

The Great and the Little 'I am' (Part 1 of 3)

By Eugene Halliday

(First printed, June, 1979, in 'St Michael and All Angels '
Parish Magazine, Manchester, UK)

1.01 In the book of Exodus we read that God spoke to Moses and told him to go to Pharaoh and gain the release of the Israelites from their bondage. Moses asked, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Children of Israel out of Egypt?" When I say to them, "The God of your father has sent me to you," and they shall ask, "What is his name?" What shall I say to them?" And God said, "I AM THAT I AM. Tell the Children of Israel that I AM sent you."

1.02 God's words, "I AM THAT I AM" in the repetition of the 'I AM', tell us something of profound interest. God does not waste words; the repeated 'I AM' is meaningful. The first 'I AM' refers to God as He knows Himself in His infinite Power, Wisdom, Action and Self-presence. The second 'I AM' refers to those aspects of Himself the He makes known to us according to our limited capacity to comprehend Him. Whatever knowledge God has revealed to us through His prophets, or to others of His chosen representatives, it is but a minute part of His infinite Spiritual being as it is known to Him in Himself.

1.03 God therefore repeats the 'I AM' because He says first 'I AM' to Himself. He refers to Himself as He knows Himself in His own Infinity; and when He says the second 'I AM', He refers to those aspects of Himself which He reveals to us as creatures of limited understanding who need His help, but are not equipped to grasp the full import of His infinite Being.

1.04 But not only God has two uses of the 'I AM'. The human individual also is double in aspect, for he has one self which is known in its inner-most essence and known only to itself and to God, and another self which is that group of aspects of his being which is presented to other human beings within the situation which constitutes human society.

1.05 When a baby is first born, it is not yet equipped with an eternally adjusted social personality such as it will later acquire. What it knows at first about itself is simply its immediate life-needs, those essentials of its survival and development. It knows when it is in pain, when it is too cold or too hot, when it is hungry or has indigestion, and so on. It does not yet have a humanly constructed social language by which it can convey to adults in its environment its particular needs. Thus its chief means of communicating information about its condition of comfort or discomfort is by means of simple noises.

1.06 But the baby is given a name, and this name is used over and over again to build a centre of reference for its consciousness. By means of this name the child will become able to respond to any statements or questions put to it by adults or others within its environment. Around the child's name is gradually built a structure of words which represent ideas and facts of the world. By means of these words and ideas is built the

child's social personality; that aspect of the child's total being which will be used to relate its thoughts, feelings and activities to other humans within society.

1.07 For economy, the child is taught to say 'I' whenever this is more convenient than repeating the name given to it by birth. Thus instead of saying, "William wants this," or, "William doesn't want that," the child says, "I want this," "I don't want that," etc.

1.08 By repetition of the word 'I' in retaliation to experiences undergone, there is gradually built up a sense of an 'I-hood' or 'self' as a being separate from other beings. So strong does this sense of 'I-hood' or 'self' become, that, even if the name given at birth is for some reason changed, yet the sense of 'I-ness' is still retained.

1.09 We see, then, that the human being has two ways of thinking of his being: one based on the innermost processes of his mind and body as known internally to itself, as first experienced when a baby, before the beginning of social training; the other built by experiences resulting from living within human society.

1.10 Just as God has two aspects, one known only to himself, and the other as revealed to His creatures, so the individual human being has two aspects, one as he knows himself in the privacy of his own thoughts and feelings, and the other as he presents himself to other human beings within the outer society in which he finds himself.

1.11 The outer aspect of a man, the 'self' which he shows outwardly to others in society, is a very small part of his total being. We call this 'self' his **little 'I am', his socially known self**, that aspect of his being which is built of behavior patterns known to the other members of the society in which he lives.

1.12 This little 'I am', which other men see, is not the **essence** of his being, it is but a complex system of ideas and attitudes which serve him in his relations with other members of the outer world.

1.13 But, hidden inside his little 'I am', his non-essential self, is another self, an essential self, the self with which he began his life when he was first born, but which was quickly covered over with those external patterns of behavior which human society demands of all its members, patterns without which civilized societies could not exist as we know them.

1.14 But although such socially acceptable behavior patterns are needed for the building and maintenance of human societies, they are not sufficient in themselves alone for the generation of truly relational beings whose ultimate purpose is to attain to full spiritual development and its implied relationship with God.

1.15 It is possible for a man to develop his little 'I am' to the point where it is quite acceptable as a socially adjusted unit, without gaining a similar degree of development of his innermost 'I am'. It is possible for a man to be known as a 'doer of good' within society, and yet to have lost all his awareness of his innermost essential 'I am'. Such a

man could consciously believe himself to be an atheist. He could consciously believe that his little 'I am', his social self, is the only self he has.

1.16 It is because of the possibility of the loss of this awareness of one's original essential self, which one had as a child before one's social education had obscured it, that Jesus says that, in order to enter the Kingdom of heaven, a man must be born again. When he says that the members of the Kingdom of Heaven are like little children, Jesus means that they are aware of their own **essential** being, that human social behavior patterns have not covered up and hidden from their consciousness that which they are in their own innermost essence.

1.17 While civilized human beings may be justified in requiring from each other certain types of socially acceptable behavior, yet God is interested not only in how polite externally we are to each other, but also in our innermost essence, in which is centered our deepest will. God is interested not only in our civilized physical activities, but in our deepest innermost reasons for them. God searches the human heart as well as He observes man's outermost behavior patterns. It is good for our ultimate well being if we do the same.

1.18 When the two 'I am's' of the human being are separated from each other, we find that the individual is in danger of becoming a battlefield in which the great 'I am' and the little 'I am' continually make war against each other. The spiritual self sends down to the fleshly self the message of God: the 'fleshly' or external self tries as well as it can to resist the message. Thus arises the battle of conscience against desire, a battle in which the individual being is the battlefield.

1.19 There is only one way in which this battle can be peacefully resolved: the little 'I am' must give in to the great 'I am'. The little 'I am', the human socially adjusted ego-self, cannot win this battle, for the cards are, from the beginning stacked against it. The little 'I am' has been built from outside, built by external social pressures, all of them finite, all of them of limited energy. The little 'I am' depends on the support of other little 'I am's'. There is no inner coherence here.

1.20 The Great 'I am' depends only on what is essentially within it. But what in it is essential is given to it by God. The essential in a human being is the divine innermost presence itself. It is God within. It is Emmanuel. It is Jesus Christ, Universal Mind, the Eternal Truth. Finally nothing can stand against this innermost essential Self, for it is one with the Supreme Power which is the origin and creator of all things.

