

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

## THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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### DIVINE VIRTUES

#### DHYANA—PERFECTION OF MEDITATION

THE SIXTH Paramita is *Dhyana*, described as, “whose golden gate once opened leads the Narjol [a saint or an Adept] toward the realm of Sat eternal and its ceaseless contemplation.” *Dhyana* is translated as meditation which leads one to the realization of Sat, or real nature of things, and also to its “ceaseless contemplation,” *i.e.*, whatever activity is undertaken, it is done with the awareness that reality is at its deeper level. Thus, it is the meditation which permeates all the activities of our entire life. We must not look upon our everyday life and meditation in compartments. The Noble Eightfold Path can be divided into three stages of training, *Shila*, *Dhyana* and *Prajna*. *Shila* or moral practices includes Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood. *Prajna* or Right knowledge includes Right Views and Aspirations. *Dhyana* includes Right Effort, Right Awareness and Right Concentration.

*Shila* and *Dhyana Paramita* make a pair, because morally pure life and meditation must go hand in hand. Merely restraining our words and deeds is useless if the mind continues to boil with anger, lust or hatred. An alcoholic may know perfectly well that he should not drink because alcohol is harmful to him, and yet when craving arises, he reaches out for the bottle and gets intoxicated. He is unable to restrain himself because he has no control over his mind. But on the other hand, we cannot follow *Dhyana* and ignore *Shila*.

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

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To begin with, the motive with which we start meditation could be narrow and selfish, such as, to escape the monotony of life, or out of curiosity, or still worse, to acquire powers. Hence the caution in the *Voice of the Silence*, “The rugged path of four-fold *Dhyana* winds on uphill. . . . The Paramita heights are crossed by a still steeper path.” If the seeker is not vigilant then he may end up pursuing only meditation practice, and develop certain powers, but fail to overcome anger, envy, greed, sensuality, and so on. “A sense of pride would mar the work.” There are many stories of sages who even after going a long way on the spiritual path had not been able to overcome pride. For instance, Visvamitra who was a *rajarshi* could not earn the title of *brahmrshi* for a long time until he was able to conquer his pride.

Sangharakshita, a Buddhist teacher, says that we may consider *dhyana* as comprising of two things: (1) Higher states of consciousness, which are above and beyond those of our ordinary waking mind, and (2) various practices leading to the experience of the higher states of consciousness. The higher states of consciousness are of two kinds: (1) Those higher than everyday states of consciousness but still mundane, and (2) those which are truly Transcendental.

*The Voice of the Silence* mentions four-fold *dhyana*. There are four *dhyanas* of the *world of forms*. Sangharakshita explains that the *first dhyana* is characterized by absence of all negative emotions, namely, lust, ill-will, sloth, anxiety and doubt, which are termed “five mental hindrances” in Buddhism. The first step is to overcome, or at least suppress temporarily, these negative emotions. At the same time there must be an attempt to concentrate our psychic and physical energies which are either frittered away or blocked. The *first dhyana* is characterized by unification of psycho-physical energy, and consequently the arising of the feeling of joy or rapture. However, there is still the vestige of discursive mental activity, *i.e.*, a little wandering of the mind. In the *second dhyana* the discursive mental activity disappears and with increased

concentration, it fades away. It is the state of no thought. It is not like coma or trance, but a state of pure awareness. In the *third dhyana* the mind is blissful but there is no pleasurable sensation and the bodily consciousness is only peripheral. In the *fourth dhyana* one enters the state of equanimity, beyond pleasure and pain. Thus, in the first *dhyana* there is unification of all energies of conscious mind; in the second, the energies of super-conscious (higher) mind begin to penetrate into the unified conscious mind; in the third stage, super-conscious energies transform the energies of conscious mind, and finally the conscious mind is dominated by and enclosed by super-conscious energies.

Likewise, there are four *formless dhyanas* in which one moves beyond subject and object, till one reaches the stage where there is neither perception nor non-perception. The four *dhyanas* of the world of forms and of the formless are classified as mundane or worldly, as opposed to Transcendental states. When the concentrated mind begins to contemplate Reality, it is then that the *dhyana* states pass from being mundane to being Transcendental. Sometimes these Transcendental *dhyanas* are called *Samadhis*. There are various states of *Samadhi*. In terms of Noble Eightfold Path, we begin the spiritual journey by having perfect vision (insight) or *samyak Dristi*, and end with the last step called Perfect Meditation or *samyak Samadhi*, *i.e.*, transforming one’s whole being, at every level and in all aspects in the light of perfect vision. It represents the culmination of the process of transformation from an unenlightened to enlightened state. *Samadhi* is like lamp and *Prajna* or wisdom is like light of the lamp. To acquire spiritual insight one must begin to understand and realize the three characteristics of the conditioned existence: All conditioned existence is *Dukkha* or suffering. All Conditioned existence is impermanent. All conditioned existence is devoid of true selfhood.

There are meditation practices in Buddhism which aim at cultivating mindfulness or awareness, as also, cultivating positive

emotions, and acknowledging and eradicating negative emotions, and thus help to remove the obstacles to *dhyana* state. Buddhist meditations are divided into two major categories—*Samatha* and *Vipassana*. *Samatha* refers to any meditation practice which aims at development of higher states of consciousness by cultivating mental integration, which manifests as concentration and calmness of mind. *Vipassana* refers to meditation practice that aims at gaining *insight* into real nature of things. Mindfulness of breathing and *Metta Bhavana* meditation are both *samatha* practices, which prepare the mind for *Vipassana* by establishing concentration and emotional positivity.

We sit for meditation and wonder why we do not succeed. Meditation at a fixed hour is influenced by the line of life's meditation. How can we suppose that with half-an-hour of meditation and the remaining 23 ½ hours spent the way we like would enable us to concentrate? Our whole day should be an exercise in concentration. We allow our energies to drain away by engaging in idle conversations, mental ramblings, reliving the past experiences or being anxious about things that have not yet happened. Every moment must be spent usefully.

We might meditate everyday but we find it difficult to integrate it to our day to day life. As a result, little things in life have the power of shattering our peace and disturbing our calm. We all experience this. If we do not get taxi as we set out for work, or upon reaching office do not find the necessary papers that we had asked the subordinate to keep ready, we fly in rage—we fret and fume. The people around us, the circumstances at home and office may remain the same, but we have to learn to face them with calmness and cheerfulness. The purpose of meditation is to transform an ordinary person into a more calm, concerned and compassionate person. When a Christian girl attended Buddhist meditation course her parents did not like it. She said, “I noticed that my parents hate me when I am *Buddhist*, but they love me when I am a *Buddha!*” *The Voice of the Silence* says that before

you can settle in *Dhyana-Marga* (*Path of pure knowledge*) “thy soul has to become as the ripe mango fruit: as soft and sweet as its bright golden pulp for others’ woes, as hard as that fruit’s stone for thine own throes and sorrows.” We may begin by having a feeling of goodwill, which gradually develops into concern for others, and then into affection and love, and finally compassion, for all that lives and breathes. A Buddhist monk who went to America visited an aquarium. He would touch softly on the glass of each fish tank and say something. When asked, he explained that he touched the glass to get the attention of the beings inside, and then he blessed each one of them saying that they too might be liberated!

