

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

Vol. 74, No. 12

October 17, 2004

THE GREATEST OF ALL WARS PREPARING FOR VIJAYADASHAMI

The outer wars are but elongated shadows of the war within. The cancerous disease of thoughtlessness is eating away the eye of spirit. Involved in this tragedy, man fears and declaims about the iniquity of neighbours and kin; all the while the trouble is within himself. He is suffering from the *delirium tremens* of consciousness, having drunk to the full of selfishness; pride rules his will; egotism energizes his conduct.

—Thus Have I Heard

FESTIVALS like *Vijayadashami*, *Janmashtami*, *Deepavali* are reminders to us of the presence of the light of divinity within. *Vijayadashami* or *Dasara* is the festival of victory. *Dasara* is celebrated on the tenth day in the bright fortnight in the month of *Ashwin*. It is the festival associated with war. It is on this day that Goddess Durga won a victory over the buffalo demon Mahishasura. The legend goes that a strong and ferocious monster, Mahishasura, once defeated all the gods, so that even Indra, the king of the gods, had to run away from heaven. He, along with other gods, went to Siva, and hearing their grievances Siva sent Durga, his wife, to destroy the demon. It is said that all the deities provided her with potent weapons—Siva gave her his trident, Vishnu his disc, Yama his spear and so on. After a fierce battle of nine days and nine nights she destroyed the demon on the 10th day. Different deities assisted Durga, implying that all the forces of Nature help as long

A Magazine Devoted to The Living of the Higher Life

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THEOSOPHY COMPANY (INDIA) PRIVATE LTD.

40 New Marine Lines, Mumbai 400 020, India

as *Dharma* is on our side. It is on the same day that Lord Rama obtained victory over Ravana.

Now destroying Mahishasura, a demon with the head of a buffalo, signifies the crushing of our animal nature. It also represents the victory of good over evil, of light over darkness. It is the victory of those who preserve the cosmic order over the disrupters of the cosmic order.

It was on this day that the *Kshatriyas* used to cross over the boundaries into the territories of each other, indicating the need to go beyond our limited powers and abilities. But these limitations are brought on us by *Karma*, *i.e.*, by the way we have lived our lives in past incarnations. Each one of us is invited to cross over the self-created boundaries. Have we ever thought it possible that we can transcend our present limitations and be a Buddha, experiencing unconditional happiness?

It is said that even Buddha, before he was born as Prince Siddhartha, in one of his prior lives was only a sweeper. But when as a sweeper he saw a *Tathagata*—Buddha Deepankara—he was impressed by his calm and compassionate appearance and decided to emulate the *Tathagata*. After that it took him the effort of many lifetimes to become a Buddha.

A beginning has to be made from what we are and where we are. But when we introspect we feel: “I pray to god, help people whenever possible, do my work sincerely, so all in all, I am leading a good life and others around me feel the same about me.” Thus, we are satisfied, not finding the need for higher goodness. As Prof. C. S. Lewis points out, it is only when this natural goodness lets us down, only when some experience shows that being good and nice is not enough, that we realize the need to become “new men.”

We start with our ordinary self with its various desires and interests and discover with pain that morality often requires giving up some of our desires that we consider legitimate. We experience an inner conflict. “Living the higher life” means waging a war not only against our *vices*, but also against our habits, beliefs, pet theories and our likes and dislikes. Each spiritual aspirant has “at

the first step to take himself steadily in hand and put the bit into his own mouth; no one else can do it for him.”

When we attempt to do this, there is an opposition on the inner planes from our own tendencies. A small resolve to take a walk for 15-20 minutes every day in the morning will give rise to many conflicting forces. Our habit of late rising, reading the newspaper in the morning, having our tea leisurely, etc., will clash with this resolve. Why are we habituated like this?

Our body cells are made up of very tiny units of energy, called elementals. Many such elementals form one cell. All our thoughts and feelings are impressed upon these elementals. All our habits leave a deep impress upon these elementals because we have been doing it for many years and many lives. Such elementals may be compared to an army of soldiers, who are trained in a particular way to follow a given set of commands. If the colonel of the army changes and he wants them to work in a different way, then he would give a different set of commands. But as the commands change, the soldiers would unite and oppose. Now, it would require great effort on the part of the colonel to efface their old habits as also the memory of old commands. Breaking a habit amounts to washing the concerned elementals clean of their first impressions, and giving them reverse kind of impressions.

In an ordinary person, the good and bad tendencies exist as complex collective forces, but when one decides to achieve some spiritual goal, these tendencies separate out into good and bad tendencies—into *Kaurava* and *Pandava* armies. Whenever one aspires towards a higher life, the good tendencies flourish, but it is a death sentence for the bad tendencies.

At a higher level, these separated tendencies act as an *abyss*, preventing the warrior from retracing his steps. As Shri Krishna tells Arjuna in the *Gita*, although *he* may not fight, his enemies will now fight, *as they have been aroused*. In other words, having made the choice and undertaken spiritual discipline, it is not possible to go back to living the irresponsible life. As *Light on the Path* suggests, this is as impossible as that a man should become a

child again.

Not only can we not run away, but also we cannot effect a compromise. We cannot be lenient with our lower tendencies. Our mental posture should be: "A firm position taken with an ideal end in view." No doubt, this is a long and difficult battle. As we have been building up these tendencies over many lifetimes, we cannot expect things to change overnight. Mr. Judge says, "Be patient even with yourself." We may begin by conquering small enemies. We may begin by practising a little asceticism every day. For instance, we may decide to adopt a simple lifestyle and give up overindulgence in things we like to do. In fact, we must make it a point to perform little acts of *Dana* (charity), *Tapas* (mortification) and *Yagna* (sacrifice) every day.

The most difficult foe to overcome is *Ahankara* or egotism. Mr. Judge mentions in *Letters That Have Helped Me*:

The question of sex is not the most difficult. The personal one is still harder. I mean the purely personal, that relating to "me." The sexual really relates only to a low plane gratification. If Nature can beat you there, then she need not try the other, and *vice versa*; if she fails on the personal she may attempt the other, but then with small chance of success.

Since we are up against foes such as these, the spiritual battle is a long one and a fierce one. *The Voice of the Silence* describes what kind of a warrior we need to be:

The fearless warrior, his precious life-blood oozing from his wide and gaping wounds, will still attack the foe, drive him from out his stronghold, vanquish him, ere he himself expires. Act then, all ye who fail and suffer, act like him; and from the stronghold of your Soul chase all your foes away—ambition, anger, hatred, e'en to the shadow of desire—when even you have failed.

In spiritual life one must be prepared to try again and yet again. What is it to remove a vice "even to the shadow of desire?" It means overcoming every vice in its subtlest form. For instance, when we do not actually hate a person but we criticize everything

connected with that person, then that is indirect hatred, which must be overcome.

All our vices when conquered in their gross form reappear in subtler form. For instance, ambition can appear at the level of wealth, fame, power and love. Often we do good without caring for material reward, but a little introspection shows that we are being ambitious at another level. We may look for public acclaim, recognition, praise, etc. If even this is foregone, then this ambition lurks at the level of power. We may not want wealth or fame, but we want to be consulted in everything that is done. If all three levels are surmounted, we at least want to be loved for our good works.

