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

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सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

## THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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### LIVING THE HIGHER LIFE

#### II

WHAT do we mean when we say that things have to be viewed in their cosmic relationship? It concerns the most important doctrine of the spiritual science and the one that must be applied in daily life, without which no true spirituality is possible. Krishna gives it in the Fifth Chapter of the *Gita*, in just one sentence. He says: “The truth is obscured by that which is not true, and therefore all creatures are led astray.” And then he adds: “But in those for whom knowledge of the true Self has dispersed ignorance, the Supreme, as if lighted by the sun, is revealed.” These two statements contain the specific message of the Fifth Chapter of the *Gita* and will reveal to us what high thinking means—that thinking which will enable each one of us to make of his life a spiritual sacrifice and a real sacrament, instinct with meaning and purpose. The spiritual life is open to all. All can change the humdrum and triviality, which seem uninteresting and tedious, by acquiring the knowledge of Universals and applying that knowledge in the performance of duty. In other words, it is the performance of duty with a particular inner attitude, namely, performing the duty without attachment to the action itself or to its fruits, which makes that duty a sacrifice. We are given the principle, the teaching, which will enable us to transform duties into sacrifices, in the statement, “The truth is obscured by that which is not true, and therefore all creatures are led astray.” It implies that the outer

appearance of all manifested objects is not real; it is only a mask or a covering which hides that which is real. The form is unreal compared to the life principle which animates that form. “The truth is thus obscured by that which is not true.”

Thus, when people take the form for the reality, mistaking the outward mask for the truth, they are led astray; they fail to see behind the veil of matter, and therefore their evaluation of objects and experiences is entirely a false one. We know this is the case, for instance, when we judge a person in terms of mere externals; when we consider only the garments and are impressed, favourably or otherwise, by those garments, attracted or repelled. All of us agree to the foolishness of such conduct, for all of us know that garments are merely incidental and not the real person at all. From the spiritual point of view, we go one step further and recognize that it is equally foolish to judge a man or woman in terms of the personality, in terms of mere personal attributes, for the personality is but a mask hiding the real man, the Soul, and behind an unattractive mask a beautiful Soul may abide, just as behind ugly garments a charming personality may reside. The student of the spiritual side of things must therefore penetrate beyond the personal clothing and aim at contacting the Soul itself. The Soul is the reality; the personality is unreal unless examined from the Soul’s point of view.

The same is true in the case of all forms. The visible and tangible is but an appearance, the shadow of the real, which is invisible and intangible to the eyes of flesh. That is the great doctrine of *maya* or illusion, which teaches us to recognize that this phenomenal world is but a *maya*, an illusion, unless examined in terms of the realities it hides. When forms are viewed as things-in-themselves and mistaken for spiritual realities, man is only playing with shadows, trying to grasp mere reflections. Instead, man must learn to evaluate the visible in terms of the invisible. In other words, the teaching is that the phenomenal world would not be if there were not an inner noumenal world behind it. All manifested objects are but reflections on this plane of their archetypes on the invisible plane. “As above, so below.”

The material world is the reflection of the spiritual world and can only be judged correctly if understood in terms of universal principles.

If every object is but the copy, the reflection of a true Idea—using the word “Idea” in its real sense as Plato used it—then the real value of that object does not lie in the object itself but in the understanding of the Idea it mirrors forth, in the grasping of its relationship to that Idea. Forms and events on this plane are thus but symbols which reveal to us the great truths of the spiritual plane. When we understand this symbolism of the phenomenal world, we are able to discover the hidden message in every object and every creature. We begin to read the language of nature and to recognize life as a teacher and every event as a lesson which must be understood. Then life ceases to be meaningless, uninteresting or troublesome, and becomes vitally interesting, for every single thing, however trivial and insignificant it may appear from the merely external point of view, contains a hidden truth. High thinking, that thinking which makes our life spiritual, consists in reading the symbolism of Nature and evaluating all things in terms of archetypes.

We all know, for instance, that our day and night are but the reflection of a greater day and night, namely the Day and Night of Brahma; the periods of Manvantara and Pralaya, manifestation and non-manifestation. We know that sleep and awakening symbolize death and birth, that the yearly seasons are but reflections or copies of the four Yugas or ages, and so forth. But we often fail to apply this same principle, this law of symbolism, the law of analogy and correspondence, in all departments of life. We forget to read the inner meaning of life and then are led into taking the outward appearance for the reality. And yet theoretically, as a philosophical proposition, we all admit the doctrine of *Maya*. We know that without an archetypal world, there would be no phenomenal world, that without the inner esoteric side, no external exoteric universe could be. If we have a table on earth, it is because “tabularity” exists as a principle. If we can trace an infinite number of triangles, it is because the idea of “triangularity” exists in the noumenal world. This must

be applied to all other things, and when we read life in terms of spiritual ideas, all human experiences become sacred and holy.

Applied to human nature, for instance, to the feelings of men and women, what do we find? We find that human feelings simply reflect spiritual energies. Let us take a few illustrations. Take the love of a mother for her children. That love is but a symbol of a higher type of love, a love which is spiritual, *i.e.*, absolutely pure and compassionate, the love of the Elder Brothers of the Race for orphan humanity. In the same way, a human tie such as marriage exists because there is a higher tie in the spiritual world. The union of the Higher Self with the lower, or the union of a Guru, a Master with his chela or pupil. If there exist in the world secret societies, private fraternities, it is because of the existence of the great Brotherhood of Perfected Men, or actual spiritual reality. And the rites and ceremonies used by the world's fraternities merely copy and reflect the true rites of initiation into the spiritual White Lodge. And this is true of all human institutions and human emotions. Patriotism, for example, is but the shadow of spiritual love inherent in the soul for its Home in the spiritual realm. Now, when we begin to see the spiritual archetypes behind the types of the world of phenomena, we see the supreme Self in all things and all things in the Supreme Self. And that is the teaching of the *Gita*. That is what Krishna means when he asks us to sacrifice all actions unto the Self of all creatures, to make of all our duties spiritual offerings, veritable sacraments laid upon the altar of our Higher Self.

Take any duty, the most trivial or insignificant, if, while one is engaged in its performance, one thinks of its spiritual meaning, that duty ceases to be trivial and becomes sacred and holy, and is transformed into a sacrifice. Take, for instance, the very common ordinary action of taking a bath. That daily action can be performed with a different attitude and thereby the nature of the action is changed. We can, to begin with, dislike our bath, as some children do, or enjoy it physically. In both cases, we are on the plane of desire, of likes and dislikes, and our action is the very reverse of

spiritual. Then we can take that same bath, as a matter of fact, because it is a duty, as part of the daily routine of life. We have no feelings in the matter; we are simply indifferent and go through the experience, thinking of something else. The duty is then performed mechanically, and we cannot derive its inner benefit. We have failed to see in the physical bath a symbol of a higher type of bath—that bath which cleanses and purifies the moral and physical nature as well as the mind. But suppose, while taking our bath each morning, we keep our thoughts on the meaning of inner cleanliness, then we are doing more than removing physical dirt. We are undergoing an inner process of purification which will enable us to go through the day with the central idea of retaining purity in our thoughts, feelings and actions. Our bath has then become a sacrament.

Likewise, when we turn on the light, we should recognize that electric light is but a reflection of spiritual life, that light which radiates from Atman—the Self. In turning on the light, we should think of the light of the Spirit, which we are all aspiring towards, and which would change our world of darkness into a world of light or splendour. If we remind ourselves of the Higher Self in us and of the fact that it is through our own actions that its light can begin to shine forth from us, then turning on the light will be a real sacrament or sacrificial action. When we look at the clock, we should be reminded of the law of cycles and the spiritual value of time. Examples could be multiplied *ad infinitum* since all things thus have their own higher counterparts and can be read in the language of symbols.

