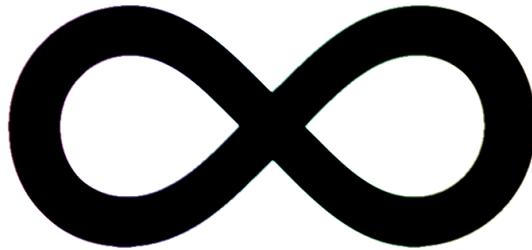


THE NEW MAN
on tolerance

PAUL VAN OYEN

The New Man

On tolerance



VILLA SOPHIA

Title: **THE NEW MAN**
on tolerance

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Publisher: Villa Sophia

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Copyright: P.G. van Oyen

First impression: 2018

ISBN: 9789076392431

Lay out and design: Fris grafisch advies, Zaandam

Cover: tapestry by Madelon de la Rive Box (2018)

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To His Holiness, a bow!

HH Shrî Bharatî Tîrtha, Shankarâcârya, Shringeri Pîtham

1. Foreword

'It's never too late to become the person you might have been'
George Eliot

The English Victorian poet and philosopher who in fact was a woman, wrote this in the 19th century. It is a literary quote directed at man's commitment to becoming the best version of himself. The idea of born-again or re-birth or becoming new transcends many religions or philosophies. Whether in life or death the concept of moving to a higher level of humanity is something that many have contemplated. Throughout history, we have seen the subject of being reborn. The Bible from the time of Jesus and Vedic scriptures show us that this is not a physical act but one of the human spirit. Many religious dominations have looked at the idea of spiritual re-birth and the regeneration of the human spirit. The idea of becoming a new man or better person is in fact as old as man himself.

In this book, renowned author and writer Paul van Oyen discusses the concept of the New Man. Referencing Vedic documents, texts from Shankara, the book of Genesis and the Gospel of St John he examines the idea of the renewal of Man. The New Man is not new but is, in fact, the connection to our relative world.

In the New Man Paul van Oyen looks at the question of how to achieve this and in doing so what sacrifices or changes man would have to make. Is it to forgo something or is it to change a state of mind? His background within the corporate world gives authority to his appraisal.

Our modern society is often criticised for lack of compassion, ego-centric behaviour, and survival of the fittest attitude. The meek shall inherit the earth seems like a misdemeanour when one percent of the world's population owns over 90 percent of its wealth. The question of discipline or of self-inquiry rather than our preference to look at and blame the outside world is often not answered. Our everyday lifestyle is dominated by materialism and consumerism. However, does this make us truly happy? We are constantly bombarded with suggestions that we need this to be happier with our lot. Do we really need more clothes, newer cars and increasingly more exotic holidays to make us more content? These new must-haves and wants do not lead to happiness and contentment but instead can mean we are never satisfied as we feel we always need more.

Paul van Oyen looks at the question of what it means to be reborn or born again in this life and explains how it is not reincarnation but is to be renewed. This book looks at how Shankara (India) preached that inner composure and balance is important to help us not be affected by the rigours of the

world we live in. The qualities of tranquillity, self-control and inner silence (peace) bring us to an increased state of tolerance. In short, we stop complaining about prevailing situations and events and learn to accept that things and circumstances are what they are.

Paul van Oyen explores the power of detachment and how this helps move the mind towards freedom. We should see the positive side of what is perceived as everyday problems. After all, it is simply our life. Many people moan about the prevailing weather, but it is just that you cannot change or control the weather, so learn to just enjoy and accept it. In the New Man, it is seen as a state of mind to overcome. It is far too easy to look and blame the outside world rather than look at what is within ourselves. The New Man is re-born of the spirit and such people understand that truth, righteousness, and compassion are connected to God. In the Vedic tradition, twice-born were regarded as highly educated and evolved souls which is mirrored in many other faiths.

In this enlightening book, Paul van Oyen looks at the history of what has often been forgotten and how the discipline of self-enquiry can project to a better way to appreciate life. After all, it is within us all to become renewed, refocused and refreshed. The enjoyment of life is always better when kindness to others and inner control is involved. The ability to be tolerant and endure our world as a matter, of course, should

be what we aspire towards. The book of Genesis reminds us that we should be forgiving and not judgemental.

