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THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

A Magazine Devoted to
The Living of the Higher Life

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सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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THE MEANING OF BEING AN ASSOCIATE

AN ASSOCIATE of the United Lodge of Theosophists (U.L.T.) is someone who has signed the "Associate card," but more than that he is someone who is *closely* connected with the U.L.T. What is U.L.T.? Mr. Crosbie, the founder of the U.L.T., says, "U.L.T. is a name given to certain principles and ideas." These principles and ideas are enshrined in the Declaration of the U.L.T., which reflects the spirit of true theosophical work.

We may ask, why should anyone want to sign the associate card? Is it essential? Does it confer any special benefit to someone who signs it? Regular students of Theosophy are well aware that U.L.T. meetings are open to all. Theosophical literature is accessible to all inquirers. Nothing is demanded of anyone. No one is asked to relinquish his beliefs or make any payment for attending U.L.T. meetings or for participating in its activities. Yet, after attending a few meetings and familiarizing oneself with the teachings of Theosophy and the work carried on by its devoted students, if someone feels that here is a philosophy which *explains*, then it is but natural that he may want to associate himself, *closely*, with the work. He may feel moved from within to become, in some way, part of the great movement and take active part in the study and promulgation of Theosophy, i.e., he may wish to become an associate of U.L.T.

Becoming an associate is the most solemn and a sacred step in

one's life. It is not to be done casually. It is not like becoming a member of some club or a social circle. When one signs the "Associate Card" one becomes a companion of the Masters. These Masters are the custodians of the knowledge, but they need companions in this world to rediscover and promulgate it. To become an associate is to want to study the teachings of Theosophy, apply it in one's life and give it out to others who are desperately in need of the right philosophy. By signing the card, you offer yourself as a candidate to work in that army of unknown soldiers who live to benefit mankind. Such should be the spirit. And the clause to which one affixes one's signature reads thus:

Being in sympathy with the purposes of this Lodge as set forth in its "Declaration," I hereby record my desire to be enrolled as an Associate, it being understood that such association calls for no obligation on my part other than that which I, myself, determine.

Thus, an associate is bound only to the principles and purpose of U.L.T., and to nothing else. It is for the individual to decide to what extent he feels "obliged" and grateful, for the life-giving philosophy of Theosophy. One of the many meanings of obligation is the "debt of gratitude." The debt that an associate wants to pay for what he has received from Theosophy. Those who are touched give all they have—their entire life is devoted to the work of U.L.T. It is for each one to decide the real purpose of joining the Lodge. Some are attracted to the philosophy, which is the philosophy of rational explanation of things, and which throws practical light on most profound subjects. Others want to acquire powers. Some are attracted to metaphysics and others seek personal growth and development. Some are just happy to join and then, as Mr. Judge says, wait like young birds for food to be put into their mouths, they would not exert. H.P.B. calls them nominal Theosophists or *drones*, who prefer to live on labour of others. Their selfish desire for personal progress acts like an obstacle between themselves and what they wish to

know.

It is quite natural to admire and look up to someone who explains Theosophy well, and to want to emulate the one who is a living example of a true Theosophist. But Mr. Crosbie's sage advice is:

It is not the best thing to rely upon any *living person*, I mean to the extent of idealizing him; for if such an one should be swept into seeming darkness for a time, its effect would not be good and might dishearten. (*The Friendly Philosopher*, p. 6)

The reason being, no one is Theosophy, and the best are but transmitters. Mr. Crosbie says that the strength shown by any worker is not that of the personality, which has none of itself, it lies in the words, the ideas, and the conviction of the truth held by the inner man. His loyalty is not to any individual or any centre but to the *founders of the Theosophical Movement and their message*. Sadly, the newcomers do not even know who the founders of the movement are and what the source of the message is. It is essential for other students to explain to the newcomer the true position of H. P. Blavatsky and William Q. Judge, and the Masters who are behind the movement. It may be a good idea for the student to read from various Theosophical books, such as, *The Ocean of Theosophy*, *Echoes From the Orient*, *The Heart Doctrine*, etc., and get a better understanding of the nature of the Masters and how they help humanity. This is important, because students tend to think that if the Masters have all the knowledge and powers, and if they are behind the movement, the Masters would be there to help them and protect them against all evils. But Masters are not some sort of guardian angels, who are always at hand, ready to correct our mistakes or act like personal bodyguards to protect us against harm or injury. They work for the humanity. If the Masters are always there to correct us, to guide us, to protect us—when will we grow up? Where is any merit? We must remember that the Masters cannot be substitutes for personal god. They cannot and will not offer help

in a specific manner that we feel we have deserved, simply because we work for Theosophy. Help is all the time there, but not the kind *we think* we need. All sincere students are surrounded by an invisible escort, says Mr. Crosbie.

It is essential for an associate to grasp the fundamental teachings of Theosophy, otherwise, how is he going to help others? Unity, Brotherhood, Karma and Reincarnation are most essential for understanding life and its problems and solutions. Our grounding of fundamentals should be so strong that we are able to make its application to any and every situation of life.

U.L.T. is not an *organization*. It is a living *organism*. No external laws, bye-laws, officers or authority can provide *true basis for union*. It comes from following the same teachings and working for common aim, i.e., to help humanity. All who study Theosophy pure and simple and who help in its promulgation are working along the original lines. When H.P.B. died, W.Q.J. declared that there cannot be any successor to H.P.B. Mr. Crosbie who had witnessed that people are led astray by personalities, came up with a unique idea of uniting all students on the unshakable philosophical basis which cannot be denied. U.L.T. does not depend upon this or that particular student, however prominent. Its professed mission is *to spread-broadcast the teachings of Theosophy as recorded in the writings of H. P.B. and W. Q. Judge*. It keeps alive in print their writings in its pure form. It believes that all that could be given out and all that was necessary for our age has already been given out by them and that it is our mission to draw attention to the teachings and not to ourselves or our opinions. Therefore, the work of U.L.T. is conducted in an impersonal manner. Its magazines are conducted anonymously. Those who are looking for authority, looking for a set of rules and methods are bound to be disappointed, forgetting that if it was possible, then Masters would have given it to us as a capsule to be gulped down with waters of blind faith! It is important for every associate to remember this and help in the mission of U.L.T. Every student is encouraged to efface his personality and humbly

pass on the teachings, saying, "Thus have I heard." Mr Crosbie's simple advice is:

All that any of us can give is Theosophy. We did not invent it. It was given to us; we stand in line and pass it along, as people used to do at fires in passing the buckets of water. People are grateful to the one who passes the "water of life" along to them, but the "passer" knows where gratitude belongs, and says: "don't thank me; thank Theosophy—as I do. It enables me to help others; it will also enable you." (*The Friendly Philosopher*, p. 381)

H.P.B., writing to Fourth American Convention, says: "In your hands, brothers, is placed in trust the welfare of the coming century; and great as is the trust, so great is also the responsibility." Unfortunately, people do not make a distinction between Theosophy and its well-meaning but still imperfect and struggling students. They forget that same sinning human nature is to be found within U.L.T. as out of it. Mere entry into U.L.T. does not guarantee overnight transformation of the sinning person into a saint. It is a line of life's meditation. He should hold out the teachings whenever he sees the opportunity and work through and upon himself to become "brand ambassador" of Theosophy. Brands like IIT, JIM and Oxford at once bring certain high image and respect in our minds. Without realizing it, associates of U.L.T. are its brand ambassadors, for good or bad. People are bound to judge Theosophy by how we live our life. It is not oratory or the knowledge of subtle metaphysics of Theosophy, but the practical application of the ethics that naturally draws people to Theosophy. Failure is not that of Theosophy but of its adherents who are unable to live up to its high standards.

