

The United Lodge of Theosophists

DECLARATION

THE policy of this Lodge is independent devotion to the cause of Theosophy, without professing attachment to any Theosophical organization. It is loyal to the great Founders of the Theosophical Movement, but does not concern itself with dissensions or differences of individual opinion.

The work it has on hand and the end it keeps in view are too absorbing and too lofty to leave it the time or inclination to take part in side issues. That work and that end is the dissemination of the Fundamental Principles of the Philosophy of Theosophy, and the exemplification in practice of those principles, through a truer realization of the SELF, a profounder conviction of Universal Brotherhood.

It holds that the unassailable *Basis for Union* among Theosophists, wherever and however situated, is "*similarity of aim, purpose and teaching*," and therefore has neither Constitution, By-Laws nor Officers, the sole bond between its Associates being that *basis*. And it aims to disseminate this idea among Theosophists in the furtherance of Unity.

It regards as Theosophists all who are engaged in the true service of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, condition or organization, and

It welcomes to its association all those who are in accord with its declared purposes and who desire to fit themselves, by study and otherwise, to be the better able to help and teach others.

"The true Theosophist belongs to no cult or sect, yet belongs to each and all"

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.

The foregoing is the form signed by Associates of the United Lodge of Theosophists. Inquiries are invited from all persons to whom this Movement may appeal. Cards for signature will be sent upon request, and every possible assistance furnished Associates in their studies and in efforts to form local Lodges. There are no fees of any kind, and no formalities to be complied with.

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

A Magazine Devoted to
The Living of the Higher Life

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- (a) To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or colour;
- (b) The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences, and the demonstration of the importance of such study; and
- (c) The investigation of the unexplained laws of Nature and the psychical powers latent in man.

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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SELFLESS SERVICE IS WORSHIP

AS SOON as you step out of the house, it seems as if the world is only too ready to *serve* you. If you own a car then your chauffeur is *at your service*, if not, then a taxi driver is *all ready to serve you*. Go to the bank, go for shopping, go to a restaurant, and you meet people ready to serve you, provided you pay! You need not even stir out of your house, as these days, they have home service. But everything is for a price, and the fellow who serves you with a smile, does he really wish to and love to serve you? The answer in most cases would be, no. This is in complete contrast to "service" in the highest sense.

The word for "service," in Sanskrit, as also in many vernacular languages, is *seva*. A great emphasis is laid on *seva* in Sikhism, the religion of the Sikhs. Since God is not separate from his creatures and creation, one who wishes to serve God must perform his duties well and serve humanity with the highest sense of duty. The term *kar seva* is used to describe any voluntary work carried out for religious purposes. *Seva* is of three kinds: That done through bodily instrument (*tan*), through mental faculties (*man*) and through material wealth (*dhan*). A true Sikh wishes to serve in "*guru ka langar*" or Guru's community kitchen and thus serve the Sikh congregation. Every service must be performed in an impersonal and selfless way, by renouncing the interest in the result of action, with humility, sincerity and pure motive so that it can lead to self-transcendence

and ultimate emancipation.

"Service" involves giving, but in this acquisitive culture of today, somehow, we are more aware of *acquiring*—name, fame, wealth, power or love. In the mad rush to get and become *someone*, some of us tend to become so self-centred that others cease to exist for us for a while.

When we look around us we find that more than the *physical* it is the mental, moral and emotional suffering, which needs to be addressed. We do not have to search for the afflicted. We find them everywhere, if only our eyes are open. Every day newspapers are full of stories of people committing suicides. What is more alarming is children aged nine or ten commit suicide—age when they ought not to have even heard the word. How is it that the child could muster up enough courage to hang herself/himself? Was there no one she or he could confide in? Everyone seems to have the need to be heard. There are bottled-up feelings, anxieties, anger, frustrations, but no one "close" enough to share it with. The first step in service, these days, consists in learning to be a patient and sympathetic listener—at home, office, in the train or bus journey. *The Voice of the Silence* asks us to attune our mind and heart to humanity's great pain. Let us first learn to attune ourselves to the pain of family members and neighbours. How could there be a lonely, depressed or a needy person in my vicinity and I am not aware of it? To serve is to be of help. Could we be of help when we think only of our rights and not the responsibilities? From moment to moment we have a chance to do the selfless service, in helping the sick, the lonely, the embittered or a neglected person. The *Gita* says, one must never abandon works of charity, mortification and sacrifice. There is the simple concept called Random Acts of Kindness (RAoK), which is all about spontaneously doing a good turn to another, such as, buying an ice-cream for a poor kid, or paying the taxi-driver and allowing him to keep the change, and so on.

But besides these small acts of service, each one must find out in what manner he or she could serve the society by making a positive

contribution? These days there is no dearth of Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) which work for a variety of causes: caring for the stray dogs, carrying accident victims, free of cost, to the nearest hospital, caring for the old people, rehabilitating prostitutes and drug addicts, and so on. There are accounts of single individuals, fired with zeal, making their own little contribution to the society, showing that one who wishes to *serve* does not need a lot of money, or time, he only needs the will and desire to serve. A woman from a middle-class family visits a nearby hospital, *every day*, with six dozen bananas and remains there for an hour distributing them to the pregnant women from poor sections of the society, so that none should suffer from calcium deficiency! And yet, in spite of hundreds of such individuals and organizations "serving" humanity, why is there so much misery? The answer is, we have been dealing with the effects, and not the causes.

In his article, "Humanitarianism," which appeared in the magazine, *The Advent*, Alok Pandey echoes theosophical concept of service. He points out that today humanitarianism is the religion of the younger generation but the service is not performed with the highest motive. There is also the question: Who are we going to serve—the personality or the real man? We may do our best to provide food, clothing and shelter, but could we stop at that? He writes:

Humanity needs help and urgently so. But what is the real disease? Hunger, physical and emotional deprivation, wars, petty family quarrels, legal disputes, the breaking of hearts, the fear of exams, mounting stress, broken homes, deserted children, crime and rape, plunder and murder, and so on are but symptoms, not the illness proper. If we treat the symptoms without care for the disease itself, then the illness will return in another name or form. Outer help, devoid of an inner change, is like putting a nice plaster and paint to conceal the cracks of a house in shambles. There are only a few who want and work for inner change....

And helping each other move and grow towards this source of all Light and Love, to help unleash the hidden springs of the soul, to inspire and awaken man towards a new vision of sublime peaks where truth and love and peace and happiness dwell as permanent inhabitants, is the real service.

When someone asked Robert Crosbie, "Why is it that Theosophists are so passive to political and social conditions?" He replied that so long as we do not take care of the *cause* and only poultice the boil on the body, it is useless. It is easy to see that the boil would burst and after a few days a new boil will appear in another part of the body. So we need to identify the cause, the item in our diet, which produces the boil. Thus:

It is apparent to anybody that the cause of all human troubles is selfishness and ignorance....If every man were to have this [true] knowledge, he would see that true happiness for all can be obtained only when each human being uses all his powers for the good of others.... The greatest need, then, is to have a right and true philosophy of life. (*The Friendly Philosopher*, p. 77)

We are asked to base our efforts at social amelioration on four doctrines: *Universal Unity and Causation*, *Human Solidarity*, *Karma and Reincarnation*. Let us recognize that we have all come from the same source and are going back to the same divine source, and that we are united on the inner plane. Hurt any person and the pain of that hurt is not restricted to that person alone, it will be felt by all men, in good time.

