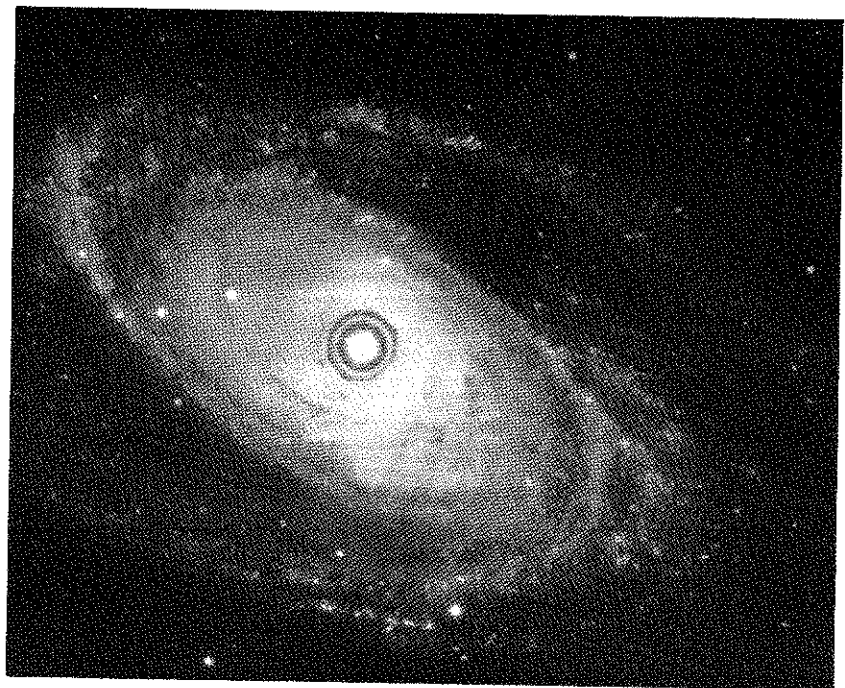


THE PILGRIMAGE OF JAMES

AN ODYSSEY OF INNER SPACE



by
GEORGE ARNSBY JONES

PEACEHAVEN

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By the Same Author . . .

The Harvest is Rich

English for Adventurers

The Living Master (poetry)

The Transformation of Man

Crown and Sword

The Possible Vision

Dedication

To Baba KIRPAL SINGH Ji Maharaj

Who lives!

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The spiritual Path is essentially a practical Path. It is only the spirit—disencumbered and depersonalized—that can undertake the spiritual journey. The inner man, the soul in man, has to rise above body-consciousness before it can traverse into higher consciousness or the consciousness of the cosmos and of the beyond.

KIRPAL SINGH

Introduction

THIS is the inner record of James, a disciple of Kirpal, the great spiritual adept of the twentieth century. Whether this record is read as fact or allegory matters little. If some deem its narrative as allegorical or imaginative, it may be said that allegory or imagination can mirror the most incredible experiences that take place within the bright realms of the human spirit. To many who walk the high Path of Discipleship it will describe experiences which they know to be objective and factual on other levels of consciousness.

Spiritual adepts, holy preceptors of the highest order, have ever come into this world to impart an ageless message of truth. Imbued with the bliss of God-realization, they pass on their knowledge and wisdom freely to those who are true and sincere seekers for the highest truth. When such a seeker comes into contact with a true spiritual adept, he is able to receive a spark of spiritual awareness from him. One cannot realize this spiritual consciousness by merely reading books, even though the inspired thoughts of mystics have been inscribed in sacred books. Words may precede the vision; but it is necessary to practice inner spiritual disciplines in order that words may become reality.

The present author of this book makes no claims on his own account; he simply presents the individual spiritual record of James, one of many sincere seekers for truth, who found the living spiritual adept of his time and who traveled over the rainbow bridge unto the ultimate vision of his True Home.

Chapter One

Prologue

AND I, James, stirred after the interregnum between incarnations, which was the spirit's waking dream of great duration; and I wanted to see the physical world now, as it truly is, and I yearned to meet the living spiritual adept of this time. My longing focussed my consciousness downwards; my spirit moved in a wide and glowing tangent, then it veered earthward in a plummeting fall.

I, James, have known love, and love is an immense madness of spiritual intoxication. I remembered that I had once stood on the edge of a vast ocean of love, and love had saturated my soul like music. Love is the eternal primavera of the heart, arising out of the bleak sepulchre of the spirit's winter. Before the creation of mind and matter, my love was a boundless sea of all-consciousness. The nature of James was all-bliss, sufficient unto myself. Every electron, every atom, every particle of dust in my personal creation was imbued with love. There was no void in my universe of love, no place where love was not, no place where love and bliss were non-existent. No other being now existed, for I was love and you were love. We were love and we are love. I am the self of all selves. All was love and all is love—if I can but seize that truth for ever.

My great madness of love had brought me into the physical world many times, but now had dawned that incarnation in which I would reach the feet of the living spiritual adept of this time, here in the physical world.

That cumulus of mist which had hovered over my mother's bridal bed, an anxious James waiting to be conceived and born again into flesh, acknowledged the fact of myself as the prime-mover in my new earthly existence. All acts of love progress from mirage to fact. And now, as I returned to the physical after the long respite of the soul, I trembled as I sensed the cyclonic vortex of the world's rage. But soon the mists of forgetfulness would be drawn across the consciousness of the new-born child.

I had been caressed by the myriad tones of the music of the spheres, and I had wandered the colonnades of the lower heavens. I had been tantalized by ephemeral glimpses of divine grace. I had conversed with the adepts of the astral-mental realms, and I had stood in the glorious vibrating flower garden, where the oriflammes of each flower shine with the potency of a pearl. In that same garden I had beheld the spinning vortex of light, a symphony of blue and gold, and a supernal chord had splintered the shredded nerves of my light-body into a billion diamond-headed fragments. I had reached the point of no return; I was to enter a new incarnation: the most profound and meaningful of my many lives.

The manacles of bone and flesh would again chain me once more to the frantic bondage of sentient existence; I would experience anew the kaleidoscopic chaos of the senses. I, James, who had been a happy wanderer on the bright highroad of the astral realm of the nightmusic, now had to return the balance of past receipts and payments in the cacophony of the physical world. But this new life would be fraught with the greatest significance of any human incarnation. Now I was to meet a living spiritual adept.

The voice on one side of me helped my eyes to focus on the vague mist, and the mist became a blurred countenance. Soon the outlines of a face showed true. I had the first fleeting consciousness of a newly-arrived

infant; and this itself would soon disappear. But it was of sufficient duration for my spirit to know that I had returned from the astral realm of the nightmusic into a new physical embodiment. And like all human incarnations, I had brought my name with me.

The long drama of the soul would fast fade from my new consciousness as I evolved into infancy. I had left the astral realm of the nightmusic far behind me, and there were no memories at all of my former excursions into the mental levels of life. There would be little to recall of the splendid moments of the great flight, for now I had received new birth into the physical world. Now I was to be part of the natural order of things in this latest version of my soul's estate. No longer would my right hand bear the olive branch from the dream garden; no longer would a radiant dove nestle on my shoulder as I journeyed through the inner realms. The place of radiant peace would be beyond my recapturing until my mature years when I would meet the living spiritual adept of the time. But even early in this physical incarnation I would have moments of inner vision, in which I would catch a sharp flight of lyrical spiritual impulse. These moments would evoke within me a keen soaring ecstasy and, at other times, serene contemplative splendor.

And once I remembered a mystic adept who spoke to me just before my departure from the astral realm of the nightmusic. His words of wisdom moved jocosely and gravely, fretting a cerulean clearness in their tonal radiance. When he had finished speaking he had placed his hands upon my head in a benediction of love. He instilled into my consciousness that the true nature of love cannot be adequately described in human language, for its inmost depths lie far beyond the scope of words. In the world scriptures, love has been used as a synonymous term for God. And God and love are eternal.

"Most social religions are of recent origin," said the mystic adept, "but love and God existed even before the creation of the world. And so, if you find any person who becomes a victim of love, you should never call him an unbeliever. It is impossible to confine the concept of love to the human and temporal levels. Remember the thousands of so-called heretics and lovers of God who have been condemned as 'unbelievers' because of their all-embracing approach to the supreme Lord of Love."

With the pressure of the mystic adept's hands upon my head, my consciousness became focussed into a force that pointed uniformly downwards; but I still experienced a vague yearning for my distant primal home, my lost Eden. "To make the great ascent, you must first descend," the mystic adept said gently. My consciousness now responded to the liquid gravitation of the blood; soon the newly burning senses would integrate me completely into my present physical body.

I was told, in a previous incarnation, that the body is mainly a corrupt machine devoted to sensual pleasures; it creaks and grunts with wellworn efficiency. It is a versatile machine, however, for innumerable senses explore its manifold paroxysms of desire. And this machine must become the temple of the living Godself within man. Before my present descent into physical incarnation my mentors had warned me that it is the mind that can pervert the senses, if the mind is not focussed upwards on the soul. But I have often ignored the words of the wise where the mind has been concerned; for I have been a mental rebel, extolling the power of my own intellect, for several past lives. Splendidly rebellious, my mind would never lie meekly in the compartments my wise and good teachers in the inner worlds have tried to create for it. My mind thus provided much food for my innate egotism.

In a previous incarnation as a poet-theologian of an intellectual bent, I endeavored to justify my 'divine' use

of my mind. My spiritual and corporeal compartments are not watertight, I informed my readers and listeners, for I am fused together cunningly, inextricably woven by life within and life without. My inner journeys have provided the frame upon which my mind could grow into its own glory. Gracing my leisure hours, blossoming amongst the worries and depressions of the physical world, my mind expanded like a flower in the trelliswork of my cosmic self. In this way I believed that I had a place prepared for beauty and for love; but the supreme egotism of my personal musings on the glories of my mind and intellect held me back.

It is impossible to confine love to the temporal and transient levels of life, and it is impossible to confine the grandeur and majesty of God to the dimensions of the mind. When I had come to a partial realization of this fact, wise adepts of the inner realms provided me with guidance through the fragrant mystic universe, the spiritual region. They showed me their many magnificent planets of light and wonder. It was they who ultimately persuaded me to roam and explore untold realms of gold within myself. I had no fixed starting place in time and space, for I dwelled in a multiverse that was co-extensive with all the ages. But my inner world was still limited by the boundaries of creation; I needed the guidance of a spiritual adept, within the physical world itself, to give me new birth into the freedom of eternity.

And this present incarnation would fulfill my true destiny; I would meet the spiritual adept of the age. Like others who had aspired to the upward Path of Light, it has at times been difficult for me to survive in the physical world. I am always conscious of my restless spirit, which, pressing in onto my little self, joins forces with the fever of my physical yearnings and seems to drive me further from the physical world to seek the companionship of the people of the astral realm of the nightmusic. But the astral

realm, like the physical world, is merely a waiting station; it is not the plane of ultimate reality. The physical world sometimes seems a foreign country to me. A tour of it can be exhilarating, but at times it is overwhelmingly difficult to live there.

And yet, to explore the far reaches of the inner realms one must understand one's true nature. Perhaps it is not entirely the fault of modern man that he does not understand his own inner universe. He has achieved much, and if such concepts escape his own consciousness it is because he has no flaming falcon of the spirit on his fist to soar beyond the confining reaches of the intellect. Men have journeyed to the physical moon, but they know nothing of the regions of the blissful music within themselves—regions which lie beyond the moon, beyond the sun, beyond the most distant stars and galaxies. But there are those who have wandered among the darting comets and the shimmering orbs of sounding fire. The soul-explorer is not alone, for there are those who have traveled the highways of the inner cosmos; far more than one may at first realize.

As I grew into maturity I proceeded with my voyage of self-discovery in the darkness of the physical world. At times I would meditate in a lonely place and catch a fleeting glimpse of the green-and-gold globes of the high crystalline palaces of the inner realms, the glowing lake of spiritual purification, and the kaleidoscopic colors of the jeweled domes of eternal cities. I would still retain a blurred memory of the cosmic journey through the blazing glory of the white expanse which led into the magnificent mists of diamonds and sapphires and emeralds, the inner penetration of the ultimate essence of mineral beauty.

In other moments of meditation I seemed to remember a little of that time when my soul was suffused with silent wonder as I moved through the sacred city of burnished marble. I remembered only a minute part of that vivid ecstasy caused by a gaseous flare of blue lightning, a

sudden tone of cosmic music, which infused the quickening center of my being. I vaguely remembered the million candles of yellow fire that fluctuated in intensity, controlled by vast rhythms of super-cosmic symphonies. Only a brief spark of memory now remained of that whirling spiral region arced in the vastness of infinite space, its curving fluid sphere orbiting about an immense white sun. These things remained submerged in my deepest consciousness; the ambrosia of immortality is thus too often dissipated by contact with the physical world.

In some passing moment my inner sight held the vision of bright fountains of fiery sound, and I beheld the dazzling whiteness of a full moon and the deep blueness of the vast sky beyond it; and I thought of the ancient ones in the higher astral realms of the nightmusic. My nights and seasons in their far country would never depart from my memory. And beyond the realm of the nightmusic are those who understand the true mystery of love. They know that love is a fragrant infection and that it can only be caught from one who is a true lover. If we keep the companionship of such a lover, I was told, we will surely understand the mystery of love. He who prays loudly to the Supreme One, and who constantly badgers his congregation to repent of their sins, is a lamp without oil, a flower without fragrance, if he has no love in his heart. Love does not preach; it transforms and liberates.

Love sees no duality in life; it is beyond the concepts of good and evil. "There is no evil; there is no good," a mystic adept once informed me. "I am so absorbed in the form of my Beloved that He has become my form within me, and I have become His form. We two have become one. The attraction of God's love is far more intense than any of the manifold attractions of mind and matter. It is the attraction of the devotee for the Beloved, and it is the key that enables one to unlock the secrets of God." Such exalted love from the heart of the true

devotee enables him to unfathom the mysteries of the spiritual realms. Love is the great purifier, which washes away the dross of the lower worlds and enables the soul to ascend to the spiritual realms of the True Lord. I began my new search for one who is a true lover.

Chapter Two Prelude

IN **the** restless years before I came to the feet of the living **spiritual** adept I endeavored to practice my own **spiritual** exercises. I followed several techniques, and in one **of them** I would retire into my inner self and try to visualize the bright sunshine of the astral realm. On such **meditative** occasions I would be filled with peace and joy. One day the purple flower with the orange stigmas, so **beloved** of many who dwell in the realm of the **nightmusic** appeared before me. It was a saffron. The saffron image became increasingly clear and bright in the astral **sunlight**, and soon I could see the saffron color of **the robe** of a Buddhist monk. Then I could perceive his **shaven** head and serene countenance. His head was surrounded by an aura of purple with orange shafts of light **expanding** from the center, like the orange petals on **the periphery** of that lovely purple disc-like flower, the **saffron**.