An associate is in agreement with the declared purposes of the Lodge and he desires to fit himself, by *study and otherwise*, to be the better able to help and teach others. If Theosophy is to become a living power in our life then we must be willing to change. Besides regular attendance at all meetings, there must be active participation, through prior work before the meeting, as also by asking questions,

by writing articles, by attending to book table and by attending to basic queries of newcomers. These are small ways of showing our gratefulness. Where there are so few, every helping hand is of value. No work is small or unimportant. If you love Theosophy, there will be automatic rearrangement made in your schedule to ensure regular attendance at the meeting. When one remains absent, one weakens the link, sets up a cycle of absence, which has a tendency to repeat itself, and also, one sets a bad example for the newcomers.

We must strive to become true warriors. The attitude of a true student should be as described by Mr. Judge, who says:

Oh, what a groan Nature gives to see the heavy Karma which man has piled upon himself and all the creatures of the three worlds! That deep sigh pierces through my heart. How can the load be lifted? Am I to stand for myself, while the few strong hands of Blessed Masters and Their friends hold back the awful cloud? Such a vow I registered ages ago to help them, and I must. Would to great Karma I could do more! (*Letters That Have Helped Me*)

All of us who have benefited from the labour of love of Mr. Crosbie must realize that under karma much is required of those to whom much has been given in opportunity and knowledge. There has to be a burning desire to reach out Theosophy to as many people as possible. Mr. Crosbie expresses it thus: "This is the time when one wishes to be like Brahma with 'eyes, heads, mouths and ears in every direction.' There is something that every student can do. Says H.P.B.: "No fellow has a right to remain idle, on the excuse that he knows too little to teach. For he may always be sure that he will find others who know still less than himself. And also it is not until a man begins to try to teach others, that he discovers his own ignorance and tries to remove it" (*The Key to Theosophy*, pp. 249-50). Work for Theosophy forms an entrance to inner life, and we have to strive to constitute ourselves a *chela*, being sure that "when the materials are ready, the architect will appear."

ON MAGNETISM

I

MAGNETISM is described by H.P.B. as a force in nature giving rise to polarity; to attraction and repulsion. The most obvious feature of mineral magnetism is its polarity. A magnet has North and South poles and around the magnet there exists egg-shaped sphere of influence, called magnetic field. If a piece of iron enters this magnetic field, it gets magnetized by induction, i.e., it gets power to attract other pieces of iron. The end of the iron piece, nearer the North pole of the magnet becomes an induced South pole, while the other end becomes North pole.

However, there exists a sort of universal magnetism. Father Kircher, a mystic monk asserts that there is but one MAGNET in the universe from which proceeds the magnetization of everything existing, and that magnet is the Central Spiritual Sun or God. Just as a piece of iron when brought within the magnetic field of a magnet gets magnetized, so also, he observed that sun, moon, planets and stars are highly magnetic and they have become so by induction, from living in the universal magnetic fluid or the Spiritual Light. There are certain plants that are especially attracted to the sun, while others to the moon. For instance, the acacia opens its petals when the sun rises and closes them when it sets. Certain variety of lotus as also sunflower shows attraction towards the sun. Also, there exists a mysterious sympathy between bodies of plants, animals and humans. Vine feels natural antipathy towards cabbage but sympathy towards the olive-tree. "Kircher accounts for every feeling in human nature as the result of changes in our magnetic condition. Anger, jealousy, friendship, love and hatred, are all modifications of the magnetic atmosphere which is developed in us and constantly emanates from us." Sympathy is a holy and natural power of magnetism, while fascination is evil and unnatural. Spiritual love, that of the mother for her child, or love as pure friendship, are purely magnetic manifestations of sympathy in congenial natures.

Speaking about the polarities of magnetism, Robert Fludd, the fire-philosopher, remarks that when two men approach each other, their magnetism is either positive or negative. If the magnetic emanations sent out by them are broken or thrown back then there arises negative magnetism giving rise to antipathy, but when the emanations pass through each other from both sides, then there is positive magnetism giving rise to sympathy. (*Isis*, I, 171)

Baron Von Reichenbach of Vienna, who conducted experiments for more than five years, especially among hospital patients, discovered that when a magnet was moved along the body of the patients in the downward direction, without touching the body, they could sensibly feel a peculiar influence or aura proceeding from the magnet. He stated that the body of a human being is filled with an aura, "fluid," vapour or influence and it is specially given off at the head, hands and feet, and it is polar, like the aura from the magnet. The whole left side of the human body is positive and when one applied left arm to the body of a sensitive, the sensitive reported that it imparted warmth. Likewise, the whole right side of the body is negative and imparts coolness. Reichenbach remarks that to the magnetic force as it exists in the magnetic needle and lodestone, we must add this force, which he called *odyle*, and stated that magnetism is a compound instead of a simple force. He observed that similar aura or power existed also around the crystals. However, human body is, at times, *abnormally charged with vital magnetism* and gives out true magnetic aura like in lodestone. H.P.B. narrates a case of a farm-servant in Russia, who attracted all objects to herself. For instance, when she opened the cellar door to get some potatoes, she seemed to be pelted with the potatoes and soon found that her basket was filled with the potatoes. When she approached the well to draw water, or passed near a bucket of water, the water began to rise and then overflow. When she stretched out her hand to get some piece of crockery from the shelf, other earthenware plates and cups would begin to jump and tremble, and then fall with a crash at her feet. Likewise, H.P.B. mentions the case of a boy in America, whose

left hand had become a wonderfully strong magnet. Metal articles of light weight, such as knives, pins, buttons, etc., would attach themselves to his hand so firmly that they could not be shaken off. Quite reverse was the case reported by Baron Reichenbach, of a patient who was very sensitive to the auras of the magnet and crystals. When a magnet was held near her hand, it irresistibly followed the magnet wherever that magnet was moved. In fact, her hand seemed to be stuck to the magnet like the iron piece gets stuck to a magnet.

Magnetism has been described by H.P.B. as the *alter ego* of electricity. If we take a piece of iron or any other metal and wind a wire around it, and then pass an electric current through the wire, that piece of metal gets polarized and behaves like a magnet. It will attract iron pieces to itself and magnetize them by induction. Thus, an electric current can induce magnetism. On the other hand, instead of passing the electric current through the wire, if we move an ordinary magnet anywhere in the vicinity of the wires, then current will flow through the wire, but will stop as soon as the magnet stops. Thus, magnetism can induce an electric current, and *vice versa*. This phenomenon is observed also in the realm of animal magnetism. H.P.B. points out that "magnetic currents develop themselves into electricity upon their exit from the body." (*Isis*, I, 395)

There is presence of electric and magnetic fluids in men and animals. If only we take up the research concerning interrelation between these two, and their interrelation with plants and minerals, it would help us better understand many electrical and magnetic phenomena. The existence of animal electricity is a well-established fact. It is also a known fact that there are muscular currents in the divided as well as the undivided muscles of all animals and man. There is a constant production of electricity going on in living organisms. It is the presence of electricity in the muscles and tissues of the body that makes it possible for us to know the condition of heart and brain through ECG (Electro-Cardio-Gram) and EEG (Electro-Encephalo-Gram). And yet, to this day it is a mystery how

modification of the peripheral extremities of nerves generates and discharges electricity in certain genera of fishes. Whence the electric power that by the simple lashing of its feeble tail, a small electrical fish prostrates a strong horse! Occult science points out that both electricity and magnetism are closely related to the life principle or Vital Principle or *Prana*.

