

Within a few weeks many persons will be making resolutions for better behavior in the New Year. It might be good to consider Emerson's thought, "Of what use to make heroic vows of amendment, if the same old lawbreaker is to keep them?" If things are to be different in the New Year, you must be different. Resolutions often contain the seeds of their failure for they attempt to solve the conflict at the level of the conflict, which, as W.A. White noted, is impossible to do. The need is not to defeat the weakness but to transcend it.

This word "transcend" is a popular term today. It means to surmount, to rise above, or be perfect. The key to its meaning is in the realization that the whole is always greater than the sum of the parts. One may have ability, wisdom, strength, skill, and personality, but to achieve success he must transcend all this, or as it is said in modern parlance, he must "get it all together." One who can transcend himself "lives with the license of a higher order of beings." Thus, a person may be deficient in parts and achieve success in spite of the deficiencies because he accepts himself, and works in confidence that the whole of him, the Christ of him, will enable him to achieve.

The idea of transcending the self seems to imply achieving perfection. Jesus did say, "Be ye perfect..." But did he mean that we must all achieve the full stature of the Christ here and now? This might be unjust, since it would appear that we are all on different levels of unfoldment. The Greek word in the original New Testament was "teleios," meaning fulfilled or completed. Thus, "Be ye perfect..." might be interpreted as "Fulfill yourself, complete the work you were called upon to do." It means to fulfill your uniqueness at the present level of unfoldment.

When the rich young ruler asked Jesus, "What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" Jesus answered, "If thou wilt be perfect..." do thus and thus. And the things he suggested were immediate and quite possible. They were only difficult for the young man because of his dependence on his "great possessions." They called for a kind of faith that would enable him to transcend his dependence on riches and gain a new sense of "within-dependence."

Jesus seemed to equate "perfection" with eternal life. In both cases they were achievable in the here and now. Perfection was not an ultimate, but a present fulfillment of one's inner pattern...and eternal life was not a length of years to come but a depth of living now. This is really the goal in spiritual seeking, not to arrive at the end of the road, but to be joyously on the road and progressively releasing one's "imprisoned splendor."

Jesus said, "Repent for the kingdom of God is at hand." We have confused the meaning because the word is a poor translation. The Greek word is "metanoia." It has nothing to do with self-reproach. It refers to a new mind, a new way of thinking, waking up to reality.

Life is consciousness. You stand where you do today, wherever that is, because of your consciousness. And there is only one way you can stand anywhere else...by changing your consciousness. If you wish to go up higher, to have more, do more, or be more, you can do so. There is no limit in God...for limitations are only in man. You need only to wake up...metanoia.

We see this in the parable of the Prodigal Son, where the young man "came to himself". He woke up from the human dream to a transcendent perspective. Suddenly, he "got it together." Some persons say, "Oh, you really can't change human nature." Of course not, and the very attempt to do so may only tend to fix it in consciousness as the level of your perception. The need is not to change, but to transcend the human, the limited, to release the greater possibilities.

You do not need to change what you are. And you can't do that no matter how hard you try. But you need to change what you think you are, the way you have been

seeing yourself. You may have identified with so many limiting conditions for so long that you have come to believe that you are these identifications. Thus, you may make a concerted effort to change your weaknesses or inadequacies, trying to solve the conflict at the level of the conflict. The effort is doomed to failure. It is important to know that your weakness conceals your strength, and there is an all-sufficiency within your insufficiency. Metonia...wake up from the illusion of separation. Know, "I am not a step-child of the Universe, receiving my powers as hand-outs. Rather, I am a person, vital, vibrant, whole. I AM! Now, I no longer see in part but 'face to face.' I go forward confidently."

We need to deal with ourselves in love, for love is the most transcendent quality. Note how through love a parent can look at the little boy with torn pants and dirty face and impish behavior, and see him still as God's child. In love you can accept yourself at the level of wholeness. Have an occasional quiet time to reflect on love. Love yourself...and let the infinite love of God support you and fulfill you. You will be able to let go of certain limitations in your life and let the whole of you, the Christ of you, lead your way with ease and proficiency.

A man went blind on the way to work. He could have cursed his fate and given up. But he went right on to take his place at his stenotype machine and went about the work of court reporting. He had been told six months earlier that his sight could go at any time. So he had prepared himself through realizing that his life was more than his eye-sight. He was a whole person, and the whole was greater than the sum of the parts, fully able to deal with life even without one part.

One might object, "But if it is true that man can transcend his limitations, why could this man not have been healed?" But this is to miss the meaning of self-transcendence. He was healed in a very real way. In achieving the consciousness to go on in spite of the blindness he became a bigger person than before. Not that blindness cannot be healed. In the wholeness of spirit, nothing is impossible. But for this man, there was a need to "break the shell that encloses the understanding," as Gibran says. It is certainly not that God wills the affliction, but that according to where the man was in consciousness, his greatest growth came through transcending the limitation of the experience rather than changing the experience.

In Truth many persons become so intent on achieving perfection that they condemn themselves for every imperfection. Fulfillment in life does not always mean making every overcoming and manifesting perfection. If we willfully push for perfection in a literal sense, we may be trying to solve the conflict at the level of the conflict which is not possible. If I were perfect I could walk across water. But if I seek to fulfill my uniqueness as a creative expression, I may invent a floating device to carry me and others across.

Don't reject yourself for your imperfections. Accept yourself, love yourself, not contingent on some overcoming, but right now as you are. The transcendence of you, the transcendent you, will enable you to achieve in spite of them, sometimes even because of them. And when you cease resisting them and you yourself because of them, you will begin progressively to overcome them.