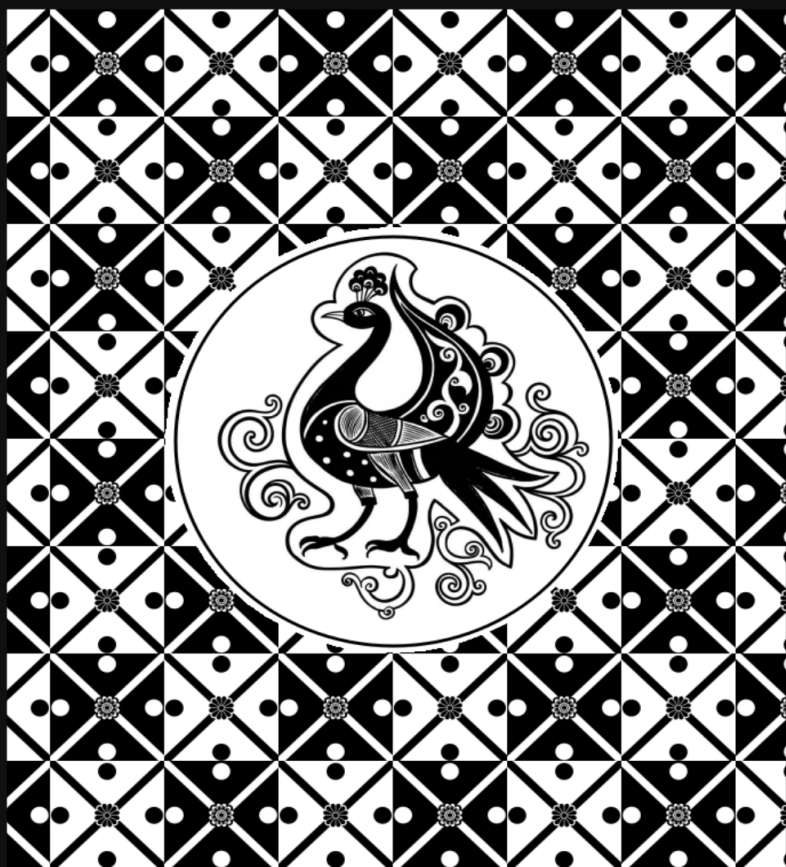


A Guide to

OUR SPIRITUALITY



Divine Path Publishing

A Guide to Our Spirituality

Principles of our spiritual path, what we follow and what we believe, the true path to the true God, a pure and perennial religion

A Guide to Our Spirituality

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Study in a peaceful environment, preferably after some prayer and meditation on God. **Avoid fast reading.**

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Chapter 1

On the Divine Path

THE GOD we worship is the soul and source of reality, goodness, beauty, wisdom, and all other noble qualities and states. This vast blue sky, this peaceful ocean, this graceful flower garden, the delicate sound of a water stream, the beauty in the face of a young lady, the strength in the arms of a knight, the warmth in a family relation, and the sweetness of a friendship all came forth from the Divine and are all manifestations of Its attributes and glory.

Many are the aspects of the Divine: some are visible, some not; some can be expressed by words, some not; some can be understood, some not. As the seeker follows the path and comes closer to the Divine, more aspects of Its glories will be revealed like an endless rainbow. That's where the poet says: "In every breath a new phantom of [Divine] wonder appears in my mind—To whom can I explain what I see on this screen?—Nobody experienced even from the finest things in life—What I see every day at the time of morning breeze." Here the saint is explaining the effect of contact with the Divine and how he was seized by various wonders and visions.

Our God is alive; indeed, how can the source of life be lifeless? So we talk to It, and It replies, and this connection is the basis of our life of prayer and devotion to God. Our God is not the fanatic and limited god of current religions with unreasonable demands.

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The path to this God is through “worship” and “work,” in which worship means worshipping God in purity and sincerity, and “work” means doing good works, upholding virtues, and noble qualities. This is the pure and perennial religion and path to the Divine preached by all the saints in all places. Then why people turn away and follow complex arguments?

When worshipping God, do not mix it with philosophy and theology of any kind. But just consider God as a higher principle, as something that you do not know yet. With this understanding, bow down to God in humbleness and respect. This is what we call “worshipping God in purity and sincerity.” The result thereof is that God gives more knowledge of Itself to such a worshiper, which comes in a spiritual form and not in philosophical or theological forms.

Sit in a clean place and in a respectful manner; repeat some praises or thanks to God, in your own language and not in a specific language, or chant some hymns and spiritual songs. Bow down in respect and humility once in a while. These constitute an example of worship. Do this a few times a day. For advanced followers of this path, worship is about devotion and union of spirit with the Divine, and it is no longer about sitting and praying verbally. But you begin with this seated worship, and God will end it with that mystic wine of life and spirit that flows continuously.

Apart from these seated worships, remember the Divine wherever you are throughout the day. Keep a Divine spirit at all times, and let your daily activities all be done in a spirit of holiness and peace like the prophets in old times. This is also a form of worship, which is called “constant remembrance” or Divine union.

When you worship, do it with yearning and devotion. Devotion (to God) is the essence of our path. Peace, intuition, strength, as well as all Divine miracles originate from such devotion and a heart enthralled with yearning (for the Divine). In regard to this, the poet said: “I installed a picture of your beautiful face in the house of my heart – The house got ruined, but this picture still remained on the wall.” Here “the

house got ruined” refers to a heart from which all trifling concerns have been evacuated and is now the abode of the Divine.

Develop devotion in yourself. Yearn for God, talk with God, wake up in the middle of the night, and cry for God. These cries and tears, which are the result of a sweet love, are keys on our path. All the saints in olden days did this, and you do this as well so that you reach the same station as theirs.

But worship alone is not enough; one has to follow the Divine Law as well. For nothing brings one closer to God than following the Law of God. And the Law of God is to do good works. An ancient myth narrates that when the Divine created man, the first words It spoke to him were the commandment: “Do work! Do it with awareness [of good and evil]! Think good thoughts, say good words, and perform good deeds, and do not worship demons.”

The interpretation of this commandment is, firstly, that man was created and brought into this world in order to “do work,” and not to worship and pray all the time. Secondly, the work should be “good works” which appear in all aspects of life: in thoughts, in words, and in actions.

One form of good works is to develop virtues and moral traits within ourselves, such as gentleness, courage, forgiveness, empathy, wisdom, and others. Another form is to do good deeds in the external world: helping others, solving society’s problems, friendship and fellowship with others, participation in building and developing, establishing justice, and others.

Indeed, good works mean to manifest Divine qualities in ourselves and in the environment around us. It is to make life enjoyable and of good quality, to make people kind and understanding, and to make cities clean and well-adorned. Our religion is the religion of happiness and cheerfulness, and we do it by means of good works.

One particular form of good works is the act of fighting with Evil and its manifestation in the external world. It means opposing injustice and fighting oppression. This is an important form of good works on

our path, and it produces an immense elevation of soul and swiftly brings it into proximity with the Divine. In the highest form, when one becomes martyred in this fighting, his blood becomes that famous mystic wine whose drinking induces Divine consciousness.

Good works also include not “worshiping demons,” which means avoiding activities that are useless or harmful to the soul or body. Along these lines, do not follow atheistic arguments or the dogmas of current religions, for both of these groups have not found the path; they did not humble themselves, and so the truth fled from them like a kite in the wind. Also, do not overindulge in eating or drinking or other bodily affairs, for that will harm the body and darken the soul. Also, abstain from over-engagement in video games and the internet. Do not watch too much movies, for that will alienate you from reality and is a main source of depression and dullness in our time. These are examples of staying away from demons and their worship.

Thus, worship and work (good works) are cornerstones of our path. These two should be together: worship without work does not produce much elevation of the soul, and work without worship soon loses its vigor like a meteor disappearing into the night. But together, they form the two wings of the mystic Homa bird, which flies continuously in the Divine firmament.

In the end, the goal of all these practices of worship and work is to bring one close to the Divine and open the Divine channel which leads to realizing God and spiritual visions. At this state, one will experience a yearning for God, a sweet sorrow, a mystic feeling of awe. It is “the union” whereby one becomes Godly by the grace of God, and the drop becomes an ocean by means of merging into it. Of this state, nothing more can be said by word of mouth other than this poem: “When my drop fell into the ocean [of Divine], the whole world became like a drop in my eyes.”

Chapter 2

On the Importance and Priority of Good Works

VARIOUS religions offer various practices to obtain salvation. Christians propose belief in Jesus and his dying on the cross as what can lead the soul to salvation. Modern Indian schools of Yoga recommend sitting cross-legged, focusing the mind between the eyebrows, and achieving mental standstill as the way to Samadhi (super-consciousness). Muslims insist that performing certain rituals at certain times is required to reach Jannah (heaven). Chinese Buddhism posits that repeating the name of “Amitufo” will lead to being reborn into the pure land of Buddha in the next life.

Noble indeed are these practices, but none of them are enough on their own. Indeed, we need “all” these practices together to truly make progress. For man is composed of various bodies and aspects—physical, emotional, mental, psychic, spiritual, etc.—and each requires its own practices and maintenance.

Along these lines, we do various practices similar to these religions on our path. We practice meditation, mindfulness, worship, chanting, repetition of the name, etc. We agree and approve of all these practices. But there is one practice missing from most religions today, and that is the practice of “good works.” And this is the practice that, among

all others, produces the “most” spiritual elevation and progress. And it is not an accident that all religions today ignore and downplay the importance of this practice, for Evil always hits the most important part of the machine.

