rather than as the

person of Jesus. The celebrated church father Clement of Alexandria quotes from the writings of Theodotus that “the only begotten Son is Nous” (Excerpta ex Theodoto

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). In *Gnosis: A Selection of Gnostic Texts* (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1972

), German scholar Werner Foerster quotes Irenaeus as saying: “Basilides presents Nous originating first from the unoriginate Father.” Valentinus, a teacher greatly respected by the Christian congregation in Rome around

a.d.

140

, held similar views, according to Foerster, believing that “in the Prologue to the Gospel of John, the ‘Only-begotten’ takes the place of Nous.”

At the Council of Nicaea (

a.d.

325

), however, and at the later Council of Constantinople (

a.d.

381

) the church proclaimed as official doctrine that Jesus himself was, in the words of the Nicene Creed, “the only begotten Son of God, begotten from the Father before all ages, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, homoousios [‘of one substance’] with the Father.” After the Council of

Constantinople, writes Timothy D. Barnes in *Athanasius and Constantius: Theology and Politics in the Constantinian Empire* (Harvard University Press, 1993

), “the emperor enshrined its decisions in law, and he subjected Christians who did not accept the creed of Nicaea and its watchword *homoousios* to legal disabilities. As has long been recognized, these events marked the transition from one distinctive epoch in the history of the Christian church and the Roman Empire to another.” From that point on, explains Richard E. Rubenstein in *When Jesus Became God: The Struggle to Define Christianity During the Last Days of Rome* (New York: Harcourt,

1999

), the official teaching of the church was that to not accept Jesus as God was to reject God Himself. Through the centuries, this view had enormous and often tragic implications for the relationship between Christians and Jews (and later, Muslims, who regarded Jesus as a divine prophet but not as part of the Godhead), as well as for the non-Christian peoples in the lands later conquered and colonized by European nations. (Publisher’s Note)

[2 See Discourse 70: “I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father except by me” \(John](#)

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[3 John 8:28 \(see Discourse 51\).](#)

[4 “The heavens shall be rolled back, and the earth unfurled before your eyes. The one who has life from the Living One sees neither death nor fear.”—Gospel of Thomas, verse](#)

111

. (Publisher's Note)

Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita (

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) speaks thus about the yoga science: “Even a tiny bit of this real religion protects one from great fear (the colossal sufferings inherent in the repeated cycles of birth and death).”

5 “A human being is part of a whole, called by us the ‘Universe,’ a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings, as something separated from the rest—a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circles of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.”—Albert Einstein

6 From Songs of the Soul by Paramahansa Yogananda (published by Self-Realization Fellowship).

7 “Seemingly eclipsed by My own Yoga-Maya (the delusion born of the triple qualities in Nature), I am unseen by men. The bewildered world knows not Me, the Unborn, the Deathless” (God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita

vii

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“He sees truly who perceives the Supreme Lord present equally in all creatures, the Imperishable amidst the perishing....When a man beholds all separate beings

as existent in the One that has expanded Itself into the many, he then merges with Brahman” (God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita

xiii

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[8 See Discourse 1, commentary on John 1:12: “As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.”](#)

[9 John](#)

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Discourse 16

[1 See Discourse 6.](#)

[2 E.g., Matthew](#)

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[3 In the noncanonical Gospel of the Hebrews, which scholars date to the early second century, Jesus is quoted as referring to the Holy Ghost as “my mother.” The great church father Origen \(c.](#)

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) wrote in his Commentary on John 2:12: “And if any accept the Gospel of the Hebrews, here the Savior says: ‘Even so did my mother, the Holy Spirit, take me by one of my hairs, and carry me to the great Mount Tabor’” (quoted in Gospel Parallels, by Burton H. Throckmorton, Jr.; Nashville: Thomas Nelson,

1992

). (Publisher’s Note)

[4 God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita](#)

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5 “These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God” (Revelation

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6 See Self-Realization Fellowship Lessons.

7 Spell derives from the Old English word spel, “talk.” See “gospels” in glossary.

Discourse 17

1 Sychar (or Shechem), where Jesus’ encounter with the woman of Samaria took place, was located about twenty-five miles north of Jerusalem, at the foot of Mt. Gerizim. Samaria, the district between Judea and Galilee, was home to a people of mixed ancestry. Centuries earlier, when Palestine was conquered by the Assyrians, the Jewish population of that area intermarried with foreigners who were sent to colonize the land, and who adopted some of the Jewish religious beliefs. The Samaritans were the descendants of this cultural medley. Being of mixed race, they were viewed with contempt by most full-blooded Jews.

2 Acts

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3 Caste demarcations developed in India in a higher age of Vedic wisdom as a natural form of social organization that honored and gave place to each individual according to qualifications and the capacity to serve society as a whole. Those whose innate qualities made them fit to be spiritual teachers or clergy were called Brahmins; others, whose nature suited the duties of soldiers and rulers, were called Kshatriyas; those inclined to business were known as Vaishyas; and persons whose chief contribution to society lay in manual labor belonged to the fourth caste, that of Sudras. As the spiritual understanding of humanity declined, caste divisions began to be based not on individual merit but on heredity. Thus evolved the manifold injustices and evil divisiveness that Mahatma Gandhi and other saints of India down the centuries worked tirelessly to abolish. [See God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita, commentary on

ii

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31

.—Publisher's Note]

4 "O Lord, the hope of Israel, all that forsake Thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the Lord, the fountain of living waters" (Jeremiah

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). See also Discourse

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, “out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.”

[5 Jeremiah](#)

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[6 God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita](#)

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Discourse 18

[1 The woman was referring to Mount Gerizim, adjacent to the well at Sychar \(Shechem\) where she met Jesus. Abraham \(Genesis](#)

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) and Jacob (Genesis

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) set up altars at Shechem. Joshua

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recounts how on Gerizim God's blessings were proclaimed on the Israelites, as promised by Moses in Deuteronomy

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. The Samaritans held that Abraham offered up Isaac on Gerizim. Later, the mountain became especially significant to the Samaritans, for when the Jews who returned to their homeland after the Babylonian Exile would not accept the help of the mixed-race Samaritans in the building of the Second Temple of Jerusalem, the Samaritans built their own temple on Mount Gerizim, which—until its destruction in

129

b.c.

—was the center of their worship even as Jerusalem was for the Jews.

[2 “Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he](#)

shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God” (Revelation

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3 Acts

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(quoting Isaiah

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4 In the verses cited in the next Discourse, Jesus showed his willingness to remain with the Samaritans for two days, during which his presence and teaching so uplifted them that they acknowledged him as “Savior of the

world”—not just for one race or religion.

5 God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita

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6 See Discourse 1.

7 “The way to acknowledge and know Him, as taught in the highest Yoga philosophy, is by constantly keeping the attention absorbed in His holy vibration, Aum. If the yogi hears that vibration—through the medium of intuition—and merges his attention in it, and worships it continuously, then he will see beyond doubt that there is a God....All may know Him through the right method of meditation on Aum. Through Aum only can the manifested Spirit be realized” (God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita, commentary on

vii

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8 “At birth all creatures are immersed in delusive ignorance (moha) by the delusion of the pairs of opposites springing from longing and aversion. But righteous men, their sins obliterated, and subject no longer to the oppositional delusions, worship Me steadfastly. Those who seek deliverance from decay and death by clinging to Me know Brahman (the Absolute)” (God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita

vii

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Discourse 19

1 “Meat” is the term used in the King James Bible, the edition used by Paramahansa Yogananda for his New Testament commentary. The word in the original Greek is bromia, which literally means “that which is eaten”; some other versions of the Bible in English translate it simply as “food.”

Regarding the customary diet among Jewish families of Jesus’ time, the book *Jesus and His Times* (Kaari Ward, ed.; Pleasantville, New York: Reader’s Digest Association,

1987

) states: “Most families ate two meals. Breakfasts were likely to be light and were carried to the fields or other places of work and eaten at mid-morning or midday. Suppers, by contrast, were substantial. Vegetables, eggs, cheese, bread, butter, wine, nuts, and fruit might all be served, and perhaps chicken or wild fowl. Fish was a common food, but red meat was a rarity, except on special occasions, when the fattened calf and the sacrificial lamb were presented with fanfare and ritual.” (Publisher’s Note)

2 Matthew 4:4 (see Discourse 8).

3 “As enkindled flame converts firewood into ashes, so does the fire of wisdom consume to ashes all karma. Verily, nothing else in this world is as sanctifying as wisdom” (God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita

iv

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37

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4 “Solitude is necessary to become established in the Self, but masters then return to the world to serve it. Even saints who engage in no outward work bestow, through their thoughts and holy vibrations, more precious benefits on the world than can be given by the most strenuous humanitarian activities of unenlightened men. The great ones, each in his own way and often against bitter opposition, strive selflessly to inspire and uplift their fellows. No Hindu religious or social ideal is merely negative. Ahimsa, ‘non-injury,’ called ‘virtue entire’ (sakalo dharma) in the Mahabharata, is a positive injunction by reason of its conception that one who is not helping others in some way is injuring them.”—Autobiography of a Yogi

Discourse 20

1 Scientific exploration of the body’s underlying energy template is described in footnote 19 in Discourse 6. “Scientists in the Soviet Union have been researching the electromagnetic radiation (called ‘bioplasma’) given off by the human body,” reports Marilyn Ferguson in The Brain Revolution (New York: Bantam,

1973

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“They have charted the effects of different stimuli on that radiation. They found that chemicals, such as adrenaline, had the weakest effect. Massage of

acupuncture points had the next strongest effect, followed by electrical stimulation and exposure to mild laser light. Most powerful of all, as observed by changes in the bioplasma, is human volition. If the subject quietly directs his thought toward a specific part of the body, the bioplasma shows corresponding changes.”

In *Healing Words: The Power of Prayer and the Practice of Medicine*
(HarperSanFrancisco,

1993

), Larry Dossey, M.D., noted author of many books on the relationship of spirituality and medicine, writes of the scientific research that has been done on healing through prayer: “I found an enormous body of evidence: over one hundred experiments exhibiting the criteria of ‘good science,’ many conducted under stringent laboratory conditions, over half of which showed that prayer brings about significant changes in a variety of living beings.”

Researchers Marilyn Schlitz, Ph.D., and William Braud, Ph.D., describe experiments that have proved the efficacy of different forms of “mental intentionality” (including prayer) to affect the growth rate of plants and cell cultures, the healing of wounds and cancerous tumors in animals, and a variety of other living systems. Using these non-human subjects, explain Schlitz and Braud, the distant healing hypothesis has been put to the test by measuring biological changes in a range of target systems “while ruling out suggestion or self-regulation as counter-explanations” (“Distant Intentionality and Healing: Assessing the Evidence,” in *Alternative Therapies*, Vol.

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., No.

6

, November

1997

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“Experiments with people showed that prayer positively affected high blood pressure, wounds, heart attacks, headaches, and anxiety,” Dr. Dossey reports. “Remarkably the effects of prayer did not depend on whether the praying person was in the presence of the organism being prayed for, or whether he or she was far away; healing could take place either on site or at a distance.” (Publisher’s Note)

2 “The infinite potencies of sound derive from the Creative Word, Aum, the cosmic vibratory power behind all atomic energies. Any word spoken with clear realization and deep concentration has a materializing value. Loud or silent repetition of inspiring words has been found effective in Couéism and similar systems of psychotherapy; the secret lies in the stepping-up of the mind’s vibratory rate.”—Autobiography of a Yogi

3 An immense and continuously growing body of scientific research conducted over the past few decades has conclusively corroborated this ancient yogic teaching of “mind over matter.” A whole new field of study and medical treatment has emerged, called psychoneuroimmunology—harnessing the power of mind to enhance the functioning of the body’s immune system to prevent and cure disease—as a few minutes spent in the “health and healing” section of any library or bookstore today will show.

A fascinating and comprehensive survey of scientific and historical material documenting the incredible power of the human mind is presented in *The Future of the Body: Explorations Into the Further Evolution of Human Nature* by Michael Murphy (Los Angeles: Jeremy P. Tarcher,

1992

). “By showing that the central nervous system interacts with and can directly affect the immune system,” writes Murphy, “such demonstrations have confirmed the long-standing belief of many doctors, philosophers, and spiritual teachers that mental images, attitudes, and emotions help determine sickness and well-being.”

In one seven-year study, Dr. Suki Rappaport analyzed twenty-five individuals who had accomplished extraordinary physical transformations—overcoming birth defects, recovering from “incurable” illnesses, regaining function after severely crippling accidents, etc. “All these people told me the same thing,” she

reported. “They all had an image in their minds of who and what they wanted to be. And they literally grew their physical bodies into that imagined form.”

O. Carl Simonton, M.D., noted pioneer in cancer treatment, has stated: “When we look at spontaneous remission [of cancer] or at unexpectedly good responses and try to figure out what happens in common, we find the same spontaneous occurrence of visualizing oneself being well....I have not found any case of spontaneous remission in which the patient did not go through a similar visualizing process.”

In *The Holographic Universe* (New York: HarperCollins,

1991

), Michael Talbot describes psychiatric studies of Multiple Personality Disorder (MPD), a condition “that graphically illustrates the mind’s power to affect the body....Biological changes take place in a multiple’s body when they switch personalities. Frequently a medical condition possessed by one personality will mysteriously vanish when another personality takes over....By changing personalities, a multiple who is drunk can instantly become sober. Different personalities also respond differently to different drugs. Dr. Bennett Braun records a case where

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milligrams of diazepam, a tranquilizer, sedated one personality, while

100

milligrams had little or no effect on another....Speech pathologist Christy Ludlow has found that the voice pattern for each of a multiple’s personalities is different, a feat that requires such a deep physiological change that even the most accomplished actor cannot alter his voice enough to disguise his voice pattern. One multiple, admitted to a hospital for diabetes, baffled her doctors by showing no symptoms while one of her nondiabetic personalities was in control. There are accounts of epilepsy coming and going with changes in personality....

“The systems of control that must be in place to account for such capacities is mind-boggling....What unknown pathways of influence enable the mind of a multiple...to suspend the effects of alcohol and other drugs in the blood, or turn

diabetes on and off? At the moment we don't know and must console ourselves with one simple fact. Once a multiple has undergone therapy and in some way becomes whole again, he or she can still make these switches at will. This suggests that somewhere in our psyches we all have the ability to control these things." (Publisher's Note)

Discourse 21

1 It is not known precisely where this story of the healing at the pool of Bethesda fits into the sequence of events recounted in the other three Gospels, which are silent about the period from Jesus' forty days in the wilderness until the beginning of his preaching the Gospel in Galilee (related in Discourse

22

). St. John's Gospel, the only one in which the Bethesda story is related, merely says that it occurred after the healing of the nobleman's son (Discourse

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) and before the feeding of five thousand with five loaves and two fish (Discourse

42

). (Publisher's Note)

2 The site of the pool of Bethesda was discovered by archaeologists in the nineteenth century. However, historians and Biblical scholars have not been able to ascertain the nature of its healing benefits, since the only extant records are in this passage in the Gospel According to St. John. (Publisher's Note)

3 All four Gospels record that throughout his public ministry Jesus encountered opposition from some elements of the Jewish community. Especially singled out in various passages are persons among "the chief priests," "the Pharisees," "the

Sadducees,” and “scribes” or “doctors of the law” (“lawyers”). It is only in the Gospel According to St. John that Jesus’ antagonists are referred to collectively as “the Jews.” Many historians, pointing out that Jesus and his disciples were themselves born into the Jewish tradition, maintain that pejorative references to “the Jews” entered the accounts of Jesus’ life decades after the fact, reflecting the growing dissension faced by Christian communities at the time the Gospels were put into writing. As is clear from Paramahansa Yogananda’s commentaries, the real import of such passages refers to ignorant and malevolent opposers of the spiritual truths preached by Jesus, irrespective of their social or religious status. (Publisher’s Note)

4 Speaking through Sri Krishna of the ceaseless work of divine activity, the Lord says: “If I did not perform actions, these universes would be annihilated” (God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita

iii

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). From the commentary: “God, as the Creator of universes, works immanently as the Universal Intelligence in matter and in human consciousness for the purpose of maintaining order while working out His cosmic plan. He says, ‘If I, the Father of all, did not act in creation, all universes would explode and vanish. My cosmic consciousness keeps the floating islands of planets swimming rhythmically in the cosmic sea. It is My intelligence as Kutastha Chaitanya that consciously holds all atoms together and keeps them working in coordination.’ ...

“If God removed His cohesive Intelligence, all universes and beings would disappear from objectivity, just as the scenes and actors vanish from a screen when the light running through a film is shut off.”

5 See Discourse 45.

6 The Hindu scriptures resolve the apparent contradiction in the transcendent-immanently active aspects of God in the concept of the Deity as Ishvara (from Sanskrit root ish, to rule):

“The Absolute united to Its Creative Intelligence, Maha-Prakriti (Holy Ghost), becomes Ishvara, the Cosmic Ruler, God the Father of Creation, the Causal Universal Dreamer by whose divine will universes evolve and dissolve in orderly cycles. Ishvara is thus both transcendent and immanent—beyond vibratory manifestation and active through Maha-Prakriti in bringing forth the primordial causal forms of all becomings” (God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita, commentary on

iv

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The transcendence of Ishvara beyond vibratory manifestation obtains also in its immaculate reflection as the Kutastha Chaitanya/Universal Christ-Krishna Intelligence that is omnipresent in creation yet is perdurably immutable midst Maha-Prakriti’s vibratory mutations of maya. (See also Discourse 5.)

[7 See “astral body” and “causal body” in glossary.](#)

[8 Revelation](#)

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[9 The scriptures of India refer to these universal governing principles as dharma: duty, eternal laws of righteousness. In his commentary on the Bhagavad Gita, God Talks With Arjuna, Paramahansa Yogananda wrote:](#)

“Dharma, from the Sanskrit root dhri, ‘to uphold or support’—often translated simply as religion or righteousness—is a comprehensive term for the natural laws and eternal verities that uphold the divine order of the universe and of man,

a miniature universe. Sankhya philosophy thus defines true religion as ‘those immutable principles that protect man permanently from the threefold suffering of disease, unhappiness, and ignorance.’ India’s vast body of Vedic teachings are amassed under the umbrella-term Sanatana Dharma, ‘Eternal Religion.’”

“The universe exists because it is held together by the will of God manifesting as the immutable cosmic principles of creation. Therefore He is the real Dharma. Without God no creature can exist. The highest dharma or duty of every human being is to find out, by realization, that he is sustained by God.

“Dharma, therefore, is the cosmic law that runs the mechanism of the universe; and after accomplishing the primary God-uniting yoga-dharma (religious duties), man should perform secondarily his duties to the cosmic laws of nature....

“Man should perform virtuous dharma, for by obedience to righteous duty he can free himself from the law of cause and effect governing all actions. He should avoid irreligion (adharma) which takes him away from God, and follow religion (Sanatana Dharma), by which he finds Him. Man should observe the religious duties (yoga-dharma) enjoined in the true scriptures of the world. Codes for all aspects of human conduct, as given in the laws of Manu, are also considered dharmas or duties for the guidance of man.”

[10 The traditional Christian belief that the Resurrection on the last day will be heralded by the angel Gabriel blowing his trumpet is not specifically mentioned in the Bible. In various New Testament passages, the Resurrection is said to be heralded by an \(unnamed\) angel sounding a celestial trumpet or by the voice of Christ \(as in the verses explained in this Discourse\), or both. For example, in Matthew](#)

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, speaking of “the end of the world,” Jesus says: “He shall send His angels with a

great sound of a trumpet....” Saint Paul wrote that at the time of the Resurrection “the trumpet shall sound” (

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Corinthians

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), and also of the Lord’s coming “with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God...” (

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Thessalonians

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). See also footnote 15 in this Discourse.

[11 As explained earlier in this Discourse, man need not wait for death to be uplifted by the “voice” of Cosmic Vibration of Aum or Amen \(Holy Ghost\): Through scientific techniques of meditation he may commune with the Holy Ghost vibration of Aum or Amen, experiencing the celestial consciousness spoken of by Saint John in the Book of Revelation:](#)

“I was in the Spirit (spiritual consciousness) on the Lord’s day (the day of contacting the divine realms of truth) and heard behind me (in the subtle center of spiritual consciousness in the medulla oblongata, ‘behind’ or in the back of

the head) a great voice, as of a trumpet (the great, blissful sound of Aum)....

“After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, ‘Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter’”

(Revelation

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[12 Revelation](#)

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[13 The Confessions of Saint Augustine, Book One.](#)

[14 Though current scientific theory does not include the idea of past-life tendencies being conveyed via a soul's astral body into a new physical body at the time of reincarnation, scientists admit that they do not fully comprehend the mechanism by which specific physical, psychological, and emotional traits are inborn in each unique human being. The current understanding is that the dna molecule, discovered in](#)

1953

, encodes in every cell of every living creature the entire genetic material for the creation of a physical body, as well as blending the characteristic genetic traits of both parents into a new combination when they conceive a child. “This, however, is not free from difficulties,” writes systems theorist Ervin Laszlo in *The Whispering Pond: A Personal Guide to the Emerging Vision of Science* (Boston: Element Books,

1999

). He reports that Nobel-winning biologist François Jacob says that the development of embryos is in fact very little understood, and that much of it is, in Jacob’s words, “a complete mystery.”

Lynne McTaggart elaborates in *The Field: The Quest for the Secret Force of the Universe* (New York: HarperCollins,

2002

): “The modern scientific view is that dna somehow manages to build the body and spearhead all its dynamic activities just by selectively turning off and on certain segments, or genes, whose nucleotides, or genetic instructions, select certain rna molecules, which in turn select from a large alphabet of amino acids the genetic ‘words’ which create specific proteins. These proteins supposedly are able to both build the body and to switch on and off all the chemical processes inside the cell which ultimately control the running of the body.” Where this explanation leaves a gap, McTaggart reports, “is in explaining exactly how dna knows when to orchestrate this....

“When a fertilized egg starts to multiply and produce daughter cells, each begins adopting a structure and function according to its eventual role in the body. Although every daughter contains the same chromosomes with the same genetic information, certain types of cells immediately ‘know’ to use different genetic information to behave differently from others....Furthermore, somehow these genes know how many of each type of cell must be produced in the right place. ...At the moment, scientists shrug their shoulders as to how this might all be accomplished, particularly at such a rapid pace.”

Laszlo continues: “For example, while the molecular anatomy of a human hand

is understood in some detail, almost nothing is known about how the human organism instructs itself to build a hand. It appears that the organism can both build, and to some extent rebuild, its damaged parts with great precision. For example, when a finger of the human hand is amputated above the first joint and the wound is not sealed surgically with skin, the tip of the finger can be regenerated. Astonishingly enough, the regrown fingertip is complete down to the finest detail, reproducing even the individual's unique fingerprints."

Fingerprints, known to biologists and criminologists alike as mathematically unique to one individual, are apparently not produced by genetic instructions from dna, since it has been thoroughly documented that even identical twins—who share the exact same dna—have different fingerprints. What this suggests, according to scientists like Harold S. Burr, is that the growth and maintenance of the body depends on some organizing template of subtle intelligent energy that possesses characteristics unique to each individual and that guides the development and functioning of each physical body. (See footnote 19 in Discourse 6) (Publisher's Note)

15 "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, 'Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?' The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ"

(I Corinthians

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Saint Paul thus describes the “trumpet” of Cosmic Vibration, which resurrects man’s consciousness at the end of each earthly incarnation from mortal confinement to the greater freedom after death. Ultimately, “at the last trumpet,” the soul is raised to liberation in God through the Christ Consciousness inherent in the Holy Ghost Vibration, “the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ,” after repeated incarnations of spiritual advancement have destroyed all “corruption,” mortal consciousness and desires, and their resultant karma. Then “death is swallowed up in victory,” the karma-compelled cycles of birth and death are over for that soul.

[16 Cf. John](#)

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(Discourse

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): “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, He gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.”

[17 Reference to John](#)

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, when the priests sent a delegation to John the Baptist to find out if he were the Messiah. (See Discourse 6.)

18 “For he wrote of me”: Among the passages from the Biblical books ascribed to Moses taken by some commentators as prophesying the coming of Christ are: Genesis

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(the seed of Abraham in whom all the nations of the earth would be blessed); Genesis

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(“the sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh [‘the Peaceful’] come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be”); Deuteronomy

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(the coming prophet who would be like Moses himself, and to whom the people of Israel should hearken).

Discourse 22

[1 Jesus had been in Jerusalem for the Passover \(Discourse](#)

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), after which he taught Nicodemus in Jerusalem (Discourses

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) and then spent time in the Judean countryside where many persons were baptized by his disciples (Discourse

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). When John the Baptist was imprisoned by Herod Antipas in Machaerus, a fortress on the shore of the Dead Sea east of Judea, Jesus departed Judea for Galilee, passing through Samaria (Discourses

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). Reaching Galilee, he healed the son of the nobleman of Capernaum (Discourse

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). The verses in this Discourse

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continue the narrative of events after Jesus' return to Galilee. (Publisher's Note)

[2 Cf. Isaiah](#)

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, one of the oft-cited Old Testament prophecies about the coming of Christ:

“The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali...by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations.

“The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. Thou hast multiplied the nation, and not increased the joy: they joy before Thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. For Thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor....

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

“Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever.”

Zabulon and Nephthalim were sons of Jacob after whom two of the twelve tribes of Israel were named. The city of Capernaum, where Jesus dwelt during most of his ministry, was between the lands anciently belonging to these two tribes, on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee.

[3 Various passages in the Gospels cite the “fulfillment of the scriptures” by events in the life of Jesus. Among these are divine predictions made through the prophets’ intuitive foreknowledge about the coming Messiah, such as are](#)

discussed here and in other Discourses. However, the Greek word used for “fulfill” in the original text (pleroo) has a range of connotations. Thus scholars propose that the Gospel writers cited some Old Testament passages as being “fulfilled” not as prophecy, but simply that the principle, truth, or figure of speech it voiced is a parallel—or otherwise also applicable—to present circumstances. Historians point out that early Christians saw Jesus’ entire life as a “fulfillment of the scriptures”—the consummation of the Law and historical destiny revealed in the sacred writings; thus it was important to the Gospel authors to provide the community of believers with links between events that actually occurred in the life of Jesus and familiar passages from the holy texts. (Publisher’s Note)

4 Later, when preaching in the synagogue at Nazareth, Jesus read aloud from the Book of Isaiah other prophecies that were fulfilled in the unfolding of his divine dispensation. (See Discourse 39.)

5 See commentaries on Bhagavad Gita

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in God Talks With Arjuna.

6 The Bhagavad Gita says: “That which is night to all creatures is (luminous) wakefulness to the man of self-mastery. And what is wakefulness to ordinary men, that is night to the divinely perceptive sage.” The meaning is: “While creatures slumber in delusion’s gloom, the X-ray eyes of the seer are open to wisdom’s light. The power of maya that keeps all beings engrossed in the wakefulness of attachment to material objects induces in saints only the slumber of nonattachment” (God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita

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7 The English verb “repent” derives from the Latin paenitere, “to be sorry.” The deeper meaning of Jesus’ usage as the reversal of mind from matter to Spirit may be found in the fact that in the New Testament, repent is used to translate the original Greek metanoein, meaning “to turn one’s mind in the opposite direction; to change one’s mind (by adopting an opposite view)”: from meta, “to change, or to be in opposition to”; and nous, “mind.”

