

## Water and Narcissus

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## I. Argument: Narcissus

Narcissus is the mind. Our ordinary life is the contemplation and exploitation of experience, the contents and reactions of the mind, the intelligence of Narcissus.

Life as Narcissus is suffering. Thus we are not simply motivated to life but also to self-knowledge. We are Narcissus, the mind, because we are limited by experience, and because we contemplate our selves as the subject of experience.

We are fascinated with the one who is the mind. Thus we either exploit experience, with its alternative pleasures and pains, or we analyze and fix upon ourselves as the form and force of the mind itself. Our religion is the religion of Narcissus, the lover of the mind's content and form, the hero of impossible existence.

For this reason, since we are bound to this game of alternatives, the play of the mind, we suffer, more or less enjoy, and finally die. Death is as much the goal of our conscious lives as it is the terminal process of the body. The myth and death of Narcissus is the drama of humanity in its common form. It is not necessary. It is not true, and it is not forever. That it is not so is the testimony of all the religions, prophecies, miracles and spiritual communications we have not believed.

Narcissus is the mind. The myth of Narcissus is the epitome of culture, the field of partial and exclusive communications. The death of Narcissus is the obsession and motive of every man who contemplates his possibilities.

At first I was consoled by experience and temporary reliefs. But even as a child I would wake in terror from the dreams of death. Then I suffered the incompleteness of religion, theology, Philosophy and therapeutic means, exploit and solution, drug culture, sexuality and art. These were my experiments. I created them all unconsciously, compulsively, desperately and, at last, deliberately. I moved through the philosophy of my own mortality to the hopeful phenomena of the psyche. I found my teachers. I witnessed and manifested miracles and sudden truth in New York, California and India, in meditation and with my open eyes.

Beyond Narcissus there is life. He is the kneeling stone whose shoulders imply the higher life. Everything in this book was written under conditions I will not explain. But there is throughout the same question and the same dilemma. It is the person of Narcissus, the mind-bearer. And I am free only to the degree that I am free from him, of my own reflection in the processes of experience.

Narcissus is my own myth. I must confess that I am Narcissus. The awareness of that meaningful identity was my first achievement of self-knowledge. From then I knew him as the motive and form of my life. Before that I only knew I was suffering, that I was confused and in conflict, that I was not satisfied, that I was not the subject of clear perception and intentional experience. But I was aware of my suffering through the evident contradictions in my own mind and behavior. I saw the confusion of the results I created in the confrontation with people and my environments.

I came to recognize the pattern of my dilemma in the myth of Narcissus. Therefore, I saw all my experience, my every act and impulse, illumined as the form of Narcissus. He was no answer, no solution, but a matter of recognition. He made me visible to myself. From then I contemplated my own life as the habit and certain death of Narcissus.

Throughout several years of my own search and spiritual practice I kept a journal. In fact, it appears like a continuous argument of my perceptions, what I knew from time to time, toward a final realization that ended the whole problem. I have presented the contents of this journal here, in what I feel is its most direct form.

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This is not an autobiography. It did not occur to me to make a diary of my circumstances. I was patient only for what I was actually knew at the various moments of transformation. Even now I am not moved to say much about where I was and why. I see no value in describing the visions and phenomena I witnessed. Nor am I moved to tell the desperate story of my beginnings, my life, and all the conflict of life that preceded the writings of these pages.

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## II. Recognition: The Likeness

The problem of true knowledge and spiritual truth is not theological or intellectual, linguistic or cultural. It is the problem of the spirit, the problem of the heart. It is the problem of realization. As such, there is nothing to be believed and no dogma to be attained. Truth is revealed, it is not published. What must be grasped is a way of life based on certain knowledge of what destroys and what produces free life.

Therefore, the task before us is not the purification or ever more perfect rendering of ancient texts and matters of report. This is a temptation based on the need for the illusion of certainty. The teaching is ours through living experience, through devotion to the path of life, to the path of truth. Only in this is there any hope for truth, liberation, love, freedom, realization and power.

The pursuit of the literate answer, the mental solutions of our philosophy and theology, is uniquely responsible for the confusion and smallness, the self-involved and anxious energy of Western life and spiritual teaching. For this and not any mere dogmatic reason we must abandon or surrender the motive to this kind of seeking. We must become open to what is available at the center of life and consciousness. We must be liberated from our bondage to externals, of which the past is one form. Our effort must be concentrated in a present opening of life and consciousness.

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The problem is how to realize love and freedom. This is the Christian “ethic” or apparent life, and it is also the ancient one. The Christian way is not a new ethic but a way for the perfect realization of the ancient ethic. Love is not a new law but the summation of the law. The solution is not love as a new law but the realization of love through the perfection of one’s identity with it. And the way to this realization of perfection is “faith”, which is a whole and perfect internal opening rather than a partial or external conformity. Anything less than perfection is sin. And sin is forgiven in order to liberate us to perfection. The goal is the liberation from the path of sin, a perfect restoration to God. Righteousness under law is conformity to a certain external life in order to deserve God’s favor. Righteousness by faith is a freedom growing toward totality from the motive to sin itself. It is restoration to the principle and force of God in one’s own being. It is divine life.

And so the solution is not that we must love. As such we are under a law and must refine our mental awareness of all the possible aspects of that manifestation. Neither is the solution that we must believe particular thing or system of things. Love, forms of knowledge, etc. are free manifestations of the genius of realized life. The solution is not the exhaustive investigation of anything, for we are not under constraint to conform to anything. There is no hope in any conformity and so no hope in any analysis and refinement of categories and systems. We are free of all that and the false motive that creates. Them. Every man under law must refine his awareness in order to conform perfectly. He is anxious for his own transformation to perfect conformity. But the Christian is notified.: there is no hope and no salvation in conformity to externals. It is necessary to be transformed utterly.

The problem is the problem of the heart. The solution is actual surrender and realization. Faith or openness and surrender before God is the only path open to us. All else is partial and distracting, built on the motive of our sin, our failure to love and be free, our bondage to numberless fascination, our dark urge to mortal superiority.

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Mortification is method. It is only another way of asserting one's superiority, of denying love, of attaining the ecstasy of self-pity. Its goal seems to be truth, God, love etc., but it is a manifestation, itself a signature of a certain quality of life. And it is a demonstration which is itself a refusal to live in a world where there is God, a world of love and openness and happiness. It embraces guilt and the incapability for love, self-pity and hard-hearted superiority of self. It seeks to win through effort. This instead of grace and the labors of love. Wherever I mortify myself it is an indication that I am seeking superiority through the emblem of suffering. But its only fruit is self-pity and darkness and lack of love. It is the refusal to live in a world in which love is the essential medium of reality and freedom the essential force of being. It seems to seek a condition of light, life, love and freedom, but in fact it manifests and enforces a condition of depression, ignorance, bondage, and separation. In a state of surrender or perfect participation there is no separation, no hindrance, no despair, no ignorance, no question. There is a quality of union, of bliss, of freedom, and all energy is operative as love, as real union with objects and persons. When reality is realized there is union with the essential force all things, and because the absolute is thus contemplated there is also an end to the separation and reflexive tendency in all relations. All things and persons then are objects freely and wonderfully embraced, at last openly contemplated and enjoyed in the single medium of God or the Force of Reality.

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There is always the possibility and at times the overwhelming temptation of flight into privacy, separateness, external and absolute self-sufficiency and satisfaction. The work of surrender is to break down the barrier between self and persons and Reality (God). The tendency is to separateness and exile and death. The work is for union, relationship, freedom and love. Knowing that one is universally committed to the dark path one can surrender all one's parts. There are no elements that are good and true and apart from one's sins. The whole nature manifests the one perversion and so one is free to surrender everything and thereby release the force at life's center.

It is not merely a matter of improving and perfecting relationships. Such is a creative work of the divine energy as it grows in us. It is, rather, a matter of moving from a subjective condition of bondage and ignorance to an active and responsible life. It is a matter of proceeding into conscious existence and the infinite growth it allows. It is not mysticism or transcendent consciousness but divine life which is whole and realized on every level.

It is not a matter of seeking or affirming union of any kind, or any goal, however sublime or ordinary. It is a matter of a deeper and deeper surrender of the concrete manifestation of sin. It is a matter of surrendering everything, and thus also every kind of goal or Truth is realized and revealed.

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All sins are manifestations of one event or mode of experience. All sin is a move toward self-fulfillment in independence to the point of absolute separateness. It emanates from a closed condition at the center and thus at every point of life. Every tendency or act at any moment is but a single expression of a universal system of the self. And thus the cure is not in the repression, manipulation or sublimation of any part but in a conscious act at the center. Thus always we must return to the heart and surrender and open. And over time the holy spirit, the transcendent power, transforms the life and makes it whole, a divine manifestation rather than a sinful one.

The quality of sin is that it is always resisting the holy spirit. And thus the quality of faith is surrender, openness and acceptance of the one principle we are given: grace, the miraculous, transforming power of God. The problem of faith is ever present to the spiritual man. And it is this: the acceptance of grace. Grace is the gift of the gospel. It is its hidden force. And the acceptance of grace is the problem of faith. It is the deeper and deeper opening and surrendering and receiving. Faith is always related to grace. And grace is the one thing preached.

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God gives all grace, every gift, all power and every miracle. He creates every goal, provides all wisdom and knowledge and exists as the substance of every attainment. We are absolutely dependent on grace. Yet we are called upon for an immense effort, not in terms of the goal and the result, but in terms of sin. We are to repent, to surrender the entire motive of sin. Even this calling is ours by grace, and the capability is ours by calling on grace. This is the work of faith as opposed to the righteous work that concentrates in the goal and splendid object of transformation. We must make ourselves available to grace through surrender. He who fails to see this has failed to recognize his own suffering and ignorance or the need for what comes from God. He is still dependent on himself, though he speaks sublimely of the grace of God.

Repentance must go deep. It must be surrender. Or else it is a mere attitude directed within the superficial spectrum of the moral mind and life. But surrender opens a man to the transforming force of God which creates divine life. And through it the moral man is made graceful along with all the high and lower natures which he knows and does not know.

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Passion and mortification, willful attachment and willful detachment, are the opposite extremes of the bondage of the will in response to its own suffering. But their source is in a single cause which is willful self-love, sin or ignorance, the will created by suffering, by life perceiving its nature as separation from a universe. Passion is the exploitation of the desire for various entities. Detachment is exploitation of the desire for the ultimate entity.

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Worship is not the essential spiritual act. Surrender, total repentance is the essential and original act. Worship is the fruit, the grace, the grateful capability. As surrender deepens it becomes coincident with union and joyous contemplation and reception of grace, which is worship.

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Mere belief or static "faith" is insufficient to destroy the life of works-righteousness. The religious man in his conceit thinks he has abandoned work and its extremes (passion and detachment) and motives. But only constant surrender over time is freedom and the condition of faith, which is also freedom from the power of the way of works.

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The law is any kind of prescription for or description of active or nominal life which can properly be accepted as a goal or good for man. This includes not only moral laws but modes of relationship to God, and also all philosophical and religious statements of any kind. Thus even prayer and worship are laws, prescriptions in the same sense as ritual and cultic prescriptions for sacrifices. All religious and moral laws are ideals, goals, realizations. Thus all of them are already the fruits of grace and not the way to grace. Prayer and worship, love and moral goodness, right thinking, the understanding of ultimate and real nature and spiritual truth, etc., all are the evidence of life already in the process of transformation. Thus none are a way, a means, a method. None are even possible to a life that is yet unopened to grace. And so there is no religious life to be prescribed for men. There is nothing to which we must be conformed. Surrender is the only possibility. And for this we need recognize nothing sublime. We need only recognize our suffering, ignorance, despair and the whole system of false life. This is that in which we are concentrated. We need not concentrate in the opposite of every mode of sin, which is the way of conformity to law, the attempt to transform life by conforming it to moral, religious and other active prescriptions. Surrender is our proper sacrifice and only it leaves us open to God's power.

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The yearning and search for experiences on every level is the way of fascination. Whether the object be a sexual image, a philosophy, drug ecstasy or mystical visions, the search for objects is the same. In this search God and pornography are the same. The true path is in seeing this truth and thereby surrendering the tempting objects. In that freedom there is an opening which allows the true creative force to operate and transform life and consciousness. Most of the time I am endlessly seeking distraction and fascination, my mind flying in many directions, now to erotic forms, now to spiritual ideas. In the midst of this I imagine I am torn in two directions, between the high and the low, the physical and the spiritual. But in fact I am only fascinated, closed, in bondage. It is not a matter of finally choosing the spiritual or the physical but of seeing through the way of fascination, truly and deeply witnessing its causes and effects in ignorance and suffering. The life of sin is a striving for union, for satisfaction is a mass of alternative and absolute forms. It is burdened with its self-created and impossible desires. Union and release are not possible to it, though these are its conscious goals. Thus, relieved through knowledge, one becomes aware of the essential force or "God". In the concentration which is freedom from striving one grows in the power of the light.

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I am prone to a feeling of tightness, particularly in the heart and stomach, but also in other areas. It is anxiety or doubt of being or in being. Life and death, both principles are necessary and operative in me and all other particularities. Thus I can work to create "good" conditions is a failure with regard to reality itself. It is a desire to escape the death side and thus to flee from the dual nature of existence. In me it manifests as a will to paradise, to ecstasy in imagination, to distraction and fascination. It is the way without faith or peace.

This fear, anxiety and doubt seems necessary, for in fact all future conditions are indefinite. However, these perceptions are not created by the fact of indefiniteness but a desire to escape it. They want to create a kingdom of certainty, of absolute pleasure. Thus I pursue all forms of knowledge and fascinating experience. I am in endless thought, erotic imagination, etc. This is a failure to accept the death side as necessary and identical to the life process. It is a refusal to die any death. But when this flight is truly seen, then one can be free of fear, anxiety and doubt with regard to one's very being. Energy can be directed into the life enterprise itself because one sees that its dual aspect is necessary and that life, peace and freedom are to be realized only by a concentration within the awesome duality. Then formerly we found only death by fleeing death and embracing a phantom life, but now we will know life in growing degrees by embracing the certain principles of reality.

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There is no escape nor any need to escape simply because death is here. Death is in every realm, even as in the cycle of flowers. We need only surrender within the dual principle and let God create. We need seek no union, which is the attainment of a single principle in opposition to another dark one, but only accept and realize that union is already the reality behind the dual principle of life and consciousness. This that we now know is union and life with God.

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The way of the "law" is the search for union beyond what is possible to the present condition. It seeks to earn what is not otherwise given. It is false because the principle with which it begins is separation as an essential, a priori condition. Thus it is always dealing in the language of beyond.

The way of "faith" accepts grace. Thus it assumes union as the a priori or most prior condition. Its effort is not directed toward a paradoxical and at last impossible goal. Rather, it is directed upon the ignorant motives that create suffering and the striving based on the illusion of separation. Its goal is not righteousness but surrender. It is always surrendering, opening, relaxing, receiving, loving, enjoying. It allows itself to be created, changed. It allows life and death. Its language is the language of prior union and of the need for surrender.

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In my flight I have refused to accept and require the world to be necessary. No object is necessary. There is no loved one. I do not desire. I deal solely with myself through the fire of imagination. Thus I am immune, cold, closed. I am Narcissus. I must confess my existence and my desire. I must see these as good and thus become dependent on the world's realities. Thus I will be drawn by desire to objects and satisfied in real participation. Thus also I will move from the consoling religion of the mind to a dependence on the sustaining and creative force at the heart of life.

Having failed to be confessed, to desire outwardly and thus become justified as a creature in the world, I am fascinated in secret by the imaginary creations of my own frustration. I seem forever passionate and in search. I do not love. I do not enjoy. I must open to the law of my life as a creature. I must open utterly. Thus I will realize my life as a man and as a divine subject, continuous with and creative as the divine power and consciousness. Union is not only "out there". It is here. But life here is not in despair, somehow dark or qualified by mortality. "God is light and in him is no darkness at all." Thus, wherever is union there is light and divinity. The world must be founded in light, and in the deep things light must be realized in marvels.

Faith is the acceptance of the principle of union. All else is striving for union out of despair. Faith moves by concrete desire to fulfillment with real objects. It can be happy because it is not seeking the absolute which it has lost or never known. To the man without faith satisfaction is absolute. His every desire seeks an utter release, an ecstatic and overwhelming pleasure, a union through fascination. It can never attain this and so it is always striving and yearning. But faith realizes union throughout the whole existence. Union is not the separate goal of its every desire. Thus it is not endlessly involved with sex and pleasure. It is not continuously fascinated with death, which ends the whole effort and consciousness of fascinated striving. It does not alternate between license and asceticism, fascination and the overcoming of fascination, absolute energy and absolute death. Faith knows it cannot be satisfied to the absolute degree (by any experience). Its satisfaction is prior and universal. Thus, all its desires and objects are manifestations of love, openness, freedom and happiness. It grows in the realization of union, denying neither the creature nor the soul, and asserting neither creature nor soul as absolute to the exclusion of the other. Faith knows its ultimate satisfaction is not in any particular, not in any object or experience. Where union and real satisfaction is sought in every particular mode of life, there is suffering and dissatisfaction. This is the pain of ignorance. It is the potential flight into exhaustion. Faith knows this possibility to be in error. It knows the fruits of surrender to this temptation. Thus, the energy is not devoted to license, nor to the resistance to objects of desire, but to surrender, opening, freedom and happiness. It moves itself constantly into contact, relationship with persons and all reality, and real action. Thus real life is made possible through the realization of prior union with the Divine.

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I resist and take flight from the material and life condition. The crux of the spiritual life for me now is to see and embrace this mode of reality. The material realm is relentless in its lawfulness. It is all cause and effect. I am always seeking a magic by which to overcome the laws of physics. But the mater forms are there and hard, dragging me into the necessary acceptance of their reality. To now I have tended to anxiety, impatience, self-pity and despair, striving after forms of immunity and passivity and superiority. I have opposed the law and thus failed to transcend and master it. Thus also I oppose the creative, endlessly active life forms. The intrusion of life around me makes my passive artifice impossible. But when I accept these forms and their laws as necessary reality, then I am peaceful. The effort of work required of me to live and create and remain in relationship is a labor I am grateful to maintain. And the noise and process that shatters the aesthetic heaven of my household is acceptable, being a reasonable expression of life in the condition of material existence. Thus, being at one with these laws, I am firm and untroubled. I master and transcend each material problem, and I become alive and in motion, exceeding the barriers of aesthetic space, in a mood with

all creative life. Thus the hard earth and stove at my foot and hand teach me. And thus the children teach me. It is unreasonable to seek peace, for this aesthetic pursuit in fact seeks to undermine and thwart the foundations of life and materiality. It is necessary to be already peaceful, one with the law, and thus to create in the world of this law.

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The same motive that qualifies and destroys the love relationship is operative universally in a man, so that I see the same obstacle is to be overcome in the attempt to surrender and open in spiritual exercise. It is the motive to separation, immunity, superiority and self-sufficiency. Thus one clings to all sorts of mental sufficiency's, from erotic images and the idea of erotic life to spiritual knowledge and ecstatic awareness. Always you think you have it, something necessary to hold on to. But always you are only seeking to remain closed, untouchable. Thus in love one must see the division that produces guilt and suffering and dissatisfaction.

The problem is that one chooses methods of experience that negate the necessity of the loved-one. One is satisfied and isolated, unopen. Seeing this as the fact which one suffers, which causes guilt, one can abandon the temptation and ever more strongly embrace and love the lover. Just so, the spirit in its depth tends to this solitary state. And thus the problem is to be overcome by seeing at every moment that the motive which is preventing surrender of whatever one clings to at the time is really a motive to separateness and contraction, however marvelous the object seems. Knowing, then, that one's life is false and death-seeking, the alternative is opened to us as true.

The genuine motive of life, the natural form, from which some perversity or negative force has turned us, is union. Thus we must surrender the present motive which endlessly excludes and negates, and love, desire, seek, open toward and weep for the grace of God. We must consciously turn from the unconscious life of separation and death toward active love, openness and union. The mind created in the affect of separation doubts and denies the reality of God or undivided and free life. Seeing this to be due to the perverse and false motive, one then also sees that God is indeed the real and necessary goal.

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I am prone to use every experience or encounter as a justification to the motive of separation. I use it to excuse myself to negativity, self-pity, contraction and superiority. This motive is universal in me and the work of my life is to oppose this motive and the life of death it creates. The inability to surrender has only one cause, whatever the particular case. It is the will to separation, to limitation, to control and sufficiency. The mind always draws the line, and this enclosure of consciousness is the "self" or universe of forms that is the root of suffering and error. There is nothing to do but surrender, ever deeper. All else is failure, a hardening and excluding process. The process in consciousness is not negative. It is in fact aspiration. It is yearning after that which we see our perversity excludes and denies.

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"God" is an object in a universe of language. To pursue religious truth by the effort to create a whole theology is really to pursue a circle about oneself. For the "I" is the God of language. I create the universe of thought, and thus God is never more than one of many things within it. God as reality is the integrity of all things, even of myself. And so language or any objective mode is no way to Him.

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All my thoughts and every motive in me seeks to create by its special alchemy a system, a perfection, an artifice of perfect fascination, an enclosure. And I am the superior, the advocate, the creator of each special universe, and of the great universe of my immunity and pleasure. Every motion in me has as its end this contraction, this separation, although pursuing it as if it were an opening, a union.

And against this there is but one liberating force. As I concentrate deeply in myself and see the tendencies and motions and distractions raging temptations in me, closing and knotting me from head to toe, I say in myself: Why should I not open? To open is the only justified mode of life. To close is artifice based on a confusion of motives. It tempts because I am already closed. But to open is an act or goal that can be read in the very forms of my life.

Just as the forms of flowering plants dictate a single and simple form for the continuing force of life, in me I see the same necessity. For all contraction kills by strangulation and all the self-suffering diseases we create in reaction to our own poison. And so the path of life is clear. It is to open and abandon the motive and temptations of contraction, of separation. By this path also all love and every subtle truth and form is realized. By it, by the sciences of this process, we come to a description of things and a practical technology that flowers life, but we are also free from being possessed of the goal of perfect descriptions and perfect technologies, the alchemy's of religion and science. The goal of every alchemy, every reconciliation of opposites, is victory over the nature itself. But true life is victorious only over its own falsity. The need is not for any superior artifice, a perfect self, but a perfect alliance with the force behind the manifestation.

Faith is the one necessity in the sense of a capacity for constant surrender and opening beyond the forms of thought and culture. Faith is a constant abandonment or letting go of all principles deemed necessary by the independent systems of mind and life. It is creative participation in the force of our own nature and all nature. It is the mood in which the real, the loved-one, the unknown, the living force is always necessary, and thus one is free of the temptation to satisfaction in the artifices of memory and timidity.

It is not a matter of resisting all fascinations. This is impossible and exhausting. It is a matter of understanding that we are fascinated, in flight, avoiding the basic consciousness. Thus, from moment to moment, we will feel the temptation and know it to be a force that would distract us from the true object. Thus we will concentrate deeper in what remains, what stands out to consciousness. We will face the undiscrined energy of the heart. And by opening deeper there we will grow into freedom and grace. Thus we will not be resisting what in fact we desire, but we will be already free, knowing the tempting object to be an illusory distraction. We will be faithful from moment to moment until the grace in life opens to us and liberates us from the war against sin.

