

Volume VIII - The Art of Being

Health and Order of Body and Mind



Chapter XX The Control of the Mind

In Sanskrit the mind is called *mana* and from this word comes *manu* which means man. Also the word man is much the same as *manu*, and from that we gather that man is his mind. Man is not his body, nor is he his soul; for the soul is divine, it has no distinction, and the body is a cover. Man, therefore, is his mind.

Once we begin to look into the minds of men we begin to see such a phenomenon that no wonder in the world can be compared with it. Looking in the eyes when they are afraid, when they doubt, when they are sad and want to hide it, when they are glad; seeing how men from lions turn into rabbits, when they have a guilty conscience. As flowers emit fragrance so minds produce atmosphere. Apart from seeing it in the aura, even in the expression of man, we can see clearly the record of his mind. Nothing can show man's mind better than his own expression. Mind therefore, is the principal thing. We distinguish men as individualities, and it is the culture of the mind which develops individuality into personality.

The difference between mind and heart is that the mind is the surface of the heart, and the heart the depth of the mind: they are two different aspects of one and the same thing. The mind thinks, the heart feels. What the heart feels the mind wants to interpret in thought; what the mind thinks, the heart assimilates expressing it in feeling. Neither is the mind the brain, nor is the heart a piece of flesh hidden under the breast. Those who do not believe in such a thing as the mind think that thoughts and impressions are in the brain, that a person thinks with his brain. It is not true. The brain only helps to make impressions clear to man's material vision.

The mind does not belong to the same element as the body; the body belongs to the physical, the mind to the mental element; the latter cannot be measured or weighed or made intelligible by physical instruments. Those in the world of science who are trying and hoping one day to produce machines which make thoughts and impressions clear, if ever they are successful, will only be so in the sense that the impressions

of thoughts affecting the physical body will be felt by their instruments, but not the thoughts from the mental sphere; for the mind alone is the instrument that can take reflections from the mind.

The mind can be seen as five different faculties working together: in thinking, remembering, reasoning, identifying and feeling.

Thinking is of two kinds: imagination and thought. When the mind works under the direction of the will there is thought, when the mind works automatically without the power of the will there is imagination. The thoughtful person is he who has a rein over the activity of the mind; an imaginative person is the one who indulges in the automatic action of the mind. Both thought and imagination have their place in life. The automatic working of the mind produces a picture, a plan which is something more beautiful than a plan or idea carefully thought out under the control of the will. Therefore, artists, poets, musicians are very often imaginative, and the beauty they produce in their art is the outcome of their imagination.

The secret that is to be understood about imagination is this: everything that works automatically must be prepared first, then it works; just like a watch must be prepared first, then it works automatically. We must wind it up, then it can go on; we need trouble about it no more. This shows that we need prepare the mind to work automatically to the best advantage in life. If people become imaginative without having prepared their mind, it leads them to at least an unbalanced condition, and maybe to insanity; for when an imaginative person becomes unbalanced, and has no control over his mind, it may lead to insanity.

Now the question arises: how to prepare the mind? The mind is like a film taking all the photographs to make a moving picture, and it produces the same that was once taken in. The one who is critical, who looks at the ugly side of human nature, who has love for evil, love for gossip, who has the desire to see the bad side of things, who wishes to find the bad points of people, prepares a film in his mind. That film projected onto the curtain produces undesirable impressions in the form of imagination.

The great poets who gave us beautiful teachings in moral, in truth, where did they get them from? This life here is the school in which they learned, this life is the stage on which they saw and gathered. They are the worshippers of beauty in nature and in art. In all conditions of life they meditate upon beauty and find good points in all those they see. They gather all that is beautiful, from the good and the wicked both. Just like the bee takes the best from every flower and makes honey from it, so they gather all that is beautiful and express it through their imagination in the form of music, poetry and art, as well as in their thoughts and deeds in everyday life.

I began in my early life a pilgrimage in India – not to holy shrines, but to holy men, going from place to place and seeing holy men of different characters and natures. What I gathered from them all was their great love nature, their outgoing tendency, their deep sympathy and their inclination to find some good. In every person they see they are looking for some good, and therefore, they find it in the wicked person. By doing so they themselves become goodness because they have gathered it: we become what we gather. In their presence there is nothing but love, compassion and understanding – of which so little is found in this world.