Before coming to *Dhyana* one has passed through *Viraga* and *Virya*, *i.e.*, cultivation of detachment and strength of will. Both these are needed to protect the island of pure thoughts and higher levels of consciousness attained during meditation. Just as an island surrounded by rocks gets eroded by continuous friction of ocean waves, so also, there is possibility of our peace and equanimity getting shattered when we come in contact with the world outside. We should protect those noble thoughts and moral principles about which we are convinced, and not allow the opinion of the world around us to change them. Our meditation should influence and reflect itself in our day to day activities. A man of meditation will not waste time in idle talk, but he will also not fail in friendly greeting. He will be more watchful of his time, intelligently proportioning it to his various duties. He will not want to leave one duty half done and turn to another, unless it is possible for him to do several duties simultaneously. He would have acquired better concentration and as a result better and deeper understanding of whatever he reads. Our half-hour of meditation and the way we live the life reciprocally affect each other.

How are we going to arrange our life in a proper manner so that it will aid our half-hour meditation? Our meditation undertaken at a fixed time can be aided when we have an appropriate *line of life's meditation*—a single thread of intention or desire running all

through the life. But what is the “line of life’s meditation”? It is that on which the heart is set. For those of us who have no spiritual inclination and are given only to low plane gratification, the *line of life’s meditation* could be to acquire money, comfort, luxury, name, fame, etc. Then all the activities and thinking that is done is ultimately subservient to and guided by the single motive, which is determined by one’s “line of life’s meditation.” However, in case of those who have even a little inclination towards spirituality, we may say there are two lines of life’s meditation—one guided by lower, animal nature and the other guided by spiritual nature. It is our duty to make the line of life’s meditation that is presently guided by the lower nature, to be subservient to the higher nature.

The consciousness of the person who has settled in *Dhyana-Marga* becomes like a transparent vase; it radiates the light of *Atman* or Wisdom. In the olden days there used to be an advertisement for Gramophone which said, “The gramophone you do not hear, you only hear the music.” That is to say, there is absolutely no extra noise added from the instrument itself—all one hears is pure music. In the same way, the person who is settled in *Dhyana-Marga*, possesses pure knowledge of things as they are, and their relation to the Absolute, because his lower principles offer no resistance or interference. No fraction of our own ideas must be allowed to interfere with the radiation or shining outward of the pure light within. Therefore, we are asked to make hard our soul “against the snares of *Self*.”

When a person lives in the world, performing worldly duties, but acts *for and as the self of all creatures*, he may be said to be engaged in ceaseless contemplation. We have an excellent example of King Janaka, who was a *Rajarshi* or an adept-king. He set an example of what it is to live *in* the world but not be *of* the world, by being inwardly detached, though surrounded by all the wealth and luxury.

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT BREAD AND WINE

[The following story (abridged version) by the well-known Lebanese writer, Mikhail Naimy, is from his book *Till We Meet*.]

ONE DAY there came to me a dashing young man, handsome of features, soft of speech, and, on whole, most pleasant to look at. His age I estimated to be about thirty five. The preliminary greetings and self-introduction hardly over, he took a seat opposite me and straightaway announced the purpose of his visit in this simple and direct fashion: “I heard that you are a believer in God; and I came to you that I may acquire your faith.” Astounded at his strange request and earnest manner in which it was put forward, I said to the man rather evasively: “But the earth is full of believers. What made you choose me of all the rest?”

“I was so inspired,” replied he quickly. “Is not your God different from the gods of men, and your faith from their faiths?”

“I do believe in God; in that you are right. But that my God is different from the gods of others, and my faith from their faiths, that I can neither affirm nor deny; for I have not tested all men’s gods and faiths.”

“If you have not, I have,” retorted the young man emphatically. “I have tested them all, and found none worthy of my faith. Therefore came I to you. Give me your God and faith.”

“Since you have tested all men’s gods and faiths, you must be erudite and an exceptional man of learning.” To which he replied somewhat wearily and with much disgust: “I have studied much and learned much. I have devoured volumes upon volumes as witness my degrees of Ph.D., and LL.D. from some of the world-famous universities. But all my studies and my learning did not lead me to a god in whom I may place my trust. When was much learning a sure way to God? I wish I had never learned anything.”

“How strange,” said I, “that you should have spent so many

years of your life in so many schools, yet not one school was able to lead you to the axis on which your life should turn, and is actually turning!”

“They led me to many axes save the one of which you speak, and which is the one I seek. That is why I came to you. I have an imbecile brother who is fifteen years my senior and who owns a great wooden trunk which he keeps in a dark corner of the basement of our house and guards with great care. Several times each day he descends into the basement, lights a lantern, dusts the trunk lovingly and meticulously, opens it carefully, spreads its contents on the floor all about, and sits for hours examining and admiring every piece; then he arranges all back in the trunk, locks it and walks out. The key he carries on a silken thread around his neck.

“My brother takes exceeding care to have no one touch his trunk or know anything about its contents. One day I surprised him in the basement just as he had emptied the trunk. The moment he became aware of my presence he fell into a fit of rage, blew the light out, and began shouting at me at the top of his voice, ‘Get out! Out with you, devil!’ Only after long entreaties was I able to convince him that I meant no ill to him or to his trunk. His rage subsided, and he consented to relight the lantern and allow me a glimpse of his trunk and its treasures.

“And what do you suppose I saw? I saw among numberless other things a horseshoe, a rusty lock without a key, a wooden sabot, a piece of a rotten rope, a handful of small seashells, the skeleton of an umbrella, a number of spools with no thread on them, and a host of other useless things of a similar nature.

“To my question as to what need he had of all those trinkets my brother replied very confidently and very philosophically, ‘As long as one lives on this earth, so long shall one be in need of everything of the earth. Who knows but that I may fall on circumstances when one, or all of these things, may prove to me life-savers?’

“Do you know brother, what you actually need in addition to all that? You need a pitcher of wine and a loaf of bread. Should

there be drought and famine in the land some day, the bread and wine will save your life. Whereas these things you have gathered can neither feed your hunger nor quench your thirst.” My visitor paused and dropped his eyes to the floor in front of him. Presently he broke the silence and said:

“My head and my brother’s trunk are alike in all respects except in shape and bulk. For in my head, as in my brother’s trunk, are many things which have nothing in common save their uselessness. There is not among them the sustaining bread and the life-giving wine. *The staff of life is missing.* That is why I am here. I have come to ask you for the staff of life.” Evading the direct answer, I said to the man, “Whom do you blame for the state in which you find yourself—me or men in general or your own self?”

“I was deceived by the Great Harlot and her Gaudy Daughter. This Civilization, sir—that is the Great Harlot. The School, my dear sir, is the Great Harlot’s Gaudy Daughter, which is presented to us as the fountainhead of pure knowledge, wisdom and freedom. I was one of the millions lured by its seductive charms. I surrendered to it with my whole heart, mind and body. I came out with my head stuffed with all manner of strange, incongruous things, precisely as my brother’s trunk is stuffed. There is in this head of mine a surprising conglomeration of arts, philosophies, histories, sciences and what-not, with plenty of conceit, arrogance and self-assertion to boot; but there is not in it an iota of true wisdom, knowledge, and freedom; there is not a drop of vivifying wine, or a crumb of sustaining bread. There is not in my head that magic fluid which is capable of cementing all that junk into something whole, living, luminous, useful, beautiful, lasting, able to defy the vicissitudes of time and space, and to serve me as a rock in the midst of the mad waves of day-to-day existence. In other words, there is not in my head a goal—a God worthy of my faith. Therefore have I come to you to demand what is my right; Give me your God and your faith.”