1.21 In this outer self, his little 'I am', a man can be a convinced unbeliever, for this little self has been built from outside and so has no experience but that of external things. It knows much of the outer world and of the things found in there. It knows nothing of the innermost world of the divine spirit. It is qualified to hold opinions about the way the material world should be managed, which political party is most likely to reduce taxes and solve the housing problem, and increase commodity production. But it is

disqualified from stating what is the nature of spirit, what God requires of us, how we are best to relate to each other for our spiritual ultimate good.

1.22 The Great 'I am' is in a better position than the little 'I am', not only to give insights into the divine spiritual intention, but also to solve the relational problems of human beings within civilized society. The little 'I am' knows nothing whatever about the innermost essence of the human spirit, but this same essential innermost spirit knows everything truly needed for the human being at every level of existence.

1.23 The little 'I am' is like a fish caught by bait on a hook. The Great 'I am' is like the fisherman, and being a good fisherman is in no hurry to land his fish. The little fish is hooked on the idea of 'more abundant life'. The little fish can never get off the hook. But that 'more abundant life' is the life of God himself, the life which Jesus Christ manifested and demonstrated so plainly for us. Finally the little fish, the little 'I am' must give up struggling and resign itself to its divinely appointed fate. Then, when it has ceased to struggle it can be drawn out of its little private pond, and kindly released into the infinitely larger ocean of the divine life.

1.24 The difference between being a Great 'I am' and a little 'I am' is one of **identification**. Identification occurs when consciousness seizes an idea and makes this idea its continual center of reference, so that every other idea, and every feeling and act of will, is conditioned by this central idea. Thus man may pin himself on a idea that he is separate from all other men, and that, as a totally separate being, he must strive only for his own survival, for private wealth and possessions, and that he should relate to other persons only in so far as he can gain further private advantages. Such a man has identified himself with his little 'I am' and will acquire only things which are possible to this mini-self.

1.25 Another man may identify with the idea of divine sonship and gain the fruits of the Great 'I am'.

To be continued

The Great and the Little 'I am' (Part 2 of 3)

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(First printed, July, 1979, in 'St Michael and All Angels '
Parish Magazine, Manchester, UK)

2.01 When a man identifies with the idea of divine Sonship, certain things necessarily follow. The pursuit of merely private advantages ceases. It is seen clearly that all real enduring benefits arise from true relationship with God, the Supreme Creative Power of the Universe, and with all His creatures. No true good can be confined to a single, private isolated individual. The Key to life is in true relationship fed by real love and permeated by the will to understand the difficulties that all creature must encounter in the highly complex world in which they exist.

2.02 Divine Sonship truly felt, lifts our minds out of separative, finite isolationist thinking into the infinitely larger universe in which the earth and the other planets, the moon and sun and stars all form parts of a whole magnificent cosmic design.

2.03 We hear much today of the need for a more ecological way of thinking, a mode of thought which views all the departments of nature as reciprocally interrelated. We are told of great cycles of relationships governing the animal and vegetable and mineral worlds, how, if we destroy one form of life we upset the balance of nature and finally have to suffer consequences of our own destructive activities. We are told how our uncontrolled pollution of our environment gradually brings it into a state where healthy living is hardly possible. Our holiday sandy beaches are be-smearred with oil from broken-backed tankers. Our city atmosphere is polluted with the harmful exhalations of motor-car exhausts. But there are worse things imperiling our lives.

2.04 Not only physical things affect us, but mental ones also. The emanations of egotistic lives bent on pursuing nothing but private purposes pollute the mental atmosphere of the human race as surely as the poisonous effluvia of badly designed plants of chemical industries pollute our rivers and seas.

2.05 We tend not to realize that untruths are poisons in our minds, but this is exactly how they act within our brain and nervous system. Untruths make false connections in the neurons of our brain, send distorted messages along our nerves, and produce highly undesirable affects on our emotions. Emotional states affect the chemistry of our body and unbalance the electrolytes in our blood, with consequent impairment of health. Thus from mental pollutions, false ideas and wrong feelings and bad motivations comes physical ill-health.

2.06 But, " Know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Just as untruths send wrong messages along our nervous pathways and produce emotional confusions and negative states, so the truth sends right messages along our nerve-lines, which give rise

to positive, helpful feelings which lead to health and true happiness, the happiness for the self consistent mind and soul.

2.07 The 'little I am', built in the mind by outward stimuli, is naturally turned outward into the world from which it has its origin. As outward-turned it feels a necessity to remain continually on guard against other 'little I am's' for it knows from its own experience that the 'little I am' always pursues its own private purposes. Therefore it feels that it must protect itself against the secret intentions of other 'little I am's' which might contradict its own.

2.08 But this continual 'on guardedness' of the 'little I am's' is the cause of what today we call 'stress diseases', which take such great toll of human life in coronary disorders and other maladies. We cannot be continually on guard against other beings without being continually over-tense in our nervous system, in our muscles and internal organs. Over-tenseness in our organs impedes blood supply and deficient blood supply means insufficient oxygen supply to our cells which, if allowed to continue means the breakdown of our tissues and entry into disease.

2.09 The 'little I am' is continually on guard because it has an erroneous idea of itself, of other 'little I am's' and of the world in which all live. The 'little I am' is estranged from itself and from its fellows. It has been taught in a competitive society that each man is to strive to stride over his fellow-men in pursuit of 'success', a lusher income, a better, more enviable social position. From this idea each 'little I am' is led to believe the civilized state of mankind it is not considered diplomatic to 'put one's cards on the table' face upwards. Within civil society one must, on the surface, show only the purest socially acceptable motives. One must represent one's 'little I am' as a thoroughly reliable citizen, filled with good civic intentions. But in the secret recesses of its own closed-in mind, the 'little I am' has its own private purposes in exhibiting its socially acceptable behavior patterns, and it sees through those of the other 'little I am's'.

2.10 But the 'Great I AM', the essential God-given self in the center of man's heart, knows all about the fears and hopes of the 'little I am', knows exactly how the 'little I am' came into existence, how and why it will fight for itself against other 'little I am's', and against the 'Great I AM', and the 'Great I AM' forgives the 'little I am's', for it knows that, "They know not what they do." It is characteristic of the 'little I am', that it does not know the ultimate affects of its own actions upon itself. If it did know, then it would have to modify its actions.

