

ol. 2

July 2010

Rs. 3/-

No. 3

# THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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

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## Publisher's Announcements

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT: Established November, 1910. Published monthly by Theosophy Company (India) Private Ltd., 40 New Marine Lines, Mumbai 400 020, India.

This Magazine is an Independent Journal, unconnected with any theosophical society or other organization. The Publishers assume full responsibility for all unsigned articles herein.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: No subscriptions are accepted for less than one year of 12 numbers, each beginning with the November issue. All subscriptions should be accompanied by the necessary remittance. Price, Rs. 30.00, £6.00, \$13.00 per annum, post free. Price, per copy, Rs.3.00.

COMMUNICATIONS: Contributions submitted for publication should be typewritten, on one side of the paper only, with wide margins, and addressed to the Editors. Copies should in all cases be retained by the writers, as no manuscripts are returned.

CORRESPONDENCE: Letters from subscribers and readers are welcomed, with criticisms, comments or questions on any subject treated in the Magazine. Questions on Theosophical philosophy and history will be replied to direct, or if of sufficient general interest, in the pages of the Magazine.

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- (c) The investigation of the unexplained laws of Nature and the psychical powers latent in man.

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

## THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

Vol. 2, No. 3

July 17, 2010

### TAT TVAM ASI--"THAT THOU ART"

TAT *tvam asi* or "That Thou Art" is one of the four *Mahavakyas* or "Great Sayings" from *Chhandogya Upanishad*. The other three *Mahavakyas*, such as "I am *Brahman*," or "Consciousness is *Brahman*," are from the other three *Upanishads*. In *Chhandogya Upanishad* sage Uddalaka tells his son and pupil, Shvetaketu, "That thou art." It shows that *Brahman* or One Reality, which is the substratum of everything in the universe, is identical with the divine essence in each one of us, which is *Atman*. "Thou" stands for *Atman*, the innermost Self, the immortal aspect in us, without which our very existence is impossible. It is not our body, mind, senses, or any of the changing aspects in man. "That" stands for *Brahman* or the Transcendental Reality, which is beyond the range and reach of thought. It is important to bear in mind that when *Brahman* and *Atman* are identified, they both stand for *pure consciousness*. It is true that if we take the word "thou" in the sense of the individual, limited by his body and mind, then there can not be identity between "thou" and "That"—the transcendental reality. When we meet Mr. X the second time, we might say, "This is *that* Mr. X" (whom we met yesterday). But we know that the conditions by which Mr. X was surrounded the previous day are not exactly identical with those he is surrounded by today. Therefore, there can not be any identity between a person qualified by one set of conditions with the person qualified by another set of conditions. Thus, the person viewed *apart*

from the distinguishing conditions is the same. is true also) of the identity between the Self and God. Thus Self, when separated from the limitations of name and form, is identical with the viewed apart from any attributes that differentiates it from pure consciousness. The Soul appears limited and finite because of its association with the body. This is shown in the dialogue between Prajapati and Indra in the *Chhandogya Upanishad*.

The *Chhandogya Upanishad* has three profoundly important dialogues: the dialogue between sage Uddalaka and his son Shvetaketu, between Narada and Sanatakumar, and between Prajapati and his pupils—Indra (from the gods) and Virochana (from the demons). Through these dialogues an attempt is made to lead the skeptical pupil step by step to right concept of Self, God, and Nature.

Thus, in a dialogue, Prajapati says that the Self (*Atman*), which is free from sin, old age, death, grief, hunger and thirst, that Self is to be searched for. The gods sent Indra while the demons sent Virochana to learn about this Self. Prajapati asked both of them to look into a vessel of water and asked them how much of the Self could they find when they looked into water? They replied that they could see their whole self, down to the nails and hair! Prajapati said, that was the Self, deathless and fearless, and that was the *Brahman*. Virochana went away with the conviction that the *body* was the Self. But Indra was not satisfied. He tells Prajapati that just as the Self becomes decorated when the body is decorated, even so the Self is maimed or becomes lame when the body is maimed or becomes lame, and the Self must perish when the body perishes. Prajapati continued to give higher instructions about the Self saying that the Self when *embodied* is affected by pleasure and pain and yet pleasure and pain do not touch the bodiless Self. Indra soon realizes that the Self does not become blind, lame, maimed, nor is it displeased or stricken when the body experiences all this. Nevertheless, it appears *as if* it were stricken, *as if* it were hustled, *as if* it were feeling unpleasantness, *as if* it were weeping. The *Gita*,

