

A Magazine Devoted to The Living of the Higher Life

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सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

Vol. 7, No. 12

April 17, 2016

MATURITY—WHAT IS IT?

MATURITY is defined as reaching or achieving full level of growth or development. Maturity in human context is complex as it comprises physical, mental, emotional and spiritual maturity, of which physical maturity alone applies even to plants and animals. It is easy to measure and recognize physical growth. Adulthood implies physical and even psychological maturity. In many cultures, adulthood is marked with a “coming of age” ritual. Coming of Age is determined at a certain age when a child is no longer a minor, or it marks the point when a boy or girl reaches puberty, or sexual maturity. In some cultures, coming of age is associated with religious responsibility, such as the Sacred Thread ceremony for boys, among Hindus, marks their coming of age to perform religious ceremonies.

Psychological maturity is often defined as the ability to respond to the environment in an appropriate manner. It means being aware of the right time and place to behave, and knowing when to act or speak and when to refrain according to the circumstances and the culture of the society one lives in. A mature person is supposed to have a clear comprehension of life's purpose and the capacity to give meaning to life. There is the ability to make one's own choices with little or no reliance on guidance from parents or elders.

In attaining maturity one passes through transition period of adolescence, when one is in the process of leaving behind immaturity of the child and grasping the maturity of adulthood.

Today's younger generation is advanced intellectually but has been stunted in the emotional maturity. It is a generation which knows too much too soon, but it is not always the knowledge that has been assimilated. Some of the things they are exposed to, on television and websites, seem in advance of their age, which they are unprepared to experience emotionally. Emotional Intelligence goes far beyond mental development and includes the ability to understand and manage one's own emotions as well as of others. It leads to development of empathy, ability to deal with negative emotions, and being able to devote oneself to interests of others. Emotional intelligence is positively correlated with higher life satisfaction, self-esteem and lower levels of insecurity or depression.

However, maturity does not come at certain age, because a person can be physically mature, *i.e.*, fully grown physically, but may not show signs of maturity, mentally, emotionally or spiritually, such as, willingness to accept responsibility or maintain poise in serious situations. For such people, the Buddha says, "A man who has learnt but little grows old like an ox; his flesh increases, but his knowledge does not grow." The Oxford dictionary defines maturity as "fully developed powers of body and mind, fullness or perfection of natural development, or deliberateness of action and mature consideration."

Attainment of Spiritual maturity involves passing through a "transition period" by every spiritual aspirant in his individual life, as he struggles to leave behind ordinary life—centred in personal care and worldly affairs—and live spiritual life where the focus shifts from one's personal self to Spiritual Self, and it involves rising above ordinary goodness. Moral qualities like truthfulness, equanimity, honesty, etc. appeal to us all, but we practice them now and then, ready to compromise and drop the discipline the moment we are cornered or inconvenienced. Full development of morality means an ability to lead a pure and virtuous life from moment to moment, and not once in a while.

Professor C. S. Lewis observes that there is a difference between doing some *particular* just and temperate action, and *being* a just

and temperate man. Someone who is not a good tennis player can play a good shot, now and then. But a "good player" is the man whose eyes, nerves and muscles have been so trained, by making innumerable good shots that they have a certain tone or quality, even while he is not playing. So also, one who perseveres in doing good action gets in the end a certain quality of character, and displays spontaneous, morally good behaviour. Buddha describes such a man as one for whom "occasions to act with like or dislike arise not."

For those of us who are satisfied with our present state, spiritual life is irrelevant. Buddha said of such complacent, worldly persons: "Most people go their rounds on this shore only." Spiritual aspirants long to cross over to the other shore. More often than not, what jolts us out of this complacency is some painful experience. For some, however, such a turning point can be brought about through extreme indulgence in pleasures. To grow as a result of pain, we need to learn from the experience. It is said that men are wise not in proportion to their experience but in proportion to their *capacity for experience*. Some of us suffer intensely and then at the end of it say: "I want to forget the whole thing as a bad dream." We then carry on with life just as before, all the time hoping that we will not be placed in a similar situation again. If we are afraid of being placed in the similar predicament again and again, then it shows that we have not learnt the lesson. We are placed into similar kind of painful situation again and again, to enable us to learn the necessary lesson. "...Growth does not depend upon the *amount* of pain or pleasure that is endured, but upon *our attitude* of mind towards all that may meet us on life's journey," writes Mr. Judge. Maturity is not necessarily attained with age, but with experience, and is proportional to our ability to give right response to any given situation.

Attainment of spiritual maturity is a slow, step by step process, culminating in an all-round harmonious development. "Our growth, to be real growth...must progress evenly throughout, just as the body of a child grows, not first the head and then a hand, followed perhaps by a leg; but in all directions at once, regularly and

imperceptibly,” writes H.P.B. The physical man must be rendered more ethereal and sensitive; the mental man more penetrating and profound; the moral man more self-denying and philosophical. Maturity is having perfect balance in life, of head and heart, of work and play, and of action and contemplation. It is a mark of hypocritical pretension and not that of spiritual progress to say that one could see his children, wife, or parents die and not feel anything whatever. Feelings are an integral part of the constitution of man, which must be controlled and not destroyed.

“Only he who has the potentialities in him both of the voluptuary and the stoic has any chance of entering the Golden Gates,” says *Through the Gates of Gold*. We cannot appreciate life by remaining at the periphery or know about the depths of the ocean by sitting at the shore and only wetting our feet, for the fear of being drowned. The universe exists for the experience and emancipation of the soul. What is expected when we are told to blend the capacities of a stoic and a voluptuary? It means developing the capacities, which enable us not to be *dependent* on the pleasures, and sifting pleasures and transcending those that belong to gross layer of existence. Spiritual maturity is being able to enjoy and suffer more keenly than an ordinary person, without losing psychic or mental balance. To achieve this, we are asked to “wear out,” first pleasure and then pain—transcend both pain and pleasure. What does “wearing out” pleasure mean? In the systematic search for pleasure, the ego first learns not to seek pleasure by hurting someone. Then, one learns to sacrifice legitimate pleasures for others’ sake. Then one comes to analyze the pleasures and appreciate that pleasures are short-lived. Then the person may come to a stage when he is able to say, “I have seen all sorts of pleasures, and I am not going to go searching for them. It is fine if they come, and it is perfectly alright if they do not come my way.” Simultaneously, there is refinement of pleasures. As we progress, the psychic nature looks for refined food. For instance, we would prefer quiet and solitude of mountains and seashore, and proximity to nature than activities and pleasures that

involve going to crowded places. There is attraction for artistic pleasures such as music, painting, drama, literature, etc., but as our taste refines we look for more depth and substance in these pleasures to satisfy our psychic nature. The test of inner progress and maturity is whether there is easy acceptance when any or all of such pleasures are denied. We are so dependent on outside things for our happiness that if any of them are missing we feel thoroughly miserable.