“A strange demand, indeed,” said I. “Do you think my God is a

stick of chewing gum in my pocket, and my faith a piece of chocolate candy that I may so easily *give* them to you? He jumped to his feet and said with much bitterness and anger: “I am not an imbecile. I know what I am asking. There is in me a crying hunger for bread you live by, and a parching thirst for the wine you drink. Beware of disappointing me!

This outburst on his part, so violent and so sincere, put me in a most unpleasant dilemma. No longer did I know what to say to the man, and how to convince him that God was not a substance to be given or taken, but a presence to be felt in one’s whole being; that faith is the soft glow emanating from that presence and filling the soul with an overflow of peace and serenity. Fortunately for me the man himself delivered me of the dilemma when, quite unexpectedly and without waiting to have an answer from me, he pointed to his head and said:

“I am well aware of the fact that this trunk has no room now for your loaf of bread and pitcher of wine; it must first be emptied of all the trash wherewith it is now cluttered. One thing, however, you can do for me immediately: stay the Harlot’s magic from me that I may have the time to empty my trunk of all evil things which fill it to the brim.”

“That,” said I with much relief, “I shall do with the help of God. But to empty your head of evil things which now stuff it to the brim—that no one can do for you but your own self. When you have relieved your ‘trunk’ of its useless contents, come back to me, and you shall find my loaf and my pitcher awaiting your pleasure.”

With an infinitely tender, grateful and confident smile he bade me goodbye, saying: “I shall be back soon, *Inshallah*, God willing.” In equal tenderness I repeated his word *Inshallah*. But the sweet fellow has not yet come back.

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The *Bhagavad-Gita*, the *Voice of the Silence* and the *Upanishads*

speak of *Agnana* (ignorance), *Gnana* (knowledge) and *Vignana* (wisdom). Normally, the term “Knowledge” is used to denote an all-round acquaintance with religions, philosophies, arts, sciences and histories, together with that which our senses give us in regard to the external material world. It is designated as “head-learning” or *Apara-vidya*. It is mere intellectual knowledge or blinkered thinking. It does not make an individual more kind or loving but oftentimes produces misplaced pride. Science feels that nothing can be known about the constituents and properties of a plant or stone without the mechanical and chemical processes. Nor can we understand the thoughts and feelings of another until they are expressed in words. But there is higher form of knowledge, called intuitive knowledge, which is not dependent on reasoning faculty, though it will never contradict reason. It is Direct Perception. Intuition is the faculty of the soul. *Vignana* is Wisdom which leads to right discrimination of good from evil. It is the knowledge of essential nature of things. *Vignana* is the knowledge of the inherent qualities of the subject or object. Acquirement of Wisdom needs devotion and development of qualities like love, goodness and altruism.

Mr. Judge advises that someone who wants to apprehend truth must be able to lay aside his preconceptions. If he holds on to his preconceptions, he can never really acquire a new idea or a new point of view. “In the East they catch monkeys by putting nuts in the bottom of a narrow-necked jar; the monkeys see the nuts at the bottom and at once put their arms and hands in to grab a fistful of the nuts; they do not know enough to let go the nuts and be free and so are caught. We are much like the monkeys in that we want to rise and be free, but we will not let go the ‘nut-ideas’ that we hold. If we only would, we should rise by our own nature. We ought to be wiser than the monkeys; to be our *self* and let *things* go,” writes Mr. Crosbie.

## STUDIES IN THE GITA THE FOES OF THE SOUL—I

[Adapted from Lectures on the *Bhagavad-Gita* delivered at  
One West Sixty Seventh Street, New York City, 1927-28.]

THE *Bhagavad-gita* is simply one short episode in the great epic, the *Mahabharata*. *Gita* occupies the place it should occupy in that greater story. When the poem opens, we find ourselves on the field of battle; the two armies are facing each other and preparing for the battle. The plain is called Kurukshetra. We know that war is certain, that all those assembled there are going to start the fight, and the carnage will be heavy. Though everything is ready, Arjuna, the greatest of all assembled warriors becomes very despondent. He is so dejected and confused that he decides he cannot continue and take part in the fight. This great battle between the two parties of the Pandus and the Kurus—two branches of one and the same family—belongs to the historical evidence. We fail to understand that it is an actual fact even in ordinary life.

In an actual battle, it is possible for a general of the army—who may have himself prepared the men to fight for his country—to be aware of the havoc that is going to take place; and yet become despondent when faced with the actual event. That is the case with Arjuna, as also, with every student aspiring to live the higher life. Here we see how an event in the world of phenomena can have its spiritual counterpart in the inner realm. The student of occultism always looks at all the events and happenings of the outside world as indicators of that which is taking place in the spiritual world and within his own nature. If there is war in the outside world—confusion, trouble and despondency—it is because within ourselves we have failed as yet to establish peace and harmony.

In all periods of the history of mankind, there have been actual wars between nation and nation, or race and race, or between two tribes of the same nation, as in the *Gita*. If such wars take place, it is because there is a war going on within man himself, between his

higher and lower natures. There is a continual struggle between these two natures of man. Vyasa, the recorder of the teachings of Krishna, in this great poem, the *Bhagavad-Gita*, built around the actual historical fact of the battle of Kurukshetra, this wonderful philosophical discourse. He only used historical event to represent a very significant and deep spiritual experience. The poem opens with the word *Dharmakshetra*, which means the field of duty, which is also *Kurukshetra* or the field of the Kurus.

Why is it that there is a struggle between the two aspects of our own nature? Evolution takes place in the human kingdom through the power of choice and free-will. Man constantly finds opposition from the outside world and from his own inner nature. He receives all the varied messages and impressions from the outside world. What comes to him through his senses and understanding influences his own actions and choices. He has to exercise freewill, which is his inheritance as man, as a human being.

We may classify a human being on the ladder of evolution based on his response to “duty.” In the first stage, he is like an *irresponsible child*, who is compelled by his elders, parents and teachers, to perform certain duties. He shirks his duty and would perform it only because *nature compels him to do so*, and not because he had the desire to do his own duty. In the *second stage*, the person decides to do his duty but finds it irksome. This is because he does not realize that his own pleasure should be absolutely harmonious with his own duty, and that he should find his joyful satisfaction in the performance of duty. He experiences an inner conflict between the performance of his duty and the desire to do other things that are not his duty, and which are opposed to the discipline he is trying to follow. This second stage may be termed the path of duty because the person is trying to follow what is known to him as his duty.

The third stage is an intermediary stage between the path of duty and the path of sacrifice or *Yajna*. In this intermediary stage, man is willing to perform his duty, but at times does not know what his duties are. He finds pleasure and joy in this stage in the

performance of his own duty, which he has resolved to perform, but begins to realize that he needs more knowledge to fully understand what his *dharma* is, and therefore, begins to seek for higher knowledge. But all the time he continues to use his past experiences and knowledge to guide his own actions, and that enables him, slowly but surely, to hear the “Voice of the God” within, so that he begins to cross over into the *fourth* stage. In the fourth stage the man can, at all times and under all circumstances, consult his own Higher Self—the Krishna within—and solve all his problems. He performs his duty with complete understanding and knowledge. As a result, he performs his duty as a sacrifice, a sacrifice offered on the altar of the Supreme Self, of Krishna, of the Universal Spirit.

