

Essential  
Contemplations  
For the Soul

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Essential Contemplations for the Soul  
First Edition, 2016  
Revised Edition, 2018

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**This book is dedicated to my love Li.**

### **Acknowledgements**

Many of the essential truths, principles and practices discussed in this book first came to my attention through the writings of several great Spiritual teachers, in particular, Plotinus, Paul Brunton, Anthony Damiani, I. K. Taimni, and A. H. Almaas. I am deeply indebted to these great Souls, both as a source of inspiration for this book and for my life in general.

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## Introduction

*Essential Contemplations for the Soul* is a book of short passages about the Soul. As such, this is a book of short passages about you and I, for each of us is, essentially, a Soul—a Spiritual Being. More specifically, this is a book which succinctly but accurately describes the origin of the Soul, Its nature, the place of the Soul in the context of the Spiritual universe, the purpose and destiny of the Soul, and what it means to live a Soulful or Spiritual life. The Soul is not only our Essence, It may also be regarded as the Essence of all life: all of life manifests and unfolds as experiences within individual Souls. And it is through the inevitable and ineluctable movement and evolution of life that Souls such as you and I are gradually coming to fully realise our Spiritual Depth, and to give that Depth expression. The study of the Soul then, is the most essential, the most fundamental and important study we can undertake. More or less consciously we are already undertaking this course through life—we have no choice. Eventually, we all need to know the essential truths pertaining to the Soul, and to live in harmony with these truths. In this short book I have attempted to succinctly and clearly give many of the essential or fundamental truths pertaining to the Soul and Its place in the universe—that is, I have attempted to give many of the essential truths about who and what we really are and our place in the universe. My only wish is that this short work serves you well.

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## The Fundamental Nature of Existence

Spirit, not matter, is the source and ground of *all* that exists. Essentially (or fundamentally) and ultimately the whole universe is an expression and manifestation of The Spirit.<sup>1</sup> Essentially and ultimately all that exists arises from, is sustained by, and returns to The Spirit. The Spirit Itself is beyond all finite or limited dimensions, and therefore, cannot be that which is thought or imagined. Even where thought accurately describes the nature of The Spirit, this is a description only, and not the actual experience of The Spirit. However, there is “something” close to the nature of The Spirit, which is the *first* manifestation of The Spirit, and which can give us *some* intimation or indication of The Spirit: Awareness. Our essence, That which we essentially are, even now, always, That which is seeing, reading and comprehending these words, is pure Awareness. Another name for pure Awareness is the Soul. Pure Awareness or the Soul, like The Spirit, is beyond all finite or limited dimensions and forms. From The Spirit, the source of the universe, comes forth the Soul as pure or formless Awareness. It does so first as what may be referred to as the Absolute Soul. Proceeding directly from The Spirit, the Absolute Soul is a Spiritual Being. In turn, from the Absolute Soul come forth many individual Souls, including you and I. Essentially, each individual Soul is, like the Absolute Soul, pure or formless Awareness, as such we too are Spiritual Beings. Within these individual Souls the whole universe

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<sup>1</sup> When terms such as ‘Spirit’ or ‘Soul’ or ‘Awareness’ are given capitals, this is to show that they denote a reality which has no finite or limited dimensions.

manifests and unfolds *as* more or less finite or limited forms or experiences—this is the *fundamental* nature and structure of existence.<sup>2</sup>

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### **An Overview of Existence: the Spiritual Universe**

From The Spirit, the Spiritual universe unfolds as a series of more or less discrete planes or levels. An overview of the Spiritual universe provides the widest context for contemplating oneself as a Soul. Proceeding from The Spirit, the first plane of existence is the Archetypes. Each Archetype is, or “embodies”, a particular Idea which serves as a foundation for or principle of manifestation.<sup>3</sup> For example, there exists the Archetype or Idea of Love, and all the manifest experiences of love in the whole universe are more or less limited expressions of this Archetype. Collectively, the Archetypes form the fundamental pattern for the whole Spiritual universe, and each universal plane that follows is a less unified and refined expression and reflection of the Archetypes. Also proceeding from The Spirit, and present with the Archetypes, is the initial phase of the Soul, what may be called the Absolute Soul. Essentially, the Absolute Soul, indeed each and every Soul, exists as pure or formless Awareness. It will be the Soul, specifically individual Souls, which will serve as the medium through which the Archetypes will manifest the universe as finite or limited experiences. On the next plane then are the individual Souls, including you and I. Individual Souls are emanations or expressions of the Absolute Soul. Essentially, each individual Soul is pure or formless Awareness and, simultaneously, this *same* Awareness but qualified and knowing Itself as an Individual. Paradoxically, upon this plane of the universe each individual Soul *may* experience Itself *as* every other Soul. Here, it may be said equally that there are many Souls or One Soul. Further, manifesting “within” each individual Soul is Its own unique Vision of the Archetypes. It is this unique Vision which is the blueprint of each Soul’s *unique* destiny which it will gradually unfold and evolve in the lower planes of the universe. To be clear, upon this plane the individual Soul exists and knows Itself as formless Awareness and, simultaneously, as an Individual Awareness in which a unique Vision of the Archetypes manifests. This phase or level of the Soul, with a dual nature, may be called the Higher Soul. On the next universal plane, what may be called the higher mental plane or causal plane, the next phase of the individual, including you or I, resides. This phase of ourselves is commonly called the Higher Self. The Higher Self is the intermediary between the Higher Soul “above” and us “below” in the so-called physical world. Then follows in succession what may be called the lower mental plane, next the astral plane, and finally the physical plane with which we are familiar. This is a *broad* overview of the Spiritual universe—the totality of existence.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> In the Western philosophical tradition, the idea of individual Souls emanating from an Absolute Soul is found in the writings of Plotinus who, in turn, understood this to reflect the teaching of Plato.

<sup>3</sup> Whenever a word appears in double quotation marks, it means that it is being used in a non-literal manner. For example, an Archetype does not have a body as the term is normally understood.

<sup>4</sup> A number of Spiritual traditions and teachers describe the various planes of universal existence or being, including Vedanta, Theosophy, Plotinus, Anthony Damiani, I. K. Taimni, and A. H. Almaas. In part, this brief overview of the Spiritual universe draws upon these accounts.

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### The Individual Soul

Each of us has an innate or inborn sense of being an individual which is, normally, regarded as being precious. This sense or knowing of being a precious individual is an expression of a reality and truth of our Spiritual nature. All individual Souls come forth from the Absolute Soul which is an immediate expression of The Spirit, the source of all existence. When an individual Soul comes forth from the Absolute Soul, It does so as pure or formless or dimensionless Awareness. As such, the individual Soul shares the *same* nature as the Absolute Soul, also formless, and as such the individual Soul *cannot yet* be regarded as an individual—It is really, actually an “extension” of the Absolute Soul. Here, in this condition, the Soul Knows Itself as formless Awareness simply by Being that Awareness—Knowing-by-Being—but, the Soul is *without* the existence or experience of individuality. Next, “within” the Soul as formless Awareness, a knowing of Itself as an Individual arises. Individuality may be regarded as the first expression or manifestation from and “within” the Soul as formless Awareness. Individuality may be described as the formless Awareness which is the Soul but now formed or qualified, and knowing Itself as, an Individual. Further, just as the Soul as formless Awareness Knows Itself by Being Itself, so too the Soul as Individualised Awareness Knows Itself by Being Itself. To be clear, the Soul now has two *simultaneous* levels of Being and Knowing: as formless Awareness and, as this same Awareness now qualified and knowing Itself as an Individual. These two levels of Being are so closely united that the Soul *simultaneously apprehends* that It is both formless and Individualised Awareness. The Individuality, at this deep level of the Soul, is eternal, unchanging. It is this Individuality, so closely united with the Soul as formless Awareness, which is the *ground* or source of our familiar, everyday knowing of being a precious individual. Our ordinary and everyday knowing of being an ‘I’ is a *reflected* and *muted* expression of the Individuality; and this is why our normal sense of ‘I’ is experienced as precious. When the Soul unfolds its potentialities and becomes a human this ordinary sense or knowing of being an ‘I’ is usually and *mistakenly* attributed to a personality structure, and maybe the body. Further, this composite of a personality and body, with the ‘I’ at its core, what is commonly called the ego, is usually mistaken to be oneself. However, the truth is that we are not the ego. We are not even the individual or ‘I’ in its reflected form at the core of the ego. We *are* the Individual which is intimately associated with formless Awareness; and more deeply still, we are essentially formless Awareness.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> The Individual or Individualised Soul is recognised in a number of Spiritual teachings and traditions. In Vedanta and more broadly Hinduism it is called the *Atma* or *Asmita*, in the Western tradition Plotinus calls it the Intelligible Soul—although this position needs some qualification—whereas A. H. Almaas calls it The Point or Essential Self. (Of course, terminology can be “slippery” and we must always be careful in comparing terms from different traditions.) In particular, the description of the Individual Soul in this section draws upon the writings of A.H. Almaas, while making no claim to *accurately* represent his teachings.

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### **Our Full Depth and Height**

We each have an awe-inspiring depth or height which normally remains unknown and un-experienced. As an individual Soul you have three *simultaneously* existing phases or levels which extend throughout most of the Spiritual universe. All individual Souls have their origin in, and are emanations from, the Absolute Soul. The Absolute Soul, and the Archetypes with which It is present, are the first expression of The Spirit which is the source of all existence. The Absolute Soul is *essentially* pure or formless, and so too the individual Soul. Each individual Soul then “enters” or “descends” into the universe to express Its infinite potential and to fulfill Its unique destiny. For the Soul to enter or descend into the universe means that finite or limited experiences manifest “within” the formless Awareness that It is. The nature of the experiences which appear will determine on which universal plane(s) the Soul is situated. The first descent is when the Soul becomes aware of Itself as an Individual Awareness. Here, the Soul *simultaneously* knows Itself as formless Awareness and also, this same Awareness but now qualified as being an Individual. This Soul, with its dual nature, also becomes aware of a unique and changeless Vision of the Archetypes which will be the blueprint of Its unique destiny. This completes the first phase and descent of the Soul. To fulfill its destiny the Soul descends twice more: first, to become aware of those finite or limited experiences which constitute the Higher Self and Its world; and second, to become aware of those experiences which constitute the Soul’s life in this world as a human being. To be clear, you are *one* Soul, one dimensionless or formless Awareness, one Spiritual Being, but with three simultaneous phases and foci: the Soul knows Itself as formless Awareness and, simultaneously, as Individual Awareness which has Its Vision of the Archetypes—together, these two aspects are the Higher Soul; second, this formless Awareness is devoting “part” of Itself to the experiences which form the nature and world of the Higher Self; and finally, this same formless Awareness is devoting “part” of Itself to the experiences of this world including the personality and body.<sup>6</sup> This is a *brief yet complete* overview of who and what we are.<sup>7</sup>

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### **Our Spiritual and Human Nature**

The Soul enters or descends into the universe by devoting “part” of the formless Awareness which It is, to be aware of finite or limited experiences. In relationship with these finite experiences of the universe the Soul will gradually discover, express and evolve Its inherent potentials and fulfill Its destiny. And so, this so-

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<sup>6</sup> Again, whenever a word appears in double quotation marks, it means that it is being used in a non-literal manner. For example, as *formless* Awareness the Soul cannot have spatial parts.

<sup>7</sup> In part, this overview of the individual Soul draws upon, synthesizes and adapts several accounts of the nature of the Soul, in particular, accounts found in the works of I. K. Taimni whose focus is a synthesis of Vedanta and Theosophy, and in the works of Anthony Damiani whose focus is deeply grounded in the work of Plotinus and Paul Brunton.

called physical world, with which you are familiar, appears to the Soul or Awareness that you are. In particular, it does so as a series or succession of experiences that we call sense perceptions. More widely, your life in this “physical” world is constituted of a succession of sense perceptions, thoughts, emotions, needs, desires, aspirations, memories and imaginings. From this flow of experiences in Awareness we construct, in the imagination, and for the most part unconsciously, our *assumed* external, permanent, self-sufficient and material world, including the body. But, our *actual* experience is always of a succession of experiences appearing within Awareness. Also included within this flow of experiences is that which we call the ego. Normally and mistakenly we *identify* with, and attach or cling to, the ego. But actually and essentially, each of us is a Soul which is aware of the ego, body and world as a succession of experiences. Soul or formless Awareness is our Essence, the ego and body are part of our Self- or Soul-*expression* while “in” this world. Fundamentally, a human being is formless Awareness, the Soul, devoting “part” of Itself (and Its attention) to the finite or limited experiences which constitute the ego and body, and more generally, constitute this world. This however, is a narrow definition of what it means to be human; for the experience of being human is dependent upon, and deeply influenced and shaped by, the deeper levels or phases of the Soul, of Oneself—the Higher Self and the Higher Soul.

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### **The Nature of the Personality or Ego**

Most of us most of the time, if not consciously then subconsciously, are identified with or take ourselves to be the personality or ego. But, what is the ego? The core of the ego is the sense or knowing of being an individual or ‘I’. But, normally we take ourselves to be much more than this. Normally, this sense of ‘I’ is associated with, and mixed up with, being a constellation of characteristics or capacities such as being loving, angry, intelligent, bad, strong, stubborn, virtuous, humorous, courageous, kind, compassionate, and so on. This is to say, that normally the sense of ‘I’ is mixed up with a personality structure. Often, the sense of ‘I’ is even extended to and encompasses the body—this too we take ourselves to be. Around the sense or knowing of being an ‘I’ then, a group of experiences are constellated or grouped, and this, we take ourselves to be. Furthermore, in the imagination, we build-up a self-image or self-concept of ourselves as such. All of this occurs quite naturally as we mature from infants into adults. But, are we the ego as such, that is, as the knowing of being an ‘I’ identified with a personality structure and a body along with a corresponding self-image? No. From observation we find that we are present even when the ego is not, and therefore, we are not the ego. From observation we find that we are present even when that group or selection of experiences which we call the personality—for example, being loving, angry, intelligent, bad, strong, stubborn, virtuous, humorous, courageous, kind, compassionate, and so on—are not present. This happens quite often when awareness is preoccupied with *other* experiences. Likewise, we find that we are present even when the self-image is not present. This too is a common occurrence, for the mind is often preoccupied with many other things. We find that even the

sense or knowing of being an ‘I’ is not always present but constantly pushed out of awareness when we are preoccupied with various experiences and activities. Yet, in some very real way we remain present even when the ego is not present; indeed, we are in some very real way present to *all* of our experiences. What is this ever-present self which you and I are? It is not any one, or even a selection, of any of our finite or limited experiences, for each of these comes and goes, and yet we remain, remain present with all of our experiences. Instead, you and I are the unchanging or timeless or eternal Awareness, the Soul, which is aware of all of our changing experiences, including the ego. The ego is simply part of our Self- or Soul-expression.

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### **Forgetfulness of the Soul and Identification with the Ego**

In the most fundamental sense, for you to be born into this world means that the Soul which you are, and which essentially exists as pure or formless Awareness, has given “part” of Itself to be aware of the experiences which constitute life in this world. It can also be said that the experiences of this world begin to manifest “within” the Soul that you are. When you were first born into this world you were more or less aware of yourself as the Soul or pure Awareness—and what may be called Its Qualities—but lacked the cognitive capacity, or knowing power, to recognise yourself as such.<sup>8</sup> This is to say, you had not yet developed the capacity of abstract thought to be *self-reflective*. However, as you matured you quickly lost awareness of your true nature as the Soul. This occurs for everyone because, basically, in the absence of sufficient cognitive or knowing capacity, our natural way of relating to our experiences as a growing child is to shun our painful experiences and attach or “cling” to our pleasurable experiences. The more we attach to our finite experiences, the more we shut out or exclude the awareness of our true nature as the Soul. This is a fundamental Spiritual principle or law: our attachments to finite or limited experiences exclude our full awareness and realisation of the Soul; whereas the release or surrender of our attachments allows our greater awareness and realisation of the Soul. By the time that our cognitive capacity or knowing power has gradually matured so that we can be self-cognizant or self-reflective, we have *lost* awareness of ourselves as the Soul or formless Awareness. Instead, we are now *only* aware of the finite experiences of this world, including the sense or knowing of ‘I’ (which, as discussed, is a muted *reflection* of the Individuality of the Higher Soul). In this situation, we naturally and unconsciously take ourselves to be the ‘I’ and whatever experiences the ‘I’ becomes intimately united and mixed up with, such as the personality structure and the body. Here, we have more or less lost touch with our Spiritual Depth, the formless Soul, and indeed, with the Soul of the world, for the world appears “in” the Soul that we are. Part of the purpose of life is to recover this Depth of ourselves and of the world.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> What is meant by Qualities of the Soul is discussed below.