In our domestic life, in our social or political life, in business, in commerce, in national activities – if we had that one tendency, it would make life different for us, more worth living than it is today for so many souls. The condition today is that people are rich, they have all convenience and comfort – but what is lacking is understanding. Home is full of comfort, but there is no understanding, there is no happiness. It is

such a little thing, and yet so difficult to obtain. No intellectuality can give understanding. This is where man makes a mistake: he wants to understand through his head. Understanding comes from the heart. The heart must be glowing, living. When the heart becomes feeling then there is understanding, then you are ready to see from the point of view of another as much as you can see from your own point of view.

The other aspect of thinking is thought, which is heavier, more solid, more vital than imagination, because it has a backbone which is will power. Therefore, when we say, 'This is a thoughtful person,' we make a distinction between the imaginative and the thoughtful person. The latter has a weight about him, something substantial; one can rely upon him. The imaginative person one day may come saying, 'I love you so much; you are so good, so high, so true, so great,' but it is just like a cloud of imagination which has arisen. The next day it is scattered away, and the same imaginative person, who yesterday followed this cloud, would try to find some fault, and nothing is left in his hands. How very often this happens! Those are angelic people perhaps, but they ride on the clouds. For this dense earth they are of no use, one cannot rely upon them. They are as changeable as the weather. The thoughtful person, on the contrary, takes his time to express both his praise and his blame. The mind of the thoughtful is anchored and under control.

The one who learns how to make the best of imagination and how to control his thought shows great balance in life. How is this to be achieved? By concentration. In India there is a sacred Hindu legend relating that two sons of God (sons of Rama, an incarnation of Vishnu) were in a country where the younger one saw a horse which was set out free by the government. The one who would catch the horse would become king of that country. This youth was so attracted to the horse, and to the idea that was behind it, that he ran after it. He could not catch it, for the horse would sometime slow down, but ran away as soon as the youth nearly reached it. His mother was worried and asked the elder brother to go find him. Then the older brother came and saw that his brother was pursuing the horse. So he said to him, 'That is a wrong method. You will never be able to catch the horse that way. The best way of catching it is not to follow, but to meet it.' Instead of following the horse the youth met the horse, and so caught it. The mother was very pleased and proud that her son had been able to catch the horse, and he became entitled to the throne and crown of his father.

The horse in this story is the mind. When the mind is controlled then mastery is gained and God's kingdom attained. The younger brother is the pupil, the elder brother the guru, the teacher. The way of controlling the mind is not by following it, but it is by concentrating: by concentrating one meets it.

It is also told that a Sufi had a pupil who said to him, 'Teacher, I cannot concentrate on one thing. If I try to concentrate on one object, other objects appear; then they become so muddled that I do not know which is which. It is difficult to hold the mind on one object.' The teacher said, 'Your difficulty is your anxiety. The moment you begin to concentrate, you are anxious that your mind might wander away. If you were not anxious about it, your mind would have poise; your anxiety makes it more active. If you just take what it gives you, instead of looking behind it in order to see where it goes, if you change this tendency and meet the mind face to face, seeing how it comes to you and with what it comes, you will be able to concentrate better.'

From this story a great lesson is to be learned, for this is always the case! The moment one sits down to concentrate the mind changes its rhythm for the very reason that the person is anxious to keep it under control. The mind does not wish it; it wants its freedom. As you stand for your right, so the mind stands for its right. The best way is to greet the mind as it comes to meet you. Let it bring what it brings when you stand face to face with your mind, and be not annoyed with what it brings. Just take it, then you have the

mind under control, for when it comes to you, it will not go further; let it bring what it brings. In this way you make a connection with your mind, and as soon as you begin to look at it, you have your mind in hand. The photographer has his subject in hand when he has focused the camera on his subject. It is the same thing with a person and his mind: as soon as he has focused himself on the mind he has got it under control.

