

Joy Mills, 'The Extraordinary Nature of the Ordinary Mind'

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When John telephoned me in Australia to have a title for a talk, inviting me to speak on this really marvelous convention, when we see the inauguration of a new administration at this headquarters, a place which holds so very many memories for me, I said: "well, I'm not sure I can produce another lecture so, why don't I just give the one that I gave, that I would be giving and now have given at the World Congress, the Eighth World Congress in Brazil, which occurred about a month ago, a very wonderful occasion when some 500 members from 28 sections around the world, gathered together for this great international event?" And John said that was perfectly fine, and since I had to write out the lecture, because of course it had to be translated into the languages of the World Congress (there being three languages at the World Congress recently, not only English but Spanish and Portuguese) you're being subjected to having to hear a lecture already given and written out, and I will probably deviate from the written text from time to time, but it's a subject that has intrigued me because eleven centuries ago, the Chinese sage Huang Po was asked about the nature of the Buddha, and he replied very simply: "*Buddha is the ordinary mind.*" A great deal to think about in that.

In the second chapter of the "*Bhagavad-Gita*" Arjuna questions Sri Krishna about the mark of the individual who may be said to be Buddha, the mark of him who is stable of mind. And Arjuna is the ordinary individual, you and I, faced with a very great problem, is interested to learn how such a person, a Buddha, a yogi of stable mind, a sage, a wise one, how that individual would talk?, how does he sit?, how does he eat?, how does he carry on all the normal activities of everyday life since he is in physical incarnation? Sri Krishna's response is of course a little more detailed therefore than was Huang Po saying: "*When a man abandons all the desires of the heart and is satisfied with the Self, by the Self, then he's called stable of mind.*" He whose mind is free from anxiety, from pain, who's indifferent to pleasures, who's loosed from passion, or fear, or anger, he is Buddha, he is the sage of stable mind.

So, many students of course, through the century and more of the existence of the Society, and particularly since the publication of that wonderful text, "*The Voice of the Silence*" — many theosophical students have tended to denigrate the mind, you know, everyone comes up with "*the mind is the great slayer of the real.*" So, do we take note of the many aspects of the mind that are referred to later in that beautiful theosophical classic? Early on of course in H.P.B.'s text "*The Voice of the Silence*" we're advised to "seek out the *Raja* of the senses", the ruler of the senses, "*the Thought-Producer, he who awakes illusion.*" But when we come to the Third Fragment of "*The Voice*", not stopping at the very beginning, reading "*the mind is the great Slayer of the Real*" and closing the book and saying "forget the mind." If we have the courage to read on and we come to the final fragment in "*The Voice*", we come to a marvelous statement: "*Thou hast to reach that fixity of mind in which no breeze, however strong, can waft an earthly thought within.*" And then of the individual who determines to walk this path, which H.P.B. describes as the *Bodhisattva Path* leading to buddhahood of course, we are told that that individual "*standeth now like a white pillar to the west, upon whose face the rising Sun of thought eternal poureth forth its first most glorious*

waves.” The individual, that individual has a “*mind, like a becalmed and boundless ocean, spreadeth out in shoreless space.*” So here we are, are we? with the mind.

I’m always reminded of a statement of Dr Lawrence Bendett made many years ago: “*If you would go beyond the mind you’d better have a mind to go beyond.*”

So here we are. What is the mind? Is it Buddha? Is that the ordinary mind, the sage of stable mind, the Thought-Producer, the Slayer of the Real? Where in all of this, in all of these descriptions is the mind itself?

Your mind may indeed have wandered quite a good deal since I began in answering some of these questions but: What of the ordinary mind? Whence does it derive? Why do we have it? and what is its essential nature? Can we live without the mind? Yes, how many mindless actions we perform? But our mind and heart, such opposites that one must choose either to be mindless or to be heartless, should we cease thinking because thought can entrap us in illusion?

Well such perhaps are only a few of the questions that I think we need to consider very seriously if we are to understand the nature of the mind, the wise mind, the Buddha mind, the ordinary mind, the mind of the yogi, of the sage, the mind of a master of wisdom.