It has been observed that under certain conditions there is an abnormal accumulation and secretion of electricity in the systems of certain people. This phenomenon is observed in cold and dry countries like Canada, as also in the hot and dry countries. The well-known medical journal *Lancet*, mentioned the case of people who only had to take their index finger near the gas burner from which gas was issuing, and the gas would light up as if burning matchstick was applied to it! The African explorer and traveller Mitchison mentions that when in anger, he whipped a negro, it brought forth shower of sparks from his body. It was by a series of experiments that he ascertained at last, *that under certain atmospheric conditions and especially during the slightest mental excitement it was possible to extract from the ebony-black body of nearly every negro*, a mass of electrical sparks. Even gently stroking the skin or touching it with the hand, brought forth these sparks. However, no sparks could be obtained when the negroes remained calm and quiet. Livingston mentions in his *Travels in South Africa* that "hot wind that blows in dry seasons over the desert from north to south, is in such an electric state that a bunch of ostrich feathers, held a few seconds against it, becomes as strongly charged as if attached to a powerful electric machine"(H.P.B. *Series No. 24*, pp. 20-24). In *Transactions*, H.P.B. points out that when you rub amber, electricity is excited. The electricity, which is latent in amber, also exists in everything else, and will be found there if given the appropriate conditions necessary for its liberation. Explaining the nature of electricity, H.P.B. writes:

All contains, and is, electricity, from the nettle which

stings to the lightning which kills, from the spark in the pebble to the blood in the body....Electricity is the cause of molecular motion in the physical universe, and hence also here, on earth....From an occult standpoint, electric phenomena are very often produced by the abnormal state of the molecules of an object or of bodies in space: electricity is life and it is death: the first being produced by harmony, the second by disharmony. Vital electricity is under the same laws as Cosmic electricity. (*Transactions*, pp. 120-21)

We are floating in the ocean of life or *Jiva* that permeates every object on earth. Strictly speaking *Prana* is breath. Generally, the terms *Prana* and life energy are used to denote that principle which permeates every part of our constitution. It is also suggested that astral body is the vehicle of *Prana* and just as blood circulates through the body, life energy or Pranic currents circulate in the astral body. The Pranic currents circulating in the astral body, affect the body and ultimately stream forth as our magnetism in the form of magnetic fluid. Purity of magnetic fluid or pure magnetism is not to be obtained by water and soap, and though it is affected by cleanliness of skin, hair, nails, etc., it is not dependent on it. "Man makes his magnetism with his mind," says an occult aphorism. The quality of *Prana* that partakes of man's psychic nature is dependent on our thoughts. Since we are always thinking our magnetism changes, for better or for worse, every hour. It gets reflected in our magnetism or magnetic emanations. A pure man is thus able to purify the *psychic atmosphere* around him. A dynamic personality emanates a particular type of forceful magnetism. Any person who lives a morally pure life can purify his own magnetism and also the psychic atmosphere around him. Pure magnetism works as a wonderful talisman, repelling evil influences.

(*To be continued*)

STUDIES IN THE DHAMMAPADA

MIND—III

7. *Looking upon his body to be fragile as an earthen jar, valuing his mind as a firm fortress, let a man fight Mara with the sword of wisdom. Let him guard what he has gained, but let him fight on. (40)*

8. *Ere long, alas! will this body lie on earth, cast aside, bereft of consciousness, useless as a burnt faggot. (41)*

INCLUDED in the term "body" are all those things, which are held in high esteem by the man of the world. Our name, fame, status, appearance, money, position, power and the academic learning are left behind at the threshold of death. Our idea of what we are, is so deeply rooted in our personal nature that the Buddha had to use this form of meditation, called "corpse meditation," to drive home the idea of impermanent nature of the conditioned being. Have we not experienced, at least temporarily, a sense of uselessness of life when someone young and promising is suddenly removed from our midst by death? We experience, temporarily, what is termed *smashan vairagya* or "graveyard detachment." But the impact does not last long. We soon fall into a rut, once again chasing the objects of our craving. We, therefore, need to guard our mind like a firm fortress which is patrolled by sentries from all sides. They stand on guard, ready to raise an alarm and charge upon the enemy. So should our mind be guarded against unwholesome thoughts and desires. It is a long and uphill journey in which we are tempted in many ways. Just when we think that we have developed universal love, our child picks up a fight with the neighbour's child, putting to test our "universal love"! When we have just enough to feed our young ones, then an orphan may come along, tugging at our heartstrings and demanding his fair share. Are we able to express impartial love for all beings at all times? One can never be sure. Saints and sages have been known to have fallen from their great heights. Stories in

Puranas have many such instances where a *Rishi* ends up losing merit of thousands of years of his meditation when he gets tempted by an *apsara* (celestial damsel) or when he curses someone who failed to show him respect, knowingly or unknowingly. It is said that there is always a possibility of slipping down until the *yogi* reaches *Samadana* stage, when he becomes constitutionally incapable of deviating from the right path. Until then, it is best to always remember the warning given in the *The Voice of the Silence*:

For, on Path fourth, the lightest breeze of passion or desire will stir the steady light upon the pure white walls of Soul. The smallest wave of longing or regret for Maya's gifts illusive, along *Antaskarana*—the path that lies between thy Spirit and thy self, the highway of sensations, the rude arouzers of *Ahankara*—a thought as fleeting as the lightning flash will make thee thy three prizes forfeit—the prizes thou halt won. (pp. 61-62)

Kill out desire; but if thou killest it, take heed lest from the dead it should again arise.

Kill love of life, but if thou slayest *Tanha*, let this not be for thirst of life eternal, but to replace the fleeting by the everlasting. (p. 15)

"Let him guard what he has gained, but let him fight on," is a warning against complacency and false contentment with one's spiritual progress. There is also a danger of losing enthusiasm and becoming lax. Worse still, doubt may arise whether it is really worthwhile to carry on. There may be a temptation to return to old ways of living. "Doubt is a horror; it grows and spreads quickly in the soil of the personal idea. The remedy is to go back to the time when you had the strongest sense of sureness, and then rehearse your grounds of surety by this, doubt will be dispersed like the mists before the morning sun," writes Mr. Crosbie. "The inference is that the awakened man must be active—a true warrior of the mind. The insights he has gained can be preserved in useful habit and in religious tradition, but this is not the heart of the story; 'he must

fight on' no matter how right or true or good his patterns of action have become. His objective is wisdom: and wisdom is not an end in itself, but the guide to ever more significant action at new levels of subtlety. Buddha is therefore teaching the fundamental tenet—that each man progresses from world to world of his own psychological making, passing through innumerable 'metempsychoses and reincarnations' in a series of progressive awakenings." (*The Theosophical Movement*, February 1956)

