

A Magazine Devoted to The Living of the Higher Life

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THEOSOPHY COMPANY (INDIA) PRIVATE LTD.

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

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

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THE MYSTERIOUS HEART

THE HEART is one of the most essential organs of the body. The function of heart is to pump oxygenated blood to other body parts and receive back deoxygenated blood carrying metabolic waste products from the body, and maintain blood pressure. In nature, the sun is the heart of the Solar System. Our visible sun is only a *shell* and is the reflection of the real Sun—which is hidden behind the physical sun. The real sun is the storehouse and generator of the vital fluid. “There is a regular circulation of the vital fluid throughout our system, of which Sun is the heart.” (S.D., I, 541)

H.P.B. points out that the muscular heart is of greater importance as compared to other organs in the body. In the article “Psychic and Noetic Action,” H.P.B. classifies the liver, stomach and spleen as the personal organs or *Kamic* organs. These organs store the memory of purely physical and personal (and selfish) deeds such as eating, drinking, enjoying personal, sensual pleasures, acting so as to harm another, etc. On the other hand, the brain and heart are organs of power higher than the personality. It is only very significant or higher forms of thought and mental experiences that can be correlated with brain and heart. Perhaps we may correlate this with a curious case of a girl who received the heart of a ten-year-old girl who had been murdered. After the transplant the recipient had horrifying nightmares of a man murdering her donor. They could find the murderer using the details given by this girl, of time, weapon, place, clothes he wore, his features, etc.

The heart is regarded as the source of emotions, and so a direct relation is seen between emotions and the health of the heart. The term “cardiac psychology” denotes a link between certain psychological traits and heart problems. For instance, research shows that anger and hostility play an important role in the development of coronary heart disease. On the other hand, strong psychological health, based on positive emotions such as, optimism and happiness, are linked to a healthy heart. In fact, emotions hold the key to health of the body, through the medium of astral body and life energy which flows through it. According to *Encyclopedia Britannica*, “The psychosomatic symptom emerges as a physiological concomitant of an emotional state.” For instance, in a state of anger, the angry person’s blood pressure is likely to shoot up, and his pulse and respiratory rate may be increased. There is some evidence that emotional stress “may precipitate illnesses not usually considered to be psychosomatic (e.g., cancer, diabetes) in individuals predisposed to them.”

There is a beautiful story, “The Magic Paper,” in *Eternal Verities*. A young boy has been walking home thinking that the teacher had been more concerned with the new boy and his lessons than with other regular boys in the class. He felt the master was being unfair. On the way he meets a stranger who tells him about a magic paper of litmus, prepared by a great alchemist, after long years of work. This magic paper, he was told, will turn black and reveal the wickedness in the human heart. One needed to hold it in his hand and fix his attention firmly on the heart of the one whom he suspects. Envy, injustice, jealousy, covetousness, greed, give what the alchemist calls an acid reaction. But the pure and generous heart would leave the paper unchanged. Next day, in the class, he held it up, looking intently toward his teacher. Nothing happened. But when he held it up against his own heart, to his surprise the paper turned black.

On his way back home, he met the stranger again. He asked him: “Why did the paper turn black against my heart? Was not the

master unjust?” The stranger gently replied, “To search the heart of another is full of danger.” The boy immediately grasped that it was the envy in his own heart all the time which coloured his perception. He was told that just as there are cities under cities, “so it is in the human heart—one reason, one motive overlays the other. The wise man searches deep till he finds the most hidden motive of all.” The boy admitted that he wanted the teacher to do right, but behind that wish was pride; and under that was envy. When he returned the paper, the stranger said, “Each heart keeps its own seasons. To attempt to know the seasons of another heart is full of danger.”

The inner condition and the motive with which the action is performed is not easily gauged by another person, who judges the action based on appearance or imputes motives of his own. As Mr. Crosbie says, “Whether a temple is intended or a building for a saloon, similar work has to be performed; so actions are no safe basis to judge from.” If we credit each other with best of motives, then all will work out well. Motive governs thought. Motive is at the very core of our hearts. Motive is essential. Without it there can be no motion, no initiation of works, no will. The sin or polluting effect of the action and the merit or purifying result of an action are not in the nature of mere action performed, but is found in the inner feeling that accompanies that act. Often a so-called good action is performed with impure motive or ulterior motive, and an apparently bad action is found to have an underlying good motive.

Light on the Path asks us to “Look intelligently into the hearts of men,” from an absolutely impersonal point of view, because our perception is likely to be coloured by our emotions and our likes and dislikes. We are likely to go wrong in our judgment out of positive bias towards our friend, and negative bias towards our enemy, who remains a riddle. “Only one thing is more difficult to know—your own heart.” It is a good practice to test our hearts, periodically. We may look deep into our hearts and find out our motives for various actions we have already performed and for the actions we are yet to perform. If we are honest to ourselves, we will

admit that our motives are of a mixed nature. If we have always acted with pure motive then we should have made great progress in our endeavours to live the spiritual life.

To acquire “unbiased and clear judgment” there must be blending of head and heart. The head symbolizes rationality and knowledge, while heart is associated with emotions and compassion. Religious feeling without knowledge gives rise to fanaticism, hatred and strife. A person with intellectual knowledge and appreciation for the spiritual dimension of life often ends up becoming an arm-chair philosopher. Head-learning or knowledge must be blended with compassion, philanthropy and self-sacrifice. “I tell you the heart, the soul, and the bowels of compassion are of more consequence than intellectuality. The latter will take us all sure to hell if we let it govern only,” writes Mr. Judge. More and more young people are seen to opt for study and careers which involve exercise of purely rational mind. Often this intellectual development is achieved at the expense of emotional development, combined with the inability to meet the challenges of life. The concept of emotional intelligence was popularized after the publication of Daniel Goleman’s book “Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ.” An emotionally intelligent person has emotional self-awareness, is self-motivated and resilient, is able to connect with other people at an emotional level, and is able to deal with setbacks and failures.

There are three hearts: one by which evil and selfish deeds are done; the second by which a man does good; and the third by which a man radiates spirituality. The first is animal instinctuality; the second is human goodness; but the last is Divine Radiance. The first two hearts are related to *Kama-Manas*, while the Real or Spiritual Heart is associated with *Buddhi-Manas*, writes Shri B. P. Wadia. The Spiritual Heart is associated with spiritual discrimination and intuition. *Chandogya Upanishad* describes it thus: “There is this city of Brahman—the body—and in it the palace, the small lotus of the heart, and in it that small ether. Both heaven and earth are contained within it...whatever there is of the Self here in the world, and

whatever has been or will be, all that is contained within it” (*Vernal Blooms*, p. 217). In this, the body is compared to a city. Just as a palace is the most important part within the city, so also within the body is the “lotus of the heart,” corresponding to *Buddhi-Manas*, where there is pure perception of Truth without reference to our likes and dislikes. There are varieties of lotus, which bloom under the rays of the moon or sun. However, if a knot is tied around the bud of lotus, it can never bloom. Similarly, if the heart is not obstructed with too much involvement with the personality, it can reflect Akasic vibrations and ideations.

When we are able to impersonalize the feelings, we can awaken Spiritual Heart, and then succeed in acquiring Wisdom, Compassion and the power of Intuition or Direct Perception, which surpasses the slow process of reasoning from premises to conclusion. This is necessarily a slow process. At present, the human heart is misguided and is under the dominance of the animal heart. By bringing to birth unselfish emotions we can awaken Human Heart. Shri. B. P. Wadia suggests that we have to learn to love or be devoted, even to a few or a single individual. When you give yourself to even one person in that manner, unconditionally, so that you are prepared to do everything in your power for that person, you break the shell of your heart in which you lived in a world of your own so far. Till then one often does not know the real outside world, without any veils of delusion and illusion. The real breaker of the heart shell is the accumulation of knowledge and aspiration to use that knowledge out of love for humankind. What breaks that shell is the devotion or love for another. Then you can expand the circle and take in others.