We must always keep in mind that from the spiritual point of view, all work is sacred and holy, if it is honest work. Any piece of work, any profession, is invested with sacredness. No task is inferior; it is not what you do that matters, but how you do it. What your understanding of that work is. When we perform the work which comes our way, cheerfully and carefully, giving it our all, then we make that work sacred and holy. Each one who performs his duty is, in a way, doing God's work. George Eliot, in her poem, shows that Antonio Stradivarius, the maker of violins, assigned dignity to

his work of making violins by his attitude. In the poem, he is made to say, “My work is mine...I say, not God Himself can make man’s best without best men to help Him...’Tis rare delight: I would not change my skill to be Emperor with bungling hands and lose my work, which comes as natural as self at waking.” And she adds, “God could not make Antonio Straidvarius’ violins without Antonio.” Shri B. P. Wadia comments that the purpose of the Inner Divinity in man is not only to draw him out of his lower, animal nature but also to aid him to so transmute it that it shall radiate the efficiency and the Beauty of the World of Spirit. We might say that we are able to accomplish this, to some extent, when we put our heart and soul into our work.

In a dialogue between the pupil and the Sage, the pupil tells the Sage that he happened to have been born in a fortunate family, where there were others performing for him the “lowly” duties. Should he not discard those duties? And the Sage gives a thought-provoking reply. The pupil is told that he has a very different kind of duty arising out of the servant and served relationship. If the duty of a servant is to serve his master with devotion, then it is the duty of the master to accept the service with appreciation and gratitude, and to treat the servant performing “lowly” duties, with consideration and not with arrogance, rather, treat him as a brother. Above all, by the very fact that every task performed by the pupil was illuminated by the light of the higher mind, he should be able to perform those “lowly” tasks better than the servant and bring his service to higher excellence. (*From the Book of Confidences*)

(*Concluded*)

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It is not from space that I must seek my dignity, but in the regulation of my thought. The possession of worlds would not give me more than this; with space the universe encloses me and engulfs me like an atom, but with thought I enclose the universe.

—BLAISE PASCAL

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT DRACULA—I

DRACULA is an 1897 Gothic horror novel by Irish author Bram Stoker. The narrative is related through letters, diary entries, and newspaper articles. The story opens with a young solicitor's assistant, Jonathan Harker, a young Englishman, travelling through Transylvania on a business trip. He is there to help Transylvanian nobleman Count Dracula in buying an English estate. As he journeys through the picturesque countryside, he comes across the local peasants who warn him about his destination, giving him crucifixes and other charms against evil and saying strange things, which Harker later interprets to mean vampire. Harker is frightened but is determined to meet the count's carriage as planned. During the journey, the carriage is attacked by angry wolves. Harker's initial impression is that Dracula is a well-educated and hospitable gentleman. Gradually, he finds that the Count is active only at night and seems never to eat. He comes to realize that he is a prisoner in Dracula's castle and that the Count is a demonic being.

The more Harker investigates the nature of his confinement, the more uneasy he becomes. He realizes that the count possesses supernatural powers and diabolical ambitions. One evening, Harker is nearly attacked by three beautiful and seductive female vampires, but the count asks them to leave, telling the vampires that Harker belongs to him. Fearing for his life, Harker decides to escape and finds a deep basement chapel in the castle, where Dracula sleeps in a wooden box filled with earth. Harker attempts to kill Dracula by gashing him in the face with a shovel, but Dracula seems only superficially harmed. Harker escapes from the castle through his window and brings his journal with him to show his experiences to his fiancée, Mina.

Meanwhile, in England, Mina Murray corresponds with her friend Lucy Westenra, who has received marriage proposals from three men—Dr. John Seward, Arthur Holmwood, and an American

named Quincey Morris. She accepts Holmwood's proposal. Mina visits Lucy at the seaside town of Whitby. A Russian ship is wrecked on the shore near the town with all its crew missing and its captain dead. The only sign of life aboard is a large dog that bounds ashore and disappears into the countryside; the only cargo is a set of fifty boxes of earth shipped from Castle Dracula. Not long after, Lucy suddenly begins sleepwalking. One night, Mina finds Lucy in the town cemetery and believes she sees a dark form with glowing red eyes bending over Lucy. Lucy becomes pale and ill, and she bears two tiny red marks at her throat, for which neither Dr. Seward nor Mina can account. Unable to arrive at a satisfactory diagnosis, Dr. Seward calls in his former professor, Abraham Van Helsing, from Amsterdam, to help Lucy.

Van Helsing arrives in Whitby, and, after his initial examination of Lucy, orders that her chambers be covered with garlic—a traditional charm against vampires. For a time, this effort seems to avert Lucy's illness. She begins to recover, but her mother, unaware of the garlic's power, unwittingly removes the odiferous plants from the room, leaving Lucy vulnerable to further attack. Seward and Van Helsing spend several days trying to revive Lucy, performing four blood transfusions. Their efforts ultimately come to nothing. When Lucy's elderly mother is in her bedroom, a wolf leaps in through Lucy's window, then rushes out—Lucy documents the events in her journal, and her mother dies from the shock of the wolf's attack. Afterwards, Lucy cannot be saved by any future blood transfusions, and she dies surrounded by the men of the group.

Meanwhile, Mina has been in Budapest caring for Harker, who has suffered a “nervous breakdown” after his time with the Count and believes the strange things he saw at Castle Dracula were hallucinations. When Mina and Harker return to England, however, Van Helsing tells Harker that his interactions with the Count were not hallucinations but real. Van Helsing gathers the men of the group and tells them that Lucy is not truly dead but is an “Un-Dead” vampire; the men of the group travel to Lucy's cemetery, observe

her haunting the grounds and attempting to suck the blood of children, and later “truly kill” her by stabbing her in the heart with a stake and cutting off her head. Although these events shock Arthur, Morris, Seward, and Harker, the men agree to track down Dracula, whom they believe to have bitten Lucy in England, and “truly kill” him as well.

As the group prepares to do this, however, Harker notices that Mina appears to be getting sick as well, and one night, as the group is all assembled in Seward’s office of the insane asylum, a loud crash is heard, and Dracula is seen having bitten Mina and forcing Mina to suck his own blood, while Harker is in a deep trance beside them. This causes the group great alarm, and Mina feels she has been “poisoned” by Dracula in this blood ritual. In the asylum, Seward has also had conversations with an insane man named Renfield, who speaks of wanting to gain the “life force” of animals he eats, and who is discovered, also, to be communing with Dracula—Renfield allowed Dracula to enter the asylum by inviting him in, and this enabled Dracula to attack Mina and form a “blood link” with her.

The men of the group find out that Dracula has shipped 50 wooden boxes, filled with sacred earth from Transylvania to England—Dracula needs these boxes to sleep in, to maintain his powers. The group realizes they must sterilize these boxes with holy communion wafers in order to remove their special restorative properties and destroy Dracula. The group finds 49 of the 50 boxes in London, at the Carfax estate and other of Dracula’s properties, and sterilizes them; but the last box, they realize, Dracula has taken back to Transylvania. The group tracks Dracula and this final box to Dracula’s castle.

The group makes the trip with Mina, who can tell Dracula’s location when hypnotized by Van Helsing because of her blood link with the Count. They believe Dracula will land at the port of Varna, near Romania, but he actually lands at Galatz—the group intercepts him, however, as he sleeps in his final box *en route* to the

castle, and Harker and Morris stab him in the heart and cut off his head, thus truly killing him—freeing his soul from his “Un-Dead” body. But Morris is fatally wounded by a gypsy during this attack and later dies. In a closing note, written seven years later, Harker says that he and Mina now have a child, named after Morris, and that Seward and Arthur both ended up finding love and getting married. They write that they and Van Helsing worry no one will believe their fantastical story of Dracula, even though they have painstakingly assembled their accounts of his activities in order to “prove” his existence.