Paul van Oyen looks at the ability to meditate and shows it provides us with energy and efficiency and helps purify and focus the mind so that it is possible to reach a higher level of consciousness. To be a realist about our daily life we need to become detached and to rise above personal impulses and desires and to forego our base instincts. Paul van Oyen looks at the lessons we can learn from developing our intellect and compassion and merging this into our consciousness. The idea that meditation helps us to become universal is explored. The ability to exercise self-control, detachment, inner peace, repentance, tolerance, faith and concentration all help us towards a positive inner self.

In conclusion, this is a book to enjoy and reflect upon with lessons that can be learned for a more peaceful and fulfilling outlook on life. The underlying message is that the New Man is within us all. We just need to take the steps to discover it.

Jason Saywood

July 2018

2. Introduction

We have become strangers to ourselves by our dependence on outward identity and success, while our real need is for a concern with the image of God in ourselves. We prefer to look outward rather than to follow the discipline of self-inquiry. Still, the New Man is as old as Man himself. The 'new' implies a connection of Man with the relative world of time and place where things are constantly subject to change in order 'to renew': the old becomes new and the new becomes old etc. We have become stuck in this endless cyclical movement of birth and death. The concept of the 'New Man' is especially used in a biblical context. The concept is used to explain the fact of rebirth. 'Born again' is then primarily seen as 'reborn' in this life and not as reincarnation. We find the same theme back in the Vedic tradition where highly educated and evolved Brahmins are regarded as twice-born (*dvija*). In a wonderful dialogue between Nikodemos and Jesus this theme of 'being reborn', or being born again, is extensively worked out in St John, III, 1-8:

1 There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: 2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. 3 Jesus answered and said unto him, verily, verily,

I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. 4 Nicodemus saith unto him, how can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

The New Man is the man who is reborn in spirit: *except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.* This 'to be born from above' or be born again is strongly reminiscent of the beginning of the John Gospel: *12 But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: 13 which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

The New Man is the human being who follows Jesus or any other divine incarnation. Such incarnations (*avatars*) descend into the world with a certain regularity to prevent people from being completely cut off from God. They restore the love of truth, righteousness, compassion and actually show how everything is connected to God. This is the New Man.

3. The basis

How can we be poised and always remain of good spirits? How does that work in practice? Controlling our emotional reactions gives a better ability to cope with outward circumstances. In his book, *Vivekacûdâmanî* (The crown jewel of reason) Shankara, the great philosopher, and reformer of India, states that one needs a strong intellect, together with a degree of understanding and learning to start the quest for one's own divinity and immortality. It is the quest for our true nature.

Furthermore, we must also be able to distinguish between temporary affairs and eternity, between dream and reality. That distinguishing power is termed: *buddhi*. Once eternity - timelessness - becomes our yardstick, our power of discernment (*buddhi*) will function much better and will become more and more unambiguous. The eternal or the timeless becomes our yardstick. With this yardstick in hand, we can then inquire into the transient and study temporal matters and not the other way round. It brings equanimity.

Shankara states: *Such a man will no longer be carried away by the things of the world because he manages to preserve his inner composure and balance. Thus, he is equanimous and acquires the other qualities that are associated with it. Finally, he will cherish a burning desire for salvation and liberation.*

The first three of the 'other qualities' are tranquillity (*shama*), self-control (*dama*) and self-withdrawal or inner silence (*uparati*). They are all interconnected and acquiring one of these qualities means that the others are also close by. The next (fourth) quality is tolerance or forbearance (*titikshâ*). In verse 25 of *Vivekacûdâmani* Shankara says: The bearing of all afflictions without caring to redress them, being free at the same time from anxiety or lament on their score, is called *titikshâ* or forbearance.

It means that we stop complaining about existing circumstances and that we do not make negative comments about prevailing situations and events. Blaming others does not work. In fact, the question of blame is irrelevant. Things are as they are.

Living in this relative world of time and place, these qualities are awkward to achieve. The contrary seems rather more relevant because it seems to us that human life has everything to do with a desire to continually changing circumstances. There is hardly anyone who accepts things as they come, and who - moreover - always sees the positive side of it all. The purpose of *titikshâ* seems to be quite contradictory to the usual disposition of the human mind, which is precisely set on change and thus on a relative, temporal, reality where things come and go.