Knowledge and good works are called purifiers and they tend to change the quality of *Kama*, transforming love into Compassion. Detachment is the key to developing Compassion. It does not mean that you love indiscriminately. It is the kind of love which ensures that the loved-one gains the right knowledge. To become like Buddha means to have acquired wisdom to respond in a right way to the sorrows of the world. It would have been very easy for the Buddha

to preach to Kisa Gotami the greatest fact of life that “death is certain to all things that are born,” when she urged the Buddha to bring back her dead son. Instead, he asked her to get a fistful of mustard seeds from a house which has not been visited by death. His request was calculated to bring to her the realization of the great truth and its acceptance.

A worldly change of heart means merely changing your mind or your opinion or your intention. A godly change of heart is movement towards good and God, an inner conversion. To check evil in the society, we may aim at bringing about inner conversion or transformation in the evildoer. The article, “The Inner Conversion of Tojo” (*Thus Have I Heard*, p. 35), mentions the story of Japanese General Tojo, described as the Dictator of modern Japan, who was tried, found guilty and executed in 1948. It is the story of his (and also of his fellow-prisoners’) remarkable conversion to a higher perception through the efforts of a Buddhist monk, who preached and discussed with them spiritual matters so that all of them went to their execution in serene submission. The monk, the follower of Buddha Way of Compassion, illustrated that the true helper of the heart must himself possess the “light of peace” to overcome “darkness of might” in warriors like General Tojo.

“I am the Ego seated in the hearts of all beings,” says Krishna. But are we aware of the presence of the divinity in our hearts? *The pure in Heart see God*, says the Bible. Hanuman is the divine monkey chief, a prominent figure in the great Hindu epic, the *Ramayana*. In one sense, Hanuman represents *Kama-manas*, or lower, animal self in man. In another sense, he is considered to exemplify selflessness, courage, devotion, energy, strength and righteous conduct. He stands for the potential that is inherent in all of us. Hanuman is portrayed as splitting his chest to show Rama and Sita within his heart, to show that God is not living somewhere far away, but resides in the hearts of all, but his presence is felt by the devotee, who has purified his emotions and desires, and has totally surrendered to Lord or Law.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY

“THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY” is a gothic and philosophical novel by Oscar Wilde, written in 1889, first published in July 1890 issue of *Lippincott’s Monthly Magazine*, and later released as a book in 1891. The story begins in the art studio of the well-known artist Basil Hallward, on a beautiful summer day in Victorian England. He is using Dorian Gray as a model for his latest painting. Dorian is a cultured, wealthy and extremely handsome young man. Besides creating the portrait of Dorian as he really is, Basil makes several other portraits, depicting him as an ancient hero or a mythological figure. It is at the studio of Basil that Dorian meets Lord Henry Wotton, who celebrates youth, beauty and the selfish pursuit of pleasure. When Dorian listens to his views, he begins to think that beauty is the only aspect of life worth pursuing. When Dorian sees his completed portrait, he is filled with awe. He is afraid and jealous, knowing that his own youth and beauty will fade, but the picture will remain beautiful forever. In a fit of distress, Dorian declares that he would give his soul if the portrait were to grow old while he remained young and handsome.

Over next few weeks, Lord Henry and Dorian become fast friends, and Dorian, who is strongly influenced by Lord Henry’s hedonistic views, begins to live a life dedicated to the pursuit of pleasure. Dorian falls in love with an actress, Sibyl Vane, who performs Shakespeare plays in a dingy, working-class theatre. He adores her for her beauty and her acting talent. They are engaged to be married. One day Dorian takes Basil and Henry to see Sibyl perform in *Romeo and Juliet*, but her performance is terrible. She explains to Dorian that in loving him she knew real love, and therefore, she can no longer pretend to be in love on stage. Disgusted, Dorian breaks his engagement with Sibyl, as he loved her for her beauty and her ability to act. When he returns home, he finds a cruel expression on the face of his portrait. He is frightened to

discover that his wish that the portrait should change and reflect all ill effects of his behaviour has come true, and his sins will be recorded on the canvas. He decides to seek Sibyl's forgiveness, but soon learns that she has committed suicide.

To make sure that no one else but he can discover the secret of his painting, and therefore, the true nature of his soul, Dorian locks up the portrait in his attic. For the next eighteen years he is drawn more and more to evil, and experiments with every vice, influenced by a morally poisonous novel that Lord Henry has given him. He frequently visits the attic where the portrait has been kept, and notices the signs of aging and of corruption that appear on it, though he himself remains unblemished. The face in the portrait grows increasingly hideous.

One night before leaving Paris, Basil goes to Dorian's house and asks him about rumours of his self-indulgent sensualism. Dorian does not deny the rumours, and takes Basil to see the portrait. Seeing the horrifying portrait, Basil tells Dorian that if this is a reflection of his soul, he must repent and pray for forgiveness. In anger, Dorian blames his fate on Basil and stabs him to death. Dorian then blackmails an old friend, the scientist Alan Campbell, into using his knowledge of chemistry to destroy the body of Basil, which he does, but later kills himself.

To escape the guilt of his crime, Dorian goes to an opium den, where he comes across Sybil's brother, James Vane, who had vowed to take revenge of his sister's death. Dorian manages to escape to his country estate. At a subsequent hunting party at Dorian's country estate, one of the hunters accidentally shoots and kills James, who was hiding in a thicket.

Some weeks later Dorian tells Henry that he has decided to live righteously from now on. Deciding to change his life for the better, he performs a good deed by refusing to corrupt a young girl who has fallen in love with him. He wishes to find out if the portrait has changed for the better because of this good act, but instead he sees an even uglier image of himself. He realizes that the portrait reveals

the hypocrisy of his desire to repent and change himself, and that his effort to save his soul was driven by vanity.

Dorian realizes that only complete confession will absolve him of wrong doing, and therefore decides to destroy the last vestige of his conscience and the only piece of evidence of his crimes, namely, the picture. In fury, he takes the knife with which he murdered Basil, and stabs the picture. The servants of the house awaken on hearing the cry. On entering the room, they find the portrait, unharmed, restored to its former appearance of beauty, and showing Dorian Gray as a handsome young man. On the floor lies the body of their master, an old, horribly wrinkled and disfigured man with a knife plunged into his heart. The servants are able to recognize the body as that of Dorian, by the rings on its fingers.

The reception of the novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* at the time of its publication was poor, and elicited a lot of negative criticism. The book was described as being "unclean," "contaminating" and "nauseous." Most of the criticism was personal, attacking Oscar Wilde for being a hedonist with values that deviated from the conventionally accepted morality of Victorian Britain. Only decades after Oscar Wilde's death this novel was regarded as a literary masterpiece.

The author wrote the preface to the novel in 1891, as a response to adverse criticism, to put the themes in proper perspective. He said that the notion behind the tale is "old in the history of literature," but was a thematic subject to which he had "given a new form." The "new form" brings the idea of duplicity or leading a double life, to the forefront of the tale. Thus, the portrait depicts Dorian's private self, the state of his soul, while Dorian himself looks perpetually young, beautiful and innocent. The author observes that the themes of the novel, such as selling one's soul, youth, beauty and power are old notions.