which is considered to be one of the *upanishads*, expresses it thus: "Spirit when invested with matter *or prakriti* experiences the qualities which proceed from *prakriti*; its connection with these qualities is the cause of its rebirth in good and evil wombs." The Self in the body is like the petrol in the car. Though we say that the driver drives or moves the car and not the petrol, it is also true that even the best driver cannot drive the car without the petrol. The power to act, to perceive, to enjoy, to think and to choose comes from the Self and yet the Self is unaffected by pain and pleasure or our choices and perceptions, though by lending the power it *seems* to participate in various actions, and *seems* to experience various feelings.

In the dialogue between sage Uddalaka and his son, who has returned home from his education, the father exposes the ignorance and conceit of his learning. He asks, "Do you know 'That' by knowing which everything becomes known?" The son is puzzled. The father gives an example to show how by knowing one thing, many things become known. For instance, if you know what clay is, you might know what clay glass, clay plate or clay mug would be like. Thus, by a single piece of clay anything made of clay may be known, for the difference is only one of words and names, and the real thing is that it is of clay. The pot has no existence apart from the clay, so also, diversity of objects have no existence apart from the animating essence. There was only One Reality existing in the beginning, "alone and secondless," which expresses Itself as multiplicity of things in the world. We might say that the appearance of multiplicity of things in the world is like the circle of fire or light that is formed when we vigorously move the torch or a sparkler. The circle has no real existence apart from the torch or sparkler. It is only an illusion created by the movement of the torch. H. P. Blavatsky points out that One Reality is the Causeless Cause, which is not involved in the cause-effect chain. It is the noumenon, which underlies every phenomenon and gives to them whatever shadow of reality they possess. For instance, the atoms of gold scattered throughout the substance of auriferous quartz may be imperceptible

to the naked eye of the miner, yet he knows that they are not only present there, but that they alone give his quartz any appreciable value.

How did the manifold objects come into existence? First, the Supreme Being or SAT put forth Fire or Radiance. Just as a person who feels hot, sweats, so the Radiance put forth Water. Just as rain produces food, so from Waters the world-food—Earth—is produced. We are told that the Fire, Water and Earth spoken of are not the physical elements we are familiar with, but subtle elements or *tanmatras*.

Everything organic and inorganic in the manifestation is the result of various permutations and combinations of three elements or three Powers—Radiance, Water and Earth. The food that is eaten is divided into three forms: the gross form of food is not absorbed into the system and is thrown out as excreta; the middle form of food gets converted into flesh; the subtle vibratory aspect, that which is produced by the essential nature of the food influences the mind itself. So it is that the capacity of thinking and the way of thinking are influenced by the food we take. Similarly, the gross aspect of water that we drink, becomes waste, the middle aspect goes to form blood and the subtle aspect enhances vitality, energy or *Prana*. Of the things that produce radiant heat, such as ghee, oil, etc., when absorbed, their gross aspect becomes bone, the middle part becomes nerve, and the subtlest aspect becomes the energy of speaking. Thus, mind is formed of the world-food or Earth; vital Breath is formed of the Waters; formative Voice is formed of Radiance. When a man dies the formative Voice sinks back into Mind; Mind sinks back into vital Breath, and vital Breath sinks into Radiance and Radiance into higher Divinity, which is the soul, the Self of all. "THAT THOU ART, O Shvetaketu," says the Sage.

The sage goes on to explain that we are not merely food, water or fire, but something more. To explain that he asks: Why do we sleep? Swami Krishnananda explains that when a person is in the condition of sleep, in Sanskrit it is called "svapiti," which

etymologically means, "one who reaches *sva* (Self)." In other words, you become your true Self in the sleep, and that is why you are not conscious of anything external. When we are asleep we are, as it were, absorbed in the true being, but while we are awake, we move away from our true being. An illustration is given of a bird tied with a thread to a peg in the earth. If the thread is long then the bird would fly as high and as far as the thread would allow. The bird flies here and there, and goes in search of freedom, but finds that its movement is restricted. Then at the end of the day, it comes back to the point where it had been tied. So also, our mind goes out in the world and searches high and low, like the bird, for freedom and happiness, but at night contacts the true being. Hence we say that in *Sushupti* or Dreamless Sleep State we touch the hem of the garment of our divine nature. 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, and it can communicate with other egos on the same plane if there is spiritual attraction between them.