We shall need *Virya* or Spiritual energy, which is not to be manufactured but results on surrendering personal will to the Divine Will. Are we going to fight the battle all alone? We are all Arjuna. Like Arjuna—who had as his charioteer no less a person than Krishna himself—we too can invoke Krishna's help. *Light on the Path* gives advice: "Stand aside in the coming battle, and though thou fightest, be not thou the warrior....He is thyself, yet thou art but finite and liable to error. He is Eternal and is sure."

Let us beware that the divine within is the *Perfect Warrior* who will settle for nothing less than complete victory. The more we obey our conscience, the more it demands. As Prof. C. S. Lewis suggests, in the spiritual life there are no half measures. It is not cutting a branch here and a branch there, but the whole tree. We are guided towards the goal of absolute perfection. We may say, "I never expected to be a saint, I only wanted to be a decent chap." When some old habits are conquered we expect to get on smoothly, only to find that we are faced with new troubles and temptations. We are pushed to higher levels, so that we can be more patient, more loving and braver than before.

Even at the eleventh hour, we have a chance to turn the corner and seek the guidance of our Higher Self. The warrior "will never utterly desert thee." We may feel deserted when we lose touch with our divine nature, temporarily. A Master of Wisdom writes:

As the lost jewel may be recovered from the depths of the tank's mud, so can the most abandoned snatch himself from the mire of sin, if only the precious Gem of Gems, the sparkling germ of the Atma, is developed. Each one of us must do that for himself.

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DREAM EXPERIENCES

DREAMS are a subject of universal experience and interest, but are little understood. There is general interest in reading about dream experiences, in hearing others recount theirs and in narrating our own, but the rational explanation is generally lacking, as is also the capacity to guide waking life so as to be able to control dreams.

All dreams, from those having a physiological cause to the highest, those capable of revolutionizing the personal life, are but the results of conditions or states of consciousness. We have to understand ourselves first if we would understand the meaning of our dreams. Dreams from the higher aspect of our nature can give us real help and guidance. These can be encouraged, and, if the subject is properly understood, it is possible also to avoid the sensuous dreams which sometimes cast a shadow over the whole life.

In all of us there are three levels of consciousness, normal, subnormal and supernormal, just as the physical body has normal, subnormal and supernormal temperatures. Our usual habits and mannerisms, prejudices and predilections, belong to the normal level and are more or less the same for the average man. If we act in a childish and petty manner when the normal course of our lives is interfered with, or when we do not get what we want, we fall below the normal level of intelligence. The example may be given of a man who is used to one kind of bread and is unable to get it on one occasion; if he makes a fuss and loses his temper, he falls into a subnormal mood. If he silently takes it as an opportunity to mortify his appetite, he is in a slightly supernormal mood.

Man has three aspects, bodily, mental and spiritual. The very word "Man" comes from the Sanskrit "*Mana*" or "*Manas*," meaning "Mind." Man's normal mood is mental. The mood is subnormal when a man allows his intelligence to be affected or enslaved by the body, including its terrestrial passions and desires. When the human aspect is brought into harmony, at least for a time, with the

divine or Spiritual Self, the animal tendencies are controlled and the mood is supernormal.

Corresponding to this threefold classification, our dreams are (a) bodily or sensuous; (b) normal; or (c) of the highest type, real spiritual experiences. Our moods are the dreams of waking life. An average good mood corresponds to normal dreams, a sensual mood to subnormal dreams, and a high mood, as in true spiritual meditation, is of the same state as pure inspiring dreams. Fanciful daydreaming is subnormal. People weave stories around themselves as the chief characters, or hold imaginary conversations in which they always have the last word, etc. Reason is in abeyance when we fancy ourselves to be the centre of the picture. Castles in the air are merely a waste of time, and if they are continued they are dangerous, for fancy may wander into wrong channels and indulgence in wrong bodily practices may follow.

Fancy is a characteristic of adolescence and should not be carried over into adult life. Adolescent boys and girls should be helped to direct their fancy into right channels by being surrounded with an atmosphere of purity and given a noble ideal for their hero-worship. They should be given something to do so that they will not have time to daydream too much. Unfortunately, at that age children are allowed to read undesirable books and to go indiscriminately to the cinema, which intensifies those subnormal tendencies. Fancy is the antithesis of true imagination, the image-making faculty of the Soul, in which the reason is most active.

The difference between waking and sleeping consciousness is merely that outside impressions are cut off in sleep. There is no cessation of bodily organic functioning or bodily consciousness. The mind, however, functions detached from the physical body, but entirely in a subjective state, *i.e.*, the mind is turned within upon itself and is not aware of any surroundings or objects.

There are two main types of bodily dreams—those caused by bodily discomfort, and those based on impressions made on the body by wrong indulgence, actually or in fancy, during waking life. Our thoughts and feelings constantly affect the body, making

the heart beat faster, or making the breathing irregular or rhythmic. Dream reactions from waking thoughts may come much later, as when a person dreams of eating meat years after he has given it up.

In the normal man, the mind is trying to free itself from bodily dreams and to live in terms of its own ideation. This is impossible at once and so he has confused dreams. When something of the impress of the Spiritual Self is added to the mixture of mental and bodily dreams, an allegorical dream may result. The truth is caught by the brain, but is distorted by bodily and mental pictures.

The controlled and self-collected pure mind can be impressed by the Spiritual Soul, and the impression transferred to the brain. Such are warning dreams for oneself or for others, or retrospective dreams, picturing past incarnations. Higher still are prophetic dreams, proceeding from the Higher Self, which are possible even in waking life if the body has been kept pure, as the Temple of a Living God. In a still higher state of purified calmness and concentration, the man with a firm desire to benefit humanity can receive dreams from the Great Gurus, whose religion, philosophy and science is Brotherhood.

The important thing to remember is that *dream experiences depend on waking consciousness*. To have the higher type of dreams, we must control and purify the senses and study and meditate on universal principles.

You often say, "I would give, but only to the deserving." The trees in your orchard say not so, nor the flocks in your pasture. They give that they may live, for to withhold is to perish. Surely he who is worthy to receive his days and his nights is worthy of all else from you. And he who has deserved to drink from the ocean of life deserves to fill his cup from your little stream.

—KAHLIL GIBRAN

THE CULTURE OF CONCENTRATION

EVOLUTION of humanity is not a race in which one entity must defeat the others. Theosophy looks upon life on earth as a great drama: “All the world’s a stage, and all the men and women merely players,” said Shakespeare; and that is also the Theosophical view. Evolution is a drama in which every actor plays his own part, however trivial it be. Human beings differ from one another and each in his own place has to play his part. Life-evolution is teamwork; it is a co-operative and not a competitive venture. The play begins and ultimately ends for all actors—that is the cycle of evolution; some enter upon the stage first, some leave it last; but the success of the whole venture depends on the merits of each.

