

# *Today to Eternity*



*by Esme Dorothy Kirley*

Today to Eternity  
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The words from the translation of  
"Tao-Teh-King" by Lao Tze  
(Published under the title  
"The Book of the Simple Way of Laotze.")

THE DISEASE OF KNOWING.

To know one's ignorance is the best part of knowledge.

To be ignorant of such knowledge is a disease.

If one only regards it as a disease,  
one will soon be cured of it.

The wise man is exempt from this disease.

He knows it for what it is and so is free from it.

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# *Introduction*

I have experienced the many pitfalls within marriage, child bearing, and commercial activity. I have an intense desire to find the meaning of what is LIFE AND IT'S PURPOSE? I have experienced the depth of mental fear, frustration and stagnation together with considerable doubt as to what life was about. Now, in the constant search for a guide to happiness and peace within, I have finally become aware of the need to change many of my earlier ideas and ways of life.

It is my desire to share many years of searching for reality, to seek and to share with others the answers to the growing restlessness of our world in general. To ask the questions why do we have terrorism, murder, home breakdowns? Why do children from an early age frequently refuse to accept guidance or fail to address the constant challenges offered by life? This book has been written in the hope it may save others from the long intense search, "looking within", which culminates from the hard knocks of life.

I do not claim to have all the answers but from a study of various teachings including Meditation together with Buddhist Philosophy, I offer this book as an expression of my deep belief that we all HAVE TO CHANGE, if we seek to achieve a vital calm with contentment. These are the basic necessities for a person of whatever age seeking some of the answers to "WHY WE ARE ON EARTH"?

The firm belief in reincarnation or rebirth has come to me from practical experience in the more personal side of life and I acknowledge the need to understand these principles in order to break from tradition and the way many of us have lived our lives.

The reader is asked to merely study these writings with an open mind and not to remain self-satisfied. Whether we are employed, retired or simply wasting our life it is never too late to question Who and What we are, in the NOW?

I believe that we have little time to waste. As difficult as it may be, many individuals need to embark on a new journey of CHANGE. It is our duty to discover what is real. To read, examine and try to understand the true purpose for this LIFE and to filter out ILLUSION in order to find the key to true happiness.

I have endeavoured to outline a number of aspects for the student and to highlight the first step. The necessity to LOOK WITHIN and start towards the "QUEST" of finding the true purpose of life and the reality of the Spiritual Path that we must all at some time tread.

The path we seek does not come easily, as pointed out by a very special person who may be termed "An Elder Statesmen". With moral determination, DAVID VAUGHAN (an International Management and Business Consultant) has travelled on his own quest through years of seeking the path within. Thus in no small way gratitude and acknowledgment is given for the knowledge, dedication and years of research that has assisted me and inspired me in my OWN SEARCH WITHIN.

This book is dedicated to the International Community of SEARCHERS, irrespective of where they may be or who they are. If in some small way it assists them on the pilgrimage to find the TRUE MEANING OF LIFE it will surely be a step towards PEACE and KINDNESS to make the world a better place for all.

*Esmé Dorothy Kirley*

## *Chapter 1*

# *The Quest*

The BUDDHA made clear, WISDOM and VIRTUE are inseparable twins. Most other religions offer much the same truths. WISDOM is purified by VIRTUE, VIRTUE is purified by WISDOM. The virtuous person has wisdom and the wise has virtue. The combination of virtue and wisdom is the highest morality in the world.

Whatever actions you intend to perform in body, speech, or mind think FIRST. Will this action produce suffering? If it is harmful - avoid doing it? Be mindful when seeing or hearing, smelling, tasting, or touching. If unmindful thoughts arise, think them over with MINDFULNESS. Note that all defilements pass with CONCENTRATION. What do you think about? Home, work, or your long gone life? Don't you realise that this is a total lack of basic MINDFULNESS?

Try hard, be patient and strive to obtain concentration and a calm, which will arise only through long and hard constant effort. This is the key to finding the tranquillity within which leads to a peaceful mind. No one necessarily knows when we commit any of the main destructive mental actions. Frequently much thought leaves negative tendencies in our mind streams.

Having wrong views denying the existence of life both here and beyond, asserting that there is no existence particularly beyond our present belief develops a closed mind and builds in each of us prejudices and opinions that help to create a negative mind. It takes time to change our basic mental behaviour. First we must learn to recognize the specific destructive actions we do throughout our life.

Often, we are not aware of what motivates us mentally due to being busy, distracted, proud or careless. Sometimes and very frequently we are not willing to recognize all actions, which have resulted from our basic mental thinking, until years later. This in many cases causes various mental disturbances that are often regarded as instability or mental breakdowns.

As we seek to develop CONCENTRATION often we realise we cheat, lie to others when convenient, gossip about irrelevant subjects and criticise the people we claim to love or those we dislike. In many cases and in spite of such negative thoughts, we seek advanced meditation practices and even seek to develop mental powers above the average individual. If we are unable to control our grossest actions, in what we do and speak in our daily lives, how can we expect to change our minds which are the source of all of our actions? It is vital to recognize and understand destructive thinking and the resulting actions, be it in mind or body. This negative contribution to our lives leads to a lack of inner calm.

Willpower alone is NOT sufficient to change our inner nature. We must understand the disadvantages of our own behaviour and repeatedly be attentive to avoid illusory thoughts, which lead frequently to a variety of negative actions.

Many teachings particularly those now prevalent under the heading of NEW AGE thought, (having in the last thirty years or more become popular within our Western Culture), have failed to stem the tide of human destructive thought which is often due to a lack of moral strength and basic concentration. A vital base on which to build true lasting MEDITATION (a word that is so frequently used by a variety of Societies and has become popular in all cultures), fails to build true and lasting calm or that which leads to meditation and not just MIND DREAMING so prevalent in our civilization today.

It is essential to those seeking the PATH WITHIN to realise the constant necessity to battle our thoughts and to establish a CALM. To live and feel thought for all people irrespective of cast, colour, or creed. To shoulder the responsibility of kindness and fairness because we are all "as one". With this knowledge we may be able to avoid so many negatives in searching for those longed for answers to life.

From time immemorial people of all races have been seeking the QUEST for an answer to life. It is important to understand that this Quest is an individual effort and no one should force another to accept Doctrines or ways which may be alien in many aspects to that person without that student wanting to exercise the desire for change in what they think and act.

The seeker has to begin by understanding what they are NOW. We should realise the necessity to seek inner-changes that will in the end, either in this life or in future times, become the master teacher by self-discipline. The Quest can become a living challenge and as we walk on with growing faith it can lead us to becoming stronger morally and physically. This will open many doors to finding tranquillity.

Unfortunately far too much is outlined in a variety of so-called NEW AGE publications which can mislead and hinder the seeker for inner truths. It cannot be emphasized enough that the Quest is initially difficult and requires dedication plus moral strength practiced DAILY and not spent in following any particular teachings in a part time study.

Many individuals claim to be interested in the search within but refuse to accept the necessity for constant mental change, which often has held them captive to a VARIETY OF ILLUSIONS and this frequently hinders the true development of the seeker.

We are prone to accept the advice and opinions of others, rather than seeking ourselves to find individual answers and we are frequently unable to stand up against the negative waves of life or the moral blackmail of family and others who make us become mere stereotypes of what we could be.

We frequently claim that we are interested in the Quest, as our life does not give us what we seek. Nevertheless, such hidden truths often lie buried in our own subconscious and tend to make us prisoners of convention, even in the name of love (whether in marriage or partnership) we fail to break the bonds of our childhood dreams and remain within the social structure to which we are committed.

The Quest is a serious guide to where we are bound and from whence we have come. TIME IS NOT ON OUR SIDE and unless we challenge our own illusions and desires the Quest will be a permanent illusion itself as it will not provide the essential answer to the “wheel of life”. We have to know that as in earlier schools or university days, attention with understanding, is the key. We cannot just be content with our initial efforts, the act of attending lectures or by reading a variety of books and receiving apparent guidance from what some term as “learned folks”.

Each and every action we take must be examined with RUTHLESS REALISM. Words alone cannot be the final guide in every personal spiritual and moral development. The student has to research by examining each and every teaching together with moral dedication for change. Then the Quest within commences and we embark on a lifetime search that can end sometimes in a sensational realization of how much time we have WASTED in this PRESENT life.

Frequently the dream of spiritual redemption becomes a nightmare in which we are bogged down by ceaseless attention to quotes and views expressed by a variety of apparently enlightened individuals. Currently a fortune is being made in the publishing world, videos and other aids all labelled as the answer to the Quest Within. Many claim to be able to solve your problems and like a variety of Religious bodies offer redemption to the weary traveller. Alas, moneymaking has become in a variety of aspects of life the main purpose of living. The student should realize that all these doctrines are but milestones upon the path and in many cases cannot be regarded as giving an accurate assessment of the journey. Each and every individual (excluding the rare case) has the capacity to learn and to understand the meaning of the inner battle, which can lead to what we term inner peace and tranquillity.

Some are born lucky, others face misfortune but in either case there are no victors or vanquished but rather the ability of each and every one of us to be aware of how often we have been misled. Equally we too can be answerable for failing others by believing we have the knowledge or experiences, or assuming we are superior to others.

Spiritually Man and Woman are frequently compared to a little child and the root of our thinking and our ability to teach others can only become apparent when we can truthfully and honestly look deep within our own minds. To a limited extent we may have obtained understanding of some of the basic truths that have been placed before us for many centuries. However unfortunately now modern technology together with greedy marketing offers the gullible the quick-fix key to further ILLUSION and confusion.

Should we not be taking stock of our daily thoughts and actions, examining our misspent youth in order to SEEK WHAT IS REAL? Surely the answers must lie within ourselves.

## *Chapter 2*

# *Here is "Now" no matter what Age*

Within Buddhism it is said that before the mind can be restored to its pristine awareness the four poisons that obstruct it must be removed as these continually contaminate the stream of consciousness. The four are GREED, LUST, AVERSION and STUPIDITY. Meditation enables the student to be aware of the process of change and this leads to the enlightenment of life. Should we not be able to acknowledge this process, we resist it with negative results. We act in habitual ways losing totally our spontaneity. We continue to build up problems in the mind and thus become confused. Frequently we fail to realise that most people live in a bubble "of their own making" becoming victims of their negative creations. It would be welcome if during the wake-up state when we wash our face we could totally scrub our minds of all negative thoughts and worries and just simply leave them behind. We could then look at each day as a new opportunity but alas in most cases life does not work like that. However there is a way we can cleanse the mind and that is to find the SILENCE within the mind.

If only we could find a pleasant place to live, meaning an environment that is conducive to peacefulness and calm. Many people who live in places like London, New York, Sydney or other major cities find the continual noise and commotion makes it nearly impossible to facilitate real peace. They suffer the stress and negatives leaving many people fatigued and feeling like an empty shell. Therefore it is important to understand what "Buddha" means in our lives. (The facts of how Gotama actually lived, taught and did all the things it is said he had done according to those who believed he was a prophet), in this case it is not overly important but in short the necessity to learn to live in the NOW is having the eyes wide open.

Many Religious practices or teachings should be a process of awakening and one must try not to get trapped into an empty ideal that we worship but rather a reality that we seek to develop the peace within and to become aware that we live only in the moment. It is possible to avoid getting caught up with the wording of a signpost - one must seek to commence the journey and anticipate that with due study of the route we become more aware of our actions, regardless of the name or the object of our destination, and hopefully arrive better than we started.

It is vital that we understand 'living in the MOMENT' is the key to understanding any philosophy or guide to making life better. Regardless of whether we are a Christian, Muslim, or Jew, or if we are English or Asian we must understand the fundamental nature of our mind, and that it is different from any other person. We are in our own right a universe within and are fully capable of realizing basic peace.

So many of us fail to understand the arising of DUKKA (which means suffering) being due in the main to the grasping of desires. The basic teaching of the inner path is to “let go”, which involves an initial investigation of suffering and gives insight into the letting go of our mental problems and lack of peace by understanding our mind and who we are.

This is quite subtle, but wanting to get rid of our defilements is another kind of desire. Letting go is not getting rid of our individual aversions because it is our attachments to so many aspects of our thinking. Should you have a lot of aversion then you will still be held by grasping and clinging. Dispassion is acceptance of awareness of things as they are, many of which are difficult to change. It is not a trick phrase but a deep insight into the nature of things and of realizing that we each must battle our minds to become master of them. I knew a case where a female had considerable back pain from a major injury and through personal effort gradually overcame the problem to participate in normal life. It is therefore being able to bear with something unpleasant and not being caught up in being sorry for oneself and replacing aversion or negative thinking with total dispassion. Inner calm overcomes many basic mind problems including depression. It is a simple key to realizing that one must live in the NOW.

It can be said that life in general is difficult and even in the best social contacts including marriage and friends, we are often lost as we have failed to understand that living requires a basic peace within, calming the mind and realizing that each moment is precious and in some cases can be lost through death, injury, illness etc. The “bubble” or insulation we create prevents us from looking at the true position of our lives and understanding our problems, not from a negative point but rather from seeking through a calm mind we should awaken to see how we can prevent ourselves from being carried on the tide of life which more often than not can prove to be misleading.

In our desire to find peace, we must seek to live within the NOW, we need to establish a reality that can be possible and with only basic truths and teachings learn to teach ourselves. Consciously we need to leave the world of illusion and start to understand the need for happiness, for true living in each and every moment of time, creating for us an inner peace in spite of the storms that may rage around us.

No known religious teachings can give the student the basic understanding of the NOW and all metaphysical and philosophical ideas, rites and rituals are quite often crutches, used by the mind and unfortunately fail to provide the basic realization that the NOW is the only reality. We become completely bound by tradition, as an example, what we eat, what is right, what is wrong, family, environment, etc. All these different factors have influenced our lives and as a result we end up worshipping the (so called) signpost rather than allowing it to point the way. We should only teach or believe what is related directly to the ability of a person, to understand - in order to realize truth.

The Buddha makes unlimited reality clear. It is wonderful to understand the moment including peacefulness. Doubt is not something one can eliminate easily but once you realise this condition it can be turned into a quality of “Calm Abiding” and Peace, which is unoriginated and unconditioned.

How could the goals be different? How could they possibly be affected by just what we believe? Just as the nature of water is not affected by the shape of the vessel into which it is poured, so too the nature of ultimate truth does not change but is realized only in the NOW. The nationality and the conditioning of the person when it is realized does not affect the way it actually becomes a key in our lives, rather it is the practice of MINDFULNESS together with individual concentration. You place your attention as example on an object and you no longer just point in your mind to that object but you observe and reflect on the conditions that come and go in the silence of the study of the object, which leads to an empty mind. This now involves letting go of an object you are not holding (or any particular objective) by observing that whatever arises passes away. This is a basic insight of meditation practiced in what is termed “VIPASSANA”, it is the inner listening to your mind, through all the turbulence, to the point that a calm abiding becomes a fact. You can hear the noises in the turbulence that goes on in the mind, its desires and fears, especially the things you have repressed, never allowing them to be fully conscious but now even if there are obsessive thought or fears or emotions swelling up in the mind, you allow them to become part of consciousness so that you can let them go, never to return. If there is nothing coming or going then just live in the emptiness of the NOW and in the silence of the mind. You do not have to hear sound and it is truly silence.

It is vital however to be honest with your intentions, so that if you are turning to the silence out of aversion to a particular conditioning it is just repression again and does not lead to a purification of the mind, which we call CALM ABIDING. It is therefore essential that as you seek living in the NOW you do not carry your negative thoughts but seek to find a happy view on all things irrespective of how dark and misleading they may be. Through effort and concentration the mind will become aware of the need to live each second, the moment in the NOW and this is the key to all life whether we are rich or poor, sick or despairing, there is a silver cloud waiting to become a reality in our mind and to give us that peace within.

Inner vigilance, even though you concentrate on emptiness, is hard to hold. You may not obtain a good result due to your mind being misled. You have not rejected things, you have not let anything go, you are just turning away from your illusions, just saying you don't want to see that. You thus turn away; at this point the practice of being willing to endure what seems undesirable is a fight within. This inner vigilance of watching, listening, even experimenting, the right understanding rather than the emptiness of form or anything like that is the beginning of learning to control thought and to bring the mind under control. Right understanding comes through the reflection that whatever arises, passes away, reflection that even emptiness is not self which makes no claims on you.

There is something inside you that wants to claim something. You observe that as a condition of the mind, the sound of silence is always there, so you can use it as a guide rather than an end in itself. It becomes a skilful practice of watching and listening rather than just repressing conditions out of aversion to them. This exercise does tend to become boring but alas we must learn to understand our minds and to realise how long one can sit being aware of an empty mind? This practice is not to attack peacefulness or silence or emptiness as an end but

when used skilfully it means to be the “knowing” and to be always alert. When the mind is empty you can watch it. Awareness is born in silence; you are not seeking any condition because there is no sense of self. You know when you are confused and are doubting, you practice to use gentle kindness by being able to endure what you might at first have felt was not ENDURABLE.

If you have an obsessed mind that goes on and chats away and nags, then you want to clear it, the more you try to suppress these wanderings the worse it gets. Don’t give up but start again and think, “I got rid of that”, so no matter how many times it comes back and goes, take it as it comes, be one who takes one step at a time and patience will reward you. Experience the release and calm from carrying the heavy baggage and begin to feel at ease in whatever situation confronts you. It will give you a form of peace that allows you to be at ease and to overcome mental conditions that earlier you might have felt were all consuming. In allowing the mind to cease controlling you, it becomes clear your fears and doubts no longer have the same hold and one is more equipped to face real life.

In vigilance you observe all things that may come up in daily life. You experience attachments the mind places before you, together with negative thoughts. You begin to become mentally free, you let go, leaving things alone, noting what arises will cease and no longer have the power to be your mental master.

Emptiness is not getting rid of everything, it does not give blankness, but an infinite potential to arise and to pass. The idea of one as a creator may seem difficult to understand but each of us have a creative nature expressed in a variety of actions throughout our lives. It is just recreating things. We become aware that through the study of the “inner life”, rather than blaming or claiming responsibility for different conditions, we start to understand the key to let go and to guide our thoughts refraining from doing evil or rather negative actions and to be ever mindful especially to those we claim to love. In this we find the beginning of our long climb towards self realization, we begin to understand the necessity of constant vigilance and through the control of the mind we become calm and able to enjoy the moment and to live in the NOW irrespective of the material problems that may surround us.

The above is only an outline of the necessity to find the calm abiding and to start to live in the moment no matter what our age may be. To appreciate that we have a divine spark that can lift us from the turmoil we often create and to give calm abiding of true inner peace. We then communicate to others in all manner of ways and especially if we are fortunate to have found true love and acceptance in its widest interpretation.

As we think in a positive manner we talk about “developing” a quality of humility by taking a positive attitude towards it. We can turn situations around and grow from them, sometimes our questions lead to a thought that makes us feel weak and servile but this is not to say that we need to let everybody walk all over us or that we become pathetic, allowing people to trample us in their wake. If the weak believe they have humiliated or humbled one we should show how we are able to refrain from reacting or overreacting in situations and learn to lay down our opinions and pride. Consider what happens if we don’t react when someone verbally attacks

us. Usually people, who may snipe with abuse, are acting on a “reaction” which enables them to justify and fuel the problem.

