

		Rs. 3/-
Vol. 16	April 2025	No. 12

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

THE PATH TO THE MASTERS	3
FOOD FOR THOUGHT	9
THE SMALL MIRACLE—II	
SOUND AND ITS POWER—V	14
A MEMORY OF MADAM BLAVATSKY	20
THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE	23
FRAGMENT ONE—III	
WHAT IS WORTH WANTING?	28
IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY	33

THEOSOPHY COMPANY (INDIA) PRIVATE LTD.

40 New Marine Lines, Mumbai 400 020, India
email: ultmumbai@mtnl.net.in ♦ Phone : 22039024
website: www.ultindia.org

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

Vol. 16, No. 12

April 17, 2025

THE PATH TO THE MASTERS

IT might be truly said that there are two kinds of human beings: those who desire to better themselves, and those to whom such a thought never occurs. Pain, problems, and suffering awaken a man, and he exerts himself to relieve his pain, resolve his problems, to learn from his suffering. This desire to better oneself is invariably accompanied by the wish to improve the conditions of all men.

Sometimes actions of individuals or governments for improvement of the conditions of others lead a man to seriously acquire the knowledge of self-improvement. The evolutionary path leads from indolence in thought to thoughtfulness, and the first sign of our being full of thought is when we feel that we are a soul, superior to thought. To be full of thoughts is a different and higher stage; when our mind is full to overflowing, there comes the moment of a great choice: shall the overflowing mind go in the direction of the Soul or of the lower nature?

When we look at the Human Kingdom, we see mighty differences: foolish men, learned men, controlled and contented men, and finally, wise men. Professor Huxley said that if there was, on the one side, a tremendous difference between a man and a black beetle, on the other, there was as much or even a wider gulf between the ordinary men and the perfected ones, “whose intelligence is as much beyond ours, as ours exceeds that of a black beetle.” Theosophical philosophy teaches that there exist men of infinite knowledge, power, and mercy in comparison to whom our

knowledge, power, and mercy are puny and passing. Professor Huxley also uttered a grand theosophical truth when he said: “The struggle for existence and the Survival of the fittest was the law for brutes; the spirit of sacrifice was the law for man.” By sacrifice, Theosophy teaches, does a man prove his fitness to survive as an immortal Soul.

This being so, human evolution and its many differences have to be pictured by us, and it can bring the thoughtful people, referred to earlier, in the direction of the true facts about the Soul, and they may find in their hearts desire to express soul-qualities—peace, contentment for themselves, power to help others, and therefore knowledge.

But to desire is one thing, to realize and attain such a noble wish is another. However, such genuine desire leads us to that path, called the Aryan Path, the Path of Noble Souls, on which ignoble feelings, thoughts, actions, and words are to be shunned, and nobility in every department of life has to be expressed.

The Aryan Path is the Path of pupils and teachers, of disciples and Masters. There, the light of nobility shed by the Nobles helps all who walk on that path to attain nobility. This path is open to all, but its existence has to be perceived by the Soul. We might say it is only suffering, poverty, and starvation of one kind or another that open our eyes to the existence of the Path. When the Soul perceives and takes the Path, one gradually moves in the direction of becoming Noble-Aryan.

For each one of us who desires to learn something about the Path, the walking of that Path is a possibility, and it only remains for us to turn it into an actuality by taking our Soul-evolution into our own hands. Theosophy can but teach us, Masters can but point the way; each one of us has to walk it. Having contacted Theosophy and known about the Path, what shall we do to ourselves? What steps shall we take?

First, let us learn the map or the chart of this Path, and not take it for granted. Where does it begin, how does it end? What does its

treading imply? It is important to learn and know what is expected of us. Then we will become aware that there are thoughtless people, there are thoughtful people, and among the latter are those who are thinking about the Soul and the helping of other Souls. We must learn the place Theosophy gives to the deluded and the low-minded and the lazy, to the religious man and the irreligious good man (for there are very excellent men who do not profess or follow any particular creed), to the spiritual man, the aspirant who wishes to know, the practitioner who applies the lessons he learns, the disciple ready to be tested in sacrifice and service, the Adept full of powers, and the Perfect Master, who is the servant of the whole of Nature. This theoretical knowledge has to be obtained, and he who is acquiring it has taken the first step.

What is the second step? The Resolve: to know is one thing, to apply and practice is another. This Resolve, if real, is born of Devotion. In the first stage, Doubt, as a quality of open-mindedness, is helpful. The one who is credulous in the first stage is likely to turn into a blind believer in the second stage. If the teachings are accepted with understanding, then such understanding will produce Devotion, and Devotion will lead to Resolve. What is the nature of the Resolve? In many different ways, by many kinds of words, this Resolve is made, but they all reduce themselves to this: "Let me become a Noble Soul."

This will lead to the third stage, the probationary stage. This Resolve will produce results: numerous and unexpected things will happen, tempting one to break the great and noble resolve. One is also tested by the Law of Karma. Some people fail at the very first or at an early test. To hold our ground, we need to cultivate (i) Silence and (ii) Assiduity.

To maintain silence implies not speaking about one's Resolve to friends and co-students. It is an inner reality, and like so many other occult things, loses its efficacy and power when spoken. Let us remember that we have resolved to act and speak, to feel and think nobly; therefore, we need to examine ourselves daily in silence.

Since the aim is to forget ourselves, we should abstain from speaking about our faults or merits, our weaknesses or powers to others. Forget the self. We condemn bragging and boasting; we also have to learn to condemn any and all reference to ourselves. One needs to cultivate “impersonality” from the very beginning.

Assiduity or constant and close attention to our thoughts, feelings, desires, actions, and our hidden blemishes, unsuspected vices, and unknown weaknesses, is absolutely necessary to make progress on this Path. All that is hidden shall be revealed. “Murder will out,” is the phrase which originates from Geoffrey Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*, and it means secrets, especially those related to wrongdoings, will eventually come to light. All murders ever committed by us, by mind which deceives, by feelings which hate, by words which hurt, and by deeds which are petty, mean, and selfish—all these must come out. It is then that instead of being frightened and giving up, we are required to be persistent in our resolve: “I will continue to tread the Aryan Path. The Ancient Way.” The only real failure is to cease trying.

Resolve means zest. To stand the test, to fortify ourselves against all falls and temptations, we must keep our whole being busy. It is not only idle hands with which the Devil in us finds mischief to do but also idle minds and idle hearts.

Hence, the fourth step is Occupation—Noble Occupation. Instead of worrying about our weaknesses, we should get busy with developing the opposite virtue. If one is irritable, then one will have to face many tests concerned with irritability. If one learns to think of and dwell upon patience, read about patience, and act deliberately and patiently, then one will soon pass the test, and the devil of irritability will disappear.

Likewise, if indolence is the sin, industry is the remedy. Let us learn to appreciate how merciful Mother Nature and the Law of Karma are—they compel every man to earn his bread with the sweat of his brow. “Happy the man who has found his work,” said Carlyle. Well, let the Soul find his work—of study, application, and practice;

of promulgation and helpfulness; and of service to other Souls.

This brings us to the fifth step. Occupation leads to a Noble Experience. As we serve and help *others*, we find that *we* are served and helped. As we teach others, we learn. As we give more and more, finer contentment comes to us. As we sacrifice, bliss is ours; as we empty our hearts, Nature fills them. Study and meditation on these experiences lead us to seek the source of this help—where does it come from? Whence the knowledge that suddenly comes into our minds? Whence the love which becomes universal and which pours out towards all Souls? Whence the power to help all enquirers? First, we find that it comes from within our own inner Ego, and then we find that that Inner Ego itself is the receiver or the receptacle of the Blessings of the wisdom and the power of the Great Masters.