One of the essential ingredients of selfless service is learning to identify with another's pain. It is not out of pity alone that we serve another. We feel pity for a blind person, but we dare not put ourselves in his position to feel what it is to be blind. Every day we read about rape, how many times do we put ourselves in the shoes of a rape victim to feel her pain? Empathy is getting into the shoes of another,

keeping them on long enough to feel their pain, carry it with us and then try to find a solution. Often, we wear our shoes so tight that we are not even aware of the troubles of other people, who may be living the life of loneliness, deprivation, depression, and so on. More often than not, our own troubles and sorrows are exaggerated. If we suffer from a broken relationship, say, or financial loss, or have a nagging wife then our whole attention is taken up and is centred on that problem. *The Voice of the Silence* says: "Let each burning human tear drop on thy heart and there remain; nor ever brush it off, until the pain that caused it is removed." Empathy, in the highest sense, is a spiritual bond, which we are able to build only when we recognize oneness of humanity, and then we are truly able to share in the joy and sorrow of another. Selfless service must have as its foundation, self-sacrifice.

Worship is becoming worthy of having relationship with our divine nature and that means to open up the channel of communication with the divine so that the Divine can speak to us and guide us. Generally, our concept of worship consists in making an offering of some "material thing" to an external deity. Even that would deserve to be called "worship" only if it is done with a *pure heart*. But there is more to worship than that, as expressed in the *Gita*:

Whatever thou doest, O son of Kunti, whatever thou eatest, whatever thou sacrificest, whatever thou givest, whatever mortification thou performest, commit each unto me. Thus, thou shalt be delivered from the... bonds of action, and thy heart being joined to renunciation and to the practice of action, thou shalt come to me. (*Gita*, IX)

True worship is performing every action as an offering to Shri Krishna and that means performing it selflessly and without attachment to the results. Selfless action is that which is done without likes and dislikes, imbued with love. A person working in a toy factory may have a simple job of fitting nuts and bolts in various parts of the toy. But what is his attitude towards the work? Does he put his whole heart and soul into it, thinking all the time that the end

result will be a lovely toy that might give happiness to some child? Does he work with same zeal as if he were making the toy for his own child? If yes, then the whole humanity becomes for him his family.

Doing every duty carefully and cheerfully is superior to ritualistic worship. That is the message of most stories about devotees and saints. There is the story of Pundalik, who was a saint in Pandharpur, in Maharashtra. He is always described as *Matru-pitru bhakta* (devotee of mother and father) as well as *Vishnu-Bhakta* (devotee of Vishnu or Vitthal), because he used to serve his parents with same one-pointed devotion as he would God. The story goes that once when Vitthal visits him while he was serving his parents, he does not run and prostrate himself before Vitthal but throws a brick and asks him to stand on it and wait while he served his parents. Vitthal is delighted to see that his devotee was equally devoted to his duties, so he tells Pundalik to ask for a boon. Pundalik asks Vitthal to make Pandharpur both *Tirtha* and *Kshetra*, i.e., make Pandharpur as a holy place with a holy river flowing by, and also a place with God's temple. Today, Pandharpur is a holy place situated on the banks of river Bhima and also has a temple of Vithoba, the name of Vishnu, which means, "one standing on a brick." On the other hand there is the instance of a modern day doctor who refused to leave his daily *puja* (worship) halfway because he did not want to earn demerit and as a result a patient died! Service to humanity is equivalent to worshipping and serving the Lord, as expressed in the *Bible*:

For I was an hungered and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in....Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me. (*Matthew*, xxv:35-40)

LETTERS THAT HAVE HELPED ME

I salute you, my Brother, and wish you to reach the terrace of enlightenment.

—WILLIAM QUAN JUDGE

CAN ANY book, we may well ask, ever have gone forth into the world with a more truthfully descriptive title than the one known to us as *Letters That Have Helped Me*, by William Quan Judge? Written to "Jasper Niemand" (Mrs. Julia Campbell VerPlanck, later Mrs. Archibald Keightley) in the closing years of the last century, and appearing originally in *The Path*, the magazine founded and edited by Mr. Judge, the first volume of these letters appeared in book form towards the end of 1891. A second series, compiled by Jasper Niemand and Thomas Green, consists of letters and extracts from letters written to a number of people in different parts of the world, and was published in 1905, since when both series have been repeatedly reprinted. The number of those who have been helped by them must be legion, and those who have fed upon them can avouch how great that help has been. Let the testimony of one reader speak for all. The Irish poet George William Russell (AE) refers to the Letters as "written by a man whom I consider the wisest and sweetest of any I have ever met. I have more reverence for him than for any other human being I know of. I hope they will mean as much to you as to many of us. They are not badly written; but do not think of fine or beautiful phrases when reading them, but only of the things it is good to live with and ever to keep in mind. I think he says only things he *knows*"

Granted, it is the matter, not the manner, that counts most, yet, because the expression of Truth by one who "knows" is invariably fine and beautiful, such phrases are assuredly not lacking. What of the oft-quoted one so applicable to the writer of it, "Let us use with care those living messengers called words"? Or that other, equally well known: "The first step in *becoming* is Resignation. Resignation is the sure, true, and royal road." Again, there is the visionary: "We

have, each one of us, to make ourselves a centre of light; a picture gallery from which shall be projected on the astral light such scenes, such influences, such thoughts, as may influence many for good, shall arouse a new current, and then finally result in drawing back the good from other spheres from beyond the earth." And if we seek poetry, this passage surely approaches it: "The darkness and the desolation are sure to be ours, but it is only illusionary. Is not the Self pure, bright, bodiless, and free—and art thou not that? The daily waking life is but a penance and the trial of the body, so that *it* too may thereby acquire the right condition. In dreams we see the truth and taste the joys of heaven. In waking life it is ours to gradually distil that dew into our normal consciousness."

But neither vision nor poetry was W.Q.J.'s object in his letter-writing. That object was always, unswervingly, the clear presentation of the teachings of Theosophy as transmitted by H.P.B. from her Masters, and—thereby—the helping of every sincere seeker whose need might come before him in his busy days of indefatigable and often single-handed work. "I do not know what to write," he confesses once, "for I've been so occupied with people. I am anxious about my lectures; still unprepared... Indeed, I often think how nice it would be not to speak or write. I am no hand at those nice phrases that people like." As guide and friend, though, he was *never* "unprepared." "Receive my brotherly assurances," he writes, "my constant desire to help you." And to an unknown inquirer, "I shall be glad to give you any information possible respecting Theosophy and the Theosophical Society." To another he gives the reassurance: "It is a relief to turn from the eternal legal quibbles (of my business) to say a word or two on eternal matters." And indeed his whole attitude to the task of constant letter-writing is summed up in his reply to one who is obviously a stranger to him: "You by no means need to apologize for asking my attention to the matter... It is my great desire and privilege to give to all sincere enquirers whatever information I may possess, and certainly there can be no greater pleasure than to further the internal progress of any real student and

aspirant."