The purpose underlying human evolution gives us a new point of view. It shows us the reason, the logic and the truth, why selfishness ends in disaster, why competition defeats its own purpose. With the perception of this real aim in human evolution we recognize that Culture of Concentration should not lead to individual and personal success so that we may establish our superiority over others, but it gives us the power to understand and evaluate everything correctly, so that our behaviour and conduct is as true and as gracious as that of Nature herself. The really cultured person is he who seeks the bonds that bind him not only to his own caste or class, to his own set or circle, but who seeks the links which unite him harmoniously, as a human soul, to all beings in the vast cosmos. The culture we need for enjoying as well as understanding life arises from that spiritual attitude of the human mind. We are ignorant and unhappy in the mind—primarily and fundamentally. Diseases of the body and agonies of the heart, pain and anguish of every type and description, are of the mind and in the mind. And what we need is the culturing of the mind.

When we look at the minds of people, starting with our own mind, we find that human beings generally suffer from two main defects: there is the wandering nature of the mind, and there is the peculiar weakness of the mind which habitually runs to small, petty things, and moves round and round in restricted circles.

Everyone complains about the wandering mind: the businessman, the society woman, the student, all recognize this mental trait and also admit that their success or failure in life is very much bound up with their concentration. The mind of everyone jumps from object to object. Why is this? What is the remedy?

Then too when people look at themselves and analyse their own habits and actions, they find that they fall much below their ideals. They wish and aspire to become better, but they seem, somehow or other, unable to get out of the narrow grooves of life. They fail to rise to the heights which they see with their own minds, and their minds remain stuck to earth, though they see the beauty and the glory of the stars. What is the remedy?

Our first task in studying the subject of the Culture of Concentration is to understand the nature of the mind which wanders from object to object, but which also wanders round and round definite grooves, which are often narrow, and mostly restricted.

When we begin to trace the wanderings of the mind, we find out that the mind follows the course dictated by the senses. Our eyes see or our ears hear something, and immediately the mind goes in the direction of or runs away from that something. So there are three factors: there is the mind, there are the senses, and there is something else—our attraction to or aversion for the objects of sense. We see something which we like, and our mind immediately thinks about that thing and feels pleasure; we see someone we do not like, and our mind runs away so as not to contact that person. All the time the mind makes contact through the senses with the objects of sense because of our likes and dislikes.

The difficulty is not with the senses, for we have evolved them for our own growth and progress; nor is the difficulty with the many objects and people around us; it is not the fault of a thing or a person that we like him or it, or dislike him or it. The difficulty is in our likes and dislikes, called in Sanskrit *raga-dvesha*. They are, so to speak, the very life-essence or vitality of the senses and organs. The force of desire sways the senses, and for their own satisfaction

our desires draw upon and drag our mind. The mind contrives to fulfil the desires which are aroused by contact with the objects of sense. Therefore the *Gita* teaches:

Those enjoyments which arise through the contact of the senses with external objects are wombs of pain, since they have a beginning and an end; O Son of Kunti, the wise man delighteth not in these. (V, 22)

What then shall we do? Torture the senses as Hatha-Yogis do? Run away from the world and its many objects so that the senses may not contact them? These methods are useless and perverse. Let us learn to make the right use of the senses, not torture them. Let us also use and evaluate correctly the things of the world. For both these purposes we need the use of our mind. By mind and mind alone can we train and use the senses; again, by mind and mind alone can we ascertain the true values of all things. The attack must be on the likes and dislikes, on *raga-dvesha*, on our desires. In the Culture of Concentration, our attractions and aversions play an important part, one of the most important of which is presenting the mind with an object or a subject for concentration. There are many so-called concentrated minds in our civilization, but concentrated on what object or subject? What are such minds thinking of all the time? Of money, of fame, of acquiring this or obtaining that? This is most dangerous. For, when the mind has become absorbed in sense-objects, when it is following the dictates of the desires, it becomes so involved in those objects and those desires that it loses the guidance of the Soul, it weakens the very voice of conscience.

It is of primary importance therefore to ascertain the why and the wherefore of our likes and dislikes. Why do we want money? Why fame? Why this, that or the other? Moreover, the mind does not become really concentrated when it goes in the direction of the objects rather than in the direction of ideas. It becomes enslaved. People always think of objects; very few consider ideas. If the purpose of life is to learn, to gain experience, then we must take

into account the learner, the soul who is gathering experience. All great teachers of the Science of the Soul have emphasized this fact. When our mind is thinking of the worldly objects dependent upon the senses, running after those objects and thus misusing the senses, pain, suffering and sorrow surely result. But when the mind turns away from the objects and goes towards ideas, ultimately it learns how to use the senses correctly, and then health of body and of mind results. But often people, turning away from objects to ideas, go to the wrong type of ideas or to false or half-true ideas, and then also pain and suffering result.

In the Culture of Concentration we have to select such ideas as would (1) enlighten and strengthen the mind; (2) enable that mind to purify and elevate the desires; and (3) train the senses so that they fulfil their real purpose of becoming fit and worthy channels for the soul-force to flow. This is the threefold task each human being has to perform if our evolution is to be brought to a successful end.

There are three truths containing important ideas that will enable us to fulfil this threefold purpose.

(1) "*The soul of man is immortal.*" That is the first great idea on which the mind must dwell. It is the *soul* that is immortal, not the body and the senses, not the mind, not the wealth and fame that we hanker after. If the soul in us is immortal, our function is to learn to know how this is true and how to live accordingly. From the dawn of evolution, the spiritual part in us is immortal; that which is gained through evolution is the understanding of that immortality, the realization that the soul is immortal and has power over all mortal things. As our mind dwells on these concepts, it lets go of the desires and the senses. They fall away from the mind, and that mind becomes enlightened. The desires become aspirations, and the senses are not merely stations for receiving impressions or messages from the outside universe, but become channels for radiating forth the light of the soul, the magnetism of the soul, that soul-power which uplifts, energizes and inspires people. Turn to the second truth.

(2) *“The principle which gives life dwells in us and without us, is undying and eternally beneficent.”* In this we learn that that which is in us and that which is in great Nature outside of us are one and the same. God within and God outside, Self within and Self outside, are of the same essence and substance. This is important to recognize, for it gives us the true idea of prayer. What is there in great Nature that is not in every human being? The strength and power of Nature is in man, and man’s conquest over Nature is a clear proof of it. When the mind of man finds out the facts about any particular power of Nature, then that mind has resources to harness it and to utilize it. On the moral side, the compassion of Nature, the adaptability of Nature, the sensitiveness of Nature—all are possessed by every man and woman. The other great idea in this truth is that this principle of life within us and without us is beneficent. By our ignorance or by our perversity and selfishness we human beings produce evil. Wickedness is the result of the mental corruption of human beings. It is the human mind that spoils the beauty of Nature, the beneficence and the graciousness of Nature. So let our minds dwell on that principle of life which unites us to all men and to the whole of Nature, and which principle is eternally beneficent, ever and always just, righteous, beautiful and gracious, provided we co-operate with it, work in harmony with its laws. When this truth is recognized by the mind, it is not difficult to grasp the meaning and significance of the third truth.

