

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

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EXAMINING OUR MOTIVES

PEACE PILGRIM, who spread the message of “peace,” emphasized “purification” to be one of the steps towards inner peace. She suggests that besides purification of body, thoughts and desires, there is also the need for purification of *motives*. We might ask ourselves before performing any action if we are doing it out of greed, or with the motive of self-glorification. It is not easy to desist from doing such actions. Also, if we examine closely, we find that most of the time we have mixed motives. There are only a few occasions when we are prompted to act wholly from bad motive. Even a businessman has mixed motives—he makes money, but he also supports his family and might contribute towards welfare of his community. You will not find inner peace, if your motive is to get peace for yourself. Your motive must be of *service*. She met a man who was a good architect, and she found that he was doing the right work with wrong motive. His motive was to make a lot of money and keep ahead of the Joneses. When he fell ill due to overwork, Peace Pilgrim told him to do little work *just for service*, and she spoke to him of the joy of service. She knew that once he experienced the joy of service, he would never go back to his old ways. After a few years, when she met him again, he was a changed person. She found that he was then drawing plans so as to make them fit the budget of the people. His motive, it could be seen, was to be of service, and as a result, more people were coming to him

for home designs. She writes, “I have met a few people who had to change their jobs in order to change their lives, but I have met many more people who merely had to change their motive to *service* in order to change their lives.”

In our quest for knowledge, and as we aspire to live the higher life it is well, from time to time, to assert to ourselves what our motives are. 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.

When there arises a desire or aspiration to live the spiritual life or enter into the study of occultism we should ask ourselves, “Why am I thus aspiring?” The ostensible motive is very often only a façade beneath which the real motive is hidden. If we carefully examine we shall find that even in the formulation of noble motive there is a series of progressive awakenings. There are people who come to Theosophy because they are drawn to a particular speaker or a person. More often than not, the motive behind our spiritual pursuits is an ambition to acquire fame and to wield power and influence. There is also the desire to meet the Masters. Still more common is the underlying motive to achieve *moksha*, freedom from birth and death, and consequent freedom from suffering. It is very seldom that one begins to walk the path with the lofty motive of serving humanity. We are warned, “The disciple who undertakes the task, secretly hoping for fame or success, to appear as a teacher and apostle before the world, fails even before his task is attempted, and his hidden hypocrisy poisons his own soul, and the souls of those he touches.” (*Light on the Path*, p. 68)

The resolve to serve humanity is the force which brings to a person the opportunity to walk the Path of discipleship. For those

who come to Theosophy, secretly hoping to acquire occult knowledge and powers, or with the desire to contact the Masters, a Master of Wisdom has this to say:

It is he alone who has the love of humanity at heart, who is capable of grasping thoroughly the idea of a regenerating practical Brotherhood who is entitled to the possession of our secrets. Such a man—will never misuse his powers, as there will be no fear that he should turn them to selfish ends. A man who places not the good of mankind above his own good is not worthy of becoming our *chela*—he is not worthy of becoming higher in knowledge than his neighbour.

We are asked to examine our motive for seeking this knowledge; whether it is for helping humanity or to benefit and gain something for ourselves alone. This motive will bring its own consequences. Dire are the consequences for the one who dabbles in practical occultism without necessary purification or with selfish motive. Therefore, we are asked to examine our motive to ensure that our motive is to become the better able to help and teach others. But, as *Light of Asia* puts it: “Nothing endures, fair virtues waste with time, foul sins grow purged thereby.” Our motive may undergo change, and therefore it is necessary to continue the examination of our motive. We may have started with pure motive, but as we hear other people speaking of their spiritual progress and acquirement of powers, we may desire to acquire similar powers ourselves. Through daily self-examination we can become aware if we are living up to our motive or not. If not, then we may take remedial steps.

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. We have to formulate to ourselves the highest motive.

This can be done by meditation and practice. The Buddha was motivated to search for the cause of human misery when he saw a sick man, an old man and a dead man. The first step in true Magic is devotion to the interests of others. In that we shall have the opportunity to test the strength and purity of our motives in many ways and at many times. Mr. Judge writes: “Let your aim be to find God; your motive, to know yourself for the sake of Theosophia and humanity....If you desire to help humanity, then you possess the true motive. If you use your will in this cause, wisdom, peace and all the powers will be given.”

Moreover, good motive implies good intention, and a Master of Wisdom has said that motive is like the attenuated atmospheric moisture, it can be used as steam or hydraulic power, if it is concentrated and applied. The practical value of motive is best seen, when it takes the form of deeds.

It is a very common experience in the life of a sincere aspirant that even when he performed the act with good and pure motive, it resulted in blunder. Between the motive and the actual action something goes wrong. When we learn to judge our motive in the light of the actual results of our deeds, we are often puzzled, at times horrified; for where we intended good to result, somehow we find evil to have precipitated. It may be because we assume our motives to be always right and righteous, which they are not. We need knowledge to ascertain the nature of our motives. We also need knowledge for the performance of action in conformity with the right motive. For instance, in case of a street accident, by the time the person is reached to the hospital, we may take some steps to relieve his pain, only to find that in the absence of proper knowledge we have caused harm, instead of good. “Good motive may save the moral character, but it does not ensure those thoughts and deeds which make for the highest good of humanity. Good motive without knowledge makes sorry work sometimes. All down the ages there is a record of good motive, but power and zeal misused, for want of knowledge,” writes Mr. Crosbie.

In the article, *Let Every Man Prove His Own Work*, H.P.B. shows that philanthropists who sought to make people happy by bettering their physical conditions or external environment—by building homes, starting soup kitchens, etc.—were ultimately disappointed. Those who had spent their lives in doing such works confessed that, “as a matter of fact, misery cannot be relieved. It is a vital element in human nature, and is as necessary to some lives as pleasure is to others...that misery is not just endurable, but agreeable to many who endure it.” For instance, a woman who worked all her life for the amelioration of prostitutes, confessed in the end that it was not possible to better the conditions of those girls, because they seemed to “love the very state which wealthy people may call misery.” Even today, we find that when blankets are given to the poor during winter, they sell them off. At times proper houses are built for them and they sell those and go back to living in their huts. Mme. Blavatsky advises to exercise discrimination even in helping others. She says, “It takes a very wise man to do good works without the danger of doing incalculable harm.”

How does the Law of Karma judge our actions? Law of Karma is described as being just and merciful. While bringing back the consequences of our good and evil actions, the law takes into account the motive with which the action was performed, the inner state of the person and also his degree of development. Every action has a soul and a body—the inner feeling and the outer performance. The motive with which the action is performed constitutes the soul of the action. A spiritual aspirant has to be ever careful to look at the inner motive and not judge the outer deed. One may give away millions of rupees in charity, but if the same is done with the intention of earning name and fame, the act will fail to benefit his real character in the least. There is a difference in the karmic merit won by a person giving charity for earning name and fame, and another person with no such ulterior motive. When a mother, who wants her child to grow up to be an upright and honest person, is severe with him, the law of Karma takes into account her “good motive,” while meting

out karmic consequences for her severity. It is motive, and motive alone, which draws a line between White and Black Magic. Occult power brings with it unknown and unmeasured responsibility.