The first two stages of evolution apply to people who know not yet of the Higher Self. In the third and fourth stages, the person enters into the condition of chelaship, wherein he can no longer be irresponsible. A chela is that learner who has decided to take his evolution into his own hands, and to find Krishna within himself. Arjuna is such a chela. Arjuna really belongs to the fourth stage or even higher, because he is in constant communication with his Higher Self or Krishna. Krishna is the charioteer, driving the chariot for Arjuna. Arjuna can turn and ask the advice of Krishna at every difficult and confusing experience. Some of us are aware of the presence of the Higher Self, but have not yet gained the power to call upon that Higher Self—every single minute in the day, and for every single occasion. When a man comes to occupy the position of Arjuna, he makes that Higher Self the living power in his own life. In other words, his whole life is controlled in terms of the demands of the Higher Self or Higher Knowledge. Man, then, is all the time trying to hear the inner voice, the “still small voice” of God, and trying to guide his whole life and activities in terms of the commands and dictates of that voice. This dialogue has been called the dialogue between the teacher and his pupil, Guru and his Chela, also a dialogue between the Higher and the Lower or

personal self.

At that stage of evolution, man makes no distinction between his Higher Self and the Teacher—the Perfected Man. He has realized that Eternal Knowledge belongs to his Higher Self, and that the Teacher, in his turn embodies that Eternal Knowledge. We see then how in the context of Chelaship, and in the teachings of Theosophy, given by H.P.B., this whole poem conveys a vital teaching, full of meaning, of deep significance.

We want to examine then what are the foes that must be conquered that his Higher Self, Krishna, is asking Arjuna to kill out in the battlefield. Arjuna has been growing as a man grows through all the fights and struggles against weaknesses, blemishes, the defects of his own personality. Arjuna has now built for himself a very pure and noble human nature, a very virtuous centre of individuality, or “I am I” consciousness. He is now asked by Krishna, the Charioteer, to kill out, to destroy with his own hands, that which cost him so much and took him such a long time to build for himself. We must realize that the “foes of the Soul” for Arjuna are not the same foes that men in the ordinary world have to fight. Arjuna is not called upon to fight merely bad and wicked things, but even those things which *appear* good and virtuous to our human and personal nature, as these impose limitations for a higher step in the ladder of evolution, which requires us to become impersonal and universal. The foes that Arjuna has to fight manifest themselves as *outer* conventions, as well as blemishes in his *inner* disposition.

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Editor’s Note: We are all Arjunas, because all of us who aspire for higher life are souls struggling towards the light. We start our spiritual journey with our ordinary self with its various desires and interests and discover with pain that morality often requires giving up some of our desires that we consider legitimate. We experience an inner conflict. “Living the higher life” means waging a war not

only against our *vices*, but also against our habits, beliefs, pet theories and our likes and dislikes. When we resolve to change even one fond habit, there is an opposition on the inner planes from our own tendencies. Our body cells are made up of very tiny units of life-energy, called elementals. Many such elementals form one cell. All our thoughts and feelings are impressed upon these elementals. All our habits leave a deep impress upon these elementals because we have been doing it for many years and many lives. Such elementals may be compared to a group of workers, who are trained to work in certain way and obey a given set of commands. If the new superior asks them to work differently, gives a different set of commands, the workers might unite and oppose. Now, it would require great effort on the part of the new superior to efface their old habits as also the memory of old commands. Breaking a habit amounts to washing the concerned elementals clean of their previous impressions, and giving them reverse kind of impressions.

In an ordinary person, the good and bad tendencies exist as complex collective forces, but when one decides to achieve some spiritual goal, these tendencies separate out into good and bad forces—into *Kaurava* and *Pandava* armies. Whenever one aspires towards a higher life, the good tendencies flourish, but it is a death sentence for the bad tendencies. At a higher level, these separated tendencies act as an *abyss*, preventing the warrior from retracing his steps. Shri Krishna tells Arjuna that although *he* may not fight, his enemies will now fight, *as they have been aroused*. In other words, having made the choice and undertaken spiritual discipline, it is not possible to go back to living the irresponsible life. As *Light on the Path* suggests, this is as impossible as that a man should become a child again.

(To be concluded)

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## SANKARACHARYA'S LIFE AND TEACHINGS

### II

SANKARACHARYA was asked a question on the *science of love*, in a debate with Saraswati. But Sankara being a celibate all his life could not answer it at once. He asked for one month's time, during which he journeyed on to find an answer. On the way he came across the corpse of a King named Amaraka lying at the foot of the tree surrounded by mourners. Taking advantage of this opportunity Sankara entrusted his own body to the charge of his disciples and caused his soul to enter the corpse of the king. There was a sort of resuscitation of the king who was taken back to the kingdom. Thus, using the body of King Amaraka, Sankara practically learnt all that pertained to science and art of love, and fitted himself to answer the query of Saraswati. Meanwhile, the cunning Brahmins suspected that there might have been transmigration of the soul. To prevent the return of the soul to his own body they ordered all the corpses in the city to be burned, taking care that the King should not come to know about the order. The body of Sankara, though under the faithful protection of his disciples, was found, and thrown on the funeral pyre, which had been prepared. By Yoga-Vidya, Sankara came to know about it and quickly entered his own body, which was surrounded by flames. But his body was covered by incombustible, though invisible, material, and hence was not consumed. H.P.B. comments that the power of the Yogi to quit his own body and enter and animate that of another person, is affirmed by Patanjali and included among the *Siddhis* of Krishna.

*Patanjali's Yoga Aphorisms*, Book III, verse 39, mentions: "The inner self of the ascetic may be transferred to any other body and there have complete control, because he has ceased to be mentally attached to objects of sense [*i.e.*, he has overcome the causes of bondage], and through his acquisition of the knowledge of the manner in and means by which the mind and body are connected." Mr. Judge explains that when the ascetic acquires a knowledge of

the exact process of connecting mind and body, he can connect his mind with any other body, and thus transfer the power to use the organs of the occupied frame in experiencing effects from the operations of the senses.

In the country of the Kamarupas, Sankara encountered and defeated Abhinavgupta, a doctor of the Sakta School. He had worldly wisdom but not the knowledge of philosophy or love of truth, and so when he found that he could not compete with Sankara, he asked his pupils to hide his own works for some time, and he posed as someone who belonged to Sankara's School, but all the while he was plotting to bring about harm to Sankara. Sankara suddenly caught the disease, called Bhagandara (a terrible form of ulcerated sore or fistula), which had been sent upon him by the necromantic spells of Abhinavgupta, who had performed a special sacrifice to accomplish his malicious plot. The greatest physicians attended on Sankara, but in vain. Meanwhile the patient himself behaved stoically or rather vedantically. But at last when the disease could not be cured, he prayed to Mahadeva to send down the *Ashvinikumaras*, who were accordingly sent down disguised as Brahmans. But they pronounced the disease to be beyond their powers of cure as it was caused by the act of another. On this communication the anger of Padmapada, one of the four chief disciples of Sankara, once more came to the relief of Sankara. For, though dissuaded by Sankara himself, he muttered some mystic incantations which transferred the disease to Abhinavgupta himself who died of it.