In *Spiritual infancy*, like a child, we expect to be loved and taken care of, and believe that God exists to grant our wishes, with the childish expectation that so long as we pray and worship, life must remain comfortable. Next stage is of spiritual *disillusionment*, when we are rudely awakened by a shock, say, of financial loss, or loss of a loved one, or sudden loss of reputation or broken relationship. We ask the question: “Why do good people suffer?” It is as if his good actions are bringing him bad results. It is as if the Law of Karma is obscured. There is a lament in the question that there seems to be no justice, no mercy, no God. Why does not an all-powerful and all-merciful God intervene? Faced with realities of life, many of us seekers become bitter, cynical or atheistic, at least temporarily. There is a tendency to run around and try to come out of the situation by performing ceremonies, consulting some astrologer, or by seeking intervention of some *Baba* or *Swami* through exercise of psychic powers. This is followed by the stage of *Responsibility*, when one is mature enough to take charge of his life. Maturity is accepting people and situation that one cannot change, and being able to let go what one cannot change. It is the ability to remain and act in the present without being unduly influenced by the past, and remaining free from the longing and anxieties for the future. Instead of complaining or grumbling there must be acceptance or resignation. We might even go a step further and say, “This is not only what I deserved, but what in fact I desired.” This is an attitude of supreme surrender, of unswerving faith in the Law of Karma—an inward stance necessary to cultivate by every true spiritual aspirant. With such attitude, we will not resort to any prayers or propitiatory

ceremonies, to cause to deviate the course of the Law and dodge the karmic consequences. It is total acceptance that “my own comes back to me.” In the next higher stage of “Keeperhood,” instead of wanting others to share one’s pain, one wishes to relieve the pain of others. There is realization that all help and guidance come from the inner planes of being. None of us acts in isolation. We are all united on inner and invisible planes, and are continually affecting each other through our thoughts, feelings and actions. With such realization comes the appreciation that “we should consider every man’s troubles as partly due to ourselves, because we have been always units in the race and helped to make the conditions which cause suffering.” The stage of full spiritual maturity is the stage of *Enlightenment* when love becomes universal and there is complete identification with all beings. It is the culmination of spiritual growth, the state of self-realization. It is the stage when one acquires *Mahaprajna* or Great Spiritual Insight along with *Mahakaruna* or Great Compassion. Paradoxically, spiritual maturity implies regaining the child-state and innocence we had lost in the process of growing up. It means being able to forgive and forget like a child does, and cultivation of total harmlessness within. It means becoming completely vulnerable, by giving up all weapons of offence and defence. Neither Jesus, when he was crucified, nor H.P.B., when she was slandered, used their powers to defend themselves, or to prove their innocence.

For mankind as a whole, Mr. Judge says that man’s childhood has passed away, and his mind has arrived at the point where right ideas must be given, to save him from sinking into superstition or materialism. Giving up of the wrong beliefs, superstitions and dogmas may be painful initially, but it is worth the effort. We must tell the truth but not force it. “The change from dogma or creed to a belief in law and justice impartial will bring perhaps some tears to the soul, but the end thereof is peace and freedom,” writes Mr. Judge. (*Vernal Blooms*, pp. 20-21)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT THE LESSON OF DIVINE WISDOM

“MY DAUGHTER, I have watched you these many days with growing anxiety. There is a cloud on your brow and the light vanished from your eyes. Does anything trouble you?”

“My father, a certain problem haunts me. I cannot put it from my mind. It seems sometimes as though my very life depends on solving it. Also, for the past nights I have had strange dreams.”

The grey haired scholar and the fair young girl sat together in a book-lined study.

“What problem, my dearest child, can so distress you, and why has it been kept from me? You surely did not think the writing of my book could come before your happiness?”

“It—concerns your book.”

“My Historical survey of World Religions? You astonish me! How can that possibly present any sort of problem to your young carefree mind?”

“My mind is carefree no longer. It is tortured by uncertainty. Oh, my father, I did not mean to criticize your great and noble work.”

“But, Lila, I have at all times invited your criticism. Is not that why I read it aloud to you, chapter by chapter? You are of the generation for whom my book is intended. I value your judgement.”

“Oh, father, do not say so! You do not know my mental confusion. All these many, many religions, each one claiming that it alone is valid as the blessed voice of Truth! I keep thinking of them constantly, little as I wish to, asking myself ever, Can one alone be that?”

“Do you reproach me, or feel regret for your upbringing? Would it have been better for you, had I guided your young footsteps into some one safe fold?”

“Oh, no, father, no! Like you, I must have spiritual freedom. It is not for my own sake that I find these rival claims distressing. They are pitiful—it pains me to think of them. What was meant to unite and uplift has been made a cause of division, wrath and enmity,

even of bloodshed.” the girl answered hastily.

“All too true, daughter. But you spoke of strange dreams. Have they a bearing on this subject? Do they spring also from my book?”

“For three nights in succession, father, I dreamt the same dream. I was in some exposed place—the scene was wild and desolate—wearing only patchwork garment. When I sought to draw it closer, for more protection, holes appeared in it and it threatened to fall to pieces. I had a terrifying sense of being but a poor helpless waif in a chill, hostile universe.”

“The patchwork garment of man-made systems!?” murmured the grey-haired scholar thoughtfully. “A mere visual presentation of what occupied your thoughts, child. Realize that and dismiss it from your memory.”

“I will try,” said the girl obediently. “But on the fourth night—ah, that was beautiful! I could almost suppose it to be more than a dream—a vision. It brought me comfort and peace.”

“What was it?”

“Again I wandered waiflike, father, clutching at my wretched patchwork garment, while the wind howled over a vast dark abyss into which I feared to fall. Then lo, there appeared a woman clad in white, with something luminous folded over her arm. This she brought to me and, casting away the patchwork, clothed me amply, so that I was draped from head to foot. It was a fair robe, and seamless, of a substance that I can only compare to light. As she vanished, I awoke. And for the first time in many weeks I felt at peace.”

“Well might you, child, well indeed might you, for that, as you suppose, was no mere dream. It was the revelation of Truth to you. Truth, pure and whole, claimed you as its own. Now let me tell you something which must convince you (if need be) that we are at one, you and I, in the spirit. I, in turn, am reassured that I did right when I led you early to my own creedless temple.

“I have still to transcribe my final chapter. But it exists, complete already, in my mind. And in it you will find that I draw together all these diverse, seemingly competitive religions which have troubled

you, showing that, as they sprang from one root, so in their essential life, they still are one, and that whatsoever sound fruit they bear to nourish souls, derives from that root only. In other words, my dearest daughter, I devote that final chapter to THEOSOPHY, our compendium for the present age of ‘divine knowledge’ handed down to us from the WISDOM RELIGION of antiquity. There your young heart will find that which it yearns for—universality, integrity, unity. There you will find, too, the distinction between a religion—which implies the many that have distressed and confused you—and Religion per se, which in its wider meaning, is that which binds all men and all things in the entire Universe into one grand whole.

“Well might the figure in your vision be a woman, since a woman it was who brought us this THEOSOPHY, this restoration of knowledge at once scientific, philosophical and religious, which has to be traced in its origin to those Beings who, led by Karma, have incarnated in our humanity. Have I set your mind at rest? Do your eyes shine again? It has grown too dark for me to see them.”

“No dear father, in this only are you wrong. It has grown light,” replied his smiling daughter, softly.

Theosophy is age-old and is the very root, the basis, the origin of all thought, whether religious, scientific or philosophical, and from it has sprung all the historical faiths of humanity, through the agency of prophet-reformers. Just as the white ray of light on passing through the prism breaks up into different colours of the solar spectrum, so also, the white ray of Truth, in passing through the three-sided prism of man’s triple nature, breaks up into different fragments called “religions.” Every religion becomes disfigured, distorted, desecrated and even anthropomorphized, as time passes and the influence of the Founder or Teacher wanes. In the nineteenth century, H. P. Blavatsky was sent as a messenger to this world by the Masters of Wisdom, breaking the silence of centuries, to reiterate the ancient Truths, which had got obscured, under the label of Theosophy,

which is but a fragment of THEOSOPHIA or Wisdom-Religion. Theosophy is the central core of Truth in all religions, and to get at the central truth in every religion one has to remove all falsehoods, and learn to understand the symbolic language of these religions. The Key to interpretation of Universal Symbolism in all religions is provided by Theosophy. “In our humble opinion, the only ‘Essentials’ in the Religion of Humanity are—virtue, morality, brotherly love, and kind sympathy with every living creature, whether human or animal,” writes H.P.B.

