

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

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THE “THIRD-EYE” OF SIVA

IN Hinduism, the *trimurti* of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva represents, three aspects of One Reality or *Parabrahmam*, viz., creative, preservative, destructive (and regenerative). On the one hand, Siva is *terrible*, a *destroyer* of ordinary passions and desires, but he is also *auspicious* for man’s higher strivings and aspirations. Lord Siva is also known as *Tryambaka Deva*, which literally means “three-eyed Lord,” and is often shown as having three eyes. His right and left eyes represent his activities in the physical world, the third eye symbolizes spiritual wisdom and power, seeing beyond the apparent and also destroying evil and evil-doers.

Siva is generally depicted with a third eye in the centre of his forehead, which is usually closed. The third eye is supposed to have appeared or sprung in the middle of Siva’s forehead when his consort, Parvati, playfully covered both his eyes with her hands, as Siva sat rapt in meditation. Immediately the universe was plunged in darkness, and chaos reigned supreme. Siva formed the “Third-Eye” to restore order, and it is said that fire emerged from his Third-Eye to re-create light. The fierce light from his Third-Eye is so powerful and destructive that he is said to open it only to destroy all that is unconscious, dark and dualistic in the universe. In other words, the opening of the Third Eye of Siva marks an end of all illusion.

Questions arise: What is the difference between our physical eyes and the “Third-Eye”? Where is this “Third-Eye” located in our

physical body? How can we activate our “Third-Eye”? Homer’s *Odyssey* mentions Cyclopes that possessed a third eye, *Grimm’s Fairy Tales* mentions Sister Three Eyes. Like the sea lamprey and some species of frogs, the fossils of a small lizard-like tuatara found only in New Zealand, show that it possesses a third eye. It is a cleft-like opening on top of its skull, consisting of a lens and a retina connected by nerves to the brain while the skin covering this area has, over the years, become translucent. Biologically, the “third-eye” is considered to be vastly modified pineal gland. In the year 2005, Dr. O. P. Jangir, a Zoology professor in Bikaner, created frogs with three eyes in the laboratories of Dungar College. He removed the two eyes of a tadpole and treated the pineal gland with Vitamin A, which gradually transformed into an eye having all the properties of a normal eye. He transplanted this eye in another tadpole, giving rise to three-eyed tadpoles. According to him, evolutionary history suggests that primitive animals, including some vertebrates, had three eyes on the frontal lobe. With time two eyes shifted sideways and the middle eye, losing its utility, survived as a vestigial organ, as a pineal gland.

H.P.B. mentions that in the beginning, every class and family of living species was hermaphrodite and objectively one-eyed. Prior to acquiring the “coat of skin” or the physical form, when man and animal were both ethereal, the third eye was the only seeing organ, the two physical front eyes developed only later, in both man and animal. This “Cyclopean” eye was, “and still *is*, in man the organ of *spiritual* sight, in the animal it was that of the objective vision” (*S.D.*, II, 299). H.P.B. mentions that during the course of evolution there were races of men with three eyes and four arms. Before the human form became perfect and symmetrical in the Fifth Race, there are indications of the early Fourth Race being three-eyed. However, this third eye need not have been in the middle of the brow, in fact, it was at the back of the head (*S.D.*, II, 294). Thus, the “third eye” was once a physiological organ, but later on, owing to the gradual increase of materiality and disappearance of spirituality,

this “third eye” got atrophied, and was gradually transformed into a simple gland (*S.D.*, II, 295-96). “The *third eye is dead*, and acts no longer; but it has left behind a witness to its existence. This witness is now the PINEAL GLAND” (*S.D.*, II, 295). Science is ignorant of the fact, and regards pineal gland to be a pea-like mass of grey nervous matter attached to the third ventricle of the brain, containing *mineral concretions* and *sand*, and “no more.”

Pineal gland is connected with spiritual visions, while pituitary body with pure psychic visions. Spinal Cord in man connects the Brain with the generative organs. Practical Occultism founded on the Esoteric Philosophy recognizes the direct and intimate connection subsisting between the Pineal Gland and the genitalia. These two are creative poles, and when one is positive and active, a proportionate negative and passive condition is produced in the other. When the North Pole of the Pineal Gland is active, it creates children of ideas and thoughts; when the South Pole of the generative organ is active, children of flesh are created. The Pineal Gland is the Heart of the Mind—the seat of Love without any trace of lust, the seat of Compassion without any trace of passion. In the ordinary individual both the Pineal Gland and the genitalia are active by turns, and therefore, he is a mixture of lust and love, of passion and compassion. The function of pineal gland is also affected by consumption of alcohol and drugs, which prevents the development of the “third-eye” or spiritual intuition. As one advances on spiritual path, abstinence from drugs and drinks, as also, observance of celibacy become absolutely necessary.

Due to disappearance of spirituality and gradual increase of materiality, the “Third Eye” got atrophied and exists today as pineal gland. The “one-eyed” Cyclopes represent the last three sub-races of the Lemurians, the “one-eye” referring to the Wisdom eye; for the two front eyes were fully developed as the physical organs only in the beginning of the Fourth Race. Ulysses putting out with a fire-brand, the eye of Polyhemus [the Cyclope] represents the psychophysiological atrophy of the “third-eye”—the all-penetrating *spiritual*

eye. (S.D., II, 769-70)

The opened “Third-Eye” represents spiritual intuition and omniscience. When there is conjunction of *Buddhi* with *Manas*, *Buddhi* is activated, which is termed as opening of the “Third-Eye,” which also represents exercise of Spiritual Will. It is said that upon losing his wife Sati (Uma), Siva in his intense grief had become insensible to love. The gods instigated Kama, the god of love, to assist, by wounding him with his arrows. As Kama aimed an arrow at Siva, Siva felt within him the stirring of desire. He realized that this could not have happened of its own accord, and then he spotted Kama. Siva is supposed to have *opened his third eye* (spiritual intuition, which also represents exercise of Spiritual Will) and burnt Kama. But then at the request of Kama’s wife Rati, Siva transformed Kama to *ananga*, or formless, *i.e.*, Kama became Kamadeva, meaning he ceased to be a tempter—*passion was transformed into compassion*. Siva is a destroyer and regenerator. He destroys things on one plane to bring them to life on a higher plane. Kama, at one level, is the desire for sensual gratification, but at another level, it is desire for the happiness of all beings. The human principle of *Manas*, when freed from *Kama* or lower propensity, turns toward the still more luminous faculty of *Buddhi* for illumination, and becomes increasingly receptive. It manifests as intuitive “flashes,” and at times as a direct vision—a sort of momentary clairvoyance.

H.P.B. mentions that in esoteric phraseology “The Eye of Shiva” is known as “*Dangma’s* opened eye.” *Dangma* means a purified soul, an initiate or a Mahatma. His opened eye is the inner spiritual eye of the seer, which far transcends ordinary clairvoyance, and has a faculty of spiritual intuition through which direct and certain knowledge can be obtained. The “Eye of *Dangma*” enables an initiate to perceive the essence of things without being influenced by Maya.

Intuition is the direct cognition of truth in all things. It is the highest spiritual faculty in man but lies dormant as long as man remains a slave to the senses and the mind. When a poet, a scientist

or an artist gets flashes of intuition, his mind has to be receptive and porous to the influences from his higher nature. There is a temporary conjunction of *manas* with *buddhi* when one gets a flash of intuition. This is because *buddhi* contains all experiences right from the monadic stage, so that when *manas* is conjoined with *buddhi* it becomes omniscient. In Great Beings there is a permanent conjunction of *buddhi* with *manas*.