Then the person of the Buddhist monk became slowly transformed into the likeness of a Persian holy man. An inner **voice** informed me that this was one of the greatest Sufi **poets** to have blessed this world with his noble presence. I had initially seen him in an earlier incarnation as a **Buddhist** monk.

"O **who** are you, Sir?" I cried inwardly. "Who are you?"

"**It matters** little what I was called many centuries ago," answered the holy man, "but I was one whose heart

grieved greatly. I was full of lamentation because the home of my Beloved was far off, and the road which led to it was filled with mire on account of the rain of human sin. But I persevered in my journey, for a true lover has only the thought of the Beloved in his heart. When I walked on the mired road my clothes became wet and filthy and I slipped at every step of the way on account of the mud. But I persevered in my journey, for a true lover has only the thought of the Beloved in his heart."

The holy man paused, as if to let the import of the last repetitive sentence sink into my consciousness.

"My heart was sorely pained from separation from my Beloved, and I did not want to break the continuity of my love. I cried out to my Beloved that the rain should be torrential and that my blanket should be drenched. With such thoughts I went out to meet my Beloved so that my love should not wane; for a true lover has only the thought of the Beloved in his heart."

"That is truly beautiful," I murmured quietly.

"It is the plaint of the true devotee," continued the holy man. "Only one who has truly offered an inexpressible longing for the Beloved can comprehend the true nature of love. He alone may solve the incredible mystery of love and life who has done so. It is difficult to ascend the summit of love. But a true lover can do so."

The holy man paused, and I had a sudden thought of the many people that I knew who were frantically pursuing transitory and nebulous goals.

"I was never afraid of losing my worldly goods, such as they were," said the holy man, picking up the thread of my thought. "Nor was I afraid of losing my youth and my health, provided that my love for God did not diminish; for I have seen many a youth wither away for lack of love for God."

"How can I attain that consciousness of knowing the Beloved?" I asked him. "I sense the reality of God, but His living form is an abstraction to me."

"You are fitfully trying to reach Him," the holy man replied, "but your own endeavors are weak and uncoordinated. Nevertheless, it is written on your forehead that you will meet the living spiritual adept of the present age. You will behold your Beloved Friend in your prayers and in your meditations. You will meet Him both within and without. Then you must live in His remembrance and remember Him inwardly as well as outwardly. In the worship of the Beloved make no one else a partner, for God is One without a second. Also you must shun dangerous and unlawful psychic and occult practices which are ever fraught with danger. Always remember that man is not the animal self. His physical body is a transient vehicle for his eternal soul. God is love eternal, and the soul is a spark of love eternal. The qualities of God are thus the qualities of man, who is not the mortal body but the immortal soul."

"Is this path difficult?" I questioned haltingly.

"It can be difficult if your attention is in the wrong place," answered the holy man. "If you constantly focus your attention downwards into the manifold attributes of the world, you will become identified with matter. But if you focus your love aspect constantly upwards into the Being of God, you will eventually become merged with the all-embracing love of the Supreme Lord. Love is an inherent quality of the human heart; and it is through love that the most potent truths of all creation are apprehended."

"But there seem to be so many faces of love," I said.

"Indeed, love wears many garbs," replied the Persian mystic. "Love is part of the diversity of life itself. Love and life are inseparable; without the creative and attractive

element of love, life would be non-existent. The soul of love has taken many forms before becoming human. We all live in the immense universe, but in all our various births we wear different garbs. Sometimes we have come into incarnation as one species and sometimes as another; but we are all part of the same great Creator. Ultimately, we reach the crown of life as a human being; and love has its place in the mind and the heart of every human being, but is often perverted into a constant desire for worldly things. When such a desire appears on the scene, true love makes an exit."

"Should we then love the so-called higher things of life?" I asked him. "I must confess that such pious exhortations have often embarrassed me."

"You have a reasonable point, my son," replied the holy man. "Many sanctimonious people focus their love aspect upon abstract goals and nebulous ideas, claiming that they have transcended their lustful attachments to the things of the flesh; but they too are caught up in a snare and delusion, for it is the lover of the Supreme Lord and of His living embodiment who is the true lover. Desire for material riches is transient and eventually unrewarding; desire for abstract goals is somewhat to our temporary advantage, but is ultimately of little use, for the true seeker can only progress along a permanent path of love. The purest and eternal rewarding desire is love for the Supreme Lord."

"What about love between man and woman, where such a love is faithful and true?" I asked.

"Love between the sexes is a beautiful and natural thing," he answered. "But the expression of such a love should be tempered by charity and compassion and respect; it should not be used as an excuse for unbridled lust and carnality. Love between man and woman, truly shared, can become a basis for an all-embracing love. It has been

truly said that love begins in the flesh and ends in the **spirit**. A life that is passed without love is surely a life **without** any benefit, for love is the most potent elixir **of the heart**. The truest love is not determined by the **degree** of devotion for special circumstances connected with **a person**, or for specific actions performed by a person, **or for the qualities** of a person. The attributes of every **human being** are the result of his own nature, and they **spring** from past actions that may have little to do with **love**. And the highest form of love does not depend on **material** circumstance, action or quality; it is not created **by these** attributes, and therefore it does not disappear **when these** attributes themselves disappear. Spiritual love **is neither** dependent on the quality or actions of its **object**, nor on its transient nature. As the soul transcends **time and space**, birth and death, so does the highest form **of love** transcend all these things."

"And so physical love does have a place in the scheme **of things**," I said.

"It most certainly does," replied the holy man, "but **it** should never be considered as anything more than a **primary** step towards that ultimate spiritual love. If love **is solely** devoted to the gratification of the sensual **appetite**, there can be little thought of the high calling of **love**; there can be little room left for the Supreme Lord **in the thoughts** of the devotee. Love for the world and **its attachments** and its objects is a sickness which stirs **the emotions** in a negative way, producing selfishness and **other negative** qualities. To taste the nectar of love, one **cannot be** arrogant; for two of a warrior's swords cannot **be sheathed** in one scabbard."

With these final words the Persian holy man made **a sign of benediction** and faded from my consciousness. **However**, during such moments of meditation he would **occasionally** return to give me transcendental instruction. **The pathway** to the highest realms of life, my Persian

teacher informed me, is by way of the unstruck music. This music is the creative spiritual fiat, the rainbow bridge of celestial tonal fire and supernal light that the pilgrim soul traverses in order to reach that ultimate abode of love. And I, James, a weak mortal, had caught some faint spirant of that heavenly music in this incarnation.

All beautiful forms and tones are mere reflections of some aspect of that ultimate love-music of the great creative Word. Within the vast complex of creation, each individual spirit is himself a spark of that eternal song of love. Man himself has his sovereign and unique pattern of individuality stamped upon him, and no other being in creation is quite like him; no one is able to share the precise totality of attributes that he possesses; no one is patterned in precisely the same mold as he is. And yet, in the vast and mysterious paradox that enfolds the symphony of life, man is an integral part of the unified kingdom of love. Love is the motivating power of all the high transports of the spirit, and the praises of love have been sung since the beginning of creation. Love is the inherent radiant quality of the human heart; and through love I have seen a little of the sublime truth of creation. I have seen a small part of the truth, but I have neither apprehended nor understood all the truth. My journey has just begun.

Chapter Three Great Warlock

BEFORE my physical meeting with the living spiritual adept of **the time**, I had some measure of inner experience with the **servants** of the so-called Negative Power, whom some in **the astral** realm of the nightmusic call the Great Warlock. **This being** rules the composite universe of mind and matter. During one of my excursions into the upper astral **realm**, an adept of the Negative Power revealed the name **and the nature** of the Great Warlock to me.

On **this particular** night I ascended in my light-body and traveled **through** the astral heights of a great plain where **I beheld** an immense concourse of arms. I was astounded **by the magnificent** sight of a king, clad in full regal **armor**, seated on his **steed** before a great host of knights.

"Who **is this?**" I asked the astral adept who had accompanied **me**.

"He **is a servant** of the ruler of this realm, an embodiment **of power**," the astral adept informed me. "The great ruler **here is the** supreme controller of manifestation. If you would **serve** this magnificent being of light and power, you will **become a focal-point** of wealth and influence in the earth-world. But he is a jealous god; you must serve him and **no other**."

"How **can he be** the true lord of all things?" I cried out incredulously.

"He is my lord," the astral adept replied evasively. "He administers justice and law. He punishes the sinful and rewards the righteous. He is the lord of most of your religionists in the earth-world. Surely you do not have to know more than that? Serve him well, and he will serve you well."

"It all seems too easy, far too easy," I said skeptically.

"Suit yourself, foolish James," said the astral adept, shrugging his shoulders; "you will learn." Then he was silent.

My gaze focussed upon one specific point on the imperial field. An osprey crest on a knight's helmet fluttered in the regal breeze, and the point of a warrior's lance brushed the branches of a tree. There before the king stood a man with a scroll of parchment. The monarch's nodding gesture, under a metallic hood, silently commanded the office of his scribe. And then the names of departed knights were solemnly read out from the parti-colored scroll, in a florid ornamentation of obituaries. I was transfixed with wonder.

"What does this mean?" I asked the astral adept. "What mysterious act is taking place here?"

"This is past, present and future, united in one regal enactment," he explained. "Swords that have been thrust from ancient scabbards are now sheathed in our sophisticated wars of words. But man's words cannot hold back the inevitable conflict between fire and ice. At long last, the old impatient warhorse will again be liberated from his stable, and battle will soon commence."

"I see no sense in it!" I protested violently.

"Sense is all you can see in it," answered the astral adept, "for sense is the silent incubus, the drug-trafficker of the hidden heart, the traitor and tyrant of our lives, ever pulsating beneath the nuptial bridge of sighs. The caduceus of sense springs to life like an agile serpent,

leaping **and** coiling and curling about the spine of the silent **warrior** and the whimpering infant and the weeping mother **alike.**"

"Your **sense** is nonsense to me," I insisted.

"We **sound** the vocables of sense through avenues of nonsense," **the astral adept** continued, unperturbed. "Notice how the **monarch** has separated his knightly goats from his subjected **lambs**. They were all given different color codes on **the scroll.**"

I raised **my gaze** to a distant hill, where a vague mass of people **were huddled** together in silent misery. I nodded my understanding. I now knew what was really taking place here.

"Thus **the division** in the lower worlds of those who stand firm **and** those who do not stand firm," the astral adept continued. "Without regret we lordly ones die for our pallid **principles**. But our mistresses love us for it when we **are alive**, and our eventual sacrifice—plus the many rewards **that we reap**—is the mitigation of all our questionable **activities**. It may be an invidious comparison, but the **sum-total** of all our noble qualities is really self-gratification. **Like** sullen serpents, slithering from sin to sin, we **flaunt our courage** for the sake of some casual **in the conjugal** tunnel of love. It is very true that all our **activities** boil down to sense. Cosmic rectification or universal retribution is meaningless to most people, particularly **when you consider** the eternal battle waged upon the **trammeled** sheets of lust. Our lives proceed through **the cycles** of anticipation, subjugation, domination and **annihilation**. And the human spirit is kept in permanent **penury**, like an unfinished poem declaimed in the desolate **deathscape** in the realms of all the possible and impossible **lower worlds.**"

"Stop! **stop!**" I cried out. "Your words hurt my inner memory of all **those wondrous** things that I hold as good

and beautiful and true. I, James, mourn for every form of life in the entire world. I pray for the return of the dove of peace and harmony within the hearts of all mankind and within my own heart. Your bitter words are a desolation of my spirit."

"The inconsolable grief of the eternal mourner is the earth-world's only real certainty," the astral adept continued blandly, the tenor of his message undiminished by my outburst. "Catastrophes and cataclysms, paradoxes and prognostications; these are the dovetailing rays of power, irradiating all from amoeba to star, before the dreadful cosmic sepulchre."

Suddenly a great figure appeared in the sky, looming over the monarch and the concourse of knights. In an ineffable robe of fire the awe-inspiring figure towered above the great plain. The king sat still and silent upon his steed. The scribe still intoned the words on his scroll."

"O who is he? Who is he?" I cried out, pointing fearfully into the sky.

"He is the Great Warlock, the cosmic director of this entire spectacular show," explained the astral adept, who was enjoying my show of fear. "Soon you will witness the mirror image of the king and his warriors, appearing before the whole concourse. And then the two mighty reflections of power will be locked in a long, savage and grisly struggle."

"Are we to witness a great cosmic epic?" I asked the astral adept in a trembling voice.

"No, James, we are not," he replied. "Epics belong to the ingenuous ages of long ago, to the first dawn of alleged civilization. What you see here is the old eternal struggle of man against man, and man with his own self. I have already told you that sense is all there is to it. Someone has to make some semblance of sense to man's existence;

and so the **Great Warlock** brings some needful organization and **purpose** into all warfare. The whole thing is quite simple."

"It is **not simple**," I insisted. "There is neither sense nor reason **here**."

"There **is reason** enough" the astral adept answered. "The **Great Warlock** is a just ruler. His reason for war is a practical **one**: pacis imponere morem; to impose the ways of **peace**. This constant warfare is the finest and the most **popular** entertainment in the entire universe. As far as **man** himself is concerned, all war's barbarisms and miseries **are finally** justified by the practical lessons that he learns, albeit how minute these lessons may turn out to be."

"What **you** are saying is quite monstrous!" I protested again. "It is **the most** preposterous and sophistical balderdash that **I have** ever heard."

"Perhaps **you** are right, James," the astral adept said. "Nevertheless, I have given you the Great Warlock's own reasons **for war**, so far as my limited understanding is able to **follow** them. Are man's justifications for any conflict **that he wages** in the earth-world any more enlightening **or less** absurd? Are they?"

He paused, **but** I did not answer, for I saw the gradual formation **of a mirror image** of the monarch and his army of knights **arrayed** in battle formation before their mutual reflection. **When the mirror image** had completely crystallized the two concourses of knights began to move menacingly towards **each other**.

"Who will **be the victor**?" I asked the astral adept. "Who will **win the battle**?"

"**Neither and neither**," he replied simply. "The **Great Warlock** will **watch over** the opposing monarchs and their armies, manipulating the battle with his magical power."

The antenna of the Great Warlock's wand receives reverberant sounds of endless cosmic clashes, and to him it is of little moment who is the victor in any one war. These battles are part of the myriad phenomena of the skies above us and the worlds below us. Life is comprised of the paraphernalia of war, James; and you will have to reconcile yourself to becoming a courageous and mighty warrior, bearing an escutcheon of honor."

"I cannot believe that the Great Warlock controls all things," I insisted. "He has no power over the Master, who is my mentor and protector."