For instance, we can understand the concept of selling the soul, in this novel, by comparing it with *Faust*. In Goethe's *Faust* the protagonist is ready to sell his soul to the devil. The story of Faust

consists of the experiences involved in a man's selling his Soul to the Devil, who gives him vast possessions and powers of magic, in exchange for his soul when he dies. The story expresses dual nature of man, wherein the higher Soul resists being turned over to Evil. But the lower Soul has such strong desires for its own immediate satisfaction that it is willing to risk future tortures and suffering through the body. Faust agrees to sell his Soul to the Devil, but unlike Dorian, he puts in a proviso, by which he remains a master. He agrees to sell his Soul provided Mephistopheles, the Devil, can bring him joy, with which he is so pleased as to say to the moment, "linger, fly not yet." Mephistopheles is no ordinary Devil but represents Doubt and Spirit of Denial. Mephistopheles promises him all his soul can wish for: fine living, gold, women and honour, but fails to give that moment of sublime happiness, which Faust wished to last forever.

In both the stories there is a bargain, in which one surrenders something of supreme spiritual importance, the soul, for some worldly material benefit, or some transitory gain. What is surrendered is far more valuable than what is obtained. As compared to Faust, Dorian looks for low plane gratification. The Devil is represented by the cynical hedonist Lord Henry, who systematically presents temptation that will corrupt the virtue and innocence that Dorian possessed in the beginning. According to some critics, he strongly influences the young man by advice such as, "the only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it. Resist it, and your soul grows sick with longing." Thus, the devilish Lord Henry is "leading Dorian into an unholy pact, by manipulating his innocence and insecurity." Dorian values his physical appearance more than the state of his soul, which is evident from the ever-increasing deterioration of the portrait. The story seems to caution against the dangers of neglecting one's conscience and valuing one's appearance highly.

A few years back, there was a shocking news item to the effect that in certain countries tissues harvested from corpses were used for making lip implants. We seem to be relentlessly and ruthlessly

pursuing physical perfection and the elixir of eternal youth. "But beauty passes; beauty vanishes; However rare, rare it be," says Walter De la Mare, of the beauty of form. It is the beauty of character we must strive for, as that survives the death of the body.

Some critics have noted that several other nineteenth century novels have made use of a magic picture or *doppelganger*, i.e., a ghostly double of a living person. As a variant to these, this story shows the link between the inner state of the person and his portrait. Occult philosophy points out that a Black Magician could bring about harm to the person by means of his photograph, picture or figure. The photograph is supposed to retain the magnetism of the person. In the article, "Animated Statues," H.P.B. puts it thus: "The astral body of a living person, of one unlearned in occult sciences, may be forced (by an expert in magic) to animate, or to be drawn to, and then fixed within any object, especially into anything made in his likeness, a portrait, a statue, a little figure of wax, etc. And as whatever hits or affects the astral reacts by repercussion on the physical body, it becomes logical and stands to reason that by stabbing the likeness in its vital parts—the heart, for instance—the original may be sympathetically killed, without any one being able to detect the cause of it." This might throw some light on the strange happening in "The Picture of Dorian Gray," wherein his portrait takes on the ugliness of his own diabolical actions, and when he tries to stab his picture in the heart, he feels the knife pierce his own heart and he dies. Now, his face and body quickly transform to reflect the hideous sins he committed, but his painting returns to the pristine state of eighteen years ago.

If the portrait in the story is taken to represent the astral body of the person, then it is easy to see that man's life-time of thoughts, besides affecting the atoms of his body, have also a profound effect on the fate of his Astral Body during life, as also, after death. If a man has been during life selfish, uncharitable, maleficent, of unrestrained passions and desires, his Astral Body takes the shape of the beast which resembles that character. It may be that of a

ferocious animal or a reptile. To the outer appearance such a man or a woman may present a normal, or even a beautiful, bodily appearance; but his or her astral form, invisible to the physical sight, but well apprehended by clairvoyants, may have taken the shape of such of the animal forms, or assumed some grotesque shape, according to the character of the person, as a result of his own thoughts and actions.

We might compare it also with Mr. Judge's novel, "The Tell-Tale Picture Gallery," which he describes as a gallery of pictures. This Picture Gallery had been deliberately constructed to perform a function of the Astral Light, namely, to retain faithful pictures of all we do; where one's actual spiritual state records itself. Such galleries are situated in mysterious localities, such as, in the Himalaya mountains, in Tibet and in underground passages in India. He found himself in a hall filled with pictures of faces of disciples. He saw, for instance, the face of a co-disciple, who was gradually degrading spiritually, turn from white to grey, and yellow, and back to grey, and suddenly growing black, showing ultimate spiritual degradation. Another face was seen as bright and pure. Mr. Judge explains that the living pictures in the gallery were of student-aspirants, and were connected by invisible cords with the character of those they represented, and like a telegraph instrument, they instantly recorded the exact state of the disciple's mind; when he made a complete failure, the picture grew black and was destroyed; when he made spiritual progress, it grew bright. In some mysterious way, the faces were made from the minds and bodies of student-aspirants, and the invisible cords carried the exact condition of the person. The Guru, the Adept, has only to look at these pictures to know the inner state of the disciple, and whether he is changing for the better or for the worse. The images were accompanied by music, which was formed of the vibrations of the disciple's thoughts and spiritual life: It is a wail, when someone commits a moral suicide, while gentle music indicates disciple's good deeds and his brotherly love.

JUDGMENT DAY

II

JUDGMENT DAY, also called Last Judgment, is a universal belief which figures in the religious traditions of every people, which was illustrated, in the previous issue, with a brief narration of the mythological accounts found in various religions. It was shown that though the accounts vary in details in different traditions yet some similarities are discernible which point to the fact that they have a common foundation in truth and fact.

There is a whole philosophy of racial evolution in the myth of Judgment Day. It is the moral, intellectual and spiritual evolution of humanity governed by the Karmic and cyclic law. Same universal law applies uniformly to the small and the great, to the individual units and to humanity as a whole. "The LAW for the birth, growth, and decay of everything in Kosmos, from the Sun to the glow-worm in the grass, is ONE. It is an everlasting work of perfection with every new appearance, but the Substance-Matter and Forces are all one and the same" (*S.D.*, I, 145). Therefore, the law of analogy and correspondence holds good throughout the Kosmos.

The Individual Ego, by the self-reproductive power of the insatiable desire to savour the sensation of the embodied life on earth, reincarnates again and again, and in each rebirth it suffers and enjoys strictly in accordance with good and evil deeds it had committed in past incarnations. Absolute and unerring justice, denominated Karma, governs the progress of the Ego through cycles of rebirth. The Ego progresses through alternating cycles of gathering experiences in activities of life in embodied condition—fruitage of its past Karma—and assimilating the distilled essence of those life-experiences during the period of rest in disembodied state, in the state of *Devachan* (paradise or *swarga*). Like the bee gathers honey from many flowers and stores it up in the hive, the Higher Ego similarly gathers the quintessence of experiences from each of the numerous personalities it overshadows, and assimilates them to

the Divine Spirit to bloom at last into universal divine perfection.

At the end of each incarnation the Personal Self—which is at once the fruit of past Karma and the maker of new Karma—stands in subjective state outside the objective life that ended in the august presence of the divine light of its parent Ego, the Higher Self, and reviews in minutest detail every thought and feeling that ever crossed its mind, every word it uttered, and every deed it performed. It thus judges itself, by its Self, its own thoughts and actions of the whole life time. It recognises by the light of the impersonal light of Spirit, the perfect justice of all the pain and suffering it had to endure as just retribution for the past transgressions, and joys and pleasures it enjoyed as just reward for past merit, and regrets the wrongful acts it had committed in the life now closing. Judgment of one's own deeds in the impartial light of one's Higher Self, immediately after death of the body, is unexceptional provision of the just Law of Karma. This is one of the meanings of the myth of Judgment Day.