Concentrations can be considered as different stages of evolution. The first concentration is on a certain designed object and is divided into two actions. One action is making the object and then holding it in the mind. It is just like a child who takes little bricks, pillars, and different things making a little house out of them. The first action is this making of the house; the second action is looking at it. This is one kind of concentration, and another kind is that there already is an object which the mind must reflect by focusing itself on that object.

The next stage of concentration is improving on the object. For instance, one imagines a tiger, and then one also imagines the background of the tiger: rocks behind it, a mountain, trees, forest, and a river. That is improvement: holding at the same time the background and changing it according to the activity of the mind. Even if the tiger changes, it does not matter as long as one has that particular kind of concentration.

The third concentration is on an idea. The idea has some form, which is inexpressible – but the mind makes it.

Now coming to the realm of feeling – feeling is such an important thing that our whole lives depend upon it. A person, once disheartened, sometimes loses enthusiasm for his whole life. A person, once disappointed, loses trust for his whole life. A person heart-broken, loses self-confidence for all his life. A person, once afraid, sustains fear in his heart forever. A person, who has once failed, keeps all through life the impression of his failure.

In the East they love bird fights. Two men bring their birds to fight, and as soon as a man sees that the bird of the other man will win in the end, he takes his bird away while it is in the action of fighting – before it has accepted defeat. The man admits defeat while the two birds are fighting, but he does not allow his bird to go so far as to be impressed by defeat. Once impressed by it the bird will never fight again. This is the secret of our mind, and once we learn to take care of our mind – just as the man took care of his bird – going to any sacrifice but not giving the mind a bad impression, we will make the best of our life.

Besides this, we read of the lives of great heroes and great personalities, how they went through all difficulties and sorrows and troubles, and yet always tried to keep their heart from being humbled. This gave them all their strength; they always escaped humiliation. They were prepared for death, wars, suffering and poverty, but not for humiliation.

I will tell you an amusing anecdote. I once was in Nepal, near the Himalayas, and I wanted a servant, so I sent for one. He was of the warrior's caste, Kshatriyas, of a fighter's tribe in the mountains. I asked him what work he wanted to do, and he said: 'Any work you like, anything you like.' I asked: 'What about pay?' 'Anything you will give,' he answered. I was amused to find that he wanted to do any work I would give him and to accept any pay. 'Well,' I said, 'then there is no condition to be made?' He said: 'One. You will not speak a cross word with me.' Imagine! He was ready to accept any money, willing to do any work, but no humiliation. I appreciated that spirit of the warrior beyond words; this was what made him a warrior.

Friends, our failure and our success all depend upon the condition of our mind. If the mind fails, failure is sure, if the mind is successful, conditions do not matter: we shall be successful in the end.

Question: Is it possible, when humiliated, to spare our mind the injury of humiliation by seeing that the person who humiliates us is beneath us?

Answer: That is not the way, because as soon as we accept humiliation we are humiliated, whether we think it or not. It does not depend upon the other person, it depends upon ourselves. No sooner do we admit humiliation, there is humiliation. If the whole world does not accept our humiliation, it does not matter as long as our mind feels humiliated, and if our mind does not accept humiliation, it does not matter if the whole world takes it as such. If a thousand persons come and say to a man, 'You are wicked,' he will not believe it as long as his heart says, 'I am not wicked.' But when his heart says, 'I am wicked,' if a thousand persons say, 'You are good,' his heart keeps him down just the same. If we ourselves give up, then nobody can sustain us.

Question: Is it possible then to develop a state of mind that lifts us out of humiliation?

Answer: Well, the best thing would be to avoid humiliation, but if a person cannot avoid it, then he must be as a patient who must be treated by a physician, then he needs a person powerful enough to help him, a master-mind, a spiritual person. He then can be doctored, attended to, and get over that condition. When a person is a patient he cannot very well help himself. He can do much, but then there is the necessity of a doctor.

Question: Can that condition be treated by counter-irritation?

Answer: Yes, it can be met with that.

Question: What do you do when the feeling of humiliation has entered the mind?

Answer: To take it as a lesson, to take poison as something that must be. However, poison is poison. What is put in the mind will grow. It must be taken out. Every impression, if it remains, will grow: humiliation, fear, doubt. When it is there it remains; there will come a time when the person will be conscious of it. It will grow, and because it is growing in the subconscious mind it will bear fruits and flowers.