<sup>9</sup> I am indebted to the writings of A. H. Almaas, in particular his work *The Point of Existence: Transformations of Narcissism in Self-Realization*, for most of the key points in this passage.

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### **The Higher Self**

Situated between the Higher Soul “above” and the human being “below” is the Higher Self—the intermediate phase of the individual Soul. The *fundamental* nature of the Higher Self is the same as that of the human being or what we may, in this context, call the lower self: It is “part” of the formless Awareness of the Soul devoted to a group of experiences which constitute its world and life. Again similar to the human being or lower self, the Higher Self has an ego or personality and a body by which it participates in Its life on what is commonly called the causal plane of the universe. Again like the human being, the Higher Self is in the process of developing, and each Higher Self is more or less developed. The Higher Self develops by receiving from the Higher Soul above, the human being below, and through interaction on Its own plane of existence. The more developed It is, the more the Higher Self will receive from and be guided by the Higher Soul. The Higher Self is the *immediate* cause and creator of the human being. The manner in which It does this may be described in different ways. *One* way is to say that the Higher Self creates a human being by associating “part” of Its awareness with a human body, where this body is a tightly structured complex of experiences created by other Souls which are concerned with the evolution of earthly life. Each Higher Self creates many, many human lives *in succession*—what is normally called reincarnation. It does so as part of the fulfillment of the unique destiny of the individual Soul, the blueprint of which is the Vision of the Archetypes contemplated by the Higher Soul. During each human life or incarnation, and especially after each life, the Higher Self distills and stores the essences, the essential learning and experiences, of that life. In this way the Higher Self adds to Its development. During our lives, you and I receive guidance, wisdom, and other forms of grace from the Higher Self, including from Its stored repository of experiences and lessons.<sup>10</sup>

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### **The Purpose of Life and Self-Realisation**

The Spiritual universe is not deliberately planned and created: it arises *spontaneously* from The Spirit which is without form or limitation. It is *inherent* to the nature of The Spirit to manifest the universe. As Souls we too arise spontaneously from the Absolute Soul which is an immediate expression of The Spirit. In this sense there is no *ultimate* purpose to life, and yet, from another perspective there is great and overwhelming purpose. Through us as Souls, The Spirit is gradually realising, expressing and evolving Its hidden potentials. The

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<sup>10</sup> Quite a detailed overview of the Higher Self can be found in the Theosophical work *The Causal Body and the Ego* by Arthur Powell. Scattered references to the Higher Self can also be found in the work of Plotinus where it is termed the rational soul. In part, my account draws upon both these sources.

universe is an ever-evolving expression of the hidden nature of The Spirit; and the universe evolves in a somewhat unique way through each of us. Each of us has the choice to either harmonise with and facilitate this evolution or, to move contrary to its current. If we choose the latter we suffer. Avoidance of unnecessary suffering is a negative motivation for choosing to harmonise with the unfolding of the universe, but there is also a positive motivation: the greater realisation and expression of the hidden potentials of The Spirit, which can also be regarded as the Soul's potentials, are *intrinsically* fulfilling. To increasingly realise and express Love, Beauty, Joy, Peace, Power, Truth, Reality, Value and the other Qualities of The Spirit or Soul are intrinsically fulfilling—indeed the deepest fulfillment. Intrinsically valuable, Spiritual expression is always for its own sake. The essence of our Spiritual expression—and of harmonising with the unfolding of the universe—is to follow the guidance of the Higher Soul. As our Spiritual or Soulful expression deepens we progressively release our attachments to the finite experiences of life, in particular, to the personality and body. As we do so we are able to more fully experience and realise our hidden potentials, including the Qualities of the Soul, which can then be given expression. Ultimately, we come to realise our essential nature as the Soul or formless Awareness. To realise your true nature as the Soul, while progressively realising and giving expression to the potentials of the Soul (or of The Spirit through the Soul), is the essence of Self-Realisation, and the fundamental purpose of your life.

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### **Reflections and Reminders**

We can imagine the Spiritual universe as a sphere. At the core of this sphere is its source, The Spirit, and around this core are the Archetypes—the fundamental pattern for the universe. Next, we can imagine that around this centre are arranged a series of concentric spheres, each larger than its prior—the planes of the Spiritual universe. We may imagine the surface of each of these spheres to be composed of a mosaic of finite or limited forms which are expressions, representations and reflections of the Archetypes within. The further away from the Archetypes the less expressive, representative and reflective these forms become. The outermost sphere or plane is this so-called physical universe of ours. Here, the finite forms which compose this world are, for the most part, but poor reflections of their Archetypes. Upon every sphere or plane there live Spiritual beings. The inner depth or center of each and *every* Spiritual Being is *also* the inner depth and centre of the Spiritual universe—The Spirit and the Archetypes. At the centre everything is connected and one, although this is rarely known in a *conscious* way by the Spiritual beings in *our* world. Because of this inner connection we are constantly, although for the most part unconsciously, recognising the Archetypes being expressed and reflected through the finite forms or experiences of this world—through sights, sounds, ideas, symbols, emotions, aspirations, imaginings, creations, art, nature, and so on. Equally, it can be said that the finite forms of life without are *evoking* recognitions and experiences of the Archetypes within us. Naturally, our love goes out to those finite forms which most remind us of the Archetypes. And so, one person's heart goes out to another who embodies and personifies the Archetype of Power;

another's heart goes out to someone who embodies Beauty; another's heart to someone who embodies a particular constellation of Archetypes; and another's heart to nature, or to particular ideas or ideals which he or she recognises as the finest expressions of the Archetypes. Our hearts are forever going out to the finite forms of life because through them we are being reminded of the Archetypes within which are part of our own Spiritual depth. However, part of Self-Realisation is to come to know the Archetypes *within*, as our own nature, especially as the Qualities of the Soul which are reflections of the Archetypes within the Soul.

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### The Qualities of the Soul

Essentially the Soul exists as formless Awareness, and yet It may also be discerned to possess Qualities. These Qualities include but are not restricted to: Reality, Truth, Immortality, Individuality, Value, Love, Joy, Peace, Power and Beauty. The Qualities of the Soul are either inherent to the nature of the Soul as formless Awareness or, they are the *initial* expressions or manifestations of the Soul. From one perspective the *expressed* Qualities of the Soul can be regarded as manifestations of Its formerly hidden or implicit potentials. From another perspective these expressed Qualities are reflections of some of the Archetypes manifesting “within” the Soul, and where these Qualities form *part* of the Higher Soul's unique and unchanging Vision of the Archetypes. Both perspectives are correct. The expressed or manifested Qualities share a very intimate relationship with the formless Awareness from which they arise and “in” which they appear. Essentially, the Soul is formless Awareness which Knows Itself as such *simply* by Being Itself. When a Quality manifests “within” this formless Awareness, the Quality is this formless Awareness which is the Soul but now formed or qualified. Further, just as the Soul as formless Awareness Knows Itself by Being Itself, so too, the Soul as Qualified Awareness—or as a Quality—Knows Itself by Being Itself. For example, the Soul Knows Itself as Love by Being Love. To be clear, when the Soul manifests Its Qualities—as part of Its Vision of the Archetypes—It has two *simultaneous* levels of Being and Knowing: as formless Awareness and, as this same Awareness now differentiated as the Qualities. These two levels of Being are so closely united, that the Soul *simultaneously apprehends* that It is both formless Awareness and Its Qualities. Indeed, these two levels of Being are so closely united, it can be said, paradoxically, that the Soul as formless Awareness *is* Its Qualities, or that the Soul as the Qualities *is* formless Awareness. All the Qualities of the Soul are *more or less* experienced by the Higher *Self*, and by us here “below” in this world. Of course, they are, or are among, the qualities of humanity which we admire and revere most deeply. The increasing realisation of these Qualities of the Soul, giving Them expression in a unique way, and the realisation of the Soul Itself, as formless Awareness, may be regarded as the *core* of Self-Realisation and of our life's purpose.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> In part, this account of the relations between the Soul, Its Qualities and the Archetypes weaves together and adapts ideas from the works of Plotinus and A. H. Almaas.

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### **The Way of the Soul: Be True to Yourself**

In the highest sense, to be true to yourself is to be true to your Soul, to be true to the guiding voice of the Soul which is your Spiritual depth, That which you essentially are. As you grow Spiritually, overall, the need to be true to yourself, to the Soul, becomes clearer and stronger. What is it to follow the way of your Soul? It is to hear and to give expression to the voice within you which is imbued with and gives the *deepest* feeling (conviction) of rightness—that this is the right or good way to express yourself. As such, this way is an expression of your truth. Being what is true and right for you, this way is imbued with power, and also, deep peace and joy come from contemplating and giving expression to it. The way of the Soul is also to express yourself with love—love for what you are expressing, love for yourself, and love for those involved. Indeed, it is this way which carries implicitly and more or less explicitly *all* the Qualities of the Soul. As such, it is that way which is expressed for its own sake, for its own inherent value. The way of the Soul, of being true to oneself, is immediately and in the long run the most fulfilling way of being; it is the way of well-being; and it is the most direct path to the fulfillment of your destiny—your unique place in the unfolding of the universe. In addition to being described as ‘being true to oneself’, the way of the Soul is also commonly called the way of integrity, or the way of being authentic or real.

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### **Realising the Qualities of the Soul**

Perhaps the main Qualities of the Soul are Truth, Reality, Immortality, Individuality, Value, Love, Beauty, Joy, Peace and Power. The Qualities are inherent to the Soul, or are the first expressions of the Soul and which *may* be regarded as *inseparable* from the Soul. The Qualities are intrinsically valuable and fulfilling—indeed, they are, or come to be our deepest fulfilment. The deepening experience and realisation of *any* Quality occurs in the same, essential way: through being true to oneself which, from a Spiritual perspective, is to be true to the Soul. When we follow the voice of the Higher Soul we are simultaneously experiencing and giving expression to *all* the Qualities of the Soul in so far as we are able at that time. In *any* expression of the Soul all of the Qualities are implicit and more or less explicit. And so, if we reflect upon an act of the Soul we find that it can be simultaneously and accurately described as true, real, individual, valuable, loving, beautiful, joyful, peaceful and powerful. Through Their expression, guided by the Soul, the Qualities naturally deepen. Actually, there is no other way to deepen into and realise these Qualities. Following the Soul, in particular, experiencing and expressing the Qualities of the Soul, is intrinsically satisfying, therefore, self-sufficient; it is its own reward, seeking and requiring nothing outside of itself. As such, it is a path of non-attachment; whatever experiences come to us along this path are appreciated but not clung to, for it is following the Soul which is of primary and sufficient importance. It is through non-attachment that deeper

experiences of the Soul and Its Qualities naturally occur—including deeper experiences of wisdom which reinforce our allegiance to the Soul and Its way.

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### **Two Ways of Being**

Essentially there are two ways of being. The first way is that of the Soul. This is to follow the voice of truth or wisdom from the Higher Soul, your Spiritual Depth. As the voice of truth, it is imbued with the deepest conviction of rightness, and gives the deepest feelings of peace and joy when it is honoured. As the voice of truth, it is also imbued with power. The way of the Soul is also the way of love, for oneself, others, and for what is being expressed. Such a way is also evidently beautiful. Indeed, all the Qualities of the Soul are implicit and more or less explicit in this way. Being the experience and expression of the Qualities of the Soul, the way of the Soul is intrinsically valuable and self-satisfying. This path is for its own sake, and as such it is the path of non-attachment or surrender where there is no striving to get hold of particular experiences. When you are non-attached or surrendered, holding life lightly, you are naturally open to yet deeper experiences of the Soul and Its Qualities. The way of the Soul then is the way of fulfillment and of deepening fulfillment. The second way of being is that of the ego. This is to follow the voice of the ego, that voice which arises when we are mistakenly identified with and attached to the ego, and which speaks from this perspective. (As discussed earlier, the ego is the sense of ‘I’ mixed up and associated with a personality structure and corresponding self-image.) Attachments shut out our experiences of the Soul and Its Qualities, and so, when we are attached to the ego and what supports it we feel empty. In the attempt to fill this emptiness we seek to get hold of particular experiences such people, personas, places and possessions. This attempt more or less manifests as the rejection of what is, while desiring some future experience. Naturally, this path is attended by much fear, anger and sadness as the experiences which we desire, or to which we attached, are denied, threatened or lost. These then are the two essential ways of being: the way of rejection and attachment in the attempt to fill our inner emptiness, where this attempt is fraught with anxiety, anger and sadness; or, the way of expressing the fullness of the Soul leading to yet deeper fullness.<sup>12</sup>

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### **Motivations**

Once you have consciously stepped onto the Spiritual path, sooner or later the question of motivation—‘What is the motivation moving my self-expression?’—becomes fundamentally important. Eventually the question crystallises as: ‘Is my self-expression from the Soul, inspired by the Soul, or does my self-expression come from my identification with the ego?’ The essential answer is that Soulful or Spiritual self-expression, being intrinsically valuable, is for itself, for its own sake;

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<sup>12</sup> In this work, the terms ‘desire’ and attachment are synonyms.

it is self-sufficient and self-complete requiring nothing outside of itself; it is its own fulfilment. Ego-centred self-expression is motivated by attachment, or what may be called desire. Attached self-expression is not for itself, nor is it self-sufficient. Instead, it seeks to possess or to get hold of a particular person, thing, condition or place, in short, a particular experience, to fill one's inner emptiness. Anger and fear are also motivations of the ego. Anger and fear occur when an attachment is denied or threatened, and they are motivations aimed to protect or to restore those experiences to which we are attached.

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### **Attachments and Aspirations**

Attachment and aspiration are two fundamentally different motivations—the first occurs when we are identified with the ego, the second is from the Soul. Attachment is the attempt to fix or hold onto a particular experience; it is actually “holding” onto a particular experience in the Awareness that you are. To get a better feel or sense for what is meant by attachment we can enumerate some of its synonyms: desiring, clinging, craving, grasping, possessiveness, obsessiveness, to be bound, stuck, enchained, trapped, enslaved, imprisoned, infatuated, intoxicated, addicted, and compelled. The conditions underlying and causing attachment are emptiness and lack of wisdom: attachment is the attempt to fill our inner emptiness through the mistaken method of acquiring particular or finite experiences. In contrast, aspiration is the Soul's *love* for, and intention to attain, a future experience. Aspiration is part of the Soul's guidance and Its way. Aspiration is the Soul reaching out with love toward a future experience which is part of the fulfillment of Its destiny. Although aspiration is reaching out toward a *future* goal or experience, it is non-attached. Aspiration is a current of love from the Soul which is guided by Its wisdom. As such, it is an intrinsically valuable way of being which is its *own* satisfaction, needing nothing other. Love is not possessive. To “ride” a current of aspiration is self-satisfying, for its own sake, where that which it seeks to attain is loved, but secondary, and ultimately not essential. As a non-attached way of being, aspiration allows deeper experiences of the Soul and Its Qualities to emerge—including new, clearer, deeper and more intense aspirations. While we must learn to dissolve our attachments through deepening wisdom, we must not throw away our aspirations and true loves—something that will only leave us feeling empty, and probably frustrated and sad. Instead, our task is to follow our aspirations while freeing or purifying them of any attachments.

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### **Allowing and Acceptance**

Allowing or accepting what is, our experiences, is an essential element of the Soulful or Spiritual path. Ultimately we will come to accept *all* that is—a universal ‘yes’ to life. However, the true nature of allowing or accepting is subtle, even more so its application to the varied experiences of life. It may easily and mistakenly be confused with passivity, withdrawal, apathy, resignation or patience. Often, we

find ourselves rejecting what is and desiring what is not—this is the way of aversion and attachment. This way is always characterised by negative emotions of varying degrees: we feel hostility, fear and sadness in the presence of what we don't want; and we feel frustration, anger, fear and sadness in the absence of what we do want. Acceptance of, or allowing what is truly occurs when we truly see the value of what we are experiencing, or, when we truly see the value of acceptance (as opposed to resistance). This may be no more, or less, than seeing and experiencing the release from our negative emotions or suffering which comes through our acceptance; it may also be the experience that acceptance makes us more receptive to the Soul. Acceptance does *not* preclude active self expression. A situation can be fully accepted, and yet, there can be self-expression which changes, transforms or leaves that situation. This occurs when the self-expression we are choosing is *not a reaction against* what is, but is done for itself, for its own value. Here, the present situation which we will be changing or leaving is valued and accepted, and, the new self-expression and situation are valued and accepted also. The *only* way to do this is to follow the Soul. Soulful expression is not a rejection of what is to get to somewhere else; Soulful expression is for itself, for it is intrinsically valuable and fulfilling. Each step along this path is valuable and therefore acceptable—it is a path of acceptance or allowing. The Soul values and accepts the new way and new experiences that It is choosing and, the Soul also values and accepts those experiences which It is changing or leaving, for on the one hand, It realises that while any experience is present it has its place, necessity, and value, while on the other hand, the Soul realises the deep value of allowing or acceptance what is.