This means that when we wish to consider a spiritual way of life and our existence from a spiritual point of view, we must ‘re-invent ourselves or become reborn’. It is no longer possible to be satisfied with just going on as we are used to. A relative and changing reality no longer satisfies us because it comes and goes again and again. We must literally become a new human being, being born again as a New Man (man or woman). It makes no sense to keep looking at things as we have always done. The physical eye is not comparable to the subtle eye, which can see things in their true essence of timelessness.

Yet, it is important to continue to see how most people look at things in creation. In everyday life, we mostly hear a kind of ‘lamentation’ about how everything should be better and different and how we should protect ourselves against unfavourable circumstances. This is a need that we may feel throughout our lives. But in timelessness, this need falls away.

* * * * *

4. Tolerance or *titikshâ*

Titikshâ directly contradicts this. In the beginning, *titikshâ* is tolerance, a quality to endure unpleasant conditions equanimously. It is a form of self-restraint. Somehow we tolerate the cold of winter and the heat of summer, although we know it may be unpleasant. Sometimes we can even tolerate hunger and people who are irritating or unpleasant, etc., but the spiritual form of *titikshâ*, tolerance, is the inner force that is developed step by step by a new vision of the world as a whole, a new vision of being, a new vision of the purpose of life. This is a real, spiritual, development. Here is a New Man rising up from the embers of the past like a real Phoenix-bird. The old man is dead and there is the resurrection of this old man who has now become a new man, not unlike the story of Lazarus in St John's gospel. This is the essence of the Christian tradition.

The biblical book Genesis states that heaven and earth have been created and also light and darkness and so forth. As a result, the Creator sees *that it was good*. The significance of this statement is that the whole creation, that has now been awakened, is 'good' and that it can have an autonomous function because it is good'. Intervention is not necessary. Everything is present, everything is available. For those who take this ultimate position, there is no concern, no wickedness,

no ignorance. All these appearances are of a lower order and for those who are not tempted to step into the relative world of creation, tolerance, *titikshâ*, becomes a matter of course. In the Îsha Upanishad (verse 8), this position is described very explicitly: *The Self is everywhere, without a body, without shape, whole, pure, wise, all-knowing, far-shining, self-depend- ing, all transcending; in the eternal procession assigning to every period its proper duty.*

Each period has its own place and task. Everything is arranged, and God saw that it was good.

Seen from this Upanishadic vantage point we are no longer amazed at the events that are taking place in the world. Nothing surprises us, because - seen from eternity - there is nothing surprising about this world. It's only a surprise for people expecting something. But why should we expect something in eternity? Expecting something leads to disappointment. Be prepared for the worst. Nothing can be worse than the worst, but if we are prepared, there will be nothing more in the world that can hurt or annoy us. This is *titikshâ*, tolerance. It brings us quite naturally to a view from eternity.

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5. The properties of the New Man

The New Man standing in the present knows that only truth counts and loves it.

The New Man is a realist and observes and meditates daily.

The New Man carefully deals with his energy.

The New Man is not bound and lives and lets live

The New Man is bright and is master over his active mind.

The New Man knows how to use his power of discernment.

The New Man is no longer a slave of his emotions.

The New Man is tolerant, forgiving and does not judge.

The New Man knows no hatred.

The New Man is always open and takes other people into account.

The New Man is like a witness, always watching.

The New Man demands nothing and enjoys what is given.

* * * * *

5.1. The New Man standing in the present knows that only truth counts and loves it.

If someone would ask: what is the truth? The standard answer is that we do not know the truth or we are avoiding the answer and keep turning around it. Truth is identical to reality and the reality is that everything comes from One, it is timeless and indivisible. In the Bible (for example, in book Genesis) that One is called God. In St Matthew's gospel (19.17), Jesus says the same thing: *No one is good except the One, namely God.* The creation, having been created, is substantially polar and dualistic and consists of pairs of opposites such as yes-no, light-darkness, right-wrong, day-night etc. That makes creation truly unreal and illusory because the reality is One (without a second): there are no opposites. Creation is relative and therefore temporary and fleeting. Everything flows, everything comes and goes. But true reality is absolute: without form, timeless, immortal, comprehensive, whole, pure consciousness. The New Man knows this and is ready to be completely absorbed into that reality because all forms of relativity have lost their attraction. The New Man is a lover of truth.