2.11 The 'little I am' has been indoctrinated from outside, subjected to external pressures and bad examples. Never a day goes by without some person in a relatively high position of social responsibility being exposed in the press or on television for committing some privately motivated anti-social act. Every day the children are exposed to bad examples of human behavior, which by their frequency become almost accepted as a social norm. We cannot be surprised that children reared in the presence of bad behavior patterns tend to acquire some of them and to appropriate them as a way of life.

2.12 But, “Insomuch as you do it to the least of these little ones, you do it to me,” says Christ. If we give the little children a wrong life pattern, we are offering the same to Jesus. But where the children may have insufficient mental insight to see what is being done to them, Jesus had sufficient insight, and so rejects absolutely any wrong example offered to Hom.

2.13 The little children may lack the discrimination needed to be able to refuse wrong influences, and so may accept erroneous ideas of the real nature of existence. The responsibility for this rests on the shoulders of those who offer the erroneous ideas. But what is done to the little children is also done to Christ, for He has made their case His own. Thus He makes war against erroneous ideas, “with the double edged-sword,” with the, “Word of his mouth.” And he says, “The words that I speak to you, they judge you.”

2.14 Words of truth inserted into the mind of the ‘little I am’ make war against the erroneous ideas that have been put into it. This war, in spite of its non-obviousness to an external observer is a real war. This is the war that is being referred to when we are told to ‘fight the good fight’. The ‘good fight’ is the fight that is fought by truth against untruth, by Love against hate.

2.15 This fact, that truth actually makes war on untruth; that love battles against hate, is very important. It is not a mere figure of speech. Truth is formed energy. Energy works. Untruth is badly formed energy, and works badly. Love is power. The love of the ‘little I am’ for its own, little, private, isolated self, is power also, but very little of it. The love of the ‘Great I AM’ for its infinite self and for all the results of its creative activity is power unlimited, power infinitely victorious. The little power of the ‘little I am’s’ love must finally give in to the infinite power of the ‘Great I AM’.

2.16 The battle between the ‘little I am’ and the ‘Great I AM’ is a real battle, a battle of energies, a war of little powers against the One Supreme Infinite Power of the Eternal Spirit. The little powers of the flesh lust against the Great Power of the Infinite Spirit. The final outcome is inevitable. In any war the side with the Greatest Power and Wisdom and materials at its disposal must defeat the power which is little, ignorant, and with little control of its materials.

2.17 The ‘Great I AM’ cannot lose the battle against the ‘little I am’. The ‘little I am’ is defeated in principle before it starts to fight. And the ‘little I am’ is afraid, tense, inhibited in its actions by its own feelings of guilt. For the ‘little I am’ **knows** that it is at fault. But the ‘Great I AM’ is not afraid, not inhibited by guilt-feelings. It knows its own faultlessness and so can act without any impedance.

2.18 Thus it can respond to the petty hates of the ‘little I am’ with an all-embracing, all-forgiving love. The ‘Great I AM’s’ only weapon in the war against the ‘little I am’s’ is Universal Love. But this love is infinite power. It is God himself, acting everywhere throughout infinite space and in the interior of every star, sun, planet, mineral, vegetable, animal, man, and higher being.

2.19 Divine Love is God Himself the 'Great I AM' operative in the most secret depths of all things, sustaining with its infinite power every smallest thing, every 'little I am', giving to its little enemies the little energy they have to battle against the Great Giver. For God Wills all 'little I am's' to become aware of the futility of battling against the infinite power which is their very source. He wills them to convince themselves by their own effort, that there is a power utterly beyond their grasp, a power they can never attain for themselves alone a power that cannot be used for merely private purposes, but must, by its very nature be used for the good of whole creation.

2.20 God gives the 'little I am's' enough rope to hang themselves, which finally, like Judas, they do. But the tree on which they hang themselves is the tree provided by God for them, and this tree is the tree of life everlasting. On this tree, when the 'little I am's' have hanged themselves, they will find growing all the fruits that the 'little I am's' ever desired for themselves, but here so plentiful, so infinitely plentiful, that there will be on possibility of any 'little I am' being deprived of all that it desires that is good. Then all will know that their battle for existence was not a necessary battle, but the divine fruits could have been gained another way.

2.21 The 'little I am' is built from outside, by stimuli received from its parents, teachers, and others in its material environment. Its area of application is in the outside material world. It has no jurisdiction over the innermost realm of the spiritual self. Here only God rules, and until the 'little I am' accepts this fact, it cannot attain inner peace, for this peace depends on the absence of conflict between the 'little I am' and the 'Great I AM', a conflict that must end finally in the victory of the 'Great I AM', who is the Creator and Supreme Lord of all.

2.22 The 'little I am' is but a mechanism. The 'Great I AM' is a living spirit, supremely intelligent and powerful. It s good for the human soul to accept this fact and to make peace with his Maker.

To be continued.....

The Great and the Little 'I am' (Part 3 of 3)

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(First printed, August, 1979, in 'St Michael and All Angels '
Parish Magazine, Manchester, UK)

3.01 Naturally, the 'little I am', the externally built social self, finds it very difficult to give in to the 'Great I am', the divine innermost self, for the little self knows nothing of the Great Divine Self within. Built from outside influences, the little self naturally thinks and feels in terms of external things. It is a natural extravert, its energies all turned outwards into the material world which surrounds it. To the little self, the innermost self is only an idea, which may or may not correspond with fact. How then, can the little self gain awareness of the divine innermost spirit which is the essence of the 'Great I am'?

3.02 The consciousness of man himself is not the little self, for this has been built from outside, from social pressures and doctrines. But this consciousness has become **identified** with the externally built social little self – by being compelled to behave in accord with the rules of social behavior demanded by parents, educators and the community at large. The imposition of **some** rules on the growing child is needed, for the child's natural tendencies at first tend always towards pleasure and away from unpleasure, and there are many aspects of social living which require us to become able to give up certain kinds of immediate pleasure for the sake of some later better advantage. Also certain naturally unpleasant facts have to be fact and dealt with happily, if human communal living is to continue to be a possibility. There are certain jobs which are essential for the running of modern communities, jobs which naturally far from pleasant. Some involve physical dangers, as, for example, working in coalmines. Others involve health-hazards, as in certain chemical industries etc. But without efficient performances of such relatively dangerous jobs, human communities as we know them could not exist. No doubt, in the not-far future, by means of computer and more refined machinery, these dangerous jobs will no longer be done by human beings. But, for the time being, these unpleasant jobs must continue to be done by dedicated men and women who fully recognize their necessity at this stage of community evolution.

3.03 If these men and women had not been educated to realize, while still children, the necessity for not always demanding immediate satisfaction of every impulse towards pleasurable experience, and immediate release from every unpleasant situation, they would not today be able to give their so needed services to the human community in which we all live.