At a simple level, as Dr. Eric Berne puts it, intuition means that we can know something without knowing how we know it. Just as old family doctor could diagnose typhoid fever “by the smell” because of his vast experience with the disease, so also, observant psychiatrist learns to judge many things about his patients “by intuition.” He makes a shrewd guess by observing the patient. Any professional can become “intuitive” about his own business, writes Dr. Berne. We might say that when there is genuine concern for another person, one may intuitively know what is troubling that person, and also intuitively know the best way of helping him. Likewise, intuition comes into play when we are reading the scriptures, which hide the inner meaning, not conveyed by the words. Making predictions by interpreting a horoscope is a very complex mathematical science. Interpreting an individual’s horoscope involves taking into account the sign and the house in which each planet is situated, and the aspects (angles) each of them makes with other planets. It would give rise to an immense number of permutations and combinations and the interpretation; to take them all into account requires more than mere mathematical acumen. In addition to mathematics, intuition on the part of the astrologer is necessary. “An element of clairvoyance is necessary to constitute a true astrologer,” suggests H.P.B. The truths of the rishis are not evolved as the result of logical reasoning or systematic philosophy but are the products of spiritual intuition, *drsti* or vision. The rishis are not so much the authors of the truths recorded in the Vedas as the *seers* who were able to discern the eternal truths by raising their consciousness to the plane of universal spirit, writes Dr. S.

Radhakrishnan.

If the mind is not completely receptive, then we would experience what is known as *hunch*, which is partial reception on part of *manas*. Something within tells us to “do this” or “do not do that.” Some of us have gut feeling or hunch as to the right course of action, even though we are not able to explain why. We just *know*. As against this, reason involves observation, experiments, analysis and use of intellect. Reasoning is like entering into a dark and unfamiliar room where you feel around and figure out what all things are there in the room, little by little. Intuition is like switching on the light, which shows the entire room, exactly as it is, in an instant. Intuition soars far above reason as the vision of the high flying eagle soars far above that of the ant crawling on earth.

Development of the intuitive faculty is a gradual process. We may begin by putting all the moral questions to our inner self and wait for an answer. We will make mistakes in the beginning. We may not get right and definite answer, but when one lives the life of purity and altruism, in thought, word and deed, one is able to purify the sheaths of the soul, and the inner light is able to shine into the brain-mind. We are asked to give to our brain-mind, a larger view of life, by considering universal doctrines such as Karma and re-birth. When we fulfil the duties of life, which are ours under Karma, mind is drawn nearer to the divine. So also, Mr. Judge suggests that if we are urged from within to visit a sick person, or moved to help a suffering person, or prompted to turn the corner, then we must obey the impulse at once. When we learn to respond to every prompting of the Divine within we are aided in the development of intuitive faculty.

THE ULTIMATE aim of the quest...must be neither release, nor ecstasy for oneself, but wisdom and power to serve others.

—JOSEPH CAMPBELL

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THE FOUR SKILLFUL BROTHERS

ONCE upon a time there was a man with four sons, but as he had nothing to give them, he bade them each to go out to learn a trade and become a master at it. So the brothers set off, and separated where four roads met, promising to come back after four years to that same spot. The eldest met a man who asked him where he was going and what he wanted. “I wish to learn a trade,” he answered.

“Come with me,” said the man; “I will teach you to become a Thief.” But the youth refused, saying that it was not an honest trade and would end with the gallows.

“This will not end so,” said the man, “for I will teach you to become a Master Thief, whom none can catch, or even find a trace of.” Then the eldest brother went with him and learned how to become so skillful that he could steal anything he desired.

The second brother also met a man and told him that he wished to learn a trade. “I will teach you to become a Star-Gazer,” said the man. The youth was eager to learn saying that then there will not be anything hidden from him. And when he had learned his trade, his master gave him a spyglass with which he could indeed see all things he wished to see.

The third brother met a Huntsman who offered to make him a Master Marksman. And, when his training was finished, his Master presented him with a wonderful gun, with which he could always hit the mark at which he aimed.

The youngest brother met a man who asked, “Would you not like to become a Tailor?” The youth refused saying that to sit at the tailor’s bench day in and day out was hardly to his liking.

“You are in error,” said the man. “With me you will learn to be a Master Tailor who can sew anything whatever, brittle as egg-shells, or hard as steel.”

And at the end of his training, his Master gave him a needle with which he could indeed sew anything together, without leaving a

mark.

The four years passed, and the brothers met and returned home to show their father, their skill in action. The Star-Gazer saw at the top of the tall tree under which they sat, five eggs inside a bullfinch's nest! The Thief climbed up and stole them from under the mother bird without disturbing her! The Marksman placed one egg at each corner of a table, and one in the middle, and then cut them all in half at one shot!!! And the Tailor cleverly sewed the egg-shells, with the young birds in them, together again, so that, after the Thief had replaced them, they hatched out in two days' time!!!

Their father said, "You have all used your time well, but I should not like to say which one should have the preference. We must leave that to some future opportunity."

Now soon after this there was a great outcry in the land. A Dragon had carried away the King's daughter, and the proclamation went forth that the rescuer could claim her as his wife. So the four brothers thought this was their opportunity.

"I will find where she is," said the Star-Gazer, looking through his glass. "She is on a rock in the sea, guarded by the Dragon."

So the four brothers set sail for the rock, where they saw the Princess, and the Dragon asleep with his head on her lap. The Thief slipped the Princess so cunningly out of the Dragon's clutches that the latter never awoke. They all got on board the ship, full of joy, but they had hardly sailed a little way when the Dragon, full of fury, came flying after. It was about to pounce on the ship with fangs and claws, when the Marksman took aim and shot it dead. But alas, in its dying fall, it crushed the ship to pieces, and tumbled them all into the sea, where luckily they managed to hold on to some planks. And now the Tailor came to the rescue with his needle. He sewed two planks together, and then two more, until they had collected all the pieces once again, and ship was sewn together and was as complete and water-proof as before. And so they sailed home safely.

But the King, though joyful at the return of his daughter, said that he could not decide which one of them deserved her most.

Thereupon the brothers began to quarrel. The Star-Gazer said they could have done nothing had he not seen the princess. The Thief said that it was he who stole her away. The Marksman said, "You would have been torn to pieces had I not killed the Dragon." The Tailor claimed that they would have all been drowned had he not sewn the broken ship. And each of them said, "The Princess should be mine." So at length the King said, "Your claims are all equal, but as you cannot all have the Princess, I will give each of you half of a province instead, as a reward."

"Yes," said the brothers with one voice, "that is better, because thus we shall remain united." So they lived happily ever after.

Fairy-tales appeal to something other than the cold, analytical reason, which requires everything to be explained and shut up in rigid compartments. They show that truth can be found even in fiction, and by their very incomprehensibility, their air of strange obviousness, lead the expectant mind to doors that open out on wider vistas.

This story is shortened slightly, for lack of space, but the essentials are kept. It is a version given by the brothers Grimm on a common theme—that of interdependence. Man can do nothing by himself alone, so closely are each one's powers interwoven with those of his neighbours. What room, then can there be for pride and egoism? It is not *my*, but *our* achievement; that is the attitude we should adopt. We cannot escape from the fact of brotherhood. Yet how often do we forget the lesson, not being well grounded in it!