Thus, the sixth stage is reached. The Soul, mind, finds himself to be a *chela*, a student, a learner who has found Masters. All Masters and then One particular *Guru* or Teacher. He then consecrates himself to do the bidding of Him to whom he owes all. More opportunities to teach and help come to him, and so he adds to his power to help and sacrifice. After such an experience, he knows himself as the Channel.

This is the last or seventh step. The Soul, knowing himself as the channel of the Master's life, lives to serve, lives by sacrifice, lives in peace, feeling it within and radiating it without. He carries the Power of his blessings wherever he goes. Humanity becomes his friend, the world his home, Masters his parents, co-disciples his brothers, and the struggling souls his children.

This Noble Path is a reality. It requires little search, a little courage, and a little discrimination. We need to seek the right direction. We must be courageous with our own beliefs and also be ready to break customs and habits if they stand in our way. Let us use our discrimination in study—what to read and what not; in application—how to be silent, how to speak, how the inner should precede the outer; in service of others—let not our enthusiasm run away with us

so that we are careful not to force our views on others; leave others free while we retain our own freedom.

We are advised to live a life of purity and not make excuses for our mistakes and sins. As we live purely, helping others, the Path will become real and visible, and we will gradually understand what is meant when it is said, “Each one must become the Path.” As we show the power, the peace, and the knowledge of the Noble Path issuing forth from within ourselves, we will become the true channel in which the Life of the Great Ones is employing itself. A Master of Wisdom said: “Take one step in our direction, and we will take one in yours.” Let us Resolve to take that step and prepare ourselves to receive the blessings which come in response, the Blessings which we keep are with all, for they are given to us for All. What a miracle can be wrought by a student-aspirant who fits himself to become such a channel is vividly described thus: “When H.P.B. said: ‘Where thought can pass, they can come,’ she referred to the particular condition and atmosphere which alone can form the channel for the passing of thought. A thread of glass cannot conduct the electric fluid, but a copper wire can. Each student has to find out for himself those particular wires within him which act as conductors for spiritual influences.” When a group of student-aspirants are united, a divine atmosphere overspreads the group, and the nobler part of each one’s nature is aroused and exercised. (*The Theosophical Movement*, September 1953)

God dwells in you, as you, and you don’t have to “do” anything to be God-realized or Self-realized, it is already your true and natural state. Just drop all seeking, turn your attention inward, and sacrifice your mind to the One Self radiating in the Heart of your very being. For this to be your own presently lived experience, Self-Inquiry is the one direct and immediate way.

—RAMANA MAHARSHI

FOOD FOR THOUGHT THE SMALL MIRACLE—II

PAUL WILLIAM GALLICO was an American novelist, short story and sports writer. In the late 1930s he abandoned sports writing for fiction and found success in writing short stories for magazines such as “The Saturday Evening Post.” Over the course of his career, he wrote forty-one books and numerous short stories. In the story, “The Small Miracle,” the little boy seeks permission to take his sick donkey into the tomb of Saint Francis and ask him to cure her. He had heard that St. Francis loved God’s creations, including birds and beasts. He wanted to beg St. Francis to heal her and had faith that he would do so.

Saint Francis of Assisi was an Italian mystic, poet, and Catholic friar who founded the religious order of the Franciscans. He was born in 1181, and his father was a prosperous silk merchant. He grew up as a carefree boy, and his father showered him with fine clothes and entertainment. His moment of disillusionment toward the world that surrounded him came very early in his life. Once when he was selling cloth and velvet in the marketplace on behalf of his father, a beggar came and asked for alms. At the end of his business deal, he searched for the beggar and gave him all the money he had in his purse. He was severely scolded by his father. However, at one point in his life, he had a strange vision, after which he lost interest in worldly life. A friend asked him whether he was thinking of marrying, to which he answered, “Yes, a fairer bride than any of you have ever seen,” meaning his “Lady Poverty.”

Later, he renounced his father and his patrimony. Some accounts report that he stripped himself naked in token of this renunciation, and the bishop covered him with his own cloak. He believed that nature itself was the mirror of God. He called all creatures his “brothers” and “sisters.” The *Floretti*, or “Little Flowers,” a collection of legends and folklore that sprang up after his death, mentions how one day while Francis was travelling with some companions, they came across a place on the road where birds filled the trees on either

side of the road. He asked his companions to wait for him while he went to preach to his sisters, the birds. The birds surrounded him, intrigued by the power of his voice, and not one of them flew away.

According to another legend, when St. Francis lived in the city of Gubbio, there was a ferocious wolf that devoured men as well as animals. He searched for the wolf in the hills, and on finding him, he made a sign of a cross and commanded the wolf to harm no one. He brought the wolf into the town and made a pact between the wolf and the citizens. Since the wolf had “done evil out of hunger” the citizens were to feed the wolf regularly. In return, the wolf would no longer prey upon them or their flocks.

Pope John Paul II wrote on the occasion of the World Day of Peace in 1990 that “the poor man of Assisi gives us striking witness that when we are at peace with God, we are better able to devote ourselves to building up that peace with all creation, which is inseparable from peace among all peoples.”

There are two important themes in this story—miracles and the power of faith. The Old and the New Testament mention the miraculous phenomena performed by Moses and Jesus. Similar astonishing and most wonderful events are invariably reported as an occurrence in the lives of great beings like the Buddha, Zarathushtra and apostles of the Christ. A modern man or a man of science may see nothing but superstition or human credulity in all these, but the fact is that such miraculous events have been reported, century after century, among men of east as well as west and often well attested by men of keen intellect, high calibre and unimpeachable repute. This ability to perform wonderful acts is not restricted to great beings. Western travellers in the east give vivid accounts of witnessing miraculous phenomena performed by fakirs and yogis.

Any phenomenon that is strange and unfamiliar and for which no rational explanation is possible is ascribed to supernatural agency and is classed as miraculous. The supernatural agency could be a god or devil, and then a miracle is something that goes against the laws of nature. Theosophy says: “There is no miracle. Everything

that happens is the result of law—eternal, immutable, ever active....There may be laws once ‘known,’ now unknown to science.” Among other things, the performance of miraculous phenomena requires a perfected human will, combined with powerful imagination and faith.

Will is the colourless force—force of spirit in action. Will is a spiritual power present in every portion of the Universe. We say, “Behind Will stands Desire.” Desire is the mover of the Will. We experience will at two levels. There is the *personal will*, displayed markedly by a strong-willed or stubborn person. What we consider a strong-willed person is the one with strong and intense desires that move the will into action to bring about the wished-for ends. Will is the divine power of the Spirit within—illimitable and exhaustless. We have limited that power by entertaining small, mean, and selfish desires.

Some people develop will power through various Yoga practices. But the development of *Spiritual Will* or *perfected human will* requires the cultivation of unselfishness and readiness to be assisted, guided, and instructed by our divine nature. In other words, spiritual will could be developed only when we have learnt to drink, to the last bitter dregs, what the cup of life holds for us, without a murmur, and realize that the adverse and painful circumstances are for our experience and discipline. When we sacrifice the personal nature, the lower nature loosens its hold on the higher, and then the power and force of the divine nature become available. The more we pay heed to the “Voice of Conscience” within, the greater will be the development of our will. When the attitude is, “Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven,” and when the lower, personal nature is purified so that it is brought closer to the divine nature, then our prayer becomes the *Will prayer*. It seems that for a brief space of time the mind is unfettered and becomes one with the divine, and we find our thoughts and desires being translated into action. It is then no longer a prayer but a command.