It’s like practicing tennis and hitting a ball against a wall - you can do it because there’s a reaction, now if someone throws verbal abuse at us and we don’t react with aversion, aggression or any other mind attack but just absorb it, then the situation deflates and fizzles out. When this happens in our daily life try to see how we can move towards NOT reacting by simply being able to absorb and quietly defuse the situation.

Sometimes in travelling I encounter attitudes that are truly bordering on verbal abuse, especially in the case of the older generation. The new terminology “Road-rage” is used when people sometimes yell something abusive as they pass by in a vehicle; this behaviour appears to be a more subtle physical reaction and expresses aggressive energy that one feels. Such negative energy you can sense sometimes even in public when a person walks by. When this happens the instinctive reaction is to meet it with aggression or a hardening of the face but what we should practice is simply absorbing it, then releasing peace and calm.

It is incredible what this different attitude can do to ones physical and mental state. It changes from a tightening of the abdomen, the clenched fists on guard ready for defence, to a total softening and absorbing peace within the mind. This is a way of learning to use your energies skilfully to defuse the situation. The result is a feeling of inner-peace and a calming of all negative forces.

Sometimes we see how the hand gesture means an offering of first, one’s body, then speech and finally one’s mind. This is surrender by emphasizing the beauty in the physical gesture, if seen with proper understanding it is the most humble bodily expression of human devotion. Even the most proud and ego-centred person can not deny that when we stop to investigate teachings, we can see the importance of personal responsibility, of taking responsibility for what we do, what we say, and eventually for what we think. We see the possibility of developing something leading to the cultivating of our body, speech and mind.

I was inspired by the thought of not having to accept anything just because it was written down or said to me. Instead I encourage one to explore through the “quiet mind” seeking generally through self-enquiry to obtain calm abiding. Honesty seems to me to be one of the most beneficial things and as humans we must develop a reflective mind. This is one of the Buddha’s Perfections known as “Parami”. Truthfulness and honesty whether we consider ourselves spiritual, religious or even bohemian, are still the bases for finding the inner self allowing peace and tranquillity to reign whilst searching for our own perfection. If we aren’t honest with ourselves then there is deception that we pass on to others, it may be very subtle but if we deceive ourselves how can we not deceive others? In the West in general, you hold out your hand and give the other guy’s paw a big squeeze or if you are a female you may indulge in a kiss or a hug of the other person. “How are you? Glad to meet you”, but how often are these gestures lacking real honest feelings?

Mind affects body and body affects mind. This formation arises dependent on conditions; it grows or develops according to conditions and often arises where negative conditions persist. For

example, sight conscious-ness or seeing and the fear of pain. Perception and other mental factors that accompany such consciousness depend on there being an object to be seen by the eyes and a contact between the two. Alas, you don't see what's believed and if you don't see anything you then have to develop awareness, which produces insight. You will see that your world and the entire range of your experience is just ILLUSION and that suffering depends on your attachments to these negative conditions and unhealthy attitude.

Having the capacity for introspection one needs COURAGE to CHANGE the direction of one's path. Life would be much smoother if we were clearer and faster to see the obvious, the need to change our ways by rethinking each thought, leading to action.

All over the world people are growing aware of the need to shed the past and to prepare themselves for what is termed "New-Age" thinking. Thousands of experimental communities, urban or rural are searching for a new way of life. Unfortunately, these people who are frequently totally lost as to their aims or objectives, are turning away blind from families and traditions. To a great extent the Search has replaced "The Political" activism of the 1960's and 1970's. Another feature of this difficult and ever changing tendency results in a proliferation of so called Spiritual mass movements which all claim to offer some sort of instant salvation. New Age views are not always the key to finding the true individual path within.

These trends sometimes combine in the form of spiritual communities that live with apocalyptic forbearance awaiting for what they believe to be the end of the world or the arrival of some Saviour. Alas, many of these and other branches of Cult Worship teaching are aimed in general only. This allows the student to survive within aspects of various teachings claiming the spirit can find its divinity. These activities carry a significant foretaste of what is generally called the New Society but they are not complete and more of them will fail before the total New-Age becomes a reality.

What is important is that much suffering can be avoided through a study and understanding of different ways of living. One must look with an impartial mind and be willing to seek and find only the TRUTH, no matter how hard it may be to discover.

For three thousand years or more, the world has lived by expansion and complexity. The trend has reached saturation. We must now turn again towards CONCENTRATION and SIMPLIFICATION. This does not mean to throw away the obvious as in discoveries of Science or Technology, which are very valuable on their own but it does mean abandoning all the results that threaten destruction and extinction to our own very existence as individuals. Personal freedom is vital.

Unfortunately even our education is far from satisfactory. Many aspects of teachings do not equip the younger generation to meet the ever-increasing problems they must face. "Defence" does not defend but is only a means of massive expansion of political and national trends and these threaten, rather than help the population involved. What is required is cooperation plus the "search within" for simplification of our lives resulting in a greater increase of human happiness rather than the lust for more and more material objects. ILLUSION has been the byword of most of our life. Whilst money is a necessary commodity we need to work for the human race and to

change our negative thinking in whatever our sphere. The belief that we can achieve INNER PEACE is the eternal key to finding all that really matters.

It should be obvious, the trend by both individuals and various Nations towards disintegration can be seen over a period of at least the last century and is often disguised by the ebb and flow of political and economic activity.

The one seeking the true path of Liberation finds that many of the Cults and Offers of mental or spiritual redemption are but pawns on the path to real peace. We constantly abuse our lives by allowing our minds to become clouded by our lack of total perception.

All our lives we are driven by a desire to seek enjoyment. This takes many forms and in some cases leads to total addiction. This is the “dark side” of our lives. With obvious world chaos all about, home violence, mass murder and general diabolical crimes stretching across all levels of society, we wrongly imagine that we can experience a true life by either living a lie by not acknowledging these problems or worse still by becoming alone in our thoughts away from what is reality leaning towards a sightless reclusive lifestyle.

In many instances we come from a society of foolish “tittle-tattle”, general gossip and even within the area of our physical or mental enjoyment we are held down by the fears and doubts that we have created. We fail to experience the need to become as a child in the spiritual search and foolishly have allowed negatives to dominate; these negatives can actually take control of our entire life. We need concentration that can obtain lasting change by our action within and by our WILL to look at ourselves. Sometimes we find that we distrust our motives so we do nothing, content to live in a “bubble” of our making. Thus, illusion is perpetuated and we find no lasting peace. We become victims of the ebb and flow in the tide of life, finding we are torn between the truth of our search and the glitter of an empty misleading life, so we continue to exist in the name of enjoyment lost in an artificial world wondering where will it all end? When one realizes this token enjoyment is imaginary with plastic people and plastic times, one soon understands this is not living - it is simply a vast “NOTHINGNESS” of illusion. If this destructive pattern continues you will find this web of your own making will make it nearly impossible to ever find the key to true happiness.

I know in my own life I challenged the system in the name of fairness. I had my own “Bubble” and this exasperated my family and many who dealt with me. I felt my plastic illusion protected me from any crisis that I could not handle. The end spelt mental exhaustion and a true fight to find the courage to leave the plastic world behind. It does not take a genius to realise without inner peace the world is empty.

Every breathing creature has self-love and we often believe we “must not” offend, backing away instead of standing up to what our beliefs and truths are. Although it is important to believe in one’s self and not follow the senseless crowd by becoming unreliable and untruthful, we should not need prompting to realise the moral need for regeneration. This is often the case in marriage, partnerships, or dealing with families including weakness within our daily thinking, we must have self-love and yet in our search we still should express our views, hold to a way of life that does not harm others but gives us true INDIVIDUALITY.

At this stage a vivid inner light begins to shine upon our past and we see our lives before us in every detail. We see devotion and aspects of kindness destroyed by others due, in no small measure, to the fact that we were held down by the belief of others, resulting in a growing negative attitude in all we think and do.

It is not like MEMORY, which is capricious and selective. You recall everything pleasant and unpleasant especially dealings or experiences which one has wished to forget. As example you recall the affairs with the opposite sex, you see what has seemed at the time to be compassion for loneliness or the desire to experience love, this being the cloak for animal impulses or the need to hide from one's self the deep fear that binds one frequently to a path of insensibility to the feelings of others and consuming self-will. These are displayed and made sharply, mercilessly visible in hundreds of episodes that tend to haunt one for years upon years, wasting a possibly good life for selfish personal gain. All this experience grows from remorse and self-loathing, it often seems that one must either go mad or die. The strange thing is that the outward life is scarcely affected and few, if any notice the agony into which one has so frequently plunged by doubt and fear.

Many of those who seek to change are either terrified or disgusted by the pitiless exposure of the human self as it is stripped naked. The student learns to understand the famous mystical quotes, "Unknown from the Epistle of Privy Council - what I would say is this, I think what is going to help you most when you start your prayer (and it doesn't matter whether it is long or short) is to make sure you are certain that you will die by the time it is ended. That you will finish before your prayer does." And the additional quote "I will give you what no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, that no hand has touched, what has not arisen in the human heart." Jesus Gospel of Thomas the 17th.

During my life I tentatively formulated the following criteria for accepting the promptings of the "Inner-voice". (1) They must not be contrary to common sense. (2) They must be surprising or at least unexpected. (3) They must be unprompted and unsolicited. Accepting in general terms "ASKING FOR HELP".

It is evident to the author that if one is to take the guidance of CONSCIOUSNESS seriously, one must be prepared to follow it wherever it may lead. It is an important command but a still small voice that is easily silenced. It does not thrive, nor cry but if we trust it, it begins to trust us and to come more and more into the open, that is growing mental awareness.

How few of us understand the meaning and the teaching of right living can be best summed up as the threefold discipline of body mind and spirit. The need to understand HERE and NOW. The very life as the Buddha put it, the TRANSFORMATION OF THAT WHICH IS DELUSION INTO INNER PEACE.

It is imperative that we do not seek to be satisfied with so-called Paradise but seek only to come to the "Sum absolute". We start to understand that this audacious quest appears to be something more than a distant vision. We start to see and understand our repeated mistakes, shattered by the successive blows and misjudgements which rise before our vision, and to see the

wretched combination of weakness and arrogant faults in humility with inward stubbornness that has led us from one disaster to another for most of this life.

As we seek to progress we can see that in these many disasters we experience and feel a guiding hand that leads to the death of part of oneself. In every case we see the resurrection, a step-by-step liberation giving growing confidence within us to find what we seek.

One cannot help seeing how much human speculation, even human fantasy has entered the teachings of the church; giving one to understand how little resemblance the Gospel story remains as related to the events that took place in Galilee and Jerusalem. It is so necessary for us all to establish a new understanding of what is termed the Incarnation. This should be clear to the mystic student that the Cult of the Catholic Church is as the custodian of a historical mystery it does not understand. However we should realise that the sacraments and their operation are no less real for those who seek beyond material values, seeking to understand something of the immense spiritual world that lies before us even in the Christian way of life. It is a fact that **HERE IS NOW, NO MATTER WHAT AGE, WHAT RELIGION OR BELIEF WE MAY HOLD.** The moment is the only **REALITY**, every second is vital and important, to live within it, appreciating what we understand to be the term for **HAPPINESS**.

## *Chapter 3*

# *Concentration, Meditation - the Path Within*

In the practice of MINDFULNESS, concentration is where you need to put attention to an object, sustaining attention on one point allowing yourself to feel the tranquillizing rhythm whilst continuing normal breathing. You develop at this stage the first principle of inner calm.

As example, mindfulness in a branch of Buddhism known as DISPASSANA MEDITATION, is the opening of the mind. You no longer concentrate on just one point but you observe insight fully and reflect on the conditions that enter and depart from the mind on the object you are holding in thought. You are not concentrating on a fixed object but observing that whatever enters the mind is the calm of observation. This is the beginning of “insight meditation” or Dispassana.

Inner listening leads you to hear the noise within the mind, the fears, desires, and all that you have repressed over possibly your entire present life. All is now permitted to become fully conscious. Allow these basic negative thoughts to develop, concentrate on each of them and they cease or dissolve in the mind through concentration. Emptiness becomes a positive force to recreate thought. This is the beginning of creative insight. The gateway to becoming aware of what you are.

When you let go of the conditions of the mind, a silence becomes the object. The silent sound of the mind out of various aversions to the doubts and conditions which are part of repression has as yet not reached purification. If you have rejected intentions though you do not concentrate on emptiness you will not obtain possible results due to being misled by your thoughts. You have reflected only on things but have not let anything go, including frustration at your own efforts. You are merely turning the mind away from aversion. The basic exercise in concentration and later meditation is to practice mind control, which is the development of patience in all aspects. The importance of total mind control leads to EMPTINESS and this is the sound of silence within.

The mind is always with you so it is a skilful practice of watching and listening rather than just repressing conditions out of aversion. Most of us fail to understand what is an important key to finding inner peace or calm. What we must realize is “the emptiness is boring”. Especially in today’s modern world we are used to constant entertainment that keeps the mind active and flitting from object to object. How long can you sit being aware of an empty mind? The practice is not peaceful, having silence, but rather leading to a negative state and as various teachers would quote SELF. This becomes uppermost with the seeking within, trying to get rid of

something first. What do you know when all experience within you is confused? When you are doubting? When you experience aversion? Suspicion or fear frequently accompanies the basic confusion.

The practice of NETTA means to use a gentle approach leading to kindness; by being able to endure what you believe may well be endurable in body and mind.

The beginning of taking MORAL REFUGE is to have an understanding of all life, its problems and how to overcome them by referring in mind to a basic moral conduct. Understanding the qualities of various teachers throughout the centuries highlighted in the word BUDDHA, the word standing for WISDOM and the DHAMMA being TRUTH. The mind is thus trained from negative thought to quiet contemplation leading to positive thought and action, resulting in the essential balance as the key to living. From experiencing mindfulness there arises a creative urge to obtain INNER BALANCE with peace within. In modern thought we overlook the art of relaxation. It has never been more necessary in these days of ceaseless deception of thought for the necessity to learn the art in mind and body of relaxation and not a further expenditure of energy in useless pursuits.

Life swings like a pendulum between pairs of opposites and our mind plays a constant war within us; the turmoil of our negative thoughts confuses the necessity for concentration as the gateway to real meditation. Although much has been written on the subject of meditation it is unfortunate that little emphasis has been made for the student at first to obtain CONCENTRATION before undertaking various mental exercises that are described to lead to this state. We must first obtain a mind that is reflective and yet aware. From those early steps we then precede to a mind with thought, we have control and refuse to allow thought to flow needlessly from object to object.

From an early age we fail to realise that rather than cramming the mind with various data we should be concentrating on obtaining an objective view, leading to balance. The beginning of a realization is that we understand there is little time in life to obtain true BALANCE.

The ever-increasing variety of mental or psychological imbalances both in the young and across the entire human spectrum is a frightening thought. Mind control should play an important role in our education or daily life. The student must realise the necessity to obtain a positive control of the “mind” including all emotions, as even they can frequently display a most destructive pattern.

Self-forgiveness with compassion can lead to Peace and Kindness, and is a basic necessity of creative thought and of mindfulness in all we do. There are three basic truths, which must not be forgotten. These truths are essential and remain silent through lack of thought and speech:

(1) The soul of man and woman is immortal. Its future is in the inner being whose growth and splendour have no limit.

(2) The principle that gives life dwells in each of us, it is undying and eternal. It is not heard, or seen, or smelt but is perceived by each and everyone who seeks PERCEPTION.

(3) Each human is his or her absolute lawgiver, the dispenser of glory or gloom, the creator of life, the reward and punishment. These wonderful truths are as simple as the simplest mind;

they explain life “AS IS” for every individual. It is important to reflect on these basic truths and feed the spiritual side to sustain our thoughts.

INTUITION, commonly referred to, as E.S.P. (Extra Sensory Perception) is the result of developing a silent mind, being at peace with all about one. This is a most important step in development of the inner qualities that lead to creative thought and action. Intuition has been used in time to immortalize art. Through centuries of writings a variety of Masters and Sages have repeatedly stressed the importance of INTUITION.

E.S.P. is now recognized by a wide range of humanity, and in the development of concentration leading to meditation, this is often overlooked by the student who fails to appreciate what we term loosely, “the inner voice”, which is the key to creative thought and action and is a guide in the darkest hour of the soul, leading to inner tranquillity so essential for true lasting peace within.

Through the practice of mind control you experience release, you no longer carry things around as you did earlier. Somehow things that made you angry no longer aggravate you, nor do they surprise you. You start to experience in each situation a calm, an inner tranquillity that you never felt before, you are allowing things to cease rather than just holding on and as you remove the fears and anxieties your mind will no longer be dominated by negative thought. In the case of illness, this no longer influences and many of our fears and problems are alleviated; the negatives towards us especially in speech or action are released. Now gradually there develops “calm thought”, letting go allowing things to be and to cease.

From vigilance you note and observe any obsessive things that come up and should they become attached within the mind it is obvious you remain attached to them. You either refute or reject these aversions, getting rid of them and controlling the thought pattern with the result that the “calm” becomes the guide within all your actions in daily life.

MEDITATION ON INNERMOTIVE - As you consider the question of WHY? Begin to cultivate unceasing WHY? Recall the worst about one’s own motives, for they are seldom as pure as we would like to think. However be generous in assuming the best in others or at least until the contrary is proved.

MEDITATION ranges over a wider field than most realise but never stop asking the question WHY? Continue to seek the answers. One should look towards Motive. Is this good or bad examine all in the widest sense. For example, why does one become counter-productive e.g. gambling all funds after a hard days work? The mind makes constant excuses for doing unproductive and foolish things but could it be simply to avoid realism, preferring the easy way out, allowing decisions and efforts of study in improving one’s self to be delayed. The higher mind is always aware and often desires to pursue the inner motive.

How many times have you felt at odds, when for example a friend invites you to join them in some wasteful unenlightened activities, which you know are nothing short of ILLUSION? We should never lack the courage to refuse. We all suffer the desire for the emotional “kick” which can be gained from (say) drinking yourself to oblivion or doing something that is totally ridiculous and senseless. Even watching television can be a total illusion with those unreal sex

scenes, war scenes and horror. Where will it end? Again you must ask why do we need these stimulating “kicks”? What is true entertainment?

The questions continue, our routine may be boring but WHY do we do it? WHY for some people does food control all their thoughts and desires?

Why are books, publications, new clothes or the latest gadget important to our life style, there must be a reason? Continue to ask WHY? Even when our mind wishes to explore the sometimes negative vibrations we must become aware and examine. All answers to these various questions are there and sometimes we need the shock to bring us down to reality. It is essential to analyse your motives and opinions. How many of us look closely and see if our views are based on family? Do you have a basic fear of change? Is there class-prejudice? What about the fear of financial pressures? Or above all, of being the outsider, the one regarded as different. It could be due to being an oddball or maverick?