I suggest, first of all, that the ordinary mind must be the mind in its original condition, uncontaminated, as it were, the original mind itself. The mind, in other words, the ordinary mind, established in order, that arises out of that essential order which is basic to all universal processes. For the theosophical worldview, as we well know, proposes that consciousness is primary. It is the mind then, whose very nature is beauty, harmony; the mind cleared of all impediments, cleared of all colorations, all obstructions, all obscurations, what H.P.B. called in another place: “*The mind that is capable of a direct beholding of the noumenon underlying all phenomena*”. If Buddha is the ordinary mind, as the Chinese sage informed his questioner, then the ordinary mind must be the mind that is simply awake. Most of us as Arthur Kessler once put it are sleepwalkers and consequently the mind is, for the most part, half asleep.

But to be Buddha is to be awake, for *buddh* simply means to be awake, to be holy, fully, completely, totally awake, established then in its own knowing. Now, because for so long, particularly in the western world, we’ve identified the ordinary mind with the analytical, the scientific, the logical aspects of thinking, I think we’ve failed very much to recognize the full potential of the mind, its amazingly extraordinary nature. We divide the mind, as we divide so much else, into two parts. I know God was divided into three parts, but I’m not talking about God. And so we’ve scorned what we termed the lower, you know, and we accord value to an aspect that we’ve come to call the higher. But lower and higher are certainly not spatial locations; they describe functions of a single principle, *manas*, the mind, the cognitive principle, and neither term, lower or higher, should ever be used in a pejorative sense.

In his little book, “*Life's deeper aspects*”, a former President of the Theosophical Society N. Sri Ram, made some very helpful, and I think useful comments, on this subject. When he was asked the question: is man his mind? and if so, of what nature is that mind? Sri Ram suggested: “*obviously the mind is an energy, which at every point of its action exhibits consciousness, with all its implied capacities in some degree or other. In the process of thinking, he added, this energy moves so quickly, changing direction very readily, is so sensitive and influenced by every circumstance and factor, that it develops an extraordinary*

complexity in the way it operates". Indeed we only have to look at our own minds; if we really observe, if we watch the whole thinking process: for Sri Ram then suggested, that "*consciousness, in its essential nature is sensitiveness itself*". Adding: "*the modified consciousness as we find it in ourselves, can have varying degrees of sensitivity*". I heard this morning a story of a particular moment in a meeting which had built up to a wonderful climax and there was a stillness, a sensitivity as it were, but evidently, one individual in that group did not have that kind of sensitivity and merely after a moment's pause of silence, which is unendurable to many people, you know – really, to be silent is almost painful to some – called out: "did the dinner bell ring yet?" What kind of sensitivity is there?

As Mr. Sri Ram suggested there's no distinction to be made between being sensitive to one thing or another. In other words, when we are sensitive to the objective world, sensitive to the trees, (Dora talked of it yesterday; and I think for many of us we saw a tree, perhaps your own particular tree, as Dora spoke of her own symbol), if we're sensitive to the objective world, if we're sensitive to the movement, if you're a physicist and sensitive to movement of whatever it may be that you're examining, if you're a cosmologist and sensitive to the movement of the planets and so on, whatever it may be in the objective world, to that world which lies outside us and all about us, the world which we can examine and measure according to some external standard, we may be said to be using that aspect of the mind, which has been called lower. But is it lower? Is this a comparative term that has become so such a pejorative term, that we say: "oh, no, we must get rid of this". It's the mind outward turned to the world of matter of things and objects which appear to be distinct from us, the world indeed in which we live our ordinary everyday life, a wonderful world, a world of awe, of wonder, of beauty, isn't it? A tremendous world. It's the world which helps us navigate, so that you don't forget how to get from here to where lunch will be served, you know is that up or is it down, depends on, you know, how you look at it.