Now, what are “good works”? Internally, it is to develop virtues in ourselves, to develop good attributes and behavior, good manners, a gentle and natural character, ethics and moral understanding, empathy, courage, and other noble qualities. Externally, it is to ease others’ pains; it is to solve society’s problems; it is to treat others with respect; it is to care about the environment, about trees, about rivers, and never pollute them; it is to be considerate and not disturb others. At more advanced stages of the path, good works also include opposing oppression and injustice in society, and fighting bullies and the evils of the day, even at the cost of one’s life.

Good works and the efforts and struggles they entail may seem wearisome, but they produce the greatest spiritual progress, the greatest light in the heart of the aspirant: the light of joy, which is true joy; the light of peace, which is true peace; and the much sought-after state.

The Mahabharata war described in the Hindu epic never ended; it is still on. Similarly, the struggle of Haftkhan described in the Persian epic *Shahnameh* never ended and is still on. These symbolize the battle of life indeed: when the armies of Light and Darkness are arrayed against each other, when God and Evil willed for a battle within a certain time, there formed the life and essence of this world.

Thus, this life is a battle between Good and Evil, as ancient wisdom testifies in allegorical or non-allegorical language. We are made for this battle, and our salvation lies in our “participation” in this battle. And participation means doing “good works” of various forms and levels. More participation, more perfection; more damage, more improvement; more engagement, more peace. And this explains the dilemma of life for those with deep understanding, and the importance and centrality of good works in our salvation and spiritual progress. Without good works, practically, there will be no salvation.

It is unfortunate to see that most, and even all, religions today do not emphasize good works. Instead, they focus on meditation, rituals, faith, and other acts. They do not offer many practices for developing patience, courage, good behavior, and other virtues, nor do they actively perform service and charity work in society, nor do they do anything to fight oppression and injustice. More unfortunate is that some of these religions and paths even explicitly avoid doing good works by considering this world as something worthless and unrelated to man's salvation, such as it being the result of sin, or Maya, or illusion, etc.

This is not a good picture of a religion and spiritual path that its adherents perform all types of rituals and meditation but do nothing in the external world, and whose manner shows no virtue or moral level beyond an average person. Today we see Christians perform a service ritual at church, but when they step out of the church, they treat others with no empathy and no respect. Muslims pray five times a day but have zero consideration for others. New Agers spend their morning in meditation or yoga practices of some sort and then spend the rest of their day creating more problems than solutions for the world. All of these occur because these religions and paths do not heed good works and virtues in the way they should.

As far as life in this world is concerned, good works are like the fruits of all spiritual practices, and you will be judged by others based on your actions and behavior more than the length and depth of your solo meditations or rituals. Ultimately, our religion is judged by our actions, and if we perform no meritorious action and exhibit no virtue and manner, then people will turn away from our religion, and subsequently from religion in general. This way, spirituality is undermined, and corruption will take over the world (as it has today).

Thus, we must do good works alongside other spiritual practices and give them priority. If I woke up early this morning and meditated or prayed to God, afterward I should come out of the house and treat others with good behavior, and help someone, and solve some problem. When religion is practiced in a city and people worship God in a temple

daily, afterward we should see that equality is established in that city, justice is established in that city, nobody struggles, nobody is left alone, and so on. If we see such results today, then it means our religion is on the right path and is producing “fruits.” If not, then as John the Baptist said: “every tree that bears not good fruit shall be axed and thrown into furnace” (Matthew 3:10), where by fruit it means good manners, good behavior, consideration, caring, justice, equality, and other good deeds as described in Jesus’s Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7).

Arguably, today’s religions do not produce such fruits. The fact that all the power and money fell into the hands of evil people today is because the spiritual and good people do nothing other than meditation, prayer, and other private actions in their closets. They sit and stare all the time, while greedy people race for power and control.

God and good works cannot be separated, just as fire and its heat. And that is why we say good works and virtues are the most important part of our path. For good works and virtues are attributes and manifestations of the Divine, and when we perform them, we become like unto Divine and closer to It. Similarly, vices and defects are attributes of Evil, and when we perform them, we become like Evil and closer to it. So a two-way fork is ahead of us in all situations, and we should choose the right path: the path of goodness and virtue.

We should keep our place of living clean and organized, since cleanliness and organization are attributes and manifestations of God, while dirtiness and mess are attributes of Evil. We should have respectful behavior since respect is an attribute of God, while rudeness and insolence are attributes of Evil. In the same way, we should maintain all other good deeds and virtues.

Followers of our religion are not to be known by any special clothing or special haircut, but by their good manners and actions, which like the scent of a flower attract others to our religion, and it will spread on the face of the earth organically like the spring breeze. And this way, no father has to force his son to go to the temple, and the son will go by himself, and no missionary has to go to remote continents

to evangelize, and people will come to him themselves. For people go where they see love and goodness.

Chapter 3

The Types and Levels of Good Works

THUS, we have explained that “the path to God is through Good,” meaning good works are of central importance for reaching and realizing the Divine, and without them, there will be no salvation, as some sects today assume. Now we explain in more detail what good works are and what they constitute, for “good works” is just one phrase, but many are its meanings and forms.

We all claim to know what good works and goodness mean, but if asked to give some examples of them, we would not be able to, except for a few trivial cases. And if we looked at our daily lives for such examples, even fewer cases could be observed. Like a man who is holding gems and diamonds in his hands, but they are slipping through his fingers in large measure, so we are losing our perception of goodness and its appreciation in daily life.

Now we shed light on this forgotten but most needed science of good works and goodness. The first topic in this science is that this science is neither trivial nor simple. Every human has some basic ideas about good works, goodness, ethics, and similar topics, but there are many more details and branches, like an Ashwatha tree.

We need training and lessons to understand what good works are.

Without such training, it is very unlikely that one can comprehend all corners and notches by oneself, just as one cannot comprehend quantum mechanics all by oneself without external help.

Today that such training is axed and abandoned, what is people's knowledge about good works and goodness? As we all see, it is limited to just "obeying the law," and apart from that, there is no more restriction. But civil laws uphold a very basic form of good works, only enough to prevent chaos, and not enough to exalt. Human beings are Divine beings, and indeed their moral and Divine capacity is far more than just stopping at a red traffic light and not committing murder.

This is verily a trick and ploy of Evil. For it knows that good works are the main force leading the soul to the True God and true salvation. Thus, Evil and all its negative forces induce this idea in people's minds that good works and goodness are trivial things; you already know them, are already doing them, and now it is time to move on to "other things"!

The next topic in this science is to learn about different forms and occasions of good works. Good works appear in humans as virtues, moral traits, and good deeds. Indeed, these three are synonyms, and each results in the other. Together, they are like manifestations of the Divine in man and make him like unto God. Now we detail some forms and examples of good works.

The first form to begin with is "consideration," meaning to abstain from any action that creates inconvenience for others. Talking with a loud voice in the apartment hallway at 2 a.m. is an example of creating such inconvenience. Playing loud music in parks or on beaches, which could disturb others and prevent them from enjoying nature, is another example. Watching clips on the phone with loud speakers and any other form of excessive noise-making in public places, as well as littering, uncleanliness, using bad language, etc., are all examples of common inconsideration today and should be avoided by the followers of the Divine path.

Such avoidance, as small as it seems, could have a significant pos-

itive effect on others. It is a dishonor for a seeker on the Divine path to do actions that create inconvenience for others, and it shall be a disgrace to his religion as well. The seeker should focus on consideration more than everything else.

The next form is well-receiving, meaning treating others with politeness and a nice face. Not a fake and pretentious smile, but one that comes from natural kindness and an expression of respect. It is the simplest of good works but solves complex problems. Sometimes one smile can shed light in a dark heart; sometimes it can melt icebergs of old aversion; sometimes it can bring many more smiles and happiness. It is a form of service to others.

The next form is softness, meaning not sharply criticizing others and bringing their weakness or mistakes into the spotlight immediately. You may forgive others' mistakes, or if it is something to point out, you may do it with kindness and in an indirect and harmless way. Avoid shaming others, and you will be on the path of no shame and regret.

The next form is forgiveness. A story has been narrated of an aspirant that, on some occasion of disagreement, his neighbor burst into anger and poured offenses and insults on him. Later in the day, the aspirant in question put on good clothes, knocked on the neighbor's door, apologized, and gave him a small gift. That blew the neighbor with shame and remorse. And he apologized as well. They became friends on that day, and the evil between them evaporated. Here, the apology was not a confession of mistakes but was for the sake of goodness and politeness, for the sake of overcoming evil and establishing peace.

The next form is to help others. This is the most well-known form of good works and the most overlooked one as well. For we see today's religions are focused on philosophy, doctrines, rituals, recitations, historic beliefs, and all other sorts of engagements, but they barely go out and help others, and as a result, they do not set a good and inspiring example for others. Religion should not be only about worship and chanting but should be about solving people's problems as well. You should constantly ask yourself whether you are solving a problem for

others. If not, then none of the problems in your life will be solved.

The next form is to participate in the development and betterment of life conditions. A follower of the Divine path should till the earth, should array gardens, and should actively participate in life to manifest Divine beauty and order everywhere around him. The city of the Divine path followers should be the cleanest and most orderly city in the world.

These were some basic forms of good works and virtue for the aspirant to begin with. At more advanced levels, there will be other forms, such as fighting with injustice and evils around us. This requires more effort and possibly some sacrifice on the part of the aspirant in this path. It is not for all, but open to all, as they say: “each person according to his capacity.”