Concerning the ultimate liberation I seek in the mysterious stories of the spiritual life, I have never attained it, never believed anything I have ever seen or heard. It is not, then, a fault in the report or in reality that has made my conversion impossible but my dependence on them; my seeking through the use of them an undeniable and overwhelming encounter that will transform me by force. This is the path of sin, of works, of the solid heart, the unopened self. And so this trial, like everything I do, at last only describes to me the nature of my own ill. It only manifests further my failure, which is the failure to open and to be free. Thus I am given no miracles, but I am forced to see myself as I am in the pursuit of them. My life, in all its forms, is one act of resistance. It is not a failure to open, thus needing "opener", but a resistance to opening. My failure is a conscious path, a resistance to life, and attempt to preserve myself, to keep myself secure from pain and death, distracted in every escape and fascination of the mind.

Yet, even this awareness fails to create or coincide with an opening in me. At best it confirms me in despair and the acts of despair. It has the effect of making me feel "seen". Belief is "works". Just so is any other manipulation of my life. I cannot act on the principles of self-knowledge any more than on those of miracles and proofs. My dilemma is thorough and relentless. The more I see of myself and the world, the more I am convicted of despair, for I am closed and pursuing the path of resistance. There is no hope in the pursuit of understanding of miracles, nor in any other pursuit, for

in all of these I place the opening of my life into the future and conceive it as a consequence of certain experiences. I conceive of grace as that manifestation which requires by its overwhelming quality the reaction of opening in me. Thus I am always pursuing the magic fact. But in fact all that is created as consequence in me is resistance. I am committed to my research, my goal. I am in motion. My life is created by a root error. Grace is not that which produces or creates faith but that which faith realizes. The problem is not the discovery, recovery or recognition of grace but faith, the opening itself. The opening is prior to any manifestation of "grace", any realization. Thus the true path of experience proceeds from an open condition and continues to deepen it. But my path proceeds from a closed condition and continues in it. To me, grace is the virtue, for it creates opening. This is the conception of a failure. Opening must be known as the virtue. In my path of resistance I think I seek opening, but I perceive that opening is the very thing I perpetually and thoroughly resist. This is my suffering. My suffering is not the lack of any thing. I continually think that what I lack is this or that, a miracle, a woman, an experience. I am dependent on things and events, and, whether I possess them or not, I am never satisfied. I cannot be satisfied, for the very heart of my life resists every object, every experience, the whole particularity and totality of things.

My suffering is my resistance to opening. It is not my lack of opening. It is not that I must open. This is only a law conceived by resistance. Such opening is an object of resistance like any other fascinating thing. My suffering is the resistance, the act of closing, the refusal to open and surrender itself. It is always there. It is the primary condition wherein I meet anything and everything. In it I meet the next thought, the next experience, the next pleasure, the next moment. I meet everything as if it were a death, a threat.

Thus, now and in the future, I am encountering only one primary reality which is of consequence to me. It is my resistance, my will to separation, to closure, to superiority, to immunity. My experience is not divided into some good and avoid the bad is an illusion because my experience is of one thing: my resistance to opening. My anxiety, then, is unjustified because I can never enjoy that which I seek or avoid that which I fear. I can only perpetuate the one experience. My life and consciousness is a solid, impenetrable mass unavailable to any reality.

If I examine my life, my desires, my will, I see this to be perfectly true of me. And everything I seek possesses one quality: it symbolizes, embodies or promises release, fascination, and satisfaction. To compensate for the essential reality I perceive in me, I extend my suffering by creating a will, whether or not I thoroughly dare to act on it, to a contemplated and projected universe of entities infused with my own passion and hope for release. And so my life is not only closed but also anxiously pursuing the overwhelming, total and final accomplishment of that universe. This is the vision of the drug addict and the religious fanatic. And as a consequence of the necessary failure such a life entails, I come also to wish for and periodically top will a release from this kind of life.

As a man bound to such an illusory search comes to identify his goals with reality and, in his failure, comes to hate the reality of the world, just so, in his despair of this path of life he comes to identify it with his very life, and thus may hate it even to the point of suicide. Thus, most men are fixed in one or another degree of aggressive hate or self-hate. And the root problem is the same in any case: the refusal to be open.

Always, in my contemplation or suffering, I come to one will. I am about to commit myself passionately to the goal of release. I am about to get high, drunk, laid, occupied. I am about to seek a spiritual or philosophical goal. I am about to commit contra-acts to my frustration. Even if I perceive the root of my trouble I erect its opposite as my goal: I am going to try to open. And I think that if I open I will realize this or that, joy, freedom, and power. Thus, I am still pursuing an effect through a goal. It is still a path moving out of the essential fact of resistance and closure. Seeing this, I may attempt to understand why I am resisting and closed, neither loving nor enjoying love, listening but not hearing my own truth, passionately seeking and equally resisting my own goal. At times I abandon and fail. At times I exploit all goals and so become a libertine and fail. I pursue both the origin, the primary and prior innocence, and the end, the exhaustive experience. But there is no

release, but always the same recognition of the dilemma. I must be opened, yet I must be already open. For a time I imagine I am progressing, merely by the fact that I am becoming more conscious of the problem. I think: a few more cycles, a few more returns and I'll suddenly be free. Thus I allow the periods of discipline and indulgence.

To this consciousness all spiritual truths are stone. The gospel of grace, of forgiveness, is as impenetrable as a Zen ko-an. For, even though I am as I describe myself, the truth of the gospel is not that I am to be free of all this in a future life beyond this world where the cause of my sin will be taken away. Such a religious conception is only a goal like all my goals, a creation of my unopened life. In fact the gospel claims that the power of sin is removed by faith. Forgiveness is not consolation but liberation. And so, clearly, I have refused the gospel and every other reality in all the world. I have simply refused, closed, withdrawn. The miracles and manifestations of Christ are the same as any one of the sentences he speaks in the traditional report. I have listened and watched, but I have not heard or seen. I cling to one thing: my resistance, the satisfactory immunity of my closure

This is the crucial matter. It is all the same whether I bring my suffering to pleasures, disciplines or the holy spirit's power. There is no grace, no answer, no satisfaction. I am given no vicarious release but only temporary relief and distractions.

To date this is the sum of my knowledge.

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The gospel is not expressed most particularly and necessarily by any act or event in Jesus' life. The teaching is all that is given. The gospel is as fully presented in the simple preaching of Jesus as in his miracles, resurrection, etc. The gospel is not overwhelming in any sense. It is only for those who "hear & see". Those who are not moved by the simple teaching will not receive the mighty report. And those whose opening is true are not dependent on the implications of startling events. The gospel is this: open and surrender to the God who is with you. Fulfill life and receive life. Nothing convinces but a direct, unswerving and deep encounter with this calm. There is one teaching: repent and receive the life. The demand of the gospel is always the same: that we let go of our controlling error and all the forms it creates. This demand is no more exactly and fully present in miracles and cosmic effects than in the words themselves. The problem is not in the presentation or the implication and promises, or the lack of these, but in the one who hears. We are only called to openness and surrender, self-knowledge, responsibility and life. Once we surrender and open and are committed to that path, in contrast to the alternative, we will begin to grow in realization. The path of surrender must be a total path, as thorough as the path of resistance, and not a mere counter path.

Open and receive the grace of the holy spirit in all your parts. Be filled. It will teach and transform and reveal. But do not expect grace to be given, after which you will open to it. Grace is already given. It is not the goal. What we require is surrender, not another grace. Surrender is what we must ask for, not any manifestation.

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To the unrelieved man all self-knowledge leads to a law: surrender. He must surrender. He must open. He must cease to resist. But in his attempt he reaches despair again and is closed more, so that his will is poisoned again. In truth, surrender and opening are the way of life, but they are not accomplished by a law imposed on the mind and life. In doing so one only realizes again that one is closed. The true man is not doing differently. He is surrendering and opening and growing. But he is simply doing so. It is the single response of his nature at least during his most concentrated and conscious periods. And these periods grow to include the whole of his life.

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My whole difficulty is epitomized in one original act: the rejection of God as reality. Thus I fail in all relationships. Whatever is the case with other men, I am in need of a conversion to God. Until then, even my surrender is a resistance to Him. Surrender is the acceptance and reception of God.

It is not a waiting for manifestations, proofs or liberation but the response, the natural life, the ultimate act and characteristic of the man of faith who already knows the one source of his hope and life. It is not a search for the Spirit but growth through reception of the Spirit.

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The problem is not simply the not-having of faith toward God but the active rejection and resistance to God. We resist not because God is real, marvelous or unbelievable but because He appears to function negatively, as judge in terms of what the world is and what we tend to be. Thus resistance to God is resistance to His claim upon us, to the moral transformation which faith entails.

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The constriction in my heart is my deep desire to believe and live the joy of faith, yet I resist this because I cling to a system of thinking as well as a personal moral reluctance which cannot allow the opening. I regard the gospel as incredible, compromised, untrue, or consisting of a certain system of psychological truth presented in an impossible tradition of miraculous nature. Thus I am closed and tight, fleeing for relief to various exploits. Yet in this I am not only closed to that religious report but to life, love, freedom, all my faculties, all things, nature itself as deep experiences, encounters, recognitions.

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Religious forms, historical, apocalyptic, or gnostic, are designed to create and maintain the effect of a certain religious emotion or relationship. They are used to cause the opening of surrender, to guarantee it to history. But such forms decay and die over time. They, even so, become rigid and necessary formulas which later devotees madly defend. Yet they must be abandoned. Even so, the word of life remains our essential need. The opening of surrender, which contains the judgment (the letting go of self) and grace (the reception of power), is necessary to life. The word is all that Jesus offers. And miraculous reports do not add to, serve, or guarantee the effect of the word. Whatever the truth and reality of such claims, they are not necessary or sufficient to the expression, reception, and effect of the word.

The miracles, visions, and divine manifestations of the Force of God are part of the cosmic order. They are as real as trees and flowers. But they are not given prior to surrender. Surrender is required before any special divinity is known and understood and enjoyed. Surrender is not response to the miraculous but response to the word of life. It is the principle of growth. And once it is realized as the law and work of our nature, then we too will grow in life and consciousness, wisdom and power and divine grace. We will speak a religious language of our own, for religious language is simply the language of realization. But the true teaching is not given in religious language but plain language. It confronts us as a demand, an undeniable insight into our fundamental problems, the error of our lives.

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On the dark, negative days my sense of failure, frustration and hopelessness is extended by the feeling that God has left me, or that my ignorant will has not, cannot and will never open to His Presence. During those periods there are no answers at all, no way out. Neither submitting nor refusing to the temptation solves the difficulty. Yet I think I see that during both the dark and the lighter periods it is the Divine itself which is at work, trying to realize itself alive and free and strong on a deeper level. The dark hours are not an estrangement from the Divine but the death of self which is the very goal of the work of surrender. I am almost certain of this because these periods are always followed by a renewal of strength and of the will to surrender. The dark periods are only a crisis, followed by re-birth. Yet the cycles of positive and negative experience revolve regularly, and the work never ends.

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Whatever is the case regarding the ultimate liberation and most future fulfillment to which we are being led through creation, it is clear that whatever we know ourselves to be at any moment (flesh, mind, ego, relations, self, psyche, emotions, etc.) is mortal and must die. Our death is the death of ourselves entirely. It is for this reason we are called to open and let go of everything toward God. God is our direction, not merely our source. He is not behind us in act and memory, as creator, past revealer, law-giver, and thus persistent in law, memory, obedience, etc. Rather he is before us, he calls us, and thus he calls us to death, to the surrender of all we know and are, all knowledge and understanding gained on the basis of a continuum of experience out of the past. For all that was and is mortal. It will and must die. And thus we are called to fear dependence on anything, be it life or pleasures or ideas or relations, even God himself as we know or have proven or understood or seek him. The God who calls us to immortality, to life, to liberation in a conscious act and relationship, and thus to surrender of what is mortal and what leads to death. We are called to let go of every mortal thing. We are called not to abandon what is, even the world, but to freedom in it and to growth. We are called not to bondage freedom in it and to growth. We are called not to bondage and identification with what appears to be at any moment, but to a free use, a free expression, a free life directed and opening toward what is alive. Love is the principle of free life, not a method of behavior in sin and despair and folly, for that is merely understanding and compassion.

Thus, truly, we will die. We can depend on nothing we possess, nor on the hope of the God we want to believe. Our goal is not heaven. Our goal is unknown. It is not heaven, for the desire for heaven is the desire for the preservation of our lives as we know them. We know for sure that our lives are mortal and contain no life. Our reality is God. He is the center of our life and consciousness. He cannot be seen and known and loved and assumed in the configuration of the present, for all of that is mortal, a synthesis of past and present. God is the power that is creative and alive. He is known not in our identity and memory but only in surrender and opening. He is known only in relationship. By that act we learn and know him, not that he is the one contained in our experience and so to be worshipped, but the one who is in relation to us, calling us into life, away from what is dead and dying. Our acknowledgement and consolation. The God known to surrender is alive. He is not the God of accumulated experience, the God of memory and language and doggerel demands. We are not called to conceive of him or to perfect ourselves by manipulating our behavior. He is our opportunity, our life, our only hope.

All other relations than surrender and opening cling to what is dying and dead. We are called only to let go and open. If this is our responsible and conscious practice we will change and grow in every way. We are called to no end, no goal, no place like heaven but to commitment to this living relationship, this way of life, this opening and letting go to God. Let go of all forms. Live your daily life. Use your suffering and difficulty as an opportunity to open deeper. God is available only to this response, this relation, this faith. All else is illusion, unconsciousness, resistance and death. God's call constantly releases us from this need to sin, to abandon life, to cling to what dies. His victory in Christ, or any teacher or realization, is his means to call us to abandon what dies and depend on him as living and undying. Thus we are constantly renewed in our difficult work, for we are much bound to our deadly choices of the past and our resistance now. But we are not called to look at these and worry over them and try to change them. Nothing frees except the opening and letting go to God. If we pursue this call we will grow, if not we will die.

It is not to any goal we are called but to God moment to moment. In that process many goals are achieved and passed. No psychic powers, worldly successes, nor heaven, nor vision of God, neither the intellectual vision of God, nor the correct interpretation of the theologies of the Bible is our goal. Such occupations as we pursue or endure as theologians are purely our work, a ground in which to recognize and act our relation to God. The Bible is a mortal book and all know death who depend on it. Yet it can be the symbol and subject of our creative work and also an instrument whereby to come to true understanding. But so can anything else. Every life and every thing is used by God to call men. Those who think Christ is the only medium for the call of God are vain. Let go of this book and this Jesus and this vision of God. Open, let go toward preaching is this: not what God is

or what was or will be but all preaching is a call to surrender to opening and letting go moment to moment, as a conscious act, toward the light and force of God.

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What I have feared is the body and devotion to life in the body. I am anxious in the body. I fear death. I am always seeking a moral relation to my own nature as a being in the body. So I am tempted to the repressive, suppressive, “spiritual” philosophies, the life of “work”, the liberating paths. But what in fact can liberate me is no radical obedience but a radical devotion to the gifts of the body. I need not pursue the anxiety that demands I be creative, but I can be free in the modes of life that are already given, alive, creative, free, unlimited, and divine. Liberation from form is not my concern, for it is based on a hatred of life. I am called to the body. Those who are under the moral burden are only tempted to the flesh. They seek God, but I am found by God.

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The way of work is not the path out of anxiety and death, and my need to pursue it is the cause and perpetuation of my anxiety, my lack of openness. There is nothing to be abandoned that is alive, no fortress relationships (like marriage, dependence on parents or guru, etc.) to be maintained. Life must be let in without qualification.

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This is my enlightenment. In a matter of moments my relationship to things changed and living energy was released in me. It is not a matter of super-natural visions or a perfect recapitulation in memory of the contents of my life and psyche. My ignorance and bondage is a functional one, not metaphysical, moral, psychic or any other. Enlightenment is a change in relationship to what is, an identification with reality. Thus it is not a path or a “way” of life, but it makes life possible and easy as the flowers. It is not a sudden jump to higher forms of life but a functional relation to present life, to life moment to moment over time. It is free of the need to abandon what is real in the present, and so it is free of the search for ultimate modes of growth and transformation. It is effortlessly conformed to the natural cycle. It allows the growth of the psyche to correspond to the natural cycle. It allows itself to be healed.

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I had thought it necessary to become a mystic seer, a graphic psychologist, before I could accept truth and life in response to enlightenment (reality). Now I see I am already free.

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What is uniquely important is the premise upon which a life is consciously based. The premise is what creates. It is the center and source of forms. Thus a life that has already despaired of itself and seeks a superior goal will suffer accordingly. The truly creative periods of my life have been when I recognized the sufficiency, infinity and goodness of the real, the given, the present. Thus I was free of illusory goals and was possessed of energy, I did not use work as a moral tool to suppress or manipulate myself. Just to, even now I am free, except my very freedom can decay into flight to an illusion, either the illusion of work or the illusion of exploitation in secret. Thus I must leave my teachers and also the church. I must freely respond to the erotic world. I need not open myself by separating myself from what I desire. The desirable makes me open.

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Work, genuine, free, and interested is itself ego-destroying. There is no need to pursue a work purposely in order to humiliate and destroy the ego, the bondage to the flight from reality and from grace. Such a conscious desire is itself based on despair and illusion. If pursued to its proper extreme it would require a choice of work that has the most ego-destroying potential, being least of all capable of satisfying any genuine, conscious and happy desire. Thus one would sell oneself into slavery and all the methodical extremes of denial. I have done this. And the result is that I have reached the limit of my ability to cope with such a trial, and I am finding ways out, where possible,

and otherwise turning to bitterness, despair and derangement. I am not learning to function as a happy man. My reaction to this may, however, lead to more genuine life. And thus the trial will not be fruitless. True work is pursued in divine sovereignty, responsible to one's own awareness of one's integrity and good. As long as one is yet seeking such awareness in some projected liberation, one is not pursuing true work, but only a method that may at best force the issue and which is in itself false, unconscious and desperate.

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Life has become justified to me. I am justified to me. I am free to explore all kinds of relationships. Relationships are now fully possible and can be assumed, extended and terminated more naturally, without the negative compulsion to manipulate and destroy relationships in order to flee. This enlightenment is what is implied in the Christian notion of forgiveness and justification by faith. It is the achievement of autonomy, and an immediate will, rather than life in relation to an arbitrary will of another. The autonomous will is the self-energy freed and thus manifesting the natural energy and will of "God", the creative power in life manifesting through the unqualified psyche.

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Most of what we do is not love but is calculated to get ourselves loved. Thus parents bind their children to them instead of nurturing them to their own freedom. All belong to the cult of personality, creating themselves as icons for the devotion of others. Thus all men resist all other men and are at war. And all our private, self-directed acts create our suffering. The cure is not to create taboos but to learn understanding. Personal rituals may create pleasures but they also confirm their origin, which is fear and a flight from love. Thus we suffer at these orgies in spite of ourselves, and the feasts are mourning in the heart. When by the power of understanding we have finished this, we move our desires outward in the world and do our needing there and freely love what is.

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You are the heart, the body, this being in the world with all the limitations this implies, and you need not, must not, and cannot avoid being these. The only alternative is to allow yourself to be these, to be open with them, to live freely as them. You are called, not to separation from these, but to be these and to use these as a means of relationship.

Thus one is called into physical and psychic life in the world, into sexual and love relationships freely embraced. This is the first step of life, the first birth. What is called the "spiritual life" or growth in the divine force and consciousness is a second birth. It is a process just as the first birth and is not a sudden conversion. Indeed, within it, like the first, are many conversions, enlightenments, deaths, and re-births. But only after one has overcome the body anxiety that flees the world can one begin to open toward other dimensions. Until the first birth the spiritual life is only an erotic dream, an indulgence, a flight. After one has learned to open the body as a physical and psychic entity identical to oneself, one can begin to open, with the body toward higher forms of energy.

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The vision that possesses me is static. I am bound to it because of my resistance to life, my reluctance to live in terms of limited, material, reactive nature. Thus I seek a heaven of stability through forms of immediate satisfaction, instant vision. I bypass the objective medium and the work (action) that is the condition for "connection" in the world. I resist all contrary forces, all energies that flow for themselves and obliquely to my own. Thus I pursue forms of physical, psychological and psychic stasis and solidity. I analyze until the other is no longer problematic. I pursue the drug of aesthetic, the household peace of understanding. I am a man in a room. I fear the outside. I deem it logically impossible. I postulate only the room. Then I seek to escape my anxiety, fear and reluctance. And through this I at last seek a spiritual goal. I adore the spiritual goal, but the spiritual life appears too difficult.

I seek to solve the anxiety of lost religion with spiritual consolation and peace. And this is contrary to the creative spiritual way itself. The true spiritual path is difficult, but we tend to take the vision of

those who succeed in various ways and lay it onto the description of the path. Thus the spiritual way comes to be informed with the symbols of those who have already attained. And so spiritual creativity becomes religion. At every moment the religious man is dealing with a category of the goal. He is not truly seeking but confronting a form of discovery. Thus worship and cultic performance and calming contemplation of the images inherited in the cult of a teacher replaces personal spiritual action. By a concentration of means, we avoid the terror and reluctance and ugliness that is our real and present experience of self and life.

In the religious path one is always confronting the signs of another and the objective symbols of another's victory. Thus one vicariously shares the glory of another heart. But one cannot grow by such means. A religious man grows fat on consolations, but, on the creative path, we must open beyond terror, without benefit of even a hint of the divine.

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It is not man's business to evolve, to see the subtle forms, to grow into another dimension. This is only a grace when it comes, and only then does it appear as a reality. Man's security is not in other dimensions but in God, and God appears in relation to us through the apparent mode or dimension of reality that confronts us in any moment. Thus it is only our task to open in the present, to function free and alive, with energy in the body of the world.

Thus we should propose our spiritual life on the basis of the abundant present, the creativity of God. To base life on scarcity and discipline, to seek God and security in the ultimate future, to live into the future on the basis of our own absolute creativity, is an unnecessary burden that ultimately destroys the harmony of life and the pleasure of experience and relationship.

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You cannot grow into consciousness of dimensions outside the present limitations until you have fully realized your freedom within your own present time. At best you can get a certain empirical intimation of the existence of such dimensions from your own occasional experience, that of others, "spiritual" teachers, etc. But no such knowledge should move us to pursue dimension as a goal until we are already free. For what we seek is the grounds for happiness, joy, freedom, hope and positive life. And, lacking it, we pursue it outside ourselves in experiences, other persons, other places, other worlds, other dimensions of reality or unreality. And this pursuit is the source of error because its principle is error: what must necessarily be sought is not already available and true. Thus, freedom, peace and positive life are not yet justified, and one's life becomes an endless embrace of methods and truths, illusions and distractions, in a perpetual experiment that always leads to despair and death.

It is perhaps a basic axiom of the psyche that it cannot discover more or other than that with which it begins. The key to all knowledge is not discovery or what is discovered but that with which it begins: the assumption. And so life cannot develop, consciously or unconsciously, by any method, until it begins to live by surrender, opening, letting go. This, and not knowledge, not gathered and remembered and synthesized experience, must characterize the center of life and consciousness in action, in relation to space and time. Everything else kills life.

