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MESSAGES IV

1995 - 2000

**The Ten Words
of
Spiritual Unfolding**

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INTRODUCTION

The third teaching of the course *Spiritual Unfolding* ends in this way:

The basic words for Spiritual Unfolding are the following:

1. *Silencing*
2. *Listening*
3. *Remembering*
4. *Understanding*
5. *Knowing*
6. *Wanting*
7. *Daring*
8. *Judging*
9. *Forgetting*
10. *Transmuting*

We can interpret the fact that the course text makes no further reference to these words as signifying that their meaning is literal and that they describe a linear process of unfolding.

Literally, each one of these words states clearly something to be done. For example, to make silence is not to speak; to listen is to pay attention; to remember is to bring something into one's memory; etc.

As a linear development, the succession of these words would imply the precedence of some over others, with no backward movement.

In this context, there are two aspects of a linear development to distinguish. In a relative sense, yes, there are linear aspects. In an absolute sense, linear development is not observed in the process of spiritual unfolding.

In the context of the *ten words* and in the framework of behavior, a linear precedence does exist. We need to make silence, vocally and mentally, to be able to listen. To understand, we have to remember. To want, first we need to know our options. To dare, we need to want within a known context and in this way recognize the limits of that context. We can only judge with validity when we have dared to contemplate a context larger than the one afforded by our habitual points of view. And to transmute, we need to turn the page of our personal memories — i.e. forget their personal character — and in this way assimilate them into a more universal context.

This is how, in the framework of behavior, the *ten words* shape an asceticism that promotes our unfolding.

But an asceticism applied to our behavior, although necessary, is not enough for us to widen our consciousness beyond the cultural conceptions which define this asceticism. We can attain great composure without this leading us to transcend the limits of our prejudices and ready-made ideas. This mental stubbornness usually leads us to feel sure that “we are arriving” at our spiritual objective without realizing that, for example, *Daring* to make a decision doesn't mean that we have *Understood* the situation that motivated our decision and that our decision is the appropriate one.

Although the development of our behavior can be linear in some respects, the development of our consciousness is not. We don't leave anything behind: everything remains in us while we expand our state of consciousness.

Spiritual unfolding is not linear: evidence shows us that simply having understood something about our behavior does not prevent us from going backwards or acting as if we had not had the understanding.

For this reason, besides setting the *ten words* within the context of what we do, we are relating them to the idea we have about ourselves and our environment; that is, we are putting them in the context of our state of consciousness.

In the milieu of our consciousness, the *ten words* make up a mysticism that acts directly on our notion of being. It is good therefore that we spend time on the distinction between the idea of *should be* and *coming to be*.

Should be assumes the existence of a model of unfolding that should be reached based on an idealization that, in reality, we generate by extrapolating what perfection might be for us. The difficulty with this approach is that our idea of the ultimate model or perfection always comes from an imperfect state of consciousness, since we are not at unfolding's finish line but on the path toward it. And not only we as individuals, but also our conceptions and beliefs are there, since they are a product of our present mentality.

Frequently the idea of *should be* based on an idealized model of perfection pervades not just our mystical asceticism, but also our notion of being, and this discourages us. As *should be* is something ideal, no matter how much we exert ourselves, we always see an insurmountable distance between what we are and the ideal being that we *should be*. Instead of paying attention to the process of broadening our context, we visualize what we *should be* in an ideal setting, outside the limits of our being. It's unavoidable, then, that we live with a sense of being at fault which we can't uproot, and with the burden of not being able to realize what we most yearn for.

On the other hand, if our model of perfection is ideal, we close off the possibility of unfolding it, and with this we impose a hurdle on our own unfolding. In addition, this vision of *should be* usually makes us discriminatory, dogmatic, and intolerant.

Of course, it is indisputable that we need models — models not perfect in an absolute sense, but as expansive as we can conceive of them within our present state of consciousness. These models are the real ones which we can indeed reach. It is also indisputable that we need a morality to align our behavior with our objective. But, to advance spiritually, we need to contextualize our models and morality within the line of the unfolding of our state of consciousness.

If we accompany the asceticism of control over our behavior with a mysticism of expansion of our consciousness, we internalize ethics and, gradually, our behavior responds in a spontaneous way to the sense of participation and inclusion that we develop.

In the context of spiritual unfolding, we could say that our present being is a *coming to be*.

We don't come to be as if we were arriving at a final objective, but rather at the stage we begin to traverse the moment we look beyond ourselves and our immediate interests. From this point of view, unfolding ourselves is a continuous *coming to be*, a process of understanding by including, accompanied by the plenitude implicit in each advance we make regarding the context which contains and defines us.

As a continuum, *coming to be* is, simply, *being now*, in the eternal present.

It's not possible for us to be neither what we once were nor what we are not yet. *We are now*. The essence of *being now* is the context of our now. The greater the context embraced by our now, the more expanded is our consciousness of being.

This vision of our unfolding sets out the *ten words* in such a way that they are all not only related, but inseparable. The first word is as close to the next one as to all the others. We can't transmute without making silence, and only when we silence our ready-made ideas can we transmute the teachings which life affords us into consciousness.

The application of the *ten words* — as asceticism and as mysticism — to our effort to unfold helps us to know who we are, how we want to live, what we want to become; it gives us as much a frame of reference as a line of work for achieving our yearning.

Even if we were to ignore this line of work, eventually we would unfold; it would be enough for us to let time lead us by the hand through life. But if our vocation is to fully expand our state of consciousness, the *ten words* show us the intention, attitude, behavior, and field of work — our state of consciousness — that orients us toward this end in the most expedient way and with the least suffering.

1. SILENCING AND LISTENING

The work of the Sons and Daughters of Cafh is to develop the Mysticism of the Heart, transmit the Message of Renouncement and prepare the advent of the Universal Religion.

In order to carry out this work it is indispensable to make silence: to be quiet and listen.

To be quiet is not simply to stop talking and control our mental movements. It is to make a more complete silence. We are already used to restraining our words and directing our thoughts into a chosen avenue. But if we pay attention, we discover that behind that mode of silence we always continue with the same discourse, the one formed by how we see things, by our desires and expectations.

To be quiet is to discover that discourse, bring it to light and stop it.

No matter how new an idea might be, we filter it through the collection of previous ideas we associate with it. This unconscious habit leads us to the attitude of "I already know," and prevents us from perceiving what is in front of us. At the same time, it gives us the false security that we understand the very thing we are as yet unable to perceive as it is.

To develop the Mysticism of the Heart we need first to recognize the ideas we have accumulated about mysticism.