After the post-mortem review, in the state of lower consciousness, called *Kama Loka*, with all the principles intact, minus the physical body, begins the process of separation of gross and material energies of its thoughts allied to passions and desires—principle of *Kama*—on the one hand, and the finer and nobler thoughts and aspirations allied to the Higher Self, on the other. Once the gross energies of its life on earth are expended in *Kama Loka*, the self becomes involved in the purer and the finer thought energies it had generated in life, allied to its Higher Ego, and falls into the bliss of the dream of *Devachan*, basking in the light of *Atma-Buddhi*. At the end of the spiritual state of *Devachanic* term, with the exhaustion of higher mental energy, the Ego is drawn back to another incarnation by the force of the unexpended Karma it has accumulated from an immense past. As the Ego is poised to emerge from the *Devachan*, it beholds in a prospective vision the circumstances of its next life as determined by its past Karma, and recognizes the perfect justice of it.

As in each of the individual cycles of reincarnation of Ego gross or material aspect of the personality is separated and purged away

from the higher and refined portions of the personal self which forms the basis for *Devachanic* dream, similar process of separation of chaff from the grain takes place in cycles of racial evolution. As individual Ego progresses by assimilation and accumulation of essential experiences gleaned from cycles of rebirth, so do the collective aggregates of Egos which constitute nations and races turn their larger cycles, and progress by accretion of idealised experiences. End of racial and national cycles are invariably attended by convulsions of nature in which segregation and separation of useless portions of mankind from the worthy portions take place, the latter constituting the seed or *sishta*, for the next cycle on a qualitatively higher scale. There are historical cycles of nations and civilizations, the basis for which is the length of the individual reincarnation cycle of fifteen hundred years for the general mass of men. It is thus that the older civilizations recur again and again, bringing each time with them the Egoic experiences, as an abstract idea, garnered in the past existence, added to the progress made by other embodied nations in the intervening period.

Thus goes in cycles the psychic, intellectual, spiritual and moral evolution of the Eternal Thinker, Man. Theosophy teaches that the matter of the globe also undergoes changes *pari passu* with the Thinker because spirit and matter, the two poles of Being, are one in essence, and the latter having to be refined and raised up by the Spiritual Ego to the human stage and thence to divinity. The dynamic power of human thought, therefore, is constantly impacting the matter of the globe. As the general sum of average human thought being selfish, and, therefore, antagonistic to law of interdependent reciprocity and universal progression, the disturbance so caused in nature goes on accumulating, and at last reaches a tipping point of imbalance when it explodes bringing on cataclysms towards the end of the racial cycles. The portion of humanity who had contributed to the disturbance through carelessness of thought are inescapably engulfed in the cataclysm; and the mindful and responsible sections of the race whose Karma is in consonance with

the general purpose of Nature are saved and they become the seed for the next higher cycle of racial evolution. The *morally* fit are thus saved and they will be pioneers of new and higher racial cycle. The unfit ones are not lost but reincarnate again, according to their Karma, to inhabit isolated spots on earth as morally and intellectually degraded races, and will have opportunity to come up again over a time through contact with the higher cultured races. (*S.D.*, II, 445)

The climatic changes and disturbance in the inclination of the earth's axis which produce cataclysms are all the effects of the inexorable Law of Karma—called the “the great ADJUSTER.” Of the progression of humanity through greater and smaller racial cycles in the Fourth Round—Vivasvata Manvantara—it is said in *The Secret Doctrine* (II, 330): “Thus, since Vaivasvata Manu's Humanity appeared on this Earth, there have already been four such axial disturbances; when the old continents—save the first one—were sucked in by the oceans, other lands appeared, and huge mountain chains arose where there had been none before! The face of the Globe was completely changed each time; the *survival of the fittest* nations and races was secured through timely help; and unfit ones—the failures—were disposed of by being swept off the earth. Such sorting and shifting does not happen between sunset and sunrise, as one may think, but requires several thousands of years before the new house is set in order. The *Sub*-races are subject to the same cleansing process, as also the side-branchlets (the family Races).”

Present humanity is the Fifth sub-race of the Fifth Root Race. *The Secret Doctrine* teaches that preparation is underway on the American continent, where people of all nationalities and races are mixing up, from which, in a few centuries, a new hybrid race would emerge, who will be pioneers of the Sixth sub-race, which will be followed similarly by Seventh Sub-race succeeding the Sixth. After the close of the Seventh sub-race of the Fifth Root Race will emerge Sixth Root Race, which, when comes into being, will be much higher in Manasic and spiritual development than its predecessor, and will be inhabiting new land masses or continents amidst cataclysmic

alterations in the distribution of land mass and the seas. Each of the transition of cycles of family races, sub-races and Root Races is attended by cataclysms, in which the *morally* fit survive to be the seed of higher humanity of the new cycle, while the remnants will perish but to reincarnate in spots on earth isolated from the higher evolved types. Of the remnants of the sifting and sorting of the races it is said, as an illustration: “[they] surviving only in small groups on islands—the mountain peaks of today—where they will vegetate, degenerate, and finally die out, perhaps millions of years hence, as the Aztecs have, as the Nyam-Nyam and the dwarfish Moola Koorumba of Nilgiri Hills are dying. All these are the remnants of once mighty races, the recollection of whose existence has entirely died out of the remembrance of the modern generations, just as we shall vanish from the memory of the Sixth Race Humanity.” (*S.D.*, II, 445)

In Nature's economy nothing, not an atom, is left out of her grand scheme of universal progression—whose end is evolving perfect man, “man, as the highest physical and ultimate form on this earth; the MONAD, in its absolute totality and awakened condition—as the culmination of divine incarnations on Earth” (*S.D.*, I, 183). Therefore, failures will have Karmic opportunity through cycles of reincarnation and intermixing of races to evolve higher.

The true sense and the meaning of the universal belief in Judgment Day, which has assumed many fantastic conceptions in the popular mind following the dead letter sense of the scriptures, is thus partly, though very imperfectly, explained. It is a mistaken belief that the Judgement Day, so called, is a single event which marks the end of the world, as “creation” of the world and of the humans was the first beginning, *ex nihilo*, as Abrahamic exoteric religions preach. There can be no first “creation” or “Last Judgment,” as the successive cycles of manifestations of the universe has neither conceivable beginning nor imaginable end, but an endless progression towards, but never reaching, Absolute perfection.

(Concluded)

EXTRACTS FROM UNPUBLISHED LETTERS

LETTERS OF PERSONAL COUNSEL—IV

TO ACCEPT a course as right and then not to act up to it—that is fatal. If you see that a step is right, take it; if you do not see it, abstain. After all, this is not difficult. Blind obedience is bad, but blind obstinacy is equally bad. Don't you think so? Why go by feelings? Try principles. You must learn to open yourself instead of remaining rigid in mind and heart. If you do not mistake obstinacy for will, you will succeed.

Who can expect discretion and discernment when the fogs of *Kama* and *Ahankara* descend? Conceit blinds people and they blunder in a variety of ways—what to do?

You can assist first and foremost by a sustained effort to calm your emotional nature and to steady your wandering mind; effort at these two will help you to control your tongue. Useless talk spoils good work. Always remember one thing: be positive and fully conscious in your daily life; accurate and heedful in all matters. Do everything smoothly. So, keep to your own time and speed without the least haste or rush. When a person overdoes what is not needed he overlooks what is wanted. Apply calmly the teachings of Theosophy in a practical way and you are bound to succeed.

I want you to realize that all these rulings are not to be observed rigidly, but in an understanding and intelligent way. The skeleton of our body is rigid but the muscles and the nerves are not. They become rigid when the body becomes a corpse. So be strict with yourself, and be flexible in dealing with other people.