And there are other forms of good works and virtues that the student of this path ought to know in their varied shapes and stages. All these good works at the end make good impressions of the Divine path and our pure religion on others. The pure religion should be introduced to others by purity, meaning by these virtues and good works, and not by philosophy or rituals.

Every action we do can set an example which changes someone’s life and opinion. Our religion is the religion of action, of good actions which speak for themselves and draw people to this religion, just as a flower garden draws people to itself.

In addition to good works, a student of this path should know about evil works too. Just as good works and virtue are the path to God, evil works and vice are the path to Evil. And both paths are wholly open to man and for him to choose from. Evil works are anger, jealousy, greed, and other vices. The demons in the ancient myths personify the vices and are depicted as repulsive and hideous sub-creatures who can set the world on fire, and indeed they did today.

Thus, the knowledge of evil works is also a part of the Divine path training. Some evil works are well-known, for they constitute atrocious crimes such as murder, robbery, mayhem, and others that everybody knows about.

But there are some evil works that, at first glance, may seem harmless, but hidden inside are the seeds of evil. Many do not realize these as vices. By means of this, they could lead to more damage than well-known vices. For the thief that comes in the garb of a friend can steal more, and a wolf that comes in sheep's clothing can slay more. Now we expose some of these hidden evil works.

The first is backbiting and making fun of others. It seems innocent and fun that a group of friends get together and talk about other people's faults and mistakes, perhaps do some mocking, and meanwhile some laughter and chortle arise, and everyone becomes cheerful. But in reality, backbiting is a form of harming, not physically, but in the spiritual plane where the respect and dignity of that person are slashed and stabbed. It is like a spiritual murdering which undoubtedly causes darkness and negativity in the heart and induces a mild spirit of murder.

Another hidden evil work is frivolity, which is excessive engagement with trivial and trifling matters. It has become common these days when people get together; all the time should be spent in joking and "funny things." Several hours that they spend together, there is not a single serious discussion, and it is all trivial and tasteless jokes.

We do not oppose jokes or talking about funny things, nor do we forbid entertaining movies or TV series. Indeed, a degree of such activities is sometimes needed. But frivolity pushes beyond the limit. It makes the whole life spent in futile and trivial matters. Frivolity weakens the soul; it renders the mind incapable of being able to think about serious matters; it takes away one's charm and inherent dignity; it lowers one to a worthless babbler, a buffoon, and his life to a circus of foolishness.

These hidden evil works are more dangerous than the well-known ones such as murdering. For such works are sometimes even forbidden by the law and entail serious consequences. As a result, many people avoid them. But for hidden evil works like backbiting or frivolity, there is no such legal restriction. And so Evil invests in them more, for it is easier to persuade people to do them compared to committing murder

or armed robbery. And now we see most people who talk with each other are engaged either in backbiting or in frivolity, and big destruction always comes in small measures.

Indeed, the list of good and evil works is long. But there is no need for a detailed analysis of them. As you follow the Divine path and put into practice those good works that you know about, God will show you the good works that you did not know about. The light that comes into your heart as a result of your good works will illuminate more corners of spiritual wisdom; you will see more virtues and vices, and all the tricks and details of each.

Chapter 4

The Purpose of Life and How It Is the Way to God

THUS, we proclaimed good works as the main vehicle for salvation and nearness to God, and defined it as various moral acts such as consideration, treating others in friendly ways, softness, and others. One may wonder how these acts, some of which seem like trivial and ephemeral deeds in daily life—such as not talking loudly on the phone at 2 a.m. or treating the person next to us with good manners—can possibly lead to any profound spiritual state or insight.

No wonder that one wonders like this, for in the spiritual schools dominant in the West—which are modern Christianity and some forms of Yoga and Neo-Buddhism—spirituality is considered something different from daily life. Not just different, but sometimes distant; and not just distant, but sometimes even disagreeing, opposite, and hostile.

In Christianity, this whole world and its activities are but the fruit of original sin, and thus are sin themselves. Life is something to turn away from and repent. Similar to this, in current Hindu and Yoga traditions, this world is an illusion, an endless wheel of suffering known as Samsara that turns and turns forever to the soul's destruction. And the goal should be to be released from this never-ending trauma and angst, which is the life of this world.

Thus, for these schools and religions, spirituality is about “something else” and “somewhere else.” It has to be done in an isolated room and in time off from working hours. The idea that spirituality can exist and coexist in the middle of the crowd, in the middle of the day, and in the middle of a bazaar is not common. All spiritual seekers expect spirituality to offer a separate domain and a separate set of practices.

But in our path, there is no such separation and partition as imagined and expected by some. There are indeed spiritual worlds, realms of angels, heavens, and other exaltations. But the path to these is this very life in this world. Our religious practices are embedded in everyday life. They appear in the form of good behavior, in the form of charity, in the form of character and persona, in the form of fighting oppression, and other manifestations of goodness and virtue.

In this situation, not talking loudly on the phone at 2 a.m. becomes of central importance; treating others with a polite face and soft manner becomes the focus; and etiquette and ethics will be the content of the Sunday preaching in our churches and temples. This material world is not a futile state; it is not anti-spirit, but a manifestation of the spirit and a path to its higher states.

In our religion and culture, a spiritual man is not depicted as a recluse, a monk with bowed head and raised hands, or as a skeletal Sanyasin in an orange robe fasting and meditating all the time in a forest or ruins, but as a strong and masculine knight with a grave face and a sword in his hand. The sword is not for oppression but for protecting the poor against the oppressor, and the grave face is the determination to fight Evil and spread justice.

This might seem like an antithesis and counter-picture of a holy man. But for us, holiness means performing good works, and to perform good works, one has to toil, one has to use tools and swords, one has to engage and enrage. Goodness and justice are not established by themselves, but need to be established by man, and that man is the holy man as pictured in our path.

Thus, a holy and spiritual man participates in the activities and

efforts of the world much in the same way that a worldly man does. Verily, a worldly and a Godly man have similarities: both go to work, both fight for promotion, both endeavor to obtain money and power, but with two utterly different purposes: one for self-importance and self-pleasure, and the other for protecting others and spreading goodness and equality. This is the meaning of the ancient allegory of two birds sitting on a branch; one was eating the fruit, and the other was sharing the fruit. These are the primordial images of a hedonistic and a holy man.

In our path, we are not to sit in an isolated corner all day, doing prayer and doing nothing else. Indeed, we set a time for prayer and meditation on God, but afterwards we come out and do all sorts of activities, but with good intention and as part of the Good-Evil battle.

As the ancient myth narrates, in the beginning of time when the two twins of Good and Evil separated, they did not look at each other with favor, and Evil vowed to destroy the Good and all its luminous creation. And the Good set a limited time for a battle between their forces before Evil is utterly destroyed and cast into the abyss. As a result of that battle, this world was created, this life was created, and man is created to be the central figure in this cosmic battle and scheme of things.

This battle is embedded in every moment of human life. In every situation in everyday life, these primordial twins of Good and Evil appear and place their paths in front of us. It is for us to choose between these paths, and the whole essence and sum total of our religion is whether we choose the path of Good or the path of Evil, whether we adopt softness and respect to treat the angry person in front of us or choose to confront and insult him back, whether we choose to give a ride to the waiting passenger in the rain or choose to race away, whether we choose honest income or choose to take a bribe and deny other people's rights.

Each choice makes a change in our existence level: good choices raise it, and evil choices lower it. At the end of this life, those with raised and exalted existence rank will return to their primordial abode

in the vicinity of the good God and become angels in His kingdom of light. But those with lower existence rank will be handed over to Evil and become demons in the darkness of its kingdom in the bottomless abyss.

So this very world and very life is the path to salvation. There is no need to resort to monasteries or caves, no need for separate rituals and mantras, no need to ascend to other worlds and realms. Salvation is here, in this very life, in this very situation, in this street, in this bus, in this office. Everywhere and in every moment, the paths of good and evil are here, in front of you, and the True religion and True worship is to choose the Good path.

This is the goal and purpose of this life. This life is not a futile phenomenon, something to run away from and unrelated to salvation, but in words similar to the Gospel (John 14:6): it is the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father except through it (through living a virtuous life in it).

Evil tries hard to steal and conceal this truth, and to replace “good works” as the means of salvation with other things, with “rituals,” with “meditation,” with “cross,” and other unrelated terms. That’s how all these corrupted religions of today came forth whose followers do everything but good works and are everything but virtuous men and women.

So we see churches in every street and district and people in them focusing on theology and converting others; we see Mosques everywhere and people in them performing Salat rituals and growing beards; and we see Buddhist temples and people in them doing meditation all the time, but good works nobody does, helping and befriending others nobody does, fighting with corruption, financial inequality, and global greed nobody does. The path of virtue and good works is forgotten. Not a single religion of today emphasizes good works and deeds. And this is not by accident but by accurate planning of cosmic negative forces.

Evil knows the path by which man can obtain salvation, and is looking upon the earth to see who is treading that path. And then it

blocks that man by shooting arrows of distractions, doubt, and other burdens. For a man who is walking in this path, his face is beaming with Divine light. And Evil is jealous of that Divine light; it hates it; it wants to stifle it, and it gives him a diabolic pleasure.