(3) *“Each man is his own absolute lawgiver.”* Meditation on the first two truths convinces us that neither the God of religions nor the heredity of mechanistic science made us what we are, but our own thinking in the past makes or mars us in every part of our constitution. Our past ideation made our present perceptions, created our present character, brought to birth our present body with its brain and senses. It is no use blaming God or Nature, no use finding fault with racial or family heredity, no use holding our friends and foes responsible for what is happening to us. Meditation on this truth takes away any depression, for it reveals that in the

present, now and here, we ourselves can re-form our character, re-shape our body, by using our mind to see differently, to understand correctly, to evaluate the world and its people more truly. Each man is his own absolute lawgiver, in every department of life.

These three truths give us the right basis for commencing the education of the soul. Culture of Concentration, like any other culture, requires a basis or foundation. To recognize himself as the maker of his own destiny, to perceive that within him is that power which manifests strength and grandeur in Nature outside, to feel in the heart the force of the soul which is immortal—all this enables us to change ourselves now and here. Let us endeavour to make of our earthly life a heavenly song.

TAKE care not to casually discuss matters that are of great importance to you with people who are not important to you. Your affairs will become drained of preciousness. You undercut your own purposes when you do this. This is especially dangerous when you are in the early stage of an undertaking.

Other people feast like vultures on our ideas. They take it upon themselves to blithely interpret, judge, and twist what matters most to you, and your heart sinks. Let your ideas and plans incubate before you parade them in front of the naysayers and trivializers.

Most people only know how to respond to an idea by pouncing on its shortfalls rather than identifying its potential merits. Practice self-containment so that your enthusiasm won’t be frittered away.

—EPICTETUS

DIVINE DESIRE

WE are familiar with the words “behind will stands desire”; also with the injunction “Desire nothing.” We are also aware that desire, which in human beings is mainly rooted in Kama, the emotional wish for some object or experience, is the motive power in our life. How then can we become desireless without becoming apathetic?

It is useful, in studying any practical topic, to go to the metaphysical teachings of Theosophy, for ethics, or true living, is simply applied metaphysics. In *The Theosophical Glossary*, we find “Kama” defined as “evil desire, lust, volition; the cleaving to existence. Kama is generally identified with *Mara*, the tempter.” It is significant that, following this definition, the *Glossary* gives us the real meaning of the inner aspect of Kama—the spiritual aspect, as against the purely material aspect. We read under “Kamadeva”:

Kama is pre-eminently the divine desire of creating happiness and love; and it is only ages later, as mankind began to materialize by anthropomorphization of its grandest ideals into cut and dried dogmas, that Kama became the power that gratifies desire on the animal plane.

Therefore, when we read that “Desire first arose in IT, which was the primal germ of mind,” we need to try and understand what this Desire is, to get a grander idea of the primeval spiritual aspect of Kama. We can do this because we are told that “Sages, searching with their intellect, have discovered in their heart” that this primal Desire is “the bond which connects Entity with non-Entity, or *Manas* with pure *Atma-Buddhi*.”

It is therefore necessary for us to search in our own heart as well, and to learn just what was and is this Divine Desire. We are told that it is

the first conscious, *all embracing desire* for universal good, love, and for all that lives and feels, needs help and kindness, the first feeling of infinite tender compassion and mercy that arose in the consciousness of the creative ONE FORCE, AS SOON

as it came into life and being as a ray from the ABSOLUTE.

What this creative ONE FORCE is, and how it works can be gathered from this quotation from *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 328):

Manvantaric impulse commences with the re-awakening of Cosmic Ideation...concurrently with, and parallel to the primary emergence of Cosmic Substance—the latter being the manvantaric vehicle of the former—from its undifferentiated *pralayaic* state. Then, absolute wisdom mirrors itself in its Ideation; which, by a transcendental process, superior to and incomprehensible by human Consciousness, results in Cosmic Energy (*Fohat*). Thrilling through the bosom of inert Substance, *Fohat* impels it to activity, and guides its primary differentiations on all the Seven planes of Cosmic Consciousness...which in the course of the increasing heterogeneity...differentiate into the marvellous complexity presented by phenomena on the planes of perception.

Another wonderful description of the unity which prevailed after the first urge is given in this quotation from an Occult Commentary:

The nucleoles are eternal and everlasting; the nuclei periodical and finite. The nucleoles form part of the absolute. They are the embrasures of that black impenetrable fortress, which is for ever concealed from human or even Dhyanic sight. The nuclei are the light of eternity escaping therefrom.

It is that LIGHT which condenses into the forms of the “Lords of Being”—the first and the highest of which are, collectively, JIVATMA, or Pratyagatma....From these downwards—formed from the ever-consolidating waves of that light, which becomes on the objective plane gross matter—proceed the numerous hierarchies of the Creative Forces....

Thus there is but one Absolute Upadhi (basis) in the spiritual sense, from, on, and in which are built for Manvantaric purposes the countless basic centres on which proceed the Universal, cyclic, and individual Evolutions during the active period. (S.D., II, 33-34)

We are, each one of us, a basic centre of this LIGHT or FORCE. If

we wish to transform our evil desire into the all-embracing desire for universal good, we have the steps given. Kamadeva is at the heart of each basic centre, and to develop it after searching for it is our task.

As that primal Desire is for universal good, we must put into practice the teaching—“To live to benefit mankind is the first step.” Any desire of ours which negatives this must go. There is no place for both higher desire and lower desire. We have to start on this journey without conditions! Unless the *Paramitas* are practised for the purpose of making ourselves better able to help others, it is all a waste of time.

The way to reach the highest Desire is to look at the desires we have in our ordinary daily life. What is a desire? How do we fulfil it? What brings it to fruition? At present our desires are rooted in the kamic principle, in our idea of ourselves and what we want to possess or to be. But desires by themselves can accomplish nothing. We have to think about them, to build them in our mind, to plan for their operation. But if that planning is weak we turn to another desire and the first one fades away through lack of attention, or *will*. The desire must be strong enough to force the will into action, after the plans are made. Therefore will comes before desire.

A weak-willed person is one whose desires are not strong enough to force his will to realize them. A strong-willed person is one who can find ways to fulfil his unselfish and noble desires.

True desirelessness is the operation of the one Desire to free oneself from all other desires so that the inherent characteristics of Life itself can show forth and one can become a living, conscious “basic centre” of LIGHT. Unless one can sense the LIGHT in the hearts of all creatures and in every grain of sand, one will cease to be a basic centre and will merge back into the Absolute when the “embrasures of that black impenetrable fortress” become once again the Darkness with the withdrawing of the Light. Our hope is to follow the Sages and discover, by searching with our own intellect, that the Divine Desire does in very fact lie in our own heart. After lives of effort we shall thus find our Manas merged into Atma-

Buddhi, which, by that merging, makes of Atma-Buddhi the only vehicle for itself. And that one vehicle is the Absolute Upadhi “in the spiritual sense, from, on, and in which are built...the countless basic centres on which proceed the Universal, cyclic, and individual Evolutions during the active period.” The world grows I!