The object of H.P.B.’s mission was, among other things, to make the world aware of the very existence of a body of knowledge which she called Theosophy. The teachings of Theosophy contain the *seeds* of all possible growth. A small seed that happens to fall in the right soil might produce rich harvest. When the mind of the person is struck by the greatness and beauty of an idea, or when his heart is moved by wisdom and compassion of great living beings, it can start him on to an entirely new path. Though we live in *Kali Yuga* or Dark Age, it is felt that the voice of the inner god is not completely smothered. Placing great faith in human nature, Masters and H.P.B. struck first notes of ageless wisdom, which brings the message of faith and trust, whatever the outside circumstances might appear to be. The knowledge also brings to us the comforting idea that a living fraternity of perfected human beings exist, and that even at the darkest hour no man is left completely without succor or hope.

Theosophy is scientific religion and religious science, and unlike the popular belief that science and religion will always be at loggerheads, theosophy tries to show that science and religion can be reconciled, if only religion could be cleared of its cobwebs of dogmatism and superstitions, and science of its materialism and atheism. True religion is knowledge of one’s own self and living the life in accordance with that knowledge, and realizing that the powers of the Godhead, *i.e.*, the power to create, preserve and destroy, are within each and every one of us.

STUDIES IN THE BHAGAVAD-GITA THE CONSTITUTION OF MAN—II

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

THE MATERIAL aspect of manifestation is simply *Apara Prakriti* of Krishna, his lower or inferior nature. The higher nature or *Para Prakriti* of Krishna is electrifying or animating principle which is described as *Daiviprakriti* or Divine Nature. It is this Fohatic electrifying principle which emanates the lower principle, gives it its life and sustains it. H.P.B. called it both the vitalizing astral model of objective nature, and its vital principle. It is more from the point of view of this vital principle, the Soul, or the energy of all things that Krishna describes his higher nature. He says:

...know that my superior nature is different and is the knower; by it the universe is sustained; learn that the whole of creation springs from this too as from a womb; I am the cause, I am the production and the dissolution of the whole universe. There is none superior to me, O conqueror of wealth, and all things hang on me as precious gems upon a string....In all creatures I am the life, and the power of concentration of those whose minds are on the spirit. Know me, O son of Pritha, as the eternal seed of all creatures.

We find that Krishna is the Knower, superior to the lower nature. In the Thirteenth Discourse of the *Gita* the word used in the Sanskrit is not that of the Knower, but is the word *Jiva-Bhuta*. This *Jiva-Bhuta* is the fohatic body of the whole of the universe, or its objective manifestation. Any energy must have this body of electrifying energy of Fohat. Undoubtedly, the phrase Holy Ghost is simply defined from the Sanskrit phrase *Jiva-Bhuta*, which is a ghost impregnated through and through with the power of life, the divine power of life, and which belongs to the Higher Nature of Krishna. The same verse explains that this Higher Nature is both the cause of any manifestation and the cause of dissolution of this manifestation. We

find that the words used are *Pralaya* and *Prabhava*. The word *Prabhava* is unknown to us. We always speak of *Manvantara* and *Pralaya*, or manifestation and non-manifestation, but before manifestation is possible there must be the preparing ground; the resource of all that which is going to become already separate from the background of the Absolute, but still distinct from the Universe or Manifestation, itself. Thus, before that manifestation there is the forth going which is *Prabhava*, which Mr. Judge has translated by two distinct terms: I am the cause and production of both. The cause and production are contained in the term *Prabhava*. So we always have *Prabhava*, *Manvantara*, *Pralaya*, and it would be well to keep in mind the distinction amongst these three terms, as far as the description of the higher nature is concerned. The nature of Krishna himself is simply hinted at in this discourse, in the thirteenth verse:

The whole world, being deluded by these dispositions which are born of the three qualities, knoweth not me distinct from them, supreme, imperishable. For this my divine illusive power, acting through the natural qualities, is difficult to surmount, and those only can surmount it who have recourse to me alone.

This divine, illusive power, divine illusion, divine *maya*, is the Higher Nature of Krishna. This Higher Nature is illusive, not an illusion in itself, but that it does cause confusion and delusion in the world, because the world, mistakes the Higher Nature of Krishna, for Krishna himself, thereby making a very grave error and causing delusion and confusion. For instance, when we see in the physical world the sun, and we see rays of light emanating from the sun, because we see both the visible sun and the visible rays we are not confused, and we can make a distinction. We never fall into the error that the rays of light coming from the sun is the sun itself, yet it is exactly that metaphysical error that we make in the higher world. We do not see the sun himself, that is Krishna, the One Self, Spirit, the One life, but we do see his illusive nature, his Higher Nature, and we take that Higher Nature, which is only an emanation, for

Krishna himself. That is what is meant by divine *maya*. It is because of this Higher Nature that men are lead into confusion and illusion, as to what Krishna himself is. The Higher Nature of Krishna is divine light of the Logos, and the Logos is Krishna himself. They are two different things but we identify the light with the Logos itself. The same idea is referred to again in verses 23 and 24. There Shri Krishna says:

The ignorant, being unacquainted with my supreme condition which is superior to all things and exempt from decay, believe me who am unmanifested to exist in a visible form. Enveloped by my magic illusion I am not visible to the world; therefore the world doth not recognize me the unborn and exhaustless.

This “enveloped by my magic illusion,” is again the Higher Nature, which envelops the lower, and the words in the Sanskrit are *Yoga-Maya*, i.e., union or yoga of Himself with *Maya*, and because of this higher Nature, we have two classes of beings. Those who have thought that this illusive nature was Krishna himself, and these are simply the theologians of whatever religion or era, who have represented God or the Divine Principle in Nature with a physical manifested form or conception of the personal God. And then we have the beings who identifying with their objective or lower nature, deny the existence of the Higher Nature or the Spirit Itself, and these are the materialists. Both are wrong, and we have to begin to try and distinguish among the three things.

Having thus explained to us what his natures are, and, of course, not saying very much about his Real Nature, Krishna proceeds to apply this metaphysical teaching in terms of individual human beings. We are able to see that there is a distinction to be made among the evil man, the good man and the spiritual man. In the world we only distinguish between evil and good, and we call the good man the spiritual man. The error again springs up exactly from the same metaphysical misconception. In Theosophy, we distinguish as much between the evil and good man, as we do between the good man

and the spiritual man, and in terms of this classification, Krishna names seven classes of beings, of which three classes of beings are evil doers, who are rooted in the *Apara-Prakriti*, or *Mulaprakriti*, in the objective side of the Universe and deny the spiritual side. The four classes of beings are those who work righteousness, and the last of these, the seventh class he immediately separates from the three other ones, and they are those who are following the spiritual path. We see that the three classes of beings who work righteousness, and are not yet following the path of Krishna, are identifying themselves with the second aspect which we call the Higher Nature. And finally the one class of Spiritual Beings are those who recognize the Spirit itself, or Krishna's own nature. The verse which describes the classification is: "The wicked among men, the deluded and the low-minded, deprived of spiritual perception by this illusion, and inclining toward demonical dispositions, do not have recourse to me. [These are the three lower classes]....Four classes of men who work righteousness worship me, O Arjuna; those who are afflicted, the searchers for truth, those who desire possessions, and the wise, O son of Bharata."