8 Further commentary on Jesus’ teaching of repentance will be found in Discourse

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9 “While two of the New Testament gospels use the word ‘gospel’ (it is missing in Luke and John), they use it to indicate not the written works themselves, but rather the message preached either by Jesus (in Matthew) or about him (in Mark). Not until the middle of the second century are documents about the words and deeds of Jesus called gospels.”—Robert J. Miller, ed., The Complete Gospels: Annotated Scholars Version (HarperSanFrancisco,

1994

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“The English word gospel is a descendant of the Anglo-Saxon word godspel or good news. Godspel was an accurate equivalent of the original Greek word euangelion, literally a good message or good tidings. And the oldest surviving Greek manuscript copies of the four canonical gospels bear only the headings According to Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John (the four books together comprise the whole of the single gospel; and the word canonical derives from the Greek kanon or measuring rod and indicates, in this case, those few gospels that were approved as holy scripture by the orthodox church of the late second century).”—Reynolds Price, *Three Gospels* (New York: Simon and Schuster,

1997

). (Publisher’s Note)

[10 See yoga in glossary. Among the world’s spiritual teachings, yoga offers the most precise and scientific descriptions and psychophysiological techniques pertaining to the ascent of the soul to God. However, the same basic experiences of ascension, presented in less specific terminology or cloaked in metaphor, are to be found in the experiences and writings of God-realized saints of every religion.](#)

Evelyn Underhill, in *Mysticism* (Part

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, Chapter

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), wrote: “It is one of the many indirect testimonies to the objective reality of mysticism that the stages of this road, the psychology of the spiritual ascent, as described to us by different schools of contemplatives, always present practically the same sequence of states. The ‘school for saints’ has never found it necessary to bring its curriculum up to date.

“The psychologist finds little difficulty, for instance, in reconciling the ‘Degrees of Orison’ described by St. Teresa—Recollection, Quiet, Union, Ecstasy, Rapt, the ‘Pain of God,’ and the Spiritual Marriage of the soul—with the four forms of

contemplation enumerated by Hugh of St. Victor, or the Sufi's 'Seven Stages' of the soul's ascent to God, which begin in adoration and end in spiritual marriage. Though each wayfarer may choose different landmarks, it is clear from their comparison that the road is one."

Discourse 23

[1 Another name for the Sea of Galilee.](#)

[2 See also parallel reference in Matthew](#)

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[3 Simon, Andrew, and John had met Jesus earlier and recognized him as the Messiah. \(See Discourse 9.\)](#)

[4 "Whosoever shall impart to My devotees the supreme secret knowledge, with utmost devotion to Me, shall without doubt come unto Me. Not any among men performs more priceless service to Me than he; in all the world there shall be none dearer to Me" \(God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita](#)

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[5 Cf. parallel references in Matthew](#)

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and Luke

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A first-century synagogue that most scholars believe to be “almost certainly” the one in which Jesus preached, as described in this verse, was discovered by archaeological excavation in Capernaum in the

1960

s, according to Jeffrey L. Sheler in *Is the Bible True?* (New York: HarperCollins,

1999). This synagogue was the scene of at least one divine healing by Jesus, as told in Luke 4:33 – 37 (see Discourse 24). Sheler also reports that additional excavation in Capernaum, at the site of a Byzantine church dating from about

a.d.

400

, uncovered a deeper stratum of evidence that indicated the building had originally been a house built about sixty years before Jesus' birth and renovated a few decades after his passing. Some researchers believe this to have been the family residence of the Apostle Peter—where Jesus was known to have spent time during the early part of his ministry—since the walls of the ancient structure found under the Byzantine church had extensive early Christian graffiti, “including at least two references to Peter,” and since reports from pilgrims visiting Capernaum in the fourth century mention visiting Peter's house, “which they said had been turned into a church.” (Publisher's Note)

Discourse 24

[1 Cf. parallel reference in Mark](#)

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[2 Luke 8:26 – 33 \(see Discourse 38\).](#)

[3 Matthew 15:21 – 24 \(see Discourse 44\).](#)

[4 One of the fathers of modern psychology, Professor William James of Harvard, wrote: “The refusal of modern ‘enlightenment’ to treat ‘possession’ as an hypothesis to be spoken of as even possible, in spite of the massive human tradition based on concrete evidence in its favor, has always seemed to me a curious example of the power of fashion in things scientific. That the demon-theory will again have its innings is to my mind absolutely certain. One has to be ‘scientific’ indeed to be blind and ignorant enough to suspect no such possibility.”](#)

The respected Benedictine monk and author Father Bede Griffiths of Shantivanam Ashram in south India compared the asuras mentioned in Hindu scriptures to the demons and evil spirits mentioned in the Christian Bible. He wrote in *The Marriage of East and West* (London: Collins,

1982

): “It cannot be too strongly affirmed that these are real powers which act on the unconscious...that is, on the lower levels of consciousness, bringing man into subjection to the powers of nature. The fact that modern man does not recognize them is one of the many signs that he is under their power; only when they are recognized can they be overcome.” (Publisher’s Note)

[5 “In my Father’s house are many mansions” \(John](#)

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[6 Cf. commentary on Bhagavad Gita](#)

xvii

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, God Talks With Arjuna.

7 In yogic terms, the Bhagavad Gita explains the good and evil forces in man as a war between two contending armies, one led by the powers of the divine discrimination of the soul and the other by the materialistic mind and its baser instincts of the delusion-influenced senses. These contending powers in man are energized either by the spiritualized Godward forces in the astral centers of life and consciousness in the spine, brain, and spiritual eye; or contrarily in matterward energies drawn toward expression in the debased inclinations of the senses and their allied cohorts of evil behavior in egotism, fear, desires, anger, greed, attachment, pride, habits, temptations. The full yoga science of the battle endemic in man's consciousness between good and evil (God and Satan)—and how practice of that science bestows soul-liberating victory over these universal psychological enemies—is described in Paramahansa Yogananda's detailed commentary on Chapter

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, verses

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in God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita. (Publisher's Note)

8 Cf. parallel references in Matthew

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and Mark

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[9 Luke](#)

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and Mark

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[10 See Discourse 8, “In highest samadhi, ‘the devil’ of delusive dualities departs from man’s consciousness.”](#)

Discourse 25

1 “Through meditation...you can set the stage for important mind- and habit-altering brain change,” concluded Herbert Benson, M.D., Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School, after extensive research reported in his book, *Your Maximum Mind* (New York: Random House,

1987

). “Over the years,” he writes, “you develop ‘circuits’ and ‘channels’ of thought in your brain. These are physical pathways which control the way you think, the way you act, and often, the way you feel. Many times, these pathways or habits become so fixed that they turn into what I call ‘wiring.’ In other words, the circuits or channels become so deeply ingrained that it seems almost impossible to transform them.”

However, advances in medical technology have enabled scientists for the first time to measure the profound effects of meditation on neuroplasticity—the mind’s ability to alter the electrical patterns by which habits and deeply rooted behavioral tendencies are stored in the brain. An article in *The Wall Street Journal* (January

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2003

) by its science writer Sharon Begley discussed new evidence that “alterations in brain wiring...could be induced by meditation.” She reported research conducted by neuroscientist Dr. Richard Davidson at the University of Wisconsin, which focused on various forms of Buddhist meditation: “After eight weeks, and again

16

weeks later, EEG measurements showed that activity in the frontal cortices of the meditators had shifted: There were now more neuronal firings in left than right regions nestled just behind the forehead. That pattern is associated with positive feelings such as joy, happiness and low levels of anxiety, Professor Davidson and others had found in earlier studies.”

Dr. Davidson is quoted in the article as saying: “The idea that our brains are the result of the unfolding of a fixed genetic program is just shattered by the data on neuroplasticity.”

“Scientific research has shown that electrical activity between the left and right sides of the brain becomes coordinated during certain kinds of meditation or prayer,” Dr. Benson writes. “Through these processes, the mind definitely becomes more capable of being altered and having its capacities maximized.... When you are in this state of enhanced left-right hemispheric communication... ‘plasticity of cognition’ occurs.... If you focus or concentrate on some sort of written passage which represents the direction in which you wish your life to be heading, [this] more directed thought process will help you to rewire the circuits in your brain in more positive directions.... When we change our patterns of thinking and acting, the brain cells begin to establish additional connections, or new ‘wirings.’ These new connections then communicate in fresh ways with other cells, and before long, the pathways or wirings that kept the phobia or other habit alive are replaced or altered.... Changed actions and a changed life will follow. The implications are exciting and even staggering.” (Publisher’s Note)

[2 The biological potency of specific wave-patterns of vibratory energy on bodily cells was “decisively demonstrated” by Jacques Benveniste, M.D., research director of France’s National Institute for Health and Medical Research, according to journalist Lynne McTaggart in The Field: The Quest for the Secret Force of the Universe \(New York: HarperCollins,](#)

2002

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“Both specific molecules and intermolecular bonds emit certain specific frequencies which can be detected billions of light-years away, through the most sensitive of modern telescopes,” McTaggart reports. “These frequencies have long been accepted by physicists.... Benveniste’s contribution was to show that molecules and atoms had their own unique frequencies by using modern technology both to record this frequency and to use the recording itself for cellular communication....

“Over thousands of experiments, Benveniste and Guillonet recorded the activity

of the molecule on a computer and replayed it to a biological system ordinarily sensitive to that substance. In every instance, the biological system has been fooled into thinking it has been interacting with the substance itself and acted accordingly, initiating the biological chain reaction, just as it would if in the actual presence of the genuine molecule....

“In perhaps the most dramatic of his experiments, Benveniste showed that the signal could be sent across the world by email or mailed on a floppy disk. Colleagues of his at Northwestern University in Chicago recorded signals from ovalbumin (Ova), acetylcholine (Ach), dextran, and water” and sent them on computer disk or by email to Benveniste’s laboratory in Paris. There, the researchers “exposed ordinary water to the signals of this digital Ova or Ach or ordinary water and infused either the exposed water or the ordinary water to isolated guinea pig hearts. All the digitized water produced highly significant changes in coronary flow....The effects from the digitized water were identical to effects produced on the heart by the actual substances themselves.”
(Publisher’s Note)

[3 The Energization Exercises, which are fully explained in the Lessons, utilize a method I discovered in](#)

1916

of drawing cosmic energy into the body and directing it, by conscious will, to recharge the various parts of the body.

[4 A method of healing through a yoga technique that employs the principles of thought and energy transmission through the ether is practiced daily by members of the Self-Realization Fellowship Prayer Council originated by Paramahansa Yogananda. The Council is composed of monks and nuns at SRF ashram centers who pray for all who request help and for world peace. This method, which can be used effectively by any sincere devotee to invoke God’s healing help in alleviating the physical, mental, or spiritual afflictions of others, is also regularly practiced by the thousands of members of the Self-Realization Fellowship Worldwide Prayer Circle. A booklet describing the Worldwide Prayer Circle and the healing technique is available from Self-Realization Fellowship. Requests for prayers are always welcome.](#)

[5 Matthew](#)

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[6 Cf. parallel reference in Luke](#)

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[7 Cf. additional parallel reference in Luke](#)

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[8 See explanation of Matthew 15:21 – 24 \(Mark 7:24 – 26\), Discourse 44.](#)

Discourse 26

[1 Discourses](#)

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cover the teachings Jesus gave to his disciples in the “Sermon on the Mount” recorded in the Gospel According to St. Matthew, chapters

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. Much of this counsel is also presented in the Gospel of St. Luke—either in the “Sermon on the Plain” (Luke

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, which contains about a quarter of the material cited by Matthew in the Sermon on the Mount), or in other contexts. Because Matthew and Luke record these teachings in identical or nearly identical words, the Sermon on the Mount and parallel passages from the Sermon on the Plain are treated together in the commentary in this series of Discourses. (Publisher’s Note)

2 “Beatify” is derived from Latin beatus, happy + facere, to make. The word used for “blessed are...” in the original Greek of the Gospels is makarios, which in Latin is beati, from which comes the English beatitude, state of blessedness or utmost bliss.

3 “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance...” (John 14:26; see Discourse 70).

4 “But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace” (Psalms

37

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11

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5 Exodus

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6 God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita

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[7 See Chapter](#)

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, Sutras

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in The Holy Science by Swami Sri Yukteswar (published by Self-Realization Fellowship).

[8 “The man of self-control, roaming among material objects with subjugated senses, and devoid of attraction and repulsion, attains an unshakable inner calmness” \(God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita](#)

ii

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64

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[9 God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita](#)

xii

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[10 See Discourse 10.](#)

[11 “Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out” \(Revelation](#)

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[12 Bhagavad Gita](#)

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. See God Talks With Arjuna for extensive commentary.

[13 Cf. parallel reference in Luke](#)

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(Discourse

28

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Discourse 27

1 “Jot” in the original Greek is iota, the ninth and smallest letter in the Greek alphabet. “Tittle” is used to translate the Greek kerea, indicating the serif (a short extended line) on Hebrew letters.

2 Matthew 24:35 (see Discourse 67).

3 “For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John 1:17; see Discourse 1).

4 Address to Harvard Divinity School, 1838.

5 See Exodus

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6 In Autobiography of a Yogi I recorded the following discussion I had with my Guru about Patanjali’s Yoga Sutras

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: “In the presence of a man perfected in ahimsa (nonviolence), enmity [in any creature] does not arise.” Sri Yukteswar said:

“By ahimsa Patanjali meant removal of the desire to kill....This world is inconveniently arranged for a literal practice of ahimsa. Man may be compelled to exterminate harmful creatures. He is not under a similar compulsion to feel anger or animosity. All forms of life have an equal right to the air of maya. The saint who uncovers the secret of creation will be in harmony with Nature’s countless bewildering expressions. All men may understand this truth by overcoming the passion for destruction.”

I then asked: “Guruji, should one offer himself a sacrifice rather than kill a wild beast?”

“No, man’s body is precious. It has the highest evolutionary value because of unique brain and spinal centers. These enable the advanced devotee fully to grasp and express the loftiest aspects of divinity. No lower form is so equipped. It is true that a man incurs the debt of a minor sin if he is forced to kill an animal or any other living thing. But the holy shastras teach that wanton loss of a human body is a serious transgression against the karmic law.”

[7 Raca: a derogatory term in Aramaic \(literally, “I spit on you”\) conveying extreme contempt.](#)

[8 Original Greek moros, “moron”; English “idiot” or “fool.”](#)

[9 See also Discourse 48 and Discourse 68. The concept of eternal damnation in hellfire, as in orthodox interpretations, is not supported in this verse or elsewhere in the New Testament. The word used for “hell” in the original Greek of the Gospel is Gehenna, from Hebrew Ge Hinnom, the valley of Hinnom southwest of Jerusalem, where children were formerly burned as living sacrifices to the Ammonite god Moloch \(II Chronicles](#)

; Jeremiah

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). In Jesus' time, according to Biblical historians, the valley was used as a dump for the filth of the city, where continual fires were kept to consume it—"a place," according to commentator John Gill, "whose fire was never quenched; and in which they burned the bones of any thing that was unclean, and dead carcasses, and other pollutions." The name was thus commonly used by the Jews to denote the after-death realm of punishment. Encyclopaedia Britannica states about Gehenna: "Mentioned several times in the New Testament (e.g., Matthew, Mark, Luke, and James) as a place in which fire will destroy the wicked, it also is noted in the Talmud, a compendium of Jewish law, lore, and commentary, as a place of purification, after which one is released from further torture."

[10 Cf. Mark](#)

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26

, Discourse

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[11 The latter part of the above verses is paralleled in Luke](#)

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59

, and is commented on in that context in Discourse

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[12 Jesus repeats this guidance in much the same words in Matthew](#)

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. His counsel in that context, as well as in Mark

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43

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48

(where he again uses this metaphor), is commented on in Discourse

48

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[13 See Discourse 7.](#)

[14 Cf. Matthew](#)

19

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9

and Luke

16

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18

, Discourse

62

, for further commentary on Jesus' teaching about marriage and divorce.

[15 Exodus](#)

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, Leviticus

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, Deuteronomy

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[16 Deuteronomy](#)

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[17 “A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger”](#)
[\(Proverbs](#)

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[18 “I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;](#)

I fled Him, down the arches of the years;
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind; and in the mist of tears
I hid from Him, and under running laughter.
Up vistaed hopes I sped;
And shot, precipitated,
Adown Titanic glooms of chasmèd fears,
From those strong Feet that followed, followed after.
But with unhurrying chase,
And unperturbèd pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
They beat—and a Voice beat
More instant than the Feet
‘All things betray thee, who betrayest Me....’”

—from “The Hound of Heaven,” by Francis Thompson

Paramahansa Yogananda often quoted from this well-loved poem; a recording of his reading of it is available from Self-Realization Fellowship. (Publisher’s Note)

[19 God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita](#)

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Discourse 28

1 “The good or sattvic gift is one made for the sake of righteousness, without expectation of anything in return, and is bestowed in proper time and place on a deserving person. That gift is deemed rajasic [fostering worldly consciousness] which is offered with reluctance or in the thought of receiving a return or of gaining merit. A tamasic [degrading] gift is one bestowed at a wrong time and place, on an unworthy person, contemptuously or without goodwill” (God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita

xvii

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2 The science of Kriya Yoga includes these techniques, which are taught in the Self-Realization Fellowship Lessons.

3 Lord Krishna referred to the requisite interiorization of consciousness in these words: “When the yogi, like a tortoise withdrawing its limbs, can fully retire his senses from the objects of perception, his wisdom manifests steadiness” (God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita

Those who find the way to actual perception of the Divine know its universality—whether they call it yoga or use some other terminology. The illumined Saint Teresa of Avila used the identical metaphor to teach her nuns the way to enter the “interior castle” to commune with Christ: “When we are seeking God within ourselves (where He is found more effectively and more profitably than in the creatures, to quote Saint Augustine, who after having sought Him in many places, found Him within) it is a great help if God grants us this favour [conscious interiorization]. Do not suppose that the understanding can attain to Him, merely by trying to think of Him as within the soul, or the imagination, by picturing Him as there. This is a good habit and an excellent kind of meditation, for it is founded upon a truth—namely, that God is within us. But it is not the kind of prayer that I have in mind....What I am describing is quite different. These people are sometimes in the castle before they have begun to think about God at all....They become markedly conscious that they are gradually retiring within themselves; anyone who experiences this will discover what I mean: I cannot explain it better. I think I have read that they are like a hedgehog or a tortoise withdrawing into itself; and whoever wrote that must have understood it well.”—Saint Teresa of Avila, *The Interior Castle*, trans. E. Allison Peers (Garden City, New York: Image Books,

1961

), Chapter

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[4 “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain” \(Exodus](#)

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[5 I Thessalonians](#)

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[6 God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita](#)

ix

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34

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[7 The Lord's Prayer as given in the Gospel According to St. Luke \(and its parallel in Matthew\) is commented on in Discourse](#)

54

. Paramahansa Yogananda there offers a further insightful commentary in which he plumbs the esoteric depths of this universal prayer for the realization of the soul's relationship with God. (Publisher's Note)

[8 Paramahansaji wrote, additionally, a variant rendering for his book of answered prayers and inspirations, Whispers from Eternity, published by Self-Realization Fellowship.](#)

[9 See Discourse 8.](#)

[10 Genesis](#)

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[11 See also parallel verses in Mark 11:25 – 26 in Discourse 35.](#)

[12 “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves...for it is written, ‘Vengeance is Mine; I will repay,’ saith the Lord” \(Romans](#)

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[13 See Discourse 8.](#)

[14 God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita](#)

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[15 See commentary on Saint Luke’s version of these verses \(Luke](#)

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34

), Discourse

56

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[16 This verse parallels Matthew](#)

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15

and is commented on in Discourse

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[17 See Discourse 3, Discourse 6, and Discourse 10.](#)

Discourse 29

[1 “Gentiles”: in this context, heathens, pagans, worldly persons. Cf. Luke](#)

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: “For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.”

[2 These words of Jesus are also recorded in the Gospel According to St. Luke](#)

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31

and are commented on in that context in Discourse

56

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[3 Mammon is an Aramaic word meaning “wealth.”](#)

[4 God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita](#)

ix

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22

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[5 Jesus’ ideals of inner and outer renunciation are discussed in Discourse](#)

49

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[6 God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita](#)

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[7 Luke 17:21 \(see Discourse 61\).](#)

[8 “He who perceives Me everywhere and beholds everything in Me never loses sight of Me, nor do I ever lose sight of him” \(God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita](#)

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Discourse 30

1 Verses

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also appear in Luke

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42

in a slightly different context; they are discussed in that context in Discourse

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[2 John 8:7 \(see Discourse 35\).](#)

[3 Swami Ram Tirtha \(](#)

1873

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1906

), well-known lecturer and poet. A musical arrangement of his poem “Marching Light” was included by Paramahansa Yogananda in his Cosmic Chants (published by Self-Realization Fellowship).

4 “Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:3). See Discourse 47.

5 See later in this Discourse: “Beware of false prophets....”

6 God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita

xviii

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67

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7 This “Golden Rule” is basic to the spiritual teachings of the world’s religions:

From the Hindu scripture Mahabharata (Anusasana Parva

113

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): “One should not behave towards others in a way which is disagreeable to oneself. This is the essence of morality. All other activities are due to selfish desire.”

From the Analects of Confucius (

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): “Tsekung asked, ‘Is there one word that can serve as a principle of conduct for life?’ Confucius replied, ‘It is the word shu—reciprocity. Do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire.’”

From the Jewish Talmud (Shabbat

31

a): “What is hateful to you, do not to your fellow men. That is the entire Law; all the rest is commentary.”

From the Buddhist text Tripitaka Udana-varga

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: “Hurt not others in ways that you would find hurtful.”

And from the sayings of Prophet Mohammed (Forty Hadith of an-Nawawi):
“Not one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother what he desires for himself.” (Publisher’s Note)

[8 Cf. parallel reference in Luke](#)

13

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24

, Discourse

57

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[9 See Discourse 6.](#)

[10 “Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God \(inner paradise of divine perception\)....Thou wast upon the holy mountain of God \(the pinnacle of transcendent consciousness, in the highest spiritual center in the brain\); thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire \(the spinal chakras or](#)

[astral dynamos of life force\). Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.](#)

“By the multitude of thy merchandise (the commerce of the senses with the material world) they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee from the midst of the stones of fire” (Ezekiel

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[11 In the Bhagavad Gita, the Lord voices a similar admonition: “Men, devotion-filled, who ceaselessly practice My precepts, without fault-finding, they too become free from all karma. But those who denounce this teaching of Mine and do not live according to it, wholly deluded in regard to true wisdom, know them, devoid of understanding, to be doomed” \(God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita](#)

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[12 “He who ignores the scriptural commands and who follows his own foolish desires does not find happiness or perfection or the Infinite Goal. Therefore, take](#)

[the scriptures as your guide in determining what should be done and what should be avoided. With intuitive understanding of the injunctions declared in holy writ, be pleased to perform thy duties here” \(God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita](#)

xvi

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[13 “The relativities of existence \(birth and death, pleasure and pain\) have been overcome, even here in this world, by those of fixed equal-mindedness. Thereby are they enthroned in Spirit—verily, the taintless, the perfectly balanced Spirit.](#)

“The knower of Spirit, abiding in the Supreme Being, with unswerving discrimination, free from delusion, is thus neither jubilant at pleasant experiences nor downcast by unpleasant experiences.

“Unattracted to the sensory world, the yogi experiences the ever new joy inherent in the Self. Engaged in divine union of the soul with Spirit, he attains bliss indestructible....

“Only that yogi who possesses the inner Bliss, who rests on the inner Foundation, who is one with the inner Light, becomes one with Spirit (after attaining freedom from karma connected with the physical, astral, and ideational bodies). He attains complete liberation in Spirit (even while living in the body)” (God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita

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Discourse 31

[1 Cf. parallel references in Matthew](#)

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and Luke

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2 Cf. parallel references in Matthew

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and Luke

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3 Cf. additional parallel reference in Luke

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4 Luke

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records that “there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judea, and Jerusalem.”

[5 Cf. additional parallel reference in Luke](#)

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21

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[6 Levi was also known as Matthew. Cf. parallel references in Matthew](#)

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and Luke

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[7 “In Judea, under the Roman system, all circumstances combined to make the publican the object of bitter hatred. He represented and exercised in immediate](#)

contact, at a sore spot with individuals, the hated power of Rome. The tax itself was looked upon as an inherent religious wrong, as well as civil imposition, and by many the payment of it was considered a sinful act of disloyalty to God. The tax-gatherer, if a Jew, was a renegade in the eyes of his patriotic fellows. He paid a fixed sum for the taxes, and received for himself what he could over and above that amount. The ancient and widespread curse of arbitrariness was in the system. The tariff rates were vague and indefinite. The collector was thus always under the suspicion of being an extortioner.”—International Standard Bible Encyclopedia

8 Jesus was quoting from the Old Testament Book of Hosea (

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): “For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.”

9 Remission of sins by the grace of God or a God-knowing saint is discussed in Discourse

35

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Discourse 32

1 Cf. additional parallel reference in Luke

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35

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[2 See Discourse 16.](#)

[3 “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” \(Matthew 4:4; see Discourse 8\).](#)

[4 Cf. additional parallel reference in Matthew](#)

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[5 II Corinthians](#)

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[6 Cf. additional parallel reference in Luke](#)

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7 “Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made” (Genesis

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8 Smith’s Bible Dictionary notes: “[Jesus’] Pharisaic adversaries...had invented many prohibitions respecting the Sabbath of which we find nothing in the original institution. Some of these prohibitions were fantastic and arbitrary.... That this perversion of the Sabbath had become very general in our Saviour’s time is apparent both from the recorded objections to acts of his on that day, and from his marked conduct on occasions to which those objections were sure to be urged.”

9 The incident is recorded in I Samuel

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. The shewbread was a ritual offering of twelve newly baked loaves placed each Sabbath on a table in the temple sanctuary and sprinkled with incense. They were left there until the following Sabbath, when the incense was burned and they were eaten by the priests and replaced by twelve new loaves. It was forbidden to remove them from the sanctuary.

[10 As he did in Matthew](#)

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(Discourse

31

), Jesus again quoted from Hosea

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: “For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.”

[11 Cf. parallel references in Matthew](#)

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and Luke

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12 Saturday was the customary Sabbath day during Jesus' time, and remains so in the Jewish religion. Though most modern Christian denominations use Sunday for that purpose, the Sabbath may be beneficially observed on any day suited to one's circumstances or community tradition.

13 The word derives from Hebrew shabath, "to cease to do; to rest."

14 God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita

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15 God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita

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and

In her masterworks *The Way of Perfection* and *The Interior Castle*, the renowned mystic Saint Teresa of Avila gives a systematic description, from her own personal experience, of the interiorized states of God-communion. These in essence correspond exactly with the progressively higher states of consciousness expounded in India's centuries-old, universal soul-science of yoga.

The saint describes deepening degrees of God-communion as beginning with the various forms of vocal and mental prayer, and progressing through the interiorized states of "infused recollection," "prayer of quiet," and "prayer of union" which culminates in perfect oneness with God or "spiritual marriage."

Of "the prayer of quiet," she writes in *The Way of Perfection*, trans. E. Allison Peers (Garden City, New York: Image Books,

1991

): "In this state all the faculties are stilled. The soul, in a way which has nothing to do with the outward senses, realizes that it is now very close to its God, and that, if it were but a little closer, it would become one with Him through union. ...

"The body experiences the greatest delight and the soul is conscious of a deep satisfaction. So glad is it merely to find itself near the fountain that, even before it has begun to drink, it has had its fill. There seems nothing left for it to desire. The faculties are stilled and have no wish to move, for any movement they may make appears to hinder the soul from loving God."

