

**A Magazine Devoted to
The Living of the Higher Life**

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सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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THE POWER OF CURIOSITY

CURIOSITY is defined as the desire to know and to explore, which entails the spirit of enquiry. It is the trait more markedly displayed by children. Most children are curious and eager to discover the wonders of life. But as we grow up we tend to lose the spirit of curiosity. We say that we live in an age of “information explosion,” and are surrounded by wonderful gadgets. Though we all use the gadgets, how many of us are curious to find out how the mobile phone or a washing machine works? Graham Collier makes a thought-provoking observation, in a *Psychology Today* post: Lewis Carroll’s *Alice in Wonderland*, is about Alice, a young girl, who was curious about everything, and possessed vivid imagination, who questioned “why’s” and “wherefore’s” of things and events. This book was written nearly a hundred years back, and in the meantime, there is addition to information and knowledge, on daily basis, but we do not find proportionate increase in the general level of curiosity concerning “how” and “why” of natural phenomena. We do not find an unrelenting curiosity in the people of today, concerning the cosmos in general, and the physical and psychological aspects of one’s own self in particular. Moreover, curiosity as regards the mystery of creation and of the self in particular, is overrun by a technological life of fact-finding.

Samuel Johnson, an English author, viewed curiosity as “one of the permanent and certain characteristic of a vigorous intellect.” The

book, “*Because—For the Children Who Ask Why?*” tells us about a little boy, who dismantled an alarm clock, with the permission of his aunt, as it was not working any longer. His sister felt that he was only being curious, and may be, it was idle curiosity. But the boy took it all to pieces because he wanted to know what made that clock work. He was trying to understand the mechanism, in his own small way. The aunt of these children explained that there are curiosities and curiosities. It was curiosity that made the discovery of America possible to Columbus, and also made possible the discovery of telegraph, telephone, and many other electronic devices.

Teachers say that children, who excel at academic studies, achieving high grades, are not necessarily curious. The interest of curious children goes beyond book-study; they wish to explore and know more than is given in the books. Their focus is not on scoring marks. Psychologists view curiosity as a life force, vital to happiness, intellectual growth and well-being. The spirit of curiosity, when kept alive, acts as a motivating power to learn in all the areas of life and work. In fact, curiosity could be a big life preserver, pulling you back into the flow of life, says Susan Noonan, in a *Psychology Today* Post. She observes that we often lose interest in ourselves, our family, friends, and the world around us. There is nothing to keep us going. One of the keys to remain interested in life is to be curious about life, about the people you meet, about everyday objects and events, activities, hobbies, and things that might interest or intrigue you. “Curiosity keeps us engaged and sharp. It can be a fabulous way to get back in touch with yourself and your world,” writes Noonan.

But curiosity, in spite of its many benefits, is a double-edged sword, and is viewed as a blessing as well as a curse. A person driven by unbridled curiosity can end up doing regrettable things, producing disastrous consequences. Even in spiritual discipline we may invite trouble, by going into forbidden realms or trying out practices, prematurely, merely out of curiosity to see what happens. Pandora was sent with a sealed box to Epimetheus, who introduced

her into human society. Though advised not to open the box, she opened it out of curiosity, releasing into the world its dire contents of evils, including every kind of sickness. It is rightly said that it is foolish to *try out* poison, just to see what happens! In *Zanoni*, the neophyte Glyndon was instructed not to open two vases, but he opened them out of curiosity and let loose the “Dweller of the Threshold,” which he was ill-prepared to deal with. Mr. Judge explains that opening of the vases is like the approach of an aspirant to the secret recesses of his own nature.

The spirit of curiosity involves learning and questioning. However, questioning often degenerates into mere inquisitiveness. “Inquisitive” means, unduly curious and prying, as well as, seeking for knowledge and inquiring. In *Sanskrit*, the former is termed *Kutuhal*, and the latter, *Jignasa*. *Jignasa* or what is termed as quest for knowledge is essential, among other things, for a spiritual aspirant. *Jignasu* are the searchers for truth. At times we obtain this knowledge by asking questions, but it is important that we do not become prying, or ask embarrassing questions, or ask merely to satisfy our curiosity. Mr. Judge says, “Do not ask a question unless you intend to listen to the answer and inquire into its value.”

It is quite harmless and often useful to find out a hundred different things by way of general knowledge—the “why,” “what” and “how” of things. But, when it comes to another’s personal life—be it sickness, financial trouble, food habits, lifestyle, relationships—it is clearly outside our province, and unless the other person volunteers to speak about it, we have no business to go prying. Cats are extremely curious creatures and hence can often be seen climbing high and narrow places, inviting injury or even death. Hence, it is said, “Curiosity killed the cat.” Like the proverbial cat, some people invite trouble when they meddle in affairs that do not concern them.

The constant mental urge to gather irrelevant facts, as well as the subconscious desire to know everything, ruins the higher faculties of the mind and wastes *pranic* vitality. Though questioning is encouraged as against blind acceptance of the teachings, in every

true spiritual tradition, there is emphasis on cultivation of self-reliance. Mr. Judge points out the futility of crowding our minds with useless information. What is not worth remembering is not worth reading. Elsewhere, he writes: “What a petty lot of matter we spend time on, when so much is transitory. After a hundred years what will be the use of all this?” (*Letters That Have Helped Me*, p. 119)

The important question is *why* we do anything. Inquisitiveness is the first cousin of curiosity, tale-bearing, and gossip and they are the greatest mischief-makers in the world. But we can subdue them all to a state of quiet and calmness by repeating to ourselves the magic phrase, “Mind your own business.” Thus, at one time curiosity is good and at another time it may be bad. There are two sides to everything. For instance, physicians prescribe a certain drug called strychnine, which is poisonous, to relieve heart trouble, but taken in a different quantity it would kill the person using it. Thus, Strychnine is good at one time and bad at another time. *Or*, we might say, strychnine itself is neither good nor bad. But depending on its use it produces good or bad effects. The same applies to curiosity. Its appropriateness would be determined by one’s *intention*. A locksmith may study locks to equip himself professionally. The burglar may pursue the same study to find out ways and means of breaking the lock.

All of our great inventions are the result of man’s effort to understand Nature. The mind of every great researcher is quickened by the spirit of constant enquiry and persevering search. He constantly questions Nature and tries to find answers to all questions. This attitude of the scientist has produced marvellous results. This spirit of enquiry enables science to discover physical causes, but behind the physical causes, exist the *metaphysical* causes.

The Secret Doctrine teaches that it is impossible to conceive of anything without a cause, and an attempt to do so makes our mind a blank. When we try to trace back the chain of cause and effect, we come to a point, beyond which we are unable to go, and our mind becomes blank. H.P.B. says that both science and religion

reach this state of blankness much more quickly because they ignore the metaphysical abstractions. The material causes are concretizations of abstract causes, producing the phenomenal universe, just as vapour is condensed into water and then frozen into ice. For example the material or immediate cause of earthquakes may be explained by science as collision of tectonic plates. But at the back of these material causes are metaphysical causes. When millions of men and women think harmful and selfish thoughts, they impress the lives of the earth with such thoughts which reach a point of explosion, which then manifests itself as tsunami, earthquakes, etc. This is similar to anger or anxiety of a person surfacing as ulcers in his body. *Parabrahmam* is the Absolute and Eternal Cause or the Causeless Cause. It is the *nouemnon* of all *noumena* which underlies every phenomenon.