10. *Whatever an enemy may do to an enemy, whatever a hater may do to a hater, a wrongly directed mind will do to us greater harm. (42)*

11. *Not a mother, not a father, not any kindred can do much; a well-directed mind does us greater service. (43)*

Man is essentially a thinker. But the thinking principle called *Manas* becomes dual during incarnation. One aspect of Mind, which functions through the body and physical brain, tends to get identified with the personal man. It is called the lower *manas* or the personal self. The other aspect is heaven-aspiring, higher *manas*. But the higher *manas* can function only through the lower *manas*. Our actions are in accordance with the ideas held. What we call "our mind" is a number of ideas held by us as a basis for thought and action. Unfortunately, we are prone to accept and hold only such ideas as are in accord with our personal desires. If you believe in absurdities, you are likely to commit atrocities, and then mind becomes the cause of illusions and downfall. When governed by false ideas, our lower mind becomes the slayer of the Real—the higher *Manas*. But it is through purified lower mind that we can unite with our higher, spiritual nature. Thus, the mind can become our friend or foe depending on the ideas we hold. Mind is also called a mirror which gathers dust while it reflects. It needs soul-wisdom to brush away the dust of our illusions. It can be educated and disciplined with the help of the divine nature. Sage Valmiki, who wrote *Ramayana*, was a robber till his eyes were opened by

sage Narada. His is a classic example of transformation through right knowledge. Of course, such a transformation is a culmination of many lives. Tendencies of mind take time to change or get eradicated, but once awakened and persistent in right course of action, the mind becomes the greatest friend that a man can have. Krishna's advice for the training of the mind is:

He should raise the self by the Self; let him not suffer the Self to be lowered; for Self is the friend of self, and in like manner, self is its own enemy. Self is the friend of the man who is self-conquered; so self like a foe hath enmity to him who is not self-conquered. The Self of the man who is self-subdued and free from desire and anger is intent on the Supreme Self in heat and cold, in pain and pleasure, in honor and ignominy. The man who hath spiritual knowledge and discernment, who standeth upon the pinnacle, and hath subdued the senses, to whom gold and stone are the same, is said to be devoted. (*Gita*, VI)

(*Concluded*)

EVERYTHING is virtuous in its nature that fulfils the purpose for which it was ordained; and the better it does this, the more virtuous it is; therefore we call him a good man who leads the contemplative or the active life for which his nature fits him; we call the horse good that runs fast and far, which he is created to do; we call the sword good that cuts hard things with ease, for which end it is made. Thus language, being ordained to express human conceptions, is good when it does this; and the more perfectly it does it the better it is.

- DANTE

HEALTH AND DISEASE IN HOMOEOPATHY

I

This is the great mistake of the physicians of our day, that they treat the body without treating the soul.

-PLATO

In the healthy condition of man, the spiritual vital force (autocracy), the dynamis that animates the material body (organism), rules with unbounded sway, and retains all the parts of the organism in admirable, harmonious, vital operation, as regards both sensations and functions, so that our indwelling, reason-gifted mind can freely employ this living, healthy instrument for the higher purposes of our existence...When a person falls ill, it is only this spiritual, self-acting (automatic) vital force, everywhere present in his organism, that is primarily deranged by the dynamic influence upon it of a morbid agent inimical to life.

-SAMUEL HAHNEMANN in *Organon of Medicine*

THE HEALING art is as old as man himself, and it is not peculiar to man alone. "Instinct...guides the dumb brute to find his appropriate remedy in the hour of sickness" (*Isis*, I, 433). This "instinctual medicine" can be observed in dogs, who spontaneously lick their wounds; the saliva has healing power. In every age, the treatment of human illness is governed by the ideas or concepts held about health and disease. As the mind expands towards a fuller understanding of the life-processes under the impact of intellectual evolution, the concept of disease-causation (aetiology) change and evolve from time to time; and so, too, the therapies adopted. Disease has always been with us, though its peripheral expressions, manifestations or forms change with every century.

In ancient times, among primitive men, all natural phenomena, including diseases, were considered to be the visitation of gods, demons or spirits. This supernatural concept of disease (demonic or

spiritual) still exists in primitive races in certain parts of the world, in folk or tribal medicine, half true and half false. The functions of priest and medicine-man were combined in one person. The treatment was to exorcise the devil or spirit by physical measures. Witchcraft and counter-witchcraft are prevalent even to this day, as in Africa.

Then came the concept of Constitutions, on which the *Tridosha* theory in Ayurveda is based. The idea of vitiation of the four humours—yellow bile, black bile, lymph and blood—as the cause of disease, was the later perverted version of this ancient Ayurvedic concept. The scientific appraisal of disease began with Hippocrates in 460 B.C. He considered disease to be a deviation from the normal state, and not an entity; he was acquainted with the Law of Similars as also with the Law of Dissimilars. Disease came to be considered by Sydenham (1624-1689) as a definite clinical entity grafted on to the host—something of which the host was to be purged. This was the era of heroic treatments—purging, vomiting, blood-letting, leeching and massive drugging (polypharmacy) to get rid of the poison. The dissection of dead bodies led to the discovery of organic or pathological changes in tissues and organs, which were held to be the cause of disease in the Morgagnian era (1682-1771). The restricted view was held that it is a local disorder. In homoeopathy, tissue changes (pathology) are considered the effects of disease and not the cause; the disease is held to be a constitutional disorder and not merely local, although having local or peripheral manifestations.

With the advent of the microscope was ushered in the era of cellular pathology (Virchow, 1821-1902); it was held that structural changes in the cells of tissues and organs were the cause of disease. The concept of disease as a local disorder still prevailed. Hahnemann anticipated the era of bacteriology in medicine, when he postulated the existence of micro-organisms as the probable cause of venereal diseases. Robert Koch (1843-1910) established the microbes as the cause of diseases, and thus the emphasis was shifted from the host

annihilation of the germs at all costs, and the importance of the natural resistance or susceptibility of the host to adverse environmental stimuli was ignored. Excessive preoccupation with germs brought about the lop-sided development of medicine, pushing the individual into the background; and this, despite the "Internal Milieu" of Claude Bernard (1813-1878), and the Classical Experiment of Pettenkoffer (1818-1901). The latter swallowed a test-tubeful of live cholera germs—enough to kill a regiment of soldiers—with immunity. Further, the ultra-microscopic viruses were also implicated in the diseases. Thus, there was adequate control of acute infectious diseases and adoption of rapid preventive measures for public health. But the indiscriminate use of chemotherapeutic agents and antibiotics has resulted in the phenomena of drug-sensitization, including fatal anaphylactic shock, drug-resistance, bacterial mutation, and disturbance in the natural immunity mechanism of the body, which renders the patient susceptible to relapses or a state of chronic ill health. The decline in infectious diseases has resulted in the rise in functional disorders, new growths and degenerative disorders.