Every belief system has its own version of mysticism. Although in most of them mysticism means a supernatural state of union, each such system explains, in its own way, with whom the soul unites in the mystical experience and what kind of state that union is.

We often imagine that a mystical realization gives the happiness we cannot find in this world. With this idea, the search for mysticism can easily imply turning our backs on the reality we know and seeking emotional states that have little to do with the unfolding of our state of consciousness.

Only by making silence by being quiet and listening can we clear away our preconceptions about the Mysticism of the Heart.

Everything that exists including ourselves is in relationship. This implies a total interaction of everything with everything else that exists.

Whether we perceive it or not, we interact with what we do not see or know, with what seems distant and alien, with our homes, with the earth, with everything that exists on the earth and, obviously, with all human beings.

We cannot relate directly with the divine whom we do not see or know; we can only have an indirect relationship with the divine through the world and the life which we do perceive and in which we interact deliberately and consciously.

The Mysticism of the Heart leads us to union with the divine unknown through daily life. There is no way to unite with the divine if we separate or isolate ourselves from the only forms in which the divine manifests itself to us. And the closest manifestation to us is the human being — each and every human being, those we see and know and those we do not see or know.

We reach the Divine Mother's heart through the heart of every human being.

Only by making silence — by being quiet and listening — can we perceive each human being as he or she is and, through that perception, transcend toward that which we do not yet know.

The Mysticism of the Heart requires us to commit ourselves totally to our obvious and evident reality: to commit ourselves to what we are, to the world and the beings we live with, and to the most excellent possibilities we can fulfill for the good and advancement of the world.

To what other reality can we commit ourselves but to this life that we live? And who can we commit but each of ourselves, just as we are? It is therefore fundamental to make silence. If not, instead of committing ourselves to obvious reality we would become attached to an illusion made of our preconceived ideas.

We have accumulated so much through our history, beliefs and well-intentioned dreams about spiritual life that it is difficult for us to see things as they are, even when they are right in front of us.

Life continuously gives us its teaching; even so, to accept that teaching we need to suspend what we think about life and about how we are. This necessarily implies making silence: being quiet and listening.

Being quiet and listening are also indispensable for transmitting the Message of Renouncement.

Our confidence in the way we interpret things can distort the good works we try to do. Without realizing it, we can transform ourselves into another case of those who think they have the solution to the problems of the world and give their own discourse, removed from the obvious reality that is always before their eyes.

The way to transmit the Message of Renouncement is by making silence: by being quiet and listening, in order to perceive the reality of the other person, his or her needs and possibilities, and thus respond to each case in particular.

Let us not confuse the Message of Renouncement with a new theory about life and its problems. The Message of Renouncement is renouncement as message: our own renouncement. This is the only way that what we say and do can further human unfolding.

The solution to the problems of the world does not come from outside; there is no magic solution for conditions that are proper to our state of consciousness. The only way to transcend

our problems is through our own unfolding: through the spiritual advancement of each one of us. Everything we do expresses what we are. If we want a better world, the formula for obtaining it is to become better: to unfold without pause.

Let us make room in ourselves for the Universal Religion by making ourselves universal.

To accept intellectually a broader vision of the world and life, including descriptions of cycles of human and cosmic life, does not greatly affect our state of consciousness. Neither is it really affected if we exchange the belief that we live only once in this world for a belief in reincarnation, nor if we change the names of the supernatural beings we believe in, nor if we believe in different planes of existence or in one set of affirmations instead of another.

These are all different approaches to reality and opinions based on beliefs, which do not imply any significant evolution in one's state of consciousness.

To explain reality in one way or another, to believe or not in this or that, does not by itself make us more open or more evolved.

It is the degree of universality we achieve through the Mysticism of the Heart incarnated in daily life which reveals the quality of our state of consciousness.

What does it mean to achieve universality?

It implies a basic qualitative change in the way we relate with everything, beginning with what is immediate: the real and continuous points of interaction we have with the universe the people with whom we relate on a daily basis.

In practice, it is to quiet ourselves in order to transform the way we relate with these people.

Underneath all our relationships are our preconceived ideas about how everything and everyone is or should be. We build our expectations on this foundation. These expectations are, in turn, the basis for the way we act and react in relation to others and the way we judge them.

It is indispensable to have a system of ideas from which to derive our decisions and actions. But if this system of ideas is unyielding, it prevents us from updating the vision we have of our immediate reality.

Every system of ideas is proper to a state of consciousness. Our unconscious tendency is to hold on to our way of seeing things, without realizing that that attitude goes against the expansion of our state of consciousness.

What can we do, then, to advance?

For one thing, we can learn to keep our interpretations as always subject to revision and to make room for an open and expectant attitude toward things and people in order to perceive them as they are and not as we think they are.

The simple and practical exercise to achieve this is to silence ourselves systematically: to be quiet and listen. In particular, we practice this silence each time we are with another person or each time we think about someone.

In order for relationships between people to be possible, it is basic not only for each person to be able to express herself just as she is but for each to perceive the other person just as she is.

Our expectations of others come from our ideas about how they are, what they want and what they can do, instead of being based on how they really are, what they really want and what they really can do.

Only by putting aside our set of preconceived ideas and being quiet before others do we have the capacity to listen to their verbal and nonverbal messages.

And only after listening to the message of others are we in a position to respond to them, to their needs and possibilities.

The very silence which allows us to hear others also allows us to hear ourselves.

Just as we have a set of ideas about others how they are or should be and how they ought to behave we also have a similar set of ideas about ourselves.

We refer to certain standards in order to adjust our self-perception and this helps us have consistent behavior. But we also need to recognize the spurious and precarious components of our ideas about how we are so that we can discover how we really are.

Only by understanding how we really are can we relate with others as they really are.

Universalization is therefore based on what is certain, what is obvious. It is nourished by our capacity to relate by remaining conscious of the transitory nature of our ideas about all things and about other people. We are then able to make contact with the universe the way it presents itself to us, through the points of permanent interaction we have with it: through human beings as unique expressions of the Divine Mother, through the earth which gives us shelter, through the firmament which inspires us.

By taking this one step becoming quiet we have the capacity to listen and to transmute our perception in a way that allows us to have a direct relationship with and, eventually, an understanding of the world, life, others and ourselves.

Society, people, things, the earth, life in general are continually expressed: they give us signals of what is happening and of what is possibly going to happen. We always have inklings

of what is going to happen illnesses, personal and social crises, eruptions of violence and also signals to celebrate and support our endeavors. If we are quiet and listen, we perceive these signals without distortions. Since we do not reject them with our preconceived ideas, we have available all our potential to respond to them so as to project an ever more promising future.