However, Faith establishes the Will, and Faith without will is

like a windmill without wind, barren of results. “At the base of your nature you will find faith, hope, and love,” says *Light on the Path*. Faith is inherent in every human being. The power of the will is strengthened by faith, and we are then able to overcome all obstacles. What is faith? In Sanskrit, it is called *Shraddha*. Faith is inherent in every human being. It is due to lack of faith that knowledge of things divine eludes modern man. “Faith fixed on *any thing* will bring results, and men are blinded to real and true faith by the results of even false faith,” writes Mr. Crosbie. The power of faith in itself is limitless because it proceeds from the very Highest. But most of the time we place our faith on *externalities*—gods, men, dogmas, and systems of thought—and thereby, limit the power of Spirit, which cannot expand beyond the limitations of our ideal. There are innumerable examples of faith-cures in which the person was cured as a result of intense faith in the healer or the doctor.

H.P.B. writes that we fully believe in the mysterious power of faith. She points out that there are plenty of “miracle-working” relics in the world, such as a tomb of a saint or a tooth of Buddha. But some of them are unimaginable, such as a feather fallen out of the wing of Angel Gabriel! She adds that a toenail of Gladstone, a boot of Col. Ingersoll, or a tail of monkey would also serve the purpose, provided the faith was strong. Thus:

“If there be in the patient alone a faith supreme and unshakable in the power of a healer, of a holy relic, of the touch of a shrine, of the waters of a well, of a pilgrimage to a certain place and a bath in some sacred river, of any given ceremonies, or repetition of charms or an amulet worn about the neck—in either of these or many more agencies that might be named, then the patient will cure himself by the sole power of his predisposed faith.” (*The Theosophist*, April 1883)

Faith is the art of holding on to things your reason has once accepted, in spite of your changing mood. Thus, for instance, having decided to live the life according to spiritual principles, there should be no turning back. The opinions of the people around—in family,

society, or office—should not influence our basic decision. We all profess to have full faith in God and in the justice and mercy of the Law of Karma, and yet how often do we witness a pious person announcing that he no longer believes in God, whom he worshipped every single day and who failed to save him from a certain calamity! Likewise, our supposed unshakable faith in the justice of Karma is set at naught when we resort to all kinds of ceremonies and rituals to avert a calamity. Our faith turns out to be not as strong as we believed it to be. In his book, *A Grief Observed*, C. S. Lewis says, “You never know how much you really believe anything until its truth or falsehood becomes a matter of life and death to you.” For instance, it is easy to say that you believe the rope to be very strong as long as you are going to use it to tie a box. But suppose you had to hang by that rope over a precipice; then would you not try to find out how much you really trusted the rope? Only a real risk tests the reality of a belief, and through pain we come out of mere *verbal thinking* and *notional belief*.

“Faith,” says *Light on the Path*, “is a great engine, an enormous power, which in fact can accomplish all things. For it is a covenant or engagement between man’s divine part and his lesser self.” A covenant is a pact or an agreement. The covenant between man’s lower and higher natures is analogous to the agreement between a child and his parents. It is based on trust. A child knows that even though he is scolded, reprimanded by his parents, or denied certain pleasures, it is all for his good. Likewise, the man of *true* faith who knows that the universe is governed by a just and impartial Law is able to maintain his faith in the divine nature, even as he passes through painful experiences. If we have faith in Karma, that whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap, we would not complain; we would not become bitter as a result of pain or adversity, and there would be no place for self-pity. Krishna advises Arjuna in the *Gita* to “make...gain and loss, victory and defeat, the same to thee.”

(Concluded)

SOUND AND ITS POWER

V

SIR JAGDISH CHANDRA BOSE, an Indian plant physiologist and physicist, after a lifetime of research, concluded that plants react to the attitude with which they are nurtured and that they are sensitive to factors in the external environment, such as light, cold, heat, and noise. Bose created recorders capable of detecting extremely small movements, such as the quivering of injured plants. He invented the crescograph, a tool that measures the growth of plants. He had shown that plants experienced sensations and were able to feel pleasure and pain. That is the reason why children are advised not to pluck leaves, flowers, or twigs.

Interestingly, in March 2023, researchers from Tel Aviv University in Israel reported that they were able to pick very distinct, high-pitched sounds in the ultrasonic range made by plants in distress. Their study on cactuses, corn, tomatoes, wheat, and tobacco suggests that they emit sounds under stress from dehydration or when their stems are severed. Each type of stress is associated with a specific and distinct type of sound. Lilach Hadany, a professor of plant sciences at Tel Aviv University who led the study, says that these sounds could have two possible explanations. They could be simply by-products of the physical processes that accompany the stress in the plants, or these sounds are used for communication, either to insects or other plants.

Is there any relation between music and plant growth? Some researchers have claimed that music promotes plant growth and that plants can distinguish different types of sound, which include different genres of music, nature sounds, and traffic sounds. In an experiment carried out with flute, violin, harmonium, and Veena, to observe the effect on plant growth, the violin was found to be the most effective instrument. In another experiment it was playing classical or jazz music that caused growth to increase. However, it is generally felt that more research needs to be done in order to

establish a connection between music and plant growth.

Music can influence animal behaviour and physiology. Studies have shown that different types of music can influence animals' stress levels and activity. For instance, classical music has been shown to have a calming effect on dogs in stressful environments, leading to increased sleep and rest behaviour. Likewise, soft classical music layered with nature-inspired sounds can be relaxing for cats. On the other hand, loud music may cause agitation. For instance, Rock music can cause higher levels of anxiety in pets, and studies show that in dogs, rock music led to increased activity and barking. Mr. Judge writes that many men in Germany, Austria, Italy, and Ireland can bring about extraordinary effects on horses, cattle, and the like, by peculiar sounds uttered in a certain way.

As for the effect of sound on various illnesses in human beings, in *Isis Unveiled* (I, 215) mention is made of harmonica, an instrument composed of five tumblers of a very thin glass, placed in a row and filled with two different varieties of wine, brandy, oil, and water, respectively. Five melodious sounds were produced from them by merely rubbing the finger on the edges of the tumblers. Sound has an attractive property, so it draws out the disease, and the two kinds of vibrations blend together and disappear in space. Mesmer is supposed to have used harmonica to cure diseases such as insanity and epilepsy. Asclepiades used a trumpet sound to cure sciatica: "Its prolonged sound making the fibres of the nerves to palpitate, the pain invariably subsided." Democritus affirmed that many diseases could be cured by the melodious sounds of a flute. There is also the example of the exorcism of the evil spirit that obsessed Saul by means of music. When David played on the harp, the evil spirit departed from Saul, and he was refreshed.

Music helps to deal with and counteract sorrow, disappointment, depression, and emotional upheavals in life. It helps eliminate negative emotions and enhances positive emotions. It seems to work on the principle of "like cures like." T. V. Sairam has shown that "a musical form representing a certain emotion could help to destroy

the very same emotion.” Thus, “listening to a fiery composition of Vivaldi, representing the moods of rage can actually melt away years of accumulated anger and frustration in an individual.” (*Dignity Dialogue*, December 2003)

The concept of *raga* seems to be peculiar to Indian classical music. A *raga* uses a series of five or more musical notes upon which a melody is constructed. In his book, *The Science of Stotras and Mantras*, (pp. 48-49), Swami Shri Savitanandji points out that various *ragas* in Indian classical music are known to affect different parts of the body and help in curing diseases. Thus, for instance, *Darbari raga* stimulates blood circulation in the brain. It also eliminates any malfunction in this part of the body. A variation of this *raga*, namely, the *Ashavari Darbari raga* cures headaches. When used appropriately, it can even cure a person of chronic, *i.e.*, long-standing headaches. Likewise, *Saarang raga* eliminates *pitta vikaar*, *i.e.*, excessive secretion of bile. Therefore, it has a considerable healing effect on jaundice as well as stomach-related diseases. For the insomniacs, *Kedar Raga* is the key.