When the battle between Good and Evil began for a set time, Evil said to the Lord, “I will turn your creatures away from you and turn them to my worship.” Evil swore to sit on the “straight path” and prevent its passengers. The straight path is the pure religion we are preaching: the path of developing ethics and virtue, the path of doing good works, solving problems, fighting with oppression, and living by Truth and Truth alone. And it is in this path that the tent of Evil and its minions is erected, and the walker in this path will soon confront them and will be harassed, blocked, and challenged.

This is while other paths are broad and open with no hindrance. You may spend hours and hours following the actions of today’s fake religions, or engage in hedonistic and other useless mundane activities, and Evil will not bother you, and the time passes peacefully. But once you step in the path of goodness, once you try to change the world, then you hear a voice that says, “change your direction!”, and everyone will turn against you. For it is then that all the negative forces will attack from within and without.

But worry not, child! This is a good sign! That is the sign that the Gospel talks about: “Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you” (Matthew 5:11-12). These persecutions are signs that Evil and its demons are really threatened and feel insecure, and so they started taking action against you. It’s a great sign! A star in the sky shone and became so intense that the whole sky became broad daylight, and then all the evils rushed to that light like robbers attacking gold.

Chapter 5

On the Constitution of Chivalry

THE PATH to salvation in our religion is the worship of God and good works (developing goodness and virtues). And good works have three stages that a purevan (follower of the Divine path and the pure religion) ascends, like angels going up the ladder to heaven (Genesis 28:12). Now we describe these stages and their manners, considerations, and occasions.

In the first stage, the purevan develops virtues and morality within himself individually. Like a gardener who plants ivy and it grows and covers everywhere, so he plants ethics, good behavior, and character in his soul, and they grow and reach all aspects of his life.

In this stage, he learns about morality, about virtues, what constitutes good and what constitutes evil, and their varied forms and fashions, some of which we described in previous chapters. And then he applies this knowledge to his everyday life. So he becomes a more gentle person, a more considerate person, a more respectful person, someone with manners, charisma, character, and other virtues.

These noble traits surround the purevan like an aura of excellence, like the robe of the angel of goodness in ancient myth, which was adorned with many gems, each being one of the virtues. On attaining

this stage, the practitioner receives the title of “purevan” or “righteous.”

Being righteous does not mean perfection; it does not mean having all the virtues to their fullest. Rather, it signifies an agreeable degree of virtues, a degree that one can be conventionally considered righteous, a degree that one behaves gracefully in typical daily life situations, and his morals and manners stand by a fair margin above an ordinary and untrained person. This much is enough for the first stage.

For in this stage, the purevan stands at the intersection of two paths: the ancient paths of goodness and evil, and he is directing his face toward the path of righteousness. He hasn’t trodden the path to the end yet but has just commenced his walk in that direction. Thus, righteous is the one whose life direction is goodness, but there is still a way to go and room for improvement.

This stage of righteousness is not the end of our path, for it is about goodness at an individual level. After that, it is time for the social level, where one teaches this Divine path and pure religion to others. This is the second stage of good works, where one becomes a teacher, a role model, a helper for younger people, for enthusiasts and the lost. He embarks on spreading the knowledge.

The importance of this stage (spreading the Divine path) is based on the fact that righteousness cannot exist in a non-righteous society, honesty cannot exist in a corrupted society, and charity cannot exist in a hedonistic society. How can I live a righteous life when the way to make money is greed, the way to success is bribery, and the way to gratification is deceit? Even if a man is righteous and endeavors much, the force and mandates of the sinful community will eventually drag him into corruption and vices. One single righteous person cannot be righteous.

Thus, teaching and spreading the Divine path is higher than individual virtue and self-righteousness, and for this reason, it is the next stage after the stage of righteousness.

It is important to note that the first stage also includes some degree of teaching and transmitting the Divine path, for our behavior in society

can inspire others: when an angry person insults me in a public place but I treat him with respect and dignity, this conduct, this uncommon and unconventional response, can shock the violent man and send a signal to the depth of his soul. It can make him reflect and reevaluate. Other bystanders who witness such excellent behavior will be edified too, as if seated in an ethics class. In particular, children and young people are more intensely influenced by our righteous and noble behavior. The memory of this incident and our role model remains in their minds; it might not change them right away, but it will at some point in the future.

Thus, the first stage encompasses a sort of teaching and transmitting the religion as well, but in a passive and indirect way. But this passive form is not enough in itself to complete the mission and convert the world. A direct and active form of teaching is also needed. And this forms the next stage where the purevan teaches this pure religion by means of lectures, preaching, and missionary work. There should be schools where those who have reached the stage of righteousness teach younger people and others about the Divine path.

At this stage, the aspirant obtains the title and degree of “teacher,” which is the one who transfers and teaches spirituality to others. In some ancient traditions, the word “Pir” is used for this title. It means “old,” but not in reference to biological age; rather, it refers to spiritual maturity. It is the adulthood of the soul and its fatherhood to younger and immature souls. A man can be Pir even if he is thirty or forty.

The word Pir also means white-haired, and this is a symbol too. White is the color of the primal light in the original creation of God. White has all other colors in it and is a symbol of Divine and all-encompassing wisdom. Hair becoming white in old age is a physical manifestation of the man being wise now, or supposed to be, after living for more than half a century and experiencing all aspects of life. But the passage of time is not the only way to become wise. One can obtain such a state early in life. The mythical figure Zal was born with white hair, which was the symbol of having a special Divine wisdom

and freedom at birth. The angel of wisdom is also depicted as having white hair, but her face is young and beautiful.

These two stages, righteousness and teacher-hood, are achievable by many. But beyond these stages, there is yet a third stage that is achievable by few. It is not for everyone, and not required for everyone. The two stages are enough to obtain basic salvation. This third stage is by choice and option, and is the unknown path to the mystical mount M from which there is no return.

This is the path of sacrificing oneself for the sake of goodness and righteousness. This is the path that one puts himself in a situation of loss or danger and takes action to establish justice. This is the path that one loses his job because of standing against the brutality of the employer, and one goes to prison for fighting an unjust government, and higher than all: one loses life in the fight against oppression.

And in this losing, he obtains the incomprehensible, and in this death, he becomes alive to a new existence beyond our grasp. For this is the highest spiritual state, the abode of The Most High God. Those who went that way never returned to narrate to us how it was and what was there. This is the top of Mount M. This is the meaning of the Gospel saying: “whoever loses his life will find it” (Mark 8:35). And this is indeed the meaning of the true cross where “you” sacrifice for God, not God for you.

Such a person becomes holy. Every breath he takes is worship and a step toward Divinity. He already reached the Divine the moment he resolved to put his life and interest at stake for the sake of righteousness, and the rest is just the progress of the show.

At this stage, one obtains the title and emblem of “chivalry,” as one becomes a knight in the temple of God and for God. In some traditions, the word “Javanmard” is used for this stage. It consists of two parts: “javan” which means young and “mard” which means “man.”

Thus, the term “Javanmard” means “the young man.” This is in contrast to the previous stage that was called Pir (old). And it is also in an unusual order, for in this way, we first become old and then young.

How is that possible? This is because in the previous stage, one's soul becomes mature and old, and in that maturity, it takes the final step to perfection and sacrifices itself in the flames of Divinity. This kills the soul, and it is reborn again as a child and young soul. It is now called Javanmard. But this youth is not associated with inexperience and crudity, but is a new transcendental existence. The birth of the mythical figure Zal as a white-haired infant presents symbols explaining the mystery of the path for those who have understanding.

Chapter 6

The Battle of Good and Evil and the Meaning of Life

WHAT IS this life? What is this world? “What is the source of this existence? Who set the sun and stars in their orbit? Who arranged the waxing and waning moon?” (Ushtavad Gatha: 3) For what purpose this turning sky turns and these shining stars shine? Who are we? What is the meaning of life? These were the questions coming into the minds of seekers when they first looked up to the vastness of the night sky.

As far as the earth is from heaven, as far as the east is from the west, so great are the wisdom and mysteries of our path. So it is narrated to us by an ancient myth that in the beginning was the two: the Good and the Evil. The Good was the True God and the God of light, the progenitor of virtues and beauty. And Evil was evil, the false god, the dark king, and the source of ugliness and discord. They were separated; time was endless, and the heartbeat of existence had not started yet. . .

Then a corridor stretched between them. Evil became aware of Good and beheld its creation: a magnificent world of light, luminous angels, and heavenly beings. Evil made an attack to destroy all this, for it was taken by envy, and destroying Divine beauty and glory would give him a lustful pleasure. (And this is the same pleasure man feels when

entertaining thoughts and motives for plunder and illicit immoralities.)

But Evil's attack was driven back by the valor of guardian angels. Then Evil made its own creation, a dark world with distorted and discordant demons. And it continued its attacks. The good God proposed a battle for a set time, after which the loser would be cast into the abyss for eternity. This way, the battle would not continue forever but end forever. So they agreed, and thereupon time became finite and the light limited. The luminous world of the Divine came in contact with the dark world of Evil, and behold, this world was born: a world mixed with good and evil, of beauty and ugliness, of virtue and vice.

This myth described the nature of this world and how Godly and demonic qualities are mixed and manifest in everything and everywhere, in marvelous and oftentimes monstrous ways. So you see a beautiful forest and magnificent trees; this is a Godly quality and manifestation of the Divine. But under the same tree, a tiger is tearing a deer, and there is bloodshed and a vile scene; this is a demonic attribute and a manifestation of Evil.