Question: Would the study of mathematics be good for an imaginative person?

Answer: Yes, it can bring about a balance. I have seen this in the case of one of my pupils who was extremely imaginative. He could not stay on the earth. But later on he got into a business where he was obliged to count figures, and after some time he obtained a great deal of balance.

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I have given this as a title in order to make my idea intelligible, but when explaining the subject, instead of using the word mind, I shall use the word spirit. The word mind comes from a Sanskrit root, which means mind and also man. In this way the name itself explains that man is his mind. Since the word, mind, is not understood in the same way by all those who use it in their everyday language, I think it best to use the word spirit instead.

The spirit can be defined as consisting of five different aspects: mind, memory, reason, feeling and ego, and each of these five aspects is of two kinds.

The mind is creative of thought and imagination. Out of the work of the mind, directed by the will, comes thought, and out of the automatic working of the will, comes thought, and imagination. So the thoughtful person is different from the imaginative. Thought is concrete because it is constructed; it is made by will power. The thoughtful person therefore, is dependable and more balanced, because he stands on his own feet. The imaginative person, on the contrary, floats in the air; he rises and falls with his imaginations. He may touch the heights of heaven, and he may fall deep down on to the bottom of the earth. He may float to the north, the south, the east or the west. However, both thought and imagination have their proper places.

The automatic working of the mind, which produces imagination, has its power, inspiration and beauty peculiar to itself. Poets, musicians, painters, and sculptors create out of their imagination, and they reach further than the ordinary man does. This only shows that the power of the automatic working of the mind is very great, although there is always a danger of being unbalanced. So often one sees a great genius, a composer, a poet, a great artist with a wonderful skill, and yet unbalanced, because the imagination makes the spirit float in space. The one who by floating takes the risk of falling, also has the chance of rising further than anyone else rises. To a practical and thoughtful man of common sense an artist or a composer seems to be very impractical, sometimes he seems to be very ignorant and childish. And looking at them from this point of view he is right, for however large a balloon may be, it is a balloon, it stays in the air. It is not a wagon one can rely upon to stay safely where one has put it. A balloon will fly; one does not know where it will take one. Nevertheless, the wagon remains on earth, it never touches space. It does not belong in the air. Being a wagon, it misses the joy of rising upwards.

Thought has its place; it is solid, it is concrete, it is distinct. A thoughtful man seldom goes astray, for he has rhythm, he has balance. Maybe he cannot fly, but he walks and you can depend upon him.

Now as to the spiritual aspect in connection with thought and imagination, there are two kinds of seekers after spiritual truth: the thoughtful and the imaginative. The imaginative at once jumps into religion; he does not walk he jumps into it. He revels in superstitions, he cherishes dogmas and beliefs, he interests himself in amusing and bewildering stories and legends connected with religion, he maintains beliefs that are impressed upon him. And yet, with all faults and weaknesses, the imaginative person is the one who is ever able to make a conception of God and of the hereafter. The one who has no imagination is not able to reach the zenith of the spiritual and religious ideal. Often an intellectual or materialistic person without imagination stands on the earth like an animal compared with a bird: when the bird flies up the animal looks at it and wishes to fly, but it cannot, it has no wings. The imagination, therefore, is as two wings attached to the heart in order to enable it to soar upwards.

The thoughtful seeker after the spiritual ideal has his importance too, because superficial beliefs and dogmas do not lead him. One cannot fool him, he is thoughtful and every step he takes may be slow, but it is sure. He may not reach the spiritual ideal as quickly as the imaginative, but if he wishes to reach it, he will arrive there, slowly and surely.

The second aspect of the spirit is memory, which again has two sides. There are certain things we need not look for; they are always clear in our memory, such as figures, and the names and faces of those we know. We just have to stretch out our hand and touch them. We can recall them at any moment we wish, they are always living in our memory. But then there is a second side to the memory, which is called by some the

subconscious mind. In reality this is the depth of the memory. In this part of the memory a photograph is made of everything we have seen or known or heard, even just once in a flash. This photograph remains located there, and some time or other, maybe with difficulty, we can find it.