Confusion is often buried within emotion and on personal likes or dislikes. We are influenced from an early age and tend to follow a certain pattern. These patterns can lead to overlooking conditions in our ever-changing lifestyle thus resulting in confusion that must be explored.

We fail to understand that most of our personal thoughts and emotions are the result of our refusal to appreciate MOTIVE and a candid impersonal approach to motive is extremely difficult to understand. We should turn to wider purposes - Asking the question “what is the purpose of daily life”? We are born, are educated, earn a living, work, marry, rear children, grow old and die. WHAT FOR? This basic and vital question is one which millions are asking daily. It is imperative we follow the inner search and fully understand what is meant by the purpose and final goal of life.

We need to ask the question, “Why do we seek meditation”? Should the answer be unsatisfactory, seek to question your motives. You must seek the silent peaceful mind that leads to kind abiding and that is the secret to Meditation.

A useful exercise is the enquiry as to the motive for doctrinal belief. Why do you believe in REBIRTH? KARMA? What about the many other aspects of the spiritual path? It may well be that you have inherited a variety of opinions from others without much thought or consideration. You may also find that you hold these opinions against your will or desire in the hope that those doctrines are possibly true, especially for you personally.

It is always important to remember that there is no such thing as an “authority for truth”. Further no teaching or doctrine can be said to be true for you until you have examined it and in the light of the INTUITION, experience and know this is the way for you.

There is a general tendency to assume that because some doctrine is formulated by the intellect it should be understood and accepted. Assimilation through understanding must occur only after considerable and lengthy studies of each subject. Every doctrine or law should be taken as the subject for analysis, especially in meditation and compared with other views or teachings. We need to assimilate and analyse constantly, listen to the INNER VOICE being the gift of intuition.

For the first time when these various truths are understood and accepted we can now allow them to become a foundation or ACTION this is vital and important for spiritual and general thought development. No doctrine or spiritual law that may affect our basic life should be accepted until we can understand it, or otherwise it will remain a simple idea or belief. Only the dual process of inner silence, gained in meditation and quiet contemplation will allow application of our basic desire to turn from belief into a quality of character.

The law of KARMA is the law of life and this is as real as the law of gravity. Too many times our development, which comes from our parents, society, religion, etc. have formulated our background and therefore many beliefs have been planted in our subconscious from an early age. Some of these beliefs are found more often than not to be totally wrong for us. The student should make a list of his or her own opinions or doctrines in order to find the answer that will become the guide. Again it is essential to believe in what you are seeking and not follow others blindly.

With the advent of an overwhelming variety of literature there is little effort needed for us to become acquainted with a variety of spiritual principles. It is wise to remain open minded and never be too fast to dismiss or reject some of these as a negative view, as this would be a true downfall in our search.

Knowledge is useless till intuitively understood and intelligently applied. You must start from where you mean to obtain your FAITH and BELIEF. The motive you are using at the moment is imperative and your approach to truth on all doctrines should be as example, to take into consideration MAHAYANA and THERAVADA if you are looking for principles that may apply to you within Buddhism. These doctrines lead to an understanding of motive and the unity of life. Similarly the study of THEOSOPHICAL Doctrines (or those as example in MEHER BABA and other spiritual centres) should not be overlooked. Every consideration should be given to what these doctrines imply? Or is it basically an unpractical ideal for your own way? With imagination one should explore new fields of thought. Don't be hesitant in considering the relationship between these various doctrines in the search for inner-reality and always be mindful for the reason and the motive for this search.

Meditation can lead you to a ruthless self-analysis, it is a difficult path but gives the individual the clarity to see and understand the average cluttered mind. You need to analyse and appreciate that the SELF we know is an ILLUSION, the child of desire or self-deceit who is able to build up an illusionary self-inflated egotism that must eventually be destroyed. It is imperative to allow the true MIND to emerge. When the bubble has been deflated and the SELF, however humiliated or hurt, has arisen, new foundations can be laid and total realization will replace outworn ideas that have held one a prisoner. A new inspired you is now ready to act upon and walk forward having gained this new revelation.

One way to destroy the NOT-SELF is the alternative, to cultivate the self building character being the method of the BRAHMIN NETI NETI meaning "not so again not so" this is not self but rather the Brahmin Doctrine of ANATTA or NOT ATTA being (Atman) the word being for SELF. The complementary way can mean to consider aspects of teachings both Eastern

and Western as the way of the Mystics. This is the focusing of attention on the ideal to the exclusion of all else and a progressive exclusion of consciousness until the individual is merged in the ideal.

When students have abandoned every desire that arises from the imagination and subdued these thoughts from the mind, the senses and organs, which tempt one into action in many directions will find peace and this will give them mental release. By patience plus having a fixed mind at rest in the true self, peace becomes real. Whatever way the inconstant thought goes, one should subdue it and Bliss will come to the seeker whose mind is in peace and tranquillity, for all the desires and passions are now subdued. Each method of meditation has advantages and disadvantages; concentration on the illusionary nature of the not-self has the basic advantages in the West of attacking the greatest weakness namely EGOTISM. On the other hand the process of disintegration of one's individuality has no appeal for those who realize that the lower self has no validity and failing to understand that at death there is nothing left behind except memory.

It is not uncommon to think and even believe that what becomes purged of illusion leads to where one is freed. This is merging into what is reflected and believed by many, including Buddhists to be a state of mind known as NIRVANA. Alas, the student is frequently blinded to the limitation of character that holds them back from their respective ideals. The meditation on the body is excellent for disassociating conscious from its lower vehicles. Having the firm belief I AM NOT MY BODY, MY EMOTIONS OR MY THOUGHT MACHINE you will arise in a world of abstract thought including creative thinking, illuminated by the INTUITION. However there still remain limitations, and more difficult to comprehend is that it is NOT the SELF, which is still with you, for self has to a great extent NOT been eliminated. Arriving at this stage you need to know the lower self and face the fact that life is but the gateway to the universal mind.

REALITY of which no words can describe, allows the veil that has held one prisoner from the cosmic inheritance to be lifted. Then the consciousness expands until it is commensurate with what is termed "universal consciousness". At this stage we have the divine right to see our self as a unit of existence, which merges into the oneness.

We should never overlook an important basic doctrine of the DHAMMAPADA' S whose opening words can be regarded as the key of all phenomena to the mind. When the mind is immersed in matter it is unable to see the light but when raised to higher levels it moves towards its own place that is a state of perfection or NIRVANA. This is a blowing out or extenuating of the elements of being, which separate the part from the whole. The higher aspect of the mind can be called the soul for convenience but it must be clearly understood that it is not in any sense immortal.

The lower or concrete mind or thought is the slayer of the reality; it harbours the heresy of separateness. The basic quest for total mind tranquillity can be summed up as the search for the inner soul or that which inspires many and different teachings that can only be answered as "IS" - the unknown. When we begin to appreciate and understand what we have in common with those around us we realise that there are basically no boundaries or no alternative separation. There is an interconnection, which we can call BEING SENSITIVE. So we can come into

contact with each other and the higher mind. However we must remember MOTIVE becomes the key in the search within.

The nature of emotion, which can be stated as the “life force” or LIBIDO is the energy that expresses itself through countless and ever-changing forms, this is part of our personality. Thought and action includes a process of mental action and ideas. Although most of our actions are far from perfect there is a certain residual force, which remains, and this is called EMOTION. It can and is often expressed through the nervous system in gestures, physical violence, moods or sex. Emotion appears to be the product of sense-reaction. As example, a person watching cruelty to an animal or fellow human will frequently display anger or fear. It is natural the more perfectly developed and controlled our mind becomes the less force will be wasted on emotion. One will observe that “emotion” like every other aspect of the life force can be wasted.

Higher emotions can be regarded as qualities pertaining to a level of consciousness, just as joy is distinct from ephemeral pleasure and this applies to compassion and the higher forms of love. Emotion can be seen as a waste of energy in that it produces no useful results, it is simply wasted power. It deludes the mind into believing it is intuition and this can result in wearing out the physical body before its time and clouds the light of REASON. We must never fail to understand that emotion is totally involved with instinct and on the higher plain intuition can be a guide, the searchlight that opens up to an understanding of the Cosmic force.

It needs considerable knowledge and experience to discriminate between the two forces within us. It is often stated woman are more intuitive than men as they are more emotional and frequently are in contact with the intuition. The voice of intuition is powerful but can also be misleading as it may well be the subtle voice of DESIRE. The test for all is the teachings that are laid down by the Buddha as being the only true authority. Does the knowledge acquire all the feelings and agree with previous experience, and is it true? If not, beware before acting on IMPULSE, which can often run contrary to past experience and reason.

EMOTION has several dangers, which include clouding the mind; however, there is a force we can attribute as spiritual love and compassion and this force is far above the emotion, and operates entirely through the mind. Cultivation of various good or positive qualities renders the emotional aspects of our mind unnecessary. It renders to a minimum the clouds that obscure our daily minds. TILLGARD quotes in his book “Spiritual Exercises”- “The state of mind recommended by the Buddhist is not one of religious enthusiasm but rather one of benevolence to all other creatures and gives an inner serenity plus detachment.”

Emotion by tending towards the personal side does hinder our dispassionate examination of laws and principles that lead the individual to mental freedom and enlightenment. It should not be overlooked that pure thought is impersonal and emotions that could be linked with desire are therefore invariably of a personal nature and can obscure the issue, making our judgement difficult if not impossible.

ART is an expression of impersonal beauty through the medium of thought and eyes. It can be found in the greatest art of any Nation in whatever age and is always most impersonal. Art is

the attempt by a human to interpret beauty in various forms. However we must remember life is basically an illusion and we spend much of our living in a cloud of our own deception. The mind becomes subject to emotion and thus to the lower instincts in our daily round of life.

Meditation, or what can be termed “calm abiding” can result in the early stages to both a positive and negative attitude. As we reduce our reactions to outside stimuli it is possible to obtain equanimity and the student will develop a greater understanding of human nature together with a depth or calm abiding. The development of COMPASSION becomes a major factor, for it should always be remembered the mighty sea of world sorrow formed by the tears of humanity holds us back frequently from our desire to find the inner peace.

Calm serenity is the growing ability to be at all times and under all circumstances, “mindful” with vital emphasis on being self-possessed. This leads to a calm in the face of many happenings.

It is possible at this stage that the mind becomes as it were the mirror of a light within. It can be stated the mind is likened to a pool of water whose surface is ruffled by the winds of anger and desire and is unable to reflect the sun in its entire splendour. It is imperative that serenity of mind not be disturbed during the times of inner tranquillity from becoming the living pathway within.

Inspiration and INTUITION in a turbulent mind and body is not conducive to “calm abiding”. The emotion at this stage should (for want of a better expression), “shut down” eliminating all desire. From this point we find that the person develops an unmoving dignity from which is developed a deep respect for the PEACE WITHIN, however infrequently experienced. It is necessary to understand there are many spurious substitutes from smug complacency to a mind totally filled with ego in all aspects, indicating the baseness of the mind by the lack of spiritual oneness.

As you develop equanimity it becomes the caretaker of the mind and you experience the joy and happiness, which springs from liberation so necessary in the early stages of seeking a peace within. It is competition for the self-discipline and as this serenity grows the student obtains identification with circumstances, the conscious ability to understand a wide range of human consciousness both evil and good. You then clearly understand the cause behind the daily panorama of cause and effect frequently known as KARMA.

MEDITATION upon these laws of harmony forms an integral part of understanding of ones own outside actions. From this comes the desire to help all human beings and to vibrate compassion in our daily lives. This understanding is necessary for the person to be a spiritual healer.

All virtues have their own temptation. We cannot interfere in another’s problem but should indicate wherever possible, the way for those who are labouring in the darkness of their souls. As the practice of concentration is divided into a constant attitude of mind, one should exercise in meditation at special times.

The correct thought relating to meditation works out during the day as the right care and use of the body as ones vehicle of consciousness. Breathing gives increasing calm, especially if

undertaken as rhythmic breathing, this reduces agitation and often fatigue. This “calm abiding” should be undertaken “each morning” even if only for a few moments before the onset of our daily activity. The results are frequently rewarding in both body and mind. We come to understand self-recollection as to our motives for each act. This ability acquired in what is termed meditation, pursuing ones consciousness with a chosen object is only the application of the task of viewing life from a universal perspective and not the narrow-minded view, which we hold so often.

The methods must depend on each individual but the aim remains the CONTROL of all thought processes. The choice and method of meditation for each student is individual but the fact remains that many of us do not reach the common goal for many lives. The concentration can be immediate but the goal of “meditation” or ultimate “peace within” can take far longer than one imagines and sadly is often lost in daily life.

The student should clearly understand that the inner life is often influenced by previous thoughts and even lives that are now lost to us. The search for the “calm within” has attracted many from the start and can be attributed to the belief that this was created by our previous lives. In this life we are making a fresh beginning and those who have NOT experienced the need or desire for meditation frequently are experiencing the beginning of a long search that will probably take this entire human life plus other lives as yet unknown. The gathering of this experience together with the striving to weave them into a preconceived design takes time. It is necessary to reflect on the search within, to appreciate the many different paths that are offered; yet each can be regarded as an aspect of the one path.

A classification of the different ways would fill a large volume for either male or female, they can include the mystic, occultist, introvert and extravert. The individual who remains a loner and who is not moulded to any particular teachings must be experienced before the student can tread the only true path being the MIDDLE WAY.

Frequently the mystic seeks a realization of life’s essential unity and when this is achieved within them, the consciousness must strive for this unity to the exclusion of all other thoughts and interests and only then will one have a beginning of the inner path of spiritual development.

The Mystic can be said to climb the ladder of spiritual progress leaving many steps untrodden. On the other hand the Occultist can be said to climb step by step his or her complex being until arriving at the threshold of the highest being, leading to “calm abiding” of their own divinity. The goal remains the same for all seekers in spite of many difficulties and this can include mental shocks in the early stages. The goal is the perfect balance becoming reality for each and every one of us.

The individual must decide the value of the path selected and should at all times display a genuine tolerance for those seeking opposite methods or branches such as Yoga, etc. However, each student must realise that merely undertaking aspects of meditation does not in itself open the door to a calm mind. What is required is constant dedication to the task at hand, followed by a realistic approach whether we are attending lectures or reading selective books the calm comes only after reflection and constant insight into our desire to find the guide of the “calm within”.

Much has been written, and occasionally different Religions, Societies, etc. have requested cash or donations to promote a variety of schemes that claim to offer the individual the mystical way of peace. Unfortunately, it is sad to reflect that NO TRUTH can be PAID FOR and each student must be willing to devote effort and time in order to achieve aims and objects. As in commercial and daily life we all experience individual difficulties that arise from an untrained mind. Mental instability frequently assails the beginner and much effort is required in order to establish a searching mind with introspective attachment as a basis for asking constantly WHY?

A heart untouched by worldly thought is a heart that is not swayed by sorrow, the same is echoed by KIPLING' S immortal lines "IF YOU CAN MEET WITH TRIUMPH AND DISASTER AND TREAT THOSE TWO IMPOSTERS JUST THE SAME", the essence of this lies in rising above self-identification in all feelings and thoughts.

It can be stated the BUDDHA offered his teachings with the intention of showing a way "to know and understand truth". Once we realise the need for personal contemplation of these teachings we are able to evaluate and hopefully allow them to become principles in our life. We can seek to understand who we are, this includes warts and all but without clear understanding of the processes of our mind we begin to look inwards, asking WHY we have spent years living without "CALM ABIDING"?

When we become hot and bothered and are dragged about by increasing emotional states, we should be aware that there could be no personal peace. The state of the constantly changing mind needs to be understood in order to examine clearly our thoughts and desires. This is the function and value of what the Buddhists call DHAAWA. Whilst trying to understand Buddhist Philosophy, meditation or calm abiding, it is vital to see that there is absolutely no obligation or intimidation involved. If we are lacking the richness of truth in our heart and at the end of our earthly existence we die, the only thing left will be a mere handful of ashes that are produced at our cremation.

There is no judge checking up on us so our OWN DESIRE should finally lead to liberation and then peace and wisdom will follow. No external authority is making statements about what is good and bad, right or wrong. Nobody is going to punish us if we are not successful at finding the "silence within". However one should realise that within our own hearts there are many conflicts and to know what we are doing becomes of paramount importance. Our guide as in "The Buddha's teachings" is so valuable in itself and knowing the four Noble Truths or what is termed "The Eightfold Path" is most essential. However we still need to recognize that the paths are still merely indicators. We should consider, through study and constant thought with intelligence to be able to apply the important guides to the inner path using them in our daily rounds of life.

We should further remember that throughout the forty-five years of the Buddha's teaching he did not change or abandon his views and therefore we must constantly endeavour to make the right kind of effort or we will end up like a stone and sink.

When we are feeling enthusiastic, we can easily establish ourselves in a practice but it can also happen that at times we are totally DISILLUSIONED even to the extent that we forget

completely the original confidence and faith we had obtained. We need not panic but simply be still until we have regained strength in observing our minds and our attitudes. It is vital to appreciate we are continually changing; this shows us that the IMPERMANENCE is natural. Nobody else can walk the way for us. For example the salient characteristic of EQUANIMITY is seeking a central position towards others and its manifestation of “compassion and joy” allows us to look at friends or lovers in a more impartial manner. The slowing down of both aversion and sycophancy becomes a reality.

As the words of the BHAGAVAD GITA describe so fully, “a constant unnerving steadiness of heart upon the arrival of every event whether favourable or not, is a shield by moving in consciousness towards a central point of view so that events are viewed from the source of causes instead of circumstances where they show forth as effects. Strive to infuse the mind with this quality towards friend or enemy. This allows the love compassion and joy to pass through, returning to that inner equilibrium where the outward events in daily life should be unable to destroy the piece within”.

There are as many different methods of meditation as there are meditators. The final goal remains the same, the moulding of character with the rising of consciousness. This is made clear to all in “Talbot Mundy's Book Om (Page 16) “He who would understand the Plains must ascend the eternal hills where a man's eyes scan infinity”. Also it should be understood that we must descend to the Plains where past and future meet.

THOUGHT is a force, and we can acquire tremendous mental powers or concentration but remember it is useless if it is used for self or evil, as you will only invite self destruction. It may be interesting to reflect that recent war, including The Gulf and Iraq conflicts, presented an unforgettable picture of the use of science by certain nations. Their knowledge has outrun their morality. It is easy to misuse the forces of nature; the various aspects of scientific discoveries can only lead to worldwide disasters.

Similarly one can misuse the forces developed in meditation, hence the danger of seeking meditation as an end in itself, or much worse as a means of becoming superior to our fellow man or woman. This may well seem like personal power but instead of making us diligent in our thoughts with constant desire to help those less fortunate; one could become full of self-importance as we develop mind power. Thus it is essential we pay attention to Character Building in order to keep pace within the increasing powers of the mind. The importance of character building lies in the vital need for a sound foundation helping to open the mighty structure of our enlightened mind. The subject is vast and we must recognize the need for constant vigilance in studying in whatever forms our studies may take us. We should also watch mood swings lest we become victims of forces beyond our control, which can materially influence and in some cases destroy many aspects of our lives.

