

# **INNER LIFE**

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I leave this work to those who strive to expand their state of consciousness and work for the good of all human beings.

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## **INNER LIFE**

### *First Teaching*

These days, we must recognize that, apart from the natural phenomena that can lead to our suffering, we ourselves are causing the misfortunes we suffer. Furthermore, the more we advance in knowledge and capacity, the greater is the suffering that we cause around us and to ourselves. Although there are many human beings working for our well-being, they are only a tiny part of the whole of humanity. For this reason, it is worth looking at, and even better, investigating within ourselves in order to produce inside us what we want for the world. In other words, if we searched within ourselves, we would be able to find the solution to our problems by developing our inner life. But what is inner life really? What does that search involve and how can it be carried out? The fact is that not all of us know how to attain it; when we search within, we find ourselves in darkness and bewilderment.

Some believe that inner life is thinking a lot, self-analyzing, delving into their personal problems, continuously revolving around themselves. Others look for inner life by focusing their will on the pursuit of their own goals and personal objectives. There are also those who believe that inner life is continuously practicing meditation and prayer exercises.

It is beneficial to meditate on one's own needs and rely on firm willpower to carry out the purposes. It is also good to practice exercises of meditation and prayer. These practices help us to unfold and generally form part of the asceticism characteristic of spiritual life. But they are not actually inner life itself.

Basically, inner life is placing our spiritual values and principles above other values we may have, such as values based on what we want just for ourselves, without taking into account the hu-

man family. This value we give to the spiritual is not just a mental approach. Instead, it is the meaning we give to our existence when we place it within parameters that transcend us. To summarize, inner life is a vital, complete attitude that transforms our acts into spiritual life. Our fields of interest spontaneously shift towards a transcendent objective. We stop becoming scattered internally in feelings and thoughts that lead us from one thing to another, and instead guide our life by a single, spiritual intention.

So inner life is not limited to some movements of our mind and our heart. It is our habitual disposition, based on a spiritual ideal.

The search for inner life goes hand in hand with a deep knowledge that we have always possessed within ourselves the resources that will grant us the inner fulfillment we yearn for. It is a consciousness of being, a knowledge that every conquest will only be a re-discovery. In this knowledge, there is the infused certainty that we will reach the goal we yearn for, that we will fulfill our destiny.

Undoubtedly, this faith is not enough for our inner life to be possible. Nor is it enough to accept the postulate that material values are vain and fleeting. Accepting a postulate as good is one thing; guiding our life by it is something very different.

The challenge we face when we want to unfold lies in harmonizing what we believe we are with what we really are, and with what we yearn to be. Thus, the main effort in our spiritual life is directed towards achieving a unity between what we think, feel and do, and what we yearn to attain.

From the ascetic-mystical point of view, the level of inner life comes from the depth of our habitual recollection, the clarity of our discernment and the breadth of our state of consciousness.

Inner life is, therefore, a progressive and expansive self-consciousness—the new world that we can discover and conquer.

The first step towards inner life is learning to discern what is good not only for ourselves, but also for everyone. The next steps involve living in accordance with this good, until we can no longer differentiate it from ourselves.

Living guided by the highest values, identifying ourselves with the good, keeps us from the selfishness that often hinders our attempts to expand our consciousness. This allows us to focus our attention on our fundamental problems as human beings and on discovering ways to overcome them. It also helps us to place the different aspects of our personal problems within the great context of life. This dispels the illusions we may have, leaving room for a loving contemplation of life as an expression of the Divine Mother (the feminine image of God in its aspect of Creator of the Universe).

Thus, inner life is one of the forms in which the process of expansion of our consciousness is expressed.

## **PRAYER**

### *Second Teaching*

Prayer is an excellent ascetic-mystical means for stimulating our spiritual unfolding.

Prayer can be active or passive, intellectual or devotional, vocalized or mental. It is active when we express it through our works for the well-being of others. It is intellectual when we ground ourselves in our intellect in order to probe the mysteries of existence. It is devotional when we express it through our feelings.

Prayer can also be vocalized. It involves reciting psalms and prayers, as well as invocations and conversations with the Divine Mother or those who inspire our devotion.

It is also good to dedicate some time each day, if only for a few minutes, to pray for noble objectives: peace in the world, food for the hungry, education for children and youth, health for the sick.

Another important aspect of prayer is that it helps us to be able to remain in an inner silence which frees us from self-justifications and the images of ourselves that we tend to create.

When we endeavor to make prayer our living state, we find ourselves facing the limits of our understanding. We cannot completely understand the breadth of our inner states or the forces that come into play in our asceticism-mysticism. Learning the techniques intrinsic to states of prayer will help us to advance along these lines.

In addition, keeping our vocation of unfolding present is also a latent state of inner prayer. From this perspective, prayer exercises are conscious attempts to realize that vocation, small consecutive stimuli which progressively bring it into being in our interior.