IT is astonishing how the world makes way for a resolute soul, and how obstacles get out of the path of a determined man who believes in himself. There is no philosophy by which a man can do a thing when he thinks he can't. What can defeat a strong man who believes in himself and cannot be ridiculed down, talked down, or written down? Poverty cannot dishearten him, misfortune deter him, or hardship turn him a hair's breadth from his course. Whatever comes, he keeps his eye on the goal and pushes ahead.

Self-reliance which carries great, vigorous self-faith, has ever been the best substitute for friends, pedigree, influence, and money. It is the best capital in the world; it has mastered more obstacles, overcome more difficulties, and carried through more enterprise than any other human quality.

I believe if we had a larger conception of our possibilities, a larger faith in ourselves, we could accomplish infinitely more. And if we only better understood our divinity, we would have this larger faith....

The fact that you believe implicitly that you can do what may seem impossible or very difficult to others, shows that there is something within you that has gotten a glimpse of power sufficient to do the thing.

—ORISON SWETT MARDEN

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT A SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVE

THE buzzword in the corporate world these days is “Knowledge Management.” Corporations are trying to retain their intellectual property with the help of technological solutions for Knowledge Management. Having adopted new technologies, organizations are under perennial threat of losing their “knowledge-workers” who have over the years become “experts” in their area. Many of these people have been nurtured by their organizations, as parents do their children. These “highly successful” men and women often begin their career on lower rungs. They wait until they have the necessary experience under their belt and leave the organization at the first opportunity, caring little as to who will manage their legacy or how. Words like “loyalty,” “contentment,” are quite foreign to many of them. Those with knowledge and expertise are found to be unwilling to part with what they have mastered. Forgetting the fact that they owe it, in the first place, to the organization which gave them the chance, investing its resources and trust in them. These people actually suffer from insecurity. They would not like to share their knowledge with another for fear of losing their own importance.

What is the spiritual position about this profound subject of “knowledge management?” It is quite simple. Giving of knowledge to another is the highest charity. Man does not live by bread alone and yearns for knowledge that can bring comfort, solace, and explain the mysteries of life. It is the *duty* of everyone to pass on his knowledge. Those of us who feel proud of our knowledge in some particular area, need to reflect. Was it not our parents and elders who taught us how to walk and talk? *Who* taught us our alphabet? Then again, it is the society and surroundings and actions and interactions with other beings that taught us many things that we, as isolated individuals, might never have learnt. There is the contribution of so many in making us what we are today. He who goes around with a swollen head has very little to call as his own.

Books on history, human nature, evolution, science, mathematics, literature, etc., have taught us much that we now claim as our own. Our ideas and ideologies are often borrowed from someone we admired.

The highest knowledge is not the knowledge of this world, but spiritual knowledge. The greatest gift of spiritual truths has come down to us from the ancients—sages and seers. Theosophy teaches us about the existence of these spiritually wise men called Masters of Wisdom. These Beings are the product of evolution from prior periods. They are like graduate and post-graduate students, returning to schools and colleges as teachers to teach the new generation. Highest among them are the “guiding intelligences” behind silent and mighty evolution. When high Beings of one class called *Lunar Pitris* had completed their task of evolving a human form, another class of great Beings—known as *Solar Pitris* in Eastern tradition—stepped in. They awakened the thinking principle in man. It was then that man could think and choose. No longer was he a brute among brutes. It is said that these great beings did not leave infant humanity to its own devices. Thus:

It is under the direct, silent guidance of this MAHA—(great)—GURU that all the other less divine Teachers and instructors of mankind became, from the first awakening of human consciousness, the guides of early Humanity. It is through these “Sons of God” that infant humanity got its first notions of all the arts and sciences, as well as of spiritual knowledge; and it is they who have laid the first foundation-stone of those ancient civilizations that puzzle so sorely our modern generation of students and scholars. (*S.D.*, I, 208)

No man descended from a Palaeolithic cave-dweller could ever evolve such a science unaided, even in millenniums of thought and intellectual evolution. It is the pupils of those incarnated Rishis and Devas of the third Root Race, who handed their knowledge from one generation to another. (*S.D.*, I, 208 fn.)

In the great esoteric tradition, knowledge has passed from one generation of sages and seers to the other—unaltered,

unadulterated. The collectivity of these great beings called the “White Lodge of Adepts” have in their custody the accumulated wisdom of the ages. These compassionate ones are ever willing to give it out to true seekers among us who are ready to receive it and pass it on in their turn. One who seeks this wisdom selfishly for his own individual progress or benefit eliminates himself—whether he knows it or not—by nature’s occult laws which require no executioners.

To think that mankind has come thus far, unaided, is to be simple-minded. Intuitive scientists have admitted that there must be guiding intelligences behind the universe. We owe our innate ideas and rapid progress to the Great Ones who are called “Elder Brothers” of humanity. But the knowledge is given to us in trust.

Thus, in one sense there is no such thing as “originality.” However, while we cannot be original, we can be creative—like an artist or a genius. The abstract ideal and ideas can be given a form using materials and instruments available on the lower plane. For example, “love” is an abstraction but it is not a *new* idea. Everyone feels it but is unable to express it on this plane—though we all have language, paints and canvas at our disposal. Shakespeare describes love very graphically in his sonnets. He is not conveying something new or original, but bringing the idea of love from the abstract plane to our plane through the medium of words. That is the task of an artist—giving to airy nothing a local habitation and a name.

While it takes a *genius* to achieve this, yet a true genius does not claim it as his own. Newton said: “I appear tall because I am standing on the shoulders of the giants.” A genius, too, is not made in isolation, as suggested in *Through the Gates of Gold*:

If the mind of man is turned upon any given subject with a sufficient concentration, he obtains illumination with regard to it sooner or later. The particular individual in whom the final illumination appears is called a genius, an inventor, one inspired; but he is only the crown of a great mental work created by unknown men about him, and receding back from him through long vistas of distance. Without them he would not have had

his material to deal with. Even the poet requires innumerable poetasters to feed upon. He is the essence of the poetic power of his time, and of the times before him. It is impossible to separate an individual of any species from his kind. (p. 12)

However, modern man is ever eager to claim name, fame and glory for the ideas, inventions, discoveries and achievements that he sincerely considers to be the results of his own individual effort. While he knows it not, he has received much from those lesser beings who are less expressive, less articulate and apparently less intelligent. We are often guilty of appropriating to ourselves the credit that rightfully belongs to others. This idea is further elaborated in the dialogue between the student and the sage in *Vernal Blooms*:

Student: Does the mind actually do anything when it takes up a thought and seeks for more light?

