

## The Nectar: The Interior Castle

---

This prospectus is made available in writing for anyone in the world to study, to reflect upon, to consider, to visualize, to criticize.

If a person can stop running and pushing, and still his being long enough, his core will be shown to him. *Any* person who stops running and pushing, who stops trying to extract a sense of life and meaning from rapidly elapsing time, and allows the empty and dark awaring of his lack, will be shown real Life and real Meaning. At this moment, the stupidity and futility of the way he has lived is unavoidably evident, and persists as a torment for some time. So be prepared for this.

This is not debatable. It is true. But it is a matter of experience: the only way to know it is to fulfill the conditions and see what naturally happens to you. There is no way to stand back or sit back and analyze it or reason it out ahead of its moment. It is a leap, in a single moment, and this leap requires your whole being; if you refuse to be whole you cannot take the leap. The leap is precisely the courage to no longer be only half.

Then, after this experience, you will have no desire but to be alone, and to find and follow the non-rational “pathless path” to “the knowingness of unknowing” where the only real meaning is found. This is an ancient road, but one that cannot even be seen by those who refuse to be whole. Those who think that they already know everything worth knowing can’t see it, because they refuse to admit that they feel their lack. It is not much traveled in this day and age, a time when the human is pressured to remain rational all day, a time when egos are swollen and inflamed. But these conditions cannot stop it. It will be laid before *any* of you who look for it sincerely. There is a clearing deep in the jungle of the modern world, a clearing of infinite expanse. You will be led to it. It is the perfect, clear vision of your True Being.

The Interior Castle is not a political position or movement. These involve dialogue, plans and proposals, speeches, rallies, conventions, deliberations, leaders, budgets. It is not a religion. These involve precepts, beliefs, rituals, pastors, gurus, followers, budgets. If someone tries to organize, or manifest, the Interior Castle he does not understand it. It is solitary. One must walk this path alone, from beginning to end. The Real – nature, life, awareness, joy, beauty – is contaminated and diluted by a human when he joins with another human. The Real is inner, it is not outer. Its qualities are silence, stillness, tastelessness, emptiness, and non-action. These qualities *are* the core of the being, and one’s awareness of them in himself can take root if he does not stray from the prerequisite: solitude. As the awareness of the core grows stronger, the individual is transformed. This is a change in his inclinations. In fact, it is a reversal in the entire direction of his life. He does not choose this, he does not plan it, he does not

desire it, he does not do it – and yet it happens. He does though enjoy the deepening of the joy within, and wonders at the beauty of it, with the eyes of a child.

Beware of the one who tries to organize. He is just a manipulator, greedy to capitalize on a few ideas, for money or power or sex or other egoistic motive. Such a person has not yet found the core, the True Self, the Interior Castle. Do not look to someone else to confirm it, to lead it or to contribute to it. Best is to not even discuss it. It will lead to disaster if money, a political body, or a military or religious or humanitarian group tries to implement it. All are equally degenerating

What you see as outside of you can never be a means for you to find the Interior Castle within. The only value of what is outside of you is *neti*: it can show you where *not* to look, how *not* to find. Every society organized by men has led its people into slavery and confusion, such that they can't enjoy the freedom that is the birthright of every animal. Freedom is your nature. It is within you every moment. And the only path back to yourself is also within you. If you cling hopefully to something outside of you, expecting to find something meaningful there, you miss. Your entire lifetime is spent in the dark.

Do not let fear stop you. Let go of the outer, the others. The inner reality will be growing a root in any moment in which you do this. Your recognition of truth will grow; you will feel, stronger and stronger, its Quality. As this new Quality fills you, allow it. Be passive. The experience will overflow and what you see outside yourself will change. You need do nothing but not interfere with the process. Be still, and be attentive to this “kingdom of heaven” within, first and foremost. This non-doing may sound easy, but it is not, because you are contaminated, programmed, in such a way that you now think you must enact your own program for changing the outer. Your mind has been usurped by the outer. The artificial feels more natural to one who leans on the crutches of the world of human artifices. Let that world go. Let your sincerity and perseverance on your inner path penetrate to every part of you, and your needs will be met. This is the only way that it can work.

There seems to be a world around you, but it is nothing but a complex sensory experience. It is only a small part of what you can experience, a part limited by what your body's few sense organs can tune to. It is like a poem, constructed of a few images strung together in a way that appears to make something meaningful. But it is only a reflection, reflecting the condition, the Quality, of your inner being. If you have integrity, if you live an honest life, your world/poem will have this same Quality. If you lie, deceive, are pretentious, are “two-faced” you are split inside, all chaos, not integrated, so your world/poem will consist of all kinds of separate elements which don't make sense. In reality, *there is no world*. There is only a mirror.

So to begin on the road back to the Interior Castle, resolve from this moment forward to live by a new standard:

In this one moment, be as you are. Be real, honest, authentic, transparent, at ease, with no agenda or guile – in *this* one moment.

Remain alert, and aware of lapses, and progress will be rapid. You will be carried to your true destination which in truth you have never left and which is forever now.

So the Interior Castle need not be built. It has always been there, at the core of your being, calling to you who have strayed far from who you really are. As you remember who you are, it grows into a living force. As it grows within billions of people you will realize that there is no space which separates you, and the old world order based on space and time and geography, and deceit and pretentiousness and secrets will die. It will *have* to die, because what is a reflection if it has nothing to reflect? And it will be replaced by a world that is permeated by the quality of the New Humanity, La Nueva Humanidad, which is really the Original Humanity, La Humanidad Auténtica. When people truly be and enjoy their *self*, everything is of the substance of a joy and a beauty that does not have to be sought.

No outer program or revolution has the power to accomplish this. But it can happen within you – naturally, spontaneously, quietly, gracefully.

\*

Consciousness is the greatest Miracle. Who can account for it? But only an insane person would deny that he is conscious. Even the “I” which allows us to feel experiences depends on it; how would we know we exist at all if we were not conscious? Even if everything else, including this “I” is an illusion, still we cannot deny that we are conscious!

No human being – not the imbecile or the intellectual, not the criminal or the saint, is denied this power of consciousness. The one in a coma? When he comes out, ask him. He may tell you that even then he was aware -- in a very different way, but aware. Frequently, those who have survived a coma and talk about it are deeply sorrowful that they recovered. No one has to do anything at all to be conscious, to enjoy just being conscious. We are not the source of our consciousness. It is a free gift.

“The night don’t need your name,  
It loves everyone the same,  
In the morning it would be a sin  
To start thinking again.”

(From: *The Night* by Kevin Oberholtzer)

Thinking perpetuates plans, dreams, illusions, objects, and more thoughts in our consciousness. These contaminate the Pure Experiencing. The thinker never gets anywhere. He is transfixed in the tiny worn out circle of what he can think. And an intellectual, a person who thinks almost continuously, is like a soldier with the most powerful short-range weapon, who will not leave his battle station. He kills anything which threatens the perimeter of his own ideas. And so, he kills the possibility of something beyond/inside him being moved. Nothing new can develop. No matter how big and complicated is his pile of thoughts, no new dimension can be entered. There is no real insight or wisdom, nothing higher than his thought system. Since he thinks that thinking is life, he must kill anything which hints that maybe there is more to life than the reality he has put together through thinking. Maybe there is a deeper joy. Maybe there is a deeper beauty. Maybe there is a silence of the mind in which Pure

Consciousness can be experienced. The thinker shudders at such possibilities. He has to deny such possibilities. Constantly pushing and then leaning on his ideas is how he denies.