In the article, “What of Phenomena?” H.P.B. explains that in the beginning of the Theosophical Movement, she performed magical phenomena, because she believed that when people see wonders it arouses in them, not the feeling of awe or veneration, but curiosity. “It was in the hope of arousing and utilizing this spirit of curiosity that occult phenomena were shown.” It was believed that the scientists will be led to investigate the laws and forces of nature which are known to an occultist but unknown to science. But unfortunately, in most people an insatiable desire for phenomena was aroused, and there were only a few cases wherein “the curiosity which was awakened gave birth to the serious desire to study the philosophy and the science themselves and for their own sake.”

The soul-scientists of ancient India searched the invisible while the modern scientist, limited by his senses and his mind, tries only to know the visible. The sages of old taught the doctrine of Karma, the law of ethical causation, of moral compensation, *i.e.*, the Law by which moral and intellectual phenomena and events can be traced to their right causes. Humanity suffers from the failure to apply these two principles, namely, the spirit of enquiry and the habit of tracing the effects to causes. We do not stop to enquire: Who am I? What is

the purpose of Life? What is the Cause and Cure of suffering? Why is a fool born to wise parents? Why some children are born blind or cripple and in a poor family?

This spirit of enquiry, the desire to know the *ultimate* cause is a spiritual quest, and answers are received only when the heart and mind work in harmony. It is the result of intuition. It requires meditation. A *Jignasu* is an ardent seeker, and unlike a modern scientist or a religious bigot who say that “God, life and death are insoluble mysteries,” he prepares himself to arrive at the answers, first theoretically and then through first-hand experience. His quest involves moving from knowledge to wisdom. The acquirement of wisdom, says H.P.B., requires devotion and sacrifice of man’s whole life.

The wish to know is almost solely intellectual, while the desire to BE is of the heart, says Mr. Judge. The former pertains to intellectual knowledge and the latter leads to Wisdom. In the article, “Among the Rosicrucians,” H.P.B. writes, “There are thousands who desire knowledge, but few who desire wisdom.” Even many, who desire to become occultists, take up their investigations merely for the purpose of gratifying idle curiosity, while others desire to pry into the secrets of nature, and obtain knowledge which they wish to employ for attaining selfish ends.

A *jignasu* is on a spiritual quest. Only ultimate realization ends the search. When human beings cease to question and refuse to carry on the search, it leads to crystallization of spiritual ideas into dogmas and mere outward rituals. We are being spiritually dishonest when we are “too willing” to rely on statements made by others without questioning their inner value. Though we ought to encourage honest doubt, there comes a stage when we must cease doubting. The quest must become a labour of love for our brother pilgrims. The further we advance, the more we meet brothers, who are bent on the same journey. These are the warrior-souls, the diamond-hearted ones, who serve in silence and humility.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT ON LOVE

I PURIFIED my lips with the sacred fire, to speak of love, but could find no words. When love became known to me, the words lapsed into a faint gasping, and the song in my heart into deep silence.

Oh, you who asked me about Love, whom I convinced of its mysteries and wonders, now since Love has wrapped me in its veil, I come to ask you about Love’s course and merit. Who can answer my questions? I ask about that which is in me; I seek to be informed about myself.

Who among you can reveal my inner self to myself and my soul to my soul? Tell me, for Love’s sake, what is the flame which burns in my heart and devours my strength and dissolves my will?...

What is that which we call Love? Tell me, what is that secret hidden within the ages yet which permeates all consciousness? What is this consciousness that is at once origin and result of everything? What is this vigil that fashions from Life and Death a dream, stranger than Life and deeper than Death?

Tell me, friends, is there one among you who would not awake from the slumber of Life if Love touched his soul with its fingertips? Which one of you would not leave his father and mother at the call of the virgin whom his heart loves? Who among you would not sail the distant seas, cross the deserts, and climb the topmost peak to meet the woman whom his soul has chosen?...What being would not burn his heart as incense before a god who listens to his supplications and grants his prayer?

Yesterday I stood at the temple door interrogating the passers-by about the mystery and merit of Love.

And before me passed an old man with an emaciated and melancholy face, who sighed and said: “Love is a natural weakness bestowed upon us by the first man.”

But a virile youth retorted: “Love joins our present with the past and the future.”

Then a woman with a tragic face sighed and said: “Love is a deadly poison injected by black vipers that crawl from the caves of hell. The poison seems fresh as dew and the thirsty soul eagerly drinks it; but after the first intoxication the drinker sickens and dies a slow death.”

Then a beautiful, rosy-cheeked damsel smilingly said: “Love is wine served by the brides of Dawn which strengthens strong souls and enables them to ascend to the stars.”

After her, black-robed, bearded man, frowning said: “Love is the blind ignorance with which youth begins and ends.”

Another, smiling, declared: “Love is a divine knowledge that enables men to see as much as the gods.”

Then said a blind man, feeling his way with a cane: “Love is a blinding mist that keeps the soul from discerning the secret of existence, so that the heart sees only trembling phantoms of desire among the hills, and hears only echoes of cries from voiceless valleys.”...

And a feeble ancient, dragging his feet, like two rags, said, in quivering tones: “Love is the rest of the body in the quiet of the grave, the tranquillity of the soul in the depth of Eternity.”

And a five-year-old child, after him, said laughing: “Love is my father and mother, and no one knows Love save my father and mother.”

And so, all who passed spoke of Love as the image of their hopes and frustrations, leaving it a mystery as before. Then I heard a voice within the temple: “Life is divided into two halves, one frozen, the other aflame; the burning half is love.”

Thereupon I entered the temple, kneeling, rejoicing, and praying: “Make me, O Lord, nourishment for the blazing flame....Make me, O God, food for the sacred fire...Amen.”

[Extracted from “At the Door of the Temple,” *The Treasured Writings of Kahlil Gibran.*]

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Commenting on the nature of the human mind, Prof. C.S. Lewis

writes that human intellect is abstract, and the realities we experience are concrete. While we are bearing pain or enjoying pleasure or loving a person, we are not intellectually apprehending Pain, Pleasure or Love. When we try to apprehend intellectually and try to catch the experience in words, the concrete realities seem to have eluded from our grasp. You cannot study repentance while you are repenting. So also, you cannot study love while you are experiencing it. You may say, “If only my toothache would stop, I could write another chapter about Pain.” But once it stops, what do I know about pain? The same applies to the feeling of love. It is said of love that “Love is a many-splendoured thing,” *i.e.*, it is full of many magnificent features or marvels.

Love is an essential part of human existence, as without love, life is barren and frozen. Without love there can be no unfoldment, no growth. The accepted notion, that love is merely an emotional state, needs correction. In fact, “love” is an illusion if we think that it depends on sensual gratification for its sustenance. If we can feel the little of “compassion” that the great ones feel, then we will know that love is more than the opposite of hate and a far more nobler feeling which helps us overcome the sense of separateness between ourselves and our fellows.

In the article, “Love with an Object” (*Lucifer*, January 1888), we read that Love is a universal power, and therefore immortal. It can never die, only the instruments through which it becomes manifest, are born and die and are born again. A love which becomes attached to objects of sense, ceases to be love, and becomes mere desire. Pure and eternal love asks for nothing, but gives freely to all who are willing to take. Earthly love is attracted to persons and things, but Divine spiritual love seeks only that which is divine in everything. Divine love manifesting itself in perfect man is distributed alike to every one without partiality. The more perfect he is, the more will his love descend upon and penetrate, all who come within his divine influence. Love can exist without form, but no form can exist without love, because love is pure Spirit, and when its light is

reflected in matter, it creates desire, and that desire produces forms.

