

self-sacrificing love then the ignorance, deformity, and painful nature of self-assertion become apparent.

The victim of self-assertion, setting up his own opinions as the standard of right and the measure of judgment, regards all those as wrong whose lives and opinions run counter to his own, and, being eager to put others right, is thereby prevented from putting himself right. His attitude of mind brings about him opposition and contradiction from people who are anxious to put him right, and this wounds his vanity and makes him miserable, so that he lives in an almost continual fever of unhappy, resentful and uncharitable thoughts. There can be no peace for such a man, no true knowledge, and no advancement until he sacrifices his desire to bend others to his own way of thinking and acting. Nor can he understand the hearts of others, and enter lovingly into their strivings and aspirations. His mind is cramped and embittered, and he is shut out from all sweet sympathy and spiritual communion.

He who sacrifices the spirit of self-assertion, who in his daily contact with others put aside his prejudices and opinions, and strives both to learn from others and to understand them as they are, who allows to others perfect liberty (such as he exercises himself) to choose their own opinions, their own way in life—such a man will acquire a deeper insight, a broader charity, and a richer bliss than he has hitherto experienced, and will strike a byway of blessedness from which he was formerly shut out.

Then there is the sacrifice of greed and all greedy thoughts. The willingness that others should possess rather than we; the not-coveting of things for ourselves but rejoicing that they are possessed and enjoyed by others, that they bring happiness to others; the ceasing to claim one's "own", and the giving up to others, unselfishly and without malice, that which they exact. This attitude of mind is a source of deep peace and great spiritual strength. It is the sacrifice of self-interest. **Material possessions are temporary, and in this sense we cannot truly call them our own—they are merely in our keeping for a short time—but spiritual possessions are eternal and must ever remain with us.** Unselfishness is a spiritual possession which is only secured by ceasing to covet material possessions and enjoyments, by ceasing to regard things as for our own special and exclusive pleasure, and by our readiness to yield them up for the good of others.

The unselfish man, even though he finds himself involved in riches, stands aloof, in his mind, from the idea of "exclusive possession", and so escapes the bitterness and fear and anxiety which ever

accompany the covetous spirit. He does not regard any of his outward accretions as being too valuable to lose, but he regards the virtue of unselfishness as being too valuable to the world—to suffering humanity—to lose or cast away.

And who is the blessed man? He who is ever hankering after more possessions, thinking only of the personal pleasure he can get out of them? Or he who is ever ready to give up what he has for the good and happiness of others? By greed happiness is destroyed; by not-greed happiness is restored.

Another hidden sacrifice, one of great spiritual beauty and of powerful efficacy in the healing of human sorrows, is the sacrifice of hatred—the giving up of all bitter thoughts against others, of all malice, dislike, and resentment. Bitter thoughts and blessedness cannot dwell together. Hatred is a fierce fire that scorches up, in the heart of him who harbors it, all the sweet flowers of peace and happiness, and makes a hell of every place where it comes.

Hatred has many names and many forms but only one essence—namely, burning thoughts of resentment against others. It is sometimes, by its blind votaries called by the name of religion, causing them to attack, slander, and persecute each other because they will not accept each other's views of life and death, thus filling the earth with miseries and tears.

All resentment, dislike, ill-thinking, and ill-speaking of others is hatred, and where there is hatred there is always unhappiness. No one has conquered hatred while thoughts of resentment towards others spring up in his mind. This sacrifice is not complete until a man can think kindly of those who try to do him wrong. Yet it must be made before true blessedness can be realized and known. Beyond the hard, cruel, steely gates of hatred waits the divine angel of love, ready to reveal herself to him who will subdue and sacrifice his hateful thoughts, and conduct him to his peace.

Whatever others may say of you, whatever they may do to you, never take offence. Do not return hatred with hatred. If another hates you perhaps you have, consciously or unconsciously, failed somewhere in your conduct, or there may be some misunderstanding which the exercise of a little gentleness and reason may remove; but, under all circumstances, "O God, forgive them" is infinitely better, sweeter, and nobler than "I will have nothing more to do with them." Hatred is so small and poor, so blind and wretched. Love is so great and rich, so far-seeing and blissful.