When the memory of the Self - the truth - is lost or forgotten, then duality arises as an inescapable alternative. Duality is the world where 'the other' reigns - duality - and also the fear of 'the other'. It is this 'other' that creates all multifac-

rious forms of pleasure, pain, suffering, and sickness. In the company of the Self, there is only bliss. The creation is like an image and is of one type: nothing is good except the One. This is the real state of affairs: full of bliss. In the presence of the Self - the truth - the creation is blissful but when duality arises and 'the other' becomes important, then associations increase and pleasure and pain evolve and multiply which deepens the forgetfulness of the truth, the Self. What is needed is that the true nature of our being is explained and the illusory nature of duality is exposed. Good company is a great help to remember the Self, the truth about ourselves, and to unite the play of creation with bliss.

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5.2. The New Man is a realist and observes and meditates daily.

To become a realist we will have to relinquish our obsession with being attached to everything around us. Only then can we observe any situation in its context and ponder over it, without the prejudice of being attached. The more we become universal in our attitude, the greater the power and brightness of our mind. This has everything to do with meditation.

Physical existence is the crudest form of our personality. From this coarse personal existence in the physical world we must extend our vision to the mental and intellectual levels where it is possible to be more philosophic and impersonal, that is to say: more detached. A clumsy type that lives only for the satisfaction of impulses and desires and that is engrossed in physical existence, is the lowest level for a human being. It is almost at animal level.

A civilised person, intellectually developed in understanding and compassion, will not behave that way. This is a simple form of detachment that people can develop through education and culture. A civilised person, well educated, is aloof and personal and impersonal at the same time. We must develop this force of detachment in our personal life because detachment is the opening door to freedom. It brings us closer to reality. 'Personal impersonality' is a signal of the real,

because it is universal. By self-control, by meditating and by merging into pure consciousness, we can develop our vision towards universality which means literally 'being turned towards the One'.

The immediate purpose of daily meditation is to provide additional energy. It is a great help for efficiency during the day and also for conserving energy rather than spending energy haphazardly and without measure. It also purifies the mind so that one would not become involved in unnecessary activities. Efficiency, capacity and a purified mind mean growth in consciousness.

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5.3. The New Man carefully deals with his energy

Embarking on the quest for oneself also means that we need to be conscious of our available energy and use it efficiently. Energy saving is an essential factor on the road to spirituality. Unmeasured energy eruptions can no longer be an issue. There are many more other things to do in our spiritual life than what the earthly, secular, life demands of us. If we just desire to have ‘fun’ and if all our efforts are, therefore, wasted in creating comfortable conditions, whilst avoiding what is unpleasant, almost all of our time will be spent on ‘fun’. There will be very little time left to build up our own inner life, such as the cultivation of self-control, detachment, inner peace, repentance, tolerance, faith, and concentration. The positive aspects of an inner life that counts are usually wilfully ignored. A spiritual view of life is extraordinary and not ‘normal’. The normal view is dominated by our senses and by looking outward rather than inward. This does not mean, however, that we must avoid looking at everyday life. We should be much aware of what is happening around us and in the world at large. If a conversation arises about what is taking place in the world, we need to be well informed and be able to put forward a well-considered answer. Still, as the importance of a well-developed inner life increases, more and more ‘things of the world’ that require a lot of time and energy will fall away or become less important. Thus, time and energy will be available to devote more time to the spi-

ritual quest. This will, however, evoke tensions with the environment that should be treated with great care according to the principle of ‘live and let live’.

We do not inherit by nature enough strength and energy to regulate and control the interaction between the senses and sensual objects. Quite often our mind gets overwhelmed by our senses and we lose control over our mind. Without proper education and training, it will be very difficult to ward off or control the attack of sensory appetite. All appetites are natural but the relationship between senses and objects is subtle. Gaining strength is very important, for it strengthens our inner stability against the tyranny of sensory appetite.