Such, then, was the evolution of concepts of disease-causation along material lines of thinking—as a biological phenomenon of "altered life" ("biological concept"). This metaphysical view of disease-processes was held by Paracelsus, when he said: "Medicine is not only a science; it is also an art. It does not consist in compounding pills and plasters; it deals with the very processes of life, which must be understood before they may be guided." Hahnemann postulated the existence of the "VITAL FORCE" permeating and animating every form of life, including man. It is the "spirit-like vital dynamis" or the "dynamic energy" which keeps the human organism in healthy, harmonious functioning at all levels of the total human entity—i.e., the physical, the intellectual or thought structure, the emotional or feeling nature and the spiritual. It is on all these planes that this Life-Principle or *Prana* operates in harmony in the healthy person, so as *to subserve the higher purposes of our existence*. In disease, this Vital

by some morbidic agent inimical to life, resulting in disharmony at all levels.

This "dynamic or vital concept" lays down that disease is primarily a disturbance of the Vital Force circulating in the human economy, resulting in the disorganization of sensations and functions, and manifesting on the external plane as signs and symptoms. Disturbed inner vitality, then, is the philosophical root or basis of all human illness, whatever the extraneous factors responsible. "It is the morbidly affected vital force alone that produces disease" (*Organon of Medicine*, Aphorism 12). "When the ebb and flow of vital energy grows irregular, it spells sickness, nothing less, and is ineradicable except through similarity of action. The earliest evidences of disease are disorderly vital action" (Boger in *Studies in the Philosophy of Healing*). Disease, thus, is essentially *intrinsic* and not *extrinsic*; its spread is centrifugal—from within outwards, from the centre towards the periphery.

This Vital Force baffles modern science and medicine, as it defies physico-chemical analysis and is difficult to conceive of by materialistic minds. To Hahnemann, it was a fact gleaned intuitively. "It has been the speculation of men of science from time immemorial what this vital force or life-principle is. To our mind the 'secret doctrine' alone is able to furnish the clew" (*Isis*, I, 466). Further:

Three spirits live and actuate man [teaches Paracelsus]; three worlds pour their beams upon him; but all three only as the image and echo of one and the same all-constructing and uniting principle of production. The first is the spirit of the elements (terrestrial body and vital force in its brute condition); the second, the spirit of the stars (sidereal or astral body—the soul); the third is the *Divine* spirit (*Augoeides*). (*Isis*, I, 212)

(*To be continued*)

O T H E L L O

THE TALE OF A HYPNOTISED SOLDIER

I

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"The Adepts assert that Shakespeare was, unconsciously
to himself, inspired by one of their own number.-

—*Echoes from the Orient*, by WM. Q. JUDGE

ADEPTS, cherishing always the purpose to bring enlightenment and reformation among men, and having always to deal with the mind of the race as they find it, are naturally interested in all men and movements, including the literary and the theatrical, that can aid their purpose.

Human evils have certain great taproots from which spring many branches. If, then, one tries to view European life at and shortly before Shakespeare's time with even a trifle of the insight that an Adept must direct to it, he finds prominent several grievous vices, some standing out with horrid clearness. Among them were overweening ambition, egregious self-pride, much ignorance and fear concerning the spiritual, undue intellectualism with lack of ethical balance and clear judgment, weakness of will or passivity, resulting in openness to many forms of degenerating influences, and most excessive, perhaps, sex corruptions.

It was (and still is, of course) impossible to give in fiction and drama broad, accurate pictures of life and omit these evils. What the Adepts must, therefore, have wished to do was, first, to lessen the wickedness in actual life; and, second, through the inspiring of Shakespeare, to augment the moral goodness by such theatrical presentments as would stimulate interest in the triumph of the virtues rather than in a display of the vices. Herein, accordingly, lies one of the differences between Shakespeare's plays and most of

measure, there must have been, native to Shakespeare's deeper character, a degree of superiority to all these vicious habits. If his nature had leaned down into the depravities instead of struggling to rise out of them, he never could have been a focus for Adept Influence. Nor could he have used it.

Chivalry was a blend of idealization of war and idealization of sex, intended to lessen the evils of both. Wherever people sincerely followed in each direction the chivalric training, much benefit was experienced. But when in sex life they became Lancelots and Guineveres, their example was all the worse for the idealized cover. Beneath that fair outside, there came to be a social rottenness that "smelled to heaven." So prevalent was sensuality, both open and concealed, that no woman was trusted without secret reservations. The moment calumny smirched her, she was almost automatically condemned as false. Only the most startling proofs of innocence could reinstate her.

Thus there resulted from chivalry a very double-sided attitude toward women—one that exalted them as nearly impossible paragons of virtue and beauty, and the other thrusting them like filthy beasts beneath the feet of those deceived. With warriors and in those war-filled ages, the relations of sex and marriage often gained a peculiar intensity. The necessary absence from home of the husband and father, with his consequent fears and quick jealousies, the physical inability of women to be soldiers and the corresponding self-importance of men, the brutal treatment of women prisoners, the degenerating effects of degraded women camp followers—all these helped to create and intensify that double attitude toward women of idealization and of their debasement. Social customs, too, of the chivalric period and later were extremely ambiguous—as they are today—often permitting personal and bodily familiarities that could and did both suggest evil and yet excusingly shield it.

Besides the chivalric traditions, and fusing with them, were the new and equally powerful thought-currents of the Renaissance. The

revival of Greek and Roman learning, customs and ideals brought to Europe a great, fresh vitality, an eagerness to break away from mediaeval fetters and a determination to develop to the fullest the individual human self. The period was a magnificent outburst of an intellectual energy that had been lying dormant, of a physical energy that was seeking other expressions than war, and of an emotional energy that had been twisted away from its natural outlets both in domestic life and in perception of the truly spiritual. Yet though the Renaissance forces were liberating and enlightening, they were also confusing and disorganizing. Determined not to be restricted, the mind of the time became guilty of great excesses. Although there was refinement and growth in art and literature, these no more than chivalry could put effective checks on brutal lusts and savage passions. This was especially true in Italy, which set the fashions and moral standards, and produced some particular characters which historians have for convenience called "Italianated." The craving for unrestricted self-development led Italianated men and women to commit the worst crimes without conscience, or even to justify them by a kind of conscience, for self. The crime was little if the individual end was reached. Again, since education and social freedom existed alike for men and for women, and since both were breaking away from accepted standards, including the ethical, a variation of the type was produced which brought about an increase, even over preceding periods, of open sex immorality and disbelief in loyal marriage.

Hence, as true domestic and sex life are the foundation and nursery of all other forms of morality, it is not strange that Shakespeare, following the lines of general thought, and also following unaware the guidance of the Higher Influence on him, made several of his plays hinge on that double attitude toward women of unwise exaltation and equally erring debasement. By his day the attitude had engendered in men a disbelief in women that was inherent, almost instinctive. In *A Winter's Tale*, for example, the husband, Leontes, turns violently against his wife for no reason

except those ambiguous social customs. With Leontes, that disbelief in women becomes an insanity, nothing less. His plan to have the supposedly guilty friend poisoned is frustrated, but he sends away his wife and her just-born daughter. Swift reaction comes upon him by the pining unto death of the little son through grief for his mother. Only gradually, and because of the adverse judgment of an oracle, does the husband come to see correctly his terrible and baseless folly.

In three other important plays the man is fooled by skilful lies intensifying very slight visible evidence (supposed) of the woman's infidelity. The motive of the deceiver is selfish gain. The psychological reason for the quick credulity is that same deeply inherent distrust of women's loyalty. Shakespeare, by showing the injustice and folly of the man's distrust, by revealing the woman's faithfulness and prompt forgiveness, must have done much to break down that common disbelief.

