

THE GAME OF LIFE

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### PART I: LAWS OF THE GAME

The body of doctrine does not hold an attitude toward its followers of admonition; it does not reprove; it does not command.

It makes itself known through something so subtle and under the surface that it steals into the mind of the student of that doctrine like some great approval; but with this peculiarity, that the approval does not lay hold of the false self, nor attach itself in any way to the false self, but seems to act as though it were discriminative, or as though the magnetic currents had a way of drawing it in the right direction so that it associates immediately with the truth in the student's mind.

I remember Mr. Rawson saying that he thought the doctrine of the I AM, by which man is taught to assume the self-ness of the Godhead, led to or might possibly lead to a puffing up of the ego by which the false self would come to feel that it was bigger than the fellow being who has not the awakened consciousness by which he can say, I am.

That would be a disastrous result, and a natural result if the word of truth had not the power within itself to seek its own assimilation. The power of truth knows where to go and where to apply itself. Therefore, the words of truth, however supreme and exalted they may be in point of identification, are perfectly safe with anyone, for they will of themselves sift the matter, separate the milk from the water as the scriptures say; they are capable of dividing the bone from the marrow, so finely discriminating is their nature.

If a person had the tendency to exalt his personal ego he would not feel an inclination to speak the words of truth

identifying him with God; he would be inclined to identify himself with exalted worldly personages, as, he would say, I am Napoleon, or, I am Alexander the Great, or, I am this or that great one who is now manifest upon the earth reincarnated. That is the way egoism practices identification. It has no taste for identification with God. It is only God Who can identify with God, and the word of truth finds no false assimilations.

Therefore the word of truth spoken by one who is ignorant is safe with him, and, moreover, will lead him to the discovery of a nature to which the word is appropriate, thereby becoming a revelation. When we say that the doctrine does not admonish nor reprove, but it praises and approves, we understand that there is a word of truth appropriate to the nature of everyone to whose nature that word is fitting.

If one were in an error, if one were misled, if one were hypnotized, if one were in any

way drawn aside from the path of truth, the Instruction would not admonish him, Be careful now lest your foot slip. The doctrine does not threaten, saying, If you do not so and so you shall be left behind in the march, or you will be dropped by the Instruction, or some misfortune will befall you, or you will be delayed in the pathway. The Instruction does not threaten and it does not admonish. The Instruction states the truth to every individual, whatsoever he may be about, trusting that word of truth to find its association with the person in the right place so that it becomes manifest in him as a declaration and acknowledgment of who he really is.

The greatest corrections are made without criticism, without any words even suggestive of turning points, but, by the presence of truth, and that alone, corrections are made so that people change their ways, their habits. They turn from paths of ignorance by the presence of truth which is in their midst as a power to approve, a power to see truth, a power to recognize that which really is.

Now, it must be understood that this world is not a curse in itself; the curse comes from the way one takes it, and he is cursed by it if he falls into a misinterpretation of it, or if he looks upon it as evil, or if he thinks it is damaging in any way.

The sagelike mind understands the view to hold toward a world, it understands that enlightened view which takes this world to be a playground. But it is not, on account of its being a playground, a place where one is turned loose, regardless of all form and discipline, correction, or convention, because in the play the conventions are adopted; in the play the codes of honor are adopted. As, if one were to invent a game, would he not make in that game certain laws that must be followed? And he who knows the laws of the game can play the game, but in playing the game he is adhering to the laws. So, when we play the game of experience, we understand the laws of the game.

The question is raised sometimes, Why should we conform? If it is all nothing, why should we still eat, and why do we sleep?

Why do we not renounce all that in the light of the fact that it is a dream, an unreality? If we gain wisdom, do we not then cease to eat and cease to sleep? Would not that be the mark of wisdom, that one should now, knowing this to be an unreal experience, should he not now cease to eat and to sleep?

If he were to throw away the dream, if he were to break up the game and say, I will play no more, he might then commit suicide and disappear off the board. But however one commits suicide, whether by external means or by mental means, it is the same, he throws up the game.

Now, the reason that it seems so plausible that one should break up the game, the reason it seems so necessary to break up the game in the light of knowing that it is a game, is because one does not really see, he only theoretically grasps the fact that this world is a playground, that experience is a dream. If he actually understood that it is all a play, he would not feel so serious about whether one

eats or does not eat, sleeps or does not sleep, for that would not be a question related at all to the subject; for this reason, that if one adopts a play experience, invents a game and plays that game, he will play up to the very finest point every part of the law, he will abide by the law, for in that way he sustains his game--that which he has created.

How, then, does he make his escape if he does not do it by refraining from all the points that show he is a participant in the play, the game, refraining from sleep and ceasing to eat? How is he, then, to escape and show that he has received enlightenment, if he does not enact his part in a way to let all fellow beings in the game see that he is different than they, namely, that he can now go without eating and he can now go without sleeping--thereby demonstrating that he has escaped the enchantment, the ensnaring power of the game? How else can he show his enlightenment in such fashion as those who of similar mind, or

like enlightenment would understand, in which there is no sign given?