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The call of my life is not to any occult realization, any preacher's proof, any experimental discovery on any plane, but to the realization of a necessary, present relationship to "God". It is a realization of true life based on no language at all, not even the theological or scientific. True life is not based on or begun from any assertions at all but from surrender. Surrender is the original act and proposition, and it is the result of no other proposition at all. The problem of religion, theology, science, and the whole tendency of the usual experience is that it seeks to determine grounds for this fundamental letting go which is the basic psychic life. But there are no grounds for it. It is necessary act. It is fundamental to life, except that it is most often not the ongoing conscious act of individuals. They come somehow to doubt and resistance and to a search and then a path.

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This is the basic discovery of my life: it is not a matter of finding that which is true but of overcoming contradictions in oneself, in one's motives. And there is no method for overcoming contradictions, except the truth, the beloved first be known as real, or that to which one is essentially related. It is always the "sinner", not his method, that recovers the beloved. He surrenders without reasons and proofs. His faith is a total act that renews life and begins action on the basis of a new relationship to things, one that assumes rather than seeks the truth, the beloved.

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Narcissus: "I am always seduced from work. My genius is in the search for availability. All my creative life is distracted and then dissolved in a constant feast upon the satisfactory object, the sufficient state. Until there are no objects. All availability is limited to my effort, my game, my seductive form. When I despair of my adorableness then all I seek is revealed as a sign, a symbol of the perfect state: immunity, private ecstasy, neither seeking nor mourning what will satisfy. It is a paradise, a sleep. It ends in death. Unwilling to move. Unwilling to be born. Unwilling to accept the conditions."

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The erotic man is not only committed to life as the body but to death as the body, to utter death. Only thus is he free of death and free to live and extend life. If this commitment is not made then the erotic life, like the life of repression (discipline) is only a flight, an avoidance, an errorsome solution to the problem of death. The realization of life must be through death. Life is on the other side of death and the life created by the possible resistances to death. But actual physical death is only the physical event. A man can witness his physical death, but what is significant is that he must die. He must not merely know he will die and experience a physical process until the loss of consciousness. He must die in fact. Thus the ultimate event is a total one. And it is total death to which the psychic whole must relate itself. The problem of death is the most significant and controlling factor in the whole of life.

Thus it is true that all I am or imagine must die. But it is false to abandon all these things on that basis. Such is repression. Rather, to commit oneself to life as such is necessary if one is to live freely, without the motive of self-destruction. And to commit oneself to life one must perfectly accept death in the present. The perfect acceptance of death moment to moment allows life to live unqualified. And this dying moment to moment to the ultimate threat of death makes death not a universal principle in contradiction to life but a function of life, a necessary dimension of the psychic process or continual experience of life. Thus one acts not in relation to death but beyond death. Preservation ceases to be one's concern. When physical death is encountered in one's own body, then one will react as to every moment and every loss before: without tension or resistance or fear. For death is not a man's doom. It is not the contradiction of his life but the final test of his freedom in this dimension.

But neither is this acceptance automatic and a simple matter of decision. Its necessity is known only on occasion and it is ultimately realized only in the process of life, not as an a priori principle. The demand that one accept death can lead to despair and the embrace of forbidden things only in order to create death, even as punishment. Thus a man comes to feel guilt and despair at his terror. The necessity of utter death does not mean I am dead or that I must seek to die or despair of life and withdraw from life. Rather it means that, no matter what I do, I cannot avoid utter death but only corrupt my life and freedom. This is no method for it except the consciousness of experience, of flight and freedom, until that which resists the condition of life lets go and opens to its destiny and its experience of itself and all things.

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The beginning of all free action, of all good life is not the recognition of the goodness of either the world, the conditions, nor of God, the source and goal, but the justification of self. This is the opening of consciousness to true self-knowledge, the surrender of repression, and thus terror, guilt,

and the drive to death. The self must be purified first of its false and illusory understanding, or else it will never be transformed by experience or some objective “savior”. Until the individual recognizes the goodness and the unlimited power of what is coming through the center of his consciousness he will always fear and destroy life. In order for there to be good fruit the tree must be good. And this realization, the result of a miraculous “letting go”, a birth, brings with it the recognition of God and the goodness and possibility of life in the world.

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What remains is the stark, present, mortal reality without an interpretive medium of consciousness. The realization of this consciousness without flight is what provoked my terror recently. I could not allow it and would flee to consolations. But, if I am unconsolated I am free to live and let myself and the world be what it is and change as it pleases. I need not know what is behind it all or where it is going. I need not believe it is good or bad, that there is some power behind it leading me always to fortune or failure. I am free to attend to it, to be free in relation to it, without striving in one or another direction. Thus I am free to live intelligently, with affection, with enjoyment, with understanding, without despair and anger, as if I been tricked by someone else. I am free to live without endless calculations for the ultimate consequences of my life in relation to a moral deity or absolute universe.

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This is the answer: There is no answer. The problem is that my relation to life and reality has been one of questioning, doubt, despair. What is necessary is not an answer of any kind but despair of the questioning, the end of resistance to what is, the end of the flight to consolations and symbols and exotic modes of knowledge and consciousness. What is necessary is the return to unqualified awareness and thus to identity with the process at hand, the freedom to be this moment and to allow the death of this moment that is required for the next. One must cease to hold on to the flower.

There is no security, no place beyond death. Those who seek it only die in terror. To surrender is to be without knowledge, without consolation, without the will to flight. It is to live, to be vulnerable, to be without control, to admit death.

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One must move out, directly to reality, and have no way back. Artifice is a false relationship to reality. It is a return from, a flight from reality. It establishes a distance from reality. Artifice is a pseudo-reality, an alternative to reality. The concentration on artifice is concentration on self, the getting of adoration from oneself. Artifice is cash. It is a success that earns the true goal of love for oneself. It is the avoidance of action, the avoidance of the danger and vulnerability of relationships, of expression, of participation, of love. Healing acts for me are acts that refuse artifice, acts that refuse to return, that seek to create nothing outside of relationship. All false work or effort seeks to produce a product: success, the goal. It is work upon the self. Every goal outside or beyond relationship is artifice, a false goal, such as enlightenment, destruction of neurosis and ignorance, etc. This kind of work begins with self-hate and self-doubt and never loves but doubts and hates all others and all reality. Whatever dimensions of reality there are, they are not gained by the systematic and ignorant hatred of this world. There is no yoga, no path, no truth, no force, no grace. When one has despaired of these, then one can begin to move without motives, in a true direction, outward toward what already exists.

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The true way is not a taking in. It is not food. It is rather becoming food to reality. Neither is it sacrifice, for this is a search for food, for the goal. When the search is abandoned, the life begins.

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I give up the motive of artifice, the return, the flight to self, to privacy, to exclusion. I do not look at a man to learn from him or to teach him. I look at him to stay with him, to be with him. I end in him.

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For me, freedom is to be already free. And true creativity is not the search for the addition of anything, any artifice, but the overcoming of the contradictions in oneself. Work and self-frustration are not fruitful methods or methods of which I am capable. They imply an understanding of life that I do not accept. For me there is no goal, no truth beyond or outside relationship. And experience pursued with that understanding can learn and become happier. It is free of the greed of goals and the labor of self-hate. The life of thought is to establish a true understanding of relationship and pursued consciously one is already creative, realized and free.

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Relationship is the goal and the result. Understanding is a function of relationship. It is relationship. It is not the sentences and truths that one can pronounce apart from or as witness to relationship. All liberation is a return to relationship. Understanding leads back to relationship. Understanding perceives the pattern, the flight from relationship. Understanding perceives the given and essential nature of this mode of life. All energy, love and life is a function of relationship. Everything is union. There is this perpetual fission and identity of the finite and the infinite, the conditional and the unconditional.

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There are no answers apart from commitment to relationship. It is itself liberation. It is not life based on a question. Nor is it answered life. It is merely true and free.

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What is at stake in the religious or spiritual problem is not truths but relationship. It is the movement from separation to union, from withdrawal and flight to relationship and staying. This I would add to my original notion that it is not a matter of answering questions, of getting truths, but of the removal of contradictions. The removal of contradictions is not a matter of the aesthetics of the psyche but is a function of relationship. It makes relationship possible, and relationship is realization.

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There are no answers apart from relationship, because relationship is the solution. Questions and seekings in terms of one's ultimate nature are essentially due to a resistance to relationship. The demand for an answer is the refusal to live, the refusal to commit oneself to the condition of life, which is not answered but at best free and true and growing and changing. Personal relationship is the dimension in which one must work in order to live freely and to grow. Commitment to relationship is the liberating act and realization. It destroys the flight and its terror. This instead of the endless aesthetic, internal, isolated contemplation of one's own dualities, one's mind, one's content. Relationship is not mere relation, adjacency, but commitment. It is directed energy, intensity, love. It is the true work, the ground of opening.

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There is no path and no goal. These are artifices. All growth is a gift and its dimensions are not known beforehand. All a man can do is place himself in a position to grow, to be in the creative flow. There is only relationship. Only commitment to the given, the knowable dimension of yourself and others, in relationship, participation, surrender, only this is the ground for realization of the possible.

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Life is not answered. It is demanded. The silence is the root condition of life and consciousness. It is not a false condition, something to be feared and escaped but finally and tragically joined in death. Acceptance of the silence is freedom and life now.

This is the liberation: not that one is answered and has a truth to count on, but that, after long trial, one has learned the essential relationship, the form of life that characterized and is the given life. Thus one is in the stream, the path. One is home. One is in relation to that which is going on here. One is possessed of the energy of life. One is in a position to grow. One is justified. One's concern is not content but relationship.

We are in a direct relation to God now. Not necessarily in the sense that even now each of us sees other dimensions, divine lights, etc. The realms of the visionary are no more a direct revelation of God than the present experience of time and space. But the present experience of time and space, when properly understood as relationship, is in fact a direct experience of God. Our experience, our participation in a true and free relationship with God is not necessarily qualified by the limitations of time and space and person. Thus, the language of spiritual life is not necessarily dimensional, filled with the mystical forms of religious and cultic history. All language is a paradoxical gesture indicating the same reality.

Commitment is this: to end the flight from relationship. The man in flight is ambivalent. He knows he suffers, yet he cannot commit himself. He is devoted to the aesthetics of his own content, his self, his experiences. Thus, even if he despairs and seeks a spiritual revolution, he remains ambivalent. He cannot commit himself. He understands only the distance between himself and reality, people, his own body and emotions. Commitment is energy to union. It is not adjacency. It is not ambivalent. It is simple and direct. It has no goals beyond the relationship, the beloved. It deepens its surrender, its giving, by committing itself more deeply in relationship. Thus an uncommitted man does not yet desire toward union. Just as before he was in flight into hallucinated desire, now he is neither desiring toward union nor in flight. He is under the law of his own despair. He works on himself. He works on his heart, his mind, his life. He tries to love. He tries to be faithful. He tries to trust and believe and surrender. But he cannot. He is only ambivalent, self-divided, uncommitted. He has lost the relation of commitment to his own body, his own life and emotion, to people and to reality. He will not be free until the ambivalence ceases and he concentrates in what is. Then he no longer works or acts upon the heart, the body, the beloved. He is the heart. He acts as the heart. He becomes the body. And the body implies relationship on multiple levels. Commitment is the nature of his action: it is union. Surrender ceases to be an act he performs on himself, his parts, all the functions toward which his ambivalence works. Rather, surrender is relationship. It is commitment to the beloved, to reality, to God.

The myth I perpetually enact is Narcissus, the separate one. I pursue separation, loss, and thus absoluteness, immunity. I flee relationships. I am satisfied by the loss of the beloved. I mourn for myself. Narcissus at the pool is an image that in fact represents the tears of him who mourns for himself. His mourning is his self-love, his hatred of others, of the vulnerability of relationship, of being a limited one, thus one capable of relationship. Thus, loving himself unto separation, he fails to realize himself in relationship. His free life is mourning. It is paradox. It is death.

This one I am leads me to negativity, anger, self-pity, contraction, separation, emotionlessness, flight, distraction and the pursuit of false self-images.

The work of surrender, then, is the letting to of this trend and, rather, to pursue union, relationship. Where one tends to separation one can open and remain always in relationship, not merely in relationship to people and things and conditionals forms but essentially and unqualifiedly in relationship, even apart from these. That is, to be radically and perpetually in relationship through

the right action of surrender, of letting go, of opening to the beloved, is to be in relationship to God. To pursue and to maintain relationship, union, is not to perpetually seek an object in the world, but to open and surrender into relationship as a prior condition, now, at any moment, any place, constantly. To be out of relationship, under any conditions, is an illusion, a withdrawal, a self-contemplation, a failure to open to that which is alive.

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My nature, my life itself, is not a thing in itself, nor can it be understood and realized in isolation, in the act of self-separation, but it is a function of relationship. I know myself, even when alone, only as in relationship. What works then? It is not to remember what I must do but to see clearly and directly what I am doing. It is to recognize my suffering, my question, my present position, disposition, tendency. Thus, if I am in trouble with, unable and unwilling to surrender to God, unable and unwilling to recognize the existence of God and my relation to him, I cannot move myself to this recognition and to surrender by any imperative or any recollected knowledge. But if I see what I am doing, if I clearly recognize my present condition in terms of the whole pattern of suffering to which I tend, then the cause and nature of my difficulty becomes clear. And, invariable, this is what I am doing: fleeing, avoiding relationship, closing, seeking absoluteness and immunity in isolation. When I see this and recognize it as a pattern which binds me, which is arbitrary and false because of the negative effect on my life, which originates in the negative processes of fear, it becomes clear that the negative basis of my life is simply the avoidance of relationship. And this is recognized to be a false and destructive goal, an unjustified goal, even from my own point of view. Seeing this, I am thereby freed of the need to pursue this goal, this closing process. I am freed to open, to pursue relationship, to live and acknowledge life as relationship. Then life is not merely an experience of persons and the whole totem of concepts and things, but it is in itself, at its heart, relationship. I am freed to commitment to relationship. I am liberated to right action, creative action, the action of relationship, of commitment, of opening into relationship. I am free to live life as surrender, as union, as already union. Then my life is not action which seeks to cause union or true relationship as results, but it is action which is relationship, directed unqualifiedly to its object. Thus I am free of the false action, the false relationship which is passively bound to the motive of separation and flight, creating barriers, preventing free energy in relationship, preventing union, preventing a direct commitment and involvement with that to which I am related.

Thus, right action and right relationship are not our habitual responses. They are created only on the basis of the recognition of "sin", the false pattern and bondage. They are not produced or made possible by imperatives and assertion of theological and philosophical truths. Only when the nature of one's false life and false truths are recognized does true life and necessary truth become possible or apparent. God is not known apart from the recognition of the false pattern of life. By contrast the true pattern or opportunity is revealed.

God is known only in true relationship. How can a man recognize him? Only by recognizing directly and simply the false pattern of his own life in all its scope and implication. When the false is no longer necessary the truth is revealed directly as that which one avoids.

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God and life and true relationship are not imperatives or abstract truths. They are apparent only to the liberated consciousness. The sinner can return to them not by dogmatic memory or the maintenance of imperatives but only by a direct approach to the content of his life at any moment. Surrender is possible only when relationship is no longer avoided. And only by the proper recognition of his sin can a man realize God and true creative life in relationship as infinitely desirable, the liberating grace, the joyous opportunity. All else is law and the worship of truth idols.

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Most seeking and spiritual work is a way of closing. It imposes a truth or a demand from without. Thus the problematic self is its goal, its object. True spiritual work is not discipline from without, a war against oneself, but a letting go, an act of relationship.

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Apart from actual surrender there is no relationship, but there is only avoidance of relationship.

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I have thought of understanding as a thing in itself, as a form of consciousness that always coincides with a liberating transformation, the attainment of a mode of equilibrium. Thus all understanding amounts to a symbol for a peculiar stasis, a kind of status. But I see now that this is not the case. To be sure, understanding often coincides with a moment of stillness, of rest from false pursuit. But it is not always so. Rather, what is always so is that understanding provides a key to true action, true relationship.

It is very often the case that one comes to an understanding of one's motives and action while still otherwise possessed of the drive to fulfill this motive and action. The understanding does not liberate you from the motive or the drive to certain peculiar goals, but it does provide a liberated standpoint from which to establish true relationship and true action. Thus understanding is the key to work, to warfare within the context of your illusion.

You are always free to abandon your understanding. The man who understands is still a sinful man, a man in flight from relationships to a secure self-satisfaction, but he bears a truth by which he can live and grow beyond the endless and absolute dualities of false existence.

You are always free to live by your understanding. You need not multiply the alternations between exploitation and discipline. These are unenlightened forms of action that manipulate life in terms of the false goals. They do not realize life in freedom on the basis of a direct insight into the motives that create life in relation to goals.

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God, who is the one to whom we are always in relationship in every relationship, is not recognized by any logic or any progression of proofs and evidence. But He is suddenly and clearly revealed to our weakness, our limitations, our incompleteness. A rational supposition is inferred from an already whole or complete viewpoint. But God cannot be inferred to the point where we are liberated into relationship with Him. Rather, when I most clearly realize my motives and my dilemma, when I see the whole process of my life in terms of relationship, when I am alone and perceive this meaning with deep clarity, then I also realize that relationship is the radical category and universal principal of existence. When I see this, it becomes clear that there cannot be any moment in which I am not in relationship. This is so because the notion of being out of relationship. This is so because the notion of being out of relationship, is in fact the cause of all human dilemmas. Human failure is the failure of men to realize themselves in relationship. And so relationship is a category that transcends the immediate proximity of objective quantities or persons with which to be in relationship. This is not a logical proof for God's existence, but it is an understanding which, when clearly and deeply realized, frees us to recognize, and thus affirm the fundamental quality of our life to be a creative, mutual relationship to God.

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There is no method by which to establish relationship. Relationship is not a goal that can be attained, nor is it dependent on the creation or presence of an object with particular qualities. Relationship is the given, and it is our resistance to relationship, to concentration in that which confronts us, that causes us to create the whole system of goals. Thus one is always on the way and always working on one's self. But what if one simply realized that relationship cannot be achieved but only avoided? Then the mind and all the reflexive action stops. And one continues, not on the basis of resistance and thus life in relation to goals and all the alternatives of exploitation and discipline, but on the basis of relationship. Then the mind is released, let go, relaxed, for it is the dilemma and it has perpetuated itself.

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The notion to be dead, to become a suicide Has occurred to me during despair of relationship. It is a thesis, a statement, in the form of an act. Thus when I had fled relationship radically and lost my connections, and when I had no functional identity by which to give meaning to time, I thought: I am not in relationship, I have no function, I am logically dead. Thus suicide is an affirmation, a way of describing one's real condition to others. It is a demonic communication necessitated by one's refusal to surrender.

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It is not that you must pursue union, for once this is asserted, then you must postulate all of the objects to which you are to be joined. Thus even God must be postulated, defended and proved. But how can this be done? How can you defend that to which you are not joined? How can you assert that which you essentially deny? If you pursue this path you go weakly, in parts, constantly inventing arguments in your separate faculties in order to convince the heart. Thus you chase the setting sun, at best enjoying its effects upon the land and in the atmosphere, but never finding yourself in the heart of light. Sun-chasers are involved in the law of light. Their speed is equal to the speed of the sun in flight. They have no means to divide the distances between, and so they never catch the sun. The way to the light is toward the east, where the sun rises, approaching us. And the truth that turns us back is in self-knowledge and surrender.

It is not that we must pursue union, but we need to understand that in every way, continually, we pursue separation. The whole life is devoted already to this path even in a moderate man. This is the graceful vision. When it is seen and understood its truth already reverses the heart.

Instead of pursuing the light, a man should simply turn to the sun as it comes upon him hour by hour. The aggressive way of seeking union cannot be accomplished, since we above all seek our separation, our own victory and absoluteness, even in the pursuit of God. But when a man sees the truth about himself he is opened to the infinite, real possibilities. The heart instantly knows that this pursuit of separation is going to death, a long process of self-emptying, a cutting away to nothing. With this understanding, constantly renewed and recollected, the whole of a man freely turns back and surrenders liberally, opening to the given and coming grace, and power, and life, and relationship, and union. He will grow, being constantly re-born to a fuller life, a more miraculous and unqualified realization.

Thus the way to union and life is not willful and constructive but a free, creative turning back to all things, to everything, to the creative force, the holy spirit of God. True understanding of the way of sin does not postulate God as a possibility or even a necessity. It merely turns about to what is, to full expectation, learning in time to place no limits on the heart. Thus it returns to relationship. To be taught. To be given birth. To be given life. To be given a world.

Such a way is apart from all doubt, since it seeks not at all to live on the basis of its postulates, of possibility, and of willful conformity. The way of pursued union in any and all relationships is a way of anxiety and partial accomplishments. But the way of surrender based on understanding postulates nothing and receives everything.

The pursuit of union is the natural path of sinners. The flight to separation, from true relationship, has the appearance of seeking, of constant embrace, of union. It constantly flees to objects like a lover, seeking to construct a meeting. It is the long erotic nightmare, the multiplication of embraces, of pleasures. It develops the system of means into increasingly sophisticated and ideally effective forms. Thus men and cultures devoted themselves to the invention of devices, philosophies, arguments, seductions. Men in flight produce a massive technology of union. They suffer deeply but they think of themselves as seekers of truth. They may intuit what they need, but they cannot find it. This is because they do not understand the true nature of the movement of their lives. They interpret themselves only in a positive sense. But the way of life is always a turning back. Its basis is the recognition of sin, the understanding of all efforts. That which we seek eludes us as long as it

remains a goal of striving. It is ours only when we see the entire falsity and fruitlessness of strife. When every movement is recognized as a manifestation of flight, then the heart has no recourse. It begins to surrender, to let go, to turn rather than pursue return.

Surrender is the way, but it is not a path, a pursuit of union, a method a man can adopt. As such he will only adapt it to the path of flight and so despair of it at last. There is no path. But neither is this a truth known to men in flight, for they simply turn from effort to ease and self-indulgence, irony and dependence, mocking the work of others. The truth is not found among all the alternatives, the contradictory possibilities. Those who understand are free to work, to be creative in the world, in all relationships. They are not in retreat. They are not bound to methods. They work but all their effort is already in relationship, turned toward God, opening, knowing true life. Only the man who understands he is in sin knows his need. Only he knows the reality and grace of God. Only he knows the grace and energy possible in any relationship. He alone is loved and loves. To all others love is an artifice, an ideal, a possibility. There is no proof for God or love.

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Ordinarily we treat everything as if it were some form of ourselves, by identification or projection, and so we are not in relationship.

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Relationship is not the truth but it must not be avoided. The truth is in surrender itself, which is the heart of relationship.

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All true teachers offer not a mere teaching, which merely creates or enforces separation, but a relationship.

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The form of relationship we assume toward a thing or person will determine our understanding of it, the ultimate meaning of our description of it and to a greater or lesser degree the content of our description of it.

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Relationship is primary, not because it is an opportunity, a circumstance, but because it is always already the case. It is impossible not to be in relationship, even if all people and all the senses are absent. Energy or life cannot by its very nature exist by itself. It already implies an object, a system, a source, a continuum. It is our ignorance that causes us to suppose we are not in relationship, that the beloved is absent, even dead. Life is only in relationship to life. To be alive is to experience the presence of life. Ignorance and sin cause us rather to see death and emptiness, a void in everything, an opportunity to die, to be exhausted. But to be alive is to be a presence, to thrive where growth and refreshment and increase are the only reality.