Bram Stoker was born in Dublin, Ireland, on November 8, 1847. His first novel, a romance, entitled *The Snake’s Pass*, was published in 1890. Stoker’s masterpiece, *Dracula*, was published in 1897. At the time of its publication, *Dracula* was considered a “straightforward horror novel” based on imaginary creations of supernatural life. The original 541-page typed sheets were believed to have been lost until they were found in a barn in northwestern Pennsylvania in the early 1980s, and handwritten on the title page was “THE UN-DEAD.” That seems to be the original title of the novel, which was later changed into “Dracula.” It appears that Stoker probably found the name Dracula in Whitby’s public library while on a holiday, and he selected it because he thought it meant “devil” in Romanian. It is also believed by some that *the legends of the Carpathian Mountains*, in present-day Romania, form the basis of the novel *Dracula*. *Dracula* is one of the most famous works of English literature and has been called the centrepiece of vampire fiction. *Dracula* is a Gothic novel, which means something that is characterised by mystery, horror and gloom.

According to some critics, *Dracula* belongs to the tradition of vampire fiction, though we cannot say that this novel originated or ended this tradition. The roots of vampire fiction can be traced back to folklore of the medieval period, whereas it was only in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that we came across vampire stories featuring in Eastern European folklore, wherein one finds

stories of corpses rising from the dead. Moreover, during that period, “a series of real-life vampire ‘sightings’ were also reported across Europe, and in some cases the graves of suspected vampires were even exhumed.” It is familiarity with this background which provided Stoker a foundation for his own fictional vampire. The novel also tries to bring out that people like Dr. Seward are “perhaps the clearest example of a mind guided entirely by scientific rationalism, dependent on the evidence of his own eyes and loathe to accept supernatural explanations even when the evidence points that way.” On the other hand, Van Helsing performs the blood transfusion on Lucy, but when that alone does not work, he also uses garlic and crucifixes, traditional folk remedies, blending modern science with superstition, to ward off vampires. One is able to see his open-mindedness when he tells Dr. Seward that “to rid the earth of this terrible monster we must have all the knowledge and all the help which we can get,” by which he means having the readiness to combine ancient schools of thought with the Western methods. He makes a candid confession that “it is the fault of our science that it wants to explain all; if it explains not, then it says there is nothing to explain.”

The most important theme of the novel is the relationship between life and death and their relation with the state which is between the two, namely, “undeath,” which refers to Dracula’s inability to die, as his soul is trapped. That soul can be released only by cutting off his head or by driving a wooden stake through his heart so that it would stop feeding on the blood of the living. The Slavonian term *Voordalak* has been explained in the *Theosophical Glossary* as, “a vampire; a corpse informed by its lower principles and maintaining a kind of semi-life in itself by raising itself during the night from the grave, fascinating its living victims and sucking out their blood.” Rumanians, Moldavians, Slavonian tribes, and also Bohemians, Moravians, and others firmly believe in the existence of such *ghosts* and dread them.

(*To be concluded*)

## JOHN KEELY—ETHERIC FORCE

JOHN Ernst Worrell Keely was an American inventor who announced in 1873 that he had discovered a certain force called “vaporic” or etheric force, which can produce tremendous power. This force was based on “vibratory sympathy.” He said that he had discovered a principle for producing power, based on musical vibrations of tuning forks. These vibrations produced by tuning forks could resonate with atoms or with the aether. He claimed that by using about one litre of water, he could produce enough fuel to move a 30-car train from Philadelphia to New York City. To achieve this, he began to construct an engine, which could give an idea of the machine he was trying to develop. He observed that he was developing a motor to obtain power from “intermolecular vibration of ether.”

In 1874, Keely gave a demonstration of an “etheric generator” to some people in Philadelphia. He blew into a nozzle for half a minute and then poured around five gallons of water into the same nozzle. It gave rise to pressure of 10,000 psi, which, according to Keely, showed that the water had been disintegrated and some mysterious vapour had been liberated in the generator, which could provide power to machinery. He also called it “vibratory-generator.”

In 1884, Keely demonstrated his “Vaporic gun.” In simple terms, he took water and air, two mediums of different specific gravity. With the help of the vibrations, he liberated from air and water an inter-atomic ether. Keely said that the energy of this ether is boundless.

In 1885, he gave an exhibition of his motor. He assembled an apparatus on top of which was screwed a globe with several apertures, to which tubes were fixed, which were connected to cylinders. Keely then took a violin bow (that with which one plays violin) and rubbed it across one of the two large tuning forks, which was forming part of the apparatus. After a while he opened the stopcock leading into one of the cylinders, and one could hear a hissing sound of escaping air. Keely said that it was etheric vapour;

and not compressed air or any vapour having substance. This force was then used to lift some weights. He said that he had managed to produce a pressure of 22,000 psi. This etheric force was found to be great enough to lift large weights and could also fire his “Vaporic gun.”

In 1886, he demonstrated again by using only about half a litre of water and obtained a pressure of 2700 psi, and then doubled the pressure by adding more water. He claimed that the etheric force which brought about these results could be utilized in the 25,000-horsepower engine he was working on. Horsepower refers to the power output of an engine. Keely explained that he was tapping the “latent force” in nature, or the vibratory energy of the ether.

Keely proposed to use the power of atoms in water to create perpetual motion. Keely’s basic idea was that atoms were in constant vibration, so all that one had to do was to harness and channel random vibrations of the atoms within water to produce unlimited energy. If you could get the atoms to vibrate in unison, you could use their etheric force to run any motor of any size.

Keely felt that in the idea of machines constructed so far, there had not been found any medium (matter) in which a neutral centre could be induced or created. If a neutral centre could be produced, then the whole problem or difficulty of producing perpetual motion would be solved. Then, in such a machine or device where a neutral centre was formed, it would require an introductory impulse of a few pounds to cause it to run for centuries.

In *The Secret Doctrine Commentaries*, H.P.B. says that everything has its *laya* centre or point. She explains it by asking us to imagine the thinnest thing, like a cobweb, which has its seven planes. We see it’s one plane. When it is rarefied, we can see it partially, and with further rarefication, we see nothing. That point where we stop seeing the cobweb can be called its *laya* point. In fact, a neutral point or neutral centre is, in one aspect, the limiting point of any given set of senses.

Thus, it appears that we are given an alternative term for *laya* point, which is a neutral centre. On p. 148 (*S.D.*, I), H.P.B. explains

it as the centre beyond which both matter and motion seem to stop or vanish. But actually, there is motion even beyond the neutral centre and also matter, but it is motion and matter which our senses cannot perceive. Hence, H.P.B. says that discovering such a neutral centre is the dream of those who are trying to find perpetual motion.

H.P.B. observes that Mr. Keely's concept of a neutral centre, which is the "laya centre" of the Occultists, is regarded as "unscientific" by many. However, such a concept as explained by Keely is in line with the concepts of esoteric philosophy. Some of these occult ideas are revealed gradually when the time is ripe for them so as to prepare humanity for the beginning of the Sixth Race. Those who guard this secret mysterious knowledge are slow to part with it, because they know that these mysteries, once they fall into the hands of the selfish portion of humanity—the *Cains* of the human race—are likely to become curses rather than blessings, as they would misuse the knowledge for harming rather than benefitting humanity. And yet, people like Mr. Keely, with peculiar psychic and mental capacities, are guided and assisted in the right manner so that they are not waylaid.