It is necessary to take your stand as a Theosophical student openly. If you and others were to be energized, there would be understanding and unity. All of you would benefit.

Why have you *failed* so far in Theosophizing your own life? Because you *fear* —, and H.P.B. has definitely said that Fear and Hate are the same. When will you learn to do the right and Theosophical thing? So far no sustained effort has been made. You

have indulged your own weakness; are you continuing to do so? This and all other things you can and you should remedy within yourself. A few years more and you will not be able to do it. Why do I write to you this now? So that you may take prompt advantage and re-establish a better relationship of faith and love and trust. If *you* stand up against wrong actions and policies others will be encouraged to do likewise. So, go to the Soul of the situation—yourself; a quiet self-examination will show you how you have not been true and faithful. So, wake up now.

Yes, make a fresh start; there is nothing else for you to do. Unless you do that in all sincerity and earnestness, you will come to grief, and in this cycle sooner than you calculate. It will not prove difficult if you observe your Discipline: inner work on yourself of study, self-examination and reflection and proper outer behaviour with due control of tongue, holding back of impulsive action and remembrance that you are under trial and test. Karma has brought you support, guidance and protection. Strengthen your bond with those who are deep in their efforts at *living the life*.

What I want to write is not about details of this and that (and every detail of work is an opportunity and a test), but principally about soul-affecting influences. I had requested you separately to work in unity and harmony. I would like you to tell me why there is lack of faith in your own Ego, of trust in each other, and so of brotherliness among you. Have you not been losing good opportunities, and more, have you not been untrue to your Discipline in the treatment of each other? Are you exercising thoughtful endeavour in the earning of Right Livelihood in a business organization which ought to be bright with Theosophical radiance? These questions are more vital and of greater importance than what salaries you get, what sales you make, and what business acumen, sharpness and push you express.

It seems to me—correct me if I am wrong—that you have, perhaps unconsciously to yourselves, fallen prey to irresponsible talk. Instead of working jointly, unitedly and harmoniously, you have listened to

adverse criticism of each other and in self-justification done injustice to your brothers and companions. Among brothers and companions there should be no fear, but frank speech, free expression ensouled by brotherliness. Things which are common and accepted and stealthily practised in the business world are not in conformity with Theosophical ethics and morality and you should neither fall prey to such nor allow any of them to creep into business concerns. *Your* most pressing task is to purify the atmosphere, to discipline your own self.

My heartfelt wishes for your betterment and prosperity are there always. The coming year will be important for all of us and I must take this opportunity to send you a word which ought to prove helpful. What *you* have to remember and ever recall to your consciousness is the fact of your special avenue of service. It can and should show that it is ensouled and moved by Theosophical Ethics. I would like you to think over this. What is needed is not personal actions but a calm, considered, impersonal attitude and behaviour in speech and deeds. You must learn to be stricter in business rectitude, stricter in veracity, stricter in observing your Discipline so that your example is copied and the staff observes its discipline. Here I am giving a few principles. Avoid long discussions and long sermons. Much time is wasted. Save minutes and the hours will save themselves.

Outside of business, continue the good work of assimilation going on between you, —— and —— . This does not mean talking—once again it is attitude and behaviour. Do not neglect your study and set an example of how a student should think and feel, speak and act.

Do not allow the rush and the impatience of business to mar your Theosophical output in the way of right conversation, balanced judgement, etc. You must not compartmentalize your conversations on business and your conversations on Theosophy. There should be Theosophizing of the business, and the business atmosphere of earnestness and right gain in Theosophical conversation. You speak of your own study and of yourself. In a way it is good that you are not

satisfied with your own self. Who can really be if he is sincere? As Judge has said, in this life of occultism there are struggles always. Impulsive action you must curb and must take your time to produce deliberate action.

In this cycle which is now opening, the discipline about small talk and big gossip will need to be applied with greater tact, remembrance and without fear. Make it a rule not to speak about anyone behind his back. Real unity remains to be established. You should practise mental honesty; *i.e.*, should think justly, rightly, with adverse feeling towards none, with due appreciation of all, if you are to make further progress.

One more piece of advice: Try to hold your Inner Centre firm, to control your mind to deliberate and orderly behaviour. Don't let your consciousness rush out, but conserve it within your brain. Use your force of affection with discrimination and expand your circle of friends while you deepen your ties with old friends. Begin to think for yourself, making proper use of our texts.

How about your own study, meditation, self-examination and application? Keep yourself collected; avoid impulses; talk cautiously; eat adequately; observe silence so that Nature-Prakriti may speak to you successfully and then there are the great *Purushas*—the Lords and Masters of Matter.

Years are rolling on like the majestic clouds I have been watching these days. They pour down what are called April showers. So with us. One way or another Time goes on. You have come some way, but you have a great, long way to go. You need to integrate your life; Lodge and office, sacred and secular, are to become all one, all Sacred Vibrations. Sunday is different from other days in the week, but all days are sacred and so the difference enriches. So think; all you do should be holy, each a different type of holiness. This implies three things—memory, attention and imagination. All of us have to learn to remember, then to be attentive to whatever we have to do, and by the power of imagination to hitch our wagon to our star!

(To be continued)

GOD AND DEVIL—SOME REFLECTIONS

I

ALL DUALISTIC religions have made their followers believe that God and Devil are two separate entities. If God is good and merciful, then how to explain evil in the world? Hence, a Devil had to be invented. Thus, God and Devil are personification of good and evil. A Latin phrase, *Demon est deus inversus* means Demon (Devil) is inverted God, or Devil and God are but two sides of the same coin. This concept that “Devil is God reversed,” is iconoclastic, and strikes at the very root of dualistic religions, because if God is a person or anthropomorphic being, he cannot be Divine and Devilish, or be a thoroughly good and a bad person, at the same time. Occult philosophy teaches that God is Absolute, Infinite, eternal and root of all. If so, then how can evil or devil be outside of It? Thus, we have to accept that good and evil are the two branches grown from the same trunk. To believe that God or good is one infinite, eternal principle and evil or devil is another infinite and eternal principle, is to believe in two infinities, which is an absurdity.

H.P.B. points out that in the earliest times there was no belief in any absolutely and thoroughly bad “god of evil” or devil, which existed separately from the “god of good.” For the pagans, good and evil were twin brothers, born of the same Mother Nature. To begin with, good and evil were represented by light and darkness, then by Day and Night and then by the luminaries, Sun and Moon, which are associated with Day and Night, respectively. The *Gita* says, “These two, *light and darkness*, are the world’s eternal ways,” and one aspect cannot be appreciated without the other. In Nature there is equilibrium or harmony of the opposites. We are better able to appreciate light when contrasted with darkness or shadow, and likewise, night makes us better appreciate day, and so also, we appreciate more, the comfort of heat, when contrasted with cold. However, later, the true idea of the duality as was understood by the ancients, was replaced by the false understanding.

In different philosophies of the world, we see the *allegorical* and *symbolical* meaning of Satan or Devil, as will be shown later. If there is an all-powerful and merciful God, then how can there be evil, injustice and cruelty in the world? Therefore, Satan was invented as a scapegoat. All that was false, evil and unjust could be attributed to Satan. They had to invent Satan because they had abandoned the concept of pantheism, which can logically and philosophically explain the existence of evil, without having to invent a Devil or Satan. Pantheism teaches omnipresence of God. If that is so, it is easy to see that God is in the evil, and also, evil is not outside of God. Hence, it is not blasphemous to say that God is present in every atom of one’s cigar ash. As Krishna says, “Of those things which deceive I am dice” (*Gita*, X). All the injustice and evil are the result of our own actions. However, once pantheism was abandoned, it was replaced by belief in “one living personal god” as a prop for lazy man who needed “a merciful father in Heaven” who is good, perfect, merciful and just—to whom he can pray and who may be propitiated when faced with adversities, instead of teaching them the true philosophical and logical Pantheism in which God and Nature are synonymous, and they had to then invent Satan to explain cruelty, blunders and injustice.