Apart from these two sides of our memory there is still a deeper sphere to which it is joined. That sphere is the universal memory, in other words the divine Mind, where we do not only recollect what we have seen, or heard, or known, but where we can even touch something that we have never learned, or heard, or known, or seen. All that can be found there also; only for that the doors of our memory should be laid open.

The third aspect of the spirit is reason, of which there are two kinds. One kind is affirmation, and the other is both affirmative and negative. Affirmative reason is the one we all know. When a person is bankrupt we have reason to think that he has no money for the very fact that he is bankrupt. When a person shows his bad side we know that he is wicked, because people call him bad. Every apparent reason makes us reach conclusions that things and conditions are so and so. This is one kind of reason.

The other kind is the inner reason, which both contradicts and affirms at the same time. This means that, if a person has become poor, we say, 'Yes, he has become poor – and rich.' If a person has failed, we say, 'Yes, he has both failed – and gained.' Here is a higher reason which one touches. The higher reason weighs two things at the same time. One says, 'This is living,' and at the same time one says, 'This is dead,' or one says, 'This is dead and at the same time living.' Everything one sees gives a reason to deny its existence and at the same time to affirm its opposite – even to such an extent that when one has a reason to say, 'This is dark,' by that higher reason one may say that it is light.

When one arrives at this higher reason, one begins to unlearn – as it is called by the mystics – all that one has once learned to recognize as such and such, or so and so. One unlearns and one begins to see quite the opposite. In other words, there is no good which has not a bad side to it, and nothing bad which has not a good side to it. There is no one who rises without a fall, and no one who falls without the promise of a rise. One sees death in birth and birth in death. It sounds very strange and it is a peculiar idea, but all the same it is a stage. When one climbs above what is called reason, one reaches that reason which is at the same time contradictory. This explains the attitude of Christ. When a criminal was taken to him he had no other attitude towards him than that of the forgiver. He saw no evil there. That is looking from a higher reason.

Feeling is the fourth aspect of the spirit. Feeling is different from thought and imagination. It has its own vibrations and its own sphere. Thought and imagination are on the surface; feeling is at the depth of spirit. Feeling also has two sides: one is likened to the glow, and the other to flame. Whether one loves or whether one suffers, there is intense feeling, a feeling which cannot be compared with the experience of thought and imagination. A feeling person has a different consciousness; he lives in a different sphere. A person who is feeling, has a world of his own. He may move among the crowds and live in the midst of the world, and yet he does not belong to the world. The moment feeling is awakened in man, his consciousness becomes different. He is raised up, he touches the depth, he penetrates the horizon, and he removes what stands between man and the deeper side of life.

Is there anyone in this world who will own that he has no feeling? And yet there are hearts of rock and of iron, of earth and of diamond, of silver and of gold, of wax and of paper. As many objects as there are in this world, so many kinds of hearts there are. One heart is not like another. There are some objects that hold fire together; there are others, which burn instantly. There are objects, which will become warm and cold in a moment; others, as soon as the fire touches them will melt, and others again one can mold and turn into

ornaments. So is the heart-quality. Different people have different qualities of heart, and by the knower of hearts, each is treated differently. But since we do not think about this aspect of feeling, we take every man to be the same. Although every note is a sound, all notes are not the same, they differ in pitch, in vibrations; so every man differs in pitch, in the vibrations of his heart. According to the vibrations of his heart he is either spiritual or material, noble or common. It is not because of what he does, nor because of what he possesses in this world – he is small or great according to how his heart vibrates.

All my life I have had a great respect for those who have toiled in the world, who have striven all through life, and reached a certain greatness, even in a worldly sense, and I always have considered it a most sacred thing to touch their presence. This being my great interest, I began to make a pilgrimage to great people in the East, and among these wonderful visits to writers, sages, philosophers, and saints I came in contact with a great wrestler, a giant man. Since I had this admiration for great toil, I thought that I should go and see this man too. And would you believe it: this in appearance, giant-like man, with that monstrous muscular body, had such a sympathetic outgoing nature, such simplicity and gentleness connected with it, that I was surprised and thought, 'It is not his giant-like look that has made him great. What has made him great is that which has melted him and made him lenient.'