And since there is only one class of Spiritual Beings he disposes of them first, and he says the best is the one possessed of spiritual knowledge: "He is always devoted to me. I am extremely dear to the wise man, and he is dear unto me. Excellent indeed are all these, but the spiritually wise is verily myself, because with heart at peace he is upon the road that leadeth to the highest path, which is even myself."

There are three classes of beings who are doing wrong, and three classes who are doing good. There are those beings who are performing wrongful action. Then we have those who are confused, deluded, and it is the power of desire which confuses man. Those beings have wrong emotions or wicked feelings. And then there are those who are low-minded, their very thoughts have become corrupted. So we have three classes of beings to correspond to the three classes of action, feeling, and thought, and the same three

classes are to be found among those men who identify themselves with the higher nature. Thus, those who are the afflicted are suffering because they have received sorrowful reactions in their own physical bodies. They correspond to action. And those who desire possessions, are imbued with the principle of desire; they want things and are striving to get the very things they desire. Finally men become searchers for truth in whatever condition they may find themselves. If they are honestly trying to find the truth, they will come to it.

So with the whole evolution, the whole gamut of differentiation has to be found in this classification, from wrong thought, to wrong feeling and action. Then we become afflicted, because we repeat the wrong reactions from our actions. Then we begin to find we cannot work alone. Then we worship the higher nature, we worship the ghost, but in terms of our desires, and that is why we are not spiritual but good, because we want to co-operate with nature so that we may be happy, and then finding that possessions do not give us the ultimate truth, we become searchers after truth, and having become searchers, we enter the spiritual path. What happens then is hinted at in this discourse. The spiritual beings, of course, become Mahatmas, Great souls, and Krishna says such a Mahatma is difficult to find. He opens his discourse with the idea that among thousands only one strives for perfection, and among thousands only one knows Krishna as he really is, so that we should not be surprised that the spiritual path is difficult to achieve, that there are, comparatively speaking very few Mahatmas. He is one who recognizes Krishna; he is the Vasudeva who is all this. Vasudeva is one of the names of the Great Vishnu, and Krishna is the eighth *Avatara* of Vishnu. Vasudeva is also the name of the Father of Krishna, according to the legend in the *Mahabharata*, and also one of the titles Krishna takes, as being the son of Vasudeva and here we have correspondence with the Christian Religion, for all Mahatmas are able to say what Jesus said, "I and my Father-in-Heaven are one." Krishna has made himself one with the Father in

Heaven and is able to express the union through the physical body. Also, Vasudeva being the source of all great Souls is the Divine Womb of all Divine Incarnations, *i.e.*, the Great White Lodge of Perfected Beings, Masters of the Wisdom.

The beings who are identifying themselves with *Mulaprakriti* have taken refuge in the *Asuric* Nature, *i.e.*, they worship to perform wrong actions, elemental or evil forces in Nature, and ultimately if they do not reform their way, they will become themselves *Asuras* or Demons. On the other hand, the good men who are worshipping good in all Nature, to do right and to obtain happiness, personal, mortal and temporary, worship these Gods, and ultimately they come, if they do not find the spiritual path, unto the Fathers or *Suras* in the Universe. And only the spiritually wise can find Krishna in his real Nature. The discourse closes with the point that it is through our likes and dislike that we return and that we die. If we want to overcome death, we must overcome liking and disliking. It is sometimes difficult to conceive how likes and dislikes attract us to rebirth, but if we remember what happens after that subjective period of meditation in the Heaven World of the gods, and how when we wake up in our own Real Nature, the Nature of Krishna, and see the whole of the past we will understand why we are attracted or on the contrary repulsed by certain things springing up in that view or vision, and it is that attraction and repulsion which compels us to dream or think about these things, and falling into dreaming, we finally fall asleep, *i.e.*, we return to this earth, and a correspondence is found at death and how our last thoughts do determine our state in the subjective meditative world. How to conquer the objective nature rooted in the lower nature, and the divine also rooted in the Supreme Nature of Krishna, and attain to the real understanding of Krishna's own nature, will be considered, when we study the question of Death in the Eighth Discourse.

(Concluded)

HEALTH, WEALTH AND WISDOM

EVERYONE in the world aspires to live a life of happiness and peace. Life's strivings of the man of the world is thus directed towards one end, and that is to be free from want, from pain and sorrow, from anxiety and worry, from strife and disease. Common belief is that much wealth at one's disposal secures to the possessor the power and the means to obtain happiness of life and peace of mind, and to ward off visitations of evils that cause disturbance. Prudent people alive to the truism of the age-old adage that health is wealth bestow special attention to diet and regular exercise to keep themselves physically healthy and fit. It is, of course, perfectly natural and proper for people to work towards acquiring health and wealth, as without these the journey of the mortal frame in this world cannot be accomplished. It must however be remembered that acquisition of wealth and physical fitness are not ends in themselves but are means to a higher end. If the higher purpose of life is overlooked, and life's activity is centred around material well-being alone, then wealth will become the object of worship, and this leads to bewilderment. Rare indeed are the wealthy who are also really healthy and happy.

In the Vedic pantheon Kuvera or Kubera is the lord of wealth but he is depicted in the myth as an evil spirit. In the later post-Vedic literature Kubera is elevated to the status of godhood and worshipped. He is the King of *Yakshas* (Elementals or *devatas*), portrayed as short and stout with a huge belly, and ugly looking. He is the Lord of all the treasures of the earth and is said to confer them on mortals for their happiness. Mankind is his vehicle as he rides over men. The meaning of the allegory is quite plain, needing no elaborate elucidation. In the *Bhagavad-Gita* it is said of those in whom the quality of passion—*Rajas*—predominate, worship celestial powers, the *Yakshas* and *Rakshasas*, for the acquisition of power and pelf. This is literally worship of wealth as a means to obtain enjoyment and happiness in life as an end in itself. Speculation in stocks and shares and real estate, and so on, with a view to amass

wealth is equivalent of worship of celestial powers alluded to.

But does possession of much wealth alone give happiness and peace? Common experience is that while wealth gives to the possessor of it an apparent sense of security against adversities and a ready means to access objects of enjoyment, it also brings in its trail, worries and anxieties, which disturb the peace of mind. Life is constantly teaching us that the happiness which we strive for and obtain in life is not lasting and permanent, and that it is inextricably bound up with its opposite, namely, pain and sorrow, disappointment and despair of one kind or the other, the visitations of which we cannot avoid or avert even with all the power and influence of material wealth at our command. There is always that inexplicable deep inner dissatisfaction and discontent which we all feel which no amount of material wealth and luxuries can relieve. It is the divine discontent which at last develops in man a dispassion for things of matter and drives him to seek for a knowledge of that which is not subject to time and change, which alone confers true happiness. Reason for it is that man is essentially a spiritual being who dwells in material forms in a long series of reincarnations for experience, leading ultimately to self-knowledge. The troubles we face, says H.P.B., are not an unmixed evil but are stepping stones to acquisition of knowledge and wisdom. She says :