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Every man is being led to a vision of God, a realization of life in relationship. This does not mean his vision will be a visualization, an occult demonstration or any other form of manifestation. Each man must become sensitive to the movement in himself, the work of God for his salvation. Each man must become free to surrender in the form of his own nature.

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The assertion that self-hypnosis is the cause of visions, etc., is a phony argument because it leads men to doubt extraordinary things but not the very form of their life and consciousness day to day, the whole pattern of their life.

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Religion is not necessarily or even at all a spiritual way. It is no more spiritual in itself than picking your nose or buying a shirt. But every way of life and every form of religion have a dimension in which creative spiritual work is possible.

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There is a tendency to reduce religious content and spiritual effort to their corollaries in psychological mechanisms. Jesus Christ, who lived and died and was glorified, is not a mere symbol, a projected picture, a meaning. He is first of all a concrete reality and, secondarily, this is symbolic, and meaningful, and thus subject to inclusion in psychological processes because we experience it. The reality of Christ is symbolic in the same sense that any thing, any experience, is symbolic. Reality is symbolic, but symbols in themselves are not real.

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Love is a freedom for relationship that is based on self-knowledge. And thus also our relationships are built not on simple love but on a difficult process of mutual knowing. And so most of love is not deep feeling affection but a willingness to work in relationship in order to exceed our limitations and remain open to others.

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The goal is relationship not therapy, and relationship heals. Because relationship is primary our action is surrender and acceptance rather than manipulation.

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Fear is conquered by surrender to the Presence.

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“Obedience” is to remain radically and continually in relationship, to maintain the love situation.

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We want God to verify Himself in excess and apart from what appears. Thus we despair in the face of mere reality instead of experiencing it openly as itself the Presence.

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God’s reality can be experienced in all kinds of manifestations but the Presence and Life is known only in love, in energy wholly open, giving and receiving in relationship. To love is to know the Presence utterly. To be dissatisfied with this and to seek proof of God in the extraordinary is to operate on the basis of a schismatic relationship to reality.

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The return of the repressed is not a mere return of unconscious contents but a return of the exiled self. The problem of life is to make a creative return, a liberating and permanent return of the prodigal to true love and life.

Thus discipline of false patterns and “contents” is an impossible effort that only kills and otherwise distorts our lives. It must be so because that which we want to destroy in ourselves cannot be separated from our very selves. Those things, the sins, are our very heart. We are the sinner. Thus we cannot destroy him by righteous effort, however noble a goal this appears to be. We can only hope to transform and liberate him by a creative effort. The thrilling exploitations of self-indulgence fail because they are attempts to satisfy an infant form of our self-solution. They deny too much in ourselves and our relationships to satisfy and keep us free. The needs of self-indulgence are needs to satisfy patterns we have outgrown, places in ourselves, love achievements of an infant kind (Narcissus) beyond which we have feared or been prevented from growing. And the ascetic knife is merely a sacrifice by Abraham, the father in us, righteously called but unaware of all the implications of the sacrifice.

True effort is growth. It is creative life. It doesn't deal with the symptom as an alien and hateful growth but as the infant self who resists growth for reasons of fear and self-doubt and anger. The child is not to be slain but loved into openness so that he can grow in the creative force, the Holy Spirit of our lives. And what were these patterns, these infantile creations? They were primitive forms of union, of love. They merely represent arrested development, not alien and evil force.

And so we grow in love. Love was always the goal. Union is the meaning of life. But union is worked out creatively, always in new forms, in relationship. And so we cannot afford to come to a halt in a pattern, or to regress out of fear and anger.

Union with what? What is achieved in union? In love? It is a certain fulfillment of energy, a total contact with the living flow, the total force of creative life. It is relationship and so it is not merely a state in us but a continuity of ourselves with the whole. It is a loss of separateness yet not of true selfhood. It is not a permanent condition but a perpetual goal of growth. It is a need.

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I reject not merely love but the loved one in all her forms, even God. I am Narcissus.

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Outline for Confession:

- Resistance to God
- Avoidance of relationship to all men
- Doubt of self
- Reluctance to surrender
- Resistance to work
- Refusal to confess love and needs in relation to others
- Preference to self-indulgence rather than creative acceptance of the need for discrimination in order to grow and be in relation to God
- Need for conflict, anger, proof of superiority, negativity and despair
- Dependence on others without insight into their needs and active love and help in relation to them

As a result "I" do not deeply seek and accept the forgiveness, love and power of God. "I" do not deeply confess my profound need for grace, relationship and love.

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Spiritual life is not based on the denial of anything or the resistance of any pattern but on the free choice of what is recognized to be good and necessary. Spiritual growth depends on the choice of this good consistently and ever more deeply over time. Thus the most necessary beginning for spiritual work is the recognition or vision of what is necessary or good: God, the Holy Spirit, even surrender or opening in relationship as a total, constant reality. To begin it is only necessary this be there even in some small, partially conscious, ambivalent way. In all relationships it is the recognition of one's true need and the expression and pursuit of it in the relationship that permits depth, concentration and fulfillment.

Relationship is the radical, simplest concept of our life. There is no moment and no place where we are not in relationship and need not let go of what resists and prevents perfect relationship. Even the body speaks this truth. All its forms and faculties imply relationship as their natural fulfillment. And the conscious self implies a like which it is over against and from which it is differentiated. The more one acts upon this, deepening relationships, the more profound the self is realized to be. It must continue to grow beyond the period of the body's early maturity. It must surrender forever in creative relationship to the force that is its own infinite possibility, or else it is turning back upon itself, away from relationship, away from the source of its life.

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Understanding does not precede liberation and true action. These must in themselves proceed naturally, directly, unequivocally, prior to the mind. The cause, paradoxically, does not precede the event. Justification does not causally precede divine life. Mystical visions do not causally precede holy action. There is no schism between will and event, father and son. This is the mystery. The understanding sees only paradox in reality. Understanding cannot lead to creative life. He who tries to improve himself by his understanding is still in bondage. There is nothing to understand. Surrender, let go of everything. Abandon yourself entirely. Do not sin anymore.

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A man tells himself his endless distraction by women is bondage. He tells himself he must love his wife. He tries and fails. He tells himself God has created a relationship with sinners. He may even say more, that God is already in relationship to men because He created men. Thus he tries to live in relationship to God and he fails. He despairs. He fails because the principle of the creative cause is merely an ignorant supposition. This remark will make men angry. It is like saying there is no God. But my remark is a paradox, like the Buddhist statement that there is no God. To say there is a God and the principle of creative causality hold is just as paradoxical, but religious men see this statement as unqualified verity. Men are in bondage to think in limited dimensions because of fear. "Love your wife". "Love God". These are not to be spoken to the mind. They are not causal principles to be utilized by the will. They are an opportunity. They are already true. They are not the contraries of anything. We are accustomed to think apart from the rhythm as if to create lyrics with our feet.

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All disunity is schism, an affirmation of one alternative. But true life calls for the inclusion of totality, and so schism is overcome by the inclusion of what is avoided and forgotten. The new life draws into relationship everything it meets.

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Surrender with both hands.

Do not weigh the Force of God.

Doubt and technique reflect a basic separateness, a psychic division.

True understanding and true life reflect the very processes and depth which is in reality itself.

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The self and the universe must cease to be present to consciousness as a problem, a contradiction. This is the ancient dilemma. The earliest Western philosophers posed two questions: What is the meaning, reality and purpose of the cosmos? And What is the meaning, reality, and purpose of life? To the solution of these most cultures and most individuals are devoted either by ceaseless search or the ceaseless and willful attempt to manipulate the world in the image of a proposed solution. But creative life begins only where this original schism ends.

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The sexual need, and all true needs, is like a limb, a faculty, an organ as plain as a facial feature. It proclaims relationship, function, the other. Thus the true end of a need is not mere release, not mere self-indulgence. The true end is relationship. The need calls for connection, union. Need and function are principles of union, unity and harmony. They are not properly the cause of a schism within a man or the human order. Schism is produced by the motive to separation itself, avoidance of relationship, of connection.

Since need is not schismatic, the body and the world, the condition of creation, is not schismatic. It is justified and free, not in itself but by virtue of the principle of relationship, of union or connection. Thus the world is justifiable not in itself but as creation, as a reality possible only through the creative maintenance of relationship.

Need is not a schism that must be synthetically resolved through relief, the destruction of need. Need arises in a universe, a reality where relationship is already the essential creative principle. Need arises only where union rather than separation is already the essential condition and truth. Thus the elaboration of relationships through concrete needs is a process of extension on the basis of what is already the case.

Life created through real need is true spiritual life, since it consists of radical union, connection, relationship. It is not mere satisfaction, which is separation. Thus any kind of free life, whether it contains miraculous consciousness and mystical gifts or the most humble labor and love, is divine life, a place of growth.

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I may be peaceful, free of inner anxiety, without any functional, creative ability for relationship. If I am already peaceful and thus not affected in relationship, I present myself like a tar-baby to all things. Thus peace can be a form of resistance to relationship. True peace is the absence of the schismatic attitude, the will to separation. Thus it is a part of the creative motive. True peace is realized only in relationship. It is not a matter of merely being in a state free of anxiety. This is only a mental quality, created by anxiety itself.

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We tend to separate life or relationship from truth. We make truth an attitude toward reality, a power principle, rather than a creative principle identified with reality itself. Thus we begin to modify and control others, our own functions and the whole universe that is available to our implementation. We limit and negate real forces in behalf of a higher causal principle. And so nothing is born and we build civilizations of limited and dangerous men.

Our methods are not those of relationship in and for itself but of control. Thus a truth principle becomes a mean for denying the essential, inherent truth and value of what it is not, that is, what it causes, what is hierarchically below it. The truth is not a posture to be taken to reality. It is more universal than a cause. It includes cause and effect. It is a principle that is realized in relationship, which excludes nothing. Thus it frees us from the causal attitude as a life method.

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In order to live, a man must be liberated from the whole rule of suffering. It is not that he must open and surrender. He must enjoy the real presence and delightful power which is at the heart of his existence. Man naturally responds to that graceful reality by opening and surrender, liberated obedience and creative life. He needs God. He needs food, life, fulfillment. He needs a deep healing. True life comes only in response to the truth. It never is a matter of seeking the truth but of enjoying it and responding to it. Thus I will never be free until God is brought to me as an overwhelming reality and promise. I cannot create or willfully adhere to God. There is nothing to preach but the joyous reality of God. And until his reality is known, all methods will fail.

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It exists. It confronts us. It is ours. We possess no ultimate insight.

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The sense of death, the lack of creative relationship, is the sense that nothing is happening, that what it manifests itself to you as static. Thus one suffers a relationship to time that corresponds to that of the dead. Indeed, we conceive of the dead as having a continuous relationship to space in some limbo but as having lost their relationship to time. This is the essential nature of mortal suffering, the loss or fear of the loss of one's relation to time. One stops, no longer grows, no longer is involved in a growing dimension that draws one into the future.

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Time, in the concrete, is a succession. Only a commitment to time can purify the present and all future experience. Only thus is one free of the past and free in the present and open to the future.

Thus life-consciousness must preserve the purity of the nature of the event at any present moment. All time taken together doesn't represent the true image of the concrete, for if one forgets actual time, space is confused, as if one superimposed all the individual segments of a motion picture.

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Freedom is a creative acceptance of the law of time and space.

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Every form of false philosophy is an error in relationship to any thing and everything. It is dependence on any form.

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Narcissus is fear. The result of "spiritual" striving, all striving, is the realization of conscious fear. Thus he sees his fear as itself the content of his life, the reality that is always in him. He sees it not as a reaction to some temporary physical, mental, or other cause, but as the essential content of his life and being. Perhaps he will no longer seek consolation for it, knowing there is no consolation. Then he is free.

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Narcissus must die in the myth, because his role is unto death. But he cannot die in me because he is me. I cannot write him dead until I die. The death of Narcissus is not the death of something in me but my very death. Even my freedom is in relation to Narcissus. I can view him as unnecessary, as false, and open beyond him by opening to the source of life that is prior to him. For Narcissus is only a dimension within us, it is sin, a form of decision. He is a relation to things. Thus even though he is the center of temptation, despair and death, one can constantly live beyond him, opening to the life of God. And this indeed is what life is. Life does not become at some point erased of Narcissus, sublime and free and fulfilled. Only one learns a little from experience about what he is up to and where he is going. And then one hears the word of life and understands the opportunity of God. From then one can work. One retains the possibility of Narcissus but one's life is toward God. This is the life and death struggle that continues until death. There is no absolute autonomy, no parentless state, no final ecstasy. These are imaginary imageries that ultimately correspond to death and seek death, for they are impossible in this world, this life as it is. At best one is at work. One is never free in the absolute sense but only free to work, to open, to grow, to create out of the substance and beyond the limitations that one constantly discovers to be one's reality. Then, as one works, one is free of either extreme, either desperate image, that of necessary death in Narcissus, or that of absolute freedom and ecstasy and autonomy. Neither is a real alternative, although one alternately succumbs to either idea.

This cycle is a search for light, for the non-mortal condition. The liberation is to free manhood apart from religious, psychological, spiritual or other strivings for transformation.

Thus you no longer seek a transformation of what you are but realize your relationship to things to be changed or different that you thought. It is like the Christian realization except it is not religious and philosophical but tacit, the end of a dream. Because it ends, man's reaction is gratitude and joy.

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The final grace is the agreement to live in a world where the beloved is.

Before that you tended either to flee the world or destroy the beloved.

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What is transformed is not the qualities but the meaning, the relation. I identified Narcissus with my person and so felt that I must die in order for Narcissus to die. And I felt there was no transformation within life. And it is true, the ultimate transformation of qualities never happens, at least to me. What is transformed is the search, the relation. The solution is not the dogma, the answer to the question, but the overcoming of the contradictions, the question itself. My problems about death are really problems about life. Death was to me but a symbol for my resistance. What was needed was surrender, letting go, allowing the force to live as me. This instead of an answer, a proof for life beyond the grave. Thus the symbol falls away and literal death is only an event, not a consequence, and no more an ultimate door that this moment or any other moment in the form of life. Thus this letting go is the restoration of humor. It embraces the condition of life, which is surrender. It replaces all work. But it does not replace the quality of life. Life still seems work. What has changed is the relationship, the meaning. The resistance breaks up.

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### **III. Implication: The Water Itself**

Without knowledge, liberating self-knowledge, meditation is impossible, for self-knowledge is the basis of the freedom that is necessary for meditation. Until one is firm in self-knowledge and discrimination one will use meditation out of the motive and need for self-knowledge and conscious freedom. Meditation is not intended as a means to these but is based in these and is in fact a conscious process for extending the realization of Self which is perceived in the interval of understanding and freedom. Thus certain understanding and self-mastery is the basis of mediation. Proof of this is seen when we lapse from these and our meditation becomes anxious, confused, disturbed, searching everywhere like the senses for a method of attaining peace.

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Basic to our ignorance is the sense of separation and thus life is an endless process whereby we create the sense of union, relationship, fullness. The “fruits of action” we seed are this sensation, whether through sense experience or higher psychic goals. Thus false meditation is a search for this sense of connection. Rather we must proceed in meditation as in life. We must be based in understanding, discrimination and surrender. True life and meditation are a deepening of the prior sense of union, of unqualified consciousness and freedom. It is not in fact a search for these by exploitation of infinite possibilities. It is not properly, then, based in the motive and sense of separation. Such is anxious and false and destructive. Understanding and discrimination bring rest and freedom and a sense of real and prior union. Thus my teacher stressed to me the need for a foundation, posture, discrimination, knowledge, freedom. Yoga does not exist in itself but is based in a certain foundation for conscious action.

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We are always already in relationship (radically, exhaustively) and moving from the center of a fundamental, unqualified, expanding identity. This is not an abstract affirmation, a belief to which we should conform ourselves. It is a reality to be experienced, a realization based on attentive self-knowing. It is a force to be realized also in the process of our lives by conscious extension.

Now, because this is fundamentally so, at any moment the vision of self and situation we assume more or less consciously is not known in abstraction, as an isolated, absolute category. Such is an illusion we harbor, since most ordinary lives are spent possessed of a vision of the self as weak and dying, the self as oppressed. And at any moment we could describe, more or less profoundly and sensitively, the force we are suffering: the oppressor. It may be felt as an unconscious influence, or in the objective symbolic form of memories, relationships and physical circumstances. In any case it is the same myth and meaning we describe: the self as oppressed and weak, needing relief, hoping and hopeless, satisfied with little and nothing, more or less content.

The ordinary self is known in relationship to a dark power, a primitive connection and assumption: an overwhelming, absolute other is present on which you depend, but which denies you the full life

of its heart force and, further, is destroying you. This is the burden of the ordinary man in his brevity and medium experience. It is all a reflection, a memory from who knows where and when, what cosmic or personal event that, somehow, we all share. Perhaps it is a longing and despair at the very birth of objective and apparently separate existence, communicated to us individually in the personal symbol of experience. Thus we excuse our negativity and medium energy instead of turning all experience into an opportunity for expansion and growth in the unqualified force and realization of life, which is our fundamental necessity.

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The way to liberation is a way of growth in energy on every functional level, through the most profound. Thus it is not achieved negatively, by a brute and unintelligent attack on the active forces in one's nature. This is only one alternative phase in the ignorant movement we create on the base of a false and negative principle. The other is excess, indulgence of the error in the form of some experience. In either case nothing is achieved but despair, exhaustion and a return to the opposite. But beneath these is a single proposition, an assumed relationship and self-concept. Instead of negatively dealing with one's energy, one must deal directly with the motivating source behind the expression itself: the negative proposition. One must, on the basis of self-knowing insight, begin to surrender, to let to of this negative constellation, the false-self universe. It is no longer a matter of refusing to indulge oneself, or exploding into excess out of frustration and emptiness. It is rather a matter of constantly restoring one's attention, one's presence, to the fundamental reality, principle or universe which persists. In that situation, that form of consciousness, the need to fulfill the negative impulse disappears. It loses its necessity. It need not be abandoned or indulged. In that conscious form there is not sense of separation, of turning away from energy, but a movement into more and more profound fullness and direct expression: the self in relationship, consciousness realized in energy.

On this life-basis there is no limitation to growth. But it is a conscious way based in an effort that grows out of insight and persists through periods when there is no conscious insight. Thus when I tend to weakness, withdrawal, self-indulgence, I consciously attend to all the forces and faculties in by body and life, and instead of obeying the negative system I perceive at work there, I return each center to the sphere of relationship, of contact with energy. I reestablish every center, as deeply as I can, as a creative center, a living center. This is difficult, even impossible at times. But it involves as insight and an effort that appears to me as fundamental, true, and ultimately necessary.

Self is universe. The fundamental reality in not the numeral, the iota the thing in itself, but relationship, system, functional life. The ordinary sufferer in his life-realization is involved in the assumption of a false universe in his conscious center. He sees separation, categorized identities. His fundamental burden is a motive to destroy the universe, the conflict of self and others. This is life as dilemma. The saving intuition is not a descriptive assumption, a working world, a cosmology, an occult system. He need not intellectualize: all is unity, from God, ok. Rather, he needs insight into the form of his own processes and their motives. Then he will begin a conscious turning outward into a growing experience of revelations. He must respond totally to a realized proposition, to understanding, and not merely console his ignorance with descriptions. Not visions, but vision liberates.

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This is, for me, immensely liberating: it is not a matter of deciding against self-indulgences. There is no logic against pleasure. Yet, without insight into these patterns, we gradually exhaust ourselves, see our decay, and move to an opposite regime of disciplines, obedience and secure self-limitation. But the insight I have tried to describe in these pages liberates a man from the whole movement of his ignorance, the cycle of suffering, and restores him to a primary form, the real universe, the authentic condition. This primary condition, which we are already in and of which we become conscious on the basis of understanding, is what saves us. It is a state, a form of energy, of functional life that, whenever it is consciously attained, destroys the necessity of all impulses and movements and visions that are negative and illusionary. Thus, once we have an insight into our patterns we have an arm by

which to transform our lives and overcome weakness, tendencies, and obstacles that occur over time as the states of our conscious realization change. One begins with a little genuine effort and grows stronger with exercise. Thus the image of warfare is not really satisfactory to describe my conscious attempts at a transformation and re-birth of life. I am not really at war like a brute. I understand, and so I always already experience my true condition and force. I have humor in relation to the “enemy”.

It is interesting that, although the elements of our understanding appear in direct, life-terms and demand a personal, human effort, the force of negative vision we deal with is not merely an individual perception, a phantom, a screwed up form of living that can be evaporated by a good practical gesture of will. This is because we are not isolated. “I” am a function of a universe, a system of functional relationships. Just so, the forms I perceive in my dilemma find concrete extensions everywhere in the world. My spiritual dilemma corresponds to a universal system of realities.

We are evolving in a universe that is evolving. The earth is heavy with old forms and the persistence of old solutions. The negative proposition is not merely inappropriate. It is, rather, unnecessary and unsatisfactory as a solution to the primary need for realization. There is death and limitation. When these are experienced by a consciousness that identifies with them rather than with the real condition it can perceive in its depth, then there is a negative or mediocre life solution. We can realize our selves in a world of apparent density and limitation only on the basis of a fundamental and persistent expression of our real condition, our real reality.

Understanding and intelligent action are evolutionary tools in an apparent world such as the one historically present. And our effort is not that of warfare and the conqueror, the slayer of death itself, the muscular rebel. Our effort is one based on realization, understanding. It is not anti-death but pro-life. It not a negative process but a positive one, a continual and conscious return to our primary condition or force.

Union and fullness is the truth to be affirmed and allowed to be experienced and consciously expressed over against the learned dogma of separation and emptiness. These are not an ultimate state to be realized by a few, nor the content of only certain unique forms of psychic representation. They are the basis and principle of life, the nature of all life. This is clear when we examine our ordinary life and consciousness, which suffers and enforces the forms of separation and emptiness. Thus there are the endless cycles of excess through craving and the thousand suppressions of energy and freedom.

Most lives are a system of temporary, anxiety-relieving games. The forms of destruction, death applied to life, evidence a mutilated and negating life center. This negative realization rather than any systematic, positive proof is the source of “faith”, the recovery of the original principles of fullness and union. These are our condition and are the basis upon which or from which we need to exercise the force of our identity. Thus it is not merely the extraordinary, “realized”, sainted man who has recovered his true form.

No life can attain the true condition on the basis of the negative process. The truth realized and affirmed is itself the way by which we grow. It already exists, prior to the transformation and harmonization of all the regions of our being and life. If we are already full, unqualifiedly alive and complete, and already in full union, completely continuous and functionally alive in the totality of universal energy and processes, then, the more profoundly and consciously we know, affirm, and express it, the less liable we are to repeat and suffer the negative games. Then we are no longer necessarily subjected, passive, decreasing, small and valueless. Nor do we need to prove otherwise or be sated into relief from our belief in this status.

The truth is the beginning and the way of life. It is the key to autonomy, freedom from fear and immobility, and the whole range of self-limiting and destructive patterns. The realization of this truth ends the experimental way of life, the trial with excesses and subsequent sated rejection of the deadly. Thus true life is conscious activity based on this principle and not some smiling enjoyment of a condition, a psychic or physical permanent experience.

There are probably marvelous conditions to be realized but they are not necessary, essential or a goal equal to the truth. The truth is available to all and represents an absolute liberation from the lows of their "condition". The saints know this and so they avoid impressing us with a notion that they are to be envied. Once we recognize the truth of our being we are free to consciously change our condition and our patterns. We are no longer necessarily motivated by anxiety and the need for relief and even death. We are motivated by the truth itself. We move outward, into relationships and forms of intensity and energy. The pilgrimage has ended.