H.P.B. comments that an important point for the student of occult science is here made and should not be overlooked. The law of physics that action and reaction tend to equilibrate each other holds in the realm of the occult. This has been fully explained in *Isis Unveiled* and other works of the kind. A current of *Akasa* directed by a sorcerer at a given object with an evil intent, must either be propelled by such intensity of will as to break through every obstacle and overpower the resistant will of the selected victim, or

it will rebound against the sender, and afflict him or her in the same way as it was intended for the other to be hurt. So well is this law understood that it has been preserved to us in many popular proverbs, such as the English ones, "curses come home to roost," the "biter's bit," etc. This reversal of maleficent current upon the sender may be greatly facilitated by the friendly interference of another person who knows the secret of controlling the *Akasic* currents—if it is permissible for us to coin a new word that will soon be wanted in the Western parlance. (*The Theosophist*, May 1880)

It is very likely that Sankara had many pupils, but four of them are well known: Padmapada, Suresvara, Totaka (or Trotaka), and Hastamalaka. Sankara continued to travel with his disciples all over the land, all the while composing philosophical treatises and engaging opponents in debate. Sankara is said to have founded four *mathams* (monasteries), at Sringeri (south), and the other three at the centres of pilgrimage, namely, Puri (east), Dvaraka (west), and Badarinath (north), probably following the Buddhist monastery (vihara) system. The four disciples were put in charge of these four *mathams*. Sankara is said to have assigned one of the four Vedas to each of these *mathams*. The *Govardhan matham* at Puri (Orissa) is associated with the Rig-veda, *Sharada Peetham* at Sringeri (Karnataka) with Yajurveda, *Dvaraka pitham* with Sama-veda and *Jyotirmath* at Badrinath with Atharva-veda. Their foundation was one of the most significant factors in the development of his teachings into the leading philosophy of India.

To this day, the heads of these *mathams* are known as Sankaracharyas. "It was a universal custom in the ancient world for the Teacher to assume a name-title occultly indicative of his mission, and those who continued his work adopted it; thus the Teacher's name invariably became a generic appellation of the School he founded....For example, the name-title of one of the greatest of Adepts, Shankar-Acharya, has been used in India these many centuries, by the Schools (*Mathams*) which came into being

under his influence. The official manager-expounder in each of such Schools called himself Shankar-Acharya, in conformity with the practice of the old occult traditions; their duty was to preserve intact and prevent any violation of the teachings of the Adept in their respective schools," writes Shri B. P. Wadia.

Sankara organized the community of *ekdandi* monks into the *sampradaya* (order) of *dasanami sannyasis*, which are affiliated with four *mathams*. *Ekdandi* monks, as the name suggests, carry a staff consisting of a single wooden stick, symbolizing the essential identity of *Brahman* and *Atman*. *Dasa-nami* means ten names, and the order is so called because the *sannyasis* of this order adopt one of the ten suffixes, namely, Aranya, Ashrama, Bharati, Giri, Parvata, Puri, Sarasvati, Sagara, Tirtha and Vana. These ten names are supposed to be distributed among the four *mathas*.

The issuing of Oriental papers was started in Mr. Judge's time, under the authority and direction of the American Section of the Theosophical Society. The article on Sankaracharya in the *Oriental Department Paper* for March 1894, mentions that Sankaracharya set himself to the task of preserving true knowledge, especially in India, within the Brahmin order, "where the advantages of heredity, of ages of high ideals and rigid discipline could best secure the purity of light; could best supply a body of men, fitted by character and training to master the high knowledge, to sustain the moral effort that made the glory of India's Golden Age."

We may understand the heredity within Brahmin order on the basis of Karma and Re-birth. An Ego can choose to take birth in a family and surroundings that are most in harmony with its karmic tendencies. Knowing this, the ancients tried to develop very pure family lines such that over many centuries that family line would have the power to repel the evil or mediocre Egos which did not come up to the standard of that family stream. There were pure family lines of true Brahmins, with genuine love for knowledge, chaste life, and high moral values. They aspired to produce saviours and regenerators of humanity.

The article on Sankaracharya in the *Oriental Department Paper* for March 1894, mentions that the fitting of the Brahmin order to carry the torch of wisdom was undertaken by Sankara in three ways. First, by commenting on the Great *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavad-Gita*. Second, by writing a series of preparatory works, of catechisms and manuals, he made it easier for the aspirants to take first steps in the path of wisdom. Thirdly, by a system of reform and discipline within the Brahmin order, so that sound basis was provided for the practices, to go hand in hand with pure precepts.

H.P.B. mentions in the *Secret Doctrine* (I, 271-72) that Sankaracharya founded Smartava Brahmin sect. Though Brahmins are generally known for their exclusiveness and pride of learning, she writes that there is no sect more exclusive than is the Smartava; they are known to maintain absolute silence and secrecy as regards the knowledge of Occult sciences and the esoteric doctrine. They are extremely learned and proud. H.P.B. writes that Sri Sankaracharya, the greatest Initiate living in the historical ages, wrote many a *Bhashyas* or commentaries on the *Upanishads*. However, his original treatises are preserved in his *mathams*, and what is available exoterically in the world, will remain a dead letter to most of the Hindus, except Smartava Brahmins. This is almost the only sect to produce students who have preserved sufficient knowledge to comprehend the dead letter of the *Bhashyas*.

The *Upanishads* reveal the mystic and secret meaning of the Vedas. H.P.B. mentions that till Buddha came on the scene, the Vedas and the Brahmanas remained in the exclusive possession of temple Brahmins, and only the Brahmins (or people of sacred caste) studied them. But then came Buddha and he studied the Brahminical Wisdom in the *Upanishads* and found that it was in no way different from the teachings of the Masters in the Himalayas. He decided that such wisdom should not remain in the exclusive possession of the Brahmins, and so he popularized it, determined to save the world. When the Brahmins saw that their sacred teachings were going to fall into the hands of the lower castes,

they abridged the texts of *Upanishads*, without altering a single word of the text. Originally, the *Upanishads* contained thrice the matter of Vedas and the Brahmanas. We are told that the *Upanishads*, or at least some portions of them, were written *before* the caste system took such degrading and tyrannical form. Almost half of their contents have been eliminated and some have been rewritten and abridged. Prior to this, they were complete and were used for the instruction of the chelas who were preparing for their initiation. The very fact that Great Teachers of higher knowledge and the Brahmins went to the Kshatriyas to become their pupils shows that before the tyranny of the caste system, the *Upanishads* and the Vedas were studied not just by Brahmins but by all. (*S.D.*, I, 270-71)

Some people believe that Sankaracharya tried to demolish the Buddhist religion and philosophy. It is a well-known fact that no prophet-reformer comes to destroy any religion. He comes as a reformer. In the article, "Sankaracharya's Date and Doctrine," Mr. T. Subba Row writes that if Sankaracharya's intention was to attack Buddhism, he would have left something of it in his writing, criticizing Gautama's doctrines and showing defects in his philosophy. In fact, Sankaracharya is called *Prachhana* Buddha or "Buddha in disguise"; perhaps because there is lot of similarity found between Sankracharya's Adwaita Vedanta teaching and the *esoteric* teachings of the Buddha which he taught to his Arhats.

(*To be continued*)

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AFTER climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb. I have taken a moment here to rest, to steal a view of the glorious vista that surrounds me, to look back on the distance I have come. But I can rest only for a moment, for with freedom comes responsibilities, and I dare not linger, for my long walk is not yet ended.

—NELSON MANDELA

## IN SEARCH OF HAPPINESS

A SOMEWHAT intimate contact with life will convince anyone that happiness and sorrow are inseparable. They are a pair; one of several such which the *Bhagavad-Gita* designates as "pairs of opposites." So long as one is caught in the snares of these pairs, they will continue to manifest in alternate succession, throwing the person into oscillations of joy and sorrow, of tears and laughter. When he says that he wants to be happy, he really desires that for himself all sorrows should cease, at least for the remaining years of his life. He wants to arrest the swing of the pendulum at the point where it reaches the zenith of happiness and to fix it there by some process which can counter and neutralize that karmic pull of Law. As long as there are pendulums in one's life that swing under outside stimuli, so long must pain and pleasure, success and failure, fame and ignominy dog his footsteps. Each pair mirrors the life of vibratory existence and one who lives in an atmosphere where such oscillations prevail must continue to be tossed hither and thither, a helpless flotsam on an ocean where calms are but the harbingers of storms. It is by emotion, by unsatiable desire and by thirst for sensation that one violently pushes the pendulum into oscillations which must then run their course.