But our position is recipient. Each of us is a recipient of the power of consciousness. The recipient cannot be its own Source. This Source is not inside the recipient, somehow physical, somehow contained in the brain or elsewhere within the skin of the body. It is the common man's conception that the brain somehow generates consciousness, but anyone capable of concentrating on this idea and pondering it with an open mind will soon realize that this conception is ridiculous. Nor is the Source outside the recipient, infusing him with consciousness through some magical or physical umbilical cord. The Source of consciousness has no location. Our intellect is not big enough to wrap itself around that which encompasses us, any more than it can understand and explain its effect consciousness.

As long as we admit that our thinking is merely one of the faculties of the recipient, and that we can put it aside, the Source continues to infuse us and inspire us; we are free and we are safe. We do not put thinking ahead of the Source. Our Self, our nature, our consciousness, cannot be threatened by a thought, or by any object of consciousness. This incomprehensible consciousness has no worthy opponent. Though it never fights, it never loses.

We have no capacity, or need, to maintain the Source. We need do nothing to enjoy it, in timeless awareness, moment to moment. And in this passive, recipient, non-thinking mode, a Silence descends. This Silence is the Gateway to a dimension where joy and beauty deepen and renew themselves endlessly. We rest, aware that we are, and always will be, of the nature of the Source.

This pure, uncontaminated consciousness is the Interior Castle spoken of by Teresa of Avila. To dwell there, one need only empty the mind of all contents. But this is very difficult, even for a few seconds, for one who has lived many years by thinking, or for one who believes that the ultimate material pleasure is the ultimate possible experience. To these people, there is nothing beyond objects and thoughts; there is no consciousness without objects of consciousness. This is insane. It is impossible. Without some moments of clarity, of sanity, of ability to sense the pure consciousness and thereby to sense the reality of the Source of consciousness, one is never able to recognize the real and to distinguish it from the unreal. His "reality" will never be more than whatever confusion of objects he has been programmed to cherish!

If you are unwilling go within, alone, and meditate, alone, and clear your mind of all thoughts, alone, you will not find the Interior Castle. It is right there, closer than anything in the world that you feel you love. But if you have walled yourself off from parts of yourself that are more perceptive, more sensitive, than your thinking ability, you cannot see it or feel its presence. You will then conclude that it does not exist. But there is something in you more powerful than your intellect, more powerful even than your ability to love another human. Lay down your weapon, with which you arm yourself as your day begins. However, do not substitute for it blindly following someone else's thinking. This is just as bad as thinking that your own thinking is God. Probably worse!

Whoever you are, there is an Interior Castle for you. If you can't meditate today and find it for yourself, maybe you can tomorrow. You have just forgotten who you are. Life will move you toward remembering, because life always moves toward truth. When we think about our situation, when we try to analyze it, we may try to blame some object of our consciousness for our inability to connect with Pure Consciousness. We say a child who experienced mistreatment has been affected, and is no longer his natural "self," and that is why he behaves like a mean animal. We say that the thief steals because it is his habit – since he was raised in poverty his conscience has been taken from him. Since our minds are stuck in the world of illusions and the simplistic notions of cause and effect that we arrive at by thinking, we think that our world of objects must be the source of all problems. But nothing gets solved in this closed circle. There is no change we can make which will bring escape. All we need to do is relax and wait. Consciousness will clarify automatically when we return it to its Source. When we are busy trying to figure out how to make something happen, we can't just rest and enjoy our gift of being conscious.

When we think, we fall asleep. We begin to dream our ideas, which then take flight and run our consciousness. We are never at the helm of our thinking, though our ego thinks we are. It is like building dams to divert the flow of a river. The river was naturally flowing, and by entering into the is-ness of it and flowing with it we enjoy its beauty. But our idea-dams create stagnant areas, diseased areas. These then breed new life forms, bacteria, that we can't control. We can't breathe. We lose everything that was freely given to us, by working and building our dam-ideas! All that is left is the awareness that we have a mess to clean up. So we speed up to try to clean up the mess, to try to cover up the evidence that all we can do is make a mess of things. We descend to a level where we experience great relief when a few happy bubbles come dancing down the lifestream. We grab them. But they are just bubbles. Probably formed from smelly gases. They burst, they are carried away. We become anxious, preoccupied, frantic, bored without our bubbles, and we look around for more of them. We have forgotten that if we just relax, be passive, be as we are, just a recipient, we receive much more than a few smelly gas bubbles.

“You stupid and giddy boy,” said the mystic Sunyata to himself at the age of eight years. “How can you forget your Self like that? Remember! Remember! And you'll not laugh at such silly tricks and these merely clever antics. You'll not wallow in desires, nor fall for mean temptations. Remember! Recollect your Self!”

If we do not Remember, a second, deeper sleep descends upon us, and we add another layer of pretense: we pretend not to be miserable in our pathetic bubble of a dying body. We do “fall for mean temptations,” and we cling tenaciously to fleeting fragments of deteriorating stagnation, because once we deceive ourselves these are all that we can see. We grab something out of someone else's hand and claim a victory. We desperately struggle every day; our lie requires constant maintenance, constant tending, constant adding and subtracting of numbers looking for some assurance us that our time is productive. If we do not keep a vigil, our precious fragments float away downstream. Our belief in our happiness we make to look robust, a certainty rather than a mere belief, but it is a thin veneer which those who know us well can see through.

It often happens that a person will commit suicide without ever having shown outward signs of depression. He or she was miserable, deeply troubled, despairing, but manages

to look just like everybody else. He has also probably found a way to convince himself that he is not miserable. But when he relaxes this posture, he always realizes that he is, if the truth be told, miserable. In fact, statistics show that the person who threatens suicide, and openly admits his or her misery, is less likely to actually do it. And, sometimes it happens that a miserable person who hides his or her misery cannot even commit suicide to escape the situation, because of the fear that then his friends, and enemies, would realize just how miserable and phony he was! What a predicament! In his insane mind, he believes that his ego will somehow survive death! This is often the case with people of fame and fortune: miserable, miserly, phony people who have nothing but their illusion of their public image.

We are creatures whose home is a heaven. Every moment. In Reality, we never leave this heaven. But by constructing false walls within our minds, we can manage to imprison ourselves, to confine our experience to a hostile wilderness made up of our ideas, outside the Interior Castle. If we do not wake up and honestly face our situation, we die when these ideas die.