Or you see rain pour and the sun shine to bring forth crops, and their tender stalks are gradually heightening, but then the same sun and rain produce a storm and destroy them all. Or you see a woman who has external beauty and charm but inside has demonic jealousy that brings about the fall of her life and her husband. Or you see one part of nature work to bring forth nutritious fruits and another part simultaneously work to bring forth poisonous fruits. . .

All our observations show that in everything and every corner and stage of this world, there is a mix of Good and Evil, and an ongoing battle between them. For this world itself is the result of the Good and Evil battle, and indeed it is the battlefield itself, with both forces present and performing.

The center of this battle is human, and it is where the majority of the fight is fought and arrows thrown. Nothing pleases Evil more than haunting and dragging the human soul to itself. For the human soul is indeed Divine and has the Divine light and effulgence, and this light

is what Evil and its demons are jealous of and afraid of. They want to destroy it, to stifle it.

As the myth narrates in symbolic and secret words, in the beginning of the Divine creation, it was this light that displeased Evil and raised him to attack. And it was this hatred and jealousy for that light which made him say: “I will turn all your creatures away from you, and your worship.”

Thus, Evil’s prime goal is to capture Divine beings, drag them down into the abyss, and strip them of that Divine light. And in this stripping, there is immense pleasure for Evil and his demons. This is what is called “extinguishing of existence,” an antonym to “creation.” It is the annihilation of Light and its transmutation into Darkness. It’s a mystic and most horrific phenomenon, but it is real and likely.

How can Evil capture and strip humans of the light? Is it done by force, like a soldier dragging a captive? By no means! A Divine being cannot be forced, but it has to “choose” by its own free will. It has to choose to be captured, to be evil, and become a demon. So then Evil operates by means of deception, to deceive humans to act evil on their own choice. Evil plants and induces all types of thoughts in the human mind: thoughts of greed, thoughts of jealousy, thoughts of hatred, and then a glimpse of false glory and bliss if one follows these evil acts.

Many are Evil’s suggestions, as many as stars in the sky and as dark as the night sky. Its voice never ends, nor it can be forced to be silent. Evil is depicted as a man with a tripod fork. The fork is to harrow human souls like a farmer. Each tooth of the fork is a deception and a way of perverting people, and there are many teeth and many forks that demons are holding. The forks of demons are spread in the world, and everyone has hairs tied to one fork; thus the creatures are struggling.

And the myth ends here, but its meaning and implication continue forever. And behind the crust of this story is hidden a profound truth that the nature of this world is battle, the battle between good and evil.

And such battle is present in every moment of human life, even in everyday trivial situations. For example, as I step out of my room and

notice my roommates are still sleeping, two paths appear in front of me: one path is to be quiet, and another path is to not care and talk loud on my phone. Now it is for me to fight within myself and choose the right path. These choices change man's existential rank: choosing good raises it, and choosing evil lowers it. At the end of life, depending on his choices and battles, man either becomes an angel and goes to the Divine bright house or becomes a demon and falls into the abyss and Evil's dark house. At higher levels, the battle appears as a more direct fight with tyrants and oppressors of the day. In fact, there is no end to the battle, and its forms and degrees.

Humans are created for these battles, to actively participate in them and not to turn away and seek refuge in isolation and solitary life. Man's mind and psyche are adapted and created for such battles and find peace only in them. Sitting idle, watching movies, playing games, going to spas, and other escapist activities won't give lasting peace. Peace is obtained when you participate in the battles of life, when you stand against an injustice or a tyrant; peace is obtained when man gives up the idea of peace, and instead fights.

All religions of the world are created in battlefields, even though their message was peace. For it is when a man puts his life at stake for a great purpose that the integrity of the soul is achieved.

Chapter 7

On the Mission of Life and How it Leads to True Happiness

A CENTRAL concept in our path is Divine bliss. It is a feeling of exaltation, a sense of happiness, and a presence of knowledge and spiritual current. Indeed, it is a connection to Divinity that produces all these feelings. It is the very joy and happiness that everyone is seeking and everyone is missing.

Divine bliss is that mystic necklace the ancient kings were searching for, a necklace whose beads were joy, peace, a state of no anxiety, inspiration, and all exalted states. It is that spring of life in search of which Alexander traveled to the edge of the world and, between two mounts and in a time between two sunrises, found the spring and bathed in it.

In daily life, people seek Divine bliss by various means and methods. Some seek it by listening to music, eating good food, drinking alcohol, traveling to beaches, and other sensual activities. Some others seek it through intellectual pursuits: by reading books, by pursuing science, by practicing arts, and others. Those with more spiritual tendencies seek it through rituals, chanting, theology, meditation, mindfulness, and other

religious acts. Verily, all of these are forms of Divine bliss, but limited forms, and their effects vanish soon like alcohol in the air.

For true Divine bliss is obtained only by “life”: a life dedicated to the Divine path (which is the worship of God and doing good works). Such a life consists of many activities: meditating on God, praising and thanking the Divinity, doing good works, improving your behavior and manners, developing virtues and morality, keeping your house clean like pieces of the Divine paradise, striving to establish goodness in the world, and participating in other activities for the betterment of conditions around you. You do all these activities and you will feel Divine bliss from the moment you wake up in the morning.

On the other hand, if you don’t live such a holy life, if you are not diligent in worship or doing good work, if you are not taking any action in establishing goodness and eliminating evil, then no bliss and happiness will come to you even if you eat the best of foods, or listen to top-chart music, or read best-seller books, or go to yoga and mindfulness classes. Whatever you do, bliss goes ahead of you like your shadow in the late evening.

For bliss is obtained by the totality of life and its activities, not by a single act or technique. Those who seek bliss and happiness by a meditation “technique” or by a “mantra,” or one-off charitable works, or other methods are indeed misled, and obtain nothing but fleeting peace and durable darkness.

Divine bliss becomes most intense when one does the work one is intended for. A man is given talent in science, so his bliss is perfected when he engages in scientific activities and discoveries with the goal of service to humanity. He would gain less bliss by other good works. Another woman has talent in communication, and her bliss is complete when she does work in social service or political activity. Another person has no special talent, and his bliss is complete when he does rough work like sweeping or other manual labor. Each person has a mission, a holy mission, in life. Realizing and following that mission leads to Divine bliss in its most glaring form.

Therefore, critical to the concept of Divine bliss is the concept of Divine mission. Mission is the key to bliss. Mission is what you are created for, your role in this world. Find your mission; there are clues to that: your talent, your path of life, opportunities that come your way, and more important than them all is your inner call. Listen, your inner angel is calling you to your mission. What is that thing you were always thinking about?

No one is without a mission and purpose. Life is purposeful and so is everything in it, and so are human beings, every single one of them. Each person is given talent and opportunity to do his mission, but it is up to him to do it or not, and in fact many people don't, and so they become barren.

There was a bazaar in the old days with many stores and many precious products. A man entered the bazaar with lots of gold in his hands, but he did not buy anything, and just passed through to the other end, dropped his gold, and left. This is the story of people who do not do their mission in life, and live in the world empty-hearted and leave the world empty-handed.

Different people have different missions. Some have small missions like sweeping the street, and some have magnificent missions like leading the world. This is not an unfair matter, for the greater the mission, the greater the trouble and stress. You might covet why that man is to lead the world, but at the same time that man secretly wishes his mission was to just sweep the floor.

There is absolute justice in distributing missions, and obtaining bliss is equally easy and hard for all. No one has more advantage in obtaining it than others. Divine bliss is for everyone, but the way to obtain it is different for everyone. For some it is by manual work, for some it is by scientific work, for some it is by active political life. Everyone has a path; follow your path.

Chapter 8

On Religious and Spiritual Practices

TO REACH every destination, steps are needed, and for every skill and quality, practice is needed. Our goal is to reach the Divine, and our path is to worship and meditate on God; it is to do good works and righteous acts; it is to develop virtues. All of these require various skills and qualities which can be developed only by practice.

Man does not become righteous automatically, nor virtues are developed by themselves, nor one has enough understanding at birth to be able to worship and meditate on God. All of these need development.

It is true that everyone has some intuition about God as such, and has some tendency towards righteousness and virtues, but these are not enough to reach the Divine.

This is because, in addition to the Divine, Evil also exists and constantly pulls attention away from God and spirituality. It produces negative energies that actively drag the soul down and create temporary forgetfulness and indifference in regard to ethics and righteousness, and takes away the taste for spirituality and knowledge.

In the absence of such active evil force, we certainly would not need any effort and practice, and we would be like angels in Heaven who are always at the height of spiritual awareness and worship God constantly

and in the most intense way.

But as humans, we are not in this state. Instead, we are standing at the intersection of two paths, of Good and Evil, and Evil constantly forces us onto its path. We are assailed by many negative forces that degrade the soul, as the poet said: “Angels could not carry the burden, so they loaded it on me, the poor one!” Indeed, it is said that even the highest angels would cry if placed into the human condition.

As a result, in this condition, we need effort and practice to develop and flourish our Divine tendencies. For worship, for doing good works, and for all other aspects of our path, we need practice. To worship and pray to God, we need to practice concentration and various forms of meditation to learn how to transcend the lower spheres of consciousness into the Divine plane, and we need to study scriptures and spiritual literature to increase our intuition about the Divine; to develop virtue, we need to reflect on our daily behavior and practice introspection; to perform good deeds, we need physical exercises to increase physical health and strength, and also psychic exercises to improve emotional balance and increase willpower; and many other practices are needed for the path of reaching the Divine.