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### **Our Relationship to Life**

As we develop from birth we more or less lose the inner experiences of being the Soul and Its Qualities. “Loss” of the Soul is *actually* the core of our experiences of emptiness. As we journey through life we find that certain experiences—particular people, places, roles, activities and objects—more or less fill our inner emptiness. Essentially, what is occurring is that these outer experiences are *evoking* from within us deeper experiences and realisations of the Soul and Its Qualities. Generally, we misunderstand this, and believe instead that our inner experiences and realisations are *dependent* upon the outer. We may even go so far as to project our inner experiences and realisations onto the outer and believe, wrongly, that they lie in those experiences alone, and not within us. Consequently we attach to our outer experiences. There is a sad irony here, for it is attachment which actually shuts us off from deeper experiences of the Soul and Its Qualities. But as we mature Spiritually we progressively realise that there is a dialectic or exchange between our inner, intrinsic and Divine nature, and the outer, as the transient and finite experiences of life: the outer is to some degree *evoking* deeper experiences and realisations of the Soul and Its Qualities which, in turn, respond to and shape what is occurring outwardly. For example, the appearance of a certain person evokes the Qualities of Love and Joy from within you, and then Love and Joy inform and shape your self-expression. With the realisation of this dialectic, we

gradually establish a new relationship with life. Instead of attaching to some experiences and rejecting others, we follow the way of the Soul which is characterised by expressing the Qualities of the Soul—in so far as we find them present—and by non-attachment. In doing so, we increasingly come to realise ourselves as the Soul and Its Qualities. While the dialectic or exchange between the inner and the outer continues—where outer experiences continue to evoke or call forth the Qualities of our Soul, and we appreciate the outer experiences for doing so—we increasingly realise ourselves as the Soul and Its Qualities, and live from There.

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### **Freedom**

The aspiration for freedom, to live according to one's truth and what is believed to be right, lies deep within each of us. As we grow Spiritually our understanding and expression of freedom undergoes a deep transformation. Less and less is it seen and experienced to be the ability to get hold of what we want—in particular, to arrange external conditions. More and more freedom is found in being true to oneself—in honouring the voice of the Heart or Soul. As we develop Spiritually this voice becomes clearer and stronger, so too the need to honour it, and so too our fulfillment from giving it expression. The power which exists at the core of this voice does so because it is the voice of destiny—the intrinsic, immortal and irrepressible impulse to realise and express our Spiritual Depth in a unique way as part of the unfolding of the universe. Each of us has a unique path to travel which, inwardly, reveals deeper experiences of the Soul, Its Qualities and the Archetypes, and outwardly, is a unique expression of this Spiritual Depth. We cannot slavishly follow the path of another: the truths and principles underlying all paths are the same, but in its particulars each path is unique. Individuality is part of Spirituality. So then, the need to follow the Soul becomes central, and to be able to do so becomes freedom. Restrictions on *this* freedom are no longer external, for the Soul can always guide us with regard to whatever life presents. Instead, restrictions are those forces which prevent us from honouring this voice: attachment, fear, anger, and lack of will. *Ultimately*, all of these restrictions are grounded in delusion and are resolved through truth. It is deepening truth which is the guide and guardian of real freedom. Following the Soul, we eventually come to realise ourselves as the Soul—as formless Awareness. As such, we are aware of the body, ego and world but are no longer identified with, attached to, and restricted by them. As Awareness Itself we are complete, self-sufficient, immortal, unchangeable, unrestricted and free. Even so, our Self-realisation *continues*. For while it is the most crucial and the most central realisation, being the Soul as pure Awareness is only the foundation for our continued self-expression and expansion on the various planes of the universe. As always, this requires deepening truth to dissolve our remaining delusions and attachments.

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### **Forms of Self-Realisation**

While essentially “simple” as pure or formless Awareness, in Its entirety the individual Soul is highly complex. It has three simultaneously existing phases—the Higher Soul, the Higher Self, and the Soul as the human being—which reach to almost the full height or depth of the Spiritual universe. And, on any of the universal planes of the Spiritual universe where It is present, the Soul has the capacity to increasingly realise and express Its potentials, and to widen Its field of experience. Accordingly, Self-Realisation may be defined in different ways depending on which phases and expressions of the Soul this realisation is concerned with experiencing and knowing. The essence or heart of Self-Realisation may be defined as the realisation of oneself as pure or formless Awareness, the Soul Itself. Here, there is simply Awareness of Awareness, where even the knowing of Individuality may have been transcended. Or, Self-Realisation may be defined as the increasing realisation and expression of one or more or all of the Qualities of the Soul, and more generally, of the Archetypes. Here, Self-Realisation will include experiencing and knowing the Qualities and Archetypes on progressively deeper (or higher) planes of the universe, including Their planes of origin. If so, Self-Realisation will involve “ascending” or deepening through the universal planes of existence to unite with one’s Higher Self, and then, Higher Soul. Self-Realisation may go further, and be defined to include the realisation of The Spirit which is the source of the Soul, and of all existence. Here, the Soul returns to being a potential, at least “temporarily”, of The Spirit. Self-Realisation may also be defined as Non-Duality, where the Soul is realised as pure or formless Awareness which is not separate from any of the experiences manifesting from and “within” It. Finally, Self-Realisation may be defined as including some combination of, or *all* of the above Realisations.

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### **Different Spiritual Traditions**

A major factor which accounts for the differences in Spiritual traditions and teachings is that each is more or less focused on a different type of Self-Realisation, that is, more or less focused on realising different depths, phases or expressions of the Soul (which of course may not be called the Soul in these traditions). Because of this, each tradition or teaching has its own more or less unique body of knowledge and related practices. Any Spiritual path is valid for you provided that it is an expression of the guidance and motivation of your Soul. More widely still, any Spiritual path is valid in the sense that it is part of the wider unfolding of the universe where, like all things, it has, for the time of its existence, its necessity, value and purpose within that unfolding.

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### **Self-Realisation as the Soul**

As an individual Soul you are a complex being of several phases or levels, but your Essence is simple: formless or dimensionless Awareness. The realisation of oneself

as the Soul, as formless Awareness, may be regarded as the most crucial and central aspect of Self-Realisation. To realise yourself as formless Awareness is to realise That which you *already* are, for you are formless Awareness now, in association with the finite experiences of life. Normally of course we do not experience and know ourselves as formless Awareness, instead, we are mistakenly identified with the body and ego, including as a self-image or self-concept. This is for Awareness to “know” Itself in a limited, distorted and indirect way. There are many paths to the realisation of the Soul, each more or less unique. But *essentially*, what is required for Self-Realisation of the Soul is to *live* as the Soul, and not as the ego. This is to be guided by the voice of the Higher Soul, to embody and express the Qualities of the Soul as far as you are able, to express and live from fulfillment (not lack), and to live with non-attachment. As you follow the way of the Soul you will naturally and progressively have deeper experiences of the Soul and Its Qualities. Eventually, the Awareness or Soul that you are will experience Itself as pure or formless Awareness. Here, Awareness Knows Itself as Awareness simply by Being Itself as Awareness—Knowing-by-Being. There is *only one* “thing” here, Awareness which is Knowing Itself by Being Itself. We can also say that the Soul as pure Awareness is Self-Knowing. This is for Awareness to Know Itself in a direct, unmediated way—and no longer in an indirect, limited and distorted way as, and through, identification with the ego and body. An analogy may help. It is as if there has been an Ocean of Self-Knowing Awareness which has been wrongly identifying with the reflections playing on Its surface, but now, free of the reflections, in particular, of wrongly identifying with the reflections, has realised that It is actually the Ocean and not the ephemeral reflections.<sup>13</sup>

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### **Self-Value**

You are a Divine Soul, a Spiritual Being, and as such you have intrinsic, infinite and immortal value. The challenge is not to acquire value or become valuable, it is to realise that you *already* are valuable, perfectly so, and to give expression to that value. The Soul is intrinsically and infinitely valuable, and therefore, intrinsically and infinitely fulfilling. When you lose the awareness of yourself as the Soul it is natural to miss your Self- or Soul-value—we feel an emptiness of and a need for self-value. We normally attempt to find our self-value through the ego with which we are mistakenly identified. However, the ego in a particular form is fragile by nature, and so too our self-value when based upon it. We also look to external conditions to support our self-value, especially the opinions of others, but these too are fragile and fluctuating. And, what is the importance of the opinions of those who have little or no idea of who or what we, or they, really are, or of what is real and true Self-value? The ego is indeed valuable. In particular, the ego is, like all finite experiences, an expression of the Soul, and is more or less an expression and reflection of the Qualities of the Soul: Truth, Reality, Individuality, Value, Love, Joy, Peace, Power and Beauty. But, the reflection is not the Real; and the deep and

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<sup>13</sup> In the ancient Greek tradition knowing-by-being is known as *gnosis* or *noesis*, in the Hindu traditions as *jnana*, in Tibetan Buddhism as *yeshe* or *rigpa*, and in the Diamond Approach of A. H. Almaas as direct or basic knowing.

lasting Self-value for which you naturally long, can only come through the full realisation of yourself as the Soul.

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### **Self-Realisation and Individuality**

Self-Realisation as the Soul or formless Awareness does not necessarily mean a loss of individuality. First, while there is dis-identification from the ego and the body, they remain as “vehicles” of expression for the Soul. In particular, the ego becomes an expression and embodiment of our deepening realisation of the Qualities of the Soul. Further, the ego remains as a *unique*, or what may be called individual, expression of the Soul. Each Soul has Its unique destiny to fulfill, and a unique development of the ego is a major part of this destiny. Finally, the ordinary sense or knowing of being an individual, an ‘I’, though mistakenly attributed to the personality structure and the body is, nonetheless, a muted reflection of the Quality of Individuality which is *inherent* to the Soul. When the Soul, as formless Awareness, emanates from Its origin, the Absolute Soul, Its very first manifestation and expression is as an Individual. Here, the Soul as formless Awareness becomes formed or qualified as an Individual. Furthermore, just as the Soul as formless Awareness Knows Itself by Being Itself; so too the Soul as Individualised Awareness Knows Itself by Being Itself. The Soul now has two *simultaneous* levels of Being and Knowing: as formless Awareness and, as this same Awareness now qualified as an Individual. These two levels of Being are so closely united that the Soul *simultaneously apprehends* that It is both formless and Individualised Awareness. Individuality, in this sense, is a Quality inherent to the Soul. When you realise the essence of yourself as pure Awareness, *all* sense of being an individual *may be transcended*: one may then be present in the world as formless Awareness non-separate from Its experiences, where this Awareness is *not* experienced as an individual. However, this need not be the case. As stated, our normal or everyday sense or knowing of being an individual is a reflected and muted expression of the Quality of Individuality. This ordinary sense of being an individual can be progressively deepened and “followed” back to its source, which is the Quality of Individuality or Individualness inseparable from the Soul as formless Awareness. Then, the Soul as formless Awareness may *also*, in addition, know Itself as an Individual. We deepen the sense of individualness by following the way of the Soul; for upon this path we are experiencing, expressing and deepening our realisation of the Qualities of the Soul, including that of Individuality. This deepening can be facilitated by self-inquiry around, and meditation upon, the sense or knowing of being an individual. Of course, as we travel this path, our deepening sense of being an individual is *not* to be, on the one hand, mistakenly attributed to the personality structure or body or their corresponding self-image, and, on the other hand, is not to be mistaken for our *essential* nature.

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### **Non-Duality, Reality and Truth**

Self-Realisation as the Soul does *not* mean a corresponding lack of awareness of the finite or limited experiences which constitute the world or, more widely, life in this world. In part, *full* Self-Realisation means that you Know Yourself to be a Soul, or formless Awareness, while remaining in association with the world and life. This is perhaps the deepest meaning of the common Spiritual saying ‘to be in the world but not of the world.’ As Self-Realisation deepens You, as the Soul, will come to experience and know that You are not separate from the world or life. The world, and more generally life, arises as finite forms or experiences in the Soul or Awareness that you are, where these are manifestations or expressions of the Soul and not separate from It. This is often referred to as Non-Duality: that there is only the Soul or formless Awareness and Its finite expressions from which It is not separate (for how can we separate anything from That which is formless?) Non-Duality *may* be described or defined as Reality, and the knowing of It as Truth.

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### **Truth and Reality**

We may define reality as what actually is, the actual nature of existence, and not as that which we wrongly believe and imagine the actual nature of existence to be. When we know what actually is, reality, it is found to have two *fundamental* aspects: ever-changing finite forms or experiences, and the formless or dimensionless Awareness out of which these finite forms arise and into which they dissolve. Sometimes, dimensionless Awareness or the Soul *alone* is given the title Reality. In this case Reality is said to be that which is unchanging or absolute, and fundamental or primary. Truth may be defined as the absolutely accurate, certain, complete and unchanging knowing of what actually is, reality, or part (an aspect) of reality. Therefore, Truth is the absolutely accurate, certain, complete, and unchanging knowing of dimensionless Awareness and Its finite forms or experiences (as they actually are and not how we wrongly believe or imagine them to be) or part of this reality. Truth, like reality, may be defined more narrowly. Truth may also be defined as the absolutely accurate, certain, complete and unchanging knowing of dimensionless Awareness or the Soul *alone*.<sup>14</sup>

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### **The Loss of Reality and Truth and the Creation of Illusions**

We are Reality now; we already exist as formless Awareness in which the finite forms or experiences of life appear and are not separate. In part, Self-Realisation is to know this Reality, which is to know the Truth. However, this is not the way in which most of us experience life, for on the one hand we have lost touch with our depth as Awareness, and on the other hand, we have constructed a largely illusory

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<sup>14</sup> For the sake of simplicity I have omitted discussion of The Spirit, the source of all existence, in my descriptions of Reality and Truth. Of course, The Spirit may be regarded as the *ultimate* Reality and Truth. Likewise, I have also omitted discussion of the Archetypes.

world out of the remaining finite experiences. Since birth we have progressively attached to some of our experiences which are pleasurable while shunning others which are painful. This is a normal and natural part of development due to our lack of cognitive capacity or knowing power as infants. But, in doing so we have lost the experience of ourselves as the Soul or pure Awareness in which these finite experiences occur, for attachments block our awareness of the Soul. From out of the remaining flow of experiences, and for the most part unconsciously, we have progressively built-up a set of delusions and illusions which we have then superimposed back onto our experiences and mistaken to be reality. This is to say, that out of the succession of our finite experiences we have unconsciously constructed a world and “reality” which doesn’t actually exist except in our minds and imaginations. What is this world or “reality”? What are the delusions and illusions which we are imposing on existence, on what actually is, upon Reality? Some of the fundamental and general ones are as follows. More or less, most of us wrongly believe that we are a separate and permanent entity, the ego or personality, which is composed of a constellation of characteristics; that as such we are located inside of and dependent upon a material brain and body; where this body exists in an externally existing and self-sufficient world composed of material objects existing in space of three fixed dimensions and in time as a continuum unfolding at a fixed rate; and where these objects, as well as our psychological experiences, are determined by causality. But, this is a *long* way from our *actual* experience of life as a succession of finite experiences in Awareness—a long way from Reality.

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### **The Way of Truth: Direct Experience, Intuition, Reason**

We are Reality now; we already exist as formless Awareness in which the finite experiences of life appear and are not separate. To know Reality is to know the Truth. However, this is not the way in which most of us experience and know ourselves or life for, on the one hand, through increasing attachments to our finite experiences we have lost touch with our depth as formless Awareness and, on the other hand, we have constructed a largely illusory world out of the remaining finite experiences. To know Reality, to know what actually is, we must clear away our delusions and illusions and the attachments they support. We do this by deepening into truth: by deepening into truth we are clearing away our delusions, illusions and attachments to reveal and to know Reality. *Initially*, we may discern three modes of knowing the truth of our experiences: direct experience, intuition and reason. We have the capacity for truths about our direct experiences where these are insights arising spontaneously from those experiences. For example, the truthful insight that there is existence or being, arises spontaneously from our experiences. Likewise, we recognise that: one experience is to some degree different from another; experiences change; one finite experience is larger than another; an experience is composed of parts; and so on. Some insights at least are true in that they are absolutely accurate, uncertain, unchanging and complete. Intuitions are where we spontaneously “grasp” something about the nature and meaning of our experiences, for example: that a group of experiences are all examples of one idea or concept; or that a consistent relation exists between the way certain experiences unfold—so

much so that it might be called a law; or we grasp the cause for why we are upset about a situation; or we discern that one experience or course is better than another, for example, that love is better than hate. Again, at least some of our insights are true. Under this mode of knowing we may also include the intuitive guidance of the Higher Soul. Finally, there is reason as the faculty or power of deliberate thinking which gives us the conceptual truth of the nature of our experiences, their being and laws. When we reflect upon these three modes of knowing we find that the insights received in each are *all, ultimately, spontaneously* received. We may regard reason as a purely deliberate process. However, close observation reveals that the insights—as opposed to logical deductions—which occur when we are reasoning are also spontaneous—they too are ‘aha’ moments, although they are given in response to our prior and deliberate thought. The spontaneous nature of these insights, received through these three modes of knowing the truth, exists because these insights are *given* by the Higher Soul and Higher Self. As such, they are forms of grace. To receive truth as insights is to literally dissolve our delusions and illusions—they have been “seen through”. When we apprehend the truth we must honour it by living it. To increasingly live in accord with truth is to increasingly live without attachments, for our attachments are based in delusions and illusions. Essentially, we attach or cling to the finite experiences of life because of the delusion that in them lies our fulfilment (instead of within Ourselves). By living with increasing truth and non-attachment we invite further insights and, more generally, invite deeper experiences of the Soul and Its Qualities. As we progressively receive insights, live accordingly, and dissolve our attachments, we come to know the truth of our experiences in a fourth way: through knowing-by-being.