In times past, a few humans have always existed who break away from the herd of tittering sheep which is stampeding toward the precipice. These few stop. They allow all the others to pass them by. They wait. They sense that something is coming to them. They are not sure what it is, but it has a Quality that seems better, somehow, than running with the herd. As the others pass, and the few are left there alone, and they continue to be still and silent, a clarification occurs. They are heartened by a sense that to just be a recipient is a more natural, an easier way. Slowly something happens in their being: it begins to feel like something that is somehow more real than it was. It doesn't feel like a body with arms and legs and eyes and ears and pumping heart and breathing lungs. It seems free of these things. The stopping and the waiting seem to have a power – a power to bring about this gentle and subtle clarifying. It is a power, but it mysteriously comes from exercising no power.

Before, there seemed to be a solid and alive physical body. Now, that just feels like an object to experience or not experience. There is a seeing that it never was a solid and alive thing. It was a set of isolated experiences of moving, of breathing, of growing and changing. But, watching these experiences, and waiting, the few humans see the changing more clearly. Cracks are opening up in the experiences. There is a whiff of something fresh, there is a taste of something sweeter than sweet, there is a light that feels as if alive and wise, always just bright enough. More waiting and watching, and the mind is drawn away from the experiencing of bodies and toward experiencing what is in the cracks. The sense of the vastness of it, the purity of it, is irresistible. But even though the attraction is strong, the fear of losing the ability to experience the body again is also strong. The sheep part wants to run, to try to catch up with the others.

But there are a few men who even then do not run. *They do not feel right running with the others, so they don't.* The stopping and the waiting, so simple, so relaxed, are *doing something*, in some deep place within them. A voice tells them not to resist. Just relax. Each one, alone, notices a darkness descending. Or rather, he is now seeing a darkness that was always there but that he could never see. He feels how crude is his body, how scarred it is from all the struggles, how weary, how foreign, how fragile. He feels how harsh is the world that this body must face, every day, every moment. He feels how

senseless are the noises and the commotions that the other sheep make. The darkness is revealing to him all these things.

The lie was comforting. But the truth is more comforting. To know that there *is* a truth is comforting. He, this one who is about to discover who he really is, begins to feel an intimacy with the darkness so real that he is willing to endure the seeing of all the horrors that it is revealing to him. He prefers this to going back to where he was. He makes a decision to not return, but this decision makes everything muddy again. He realizes that he has no choice now. All that he can do is make no decisions. He is destined to wait, in silence, in stillness, in isolation, in the darkness, and nothing more. Before, time was precious to him, and he is accustomed to using it, filling it. Now, time is meaningless, and all that he can do is to let it keep slipping away into timelessness.

The sheep who are still running, bleating and not in unison, unaware that they are very close to the precipice, look back in horror at this poor lost soul who is getting nowhere, seemingly unable to run, unable to keep up. He must be sick. But in that moment when they are all peering back through the dust of their fear -- a fear of they know not what -- they all tumble over the precipice and fall silent. Now, all is silent. No bleating. The silence seems to be the only thing that has the power to survive anything. And as the dust settles, all that remains, in the center of the vast clearing, is the silence of the inwardly silent and still and passive one. He would be invisible, were there someone else there who was not also dwelling in the silent Interior Castle. But the silence of a silent being is visible, is palpable, to another who is also silent. These two just ARE, each like a king in his castle, and they just recline and recede, and they enjoy Just Being Conscious.

In 1577, when Teresa of Avila, Spain wrote of her experience of all this, she referred to it as *El Castillo Interior*. In a period of four weeks she wrote, with a plume and ink and parchment, a book of 150 pages, in a state of mind that was so intense and concentrated that it challenged the Catholic church's doctrine that no ordinary human can do this. Her consciousness had left her ordinary body behind in the darkness, and she claimed that she had had direct contact with God. True communion. And she stated at the beginning of *El Castillo Interior* that God said to her: "The soul of the just man is a paradise in which I take my delight."

The quality of this woman was such that she could not be accused of fabricating her experiences; she was never excommunicated or killed, as many others before and after her were. She was left to found a new order of hermit nuns, and she had many followers, including Juan de la Cruz, who became the father confessor for the nuns, and was himself a mystic who was later canonized, as was Teresa. Curiously, many of her followers were later excommunicated or killed for following her way. During the past five hundred years, there have been a few others like her who openly tried to describe their ecstatic experiences, but most just keep quiet and live solitary, invisible lives. Most do not associate with any organized religion. The Interior Castle is of necessity a very solitary path. Trying to advertise it or to convert others to it ends in disaster.

Our lives as a part of a civilized society are false. We are violating our true nature whenever we participate. We are ignoring that sense within us which incessantly reminds us to remain interior, silent. But, probably since before the time of Muhammad and the time of Jesus, societies have had no use for mystics, and governments have

found excuses to banish or kill them. The more recent “civilized” societies are even less tolerant, branding such people as mentally ill and dangerous, and applying “correction” through medication, incarceration, shock treatments, brainwashing, ridicule, and constant social pressure to be “normal.” And, it must be said, probably most of the people who claim to have mystical experiences have not been able to stabilize in the state of the Interior Castle. Some are for some reason of their own claiming something that they have not really experienced. Others, such as those who intoxicate or chemicalize themselves, are caught in a state between two worlds, unable to let go of the security and reassurance of the normal population and ordinary consciousness, but unable to deny to themselves that they have had a few true mystical encounters.

Now, into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, mankind still has the same nature as always. The Interior Castle is really our only true Home. No matter how much the world tries to progress, tries to become a heaven, to meet all of our needs and desires, it can’t do it. We yearn for a Real Life, a complete and fulfilled life. When we try to live intensely in the exterior world, when we “live it up” through our bodies, we find that there is, invariably, sooner or later, another side to that coin: we have to live it down. In the Interior Castle, joy and beauty flow naturally, coming to us with no effort on our part, and no “bad karma.” But in the world, to quote C. G. Jung: “For every benefit you receive a tax is levied.” Not only do we have to work for our joys and carve out our experiences of beauty, but they are always reversed. We die, like Alexander the Great, empty-handed.

We all realize this truth -- eventually. We all have glimpses of our powerlessness to supercede this truth. It is no success of any kind to delay this realizing and deny that we have had these glimpses; just more of passing time in the dark. But most of us – especially the educated – keep on trying to figure out a way to outsmart our own karma. We live by our ideas, we live for the things we can accumulate, but eventually we get caught in the quagmire of those very same ideas, and in enslavement to the very things we claim as evidence that we have “won.” The nature of thinking is that just at the moment when an idea seems to be on the brink of solving a problem, it creates a new problem. But the greatest danger is that there may be a point of no return: trying to build a life in the exterior world based on ideas and plans is habit-forming, and we can get so deep into the addiction that we can’t stop even when we want to. We lose control of our own minds. Peace of mind is impossible. Our minds are runaway animals. We are insane.

Virtually all civilized people are insane most of their adult lives. They need somebody or something else to tell them what to do, what to think, and when and where, and even why. They have no inner guide or conscience, and need to be policed, threatened with injury or loss if they violate some external standard which may not even apply to them. Their world is totally false. The Interior Castle, their home, is still just as alive and real inside them, but they can’t get back to it. The false world has robbed them of all that is real.