Unlike human affection, in divine affection there is no exclusiveness, no jealousies, and it seeks happiness of all the people with whom one may come in contact, without seeking the return. In an article, “Love” (*The Path*, September 1891), we read that we deceive ourselves in our love towards individuals, mistaking the human for the divine. The more especially is this a danger where the person in question may be of the opposite sex. The human lover falls under the marvellous glamour of believing that the object of his devotion is partly divine. When he honestly analyzes his love he finds that his love is not unalloyed, but contains something of a human element. It is with some sadness that one discovers that the road from human to divine love is covered with snares, pitfalls and sophistries of the most subtle kind. H.P.B. mentions that the love for wife and family, the purest as the most unselfish of “human” affections, is a *barrier* to real occultism. For, a mother would not hesitate to sacrifice the happiness of other children in order to see her own child happy, and the same holds true of a husband. This is deemed natural and acceptable as far as the code of human affections goes, but it becomes a barrier in the development of divine universal love, in which the heart is full of concern for *all* that lives and breathes. To cultivate impersonal love is to expand the circle of love. Human love and affection pave the way for compassion.

The ladder of love has many steps. We gradually move from loving ourselves to loving another, and then loving others, till we learn to cultivate love for all. Love between man and woman is one of the most potent forms of love, which has the power to lift a person out of apathy and help him burst the hard shell of pride and egoism. Consider an egoist, “with stream of life half-congealed within him, waiting for some angel to stir the waters into life. By and by the miracle happens, the great teacher [life] brings him face to face with another soul, qualified in all things to supplement his deficiencies. At once he feels the infusion of supernal power....Through giving he receives; through self-sacrifice he inherits his kingdom.” And his

sympathy is not restricted to a single soul, but extends in an ever-widening circle, till at last he embraces all humanity in holy bonds of love, points out Charles Johnston. (*The Path*, February 1888)

Such love may well border on being one-pointed devotion, and then one is willing to do anything for the other. Often, the spirit of self-sacrifice, self-transcendence and self-surrender is as intense as that of the spiritual aspirant. For instance, Tulsidas, who later became a saint, was once deeply in love with his wife. One day his wife taunted that if he had shown the same sort of fervour for God, he would have reached self-realization. That was the turning point in his life, leading him to sainthood. Thus one could be the means of awakening the other to the higher possibilities, using that strange power to touch the inward life. Our affinities “anon save us and anon damn us,” says Mr. Judge.

In *From the Book of Confidences*, while discussing the love between a man and woman, the sage replies that “Love is an Initiation.” Describing this love in its highest form, the sage says:

“When thou shalt find true Love, shalt find one homogeneous to thy nature; to whom all life is consecrate, who will have ardency to take with thee, the Bright Track of the Soul....Thou shalt know thy love is true, if thou art Friend to him, Mother, Sister, Daughter and Companion; if to thee thy needs of Friend and Father, Son and Brother all find fulfilment in him, yet leave the doors flung wide to the world....and to make thee tenderer, wiser and more thoughtful to thine own near Karmic bond. Never can true Love be ministrant where is exclusiveness—where happiness is sought for two alone.”

What survives the death of the body is not wealth, name, fame, power, position, knowledge, but pure love. “I erected a temple in Jerusalem and the priests sanctified it, but time has destroyed it. But in my heart the altar I built for Love was consecrated by God and sustained against the power of destruction,” writes Kahlil Gibran.

THE REAL H. P. BLAVATSKY

Do you believe that, because you have fathomed—as you think—my physical crust and brain; that shrewd analyst of *human* nature though you be—you have ever penetrated even beneath the first cuticles of my *Real Self*? You would gravely err, if you did....you *do not know* me; for whatever there is *inside* it, *is not what you think* it is: and—to judge of me therefore, as of one *untruthful* is the greatest mistake in the world besides being a flagrant injustice. *I* (the inner real “I”) am in prison and cannot show myself as I am with all the desire I may have to. Why then, should I, because speaking for myself *as I am* and feel myself to be, why should I be held responsible for the *outward* jail-door and *its* appearance, when I have neither built nor yet decorated it?

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

H. P. BLAVATSKY dropped her mortal coil on May 8th, 1891. Even today she is as much a mystery as when she lived in the full light of publicity. She baffled people then, and continues to baffle even now. She had been doubted, derided and calumniated through the years as few others have been. Yet, in spite of the constant stream of assaults upon her integrity, the Light that was H.P.B. continues to illuminate the paths of many. H.P.B. is not dead and gone, but continues to be a vibrant, living Force in the world—a Force which has had its impact on countless human hearts.

To understand the real H.P.B. is difficult and the best of her biographers have failed to do full justice to her colossal mind, her profound heart. It is one thing to know about the events and incidents in her life; altogether another thing to understand their real significance and to interpret them accurately. An incarnation like hers cannot be evaluated by our rules, our standards. Her personality misled and still continues to mislead people, for it was but a mask that hid a powerful, unfathomable intelligence that could only be known at first-hand to herself and to her Masters who sent her into

the world. How can people who have not an all-round perception of mind and of heart to understand and evaluate her motive and methods, her inner and invisible nature, be relied upon? The very fact that they drew conflicting pictures ought to make thoughtful inquirers pause and ponder.

The only safe approach to her is through the Message she delivered in her written words. Fortunate is the Karma of that inquirer who comes first and at first-hand in contact with H.P.B.’s own statements as to her mission, her Masters, herself, and her life-work. He will find that from first to last she is a *consistent* witness, whose life was subjected to endless examination and cross-examination, without a solitary instance of her testimony having been shaken or upset. He will find that her Teachings, from the beginning to the end of her vast writings, stand today as unimpeachable as ever. Those who trusted her and were themselves true to their own trust never came to grief. This is as true today as it was in the days when H.P.B. lived and moved among men in a body of flesh.

Active and passive disloyalty, mistaken and misguided loyalty, have made the Theosophical Movement of our era wander in many forbidden channels and drift upon many sandbanks of thought. The restoration of the Movement to the original lines is the great and pressing work of the present and of the future, and is possible only through a better appreciation of her mission and of her life-work by professing Theosophists. It is by going to the Message and the Teachings that will be found the Mind of the Messenger and the heart of the Teacher.

The following passage from the writings of Robert Crosbie, whose loyalty to H.P.B. never swerved and who infused new life into the Movement, adhering to the original lines laid down by her, are well worth the consideration of all those who look upon her with gratitude, love and devotion:

“What you say about ‘incarnations like H.P.B. and W.Q.J. being evidently governed by conditions widely different from ordinary humanity,’ is correct. If we would look at the bodily H.P.B. as a

mirror which reflected from above and from below as well, giving back to each who confronted it, his own reflection according to his nature and power to perceive, we might get a better understanding of her nature. To the discriminative, it was a well of inspiration; in it the common-place, the Judas, the critic, and every other saw himself reflected. Mighty few caught a glimpse of the real individuality. Each got the evidence that he sought. We have Master's words that the body of H.P.B. was the best that they had been able to obtain for many centuries. Those who looked at the body and its human characteristics got what that view was capable of giving them; those who looked at the mind behind got what came from it, in the degree of their comprehension; those who were able to look into the causes of things saw what their depths of sight gave them—more or less of Truth. 'By their fruits, shall ye know them.'"

"His saying that H.P.B. made mistakes is a pitiful attempt to drag her down to the level of his own ignorance. It might very well be that she (He) purposely laid herself open to a charge of errancy in unimportant things, in order to prevent dependence upon her 'as a person,' but I for one do not believe that she made a single 'mistake'; but that everything that she did was intentional, and with a beneficent end in view. It does not make any difference what A— or Mr. C— said about H.P.B.; the value of both is identical—guesswork. 'Those who do not understand her had best not try to explain her; if they find the task she laid down too heavy for them, they had better leave it alone.' These are Master's words, and their repetition at times would help to eradicate wrong impressions."