Absolute, being Omnipresent, Omniscient, Infinite and including the whole Universe, It must either include evil, or It must be the direct Cause of evil, else It cannot be Absoluteness. In short, Deity or God cannot be disconnected from evil. Hence, evil is described as lining of God or good, and hence inseparable, like light and shadow. Evil is shadow of light, and just as without the shadow we would not be able to perceive light, so also, we would not be able to perceive or appreciate good without evil. Science tells us that we are able to see, sunlight, only when it is reflected by dust particles in the air. Thus, light does not exist without shadow, and so also good cannot exist without evil. This is depicted in the story of *Kaliyadaman*. When Krishna found that the poisonous serpent Kaliya had been contaminating the river water with his poison, he

jumped into the river and after long struggle, subdued him. Like many other stories, the story of Krishna and Kaliya, is the story of triumph of good over evil. However, we must not forget that Krishna does not *destroy* Kaliya, but asks him to retire into the fathomless depths of the sea. It implies that even if we may get rid of evil from our *individual* natures, evil will always remain in the Kosmos as the opposing power to active goodness which maintains the equilibrium in Nature, writes H.P.B. in the article, “Origin of Evil.”

There is no evil in itself, or evil *per se*. Thus, although in one sense, murder, rape and robbery are evil or wrong, from the higher point of view, there is no evil in itself. Mr. Judge explains that if a man murders and for which he is imprisoned and punished, and that in turn brings about a transformation in him, then was the act out and out evil? The answer is no. There is nothing evil in itself, because for instance, poison can kill but it can also heal. Even that which is useful and constructive can become destructive when it is altered in its constitution. Too much of nearly anything can be harmful. Too much water can result in hyponatremia, a dilution of the blood’s salt content, which disrupts brain, heart, and muscle function. It also means what is good for one may be evil for another.

It is very difficult for one who does not possess the key to interpret symbology to understand apparent contradictions in the statements from the *Old Testament* and in the Christian theology. Such contradictory statements when interpreted correctly, immediately reveal that God and Devil are not two separate powers but two aspects of the same thing. For instance, they say that Devil or Satan is an incarnate lie, and at the same time he is called the most beautiful of the archangels, and a son of God. It refers to Lucifer, who is also equated with the archangel Michael, who rebelled against Lord’s order to create. H.P.B. points out that if one analyzes the rebellion of Lucifer, one finds it to be merely an assertion of free will and independent thought. The theogony of every religion speaks about “gods” who refused to create man and thus opposed or rebelled against the God. Thus, the *Archangels* of the Christians, the

Ameshaspendas of the Zoroastrians or the Solar angels (*Agnishwatta Pitris*) of the Hindus, are all variously termed Satan, Asura (no-god), because they refused to create men. These rebels were the celestial beings who refused to create the physical body of man, because they did not possess the *physical creative fire*. In Greece they were symbolized under the name of Prometheus. These rebellious angels, or first mind-born sons of Brahma, who refused to create physical man were hurled down to Earth, and are called “fallen angels.”

Often the contradictions are the result of distortion of esoteric idea by exoteric religions and theologies. We find such distortions and contradictions even in Hindu *Puranas*. Thus, we have in the Indian Philosophy, the *Suras*, the brightest and earliest gods, who are dethroned by the Brahmins and made into *Asura*. On pp. 500-01 (*S.D.*, II) we read that esoterically, the Asuras were the gods of the Secret Wisdom. In the oldest portion of the *Rig Veda* they are described as being spiritual and divine, and it was the term used for the Supreme Spirit and is also the Ahura (Mazda) of the Zoroastrians. Indra, Agni, Vayu, etc. were also considered to be *Asuras*. Moreover, the term *Asura* is derived from *Asu* means breath. H.P.B. says that in *Aitareya Brahmana*, we are told that the Asuras were created from the breath of Brahma (Prajapati). Later, they become “A-suras” or “no-gods,” and thus *Asuras* or hierarchies of spiritual beings may be compared to the “fallen angels” of Christianity. In the allegory of Soma eloping with Tara, the wife of Brihaspati, and the ensuing war between Soma and Brihaspati, the *Asuras* are on the side of Soma, representing esoteric wisdom, as against Brihaspati, representing ritualistic or ceremonial worship. It is easy to see that *Asuras* have been degraded and made into *A-suras*, or no-gods or demons, in later times, because they rebel against, hypocrisy, false-worship and dead-letter-form. Later day Brahmins preferred to have ceremonies, rituals and propitiation of Gods and hence called these Gods *A-suras* who opposed them in their form-worship.

(To be continued)

APHORISMS ON KARMA—SOME REFLECTIONS

XIX

APHORISM 30: “*Karma operates to produce cataclysms of nature by concatenation through the mental and astral planes of being. A cataclysm may be traced to an immediate physical cause such as internal fire and atmospheric disturbance, but these have been brought on by the disturbance created through the dynamic power of human thought.*”

Aphorism 31: “*Egos who have no Karmic connection with a portion of the globe where a cataclysm is coming on are kept without the latter’s operation in two ways: (a) by repulsion acting on their inner nature, and (b) by being called and warned by those who watch the progress of the world.*”

Almost every day we hear the news of one or the other natural disaster occurring in some part of the world. Earthquakes, floods, droughts, locusts, volcanic eruptions, snow storms, cyclones, fires, epidemics, and so on, cause destruction, displacement and deaths globally every year. Despite technological advancement and scientific research little is known of the actual causes of natural calamities, their prognostication and prevention. Researchers trace the cataclysms to atmospheric or geological disturbances, such as convection currents causing cyclones, and tectonic plate movements bringing on earthquakes, and so on. Meteorologists however are able to predict days in advance occurrence of cyclonic storms and thus, with foreknowledge, minimise loss of lives and property. In respect of other cataclysms such accurate prognostication as to time, place, and intensity of occurrence is not known. The assumption of modern empirical science is that natural phenomena are purely mechanical effects produced by combination of physical, geological, chemical, electrical and magnetic forces. The mechanical effects of natural forces are accurately measured and quantified but they see in them neither design nor purpose, and, least of all, any moral causation.

The fact that marine and terrestrial animals and birds are able to instinctively sense the coming on of cataclysmic disturbances in advance is an indication of the fact that there exist occult causes behind the mechanical forces at work which are observed by empirical science. In ancient literature, myths and legends can be seen as accounts of instances of accurate prophesying by wise men of disturbances in the natural world and in human affairs affecting individuals as well as people in the mass. The account of the Pharaoh taking proactive measures to store sufficient food grain to save his subjects from famine that was to come, which was prophesied by Joseph, the wise man (*Genesis*, 41); and Sri Krishna saving the people of Dwaraka from catastrophic subsidence of the city into the sea which he had known in advance, as narrated in the *Bhagavata Purana*, are some instances which illustrate the truism that human life and the natural world are intimately connected and react on one another by occult laws subject to the Karmic Law. Man, not the impermanent body, but the Eternal Mind-Being dwelling in it, the Thinker, the crown of universal evolution, is united intimately with all nature, which he affects in a significant way by the power of his thoughts. The impact of the force of the collective thoughts of men, when they are dissonant with nature’s harmonious progressive order, cause disturbances, which fall upon man as cataclysms.