At the same time, those signals show us the effects of our presence on the earth and in society, the consequences of the way we are and the way we act, the way we pursue our objectives and the results we leave behind as we pass through life. The responses we generate in others and in our environment are the mirror that shows us how we are and what we are doing.

To make silence to be quiet and listen is the only way we can remain conscious of what we are doing with our lives and with others' lives, and it shows us the direction we are taking.

Only silence shows us whether we are heading toward our chosen objective and, likewise, it teaches us to correct our course continuously. This is the only sure basis on which we can build our destiny, to travel the road of the Mysticism of the Heart.

2. REMEMBERING AND UNDERSTANDING

Spiritual unfolding is a process based on understanding. First we understand, then we make decisions and finally we act. Otherwise, our actions would be motivated by impulses and reactions, and this would be detrimental to our unfolding.

Understanding what we experience allows us to evaluate what happens to us, recognize our alternatives, establish our priorities and discern the consequences of our decisions. By using this process we can apply our will in efforts that promote our advancement.

Understanding is also a process of paying attention, remembering, including, comprehending, and then placing all of this within an appropriate context.

Paying attention requires being quiet--so as to be able to perceive--and listening--so as not to distort what we perceive.

We are used to paying attention by filtering out everything except what interests us or suits us. We make arbitrary selections from the complete message of life and are left with little bits of information. Our attention has its definite limits, but we are rarely familiar with them. When we pay attention we reduce our outlook to the extreme, while our inner discourse struggles to hide the evidence around us.

When we pay attention we are developing our interest, our love for everything and everyone around us. When we pay attention, everything which happens is happening to us and teaches us.

If we want to comprehend what happens, and what happens to us, we need to pay attention without allowing our moods and prejudices to distort what we are considering. We especially need to curb our tendency to justify ourselves and be critical.

If we want to benefit from our relationships, instead of interpreting differences or difficulties as attacks from others, let us meet others with the attitude of paying attention and learning about aspects of ourselves that we either don't know or don't accept.

Our attention shows how much we love our ideal of inner liberation and self-knowledge, and to what extent we learn from our experiences, from life.

Remembering implies registering and validating what we perceive.

Everything that happens to us remains in our memory, but we don't take advantage of it if we don't remember it. We remember especially what we think is important and do not remember events that don't interest us or that we don't want to remember. But, as a point of fact, we are involved in everything that has happened.

However, if we remember the past but do not include ourselves in that past, we reduce our experiences to a succession of remote incidents and anecdotes that have no content or teaching for our lives.

Besides paying attention and remembering, if we want to understand we need to include ourselves in everything that happens.

To include ourselves means committing ourselves. Through attention and memory we incorporate more and more reality into what we perceive, and by including ourselves in our perception we commit ourselves to what we know. We, as well as what we consider, belong to the same context. We need to include ourselves in that context deliberately and consciously so that our perceptions do not stray from reality. To remove ourselves from what happens, to look

from the outside, makes us strangers within our own reality. By including ourselves in what we perceive, we see ourselves as participants both in what touches us closely and in everything that takes place.

Paying attention, remembering and including are key elements to understanding, but they are not enough. It is also necessary to comprehend.

To comprehend is to have discernment about what we perceive. Our attention makes it possible for us to store up great amounts of data, our memory allows us to remember the data, while our ability to incorporate that data allows us to make it our own. However, all this is not enough to make the most out of the material we accumulate. Part of the process is to evaluate the information which facts give us. But what do we base that evaluation on? We need to relate it to a context.

Although we comprehend a situation when we find out what, how and when something happened, we understand that situation only when we relate it to a broader context than that provided by that particular set of data.

We are always inside a greater context than the one we are aware of, although sometimes, being self-involved, we may not realize it. We choose our context with our intention, interest and objectives. The degree of our understanding depends on the scope of our context.

In order to understand the information that we evaluate we have four main contexts: the individual context, our immediate milieu, the human milieu and the great context of the totality of reality.

Consideration of the individual context forms the basis for our way of comprehending ourselves and of discerning what happens to us. The context of our immediate milieu gives us the elements for understanding and resolving our daily circumstances, for having a more objective appraisal of ourselves and for adapting to our culture. Consideration of the human context serves as a reference point for distinguishing the position of our particular culture in history and in the present era, and the relative importance of what happens to us. It also shows the incontrovertible necessity for participation. Consideration of the great context of totality gives a transcendent meaning to our life.

The individual context: the human being as an individual

Every experience belongs to the context of our whole life. When we isolate an experience we turn it into an anecdote. If, however, we relate it with our past and see it within a framework that includes our future, we infer its consequences and are in a better position to understand it.

We cannot understand a current experience without relating it to our individual past and to our future. Nothing happens to us “just because,” without previous causes which have been, to a great extent, generated by ourselves. The future is not completely unforeseeable. Just as we can understand how through our behavior and decisions we gradually determined the circumstances we are now experiencing, we can also infer what is awaiting us if we continue with the same behavior and deciding with the same criteria. We can even envision what our future circumstances would be if we were to change that behavior and those criteria. The inner outlook, then, must not only seek clarity in the vision of the movements of our present mind and feelings; it must especially perceive, discern and interpret the conditioning of the past, and distinguish the future we can freely build from where we are now.

Our capacity to perceive ourselves and interpret ourselves depends on the credibility we have with ourselves. This depends on our willingness not to deny conflictual aspects in our reality so as not to lie to ourselves with justifications which make us feel badly about ourselves.

Our individual context shows us our possibilities and weaknesses. It allows us to direct our life in pursuit of the objectives we want to gain. But if we remain only in this context we reduce our reality to a merely individual framework. By enclosing ourselves in what we think of as our world we exaggerate our self-importance and the importance of what happens to us. Without realizing it, we become gradually disconnected from our surroundings; the moment may come in which it will be very unlikely for anything or anyone to be able to penetrate the barriers we have surrounded ourselves with. At the same time we begin losing the capacity to perceive what we think does not concern us. Our seeming understanding of ourselves and of the world is reduced to a subjective illusion. Our possibilities for unfolding are rapidly exhausted if we don't transcend the boundaries with which we define ourselves as individuals.

The immediate milieu: the individual in his or her culture

We relate to this context by evaluating our possibilities, conflicts and work in relation to the persons and the milieu we live in. What we can consider gain or triumph in relation to ourselves can be a loss or a failure in relation to those around us.