Sage: It actually does. A thread, or a finger, or a long darting current flies out from the brain to seek for knowledge. It goes in all directions and touches all other minds it can reach so as to receive the information if possible. This is telepathically, so to say, accomplished. There are no patents on true knowledge of philosophy nor copyrights in that realm....General truth belongs to all, and when the unseen messenger from one mind arrives and touches the real mind of another, that other gives up to it what it may have of truth about general subjects. So the mind’s finger or wire flies until it gets the thought or seed-thought from the other and makes it its own. But our modern competitive system and selfish desire for gain and fame is constantly building a wall around people’s minds to everyone’s detriment. (pp. 196-97)

An individual’s private and personal thoughts are left severely alone. As regards those which are philosophical, religious, and moral in nature, there is no law of copyright or patent—all that is invention of the present-day competitive system. The sage further explains:

When a man thinks out truly a philosophical problem, it is

not his under the laws of nature; it belongs to all....Similarly with other generally beneficial matters. They are for all. If a Spencer thinks out a long series of wise things good for all men, the seer can take them all. Indeed, but few thinkers do any original thinking. They pride themselves on doing so, but in fact their seeking minds go out all over the world of mind and take from those of slower movement what is good and true, and then make them their own, sometimes gaining glory, sometimes money, and in this age claiming all as theirs and profiting by it. (*Ibid*, 203-4)

Knowing this to be the fact, we must do for others what others have done for us. We must share knowledge. Little do we know that all our worldly knowledge or our achievements are not the baggage we can carry beyond death. This knowledge is of value only in proportion to its usefulness in helping others. It is our kindly acts and unselfish deeds that accompany us beyond this life into the next. It is this attitude of sharing and caring for others that makes us fit companions of the Masters of Wisdom. In this rat race—to be first, to be ahead, to be on top—men know not where to stop. What we know today becomes obsolete within a short time. We are ever running to remain on the same spot like Alice in Wonderland. What we need is a spirit of camaraderie, mutual appreciation and help in the collective effort to evolve and progress. Our endeavour should be to pass on the knowledge in all humility, as we low confess: “Thus have I heard.”

HOWEVER innumerable beings are, I vow to save them;
 However inexhaustible the passions are, I vow to extinguish them;
 However immeasurable the Dharmas are, I vow to master them;
 However incomparable the Buddha-truth is, I vow to attain it.

—ZEN GATHA

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: Today, when there are many schools of philosophy and many who pose as spiritual teachers, how does one distinguish the true from the false?

Answer: It is difficult to be *certain* even regarding physical occurrences and phenomena. Does the sun *really* rise in the east and set in the west? It only appears to. We experience similar uncertainty regarding moral and philosophical questions.

Does Theosophy give the correct philosophy? We find in the philosophy of Theosophy universal outlines common to different religions and philosophies. It is a system of philosophy that appeals to reason. Any philosophy that is presented as a “revelation,” can never be a true philosophy. A true philosophy must be impersonal, universal in its application and must be true at all times. It must enhance the feelings of goodwill and brotherhood. Similarly a true teacher always presents the truth in the spirit, “Thus have I heard,” and leaves it open to be accepted or rejected. In deciding the validity of any philosophy, we must ask ourselves two questions:

(1) Does it satisfy my reason? As Mr. Crosbie says:

Truth...always explains. When we have the explanation, we have the truth. Each has to make his own verification of the truth....If Truth exists and is possible to us—the Truth in religion, science and philosophy—it must first come to us by suggestion from Those who know....But when the true is suggested to us, there is always a means presented by which we may see and verify it. That means is not in anyone’s authority or endorsement, but in the fact that we can perceive it and test it for ourselves. *The final authority is the man himself.* (*The Friendly Philosopher*, pp. 308 and 323)

(2) What is my heart response? When we encounter truth, there is an intuitive feeling: “This is true.” “Intuition is the direct cognition of truth in all things.” Mr. Judge explains that we have “within us a series of wires whose vibrations are all true, but which will not be vibrated except by those words and propositions which are in themselves true.” Even if the grand ideas are veiled and we may not understand them, we will feel the power of the vibration and the value of the words we have heard. We can develop this intuitive faculty “by constantly referring mentally all propositions to it and thus giving it an opportunity for growth.”

True philosophy must change our sense of values and must present universal ethics. Maha-Prajapati, the Gotamid, asked Buddha to show her a teaching, hearing which from the lips of the Exalted One, she might dwell “alone, solitary, zealous, ardent and resolved.” Buddha never asked her to accept anything because *He* said so. Buddha’s reply (*Vinaya*, II, 10) was to accept the teachings conducive to spiritual progress and reject that which hindered or did not help the spiritual advancement. Thus:

Of whatsoever teachings, Gotamid, thou canst assure thyself thus: “These doctrines conduce to passions, not to dispassion; to bondage, not to detachment; to increase of (wordly) gains, not to decrease of them; to covetousness, not to frugality; to discontent, and not to content; to company, not to solitude; to sluggishness, not to energy; to delight in evil, not to delight in good;” of such teachings thou mayest with certainty affirm, Gotamid, “This is not the Norm. This is not the Discipline. This is not the Master’s Message.”

But of whatsoever teachings thou canst assure thyself (that they are the opposite of these things that I have told you)—of such teachings thou mayest with certainty affirm: “This is the Norm. This is the Discipline. This is the Master’s Message.”

(*A Survey of Buddhism*, pp. 79-80)

Question: Is the power of the “evil eye” only superstition? Is this power always developed consciously? How does one protect oneself and other things and people—car, house, crops, family,

etc., against the power of the “evil eye”?

Answer: The power of the “evil eye” is not a superstition, but a reality. An “evil eye” is the destructive power of thoughts. Whenever we think, every thought coalesces itself with a unit of life-energy or “elemental.” An elemental is a colourless force or energy without any attributes, but when coalesced with thoughts, it acquires quality or colour. Electricity is a colourless force, but when it is passed through a rod, the rod gets charged and anyone touching it will experience shock. Just like a charged rod, these elementals carry bad thoughts to another person and cause him harm. Only when the person is pure—at the level of speech, body and mind—such bad thoughts are powerless. For instance, when people fix their thoughts in envy upon a person, who suddenly gets rich, he is adversely affected by them and may lose the money. So also, the envious glance of a person on a beautiful vase or car or any other object or person may result in damage or injury to the same. The elementals precipitate down the glance of the envious person. Envy is a powerful emotion. Envy is worse than jealousy, because the feeling involved is that if *I* cannot have then no other should have it. In *Isis Unveiled* (I, 380), H.P.B. points out that certain persons possess the power of the evil eye consciously and some even unconsciously. Thus:

There are persons who can kill toads by merely looking at them, and can even slay individuals. The malignance of their desire brings evil forces to a focus, and the death-dealing bolt is projected, as though it were a bullet from a fire.

We need to cultivate goodwill towards all. H.P.B. mentions that each one of us is endowed with a magnetic potentiality, which when helped by an intense and indomitable will, can be used for bringing about harm or good. She cautions that we must be especially careful of our inner state while, for instance, sending New Year greetings.