H.P.B. quotes Keely as saying that "My system, in every part and detail...is based and founded on sympathetic vibration. In no other way would it be possible to awaken or develop my force, and equally impossible would it be to operate my engine upon any other principle" (*S.D.*, I, 561). In other words, the force mentioned does not require complicated machinery or pressure; it is *his own force*. It was operated by his will power or personal influence. Till the end, he did not succeed in developing a machine that could produce a force and regulate that force without the intervention of conscious or unconscious will power or personal influence. That is the reason why H.P.B. observes that the discoveries made by Keely can bring wonderful result but only when they are applied or used by him or through himself. What could bring about marvellous results was "Keely's ether" because it was produced by his own personal influence. "Any other person's ether would have remained forever

barren of results.” What he was able to produce by his will power was the force pertaining to the fifth and sixth principles of Akasa. That his personal influence was necessary was proven by the fact that only he could operate the machine. We might say that there were two forms of forces which he had been experimenting with; the first force was etheric force obtained using water or air, and the second force may be termed the psychic force obtained by using “will power” or personal influence. The nature of the second force was provided by an incident. A person watched Mr. Keely operate the machine for six months, and then he offered to operate it himself. However, when he turned the cock, nothing happened. He again watched Mr. Keely perform the operation and tried, but did not succeed. Then Keely put his hand on the shoulder of the man and asked him to try again. This time it worked. (*S.D.*, I, 561-62)

It is evident that Keely was trying to tap faculties or potencies latent in the super-physical regions of ether, and that is why H.P.B. says that “the results obtained from the fifth and the sixth planes of the etheric (or Astral) Force, *will never be permitted to serve for purposes of commerce and traffic.*” (*S.D.*, I, 562)

It was said about Keely that he was a natural-born magician. But he would remain unconscious or unaware of the full range of his powers and would be able to use only those he had discovered within himself, the reason being that he attributed these powers to a wrong source and therefore could not bring these powers into full play; moreover, it was beyond his power to pass to others that which was *a capacity inherent in his special nature*, that is to say, inherent in his psychic nature, and hence, he could not communicate the whole secret to anyone for practical purpose or use. It is like a natural-born genius in math, music, or art who never had to study to understand their craft and therefore cannot impart it to another.

H.P.B. observes that there has always been present in man “the *principle*, which can control and guide etheric vibratory force. At any rate, it exists in all those mortals whose *inner selves are primordially connected, by reason of their direct descent, with that*

*group of Dhyanic Chohans* who are called ‘*the first-born of Ether.*’ Mankind, psychically considered, is divided into various groups, each of which is connected with one of the Dhyanic groups that first formed *psychic man.*” Thus, Keely’s particular psychic temperament and mechanical genius explain how he could achieve most wonderful results. (*S.D.*, I, 559)

“What he has done is certainly quite sufficient ‘to demolish with the hammer of Science the idols of Science’—the idols of matter with the feet of clay,” writes H.P.B. It seems to refer to the fact that for generating a tremendous force, Keely did not require any mechanical means, but rather it was all based on sympathetic vibrations. Also, mechanically, he was able to get rid of a huge machine, a generator, and reduce it only to a machine of the size of a watch. In other words, it appears that Mr. Keely was able to produce a tremendous force using matter, and yet it was a form of matter not known to science, and he was able to demonstrate it experimentally, and thus, show that science, with all its discoveries, is not standing firmly. It has feet of clay or poor foundation.

However, Keely was not allowed to go beyond a certain limit because what he had unconsciously discovered was a terrible sidereal Force called *Mash Mak* by the Atlanteans. It was given the name *vril* by Bulwer Lytton in his book “The Coming Race.” It is the force which will become known and used by the coming races of mankind. In the article, “The Two Aspects of Occultism,” Mr. Judge writes that electricity produced by a dynamo is the most powerful force in nature. The nervous, physical and mental systems of man acting together can produce the same force as the force produced by the most powerful dynamo. A dynamo produces electrical energy from mechanical energy by rotating coils of copper wire. This force can be used to kill, to alter, to move and also to change any object or condition. This force, he says, is called *Vril* by Bulwer Lytton in his novel, wherein a race of powerful beings makes use of an all-permeating fluid called *Vril*, as the latent source of energy. Some of the spiritually advanced beings among them are able to master this

energy through training of their will, and as a result they find themselves in possession of an extraordinary force which can be controlled by will. Using the power of the “Vril,” they are able to heal, to change, and to destroy beings and things. The force gave them enormous destructive power so that they could destroy entire cities if necessary.

In *The Mahatma Letters*, a Master of Wisdom writes that the *Vril* mentioned in “The Coming Race” was the common property of races of humanity now extinct. He seems to refer to the gigantic humanity of the later third and fourth races. He says that *Vril* can be understood if only one understands *Akasa* with its combinations and properties. At one place, the Master says that secrets of certain forces cannot be given to anyone but the regular chela of many years’ standing through successive initiations. Mankind as a whole has to progress morally and come to a certain stage where such mysteries can be revealed to it. That will happen only towards the beginning of the Sixth Race.

This force is described as the *Sidereal force*. It must refer to astral force and must pertain to astral light or an aspect of ether which mingles with astral light. H.P.B. tells us that this force was known in India, especially to Aryan Rishis, and was part of their *Astra Vidya*, though its name cannot be given. In ancient times there were two kinds of weapons—*Shastra*, or physical weapons, and *Astra*, or extraordinary, or divine weapons that were endowed with powers by using some *mantrams*. This vibratory Force, when used according to the instructions found in the *Astra Vidya*, could reduce an army of 1,00,000 men and elephants to ashes as easily as if it were a dead rat. There is also an allegorical reference to this force in *Ramayana*, *Vishnu Purana*, etc. Thus, for instance, Sage Kapila’s glance reduced 60,000 sons of King Sagara to ashes. The esoteric works describe it as *Kapil-aksha* or “Kapila’s eye.” (*S.D.*, I, 563)

At one level, this story is about the force, the power of will, exercised through one’s glance. It is comparable to what H.P.B. describes as “evil eye” or *jettatura* in which, the animal magnetism

or magnetic fluid, charged with malicious will and hatred, is directed from one person to another and sent out with the intention of harming him. However, on p. 571 (*S.D.*, I) we are given the allegorical meaning of the story, wherein 60,000 sons of King Sagara, who were vicious and brutal, represent the personification of human passions, which were reduced to ashes by a mere glance of the sage. The “glance of the sage” represents the SELF or the highest state of purity that can be reached on earth. In another story of Maruts that represent passions and desires, H.P.B. writes that it is the *divine and steady will of Yogi* which is determined to resist temptations that destroy the passions. In other words, the “force” is very much concerned with the power of will.

In the article, “The Blessings of Publicity,” H.P.B. mentions that Professor Faraday was of the opinion that it was very unwise to acquaint the general public with certain discoveries of modern science. The article goes on to tell us about the stand taken by the manufacturer of “dynamite toys,” who was manufacturing destructive machines in the shape of oranges, hats, boats, etc., and arguing that his machines are “harmless to look at” and that the one who uses these machines to kill or murder people is criminal, not the one who manufactures them. H.P.B. says that if such explosives were in the hands of a “modern Attila,” they would reduce Europe to ashes. Attila was a brilliant military leader; he and the Huns built a vast empire by ruthless violence, and therefore were called “scourge of God.”

Just as it was extremely dangerous to make known certain discoveries of modern science to lay public, so also, it was dangerous to make known the discovery of Keely’s force, though it showed to science that there were mysteries lying behind the matter as was known to science. Certainly, such a force can be used by Psychists and Spiritualists, *i.e.*, people with psychic development. Laurence Oliphant stated that the use of this force for beneficial purposes in life will bring a new moral future for our world (*S.D.*, I, 560-61). However, H.P.B. tells us that complete discovery of this force is premature by hundreds and thousands of years.