Feeling is vibration. The heart which is a vehicle, an instrument of feeling, creates a phenomenon, if one only watches life keenly. If one causes anyone pain, that pain returns. If one causes anyone pleasure, that pleasure returns. If you give love to someone, love comes back, and if you give hatred, that hatred comes back to you in some form or other. Maybe in the form of pain, illness, health, success, joy, or happiness – in some form or other it comes back, it never fails. Generally one does not think about it, and when a person has got a certain position where he can order people about and where he can speak harshly to them, he never thinks about those things. Every little feeling that arises in a man's heart, and directs his action, word, and movement, causes a certain reaction and rebounds; only it sometimes takes time. But do not think that you can ever hate a person – even have the slightest thought of it – and that it does not come back. It surely comes back some time. Besides, if you have sympathy, love, affection, a kind feeling for a person, even without telling him so, it returns in some form or other.

The fifth aspect of the spirit is the ego, and again there are two sides to the ego: the false and the real. They are just like the two ends of one line. If we look at the line in the center, it is one line. If we look at the line on the ends, it has two ends. So the ego has two sides: the first one is the one we know, and the next one we must discover. The side we know is the false ego which makes us say, 'I'. What is it in us that we call 'I'? We say, 'This is my body, my mind, these are my thoughts, my feelings, my impressions, this is my position in life.' We identify our self with all that concerns us and the sum total of all these we call 'I'. In the light of truth this conception is false, it is a false identity. If the hand is broken off, or a finger is separated from this body, we do not call the separate part 'I', but as long as it is connected to the body, we call it so. This shows that all the false ego imagines to be its own self is not really its self.

Besides, it must be remembered that all that is composed, all that is constructed, all that is made, all that is born, all that has grown, will be decomposed and destroyed, will die and will vanish. If we identify our ego with all these things which are subject to destruction, death and decomposition, we make a conception of mortality, and we identify our soul which is immortal, we identify our self, with all that is mortal. Therefore, that is the false ego.

Now, coming to the most important truth about spiritual attainment: those who are thoughtful and wise, those who go into the spiritual path, do not take this path in order to perform wonders or to know curious

things, to perform miracles or other wonderful things. That is not their motive. Their motive is to rise above the false ego and to discover the real. That is the principal motive of spiritual attainment. For no one will consider it wise to be under a false impression, to be under the impression that 'I exist,' when one has nothing to depend upon in one's existence. Therefore, striving in the spiritual path is breaking away from the false conception that we have made of ourselves, coming out of it, it is realizing our true being and becoming conscious of it. No sooner do we become conscious of our true being and break the fetters of the false ego, than we enter into a sphere where our soul begins to realize a much greater expansion of its own being. It finds great inspiration and power, and the knowledge, happiness, and peace, which are latent in the spirit.

Volume II - The Mysticism of Music, Sound and Word

Part IV: COSMIC LANGUAGE



Chapter VII THOUGHT AND IMAGINATION

The mind has five aspects, but the aspect that is best known is that for which we use the word 'mind.' Mind means: the creator of thought and imagination. The mind is the soil upon which, in the form of thoughts and imaginations, plants grow. They live there; but, as they are continually springing up, only the newly created plants are before one's consciousness, and those plants and trees that were created before are hidden from one's eyes. Therefore, when thoughts and imaginations are forgotten, then they are no longer before one and one does not think about them anymore. However, whenever one wishes to find a thought that has once been shaped, it can immediately be found, for it still exists in the mind.

That part of the mind which our consciousness does not see immediately is called subconsciousness. It is called this because the consciousness remains on the surface, making clear to us the part of our thoughts and imagination that we have just shaped and are busy looking at.

Nevertheless, once a person has had an imagination, a thought, it still exists. In what form does it exist? In the form that the mind gave it. As the soul takes a form in the physical world, a form borrowed from this world, so the thought takes a form, borrowed from the world of mind. A clear mind, therefore, can give a distinct body, a distinct form to the thought. A mind that is confused produces indistinct thoughts.