In the *Bhagavad-Gita* (Chapter III, verse 34) Sri Krishna says that attachments and aversions of the sense are natural and that therefore no one should fall under their sway. He calls these the enemies of man. Attachments to things and persons, which by their nature are perishable, can bring pain and anguish at the moment of parting. But if attachments have the power to bind the person, and swing him now here, now there so that no light comes, aversions too have an equally strong power to shake him from his moorings. For instance, there are many otherwise intelligent and kindly persons who get attracted to works which it is not their duty to perform. This covetousness brings into action the opposite constituent of the pair, namely, abhorrence. Brooding over the

misfortune of not getting a duty to his liking, the person begins to dislike and then abhor his own. The more powerful his aversion, the greater the force that he exerts on the pendulum. Even when the coveted thing is obtained, the oscillations make a mockery of the possession and all too often where happiness was expected, there misery sets in. If, as the *Gita* has it, affection and dislike are fixed in every purpose of the senses, then it needs must follow that my possession pleasing to the senses and therefore conducive to happiness will in time yield to a condition of worry and sadness. Therefore, such experience may become pleasingly painful or painfully pleasant—to put it in a crude manner of speaking. Tears will never be too far away from laughter.

Possessions that corrode and dwindle under the action of time and circumstance are ephemeral and the happiness they can give is ephemeral also. Further, the ephemeral possession that may give intense happiness during a particular state of consciousness may become revolting when a higher state supervenes. No sustained happiness can therefore result either through possessions or lack of them. They are redundant to the Soul and must therefore be used only as avenues to live a soul-life upon earth. If in his blindness the person uses force to gain the object of his desires, or uses occult forces for selfish ends, then the force so expended may have the tendency to arouse the undesirable psychic part of his nature and ultimately erupt in the body, mind, or psychic part of his make-up. The seeds of true happiness and joy are not to be found on the material plane, and if brought from above and sown on earth, lose their intrinsic qualities in the stifling atmosphere.

The archetype of happiness is found in Kama, not as now materialized into a power that gratifies desire, but as originally described in the Vedas. It is the first conscious, all-embracing desire for universal good, a love for all that lives and feels and needs help and kindness. It is the first feeling of infinite tender compassion and mercy that arose in the consciousness of the creative One Force as soon as it came into life. Kama is pre-eminently the divine desire

of creating happiness and love. Where spirit and matter meet and where the electric fire which is the Force that impresses matter with the ideation that resides in Spirit—there are laid the foundations of true happiness. Where the mind loses its hold upon the starry soul within—there the rhythm of evolution is destroyed. Thus, losing his hold on the True, the person tries to snatch his semblance of happiness in the elation that waxes, wanes and dies in acts of indulgence of sense-life. “True happiness can be found only in the bond that connects Entity with non-Entity or *Manas* with pure *Atma-Buddhi*.” From this confluence of the streams of life, happiness descends at each succeeding stage on the descending stairways of life. Where the reasoning mind becomes intoxicated in its love and union with the higher mind, where intellect pays its homage to intuition, there a calmness settles upon the harassed soul and a peace prevails that cannot be shattered even though the storms rage.

In the quest for happiness, many lose sight of the fact that happiness is not an end by itself. It is an effect that follows upon each progressive awakening of the soul. The processes of its fruition cannot be rushed, nor can its bloom be duplicated by dubious means. There have been and there will continue to be those who not seeing beyond their broken lamps have tried to seek happiness by torturing and mutilating their senses and organs and by the development of the tremendous force of the Will.

In the ultimate analysis, it will be found that happiness sprouts and fructifies on the side-lines and borders of the Path which the questing Soul must tread. *Light on the Path* says, “Seek it [the Way] by plunging into the mysterious and glorious depths of your own inmost being....Seek it by study of the laws of being, the laws of nature, the laws of the supernatural; and seek it by making the profound obeisance of the soul to the dim star that burns within. Steadily, as you watch and worship, its light will grow stronger. Then you may know you have found the beginning of the way.”

## 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 meaning of being free from Karma, or becoming Karma-less?

**Answer:** Karma is the law of action and reaction; cause and effect. The law of Karma adjusts every effect to its cause and restores the disturbed equilibrium in the physical world and broken harmony in the moral world. Each action, at the level of thought, word and deed, gets recorded either on the credit or on the debit side of the life's ledger. These Karma come to fruition when an appropriate body and environment is obtained by the soul; until then they remain stored up as karmic merits or debts. The first step is to learn to encourage only wholesome thoughts, feelings and actions.

We are judged even for our *thoughts*. Jesus said that he, who looks at a woman to lust after her, has already committed adultery in his mind. Our unwholesome or evil thoughts of revenge, hatred, jealousy, etc., do not vanish but get impressed on the astral light, and the same could be attracted by another person having similar thoughts, and give him an added impulse in that direction. Theosophy teaches that selfish thoughts of millions of men and women get impressed on the "lives" of the earth, till a point of explosion is reached, expressing itself in natural calamities, such as, earthquakes, tidal waves, tornadoes, etc.

We fulfil our karmic debts when we *accept* the adverse or painful circumstances without grumbling or complaining. There is total acceptance that "my own has come back to me." With such an attitude, we will not resort to any prayers or propitiatory ceremonies, or cause to deviate the course of the Law and dodge

the karmic consequences. As Mr. Judge suggests, "The indissoluble unity of the race demands that we should consider every man's troubles as partly due to ourselves, because we have been always units in the race and helped to make the conditions which cause suffering." When we refrain from helping others we create a karmic debt through the act of omission.

Family, Racial and National Karma are collective Karma, which influence every unit constituting the whole through the Law of distribution. We bear certain consequences by virtue of being part of the whole. We must always remember that we are indebted to many people, even for our morning cup of tea and bread. Since there are plumbers, electricians and servants, we save time and energy. We must contribute in our turn by utilizing the time thus saved for the good of others. Instead of complaining against crime, pollution, and corruption in the country we must do our best to eradicate them.

In fact, Manu in his ordinances enjoins five sacrifices (*Yajnas*) which, he says, are incumbent on every man to perform every day in order to acquit himself of the debt he owes to his fellow-beings. They are, sacrifice to the supreme (*Brahma yajna*), sacrifice to our progenitors (*Pitri yajna*), sacrifice to the gods (*Deva yajna*), sacrifice to the lower kingdoms of nature (*Bhuta yajna*) and sacrifice to mankind (*Nara yajna*). It is evident that these five sacrifices are comprehensive, covering as they do the whole gamut of beings with which man's being is interwoven.

Even good karma, performed with the expectation of results, binds the actor to the action. Mr. Judge writes, "So the man may in this life perform 'special ceremonies' and conform to texts and doctrine, attaining thereby the reward of heaven, and still have left over a quantity of that 'mysterious power of meditation' unexpended; and what its complexion is he does not know" (*Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita*, p. 66). In other words, by performance of "special ceremonies" and conforming to religious texts and doctrines, a person may have a long stay in *Devachan* (*swarga* or

paradise), but he would still have to face “delayed karma” and “unspent affinities.” As a result, when his stock of merit is exhausted he is forced to take birth on earth, to fulfil the unexhausted Karma. Together with this, the unexpended affinities bring him back to birth in company with others.