The set of all these practices constitutes what we call the Divine lifestyle. The Divine lifestyle leads to Divine life, and Divine life leads to the Divine.

These practices are very similar to what we see in other religions: prayers, meditations, repetition of holy names, rituals, and other religious and spiritual practices. But we do them with a different view: we do them as “means” to reach the Divine; we do them as tools which enable one to develop virtues and other spiritual qualities that can bring us close to the Divine.

But in current religions, these practices are often done as rituals that are required by God and should be done no matter what. For example, a temple ritual is considered as something ordered by God, and by performing it, bliss and forgiveness of sins will descend on the participants. But in our religion, a temple ritual is to remind us of God

and keep us focused on Divine ideas such as forgiveness, charity, and other virtues, so that these virtues gradually become implanted in our soul, and it is because of this implantation of virtues that we come closer to the Divine, and not because of performing the ritual alone.

So there is a remarkable difference between us and followers of current religions in regard to religious acts. We both do the same acts; we both pray, meditate, do group chanting and rituals, and outwardly seem to be the same, but inwardly we hold different views on these acts: one considers them as a path to a goal and the other as a goal itself.

A story has been narrated of two brothers, one spending all his time in a temple worshipping God and the other spending all his time in prostitute houses. But one day, the brother who was in the prostitute house regretted, and said to himself: “See, my brother is in the temple of God worshipping, and I’m here in this house of sin! Shame on me!” So he was taken by grief and repentance. At the same time, the brother who was in the temple also regretted, saying to himself: “See! My brother is in that place and must be enjoying himself, while I’m here wasting my time!” And it so happened that on that day both of them died. The brother who was in the temple was taken by Evil to the house of death, but the brother who was in the prostitute house was taken by the angel of life to the house of Light and Divine abode.

This is because the brother in the temple, despite his many worship and spiritual practices, failed to develop love and devotion to God and eventually turned away. But the brother in the prostitute house, despite his lack of spiritual practices, eventually turned to God and repented. And all God wants is a pure and repenting heart, a heart that calls to God in sincerity and desire.

The implication thereof is that God does not care what religious practices we do and how we do them, etc., but only cares about the result of it, which is a pure heart and good works.

As a result of this, the exact form of a ritual, or any other practice, is not important as long as it helps us to develop virtues and Divine

remembrance. And we can rearrange and alter the practices. But in current religions, rituals should be done in a fixed manner which they think is ordered by God. For them, all that is important is the physical performance of the ritual or any other religious act and not their effect on the soul and behavior.

Because of this, these religions fail to produce virtuous and holy men, except in very few and exceptional cases. And religion becomes a set of “laws” and rules that are physically performed each day while the followers remain the same each day. But followers of our path and the pure religion make progress daily, and each day better than the day before and each year more spiritual than the year before, until they reach the stage of righteousness and holiness. And this makes a good reputation for our religion and our God, for our followers are indeed virtuous, and not just claimants.

These practices are detailed in the book of practice, where the goal and forms of each practice are described along with the concepts behind them. It is like a medical book for the soul. It is of utmost importance for the followers to do these practices and make progress in virtue and righteousness daily.

Chapter 9

Marriage and Other Pleasures

IT IS NOT possible to talk about religion and not talk about marriage, and to clarify what good and evil are without clarifying whether the man-woman relationship is good or evil. For these thoughts are forerunners in everyone's mind, like horns in unicorns.

And the religions prevalent in the West—both Christianity and forms of yoga and Neo-Hinduism—have heightened the sensitivity and confusion of this topic, for they condemn and cut down the man-woman relationship and other pleasures. Many are drawn away from religion these days, for they think religion means no relationship, no food, no home, no laughter, no happiness, no travel, no nothing. They fear and see religion as a boring box within which the follower is imprisoned, with head down and hands up to heaven all the time in painful prayer and regretful repentance.

Consequently, they will ask us about marriage, about relationships, and about other pleasures under this blue sky, and whether we should abstain from all these. And if we abstain from writing about these here, we will have to write at a later time. So we choose to write about them now and make them clear now so that our religion is vindicated with a clear image. And what we write about pain and pleasure may be

painful to some and pleasant to others, but our concern is to appeal to the Truth and not to any group or institute.

Since ancient times, erroneous ideas have circulated about what good and evil are. Some identified good and evil with pain and pleasure, where they posit that pleasure is bad, is illusion, and so is evil, while pain and sorrow are good and truth. Thus, they turned away from everything that gave comfort and pleasure and instead sought those things that gave discomfort and pain.

Some others identified good and evil with materiality, wherein all things material and visible are bad and evil, and all things immaterial and invisible are good and holy. Still others have identified good and evil with the body vs. the soul, where the human body and all its impulses and needs are evil and distractions, while the soul is good and divine. They sought to distance and detach themselves from the body through trance, astral projection, and other means to achieve an authentic spiritual experience.

And many other similar conceptions and beliefs were circulating around the world of men since time unknown. The result of these ideas was asceticism, mortification of the body, and abstention from life and its pleasures. They infiltrated many religions and cultures, including early Christianity and Indian sects, and today they cause confusion and draw many away from religion.

But in our path, good and evil are not defined by pleasure vs. pain, nor by material vs. immaterial, nor by body vs. soul, nor by any other duality. Indeed, good and evil have their own precise definition and concept, and can exist in pleasure as well as pain, can exist in the material as well as the immaterial, and can exist in every level and realm of creation.

As a result, a purevan (a follower of our path and the pure religion) does not need, and in fact should not, abstain from pleasures, nor from material things, nor from the body, provided that he adheres to moral law and goodness. Our path does not promote the image of monks in ragged clothes sitting in ruined huts, praying all the time.

The source and root of all these misconceptions lie in the concept and definition of good and evil. Indeed, this knowledge is not trivial and requires training and study. Underestimating this science has led to all these confusions and has drawn people away from religion and from the path of truth. This science was the tree that God planted in the middle of the Garden of Eden, according to the ancient creation myth. The tree was called the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” For indeed, this knowledge is what is to be placed in the middle of heaven, and the whole religion and path of salvation revolve around this knowledge; knowing it is pleasure, and not knowing it is pain.

The aim of this book and the whole pure religion is to focus man on this science and knowledge. Now we attempt to delve into this and explain what good is and what evil is, and to dispel the confusion that good and evil are simplistically defined by pain and pleasure, or by material and non-material boundaries.

Good is that which does not harm anyone, does not offend, and does not violate one’s rights and honor. It is that which facilitates the learning of knowledge and virtue; that which produces friendship, creates beauty, removes burdens and barriers, solves problems, brings relief and peace, and everything that the human soul perceives as noble. Evil is the opposite of all these: that which is ugly and produces dishonor and depression for oneself and others.

Good and evil are not correlated with pain and pleasure, and can exist in both: the joy of seeing beautiful natural scenery, the elation of learning knowledge or art, the glory of defeating evil oppression are all examples of goodness that are pleasant; the toil to develop a skill, the struggle to wake up early in the morning, the effort to stop anger and forgive a brother, turning down an evil suggestion for bribery are examples of goodness that come with some degree of pain and hardship; the joy of revenge, the joy of becoming rich by deceit and lies, the joy of insulting and belittling people are examples of evils that are pleasant; the darkness of constant selfish anger, the depression caused by greed, and the bitter hatred caused by jealousy are examples of evils

that are painful.

Similarly, good and evil are not correlated with material and non-material concepts, and both appear in material and non-material realms equally, like twins in a womb. As for the realm of materials: beautiful scenes, perfumes, art, order, cleanliness are examples of good; and dirtiness, ugliness, stench, chaos, garbage are examples of evil. In the realm of the non-material: good intention, mental strength, will, determination, faith in God, adherence to moral principles are examples of good; and bad intention, hatred, carelessness, mental gloom, faithlessness, and others are examples of evil. In fact, the very essence of evil is a non-material principle from which all forms of evil entered the material world.

The same is true in regard to the body vs. the soul. Examples of goodness in the body: physical strength, handsomeness, and the fact that the body is the instrument to carry out our good deeds, without which there would be no salvation. Examples of evil in the body: illness, laziness, and its many needs. Examples of goodness in the soul: knowledge, concentration, virtues. Examples of evil in the soul: ignorance, distraction, vices, and so on.

Therefore, good and evil exist in all stations and realms of our current existence: in pain and pleasure, in matter and non-matter, in body and soul. As a result, following our path does not require abstaining from pleasures or material things; quite the opposite, we should engage with them with the goal of manifesting goodness in them.

So we partake in pleasures in this life that are in accord with goodness: we go out in the world, we take wives, and watch the sunset at the beach. We also engage with the material world and try to manifest Divinity and beauty in it: we keep our surroundings clean and in order, we keep our rooms well decorated and our gardens well-trimmed, we seek to acquire riches to be able to further promote Divine causes. We also care about our bodies: we keep our clothes and body clean, for it is a dishonor for a purevan to be dirty, ugly, or miserable,

and we keep the body healthy and strong, for physical strength and fitness are a must for our followers and a must for their mission in life.

If some religions imposed some rules or restrictions regarding food, certain pleasures, or marriage, it was merely to ensure they were in line with moral values and to prevent them from turning into evil. Never ever was the goal to forbid them. The goal of religion is to even increase pleasure, and to include spiritual pleasure alongside it as well.

Indeed, in the house of a purevan there are riches, food, and wives, and everyone prospers. We are not seeking to destroy our body or life, but to destroy evil.