Let us then, Theosophists, use that will to send a sincere greeting and wish of good luck for the New Year to every living creature under the sun—enemies and relentless traducers

included. Let us try and feel especially kindly and forgiving to our foes and persecutors, honest or dishonest, lest some of us should send unconsciously an “evil eye” greeting instead of a blessing. (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 28*, p. 1)

Inward purity is considered to be the greatest protection against the power of the “evil eye” or any other Black Art. Clear conscience and the desire to benefit humanity would act as a protecting shield. A pure person can be a protection for others around him. Sometimes one becomes a victim of the “evil eye” because one may have been indulging in such psychic practises in this life or may have done so in some previous life. As for the objects—car, house or crops—they can be destroyed or not, depending upon the purity of the person who owns them. Basically, the power of the “evil eye” is exercised towards the owner of the objects and not towards the objects themselves.

From a philosophical point of view, as H.P.B. says, there is not even a misshapen day, accident or chance in our lives. In other words, there can be nothing outside of our *karma*, although we may not know the causes. If an individual becomes a victim to an evil-eyed person, could it not be due to some karmic affinity between the victim and the malignant person?

POWER breeds isolation. Isolation leads to the capricious use of power. In turn, the capricious use of power breaks down the normal channels of communication between the leader and the people whom he leads. This ultimately means the deterioration of power and with it the capacity to sustain unity in our society. This is the problem we face today.

—GEORGE REEDY

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Can poor people be more self-satisfied than the rich? What is the link between wealth and happiness? A World Value Survey of people in 65 nations, conducted recently by an international group of social scientists, concluded that the world’s happiest people lived in Nigeria, followed by the people of Mexico, Venezuela, El Salvador, and Puerto Rico. People in America, who earn a lot and spend a lot in all sorts of expensive fripperies, ranked sixteenth. This conclusion defies conventional wisdom, reports Richard Ernsberger Jr. (*Newsweek*, July 26)

It is felt that the relationship between money and happiness is tricky. Happiness means different things to different people—some equate it with personal success and self-esteem, while others equate it with money. Daniel Kahneman, a Professor of economics at Princeton and co-winner of the 2002 Nobel Prize, says that “a person’s happiness level doesn’t simply rise with his bank account; the law of diminishing returns applies.” How so?

The answer, it turns out, is that happiness can be a tantalizing but elusive goal—a ripe apple in a tree that’s always just out of reach. “Aspirations rise with income,” notes Kahneman, and successful people can be unhappy if they perceive others in their peer group to be even more successful. John Helliwell, a professor of happiness economics at the University of British Columbia, adds: “A lot of people think high levels of material satisfaction should produce happiness. They say, ‘Gosh, I have everything and I’m not happy.’ But of course they don’t have everything.”....

A century ago the French founder of modern sociology, Emile Durkheim, argued that both natural and man-made disasters were good for societal happiness, because they gave people a chance to capitalize on “potential relationships”—in other words, to make new friends.

Through the Gates of Gold which deals with the subject of true happiness in all its details, says that happiness is elusive and that nothing that is mundane and evanescent can give lasting peace or

happiness. Thus:

There are certain pleasures which appeal to each individual; every man knows that in one layer or another of sensation he finds his chief delight. Naturally he turns to this systematically through life, just as the sunflower turns to the sun and the water-lily leans on the water. But...no sooner has he obtained his pleasure than he loses it again and has once more to go in search of it. More than that; he never actually reaches it, for it eludes him at the final moment. This is because he endeavours to seize that which is unobtainable and satisfy his soul's hunger for sensation by contact with external objects. How can that which is external satisfy or even please the inner man,—the thing which reigns within and has no eyes for matter, no hands for touch of objects, no senses with which to apprehend that which is outside its magic walls? (p. 16)

The “law of diminishing returns” sets in when we try to repeat and intensify the pleasures. As *Through the Gates of Gold* suggests: “When a man drinks his first cup of pleasure, his soul is filled with the unutterable joy that comes with a first, a fresh sensation” (p. 23). But with every attempt to repeat and intensify this pleasure, we seem to add a drop of poison, till at last the whole cup is filled with poison. This is the ignorant desire for repetition and intensification.

Can genes make us? Conjoint twins, who shared the same genes and even part of their bodies, lived and died together. Yet, for nearly 29 years they had different aims and aspirations, wanted to take up different vocations, had different identities, a different self-concept and inner life. “Do genes and environment determine everything from body-type to personality, mentality and emotional life? Can genetic and environmental manipulation solve all problems of human life, from physical to psychological?” asks Dr. Alok Pandey, a psychiatrist (*Namah*, July 15). The answer is, perhaps, outside the purview of modern science—in the spiritual realm. Dr. Pandey writes:

After we have probed the chemicals and genes, after we have measured, labelled and typed every neural pathway and its corresponding emotion, we can turn deeper and further to learn the secret of both matter and mind. There lies the secret of human life and the solution to its paradox and mystery.

Who or what determines the personality, the family and the environment in which to take birth? It is the reincarnating Ego, under the laws of Karma and Reincarnation. Mr. Judge explains:

The first great result or Karmic action is the incarnation in physical life. The birth-seeking entity consisting of desires and tendencies, presses forward towards incarnation...It incarnates in those surroundings most in harmony with its Karmic tendencies, and all the effects of actions contained in the Karma so manifesting will be experienced by the individual. This governs the station of life, the sex, the conditions of the irresponsible years of childhood, the constitution with various diseases inherent in it, and in fact all those determining forces of physical existence which are ordinarily classed under the terms, “heredity,” and “national characteristics.” (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 6*, pp. 4-5)

Heredity provides the Ego with appropriate body and environment. Mr. Judge explains in *The Ocean of Theosophy*, that genes or heredity—transmission of trait and tendency by means of parent and body—is the *mode* selected by nature to provide the Ego with the appropriate tenement. The environment, the personality and the limitations imposed on the Ego are exact consequences of that Ego's actions in prior lives. Can we hold genes responsible for certain mental traits, peculiarities and leanings which we may have inherited from the father or even great grandfather? Is heredity the cause of crime or virtue? “It is not a cause but only the means or instrument for the production of the effect, the cause being hidden deeper...Heredity is a puzzle and will always remain one so long as the laws of Karma and Reincarnation are not admitted and taken into account.” (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 9*)

Are we really free? What is true freedom? We feel we are free because we can choose and make our own decisions. “Although we seem to make our own choices...internally, we are still controlled by the ego which creates desires based not on true needs but on societal influences....True freedom is when the desire to acquire something emanates not from the ego but from the true Self,” writes Rajesh B. Gajabi. (*The Times of India*, July 15)

Freedom also means being able to break the moulds. “What does freedom cost you? Freedom will cost you the mask you have on, the mask that feels so comfortable and is so hard to shed, not because it fits so well but because you have been wearing it for so long,” says Florida Donner.

True freedom may be looked upon as total absence of ego or false self. It is being able to expand our horizons and accept new ideas. Wayne Dyer says: “Freedom is the ability to leave the single room of awareness you were born in. In that room, you learned the limits of your life. Outside of that room you learn that your life has unlimited possibilities.” Gajabi writes:

True Freedom lets your “individuality” bloom and helps you shed the “personality.”...Once the ego collapses, true freedom is experienced. Then the whole universe appears as one....When a machine is well lubricated or oiled, an engineer or mechanic refers to the parts being “free,” meaning they now have little or no friction in movement. Similarly, in true freedom, once the ego which causes friction is removed, the conscious mind comes in direct contact with the Universal Self in a smooth and almost effortless manner.