The lesson of interdependence thus presented in story form is really a fundamental one. Let us think, for example, of everything involved in the publication of this very magazine: publishers, authors, editors and sub-editors, typists and other clerical staff, paper-makers, ink-manufacturers, printers, binders, transport workers; the sources from which the finances come, the banks; the sources, human and

otherwise from which the authors draw their facts and inspiration; the manufacturers of all the machinery for printing, paper-making, and so on and on, in ever-widening circles.

It must be ultimately that we cannot see anything, cannot do anything and cannot use anything, without involving thousands of people in it. We say glibly, “The world is one,” but unless we make our imagination fill in the details of the idea outlined in the sentence, it becomes mere empty catch phrase. Once, however, we grasp this idea of interdependence, we can start from any point whatsoever, and project our thought out along all the radii until we touch infinity.

There are one or two other points of interest in the story. The theme of the Thief appears so many times, not only in fairy tales, but also elsewhere, as also in the legend of the child Krishna stealing the curds, and the youthful Krishna stealing the gopis’ clothes. King Soma, the Moon, steals Tara, the wife of *Brihaspati* (Jupiter) and begets *Budha*, Secret Wisdom. Mercury, also the god of Wisdom, is popularly called the patron god of thieves. So there must be some other significance to “stealing.” In all the folk-tales, the Master Thief is one who is able to accomplish his deed silently, without other people being aware of it, for he draws no attention to, leaves no trace of, himself. He has the power that the disciple covets, that of appearing as nothing in the eyes of men. He therefore raises no unnecessary opposition to his mission.

The Star-Gazer, for whose clear vision there can be no veil throughout nature’s kingdoms, is easier to understand, as is also Huntsman with his power of concentration that can always “hit the mark”; while the Tailor is the true Occultist who reunites what other men cannot, and so brings what is dead or broken to life and wholeness once more.

As for the Princess, she is like Nature herself. No one individual unit of life can possess her separately for himself, since none has the greater claim than the rest. Yet all can share her possessions, the Provinces of the Spirit.

STUDIES IN THE DHAMMAPADA

THE BHIKKHU—III

12. *Meditate, O Bhikkhu; do not be heedless. Let not your mind whirl around the pleasures of the senses. Do not be reckless lest you have to swallow the iron-ball and then cry not in burning pain, “This is suffering.” (371)*

OUR BODY and senses are the means by which we contact other objects and beings in the world. The contact of senses with the objects produces pleasurable or painful sensation which results in our likes and dislikes. We seek to repeat pleasurable sensation and wish to avoid the unpleasant ones. Our mind has a natural tendency to fly to a pleasant idea. Uncontrolled desires make a man slave to his desires. That which was source of pleasure becomes the source of pain through craving and addiction. The mind entangled in the desire gets so blinded and obsessed that it does not hesitate to sacrifice anything or anyone for its fulfilment. We see this happening to an ordinary man who becomes a gambler, an alcoholic or a drug addict. The uncontrolled desires sometimes become the headlines of the newspapers concerning respected and prominent figures involved in financial scams or sex scandals. Why should we permit our pleasures to become the cause of such extreme pain which is like swallowing of a hot iron ball? It is better to be moderate in everything and try to cultivate contentment and detachment. To cultivate detachment, we have to reflect upon the transitory nature of our enjoyments and meditate upon our true nature which is not affected by our pleasures or pain.

The Bhikkhu has to exercise restraint in senses. The senses must be prevented not only from seizing hold of objects but also from turning towards them. The attention must be diverted from its natural outward-going tendency and turned within. Only when there is no longer any response to external stimuli, whether physical or mental, the mind being as it were at rest within itself, can there take place

that expansion, elevation and intensification of consciousness beyond the limits of the personal, wherein lies the essence of Meditation, writes Bhikshu Sangharakshita. The Pali scriptures contain following account of how the restraint of the senses should be exercised:

Now, in perceiving a form with the eye—a sound with the ear—an odour with the nose—a taste with the tongue—an impression with the body—an object with the mind, he cleaves neither to the whole, nor to its details. And he tries to ward off that which, by being unguarded in his senses, might give rise to evil and unwholesome states, to greed and sorrow; he watches over his senses, keeps his senses under restraint. By practising this noble Restraint of the Senses, he feels in his heart an unblemished happiness. (*A Survey of Buddhism*, p. 171)

13. *Without insight there is no meditation and also without meditation there is no insight. With both insight and meditation one approaches Nirvana. (372)*

In *A Survey of Buddhism*, Bhikshu Sangharakshita has dealt with the subject of meditation and insight that might help us to understand this verse. The eighth stage in the Noble Eightfold Path is known as *Samyak-Samadhi* or Right Concentration or the wholesome concentration of the mind on a single object. He who is concentrated sees things as they are. Concentration is the means to an end. That end is Wisdom or Insight, the seeing of things as in truth and reality they are. Thus, various stages of Samadhi or meditation are a means to the development of insight and attaining final Wisdom. With concentrated mind, the disciple penetrates the true nature of the teachings and then what was merely an intellectual understanding of the teaching becomes transformed into Transcendental Wisdom. However, what finally culminates into insight or wisdom has to start with intellectual comprehension of the Doctrines, followed by actual practice of the tenets in one's life, and meditation upon the teachings. Thus, the steps of the Eightfold Path are distributed in three stages and its order is "learning," Morality (*Sila*) and

Meditation. Meditation includes not only concentration in terms of one-pointedness but also insight. But, without learning and morality, even though the disciple may succeed in developing concentration, it will be of no more use to him than a sharpened pencil to man who can neither read nor write. In that sense, the kind of "insight" which must precede meditation is the "learning." The importance of acquiring by means of rigorous course of scriptural study, preferably at the feet of a teacher, thorough intellectual comprehension of the Doctrine has during the long history of Buddhism rarely been underestimated. It marks the beginning of insight. However, mere intellectual comprehension of the Doctrine in itself is powerless to give rise to Wisdom, unless it is accompanied by Meditation.

But, concentration is difficult for one who does not practice the *Sila* or morality. Because, conduct influences the states of mind just as the states of mind determine behaviour. *Sila* is prescribed for the beginner not as an end in itself but as the means of weakening the unwholesome states of mind from which wrong speech and wrong bodily actions proceed. Morality is the indispensable stepping-stone to Meditation. Our minds being usually in a thoroughly unwholesome state, burning with the threefold fire of greed, hatred and delusion, inevitably the actions which we commit are nearly always unskillful. Abstention from evil is therefore the first stage of spiritual progress. We must cease to do evil before we may learn to do the good. And the latter is acquired through the practice of Meditation. In Buddhism, the significance of Morality resides principally in the fact that without the good life for basis, the state of super-consciousness or Samadhi, which in its turn is the foundation of Wisdom, is impossible of attainment.

By meditating, the disciple gains deeper levels of insight, and with deepening insight, the disciple attains higher stages of meditation. He concentrates his pure and unruffled mind on reasoning and investigation regarding the truths, and enjoys in this stage, an ease born of detachment and pure thought. This is the first stage of intent meditation or *Dhyana* or *Jhana*. When this

concentration is successful, a belief or conviction in the fourfold truth arises dispelling all doubts and therefore making reasoning and investigation unnecessary. From this results the second stage of concentration, in which there are joy, peace and an internal tranquillity born of intense, unruffled contemplation. There is in this stage a consciousness of this joy and peace too.

In the next stage attempt is made by him to initiate an attitude of indifference, to be able to detach himself even from the joy of concentration. From this results the third deeper kind of concentration, in which one experiences perfect equanimity, coupled with an experience of bodily ease. He is yet conscious of this ease and equanimity, though indifferent to the joy of concentration.