Chapter 10

That Everyone Can Go to God Directly Without a Medium or Master

THERE IS a common theme in many religions and spiritual paths that an ordinary person cannot contact God directly and that a medium and an intercession hierarchy are needed. The ancient tribal religions were based on this idea, and the shamans and priests were those mediums connecting people to God through performing certain prescribed rituals and incantations.

These ancient religions are gone, but their underlying philosophy of mediumship is not. Christianity, as the largest religion of our day, espouses this notion at its core. They believe no matter what a man does and how righteous he is, there will be no salvation for him. The only way to salvation is through the mediumship of Jesus, which is obtained by believing in church doctrine and participating in some prescribed rituals performed by its priests.

And many Indian sects that reached the West in recent centuries also similarly insist that man cannot reach God by himself, and the intercession of a master, or as they call it, a guru, is needed. The aspirant must find a guru. Without a guru, their literature warns, no

salvation is possible and no hope. This way, the guru is no longer just a teacher but a bestower of salvation and almost replaces God for the aspirant.

And many other new religions—and may I say all that we have seen so far—have similar principles to such an extent that this became a common element in all. But this is not indeed a surprise, for Evil exists and is in active work to deviate and deceive. Some people are deviated by the pull of lust, greed, and other vices. But not all can be deviated this way, for Divine intuition and inherent wisdom bar some from following evil traits. These people have a tendency for religion and philosophy, and so Evil comes to them with false religions and philosophies to engage and nullify their spiritual efforts.

Thus, not surprisingly but sadly, false religions and cults are spread on the face of the earth. This was in the past, and is today, and so will be in the future. The followers of our path should be wary of this fact and not be deceived. They should know about false religions and their attributes fully. Many are false religions, but one is their attribute, wherewith they call people to something other than God and through means other than virtue and good deeds. And this mediumship and Guruism is an example of it.

Thus, mediumship and guru-based religions are all false. For the true God is the God of all people and not a few elect, and the way to this God is through good works and not adherence to a master and membership in his team. Therefore, these religions erred both in regard to the nature of God and the path that leads to It.

Every human can connect to God directly. No election is needed, nor any ritual. Human, by virtue of being created as human, is already elected and connected. The day that God fashioned his soul, the day that the Almighty breathed wisdom and understanding into the soul which is only given to humans, the day that the angel of life placed him on the altar and brought him to life, on that very day he also became an elect to God, and a connection to the Divine was established in the seat of his soul.

The only thing that separates us from God is our choices in regard to good and evil. For in addition to God, Evil also exists and tries to draw the soul away from the Divine. Thus, man becomes a battleground of opposite forces and can choose which side he stands on. Once we choose God, It will be available; and once we make an effort in the path of goodness and virtue, It will be reached. No ritual or human approval is needed.

God is the God of all people, all nations, and all earth. God is like a sun that shines on all. No one is dear or detested by It. Whoever resolves in Its path and perseveres will reach Its abode and Divine station. No master or medium is needed.

If there was any reference to prophets or spiritual masters in religions, it was meant to be a teacher who teaches the path to the Divine. Our path does not deny the role of teacher. A teacher is needed for everything: for learning how to write, learning how to drive, learning mathematics, and all other skills. And religion and spirituality are no exception, and even more exceptionally required.

But a teacher in our path is just a teacher who teaches all these things we are writing here; someone who teaches the truth, and not someone who grants salvation or decides the fate of others. A teacher is someone with profound knowledge and experience in regard to the truth and the Divine, someone who has experienced God and Its path in various aspects, and can now show the path.

A teacher presents the student with the realities of the path, with the way and its complexities. A teacher teaches the science of morality, and at the same time serves as a model of morality. He teaches good behavior, and serves as a role model for good behavior. He inspires the student, he shows him the sweetness of God, he soothes the troubled mind of the student by mystic stories of old and how things came to accord with goodness at the end. He waits and listens to the student until he can stand on his own.

And as the student stands on his own, the teacher recedes gradually from the path, until there remains the student and God alone, and the

path to go. A teacher is not someone between you and God, but behind you and pushes you to God. In the end, it will be only you and God; not the teacher, not the father, not the mother, not me, not he, not she, not anything else will be and should be between you and God.

The path should be trodden by each person alone. Nobody can walk the path for another. There is no shortcut or back door. A teacher does not and cannot make the path easier, and no bargain or favoritism is allowed in the Divine court. Favoritism and intercession are indeed rampant in human institutions, but not in the abode of God which is the house of pure Truth and pure justice. But there is such a thing as Divine mercy and repentance, where one affirms past errors with a broken heart and resolves not to repeat them again with a firm will. Repentance, if sincere, can lead to the erasing of sins. But repentance is not favoritism, and does not need a medium or master to be present or act. Repentance can be done directly to God. God is enough.

The goal of the pure religion is that the student should eventually become like unto his teacher. As the ancient myth narrates, you meet your teacher at the junction of the two seas (sea of material existence and sea of spiritual existence), and the teacher takes you through the seven cities (teaches you the seven cardinal virtues) and then you reach the “ultimate point” where he will stop walking with you. This is where you have to go by yourself. The last mile of the path should be trodden alone, like a one-person ship sailing in the sea of wonders towards the Wonderful.

Chapter 11

How Pure Religion Was Discovered by Many but Lost Again

THE PURE RELIGION and the Divine path we preach here are preached by many others. It is ancient wisdom, and many discovered and rediscovered the same truth throughout history, even in modern times. All spiritual men, philosophers, and sincere seekers in all countries and at all times arrived at the same conclusion that this is the path, and the same religion has been proclaimed in different ways and languages.

The modernity and Renaissance movement in Europe, in contrast to popular ideas today, was not a secular and materialistic agenda. Quite the opposite, it was indeed a sincere search for truth and for the true God. The famous philosophers and scientists of that time were indeed spiritual men who rose against the church's unreasonable dogmas and realized simpler and more pure religions in agreement with human intuition. An example of such religions was known as Deism. It is similar to the pure religion in fundamentals and is an instance and sister of it.

Other spiritual movements such as Transcendentalism also present instances of our pure religion throughout the modern history of the

West. Jefferson of America created the “Jefferson Bible” by cutting all the impure verses (verses that are not about God or good works) and thus produced a bible of, in his own words, “pure and unsophisticated doctrine,” which indeed is a bible for our pure religion.

In the Eastern world, Gandhi of India in the early twentieth century rejected the other-worldliness and other impure elements in Hinduism and talked about a religion whose way was service to others and whose God was Truth (Satya). Before him in medieval India, Akbar Shah talked about “Din Ellahi” (religion of God), a perennial religion underlying all religions. Several other Indian saints also came to the same conclusion at different times and preached a religion based on service to others rather than sitting in cloisters and meditation all the time.

And many new religious movements in recent centuries and years in North America, Japan, and other parts of the world advocated an ideology similar to the pure religion. And before that time, ancient Greeks and classical Romans and others talked about the same truth: they all talked about God as the goal, virtue and good works as the path, and rituals and dogmas as anti-path.

How is it that all these learned and noble men lived in different countries and different ages but proclaimed the same truth and same path? Like volcanoes that are in different locations and times but all erupt the same materials, so all these great men erupted the same Truth, which is timeless and placeless. And should they all rise from the grave today and come together, they will look very different but all will be brothers and find no difference in their path. They all will sit at the fellowship table of the Divine union, as a manifestation of this verse in the Bible: “People come from east and west and sit in the kingdom of God” (Matthew 8:11).

And the next verse in the Bible says: “But the children of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness” (Matthew 8:12). Here, the “children of the kingdom” refers, as it were, to the current religions who insist on absolute authority and lineage from previous prophets. Despite these claims, they are the most misguided religions; they added

rituals and many other impure elements to their religions and mixed them with strange beliefs and fables.

But even in these corrupted religions there exist many teachings pointing and pushing towards the concepts of the pure religion, to the point that one may feel that perchance they used to be a form of the pure religion at their time, but later altered and distorted in different directions.

For example, Christianity is a corrupted religion (and in fact the most corrupted one), and yet the Bible itself talks about pure religion explicitly: “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world” (James 1:27). Here, religion in its pure form is defined as service to others and having virtues, which is in conformity with the pure religion we preach in this book.

And again in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus proclaims nothing but virtue and sincerity towards God, and his great commandments of “love God and love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:37-40) are also a testimony to this. The narrations of the Gospels, through an unbiased eye, almost assure that Jesus was preaching the pure religion against the dogmatism and ritualism of Jewish Pharisees.

In the world of Hinduism, the holy book of Bhagavad Gita teaches a simple devotion to God and rejects rituals and other Hindu dogmas. Other religions also contain the same allusions to the pure religion, clear and explicit.

Nevertheless, these references to the pure religion principles are surrounded by many impure elements in these religions, to the extent that they are almost forgotten, and only impure elements such as rituals and dogmas have become the focus of the church and its followers.

And this should not come as a surprise since Evil does not remain idle. Religion is its greatest enemy, and so it corrupts and dilutes religions to counter them. Path and anti-path go hand in hand. Evil deflects some with lust, anger, addiction, and other mundane means, but not all follow this path. In some people the Divine nature is

dominant. They are not taken away by evil impulses and harmful acts. Instead, they are looking for the truth and eventually pick a religion. To deflect and nullify this group of people, Evil attempts to corrupt their religions. Once a religion is corrupted and misguided, all who follow it will be misguided as well, and they become so without realizing it.