The consequence of considering ourselves in the context of our culture is harmony in our system of relationships within that culture. This context gives a more objective vision of reality than our individual context gives because it shows us that we are involved in a culture and a system of relationships that transcends us. This gives us solidarity with the family and social or ethnic group with which we identify.

Nevertheless, when we consider ourselves in our cultural context we have to take into account the conditioning that comes about by having been formed in that context. Even the introspective outlook gained through reflection and meditation is always bound to the milieu and the era we belong to.

The human being's comprehension of him or herself and the world varies from place to place and from generation to generation. How can one establish which one is most correct? Of course our own comprehension seems the most complete, but it is evident that it is neither unique nor definitive. If we fossilize our interpretation of the world and life into what we learned at a certain moment from a restricted milieu, we generate dogmatism and separativity. These are the evils which cause most human problems. We distort our understanding when we enclose ourselves in our culture and deny the greater context to which we belong.

In order to deepen our understanding we have to give our context a broader time frame than that of our individual and cultural circumstances, and a space which can situate those circumstances within the framework of the human condition. We have to remember that reality transcends our circumstances and our milieu. No matter how much we try to confine ourselves within these conditions, sooner or later our perception shows us broader horizons. Whether it is sooner or later indicates the level of suffering or happiness we can generate.

The human milieu: humankind as a mystical body

We relate to this context by choosing our objectives with a viewpoint that encompasses all humankind. This moves us to self-abnegation: to place our will, our affections and our interests at the service of all human beings.

Since we cannot exist in isolation or separated from others, neither can we partialize love. It is true that our feelings can be directed to some one particular person or another, but love itself is not divisible. Real love is love for everyone and for each one, love for creation and all its manifestations.

When we evaluate our circumstances, possibilities, difficulties and achievements within the human context, we free our decisions and choices from selfishness. In this way we participate with all human beings and generate harmony in the world.

Transcending selfishness, dogmatism and separativity signifies an immense advancement in the way we relate with the world and with life, but it is still not enough to make us understand our human condition.

Just as the subjective outlook we have within the individual context is inadequate for understanding our circumstances in the social and human milieu, if we look at humankind only within its own context--also a subjective outlook--we are unable to understand its condition within its greater context.

We cannot remain indifferent to the fact that the human milieu is less than a speck in the immensity of our reality: the context of the universe.

The totality of reality: the universe

Although the totality of the universe goes beyond the boundaries of our current perception and comprehension, it is the reality which contains us. By the mere fact that our minds cannot encompass it does not mean we can dismiss it: it is our milieu.

When we discern our vocation in the light of the universal context we give it a transcendent meaning. We situate ourselves within the immensity of life; we position ourselves within our awareness of the context which permeates and sustains us.

By having a point of view which encompasses this great context, we define our measure in space and time, and we establish a harmonious relationship between our limited and temporary selves and what is infinite and eternal.

Our perception does not enable us to assimilate the totality of time and space; less still does it allow us to grasp the principle which engenders us: the divine. Therefore our faith is not based on beliefs or descriptions of what we cannot understand, but on the evidence that we participate in a totality which expresses, for us, the divine. We base our faith on our relationship with the Divine Mother, the alpha and omega of the universe.

The process of understanding continuously expands the context with which we relate. Every expansion of this context reorders our priorities and makes us reevaluate what we understand. This is the process of our unfolding.

In order for that process to take place:

Let us keep current our quietness and listening.

Let us keep current our attention by recognizing and assimilating the teaching of the present and overcoming our denials and justifications.

Let us keep current our past by understanding the teachings we have received from each experience.

Let us keep current our commitment by living in a way that is consistent with our spiritual vocation and all it implies.

Let us keep current the contexts which compose our reality by keeping our human condition and eternal destiny in our minds and hearts. This integrates the different contexts in a harmonious way and provides a perspective which gives validity both to the limited, immediate context and to the infinite and eternal one. It correlates the subjective context which we have actively in mind with the real context which defines our existence. We thus achieve health and harmony as individuals, we unfold spiritually, and we generate a more just and participatory world.

Only when we understand the universal context in which we live and ourselves within that context, can we discern the inner work we can do from within ourselves and the exterior work which responds to our possibilities, for our own good and the good of all human beings.

Once we acquire that discernment the decision is left in our hands to live in accordance with what we understand.

3. KNOWING HOW TO WANT

We begin the process of understanding by silencing ourselves, listening, and remembering. This is how we learn. We develop our sense of participation when we include ourselves in what we learn, and this sense of participation expands the context which is our reference point. In this way we gradually universalize the way we see ourselves and the world. In other words, we understand.

However, what we understand is not always uppermost in our minds. Our attention is attracted by new interests and situations. The free movement of mind and heart continues as it always has, and it often obliterates the traces of what we once understood.

Both knowledge and emotions change, and this characteristic of change affects what we understand, making it impermanent.

Our understanding is impermanent not only because new knowledge continuously forces us — quite positively — to rethink what we thought we understood, but also because our understanding is affected by our moods and influenced by impulses, passions and desires. These give free rein to our propensity to gratify ourselves without giving too much thought either to what we have understood or to the consequences of that behavior.

If we are not aware of these limitations of understanding, we could come to believe we have mastered what we have understood. This is not really so, however, for no realization can take place unless we implement our understanding in our lives.

Everything we understand demands an operational response. What we understand calls to our consciousness, asking us what we are going to do now that we have understood this particular thing. Yet the response we give doesn't always promote our unfolding.

If we stifle our understanding—if we do not want to get involved in it and move forward as if we had not achieved that understanding—we dissociate our mental and emotional life from our acts and eventually deny, in practice, what we understood.

If we understand something, then fall in love with our intellectual acuity or emotional sensitivity and nothing else changes, spiritual life becomes confused in our minds with personal gratification.

These ways of responding to our understanding generate imprudent behavior.

Our behavior is imprudent when it does not reflect what we have understood, when it is dominated by moods and impulses and is therefore inconsistent with the things we understand and with our vocational objective.

We promote our unfolding when we accept the things we understand and, out of love for freedom, assume the commitment which increasing understanding signifies.

When we respond in this way to our increasing understanding, we make the way we act contingent upon what we understand and upon our vocational objective. We then express ourselves through prudent behavior.

Behavior is prudent when it is discerning, congruent and consistent with both our understanding and the vocation which guides us, as well as with the values that vocation implies.

Reflection and self-control are what nourish prudent behavior.

Reflection teaches us what changes we have to make in our behavior so that it corresponds to what we learn over time.