## ON INTEGRITY

INTEGRITY means wholeness. Every part of a system works with the other parts as one whole. A machine does this. It is made up of hundreds of parts. Each part must perform its own *dharma*, but as a part of the whole. The human being is a machine of many parts. How is it to work as one whole? The Universe is a machine of many parts. How can it work as a whole? There is One Life, one Harmony, one Law. Yet there is chaos in the world of men. Only when Life is withdrawn once again from the parts into the Whole will cosmos take the place of chaos. Yet, among the many parts, some parts will have learnt how to be integrated in themselves as parts of a larger unit, as parts of the unit of the One Life. We today—*i.e.*, humanity as it is—are at the turning-point where the individual human units must either learn how to become integrated in their own nature and to become parts of the Whole or fall into disunity within themselves and with the Whole, leading to final destruction.

With this in mind, what shall we do *now*? Put simply, we have been told that our head, heart and hands must work as a unit; mind, feeling, action must be directed to one goal. The link between these three aspects, which will bring integrity, is *motive* “that on which the heart is set.” This motive may be good or it may be bad, rooted in harmony or in disharmony. Our heart may be drawn towards good, our mind plead against it, and the hands, from either lack of control or wasted effort, fail to follow the heart or the mind. What is that which *moves* all three? *Will*, spirit in action. Lack of will power means passivity, leading to stagnation.

What are the outer signs of integrity? How shall we look for it in ourselves and in others? Let us ask ourselves: Can we be trusted at all times and under all circumstances to deal with everything from the point of view of what is good for the work we have in hand, which, in theory at any rate should be our motive? Do we at times let a hint of our personal likes and dislikes, pride or vanity, sloth or overriding enthusiasm, colour our motive, our heart (love for others), our mind (clarity of understanding)?

Are we faithful *transmitters* or coldly mechanistic? Have we understood with the heart or solely with the head? Do we *act* Theosophically? Do we speak of Reincarnation and Karma and yet complain of things, people, events, life? Do we speak of Masters—and then ignore Them in our life? Do we say one thing and mean another? Do we balance pros and cons, the central pivot being our own belief? Or do we search the philosophy to find what it says? Do we say, Brotherhood is a fact; we must have unity; only personalities clash—and, saying this, do we try to alter our personality so that it does not hurt or upset or clash with the personality of another?

Integrity means that the mental recognition of brotherhood reveals itself in our feelings and actions. Integrity shows itself when our heart responds in devotion to the Masters and our mind learns and passes on Their teachings, and our actions are in accordance with what They have given out for our benefit. Integrity means that whatever comes to us, we try to understand it mentally, try to purify the heart and to perform right action, accepting all karmic precipitations gladly and taking the attitude, “This is just what I desired,” in order to learn.

To sum up, integrity means full appreciation of all things, the capacity to harmonize all things, to *listen* carefully both to the spoken word and to the unspoken feeling, and to understand others, so that our actions, feelings, words are in harmony. It means that, at all times, we take the trouble to “come to the centre” within and act according to what we honestly decide is the best we know, watching for events to show us if we were right and willing to change our attitude when we see that we were wrong. Integrity means control of speech, while heart and mind decide what we will say. It means control of actions, while we let heart and mind decide whether what we are doing is right. It means control of the heart, while we let our mind and hands adjudge our feelings. The heart may say, “I must help,” but the mind may not know how to help, and the hands may be incapable of rendering any help.

## THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE FRAGMENT ONE—XIII

“SEEK for him who is to give thee birth, in the Hall of Wisdom, the Hall which lies beyond, wherein all shadows are unknown, and where the light of truth shines with unfading glory.”

The footnote explains that the “Initiate who leads the disciple, through the Knowledge given to him to his spiritual or second birth, is called the Father, Guru or Master.” What is a spiritual rebirth? H.P.B. explains that the one striving after spiritual perfection must have *three* births: (1) physical, from his mortal parents; (2) *spiritual*, through Initiation; and (3) his final birth into the world of spirit—at death. (*Isis*, II, 565)

An egg is potentially capable of giving birth to a chick. But in its exterior, such potentiality is not evident. Man, too, is capable of becoming a God, but matter is like the shell of an egg. The chick has to break it. We have to transcend the limitations of matter to be reborn. Interestingly, in Sanskrit, *Dwijā* means twice-born and it is also the name given to all oviparous animals and birds. The “laying of the egg” marks the *first* birth, and when the chick comes out by breaking open the shell, it marks the *second* birth.

Bulwer Lytton says, in the *Strange Story*, that man’s first initiation comes in dreams. To be initiated means to be tested and tried by the *guru* (spiritual teacher) to determine if one is ready to take the next step on the Path. Sometimes the *guru* may test the courage of his disciple by letting loose a tiger on him during sleep on the astral plane. Thus, the disciple may dream of a tiger pursuing him or pouncing on him. It all happens on the subjective or astral plane. Does he get frightened, or does he show the courage and fight the tiger? Thus, without causing actual harm to the disciple, the *guru* could test his courage. Similarly, he could be tempted through a dream of a beautiful woman or lots of money, waiting to be taken, and so on. He is initiated if he passes the test.

In the Puranic allegory, Viswakarma’s daughter Sanjana

(spiritual consciousness), the wife of Surya the sun, complained to her father of the too great effulgence of her husband. Viswakarman, the divine carpenter, crucified Surya on his lathe and cut away an eighth part of his rays—creating round him a dark aureole. After that, Surya looked as though he had been crowned with dark thorns, and he became “Vikarttana,” the one who was shorn of his effulgence. Vikarttana is the type of the initiated neophyte. All these names were given to candidates who were going through trials of initiation. The candidate for initiation personifies the sun, who has to kill all his fiery passions and wear a crown of thorns before he can rise into new life and be reborn. It refers to the process in Initiation, wherein the candidate was made to look deep into his consciousness and face the whole of his lower nature without getting disturbed. Candidates were literally made to sit, all alone, in a dark room. By cutting off the sun’s rays, Viswakarman created similar darkness. This is equivalent to a descent into lower worlds or Hades, wherein the candidate touches the lowest levels of his consciousness. After facing and purifying it, he rises with a fully purified consciousness.

But there is a series of initiations in the life of a disciple till he comes to the stage of final Initiation, when he comes face to face with the Dhyani Buddha, the head of the hierarchy to which he belongs.

It is only natural that we desire contact with the Masters on the physical plane, but it is far more important to *feel* Them inwardly. One should not go searching for the Master because “When the pupil is ready, the Master will appear.” How shall we become ready? We must contact the Master on the spiritual plane by rising to Their level and not by dragging Them down to our level. The Master can be met in the “Hall of Wisdom” or in the dreamless sleep (*Sushupti*) state, when our consciousness is free from the body and the senses as also from the *kamic* (passions and desires) nature.

In *Sushupti*, we exist as our true individuality, unhindered by personality. So the *Upanishads* say that in the deep sleep state, “the

father is father no more, nor the mother, a mother.” Even the most hardened criminal passes through this state of dreamless sleep. Mr. Judge calls it a great spiritual reservoir “by means of which the momentum toward evil living is held in check.” In this state, our ego acts on its own plane and is fully conscious and omniscient.

Ordinary people return from deep sleep without recollection of experience of any kind. Hence, the importance of preparing for sleep, living a morally pure life and performing every task with complete concentration during the waking state. The study of the nature and powers of the Masters helps us create a clear channel, which in turn enables us to bring back the memory of activities of our higher nature in the dreamless sleep state. The dwelling on the real nature and powers of the Masters enables us to build a new centre of consciousness. “It is the spiritual Heart, and that *alone* which can function in the Hall of Wisdom. If that does not function, we plunge into *Sushupti* and emerge rested and refreshed but not *energized* and *enlightened*,” writes Shri B. P. Wadia.