In considering the concept of absolute truth, it is essential to understand that such truth is unknowable for most of humanity. Various doctrines or laws attempt to give the student the belief that they have reached truth in their teachings. Still it follows that no lone doctrine can be stated to be absolute truth and that we may find it difficult to grasp, what is believed to be

TRUTH. There must be grades of understanding and as we return again and again to the study of various principles we generally obtain an ever-deeper understanding of their relationship to each other. This generally gives rise to an ever increasing tolerance of the different methods of approaching truth. It also gives temporarily a feeling that we have achieved different points of view.

There is a tendency to assume that because a doctrine is formulated in a manner easily assimilated and understood that we have arrived at the basis of truth. Between such intellects it may be understood that you believe you have achieved some important understanding possibly through MEDITATION. However many of these views or opinions may later be proved the subject of deeper meditation and can to some extent be related to the PALI CANON. These teachings are described generally as the BUDDHA, the DHAMMIVA, and the SANGHA. We should endeavour to study such teachings and we may well find “what is meant by each”?

It could well be that at one stage or another one has asked one’s self, what is meant by these pronouncements or basic teachings? It may be further necessary in your search for truth to seek and to understand the FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS? What of the twin doctrines of KARMA and REBIRTH? Do these go together and if so what is reborn? Does KARMA apply to animals? What are the three fires that bind humanity to the twelve spokes of the wheel of becoming? How can we escape from this?

These are but a fraction of the many questions one can ask oneself and by such actions endeavour to possess awareness and true understanding. It is vital in our development to be genuine and prepared through constant hard work to know and to live these principles, which are enumerated in a variety of teachings. It is necessary that each doctrine or law must be the subject of individual study and meditation. In the quiet of the mind, analyse, examine and compare with various other teachings or philosophies. It is at this stage we begin to use the intuition and possibly for the first time in this present birth commence to understand the complex problems that beset the student in the search for truth.

By this time we should become a main spring of action within ourselves and understand the basic force of inner development. It is imperative to understand and to apply the doctrine, which we believe gives us the key in our search. Be diligent in applying that doctrine or law in our daily lives and it must be realized that as long as it is an ideal held belief, it is also subject to constant change.

During deep meditation or as the author prefers to say a 'calm mind', we learn to turn from a belief into a quality of CHARACTER and with our basic principles we can start to appreciate what this life offers and obtain calm in the endless “LAW OF KARMA”. When we become conscious of our belief and endeavour to understand what we believe to be truth in a particular doctrine, we are starting on a road that will lead to having the moral strength to uphold that doctrine, which we regard as proof of our belief. Up to this stage in our search, it is as if it was food awaiting digestion and of no lasting value in our search for truth. It is vital that we start to make a comprehensive list of all laws and doctrines, which we truly believe are important to us. Many of these will subsequently be proved through the study and application of Meditation, by

living with these principles they may be the only ones we need to apply to our lives. It may also be that during study we will find and understand what each means. The critical thinking to everything which claims to give the mind a certain opinion or belief will be found to be often most misleading.

With the advent of modern communication, (the World Wide Web, for example), one will find cheap publications that proliferate; they claim to have the answer to the search within. It is not unusual to become confused but one should be lead back to stilling the mind through a variety of studies and this can be described generally as “Personal Meditation”. We need only a limited amount of effort to become acquainted with the basic principles which can act as our best friend within the complex aspects of life as lived by the average person in this fast ever changing world.

There is no knowledge that can teach us truth, until intuitively this becomes a paramount guide and most important intelligently applied. It is of no use just following the various statements or teachings that now proliferate in the Western World; we need to arrive at some understanding of our search. Meditation develops qualities of perception and intuition. Whilst meditation is difficult for many, the individual must through concentration and application appreciate that no books, teachings or other methods currently used can possibly fill the need to still the mind and with constant personal effort we will arrive at a point where we can truthfully say to ourselves that we have reached an understanding of basic truth that can be a major principle for us to continue our search. In outlining the basic principles of meditation there is one factor that drugs, alcohol or any other particular addiction CANNOT give us - stillness of the mind. Until we reach such stillness, sometimes only for a few minutes, this will then lead to the beginning of real meditation that must be undertaken through regular BREATHING enabling one to still the mind on a regular basis.

Whilst it is commonly thought that “MEDITATION” is the key, we must understand that calmness can only result if we spend effort and apply deep breathing. The rhythmic breathing should be slow, breathing in and out over a period of time resulting in the mind becoming still. Modern life has many problems and we are constantly applying our mind to a variety of individual problems in the household, workplace or even in social contact. However we need to stop and recognize how imperative is the calm within.

It is easy to delude ourselves that we are applying meditation in our search. We should know at this stage that making the effort, even over a period of “five minutes” each morning and evening, forgetting our problems and through the application of rhythmic breathing, slowly the mind will become quiet. And at this period we develop mental balance leading to AWARENESS which is the start of the basis for the search within.

Many teachers believe through lectures and publications that they are able to teach others the principles of meditation. The mind is complex, it is moving constantly and in many cases rules our lives in a variety of ways. The stillness can be only arrived at through the application of simple breathing exercises as enumerated above. Such breathing should not be forced and as we exist through breathing we should endeavour to apply the breath in a regular manner, SLOWLY,

and this will stem the mind from running from one thing to another. It is at this point we can truthfully say to ourselves that we are beginning to apply meditation in our lives. A calm mind will be expressed in a variety of ways including concentration or work application and whilst this may at times for young or older persons prove to be difficult, the rhythmic breathing as applied particularly in Eastern Teachings will give the student the basis on which we can start to believe in various aspects of the path, granting us that calm, vital in our search for the secret of life.

It has been my experience that whilst there are a variety of teachings spanning the whole aspect of inner tranquillity, we must understand that we are all different and no firm guidelines can be given that are not altered as we apply them. Stillness is essential, it helps us to understand the complex problems that face us. I have found that over a period of some years even a book can best be understood by taking, as example, a chapter and then seeking to assimilate what has been read, returning to the same chapter a day or two later and possibly we will gain some basic understanding of what has been outlined. Readers may believe that from their school days they have learnt to apply understanding in reading but we must realise that in the application of an understanding of a WAY OF LIFE and of TRUTH it is essential to study and ASSIMILATE SLOWLY the various doctrines or laws as they may apply to us. Meditation can only be reached by stilling the mind; no easy task and we therefore must endeavour to make this possible through the application of what is termed RHYTHMIC BREATHING, as this is the vital key that we alone must develop.

## *Chapter 4*

# *Silence, Peace and Compassion*

Modern Society provides everyday testimony to the sad fact that knowledge does not create a better world. What we need rather is a growth of love, wisdom and compassion leading to tranquillity with compassion. This can truly redeem us from the many pitfalls of life in general. However, like most things worth holding or gaining, it comes at a price. We must first seek to live in a growing silence within our thoughts. This inner-peace, leading to the control of our thoughts brings about calmness of the constant mind throb, which we often regard as normal.

Civilization is inseparable from competition, which produces and implies antagonism. Man against Man, Business against Business, Nation against Nation and Race against Race. This is a ceaseless cry and it is also very well stated that “competition has its uses”. But when it’s usefulness has passed it becomes a fetter on the path of spiritual progress and therefore, must give way in time to cooperation based on mutual understanding and respect.

One of the greatest pronouncements ever made in the field of morality is contained in the DHAMMAPADA- “Hatred ceaseth not by hatred. Hatred ceaseth by love”. This is the internal law when desire has been transmuted into higher forms of energy, and all ill-will is removed, we enter the final stage.

It must be appreciated that the world as we know it is not the final stage, what we need to realise is “life” in its widest form. When we are free from our earthly body we all are no less clothed in matter, though of a far less tenuous form, it is life in the whirlpool of ILLUSION even though compared with earth it seems to some as a heaven. Beyond these conditions live the formless worlds, where although free from an earthly body one is still subject to the limitations of existence. Desire for material existence under any conditions will in time be fulfilled, leading to the wheel of “Rebirth”.

In the end, even in death, we all must come to know we cannot escape from what is termed “the Wheel”. Thus starting the long and tedious journey by training the mind. In this it is necessary to understand the way of BUDDHISM; although Buddhism is NOT a religion, it is the basic teaching of individual effort and will help one to see that no being Man or God is allowed to stand for good or evil between “cause and effect”. “Absolution” and the “Forgiveness of Sins” as understood by the average Christian or Muslim etc., are, especially for the Buddhist, totally absurd in that they strive to separate a cause from its effect and permit some person other than the doer to suffer the consequences of the deed and actions of others.

The “Wayfarer” must realise that it is important to obtain mental silence, wrestling with the fetters of “sensuality” which are often displayed by “unkindness and hurt” in all its various forms. The lust of the flesh is man’s most powerful thought and although not the most subtle enemy must be slain to arise no more. This must be seen before the searcher within may reach the inner goal of peace. We must also break the fetter of every form of animosity. We have to subdue all the feelings of anger, resentment, envy, and jealousy including hatred, which may spring from the sense of separateness from the rest of living things and then subsequently we will come to identify with the Universal life force.

The removal of doubt does not necessitate a blind belief but little progress can be made on the path while the pilgrim is uncertain of the end to which it leads. However; Buddhism does not in general underestimate the value of doubt during our early investigation of the basic philosophy of life.

One of the most important fetters is “Spiritual Pride” which explains a vast area of human foolishness. It is important to understand that whatever path we seek and the knowledge gained; we must always stand apart and never become self-righteous. Much can be written about this common weakness. Perhaps we should strive harder, but the Buddha knew that even in the final stages of the spiritual search, the individual who can say, “It is I who have scaled these heights”, “It is I who have suppressed egoism”, “It is I who have won a major deliverance”, is however still, alas the subject of many DELUSIONS.

Ignorance is the final obstacle and the fetter of all suffering, for had we perfect knowledge we would be totally free to know the universal self is one’s own real self. Thus to know the truth, not a theory, or a poetic idea, or as a sensual desire of one’s own inner life but rather to find silence in one’s own very being. With the expansion of consciousness the fetter of ignorance is finally broken and the delusion of self is dead.

The silence within becomes our guide, helping us to control emotion including fear and even doubt, living in that peace, which as the Sages so frequently have stated - is a peace beyond words. Peace comes to those who understand the need to control and to conquer the turbulent mind and to establish “calm abiding” and on achieving this state one must continually work at it in order to enjoy the benefit of the mind that is free. This in turn quiets the restlessness that most of us suffer from and with personal application it too will cease to be our cancer, which can in many cases be the destroyer of this our present life.

While there are many ways to achieve inner calm, one of the simplest ways is to find a spot within our own world and to commence with our inner thoughts and deep rhythmic breathing. A daily practice of about “five to ten minutes” is a good way to begin. This is an essential key to bringing the mind and our thoughts under control. The student will as a result find the mind becoming calm and if we regularly use this simple technique in our lives we will be well on the road to having and finding lasting inner peace.

Compassion and Humanity has been advertised and exploited in so many forms, yet in spite of the plight of the poor, the ill and the down trodden, most people who give in various ways to Charities or other religious bodies, believe wrongly that they are displaying compassion.

It is clear that the technique of mindfulness works hand in hand with compassion and not by following the herd mentality.

We find insight and understanding of the way things are as an important key. We see the beauty, refinement, pleasure and many material joys as impermanent conditions, as in pain, misery and even ugliness. If you commence to understand you can enjoy and endure whatever happens to you. Actually much of the lesson of life is learning to ENDURE the many problems that we face from childhood to death. Including those we don't like in ourselves and in the world around us, being able to be patient, demonstrates the art of peace and compassion within us, not only in our way of life but to demonstrate to all, even to those who have perhaps hurt us.

We start to learn via observation and reflection on the sensory world, we realise that the sensory world has a powerful influence because we have an emotional body, which explains the pressures on all of us. Everything moves so quickly, whirling about us. It all appears to be attractive, exciting and interesting, pulling our senses apart. We constantly see advertisements that attract our attention to a variety of offers from booze, cars, cigarettes and even sex. We are pulled into things taking no notice of rebirth into sensory experience and the level it has on our mind and basic personality. The Materialistic Society tries to arouse greed over what we have. There is always something better, newer, and something more delicious than what was there yesterday. It goes on and on, pulling one into objects of the senses, it even extends to our personal relations in marriage, partnerships or simply the love we have for others.

We need to concentrate our mind on peaceful objects be it nature, the sky or the ever changing sea. We start to reflect on the way things are. We have to experience this for OURSELVES in order to understand what life is and how it applies to us in all its varied aspects. Mindfulness of the ordinary. We should remember we could even find the inner peace when we are fully alert to the sensation of walking from the start to the end. You develop a normal pace, because meditation or a calm mind moves around ordinary things rather than the special. This applies to walking or the ordinary breath, not a special breathing practice or the sitting posture. We should practice around the natural aspects of our daily life. Many of us simply take life for granted and have never noticed our own minds or bodies and this includes Doctors and a number of professionals who fail to include all the aspects of life including growing old and how we should understand life. Imagine how one reacts as the Doctor studies the X-ray and gives negative news of say liver failure, etc., one views these statements from an outside mind not really being a part of it. We tend to look at the world ignoring the most ordinary experiences leading us to missing what is the CORE instead of what we believe to be important.

Television can be extraordinary, it is a miraculous invention and stimulates us in a variety of manners as it produces pictures and sound. It is extremely easy to concentrate on it, to the point that one can become mesmerized Also the body becomes extraordinary when it becomes ill or it feels ecstatic as wonderful feelings go through it. We are often as in a Trance-state. We notice the pressures as example via vibration of the ground or the movements of our breath or just sitting, there is frequently not any kind of extreme cessation. We are commencing to bring our attention to the way things are. When that life becomes extreme then we often find we cannot

cope with it as well as we had hoped. However it brings attention to ordinariness of our human condition. Breathing, walking the feeling of pleasure and pain, we start to understand and to examine absolutely EVERYTHING including watching, seeing and knowing all about us. This is the start of the practice known as “VIPASSANA” - to know things as THEY ARE, not according to some theory or some assumption we make about them.

On the opening of the mind, we must start to learn to “Let-go”; we should feel the mind going from blindly repressing to observing mental and physical phenomena. When frightened of something we must not back away but notice that tendency to try to get rid of it. Be fully aware of what you are frightened of. Think about it and deliberately listen to your thoughts. Frequently the mind just screams away “I want this” and you listen to it. This is much the case in confrontation when you scream at each other and experience that kind of thing, saying all the repressed things in your mind.

This is an example of the lack of listening to that screaming as a condition, rather than just as a kind of letting one’s self go, and saying what one really thinks. It lacks steadiness of mind, which is willing to endure the most horrible thoughts. We are taking fear and anger mentally to an absurd position to where they are just being seen as a progression of total negative thoughts. It should be realized that we are deliberately thinking all these things that come through fear out of mental blindness. It is necessary to actually watch and listen to these conditions of the mind rather than to the obvious failures or problems, which cause this condition. We are, as a result starting the long practice to LET THINGS GO. We find understanding in the mystical quote of “LAO TZE” who makes clear “in the beginning of heaven and earth there were no words”.

We start to distinguish between the simple fact of self-consciousness, feeling that “I am P” and the complex thought that I am Mr. Smith or Mrs. Brown believing as we do in a series of birth and death of the same ego or as some call it “reincarnation” we start to understand that Messrs. Smith\Brown really means a long series of daily experience strung together by the thread of memory which calls itself in this life, Smith, etc. None of these experiences are really “P” or the ego, which are often lost. We should start to understand and to distinguish between the bundle of “experiences”, which we call the personality being the element in man / woman, we call the true individuality and we often say that this ego or individuality is like an actor, many parts on the stage of many difficult lives. (NOTE the word “EGO” as used should not be confused with the use of that term in modern psychology.)

Let us realise every new life on earth is the same ego as that which appears on the stage of a theatre. One night the actor appears as Macbeth, the next as Shylock, the third as Romeo, the fourth as Hamlet or King Lear and so on until he or she has run through the whole cycle of various incarnations experiencing both what is termed as good and bad in life.

We begin life, pilgrims as a spirit, an Ariel or a Puck, we play the part of a soldier, servant, one of chores and then rise to speaking parts leading to a variety of important roles interspersed with insignificant parts till finally we retire from the stage as Prospero the “Magician” to the physical brain with a memory of its super-physical experiences.

If we tend to live in the Astral plain, then the Samadhi is in the astral. If one functions on the mental plain then the Samadhi is on that plain. The man or woman who can practice Samadhi can thus withdraw from the physical body so as to leave it insensitive while his or her mind is fully self-conscious. Samadhi is a relative term, as when an evolved being or as some say a Master, begins Samadhi on the plain known as “Atma”, rising to the higher Cosmic plains. It should further be stated Samadhi is sometimes used to denote the conditions just beyond the level where the man\woman can retain full consciousness. For a savage whose consciousness is clear only on the physical plain, the astral plain would be Samadhi. It means that when the man\woman comes back to his lower vehicle he or she would bring with them no definite additional knowledge and no new force for doing anything of use in their development.

When we understand that one can control emotions and desires, we should repudiate the astral body with it’s influence on desire and emotions. We should then picture ourselves as in the mental body, reflecting that we can control and direct thoughts, and should repudiate our average mind and soar in the free atmosphere of the spirit where we gain eternal peace. Resting there for the moment and striving with great intensity to realise that the “REAL-SELF” must be found and through it “PEACE WITHIN”.

A further exercise in obtaining true silence and peace can be what is termed MEDITATION, helps character building, selecting for the purpose the theme harmlessness or compassion. The attention having been concentrated, 'harmlessness' in act, speech, in thought or desire builds up true COMPASSION towards all life, giving one to understand how it can affect daily life and how one would treat people if one had fully acquired this virtue being in particular in 'harmlessness' to all living creatures. This would carry into daily life a state of mind that would soon express itself in all actions and thought. Naturally, other qualities will soon express themselves in actions and thoughts as in confusion, doubt, and fear that is so often experienced and would eventually be replaced by an “inner peace, which is the ultimate of understanding". A few months of earnest effort along these lines will produce wonderful changes in the life of the individual. Mystics including so-called Saints have described the real vision over many centuries of how man can find the secret to life and total liberation.

It is easy to confuse personality with individuality, yet it is precisely that difference which gives the keynote to our understanding of Eastern Philosophy and this has at it’s roots, the divergence between a number of so-called spiritual teachings. We need to be totally mindful in our inner search and must prevent ourselves falling into the pit of the naive and the gullible as we need to achieve a safer spiritual journey.