I mean that experience which *teaches* that the needs of our spiritual nature can never be met by other than spiritual happiness. As long as we are in the body, we are subjected to pain, suffering and all the disappointing incidents occurring during life. Therefore, to palliate this, we finally acquire knowledge which alone can afford us relief and a hope for better future.....Moreover, our constant failure to find any permanent satisfaction in life which would meet the wants of our higher nature, show us plainly that those wants can be met only on their own plane, to wit—the spiritual. (*The Key to Theosophy*, pp. 224-25)

This is the lesson life is constantly teaching us. “Evils” of life

which ceaselessly come into our lives to afflict us are the Karmic effects of our own thoughts and deeds done in the present or in past lives. The acts of others, or external circumstances, which seem to us, in our ignorance, to be source of our afflictions, are in reality part of the effects of our own Karma, and hence our own creation. Wisdom consists in recognizing this profound moral verity and to assume responsibility for our troubles, and not blame anyone or anything. The ignorant people look for causes of their troubles and for their remedies in things external. But the wise looks within and seeks to initiate, in daily life, such thoughts and actions in harmony with the laws of higher life which cannot fail to produce all-round benefit and a happy future, while allowing painful effects of ill-deeds of the past Karma to run out and exhaust themselves from out of his psychic nature by experiencing them without complaint.

In the Seventh Chapter of the *Gita* four kinds of worshippers, *who work righteousness* are spoken of: those who are afflicted, those who desire possessions, the searchers for Truth, and the Wise. The afflicted are those who have come to see the evils which afflict society as their own afflictions, in the realization that the individual Karma is inextricably bound up with the Karma of society and of mankind as a whole, and desire to work for alleviation of the cause of human suffering. Therefore they seek spiritual knowledge—which is the knowledge of Self, as the Self of All, which is not a personal possession but that possession of the pure soul which arises when the sense of separate personal self is entirely annihilated. Of this *Light on the Path* says: “Hunger for such possessions as can be held by the pure soul, that you may accumulate wealth for that united spirit of life which is your only true self.” He becomes an ardent seeker of Spiritual knowledge that he may be the better able to help and teach others. It is this Wealth of virtue and wisdom that the seeker after Truth aspires for, which Jesus commended his disciples to seek, which no thief can steal and no moth can eat away, which Nature reveals only to the “Eye of Spirit” of the one who becomes co-worker with Her. Such is the truly wealthy man who becomes a

Trustee of his possessions which he uses to relieve the moral cause of all human suffering and sorrow.

The problems of disease and health have always been one of the chief concerns of man. Barring the common diseases which are due to such external factors as lack of hygiene, unregulated habits of work and rest, of eating and exercise, most of the diseases are hereditary. Emotional, mental and physical diseases of various kinds we experience are actually flowing down and out of our lower nature of the seeds of moral contagion we had sown in the long past lives on earth, by our own actions of iniquity and vice.

Teachers say that our race is heir to many diseases due to past Karma. The scientific approach to cure diseases is to work on the outer symptoms to give relief. While this should be availed of for relief, it must not be forgotten that it cannot heal the seeds of moral disease, imbedded in the mind, which are the real causes. Being of the race all of us share in common with our fellowmen the defects of character which are the source of hereditary diseases. Chief cause of our ailments and unhappiness is our negative state of mind, such as, ill-will, anger, lust, greed, malice, revenge, and so on, which poison our own souls, and precipitate themselves on us from within our minds in numerous ways as disease, sorrow and suffering. Merely attending to diet and physical exercises, important though they are, will not make us whole and healthy unless we also strictly follow the laws of moral hygiene by means of ethical living based on good thoughts, good words and good deeds, and abundant goodwill and charity towards all, and ill-will towards none. This alone, in the long run, will relieve us of ill-health and diseases and make us whole. When we are afflicted with pain of disease we must remember that it is the burning out of so much adverse Karmic causes we had in the past generated. *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* teaches: "This indeed is the highest *Tapas* that a man in illness suffers. And the world highest wins he that knows this truth" (5-11). Sri Shankaracharya commenting on this verse gives a sage advice :

A man should think that the suffering his fever and other forms of illness cause him is the highest *Tapas*. For his suffering in the form of illness will wipe out the effects of his deeds, of the wise man who takes that suffering as *Tapas*, looking on it without a blame or a complaint. With his suffering transformed thus into *Tapas*, with this *Tapas* that his meditation is, he with his evils all burnt up, wins the highest world, he, the man, who knows this.

Resorting to Yoga only for gaining health and freedom from disease, popular though it is all over the world at the present time, is not recommended by true Teachers. Says Sri Krishna in *Srimad Bhagavatam* (11th *Skanda*, 28th chapter):

Some devotees, with a view to obtain healthy and perfect body, and for developing psychic powers (*siddhis*), practice Yoga in their youth. But such an endeavour for bodily perfection is not favoured by the wise; it is nothing but tiresome (*ayasa*) and worthless (*apartha*) because, like the fruit of a tree, the body is impermanent. He who pursues *Jnana Yoga*, if desirous of obtaining a sound body, that wise man should renounce Yoga, and place his entire reliance upon me. Such a Yogi, depending on me, heart free from desires, taking refuge in the Self, delighting in the Self, is not assailed by any affliction.

This is the true and royal road to wellness of the whole man—of body, soul and spirit. Only such are truly healthy, wealthy and wise who are grounded in spiritual knowledge and perfected in ethical living. Mr. Judge strikes the keynote of what should be the health policy of nations based on the right philosophy:

"The world could get along with what disease there is, if it only turned attention to high ethics and altruistic endeavour. For after a few centuries of right living the nations would have purged themselves and built up a right moral building founded on the rocks of true philosophy, charity and love." (*W.Q.J. Series No. 22*, p. 20)

EMERSON'S CONTRIBUTION TO AMERICAN THOUGHT

II

A new era has begun in literature, this is certain. New thoughts and new interests have created new intellectual needs; hence a new race of authors is springing up.

—*Lucifer* (November 1889)

THE ABOVE historical statement by H. P. Blavatsky explains the relevance of Emerson and a few good inspired writers in arousing the moral and intellectual upliftment, in line with the Theosophical Movement of 1875. Those were the years of changing ideologies at the individual and national forum. Being aware of the needs of the time, Emerson responded by saying: "If the universal cry for reform of so many inveterate abuses with which the society rings, if the desire of a large class of young men for a faith and hope be an omen to be trusted... If the search for the sublime laws of morals, and the source of hope is trust in man and not in books and bells, proceed... if the rising generation can be provoked to think and shall feel the generous daring of austerity and virtue..." then it is the responsibility of the leaders to cater to the needs for bold guidance, and mainly encouragement.

"There is the highest fitness, in place and time, in which this enterprise is begun." Thus it was not accidental that such few bold thinkers were present in the West and were themselves truly inspired to rise to the occasion. It is said that Providence provides for the provident, and steer the appropriate course. Thus, the right calibre of souls came, or were sent, on the continent to steer the infant nation safely through the thick and thin of the wars, conflicts and confusions of the period, such as the Civil War and the War of Liberation of slaves. In Europe, too, there were important, fast moving events in need of appropriate guides. On the American Continent the influential presence of Thomas Paine helped to turn the tide of the crucial wars toward the favourable victory for President

Abraham Lincoln. Very few people could sense that the "magnetic lines of force," spoken of by H.P.B., were being laid down over the geographical as well as inner world of thought, as envisaged by the sacred invisible hands or power, working behind the scene, of those great souls concerned with the higher welfare and destiny of humanity.