The motive may be twofold—internal, as seeking the formation of noble and God-like character; external, as effecting benefit to others. Both may combine, the one producing a sympathetic nature, the other a useful life. From these, good Karma must arise *naturally*, and then we are not *seeking* to create good Karma. The desire for good Karma is also a desire for some Karma, whereas one has to become Karmaless.

Good life produces good Karma, and good motive produces good life. Good motive springs from true conception and a strong aspiration. We first see the validity and beauty of spiritual truth; then we desire to assimilate and exemplify it; from this double experience of the soul comes the motive towards good, which is bereft of desire for reward, happiness or self-aggrandizement in any form. What sustains such motive is the feeling of richness which arises out of such spiritual attainments, as opposed to any other attainments. The other force that helps in the sustaining the motive is the formation of the habit of offering all actions, even the trifling, as voluntary sacrifices, *i.e.*, performance of the smallest of actions without expectation of reward or benefit. We are to concern ourselves with the quality of actions and not with the results, writes Mr. Judge. “Let, then, the motive for action be in the action itself, and not in the event. Do not be incited to actions by the hope of their reward, nor let thy life be spent in inaction. Firmly persisting in Yoga, perform thy duty, O Dhananjaya, and laying aside all desire for any benefit to thyself from action, make the event equal to thee, whether it be success or failure. Equal-mindedness is called Yoga,” says Shri Krishna in the *Gita*.

STORIES FROM THE MAHABHARATA

WHEN Yudhishtira asked Bhishma what one’s attitude should be towards someone who asked for protection, and what kind of reward was received by him who looked after such a suppliant, Bhishma told him the following old story:

Once there lived a wicked, cruel man of fierce mien who made his livelihood by catching birds and selling their meat. He was not a good man in any respect and therefore had no friends, for no one wanted to be friends with someone who led a cruel life.

One day while he was wandering throughout the forest intent on his business, a big storm arose; the wind blew fiercely and the rain fell in torrents, flooding the earth. This frightened the fowler very much and, trembling with cold, he tried to seek some place that was not flooded. But he could not find any such spot for a long time. Everywhere he saw birds and animals falling to the ground and dying, such was the force of the storm. Those that found high spots that were not under water, escaped. At last the fowler felt his limbs becoming so stiff by reason of the cold that he could neither stop where he was nor go any further.

While in this state he noticed a female pigeon lying on the ground, stiff with cold. Instead of feeling sorry for her since she was in the same plight that he was, his cruel nature made him pick her up and place her in his cage. Then, looking around, he saw a large tree on which many birds were taking refuge. It seemed to have been placed there to give comfort and shelter to all who needed it. He walked towards it to take shelter there for the night, as it was getting dark and he was far from his home.

The storm passed and the night sky became so clear and spangled with myriads of stars that it looked like a magnificent lake covered with full-blown lilies, and the fowler happily settled down to rest. But first, bowing down to the tree with joined hands he addressed it saying, “I am a suppliant for shelter unto all the deities that have this tree for their resort.”

Now it so happened that it was in the branches of this very tree that the pigeon he had caught had lived with her husband. When night came and his wife did not return home, the male pigeon began to worry. Perhaps, he said, she had been lost in the fierce storm. If so, what would he do without her? She had been so excellent a wife, of righteous ways and always making him happy, that without her he would be desolate.

The female pigeon in the cage underneath the tree heard all this and was very happy that her husband spoke so well of her. She wondered what she could do to help him. Then she thought of the fowler and knowing of the obligation to look after a suppliant for protection she called to her husband and asked him to minister to the needs of her captor who was cold and hungry.

When the male pigeon heard these words he joyfully welcomed the fowler, for he too knew that hospitality ought to be extended even to an enemy if the latter came to one's home. A tree does not withdraw its shade from the man who comes to cut it down, and anyone who asks for shelter should be given it. Therefore he asked the fowler what he could do for him.

The man said he was stiff with cold and would like something that would give him warmth. Speedily the pigeon flew off to find some leaves which had remained dry in spite of the storm, and bringing them back with him, made a pile of them. Then, taking one leaf in his beak, he flew away again to a place where fire was kept and, lighting the leaf, returned with it and set the pile of leaves alight. Immediately the fowler began to be aware of his next need, which was food, and he asked the pigeon to bring him something to eat. Living in the woods, the pigeon said, he did not keep any stores of food; he only gathered what was needed every day, and so did not see how he could help the fowler appease his hunger. Having said this, he felt ashamed for not being able to help his guest. Soon, however, his mind became clear and he remembered that he could sacrifice himself and feed the fowler with his own flesh. Immediately he made another fire of dry leaves and when it began to blaze he

walked around it three times with a smile on his face and then stepped into the flames.

Seeing this great sacrifice, something in the fowler awoke and he was filled with compassion. He realized with a shock that he was evil and cruel and mean, and that his sins would bring untold misery to him. He saw that he had taken up an unworthy occupation, catching and killing birds for his own livelihood, while this pigeon had sacrificed his own life for another, and that too his enemy. So doing, he had read him a grave lesson. He vowed to himself that henceforth he would deny every comfort to his body and live a life of righteousness and mortification.

Throwing away his staff, his sharp-pointed iron-stick, his nets and straps and his iron cage, and setting free the female pigeon, he went away to live the life of penance.

The poor female pigeon had seen all that had happened and was overcome with grief. She felt that she could not live without her husband, and so she, too, entered the fire and was burnt.

The male pigeon, the story goes, accompanied by his devoted wife, had his reward in the after-life for his meritorious action. Joy and peace surrounded them.

Having made his resolve, the fowler lived a life of great austerity, and in time he was cleansed of all his sins and attained to high success. He, too, earned a meritorious end by his righteous acts.

Thus, Bhishma pointed out, the protection of one who appeals for help is truly an act of merit. Also, as the story teaches, there is no path higher than that of duty and self-sacrifice. Not only does it help oneself but also helps another, by the force of example, to give up his evil ways. Even the most wicked among the men can change his course of life if he resolves righteously.

THE true worth of a man is to be measured by the objects he pursues.

—MARCUS AURELIUS

STUDIES IN THE DHAMMAPADA

THE PLEASANT—I

THE CHAPTER is called *Piyavaggo* or “The Pleasant.” The canto is not about true Happiness, the unconditional joy or the bliss of Nirvana experienced by the enlightened man. *Piya* or *Priya* refers to that which is pleasant, as against that which is unpleasant. *Priya* is thus opposite of that which is *apriya*, unpleasant; hence it has a power to bind the man through attachment. This does not mean that the spiritual aspirant has to go around with a solemn face and refuse to enjoy innocent pleasures of life; he has to rise above the pleasant and also the unpleasant, in short, become detached.

In an article, “Joy Beyond Pleasure,” Shri B. P. Wadia writes that the highest attribute of Deity is called *Ananda*—bliss. Life originated in *Ananda*; it moves and has its being in *Ananda*. Real happiness is an inherent quality of the Soul; which is called “an enjoyer” in the *Gita*. In spite of being so near, happiness appears, to many of us, to be afar off; for we are apt to judge *Ananda* or real bliss by the ephemeral sense pleasures and deceptive allurements of mundane life which gladden us in their coming and sadden us when they depart. He tells us that to enjoy life in a real way, we have to go to the core of every incident and try to learn its lesson. It is because we do not look deep enough that we miss the meaning and purpose of life, and hence its joy. In all events we must look for the hidden meaning, the hidden beauty, the hidden good. The Joy of Life is ours only when we are able to distil out of all experiences, pleasurable or painful, the perfume they contain. Real happiness is above pleasure as it is above pain, for it is made of the essence of both.

