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**The Maitreyan Way
To the Plenitude of Man**

The possibility for every human being today to realize vividly that he is a more or less individualized unit participating willy-nilly in the life of the planetary whole which we call the Earth is the great revolutionary fact of this crucial and cathartic century. One may want to ignore this fact; one may close one's mind and sensibility to this possibility of extending our consciousness and our feeling—responses so that they may encompass not only all human beings but also everything that lives in the Earth's biosphere; but the possibility is there, demanding to be recognized and to be acted upon. It represents the next step in human evolution, and no man can be truly called "spiritual" who does not willingly and consciously take the next step in his and in mankind's evolution. One must "walk on" - walk on with the new facts. No spiritual Teacher or Exemplar can really do much more than throw some light on the way which his feet are outlining for the hesitant, the confused and the timorous.

To Know and to feel that we are functional parts of a Greater Whole, the Earth, the single home of mankind—indeed that we are participants in the infinitely varied complex of activities within an organically structured global and planetary "field" — can and inevitably must transform every individual response to the everyday life. It can and indeed it must give a new meaning not only to our reaction to national and international events but as well to all our interpersonal relationships and to whatever feelings of purpose we may have. It has to do it in as much as it establishes at least potentially *a new and much greater "frame of reference"* for each of our acts, our feelings, thoughts. The primitive unicellular living organism floating in shallow waters *must* change every aspect of whatever rudimentary consciousness it may have when it becomes, by evolution, a cell within an animal or a human.

It is conceivable that it takes a long time for the cells within a human body to become conscious that the activities they perform within the body's fluids are actually related to and structured by an immensely greater field of unceasing organic transformations; but in some way they must reach that state of awareness, rudimentary and subjective as it may be. It has taken ages for human beings to become conscious of the total interdependence of all living organisms within the Earth's biosphere—this narrow zone which extends above and below the surface of the soil and the ocean; but now this must be done, gradually yet ineluctably.

For very many millennia human beings have lived attached to the locality of their birth—attached to its soil and to the traditions and taboos of the tribal, then national societies whose cultures and religions were utterly conditioned by the geographical and climateric pressures of a collective existence bounded by a narrow horizon—attached indeed almost as a leaf of fruit is attached to the branch of a tree. The consciousness of men has operated in terms of such binding and local geo-telluric or geomorphic conditioning.

When finally some few pioneers sought to bring to dissatisfied or restless men around them a realization that they were more than biological products attached to a local soil and culture, they had to bring to these men the attractive dream—the bait, in a sense—of a totally transcendent possibility of existence absolutely free from all earth-conditioning and all binding socio-cultural patterns. In the India of perhaps four to five thousand years ago these men were known as Forest-Philosophers older men who had retired from active participation in the totally and rigidly planned system of collective living pictured to us by the Laws of Manu, and who were preparing for the inevitable step ahead we call death. If death was the step that freed human

consciousness from all localisms and earth-boundaries, could not this transition from bondage to freedom be experienced *in consciousness*, that is, in a body that would not disintegrate and that could *remember* the experience and repeat it?

That such a question could be answered in the affirmative must have been the tremendous discovery which the Forest-Philosophers made, and which they tried to convey to their chelas in the condensed and quasi-magical Upanishads. The practices of yoga were devised with this ultimate end in view: to experience consciously death and yet return to the body. This experience of death is also central to the Japanese system of Judo.

It seems evident that the great transcendental dream of man was born in this manner. It can be called a "dream", in the sense that what the ego-surrendering seeker for Nirvana or Satori may experience will not be absolute individual freedom, but a moment of ecstasy leading to a far vaster type of allegiance—allegiance to mankind-as-a-whole and to "life". This is what Northern Mahayana Buddhism realized; and this is why this type of Buddhism fought against the false path leading to the illusory individual liberation of the Pratyeka Buddhas and presented to the world the sublime ideal of the Bodhisattva who deliberately, serenely renounces Nirvana until all sentient creatures—i.e. all living organisms in the Earth's biosphere—freedom and attachment—are but two aspects of the same reality: this is the great realization which the higher forms of Buddhism have brought to mankind. What therefore is really "the next step" is not a passage from a total acceptance of bondage to an absolute ecstasy of freedom for the individualized center of consciousness, but a transition from a binding and exclusivistic type of *compulsive attachment* (and as a result of possessiveness and jealousy) to a vastly freer type of *conscious and deliberate allegiance* to a far greater existential Whole, viz, humanity and the Earth. The evolution of consciousness which is paralleled by and synchronous with an evolution of existential forms and modes of activity—constitutes a series of progressive steps. Each step represents a discarding of tradition-perpetuated and mentally stabilized limitations. It leads to the attainment of a far greater potentiality of relationship implying a sense of functional participation in (thus an allegiance to) a greater whole of existence.