3.04 It is the little self, the socially built external 'I am' which had to be educated and made aware of the necessity of learning to gain the power to curb and control the immediate natural reactions to pleasures and pains. But in the process of learning these powers of control, the little self becomes extraverted, turned out into the material environment. The consciousness mind becomes **identified** with the things and affairs of the outer world. Gradually the innermost self is forgotten under the pressures and cares

of daily living. The 'little I am' becomes alienated, made a stranger to the inner divine essence. God becomes a mere idea, a hypothesis which may or may not be true.

3.05 Now the 'little I am' finds difficulty giving itself up to the infinitely greater intelligence of the innermost 'Great I am'. The little self has been trained to deal with the demands of the outer material environment. It has no sensitivity to the innermost recommendations of the spirit. Unless there is a complete change of mind, the consciousness will remain trapped in a state of identification with the 'little I am'.

3.06 It is this complete change of mind, this **metanoia**, that is meant by 're-birth'. "Unless we are born again we cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven." "The Kingdom of Heaven is within," in the most innermost center of men's heart, where dwells the 'Great I am', the spirit of God. Rebirth is the re-discovery of this spirit, so long overlaid with the cares of the outer material world. The consciousness previously trapped in the processes of the 'little I am' is released from its bondage to the necessities of survival in that world. Now its actions are directed by the divine spirit within, and this spirit takes care of the reborn soul, inspires it with a new way of living, infinitely more efficient and profitable than the old way.

3.07 This 'change of mind' this 're-birth' of the soul into the higher consciousness is gained in an act of faith, not of **blind** faith, for careful meditation shows a good **reason** for it. Faith is energy directed towards a preconceived goal. The goal is the perfected humanity, which, as a goal, is imprinted in the soul of every human being. The presence in man's mind of this goal, this idea of ultimate human perfection, is the guarantee of its possible attainment. Every goal that can be defined which does not in its definition contradict itself, is realizable. Human perfection is such a goal. Therefore human perfection is attainable.

3.08 True, we see much in human nature that is far from perfect, but mankind is only half-way up the ladder of evolution. He has as far to go as he has to come, but he will climb the second half of the ladder as he has climbed the first, and each higher step is made with an **increase in consciousness**. Today the consciousness in man has reached far beyond the level of the primitive single-celled animal from which he started. Impelled by the divine impulse towards higher states of awareness, we have gained a sense of creative interrelatedness of all humanity. As our science and technology continue to advance, we move towards a new world in which the unpleasant and dangerous operations needed to maintain the human community will be turned over to computer-controlled machines. Then we shall be released from the external drudgeries of mere survival, and shall be able to turn inwards to the divine creative self within, from which we have been so long estranged. Then, "God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes, and remember our sins no more."

3.09 It has been needful for us to lose our childish innocence, and to be conjured outwards into the physical world's material community, for only thus could we be taken out of our immediate reactivity to the dictatorship of pleasure and pains. But once we have been lifted above this primitive level and placed properly within the true

community of mankind, it becomes possible for us, like the prodigal son, to turn around, to fact inwards towards the so long hidden divine spirit and say, "I will return to my Father." For our Father, our true creator, the infinite divine spirit who made us, and breathed into us His own life-principle, is **within** us.

3.10 We are generated from within; we shall be **regenerated** from within. All essential power beings from the **center** of being, not from the periphery. At this innermost center man is vitalized by the Divine Spirit. The Spirit is the 'Great I am' in mankind. In the process called the 'Fall', man fell from his innermost center and became ensnared by the external necessities of the material world, in which physical survival seemed to be an absolute imperative. In this external survival battle, man forgot his innermost divine spiritual essence. He sharpened his outer sense-organs and the intellectual processes which are based upon these, and these were valid gains. But in the securing of these gains man forgot his real, innermost nature, the nature which lifts him above all other living beings on earth. He forgot his essential spirit. This forgetting was his fall into identification with the 'little I am'.

3.11 For most members of mankind, evolution has been slow. But for some the process has been accelerated. The great sages of the ancient world, and the prophets of the Great religions were in advance of the generality of their day. All were inspired by the same divine spirit dwelling in man's innermost soul, the same spirit which is still with us today, and shall be, tomorrow and forever.

3.12 We have to be re-born before we can understand what the ancient sages and prophets had glimpsed. This re-birth consists in a change of direction of our attention, a turn-about from the outward, materially directed, to the inward, spiritually vitalizing presence which is the spirit of God himself. To make this 'about-face', we have to see the 'little I am' for what it really is, a construction made from the outer world. We have to break our identification with it; release our consciousness from it and recognize the profound error of equating our true self with this 'little I am', The real 'I am', the 'Great I am', is the divine spirit within our soul, God's own spirit in living presence in us.

3.13 When we thoroughly understand this we shall be able to give up the 'little I am' to the 'Great I am', as a little chariot to a Great Charioteer, for the little self was never intended to be other than a vehicle and instrument of the True Self who dwells within the human heart. And the little self, when given up becomes like a precious jewel through which shines the light of Eternal Truth and Love.

3.14 To give up the 'little I am' is not easy, for much energy has been put into its behavior patterns, and its familiar forms of expression have given us, for many years, a sense of security. In our conscious ordinary mind we feel at home with our little self. But the 'home' we feel in this self is not our true home; it is but a temporary dwelling place for our waking consciousness, built for a given time and place, for a given social, communal situation in which we have to spend our external daily lives. Our real home is in eternity, within the innermost center of our being, where dwells the divine spirit which was breathed into us at the beginning of the Creation.

3.15 But although the 'little self' is not easy to give up, it **can** be given up, and this te more easily when we are able to see the logical necessity of it. We are to make ourselves follow the **logic of the facts** that we know. The 'little I am' was built into the baby's mental and physical behavior patterns from **outside** by directed verbal commands and by parental and other examples. In the process of undergoing the inbuilding of this little self, our attention was withdrawn from the original real self at the innermost center of our being, and was turned outward towards the external world of material things.