"You will remember that H.P.B. said: 'Do not follow me nor may path; follow the Path I show, the Masters who are behind.' The wisdom of which is seen in the course of those who judged of the teaching by what they were able to understand of the Teacher. They judged Her by *their* standards and fell down on everything. In their views, a Teacher of high philosophy should not smoke, should be conventional; she made mistakes, in their wise opinions; ergo, her philosophy must be wrong. All the time she said, I am nothing; I

came but to do the bidding of Him that sent me. W.Q.J. had similar judgment passed on him; primarily, because, he upheld H.P.B. first, last, and all the time—which was the underlying reason for the attacks. Fearful of 'authority,' they minimized the only possible source upon which reliance could be placed, and then endeavoured to convey the impression that *they* were so much greater than H.P.B. that they could explain Her away; in this, they made a greater claim for authority than she ever made. Where was W.Q.J. all this time? Right beside Her, holding Her hands, pointing to Her as the one to whom all should look. Those who followed his advice or yet follow it, will find *where she pointed.*"

In *Letters That Have Helped Me* (pp. 47-48) we read:

"She sacrificed—not so calling it herself—all that mankind holds dear to bring the glad tidings of Theosophy to the West, that West, and especially the Theosophical Society, thereby stands to her as a chela to his Guru, in so far as it accepts Theosophy....So those who regard her personality, and, finding it discordant from theirs, try to reach the Masters by other means *while disregarding or underrating scornfully her high services*, violate a rule which, because it is not made of man, cannot be broken with impunity....Such persons have not reached that stage of evolution where they can learn the higher truths....She who has braved the laughter and anger of two continents, and all the hosts of darkness...she who now lives on, only that she may take to herself the Karma of the Society and so ensure its well-being, has no need of any man's praise; but even she has need of justice, because, without that impulse in our hearts and souls toward her, she knows that we must fail for this incarnation. As the babe to the mother, as harvest to the earth, so are all those bound to her who enjoy the fruit of her life. May we try, then, to understand these occult connections brought about by the workings of Karma, and bring them to bear upon our diurnal, as well as our theosophical, life. Madame Blavatsky is for us the next higher link in that great chain, of which no link can be passed over or missed."

EXTRACTS FROM UNPUBLISHED LETTERS
MASTERS AND CHELASHIP—II

IT WAS once explained: “There are those who labouring for the Cause come to love the Cause,” (*i.e.*, become wholly devoted to it and Those behind it). Then, “there are those who love the Cause and learn to labour for it, more and ever more.” The Cause and the Masters are one; They and Their Teachings go together. Old chelas in new bodies love Masters and so learn anew the Philosophy called the Esoteric Philosophy—*Gupta Vidya*; new aspirants proceed from the Teachings to the Teachers. They cannot be separated. The Twelfth Chapter of the *Gita* gives the picture of the complete chela-devotee; it serves as a model for willing and determined aspirants. Effort counts; errors matter little (see *The Voice of the Silence*, p. 68)

No one, not even a Divine Incarnation, can root out evil; but the Gurus point out the ways whereby it can be overcome. The real inner work of the Lodge of Masters is to affect the mind of the race by the re-proclamation of old wisdom and as a result, *individuals* transform themselves. It is the individual who rises to be the Adept, the rare efflorescence of any race and civilization.

The Guru can but adjust the mind of the disciple; the latter must learn the real significance of that adjustment. Even to become a chela one must have already developed the right inner attitude and the right outer behaviour, appropriate to and required by Chelaship. The good man must be active and moral principles must be to the fore. Presently his tests and trials will begin and will make heavy demands upon his character. How will he fight? That depends on his already developed moral stamina.

Real chelaship may be far off, but the Himalayas are not climbed in a day. Patiently we have to persevere. Devotion of the heart, vigilance of the head and piety of the hands—that is the triad we have to develop. Devotion flows when disturbances are absent from the mind; and they can be absent only when the mind looks to and attends to its real function, finding positive expression in pious deeds,

holy acts. This it is which makes all functions sacramental—outward and visible signs of the inward and spiritual grace. Reflect on that triad; it has a fine potency.

Light on the Path has something that at this stage you will find useful; let your mind dwell on it: “The would-be disciple (we may say “lay chela”) has to arouse himself by a fierce and resolute and indomitable effort of will.” Any person can become a lay chela; he may feel in himself who his Master is, but in silence about this he has to labour for the Cause. If out of egotism he gives out his inner belief, or even faith, he will have taken the first step towards a failure. On the side of the Master, He of course knows, but He works in silence of His own. That, as far as lay-chelaship is concerned. Accepted chelaship is very different and implies knowledge on the part of the chela of his acceptance by his Guru.

Yes, the Master uses even the lay chela’s Karma to draw out hidden forces of good as well as of evil. But the chela does not know, often does not even suspect this. Dispassion is the starting point. How each values and how each judges men, matters and events is related to his inner attitude. Desirelessness at every turn implies our power to give the correct value to all these. It is not merely running away! In this the principle of the “Resist not evil” and the higher resignation play important parts.

One need not be an actual accepted chela to experience all chela-life activities. The period of probation is preparation for accepted chelaship. Therefore we must theoretically live as if tomorrow we would be ready and willing to offer ourselves for chelaship. Take H.P.B.’s article on “Practical Occultism” in which she quotes several Rules of Chelaship, *e.g.*, about shaking hands, pet animals, etc. Now for us these are most difficult to practise, almost impossible. But we must know what is expected of us and so aim at right preparation, using discrimination. To use *Viveka* in practising *Vairagya* is one of our tests—now and here.

Now come to the next point: we are required to develop higher resignation, indifference, inward patience, etc.; to meet and pass

our Karmas, saying, “This is what I desire and not only what I deserve”; to resist without resisting and to be truly brotherly. All this requires not only belief but faith, belief which is elevated into faith by true knowledge. Theosophy tells us about Masters’ teaching pupils—we accept that mentally and theoretically; but how to apply it? If we develop nearness to the Great Teachers, and as a result of our study They become more and more real to us, we ultimately come to look upon our life—*i.e.*, all our Karmas—as somehow related to Them, connected with Them. As we deepen our devotion and They begin to be a presence in all our tasks, at all our waking hours, as we begin to live *dharmically* in facing Karmas, we see how the feeling of Karma coming from Them naturally arises. There is strength in this attitude. We are not overpowered and overthrown by our weaknesses; also we are not puffed up by our merits. That is the line of reasoning I offer you for your consideration. It is, as you say, an inspiring idea, and so what are you going to do with it? You may not have surrendered yourself body and soul, to the Masters but are you not attempting a surrender? What means application in reference to the Path of Chelaship? Their Movement, in every age and cycle, deals with the Karmas of Humanity, and one striking variety in that Motion is the selection of chelas who are ready to become channels for Them.

I do not agree that we will need a long time to arrive at the stage of probationary chelaship. The whole tremendous effort of H.P.B. and her Mission would then become a fanciful plan. If we, students, cannot apply the fundamental proposition that “All life is probationary” to our own incarnation, then her arrival on the stage of the world is robbed of serious meaning. Those Rules in “Practical Occultism” are purposely given; of course, not for our present and immediate application, but do they not enable us to make our mental and moral luggage ready—especially by discarding those pieces of the luggage which will prove a burden or worse? Remember that chelaship has grades—the probationer or the lay chela is the first and from there we proceed to the Adept-Chela ready to be “Initiated”

and to become a Brother, a Member of the Great Fraternity. Now, the first stage has this for its fundamental and foundational principle: Live as a chela; overcome your own Karma; presently trials and tests will precipitate themselves; do not expect to see or hear from the Guru; cultivate the Self in the self. For this purpose instructions are given and what each should select for study, suitable to his temperament, is left to himself and in a sense constitutes his first test. In what is given is present work for future days and stages; the map of the road which we are walking and which is to be walked is offered and we should be thankful for it. Also, please remember that many grades of human Intelligences live and strive side by side; milk for babes and meat for men are provided. Again, mind-temperaments are numerous and provision is made for each. It is like a buffet supper; 20 dishes are offered; we can eat what we find suitable for us. Some eat what is tasty and get pain; some sample all 20 dishes and very probably go away hungry dissatisfied and full of complaints!