The *Gita* speaks of three kinds of pleasures, *Sattvic*, *Rajasic* and *Tamasic*. *Sattvic* pleasure is like poison to begin with, but in the end it is sweet like waters of life. It arises from purified understanding, which means not only will you indulge in refined pleasures like music, art or reading, but also try to learn the lesson from the

experience, and thus, distil the essence. Learn to see redeeming aspect of the situation. *Rajasic* pleasure is sweet to begin with, but is as bitter or bad as poison in the end. It arises out of the contact of senses with their objects. The *Tamasic* pleasures include sleep, idleness, and carelessness, which tend to stupefy the soul.

1. *He who gives himself to unbecoming distractions and not to fitting reflection, gives up his own welfare; going after pleasures, he envies the man who exerts himself in meditation. (209)*

Pleasures arise out of sensations. Pleasurable sensations are what we want to repeat, be it physical, intellectual or emotional. It is natural human tendency. While it may be perfectly legitimate for ordinary people to pursue pleasure, it can become an obstacle for those who wish to become spiritual. Memory of pleasurable experience makes them choose what they like to do rather than what they ought to do. They choose joys of little worth over the joys of greater worth. Harmless pleasures, though not bad in themselves, nonetheless, take the disciple away from the right course. They are not conducive to spiritual welfare of the disciple who has not yet obtained mastery over them. Mr. Crosbie’s advise may be of immense help to us. In a letter to a student of Theosophy. He writes:

It was natural that you should attend the Art Exhibit, but unfortunate that it detracted from the strength of the meeting by taking you away. Where there are so few, the absence of even one is felt by all. It weakens the current by division of interest for the time being; moreover, the tendency to repeat is easily established....It should not be taken as a stricture on any particular thing or person, but in general, as a guiding principle. I know that you are no lukewarm Theosophist, but I am thinking of the example set to younger students. It is so easy, and especially in the earlier stages, to lose enthusiasm for the Work itself through dissipation of energy in diversions harmless in themselves. It is better to take relaxation or to attend to “social” matters at other than

meeting times, if our intention really is “to sacrifice to the Permanent the mutable.” (*The Friendly Philosopher*, p. 383)

In *An Epitome of Theosophy*, Mr. Judge points out that so long as the smallest personal or selfish desire—even for spiritual attainment for our own sake—remains, so long is the desired end put off. Hence, the term “demands of the flesh” really covers “desires of personal nature, including those of the individual soul.”

The disciple who fails to overcome his temptations and feels envy for another who is steadfast, needs to remember what Mr. Judge has to say on “envy.” In the article “Culture of Concentration,” he writes that envy is not a mere trifle that produces no physical result. Envy not only hinders the further development, but also attracts to the student’s vicinity thousands of malevolent beings of all classes that precipitate themselves upon him and wake up every evil passion. Envy must be extirpated, and it cannot be got rid of as long as the personal idea is allowed to remain in us. Disciple’s thoughts must be predominantly fixed upon his heart, chasing there from every hostile thought to any living being. Even the feeling, “I am more holy and pleasing to the teacher, or in my community, than my brother,” makes him unfit to remain as disciple, writes H.P.B. in the article, “Practical Occultism.” These are “unbecoming distractions” for a serious student. Fitting reflection requires meditation on what man is, and his purpose of existence.

2. *Cling not to the pleasant, nor to the unpleasant. Not seeing the pleasant as to see the unpleasant—both are painful.* (210)

3. *Therefore do not be attracted to anything, for loss of a loved object is painful. No fetters exist for him who neither likes nor dislikes.* (211)

We spend our life avoiding suffering and seeking happiness. But we know that neither is permanent. Our pleasure turns into pain when the object of our pleasure is taken away, whether that object is a thing or our loved one. Sometimes our pleasures turn into pain

through saturation. If one likes eating ice cream and gets to eat as much as one wants, eventually it would lead to aversion. Therefore, we are asked to cultivate equal mindedness or detachment. It is not *indifference* of a stoic who remains indifferent to his own sufferings as also to those of others. In *Light on the Path* we are told that it is a state in which his sensitive nature suffers or enjoys more keenly than other men, and yet he does not allow his suffering to shake him from his fixed purpose. It means to have obtained equilibrium which cannot be shaken by personal emotions. This is one of the qualifications of becoming an accepted *chela*. In the *Gita*, Shri Krishna does not ask Arjuna to destroy his sensitivity, but asks him to cultivate endurance. Thus:

The senses, moving toward their appropriate objects, are producers of heat and cold, pleasure and pain, which come and go and are brief and changeable; these do thou endure, O son of Bharata! For the wise man, whom these disturb not and to whom pain and pleasure are the same, is fitted for immortality. (*Gita*, II)

We can endure our pain and suffering, if we realize that it is not ordained by any capricious God, but by ourselves. The unerring law of Karma brings to us reward or punishment for our good or bad actions, of this or some past life. Once we understand this, at least intellectually, then we would stop blaming others for the circumstances in which we find ourselves. Then, we would understand why we are asked to drink without a murmur whatever the cup of life has in store for us. When we accept life’s trying situations as liquidating of our past karma, our Self within gives us the needed strength to go through them cheerfully. We understand that at times it is our own inner Self which chooses trials and tests so that we can learn great lessons of fortitude and sympathy.

(*To be continued*)

ON DOWSING AND DIVINATION

DOWSING is a type of divination. It is employed in an attempt to locate such hidden substances as underground water, buried metals or ores, gemstones, oil, treasure, archaeological remains, and even dead bodies, without the use of scientific apparatus. There are various instruments used for the purpose of dowsing.

The most common “dowsing rod” also called “divining rod” is a forked or Y-shaped branch from a tree or a bush. At times, twigs from particular trees are preferred, such as, Hazel, witch-hazel, willow or peach trees. Holding two ends of the forked side, one in each hand, with the third (or the stem of the “Y”) pointing straight ahead, the dowser walks slowly over places where he suspects water, or metal or oil, or whatever object he is searching for is likely to be found. If searching for underground water, when the dowser comes to the area with underground water, the dowsing rod is supposed to dip or incline. In using the dowsing rods for searching an object, it is suggested that the dowser appears to receive transmissions from the hidden object that cause involuntary muscular contractions, which in turn make the rod bend or quiver violently. Some dowsers claim to be able to detect buried substances merely by passing a dowsing rod over a map of the area where the substance lies hidden.

We are also told that some dowsers use other equipments or no equipments at all. Some of the researchers have come to the conclusion that a divining or dowsing-rod is only an aid to the dowser’s faith in his own faculty. This faculty is not very rare, and it is known to increase with practice. Many years ago, there was search for water in the Satara district of Maharashtra State in India, and half a dozen sites had been scientifically tested for water using a machine. A beggar girl suggested another site for testing, which gave better results. She could give no explanation except that she had a feeling that there was water there. Thus, a divining-rod is probably not necessary, and which seems to only arouse the confidence of the inner psychic man.