3.16 Having withdrawn our attention from the true divine self, the 'Great I am' at the center of our beings, we have lost faith in its existence. Our extraverted little self has fallen into identification with external things and has come to believe that only these are real. But there is another reality deep within our being. It does not cease to exist simply because we have forgotten it. It lives within us, and is the very principle of our spiritual vitality. It waits for us to need it. It is infinitely patient. It has eternity on its side, while the little self has only **time** to spend on the pursuit of its goals. At some point the little self breaks down, and our consciousness finds its usual reference no longer there. 'Mans extremity is God's opportunity'. Deprived of the reference center of the little self, our consciousness tends at first to feel bewildered; then it turns inward to the innermost center of our being, where dwells the True Self, the 'Great I am'. Then it is the returned prodigal, come back to its true Father's House, and with it it brings the memory of all the experiences of the 'little I am', which made it possible finally to return joyfully to its original home in the Kingdom of the Divine Spirit.

THE END

BOB HARDY – ARCHIVED MATERIAL

EUGENE HALLIDAY – RAW MATERIAL

Scans of the original three parts that comprise

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First published in the parish magazine of St Michael and All Angels, Lawton Moor – June, July, and August of 1979

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Part 1. In the book of Exodus we read that God spoke to Moses and told him to go to Pharaoh and gain the release of the Israelites from their bondage. Moses asked "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt? When I say to them, 'The God of your father has sent me to you', and they shall ask, 'What is his name?', what shall I say to them?" And God said, "I AM THAT I AM. Tell the children of Israel that I AM sent you".

God's words, "I AM THAT I AM", in the repetition of the 'I AM', tell us something of profound interest. God does not waste words; the repeated 'I AM' is meaningful. The first 'I AM' refers to God as He knows Himself in His infinite Power, Wisdom, Action and Self-presence. The second 'I AM' refers to those aspects of Himself that He makes known to us according to our limited capacity to comprehend Him. Whatever knowledge God has revealed to us through His prophets, or to others of His chosen representatives, it is but a minute part of His infinite Spiritual Being as it is known to Him in Himself.

God therefore repeats the 'I AM', because when He says first 'I AM' to Himself, He refers to Himself as He knows Himself in His own Infinity; and when He says the second 'I AM', He refers to those aspects of Himself which He reveals to us as creatures of limited understanding who need His help, but are not equipped to grasp the full import of His infinite Being.

But not only God has two uses of the 'I AM'. The human individual also is double in aspect, for he has one self which is known in its innermost essence and known only to itself and to god, and another self which is that group of aspects of his being which is presented to other human beings within the situation which constitutes human society.

When a baby is first born, it is not yet equipped with an externally adjusted social personality such as it will later acquire. What it knows at first about itself is simply its immediate life-needs, those essentials of its survival and development. It knows when it is in pain, when it is too cold or too hot, when it is hungry or has indigestion, and so on. It does not yet have a humanly constructed social language by which it can convey to adults in its environment its particular needs. Thus its chief means of communicating information about its condition of comfort or discomfort is by means of simple noises.

But the baby is given a name, and this name is used over and over again to build a centre of reference for its consciousness. By means of this name the child will become able to respond to any statements or questions put to it by adults or others within its environment. Around the child's name is gradually built a structure of words which represent ideas and facts of the world. By means of these words and ideas is built the child's social personality; that aspect of the child's total being which will be used to relate its thoughts, feelings and activities to other humans within society.

For economy, the child is taught to say 'I' whenever this is more convenient than repeating the name given to it at birth. Thus instead of saying "William wants this", or "William doesn't want that", the child says "I want this", "I don't want that", etc.

By repetition of the word 'I' in relation to experiences undergone, there is gradually built up a sense of an "I-hood" or "self" as a being separate from other beings. So strong does this sense of 'I-hood' or 'self' become, that, even if the name given at birth is for some reason changed, yet the sense of "I-ness" is still retained.

We see, then, that the human being has two ways of thinking of his being: one based on the innermost processes of his mind and body as known internally to itself, as first experienced when a baby, before the beginning of its social training; the other built by experiences resulting from living within human society.

Just as God has two aspects, one known only to Himself, and the other as revealed to His creatures, so the individual human being has two aspects, one as he knows himself in the privacy of his own thoughts and feelings, and the other as he presents himself to other human beings within the outer society in which he finds himself.

The outer aspect of a man, the "self" which he shows outwardly to others in society, is a very small part of his total being. We call this "self", his **little "I am"**, his **socially known self**, that aspect of his being which is built of behaviour patterns known to the other members of the society in which he lives.

This little "I am", which other men see, is not the **essence** of his being. It is but a complex system of ideas and attitudes which serve him in his relations with other members of the outer world.

But, hidden inside his little "I am", his non-essential self, is another self, and essential self, the self with which he began his life when he was first born, but which was quickly covered over with those external patterns of behaviour which human society demands of all its members, patterns without which civilised societies could not exist as we know them.

But although such socially acceptable behaviour patterns are needed for the building and maintenance of human societies, they are not sufficient in themselves alone for the generation of truly relational

beings whose ultimate purpose is to attain to full spiritual development and its implied relationship with God.

It is possible for a man to develop his little "I am" to the point where it is quite acceptable as a socially adjusted unit, without gaining a similar degree of development of his innermost "I am". It is possible for a man to become known as a "doer of good" within society, and yet to have lost all his awareness of his innermost essential "I am". Such a man could consciously believe himself to be an atheist. He could consciously believe that his little "I am", his social self, is the only self that he has.

It is because of this possibility of the loss of awareness of one's original essential self, which one had as a child before one's social education had obscured it, that Jesus says that, in order to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, a man must be born again. When He says that the members of the Kingdom of Heaven are like little children, Jesus means that they are aware of their own **essential** being, that human social behaviour patterns have not covered up and hidden from their consciousness that which they are in their own innermost essence.

While civilised human beings may be justified in requiring from each other certain types of socially acceptable behaviour, yet God is interested not only in how polite externally we are to each other, but also in our innermost essence, in which is centred our deepest will. God is interested not only in our civilised physical activities, but in our deepest innermost reasons for them. God searches the human heart as well as He observes man's outermost behaviour patterns. It is good for our ultimate well being if we do the same.

When the two "I am's" in the human being are separated from each other, we find that the individual is in danger of becoming a battlefield in which the great "I am" and the little "I am" continually make war against each other. The spiritual self sends down to the fleshly self the message of God; the "fleshly" or external self tries as well as it can to resist the message. Thus arises the battle of conscience against desire, a battle in which the individual being is the battlefield.

There is only one way in which this battle can be peacefully resolved: the little "I am" must give in to the Great "I am". The little "I am", the human socially adjusted ego-self, cannot win this battle, for the cards are, from the beginning stacked against it. The little "I am" has been built from outside, built by external social pressures, all of them finite, all of them of limited energy. The little "I am" depends on the support of other little "I am's". There is no inner coherence here.