It is true that there is no real separation, yet we pursue it, fearing the expression of hostility, sexuality, personal strength and its consequences: guilt, rejection, the whole form of vulnerability. Thus one deepens by these patterns the illusion of separation, the holocaust of energy and relationships.

One must choose relationship, energy, and creative growth consciously. One must work beyond the patterns in order to enjoy the literal condition of the truth. If relationship is the truth, then it must be the responsible work of consciousness. Yet most of our lives are involved in a subversive operation of unconscious patterns. Thus we must not merely preserve the aesthetic feeling of relationship. We must work beyond the resisting patterns. This involves not a mere willful and ignorant attempt to overwhelm our neurotic needs. Instead of being busy rejecting unconscious patterns we must enforce a conscious life of relationship, union, energy, free developing creativity. We must embrace a positive and conscious life. This instead of mere manipulation of ourselves while remaining inwardly bound to the destiny of our negative impasse. We must work, not like a weary and soul who must overcome his own absolute dilemma, but freely and with strength, not in opposition to old patterns but in the present creation of positive existence. We need no overcome the old if we merely embrace the truth and central energy of our life. Thus life is creative, based on truth, moving forward. The past and the bondage of unconscious forces and patterns is an illusion that can and must be abandoned by a simple and positive effort. This is life's true work. It is the truth of real energy.

It is not merely a matter of letting go of the image of separation, of constantly, even in the midst of debauches, returning to a positive affirmation. This is a mere religious consolation, a minor realization that cannot dissolve one's destructive motives. It does not permit the release of creative energy, the action of positive life. Such is a word softly spoken to the defeated. It is rather a matter of actively creating one's life on the basis of positive understanding. When you attempt to do this you confront a continual mass of obstacles in yourself, all the patterns and responses your fear prefers. You must work beyond these, letting go of the negative will at the center of your being, letting your central energy release itself to the immense source beyond mere present and circumstantial consciousness. This is life outward, manifesting, free, rather than the cycles of self-indulgence and war against patterned impulses. The enemy at the center is an illusion. God is at the center and everywhere. Realizing this, we must begin intelligent life. The truth is not merely to console us. It must be creative. "You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free". This understanding will prevent us from using the truth to foster religious error, making God a mere aesthetic form, a source of moods, an origin that cannot be identified with continual, conscious creation of destiny.

The basis of true life is the awareness of the non-necessity and lack of profundity in our patterns. This is our essential spiritual humor.

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If relationship were not the radical condition of our existence, then death would necessarily and indeed be a radical separation. None the less, death can be experienced as separation. As such it is feared. The only way death can be experienced as an event in an essential and continuous, radical relationship is by its being transcended. Death apparently separates because it is a process whereby a whole realm of functional capabilities for relationship is systematically destroyed. Radical relationship and apparently experienced separation are simultaneously true. Thus transcendence is the implied necessary way of life.

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The very energy I experience in me, the peculiar life emerging there, known to me in forms of consciousness and experience, is not itself a form, a thing, a boundary that is me in myself. It is rather already an indication, a testimony to the fact that I am in connection, in union. It is not properly "I" apart, but the force released and realized in continuousness. A system, a relationship, a functional energy. But, for some reason, I think of it in isolation, as "me", as a force with which I consciously identify, and which I thereby experience as over against something else: nothing. For "I" is really the proceeding and realized energy of relationship, but if I recognize it rather in itself, as isolated or separate, a monolith, then I exclude that with which I am in union by failing to recognize it consciously. So I look over against the "I" for what there is to which I can be related. I do not see I am related already. I do not see that to which I am related. I think I am not related. And so, when I look over against this self for relationship, I see nothing, for what there is to which I can be related is already there, in the force I call "I". I have overlooked, forgotten and excluded it. When this is recognized then the "I" experience becomes really an experience of relationship, of continuousness, union and energy. Thus consciousness is itself bliss, joy, fulfillment. It is on this basis that ordinary consciousness is grateful and opening by surrender. It does not seek over against itself for what is absolutely absent. It begins with relationship and seeks to bring it ever more profoundly into experience.

In a condition of fear, of the experience of emptiness, exhaustion, after debauches, I have become profoundly conscious of my doings. I see the results and recognize my need. As fullness and equilibrium return I experience myself as filled and as dependent. What I now possess consciously is not what "I" am by nature, in the extreme realization of myself apart. "I" am empty, dying, a morsel. In the extremes I see that I need to be filled, to be conscious of energy, as energy. And when I return to the average condition of secure strength I realize that this normal "I" is filled, in relationship, already with God. The merest consciousness is itself already and actually an experience of the presence of God. Neither "I" nor "God" is absolute, in isolation. The "I" experience is a manifestation of the union. The experience of God is an experience of union, of bliss, not of separated confrontation. Yet this realization is maintained in a tension. I am at once already in union and not yet experiencing union in fullness. I tend to experience my self apart, uniquely, absolutely, over against entities and the fear of obliteration. I tend to posit an "I" and a "God" and to experience both as rigid, humorless, logical necessities, logical impossibilities. So I must let go of my understanding, remembering that I have known consciousness as bliss, as energy, as unqualified, as union once before. I return to the sense of union not by forceful seeking but by surrender, knowing all my understanding has brought me to my present dilemma.

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I seek to exploit myself as if I were a man of passion, of real desire. But a passionate man is serious, intense, on fire to possess, to be united. When I observe myself I see that I do not pursue unions by my exploitation of desire. Instead I attain degrees of self-destruction. I pursue my own exhaustion. I see that I do not attain union but relief. I seek to attain the exhaustion of irritating energies. Thus all the patterns of my desiring are not creative. They are a response to functional blocks to realized union. As long as I pursue relief in order to attain equilibrium I will always realize a state of exhaustion, of mere rest, and, above all, separation. I do not pursue the other, the loved-one, or the

divine. Rather I seek my own relief and bear no consciousness of that to which I am related except as an object, a symbol, a means.

I am ultimately and by default separated from every kind of union. I never in fact pursue union. The pursuit of union is an impossibility for me. I am too timid, weak, guilty and ashamed. I am anxious and afraid. I seek only relief and comfort. I allow no fires but only a coolness in my loins. I do not begin with relationship and so pursue growth in deep-desiring love. Instead I am anxious over separations and embarrassed, stuck with my needs. Instead of embrace, I turn to relief and self-indulgence. I am easy and soft, or else rigid and self-involved. I pursue cycles alternating these unsatisfactory solutions. I must return to surrender, to fundamental consciousness.

Consciousness is relationship. Relationship is consciousness. The root, basis and essential experience of consciousness is relationship, union.

When dying or in the fear of separation I can consider that I have daily experienced sleep, often let go of my armor-reflexes into an experience of peace and energy, and when I experienced these processes I did not think I was about to be annihilated. The connection exists already, prior to all forms of experience. Instead of fear and resistance we should remember that we have always been dependent, always lived on the basis of a union we could not create but only resist.

Childhood, sainthood, sexual love, drugs, learning, etc. are, among other particular things, symbols and symbolic actions for the state or condition of union, security, and fullness. This is the goal of life when it is in conflict, separated from such a condition. The separation is an illusion, and its solution through various actions, such as aesthetic and mystical practices, is prompted by adherence to the illusion. The essential recognition should be that all suffering, which is conflict, is caused by a primary and chronic decision: the fear and refusal to be in relationship. Knowing this, fully, without striving for relationship or union as if it were lost, is the key to realization and freedom. Striving for union is a search for reunion. It is action based on ignorance, on the feeling of a lost past, and so it results only in the reenactment of past conditions themselves rather than in a present union.

An understanding is prior to all attitudes, postures, acts and paths. These are all the effects of an understanding. If the understanding is true these will flow as native origins, free of all seeking. If the understanding is false they will proceed as efforts toward goals. When an understanding is sought as the result of a process, a transformation, then a false or partial understanding has preceded it. The truth is instant, and so all seeking is unnecessary. There is no prescription to recommend, no attitude, posture, act or path, for, if the truth is known, these are generated as a result. Just so, any of these adopted without true understanding are again the result of falsity and are merely extensions of ignorance. Striving is their common denominator and the evidence that they are not true. There is only one essential to be understood and that is the primacy or priority of relationship as native to our being, and the refusal to be in relationship as the source of all suffering, all problems, all unrealized life.

Practices as a way to realize what has been lost vs. practices as themselves the manifestation of realization, freedom and truth. Action as expression, as true relationship, vs. action as a means to radical transformation. That which seeks to remove the contradiction is false and self-destructive, whereas that which understands contradiction to be the source of the problem is already free. Action as solution is false because the one who performs it is working to destroy something with which he has identified himself.

To realize a relationship is to cease to have your attention on the “other” to whom you are related, but to be free of the consideration of separation. Thus you are always already in relationship, connected, not separated, and can function alive. It is not necessary to seek the other but only to assume, acknowledge and enjoy the connection. To do this it is necessary to understand that the connection exists, that the separation is a false consideration, for all action and thought follows from a prior understanding, whether true or false. To seek is to enforce separation. Truth is relationship, not separation.

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Seeking is striving to recover what you have refused to understand. It is painful and a self-creating dilemma because it reinforces the idea that you do not and cannot know.

It is not a matter of finding an answer, a truth, a belief or a stable victory but the removal of the contradictions which produce the search

Life is basically relationship.

The freedom of life in relationship depends upon the liberation of the one who is in relationship, through the removal of the contradictions that prevent full-relatedness.

The attention of free life is not toward the Self or self or God or any particular spiritual entity, for such is only a manifestation of strife. The attention of liberated life is toward all relationship. It is already perfectly related.

The key mood of unliberated life is the sense of separation. One is not liberated by any seeking for union with self or other or any thing. One is liberated by the removal of the self-created contradictions that prevent relationship.

The striving for union creates a sympathy for the idea of unity and identity. Thus everything becomes one and every one becomes a mode of you. These are illusions and sympathies created by the efforts of strife. All relatedness is particular, specific, concrete. Relationship, not union or identity, is the form of free life.

Relationship depends on the awareness of uniqueness and particularity: I am not that. I am not you. However, it also springs from the awareness of non-separation. Relationship is unqualified, not limited by unique existence. It is a mutual and perfect experience of life.

That which is in relationship is not limited to persons, identities, bodies or forms in time and space. As soon as I begin to act under the assumption that I am the identity implied by my body and experience I become less capable, anxious, and begin to strive for understanding. That which is in relationship is the free witness of all the parties in any relationship. And he assumes an identity in relationship only to enjoy the mutuality of causes and effects with clarity and precision.

One who knows this and lives it is free and enjoys the perception of non-separation. He does not strive. He understands. He does not seek to find an underlying Self, a supreme identity. Even so, relationship is possible only where there is already no separation. He is not separate but he is not identical to anything. Thus he related creatively out of the infinity of free life.

There is no unique and separate self because there is always relationship. But there is no strife because there is never any separation.

We are liberated by the removal of the contradictions behind relationship, not by the fixing of attention in modes of thought and forms of life or the motivation of intention in any direction.

Thus truth is not found in the description of anything, whether an object of relationship or the nature of that which is in relationship. Freedom is not the result of naming and separating. Rather, truth is liberated understanding, which comes after the thorough examination and discarding of contradictory assumptions collected over the period of experience (relationship).

To begin free life it is only necessary to regain the certainty that you are free. Thus one lives apart from all the contradictory modes of thought, all the descriptive habits of mind. When one perceives and acts directly one neither seeks nor resorts to the attitude of an idea.

It is not the circumstance of this universe nor our nature that is unfree, but the contradictory mentality or approach to relationship that has resulted from misunderstood experience.

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All activity that seeks freedom is a form of striving, based on a misunderstood awareness. Anything that produces an insight into that approach to life will, more or less briefly, reassert the free viewpoint. Thus, understanding is not itself freedom but an experience that reverses the tendency of awareness and frees it. Freedom is itself most basic and prior to any experience. No experience is necessary to attain it. Indeed, it is a misconception to consider that freedom must be attained. Thus, at last, all ways to the truth prove futile.

When one no longer needs to trust a path, an action, a procedure, a practice in order to realize one's freedom, then one can be free. All practices produce despair when examined. One races from one discipline and method of producing the effect of freedom on oneself to another. But there is nothing more than experiences, effects, moments of exhilaration that disappear as the engagement of life continues. When at last one knows the futility of experience, understandings and practices for the achievement of liberation, then one will simply enjoy and expand in the most basic awareness, which need no ever have been sought.

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A basic error in all practices is that they seek freedom through experience, as if experiences, which are conditional, could be used to enforce or create freedom, which is most basic and actual. The attempt to trace one's experiences back to basic events of separation is not ultimately useful. This is because it is not experience that is causing one to be unaware of one's basic freedom. Rather, it is the assumption that this is so, and the addiction to practices that will liberate one from the consequences of experience that is the root of the dilemma. One's freedom, not one's bondage, is basic. One's freedom is not back behind a sequence of difficult events. It is always now, always you.

This is the best thing a man can learn: no one, nothing, no experience, no method, nor any thought or effort in all the universes will free him. From that moment he will relax the efforts that compose his life and he will be able to understand simple truths and direct himself unqualifiedly toward whatever he chooses in life.

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There are no ultimate answers of any ultimate questions. Freedom in relationship has no abstract content, no special content over against experience at any moment. There is no special content to free consciousness. It is simply free. There is nothing in it to be identified or identified with. It does not turn on itself. It contains nothing, and so it moves into relationship. The objects of relationships are the content of life. You are free, which means you are not anything by which you can know you are in relationship.

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The life that is not already free is a long adventure in search of freedom and relationship. Instead of simply walking and opening a door the man walks and opens the door in the midst of a grand process and search for freedom and connectedness. But since he has forgotten that he is already free and always already in relationship, freedom and relationship are the basic things that he has

misunderstood. Thus he tends to pursue them separately and exclusively, as if they were mutually exclusive and opposite. When he is pursuing the idea of freedom he thinks it is something apart from relationship, he considers relationship to be a kind of unfreedom. And when he pursues relationship he thinks it something not identical with perfect freedom. Freedom becomes a kind of disconnection or non-connection and relationship a kind of necessary connectedness. These realities become so exclusive that in the Orient we have masses of traditions which pursue freedom or spiritual attainment as a more or less exclusive goal. And in the West we have traditions which pursue an apparently basic opposite to that, which is all of the ethics of love and the politics of relationship. The two basic traditional strains pursue their essential goal with a tendency toward philosophical exclusion of the other.

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You are always and now already free and already in relationship.

You are already free and you are here. This is not a contradiction.

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Identification with the body and experience caused me to become unaware of my actual free state. Under the pressure of this denial of my nature I strove to realize freedom in all my activity. And this is the root of bondage. Having put aside our native freedom, which is the basis from which we can truly enter into relationship, we turn experience or relationship into a different end than we freely intend it. Instead of merely experiencing, creating and enjoying relationship, we try in all experience to create freedom. Thus all experiencing becomes difficult and problematic, a stage for a dilemma. Instead of simply engaging in relationship we pursue freedom as a result of relationship. And so relationship is far less than creative enjoyment founded in freedom.

To be in relationship we must be already free. To seek freedom as a result of relationship is to fail to be in relationship. Instead there is a drama of acceptance and rejection, flight or embrace, love or hate, and all the endless variations of unrealized existence. But I am not separated from the immense awareness that proceeds from outside the universes and all forms. I am not this body or name or memory. I enter in to the world, freely into relationship. Whatever I put my attention on I include. I create my life but I am not qualified by it. From this freedom relationship becomes possible. It is the native freedom that is ours beyond the contradictory viewpoint of the usual man. To assume it again is to create the future without the faintest involvement or influence of traditional suffering and understanding.

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The common factor in all “practices” is the search for union, connection, the seeking to join. Thus attention is directed with great effort toward realization of self or spiritual being or any of the endless goals and ends desired in the present world. But you are already free, and you are already here. The error is the belief that you are not yet free, that you are not free now, and that you must make some connection in order to arrive or be a presence in the world.

The free and effective man is not one who I connected or joined to his soul or deity or to some object or condition in the world. These are mere artifices arrived at by the efforts of misunderstanding. The free man is already here, already free. And this is so of him because he doesn't move out of a contradictory state, an unworkable intention.

When a man is overwhelmed by the contradictions of mental alternatives he begins to identify himself with that mental condition and with his bodily and environmental status. Then he conceives of himself as being cut off, not joined with what he considers to be outside of that identity. In the one direction is the whole area of spirituality or pure existence, and in the other is the whole expanse of possible relationships. These, like himself, appear to him as more and more exact identities, disconnected entities. As he tries to move out and re-connect with these areas, and begins to include more and more of these identities within a workable understanding, he groups them under abstract

headings in order to link them conceptually. At last he is stuck with two enormous abstractions, God and the World, or Self and Reality, etc., a duality, a contradiction that only parallels the original state of freedom and relationship.

The whole cause of human dilemmas follows this basic pattern, beginning with an original failure to understand the basic truth of existence. Once a man ceases to know and act on the basis of being already free and already in relationship he has begun to proceed on the basis of contradiction. He is in conflict with life. He is moving into the complex and unresolvable patterns of identification and abstraction. Instead of living free in relationship he seeks freedom and relationship. He seeks the abstract forms of what he already possesses, and he seeks them through an endless adventure in his environment. At times he takes flight from relationship to find freedom, and others he rushes in to heavily embrace something identified in relationship. He is in a state of contradiction. He feels disconnected, unfree, out of relationship. The basic and unified truth of being free and in relationship is forgotten and he pursues them separately, in opposite directions.

Thus freedom and relationship become apparent contradictions, concepts out of which we create traditional existence. In truth you are already free and already in relationship, so there is no need to seek a connection. As such you are not trapped in a learned identity or condition and so you do not proceed toward relationship as if already disconnected from it. You are already free, and so the mind does not strive toward freedom as an abstraction, a state to be created, an imagined consciousness with which to be joined, a God with whom to be reconciled. You need not turn out of relationship toward some deeper mind. You are already in relationship, and so there is no freedom apart from relationship. There is no turning toward the “divine” as an abstract or separated entity. The free man’s attention is free to create in relationship. The more he live as if this were so the more profound his resources and his accomplishments.

Striving for union is the way of contradictions. It is created by an original failure to live as free and in relationship. Thus freedom and relationship are pursued as disconnected and contradictory goals in the tragic flight and embrace of traditional existence. What is needed is not a joining, removal or embracing of anything. It is not belief or realization or any kind of gain that can be pursued. What is needed is simply the removal of contradictions, the dissolving of bondage to, particularly, mental alternatives. The end result of such liberation is not union with “God” or “Self” or the world or any thing to which once can be related. It is simply and tacitly to know the basis of existence and to live in it. To understand this is to cease to be identified with any function or experience and to cease to be anything but in relationship.

The truth is that we are always already free and always already in relationship. These are neither distinct nor opposite, nor can they be joined conceptually. They tacitly coincide only in a liberated life, a life free of contradictory and problematic mentality based on the identification with experience.

Relationship creates problems when you misplace identification, that is, instead of identifying that body, mind, object, etc. and giving life to that you identify that with yourself or another, and so relationship enforces various forms of identification. Relationship is actually a communication of forms within one consciousness that is not identifiable. It is free. And yet within that exchange there is only affirmation, not negation of any thing or consciousness.

When you begin to feel disconnected, agitated, bound to some compulsive habit, emptied, or you discover any of the various symptoms of inharmonious and misunderstood living, approach such symptoms with the question: in what way am I avoiding relationship? You will soon be relieved of that symptom and effort.

The recognition that life is relationship but most often lived as an avoidance of relationship overcomes the basic contradiction of misunderstood existence, that is, freedom vs. relationship. Thus, by understanding relationship as a whole in this sense, relationship itself is transcended, it ceases to be a barrier to the ultimate realization of consciousness. Thus the ultimate realization in the process of free relationship is consciousness itself, pure, dimensionless, blissful.

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Relationship is always with consciousness, even when it also manifests in forms. When a person appears to be compulsively involved with non-conscious entities, or avoids certain conscious beings and compulsively puts attention on others he is simply avoiding relationship. You cannot be related to what is less than you, because what is less than you cannot comprehend your presence and communication. Thus, wherever relationship is free, there is in fact the attending of consciousness to consciousness in the midst of the circumstance of forms.

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It is not a matter of seeking to realize consciousness but of understanding relationship. Only this realized consciousness. Nor is the understanding of relationship a method for realizing consciousness apart from relationship. It is simply life lived as such, since it is the same as the realization of consciousness.

We have embraced life as seeking, a search for freedom under every possible form and experience, from physical to utterly transcendent. Thus every effort and act and experience is an attempt at the creation of self based on an unawareness of the essential and unqualified existence of what one basically is. In fact, life is relationship, and relationship proceeds out of freedom, an unqualified, already existing freedom, which is consciousness prior to all identity or experience. And relationship, proceeding out of freedom, out of unqualified consciousness, creates or gives life to that with which it is in relationship. It is not involved in self-creation but the free giving of life to whatever it is not, that is, to forms of identity, reality and experience. Thus when freedom is realized as the essential state life does not end. It is, rather, understood. Relationship is then possible. When the life of striving is ended, what replaces it is the life of transformation, not of the essential consciousness but of all that is outside it, in relationship.

There was a point when I knew I was already free and forever free. I knew I was free and existing beyond all the modes of experience, reality and identification. But then I realized that this in itself did not change the quality of my life in relationship. There still were habits, disabilities, physical problems, and personal weaknesses. I was not basically endangered by this, but it was apparent that freedom realized is still not sufficient to the realization of life. Freedom is not effective apart from relationship. It is only a knowledge that makes relationship possible. Thus life is a process whereby the dimensions of conscious life, through the purely material, are transformed by the extending energy of free creativity. Thus free life transforms all life toward a more and more conscious, energized and free form. That is the process of liberated consciousness in the world. It is not a process of seeking. It does not move toward freedom since it is already free. Every action is for its own sake, a living creation. Life then becomes the place where free consciousness creates free form. It is the divine life.

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The decision to be something is a refusal to be in relationship to it. And life is relationship. Personal existence is simply identification with something that you are not but with which you are in relationship. Consciousness is basically no kind of identity but it is the basis, origin, meaning, creator and enjoyer of all relationship. Consciousness (freedom) is not identical to anything that can be experienced and thus it is in control of all manifestation as long as it does not identify itself with anything. All life problems are this identification in some form. For example, habits are difficult to break because you identify yourself, your existence and basic enjoyment with the thing from which you are trying to separate yourself.

Living freedom proceeds by this understanding and the assumption of relationship rather than identification. Thus you live by giving life to that with which you are related rather than what you yourself are. Knowledge is the direct approach to life. It is the capacity for relationship. It is to be already alive. Thus relationship is always a kind of incarnation, to bless things as well as to become visible. It is free only as long as it knows itself to be free and conscious, or else life becomes striving for freedom. The ignorant world is striving for consciousness.

Life in search of freedom is life against itself, life as a refusal to be simply in relationship. Life in search of freedom is life in search of consciousness. Such a life is basically uncertain of consciousness. And it is manifested by periodic avoidance or identification with objects of relationship, for to avoid or identify with such is to refuse to be in relationship by escaping objects or becoming them.