Worrying about what others think is a condition of the mind, you then start worrying about what everyone is thinking of you. They are trivial things, which one must learn to push aside, one should not be bothered with such thoughts but be above them otherwise things become repressed and then it does become a problem. We start feeling aversion to ourselves or to others and this can lead to depression. If we allow trivialities or horrible things to become conscious in our mind we lose control of our thought patterns, resulting in a doubting mind, never quite sure what to do. When fear, doubt and uncertainty become the controller we become unsure of

ourselves and the art of relaxation is lost and deliberately we allow “Doubt” to be the ruler of our minds.

How often do we think, “What should I do? Should I stay or should I go? Should I do this, or should I do that?” Ask yourself questions that perhaps can’t be answered, “WHO AM I?” The thought comes and goes out of emptiness. Start to learn that your mind can be empty especially before thinking deeply but be alert. It is not possible to see the arising of thought, you can only catch thought but it is not necessary for thought to become your controller, rather learn to control the thoughts you think and to overcome all negative tendencies by a calm within. This takes effort and time but the individual who needs change can have success in what is a necessary spiritual battle that all must experience if we are to regain our true inheritance within the Universe.

## *Chapter 5*

# *Karma - a New Life* *- a New Chance awaits You*

In mid-life many of us, regardless of our worldly success feel that life is not giving us what we want. When we come to analyse what it is? What we do want? We are still unsure. The confidence and idealism that carried us through the first half of our lives often gives way to emptiness and confusion, as we get older. The seeds of goodness lie in most people and anyone with a genuine desire to improve can be saved. This is the message DICKENS wished to bring to the world. Had he written an epilogue to his stories he would have made the added point that the way we behave is important spiritually, what we have done before is important to appreciate. “Our new life begins when our old one ends”.

Beside the obvious moral of Dickens’ Story, there is another dimension to this Master Peace that unfortunately is rarely brought to light, an esoteric message that is not apparent at first reading. This hidden message shows how we are to live our lives during the stage of Return and more important, how the stage of Return ties all the other stages together and, in a sense compounds them into a still larger and more universal form of greater Return. The Return to the primal source and centre of our being.

It is a living example of the Gospel Parable of the three labourers in a vineyard who each worked for different lengths of time but who all received equal pay. The rewards are equally tremendous for all those who answer the inner call. This is because the stages of the SOUL do not correspond to TIME, as we understand it. From a higher point of view, TIME is a relative process plus an immeasurable one.

Death is a major change; therefore we need to expect differences. We can prepare ourselves better if we learn to become consciously more adaptable to new situations. We have to discover who we are; this is an important consequence of death in that we have to adjust our sense of who and what we are. Normally during daily life, we identify with our bodies, senses, instincts, and emotions and brain thought. It is said that the moment of death or even birth is just the past reviewed. It is necessary for these experiences to be investigated and understood. This will lead to positive changes in our responses to life’s many challenges. It will help to consider that our present life is only one phase in the great cycle of our existence, one incarnation of countless births and deaths, all governed by the LAW of KARMA or HARMONY. What we are

NOW is the total result of our past actions and thoughts. How we think and act each day determines the quality of our life not only NOW but after death and in future lives.

In order to appreciate the enormous significance of the story of life and of death, it is necessary to consider that we are all embarked on a massive journey. According to timeless teachings we are individual sparks of the One Flame. This is the source from which we came and to which we are returning. We have lived countless lives; we have been born countless times and have died many deaths. Eventually the divine spark will return to that great Source of Spirit, which pervades all life. It stands to reason that the physical aspects of our journey provide opportunities for experiences, which we refine and after our passing in the emotional and mental worlds give us greater powers to pursue our journey. Our heaven or hell is therefore of our own making, it is not eternity but rather a period of time for assimilation and rest. It is said that each earth life can bring us closer to the journey's end and this will allow the individual soul to free itself from the wheel of birth and death.

"The Light of Asia" by SIR EDWIN ARNOLD describes in beautiful terms, "that the total journey of the soul will follow the example of the Enlightened One and like the dew drops, slip into the shining sea at last One with his Divine Thoughts." The great spiritual traditions all point to a fundamental state of oneness and to a common spiritual essence that pervade all life.

The many stages of the Soul are bound together by the law of "KARMA" which gives us a way of life. While to the materialist, the present life and all that surrounds it is what matters, the sages of the past have clearly indicated that we must realise our present journey is but a pin prick in the total journey of our Soul and all experiences (be they good or bad) of our own actions in thought and deed now and in past time. Whilst the Author does not subscribe to any particular teaching as the answer to the "Quest of Life", she has realized on her own journey that the good through to the bad there comes a time when an account must be rendered and that no material condition can answer the deep quest that the Soul must undertake as the total answer to a peaceful existence.

Although children can give enormous pleasure and are able to grant us a moral and possible physical support, we must realise that we are solely responsible for ourselves in each day of our lives, and remember we have not the right to lean on others (including the family). We need to learn to use each precious moment to develop a peaceful, joyful and harmonious attitude; we must overcome all negative thoughts and problems which have been created by us and will in time eliminate the past.

The Author has given much thought to her own life and the many aspects that have in a variety of ways acted as a control on actions. This book merely indicates that her search has shown the need to understand the past, the present and to build for the future. Not on dreams but through harmony and love and by this to find the key that may help her and others to progress on the long journey of life.

In 2006 Buddhism certainly in the Western World is the fastest growing religion "Buddha {pronounced Boo-da} is a title and not the name of a person and is derived from the root "Buddha meaning to wake". There have been many Buddha in the past and they will arise in the

future. The fully “self-enlightened Buddha” are able to discover fully liberating truths and will teach them universally.

We should realise that the self- enlightened Buddha whose teachings are so well known in this present age, SIDDHATTHA GOTAMA, is referred to as the “Buddha” and in future ages other great teachers will arise (especially after dark ages have ensued) and the light of these teachings will continue while ever there is life on earth.

It is said that at no time is it possible that, in one and the same universe two fully self enlightened Buddha will arise together, neither before nor after the other. It is possible for a man or woman to discover truths, to find the way to gain total enlightenment and through their dedication to enable them to become a Buddha. These are referred to as “Silent Buddha” who are able to teach widely the basic truth of life and it’s journey. Those who gain enlightenment by following the way of the teachings of the Buddha are known as Arahats. Buddha himself also used this title.

It should be pointed out that Arahats or “Tathagata” is an idiom, which is evident in the use and understanding of the Canon, corresponding to the English idiom, “Gone for Good, one who will never return”.

How do we know that the Buddha existed and how do we know what he taught? The first part of the question is clearly answered by recent archaeological discoveries, among them the pillars set up by the Emperor Asoka himself a Buddhist who lived and reigned only three hundred years after the teachings of Gotama. The teachings were given in PALI, which is allied to Sanskrit, both derived from an ancient language, which was the parent of most European languages of today.

We should also understand that much like the Bible the Buddha’s Canon was written down more than two thousand years after the event. The Pali Canon has a perfect grasp of meanings able to compare one part with another. It must be remembered that the Canon is approximately eleven times the volume of the Old and New Testaments known as “The Holy Bible” of the Christians. The Buddha gave this message so long ago and any man or woman of moderate intelligence who will follow the practice by the methods given can prove the teachings as a guide to finding many answers.

KARMA operates in all our lives individually. It operates also for the entire human race. The West has created needlessly many problems for the whole world by being completely unconscious of the understanding known as “KARMA”. The Law is simple. “DO UNTO OTHERS AS YOU WOULD HAVE THEM DO UNTO YOU”. “AS YOU SOW SO SHALL YOU REAP”.

The so called Democratic nations who are the pillars of the West boasting that they uphold freedom and are the contributors to Democratic beliefs, fail totally to understand or live to the Laws of Karma. We are starting to observe in the environment and the growing negative attitudes of humans to each other the divide and desire to control different races or nations is the recipe for total Global destruction. It is sad to record that few of the leaders currently strutting the world stage, have failed to learn or understand the basic teachings on the Spiritual path. We

must learn to forgive and accept others. We must stop fighting others and above all must stop living at others people's expense. The selfish and criminal attitudes of people taking over other people's natural resources and using them to claim profits as if it is their own divine right is totally wrong.

Little interest is shown in the starving millions or the enormous poverty that crosses all frontiers and races. It should be more important to make a goal of exploration of our global community, under the name of bringing freedom to other people and be concerned for their welfare.

Alas, we tend to live our lives (both as individuals and as a Nation) in a total vacuum. We are driven from our birth through our education, to believe that money is the key to happiness. Many walk over countless other individuals in the desire to prove that they are successful. However the basic human law of Karma will come home to all of us. A study of History and of the complex aspects of different races, will indicate clearly that the most powerful Nations can fall, and that various individuals who have abused power come back often sick in mind and body to learn the heavy price that must be paid for those who ignore the cosmic reality of Karma and all that it implies.

Whilst the West believes that they are superior, in particular to Asia, we are now finding growing evidence of the enormous changes that are taking place frequently heralded as "New Age". But out of this comes a growing dynamic force, which expresses itself in a variety of ways and no longer is subject to the traditions and power complex of the major Imperial Nations who previously controlled an "Empire".

The Universe is limitless. In the same way it is essential to recognize that we all have a journey to undertake, yet to be mindful that we are part of a much greater force that can be found in an understanding of what is termed "THE UNIVERSE". If we are to believe the Sages of the past, they all, after much contemplation, issued a clarion call to all who seek to understand the complex problems of humanity. We must learn to understand and to walk with Cosmic Laws such as Karma otherwise we shall reap a dividend of destruction both as individuals and as Nations.

The Author does not claim to be politically aware or for that matter associated with any particular political or religious Sect. Yet having lived through common sense over many years, realizes only too well the need for constant change in order to better spiritual awareness and to enjoy the fruits of labour. We live in a culture that extols the virtues of youth and we have forgotten the value of old age. Young and beautiful is the order of today and yet, as people start to move towards older age and with it some understanding possibly of the many lost opportunities and mistakes which we have failed to overcome, we suddenly realise that aging is part of a natural process giving us on the way the opportunity of appreciating the power to rebuild ourselves anew, seeking to awaken the Power of our inner creative visualizations.

Whilst in our present thinking youth appears to have the key, an appreciation of the complex problems facing youth today is imperative. Surely parents and all concerned with the human race should try and teach something of the Divine Law. Every person has within them the

chance to become a creative genius, potentially as we look at the various “Geniuses” through history, we should realise that these individuals have earned their title through countless experiences and that in many cases a “Genius” is one who is in touch with his or hers intuitive nature. We all have an intuitive sense but few become aware of that capacity and the rest remain ignorant for their entire lives. We need to become aware of what we’re doing at all times; in so doing we may unlock the Genius within us. However it is certain that our creativity will develop effortlessly in a variety of ways, providing we call upon that inner force within us all.

Some people are able to remember and reconnect with the fantasies, dreams and even activities experienced in early childhood. Children know exactly where their greatest potential lies and many are able, in a visionary manner to recall experiences from former lives. Unfortunately, parents and guardians tend to merely laugh at these occasional outbursts of the young, and alas, the technique of creating a bridge between an enlightened outlook and a mundane existence is frequently crushed by material thinking.

Enlightenment is on the Mystic way regarded as the top of the mountain of our ever evolving consciousness. The culmination of lifetime after, lifetime of experience searching, and in the end the peak, so far and remote for most people becomes a reality. We see this in the countless stories of Saints, Sages or even the Buddha. We must understand minds become as one with the advice from “The Wise Ones” who have left so many pointers. We are thus able to learn about the real way we should frame our life in order to reach the final quest.

However in all this history there remains one thread “The Law of Karma”. This law is so hard to live by and understand but it is hoped that as the reader considers these belated words some awareness will grow in their confirmation of an inner search. From whence there is no falling back but continuing with steadfastness and devotion for however hard and long are the trials of life, we alone must face our own destiny relying on no other human or Religion. Rather our inner faith (not blinded by convention or doubt), arising with faith in ourselves to continue walking forward on the stony path leading to the mountaintop.

## *Chapter 6*

# *Sex and Love*

When was the last time you examined your attitude toward SEX. Is it that wonderful experience that everyone tells you about? Or is it shocking and disgusting? When you examine you realise that parents had sex so it is safe to assume that it is NOT shameful and immoral.

Why in close relationships do so many people carry a guilty feeling about sex? Research confirms that there is a great schism between what people regard as moral or correct and their subsequent actions. It is necessary to learn to be totally honest in our behaviour especially in sexual relationships. Ask yourself does it feel good to those involved? Is it tedious unfulfilling or a mere act that could be regarded as hypocrisy? Many experience sex for sex's sake, to enjoy (thanks to modern contraception). However, when experiencing loving caring and intimate sex, the experience should engulf the whole being leaving one fulfilled and happy.

The youth of today when moving forward to marriage or partnerships should experience the same level of giving and sharing as their partner and not one of self-righteousness or self satisfaction. Unconditional love is certainly joyful but if it becomes blocked with fears of rejection either towards the partner or of being possessed through physical contact alarm bells should ring. When these problems arise they should be addressed.

All situations should be resolved by being totally open and frank with the partner. Honesty and sincerity must become the basis of the relationship, even the sex act and the giving of love needs to become the highest form of true intimacy for the unity of two individual souls to find the complete harmony of human survival and happiness.

John Gottman, an American psychologist, had researched over two thousand couples to help understand what leads to marriage success or failure. He feels he can predict a marriage success or failure with about 95% accuracy. John identifies the sets which destroy relationships as "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse". Criticism, Contempt, Defensiveness and Stonewalling. Criticism is attacking the person instead of the issue. Contempt is criticizing and crushing the person with disgust. Defensiveness is making excuses, justifying and not listening to the issue at hand. Stonewalling is ignoring with icy silence and refusing to engage in any conflict resolution at all.

For success of marriage or partnerships one must recognize destructive patterns, moods leading to conflict, learning to address these negative issues. Dramatizing, exaggerating or ignoring does not solve problems. One is totally responsible for ONESELF and as in the DHARMA practice, "one must not react to negative, this includes fear, anger or simply not

obtaining one's own will or desire. Remember mindfulness and the meditation practice help to overcome emotions particularly in relationships and in many cases are the only positive answer to some of our personality conflict.

As people mature and work at their relationships they report better and more intimate sex than when they were young. This is attributed to giving love with openness and it is unconditional. The various techniques have less to do with intimacy than to do with enjoyment. Intimacy has the power to awaken the heart, to ignite the fire giving forth the tremendous gift of HUMAN LOVE. The Mystical aspect known as the KUNDALINI is regarded in many Eastern philosophies as the force within the body being the Universal life force that created us. It flows through us in a variety of aspects giving us that inner mental strength to move forward even against the tide of life. It is the most important part of us and in physical contact, especially sex, is the opening up of the deepest aspects of what can be described as intimacy. In the TANTRIC tradition intimacy is regarded as a positive condition for the calm, which can arise - releasing the surplus fears, doubts and other negative thoughts. The male and female bodies blend together giving peace and harmony in the sexual act.

When one has an understanding of the body, in the WEST as well as the EAST, sexual behaviour becomes balanced, harmonious and resulting from intercourse one should be able to develop an "Inner Spirit of Calm Abiding" instead of the reckless self-indulgence. Happiness and health issues are vital and must be studied by both parties if intercourse is undertaken in the so-called "NEW AGE" thinking. Whilst in Western Societies, multiple partners are acceptable it should be remembered that once married or in true partnership, extramarital liaisons are negative or taboo unless husband and wife fully understand and agree to such involvements. It is known that couples undertaking occasional sex with other partners can reinforce the sexual urge, which unfortunately can die in some marriages. The threat against matrimonial bliss is eliminated when it is realized that infidelity is generally not the problem, rather sexual dissatisfaction. Boredom between partners does erode the basic happiness in many marriages or partnerships. The famous psychologist C.G. JUNG reported he enjoyed over fifty years of marriage to Emma Rauschenbach whilst he had many open sexual liaisons. Some of these women actually lived in the Jung household. He wrote, "The prerequisite for a good marriage is the license to be unfaithful". Perhaps this may be so but the reader must think it over considering what is important for them and morally correct in all circumstances without cheating or lying in any way to their partner.

Whilst sex between two consenting partners is now generally accepted, we must always appreciate the need to find mental union. This fulfils a basic need between the individuals involved. We have to mentally find the "calm abiding" giving peace and joy not allowing ourselves to rely on the other person to give it to us. Eventually with this peace we begin to sense something more valuable in life, the development of what can be added by a more balanced relationship, equanimity is finding total oneness in the joy of sex and love.

Whether sexual relations are monogamous or polygamous the primary basic human function of SEX is similar to eating or sleeping. If one is able to cultivate the sexual act into pleasure for both involved, it will enhance health and happiness at whatever age.

Recently a female stated, "I am now seventy-four years of age and my partner and I are enjoying a sexual experience that young people have missed out on because they have not learnt the art of lovemaking". Many foolish people especially in the present age have the mistaken idea that one should cease to have sexual intimacy after reaching the age of sixty or older. "This is a fallacy". It is well known that sexual activity has the chance of keeping a person healthy and possibly well balanced. In the teachings of TANTRA, which the West is now acknowledging many students are realizing that sexual awareness plays a very important role in the development of the life force. This sexual force is a way to understand our inner emotions and is a key to life in the "search within".

The SUTRA on the Four Establishments of mindfulness includes certain exercises involving the body and in these exercises it helps us feel less lonely and cut off. Meditation on the various elements that comprise our bodies is of great value. The elements are EARTH, FIRE, WATER and AIR. However the Chinese Version has six elements and they add SPACE and CONSCIOUSNESS. Again these elements are just as important. In personal meditation one should seek to know and understand the body and this includes our perceptions on sex. Many fail to awaken the deeper passions, which are so beautifully described in the Eastern Practice of TANTRIC learning to apply the sex force that binds us together in a union that can remain long lasting.

Touching with mindfulness everything in your body that is firm, you are touching earth elements in you. Everything inside the body is the WATER ELEMENT, urine, blood, and saliva, even the perspiration. One should realise we are seventy percent water in our bodies. In sexual activities we endeavour to liberate our body through the emotions. Sex without deep feelings can leave one or other of the parties temporarily exhilarated but fails in the total union of body and soul leaving the precious inner emotions unfulfilled. In the Mystical sense physical contact especially if one believes one has found one's Soul Mate substantially helps on the path of inner reality.

Negative conditions in thought and word can be overcome especially if there is pride in the more physical aspect of the act. It should be remembered inside every Terrorist, Rapist or Character Assassinator is the "Innocent Victim" frequently trying to justify his or her grievances by asserting moral or physical force. How frequently one party fails to be satisfied and when this happens on a regular basis, resentment arises, feelings of being used and other negative attitudes come to the surface and the wonderful aspect of physical love is lost.

Many marriages, (even after producing children from that union) become negative for each partner. Physical contact deteriorates into a mere act and forced intimacy occurs, resulting in dissatisfaction and total breakdown between those involved. We become deluded and seek to remain behind the wall we have mentally built in order to protect our feelings. Suffering

including dissatisfaction with our bodies and our partners and all that is around us. Leading us to look elsewhere for physical or mental conditions that we believe will be better.