In any human relationship, when *we* overcome aversion or attachment for a person, but if that person in turn does not overcome his aversion and attachment for us, then irrational and one-sided likes and dislikes develop. It is like the case of Lord Buddha and his cousin Devadatta. Buddha was full of charity towards Devadatta, and yet Devadatta continued to be inimical to him. We have to remember that we can have no attachment for a thing or a person we do not think about. When mind loses interest and stops clinging to the object or the person, with affection or dislike, there will no longer be a karmic link between us and that person or the object.

In a larger sense, so long as we do not learn to act selflessly, renouncing attachment to the results of actions, and renouncing the feeling of *kartabhav* or doership, and consider ourselves merely an instrument through which actions are done, we provide an individual focus, where karmic effects must return. Like a stone thrown into the pond creates ripples which return back to the point of disturbance, so the consequences of our actions will return to us. Even in ordinary activities like sleeping, breathing, speaking, etc., the attitude of a sage is, “the qualities act in the qualities,” or “the senses move among the sense-objects,” but Self within is not the actor. There is the story of a sage who ate food with the *gopis* (shepherdesses) on the river bank, and when the *gopis* said that they wanted to go to the other side of the river, the sage moved his hand over his stomach and said that if he had not eaten any food the river should part and make way for the *gopis*, and the river parted. The *gopis* were surprised, as the sage had eaten food with them. The sage explained that the food was offered to the fires in the stomach, hence, “I have not eaten the food.”

When a person renounces interest in the fruits of actions, as

also the feeling of doership, he is not bound by actions, because then, he does not offer individual focus; he only introduces beneficent causes into collective karma of humanity. He is like a writer who has made a deal that all money that comes to him as royalty must be distributed as charity. He is then not forced to take birth, but voluntarily, complying with the law of cycles, can choose to take birth at appropriate times to help humanity.

**Question:** In the case of accepted *chela* (disciple), who bears greater karmic responsibility, the *chela* himself/herself or the Guru?

**Answer:** Who is an accepted *chela*? In *Letters That Have Helped Me*, Mr. Judge explains that there are many kinds of *chelas*. There are lay *chelas*, accepted *chelas* and also *chelas* on probation. H.P.B. defines a lay *chela* as man of the world who affirms his desire to become wise in spiritual things. In a sense, every sincere and devoted student of Theosophy is on his way to becoming a disciple. In case of probationary *chelas* there is a period of at least seven years of trials. The aspirant is tried and tested in his response to events of ordinary life. The process of purification is a long process. A disciple has to progress by making moral choices through his own efforts, constantly *turning within* to seek guidance. A probationary *chela* has to work, wait and aspire in silence. In the article, “Chelas and Lay Chelas,” it is indicated that when all the points enumerated in the rules for chelaship have been fulfilled by the *chela*’s “Un-helped Exertions,” and when the *chela* has become a master of his body, senses, faults and pain, is he ready to be taken in hand by one of the Initiates. It is then that he is fit to be instructed by the *guru* in the practical occultism.

In the article, “Practical Occultism,” H.P.B. describes the relation between accepted *chela* and *guru* to be similar to the relation between the god-parents and the child who is to be baptized. The god-parents tacitly take upon themselves all the sins of the newly baptised child, until the day when the child becomes responsible (probably that means till the child reaches the age of seven) knowing good and evil. The Master is said to take upon himself *all* the sins

of the pupil from the moment he begins to teach him and confer upon him or allow the development of powers in the *chela*, which are connected with the occult sciences, whether of omission or commission, *i.e.*, in connection with the powers and knowledge of occultism that is imparted to him by the Master, till the *chela* becomes a Master through initiation, and hence fully responsible. This is the reason why no secrets are given out by the Teachers prematurely, and also, a disciple has to pass through a period of *at least* seven years of probation before he is accepted as a *chela*, during which he is rigorously tried and tested.

However, while the *guru* does take upon himself the consequences of all the sins that pertain to the use or misuse of the occult powers by the accepted *chela*, in all other matters, it is the disciple who has to pay for his sins. The severity of Karmic backlash is greater in case of an accepted disciple. As explained in the article, “Occultism versus Occult Arts,” much is forgiven during the first years of probation, but no sooner is he “accepted” as a *chela*, his personality must disappear, and he has to become a *mere beneficent force in Nature*. He must live for humanity. The Master writes that their *chelas* are helped but when they are *innocent of causes that lead them into trouble*; when such cases are generated by outside influences. Life and struggle for Adeptship would be too easy, had we all scavengers behind us to sweep away the effects we have generated through our own rashness and presumption.

The law of Karma takes into account the person’s state of knowledge or ignorance and his degree of development. The Karmic responsibility is in proportion to his knowledge. The more the knowledge—of right and wrong—the less will be the “mercy” of the law. This might be the principle behind the stories of great karmic backlash for a trifling sin. For instance, Bhishma’s having to lie on the bed of arrows in the *Mahabharata* war, is said to be the consequence of his having killed a chameleon just for sport as a young boy.

## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

On December 16, 2014 a group of militants entered the Army Public School in Peshawar, Pakistan and mercilessly gunned down about 150 students and teachers. The photograph of the six members released by the terrorist outfit carried a banner in the background which read: “There is no god, but One God,” thus giving us the criterion on which to judge their act, writes Maulana Wahiduddin Khan. He points out that according to a verse in *Quran*, killing of an innocent human being is like killing an entire human kind (5:32). In the light of this the terrorists killed the entire humankind 150 times over. There is a very striking verse in *Quran* which carries an important message to the grieving relatives. It says: “Beware of an affliction that will not smite exclusively those among you who have done wrong” (8:25). This is an alarming verse for the relatives of the innocents who were killed. We are reminded of the fact that militancy has been going on in Pakistan for more than 50 years, but people of Pakistan remained indifferent to it because they thought that the militants were targeting others. The Peshawar killings show that in such matters one cannot remain indifferent. If one does not take necessary steps to stop it, one runs the risk of becoming its victim.

Similarly, according to a *Hadith* when God commanded his angels to demolish a town in which people were engaged in evil acts, the angels reported that there was a person in the town who worshipped God daily, and God’s command was to demolish the town along with that person, “as he did not try to stop his people from doing evil deeds” (*al-Mojam al-Awsat*, 7661). Though militancy in Peshawar had been thriving since long, the people there were indifferent because they considered themselves safe. But indifference means indirect involvement, which in God’s eyes is as bad as direct involvement.

The relatives of those killed have two choices. One is to indulge in negative thinking and thereby take the option of psychological

killing after witnessing physical killing. The other option is that the grieving relatives and friends must make every effort to root out militancy, arousing people in that area to abandon violent version of Islam and adopt the peaceful version of Islam. By doing that they would have converted what could have been their minus into a plus, and make the world safer for everyone, writes Maulana Wahiduddin Khan. (*The Speaking Tree, Sunday Times of India*, December 21, 2014)

“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you” encourages us to become actively kind and virtuous. But, if this practice is too hard for an individual, he can make a beginning by following the advice: “Do not do unto others as you would not have done unto you.” What is painful for one is most likely to be painful for another also. The Buddha reminds us, “All men tremble at the rod [of punishment]; to all men life is dear. Putting oneself in the place of another, one should neither slay nor cause to slay.” We have to learn to put ourselves in place of another and *feel* his pain. It would enable us to avoid becoming the cause of another’s pain. “Inaction in a deed of mercy becomes an action in a deadly sin,” teaches the *Voice of the Silence*. We are held responsible for our acts, both of commission and omission.