In Indian musical tradition, *ragas* are associated with different times of the day or with seasons. It is observed that when these *ragas* are performed at the prescribed time, they have maximum effect. For instance, many of the *Malhar* group of *ragas* are performed during the monsoon and are ascribed the magical power to bring rain. Thus, *Megh Malhar Raga* is said to have the power to cause rain in the area where it is sung.

Some musicians of the archaic times had the perfect knowledge of these *ragas*, and they could bring into play the magical power of the *raga* while singing it. One such person was Tansen, who flourished in the sixteenth century and was considered to be one of the greatest musicians of India. He was a court musician to Emperor Akbar and was reckoned one among the *Navratnas*, or nine jewels, *i.e.*, nine illustrious persons in Emperor Akbar’s court. Legends associated with Tansen say that he could bring down rains by singing the *raga Megh Malhar*, and start fire with *raga Deepak*. Other

legends speak of his ability to make wild animals listen with attention. When he sang certain *ragas*, candles used to light up automatically. Once, he tamed a wild elephant, using the power of *ragas*, so that the emperor could ride him.

We might say that the magical power of *ragas* is the magical power of music, which in turn is associated with the power of spoken word or sound. A *mantram* is a spoken power, which awakens another corresponding and still more occult power in the world of spirits. These spirits or elementals are said to be the soul or essence of four elements—earth, water, air, and fire. What is said about the *mantram* becomes applicable to various *ragas*. Therefore, singing of certain *ragas* awakens fire elementals, causing light or fire, and water elementals causing rain. For instance, *Kumil-Madan* (elementals associated with water), when invoked, they will shower rain. *Poruthu-Madan* (earth elementals), help in the taming of wild animals (*Isis*, I, 496). Just as there are very few people who have perfect knowledge of *mantras* so as to bring about the desired effect, so also, even today there must be only a few who might possess the perfect knowledge of the magical power of *ragas*.

There are seven notes in a musical scale. We could obtain the first, second, and third octaves of these notes by doubling the vibrations and, in fact, can have infinite octaves. In the Indian musical system, it is stated that between two notes there are 12 *shrutis* or, as it were, 12 mini-notes, which a sensitive person and a musician is able to detect. *The Voice of the Silence* (pp. 55-56 fn.), says, “It is a well-known fact in Physical Science, as well as in Occultism, that the aggregate sound of Nature—such as is heard in the roar of great rivers, the noise produced by waving tops of trees in large forests, or that of a city heard at a distance—is a definite single tone of quite an appreciable pitch. This is shown by physicists and musicians.... This tone is held to be the middle F of the piano; which may... be considered the key-note of Nature.” In other words, it seems to suggest that all the different sounds in nature produce a single note, Fa, of a diatonic scale. But how many of us have ears

sensitive enough to discern this note?

H.P.B. remarks that a sensitive (clairvoyant) can *see* sounds and detect every note and modulation far more distinctly than they would by hearing. Just as sounds can be seen clairvoyantly, so also sound can be translated into taste. There are sounds which taste exceedingly acid in the mouths of sensitives. H.P.B. mentions a case of a gentleman in Paris for whom sound generated the impression of colour. Thus, the vowel “A” appeared to him dark red; “E” white; “I” black; “O” yellow; “U” blue. The consonants appear in dark grey hues. Thus, for this person, the colour of the word depended on the colour of the letters composing the word. To him, human speech appeared in the shape of many-coloured, or variegated ribbons coming out of persons’ mouths. Depending upon the predominance of vowels or consonants in a language, French appeared to him as grey, strongly mixed with white; the English seemed nearly black; Italian yellow, merging into carmine and black, and so on.

Inversely, there are sensitives in whom the sight of colours evokes the sensation of sounds, and in some others, a triple phenomenon is produced by one sense generating two other senses. Thus, a certain sensitive person reported that whenever he heard a brass band, he saw dark golden clouds and experienced a taste “like copper in the mouth.” (*H.P.B. Series No. 19*, pp. 9-11)

Scientists now accept the phenomenon that one type of sensory input (such as hearing music) evokes an additional one (such as seeing colours). The phenomenon is termed *synaesthesia*, from the Greek roots *syn* (together) and *aesthesia* (perception). In the magazine *Theosophy* (Vol. 11, pp. 495-496), the case of one Ms. Huggins is printed. At the age of ten, she began losing her sense of sight and hearing, and she completely lost them within a year. Having reached the age of reason before the disabilities set in, she could hear others by using an auditory apparatus by touching the diaphragm with her finger tips or by her fingers touching the throat of the speaker. She said that she could not hear the sounds but could *feel* them. Similarly, she could determine as many as thirty different

colours by her sense of smell. The article concludes by saying that all the senses are *astral*, distinct from the physical *organs*, and are *interchangeable*.

Occultism explains these phenomena by saying that physical sense organs are not the real organs of perception. The perceptive faculty proper belongs to the astral plane, and real centres of perception are in the astral body. All senses are but differentiations of the one sense-consciousness. Every sense pervades every other, there being only one sense acting through different organs of sensation.

H.P.B. argues that just like musical vibrations, we are affected by the vibrations produced by the stars and planets. The Pythagorean “music of the spheres” is not a mere fancy. As the planets move around the Sun in their respective orbits, the swift revolution of each of these bodies causes a swish or musical hum, in the air. “Evidently, each planet will hum on a different pitch, depending on the ratios of their respective orbits—just as the tone of a string depends on its length. Thus, the orbits in which the planets move form a kind of huge lyre whose strings are curved into circles. It seemed equally evident that the intervals between the orbital cords must be governed by the laws of harmony,” writes Arthur Koestler.

The corpuscles of the blood, floating in the common fluid, affect each other, so also the planets affect each other. The planets differ from each other in size and distance, and hence, the intensity of the impulse they give to the surrounding ether as they move around the sun in their respective orbits, is different. Music is the combination and modulation of sounds, and sound is the effect produced by the vibrations of the ether. H.P.B. points out that we may compare the impulse communicated by different planets to the surrounding ether to the tones produced by the different notes on a musical instrument. It is easy to understand the combined influence caused by the movement of these planets in their orbits producing harmonious vibrations. (*Isis*, I, 215 and 275)

(To be continued)

A MEMORY OF MADAM BLAVATSKY

THE first and earliest impression I received from Madame Blavatsky was the feeling of the power and largeness of her individuality; as though I were in the presence of one of the primal forces of Nature.

I remember that the talk turned upon the great leaders of materialism—then filling a larger space in the public eye than now—and their dogmatic negative [denial] of the soul and of spiritual forces. Madam Blavatsky's attitude in the discussion was not combative, hardly even argumentative; still she left in the mind the conviction of the utter futility of material reasoning, and this is not by any subtle logic or controversial skill, but as though a living and immortal spirit by its mere presence at once confuted the negation of spiritual life.

This sense of the power of individuality was not what one has felt in the presence of some great personality, who dominates and dwarfs surrounding persons into insignificance, and tyrannously overrides their independence. It was rather the sense of a profound deep-seated reality, an exhaustless power of resistance, a spirit built on the very depths of Nature and reaching down to the primeval eternities of Truth.

Gradually apparent under this dominant impression of power, arose a subtle sense of great gentleness and kindness, an unfailing readiness to forget herself entirely and to throw herself heartily into the life of others.

Another side of Madam Blavatsky's character unfolded itself more slowly—the great light and piercing insight of her soul.

One was lulled, as it were, by the sympathetic personality, and tranquilised by the feeling of balanced power, so that at first this quality of inner light might remain un-noted, till some sudden turn of thought or change of feeling opened the eyes, and one recognized the presence of a denizen of eternity.