There's an extraordinary quality to the mind when it's turned outward to seek knowledge of the world of the existent things. Such a mind, as I say, can become extraordinarily sensitive to beauty, whether that beauty be perceived in the face of another: in a flower, in the form of a great work of art, or in the exquisite harmony of a mathematical equation. The sensitivity of the mind of a great scientist exploring the wonders of the cosmos, finds its counterpart, I think in the sensitivity of the great artist, perceiving in the world about him the wonders of form and color. Such a mind, of course, absorbed in the world of things, can be obscured, yes, by what Patanjali, the great expounder of yoga, called the *Kleshas*, the psychological afflictions which cast shadows on the mind, distorting vision and thereby, reducing sensitivity.

Most dangerous of these afflictions producing the greatest distortions of true vision are, as Patanjali pointed out, egoism and desire for the personal self, leading to attachment and to all its attendant problems. You know how often you may walk through a beautiful park with a rose garden, and the roses are in bloom, and something in the mind says: "I'd like to pick that rose, I'd love to have that rose, I'd like to take it home with me". It's a very subtle sort of thing, isn't it?, that arises very quickly. All right, somehow I'd like to possess that rose; it is so exquisite, just to hold it. But, can we look at it with the full sensitivity and let it be, without any obscuration whatsoever?

So, the aim of yoga, of course, is simply to bring the mind to its original nature by the cessation of the modifications of the thinking principle. For that one must indeed, as "*The*

Voice of the Silence” advises: “seek out the raja of the senses, the Thought-Producer, he who awakes illusion,” for “thou shalt not let thy senses make a playground of thy mind”. A wonderful statement to consider.

So when the outward turned aspect of the mind is cleared of all personal attachments and repulsions, free of desire for the personal self, when it can see the world about us without distortion, perceive its exquisite beauty and wonder, the mind displays a truly extraordinary quality.

Equally extraordinary is the quality of the mind which may be called “subjective.” The mind turned inward toward the realm of the noumenal, the realm of the archetypes, the realm of spiritual reality. In such a movement therein there is that possibility of knowing all that exists in a moment, in a flash, totally, holy, knowing, you know. We don’t know this possibility perhaps as a fact, but it’s an illuminative idea. It satisfies, I think, our sense of fitness and completeness. So in even approaching that possibility via the inward turned mind, we begin to recognize the great creative powers of the mind, the image making faculty we call imagination, and the faculties of inspiration and discriminative wisdom. Here we touch also on the awesome qualities of love, of compassion, the direct reflection of the One Supreme Spirit, the One creative energy in the universe. That primal energy is not only love; it is thought, ideation, the outpouring of the universal mind.

H.P.B., of course, refers in many places to these two aspects of the mind’s functioning, in many many of her writings she discusses it. Discussing, for example, the nature of the thinking principle, in *“The Key to Theosophy”* she wrote: “*The clue lies in the double consciousness of our mind, and also, in the dual nature of the mental “principle”.*” And so she said: “*There is a spiritual consciousness, the Manasic mind, illumined by the light of Buddhi, that which subjectively perceives abstractions; and the sentient consciousness inseparable from our physical brain and senses.*”

Now that the mind is essential, and this is why I suggest that before getting rid of anything one always tries to find out its value, you know, you say you’re, we’re all of us at some time or other there are people who are hoarders as you probably know, maybe you’re among them, keep everything, there other people are always throwing out everything, and when you’ve thrown out something, then you think: “ah! why didn’t I keep that is just what I need right now?” Or you may be the kind of hoarder, the little old lady when she died they found every box neatly labeled with everything that she had hoarded, but she had carefully categorized it according to the lower mind, you know, categorizing, till they came upon a box in her closet marked string too short to use.