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### **The Way of Truth: Knowing-By-Being**

Knowing-by-being is where we know what actually is, Reality, by *being* it. We *already exist as* Reality, that is, as formless Awareness in which the finite forms or experiences of life appear and are *not* separate. However, because of our attachments to finite experiences and our superimposition of delusions and illusions, we are unaware of this Reality, the knowing of which is Truth. Instead, we live in a “reality” which is devoid of the experience of formless Awareness and which is largely constructed of delusions and illusions superimposed onto existence, onto what actually is, onto Reality. For example, instead of our experiences being known as inseparable from formless Awareness, we mistake many of them for three-dimensional material objects, external and independent to the Awareness that we are. As we progressively receive truthful insights—through direct experience, intuition and reason—live accordingly, and dissolve our attachments, we re-experience Reality *free* of delusions and illusions and the attachments they support. That is, we progressively re-experience ourselves as formless Awareness in which finite experiences appear, without unconsciously and mistakenly imposing our delusions, illusions and attachments. Here, we do not experience Reality indirectly through a mind-made and distorting filter of delusions and illusions. When there is no imposition of delusions and illusions, and the attachments they support, there is simply knowing-by-being of what actually is,

Reality. There are two aspects to this knowing of Reality. First, formless Awareness is simply Aware of Itself. Here, the Soul as formless Awareness Knows Itself as formless Awareness simply by Being Itself *free* of delusions, illusions and attachments. This is for Awareness or the Soul to Know Itself in a direct, unmediated way without the normal superimposition and filter of delusions and illusions. Second, we know the finite or limited forms or experiences in formless Awareness by *being* them. Formless Awareness *is* Its finite forms; they are not separate from It. Now that formless Awareness is free of delusions, illusions and attachments, It is *simply* being Its finite experiences or forms and knowing them by being them. In doing so Awareness, or the Soul, has a direct and unmediated knowing or recognition or discrimination of the nature of Its finite forms, and is *not* mistakenly and indirectly “knowing” them through a filter of superimposed delusions or illusions. For example, instead of imposing delusions and illusions so that we erroneously regard a finite form or experience as a three-dimensional material object, external to us, and having a self-sufficient and permanent existence, we know it for what it is: a finite form of a particular character manifesting in Awareness and not separate from It. Like the insights received through direct experience, intuition and reason, the knowing involved in knowing-by-being is also a form of grace. Thus, its arising is experienced as spontaneous, albeit in response to our living of the truthful insights we have previously received. Knowing-by-being is a grace which dissolves the remaining delusions, illusions and attachments which we were imposing on Reality, on what actually is, and which allows us to simply *be* Reality, and therefore, to know the Truth.

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### **Reason**

Reason is the faculty or power of deliberate thinking which gives us the conceptual truth or knowledge of the nature, or being and laws, of our experiences. Sometimes it is declared that reason cannot ascertain the truth. But we must differentiate between the capacity of reason to ascertain the truth and, *our* capacity to use reason. Reason *is able* to ascertain the truth, where truth is that knowing which is absolutely accurate, certain, unchanging and complete, provided that our capacity to reason is *sufficiently* developed. However, there are limits to the extent and nature of the truth which reason can attain. If reason has insufficient or unclear experiences with which to work it cannot ascertain firm conclusions. Further, a finding or truth of reason may be subject to change as the set of experiences upon which it is based is enlarged; it is a truth *only* for a limited set of experiences, but not necessarily for a larger set. This is a relative truth. With few exceptions, science is a domain of relative truths. Relative truths are not fixed or absolute but changeable, and therefore, our knowing of them is uncertain. As changeable and uncertain they are, actually, not truths. However reason can also ascertain absolute truths about experiences: these are truths which are supported by both present and *all possible* experiences. For example, the truth that *all* of our experiences occur through or as awareness will never be altered, but only affirmed, by every new experience, for any and every new experience is through or as awareness. There are a number of such immutable rational truths, and they can help guide us upon the

Spiritual journey. Next, reason can only give us truths of a certain kind or nature: reason gives us the truth in concepts or thoughts *about* or *describing* the nature of experience, but it does not give us the truth which comes from *having* the experience *itself*—much the same as the thought or concept of honey is not the knowing which comes from the direct experience or taste of honey. Perhaps the ultimate example here is that reason can tell us that we exist as a changeless or timeless and spaceless or infinite Awareness—where it truthfully tells us something about this experience—but it cannot give us the knowing and truth of Awareness which comes from the direct experience of It. In so far as our truth *is* concepts or thoughts *about* or *describing* an experience and not the experience itself, this is still not the truth of the experience itself. This can only come when one knows the experience by *being* it. But, truth through experiencing, or truth-by-being or knowing-by-being, is not the domain of reason.

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### **The Seat of Knowledge: the Archetypes and the Soul**

While knowing-by-being, and the insights received through direct experience, intuition and reason, are the ways or modes by which we know the truth, it is the Archetypes and the Higher Soul which are the *ground* of truth. The Archetypes are the initial and immediate expression of The Spirit, the source of all existence. Speaking *somewhat loosely*, but in a way which gives us some comprehension, the Archetypes may be regarded as Beings of Awareness. Each Archetype is, and “embodies”, a particular Idea which serves as a foundation for, or a principle of, manifestation for all experiences of that kind in the universe. The Archetypes form the fundamental pattern for the universe, and each plane of the Spiritual universe that follows is a less unified and refined expression and reflection of the Archetypes. The Archetypes can be regarded as the Absolutes, while their expressions—as finite experiences on the lower planes of the universe—can be regarded as Their approximations. The Archetypes and the Higher Soul are Self-Knowing, which is to say that the Higher Soul and the Archetypes Know Themselves simply by Being Themselves. The Higher Soul Knows Itself as formless Awareness by Being that Awareness, and the Higher Soul Knows Its unique and changeless Vision of the Archetypes by Being that Vision. Through Knowing-By-Being, the Archetypes and the Higher Soul have the Truth of Themselves, of the Reality which They are, as an absolutely accurate, certain unchanging and complete knowing. Here then Knowing or Truth, and Being or Reality, are one and the same. The Higher Soul can also know the truth of the finite or particular experiences on the various universal planes which are “below” It. How does this occur? As stated, the Higher Soul has the Truth of Itself and Its Archetypal Vision simply through Being Itself and Its Vision. Against this unchanging standard of Itself and Its Vision the Higher Soul can compare or relate the finite experiences of existence, including our experiences, to determine the truth of them, that is, how, to what degree, and in what ways, they reflect, express and approximate Itself as dimensionless Awareness and approximate Its Vision of the Archetypes. Likewise, *in a less direct way*, the Higher *Self* can compare or relate the finite experiences of existence, including our experiences, to the Higher

Soul and Its Vision to determine the truth of them. These truths of the Higher Soul and Higher Self may then be passed “down” to us, into everyday awareness, as spontaneous insights about the nature of reality including our experiences. These we receive as truthful insights arising through direct experience, through intuition, through reason, and knowing-by-being. One class of experiences deserves special mention. The Higher Soul (and Higher Self) is able to compare or relate *our* present or proposed states of being and self-expression to Itself and Its Vision to determine the truth of them, that is, how, to what degree, and in what ways, they reflect, express and approximate Itself and Its Archetypal Vision. These truths may then be passed down to us, into everyday awareness, as spontaneous and truthful insights which, collectively, we call the conscience. The *true* conscience is the guiding voice of the Higher Soul, or its deputy the Higher Self, where this voice expresses the truth regarding our present and proposed states of being and self-expression, and, urges us to follow this truth. To follow the conscience is to give expression to this truth—this is to live with Spiritual integrity.<sup>15</sup>

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### **The Origin of Our Ignorance and Delusion**

The Archetypes and the Higher Soul are the foundation or ground of our knowing of the truth. The Archetypes and Higher Soul Know the Truth of Themselves, Their Reality, simply by Being Themselves. Also, against this unchanging and absolute standard, the Higher Soul can determine the truth of the finite or limited experiences of the universe, including our own experiences. These truths may then be received by us below as spontaneous and truthful insights about reality, including our own experiences. In this way, we possess the power or capacity to know the truth. But, when we are born into this world, we initially lack much of this power. For the Soul to “descend” or “enter” into this world is for It to give “part” of the formless Awareness that It is to the finite experiences of this world. Fundamentally, this is the true nature of being born. When we are born we are more or less aware of being the Soul, as formless Awareness, and Its Qualities. However, we are born with a relatively limited power of knowing the truth; we especially lack the capacity to reason and for self-reflection. In this benighted condition, part of our natural way of relating to our experiences is to shun those which are physically or psychologically painful, and to attach to those which are pleasurable. As our attachments multiply and strengthen we lose awareness of the Soul and Its Qualities and are left only with our finite experiences. As our power of knowing gradually develops—because the Higher Soul and Higher Self are progressively beginning to influence us—we now only have this range of finite experiences to know and with which to work. In this condition—ignorant of our True Nature, and with limited power of knowing—it is natural that we reach wrong conclusions about who and what we are, and about the nature of the world. In particular, we mistakenly identify ourselves to be the ego and the body, and we build up our whole mistaken ego-centred “reality”. But, the *origin* of our delusions

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<sup>15</sup> For this account of the Archetypes and the Soul’s Self-Knowledge I am again deeply indebted to the writings of Plotinus. However, I do not claim that this account *accurately* represents his teachings.

and ignorance is the lack of knowing power that is a *natural* part of being born. We are born as the Soul gives “part” of Itself to be aware of the experiences of this world as part of fulfilling Its destiny. This It does as part of the wider and ineluctable unfolding and evolution of the universe which is occurring through each Soul. Ultimately, the unfolding and evolution of the universe has no purpose—it is “simply” a spontaneous expression, through each Soul, of the potentials of The Spirit, the source of all that exists. Thus, ignorance and delusion are natural and inevitable aspects of the spontaneous unfolding of the universe.

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### **Spiritual Inquiry**

Spiritual inquiry begins with a sacred question and ends with a sacred answer, this is to say that Spiritual inquiry begins with a heartfelt question given to you by your Soul and, if the inquiry is successful, it is the Soul which also gives the answer. More generally, ideally Spiritual inquiry should be a Soul-guided and inspired activity—a dynamic expression of the Soul. Such inquiry will differ from normal inquiry in some fundamental respects. The most important is that Spiritual inquiry is motivated *only* by the search for truth, and further, the search or inquiry is undertaken for its own sake; it is an intrinsically valuable process which requires nothing more—not even answers. If there is a goal apart from truth, and more generally, if the inquiry is attempting to get somewhere or to attain something, then truth may be sacrificed to this end. Here, the truth, and the way to that truth which the Soul wants us to traverse, will be missed, ignored or rejected. Spiritual inquiry may proceed in a philosophical or psychological manner—although the distinction is sometimes more one of degree than kind. Philosophical inquiry emphasises the use of reason, and is more concerned with arriving at universal truths which apply to people and life generally. It will pose questions such as ‘Is there a God?’ ‘What is the nature of the Soul?’ ‘What is good and bad?’ Whereas psycho-Spiritual inquiry is concerned with a *particular* individual’s unique personal and Spiritual development. Examples of questions here are: ‘Why is *this* situation causing *me* suffering?’ ‘What am *I* so attracted to *this* person?’ ‘What is *this* feeling of emptiness about?’ Psycho-Spiritual inquiry maintains very close contact with one’s own individual experiences, whereas philosophical inquiry will tend to draw more upon the experiences of others. Psycho-Spiritual inquiry has a particular power: when a delusion or illusion is *really* seen through one’s experiences change, open up and develop. This is the key to personal and Spiritual transformation and revelation: seeing the truth as it pertains to one’s *own* experiences. Eventually, universal or general philosophical conclusions must be applied to one’s individual experiences if they are to be fully and deeply effective in bringing about personal and Spiritual transformation and revelation. Spiritual inquiry requires and involves the interplay of many qualities and capacities, these include: mindfulness, concentration, precision, clarity, openness, honesty, courage, strength, calmness or

peace, compassion, joy and love (for the process), non-judgementalism, trust (in the Soul), and non-attachment or surrender.<sup>16</sup>

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### **Mindfulness**

There is experiencing *per se*, and then there is experiencing *and* being aware, or knowing, that one is experiencing. Mindfulness is to mentally step back and witness your experiences and, to be aware or to know that you are doing so. Further, mindfulness is the *bare* or *simple* witnessing of experiences. This is to say that there is no attempt to interfere with or manipulate your experiences in *any* way. There is no *deliberate* rejection of some experiences and movement toward others—there is simply non-directed awareness—and also, there is no *deliberate* thinking about your experiences, including judgements or evaluations. Of course, due to past habits and conditioning, rejection of and movement toward experiences, and thinking about experiences, will automatically or spontaneously occur. But again, these conditioned and automatic reactions are simply witnessed. For various reasons mindfulness plays an integral part in many Spiritual traditions and teachings. First, it is axiomatic that if we wish to know the truth of our experiences we need to be increasingly aware of them, and to do so with increasing clarity. Indeed, as this occurs insights about the nature and meaning of our experiences tend to arise *spontaneously*. Mindfulness facilitates this process, for it is an attitude of openness to *whatever* experiences arise, and a close attention to those experiences. Next, as the bare witnessing of our experiences, mindfulness is a non-attached way of being. As we release our attachments and aversions repressed experiences emerge into awareness. Having been brought out into the light, we now have the possibility of constructively engaging with these experiences. As we release our attachments we also allow deeper experiences of the Soul and Its Qualities, including truth and wisdom, to emerge. Mindfulness also tends to dissolve negativity and create calmness. Negative emotions are grounded in negative thoughts. If we are not mindful we may automatically allow and affirm our negative thinking, and deliberately engage in it. This fuels or “feeds” our negative emotions. When we are mindful we simply witness our negative thoughts. Consequently, both they and the negative emotions they fuel tend to die down, leaving awareness calm and spacious. In this way mindfulness gives us power over negativity. While valuable in itself, this calm and uncluttered condition is also conducive to the arising of insights and deeper Spiritual experiences—including how to resolve our negativity. More generally, by increasing our awareness of what we are experiencing, mindfulness enables us to more consciously choose our experiences. Again, this is a position of power. Mindfulness is powerful in yet another way. It is easy to be caught up in and swept along by our experiences. But when we are mindful we have deliberately and mentally stepped back and out of this sometimes raging stream. No longer are we being helplessly swept along by our experiences but we are simply witnessing them. Eventually they will begin to

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<sup>16</sup> One of the most extensive works on Spiritual inquiry is *Spacecruiser Inquiry: True Guidance for the Inner Journey* by A. H. Almaas. In part, this section draws upon some ideas discussed in this work.

slow and settle. This too is a position of power. Finally, mindfulness attenuates our identity with the ego or personality. No longer are we identifying with the ego. Instead, we are regarding it, indeed all of our experiences, as the object of our attention. And who are we? We are the witnessing Awareness. To be mindful is to cease your misidentification with the ego and to more or less consciously “resume” your stance as Awareness Itself. This stance is central to Spiritual practice, development and living.