Prayer leads us to ever deeper spiritual states, expands our feelings and thoughts, universalizes the foundation we use to prioritize our values, and offers the world thoughts and feelings of well-being and love.

Moreover, prayer infuses us with peace and security. It also expands our awareness of being and provides us with the certainty of being on our path, of knowing that we will reach its end.

Prayer also creates an inner state of participation within us. Because prayer leads us to live beyond our personal problems, it provides us with a more universal vision of our life, our work and our mission in the world.

In other words, prayer teaches us to understand beyond the limits of what our mind tells us. It grants us the gift of contemplating the divine mystery and the depths of the human heart.

Prayer helps us to develop patience with, and understanding of, human problems, and to offer peace, silence and love to the world.

However, even though prayer exercises can lead to noteworthy achievements, they are insufficient to attain a true inner life. This cannot be achieved only through an asceticism of prayer. In order to reach inner life, we must renounce to ourselves and offer our life for the good of all human beings. When we do this, we are not just engaging in prayer exercises. We are also keeping our intention, our attention and our attitude concentrated on our ideal of union with the divine through our integral participation with each person who forms part of the human family.



## **THE MEDITATION EXERCISE IN SPIRITUAL LIFE**

### *Third Teaching*

If the meditation exercise is practiced regularly and methodically, it is an excellent means for harmonizing active and contemplative life.

In addition, the meditation exercise helps us to discover our vocation and the way to fulfill it. It also trains us to respond in the best possible way to any circumstance, and to develop habits which stimulate our inner unfolding. For example, we learn how to stop digressing in order to think before we act, and to ask ourselves whether what we habitually think, feel or do is what we really want to think, feel and do. This helps us to recognize when our words or attitudes express understanding and acceptance, and when they reflect our prejudices or selfishness.

These habits lead us to center ourselves within, even in the midst of intense activity.

The perceptiveness we attain through the meditation exercise moves us to express it in our daily life. For example, we consider others and their needs. We become aware of our impulses and learn how to direct them. When our basic impulses appear, the meditation exercise helps us to channel them towards thoughts of goodness, assistance, understanding and acceptance.

The meditation exercise also teaches us to examine our opinions and deepen our faith. It also helps us to understand that, as extraordinary as our experiences may appear to us, they are not permanent, no matter how important what we have achieved may seem to us.

Meditation spontaneously leads us to live continuously learning from what happens to us, to others, and to the whole human family. This also enables us to advance naturally, step by step, on the path of our spiritual unfolding.

## **THE MEDITATION EXERCISE AND THE MEDITATION STATE**

### *Fourth Teaching*

When we identify with our emotions, our thoughts and our sensations, it is difficult for us to understand why we think, feel and act the way we do. This identification does not allow us to use our lives as a means for realizing our vocation of unfolding. The ascetic-mystical exercises help us to be able to work on the different aspects of our lives so that we may know ourselves ever better and achieve greater mastery over our destiny.

For example, mental and vocalized prayers, supplications and the discursive meditation work on the emotional plane. In addition, the affective meditation works on the plane of comprehension and imagination by using the power of feelings. It is a technique that allows us to know our mind and direct it with ever greater ability.

However, we do not always recognize the difference between an exercise and a mystical state. This can confuse us, since the difficulties we encounter in carrying out meditation exercises can lead us to think that mysticism is beyond what we will be able to achieve. We do not realize that these difficulties are common during the time we are learning these exercises. If we persevere in practicing them, we are going to know ourselves more and more, and we will reach the point of creating stimuli within us which sustain and promote our spiritual unfolding.

When we start practicing the meditation exercise, we tend to experience two different mental states. When we are doing it,

our mental and emotional states are quieted. This allows us to better observe the processes we are living. Once the exercise is over, a sort of split occurs within us—our daily life begins and we return to our habitual mental state. The opposition between these different mental states confronts us with the challenge of ensuring that the mental state we had in the meditation takes precedence within us.

When we become used to meditating, we understand that the moments of meditation and those of daily life gradually become one, until a meditation state is produced within us.

Thus, the meditation exercise is a way of leading us towards the meditation state. By practicing it systematically, we gradually reach a simple, alert mental state. This develops our perception and discernment, as well as our capacity for understanding both what we and others are living.

The simple act of starting meditation exercises by placing ourselves interiorly in the presence of the Divine Mother enables us to feel greater union with Her. These moments allow us to glimpse a state of permanent union and inspire us to persevere in these exercises.

## **VOCATIONAL DISCERNMENT**

### *Fifth Teaching*

We sometimes say that we cannot dedicate ourselves to our vocation even though we actually try to fulfill it. Perhaps, since we encounter difficulties and obstacles in what daily life demands of us, we use them to justify our lack of success in our attempts to unfold. This attitude can lead us to think that, although everyone can theoretically reach realization, very few can overcome the almost insurmountable difficulties that exist for those living in permanent contact with society.