\*

Here we offer you nothing that you don’t already know – no new ideas to cling to, no additional thoughts to cloud your already dark consciousness. If you actively try to

ferret out meanings in the words you will be frustrated. The only way to approach this writing is to passively let it impress you at some forgotten level which requires no thinking, and no judgment. Instead of trying to make the Interior Castle into an object, let your vision shift so that *you* become the object. Let yourself be turned inside out. Interiorize. Break away from the herd, and from all herds, all those with whom you feel that you can communicate, with whom you feel that you have established some consensus, some understanding, some rapport. Let everybody else go on merrily pursuing their plans and ideas and dreams of a future happiness or accomplishment, while you just wait and watch and listen to whatever the present moment is telling you when you are alone. The wisdom is always “in the air” in the moment. *This* moment contains all there is to know. Listen to it; accept what it whispers. One never finds out what he is connected to if he does not stop and pay attention.

A dog is born an animal, lives the life of an animal, and dies the death of an animal. That is all there is to a dog. He never looks for anything deeper. He has no choice to look for anything deeper. He cannot stop his instinctive, knee jerk reactions. He is “stimulus bound,” at the mercy of whatever stimuli are around him. But, mercifully, he does not have the power to regret anything. He cannot see what he is missing by being a dog and not a human.

A human is not born an animal. He can descend to that level, he can live like an animal, he can limit himself to knee-jerk reactions to events and ideas, but he is not compelled to do this. He has the capacity to reflect. And he has the capacity to maintain, preserve and nurture this capacity to reflect. If he makes use of this capacity, if he looks beyond the stimuli in the world, he will remain dwelling in a particular “space” that we may call the human soul. If he stores up the energy that animals expend in reaction to whatever occurs to them from outside their bodies, he re-creates himself. Very few humans are able to remain the wholesome spirit they are born as; most lapse into a sort of sleep of ideas and beliefs. Then, if they want to escape the confines of these ideas and beliefs and experience their whole being, they have to do what Jung referred to as “soul work.” That is, they have to reverse all the effects of cultural conditioning, somehow disable all the things that have been stuffed into their heads. They have to revive their capacity to reflect deeper and deeper, to concentrate on the self. It feels like a re-creation, a re-conception, a re-birth.

It is not a tragedy if a dog does not do this. The dog just dies, unaware of having missed anything. He has not missed anything because he was not capable of being anything but a stimulus-bound creature in a herd of stimulus-bound creatures. Perhaps there are humans who are just like dogs, with no capacity to reflect. If so, it is not a tragedy if they never discover any other possibility, any other potential. Their death in this state is just a meaningless incident in the chain of meaningless incidents that was their “life.” However, we know that at least some humans feel within them something unfulfilled, untapped. This separates them from the dog. Now, everything changes. Now, the inquiry into whether this feeling is a sign of some real deeper potential, or is just imaginary, becomes important. And if this human does not on his own initiative embark upon this inquiry, he will *always* – right up to his dying breath – feel that something important was missed. This *is* a tragedy. The animal’s life could never have had any meaning to the animal because it could not reflect. But the human’s life has the possibility of having meaning to the human. Another human may look at him and shake his head “No, that person’s life is meaningless and will always be meaningless, just like

an animal.” But someone else’s opinion or point of view is not important in the Interior Castle. If you yourself do not feel that every moment of your life as a human is overflowing with meaning, you are missing something. If you are living the life of an animal and still honestly feel that your life has all the meaning it could have, you are on the right track regardless of what anyone else may tell you.

Those whose profession it is to sit with dying people, and perhaps counsel them through the dying process, will tell you a very interesting thing. Many people, after finding that they have a terminal illness, will go through a period of fear and of “preparing to make the transition,” and then at a certain point they declare that they are ready to die. Whenever asked, or whenever they reflect, they reaffirm that they have accepted death. They may give many outward signs that this is true, such as giving away precious things, discussing their last will, their funeral, their burial, etc. But then, in their last few minutes, they panic. They suddenly realize that they are *not* ready to die. They suddenly realize that there is something of such importance that they need to do that they will fight and struggle to get out of bed and run to do it. Dying people have injured themselves, and others; whatever this is it is so powerful that it gives the dying person a temporary superhuman physical strength and force of will. And this powerful thing, deep in the psyche, has been suppressed by the thinking mind. The person has been using his thinking power to deceive himself, to dissociate from something extremely important about himself. Something very basic. This is the problem with thinking. It can seem to have avoided or solved many of the important issues and anxieties of life but has not resolved anything.

In this sense, the human is cursed. Dogs are not cursed with a possibility that if it goes unfulfilled during their lifetime becomes a source of tremendous torment. Humans are. Or, at least we must admit that *some* humans are. And by casual observation of the pace at which man tends to live, and of all that he strives for every day of his life, it is probably fair to conclude that the vast majority of humans possess the awareness of this untapped potential within themselves. There is something that they feel a need to do before time runs out. Or at least, there is something that they feel a need to reflect upon, some state of mind they must enter, some condition they must fulfill, before death. This tells us that some people acutely feel the torment, the sense of urgency that something important is unfulfilled. Their life, their time, is *not* meaningless to them, as it is for a dog; no dog would ever speed up to the pace of civilized man all day every day, even under the whip! Also, casual observation, of oneself and others, tells us that some humans appear to have achieved a measure of peace with themselves, a serenity that comes from having touched this place in themselves, having fulfilled “the purpose” of their existence. They are less frantic, their thinking process slowed way down, or even stopped. They live according to different “rules” than the rest of people; they do very little, but everything seems to work out in such a way that the serenity that has come upon them is not interrupted.

There is no point in trying to convince another human that he is missing something, that he has deep within himself some potential that he does not know, or that he is deceiving himself. No matter how ardently and compassionately and brilliantly you present these arguments, they cannot penetrate beneath the level of thinking: mere beliefs, mere points of view. And, who does a person think he is, trying to pass judgment on another? Maybe that other really *does* have the nature of a dog, with no capacity to reflect. Just

because he is in a human body does not mean that he is endowed with the same things that some other human is endowed with.

And so, it is always best to just *leave everybody else alone*. Don't bother them with your mystical or spiritual or religious plans for their future! If you are articulate and appear sincere, someone – or an entire flock – may be riding along with your efforts. Draining you. But then what will happen to them when your attention is on other things, or other people? Or if you die? Perhaps the effect on them will be worse than if they had never laid eyes on you. The advice given by the ancient Taoist teachings is to simply be passive and silent. If someone recognizes something in you that they want, let them come to you. If they come, of their own accord, sing them a song, tell them a parable, then leave them alone and hope that they go away and figure it out on their own, or figure out their own way to approach you. If you have a desire to teach, you are not yet ready to teach. If you have a desire to organize, you are worthless to a sincere seeker of the Interior Castle, for it can't be exteriorized. And you already have enough on your plate trying to digest your own portion.