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### **Meditation**

Like any true Spiritual practice, true meditation is an expression of the Soul—something undertaken because of a sacred impulse from the Soul and guided by the Soul. As such meditation is a natural, organic expression of the Soul and part of the way of the Soul. Generally speaking, meditation is the art of deliberately focusing your attention upon your experiences to reveal their true nature. All of your experiences arise from and “within” the Soul that you are, and so, essentially, meditation is the Soul looking into Its own experiences to know their true nature—ultimately the Soul Itself. Meditation can take two, essential forms. First, there is mindfulness meditation where we are simply witnessing our experiences. Here, there is no interference with or manipulation of experiences, our attention is not directed to any particular experiences, and there is no aversion to some experiences and desiring of or attachment to others. In terms of attaining a particular experience there is no goal, but in one’s heart there is the aspiration to know the true nature of one’s experiences. In the increasingly peaceful, clear, non-attached and alert “space” created through mindfulness, insights, transformations and revelations naturally or *spontaneously* occur. Some are merely due to repressed experiences being allowed to surface, some are due to the law of attraction drawing in new experiences, and some are from the Higher Self and Higher Soul—grace. The second, essential form of meditation is to focus one’s attention on a particular experience or set of experiences, such as an object, the breath, an image, a sound, idea or feeling. Whenever attention wanders it is gently but firmly brought back to the focus of meditation. The *quality* of attention is crucial. Meditation is an expression of the Soul, and like all Soulful expression it is not done to get anywhere; it is intrinsically valuable and self-fulfilling; it is done for its own sake. However, in this way—and with love in one’s heart for the revelation of the true nature of our experiences—eventually insights, transformations and revelations will occur. Focused meditation may unfold in two essential ways. First, there may be increasingly deep experiences of the “object” which is the focus of attention. From its origin in an Archetype or the Higher Soul, an experience may then be reflected down through each plane of the universe. In one type of focused meditation we are progressively following the “object” back through the planes of the universe to its origin, ultimately the Soul or an Archetype. For example, if the focus is upon the feeling of love, there may be increasingly deep revelations of love which finally open to Love Itself as a Quality not separate from the Higher Soul. Again, if the focus is upon the feeling of being an individual, there may be increasingly deep revelations of individualness which finally reveal Individualness

Itself as a Quality not separate from the Higher Soul. Potentially, we may take any experience and follow it back through its depths or heights. In doing so, we will traverse the planes of the universe until we reach the origin of that experience. Focused meditation may unfold in a second essential way. By focusing our attention in the manner described earlier, we may create a clear, alert, uncluttered, peaceful and non-attached inner “space” in which the Soul may pour Its grace in the ways that It knows are appropriate for our continued development and Self-Realisation.

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### **The Law of Attraction and Karma**

Every experience which manifests in Awareness attracts to itself, with more or less power, that which is like it—like attracts like. This is the law of attraction. Karma is a particular aspect of the law of attraction, where every experience which *you* embody or express attracts to itself, with more or less power, a similar experience. This is to say, that every thought, emotion, need, desire, aspiration, sense perception, imagining and memory that you embody or express attracts back to you similar experiences. Naturally, the more deeply this law is realised, the more discerning and discriminating we become about which experiences we embody and express. The attractive power of one’s experiences varies. It depends on the intensity with which experiences appear in awareness, the intensity with which they are held within awareness by concentration, the intensity of emotion, positive or negative, which they are given, the degree of conviction that they will attract like experiences, and the amount of attention they are given. Not all of your experiences will have the power to attract, into your life, similar experiences. And while similar experiences may be attracted back to you, they may not occur in *this* life but a later life—some karma is carried over from one life to the next. You may use the law of attraction in a deliberate way to bring into your life particular experiences or types of experiences such as relationships, careers, money, health, and qualities of character. Indeed, to some degree we *must* consciously attend to the law of attraction, for it is *always* operating, and if we do not use it consciously and deliberately then we attract by default in an accidental, haphazard, inconsistent and less effective way. When we use the law of attraction in a deliberate way, we will need to develop the ability to discern what, exactly, we are choosing to be and express, and what is *best* to be and express. In particular, we must be able to discern whether we are expressing our lack or our fullness—for like attracts like. The law of attraction is *not* the only force which determines our experiences. In addition to free choice, the other great determinant of what manifests in Awareness, Oneself, is destiny.

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### **Destiny**

Each of us has our own unique destiny, our unique part to play in the universal drama. The blueprint of your destiny is the unique Vision of the Archetypes—the

fundamental design of the universe—contemplated by your Higher Soul, your Spiritual Depth. Both inwardly, and outwardly through the events of life, we are being guided by the Higher Soul toward the fulfillment of our destiny. In particular, the voice of the Soul within you is guiding you toward the fulfillment of your destiny—in part, this is why this voice is experienced as important and feels right, even compelling. To honour the voice of your Soul, which is to live authentically or with integrity, is to fulfill your destiny. The fulfillment of your destiny is certain; it is fated. However, we also have free-will, and the capacity to make free choices. Our essential choice is between honouring the voice and way of the Soul, or, the voice and way of the ego. When we deliberately or inadvertently disregard the way of the Soul and choose that of the ego, we suffer. This is not some form of punishment; suffering is simply the consequence of living with delusion, illusion and attachment, or contrary to reality and truth. Sooner or later suffering, specifically, the surrender, wisdom and other Qualities of the Soul it evokes, brings about a reorientation where we are more closely aligned with the voice of the Soul and the fulfillment of our destiny.

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### **Grace**

Grace is assistance provided to us where this is initiated by the Higher Soul or, the Higher Self as Its delegate. Grace is *always* being showered upon us, but we can only receive it, or can most easily receive it, when we are sufficiently non-attached or surrendered and therefore at peace, when we are open to whatever form it might take—for it takes many—and when we are attentive. Prayer which is sincere or heartfelt, ardent, surrendered, humble and trusting will also evoke grace. Grace may be received as both inner experiences—including intuitions, creative ideas, an influx of a Quality such as Power or Love, or a new aspiration—and also as outer circumstances, including those which cause suffering. Receiving experiences through grace is different than receiving those through the law of attraction. Experiences received through the law of attraction are the result of a universal and *automatic* law. Whereas experiences received through grace are those which are *designed and initiated* by our Higher Soul or Higher Self specifically for us, in particular, for the fulfilment of our destiny. The Higher Soul has Its unique Vision of the Archetypes which is the blueprint of Its destiny. Through grace, the Higher Soul, or the Higher Self in Its service, are giving to us both inner and outer experiences for, or which are, the fulfilment of our destiny.

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### **Free-Will or Free-Choice**

Each of us possesses free-will—it is a capacity inherent to the Soul. Free-will means that we can choose between the options or alternatives of which we are aware, where this choice is not determined or caused by prior events or experiences. Instead, free-choice is a *spontaneous* act. There is a great limitation upon our free-will or free-choice. We choose one option or alternative over another

because a belief, that is, a thought coupled with a feeling of rightness, enters our awareness, where this belief is for one of the options or alternatives before us, and where this belief is the strongest. When this belief is apprehended, then we freely choose the option it recommends. It is important to note that we do *not* deliberately create this belief, rather, it arrives spontaneously then we choose to express it. We see here that our free-choices are limited to and by the strongest beliefs which spontaneously arise. Aware of this fact—that we choose to express those beliefs which are imbued with the greatest feeling of rightness—we can learn to cultivate that way of being which opens us to the *best* beliefs—those which are most true, most deeply felt to be right and which result in the best outcomes. This is to cultivate the guidance of the Higher Soul. By inviting and being open to the guidance of the Soul which arrives as deeply felt beliefs, and by honouring this guidance, we open ourselves to even greater guidance from the Soul.

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### **The Forces Influencing Our Experience of Life**

Your life is constituted of the experiences manifesting “within” the Awareness that you are. Three great forces combine to determine your experiences: free-choice, the law of attraction or karma, and destiny. These can be viewed in the context of the Spiritual path. You possess free-choice, and your fundamental choice is whether to follow the voice of the Soul or the voice of the ego, that is, of your thinking when you are identified with the ego. These two fundamental choices correspond to two fundamental ways of being. The first way is the expression of the Soul and Its Qualities in so far as you are able. This is an intrinsically valuable and positive expression of fullness. Through the law of attraction, inwardly and outwardly you will attract more of these experiences, and therefore, your Spiritual direction and path will be reinforced. The second way is basically an expression of the attachments and aversions of the ego, the negative emotions of unfulfilled attachments, and the emptiness which underlies these attachments. Through the law of attraction you will attract more of these experiences which include much suffering. Eventually, this suffering will result in a re-evaluation and reorientation of your choices, and a greater alignment with the Soul. Your choices and karma occur in the context of your destiny. The depth of yourself, the Higher Soul, contemplates a unique Vision of the Archetypes. This is the blueprint of your destiny. *Inwardly*, the Higher Soul guides you to the fulfilment of your destiny through Its voice. As discussed, this way of the Soul is an intrinsically valuable and positive expression of fullness which attracts corresponding experiences, and therefore, is self-reinforcing. *Outwardly*, the Soul brings experiences that evoke and develop those potentials which are part of your destiny. By contrast, to follow the voice of the ego is to depart from your destiny. The negative experiences and suffering involved in this path attract similar experiences until eventually there is a re-evaluation and reorientation of one’s direction back to the Soul. The Soul may also bring us painful, yet benevolent, experiences to effect a reorientation. The more we develop Spiritually, the more we align with the Soul to realise our destiny—the eventual fulfilment of which is fated.

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### **Harmony and Goodness**

The universe is evolving. This evolutionary impulse is inherent to its nature, more precisely, inherent to The Spirit which is its source. The universe manifests through and “within” individual Souls, including you and I. Through its evolution the universe is bringing into existence those finite forms or experiences which are ever more reflective or expressive of, more “transparent” to, and more evocative of, the Soul as formless Awareness, the Qualities of the Soul, and more generally the Archetypes. This is also to say that through its evolution the universe is progressively becoming an expression of Goodness; for the Spiritual, as the Soul, Its Qualities and the Archetypes, *can* be regarded as intrinsic and absolute Goodness, and the evolution of the universe is becoming the progressively greater expression and reflection of this Goodness. We align or harmonise with the evolution of the universe, and its movement toward greater goodness, by following the guiding voice of the Soul. More specifically, as we give expression to the Soul we increasingly experience and realise the Soul, Its Qualities, and the Archetypes, and we increasingly give expression to those finite forms or experiences which are reflections of and evocative of the Soul, Its Qualities and the Archetypes. This is also to fulfil our destiny—our fated role in the unfolding of the universal play.

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### **Good and Bad**

The question ‘What is good and bad?’ does not permit of a single and simple answer but requires multiple standpoints. From one standpoint, to align with the Higher Soul is that which is good—at least with regard to conduct or self-expression. For here, we are deepening into the realisation of the Soul, Its Qualities and the Archetypes, which may be regarded as absolute Goodness, and are giving ever-greater expression, as finite experiences, to this Goodness. However, *each and every* experience is to some degree a reflection and expression of the Spiritual, that is, of the Soul, Its Qualities and the Archetypes. This is to say that each and every experience is to some degree a reflection and expression of absolute Goodness. Equally, we can say that there is nothing which is bad—there are only *degrees* of Goodness. This is *not* to say that all the finite experiences of our lives or the universe are *equally* good. There is an absolute Goodness which experiences may more or less express, reflect or approximate. Further, each and every experience of life, or part of the universe, is, at the moment it occurs, both the best that can be based on all that has gone before, and, the best that can be to facilitate the development or evolution which is to come. In this sense, each experience is perfect and perfectly good. Closely related to this is the well-known law that from bad, including suffering, good eventually comes forth. Again, if good comes from the bad, then the so-called bad is, in fact, valuable and good. Further still, the manifested universe is one of opposites or relatives, where each finite or limited experience exists, and is defined, known and appreciated in relation to its opposite. This means that if there are going to be relatively good experiences there must be

relatively bad experiences. But again, if the good is dependent for its existence, and for being known and appreciated, upon its opposite or relative and bad experience, then these “bad” experiences are needed, valuable and good.

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### **The Way of Peace**

What is the way of peace? Often we are at war with life. We are against what is, some aspect of life, for we see it as bad, and we are struggling to get to something other which is seen as good. Here, we naturally feel hostility, fear and sadness—we are not at peace. As our wisdom deepens, and we see the Spiritual nature of life, we come to see that life is good. When we see that life is good we accept it for what it is. When we accept life for what it is we are at peace. Being at peace does not preclude action. When you are at peace you can still act, and act to change what is, however, the nature or quality of your action will be different. No longer will it be characterised by rejection of what is because it is seen as bad while desiring something other which is seen as good—a way which inevitably involves anger, fear and sadness. This is not the way of peace. Instead, you will “simply” do or express that which is for itself, for its own sake, because it is intrinsically good or valuable. As such, this will not be an act of opposition against what is or an act of desire for, or attachment to, what is other, along with the negative emotions these acts involve. And as such, as intrinsically good or valuable, this action or self-expression will also be found to be acceptable, and there will be peace. That way which is found to be intrinsically good, and most deeply so, is to do or express that which you most deeply feel to be right which, simultaneously, will also be found to be your most truthful, valuable, powerful, loving and joyous expression. This is the way of the Soul, and this is the way of peace.

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### **Beauty**

The appreciation of beauty is universal, and yet, beauty serves no practical purpose. Beauty is for itself. To experience beauty is to feel raised—uplifted. To experience beauty is to experience love, for the heart naturally goes out to that which is found to be beautiful. These are all hints as to the mystery of Beauty: the Spiritual *is* Beauty Itself, and the beauty we experience in this world is the Spiritual being reflected through the forms of this world. The more the finite forms or experiences of our lives reflect the Spiritual, the more beautiful they are found to be. The Higher Soul within us compares the experiences of this world to Itself, Its Qualities, and the Archetypes, and the more these outer experiences reflect these inner Spiritual Realities, the greater our recognition and appreciation of beauty. Beauty then, does serve a purpose: to reveal the Spiritual and to lead us back to the Spiritual. The more we find beauty in the world around us—in nature, animals, architecture, music, art, literature, ideas, and the like—the more we are experiencing the Spiritual in the world, and within ourselves.

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### **Positivity**

The origin of our positive emotions is the Soul: our experiences of love, happiness and peace are more or less realisations of the Soul's Qualities of Love, Happiness and Peace. Our experiences of peace, happiness and love may be evoked *by* certain experiences, but they are evocations *from* the Soul. Among the experiences which evoke our positive experiences of peace, happiness and love, are our positive thoughts. Essentially, positive thinking is where we have a perspective of our experiences, of life, as being good (or valuable). Conversely, when we see life as bad, then we experience fear, anger and sadness. When we view our experiences positively, for we see them as good, we naturally accept or allow them. In this condition, which is a condition of non-attachment, we *allow* the Qualities of Love, Happiness and Peace to arise more fully from the Soul. This is to say, that when we view life positively, see it as good, this releases our attachments, and the Qualities of the Soul flow into us more powerfully. To think positively, and therefore, to feel positively, we *must* see life as good. Here, we come to a fundamental relationship between truth, goodness and positivity. As our knowing of the truth deepens, increasingly we see that *all* of life is to some degree good—in some ways perfectly good—that is, our view of life becomes increasingly positive, and in turn we feel increasingly positive. Deepening truth and deepening positivity are positively correlated and indeed, inseparable. The more fully we see the truth of life the more fully we see that life is good, and on this foundation we can be truly positive about life—in fact, it becomes impossible to be otherwise.

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### **The Art of Being Positive**

When we are thinking and feeling negatively about a situation, the *key* to becoming and remaining positive is the truth. By bringing *sufficient* truth to a situation we can hold it in a positive light. However, this is not always easily accomplished. When we are experiencing negative thoughts and feelings about a situation we can respond in five essential ways which are grounded in a Soulful or Spiritual view of life: surrender, prayer, mindfulness, inquiry, and positive affirmation. We can surrender our negativity to the Soul or the Divine, knowing that It will, in Its own way and time, shed a more truthful and positive light with which we can view things. Closely associated with surrender is prayer as a sincere or heartfelt, ardent, surrendered, humble and trusting invocation to the Soul for grace, in particular, the truth by which to see the situation in a clearer and brighter light. Third, through simply being mindful of the negativity—simply witnessing it without deliberately interfering with it in *any* way—the negativity will atrophy and die through lack of affirmation. At the same time, a more peaceful and surrendered inner “space” will be created for a more truthful and positive perspective to appear—including from the Soul. Fourth, we can inquire into or investigate our negative beliefs and feelings to find the delusions on which they rest and, simultaneously, the positive

truths which will replace these delusions. Finally, we can immediately and simply reach for, affirm, and live according to a *somewhat* more positive view which is *intuitively* felt or known to be true. By experiencing our situation a little more positively, both inwardly and outwardly we may attract more truthful and positive thoughts, feelings and experiences with which to continue the transformation—for positivity attracts positivity.