It is true that we distance ourselves from contemplation and the search for the divine when we allow ourselves to be trapped by worldly values and by an excessive concern for our material problems. Nevertheless, if we focus on our vocation, we create the necessary strength within ourselves to face the difficulties inherent to life, in whatever circumstance we may find ourselves.

For this reason, it is worth remembering that everything will become difficult for us if we separate our spiritual vocation from our daily life. We create two parallel levels of experience: "ordinary" life and "spiritual" life.

We need to define and maintain the foundation upon which we sustain our life in order to be at peace with ourselves and unfold. There is no clash between unfolding our vocation and dedicating ourselves to our work, society and family. On the contrary, our daily life becomes a simple prayer when, while fulfilling all our obligations, we also nourish our discernment through the value of our spiritual vocation.

Once again, let us remember that placing personal desires and ambitions before the yearning for spiritual unfolding produces inner instability. This is the real origin of the conflicts and hindrances we may encounter in unfolding ourselves. However,

placing our spiritual vocation before all other values harmonizes our life because it leads us to fulfill not only our vocation, but also our responsibility to society, our family and ourselves. Spiritual realization is not something impossible to reach, nor is it unique to some persons. Nevertheless, it is only attained by those who decide to make their spiritual vocation the only foundation that gives a transcendent meaning to their lives.

Centering ourselves in our vocation leads us to attain a state of simple prayer that transcends the opposition between spiritual life and life in the world.

Through this attitude, we base our life on good discernment and responsibility to ourselves, to those close to us, and to society. And especially, we base our life on faith in the Divine Mother, in other words, on faith in the transcendent destiny of human beings.

Simple prayer and the effort to integrate our vocation with daily life gives us the power to cultivate that faith, that discernment and that responsibility.

## **THE DISCURSIVE MEDITATION**

### *Sixth Teaching*

The discursive meditation is a free dialogue between us and the Divine Mother, which becomes meaningful when we have faith in the divine, that is, faith in a reality which transcends our perception and towards which we direct our intention and pleas. It can also be a dialogue with what is purest within us, based on the highest ethical principles that we may have in our consciousness.

The discursive meditation exercise is composed of three steps: invocation, silence and response.

In the invocation, we appeal to our highest sentiments and try to activate profound layers in our interior. Even though we may imagine the divinity outside of us, in reality we seek it in the depths of our sense of being and existing.

The invocation produces an inner opening. We place ourselves at the Divine Mother's feet just as we are. We open our consciousness without fear, justifications and judgments.

The invocation is like an arrow shot towards our inner reality. It is an excellent means for knowing and accepting ourselves, and discovering the Divine Mother in our heart.

We don't need to be concerned if we repeat the same words several times in the discursive meditation. On the contrary, that repetition charges our will with strength, be it only through the suggestion produced through the repetition of the words.

The period of silence consists of our remaining in a receptive attitude, awaiting a response. Our interior remains quiet, as if we could sense the Divine Mother's presence in an ever more intimate way. Little by little, we become used to remaining in that presence without desiring or expecting anything, simply opening ourselves interiorly. We have the Divine Mother as a

witness to our inner reality, a reality that we ourselves do not know in its totality.

During the period of silence, we must remain quiet inwardly, without judging ourselves or imagining responses.

Silence has great mystical value. By silencing the habitual movements of the dialogues with ourselves, by no longer daydreaming, evoking appetites and desires, we learn to listen to our own voice, the voice of our vocation and the highest principles we try to have in our lives.

When we open ourselves completely to the Divine Mother in the invocation, when we place ourselves at her feet expecting nothing and without judging ourselves, when the silence we attain mutes the voices of our compounds, the response we receive springs from our most elevated part.

Summarizing, we could say that:

The invocation in the discursive meditation is a *search* within the depths of our consciousness for answers to the fundamental questions: Who am I? Where am I going? What do I want to be? What motivates me in life? It is imperative that we do not judge ourselves, but rather go deeper within what we discover.

The silence is an opening of ourselves to the *knowledge* that is revealed from within us.

The response is *discerning* what we should do with this knowledge, what direction we want to give to our life and to each step we take in it.

The discursive meditation is seeking, knowing and discerning which voice is the Divine Mother's within our consciousness, and then allowing ourselves to be guided by it or by what we perceive as transcendent in us.

## **ACTIVE MEDITATION AND PASSIVE MEDITATION**

### *Seventh Teaching*

The exercise of active meditation is a movement from the inside outwards. As we practice it, we have strong feelings. Then, we conceptualize those feelings and give them shape in an image we live and understand.

The exercise of passive meditation, on the other hand, is a movement from the outside inwards. We rely on a symbol—whether a word, an image, a concept—to begin an inner search. We deepen into that idea, as if we were merging with it, until we are the idea itself.