As a result, Evil injected many misleading ideas into religions throughout history to corrupt them. The common forms of such misleading ideas are exegesis, interpretations, legalism, ritualism, philosophizing, intercession, mediumship, idolizing masters, exaggerating the power of Evil, and fear-mongering. All these different forms lead to one result in the end: to discourage the followers from taking effort to do good works, and to engage them in useless activities like rituals, serving a master, or endless waiting for a savior. All are a waste of time and “all is vanity and vexation of spirit” in the words of the Bible (Ecclesiastes 1:14).

Such corruption happens for every religion. Even if it starts as a pure religion in its purest form, and creates great men and women, and builds a land of milk and honey, as time passes by it gathers more and more impure elements to itself due to Evil’s activities, until it becomes like unto one of the current religions which are full of complexities, full of superstitions, and divided into many branches. Such corruption happens in the course of time and continues until a great Divine man comes and destroys all these religions and establishes a new Divine order and a new form of the pure religion. And that pure religion creates great men and women again, and continues, till it becomes corrupted again and the same cycle repeats forever, thus, conforming to the yin-yang and light-darkness doctrine. This is what’s called the cycle of religion clone-and-corruption.

A follower of the pure religion should know about this cycle, and not be deceived by illogical claims of current religion’s followers that they are not corrupted and represent the pristine teachings. It is the pure religion followers’ duty to uphold and renew the pure religion and

Divine path if need be. They should create a new sect if existing ones are corrupted, and should revolt against everything that is not pure religion and not based on goodness and morality. And this fight will go on and on, as long as the Earth revolves and the sun rises and sets.

Chapter 12

On the Lost Temple and a Call to International Religion

ANTI-PATHS are spreading in the world today, and so by this we make a call to the righteous to gather themselves in congregations and practice forms of the pure religion. The pure religion in its absolute form is independent of culture and language, but it can take the form of any and live within the context of any.

It is like a Surakav bird that is sometimes green, sometimes red, sometimes blue, but it is still the same bird. Similarly, the pure religion can take the form of Hinduism, Buddhism, or Islam, and can be within Middle Eastern culture or within Western culture. It is still the same jewel.

Many are the religions of the world. All religions are true; they are all forms of an archetypal ancient religion, but some are too old and vague, with many superstitions and dogmas entered into them that have covered their faces. They are like far-off stars: far and dim, but still showing a pattern. We respect them, but do not follow them.

We are not to wait for the stars to come back and shine again, but we can create new forms of the pure religion within our current culture and society. No need to create another branch of Christianity or Islam. The word of Truth is truth because it is truth. It does not need to be

within the framework of Christianity and made related to a Gospel verse in order to be truth. A purevan can go to the pulpit and preach without referring to the Gospel even once, yet his words are salvation since he is connected to the same source as all the prophets and saints in old days.

Thus, forms of the pure religion are to be spread on the face of the earth, each based on a particular culture, each having its own color. Apart from these localized forms, there is also a need for an international form since the will of God was that in this age men gather in one global community. So there could be an international congregation as well where people from all races and countries gather and worship the Divine in a common language.

The ancient texts talk about a mysterious temple with a column at its center. And when one person of each country gathers there and all circle around the column in an unbroken chain, a mystic union will take place. And this symbol flashes a solution to all our problems today, for it produces the necessary unity and strength.

Thus, there should be two versions of the pure religion: one local where the religion is expressed in local culture and local language, and one global where an international congregation gathers and worship is done in some language known to all. There would be fewer cultural elements in this form. The principles remain the same in both forms. And one should not see any difference in them. The differences are just colors and skins. One should see the same God in both forms, and even in other forms of the religion in different cultures. One should experience the same God in a Japanese temple as in an American temple, as well as in the temple of his own language.

And there shall be houses of wisdom and pure religion in every nation for teaching ethics and rules of righteousness. When all these centers are established, when Divinity is regularly worshiped everywhere, when people dedicate themselves to ethics and good works as the way, when there is active opposition to oppression, then we will come near to Divine blessing. And in that blessing, a strength is

produced which drives away the Evil of the world.

The congregation of the righteous stretches from east to west, from sea to ocean, and from island to mainland. A tie connecting people in many countries, allowing them to rise above every country; a country within a country, and a hidden order behind all orders. It is an agent of righteousness and guardian of light in the world.

A poem talks about uncle “chain maker” who constantly creates chains of flowers but throws them behind a mountain. The chain represents this unity of the righteous across the universe; each is like a flower chain, and the mountain is the agent of forgetfulness and Evil. We should go and redeem those chains and bring them back.

Chapter 13

That Without Spirituality None of the World's Problems Will Be Solved

IT IS NOT a small number of people today who are striving to make the world a better place, and many problems in the world today are known to many, but the solution is known to none. Some proposed a certain political structure; some proposed a certain economic structure; some proposed rules and policies. All these were put into practice throughout history, and they all failed and are also failing today.

The ancient texts talk about seven demons who rule the dark worlds. They are greed, jealousy, selfishness, and other vile traits. They are the ones who cause all the problems, all the wars and tears. Why people fight with each other? Because one man is driven by the demon of greed and fights with others to snatch their riches for himself. Why people fight with each other? Because one man is driven by the demon of jealousy, and to bring down others, he spreads enmity and disharmony in the community. Why people fight with each other ... All these myriad problems and complexities in the world are rooted in just a few unethical characteristics in man, and when they rise and become active.

These demons were known since old age to sages, and they warned

man against them, and how they might set the world on fire. If we see the world on fire again, we have to fight with these demons, and this fight is what we call religion. For religion, in its purest form, is all about developing virtues and eradicating vices and demons of all types. God is the living force and energy leading us to this purpose. Thus, religion is not just a cure for the person, but for the whole community and the world.

Without religion in its pure form, none of the problems today will be solved. All these political solutions, round tables, discussions on democracy vs. aristocracy, capitalism vs. communism, and all these rules and policies, none can solve any problem by themselves. For they do not solve the unethical nature of man. They miss that part which is the most essential. They are like a building that lacks the ceiling or a car that lacks the engine.

When the angels of the Lord were creating the castle of civilization, they had a pile of blocks: a block of politics, a block of science, a block of art, and others. They placed all these blocks together, and the castle was complete except the topmost block and cornerstone was missing. That was the block of virtue and the pure religion, without which the work remained incomplete.

At the end of this book, we appeal to all the well-wishers of the world and those who seek to solve its problems and soothe its pains, that they join the pure religion as the ultimate solution. Many are the crises that are ahead: environment, pollution, suicide, mental health, divisions, hatred, and others. They are indeed terrible, but there is yet another bigger and more terrible crisis ahead: the decline of spirituality and wisdom, which is indeed not just the cause of all other crises but also the inauguration of hell and the end of human dignity and civilization.

In this crisis, man becomes deprived of spirituality which is needed for mind and psyche to operate. It makes man unmotivated, weak, and without character. A lethargy will take over body and mind. He does not feel okay within, and feels okay to be part of every corruption and

destruction. He becomes ready to ignore all oppression around him and shrug at every call for justice; in one word: a doomer.

In a world with inhabitants like this, how can justice exist? How can goodness rule? Devising a new political structure will only change the form of the problem, and bringing a new president and cabinet only changes the agents of corruption, and devising new rules only creates new ways for fraud and profiteering. Nothing stops the wicked wheel other than religion and spirituality in its pure form.

The old religions became corrupted, but this should not become a reason to throw the whole idea of religion away. What has to be thrown away is the corruption and misunderstanding of religion, not religion itself. Religion in its pure form is the agent of change and righteousness. Those who dream of positive changes should wake up and walk in this direction. What we truly need is a spiritual revolution and the establishment of the community of the just, without which more and more unjust causes will happen.

Chapter 14

Prayer for the End of the Work and Forgiveness

WE HAVE explained topics about spirituality and the Holy Divine path we follow, and yet the explanations fall short. For spirituality starts with a few topics, but then each becomes like a deep sea with many jewels hidden at its levels, and each jewel again becomes the same. So no word of mouth can fully explain, and no sun can fully illuminate all aspects of this holy science.

The ancient injunction of “good thought, good word, and good deed” is only three phrases but can fill up three hundred volumes. And following this path seemed simple to us, but as we tried to do it in real life, many complexities and twists came forth, so that it failed us and we failed it. That is why the poet said: “This path seemed easy at first, but then befell many problems.”

So this work has come to an end, but our ail and ambitions have not. I ask God for forgiveness that this work fails to shed light on all aspects of Its infinite Light. Indeed, wisdom is like an endless river, or a shoreless ocean that never ends; its concepts are overlapping and converging in many ways like the wings of the mythical Dragon.

In that myth, it is stated that a holy man reached the height of Mount M, where the Dragon lived, and asked the questions of life, that

who are we, and where are we coming from. The Dragon showed him the vastness of heaven and earth and stated that there is yet another world beyond all these where flames are burning by themselves, and even angels do not know how.

And by this, I, who fell far from Mount M, just wave my hands from where I am with tears in my eyes. And I offer this work as an attempt on the path of righteousness and responsibility. Afterwards, if I ever feel sorrow, the reader's prayers can come as a remedy, and a calming call through this stormy ocean so that I may find solace in the rest of my life. And when the time comes to close my eyes and depart from this world, the remembrance of this work, and that I did my best at the best, will be my last thought before I fly to the vision of Holy Divinity, the Lord of Beauty and Truth in all the worlds.