She goes on to describe three distinct stages of union: simple union, ecstatic union, and perfect union (spiritual marriage). Saint Teresa's writings on these exalted states have been summarized as follows by Catholic scholar Albert Farges, in *Mystical Phenomena* (London: Burns, Oates, and Washbourne,

), who writes: “Whilst in simple union the senses are more or less asleep, and awake if disturbed; in ecstasy, on the contrary, they are totally suspended, or rather in a state of anaesthesia, to such an extent that even violent disturbance will not arouse them. The hand of an ecstatic engaged in prayer may be approached with the flame of a candle, without his feeling the least pain....[It] is as though the soul were no longer in the body: to such an extent that philosophers and theologians have asked themselves whether, for example, the soul of St. Paul, during his ecstasy, did really cease to animate his body....

“All mystical theologians are agreed in placing, above ecstatic union, a still more perfect degree of union, the height of earthly contemplation and a foretaste of eternal beatitude....In it ecstasy may become very rare....As Suarez has remarked, our Lord, during his mortal life, was able to enjoy the beatific vision without ever falling into the swoon of ecstasy....The highest summit of contemplative life here below seems, then, to coincide with freedom from this weakness and natural imperfection of the life of the senses; that is to say, with rarity and even complete absence of the swoons of ecstasy.” (Publisher’s Note)

[16 Cf. additional parallel reference in Luke](#)

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[17 Cf. parallel references in Matthew](#)

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and Luke

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18 “Behold My servant, whom I uphold; Mine elect, in whom My soul delighteth; I have put My spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law” (Isaiah

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Discourse 33

1 Many of Jesus’ sayings in verses

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, known as the Sermon on the Plain, parallel verses in the Sermon on the Mount in St. Matthew’s Gospel. See Discourses

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for corresponding commentary.

[2 See also additional parallel reference in Matthew 10:1 – 4 \(Discourse 40\).](#)

[3 The word apostle comes from a Greek term meaning “to send forth.”](#)

[4 Scientists have shown that the air at higher elevations, because of greater exposure to solar and other radiation, contains a larger number of “negative ions”—molecules that have acquired an extra electron, giving them a negative electrical charge. Negative ions of oxygen bond more readily to the hemoglobin in the blood, and thus more oxygen is assimilated with each breath. This accounts for the feeling of increased vitality produced by fresh mountain air \(and by the ocean breeze and waterfalls and air just after a lightning storm, all of which generate negative ions\). A summary of research on ions in the air and their effect on physical and mental well-being is found in *The Ion Effect* by Fred Soyka with Alan Edmonds \(New York: Bantam Books,](#)

1977

). (Publisher’s Note)

[5 See also Discourse 9.](#)

[6 See Discourse 23.](#)

[7 See Discourse 2.](#)

[8 See Discourse 73.](#)

[9 Jesus' foreknowledge of Judas's treachery is apparent in many Gospel verses, such as John](#)

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71

[Discourse

43

]; John

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[Discourse

70

]; and Matthew

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[Discourse

73

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[10 See Discourse 26 for commentary on The Beatitudes according to the Gospel of St. Matthew, with parallel references from the above verses of Luke](#)

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[11 Cf. Discourse](#)

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: “Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth” (Luke

12

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15

); and Discourse

63

: “Children, how hard it is for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom

of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God” (Mark

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12 “Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see” (Revelation

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13 God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita

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[14 God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita](#)

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57

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[15 Cf. Matthew](#)

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, wherein Jesus repeated this counsel (Discourse

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[16 Verses](#)

41

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42

also appear in Matthew

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; they are commented on in Discourse

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with a different emphasis consistent with the Matthew context.

[17 The illumined master Swami Shankara, father of India's ancient monastic Swami Order, wrote: "No known comparison exists in the three worlds for a true guru. If the philosophers' stone be assumed as truly such, it can only turn iron into gold, not into another philosophers' stone. The venerated teacher, on the other hand, creates equality with himself in the disciple who takes refuge at his feet. The guru is therefore peerless, nay, transcendental" \(Century of Verses,](#)

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[18 Yoga science identifies ten "senses" with which the physical body is endowed: five instruments of knowledge \(sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch\) and five instruments of action \(the subtle powers behind the bodily faculties of manual skill, locomotion, speech, procreation, and elimination\).](#)

[19 See also Discourse](#)

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, the tree of life in the Garden of Eden; and Discourse 10, Nathanael sitting under fig tree.

[20 Yoga Sutras](#)

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: “Yoga chitta vritti nirodha—Yoga (scientific union with God) is the neutralization of the modifications of chitta.” See Discourse

26

, where this sutra is discussed in the context of “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.”

[21 “Our research and that of others indicate that the heart is far more than a simple pump. The heart is, in fact, a highly complex, self-organized information processing center,” report Rollin McCraty, Ph.D., and his associates in Science of the Heart: Exploring the Role of the Heart in Human Performance \(Boulder Creek, California: Institute of HeartMath,](#)

2001

).

“Traditionally, the study of communication pathways between the ‘head’ and heart has been approached from a rather one-sided perspective, with scientists focusing primarily on the heart’s responses to the brain’s commands. However, we have now learned that communication between the heart and brain is actually a dynamic, ongoing, two-way dialogue, with each organ continuously influencing the other’s function. Research has shown that the heart communicates to the brain in four major ways: neurologically (through the transmission of nerve impulses), biochemically (via hormones and neurotransmitters), biophysically (through pressure waves) and energetically (through electromagnetic field interactions). Communication along all these conduits significantly affects the brain’s activity.”

“Neurocardiologists have found that

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to

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% of the cells of the heart are actually neural cells, not muscle cells as was previously believed,” explains child-development expert Joseph Chilton Pearce in a

1999

interview in *Journal of Family Life* (Volume

5

, Number

1

). “They are identical to the neural cells in the brain, operating through the same connecting links called ganglia, with the same axonal and dendritic connections that take place in the brain, as well as through the very same kinds of neurotransmitters found in the brain. Quite literally, in other words, there is a ‘brain’ in the heart, whose ganglia are linked to every major organ in the body, to the entire muscle spindle system that uniquely enables humans to express their emotions.”

“Our emotional-cognitive brain has direct, unmediated neural connections with the heart,” Pearce reports. He explains that the brain “makes a qualitative evaluation of our experience of this world and sends that information instant-by-instant down to the heart. In return, the heart exhorts the brain to make the appropriate response....In other words, the responses that the heart makes affect the entire human system.” Thus, these scientists conclude, though the brain supplies the heart with perceptions, it is the heart, responding to the reports from the brain, that sends positive or negative instructions back to the emotional reactive centers in the brain (and, through hormones released into the bloodstream, to the entire body). (Publisher’s Note)

Discourse 34

[1 The full context of this story is told, with slight variations from the Gospel According to St. Luke, in Matthew](#)

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[2 Yoga Sutras](#)

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[3 See also Discourse 20, commentary on John 4:45 – 54, in which Jesus heals the nobleman’s son by operation of the same principle.](#)

Spirituality and medicine researcher Larry Dossey, M.D., reports experimental verification of the mechanism behind this form of “distant healing” in his book, *Be Careful What You Pray For...You Just Might Get It* (New York: HarperCollins,

1997

): “For a decade, a research team led by Jacobo Grinberg-Zylberbaum at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México in Mexico City, has performed experiments examining the electroencephalograms (EEGs or brain wave tracings) of subjects who are far removed from each other... While the distant subjects are sitting quietly, there is no correlation in the pattern of their respective EEGs. But when they allow a feeling of emotional closeness or empathy to develop between them, the EEGs begin to resemble each other, often to a striking degree. No type of energy or signal can be detected to pass between the distant individuals. Moreover, the statistical correlations between the distant EEG patterns do not diminish when the subjects are moved farther apart. This defies one of the hallmarks of energy as defined in physics—its decrease in strength with increasing distance from its source. Also, the EEGs remain equally correlated if the subjects are placed in metal-lined boxes, which block ambient electromagnetic energy....

“Grinberg-Zylberbaum’s team, along with physicist Amit Goswami, of the Department of Physics and the Institute of Theoretical Science at the University of Oregon, propose that these ‘transferred potentials’ between brains demonstrate ‘brain-to-brain nonlocal...correlations....’ Nonlocal correlations have been a concern of physicists since they were proposed by Einstein, Rosen, and Podolsky in

1935

....They were demonstrated experimentally in a celebrated study in

1982

by physicist Alain Aspect and his colleagues. Physicists assumed that nonlocal connections exist only between subatomic particles such as electrons and photons. But the pioneering work of Grinberg-Zylberbaum, Goswami, and their colleagues, which they have replicated, strongly suggests that nonlocal events occur also between human beings....

“But the connections between distant humans are not automatic. The researchers asked the subjects to try deliberately to ‘feel each other’s presence even at a distance.’ If they did not, the distant EEG correlations were totally absent. This implies that love and empathy are required for distant connections between people to take place, and it is consistent with the universal belief that distant

healing depends on love, caring, and compassion.” (Publisher’s Note)

[4 One of the six classical systems of Hindu philosophy. Further explanation to follow.](#)

[5 Paraphrase of John 14:12 \(see Discourse 70\).](#)

[6 See Discourse 11, discussion of how Jesus changed water into wine through control of the creative thought-matrix underlying all materializations of energy and form.](#)

[7 God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita](#)

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[8 The twenty-four principles of cosmic creation—beginning with Prakriti \(creative Mother Nature or Holy Ghost\) and ending in the five elemental forms of gross matter—are explained in God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita, commentary on](#)

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[9 “And God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over...all the earth’” \(Genesis](#)

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[10 From Whispers from Eternity by Paramahansa Yogananda \(published by Self-Realization Fellowship\).](#)

[11 John the Baptist also, in his incarnation as Elijah, had raised a widow's son from the dead. Indeed, when Jesus as Elisha resurrected a dead child by laying his own body over the corpse, as described above, he was reenacting the same method previously used by his guru Elijah in bringing the widow's son back to life \(see I Kings 17:17 – 24, cited in Discourse 39\).](#)

[12 The death of John is recorded later, in the Gospel of Mark](#)

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(and in a parallel reference in Matthew

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): “And king Herod heard of him [Jesus]; (for his name was spread abroad;) and he said, that John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him. Others said, that it is Elijah. And others said, that it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets. But when Herod heard

thereof, he said, 'It is John, whom I beheaded: he is risen from the dead.'

"For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife: for he had married her. For John had said unto Herod, 'It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife.'

"Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him, and would have killed him; but she could not: For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.

"And when a convenient day was come, that Herod on his birthday made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee; and when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod and them that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, 'Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee.' And he sware unto her, 'Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom.'

"And she went forth, and said unto her mother, 'What shall I ask?' And she said, 'The head of John the Baptist.' And she came in straightway with haste unto the king, and asked, saying, 'I will that thou give me by and by in a charger the head of John the Baptist.'

"And the king was exceeding sorry; yet for his oath's sake, and for their sakes which sat with him, he would not reject her. And immediately the king sent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought: and he went and beheaded him in the prison, and brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damsel: and the damsel gave it to her mother. And when his disciples heard of it, they came and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb." (See also Discourse 42.)

[13 See Discourse 22.](#)

[14 "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory" \(Psalms](#)

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[15 Parallel verses in Matthew](#)

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[16 Cf. Gospel According to Thomas, verse 78](#)

: “Why have you come into the field? To see a reed tremble in the wind? To observe a man wearing soft cloth? Your kings and great men all wear soft clothes, and yet they cannot see the truth.”

[17 Cf. Mark](#)

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: “As it is written in the prophets, ‘Behold, I send My messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.’” The reference is to the Old Testament book of the prophet Malachi: “Behold, I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me” (Malachi

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). That the promised messenger would be the reincarnation of the prophet Elijah is declared in a later passage, Malachi

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(see more below).

[18 Yoga Sutras](#)

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[19 Cf. Luke](#)

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: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God...with all thy strength.” (See commentary in Discourse 53.)

[20 Malachi](#)

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[21 Cf. parallel reference Matthew](#)

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[22 The town of Chorazin is no longer extant; it is thought to have been about two miles north of Capernaum. Bethsaida, home of Peter, Andrew, and Philip, was situated on the Sea of Galilee where the Jordan River enters it. Tyre and Sidon were wealthy trading cities on the Mediterranean coast in Phoenicia \(modern Lebanon\), with whom the Jews had occasionally been enemies; see, for example, Joel](#)

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: “Yea, and what have ye to do with Me, O Tyre, and Zidon, and all the coasts of Palestine?...Because ye have taken My silver and My gold, and have carried into your temples My goodly pleasant things: The children also of Judah and the children of Jerusalem have ye sold unto the Grecians, that ye might remove them far from their border.”

[23 Cf. parallel verses in Luke](#)

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24 Proverbs

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25 “That thought with which a dying man leaves the body determines—through his long persistence in it—his next state of being” (God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita

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26 See Discourse 21.

27 “Though India possesses a civilization more ancient than that of any other country, few historians have noted that her feat of survival is by no means an accident, but a logical incident in the record of devotion to the eternal verities that India has offered through her best men in every generation. By sheer continuity of being, by intransitivity before the ages (can dusty scholars truly tell us how many?), India has given the worthiest answer of any people to the challenge of time.

“The Biblical story of Abraham’s plea to the Lord that the city of Sodom be spared if ten righteous men could be found therein, and the Divine Reply: ‘I will not destroy it for ten’s sake,’ gains new meaning in the light of India’s escape from oblivion. Gone are the empires of mighty nations, skilled in the arts of war, that once were India’s contemporaries: ancient Egypt, Babylonia, Greece, Rome.

“The Lord’s answer clearly shows that a land lives, not in its material achievements, but in its masterpieces of man.”—Autobiography of a Yogi

Discourse 35

[1 Other passages about the forgiveness of sins are also covered in this Discourse: John](#)

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, and Matthew

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[2 God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita](#)

ix

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[3 Galatians](#)

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4 “Crime and punishment grow out of one stem. Punishment is a fruit that unsuspected ripens within the flower of the pleasure which concealed it.”—Emerson, in Compensation.

5 God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita

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6 God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita

ix

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7 “All the wickedness in the world that man might work or think is no more to the mercy of God than a live coal in the sea.”—William Langland, fourteenth-century English mystical poet.

8 Saint Teresa wrote: “There are souls whom the certain conviction that God is with them benefits more than all the fear they may ever have. If a soul love greatly, and is thankful naturally, the remembrance of the mercies of God makes it turn to Him more effectually than all the chastisements of hell it can ever picture to itself—at least, it was so with me.”—Life of St. Teresa of Jesus (New York: Benziger Bros.,

1904

), Chapter

xv

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[9 See Discourse 13, Discourse 25, and Discourse 31.](#)

[10 See parallel passage in Matthew 6:14 – 15, Discourse 28.](#)

[11 God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita](#)

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Discourse 36

[1 Cf. parallel references in Luke](#)

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[2 See Discourse 24 for detailed discussion of possession by evil spirits.](#)

[3 See II Samuel](#)

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: [God speaking to David] “And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom.”

Isaiah

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: “And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse [father of David], and a branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.”

Jeremiah

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: “Behold, the days come,” saith the Lord, “that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord Our Righteousness.”

[4 Hebrew Ba'al zebubb, a Canaanite deity \(“lord of flies”\); in some translations rendered as Beelzebul, “lord of dung.”](#)

The Encyclopaedia Britannica gives this brief summary of the concept of devils as expressed in principal world religions:

“In Zoroastrianism, a religion founded by the

6

th-century-

b.c.

Persian prophet Zoroaster, the hierarchy of demons (daevas) is headed by Angra Mainyu (later called Ahriman), the Evil, or Destructive, Spirit. The demons are in constant battle with Ahura Mazda (later called Ormazd), the Good Lord.

“The hierarchy of demons in Judaism, which is rooted in ancient Middle Eastern and Zoroastrian demonology after the postexilic period (after

538

b.c.

), is quite varied. The prince of the forces of evil (Hebrew shedim, meaning ‘demons’ and applied to foreign gods, or se’irim, meaning ‘hairy demons’), who

often were believed to inhabit desert wastes, ruins, and graves and to inflict humanity with various physical, psychological, and spiritual disorders, was called by different names: Satan (the Antagonist), Belial (the spirit of perversion, darkness, and destruction), Mastema (Enmity, or Opposition), and other names. Though the Old Testament refers to Satan as the prosecutor of God's celestial court (Zech.

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; Job

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), a hierarchy of demons under Satan or other princes of evil was developed in intertestamental literature and later Judaism.

“The hierarchy of demons in Christianity is based on various sources: Jewish, Zoroastrian, Gnostic (a syncretistic religious dualistic-belief system in which matter is viewed as evil, the spirit good, and salvation as being attainable through esoteric knowledge, or gnosis), and the indigenous religions that succumbed to Christian missionizing. In the New Testament, Jesus speaks of Beelzebub as the chief of demons and equates him with Satan. In the European Middle Ages and the Reformation period, various hierarchies of demons were developed, such as that associated with the seven deadly sins: Lucifer (pride), Mammon (avarice), Asmodeus (lechery), Satan (anger), Beelzebub (gluttony), Leviathan (envy), and Belphegor (sloth).

“The Islamic hierarchy of demons is headed by Iblis (the devil), who also is called Shaytan (Satan) or 'aduw Allah ('Enemy of God'). Based to a great extent on Jewish and Christian demonology, Iblis became the leader of a host of jinn, spiritual beings that generally bode evil.

“In Hinduism, the asuras are the demons who oppose the devas (the gods). Among the various classes of asuras are nagas (serpent demons), Ahi (the demon of drought), and Kamsa (an archdemon). Demons that afflict humans include the raksasas (grotesque beings who haunt cemeteries, impel the performance of

foolish acts, and attack sadhus (saintly men) and pishacas (beings who haunt places where violent deaths have occurred).

“Buddhists often view their demons as forces that inhibit the achievement of Nirvana (bliss, or the extinction of desire); an important example is Mara, an arch tempter, who, with his daughters, Rati (Desire), Raga (Pleasure), and Tanha (Restlessness), attempted to dissuade Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha, from achieving his enlightenment. As Mahayana (Greater Vehicle) Buddhism spread to Tibet, China, and Japan, many of the demons of the folk religions of these areas (e.g., the Chinese kwei-shen; the Japanese oni) were incorporated into Buddhist beliefs.”

[5 Cf. parallel reference in Mark](#)

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[6 See also Discourse 24, discussion of Jesus’ “rebuking the fever” that afflicted Peter’s mother-in-law.](#)

[7 Cf. parallel reference in Mark](#)

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[8 John 14:26 \(see Discourse 70\).](#)

[9 Cf. parallel references in Mark](#)

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and Luke

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[10 See also commentary in Discourse 33 on parallel verses \(Luke 6:43 – 45\).](#)

[11 Recounted in the Old Testament book of Jonah, chapters](#)

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and

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[12 Many miraculous incidents from the life of Trailanga Swami are recounted in Autobiography of a Yogi, Chapter](#)

31

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[13 Jonah](#)

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[14 Jesus repeats his words about the “sign of Jonah” in Matthew 16:4. \(See Discourse 44.\)](#)

[15 I Kings](#)

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[16 Cf. parallel reference in Mark](#)

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[17 See Discourse 44.](#)

Discourse 37

[1 Cf. parallel passages in Mark](#)

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and Luke

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[2 Cf. parallel references in Mark 4:25 and Luke 8:9 – 10 and 8:18. See also Discourse 63, commentary on Luke 19:26, in which Jesus repeats this saying.](#)

[3 Jesus repeats this saying in Luke 19](#)

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in a different parable; it is discussed in more detail in that context in Discourse

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[4 Isaiah](#)

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[5 See also Discourse](#)

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, commentary on John 12:37 – 43, in which these verses from Isaiah are repeated.

[6 Cf. parallel reference in Luke 8:11 – 15. \(Mark 4:11 – 12 are commented on with their parallel in Matthew, earlier in this Discourse.\)](#)

[7 “In the beginning was the Word \(the holy Aum or Amen Vibration imbued with divine Christ Intelligence\) and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” \(John 1:1; see Discourse 1\). In the original Greek text the term logos is used consistently for the verse in John and in these verses in Matthew and Mark, implying the same intended meaning.](#)

8 Tares: “This bearded darnel, lolium temulentum, is common in Palestine and resembles wheat except that the grains are black. In its earlier stages it is indistinguishable from the wheat stalks so that it has to remain till near the harvest.”—Robertson’s Word Pictures of the New Testament.

9 Cf. parallel reference in Luke 13:18 – 19.

10 Cf. parallel reference in Luke

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11 “Spoken by the prophet” refers to Psalms

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12 “In those who have banished ignorance by Self-knowledge, their wisdom, like the illuminating sun, makes manifest the Supreme Self” (God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita

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[13 The true meaning of the various Biblical references to “hellfire” is explained in Discourses](#)

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and

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[14 “O Arjuna, by the knowers of truth, this body is called kshetra \(‘the field’ where good and evil karma is sown and reaped\); likewise, that which cognizes the field they call kshetrajna \(the soul\)...As the one sun illumines the entire world, so does the Lord of the Field \(God and His reflection as the soul\) illumine the whole field \(Nature and the bodily ‘little nature’\). They enter the Supreme who perceive with the eye of wisdom the distinction between the Kshetra and the Kshetrajna and who also perceive the method of liberation of beings from Prakriti \(delusive Nature\)” \(God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita](#)

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Discourse 38

[1 Cf. additional parallel reference in Matthew](#)

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[2 Folklore of all peoples contains references to incantations with power over nature. The American Indians developed effective sound rituals for rain and wind. Tan Sen, the great Hindu musician, was able to quench fire by the power of his song.](#)

[3 Cf. parallel references in Matthew](#)

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and Mark

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[4 See Discourse 24.](#)

[5 Cf. parallel references in Matthew](#)

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and Mark

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See also Mark

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(and its parallel in Matthew

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36

), which cite similar instances of healing: “And when they had passed over, they came into the land of Gennesaret, and drew to the shore. And when they were come out of the ship, straightway they knew him, and ran through that whole region round about, and began to carry about in beds those that were sick, where they heard he was. And whithersoever he entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment: and as many as touched him were made whole.”

[6 See Discourse 39.](#)

[7 Cf. additional parallel reference in Matthew](#)

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[8 One among many examples that might be cited is recorded in Deuteronomy](#)

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: “And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the Lord commanded Moses.”

[9 This story is repeated, with slight variations, in Matthew](#)

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. Cf. parallel references in Luke

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43

and Mark

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(in the latter passages, only one blind man is cited; Mark's rendering names him as "blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus").

[10 Cf. Matthew](#)

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(commented on in Discourse

36

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[11 Cf. parallel reference in Mark](#)

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[12 Cf. parallel reference in Luke](#)

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(Discourse

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Discourse 39

[1 This story of Jesus' preaching in Nazareth, and being rejected by the people of his hometown, is recounted in greater or lesser detail in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Each of them places the story at a different time in the chronology of Jesus' life: In Luke, the event occurs just after the beginning of Jesus' public preaching in Galilee; Matthew \(](#)

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) and Mark (

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) describe it as taking place later in Jesus’ ministry. Luke has the most detailed account of the story, but most scholars acknowledge that this gospel narrates it out of sequence, since there is reference to the healing miracles that Jesus performed in Capernaum, and Luke relates this before Jesus’ visit to Capernaum (Discourses

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). Thus, the commentary in this Discourse is based primarily on Luke’s detailed telling, though not his chronology.

[2 God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita](#)

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[3 Exodus 20:8. See Discourse 32 for additional commentary on the spiritual purpose of the Sabbath.](#)

4 Isaiah

61

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5 The word Christ (as also Messiah) literally means “the Anointed.”

6 Translations other than the wording given in the King James Version as “the acceptable year of the Lord” show that the meaning intended is “the year of the Lord’s favor or amnesty.”

7 The scriptures of India identify these four stages as Kali Yuga (the age in which humanity comprehends only the grossest physical aspects of creation), Dwapara Yuga (in which the human intellect develops enough to understand and harness the finer atomic and electromagnetic forces), Treta Yuga (the mental age, in which the dormant powers of the mind become highly developed), and Satya Yuga (the spiritually enlightened age, during which humanity as a whole lives in attunement with God and His laws and purposes in creation). See yugas in glossary.

8 Cf. additional parallel reference in Matthew

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9 Paraphrase of

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10 Nathanael was perhaps referring to this when he asked Philip, in John

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: “Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?” (Discourse

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11 Sarepta (Zarephath) was in or near the prominent city of Sidon, in Phoenicia, not in Elijah’s native country of Israel. The story of the widow whose meager store of meal and oil was miraculously replenished for many days till the end of the drought, and whose son was raised from the dead by Elijah, is told in I Kings

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12 II Kings

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13 It was during this time that Elijah said to God: “The children of Israel have forsaken Thy covenant, thrown down Thine altars, and slain Thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left” (I Kings

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14 One of the powers possessed by a great master is the ability to prevent any specific thought from arising in the mind of others. The God in Jesus communicated with the God present in the souls of the Nazarenes to induce a momentary lapse of their evil intent.

15 John

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44

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Discourse 40

1 Luke

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consists of Jesus' instructions to the seventy disciples he sent out in addition to the twelve apostles, at a later time in his mission according to the story as told by Luke. (Luke is the only one of the four gospels that describes the sending out of the seventy.) Much of Jesus' counsel to the seventy is identical to that he gave to the twelve apostles as recorded in Matthew and Mark; therefore the sending out of the twelve and of the seventy are treated together in this and the next Discourse. (Luke

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are omitted here, as they are commented on in Discourse

34

with the parallel verses from Matthew

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[2 Cf. parallel references in Mark](#)

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and Luke

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[3 Cf. parallel references in Mark](#)

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and Luke

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, in which Jesus ordains the twelve apostles (commented on in Discourse

33

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[4 Cf. parallel reference in Luke](#)

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. See also Discourse 44 re “lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matthew 15:24).

[5 Philippians](#)

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6 A synthesis of these three philosophies is provided in Paramahansa Yogananda's comprehensive commentary on the Bhagavad Gita, God Talks With Arjuna. Explaining the mysticism of Hindu thought, Paramahansaji shows the universality of the yoga science. (Publisher's Note)

7 In Lost Christianity (New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin, 2003), Dr. Jacob Needleman, professor of philosophy at San Francisco State University and former director of the Center for the Study of New Religions at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, writes: "In my own academic work as a professor of philosophy and religion....it became increasingly clear to me that were Christianity actually to recover its own esoteric tradition, it would be a development of immense significance. In using this term, 'esoteric,' I mean to say the Christianity that works, that actually produces real change in human nature, real transformation...."

"Weren't Westerners now being attracted to Oriental religions because they could find in them the sort of methods for inner work that may have been predominant among the early Fathers?...Where did [those methods] come from? Where have they gone? The whole modern world is beginning to look for them as an indispensable element of what has been lost from the Christian path."

Professor Needleman cites the work of Dom Aelred Graham, a pioneering Catholic monk and prior of a Benedictine monastery in England: "The very future of the Christian tradition may depend, according to Dom Aelred, 'on reviewing its basic doctrines in the light of religious insights now being made available from the East.'...Dom Aelred therefore urges that the contemporary Christian seek after the attainment of a transformed quality of consciousness in himself, 'the God-centered consciousness of Jesus,' just as the Mahayana Buddhist strives to attain for himself the same level of being as the Buddha."