The exercise of active meditation is a work on a mental or affective state, starting from what we know about ourselves.

The exercise of passive meditation is an effort to reach a deep state of consciousness. It is based on symbology and a conventional representation of feeling and thought, and is supported by straightforward language. That is, the images we use in this meditation are based on interpretations coming from symbology and tradition.

When we are carrying out an exercise of passive meditation, we do it more slowly and use fewer images and words than in an active exercise. However, an exercise is not passive simply because it is slower. Meditation naturally becomes passive when it responds to our inner state of recollection.

In the passive meditation, we create an image and strengthen it by centering ourselves on it. This is done by slowly repeating the words that describe that image. To achieve this, we avoid rationalizing the idea implied by the image we are using. This concentration produces an increasingly simpler prayer within us, and gradually, a deeper state of meditation.



We may encounter some difficulties when practicing the passive exercise. For example, we can confuse this slower practice with the effect produced by our introspection when we focus the mind on an idea. Although repeating the words slowly helps us to concentrate on an idea, slowness is the effect and not the cause of the passive exercise.

But the fact is that we cannot suddenly become able to concentrate the mind on a single idea or a single image. That is why we need to diligently practice the exercise of active meditation in order to attain some degree of mental concentration. This will enable us to sustain and deepen into an idea.

The effort to focus our attention on an undefined inner image, using subjective pictures, helps us to reach a passive, almost non-rational understanding. In this way, we can naturally and gradually make the exercise slower. The words are then a reflection of a deep state of meditation.

The exercise of passive meditation gradually simplifies our prayer, enabling it to converge into a single idea, a single feeling. We no longer seek an outcome, such as a specific emotional state or a pre-determined consequence. Nor do we expect to experience emotional states, but rather depth, inner silence, recollection.

Recollection is a simple state; it rests on our consciousness of being. When we are motionless in our inner center, we simplify each step of the exercise and we succeed in turning the meditation into a simple state. In this way, meditation gradually becomes a deep and spontaneous subjective concentration—a true prayer that absorbs the totality of what we are.

Moreover, applying our will to attain a gradual passivity in the meditation exercise facilitates our entrance into passive meditation. The time may also come when prayer emerges from within us as a deep need and becomes spontaneously subjective. At that moment, our active exercise becomes passive.

The truth is that sometimes we meditate passively out of an inner need, without knowing the technique of the passive exercise itself, and without realizing that we are even doing it. Nevertheless, even though the Divine Mother may lead us by the hand to prayer, it is necessary for us to be familiar with and practice the technique of the passive exercise, since it marks the beginning of the illuminative pathway.

## **ASCETIC DEVIATIONS**

### *Eighth Teaching*

It is easy to confuse mysticism with asceticism's possible results. The most common deviation in the ascetic-mystical path is turning asceticism into an end in itself.

The objective of asceticism is to gradually predispose us to union with God. At the same time, it also produces secondary effects within us. Actually, every act we carry out produces secondary results, physical effects as well as mental and spiritual ones, in the totality of who we are. But since these effects are not permanent, they do not imply a true realization. That is why it is important that we not confuse the fruits of the life we consecrate to all beings with sentimental states that we may achieve by practicing certain ascetic exercises.

When we attain supernatural experiences through our ascetic practices, it is natural for us to want to repeat them. This repetition is useful until we master those techniques. But if we persist in seeking to gratify ourselves in sentimental ways, we decrease the value of our asceticism.

This does not negate the reality of the secondary effects, which are a result of asceticism. But we must keep in mind their value relative to the exercises that produce them. Many times, we remain trapped by the glamour of the immediate results we attain from our asceticism. This is because they are more attainable and attractive than an inner state of renouncement. The latter

involves sustaining our effort to unfold our state of consciousness through a growing sense of responsibility, the offering of our lives, and self-forgetfulness.

When our inner expansion results in an expansion of consciousness, this doesn't happen only at the level of our intellect or sensations. Those who achieve this expansion really live united with all beings. And that union is seen in their responses to their surroundings, to others and to the divine. When they understand something, that understanding encompasses their whole life and they commit to it completely. That understanding is also expressed in their concrete response to the needs and possibilities of others.

The path toward union with the Divine Mother is a high degree of empathy and inner union with all beings. This state is simple and is expressed in the deepest inner fulfillment that is radiant and expansive as well. Even though this state is obscure to the human mind, it produces unmistakable effects in those who live it.

## **RENOUNCING THE SENTIMENTAL**

### *Ninth Teaching*

Renouncing the sentimental is not just necessary in the process of expansion of consciousness; it is indispensable to making asceticism an instrument of unfolding and not an end in itself. Asceticism, like prayer, is sustained by the vocation of renouncement, where there is no room for personal gratification.