But how to locate this Self? The Sage explains by saying, "That Thou Art." The pupil, Shvetaketu is puzzled and wants to know how all of the creation or manifestation be in THAT, because then he would be merged with other objects, like various metals in a melting pot. The Sage explains what happens to all individuals when they reach the Ultimate Reality. An analogy is given. Honeybees collect the essence of various flowers and convert it to honey. Thus, honey is an amalgamation of the essence of hundreds of flowers, but we are unable to distinguish the essence of one flower from the other. No essence can say, "I am from this flower," or "I am from that flower." And yet, the essence of all the flowers is in the honey. There is no negation of individuality but transcendence of it, when one reaches the state of *Samadhi*. Like the spark lost in the fire, in the state of *Samadhi*, the yogi loses all sense of individuality, including his own. He becomes the ALL.

Sage Uddalaka asks his son Shvetaketu to bring the fruit of fig tree and asks him to open it. He sees atom-like seeds within. Then he is asked to break one seed into two and look inside. The pupil says that he can find nothing inside. The Sage says, "That soul that you perceive not at all, dear—from that very soul the great fig-tree comes forth. Believe then, dear, that this soul is the Self of all that is, this is the Real, this the Self. THAT THOU ART, O Shvetaketu." There is the verse in *Chhandogya upanishad* which explains the mystery of the presence of Divinity in man. Thus:

There is this city of Brahman—the body—and in it the palace, the small lotus of the heart, and in it that small ether. Both heaven and earth are contained within it, both fire and air, both sun and moon, both lightning and stars; and whatever there is of the Self here in the world, and whatever has been or will be, all that is contained within it.

Body of man is called the city of Brahman. In this city there is the Palace which is compared to the heart, one of the most important organs in the body. In this is present small ether or space. That ether is the very *Akas a*, which pervades everything. Like subtle, immaterial and all-pervading ether, *Brahman* too is subtle and omnipresent. It is the *sadhana*—line of life's work to ever move closer and closer to the very centre of heart which is the very source, the fountain-head of all the force, wisdom and power. Vain it is to make search without. No knowledge will reach us from anywhere but this small lotus of the heart. However, if the lotus bud is tied with a string, then even though there are sun and moon rays, it will not bloom. So also there is the "knot of the heart," delusions of our mind, preconceived ideas, our running after this or that objects for happiness, and false doctrines which teach us to depend on this or that person, this or that dogma. We function from limited perspective. It is in transcending this limited sense of "I" and reaching the very centre that we touch the very fount, the source of all sweetness, of power and infinite happiness. No longer is there any conflict.

## ON ACTING WISELY

EVERY human being is always engaged in action of one kind or another, whether it be wise or foolish, selfish or unselfish, on one plane or another. The plane of thought and mind is the most important because it is there that the seeds are sown which fructify in speech and in deeds which affect oneself and others beneficently or otherwise. In order to show forth wisdom in action one must understand the dual aspect of the mind, the higher and the lower. The lower mind always acts from a personal and selfish point of view, creating troubles and obstacles, and so it needs to be purified, controlled, trained. People usually generate thoughts hastily, impulsively, without deliberation, resulting in actions of a like nature, actions that are neither useful nor necessary to themselves or to others, and thus time and energy are wasted. So the mind has to be clean and clear in order to perform actions of a wise and righteous nature.

Arjuna had this very difficulty, and therefore he questions Sri Krishna in the Third Chapter of the *Bhagavad-Gita*: "By what is man propelled to commit offences; seemingly against his will and as if constrained by some secret force?" And Krishna answers: "It is lust which instigates him. It is passion, sprung from the quality of *rajas*; insatiable and full of sin." And this is the condition of majority of human beings who work thoughtlessly because they are led by passion and desire of one kind or another, arising out of the quality of *rajas*—restlessness. Lord Buddha also taught that it is *Trishna*, *Tanha*, lust and thirst for things material, which makes people blind to the realities of life immortal. This it is that brings about strife and wars and misery and unhappiness.

There are people who shirk their own duties and responsibilities, thinking that thereby they will be able to free themselves from the moving wheel of Karma. Freedom can not be obtained that way. It is not by running away from home and family, but rather by fulfilling all one's obligations in the right way that one becomes free from the

bondage of the lower self and begins to show forth wisdom in action. As in every sphere of activity, certain qualifications have to be met with to acquire soul-wisdom.