W.Q.J., assuredly was not one who failed to practice what he preached. He speaks from the heart when he says, in concluding a lengthy letter, "Let us, then, extend help to all who come our way. This will be true progress; the veils that come over our souls fall away when we work for others." There is a hint here of personal experience. It gives us an insight into Mr. Judge's modest, unassuming nature. Great occultist as he was, illumined master of the Theosophic teachings, he can readily align himself with an earnest inquirer, as though writing from the same lowly level: "I will talk the matter over with you for your future guidance in replying to such question; perhaps also to clear up my own mind." Again, "I am, like you, struggling on the road." And again, "As before, so now, I will do all I can for you, which is not much, as each must do for himself." Finally, "I wish I could answer your letter as you ought to have it done. But I feel my inability. However, our duty is to never consider our ability, but to do what comes to be done in whatever way we can, no matter how inadequate the work appears to others... So I will just say what comes." This last extract, which bears the stamp of true humility. That injunction, "our duty is to never consider our ability, but to do what comes to be done in whatever way we can," is but one example of the simple, unforced way in which W.Q.J. can introduce into his letters a bit of valuable Theosophical teaching. In another, in which he strongly advises his correspondent "to give up all yoga practices, which in almost all cases have disastrous results unless guided by a competent teacher," he goes on to offer the counsel of his own sound common sense: "If you will take some subject or sentence from the *Bhagavad-Gita*, and concentrate your mind upon that and meditate upon it, you will find much good result from it, and there is no danger in such concentration."

Warmth of heart glows throughout the Letters. ("I cannot tell you how my heart turns to you all.") So, while deeply aware of their spiritual wisdom, it is delightful to note their human affection

also. "That you may pass beyond the sea of darkness," he tells Jasper Niemand, "I offer you my life and help." To another, "I wish you luck, and wish I could do more for you. But I will do what I can." The note of brotherhood is struck repeatedly. "*Brother*" he reminds us, "was the noble name given in 1875 to the Masters. Hence you and I and all of us must cultivate that." At some period when he has not had any letters or news from anyone to lead him to write, In begins his own letter by saying simply, "I send you a word of brotherly greeting," and continues, "We are so far away from each other that now and then such a greeting is well, and should be taken in the spirit it is sent." Again, he urges, "Let us all draw closer together in mind and heart, soul and act, and try thus to make that true brotherhood through which alone our universal and particular progress can come."

Naturally, with his great powers of mind and spirit. W.Q.J, did not depend for communication upon the written word alone. "A word of love to — ?" he writes, as though taking up some query or request; "I sent it, I sent many, I not only sent it visible but also the other way. What could I say? I do not know. In what I sent my whole heart was put." This recurs in a letter to a friend who was tending a sick person. "I would I were there with you. Tell him how much I love him... Words are of no use. I have sent thoughts, and those are useful.... I sent every night lately all the help I could and continued through the day, not only to —, but also you. It reached there. I know, but I can't overcome Karma if it is too strong."

Mr. Judge makes little reference, however, to such inner powers and these two instances are mentioned here only as revealing further his warmth of human feeling. Of this there is touching proof when he says, in concluding a letter, "I am writing this, instead of machining it, in order that you may feel the force of my love and comradeship." Another example occurs in a letter to the Theosophical Publication Society when it adjudged his fine *Epitome of Theosophy*, which had appeared in *The Path*, as "too advanced to be reprinted now," averring that what was needed was "a stepping-stone from

fiction to philosophy." Mr. Judge begins his reply by stating that he had learnt of this "with great regret, but he ends it "Fraternally yours." Brotherhood first, last and always: As he says elsewhere, "Let us be of and for peace."

All his forms of concluding his letters are characteristic and beautiful. "I give you my best wishes and brotherly greeting for the new year and for every year that is to come. Affectionately yours." "Good-bye, then, and may you find that peace that comes from the self." "Again, in storm and shine, in heat and cold, near or afar, among friends or foes, the same in One Work." "Good-bye, and good luck, and may the devas help you and also karma. Love to all, as usual. As forevermore." The phrase "as forevermore," or a similar one, recurring frequently, seems to indicate his sense of a lasting relationship. "As forevermore and after." "As formerly, and as now, and as forever and forevermore." "Again I go, as forevermore." Perhaps the key to this sense of timelessness lies in the italicized words (italics ours) of a final greeting: "Let us go on from place to place and from year to year; no matter who or what claims us outwardly, *we are each the property of the self*. As forevermore and after...."

Letters That Have Helped Me could provide matter for many articles. This is but a brief one, which has not sought to be a commentary, or even to mention the many aspects of Theosophical life and teaching that Mr. Judge deals with in his correspondence. Its purpose was simply to make contact with the writer himself in his warmth of personality, beauty of mind and strength of spirit. "May you all be well sustained" we seem to hear him saying across the years, and though his farewell comes to us, too, "And now, my Brother, for the present I leave you," his words of wisdom speak on for our guidance and inspiration.

Let us, in gratitude, return his own greeting—"Salute, most noble, brave, and diamond-hearted!" And let us honour him by striving to reach the Terrace of Enlightenment.

STUDIES IN THE DHAMMAPADA

THE WISE MAN—III

12-13. *Let a man value retirement which is hard to love; let him leave the householder-state, seeking the homeless one. Let the wise abandon the way of darkness and follow the light on the path. Leaving behind all sense pleasures, calling nothing his own, let the wise man cleanse himself from all impurities of the heart and then enjoy. (87-88)*

FOR an average man, "to live" is to constantly experience sensations, pleasurable as well as painful. Worldly life is full of sensations and it gives the person a feeling of existence. Usually, solitude is not welcomed. If we have a quiet hour to ourselves, what do we do? Call up a friend, watch television, go for shopping, switch on the music system, play some game or engage in any other activity which keeps us occupied. We find it very difficult to remain alone in our own company.

Hinduism speaks of four stages in the life of a Brahmin. The stages are: (1) The Student (*Brahmachari*), marked by chastity, devotion and obedience to one's teacher; (2) The Householder (*Grihastha*), requiring marriage, the begetting of sons, working to sustain one's family and to help support priests and holy men, and fulfilling duties toward gods and ancestors; (3) The Hermit (*Vanaprastha*) state, which begins when a man has seen the sons of his sons, consisting of withdrawal from concern with material things and pursuing solitude as also the ascetic and yogic practices; (4) The state of Homeless Mendicant (*Sannyasi*), which involves leaving the hermitage and renouncing all one's possessions to wander from place to place, begging for food, concerned only with the Eternal. Traditionally, *Moksha* (Spiritual Liberation) should be the pursuit of a man only during the last two stages of his life (*Encyclopedia Britannica*). When followed in right spirit, it prepares one to enter the spiritual path. They help us to cultivate detachment. While the

practice of four *ashramas* is no longer observed, one can try to follow it through various stages of life. Even as a householder, one must try to keep aside some time, say of half-an-hour, for meditation, self-examination, study of scriptures, etc.

Retirement is hard to love, whether it is from service or from some position or status in the world. Working to earn the livelihood becomes a ceaseless pursuit of ever increasing desires, for more money, higher position, improved status and comfortable living. Hence it is important to prepare ourselves to leave the Householder State and become homeless. The preparatory steps involve giving up of bad tendencies, restraining senses and remembering that we own nothing. Such a practice helps us to get rid of impurities of passion, anger, ignorance, arrogance and pride. It is necessary to give up even what the world calls legitimate desires because if indulged in, they tend to obstruct spiritual progress through attachment. For living the higher life, they have to be abandoned. One must learn to prefer the "good" over the "pleasant." It is part of the process of growing up spiritually. Our human nature does not like it; but the child has to give up toys if it wants to grow up. Similarly, we need to outgrow our worldly infancy. It does not mean that we cease to enjoy good things in life. On the contrary, this discipline makes us appreciate the value of good things and enjoy them without getting attached to them.