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When life becomes suffering and problematic it is due to an accumulation of the effects of various refusals to be in essential relationship, either by avoidance or identification with certain objects of relationship. The more certainly this is understood the more easily and profoundly you can change such conditions and your reaction to them. The less this is understood the more recourse is taken to guilt, fear, remorse, belief, despair and the various practices of seeding.

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You are unqualified consciousness in relationship. The degree to which you fail to understand this is the degree to which life is a problem for you. The more certain you are of it the more force you develop in relationship.

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Consciousness and relationship are the simultaneous essentials of our existence. The traditions of spiritual practice that have been developed in various environments have pursued the unqualified state through methods that emphasize one or the other of the two principles of existence. We may call these the way of mindfulness (or attention) and the way of aspiration. The first is peculiar to techniques found in Zen and the other forms of Buddhism. The second is more common to the yogic paths. The first is common to certain philosophical religions and the second to devotional religions, East and West.

The way of mindfulness assumes that I am already unqualified consciousness, and thus, by directing me to mere attention to physical and mental processes, it hopes I will eventually perceive my own most prior nature by sudden implication.

The way of aspiration considers that I am, for all practical purposes, bound into the mind and countless identifications with the processes of experience. Thus, by directing me to meditation on consciousness itself, it hopes to bring me to the realization of my most prior nature and power.

Both paths acknowledge the priority of consciousness, and both, in the event of their highest realization, recognize the perfect unity or non-problematic status of relationship and consciousness. They differ in their techniques, the phenomena encountered on the way, and in the forms of their expression. Their differences are points of culture, aesthetics, argument and mechanics. Both paths in fact attain to the truth. And many people find themselves preferring one or the other path by reason of their own temperament and posture. However, it becomes clear upon examination of these two paths that they achieve their destiny by force of exclusion. Each chooses to emphasize one aspect of our essential condition.

If we read the literature of these methods we find in them case histories of struggle, intense effort, and monumental internal conflict. This may be due to the fact of their basic exclusiveness, which is itself a manifestation of conflict, of the failure to realize an original understanding of what is. In both cases, the event of ultimate realization produces a total recovery of the unitive cognition, a benign

dwelling in the world. The ultimate realization brings the end of conflict, the end of all exclusive considerations. This is so much the case that a study of the phenomena of spiritual life might lead you to believe that the common goal of all paths is the unitive vision, the cessation of conflict. This, however, is not my experience.

If spiritual life is directed exclusively, then the end of conflict, the realization of an overwhelming peace that appears to permeate the very atoms of the environment, will also be one of the benefits of growth. But I have found that spiritual life is itself best lived beyond conflict and strife. Understanding should precede and form the very posture of real spiritual action. True understanding is unitive, always already free and radically in relationship. Thus spiritual life begins and is continually refreshed by the unitive vision. It will not, therefore, move via an exclusive meditation in any form.

I find that in the course of meditation I make brief use of objective attention to various processes, thereby acknowledging “this is the mind, this is the mind” and not myself. Thus I am free of the need to oppose or enjoin impulses and obsessive thoughts. I also find that, when the processes of thought are relatively quieted, I move into the more intense meditation of an aspirant, directing the current of the mind to the more prior Divine source. But when meditation is actually achieved I am not exclusively mindful nor aspiring. I am both of these simultaneously, and thus, in a real sense, I am neither. I pass beyond conflict and exclusive, remedial techniques, into the meditation realizable only in peace, in radical understanding. In that perfect meditation there is realization beyond the mind.

It is the mind and the necessity to transcend the mental process that produces conflict and exclusive techniques. Meditation truly begins only when the mind is understood and there is a cessation of conflict, of mental exclusiveness. It is not that in meditation I am mentally aware of being conscious and radically in relationship. It is, rather, that I live in the freedom which is coincident with such understanding. In fact I am beyond the mind, in intense silence and stillness. From there I begin the recovery of infinite existence, knowledge, enjoyment and power.

The ultimate end of spiritual life is not peace but full recovery of perfect and infinite existence. Peace is the seat of spiritual transformation, and if it is realized as the principle of basic spiritual effort, then conflict and strife will cease to be major phenomena of such growth.

To be in relationship to something is to be simultaneous with it. Meditation and other conscious activity does not move you away from relationship. Rather, these move you out of the sphere of the mind, the seat of the life problem, of identification and avoidance.

Relationship is not a function of the mind. Relationship is a consciousness of totality, but the mind is a process that deals with particular and thus partial awareness.

Life is relationship, the enjoyment of consciousness. Apparently great austerity, produced by decisive understanding, may produce a reaction that appears to be a profound desire for relationship. From this you might assume that spiritual life, prior to this reaction, is an avoidance of relationship. But in fact such a reaction is only the mind craving for experience.

The mind is an automatic process in which the signal of desire moves us to the repetition of circumstances and the use of energy. True life transcends the mind and experience and exists consciously in relationship, totally included while itself including totally.

We need to embrace the path of our understanding and continually resolve not to be deluded by the persistence of the mind. It was our own ignorance that created this mental strength and reinforced all of its desires. Thus, the decision to live consciously requires great strength and patience in the transformation of the life processes we have raised like wild children in the field of consciousness.

Truth must be valid for all states of consciousness, or else it is merely an experience, a condition not basic to life. Thus it cannot be a mental form or any particular experience, for these do not persist in all states. Neither can it be the form of a vision, a dream or a hallucination, for these are not peculiar to all states. Nor can it be a void, a mere peace without external or internal perception or even the awareness of being, for such is not possible under all conditions. Truth is simply the unqualified bliss of consciousness. As such it is the basis of all states, all experiences, and any condition can be recognized or received as a manifestation of it.

This is the heart of all realization. To realize it perfectly is to be identical and simultaneous with the Divine, the real Self. The understanding of this and the whole process of identification and avoidance, the intentional control of life, and the resort to real meditation are the process and evidence of realization.

Every act, every form of relationship is, for the man in bondage, a decision to be. Thus he enforces and reinforces identities with every kind of action. Soon he is not only compulsively creating himself but his own continuation or being depends on the continuation of certain forms. So he is anxious. His basic mood is that of separation, since he has denied his own existence by trying to create himself. He has denied that he always already is.

To one who is free, all action is in order to create or affirm the existence of something not himself, something in relationship. Thus he is, always, already, and this experience is a direct, creative expansion, not a seeking.

To break free it is only necessary to examine how, moment to moment, you are deciding to be. By this you become aware that really you are only deciding that something not yourself is.

The present creation of a universe and of experience is not due to error or ignorance. There is no final withdrawal from doing so, no ultimate non-universe forever. There are only periodic withdrawals, not the conquering of relatedness. Relationship is a basic function of what you are.

Liberation is an end of “karma” in the sense of not-knowing why, etc. But it is not a gradual or permanent withdrawal from creativity. It is simply the overcoming of the basic, compulsive and false idea of self-creation, the idea of mortality, wherein relationship becomes involution and withdrawal. It is the return to creation and relationship with self-free, not in identities.

The method of the “removal of contradictions” is simply a notion that, when seen against the actions you are moved to create to handle the life problem, liberates you from striving. It is not itself a practice that needs to be undertaken in order to become free. It is only a token or symbol of already liberated understanding. What is needed is, on the basis of understanding, to cease all the methods of liberation and to live free. Once this understanding is gotten, such a life is possible. And free life is exactly the life and consciousness that is yours when you operate by this understanding. It is not a life and consciousness of a particular kind represented by some saint or other. This is the free life: since action is no longer done in order to create one’s self, one should act always toward the object of action, that is, always, in relation to anything. Know and act in order to create it. This is the same for all things with which you are in relationship, from material objects to your own mind, anything that you might have before tended to identify as yourself. Thus you are no longer operating to create or continue an identity. You are living free. Such free life produces no fruit beyond this, no special kind of consciousness of mystical forms or fantastic abilities. Such are only themselves forms of identity. It is, rather, itself the free life. The value is the truth, the verity of the life itself and not any experience it creates.

Suddenly I have gone from deciding and striving to be, or to discover my being independent from or causally prior to all forms of identification, to deciding that everything with which I am in relationship is. In other words, the problem was the problem of existence, consciousness thinking it has to keep creating itself. When identification ceases, then one is no longer an identity, and can simply create life, life as non-separate from all forms. The error is not in creating a universe but in not knowing who you are.

Freedom is a category of relationship. It is the basic approach to reality. It is true that I can enjoy consciousness even when there is nothing with which to be related, but the realization of what I am is not accomplished by striving toward or away from relationship.

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Love is associated with God or the highest truth in many traditions. It is perhaps the major commandment coming down from prophets in the West. It is considered a major path to harmony, and truth, and the basic alternative to the over-rational tendencies of men. Love is the major commandment of religion, and could perhaps be called the essential solution and anti-philosophy of the ages.

However, love is simply a function of relationship. It is at best the most aesthetic force we can manifest in relationship. But it is itself neither the truth nor the way to truth. It is deadly to identify it with freedom, so that you feel religiously wrong when you do not feel or manifest it. From this viewpoint it is merely another religious ornament, the liturgy of relationship.

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It is not a matter of seeking to be in relationship. You always are already and totally in relationship. Nor is it a matter of seeking to find the self or what you really and ultimately are or are not separate from, because this too always and already is the case. Yet these two inclinations of seeking persist as the basic impulses that prevent the operating awareness of the form of existence that is the case. These come to rest only when this traditional process of life and awareness is understood and the mutual contradictions relieved.

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What distinguishes men is not what they experience, not what they have or will or are now perceiving, nor receiving in the parts of the mind. It is what they know, the degrees of certainty which approach joining the infinite fullness of consciousness with the numberless fullness of relationship. Knowledge is not the result of experience. Experience is simply the effect of any number of possible awareness in relationship, whether in the direction of "spiritual" or purely "relational" consciousness. Knowledge is not a result nor is it held in place by experiences, pictures, concepts, memories, etc. It is, rather, allowed by the removal of contradictions, the direct approach to conscious awareness that dissolves the warfare of striving among alternatives.

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Traditional consciousness is a problem. It is the problem. It pursues either a unity and universal identity (self, Self, spirit, Spirit, God) or multiplicity (relationship, experiences) or cannot decide (duality). None of these is the answer. There is no answer. There is only the unqualified awareness that is removed of contradictions.

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Philosophy, being a mental activity, tends to become descriptive rather than liberating, useful rather than sudden. I have considered or discovered philosophy to be, rather, an activity going on in me already. It is simply the mental approach to life. I did not create it to handle life or problems, rather I adopted the process itself, consciously and deliberately, in order to come to a higher state of awareness than thought and description. The problem of philosophy is its own mechanisms, processes and language, the mind itself. The problem of life is not language, but the problem of

philosophy is language. After a long period spent considering these fundamental operations that my life includes, I came to understand them. Understanding and, even more, knowledge itself, is liberated from processes and problems. What I have written is not in the direction of description, an analysis of mind, life and reality, but in the direction of understanding or sudden knowledge. It is not my intention nor do I think it valuable, to describe what is, but only to clearly state the truth of the human viewpoint so that reality can be approached apart from the form of problems. Thus I am writing for the sake of free life now, not for any process or life that approaches freedom. All paths are lies and trap consciousness within form.

A basic error I made in the earlier expression of my investigation was in thinking that the removal of contradictions was itself something to be done to clarify or expand consciousness. But in fact the achievement of the awareness that all forms of striving for goals, spiritual and material, was false, leading to an emphasis on one side of the dynamic process of existence, was itself free awareness. In seeing this the mind is already removed of contradiction.

There is no process that mind and life must be put through in order to be free. The understanding alone liberates. It is only necessary to know this as truth over time as well as realize it in understanding at the moment. It is possible at any moment to realize this and be free by a simple analysis of one's action. A simple realization that you are striving to avoid relationship (overtly seeking freedom) will usually restore the equilibrium of consciousness. Or the awareness that you are overwhelming yourself with relationships, experiences (and thus covertly seeking freedom) will similarly restore the total or embracing awareness. In this creative, meditative wholeness there is full, expanding awareness, self-knowledge. Anything you are doing even in spite of this understanding is not a "spiritual problem". It is merely a life effect, a habit, an intention based in past experience.

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People approach "paths" in order to create, change or destroy a chronic condition. But conditions are practical matters of choice and decision. They have no spiritual significance, and to handle them is not to handle the essential dilemma or problem of life. It is this latter, which is of greatest concern, and easily handled if seen as it is, apart from a confusion with other significances. Once that problem is unbound, then the practical and aesthetic matters of life-process can be handled by the usual technology or art.

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The totality of liberation is afforded by the decision and certainty that life is relationship and you are already free. The non-avoidance of these, produced by such awareness, is itself the divine action and consciousness.

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The removal of contradictions is simply an operation of understanding whereby one examines the concrete intentions to avoid kinds of relationship. The only problem or condition that prevents the total liberation of a man is his inability to be in relationship. It is the only problem in any moment or situation, and it is the only ultimate problem. Total relatedness or non-separation is the mood of freedom.

A man experiences various things in relationship. Anything he can experience is thus external to him, a form to which he can be related. On the basis of this confrontation over time he begins to acquire certain tendencies in relation to certain things, all expressed as a degree of willingness to be in relationship to it. To the degree he can remain related to anything it ceases to be a source of problems to him. A man who has many areas, places, men, etc. with which he is unable to be in relationship simply and directly, is one who has become stuck in the contradictions, the yes and no of his experience. He begins to identify with qualified intentions to be in certain kinds of relationship. And the more areas in which he is actually striving to avoid relationship the more anxious, immobile and self-divided he becomes. To that degree he has identified with contradictions, or exclusive alternatives.

The more one knows directly about one's own tendencies in relationship the freer one is to be in relationship. When relationship is something under your control, then you can freely maintain appropriate action. When your ability to be in relationship is thus freed, then you will be aware of what you are, which is the awareness of relationship.

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You are not It, That, this or anything that can be experienced. You are always already conscious, already free. That consciousness is existence and great bliss, joy and humor. It is what you are when you are happy, when you do not confuse yourself with any condition. It is what you are when you understand, when you permit relationship and thus do not obstruct consciousness.

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The purpose of life is not "religious" (to bind again) in any sense. It is not to become free, find God, love God or neighbor, find truth, etc., etc. All such purposes imply a freedom already lost and to be gained. Life's purpose is not realization in that sense but actualization, creation out of an already existing freedom. Life's purpose is not relationship. It already is relationship. Life begins already with freedom (consciousness) and relationship. It's purpose then is not to attain these. It is, on the basis of these, to enjoy the whole play of extension and involution, expansion and contraction known consciously and created intentionally.

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There are problems created by spiritual and religious language, just as there are in philosophy. A major one is that the essential truth of freedom or consciousness is approached and described through the forms of relationship. Thus consciousness comes to depend on strife and such artificial questions as "Is there a God"? This question represents a problem. It contains the question: "Am I free, conscious without qualification?" And at the same time it contains despair, for if there needs to be a God for freedom to exist, then freedom is conditional, not basic to life. For this reason people resist the entire matter and do not penetrate to the answer.

Of course there is God. There is obviously a creative force expanding as manifestation and transcending any individual manifestation. No matter what person, entity, process or manifestation you approach, it is not source on the whole. The game is always already going on. Specific forces are not separate from source but their involvement is on the level of participation. The larger game or process does exist, and thus all processes and existences are transcended entities, not knowable and powerful or source.

But the question about God is false with respect to the answer it expects. It really wants the answer of freedom, of liberation from the doubt of consciousness. The existence of God is not that answer. God is an object of relationship, a source of form. To be in relationship you must be already free. Thus you come to God already free, already in relationship. You experience God through the mood of separation and doubt only if freedom (consciousness) is not recognized as the basis of life. Thus the God-relationship, as all others, is pursued as an experience that will create freedom, and God becomes an object of striving.

The question of freedom is not resolvable by experience or recourse to any relationship. It must be known to be already the case. When that is known and relationship is known as the basic of life, then relationship is confronted directly, clearly, intentionally. Then the creative God source ceases to be a problem because it is no longer confused with the problem of consciousness. And that relationship and reality can be known directly and become a source of effective power.

Spiritual and religious language is full of descriptions of ultimate reality: All is one, all are one, there is only the One, God is love, everything is Brahman, All belong to God, etc. There is the endless problem of manyness and Oneness, the necessity of the One and the apparency of the many and unique. Such language is also uniquely conscious of dichotomies: Love vs. list or hate, God and

Devil, Brahman and maya, truth and falsity etc. In many ways spiritual and religious language is more symptomatic and problematic than effective. These dichotomies and descriptive dead ends are simply the result of the confusion, separation, or identification of consciousness (freedom) and relationship (experience).

Consciousness is not a descriptive entity. It is not learned by experience. Thus it does not free the mind to call it One, Brahman, Self, etc. You are not other than consciousness. You are not in relationship to it as an entity, so you cannot describe it. Thus to involve it and pursue it through descriptive language is not useful. In fact it causes grave difficulty, because it forces the tendency to reduce awareness in relationship to a single entity, an undifferentiated quality. Thus persons and conditions and entities, instead of being known in freedom in relationship as unique manifestations suffer the reductive fantasy that actually lessens awareness in relationship. This is all due to this basic confusion of consciousness and relationship. When each is understood in its unique realm the descriptive problems of life-realization disappear. They are dissolved by this fundamental removal of contradiction. When this is done language need no longer be turned to describe what "is" not simply beyond the power of words to describe but what is not in fact an object of relationship.

Description is language, a tool of relationship. Consciousness, freedom, and all the ideas, which indicate ultimate identity, are not known in relationship but in fact create relationship, being prior to it. What is prior to relationship and known as such is not an idea or reflection by which to interpret or reduce relational concepts. To use it as such produces a contradictory awareness and an inability to intend, an overwhelming awareness of dichotomies as forming the basic structure of reality, and a tendency to reduce awareness of the multiplicities of relationship to a single conceptual datum. In fact to be already free and already in relationship is to maintain the certainty and power of consciousness, and a directness and simplicity in relationship. Such an approach no longer views life as dichotomies, confusions, and automatic programs that cannot be controlled. There is no longer a reductive tendency or a descriptive search for ultimate reality. There is sublime and stable consciousness and an ability to be intentional, responsible, and in the creative role in relationship. This is the result of right knowledge, an illumination of the basic error of consciousness in the meeting with manifest reality.

Every pursuit has its heroes. Saviors, saints, and teachers are the heroes of religious and spiritual search. Thus, spiritual realization comes to be identified with certain attitudes, methods and manifestations. While I first struggled with yoga I passed through transformations and states that, if I had understood my purpose, would have been the end of all seeking for me. But I gauged my own progress in terms of the manifestations and efforts of my teachers and so made nothing out of my own knowledge. This is because of one basic error and lie. It is the basic lie of all seeking that there is anything to discover and know but consciousness itself. There is nothing freer than freedom, no greater certainty and ecstasy than consciousness itself. Everything else manifested in the course of that realization is simply experience, an effect of relationship.

What needs to be recovered is the certainty of consciousness itself, prior to all experience of content. There are no "holy" visions, and no holy visions holier than other holy vision. Spirituality is not an expression of values. Its only truth is pure consciousness. It is attained when freedom (consciousness) is no longer understood to depend on anything at all. The certainty of consciousness is the beginning of life. Freedom is not the result of some effect. It is neither the result of realization nor salvation. It is already, and this becomes a certainty when you examine the efforts of your life and see that the search for freedom fails and always must fail since it involves the avoidance of relationship. Thus freedom is known as the prior basis for life and not a purpose toward which life must be turned.

Consciousness alone, then, is the goal of all spiritual effort. And it is known simply, in itself, when the futility of effort is understood.

Consciousness should be the basic knowledge and certainty. But the freedom, which is consciousness itself, has come into doubt as a result of a process of identification with experience. Relationship is itself free and equal to consciousness itself. But, in the combination of painful and pleasurable experiences, identifications take place, so that consciousness becomes associated with certain limited configurations, processes and appearances. Pleasure of existence leads to a decision to be and survive as something. Then pain reinforces that identification with the need to struggle to survive as that. In the midst of the processes of identification enters the idea that consciousness and delight are dependent on a certain form. Thus life becomes associated with bodily existence and pleasure with the repetition of certain habitual experiences. But freedom is not identification, and consciousness is prior to any manifestation. Thus there is a buildup of resistance and avoidance to this entire process. Experience starts to be resisted, and despair increases as resistance is seen to cure nothing. Then there are the various corrective measures on up to the processes that seek perfect liberation. But just as identification is a lie about consciousness that eventually creates apparent death or rebellion, the attempt to eliminate the problem by reversing the process involves a similar inability to recognize what is already the case.

The intention to be identified and the intention to be liberated involve the same error in the matter of freedom. Both assume a relation to consciousness and equate or confuse consciousness with relationship and experience. Freedom is always now and must be assumed in its own right, tacitly, and not on the basis of any learned awareness. Freedom or consciousness is not the result of a process. Even if this is sought as a goal of liberation the seeker knows that, if he found it, it would be an unqualified state, the equivalent to his essential being. It is only necessary to understand that identification with forms and forces as well as the attempt to be liberated from these is, as an action, an enforced denial of consciousness and, as an impulse, a manifestation of free consciousness itself. It is only necessary to live on the assumption of consciousness itself. Thus it expands and begins to control existence. The only obstacle to this is the prejudices a person has about what state consciousness must be in before it is free. Thus there is a demand for visions, ecstasies, perceptions and experiences. Again there is the failure to live as already conscious, already free.

Consciousness is empty, prior to experience. The having of it does not create any particular manifestation. Thus the intention to live as free, as consciousness, does not depend on any particular evolution or ability. You are already free.

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The summation is this. Life is not a problem or a mortal event. When it is lived as such it produces the very effects that life resists. Life is free only when it is lived as already free. Any action engaged for the modification and transformation of experience is already free. The achievement of a more perfect existence is not the result of a search for freedom, nor is any condition, however desirable, to be equated with freedom itself.

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At last there is not recourse, not path but the radical assumption of freedom, of consciousness prior to all relationship, all manifestation, all experience, all learned knowledge. Understand this and live. Until then death is your concern and life a search for freedom.

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Consciousness and relationship are easily recognized and require no belief, no abstraction, no dogma supported at length by thought. These are the basic observables of existence.

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With knowledge there comes an end to practices that pursue freedom, which is consciousness, knowledge. When the truth is realized, consciousness and its messianic energies invade and perfect each level of manifestation. Thus you will simply expand in joy. You are a source of consciousness and beauty to everything. You are the presence of love.

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The essential barriers to spiritual life are spiritual lies. They alone create spiritual effort, spiritual “warfare”. And of all such lies there is one basic, and that is that you are not already free. Thus all spiritual effort is strife toward freedom. And such efforts, although they produce experiences all along the way, from torment to sublime mystical certainty, never end. They do not end because they always operate on the premise that animates them, the idea that you are not already free and therefore must become free. As a result, even when freedom is glimpsed and known it cannot be maintained as knowledge, as the operating basis of life. It is because, even in that moment, such freedom is understood as an experience, a moment in life, an attainment, a miracle. It is seen within the structure of seeking. For life is created out of this lie of unfreedom, of creatureliness and original ignorance. Consciousness is understood as a thing enclosed and originating in a body or a limited and comprehensible space. All because of the original misunderstanding. Thus when the truth is seen it cannot be known. It could only be known if life were consciously, intentionally lived on a radically new basis.