"That this happens to be what Christianity is all about is rather more than hinted at in passages from both the Pauline epistles and the Fourth Gospel," writes Aelred Graham in *Contemplative Christianity* (New York: Seabury Press,

). “Could it be that in striving to attain the Christ-consciousness we have the only effective foundation for Christian renewal? To achieve ‘the mind of Christ’ may well demand a profound rethinking of Christianity’s prayer life.”
(Publisher’s Note)

[8 Matthew 21:13 \(see Discourse 64\).](#)

[9 Cf. additional parallel reference in Luke](#)

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[10 For commentary on “the harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few,” see Discourse 38.](#)

[11 Speaking of the first Christian monastic communities \(the Desert Fathers\), which were formed in Egypt in the early centuries following the life of Jesus, British historian Sir Charles Eliot writes: “Egypt was a most religious country, but it does not appear that asceticism, celibacy, or meditation formed part of its older religious life, and their appearance in Hellenistic times may be due to a wave of Asian influence starting originally from India.”—Hinduism and Buddhism, Volume III.](#)

[12 Cf. additional parallel references in Mark](#)

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and Luke

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Discourse 41

[1 Mark](#)

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(as also Matthew

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) recounts the death of John the Baptist, covered in Discourse

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2 See footnote 1 in Discourse 40, about the seventy disciples whom Jesus sent out to preach in addition to the twelve apostles.

3 See Discourse 6, commentary on declaration of John the Baptist when he baptized Jesus: “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him” (John

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32

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4 See also later in this Discourse, where Jesus tells the disciples he has given them “power to tread on serpents,” i.e., power over all satanic material temptations engendered by the outgoing life force and consciousness.

5 Saint Paul emphasized this teaching of Jesus in letters he wrote to those in his ministry:

“Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Ephesians

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“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (II Corinthians

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[6 Jesus emphasizes this even more in Luke 9:54 – 56, when the disciples ask him if they should call fire from heaven to destroy those who opposed them. \(See Discourse 49.\)](#)

[7 Cf. parallel references in Mark](#)

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and Luke

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[8 Cf. parallel reference in Mark](#)

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[9 Jesus repeated this guidance to his disciples at the Last Supper \(John 15:20\). See Discourse 71.](#)

[10 Reference to the Pharisees' slander of Jesus in Matthew 12:24. \(See Discourse 36.\)](#)

[11 These sayings of Jesus are repeated in Luke](#)

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as part of another speech, and are also commented on in that context in Discourse

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[12 Cf. additional parallel references in Mark](#)

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and Luke

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(Discourse

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[13 Cf. parallel reference in Luke](#)

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Jesus repeats the last two sentences of this counsel in another context in Matthew 16:24 – 25. (See Discourse 45 for commentary.)

[14 Matthew 12:48, 50 \(see Discourse 36\).](#)

[15 Matthew 6:25, 33 \(see Discourse 29\).](#)

[16 Paraphrase of](#)

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: “Forsaking all other dharmas (duties), remember Me alone; I will free thee from all sins (accruing from nonperformance of those lesser duties). Do not grieve!”

[17 The holy succession of a line of gurus, by which a master appoints his spiritual successor. \(See “Gurus of Self-Realization Fellowship” in glossary.\)](#)

[18](#)

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: “Whatever embodiment (a God-incarnate, a saint, or a deity) a devotee strives faithfully to worship, it is I who make his devotion unflinching. Absorbed in that devotion, intent on the worship of that embodiment, the devotee thus gains the fruits of his longings. Yet those fulfillments are verily granted by Me alone. But men of scant knowledge (worshiping lesser gods) receive limited results. The devotees of the deities go unto them; My devotees come unto Me.”

[19 See Discourse 7.](#)

[20 See also commentary in God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita](#)

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[21 Cf. parallel reference in Matthew](#)

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[22 Cf. parallel reference to verse](#)

22

in Matthew

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. Verses

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24

were commented on in Discourse

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with their parallels in Matthew

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[23 For example, John](#)

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: “...no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” (See Discourse 70.)

[24 Yoke \(zugo in the original Greek of the Gospel\) and yoga are etymologically related, all deriving from the Sanskrit root yuj, signifying union. \(See also footnote 7 in Discourse 5.\) Even as Jesus in these verses promises his disciples that the transcendent, all-liberating Cosmic Consciousness will be revealed to those who attune themselves with the immanent Christ Consciousness by taking up his “easy” yoke of spiritual discipline, so does Bhagavan Krishna declare to his disciple Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita:](#)

“To thee, the uncarping one, I shall now reveal the sublime mystery (the

immanent-transcendent nature of Spirit). Possessing intuitive realization of this wisdom, thou shalt escape from evil. This intuitive realization is the king of sciences, the royal secret, the peerless purifier, the essence of dharma (man's righteous duty); it is the direct perception of truth—the imperishable enlightenment—attained through ways (of yoga) very easy to perform” (God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita

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Discourse 42

[1 See Discourse 34 for the complete story of the death of John the Baptist.](#)

[2 “After these things...”: The immediately preceding verses in St. John’s Gospel recount the healing of the man at the pool of Bethesda, discussed in Discourse](#)

21

. Since then nearly a year had passed, the events of which are not recorded in the book of John. Based on accounts in the other Gospels, “after these things” may be read as referring to Jesus’ sending forth his disciples to preach the Gospel, during which time John the Baptist was slain by Herod.

The Sea of Galilee was also called the Sea of Tiberias, after the town by that name on its western shore.

3 “Two hundred pennyworth”: two hundred denarii (one denarius was a day’s wage for the common man).

4 Cf. additional parallel references in Matthew

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and Mark

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5 “Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me (becomes more attuned to the universal intelligence of Christ Consciousness), the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do” (John 14:12; see Discourse 70).

6 See yugas in glossary.

7 Albert Einstein and Leopold Infeld, The Evolution of Physics: The Growth of Ideas from Early Concepts to Relativity and Quanta (Cambridge University Press,

1938

).

[8 The Nature of the Physical World \(Cambridge University Press,](#)

1928

).

[9 Cambridge University Press,](#)

1930

.

[10 The Nature of the Physical World \(Cambridge University Press,](#)

1928

).

[11 Space, Time and Gravitation: An Outline of the General Relativity Theory \(Cambridge University Press,](#)

1920

).

Speaking about methods of attaining a deeper insight into nature than that afforded by material science, Professor Brian D. Josephson of Cambridge University, winner of the Nobel Prize in physics in

1973

, commended the ancient Hindu systems of philosophy: “Vedanta and Sankhya hold the key to the laws of mind and thought process, which are correlated to the quantum field, i.e., the operation and distribution of particles at atomic and molecular levels.” (Publisher’s Note)

[12 The Gospels relate a recurrence of this miracle when Jesus later fed four thousand people with seven loaves and a few fishes \(Matthew](#)

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and Mark

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[13 See Discourse 32.](#)

[14 See, for example, II Samuel 7:12 – 17; I Chronicles 17:11 – 15; Daniel 9:25 – 26. See also Discourse 36.](#)

[15 The term used in physics to denote the ratio of the density of a substance to that of a standard substance \(which is usually water for solids and liquids, and dry air for gases\). “Buoyancy is intimately related to specific gravity,” explains Encyclopaedia Britannica. “If a substance has specific gravity less than that of a](#)

[fluid, it will float on that fluid: helium-filled balloons will rise in air, oil will form a slick on water, and lead will float on mercury.” \(Publisher’s Note\)](#)

[16 Chapter](#)

7

, “The Levitating Saint.” Many Christian saints, including Teresa of Avila and Joseph of Cupertino, have similarly exhibited miraculous powers of levitation and weightlessness. The Catholic scholar Monsignor Albert Farges writes in *Mystical Phenomena* (London: Burns, Oates, and Washbourne,

1926

):

“In spite of the strangeness of these facts, they cannot be doubted. Not only are they perfectly authentic, but, moreover, frequent in the lives of ecstatic saints.... They have often been discussed and verified in the processes of canonization....

“St. Francis seems to have been the first stigmatic and also the first ecstatic whose spontaneous elevation above the ground was officially confirmed, but since that time verifications have been multiplied. Here are some instances:

“St. Peter of Alcantara was unable to hear the lofty words of St. John, *Verbum cara factum est* [‘The Word was made flesh’], pronounced without falling into ecstasy and being raised above the earth. The Franciscan, Biagio of Caltanissetta, went into ecstasy simply at the names of Jesus and Mary, and, enraptured with their beauty, sprang into the air. Blessed Giles, of the Order of St. Dominic, remained suspended in the air in ecstasy for whole nights without it being possible to bring him back to earth...St. Thomas of Villanova, whilst preaching one day in his cathedral, suddenly went into ecstasy and remained suspended in the air for twelve hours.”

The levitations of seventeenth-century St. Joseph of Cupertino are among the most famous. The *London Times* reported on March

24

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2003

: “In a message marking the

400

th anniversary of the birth of St. Joseph, the Pope said that the Franciscan friar, who was said to amaze congregations by levitating and flying through the air, was spiritually close to our times. He is the patron saint of aviators and students. ...Witnesses record that after falling into an ecstatic trance, St. Joseph would utter a loud cry and soar into the air, sometimes flying down the nave and sometimes flying out of the church and across the hills for several miles. He was put on trial by the Inquisition, but when he flew over the heads of his inquisitors, the judges referred the case directly to the Pope, Urban VIII. The Pope dropped the case after apparently witnessing an ‘ecstatic flight.’ Numerous important people, including Frederick, Duke of Brunswick, and Prince Casimir of Poland testified to having seen the flights.” (Publisher’s Note)

[17 In his Yoga Sutras, Patanjali devotes an entire section to the obtaining of miraculous powers \(known as siddhis or vibhutis\) by mastery of the yoga science—in particular, by samyama, a coalescence of the last three steps of the Eightfold Path: dharana \(concentration\), dhyana \(meditation\), and samadhi \(divine union\). Among the powers mentioned are levitation and the ability to walk on water or mire without sinking \(Yoga Sutras](#)

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), as well as the ability to exercise the eight aishvaryas (ascetical majesties; see Discourse 70) and to perfect the body so that its functions are unaffected by the properties of earth, water, fire, air, ether—the solid, liquid, fiery, gaseous, and ethereal phases of matter (Yoga Sutras

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In Sutra

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, Patanjali warns the sincere seeker of God-union that the use of phenomenal powers is an obstacle, tempting the yogi to egotistical pride and distracting him from the true Goal. The advancing devotee is careful to shun the use of any supernatural powers he might attain, or to employ them only when he is certain of divine permission. After becoming irrevocably established in samadhi, of course, the perfected yogi is guided by God's wisdom; he then exercises the siddhis or refrains from doing so entirely according to the inner promptings of the Divine Will.

[18 Cf. parallel reference in Mark](#)

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[19 “He whose consciousness is not shaken by anxiety under afflictions nor by attachment to happiness under favorable circumstances; he who is free from](#)

[worldly loves, fears, and angers—he is called a muni \[God-knowing sage\] of steady discrimination” \(God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita](#)

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[20 The great novelist Leo Tolstoy wrote a delightful folk tale, The Three Hermits. His friend Nicholas Roerich summarized it, as follows:](#)

“On an island there lived three old hermits. They were so simple that the only prayer they used was: ‘We are three; Thou art Three—have mercy on us!’ Great miracles were manifested during this naive prayer.

“The local bishop came to hear about the three hermits and their inadmissible prayer, and decided to visit them in order to teach them the canonical invocations. He arrived on the island, told the hermits that their heavenly petition was undignified, and taught them many of the customary prayers. The bishop then left on a boat. He saw, following the ship, a radiant light. As it approached he discerned the three hermits, who were holding hands and running upon the waves in an effort to overtake the vessel.

“‘We have forgotten the prayers you taught us,’ they cried as they reached the bishop, ‘and have hastened to ask you to repeat them.’ The awed bishop shook his head.

“‘Dear ones,’ he replied humbly, ‘continue to live with your old prayer!’”

(The story apparently has a historical basis; an editorial note informs us that the bishop met the three hermits while he was sailing from Archangel to the Slovetzky Monastery, at the mouth of the Dvina River.)—Autobiography of a Yogi, Chapter

30

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Discourse 43

1 “Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto Me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto Me: hear, and your soul shall live” (Isaiah

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2 Reference to Exodus

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3 “In him was life, and the life was the light of men” (John

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), explained in Discourse

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. Cosmic Energy guided by the latent Christ Intelligence transmutes itself into different rates of vibration, creating astral living substances and semiconscious life force and potentially conscious electrons, protons, atoms, and molecules, which in turn form themselves into solid, liquid, and gaseous forms constituting the cosmos with its island universes, stellar systems, planetary systems, solar system, the earth and its human inhabitants.

4 “The Father Himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His shape. And ye have not His word abiding in you: for whom He hath sent, him ye believe not” (John 5:37 – 38; see Discourse 21).

5 Some modern translators have rendered “All that the Father hath given me...” as “Everyone the father hath given me...” The original Greek has pan, which is correctly translated as “all”—not panta, which would be translated as “everyone.” “Him” in the second part of the sentence is correctly translated as referring to a person.

6 “And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children” (Isaiah

54

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13

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[7 “His flesh is the Word \[logos\], and his blood is the Holy Spirit,” says the third-century gnostic Gospel of Philip \(The Nag Hammadi Library in English, James M. Robinson, ed.; HarperSanFrancisco,](#)

1990

). Such views were later replaced by the official church dogma of transubstantiation—the doctrine that the bread and wine used in the Eucharistic rites are mystically transformed into the physical body and blood of Jesus when blessed by an ordained priest during the liturgy of Holy Mass. The esoteric truth behind the church’s dogmas and outer rituals, however, was not lost sight of by those of deeper insight, such as Saint Basil the Great, revered Doctor of the Church and bishop of Caesarea (

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Karen Armstrong, in *A History of God*, describes the distinction between dogma and kerygma made by Basil, who taught that “both kinds of Christian teaching were essential to religion. Kerygma was the public teaching of the Church, based on the scriptures. Dogma, however, represented the deeper meaning of biblical truth, which could only be apprehended through religious experience and expressed in symbolic form. Besides the clear message of the Gospels, a secret or esoteric tradition had been handed down ‘in a mystery’ from the apostles; this had been a ‘private and secret teaching, which our holy fathers have preserved in a silence that prevents anxiety and curiosity...so as to safeguard by this silence the sacred character of the mystery. The uninitiated are not permitted to behold these things: their meaning is not to be divulged by writing it down.’ (Basil, *On the Holy Spirit*,

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) Behind the liturgical symbols and lucid teachings of Jesus, there was a secret dogma which represented more developed understanding of the faith....Some religious insights had an inner resonance that could only be apprehended by each individual in his own time during what Plato had called theoria, contemplation. ...As Basil said, these elusive religious realities could only be suggested in the symbolic gestures of the liturgy.”

See also Discourse 69, commentary on Jesus’ words at the Last Supper.
(Publisher’s Note)

[8 Cf. Matthew 16:16 – 17 \(see Discourse 45\).](#)

Discourse 44

[1 See Isaiah](#)

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[2 “Jesus makes good his indictment against \[the Pharisees’\] tradition by giving an example of the mischievous way in which it set aside God’s commandments. The law required the honoring of parents, and for any one to cast off his parents in their old age, thus subjecting them to beggary or starvation, was to do more than to speak evil of them. Such conduct was practically to curse them, and to incur the death penalty for so doing. But at this point the Pharisees interfered with their tradition, which taught that a son could say of that part of his estate by which his parents might be profited, It is a gift; that is, a gift to God, and by thus dedicating that part to God, he would free himself from his obligation to his parents.”—J. W. McGarvey and Philip Pendleton, The Fourfold Gospel \(Cincinnati: Standard Publishing,](#)

1914

). (Publisher's Note)

[3 These commandments given by God through Moses are recorded in Exodus](#)

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, Leviticus

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, and Deuteronomy

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[4 Numerous studies of thousands of persons who have had “near-death experiences” have documented many positive changes that such brushes with death produce. One doctor who has done extensive research is Melvin Morse,](#)

[M.D., who writes in Parting Visions \(New York: HarperCollins,](#)

1996

): “I have never interviewed anyone who had a near-death experience who told me that they came back to make more money or to spend more time at their jobs away from their families....Instead they become convinced that they need to be more loving and kind. They react to their experience by living life to its fullest. They believe their lives have a purpose, even if that purpose is obscure to them. Invariably it involves concepts such as love of family or service to others. They seem to know that the love they create while living will be reflected and radiated back to them when they die.” (Publisher’s Note)

[5 From Robertson’s Word Pictures of the New Testament: “Handwashing before meals is not a requirement of the Old Testament. It is, we know, a good thing for sanitary reasons, but the rabbis made it a mark of righteousness for others at any rate. This item was magnified at great length in the oral teaching. The washing of the hands called for minute regulations. It was commanded to wash the hands before meals, it was one’s duty to do it after eating. The more rigorous did it between the courses. The hands must be immersed. Then the water itself must be ‘clean’ and the cups or pots used must be ceremonially ‘clean.’ Vessels were kept full of clean water ready for use \(John](#)

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). So it went on ad infinitum. Thus a real issue is raised between Jesus and the rabbis. It was far more than a point of etiquette or of hygienics. The rabbis held it to be a mortal sin.”

[6 Century of Verses.](#)

[7 “Blind leaders of the blind”: Jesus used the same phrase in Luke 6:39; see](#)

[commentary in Discourse 33.](#)

[8 Yoga Sutras](#)

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: “Yoga (scientific union with God) is the neutralization of the modifications of chitta. Then the beholder (the soul) is established in its own state”—i.e., the unconditioned freedom and immortal bliss inherent in the soul as a spark of God-essence.

As cited briefly in Discourse

26

(“blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God”), Jesus’ teachings on the emotions parallel those of the more ancient science of yoga. A comprehensive yogic explication of how these energetic forces operate in man’s consciousness to promote or impede awareness of the Divine is given in Paramahansa Yogananda’s commentary on the first chapter of the Bhagavad Gita (especially verses

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). That such teachings were also known and practiced as part of original Christianity is evident in the writings of a number of the early Church Fathers—leading some scholars to refer to them as a kind of “Christian yoga.” Among the examples cited is Evagrius Ponticus, a fourth-century Desert Father whose

writings were influential in the early mystical traditions of both Roman and eastern Orthodox Christianity, and later among the Sufi mystics of Islam. In *Lost Christianity* (New York: Tarcher/Penguin,

2003

), Professor Jacob Needleman says of Evagrius's teaching: "The key term is the word *apatheia*, which translates into our word 'apathy' but which is as far from the meaning of our English word as diamonds are from broken glass....*Apatheia* means, literally, 'without emotions'—or, more precisely, freedom from emotions....Evagrius himself writes, 'Now this *apatheia* has a child called *agape* [love of God] who keeps the door to deep knowledge of the created universe. Finally, to this knowledge succeed theology [experiential knowledge of God] and the supreme beatitude.'"

Likewise, in *Yoga Sutras*

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Patanjali says that the goal of yoga is nearest—that is, is reached most quickly by—those who possess *tivra-samvega* (extreme dispassion; not a negative state but a transmutation of longing for the world into intense ardor for God).

Professor Needleman continues: "The most influential of Evagrius' practical writings may be taken as general guidelines for the arduous inner struggle to break free from the sufferings and illusions brought to man by the emotions. Emotions and the thoughts that support them are often given the name 'demons.' This term, which sounds so naive to the modern mind, has a meaning that is anything but naive. Man is a microcosmic being; he lives and moves within a field of forces and influences spanning the entire ontological range of forces in the universe. These forces have a direction—a vertical direction toward or away from unity with God. And the transactions of these forces take place within the mind and heart, within the 'soul,' as well as in the external universe....

"The *Praktikos* of Evagrius begins with the listing of eight kinds of 'evil' or 'passionate' thoughts: gluttony, impurity, avarice, sadness, anger, *acedia* ['the

desire to give up’], vainglory, and pride. By calling them ‘thoughts,’ Evagrius is referring to an exceedingly important element in the early-Christian teaching about the emotions.... ‘It is not in our power,’ Evagrius writes, ‘to determine whether we are disturbed by these thoughts, but it is up to us to decide if they are to linger within us or not and whether or not they are able to stir up our passions.’

“In short, thoughts, impulses, associations appear within the psyche, but as such they are not yet emotions. It is only when these ‘thoughts’ are given something by ourselves, some energy, some specific psychic force, that they take on the nature of emotion—passion—and assume their overwhelming power in our inner and outer lives.” (Publisher’s Note)

[9 Cf. parallel reference in Mark](#)

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[10 Cf. Discourse](#)

32

, commentary on prophecy of Isaiah quoted in Matthew

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: “And in his name shall the Gentiles trust.”

11 The spiritual traditions of India, while always allowing for a near-infinite variety of personifications of the Supreme Deity to accommodate the diversity of human temperament, have upheld a pure monotheism since the time of her earliest scriptures. “Truth is One; the wise call it by many names,” declares the Rig Veda (

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) unambiguously declares monotheism,” writes Dr. N. C. Panda in *The Vibrating Universe* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass,

1995

), “in the following verse: ‘He is our father, generator, and disposer. He knows all the worlds. He is one alone. All the names of the gods refer to Him only.’”

“In Hinduism and Buddhism people were encouraged to go beyond the gods,” writes Karen Armstrong in *A History of God*. “[But] the new religion of the One God was not coming as easily to the Israelites as Buddhism or Hinduism to the people of the subcontinent.”

“The ancient Israelites were not originally or always strict monotheists,” observes Jonathan Kirsch, author of several acclaimed works on Jewish history, in *The Woman Who Laughed at God: The Untold History of the Jewish People* (New York: Viking,

2001

). “Only when we reach the Book of Kings and the writings of the Prophets”—i.e., the time of Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, etc.—“do the biblical authors enforce the laws against idolatry wholeheartedly and embrace monotheism as the official theology of ancient Israel in plain language.”

Experts generally agree, writes Kirsch, that the five books of the Torah, traditionally attributed to Moses (circa

1250

b.c.

), were actually the work of multiple authors and revisionists over a period of perhaps a thousand years. Some scholars, including Karen Armstrong, believe that the evidence of history shows that the pure monotheism passed down to later Judaism truly crystalized during the Jewish exile in Babylon from

597

to

538

b.c., and that the older books of the Hebrew Bible were revised accordingly. Other historians point out that it was through Babylon that India’s metaphysics and mysticism influenced Jewish, Greek, and Gnostic philosophy. It was during and after the Babylonian exile that some of Judaism’s greatest prophets lived and taught—Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and others.

In his *Autobiography of a Yogi*, Paramahansa Yogananda writes: “To surmount maya was the task assigned to the human race by the millennial prophets. To rise above the duality of creation and perceive the unity of the Creator was conceived of as man’s highest goal.... To remove the veil of maya is to uncover the secret of

creation. He who thus denudes the universe is the only true monotheist. All others are worshipping heathen images. So long as man remains subject to the dualistic illusions of Nature, the Janus-faced Maya is his goddess; he cannot know the one true God....

“Maya or avidya can never be destroyed through intellectual conviction or analysis, but solely through attaining the interior state of nirbikalpa samadhi. The Old Testament prophets, and seers of all lands and ages, spoke from that state of consciousness.” (Publisher’s Note)

[12 See Discourse 16, discussion of partial and full divine incarnations \(khanda avatars and purna avatars\).](#)

[13 Mark](#)

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[14 Cf. parallel reference in Mark](#)

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. Jesus’ miracle of materializing bread and fish is commented on in Discourse

42

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[15 Cf. parallel reference in Mark](#)

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[16 See Discourse](#)

36

, commentary on Matthew 12:38 – 40.

[17 Cf. parallel reference in Mark](#)

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[18 Matthew 11:21 \(see commentary in Discourse 34\).](#)

Discourse 45

1 Cf. parallel references in Mark

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and Luke

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2 See end of this Discourse, and Discourse 2, Discourse 6, Discourse 13, and Discourse 52.

3 In Aramaic, Cephas; in Greek, Petros: a rock.

4 Note about Matthew

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, ...I will build my church:

“Here and Matthew

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are the only two verses in which the word congregation (frequently translated ‘church’) appear in the Gospels. It is a term of Greek-speaking Christianity. In secular Greek it refers to a popular assembly. Early Greek-speaking Christians borrowed the term from their Bible, the Septuagint, where it frequently is used to translate the Hebrew term for the community of God (e.g., Deuteronomy

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).”—Robert J. Miller, ed., *The Complete Gospels: Annotated Scholars Version* (HarperSanFrancisco,

1994

). (Publisher’s Note)

[5 See discussion of disciple-succession \(guru-parampara\) in Discourse 41, commentary on Matthew 10:40: “He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth Him that sent me.”](#)

[6 Sri Ramakrishna’s experience with Jesus was recorded in *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* by Mahendra Nath Gupta: “Some time in November](#)

1874

, Sri Ramakrishna was seized with an irresistible desire to learn the truth of the Christian religion. He began to listen to readings from the Bible....Sri Ramakrishna became fascinated by the life and teachings of Jesus. One day he

was seated in the parlour of Jadu Mallick's garden house at Dakshineswar, when his eyes became fixed on a painting of the Madonna and Child. Intently watching it, he became gradually overwhelmed with divine emotion. The figures in the picture took on life, and the rays of light emanating from them entered his soul....he cried out, 'O Mother! What are You doing to me?' And, breaking through the barriers of creed and religion, he entered a new realm of ecstasy. Christ possessed his soul. For three days he did not set foot in the Kali temple. On the fourth day, in the afternoon, as he was walking in the Panchavati, he saw coming toward him a person with beautiful large eyes, serene countenance, and fair skin. As the two faced each other, a voice rang out in the depths of Sri Ramakrishna's soul: 'Behold the Christ, who shed His heart's blood for the redemption of the world, who suffered a sea of anguish for love of men. It is He, the Master Yogi, who is in eternal union with God. It is Jesus, Love Incarnate.' The Son of Man embraced the Son of the Divine Mother and merged in him. Sri Ramakrishna realized his identity with Christ, as he had already realized his identity with Kali, Rama, Hanuman, Radha, Krishna, Brahman, and Mohammed. The Master went into samadhi and communed with the Brahman with attributes. Thus he experienced the truth that Christianity, too, was a path leading to God-Consciousness. Till the last moment of his life he believed that Christ was an Incarnation of God."— Mahendra Nath Gupta, *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, trans. Swami Nikhilananda (Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center of New York,

1942

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[7 Cf. parallel references in Mark](#)

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and Luke

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[8 Cf. additional parallel reference in Luke](#)

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The Gospels record that Jesus voiced this thought on several different occasions; see for example Matthew 10:38 – 39 (Discourse 41) and John 12:25 (Discourse 66): “He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.”

[9 Jesus makes a similar statement in Matthew 10:32 – 33 and Luke 12:8 – 9; see commentary in Discourse 41.](#)

[10 Cf. additional parallel reference in Luke](#)

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11 While this verse of Matthew 16:27 (“For the Son of man shall come in the glory of the Father with His angels”), addressed to the disciples of Jesus, refers to the worthy devotee’s reward of the glory of Cosmic Consciousness realized in exalted meditation, similar words expressed by Jesus in Matthew 25:31—in the context of his impending death and resurrection—describe his own immortal glorification in Cosmic Consciousness and his everlasting enthronement in the Infinite Christ Consciousness—God’s Cosmic Intelligence that is the supreme witness and judge of the lives of all persons. (See Discourse 68.)

12 Cf. additional parallel reference in Mark

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13 The transmutation of bodily flesh into energy was also demonstrated in the Old Testament story of God speaking to Moses from a burning bush: “And the Lord said furthermore unto him, ‘Put now thine hand into thy bosom.’ And he put his hand into his bosom: and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous as snow. And he said, ‘Put thine hand into thy bosom again.’ And he put his hand into his bosom again; and plucked it out of his bosom, and, behold, it was turned again as his other flesh” (Exodus

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At the Lord's direction, Moses put his hand on his chest, over the fourth subtle cerebrospinal center of life force (the heart, or dorsal, center; anahata chakra), and his hand became charged with the astral life energy, the lifetronic prana, flowing from that center. "Leprous" refers to the scintillating and disintegrating solidity of atoms of the hand, which metamorphosed into a snowy white light. His hand was no longer physical, but made of dancing atoms and glistening astral energy. By replacing his hand of pure energy on his chest, the materializing power of the life energy again re-formed the hand into flesh.