One evident result was fading of slavish loyalty of the early emigrants of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries toward their previous European Authorities and the British Crown. Many such transforming historical events have behind them an invisible plan. In the earlier years of the Nation-building efforts by the enlightened leaders like Jefferson and others, it was crucial for the great "Movement of ideas," viz., the Theosophical Movement and the Theosophical Society of the nineteenth century, to be inaugurated by H.P.B. in New York. Although latter was envisaged as the Universal Movement "to influence the Mind and Conscience of the Race," during the preparatory years in North America, it took the form of social, moral, philosophical and religious concerns, as found in the spate of literary productions of independent thinkers on both continents.

It was, as Emerson recognized, an arousal of independent and free minds taking place within two centuries of American settlements, to surface as the social and historical forces, producing liberal minds and literature of the people. It could make inroads even against the well-grounded religious structure of the Church so as to counter their narrow and dogmatic authority. It could strengthen in favour of the opposition to the powerful forces supporting the degrading practice of Bonded-labour, and Negro-slavery and trade, as also exploitation of the weak by the powerful "Lords" of the colonies.

The above-mentioned evils had hitherto dampened the truly spiritual and intellectual progress of the American people and also of the western countries. During these uncertain moral and social transformations, Emerson saw his role and opportunity to enter the field, and started his living by preaching and lectures wherever

invited. But his real genius was soon revealed in his profound, almost poetic and mystical writings. These were the product of the spontaneous birth (called "visitations") of inspiring ideas, and words which earned him great reputation and following. Among his published works were the first volume of Essays and his first volume of Poems. Some of his lesser known but truly great poems were incorporated in his prose writings, in which we could see the Eastern influence, including that of the German translations from the original Persian (Sufi) poet-mystics like Saadi and Hafiz, for their style and spirituality. Emerson was also influenced by the sacred Oriental literature. But his own style of presenting such profound concepts was sometimes through the picturesque metaphysical images from Nature itself with which he was in constant and intimate touch. It is from the "Spirit of Nature and its Laws" that he gleaned much insight and wisdom as revealed in his aphorisms and speeches.

His important trait was the great affinity toward Nature. In fact his first book of Essays, namely, *Nature*, was received with great acclaim. To Emerson, the measure of man's inner "maturity" is in his ability to respond to "Nature and Nature's god."

There is something characteristic about Emerson as a speaker, before the mixed audience of high and low, who warmly responded to him, both as a man among men, and as a man of clean heart, which captivated them. One of the reasons was that, as a compatriot, he could identify with their woes and weakness, and always spoke not condescendingly but in sympathy with their stamina and newly awakened self-respect. There are episodes recorded about him which could explain his character. Emerson had a practice of creating acquaintance with people at the market place, before his lectures in America or in Europe. He would feel their pulse and their common needs. Such sympathetic encounter could prepare him with material to speak on life's realities as much as his theme notes on philosophy.

On the 200 years' foundation of Concord and the 16th anniversary of the famous battle, he met the surviving veterans, among whom was a bare-foot farmer. Emerson asked whether all

people thereabout went without shoes and stockings. The farmer rather bluntly replied, "Well, some on 'em does, and the rest on 'em mind their own business!" Emerson admired the cheek and the impudent spirit and self-respect of the man, who would like others to mind their own business, without anyone encroaching upon their life, to be left alone. It could show the grit and the guts of the free spirit of the citizens of his time.

A gentle lady once asked the servant-woman, who too was attending regularly Emerson's lectures at Concord, if she understood Mr. Emerson. "Not a word," was the reply, "but I like to go and see him stand up there and look as though everyone was as good as he!" Indeed, some people felt an awe at this small man standing there, all charged with the spirit of truth.

Those were the years of churning of ideologies, both at the individual and national forum. It seems people were being prepared for the advent of the greater Movement, later known as Theosophy, inaugurated by H.P.B. in 1875. Earlier to that it took the shape of social, moral, philosophical and religious concepts as found in the great literary productions of independent thinkers of the time.

For the mix breed of colonial settlers the wave was more in the favour of the rising tide of united efforts to build anew their own free and honourable "Nation" state (the American Union), which could secure an assured freedom and prosperity to them all.

The American minds were slowly rising in favour of independent choice and judgement for social transformation. It brought about the united response to the call of emancipation from the past affinities and dependence upon their earlier respective governments, and the indoctrinated national "patriotism" as well as religious affinities.

Emerson's approach to Religion in general and especially to the Christianity of his time, was publicly expounded in his famous speech at Harvard, and published as the "Divinity School Address." It made a great impact upon the intelligentsia and even the young Harvard graduates. It brought about over the time a certain change of heart in the populace, who were in a state of uncertainty but now

had found a clearly expressed stand on the true religious life, and the great mystery of creation. The thinking man had found his voice and inspiration through Emerson's clear declaration of faith in the free spirit in man.

Emerson's own philosophy of Transcendentalism, was based on his main stand on the practice of the true Christian way of life, and was originally drawn from his own conviction of "Religion as the intuitive perception of divine Truths," as opposed to all the dogmatic beliefs, assertions and practices enforced by the Church which forbade any discussion thereon! It also means going beyond any second-hand knowledge and experience in search of truth and to rely finally on the inner experience and to be worthy of such intimations! In practice, according to Emerson and his fellow-thinkers, it means to rely on "the superiority of the intuitive, including the spiritual and ethical, over the purely empirical in philosophy." But, as the Movement, it gave rise to a refined religious tolerance and liberal social practices guided by the awakened American conscience.

No wonder this philosophical stand, especially among the thinking public, made it possible for a large scale sympathetic support to the "Movement for the liberation of the slaves" from the atrocious treatment and the most degrading "trading of humans" and the brutal enslavement for life of fellow citizens!

There have been a few thinkers and the student of American history, who have intuitively sensed, and later expressed by H.P.B. that in this cycle the American continent was chosen by the unseen intelligences to be the Birth-place for a new and broader form of religious mind, and for the guidance of the social conscience and the true social order. It was based on equal respect and opportunity to one and every individual citizen, no matter what his origin and status, to participate in the building of the "New World Order," as predicted by Thomas Paine.

(To be concluded)

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: In the allegory of the "Churning of the Ocean," the churning is done by both the *Devas* and the *Asuras*. It seems that both together are necessary. What does it represent metaphysically? What could be its philosophical interpretation for us?

Answer: In the allegory, the ocean represents the primordial *chaos* or the homogeneous, undifferentiated matter. Just as butter comes to the surface while churning the butter-milk, so also, "churning of the ocean," represents *differentiation* of primordial, homogenous matter, which results into formation of the universe with its Milky Way, Sun and Moon, etc. "Gods and demons," "*Amrita* and poison" are the contraries, which suggest that in the universe there are contrasts or opposites. Light and darkness are the world's eternal ways. These contraries must be balanced. We are told that the active Power, the "Perpetual motion of the Great Breath" only awakens Kosmos at the dawn of every new Period, setting it into motion by means of the two contrary Forces, the centripetal and the centrifugal forces. That dual motion transfers the Kosmos from the *Noumenal* to the *phenomenal* plane (*S.D.*, I, 281). Centrifugal force is centre leaving, while centripetal force is centre tending. We might say that when centrifugal force overpowers the centripetal, then the universe is projected out from the noumenal to phenomenal plane.