Of those three plays one is a comedy, as its title indicates, *Much Ado About Nothing*, the poet evidently wishing to show the absurdity of what just escaped being tragic. In each of the three appear the same elements—the Italianated intriguer working for self-interest, his foolishly credulous victim dominated by palpable lies, and the innocent, loyal, persecuted, yet forgiving woman. All the chief persons have been bred in the chivalrous social thought and exhibit its virtues as well as its grossness.

In *Cymbeline* the young Briton, Posthumus, having received all possible exhibitions of loving loyalty from his self-sacrificing wife, makes a wager—with an Italian—that her faith will stand against any temptations. Why does Posthumus not see that his shrewd designing opponent, delighting in his self-superiority as an Italian compared with a Briton, will do anything at all to win his wager? The answer is that Posthumus too, unknown to himself, is infected with the poisonous distrust of a wife's faithfulness. It is worth noting that of the four plays on this theme, three end in peace and the establishment of proper family life, the possibility being thus

emphasized.

As for *Othello*, the disbelief in women and the situations arising out of it here reach their climax of heavy tragedy. There is added, however, in this drama another plot element which greatly intensifies the evil conditions—that is, the use of hypnotic power.

Hypnotism is the compulsive influence exerted and the effects produced by a man consciously entering some one else's mental life and transforming it. When not directed to healing physical disease (and at times even when it is), hypnotism is usually a misuse of the tremendous and mysterious power in Nature called will—a misuse because the effort is intended to change or destroy another's individual will and make it follow the hypnotizer's selfish purposes. The one hypnotized may or may not remain wakeningly conscious, or may not even be aware of the extraneous influence. Hypnotism for selfish ends was certainly one of the crimes of that earlier day (as of this), which Adepts most strongly rebuked, for it is Black Magic. There is, however, an important element in hypnotism that often is not acknowledged—that is, the victim's own responsibility. For if he remains able to choose his thoughts and acts, and if then his behaviour under the hypnotic influence is quickly and markedly different from what it has been before and from what is expected, there must be reasons in the mind of the victim himself why that transforming influence can operate. In other words, since man is a chooser and a self-governor, no one's mind can be transformed by another unless he, even though in part unknowingly, permits it to be. Hence when one sees Othello's mind change from loving gentleness to blind fury, the questions arise why, psychologically, can this happen? What forms are taken by that inherent distrust of women? Further, what are the inmost reasons and the innermost character of the hypnotizer—why is Iago at work on Othello and with such merciless methods?

(To be continued)

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 "*unconscious black magic*"?

Answer: H.P.B. defines black magic as abuse or misuse of psychic powers, or of any *secret of nature*, *i.e.*, using them for selfish or evil purposes. A hypnotizer who hypnotizes his subject, interfering with his free will, and uses the power of "suggestion," to make that person steal or commit crime or murder, could be termed a *black magician*. As for the misuse of the "secrets of nature," H.P.B. gives an example of "animal injections" prepared by Dr. Brown-Sequard. Dr. Brown-Sequard is said to have "rejuvenated" himself by the subcutaneous injections of a fluid prepared from the testicles of freshly killed guinea pigs and dogs. He was the French physiologist and neurologist, a pioneer endocrinologist and neurophysiologist. Comparing the "rejuvenating system" of Dr. Brown-Sequard with the evils of Hypnotism, (U.L.T. *Pamphlet No. 19*), H.P.B. points out that in hypnotism, the "suggestion" once implanted does not get erased completely. Hence, like a seed, the "suggestion" for crime may lie dormant in the mind of the subject for years sometimes, to become suddenly awakened by some unforeseen circumstance, forcing that person to commit the crime. H.P.B. remarks that this is as bad on the moral plane as the artificial introduction of animal matter into the human blood (by Dr. Brown-Sequard) is on the physical, which she describes as *unconscious Black Magic*. In modern times, use of medicines such as viagra, which enhances youthful vigour for sexual enjoyment, may well be termed unconscious black magic.

In the article, "Occultism Versus the Occult Arts," H.P.B. terms *vivisection* as black magic. Giving another definition of black magic

or sorcery, she says that *sorcery* is any kind of evil influence exercised upon another that makes the other person suffer in consequence. In the article, "Have Animal Souls?" H.P.B. says that vivisection is the specialty of the scientific slaughter-houses, where the animal is tortured for days, weeks and even months, and that torture is applied to the fibres and muscles of one and the same victim, again and again, till there is even breath of life and sensibility left in the victim.

There is always a danger of exercising *unconscious black magic* through our thoughts. In "Dialogues Between the Two Editors," H. P. B. points out that many of our thoughts are still-born, but there are *silent but potential thoughts*. She gives the extreme case of a person who intensely wishes for the death of another. If the person is a *Dugpa* or an adept of the left-hand path, then that person will die, but if not a *Dugpa*, then such a thought or wish comes back to him and may cause his own death. It is like throwing a ball which, if it does not penetrate the object, will rebound and harm the thrower. The question is asked: What if a person is not a *Dugpa* but has very strong will? The answer is that only "strong will" is not sufficient. He must be a person with an evil eye, i.e., a person who possesses enormous power of imagination, which works involuntarily, and it is unconsciously used for bad purposes. Such a person, unknowingly, creates a current, which has potentiality for accident and misfortune, so that any person who comes in its influence is affected and comes to harm. She goes on to say that a person with the evil eye need not have powerful imagination or evil intention, he may produce this destructive current even if he is naturally fond of *witnessing or reading about sensational happenings, such as murder, executions, accidents, etc.* As soon as such a person thinks of harm coming to someone, this current will cause damage.

Since we have no yardstick to differentiate between a stillborn thought, and a silent but potential thought, we must exercise constant vigilance, lest we turn an evil eye on another by wishing him harm, no matter what the situation is. We have to remember that as a person advances on the spiritual path, his thoughts assume greater power

and could actually bring harm to another. Even those who have been striving to lead a morally pure life must not be complacent, because sometimes trifling causes could bring about the downfall, like the first step on the slippery mountain path could send one precipitously down and into the arms of death. Lord Buddha says, "Think not lightly of evil, saying, 'it will not come unto me.' Even a water-pot is filled by the constant falling of drops of water. A fool becomes full of evil if he gathers it little by little." (*The Dhammapada*, verse 121)

When a person tries to bring undue personal psychological influence upon another, it becomes *unconscious black magic*. By our very act of living, we influence others around us, for good or ill. However, enormous would be the Karma of someone who deliberately and with premeditation influences hundreds of people, at times, misguiding them through wrong ideology.

H.P.B. mentions "will prayer," in which the inner attitude is, "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." There is no personal or selfish element. It seems that in such a prayer the mind becomes unfettered for a brief space of time and becomes one with the divine and hence the potentialities and powers of the divine nature become available, translating our thoughts and desires into action. But if there is no purity then we send up waves of purely personal desires towards our divine nature, which may produce disastrous results. When a person prays, saying, "Thy will be done and not mine," and yet sends up waves of will-power for selfish and unholy purposes, it is *black magic*, abomination and *spiritual sorcery*, writes H.P.B.

Question: How does one understand the Buddhist concept of "Right Mindfulness" in the theosophical context?