In a sense, we can look upon the entire universe in the form of Guru, because the real Guru is the Seventh principle centred in the Sixth, *i.e.*, the divine nature in man or the Krishna within, which is present everywhere. *Srimad Bhagavatam* mentions that Krishna is in each human being as fire is in the wood, but to be able to draw out the fire, the wood must be dry. So also, unless each individual becomes like dry wood, free from the moisture of personal and human feelings and attachments, gradually expanding and universalizing his love and care, he cannot contact the Guru within. If you want to know us, then know our philosophy; if you want to serve us, then serve our humanity, said one of the Masters.

**“That which is uncreate abides in thee, Disciple, as it abides in that Hall. If thou would’st reach it and blend the two, thou must divest thyself of thy dark garments of illusion. Stifle the voice of flesh, allow no image of the senses to get between its light and thine, that thus the twain may blend in one.”**

When one reaches the Third Hall of *Sushupti*, one touches the

hem of the garment and meets one's real father. This is the Absolute, the Uncreate, the Ray of which is in every one of us. In Theosophy, the Absolute or *Parabrahm* is taken to be uncreate—a beginningless and endless Reality. Shankara taught that *Jivatma* is not separate from *Paramatma* or One Reality. The Higher Self or *Atman* is like a ray of the sun, which may *appear* separate but cannot be detached from the Sun. Krishna says: "I am the Ego which is seated in the hearts of all beings." This Spirit in the body is the Perceiver, something which itself remains unchanged but perceives all the changes. Our body, our likes and dislikes, all change, but the power to do, to know, to feel—all these come from IT. So, the power to make, to unmake and to re-make—which are powers of divinity—are all within us.

To realize the presence of the *Atman* or Divinity, within us, and to merge the Higher Self, the Ray, in the *Parabrahm*, we must be able to get rid of all kinds of illusion, which arise from false identification. We identify ourselves with the ever-changing perishable body, 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. We were likewise attached to other forms and conditions in the past, and in the future will be attached to another set of forms and conditions. But through all these conditions and forms, which are changing continually, there is that in us, the "we," which has remained unchanged and unchanging. "If we can grasp this idea and hold to it, we will have taken the first step towards right knowledge and freedom," writes Mr. Crosbie (*Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita*, pp. 189-90). Mr. Judge suggests the following meditation: "Here is advice given by many Adepts: every day and as often as you can, and on going to sleep and as you wake—think, think, think, on the truth that you are not body, brain, or astral man, but that you are THAT, and 'THAT' is the Supreme Soul....By persistence in this, by submitting your daily thoughts each night to

the judgement of your Higher Self, you will at last gain light.” (*Letters That Have Helped Me*)

To achieve this, we are asked to stifle the voice of flesh and “allow no image of the senses to get between its light and thine.” To go on satisfying one’s desires is not good because the voice of flesh is able to report the feelings of only first sensations, but it cannot tell you the effect if the sensation is continued. Take, for example, Chinese water torture, wherein a person is given to drink glass after glass of water. He enjoys the first glass, and the joyful sensation gradually decreases with every glass, and after a few glasses, it is painful rather than joyful. We try to derive pleasure out of sensations. *Light on the Path* says: “In sensation no permanent home can be found, because change is the law of this vibratory existence. That fact is the first one that must be learned by the disciple. It is useless to pause and weep for a scene in a kaleidoscope which has passed.” Things and pleasures of the world are as fleeting as the scene or pattern formed in a kaleidoscope. In fact, the law of diminishing returns seems to govern the realm of pleasures. We do not derive the same pleasure the second time and still less the third time, and so on.

There are reports of senses to which values are added and attributes given by us. For example, when a boy says that the girl is beautiful, he unconsciously even adds that she is kind, intelligent, sincere, and so on. Thus, what is reported by senses in themselves may be true, but to that is added our preconceived ideas, notions, prejudices, likes and dislikes and therefore the result is not the true picture of the thing as it is. There are certain magnetic personalities like actors, models, etc. And through the roles they play, an image is created which sticks to the mind, and people then evaluate them from the standpoint of the image they have of them.

*(To be continued)*

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ALL that unites with the universal is virtue. All that separates is sin.

—VIVEKANANDA

## WHY NO SATISFACTION?

PERHAPS, unwittingly, Mick Jagger of the Rolling Stones placed his finger on the nub of the most salient philosophical conundrums of our time with these immortal words, “I can’t get no satisfaction.” In our consumeristic modern age, most of us motivate ourselves with the premise that once we obtain the object of our pursuit, we will be satisfied. We often hear people say, “once I hit this net-worth, I will be done” or “once I buy this house, I will be satisfied.” Well, Mick Jagger, the rock star, had copious amounts of everything materially desirable and yet admitted to finding no satisfaction in them. In light of this, we cannot deceive ourselves anymore. We either have to accept that what we are pursuing is not satisfaction or stop and ask what actually gives satisfaction?

Here, the connotation associated with the word “satisfaction” is important as contrasted against pleasure or momentary happiness. That which we denominate pleasure is largely mediated by a neurotransmitter called dopamine and its associated dopaminergic system. It is the one and only motivation and reward circuitry in our physiology which drives all actions associated with our primal instincts of self-preservation, procreation and self-assertion. The bane of technology is our ever-increasing ability to artificially stimulate this system with minimal effort. Processed foods with high sugar content, ubiquitous pornography on the internet and social media algorithms that serve as self-validating echo-chambers, all hijack and artificially stimulate this system. However, once dopamine peaks, it has a very short half-life of about two minutes. After which it drops precipitously and stays below baseline for a prolonged period of time. This is what we feel as withdrawal such as the sugar crash that inevitably follows a sugar high. To recover from this, we tend to engage in more pleasure-seeking activities. However, with constant stimulation, our bodies build resistance to dopamine by downregulating its receptors, thus needing more dopamine to feel the same pleasure, hence creating a cycle of addiction. On the other

hand, a sense of contentment and satisfaction is mediated by the neurotransmitter called serotonin. While dopamine is excitatory, serotonin is inhibitory. So, while the brain needs to defend against over-excitation and hence cell death by downregulating dopamine receptors, the same risks don't exist for serotonin. Meaning, there is such a thing as too much pleasure or satiety but there is no such thing as too much satisfaction. Analogously, while pleasure is short-lived and is inevitably followed by pain, contentment and satisfaction can be a perpetual state of mind. Now, continuing to use the analogy of neuroscience, let's examine how one may achieve an abiding satisfaction in life.

During waking consciousness, we are always operating in either one of two predominant brain networks called the Task-Positive Network (TPN) or the Default Mode Network (DMN). TPN is active during goal-oriented activity or executive function when we are working towards a fixed goal, while DMN is active when we are idly thinking about ourselves. DMN is the “me” centre of the brain and is especially active when one ruminates about oneself, one's future or re-adjudicate decisions made in the past. Depression is characterized by a persistent activity of DMN. Neurologically, there is no difference between obsessing about oneself and being depressed. In a healthy brain, when TPN is active, DMN is switched-off. When one is deeply engaged in a creative pursuit and forgets everything other than the task at hand, sometimes, one slips into what is called the Flow State. This state is described as a peak experience and is accompanied by a deep sense of satisfaction. So, neuroscience is telling us that when we forget ourselves in concerted work, done for its own sake and not for its results, then we achieve deep states of satisfaction. Isn't this essentially Karma Yoga spoken of in the *Bhagavad-Gita*?