Manas or Mind of man, with his brain, the mind’s instrument, like a dynamo, is ceaselessly generating throughout his life enormous amount of thought-energy. Death of the body does not destroy the effects of the force so generated during life by man but remain as mental deposits and enmeshed with the magnetic threads of the web of life-force which ensoul the solar system, begetting various physical, mental and moral effects. The effects we thus produce is the destiny we have created by our own thoughts and deeds, from which we suffer and enjoy with kindred souls from life to life bound by the chains of self-made destiny.

When a thought occurs in the brain, it coalesces with one or the other of the various classes of conscious invisible elemental beings

belonging to the great elements on the astral and mental planes, and an image is produced with a certain amount of energy or force infused into it. The force or power of the entity so produced is proportional to the intensity of thought generating it. The elemental entities being morally neutral they assume the quality and character of the person who generated it, which becomes either a benevolent force for the good or a veritable demon for evil. In the article, “The Application of Theosophical Theories,” Mr. Judge shows that each one of the thought entities we thus produce, lives its life, dies, is reborn, “some good, some bad, some so terrible in their nature that if we could see them we would shrink back in affright....Further than that, a number of these thoughts form themselves into a certain idea, and it dies to be reincarnated in its time. Thus, on rolls this vast flood. Will it overwhelm us? It may; it often does. Let us then make our thoughts pure. Our thoughts are the matrix, the mine, the fountain, the source of all that we are and of all that we may be.” The cumulative force of collective thought thus produced by mankind is enormous. At the present stage of evolution of humanity, the principle of Kama, or passions and desires, being fully developed and perfected, and the higher Manasic principle only partly developed, the prime mover of generality of people is selfishness—which is the prolific parent of every evil which afflict nature and man alike.

Theosophy teaches that the evolution of humanity proceeds in greater and smaller cycles in an order of ascending progression. Egos forming civilizations and nations come into being, rise to their highest development within the limits of evolutionary potential of the cycle, then they begin to decline and die out, as the Egos begin to abandon the bodily line of the race. As they reincarnate once more to make another new civilization and nation, they bring back with them the essence of progress which they had already made together with all the Karmic potentialities—acquired nature, character, and tendencies. Not only do nations frequently suffer from natural calamities during their life cycle caused by the potency of

their own thoughts, but the beginning and ending of the civilizational and racial cycles are also attended with natural calamities, because of the intimate association of the matter of the globe and the principles of man, the former having to be refined and given higher impulse by man. Mr. Judge shows the interconnectedness of the human Ego and the matter of the globe and how cataclysms are brought on at the intersection of cycles: “Not only is man ruled by these laws, but every atom of matter as well, and the mass of matter is constantly undergoing a change at the same time with man. It must therefore exhibit alterations corresponding to those through which the thinker is going. On the physical plane effects are brought out through the electrical and other fluids acting with the gases on the solids of the globe. At the change of a great cycle they reach what may be termed the exploding point and cause violent convulsions of the following classes: (a) Earthquakes, (b) floods, (c) Fire, (d) Ice.” (*The Ocean of Theosophy*, p. 131, Indian ed.)

Therefore, suffering that comes from natural disasters is neither accidental or chance occurrence as science thinks nor “Act of God” as anthropomorphic theistic religions believe, but by the action of exact and absolute justice ever tending to restore equilibrium which had been disturbed by thoughts of men. At times whole towns or provinces are engulfed in devastating earthquakes or wild fires or floods. Epidemics sweep across a whole continent killing many thousands, and millions perish in a prolonged drought and famine. Only such of the Egos who had contributed in creating the cause of the disturbances, in the present life or in the past lives, inescapably find themselves in the place and the time of occurrence of the disaster and experience the painful effects. Egos who had no Karmic connection with the cataclysm will not find themselves in the place of disturbance when it occurs; and, even if they happen to be present there, they escape the calamity by moving away from the scene of occurrence either because of a repulsive force acting on their inner nature or called and warned by one of the members of the fraternity of Adepts who watch over human progress and evolution. The prophetic warning may come in dreams in some cases. Instances

of individuals and families prevented from boarding a flight which met with a fatal accident, because of some obstructive events preventing them from reaching the airport in time, or due to some one or the other obstruction, are not uncommon. These instances are illustrative of the aphorism under consideration.

Can suffering and death coming from cataclysms, or from any other means, be called evil Karma? It is no more evil than the buffetings we receive in our everyday life as a consequence of our own wrongful actions from which we learn and become wiser, is evil. The great journey of the soul through the school of recurrent embodied life governed by Karma is all made up of learning, the end of which is perfection and emancipation. Loss or death that comes from cataclysms, therefore, cannot be called evil. Trials often bring on complete change in life or development of a healthier attitude. We wipe away so much of adverse Karmic store we have accumulated in our Soul-life by experiencing their effects which come as pain and sorrow in embodied life.

General diffusion of the knowledge of the Karmic Law as propounded by the aphorisms which Theosophy presents is of utmost importance as a detailed study of them reveal to us how the Inner and the outer self of man is inseparably interwoven with all beings and great Nature, and how responsible man is for his thoughts and actions which affects, for good or evil, whole of Nature and destiny of humanity. St. Paul speaks of creation groaning in travail because of iniquity of man (*Romans*, 8-22). It is the duty of man, therefore, to so live and act with higher ideal, as to transform and transmute the life force of his being into spiritual dynamical force which impel lower kingdoms of nature to higher life, towards man-stage, and humanity to higher destiny.

“In the energy we put into self-interest we are generating maleficent influence, which finally, in cyclic course, will culminate in some disaster. The energy generated by high ideals will likewise culminate, but in some great benefit.” (*Answers to Questions of The Ocean of Theosophy*, p. 184)

(Concluded)

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

The Coronavirus pandemic has shown that our consumerist-oriented society has been extremely damaging to Nature, forcing us to consider if there are other ways to live life. The economic activities of buying, selling, making money etc. underwent a radical change with the appearance of the book, *The Creation of Wealth*, by Scottish thinker, Adam Smith, in eighteenth century, as then, the economists regulated the economic activity, leading to disastrous results. However, in his book, *Unto This Last*, John Ruskin criticized *The Creation of Wealth*, saying that the book is based on the assumption that man does not have a soul and that greed and self-interest are his only guiding factors. While it may not be of much consequence, whether human body has a skeleton or not, but from the spiritual point of view it is of paramount importance to understand that human beings are souls having a human experience, and not bodies having a soul.

A closer observation reveals that in choosing our livelihoods, not *all* of us are motivated by the need to make money. There are many who have left lucrative jobs that were unsatisfying in order to do what their souls wanted them to do. In fact, there are those who say they have healthy disrespect for money, meaning thereby that they refuse to do anything just for money. The author says that when you refuse to be controlled by money, you have the freedom to decide what you will or will not do. “As we go into a post-corona world, my belief is that more and more will be unshackling from jobs that suit neither their souls nor the environment,” writes Suma Varughese.

Ruskin further argues that it is not necessary, as economics suggests, that if the interests of two parties are opposed, as happens in employer-employee relationship, they will be antagonistic with each other. He says that if there is only a crust of bread in the house, and mother and children are starving, then it is easy to see that if the children eat it, then the mother must remain hungry, and if the mother

eats it, then the children must go hungry. “But it does not necessarily follow that there will be ‘antagonism’ between them, that they will fight for the crust, and that the mother, being the strongest, will get it and eat it.” This and the like arguments by Ruskin just show that unless we bring in ethical and moral dimensions in our dealings with money, we can bring only evil upon ourselves and our world. We see that in our capitalist world, with the aim to make profit, there has been exploitation of resources and labour. We are able to see now that we live in an ethical universe, and we now seem to be reaping the “rewards” of prioritising money over people. “The miasma of greed in which we are presently submerged fails to show us how self-destructive our behaviour is....Let us put money in its place,” writes Varughese. (*Life Positive*, May, 2020)

Our perceptions are coloured by our conceptions. We need to have right concept regarding Deity, Nature and Man. Theosophy teaches that man *is* a soul, and the universe exists for the experience and emancipation of the soul. Mind, or rather an attitude of mind, is the cause of his bondage and freedom from the wheel of birth, death and re-birth. Whatever may be our possessions—money, ideas, knowledge or powers—our attitude towards them must be that of *trusteeship* and not of ownership. The trustees are constrained to use the funds only for the purposes or objects for which the trust was set up. So also, we must use our possessions for higher purposes, for the good of humanity.