Q. —Do the Masters know one’s earnest desires and thoughts? I desire to become a chela in my next incarnation. What effect will it have upon my condition and environment in that life?

W.Q.J.—The effect of a desire to become a chela in the next incarnation will be to place one where the desire may be probably realized. Its effect on the next condition and environment depends on so many things that no definite reply could be given. If the desire be held determinedly and unceasingly, the goal is brought nearer, but that also brings up *all* the karma of the past, thus precipitating an immense conflict on the individual: a conflict which when once begun has only two ways of ending, one, total defeat, the other, success; there is no half-way. As Dante wrote, “Who enters here leaves hope behind.” Therefore, in general, the next life, or rather the life of a chela, while full of noble possibilities, is a constant battle from beginning to end.

THE MEANING of life and death is a question that arises at some time in the life of everyone, even if it be a fleeting thought of a moment. Especially this is so when one is moved by death of near and dear ones or when one meets with adversities in life. It is a sign of the beginning of a train of reflection on the serious side of life. When this line of thought grows strong, search for satisfactory answers to the great questions of life and death begins. Existential questions naturally arise in thoughtful people when contemplating the paradox of good and evil, and witnessing suffering and apparent injustice in society. The fact that some keenly feel the pain of and sympathize with their distress, and are even moved to extend them a helping hand, is a sign that they themselves have undergone in the past similar experience which has left an indelible impression on their minds. Hence suffering of others elicits a sympathetic response in them.

There is none who is not a philosopher of some sort. Even a boor or a brigand has a philosophy of his own, by which he lives, rationalizes and justifies his actions. Social norms, religious beliefs, secular education, atavistic inheritance, and, to a more or less marked degree, that which one brings in the present life, as the direct heirloom, one's past individual Karma, are the principal factors which go to make each one a unique personality. It is thus the ideas and beliefs we hold which shape our attitudes and character, make our destiny, and influence our surrounding, affecting others for good or otherwise.

Therefore, everyone has his own outlook on the question of life and death. The outright materialist considers life to be no more than a fortuitous concurrence of atoms. He does not believe in any vital principle to be a factor independent of biological organism, but to be the result of molecular action. Events of life are considered by people of materialistic persuasion as coincidences, or as chance happenings, and death to be extinction of the temporary phenomenon of life. To such, life and death have no special meaning or purpose other than what strictly empirical evidence and *a priori* reasoning

indicate. Views of religious people, on the other hand, are coloured by the doctrines and dogmas of their respective creeds which they have adopted.

With the Orientals, generally, life on earth and post-mortem life are successive alternating modes of existence through cycles of reincarnation of the soul which is eternal, experiencing in both the states the good and evil results of its own deeds in the series of its earth-lives. For them, life is not coterminous with the death of the body but a continuum spanning eternity. More or less the same kind of belief prevailed among ancient Egyptians, Chaldeans and pre-Christian Occidental people. Abrahamic religions, in their orthodox construction, at any rate, believe in one short life on earth, as ordained by "God," followed, after the death of the body, by a life of torment in hell or of enjoyment of bliss of heaven for sempiternity, depending on the course of conduct of man on earth prescribed by their religion.

The quest for understanding the meaning of any phenomenon is basically an attempt to discern a design and a purpose underlying it, which may not be apparent, but which, one intuitively feels, ought to be there. The great majority of people, who seldom think beyond the doctrine of their creeds or the popular theories of the day, are content to adopt and live by them. Not a few are there, however, who seek a comprehensive view of life based on sound philosophic basis which satisfy both reason and intuition, which are lacking in conventional ideas. For satisfactory answers to the questions of life and death one has to turn to timeless Wisdom-Religion, known now as *Theosophy*, for an understanding of the whole truth, fragments only of which are to be found in all the existing religions, and, therefore, necessarily incomplete, and to a great extent distorted and misunderstood, though they all have sprung from the former.

It is in the admission of the truth that the universe is embodied consciousness, that it exists for the purpose of evolution and perfection of souls through a long series of cycles of reincarnations governed by the law of Karma; eternity and universality of soul,

having to become dual, when incarnated on earth, as divine Individuality and mortal earthly personality; and essential unity of all souls with Universal Over-soul—it is in the admission of these fundamental axioms, and their application in all directions, that one finds clues to the mysteries of life and death, and the great moral dilemmas and paradoxes of human life that perplex thinkers.

The Secret Doctrine teaches that “The whole order of nature evinces a progressive march towards a *higher life*. There is design in the action of the seemingly blindest forces” (I, 277). That great purpose of all existence is stated in the same work:

“Every form on earth, and every speck (atom) in Space strives in its efforts towards self-formation to follow the model placed for it in the ‘HEAVENLY MAN.’ . . . Its (the atom’s) involution and evolution, its external and internal growth and development, have all one and the same object—man; man, as the highest physical and ultimate form on this earth; the MONAD, in its absolute totality and awakened condition—as the culmination of the divine incarnation on Earth.” (I, 183)

Even intuitional Western thinkers have suspected that the principle of perfectibility, tending towards perfection of all that exists, is inherent and ever active in the universe. Intelligent design and purpose are evident in the progressive development and perfection of species which Darwin observed and recorded, though he did not postulate intelligent design. Theosophy teaches that this tendency towards perfectibility “are all veiled manifestations of the universal guiding FOHAT, rich with the Divine and Dhyan-Chohanik thought.” (*S.D.*, II, 649 fn.)

Even such commonplace events of human life as sleep and dreams, to which we barely give a thought, are full of significance and instinct with lessons of life. The various organs of the body, faculties of mental, emotional, psychic and moral nature, all of which being vehicle or instrument of the human soul, made up of lives on the lower rung of evolutionary ladder, are themselves evolving

towards man-stage, with his aid, who is the macrocosm for them; as man himself, the Manasic being, or the Thinker, is evolving through self-effort, with their help, towards his ideal Archetype, the Heavenly Man. These faculties and organs grow in strength and felicity of action, and unfold higher potentialities, as we use them in waking life. Similarly, in our nightly dream state the inner, psychic faculties are exercised, strengthened and thus grow in power. In the state of deep sleep, the faculties of the lower mind are rested, while the Higher Ego enjoys the freedom of its own native divine life, confabulating with the gods, feeding on ambrosia of divine ideation, till the time for returning to the waking life, the prison house of the Ego, arrives. Though the lower self is not participator in, nor receives knowledge of, the divine felicity of the dreamless sleep, yet man receives a portion of the bliss of the spiritual plane of the dreamless sleep, feels refreshed and peaceful by the benevolent influence, immediately upon waking in the morning from sleep. Teachers say that but for the benevolent effect of the dreamless sleep which every man feels without exception, irrespective of whether he is good or bad, man would be prone to much greater evil than otherwise, and society in much worse condition.