In the *Key to Theosophy*, H.P.B. says, “our constant failure to find any permanent satisfaction in life which would meet the wants of our higher nature, shows us plainly that those wants can be met only on their own plane, to wit—the spiritual.” We are spiritual

beings, delusionally looking for satisfaction in material possessions. When one is starved of food, one may temporarily distract oneself from hunger by such momentary pleasures as driving a race car. But eventually, the hungry man will abandon such distractions in disgust and fervently go in search of food. Dissatisfaction in life is essentially soul-hunger—the yearning of our spiritual nature to regain and realize its identity with the Universal Over-Soul. Hence, everything that confines us more to the separative “me” centre or the activation of DMN, leads to depression and dissatisfaction. The most reliable way to turn-off DMN is to continually engage the TPN. But if we execute tasks with a preferred outcome in view, then DMN is still intermittently activated because it is the “me” centre or the lower-personality that is expressing and reinforcing the preference. To be happy and satisfied, one has to completely remove the personal idea from action and strive selflessly for the upliftment of his fellow men. Such sacrificial actions are called *Yajna* wherein the selfish, personal idea is burnt in the fire of dispassion and discrimination or *Vairagya* and *Jnana*. Mr. Judge writes:

“We must by means of this mental devotion to the divine, which means abnegation of all the rest, dismiss all results of our actions. It is not ours to say what shall be the result of an action; the Law will bring about a result much better, perhaps, than we had imagined. If the results, if the passing daily circumstances, are not those we expected, then by means of devotion we accept them as just what the Law intended. But if we fix our desire on accomplishing even a seeming good result, we are bound by that desire, no matter whether our wish is accomplished or not.” (*Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita*, pp. 68-69)

To be in an abiding state of satisfaction, one has to engage in *Nitya Yajna* or perpetual sacrifice. We can begin on this *Abhyasa* or practice with a simple thought of gratitude. We, as spiritual entities, are here on earth to gain experiences and through that achieve emancipation or redemption of spirit through flesh. This journey is enabled by our bodily vehicles which are formed of infinitesimal

lives called elementals or *Bhuta Ganas*. This outer covering was built on a form provided to us by the Lunar *Pitris* and the indwelling mind by the Solar *Pitris* which makes us uniquely human. The *Deva Ganas* provide us with many sheaths through which our Souls come in contact with the phenomenal world. But just so this free-willed entity called Man isn't led astray, many *Rishis* and *Avataras* have descended and given us perfect Law. And finally, it is through the sacrifice of innumerable *Manushyas* or human-beings that we have come into being and have access to food, clothing and shelter without us having to grow, stitch and build individually. Living in perpetual gratitude to these five classes of beings and sacrificing for their spiritual upliftment is the *Pancha Yajna* enjoined by Manu. All these classes of beings are either spiritually regenerated or debased by our thought, word and deed. This intimate interconnectedness or Universal Brotherhood is a fact in nature. Hence, to live in perpetual fulfilment of duties suited to our current situation in life, as a sacrificial offering to *Bhagavan* who is the synthesis of the above five classes of beings, is the only way to achieve lasting satisfaction.

It is said that Mick Jagger conceived of the lyrics for "I can't get no satisfaction" in a dream, wherein the outer personality is temporarily suspended and the Real-Self is able to express itself more fully. This yearning of the Real-Self cannot be satisfied by any worldly possessions because it is not of this world. We are here for a purpose and it is only the fulfilment of that purpose which gives satisfaction. In the Second Chapter of the *Bhagavad-Gita* we see the words, *atmani eva atmana usotoaho* or "satisfied in the Self, through the self," meaning Self can only find satisfaction in itself. And this Self is not separative but universal and hence we can only reach it through identification with and service to ALL in which this Self is manifested. We don't need to hack neurochemistry to find satisfaction. We simply need to live in accordance with the dictates of our Real-Self which is *Yajna Purusha* or the embodiment of Sacrifice.

## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Renunciation, as practiced in Buddhism, Hinduism, and Jainism, indicates abandoning the pursuit of material comforts for the sake of achieving Enlightenment, Liberation, or *Kevala Jnana*, respectively. In Buddhism, “renunciation” implies “giving up the world and leading a holy life.” The concept of renunciation is not regarded highly by our modern society, because the spiritual attitude that is required to be cultivated is in direct opposition to materialism which has dominated Western culture for the last two decades. Renunciation has always been and will be indispensable to genuine spiritual quest, and hence the necessity to drive away fear and clear the confusion that has arisen due to misunderstanding of this term. For instance, in Hinduism, Renunciation or *Sanyasa*, denotes “the practice of renouncing the worldly life to become a homeless wandering mendicant, while *sanyasin* refers to an individual who adopts this lifestyle.”

The mystical path calls for a complete revolution in consciousness that reveals a Unity that underlies and transcends all apparent distinctions. We are required to abandon the understanding that we are a separate “self” in a world of individual objects. When one becomes a nun, a monk or a wandering mendicant, renouncing all the worldly possessions and disengaging from normal social relations, he becomes an “external renunciate,” and it may help him to understand and develop a certain amount of detachment and surrender. “Such external renunciation is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for attaining Gnosis.” True renunciation is an inner operation. Ramana Maharshi observes that our real problems do not arise from the outer conditions of our lives but have their roots in the deluded thoughts produced by our own egos. We take all that our egos tell us about ourselves and the world to be true. “Inner renunciation, then, begins with a rejection of those internal messages and commands that come from the ego and are predicated on a false perception of the ‘self’ and ‘world.’”

The first step is to cultivate an awareness of one's own internal thought-processes. This can be achieved by taking up meditation practices. A point comes when the ego disappears and the Self or *Atman* reveals itself, and Gnosis dawns. "Ultimately, it is impossible to renounce oneself and the world because no such 'self' or 'world' really exists—which, of course, is precisely what must be Realised," writes B. L. Razdan. In the words of Yogananda, "The deeper the realization of a man, the more he influences the whole universe by his subtle spiritual vibrations, and the less he himself is affected by the phenomenal flux." (*Bhavan's Journal*, January 16-31, 2026)

The term *Sannyas* or renunciation may mean merely external renunciation or *tyaga*, in which one renounces worldly objects such as family, marriage, wealth, and pleasure of life, but is not completely detached from worldly interests. True renunciation is internal renunciation or *Vairagya*, wherein the worldly objects are not necessarily renounced but only the *attachment* to the worldly objects is renounced. *Vairagya* is detachment, dispassion or disconnection of mind and heart from the objects of the world.

The discipline of monastic life or life of *ashram* is useful but it is likely that one only *suppresses* the desires and attachments by the strong effort of will without trying to eradicate them from the roots. Virtues are developed by remaining away from temptations of sex, food, comforts of life. As a result, at the first contact with the pleasures and temptations of the material world, the person slips. John Milton has said, "I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue [virtue developed within four walls of monastery], unexercised and unbreathed...."

True renunciation does not mean suppression or developing aversion for the material objects. By the application of *viveka* (spiritual discrimination or discernment) to life experience, the aspirant gradually develops attraction for the inner spiritual life, and attachments fall away naturally. *Vivekachudamani* says that *Vairagya* and *Bodha* (true understanding) are two means, like the two wings of a bird. The one desiring liberation must be fully equipped, not

only with dispassion for things mundane, but also with the cultivation of *Bodha* or constant attunement to real nature. In other words, there must be gradual purification of the desire nature.