A 1948 study tested 58 dowsers’ ability to detect water. A 1979 review examined many controlled studies of dowsing for water, and in both cases it was found that none of them showed better than chance results. Theosophy suggests that the phenomenon cannot be wholly explained on the basis of “extra-sensory-perception.” The discussion of Shri N. G. Apte, on “Water Finding” appeared in *Indian Farming* for December 1942. He explained water divining as “an innate intuitive ability to locate water by some feeling which the diviner is not generally able to explain. Such persons passing over currents or pockets of water feel its presence.” However, some dowsers have reported definite physical sensations in connection with the presence of currents or pockets of water beneath the surface of the earth. Shri Apte’s experience was that he felt a sensation or pain in the calf when passing over a spring or a river. He remarks that he got this feeling on rainy days also. He explained his dowsing or divining powers as “susceptibility of the person to certain influences.”

Likewise a German operator, whose predictions using divining-rod were found to be 90 per cent accurate, experienced marked acceleration of pulse when passing over reservoirs of water. He explained his success on the basis of the effect on the human body of the rays of different density escaping constantly from the interior of the earth. These rays are differentially absorbed by different materials under the surface. We must also keep in mind the psychophysiological continuity of the human organism with the whole of nature.

In the review of *The Divining Rod*, by Charles Latimer, that appeared in *The Theosophist* for April 1885, it has been observed that according to Aryan theory man is made up of five elements or *panchmahabhutas*, viz., earth, air, fire, water and *akasa*. The combination of the various elements in different proportions, determines the character of the individual. The phenomenon of the “divining rod” may be explained on the hypothesis that the preponderance of the watery element in particular individual

constitutions may lead to a more perceptible effect on the rod in their hands. This would account for the fact that the “rods” are moved in the hands of certain persons only.

In *Vernal Blooms* (pp. 167-68), Mr. Judge seeks to explain certain other phenomena, on the basis of the preponderance of one kind of elementals in the constitution or aura of a person. For instance, there are people, who seem to be able to find metals (treasures containing gold and silver) with ease, *i.e.*, they are lucky in that direction. The natural tendency of the elementals connected with mineral kingdom and with metals is to hide treasures. However, the person who is fortunate with metals, say gold or silver, has about him more of the elementals connected with metals than other people. Hence there is less conflict or strife between these elementals and the ones that are guarding and hiding the treasure—both being of the same class and kingdom. “The preponderance of the metal-spirits makes the person more homogeneous with their kingdoms, and a natural attraction exists between gold and silver lost or buried and that person.” He further explains that the preponderance of any one class of elementals in one’s constitution or in one’s aura is determined by many factors. It would depend upon the peculiarities of soil, climate, nation, family and race.

In the year 1951, reviewing the book *Henry Gross and his Dowsing Rod*, an American poet, Robert P. Tristram Coffin, remarked that human beings may be compared to and often behave like scientific instruments. “Thirsty deer and men have been finding water by instinct for hundreds of thousands of years where scientists would curl up and die of thirst. But science goes on shouting witchcraft and hokum.” When Henry Gross dowsed Bermuda from the distance of 800 miles, he claimed to have located three important springs of water, which if true, would be a case of extra-sensory-perception or clairvoyance, to which ordinary explanation of dowsing would not seem to apply. Real clairvoyance is independent of distance. “For the perceptions and apprehensions of the Ego there is neither space nor time,” writes H.P.B.

Mr. Coffin remarked that his fishermen friends were living barometers, and thermometers and anemometers. They made more reliable weather forecasts than the laboratories. A Master of Wisdom has the following to add:

Even simple muscular contraction is always accompanied with electric and magnetic phenomena, and there is the strongest connection between the magnetism of the earth, the changes of weather and *man*, who is the best barometer living, if he but knew to decipher it properly.

In the year 1952, a German dowser, by the name Herr Peinecke, experimented with “earth radiations,” as some dowsers have attributed the activities of the dowsing-rod to the influence of these earth radiations. Herr Peinecke claims that where currents of earth radiations overlap or cross; sensitive people react to them with sleeplessness, discomfort or even illness. Animals of many species instinctively avoid such places. At such places his dowsing-rod was found to become uncontrollably lively. However, when he tied a copper cord around his waist, the movement of the dowsing-rod stopped, because the copper cord had intercepted the earth’s rays or radiations. Such observations induced Herr Peinecke to devise an apparatus which, when placed on the ground in a spot where great magnetic disturbance was reported, helped to overcome the difficulties caused by magnetic disturbance. Theosophy suggests that in order to understand and explain the phenomena of terrestrial and animal magnetism, science must admit the existence of a *material and substantial* magnetic fluid, and study the effects of electricity and magnetism on man and animals.

There exists a sort of universal magnetism. Father Kircher observed that sun, moon, stars and planets become highly magnetic by living in the universal magnetic fluid or Spiritual light. Hence there exists a mysterious sympathy between the bodies of plants, animals, and humans. There are plants that are especially attracted to the sun and some others to the moon.

Dowsers have also used “pendulum dowsing” to find missing keys, eyeglasses, jewelry, and just about anything. A pendulum of metal, crystal or any other material is suspended by nylon or silk thread or even on a chain, and used for divination and dowsing. In one approach it is first determined which direction or movement of the pendulum, *viz.*, left-right, up-down or clockwise and anti-clockwise, will indicate “yes” and which “no,” before proceeding to ask specific questions to the pendulum. The pendulum is sometimes moved over a paper with “yes” and “no” written on it. The person holding the pendulum aims to hold it as steadily as possible over the center and its movements would indicate answers to the questions.

Pendulum dowsing has also been called “divining” for its ability to provide information and predict the future. The term “pendulum dowsing” is used when one uses the pendulum to find specific object. The term “pendulum divining” is used in reference to seeking precise information. Divination is an attempt to get insight into past, present or future by the interpretation of signs, symbols, and omens. For instance, the ancient Romans and Aztecs believed that the gods controlled the flight of birds, thus indicating their wishes. There were diviners who predicted the future by interpretation of the flight and the songs of birds. *Rhabdomancy* is a type of divination by means of any rod, wand, staff, stick, arrow, or the like. One method of rhabdomancy was setting a number of sticks or rods on end, and observing where they fall, to divine the direction one should travel, or to find answers to certain questions.

There are three types of divination: inductive, interpretive and intuitive. Interpretive divination requires the combination of correct procedure with the special gift of insight that sets a diviner apart. The contemporary Mayan diviner of Guatemala, seeking to diagnose an illness, will carefully pass a number of eggs over the patient’s body in order to draw into them an essence of the affliction. The intact contents are then collected in water, and the diviner withdraws into a darkened corner to bend over the receptacle and read the

signs of the eggs. His recitation then interprets the origin and nature of the disease (*Encyclopedia Britannica*). There is also *Alectromancy* or divination by means of a cock, or other bird. A circle was drawn and divided into spaces, each one allotted to a letter; corn was spread over these places and note was taken of the successive lettered divisions from which the bird took grains of corn.

The Paraphernalia and instruments of divination help to concentrate the will of the divinator and the person consulting him, in the same direction, upon the same sign or object. At times, we are enabled to see in the coffee cup, or in the clouds, or in the white of an egg, forms, which have their existence in the translucent, or seer’s imagination. Vision seeing in the water is produced by the fatigue of the dazzled optic nerve, which ends by relinquishing its functions to the translucent (seer’s imagination), and calls forth cerebral illusion, so that the simple reflections of the astral light appear to be real images. Thus the fittest person for this kind of divination is one of nervous temperament, whose sight is weak and imagination vivid, writes H.P.B.