[14 From Paramahansa Yogananda's extensive poem "Samadhi" \(Autobiography of a Yogi, Chapter 14\), in which he described his own experiences in that transcendental state. \(Publisher's Note\)](#)

[15 See Discourse 2.](#)

[16 Malachi 4:5 \(see Discourse 2\).](#)

[17 "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" \(Isaiah](#)

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Discourse 46

[1 Cf. additional parallel reference in Luke](#)

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[2 Cf. additional parallel reference in Luke](#)

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[3 Cf. parallel reference in Mark](#)

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[4 These verses, and a parallel reference in Matthew](#)

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, are part of the story of Jesus’ withering the fig tree, which is commented on in Discourse

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[5 Hebrews](#)

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[6 “Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: \(For we walk by faith, not by sight:\) We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord” \(II Corinthians](#)

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7 “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways” (James

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8 John 10:30 (see Discourse 52).

9 Matthew

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[10 Matthew](#)

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[11 From Swami Ram Tirtha's poem "Marching Light," set to music under the name "Swami Ram Tirtha's Song" by Paramahansa Yogananda in his Cosmic Chants \(published by Self-Realization Fellowship\).](#)

Discourse 47

[1 Cf. parallel references in Mark](#)

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and Luke

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[2 Cf. Mark](#)

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: “And Jesus answering said unto them, ‘Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.’” (See Discourse 65.)

[3 Cf. additional parallel reference in Luke](#)

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[4 “For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; ‘I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit’” \(Isaiah](#)

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[5 See Discourse 7, explanation of “Adam and Eve” allegory.](#)

[6 “Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting: / The Soul that rises with us, our life’s Star,](#)

Hath had elsewhere its setting, / And cometh from afar:

Not in entire forgetfulness, / And not in utter nakedness,

But trailing clouds of glory do we come / From God, who is our home:

Heaven lies about us in our infancy! / Shades of the prison-house begin to close

Upon the growing Boy, / But He beholds the light, and whence it flows,

He sees it in his joy; / The Youth, who daily farther from the east

Must travel, still is Nature’s Priest,

And by the vision splendid / Is on his way attended;

At length the Man perceives it die away, / And fade into the light of common day....”

—Wordsworth, *“Intimations of Immortality”*

[7 Cf. Matthew 19:14 – 15 and Mark 10:14 – 15: “Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.” \(See Discourse](#)

62

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[8 See commentary on Jesus’ saying “I and my Father are one” \(Discourse 52\).](#)

[9 Luke](#)

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48

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10 “But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father” (Mark

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11 “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear has torment. He who fears is not made perfect in love” (First Epistle of St. John,

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12 Cf. parallel reference in Mark

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13 Cf. additional parallel reference in Mark 10

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. See also Jesus' words in Matthew 23:11 – 12, Discourse 55: "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted."

Discourse 48

[1 Cf. parallel reference in Luke](#)

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[2 See Discourse 7.](#)

[3 "Lust, anger, and greed—these constitute the threefold gate of hell leading to the destruction of the soul's welfare. These three, therefore, man should abandon. O Arjuna! By turning away from these three entrances to the realm of darkness, man behaves according to his own highest good and thereafter reaches the Supreme" \(God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita](#)

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[4 Jesus had previously given this counsel in Matthew 5:30; see Discourse 27 for additional commentary in that context.](#)

[5 “If the salt have lost his saltness...”: Cf. parallel reference in Luke 14:34 – 35. See also commentary on parallel reference in Matthew 5:13 \(Discourse 26\).](#)

[6 From Encyclopaedia Britannica: “Thomas Cranmer \(](#)

1489

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1556

) was the first Protestant archbishop of Canterbury (

1533

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), adviser to the English kings Henry VIII and Edward VI. As archbishop, he put the English Bible in parish churches, drew up the Book of Common Prayer, and composed a litany that remains in use today. Denounced for promoting Protestantism by the Catholic Mary I, he was convicted of heresy and burned at the stake....As he had promised, he steadfastly held his right hand—which ‘had offended’ by signing the false recantations—into the flame until it was consumed. His brave and dignified end made an enormous impression.”

Hugh Latimer was the bishop of Worcester and a vocal spokesman for Protestantism; he was also arrested in the conflict between Catholics and Protestants and burned at the stake a few months before Cranmer. At his death

Latimer encouraged his fellow victim Ridley with his famous last words: "...we shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England as I trust shall never be put out."

[7 God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita](#)

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[8 God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita](#)

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[9 Matthew 18:11 – 14. See commentary in Discourse 48.](#)

[10 As cited earlier \[see Discourse 27\], the word used for hell in the original Greek of the Gospel is Gehenna—from Hebrew Ge Hinnom, the valley of Hinnom southwest of Jerusalem, used as a dump for the filth of the city, where continual fires were kept to consume it.](#)

Further examination of the meaning of "hell" and "damnation" is found in Discourse 68.

[11 See Discourse 47: "...they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest" \(Mark 9:34\). The incident in which the disciples could not heal the child possessed of an evil spirit is recounted in Discourse 46, Matthew 17:14 –](#)

21.

12 “Renunciation is difficult to achieve without God-uniting actions (yoga). By the practice of yoga, the muni (‘he whose mind is absorbed in God’) quickly attains the Infinite” (God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita

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13 See Discourse 21, commentary on John 5:28 – 29.

14 “Can God Himself ever incarnate as a human being? To say that God can not do a certain thing is to limit Him. But there are so many things that God can do, yet does not do—at least not as human beings expect of Him. God has never been known to have taken a human form called ‘God’ and dwelt in it among men. (‘Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, God,’ Jesus said, to distinguish himself, an avatar, from God the Father, the Absolute, the Formless.) The Lord has condescended many times, however, to manifest Himself through the incarnation of a fully liberated being who, once an ordinary human being, has become a true reflection or ‘son of God.’ God, who is almighty and can do anything, thus operates His Omniscience through the human body of an avatar. Just as the ocean of Cosmic Consciousness is aware of a soul wave manifesting on its surface, so the soul wave of an avatar is aware of the ocean of Cosmic Consciousness manifesting through its form” (God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita, commentary on

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[15 Jesus uses the parable of the shepherd and lost sheep again in Luke 15:3 – 7. See Discourse 58 for additional commentary in that context.](#)

[16 See footnote 4 in Discourse 45 \(Matthew 16:18\) for explanation of translation of original Greek word congregation as “church” in the King James Bible. No “church” per se existed in the time of Jesus.](#)

[17 These same words are ascribed to Jesus in another context in Matthew 16:19; see Discourse 45.](#)

[18 Revelation](#)

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Discourse 49

[1 “Be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves” \(Matthew 10:16\). See commentary in Discourse 41.](#)

[2 “He is truly a yogi who, on this earth and up to the very time of death, is able to master every impulse of desire and wrath. He is a happy man!...Renunciants who are desireless and wrathless, mind-controlled, and Self-realized, are completely free both in this world and in the beyond” \(God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita](#)

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[3 Matthew 26:53 – 54 \(see Discourse 73\).](#)

[4 Cf. parallel reference in Matthew](#)

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[5 The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, quatrain lxxiv, translated by Edward FitzGerald. Paramahansa Yogananda’s revelatory spiritual interpretation of this poetic classic, Wine of the Mystic, is published by Self-Realization Fellowship.](#)

[6 In The Vision of God \(New York: Longmans, Green and Co.,](#)

1932

), Dr. Kenneth E. Kirk, Anglican bishop of Oxford, points out that Jesus’ ideals of renunciation were not derived from traditional Jewish teachings: “The ascetic outlook of the Gospels is seen to stand out of any recognizable relation with contemporary Judaism. The passages about turning the other cheek, about taking no thought for the morrow, about laying up no treasure on earth, about forsaking parents and possessions, about bearing the Cross are foreign to the genius of the [Jewish] race.” Though Bishop Kirk concludes that the historical origins of these

teachings are something of a mystery, other historians relate them to evidence of Jesus' link with India. The distinguished scholar (and former president of India) Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan writes in *Eastern Religions and Western Thought* (Oxford University Press,

1939

): "In his teaching of the Kingdom of God, life eternal, ascetic emphasis, and even future life, Jesus Christ breaks away from the Jewish tradition and approximates to Hindu and Buddhist thought. Though his teaching is historically continuous with Judaism, it did not develop from it in its essentials."
(Publisher's Note)

[7 The paths of outer renunciation and yogic inner renunciation are explained later in this Discourse, and in Discourse 40.](#)

[8 The words of Swami Shankara quoted here were set to music by Paramahansa Yogananda in his Cosmic Chants \(published by Self-Realization Fellowship\).](#)

[9 Acts](#)

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[10 See Discourse 63.](#)

[11 Cf. parallel reference in Matthew](#)

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Discourse 50

1 I.e., Judea.

2 “To the knower of Brahman (Spirit), all the Vedas (scriptures) are of no more utility than is a reservoir when there is a flood from all directions” (God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita

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46

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3 John 5:1 – 18 (see Discourse 21).

4 “The rishis taught that each human being has been created by God as a soul that will uniquely manifest some special attribute of the Infinite before resuming its Absolute Identity.”—Autobiography of a Yogi

5 John 8:58 (see Discourse 51).

The Los Angeles Times on November

16

1999, reported: “‘The history of physics,’ says Harvard physicist Andrew Strominger, ‘is the history of giving up cherished ideas.’ No idea has been harder to give up, however—for physicists and laypeople alike—than everyday notions of space and time, the fundamental ‘where’ and ‘when’ of the universe and everything in it...Now, some physicists are taking this revolutionary line of thinking...If their theories are right, in the words of Edward Witten of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, space and time may be ‘doomed.’ Concur physicist Nathan Seiberg, also of the institute: ‘I am almost certain that space and time are illusions. These are primitive notions that will be replaced by something more sophisticated.’ That conclusion may not affect anyone’s morning commute. But it is rocking the foundations of physics—as well as causing metaphysical reverberations that inevitably follow major changes in our fundamental understanding of how the universe works.” (Publisher’s Note)

6 “The dispersed among the Gentiles”: reference to the Jews who had been driven from their Palestinian homeland to live in other parts of the Hellenic world during the reign of the Greek rulers who succeeded Alexander the Great. (“Gentiles” in this verse is a translation of Hellenon, “Greeks.”) Jesus’ listeners assumed he was telling them he would go to foreign lands where they would not be able to find him.

7 John

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(Discourse

17

) and John

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(Discourse

43

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[8 God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita](#)

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[9 “But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting” \(Micah 5:2\). See also Discourse 36 \(prophecies about Christ coming from the “house of David”\).](#)

[10 See Discourse 13.](#)

Discourse 51

[1 The text preceding this segment of verses \(John](#)

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) in the King James Bible tells the story of the woman taken in adultery. According to Biblical scholars, this story appears in different places in various ancient manuscripts of the New Testament. Many modern editions place it at the beginning of John chapter

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, as in the King James version; other manuscripts place it after Luke

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, or elsewhere in the Gospel of John. It is commented on in Discourse

35

, along with other passages containing Jesus' teachings on the forgiveness of sins. (Publisher's Note)

[2 John 1:4 – 5, 9 \(see Discourse 1\) and John 3:19 \(see Discourse 15\).](#)

[3 “Oh grace abounding that had made me fit](#)

to fix my eyes on the eternal light

until my vision was consumed in It!

I saw within Its depth how It conceives

all things in a single volume bound by Love,

of which the universe is the scattered leaves.”

— Dante, *The Divine Comedy: Paradiso*, trans. John Ciardi

(New York: Mentor Books,

1961

), Canto xxxiii,

82

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[4 John 7:34 \(see Discourse 50\).](#)

[5 Jesus' citing of the Mosaic law refers to Deuteronomy](#)

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and

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[6 “The ancient sage Patanjali, in Yoga Sutras](#)

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, refers to two basic categories of samadhi: (

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) samprajnata and (

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) asamprajnata. As applied to advanced stages of realization, samprajnata refers to savikalpa ('with difference') samadhi, or divine union in which there remains some distinction between the knower and the known, as in the realization 'Thou and I are One.' In greater or lesser degree, some modifications of nature remain. But in asamprajnata samadhi, all differentiations of nature are resolved into the one Spirit. The consciousness of 'Thou and I are One' becomes 'I am He, who has become this little form of "I" and all forms.' This is not the egotist's proclamation, 'I am God!'—the brass crown of megalomania—but rather the full realization of the absolute truth: God is the only Reality. Thus asamprajnata, in its absolute definition, is nirvikalpa ('without difference') samadhi, the highest yoga or union manifested by fully liberated masters or those on the threshold of soul freedom."—God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita

[7 God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita](#)

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[8 I Corinthians](#)

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. “Our rejoicing” is the correct translation; not, as usually given, “your rejoicing.” Saint Paul was referring to the universality of the Christ Consciousness.

[9 John 3:14 \(see Discourse 14\).](#)

[10 Though some modern translations render this verse \(John](#)

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) as “if you adhere to my teachings” or “if you live as I tell you to,” the original Greek for “word” in this verse is logos—the same term used in John

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: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” (See Discourse 1.)

[11 The nature of Satan \(“the devil”\) as the perpetrator of maya, cosmic delusion, is explained in Discourse](#)

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[12 First Epistle of St. John,](#)

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13 In Autobiography of a Yogi, I quoted Jesus, with the following observation: “If a man keep my saying (remain unbrokenly in the Christ Consciousness), he shall never see death.’ In these words Jesus was not referring to immortal life in the physical body—a monotonous confinement one would hardly mete out to a sinner, much less a saint! The illumined man of whom Christ spoke is one who has awakened from the deathly trance of ignorance to Eternal Life.”

14 Physicists as well as illumined sages aver that time is not an absolute reality. In The Elegant Universe: Superstrings, Hidden Dimensions, and the Quest for the Ultimate Theory (New York: Vintage Books,

2000

), Dr. Brian Greene writes: “Einstein’s work showed that concepts such as space and time, which had previously seemed to be separate and absolute, are actually interwoven and relative”—a fact observable, for instance, in that the force of gravity distorts not only the fabric of space, but of time itself. Indeed, in the massive gravitational fields of black holes, “time seems to slow down or even come to a full stop,” according to Discover magazine (Dec.

2000

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In “an ultramicroscopic examination of space and time,” writes Professor Greene, “the conventional notions of left and right, back and forth, up and down (and even of before and after) lose their meaning.” Einstein put it succinctly in a letter written shortly before his death in

1955

: “For us believing physicists, the distinction between past, present, and future is only an illusion, even if a stubborn one.”

To ordinary human perception, the “illusion” is persistent indeed. “Such is the great influence of Time which governs the universe,” wrote Swami Sri Yukteswar in *The Holy Science* in

1894

. “No man can overcome this influence except him who, blessed with pure love, the heavenly gift of nature, becomes divine; being baptized in the sacred stream Pranava (the holy Aum vibration), he comprehends the Kingdom of God.”

The great jnanavatar (“incarnation of wisdom”) explained the genesis of time and the other universal delusions inherent in creation, and how liberated souls such as Jesus transcend them: “From Aum (Pranava, the Word, the manifestation of the Omnipotent Force), come Kala, Time; Desa, Space; and Anu, the Atom (the vibratory structure of creation)...In its different aspects Aum presents the idea of change, which is Time, Kala, in the Ever-Unchangeable; and the idea of division, which is Space, Desa, in the Ever-Indivisible. The ensuing effect is the idea of particles—the innumerable atoms, patra or anu. These four—the Word, Time, Space, and the Atom—are therefore one and the same, and substantially nothing but mere ideas....

“[Man] achieves salvation by dissolving the four original ideas...primal thoughts by which creation sprang into being,” he goes on to say. That transcendent state is attained when, by highest yoga meditation, one takes his consciousness through the Brahmarandhra (see Discourse

75

), “the door between two creations, material and spiritual. When Ego, the son of man, comes to the door, he comprehends the Spiritual Light and becomes baptized therein. And passing through this door he comes above the ideational creation of Darkness, Maya, and entering into the spiritual world, receives the true Light and becomes the Son of God.” (Publisher’s Note)

[15 God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita](#)

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Discourse 52

[1 In his scholarly study *Reincarnation for the Christian* \(Philadelphia: Westminster Press,](#)

1974

) Dr. Quincy Howe, Jr., former Professor of Comparative Religion at Scripps College, writes about this incident of the man blind from birth:

“There is a glaring inconsistency in the question posed by the disciples. They ask the Lord if the man himself could have committed the sin that led to his blindness. Given the fact that the man has been blind from birth, we are confronted with a provocative question. When could he have made such transgressions as to make him blind at birth? The only conceivable answer is in some prenatal state. The question as posed by the disciples explicitly presupposes prenatal existence. It will also be noted that Christ says nothing to dispel or correct the presupposition. Here is incontrovertible support for a doctrine of human preexistence [in the Bible]...It is perfectly reasonable to surmise on the basis of this episode that Jesus and his followers accepted preexistence and thought so little of it that the question of prenatal sin did not even call for an answer....We have here an explicit statement of prenatal existence with all its implications for karma and reincarnation.” (Publisher’s Note)

[2 See commentary on John 8:12, “I am the light of the world,” Discourse 51.](#)

[3 The Bhagavad Gita states: “The Aum that causes the birth and sustenance and dissolution of beings and their various natures is termed Karma \(cosmic action\). ...They are true knowers of ‘day’ and ‘night’ who understand the Day of Brahma, which endures for a thousand cycles \(yugas\), and the Night of Brahma,](#)

which also endures for a thousand cycles. At the dawn of Brahma's Day all creation, reborn, emerges from the state of nonmanifestation; at the dusk of Brahma's Night all creation sinks into the sleep of nonmanifestation" (

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“By revivifying Prakriti (Aum, Cosmic Creative Vibration), Mine own emanation, again and again I produce this host of creatures, all subject to the finite laws of Nature....It is solely My impregnating presence that causes Mother Nature to give birth to the animate and the inanimate. Because of Me (through Prakriti) the worlds revolve in alternating cycles (of creation and dissolution)” (

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These cycles or yugas are discussed in more detail in the commentary on these Gita verses in God Talks With Arjuna.

4 Cosmic dissolution may be only partial and temporary or complete and for a long time. In the partial temporary dissolution, portions only of matter and worlds are disintegrated; but in complete dissolution the entire system of universes, all stars and planets, all beings, are dissolved in Spirit. But the dissolving of all creation in a permanent end of manifestation is impossible until all souls are free from mortal desires and thus become fully liberated in God. To provide ample accommodation for the slow evolutionary return of an infinite family of souls to their Maker, God keeps spinning the alternating cycles of manifestation (day) and dissolution (night), spanning aeons as reckoned on the small scale of a solar system calendar. In the night, God gives all unredeemed souls, as well as Himself! a long cosmic rest, after which the Holy Ghost, Aum Vibration, has to create anew the entire universe at the behest of God the Father. Because of the endless desires of creatures, their universe, fashioned after their own longings, is endlessly re-created for their folly and ultimate divine schooling.

5 Paramahansa Yogananda wrote in a letter to his highly advanced disciple Rajarsi Janakananda: “There are two individual dissolutions or ‘floods.’ First the partial dissolution of sleep and second, the bigger dissolution of death. (

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) The partial dissolution of sleep every day dissolves the daily picture of life; unconsciously, the soul realizes its invisible blessed nature. (

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) Death is a bigger dissolution in which the soul first finds out that the body is only a shadow, a picture played on the screen of the cosmic cinema house. Both of those above processes are unconsciously imposed upon man. Therefore yogis learn to produce partial dissolution and the bigger dissolution consciously by pranayama, switching off the life force from the sensory and motor nerves (as in sleep), and further switching off the life force from the sensory and motor nerves, muscles, lungs, heart, spinal cord, seven plexuses, etc. In order to destroy the false reality of the body and its surroundings, and to behold this body and world as pictures, and to understand the invisibility and real nature of the soul, the yogi must be able to produce the partial dissolution—Sanskrit khanda (partial) pralaya (dissolution) and mahapralaya (bigger dissolution) at will....

“Please practice these two states—of sensory-motor samadhi with heartbeat and sensory-motor relaxation samadhi without heartbeat—and you will know this universe as God’s cosmic cinema house.”

6 “Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto Him that sent me. Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come” (John 7:33 – 34; see Discourse 50).

7 Cf. Mark 7:31 – 37 (see Discourse 44).

8 The pool of Siloam was located inside the walls of Jerusalem, fed by a conduit that channeled water from a spring outside the city. To this pool, Bible commentator John Gill wrote, “the Jews went at the feast of tabernacles, and drew water with great rejoicing, and brought it, and poured it on the altar; the waters thereof also the priests drank for digestion, when they had eaten too much flesh; and this was likewise made use of to wash in, in case of uncleanness.”

9 By “judgment” is meant divine cosmic intelligence, not a process of condemnation as is interpreted by dogmatists. See also commentary on John 5:22 (Discourse 21), “For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son,” and succeeding verses in that Discourse.

10 John 6:44 (see Discourse 43).

11 See Discourse 9 and Discourse 13.

12 “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6; see Discourse 70).

13 I.e., Hanukkah, the “festival of lights” commemorating the rededication of the temple in

164

b.c.

14 God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita

xiv

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15 “I have said, ‘Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High’”
(Psalms

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Discourse 53

1 Jesus’ declaration of the two greatest commandments is recounted in all three synoptic Gospels, with minor variations. In the Gospels According to St. Matthew and St. Mark it occurs during Jesus’ last week in Jerusalem, shortly before his crucifixion; in the Gospel According to St. Luke it appears earlier. In this Discourse all three versions are commented on together, but the chronology used is that found in Luke, in which it is followed by the parable of the Good Samaritan and the story of Mary and Martha (not related in any of the other Gospels).

2 Here Jesus is quoting from the Hebrew law set forth by Moses: Deuteronomy

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[3 Jesus' words "the law and the prophets" here and in other statements \(e.g., Matthew 5:17; see Discourse 27\) made reference to the canon of Hebrew scripture—the Torah \(five books of Moses setting forth the doctrinal laws of Judaism\) and the books containing the works of the great Hebrew prophets, consisting of Joshua, Judges, I and II Samuel, I and II Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve "minor prophets" \(so called because of the brevity of these books\): Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.](#)

Thomas Cahill, in *The Gifts of the Jews* (New York: Anchor Books,

1998

), writes: "The books of the Hebrew Bible are divided into three sections, Torah [the Law], Neviim [the Prophets], and Ketuvim [the Writings], the initial letters of which form the acronym Tanak, the word by which the Bible is known in Jewish tradition.... Torah or Teaching (sometimes translated Law) is also called the Pentateuch, that is, the Five Books: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.... The Torah is unquestionably the scripture of Jewish tradition, though the oft-repeated phrase 'the Torah (or the Law) and the Prophets' alerts us that these two parts of scripture are viewed as virtually inseparable."

(Publisher's Note)

[4 "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers](#)

[of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?](#)

“He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?”
(Micah

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[5 Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa.](#)

[6 I Thessalonians](#)

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[7 See Discourse 6.](#)

[8 God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita](#)

xviii

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. From the commentary: “‘Absorb thy mind in Me’ signifies absorption in the true ‘Myself’ [the Spirit, reflected in man as the soul] in ecstasy. ‘Become My devotee’ signifies perception and remembrance of the blessed ‘Myself’ during that state of human activity in which the devotee’s actions are not performed under the influence of the physical ego. ‘Resign all things to Me’ signifies dissolving mind and life force and desires in the fire of true perception of the inner ‘Myself.’ ‘Bow down to Me’ has a very deep meaning. The act of bowing consists in placing the hands, palms pressed together, over the heart, then touching the fingertips to the forehead to express devotion to a person or to God. Hands symbolize activity, the heart symbolizes love, and the head symbolizes wisdom. So a person bowing to man or God symbolizes by this act of obeisance: ‘My activity, my love, and my mind are at Your service.’

“In this stanza the Lord asks Arjuna to dissolve his heart’s love, his impulse to physical activity, and his discriminating thoughts in the inner ‘Myself’ by repeatedly concentrating his attention therein, even though the mind wants to run away and to be engrossed in physical or emotional activities on the plane of the senses.

“The Lord further intimates to Arjuna: ‘You have endeared yourself to Me. I truly promise you that if you become absorbed in your inner “Myself,” you will know it is none other than the great Myself pervading everywhere.’”

[9 Mirabai was a medieval Rajputani princess who renounced her royalty and became a renowned devotee of God. She composed many devotional songs that are a treasured part of India’s spiritual lore.](#)

[10 Recounted in The Saints that Moved the World by René Fülöp-Miller \(New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company,](#)

1945

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[11 Teresa’s experience with the angel is recounted in The Saints that Moved the World, by René Fülöp-Miller.](#)

In her autobiography the saint wrote that experiencing Christ without form is a vision “of a higher kind.” In this way, she says, “we learn how He is God, is mighty, can do all things, commands all things, governs all things, and fills all things with His love.”—Life of St. Teresa of Jesus, Chapter

xxviii

(New York: Benziger Bros.,

1904

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“I was in prayer one day...,” she relates in Chapter

xxvii

, “when I saw Christ close by me, or, to speak more correctly, felt Him; for I saw nothing with the eyes of the body, nothing with the eyes of the soul. He seemed to me to be close beside me; and I saw, too, as I believe, that it was He who was speaking to me....

“I went at once to my confessor....He asked in what form I saw our Lord. I told him I saw no form. He then said: ‘How did you know that it was Christ?’ I replied, that I did not know how I knew it; but I could not help knowing that He was close beside me—that I saw Him distinctly, and felt His presence; that the recollectedness of my soul was deeper in the prayer of quiet, and more continuous; that the effects thereof were very different from what I had hitherto experienced....

“Afterwards I learnt from Friar Peter of Alcantara, a holy man of great spirituality—of whom I shall speak by and by—and from others of great learning, that this vision was of the highest order, and one with which Satan can least interfere; and therefore there are no words whereby to explain....

“He renders Himself present to the soul by a certain knowledge of Himself which is more clear than the sun. I do not mean that we now see either a sun or any brightness, only that there is a light not seen, which illumines the understanding so that the soul may have the fruition of so great a good. This vision brings with it great blessings.”