14. *Living in this world they attain the bliss of Nirvana whose appetites have been conquered, whose minds are well grounded in the elements of enlightenment and who cling to nothing but enjoy the freedom of detachment. (89)*

Being well grounded in the elements of enlightenment, the wise man is on his way to becoming an Enlightened One. He enjoys the bliss of Nirvana even while he is living on the earth. A note on the "Elements of Enlightenment" says, "These are seven in number and are also called Links of Enlightenment, because they lead to Nirvana. They are: (1) Mindfulness or attentiveness or self-

possession, (2) Wisdom or investigation of the Doctrine (*Dhamma*), (3) Energy, (4) Joyousness or Rapture, (5) Serenity, (6) Concentration or Meditation, *i.e.*, firmly fixed (*Samadhi*), (7) Equanimity." Included in the elements of enlightenment are the transcendental virtues mentioned in *The Voice of the Silence* such as *Virya* (Energy)—the dauntless energy that fights its way to the supernal TRUTH, out of the mire of lies terrestrial, *Kshanti* (Serenity)—patience sweet, that nought can ruffle, *Dhyana* (Meditation)—whose golden gate once opened leads the *Narjol* toward the realm of *Sat* eternal and its ceaseless contemplation. When one has risen above the likes and dislikes, conquered appetites and is well grounded in elements of enlightenment, one enjoys total freedom. Truly detached, one rises above the binding influence of all the three qualities, *viz.*, *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* and thus enjoys the highest happiness even while on earth. Equal-mindedness is called *Yoga* in the *Gita*. Such equanimity is achieved when one acts from the basis of the Self within. It is *Atman* which shines in all beings. IT is universal, impersonal and unaffected by anything that may come to pass in life—good or bad. IT is the spectator and a witness of the drama of life. The very highest in each one of us is the Spirit which is a direct ray of Absolute or *Parabrahm* or God, whose nature is *Ananda* or *unconditioned* happiness. In *The Voice of the Silence*, *Samadhi* is called "the state in which the ascetic loses the consciousness of every individuality including his own. He becomes the ALL." "It is the spark lost in the fire, the drop within the ocean, the ever-present ray becomes the All and the eternal radiance."

(Concluded)

A SUFI was asked: "Who is a Sufi?" He replied: "He who neither possesses nor is possessed."

—AL-KALABADHI

ON CLAIRVOYANCE OR "CLEAR SEEING"

CLAIRVOYANCE is "clear seeing." There are seven distinct planes of matter of which physical is one. True Clairvoyance is being able to see clearly on all these planes, and being able to also see things happening at a distance. We know that there is an element of illusion or error even in seeing, *i.e.*, in observations made on the physical plane, using physical eyes and physical instruments. Hence, in scientific experiments, "correction factor" is added to such observations to obtain correct results. In scientific (astronomical) measurements and calculations of distances it is impossible to be absolutely correct because these observations are made in *reflected light* (at night) and also due to the optical illusion caused by the atmosphere of the earth, say the Masters of Wisdom. We speak of people being "short-sighted" or seeing with jaundiced eyes, etc. They fail to "see" the situation *as it really is*, and add the colouring of their prejudices, biases, emotions, etc.

Likewise, "clear seeing" is equally difficult when one sees on the astral plane with astral senses, without proper training. Hence, Mr. Judge points out that there are very few genuine cases of clairvoyance that could be relied on. The cultivation of psychic senses is more difficult than any physical gymnastics. True Clairvoyance involves the ability to see as well as to *interpret* correctly what is seen on the astral plane. For instance, if we were transported to the planet Mars, and if we saw the beings on that planet act, and heard the sounds made in their speech, we would not understand what they were doing, since they were a different kind of beings from ourselves.

In the article, "Delusions of Clairvoyance," Mr. Judge cautions that the field of clairvoyance is full of delusions. If people could see clearly in the astral light and are able to interpret what they see then they should be able to aid us in discovering absconding criminals. They should be able to point out from where the stolen property could be recovered. We create pictures in the astral light or our aura,

by our thoughts and imagination and also by our ideas. Thus, the picture of the object we have actually seen in another's hand and the picture of the object we have only thought about, impressed in our aura or in the astral light may appear to be the same to an untrained seer. Thus, an anxious mother who vividly imagines her child meeting with a railway accident creates vivid thought-pictures, which are impressed in the astral light. When an untrained seer sees them he may mistake them for pictures of a real event, instead of being a product of emotion and imagination. When the seer is not trained he could project his own ideas on the picture of a person at a distance, he sees in the astral light. For instance, when seeing the picture of a person in a distant land, who may be wearing winter clothing, he may appear to the untrained seer to be wearing spring clothing because he was thinking about Spring season and spring apparels and thus sees the distant person in spring clothing. Consider a case when an untrained seer is consulted on some subject, or his opinion is asked about the course of action that you wish to follow. However, before consulting the seer, if you had consulted a person who thought very strongly and clearly on that particular subject, then there is a strong chance that the untrained seer will be influenced by his thoughts impressed in your mind, and he will repeat the ideas of that person and give the same advice. Just as the image on the retina is inverted so also there is reversion of images in the astral light. The picture of an object may appear upside down so that number 6 may appear as 9 and *vice versa*.

Sometimes the faculty of clairvoyance is inborn. It is possible to see visions and predict events through crystal gazing. In the article, "Visions in the Crystal" (*The Theosophist*, August 1882), H.P.B. mentions a crystal with curious properties in possession of Col. Olcott, from the Gastein Mountains. H.P.B. points out that the field of "conscious clairvoyance" is the most interesting field, where one uses many kinds of instruments of divination. A cup of water, or shinning objects or a smooth glass goblet filled with black ink, or a clean, round, smooth inkstand filled with ink could serve as "magic

mirror," in which pictures or images from Akasa or astral light get reflected (*The Theosophist*, March 1883). Questions pertaining to past, present and future are answered using the visions seen in the astral light. In the article, "The Universe in a Nutshell," H.P.B. quotes Eliphas Levi, thus:

The peraphernelia and instruments of divinations are simply means for (magnetic) communications between the divinator and him who consults him: they serve to fix and concentrate two wills (bent in the same direction) upon the same sign or object; the queer complicated figures helping to collect the reflections of the Astral fluid.

He goes on to explain that sometimes one sees in the coffee cup, or the white of an egg or in the clouds, fantastic forms which are reflection of the seer's imagination. Visions are seen in water when the optic nerve is fatigued and then there are cerebral illusions and one may mistake as real mere reflections of the astral light. He points out that the fittest persons for such divination are people with nervous temperament and vivid imagination—children being best adapted for it. (*H.P.B. Series No. 22*, p. 33)

True clairvoyance is also called seership and a true clairvoyant is called a "seer," who can "see things visible and invisible.. at any distance and time with his spiritual or inner sight or perceptions" (*The Theosophical Glossary*). However, the state of merely catching glimpses in the astral light passes for seership. Likewise, Trance State is often confused with seership. During cataleptic or somnambulant trance very few of the mysteries of life or even any knowledge about the trance state itself can be unveiled. There is only change in the field of action. In waking state we operate on physical plane, while in trance state we operate on astral plane. If trance state is induced in a person who is an illiterate person he can read from the astral light the record or impressions of all that is contained in the books written by Patanjali or Herbert Spencer. However, he can never make a comparison between the two systems,

unless someone has already made that comparison, which would then be impressed on the astral light. A person under mesmeric trance only throws off the impressions from the astral body when physical body is paralyzed. For instance, a servant girl used to hear a Bishop utter certain verses from some Latin and Greek works, and when under mesmeric trance she would repeat them, though she had no knowledge of Latin or Greek. Though the utterances of a person in trance state transcend his knowledge in ordinary waking state, it does not mean that he is getting that communication direct from the spirit. A trained seer is one who has complete knowledge of all the forces at work and of all the planes on which his consciousness functions.