Dowsing has been used not only to locate water, gold, oil and other minerals, but for many other purposes. For instance, in France, physicians have used the pendulum to assist them in making diagnoses. In dire circumstances during the Vietnam war, some U.S. marines were said to have been taught to use a pendulum to locate underground mines and tunnels. Dowsing has been used in many places to increase food crops—by helping plants grow, keeping bugs away, and even putting a protective field around them to prevent diseases.

BRAHMACHARYA [celibacy] must be observed in thought, word and deed....Its root meaning may be given thus: that conduct which puts one in touch with God.

—GANDHIJI

THE MAKING OF DESTINY

THE OBSERVANT will have little difficulty in noticing that law works everywhere. Law and life are synonymous terms, and every atom of dust, every blade of grass, every creature on its wings, every savage and every sage express life by law and under law. It is the law that is at work when beautiful crystals form themselves. The reptile creeps and the bird flies by the action of the same law by which men speak and asses bray. The formation of a cell and that of a star are operated upon by the same law. And if it functions in the whole of the external universe, must it not be so in the invisible realms as well? The whole universe, visible and invisible, is but an expression of law, ever and everywhere present, working incessantly and infallibly. It knows neither wrath nor pardon; it measures with justice every tiny as every mighty act, word, desire, or thought.

That is the first thing we must understand. Science is finding it difficult to define the law in the moral world; it has succeeded in defining some of the many variants of law in the physical world. The law of motion, the law of concretion, the law of disintegration, the law of evolution, are some of the laws of which science knows, and it has found out sufficiently to affirm that nothing happens by chance, that there are no miracles, for law and law alone is at the foundation of the universe. Law is the first and basic principle of the order we name cosmos.

With this Theosophy concurs. Law is omnipresent and works at every point of space. Law is omnipotent and acts every minute of time. Law is omniscient and functions as infallible justice. Law is not any person or being, but the cause, sustainer and renovator of every person and every being. Theosophy also affirms that there are no miracles, and it cautions science that there are more things it is ignorant of than there are things it knows about. While modern science has not yet discovered how that law works in the universe of morals and in the universe of mind, ancient science, which Theosophy reiterates, knew of it. That is the fundamental difference

between ancient and modern science.

If we look at the world today what do we find? There is irreligion, *adharma*, flourishing everywhere. There is religious exploitation of human souls; there is social exploitation of human morals; there is political and economic exploitation of human minds and human bodies. People have been looking for help to their government and to their political leaders, and sometimes they fall prey to and slavishly adopt the ways of mass tyranny which we see at work in more than one country. What will save us from that danger is the knowledge of Karma, the law of ethical compensation—the doctrine of fate and free will.

That ancient doctrine is at once simple and profound. The word Karma is familiar to all today, but is very much misunderstood. Karma is not fate, though fate is an aspect of Karma; it is not the expression of free will only, though free will plays a most important part in it. It is not action as we know action—something we do with our bodies. It includes action of tongue, of feelings, of thoughts, of human will. Karma is perpetual motion. Its metaphysical concepts are difficult to understand; its moral presentation is simple. Every spiritual Teacher and every religious philosopher has given that moral teaching. Let us look at it.

We must begin with an aphorism—“There is no Karma unless there is a being to make it and feel its effects.” This is simple, self-evident, but, like other simple truths, it is also profound. When people say, “Such is my fate,” “Such is my kismet,” “Such are my *samskaras*,” “Such is my Karma,” they overlook that there must have been a being who made that destiny, who produced that fate. So we have two factors—*Karta*, the actor, and *Karma*, the action. No action without the actor; no destiny or fate without the being who wove that destiny, who manufactured that fate.

But people are puzzled because they do not always see the actor and the action together, which really means that they do not see the actor performing the action. To take an example—a man is born deaf. What made him deaf? The man may say, “Deafness is my

kismet; it is my Karma, my fate.” Theosophy says, “It is; but what caused that Karma? Who caused it?” If “there is no Karma unless there is a being to make it and feel its effects,” it is evident that in our example deafness is made, and the being who made it is most closely related to it, is in fact the very one who now suffers the effect.

That brings us to the second great fact about Karma: Each Karma, each action, is a process; it is a motion. Every cause is followed by its own legitimate effect, that effect becoming in its turn a cause and producing further effects. Cause, effect, cause once more—a mighty chain in which each link is both a cause and an effect. Karma is not static or stationary: it is dynamic; it moves, moves, moves—like the waters of a river.

Let us not think of Karma as isolated causes each producing its own effect, and that effect separate and distinct from all other effects. It is most illogical to say, for instance, that because ‘A’ murdered ‘B’ in the past life, therefore ‘B’ will murder ‘A’ in this life. Any single action of ours is a process, a complex process. Our thought on any given subject results from all our connections, mental, moral and physical, with that subject. So every action of ours is a new cause producing numerous effects, often unknown to us and hidden from us. What we see as effects may puzzle us because we do not perceive the causes, but whatever comes to us is an effect from a cause. Because we generate causes on different planes of being, we produce different kinds of effects. By our thoughts, feelings, words and deeds we make different kinds of Karma. If we cease to perform this fourfold action, we cease altogether. To live implies this fourfold action. We cannot be alive and not generate these four kinds of causes.

Let us apply this knowledge to ourselves. First, let us look at ourselves from the point of view of effects. We have a mind; it is our effect—Karma from the past. If we did not use our mind in the past, we have a dull mind in the present. If we misused our mind in the past, we have a diseased mind now. If we used our mind properly

and wisely in the past, we have a keen and fine mind in the present.

Next, we have amoral character that is strong. Our past feelings made that; cruelty begets cruelty; selfishness is born of selfishness; compassion multiplies compassion; out of kindness comes kindness. “See yonder fields! The sesamum was sesamun, the corn was corn,” says the Buddha. “Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?” asks the Christian scripture. “The pepper plant will not give birth to roses, nor the sweet jessamine’s silver star to thorn or thistle turn,” says *The Voice of the Silence*. We cannot sow meanness and expect a kind character. Our character, our morals are effects from and of our past feelings.

Third, we cannot have a sweet voice or a powerful one if we have indulged in lies or gossip. The way we speak, the things we speak, are effects, for does not the same *Voice of the silence* say: “A harsh word uttered in past lives is not destroyed, but ever comes again”?

Fourthly and finally, our body, ill or well, ugly or handsome, capable or inefficient, keen or dull, energetic or indolent, is the result of how we treated our bodies in the past, in previous lives.

And all these four together, the mind, the character, the speech and the deeds of the body, exist and function in an environment, under an outer set of circumstances, which they mould and shape. Our environment, the family and the country in which we find ourselves today, in this life, is the result of past actions in all four departments of our being. Let us look at the fourfold Karma as causes in the present, causes that will produce their effects in the future—tomorrow or after many days.

Is this not a wonderful just Law that inspires, that energizes, that reconciles us to the apparent injustice of life? We need not lie down and mourn; we need not blame our parents and families; we need not pray to God or gods, or propitiate any devil or demons. We only need to take ourselves in hand and say: “I will be what I choose to be: I will make my destiny and rule my stars; I am a free being, the creator of my own fate; I will break the chains of my fate and be

free.” When once that resolve is taken because the fact is understood, half the battle is won. So let us take that strong, virile position of a warrior, and not act like the coward who throws the blame for his misdeeds and stupidity on the shoulders of Karma, or on his environment, heredity, or what not!