Lastly, he tries to put away even this consciousness of ease and equanimity and all the sense of joy and elation he previously had. He attains thereby the fourth state of concentration, a state of perfect equanimity, indifference and self-possession, without pain. Thus, he attains the desired goal of cessation of all suffering, and attains to arhatship or nirvana.

14. *Superhuman is the bliss of that Bhikkhu who has a calm mind and a right discernment of the Law when he comes to his secluded spot. (373)*

When the mind is calm and there is understanding of the Law or the teaching, it is possible for the Bhikkhu to practice meditation. However, since the mind tends to get distracted by the objects of senses, choosing a secluded spot is useful to meditation. Then, by endeavour, by vigilance, by discipline and self-control, the disciple gradually builds for himself an inner "island" mentioned in the chapter on "Vigilance," to which he can retire at will. This discipline makes the Bhikkhu receptive to the inner voice. It unfolds his intuitive faculty to know the truth in all things, and experiences superhuman bliss which is not dependent upon anything external.

(To be continued)

ON OVERCOMING IGNORANCE

THE ART OF LIFE consists in reproducing on earth the harmony that prevails in the divine Universe. The true art of life lies in the distilling of the quintessence of human perfection. Behind this art, making it rich and colourful, is the force that can move mountains. It is the force that pervades all and everything, and which in its synthesis is life itself. The art of life has to be applied first on the intellectual and then on the intuitional spheres of conscious existence. The basis of any deliberate action is a knowledge by which nature's finer forces are wielded for the performance of that action. The random acts, the reflex automotive movements which have not a directive thought behind them may be ignored for the purposes of a study which concerns primarily the mind of man. It is only when the theoretical aspects are mastered and the requisite knowledge obtained that the student can advance towards an application of these principles. It therefore follows that in life metaphysics must in every case precede ethics, for it is metaphysics alone which can make the precepts of ethics meaningful. "Thou shalt not steal" is being preached from press and pulpit and platform, but why this should be so, why it is wrong to covet the goods of another, is not being taught—mainly because the teachers themselves lack the inner perception which alone can give the correct answer. Strange as it may seem, politicians and priests desire that this ignorance be perpetuated in the masses, as also do those who desire to retain their precedence and authority over others by treading on their ignorance.

The shedding of ignorance is not as easy as it may at first sight appear. The fanatic and the man of superstition hug their delusions to their breasts, and in consequence both are wont to reject *a priori* all knowledge that militates against their beliefs. Their minds stand insulated against any truth that threatens their world of make-believe. What, however, stands generally in the way of an early eradication of ignorance is lethargy, a disinclination to disturb the prevailing tenor of life, some deep-seated craving for indulgence, a nature that

revolts at discipline and a mind that runs too readily to mischief. Just as there are living organisms that shun sunlight and prefer darkness, so too there are not a few human natures to whom the darkness of ignorance is more congenial than the light of wisdom. In such, the divine spark burns low, but it is there and may, if tended, in time become a shining star that gives light of itself. There is no ignorance that the light of knowledge cannot dispel. *The Bhagavad-Gita* puts it in this wise: “Even if the man of most evil ways worship me with exclusive devotion, he is to be considered as righteous, for he hath judged aright. Such a man soon becometh of a righteous soul and obtaineth perpetual happiness.”

It is ignorance which makes man fall an easy prey to such illusions and delusions as fatten upon his desire nature; for ignorance sees and does not perceive, hears and does not understand. It envelops the man in dark and darker sheaths, and shuts him out inexorably from the warmth and clarity of that light which is within him and which yet avails him naught. Much of this darkness comes from a blind reliance on the messages that come swamping the man *via* his senses. He has to learn the lesson that the physical senses play him false, and that too much reliance on them leads him to a knowledge which is deceptive and a reasoning which is false. The student has to understand that the senses are deceptive and that if he is to remove falsity, he has for all time to bid farewell to a life of and in the senses. The god within can have no consciousness or perception of things on this earthly terrestrial plane and has therefore to be sought in regions where the physical senses do not function.

Ignorance becomes deep-seated in time. Like the weed, it spreads rapidly. Removing ignorance, like the dismantling of old buildings, is fraught with danger and therefore it is safer to remove it by gradual stages. Too great or too precipitate a revelation of truth may produce undesirable reactions. Sunlight falling on eyes that for years have looked on total darkness may produce partial and even total blindness and deny the power of sight for a whole incarnation. Secrecy about knowledge which is not needed for the lower stages of development

is necessary lest the pupil by an ignorant wielding of force injure himself and others.

Universal principles that remain true regardless of time, space and circumstance are the great removers of ignorance. A constant dwelling on these orients the mind to the true. It is therefore proper that habit be established which directs all processes of thought to use these universal principles, and their extensions to daily living. When a problem presents itself, it has to be referred back to, and put in juxtaposition with, an axiom, a theorem or a formula that is basic to life. If one tries to solve a problem by means that fit no formula and that find no roots in the imponderables, then it is no solution and must in the ultimate analysis be judged erroneous. It is true that the method of proceeding from a principle to a problem—from generals to particulars—is diametrically opposite to that advocated by modern scientific thought. To pursue this new line of thought process is not easy and all too often the person steps back into the familiar grooves of inductive reasoning. To achieve any significant progress, the man must develop through experience an unshakable conviction that the inductive method is no right basis for the acquisition of knowledge. The errors which modern science has slipped into by following the inductive method have to be given their full educative value. They cannot be wished away by a mere wave of the hand for the simple reason that they point to an error which is fundamental. The student of life has to understand that he is trying to soar where the scientist is wont to crawl. He who would soar into the azure blue must develop wings. Legs are no use to him, save for landing.

From the one have emanated the many, and the lines of descent are traceable by him who seeks that knowledge. It is because the chain of emanations exists that a study of the genesis of things—of the universes as of gods, heroes and men, becomes important. This tracing of the lines of descent is also necessary for the seeking of the genesis of the laws that govern the arts and sciences which pertain to each sphere as to each plane of activity. It is this extension by

emanation that welds everything—the abstract as well as the concrete—into one interconnected whole. He who would understand the working of any one part of this mighty unity must no doubt fail in his quest unless he accepts the synthesizing thread that sustains the whole. It is the search for the wider, the deeper, the all-comprehending knowledge that distinguishes the true student from the millions who seek to grab knowledge to turn it to their personal and therefore disruptive ends. All partial knowledge as it emerges after being divorced from the whole gets surrounded by ignorance which imprisons it as in a capsule and that makes it stagnant and mortal with all the marks of decay and death.

A major error that man commits is through his ignorance of the fact that, unaided by the spiritual, all his efforts at creation will breed only monstrosities. The Lower or rather the lesser part of him can and does create, but these creations, however beautiful they may seem, hide behind their pleasing exteriors the masks of death. They perish, and as long as they are alive they are attended by ups and downs, by pain and suffering that are the adjuncts of the mortal. The student of *The Secret Doctrine* knows that Nature, trying unaided to undertake the task of creation, failed, and in failing produced “water-men terrible and bad.” Man, too, when he does not invoke his divine self is capable of creating only forms of horror—equivalents of the earlier terrible and bad creations which had to be destroyed. He needs the warmth of the holy fire to move to a purpose, to perform such deeds and generate such creations as are in consonance with the plan emanating from the Divine Mind.

There is yet another area of ignorance which beclouds the individual. He thinks erroneously that just because the divine spark overshadows him, he by that fact will be ultimately redeemed even though he work iniquity and associate with evil. Just as the rays of the sun give life to the vegetation that lies in their path, but will not follow the plant if it is uprooted and transplanted in a soil where their warmth cannot reach it, so with the Atman. Unless the Ego gravitates towards its spiritual Sun, the lower Ego or the personal

self will in every case produce creations that are the antithesis of the spiritual.