Whilst physical violence or anger may be demonstrated we tend to experience criticizing speech and thought actions towards the other individual. Some have a tendency to direct violence outwardly others turn it towards themselves in the form of toxic shame. Sex becomes a duty, a sham towards the other person. How often in marriage or partnerships does sex deteriorate into a duty? The joy that can develop if both male and female start to understand mentally entering into the sexual act is necessary in order to release true passion for this sacred dance. As your senses enjoy the sexual act, one should appreciate the sensation of interacting and no matter what the circumstances understand that the physical act should be able to bring about mental peace, awakening an inspiring inner joy.

Honesty is essential in all aspects of intimacy and in the BUDDHIST teachings it is mentioned; we have "ELEVEN BENEFITS". METTA BHAVANA is important in waking up the inner mind or consciousness. The first benefit is that one falls asleep easily and contented. The second is that one wakes easily, contented and happy. The third is that one is loved by other human beings and the fourth is that animals are attracted to us or love us. It is said that the feeling of HEAVEN makes the mind peaceful. The human face of one who practices peace is serene and radiant. The final benefit is that one dies unconfused; developing an attitude towards one's self, which indicates a slow change with patience and self-forgiveness. We should review our sexual inclinations and consider what we mean by "Right-Effort".

The BUDDHA gave an example of throwing a stick into a river. If that stick did not sink or stay on the bank or run aground it would reach the sea. In terms of our effort to find harmony especially with one who is close to us, we should appreciate that the left and right banks of the river are the extremes of clinging to the path with pain or pleasure. Not sinking means relinquishing effort and finding in each moment the inner thrill that even in the act of intimacy opens up the spirit of joy beyond expression. Perhaps this should be the meaning of sex with passion and love.

A true appreciation with honest understanding of our life is as we have it NOW. Our relationship in a physical sense with another becomes a key to knowing the meaning of true happiness and recognizing illusion that may have covered previous physical contact. We arrive at situations that should teach us how we can move towards non-reacting by absorbing. To create mentally kind thoughts instead of dwelling on the negative physical aspects of what one has experienced even in sex. Consider what happens if we don't react when someone verbally attacks us. What they are looking for is the type of reaction that they can feed on. When someone throws verbal abuse at us, we should NOT react with aversion or aggression but ABSORB all, examine how the negatives become deflated. There are so many situations that should teach us how we can move towards not reacting by absorbing, tolerating all thoughts directed at us and not dwelling on negatives.

The Culture of the Emotions is a force described as a useless by-product of thought. It should never be forgotten, this force could be manifested in innumerable forms that can

constantly be generated into other emotions and utilized and sublimated into higher forms. The art medium is an expression of impersonal beauty through a personal medium and this can be found in the greatest art of whatever country or historical period. Beauty is the outward appearance of Cosmic harmony. Sex as in art is an attempt by human beings to interpret beauty in various forms.

Whether the medium used be intimacy or the expression in poetry, pottery, music or the movements of the human form such portrayal of eternal qualities is only permitted to the extent that the personal element is common to all mankind and to this extent it is impersonal. We need to become super-sensitive to the senses, which are the outpost of the mind. The greatest art and sexual arousing in the beholder is a faculty far higher than the emotions where by the mind attains direct perception of the laws of Cosmic Harmony. The artist in whatever form then has the insight to successfully portray. The wonderful thing about intimacy is that it can rise to total joy and harmony between those involved. AN INTIMATE LIFE: What does it mean to live a life committed to the DHARMA? It is simply to live life openly and infinitely - fully awake in the present moment and to practice overcoming the problems that impede us.

To live openly and intimately in the present moment is to love life unconditionally as it is. Without trying to possess it. Without demanding it be other than what it is. To live in friendliness with life in all its wonder and this includes dilemmas, sorrows, ironies or fears. It is to allow us to melt into life and not keep things at an observational arms length as some kind of threat to our individuality. To address what blocks us from living life fully and to acknowledge our stubborn pride especially in our deeper associations.

Whether we choose a celibate life or a sexually active life the practice is the same. We need to eliminate our stubborn pride of the Ego even if it butts up against the vagaries of life, as we cannot allow pride to maintain its own false identity. The BUDDHA practiced celibacy and encourages followers to do the same but for many this is neither possible nor suitable in their world. The celibate monastic path remains a strong tradition in ASIAN countries; however in Western Countries most DHARMA practitioners lead sexually active lives.

It is not the purpose of this book to ask why these practices vary, nor is it to justify or evaluate the monastic life. It is simply to acknowledge that a life of sexual intimacy can be a fulfilling and challenging form of DHARMA practice. The main question is if you choose a sexual life, how do you transform it into Dharma practice rather than as a way of maintaining your old rigid self?

Sex is a raw body energy that can dictate outside the irrational thinking mind, as some graffiti in the inner city of Sydney once proclaimed, "Sex is better than logic but I can't prove it". To the thinking mind we should note how sex is abused and sensationalized. For the most part sex or lovemaking is a harmonious pleasure between consenting adults but on the negative side sex does not necessarily have to be connected to LOVE. We all need to understand the difference between love, lust, pleasure, feel the depth of sexual intimacy and all this joy and harmonious energy can be found in that special relationship.

## *Chapter 7*

# *Inner Strength, Life and Death*

It is self-evident that we neglect at our peril discovering our true self. Some of us encounter much misfortune, but good fortune or not we all die. SPIRITUAL AWARENESS and knowledge gives us the strength to understand circumstances when our expectations are not realized, when we face the unknown to sum up all experiences of life.

It is found that our earthly journey and adventure of this life, for many reaches the end when moving towards old age. Many of us pursue a course in life failing to manage our anxieties and emotions we close our mind to turning within. How many factors impact upon our understanding of the purpose of our life? When we consider using our deeper thoughts to produce a reflective view, we learn a new perspective that gives us the strength to weather a variety of storms that we experience during the journey of life.

Through detachment, we can find strategies for managing pain, loss, fear and doubts. We can find inner-strength to spiritually win the battle against EGOTISM that unfortunately tends to overshadow the clarity of our mentality. We find inspiring examples in daily life, which describe or show us the immense courage that often displays itself in the face of hardship, as the spirit shines through with glints of humour and kindness.

In making the Inner Spirit our goal and priority, we will find moral and physical strength arises especially in an emergency. We start to understand how long we have lived in “ILLUSION”. People who are not fully awake frequently tend to build walls, which alas define and segregate lives from others. When we reach beyond the barriers making connections with others we begin to understand the cosmic origin of all humans. We are all equal in having the same qualities of spirit, yet as individuals we frequently tend to grade people in a variety of ways and this limits the basic harmony we should experience with all people.

We may feel for the victims of war, famine, or natural disaster but the majority of people in daily life (many more in big cities than in country areas) understand NOTHING of the perils faced by the victims themselves. We frequently see people as so distant that it does not come home to us that ALL humanity emanates from the one force of the Universal Spirit. Many of us, especially those who are involved in a variety of philosophies, Cults, (spiritual or material); believe that we are special and are the enlightened ones. Those not within that particular group are frequently regarded as total outsiders and so low in the human scale as not entitled to enlarge themselves and blossom into wholeness. A positive step is made when we start to “meditate” on the web of connections that link us to everyone else in the world. It is imperative to allow your

spirit to vibrate around you. Open yourself to allow the positive energies of others to flow with your own.

Watch and learn how a stranger lives! Consider their life, you can see this clearly at any gathering or event. You will note their posture, the way they present themselves. Seek to understand the idea of the TRUE SELF WITHIN. Study their face and general attitude, especially behaviour. At all times be mindful of the value of others remembering we have also walked now or in past lives much the same path as those we are watching or criticising.

It could be an important aspect of MEDITATION to think, “I am imperishable energy, and Consciousness, I am Eternal”. The more we think and even meditate on this acclamation the easier it is to comprehend its profound truths. In ancient Greece, the Philosopher SOCRATES is said to have patiently talked with an uneducated slave boy till the lad revealed that all his life he had embraced a fundamental mathematical theory, without having been taught it or without even knowing that he knew it. The truth, Socrates said is eternal, unchanging and born within us.

One of the reasons that truth appears so often elusive is that most of us are afraid to search within. The ego clings to material existence and illusion. It insists on its own completeness, it turns away from imitations of a timeless inner truth. Locating truth within means, the cleansing of clinging to attachments, desires, and fears, which obstruct reality, shattering all forms of psychic clutter that make up the foundation of the ego. We should consider that the journey of the spirit concludes at our starting point. What we seek is ALREADY THERE, we are reminded of the claim made by “MICHELANGELO” that his “David and his Pieta” and his other great sculptures were already present inside the original marble blocks hewn from the quarries of Carrara in Italy.

As we energize our inner capacity to give and receive love, we look deep within our mind for the inner peace, resulting in happiness, and this becomes a daily way of life. We realise the beauty beneath the surface of our skin. There are five innate spiritual qualities, “TRUTH, LOVE, BLISS, PURITY and PEACE”. This truth becomes our corner stone, helping us to find that indescribable peace within. NATURE teaches us to draw closer seeing the completely accepting way that each flower opens and the perfect way every petal is formed. This is purity that is never puritanical.

PEACE and quiet exists within all of us but many have lost their way to finding it. We should banish the clouds mentally to reveal the unwavering light of the sun, the source of the Universal Spirit and start to look up to the night sky and appreciate the wonder of it all. Eventually you will be able to visit the inner citadel of peace and quiet even amid the restlessness of everyday life. Whatever sounds, torrents or catastrophes encircle your world, you should be able to immediately TURN WITHIN, to your spiritual place of “SILENCE” finding the total oasis of calm and inner peace.

How often we fail ourselves in partnerships or marriage. We tend to lash out and yet in a split second we are capable of finding that sanctuary of the soul, becoming refreshed in these moments, helping us to become balanced once more and to radiate peace and love to all those around us. We often fail to appreciate our birthright. Our imagination and power is shown in so

many ways; take artwork for example, see the tantalizing and inspiring aspects of eternal truths that have been passed down through generations. An example of how the spirit can shine out to all in a creative manner that acts as a signpost for all humanity.

An act of love or forgiveness is a creative act that illuminates us and those close to us. When you experience the first stirrings of the storm rolling through, you treat it as a signal to still yourself and observe what is happening. Imagine you are an onlooker watching the flood and keeping mentally still, slowing down your thinking, living only in the moment. You will observe the flood of negative thought be it fear, hate, or lust, passing through you and slowly the experience will pass as it is life and death! We are all living in mental space, where these tides of emotion happen, frequently and unpredictably. As we continue on our search within we allow these negative happenings to flow through us without affecting how we think, finding that our spiritual current runs its true peaceful course allowing us to think positive, feeling balanced and discovering our true inner spirit arising from the storm.

DEATH of people we care about is sad and causes grieving but in the pattern of “LIFE and DEATH” and the reality that the few years we spend are but a shadow of the total picture of our many lives, we should be able to feel comfort in this knowledge and the fear of our own end should be greatly removed. Yet it is a fact that many marching towards the end of their lives fail to understand the famous quote from the Christian Bible “ALTHOUGH I WALK THROUGH THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH, I FEAR NO EVIL FOR THOUGH ART WITH ME, THY STAFF AND THY ROD COMFORT ME”. The true soul arises even in death subject only to our understanding of the term we so loosely quote “The Wheel of Life”. We must understand that we have precious little time that should NOT be wasted on illusion and unnecessary fears. Rather when we wake up from our long sleep and march forward making every second and moment of our life positive so that when we do cross the river into death we do so MINDFUL of what we have done and conscious of the opportunity to improve not only in the life beyond the grave but in subsequent rebirth as the wheel of life is at the core of all.

Death is but the gateway to our ability to face reality, for example let us assume that there is a pit about 100 feet deep as we start to put burning charcoal constantly at the bottom, we then lower a ladder into it and ask people to go down one step at a time. Those who start to go down make no complaint about the heat until they reach say 70 feet but as they continue to descend the heat from the burning charcoal intensifies. Now in the same manner, many people do not experience suffering although the Buddha made clear that life is one of total suffering. It is a good analogy when clearly explained, “that as we gain more experience we see the truth about suffering more clearly”.

The real meaning of suffering is experiencing the unsatisfied and unfulfilled aspect of our life; hence death whilst regarded as suffering due to possibly medical conditions is at the root of each birth. Death should be viewed as a crossing over into a new dimension and therefore the need to appreciate the extension of life is in fact the beginning of a second life in which past experiences, particularly arising from our present life, enable the soul to realise that we must

practice (as is expanded in ZEN Teaching) a key to meeting death by “obtaining clarity of mind and seeing into one’s true nature”.

Choosing any spiritual path will enable us to attain inner achievement. How can we say that one method is better than another? We need to understand that where Death is regarded as the final act and it does bring grief and loss, we must still be aware and appreciate that the soul embarks upon a new journey. With each life or death the spirit has the ability to break the bond of ignorance and to seek what is termed the flower adornment or SUTRA which is explained as the FORTYONE LEVELS OF THE BODHISATTVAS, all of which have these levels of enlightenment giving the soul ability to understand the purpose of life and to seek “purity and clarity of mind to see into one’s self-nature”. This is the real essence of the inner path for each Soul.

Many people help humanity in a variety of ways. An example was Mother Theresa in India, who devoted her whole life to the caring of the needy and destitute. People and organizations of many different origins are involved in providing social services to the sick, the handicapped, the starving, the old, the dying and others. All great religious teachers have exhorted their disciples and followers to be charitable. In Christianity Jesus said, “LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR”. He praised those who fed the hungry, gave drink to the thirsty, clothed the naked, and gave shelter to the destitute. He included visiting the sick and the imprisoned, and his words were “In as much as you have done it unto one of the least of these my brothers, you have done it unto me”. This again is a powerful reminder of the need to act with compassion and mindfulness to ALL irrespective of RACE, COLOUR OR CREED.

There is a saying in the KORAN where Prophet MUHAMMAD said God might say to a person on Judgment Day “I was hungry but you did not feed me. I was sick and you did not visit me”. When asked by the bewildered person how can that be? God would reply “Such a one asked for bread and you did not give it to him. Such a one was sick and you did not visit him”. In Buddhism although we do not believe in a Creator God, the belief is in goodness and not to harm or kill sentient beings, even an animal or insect. The basic belief is in the Law of Karma, “good begets good and bad begets bad”. We must train ourselves to reach a stage where we will do good not just for the sake of doing good, and not because of the fear of death through hell or other retributions or the anticipation of reward. In short the BUDDHA made clear to be charitable and caring in all aspects of life. It is interesting to remark in a modern world where we have little concern about the waste in our daily life, we throw away so many items including food. If one could only stop and think even by throwing a single crumb to feed fish or fowl this is charitable and is praised by Buddha as an act of kindness. Hard to follow but the “Wheel of return” will in the end make us realise that we cannot waste food or water as we may well in a future life be the one who experiences lack of water, food or shelter.

One should therefore be prepared for death at ANY TIME. It is a fact of our earthly existence that death mostly strikes without warning and therefore it is important that one makes good use of the physical body at all times. Seeking wherever possible, without becoming Cult Orientated, the outline of SHAKYAMUNI BUDDHA teachings which, in this ever changing

world gives us pointers making us aware we are here on earth for such a short time. People die when it is their time to die. Many babies can die prematurely. Children also die, as do young people. It is not just the old or the infirm, Our goal therefore is to break through DELUSION and achieve understanding and to some extent appreciate why the SIX REALMS OF REINCARNATION or rebirth exist. It is because the wisdom and the virtuous abilities in our original nature have yet to be uncovered. Many of our views and ways of interacting with life and the Universe are INCORRECT. These erroneous acts committed due to negative views and actions have resulted from the suffering of rebirth within the six realms.

The path of practice as outlined by the BUDDHA and many other Great teachers is the path that one must walk by ONESELF and NOT through another. One should not need reminding to always be aware of others, to understand their suffering and to seek to develop a heart of COMPASSION. With wisdom we should seek to alleviate the suffering of others wherever possible.

How true it is “from an inconceivable beginning comes transmigration”. A beginning point is not evident, through being hindered by ignorance, fettered by craving and transmigrating we are wandering off. When you notice someone who has fallen on hard times, overwhelmed with difficulties, possibly living in considerable pain and fear, you should conclude, we too have suffered and experienced this negative pattern in the course of our many periods of Birth and Death. Why is that? From an inconceivable beginning comes the transmigration A beginning point is not evident but in the end we become totally disenchanted with all fabricated thought and learn to become dispassionate enough to be released from the results of our deeds, past and present, becoming free to be part of the UNIVERSAL SPIRIT as one in the God force, liberated in all our ways.

Human life needs to be protected, valued and worked with, as the focus for the liberation from “DUKKHA”. Body, heart and mind are the places in which we must work to finally liberate ourselves. There is no point in just following the teachings of even the BUDDHA if we are blind in mind and disparaging of the body, we should see the need to follow the middle path of peace resulting in “CALM ABIDING”.

It would be wrong to believe that the INNER PATH is only for the individual who understands the unity of life. We must recognize that liberation begins when we are prepared to break the bonds of convention that have held us to many ignorant ideas, and to walk the “path within”, destroying the negatives of muddled thinking which have held us back from the dawn of our own freedom. In time we awaken to become a spiritual warrior having vigour to start the quest of liberating ourselves from a variety of shackles that have held us back.

It is necessary to recall the words of the immortal sage LAO TZE: in the "Tao-Teh-King". The properties of the TAO are here recited and it is revered as a veritable, consistent and unchangeable essence, which is the root and origin of all things whatsoever.

“Whosoever adapteth himself shall be preserved to the end.”

“Whosoever bendeth himself shall be straightened.”

“Whosoever emptieth himself shall be filled.”

“Whosoever weareth himself away shall be renewed”

“Whosoever humbleth himself shall be exalted.”

“Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased.”

Therefore doth the Sage cling to simplicity.

An example to ALL (the real meaning of finding the SPIRITUAL warrior within life).

“He is not ostentatious and therefore he shines.”

“He is not egotistic, and therefore he is praised.”

“He is not vain, and therefore he is esteemed.”

“He is not haughty, and therefore he is honoured”

And because he does not compete with others, no man is his enemy.

The ancient maxim, “WHOSOEVER ADAPTETH HIMSELF SHALL BE PRESERVED TO THE END”. Verily it is no idle saying and one worth cultivating. “Without doubt he shall go back to his Home in Peace”.

The HINDUS use the word NIRVANA meaning Liberation. HINDUISM is a God based religion and its followers believe that it is a prime way to find spiritual oneness. As with many other established religions it permits its followers to regard that they alone are on the divine path. In time this may be proved a total illusion as with many other beliefs. BUDDHISM fundamentally requires for each person to develop along the path to NIRVANA, letting go of all attachments that can be termed as worldly desires. In due course this detachment will include the desire to find the elusive Nirvana itself and in spite of our restlessness, which is often the main obstacle to concentration, our own mindfulness is continuous and we arrive at a point where we acknowledge that the closing of an earth life is but the beginning of the next Chapter.