* * * * *

5.4. The new man is not bound and lives and lets live

Freedom and detachment are becoming more and more important and the new man will increasingly go his or her own way but will have to reconcile this way of living with its environment which is often not interested in 'another way of living'. This is where the call for help is very relevant. That help can come from everywhere but given the changed principles, it is obvious to seek help within the confines of the spiritual world, the world of the divine. Rituals and ceremonies become one of the possibilities for getting 'help' alongside prayer. For example, praying for help to get reason to prevail in a situation. There is nothing wrong with that. Very often there is much resistance in the 'normal world' against an unworldly attitude and it is mostly rather unreasonable being based on a stubborn resistance to change. Help is indispensable. The detachment and new found freedom are not given nor acquired 'to be free' but to come to liberation and to find the reality of the I AM, the reality of yourself. Freedom also implies to live and let live.

Shankara says about detachment (verse 177): *Clarity of mind is acquired by refining the mind by means of discernment and by a determined attitude of detachment. Then the mind turns towards freedom. An intelligent seeker of liberation must first be firmly established in the power of discernment and in detachment.*

The two qualities are the power of discernment, *viveka*, and a natural and essential attitude of detachment. The Sanskrit word used for detachment is *vairâgya*. This word is difficult to translate: detachment, generosity, letting go, renunciation. This last word is meaningful because renunciation literally means renaming. This indicates the ability to always consider things from a different side and to put them in a new daylight so that they are 'renamed'.

The crown of this renunciation or this ability to rename is laid down in the opening verse of the Isha Upanishad: *cover everything with the name of the Lord!* Traditionally, this ability of renunciation, renaming, has been laid down in the rule to dedicate all actions at their beginning and at their end to the Lord. Hence the morning prayer and the evening prayer and the prayer before and after the meal, for example.

When both *viveka*, discernment, and the ability to renounce has become so strong that man is convinced that only the comprehensiveness of the One without a second - the Absolute - is real and all else in the world is like a dream and therefore unreal, the spirit will no longer yearn for these dreamlike phenomena.

Magnanimity, generosity and the power of discernment are the basis of reason. When man gradually learns to make use of reason, his understanding and ability to create unity will

grow. This is how man, man or woman, is moving from individuality to universality.

Man is, in fact, a universal being. In truth, Man is Immortal and eternal. He is Absolute, *Brahman*. This man is *buddhimâna*, intelligent. His desire for liberation is now becoming increasingly intense, and he is firmly set on the journey home.

* * * * *

5.5. The New Man is bright and has control over his unruly mind

Mother Nature does not make a fuss about this person or that person. She has no friends or enemies. It is not the intention of Mother Nature to satisfy us personally or to give us personal pleasure. The laws of nature are universal and are intended for everyone. They are good for all: ‘and God saw that it was good’. Hence, living according to the rules and regulations of Mother Nature is an effective means of developing an inner force, so that the circumstances of the world no longer worry us. What is more: they also take on a meaningfulness and beauty. Objects regain their natural coherence and become methodical and lawful in their operation, so that we are able to enjoy the world as it is, rather than suffering from it. Nothing happens by chance. Everything is regulated by law. This is what brightness does.

If practiced properly, meditation follows the development as laid down in the Ashtanga Yoga System of Patañjali. Together with the proper and good company and consistent self-examination, mantra meditation is the way to get the mind focused and to bring clarity to it. A clear mind is like dry and clean wood that is fired and does not give off smoke. There are no more contaminants and the wood is dry.

A clear mind (*buddhi*) gets inspiration from the universal

and allows everything to flow back to the universal. There is nothing that is withheld. The New Man has learned to speak the truth and not to keep things behind. He will keep the word, and he will do what he says. This is not easy. A lot of courage is needed and a lot of faith and trust. Good company is in this respect the best example to follow.

The world is created in such a way that there is a mirror effect. Eye for eye, tooth for a tooth. She responds to us in the same way as we react to the world. Some consider the world as a kind of reflection in a mirror. When we smile, the reflection smiles in the mirror as well. If we frown, it frowns in the mirror; Whatever we do, it does it with us as well. It is very lawful and therefore very mechanical.

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5.6. The New Man knows how to use his power of discernment.

Discernment only works properly and stable when it can have a yardstick. The yardstick indicates whether something is relevant or not. The more precise the yardstick the more accurate the discernment can work. The ultimate yardstick is that of what is true and what is not. If the yardstick has become reliable and shows flawlessly what is true, what is real and what is simple then the whole life becomes true, realistic and simple. The cleaning of *Krishna* (the inner mirror) is definitely necessary. It is also a movement from personal to impersonal and universal.