To move from darkness to light requires primarily an uprooting from spots where the sun reaches not at all. This tearing out from darkness is attended by pain and suffering. Speaking about the source of evil, *Light on the Path* says:

It is a plant that lives and increases throughout the ages. It flowers when the man has accumulated unto himself innumerable existences. He who will enter upon the path of power must tear this thing out of his heart. And then the heart will bleed, and the whole life of the man seem to be utterly dissolved. This ordeal must be endured: it may come at the first step of the perilous ladder which leads to the path of life; it may not come until the last. But, O disciple, remember that it has to be endured, and fasten the energies of your soul upon the task. Live neither in the present nor the future, but in the eternal.

In the light of what has so far been considered, an effort can be made to find the rationale behind the injunction “Thou shalt not steal,” or for the matter of that any injunction of ethical import. Does the act conform to the solidarity that prevails in the Great Oneness, the Universal Brotherhood? Does it deserve to be repeated along the crests of cycles under the laws of periodicity? Does it further the cause of human progression and perfection? Does it militate against charity and love immortal? Will it preserve, even within the man himself, a harmonious relation between word and act? Will it through patience bring peace? Will it portray the strength of the strong as regulated by moral fitness? Will it bring glory to the Guru and the Teaching? Such are but some of the considerations, metaphysical and ethical, which must be made to regulate each action. These are the dispellers of ignorance.

THE ADEPTS IN THE BIBLE

JESUS—III

IN THE four canonical gospels, Jesus' final entry into Jerusalem took place at the beginning of the last week of his life, a few days before the Last Supper. When Jesus entered Jerusalem, riding on a donkey, people laid on the path palm leaves and twigs, and that day is called Palm Sunday, which is the first day of the Holy Week, also known as Passion Week, which is reckoned from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday. In the three Synoptic Gospels, entry into Jerusalem is followed by the Cleansing of the Temple, in which Jesus expels the money changers from the temple, accusing them of turning it into a den of thieves through their commercial activities. Jesus found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the money-changers, and drove them away. The "temple" here signifies all externals, exoteric creeds, or bodies of flesh. "Oxen" typify material things, the physical man. "Sheep" typify the passion and desires which must be subdued and tamed, and "Doves" represent spiritual aspirations or "spiritual knowledge." "The money changers" are those who traffick in spiritual things, and represent the money-seeking priesthood, explains H.P.B. (*Lucifer*, March 1893)

The Last Supper is the final meal that Jesus shares with his twelve apostles in Jerusalem before crucifixion. During the meal, Jesus predicts that one of his apostles will betray him and he specifically identifies Judas as the traitor. Jesus predicts that Peter will deny knowledge of him three times before the cock crows the next morning. After the Last Supper, Jesus, accompanied by his disciples, takes a walk to pray in the Garden of Gethsemane, when Judas appears in the garden, accompanied by a crowd that includes Jewish priests and elders. He kisses Jesus to identify him to the crowd, which then arrests Jesus. After the arrest, when Jesus is sent to Herod to be tried, he says almost nothing in response to Herod's questions. Herod and his soldiers mock Jesus, and return him to Pilate, who announces that he has "not found this man guilty." Observing a

Passover custom of the time, Pilate allows one prisoner chosen by the crowd to be released. He gives the people a choice between Jesus and a murderer called Barabbas, and persuaded by the Jewish priests and elders, the mob chooses to release Barabbas and crucify Jesus. The soldiers place a Crown of Thorns on Jesus' head and ridicule him as the King of Jews. After the trials, Jesus is led to Calvary carrying his cross, and is crucified.

History shows that again and again mankind has made the fatal error of failing to recognize a divine teacher when he appears among them in human guise. Buddha, Jesus, and many others before and after them, were treated by their contemporaries as ordinary human beings and they were opposed by the priest-class and religious heads because the doctrines they taught were a death blow to dogmas. "Even among their immediate disciples, suspicion, doubt, jealousy, fear, resentment and self-interest were to be found, none of which could have had existence had the real nature of the teacher been understood." The bond between the spiritual teacher and the disciple is a sacred bond and the disciple is able to derive very little benefit if there is lack of intuitive perception of the divine nature of the teacher. As a result, the disciple may receive the teachings, but is unable to transmit the teachings effectively. (*Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita*, pp. 177-78)

Jesus was made to carry the cross on which he was nailed. We often say, "Each one must bear his own cross." In that sense, "cross" represents our Karmic responsibilities. Our present unfavourable circumstances are the result of our past actions, which must be faced, without complaining or grumbling. Every person finds his own "cross" the heaviest and most difficult to bear. Our own suffering always seems most terrible and yet it is said that if we shun the cross we will make it heavier. In other words, if we shun the circumstances or try to dodge the Karmic consequences instead of accepting them and learning the lesson, we make our karma more difficult and complex.

What does the crucifixion of the Christ signify? Every time we

remain deaf to the Voice of Conscience, or the prompting of the inner God, we crucify the Christos within us. But Christ is also the Divine principle in each one of us. H.P.B. writes: “Christ—the true esoteric SAVIOUR—is *no man*, but the DIVINE PRINCIPLE in every human being” (*The Esoteric Character of the Gospels*). Christ is not the only Son of God; we are all sons of God in our divine nature. But unfortunately this divine nature, though all-powerful on its own plane, is quite powerless on our plane. Every time we refuse to listen to our divine nature—the Christ within—we crucify the Christ. Every time we want *our* will to prevail over the Divine Will, there is a minor crucifixion.

Jesus was crucified between two thieves. One thief jeered at him, saying, if thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other thief rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear god? At least we are suffering justly, receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing amiss.” And he said to Jesus, “Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise” (*The Gospel According to St. Luke*, Chap. 23, verses 39-43). Crucifixion of Jesus between two thieves is allegorical. The two thieves represent two aspects of the mind. Christos represents the Higher Mind in man. In each incarnation, it sends out a ray, which has to incarnate in a vehicle, that is an already differentiated astral substance. The moment it incarnates in such a vehicle, it is completely shut off from its divine parent, and becomes dual in nature. The portion of the incarnated mind which is pulled down by *Kama*, or entangled in personal thoughts and desires, forms after death, *kamarupic* shell and is dissipated. The repentant thief represents the pure part of the lower mind, involved in higher thoughts and aspirations, which after death, becomes part of the Ego and goes to paradise or *Devachan* or *Swarga*. Thus, the thief who was repentant represents that aspect of mind which aspires to move towards the divine, and to whom Jesus said that he was with him in Paradise that very day. The thief who jeered at Jesus represents the aspect of mind that is entangled

in personal or wicked thoughts and desires. At a simple level, resurrection of Jesus implies that there is an undying and spiritual aspect in man which survives the death of the body. However, at a deeper level, resurrection implies spiritual re-birth. Thus:

He who strives to resurrect the Spirit *crucified in him by his own terrestrial passions*, and buried deep in the “sepulchre” of his sinful flesh; he who has the strength to roll back *the stone of matter* from the door of his own *inner* sanctuary, he *has the risen Christ in him*. The “Son of Man” is no child of the bond-woman—*flesh*, but verily of the free-woman—*Spirit*, the child of man’s own deeds and the fruit of his own spiritual labour. (*H.P.B. Series No. 7*, pp. 4-5)

To resurrect the Christ *we* have crucified, we must allow the divine nature to control the terrestrial nature, and thus raise ourselves to the spiritual level. Spiritual life has been defined as *conscious existence in spirit while we are in this body*. Spirit is eternal and we need to become aware of it. Our knowledge of matter has become instinctive, but not so our knowledge of spirit. When that happens we will resurrect into spiritual life.