Once a person has realized through reflection who and what he is at the core of his being, he passively radiates. Only those who are ready to benefit from what he radiates can feel it as an attractive force. Those who are resisting in their lives whatever he radiates feel it as a repulsive force. A dog smells his own fear in a person. In this way, things settle into their natural place, each one in a rhythm of life that is perfect for him, with no meddling. No teachers or masters or gurus or pastors and no students or followers or disciples or sheep. All are finding and re-finding themselves in a harmonious interplay. All that can be awared will always be awared, and that is all that can ever be awared. It is a moment to moment perfection, effort-free.

It might seem that finding and dwelling in the Interior Castle would be much easier if outer conditions that might be conducive to such an inner experience could be set up. We all look for a place to hide from forces that threaten where we want to go and what we want to do; most of us look for people who seem to be in the same boat as ourselves. It might seem that a quiet place, with walls and fences to block out the noise, would speed up our process of exploring the Interior Castle within. It might seem that excluding people who are not “on the same page” would also be conducive. However, such strategies will ultimately backfire in your face. The “Why?” will become apparent as you progress on your own journey.

Always remember that the Interior Castle is not distant. It is upon you. It permeates you. It is always more “I” than I am. It is not “me” the object, it is “I” the subject. Here we offer four questions that you may ask yourself, that may help you to remain connected to this the True Self. Ask yourself these questions as continuously as possible in the course of your day:

1. In *this* moment, am I conscious of just being conscious? Am I enjoying this experience? Am I thankful for this gift?
2. In *this* moment, am I being real, honest, authentic, transparent, and at ease? Am I without an agenda, without guile?
3. In *this* moment, am I making a shift toward greater passivity? Am I allowing whatever is happening to happen? Do I feel like I am not interfering, not trying to influence things?

4. Am I living in the thought-free state of joylessness? Am I aware of my desires and my judgments in my thoughts and feelings? Am I able to let go of them?

Why joylessness?

Hendrik Ibsen, poet-mystic, wrote these strange lines:

“He who bends to himself a joy, his winged life he doth destroy.  
But he who kissed the joy as it flies, lives in eternity’s sunrise.”

And, in another place he wrote:

“Soul, be faithful unto the last.  
The victory of victories is to lose all.  
The sum total of your loss constitutes your winning.  
Eternally we possess only that which we have lost.”

Once you have identified with a mortal physical body, your fate is suffering, joylessness, loss, and death. The outer world can offer only temporary relief through distractions which keep our minds off the truth of our situation. But living in the lie further worsens our situation and the amount of pain that we will have to undergo. The only escape is to accept joylessness. This is not some stupid inane or self-deceptive joke. It is a secret that has been handed down since ancient times in many different cultures. The great mystics rarely laugh, or even smile. They stay connected to the truth of the human condition. This serves as a constant reminder to them to let go of their identification with the body, and of the false hopes that through it anything worthwhile can happen. They let their exterior castle fall to ruin. Then new energy accumulates, and an automatic shift of the energy to the Interior Castle occurs. Circumstances change so that the mind is free to enjoy the Interior Castle experience. No effort or sacrifice as such is required; what is let go of is not felt to be a loss, or a trial. This is how the mystic fulfills the teaching: “To him who hath shall be given.” The one who grabs for all joys from the outer world, especially if he robs them from others, is giving up the power to be given the deeper Joy.

In a word, the ego, the image that one has in his mind of who he is, is the problem. One who has a self-image is always seeking to fulfill it, but never succeeds. Ego has many tricks; its survival depends on deception, especially self-deception. Thus it makes everything complicated, and obscures the plain and simple truth which is self-evident to the simple and the humble. It destroys true conscience, and sets up in its place a substitute which distorts the mind, the heart, and the conduct. The substitute impedes our approach to the Interior Castle, and may even make it impossible for us to even imagine that we have the potential for such a level of living. We now turn to a presentation of these substitutes, or false “consciences.”

\*

It is only when one is conscious of and as his innermost core, the true self, Anandamaya, the Interior Castle, that he has his true conscience to guide him. Each of the five layers of a human being has an “inner guide” or “intuition,” and this tells the

person what is “right” and “good” for the preservation of that layer, and tells him what might threaten that layer. Those for the outer four layers, then, are imposters of true conscience, keeping these layers “safe” from their replacement by the deeper true self. They hinder the person’s deepening, and thus mislead him from the true self; they are dangerous to the soul.

For example, if the person is attuned primarily to the outermost layer, the physical body and its world, he will have a very strong sense of where he is in spacetime and of any dangers to the health or life of the body. His sensitivity to such things will be greater than that of others. “Something is telling me not to eat that piece of fish” or “I feel like taking a different highway home tonight” or “I shouldn’t say that or something bad might happen to me” are the nature of the experience. Or, it could be a very acute sense of smell, or “eyes in the back of the head.” He may consider this faculty his intuition. It is a superficial kind of conscience in the sense that it makes judgments. A successful athlete must develop and refine his ability to learn the rules of his sport, and be able to sense how far he can push them. A successful businessman must know his commodity well enough to be able to unconsciously predict certain changes, and, again, know his limitations. To all appearances, his decisions may look like matters of “conscience.”

A person strongly attuned to the second layer, the emotional body, will have intuitions stronger than other people to keep things intact in his emotional life. This includes so-called “women’s intuition.” She (or it exists in men as well) can sense what will upset her, and what may bring her a temporary bubble of hormonal excitement, and what will have these effects on others. What is right and good for her and for the people to whom she is attached, and what is bad and wrong, promoting the welfare of her enemies or the people she fears, is the false “conscience” of this level. Basically, it tells her how to control and maintain order in her personal relationships and to have the kind of emotional life she wants. Empathy and sympathy are her virtues, but only for those on her side. Both empathy and sympathy are types of false compassion that are cultivated; they are contingent on ego needs. They are based on fear: the fear of upset to one’s emotional life, and the fear that others will find out that the empathy is based on the primary fear. In societies where survival depends on belonging to a cohesive family, “heart” or “corazón” is the most important virtue of all. Things have to “feel right.” The sensitivity of this feeling type of “conscience” can be highly refined, even telepathic.

The person attuned strongly to the third layer, the intellect, automatically makes judgments of right and wrong based on ideas previously taught and currently held. What we call “a social conscience” is formed. The set of mores abided by and demanded of others is inculcated by the society or organization to which the person wishes to belong. The goal, of course, is the survival of that society or organization. People who regulate their lives according to a cultural dictum, or commandments of a religion, or who have studied psychology and adopted definite ideas about what is normal and what is abnormal, and then try to imitate, or who have a political position and follow its party line of what should be, what is just, etc. are examples. But this kind of moralistic, thought-out “conscience” can be all ideas. The intellectual part of the mind may be completely closed, split off from both the other three false “consciences” -- including corazón -- and from the true conscience. The person may develop strong convictions around certain ideas, and be willing to die for these ideas, but they are still not from the true conscience, and tomorrow he may receive some new information that changes his mind! The intellectual conscience may be puritanical or libertarian, but

either way it is fundamentally the same: the person sees ideas which support his system and people who behave in accordance with it as good, and ideas which threaten it and people who behave in violation of it as bad. It is the “Judging a book by its cover/ it has to look right” mentality, and it breeds intellectualization, prejudices, and ethnocentrism. It may take a world war before one can see the value of any position on right and wrong other than his own.