The phenomenon of sleep and dreams, if we only study them diligently, gives us invaluable clues to self-knowledge, and also shows by analogy, the meaning of death, post-mortem states of consciousness and rebirth, since sleep is temporary death, and death a permanent sleep. It is in the spiritual state of consciousness after the death of the body, analogous to the dreamless sleep during life in the body, that the purer and nobler aspects of the defunct terrestrial personality enjoys unalloyed uninterrupted bliss as Karmic compensation for the pain and suffering endured by man in earth-life which he feels are undeserved, develops faculties and knowledge he strove to acquire, assimilates the essence of the experiences he garnered during life. By dying, consciousness of the average man of the world is not lost—except such as have been irremediably wicked life after life—but enjoys heavenly bliss and makes great

progress on the Egoic plane. If this is generally understood well there would be much less struggle and stress of competitive life on earth, and the fear of death among people would be greatly abated.

It is the duty of man to so think and live based on right knowledge, thereby aiding and helping Nature in her ceaseless progressive development of beings towards a higher life, and in transmuting brutal and gross energies into subtler and finer spiritual dynamical force. Thus it is that man lives and works for the good of the world, for the progress of humanity towards the next higher plane of being, becomes a benefactor and friend of all. Through ignorance of spiritual knowledge, and a life of indifference and selfishness, on the contrary, man breaks the harmony of life, retards progress of all, and suffers from the retributive Karmic reaction which must necessarily follow. Pain and suffering are concomitants of life, which we all experience, as the effects of our wrong thinking and living, and which contain precious lessons by which we learn and grow in self-knowledge and wisdom in action, in which is true freedom—though it may take many ages—freedom from the illusion of birth and death. In reality there is neither birth nor death for the Real Man, who is the eternal witness and the director of energies which aggregate and disperse, which we call birth and death, but which are in fact only change of conditions. Atoms which compose variety of forms and souls which inhabit those forms are both indestructible and eternal—dual in manifestation as subject and object but One in their ultimate resolution. Wise are the words of the great Teachers:

“Death does not exist, and man never steps outside of universal life. Those whom we think dead live still in us, as we live in them...The more one lives for his kind, the less need he fear to die.” And, we might add, that he who *lives* for humanity does even more than him who dies for it. (*Isis*, II, 343)

THE MOON IN OCCULT PHILOSOPHY

II

WE know the moon only from the astronomical, geological and physical standpoint. Her psychic and metaphysical nature remains an occult secret. Her real nature and properties have been known to every occultist, as also to the witches of Thessaly and in our present day, to the *tantrikas* of Bengal (*S.D.*, I, 156). The esoteric philosophy mentions seven *sacred* planets, and points out that neither our earth, nor the Sun or the Moon are considered sacred planets. The Sun is a Central Star, and the Moon is a *dead* planet. These two are substitutes for two sacred planets. The moon is a substitute for “a planet with a retrograde motion, sometimes visible at a certain hour of night, and apparently near the moon. The occult influence of this planet is transmitted by the moon.” (*Transactions*, pp. 47-48)

As the moon orbits around the earth, the half of the moon that faces the Sun will be lit up. The different shapes of the lit portion of the moon that can be seen from the earth are known as phases of the moon. Each phase repeats every 29 ½ days.

The Metonic cycle is an interesting cycle of the Moon. It is a period of about nineteen years, which being completed the new and the full moon return on the same (solar) days of the month. Meton attempted to reconcile solar and lunar time. For solar and lunar time to coincide, they have to have the Least Common Multiple, and that common multiple is 19 years.

The Moon makes its full journey through the sky in, roughly, 27 days (the exact decimal figure is 27.322 days). It is called the Sidereal Lunar Month, or the Tropical Lunar Month. So, the Moon returns to the same background stars every 27.3 days.

The cause of moon phases is that from the Earth we see the part of the Moon that is illuminated by the Sun from different angles as the Moon traverses its orbit around the earth. So, the appearance depends on the position of the Moon with respect to the Sun (as seen from the Earth). However, since the Earth itself moves around the Sun, it takes the Moon a little extra time (after completing a

sidereal month, *i.e.*, a full circle) to catch up and return to the same position with respect to the Sun or the *same phase* as seen from earth. In other words, the time it takes the Moon to return from one Full phase to the next is, roughly speaking, 29 ½ days. (Actual period expressed as a decimal is 29.5306 days). That period is called a Synodic Lunar Month. In other words, because of the relative motions of the Earth, Moon and Sun, the time taken by the Moon to return to the *same phase* is 29 ½ days, instead of 27.3 days (though it returns to the same background stars in 27.3 days).

The Metonic cycle is a period which being completed, the new and full moon return on the same solar day of the month. Thus, if it is a full-moon day, say on 1st January 2006, the Metonic cycle gives us a period after which we shall again have the full moon on 1st January in some future year.

Since 235 Lunar synodic months and 254 Lunar tropical months roughly equal 19 Solar tropical years, the Least Common Multiple for lunar and solar time to coincide is 19, as follows:

19 Solar tropical years = 365.24 * 19 = 6939.56 days

235 Lunar synodic months = 235 * 29.5306 = 6939.691 days

254 Lunar tropical months = 254 * 27.322 = 6939.788 days

Further, Meton fixed up the calendar in this way: out of this 19-year Metonic cycle, 12 out of the 19 years had 12 months in them, and 7 had 13 months—lunar months.

Regarding the phases of the moon, the *Secret Doctrine* teaches that “Her seven phases (original esoteric division) are divided into three astronomical phenomena and four purely psychic phases” (I, 396). “The number seven is closely connected with the moon, whose occult influence is ever manifesting itself in septenary periods. It is the moon which is the guide of the occult side of terrestrial nature, while the Sun is the regulator and factor of manifested life.” (II, 595)

The Hebrews speak of the seventh day of the week or *Sabbath*, but we do find in *Genesis*, the division of the lunar month being made into four parts of 7 days each, keeping in mind the lunar phases.

Hence, we are told about God resting on the seventh day. “God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it.” In *Isis Unveiled*, H.P.B. explains the true meaning of Sabbath or the seventh day which seems to be based on four divisions of lunar month based on phases of the moon.

The Jews borrowed their Sabbath from the ancients, who called it *Saturn’s* day, and they observe it on Saturday, while the Christians observe it on Sunday. The Jews reckoned their days by number, as day the first (*yom ahad*); day the second (*yom sheni*), and so on. The seventh day was called *yom shaba*. When Moses mentions that the Lord God rested on the seventh day or Sabbath after creating the world for six days, it was a *blind* to hide the true meaning. H.P.B. points out that the Hebrew word SHABA has several meanings. It may be translated as *old age*, as well as rest. *Sab* also means *gray-headed*, and hence, *Saba-day* was the day on which the gray-headed men or “aged fathers” of a tribe were in the habit of assembling for councils or sacrifices. We may compare it to lunar festivals in India where meetings are known to have been held on every seventh day. Moreover, lunar month can be divided into four quarters of seven days each, and with every new quarter of the moon there are changes in the atmosphere, as also all throughout the universe. Hence, on the seventh day, which is the most powerful of the prismatic days, the Adepts of the “Secret Sciences” meet, as they met thousands of years ago, to become the agents of the occult powers of nature, and commune with the invisible worlds. This explains the real reason of the significance attached to the seventh day of the week. In fact, the *Sabbath day* was not observed as the day of rest by the early Christians. They said that the elements are never idle and keep no Sabbath. If one is guilty of fraud, let him reform; if one is an adulterer, let him repent, *and then he will have kept the kind of Sabbath truly pleasing to God.* (*Isis*, II, 418-19)

The Moon is a dual symbol, male and female, and is considered to be the most complex, having manifold meanings. Thus, for instance, with the Hindus, the moon is King Soma, whereas with

other nations, the moon is a female deity, such as goddess Diana-Luna, Lucina and Artemis. Artemis Lochia was the goddess that presided at conception and child-birth. (*S.D.*, I, 395)

H.P.B. says that moon-goddesses have always been connected with child-birth and that there is occult connection of moon with conception and fecundation, which is not known to physiology so that it regards all such information as mere superstition. On p. 228 and footnote (*S.D.*, I) H.P.B. writes that the ancients knew far better than us the real, occult influences of the moon upon mysteries of conception. When moon is shown to be a male deity, such as the Soma of the Hindus, whose son is Budha or Wisdom, he relates to Occult Knowledge. Later, the moon got connected with female goddesses, such as, Diana, Isis, Juno, etc. She says that if the knowledge of occult properties of the Moon and its hidden influences on generation was made known, then probably, we would not have to be afraid of population explosion. That is because the moon and her conjunctions regulate conception. Thus, during certain lunar phases, if a man and woman unite, such unions would be sterile, and would produce no offspring. But those who used this knowledge and united during those phases were regarded as sorcerers and sinners. But, she says that what was regarded as sinful in the days of old, *i.e.*, making use of the knowledge of phases of the moon to have sexual relation, without the fear of producing progeny, is preferable to sexual crimes perpetrated now.