There is a great deal of difference between Soul-wisdom and Head-learning, the Heart and the Eye Doctrine. *The Voice of the Silence* states: "The 'Doctrine of the Eye' is for the crowd; the 'Doctrine of the Heart' for the elect." It is the latter that will enable us to show forth wisdom in action. People in our civilization live in houses built on foundations of sand that cannot withstand the floods and storms of life. Jesus advises us to build on foundations of rock, which cannot be destroyed but which will always stand firm against the crises and calamities which come about cyclically.

Those acts show forth wisdom, which are performed with the heart, the mind, the understanding, without attachment and for the benefit of all. There is no thought of one's own reward in the performance of such acts. It is the performance of one's own duty that leads to wisdom in action. "Men being contented and devoted to their own proper duties attain perfection," says the *Gita*. It is constant discontent with one's environment, internal and external, that leads one into a vicious circle, which seems never-ending. So it is necessary to change the mental attitude, give up false views and values, and start anew along the right lines indicated by all the great teachers. In *Letters That Have Helped Me*, we are advised by Mr. Judge: "The way gets clearer as we go on, but as *we* get clearer we get less anxious as to the way ahead." So it is most important that *we* get clear in our perceptions and expressions.

It is through the cheerful and careful performance of small plain duties of life that we are fitted to undertake larger duties. The same is true about purifying our nature. Lord Buddha advises us to remove impurities of our nature one by one, little by little and day by day, as the smith removes impurities of silver. "You can solidify your character by attending to small things. By attacking small faults, and on every small occasion, one by one. This will arouse the inner attitude of attention and caution," writes Mr. Judge. Moreover, for

every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. Hence, if we try to change our nature all soon, a strong opposition is aroused in our nature and that could throw us off-balance.

Wisdom in action implies well-thought-out action, necessary action, right action done with the right motive, at the right time, in harmony with laws of Nature. This will not bring about a personal reaction and consequent suffering leading to bondage, but will enable us to win freedom.

The modern Prometheus has now become *Epi-metheus*, "he who sees only after the event"; because the universal philanthropy of the former has long ago degenerated into selfishness and self-adoration. Man will rebecome the *free* Titan of old, but not before cyclic evolution has re-established the broken harmony between the two natures—the terrestrial and the divine. (S.D., II, 422)

It is necessary to be far-sighted and be wise before the event and not after. H.P.B. stresses, in the Conclusion to *The Key to Theosophy*, the importance of "unbiased and clear judgment" for the success of the Theosophical Movement.

It is essential to cultivate wisdom in action and seek guidance from within. If each one awakens to his responsibility and considers his duty to keep the cycle moving without obstructions, the task will be easier. To be in attunement with the whole of Nature, visible and invisible, to observe the underlying unity between the subjective and the objective, is to understand the sanctity of life, to treat each being and thing with respect and reverence, and to show forth wisdom in action. Mr. Judge gives us a very helpful piece of advice:

Remember that "Thou may'st look for silence in tumult, solitude in company, light in darkness, forgetfulness in pressures, vigour in despondency, courage in fear, resistance in temptation, peace in war, and quiet in tribulation." (U.L.T. *Pamphlet No. 36*, p. 3)

## STUDIES IN THE DHAMMAPADA THE THOUSANDS—II

7. *Better than a man who offers, month after month for a hundred years, a thousand sacrifices is that man who pays homage to one grounded in wisdom. Superior is that homage to a century of formal sacrifices. (106)*

8. *Better than a man who tends the sacred fire in the forest for a hundred years is that man who pays homage to one grounded in wisdom. Superior is that homage to a century of formal sacrifices. (107)*

9. *Better than a man who offers an oblation and a sacrifice for a whole year in order to gain merit is that man who pays homage to the righteous. The whole of the former is not worth a quarter of the latter (108)*