We use the expression "sentimental states" to refer to states of meditation or contemplation that produce emotional experiences. Due to their depths, these experiences help us to calm down within until we reach a vague sort of peace. It is as if our interior was still and our mind inactive. This makes it easy for us to suppose that this quietness is mysticism.

Sentimental states produce beautiful experiences, but they do not lead to a true state of participation with others and with everything else. To reach this state of participation, we must work on our sentimentality. When we renounce looking for emotional gratifications, our prayer is a state of participation that moves us to keep the needs of others ever present.

It is useful to note that we tend to seek contemplation because it can result in such emotional states. But we should also remember that it is essential to renounce the search for emotional gratification to reach union with the Divine Mother. And this stage, which we call purgative, should last as long as necessary to purify sentimentality.

Purifying sentimentality is not just transmuting the basest emotionality, or renouncing comfort and satisfactions. It is sublimating the affections of the heart. This is how we learn to leave the limited world of our own feelings and find love in service to others, in participation with their sorrows and joys.

In addition, when someone mentions renouncing sentimental states, we are often afraid that, without them, we would lose our incentive to continue with our ascetic practices. We may feel that without our sentimental stimuli, we would not have the strength to lead a life of renouncement, that living without those emotional supports would be like dying, or like living suspended in the void. It would really “pull the rug out from under our feet.” The hope of reaching fulfilment certainly supports our existence. But although it is useful to keep this hope alive, we must distinguish between over-stimulated emotions and the plenitude of the state of participation.

For this reason, we must not confuse renouncing sentimentality with an absence of emotion, or with not feeling attracted to anything. If we relied only on our emotions, not feeling them could lead us to painful and depressive states. Instead, when we renounce experiencing emotional exhilarations, we give birth to the need to assist, to help, to love with greater and greater fullness.

Sentimental spiritual states result in a great waste of energy. This is why they are followed by periods of numbness. It is impossible for us to remain in a state of heightened emotions for long, so afterwards it is natural to experience a state of inner aridity. The belief that we have lost our inner gift can make us suffer a lot at this stage. But although this aridity can last for some time, it helps us to purify our sentimentality.

Only a force more powerful than emotional movements can grant us inner stability. We can overcome our emotional swings through inner aridity. Through our renouncement, it is as if the Divine Mother were leading us by the hand to what lies beyond all feelings.

## **ARIDITY**

### *Tenth Teaching*

During the process of spiritual unfolding, we may experience two types of aridity: sentimental aridity and spiritual aridity.

We experience sentimental aridity when we are discouraged because we have not attained emotional gratification in our relationship with the divine, that is, when we were longing for consolation, joy or some heavenly favor. This type of aridity makes it difficult for us to persevere in our ascetic exercises. But spiritual aridity is when, having committed ourselves to our vocation of renouncement, we don't base our prayer on the hope for sentimental achievements.

We all may sometimes feel the closeness of the divine, even if only for an instant. But if we seek to repeat that experience in our ascetic exercises, especially in the meditation, without being able to reach it, we may experience a state of aridity that tends to express itself as sadness, lack of motivation, reluctance, suffering.

Some factors may affect our effort in carrying out ascetic exercises, even though they are external to those exercises. Here are some examples: inconsistency in practicing the meditation exercise or choosing an inappropriate place to carry out the meditation exercise and other ascetic practices. These factors may trigger states of sentimental aridity.

When we stop practicing the meditation exercise for a period, we need to make a great effort to take it up again. We rely only on our will, which is generally free of sentimental stimuli.

It is also possible that we may experience physical or mental tiredness when carrying out the meditation exercise. In these cases, choosing a suitable place to meditate may help us to have a better disposition in carrying it out. That is why it is useful for

the meditation exercise to be one of the first activities in our day. Doing so helps us to prevent tiredness or being over involved in situations which block our concentrating on the meditation.

Another factor to consider is the kind of work or habitual activity that is carried out in our surroundings. If we cannot rely on an atmosphere of peace and tranquility, it is possible that we will not be able to concentrate. Consequently, our feelings will not flourish easily. Under such circumstances, the meditation time may turn into a moment of suffering instead of fullness and inner richness.

Even under these circumstances—when we are not able to concentrate during the exercise—and even though our minds and hearts are unresponsive to us, it is useful for us to exert ourselves in doing so. In these situations, the exercise involves the effort to overcome ourselves.

At the beginning of our path of inner unfolding and the carrying out of a work on ourselves, a force awakens within us that impels us to broaden our consciousness and overcome the tyranny of our desires. This struggle may lead us to believe that we are attaining something. But time wears away this capacity for a sentimental response, and we are left facing our reality and the effort to overcome it. If we are identified with our feelings, we will live this state as a form of sentimental aridity.