But they who have understanding recognize him who has enlightenment, and that enlightenment consists in knowledge alone, so great a knowledge that it does not look upon the game as something that must be broken up, but looks upon it as though one had entered into the mind of the creator of the game. He invented it, and he could therefore look over all the laws and rules and forms of the game without being in any way convinced that they steal from the awakened consciousness which knows the mind of the inventor; and he sees no ensnaring in the fact that he invents a game.

He sees when he invents a game that he has brought to light a pleasure by which one may enter into the fictitious life, the supposition of something going on which is not veritable fact. He may participate in that game, but with the power always within the intellect to draw back from the game at will and to say, I do not wish to play any more.

But the game is not destroyed for those who wish to go on with the play. The game is not taken off the boards because someone has returned to the knowledge of that mind that invented it.

Perhaps an illustration will carry out the meaning more clearly: A young prince was playing with some neighborhood children who did not belong to the royal house, they belonged to the village. But the prince entered into the game with them, playing hide and seek; and it was the turn of the prince to blind his eyes and let the village children hide. After they were hidden in various places, he opened his eyes and began to search for them. He searched and searched, but the children were well hidden.

A grown-up walked by who belonged to the royal house, and spoke to the prince in this way: Why do you not assert your royal authority and call these children out? All you have to do is to speak from your royal position and they must obey and come forth. But the prince said,

Then I could not play with the children; if I assert my princely nature, my authority, then I cannot play the game any more.

The prince wanted to play the game, he wanted to be a child with the other children, he wanted to make believe, he wanted to live in an unreal world, he wanted to face difficulties, he wanted to search where the finding was hard, he wanted to peer in many directions where there was nothing to lead him aright; he wanted to feel the obscuration all about him and the impossibility of solving the difficulty, that he might play that he was a person who could wend his way through all difficulties and win the game.

So, in experience, when the heart grows firm and strong in knowledge, one loves to play the game and he does not look upon it as disaster that he should be caught in a dream world, in a fictitious place, in a make-believe experience. He does not take that seriously, but like one who loves the sport.

## PART II: THE PLAYGROUND

Now, as the mind comes close to the understanding that this world is a playground, that it is fictitious, going by the name of dream or story or unreality or fancy or game, as one begins to enter into a genuine comprehension of the nature of this world, he loses the serious sense about it that it should be, at every point, demonstrated over.

The real student does not call upon his teacher, saying, Exercise your authority and call these children out from their hiding places. For the real student understands that his mind is at one with the mind of the instructor, that it is a game. It is a play and no demonstration is exacted, for if the demonstration were exacted in full, no one could play any longer.

Now, the reason one thinks the play should stop is because he believes in evil; but is that the fault of the game, that one

believes in evil? Is that to be laid to the play, that one should be fearful and worried and concerned and disheartened? No, that should be laid to oneself, the way he looks at his game.

There are children who sulk when they play games; and there are children who will not slide down the rain barrel any more; there are children who take their dolls and go home. There are children who cannot play fair and children who do not want to play anyway, and some who want to play their own way, and some who want to break the rules of the game, and some who want to cheat. There are all kinds of people playing the game of life.

But the children of light play fair and they play heartily, for they are healthful, they are strong and robust and healthy, and they love the zest of the game. They do not call for a showdown, they do not call for a termination; they do not ask for demonstration, they do not ask for power. They ask for knowledge. They say, Let me see what the rules of this game are and

let me learn how to play the game according to the rules--knowing full well that if one has understanding he can win at any game.

Therefore, understanding is supreme, and in this universe it is the only thing offered. So, when the students say, Why do we not see those who have demonstrated physical immortality, who have lived for thousands of years in the flesh, why do we not see them? It were better if one asked for more wisdom, that he might see how the game is invented and who they are who play it. If the game were set aside and no longer here, the immortals would be seen, but they would not be any more real nor any more present than they are when the game is going on.

Therefore, one learns to live in all worlds. He learns to live in the world of the play, he learns to live in the world of knowledge, which is the place where the game was invented, where the rules were made up, where it was all set forth as a creation. Some of the great teachers have entered upon devices. So

universal has this method been that there have been books written on the subject of sagely devices, in order to capture the instances in which the sages have entered into their various inventions for the sake of purposes all their own. The Instruction, through the reports, is familiar with the device of the father who was a great physician. He wanted his sons to take a medicine which they refused because it was bitter. So he performed a device by which he got them to say that they had taken the medicine, and then he arranged that after a while the opportunity would come again so they might take it. Finally their hearts warmed toward the giver of the medicine to such an extent that they were healed of their obstinacy.

We have another device which might be repeated, of a wise man who saw that there were many prisoners in a certain community who had broken the law and had committed all kinds of crimes, so that the prison was overcrowded with those who had committed some kind of offense. It seemed as though the whole tendency of the

world was toward crime. And this wise man thought, How can these criminals be converted, be turned to the light, be changed about in their views? How can they be turned to the truth? So, in order to convert all these criminals, he went out in the dead of night, dressed up as a regular bandit; he entered into the richest neighborhood of the town and broke into one of the homes of the wealthy and stole some valuable jewels. He was taken in the act and convicted of crime and sent to prison.