But let us not rest content with making a resolve. We must seek knowledge to act and to practice. And what is the knowledge we need for the changing of our self-made destiny? What is to be done by each one of us for the shaping and moulding of our own future in the departments of mind, of feelings, of words and of deeds?

First, what shall we do to improve our mind, so that it does not act as a fetter, so that it does not enslave us? The mind loses its narrowness, it gains breadth as well as depth by moving away from subjects which only deal with our narrow, personal selves. If we look at the mind activity of most people, we find that their thinking is limited to personal matters. “What shall I eat? Where shall I go? How shall I dress?” It is “I,” “I,” “I” all the time. Let us liberate our mind from the fetters of selfishness and personality. It must be given universal, cosmic, impersonal ideas to dwell upon. Our mind uses the brain as its vehicle and instrument. We have grooves in our brains; we have also grey matter. Grooves and grey matter are affected and made by the ideas on which we dwell. Let us use our will and resolve to choose Universal Ideas, and deliberately keep our mind on these. Without open, deep and broad minds we cannot learn the Truth, nor can we be true to ourselves. Let us dwell on ideas which touch not our personal and petty self, but the Great Self of all mankind.

As for our feelings: Egotism, pride and selfishness are the three bastard children in the characters of almost all men and women. They are in each of us, however hidden. They have to be eliminated, for they enslave us. If universal ideas break the fetters of mind, impersonal feelings break those of low morals. People love in selfishness, are charitable because of pride, and labour to satisfy their own egotism. Let us analyse and see if we love impersonally,

without the desire to be loved in return. Are we giving in charity for the sake of fame? Are we doing anything without bringing in our own personality? We shall be surprised to find how very personal we are, and how rare, how very rare, is the quality of Impersonality.

Coming to our speech: Do we watch it all day long? We may not speak obscene language, we may not indulge in evil gossip, but how often during the day do we talk about ourselves? Men and women want to speak of themselves and hear their own voice! To make our speech soul-centred it is absolutely necessary to practice silence at certain periods, by retreating to the inner sanctuary of our own heart.

As for deeds, all we need to do is our duties. Let us do our duty by every duty, without looking longingly for results. If we act with dispassion, the fetters of action will fall away. Though we may obtain all that the world considers fortune and wealth, unless we have built peace within ourselves we cannot have happiness. Peace comes from a mind fed on universal principles; power comes from a heart that has become unselfish, that loves in compassion which is impersonal; helpfulness comes from speech which is pure and wise and sacred; sacrifice comes from deeds performed in the true spirit of renunciation, without looking to the fruits. The Perfected Souls, the Super-Men, are Men of Peace, Men of Power, who help all humanity in uttermost self-sacrifice, without looking for any reward, irrespective of persons. Let us copy Their great examples.

FOR me patriotism is the same as humanity. I am patriotic because I am human and humane....I will not hurt England or Germany to serve India. Imperialism has no place in my scheme of life. The law of patriot is not different from that of the patriarch. And a patriot is so much the less patriot if he is a lukewarm humanitarian.

—GANDHIJI

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

[In this section we seek to answer frequently asked questions, at U.L.T. meetings or during private conversations and discussions with people who seek the answers in the light of Theosophy. Answers given in this section are by no means final. Only a line of thought is being offered by applying general principles of Theosophy.]

Question: In the *Puranas* and in the *Rig-veda* Viswakarma is variously described as divine carpenter and cosmic creator, who sacrificed *himself to himself*. What does it signify?

Answer: According to *Dowson's Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology and Religion*, Viswakarma means omnificent. Originally, it was an epithet of a powerful god, such as Indra or Surya, but later it came to designate a personification of the creative power. He thus becomes a great architect of the universe. In the *Puranas*, Viswakarma is the son of Prabhasa (dawn), the eighth Vasu, by his wife Yoga-siddha (the power of yoga). His daughter Sanjana or spiritual consciousness was married to Sun. She complained to her father of the too great effulgence of her husband. Viswakarma, in his character of *Takshaka*, “wood cutter and (divine) carpenter,” crucified the sun on his lathe and cut away eighth part of his rays—creating round him a dark aureole. Viswakarma represents the *Hierophant-Initiator*. After that, Surya looked as though he had been crowned with dark thorns and he became “Vikartana,” one who was shorn of his effulgence. Vikartana 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, *crucifying his body*, before he can rise into new life and be reborn. During the mysteries of initiation, the Candidate was tied to a cross and was made to pass two days and two nights in the underground cave or crypt and on the third day he is brought to entrance of the cave to face the sun. Viswakarma who is described

as the *artificer of gods*, is really speaking, artificer of the Adepts on earth, because as Hierophant-initiator, he presides over the process of spiritual re-birth, which leads the disciple to Adeptship.

However, in the *Rig-veda*, Viswakarma is the son of Bhuvana and as the name suggests he is the creator of the universe or Cosmic creator. He creates the universe and everything in the universe including human beings. The descent of spirit into matter is an act of sacrifice. Before there could be evolution, there is first involution of spirit into matter. The doctrine of emanation says that nothing can be evolved, or unwombed or born, unless it has first been involved, thus indicating that life is from a spiritual potency above the whole. Since the world and everything in the universe is “himself” Viswakarma is said to sacrifice in the *servamedha yajna* (universal sacrifice or general sacrifice) *himself to himself*. In the *Gita*, Shri Krishna says, “I am *Adhiyajna* in this body.” In *Secret Doctrine*, (I, 268), we are given the description of the journey of the monad (*Atma-Buddhi*) through various forms, and it is described as the journey of the Pilgrim towards (spiritual) home by climbing the uphill path of the Golgotha of life. It is martyrdom of self-conscious existence. Monad is the Eternal Spectator, which neither progresses nor develops, and is not even affected by the changes of states it passes through. It is not of this world or plane, and is thrown down on to our Earth as a plank of salvation for the personalities in which it indwells. It is for the personalities to cling to it, partake of its divine nature and obtain immortality.

In *Transactions*, H.P.B. applies the allegory of Viswakarma to the mind of man. Manas or mind in man is compared to a globe of pure divine light or Sun. At every birth, a ray of this Manas manifests through the personality, which is termed “incarnated mind” or “lower mind.” The lower is of the *same essence* as the Higher. As a *pure ray* it cannot function on this plane, hence it is clothed in the astral light, to enable it to give and receive impressions from the external world, and as a result it forgets its divine origin and becomes dual in nature, *viz.*, the heaven-aspiring and Kama-tending mind. We often

prostitute and even misuse the powers of the mind. The Higher Manas or the Higher Ego is essentially divine, and it is innocent of, and takes no part in the deliberate misdeeds of the lower mind. And yet, though the Higher and lower mind are distinct during life, after death, when the personality disappears, the Karmic focus shifts to the Higher, which, though innocent, vicariously suffers for the deeds of the Lower. Thus, the Higher Ego sacrifices itself by taking upon itself the responsibility of the misdeeds of the lower mind, and since the Higher and lower are *essentially* the same, Higher Ego is said to sacrifice, *himself to himself*.