HOLY scriptures often enjoin certain sacrifices, rituals, ceremonies, etc. They provide us the means by which our mind is diverted from worldly concerns, at least temporarily. Moreover, strict rules have to be observed in performance of sacrifices to ensure their efficacy. Hence, regular performance of sacrifices tend to increase one's concentration; thereby purifying the mind. Most sacrifices are performed for the express purpose of gaining something in return, be it wealth or son or sojourn in the heaven-world after death. But their true purpose is to express our gratitude to the gods or intelligences which preside over various forces of nature and maintain order in the universe. It is recognition of the principle of reciprocity or interdependence between men and gods. *The Bhagavad- Gita* tells us that only that sacrifice which is performed without expectation of reward is considered to be *sattvic* or good. But sacrifices performed with a view to their results or with ostentation of piety as also those which are not performed according to the precepts, are considered to be inferior. Success resulting from such sacrifices comes to an end. Therefore, homage paid to the one grounded in wisdom and worthy of reverence, is considered superior

to a century of formal sacrifices, and is also superior to the sacrifices that are performed for obtaining merit. In the *Bhagavad-Gita*, "honouring the gods, the brahmans, the teachers, and the wise" are called mortification of the body. Honouring the gods, the brahmans, the teachers and the wise elevates one's emotions to a feeling of reverence, humility, gratitude and also devotion. Their very presence arouses a desire in us to become worthy of having relation with them and to become like them. It is said that when Buddha taught the multitudes, thousands attained the *srottapati* stage, there and then, and became his disciples. It is said that in one of his former births, when Buddha saw the then Buddha Deepankara, there arose a desire in him to become like him. The seed for enlightenment, which is present in the heart of each and every being, got quickened in him by the reverential feeling that was aroused for Buddha Deepankara. At a simple level, we can appreciate that outward and formal performance of sacrifice does not necessarily make us better human beings. This is particularly so when the sacrifices are performed for getting something in return. Honouring the worthy, on the other hand, does help to some extent in getting rid of personal self and reminding us of the higher ideals of life. Thus, if the thing is done only outwardly, it is of no value as compared to that in which we put our heart.

What is the best way in which we can pay our homage? Paying homage is an attitude of mind. Even when we recognize holiness, our attitude wavers. We are tempted by worldly things. We often forget the teachings and then justify our action as being reasonable or practical and so on. We have to learn what they have taught, practice it and remain vigilant. If the practice falls short, we are not paying homage. There is gap between understanding and practice. We have to emulate. If we do not practice what we know, then we pay only a lip-service, we are not paying homage. To pay homage is to give ourselves completely to the teachings and practice them in our daily life.

10. *Four blessings to the man who respects the elders and practises reverence—length of days, beauty, happiness and strength. (109)*

When we respect our elders and practice reverence, we are blessed with long life, inner beauty of character, happiness and strength. But who is an elder? Buddha says that a man is not an elder simply because his hair is grey. His age is ripe but he is to be known as "old-in-vain." He is called an elder in whom dwell truth, virtue, non-violence, restraint and control, and who is free from impurity and is wise. With guidance and help from such an one, the younger learn quickly the lessons of life without associated stress that is experienced by the modern-day man. Respecting the elders brings happiness—a feeling of well-being; it is not to be confused with pleasures or bliss. In their blessing there is tremendous strength. Their blessings are not empty words; they are backed by sincere and indomitable will about which H.P.B. speaks. This is why in countries like India, reverence of the elders is taught to the young from childhood. Their blessings can become a protecting shield and may provide providential escape from calamity. It also fills one with vigour and enthusiasm which enables one to work dedicatedly and tirelessly. It gives strength to withstand jolts, bad events, sorrows, deceits and calamities, bravely.

The tradition of paying respect to one's elders, teachers, parents, etc., prepares the child to revere and recognize the *guruparampara* chain. He learns to respect every teacher, right from the person who taught him his alphabet to the one who gives him spiritual birth. It is lack of this tradition in the West that makes spiritual life difficult for a Westerner. When Buddha is sent to a teacher, he could recite far beyond what the teacher knew, but he is still respectful. Buddha's teacher, sage Viswamitra prostrates before the prince, and says:

[Thou] Art Teacher of thy teachers—thou, not I,  
Art Guru. Oh, I worship thee, sweet Prince!  
That comest to my school only to show

Thou knowest all without the books, and know'st  
Fair reverence besides. (*The Light of Asia*, p. 32)

The poet brings home the culture of the Orient, which teaches that the pupil should not be disrespectful to the teacher—even in thought.