While he was in prison he had the opportunity--for which his device was performed--to be on a level with the criminals. He entered as one of them, he was himself a criminal. He began to show them the rules of the game--not the game of crime but the game of life. Little by little they became interested and he led them and intrigued their minds into consideration of things that pertained to him--the one who had invented the game of life. He won over all their hearts to love and devotion for him who was wise enough to create a game of

life like this; and he converted all the prisoners.

Many have been the devices performed, but they are always of this nature: The sagely mind enters into the game and he plays the part with the rest; and by the light which is in his mind, and through association on the plane of the game itself, he transmits that light; and they who play with him become participators in that light.

\*My heart was lifted up  
and enriched in the  
love of the most high;

That I might praise him  
(and that I might praise  
him) by my name.

My members were strengthened  
that I might not fall  
from his power.

Sickness removed from  
my body, and it stood  
for the Lord by his will;  
for his kingdom is firm.

\*Odes and Psalms of Solomon,  
Vol II, page 295

O Lord, for the sake of  
them who are deficient, do not  
deprive me of thy word.

Nor for the sake of their  
works, do thou restrain from  
me thy perfection.

Let not thy luminary be  
conquered by the darkness;  
nor let truth flee away  
from falsehood.

Let thy right hand bring our  
salvation to victory, and  
receive from all quarters,  
and preserve whomsoever is  
affected by ills.

Falsehood and death are not  
in thy mouth, my God; but  
thy will is perfection.

And vanity thou knowest not,  
for neither doth it know thee.

And error thou knowest not,  
for neither doth it know thee.  
And ignorance appeared like  
dust and like the scum of  
the sea.

And vain people supposed that  
it was (something) great; and  
they came to resemble it and  
became vain:

And the wise understood and meditated (thereon), and were unpolluted in their meditations; for such were in the mind of the Lord.

And on their part they spake truth, from the inspiration which the most high breathed into them.

Vain people supposed that it was something great and they came to resemble it and became vain.

In the beginning of this lecture we were speaking of the use of the word "I am." When egoism claims any enlargement of itself, when it would be puffed up, when the frog would imitate the bull, when human beings declare they are Napoleon or Alexander the Great, they think to become great; and their vanity is a disaster. But the wise understood and meditated thereon and were unpolluted in their meditations, for such were in the mind of the Lord. They who are in the mind of the Lord meditate upon truth. They speak the mighty words of

identification; their meditations are unpolluted and they themselves are not inflated and over-sized with egoism, but they themselves are meek and lowly of heart.

These wise ones are so lowly of heart that they can, like Jesus, take on the dream. In all ways He was tempted like as they; and in all ways He took upon Himself the experiences which they had. By His almighty power, by His greatness, by His meekness, by His assumption of truth, knowing who He was, He could perform the device of being a prisoner among prisoners; He could play hide-and-peek with the children who play hide-and-peek; He could be a mortal among mortals, a dreamer among dreamers.

But through it all the mighty principle prevailed, which was understanding. For when one has knowledge, when he has an understanding mind, when he is in the mind of the Lord--having this mind which is in Christ Jesus--he is like one who is never lost among those who are lost; he is like one who never comes to harm when he is among those who are experiencing the world's ills. He is like one

always saved out of the midst and yet remaining in the midst of the errors, that he may be the light shining from a high tower.

This light shining from the high tower illumines all around and they are saved from shipwreck and they are saved from disaster; they are drawn by the power of this light to the same position as the light is, to the same knowledge, to the same escape, the same deliverance.

But while the sage is administering to his people and while he is giving the doctrine of truth, he remains in the dream, seeming like those who have ignorance and do not know they dream.

There is not anything that will not yield its goodness, its excellence, its wonder, its healing, its administering power, to those who have the mind of the Lord. Those who have the mind of knowledge, who are one with him who invented the game, who believe in truth, who speak words of identification with truth, who understand their relation to the truth--to them the mind of

the Lord is an absolute unity.  
Then all things yield--fortune,  
happiness, deliverance, goodness.

A professor of agriculture in the Minnesota University said, The cow is only able to yield her full possibility of milk to a milker who she regards as her child. In the Vedas the cow is a symbol used to indicate the supply of abundance which all mortals feel should be theirs but from which many times they think they are estranged, and unfortunate enough to be separated from the source of supply. Meditation upon the cow was encouraged and ordered in ancient times, that one might feel that his universe was a mothering principle, and a nourishing principle, and that no one ever need go hungry or without the satisfaction of his desires. But unless he relates himself, as though he were the child of this great mothering principle, he cannot receive the full supply.

So when one becomes obstreperous and conceited and bold, aggressive and full of effrontery, of a refractory,

at hide-and-seek, or any other game.

The wonder of it is that this ability to go outside and come in again, to be related to the outside while one is within the game, is to have that nature of the child which draws down from the infinite supply all nourishment, all fortune, all goodness and happiness, and permits no evil. Except you become as little children, you cannot enter into the kingdom. But it is this childlike mind, the mind of faith, the mind that knows everything is right, the mind that has no fear, the mind that can play the game happily; that childlike mind is nourished. The great mothering principle of this universe shows what its possibilities are to nourish.

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