In the famous book “THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE”, by H.P. Blavatsky, (Published by the Theosophical Society). It is made clear in number 244, “If thou dost not - then art thou lost”, and therefore death is but a gateway, a time to reassess, hopefully the lessons learnt in the life that has ended.

## *Chapter 8*

# *Ageing with Attitude*

We live in a Culture, which extols the virtues of youth and has forgotten the considerable value and experience of old age, or what may be termed the WHEEL OF LIFE. Being young is vital, beautiful and yet as people start to age after fifty years, there is no need to regret the apparent passing of earlier years. Ageing is part of the natural process and every step of that has its own beauty and perfection.

We have the power to rebuild ourselves anew, if we awaken to the power of OUR INNER CREATIVE THOUGHTS. The worth and quality of our life relates not to what we do or have, but to the quality of our conscious awareness. By becoming more mindful we engage a conscious relationship to our ongoing experience, free from the obstructions of being conditioned or conditional. Through this RIGHT relationship to life we enhance the possibility of becoming more fully a living person, learning, loving, and caring, knowing our true worth and walking on the right path.

There are several things, which can affect the ageing process and relate to our physical, emotional and mental wellbeing. On the physical level, our diet and exercise certainly affect the ageing process. If a person abuses their body, which is now prevalent in so many cultures with the abundance of food, resulting in obesity, alcoholism and not enough exercise then the body naturally is going to start slowing down and problems will appear. This is clearly indicated when tiredness haunts the individual and we look back to our earlier life with nostalgia.

The emotional and mental processes appear to affect our ageing even more than the physical. In reality there is nothing in our minds or feelings that is actually “subconscious” for all we need to do is to focus the light of our INNER OBSERVATION upon what we are telling ourselves, thus resulting in the so-called subconscious patterns emerging. If as example we are telling ourselves that we are young, strong, healthy and socially and sexually content, we are more capable of fighting off the negatives that can affect our mental and physical health. However if we look on the other side believing we are weak prone to sickness or if we overeat, (as is frequently the case in older people) we become worried and our life appears to become stress related. All these negative thoughts then attack our wellbeing and the body loses many of its functioning powers.

Many people refuse to acknowledge how this negative process works but it is a well known fact supported by a range of Psychologists and Medical people that NEGATIVE thought leads to negative action thereby creating imbalance, which affects the basic stability of our physical, and

mental body and this can influence our life expectancy. Various researches in Britain, Europe and America have found that retired people who considered themselves to be energetic, happy, and hopeful and above all feeling useful, appear to live longer than those who report negative perceptions on ageing and retirement. In fact, the Author has found that positive self-perception is a vital defence against ageing and helps to overcome the various aches and pains. We need to look towards conventional health measures, as they play an important part in our well being and this includes blood pressure, cholesterol level, and many basic medical tests.

Also we of the “Smoking and Drinking Generation” are now looking towards paying the price socially, sexually and medically, but again if we build on the positive aspects we can influence to some degree all aspects of our life. We at our age should realise how powerful is the MIND and the SUBCONSCIOUS and with this knowledge we should be able to maintain a superior quality of life.

Ageing is part of the Wheel-of-life and it can still be an exciting time. The Writer often smiles blandly and states, “one mentally still feels about Thirty”, but unfortunately the body does dispute this. Many of us on the wrong side of fifty have experienced this feeling and have no doubt realized we must meet problems head on by exercising regularly, watching our diet and facing the complex mental side that includes, not looking backwards or rehashing the negative side of the past. Remember there comes a time to LET-GO. This is when the need arises for an ENQUIRY into one’s own mind and to have the willingness to change the thinking patterns of our earlier life. We need to always fight for the POSITIVE mind and its thoughts as the only true answer is “CALM ABIDING”.

As we walk towards retirement we may find time on our hands, leading to looking towards various teachings or philosophies, including meditative processes as our salvation. One sees clearly the benefits of exploring the nature of thoughts and states of mind, as much as the nature of those particular teachings. At this stage we should be benefiting from looking at the “Now” as much as the “What”? We have to remember to “throw away many ideas or opinions we have held for most of our present life. In a spirit of adventure we start our QUEST to find the hidden truths that have escaped our attention. This particularly is a time to appreciate the more personal side of one’s life. It is now time for study and to know the term “LOVE”. Explore all aspects in past and present partnerships or marriage; experience what values are acceptable to you in your way and stage of life? This could well help eliminate many aspects of desire and envy. At this stage we are able to find the person develops an unmoving dignity and the development of deep understanding towards life in general.

Looking, appreciating, then forgetting the past is a key to finding the inner calm, and this can lead us to experience ACTUAL CONTENTMENT. The secret is living in the “NOW” and finding contentment in love and peace in the way we exist. Older age provides a time for not only testing our ability to be creative but particularly in marriage, partnership or even sexual contact we must accept our ability to be creative and not allow age to interfere with what is a natural process. Such creativity can be enjoyed in a variety of ways giving those involved a joy, that maybe has not been experienced earlier.

The joy we have experienced at this stage can be overshadowed by many hurts, doubts, illness, rejection etc., but to some extent we can overcome these negatives through our mental processing which leads to HOW WE THINK. Understanding the NEGATIVES and POSITIVES in life is the only way to find balance. We now have time to absorb many aspects of our search for “peace within”. Never overlook there are many spurious substitutes, from smug complacency to a mind filled with Ego. This indicates the baseness of the mind and the lack of spiritual awareness and in retirement when boredom can become a major vice, it is necessary to be constantly controlling our minds over the whole spectrum of thinking.

STRESS cannot only kill you but can also create mental and physical chaos. It is a major trigger that creeps into everyone’s life to some degree and can and does cause a myriad of health problems including ulcers, skin and digestive problems plus a major cause of DEPRESSION. It lowers the immune functions and causes hormonal irregularities. However, it is not the stress factors that are the cause rather the way we perceive and react to them. A multitude of studies have shown that a number of simple steps can help reduce stress in it’s general accepted form. These include regular exercise, relaxation and Meditation techniques. A variety of natural therapies can be regarded also as a counter balance to stress and nerve problems.

It must be understood that as the body grows older every day sees a change not only in our thinking pattern but in the body itself. We must endeavour to prevent disease or sickness, particularly in the modern world where we are subjected to foods and other ways of life that can be alien to us and can contribute to mental instability. Such instability could be referred to as stress induced. Physicians in increasing numbers are now accepting and recommending alternative therapies. ACUPUNCTURE and CHI GONG are among a variety of therapies that can be helpful. Plus it is also important to understand that nature provides us with a variety of herbs that can be utilized in foods. We find even our domestic animals use natural remedies that are under our nose, and armed with knowledge we can find an antidote to many of our ailments.

Over recent years Psychologists in the area of health, healing and human performances have seen a growing trend of acceptance and interest in MINDFULNESS PRACTICE. Whilst the general public is ever seeking relief from life’s stresses it is becoming clear that the practice of Mindfulness Meditation and Conscious Living alleviates stress and produces a positive attitude. Many health professionals are now looking at and accepting these facts as better tools to help those in need. There can be no doubt that Mindfulness in the context of being a key element in the Buddha’s teachings is really a way to integrate wisdom to help overcome a variety of human predicaments. Mindfulness can open up the potential for ultimate WELLBEING so essential in overcoming negative thought which can control our entire being.

We must realise that all suffering caused by the heat of anger and the coldness of rejection can brew and cause a variety of KARMIC ILLNESS which frequently we fail to recognize e.g. migraine, heart and lung problems, stomach ulcers and numerous additional health problems. One cannot stress enough that the power of POSITIVE THOUGHT with Positive speech will lead to Positive behaviour. With this in mind we recognize that our own wishes cease to be paramount. We fail to understand the basic average thinking enabling us only to see our own

wishes being paramount. With accepting and understanding our ageing be it in Wisdom, Senility, Illness or Experience we move forward to knowing we all eventually die. We therefore can help ourselves by preparing for that transition. The entire process is made easier if we live a life that takes into account the deeper aspects of human life.

When thinking of our mortal end we should consider the SOUL, the eternal part of us, which is a projection or vehicle of the indwelling spirit and evolves over long periods by assimilating the varied experiences and gradually offering higher qualities with each incarnation. These can be outlined as COMPASSION, INTELLIGENCE, WISDOM, and a deep understanding of “WHAT IS LIFE”? Our journey requires many lives in which we develop a full human and spiritual potential, understanding finally something of COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS. It is a journey that through varied experiences the soul is polished like a diamond in the hands of an expert until we finally shine through to the splendour of Cosmic radiance finding oneness in what ‘IS’.

## *Chapter 9*

# *Setbacks on the Greatest Journey*

First we must appreciate and come to know “WHY WE ARE ON EARTH” and “WHAT IS THE REAL PURPOSE OF LIFE”? Not everyone will accept or even understand the principles of “REBIRTH” or as some prefer to believe in “REINCARNATION” but if we are able to understand we are “WHAT WE THINK” and when looking at the whole picture of the human journey we come to realise we must live many lives in order for us to develop our full human and spiritual potential.

A recurring Buddhist motif is the WHEEL OF BECOMING (otherwise known as the Tibetan Wheel of Life, although its origins are pre-Tibetan). The Wheel is a compact and complex symbol, which at a glance graphically presents a story of a human life (even perhaps our own lives) in a dynamic term of dependent origination, the Buddha’s central philosophical idea. The wheel gives the links that keep us endlessly in SAMSARA, the eternal round of life and death.

When one first looks at the symbol, bad news appears to greet them. This is because those who work towards their own and other people’s freedom must in a sense understand all the Laws that create bondage. When we finally look and interpret what the Wheel is portraying we will be on the path to Liberation.

If life from birth to death is a game of chance, it still does not answer what is the meaning to life? We should start to understand there is a continuity of lives. What we do NOW has a consequence for what we experience TOMORROW and this continues beyond mundane everyday values of our materialistic societies. We must understand the oddities and foolish ways that have guided us in life. This includes the many delusions that dominate masses of humanity due to their unwillingness to give a valid answer to the many complex problems that we experience during our Earth Life. It is a daily occurrence to see the destruction and negative views broadcast by the world media and this haunts our very existence in all aspects of human contact.

With increased horror we are now seeing the breakup of many earlier basic principles and the crumbling of society as it struggles to explain richness and poverty all in one with little if any regard for humanity in general. All too often we are guided by our feelings of wellbeing and conventional attitudes, that have been foisted on us by society and in particular our families, for much of our earthly life. ALBERT SCHWEITZER was reported to say: “Man has lost the capacity to foresee and to forestall. He will end by destroying the earth.”

It should thus become clear to any thinking person that there are many questions of HOW, WHEN, and WHY is life leading us and to WHAT end? What deeds are we responsible for? Are they good or Bad? So many questions need to be addressed. We must look deep into our own thought pattern and find the RIGHT-WAY. For example, Noise will not cease by Noise, but rather by silence alone can we start to answer our own questions.

It is well known that Buddhist Nations have been struggling with the dilemma of protecting the lives of citizens while appearing to uphold the principles of non-violence. We should however not blunt our acumen or deflect our gaze from looking into the nature and origin of violence, which arises in all manners of ways, even in our own marriage, homes and neighbourhood. Violence is intrinsic to the function of the modern state as it is a fact that most Nations will resort to violence to protect the so-called interests of its citizens. Over the past century we have seen Christianity's Crusades establish their missions in underdeveloped countries as in Africa, Asia and South America. They came with their Western attitudes to convert the heathens, but what gives Christianity or any other religion the right to do this? It is a shocking fact that many of the Globe's Religions are one of the major causes of so much violence on this earth.

In modern times since the creation of the "State of Israel", the Jewish people have grown to believe, that they have a divine right to the Biblical land of ISRAEL allowing them to annex more land than was originally the area designated as the " State of Israel". In the process, through force of arms they have destroyed so much faith and many lives of the Palestine and Arab people. The Muslim opponents then justify their violent response by believing in the authority of the QUR'AN. This tit for tat is repeated not only throughout the Middle East but also sadly in growing areas of the Globe even to fishing rights and the constant destruction of the Marine habitat as greed explodes all about us. It is easy to lose faith as we see undeclared war and death all about us. The family structure causes many problems through worry over a variety of matters. Now as we grow older and battle our setbacks through sickness and other delusions, we ask the question "WHY ME"? Then we look to others and ask "WHY" the violence?

In dealing with life's fortunes and misfortunes there comes a time when we must look more closely at the lessons and what they teach us. We need to rethink our views and opinions and experience a rebirth of our own thoughts long before the final chapter is written in our passing from earthly life. Whilst misfortune does hurt and the lessons from it are hard to appreciate there comes a time when we need to have a more intimate understanding of life and enter into a dialogue with ourselves and with life in general. We now know "KARMA" is not just an Eastern word but is a true and lasting expression of all aspects of life.

Many of our beliefs and opinions will have to undergo a searching examination. We must be prepared to deal with thoughts and opinions as they affect our moral and physical outlook as many of us are like sheep taking the easy way allowing each day to become MINDLESS until the final curtain descends on us, the curtain of death. It is imperative that we start to wake up from the slumber of years and understand aspects of real life that can be our searchlight in the future.

As we look at the story and background of those much more learned in History, some of whom have been religious, artists or great teachers - we cannot escape the constant message that runs throughout. We ourselves are the custodians of our own future and we cannot expect others to answer for or explain the real purpose of life except by looking at our own lives making constant change. Set backs take various forms but can be transmuted into basic reality in giving us an inner understanding of the eternal teachings “AS WE SOW WE SHALL REAP”.

While large numbers of the human family fail to appreciate what is the meaning of the “WHEEL OF LIFE”, in particular those who worship their worldly treasures as their guide, these poor souls do not see that affluence now is NO key to the future. We may, in fact become (as is the case in India), a member of the outcast known as the “Untouchables”. There can be no question that the Law of the Universe and it’s study in its widest application gives us an understanding, however basic to experience and even in a small measure investigate. We must try to discover true “REALITY”? We need a guide to help to meet a variety of problems whether good or negative and should, as a result be able to visualize and appreciate ourselves as one with the Universe. Imagine you are bathed in a pure white light, which permeates the whole Universe. This in time should enable us to feel a state of ONENESS and help us to appreciate the full significance of the great teachings of the past, to consider concepts that we are all embarked on a major journey. Eventually our souls, the divine part of us, will return to that great source of Universal Spirit.

In previous pages, emphasis has been made that our thoughts lead to our actions. Now with rigorous examination of ourselves and even on discovering certain basic truths, we must see the need to change our actions and thought patterns in our daily lives in order to understand a variety of Eastern and other teachings. It is clearly outlined that our present life is but a fraction of lives lived earlier and in the future. This fact explains many and different mind-boggling experiences that cover the entire field of human existence leading to having an understanding that we are indeed part of the Universe in which there is no final answer. Through understanding we will learn to mould our minds into “Conscious Reality” moving forward towards “Universal peace” within ourselves in all manner of ways.

Buddhist practice is very much the development of spiritual qualities. These qualities of Mind are enhanced and engaged through the various experiences of life, enabling insight, clarity, and freedom to develop away from stress, and other suffering. Such spiritual qualities are exemplified in the Ten PARAMITA (perfections) being: - Generosity, morality, renunciation, wisdom, energy, honesty, patience, resolve, loving-kindness plus equanimity.

The INTELLECT, whilst important must take second place to a growing understanding that through the subconscious we in time can develop our own nature with the result that, like an artist we will seek to improve OURSELVES in Cosmic time. We need not seek to be superior to others but we can move forward by adapting a more positive and creative attitude in all we think and do.

We must understand it is vital that we become masters of OURSELVES, intellectually, morally and spiritually, we need to be able to examine our states of consciousness and direct

thoughts and desires to the end where lies the rationale of existence. This habit of SELF EXAMINATION is obtainable only through the practice of CONTEMPLATION. It is also necessary to have insight going deep into the indwelling reason of things and this insight according to Buddhism is the outcome of the mental training of introspection which is another key to understanding “WHAT IS LIFE ABOUT”. It is up to each student to overcome the negative conditions that may well be experienced and resolve to gain true MENTAL freedom.

PANSIL a contraction of “PANCHA SILA” the five rules of basic morality is the name given to a recitation used in the THERAVADA tradition for many purposes. It is usually taken individually before a Buddhist Shrine or collectively at the beginning of a Buddhist meeting. This includes the refuge formula, and finally comes the five affirmations difficult to translate with an easily memorable phrase. A further meaning of these “precepts” is “To undertake the rule of training in the renunciation of attachments to (you name the negative aspects). The exact meaning is important to the Western student who must clearly understand: (A) This is not a vow to God or any other being but a solemn undertaking to oneself. (B) That it is not an undertaking never to kill or lie as the case may be but a vow taken in silence to train oneself to diminish one’s attachments to the various areas one has specified as these attachments frequently prevent us from moving forward to total inner peace.

“BUDDHISM” is at all times a reasonable middle way and all that a person may usefully undertake is to wean themselves with diligence from the ways of darkness (personal desire) and to set themselves on the inner path which will bring about total liberation. These points are usually considered necessary for the realization of a Buddhist understanding of life and they prevent the student being bound by unnecessary dogma. However one should clearly understand the three basics, which are: (A) CILA (Moral precepts). (B) DHYDNA (Contemplation). (C) PRAYANA (Wisdom). These are comparative and mutually related. The mechanical observance of the moral laws is NOT becoming to the dignity of the rational conscious being and we must totally separate any belief which binds the student to what can be termed religious or seemingly moral issues which are frequently man made.

Whilst it is not unusual that we occasionally return to foolish or ILLUSIONARY aspects in our daily lives, there comes a time when we must realise the purpose and origin of the greatest journey that faces every individual and whilst retaining happiness and joy as we understand it, we must not waste time on delusions that have in the past held us prisoner, giving us momentary pleasure but diverting us from the purpose for which we are born and the true path which every individual must at some time seek in the climb of the spiritual mountain. The Cosmic puzzle that gives forth the magnetic field and energies has had modern science Researches left in wonder as it is beyond the average understanding. It is important to appreciate we are able to overcome much of our birth by understanding even in a limited way Cosmic Consciousness and all that this may imply.

While life for many may signify a dull existence, we are as children sometimes failing to understand and appreciate the wonder and duty of life - The Universe and our plan within that vastness. Many establishments including Governments, Churches etc. blindly refuse to entertain

the idea that we are “not alone” but the enlightened realise that we are part of a major Cosmic Web and if we can apply our higher mind we will find something, which can only be termed as indescribable. As we look at the sky particularly on a starry night we cannot help but realise the vastness of the Universe and appreciate the magnitude of the stars. We behold in our limited vision the seemingly endless pattern of it all. The words “WORLDS WITHOUT END” should be a constant reminder that we are as insects in a pattern which is endless.