So one can go on with this sort of thing, but that the mind is really essential and that’s why I say we need to examine it before we throw it out, the mind is really essential to our human state, made very very clear in the *“Secret Doctrine”* as she says: “*The two higher principles [Atma-Buddhi] can have no individuality on Earth, cannot be man*” (perhaps today we should say “cannot be human”) “*unless there is the Mind, the Manas-Ego, to cognize itself*”. So, as she says, continues, she comments that there must be what she called “*the body of egotistical desires and personal Will*” even though it is from that body that arise the psychological afflictions which obscure or contaminate the mind. Well, to complete the picture, of course, H.P.B. indicated that it’s these two principles, the middle principles, the Fifth, *Manas* and the Fourth, *Kama*, which, as she says “*cement the whole,*” this is the mortar that binds it together “*as if round a pivot to the physical form of man.*”

So considering further this Fifth principle, as it's known, *Manas*, I think we need to give attention to its uniqueness. It's the very uniqueness of its origin that gives to the mind its really extraordinary nature. And two quotations from H.P.B., I think help us to understand this subject. First from "*The Key to Theosophy*" again: "*Manas is a "principle," and yet it is an "Entity" and individuality or Ego.*" And elaborating on this point she indicated that this Entity incarnated in nascent humanity at a certain stage of development to awaken *Manas* into full activity. This Entity is, and I quote H.P.B.: "*called in its plurality Manasa-putra, the Sons of the (Universal) mind.*" And then follows a most significant statement: "*Once imprisoned,*" – you can go to sleep if you like, but I find these passages fascinating, really something to think about – "*once imprisoned or incarnate, their essence,*" that is, the essence of the *Manasa-putras*, that is the essence of these Beings who incarnated in the growing form, the nascent form, in which the principle was already possible now awakened — "*once imprisoned or incarnate, their essence becomes dual: that is to say, the rays of the eternal divine Mind, considered as individual entities, assume a two-fold attribute which is a) their essential characteristic, heaven-aspiring mind and b) the human quality of thinking, or animal cogitation (...) the Kama-tending or lower Manas.*" Now when H.P.B. wrote "*The Key*" this description of *Manas* as an Entity had of course already been explained in some detail in "*The Secret Doctrine.*" And the entire subject of the descent of the *Manasa-putras*, I think deserves very close study, if we would really understand the implications of what it means to be human, what is our essential identity, what does it mean to be fully, wholly human.

Suffice it for our present purposes, not to bore you interminably, to quote just one passage from "*The Secret Doctrine.*" H.P.B. wrote: "*Between man and the animal – whose Monads (or Jivas)", that is life principles, "are fundamentally identical – there is the impassable abyss of Mentality and Self-consciousness. What is human mind in its higher aspect, whence comes it, if it is not a portion of the essence – and, in some rare cases of incarnation, the very essence – of a higher Being: one from a higher and divine plane?" [...] "Man" (let us say the human) "is an animal plus a living god within his physical shell."*

So the relationship between those whom H.P.B. termed the *Manasaputras*, those great intelligences who awakened the spark of *Manas* within the gradually developing human forms, at an earlier stage of evolution and ourselves, is a fascinating study, however difficult, and abstruse. So even the few references that I've cited I think should indicate to us the extraordinary nature of the ordinary mind. For truly *Manas* is embodied spirit, to use one of H.P.B.'s designations for it. It provides us with access to the supreme reality which is universal consciousness. We are rooted in consciousness, *Mahat*, the universal mind, as indeed is all existence, but in us, in the human that consciousness is flowering into full self-consciousness. In us therefore, are all the powers, all the beauty, all the wisdom, all the splendor of self-reflective consciousness.

In that profound and very beautiful text of Kashmir Shaivism the "*Shiva Sutras*" which Dr. Jaideva Singh, a long time member who since passed on and a wonderful speaker and expounder of the "*Shiva Sutras*" I had the privilege of knowing when I was first in India — Dr. Jaideva Singh called the "*Shiva Sutras*" "the yoga of supreme identity". There's a simple but highly significant aphorism: "*Chittam mantra.*" Dr. Singh has translated this simply as "the mind is mantra." Consider it. Commenting that by intensive awareness of one's identity with the highest reality enshrined in the mantra, and thus becoming identical with that

reality, the mind itself becomes mantra. To put it in other words, this is not, you know, the usual kind of mantras Krishnamurti once said: “if you want a mantra you can go on chanting coca-cola, coca-cola, coca-cola”. You know, this is mantra in its fundamental sense, in which the mind now resonates with that song, with that rhythm, that is the universal consciousness. When the two are brought into harmony and attunement, and how often we use that, we attune ourselves, the mind is mantra.