The Great "I am" depends only on what is essential within it. But what in it is essential is given to it by God. The essential in a human being is the divine innermost presence Itself. It is God Within. It is Emmanuel. It is Jesus Christ, Universal Mind, the Eternal Truth. Finally nothing can stand against this innermost essential Self, for it is one with the Supreme Power which is the origin and creator of all things.

In this outer self, his little "I am", a man can be a convinced unbeliever, for this little self has been built from outside and so has no experience but that of external things. It knows much of the outer world and of the things found there. It knows nothing of the innermost world of the divine spirit. It is qualified to hold opinions about the way the material world should be managed, which political party is most likely to reduce taxes and solve the housing problem, and increase commodity - production. But it is disqualified from stating what is the nature of spirit, what God requires of us, how we are best to relate to each other for our spiritual ultimate good.

The Great "I am" is in a better position than the little "I am", not only to give insights into the divine spiritual intention, but also to solve the relational problems of human beings within civilised society. The little "I am" knows nothing whatever about the innermost essence of the human spirit, but this same essential innermost spirit knows everything truly needed for the human being at every level of existence.

The little "I am" is like a fish caught by bait on a hook. The Great "I am" is like the fisherman, and being a good fisherman is in no hurry to land his fish. The little fish is hooked on the idea of "more abundant life". The little fish can never get off that hook. But that "more abundant life" is the life of God Himself, the life which Jesus Christ manifested and demonstrated so plainly for us. Finally the little fish, the little "I am" must give up struggling and resign itself to its divinely appointed fate. Then, when it has ceased to struggle it can be drawn out of its little private pond, and kindly released into the infinitely larger ocean of the divine life.

The difference between being a Great "I am" and a little "I am" is one of **identification**. Identification occurs when consciousness seizes an idea and makes this idea its continual centre of reference, so that every other idea, and every feeling and act of will, is conditioned by this central idea. Thus a man may pin himself on a idea that he is separate from all other men, and that, as a totally separate being, he must strive only for his own survival, for private wealth and possessions, and that he should relate to other persons only in so far as he can gain further private advantages. Such a man has identified himself with his little "I am" and will acquire only things which are possible to this mini-self.

Another man may identify with the idea of divine sonship and gain the fruits of the Great "I am".

To be continued

The Great I Am and the Little I am

by Eugene Halliday

Part 2. When a man identifies with the idea of divine Sonship, certain things necessarily follow. The pursuit of merely private advantages ceases. It is seen clearly that all real, enduring benefits arise from true relationship with God, the Supreme Creative Power of the Universe, and with all His creatures. No true good can be confined to a single, private isolated individual. The Key to life is in true relationship, fed by real love and permeated by the will to understand the difficulties that all creatures must encounter in the highly complex world in which they exist.

Divine Sonship truly felt, lifts our minds out of separative, finite isolationist thinking into the infinitely larger universe in which the earth and the other planets, the moon and sun and stars all form parts of a whole magnificent cosmic design.

We hear much today of the need for a more ecological way of thinking, a mode of thought which views all the departments of nature as reciprocally interrelated. We are told of great cycles of relationships governing the animal and vegetable and mineral worlds, how, if we destroy one form of life we upset the balance of nature and finally have to suffer consequences of our own destructive activities. We are told how our uncontrolled pollution of our environment gradually brings it into a state where healthy living is hardly possible. Our holiday sandy beaches are be-smearred with oil from broken-backed oil tankers. Our city atmosphere is polluted with the harmful exhalations of motor-car exhausts. But there are worse things imperilling our lives.

Not only physical things affect us, but mental ones also. The emanations of egotistic lives bent on pursuing nothing but private purposes pollute the mental atmosphere of the human race as surely as the poisonous effluvia of badly designed plants of chemical industries pollute our rivers and seas.

We tend not to realise that untruths are poisons in our minds, but this is exactly how they act within our brain and nervous system. Untruths make false connections in the neurons of our brain, send distorted messages along our nerves, and produce highly undesirable affects on our emotions. Emotional states affect the chemistry of our body and unbalance the electrolytes in our blood, with consequent impairment of health. Thus from mental pollutions, false ideas and wrong feelings and bad motivations comes physical ill-health.

But, "Know the truth, and the truth shall make you free". Just as untruths send wrong messages along our nervous pathways and produce emotional confusions and negative states, so the truth sends right messages along our nerve-lines, which give rise to positive, helpful feelings which lead to health and true happiness, the happiness for the self-consistent mind and soul.

The "little I am", built in the mind by outward stimuli, is naturally turned outward into the world from which it had its origin. As outward-

turned it feels a necessity to remain continually on guard against other "little I am's", for it knows from its own experience that the "little I am" always pursues its own private purposes. Therefore it feels that it must protect itself against the secret intentions of other "little I am's" which might contradict its own.

But this continual "on guardedness" of the "little I am's" is the cause of what today we call "stress diseases", which take such great toll of human life in coronary disorders and other maladies. We cannot be continually on guard against other beings without being continually over-tense in our nervous system, in our muscles and internal organs. Over-tenseness in our organs impedes blood supply and deficient blood supply means insufficient oxygen supply to our cells, which, if allowed to continue means the breakdown of our tissues and entry into disease.

The "little I am" is continually on guard because it has an erroneous idea of itself, of other "little I am's" and of the world in which all live. The "little I am" is estranged from itself and from its fellows. It has been taught in a competitive society that each man is to strive to stride over his fellow-men in pursuit of "success", a lusher income, a better, more enviable social position. From this idea each "little I am" is led to believe that "every man's hand is against him", secretly, of course, for within the civilised state of mankind it is not considered diplomatic to "put one's cards on the table" face upwards. Within civil society one must, on the surface, show only the purest socially acceptable motives. One must represent one's "little I am" as a thoroughly reliable citizen, filled with good civic intentions. But in the secret recesses of its own closed-in mind, the "little I am" has its own private purposes in exhibiting its socially acceptable behaviour patterns, and it sees through those of other "little I am's".

But the "Great I AM", the essential God-given self in the centre of man's heart, knows all about the fears and hopes of the "little I am", knows exactly how the "little I am" came into existence, how and why it will fight for itself against other "little I am's", and against the "Great I AM", and the "Great I AM" forgives the "little I am's", for it knows that "they know not what they do". It is a characteristic of the "little I am", that it does not know the ultimate affects of its own actions upon itself. If it did know, then it would have to modify its actions.