When Buddha saw the householder Singala scattering rice in four quarters to ward off evil, he said to him:

Scatter not rice,  
But offer loving thoughts and acts to all.  
To parents as the East where rises light;  
To teachers as the South whence rich gifts come;  
To wife and children as the West where gleam  
Colors of love and calm, and all days end;  
To friends and kinsmen and all men as North;  
To humblest living things beneath, to Saints  
And Angels and the blessed Dead above:  
So shall all evil be shut off, and so  
The six main quarters will be safely kept. (*The Light of Asia*)

(*To be concluded*)

IF the soul is really immortal, what care should be taken of her, not only in respect of the portion of time which is called life, but of eternity! And the danger of neglecting her from this point of view does indeed appear to be awful. If death had only been the end of all, the wicked would have had a good bargain in dying, for they would have been happily quit not only of their body, but of their own evil together with their souls. But now, inasmuch as the soul is manifestly immortal, there is not release or salvation from evil except the attainment of the highest virtues and wisdom.

-PLATO



## ON SACRED ANIMALS

## IV

IT is said of H.P.B. that she had the power and knowledge that belonged to lions and sages. She had lion's heart and on the work traced out for her she had lion's grasp. Lord Buddha has been described as the "Lion of the Law." The Lion is one of the four Sacred Animals of the Ezekiel's wheel, the other three being, the Bull, the Eagle and the fiery serpent. The Lion symbolizes many things. Physically, we think of the lion as symbolizing strength, courage, power, majesty and nobility. It is the king of the jungle. It is known to kill but what is necessary for its sustenance, eating only a portion, and leaving the "impure" parts to the jackals. The Sphinx is shown to have the body of lion and human head, in which the beast signifies strength and the human head stands for wisdom. A spiritual aspirant must combine strength and wisdom. "For strength when destitute of the ruling aid of wisdom, is overcome by stupid astonishment confusing all things together; and for the purpose of action the intellect is useless when it is deprived of strength," writes Mr. Judge. The Atlanteans or the Fourth race of humanity was symbolized by the strong, powerful lion. When the symbol of two lions is used, they represent the "dual force or power of the two solar eyes, or the electro-positive and electro-negative forces." (S.D., I, 673 fn.)

In the article, "The Twelve Signs of the Zodiac," Mr. T. Subba Row points out that the fifth sign of the zodiac is *Simha* or Leo and the "word contains a world of occult meaning within itself; and it may not be prudent on my part to disclose the whole of its meaning now." The hierarchy of Creative powers is divided into seven esoteric groups of which the highest group is composed of beings known as "Fiery Lions," and the "Lions of Life." The esotericism of these Fiery Lions and the Lions of Life is securely hidden in the Zodiacal sign of Leo, writes H.P.B.

In *The Esoteric Character of the Gospels* we are told that the

zodiac sign Scorpio stands for *Chrestos-Meshiac* or the candidate undergoing trials of initiation during the Mysteries. He is represented as the Sun shorn of his golden rays, and crowned with thorns. Leo represents *Christos-Messiah*, and stands for triumphant *Messiah*, mounted up to the summit of the arch of heaven, personated as the *Lion of the tribes of Judah*. In the same article, H.P.B. explains that "*Chrestos* was the lonely traveller, journeying on to reach the ultimate goal through that 'Path' which goal was *Christos*, the glorified Spirit of 'TRUTH,' the reunion with which makes the soul (the Son) ONE with the (Father) Spirit." Thus we are able to see why Lion is the symbol of Michael, the Son of God.

One of the *Avatars* of Vishnu is that of *Nara-simha*, or a man-lion, representing last animal stage in the scale of evolution. Daitya king Hiranyakasipu is said to have been slain by Vishnu in his *Nara-simha Avatar*. Brahma's boon to the Daitya king was that he would not be destroyed by a common animal or man. Vishnu appeared in the form of half-man and half-lion, breaking open the pillar and held Daitya king by the thighs with his teeth and tore him up the middle.