Everyone has noticed, in travelling through some wild and mountainous country, that the vast masses and depths of the hills and valleys are often hid and remain unapparent; the mind and eye

are held by the gentler graces of nature, the trees, the birds, and the flowers; and some ridge is ascended imperceptibly, till suddenly the crest is reached, and the mind is startled by the vast perspective swiftly unfolded before it.

These startling, unexpected glimpses into profundity, I have often felt in Madam Blavatsky's presence, when the richness and sympathy of her character had almost tempted one to believe her a fascinating personality, and nothing more....

With unparalleled force, she asserted the soul; with transcendent strength she taught the reality of spirit, by living the life, and manifesting the energies of an immortal. She cast herself with torrential force against the dark noxious clouds of evil and ignorance that envelope and poison human life; the rift in their leaden masses through which, high above, we catch a glimpse of the blue, bears testimony to the greatness of the power that rent them asunder.

She was a personality of such magnitude as to divide the world into her adherents and her opponents, leaving none indifferent between; the test of the force of her nature is as much the fierce animosity of her enemies as the loving devotion of her friends. Such was the power and dominance of her individuality, that, in comparison with her, all other souls seemed inert.

An immortal spirit, she had the courage to live as an immortal spirit, and to subject material nature and the base forces of life to the powers of her immortality; she perpetually took her stand on the realities of spiritual nature, and consistently refused to admit the dominant tyranny of the material world.

And this dominant power and this clear interior light were united to a nature of wonderful kindness, wonderful gentleness, and absolute self-forgetfulness and forgiveness of wrong.

Nothing in her was more remarkable, nothing more truly stamped her as one of the elect, than the great humility of her character, ready to deny and ignore all its own splendid endowments, in order to bring into light the qualities of others. This humility was no mere affectation, no mere trick to call up admiration and wonder, but the

A MEMORY OF MADAM BLAVATSKY

profoundly sincere expression of her own nature; an expression as deep and real as Sir Isaac Newton's comparison of himself, after a life of unequalled achievement, to a little child gathering shells by the shore of the ocean.

Madam Blavatsky's nature was like a mountain torrent, having its source in some deep, clear lake above the clouds, and impetuously carrying down to the valleys the riches of the mountains, to spread them over the hungry and thirsty plains below; to give them new life and fertility, and the promise of a richer harvest in due season; and amongst the commoner gifts of the mountains, bringing now and then grains of gold and precious gems, and scattering them like Pactolus, over the sands of the valley; and ever and anon the dwellers of the valley, finding these rarer treasures, see in them the promise of the deeper wealth of the mountains, and vow to themselves never to give up the search for the great treasure until they die.

Such was Madam Blavatsky in her life; and now that she is dead, her death seems to have taken away from us half the savour of life; and her absence to have withdrawn one of the great incentives to living.

But to hallow the loneliness of her death, she has left us the great lesson of her life, a life true to itself, true to its Spirit, true to its God.

One who stood beside her, so calm and quiescent in death, could never believe that torrential nature, that splendid power, had ceased, had ceased to be; with the feeling of loss at her departure came the conviction far stronger than reason or logic that a power like hers could not be quenched by death, that a great soul like hers could never cease to be.

And so has gone from amongst us a soul of singular power, of singular light, of singular sweetness. Her life has given a new nobility to life; and Death has become more kindly by her death.

CHARLES JOHNSTON, F.T.S.

(Reprinted from "In Memory of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky" by Some of her Pupils, Death Centenary Edition, 1991.)

THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE FRAGMENT ONE—III

IN *Raja-Yoga or Occultism*, H.P.B. describes some of the occult arts, and one of them is *Guhya-Vidya*. It is “knowledge of the mystic powers residing in Sound (Ether), hence in the *Mantras* (chanted prayers or incantations) and depending on the rhythm and melody used. The last of the spiritual powers is *Kundalini Sakti*, described in *The Voice of the Silence* (Indian Edition, p. 10 fn.) as an electro-spiritual force, a creative power which, when aroused into action, can as easily kill as it can create.

All the *saktis*, or spiritual powers, lie latent in every man, but only those who are ready to pay the price of discipline and self-conquest can hope to develop these powers. Man himself is the Alchemist, who in the crucible of Right Knowledge transmutes the lead of his lower nature into the gold of the higher. At our present stage, it is the mind with which we are mostly concerned, and we must free the mind from *Kama*, or the desire principle. This can be achieved by making our feelings and our desires universal in scope and by living for others.

Then we read: **“He who would hear the voice of Nada, the ‘Soundless Sound,’ and comprehend it, he has to learn the nature of Dharana”** (*The Voice of the Silence*, p. 1). The footnote explains Nada as the “Voice in the Spiritual Sound,” or the “Soundless Voice,” or the “Voice of the Silence.”

The phrase “*The Voice of the Silence*,” is translated in Sanskrit or a vernacular language as *Anahata Nada*, meaning literally “Soundless Sound” or “Soundless Voice.” In an article in *Bhavan’s Journal*, September 15, 2010, T. V. Sairam writes that *Nada Yoga*, or the Yoga of music, is the union with the divine through the intonation of sound. There is an attempt to bring about inner transformation by meditating on sound vibrations. When the mind gets absorbed in sound vibrations, like cotton soaked in water, there arises in it a feeling of inner bliss. *Nada Yoga* distinguishes between

two sources of sounds: *ahata*, or the struck sounds, which have their origin in outside organisms or instruments, and *anahata*, or the unstruck sound, which emanates from within as one advances in his or her meditation with sound. The first form of sound is gross, while the latter is subtle. According to him, the subtle sound is believed to arise inwardly from the subtle pranic energy moving through energy channels in the body. Listening and appreciating internal sounds demands *tapas* (penance) and perseverance on the part of the aspirant. In the case of internal sound experience, it is the aspirant himself, who manages and controls emanations of *anahata*. Some of these internal sounds have been compared with the sounds of bells, gongs, and flutes. However, there are internal sounds that are never audible and hence are difficult to explain and experience, writes Sairam.

Now and then, we do receive “communication”—guidance and illumination—from the inner planes of our being, which is described as the “voice of conscience,” or “whisperings of *Buddhi* to *Manas*,” etc. But apart from this, in a state of deep meditation, there are experiences like seeing spots of light and hearing distant, fairy-like bells. To someone experiencing these things, Mr. Judge advised: “Do not look for the *voice* of the bells, but regard the *ideas*” which accompany the sound of bells. *The Voice of the Silence* (pp. 11-12) points out that there comes a definite stage in the life of an aspirant when he will hear the voice of the *inner* God, or Higher Self, in seven manners. It will be first heard as the Nightingale’s sweet voice; next it will be like the silver cymbal of the Dhyanis; and the last, the seventh sound vibrates like the dull rumbling of a thundercloud and swallows all the other sounds. In *The Theosophical Movement* (Vol. 18, p. 168), we read: The concept of the “Voice of the Silence” is not absurd; it can be appreciated through analogy. On the physical plane, the synthesis of the seven colours of the spectrum should be the purity of no-colour, white, which is itself the source and container of all colours. We might say that the discordant sound is rajasic and erratic, while the harmonious and rhythmic sound is sattvic. Both of them change in time. When they have ceased, they give rise to the

dead silence of *tamas*. The noumenon of Sound, which to our ears is Silence, is to be found in Space and Eternity. Likewise, when man “has synthesized the separated colours and sounds of his being, he passes through the prism of life out of time and space, to rebecome HIMSELF in freedom and timelessness.” It appears that this must happen in the high state of *Samadhi*, when one loses all sense of individuality and becomes the ALL. Hence, the necessity of learning the nature of *Dharana* or Concentration, which is the first, the preparatory step, leading to *Samadhi* or Meditation.