As simple God-seekers, we are expected to cherish an impersonal attitude, even in this personal embodiment of the senses. The impersonal actually keeps us alive in this world. What expands to an ever greater extent eventually flows into the impersonal and universal. God, the Absolute, is the highest impersonality and that is the purpose of the God-seekers quest; the impersonal quality of life that is there for all of us. The more we become impersonal in our attitude, the greater the power of our minds and the stronger our power of discernment.

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5.7. The New Man is no longer a slave to his emotions

Modern language seems somewhat deficient when ‘emotions’ are discussed. Literally, emotions carry qualities or virtues that take us away from the movement, bringing stillness. Emotions are emotive. In stillness, the mind regains its clarity and our power of discernment or discrimination becomes, once more, a reliable partner. The heart opens and becomes the living partner of the intellect. It is the Sita-Râma relationship or the Shiva-Shakti relationship or the Krishna-Râda relationship or the Christ and Mary Magdalene relationship. But in ordinary language emotions do exactly the opposite: they bring the mind into great turmoil and drag us from our anchors so that we fall prey to the quirks of the wind. Those emotions are strongly ego-driven and they almost always end up in desires, anger, greed, false attachment, pride, and jealousy. As a result, the mind loses its balance with all consequences.

Nothing is so dangerous for a spiritual life as desire and anger (*kâma* and *krodha*). This is the reason why *titikshâ*, tolerance, is so important because it is capable to withstand and endure the impetuous movements of desires and anger (*kâma* and *krodha*). *Kâma* and *krodha* are everywhere and, unfortunately, they are in the first place inside us and not outside. We carry their impetuous impulses always with us. It is as if they are continuously lying in an ambush, as a sniper, and when

the conditions are favourable, they rise up in the form of a stormy wind and bring us completely into confusion where everything has to depart and everything we have learned is forgotten. *Kâma* and *krodha*, desire and anger, are the most destructive forces in us. Because they are part of our own inner selves, we will have to learn to transcend them and leave them behind us. This requires a lot of effort, patience, and tolerance. Here is the tilting point of the transition to the subtle world where head and heart work together. Then we can start to inquire into the nature of consciousness and hence the real nature of our being. This is what the New Man is concerned with.

* * * * *

5.8. The New Man is tolerant, forgiving and does not judge

Titikshâ, tolerance, has a lower and a higher form. In the beginning, it is about enduring unpleasant circumstances. It is quite possible that we do not like the cold of winter nor the heat of the summer, but we can still tolerate it. In the same way, we can also tolerate hunger, tolerate people if they annoy us or are unpleasant, etc.

The spiritual form of *titikshâ*, tolerance, is an inner force that one can develop by adopting a whole new vision of the world around us. That vision places all things in the context of unity, of timelessness, of eternity instead of the temporality of a few seconds or a few years or of a lifelong. In real tolerance, we are no longer surprised at the events taking place in the world, because we see how things are just repeating themselves. They are *déjà vu*. They no longer confuse us. There is nothing surprising in this world. It's only a surprise for those people who expect something else. But why should we expect something at all? The error is in the person expecting things.

One of the reasons why we cannot tolerate things is that they often contradict our desires and our intentions. However, the world is not governed by our desires. The universal does not worry about this person or that person and has no friends or enemies. *And God saw that it was good*: the universal is good for all people and not just for a particular person or for

a group of people. Hence the respect for the universal laws of the universe is the real way to develop an inner force, so that the circumstances of the world are not only not a torment, but also full of meaning and beauty. The universal laws of the universe are a system, they follow a specific sequence and a method in their operation, allowing us to be able to enjoy the world as it is, rather than suffering from it. They are the embodiment of the will of the creator.

How can we enjoy the world as it is, without wanting to change the world or to completely transform it? This is a new art of living.

The art of spiritual life is the art of understanding, rather than making an effort to change things. The art of spiritual life is a matter of connecting with the system and the knowledge behind a situation, and to appreciate it in the right context. In this age, the system of dark ignorance makes itself very obvious, but it also makes it obvious how this very ignorance protects humanity from even worse evils or even greater destruction.