Do people sometimes go crazy on full moon nights? The term “lunatic” is derived from *luna* or *lunar* which relates it to moon. The moon acts perniciously upon the mental and bodily constitution of people in more than one way. In the article, “Whence the name Lunatic?” H.P.B. observes that it has been proved by a series of experiments that even a person of remarkably strong nerves could not sit, lie or sleep for a long time in a room lit by moonlight without injury to health. Every observing housekeeper or butler knows that provisions of any nature will decay and spoil far more rapidly in moonlight than they would in entire darkness. There exists a

connection between phases of the moon and various plant, animal and human diseases. H.P.B. points out that in the year 1693, on January 21, during the eclipse of the moon, thrice as many sick people died than on the preceding and following days. Lord Bacon used to fall down senseless at the beginning of every lunar eclipse and returned to consciousness only when it was over. Charles the Sixth, in 1399, became a *lunatic* at every new moon and at the beginning of the full moon. An intimate connection has been observed between certain nervous diseases, such as epilepsy and neuralgia, with certain phases of the moon, and the cure for that is the sun.

Our astral body, the design body for the physical, is the gift of the lunar pitris, the advanced beings from the moon. There is an intimate relation between the moon and astral body, which in turn is connected with Kama and Prana. In cases of incurable insanity, the connection of the lower and higher man is destroyed forever (it is only *paralyzed* in temporary insanity) and the lower mind functions on the *astral plane*. This may perhaps explain (given the intimate connection of the astral with the moon) why during full moon nights, insane people become more insane.

Physical phenomena often mirror moral, intellectual and spiritual conditions. What could an eclipse of the Sun *symbolize*? The physical eclipse of the Sun occurs when the Moon passes directly between the Earth and the Sun, cutting off the light of the Sun. Let us take the Moon to represent a disciple or someone who reflects the light of truth, and reaches it to his fellow beings. Let the light of Truth symbolize the Sun. Depending upon his level of development he will reflect more or less light. Also, so long as he is faithful to his task of reflecting the light impersonally, he benefits humanity, by removing the darkness of ignorance. But when he tries to put forward his own personality, seeks to put himself on a pedestal, begins to divert the attention of the people from the teachings to himself, he, without realizing, places himself between his followers and the light of truth, causing a moral and spiritual eclipse. For those who are

partly deluded, there is partial eclipse, but for those who are completely taken in by his pretensions, there is total eclipse. After a while, the Sun escapes from the clutches of the Moon, re-establishing brightness, and against the glory of the corona, the Moon is seen for what it is, a dark and sombre shadow. The Moon is forced to retire and allow once again the life-giving rays of the sun to shine forth unobstructed. Likewise, the self-seeker who sought to obscure the sun of truth is eventually exposed and must retire.

To take another analogy, let us take the personal man to symbolize the Moon, and the immortal Ego to represent the Sun. Most human beings suffer from the partial eclipse of the higher nature by the lower. We must make our personality so pure as to be a clear reflecting surface for the Sun (Higher Self) within, instead of being an obstacle, which blocks the inner light. When the personality proves wholly useless, as happens in case of a completely materialistic and totally self-centred person, the phenomenon of a total eclipse is enacted on the moral plane, and then such a personality is cast off by the Ego. When the personality ceases to take guidance from the Divine nature, it is annihilated.

Often, the phenomenon of a solar eclipse is witnessed in a race as a whole, when the personality obscures the inner light, as happened in case of the Fourth or Atlantean Race, who became extremely materialistic and sensual, worshipping their own statues. It is this moral degradation which brought on the deluge, sinking the “great continent.” H.P.B. points out that according to an occult “tradition” such submersion occurs whenever there is an eclipse of the “spiritual sun.” (*S.D.*, II, 250 fn.)

THERE is something haunting in the light of the moon; it has all the dispassionateness of a disembodied soul, and something of its inconceivable mystery.

—JOSEPH CONRAD

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Turiya is the fourth state of consciousness. According to *Mandukya Upanishad*, there are four states of human consciousness: *Jagrat* (waking state), *Svapna* (Dream state), *Sushupti* (deep sleep state) and *Turiya*, the transcendental state. While the first three states, called *Vaishvanara*, *taijasa* and *prajna* respectively, are subject to modification, the fourth state is changeless and abiding. Verse 8 of *Mandukya Upanishad* teaches that syllable A of Aum, represents the waking state; syllable U represents dream state and syllable M represents the deep-sleep state. The waking state is *bahir prajna* or outward-knowing, and it cannot fully grasp the absolute truth because senses and the intellect have their limitations. The dream state is *antar prajna* or inward-knowing, but it leaves the consciousness foggy and turbid. Both these conditions eclipse in deep sleep.

Turiya is self-luminous, self-existent, and the substratum of the physical states of human experience. It is the witnessing consciousness. It is the true nature of the individual soul. *Turiya* is the ascension of consciousness from phenomena to noumena. It is rising above the duality of name and form, and identifying with the *causa prima* of existence.

Turiya avastha, the realm of *turiya*, can be attained by absorption in the contemplation of one’s real Self. As the spiritual aspirant moves from spatial to temporal consciousness of the little self to transcendent consciousness of the Absolute, the divine light of bliss radiates from his being and in mystic parlance, he dies while living. In *Turiya* state, one is beyond time and space, and is free from the cycle of birth and death. In a state of consciousness that is beyond *Turiya*, called *Turiyatit* state, the individual soul obtains eternity, immutability and completeness by dropping the sense of “I” and “mine.” It becomes conscious of the divine presence in everything, and perceives the infinite and the finite, the eternal and the evanescent, the one in many, writes Dr. Satish K. Kapoor, a former

British Council Scholar, educationist and a spiritualist. (*Bhavan's Journal*, March 15, 2019)

According to Theosophy *Turiya* is a state of consciousness beyond the dreamless sleep state. It is the highest state of *Samadhi*. In the book, *The Dream of Ravan*, we are told that man is in the SPIRIT-CONDITION in the *Turiya* State, a state of high spiritual consciousness. In this state the individualized spirit lives an ecstatic life, possesses true knowledge and the universal, eternal, intuition.