"In the higher spiritual realms that may well be true," the astral adept replied evenly. "But the Great Warlock is certainly the controller and manipulator of all things in the universe of mind and matter. He commands the deepest hell, infested with demons, and the angel-laden levels of all explored paradises. You yourself, James, set your gaze upon the Great Warlock, when you arose from the truant tomb of flesh in your last incarnation; but you denied your vision of him and your service to him when you made your entry into your present mother's womb. It was a great pity that you found it necessary to do this, for the experience unhinged you somewhat insofar as living harmoniously in the earth-world was concerned. If you do not return to the fold of the Great Warlock, my dear James, I fear that no door to the supernal light will open for you. Only the monarch of death will stand grinning beneath the portal of your skull, awaiting your return as a prisoner in his domain."

"You lie!" I cried out. "I, James, deny all that you have said here. Over the head of the Great Warlock I see the curving ladder of the rainbow, which bespeaks a true pathway to the highest heaven. I shall cry out for entry into my apocalyptic dwelling; and the living Master of my soul will hear me."

As my **voice** sounded across the plain, the astral adept and the monarchs and their concourses of knights suddenly disappeared. I found myself standing alone on a vast and desert-like plateau before the palace of the Great Warlock. I **had** mixed emotions of fear and deep respect, for I knew **that** the Great Warlock was still near me, even though **he** had momentarily disappeared from my vision. My **chaotic** thoughts evoked the voice of the Great Warlock **into** my consciousness, and the outline of this profound **being**, etched in vibrant crimson, stood out against **the** astral sky. I stood perfectly still, for I appeared to **have** no will to move beyond that place.

"I have **many** gifts for you, James, both here and on earth, if **you** would deign to accept them," intoned the voice of the Great Warlock.

I did not **answer**. I stood as still as a sculptured stone.

"You are **not** dumb, my friend," continued the voice of the Great Warlock. "But perhaps I must make myself more clear **to** your vision."

The crimson **outline** of this nebulous giant began to radiate arcs **of** bright color, creating a glorious robe of pulsating light **for** this magnificent being. Above the robe an ascetic and **finely**-etched countenance took shape. The piercing eyes **of** the Great Warlock gazed sternly down at me.

"Find your **voice**, James!" he commanded. "Turn your head and see **the** great archives of wisdom that are set up behind you. **You** may have a wealth of knowledge and power. **You** **have** already received a trifle of these riches, a mere widow's **mite**; and you were greatly and suitably impressed by **the** scraps thrown to you from the rich man's table. But now **you** can be a man of endless mental and creative riches. **Yes, yes**, I understand that you have little regard for worldly **wealth** and footling sensual desires. **You** have renounced **these** trivial and foolish pleasures,

and this is good. Such stupid pastimes have brought constant trouble to mankind, and mankind never learns any lessons from this trouble. But it is true, James, that you have a fine appreciation of the great creative powers pulsating through my universe. And so I shall reward you with lordship over many of these powers. I will give you that treasure which your puny preachers and pompous philosophers so often speak of, but of which they have no real knowledge. But first, James, tell me: do you accept me as your Master?"

My entire being seemed to be electrified into motion by these final words of the Great Warlock. "Sir, I cannot serve you!" I cried, "for you are not my Master and my Lord."

As I cried these words aloud, the sky was filled with a blinding white light. The radiant form of him whom I later knew to be the living spiritual adept filled the mantle of the astral heavens. This being of light was quite literally wrought out of cosmic music. The Great Warlock made a deep obeisance to the supreme mystic adept and disappeared from the scene. I stood alone, on a plateau of tonal fire, with the pulsating light-body of the living Master towering above me. He then spoke reverberant and holy words to me, and then ended his discourse by framing a statement in the form of a simple question:

"You see?" he said. I raised my eyes unto the distant heavens; and I saw.

Chapter Four Living Master

THE negative **power** of the Great Warlock had departed, and now in this **inner** transport I beheld the radiant form of the living **Master** standing before me. He no longer towered above **me**; now he had taken the dimensions of a man like me. **Or** perhaps he had momentarily raised me to his dimensions. A song radiated from his lips, but his words and **tones** were inexpressibly sweet. I had experienced nothing **of** such ineffable beauty before. His song was glorious and **unearthly**, an ecstatic symphony of contemplation and **serenity**, a glowing apotheosis of tonal mysticism.

I have always **appreciated** and loved the music of earthly genius, **and I have** loved all forms of great art. But the spiritual essence **of** all art is ensouled in the spiritual words of the **Master**. I have experienced all the beauty of artifice, which **reflects** the essence of life and love in the physical **world**, and now I am prepared to take that great journey **to my** primal home, the Abode of Love.

And the living **Master's** song was of that pathway to the Abode of **Love**. And it was the essence of all life and all love. It **was** the essence of that which is the eternal inspiration **of the** highest human art, and which flows through all universes as it flows through all beings. In the physical world the beauty of artifice is latent everywhere, reflecting **the** distillation of life and love. Suddenly and magnificently, in some nation, in classical Greece or Rome, in ancient **Indian** or renaissance Italy, it bursts forth, working on **the** streams of human experience as

the mills beside the River Nile convey water over the land, fertilizing it with hidden riches.

Thus does the beauty of artifice enrich civilization and human culture, entering back into the inner consciousness of the people from whence it arose, rejoining the essence of life and love and mingling inseparably with it. When the bright stream has fallen back from the souls of its originators, subsequent creators, in other lands and climes, take it up and transmute it afresh.

And so I heard the essence of the song and symphony of joy and liberation from the lips of the living Master. It was no new song that he was singing. It had existed always and everywhere. Worthwhile riches have ever been passed on in a simple fashion. Moses, when he led Israel out of Egypt, carried with him a branch of the vine, as Noah took a sprig with him in the ark. The wine that the great Solomon drank in his temple contained all the suns of Egypt in it. So with the beauty and essence of human artifice. It is conveyed from land to land in the physical world; but its essential nature is of the original essence of the spirit, the pulsing flood of all supernal experience in the human and angelic soul. And when the distillation of that essence is completed, man must return triumphantly to his primal home—the Abode of Love. This was the import of the Master's song.

The Master finished his song and addressed me: "Well, my son, the time of our meeting in the physical world is fast drawing near. Soon you will receive initiation into the higher spheres of consciousness. But your mind still possesses many questions and many doubts. You should be an honest skeptic, and address these questions to me as they enter your mind."

"O, Sir!" I cried out, "my heart loves all truth, and yet there are those who would erase the consciousness of truth that I bear within me."

"Yes, your recent experience with the adept of the negative power demonstrates that the Great Warlock is uneasy about your inner direction," said the Master. "The Great Warlock is a jealous god; he wants no soul to escape from the prison house of mind and matter."

"It is not only the Great Warlock," I cried again, "it is the bombardment of cynicism and skepticism that I feel all around me."

"Dear James," said the Master, with great love in his voice, "nothing can alienate the autumnal joy of a loving heart; and those who would attempt to destroy the plaque of truth inscribed in one's inmost self only find their endeavors crowned with an Assyrian wreath of desolation. They are desecrators of temples, and ultimately provide themselves with their own fitting punishment."

"Desecrators of temples!" I exclaimed incredulously. "Do we then believe the words of the priests and the ecclesiastics?"

"You know better than that, my dear friend," answered the Master. "I was referring to the temples of the human body. As for the majority of the theologians and their like, they can only interpret innumerable dogmas and doctrines of the mind. One workable principle of truth and wisdom would probably leave them speechless. The preachers constantly preach, and a crowd-encountered word from the pseudo-wise is left to puzzle and perplex future ages and generations."

"I have ever viewed the pious platitudes of theologians with distrust," I said.

"The heart's Golgotha makes man wary and suspicious of outer teachings," continued the Master. "We find the true doctrine when we have passed through the martyrdom of the spirit. And to understand the import of our dwelling in this human temple, the upward-reaching music of the soul must master the ungoverned flesh."

"Do any of the priests understand these things?" I asked the living Master.

"The world is lost in reading scriptures, yet never comes to true knowledge," the Master replied. "But to one who has an iota of love within him all is resolved. I would say that in the temples one finds robbers and in mosques one finds swindlers; but true lovers of the Supreme One remain aloof from all these things. Most lovers of truth show a healthy distaste for the machinations of the professional religionists. No amount of scholastic and cultural attainments can determine the true depth of man. What supreme saint ever went to divinity school? The greatest holy men have been weavers, cobblers and carpenters; and they are your real emperors of love, the mystic adepts. Rites and rituals are completely useless if there is no love in the hearts of those who perform them."

"And so the professional theologian warps the way of love into a foolish and sterile teaching," I said. "Does he ever realize the enormity of his crime?"

"The absurdity of his doctrines occasionally dawns upon the liberal theologian, drowsily reflecting on his deeds and pretensions," said the Master; "and so he becomes a trifle more rational in the presentation of his ideas. He then claims only to absolve man's psychic fears, and he leaves sin itself to a mythical devil. As for the hidebound conservative theologian of the major Western religion, he still adheres to the misread story of the transmutation of the lower man into consciousness of his higher spiritual self. The horrible pronouncements of the lower man, like an endless curse, have led to great conflict and widespread murder through successive ages. Christ has most surely been crucified by his apologists and propagandists, and the spirit of truth is thereby plundered by the merchants of falsehood, who immerse the glorious vision and self-transcendence into the enveloping mirage of dogma. In such a way the negation of the paid priesthood become

architecturally-unstable truths without any foundation whatsoever."

"But what of those who renounce the fables of the theologian?" I asked him. "What of their newly coined truths?"

"Many **aspire** to private rebellions, and end up by insinuating new **falsehoods**," the Master replied. "Faith is always in the **eye** of the beholder. You see what you wish to see; and **so** does the next man. This is the supreme law of the lower **words**. Ultimately, though, all men must reach the resolution of their personal destiny in the realms of the incredible, the Abode of Love. True lovers must act in an incredible **way** by their very nature. Condemned by impious bigots, a great mystic drank a cup of poison as if it was **the** sweetest elixir of life. Such self-surrender is not an act of **giving** up one's own individual autonomy, and thus becoming a mindless automaton. On the contrary, it is a **state** of the highest attainment and produces a pure consciousness of love in which all material desires are seared to **ashes** in that flame which endlessly burns beyond all **the** distractions of the lower worlds."

"Your words **are** strange, Sir," I said, "but I believe that I intuitively **understand** them."

"We of the **timeless** brotherhood of the Word are ever wont to embellish **our** phraseology with the charming and desirable fancies **of** grace," the Master said. "We see nothing wrong with **beauty**, and our truths bud like the floral symbols of nature. **We** are our words, you see. Man's words are, more often **than** not, the camouflage of his own spirit. He hungers **for** that germinal pull upwards into the radiant sky of his **soul**, emblazoned in cosmic splendor; but his poverty of will **pulls** him down again. With false words he rationalizes **his** poor existence."

"And yet he **speaks** constantly of eternal truths," I said.

"Man's so-called eternal truths are mere ephemeral pastimes, enshrined in the well-defined inscriptions of the mind until the whirlwinds of time sweep them away," explained the Master. "To discover the true secret of love, one must first seek the mystic adept from the higher star. No seed must fall on barren ground, for the Apollyon of mind and senses, circling between defiance and lust, knows neither quarter nor a vague neutrality. You yourself, James, must attain the highest state of grace if you are to wear the garment of true freedom."

"How do I attain such a state of grace?" I pleaded. "What must I do?"

"You must grasp the spirit's sword of sounding fire," the Master replied, "and thrust it through the final veil of inner space. I will give you the passwords of all the inner realms when you meet me in the earth world. You will then be able to enter the orbit of flame—beyond the astral and causal regions—and you will follow the unearthly music of spiritual grace that leads eventually to the realm of love and ineffable bliss. The dark and forbidding men of the hidden planets will caution you to travel no further; the somber warriors of the Great Warlock, advancing from their crimson halls with their tall spears, will try to impede your progress. The Great Warlock himself will thrust his wand of power at you, seeking to intimidate you and to dissuade you from the path of liberation. But you will succeed because you have the heart of love and the knowledge of the sounding fire."

"I wish to be a true spiritual aspirant, Sir!" I cried.

"Remember this pious resolution, then," answered the Master. "And when you meet me in the physical world, you will see a man. You may give me the deference and respect that is accorded to all men by those who are truly civilized. But you will remember that you met me in this place first. You will remember that the spiritual aspirant

is joyful in his remembrance of God and of the mystic adept, who is a manifestation of the true Lord. If a lover of God loses all of his worldly possessions, he knows that he has lost nothing. But if he has lost time that should have been spent in meditation and loving remembrance of the Supreme Lord, then his loss is experienced as a desolate pang of separation. The true lover, the spiritual aspirant, is no longer a slave to his emotions, for if love is served in a dutiful manner by the emotions, the great fragrance of the lover's spirituality permeates all about him. Heart reaches out to heart, and all are blessed with the healing currents of love. The Supreme Lord, Who is all-love and all-wisdom, infuses the consciousness of the lover with a constant awareness of His grace. This consciousness is transcendental and universal. Man, animals, birds, insects, plants, trees and flowers respond to it. The entire cosmos is a hymn of praise to love, and we who are born into the physical world bring with us the gift of love."

"Love springs from the fountain of all life, and as we turn our attention towards that fountain, the fragrant spray falls upon us. Even the rational mind may be conditioned towards love and wisdom by a repetition practise that focuses upon the Beloved. When such a love-infused mind controls the concrete intellect, separation from the Beloved becomes unbearable and the mind yearns for companionship with Him. In this intense state of love, the lover begins to lose awareness of his lower personality. He becomes fully conscious of his communion with the Beloved within. His inner vision captures a glance of the luminous spiritual form of the Beloved, and he is intoxicated by this sight. His entire being is merged into the radiant light-music of the Beloved. Blessed indeed is he who has gazed into the eyes of a God-intoxicated saint, for this one glance may cause the currents of love to enter irresistibly into the heart of the aspirant. This is the Path of Love which must be trod by all who would attain union

with the Supreme Lord; but few there are who realize this truth."

"The great mystic adepts, the true saints of God, are always merciful to suffering humanity; but how many of the people heed their words? The saints incarnate into physical bodies and live in the world, and they labor untiringly to help humanity attain the true Path. They even take the burden of karmic sins from the shoulders of sincere seekers. They offer freely the greatest of life's treasures—spiritual liberation. And even then no one will follow them. And so you must learn to be a true lover of the Supreme Lord, James. But you must be aware of the true nature of this love. Many people profess to love the Supreme Lord because they are enamored of the beauties of His creation. Such devotion is quite satisfactory up to a point, but we must understand that the true hidden glory dwells behind and beyond the outer symbol. The mystic adepts and saints love God for His sake alone, and this love goes far beyond that of the average pious devotee. It is a simple matter to love God for the sake of His limitless blessings and favorable circumstances; but the great saints are unwavering in their intense love for God, even when they are made to suffer circumstances of great privation, hardship and even torture. The true spiritual disciple renounces all self-interest and considers both reward and punishment as equal blessings. This is the only formula for selfless love. You see, James, true love is complete in itself."

"I understand, Master," I affirmed. "I will go forward, with your grace, in gratitude and love."