Answer: Generally, "Right Mindfulness" or "Right Awareness" means becoming aware of one's surrounding, actions, and contents of one's mind. At a deeper level, it implies becoming aware of one's mental processes. It is very important for a spiritual aspirant not only to be good-hearted, but also to study his own mental processes,

else some day he might find that he uses his mind in one track. He may discover that perhaps he gives the same fixed response to a given situation or fixed answer to a given question, thus forming *mental grooves*. A man of meditation, on the other hand, is one who always tries to cut fresh path and is willing to have a fresh look at the matter. We can acquire depth of mind only when we are not willing to be satisfied with the first answer that comes to our mind. Such a person may neglect to check his premises, which, if they are incorrect, are bound to lead to wrong conclusions. For instance, if a person believes in a personal God who rules the world according to his own whim and fancy, then his conclusion would be that such a God must be prayed to, and propitiated. If a person believes that the scriptures are sacred, infallible and are the final authority, then he would have blind obedience to the scriptures. We can see that such a person may continue his wrong way of thinking because it suits him. For instance, it suits him to believe that our sins are washed in the blood of Christ, because he wants to avoid personal responsibility. Likewise, it suits him to believe in a personal God so that he could pray and ask for favours. He is unwilling to give up these ideas as they cater to his inner desires. Such a person desires to go along his own road of thought, for to change it is unpleasant because difficult to begin. He does not want to question them. This is *tamasic* behaviour. To watch one's mental processes one needs to undertake critical self-examination, to eliminate one's biases and prejudices, question one's beliefs and preconceptions.

As pointed out in *Through the Gates of Gold*, religion and virtue often make a man fall into a rut. By the practice of virtue he will fetter himself into one groove, one changeless fashion of life in matter. In the article, "Breaking the Moulds of Thought," (*The Theosophical Movement*, Vol. 18), we are told that a person who practises a virtue of punctuality very rigidly, at last, becomes a slave to that virtue instead of being the master of it. If one day he is unable to follow his set routine he feels lost. For the smooth functioning of a machine we must allow leeway between the parts. There must be

flexibility and adaptability. Mr. Judge points out that each mind has a groove, and it is not willing to run in the natural groove of another mind. It is like the flanged wheel of the engine running on a track of a particular size. It cannot run on a broader or narrower gauge and is confined to a single track. Take off the flange, and make the face of the wheel broader and then it can run on any track. General human nature is like the engine. But the occultist or the would-be occultist has to take off the flange and have a broad-faced wheel that will accommodate itself to other minds and natures.

Mind is considered to be a mirror, which gathers dust while it reflects—the dust of false ideas, biases, desires, and predilections. One has to be aware of their existence to get rid of them. Watching the mental processes would also help one to curb the tendency to go off at a tangent. Someone may say something about H.P.B. and we are reminded of Russia and then of the aeroplane journey to another country, and so on. We might start thinking of totally irrelevant matter in no time. If we are watchful, we see that we are going off the track. In fact, to make our mind creative, an author suggests that in small matters like thinking about the gift to be given to someone, we must discard the initial three or four alternatives that present themselves, then we are likely to hit upon something novel.

It is very essential to know if we have an inquiring and reflecting mind. It is important to ask questions, but it is equally important that we find the answers ourselves. We must avoid asking unnecessary questions. By unnecessary questions we make another person drag his mind to mundane level and waste his vitality. We must spend our own time and vitality in *searching* for the answer. Getting a ready answer is like getting a nugget of gold from a miner, and that is all we get at that time. But when *we* make an effort, or dig out the knowledge, we drag out of our mind rocks and debris and thus become aware of the contents of our mind—useful or useless, as also of our mental processes.

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

What disappears the moment you name it? The answer is, "silence." Silence can help you communicate, heal and often tease you into spilling your secrets! Silence could be an effective communication tool, for one who knows how to use it, to convey and to gauge deepest desires and feelings. "While this may make a lot of sense to Indians, Westerners would find eulogy to silence extremely odd," writes Vinita Dwara Nangia. A study by the University of Malay reveals that the Americans construe silence as rude, and attach significance to speech. The same study revealed that 40 per cent Japanese considered silence to be golden while 43 per cent British respondents said it was speech that is golden. Asians consider silence not only an effective communication tool but also a sign of respect for elders and seniors. The only acceptable way of responding to an upbraiding from parents is silence and downcast eyes. A deeply meditative silence could be healing. Mahatma Gandhi observed silence once every week when he would communicate only by scribbling on notes. Further:

Indeed the use of silence and how we manage it in conversation depends on how intelligent we are as communicators. Those who are great communicators are comfortable with silence and adept at using it in many ways to reach their desired goal. Silence does not unnerve them, nor overwhelm them. They do not get put off by a silent communicator; rather they try to unravel the meaning of that silence. Their use of silence is an important indicator of their emotional intelligence....In their hands silence becomes an excellent form of communication.

There is also the "spilling effect" of silence, where it is used as a powerful pressurizing tool, generally by the interviewer. Sometimes an interviewer deliberately keeps silent so that anyone not used to silence will rush forth to fill it up with words, often with words they never meant to speak! "Rather than becoming ready victims of the

masters of the silent communication, would not it be great to master the art of silent communication ourselves"? asks Vinita Nangia. (*Sunday Times of India*, May 10, 2009)

Silence is unuttered speech. There is a Sanskrit sloka to the effect that the *guru* is a young man and the disciples are old, the teaching is silence and yet the doubts of the disciples are dispelled. There are times when words are not necessary. A mother with a sick child does not speak much, but her mere presence is enough for the child. If we really want to share a person's suffering, we are not required to say much. If we have sensed it then our heart will be full and something strong and comforting will spill out and it will be sensed by that other person. As Carlyle says, "Speak not, I passionately entreat thee, till thy thought has silently matured, till thou hast other than mad and mad making noises to emit, hold thy tongue." In other words we must prefer to remain silent, rather than speak without benefit or need. One of the requirements of spiritual life is to learn the value of silence. Silence is needed to conserve spiritual energy, as one of the main avenues through which man's divinity goes to waste is through sound and speech. The power to speak comes from the Higher Self.

Periodical observance of silence is necessary for a spiritual aspirant. We have to silence the behaviour of the lower mind, which means not allowing the chatter in the mind to go on. It is important to silence all the thoughts. To observe complete silence we must not communicate even by scribbling on pieces of paper. Just as when we are talking, someone else can not talk, so also our Higher Self can not talk if we are all the time thinking about ourselves.

In a recent Lok Sabha election in India, the indifference of the people was evident as very few people turned up for voting. Those living in democratic countries should realize that voting is their right as well as a duty. In fact it is a spiritual responsibility. The reason

why most people who are eligible to vote, refrain from voting is that they think expressing their opinion by casting a vote will not make any difference at all. We have acquired this defeatist attitude because of the corrupt political system. But every vote we cast is a symbol of faith and hope we repose in a candidate, who we think might make a positive difference to society, writes Narayani Ganesh. The right and responsibility to vote matters if you care about life of other human beings, observes Corinne McLaughlin of the U.S. Centre for Visionary Leadership. She says that your vote could well help decide policy on terrorism, war, health, education, climate change and many other subjects, which touch the lives of other individuals. To willfully abstain from casting votes is not to be construed as staying away from (dirty) politics, but it means that you are allowing the political process to take place without your involvement, as you refrain from exercising your choice.