One can see the truth of this in dreams. The dreams of the clear-minded are clear and distinct, and the dreams of those whose minds are unclear are confusing. Besides, it is most interesting to see that the dreams of artists, poets and musicians, who live in beauty and who think of beauty, are beautiful; whereas the dreams of those whose minds contain doubts, fears or confusion are of the same character.

This gives proof that the mind gives a body to the thought. The mind supplies form to each thought, and with that form the thought is able to exist. The form of the thought is not only known to the person who thinks, but also to the one who reflects the thought, to the one in whose heart it is reflected. That is why there is a silent communication between people: the thought-forms of one person reflecting in the mind of another. These thought-forms are more powerful and clearer than words. They are often more impressive than the spoken word because language is limited, while thought has a greater scope of expression.

Someone asked me what elementals look like. I answered, 'Elementals are exactly like your thoughts. If you have the thoughts of human beings, then the elementals have human form. If you have the thoughts of birds, then the elementals have the form of birds. If your thoughts are of the animals, then the elementals have the form of animals, for elementals are made of your thoughts.'

There is another most interesting aspect in studying the nature of the mind. Every mind attracts and reflects thoughts of its own kind – just as there is a part of the earth which is more suitable for flowers to grow in and another part of the earth more suitable for fruits, and yet another part where weeds grow. Thus, a reflection that falls from one mind to another mind only falls upon the mind that attracts it. This is the reason why like is attractive to like. If a robber or a thief goes to Paris, he will certainly meet with another thief. He will easily find out where the thief lives, and he will recognize him at once because his mind has become a receptacle for thoughts of the same kind. As soon as their glances meet, a communication is established, as their thoughts are alike.

One sees in everyday life how like attracts like. The reason is that the mind has developed a certain character, and the thought-pictures of that particular character appeal to it. It is so very interesting for a person who sees this phenomenon in everyday life that there is not one moment when he does not see the truth of it.

High minds will always reflect and attract higher thoughts; from wherever it comes it will come to them. It will be attracted to the mind the ground of which is prepared for it. An ordinary mind is attracted to ordinary thoughts. For instance, a person who has a habit of criticizing people is very eager to open his ears to criticism because that is the subject which interests him, his pleasure is there. He cannot resist the temptation of hearing ill of another because this is most dear to his heart, for he speaks ill of others himself. When that thought does not belong to a person, it is a foreign note to his ears, and he does not want to hear it. His heart has no pleasure in it and wants to throw off anything that is inharmonious. Therefore, the mind-world is man's kingdom, his property. Whatever he sows, he reaps. Whatever he keeps that property for, that is produced in it.

Now, going into deeper metaphysics, what is it that forms the thought-picture? It is a very subtle question. A materialistic scientist will say that there are thought-atoms that group and make the form. Joining together, they compose the thought-form. If he wants to make it more objective, he will say that in the brain there are little thought-pictures, just like moving pictures, and that, moving successively, they complete the form. For this person does not see further than his body, and so he wants to find out the secret of the whole life in his body and in the physical world. In reality, the brain is only an instrument to make thoughts clearer. Thought is greater, vaster, deeper and higher than the brain.

There is no doubt that the picture of thoughts is made by the impressions of the mind. If the mind has had no impressions, then thoughts will not be clear. For instance, a blind person who has never in his life seen an elephant will not be able to form an idea of an elephant because his mind has no form ready to compose it at the command of his will. For the mind must know it first in order to compose it. Therefore, the mind is a storehouse of all forms that a person has ever seen.

One might ask, 'Cannot a form be reflected upon a blind person's mind?' Yes, but it will remain incomplete. If a thought is projected onto a blind person, he takes only half of it, for he will not have that part that he should give from his own mind and so he only takes the reflection which is projected upon him. Therefore,

he has a vague idea of the thing, but he cannot make it clear to himself because his mind has not yet formed that idea.

The form of a thought which the mind holds is reflected upon the brain and made clearer to the inner sense. By inner sense we mean the inner part of the five senses. For it is outwardly that these five organs give us an idea of five senses; but in reality, there is only one sense. Through the five different outer organs, we experience different things, and this gives us the idea that there are five senses.