Spiritual visions become possible by one of the two methods. An adept may receive direct impressions from his spirit by paralyzing at will, the memory, fancy, instinctual or independent action of cells and organs in the body and automatic activities of the brain. In *Isis Unveiled* (II, 591), we are told that unless these are paralyzed, they pose an obstacle to spiritual vision, which gets further distorted by vibrations of astral waves, even in a high state of *dharana*.

Apart from the adept, the persons in whom the spiritual visions become possible are those who had lived the life of extreme purity and holiness in previous incarnation and attained the state of saintship, as in case of Jacob Boehme. Such visions also become occasionally possible through extreme weakness and exhaustion of the body due to illness and suffering. Seeress of Prevorst is an example of this type of seership. In *Isis Unveiled* (1,463), it is said that the Seeress herself repeatedly stated that she supported life merely on the atmosphere of the people surrounding her and their *magnetic emanations*. She was a magnetic *vampire*, drawing vitality of others around her. In *Five Years of Theosophy*, responding to the queries, a Master of Wisdom writes that at present we have five senses. The Sixth sense in our race has hardly sprouted above the soil of its materiality. It is highly unreasonable to expect the Fifth Race men to have fully developed Sixth and Seventh senses. The

two exceptions being (a) the rare cases of constitutional, abnormally precocious individual evolutions as in case of Seeress of Prevorst and (b) those who have by training and special methods, reached the stage of Fifth Rounders and have fully developed their Sixth and sometimes even their Seventh sense, as in case of Count St. Germain. The Seeress of Prevorst is called a creature born *out of time*, a rare precocious growth, ill-adapted to the uncongenial atmosphere that surrounded her and hence ever ailing and sickly. As a kind of opposite pole of the Seeress of Prevorst, is the example of Swedenborg. What Swedenborg saw were psychic visions and he was often mistaken in what he saw in the astral light. He mistook denizens of astral light (elementals) for spiritual beings. "All that he says of subjective worlds and spiritual beings is evidently far more the outcome of his exuberant fancy, than of his spiritual insight." (*The Theosophical Glossary*)

Rude physical health is a hindrance to seership, as excess of *prana* sets up powerful molecular vibrations, which drown atomic vibrations. Since our lower four principles are molecular and the higher three are atomic, it implies greater activity of lower principles, instead of being paralyzed.

In *Isis Unveiled*, p. xxxv, describing Manticism, H.P.B. points out that when the initiate drinks sparingly of the sacred soma juice, it "stirs the Brahma." In other words, his spirit personified by the god Soma enters and takes possession of him and puts his soul in communication with the *highest divine essence* itself, leading to ecstatic vision, clairvoyance, and the gift of prophecy. Like the drinking of soma juice, wearing a wreath made of verbena leaves on the head is supposed to excite and intensify seership. On the other hand, morphine and opium would isolate the person completely from his divine nature, there being complete absorption in psycho-physiological world.

In *The Dhammapada*, the Enlightened One is described as, "a seer of limitless range." *Nabia* means seership or soothsaying. In Islam, a *Nabi* is a seer, one who brings out the scripture from *Akasa*,

while a *Prophet* only interprets the scripture. According to post-Vedic tradition, the *Rishi* is a "seer" (*mantra-drashta*) to whom the Vedas were "originally revealed" through states of higher consciousness. We may say that the hymns were seen or heard by attuning one's self to the *Akasic* realm.

Sruti means Revelation. *Smriti* results from remembrance of "what is heard," *i.e.*, *Sruti*. The *Sruti* is composed of the Four Vedas. Occultism teaches that these were delivered by Primeval Sages on Lake Manasa-Sarovar beyond the Himalayas, tens of thousands of years ago. They were first heard and remembered; then they were fully transcribed and then they were rearranged till their present form was reached. In the Western religions, both in modern Christianity and in its parent Judaism, Revelation connotes that which is revealed by God to his chosen Prophets. In Hinduism it does not mean that at all. By purity of life, study, and meditation the human soul becomes capable of hearing the Song of Life which Mother Nature chants in the Voice of the Silence; such highly evolved souls *repeat* in the language of words what is heard; that repetition is *Sruti* or Revelation. They saw by the Soul what the "upholders of the universe" who are "the knowers of the essence of things" were doing by way of duty and of sacrifice; what they heard and saw they described and that faithful description is the *Sruti*. This is *not* the work of one or several isolated individuals, but is the great record of Truth made by checking, testing and verifying the work of each with that of all others and by centuries of experience. (*Theosophy*, October 1931)

THE fish looks eagerly at the red fly
With which the fisherman will take him;
But it does not see the hook—
So it is with the poison of the world
Its danger is not realized.

—MECHTHILD OF MAGDEBURG

CLEANSING MIND AND HEART

WE LEARN so often that action must be controlled, desires must be controlled, thought must be controlled. But why and how?

If we turn to *The Voice of the Silence*, at the very outset we read that when we have become indifferent to what we perceive (through the senses and sense-organs), we have to find out the king of the senses who produces thought, for he it is that awakes in us illusion. Because of this illusion, we do not truly perceive or think of things as they are.

Unfortunately, most of us stop here, for the highest we actually know of ourselves is the mind we use every day. This mind is full of notions that we have entertained in the past; it is full of prejudices, full of conceit, for we are what we think, and as everyone thinks differently, in terms of "his own knowledge, experience, and consciousness, based on what he has already learnt" (*S.D.*, I, xlvi), there are clashes among men. We fight for our own, whether it is our land, our family, our thoughts and ideas, or our feelings. If we watch ourselves through one day, or even an hour or two, we shall find that we are not really thinking at all and are only acting automatically, or are thinking and planning in terms of what we already have filled our mind with, or are arguing with ourselves to prove our own ideas.

It is this mind, this thought-producer, that we have to perceive as operating in us. We should try to realize that it is composed of our own ideas, good or bad (derived mostly from others), our own preconceptions; or that we are accepting some idea new to us. Unless we look at all these ideas from a higher point of view than that of this mind in which they are contained, even new ideas will give rise to further prejudices.

Therefore *The Voice of the Silence* says that we must slay this "great Slayer of the Real." Then what? This is what we dare not conceive, for if we do, we are like a lone wanderer in a desert, with no other horizon, no food, no water. We are alone and desolate in

the world. This state comes to us often by karmic loss, whether of a friend, or of our familiar surroundings, or of our trust in others; or by the shock of finding that what we thought of something or someone was built on sand. The isolation of the soul is in a sense reflected here, and that is why we find it so difficult to kill the thought-producer, kill our preconceptions, our prejudices, our illusions, every one of them, and start all over again.

It is only when this state of loneliness and nakedness has been reached that it is possible for the higher aspect of the mind or soul to speak to us. In the noise-filled atmosphere of the cities today, our ears have become incapable of hearing the cries of distress of millions of beings, and of the earth itself, and the nightingale's song is not even thought of.

We can take an analogy; right in our room we can hear sounds from the whole world, but we do not hear them unless we "tune in" to a particular wave-length. We *can* tune in, but even then we cannot hear if there are other noises around. So we can tune in our own minds to hear the sounds we choose, until these sounds are like "the dull rumbling of a thunder-cloud." It is to be noted that this "dull rumbling" is not a piercing sound like the trumpet-blast. This rumbling reverberates throughout all space till all other sounds die away. But in between the hearing of the nightingale's voice and this rumbling there are many other sounds.

The first "sound" is that gentle feeling of loss which comes to us when we begin to give up our beloved possessions of ideas and feelings.