The "little I am" has been indoctrinated from outside, subjected to external pressures and bad examples. Never a day goes by without some person in a relatively high position of social responsibility being exposed in the press or on television for committing some privately motivated anti-social act. Every day the children are exposed to bad examples of human behaviour, which by their frequency become almost accepted as a social norm. We cannot be surprised that children reared in the presence of bad behaviour patterns tend to acquire some of them and to appropriate them as a way of life.

But "Insomuch as you do it to the least of these little ones, you do it to me", says Christ. If we give to the little children a wrong life pattern,

we are offering the same to Jesus. But where the children may have insufficient mental insight to see what is being done to them, Jesus had sufficient insight, and so rejects absolutely any wrong example offered to Him.

The little children may lack the discrimination needed to be able to refuse wrong influences, and so may accept erroneous ideas of the real nature of existence. The responsibility for this rests on the shoulders of those who offer the erroneous ideas. But what is done to the little children is done also to Christ, for He has made their case His own. Thus He makes war against erroneous ideas, "with the double-edged sword", with the "Word of His mouth". And He says, "The words that I speak to you, they judge you".

Words of truth inserted into the mind of the "little I am" make war against the erroneous ideas that have been put into it. This war, in spite of its non-obviousness to an external observer is a real war. This is the war that is referred to when we are told to "fight the good fight". The "good fight" is the fight that is fought by truth against untruth, by Love against hate.

This fact, that truth actually makes war on untruth, that love battles against hate, is very important. It is not a mere figure of speech. Truth is formed energy. Energy works. Untruth is badly formed energy, and works badly. Love is Power. The love of the "little I am" for its own, little, private, isolated self, is power also, but very little of it. The love of the "Great I AM" for its infinite self and for all the results of its creative activity is power unlimited, power infinitely victorious. The little power of the "little I am's" love must finally give in to the infinite power of the "Great I AM".

The battle between the "little I am" and the "Great I AM" is a real battle, a battle of energies, a war of little powers against the One Supreme Infinite Power of the Eternal Spirit. The little powers of the flesh lust against the Great Power of the Infinite Spirit. The final outcome is inevitable. In any war the side with the Greatest Power and Wisdom and materials at its disposal must defeat the power which is little, ignorant, and with little control of its materials.

The "Great I AM" cannot lose the battle against the "little I am". The "Little I am" is defeated in principle before it starts to fight. And the "little I am" is afraid, tense, inhibited in its actions by its own feelings of guilt. For the "little I am" **knows** that it is at fault. But the "Great I AM" is not afraid, not inhibited by guilt-feelings. It knows its own faultlessness and so can act without any impedence.

Thus it can repond to the petty hates of the "little I am" with an all-embracing, all-forgiving love. The "Great I AM'S" only weapon in the war against the "little I am's" is Universal Love. But this love is infinite power. It is God Himself, acting everywhere throughout infinite space and in the interior of every star, sun, planet, mineral, vegetable, animal, man, and higher being.

Divine Love is God Himself the "Great I AM", operative in the most secret depths of all things, sustaining with its infinite power every smallest thing, every "little I am", giving to its little enemies the little energy they have to battle against the Great Giver. For God will all "little I am's" to become aware of the futility of battling against the infinite power which is their very source. He wills them to convince themselves by their own effort, that there is a power utterly beyond their grasp, a power they can never attain for themselves alone, a power that cannot be used for merely private purposes, but must, by its very nature be used for the good of the whole creation.

God gives the "little I am's" enough rope to hang themselves, which finally, like Judas, they do. But the tree on which they hang themselves is the tree provided by God for them, and this tree is the tree of life everlasting. On this tree, when the "little I am's" have hanged themselves, they will find growing all the fruits that the "little I am's" ever desired for themselves, but here so plentiful, so infinitely plentiful, that there will be no possibility of any "little I am" being deprived of all that it desires that is good. Then all will know that their battle for existence was not a necessary battle, that the divine fruits could have been gained another way.

The "little I am" is built from outside, by stimuli received from its parents, teachers and others in its material environment. Its area of application is in the outside material world. It has no jurisdiction over the innermost realm of the spiritual self. Here only God rules, and until the "little I am" accepts this fact, it cannot attain inner peace, for this peace depends on the absence of conflict between the "little I am" and the "Great I AM", a conflict that must end finally in the victory of the "Great I AM", who is the Creator and Supreme Lord of all.

The "little I am" is but a mechanism. The "Great I AM" is a living spirit, supremely intelligent and powerful. It is good for the human soul to accept this fact and to make peace with his Maker.

To be continued.....

The Great and the Little 'I AM'

by
Eugene Halliday

Part 3 Naturally, the 'little I am', the externally built social self, finds it very difficult to give in to the 'Great I am', the divine innermost self, for the little self knows nothing of the Great Divine Self within. Built from outside influences, the little self naturally thinks and feels in terms of external things. It is a natural extravert, its energies all turned outwards into the material world which surrounds it. To the little self, the innermost self is only an idea, which may or may not correspond with fact. How, then, can the little self gain awareness of the divine innermost spirit which is the essence of the 'Great I am'?

The consciousness of man itself is not the little self, for this has been built from outside, from social pressures and doctrines. But this consciousness has become **identified** with the externally built social little self - by being compelled to behave in accord with the rules of social behaviour demanded by parents, educators and the community at large. The imposition of **some** rules on the growing child is needed, for the child's natural tendencies at first tend always towards pleasure and away from unpleasure, and there are many aspects of social living which require us to become able to give up certain kinds of immediate pleasure for the sake of some later better advantage. Also certain naturally unpleasant facts have to be faced and dealt with happily, if human communal living is to continue to be a possibility. There are certain jobs which are essential for the running of modern communities, jobs which naturally are far from pleasant. Some involve physical dangers, as, for example, working in coal mines. Others involve health-hazards, as in certain chemical industries, etc. But without efficient performances of such relatively dangerous jobs, human communities as we know them could not exist. No doubt, in the not-far future, by means of computers and more refined machinery, these dangerous jobs will no longer be done by human beings. But, for the time being, these unpleasant jobs must continue to be done by dedicated men and women who fully recognise their necessity at this stage of community evolution.

If these men and women had not been educated to realise, while still children, the necessity for not always demanding immediate satisfaction of every impulse towards pleasurable experience, and immediate release from every unpleasant situation, they would not today be able to give their so needed services to the human community in which we all live.

It is the little self, the socially built external 'I am' which had to be educated and made aware of the necessity of learning to gain the power to curb and control the immediate natural reactions to pleasures and pains. But in the process of learning these powers of control, the little

self becomes extraverted, turned out into the material environment. The conscious mind becomes **identified** with the things and affairs of the outer world. Gradually the innermost self is forgotten under the pressures and cares of daily living. The 'little I am' becomes alienated, made a stranger to the inner divine essence. God becomes a mere idea, a hypothesis which may or may not be true.