Self-control allows us to master our thoughts and impulses to be able to act according to what we have discerned.

We transform understanding into knowledge by systematizing our responses to what we understand and by making a habit of prudent behavior. Only then can we say that we know something. That is why *understanding* is not the same as *knowing*, in the context of spiritual unfolding.

The act of understanding is temporary. Knowing, on the other hand, is an aspect of our state of consciousness. Consistent actions become habitual, and these habits become the way we are: the way we express our state of consciousness operationally. We no longer have to make an effort to conduct ourselves as our understanding dictates.

What we know shows in the way we act and the way we are. It depends not so much on mechanically remembering what we have learned as on memory which has become conduct. This kind of knowing frees us from the tendency to senselessly repeat behaviors and experiences whose negative results we are already familiar with—or whose consequences we can anticipate—since such knowledge lets us know exactly which are the forces that move us: desires, passions, impulses, or the genuine desire to fulfill our destiny and fulfill our vocation. Examples of this kind of knowing are common sense, prudence, acceptance, and strength in adversity.

Our current reality corresponds to what we understood yesterday and which, through our behavior, we transform into our present knowledge. The effort we make today, applied in consistent behavior, leads us to transform what we understand today into what we now know. Each new understanding opens up a potential field for realization and shows us a horizon which keeps on expanding insofar as we travel toward it with our consistent behavior. This new potential field represents, at every moment, the real possibility to expand what we know. When we understand this and make the effort to respond positively and systematically to this challenge, we gain access to the strength of our soul and are able to make it concrete through want.

There are many ways of wanting, but only one expresses the soul's strength and wisdom.

We are familiar with the “want” which is a “wish”: the fantasy that we will get something for which we do not expend any effort. This want does not lead anywhere but serves as a pretext for discontent and frustration.

We are familiar with biological want: the strength of the self-preservation instinct which drives us to survive at all costs.

We are familiar with the want produced by passions like hate, envy, jealousy, greed, lust, and ambition: the strength of the desire which drives us to satisfy those passions.

We are familiar with the want that is born in the consciousness that, at every instant, our capacity to understand our experiences makes us aware of a new field of possibilities which we need to actualize in order to know and then be able to fulfill our ideal. There is a substantial difference between this want and other wants.

Those other wants drag us along by the force of instinct and passion, leading us into a life of confusion and pain. By contrast, the want which is in tune with our consciousness is a strength which we generate by our understanding and by applying our will to fulfill the potential which that understanding reveals to us. This is our source of wisdom and our soul's strength.

Want grounded in true knowledge is the way we express our love for the Divine Mother and our love for the path which leads to Substantial Union with Her.

4. DARING, JUDGING, FORGETTING

Trying to act well and lead a virtuous life shows that we want to fulfill our vocation. Yet this is no guarantee that we will end the self-deception of believing we are the center of it all, nor that we will stop going back to our problems over and over again without being able to solve them. To remain on our path of spiritual unfolding requires much more of us.

Our self-importance and the disproportionate prominence we give to our difficulties shows us that what matters most to us is what happens to us, and this self-concern is a force which goes against our vocation.

Although once in a while we adopt a broader scope, we still tend to hold on to our old vision, resisting what would allow it to evolve. Our rigidly held opinions and the habit of attempting to impose our will over others make us just as dogmatic as when we had a narrower interpretation of reality.

Although superficially these attitudes give us a feeling of security, we don't realize that they are really what make us feel we're stagnating, that underneath we haven't changed much, that our unfolding hangs from a very precarious thread. We feel that if our will failed and we were to weaken in our effort to control ourselves our selfishness would prevail; we'd give free rein to our impulses and desires and would lose in an instant the mental openness and degree of love we would have been able to reach.

Together with the good want that moves us when we are conscious of our vocation other wants persist which struggle to take over. The desire to prevail, the resistance to making an effort, the tendency to give in to harmful impulses all undermine our will and put our perseverance to the test.

This struggle among all the things we want produces an almost desperate desire for security. We want the security that we won't lose anything forever, that sometime in the future we will be able to enjoy the pleasures we now deprive ourselves of. We want the security that, even though we have renounced something, we will be able to get it back if we change our mind. We want the security of believing that we have privileges over others; that, although others experience the loss of material goods, illness, old age and death, it would be unjust if these things happened to us—at least not yet, not now. We especially hang on to the security of believing we were always and still are right, as if that illusion allowed us to recreate a dead history and defended us from the evidence which makes our fallibility evident. We are so terrified to think the opposite that we don't even perceive our fear.

Our problem is that we look for security where we can never find it, fleeing from a fear that takes on huge proportions as it goes along. For it is impossible to escape the uncertainty which is part of life.

The security we're looking for, unattainable because it is illusory, consumes our inner strength and makes us spiritually weak. What apparently gives us security—the idea that we can possess something forever and that we're right—is the source of both our fear and our misfortune.

Our longing for security makes us think that our effort to work well must guarantee us a future without suffering, and this leads us to practice virtue. In this sense, the practice of virtues is equivalent to a tradeoff: we give something to get something; a sacrifice is the price we pay to win the prize of divine favor. Even if we don't recognize this ulterior motive when we carry out

our asceticism, we show it by expecting something from it. We keep track of our renouncements and the sacrifices we've made and we grieve if we don't receive what we think we deserve — from others, from life or from God. We don't see the contradiction between believing that we renounce and grieving at not receiving payment. When we don't find the rewards we expect from our renouncements we start asking ourselves: why renounce, why sacrifice ourselves and give up what we have if we don't get anything for it?

The fact is that we have reached the limit of how far we can go with the asceticism of self-affirmation sustained by the ethic of our beliefs. This asceticism isn't a strong enough inducement to overcome the fear which prevents us from renouncing to ourselves and thus go beyond that limit.

Fear sets the limits to our unfolding. The longing for security wouldn't overpower our good want if we could see it for what it is: a delusion with which we try to nourish our fantasy of wanting a world without uncertainty and laws which do our bidding.

We need to recognize our fear, acknowledge our search for illusory security and dissipate the chimera of trying to get life to respond to our desires. In other words, we have to learn to face the law of life: daring to live without supports and daring to renounce.

However, there are certain supports we need to make use of.

We need principles to guide our conduct and postulates to formulate a theory which can give us an intelligible view of life. These supports are references which we deepen as we unfold inwardly and advance in knowledge. But not even doctrinal support can give us the security of being right. For one thing, our understanding is incomplete. For another, a doctrine must evolve and respond to the new possibilities of human development or else be reduced to the dead letter of a circumstance which no longer exists. The constant becoming obligates us to be part of this process, using what we need and then leaving it behind, to take a step forward in our understanding and then, based on that understanding, continue onward, leaving a wake behind us as we move forward to attain a farther-reaching understanding.