The second is that gentle sound which begins to help us to sense a fullness in the world, to half-awake to the immensity of space outside ourselves.

The next is our cry to get out of our limited self or shell.

Once we are free from that, we become almost overcome, as by the shrillness of the bamboo-flute. There is no turning back; it fills us, and often frightens us. But when we have been able to let it play through us, we pass on to hear the next sound.

This is like the trumpet-blast, which is the prelude to the last.

The last is like the rumbling of the thunder cloud, which swallows all the other sounds, as the sound of the swelling and moving waves swallows all the other sounds in and around it. It absorbs us in itself.

Where are all the other sounds, where are our preconceptions and prejudices and ideas? They have been absorbed in the rumbling, as the dead are absorbed in the waters of the ocean.

But we have been a part of them; they have our own life-force in them. Do we grieve when we lose them? We are told what to do: We must lay them at the feet of the Master. They are no longer ours; they are the gift of our former self to Those who would lead us onward to the great Life itself. It is only when we have done this that we are free to do the Master's bidding in fullness, for the self we knew has now been given up; it is no more. It is now His bidding that we obey; it is His ideas, which are illusionless, which are truth itself, that we hold. Our willfulness is no longer used to boost our little selves and opinions, for it has become merged in the will of the ONE. Henceforth we are great Nature's servant.

We have nothing left of the self we knew, but, instead of being surrounded by the vast dry desert, barren of life, all alone, we find ourselves in the vibrant world of Life, part of that Life; it is in our veins and obedient to our will as our will is now the will of the WHOLE.

We can see the insidiousness of pride, or selfhood, when we know the part it must play at the final moment of choice. If it is the desire to help mankind that is predominant throughout the long and arduous path, renunciation of bliss will naturally take place, for the whole of life will be reflected in the new recruit and he knows he can direct it for the good of all. But should there be one tiny germ of conceit left in him, the very power of the One Life will break the thought-picture of the aspirant, for no limited individuality could hold within it the power of the Whole.

It is, therefore, not even the desire to live to benefit mankind that has to grip us. Even that *desire* has to go, for it clothes itself in the

thought of oneself as an individual being. It is only the making of oneself a part of the Whole, not the mere desire to do so, that wins through. Complete self-abnegation has to come before that self can pour forth the stream of hard-earned knowledge into another bed.

Even the strong desire to serve Masters is not enough. It may be like the love of a Christian for Jesus, or of the Mohammedan for Mohammed, and land us in thousands of years of *devachan*, thus hindering our work of rendering service on earth. Therefore it is necessary to keep the mind free of preconceptions, however high and spiritual, and seek the abstract. Our individual planning has to go if we would co-operate with Nature's plans, so that little by little we destroy our personal emotions and emotional aspirations, cleanse our minds and throw out all that concerns ourselves. This will make our heart clean, for otherwise it is full of personal thought-desires. Get rid of them and the heart will be clean.

Is it enough to have a clean heart? The Christians speak of cleansing a man of the devil, but unless something is put in its place the condition of the man will be worse than before. Hence we must have something which will fill the clean heart.

There is that which cannot be given a form, for it is all forms. It is that "light from the ONE MASTER. The one unfading golden light of Spirit." Its rays are in all at every moment, without thought-form, but vibrant and clean.

Much has still to be done, but the beginning is made every time we try to follow the injunction in the *Voice of the Silence* to seek out and then destroy the "Thought-Producer, he who awakes illusion." But in its place it is the "golden light of Spirit" that has to become a background to life.

We must expect pain and sorrow and woe, for no change takes place without pain, but even on the way we get glimpses of "glories untold, unseen by any save the eye of Soul." Only the "VOICE unbroken, that resounds throughout eternities," is exempt from change.

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 significance of *Japa*—the practice of repeating God's name?

Answer: *Japa* is repetition of God's name. It is the practice common to almost all religions. Sometimes there is *mantra-japa* where some *mantram* or sacred formula such as *Om Namah Shivay* is repeated, as many as 108 times. But generally, the seeker is advised that there should not be *mechanical* repetition but that there must be simultaneous contemplation on the meaning and importance of the name or *mantram* being recited. *Japa* could be external verbal repetition of name or a *mantram*, or it could be *manasic japa* where one mentally repeats the name. *Japa-sadhana* acts as the purifier of mind, if one also meditates on the meaning while reciting the name. When many buckets of good water is poured in a bucket-full of dirty water, gradually, the dirty water flows out, and ultimately clean water displaces the dirty water. That is why the *Gita* recommends silent repetition of sacred texts. In *Samadhi-pada* (Book II) in the *Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali*, which deals with "means of concentration," the first verse says, "The practical part of concentration is, Mortification, Muttering, and Resignation to the Supreme Soul." This is a recommendation to "muttering" or semi-audible repetition of certain sacred formulae as well as OM, the mystic name of the Supreme Being. Aphorism 28 in Book I says that the repetition of OM should be done with reflection upon its significance. There is a deep mystical and symbolic meaning attached to AUM as a three-syllabled word. It denotes the trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva and hence, creation, preservation and destruction. In man, *au* refers to the spark of Divine Spirit within, *u* represents body through

which the Spirit manifests itself and *m*, denotes death of the body. In practical occultism, "Aum" refers to Sound or Vibrations, which is one of the greatest powers of nature, writes Mr. Judge. The practice of uttering "Aum" has the potentiality of liberating the Spirit from the confines of body, mind, intellect and ego. *Thus, japa* or muttering is an aid to concentration and purification of mind. Our mind is flighty and wanders from pleasant to unpleasant thoughts and is caught in day-dreaming or phantasy. Hence, even when a person is mechanically repeating the name or a formula, at least for that much time his mind is free from unwholesome thoughts, and the wandering mind is restrained.

To further aid this process, use is made of *japa-mala* or rosary, to keep count of the repetition of sacred syllables. The *mala* or rosary beads are made of *Rudraksh* seeds, stems of the Tulsi (Basil) plant, shells, lotus plants, gold, precious stones, pearls, crystals, etc. Different types of rosaries are used for different purposes. A Lotus-ma/a is said to destroy enemies. A *Kusa-mala* is said to destroy sins. A Silver-ma/a is said to fulfil desires, etc. Even if this is not true, it is easy to see that different metals, plants and especially *rudraksh*, have distinct magnetic properties, and might play some role in warding off evil influences. Mr. Judge points out that rosary was used in Japan from ancient times and they had over one hundred and seventy two sorts of rosaries. Rosary had also been placed with Egyptian mummies in their graves.

Besides "Aum," repetition of certain words and mantras are considered to produce definite results. There is *Rama-nama japa*. Rama is considered to be a *taraka-mantra* instead of being only a name. It is supposed to have the power of destroying sins and conferring peace and hence repetition of that name could ultimately free the person from the wheel of life and death. Mr. Judge points out that the Pure Land Sect of Buddhism in Japan, teaches that Amitabha Buddha vowed that any one who repeats his name *three* times would be born into his pure Land of Bliss. He says that these are various expressions of the doctrine of "salvation by faith." The

Brahmins also call it as "The Bridge Doctrine," where complete faith in Rama, Krishna and others paves a way to heaven, a bridge for crossing over all sins.