The “Voice of the Silence” is a voice and not a noise. It is not even “sound” because sound could be of the running waters or of music, which could be pleasant without meaning, whereas a “voice” necessarily tries to convey some meaning. It is a “soundless voice,” *i.e.*, it does not require a medium to travel. It is the voice of one’s Higher Self. It is the kind of voice that speaks only when thoughts, desires, and Will are all silenced. Any movement of the soul that was not in accordance with the Will of God must be silenced. Hence, later, this fragment points out prerequisites for hearing the Voice of one’s Higher Self, such as silencing one’s thoughts, withdrawing one’s mind from external sounds and sights, and fixing one’s whole attention on the Master. In short, the first step is to be able to control the mind and achieve concentration by following the eight-fold path given in the Raja-Yoga tradition, which includes *Yama*, *Niyama*, *Pranayama*, *Prtyahara*, *Dharana*, *Dhyana*, and *Samadhi*. Of these, the first five constitute the *bahiranga sadhana*, or the external practice, and the remaining three constitute the *antaranga sadhana*, or the internal practice.

In the *Voice of the Silence*, no explicit mention has been made of the first five steps mentioned in *The Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali* because these are to be taken as preparatory steps. It is enough to note that a relaxed posture with head, neck and spine in one line will do well, where one is not distracted from one’s meditation due to bodily discomfort. As the universe is governed from within without, so should the man be. Let the Higher Self take hold of the lower and govern it.

Yama includes rigorously following certain rules, such as observance of truthfulness, non-violence, non-stealing, continence, and non-coveting. *Niyama* includes purification of both mind and body, contentment, austerity, study, and persevering devotion to the Supreme Soul. *Pratyahara* means “withdrawing the senses, mind, and consciousness from contact with external objects and then drawing them inwards towards the seer.” The effect of *Pratyahara* is felt when the senses are mastered and the mind is ready for the spiritual quest.

After these come: (*Dharana*) concentration, (*Dhyana*) contemplation, and (*Samadhi*) meditation. *Dharana* or Concentration has been defined as “the intense and perfect concentration of the mind upon some one interior object, accompanied by complete abstraction from everything pertaining to the external Universe, or the world of the senses.” (*The Voice of the Silence*, p. 1 fn.)

The eyes are closed to ward off external images. Concentration does not mean gazing at the tip of the nose or a nail in the wall. For practising concentration, “There are two chief practices which are safe ethically and sound philosophically. The first deals with the exercise of self-examination, the second with turning attention and thought to high and noble spiritual themes.” (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 12*, p. i). The latter form of concentration consists of taking up a noble idea, such as, “Compassion,” “Brotherhood,” “Masters,” etc. But as soon as we close our eyes to ward off external images, our mind is flooded with internal images. Some of the obstacles to concentration mentioned in *The Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali* are sickness, laziness, sleep, false perception, carelessness, clinging to sense enjoyments, doubt, etc.

Mr. Judge writes: “The greatest foe and that most frequently present is memory, or recollection. This was, at one time, called *phantasy*. The moment the mind is restrained in concentration for the purpose of meditation, that moment the images, the impressions, the sensations of the past begin to troop through the brain and tend

to instantly and constantly disturb the concentration. Hence the need for less selfishness, less personality, less dwelling on objects and desiring them—or sensation. If the mind be full of impressions, there is also a self-productive power in it which takes hold of these seeds of thought and enlivens them.” (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 12*, p. iii)

But all these obstacles have their root in the mind. It is important to consider the nature of the mind. Living the Higher Life implies that the aspirant must strive to acquire control of the mind in an ever-increasing degree. Theosophy teaches that the mind is dual in its nature: there is that aspect of mind which is caught up or entangled in *Kama*, or desires and passions. This is the lower mind. There is that aspect of mind, designated as the Higher Manas, which always looks up towards *Buddhi*, our Divine Soul, the vehicle of *Atma*. Whenever the lower mind “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,” writes H.P.B. In other words, whenever the lower mind chooses to be free from *Kama*, it is able to derive help and guidance from the Higher Manas, in terms of the “Voice of Conscience” or the “Inner Voice.”

While studying *The Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali* and the *Voice of the Silence*, we need to distinguish between the mind and the Soul. According to Patanjali, the real experiencer and knower is the soul and not the mind. Just as an astronomer uses his telescope for acquiring information respecting the heavens, so also the mind, also called the “thinking principle” or “internal organ,” is only an instrument used by the Soul in gaining experience. Thus, the mind may be regarded as the *Kama-Manas* or lower *Manas*, and the Soul as the Higher *Manas*. In the footnote on page 4 of the *Voice of the Silence*, we read: “Soul is used here for the Human Ego or Manas, that which is referred to in our Occult septenary division as the ‘Human Soul’ in contradistinction to the Spiritual and Animal Souls.” Thus, the term Soul seems to refer to both higher and lower minds, to be understood from the context.

(*To be continued*)

WHAT IS WORTH WANTING?

WITH increasing per capita income, the developing world is quickly transforming from a needs-based to a consumerist, wants-based economy. And as one gains the capacity and means to fulfil one's wants, there is usually a mad rush to placate every whim and fancy. But one quickly discovers that such desires are infinite and the dopaminergic reward from each novelty has diminishing returns. Then the obvious question that stares one in the face is, "of the practically infinite number of things that one can want, *what is worth wanting?*"

We can readily dispense with platitudes such as "happiness" or "peace of mind" because they simply push the question back one trivial step to "what should one want to gain lasting happiness or peace of mind?" These hackneyed non-answers are simply restating the premise of the question itself.

At the outset, we should recognize that this question is one of values and not facts. The question we are really asking is "what is valuable in life?" And no fact in and of itself can answer this question satisfactorily. To illustrate this point, we can consider the world's longest longitudinal study on happiness called the Harvard Study of Adult Development. Their main conclusion was that the best predictor of health in the 80s was having deep and meaningful relationships in the 50s. Still, this study has made a value *prejudgment* that good-health in the 80s is the one thing that is worth wanting. It is undoubtedly desirable but should it be the sole focus of one's life?

Similarly, some degree of wealth is worth wanting, as it affords degrees of freedom to engage in any pursuit. Lakshmi is like Cosmic Energy—the means to the fulfilment of Cosmic Ideation. But energy without purpose is like a car without a driver. Purpose without energy to fulfil it, is equally useless. So, wealth like health is a necessary, not a sufficient condition. Because all these means, such as health and wealth, are to do with the body, which is itself the means (vehicle) for the expression of the Soul. They all come to an inexorable end

WHAT IS WORTH WANTING?

along with the body.

Ironically, the finality of life seems to both bestow and beg for meaning. If one were immortal, each day would be meaningless. Just like for an infinitely rich person, one rupee would be worthless. Each moment only acquires value and meaning in relation to the finiteness of such moments. On the other hand, since “time devours all things” and “nothing stands but for his scythe to mow,” what enduring meaning can life really have? Whatever we acquire or build will not withstand the ravages of time. So, is anything really worth wanting?

Before we attempt to answer this question, we should first specify what criteria a sufficient answer to this question would have to satisfy:

1. Unattainability: If we think of what we want as a goal, then it is clear that such a goal should be essentially unachievable. Otherwise, once we achieve it, it is no longer worth wanting, and hence the question will remain unanswered. An answer that posits a goal that is attainable only provides a temporary solution. “*Desire only that which is unattainable.*” (*Light on the Path*, p. 3)

2. Incrementality: While the goal forever recedes from us, it should not be hopeless. There needs to be mile markers that indicate progress and a sense of achievement along the way. The neurological analogy of the above is instantiated in how the motivation and reward circuitry of our brain works. Dopamine peaks not after a goal is achieved but rather during the process of achieving it. Hence Dr. Robert Sapolsky famously said, “Dopamine is not about the pursuit of happiness, it is about the happiness of pursuit.”