For our own ethical advancement as well as that of society, we also need to establish our behavior on the practice of virtue — no longer as a tradeoff for a reward but as a parameter by which to act honorably.

Living without supports means knowing which supports to use, when and how to use them and when to leave them behind. Above all, it means remembering that they are only supports. Thinking and feeling this way gives us the daring to renounce unconditionally, totally and definitively, without a single reservation, without looking back.

Renouncing unconditionally means renouncing to ourselves. This produces a qualitative change in our unfolding. The fruit of this renouncement is, simply, inner freedom.

We are used to exercising freedom to do or get what we want, to the point of fighting for it. But this is not the freedom we're referring to.

Inner freedom is expressed through balanced judgment.

We are familiar with various types of judgments: those which derive from the instinct for self-preservation, the ones stemming from our emotional reactions, those originating in what we like or reject, the ones based on our habits and those ensuing from the values transmitted by our culture.

Unconsciously and automatically, we are conditioned to judge as good what promotes the survival of our species and to judge as bad what goes against it. This leads us to avoid life-

threatening situations and to keep away from the things that have caused us harm. But we are also conditioned to respond to impulses which, although they can be judged good for the species as a whole, are not always good for human progress—i.e., those which insure survival of the fittest and reproducing oneself at any cost.

A strong stimulus causes us to react emotionally and make a snap judgment about what produced our reaction. What excites us with pleasure we call good and what produces rejection we call bad. We call the things we like beautiful or pleasant and the things we don't are considered ugly or unpleasant.

The things that match our habits we also judge to be good. For example, the particular behavior, appearance and tastes of our ethnicity, our milieu and our times. We form instantaneous and automatically negative judgments about what doesn't fit that model.

In short, the values we have received and our own preferences tell us what we should consider good or bad, beautiful or ugly, attractive or repulsive and we automatically judge according to them.

When that conditioning motivates our actions we make judgments from a subjective basis. And, more seriously, we assign a definitive quality or value to our circumstantial evaluations. By doing this we imply that what we think is good or bad, beautiful or ugly, true or false must be so for others and that this qualification is absolute and permanent. This confusion makes us forget the difference between a judgment based on opinion and a balanced judgment.

Judgment based on an opinion expresses the relative value we assign to one thing in comparison with another, and it is necessarily temporary. It belongs to a context and is subject to contraposition with other opinions.

A balanced judgment presupposes awareness of our basic uncertainty and leads us to take some distance from the way we think and feel. In this way we can discern the temporary from the permanent, the probable from the possible, the particular from the general, facts from opinions, evidence from beliefs and opinionated judgments from balanced judgments.

To make balanced judgments we also have to take into account the great weight the judgment of our past exercises on our present judgment.

We don't find it easy to see our past clearly. Many of our remembered experiences are accompanied by a great emotional burden and with the judgment we made about them at the time. This means that in many cases we generate negative feelings about those judged memories which we ensconce deeply inside of us. This is how the misery or sorrow of one moment becomes rancor and resentment, how mistakes turn into feelings of failure, how a bad choice makes us convinced we have no more opportunities, how a deprivation becomes a wound that never heals.

This fixation ties us to the subjective past we constructed over time and prevents us from understanding our own and others' limitations. It hinders us from accepting and forgiving, from erasing from our memory the catalog of grievances we have accrued. In other words, it prevents us from continuing to grow inwardly and living freely *today*.

We learn from our past when we discern the facts from the emotional burden with which we have engraved them in our memory.

The capacity to discern between our past and the judgment we have made about it we call "disattachment from the past." It allows us to experience an unfolding which correlates to our

age so we can judge the same experience differently in childhood, adolescence and adulthood. Greater knowledge is expressed in greater balance.

When we disattach ourselves from the past we stop keeping track of the saga of our life. We stop counting up our sacrifices and measuring our efforts. We stop thinking we deserve something from life. In this way we stop feeling self-pity and so we stop holding on to our resentments, rancor and even our fear. On the one hand, this allows us to associate the events of our lives with their real causes and consequences. On the other, it allows us to look impartially and intelligently at our reactions to these events and their effects on our behavior, relationships and current decisions.

Disattaching ourselves from the past means forgetting without losing our memory: it means having a balanced judgment about what happened. We drop all subjective labeling of our past and incorporate that past into the great continuum of human experience. In that way, we recover our true history.

By forgetting the judgments we have made about ourselves we are free to live as we have chosen to live. By forgetting the judgments we have made about others we respect their freedom to be as they want to be. We thus promote harmony and peace in ourselves and in others.

Our strength and vision reside in the balanced judgment and subsequent forgetting of our past. We forget the particular circumstances we have experienced, keeping in memory the lessons we have learned. This allows us to live each day anew, with our capacities and knowledge growing constantly.

The inner freedom we achieve by renouncing to ourselves gives us mental flexibility and the capacity to find new meanings in what we think we know. It allows us to creatively apply the energy contained in our past, generating new pathways of unfolding. It makes us able to transform our knowledge into wisdom and transmute our experiences into consciousness.

It would be impossible to unite a consciousness which is tied to a personal history, alienating fears, habits and ideas anchored in the past with the infinite and eternal cosmic consciousness. Only renouncement to ourselves opens up the way to eternity, for the inner freedom which renouncement generates transmutes weakness and fear into intrinsic strength, and a contingent personality into true individuality.

5. KNOWING HOW TO WANT AND WANTING TO DARE

Ten basic words describe spiritual unfolding:
Silencing, Listening, Remembering, Understanding, Knowing,
Wanting, Daring,
Judging, Forgetting, and Transmuting

On one hand each of these words can be taken as an objective in itself. Attaining any one of them would be a sure and unmistakable spiritual accomplishment. On the other hand taking them all together, they represent a sequence in the process of human unfolding.

Perhaps just as important as what each word implies in itself or as part of a sequence is that which happens in the progression from *Wanting* to *Daring*. This is a peak in our unfolding, in which we overcome our tendency to structure ourselves on what we have acquired, and we dare to open ourselves to new realms of experience. This turning point divides the sequence into two spans. The first span, which goes from *Silencing* to *Wanting*, expresses the world we already know and understand. The second span, which goes from *Daring* to *Transmuting*, expresses the unknown—the challenge to transmute past experiences into an expansion of our state of consciousness.