It is said of the spiritually advanced beings that they take upon themselves the sin of the collective bad karma of humanity. This is possible because *they completely identify themselves with humanity*. In both these cases, there is *vicarious atonement*, in which the Higher Ego and the High beings, represented by “lamb,” act as scapegoat.

Shri B. P. Wadia writes that we are all learning to be *Universal Beings*, aspiring to serve Humanity without any distinctions. Every chela gets his share in learning to take upon himself the Karma of others. “Theosophical students make a jump and a short cut, so to say, from personal Karma to universal Karma, taking in their stride family, community, national and race Karma.”

Question: What is the significance of the story of Trishanku, theosophically?

Answer: The story of Trishanku occurs in *Bala Kanda* portion of the *Valmiki Ramayana*. Trishanku was originally known as King Satyavrata in Solar dynasty. He wanted to go to *swarga* (heaven) in his mortal body. He approached sage Vasishtha to perform a *yajna*, to enable him to go to heaven in his mortal body. Vasishtha refused for it was against the laws of nature for someone with a mortal body to enter heaven. Likewise, Vasishtha’s sons also refused to assist King Satyavrata in fulfilling his wish, and in fact cursed him with a debilitating disease, for requesting in spite of their father’s refusal. The King was forced to leave his country and wander the lands.

During his wanderings, he met sage Viswamitra who was a rival of sage Vasishtha. He accepted the King’s request and agreed to perform the rites required to send him to heaven in his mortal body.

As the rituals began, by the power of the great sage, King Trishanku started ascending to heaven. The *Devas* were alarmed and they decided to not let Satyavrata enter the heaven in his mortal self. Indra using his powers caused him to fall back to earth. Sage Viswamitra used his powers to arrest the fall. Thus Trishanku was suspended mid-air in a state of unstable equilibrium. The struggle went on for a long time, and when the gods pacified the sage and made him understand that he was trying to help in performing an unnatural action of sending someone to heaven in mortal body; Viswamitra reached a compromise with the *Devas* to let the King inhabit the new heaven that was created for him. The new heaven would be called “Trishanku’s heaven” and the king shall reside upside down in his heaven, and since then he is called “Trishanku.”

The story, at the simple level, shows the consequences of trying to cause the natural laws to deviate. Rishis and Sages are described as agents of Karmic and Cosmic laws, who never contravene the law. Henry W. Longfellow compares Trishanku with human heart, which is tossed between aspirations and misgivings, thus:

Thus by aspirations lifted,
By misgivings downward driven,
Human hearts are tossed and drifted
Midway between earth and Heaven.

Trishanku is commonly referred to through the phrase “Trishanku’s heaven.” The phrase describes a middle-ground or a compromise between one’s goals or desires and one’s current state or possessions.

In trying to live the spiritual life we try to leave behind the lower, worldly life and move towards higher life. When we are trying to leave off the lower and are not yet accustomed to the Higher, we are in the mid-air, like Trishanku. We have not quite left behind the

old state or condition, and we are *only beginning to get the grasp* of the new state. Such “transition period” is faced by every spiritual aspirant in his individual life as he struggles to leave behind ordinary life—centred in personal care and worldly affairs—and live a spiritual life, where the focus shifts from one’s personal self to Spiritual Self. It is a transition from dealing with tangible and palpable to things invisible, immaterial and impalpable, beyond the domain of the five senses. This “transition period” is the most delicate and crucial period in an aspirant’s life, because it is difficult to leave the familiar in order to grasp the unknown and the unfamiliar. It is during this state that one experiences loneliness, with the feeling of “neither here,” “nor there.”

According to another version of the story, Viswamitra created another heaven and another *Saptarishi* or “Great Bear” Constellation and exerted his power, so that the King obtained a place amongst the stars. The *Saptarishis*, at times, refer to inferior class of celestial beings, called *Devas* or elementals. H.P.B. writes, “Those who fall off from our living human Mahatmas to fall into the *Saptarishis*—the Star Rishis—are no Theosophists.” Mr. Judge observes that in the given context, the *Saptarishis* are a very advanced class of elementals that may be compared to the *Devas* of the Hindus. In *An Epitome of Theosophy* Mr. Judge alludes to the possibility of an adept deciding to become a lesser god. Thus:

When the adept has reached a certain very high point in his evolution he may, by a mere wish, become what the Hindus call a “Deva”—or lesser god. If he does this, then although he will enjoy the bliss and power of that state for a vast length of time, he will not at the next Pralaya partake of the conscious life “in the bosom of the Father”; but has to pass down into the matter at the next new “creation,” performing certain functions that could not now be made clear, and has to come up again through the elemental world.

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Is there too much pressure to be “bright, chirpy and positive” all the time? Are we increasingly viewing optimism as the “mind drug” that is an all-purpose remedy for everything that is wrong with our lives? Shopping for too much optimism can be stressful, writes Nona Walia. A research in *Psychology Today* reports that science now regards optimism and pessimism not as good or bad outlooks one is born with, but as mindsets to adopt as situations demand. While a certain actor remained upbeat after her break-up with her boyfriend, another one used pessimism to her advantage during her low phase. There are those who believe in being positive, and claim that they could survive through the toughest situations of life because they never gave up on hope. They consider “hope,” to be the most powerful source of sustenance for anyone.

On the other hand, Rochie Rana, colour therapist, feels that it is not as if optimism is “good,” and pessimism is “bad,” but both are functional and have value, as it is impossible for an average person to approach life with a neutral state of being. In fact, it is believed that successful people often employ pessimism in a strategic way to motivate and prepare themselves for the future. There are others who feel that optimism and pessimism are both powerful motivators, which push us into action, and that they are just two polarities of the same phenomenon. We need to get above both pessimism and optimism, because even chasing optimism shatters peace. Instead, we must accept whatever happens in life. If optimism misses reality, then it is not very helpful, says psychiatrist Dr. Avdesh Sharma. “There is constant pressure to be more positive than we already are....Do not always look for a smiley, just indulge your moods and make them work for you!” writes Nona Walia. (*Times Life! [Sunday Times of India]*, December 4, 2011)

Positive thoughts and feelings call forth, best efforts; so that the thing that seemed impossible moves into the area of the possible. When we make a positive formulation, *it is a direct affirmation of*

the will. Once we take the positive mental position saying, “I can do it,” or “it can happen,” the whole of the emotional nature must be brought in perfect harmony with this. *When the desire is intense, the will comes into action.* Mr. Judge says that when you ardently desire to do some good thing, “your strong desire will strike like Vulcan upon other hearts in the world, and suddenly you will find that done, which you had longed to be the doer of.” Noell Nelson, a clinical psychologist, shows how positive beliefs and hence optimism play an important role. “All of your beliefs—about yourself, your abilities, your potential, your ‘place’ in the world—affect how you live your life. In fact, beliefs are so powerful that they can even affect whether you live or die....No matter how grim your present seems, be willing to accept the belief that the future holds positive possibilities. The wonderful thing about possibilities is that they can be turned into probabilities and from there into actuality.” However, optimism can degenerate into wishful thinking, and when that wish is not fulfilled one feels frustrated.

At the base of every nature there is “faith, hope and love.” Hope springs from our divine nature. In *Raja-Yoga or Occultism*, H.P.B. writes that it is very difficult for a materialist to raise himself to metaphysical and spiritual level of thought, and likewise, it is very difficult for one naturally spiritually minded to descend to the level of the matter-of-fact vulgar thought. She says that optimism and pessimism depend on it also in large measure.