As long as there is attachment to sentimental states, aridity is a painful experience for those who wish to advance in their unfolding. But when prayer is renouncement, spiritual aridity is its natural consequence. This prayer is illumined by moments of contemplation that are experienced as an inner void, free of sensations, as well as a profound recollection which leads one to living beyond all sentimental rewards.

When prayer is based at the level of participation—where the waters of desire and instinct do not reach—one experiences the



freedom of knowing and being. In that state, the only support is faith. The stimulus of pleasurable emotions is not necessary for those who seek only the wisdom of a transcendent state of consciousness.

## **THE MEDITATION EXERCISE AND SELF-KNOWLEDGE**

### *Eleventh Teaching*

Knowing ourselves helps us to be grounded in the field of our spiritual work. This inner stability stimulates our unfolding and leads us to participate with everything and everyone. The meditation exercises help us with this when we are honest with ourselves to see in an unclouded way what happens to us, what we feel, what we think and the intention that moves us to do what we do. Knowing clearly how we function is indispensable to being able to accept ourselves and broaden our state of consciousness.

In other words, knowing how we function, and accepting ourselves for who we are, are indispensable requirements for having the possibility of fruitful change.

When we do not know ourselves well, there is a struggle between the pairs of opposites within us—love and hate; generosity and selfishness; solidarity and self-centeredness. We are also moved by emotions, some strong and others fleeting. We are especially driven by our desire to win or stand out, which blocks our desire to participate and serve. When we recognize this ambivalence, what may happen is that either we look at our bad tendencies as our enemies or we rest on our virtues, feeling we are above others. When we concentrate too much on our personal problems, we cannot have an objective view of our inner states nor of our own reality. We remain in the dark regarding ourselves.

It's worth keeping in mind that we may imagine we are different from others, that we are more spiritual, simply because we are working on our unfolding. We may also think we already fully know who we are. If we cover our ignorance with a new spiritual personality, we transfer our problems to deeper levels; or we

negate those problems to prevent a clash between them and the ideal self-image we have forged. Instead of seeing ourselves as we are, we may see ourselves the way we imagine we are. This illusion can disconnect us from our reality. That is why it is important to develop the necessary simplicity and humility at the beginning of the path so that we may gradually get to know ourselves. The practice of meditation exercises guides us in attaining that.

When we practice the Discursive Meditation, we place ourselves at the Divine Mother's feet in the Invocation, without explaining, comparing, justifying or judging ourselves. We remain expectant during the time of Silence. In the Response, we receive what we need from the depths of our consciousness so that we can know ourselves better and accept what we discover through this process. Thus we become an instrument in our own unfolding.

In the Affective Meditation, we learn how our mind and our emotions work. We also learn how to guide the power of thought and emotion in order to be able to fulfill our vocation.

The meditation exercises not only provide self-knowledge but also implement our yearning to work for a better world. We learn to work on our limitations and conditioning, as well as to generate noble feelings and thoughts. This work on ourselves is a secure guarantee of goodness for others.

Step by step, we can transform our life, society and the world through self-knowledge, self-acceptance and fidelity to our vocation.

## **LOVE AS RENOUNCEMENT**

### *Twelfth Teaching*

The word "love" has many connotations. We often use the word to refer to a feeling that can vanish with time and changes. We also tend to apply it to our instinctive and passionate moments, and to companionship and friendship as well. Likewise, we call the inner search for fulfillment and freedom "love." All this can move us to seek, in what is passing, a feeling of love that will give meaning to our lives, and to feel betrayed if we do not obtain it. It is worthwhile for us to understand that we will not be able to attain inner fulfillment through feelings which wear away with time and change.

We especially need to understand that the path of love is the path of renouncement.

If we want to learn how to love better, we must work within ourselves to expand our state of consciousness. We must gradually encompass all human beings with our love and the reality we know exists. Why hesitate? The pathway to accomplishing this is the road of renouncement. Loving others requires that we stop thinking only about ourselves, as if we were the center of life and the world. In other words, it demands that we start to renounce to ourselves and stop living as if we had the freedom to act, feel and do whatever we please.

The more we love, the more we renounce to ourselves. The more we renounce, the more we expand our love by assuming obligations and commitments, and by taking into account what others might need from us. This love impels our own unfolding and likewise stimulates it in those we encompass with our love.

We are moved to work on our unfolding in an effective way when we expand our love. Within us, we apply ourselves to attaining sufficient control over ourselves so that we can recognize our

individuality; outside us, we express our love in attention and service to others.

Love based in our renouncement moves us to reserve our energy so that we can count on it for the good we can do for others. Moreover, we do not waste our mental energy, so that we can concentrate it on thoughts and works for the good of the world.

An attitude of service helps us to recognize our true habitat: humanity. Within our consciousness, we stop being the center of a tiny world in order to be only one among the many that form the human family. This helps us to develop a profound empathy with any person, whatever their ideas and circumstances may be.