"As I have promised, when you meet me in the physical world I will give you inner passwords of power," the Master said. "The spirit of man surely desires truth, goodness and beauty. In these words are ensouled the records of the inner experience and highest creative imagination of man. They comprise a charged verbal formula, which both

protects you and is symbolic of all protection on the vast journey ahead. If you will repeat this verbal formula with the tongue of thought, keeping a constant inner attention, you will become absorbed in the supernal music of the spirit, and you will be drawn inwards and upwards into communion with the highest reality."

Chapter Five

Initiation

IT was many months after I had confronted his luminous spiritual form in the higher astral realm that I met the living Master in the physical world. With his deep brown skin, white turban and magnificent demeanor, he seemed a veritable lion of spirituality. Shortly after our physical meeting the master gave me the passwords of power, which led to an initiatory experience of inner light and sound in which I consciously contacted the sounding fire of creation, the audible life stream. The Master directed me to focus my inner attention at the 'third eye' center in my head and to collect my scattered attention. I was told to hold my attention at this spiritual center that lies behind and between the two eyebrows. This process of inner concentration automatically drew my spirit currents up to my highest center of consciousness. I began to perceive the radiant light of the higher realms of consciousness and to hear the resonant strains of the sounding fire. I closed my ears to all external sounds and I rapidly became absorbed into the audible life stream.

And so I, James, had received initiation from the living Master of my time. I had cast my last sad spear into the faroff corner of my warring world. I had now reached the hard floor of Abaddon, the so-called bottomless pit, and had fought the great battle with my own personal Apollyon. Now had dawned the time of the great ascent out of the abyss, even beyond the highest realms of causality. I was grateful in my heart for this supreme benediction of love that my Master had bestowed on me. All

that was now lacking was the eradication of my personal egotism. When this takes place I will surely commence my great journey through the jeweled light of the place of the immense silence. Beyond that incredible magnitude of the multiverse there is something that cannot be grasped by the ironlike vise of the mind. And above the mud of creation the lotus of radiance emerges and the glorious syllables of initiation are enunciated in the flaming tones of the sounding fire.

"Free yourself of all vestiges of greed and selfishness, James," the Master abjured me, "and let there be no desire for anything—even for the highest good. Yes, for this is the great mystery: whoever is prepared to sacrifice himself completely, he can drink fully of the cup of love; but neither a greedy person nor a selfish one can do so, even though he may swear by love and talk of love. You must be prepared to travel with the lightness of a spirit of love, James. Your love must be that small drop of water that has now become suddenly transformed into a great ocean of spiritual consciousness. I think that you have heard that statement many times; now let it become a living truth for you."

"I understand, Sir!" I cried. "I understand the law of love."

"Be truly certain that you do understand, my friend," said the Master. "If all mankind lived in accordance with the law of love, there would be no need for the world's laws. Life in the physical world is lacking in love, and this is confusing to even the most ardent seeker of spirituality. What with all the intellectual hair-splitting and semantic wrangling that one finds on this planet, it is very difficult for the devotee to be able to concentrate on learning his true nature. The life of a true lover is an eternal song, an endless saga of love—if you will forgive a simple man his trite and simple images. The possessions

of this world are of very little use to you, James; you have at least discovered that truth for yourself."

"Without love, the ownership of worldly possessions can prove a diabolical pitfall to the aspirant on the pathway of liberation. Affluence itself can prove a doorway to spiritual pride; devotion to beautiful and aesthetic objects may become a pathway to spiritual blindness; temporal power is almost always a doorway to cruelty and arrogance; intellectual knowledge too often becomes a pathway to egotism; love of outer observances and flamboyant rites becomes a pathway to religious intolerance and bigotry. But the gift of love can transform all lesser gifts into instruments of spiritual liberation, for they are now tempered with the joyful sweetness of a loving heart, and are of benefit to all living things. It is impossible to confine love to the temporal levels of life, just as it is impossible to confine the concept of the grandeur of God to mortal dimensions. Love is the sublime experience of the heart, for where true love dwells there is sanctity, and the lover knows compassion for all life. Maulana Rumi, the Persian poet-saint and disciple of Shamas-i-Tabrez, has written: 'Different from all other diseases is the disease of the lover; for love is the key to the secrets of God.' People may misunderstand the inner nature of love, for few have experienced the higher transports of mystical love, but the spiritual heights of love have been attained by those who are the true lovers of God and His entire creation. Christ went to the Cross with love in his heart for all mankind; Shamas-i-Tabrez blessed his torturers; and Guru Arjun, fifth guru of the Sikhs, when forced by his tormentors to sit on red-hot iron plates, gently informed them that 'God's Will is sweet.'"

"Such things can only be truly comprehended by those who love in the highest sense. True love enfolds within itself the concept of self-surrender, the surrendering of one's life to the way of love. Much has been written about

love, but the highest form of love must be lived to be experienced and known. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Lord Krishna exhorted Arjuna to give him his whole heart; to love and adore him always; to worship him for ever. 'Bow to me only; and you shall find me,' Lord Krishna told Arjuna. 'To love is to know me, my innermost nature, and to enter at once into my being.' Such a love as this cannot be affected by the vicissitudes of life, for it raises the lover to a plane of eternal peace and joy. The Apostle John stated, 'he that loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no occasion for stumbling in him.' Love is the regenerative force of mankind, and even animals, birds, plants and flowers can be influenced by the transforming power of love."

"Can this warring world really be transformed by love?" I asked him.

"The laws of the world have arisen because of man's lack of love," replied the Master. "Through this lack of love man is ensnared in a cruel web of wars and destruction. I repeat again, that if mankind lived in accordance with the law of love, mankind would not need the laws of the world. Love must blossom in the heart of each individual, and then there will dawn a planetary externalization of the love that has flowered in the hearts of all mankind. Within such a rule of love, no outer law would be necessary. But the people of this world are engrossed in their thoughts of hatred and jealousy for each other. We look about us and we see that love is not king in the world. Only injustice and destruction remain."

"Love is the crown of all human experience, and he who does not love is unworthy of the designation of 'human being.' Kabir, one of India's greatest saints and her greatest poet, said that 'a person in whom there is no love should be considered as a moving statue.' Guru Arjun, expressing similar sentiments, stated that 'a man may be extremely clever, learned and wealthy, and may have in him

many other good and fine qualities, but if he has not developed the love of God within himself, he should be considered the same as a corpse.'"

The Master finished speaking and fell silent for a while. I felt the import of his words penetrate my entire being. I pledged myself to explore the universe of love, that universe that transcends time, space and causality. It is a universe which needs no spaceship for its conquest. It has riches undreamed of in the outer physical universe. The physical universe is a place of awe-inspiring beauty, and the mind of man is naturally inclined to plumb the wonders of its creation; but this outer universe is only the material robe of the Supreme Lord, who is all love. God has upheld His entire creation with the power of love, and the very soul of man is infused with this power. I have sojourned in the physical world for eons, and I have known the three states of slumber, dream and wakefulness. Now, through the grace of a living Master, I would attain the state of superconsciousness. I will be shown how to reassert my own true nature and thus walk upon the highway of love, the radiant way of return to my true home.

"I will later reveal much of the great journey that you must eventually take," said the Master, emerging from his silence. "Be constantly and diligently devoted to your meditations. When you have completed the great journey, you will again return to the physical world to fulfill your future purpose in this life. It will be simple. To sharpen the antenna of your superconscious self, follow the instructions that I have given you."

The Master then left me and I began to meditate alone. He had informed me that I would now begin an inner journey of the longest duration thus far. I closed my eyes and repeated the passwords of power in my head. The chirping of innumerable crickets and the chiming of many bells sounded in my inner consciousness. My closed eyes

quivered momentarily and then they were still. The chirping and chiming sounds merged into one pulsating indrawing tone of a delightful sonority, a lifting and a pulling of tonal power that swept my consciousness out of my corporeal body.

Once more I beheld the spinning vortex of blue light and heard the sublime chord of heavenly music. Within the circle of ovoid globes of radiance I saw the blue eye. I concussed through the eye with a brilliant splintering of minute motes of light, like a body shattering the thin ice on the surface of a frozen lake. Then I was alone in the glorious flower garden that was laid out in five-pointed symmetry, where the oriflammes of each flower shone with the potency of a pearl. Through the sounding fire, the Master showed the way through the celestial spheres.

I, James, have seen the meteor arise in the astral sky, beyond the sparkling fountain that is the rainbow bridge. I have seen the meteor break upon the fountain, and the radiant spray has fallen upon me. I have again entered the garden that knows no autumn. Through the grace of the Master, I had entered a high subplane of the astral realm, but my spiritual perceptor informed me that I must experience the entire orbit of the astral plane. I must go down as well as up.

"Most initiates do not enter the lower part of the astral plane," the Master said, his voice sounding in my right ear. "You must have this experience for karmic and personal reasons, however. All this must be undergone for a purpose. Have no fear. You will be under my protection. First you must go downwards."

And then I seemed to be journeying downward alone, making a diversion to a place where unregenerate and bestial people dwell and evil entities reap the harvest of their wicked deeds. This place is an astral subplane of the lowest level, an astral hell. Souls who have had implacable

carnal appetites or insatiable desires for gratification dwell there after death. There are also those who have died with some deep and terrible anxiety weighing upon them. Such gravity keeps them submerged in this terrible place until their problems are overcome.

This hellish place is a terrifying and somber reflection of some of the ugliest parts of the physical world, and in it I was confronted by savage people who were slaves to their unbridled desires. I was not afraid of them, however, for the repetition of the Master's five passwords of power rendered me invisible to them, and I felt nothing but love and compassion for them. In spite of what many religionists have stated, 'hell' is no place of eternal suffering, only of penal correction and eventual release. From that dark place I again ascended upwards to more pleasant regions, where dwelled thoughtful and educated people who had been mainly preoccupied with their worldly affairs during their lives in the physical world. The attention of these souls were being directed upwards by those who have spiritual duties in these regions.

Then I soared into a region that was very familiar to me, for I remembered many previous transports there. It was a landscape of pleasant scenery, of pine forests and high blue-white peaked mountains. In the pine forests were the white inns of rest, little circular temples that served those people who had recently left the physical world and those who awaited imminent incarnation into the physical world. I entered one of these inns and met a rather agitated young man, who was now responding to the downward pull of his future parents' act of love. He seemed to be aware of the fact that I came from the physical world.

"What will confront me on earth?" he asked anxiously. "What is in store for me?"

"For you, personally, I don't know," I replied candidly. "But there is a great change of consciousness taking place

in the hearts of men. If you are to help build a society that is based upon the inner transformation of each individual, you will be very aware of this fact. It would be grossly dishonest on my part to tell you that there is no warfare and strife, no intolerance and bigotry, no ignorance and unhappiness. But the people of the earth are desperately seeking new joy and happiness. The pity of the matter is that most of them have not discovered that joy is the fruit of the mind's concentration on the higher attributes of love."

"I don't follow your reasoning," said the young man. "I only left the physical world a short while ago, but I had little time for reading in that incarnation. What you are saying sounds too learned for me."

"It is not a matter of reading or learning," I told him. "It is love of the highest within each one of us. Once love truly enters a man's heart, it keeps him happy at all times, for he then becomes free from worries, and vibrations of love flow naturally and continuously from him. If you can keep such thoughts in your consciousness before the psychic mists of earth erase your memory, you can take with you much that will bless mankind."

"You sound as if you know what you are talking about," said the young man. "I was speaking a little while ago to one who had also recently come from earth. He had made the transition at an early age because of some addiction to a poisonous drug, I believe. He told me about a new communal spirit that appears to contain a measure of the same philosophy of love that you yourself expounded. He said that it will be all the rage in the incoming Aquarian Age."

"I do not expound any philosophy," I informed him. "for my Master's loving words cannot be caged in a philosophy. But I know that of which you speak. The cult of the communal spirit, as opposed to the monolithic

social organization so prevalent in sophisticated nations, is something more than a swing of history's pendulum; it is a portent of things to come. The communal spirit as a form of expression with its own aims, existing in its own right within the physical world's most advanced societies, is to all intents and purposes a sign of the disintegration of the Piscean civilization of the past two thousand years. But the greatest achievements of this new communal spirit—and probably its greatest problems—are yet to come in the emerging Aquarian Age."

"I am still not certain that I know precisely what you are talking about," said the young man, "but your words certainly give me a feeling of confidence."

"I am very happy about that," I replied, "for I really wanted to reassure you about your future birth. The mighty forces and energies of the cosmic universe surge through the organism of man, and are used creatively or destructively by him, according to the level of his own awareness. Man as a being of love has illimitable powers for joy and bliss within himself. Within you is that creative symphony of love which links you to all creation, from the physical universe to the Abode of Love itself."

"Well, I'll have to take your word for it," the young man said, "for you are speaking in highly metaphysical terms."

"We're in a metaphysical place, aren't we?" I replied.

"Quite frankly, I don't really know," the young man answered. "It looks a lot like the physical earth to me, only more pleasant. The atmosphere is brighter and cleaner too."

"I am very sorry," I said. "If what I have said to you appears metaphysical and difficult, then the fault is entirely my own. I was trying to convey to you some of the things taught me by my mentor, who is known as the present living Master in the physical world."

"Unfortunately, I don't know the gentleman," the young man said, shaking his head sadly.

"You will know him one day," I assured him. "He is a prince of love and wisdom. He taught me that love is both the motivating energy and the fulfillment of all life. Love is not blind, my Master says, for the inward sight of the lower sees the truth immanent in all creation. Love transcends any system of metaphysics, for it transcends the intellect, reason, knowledge and emotion. My Master has told me that where there is true love, it is there we find the 'life more abundant' spoken of by Christ. And this abundant life is the evocation of the power of love within the heart of man and woman. The hidden image of God as the spirit of love dwells within each and every human being. When our inner eye is truly open, we can see all beings as manifestation of God's love."

"Haven't you suffered because of that knowledge?" the young man asked.

"To be truthful, I have felt a little pain because of it," I said candidly. "I have loved greatly and some people have taunted me for it. They did not understand the condition of my heart, and thus there were times that I felt as if I was an alien atmosphere. But again the fault is mine. I am one who has known love, and yet I have been clumsy in handling that knowledge."

"I can see your point, I think," said the young man. "It is because of our ignorance that we suffer."

"Yes, that is so," I replied. "My Master has stressed that we must learn love, or else we fail to affirm our basic nature as spiritual beings. Love fulfills the law of life itself. If we perform just one selfless act of love, my Master told me, we then truly perform many such acts without conscious realization of this loving proliferation of kindness. There are many alleged religious people who profess love of God, and yet they are prepared to foster

hatred and violence against one another. According to my Master, such people who entertain hatred for others cannot be considered as devotees of the Supreme Lord, for they have not even learned how to become human beings."

I paused, and the young man nodded mutely.

"Well, I must be on my way," I informed him, for I had felt again the upward pull of the audible life stream (of which my companion seemed quite unaware). "I most certainly wish you the richest of God's blessings and fortune and love in your new incarnation."