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### **The Place of Suffering**

Emotional suffering is the experience of fear, anger and sadness in all their degrees and forms, and it is also the experience of inner emptiness. Suffering may be extended to include physical pain. From a deep but still not final perspective, the ground of emotional suffering is the “loss” of the Soul and Its Qualities. As infants we begin life more or less experiencing the Soul and Its Qualities. But we soon lose awareness of Them due to our increasing aversions and attachments as we attempt to minimise pain and discomfort, and to maximise pleasure and joy. With our limited power or capacity for truth as infants, no other approach is possible. This “loss” of the Soul and Its Qualities results in an inner emptiness which we attempt to fill, somewhat paradoxically, by seeking out and further attaching to the experiences of life. Attachments result in sadness, anger and fear in all their degrees as the experiences of life elude us, slip away, or threaten to do so. More deeply still then, we see that the cause of our suffering is being born into this world with a limited power or capacity for truth. We are born or enter into this world when the Soul gives “part” of Itself to be aware of the experiences of this world, to thereby unfold Its potentialities and to fulfil Its evolution as part of the wider evolution of the universe. There is no ultimate *reason why* this occurs—the Soul is simply obeying the *inherent, spontaneous* and *necessary* way that The Spirit evolves the universe through It (the Soul). While suffering, particularly emotional suffering, largely exists because we have lost the experience of our Souls and are clinging to the finite experiences of life, from another perspective we can say that suffering exists because we are *ignorant* of our Spiritual Depth and how to recover It while living in the world. The essential value and redemption of suffering is to more deeply evoke and develop our capacities and Spiritual Qualities, especially wisdom. In doing so we resolve our suffering, develop our potentials and grow, and reorient the way we live to be more in accord with wisdom, more in accord with the guidance of the Soul, and more in accord with our unique destinies.

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### **Well-Being**

Essentially, deepening well-being is the deepening dissolution of our negative emotions of sadness, fear and anger or hate, in all their degrees and forms. More positively, deepening well-being is the deepening realisation and expression of the Soul and Its Qualities—of Truth, Reality, Immortality, Value, Love, Joy, Beauty, Power and Peace—which are intrinsically and infinitely fulfilling—our real and

true fulfilment. How do we nurture well-being? Essentially, by releasing our attachments and giving expression to the Soul. Our negative emotions are due to our attachments, the greatest of which are to the ego and body with which are often identified. When that to which we are attached is denied or threatened we react with sadness and fear and, if we believe this threat to be unjust, with anger or hate. Essentially, we attach because we are attempting to fill our inner emptiness through external experiences. We are empty because we have lost the full awareness of our Spiritual Depth, the Soul and Its Qualities, which are our real and true fulfilment. To regain this awareness we must follow the way of the Soul. This is to give expression to the guidance or truth of the Soul, which is also to more or less express and experience the other Qualities of the Soul. As an expression of the Qualities of the Soul, the way of the Soul is intrinsically fulfilling; as such, it is for its own sake, and is not attached to external experiences. As a path of non-attachment the way of the Soul dissolves our negative emotions and also, opens us inwardly to deepening realisations of the Soul and Its Qualities. This is also to say, that the way of the Soul opens us to deepening well-being. The Spiritual path and the path of deepening well-being are then, actually *one and the same* path viewed from two different perspectives.

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### **Forgiveness**

When you believe that you have been harmed and treated unfairly in some way by another, by yourself, by life or by the Divine, a degree of anger or hate arises in the heart. Can you find forgiveness? There is *only one* way to *truly* forgive: to find a deeper or truer way of viewing what has occurred which basically says, ‘There has been no unfairness, and no real harm has been done.’ Forgiveness is essentially a movement from ignorance to truth, and when this shift required is great, forgiveness can be very difficult. The difficulty is not simply in letting go of our old “truth” and “reality” to which we may be deeply attached; the difficulty is also in accepting that the responsibility for forgiveness lies with oneself—to find the deeper and truer perspective that is required. Life is always completely fair and no real harm has ever been done—this is a deep Spiritual realisation which each of us is gradually but inevitably coming to discover. This means that forgiveness is not only possible but inevitable. It means also that we are all on the journey of forgiveness, to complete forgiveness. Several insights can help us to undertake this journey. The first is to see that *in almost all instances* people cause other people and themselves suffering because they cannot *really* see a better, truer and more virtuous way of expressing themselves. If they could really see a better way to act, then they almost certainly would do so—but due to their ignorance or stupidity they cannot. And ignorance or stupidity is *innocent*—it knows no better. Second, all harm and suffering *eventually* contributes to our growth, where we become greater than we once were. For example, when faced with suffering our hearts open with compassion, or we find deeper strength and wisdom. Third, the presence of suffering in the universe is not something which is *ultimately* and *deliberately* created by a Divine Being; rather it is a natural and inherent part of how the Spiritual universe manifests and works to bring forth growth, development and

evolution. Finally, we must remember that while the body and personality are forever being deconstructed and redeveloped on higher levels as part of evolution, we are essentially the Soul, pure Awareness, which is perfect and complete, beyond any change or harm. These and other insights which make forgiveness possible come from the Soul, and so, they are acts of grace. Essentially, forgiveness requires a deepening into truth, and this is always an act of grace. True forgiveness is always an act of grace.

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### **Innocence and Evil**

Each of us lives according to his or her truth. You choose that way which is an expression of *your* truth, as do I, as does everyone. This does not mean that we are not at times conflicted or ambivalent about what is true but, in the end, with few exceptions, we choose that way which we *really* or actually believe to be true. In *this* sense humanity is ruled by truth. Our beliefs about what is right and good are based on and inseparable from our truth. In the light of your truth you choose that way which you believe to be right and good, as do I, as does everyone. Again, this does not mean that at times we are not conflicted and ambivalent about what is right and good, but ultimately, with few exceptions, we choose that way which we really or actually believe to be right and good *in the light of our truth*. In *this* sense humanity is ruled by rightness and goodness. Of course, someone's "truth" may be delusion or falsehood, and therefore, what he or she believes to be right is wrong, and what he or she believes to be good, bad. In particular, the truth for someone may be that the welfare of others does *not* need to be considered; indeed, the truth for someone may be that he or she should inflict suffering upon others for the enjoyment of doing so. And so, we come to the question of evil. Evil may be defined as the infliction of suffering on others because of hatred. People deliberately inflict such suffering upon others because they believe, in the dim light of their "truth", that this is right and good. Their "truth" however is actually delusion. By definition and nature, delusion and ignorance cannot see the truth, and therefore, cannot see what is right and good. In *this* sense, the foolish and ignorant person is innocent—for the present he or she cannot see any better. Evil is ultimately an expression of delusion and ignorance, and therefore, of innocence.

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### **Compassion**

Compassion is where your love is evoked by the suffering of another. Compassion is not pity or feeling sorry for another who is somehow viewed as inferior to oneself. Compassion is love and loving expression given by one Divine Soul to assist another Soul. When we meet one another in compassion we too are being assisted or helped, for our love is being evoked and experienced, our heart is opening, and doing so in circumstances which we may have regarded as valueless or bad. Compassion is something that redeems suffering and difficult situations.

The person who is suffering is learning and opening to compassion also; for it is only through the trial of suffering that he or she will develop the empathy for, and sensitivity to, the suffering of others which are needed for true compassion. When one sees that most of us are struggling amid the immense complexities and ever-threatening severities of life, benighted and burdened by deep and, for the moment, inescapable ignorance and delusion, a profound compassion arises in the heart for all people, including oneself. The deepest expression of compassion is not simply or only the relief of suffering, but to relieve suffering through truth or wisdom, for it is our ignorance and delusions which are the *roots* of our suffering.

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### **The Spirituality of All Relationships**

Essentially, *every* relationship you have with another aware being is Spiritual or Soulful. Each person with whom you share a relationship appears “within” the formless Awareness or Soul that you are—if this was not so then you could not experience that person. Likewise, to be experienced and known by another you must appear within the formless Awareness or Soul that he or she essentially is. This is the second degree of intimacy with another; the first and fundamental degree is that the formless Awareness or Soul that you are is *one and the same* as the Awareness or Soul which is the other, for how could one formless or dimensionless Awareness be separate from Another? Our separation then is only superficial, not fundamental. Essentially, all people, indeed all aware beings, are one and the same Awareness. In the Spiritual universe this singular Awareness first exists on the universal plane of the Archetypes—that plane which is the first expression of The Spirit—where it may be called the Absolute Soul. From the Absolute Soul individual Souls come forth. Initially, they do so as the One Soul where, paradoxically, each and every individual Soul—as formless or boundless Awareness and also as Individual Awareness—experiences and knows *Itself as being* every other Soul. From this high degree of unity Souls progressively divide and separate as they “descend down” through the planes of the universe. This increasing separation is due to: each Soul progressively focusing on its own unique set of experiences; each Soul progressively and mistakenly identifying itself to be some of its finite experiences; and, the increasing delusions and illusions, including those of separation, which beset Souls as they descend into the universe. However, if a Soul can retrace Its footsteps, It can progressively shed Its mistaken identifications and attachments to experiences, and its delusions and illusions, so that It can realise *Itself* as pure or dimensionless Awareness not separate from other Souls, and ultimately, not other than the Absolute Soul. All aware beings then are essentially this same, one Awareness or Soul—this is the essential foundation of our unity, and for our cooperation, mutual respect, compassion and love.

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### **Relationships and Self-Realisation**

We begin this life utterly dependent on others for our physical survival and, after much work where we *apparently* lessen our reliance a little, in older age we return to our original condition. Clearly our ties to others are deeply important to the Soul: relationships are central to any Spiritual path. The *deepest* purpose of relationships is the realisation and expression of the Soul and Its Qualities. Often, it is through others that we first see the Qualities of the Soul embodied, revealed and expressed. In this way They are awakened in us and we are inspired to give Them expression. Falling in love with another is such an awakening and inspiration. Often the awakening and inspiring of Qualities in each other is mutual, and so a strong bond forms. Often, *different* Qualities are embodied and evoked by each so that as a unit or whole the *relationship itself* is more balanced and greater than either person alone. Frequently, our mistake is to believe that a Quality lies in another only, or that our experience of that Quality *depends* upon the other. However, the purpose of our relationships is not only to experience our Qualities through another, but to progressively experience these Qualities *independently* of others. The essential way in which we do this is to give expression to our Qualities guided by the Higher Soul. As we express the Qualities They deepen. This is both inspiring and difficult, for the full experience and expression of any Quality is generally opposed by many internal barriers—delusions, attachments and negative emotions. The commitment to more deeply realise any Quality will evoke these barriers, and they will need to be worked through. Will we embody and express our inherent and infinite Self-Value? Then we will be confronted by, and will need to work through, the delusions, attachments and negative emotions which prevent this realisation—and so for love, power, truth, peace or any Quality of the Soul. As we come to realise our own Qualities we become self-fulfilled and self-sufficient. But the circle completes itself: for now we can more fully and freely give to others, and so our relationships become deeper, richer, and more harmonious.

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### **Two Ways of Relating**

As in life so too in relationships: your essential choice is between living as the Soul that you really are, or living as the ego. Ultimately, it is our mistaken identification with and attachment to the ego that causes our relationships to be problematic, where they are characterised by selfishness, conflict and mental and emotional negativity. Believing that we are the ego, especially the self-image, that its survival is our survival, and that maintaining and enlarging it in various ways is necessary for our fulfilment, we naturally attach to the ego and whatever supports it. Here, we see others as either allies or enemies. If we see others as enemies—something which is *always* more or less the case when we are identified with the ego—we are in a posture of attack and defence. Attack and defence take many forms, often subtle and unconscious, but essentially they are attempts to maintain and build the ego, especially as a self-image, and to defend against any perceived threats to it. If both people in a relationship are engaged in this way of being, then a power play exists. This way of being and relating is characterised by countless degrees and variations of mental and emotional negativity. Negativity, including in our relationships, is *inherent* to our identification with and attachment to the ego. To

live as the Soul means to know—intuitively, rationally or experientially—that you are formless Awareness, and to express yourself as the Soul by following Its voice. Here, we are no longer concerned with attacking or defending against others to maintain the ego or self-image. Instead, our only real concern is to be true to ourselves or to the Soul, which is to follow the path of integrity and love, and more generally, to express the Qualities of the Soul. Outwardly, this way of being will not dissolve all of our relationship problems, for this requires *both* parties to live as such. But *inwardly* at least, as the postures and positions of attack, defence and negativity fall away, our relationships will become increasingly peaceful, harmonious, inspired, fulfilling and fruitful.

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### **“Enemies”**

To confront an enemy is really to confront oneself—literally and psychologically. Like any person, an enemy appears to you as finite experiences “within” and not separate from the formless Awareness that you are. Likewise you appear to your enemy. And, there can be no essential separation between one formless Awareness and another—the separation is superficial not fundamental. Essentially, you and your enemy are the same, one formless Awareness which is temporarily dividing Its attention to simultaneously play two roles—two opponents. And so, by confronting your “enemy” you are confronting yourself. And here, in Awareness, you are interacting with each other, thereby provoking the potentialities of Awareness—various Qualities, powers and skills—into actualities. Essentially, your enemy does this by finding areas of weakness which reflect a lack of development. In particular your enemy finds and threatens an attachment—something onto which you are holding because you believe that your fulfilment lies in it, be it the ego, the body, another person, a place, a possession or some other experience. It is because of this attachment that you react with anger, hate and fear and therefore regard the person as an *enemy*. Your enemy is provoking you to bring forth your Qualities, powers and skills to deal with this threatening situation. The greatest thing your enemy can help you to bring forth is wisdom—the capacity to see things as they really are—including the wisdom which releases attachments by seeing that your true fulfilment does not lie in this or that particular experience, but within yourself as a Soul with Its inherent Qualities and powers; the wisdom to see that you are the Soul that cannot be harmed or hurt in any way; the wisdom to see that all experiences, even encounters with “enemies”, are valuable and therefore good; the wisdom to see that your enemy is acting from ignorance and does not *really* know of a better way to act; and the wisdom which sees an enemy as oneself—in short, the wisdom which sees that an enemy is not really an enemy.

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### **The Way of Love**

Love is from the Soul, and following way of the Soul, which is also the way of love, deepens our experience of love until we return to the Soul. Love is a circle

from the Soul to the Soul. As we follow the way of love there are many experiences of people, places, things and conditions which evoke and receive our love. We must not mistakenly attach or cling to them under the illusion that they are the *source* of our love, or that our love is *ultimately* dependent upon them. In part, these outer experiences are given to us so that we can experience love, and finally, so that we can come to experience and know that we *are* Love Itself, inseparable from the Soul. This is the inward movement of love, but love also has an outward movement. The more we realise ourselves to be Love, the more we can freely and fully give love. Our love goes out to others, and is evoked by others, because we recognise their value. As we traverse the way of love, our love deepens, and its scope widens to embrace all that is, for we are coming to recognise that the same, one Soul is the *essence* of *all* that is. Love is the felt expression of the truth that we are all essentially the same Soul, invaluable beyond measure. Love unites. The way of love is long, arduous, subtle and at times paradoxical. But love is also irrepressible—the way of love must be walked, run, crawled and climbed by everyone. Perhaps the most difficult aspect of this path, indeed of any path through life, is to learn the difference between attachment and love, and to release the former while deepening the latter. The key is to remember that true love is intrinsically valuable, and so, the experience and expression of love is self-sufficient, seeking to possess nothing outside of itself. Love is giving not possessive, empowering not weakening, uplifting not depressing, healing not hurting, and invulnerable not fragile. Love is the purpose and the path, the beginning, middle and end, irrepressible, inescapable, real, essentially what we are, essentially what all others are, essentially what all else is, Divine.

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### **Happiness**

You are Happiness Itself. Like any Quality of the Soul, Happiness is not something to be acquired or developed, but something to be *realised*. Like every other Quality of the Soul, the way to realise Happiness is *essentially* the same: to be true to yourself. To be true to yourself, which is to express that which is most deeply felt to be right (or good) and loving, naturally gives the deepest joy. This is an intrinsically valuable path, and therefore, travelled for its own sake. As such, it is a path of non-attachment. As our attachments dissolve it is natural for the Qualities of the Soul, including happiness or joy, to be experienced more deeply. Again, as with any Quality, happiness will be evoked by the outer experiences of life, and this will be increasingly so as our attachments fall away. In the absence of wisdom there will be a natural tendency to try and hold onto these experiences. However, the key is not to attach or cling to our experiences—which will only shut us off from deepening happiness, and create the negative emotions of attachment—but to remain true to ourselves. Remaining true to oneself while appreciating but holding lightly the experiences of life is the “secret” to deepening happiness. As we travel this path we will come across many experiences which, at first, we consider to be bad. The basic reaction here is to be against such experiences and to attach to their opposites. But attachment is antithetical to happiness. Instead, the essential challenge is to see the value, and therefore the good, in our experiences and in

doing so, to accept them. In particular, if an experience exists it is necessary and valuable for as long as it is present. If we can bring a deeper perspective to these experiences, though difficult, we can appreciate and accept them, and in doing so release our aversions and attachments to them. And, we can resume our path of being true to ourselves, also non-attached, thereby allowing happiness to flow into us freely once again.

