

Part I
ETERNAL SCIENCE

CHAPTER ONE
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Mankind has always dreamed of a Golden Age. Some imagine it as having existed in the remote past, while others project it into a distant future. For those who have the eyes to read the signs, the Golden Age of spirituality has already begun, and we are witnessing its dawn. Already, young and old throughout the world are beginning to seek spiritual awakening.

People today are realizing as never before the ephemeral nature of material life. Although we have made great strides in science and technology, we find humanity is no closer to happiness. The world is still strife-torn, the crime rate is ever-increasing, wars continue to be fought between people of one religion and another, between people of one color and another, between one country and another. Even within the family there is unhappiness. Family life has deteriorated, and every day I come across cases of broken homes, uncared-for children, and forsaken elderly parents. When I inquire from the young who come to me, "How are your parents?" I am often told, "I do not know - my parents divorced when I was a child and since then my parents remarried more than once. Now I do not have much contact with my father or my mother." Parents tell me that their children are not respectful or obedient. And when the elderly come to me they say they are uncared-for and forgotten, and may even have been placed in old-age homes.

Not only family life, but community life is also vanishing. There is such an emphasis on individuality that we are not concerned about our neighbors. A man may fall seriously ill and need help - even die - and those living next door may not learn of it for weeks.

With our material advances we have been able to acquire so many luxuries, but we have not been able to bring peace to the world, to our countries, to our communities, to our families, or to our own souls. We may build the tallest building in the world, possess the costliest diamond, become president of the richest nation, and fulfill all our sensuous cravings, but such achievements, we find to our dismay, do not give us lasting peace and happiness. We then begin to ask, "Can we not seek something which will give us permanent happiness and bliss?"

This quest is leading us to explore numerous paths and movements which promise peace to the soul. In this age of spiritual awakening we find people returning to more healthy ways of living: vegetarian and natural diets, physical exercises, hatha yoga, natural remedies for disease, wellness and fitness programs, and abstinence from smoking, drinking and intoxicating drugs which harm the body. Others who long for world peace join organizations to further that end: Ecological groups, organizations to deal with world hunger, social welfare societies, world peace organizations and human rights movements are a few examples. Others are trying to raise the moral and ethical values of mankind, especially in the fields of politics, education and business.

More and more people are turning to spiritual paths. Meditation is no longer something obscure; it is being practiced by people of all religions, ages and avocations. These people are joining different groups and are practicing various forms of yoga, Transcendental Meditation, Zen Buddhism, Sufism, and the like. Some forms of meditation are becoming a daily feature in the

lives of doctors, educators, scientists, lawyers, businessmen, politicians, those in the creative arts and all other walks of life. Meditation is now being recognized as a means to relieve depression and reduce the tensions of daily life. It is being used by many to increase productivity on the job, to help the concentration of students who have learning difficulties, and to give those who were addicted to drugs a natural means to overcome their problems. While many practice meditation to relieve anxiety and become more productive, a growing number of serious seekers are turning to meditation to solve the mystery of life and death.

All our lives we are learning, and in a sense always remain students. When we are children we learn from our parents and teachers, later we learn from our college professors, and even when we take up our professions we learn from those who are already proficient in that field. In spite of all the books we have in our libraries, when we wish to master a subject, we go to living teachers. If this is the case with outer knowledge, how much more important it is to have the help of an adept when it comes to inner knowledge. In the past, esoteric knowledge was confined to the lucky few who were disciples of the great Masters of their time. But in the age of spiritual awakening, such knowledge is available to everyone. This is a significant step in the spiritual evolution of man. If today we see spirituality as the universal core of religion, no longer tied to rituals and dogmas, no longer the preserve of priests and theologians, it is because of saints such as Baba Sawan Singh (1858-1948) and Sant Kirpal Singh (1894-1974). These great Masters at whose feet I had the privilege of learning, presented spirituality as the most perfect science - the science of the soul. Spirituality is a practical discipline in which, under the guidance of a competent teacher, we can transcend the body and know for ourselves that we are spirit. It is the most natural path, one that does not require us to leave our family, job, home or religion. Like God's other gifts, it is free and available to all.

Many people fear that the Golden Age will be preceded by a world catastrophe and cataclysmic upheavals. It has been said that whenever there is a change from one age to the other, it is accompanied by a dissolution or grand dissolution. But as Sant Kirpal Singh said, the Golden Age will not be ushered in by worldwide destruction. The new age will come about through a change of hearts. When the day dawns, the night seems to linger and there are many shades of gray before the sun comes into its full glory. Likewise, there are many stages before the new consciousness comes into its own and bathes the world in spiritual light.

As more and more people take to meditation and learn to transcend their limited physical consciousness, they will begin to see that all are children of the same Father, of the One God. The walls which separate man from man will gradually crumble and we will create a world in which every individual - no matter how humble - is respected and cared for.

We are witnessing the dawn of a spiritual revolution. By definition, such a revolution, unlike political, social or economic ones, cannot be enforced from without. It is an inner revolution which centers on a change of consciousness. We cannot convert others, we can only convert ourselves. If we can accomplish this transformation we will not only hasten the spiritual dawn, but will ourselves bask in its full glory.