"Thanks a lot," he said. "I'll probably need all that. I will try to keep the gist of all that you have told me in my consciousness."

I climbed again through the higher levels of the astral realm, and beheld those cheerful places which are commonly termed 'heavens,' and which are so remote from the supernal heavens of the mystic adepts of the highest order. The pious busybodies of religion and philosophy often find their way into these postmortem astral heavens. The New Jerusalem of self-satisfied Christians, the Valhalla of certain Nordic types, the somewhat sensual joy-filled paradise of the Muslims, the Summerland of the spiritualists, are all to be found in these higher astral subplanes. On even higher astral levels may be found colonies of idealistic artists and intellectuals, who have served humanity well in worldly ways.

I passed through these subplanes with very little delay, for I knew deep in my consciousness that it would be on a higher level—the highest level of the astral realm—that I would again meet with the radiant spiritual form of the living Master.

Chapter Six

The Cosmic City

THUS, through the grace of the living Master, I attained the initial state of superconsciousness, which is the state of transcendental consciousness, the fourth state of existence. I found myself ascending beyond the astral heavenworlds and summerlands into a region of dazzling light. I passed through an azure sky, studded with the most luminous stars and glowing suns. I saw bright comets like scintillating darting silverfish and flashing errant fireflies, and then I heard with greater power the sound of the unending melody of creation.

I moved towards a sun and a moon, globes of yellow fire, which dissolved into diamond-splintered fragments of light as I passed through them. I then heard the deep sonorous tones of a great bell and became absorbed in its music. Then the music of the bell merged into the melody of a conch and I found myself on an ascending pathway which led up the side of a steep purple-gold mountain. At the highest point of ascent I was confronted with three immense paths. I trembled with dire apprehension as I gazed upon these paths, for I could still sense the cyclonic vortex of the world's rage behind me. I quickly thought of God as omnipresent and permanent; and love—being of the same essence and nature of God—is also omnipresent and permanent. I should therefore have no fear.

The path on the lefthand side was a dark forbidding region, where I instinctively knew that strange warlocks and adept-magicians abounded. The entry to this path

was guarded by fantastic embodiments of the miraculous and secret powers, strange beings with piercing eyes of flame, concrete and visible to my sight. My Master had previously informed me that these implacable sentinels would endeavor to obstruct my further ascent and that they would offer me great knowledge and power if I would cooperate with them. I recognized the familiar figure of the negative adept among them. He moved towards me with a welcoming smile on his countenance.

"James, my dear friend, how wonderful to see you again," he said; but he kept his distance, for waves of sounding fire were encircling me. "I do hope that you will be spending some time with us here. My many friends in this place will present you with great power and riches and psychic gifts if you will do their simple bidding. I can assure you my friend that it would be too your great advantage to listen to them. Why, they can give you a far better deal than any offered you by your pious teacher. You will reign with many honors in the physical world, and that's no exaggeration."

I spoke the passwords of power aloud and the negative adept disappeared into a mist, which immediately dissolved into the side of the mountain. The warlocks and adept magicians vanished into nothingness.

"The path on the righthand side can provide you with an ingress into far higher universes than this," the voice of the Master sounded in my right ear. "But your journey lies upon the central path, an immeasurable luminous way, the true highroad of the rainbow bridge to the highest heaven.

I then ascended the central path and crossed over the peak of the purple-gold mountain. By a ravine on the other side of the mountain, the Master revealed himself to my sight. His countenance was resplendent with radiant light and the garments of his light-body were irradiated with

glorious colors. I remembered the words of Tulsi Sahib, a mystic-adept of the highest degree, who declared that in the inner realms 'blinding light flashes forth from the nails of the Master's feet and illumines the very soul of the devotee.' And Maulana Rumi also spoke of the experience of seeing the luminous spiritual form of the Master: 'As the light of the Master dawns in the soul, one gets to know the secrets of both worlds.' Guru Arjan stated: 'The Blessed Form of my Master is in my forehead, and whenever I look within I see him there.' And Khawaja Moen-ud-Din Chisti, another great saint, told of this inner contact with the Master in poetic words: 'O Master! the sun cannot stand the resplendence of thy face. The moon also has covered herself with cloud to escape thy dazzling light. In the very person of the Prophet, the light of God has taken visible form, as the light of the sun does in the body of the moon.'

I now understand the full significance of the words of these saints. The Master led me to a promontory and directed my gaze to a stupendous city of light in the valley below us.

"That is the City of the Thousand-petalled Lotus," he informed me. "It is the cosmic powerhouse for both the astral realm and the physical universe."

We started down the mountainside towards the city, which was a wondrous pulsating cosmos in itself, with fine domed buildings that appeared to be carved out of iridescent mother-of-pearl. The walls of the buildings seemed to vibrate with the banded colors of agate. The central part of the city was illuminated by a colossal flame of the most intense radiance, which appeared to project from the dome of a great palace. Numberless melodies and harmonies of ravishing beauty emanated from this flame.

"You can see why it is described as the City of the Thousand-petalled Lotus," the Master said. "Look at the

hundreds of beacons of light that surround the central light."

As we entered the city itself, I beheld countless courtyards where great fountains of light murmured their fragrant nectar into the astral air. Aureous blossoms and shining asphodels grew in great profusion around these fountains. Above me the starglow burned in the sky and I could feel the throbbing astral music of life within me.

"The advanced people of the astral realm who dwell in this city are exceedingly happy," said the Master. "In fact they truly believe that they have attained the ultimate state of bliss."

"They surely cannot be blamed for that assumption, Sir," I replied, "for I do not remember ever having seen anything so beautiful as this in my previous excursions into the astral realms."

"You most certainly have seen this beauty," replied the Master, "and you have witnessed sights that are far more beautiful. But you have forgotten much that you have previously experienced. Nevertheless, this is the highest region reached by many advanced mystics and yogis of the earth; and it is so incredibly vast and awe-inspiring that the holy ones who dwell here cannot comprehend the fact that much higher and far more beautiful realms lie beyond here. They cannot comprehend God-beyond-God, you see."

"God-beyond-God!" I exclaimed. "That phrase strikes a deep chord in my memory. During my last sojourn in the astral realm, it was rumored by a few wise ones—whom others designated as lunatics—that God exists beyond God. I wanted to explore this idea a great deal; it is such an unusual concept. However, I was dissuaded from this pursuit."

"Well, we will explore your unusual notion further," said the Master, his eyes twinkling with humor, "but first

there is someone I would like you to meet. He has descended from a higher realm in order that sincere aspirants like yourself may meet him."

We walked through bright streets where happy children played and wise men and women smiled their benedictions on all who passed by. Then the Master led me into a small courtyard and we entered a humble white building. A slightly-built man, who looked as if he was in his middle thirties, rose from a chair and gave the Master a deep bow, which the Master reciprocated. Without waiting for any introduction from the Master the man turned to me and gave me a salutation, touching both his forehead and his heart. He asked us both to be seated and waited for us to sit down before he took his own chair. He was wearing the body of a Persian and had dark piercing eyes. It was obvious to me that he and the Master knew each other very well.

"My name was Khusro in one of my earthly incarnations," he informed me. "I tell you this because I know of your interest in music. I was considered to be a poet-mystic and a musician of sorts. I invented the musical instrument known as the sitar. This was a crude attempt on my part to capture the music of the spirit in terms of the physical world. I consider the attempt a failure. Like yourself, James, I confessed an indifference to all institutionalised religion. I was attacked by the world of contemporary priesthood, for they saw me as an infidel. Certainly I became an infidel on account of love for the Supreme Lord. I could not have stomached the superficial religion of the priests, even if I had tried my hardest. Every cell of my body throbbed with the radiations of love for God. Frankly, I reached the point where I cared nothing whether I lived or died. You know, we lovers of the Supreme Lord really have no great anxiety regarding the eventual dissolution of the lower universes, because our primary aim is to continue to know the glory of our Beloved."

"The Master Khusro is the principal teacher at a temple of fiery wisdom in the causal world beyond this region," the Master explained to me. "Perhaps you will kindly tell our friend James a little more about the region in which he finds himself, beloved Khusro."

"You who can tell him everything are asking me to instruct him?" Khusro said, a smile playing on his lips. "Well, James, as you progress onwards and upwards you will become increasingly aware of the power of the sound current, the audible life stream, the unstruck and unfathomable Word that underpins all creation from the first outpouring from the realm of pure spirit to the densest plane of matter. As the river of life this 'God-into-expression' power exists in a fluid state, altering its tonal nature from level to level, yet always remaining the same in its primal essence. It upholds the seven cosmic islands and the nine immense divisions of consciousness that comprise our universe of universes. These islands and divisions are referred to in the Christian Bible as 'Mansions in the Father's House.' They may be conveniently divided into four Grand Divisions of the cosmic scheme of creation: first, the purely spiritual region; second the spirito-material region; third, the materio-spiritual region; fourth and last, the material region. As your Master has already informed you, the exploration of these three inner realms—the first three Grand Divisions—is the innate right and spiritual heritage of each and every human soul. If we do not go within and traverse all these regions, the fault is entirely ours." Khusro paused and gave me a long piercing look.

"The materio-spiritual region, the third and lowest inner region, is the nearest Grand Division to the physical universe—the final Grand Division," he continued. "This City of the Thousand-petalled Lotus, in which you now find yourself, is the highest point of concentrated cosmic energy in the materio-spiritual region; and it is from this

power-source that the entire physical universe derives its motor energies. The time-scale is this Third Grand Division is shorter than that in the spirito-material region, but it is still much longer in duration than that in your immediate physical universe. Both this region and the spirito-material region go into dissolution at the end of a cosmic age, which lasts for many millions of years. Now you can see that those who dwell here are deluded if they believe that they are eternal. The so-called 'heavens' are very beautiful, but they are all subject to eventual dissolution."

"It is the first and highest Grand Division, the Abode of Love, that is beyond time, space and causality. As you well know, the commencement of the Way of Return to the Abode of Love takes place in the fourth and lowest region of creation, which comprises the entire physical universe of all planets, suns, stars, solar systems, galaxies and cosmic schemes known and unknown to modern astronomy. Matter in your physical universe is in its most coarse, most dense form, with a very limited admixture of spirit substance—just enough to vivify matter and maintain life, in fact. The physical structure of the fourth Grand Division is the lowest projection of a cosmic idea channeled through the medium of 'universal mind.' The entire physical universe, with its billions of galaxies, separated by immeasurable numbers of light-years, is as a speck of dust in comparison with the inner realms beyond it. It is at this place, the City of the Thousand-petalled Lotus, that the spiritual aspirant starts on his inner journey. And it is here, remarkably enough, that the final stage of the yogi's journey is marked, after he has traversed the various chakras or etheric power-centers in his organism. For the soul who aspires to climb on the mystical Path of Love, the audible life stream, this is the first rung of the ladder of ascent. Because the aspirant on this highest spiritual path refuses to disturb the fiery force of the serpent power, the kundalini, which vivifies the chakras in other yogic practices, the strain of physical transcendence is greatly

reduced, and there is no possible risk of harm being done to the physical or mental organism of the aspirant. By contact with the inner symphony of love, the divine sound current, the sensory currents of the body are automatically drawn upwards without any conscious striving on the part of the aspirant."

"Why cannot the practitioners of yoga achieve a complete transcendence of physical consciousness by these exercises that apparently bring to life these microcosmic force-centers?" I asked him.

"Because such practices are concerned with the manipulation of the subtilized life-currents of the human organism, which the yogis call the pranas," answered Khusro. "And any result thereby is attained only after a long and arduous period of discipline. And the yogi may not necessarily achieve the desired result, even after a life-time's labor in the yogic field. Also, these subtilized life-currents end at this point, the City of the Thousand-petalled Lotus, for the pranas are only concerned with subtilized physical, etheric and astral matter. But the mystical Path of Love, as you well know, begins at the highest microcosmic center in man, the seat of the soul between and behind the two eyebrows. On many occasions the aspirant to this high spiritual path will receive the same illuminating and transcendental experience at his first initiation that the advanced yogi has worked long and hard for."

Khusro now fell silent and the Master rose to his feet and bade me do the same. Khusro got up from his chair and bowed first to the Master and then to me. The Master bowed in return and I felt an overwhelming urge to prostrate myself at the feet of both these holy men. The Master, catching my thought, stopped me from this act. I bowed to the noble Khusro and then followed the Master out of his humble abode. We walked through some lovely

flower gardens, where children were happily playing on the lawns.

"You were saying that you have already come across the concept of God-beyond-God," remarked the Master as we proceeded along a dazzling white flower-bordered boulevard.

"Yes, Master," I replied. "I had previously tried to pursue the subject when I sojourned in the astral realm of the nightmusic, but my moves in this direction were met with some negative reactions. So many people were afraid of the profound questions raised by this concept that they assured me that they had seen God themselves. They protested that God was final, and that was all there was to it, for nothing existed beyond Him. I certainly had to admit that it was most difficult to comprehend God existing beyond God; but you, Sir, infer that this is indeed so."

"Yes, it is most emphatically so," answered the great Master, smiling benignly at some children who regarded us with friendly curiosity. "And in order that you may progress quickly and surely on the rest of your journey, I will take you into my confidence. I can assure you my friend, that God does exist beyond God, and you will soon prove this to your own satisfaction."

"Well, Master," I said, "those who assured me that they had seen God themselves stated that such a concept is impossible, for, they argued, how can God exist beyond God? Obviously he can, for you have told me that he most certainly does, and I trust your word implicitly."

"There are many deities in the cosmic scheme of life," said the Master. "One of these deities dwells in this great cosmic city. You will have noticed that the city curves like a great crescent into the environs of a cosmic mountain of light, and upon that mountain is the palace of

the ruler of this realm. Many people look upon him as the supreme deity; God Himself. And yet he is not even the highest deity in this region, for he is subservient to another god, who has his high domain in the causal realm beyond this place. In fact, in relation to the deity who rules this cosmic city, the causal god could be termed God-beyond-God. And yet he is not, for he is still a secondary deity, the lord of the universes of mind and matter. Beyond the causal realm are higher and more spiritual deities. The one purpose of spreading the rumor concerning the profound truth of God-beyond-God is to make people understand that they will constantly return to the pain and the suffering of the physical world until they have undergone the experience of God who exists beyond God. God-beyond-God is ultimately the Nameless One, Whom the mystics of the Trans-Himalayan School termed with deep understanding, the 'One about Whom naught can be said.'

"It certainly sounds an incredible doctrine," I said.

"What better place to explain it than in the realm of the incredible," laughed the Master. "The secret of all cosmic unity lies in the apparent duality of God and God-beyond-God. Life is an immense circuit of power, stemming from God-beyond-God in the first place and from God in the second place. In that circuit billions and billions of entities form and reform, again and again. God-beyond-God creates the indestructible spirits; but the transient forms are created by God, who is called by so many names in the religions of the world. The conceivable and the inconceivable are two strangers and lovers constantly being brought together in the holy wedlock of creation."