3. Durability: Such incremental progress must be durable—even beyond a lifetime. Without this condition, the journey towards an unreachable destination would be hopeless and not worth undertaking.

This desire for durability is so strong that many people are deluded into thinking that it is biologically fulfilled by the passing on of our genes to our offspring, materially fulfilled by the bequeathing of wealth, culturally fulfilled by the handing down of heritage, and so

WHAT IS WORTH WANTING?

on. Kings and leaders are obsessed with leaving behind a positive and lasting legacy. But on closer inspection, we find that we are neither our genes, our wealth, our culture, nor our legacy. So, of what use is any of this to the personality that has ceased to exist and to the self that is no longer associated with that personality after death?

Since no material possession can ever be taken through the doorway of death, our goal cannot be anything outside of ourselves and hence it must be a certain quality of our own Being. “*Desire only that which is within you.*” (*Light on the Path*, p. 3)

Consequently, if we posit that there is no self beyond death, then life becomes fundamentally meaningless. However, such material beliefs do not comport with even the commonsensical reality of our diurnal existence, wherein our subjective existence continues even when our body is paralyzed by sleep. And we come back to waking existence as surely as day follows night and seasons follow each other. All of nature is cyclic, and it is only in the obtuse conception of materialists that this law breaks down at death.

Furthermore, it is only Karma and Reincarnation that fully answer the seeming injustice of privilege and hierarchy that is endemic in nature. Think about it—what part of our achievements in this life can we really take credit for? Let us take the best-case scenario wherein we had no material privileges at birth and all our achievements were due to our own hard-work. In that case, what did we do in *this* life to deserve the strong will-power and tenacity that drove us to work through adversities? Both were innate qualities that we were born with—a privilege that is not shared by many who struggle to exert agency and will-power. The only answer that does not revolt against justice is that we earned it in a previous life.

Hence, we can conclude that gaining virtuous *qualities of being* that endure past death is worth wanting. But how do we acquire such durable virtuous qualities? We need to build them into our Soul character. How? By experience. But experience alone is not enough. We need to retrospect on our life-experiences in the light of

WHAT IS WORTH WANTING?

knowledge and transmute it into wisdom and understanding. Then reflect on that understanding until we embody and effortlessly exemplify it.

Since experience is the fuel that drives this pursuit, should we seek out experiences? Will a child learn anything by passing an exam he created himself? When we seek out experiences, we invariably seek out pleasurable experiences which hold no lessons of life for us. What we need is a sequence of experiences that are instances of the archetypal hero's journey that we find in every fairy-tale. A dragon that needs to be slain in order to rescue the princess who it guards. Experiences that challenge us to slay defects in our character to gain Sophia or wisdom. These experiences need to be hard-enough to not be taken trivially, yet not so hard that it would crush us, and the wisdom it encapsulates to be exactly that which we specifically need to learn. Such a tailor-made adventure, optimally designed to challenge and yet not overwhelm, with the right dragons to slay and the right Sophias to gain, would truly be worth wanting. But where can we find such a bespoke sequence of situations?

Theosophy teaches that the Law of Karma provides exactly such a sequence of situations, however small and in whatever station of life in which we happen to be situated. We are never faced with an adversity we do not have the strength to overcome, and the lesson it encapsulates is precisely that which we ought to learn in this life and transmute into Soul Character. But to avail of this precisely sequenced journey of adventure, we need to hold to the Covenant of Honesty and face situations in life with forthrightness. It is very easy to dodge a situation with falsehoods or like Arjuna in the first chapter of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, delude oneself into thinking that the Sophia who the dragon is guarding is not worth the fight.

But like Mahatma Gandhi, if we hold to Truth, no matter what the consequence, life becomes a unique adventure. And what an adventure Mahatma Gandhi embarked on! Every human life is a unique challenge and an adventure that is specifically tailor-made for our Soul's need if we only stay true to the Covenant of Truth.

WHAT IS WORTH WANTING?

Intellectually analyzing one's situation, wanting a different situation, and manipulating it through falsehoods is diametrically opposed to the very thing that is worth wanting. So, what is ultimately worth wanting is the state of non-wanting-ness or a state of acceptance and an adherence to Truth no matter where she leads us.

This fully meets the last two conditions that we stipulated for a satisfactory answer to the question at hand. Removing defects and gaining virtues that build Soul Character is both incremental and durable. But is it inexhaustible? This adventure is finite only if we have concern but for ourselves—this is the Open Path. However, if we expand our Circle of Concern beyond our little self, through a voluntary adoption of ever-increasing responsibility for the collective, this journey becomes limitless because we then become a co-worker with nature, and nature is boundless. But there is a physical limitation to how large one can expand one's Circle of Concern. Here we can take the analogy of a cone whose bottom is the Circle of Concern and its apex is the Centre of Activity. If we want to expand the circle at the bottom, we have to necessarily raise the centre of activity higher into more causal realms. When one works on the causal plane of ideas, it naturally has a broader circle of effect. To strive for the upliftment of an ever-expanding Circle of Concern by effort in the causal and moral planes of Being is the first and primary objective of the United Lodge of Theosophists, namely, that of Universal Brotherhood. This is the Secret Path.

While the ideal of the Bodhisattva may seem too lofty, it still gives us a formula that can be applied at whatever level we find ourselves in: *Strive to expand your Circle of Concern while adhering to the Covenant of Honesty and everything that follows from that—IS WORTH WANTING!*

If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear to man as it is, infinite.

—WILLIAM BLAKE

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Ronald Garan, a former NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) astronaut who spent 178 days in orbit, had a breathtaking view of Earth's beauty and fragility, which proved to be his "light-bulb moment." What he saw from space revealed hidden truth about humanity's priorities and showed that humanity's current systems are fundamentally unsustainable. On the one hand he saw "lightning storms illuminating the night, auroras shimmering across the poles, oceans reflecting sunlight," and on the other, he saw earth's atmosphere or protective layer as "thinner than the skin of an onion"—a fragile boundary shielding us from the void of space. He says, "It became painfully clear how our human-made systems treat Earth's vital systems as mere subsidiaries of the global economy." This disconnect is threatening the very ecosystems that sustain life on Earth. He says that "we are living a lie" by prioritizing the economic systems above the environment and societal health and suggests that for the survival of our species, we should change the priorities by placing the planet first, society second, and the economy last.

In his earlier article on the same subject (published in "The Daily Galaxy," December 7, 2024), Arezki Amiri draws our attention to some of the concrete steps suggested by Garan to bring about the change. Garan suggests that governments should give priority to environmental protection by investing in renewable energy, phasing out fossil fuels, and imposing stricter penalties on polluters. He also suggests reusing resources and minimizing wastage, and measuring progress based on Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI), which includes environmental health, social well-being, and economic equity. Lastly, every person can contribute by reducing single-use plastics and adopting sustainable consumption habits. He makes a profound statement: "There is no such thing as 'them.' There is only us," which implies that "humanity must come together as a united force to tackle the common challenges of climate change and environmental

degradation,” *i.e.*, change starts with all of us. He invites us to embrace a new global ethic where the planet, society, and economy work in harmony. It is left to us to take the necessary steps to build a sustainable future, writes Arezki Amiri.