To accomplish this resurrection, mind must be trained to cooperate with the spirit. We must be bold and frank enough to own up our misdeeds, our vices, and our defects.

What is spiritual rebirth? H.P.B. explains that one striving after spiritual perfection must have *three* births: (1) physical, from his mortal parents; (2) *spiritual* through Initiation; and (3) his final birth into the world of spirit—at death. (*Isis*, II, 565)

H.P.B. observes that Jesus was a *Chrestos*, “as undeniably as that he never was entitled to the appellation of *Christos*, during his life-time and before his last trial.” The *Glossary* explains that *Chrestos* means a disciple on probation—a candidate for hierophantship. When he had attained this stage through initiation, long trials and suffering, and had been “*anointed*,” *i.e.*, “rubbed with oil,” as were the initiates—as the last touch of ritualistic observance—then his name was changed into “*Christos*,” the “purified,” in the esoteric

language. H.P.B. writes:

Chrestos means certainly more than merely “a good” and “excellent man,” while “Christos” was never applied to any one living man, but to every Initiate at the moment of *his second birth and resurrection*. He who finds Christos within himself and recognizes the latter as his only “way,” becomes a follower and an *Apostle of Christ*, though he may have never been baptised, nor even have met a Christian, still less call himself one. (*H.P.B. Series No. 7*, p. 13)

In a way, crucifixion and resurrection reflect the initiation ceremonies practised by the ancient Egyptians and other early civilizations. These initiations took place in the crypts, caves, temples, and pyramids where the neophyte underwent a series of physical and psychological trials through which he proved his strength and readiness for spiritual rebirth. The symbol of the cross and the crucified man have deep significance. Thus:

The initiated adept, who had successfully passed through all the trials, was *attached*, not *nailed*, but simply tied on the couch in the form of tau (in Egypt)...plunged in a deep sleep. He was allowed to remain in this state for three days and three nights, during which time his Spiritual Ego was said to confabulate with the “gods,” descend into Hades, Amenti, or Patala (according to the country)...his body remaining all the time in the temple crypt or subterranean cave. (*S.D.*, II, 558)

In the Puranic allegory, Viswakarman’s daughter Sanjana (spiritual consciousness), and wife of Surya the sun, complained to her father of the too great effulgence of her husband. Viswakarman, the divine carpenter, crucified the sun on his lathe and cut away eighth part of his rays—creating round him a dark aureole. After that, Surya looked as though he had been crowned with dark thorns and he became “Vikarttana,” one who was shorn of his effulgence.

Vikarttana is the type of the initiated neophyte. All these names were given to candidates who were going through trials of initiation. The candidate for initiation personifies the sun, who has to kill all his fiery passions and wear a crown of thorns, before he can rise into new life and be reborn.

It refers to the process in Initiation, wherein the candidate was made to look deep into his consciousness and face the whole of his lower nature without getting disturbed. Candidates were literally made to sit, all alone, in a dark room. By cutting off the sun’s rays, Viswakarman created similar darkness. This is equivalent to descent into lower worlds or Hades, wherein the candidate touches the lowest levels of his consciousness. After facing and purifying it, he rises with fully purified consciousness.

But there are a series of initiations in the life of a disciple, till he comes to the stage of final Initiation, when he comes face to face with the Dhyani Buddha, the head of the hierarchy to which he belongs. Spiritual rebirth or resurrection “is the spiritual birthright of every human being endowed with soul and spirit, whatever his religion may be. Such individual is a *Christ-man*.” (*H.P.B. Series No. 7*, p.12)

(Concluded)

LEARN how to carry a friendship greatly, whether or not it is returned. Why should one regret, if the receiver is not equally generous? It never troubles the sun that some of his rays fall wide and vain into ungrateful space, and only a small part on the reflecting planet. Let your greatness educate the crude and cold companion. If he is unequal, he will presently pass away, but thou art enlarged by thy own shining.

—RALPH WALDO EMERSON

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

[In this section we seek to answer frequently asked questions, at U.L.T. meetings or during private conversations and discussions with people who seek the answers in the light of Theosophy. Answers given in this section are by no means final. Only a line of thought is being offered by applying general principles of Theosophy.]

Question: What is the value of Patriotism? In some academies patriotism is preached as an ethical virtue, stating that even Mahatma Gandhi began his public career with patriotic zeal, and it was only later that he worked for universal values like *sarvodaya* (welfare of all). Does it mean that we cannot turn to “Higher Life” without first having love for our country and family?

Answer: Patriotism means loyalty of a person to his or her own nation including the great men belonging to the nation. Many people have questioned the value of Patriotism, saying that belief in reincarnation shows that in the previous ten incarnations a person might have been born in ten different nations and ten different races. Patriotism is the natural love felt by a human being for the land in which his body is born. Though he may be born in different country in every birth, he may feel the same patriotic feeling for the country in which he is born. True patriotism is a noble and high sentiment. It transcends personal love, and can enable a person to cultivate the feeling of universal brotherhood. At first, a person may love only himself, then he enlarges his love and extends it to his family; and then in ever-widening circles he learns to embrace his town and finally his country. A person cannot die for his country unless his love has gone beyond the confines of his family. Patriotism is the best example of an attempt to universalize one’s love, explains Mr. Judge. It can be seen that universal love can be cultivated only when one transcends emotional attachment.

However, we need to guard against narrow patriotism, in which we care about the welfare of our own country, often at the expense

of other countries. Gandhiji said, “For me patriotism is the same as humanity. I am patriotic because I am human and humane....I will not hurt England or Germany to serve India....And a patriot is so much the less a patriot if he is a lukewarm humanitarian.” Leo Tolstoy says that every ruling power rests on patriotism, which is the readiness of people to submit to this power, and fight wars, commit violence in order to defend one’s own country from the supposed dangers.

The article “Living the Higher Life,” (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 34*) seems to suggest that love for family and nation is an integral part of living the higher life, and it is essential to understand that love for one’s family does not mean mere emotional attachment to one’s family, but should express itself in doing one’s family duties, which include cultivating and elevating the pure emotional or desire nature of one’s self and of one’s family members. It means helping the family members to live such a life as to be able to overcome family defects. Likewise, Patriotism does not mean self-identifying attachment to one’s nation, but consists in getting rid of national defects in one’s own nature and helping others to do the same, as also, strengthening the noble qualities of one’s nation, in oneself and in the whole of nation. Each one of us has the germ of all the good and bad qualities of the family, race and nation to which one belongs. The one who desires to live the higher life, in earnest, has to overcome lower tendencies and weaknesses common to him and his family; common to him and his nation, as also, those common to him and mankind in general, which are known as “weaknesses of human nature.”

Mr. Judge explains that patriotism and family attachment, when narrow and bigoted, do not allow us to see the good qualities in other families and other nations, which we cherish in our own family and nation. Our attachment makes us fancy that our family geese are more beautiful than our neighbour’s swans. There are lights and shades, varying degrees of good and bad qualities in our family and nation, as in other families and nations. True patriotism helps us lay

aside personal prejudice and view all countries and families in their true light. The feeling of patriotism is developed slowly. For instance, a villager is, at first, attached to his village, and then as his mind expands, he gradually embraces the state and the nation.