The Fifth Chapter of the *Gita* is entitled *Karma-Sannyasa* Yoga, or “Devotion by means of Renunciation of Action.” Many have taken this to mean complete renunciation of action outwardly. Mr. Judge remarks that no person will be able to renounce the world until he has learnt the right performance of action. By perfect performance of action through devotion, we are fitted for the next stage of *renunciation of action*, which is renouncing attachment to the results of action, and acting as a mere instrument of the divine. “The character of the man himself inwardly is the real test. No matter how many times during countless births he has renounced the world, if his inner nature has not renounced, he will be the same man during the entire period, and whenever, in any one of his ascetic lives, the new, the appropriate temptation or circumstance arises, he will fall from his high outward asceticism.” (*Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita*, pp. 118-19)

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If we want to be free from fear and tension, we should learn to focus all our energy and attention on the present moment. It is said that a movie magnate had his own way of dealing with his fears about the future. He decided that every Wednesday would be his worrying day. He would write down on a piece of paper whenever any thought of future or fear for the future entered his mind, and then forget all about it. When he opened the box on Wednesday, he would find that many of his worries and fears had been dissolved by then! In the case of an old lady, worrying constantly about the future had become an inseparable part of her life, so that if she did not worry, she would begin to feel bad! It has been said, “A day of worry is more exhausting than a day of work.” Truly, fear, stress and worry can be fatal.

Charles Kingsley wrote: “Be not anxious about tomorrow. Do

today's duty, fight today's temptations, and do not weaken and distract yourself by looking forward to things which are yet to occur. You cannot see them, and you would not understand them if you saw them!" It appears that worrying about the future is a waste of mental and emotional energy, because "it has been proven in most cases that over 99 per cent of the things people worry about never actually happen!" In the journey of life, "we must shut out the past with all its errors and failures. Equally, we must also shut out the unborn future so that we may live in the present."

In his autobiography, Martin Luther writes about the little robin in his garden that he calls the "preacher" that he loved and admired the most. Whenever crumbs were put upon the windowsill, this bird would eat as much as would satisfy his need and then sit upon a branch of a nearby tree and "sing his carols of praise and gratitude" to God and then tuck his little head under his wing and fall asleep, "leaving tomorrow to look after itself. He is the best preacher I have on earth." Can we not walk with God today and trust Him for the morrow?" writes Dada J. P. Vaswani. (*East and West Series*, May 2022)

Modern man lives in a state of perpetual anxiety. It has become an inseparable part of our existence. We are anxious about trivialities. Very often we are anxious about things that have not yet happened. Why cross the bridge even before we have arrived at it? Anxiety shows our lack of faith in the law of Karma. We are required to do the best that the circumstances demand and leave the results to the law. Can we change the course of the law by being anxious? Neither our entreaties nor our anxieties can move the Karmic balance by even a hair's breadth. Mr. Judge observes that our anxiety works as an occult obstacle, hindering the course of action under Karma. His advice is to trust the law and accept the results—favourable or unfavourable. The "occult obstacle" might mean the barrier caused by our own thoughts.

When we are anxious, we seem to assert, in a subtle way, our own will. We want things to happen as we desired. By being

anxious, we mar our chances of receiving help from our divine nature. Instead, if we learn to accept that whatever happens is for the best, we will never have any need to be anxious. Sometimes, apparently adverse-looking circumstances or happenings work to our advantage or at least prove educative for the soul. Instead of feeling anxious about the troubles to come, we can utilize the time in preparing ourselves to deal with the future calamities—should they arise. True detachment helps us develop *concern*. Peace Pilgrim suggests that relinquishment of negative feelings is essential for acquiring peace. She writes: “One negative feeling which the nicest people still experience...is *worry*. Worry is not concern, which would motivate you to do everything possible in a situation. Worry is a useless mulling over of things we cannot change.” She mentions that instead of agonizing over the past or being apprehensive over the future, we must learn to live in the present.

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The interpretation of marriage has changed over the period of time. There was a time when elders in the family conveyed the idea of marriage to their daughters as soon as they reached puberty. “The primary purpose of marriage was to ensure social security for women and children, to create alliances between families to form stable units, and to secure heirs, especially sons, to inherit property.” To begin with, marriage was regarded as a social institution, but in scriptures it was considered to be a holy institution. There are Bible verses that describe marriage as a covenant, a sacred agreement before God. The Rig Veda has hymns which describe marriage as a spiritual commitment.

“However, over the years, how we look at marriages has changed. As societies become more egalitarian, traditional ideas of marriage are being thrown out the window....Same-sex marriages and live-in relationships added different perspectives to the institution of marriage.” In the last few decades, we find that more women are opting to stay single. Men continue to expect women to be employed and also take care of the house and children.

When viewed from the spiritual angle, a question may arise, “Is it necessary to go through the *Grihastha Ashrama* phase, which is supposed to help one find a balance between arth, kaam, moksha and dharm, for individual spiritual growth?” Some people argue that one can attain the state of equanimity by remaining single or also by being in live-in relationship. However, among these changing views, the central idea of a mutually beneficent partnership between a man and a woman has by and large remained unchanged. Only our view of marriage as an institution has changed, writes Ranjeni A. Singh, (*The Speaking Tree, The Times of India*, December 10, 2025)

H.P.B. says that Theosophy does not preach against marriage. A person who still desires worldly life and is ready to “take the risks of that lottery where there are so many more blanks than prizes” should marry and settle down, for marriage is the only remedy against immorality. It is only when a person reaches a high stage in his spiritual development, when he has no worldly desires, and is ready for practical occultism, which requires complete purity of motive and purity of one’s magnetism, that celibacy or *brahmacharya*, in thought and deed, is absolutely necessary. Chastity is the means whereby vital energy or *Prana* can be conserved and directed towards the higher planes of consciousness.

Shri B. P. Wadia points out that in the married life of a *Grihastha*, man and woman must try to realize that true union is the contact of mind with mind, of heart with heart, of soul with soul—where the wife regards the husband, not as a possession but as a partner, where the husband treats his wife not as his personal property but as a companion, and where both help each other to tread the Path of Nobility. Marriage is the union of two souls for the purpose of propagating of the species, but if in its place, there is only a union of male and female bodies, then marriage becomes merely a brutal act, which lowers man and woman to a level lower than that of animals.

Marriage provides the foundation for building of the home. Mr. Judge writes that when a suitable mate is found, a man should marry and settle down as a householder, bringing up a family with right

views and high purpose. He contributes a service to humanity, who leaves behind children that can emulate his altruistic life. The alchemical process of transforming animal man to human and then to divine takes place, to a considerable extent, in the crucible called Home; its building begins when two people marry and settle down. Their natures may be compatible or vastly different. But herein is the great opportunity to learn adjustment and co-operation. Great lessons of adaptability could be learnt. Taking advantage of the closeness of the relationship, each could positively influence the character of the other.

As the article “On Philosophical Anarchism” (*The Theosophical Movement*, September 1958) suggests, family, tribe, community, nation, etc., are all playgrounds for the unfoldment of the individual. Each of these institutions has certain virtues that the individual, passing through it, must acquire. He, as a soul, repeatedly takes birth in that environment till he acquires the virtues afforded by that institution. All the time the individual is learning how to cooperate—in the family with a few, in the tribe with a few more, as a member of a nation with many, and finally as a human being, with all. But slowly, as he has finished taking the necessary experience and imbibed the necessary virtues afforded by the institution, he begins to extricate himself. For instance, the inclination to marry and settle down would be less strong, when lessons of family life are learnt, and there would be a genuine desire to practice celibacy.

It is in the householder state that men and women have the opportunity to transmute creative energy into creative Will of divine wisdom. Thus:

“That state will return to it and to the world at large, when the latter shall discover and really appreciate the truths which underlie this vast problem of sex. It will be like ‘the light that never shone on sea or land’ . . . . That light will lead on and up to the *true spiritual intuition*. Then . . . “the world will have a race of *Buddhas and Christs*, for the world will have discovered that individuals *have it in their own powers to procreate Buddha-like children—or demons.*” (S.D., II, 415)