"And yet I can fully understand why many believe the ruler of this realm to be the supreme God," I said, indicating the majestic panorama of the cosmic city with a sweep of my hand.

"Well, this potentate does rule the astral and the physical realms," the Master said. "But he is still a lower aspect of the Lord God, who truly rules there and here, and beyond in the causal realm. This causal deity comprises in his corporate nature the past and the present and the future, as understood by human beings. Nevertheless, it is impossible to predict a date when the cosmic reign of this causal deity will come to an end, just as it is impossible to fix a cosmic date for his origin. You yourself, James, know that beginnings and endings are unreal concepts, created by man's outgoing faculties, which see an apparent commencement and an apparent termination to everything that transpires in his environment. From the viewpoint of the higher consciousness, that which can be seen as the beginning of an event in the physical world has previously been occurring as an idea in this region of astral and mental energies. And far beyond this region are realms which ultimately transcend time—or the secondary deity—itself."

"This secondary God is therefore only a subordinate in the hierarchy of the cosmic universe, and yet he is worshipped by millions of people as the supreme Lord of creation. Naturally, we should look upon him as an exalted being, an embodiment of light, wisdom and power. It may be said that the 'duration' of the secondary God lasts from one major cosmic cycle to another, during which the composite universe of mind and matter remains in its manifest form until its eventual dissolution."

"What is the purpose of this secondary God, then?" I asked wonderingly. "It appears that he is considerably down-graded in comparison with God-beyond-God."

"We should show the secondary God the utmost respect," the Master replied, "for his duty is that of binding all of humanity to the Wheel of Birth and Death in the realms of causality. Mankind's long upward struggle against the downward-raying force of incarnation is

designed by God-beyond-God for the purgation of our sins and impurities, and to make us ready for our cosmic journey to that far-off radiant center, the Abode of Love. The incarnations of the secondary God, the avatars, the messiahs and the prophets, whose mission it is to incarnate themselves in every age in order to root out unrighteousness and evil, to protect the good and to punish evildoers, thus bring the promise of redemption to the righteous. But such 'redemption' is still bound and limited by the time-scale of the lower universes and is thus not lasting.

"Many of the righteous dwell here in this great cosmic City of the Thousand-petalled Lotus. If you asked them where they consider they are, they would probably reply quite simply 'heaven.' But they themselves will inevitably return to the physical world until they are ready for the attention of some living Master, at which time he will help them to transcend time, space and causality in order to ascend into the Abode of Love. It is all so very simple, James; so simple that few people would ever believe it. This great City of the Thousand-petalled Lotus is itself a copy, a pale reflection, of a high region that is known as the Blissful Region, which is far beyond this realm. You see, James, the secondary God and the Great Warlock, which is his lowest embodiment, have placed many obstructions in the path of the aspiring soul by creating these counterfeit heavens. In the physical organism itself, the heart center or chakra is also a microcosmic reflection of this great cosmic city; and yogis who meditate upon this heart center often mistakenly believe that they have been taken on a higher astral transport."

And so I, James, arrived at the beautiful region which has its capital the City of the Thousand-petalled Lotus. My master took me to a school of awareness, a temple of wisdom, where my mind was awakened to the consciousness that I had spent many incarnations in deep

slumber. I was now apprised of the existence of the many higher realms in the inner cosmos. I witnessed the way my Master, who in the physical world was a simply dressed, white-turbaned, bearded man, was looked upon with the greatest reverence and awe by the wise ones who dwell in this cosmic city. Even the Lord of that realm himself paid homage to my Master. There is no surprise that my Master should be accorded such veneration and respect, of course, for he is a prince of love. And where love is chief there can be no other rulers. Love is the beginning and ending of all wisdom, and every true Master in every age of man has professed that the kingdom of love is the highest of all realms.

In the City of the Thousand-petalled Lotus I met many who had been advanced yogic teachers and mystics in the physical world. They had advanced to this region by the subtle manipulation of the electronic ether-currents of the human organism, which are known in the Orient as the pranas. There were also millions of prophets of greater and lesser degrees, together with incarnations of minor deities, and spiritual hermits who are literally stranded in these attractive regions. Unless all these beings are released from the bondage of the secondary God by a competent mystic-adept of the highest order, they will be unable to proceed to the realms of pure spirituality. As previously stated by the Master Khusro, they can ascend no further by yogic methods or similar mystical means. Nevertheless, I found that the majority of those whom I had met here were quite content to have ascended thus far. But I myself could not be satisfied with this attainment, for the vistas beyond the cosmic city were vast and awe-inspiring, and challenging to my soul. Under the grace and guidance of my Master, it would be a great spiritual adventure to pass beyond these vistas. This I had to do.

Chapter Seven

Cosmic Mind

DURING my brief sojourn in the City of the Thousand-petalled Lotus I began to forget the circumstances of my present existence in the physical world. My occasional flashes of memory proved extremely sketchy. This great city with the golden spires of its buildings and the radiant domes, phosphorescent spheres of glory, was over-powering to my spirit in its wondrous beauty. When I had fully received a new accrescence of consciousness in that realm, the Master signified that I should ascend further.

"When you climb beyond this place," he informed me, "you will find that the negative powers, working under the lordship of the Great Warlock, are at their worst. The machinations of lesser adepts are nothing compared to their wiles. Remember that I shall be near you at all times, protecting you. And yet you, James, still have the freewill to choose your own direction."

I heard the Master's voice as a counterpoint to the melody of the sounding fire, which was drawing me upwards. I was travelling and listening at one and the same time. His words appeared to be the sum-total of all the experiences I had undergone, together with the motivating power of my inner transport, which was now moving me onwards and upwards.

I passed onto an ascending plateau beyond the great City of the Thousand-petalled Lotus and I was suddenly confronted by indescribably beautiful women, clothed in garments of shimmering purple, who began to gyrate

sinuously and sensuously around me. I was astounded to discover that one part of the astral consciousness was still responding, imaginatively but realistically, to the reactions of the senses. One of the women moved closer to me, and I could see her body through the purple haze of her garment.

"She can offer you the most incredible allurements," whispered the familiar voice of the negative adept in my left ear. The woman continued to stand before me, her body swaying rhythmically, whilst her companions performed seductive rites within the outer circle.

"This is your real home, my friend," continued the negative adept. "Sense has become so subtilized and perfected here that you cannot imagine the unutterable joys of this region until you yourself have experienced them."

"Stay with us," murmured the woman appealingly, "stay with us. You are my lover throughout eternity. There are so many wonderful experiences for us to share in my beautiful land."

I found myself being drawn towards the woman and her astral companions. An incredible feeling of languor infused my subtle body. And then I remembered suddenly the meaning and purpose of my being in that place.

"Begone!" I cried, and then I enunciated the passwords of power. The women disappeared instantly, and the low voice of the negative adept was no longer with me. There was now nothing but the vastness of a great white void and an immense silence.

"Always remember to use the words of power, at all such times as these, James," came the Master's wise admonition in my right ear. He appeared before me in his radiant spiritual form of light and led me firmly beyond the white void into a place of darkness.

"Now to transcend the dark places of your mind," said the Master. "Go forward on your journey!"

With these words I felt my wraith whirling and weaving in the violent winds of my mind. Gradually the darkness diminished and the Master guided me to the mouth of a crooked tunnel, an incredibly narrow pathway through a dark cave in the side of a mountain. I gazed upwards; the mountain seemed to ascend to infinity. To the left and right of me were seemingly impassable walls of great energy. Behind me was the whirling hurricane of darkness.

"How can I get through there?" I lamented helplessly.

"You have heard that there is a path that is one-hundredth the size of a mustard seed, one-tenth the width of the finest spider's web?" the Master said, smiling down at me. I nodded silently. "Well, this is it," he continued. "Your mind alone, James, which struggles grotesquely like a lumbering elephant, would most certainly fail to effect an entry into this tunnel. But I can lead you through safely, if you would but give your chaotic thoughts a rest."

I relaxed my mind and found myself passing through a dark tunnel of indeterminate length. The way of my new progress extended straight and level for some distance, and then descended into another terrifying pool of darkness. After a long descending curve through the darkness I again ascended a long path and then traversed a level way onwards. All at once my vision and perspective were reversed and I saw the entire electronic power-system that sustains the cosmic universe of the physical and astral realms as if from the other side of a veil. I trembled with awe.

"James through the Looking Glass," quipped the Master casually. He was often given to quotations from literature, often amended for the occasion.

I now found myself in a fortress-like region, of which my inner consciousness knew that I had had some measure of past familiarity. I heard a deep pulsating tone, which resembled the oriental chant of 'Om.' I felt the overpowering, throbbing pulse of the Om-tone throughout my entire being. I was being seared through and through with the flames of some fiery music. I gazed above the turrets of the high fortresses and saw vast clouds, colored like crimson paprika, through which the Om-tone constantly resounded.

"This is the region of Universal Mind," said the Master. "We are now truly in the mental world. From the secondary God, with his pure mind-essence, to the individual soul: each has his own mental plane here. This is the plane of thought-creation. In this realm you truly understand the full meaning of the adage, 'as you think, so you become.' Life here is far more advanced and richer than in the astral or the physical realms, but it still remains fraught with delusion and deception. The entire region is the creation of a lord of mental energy; it is manifested from cosmic mindstuff and thus it cannot contain the entire spiritual truth of life. Nevertheless, as you can experience at this moment, one does retain a measure of consciousness in the web of illusion. Now look below you, and you will see the glory of this region."

We had ascended beyond the dark red clouds and I saw that the entire region was an elliptical shape of the most vibrant crimson color. Far above the sphere I beheld an incredible cosmic sun, which radiated intense red flames that gave it the form of a resplendent four-petalled lotus. The predominant red color of the sun evolved into exquisite hues and manifold tones, which became more pronounced as I approached near the radiant orb. I now heard the sound of a colossal drum, which was being beaten incessantly.

"You can see why the Indian saints call this region Brahmanda, or the Egg of Brahm," said the Master. "It is so called because of its apparently elliptical shape. It embraces within its totality both astral and the physical universes, but it is far more vast than the combination of both of these. In point of fact, the three lower realms of the entire cosmic creation may be conceived as a totality, with the summit of this region as Brahmanda, the plane of Cosmic Mind, and the middle section as the astral region, and the lowest section as the physical universe itself."

The Master paused and I heard the strains of an incredibly rhythmic music, a planetary symphony.

"There is much for you to experience here, James," the Master continued. "We shall soon be traveling through the sub-plane of the Abode of the Shining Ones, where highly evolved souls research into the higher creative attributes of mind and tone. Some time ago the majestic tones of Beethoven's music evoked in your consciousness an ancient memory of this realm. Beethoven was truly a very advanced soul; on several occasions he tapped the realm of causality and echoed its supernal tones in his music. In this Abode of the Shining Ones, you will find the higher heavens of the major world religions: the Sukh Vati of the Buddhists, the Svargas and Baikunths of the Hindus, the true heaven-worlds of the Christians and the Zoroastrians, the higher paradise of the later Hebrews, and the Arshas or higher spiritual regions of the Sufis or the more esoteric Muslims. You will linger for a time in this realm so that you may become more fully imbued with the attributes of devotion and faith. Here you must burn out stored karma through long periods of meditation and spiritual practice."

"I will certainly do your bidding, Master," I affirmed. "But I would like to know more about the fortress region. What is its nature?" We were now descending through

the red clouds. The Master's voice sounded with the breath of cosmic life.

"Indeed, James, you shall know more about the fortress region," he said. "It is part of your experience. This place is the storehouse of all human acts in their full essence. Cause and effect are recorded here. Here are stored the records of all the actions of the past and of the present, as well as their reactions. The Law of Karma—the Law of Cause and Effect—governs the entirety of the physical universe and the astral-mental and causal realms above it. The individual's pattern of past behavior has determined his present destiny. The way in which a man has acted in his present life, and during all past cycles of life, ordains what he is in the present time. The mills of the secondary God grind inexorably in this region of the great fortresses, and the Lord of Karma and all his regents in the worlds below await the counting of the grains in exact proportions. This is the controlling factor of all life in the universes of mind and matter."

I found that my mind was expanding with knowledge and understanding as I traversed this region. The Master explained the reason for this.

"This is the realm of knowledge, James," he told me. "It is within this majestic sphere that the three cosmic attributes of harmony, action and inertia have their true origin, and the creation of the lower universe was made possible by their interplay. It is the true Garden of Eden, where the spirit of man first made its contact with that cosmic duality which creates illusion. On the spirit's first descent into the regions of matter after leaving its original home in the Abode of Love, it was in this region that the great separation of man's awareness of God began. The alliance of spirit with matter is symbolized by the marriage of Adam, the pristine spirit, with Eve, the representative of Maya or matter. It is because of this marital alliance that the soul enters upon its saga of sensual

enjoyments and experiences. This union of spirit and matter takes place through the instrumentality of mind. Mind is the most exalted form of matter in this cosmic universe. It forms the medium of contact between the soul and coarse matter."

"I suppose this explains man's constant rages and conflicts," I said slowly. "We are being ripped apart by our dual natures."

"This is very true," replied the Master. "It is the condition of all humans. We are spiritual schizophrenics of a higher order. And our dual selves began in this the mental realm. The spirit, now equipped with mind, is capable of various forms of self-indulgence for the first time. It is from this point on that the spirituality of man begins to wane and the soul sinks into the quagmire of self-created sorrows. That is why, in spite of there being relative golden ages in the history of the physical world, there can never really be any perfect or enduring happiness while there is this uneasy alliance between spirit and matter."

"Sir, you speak of the Garden of Eden and Adam and Eve," I said. "Where does that old rascal, the Serpent, come in? What is his place in all this?"

"The Serpent symbolizes intellectual knowledge," answered the Master. "And its real home and headquarters is also here, in this region of universal mind. Endowed with its serpentlike fragment of universal mind, the individual soul becomes subject to the influences and suggestions of that mind. There is no disrespect intended to either sex in the human family, as far as we of the timeless brotherhood are concerned, but as woman—symbolized by Eve or Maya—represents matter in its alliance with spirit, it is logical that the most seductive influence in the mind of man should be the form of woman. This does not make the woman the lesser of the two, for both man and woman are equally ensnared souls in the worlds of mind and

matter. They are innately spiritual beings, both equal to one another, and both equally trapped by the negative powers."

"The truth of your words appear to be borne out by the fact that the appeal of the Serpent was first made to woman, biblically speaking," I remarked. "Is that true?"