The opposite or reversed mode of being is called *Jiva-dasha* or LIFE-CONDITION, comprising a subtle inner body or soul, a gross outward body of matter, and a Causal body, which is described as a boundary of oblivion between the SPIRIT-CONDITION and LIFE-CONDITION. It is ignorance of real nature of things which precipitates man from the SPIRIT-CONDITION into the LIFE-CONDITION. *Jiva-dasha* and *Atma-dasha* are depicted as four states of consciousness or four spheres of existence, which could be visualized as four concentric spheres. The innermost sphere depicts the *Turiya* state and the Ego arising from this state enters the sphere of transition, which is the boundary of oblivion or the dreamless sleep state, where it exists in the Causal body. When the Ego crosses this boundary, it enters the dream-state, and exists in a subtle, inner body and comes under the influence of illusion. It believes in the universe of light and shadow, and is identified with the astral body and the lower mind. In the outermost sphere, the Ego enters the waking state and begins to identify itself with the body, with its five senses or organs of perception, and five organs of action. Thus, as the individual spirit or Ego moves from *Turiya* to the waking state, the True Being is more and more forgotten and obscured through false identification.

It appears that *Turiya* is that state in which one's individual consciousness is merged with the *Atma* or Higher Self, being the highest state of *Samadhi*. In *Letters That Have Helped Me* (pp. 58-59), Mr. Judge writes, "In the Spirit or *Atma* all experiences of all forms of life and death are found at once, and he who is one with the *Atma* knows the whole manifested Universe at once. I have

spoken of this condition before as the *Turiya* or fourth state." Further, he explains that *Turiya* is a high state, which can be enjoyed even while in this body. In that state there exists none of the three qualities, but the soul sees the three qualities moving in the ocean of Being beneath. In that state "there are those high Yogees who can and do rise up to Nirvana, or Spirit, even consciously, while on the earth. ... In that state the body is alive though in deep catalepsy [Self-induced by the Adept.— J. N.]. When the Adept returns from it he brings back *whatever he can* of the vast experiences of that *Turiya* state," writes Mr. Judge. (*ibid.*, pp. 28-29)

Male and female differ in their behaviour and abilities. For instance, it is believed that men are good at map-reading, but they are good at doing only one task at a time. Females, on the other hand, are good at multi-tasking, and are more intuitive and empathetic than men, but are poor at logical thinking. But it appears that men and women are distinguished also by their brains, so that women are not found suitable for certain kind of works. It is also believed that the differences between women and men in ability, behaviour, temperament and even lifestyle choices are on the basis of genes, genitals and gonads. But such assumptions are questionable, because our brains are plastic, capable of being moulded in different ways. Early explanation of brain differences often centred on size and weight of the brain. Women's brains, on average, being ten per cent or about 140 grams lighter than men's, women were considered inferior. Later, the differences were based on specific structures of the brain. In the early 1980s, came the idea that the corpus callosum, which connects two halves of the brain being larger in women than in men, enabled her to access both the sides of the brain, almost simultaneously, and to this was attributed greater emotional awareness and the multitasking abilities in women.

"There are good reasons to think that such studies are chasing shadows," writes Gina Rippon, a cognitive neuroscientist at the

University of Aston in Birmingham, United Kingdom. She points out that there is no evidence to suggest that bigger brains are better brains, because, for instance, human beings are cognitively superior to sperm whales and African elephants, that have far larger brains. Moreover, now it is accepted that our brains are the product of the lives we have lived, the experiences we have had, and our education, occupations, sports and hobbies. Any regular activity, be it playing a certain game, or learning juggling or origami, can change our brains. Thus, men or women's ability for a particular activity will be determined based on which of them were more engaged in that activity. We need to challenge assumptions behind the hunt for differences between male and female brains, writes Rippon.

In fact, there are evidences that suggest that men and women are more similar than they are different. Moreover, in a 2015 study by Daphne Joel and her colleagues, at Tel Aviv University in Israel, they examined more than 100 brain structures in over 1400 brain scans and found that each brain had a mixture of what may be called "male" and "female" characteristics, and hence it was impossible to divide them neatly into two sets of "female typical" or "male typical." Thus, we may say that "every person's brain is unique. The value comes from knowing where these individual differences come from and what they might mean for the brain's owners," writes Gina Rippon. (*New Scientist*, March 2, 2019)

Theosophy says that man is a soul. Mr. Judge remarks in *Letters That Have Helped Me* that we make a lot of fuss about the male and female sex. Both, men and women are *essentially* divine and hence, at the level of Spirit, there is no difference between a man and a woman. We say that the soul has no sex. However, in psychic consciousness there are still distinctions between man and woman. Thus, for instance, Mr. Judge says that the female character is, *per se*, concrete, *i.e.*, its tendency in thought, speech, and act is toward the concrete, while the male character seems to be *per se* abstract, and this was believed by the Kabalists and the ancients of all nations. Perhaps by concrete thought he means rigidity, thinking in grooves,

having fixed views, and also lesser ability to dwell on the abstract. Concrete may also mean precise and definite, practical and realistic as against theoretical and idealistic.

Also, the general tendency of women is to keep things as they are and not to have change. Woman, with a few exceptions, has never been the pioneer in great reforms. They keep things as they are, until the men have brought about the great change. As a result, women generally tend to support established religion. There could be exceptions in both the sexes, but that does not invalidate the claim, and we are easily able to recognize a woman who has man's character or a man who has a woman's character, writes Mr. Judge. He observes that the essentially female character is totally different from the essentially male character. He explains that the soul or the Ego evolves, through many lives, male or female traits or character and then depending upon predominance of that tendency it is attracted to a male or female body. Each human being prepares to move over from a male body to the female body, and *vice versa* in some subsequent life for gaining experience. All of us must have lived in the past incarnations many times in male as well as in female bodies by now. There are lessons to be learnt in both male and female bodies, and through masculine and feminine natures.

Brain is only an instrument of the mind or soul, which facilitates expression of a particular ability or skill brought by the Ego from the previous births. H.P.B. says that any new kind of mental effort carves out new "brain paths."

There is darker side to darkness. Darkness of the night brings its own brand of intoxication. Somehow, we tend to say or do things in the darkness of night that we would not dream of saying or doing in the full daylight. "Your sense of discipline, your principles and your code of ethics, all seem to take on a blurry edge as the mind and body dull with darker hours....Darkness gives us a sense of anonymity that promotes unethical behaviour....Darkness fools our

minds into believing that we are unseen, invisible,” writes Vinita Dawra Nangia. She observes that darkness increases morally questionable behaviour. “Character like a photograph develops in darkness,” says the American photographer Yousuf Karsh.

Night time is the period of rest and rejuvenation of the body. But we humans have learnt to create light in darkness, and technology has enabled us to make use of night time. Metaphorically, that shows that darkness exists only when there is no light, and is dispelled when we switch on the light. Francis Bacon said, “In order for the light to shine so brightly, the darkness must be present.” The path to light is through darkness, as in meditation we close our eyes, thus creating darkness, to touch the light within, writes Vinita Nangia. “The real meaning of enlightenment is to gaze with undimmed eyes on all the darkness,” writes Nikos Kazantzakis, a Greek writer. (*The Speaking Tree, Sunday Times of India, March 24, 2019*)

“Darkness” is a term of many meanings, having even *positive* connotation in metaphysics. Thus, *Darkness* represents something incomprehensible and unknowable, and therefore symbolizes Absoluteness or *Parabrahmam*. Metaphysically, eternal absolute light is ever present in the bosom of the unknown Darkness, coeval and co-eternal with it, but in manifestation, all ancient cosmogonies teach that *light* comes from *darkness*. The *Gita* says, *light* and *darkness* are the world’s eternal ways, and represent good and evil, respectively. We have darkness of ignorance and light of knowledge. We have Kali Yuga, the Dark Age, the age of mental and moral darkness. There is a phrase, “It is better to light a candle than curse the darkness.” We need the light of *wisdom*, not just knowledge, to remove the darkness of immorality and ignorance. Jesus advises his disciples: “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” The highest light is the light of *Atman*—that spark of divinity which is present in us all, and is described in the *Gita*: “It is the light of all lights, and is declared to be beyond all darkness.”