This mind becomes mantra must be the inward turn, the heaven-aspiring aspect of the mind, the mind that is as one commentary has it, a throb or pulsation of pure consciousness. Because according to Dr. Singh, the term mantra in the context of the aphorism in the “*Shiva Sutras*” is more than a particular combination of letters or a sacred formula. It is, he suggests, “*the heart seed of Shiva or the Supreme,*” adding: “*he who can enter into the spirit of this mantra, will be identified with the supreme eye consciousness and will be liberated.*”

At the same time, as Dr. I.K. Taimni points out in his commentary on the same aphorism in his work “*The ultimate reality and realization*”: “*The word mantra, basically means, sound; but in its widest sense any vibration or motion,*” and so, we are always tuning in to all of the vibrations.

I must interpose here that one of the fascinating books that I have just finished reading during my sojourn in Australia, which is a magnificent country, I must say, with a marvelous possibilities there, is a fascinating book called “*Song lines.*” Now many of you may have heard of ley lines and lines of magnetic influence on the earth’s surface. For the aborigine this book by Bruce Chapman, details what the aboriginals of Australia knew that in each group, each member of the clan had to learn the song line that kept the world in being. You must sing it, you must sing it. And I couldn’t help but think of those wonderful words in “*Light on the path*”: “*Listen to the song of life. Store in your heart the melody you hear.*” For the aboriginal must know the proper song to keep that part of his territory, the line, present, so that the universe continues to exist. Is it not magnificent? This is the mind its mantra.

So bringing these concepts together, the *Manas* or mind is truly a living God, an embodied spirit and is also mantra or vibration. I think we can begin to explore further, something of the extraordinary nature of the mind, even the ordinary mind, which must be in its ordered condition. The original mind possesses extraordinary capacities, preeminent among these must be the power to create, to produce images which embody the great archetypal patterns in the universal mind.

Note H.P.B.’s response, for example, to a question as recorded in her talks with students about “*The Secret Doctrine*” and which has been published as “*Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge*”. She answered: “*The one Great Architect of the universe is the universal Mind.*” So as we are rooted in that universal Mind we must possess or at least reflect those faculties, inherent in that source which she called “*the Great Architect.*” We are the builders then, from that archetypal plan. We in our turn can become creators of forms from patterns in universal Mind. This inherent yet extraordinary power we may call the spiritual imagination. It is the power that makes us co-creators with the universal, we live in a participatory universe.

So many prominent scientists are suggesting that today, and while science has to a large extent made the logical, analytical and mathematical functions of the ordinary mind, the basis for all knowledge, we may now recognize the necessity to couple those functions with the deeper, more all-embracing creative aspects of consciousness, which arise in and flow

from the mind, inwardly illumined by the energy of *Buddhi*: intuitive perception, discriminative wisdom, compassionate understanding. Only through an awakening of a genuine spiritual imagination can we discover that the liberation of the human spirit – the most endangered species on this planet is the human spirit – may be achieved. This is not anti-science, for the function of science in terms of its essential methodology, is to test the imagination, as every genuine scientist knows. And the liberation of the human spirit is possible, as much through that science, which is open to intuitive perception or imagination, as through the leap from the analytical and logical mode of thought into the creative and symbolic mode. The flow of energy may be and must be, as much from below upwards, as from above downwards.

H.P.B. therefore suggested that much of her work was directed towards awakening a new mode of thought, and what must be for what may be proposed then is that there needs to be first the recognition that *Manas*, the cognitive mind or consciousness, is a God within us. And second that it therefore has god-like capacities of imagination and creativity. These are the extraordinary capacities but ever present in, and available to the ordinary mind. These are the capacities which not only give meaning and purpose to existence, but draw us into the future.

Over a century ago, our own american philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson said: “*What lies before us and what lies behind us is a small matter compared to what lies within us*”; to which his great colleague Henry David Thoreau added: “*And when we bring what lies within us out into the world, miracles happen*”.