Sacrifice all hatred; slay it upon the holy altar of devotion—devotion to others. Think no more of any

injury to your own petty self, but see to it that henceforth you injure and wound no other. Open the flood gates of your heart for the in pouring of that sweet, great, beautiful love which embraces all with strong yet tender thoughts of protection and peace, leaving not one, nay, not even he who hates or despises or slanders you, out in the cold.

Then there is the hidden sacrifice of impure desires, of weak self-pity and degrading self-praise, of vanity and pride, for these are unblest attitudes of mind, deformities of heart. He who makes them, one by one, gradually subduing and overcoming them, will, according to the measure of his success, rise above weakness and suffering and sorrow, and will comprehend and enjoy the perfect and imperishable blessedness.

Now, all these hidden sacrifices which are here mentioned are pure, humble heart-offerings. They are made within; are offered up on the sacred, lonely, unseen altar of one's own heart. Not one of them can be made until the fault is first silently acknowledged and confessed. No man can sacrifice an error until he first of all confess (to himself) "I am in error;" when, yielding it up, he will perceive and receive the truth which his error formerly obscured.

The silent sacrifice of self for the good of others, the daily giving up of one's egotistic tendencies, is not seen and rewarded of men, and brings no loud blazon of popularity and praise. It is hidden away from the eyes of the entire world, nay, even from the gaze of those who are nearest to you, for no eyes of flesh can perceive its spiritual beauty. But think not that because it is unperceived it is therefore futile. Its blissful radiance is enjoyed by you, and its power for good over others is great and far-reaching, for though they cannot see it, nor, perhaps understand it, yet they are unconsciously influenced by it. They will not know what silent battles you are fighting, what eternal victories over self you are achieving, but, they will feel your altered attitude, your new mind, wrought of the fabric of love and loving thoughts, and will share somewhat in its happiness and bliss. They will know nothing of the frequent fierceness of the fight you are waging, of the wounds you receive and the healing balm you apply, of the anguish and the after-peace; but they will know that you have grown sweeter and gentler, stronger and more silently self-reliant, more patient and pure, and that they are rested and helped by your presence. What rewards can compare with this? Beside the fragrant offices of love the praises of men are gross and fulsome, and in the pure flame of a selfless heart the flatteries of the world are turned to ashes. Love is its own reward, its own joy, its own satisfaction; it is the final refuge and resting-place of passion-tortured souls.

Sacrifice

It is your **piety** THAT REACHES God

All true sacrifice is within; it is spiritual & hidden. It is prompted by deep humility of the heart. Nothing but **the sacrifice of self** can avail, and to this must all people come sooner or later during their spiritual evolution. But in what does this self-abnegation consist? How is it practiced? Where is it sought & found? It consists in overcoming **the daily proneness to selfish thoughts & acts**; it is practiced in our common intercourse with others; and it is found in the hour of tumult & temptation.

The blessed life, the life that is not tormented with passions & pains, is reached only through sacrifice, not necessarily the sacrifice of outward things, **but the sacrifice of the inward errors & defilements**, for it is these, and these only, which bring misery into life. It is not the good & true that needs to be sacrificed **but the evil & false**; therefore **all sacrifice is ultimately gain**, and there is no essential loss. Yet at first the loss seems great, and the sacrifice is painful, but this is because of the self-delusion & spiritual blindness which always accompany selfishness, and pain must always accompany the cutting away of some selfish portion of one's nature. The sacrifice of self, and the acquisition of the supreme knowledge & bliss which it confers, is not accomplished by one great & glorious act but by a series of lesser & successive sacrifices in the ordinary life of the world, by a succession of steps in the daily conquest of Truth over selfishness. Those who subdue & put behind them some unkind thought, some impure desire, some tendency to sin, are everyday growing stronger, purer, & wiser, & every dawn finds them nearer to that final glory of Truth which each self-sacrificing act reveals in part.