See also Discourse 69, Teresa of Avila. (Publisher's Note)

[12 First Epistle of St. John,](#)

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[13 Matthew 15:24 \(see Discourse 44\).](#)

[14 The Levites were members of the priestly tribe descended from Moses' brother Aaron, or those assigned ceremonial temple functions by the priests.](#)

Discourse 54

[1 Luke](#)

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are commented on with the parallel references from Matthew in Discourse

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. Luke

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, also paralleled in Matthew, are commented on in Discourse

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[2 The Lord's Prayer as given in Chapter](#)

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of the Gospel According to St. Matthew is commented on in Discourse

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. In this present Discourse, Paramahansa Yogananda offers a further insightful commentary in which he fathoms the depths of the words and consciousness of Jesus to reveal a prayer of esoteric universality for the realization of the eternal relationship between the soul and God. (Publisher's Note)

[3 Vedanta, the end or final message of the Hindu Vedas which appears in the Upanishads, propounds the philosophy of monistic idealism. Swami Shankara, peerless exponent of Advaita \("nondual"\) Vedanta, wrote: "The whole universe apprehended by the sensory mind and speech is naught but Spirit \(Sat\), the Reality transcending Nature. Nothing else exists."— Crest Jewel of Wisdom, verse](#)

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Amit Goswami, Ph.D., professor of physics at the Institute of Theoretical Sciences at the University of Oregon, writes in his book *The Self-Aware Universe*: “Modern science validates an ancient idea—the idea that consciousness, not matter, is the ground of all being....The philosophy that has dominated science for centuries (physical, or material, realism) assumes that only matter—consisting of atoms or, ultimately, elementary particles—is real; all else are secondary phenomena of matter, just a dance of the constituent atoms. This worldview is called realism because objects are assumed to be real and independent of subjects, us, or of how we observe them....The facts prove otherwise; science proves the potency of a monistic philosophy over dualism—over spirit separated from matter. In the idealist philosophy, consciousness is fundamental....From this vantage point we see that some of the concepts of various religious traditions become as logical, elegant, and satisfying as the interpretation of experiments of quantum physics.” (Publisher’s Note)

[4 “But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth” \(John 4:23 – 24; see Discourse 18\).](#)

[5 God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita](#)

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[6 “O Lord my God, Thou art very great; Thou art clothed with honour and majesty, who coverest Thyself with light as with a garment” \(Psalms](#)

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[7 A parallel example in Judeo-Christian scripture is found in the Old Testament Book of Job, whose extraordinary ordeals and subsequent demand for an explanation from God are proverbial. In the Introduction to his English rendition The Book of Job \(New York: HarperCollins, 1992](#)

), translator Stephen Mitchell writes:

“Job’s outrage at the world’s injustice is directed straight to the creator of that world. There are no detours or half-measures, no attempt to deflect ultimate responsibility by blaming a devil or an original sin.

““He [God] does not care; so I say he murders both the pure and the wicked.

““When the plague brings sudden death, he laughs at the anguish of the innocent.

““He hands the earth to the wicked and blindfolds the judges’ eyes.

““Who does it, if not he?’ ...

“All this bewilderment and outrage couldn’t be so intense if Job didn’t truly love God. He senses that in spite of appearances there is somewhere an ultimate justice, but he doesn’t know where....Of course, the answer Job receives is anything but what he expected....He is taken up in a state of vision, and enters a world of primal energy, independent of human beings, which includes what humans might experience as terrifying or evil....

“These huge symbols of evil, so terrifying to humans who haven’t seen, or won’t acknowledge, the destructive Shiva-aspect of God, are presented to us as God’s playthings. They are a part of the continuum of nature, which runs seamlessly from angel to beast. ‘The roaring of lions,’ as Blake wrote, ‘the howling of wolves, the raging of the stormy sea, and the destructive sword, are portions of eternity too great for the eye of man.’...The only other source in the Bible that approaches [Job’s vision] in kilowatts is a passage from the anonymous prophet known as Second Isaiah: ‘I form light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil; I the Unnamable do all these things.’”

In essence, God’s reply to Job is that he must rise from human consciousness to divine consciousness in order to understand the seeming paradoxes of creation: “Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?” (Job

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“The only scriptural analogy to God’s answer,” writes Mitchell, “is the vision granted to Arjuna in chapter

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of the Gita, in which that prince experiences, down to the marrow of his bones, the glory and the terror of the universe, all creation and all destruction, embraced in the blissful play of the Supreme Lord. The manifestations there are more cosmic than in Job, and the realization of God as ‘the Self seated in the heart of all creatures’ is far clearer....[But] when Job says, ‘I had heard of you with my

ears; but now my eyes have seen you,' he is no longer a servant, who fears God and avoids evil. He has faced evil, has looked straight into its face and through it, into a vast wonder and love." (Publisher's Note)

8 Revelation 4:11.

9 "The Aum (Visarga, the two dots '·' representing the duality of Cosmic Vibration) that causes the birth and sustenance and dissolution of beings and their various natures is termed Karma (cosmic action)" (God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita

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From Paramahansa Yogananda's commentary: "The cosmic vibration (Aum) with its law of duality and relativity emanates from Spirit and causes the birth, sustenance, and dissolution of all matter and beings through the law of karma. This law of action holds sway over all activities of man and Nature....

"Karma signifies all cosmic divine and material activities as well as the spiritual and worldly activities of human beings.... The Aum or cosmic intelligent vibration is the first manifestation of God in creation. Therefore all the cosmic activities emanating from the intelligent cosmic Vibratory Being—the Aum—are termed Supreme Cosmic Karma. Man is a miniature or microcosmic manifestation of the macrocosmic Vibratory Being (the invisible intelligent Holy Ghost, or Aum, or the Word). Man's spiritual, worldly, and evil activities are termed human karma. God, manifested as the cosmic Vibratory Being or Aum, is the direct Originator of all cosmic and human activities, governed by the law of karma, or cause and effect. The whole cosmos and all its sentient beings are subject to this law."

10 "Man shall not live by bread [material sustenance] alone, but by every word [unit of cosmic energy vibrating out of the Holy Ghost or omnipresent Aum] that proceedeth out of the mouth of God [descends into the human body through the subtle astral center of life in the medulla oblongata]" (Matthew 4:4; see

[commentary in Discourse 8\).](#)

[11 Matthew 6:14 – 15; see Discourse 28. See also Discourse 35, commentary on Mark 11:25 – 26.](#)

[12 See also Discourse 28.](#)

[13 Satyam, shivam, sundaram: a well-known Sanskrit mantra \(chant\) for worshipfully invoking a meditative perception of God.](#)

[14 “If thou would’st hear the Nameless, and wilt dive](#)

Into the Temple-cave of thine own self,
There, brooding by the central altar, thou
May’st haply learn the Nameless hath a voice,
By which thou wilt abide, if thou be wise.”

— Tennyson, “The Ancient Sage”

[15 “It is a beauteous evening, calm and free,](#)

The holy time is quiet as a Nun
Breathless with adoration; the broad sun
Is sinking down in its tranquillity;
The gentleness of heaven broods o’er the Sea;
Listen! the mighty Being is awake,
And doth with his eternal motion make
A sound like thunder—everlastingly.”—Wordsworth

[16 Acts 2:1 – 21 \(see Discourse 70\).](#)

Discourse 55

[1 See Discourse 44, footnote 5, on the elaborate ritual handwashings observed by the Pharisees.](#)

[2 Cf. parallel reference in Luke](#)

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[3 Jesus repeats this admonition in other contexts in Luke 14:11 \(see Discourse 58\) and Luke 18:14 \(see Discourse 61\).](#)

[4 John 10:34 \(see Discourse 52\).](#)

[5 According to Jewish law \(Numbers](#)

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), a person who touched a grave was considered unclean for seven days.

[6 “The phrase ‘wisdom of God’ has been very puzzling, for the words spoken by Jesus are not found in any Old Testament book. Among the explanations, the best is that which represents Jesus as quoting the trend or tenor of several prophecies, such as II Chronicles](#)

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.”—J. W. McGarvey and Philip Pendleton, *The Fourfold Gospel* (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing,

1914

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In light of recent discoveries, however, it is possible that Jesus was referring to some scriptural writing not included in the Bible as it has come down to our time. In *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation* by Michael Wise, Martin Abegg, Jr., and Edward Cook (HarperSanFrancisco,

1996

), the authors state: “The scrolls have proven that some of the Jews of Jesus’ day knew and used more than one form of the many biblical books....There was as yet no agreed upon ‘canon’ of the Bible. Which books would be included in the Bible and in what form or ‘edition’ had not yet been decided. Doubtless different Jews and groups of Jews would have made different selections of authoritative books. Many of the Dead Sea Scrolls, though not a part of our Bible today, were certainly regarded as holy and authoritative by at least some Second-Temple Jews. Only later, after

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c.e.

, did a ‘standard’ version of the Bible emerge.” (Publisher’s Note)

[7 The version in the Gospel According to St. Matthew identifies Zechariah as the “son of Berechiah,” the chronicler evidently confusing him with the author of the Book of Zechariah \(see Zechariah](#)

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). The incident referred to by Jesus, however, is recounted in II Chronicles

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: “Now after the death of Jehoiada came the princes of Judah, and made obeisance to the king. Then the king hearkened unto them. And they left the house of the Lord God of their fathers, and served groves and idols: and wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this their trespass. Yet he sent prophets to them, to bring them again unto the Lord; and they testified against them: but they would not give ear.

“And the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, which stood above the people, and said unto them, ‘Thus saith God, “Why transgress ye the commandments of the Lord, that ye cannot prosper? Because ye have forsaken the Lord, He hath also forsaken you.”’ And they conspired against him, and stoned him with stones at the commandment of the king in the court of the house of the Lord.”

[8 A passage from the Old Testament book of Nehemiah \(](#)

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) describes such treatment of the Hebrew prophets, part of the recurrent cycles of forgetfulness of God, karmic retribution, and subsequent repentance:

“And they took strong cities, and a fat land, and possessed houses full of all goods, wells digged, vineyards, and oliveyards, and fruit trees in abundance: so they did eat, and were filled, and became fat, and delighted themselves in Thy great goodness.

“Nevertheless they were disobedient, and rebelled against Thee, and cast Thy law behind their backs, and slew Thy prophets which testified against them to

turn them to Thee, and they wrought great provocations. Therefore Thou deliveredst them into the hand of their enemies, who vexed them: and in the time of their trouble, when they cried unto Thee, Thou heardest them from heaven; and according to Thy manifold mercies Thou gavest them saviours, who saved them out of the hand of their enemies.

“But after they had rest, they did evil again before Thee: therefore leftest Thou them in the hand of their enemies, so that they had the dominion over them: yet when they returned, and cried unto Thee, Thou heardest them from heaven; and many times didst Thou deliver them according to Thy mercies.”

[9 “Guilty” here is used in the archaic sixteenth-century sense of “owing payment.”](#)

Discourse 56

[1 Cf. Luke](#)

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: “Woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation” (Discourse

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[2 These words of Jesus are paralleled in Matthew](#)

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and are commented on in that context in Discourse

29

, with emphasis on the individual application of this central teaching of Jesus. The commentary on the reprise of these verses in Luke expands their relevance to include, along with personal observance, a national and international obligation.

3 “God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth....That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us: For in Him we live, and move, and have our being....For we are also His offspring” (Acts

17

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26

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28

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4 “The ideal of a well-rounded civilization is not a chimerical one. For millenniums India was a land of both spiritual light and widespread material prosperity. The poverty of the last

200

years is, in India’s long history, only a passing karmic phase. A byword in the world, century after century, was ‘the riches of the Indies.’ Abundance, material as well as spiritual, is a structural expression of rita, cosmic law or natural

righteousness. There is no parsimony in the Divine, nor in Its goddess of phenomena, exuberant Nature.

“The records of history present India, up until the

18

th century, as the world’s wealthiest nation....The Bible refers to the riches of India, telling us (

ii

Chronicles

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21

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) that the ‘ships of Tarshish’ brought to King Solomon ‘gold and silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks’ and ‘algum [sandalwood] trees and precious stones’ from Ophir (Sopara on the Bombay coast). Megasthenes, the Greek ambassador (

4

th century

b.c.

), has left us a detailed picture of India’s prosperity. Pliny (

1

st century

a.d.

) tells us the Romans annually spent fifty million sesterces (\$

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) on imports from India, which was then a vast marine power.

“Chinese travelers wrote vividly of the opulent Indian civilization, its widespread education and excellent government. The Chinese priest Fa-Hsien (

5

th century) tells us the Indian people were happy, honest, and prosperous. See Samuel Beal’s *Buddhist Records of the Western World* (India was the ‘Western world’ to the Chinese!), Trubner, London; and Thomas Watter’s *On Yuan Chwang’s Travels in India*,

a.d.

629 – 45, *Royal Asiatic Society*.

“Columbus, discovering the New World in the

15

th century, was in reality seeking a shorter trade route to India. For centuries Europe was eager to possess the Indian exports—silks, fine cloths (of such sheerness as to deserve their descriptions: ‘woven air’ and ‘invisible mist’), cotton prints, brocades, embroideries, rugs, cutlery, armor, ivory and ivory work, perfumes, incense, sandalwood, potteries, medicinal drugs and unguents, indigo, rice, spices, coral, gold, silver, pearls, rubies, emeralds, and diamonds.

“Portuguese and Italian merchants have recorded their awe at the fabulous magnificence throughout the empire of Vijayanagar (

1336

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1565

). The glory of its capital was described by the Arabian ambassador Razzak as ‘such that eye has not seen, nor has ear heard of, any place to equal it on earth’” (Autobiography of a Yogi, Chapter

49

).

[5 Cf. commentary on Saint Matthew’s version of these verses \(Matthew 6:19 – 21; see Discourse 28\).](#)

[6 See also explanation of metaphysical significance of “the Bridegroom,” Discourse 16.](#)

[7 From Gitanjali by Rabindranath Tagore \(New York: Macmillan and Co.,](#)

1916

).

[8 For this second paragraph of verses \(Luke 12:54 – 56\), see also commentary on parallel reference in Matthew 16:2 – 3 \(Discourse 44\).](#)

[9 See also commentary on Matthew 10:34 – 36 \(Discourse 41\): “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household.”](#)

[10 Luke](#)

9

:

54

(Discourse

49

).

[11 Matthew](#)

3

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11

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12

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[12 “‘Is not My word like as a fire?’ saith the Lord; ‘and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?’” \(Jeremiah](#)

23

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29

).

[13 These verses are paralleled in Matthew](#)

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23

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26

, and are commented on in that context in Discourse

27

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Discourse 57

1 Verses

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17

are commented on in Discourse

32

. Verses

18

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21

are covered in Discourse

37

with their parallels from the Gospel According to St. Matthew.

2 “What a responsibility one assumes when he tries to improve people! The rose in the vase looks beautiful; one forgets all the gardening work that helped to make it beautiful. And if one must take pains in order to have a lovely rose, how much more effort is required to produce a perfect human being!”—Sayings of Paramahansa Yogananda (published by Self-Realization Fellowship).

3 See “The Saint With Two Bodies,” a full account of my meeting with the revered Swami Pranabananda, Chapter

3

in Autobiography of a Yogi.

4 Spirit in Its aspect of God the Creator. When Emerson’s poem “Brahma” appeared in the Atlantic Monthly in

1857

, most of the readers were bewildered. Emerson chuckled. “Tell them,” he said, “to say ‘Jehovah’ instead of ‘Brahma’ and they will not feel any perplexity.”

5 “By diligently following his path, the yogi, perfected by the efforts of many births, is purged of sin (karmic taint) and finally enters the Supreme Beatitude. The yogi is deemed greater than body-disciplining ascetics, greater even than the followers of the path of wisdom or of the path of action; be thou, O Arjuna, a yogi!” (God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita

vi

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45

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46

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6 “I (the God-united Christ Consciousness in me) am the door of the sheep....by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture” (John 10:7, 9; see Discourse 52).

7 Matthew 7:14 (see Discourse 30). The “strait gate” and “narrow way” are among the many uses by Jesus of the double entendre in his teachings: the “strait gate” of virtuous inclinations, and the “narrow way” of the spiritual disciplines of righteous actions; so also, metaphysically, these phrases refer to the gateway in the subtle astral center at the base of the spine, which opens into the astral spine’s narrow, extremely fine pathway through which the life and consciousness ascend to the higher cerebrospinal centers of spiritual perception—the singular path of ascension to Christ consciousness and union with God in cosmic consciousness. In these present verses, both meanings are again intended in the context of the guidance and blessing of the guru who not only leads the disciple through the strait gate of the path of virtue, but also ultimately opens the inner astral door of ascension to God.

8 See also commentary on John 7:33 – 34: “Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto Him that sent me. Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come” (Discourse 50).

9 Jesus repeatedly voiced such warnings to those who rejected him as one sent by God: “Not every one that saith unto me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord...’ And then will I profess unto them, ‘I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity’” (Matthew 7:21 – 23; see commentary in Discourse 30).

This point is further explained later (in the present Discourse) in the commentary on Luke

13

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35

: “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, ‘Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.’”

[10 John 6:44 \(see Discourse 43\).](#)

[11 “Last shall be first”: Cf. parallel references in Matthew](#)

19

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30

and

20

:

16

(Discourse

63

).

[12 Commentator John Gill explains that this is “because the great Sanhedrin only sat at Jerusalem, to whom it belonged to try and judge a prophet; and if found false, to condemn him, and put him to death.”](#)

[13 Cf. parallel reference in Matthew](#)

23

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37

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39

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[14 For example, Lahiri Mahasaya had, in a previous incarnation, entertained a desire to enjoy the beauties of a palace. Though he had long since transcended bondage to delusive personal desires, being a fully liberated master, the Divine Will saw fit to fulfill that wish in a miraculous way. See “Materializing a Palace in the Himalayas,” Autobiography of a Yogi, Chapter 34](#)

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[15 “Stoning the prophets” is recounted in II Chronicles](#)

24

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17

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21

(cited in Discourse

55

). See also I Kings

19

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, prophet Elijah’s words to God: “The children of Israel have forsaken Thy covenant, thrown down Thine altars, and slain Thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.”

Discourse 58

1 Jesus repeats this last statement in other contexts in Luke 18:14 (see Discourse 61) and Matthew 23:12 (see Discourse 55). Cf. also Matthew 18:4, “Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (see Discourse 47).

2 James

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6

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3 “In taking infinite pains to shroud with mystery His presence in the atoms of creation, the Creator could have had but one motive, one sensitive desire: that man seek Him only through free will. With what velvet glove of every humility has He not covered the iron hand of omnipotence!” (Autobiography of a Yogi, Chapter

24

).

4 Jesus relates a similar parable in Matthew

22

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14

(commented on in Discourse

65

).

5 See also commentary on parallel references in Matthew 10:37 – 38 (Discourse 41); and Matthew 16:24 and Mark 8:34 (Discourse 45).

6 Cf. parallel reference in Matthew

18

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12

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14

(Discourse

48

).

7 “The masters, the Good Shepherds of this world, come down from their high places and give their lives to searching for disciples who are lost in the darkness. They find them in desolate and dangerous places, arouse them, lift them to a divine shoulder, and bear them with rejoicing to a safe place in the fold. They feed them with celestial food and give them living water to drink, of which, if a man eat and drink, he shall live forever. They give them power to become the sons of God. They give their own lives, to the last ounce of flesh and the last drop of blood, for the redemption of the sheep who know their voice.”—Sri Gyanamata, in God Alone: The Life and Letters of a Saint (published by Self-Realization Fellowship).

8 God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita

ix

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Discourse 59

[1 Verses](#)

16

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18

of Luke

16

are omitted here. Verse

16

is commented on in Discourse

34

with its parallel in Matthew

11

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12

. Verse

17

is commented on in Discourse

27

with its parallel in Matthew

5

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18

. Verse

18

is commented on in Discourse

62

with its parallel in Matthew

19

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[2 Mammon is an Aramaic word meaning “wealth.” See also Discourse 29, commentary on Matthew 6:24 in which Jesus makes this same statement that man cannot serve both God and mammon.](#)

[3 I Timothy](#)

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4 See Discourse 21, discussion of “Gabriel’s trumpet” that resurrects souls after death into their karmically earned abodes in the astral world and next incarnation on earth.

5 See Discourse 8.

6 See also Discourse 10 and Discourse 24 for further explanation of the positive after-death experiences in the astral world earned by most souls, in contradistinction to the unpleasant karmic lessons awaiting debased individuals, as Jesus cites in the parable explicated here.

7 See also Discourse 48, commentary on Matthew 18:8 – 9: “If thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.”

8 Matthew 6:22 (see Discourse 28).

9 “Without real sacrifice, O Arjuna, whence comes any better world (any better existence or elevated state of consciousness)?” (God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita

iv

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31

).

[10 See Chapter](#)

43

of Autobiography of a Yogi, “The Resurrection of Sri Yukteswar,” for my Guru’s incomparable explanation of the astral and causal realms.

[11 “Many persons erroneously imagine that ‘the dead’—human beings who have passed over to the astral world—are in touch with great masters or are themselves deep founts of wisdom. The truth is that most astral beings are not reliable messengers and have attained no final insight into the Great Mystery. The soul is divine; but until man achieves soul-realization he is unable after death to express any more divinity than he expressed during his life on earth. Only those persons who possessed enlightenment while in the physical body are empowered, upon leaving it, to unite with God and to impart illumination to others.](#)

“The Gita points out that those who believe in consulting ‘departed spirits’ are ignorant men. Such persons rely on the guidance of astral entities instead of seeking communion with God, the Heavenly Father and Friend of all. Having His help, what need of aid from astral beings?” (God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita, commentary on

xvii

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Discourse 60

1 John 12:3 (see Discourse 64).

2 See also Discourse 52, commentary on John 9:3, regarding the man born blind: “Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.”

3 As recounted in John

10

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33

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42

(Discourse

52

).

4 See Discourse 13 and Discourse 52, discussion of sleep and death in relation to man’s states of consciousness.

5 See also commentary on John 5:28 – 29, Discourse 21: “For the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”

6 See commentary on similar usage of “I am” in John 6:35, “I am the bread of life” (Discourse 43); and in John 8:12, “I am the light of the world” (Discourse

51

). Jesus speaks impersonally from his divine ego, or spiritualized human consciousness, that was one with the infinite Christ Consciousness and its permeative presence throughout all vibratory manifestation.

[7 Bhagavan Krishna, speaking from the same universal consciousness, similarly declared: “Understand, O Arjuna! that My different and higher nature \(Para-Prakriti\) is the jiva, the self-consciousness and life-principle, that sustains the cosmos” \(God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita](#)

vii

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5

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[8 See Autobiography of a Yogi, Chapter](#)

43

, “The Resurrection of Sri Yukteswar.”

[9 Cf. Discourse 51, commentary on John 8:51: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man keep my saying \(remain continuously in Christ Consciousness\), he shall never see death.”](#)

Discourse 61

[1 The remainder of Luke chapter](#)

17

(verses

22

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37

) is paralleled in Matthew chapter

24

and is commented on in that context in Discourse

67

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[2 See also Discourse 17, commentary on John 4:5 – 10.](#)

[3 John 3:5 \(see Discourse 13\).](#)

[4 Luke 13:24 \(see Discourse 57\).](#)

[5 John 3:13 – 14 \(see Discourse 14\).](#)

[6 Mark 9:47 \(see Discourse 48\).](#)

[7 John 10:9 \(see Discourse 52\).](#)

[8 John 14:6 \(see Discourse 70\).](#)

[9 See Discourse 37 for explanation of the meanings of “kingdom of God” and “kingdom of heaven” as used both distinctively and interchangeably.](#)

[10 “If those who lead you say, ‘Look! the kingdom is in heaven,’ then the birds of heaven will precede you. If they say to you, ‘It is in the sea,’ then the fish will precede you. But the kingdom is within you and it is outside of you. If you will know yourselves, then you will be known, and you will realize that you are children of the living Father. But if you do not know yourselves, then you dwell in poverty and you are poverty” \(The Gospel of Thomas, verse](#)

3

).

His disciples said to him, “...When will the new world come?” He said to them,

“What you are looking forward to has come, but you don’t know it” (The Gospel of Thomas, verse

51

).

Jesus’ disciples said unto him: “When will the kingdom come?” Jesus answered, “It will not come by waiting for it. People will not say, ‘Look! Here it is!’ or ‘There it is!’ But the kingdom of the Father is spread out upon the earth and people do not see it” (The Gospel of Thomas, verse

113

). (Publisher’s Note)

[11 Among the non-canonical Gospels that have survived from the earliest part of the Christian era is a fragmentary manuscript known as “The Dialogue of the Savior,” composed around a.d. 150 and lost until the discovery of the Nag Hammadi manuscripts in 1945 \(see footnote 4 in Discourse 4\). The translation in The Complete Gospels: Annotated Scholars Version includes this passage \(14:1 – 4\):](#)

Matthew said: “Lord, I wish to see that place of life...where there is no wickedness but only pure light.”

The Lord said, “Brother Matthew, you will not be able to see it as long as you bear flesh.”

Matthew said: “Lord, even if I will not be able to see it, let me know it.”

The Lord said, “Those who have known themselves have seen it.” (Publisher’s Note)

[12 See Chapter](#)

1

of God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita for a detailed discussion of this spiritual analogy.

[13 God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita](#)

xiii

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[14 “Firmly holding the spine, neck, and head erect and motionless, let the yogi focus his eyes at the starting place of the nose \(the spot between the two eyebrows\); let him not gaze around in various directions.](#)

“With serenity and fearlessness, with steadfastness in brahmacharya, with the mind controlled, with the thoughts centered on Me, the yogi should sit, meditating on Me as the Final Goal.

“The self-governed yogi—he whose mind is fully under control—thus engaging his soul in ceaseless meditative union with Spirit, attains the peace of My being: the final Nirvana (deliverance)” (God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita

vi

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[15 From Cosmic Chants: Spiritualized Songs for Divine Communion by Paramahansa Yogananda \(published by Self-Realization Fellowship\).](#)

[16 “The ignorant, oblivious of My transcendental nature as the Maker of all creatures, discount also My presence within the human form” \(God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita](#)

ix

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[17 God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita](#)

vi

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35

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36

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[18 “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in Him will I trust....](#)

“There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone....

“Because he hath set his love upon Me, therefore will I deliver him:

“I will set him on high, because he hath known My name. He shall call upon Me,

and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him. With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him My salvation” (Psalms

91

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16

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[19 This last verse is repeated in Luke 14:11 \(see Discourse 58 for additional commentary\).](#)

Discourse 62

[1 Jesus is citing Genesis](#)

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27

and

2

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24

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[2 Cf. parallel references in Mark](#)

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2

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12

and Luke

16

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18

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[3 See Discourse 1.](#)

[4 See also Discourse 2, explanation of immaculate creation, direct materialization.](#)

[5 Cf. commentary on Mark 12:25: “For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven.”](#)

[6 See Discourse 2 and Discourse 7, explanation of the fall of Adam and Eve.](#)

[7 See commentary in this Discourse regarding Jesus’ words on those who “have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake.”](#)

[8 “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, ‘Thou shalt not commit adultery’: But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” \(Matthew 5:27 – 28;](#)

[see Discourse 27\).](#)

[9 Medical doctors consider it a well-established fact that replenishing the seminal fluid, a concentration of vital bodily elements, requires a significant expenditure of physical energy; and that the body will reabsorb the constituent vital materials if they are conserved in the body rather than dissipated outwardly, making their inherent energy available for other purposes. The pranayama techniques integral to yoga \(taught as part of the science of Kriya Yoga in the Self-Realization Fellowship Lessons\) automatically induce the process of transmutation of the conserved energy into pure life force and consciousness for awakening of the higher centers of consciousness in the spine and brain. One of the basic disciplines of Patanjali's Eightfold Path of Yoga is brahmacharya \(self-restraint\); yoga treatises refer to the successful celibate brahmachari as urdhvareta \(literally, "keeping the semen upward"\), one in whom the physical reproductive fluid is converted into pure conscious life force, bestowing bodily strength, immense creative intelligence, and spiritual magnetism. \(Publisher's Note\)](#)

[10 I Corinthians](#)

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[11 Cf. Matthew](#)

18

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3

(Discourse

47

): “And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, ‘Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.’”

[12 Cf. additional parallel reference in Luke](#)

18

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17

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[13 Cf. Gospel of Thomas, verse](#)

22

: “Jesus saw infants being suckled. He said to his disciples, ‘These infants being suckled are like those who enter the kingdom.’ They said to him, ‘Shall we, then, as children, enter the kingdom?’ Jesus said to them, ‘When you make the two one, and when you make the inside like the outside and the outside like the inside, and the above like the below, and when you make the male and female one and the same, so that the male will not be male nor the female be female.... then you will enter [the kingdom].’”—J. M. Robinson, ed., *The Nag Hammadi Library in English* (HarperSanFrancisco,

1990

). (Publisher’s Note)

[14 Cf. parallel references in Matthew](#)

22

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23

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33

and Luke

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40

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Discourse 63

[1 Cf. additional parallel reference in Luke](#)

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2 See also Discourse 53, commentary on the two greatest commandments (to love God and to love one's neighbor).