When we tap the extraordinary powers of the ordinary mind, that mind which is a living God and which is mantra, we can perform miracles. And we need not be stopped by any of the obstructions. We need not be defeated. As T.S. Eliot so beautifully put it, “*for we are among those who are never defeated because we have gone on trying.*”

This is the genuine reformation, regeneration, transformation, needed. We may well ask: What is the nature of the act of thought, when in one brilliant moment there’s a sudden veering of attention, a concept consequent grasp of new understandings, and a new idea is born? What is the nature of that act by which we suddenly see a new aspect of life, perceive a meaning which is so much more complete and whole than any perception we have had before? That sudden accurate leaping of mind across all barriers and into new fields of knowledge and understanding has best been described, I think, as a flash of insight. It’s the moment of coming fully awake, the moment so beautifully described by Arjuna when he said: “*Destroyed is my delusion. I have gained knowledge, I am firm, my doubts have fled away.*”

At such a time insight must become translated into oversight, to coin a word, which means action in the world. And so when the third object of our Society, which we’ll be looking at further today, directs our attention to an investigation of still unexplained laws of nature, and their corresponding powers latent in every individual, I would suggest that one aspect of that exploration must be into those capacities of *Manas*, of mind, consciousness, which lead to an awakening of a new mode of perception, and consequently, a new mode of action in the world. But what we’re talking about is not psychic perception, as it’s usually understood, although from a psychological point of view it may be the total perception of the psyche when it is illumined by the light of *Buddhi*, moved by that energy which is compassionate wisdom. It is the perception of the spiritually illumined consciousness, to which H.P.B. gave the designation *Manas Taijasa*, the radiant or resplendent Mind.

So, writing of theosophy itself H.P.B. did write that it awakened in us a direct beholding. But as the Mahatma K.H. wrote to Mr. Sinnett: “*The illumination must come from within*”. And in another of the Mahatma letters to Mr. Sinnett, his great brother the Mahatma Morya wrote: “*It is with jealous care that we have to guard our mind plane from all the adverse influences which daily arise in our passage through life; it is upon the serene and placid surface of the unruffled mind that the visions gathered from the invisible, find a representation in the visible world*”. Someone has said it’s perfectly all right to build castles in the sky. Now put the foundations in under them.

The unruffled mind is the ordinary mind in the sense that it is the original mind, the mind in its orderly and normal state, without any confusion or obscuration, to avail its natural condition. In such a mind there is present, as the Mahatma K.H. expressed it: “*an instantaneous implicit insight into every first truth.*”

So the question now arises as to how to awaken that imaginative mode of thought, a mode that I think has been all too often neglected, particularly in our educational systems, and even excluded from any consideration of the mind. But it’s only as we nurture that imaginative mode, the intuitive, the symbolic, the mode of conceptual synthesis, that we come to realize the full potential of the mind and its extraordinary nature. It is the imaginative mode of thought which helps us to awaken true insight and understanding. So while it’s the outward turned aspect of the mind that may all too easily become ensnared by the energies of desire and passion, and may even create devices for destruction, as well as forms of great beauty; it is that deeper aspect of the mind, the mind illumined from within and responsive to the light of *Buddhi*, which gives rise to genuine ethical action. For the ethos that will come to characterize our total behavior, will arise naturally and spontaneously from the vision we embrace. When that vision is one of wholeness, of oneness, of unity, we will act accordingly for the benefit of all humanity.

There seems to be, as you probably know, a general agreement in amongst all the spiritual traditions, regarding the two essentials required for awakening, the intuitive or imaginative mode of consciousness: conscious effort and intense concentration or one-pointedness. When the mind is held steady, focused, then the sudden and unexpected flash of illumination, marked by a feeling of certitude may occur. This is the leap into a new state of consciousness, in which the personal self and its attachments disappear. But the mind must be equipped with materials with which to make the leap, for imagination does not flower in a vacuum. The flash of inner illumination is favored by a disciplined grasp of and an intense concern for the fundamental principles that provide the stimulus needed to precipitate the new vision. Actually imagination, the spiritual imagination, is the universal and indispensable instrument of all levels of living in our world. If you realize that our daily lives are dependent on it. All day long we imagine our way around, from one activity to the next, from one location to the next. We visualize alternate courses of action, as well as alternative consequences. It may be suggested in fact, that the principal function of the imagination is to enable us to constantly build thought models of the real world, the virtual reality in which we live. By thought we create that virtual reality and when thought is uncluttered, free, unfettered by desire, egoism, fear, anger, resistance, the virtual reality we create is closer to the One true reality out of which all existence emerged.