Man is a free agent during his stay on earth. However, “*there are external and internal conditions which affect the determination of our will upon our actions,*” writes H.P.B. (*Isis Unveiled*, II, 593). We consider freedom from the traditional restraints and external authority as real freedom. Normally, our thinking and choices are influenced by society, family, education, religion, etc. We are free, but we have used that freedom to choose those things that have sanction of the majority around us. Mind becomes an “organ of

free will” only when it becomes free from the influence of passions and desires. Thus:

“Mind”...or rather its lower reflection, which whenever it disconnects itself, for the time being, with *kama*, becomes the guide of the highest mental faculties, and is the organ of the free-will in physical man. (*Raja-Yoga or Occultism*, p. 64)

Mr. Crosbie points out:

The action of the will is through ideas. The ideas give the direction. Small ideas, small force; large ideas, large force; the Force itself is illimitable, for it is the force of Spirit, infinite and exhaustless. What we lack are universal ideas. (*The Friendly Philosopher*, p. 270)

A really free man listens to the prompting of his higher nature. He has unfolded his divinity to such an extent that he is able to live with other men and women without interfering with their lives. A truly free man is harmonized within and is able to live in harmony with others.

Of the five elements—earth, water, fire, air, akasa—fire is not only considered to be a cleanser but also it is the only element that never gets polluted or impure. There is both domestic and cosmic fire. What does fire symbolize?

It...represents in various forms the Eternal Light, the universal symbol of God—the ever-pure Supreme Being who removes all impurities of souls....

Most religious rituals, myths and spiritual concepts associated with fire are related to its role as a link between the sacred and the mundane worlds. Be it a candle symbolizing eternal light in a church or the red light that hangs before the Ark of Law in a synagogue, a sacrificial fire (*yagna*), or a butter lamp, the fire has been sanctified in all religions as a holy power that enlightens, purifies, transforms and dispels evil....

The ancient Persians revered fire as the living embodiment of Light and Good....

Agni was considered as the mouth and ears of gods and hence offerings to gods were made through fire. Earlier sages would carry along sacred fire wherever they went....

The element of fire is fundamental to the concept of life. The human being is a being of light, a spark of consciousness, a spiritual fire or a star that is wrapped up by a physical body made up of five elements. (*Purity*, August 2004)

“Of all the elements known to physical science, Fire is the one that has ever eluded definite analysis,” writes H.P.B. (*S.D.*, I, 120). Fire is the most mystic and most divine of the five elements, with several meanings even on our plane. We are asked to distinguish between the chemical, terrestrial and universal (or cosmic) elements. The universal elements are not confined to our Solar System and are the noumena of the terrestrial elements.

Theurgists and Rosicrucians regarded fire as the symbol of Deity. According to the Hindus, the Deity in the form of Aether pervades all things. The Rosicrucians regarded fire to be septenary like man—Spirit, Soul and Body, *plus* a fourfold aspect. Thus Fire contains a visible flame (Body); an invisible astral fire (Soul); and Spirit. “The four aspects are heat (life), light (mind), electricity (Kamic or molecular powers) and the Synthetic Essence, beyond Spirit, or the radical cause of its existence and manifestation.” (*The Theosophical Glossary*)

Prometheus is supposed to have stolen the fire from heaven and brought it to earth. This refers to the process of lighting up of *Manas* in man, in human evolution. Prometheus also represents fire by friction. H.P.B. observes that the Promethean myth does not represent man’s first discovering *fire*, as *fire* was never *discovered* but existed on earth, since its beginning. The Myth of Prometheus relates to the first opening of man’s spiritual perception. (*S.D.*, II, 523). The name Prometheus is derived from the Sanskrit word *Pramantha*, *i.e.*, the instrument used for kindling the fire. In the Vedic sutras we are told that by rapidly turning the stick in the socket, first heat and then fire was produced. The stick was called

Pramantha, the disc was called *Arani*. H.P.B. observes that in one sense Prometheus represents fire by friction, which cements *Manas* with *Buddhi*. (*S.D.*, II, 413 and 524)

Yajna is defined in the *Glossary*:

The *Yajna* exists as an invisible presence at all times, extending from the *Ahavaniya* or sacrificial fire to the heavens, forming a bridge or ladder by means of which the sacrificer can communicate with the world of *devas*, “and even ascend when alive to their abodes.” It is one of the forms of *Akasa*, within which the mystic *WORD* (or its underlying “*Sound*”) calls it into existence.

Track two diplomacy, also known as citizens’ diplomacy, started by Professor Edy Kaufman, is the tool used for conflict resolution within the country, as well as bilateral and multilateral conflicts between two or more countries, writes A. Venkata Narayana (*Span*, March-April, 2004). It is the technique of conflict resolution based on “transformation of the parties’ perceptions and attitudes.” Fundamentally, an attempt is made to build confidence and trust between the conflicting groups by showing that “they have more ideas in common and only a small percentage of disagreement.” The aim is not to change ideologies, identities or basic values of the parties but have appreciation for others’ point of view. Each party must educate itself and diagnose the real conflict. “There are many subjective ways of seeing the reality, which has different layers. The more we encourage the subjective view, the closer, perhaps, we are to finding solutions. This will provide an opportunity to the other side to listen about what you have to say,” explains Professor Kaufman.

Light on the Path advises: “Learn to look intelligently into the hearts of men.” Often, problems are apparently unsolvable because people refuse to consider another’s point of view. But Mr. Judge says that in resolving a conflict, “never stop to think where they

[others] are wrong. Everybody is always wrong somewhere; and, apart from that it would be easy enough to find their errors in your imagination.” Elsewhere Mr. Judge writes: “Harmony comes from balancing of diversities, and discord from any effort to make harmony by force.”

Mr. Crosbie points out that for the “league of nations” to be successful the nations involved must have a common aim and a like ideal, and that ideal should not be of trading, of gaining possessions or of getting advantage and prestige over other nations. “We need to *educate*, and first of all, we need to educate ourselves....Let us follow the lines of the law of our own being—compassion, love, helpfulness for all—and then we shall be able to understand ourselves and the natures of all others.” (*The Friendly Philosopher*, p. 309)

THERE IS That in every human being to be trusted—That which stands behind his human nature, the Witness, the Spectator, the Knower, the Judge, the Avenger of every thought and deed—noble or ignoble, pure or vile. *That* may be trusted. In *That* all Faith resides and comes to rest. It is the power which is exhaustless and eternal, the Power at any time to take a better course, when the old is exhausted, when the old has brought defeat, disgrace. However much my friend may betray me, I can have faith that some day, somewhere, he will repair the evil done to me and to all beings, however long ago. *That* is impartial; *That* expects nothing; *That* can not be added to nor taken from; It ever is, the Source of Faith.

—*From the Book of Confidences*

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