Now the 'little I am' finds difficulty in giving itself up to the infinitely greater intelligence of the innermost 'Great I am'. The little self has been trained to deal with the demands of the outer material environment. It has no sensitivity to the innermost recommendations of the spirit. Unless there is a complete change of mind, the consciousness will remain trapped in a state of identification with the 'little I am'.

It is this complete change of mind, this **metanoia**, that is meant by 're-birth'. 'Unless we are born again we cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven'. 'The Kingdom of Heaven is within', in the innermost centre of men's heart, where dwells the 'Great I am', the spirit of God. 'Re-birth' is the re-discovery of this spirit, so long overlaid with the cares of the outer material world. The consciousness previously trapped in the processes of the 'little I am' is released from its bondage to the necessities of survival in that world. Now its actions are directed by the divine spirit within, and this spirit takes care of the re-born soul, inspires it with a new way of living, infinitely more efficient and profitable than the old way.

This 'change of mind', this 're-birth' of the soul into the higher consciousness is gained in an act of faith, not of **blind** faith, for careful meditation shows a good **reason** for it. Faith is energy directed towards a preconceived goal. The goal is the perfected humanity which, as a goal, is imprinted in the soul of every human being. The presence in man's mind of this goal, this idea of ultimate human perfection, is the guarantee of its possible attainment. Every goal that can be defined, which does not in its definition contradict itself, is realisable. Human perfection is such a goal. Therefore human perfection is attainable.

True, we see much in human nature that is far from perfect, but mankind is only half-way up the ladder of evolution. He has as far to go as he has come, but he will climb the second half of the ladder as he has climbed the first, and each higher step is made with an **increase in consciousness**. Today the consciousness in man has reached far beyond the level of primitive single-celled animal from which he started. Impelled by the divine impulse towards higher states of awareness, we have gained a sense of creative interrelatedness of all humanity. As our science and technology continue to advance, we move towards a new world in which the unpleasant and dangerous operations needed to maintain the human community will be turned over to computer-controlled machines. Then we shall be released from the external drudgeries of

mere survival, and shall be able to turn inwards to the divine creative self within, from which we have been so long estranged. Then 'God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes, and remember our sins no more'.

It has been needful for us to lose our childish innocence, and to be conjured outwards into the physical world's material community, for only thus could we be taken out of our immediate reactivity to the dictatorship of pleasures and pains. But once we have been lifted above this primitive level and placed properly within true community of mankind, it becomes possible for us, like the prodigal son, to turn around, to face inwards outwards the so long hidden divine spirit, and to say, 'I will return to my Father'. For our Father, our true creator, the infinite divine spirit who made us, and breathed into us His own life-principle, is **within** us.

We are generated from within; we shall be **regenerated** from within. All essential power begins from the **centre** of being, not from its periphery. At this innermost centre man is vitalised by the Divine Spirit. This Spirit is the 'Great I am' in mankind. In the process called the 'Fall', man fell from his innermost centre and became ensnared by the external necessities of the material world, in which physical survival seemed to be an absolute imperative. In this external survival battle, man forgot his innermost divine spiritual essence. He sharpened his outer sense-organs and the intellectual processes which are based upon these, and these were valid gains. But in the securing of these gains man forgot his real, innermost nature, the nature which lifts him above all other living beings on earth. He forgot his essential spirit. This forgetting was his fall into identification with the 'little I am'.

For most members of mankind, evolution has been slow. But for some the process has been accelerated. The great sages of the ancient world, and the prophets of the Great religions were in advance of the generality of their day. All were inspired by the same divine spirit dwelling in man's innermost soul, the same spirit which is still with us today, and shall be, tomorrow and for ever.

We have to be re-born before we can understand what the ancient sages and prophets had glimpsed. This re-birth consists in a change of direction of our attention, a turn-about from the outward, materially directed, to the inward, spiritually vitalising presence which is the very spirit of God Himself. To make this 'about-face', we have to see the 'little I am' for what it really is, a construction made from the outer world. We have to break our identification with it; release our consciousness from it, and recognise the profound error of equating our true self with this 'little I am'. The real 'I am', the 'Great I am', is the divine spirit within our soul, God's own spirit in living presence in us.

When we thoroughly understand this we shall be able to give up the 'little I am' to the 'Great I am', as a little chariot to a Great Charioteer, for

the little self was never intended to be other than a vehicle and instrument of the True Self who dwells within the human heart. And the little self, when given up becomes like a precious jewel through which shines the light of Eternal Truth and Love.

To give up the 'little I am' is not easy, for much energy has been put into its behaviour patterns, and its familiar forms of expression have given us, for many years, a sense of security. In our conscious ordinary mind we feel at home with our little self. But the 'home' we feel in this self is not our true home; it is but a temporary dwelling place for our waking consciousness, built for a given time and place, for a given social, communal situation in which we have to spend our external daily lives. Our real home is in eternity, within the innermost centre of our being, where dwells the divine spirit which has breathed into us at the beginning of the Creation.

But although the 'little self' is not easy to give up, it **can** be given up, and this the more easily when we are able to see the logical necessity of it. We are to make ourselves follow the **logic of the facts** that we know. The 'little I am' was built into the baby's mental and physical behaviour patterns from **outside**, by directed verbal commands and by parental and other examples. In the process of undergoing the in-building of this little self, our attention was withdrawn from the original real self at the innermost centre of our being, and was turned outward towards the external world of material things.

Having withdrawn our attention from the true divine self, the 'Great I am' at the centre of our beings, we have lost faith in its existence. Our extraverted little self has fallen into identification with external things and has come to believe that only these are real. But there is another reality deep within our being. It does not cease to exist simply because we have forgotten it. It lives within us, and is the very principle of our spiritual vitality. It waits for us to need it. It is infinitely patient. It has eternity on its side, while the little self has only **time** to spend on the pursuit of its goals. At some point the little self breaks down, and our consciousness finds its usual reference no longer there. 'Man's extremity is God's opportunity'. Deprived of the reference centre of the little self, our consciousness tends at first to feel bewildered; then it turns inward to the innermost centre of our being, where dwells the True Self, the 'Great I am'. Then it is the returned prodigal, come back to its true Father's House, and with it it brings the memory of all the experiences of the 'little I am', which made it possible finally to return joyfully to its original home in the Kingdom of the Divine Spirit.

THE END