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Life, the Great Experience

As the bud unfolds into the flower, so the soul unfolds through experience into the clear white light within

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At one time or another in life, each of us has had similar experiences of temptation. There were times when we went against what we knew to be the better action, did things we knew we would be sorry for later. We knew because the actual knowing of the consequences of our actions or inactions is resident within us. Even the demons of ancient scripture are actually within us, for that is the lower, instinctive nature to which power is given when we go against what we know to be the best for us. Even the greatest souls have temptations. The souls who are the oldest and the strongest have the strongest temptations and desires. Do you often ask, "Why should this happen to me? What did I do to deserve this?" The experience was created and born of your own strength. Any lesser experience would have meant little more than nothing to you because no lesson would have been derived from it.

When we go to kindergarten, we are taught gently. When we go to the university, we are taught in the language of the

university. The teachings only come to us from life in a way that we can best understand them, in a way that we can best call forth our inner strength. I have been in many situations and expected people to meet certain standards, but I have discovered that there are many basic things people just don't know.

If you check back through the pages recording various periods of your life, you will observe that knowing grew from certain experiences which you held memory of in your subconscious mind. You can also look within yourself and observe all that you do not know that you knew. For example, start with all those things you are not sure about. You must resolve all of these things through understanding before you can clear your subconscious mind. When you have cleared your subconscious mind through understanding the lessons from the experiences you are still reacting to, you will unfold the inner sight of your clear white light and begin to live in your true being.

The yoga student must establish basic principles in his life. He must try very hard to do this. The knowledge of interrelated action and reaction is within the consciousness of man. To understand the deeper experiences of life, we must analyze them. We must ask ourselves, "What does this experience mean? What lesson have I derived from it? Why did it happen?"

We can only find answers to these questions when we have established a foundation of dharmic principles, which are the mental laws governing action and reaction. Below are listed thirty-three contemporary dharmic principles that stabilize

external forces so that a contemplative life may be fully lived. When practiced unrelentingly, they bring the understanding of the external and deeper experiences of life.

1. Simplify life and serve others.
2. Live in spiritual company.
3. Seek fresh air and sunshine.
4. Drink pure water.
5. Eat simple, real foods, not animal flesh.
6. Live in harmony with nature.
7. Consume what you genuinely need rather than desire.
8. Revere the many forms of life.
9. Exercise thirty minutes every day.
10. Make peace, not noise.
11. Make a temple of your home.
12. Develop an art form or craft.
13. Express joy through song and dance.
14. Plant twelve trees a year.
15. Leave beauty where you pass.
16. Be one with your guru.
17. Be nonviolent in thought and action.
18. Love your fellow man.
19. Rely on the independent energy in the spine.
20. Observe the mind thinking.
21. Cultivate a contemplative nature by seeking the light.
22. Draw the lesson from each experience of life.
23. Detach awareness from its objects.
24. Identify with infinite intelligence, not body, mind or intellect.
25. Be aware in the eternal now, not in the past or the future.
26. Do not take advantage of trust or abuse credit.
27. Keep promises and confidences.
28. Restrain and direct desire.
29. Seek understanding through meditation.
30. Work with a spiritual discipline.
31. Think and speak only that which is true, kind, helpful or necessary.
32. Create a temple for the next generation by tithing.
33. Strive to realize God in this life.

There is a state of mind in which the sifting-out process of action and reaction is not possible. This is when the subconscious mind is confused. Too many experiences have gone into the subconscious that have not been resolved through understanding. Balancing the subconscious mind is

like keeping accounts or balancing books.

Suppose you have hurriedly put many figures on your ledger. Some of them are correct but a few are not, and others do not belong, so the books don't balance. You may spend hours over these ledgers, but they won't balance because it is human nature that we do not see our own mistakes. It takes someone else to gently point them out to you. As you quietly sit in concentration over your books, trying to balance them with a deeper understanding, your guru, teacher or friend may walk in the door and in five minutes find the error. You correct it and, like magic, the darkness lifts, the books balance perfectly and you inwardly see your clear white light. The ledger is your subconscious mind, the figures are your experiences, and until you understand them you will remain in darkness, in a state of imbalance. You will not only feel this disharmony, you will be able to see it portrayed as darkness within your body.

For just as it is your experience which makes up your subconscious state of mind, so it is your subconscious which creates the physical body and makes it look as it does. There are some people skilled enough to look at your face and your body and thereby read what is in your subconscious mind. My spiritual master, Jnanaguru Yogaswami, could look at another's mind, see and understand the nature and intensity of the darkness or light. It is a science only a few are trained in accurately. He knew that the physical body is really created by the sum total of the conflicts and tranquilities within the subconscious state of mind. As man becomes enlightened through cognition, the conflict lessens, giving birth to the dawn after the darker hours.

If you haven't taken from each experience its sum of understanding, subconsciously you remain in the classroom reacting to the lesson you are learning, even though the experience may have occurred fifteen or twenty years ago.

So, we have to end each of these experiences in understanding. We have to be promoted to the next deeper grade of awareness so that, with the universal love born of understanding, we can close the classroom doors behind us and receive our diploma. When we receive this first diploma of the clear white light, we are given the greater knowledge and wisdom of what this great experience of life is all about. How do we realize what life is all about? By having lived it fully, we fully realize that the past is nothing more and nothing less than a dream, and a dream is comprised of pleasant experiences and nightmares. Both are just experiences, neither good nor bad, right nor wrong.

But you must remember that even the greatest souls have had nightmares, confusions, heartbreaks, disappointments, losses, desires that have been unfulfilled and experiences that they have not been able to cognize. And then they have come to a point in their lives when their inner being started pushing forward to the conscious plane. In other words, they have had just about all the experience necessary to graduate out of the instinctive-intellectual world, or consciousness. The great, intuitive superconscious nature begins pushing forward to the conscious plane, stirring up within the subconscious the remnants of the past. As those remnants come up, they have to be faced and cognized through meditation, thus creating the foundation for understanding the basic laws and principles of life. Then comes the dawn of the clear white light.

I always try to keep the approach to the study of life and the unfoldment of the inner Self very simple by giving examples of the flower that begins as the little seed and grows into a stem forming a bud. We know nothing of the blossom until the bud opens, and we know little of the bud after it has become a blossom. However, each process within that growth to maturity is an experience for the plant. The seed contains within itself its basic laws of growth. The stem will tell its own story as it grows. The bud contains many experiences and has contained within it a complete story of its own. As the blossom unfolds, it tells a radiant autobiography of beauty.