Life must be lived out of the certainty of freedom, of unqualified consciousness. Such a life is not threatened. Such a way accomplishes and fulfills life. It is not itself life but consciousness invading and transforming life. Life must be intended as such. And you will turn to this simply on the basis of knowledge, an original certainty and trust in the truth of consciousness. No experience can prove it. The certainty is the consciousness itself. The way of experience is based on the denial of original freedom and so cannot know it. It knows freedom only as an incident within experience. Experience teaches you only to seek freedom or despair of it. To be free you must be free already. You must act as if it were the case, knowing it to be so. Then you create life and expand within it.

It is only the confrontation with the world that leads you to doubt and deny your freedom. No amount of effort will make you free. At best you will be a circumstantial victor, a muscular saint. You will be devoted to the effort of self-transformation, which is founded in self-hate. And self-hate identifies self with certain limited states and abilities. But it basically hates the self as unfree. When you deny your freedom you become burdened, angry, anxious, desperate and motivated. Such manifestation is itself the struggle for freedom. Understanding this brings great relief and release from the snare of lies.

The beginning of true life is based in no experience, no vision, no faith, no belief, no dogma, and no philosophy. It does not even depend on understanding through the inspection of life. It is simply begun out of the tacit certainty and knowledge of consciousness.

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When life is lived as already free there is an abandonment of all practices, all acts of self-transformation and ultimate seeking. There is peace and enjoyment beyond existence, beyond identification with names and forms. And relationship becomes a field of enjoyment of varying complexity in which what is always known and identified everywhere is consciousness, everywhere the blissful recognition. It is a life that cannot be compared to the strife manifested in the world comprehended and created on other “truths” which call for the progressive fulfillment of man, the evolution of structures.

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There is no evolution of consciousness. That is a lie created out of the unknown freedom. Freedom is not in the distant time, eternally past, eternally future. Freedom must be radically comprehended and assumed. Out of such knowledge we can create a world of our choice. If men would only know it, that which they call divine life is always only realizable now before anything is learned, proven or doubted.

Experience is filled with arbitrariness and contradiction. Out of memory we build all dichotomies, all uncertainty. Experience is no form out of which to create the knowledge of self. Yet we do it as a

natural repetition of what we do everywhere in life when we do not know we are free. We identify consciousness with experience and freedom with relief from certain types of experience. Thus we do not acknowledge the priority of consciousness and we prevent its invasion of the world.

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The more or less exclusive flight to freedom is the ancient search for God, for absolute spirituality. The more or less exclusive flight to relationship is the ancient search for death, for existence apart from consciousness. They are equal in their denial of life, for freedom, conscious and intentional existence is now, it already exists and need only be made the principle of life. God or death, the fruits of ignorant seeking, are, even if found, only categories of relationship, experiences of a certain kind, and not freedom itself. Consciousness thus identified in either way with experience is a failure to actually be in relationship.

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#### **IV. Realization: Water**

It is necessary to remain in the truth and communicate it. Thus you are always identical to it and a source of it. When the truth is not real to you, then you are and communicate that which remains as real to you. And that remainder is not the truth. If you continue to operate that way, life will become a problem based on the absence of truth and the seeking of truth. And it becomes difficult to be free, to cease to be that which has become real to you but which is not the truth. This is the essence of our dilemma. We live here but not in the truth, and thus this life appears false. It is necessary, then, to encounter the truth as reality again and so live on a real foundation.

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If the teaching is something like “surrender to God”, then God must be real as the surrender. Then it is easy. It is a union, an identification, a realization of consciousness. Otherwise it is a struggle against yourself and your inability to surrender. For, if that to or for which you surrender is not real to you, and of course desirable and greater than your limited being and dilemma, then the only thing real to you is your attempt to surrender and the recognition that the foundation is missing. Thus surrender becomes a search for God to become real. But surrender in itself implies its object. If the object is missing or unreal, then the surrender is turned in on itself and made self-conscious and impossible. What makes growth possible is the real power of higher consciousness. If it is not contemplated as real, then you are stuck with what remains real, the thing or life or level of reality you would want to surrender. Thus spirituality becomes effort and seeding instead of growth. All its attention is on its own bondage, its insistence on a level of reality that is bondage, and the constant attempt to prove or imply the reality of the higher dimension it seeks to realize.

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Surrender to the Presence is the true way of life. Surrender is the form of relationship, and it is relationship turned to consciousness, freedom and universal power (the Presence). But unless the Presence is real to you, then the surrender becomes effort and seeking to prove the reality of the Presence itself. Wherever the Presence is unreal and less than an obvious living experience we have dying religion, practices, methods, restriction, dogma, philosophy, legality. The whole necessity is to realize this Presence. This is the teacher, the incarnate consciousness and power that manifests all reality. When He is known then spiritual life becomes possible. The truth, the teaching, then, is not any prescription for your action, such as surrender. The truth, the teaching, is the Divine Presence.

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The truth in relationship is always known through a manifestation. It is incarnate, a being, a presence. If it cannot be found then the truth is not present in the world and the world is false, separated from its foundation. The truth is not mere philosophy, or a theology reflecting the meaning of past manifestations now only present outside the forms of the world. The truth must always be incarnate, manifested, to be real now.

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When the Presence is located as a reality in relationship, then life action begins to become true. You begin to enact the conscious power of the universe.

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The refusal to be in relationship which is evidenced by a flight from or identification with forms of existence is not itself only flight from or avoidance of forms of existence. It is the refusal to be in relationship to reality as Presence and consciousness. It is the reduction of life to forms of existence and thus the separation from the Presence and consciousness. Life is a manifestation of these. And so unaccomplished life is the avoidance of the knowledge or realization of these.

Examine yourself in relationship and see to what degree this pattern is true of you. Examine your awareness of freedom and the reality of consciousness. Examine to what degree the Presence of ultimate power is real to you as concrete experience.

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Sadhana or spiritual exercise is not an effort toward personal transformation. As such it is only a continuous and frustrating awareness of your limited state, the identity you willfully maintain with levels of experience, and the habits and problems such identifications generate. Sadhana is simply the awareness of being in relationship to the Divine Presence. Thus room is made for the invasion of that Presence into all areas and dimensions of consciousness and life. The knowledge of the Presence opens all the levels of your manifest being to the Light. The result of this is a gradual transformation of your self-awareness, a raising of the level of consciousness and power you know yourself to be. Then the life effects you generated in ignorance fall away. Thus, transformation is the work of God.

Sadhana is simply the knowledge of God. Sadhana is not the effort of surrender or opening or love. These are themselves transformations created by the Divine Presence. It is only necessary to be in that Presence, to find it and know it. When it is recognized for what it is then the whole of consciousness and life is already liberated.

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All seeking, even all spiritual effort is merely an attempt to discover the Divine as an unqualified real Presence. What is required, then, is not seeking or effort but an encounter with the Presence, the Guru, the Truth.

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It is strange, considering the paths men take, that consciousness and infinite power are the most obvious realities in our experience.

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Flowering plants are the perfect expression of the perfect way. In them there is no effort to exist, to grow, or to persist. Yet, from the beginning they thrive and develop out of a perfect acknowledgement of the source of their life. Flowers in sunlight demonstrate the knowledge of their source. The cycles of their living cause them no despair. Flowers are not suicidal, nor do they tend to withdraw from their source out of despair and resistance to their disappearing. The spiritual life is simply this continuation in the Presence. Thus the Narcissus is blossomed white, turned from his self-attentive dying to the intentional source of life.

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Life is the certainty of being in relationship to God, or, more simply, the conscious relationship to God. Thus it is to be in relationship to everything, thus transcending everything while totally assuming everything.

Certainty is operating as if everything existed and being in relationship to everything simultaneously.

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All that you know as self and experience are processes, functions of the vast manifestation, which is relationship, the experiential universe in all its planes. Consciousness is the most prior source of all manifestation. It is not identical to all functions of relationship, but they are not separate from it. The center of experience called "I" is only a center of relationship and not an entity. "I" is as much an experience, a functional reality, a process, as any material object or configuration. It is only closer to the reference point of consciousness in your present life. To identify with it rather than simply to use it from the viewpoint of a more prior consciousness is to fall in to the basic error of life, which is to make relationship or experience a principle higher than consciousness or freedom. Thus you drive consciousness and freedom out of life and make them at best the goals of life.

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If you examine your life in every detail, at every level of manifestation, you will see a constantly changing effort to be free, to be set loose, unqualifiedly alive. The effect of this effort on every level of life is the game of avoidance of relationship or identification with some form of relationship. There is the basic game of separation from relationships and identification with the experience of "me", which is itself a process, a form of relationship, a condition. Then there is the reflex reaction caused by this, which is flight from the trap of that identity into forms of experience, into relationship with objects rather than manifestations of consciousness. Watchfulness, attention to life, results in understanding, which lets go of certain habits of life and mind. When life is viewed totally and seen as suffering to the degree that it pursues freedom and thus destroys relationship through avoidance and identification, then you begin consciously to abide and function freely in relationship. For, to the degree such seeking continues, life is operating against itself through unconscious compulsions, the whole accumulated influence of experience and one's decisions and reactions to it over time. This awareness brings you to operate consciously and intentionally, in your original state.

The truth cannot be found as the result of seeking. It can only be realized, that is, intentionally lived. Such occurs then you have understood life and so let go of the habitual responses that entrap conscious life. Bondage occurs when freedom (consciousness) or relationship (existence as manifestation) or both cease to be real to you. Free life, intentional life, resumes when these again become real to your understanding and so form the necessary structure of your being. Then your life can be lived intentionally, a manifestation of unqualified consciousness.

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The ultimate state is that in which you allow everything to be lived.

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The end of seeking is not in the attainment of its objective goal but in the radical understanding of the motive and process of seeking. Seeking is endless and never epitomized. If a certain object is obtained in experience, either one seeks the repetition of that experience again and again, or abandons that objective, more or less temporarily, and stresses one of the countless others shown to the mind. Unliberated life is this endless repetition of seeking. It is the stress and effort of false identification, misunderstood experience. It is the cycle of limited and limiting consciousness, like a process of going blind, from a field of infinite totality down to a chink of glitter and the sudden black. The recognition of this dilemma is the beginning of a revolution in consciousness. Then begins a gradual and growing counter-effort of inquiries, processes and paths. But it is the Light itself that liberates and transforms, just as it is the Light that provides the inkling of suffering in the midst of a workable life. The awareness of the futility of seeking is the witnessing of your deliverance. From that time you will act toward the Light and the Light will transform your understanding out of black.

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The only reality than you cannot experience, which you cannot know and identify in relationship, and which you cannot isolate anywhere, even in yourself, is consciousness. Yet it is unqualifiedly real and affirmed by all experience. This reality, then, is the most prior reality, the unqualified identity, the foundation and principle of all existence. All experiences, all phenomena, all relationship, are merely the contents of this consciousness.

The mind, the body, the whole process identified as “me”, generated as “I”, and realized as “mine” is a function of prior consciousness. While in the form and ritual of Narcissus we have denied this functional link, and thus we stimulate the program of suffering, unconsciousness and death.

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Consciousness is freedom. Thus freedom cannot be attained by any method at all. Freedom always already is. Relationship or manifestation is the intentional and free condition of consciousness for us here and now. These are the two primary truths of our life, and they must be known as thoroughly real and necessary in order for life to be realized.

Free life is simply the bringing of consciousness to existence. That is not a method for ultimate liberation. It is, rather, already liberated action. Thus consciousness comes to observe, understand, control, and transform life. By this path, which is already true, already free, life or relationship will become forms of consciousness. It will be realized as manifestation. Thus consciousness and the force of manifestation are wed in creative realization, the creation of known light.

The difficulty for men who are unable to understand and begin such a life is that consciousness, for them, is so deeply bound to various forms of experience. They are overwhelmed with life as pure relationship, more experience, and so they cannot realize it as manifestation. They cannot assert the prior force of consciousness. For them the way is more difficult. It is one in which suffering produces wisdom by the despair of effort. Thus there is a gradual realization of the same truth. If you cannot decide to live truly, then you are already on this latter path. It is also Divine, since the Divine transforms you in spite of yourself, but it is also gradual, unnecessary and terrible.

Freedom and truth are so simple. They are a present, available, sudden grace that ends all seeking and fulfills all life. It is the simple choice of consciousness. It is to be conscious and allow it to be already manifesting everything. It is to open averting to Light. If you do not choose it you have chosen to seek.

Observe your life after you fail to make the decision of radical consciousness. It turns simply to the suffering of experience as the basic principle of life. Experience or relationship is in no way separate from consciousness. It is one with the radical principle of reality. One who fails to realize this truth will, by the grace of the Divine, come by the route of his sins to recognize his emptiness and dependence, the necessity and reality of relationship, the priority of consciousness, non-separation from the Presence while in the condition of manifest existence, and, finally, the perfection of Divine Life and eternal freedom.

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Spiritual life is simply self-created life, intentional existence, conscious relationship in all its possible forms. Total relationship must be the knowledge and assumption out of which you move into particular relationships. To knowingly be in relationship to everything is to be God-conscious. It is to be unqualifiedly conscious. To know you are unqualified consciousness in relationship is to understand perfectly. Spiritual activity is not search for Spirit is our conscious activity in all relationship. To be in relationship to God is to witness the Presence and manifest the Presence to God. To be Consciousness is to create God. This is truth and not death to those who understand and bring consciousness into life.

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A man can kill himself but he cannot give himself birth. Spiritual realization is a re-birth. It cannot be acquired or attained. It is done by the grace of God, the supreme Guru. Yet, just as a babe in the womb consents by response to his existence and growth, so we engage spiritual life as knowledge, and self-control, and meditation. Spiritual life is life lived as spirit, life not separate from the Divine. Effort as spirituality is partial and suicidal.

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The true path is not avoidance of relationship but intentional transcendence of it, that is, reaching into consciousness, prior to thought and forms.

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One must get out of thought and into relationship. This is the realization of consciousness. Consciousness is prevented by the chronic adherence of the mind to various forms, and the resultant demand for action, the demand that you become a process rather than consciousness. Such is suffering and death. When this process is stilled, relationship is possible.

Relationship is always to consciousness. In meditation we move into consciousness, and in life we should be constantly in relationship to consciousness. The result of such living in that you understand the nature of consciousness and become it. The attainment of consciousness is thus the liberated state. It is attained not by doing anything to the mind such as emptying it, surrendering it, etc., but by understanding that the mind is taking forms, and knowing the results of that. Consciousness is prior to that. The attainment is realized by putting your attention on the real consciousness.

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All outwardly directed action is simply manifestation and all inwardly directed action (prior to mind and experience) is simply realization. But we fail to understand this and so outward action, though apparently striving for effects, is actually seeking the result of knowledge and freedom, and inward action, though apparently moving into consciousness and bliss, is motivated to realize certain experiential effects. Thus men act without understanding and become bound to the search for results that are inappropriate to the dimension in which they are acting.

Life and every form of action must proceed from understanding and expand in it, realizing its own simple result. Meditation and the enjoyment of consciousness must also proceed freely, out of understanding, so that it is free to realize its proper object and not become tied in the loveless search for various experiences.

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All paths, from the sophisticated religious and philosophical to the simple, more or less automatic, ordinary effort of strife which is the average existence, are reactions to life recognized as dilemma. All life, until it is simply understood and directly lived, is something to which we resort. All paths are resistive and not radical, being exclusive rather than inclusive. While apparently seeking the goal of either consciousness or relationship they are actually attempting to correct the one they abandon. Thus the search for pure consciousness develops out of an unsatisfactory relational existence, and the search for perfected relationship develops out of a static, self-enclosed awareness. All paths seek to correct an inharmony. Thus all of them are actually failures to understand and live life as it is.

Our condition is neither pure consciousness nor mere relationship. It is both consciousness and relationship, always, already and exactly. This is not a problem. It is merely a creative condition, an unqualified reality. If we become conscious of it as a dilemma, a limitation of problems, then we must resort to seeking, practicing and realizing. We will become bound to the scheme of alternatives arising at every moment of our existence. We will always be seeking, avoiding, choosing, attempting, disciplining, indulging, practicing and despairing. Liberation is not some fantastic realization and attainment of consciousness or experience but the recognition of what is the exact condition, without distorting it by interpreting it as a problem. Examination of our lives, our motives, our intentions

and tendencies, moment to moment, over time relieves us from life as dilemma. This is not to say we accumulate experience and philosophy but that we live it directly, without resorts. The release at last and always is from resistance, at any moment, to consciousness (prior to processes) and relationship (experience, processes). This must be understood, and no practices can realize it. All practices lead to an artificial result, an experience, an interpretation of life.

There are great men of all kinds, divine men and very human men, and moments of all kinds, divine and human. But the way is neither divine nor human but is itself. It is so deeply itself that it is not moved to pursue any solution, since it is not conscious of itself as a problem or a condition that could be remedied by any revolutionary intention. Radical existence is simply itself. It is always and radically both consciousness and process, freedom and relationship. My failure to live as such is always the root of suffering and strife, an attempt to recapture one or the other principle of existence that has been lost by misunderstanding and effort.

The effort of which we need to be free is the effort to overcome life as dilemma. Intentional action is itself necessary and can be highly creative. But action that pursues the liberation from life contradiction, where consciousness and relationship appear in opposition, is itself bondage and extends suffering and illusion. Thus the way of life is neither mindfulness (attention to processes) nor meditation (ascent to consciousness). The way of life is already free and creates freely. It is also self-healing, and so at times we become meditative unto sublimity and at others concentrated unto understanding of experience, but these are occasions and repairs and not life itself. They are refreshments.

Life is conscious experience. That is it exactly and solely. Within it no possibility is excluded nor absolutized. Those in trouble need only understand the essential structure of existence and so illuminate their strife.

When I thoroughly and tacitly understand that I am always already in relationship, radically and totally, then the effort to avoid relationship becomes unnecessary and, indeed, impossible and so it relaxes and I am peaceful. Similarly, when I thoroughly and tacitly understand that I am continually seeking freedom, but that freedom can exist only always and already, prior to effort and result, and when I realize that freedom is consciousness itself, then the whole effort to identify with processes and relationships becomes unnecessary and impossible and I enjoy the unqualified peace of consciousness. When both of these dimensions are understood and stand as reality, the essential condition, then I am grounded in real life and no longer enforce it as a question, a problem, a dilemma. In this unanswered depth and peace I can create with unqualified freedom.

But this is not the end of all knowledge. At this point I have overcome life as dilemma. There is still free growth in two directions. Life is a creative possibility. Life as creative action, free in relationship, is indeed action, participation, politics. Thus, out of peace and harmony and bliss I can create and know as I choose in relationship. This is the beautiful occupation of energy. And consciousness is also realizable in itself. Consciousness presides over all the realms of our experience, waking, dreaming and sleeping. Thus to uncover its peace by disarming the “problem” of waking consciousness does not reveal the totality of consciousness itself. It simply permits you to enjoy it, manifest as it, and know it. Life, then, also involves the permissive realization of consciousness in its totality as well as relationship in its totality. When the life problem is dissolved in understanding, then there is a way of life, as intelligent and natural as hunger and eating, that permits growth and realization of the fullness of possibility.

Even the spiritual seeker is obsessed with the mentality of spiritual experience. And, though often he may achieve concentration in his holy object, he does so via a compulsive avoidance of relationship to life processes. Inevitably he finds himself agonizing over his inability to keep his mind free from

the “unholy”. All of this, then, is off the mark and not at all free. It is the avoidance of relationship through the identification with the mind, the process of experience. It is the failure to realize the radical, total condition of relationship, of non-separation. The avoidance of relationship, the idea of separateness from total relationship is the basic cause of bondage to the mind, the form of experience.

What, then, is true relationship in terms of any object? It is one in which relationship is itself the experience. It is not one in which some manifestation is approached as an object which, by participation, will guarantee certain effects. Such is to be bound to experiences rather than free in relationship. Relationship is not a mere matter of fact, an objective condition, but a recognition, a realization, a force of consciousness. Thus, by understanding relationship radically one becomes free of the mind and ascends to consciousness. Thus every experience, every object, can and ultimately should be approached as relationship, which is unqualified consciousness of Presence.

The Teacher, then, is not some God-conscious and powerful person who is to be approached in order that he provide us with certain experiences that will free us by the force or argument of a miracle. To travel in that way to any object is to be caught in life as a dilemma. Thus most who approach spiritual sources will at first find themselves unsatisfied and put off their hopes. The teaching that is first taught is freedom from the dilemma of the mind, the life-problem, the anxious search. The Teacher at first raises us to the realization of love, life as devotion and joy rather than dilemma. This is the internal miracle that is the first realization. We come, then, no longer to demand experiences of the Guru but only the relationship itself, the paradigm recognition of non-separation. There are miracles and marvels in the deep realizations and graces of spiritual life, but they come only after the crisis of enjoyment, the liberation from life as dilemma.

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The knowledge that you are radically in relationship is the key recognition which, as it is more and more fully experienced, raises you up out of the revolution of separateness and particular or partial relationships into the bliss of consciousness and actuality. Thus it is the essential realization that creates spiritual life. From then there is continual expansion of consciousness and the dimension and power of manifestation. In this way perfect consciousness and divine life are both realized and there is no compulsive and exclusive effort to create either one, for such are merely mental persuasions created out of a life dilemma. Indeed, there is no compulsion to realize anything since the knowledge of radical relationship is the sufficient heart of liberation, the core of freedom, of unqualified consciousness.

Spiritual realization is actual bliss, unqualified consciousness. It is thus the Divine state, the Divine knowledge. It is not separate from the perfect and ultimate reality, but knows it, manifests it and enjoys identity with it. It is not a state known only in meditation or some specific condition in relation to manifest existence. It is a state periodically experienced by all men, but often it is not recognized for what it is and so enjoyed to the point of illumination. It is sufficient. From it proceed miracles and powers and all existence, but this itself is the goal and no other manifestations will necessarily be given you to verify its power and depth.

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Truth is the enjoyment of consciousness, the non-separation from God or actual bliss.

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Total, unqualified relationship is not other than consciousness. To be radically in relationship is to be conscious without qualification. Thus the awareness of unqualified relationship is also the enjoyment of consciousness itself. This is the supreme bliss, and it is not realizable by any exclusive process dealing with the mode of relationship or, alternatively, with consciousness itself. The exclusive method is simply a manifestation of the struggle of life experienced as dilemma. When you thoroughly and radically understand your real condition there is no seeking and nothing to be attained. There is the peace of non-separation, the conscious bliss of actual, unqualified existence.

The enjoyment of this is the highest realization of life. Everything else is an expansive activity generated out of this perfection and harmony beyond all questioning.

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The desire to satisfy some chronic desire, some mental persuasion, is based in a failure to recognize relationship as your essential condition. Thus experience is generated out of anxiety, a sense of separation, a need to be joined, immersed in a relationship that is only partial and particular in order to satisfy the need for the sensation of wholeness, of radical relatedness. At such times it is necessary to get beyond the mind. This is meditation.

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Meditation is basically the enjoyment of realization. It is not an effort or search for realization but a total relaxation and expansion and permissiveness to the radical consciousness of relationship, of actual bliss. To know this state and freedom is to be free of all questions, even the questions regarding: What is this state, its exact nature? Is it God, is it the Self? Is it perfect relationship to God? Is it only a personal peace of mind? All such questions are based in the problematic mentality. However, to meditate, to fully allow this radical consciousness of relationship, to intensely enjoy this unqualified condition is not separate from any perceptions and descriptions of ultimate reality that may be provoked by the experience. It is only that none of this is necessary or persuasive, and only the native freedom remains to be an essential reality and truth for all.