The first span—*Silencing, Listening, Remembering, Understanding, Knowing* and *Wanting*—is the realm of values on which we base our culture. It is where we benefit from the human experience as it has been generated throughout history. *Knowing* how to *Want* helps us to work for a better world, applying our willpower to integrate what we already know and the values of our culture.

We tend to structure ourselves on what we already know—what we have learned from our own particular context. This makes us think that *Knowing* how to *Want* is enough to keep unfolding, leading us to apply our will to strengthen our present state of consciousness.

Furthermore, we habitually tend to associate spiritual life with what we believe about what we don't know. We thus repeat to ourselves that what we believe is the truth. The result is that we take our beliefs for the truth. This gives us a certain sense of security, yet it keeps us always in the same state of consciousness, blind to the evidence of our ignorance and uncertainty. In our blindness we imagine that we are engaged in spiritual transmutation when what we are really doing is reinforcing what we already know and believe. Rather than change our state of consciousness we consolidate it into a prison.

This situation makes it hard for us to recognize that *Wanting* only in the realm of the known is stagnation; that there is no advancement without change. Life brings changes, whether we like it or not, which we need for developing our understanding and giving meaning to our work. But because we lack perspective, we think of the inevitable changes of life as blows to our self-concept and as tragic interruptions of what we think we should be doing. We think we preserve our identity by hiding behind a denial of what we don't know and by holding on to an idea of the Divine and the spiritual which is a projection of the very state of consciousness we need to transcend. Not only are we in a prison, we're not even aware of it. On the contrary, we confuse our self-imposed limits with defenses which protect us from any change which might alter our mental framework. There is no way out if we use the same framework which caused our anguish to try to find explanations for it.

It is true that not just any change implies unfolding. But it is also true that unfolding without change is a chimera. We need to overcome the limits of the context we are enclosed in. We need to develop the attitude of *Wanting to Dare* if our unfolding is to be continuous.

The second span begins, then, in *Wanting to Dare*, and it stirs us to investigate and discover possibilities which help us keep on unfolding.

In a spiritual context, unfolding means broadening our state of consciousness. This implies reconciling ourselves to change, being willing to move from the stage of integrating what we are to the stage of readiness for new fields of unfolding: i.e., *Wanting to Dare*. Even when our state of consciousness expands only slightly, this is a fundamental change which forces us to reevaluate and understand—from a new perspective—what we thought we had understood once and for all.

The context of what we don't know is so vast that its magnitude doesn't seem to diminish as our knowledge advances. However much we progress and learn, our present condition keeps us face to face with what we could call the Great Constant of the Unknown. This Great Constant is the magnet which generates our unfolding and compels us to *Dare*.

Wanting to Dare, of course, starts from whatever it was that got us to that point in the first place. Advancement doesn't mean throwing overboard what we have in order to latch on to something different. It means transmuting it. Being open to changes, moving toward what we need to learn, doesn't invalidate any of the knowledge we may have attained along the way. On the contrary, it validates it within its limits. For instead of reducing the unknown to what we think we know about it, we have the daring to recognize how limited our knowledge is and we understand its relative value. This kind of daring is what lets us appreciate the progress we make in each step of our unfolding and alerts us to the fact that unfolding is a process. In other words, we are aware that if we don't move beyond *Knowing how to Want*, we create an obstacle which not only prevents us from progressing further but makes us regress: to stop is to lag behind and go against the current of life.

By *Daring* we arrive at *Daring to Judge*. The attitude of *Daring* implies that we venture to disattach ourselves from the knowledge we have gained and which, in spiritual matters, we tend to think is final and irreplaceable. Daring to confront what we have called the Great Constant of the Unknown—and the continuous change which is life—brings us to a logical judgment: that renouncement is more than a virtue to practice, it is the necessary response to our vocation of unfolding. Renouncement is the inevitable response if we try to stay aware of the rhythm of becoming and follow the current direction of human development. In this context, renouncing implies *Daring* to recognize that we have to retrace our path every time we identify with the past and we forget the lesson that all knowledge and all achievement are contingent. When we forget this, we get off track and generate ignorance and confusion.

Daring to Judge means venturing to find new relationships between ideas, experiences and events which we thought we had totally understood. It means accepting that judgments are always relative to a state of consciousness and that the way to see reality, what happens to us and what we have to do, must be updated with the passage of time.

Daring to Judge gives us the necessary vision not to be beguiled by change for its own sake, or for the sake of variety, or to respond to selfish motivations, but in order to make the changes which answer our need for unfolding.

When we learn to *Judge* without holding on to an already consummated past, we learn to *Judge* what we have to *Forget*; we forget the judgments of the past, so that we are free enough to

discern, understand and respond to new possibilities and the needs of each moment of our unfolding. Likewise, we *Forget* the anecdotal, the experiences which are loaded with exacerbated emotion, so that we can gather the fruit from what we have lived. We *Forget* the grievances born of judgments which came out of very limited contexts. We *Forget* the sufferings of painful losses which are always present in life. We *Forget* resentments for the things we feel life took away from or failed to give us. We *Forget* the triumphs which resulted from undeserved privileges. We *Forget* the mental frameworks which limit our judgment about what our possibilities are and how we can fulfill them.

Daring to Judge that what is no longer valid has to be *Forgotten* means recognizing becoming in the eternal present.

The attitude of renouncement frees us to let the contents of *Forgetting* nourish Transmutation. In this context, the attitude of renouncement permits us to validate what we have learned, to gauge it, to turn it into an assimilated experience and a broader and deeper understanding of ourselves and our place in the world. It permits us to free ourselves of our history in order to take the next step.

The attitude of renouncement makes us *Dare* to live with inner freedom. This means:

Daring to be born to a new world with each step we take on the road of unfolding.

Daring to transmute into action everything that we achieve spiritually.

Daring not to become attached either to spiritual achievements or to the works those achievements generate.

Daring to love with such a deep love that we are able to transmute the sorrow and joy of experience into spiritual nourishment for ourselves and for all souls.

6. TRANSMUTING

The first nine words we use to describe spiritual unfolding sum up a process that ends with the key word, *transmuting*.

What does transmuting mean to us, in our present-day circumstances?

It means that our spiritual work is directed to identifying the personalistic¹ outlook we have toward life, and replacing it with an awareness of universal participation.

Our approach to our spiritual ideal—and our lives—is based on some presuppositions, most of which are not very clear-cut to us.