Love that is the fruit of renouncement does not produce sentimental experiences within us. It is rather an experience of being united with all beings and which, at the same time, gives rise to a profound silence within us. This love, which is always present within us, is expressed both as assistance to those who need it, and as recollection and prayer. This prayer is not wasted on words or sensations. It is gradually transformed into a spiritual consciousness that is ever more full and complete.

To be able to reach this inner state, it is useful for us to remember that when we pray, and especially when we meditate, we should not try to repeat some sentimental state that we may have once experienced. Instead, we need to approach our interior with very simple words and thoughts, drawing ever closer to the unfathomable depths of the heart, where we may hear the Divine Mother's voice which speaks in silence.

Love—fruit of renouncement—moves us to offer ourselves without expecting or longing for anything. It turns our heart into the Divine Mother's dwelling.

## **CREATIVE IMAGINATION**

### *Thirteenth Teaching*

Working for a better world is one of the most beautiful aspects of our shared effort. For this world to become a reality, we must create it with our imagination, and sustain it as a possibility through the strength of pure thoughts and noble feelings.

Eastern philosophers say that we are what we think. Sustained thought not only transforms the self, but it is also materialized in the world.

The responsibility of those who renounce is immense. Their vocation leads them to create conceptual foundations for the future world.

How can we live up to this responsibility?

No isolated practice or exercise can promote this type of creative imagination. That is why the total effort of ascetic-mystical practices is needed.

Creative imagination needs a mind that is open to the new, as well as free of prejudices, ready-made ideas, and selfish feelings.

This attitude requires an intense work of purification and inner liberation.

It is very easy to dream of a world without hunger, violence and selfishness. But for the world to really change, we need more than simply dreaming of an ideal situation. We need to develop inner purity and strength to imagine the means to bring about that ideal world. Afterwards, we must use those means to transform that ideal into reality.

For example, to address the dream of a world free of hunger, one must imagine a way of producing more, of consuming only what is really needed, of creating surpluses that others may

make use of. This means a great capacity for work, discernment and control of individual needs, as well as creativity in improving the means of production.

To address the dream of world peace, one must imagine relationships which lead to peace and love among human beings, as well as practice, evaluate and improve the relationships one imagines.

We have many illuminating examples of those who used their creative imagination to respond to the pressing needs of human beings.

Gandhi imagined a way of applying the idea of nonviolence to liberating India from English rule. Afterwards, he experimented with this in himself, he taught it, and he practiced it through his social action.

Florence Nightingale responded to the tragic need for medical attention among the soldiers of Crimea. She imagined it, gave it form and concretized it with her work and example with a new profession—nursing.

Albert Schweitzer used his creative imagination to fund the health needs of African peoples and responded as a medical doctor himself.

Therese of Lisieux, through her great simplicity and wisdom, conceived of a mystical path that any person, without any special gifts, could follow.

Martin Luther King dreamed of equality among all human beings. Basing himself on Gandhi's idea of nonviolence, he found the means to transmit his ideal to millions of people and motivated them to put it into practice. His famous speech "I Have a Dream" is the inspiration and the path that still move and motivate many towards that noble ideal. And it will surely inspire countless people in the future.

Imagination becomes creative when, through fidelity to our own vocation, it purifies our thoughts and feelings, and when a concrete offering turns our dreams into daily reality.



## **LIFE COMMITMENT**

### *Fourteenth Teaching*

The path of Cafh is traversed through the Asceticism of Renouncement and the Mysticism of the Heart.

The Asceticism of Renouncement provides us with a method of life so that we may gain knowledge of ourselves. The Mysticism of the Heart offers us a universal reference point—presence, participation, universalization of consciousness—so that we may understand our experience and reach union with the Divine Mother.

How can a bridge be built between the Asceticism of Renouncement and the Mysticism of the Heart? That is, how does one connect an individual experience with a universal understanding?

The integration of asceticism and mysticism comes through a recognition of our vocation of unfolding and our commitment to fulfilling that vocation.

Cafh gives us an asceticism which is an organic system of norms. To attain the expected result, self-knowledge, asceticism is practiced as a system and not as isolated norms—some accepted, others not; sometimes practiced, sometimes not. That is why asceticism is introduced as a method of life. Therefore, asceticism is not something we add to our everyday life; instead, it is the way in which each person lives.

The mysticism of Cafh offers us a working hypothesis in the form of a universal vision of reality. It is a hypothesis because Cafh tells us that it must be experimented with and corroborated by our own experience. This is how ideas are transformed into individual knowledge.

We don't need extra time to practice asceticism. Daily life is our field of work—with its sorrows and joys, successes and failures,

light and shadows. When we are open to knowing ourselves, each minute of the day brings countless possibilities.

That is why we say that asceticism is rooted in our life as an organic whole, and why we also say that the mystical vision is experienced and corroborated.