Though the story goes that Valiya, the bandit, repeated the name of Rama till ant-hills formed around him and ultimately he became Valmiki rishi, obviously it was not mere "repetition" of Divine Name that brought about the transformation and ultimate liberation. It may be looked upon as a means to acquiring concentration and then meditation. In fact, we are told that the practice of repeating the Divine Name or the *mantram* must be kept up to derive benefit. Gradually, one is able to go beyond syllables and surface level meaning of the name or the *mantram*, and is able to feel all that the name or the *mantram* stands for. There comes a time when there is constant awareness of the *mantram*. It is also true that "there are words which have a destructive [and likewise beneficent] quality in their very syllables, as though [they were] objective things; for every sound awakens a corresponding one in the invisible world of spirit, and the repercussions produce either a good or a bad effect." (*Isis*, 11,411)

Besides *Gayatri* mantra, *Mahamrityunjaya Mantra* (or, the Great Death-Conquering *mantra*), is yet another *mantram* recommended for repetition. It is a verse from Yajur Veda, considered to have power to conquer death. It is addressed to Siva, the "three-eyed" deity and the "third-eye" represents awakening of *Buddhi* and acquirement of wisdom, which destroys ignorance and releases us from the cycle of death and rebirth, conferring immortality.

Question: What is Horary Astrology? Can it be used to make accurate predictions about the future?

Answer: Mr. Judge points out that there are various divisions of astrology. There is the *Natal* or *Genethliacal Astrology*, which involves telling an individual's fate; *Mundane Astrology* involves forecasting wars and pestilence and it deals with nations, and *Atmospheric Astrology*, which is concerned with predicting weather conditions from certain aspects of the planets. These are not easy to

understand or practice, and require deep study of several years. However, he suggests that *Horary Astrology* can be soon learned by close attention; using which one is able to answer questions with far greater degree of certainty than in other three forms of astrology. Horary Astrology, also known as *Prashna* (question) *Jyotish* (astrology) involves answering questions without the use of natal horoscope. It is the answering of questions at any time upon any subject whatever, about which the questioner is anxious. In Natal Astrology, the horoscope is cast using time and place of birth. Likewise, in Horary Astrology, the time when the question was asked is important and is used in calculating the horoscope, using which the answers are given. In astrology, the day is taken to start from sunrise and is divided into twenty-four units called *horas* or hours. Probably, the word "horary" is derived from "*hora*" because in Horary Astrology, the "*hora*" or "hour" at which the question was put is important. We are told that the first hour of each day is ruled by that day's planetary ruler. Thus, on Sunday, the first hour after sunrise is ruled by Sun and then other hours are ruled by other planets in the sequence of Venus, Mercury, Moon, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, cyclically, so that the first hour after sunrise on Monday comes to be ruled by Moon, and so on. In Horary Astrology, the horoscope can be calculated based on the hour at which the question was put, or in a variety of other ways. For instance, the *lagna* or ascendant, in Horary horoscope could be the sign *rising* in the east when the question was put. It could be calculated using the phonetic values of the syllables uttered by the questioner, or, based on the parts of the body the questioner touched, at the time of putting the question. It could also be the compass direction in which the questioner stood at the time of putting a question, or, by the numerical value of the first letter of the name, or the numerical value of the full name, etc.

In the article, "Astrology Verified," Mr. Judge gives several instances when he consulted with benefit, persons having the knowledge of Horary Astrology. In one instance he signed a contract at exactly 3.00 p.m. relating to the use of electric light. He sent a

question to four persons with the knowledge of Horary Astrology: "At 3.00 p.m. today I signed a contract; what will come of it?" No other data was given. He says that all of them unanimously replied that *nothing* would come of it, but that the project would be abandoned, and the expenses involved would eat up any money made through the contract. The prediction was absolutely correct as the project was abandoned within eleven weeks and no profit was made. Likewise, Mr. Judge had put a question: "My father is sick; what will come of it?" The clear answer was: "All the indications are bad. He will die in a few days, but his death will be easy and calm." As predicted, his father died within fifteen days, "as calmly and sweetly and as a child would drop to sleep." Mr. Judge writes that Horary Astrology is a correct form of divination. Nature is one vast machine whose wheels work one within the other, so that calculating the motion of one wheel can enable us to calculate the motion of all other wheels. Those who have the *genuine desire to benefit humanity* can master and use this knowledge. Thus:

Anxiety is one of man's greatest and most insidious foes. It fetters his energy and defeats his ends. If Astrology will relieve one at any crisis from anxiety, is it not well to foster its pursuit and spread its fame? It has relieved me often from anxiety which, without it, I would have felt for months. It will do the same for any one. (*The Theosophist*, April 1882)

The above explanation on Horary Astrology and its use, to make accurate prediction, should not give us an impression that we may form dependence on Astrology for frequent consultations, to avoid anxiety. There are people who habitually consult their favourite Astrologers. Though Astrology is an exact science, horoscope interpretation and prediction require purity and intuitive perception on part of the astrologer, which only a few possess.

The Theosophical Movement
 1910-1911

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

People in India are becoming increasingly conscious as regards environment pollution and saving the depleting resources of our planet. Many opt for organic food, cracker-less Diwali, and prefer jute and cloth bags over non-degradable plastic bags. But these and the like practices will remain inconsequential droplets that will evaporate under the harsh sun of an economic model that is geared towards maximizing consumption and production, which is actually responsible for the state of the earth today. It seems that the traditional Indian lifestyles, rooted in spiritual values, offer a creative alternative to the economics of greed. We have to revive those values and integrate them in our present lives. For instance, there has always been emphasis on need-based and not greed-based consumption—an ethic of taking only as much as is needed. Green life or green technology was already an inseparable part of Indian society, where the impulse to "use and throw" was curbed. Water used for washing vegetables was used to water plants. Likewise, clothes, rubber-bands, paper and matchsticks were creatively reused.

The eco-friendly life-style is inspired by the key spiritual principle of balance mentioned in various spiritual traditions. For instance, Patanjali's Yoga Aphorisms aim at balanced development through self-control, non-possessiveness and non-attachment. It encourages letting go of the impulse to acquire more things and enjoy what you already have. This "letting-go" frees the mind and also reduces the burden we put on earth and her fast-depleting resources. The Sanskrit directive, "*Ati sarvatra varjayet*" to avoid excesses everywhere—whether it is cars, mobile phones, iPods or clothes. It is the quality of deep attention and being fully in the present moment that makes for happiness and not the endless consumption or infinite repetitions of a particular experience. The Jaina vow of *aparigraha* or non-possession is actually a call to not draw boundary around anything, *i.e.*, not establishing ownership in our minds over our spouse, children, homes or jobs, and know that we are only custodians. We

can extend this attitude of caring, as against grasping, in ever-increasing concentric circles, from the self, to the family, the nation, the biosphere, the ecosphere and the whole universe, and help spark global economic renaissance, writes Swati Chopra. (*The Times of India [The Crest Edition]*, November 7, 2009)

In our age sensual pleasures and their continuous enjoyment are the be-all and end-all of life. Advertisements and the media stimulate desires and we are glamourized into believing that we "need" certain things, whereas we only "want" them. Multiplication of wants is taken as a sign of progress. "Contentment is the greatest wealth" taught Lord Buddha. Discontentment could not only be a cause of vitiating the outer environment but also the moral environment. In the name of progress the forces of rivalry and competition are allowed to take possession of our consciousness. Gandhiji said that we are trustees of our possessions. "Non-possession is allied to non-stealing. A thing not originally stolen must nevertheless be classified stolen property, if one possesses it without needing it. Possession implies provision for the future. A seeker after Truth, a follower of a Law of Love cannot hold anything against tomorrow. If each retained possession only of what he needed, no one would be in want, and all would live in contentment."