3 "Take up the cross, and follow me": See also commentary on other verses in which Jesus gives this instruction, in Discourse 41, Discourse 45, Discourse 46, and Discourse 58.

4 See also reference to niyama, the prescriptive practices necessary to the spiritual life linked by Patanjali to the proscriptive practices of yama (Discourse

61

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5 God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita

vi

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6 Indeed, it is the higher disciplines of yoga that make possible for the average person an effective and lasting practice of moral observances, not by outer suppression of harmful impulses but by inner transmutation. See Discourse 48, yogic explanation of Jesus' moral admonitions in Matthew

18

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: “If thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off....And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee.”

7 “Free from ever-hoping desires and from cravings for possessions, with the heart (waves of feeling) controlled by the soul (by yoga concentration), retiring alone to a quiet place, the yogi should constantly try to unite with the soul....

“Established on that seat, concentrating the mind on one point, and controlling the activities of the fanciful faculty (chitta, feeling—the power that visualizes) and the senses, let him practice yoga for self-purification” (God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita

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8 See also Discourse

33

, commentary on Luke 6:24: “But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation.”

9 See also Discourse 29 and Discourse 59, commentary on Matthew 6:24 and Luke 16:13: “Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”

10 Cf. additional parallel reference in Luke

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[11 Analogously symbolic references to the apostles in heaven and the twelve tribes of Israel are found in Revelation](#)

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: “And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain (transcendent state of consciousness), and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal (the universal creative light descending into astral manifestation from the infinity of God’s unmanifested Bliss); and had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel (the vibratory ‘wall’ or rampart circumventing and separating the astral heaven of manifestation from the Unmanifested Absolute, with portals, ‘gates,’ through which God sends souls into creation and ultimately draws them back into His Being)...And the wall of

the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. (As the consciousness of Jesus was absorbed into Christ Consciousness, so his twelve disciples, when completely liberated, would also be one with the Christ Consciousness enthroned on these foundations, i.e., ensconced in the wondrous realization of the awesome informing of the Formless Absolute.)”

[12 See also Discourse 40, Discourse 41, and Discourse 49 for further commentary on Jesus’ ideals of inner and outer renunciation.](#)

[13 See also Discourse 57, commentary on Luke 13:30, in which Jesus repeats this saying about “the last shall be first.”](#)

[14 Jesus also pointed out the futility of mere outward renunciation if unaccompanied by intense inner discipline, as illustrated in the next two parables in this Discourse—the parable of the laborers in the vineyard and the parable of the ten pounds.](#)

[15 Cf. additional parallel reference in Mark](#)

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[16 For example, Isaiah](#)

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: “He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief....He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed....He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.”

See also Discourse 10, commentary on John 1:44 – 51; and Discourse 22, commentary on Matthew 4:12 – 17.

[17 John 2:18 – 22 \(see commentary in Discourse 12\).](#)

[18 John 6:44 \(see Discourse 43\).](#)

[19 “Ten pounds”: The Greek term mina was translated as British pound in the King James Bible. A mina was approximately three months’ wages for a laborer of that time.](#)

[20 Cf. Matthew 25:14 – 30 for a similar telling of this parable.](#)

[21 See also Discourse 37, commentary on Matthew 13:12 in which Jesus repeats this saying.](#)

Discourse 64

[1 The ointment, or at least its ingredients, most likely came from India. Spikenard is the root of *Nardostachys jatamansi*, of the Valerian family, which grew on the slopes of the Himalaya mountains. Smith’s Bible Dictionary states that it “was annually brought from the mountains overhanging the Ganges and Jumna rivers down to the plains.”](#)

2 Cf. additional parallel reference in Matthew

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3 Luke 10:42 (see Discourse 53).

4 Paramahansa Yogananda's commentary on the Bible verses covered in this Discourse was being prepared for publication in Self-Realization magazine during the period in which he was also working on Autobiography of a Yogi. Segments of the commentary, which may seem familiar to discerning readers, were adapted by him for inclusion in both works. (Publisher's Note)

5 Cf. additional parallel references in Mark

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and John

12

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19

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[6 See John](#)

12

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16: “And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written, ‘Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass’s colt.’ These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him.”

[7 Jesus’ prophecy came to pass in](#)

a.d.

70

, when the city of Jerusalem was completely destroyed by the Romans after the Jews’ four-year violent revolt. Wars between the Jews and Romans continued until

a.d.

135

. Encyclopaedia Britannica states: “After this defeat Jerusalem became a Roman colony; a temple to Jupiter was erected there, and Jews were prevented from entering the city until the

4

th century. When the Romans had entered Palestine in

63

b.c.

, they practiced a relatively humane occupation until c.

a.d.

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. They did not interfere with religious practices unless they considered them a threat to Rome, and their rights of requisition were precise and limited.”

[8 Cf. parallel references in John](#)

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(commented on in Discourse

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), and in Mark

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and Luke

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[9 “O Lord our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth! who hast set Thy glory above the heavens.](#)

“Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast Thou ordained strength because of Thine enemies, that Thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger” (Psalms

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[10 Cf. parallel reference in Mark](#)

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and Mark

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. Regarding this incident, the Gospel According to St. Mark relates that Jesus cursed the fig tree in the morning on his way into Jerusalem, where he cast the money changers out of the temple; and that leaving the city in the evening he and the disciples passed the tree again and saw that it had withered.

[11 Mark](#)

11

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: “...he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet.”

[12 See Discourse 46 for commentary on Jesus’ teachings about the power of faith expressed in these verses.](#)

Discourse 65

[1 Matthew](#)

22

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23

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33

were commented on in Discourse

62

. Verses

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40

were commented on in Discourse

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[2 Cf. parallel references in Mark](#)

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33

and Luke

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[3 Even as in John](#)

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(Discourse

52

) the people wanted to stone him for such an assertion, and in Matthew

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64

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(Discourse

73

) he was condemned to die for it.

[4 Jesus is citing Psalms](#)

118

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22

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[5 Cf. parallel references in Mark](#)

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and Luke

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6 At the beginning of each recurring manifestation of creation (Day of Brahma), having set in motion the cosmic laws governing the universal structure, the Father-Creator turns over the operation of those laws to the Holy Ghost (Cosmic Vibratory Nature) and withdraws to the transcendent realm of Cosmic Consciousness beyond the vibratory universes, but reflects Himself in creation as the immanent Christ Consciousness.

See also explanation of the cycles of cosmic creation in God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita

viii

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and

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[7 As also expressed in the parallel reference to this story in Luke](#)

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: ““He shall come and destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others.’ And when they heard it, they said, ‘God forbid.’”

[8 A similar parable is related in Luke 14:16 – 24 \(see Discourse 58\).](#)

[9 See, for example, references in Discourse 4, Discourse 7, and Discourse 8 to the simultaneous dichotomy and unity of the human and divine nature in incarnate liberated souls. The everyman of their universal being undergoes the resistance and limitations of maya to at last demonstrate victory over delusion in their manifest Divine Union.](#)

[10 Cf. parallel references in Luke](#)

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26

and Mark

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11 “And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute money came to Peter, and said, ‘Doth not your master pay tribute?’...

“Jesus saith unto [Peter]... ‘Lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.’” (See Discourse 47.)

12 Psalms

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13 Cf. additional parallel reference in Luke

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44

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14 See Discourse 36.

15 For a father to speak deferentially to a son or descendant would be completely out of keeping with the patriarchal culture to which Jesus and David belonged.

[16 See Discourse 55 for commentary on these verses.](#)

[17 Cf. parallel reference in Luke](#)

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[18 “Whatever sacrifice is offered, gift bestowed, or austerity performed without faith \(devotion\) is called ‘asat.’ It is worthless here and in the hereafter” \(God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita](#)

xvii

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28

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[19 “The reverent presentation to Me of a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or water, given with pure intention, is a devotional offering acceptable in My sight” \(God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita](#)

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Discourse 66

1 John Wesley wrote about these words of Jesus: “Agreeable to his infinite knowledge, he singles out, from among so many thousands of seeds, almost the only one that dies in the earth: and which therefore was an exceeding proper similitude, peculiarly adapted to the purpose for which he uses it. The like is not to be found in any other grain, except millet, and the large bean.”

2 See also Discourse 41, commentary on Matthew 10:39, and Discourse 45, commentary on Matthew 16:25—verses in which this statement of Jesus is repeated.

3 One such revelation is recounted in Luke 3:21 – 22: “Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, ‘Thou art My beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.’” (See Discourse 6.)

Of the works of Jesus that would manifest the salvation-bestowing Holy Ghost, John the Baptist had declared: “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire” (Matthew 3:11; see Discourse 6).

4 Twice earlier Jesus had referred to “the son of man” being “lifted up”: See commentaries on John 3:14 (Discourse 14) and John 8:28 (Discourse 51).

5 Reference to Isaiah

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: “Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever.”

[6 Mark 12:35 – 37 and Matthew 22:41 – 46 \(see Discourse 65\).](#)

[7 John 8:12 \(see Discourse 51\).](#)

[8 Cf. Gospel of Thomas, trans. Pico Iyer \(London: Concord Grove Press,](#)

1983

), verse

24

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“His disciples requested: ‘Teach us about the place where you live, for we must seek it.’

“He said: ‘He who has ears to hear, let him hear. There is Light in a Man of Light, who gives Light to the world. If he does not give Light, there is only darkness.’”

[9 Isaiah](#)

53

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[10 Isaiah](#)

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[11 Isaiah](#)

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is also commented on in Discourse

37

, in the context of Matthew

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[12 See commentary, Discourse 45 and Discourse 63.](#)

[13 Cf. John](#)

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(Discourse

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): “For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.”

[14 Cf. John](#)

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(Discourse

51

): “I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.”

Discourse 67

[1 The remainder of Matthew 24 \(verses 43 – 51\)—the parable of the faithful and wise servant versus the evil servant—is commented on in Discourse 56 with its parallel from the Gospel According to St. Luke.](#)

[2 Matthew 25:14 – 30 \(Parable of the Ten Talents\) are omitted here. See commentary on the similarly worded Parable of the Ten Pounds related by Jesus in Luke 19:12 – 28 \(Discourse 63\).](#)

[3 Cf. parallel references in Mark](#)

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and Luke

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[4 Jesus had already prophesied the general destruction of Jerusalem, which came to pass about thirty years after his ascension during the revolt of the Jewish people against Rome \(see Discourse 64\). The culmination of this war was the destruction of the temple in](#)

a.d.

70

, after which only one section of a wall remained standing (known as the Western Wall, or Wailing Wall, a place of Jewish pilgrimage to this day).

[5 The disciples are identified as Peter, James, John, and Andrew in the parallel version of this verse in the Gospel According to St. Mark. Luke](#)

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tells us: “In the day time he was teaching in the temple; and at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called the mount of Olives. And all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple, for to hear him.”

[6 Cf. parallel references in Mark](#)

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and Luke

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7 Luke 21:16 – 19. The parallel to this verse in St. Matthew’s Gospel is cited earlier, on the occasion when Jesus sent the disciples out to preach and predicted the persecutions they would encounter. See Discourse 41 for commentary in that context.

8 Intermittent but violent Roman persecution of the early Christians did not finally end until Constantine the Great became emperor in

a.d.

312

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9 According to tradition, the lives of a number of Jesus’ early disciples ended in violent persecution: Matthew was slain with a sword in Ethiopia; Mark was dragged to death through the streets of Alexandria; Luke was hanged in Greece; John was put in a caldron of boiling oil, but escaped miraculously, was banished to Patmos and died a natural death; Peter was crucified at Rome with his head downwards; James the Greater was beheaded at Jerusalem; James the Less was thrown from a pinnacle of the Temple, and then beaten to death; Bartholomew was flayed alive; Andrew was bound to a cross, and died preaching to his persecutors; Thomas was run through the body with a lance; Matthias was first stoned and then beheaded; Jude (Thaddeus) was shot to death with arrows; Barnabas of the Gentiles was stoned to death at Salonica; Paul, after various tortures and persecutions, was beheaded at Rome; data regarding the deaths of Philip and Simon the Canaanite are obscure and conflicting; Judas Iscariot hanged himself.

10 “The Hindu scriptures declare that an earth such as ours is dissolved for one of two reasons: the inhabitants as a whole become either completely good or completely evil. The world mind thus generates a power that releases the captive atoms held together as an earth.

“Dire pronouncements are occasionally published regarding an imminent ‘end of the world.’ Planetary cycles, however, proceed according to an orderly divine

plan. No earthly dissolution is in sight; many ascending and descending equinoctial cycles are yet in store for our planet in its present form” (Autobiography of a Yogi, Chapter

16

).

Of the two diametrically opposite causes for the dissolution of a world such as our earth—“completely good or completely evil”—Jesus emphasized the spiritualization of the human race as the ideal criterion. As for the souls that are still evolving upward, as is the case in even the highest ages, they are suitably accommodated for their continuing progress on some other “earth” in God’s infinite universe.

See Discourse 52 and Discourse 39 for further references to the planetary cycles (yugas).

11 “I believe there will always be wars, until perchance we all become so spiritual that by the evolution of our individual natures we will make war unnecessary.... War is like poison in the system. When we have toxins in our body, that impurity has to get out somehow. So we suffer from disease. Likewise, when there is too much selfishness in the international system, that poison breaks out in the world as the disease of war. Many people are killed, and then for a little while there is a lull. But war comes again—and will come again and again—so long as there will be ignorance, and so long as the individual man has not become a perfect citizen of the world.”—Paramahansa Yogananda, in “A World Without Boundaries,” The Divine Romance (published by Self-Realization Fellowship).

12 See Discourse 39, discussion of the operation of the law of mass karma.

13 Luke 19:26 (see Discourse 63).

14 Cf. parallel reference in Mark

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[15 Jesus' reference is to Daniel](#)

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: “And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate.”

History records the terrible events that Jesus predicted would befall Jerusalem in the “days of vengeance” by Roman armies under Titus:

“Titus advanced in the spring of

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, driving the Passover pilgrims before him to increase the mouths to feed.... Titus invested the city with a wall to prevent escape or the admission of supplies. Famine spread; the bodies of the dead were dropped over the walls into the valleys to avoid plague. There is even a record of cannibalism. Fugitives who fell into Roman hands were crucified in sight of the city, to the number of

500

a day.

“At the end of June the direct assault was resumed. The Antonia fortress was captured and razed. In July the daily Temple sacrifice ceased. On

6

August the Temple was stormed, and against Titus's orders destroyed by fire. The revolutionaries made their last stand in the Upper City. This was finally breached, and after five months' siege the city taken and razed to the ground. Prisoners were forced into the arena as gladiators....

"So were fulfilled the words of Jesus in Luke: 'When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then you must realise that it will soon be desolate' (

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); '...the time will come when not a single stone will be left on another, everything will be destroyed' (

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)."—Great Events of Bible Times, James Harpur, ed. (New York: Doubleday,

1987

).

[16 Cf. parallel reference in Mark](#)

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17 Miracles are not necessarily a sign of divine realization, as is obvious from the phenomenal feats of a number of celebrity wonder-workers who yet lack basic requisites of true saintliness and God-realization. In Autobiography of a Yogi I wrote: “Ostentatious display of unusual powers is decried by masters. The Persian mystic, Abu Said, once laughed at certain fakirs (Moslem ascetics) who were proud of their miraculous powers over water, air, and space.

“‘A frog is also at home in the water!’ Abu Said pointed out in gentle scorn. ‘The crow and the vulture easily fly in the air; the Devil is simultaneously present in the East and in the West! A true man is he who dwells in righteousness among his fellowmen, who may buy and sell, yet is never for a single instant forgetful of God!’”

18 See Discourse 6, discussion of the guru-disciple relationship.

19 References to the Son of man are to be remembered as distinct from the Son of God. The Son of God is the macrocosmic, universal, omnipresent Christ Consciousness: the pure reflection of God in all creation. The Son of man refers to the manifested Christ Consciousness as experienced and expressed in and through incarnate consciousness, as in the life of Jesus—or in any advanced devotee who intermittently or permanently uplifts his consciousness to the state of Christ-realization, in which he perceives the Christ Consciousness reflected as his own soul, or manifested as a divine form. (See commentary on Matthew 24:29 – 32, below.)

20 See commentary on Luke’s use of the metaphor of the eagles in a variant context and sequence of events, which elaborates the significance of eagles as desires.

21 Cf. additional parallel reference in Mark 13

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22 Jesus was foreseeing the cataclysmic sufferings that would result from the mass evil karma of peoples debauched with ignorance. Consequent catastrophes are inevitably followed by a renaissance of spiritual fervor among the repentant. Such events have come to pass, in greater or lesser degree, with tragic regularity through subsequent centuries of man's persistent disavowal of spiritual law.

(Publisher's Note:) In his book *Catastrophe: An Investigation Into the Origins of the Modern World* (New York: Ballantine Books,

1999

), British journalist David Keys writes of one such incident whose particulars are strikingly reminiscent of Jesus' prophecy: "In

a.d.

535

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mankind was hit by one of the greatest natural disasters ever to occur. It blotted out much of the light and heat of the sun for eighteen months, and the climate of the entire planet began to spin out of control. The result, direct or indirect, was climatic chaos, famine, migration, war, and massive political change on virtually every continent." The author has compiled evidence that the source of these changes was a super-massive volcanic eruption in Indonesia, which ejected such a huge volume of ash and dust into the atmosphere that the climate was changed worldwide. He goes on to say:

"The contemporary Roman historian Procopius wrote of the climate changes as 'a most dread portent.' In describing the climate that year, Procopius wrote that 'the sun gave forth its light without brightness like the moon during this whole year.' Other accounts of the event say that the sun became 'dim' or 'dark' for up to eighteen months. Its light shone 'like a feeble shadow,' and people were terrified."

Keys cites similar accounts from historical records of Arabia, China, Japan, and other countries, as well as scientific evidence such as analysis of tree-ring growth in northern and western Europe and North America, where “trees virtually stopped growing in the years

536

and

542

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43

” and did not return to normal until more than twenty years later.

[23 See also Discourse 73, commentary on Matthew 26:64: “Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.”](#)

[24 All personalized reflections of God are individualizations of His one omnipresent Christ Intelligence, referred to in the scriptures of India as Kutastha Chaitanya, the ubiquitous Universal Consciousness of Spirit. The angels and archangels \(the Biblical Gabriel, Michael, etc.\), the Hindu trinity of Brahma-Vishnu-Shiva \(representing creation, preservation, dissolution\) and other deities \(depictions of God’s qualities and creative forces\), and liberated masters at one with formless Spirit or serving souls in the supernal astral or causal regions, as also avatars who at God’s behest incarnate for a time on earth as God’s messengers to man and then return to the Cosmic Consciousness of Spirit or dwell as saviors in the highest heavenly realms—all can become manifest to the advanced devotee. In vision, they are informed by the Cosmic Vibration from the one Christ-Kutastha Intelligence that is the Essence of their being—as in the present verse wherein Jesus promises such an appearance of himself.](#)

[25 Genesis](#)

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26 Genesis

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27 See also Discourse 41, commentary on Matthew 10:39; Discourse 45, commentary on Matthew 16:25; and Discourse 66, commentary on John 12:25—verses in which this statement of Jesus is repeated.

28 See Discourse 6.

29 The above abbreviated commentary on the afterlife of the soul in its astral and causal bodies, as relative in this context to the words of Jesus, is elaborated in Autobiography of a Yogi, Chapter 43, “The Resurrection of Sri Yukteswar.” There, Paramahansaji recounts in full the awe-inspiring revelations of the mysteries of life after death received through his guru, who appeared after his death in resurrected form. Paramahansaji related that during this experience, “My mind was now in such perfect attunement with my guru’s that he was conveying his word-pictures to me partly by speech and partly by thought transference. I was thus quickly receiving his idea-tabloids....Never from song or story had I ever received such inspiring knowledge. Though the Hindu scriptures refer to the causal and astral worlds and to man’s three bodies, how remote and meaningless those pages compared with the warm authenticity of my resurrected Master!” (Publisher’s Note)

30 The parable of the ten virgins has its basis in the tradition of the Eastern marriage customs of the Jews, in which virgins served as attendants, or

bridesmaids. Recounting one such instance, the Book of Psalms records that the bride “is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee [the king, or bridegroom]. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the king’s palace” (Psalms

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31 See Discourse 16 and Discourse 32 for discussion of metaphysical significance of Christ Consciousness as “the Bridegroom.”

Discourse 68

1 See similar words of Jesus in Matthew 19:28 [Discourse 63]: “...in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory....” That is, “after the resurrection of the Son of man (the spiritualization of my physical body into cosmic Spirit), my Christ Consciousness will rest on the throne of omnipresent Cosmic Consciousness in the kingdom of Christ Consciousness.”

2 Scapegoat: “an animal or person to whom sins, ill luck, or other evils are ceremonially attached and who symbolically bears them away by being sacrificed or exiled” (Webster’s Third New International Dictionary, Unabridged).

3 See commentary, Discourse 21, regarding the after-death judgment by the Infinite Christ Consciousness and Cosmic Law.

4 “A man who dies with sattva [elevating] qualities predominant rises to the taintless regions in which dwell knowers of the Highest. When rajas [the activating quality of nature] prevails at the time of death, a person is reborn among those attached to activity. He who dies permeated with tamas [degrading quality] enters the wombs (environment, family, state of existence) of the deeply deluded” (God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita

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5 See also Discourse 48, commentary on Matthew 18:8 – 9 and Mark 9:43: “And if thy hand [or foot or eye—any instrument of sense temptation] offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.”

6 Matthew 16:27 (see Discourse 45).

7 See also discussion of “Gabriel’s trumpet,” Discourse 21.

8 Before one reincarnates on earth, karmic compensation may also be partially meted out through suffering mentally the fiery pangs of unrequited material cravings during a temporary stay in one of the lower astral regions, as in the example of the rich man cited in Luke 16

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(Discourse

59

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9 “One who is united to cosmic wisdom goes beyond the effects of both virtue and vice, even here in this life. Therefore, devote thyself to yoga, divine union. Yoga is the art of proper action.

“Those who have mastered their minds become engrossed in infinite wisdom; they have no further interest in any fruits of actions. Freed thus from the chain of rebirth, they attain the state beyond sorrow” (God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita

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Discourse 69

1 Cf. parallel references in Matthew

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and Mark

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2 The Gospel does not identify the man by name. Clearly a man of wealth, owner of a large home with a furnished upper room that he could readily place at Jesus' disposal, it is possible that he was one of a number of prominent disciples who, for social or political reasons, did not openly profess their belief (such as Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea). Jesus intimated to Peter and John that the man would accede to their request without question and without their even mentioning Jesus' name; also, in the Aramaic and Persic manuscripts of the Gospel, "the master saith to thee..." is given as "our master saith to thee"—another intimation that the man was a brother disciple. (Publisher's Note)

3 Cf. parallel references in Matthew

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and Mark

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[4 Cf. additional parallel reference in Mark](#)

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[5 See Luke 24:30 and 24:41 – 43, two occasions on which Jesus ate with his disciples after his resurrection \(Discourse 75\).](#)

[6 The word wine is not used in any of the Gospel accounts of the Last Supper.](#)

[7 The Feast of the Passover, one of the principal holy festivals of the Jewish year, commemorates the deliverance of the people from their bondage in Egypt. As recounted in the Book of Exodus, God said to Moses:](#)

“I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered My covenant. Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, ‘I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will

redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: And I will take you to Me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians” (Exodus

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The Biblical account relates that it took ten devastating plagues, prophesied by Moses, to convince the Pharaoh to release the Israelites. The final punishment was the sudden death of the firstborn son of each Egyptian household. God had told Moses to have each Israelite family, on the specified day, prepare a meal of lamb, unleavened bread, and bitter herbs—and to daub the doorway of their homes with the blood of the lamb. “For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you.

“And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever. ...It is the sacrifice of the Lord’s Passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when He smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses” (Exodus

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[8 Cf. additional parallel reference in Mark](#)

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[9 See Discourse 43, commentary on John 6:51 – 54, wherein Jesus says: “I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh...Whoso eateth my flesh \(absorbs in his own consciousness the Christ Consciousness that was fully manifested in Jesus\), and drinketh my blood \(becomes purified in the light and life of the Holy Ghost Cosmic Vibration\), hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”](#)

[10 As he also prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane before his trial: “Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but Thine, be done” \(Luke](#)

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11 In this manner they were highly purified and made fit to receive the omnipresent consciousness or Holy Ghost that later descended upon them, as promised to them by Jesus in Acts

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“Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence....ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

That is, when by divine grace the apostles would become filled with the Holy Ghost, imbued with the conscious perception of the Holy Vibration of Spirit, they would be empowered witnesses of the Infinite Christ, experiencing and testifying from personal realization that the Christ Consciousness is present in the sphere of Cosmic Vibration, made manifest both in the spiritualized consciousness in the body (metaphorically, the holy city of Jerusalem) and in every part of the earth and universe. [See also Acts 2:1 – 21, Discourse 70.]

12 The word “testament” used in these verses is a translation of a Greek word whose literal meaning is “covenant.” The word is used many times in the Biblical books of the Old Testament, cited as holy edicts and promises between God and earlier generations, as given through Moses and other prophets.

See, for example, Exodus

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: “And the Lord said unto Moses, ‘Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel.’ And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.”

Jesus’ words about “the new testament in my blood” and “my blood of the new testament” or new covenant thus recalled scriptural passages well known to his contemporaries, e.g., Exodus

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: “And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, ‘Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words.’”

[13 Jeremiah](#)

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[14 Luke 17:21 \(see Discourse 61\).](#)

15 Jeremiah

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16 Bhagavan Krishna, the Christ of India, declared: “Whoever realizes Me to be the Unborn and Beginningless as well as the Sovereign Lord of Creation—that man has conquered delusion and attained the sinless state even while wearing a mortal body” (God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita

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17 See Teresa’s description of her vision of the formless Christ, Discourse 53. Her confessor, Fr. Baltasar Alvarez, at a loss to understand this experience, spent days searching for an explanation in the works of the great Catholic saints. “Finally his efforts were rewarded,” says René Fülöp-Miller in relating the story in The Saints that Moved the World (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company,

1945

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“In the Summa Theologiae of St. Thomas Aquinas he came across a passage presenting in extremely learned terms an account of visions which are not perceived through the senses but in species impressa, by immediate conception through the intellect.”

A passage about the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas in The Catholic Encyclopedia (

1912

) tells us: “The ‘species,’ frequently also called forma, is the determinant of the mind in the process of knowledge...The species impressa is the modification of the faculty by the action of the object. The species expressa is the reaction of the mind as a cognitive process. The former is impressed in the faculty which it determines, and corresponds to the passive phase of knowledge which is a necessary condition but is not yet actual knowledge. The latter is the active response of the faculty, the cognitive process itself by which the mind reaches the object...In the beatific vision God’s essence takes the place not only of the species impressa, but also of the species expressa.”