True love for the family or nation into which one is born must translate itself into performing family and national duties. When one neglects to perform family duties, one may find himself, gradually becoming apathetic to his nation and to mankind in general. On the other hand, strict performance of family duties would serve to purify our lower mind of its dross and may help to cultivate higher qualities.

A Mahatma has said, He “still had patriotism,” but that does not mean he is attached to a nation in a narrow or prejudicial way, but that he would be moved to help people of that nation, who seek spiritual guidance.

Question: In Hindu Philosophy, *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama* and *Moksha* are said to be four *purusharthas*. What does it mean and what is their purpose in life?

Answer: *Purushartha* means human effort or exertion towards fulfilling the goal or objective of human existence. If an individual wishes to live a complete life and experience happiness, he must fulfil four objectives of life, namely, *Dharma* or duty; *Artha* or prosperity; *Kama* means desire, or pleasures, and *Moksha* or liberation. Each of these four canonical *purusharthas* was subjected to a process of examination and elaboration which produced several key works in the history of Indian philosophy, including the *Kamasutra* of Vatsyayana, which treats *kama*, particularly as “sexual gratification,” the *Arthashastra* of Kautilya which treats *artha* as “material pursuit,” and *Dharmasastras*, especially of Manu, which treats *dharma* as “religious, social and personal ethics.” All these three goals are mainly concerned with the attainment of the fourth goal, which is *moksha*, which is often referred to as the *parama-purushartha* or “chief goal of human life.” Recognizing this, one has to try to follow the suggestion to live “in” the world, but not be

“of” the world.

Man is essentially divine but divinity in man is obscured, so that man identifies himself with the personality. The purpose of life is to attain liberation by overcoming delusion, which chains him to the wheel of birth and death. He can achieve this aim by leading a balanced life in which both material comforts and human passions have their own place and legitimacy. Though *dharma* alone might seem to be sufficient to achieve salvation, the other two, pleasures and material wealth, also play an important role. It is suggested that when man pursues wealth and pleasures he encounters suffering and learns important lessons, which accelerates his progress on the spiritual path. Every individual is expected to pursue these goals with detachment and selflessly. The attitude with which these are pursued will either entangle the person in worldly concerns or set him free.

The word “Dharma” is derived from the root *dhri*, meaning to *hold together*, or to *sustain*. *Dharma* for a human being means developing divine virtues and performing actions that are in harmony with the divine laws. *Dharma* also means performance of obligatory duties towards one’s family, society, nation and mankind as a whole. An individual was and is still guided in proper performance of his duty by scriptures such as the *Bhagavad-Gita* and the *Dharmasastras* or law books. When a human being gathers material wealth without observing *dharma* or indulges in sexual passion against established moral values, he experiences suffering and delays his spiritual progress.

Hindu philosophy seems to suggest that there is nothing wrong in striving to get wealth, but it must be done with pure motive, and that wealth must be used for the welfare of the family and for the society. Wealth in itself is not bad, but attachment to wealth causes a hindrance to spiritual progress. Food for the body and food for the soul are equally important, because a person cannot pursue his spiritual goal on empty stomach.

Kama means desire, and more specifically it is taken to mean

sexual desire. *Kama* is also interpreted to mean pleasures. Every man performs actions with the expectation of reward or with the attachment to the fruit of his actions. Sexual activity is for the purpose of procreation and for the perpetuation of family and social order. There is important code of conduct prescribed in *Dharmashastras* to safeguard social and moral order. Though sex is an important aspect of human life, Lust and Greed are considered to be obstacles to spiritual progress. Ultimately, desires must be so purified and transformed that they become merely motor power, an energy which can be guided by Spiritual Will.

The most important aim of human life was considered to be pursuit of liberation and all the other aims were to be made subservient to achieving this goal. When a person learns gradually to give up his attachment to the results of actions and to perform selfless actions, with complete detachment, he comes nearer to the goal of liberation because such selfless actions are not binding on him. *Moksha* is the direct experience of the Absolute Truth or Reality, along with the realization of who we really are. During Vedic period ritualistic activities were considered to be the means for the attainment of *moksha*. However, by the late Upanishadic period the emphasis shifted to knowledge, and the rituals were considered irrelevant to the attainment of *moksha*. Shankara was the most eminent exponent of the *Upanishads* and he held that they are meant for those who are above worldly or heavenly prosperity. Those who follow the *Upanishads* have no attraction for Vedic rituals but look for emancipation. “By reflection, reasoning and instructions of teachers, the truth is known. Not by ablutions, not by making donations, nor by performing hundreds of breath control exercise,” writes Shankara in his work, *Vivekachudamani*. These four *purusharthas* are often compared to four wheels of a chariot of human existence. Their harmonious functioning upholds and directs human life.

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Indic texts mention four goals of human life: *dharma* or ethics; *artha* or wealth; *kama* or pleasure, and *moksha* or liberation. Scriptural writings classify types of sex as *dharma-sex*, *artha-sex*, *kama-sex* and *moksha-sex*. In *dharma-sex* the purpose of sexual activity is only procreation. There is no love, desire or attachment, just duty. A woman invites a man during her ovulatory period with the sole intention of conceiving a child, and he is obliged to do the needful. We see this form of physical relation between *rishis* and their wives. In one story sage Kardama is obliged to sleep with Devahuti only for the purpose of having a child. After his wife conceives, he retires to the forest, and Devahuti gives birth to Kapil Muni, who is renowned for Samkhya Philosophy.

In *kama-sex*, the purpose is pleasure—to indulge in the senses, excite the mind and achieve orgasm, with no procreative purpose. This is what *apsaras* lure *rishis* with. *Kama-sex* is a powerful force which can distract the ambitious from their goal. During churning of the ocean, the demons got hold of the heavenly nectar of immortality. Hence, the gods appealed to Lord Vishnu who took the form of Mohini, a beautiful and enchanting damsel. She distracted the demons with her beauty and took the *Amrita* and distributed it among the gods. In *artha-sex*, sex is a transaction, a service offered in exchange for money or material favours. Courtesans or *Ganikas* were women who gave pleasure to men for money. Yayati offers his daughter Madhavi to any king in exchange for 200 horses. *Moksha-sex* is to break free from the unending cycle of birth and death. In Tantric texts, sex is not about pleasure, procreation or commercial transaction, but it is about gaining *siddhi* or magical powers. In the *Bhagavatam*, one hears of Lakshmi seated on the lap of Datta, son of Atri and Anasuya, who holds a bowl of liquor in his hand, and is engaged in secret rites. But Datta is not burned by the fire of sexual desire, thus indicating wisdom and liberation, writes Devdutt Pattanaik. (*The Speaking Tree, Sunday Times of*

India, January 19, 2014)

The main function of the sexual activity is production of progeny. H.P.B. describes the laws of Manu on connubial life as “far-seeing and morally beneficent.” She writes: “The Brahmin was a *grihastha*, a family man, till a certain period of his life, when after begetting a son, he broke with married life and became a chaste Yogi. His very connubial life was regulated by Brahmin astrologers in accordance with his nature” (*S.D.*, I, 411 fn). Sex immorality has taken hold of our civilization. Sexual indulgence for the sake of pleasure and for money dominates our society. Both men and women, who earlier looked for stability and security of marriage, prefer casual flings and one-night stands from which they can walk away without looking back. Marriage is the union of two souls for the purpose of propagating of the species, but if in its place, there is only a union of male and female bodies, then marriage becomes merely a brutal act, which lowers man and woman to a level lower than that of animals.