Originally mankind—or at least the vast planetary cycle of our present humanity—began at the tribal, vitalistic state, featuring a compact unity of blood, land and culture within narrow geographical boundaries. The tribe was the unit of both biological activity and consciousness: this represented the "thesis" of human evolution. When tribes grew into large empires ruled from a centralized metropolis, the change involved not only an expansion of space-boundaries and numerical growth population—quantitative factors—but as well a *qualitative* transformation of consciousness.

This transformation became fundamental in the Mediterranean world of Greece and Rome, for it involved the development of new intellectual faculties, objective and analytical. This led inevitably to an individualistic approach to existence—at least among the elite living in or near cities. This represents the "antithesis" phase of human evolution in which the individual ego becomes an increasingly dominant power; and this ego-domination, sustained and exacerbated by intellectual processes, gives to man's natural bio-psychic drives for power and expansion an often monstrous character, because the inherent isolation and frustrations of the ego-ruled person leads this person to a ruthless as well as restless and neurotic search for ever-eluding wholeness and fulfillment.

This is where man stands today; but the dynamic intensity (and indeed madness) of a civilization "of the ego, by the ego and for the ego" has produced a "heating" process which has brought humanity to a situation in which a further phase of development is imperative. The

impending change deals *outwardly* with the new possibility of establishing a global society and the realization of the *organic interdependence* of human beings on an Earth which now can be experienced objectively from gravitation-free space as a globe; but *inwardly* the change must inevitably be synchronous with a radical transmutation of the very foundations of consciousness. The phase of "synthesis" is being heralded by the very intensity of the world-wide crisis confronting mankind.

It is rather naive to say, as many do, that there have been periodical crises in human history, and that our present revolutionary changes need not alter the foundations of what we love to consider as "normality". What mankind is experiencing today is not a superficial crisis of readjustment caused by merely quantitative changes (more people, more energy being used, more speed, more travel, more goods and comfort); it can only be compared to a "critical state" of matter--as for instance between the solid and the liquid states.

Such a comparison must obviously not be taken literally, yet it is remarkably significant in many ways. Tribal existence represents essentially a "solid" state of existence as can readily be seen by its long-enduring and static traditions perpetuated through millennia. But even at a higher, mental level, the rationalism of Greek and European cultures and the cult of objectivity and normality in the fields of religion and institutionalized learning belong also to a "solid" state of consciousness. Up to the first decades of this century "classical" science dealt with material "objects" having more or less precisely definable and constant form and properties; and psychology considered man also very much as an object, with a set character and classifiable virtues or vices.

Today, however, ever since the great French philosopher Bergson challenged the validity of this intellectual and rationalistic approach to existence with his poetic vision of the universal flow of life (the *elan vital*) and his concept of "duration" in contrast to the mathematical time of the 19th century science, the feeling-realization of this constant flowingness of existence has spread through all fields of human thinking. The tremendous interest in Buddhism is an instance of this trend, for Buddhism has emphasized for centuries this principle of the flowing stream of events and of inner states of consciousness. The concept of "process" now dominates most scientific thinking. The old teaching of Heraclitus that the only thing that does not change is change itself has been revived everywhere. Everything that seemed static and definable as a set entity has turned into a dynamic ever-changing process; matter is resolved into energy; the old concept of substance is giving away to the realization that relatedness and "form" are the basic factors in the universe.

The change from the solid to liquid state implies a raise of temperature. The world of man is being *heated up* - and heat is definable by an increase in molecular movements. Atomic explosions raise high up into the sky the great standard of the modern age: intense, devastating Heat. Humanity indeed has become feverish. An early frantic state of agitation drives individuals to and fro at speeds beyond sound's. Man's consciousness, man's sense of value are becoming ever more fluid in their relativism. The ego-sense is dissolved by repeated confrontations with "complexes" and emotionally intense group-psychotherapy - or by psychedelic experiences through drugs which apparently break down those factors in the brain confining consciousness within solid boundaries of objectivity and security.

Indeed for us today the great illusion, the basic *maya*, is the sense, and even more the concept, of solidity and absolute rest it is the "thing" that can only be what it appears to be, the kind of "perfection" (or social success) which claims to be an end in itself, the ego that pretends to be definitive, absolutely itself, and which projects itself upon the screen of a universe of infinite

abysses and blinding light under the glorified shape of a personal and redeeming God with Whom one can reassuringly communicate when one is frightened and anguished.