"That is only partially correct," replied the Master, "for you must remember that I am making no invidious comparison concerning the two sexes. Man and woman are complementary beings; but the symbolism that I have expounded can only be fully understood on the higher mental level of consciousness. The soul is beyond gender and duality; such divisions only occur on the lower levels of manifestation. The forbidden fruit, so appealing to both man and woman, is merely a graphic symbol of what has developed into flagrant self-indulgence. 'In that day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,' states the biblical record. Man constantly degrades himself in the dark mists of materiality by sinking to a lower moral and material status. He perverts true love and true living for more intense but transient sensations. The senses in themselves are not evil, and neither is the sensual apprehension of the beautiful and true. It is the perversion of the instruments of perception that we know as sense into vehicles for mere lust that constitutes the real death. And this death is the blacking out of man's continuing consciousness of his true self. Man was warned not to commit this fatal error by the early preceptors of the human race. He chose to ignore the warning, and history shows him as constantly ignoring the warning. Thus he has been expelled from that paradise which he should have been enjoying."

We rested for a short time on the shore of an immense lake, whose glistening surface appeared as bright and as still as polished crystal. After a brief silence the Master again indicated that we should continue on our journey.

"So much has happened to you since your exodus from the physical world through the radiant blue eye of the

floral pentagram, James," he said. "But there is much more that will transpire before the ultimate purpose of this journey is fulfilled."

The deep tones of the causal drum accompanied us as we sped across the great lake and over glorious mountains and glowing plains of floral wonder. Below me I saw magnificent gardens where vibrant flowers were arranged in symmetrical patterns in a symphony of color and sound. Radiant rivers and canals of ethereal nectar flowed abundantly through this region. I crossed an ocean of what appeared to be gleaming diamonds, and the Master stated that our ascent would now be more rapid.

"This mental realm is also known to mystic adepts as the Realm of the Three Cosmic Mountains," he informed me. "And now you will see the reason for this name."

Before he had completed his sentence. I suddenly saw before me three incredible mountains of light, emblazoned in the radiance of burnished copper.

"These three cosmic mountains are known to all mystic adepts," the Master explained. "The Master Khusro, whom you were privileged to meet in the City of the Thousand-petalled Lotus, instructs fortunate novitiates in a great temple of wisdom that lies halfway up the central mountain. Now you can see why the old sages of Northern India and Tibet chose to meditate on the inner nature of creation on the snow-capped mountains of the Himalayas. These sages understood the significance of the three mountains, and, indeed, they named the three cosmic mountains after three holy mountains in the Himalayas: Mer, Sumer and Kailash."

"This is so incredible!" I cried out. "Master, the magnificence of it all is indescribable."

"Your first adjective was the most appropriate," the Master said drily. "Incredible as it seems, it is in that

fortress-like region below these three cosmic mountains that the inhabitants of the lower worlds are ultimately tested and judged. Some few souls are not found wanting, and they are sent out to explore the great and wondrous supercosmic regions. Some privileged ones, who have had the good fortune to meet a living Master in the physical world, will eventually reach the Abode of Love, the radiant center of all that is created and uncreated. The inhabitants of this realm are unutterably happy, but the majority of them are still subject to eventual rebirth into the physical universe after a long sojourn here. They are thus not immortal as are the liberated souls in the purely spiritual realms, but they do dwell in an infinitely vaster time-scale than do the beings in the astral and physical worlds. This region is ruled by a higher aspect of the negative power, known as Mahakal in the oriental teachings."

We descended to the foot of the central mountain and walked into another fortress-like city where shining beings, whom the Master identified as Adepts of the School of Tone, were instructing those of their disciples who had attained this radiant region. The Om-tone was at its most supernal at this place and now appeared to emanate from a river of light that flowed through the converging valleys of the three cosmic mountains. It was a music that was both enchanting and dynamic.

I had once asked the Master how man's karmic debts could be completed or rendered ineffective, other than by suffering the long and apparently endless cycle of births and rebirths. Now I realized that part of his answer lies in this fortress region of the mental realm. On the physical level it seems that as soon as man has atoned for past mistakes and sins, he creates new karma for himself, and the just law of action and reaction must take its toll. The secondary God holds the supreme court of judgment in the causal, astral and physical universes; he is the Lord

of Karma, and only *one* embodiment can be empowered to change his decrees for the purpose of liberating a soul from the cycle of birth and death. Such an embodiment is the mystic adept of the highest order, who can amend certain decrees of the Lord of Karma. Once such a mystic adept has taken an aspirant under his protection, that aspirant is freed from bondage to the secondary God, who is the wielder of the negative power. The karmic debts of the aspirant, some of which are dissolved at the time of initiation into the Science of the Audible Life Stream, are subsequently dissolved through the grace of the mystic adept.

Through the grace of my Master I was able to wheel through the profound space of the causal regions, with the melody of the cosmic drum sounding all about me. I now consciously grasped the import of the celestial sound that had brought into being all creation. I ascended through a pulsating stellar pathway, speeding onwards and upwards, with innumerable suns, moons and stars appearing and disappearing before me. Words are completely inadequate to describe this experience, for I now fully realized my complete separation from the lower universes of materiality and from the languages of the physical world. In the limitation of human language, I can declare that this glorious realm is the plane of Universal Mind, through which the Supreme Lord has created all the cosmic universes. However, as my Master had stated, the Supreme Lord is *not* that Universal Mind, in spite of statements to the contrary made by many modern metaphysicians and mystics. Universal Mind is a projection of the will of the Supreme Lord to manifest part of Himself in His creation. Man himself also creates through the medium of his own mind, for he is made in "the image of his Creator." But man also is *not* his mind. Man is a living soul, a spiritual entity who is the essence of God, and on my upward journey I saw that the human mind is still far lower on the ladder of the inner cosmos than the

spiritual aspects of each human being, in spite of the mind's wonderful functions and creativeness.

I knew that I would have to remain in this causal region, a realm of unalloyed delight, for the period of time that it would take for my entire karmic burden to be liquidated. I returned to the foot of the central cosmic mountain where the Master gave me further instructions.

"You are very close to the fountainhead of all causal power, the great secondary God himself," he informed me. "But it is not intended that you should meet him at this time. You yourself must come to the realization that you are the sole lord of your mental world. This is very difficult to grasp when the human consciousness has been so fractured and dispersed over long eons of time; but the esoteric truth of this matter will be made manifest to you."

The Master then led me to a small sanctuary wherein was a simple couch by a sparkling fountain. He motioned towards the couch and told me: "Rest and meditate for a while. Gaze occasionally at the soft pink petals of the lotus under the fountain. You will find yourself much refreshed in spirit. When you have done sufficiently well in an intense spiritual practice, the seeds of your past actions will eventually be seared to nothingness in this place, although your soul will still retain the dull stain of much impurity garnered through a great many incarnations. I shall leave you now, but I shall return when you are ready for the ongoing journey."

Chapter Eight Cosmic Baptism

WHEN I had fulfilled the purpose of my stay in the realm of cosmic mind, the Master directed me to continue my journey onwards and upwards.

"We are now leaving the lower causal region," he now informed me. "We will traverse a great expanse of inner space in order to reach the supercausal region, where the spiritual Lake of Purification, the place of cosmic baptism, is located. In that place all the veils and coverings will be lifted from your soul, which will then shine out in its pristine splendor. To attain your complete purification you will bathe in these waters of immortality, and once your spirit has been cleansed of its last impurities you will experience a redoubled yearning for blissful union with the Supreme Lord of Love."

We ascended far above the great cosmic mountains of the mental plane and I beheld aciniform clusters of the most glorious multi-hued planets. I then lost awareness of the spiritual light-form of the Master, although I could still sense his presence with me. I traversed a pathway through pulsating planets, from which the vast rhythms of supercosmic music pounded into my consciousness. This was another aspect of that celestial music of creation, the sounding fire, from which primal power all cosmic universes have come into being. I rose above this melodious stellar pathway, ascending through a constellation of crystalline stars and suns and planets. I then crossed a profound glowing vastness of inner space until I beheld

a region of the most intense and awe-inspiring radiance that I have ever experienced. I had now arrived in the supercausal region, a vast realm which has the brilliant configuration of an eight-petalled lotus.

As I descended into this realm I heard the voice of the Master proclaim: "You have arrived at the true place of pilgrimage insofar as the greatest religions are concerned, my son. You will hear the music of mystic power enunciated in tones and melodies of the most exquisite beauty here. This is where the soul receives its cleansing baptism."

I listened carefully and my consciousness was now permeated with melodies and harmonies that were partly reminiscent of the finest string compositions that I had ever heard in the physical world. However, such a comparison is totally inadequate, for I was now enjoying the Unstruck Music, that celestial melody that sounds endlessly in the exalted levels of the cosmic universe. I saw before me a vast shimmering lake at the confluence of three great rivers of light. I stood before it in silent wonder.

"This is the cosmic Lake of Purification," the Master informed me. "In the mental plane sin is burned away like the dry leaves of autumn in a woodland bonfire. But the stain of sin itself is washed away here, and this is why this place is called the true place of pilgrimage by all mystic adepts. It is that spiritual lake which lies within believer and nonbeliever alike. It is the cosmic center of spirituality where the questing soul can be shrived of the dark stain of all its past sins. A few world religions have had their inception in the supercausal realm; but these are exceptions to the general rule, for, as you well know, most of the social faiths have emanated from the mental realm, with the secondary God, under various names, as their supreme deity. Mystics and disciples who ascend to this most rarified plane of mental-spiritual energy are very rare indeed. Spirit is blended with the most

subtilized form of mental matter here. This is the shrine of holiness, my son, for if you bathe in these waters you will surely become immortal. You will become an immaculate spiritual being, shining with refulgence of twelve suns."

The Master left my presence, and I pondered his words as I stood on the shore of the cosmic Lake of Purification, where the three rivers of light, love and power now converged to support and sustain this universe of universes. I knew that the soul would transcend its causal, astral and physical coverings after its bathe in the lake of spirituality, and it would thus lose the negative and regressive qualities of the three lower regions of mind and matter. The soul would have tested the ineffable nectar of the Unstruck Music, and it would receive complete insight into the true nature of creation.

The Master had revealed to me the secret of the total universe and the secret of my little self, all rolled into one, and I considered this fact with the most profound gratitude. And so I now know that all my earthly acquaintances and lovers, friends and enemies, strangers and kinsfolk, have ever been one. All of us are the holy victims of cosmic love, for love is the universal intoxication of life. We are all glued together with the same loving stuff of life throughout the vast tracts of the cosmic universe.

The intoxication of love draws all beings into the orbit of its all-embracing power. The liberation of the self through love is no meaningless abstraction; it is a dynamic and conscious vivifying of the inner energies of man, the essence of his true self. Surrender of the self in love demands that the mind should become as clear as a polished mirror, cleansed of the stain of error and evil.

There is I and not-I in the cosmic universe. I and not-I experience bitterness and sweetness, unpleasantness and

pleasantness, mortification and contentment, inquietude and wellbeing, pain and pleasure, dissatisfaction and satisfaction, frustration and gratification. We advance in jerks and spasms towards our eventual goal together, in that duality which is ultimate unity. And we trudge wearily for eons through the deathscape of the physical world, trying hard to understand the meaning and purpose of this constant procession of entities through time and eternity—like wandering fish in the cosmic ocean. And God-beyond-God, the Supreme Lord and ultimate reality, exists out of time and space, out of all Great Ages and Grand Dissolutions. It was so easy to comprehend these truths when standing on the bright shore of the wondrous Lake of Purification.

After I had bathed in the lake, at the confluence of the three radiant rivers, I joined the company of the Immaculate Ones and began to enjoy the enchanting beauty of this realm. I truly realized that the liberated soul is the essence of love, the essence of the supreme Lord of Love Himself. I had discovered that the Supreme Lord resided in the ongoing regions above, and my most sublime desire was for ultimate union with Him. Concerning this highest state of consciousness my Master had once told me that no one is a true theist until he has realized this God-essence within himself. Until this realization takes place the aspirant relies on the testimony of saints and sages. Such testimony has been recorded in a general way in the world scriptures, but the reading of holy books, desirable as this is in many ways, can never give the individual seeker a conscious experience and awareness of the Supreme Lord within.

Eventually the Master bade me join him for the onward journey and I said farewell to the Immaculate Ones, who had given me so much instruction concerning this glorious region. The Master and I walked together for some time through forest glades and magnificent fields

of beryl-like flowers which sparkled like emeralds and aquamarines.

“The Great Lord of this realm is the highest and most spiritual embodiment of the negative power,” the Master informed me. “He is almost entirely pure soul-essence, and yet he is still concerned with the populating and the sustaining of the lower universes. This is one of the deepest mysteries of creation; but you will understand its import when you come to the place of the intense darkness.”

Then we again ascended through the etherial sky, and the Master revealed to me the Inconceivable Island Kingdom, with its glowing configuration of a twelve-petalled lotus. I beheld this cosmic island-continent to my right as we soared upwards. To my left the Master pointed out the Blissful Region, with its magnificent configuration of a ten-petalled lotus. Shimmering stars and planets formed the petals of the lotus, which was irradiated by a glowing white sun at its center.

“We are approaching the vestibule of a terrifying region of darkness,” the Master told me. “At this place I will impart to you the most esoteric knowledge of all creation, James. This knowledge may never be revealed in spoken or written words on the lower levels of the cosmic universe, the causal, astral and physical worlds. This knowledge is forbidden to all but those who have attained this place. When you are imbued with this new knowledge, I will escort you across the Great Void, the vast plain of unutterable darkness. On this journey you may even lose the consciousness of the sounding fire, the Unstruck Music of bliss, and the light of the soul will be completely blanketed by the darkness. But have no fear, my son, for I will protect you at all times. In this somber region the highest form of the negative power has placed a myriad of terrifying obstacles in the path of the inner traveler. Only he who has crossed that dark void once, with the help of a competent mystic adept, is thus free to traverse

it at will from that time onward. You will cross it in a very short time, James, under my full protection."

And so the blazing light of my soul, newly irradiated in the bright waters of the cosmic Lake of Purification, would soon be eclipsed in a region of utter darkness. I would shortly know the awesome stygian blackness of the Great Void, which could overwhelm all spiritual light. We entered the deep canyon, which is the vestibule of the Great Void, and the Master again turned to me.

"In this place there are four inner regions, which are never mentioned in any of the esoteric teachings of the religious scriptures of the world," he informed me. "In these secret regions are located the prisonhouses of very highly evolved spirits, who have transgressed the laws of God in ways that are quite unknown to the people of the lower universes, amazing as that fact may seem. Now these prisoners are under no duress whatsoever within these four regions, but they cannot travel beyond their boundaries unless they are released under the direct word of the Supreme Lord Himself. Sometimes I have passed through their regions and many of them have begged me to plead their case before the Supreme Lord, so that they too may ascend to higher regions. And many times I have interceded on the behalf of prisoners I have met; but, as I have said, their release may only be effected through the will and pleasure of God-beyond-God. Eventually, they like all beings throughout the cosmic universe will be freed into that ultimate radiant glory." The Master paused for a moment and then said: "Now I shall proceed to impart the true esoteric knowledge to you."