With moral resolve, the past plus our own shortcomings will become as dust, we will move forward to what may be termed an Endless Beginning and we will find oneness in that “WHICH IS”. If we all could have the opportunity of sharing (in this life) a true partnership through all the trials and tribulations we can find an inner joy and happiness. This can inspire and give hope enabling us to open our minds to the beauty and joy of the dawn that is endless. Our journey is the start of our return to what perhaps we can believe is the key to endless worlds and finally the soul finding its total oneness with creation and with the beginning of what is termed TIME yet endless in its majesty.

ZEN practice has suggested that we are caught in our own self-centred dream. Each moment is the only teacher. There is a golden rule that in all relationships as with DHARMA practice we must understand our business is our own practice and no one should attempt to interfere for we alone are the Masters of our own destiny. The “New-Age” type thinking has become a trend, leading the ignorant to believe some practices are superior and a fast track to finding spiritual liberation. Let it be clear, no one can give you your ultimate liberation, it can only be gained through efforts of your own, by using intuition, the higher mind and understanding what it is to find ‘COSMIC REALITY’.

SUFFERING. Is there a way out? If there were no way out of suffering there would be no reason to continue to live. The Buddha has taught the way. The first steps on the path consists of looking Suffering squarely in the eye and investigating it. When we do this we find what the Buddha experienced.

We suffer because:

1. We are Humans with bodies that become ill, deteriorate and die.
2. We don't like the way things are (this is aversion or anger).
3. We like the way things are and we don't want them to change, (clinging or desire).
4. We try to deny the truth of “Cause and Effect” and impermanence, (Ignorance).

These four reasons are profound. We have to understand about our own individual life. It is a treasure that is limited and one day will be used up. It is also a treasure that is unlimited, self-renewing and inexhaustible. Only when we advance beyond all opinions and views can we enter the spacious treasure of true reality. Once this treasure has opened, its wealth is opened at will and we then understand the depth of the inner spirit.

When SHAKYAMUNI BUDDHA spoke about HELL, he said simply that it is a physical and mental misery from which we have no means of escape. It is designed to make all people aware of the implacable and inexhaustible nature of “cause and effect”, “action and reaction”.

This should never be underestimated, it's workings are marvellous the fabric woven and rewoven moment by moment on the loom of our lives. It operates like all laws of physics.

The Hell Realms according to Buddhist descriptions are the same as those of other Religions. Hell is characterized by heat or considerable cold and by extreme physical pain with no hope of escape. Hell is sitting as in a blast furnace! This type of Hell is created by hot anger or the desire or act of killing. The real meaning of Hell does not exist outside our actions and comes into being at the time we act as a consequence of what we do now or in past lives. It is also our own actions that can free us from these hells. Let us be clear, Hell Realms are entered through indulging anger, allowing it to control our thoughts, speech and actions. Thus these are specific reparations in the hells for particular deeds.

How does the KARMA of repudiation work? If you become angry your face becomes contorted. Even beautiful people become ugly inside and out. We are naive to believe our bad actions can be hidden, that no one knows and they will have no consequence. This is total delusion to believe that when we die all of our negative and harmful actions will simply disappear. Whatever we set in motion, be it words or actions will continue to be written. The Buddha stated "HELL" is extreme physical and emotional pain with no relief. It is only via the power of sincere spiritual practice including efforts in meditation that we can turn our physical, emotional pain around. Never overlook that pain can be used as a valuable training tool, helping to change our Karma.

It must be clear Buddha originally taught there is no permanent unchanging thing like a SOUL that continues after death. However, the Buddha refused to say that NOTHING continued after death. As Buddhism entered China, it picked up TAOIST beliefs in the individual existence after death and the possibility of good and bad destinations as in Hells or Heavens.

We all pay lip service to KARMA but if we understood it fully having harmful deeds returned immediately to us several fold, how quickly would we change how we act. Pain (mental or physical) is a demanding and efficient teacher, which produces hard lessons into seeing the shadow of life.

## *Chapter 10*

# *The Mystic Circle*

There is tremendous power in words. You only have to use the word “intention” to yourself to see and feel the meaning. Our subconscious is always active; there is a way of bringing into existence that which does not currently exist, we are all like apprenticed artists creating something that appears to be blank. Yet within us lies a creative power in thought, leading to action that can herald the wind of change blowing away many illusions of the past. We must seek and learn that everything is part of a higher plan or the working out of the Cosmic Law of KARMA. Many consequences are often beyond our individual understanding as we are now living beings frequently missing a basic understanding of what constitutes our innermost being or Cosmic consciousness. One must pull out the arrow hidden in the heart and understand the meaning of “what is vast and empty”!

Understanding why people will be lead to commit an extreme act, however does not absolve them of moral responsibility for that act, whether it be in marriage or an association or as we are experiencing currently terrorism and the break down of many family values.

The fabric of our moral language begins to break apart as we try to explain individual human behaviour as the result of impersonal, historical, economic and above all else modern day social and political forces. Each of us is to some extent implicated in contributing to the conditions from which these acts of violence arise in whatever form they may be. As we consume fossil fuels, we are complacent in the intricate web that sustains the world as it is. Our challenge is to respond to the confusion without leaping into the oppositional theories of us versus them. The Science Fiction of yesterday is tomorrow’s reality. According to all reports Albert Einstein was in complete sympathy with the idea that prehistoric visits to earth took place by extraterrestrial intelligence. In Russia, Professor Iosif Samuilovich Shklovsky, a leading astrophysicist and radio astronomer is convinced that the earth had received visits from the Cosmos at least once. The well-known American Space Biologist, Karl Sagan, did not exclude the possibility that earth had been visited by representatives of an Extraterrestrial Civilization and accepted the idea that it was extremely probable.

We now understand the facts that space travel within our Solar system is conceivable but in the same breath many believe that Inter-terrestrial travel is not possible due to the vast distances involved. Like a conjurer, people whip out of the hat the statement that because interstellar space travel will never be possible, our earth cannot have been visited in the past. Why should not interstellar space travel be possible? Working on the speeds that we know are possible and are calculated and accepted by NASA, the journey to our nearest fixed star ALPHA CENTAURI, is

4.3 light years away would take eighty years. What is time? Even a simple example shows why it is difficult for us to escape traditional patterns of thought, especially when we seek to tackle projects that are aimed at the distant future. Now knowing “We are not alone” and with an understanding and not lip service to the Cosmic Laws of KARMA, we are able to feel we are part of a Cosmic consciousness - as earth mortals have failed to appreciate. To the thinking person without religious background or bias there can be little doubt of a force at present beyond our understanding, which indicated we have a place within the “Mystic Circle”.

For over two thousand years our fathers were obliged to take the Bible literally and this was the case for most Religions. It was forbidden to express any doubts and if one were brave or silly enough to question, the consequences would have been enormous. As history has stated many gifted dissenting persons have departed this mortal world by execution, burning or other more painful deaths yet if we look closely the bigots still remain today and are often leaders in the community. The serious student who claims to be a seeker of truth must examine the interpretations of the traditional and scientific. They should have their own opinions and views and not be like a robot that has the name and mind of its constructor and is unable to deviate from the programming.

In the near future we will see a carefully preserved world picture, which will arise within our consciousness destroying the last nationalistic feeling that soon will become meaningless. This will go well beyond the aspirations of the U.N. or the E.U., as we know them today. Our duty is to appreciate history and the living legends that have become a shining star in the night sky, calling us, beckoning our consciousness to look beyond our very limited flesh and blood encounters to know and finally understand the beauty of Cosmic rule. We are children, babes in the wood, in the majesty of the Cosmic Laws from which we emanate. Those who are called to look within, liberating their minds from the trash of modern scholastic thinking, to leave the many traditions that have been inherited either by a nation or through family, and are able to sweep aside the rubble. These enlightened ones will discover reality, their birthright and will know and accept the Cosmic message of the Universal Spirit that is both, IN US, AROUND US, and BEYOND our present day vision.

Thinking individuals are aware that in Europe, Church attendance is plummeting even in the U.K., Russia and Poland, (the heart of reactionary Catholicism). The young are clueless about the most basic Christian stories and if questioned it would not be surprising to realise that half the population do not know or could not explain the meaning of “Easter” or many other Religious festivals. It is precisely this ignorance that lets people emote with the flow, they do not know what they think or do!

The Vatican is not as some regard, a charming collection of Ruritanian Stamps or for gazing at past glories in the Sistine Chapel. It is a modern potent force for cruelty and hypocrisy. The power the Vatican holds is enormous and although it may be temporal it continues to exercise it's reign in many parts of the world including Australia. The great power of America via Bush as President can safely pray and believe his war in Iraq is just. Yet the late Pope condemned this and Capital Punishment. But in the U. S.A. it simply does not matter, as the

Church did not ever make a serious issue of these important problems or even order the “American Catholic Church” to take strong action. The same can be said of the “Church of England”. These are DOUBLE standards replacing truth and the poor lay individual becomes more confused.

The Vatican’s deeper power is in the authority over the 1.3 billion worshippers, which alas remains strongest over the poor of the world. The banning of contraceptives has caused in our lifetime, the death of millions of Catholics and others who have been dominated by Missionaries in many of the emerging nations. Across the world and especially in Africa, millions are suffering from the AIDS Virus and many of these deaths can be attributed to The Catholic Religion banning the use of Condoms, spreading the lie that the virus can easily pass through microscopic holes in the Condoms. Many other religious bodies continue to offer a view on life that has lost ALL credibility. What a disgrace it is that we see “the world’s rich”, quietly ignoring the Church’s outlandish teachings on contraception. Where are the rebellions on behalf of the helpless third world poor that die for their misplaced faith? This irresponsibility is beyond all comprehension.

We should by now be able to recognize and prove TOTAL fabrication on many issues. We should have in our search for the “Mystic Circle”, open minds to creative thought, some of which in the light of our own reasoning may be rejected - at least initially. In previous pages an effort has been made to highlight the opening of the search within. Let us not falter as it is up to each and every one of us to loosen the bonds that have tied us as prisoners to a variety of illusions, especially in our present life.

A happy life may not grant us all we hope for especially regarding wealth or power but as we seek to hold the inner calm that can be developed by the “search within”, we will find much truth, which becomes the corner stone of our new lives. We will come to understand that the past IS HISTORY and there is no point in dwelling on that condition. The present is NOW and the future is within our grasp to open our minds to “calm abiding” and in time we can look at each new day as the opportunity to learn and understand the real meaning of “WHAT IS LIFE” and “WHY ARE WE HERE”?

Various philosophies indicate the need for each individual to search and to find “WHAT IS” and with modern technology such as computers etc., we have the opportunity to access the enormous wealth of information available. Now is the time to break the bond of many of conventions that have isolated us from the world at large. Mass media makes much of sadness and other problems that do exist yet in acknowledging, we should try to overcome negative thinking and realise within ourselves we have the power to build and control our future. This future is not only NOW but in accepting the fact that in some way, some form we DO live on, we need to have the courage to become free from what others have implanted in us over generations. We must move forward in the Cosmic reality, to know we are as one family and although we are here for such a short time on earth we must find and understand the meaning of the truth “THAT AS WE SOW WE REAP”. Overcoming our negative thoughts and move proudly on the path of

“CALM ABIDING” will produce true and lasting happiness and this is the gateway to the “MYSTIC CIRCLE”.

Leaving political debate aside we often rant or fear the State taking ORWELLIAN Control of our thought processes. This should make us appreciate what a wonderful gift we have in the power of thought. Thankfully no-one can penetrate the depth of our mind and as we use this wonderful resource through night and day. How easy it is to sabotage our thinking, focusing alas on our limitations both perceived and real. We further spend too much time thinking of what we don't have; some of us carry a poor self-image and worst of all a futile comparison with others. We need to control our thoughts and steer away from total negative thinking. It is important to know “Who and What we are” and this helps us in understanding the ups and downs of life in general, but even though we read the right books we are still left with the question, “Where are we bound”?

As we pull off layers of negative thought we begin to understand self-truths, we start to recognize both good and bad and they are all learning opportunities. It becomes a new experience of discovery opening a wonderful Pandora's box of Inner Wisdom. We begin to note the emotionally, physically and even spiritually bad habits. We become bogged down and blame everyone for our problems forgetting to appreciate that most are created BY US often over many births of experience. We need not take emotional refuge in building a spirit of experimentation or adventure rather than looking with fearless criticism at where we are NOW. While ancient myths, legends and fairy tales can sometimes act to inspire us, a cold realistic approach with ruthless realism will rediscover the real self and help us to build again, as we have done through countless past years and now can appreciate the meaning of what is meant by the “JOURNEY OF THE SOUL”.

In investigating ancient wisdom at least three spiritual traditions should be looked at: - The HINDU CHAKRAS, the CHRISTIAN SACRAMENTS and the KABBALAH'S tree of life. The search indeed could well take this present life; we need to learn the wisdom of certain parables especially from the Christian Bible. What could ring truer in this crumbling world of destruction than “LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR AS THY SELF”. If we cannot accept “what we are” and love ourselves “as we are”, we run the grave risk of running in circles of illness, depression and general discontent. It is a tailspin chasing the ebbing tide and wasting a precious birth to perchance start once more to rebuild on the next round.

Seeking “INNER REALITY” is unwrapping our present views on life and discovering a new person. We need to appreciate this process as we master new skills leading over a period of time to basic reality. We then understand the truth in that we have a life time to learn our lessons and to connect with our natural God Head given creativity which can be a rewarding process taking us away from the outstanding clouds that have prevented us from becoming aware of “who we are”. We need to accept and overcome our problems, as they are all lessons leading to the “Mystic Way”.

Many of us remain in negative gear failing to climb away from the stereotype of life. Without thought or attitude we follow blindly in life's journey failing to awaken. How sad to be

lost and having to repeat the hard lessons over and over. When will we understand? “The Soul is immortal” and we need to liberate ourselves. We need to appreciate even at the smallest level, the underlying principle of the Universe that is the constant state of vibration and that includes the “Atomic” level and the subatomic level. Everything vibrates even the nucleus of the atom itself, which we thought was static, is constantly vibrating. In understanding the vibration of the Universe we encounter the key to instantly being able to sense the mood and pick up the vibes. This is known as BADO.

Because we do seek to learn we start to realise that when a problem arises, rather than question it, we should accept it and start to examine our thoughts on it, now and also in the past. Even in older age we must learn from the lessons which life offers us. We cannot deceive ourselves forever, and allowing desire and illusion to become a way of life is only for the weak as the call to the Spirit is not for the faint hearted. Let us be solid and go forward with vigour and not just accept average words of others. Our mission is to find the key to reach the mountaintop of truth and to know “WHY WE ARE HERE”.

Much has been written on the “INNER PATH”, in today’s values the countless offers are endless - they include offers of love, truth and happiness, but regrettably most offers are delusion and simply a way of making money from the gullible. We may, in some cases be deeply resistant to change; yet there is no truer statement, “BE YOU RICH OR POOR”, we all have to change our basic views on life. Should you however believe life is just a gamble, you are in danger of frittering away many opportunities and the years will pass. Your consciousness and memory will pass through death to later learn with regret what you have lost and will have to regain as yet in a period unknown and at what cost?

Living in self-delusion and wasting energy and life in the name of “WHAT”? Many Sages and others have pointed the way for Man/Woman to liberate themselves and to accept the “Wheel of Life” as endless. It binds us to a weary journey and although at the moment we may have material trappings these will pass, we cannot hold them forever, and eventually we must face the naked truth. From the moment we are born to the moment we die, we’re in an intimate relationship with life - with the sun and the moon the stars and the rain, with each other and everything, we are never NOT in relationship. ZEN emphasises true intimacy, in the sense of being truly awake to, and at one with, what the awakened mind would see as the other. True intimacy in the sense defines the realization experienced and is essential for the liberation of the mind from purgatory, which can be absorbed into our mind. A wise person would forget about luck and realise they alone are in charge of their own destiny.

Frequently much is spoken of the power of positive thinking. It is useless unless your own inner feelings go along with it. It is not positive thinking that makes events happen in our lives but rather imagination and emotion that alters outside events and objects and this includes our mental and physical bodies. Indeed we do create all the events that HAPPEN TO US. There is no such thing as an accident, no such thing as good or bad luck. Believing such things is to create a chaotic Universe. We create with the ease of our own breathing, all things that happen individually and collectively. We do not have to gain special spiritual powers, for these powers

are our birthright and our basic inheritance, we must learn to use them at all times. We create with our thoughts, our beliefs, our expectations and our attitudes and this in turn sets off imagination and emotion that is part of the creative force from which all realities spring.

The condition of the body is also directed by the conscious mind, illness does not just happen as there is a connection between conscious thought and the body condition. We need to recognize that the body is a mirror of our own beliefs and it will accurately materialize those beliefs held by the conscious mind. The mind in many cases is the ruler of a sick or healthy body as what you think and allow yourself to feel often becomes your experience. When you believe in a possible disaster you will, through your own anxiety attract that disaster until it becomes reality. Once you have realized through direct personal experience, the liberation of your mind will never again feel as though you are the victim of your environment.

It is said that after the Buddha obtained his enlightenment he was motivated to teach, he wanted to see that all beings were seeking happiness, yet out of our ignorance we are often doing the very things that result in suffering. This aroused his great compassion to point the way to freedom. The Buddha spoke of different kinds of happiness associated with stages of the unfolding path of awakening. As we penetrate deeper into the process of opening the happiness of each stage it brings us closer to the highest kind of happiness, the happiness NIBBANA of freedom. What we need to constantly appreciate is that the events and circumstances of our lives do not happen by accident; rather they are the result of certain causes and conditions. When we understand the conditions necessary for something to happen, we begin to take DESTINY into our own hands.

Even though pleasures are impermanent or fleeting we experience them for the moment and they bring us a certain delight but this is not true happiness. Purity of conduct is a fundamental way of coming into a relationship with ourselves and with the world. The first is the cultivation of generosity, the expression of non-greed and non-clinging, it is greed and attachment that keeps us bound to the Wheel of SANSARA, the cycle of life and death and with every act of giving we are able to weaken the power of grasping. The Buddha once said that if we knew as he did the fruit of giving, we would not let a single meal pass without sharing it, so great is the power of generosity. Generosity takes many forms and all are expressions of caring, of compassion and of renunciation. The ability to let go being the duty of Generosity, which brings its happiness in the moment.

The other aspect of purity of conduct is SILA, the PALI word for morality and we should understand there are five precepts that lay people should follow. These are: NOT KILLING, NOT STEALING, NOT COMMITTING SEXUAL MISCONDUCT NOR WRONG SPEECH, NOR HARSH SPEECH. In short the underlying principle is NON HARMING of ourselves or other people. We must become aware and start to consciously appreciate that the evolution of happiness does not lie in just Illusion.

Now at a time when females of the species are becoming more conscious of their own responsibilities, it is interesting to note that the historical Buddha SHAKYAMUNI had many female disciples yet little information has survived of them in early Buddhist literature.

However, like scattered gems, throughout the earlier PALI recollections are stories of great value. They centre on women and their liberation from suffering personal, social, cultural and religious bigotry. It is therefore a hopeful sign we are beginning to see that in a male dominated society the female form is establishing it's own birthright and obvious ability to be creative in a variety of spheres.