Since we are all interconnected on the invisible plane, we are continually helping or hindering others in building their character, not only by our actions, but also by our thoughts—for good or evil. “The indissoluble unity of the race demands that we should consider every man’s troubles as partly due to ourselves, because we have been always units in the race and helped to make the conditions which cause suffering” (“*Forum*” *Answers*, p. 55). Besides individual karma there is also collective and distributive Karma. We have contributed in making the humanity as we find it today. Family, Racial and National Karma are collective Karma which influence every unit constituting the whole through the law of distribution. Therefore, we cannot sit back in apathy, but must strive to arouse public opinion and act so as to save humanity from

further degradation.

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Often we experience rising of a memory while we are busy with something which has no relation to that memory, and hence do not have a clue as to what triggered that memory. Probably it was the emotion attached to that magical moment which then repeatedly visits you across time and space. In fact, science has a term for it—*involuntary memory*, when cues from everyday life evoke past recollections without any conscious effort on our part. These recurring magical moments seem to be attached to some emotions. Experts speak of “anchoring emotions,” explaining that many of us can and do anchor emotions onto activities and even simple acts. Our sensory experiences get associated with incidents and trigger memories. Thus, for instance, the smell of a barbecue may remind you of a bad moment you had at a picnic many years ago, where possibly there was barbeque around which you may not have been aware of. Likewise, the sound of a buzzing bee may transport you to a pleasant moment in childhood. When you put your hand into a big bag and take out exact lipstick you needed, it is haptic or touch memory at work.

Scientists mention sensory memories—memories triggered by smell (olfactory), by sound (echoic), sight (visual) memory, and touch or taste (haptic memory)—which bypass the logical part of mind, as they are connected with seat of instinct and memory, which is primitive part of the brain. A study at National Institute of Neuroscience in Turin, Italy, reveals that the same part of the brain that is responsible for processing our senses is also involved in storing emotional memories. This seems to be matter of subconscious associations, which could be used for creating voluntary connect. For instance, if a person is in the habit of rubbing his fingertips on the forehead while experiencing happy emotions, then in future he can recall these happy emotions by simply repeating the action of rubbing his fingertips on the forehead. One

can use this technique when one is feeling low. Thus, by focusing on the actions and sensory experiences which evoke happy memories and avoiding the actions associated with painful memories the process of healing can be hastened. “Thus, by turning involuntary memory into a process of voluntary, deliberate recall of happy memories, one can walk around with a bagful of happiness,” writes Vinita Dawra Nangia. (*Times Life, Sunday Times of India*, December 21, 2014)

There are three types of memory—*Remembrance, Recollection* and *Reminiscence*. When we are able to remember without any external aid, it is *remembrance*. It is spontaneous remembering of the past impressions or ideas, with little or no effort. But when we recall because something from the outside suggests itself to us, it is called *recollection*. For instance, the smell of a certain perfume may remind us of a friend, or we may be reminded of our trip to Switzerland on seeing a picture of snowy mountains, etc. In recollection, we can *collect back* from one point all the other points connected with it. Often on waking up the dream seems to slip away, as it is not brought into waking consciousness. However, it is registered in the appropriate nerve centre or cell of the brain. It “hangs fire,” till some event or sensation gives the needed impulse, and we recall the dream.

Mr. Judge explains that instinct is *recollection*, divisible into physical and mental memory. In the case of a person who might have burnt himself in a particular life, his physical and mental memory is so deeply impressed by that experience that in the next life he will instinctively stay away from fire; and we call this instinctive fear of fire. In the same way the *Kama* principle can be given such strong impressions that in coming lives we have instinctive likes and dislikes.

We are also told that every organ and cell in the body is a *seat* of memory. Each cell bears a long record of impressions connected with its parent organ, and each cell has a memory and a consciousness of its kind, writes H.P.B. In fact, Our body is a thing

of habit, which mechanically repeats the impulse given to it and brings back the temptation. You put ice-cream on the tongue and the mind says, “I like it and I want more of it.” Such repeated thoughts or impulses give rise to temptation to eat ice-cream as soon as we see it. The mouth waters and the hand reaches out to take a second helping. The same is true of repeated impression of anger, hatred, dislike, fear, etc, leading, for instance, to automatic angry or violent reaction to insult.

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How does one differentiate between fake Babas and true gurus? Today, there are several self-proclaimed “Babas” and “saints” who wear saffron robes, keep long beard and claim to cure diseases, and are able to draw crowds, which the gullible take to be the yardstick to gauge their Spiritual Quotient. Vulnerable devotees lavish praise, power and wealth on these professed Babas. Who is a guru and what does one need him for?

The Vedas mention some of the traits of a true guru. A guru exudes radiance and has a body that is strong and free from disease. Through the purity of his thoughts and speech, he can change the environment, and by his gaze alone he can cure diseases. A true guru is in a state of *Vairagya* or detachment from the pleasure of the physical world. He may choose to live the life of luxury but he is not attached to it. He has complete control over the elements and the five senses. The Vedas clearly state that a guru speaks the truth (*satya*); does not steal from you or your country (*asteya*); he does not amass assets or political power (*aparigraha*); he practises non-violence (*ahimsa*) and he is a celibate (*brahmachari*). A guru may earn his living but does not sell knowledge. The function of a guru is not to cure diseases or remove physical problems, but to show you what lies beyond the visible and the manifested. “A Baba will tie you in knots; a guru will release you from them,” writes Yogi Ashwini. (*The Times of India*, December 19, 2014)

Today, our life has become complicated and troublesome. Hence,

we find an increasing tendency in people to look *outside* for support. Any person who promises to provide immediate solution to one's problem is accepted as a "saviour." It is this tendency which is at the base of new age "guru-cult." We get carried away by externalities like charm, charisma and magnetism. An enlightened soul is devoid of personality. The most important tool on the spiritual path is cultivation of intuition that would enable us to judge the quality of a person's soul. The real mark of an enlightened soul is freedom from desire. A true guru makes one self-dependent by helping to awaken the inner guru, the powerful guide within. The best policy is to go from the teachings to the teacher. A Master of Wisdom says that if you want to know us, know our philosophy, and if you want to serve us, serve our humanity. A true philosophy must be impersonal, universal in its application and must be true at all times. It must enhance the feelings of goodwill and brotherhood. Similarly a true teacher always presents the truth in the spirit, "Thus have I heard," and leaves it open to be accepted or rejected.

Beyond the physical and psychic worlds is the spiritual world, and there only the Guru of soul-life awaits the aspiring Chela. H.P.B. describes the "true Guru," thus: "...the real Guru is always an Adept in the Occult Science. A man of profound knowledge, exoteric and esoteric, especially the latter; and one who has brought his carnal nature under subjection of the WILL; who has developed in himself both the power (*Siddhi*) to control the forces of nature, and the capacity to probe her secrets by the help of the formerly latent but now active powers of his being—this is the real Guru." (*Raja-Yoga or Occultism*, p. 1)

When we are advised not to go searching for a Guru, it refers to the guru in this highest sense. It is said, "When the pupil is ready the Master will appear." One needs to have reached a certain level of inner development to be noticed by the Guru. Of what use would Professor Clerk Maxwell or Einstein be, teaching a class of little boys their multiplication table? asks H.P.B.