These two forces have been explained by Mr. T. Subba Row in the article "The Aryan-Arhat Esoteric Tenets on Sevenfold Principle in Man." He observes that the ancients have compared man's life and existence to the orbital motion of a planet around the sun, in which there is balancing of the centripetal and centrifugal forces. But when the planet in its *approach* to the sun passes over the line

where the centripetal and centrifugal forces completely neutralize each other and is only acted on by the centripetal force, it rushes towards the sun with a gradually increasing velocity and is finally mixed up with the mass of the sun's body. Again, when the planet in its *retreat* from the sun reaches a point where the centrifugal force becomes all-powerful, it flies off in a tangential direction from its orbit, and goes into the depths of void space, and is ultimately, decomposed into atoms. In human beings, the Centripetal force is *spiritual attraction*, and Centrifugal force is *terrestrial attraction*. As the centripetal force predominates, the individual reaches a higher plane of existence and ultimately becomes one with *Paramatma*. If, on the other hand, the centrifugal force becomes greater than the centripetal force, the individual comes to a lower level of existence and is ultimately annihilated.

We find the same idea in the *Key to Theosophy*, wherein, H.P.B. tells us that Spirit (or *Buddhi*) is the centrifugal and the soul (*Manas*) the centripetal spiritual energy; and to produce one result they have to be in perfect union and harmony. If we arrest the centripetal motion of the earthly soul tending towards the centre, by clogging it with a heavier weight of matter than it can bear, the harmony of the whole will be destroyed and we have the case of lost soul.

There is another explanation of *devas* and *demon* in the article "Mount Meru" in *The Path* magazine, by Mr. Judge, where physiological key is applied to the myth of the churning of the ocean. We are told that Meru is geographically described as passing through the middle of the earth and protruding on either side. In this we find a good picture of the spinal column as the centre of man's nervous system. Spinal column is often referred to as *Meru danda*. When we find the gods on its upper station and the demons on its lower station, and its roots and foundation in the navel, we are reminded of the physiological and generative powers of man at his lower pole, and the high Mahatic powers at the seat of the soul in the brain, said by some writers to be the pineal gland.

The article mentions that the churning of the ocean takes place

round about Mount Meru, and in man when *Buddhi* is activated it gives rise to an electro-spiritual force called *Kundalini*. "We are given reason to believe, through the *Secret Doctrine*, that the seat of this process is pineal gland...and that this gland corresponds to Mount Meru." It appears that Mount Mandara represents solar plexus, around which the great serpentine force (*Kundalini*), represented by serpent Vasuki (used as a rope for churning) is deployed.

The "stirring" or "churning" is also the result of living the spiritual life in earnestness, when one experiences tug-of-war, a certain inner conflict between lower and higher tendencies, and the extent to which the aspirant is able to overcome the lower tendencies, he gradually begins to acquire psychic and spiritual powers, which may be compared, at a simple level, to the fourteen precious things that came out of the ocean during the churning.

Question: What to make of the story of a sage remaining alive for 10,000 years under water? Can we say that he obtained nourishment from *Akasa*?

Answer: Theosophy does not agree to this as a possibility. It is because the very composition of our physical body is such that it cannot last beyond certain number of years. Mr. Judge in his article, "If Methuselah Existed, Why So Short Our Lives?" points out that the body of man is now much more compact than the ethereal bodies of man of earlier races. Thus, the atoms forming the body are drawn closer together. The friction between them will develop heat or tend to reduce the cohesive power. The heat evolved will have a tendency to destroy the intervening medium, or at least to so alter its state as to make it useless as a medium for cohesion to act. Such a process as described will in the end bring about the disintegration of the entire mass of atoms. Another element that tends to destruction of the union is the force of the mind and the emotions. As man increases his brain use and power, and the play of his emotions, he is able to affect his physical frame thereby. On the other hand, the wear and tear of the body is much slower when bodies are ethereal, because atoms forming the body are much farther removed.

In the article, “Elixir of Life,” we are told how man can, through discipline and purity, both physical and mental, gradually reduce his intake so as to be able to subsist first on fruits and milk and then give up even that to derive nourishment from the Ether (*Akasa*). In her article “Do the Rishis Exist?” H.P.B. says that we are not prepared to say that “any Hindu Rishis of old still exist in flesh and blood” although we have our own reasons to believe that some of the great Hindu Adepts of ancient times have been and are reincarnating themselves occasionally in Tibet and Tartary.

The story of Vyasa, Vasishtha and other sages appearing in different epochs, centuries apart could be accounted for by the presence of the permanent astral beneath the physical body taken up by them for a purpose, thereby acquiring sameness of appearance across these periods. In *The Key to Theosophy*, H.P.B. writes: “I have heard of Methuselah being 969 years old... I have never heard of mortal man, layman, or Adept, who could live even half the years allotted to Methuselah. Some Adepts do exceed, by a good deal, what you would call the ordinary age; yet there is nothing miraculous in it, and very few of them care to live very long.” In the *Ocean of Theosophy*, Mr. Judge writes: “In history there are instances where ordinary persons have lived to be two hundred years of age; and by a knowledge of the occult laws of nature the possible limit of duration may be extended nearly to four hundred years.”

The average human life span will gradually increase as we move from our present, Fifth Root Race to Sixth and Seventh Races is hinted at in the passage quoted by H.P.B. from certain Asiatic old books. Thus, “The sixth and seventh *Manushya* (men) will be born adults; and will know of no old age, though their years will be many....As the life of man lasted 400 (years in the first, or *Krita* Yuga), 300 (years in *Treta*), 200 (years in *Dvapara*) and 100 (in the present *Kali* age); so in the next (the 6th Race) (the natural age of man) will be (gradually increased) 200, then 300 and 400 (in the two last *yugas*).” (*The Theosophist*, Vol. V)

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

American cognitive neuroscience researcher and university professor, Michael Persinger said in the early 1990s that he had developed a “God helmet.” It was a head worn device which gave off very weakly generated magnetic fields. He claimed that the subjects wearing this device could experience mystical and religious phenomenon, such as, feeling the presence of the divine, spiritual oneness with the universe and a sense of Holy Communion with a higher power. It received wide publicity and led some of the neuroscientists and psychologists of that time to believe that there existed a corresponding “God Spot” in the human brain which was being tapped and activated and that the people who meditated, went into trance and prayed regularly were those who were likely to arouse the God Spot of their brain. Anyone who could stimulate this area would experience peace. This is now termed “Push” theory.

However, researchers at the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago and Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand believe that it is suppression of regulating functions of the brain which increases one’s chance of experiencing the mystical. This is called “Pull” theory. It has been found that people with damage to regulatory regions of the brain, in the frontal and temporal lobes, were more likely to have mystical experience as compared to healthy human beings. Commenting on this finding, the *Daily Mail* of England asked: “Could closeness to God be the result of Damaged Brain regions?”

Such findings appear blasphemous and surprising, as we have always believed that minds of Jesus, Buddha or Confucius were vastly more developed and superior, rather than atrophied in any respect. And yet, it is also true that some people with epilepsy and LSD users have reported having experiences which may be interpreted as transcendental in nature. “Might there be some aspect of the brain’s comprehension of the unknown that we still do not understand fully or at all?” asks Mukul Sharma. (*The Speaking Tree*,

Sunday Times of India, March 13, 2016)

All growth, for it to be permanent, must be from within, and must be the result of one's own effort. In the process of growth we do not add anything new from the outside. There is only *unfolding* of what is locked up within, as potential. When athletes take steroids to boost their energy level and give their best performance, they are disqualified, because that achievement under the effect of the drugs is not considered "their own." It is only temporary. Sometimes drugs and alcohol spurs creativity. But could we compare creativity achieved under the influence of drugs with that resulting from genuine inspiration from within?