M.C. Richards in her work “*Toward Wholeness*” has expressed the implications of a truly spiritual and creative imagination, for she has written: “*The renewal of society will come*

when we can imagine it differently, and when we are ready like artists to take on the actual work of creating new forms". But we are called not simply to creativity but to a creativity which is in the service of compassion, for compassion is the goal of the spiritual journey on which we are embarked, as pointed out in "The Voice of the Silence": "Know that the stream of superhuman knowledge and the Deva-Wisdom thou hast won, must, from thyself, the channel of Alaya, be poured forth into another bed, ... if thou would'st ... follow upon thy predecessor's steps, remain unselfish till the endless end."

I think when we promote imagination to the rank of the primary creative agency of the human mind in its highest functioning, we can, if I may coin a word, "nirvanize" the world. That is to say, for that we recognize that beneath the outer turmoil and the numerous problems that afflict our world, there is a deeper reality with which we can align ourselves and which we can help bring into manifestation.

As William Blake, the great English poet and mystic once wrote: *"If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear as it is, infinite."* It is for us to cleanse the doors of perception through meditation, concentration, one pointed attention to the highest we know. This is the supremely human task: to see things as they really are, to rid ourselves of the illusions brought on by selfish motives, to lift ourselves out of the sham world of hypocrisy and cant, to straighten out our values, and through the awakening of the creative potential within us, to bring about a new vision of a world in which peace and brotherhood are the norms of existence. It's been suggested, you see, that imagination can tidy up the chaos of sense experience, for it can perceive a deeper significance to daily events, it can awaken us to the need for a genuine morality and ecological morality, which is the ethic of the spirit. A life within the spectrum of the spiritual imagination avoids the extremes of spending itself, either in unrestrained sensuality, or in the useless heroics of a muddle-headed spiritualism. The mind is no longer pulled outwards by desire for personal ends, nor is it only pulled inwards toward mystical experiences. It is the stable mind, the mind crystal clear, reflecting the light of wisdom, the mind that through the exercise of its extraordinary nature can visualize, and therefore bring into existence, that noble society of which we dream.

I think when we rack up all of the mind and its vast possibilities: the mind is Buddha, the mind is mantra, the mind is that principle in us which is a living God, and which at the same time defines our truly human state, we begin to realize that the function of imagination is to make palpable the fact that matter, in its subjective aspect is spirit, while spirit, regarded objectively, is the material world. This is simply to say: that the world of things, whirling, spinning, *samsara*, is *nirvana*; and *nirvana* is *samsara*, all depends on our point of view.

The realization of this, changes our total vision, and with a change of perception our behavior, our modes of action in the world as I have said, completely change. So the ordinary mind reveals its extraordinary nature. Nurturing our spiritual imagination, calling on our own deific powers of creativity, we may image forth into manifest existence a nobler and more beautiful society. The mind illumined from within, the mind awake to the direct perception of the One reality abiding in all things, the mind alight with the refulgence of the spiritual self, the mind that is one with the heart in seeking to serve all beings.

Our task, it has been said, is to transform *Kama-Manas* into *Buddhi-Manas*; the mind driven by desire to the mind illumined by love. And in that transformation we release all the potentials of that living God within us, compassion and caring, humility and gentleness, patience and an infinite concern for the welfare of all. And in that transformation we will have

obeyed the injunction of the Buddha: to produce love in one's mind for a single moment is a more commendable deed than to distribute among the poor a thousand pots of food. A love that knows no other, for there is only the One, ever remembering itself, as it reveals itself in all the countless forms.