One of these presuppositions—which we often cover up with rationalizations—is that we are separate and independent from others. We tend to rely more on our sensory perceptions than on discernment, and our senses make us feel separate from each other: we think we each have distinct boundaries and personal characteristics, and we don't clearly perceive that what someone else does in his or her house influences what we do in ours. Also, we don't always feel it is necessary to anticipate the potential consequences of our actions upon others and the environment. So we grant ourselves a very flexible margin of freedom in deciding how to feel, think, and live. We stretch that margin to the limit when we have a very powerful desire: we suppose that we can live as we like, enclosed in our own little world. Even if we can admit intellectually that we have an influence on others and our environment, in practice our impulses and personal desires reveal the presupposition that is implicit in our usual attitudes: that we are somehow different from others and our life is, therefore, independent.

This tendency is also expressed in our spiritual work. The feeling of being separate from others gives a personalistic approach to our spiritual unfolding and our attitude toward human progress. We are overly concerned about the amount of personal gain in what we do, and we measure our progress in terms of how far we are able to achieve our personal goals. In other words, we are focused on our own personal happiness. We reduce our spiritual work to what we think is necessary to achieve a personal spiritual triumph. The consequence is that we center our intention and attention so much on ourselves that the things that happen around us are important only insofar as how they affect us and our interests.

Even though we have enough information nowadays to realize that the universe is an impressive unity, wherein each part interacts with all the others, we still live in a way that threatens our own survival: We form personal interest groups and then compete for predominance, both as individuals and as groups. This way of interacting is hardly tempered by our intention of striving for the common good which, in any case, is more theoretical than practical.

Although we are capable of discerning how our attitudes and actions affect others and the environment, we choose when to notice and when to ignore those effects. When we do notice them, we interpret them and attach responsibility for them according to our convenience.

How can we transform the process of transmuting from a personalistic outlook into a more universal outlook which will expand our state of consciousness?

We can do this through action.

¹Personalistic: making the common interest subordinate to one's own personal motives

Action is based on a philosophy of life and is expressed in behavior.

Our philosophy of life stems from our recognition that our every action is always a multiple interaction which, in turn, generates countless interactions through the endless threads in the web of life. We exist in participation. Being aware of that fact, we apply ourselves to an inner work on our attitude and intention:

We engage in a joint effort for the sake of the common good

Being aware that we participate in a system of multiple interactions, we apply that awareness to our behavior:

We engage in teamwork.

We use the word “work” because we are operative beings. We act by doing, as well as by feeling and thinking. And every action implies work.

Joint efforts and teamwork are not only a way of working but are really a way of relating and living.

If we have a personalistic outlook, we understand participation as taking part in something. In our own particular case, we would understand it as a decision to take part in a shared action. While this decision would make clear our intention of working with others, it would also show how we preserve our perception of ourselves as separate, self-interested beings, who make a step-by-step evaluation of the benefits we receive from the group we have decided to work with.

Taking a broader outlook, participation means feeling and knowing that we are an inseparable part of everything that exists, and acting accordingly. To the degree that we can feel, know, and act from that broader outlook, we will be able to transmute our sense of separateness into an awareness of universal participation.

Joint effort and teamwork are aspects of relationship which help us to attain that level of participation. They move us to transmute a personalistic relationship, based on self-interested and separatist competitiveness—along with the frequent, aggressive arguments and hurtful criticisms that go with it—into a relationship of integration with shared meaning.

All actions produce consequences which affect both us and the group. From this point of view, we receive all the messages that our actions entail, but we don’t always perceive those messages or know how to interpret them. That’s why we find it difficult to share meaning. For one thing, we don’t realize that we are giving and receiving all these messages. For another, our defense-and-reaction system tends to distort the meaning of the messages we receive, even the explicit ones. Only at times of great empathy do we open ourselves to a deep understanding. In order to learn to share meaning, we begin by making a joint effort and working as a team.

Taken in this context, the term “meaning” refers to more than the intellectual content of messages. It includes each individual and the totality of all individuals since both the life of each person and the life of the group are meaningful messages.

The process of deliberately sharing meaning ranges from validating others’ ideas to incorporating the world and all human beings into our self-concept.

We nourish our consciousness with the meaning we grasp through interaction. Every stimulus we receive contains a meaning for our consciousness. Our ability to grasp meaning sets the pace for the expansion of our consciousness.

For the purpose of stimulating the development of universal consciousness, the reunion of souls of Cafh is expressed in groups of Sons and Daughters. These groups reflect incompletely and on a very small scale, of course—the diversity of characteristics, backgrounds, and interests which exist in human society. To the degree that group members are able to relate together and work as a team—and that each group is able to relate and work as a team with other groups—we will gradually be able to overcome the separativity, self-interested competition, and tendency to worry and be concerned only about ourselves, which is such a threat to our unfolding. And to the degree that we make no difference between belonging to one group as opposed to another, we will gradually overcome our tendency to form separate groups.

Let us apply the same criterion to our idea of spiritual realization. Let us recognize that the path toward liberation is through participation, instead of seeking personal and private spiritual liberation motivated by the underlying desire to escape from the pain of living in a world in which—in our present condition—suffering is inevitable.

Let us love the freedom we experience when we overcome the limits of the ignorance we have been nourishing with our selfishness. Let us recognize the interrelationship in the great web of life, and let us orient our self-concept along the lines of that web. Let us recognize the need to act in concert, always working for the common good which is, by definition, always our good.

Let us approach our unfolding as a process of transmuting consciousness into action and action into consciousness, just like the old maxim: “making mind out of matter and matter out of mind.” Experience is poured into action and action becomes experience. The experience of an action broadens our state of consciousness, which then expresses itself in action, and so forth.

Let us therefore transmute our sense of participation into joint effort and teamwork, and we will transmute joint effort and teamwork into a consciousness of participation.

Let us begin by replacing our automatic reactions with a form of deliberate action which is expressed in:

- Validating instead of discrediting
- Cooperating instead of vying
- Understanding instead of insisting on our way
- Helping instead of censuring others and being upset
- Incorporating instead of excluding, or leaving ourselves out of the picture
- Broadening our viewpoint instead of entrenching ourselves in it

When we are able to transform these deliberate responses into a habit, we will begin to transmute them into shared meaning. Sharing meaning will allow us to understand renouncement more deeply and open the way to self-awareness through participation.

The immediate spiritual realization we can achieve is to accomplish this transmutation. It is indispensable for us to contribute with this good, this realization, to humankind, at the present stage of human development.

Let us make our contribution, then, so that we will be able to interact in concert and all attain a more universal state of participation. The fruits of this will be peace, progress, and happiness.