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### **Surrender**

The essence of surrender is to let go of something and turn it over to the Soul once you have done, or are doing, all that is required. Surrender is not passivity or resignation or giving up; it is a different, deeper, and more productive and powerful way of living. Surrender is doing what you are able to do, by discerning and giving expression to the Soul, and then turning the situation or matter over to the Soul—the Power which creates and sustains the universe. Surrender is also a form of non-attachment which opens us to deeper experiences from and of the Soul, including Its guidance or truth, creativity, power, peace and love. Of course, surrender requires trust in the Spiritual nature of life. The only way to really and fully develop this trust is to *practice* surrender and *experience* what occurs. Eventually, we must all learn the way of surrender, for the inexorable course of our lives is to more and more deeply access, rely upon, realise, and be our Spiritual nature. And so at times Life assists us to surrender by giving us *crucial* situations where we have exhausted what we are able to do, are powerless to do more, and feel moved to call upon, and turn things over to, a Higher Power.

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### **Humility**

A characteristic of humility is that someone is, more or less, not concerned with being recognised in a positive way by others, nor even by himself or herself. In *some* sense, there is a low estimation of oneself. Despite our egoistic culture, true humility is still greatly respected. Some of the reasons for this respect are apparent. We find it admirable that a person is sufficiently self-assured about who and what he or she is without the need for constant praise and reinforcement. We find it admirable also that a person is not considering himself or herself to be superior to or greater than others. These sentiments express something very deep of which ordinarily we are but dimly aware: one is not the ego requiring constant praise and reinforcement; one is the Soul which is self-sufficient, infinitely valuable, and essentially the same in each person. The essence of humility is to know that you are essentially the Soul, not the ego, and to express yourself as the Soul. And the essence of this way is to follow the voice of the Higher Soul. This is the way of deepening dis-identification and non-attachment from the ego, and thus its pride, and greater realisation and expression of the Soul. To fully realise and express oneself as the Soul is the condition of complete humility.

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### The “Small” Things

Our lives are composed *mainly* of small experiences—those experiences which *appear* ordinary, mundane, relatively unimportant or of little value. Through this constant association Life is teaching us the deep and often hidden meaning and value which is present in the apparently small. First, the small things are essential for our growth. Based on all that has gone before, and that which is to come, namely the fulfillment of your destiny, *each and every* new experience is perfectly suited to your ongoing development or Self-Realisation. The essential way to Self-Realisation is to be guided by your Higher Soul. When, upon this path, you meet with or are guided to do things which *appear* mundane, valueless, or in some other way small, you can appreciate that each experience here is *necessary* for your unique line of growth and, ultimately, cannot be avoided. Upon your journey you will occasionally experience major and rapid shifts forward, but again, you can appreciate that they are always preceded by, and in part are the cumulative outcome of many smaller experiences, steps and accomplishments. Next, in our appreciation of the “small” things, is the truth that all things have *essentially* the same nature and are governed by the same fundamental laws. Thus, all things or experiences, no matter how big or small, are potentially not only teachers of the deepest realities and truths, but also each thing or experience can give us insights into all other things. Finally, with regard to the “small” things, is the truth that each and every experience is a manifestation of the Soul, and has the Soul as its Essence. Indeed, the whole Spiritual world is fully present here and now, “in” each experience, and it is only our delusions, illusions and attachments which prevent us from this Revelation. The present moment is *never really* ordinary, mundane, dull, valueless, imperfect or unfulfilling; this is just the way that we are experiencing it through the veil of our delusions, illusions, attachments and negative emotions. We can take any experience, even the most apparently prosaic or “small” and, by clearing away our delusions, illusions, attachments and negativities, reveal its Divine Essence and behold that Essence shining through it.

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### Teaching and Learning

We are all teachers. Consciously or unconsciously we are all teaching through what we are and what we express. We have no choice but to teach, however we do have some choice as to *what* we teach and the *quality* of our teaching. The essential point is whether we are teaching that which is true and real, or that which is false and illusory—for this is the difference between being a teacher of well-being or a teacher of suffering. Essentially, the more we realise and express the Soul and Its Qualities the more we teach what is true and real; and the more we mistakenly identify with and express ourselves as the ego the more we teach what is false and illusory. The primary *way* in which we teach is through that which we are and do, for despite what we may say, it is through that which we are and do which testifies most strongly as to what we *actually* believe and value. Do you really believe in

being true to yourself? Then this is how you will live. Do you really believe in love? Then it is through love that you will live. We are all teachers, and also, we are all students. Throughout life we have two great teachers: Life and the Soul.<sup>17</sup> Life without, and the Soul within, are always working together, in harmony, to facilitate our increasing Self-Realisation. We are always being taught but we are not always listening. Gradually we learn to become increasingly respectful of, attentive to, and cooperative with these two great Mentors. As a teacher, Life comes in many forms, including parents, families, school teachers, the body, suffering, success, nature, friends and enemies. In fact, each and every experience is perfectly suited to our increasing growth and realisation. Initially, this may not appear so, but, often the lessons involved in an experience or situation are deep and varied, and will take many years to fully unfold and be revealed. As we mature Spiritually the Soul becomes our *primary* teacher: increasingly it is to the Higher Soul that we look for wisdom and guidance, and for the deepening experiences of those Qualities which are intrinsically valuable. The Higher Soul's truth is grounded in Itself and Its unique Vision of the Archetypes which It Knows-by-Being. The Soul and Its Vision is the blueprint of the Soul's destiny. The Higher Soul relates *our* finite experiences to Itself and Its Vision to assess how and to what extent they embody and express Itself and Its Vision—to what extent they are in accord with our destiny. We receive these evaluations as wise insights and guidance, often coupled with feelings of goodness, love, joy and peace. In this way the Higher Soul is both teaching us and *learning through us*—learning how the Soul and the Archetypes find expression in this world of ours as finite or limited experiences.

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### **Soulful Communication**

Real or authentic communication is an expression of the Soul—that expression which is inspired and guided by the Higher Soul, or by the Higher *Self* in harmony with the Soul. This is to speak and express your truth, and so, it carries the power of truth. Indeed, when we speak or express from the Soul, all of the Qualities of the Soul are simultaneously embodied and expressed in this act—truth, reality, power, value, love, joy, peace and beauty. Herein lies the full power of Soulful communication to influence and inspire. Such communication has the power to touch and move the Soul of another, and inspire him or her to speak and express from that Depth. Now there is one Soul communicating with another Soul—now there is real communication. Such communication is intrinsically valuable, for its own sake, whatever may or may not eventuate—yet it has the greatest power to beneficially influence and transform.

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<sup>17</sup> The term 'Life', when capitalised, means more than merely our finite or limited experiences. 'Life' means our experiences as an expression of the infinite intelligence, love and power possessed by our Souls, other Souls, the Archetypes, and the Divine laws which, along with our free choices, are the creators of our experiences.

## **Wholeness and Balance**

While each person's particular path of growth and development is unique, all of these diverse paths unfold according to, and are governed by, universal and fundamental principles or laws. Among the most important of these are the related principles of wholeness and balance. Each individual is enormously complex: there are three phases of the Soul—the Higher Soul, the Higher Self and the human being; there are the Qualities of the Soul and Their expression; there are the powers of intuition, reason, will, imagination, memory, emotion and sense perception; there are the various roles that we put on and put off; and there are our various and sometimes apparently opposed modes of being such as rest and activity, solitude and society, dependence and independence. Life without, and the Soul within, are working together to develop all of these aspects of the individual and, simultaneously, bring them together into a coordinated, integrated, inter-dependent, harmonious, balanced, efficient and productive whole. While the overall movement is towards balance and wholeness, the Soul does not develop all of Its aspects uniformly. In particular, the Soul, like nature or life, works in rhythms and oscillations, where there is an emphasis upon developing one of Its aspects and then a gradual movement back to develop the opposite aspect. Gradually, the two opposites or poles are brought together and integrated into a higher synthesis or greater whole—so too for all other aspects of the individual. Our balance and wholeness then, is dynamic. For example, in one period the emphasis is on the development of the emotions, and in another, reason. But over time, these two powers are integrated and act in unison to guide the individual where he or she seeks that way which is not only intellectually sound, but also characterised by lighter, brighter and more expansive feelings. When one or more aspects of our development fall too far behind the others, that is, when we become imbalanced and incomplete, there are two major consequences. First, because all aspects of the individual are interdependent, when one aspect falls behind in its development this has a retarding or distorting influence upon the others. For example, we are too familiar with the person who has not cared for his or her physical health, and therefore, compromises his or her psychological well-being, or vice versa. Second, if this imbalance and incompleteness continues too far or for too long, pain and suffering inevitably result. Eventually, these negative consequences initiate a reorientation in our way of living, and a restoration of our balanced and wholistic development.

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## **Interplay of the Opposites**

Always, life is moving, ever oscillating between the opposites. Every finite or limited condition has its polar opposite, and between any two opposites there is a movement where one builds as the other declines, until a critical point is reached and the reverse movement is initiated. Some of these rhythms are open and obvious—the pulse of the heart, our breathing, day and night, the changing of the seasons—while others are relatively hidden and less apparent: cycles of wealth and

poverty, health and illness, success and failure, birth and death. Indeed, the life of the universe *as a whole* is one of continual births and “deaths” as the exhalations and inhalations of The Spirit which is the source of all existence. The experiences of our lives are forever moving between the opposites, forever waxing and waning, and if we wish to have peace, happiness and fulfilment ideally we will move and cooperate with this universal pulsation. We do so by being true to ourselves—by being true to the Soul. When we follow the voice of the Soul we find that there is a natural *synchronisation* between the Soul and Life. When the Soul asks for, motivates, and promotes a particular line of development, outwardly Life supports and reinforces this line of development through what It gives and withholds. Conversely, when Life asks for, motivates and promotes a particular line of development, inwardly the Soul supports and reinforces this line of development through what it gives and withholds. Both the Soul and Life have an oscillating rhythm which are synchronised. For example, when the Soul asks for inner contemplation we are provided by Life with the needed time and solitude, while other opportunities decline; but when the Soul moves back the other way and asks for outer development, opportunities for work, socialising and so on increase, while time and opportunities for solitude decline. Thus, although there is an ebb and flow in our outer experiences, when we are in accord with the Soul then Life provides what is *truly* needed. In *this* sense, there is continual abundance. From the constant oscillation between the opposites, universal and individual evolution occurs. More specifically, as the movement between the opposites occurs, experiences, conditions and developments at one pole are integrated with those of the opposite pole to bring forth a greater whole. Thus, from the oscillation of the seasons nature evolves. Or, as a person moves between society and solitude she learns to combine social ease and fluency with independence and self-sufficiency and, in this way, the Soul and Life build a woman who can stand in the midst of the crowd and yet contribute in her own *unique* way; or, build the man who can stand alone, contented, and yet is not neglectful of his community but devotes himself to something which can benefit it. From a Spiritual perspective, of especial importance is the mutually beneficial interplay between the inner Qualities of the Soul and the outer experiences of life. The outer experiences of life help to evoke the Qualities of the Soul, whereas the inner Qualities of the Soul help create and shape our outer experiences. There are shifts of emphasis or oscillations between developing our inner and our outer lives, but overall these lives are increasingly brought together as the individual who is deeply and permanently grounded in the Soul and Its Qualities while living a full, creative and productive life in this world. Discerning that our inner Realisation and outer development depend upon the oscillations and interplays between the opposites, we increasingly learn to move with, and not resist, the rhythmical currents of Life, and of the Soul.

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### **Society and the Soul**

Society is not separate from the Spiritual, for there is only the Spiritual and Its expression. Nothing which occurs in society is against the Spiritual—even the apparently and relatively dark and negative ultimately further the growth of

Spiritual realisation and expression. But in a limited sense, society is commonly antithetical, even hostile, to Spiritual development, that is, the way society functions, or dysfunctions, can make Spiritual development more arduous, protracted and painful that it would otherwise be. The principal way society does this is by consciously or unconsciously, explicitly or implicitly, inculcating beliefs and ways of being which disconnect us from our Souls and stifle Their expression. More specifically, we are taught conformity to a set of beliefs, rules and ways of being and behaving which stifle the voice, aspirations, and expressions of the Soul. An artificial and mechanical way of being is imposed upon us and, for a while, imprisons us. Yet, for reasons of practicality and necessity we cannot wholly separate ourselves from society and, from a Spiritual standpoint, nor should we: to be able to remain true to one's Soul amid the stresses, influences, tensions, conflicts, clamour, noise, rush, glamour, trivialities, superficialities, inanities and the semi-pervasive untruths of society, is to enter *deeply* into one's Spiritual nature. For most of us, society is *essential* to our Spiritual development: to develop such qualities as integrity, discernment, compassion, non-attachment, humility, serenity and strength. The challenge then, is to live within society, to make the most of the opportunities—overt or disguised—which it affords for Spiritual development, to stay attuned to one's Soul, and then, through that development and attunement contribute to, transform, and uplift society. Society, despite appearances, and what large segments of it say and do, exists within the Spiritual, and cannot survive and thrive without the ongoing and deepening influx of the Spiritual. All of the major or significant advances in society, be they intellectual, moral, artistic, aesthetic, humanitarian, political or scientific, have their original impulses from the Soul or Spirit. Indeed much, if not all of the haste and clamour of society is *essentially* and mainly driven by the need for those experiences which reflect and evoke, which give us some experience of, the Soul and its Qualities—experiences which to some degree fill the emptiness within us when we are “separated” from the Soul and Its Qualities. Although, for the most part, we are unaware that it is the Soul and Its Qualities of which we are bereft, for which we are seeking, and of which we need a greater experience. The person who is able to more deeply realise and express his or her Spiritual nature in the *midst* of society contributes much more than is normally understood, for not only are Spiritual influences and contributions necessary, but often, they are more subtle, take longer to show effects, and are slower to be fully acknowledged and appreciated. Let us bless the men and women who keep their Spiritual lanterns burning amid the frequent darknesses and storms of society.

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### **The Way of Power**

True power is a Quality of the Soul. Power is intrinsic to the Soul as Its capacity to be or exist, which is perfect and complete, for the Soul is immortal and invulnerable. Power is also intrinsic to the Soul as Its capacity to create, which is potentially infinite. Through individual Souls the whole universe is manifested or created. Each Soul, including you and I, possesses such power—actually and potentially. The way to deepen our realisation of the Soul's power is to live as the

Soul. This means to live in accord with the knowing that you are formless Awareness, immortal and invulnerable, and not the fragile ego. In particular, this means to follow the voice of the Soul, the true conscience, which is to live with integrity. Spiritual integrity is imbued with power—the power to express and execute that which is discerned to be true and right or good. This power deepens through its expression. To this power we may add our own will-power. Like any Quality of the Soul, true power is intrinsically valuable and expressed for its own sake. As such, it is non-attached, non-possessive and non-acquisitive. The expression of power as part of Spiritual integrity is in accord with, and supported by, the evolutionary movement of the universe. The power of the ego, of oneself when identified with the ego, is essentially that of attachment (or desire), anger and fear. To this power we may also add our will-power. Basically, the ego's power is its *mistaken reaction* to its inner emptiness. Feeling its emptiness or need, and mistakenly believing that this can be filled by possessing some experiences and shunning others, the ego reacts with attachment or desire, fear and anger to possess or acquire some experiences and to avoid others. To a point, the ego's power may deepen through its expression, but ultimately it is limited and its use exhausting. And, being grounded in delusion, the ego's power is out of accord with, and not supported by, the evolutionary movement of the universe.

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### **Practicality**

Essentially, practicality is the capacity to attain those experiences which we find to be intrinsically satisfying. To some extent, these experiences will include physical survival, and the satisfaction of our physical needs, appetites and pleasures. But eventually, there comes the insight that the survival of the body and the gratification of its needs and pleasures are not simply for their own sake, but that they exist to subserve and facilitate our higher needs for, and experiences of, power, happiness, love, peace, beauty, virtue, truth and reality. It is these experiences which are found to be increasingly fulfilling. It is these experiences which are found to be essential for transforming the world into a better place. Eventually there is a further insight: that these higher experiences are deepening realisations and expressions of the Soul and Its Qualities. The question of practicality now increasingly resolves itself into the question, 'How do I more deeply experience the Soul and Its Qualities?' The essential answer is, 'By following the guiding voice of the Soul.' This is the way of expressing, and deepening our experience of, the Soul and Its Qualities. We cannot do this effectively if we lack a Soulful or Spiritual perspective of life. If we believe that this world and life, as we ordinarily experience them, are all that exist, and that they have no Spiritual depth or dimension, then naturally we will regard them to be reality, and naturally we will attach or bind ourselves to them—especially the body which is our connection to this world. But when we are attached we block our deeper experiences of the Soul, and, we are inclined to fulfil our attachments at the *expense* of our most noble sentiments and impulses from the Soul. To increasingly experience and give expression to the Soul and Its Qualities, something which is both our deepest fulfilment and needed for the greatest transformation of this

world, we must not attach to the world but hold it lightly. We can only do this if we truly understand the relationship between the world and the Spiritual—a Spiritual or Soulful perspective is necessary.