To a very large extent today’s environmental crisis is the product of separative patterns of thought, of national self-interest, and of short-term goals. There is a need to recognize that all life is interconnected and interdependent so that exploitation of any area of life is seen to be damaging to the whole. The creation of informed public opinion is essential, as the pressure of public opinion can play a crucial role in influencing the governments to incorporate an ecological perspective in their basic policies. Ultimately, the collective will to sacrifice short-term material gains for the long-term interest of a healthy environment will become possible when a sufficient number of people work towards achieving it.

There are those who have seen the ecological crisis from the angle of how much production and consumption is enough. Once the basic needs are met, is “more” really better? High consumption depletes natural resources, pollutes the air and water with waste materials, and generally degrades the environment, and that in turn diminishes the quality of life.

In his article on “Our Ecological Crisis,” Dr. Carroll Quigley, writing at a time when environmental pollution had reached staggering proportions, brings home the oneness of life; how all forms of life fit together and are interdependent, including man, so that loss of one species, say of birds, from DDT, may be ultimately injurious to human life. He is of the opinion that the basic causes of the ecological crisis and its historical roots lie in our *outlook*. Thus, technology itself is not the cause of this crisis, but how it is used. “The historical roots of our ecological crisis must be sought in the history of how our present attitudes toward nature and our fellowmen came into existence. All we need to do is to establish the chief steps by which our outlook...became established in opposition to nature,” because it is clear that it is not the “backward” people but the most

advanced groups of people in our civilization that are threatening to destroy the ecological basis of human life. The need of the hour is to pay heed to the statement in the *Voice of the Silence*: “Help nature and work on with her, and nature will regard thee as one of her creators and make obeisance.”

When we are making decisions, we are more likely to see what we expect to see rather than see things as they are. This phenomenon is termed “perceptual set,” which leads to biased, erroneous perception and wrong decisions. At a simple level, we find ourselves reading correctly a word that is misspelled and the same results from our unique ability to selectively ignore what does not conform to established patterns to avoid confusion. “It is now estimated that visual perception is 80% memory and 20% input through the eyes. Sensory information is not transmitted to the brain; it comes from it.” Any decision based on our perception is strongly influenced by what is known as “confirmation bias,” which is the human tendency to seek out only information that supports the decision. It is focusing on factors that lend credibility to whatever position one has taken.

Another factor affecting decision-making and human judgment is powerful emotions that tend to overpower reason and blur reality. Therefore, it is necessary to exercise human intelligence, which can challenge or even negate one’s assumptions, arguments, and evidence of the chosen option. “An ‘autocorrection’ of sorts that splits the Self into two. One that has made the decision and another that questions the former.” This autocorrection mechanism leads to delay, which gives a chance to act with deliberation wherein the decision maker is able to be an unbiased observer. “To err is human; to review is divine. Eliminating cognitive bias plays a crucial role in making correct decisions. This endeavour is particularly important when making critical, irreversible, life-changing decisions,” writes Deepak Ranade, a neurosurgeon. (*The Speaking Tree, The Times of India*, March 26, 2025)

Biases can have negative effects on our personal and professional lives. They can affect our decision-making, our relationships, our personal lives, and our communication. In order to perceive things, people, or situations as they really are, it is essential to be able to put aside our biases. It is because we continue to accept information that confirms our beliefs and opinions and reject that which tends to challenge them that our biases become strong.

Mr. Judge advises that someone who wants to apprehend truth must be able to lay aside his preconceptions. If he holds on to his preconceptions, he can never really acquire a new idea or a new point of view. When people hold onto their own ideas, they are unable to grasp the philosophy of Theosophy. Even when someone says that he has mastered a certain book, a closer examination reveals that actually, only that which coincided with his previous training and line of thought has been grasped. Someone who wants to grasp the entire truth, from all its aspects, must be willing to cultivate both ethical and metaphysical viewpoints.

The same power of perception is possessed by each one of us. Each human being has the power to perceive and know all things, though at any given time that power may be restricted. What produces this restriction? It is caused by the narrow range of the ideas that we adhere to because those ideas become the basis of our actions. As a result, we are unable to have the right understanding of our observations and experiences. Hence, it is said that “the proper adjustment and focussing of the instrument” is necessary. This instrument is our mind, which, like a mirror, gathers dust while it reflects. What we call “our mind” is a bundle of ideas held by us, and we act in accordance with these ideas, writes Mr. Crosbie. Mind is the Slayer of the Real—“he who awakes illusion.” We say that our perceptions are coloured by our conceptions. We are not able to see things as they are because our mind is covered with the dust of attachments, dust of passions, dust of prejudice, and biases. Hence, adjusting the instrument or cleaning the mirror implies acquiring universal ideas.

It appears that “dream memory is fragmented, incomplete, and often shaped by emotions, recent experiences, health, and even stress levels.” However, through the lens of the scientific method it can be examined, why some people are able to remember their dreams more than others. One key finding according to the study recently published in *Communications Psychology* is that the ability to recall dreams is linked to a person’s vulnerability to “cognitive interference.” When we wake up, we are bombarded with different stimuli, such as turning off the alarm, checking time, or rushing and hurrying. These distractions represent cognitive interference and they make remembering a dream challenging.

The study concludes that people with greater ability to ignore distracting factors, and also those who are curious about the act of dreaming, its nature, characteristics, and meaning, tend to recall content of their dreams more frequently. Moreover, those who are prone to drifting into internal reflections are more likely to remember their dreams.

Various sleep studies have shown that we dream more vividly during REM (Rapid Eye Movement) sleep, and if we wake up during this period, we are more likely to recall dream. On the other hand, deep sleep which is dominated by slow-wave brain activity, can interfere with memory encoding (impressing or recording of the dream on the brain) and thus reduce awareness of the dream experience. According to 2024 study, dream recall was slower in winter compared to spring or fall because shorter days in winter can lead to deeper sleep, reducing the likelihood of waking up during REM sleep, when it is easier to recall a dream.

The researchers suggest that remembering certain dreams can be beneficial as they can help us to cope with emotions, fears, anxieties, and also facilitate learning from past experiences. Moreover, being able to recall them might help develop solutions or anticipate dangers. (english.elpais.com)

Waking, dreaming and dreamless sleep are described as three planes of human life, or three states of consciousness. There are

“ordinary” dreams and “real” dreams. Ordinary dreams are caused by physiological, biological and even psychic activities of man. The real dreams are the reflections of the activities of the real man, or Higher Ego on its own plane, when brain and body are paralyzed during sleep. In dreamless sleep state we find solution to our problems. So many artists and inventors have found inspiration or solution in dream, of a problem which they were struggling to solve while awake. Sometimes in dreams we get warning of an impending danger. These are called warning dreams. There are retrospective dreams of events belonging to past incarnations.

Our ability to remember the real dreams depends upon the state of our consciousness before falling asleep. Various classes of dreams are but the impressions made on the brain; and brain is the instrument of lower mind or waking human consciousness, hence impressions from the higher states get mixed up with the impressions made in the waking state. Thus, the brain can act as a dull surface, mirroring shadows and distorted images. It can also be like a sensitive photographic plate, and then it will faithfully mirror and retain every impression of the soul.

The more spiritual the man, the easier it will be for the Ego to awake the sleeping hemispheres, and arouse into activity the sensory ganglia and the cerebellum, and to impress the former with the vivid pictures of the subject so transferred. The ability to recollect dreams is also enhanced by our imaginative faculty. The more imaginative you are, the greater the facility for the brain to remember the dreams. That is why we find that artists, scientists as also the sensitive and sympathetic persons are sometimes able to remember and benefit from dreams. What and how much our brain can remember of these dreams, depends upon how porous our brain is. For our brains to become porous we should lead virtuous life, have fewer desires, and lead a life along non-materialistic lines.