Peacock is both an emblem of good and evil. In the Zoroastrian philosophy Ormuzda is the Lord of Light while his brother Angra Mainyu is the Lord of Darkness. Angra Mainyu with his wicked army of demons opposed light, purity, truth, goodness and knowledge with darkness, filth, falsehood, cruelty and ignorance. As a contrast to the useful and clean animals created by Ormuzda, Angra Mainyu created wild beasts and blood-thirsty fowls of the air. When the Holy Ones told Angra Mainyu that he was incapable of producing a beautiful and harmless being, he laughed and said that he could. He produced the loveliest bird the world had ever seen. It was the majestic peacock, the emblem of vanity and selfishness. Angra Mainyu said, "Let it be the King of Birds, and *let man worship him and act after his fashion*." From that day "Melek Taoos" or Angel Peacock came to be regarded as the messenger of Satan. The Yezidis or "Devil Worshippers," some of whom lived in

ancient Babylonia, to this day worship *Melek Taoos* or Peacock as the messenger of Satan and the mediator between the Satan and men. But, actually Peacock is not Satan or Devil but a symbol of the hundred eyed Wisdom. It is the vehicle of goddess Saraswati, the goddess of Wisdom. It is also the vehicle of Karttikeya, the Kumara, who is a virgin celibate associated with giving light of mind to men. In fact, peacock is the bird of all the gods and goddesses connected with secret learning. All the gods and goddesses are represented as using *vahans* or vehicles, through which they manifest themselves. A vehicle represents a carrier of something formless and immaterial.

The peacock's tail represents the sidereal heavens; and the twelve signs of the Zodiac *are hidden on his body*; for which he is also called "*Dwadasa Kara*," (the "twelve-handed"), and *Dwadas aksha*, "twelve-eyed" (S.D., II, 619). The eyes upon the feathers of the bird's tail, symbolize the sleepless eyes that see all things. To one who has the ambition of becoming an Adept of the "Secret doctrines," these eyes upon the bird's tail are a reminder that he must have the hundred eyes of Argus to see and comprehend all things. (*Isis*, II, 409)

We are told that Rishi Kasyapa through his wife Tamra is the progenitor of birds and of Garuda, the king of the feathered tribe. Garuda means one who soars in the sky. At his birth, Garuda was mistaken for Agni, the God of Fire, on account of his dazzling splendour, and hence was called *Gaganeswara*, "lord of the sky" (S.D., II, 564-65). He is the enemy of the snakes. In the *Ramayana*, the arrows shot by Ravan's son Indrajit, at Rama and his brother Lakshmana, turned into snakes and bound the two brothers, making them unconscious. When Garuda approached the two brothers, the arrows that had become snakes uncoiled and fled. Moreover, it is said that their wounds were healed by Garuda's touch. The *Garuda Purana* is a philosophical treatise, which discusses states after death and rituals for the dead.

Garuda, the allegorical and monstrous half-man and half-bird is

the vehicle on which Vishnu (who is *Kala*, "time") is shown to ride. He is the Indian *phoenix*, the emblem of cyclic and periodical time. Garuda is the emblem of the great cycle, the *Maha Kalpa*, co-eternal with Vishnu and also the emblem of the Sun and Solar Cycle. Jatayu, the son of Garuda represents the cycle of 60,000 years.

During the churning of the ocean, besides *Amrita*, the water of life or immortality, "*Surabhi*" the "cow of plenty," called "the fountain of milk and curds," was extracted from this "Sea of Milk." Cow and bull are considered sacred and one of them is the productive, while the other is generative power in Nature. They are the symbols connected with both the Solar and the Cosmic deities (S.D., I, 67). Cow Surabhi is also known as *Kamadhenu*, the wish-fulfilling cow, and also *Nandini*, or the one who gives happiness. Hindus consider the cow to be a sacred animal. In Egypt, the bull was sacred to Osiris and the cow was sacred to Isis, the Universal Mother, Nature, and to Hathor, the female principle in Nature, the two goddesses being allied to both Sun and Moon.

By means of cow worship, actually worship is offered to "nourishing earth" or Nature. The bull and the cow symbolize the Fifth or the Aryan Race. "The cow was in every country the symbol of passive generative power of nature...but at the same time that of the Logos, whose symbol became with the Egyptians and the Indians—the bull....In esoteric philosophy the cow is the symbol of creative nature, and the Bull (her calf) the spirit which vivifies her, or 'the Holy Spirit.' " (S.D., II, 418 fn.)

In India, it is the "golden" Cow through which the candidate for Brahminism has to pass if he desires to be a Brahmin, and to become *DWLJA* ("reborn a *second* time") (S.D., II, 462). The Scandinavian legend mentions the cow *Audhumla* (female principle), from whose udder flowed *four* streams of milk, which diffused themselves throughout space, and which represents the astral light in its purest emanation. The cow is the symbol of prolific generation and of intellectual nature. (*Isis*, I, 147 and fn.)