It is time we recognized that our happiness neither arises from nor is dependent upon our possessions. We live in the midst of plenty and are joyless, remarks Dr. Erich Fromm, the psycho-analyst. We, who foolishly seek repetition and intensification of our pleasures, forget that the law of diminishing returns governs our pleasures, and that at last it all turns to dust and ashes in the mouth.

Despite their animosity, do the Jews and the Pathans in India come from the same ancestral stock—the Biblical lost tribes of Israel? A few tribes of Israel migrated all over Asia, a few thousand years ago. An Indian geneticist, Shahnaz Ali is studying link between the

Afridi Pathans based in Lucknow (India) and these tribes. If the link between the Pathans and the Jews is established, it is likely to throw light on Muslim-Jew relations, observes Dr. Navras Aafreedi, a researcher in Indo-Judaic studies and one of the first proponents of the common-origin theory in India. The term "Ten Lost Tribes" refers to the ancient Israeli tribes that disappeared from the Biblical account after Assyrians overran the *Kingdom of Israel* in 722 B.C. and sent them into exile. Some descendants of these lost tribes are said to have settled in India between 1202 A.D. and 1761 A.D. It is believed that the Pathans are descendants of the Ephraim tribe. The tribes were named Asher, Dan, Ephraim, Gad, Issachar, Manasseh, Naphtail, Reuben, Simeon and Zebulun. Two other tribes, Judah and Benjamin, had set up the *Kingdom of Judah*. It is felt that the Pathans or Pashtuns in Lucknow district of India could be safely and easily approached for collecting DNA samples, for academic purposes, the same would not be possible with the Pathans in Afghanistan or in Pakistan. (*The Times of India*, January 12, 2010)

In the *Secret Doctrine* (1,200 and fn.), H.P.B. points out that the Jews and the Arabs are the later Aryans—degenerate in spirituality and perfected in materiality. Further, the Jews are descendants of the *Tchandalas* of India, the outcasts, many of them ex-Brahmin and who, driven away from India, sought refuge in Chaldea, Scindia and Iran. They were born from A-bram (No Brahmin) some 8000 years B.C. The Arabs, on the other hand, are descendants of those Aryans who would not go into India, at the time of dispersion of nations, and remained on the borderlands of Afghanistan and Kabul, and some of them penetrated and invaded Arabia. In the footnote, H.P.B. points out that the Afghans call themselves *Ben-Israel*, or children of Israel, from *Issa*, which means woman and also earth. But an Afghan would not like to be called a *Yahoudi* (Jew). The names of supposed twelve tribes of the Jews and that of the Afghans, are the same, only the Afghan tribes are older than the Israelites. On translating the names of the oldest Arabic tribes we find that they yield the names of the zodiacal signs and also of the mythical sons

of Jacob. "Where are the traces of the Jewish twelve tribes? Nowhere. But there is a trace, and a good one, that the Jews have tried to deceive people with the help of those names," writes H.P.B.

H.P.B. observes that the alleged ten tribes of Israel disappeared during the captivity period, without leaving a trace behind them. In fact, the Jews had only two tribes—those of *Judah* and of *Levi*. The *Levites* were not a tribe, but a priestly class. (*S.D.*, II, 130)

In the *Secret Doctrine* (II, 471 fn.), H.P.B. points out that originally, the Fifth or Aryan race was divided into seven primitive types, but of which there now remain on earth only three types. She affirms the view of Prof. W. H. Flower that in the course of time, the primitive man diverged into three extreme types, represented by Caucasian of Europe, the Mongolian of Asia, and the Ethiopian of Africa, and the existing humanity can be ranged around these three types. H.P.B. writes that the Jews are an artificial Aryan race, born in India, and belonging to the Caucasian division.

Does God really exist? In her latest book, *The Case for God: What Religion Really Means*, the author, Karen Armstrong, a former nun and a prolific writer on religion, once again, attempts to understand the nature of God and religion. From the time of the primitive cavemen to the contemporary times, she traces the evolution of religious beliefs with remarkable erudition and skill. She distinguishes between *mythos* (myth) and *logos* (reason), and points out that when *mythos* and *logos* are confused—as in theories like intelligent design—we have "bad science and inadequate religion." Her emphasis is on bringing back the more intuitive and creative element of religion instead of scientific rationality. She points out that the religious fundamentalists distort the very tradition they are trying to defend.

She mentions the incident in 1802 when Napoleon Bonaparte visited Pierre Simon de Laplace, the leading scientist of the time,

and after talking about the wonders of the cosmos asked, "Who is the author of all this?" Laplace is said to have replied, "I have no need of that hypothesis," and that remark, says Armstrong, marks the beginning of the modern attitude when no need was felt to acknowledge the supreme creator. A few decades later, German philosopher Ludwig Feuerbach, argued that God was an oppressive human construct. But as against this she mentions great scientists whose science was rooted in faith. Johannes Kepler, the astronomer, is said to have remarked that in his mathematical explorations he had followed the "footprints of the Creator," while Darwin is said to have admitted that he was never an atheist in the sense of denying the existence of God. Albert Einstein said: "He [God] does not throw dice." She explores the teachings and traditions of monotheistic religions, such as, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. She remarks that in the eighth and ninth centuries, the Muslims developed the tradition of *falsafah* (philosophy) and Ibn Sena (or Avicenna), the Muslim philosopher, spoke about direct intuitive knowledge of God. Likewise, Thomas Aquinas said, "We cannot consider in what way God is but only in what way he is not." Voltaire is supposed to have remarked that if God did not exist it would be necessary to invent him.

"Karen Armstrong is not really interested in making a case for God. Instead she builds up a case against the militant atheism of Richard Dawkins and his followers... Readers seeking an answer to whether God exists or why terrible things are done in the name of religion would probably be disappointed with this book.... Armstrong believes religion is all about a 'stunned appreciation of an otherness beyond the reach of language,' somewhat akin to William Wordsworth's description of a 'presence' that disturbs him with joy," writes Ronojoy Sen (*The Times of India [The Crest Edition]*, September 26-October 2, 2009).

Humanity has always been divided into two camps: believers and nonbelievers. Belief in God's existence rests mainly on the anthropic principle, while non-belief rests on unaccountability of

so much pain and wickedness. Like the Greek philosopher Epicurus, the atheists argue that if an omnipotent and benevolent God exists, why should there be so much suffering and evil? Why does God—if He exists—allow earthquakes, floods and typhoons to occur, bringing death and destruction in their wake? The theists counter this with the free-will argument. Except for the atheists, each person has his/her concept of God. Human history shows that in the beginning when man identified himself with nature, he worshipped animal gods. But as time passed and man became aware of himself as the crown-piece of evolution, he endowed God with human form and attributes.

God is Law, and the anthropic principle seems to emphasize the existence of intelligence behind the orderliness of the universe. There is evidence of law and order from all branches of science. God, in Theosophy, is an Impersonal, Eternal, Boundless, Omnipresent and Unchanging Principle. To assign to It any attributes, is to dwarf It, and hence, in the Upanishads the sages describe It as, "*neti* (not this), *netiV*

THE UNBELIEVER'S argument is always shamefaced: where is the single sign that indicates the truth of that unbelief?

Where in this world is to be found a single minaret in praise of the unbelievers, so that it should be sign (of their veracity)?

The unbeliever's argument is just this, that he says, "I see no place of abode except this external world."

He never reflects that, wherever there is anything external, that object gives information of hidden wise purposes.

The usefulness of every external object is, indeed, internal; it is latent, like the beneficial quality in medicines.

—JALALUDDIN RUMI