The issue of tolerance and forgiveness is in both cases a question of temporality as against timelessness. In the relative world of temporality, situations come and go. Today there is peace, tomorrow there is war. Today's joy is tomorrow's sadness. This goes on endlessly in a continual alternation of

pairs of opposites. There is no stability. No wonder that in a moment of inattentiveness the mind becomes confused and gets carried away into the 'soap' of this relative and unsteady world. There is a huge energy waste. In The Gospel of Mary Magdalene, Jesus expresses himself very clearly: *There is no sin. But you are making sin when you do what could be likened to adultery. That is called 'sin'.*

Jesus' answer to the question of Peter to 'sin' is as astonishing as it is simple: *there is no sin*. He means to say that there is no sin in the will of God. There is only that one will and it is pure, always relevant and precisely tailored. In that will there is no waste that could be said to be 'sin'. Wastage is a sin, and it always comes from the human reluctance to listen to the voice of his own conscience. After all, that voice is the mouthpiece of God's creative will in us. Instead, man prefers to listen to the voice of his own thinking and feeling. Thus he leaves the connection with what he truly is, namely pure, divine and immortal consciousness.

As a result, he settles for a consciousness that fluctuates in intensity and he accepts the ever-changing existence of birth and death until he decides to conform, once more, to the will of the Creator. He must come to this point of total and unconditional surrender. The choice that man makes to follow his own way, against his better knowing, is a sin that he himself created. God has nothing to do with it. In the 'real'

creation of the Creator, there is no sin. Sin consists of the dream-world of human individuality. Sin means that man misses his function as a cosmic being.

Man is stuck in his own personality and individuality and puts all his faith and trust in it, without seeing how cut-off he is in this way. He simply misses the boat that could take him 'to the other side'. Now he must wait for the next boat and one never knows when it leaves. It is actually a missed opportunity. The chance is always there but missing it is a matter of not paying attention or consciously doing something else. That is a waste of both time and energy.

The same applies to tolerance. In timelessness, it is quite possible and even easy to see and understand 'that everything is good' as the Creator himself also saw that it was good. Tolerance is a quality that is relevant in a world of time and place and it requires a strong effort, and also willpower and discipline. Understanding that in timelessness tolerance and forgiveness are self-evident is a tremendous help to actually produce that willpower and discipline in this world of time and place.

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5.9. The new man knows no hatred and does not discriminate on the basis of preconceived ideas

Here again, hate feelings and discrimination on the basis of preconceived ideas have a relative meaning. In timelessness, they cannot exist. The whole human community is one big family. How would parents be able to hate their children? That is very unnatural. The same goes for brothers and sisters. Sure, there are naughty children. Sometimes there are even small rascals amongst them. Hating one's children is unnatural and not possible unless one ignores all the laws of nature. The same applies to discrimination. In this sense, creation is utterly egalitarian, while the same creation is very much based on distinctions. Making a distinction is not the same as what we consider, nowadays, to be discrimination. The meaning of discrimination has unfortunately become distinctly negative. A soccer goalkeeper cannot be a centre-forward. But both the goalkeeper and the centre-forward are human beings, children of God.

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5.10. The new man keeps always an open mind and takes into account others

When consciousness overlooks - as a witness - all the impulses that come to man, one can find out what openness is and what real freedom is. We usually identify ourselves (our consciousness) with the impulse itself, and then it becomes very difficult to distinguish between the impulse as such and the consciousness that is behind it. It mostly escapes us so that we become the plaything of the impulses that come to us. We are only free to the extent to which our consciousness can distinguish itself from *kâma* and *krodha* (desires and anger). If our consciousness is attuned to impulses, we are bound and not free (*bhoga*). If consciousness is attuned to the law of the cosmos, it is free and inwardly connected (*yoga*).

Therefore, there can be no *yoga*, as an inner connection, as long as there is the identification of consciousness with the impulses of *kâma* and *krodha*. *Kâma* and *krodha* are like a storm that can blow us over. It is the storm of passion. When we are filled with desires and anger there is no openness and we do not take into account others.

Openness must be seen especially in connection with the quest for oneself. That door should always be open. Being open to a myriad of wishes and desires is equivalent to open the locks for a flood. There is one desire for which we should

be open and which needs to be met. It is the desire that arises among those who are looking for reality (*sat*, the truth), who are looking for the restoration of the connection with the divine, and who are prepared to make the necessary effort. As long as that desire and the decision to follow that desire is strong, stable and persistent, help will be available.