**SACRIFICE YOUR CHERISHED & COVETED INDULGENCE;
FIX YOUR MIND ON SOMETHING HIGHER, NOBLER,
& MORE ENDURING THAN EPHEMERAL PLEASURE;
LIVE SUPERIOR TO THE CRAVING FOR SENSE-EXCITEMENT,
& YOU WILL LIVE NEITHER VAINLY NOR UNCERTAINLY.**

It is one of the paradoxes of Truth that we gain by giving up; **we lose by greedily grasping.** Every gain in virtue necessitates some loss in vice; every accession of holiness means some selfish pleasure yielded up; and every forward step on the path of Truth demands the forfeit of some self-assertive error. Who would be clothed in new garments must first cast away the old, and who would find the True must **sacrifice the false.** The gardener digs in the weeds in order that they may feed, with their decay, the plants which are good for food; and the Tree of Wisdom can only flourish on the compost of uprooted follies. Growth-gain—necessitates sacrifice—loss.

When the drunkard resolves to sacrifice his lust for strong drink he passes through a period of great suffering, and he feels that he is forfeiting a great pleasure; but when his victory is complete, when the lust is dead, and his mind is calm and sober, then he knows that he has gained incalculably by the giving up of his selfish animal pleasure. What he has lost was evil and false and not worth keeping — its keeping entailed continual misery—but what he has gained in character, in self-control, in soberness had greater peace of mind, is good and true, and it was necessary that he should acquire it.

So it is with all true sacrifice; it is at first, and until it is completed, painful, and this is why men shrink from it. They cannot see any purpose in abstaining from and overcoming selfish gratification, it seems to them like losing so much that is sweet; seems to them like courting misery, and giving up all happiness and pleasure. And this must be so; for if a man could know that by giving up his particular forms of selfishness his gain in happiness would be immeasurably greater, unselfishness (which is now so difficult of attainment) would then be rendered infinitely more difficult of achievement, for his desire for the greater gain—his selfishness—would thereby be greatly intensified.

No man can become unselfish, and thereby arrive at the highest bliss, until he is willing to lose,

looking for neither gain nor reward: it is this state of mind which constitutes unselfishness. A man must be willing to humbly sacrifice his selfish habits and practices because they are untrue and unworthy, and for the happiness of those about him, without expecting any reward or looking for any good to accrue to himself; he must be prepared to lose for himself, to forfeit pleasure and happiness, even life itself, if by so doing he can make the world more beautiful and happy. But does he lose? Does the miser lose when he gives up his lust for gold? Does the thief lose when he abandons stealing? Does the libertine lose when he sacrifices his unworthy pleasures? No man loses by the sacrifice of self, or some portion of self; nevertheless, he thinks he will lose by so doing, and because he so thinks he suffers and this is where the sacrifice comes in—this is where he gains by losing.

There are hidden sacrifices of the heart which are infinitely blessed both to him that makes them and those for whom they are made, albeit their making costs much effort and some pain. Men are anxious to do some great thing, to perform some great sacrifice which lies beyond the necessities of their experience, while all the time, perhaps, they are neglecting the one thing needful, are blind to that sacrifice which by its very nearness is rendered imperative. Where lurks your besetting sin? Where lies your weakness? Where does temptation assail you most strongly? There shall you make your first sacrifice, and shall find thereby the way unto your peace. Perhaps it is anger or unkindness. Are you prepared to sacrifice the angry impulse and word, the unkind thought and deed? Are you prepared to silently endure abuse, attack, accusation, and unkindness, refusing to pay back these in their own coin? Nay, more, are you prepared to give in return for these dark follies kindness and loving protection? If so, then you are ready to make those hidden sacrifices which lead to beatific bliss.