There are visionary people who have conceptions of the different colors of thoughts, imaginations and feelings. This is symbolical rather than astral. The color of a thought corresponds with the condition of the mind. It shows the element to which the thought belongs. It shows whether the thought belongs to the fire element, to the water element or to the earth element. This means that it is the feeling that is behind the thought that produces its color around it as an atmosphere surrounding it. When such visionary people see the thought-form in the form of color, it is what surrounds the thought, it is the atmosphere of the thought, and this is according to the element belonging to that thought.

A thought connected with earthly gain is of the earth element. A thought of love and affection represents the water element, it is spreading out sympathy. A thought of revenge and destruction, hurt and harm represents fire. A thought of enthusiasm, courage, hope and aspiration represents air. A thought of retirement, solitude, quiet and peace represents ether. These are the predominant characteristics of thought in connection with the five elements.

The form of a thought is also its effect, its effect upon the form and expression of a person. For a thought has a particular language that manifests as a kind of letter, if one could read it. This language can be read in the face and form of a person. Everyone reads this to a certain extent, but it is difficult to define the letters, the alphabet of this language. There is one mystery that opens a door into the thought-language and that is the vibrations – what direction the vibrations take. A thought works upon and around a person's form and becomes manifest to the eyes upon his visible being. There is a certain law that governs its work, and that law is the law of direction – whether the forces are going to the right or to the left, upward or downward. It is this direction of the vibrations of thought that produces a picture, so that a seer can see this picture as clearly as a letter.

No doubt for a seer it is not necessary to read the thought from the visible form of a person because he cannot be a seer if he is not open to reflection. Every thought is reflected in him, and this makes things even clearer. Besides that, he need not see the picture of the thought on its visible form in order to know it, as the atmosphere tells him. The thought, itself, calls out, 'I am this thought!' – whatever it may be, for thought has a language, a voice, a breath and a life.

Question: What is imagination?

Answer: Imagination is uncontrolled thought.

Question: Is it good to have a strong imagination?

Answer: It is good to be strong oneself. If one has strength, then imagination is strong and thought is strong and one is strong oneself. Furthermore, a strong imagination means a strength going out from oneself,

reaching out without control. Therefore, strong imagination is not always promising. It is strength of thought that is desirable. For what is thought? Thought is a self-directed and controlled imagination.

Question: If thought has a body, is it bound to a place, or does it spread throughout the whole universe?

Answer: This is a subtle question. One could ask, 'If a person is in prison, is his mind in prison too, or can it reach beyond, can it go out of prison?' Certainly it can. It is the body of the man that is in prison. His mind can reach everywhere. Perhaps a thought produced in the mind-world is made captive by its object or motive, by its source, or by its application in a sphere, within a horizon where it is working out its destiny. Nevertheless, it is a thought, and it is capable of reaching every part of the universe in a moment's time.

Question: How should undesirable thoughts be destroyed? Must this always be done by the person who created them?

Answer: Yes, it is the creator of the thought who must destroy it, and it is not in every person's power to do it. Yet, the mind that has reached mastery, that can create as it wishes, this same mind can destroy.

Question: Would you explain further what role the brain plays in thinking?

Answer: The brain may be likened to a photographic plate. The thought falls upon the brain, just as a reflection falls upon the photographic plate – both one's own thought and the thought of another. Then there is another process, and that is that the thought is developed like the photographic plate. What is it developed with? Is there some solution in which the photographic plate is to be put? Yes, and that is the intelligence. Through one's own intelligence, it is developed and made clearer.

Question: Has one element superiority over another? For instance, is a thought colored by fire superior to a thought colored by another element?

Answer: There is no superiority of one element over another. The superiority of a thought is according to the outlook of the mind. For instance, one person standing on the ground sees the horizon just before him – this is one outlook. Another person stands on the top of a tower and from there, he looks at the wide horizon – his outlook is different. It is according to the outlook that the thought is superior or inferior. Besides, no one can take a thought, any thought-picture before himself and say, 'This is an inferior thought,' or, 'This is a superior thought.' Thought is not an earthly coin, which can be inferior or superior. What makes it inferior or superior is the motive behind it.