At the fourth layer of the human, the layer of wisdom, is a false conscience which is more open and flexible than the three above. There are universal values at the foundation of this person’s sense of right and wrong, such as “man’s inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” or Confucius’ urgings that we practice the three virtues of compassion, harmony and creativity. The person of wisdom is aware of all three more superficial layers of his being. He draws upon them intuitively to arrive at what seems best at the moment for the welfare of all. He is thus very sensitive, and functions in a more whole manner, a less egocentric manner, than the above-mentioned three. He would feel in his body, perhaps in the solar plexus, the “sickness” or “uncleanness” of some things and the goodness or wholesomeness of others. Shame and a sense of human dignity are felt strongly, and guide his conduct. These are the ways in which the “conscience” of this level speaks. Even this wise person, however, is somewhat confused and contradictory. At times, he is in touch with the Interior Castle and true conscience, but at other times is concerned with actively trying to preserve, and improve, things at the more superficial layers, again for what he perceives to be the good of all. We would tend to say of him “This is a noble person” and he is admired for the breadth of his vision and his self-disciplined and even self-sacrificing consideration of the concerns of all people.

But the true conscience is distinct from this. It defines a fifth, the deepest layer, of the human being, called in the Vedas “Anandamaya” and by Teresa of Avila “The Interior Castle.” This eye is neither learned, developed, or refined, nor is it determined by the circumstances of outer life. It is inherent in all of us, strong and sensitive from birth and probably from before birth. But it is very, very delicate. In every human’s life there are times when the demands of the other four layers overshadow it. In most people in primitive, simple societies where as children they were not so immediately exposed to dense and intense sensory overload, they are able to some extent to sustain conscious awareness of the messages from the true conscience – which means that they have been able to stay conscious of their innocent nature. On the other hand, complex high tech competitive societies grow up around a package of lies, deceit, pretense, cover-ups and cruelty – “man’s inhumanity to man.” Every young child recoils from this with his entire being. This wholesome recoiling, not based on ideas, judgments, or emotions, is the true conscience. A person still whole and natural and honest feels torn apart by the unnaturalness of an atmosphere of brutality, artificiality or deceit. He is unable to relate to it. To him, it is a break from Reality. It is a torment to him; he feels as if his life (i.e. his soul) is being killed. And not only his, but since he experiences no separation from others, he feels for them the same. But a whole and innocent person will take no stand against anything; he accepts all as part of the All, but does not participate in anything he feels is false. So, at a very early age, in a society of sensory overload and intense social pressure, his delicate true conscience may be overwhelmed. When he loses contact with this source of guidance he may grab for one of the four substitutes.

A child who has not suffered such a sudden and traumatic artificial dissimulating atmosphere, whose raw conscience is still intact, will feel the torment of any lack of innocence, but if left alone will probably be able to listen to this torment as it guides him back to his sense of innocence. If he is not able, he will be thrown into a great state of confusion, and follow the same course as the vast majority of humans: a “Holy Terror” which is relieved, driven from consciousness, by the development of an ego and ego defenses.

Hence, the problem with child abuse. First, we must caution how one interprets this, for no experience comes to someone that he has not attracted, and that cannot accelerate his return to his original innocence. Being abused in itself is not the real problem. It does though present a serious challenge to the victim to look deeper into his or her being than the physical body or its emotions or mentalistic ideas of right and wrong. An innocent, aware person – one who lives by the guidance of the true conscience -- is never abused. The part that is egoistic is what is abused. The innocent part of the child feels tremendous torment if he or she has allowed himself to be pressured into committing or permitting some act which violates what he feels deep down to be right and good. He feels guilty about even the slightest complicity. His entire being feels dirty, contaminated – heavy and dense with a burden that will not be relieved until it is thoroughly atoned for. That is, the child’s ego’s judgments against the person who perpetrated the act must be transcended. Atonement is the correct word, in the sense of “at-one-ment” and not in the sense in which religions usually use the word. The true conscience of the innocent part of the child, still strong, sensitive to even the smallest transgression, is calling to the child to clean up his one tiny area of judgment, of egoism. The earlier in life that a person faces this challenge and lets go of his judgment, the more likely it is that he will be able to dwell constantly in the Interior Castle. This is how being abused can bring about a speeding up of one’s journey back to the pure experience of the true self.

Being treated as merely a body may be “normal” for the average teenager or young adult who has grown up in materialistic and egocentric societies, but to a person of any age who knows the true conscience, this is a foreign, disgusting, bizarre, and unreal experience. So first, when an incident begins he is challenged to relax and accept it. If he succeeds in this, the perpetrator will stop. If the child can feel the deep pain in this person who has completely lost his connection to his own true being, and can feel his confusion and desperate neediness, the perpetrator will stop, because the act has fulfilled its karmic function.

But if the child becomes too afraid to remain sensitive, and leaves his own true conscience to preoccupy himself with his own body, or ego, or if he resists, the assailant will not stop. If the child actually begins to comply in order to avoid further pain or humiliation, and especially if the child enjoys the touches of a gentle perpetrator, as often happens if it is a parent, then afterwards the child will feel guilt. These are a mixture of ego feelings and true conscience. Ego may rise up and call the child a coward for not resisting, or a pervert for enjoying it. Both are betrayals of the True Self and serve ego. After the act, in the process of reflection, the person can arrive at the insight that the act was not wrong. It occurred to open his eyes to a blind spot in his being. It is an aid to ego diminishment. So, ironically, it may be more difficult for an abused child to overcome an incident of gentle seduction in which he accepted rewards than an incident in which he was physically overpowered. The former may produce a

lasting obsession with sex of a specific type, the latter may produce a hate and a desire for revenge on sex partners. Each offers challenges to letting go of ego. So, paradoxically, the experience which robs the child of his innocence and torments him because it is such an extreme violation of it, gives him or her an opportunity to look at his egocentric part and to eliminate it, and to thereby return more quickly to his original innocence.

We should note here some distinctions. All humans are permeated by true conscience. Permeated. This is the defining characteristic of what it is to be human. And, it is what determines even the physical layer, our body composition and features. These are mere symbols of something deeper in the personality or character of the being, and sometimes we can clearly see the meaning of the symbol/physical feature. But, at any given moment, even though the true conscience is always alive, one may or may not be able to hear the messages from his Self. This is because at that moment, one's ego or one's animal part does not WANT to hear them. He prefers not to disturb the ego overgrowth at a certain layer. The ego generates competing messages at the other four layers, and these will be strong if some fear is strong. These messages from the false "consciences" may, from the standpoint of ego and its fear, seem to be more useful guidance, more relevant to the external dilemma at hand. They offer what seems to be protection, prompting us to protect ourselves – to put on a mask. One who has slipped from living consistently at the Interior Castle level and from listening only to the true conscience loses access to it. His ability to live in the way which is best for his entire being is slowly eroded away.