It is said that the two most potent enemies to fight in the spiritual battle, and the last to get conquered are, sexual desire and Egotism. One desiring to live the Higher Life must learn to control the animal nature, as the sexual act on the physical plane proportionately diminishes the activity of the creative power on the higher plane. There is a direct relation between sexual act and pineal gland, and hence spiritual intuition.

Misunderstood Tantricism has led to the belief that sexual energy is divine energy and it can be transformed into spiritual energy through controlled expression of sex. When Tantric literature mentions union of Siva and Sakti, it is sometimes taken literally, to mean union between male and female. In the article, “The Future Occultist,” H.P.B. hints at the deeper meaning behind the marriage of the *Rishis* and union of *Siva* and *Sakti*. They are purely allegorical accounts. Buddhi or Spiritual Soul in man, (in relation to the Universe, it is spoken of as *Prakriti*) is represented as “female,” because it is passive and represented as the vehicle of *Atman* or Spirit. This *Atman*, when spoken of in relation to the entire Universe,

is referred to as *Purusha*, and is depicted as active “male,” for it is the CENTRE OF ENERGY, acting through and upon its female vehicle. Thus, the Mahatma, who has become one with the *Atma* (or *Purusha*), becomes practically a creator, because he has identified himself with the evolving and the manifesting energy of nature.

Time rules our lives. Businesses make money out of it, and science has been able to measure it with astonishing accuracy. Earlier this year, American researchers unveiled an atomic clock which is accurate to better than one second. And yet, even the greatest thinkers have been unable to define time. According to theoretical physicist Lee Smolin, one of the founders of the Perimeter Institute for Theoretical Physics in Ontario, Canada, understanding the nature of time is central to understanding reality itself. Since 500 B.C. thinkers, philosophers and scientists have put forward varying views of time. Heraclitus, an early Greek philosopher insisted that permanence is an illusion, because everything is in a state of flux. Parmenides, on the other hand, argued that existence demands absence of change, making time an illusion. Sir Isaac Newton posited existence of “absolute time,” which flows throughout the Universe, independent of any influence. According to Albert Einstein time is relative. In the mid-1960s, the American theorist John Wheeler and his collaborator Bryce DeWitt applied quantum theory to the cosmos, and came to the conclusion that time is an illusion. “The quantum Universe is a Universe without change. It just simply is.” However, this conclusion contradicts reality, as we see that since Big Bang, Universe is still expanding, and stars are constantly being born, and are dying, along with ourselves.

According to Lee Smolin’s theory, time is the most fundamental feature of reality—so fundamental that its existence transcends that of our Universe. In contrast to conventional theory, time did not come into existence at the Big Bang. Our Universe is just the latest

in the endless sequence of cycles. The idea of cyclic universe is one of the oldest ideas in Cosmology. Lee Smolin believes that when giant stars run out of nuclear fuel they collapse under their own gravity, and trigger supernova explosion, and finally lead to the formation of black holes. He is of the view that there are hints from quantum theory that the centre of black holes may be the birth-places of whole new universes, each with different laws of physics. Moreover, explosion of stars produce the carbon, oxygen and other elements required for life. Thus, he suggests that our very existence may be evidence for cosmic evolution, and since evolution can only happen over time, that in turn suggests time is real. “If he is right, our Universe is just the latest in an endless series. . . . Time explains the apparent fluke that our Universe has just the right combination of conditions to allow our existence,” writes Robert Matthews, a visiting Reader in Science at Aston University. (*BBC Knowledge*, February 2014)

“Time is an illusion produced by the succession of our states of consciousness as we travel through eternal duration, and it does not exist where no consciousness exists in which the illusion can be produced; but lies asleep” (*S.D.*, I, 37). H.P.B. implies that time is but a by-product of consciousness. In the experience of the mystic, past, present, and future merge in the Eternal Now. Hence, a Master of Wisdom says that “past, present and future” are clumsy words. We are constrained to use terms such as past, present and future due to limitation of our perception. It is impossible to point out the dividing line between the past and present, or the present and future. Even as we say, “now,” it has moved into the past. Our divisions of time are relative to the observer’s point of view. *Time is something created entirely by ourselves*, says a Master of Wisdom. Time seems to fly in happier moments, while it seems to drag on, ever so slowly, during painful experiences.

The term “duration” applies to that which has no beginning and no end. In that sense, we can never have experience of “duration” while we exist in the phenomenal world, because nothing in life

remains the same even for a moment. There is constant change or *Nityapralaya* going on.

Cycles are the clocks of Karma. Cycles are not arbitrary divisions of time, but they mark the periodic return of impressions and actions. Cycles mark the moments of cause and effect. Having the knowledge of Karma and Cycles, a yogi can predict a future event. Evolution is cyclic. Universe and everything in the universe is subject to periodic time. The manifestation and dissolution of the universes happen cyclically. This process has been going on from all eternity, and our present universe is but one of an infinite series, which had no beginning and will have no end.

When we overindulge in “harmless” habits like nail-biting, shopping, web-surfing, continuous texting or checking for messages, overworking, procrastinating, gossiping, watching too much television or drinking too many cups of tea or coffee, they can become, what are called “soft-addictions,” which limit our potential, and ultimately drain us of both energy and self-respect. Judith Wright, the author of “The Soft Addiction Solution,” who labelled this phenomenon, says that unlike hard addictions related to substance abuse, you don’t die of soft addiction, “but you don’t really live either.” Soft addictions are soothing activities, which may seem like solution to some problem, but in the long run, some of them have severe consequences. Too much television watching on regular basis can zone you out, and can make it hard to sleep and wake up. Overeating or overusing gadgets are the adult equivalent of thumb-sucking. A shopping addiction could ruin your finances.

In the beginning these addictions appear so harmless that we tend to overlook them or laugh them off, but when others around us draw our attention, we should not ignore. “If people tease you about always being late, your friends get mad when you are texting while

seeming to engage with them, your husband complains that you spend more time with your online friends than him, if your wife points out that you are becoming a couch potato—these are warnings of soft addictions,” writes Marguerite Theophil. Underlying these soft addictions is deeper need or hunger. Judith Wright says, “You might want a new designer dress, but you are really ‘hungry’ to feel good about yourself.” The first step to beating a soft addiction requires making a commitment to higher quality of life, and realizing how they come in the way of our well being, our relationships and our dreams, writes Theophil. (*The Times of India*, January 24, 2014)

Like the cycle of day and night, and the cycle of seasons, there is cyclic return of impressions, which govern habits. Our habits are made by the return of impression of some thought we liked, until it makes so clear a path, or cycle, that we keep repeating it without thinking about it at all. Our body is made up of atoms, and atoms are made up of “lives.” Every atom has a life and memory of its own. In a habit “lives” in the body are repeatedly given certain kind of impressions, day after day, and they clamour for the pleasurable sensation produced by certain activity, periodically. Often harmless habits or soft addictions are sought to overcome a feeling of emptiness, disappointment or meaninglessness of life. Instead of turning *within* and trying to find answer, solace and happiness in companionship with the divine, we tend to look *without*. *The Voice of the Silence* describes these addictive pleasures to be “mocking demon of illusion,” wherein, after a while, one neither enjoys the addiction as before, nor is he able to give it up, and the thing seems to mock and say, “Leave me if you can.” Since it is extremely difficult to break a habit, it is better to be vigilant and not fall prey to addictions—soft or hard. But good habits should be encouraged and cultivated, for, it is said, “Sow a thought, reap an act, sow an act, reap a habit, sow a habit, reap a character, sow a character, reap a destiny.”