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### **Dreaming**

Somewhat paradoxically, the existence of dreams is deeply illuminating about the nature of reality. In dreams you may find yourself to be a person with a unique body and personality, present within a world extended in space, unfolding through time, filled with solid material objects, ruled by causation, and where you believe all of this to be real. And yet, upon awakening you find that time, space, material objects, causation, and yourself as a body and personality were nothing more than a creation of your mind or awareness exercising its imaginative faculty. We see here a clear illustration of the power of Awareness, of the Soul, to create and identify with a body and personality, to create and “enter into” a world of its own making, and to take these to be reality. From your dreams you can see how your life in this so-called physical world can be a vivid, coherent, consistent and familiar dream manifested from and to the Soul that you are. But, we must not push the analogy too far: dreams are primarily private affairs, whereas the spectacle of the so-called physical world is primarily or largely a public or shared phenomenon. Each of us more or less experiences the same “physical” world. This occurs because the world each of us, each Soul, perceives or experiences is a *reflection* and manifestation of the same Archetypes—the one fundamental pattern of the universe. This reflection is mediated “down” through the planes of the universe to each of us by the Higher Soul, the Higher Self, and other Souls responsible for the ordering and evolution of the universe. To reduce the “physical” world, and life in this world, to Awareness and Its experiences is *not* to devalue them, but to reveal their true and deeper value. They are now understood to be more or less expressions of a Spiritual Depth—the Soul, Its Qualities and the Archetypes. And, our lives in this world are an *indispensible* part of the way in which we progressively come to realise and give expression to this Depth.

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### **Awareness and Matter**

You or I do not possess awareness, we *are* awareness. Upon self-observation and self-reflection it is self-evident that one is awareness. All that we experience of the world and life appears in and as awareness. All that we have ever experienced is awareness. It is commonly believed that awareness comes from matter. Science is uncertain as to the nature of matter, but it is commonly believed to be that which is composed of spatial particles and waves which have self-sufficient existence and which, themselves, lack awareness. Defined as such, awareness *cannot* come from matter. First, awareness, with its qualities such as truth, virtue, love, beauty and joy, is self-evidently greater than matter. The greater cannot come from the lesser, for this is tantamount to something coming from nothing which is not possible.

Second, matter itself is not awareness but *other* than awareness. However, something cannot come from that which is *other*, for there is nothing of the supposed product to be found in the supposed source. Just as white cannot come from black where black is other than white, awareness cannot come from matter where matter is other than awareness. Likewise, awareness could never convert or transform into matter. Third, matter is spatial, yet awareness and most states or experiences of awareness have no spatial dimensions, and therefore, cannot be composed of matter. For the same reason, awareness cannot be a transformation or form of matter which *really* means that awareness is some sort of rearrangement of spatial particles or waves. Finally, we must ask ‘How is matter to produce awareness?’ Ultimately, the only answer is that ‘It does so through the collision of its particles.’ But, the collision of material particles, regardless of size, will only ever result in their modification, their breaking-down or building-up, or their increase or decrease in number. Such collisions and movements will never cause awareness, that is, they will never cause you or I.

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### **Awareness and the Brain**

Upon reflection, we can discern that matter, and therefore a brain composed of matter, could never produce awareness. How could matter produce awareness, and therefore the qualities of awareness such as free-will, intelligence, integrity, creativity, love, beauty, joy, aspiration, or a sense of humour, when matter itself lacks all of these? This is for the radically greater to come from the radically lesser, which is not possible. How could that which is *other* than awareness ever produce awareness, for there is *nothing* in the supposed source to build the supposed product? How could awareness be a product or transformation (or reconfiguration) of spatial matter when awareness and many of its experiences have no spatial dimensions? How could the spatial supposedly lose its spatial dimensions and convert itself into the non-spatial? How can the clashing together of minute material particles ever produce awareness any more than the clashing together of larger clumps of matter such as rocks or metals, when all material particles, regardless of size, are essentially the same stuff? And how can awareness and most of its experiences be located inside the space of the brain when they have no spatial dimensions by which to be located or positioned? If you were asked to place a non-spatial emotion or need in the brain, could it be accomplished? More generally, by definition, the non-spatial cannot be located within the spatial. The reality and truth is that space, as visual perceptions and spatial images of the imagination, appear “within” the spaceless Awareness that you are. All of life is nothing more, or less, than experiences manifesting in Awareness or the Soul—this is the fundamental nature of the whole manifested universe. What is the relationship between Awareness and the brain? So-called matter only exists as states of Awareness; in particular, the brain and body are a complex of states within and produced by Awareness. The brain does *not* produce or cause i.e. necessarily determine, Awareness, however, its condition does influence the manner in which Awareness expresses itself as what we commonly call the mind, that is, as the totality of thoughts, feelings, needs, desires, aspirations, memories and imaginings. The

condition of the brain will influence what mind states appear in two basic ways. First, the condition of the brain will modify the form in which *pre-existing* mind states, from the subconscious levels, enter our normal awareness. Second, the condition of the brain, while not producing or causing mind states, will attract or induce mind states from out of Awareness. In these two ways, all mind states in our normal awareness are modified to some degree by the brain. In part then, the brain is a transmitter and reflector of mental states, and in part it induces them out of Awareness. But, the brain neither produces nor causes Awareness nor its states. When we manipulate or damage the brain in some way we merely change what experiences it can enable or induce. This is to say, we merely change what experiences Awareness can manifest. The brain may be destroyed or die so that Awareness can no longer attract and manifest the experiences which constitute *this* world. When this occurs, Awareness, Oneself, does not end—Awareness simply has a different field of experience.

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### **Body and Soul**

You are not the body; you are Awareness. You are not produced by the body, for the body, as matter, cannot produce Awareness which is other, greater, and of a different nature than matter. You are not even in the body; the body is “within” You. Essentially, the body appears as a tightly structured series of experiences within the Awareness or Soul that you are. The body *is* your connection to this world. It has been specifically created for you and given to you for the fulfillment of your unique destiny in this world. Your particular body is *perfectly* suited to the accomplishment of your primary purposes in this life. As such, your body opens up and enables some paths and possibilities while closing down and restricting others. If there is a fit between your body and your inner and outer pursuits, this is a positive sign that these pursuits are in line with your true life path. Further, it is through your intimate and consistent association with the body that major and necessary changes in thought, feeling and conduct are gradually and deeply forged. For example, one person is given a weak body and therefore must compensate through the development of a strong will; while another is given an ugly body and through it learns that true self worth must be inwardly, not outwardly based. The body then is the servant of the Soul, given to facilitate Its evolution and realisation. The body’s service is most fully rendered when it is obedient to the voice of the Higher Soul, and does not, through its desires, compel us to ignore this sacred voice. Is the body a temple in which the Soul resides and radiates or is it a sarcophagus in which the Soul is entombed and suffocated? When we depart from following the voice of the Higher Soul, pain and suffering eventually result. In turn, pain and suffering eventually persuade us to re-evaluate our direction and, more or less consciously, to realign with the Soul. Bodily pain then is often a signal that we are not living as Soulfully as we should and that a reassessment of our path is required. Eventually of course, the body declines with old age and the approach of its death. For most, the decline of the body is experienced with some difficulty, and may even be perceived as entirely negative. However, from a Spiritual perspective the decline of the body and its approaching death have enormous

potential. As the body declines there is a natural shift from the outer to the inner life. Naturally we become less active and more contemplative. An initiation into the contemplation of Spiritual matters is, more or less consciously, evoked and intensified as the body declines and “death” approaches. We see clearly that deep and lasting fulfillment cannot be based on the body. The demise of the body silently but forcefully persuades us that we must look further than the body, indeed further than this world, for lasting happiness and fulfillment. We begin to surrender and let go of the world, including the body. But as always, surrender is completed through the reception of grace.

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### **Space and the Soul**

Our entire lives are unfolding as experiences “within” the Awareness that we are. Therefore, the space which we experience is appearing to that Awareness also. Our experience of space is then nothing other than spatial images in Awareness—those images which we commonly call ‘visual perceptions’ and those images of the imagination based on these perceptions. When we reflect closely upon these images we find that they are actually and only two-dimensional, for each of these images can be fully and accurately copied or reflected onto a two-dimensional surface such as a mirror. It is through the creative, and largely unconscious, activity of our imaginations that we work with these two-dimensional images to construct and add the third dimension of space. We can do this because the images, as visual perceptions, which are presented to us, are presented in a very structured, or consistently and strictly associated, way. Perhaps the easiest way to understand what is occurring here is to again use the dream analogy. In dreams we often imagine and believe that we are located within a spatial body moving about within a spatial world. But, we are not within a spatial world at all; space is “within” us, the dreamer, as mere spatial images. So too in waking life, the images appearing to the Awareness that we are, are built up into a three-dimensional world by the imagination. Of course, unlike dreams, the images, as visual perceptions, which are given to us, and out of which we build our three-dimensional world, are *not* our own private creation. Like all of our sense perceptions they are reflections and expressions of the Archetypes mediated down to us by our Higher Soul and the Higher Self, and other Souls responsible for the creation and evolution of the so-called physical plane of the universe. You are not in space, space is “within” the formless Awareness or Soul that you are.

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### **Causation**

Causation may be defined as the existence of “something” being produced by and from its prior, or having its nature more or less determined by its prior. Matter, as some sort of spatial substance which is other than awareness, could never cause awareness and the experiences of awareness: something, awareness, cannot come

from that which is *other*, matter; that which is greater, awareness, cannot come from that which is lesser, matter; that which is non-spatial, awareness and most of its experiences, cannot come from or be composed of that which is spatial in nature; and the interaction of spatial particles will only ever result in their modification, but never awareness. Neither is any experience in awareness caused by its prior experience. Generally, an experience shares nothing in common with the one which preceded it—they are totally other. As such, an experience could not have been produced by its prior, for something cannot come from that which is other. Next, causation requires one thing acting on another to produce an effect. However, most experiences in awareness are without parts, and therefore, there are no parts to act on each other to produce the next experience. Even when we apparently witness one thing acting on another, we are *actually* witnessing one experience *succeeding* another in awareness, nothing more. Perhaps the easiest way to understand the fallacy of causation is again through the dream analogy. In a dream we believe that one thing is causing another, yet there is *only ever* one experience *succeeding* another—so too when we are awake. Instead, our experiences are manifestations out of the Awareness that we are. Some experiences arise in Awareness through the law of attraction, where each experience has the tendency to attract similar experiences. Some arise through conditioning, where experiences normally associated in the past have a tendency to continue to do so. Some arise from where we choose to place our attention: when we focus on an experience there is the tendency to attract similar and associated experiences. And others arise from the workings of the Higher Soul or Higher Self, which can produce experiences in our Awareness.

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### **Time and the Soul**

Time is normally conceived of as some kind of continuum or duration or extension of past, present and future. But, we *only ever* experience the present moment—when we experienced the past it was the present, and when the future arrives it too will be the present. The present moment has no duration or extension, for if this were so, it could be divided into present *and* past. *Any* extension of the present moment would be the past. Therefore, the present moment has *no* extension or duration. Each moment has no duration, and therefore time, as an accumulation of present moments, also has no duration. Time is not a duration or extension or continuum. Time is only the changing of experiences in Awareness. To this changing sequence we may mistakenly add, *in the imagination*, extension or duration. What then is time? Time is merely change—changes of experiences in Awareness. Time, or change, is measured by various means such as clocks or the rhythm of day and night, but these measures too are, essentially, only changing experiences within Awareness. We are only measuring one set of changes by another. You apprehend *change per se*—and therefore time—by referring or relating your changing experiences to that which is unchanging: Awareness Itself, That which you are. Self-evidently you are awareness, and self-evidently you are in some way always the same or unchanged you. This unchanging awareness that you are is not limited or finite in nature. You can easily observe that in one moment a

finite experience occupies your awareness, and in the next moment another, *totally different*, finite experience occupies your awareness—say one colour being replaced wholly by another. Yet, self-evidently, in some way you remain unchanged during these experiences or moments. Clearly, if you are in some way exactly the same or unchanged in these two moments, but where the finite experience for each moment is completely different—so that they have nothing in common or unchanged—then you cannot be these differing and changing finite experiences. What is left? Only Awareness Itself: the unchanging Awareness, You, which is observing and apprehending these changing and finite experiences. Is it not evident from your direct experience that there is something, awareness, which is common and unchanged amid all your finite or particular and changing experiences, but which is itself not particular? You and I are unchanging and non-finite Awareness, as such we are timeless, for time is only change. Time, as change, is in the Soul; the Soul Itself is beyond change and therefore beyond time.

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### **Immortality**

Upon the death of the body, Awareness, that which you and I are, cannot cease, for something cannot become nothing. Nor can the Awareness that we are convert Itself back into matter, which would be for awareness to *produce* matter. Awareness is *other* than matter. And something, in this case matter, cannot come from that which is *other*, in this case awareness, for there is nothing of the supposed product to be found in the supposed source. Indeed, Awareness can *never* become what is *other*—it *must* remain Itself. If we were to assert that Awareness is *not* other than matter, and in doing so, seek to evade the foregoing argument, then we are left with the conclusion that there is *only* Awareness which is also called ‘matter’. Again, this Awareness cannot cease, for something cannot become nothing. Upon death then we remain, always, as Awareness. This means that you and I are immortal. The immortality of Awareness or the Soul can be approached in another way. The Soul is not in time; time is in the Soul. Essentially, time is nothing more than the changes of experiences “within” Awareness. Awareness Itself, the Soul, is changeless and therefore timeless—*without* time. That which is changeless or timeless is eternal, and that which is eternal is immortal. Further still, that which is not in time does not begin or end in time—it is Immortal. You and I are the immortal Awareness in which the changing experiences of life, including those that which we call “death”, occur.

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### **“Death”**

So-called death is simply a change of finite experiences “within” the Awareness that you are—*nothing* more. Awareness does not depend on the body; the body depends upon Awareness. Essentially, the body is only a series of finite experiences within Awareness—a vivid, familiar, and consistently associated set or experiences, but a series of experiences nonetheless. However, the body is the

means for our participation in this world, and when it dies we leave this world. To 'leave this world' means that the experiences appearing to Awareness, and which constitute this world, come to an end, and are replaced by a new set of experiences constituting a new world. Upon the death of the body most people will become aware of that plane of universal existence which is commonly called the astral plane. In particular, a person will "gravitate" to or be "attracted" to that area of the astral plane which is commensurate with, or a reflection of, his or her inner and true character. This is an aspect of the law of attraction that operates throughout the manifest universe: we attract those experiences which correspond to that which we are and are expressing. How we have lived in this world then, more precisely, what we have become, will to some degree determine what we will experience after "death"—at least initially. After "death" we continue our journey of growing and learning, but upon other planes of universal existence. In particular, we are involved in fully assimilating the experiences and lessons of the earthly life which we have just left. Eventually, we will return to this world for a new period of growth and learning.

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### **Trust In Life**

Our relationship to life is very intimate. Life is not external or alien to us. The finite experiences of life are manifesting within, and are not separate from, the formless Awareness that you or I are. Neither is the life arising within us accidental or random; it is an ever-evolving and ordered expression, ultimately, of the Archetypes. Indeed, the whole manifested universe is an ever-evolving and ordered expression of the Archetypes mediated through and by individual Souls. This includes the Soul of the Universe responsible for the ordering of the whole universe as manifested and finite experiences, and that great Soul which is responsible for the evolution of our own planet Earth. Within, and as part of, this wider evolution of the universe our own individual evolution occurs—the evolution of one's body, ego, character, capacities and skills. This individual evolution is being guided by the Higher Soul of each individual which has Its own unique Vision of the Archetypes. The fulfilment of this Vision is certain, fated, as part of the inexorable and ineluctable unfolding of the whole universe. As we develop Spiritually we increasingly learn to harmonise with, and facilitate the realisation of our individual destinies as part of the wider unfolding of the universe. We do this by becoming increasingly attuned to the Higher Soul which is guiding us through the ever-changing circumstances of life. At first this attunement is weak, faltering and inconsistent, but gradually, over many lives, it becomes clear, sure and strong. Yes, there is pain and suffering, and even death, which are inherent aspects of the universal unfolding. But we come to learn that pain and suffering are but tough teachers and mentors, and that there is no real death, for we are not the body or the ego but the formless Awareness in which these and the whole universe unfolds as finite experiences. We are essentially Souls—inviolable, invulnerable and immortal. At the end of each life we merely ascend back through the universal planes to unite with the Higher Self—fully assimilating the experiences of the life just completed as we do so, and preparing to descend again to this world or another to continue

our never-ending journey of growth, development and evolution. Relax and trust, the universe and the individuals within it are being intelligently guided and nurtured. Relax and trust, all is well.

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