An extreme example is the psychopath, who lives for worldly pleasures, the money to buy them, and the power of force or deceit to protect the money. A good definition of a psychopath is: "A person who hates himself for what he has done to others, but enjoys it so much that he cannot stop. But every time he does it, he hates himself even more. Hence, he is trying to kill himself, and treats others the way he feels he deserves to be treated." It is sometimes said that the psychopathic (or sociopathic) personality HAS no conscience. This is not exactly true, for every human has the same *true* conscience. However, this person rarely, or never, listens to it. He or she is too preoccupied with pushing to the limit what he can get without paying the price. This becomes the "law" by which he chooses to follow some combination of the other four "consciences." The message from the true conscience is so opposed to these that he must carefully exclude it from consciousness or his entire being will be thrown into chaos.

This brings us to an important distinction as regards conscience – a person may hear the true conscience but not follow it. This is very common, because, except for the psychopath as just mentioned, fleeting glimmers of the torment come frequently to many people in the midst of the other consciences, but these more superficial sources of guidance have so much momentum in the midst of an active life in the artificial world of the ordinary person, that one cannot do an instant about face, and sustain the glimmers of true conscience long enough to let go of his habitual thinking, speak in different terms or not at all, and take the course of action whispered to the person by the subtle, non-intrusive true conscience; this message is usually non-action. In other words, we live such false lives that it is too much to make the shift to living by the true conscience. Usually, we are directed by the true conscience to simply relax into passivity. We are following it if we do nothing more than stay connected to it! It is all we really are!

This is why at-one-ment is the correct word. When we are living by the true conscience that is the only time when we are being wholly ourselves. The human being IS an exquisitely sensitive, perfectly attuned, conscience. The state of attunement IS the only Reality, the only heaven. Whenever we are not attuned and not following this, our Real Self, we are being led into some hell by one of the false “inner guides.” Hell, because there is no way out but to suffer and die.

And now, the problem of describing what a message from the true conscience feels like. It is the same problem as trying to describe a mystical experience or the Tao. Really, there is no way to describe it. Words can't penetrate that realm. We can only say what it is not. Well, first, it is not anything discussed above for the other four “consciences.” It is not a sensation localized in the physical body, it is not a sense for which door to enter to stay safe, or which of several bars of soap to buy that will last the longest. It is not an intuition that your child is in pain somewhere, it is not a resounding accord with something you hear in a sermon or speech, it is not a nodding of the head to a dictum such as “Thou shalt not commit adultery.” It is not even living according to your inner feelings of compassion, doing acts of kindness for example. These are NOT true conscience. But it is (and now we skate onto thin ice) a sense of the rightness of whatever IS, an awareness of the tremendous beauty of leaving things alone so that they can follow their own natural course, and the knowingness of the endless fountain of joy in joylessness. True conscience has nothing to do with judgments of good and bad, right and wrong, or with “prosocial” actions. If you are following it, these automatically take care of themselves.

We feel the true conscience in a place so deep in our being that it paralyzes everything else. The sense of rightness – of the perfection --of each moment is held in place by the frontiers of the torment whenever the mind runs to the past or the future. It is hell for a Real Being to even feel these unreal concepts. Exquisite, perfect balance supports us, supports life, with no effort of our own. When in it, we don't want to move a single muscle, or even breathe; such things are too gross, and disturb this ultimate of all experiences. All is Light, a Light more pure, more intense, more constant, more full of life, than anything in the outer world. In this awareness, all is right, all is good. One needs not to judge, to think, to consider, to consult his heartfelt feelings or some rule he has been taught to find out what to do. Everything is done for him, everything “good” is accomplished, by simply allowing the experience to continue, moment-to-moment. Listen to this and only this. In a sensitive soul, to slip from this razor's edge produces incredible torment.

It is very difficult for a person with a finely tuned true conscience to live in today's world. Once a soul has entered the outer world, there is almost nowhere to go to escape the materialistic and egocentric criteria on which people and societies make their decisions. In ancient times, the walls around cities were sometimes built with an opening big enough for a man to pass, but not a horse or camel. This opening was called “The Eye of Needle.” An obese person could not fit through. One of the teachings of Jesus was that it is easier for a camel to pass through the Eye of Needle than for a rich man to enter heaven. To accumulate wealth, one must make his mind focus consistently on the relevant mundane things; he must ignore the true conscience in making his daily decisions. Though each decision to choose the worldly may seem trivial, a tiny compromise of conscience, what is eroded away over time in this process is immense. But if a person in a high-tech competitive society strives to persevere in

listening to and living by the true conscience, he is facing a huge wall of adversity. These societies are set up to constantly bombard the mind with easy opportunities to improve his standing, and that of his family or associates, in the society. But these societies are also set up to hide from the person the price he will have to pay. All that *seems* to be asked of him is to ignore conscience for a moment. These “temptations” are everywhere, continually. Nobody gives them a second thought, that they are contrary to something deep within the nature of all things, that they are inducing one to violate something fundamental. But we look around, and everyone else is succumbing to these opportunities, “seizing the day,” so they must be OK. Right?

The person trying to stay with his true conscience invariably will lapse sometimes, will set his conscience aside to get through some situation. This puts him on a road, a chain of events, that all have the same character, the same quality, as his little lie. They never lead to a way out, but on the contrary: he becomes caught, required to live in his own falseness, until he finally admits it. When he wakes up, and his finely tuned conscience speaks again, it feels foreign, like an intruder. But an intruder that deep in his being he knows is who he really is. He is conscious that there is a chasm separating him from who he knows he is, from his Reality. He is in agony. This crisis of conscience is crushing him, tormenting him in his deepest place. He looks at the situation he has gotten himself into and knows it is not real, but has to pretend that it is in order to dull the torment. He feels what are called “panic attacks” which come from his fear that he will never again be able to re-enter the Real. He is driven to frantic, unfocused hyperactivity as he looks for a way out, a way back to the True Self. If he does not give in and grab for another material distraction to temporarily silence his conscience, he will have to pass through the loneliest, scariest part of the Dark Night of the Soul before re-emerging into the Light as what he really is.

The “normal” person in a high tech competitive society does grab for the distractions, does continue to ignore true conscience. To all appearances, as he dissociates from the Real, like the majority of people, he is emotionally healthy, “well-adjusted.” Maybe he takes his ego-pride from a few acts of kindness, or some accomplishment. Maybe he buys something or sells something. He is not in depression now. He is not trembling in neurotic indecision as the one in the grip of the reappearance of true conscience is, he is not paralyzed, waiting for something Real to appear, he is not split off from the relaxed chit-chat and humor that everyone else easily participates in and seems to enjoy. He is not plagued by panic attacks. He is “normal.” His behavior is “prosocial,” not “antisocial” or “sociopathic.”