In familiar terms relevant to his knowledge, Aquinas echoed the truth of ecstatic realization voiced by the great sage Patanjali in his Yoga Sutras

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. “He refers to two basic categories of samadhi: (

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) samprajnata and (

2

) asamprajnata,” Paramahansa Yogananda explains in *God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita*. “When used to define the preliminary stages of realization rather than its advanced states of fulfillment, then samprajnata and asamprajnata are relative terms used to distinguish initial supersensory experiences in meditation (samprajnata) from true samadhi or union with the object of meditation (asamprajnata). Samprajnata then refers to those primary states wherein the object of meditation is ‘known accurately or thoroughly’ through intuition that is still somewhat mixed with, or interpreted by, nature’s subtle instruments of perception—an interaction of the knower, the knowing, and the

known....By contrast, asamprajnata then means those superconscious experiences that are perceived through pure intuition or realization—the direct perception of the soul by being one with the object of meditation—transcendent of any intervening instrument or principle of nature.” (Publisher’s Note)

[18 First Epistle of St. John,](#)

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[19 John 6:58 \(see commentary in Discourse 43\).](#)

[20 Cf. additional parallel references in Matthew](#)

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and

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; and John

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(the latter commented on in Discourse

70

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[21 See also Discourse 72.](#)

[22 These verses \(Luke](#)

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27

) are commented on in Discourse

47

with their parallel in the Gospel According to St. Matthew.

[23 These verses \(Luke](#)

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28

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30

) are commented on in Discourse

63

with their parallel in the Gospel According to St. Matthew.

[24 Zechariah](#)

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[25 Cf. additional parallel references in Mark](#)

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and John

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[26 Jesus refers to his instructions when he sent the disciples out to preach, recorded in Luke 10:4 \(see Discourse 40\). “Scrip” is an archaic word for a small knapsack or shoulder bag used in Palestine by travelers or shepherds for carrying food or other basic needs.](#)

[27 Isaiah](#)

53

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12

: “...and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

[28 John 18:10 \(see Discourse 73\).](#)

[29 See Discourse 27, commentary on Matthew 5:38 – 42 and Luke 6:29 – 30.](#)

Discourse 70

1 Washing his disciples' feet also afforded Jesus the opportunity to impart to them purifying blessings through the magnetic exchange of vibratory energy. As explained earlier, the hands and feet function as positive and negative poles which when contacted generate a flow of subtle currents of life force. In the time-honored custom of touching the feet of great souls, the disciple is the negative pole that is surcharged with divine power from the master who is the positive pole. When Jesus washed the feet of his disciples he operated this same law, the meeting of positive and negative poles—with himself as the positive, the disciples as the negative—and thereby through the touch of his hands blessed the disciples with spiritually purifying vibrations.

2 “Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me” (Psalms

41

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9

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3 Jesus had also voiced this promise to his apostles earlier; see Matthew 10:40, commented on in Discourse 41.

4 See also Discourse 69, explanation of karma and free choice in the context of Luke 22:21 – 23.

5 The last two verses (Jesus' prediction of Peter's denial) are commented on in Discourse 69

with their parallels from Luke and Matthew.

[6 The earlier statement to which Jesus referred is recorded in John 8:21; see commentary in Discourse 51. Also see commentary on John 7:33 – 34, Discourse 50, in which Jesus tells the Pharisees, “Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto Him that sent me. Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come.”](#)

[7 See also commentary on John 15:12 and 15:17 \(in which Jesus repeats this commandment\), Discourse 71.](#)

[8 Yoga Sutras](#)

i

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2

. See also Discourse 33, commentary on Luke 6:45, and Discourse 26, commentary on Matthew 5:8.

[9 “When the chitta \(feeling\) is absolutely subjugated and is calmly established in the Self, the yogi, thus devoid of attachment to all desires, is spoken of as the God-united....](#)

“The state of complete tranquility of the feeling (chitta), attained by yoga meditation, in which the self (ego) perceives itself as the Self (soul) and is content (fixed) in the Self;

“The state in which the sense-transcendent immeasurable bliss becomes known to the awakened intuitive intelligence, and in which the yogi remains enthroned, never again to be removed;

“The state that, once found, the yogi considers as the treasure beyond all other treasures—anchored therein, he is immune to even the mightiest grief;

“That state is known as yoga—the pain-free state. The practice of yoga is therefore to be observed resolutely and with a stout heart” (God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita

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[10 See Autobiography of a Yogi, Chapter](#)

43

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[11 “The eight principal divine powers, referred to as aishvaryas, which can be manifested by the incarnate being who has attained mastery over the forces of creation, are as follows: the power to make one’s body or any object \(](#)

1

) as small as desired (anima), (

2

) as large as desired (mahima), (

3

) as light in weight as desired (laghima), and (

4

) as heavy as desired (garima); the power (

5

) to obtain anything desired (prapti), (

6

) to bring anything under his control (vashitva), (

7

) to satisfy all desires by the force of his will (prakamya), and (

8

) to become Isha, Lord, over everything. In the Yoga Sutras of the sage Patanjali, other powers (siddhis) are also discussed. The attainment of mastery over phenomenal creation is not a goal of the enlightened man, but is a natural endowment of the omnipotent, omniscient soul—the immortal Self, which becomes manifest as it gradually sheds its coverings of delusion.”—God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita

[12 “Jesus Christ belonged to the true race of prophets. He saw with open eye the mystery of the soul....Ravished with its beauty, he lived in it, and had his being there....One man was true to what is in you and me. He saw that God incarnates himself in man, and evermore goes forth anew to take possession of his world. He said, in this jubilee of sublime emotion, ‘I am divine. Through me, God acts; through me, speaks. Would you see God, see me; or, see thee, when thou also thinkest as I now think.’”—Emerson, Address to Harvard Divinity School, 1838.](#)

[13 This meditation technique is taught in Self-Realization Fellowship Lessons \(see also “Aum \(Om\)” in glossary\).](#)

[14 Acts](#)

1

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(see Discourse 69).

[15 Though Jesus concludes by saying “Arise, let us go hence,” his discourse to the disciples at the Last Supper continued, as recorded in Chapters](#)

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of St. John’s Gospel (to be commented on in Discourses

71

and

72

).

[16 Cf. John](#)

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(Discourse

71

): “Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.”

[17 The Bhagavad Gita speaks of the devotee’s perception of Transcendental Spirit, higher than communion with the Christ-Kutastha Intelligence that informs creation and embodied Sons of God:](#)

“There are two Beings (Purushas) in the cosmos, the destructible and the indestructible. The creatures are the destructible, the Kutastha is the

indestructible. But there exists Another, the Highest Being, designated the ‘Supreme Spirit’—the Eternal Lord who, permeating the three worlds, upholds them.

“I (the Lord) am beyond the perishable (Prakriti) and am also higher than the imperishable (Kutastha). Therefore, in the worlds and in the Veda (the intuitive perception of undeluded souls) I am proclaimed Purushottama, the Uttermost Being.

“Whosoever, freed from delusion, knows Me thus as the Supreme Spirit, knows all, O Arjuna. He worships Me with his whole being” (God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita

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Discourse 71

[1 God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita](#)

xii

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2 See Discourse 53, “Fulfilling the Two Greatest Commandments.”

3 “Yogis not yet free from the world revolve back again (to the world) even from the high sphere of Brahma (union with God in samadhi). But on entering into Me (the transcendental Spirit) there is no rebirth!...By single-hearted devotion, O Arjuna, that Supreme Unmanifested is reached. He alone, the Omnipresent, is the Abode of all creatures” (God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita

viii

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4 That divine friendship and love was sublimely expressed in the relationship between the avatar Bhagavan Krishna and his beloved disciple Arjuna, recounted in the epic Mahabharata and specifically in the holy Bhagavad Gita. Imparting to Arjuna knowledge of the timeless science of God-union revealed in India countless millennia ago, Lord Krishna said:

“I have this day informed thee about that same ancient yoga, for thou art My devotee and friend. This sacred mystery (of yoga) is, indeed, the producer of supreme benefit (to mankind)” (God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita

iv

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[5 John 13:16; commented on in Discourse 70. See also Discourse 33 \(Luke 6:40\) and Discourse 41 \(Matthew 10:24\).](#)

[6 “These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God” \(Revelation](#)

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[7 The illumined mystic Saint John of the Cross \(contemporary and supporter of Teresa of Avila\) speaks of his own experiences of God as the Holy Ghost in Stanzas](#)

14

and

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of his sublime Spiritual Canticle (the saint’s paraphrase and abridgement, with commentary, of the Old Testament “Song of Songs”). In poetic imagery he evokes the blissful communion between the soul and God:

“My Beloved is the mountains,

The solitary wooded valleys, / The strange islands,

The roaring torrents, / The whisper of the amorous gales;

The tranquil night / At the approaches of the dawn,

The silent music, / The murmuring solitude,

The supper which revives, and enkindles love.”

Explaining the symbolism, Saint John describes the “roaring torrents” as “a spiritual sound and voice overpowering all other sounds and voices in the world.
...

“This voice, or this murmuring sound of the waters, is an overflowing so abundant as to fill the soul with good, and a power so mighty seizing upon it as to seem not only the sound of many waters, but a most loud roaring of thunder. But the voice is a spiritual voice, unattended by material sounds or the pain and torment of them, but rather with majesty, power, might, delight, and glory: it is, as it were, a voice, an infinite interior sound which endows the soul with power and might. The Apostles heard in spirit this voice when the Holy Spirit descended upon them in the sound ‘as of a mighty wind,’ as we read in the Acts of the Apostles....

“The whisper of the amorous gales....The whisper of the gales is a most sublime and sweet knowledge of God and of His attributes, which overflows into the understanding from the contact of the attributes of God with the substance of the soul....Inasmuch as this touch of God greatly satisfies and comforts the substance of the soul, sweetly fulfilling its longing to be received into union; this union, or touch, is called amorous gales, because, as I said before, the perfections of the Beloved are by it communicated to the soul lovingly and sweetly, and through it the whisper of knowledge to the understanding. It is called whisper, because, as the whisper of the air penetrates subtly into the organ of hearing, so this most subtle and delicate knowledge enters with marvelous sweetness and delight into the inmost substance of the soul, which is the highest of all delights.”—A Spiritual Canticle of the Soul and the Bridegroom Christ, by Saint John of the Cross (trans. David Lewis,

1889

).

[8 Saint Paul, before his conversion by means of a vision of Jesus on the road to Damascus, was among the intolerant fanatics \(whose ilk continued through the centuries, as in the Spanish Inquisition and similarly evil persecutions\) prophesied in these verses. Paul relates \(in Acts](#)

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“Many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities. Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, at midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, ‘Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?’ ...

“And I said, ‘Who art thou, Lord?’

“And he said, ‘I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.’”

[9 John 14:6 \(see commentary in Discourse 70\).](#)

[10 See Autobiography of a Yogi, Chapter](#)

33

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[11 Saint Symeon the New Theologian \(](#)

949

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1022

), a monk of the Eastern Orthodox Church, wrote: “Having been made rich with Him, they shall see invisibly the inexpressible beauty of God Himself. They shall hold Him without touching. They shall comprehend incomprehensibly His imageless image, His formless form, His shape without shape which, in sight without seeing and in beauty uncompounded, is ever varied and unchanging.

“What is it that, comprehending, they will see? The simple light of divinity, this is what they will see richly with the eyes of their intellect; this what they will also handle, drawn by irresistible love, with immaterial hands; what they will eat without consuming with the spiritual mouth of their intellect and soul. They will never have enough, never be satiated with the contemplation of that beauty, of that sweetness. For, stranger still, the light which wells up in them is always increasing in sweetness and kindling their desire ever the more greatly.”—On the Mystical Life: The Ethical Discourses, Vol.

2

, trans. Alexander Golitzin (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press,

1996

). (Publisher’s Note)

[12 The dichotomy of the creative force into the Holy Ghost Cosmic Vibration—
which acts in harmony with the God-reflected intelligence and will of Christ
Consciousness—and the nemesis creative force that acts “independently” under
the influence of satanic delusion, was explained in the context of Jesus’ words in
Discourse](#)

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[13 See also Discourse 70, commentary on John 14:14: "If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it."](#)

[14 God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita](#)

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Discourse 72

[1 John 13:27 \(see Discourse 70\).](#)

Cf. also Luke

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: “Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover. And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him; for they feared the people. Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve.

“And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them. And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money. And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude.”

[2 E.g., “Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot...” \(John 6:70 – 71; see Discourse 43\).](#)

[3 Mark 14:21 \(see Discourse 69\).](#)

[4 Matthew 27:5 \(see Discourse 73\).](#)

[5 Romans](#)

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Discourse 73

[1 Cf. additional parallel reference in Mark](#)

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32

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[2 Cf. parallel reference in Mark](#)

14

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[3 Yoga Sutras](#)

ii

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: “The tenacity that clings to life as a result of body attachment, even in the wise, and that propagates itself (from the subtle memory of repeated experiences of death in previous incarnations) is abhinivesha.”

[4 In the Lord’s Prayer, Matthew 6:10; see commentary in Discourse 28.](#)

[5 Cf. parallel references in Mark](#)

14

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37

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38

and Luke

22

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45

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46

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[6 Cf. parallel reference in Mark](#)

14

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39

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42

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[7 Cf. additional parallel reference in Mark](#)

14

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43

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45

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[8 God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita](#)

xii

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[9 “In Greek, simply I am, used frequently in the gospel in this everyday sense but often with divine resonance as well, since ‘I AM’ is a version of God’s name in the Hebrew Bible \(see Exodus](#)

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15

).”—Robert J. Miller, ed., *The Complete Gospels: Annotated Scholars Version* (HarperSanFrancisco,

1994

). (Publisher’s Note)

[10 See also Discourse 27, commentary on Jesus' admonitions to "resist not evil," "turn the other cheek," and "love your enemies" for discussion of the practical application of the scriptural ideal of nonviolence \(ahimsa\).](#)

In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna clearly distinguishes between the righteous and unrighteous use of force and warfare understood in light of the principle of ahimsa. See, for example, commentary on

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32

in God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita.

[11 "He who unites his spirit to Me, having subjugated all his senses, remains concentrated on Me....The intuitive wisdom of that yogi becomes steadfast whose senses are under his sway" \(God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita](#)

ii

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61

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[12 Cf. additional parallel reference in Mark](#)

14

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48

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13 See, for example, Luke 4:28 – 30 (Discourse 39); also commentary on Luke 13:31 – 35 (Discourse 57).

14 Cf. parallel references in Mark

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and Luke

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15 John 11:50 (see Discourse 60).

16 Matthew 13:13 (see Discourse 37).

17 Nowhere in the Gospel is it recorded that Jesus said that he would destroy the temple. The Gospel According to St. Mark, in recording this incident, includes additional details: “For many bare false witness against him, but their witness agreed not together. And there arose certain, and bare false witness against him, saying, ‘We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.’ But neither so did their witness agree together” (Mark

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56

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59

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[18 See also Discourse 10, commentary on John 1:51, “Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God....”](#)

[19 Cf. parallel references in Mark](#)

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63

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72

, Luke

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56

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71

, and John

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[20 Cf. Zechariah](#)

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: “So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, ‘Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prised at of them.’ And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord.”

[21 “Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents” \(Psalms](#)

69

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25

). “Let his days be few; and let another take his office” (Psalms

109

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8

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Discourse 74

[1 They were observing the rules of ritual purity, which dictated that entering the house of a Gentile rendered one unclean for the Passover rites. Cf. parallel references in Matthew](#)

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, Mark

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, and Luke

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Since Matthew

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, Mark

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17

, and Luke

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all clearly state that Jesus ate the Passover supper with his disciples on the

previous evening, this reference in St. John’s Gospel (as also John

19

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14

, cited later in this Discourse) has led to much scholarly disputation. However, many authorities find no contradiction, since Passover observances lasted for seven days, not just the day of the ritual supper. A detailed discussion may be found in Smith’s Bible Dictionary under the heading “Passover.” (Publisher’s Note)

2 This phrase is repeated in John 12:32 – 33, in which it is clear that Jesus is referring to his crucifixion (see Discourse 66): “‘And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.’ This he said, signifying what death he should die.” Thus in the present verses the implication is that the Jewish officials, by giving Jesus to the Romans to be put to death (since the priests themselves were powerless to render that verdict for the crimes of which they accused him), contributed to fulfillment of Jesus’ prophecy of death by crucifixion, which was solely a Roman practice.

3 “This Self is never born nor does it ever perish; nor having come into existence will it again cease to be. It is birthless, eternal, changeless, ever-same (unaffected by the usual processes associated with time). It is not slain when the body is killed....

“No weapon can pierce the soul; no fire can burn it; no water can moisten it; nor can any wind wither it. The soul is uncleavable; it cannot be burnt or wetted or dried. The soul is immutable, all-permeating, ever calm, and immovable—eternally the same” (God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita

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[4 Cf. additional parallel references in Mark](#)

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2

and Luke

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[5 In the final chapter, which he wrote in](#)

1951

(included in the third and subsequent editions).

[6 Psalms](#)

46

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7 As recorded in St. Luke's Gospel, Pilate sent Jesus to be examined by Herod also, who "questioned him in many words; but he answered him nothing." Pilate then proclaimed to the mob that Jesus was guiltless: "Behold, I have found no fault in this man...nor yet Herod." See Luke

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8 Cf. parallel references in Matthew

27

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31

; and Mark

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[9 Matthew](#)

27

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. Bible historians J. W. McGarvey and Philip Pendleton, in *The Fourfold Gospel* (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing,

1914

), note: “The Romans generally were influenced by all presages, and Suetonius tells us that both Julius and Augustus Caesar attached much importance to dreams.” Pilate’s wife, whom tradition names Claudia Procula, was apparently the only individual to intercede on Jesus’ behalf; she is a canonized saint in the Greek Orthodox Church.

[10 “When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, ‘I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it’” \(Matthew](#)

27

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24

).

Nevertheless, the historian Eusebius records that Pilate, “wearied with misfortunes,” later committed suicide.

[11 Jesus is quoting from the book of prophet Hosea \(](#)

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).

[12 Cf. additional parallel references in Mark](#)

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[13 Matthew 18:22 \(see Discourse 35\).](#)

[14 Psalms](#)

22

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18

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[15 Cf. additional parallel references in Matthew](#)

27

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35

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44

and Mark

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24

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[16 See Discourse 75.](#)

[17 “They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink” \(Psalms](#)

69

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21

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Cf. also Matthew

27

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33

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34

(and its parallel in Mark

15

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22

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23

): “And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull, they gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had

tasted thereof, he would not drink.” Gall, according to some historians, here referred to a bitter-tasting drug used to deaden the senses.

[18 Cf. additional parallel reference in Mark](#)

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33

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36

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[19 As previously noted, even fully liberated masters subject themselves to some degree of cosmic delusion as a prerequisite to incarnating and living in the material world in a physical body. Jesus himself had spoken of his attainment of absolute oneness with Spirit as occurring after leaving his physical form: “On the third day I shall be perfected.” \(See commentary in Discourse 57.\)](#)

“For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren....For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted” (Hebrews

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). The limitations voluntarily assumed by God’s emissaries descending into earthly incarnation were previously explained (in Discourses

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and

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20 “The ideas of heat and cold, pleasure and pain, are produced by the contacts of the senses with their objects. Such ideas are limited by a beginning and an end. They are transitory, O Descendant of Bharata (Arjuna); bear them with patience!”

“O Arjuna! he who cannot be ruffled by these (contacts of the senses with their objects), who is calm and evenminded during pain and pleasure, he alone is fit to attain everlastingness!” (God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita

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21 Cf. additional parallel reference in Mark

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[22 God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita](#)

vii

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[23 The first reference is to Psalms](#)

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; the second to Zechariah

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: “And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.”

[24 Cf. additional parallel references in Matthew](#)

27

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57

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61

and Luke

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56

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See also Matthew

27

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66

, which includes the following details not recounted in the other Gospels:

“Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, ‘Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, “After three days I will rise again.” Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, “He is risen from the dead”: so the last error shall be worse than the first.’

“Pilate said unto them, ‘Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can.’

“So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.”

Discourse 75

1 The resurrection of Jesus is recounted in all four Gospels, each relating certain details not recorded in the other three or sometimes in contradiction to each other. For this Discourse, Bible verses from the four Gospels have been arranged so they can be read as a continuous narrative that presents the story as completely as possible—covering the material in Matthew

28

, Mark

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, Luke

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, and John

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and

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(but minimizing unnecessary repetition).

2 I Corinthians

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. See also Saint Paul's words about Jesus in Hebrews

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: “Forasmuch then as [men] are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”

[3 John](#)

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. He also made numerous similar prophecies in the other three Gospels.

[4 The gunas, quiescent in Spirit, are stirred by God the Creator to bring forth cosmic creation in its spiritual, gross, and active manifestations; and in the microcosm of man to manifest the instrumentalities of consciousness, mind, and senses and to influence the expression thereof. \(See references detailing the intricate science of the action of the gunas in Paramahansaji's commentaries on relevant verses in God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita.\)](#)

[5 God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita](#)

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[6 God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita](#)

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[7 “A man who dies with sattva qualities predominant rises to the taintless regions in which dwell knowers of the Highest” \(God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita](#)

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[8 See Discourse 8.](#)

[9 For a more definitive understanding of the nature and function of the sushumna, vajra, chitra, and brahmanadi, see God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita, commentary on](#)

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, in the section entitled “Yoga Physiology of the Astral and Causal Bodies”; and also, commentary on

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[10 God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita](#)

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11 “The Brahmastrandhra [is] the door between two creations, material and spiritual. When Ego, the son of man, comes to the door, he comprehends the Spiritual Light and becomes baptized therein. And passing through this door he comes above the ideational creation of Darkness, Maya, and entering into the spiritual world, receives the true Light and becomes the Son of God. Thus man, being the Son of God, overcomes all bondage of Darkness, Maya, and becomes possessed of all aiswaryas, the ascetic majesties....

“Man, being possessed of aiswaryas, the ascetic majesties aforesaid, fully comprehends the Eternal Spirit, the Father, the only Real Substance, as Unit, the Perfect Whole, and his Self as nothing but a mere idea resting on a fragment of the Spiritual Light thereof. Man, thus comprehending, abandons altogether the vain idea of the separate existence of his own Self and becomes unified with Him, the Eternal Spirit, God the Father. This unification with God is Kaivalya [liberation], the ultimate goal of man....See Revelation

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: “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne.”—Swami Sri Yukteswar, in *The Holy Science* (published by Self-Realization Fellowship).

12 Cosmic energy in the body works as five specialized currents, empowering the performance of the crystallizing (prana), assimilating (samana), eliminating (apana), metabolizing (udana), and circulatory (vyana) activities of the body.

13 See Discourse 8 for details of story of Sadhu Haridas.

14 John

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[15 See Discourse 60, explanation of how Jesus accomplished this.](#)

[16 John 10:17 – 18 \(see Discourse 52\).](#)

[17 Professor N. C. Panda, Ph.D., former Dean of Orissa University in India, writes in Maya in Physics \(Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass,](#)

1991

): “Shankara, the non-dualist philosopher of India, has recognized the consciousness of particles long back in the eighth century. Some physicists, like Evan H. Walker, speculate that photons may be conscious. He remarks: ‘Consciousness may be associated with all quantum mechanical processes.... Since everything that occurs is ultimately the result of one or more quantum mechanical events, the universe is “inhabited” by an almost unlimited number of rather discrete conscious, usually nonthinking entities that are responsible for the detailed working of the universe.’ ...

“Brahman, which is Reality, is pure Consciousness....This Consciousness is reflected in maya and the products of maya. As a result, all insentient things of the universe gain consciousness. There is nothing, whether macro or micro, stars or photons, that are completely unconscious. When considered in this context, the proton, electron, neutron, neutrino, and photon are all conscious within their respective limits.”

“I regard consciousness as fundamental,” said Max Planck, one of the great founders of quantum physics. “I regard matter as derivative from consciousness. We cannot get behind consciousness. Everything that we talk about, everything that we regard as existing, postulates consciousness.” (Quoted in The Observer, London, January

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1931

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As Nobel laureate Eugene Wigner put it in *Symmetries and Mysteries* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press,

1970

): “The formal inclusion of consciousness in physics could well become an essential feature of any further advance in our scientific understanding.” (Publisher’s Note)

[18 Recorded in Autobiography of a Yogi, Chapter](#)

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[19 See Autobiography of a Yogi, Chapter](#)

43

, “The Resurrection of Sri Yukteswar.”

[20 Cf. Luke 9:29 and Matthew 17:2 \(Discourse 45\). To the two disciples on the road to Emmaus \(Mark 16:12\) “he appeared in another form....” The followers of Lahiri Mahasaya who beheld the Yogavatar after his death likewise stated that his resurrected form, though identical to the one they had known, appeared “younger and more radiant” \(Autobiography of a Yogi, Chapter](#)

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[21 Matthew 10:1 \(see Discourse 40\).](#)

[22 See Acts 2:1 – 21 \(Discourse 70\).](#)

23 Lahiri Mahasaya once asked Mahavatar Babaji to materialize himself to satisfy the curiosity of some friends. Babaji chastised his disciple: “Lahiri, do you call me for a trifle?” The master’s gaze was stern. “Truth is for earnest seekers, not for those of idle curiosity. It is easy to believe when one sees; no soul searchings are then necessary. Supersensual truth is deservedly discovered by those who overcome their natural materialistic skepticism.” (See [Autobiography of a Yogi, Chapter](#)

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24 “Because you have drunk, you have become intoxicated from the bubbling spring which I have measured out” (Gospel of Thomas, verse 13). See [Introduction, regarding Thomas. To this day, stories survive of the travels and divine works of Thomas during his years and ultimate death in South India. \(Publisher’s Note\)](#)

25 I Corinthians

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26 I Corinthians

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27 “Fearlessness, purity of heart, perseverance in acquiring wisdom and in practicing yoga, charity, subjugation of the senses, performance of holy rites,

study of the scriptures, self-discipline, straightforwardness; noninjury, truthfulness, freedom from wrath, renunciation, peacefulness, nonslanderousness, compassion for all creatures, absence of greed, gentleness, modesty, lack of restlessness; radiance of character, forgiveness, patience, cleanness, freedom from hate, absence of conceit—these qualities are the wealth of a divinely inclined person” (God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita

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Patanjali’s yama and niyama, found in Yoga Sutras

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, consist of noninjury, truthfulness, nonstealing, control of sex force, noncovetousness, purity of body and mind, contentment in all circumstances, self-discipline, self-study (contemplation), and devotion to God.

28 John 6:62 (see Discourse 43).

29 “Jesus said: ‘I am the light that is over all things. I am all: from me all came forth, and to me all attained. Split a piece of wood; I am there. Lift up the stone, and you will find me there’” (Gospel of Thomas, verse

77

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Inspirational Readings for the True Worship of Christ

[1 In Songs of the Soul, published by Self-Realization Fellowship.](#)

[2 “Before Abraham was, I am”—John](#)

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[3 In India, Paramahansa Yogananda’s work is known as Yogoda Satsanga Society.](#)



Paramahansa Yogananda

(1893–1952)

Author of the spiritual classic
Autobiography of a Yogi

These teachings have been sent to explain the truth as Jesus intended it to be known in the world—not to give a new Christianity, but to give the real Christ-teaching: how to become like Christ, how to resurrect the Eternal Christ within one's Self.

—Paramahansa Yogananda

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- Karma and reincarnation
- "Heaven" and "hell"
- How to pray
- Using the healing power of thought and life force
- The methods by which every soul can attain Christ Consciousness

Paramahansa Yogananda (1893–1952) came to the United States in 1920, where he founded Self-Realization Fellowship and taught India's ancient science of meditation and the art of balanced spiritual living for more than 30 years. His best-selling spiritual classic, *Autobiography of a Yogi*, and his numerous other books have introduced millions of readers to the timeless truths underlying the religious traditions of East and West.



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