The middle path lies in “hoping for the best while preparing for the worst.” Mr. Crosbie writes that he used to look calmly and dispassionately at the very worst picture he could conjure up as happening to himself. He saw himself as alone, dishonoured, stripped of everything, and all that it entailed. He writes that those very things happened to him, but he went on undismayed, because he was prepared.

We have heard of the “Three Wise Men” who went to see the

Christ-child in Bethlehem, but according to a 19th Century story by Henry Van Dyke, there was fourth, writes Marguerite Theophil. The story goes that in the mountains of ancient Persia there lived Artaban, whose deep study of astrology led him to predict the birth of King of Kings (Lord Jesus). He sold all his belongings and purchased a large sapphire, a lustrous pearl and a flawless ruby, and then set out for Jerusalem to meet three Wise Men or Magi, to find the new-born. On the way he came across a sick man suffering from fatal fever. Artaban attended to the sick man, even at the risk of not meeting his three friends, and left with him food and herbs, for which he was blessed by the poor man: “May the Lord bring you in safety to the place (Bethlehem) where Messiah will be born, because you had pity upon the sick.” When he arrived at the meeting place, he found that his friends had left asking him to follow them across the desert. Artaban sold his sapphire in order to buy camels and when he arrived at Bethlehem, with his remaining ruby and pearl offering, the three wise men had left after making their offering to Mary, Joseph and Jesus. A woman with her child in that cottage informed him that Joseph had fled with his wife and child saying that king Herod was slaying all male children, afraid that the promised “King” would claim his throne. Just then Herod’s soldiers approached the cottage, looking out for a male child. Pacifying the frightened mother, Artaban stood at the cottage door offering the ruby to the soldiers, and telling them that there was no child in the cottage.

The story goes on that having spent two gifts which were meant for god, for man, Artaban wondered if he will ever be worthy to see the face of the King? Moving on with the blessing from the mother, he wandered for 33 years in search of Jesus, Joseph and Mary. Worn and weary, but still looking for the King, he reached Jerusalem, when he heard about a great person and his life and teachings, and that he was to be put to death that very day. Realizing that it must be his “King” he rushed towards Golgotha to buy freedom of the “King” with his priceless pearl, but just then a young girl in chains pleaded

with him to help her as she was being sold as a slave. He exchanged the girl's freedom for the pearl. When he collapsed in grief at not being able to see the "King," he heard a gentle yet compelling voice: "Verily I say unto thee, inasmuch as thou hast done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, thou hast done it unto me." The fourth wise man had indeed found the King, and his gifts were accepted, writes Marguerite Theophil. (*The Speaking Tree* [*The Times of India*], December 25, 2011)

Christ is not the name of Jesus but a generic term meaning the Divine Principle or *Christos* residing in the heart of every man and woman. Krishna or Chris-na and *Christos* come from the same root. *Kris* in Sanskrit means the pure or the sacred. The legends of three Saviours—Krishna, Buddha and Jesus—when compared, show striking similarity, writes H.P.B. She suggests that St. Thomas adopted in his gospel the most important details of the story of the Hindu Avatar, Krishna. Thus, Krishna is persecuted by Kansa, who ordered for the slaughter of thousands of male children (*innocents*), in the hope of destroying Krishna, but he miraculously escaped. Likewise, King Herod ordered for the massacre of male children. The real meaning of Herod's "infant-massacre," is the persecution of the kabalists and the wise men during his reign. The Wise men were nicknamed the "Innocents" and "Babes" on account of their holiness, explains H.P.B.

There are special signs in the heavens which foretell the birth of a Great Being. At the time of the Buddha's birth, there were five sure signs in the heavens, which the gods recognized. So also, the "three wise men" were guided by the "star of the Magi" which was placed in the "constellation of Messiah." Kepler maintained that at the moment of the "incarnation," all planets were in conjunction in the sign of *Pisces*, called by the Kabalists, the "constellation of Messiah."

Exoterically, Jesus was an Adept, an Initiate. But esoterically, Christ, the true esoteric Saviour is not a man but the divine presence latent within the hearts of men. Only he can find the "King," who

recognizes the oneness of humanity, and is truly able to share in the joy and sorrow of another. Christmas is supposed to be the festival that emphasizes the spirit of giving. H.P.B. reminds us that each one of us is endowed with a magnetic potentiality, which when directed with sincere and indomitable will, becomes a most effective lever for weal or woe. Hence, if we only send out sincere thoughts, "Peace and goodwill to all," it will benefit the whole of creation.

In a sleep study, a team at the Out-of-Body Experience Research Centre in Los Angeles established that religious tales of visions of angels and other religious encounters were nothing but a result of lucid dreaming, in which one is aware that he is dreaming. In the research, 30 volunteers were instructed to try to replicate the biblical account in which prophet Elijah who awakens, sees an angel, eats food that was not there before, and goes back to sleep. This event was specifically chosen because it is easy to verify, since western culture has well-established image of an angel with wings, white robes, and halos, etc., lead researcher, Michael Raduga was quoted as saying by *LiveScience*. Fifteen of the participants said that they were able to re-create the story of Elijah, either in part or full. Nine of these volunteers dreamed of the experiences involving both an angel and food, while the remaining six encountered an angel, says Raduga. He says that the statistical probability of seeing an angel, as described in the Bible, in one's lifetime is 1 in 5000. If he could coach people to have such religious encounters, then, says, Raduga, he could prove that many of the historical accounts of such encounters are merely products of people's imaginations. (*The Times of India*, December 23, 2011)

Visions of angels and gods are not all hallucinations or figments of imagination. We are told that the astral region around us is full of beings of various classes and degrees. There are lower and higher

“gods” inhabiting the invisible realm. A sensitive medium whose astral senses are active due to certain past practices, or a disciple who has trained his inner astral and spiritual senses, could sometimes see these gods. The lower “gods” are the elemental beings, or *devas*. There must be training of the psychic and spiritual senses, so that we will not make the mistake of anthropomorphizing these gods, which are formless, and thus give them human form. At times, one sees *Nirmanakayas*. These are the advanced spiritual beings that live in the invisible atmosphere in their purified astral form.

Often, in dreams people report seeing a particular god or goddess, whom they may have been worshipping. For some it may be Jesus or Zoroaster, for another it may be Krishna, Siva, or Vishnu, or goddess Laxmi or Durga, seen in a particular form. What could possibly happen is that they might have had a brief contact with the divine nature within, and they bring back the experience by endowing that divine presence with a form of a familiar god or goddess. H.P.B. says that “the only God man comes in contact with is his own God, called Spirit, Soul and Mind, or Consciousness, and these three are one.” In Near-Death Experiences, almost every person describes having come across a “Being of Light,” who guided him to the borderland and then he was asked to go back to the world of living, and that he experienced indescribable peace in Its presence.

Mr. Crosbie writes about another possibility that exists when one tries to consciously open up communication with these beings of other planes. When a person is not ready, it could happen that he creates his own images and is deluded into thinking that he contacted this or that god. It may also happen that some of the lower and dark forces use their power to assume the forms of real gods, or beings of Light, and thus not only delude the person into thinking that he had a vision of some high god, but they could also thus, sidetrack the aspirant from his real goal.