In a democracy, the electoral process must have provision for people to express that they are not happy with any of the candidates contesting from their constituencies. The voter must have the right to reject all candidates by choosing the option, "none of the above." This form of negative voting is a positive action, which can force political parties to wake up and improve the quality of candidates contesting the election. If we do not take action in an informed and detached manner, we might upset the balance and tip the equilibrium towards total anarchy. "Indecisiveness, or worse, indifference, go against the tenets of all spiritual teachings, which advocate individual and collective action for the common good....A spiritual person will find a way to be rooted in spirituality as well as execute his worldly responsibilities without one disturbing the other," writes Narayani Ganesh. (*Sunday Times of India*, May 3, 2009)

If we trace back the history, we find that in western countries, especially, for a long time, the Church and the State were regarded as two great authorities. Between the two of them Church had supreme authority because the monarch did not rule as he liked, but was checked by the Church. But then the authority of the Church

and the priests was challenged by the claim to liberty of conscience, and the individual was recognized as the true basis of an empire. Thus, after long struggle, democratic form of government came into existence. Democracy is defined as government of the people, by the people and for the people. Voting is a powerful tool through which required change, including combating corruption in the political and electoral system could be brought about. When we refrain from voting we are saying that any kind of government is acceptable to us and then we have no right to criticize and blame corruption in politics. Prof. Lewis points out in his book, "Studies in Words," that the word franchise was synonymous with citizenship, but later implied "power of voting," something which is essential for a person to become a full citizen. When we find something wrong we need not wait for others to remedy the wrong. Henry Thoreau writes in his essay on "Civil Disobedience," that "voting" only means that we are feebly expressing the wish that right should prevail, whereas democracy is the strength of the people to express their will into action. How can a person be satisfied merely with an opinion? He argues that if you are cheated out of a dollar by your neighbour, you would take measures to obtain the full amount back and see to it that you are never cheated again. A good citizen should not have passive obedience. When we refrain from voting, it is an act of omission.

On November 26, 2008, Mumbai (Bombay) was attacked by terrorists, in which many died while many were maimed for life. Andreina Varagona, the American national was shot by rampaging terrorists while she dined with friends at Tiffin restaurant in Oberoi Trident Hotel. Two of her dinner companions, one of them being her own 13-year old daughter, were killed, while she escaped with grievous injuries from the two bullet wounds in her right arm and

leg. Varagona, a professional meditation teacher and a successful marathon runner, is still recuperating at her Nashville house in Tennessee, walking with the help of a stick or a walker. As the lone surviving terrorist, Ajmal Amir Qasab went on trial, on April 15, 2009, she says that she forgives Qasab and hopes that he will not be sentenced to death, as victims of the attacks would find some solace when a terrorist like Qasab transforms. She says that as she looks closely at the episode she is able to imagine that Qasab was taught something different from what she was taught and perhaps he was made to believe that it was the most important thing to do. She hopes that some day he would realize what he has done. Just as Jesus on the cross forgave the misguided souls, I forgive him and also pray for him every day. The positive aspect of this experience has been that she no longer has the fear of death. She says that though in pain, she is happy to be alive, writes Anand Holla. (*Mumbai Mirror*, April 15, 2009)

Truly, to err is human, but to forgive is divine, especially when an ordinary person brings himself to forgive a grievous harm. Forgiveness helps both the victim and the wrongdoer to heal faster. Forgive, forgive and largely forget, says H.P.B.

In the article, "Is Denunciation a Duty?" H.P.B. points out that "A true theosophist must be a cosmopolitan in his heart. He must embrace mankind, the whole of humanity in his philanthropic feelings. It is higher and far nobler to be one of those who love their fellow men, without distinction of race, creed, caste or colour." Denunciation is *duty to truth*, and it is our duty to denounce systems and organizations, social and religious evils, but *not the individuals*, who are but children of their own century, the victims of their environment. "To condemn and dishonour a man instead of pitying and trying to help him, because, being born in a community of lepers, he is a leper himself, is like cursing a room because it is dark, instead of quietly lighting a candle to disperse the gloom," writes H.P.B.

Yoga is achieving union with the divine. In that process the animal man must be first humanized and then divinized. This goal could be achieved by using mind as the spring-board, so that thoughts, emotions, feelings and "will" must progressively turn from the human field of their interests and endeavours towards higher and deeper fields of activities. An unrefined emotion, an unchastened thought, a crude "will" engaged in its petty, personal desires and small narrow interests cannot turn upwards. The human element is not to be discarded, but has to be transcended and transformed. Our thoughts, feelings, "will" and desires must be used rightly and given their due share of experiences. In spiritual life there are no bypass surgeries and shortcuts. If we make haste in transcending the human element, we might land into an abyss. We might delude ourselves into believing that we have gone beyond humanity because we are devoid of human feelings and reactions, we no more feel love for others and we can exercise control and power over others by our superior faculties. But actually we have become inferior even to, ordinary human beings. How can we love the Divine if we have not even known the human love? How can we concentrate upon the Divine if we know not even how to concentrate upon external things? In order that we would not try to undo all that is human in us, too prematurely, in certain yoga systems there are steps, called *yama* and *niyama*, or certain do's and don'ts. Even here we need to be careful, because if these rules are followed too scrupulously then they make our nature rigid and take away adaptability and plasticity needed for growth and evolution of life. Ultimately, one has to transcend reason and bring the inmost soul to the surface. There is that in man which is the experiencer, and which also holds the seed of divinity in its core—it is *Satyavan*, the upholder of truth, the immortal divine element. We also need to take care that we do not end up choosing the path of the titans, which is the path of ego aggrandizement. "The titan takes all forms of austerity, even tortures himself to overpass the human limitationsHe seeks greater force and powers that can put him ahead of others of his kind....His is a

quantitative change, an increase of powers and capacitiesBut there is no fundamental change in the quality of his consciousness.... He is an exaggeration of man, an enlarged version of the same text, not a new edition....He rejects humanity out of a sense of false superiority and pride." The true path is just the opposite, it is the path of the gods, writes Alok Pandey. (*The Advent*, April 2009)

Perfect human development involves perfection of human nature so that "human man" can become divine man, such that there is a perfect harmonizing of the divine with the human. "Not only is man more than an animal because there is a god in him, but he is more than a god because there is the animal in him." Spiritual progress depends upon right relation of these two forces—animal and divine. We have allowed the animal to usurp the place of the god. Once we allow the god to rule the animal, we will be in possession of great force and power hitherto unknown to us, says *Through the Gates of Gold*. But altruism is an integral part of self-development. "Self-knowledge is of loving deeds the child." Hence, the *dharma* of self-development is to "live to benefit mankind," "to be the better able to help and teach others."

There is always the possibility for a spiritual aspirant to have mistaken notions about spirituality, either out of ignorance or owing to hypocrisy. Often, the acquirement of psychic powers, the ability to understand abstruse metaphysics coupled with abstinence from drinks, meat, pungent or *rajasic* food, etc., deludes a person into thinking that he is a thing apart from other "inferior" men. It shows that though desires of the lower plane have been conquered, they have got hold of him through *inanas*. It may only be described as spiritual darkness. Spirituality demands progressive detachment and even equanimity, but it is not cold indifference or stoicism.

HE to whom you pray is nearer to you than the neck of your camel.

—MUHAMMAD

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