If you are given to anger or unkindness offer it up. These hard, cruel, and wrong conditions of mind never brought you any good; they can never bring you anything but unrest, misery, and spiritual blindness. Nor can they ever bring to others anything but unhappiness. Perhaps you will say: "But he was unkind to me first; he treated me unjustly." Perhaps so, but what a poor excuse is this! What an unmanly and ineffectual refuge! For if his unkindness toward you is so wrong and hurtful yours to him must be

equally so. Because another is unkind to you is no justification of your own unkindness, but is rather a call for the exercise of great kindness on your part. Can the pouring in of more water prevent a flood? Neither can unkindness lessen unkindness. Can fire quench fire? Neither can anger overcome anger.

Offer up all unkindness, all anger. "It takes two to make a quarrel;" don't be the "other one." If one is angry or unkind to you try to find out where you have acted wrongly; and, whether you have acted wrongly or not, do not throw back the angry word or unkind act. Remain silent, self-contained, and kindly disposed; and learn, by continual effort in right-doing, to have compassion upon the wrongdoer.

Perhaps you are habitually impatient and irritable. Know, then, the hidden sacrifice which it is needful that you should make. Give up your impatience. Overcome it there where it is wont to assert itself. Resolve that you will yield no longer to its tyrannical sway but will conquer it and cast it out. It is not worth keeping a single hour, nor would it dominate you for another moment if you were not laboring under the delusion that the follies and perversities of others render impatience on your part necessary.

Whatever others may do or say, even though they may mock and taunt you, impatience is not only unnecessary, it can never do any other than aggravate the evil which it seeks to remove. Calm, strong, and deliberate action can accomplish much, but impatience and its accompanying irritability are always indications of weakness and inefficiency. And what do they bestow upon you? Do they bestow rest, peace, happiness, or bring these to those about you? Do they not, rather, make you and those about you wretched? But though your impatience may hurt others it certainly hurts and wounds and impoverishes yourself most of all.

Nor can the impatient man know aught of true blessedness, for he is a continual source of trouble and unrest to himself. The calm beauty and perpetual sweetness of patience are unknown to him, and peace cannot draw near to soothe and comfort him.

There is no blessedness anywhere until impatience is sacrificed; and its sacrifice means the development of endurance, the practice of forbearance, and the creation of a new and gentler habit of mind. When

impatience and irritability are entirely put away, are finally offered up on the altar of unselfishness, then is realized and enjoyed the blessedness of a strong, quiet, and peaceful mind.

Then there are little selfish indulgences, some of which appear harmless, and are commonly fostered; but no selfish indulgence can be harmless, and men and women do not know what they lose by repeatedly and habitually succumbing to effeminate and selfish gratifications. If the God in man is to rise strong and triumphant, the beast in man must perish. The pandering to the animal nature, even when it appears innocent and seems sweet, leads away from truth and blessedness. Each time you give way to the animal within you, and feed and gratify him, he waxes stronger and more rebellious, and takes firmer possession of your mind, which should be in the keeping of Truth. Not until a man has sacrificed some apparently trivial indulgence does he discover what strength, what joy, what poise of character & holy influence he has all along been losing by that gratification; not until a man sacrifices his hankering for wild pleasure does he enter into the fullness of abiding joy.

By his personal indulgences a man demeans himself, forfeits self-respect to the extent and frequency of his indulgence, and deprives himself of exemplary influence and the power to accomplish lasting good in his work in the world. He also, by allowing himself to be led by blind desire, increases his mental blindness, and fails of that ultimate clearness of vision, that clarified perception which pierces to the heart of things and comprehends the real and the true. Animal indulgence is alien to the perception of Truth. By the sacrifice of his indulgences man rises above confusion and doubt, and arrives at the possession of insight and surety.

Very far-reaching in its effect upon others, and rich with the revelations of Truth for him who makes it, is the sacrifice of self-assertion—he giving up of all interference with the lives, views, or religion of other people, substituting for it an understanding love and sympathy. Self-assertion or opinionativeness is a form of egotism or selfishness most generally found in connection with intellectualism and dialectical skill. It is blindly presumptive and uncharitable, and, more often than not, is regarded as a virtue; but when once the mind has opened to perceive the way of gentleness and

Say
Lo!

**My worship & my sacrifice & my living & my dying
ARE FOR GOD, LORD OF THE WORLDS.**

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