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5.11. The new man is like a witness who is watching

Verse 3.1.1 of the Mundaka Upanishad says:
*dvâsuparnâsayujâsakhayâsamânamvrikshamparishasvajâte|
tayoranyah pippalam svâdvattyanashnannanyo abhicâkashî-
ti || 1||* (Mundakopanishad 3.1.1)

Two birds are connected in friendship and have made their home in the same tree. One of the two picks of the sweet fruits while the other just looks at it.

In this well-known verse, the two birds refer to the always busy fellow on the one hand and to the eternal silent witness on the other. The witness just looks and sees how the whole world with all her hassle comes and goes. The witness also observes all the fleeting experiences in the mind with all their emotional charge such as sadness and joy, anger and compassion, pain and retribution. The witness remains unaffected by these ever-changing situations and does not become involved in the world-stage and remains purely an onlooker.

In contrast, the ego feels completely involved in the world stage and wants to 'change' as much as possible. The bird eats from the fruit of the tree and enjoys it, but if there is no fruit, the bird has to forgo its meal and is left with the pure misery of hunger and thirst. The tree is the body of man and also the

tree of life and both birds have their home in that tree.

The embodied man can be a witness, as a world renouncer, or he can be a busybody who always wants to change everything and be in the limelight of the world stage. It is the contradiction between the Self, *âtman*, on the one hand, and *ahamkâra* – the ego – on the other. Both have the same right to the house and to enjoy life in that tree. The one as a witness and the other as a player. The witnessing bird symbolises the unbound man who is independent of the world and independent of the tensions of duality (polarity). This bird symbolises what it really is: the Self, *âtman*.

The busy bird symbolises the ego, which makes that it becomes completely tied to the relativity of this world and therefore to endless rebirth. This busy bird symbolises the *samsâri*: it is taken up and down on the waves of rebirth.

The witness is emotionally independent of the world. He or she is also independent of the state of his or her body-mind complex in order to be happy. He or she is established in pure and transparent consciousness, as the substratum of all living beings that are woken up to life.

From that point of view – the starting point – such a mind can fathom and understand all the fussing-about of his companion. All virtues and all understanding are locked up in

that consciousness as in a store-room and are available. This consciousness is as the substratum of our being is the basis of wisdom, of compassion and of pure love towards all beings.

The Bible is full of references to this being as a witness. Let's take one:

In Acts 10, 42-44, Peter is speaking and says: *42 And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. 43 To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. 44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.*

'He' is here, of course, Jesus but it is the Jesus who speaks about himself as: *I am the way, the truth and the life* (St John 14.6). That the way, the truth and the life itself are in fact 'judge over the living ('the quick') and the dead' is absolutely clear. It needs no further argument. The same goes for the 'him' of whom the prophets testify that whoever through his name believes in him will obtain forgiveness ('remission') of sins.

This form of forgiveness means that the inner system of the human being is washed clean because that busy soul is suddenly awakened by her own name: 'I AM' and by staying the-

re and no longer being distracted it has become clean within, it is washed clean. This is the fullness of the New Man: *jivan-mukta*, Self-realised in this body.

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5.12. The new man does not demand anything and enjoys what is given

Not claiming anything is the active side of detachment, *vairâgya*. It is the logical consequence of being a witness as the bird watching from the Mundakopanishad 3, 1, 1. In the Vedic tradition, this is the *sannyâsin*, who has renounced the world as is the case within the various male and female monasteries as well.

When prospective monks and nuns are taken up into the monastic community they have renounced all their property and adopt a new name. The old man is as it were dead and they are reborn a monk or nun in the monastic community. From that moment on, their lives are devoted to God. They believe from within in His name (I AM) and know from within what forgiveness means. They also know that everything is given, Thy will be done.

The Îsha Upanishad gives also a clue about claiming nothing. The Upanishad starts, as usual, with a beautiful invocation:

That is perfect, this is perfect, perfect comes from perfect. Take perfect from perfect, and what remains is still perfect. May peace and peace and peace be everywhere!

The text then starts and states:

1. Whatever lives is full of the Lord. Claim nothing; enjoy, do not covet His property. Then hope for a hundred years of life doing your duty. No other way can prevent deeds from clinging, proud as you are of your human life.

It cannot be said shorter.

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