And so the Master instructed me into the secret and most holy teachings that lie beyond the ken of the time-space-bound worlds below. Then we started to cross the Great Void. And in that terrible darkness the light of my soul diminished to nothing. The Master had sung me a song of freedom, but now I knew the solemn import

of his song in its incredible entirety. The song of freedom is glorious—its glory is impossible to describe in human language; but now, in this all-enveloping darkness, that freedom was almost too terrible to contemplate.

"O the awful darkness!" my soul cried aloud, as we journeyed through the Great Void. "This terrifying vastness! I am lost in the freedom that you have now decreed for me."

"The light will soon return, my son," said the voice of the Master. "You shall see the radiant vistas of all truth again and for ever. Do no fear the dark void, for you are passing through the most sublime martyrdom of all. You have placed the sensual harp of the earth beneath a dark tree, and no more shall the martyred music sound. The sacrifice is made, and the spiritual key turns in the lock with a chord of finality. You are now freed from the long and ancient bondage."

Then we emerged from the void of darkness, and I now entered a region of the most ineffable light. I heard four different melodies of the Unstruck Music, the great sounding fire, about me, all emanating from invisible sources.

"Listen to the cosmic music of light that predominates above the others," the Master said. "The other melodies will lead you to beautiful islands of the blessed, but you must speed onwards and upwards to the Abode of Love."

Heeding the Master's words I found that one of these glorious melodies stood out above the others. I found its beauty indescribably poignant, a song of the long-lost prodigal son who had finally returned home. In the blue-white radiance about me the Master pointed out five egg-shaped universes, all of which he explained were the macrocosms of other cosmic schemes. Each one of these cosmic systems had a dominant color, a yellow or blue or green, and each one was permeated and ruled by a

secondary deity who was regarded as the supreme lord of that realm.

"You can now see why the astral City of the Thousand-petalled Lotus and the highest regions of the astral universe delude many seekers into thinking that they are in the ultimate heaven," said the Master, indicating the wondrous sights that were all about us. I nodded mutely, for I now understood how cleverly the negative power had made copies of the highest heaven in the lower astral-mental planes; and yet there was truly little comparison that could be made between the glory which I was now experiencing and that which had so overwhelmed me in the lower realms.

"We are now approaching that realm known as the Whirling Region," the Master told me. "Here you will truly understand the import of the holy sayings, 'I am that I Am!' In fact the name of the great lord of this realm is often translated as 'That Am I!' in the mystic terminologies used by spiritual adepts of the Middle East and the Far East alike. When we enter the Whirling Region I will escort you onto the high luminous pass over the Hasni Tunnel, so named by the Shabd adepts of India. Then we will proceed through the massive Rukmini Tunnel, where you will behold an incredibly beautiful structure, which will radiate a power that will increase your inner vision and hearing into infinity."

As the Master finished speaking we entered the realm of the Whirling Region. It was here that I fully and completely experienced the mantle of spiritual unity that now enfolded me.

Chapter Nine The True Being

AS we entered the Whirling Region, the Master escorted me across the high luminous way above that vortex of spiritual power known as the Hansni Tunnel. Then we glided on the wings of the Unstruck Music into the Rukmini Tunnel, where I received the experience of intensified vision and hearing of which the Master had spoken. The radiation of spiritual energy from an enormous pulsating structure, incredibly framed like a cosmic face, impinged upon my own spiritual sight and upon my own spiritual hearing. And now these inner powers of sight and hearing attained the ultimate consummation of all their qualities. I felt a surge of the most inexpressible peace suffuse the very depths of my soul.

"This realm will be our final station before we enter the Abode of Love, our true home," the Master said. "You must understand that even in this exalted spiritual realm, the Whirling Region, there is an admixture of subtle and highly purified matter. It is very, very little when it is compared to that in the regions below this one, but it means that even this plane of consciousness is not an eternal abode for liberated souls. It too will fall into eventual supercosmic dissolution."

We ascended onto a vast plateau that appeared to be completely encircled by high mountains, and then made our way along a narrow white road on the ridge of a mountain range. To my left I saw crystal palaces, which appeared to be constructed of glass-like pearls, with their top stories fashioned with rubies and studded with emeralds

and diamonds. To my right, floating in the ethereal blue-gold mists, were bright cosmic islands of unfathomable beauty. All around me I heard the music of a supernal flute. This enchanting melody appeared to flow from the peak of the highest mountain in the range, and above that mountain an immense sun shone with vibrant blue-white light that dazzled my spiritual sight.

"Maulana Rumi, the great Sufi mystical poet, wrote of the plaintive strains of the flute, played upon the top of a mountain," remarked the Master. "This flute melody tells of the separation of the soul from its true source. I have noticed your preoccupation with this sublime music of the spheres, which is the same music that sounded in the enlightened consciousness of the mighty Rumi." The Master paused and motioned across the plateau. "Now look across the central plain," he continued, "and you will be confronted by the palace of the lord of this realm, who dwells within a city of cosmic light. Those hovering beacons, which appear to be suspended in the air over the center of the city, are the etheric gems that comprise the roof of the palace. We shall be staying in that temple of love and wisdom for a brief interlude."

My stay in the capital city of the Whirling Region, as a guest in the holy palace of wisdom and light, was the most incredible experience of wonder and truth and radiant joy that I had hitherto received. The blue-gold beings who lived in that holy sanctuary imbibed the tonal elixir of the sounding light as their sustenance; and they themselves were living beacons of wisdom, love, light and power. Nevertheless, as my Master had informed me, the Whirling Region and all the realms below it—supercasual and causal, astral-mental and physical—must eventually fall into dissolution. Dissolutions of a relatively frequent nature and short duration extend to the top of the causal region, while the immeasurably longer and far less frequent Grand Dissolutions extend through the supercausal

realm of the cosmic Lake of Purification into the high realm of the Whirling Region.

And so the aspiring soul must journey further upwards in order to attain true spiritual liberation; for only the Abode of Love, the fifth inner region above the plane of the physical universe, is unaffected by the many cosmic dissolutions, great or small. It is the Abode of Love that is the beginning of the total realm of true spirituality; and it is the Abode of Love that is the true home of each and every human soul.

However, I was loath to leave the glorious realm of the Whirling Region, and the Master had to urge me to take once more a journey into the higher planes of light. And so, after a short sojourn in the palace of wisdom, we ascended through the sky of the Whirling Region, over the sparkling rooftops of the city of glory, which scintillated in the blue-white radiant tones of the central sun. As we journeyed onwards the sound of the flute receded, and I gazed back with longing at the majestic cosmic panoply through which we had traveled.

"Eighty-eight thousand universes revolve about the realm of the Whirling Region," said the Master, noting my deep love for that beautiful spiritual level. "As you have witnessed, the inhabitants of the Whirling Region live lives of all-joy and all-bliss. But you must not yearn to be back in that place, for we must travel on to the realm of God-beyond-God, the Abode of Love. Listen, my son! Can you hear the music of the celestial bagpipes?"

"Yes, Master," I replied, "although I have never heard bagpipes like those in the physical world. The sound is almost a string sound at times, not a wind sound."

"Your preoccupation with earthly orchestration is quite amusing, considering where we are," the Master said, smiling broadly. "But your comparison is quite a reasonable

one. The sound may be considered to be a spiritual overtone of that stringed instrument which is known in India as a vina. The spiritually-motivated instrumentalists of that sub-continent have had much intuition concerning the tonal matters of spirituality."

Soon we passed through a blue-white void into another region of gloom. There was little light in this place, but the music of the spiritual vina constantly increased in intensity. As it crescendoed into my soul we emerged from that somber region into a realm of such intense and glorious light that to describe it in linguistic terms would be utterly impossible. We had arrived in that realm of pure spirit, which is beyond time and space and dissolution.

"This is the Abode of Love," my Master said simply. "Here dwell all the true mystic adepts, drawn from all regions, who rejoice in God-beyond-God, the True Being, and live in eternal bliss. The form manifestation of the Supreme Lord, the True Being, dwells here; and around this realm tens of millions of spheres, cosmic islands of the Most Highly Blessed, revolve eternally. These spheres are the abodes of pure spirits who have never descended into the regions below. Even in the magnificent radiance of this place, my son, your soul shines forth with the light of sixteen suns."

The Master then escorted me to the forecourt of the palace of the True Being, God-beyond-God. All about us were supernal parks of golden and silver flowers, trees with pearl-like fruit and emerald leaves. Reservoirs of spiritual nectar abounded in the centers of fragrant fields of glowing music; and below these reservoirs flowed abundant rivers of sounding light, and the love and beauty which radiated from the golden beings I saw all about me was indescribable. The trees in the forecourt of the palace of the True Being were fashioned of silvery-gold rays, of shimmering light, with profusions of blossoms that were pulsating tones of crystal and coral.

"You must go forward alone now, my son," said my Master simply. "My work on this journey is completed." Before I could make protestations of extreme gratitude he had disappeared from my sight.

I walked towards the palace gate, and a golden being, whose form radiated shafts of light, asked my identity and the purpose of my visit to that place.

"In the physical world I was known as James," I told him. "It was there that I had the rare good fortune to meet the living Master. He brought me safely to this realm, and now I would request the honor of an audience with its ruler, the True Being."

The golden sentinel, guardian of the palace, nodded silently and then led me into the holy palace of the True Being. I stood transfixed by celestial music in a great hall of light, where I was confronted by a shining lotus of the most intense and ineffable beauty. A voice then sounded from the center of the lotus and asked my name.

"I was known as James," I whispered. "And in your presence I am nothing."

"You are everything, James," replied the voice from the center of the lotus. And the nuances of that voice stirred me to the depths of my body of light, for they were so familiar to me. It was the voice of my guide and preceptor, the living Master. The shining lotus now became transformed into the meditative form of my Master before my eyes.

"You are the Supreme Lord, the True Being!" I cried out exultantly, prostrating myself before him.

"No, my son," he replied gently. "The Supreme Lord has no form, and yet He has every form. God-beyond-God is immanent in all forms and in all regions. I am he whom you have recognized as the emissary of the Nameless One, the ultimate God-beyond-God, about Whom nothing can

be said. My form will serve to focus your powers of true spiritual vision upon That which is ultimately formless. Beyond the realm is the higher spiritual level of the Invisible Region; and beyond that place there is the Inaccessible Region; and ultimately there is the highest spiritual region of all, the Nameless Region. When you have imbued my blessed sight, you will be impelled into the wondrous experiences of the Invisible Region, and will understand its mysteries; and thence to the Inaccessible Region, where you will understand its mysteries. Concerning the radiance of the lords of these regions, I can only speak in terms of billions and billions of suns. What would this mean to you, when you already believe you have experienced the ultimate music here? What to say of the region of the Nameless One? It is All Love. It is at that stage that the final understanding is given."

The True Being paused, and I imbibed the music of His blessed sight. Then He spoke these words:

"Well, you have further mysteries to unravel, further worlds to explore, you who are known as James. With this power of love, which is the sole power of God-beyond-God, I will again aid you to ascend through the highest paths of spirituality. But first you must return to earth, for you have much unfinished business there. I fear that it will never be possible for you to conduct yourself in a corporeal existence in quite the same way again; but you should show willing to live a sane and balanced life while the life-force still pulses through the veins of your physical body. You have many breaths to breathe before you take that final journey to the Abode of Love. You have your own earthly destiny to fulfill, and you must always remember that." The True Being paused and smiled a blessing of love upon me.

"Must I take that long journey back to the earth world?" I asked quietly, a faint trepidation stirring within my soul-being.

"That apparently long and arduous journey is as naught," replied the True Being. "You will be back in your corporeal body in an instant. There is no time and space in this region; and even on earth the planes of heaven are about you everywhere. Man has only to know this simple truth consciously, and then he will be free. Spiritual consciousness is both the reason and the summit of human evolution, and its true nature is beyond words. Words are merely invented symbols of human ideation, but spirituality is a wordless and timeless state of eternal beatitude. He who has attained this state of consciousness truly knows that he is a free spirit, as he is truly God. He lives in the eternal realms of spiritual liberation, for he is a liberated soul. He has risen unto his True Home on the celestial symphony of salvation. This is the true heaven, where freedom and love eternally reign. Go to that point where you started your journey, James, my dear friend. You must complete that task which has been ordained for you. You will again return joyfully to the Abode of Love."

Chapter Ten

Epilogue

AND I, James, awakened after the long dream of existence in the physical world, which was the spirit's forgetting of great duration, and I desired liberation now, as it truly exists. My soul descended in a line of gathering fire, a streak of sounding gold and again pierced the lurid mists surrounding the physical world with a vibrant tongue of opulent flame.

I now fully understand that within all beings is the ardent and eternal spirit of love which makes all mankind God and a part of God. When the Master presented me with a robe of light, he explained the meaning of his spiritual gift in the following words: "You, James, have made too much noise in the world. Now be careful. You must remain silent when you return to the lower regions, for you have been placed upon a path which is not for the talkative, and you have already talked too much. This is the path upon which one has to merge himself with love and become love itself. Have patience in your heart, for as long as you do not sacrifice the old life on this path, you cannot travel the golden highroad to the Abode of Love."

O, I James have been incredibly talkative! But I have become so intoxicated with love that all who know me in this world have become deeply concerned over me. But I have come to the lotus feet of the emperor of all love. He offered me an elixir from the pitcher of love and I was released from bondage to the restrictions of time and

space. The secondary lord of mind and matter, the inflexible negative power, drove me into the wilderness of the physical world, but the living Master showed me the secret of snapping the endless chain of transmigration.

I know that at long last the burning fervor of the sounding fire would shrive my spirit of all the stains of past sin, and I would ultimately arrive triumphantly at the Abode of Love. And through the loving grace of my Master my yearning for union with the Supreme Lord has become stronger. My joy and happiness have undergone a transmutation into glorious bliss, for I now feel no sense of separation from my Master, although He has now left the physical plane for the last time. I have seen the luminous countenance of my Master merged into the form of the True Being. With such good fortune as this I may well echo the words of Kabir, the holy poet and mystic adept: "My soul has become a bird and has flown into the sky above. It found heaven empty because it is ever in the hearts of Saints."

About This Book . . .

Dedicated to Sant Kirpal Singh (1894-1974) *The Pilgrimage of James* is the inner record of one who has walked the high Path of Discipleship. Describing experiences that many spiritual aspirants know to be objective and factual on higher planes of consciousness, the text also affirms the reality of spiritual adepts, help preceptors of the highest order, who come into this world to impart an ageless message of truth. This book presents the reader with a road-map through the bright realms of the human spirit.

The author George Arnsby Jones, is founder and executive director of Peacehaven, a Center for Human Fulfillment, located in the mountains of North Arkansas. Dr. Jones is also the formulator of Psychophonics, a technique for the transformative use of word and tone. He has published several books, magazine articles and poems, and his musical compositions include a cantata for women's voices, a Mass, chamber and orchestral works, songs and piano pieces. Prior to the founding of Peacehaven he was a professional educator.