It is not necessary to pursue novel ideas to realize mysticism. One only needs to be faithful to the commitment one has made. When this happens, renouncement appears as transparent and crystal-clear as the light that gives meaning and a framework to human experience. The transparency of this law reveals and clarifies the countless nuances with which our thought captures reality, just like a rainbow reveals the colors of the light spectrum.

The commitment of persons who renounce transforms their lives into laboratories of experimentation and realization of the human being's real possibilities. And, in this way, those committed persons universalize their experiences until they unite with all beings, the world and the Divine Mother

## **RENOUNCEMENT IN THE WORLD**

### *Fifteenth Teaching*

There is an extraordinary scope to the work done in the world by those who renounce. Each attitude, each understanding widens the way of perceiving reality. Each effort made for the good of all is a spiritual force that expands as far as the purity of the intention that enlivens it.

Persons who want to offer their lives are needed in the world to transmute violence into love, separativity into participation, ignorance into discernment, materialistic hedonism into realizations able to cure the world's ills.

The possibility of transmutation becomes a reality through what those who renounce attain. That is why they work consciously and deliberately on themselves, carrying out in their own lives what they want to offer to the world.

Those who renounce are Cafh's living teaching. Their adherence to the idea of renouncement is backed by their visible effort to unfold. Their endeavor to create new fields of possibilities fosters hope, because it proves the feasibility of a better world.

Those who renounce offer themselves wherever they may be, no matter the beliefs, races or other elements that surround them. The diversity of the human groups they become part of allows them to express their love, understanding and generosity to humanity as a whole. Those around them represent all humanity: They offer themselves to these human beings with the same enthusiasm, dedication and care they devote to working on their own or their family's difficulties. This is how the Message of Renouncement effectively reaches humanity. Those who renounce mirror their convictions in their lives.

Although the path of renouncement is the same for all Cafh members, the choice of the way of life that each adopts should

be a matter of deep reflection. They all decide whether to live their vocation within a family or not, and whether to consecrate their lives through Ordination.

The family is a suitable means for showing that, when a group of beings united by blood ties decides to live spiritually, unselfish love, acceptance, harmony and shared effort are possible.

Those who choose to live in the world without forming a family have an even greater responsibility before society. They use their considerable surplus of energy, time and resources to meet the needs of the Work of Cafh.

Those who consecrate themselves through Ordination know that their lives belong to all beings. And their renouncement to themselves bears witness to that.

Even though there are these options which allow each person to fulfill their vocation using the means which best support it, their offering makes no distinction between life in the world or life apart from it. What matters is the commitment, the responsibility, the dedication and the determination to carry out their mission.

Humanity needs simple, humble and straightforward persons who can use their own lives to demonstrate the possibility of unfolding. Humanity needs human beings who delight in life because there is harmony in their relationships. They have a free and open attitude, are ready to understand without judging, and to accept without discriminating: Human beings who show their compassion with good works, providing clear solutions to the problems affecting the world and all those who live in it.

## **THE IDEA OF RENOUNCEMENT**

### *Sixteenth Teaching*

The whole world is becoming. Everything that happens within the temporal parameter is born and dies. This ephemeral condition of apparent reality could lead one to believe in materialistic relativism, where only momentary satisfaction and gratification, without a thought for tomorrow, are worthwhile.

One of the essential tasks is to show that the transitory is the setting where human beings have their experiences in order to discover and focus on what is permanent: participation.

Participation is the manifestation of the law of renouncement within the framework of the transitory. This world is not based on transience, but on the permanent good of renouncement. The fact that a life of participation is the only one which brings well-being and happiness on this earth is proof of that. And this is something that should be very clear to those who wish to discover the meaning of human experience.

It is this eternal idea that must be sought, discovered and transmitted. The first step in doing so is to make the effort to ensure that what one does, says and thinks always reflects one's highest ideals; the effort to ensure that one looks at one's own life and everything around with eyes fixed on the Divine Mother.

At first glance, this appears easy. But this is an arduous and difficult task undertaken by those who are willing to live in total honesty with themselves, and with eternity as their reference point.

Those who live renouncement understand it as a law. That means they rule out every idea of moral, social or any other type of relativism in their lives. What is of value to them is what is permanent. This is what they choose and exemplify.

This implies guiding one's actions according to a single intention: participation. Expressions of this are: putting the needs of others before one's own; uprooting discrimination and prejudice from the mind; aligning decisions within the great framework of the reality we perceive, and always standing on tiptoe, trying to see a little beyond the horizon.

The words in this Teaching may seem exaggerated, theoretical or utopian. And this may be so. This is because living renouncement requires us to have the courage to go beyond the transitory, to see what is evident, even though it is covered by selfishness and ignorance. One needs the ability and courage of the child who, in the midst of the obsequious crowd, cried out that the emperor was naked, while everyone else, whether due to pressure from what others would say or out of fear, praised his nonexistent robes.