Total, radical relationship excludes particular identity. The consciousness of radical relationship can isolate no fixed entity or disconnected process with which to identify. Yet it is not necessarily identified in particular with an infinite process. It is simply free of the identification with separateness, an isolated, finite and qualified process.

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I continually return to this realization: It is not a matter of seeking and finding a truth in order to be free. It is not a matter of concentrating the mind in some truth or idea, some state or process, some person or source. It is a matter of removing the concentration of the mind by dissolving the problems created by the contradictions, the dualities, the endless forces of opposition that continually form the content of the mental process. And this is not a matter of method. We are always automatically concentrating the mind by thinking, trying to resolve and synthesize the dualities of experience. The attempt to put an end to this is simply another manifestation of the dilemma. But at times we suddenly perceive this entire activity, not any one side of any contradiction, but both sides, the mind as a whole. At those times we are suddenly free of the mind. Then there is an end to seeking, to avoidance and identification, to mental concentration. At those times there is a free enjoyment of consciousness and relationship as a total, unqualified realization.

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In the West the tendency is toward an indulgence in and identification with the mechanics or phenomenal aspect of reality itself. Thus relationship is exploited, experience exhausted. This tends to create the reaction of revolution, cynicism and disavowal, the yearning for a totally other reality and the acknowledgement of a dimension of meaning.

In the east the tendency is toward the exploitation of consciousness itself, to the exclusion of the dimension of relationship, which appears to be a gradient downward from the totality of Self to the mortal separateness of bodily existence. This tends to produce the reaction of self-indulgence, the demand for politics and economic visibility, the search for a manifest freedom and enjoyment.

Both these paths, then, are expressions of a conflict, which is emphasized and exaggerated by an exclusive intention. Both, in spite of the marvels each produces in the infrequent case of actual realization, are products of problematic awareness, a failure to radically understand the essential nature of our condition. Only radical, total knowledge and not partial, exclusive knowledge, can generate true and realized existence.

What is required is radical knowledge, radical existence. Thus life is based in a non-dualistic, exclusive idea of existence is problematic, contradictory and thus demands life to be lived as emergency, as search. The problematic life is motivated by urgency and incompleteness. The products of such existence, whatever its style, manifest the falsity of traditional existence.

You are always already conscious and always already in relationship. This radical comprehension, truly realized, manifests the natural state of blissful consciousness and the ability to create harmony or union.

Life is not recognizable by an ultimate purpose, such as to realize the Self or to achieve a political perfection. These are exclusive, burdensome goals that merely depress and exploit free existence. Just so, the truth is not descriptive. It does not involve mental indications of the nature and source of the universe and consciousness, etc. The truth is a unifying principle, not an exclusive fixation. Life is already free on the basis of an intuitive understanding of its basic structure.

Relationship is radical, not exclusive. It does not fix on God or any other symbol or indication of "source". It does not fix or concentrate consciousness at all. Neither does it disperse it. It is total, without qualification, free of the whole process of contradiction, the infinite complex of the dual efforts of the mind. And so, our essential freedom cannot even be described as the realization of the relationship to God, even if such is understood to be effortless, totally by grace, neither created, maintained not increased by effort.

Our basic experience is known only when the primary and most prior structure of our existence is intuitively recognized. Then the "problem" of consciousness, the dilemma of existence, unwinds and a tacit, radical awareness of reality replaces the exclusive tendencies of the mind. For such there is no savior, no Guru, no vision, no God, no Self, no goal, no miracle, no problem and no illusion. Neither is there the absence of these. Such a person is free of the persuasive effects of experience, free of the contrary, free of the grief that follows fulfillment, free of the search for joy, free of the concepts of destruction, free of the structure and process of conscious life. His way is enjoyment. If the Divine miracle were to be produced in the next town tomorrow he would be absent, found making love, or devoted to bringing peace to the minds of those who, disbelieving, remained behind. This is not to say that there are no miracles, no Divine center of being. But neither are such realities to say there is no death, no suffering, no enjoyment of the body. What may be said of such a state is that, in the most positive sense, neither death nor God is its concern. Such peace is the graceful child of all truth.

The detachment which is a liberation from all bondage is not a mental separation from the life manifestation but the basic freedom which permits passion, survival and perfect peace.

There is only consciousness. Relationship is consciousness. It is not that consciousness is a principle prior to relationship. There is no separation, no distinction between relationship and consciousness. It is only that we do not realize relationship. We tend to fragment, concentrate, separate, avoid and identify with experience. Thus we are not in relationship and do not recognize real relationship.

Relationship is radical, total, unqualified reality. To know it is to be conscious, to recognize and realize consciousness. If we identify or epitomize relationship in a certain entity, then relationship has the appearance that it may be lost, since the entity is not perfectly durable. Thus we suffer grief while in the prime of enjoyment and we are threatened with loss, separateness and emptiness.

By the false knowledge of relationship life becomes search, relationship is pursued as something other than consciousness and consciousness as something other than relationship. Life becomes a conflict determined by a conceived polarity, the analyzed opposites of consciousness and relationship. Thus when relationship is enjoined there is anxiety that consciousness is threatened, and when consciousness is embraced there is the suffering of disconnection from life.

All of this is the failure of consciousness to realize itself. It fails to recognize manifestation and comprehend relationship or experience as a totality. It engages relationship only as particularity and so always narrows and concentrates the awareness of relationship. Since it fails to recognize relationship as a whole, particular relationship becomes awareness trapped in a form rather than the direct enjoyment of consciousness.

When relationship is known as it is, without the mechanism of conflict and contradiction standing in the way of grasping what is, then relationship ceases to be a field of danger. It is not a descent or a separation from the center. It does not proceed from consciousness but is itself consciousness, continuous with the totality of awareness.

The contemplation of relationship and consciousness, apart from any other method of transforming awareness or the processes of the mind, will ultimately bring an end to all strife, all ignorance and all necessary suffering. When the conflict between them ceases then the center of being is opened and the life problem dissolves. At such moments there is a return to natural freedom and enjoyment of consciousness. Then there is the expansion and deepening of profound awareness and bliss, the pleasure of unqualified silence.

The only problem is the problem of consciousness. The problem of consciousness is conflict or contradiction produced by the failure to understand the nature and reality of relationship. There is only consciousness and it cannot be known by separation from relationship. If relationship is not recognized in its radical sense, then all particular relationship becomes a descent, a separation, a movement into unconsciousness. But you are totally related, not in any sense separated from the center, the source, from consciousness itself. There is only consciousness. There is no problem. There is no search and no answer. Relationship is not a separate dimension but is known only as connection and continuation. Relationship is not even the content of consciousness. It is consciousness. There is nothing that can be known except consciousness. Consciousness is your only experience.

Relationship is radical knowledge. It is not guaranteed or created by any exclusive relationship such as to God or Guru. These are at best doors to total relationship, being themselves not knowable as separate, exclusive entities. Relationship is always radical, always already the case. Thus it is knowledge whereby all particular relationship is approached and recognized. It is the knowledge, which is unqualified consciousness. The true Guru falls through your hands. He cannot be identified. To know the Guru is to possess all knowledge. He is the principle of existence. He is your own bliss.

The reality of the Divine Lord, the One than which there is no other, who, though wholly other than all that exists, has manifested and is the heart of all existence, is itself the salvation of men. To recognize this Reality after the contemplation of our life is to enjoy perfect knowledge and eternal liberation. His grace is that He makes Himself known as real and as the Lord of all reality. Thus there is no condition wherein He cannot be known and where He is not revealing Himself. He is Jesus Christ. He is Krishna. He is Muktananda. Yet He is not exclusively these, more than my chair, my arm. To know Him is to attain Self-knowledge. His existence and not His actions, not the quality of His manifestations, is what liberates. Thus He appears under many forms and yet the truth is always the same. He is the one who is known.

Life is manifold and truth is paradoxical, that is, inclusive, whole. Life may produce the experience of subject and object, but, in truth, neither subject nor object represent an absolute dimension. Both are aspects of a total process. My own consciousness of an event is something to which I am ultimately the witness, just as I am the witness of its object, the external event.

Of this I am certain, and it has manifested itself to me in the midst of my meditations. The “I” and the “world” are aspects of a total process. I am a witness of the subjective self and the objects of experience. Yet this truth is liberating to me only in the condition of relationship. The actual attainment of transcendent consciousness and power is not usual or constant until it actually is such. Until then such knowledge is graceful and a devotional aid within the context of life. Life is not reducible to consciousness. Life is relationship, consciousness as relationship. And the way of life is, at its best, a relationship to the Divine Presence which is manifesting as everything. Such is the path of truth, which I cannot deny.

All that I have written has a single result, and all of my experience and understanding is epitomized in a single realization. The Divine Lord, the real Presence of the one who is all Consciousness, all manifestation, from whom every kind of awareness and actuality proceeds, is That to which I am related. And that is the nature of my existence. That relationship, which is a devotion of my whole being, always more and more inclusively, is beyond all my efforts to identify with the states of life. The knowledge of that relationship coincides with and creates more and more the stillness of the processes of identification that are the basis of my dilemma, the mystery and suffering of ordinary life. In that knowledge the mind is stilled, energy returns to the body and the very nerves, clarity is restored to all relationships, and the center of my being, my heart, is raised in live to a growing devotion.

Thus my life, in practice, devotes all my activities, in every dimension wherein I become aware, to the Divine. I come to know that the Lord manifests His Consciousness as all states of awareness and His Form as all forms, and that He is perfectly in control at the source of all things, and so I surrender my compulsive control of my life and experience. Just so, I devote my life, as it continues, to that same source. I allow the results and benefits of all I do be for the sake and enjoyment of the Heart of Life. Thus I allow all life to be the experience of the Divine Person, and in that grateful path He raises me to Himself.

True existence begins when you become knowingly and certainly founded in the essential relationship and consciousness. When this occurs life ceases to be in conflict, motivated by contradictions, in search by various inventions for the accomplishment of freedom. When the Divine Presence is discovered then comes the knowledge of the radical priority of unqualified consciousness and perfect relationship. The relationship to the Divine Lord is free life, liberally turned and devoted to the heart of existence, the consciousness of joy. Life as such devotion is creative, clear, free of strife and illusion, and moving by grace into higher reality.

I am not in relationship to the physical universe, nor to any object I perceive. I am not in relationship to my own mind, or my body. Neither am I in relationship to my loved ones or any person. And I will never be in relationship to any particular thing. Nothing that appears to me has ever known my presence, nor will it ever know that I exist. I am always, already and only in relationship to the Divine Lord, the One who is manifesting everything and is the consciousness of everything.

Whatever I may appear to do, and whoever I may enjoy, and whatever I experience, I am always and only enjoying the direct relationship to the Divine Lord. I am never in fact separate or experiencing any entity in itself. I am never even experiencing my own separate mind and personality.

At times I have interpreted my life as separate experiences by a disconnected and unique process I identified as myself. The error was not that I experienced the play of phenomena, but that I failed to know I was always in relationship and always free. Healing is simply the instant, moment to moment recovery of this knowledge.

This knowledge is not the result of a process, a practice, a method. I am always witnessing and apparently performing such things, but knowledge is a grace, a suddenness, an awareness outside of all activity, all strife and all the influence of experience. And this knowledge is totally liberating. The more profound it goes within the simpler the truth appears, and it is simply unqualified consciousness, awareness, and bliss. It is a life prior to the mind and all identification with manifestation. It is marked by direct experience, a calm, questionless awareness, peace, the knowledge of self as bliss. And its essential content is the consciousness of the Divine Lord, the Presence, the actual source and object.

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The Divine Lord is not the symbol of religions. He is not the one in whom you are persuaded to believe. He is not an entity, a mental object, a reduction of reality or a phenomenon within the whole world. He is One who must be realized to be known. He is not known prior to the realization of life. It is simply that the tacit understanding of the man who is beyond conflict and who enjoys the perception of non-contradiction is suddenly voiced as this recognition. It is the testimony of his absolute freedom and enjoyment and not the description of a path for the mind in its bondage. But neither is the way the avoidance of devotion and worship of the prophetic symbol. Men will act and seek in any case and enjoy the consolations of their many answers. It is simply that when there is a return to understanding there is an end to seeking, questioning, descriptive belief and all conflict, and these are replaced by immediate recognition.

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Life is realizable only when we relate to it non-philosophically, that is, prior to the description of life as a problem, a warfare of opposites communicated by experience. Thus life must be asserted directly, prior to the question. This is to say that life is understood only as a whole. It is not recognizable nor realizable as mere experience or relationship, nor as mere consciousness, mere witnessing. In either case experiences or awareness are reduced and limited to the separate contents of the abstract condition, and so the reaction of result of revolt and despair is created.

Life is not realizable within the categories of mental conflict but only directly, immediately, as conscious experience. Life is not primarily matter or experience or relationship, nor is it primarily undifferentiated consciousness or pure awareness. It is both of these simultaneously. It is conscious relationship. It is the certainty of the unanswered state. It is unconceived knowledge. It is the excitement of present bliss.

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Those who practice the perennial Vedanta are always witnessing the not-Self, and so they retreat by analysis and reduction to consciousness prior to all relationship. The ordinary man also perceives only an involvement with what is not God. He acknowledges only mortality and mystery. He is able to make no assumptions about conscious reality. But the real is not the entity of Self, nor the sorrows of mortal Narcissus. I never see what is not real. I never contemplate what is not consciousness. Freedom is in the proper identification of the reality of my present experience.

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The Divine Lord, who is present universally but who is not qualified by any manifestation, who is the source and consciousness and control of all processes, who is manifesting everything, who transcends everything, who is that alone to which you are related, who is that alone of which you are conscious, who is freedom, consciousness, actual Presence, perfect knowledge and absolute bliss, who alone is your Self and that of all things, who is the Guru, the Teacher, is the principle of life.

The solitary necessity for our freedom, if we could assume Him to be what He is, is to allow Him to exist, to manifest Himself as everything, to be the transcendent Presence known anywhere.

The relationship to the Divine Lord is salvation. His grace, whatever form it takes, is simply to make His existence, as he is, real to us. This Lord is the Lord, and all men are communicating their level of realization of Him. All religions, all religious statements, all spiritual paths, truths and witnesses are communications about this Presence modified by the limitations of their realization and the historical circumstances of the transmission. He is knowable and He must be known.

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The heart of every religion is sacrifice by the Divine or by humanity or a cooperation of both. The real action of spiritual life, the mutually inclusive relationship to God, is conscious surrender. Surrender is that which is symbolized in the dramatic ritual of sacrifice. Surrender to the Divine is the way of life, just as he creates and saves life by making himself unqualifiedly and infinitely real, as every kind of manifestation and consciousness. But surrender is not something you are required to do to yourself. It is not a method, a practice of self-manipulation. Surrender is, rather, allowing the Divine to do something. The Lord is the Lord of every faculty, every process, and we must consciously allow him to be so. Surrender, then, is not to put your attention on some process in order to let go of it by an act of will. It is to put your attention on the Divine and allow him to be the consciousness and power, the actor and enjoyer of every process.

Thus we approach the Divine directly and not through the medium of some process. We are always already in the supreme relationship. It can be lost to consciousness but it cannot be lost in fact. Thus our devotion and our knowledge, our yoga and our creative action is not a means to approach the Divine. Rather, we must approach the Divine directly, in relationship, consciousness to consciousness, allowing him to be the source, consciousness, intelligence, enjoyer and determiner of every form of existence, from those most exterior to us to those most intimately involved with the processes we ordinarily identify as our selves. When this is done, all processes, including those we call religious and spiritual, become transformed by the higher life.

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Life is lived by God in all his infinite forms. True existence begins when this is known and acknowledged freely and consciously by the individual. Thus we exist as liberated. Liberation is not the result of the search for the ultimate consciousness and power. Liberation is that state of bliss, freedom, certainty and unqualified being that is known when we recognize the actuality and inescapability of our relationship to the Divine, who pervades totality.

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Impulse is a reaction to experience. It is a machine. The mind is an accumulation of reactions, a complex pattern of responses. It is the evidence of the laws of nature. The responsive center of experience, which we mentally identify as ourselves, is not a person, any more than a computer is a person. What we identify and value as character is the force of the actual person, the conscious being, revealed in control of the natural mechanisms of physical and mental life. And spiritual realization is the knowledge of that consciousness raised to the highest state, the freedom from all effects, the perfect enjoyment of actuality.

The mind takes on the form of whatever absorbs it. Thus it is necessary to maintain absorption in God. As soon as some form seen apart from God becomes a fascination we are drawn into conflict and the actions which express our fascination. The end of that is an exhaustion of energy and the manifestations of separation. We must acknowledge our understanding and, with the devotion our knowledge releases, draw into the real action of meditation. This destroys all illusion and unconsciousness. It leads to union with the perfect, and permits life to be enjoined in freedom, in the natural awareness of the Divine center. By such realization we become free of the qualifications and bondage men suffer as a result of the process of experience.

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The essential realization of the meditative act is that this present consciousness, my awareness at this instant, the entire reality which is my present experience is in fact the consciousness and experience of the Divine Lord. He is experiencing this. He is this state, this awareness, this manifestation. The moment of this recognition breaks the entire form of bondage.

The truth is that all manifestation is being lived, all consciousness is the present consciousness of the Divine. Totality is the present actuality as a simultaneous realization, manifestation and experience of the Divine Lord. Our bondage, the root of ignorance, suffering, the activity of sin, is simply the result of the loss of this conscious knowledge. Instead of living in the bliss of this infinite freedom we identify our present awareness, the form of consciousness and experience at this moment, as a separate, unique and finitely personal reality. Thus we lose the freedom of totality, the infinitely unburdened bliss of pure consciousness of the Divine, and fall into the expression of finite and separate existence. I do not mean to say that when we are fully in the truth we cease to exist in a world, in relationship to one another. It is simply that we come to live life truly, directly, in the full bliss of the relationship to the Divine. In the free and natural state we cease to enforce the form of ignorance and the conditions its assumptions create.

Normally we assume: I am having this experience. Every moment of life is informed by this affirmation. Moment to moment this awareness of being a separate identity is communicated to the whole of life. And life becomes an expansion out of the idea of this individuation, a process whereby the separate and absolute ego tries to predicate all reality to itself in order to regain the totality intuited beneath the mind. This is the source of life as dilemma and mortality, suffering and tragedy, dark humor and search. It is simply a matter of a failure to recognize the truth of our condition, our right relationship, the actual reality. In fact the Divine Lord, the conscious subject and source of all manifestation, experiencing everything and what we now identify as our selves is simply our awareness of the Reality of the Divine.

There is a state which transcends all conditions. It is not a vision nor the result of visions. It is unqualified consciousness, yet it enjoys perfect relationship. It is not moved to retreat into pure consciousness, away from relationship, nor to exploit experience and avoid the problem of awareness. It is possessed of no powers, no answers and, above all, no questions. It is not to be identified with any special form or knowledge or gift of energy.

Whenever I become confused and seek among alternative thoughts for answers, whenever I realize a peculiar sense of problematic identity and the question which is my vulnerability, I know I have ceased to understand. Then it is not a matter of finding a path, a method, an answer, a form for my question. I know from experiences that I have simply ceased to understand and there is no use in seeking.

A person's bondage is simply the whole pattern and effort whereby he seeks to avoid relationship, which is the processes of identification and escape. Therefore we get religious formulas, such as: "you must surrender to God", or, "Abide in the Self". But what must be surrendered and undone is the whole pattern of Narcissus. And, if this were done, there would simply be the tacit recognition that you are radically in relationship. And this is our essential, prior, transcendent condition, which is freedom, consciousness itself.

Therefore, when you have understood your essential dilemma, there is no need to surrender. Surrender is an intentional act, a conscious letting go of symptoms and functions. It is a kind of warfare, a typical "spiritual" act. It is done in hope and faith but also in ignorance. It is simply another aspect of life as dilemma. When the entire process is understood, then your essential condition is known as a prior reality. The "sinful" and the "spiritual" are then recognized as aspects

of one dilemma, and, when their necessity is quieted, there remains only abiding in reality. There is no need to surrender or to perform any self-manipulating spiritual act.

The idea of surrender occurs in the context of its perfect object, which is God or Self. He is recognized in the spiritual side of the dilemma, when an objective or transcendent concentration replaces a subjective one. Then there is a sympathy for the greater form of reality, and healing is sought through the recognition of source. But if we realize our essential condition there is no need to recognize anything, no need for deliberate union and reunion, no need to establish the result of freedom.

When I sit in stillness, actually conscious, already related, prior to this moment and all the pristine black, I do not hold on to any function, means, operation or temporary creation of my manifest life. The enjoyment of radical relatedness quiets the mind and rests the functional energy of the whole life. Then I simply fall deeper and deeper into the heart of pure consciousness and brilliant peace, concentrated in the unnamed reality which is implied in the radical knowledge of relationship. When I rise again I am the enjoyment of consciousness, the blissful center, already free, already forever here.

The basis and form of every problem, every kind of dilemma, and thus all of the suffering which is Narcissus, is the complex avoidance of relationship. The impulse to escape and the force by which we identify with forms of experience are the source of bondage and all unrealized existence. When this is recognized in its depth and actuality of whole impediment to conscious life disappears.

Perfect insight is also perfect restoration. Since the complex of suffering is caused by the avoidance of relationship, the radical awareness of this is a restoration to the radically related, conscious state. And radical relationship is prior to all mentality.

That which is enjoyed in the free state and in the force of meditation has been called God, the Self, the One mind. It has been recognized in a thousand forms and within the mechanics of countless religious, philosophical and spiritual conceptions. But when there is a radical awareness of the source of bondage the mind is quieted and consciousness is restored to its primary, imageless enjoyment.

When you see yourself to be Narcissus in the total obscenity of his worship, then you will have no need to resort to any means to be free. You will know with certainty resort to any means to be free. You will know with certainty the profound heart of reality. You will know the bliss of radical relationship. The recollection of radical relationship, and the deep enjoyment of the unproblematic condition separates the action of Narcissus from the form in which he images himself. When he sees the water itself he attains the conscious incident of life.

First there is mere life, awareness perceiving the effort and dismay of its own drama. That is the recognition of Narcissus, which is understanding.

Understanding relaxes the necessity of the root of all suffering, the pattern and identity of contradictions. When that necessity becomes unnecessary and that reality becomes unreal, there is the implication of relationship as the most prior condition, which need not be created but only enjoyed.

When this conscious enjoyment is embraced and allowed there is unqualified realization, the real and necessary form of conscious bliss. Then what is known is only enjoyed and manifest as life.

The quality of life proceeds from the form of cognition we assume. It is only necessary to return again and again to the form of reality, which is the actual and conscious relationship to the Divine Lord, who is that alone of which we are conscious.

The mind is only a process of experience. We suffer because of the quality of our relationship to the mind. When we do not enjoy the Divine, we are identified with the force of experience.

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The universe is conscious. There is consciousness everywhere. There is only consciousness, and a universal event, a simultaneous reality.

The form of consciousness is the enjoyment of the Divine Lord. That relationship is reality. It is consciousness. It is unqualified enjoyment. It is the realized actuality.

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There is a completion of all the reasons.