Brain is only an instrument of the mind. All true impressions are in the divine nature or *Atman* but they must be reflected in our everyday consciousness. At the simplest level, we receive help and communication from our divine nature during Dreamless Sleep state. We are none the wiser when we wake up, either because we are unable to bring the memory of those experiences to waking life, *or* if we do bring them to the waking state, we are unable to get any higher meaning from these experiences. Our brain is not *receptive* and *porous*, as it is entangled in everyday activities and concerned with only mundane plane. We need to change the quality of our brain. By living according to the dictates of the soul, the brain can be made porous to soul's recollection. We can change the quality of the brain by taking up or ideating on universal ideas or even metaphysical ideas and living a morally pure life.

During certain condition of the body or through the use of drug or any other artificial means, it is possible to alter the condition of the brain so that it becomes *temporarily* receptive to higher impressions. At times, what is experienced is only psychic and not spiritual but, mistakenly considered as high, spiritual and mystical experience. Certain diseases, such as consumption, bring about changes in the physical and astral bodies, and the physical body tends to waste away, and is no longer a hindrance, and the consumptive becomes more and more clairvoyant, as the inner man

has now greater facility for impressing the physical brain. When the physical man is paralyzed the spiritual man can manifest uninterruptedly.

Who is an empath? Empaths pick up energy of people, places and things, and are excellent healers once they learn to balance this quality. It is like you have a radar that senses things. An empath can easily detect a lie, pick up other people's thoughts and emotions, and may feel overwhelmed in crowded places, and may avoid parties. Dr. Michael R. Smith, an intuitive empath coach says, "If you are one of us, you have highly sensitive, spiritual, emotional and energetic perception. You literally feel other people's energy and emotions in your own body and energy field. ... There is nothing you can do to take your intuitive empath sensitivity away: however you can learn to become a skilled empath so it does not hurt." Not all the emotions or thoughts or energy they feel are their own. Sometimes as an empath, one is able to predict what may happen to friends or family. Empaths can also be deeply affected by collective suffering during a manmade or natural disaster, and feel the pain of thousands of people or feel as though their body's energy is being used elsewhere. Many times it can be hard to distinguish between one's own feelings, and what is being picked up from others.

Many empaths turn into energy healers and use their empathetic connections to help others heal. But the first step is to learn how to cope with all that being empath entails. In one of the methods called Access Consciousness, an empath can ask himself or herself, "Who does it [emotion or energy] belong to?" or "Is this yours or someone else's?" As the empath asks the questions, she can feel her energy lighten up and can sense the answer, and know what is hers and what is not. Once the awareness comes in, the person is able to deal with the energy. "A trained empath may be well aware that they are experiencing someone else's sadness, yet decide to feel the energy for a while in order to help the other person figure out what the

sadness is about,” writes Caroline Van Kimmenade, an empath trainer. “Eventually, every empath can settle into his or her space in the universe, giving and receiving from a position of balance and peace,” writes Aparna Talaular, a yoga teacher. (*Life Positive*, March 2016)

H.P.B. describes a “medium” as a “sick sensitive,” born with a peculiar organization. All of us are sensitive to changes in the atmosphere, to the needs and moods of others, to a certain extent. A spiritual aspirant becomes more and more sensitive as he progresses, and feels more keenly the joys and sorrows of others, but he does not allow these to shake him from his fixed purpose, says *Light on the Path*. In other words, a psychically or passively sensitive person is sensitive to every passing sensation, while a Mahatma is sensitive to the thoughts and feelings and needs of every living creature.

It is said that every human being throws off, *unconsciously*, the magnetic fluid or vitality that affects the objects and beings around him. A mesmerizer projects the same fluid from himself, *consciously* and under the guidance of his will. In a healthy and young person these magnetic emanations are strong while the same are weak in case of diseased or old person. When two such people come in close proximity of each other, there is transfer of vitality from the stronger to the weaker person, which may leave the stronger person exhausted. As an extreme example, there is the case of Seeress of Prevoist, Madame Hauffe, who repeatedly stated that she supported life merely on the atmosphere of the people surrounding her and their *magnetic emanations*. H.P.B. points out that the seeress was a *magnetic vampire*, who absorbed vitality of stronger people in the form of *volatilized blood*. (*Isis*, I, 463)

H.P.B. makes the following suggestion for the cure of obsession, which may be equally applicable to cure “psychically sensitive” people. Thus:

The sensitive must have his sensitiveness destroyed....He can be helped by a magnetizer...who is morally pure and physically healthy; it must be a powerful magnetizer, a man

of commanding will-force. But the fight for freedom will, after all, have to be fought by the patient himself. His will-power must be aroused. His diet must be of the simplest, he must neither eat animal food, nor touch any stimulant....[He must] control his thoughts and compel them to dwell upon pure, elevating, spiritual things. (*H.P.B. Series No. 9*, p. 44)

A smart and timely suggestion can sometimes be far more powerful than trying hard to convince another. In the movie, *Six Years*, a young couple that had been happily together for a long time, began to drift apart when friends began asking questions, such as, what it was to stick together for that long, and if they felt stifled or if the sex had got boring. The power of suggestion seemed to have done its work, playing a negative role, with comments from friends finding their way into their subconscious. Some smart people use the power of suggestion as a highly manipulative technique, in which they replace open criticism by mild suggestions, which lodge themselves in the mind of the hearer. At office, smart people throw subtle hints that may work against a rival.

Suggestions can play highly positive role as well. “Have you noticed how your chest swells with pride when someone places faith in you with, ‘I know you can do this’? Such suggestions are particularly effective when they come from those who believe in and love us. A mother who sends her child to an exam with the words, ‘I know you will do really well,’ has encrypted success code already into the child’s subconscious. And the same child uses the same technique when he/she tells parents fighting illness and age, ‘You have been my strength; I know you have it in you to fight back and come up trumps’! The subconscious works on whatever it accepts. Fortified with positive suggestion, we believe in our own power that much more—and with that, half the battle is won,” writes Vinita Dawra Nangia.

Suggestions work almost like a hypnosis—positive or negative, once the subconscious accepts them. But the fact is that before

reaching the subconscious, the suggestion has to cross the barrier of the Conscious Mind, which is the critical gatekeeper. “It is important to use the services of this gatekeeper and allow only positive suggestions past the barrier,” writes Nangia. (*Times Life, Sunday Times of India*, March 27, 2016)

To suggest is to leave the free will of the person intact; it is the very opposite of imposing. The power of suggestion can be used beneficially in reforming or instructing another. Even a child rebels if certain discipline is *imposed*. He might be willing to consider if it comes as a suggestion, where he is free to reject the same. However, it is not good to be extremely suggestible, which means being ready to *passively* accept any and every suggestion, without critical examination. We are being influenced by a thousand voices. But the spiritual aspirant must follow only *his* sense of right and wrong. He must have the courage to defy, if required, the opinion of the society, community or even religion. He has to consult wise people, good books and above all his own inner nature. He may go wrong in his judgement, but it would eventually lead to *intuition with certainty*. Mr. Crosbie remarks:

From our birth, we are surrounded by those who suggest certain ideas to us as true, and we follow the suggested ideas. There is very little *original* thought anywhere, and particularly is this true...in politics, religion, science. Whatever system of thought is presented to us we adopt....This power of suggestion must still be used....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 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*. (*Universal Theosophy*, pp. 108-111)