Light on the Path says, “Desire possessions above all.” What kind of possessions? The answer is: “But those possessions must belong to the pure soul only, and be possessed therefore by all pure souls equally.” These refer to wealth of soul and spirit. There are people rich in love, rich in sympathy, rich in compassion, rich in wisdom. These are possessions to be desired and shared with others.

It is the attitude of selfishness and careless indifference, of the rich towards the poor, that is responsible for the inequalities in the society, and that is because we are losing sight of the fact that we are interconnected on the inner planes of our being. “If the action of

one reacts on the lives of all...then it is only...by all practising in their daily lives true brotherhood and true sisterhood, that the real human solidarity, which lies at the root of the elevation of the race, can ever be attained.” (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 232)

It is very difficult to decide whether to have children or not, because we do not know how they will turn out to be, writes Sabra Boyd. Her own reluctance to have children was based on her worry of passing on her parents’ genes. “I fear that I could pass on my mother’s addiction and my father’s violence.” She writes that her father was very likely a sociopath, who periodically kidnapped and trafficked her until she was ten years of age, and he had been to prison several times for white-collar crimes. She wanted to be reassured in some way that her children would not be predisposed to her parents’ violent tendencies. With the hope that science could give a decisive answer she decided to meet a genetic counsellor. When she asked the counsellor if there was any way to genetically predict *psychopathy*, her reply was that it was difficult as “there are too many factors and unknown genetic markers for psychological development. As long as they are provided with a healthy environment...many times children won’t develop any of the psychological disorders that they might be predisposed to,” and that ultimately, “nurture and environment will supersede nature.”

In a sense, all parents have to grapple with uncertainty, as they do not know if their child will be kind, curious, intelligent and successful or otherwise. In spite of the fact that genetics has been able to provide a lot of information about our genealogy, there are limitations to what our genes can tell us. Thus, for instance, her chromosomes will not reveal why she did not go to prison but her little sister went. “Gradually, I am learning to accept that life is full of ambiguity and that parenthood is a leap of faith,” writes Sabra Boyd, a writer, reader and child-trafficking survivor activist. (*Psychology Today*, November 2020)

Heredity is the passing of traits to off spring, from its parent or ancestors. We do not deny the fact that likes and dislikes, as also, peculiarities are transmitted from one generation to the other, down the line of descent. We do find mental traits and physical peculiarities being passed on from the parents to children and sometimes bodily or mental trait of some remote ancestor is reproduced. The point to grasp is that heredity should not be looked upon as the cause of crime or virtue. It is not the cause but only an instrument or means for the production of the effect. The cause is hidden much deeper. Unless we study heredity in conjunction with the laws of Karma and Reincarnation, it must remain a puzzle.

Mr. Judge explains that heredity is a mode used by nature to transmit physical and psychical traits through parents to provide a proper tenement to the Ego. But the traits are brought under karma by the Ego. Mr. Judge tells us how a person who reviled and persecuted a deformed person persistently, imprints on his own immortal mind the deformed picture of his victim. When coming again to rebirth, this actor carries with him this picture, and if the family to which he is attracted for birth has similar physical tendencies in its stream, the mental picture causes the newly-forming astral body to assume deformed shape by electrical and magnetic osmosis through the mother. We might say, both Heredity and Atavism are handmaidens of Karma and Reincarnation.

On the other hand, there are instances of great geniuses appearing in families that were devoid of these qualities. Nothing in the heredity of Napoleon the First can explain his character, as his family lacked the power and force displayed by him. We find exceptions to the hereditarily transmitted traits, when we see differences in character and capacity of the children of the same family. So also, physical heredity is unable to explain birth of idiots or vicious children to parents who are good, pure or highly intellectual, and that can only be explained on the basis of past karma of parents and the child. It is a chance for redemption to the child and the occasion of punishment to the parents. An unruly and adamant child can bring about a great

transformation in the parents, because in handling such a child parents may learn the lesson in patience. Similarly, parents can influence the child for good. The Ego is attracted to the family which can furnish it with the necessary instruments, the body and the brain, through which the knowledge and the skill can be manifested.

We are likely to find the phrase “Know thyself!” in serious philosophy books as well as in self-help books. What are its implications? At a simple level, it means, in order to accept yourself, you need to “know thyself” first. To make good decisions, decisions that are good for you, you again need to “know thyself.” However, the whole “knowing thyself” business is not as simple as it seems but is a serious philosophical muddle, writes Bence Nanay. You do much of what you do because it goes well with the kind of person you think you are. For instance, you order an espresso when you go to the local café, because you are an espresso kind of person. Likewise, you go to philosophy section of the bookshop because you are philosophically inclined person. In a sense, we have a fairly good idea as to what kind of people we are, or are not.

However, it is crucial to know that people change. There are periods of time in our lives when we change drastically, while at other times, we change gradually. However, the problem is: “If we change while our self-image remains the same, then there will be a deep abyss between who we are and who we think we are. And this leads to conflict.” Thus, for instance, if you keep doing philosophy, because it is a stable feature of your self-image, which you genuinely enjoyed doing once, but which you no longer do, then there will be a huge difference between what you like and what you do. What you do is dictated by what kind of person you think you are, and not by what you like. What you think of yourself is very different from who you are and what you actually like. Thus, once certain features are built into your self-image, any change would be either censored or it would lead to contradiction, as in above case. “A

caterpillar who seeks to know himself would never become a butterfly,” wrote Andre Gide, because “if you know thyself to be such-and-such a kind of person, this limits your freedom considerably,” writes Bence Nanay, a professor of philosophy at the University of Antwerp, in an article in *Aeon* magazine.

“Man, Know thyself” is a profound philosophical injunction which aims to make us aware of who we *really* are. You are not what you think you are, or identify yourself with, nor what others think you are. The first step consists in realizing that there are two selves in us: the lower, constantly changing personal self, and the Higher, Permanent, Spiritual Self. A little observation shows that we identify ourselves with the ever-changing perishable body, and with its conditions and relations, which are also ever-changing. We say, “I am happy, or I am sad,” “I am sick, or I am well.” These expressions are because of the self-identifying attachment to some form or conditions which are changing. But through all these conditions and forms, which are changing continually, there is that in us, the “we,” which has remained unchanged and unchanging, and that is the Spiritual or true Self.

Another important aspect of “know thyself” is not only knowing that the lower, personal self changes, but to see to it that it changes in the right direction. It can be achieved only by impersonal and detached examination of our lower self in the light of the Higher Self. If we can examine, each day, our thoughts, feelings, motives, strong points and weak points, then such an examination will uncover our selfishness, hidden good and hidden ills. Such an examination at once reveals to us, whether we lived the day in the company of our divine self or were oblivious to the presence of the god within. It must lead to the recognition that the personal self derives its value and worth from the Spiritual Self, and hence the need to keep the personality in the background, and to learn not to identify with it. Mr. Judge recommends that every day and as often as one can, one should think, think, think, “I” am not the body, the mind, the emotions, the intellect, praise or blame, but I am THAT.