Over the last thirty years, modern psychology and psychiatry have subtly twisted something very important. They have finagled and finessed into the minds of laymen and their own students who aspire to work as psychiatrists, psychologists, counselors, and social workers, a perversion of the ancient concept of psychopathy. There was a time, which only recently ended, when psychological health or illness was recognized in terms of inner qualities – true conscience-based qualities. The one who did not feel and live by these qualities was identified as a psychopath, later as possessing a “psychopathic personality.” But in about 1970, things changed. The problem was pinpointed when it was still in its early stages by Erich Fromm in his book *The Sane Society*. Fromm showed us how people become mentally ill, emotionally disturbed, by adapting to a society which is itself pathological. Adapting to society is not in itself a sign of psychological health. Every society violates true conscience. So a battle is

brewing. The society does not want people to have strong personal conscience. If a government and the laws are *laissez faire*, the people who adapt to the society become merely neurotic. But if the society is power and money oriented and expects everyone to step into line in the productive and world-competitive machine, those who adapt become full-blown psychopaths.

But here's the twist. If a government is so powerful that it funds major research programs and hires lots of people in the helping professions into secure government jobs, that government essentially buys the helping professions. And this is exactly what has happened in the U.S. and Europe and Japan and China. And then, after the profession is bought, what psychologist is going to object to a re-definition of the most serious of all psychological problems? It is now no longer the psychopath, who has lost inner conscience. It is the "sociopath," the one who refuses to play the game of the society. This is now the one to label as the most seriously disturbed – and the one to fear. Having no "conscience" is now defined as not playing the game. This is "antisocial." You are not sociable. You are not amenable to pressures to adapt. You are not "for" the values of the society. You are merely a thorn growing on the side of their rosy rose plant. You are going to be labeled, ostracized, and punished for this grave sin. You do not subscribe to and live by "our" conscience. It doesn't matter if you are trying to listen to "your" conscience. In fact, if you do, and if you talk about it, and if what you say strikes "normal" people in positions of power in a psychopathic society as "anti", you are in big trouble. The government, law enforcement, the professions of psychiatry, psychology, medicine and psychopharmacology will in unison descend upon you to persuade you to fall in step. You now have "a very serious psychological problem." And your torment, which really comes from your attempts to adapt to the perverse society, proves it.

No thorns are allowed on plastic rose bushes. Only perfectly shaped and uniformly scented roses.

A psychopath with no true inner conscience who plays the game, even if for personal gain only, is now proclaimed "normal."

A recent president of the American Psychological Association, Martin Seligman, wrote a book, probably with government funding, aimed at removing all thorns. The title of his book: *Ultimate Happiness*.

We probably should mention for the reader that, in reality, there can be no conflict between true conscience and the four imposters. The imposters, being unreal, have no power. They can seem to threaten or to defeat the true conscience, but they can only temporarily interrupt it. It always comes back. They gain their apparent power only for the person who chooses the outer over the inner. As long as one continues to relate to the outer as his reality, and to reject that an inner exists, he is subject to the laws which operate in the outer realm. When he reverses his direction, and chooses to be real and to return Home, it may take some time, but the outcome is guaranteed. He cannot be touched by the laws of the outer.

In a human's life journey, it is exceedingly rare for a person to be a born mystic whose true conscience never falls asleep. After the more usual obscuring of original innocence and true conscience during childhood, the human begins at the three superficial layers

and then progresses down through the wisdom layer and then eventually back to the innocence and true conscience he had to begin with. The transitions are not easy, especially for those with strong egos, which develop rigid attachments to their position at each layer. The majority of people never seem to stabilize and live for any length of time at the wisdom or true conscience level. In modern industrialized power- and money- oriented cultures, the typical scenario is for the person to settle into one layer early in childhood and that is where he stays until there is a severe trauma of some kind later in life that forces open a different eye. And, of course, societies try to prevent these eye-opening traumas. You are much more docile if you remain asleep. So usually a person is old or close to death before wisdom sets in and he can begin the turn away from the world and toward the inner being. And the true conscience may not return until death itself is imminent. And then it is such a shock, for the person whose whole reality has been the outer, that it can kill him. Or he may need morphine.

The life journey after the original loss of true conscience is a chaos of back and forth floundering, trying to find something real enough. We try to escape from the outer world through drugs and alcohol, and do through such things enter a state that is similar to the state of original innocence. We love these brief vacations from what we glibly call “life”!! But they do not “take.” We are still stuck with our “life.” It is a constant struggle to survive, both emotionally and physically; the struggle ends only in the moment of acceptance of death. The more one has ignored the glimmers of true conscience in the midst of all this chaos, the worse the struggle. There is a process that works according to the law of miracles, by which the person is released from struggle when he consistently follows true conscience. No laws of the physical world can supercede this. This is discovered, however, only by those with the courage to test it.

But the problem is that we cannot take our egos and its projects with us into the realm of true conscience. When we live from true conscience and that only, we are naked and alone. We do not resemble the wise man, who has dignity, principles, and the admiration of others. There is nothing outward to admire about the man of true conscience. He does not look “normal.” He is not *trying* to look normal, and he doesn’t even care what normal is. If he lives in a competitive society, he probably looks like a fool. Though he is passive, and he is not immoral, he is amoral. He moves very little, preferring stillness. He speaks very little, preferring silence. He probably has not developed any marketable talents or skills. He has few needs, small appetites, and makes almost no demands on the people around him. Since he is not interested in externalities, or a family, or respect, he doesn’t need to follow the patterns and routines of those who do need these things and so he never learns them. He is concentrated on the inner, and so is not an entertaining person to be around. To people whose “consciences” are built around totally different things than is his, in their eyes he *has* no conscience. He violates *their* standards, which are more popular. But by his presence, he shows them a new possibility. If they will open up, they will feel a powerful attraction – not to him personally, but to the Self which is us all, but which radiates only from someone like him. In this sense, he has the power to remind others of their deeper life, their vast vision, their enduring reality, and he has the power to draw them to these.

In the past, in especially the Anglo societies, the person living in the Interior Castle was feared, often ostracized, perhaps persecuted. The animal instincts in a human react against the renegade who dives deeper than the rest, who embodies true conscience. Perhaps humankind is now, in this day and age, more aware than in the past, and can see

the value of such people. Perhaps the suffering of the many mystics, like John of the Cross, as they dove deep and endured their own Dark Night, has left an imprint in the Akasha, has opened an opening so that we today may more easily see the Light. Perhaps, finally, as a humanity, we know a little better the mystic in ourselves, and are prepared to accept the mystic as one of our own – not necessarily as a teacher, but at least as a silent presence.

We must never forget that whenever we are not attuned to the true conscience, even if we are at the level of wisdom and are very polite, we are fundamentally ruled by animal instincts. We are living at the level of an animal. We are no longer human, except during our glimmers. We are controlled by all the same forces, subject to all the same needs and limitations, disasters and death, as any other animal. We have fallen out of grace, Anandamaya. We have been banished from the Garden. Now we have to struggle, to generate our own resources. God's are not available to us, for we have rejected them.

\*

(Ed.: To complete your study of the Interior Castle, it is suggested that you read our *The Nectar of Muhammad*, available on this same website [www.nectarproject.org](http://www.nectarproject.org))