The elephant is ridden by gods and kings. Indra, the king of

heaven, rides *Airavata* that came out during the Churning of the Ocean. Ganesa, the God of Wisdom, is the elephant-headed God. There are various legends associated with the birth of Ganesa and his elephant head. In *Matsya Purana* Ganesa is shown to be the child born of sweat and dust on Parvati's body. After creating this child, Parvati sat for bath and told Ganesa to guard the entrance, with strict instructions to not allow *any one* to enter. Siva, the consort of Parvati, who was away, returned and did not recognize this new being to be his son, and therefore when he refused him an entry, Siva being "Siva-rudra," beheaded him. But when Siva came to know that the being guarding the entrance was his son, he ordered to replace Ganesa's head with the head of the creature sleeping with his head towards south, and that happened to be an elephant.

Ganesa, as well as the Egyptian equivalent deities, have animal head and body of man, which refers to that point in evolution when man was only man in form but no better than an animal. In his book, *The Symbolism of Hindu Gods and Rituals*, explaining the symbology of various parts of Ganesa's body and the elephant head, A. Parthasarathy observes that the trunk of the elephant represents the faculty of discrimination arising from wisdom. The trunk of an elephant has the unique capacity of performing both gross and subtle activities. An elephant can use his trunk to uproot a tree, and also to pick up a coin or a needle from the ground. So also one must aspire to reach discrimination that can penetrate the realms of material as well as spiritual worlds.

The elephant symbolizes strength, majesty and endurance. Lord Buddha says, "I shall endure abuse even as the elephant on the battlefield endures the arrows shot from the bow ....Draw yourself out of evil, like an elephant sunk in the mud." (*The Dhammapada*, verses 320 and 327)

Hanuman, the loyal devotee of Lord Rama is described as the monkey-god. Hanuman, with his army of monkeys or *Vanersena*, helped Rama in his fight against Ravana. H.P.B. points out that the monkey or rather the ape is sacred in India because its origin is

well-known to the Initiates. They have kept it concealed under a thick veil of allegory. Man has not descended from apes but the apes have descended from unnatural union between man and animal. We are told that Men of the Third Race, were ape-like in appearance but intellectually senseless giants. It is these ape-like, morally irresponsible men of the third race, who united with animal species lower than themselves creating remote ancestors of the anthropoid apes that we find today. H.P.B. points out that the Third Race men, though they were senseless and devoid of mind, they were as "Gods" by their spirituality and purity (S.D., I, 190). In the book, *From the Caves and Jungles of Hindostan*, H.P.B. writes: "Hanuman is the personified symbol of 'the earthly man,' who in spite of his animal nature, unfolds his spiritual nature by personal effort and, having overcome the former, emerges as the intellectual victor over all things earthly, finally becoming a god-like individual worthy to walk arm in arm with Rama, the embodiment of the highest divinity."

In the same book, H.P.B. records a conversation with an ascetic from South India who, further explains that Hanuman, the monkey-god, is the forefather of the Dravidians, a race distinct in every way from the Brahmins of the North. Mythologically, he is the son of Vayu, god of the air, guardian and ferryman at the river *Viraja*, the Hindu equivalent of river Styx, which every mortal has to cross after death in the world of shades and which no one crosses without the aid of Hanuman. The meaning of this is that before man can attain, in other and more evolved worlds, that stage of progress when he no longer needs a grossly objective form, he must begin at the point of inception of humanity under the guise of the monkey-like man, with all his animal passions and instincts. (p. 88)

(Concluded)

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LOVE is the astrolabe of the mysteries of God.

—RUMI

## TOTAL EDUCATION

What is the *real* object of modern education? Is it to cultivate and develop the mind in the right direction; to teach the disinherited and hapless people to carry with fortitude the burden of life (allotted to them by Karma); to strengthen their will; to inculcate in them the love of one's neighbour and the feeling of mutual interdependence and brotherhood; and thus to train and form the character for practical life? Not a bit of it. And yet these are undeniably the objects of all true education.

—*The Key to Theosophy*

IT IS generally accepted that the upbringing at home and an exposure to some formal education will contribute greatly to our nature and character, right from the early childhood. But it is said that even before birth the little developing life in the womb is capable of being "educated" in a sense, by the way the mother conducts her life and thought and by the conditions which may affect her. If that is so, there is such a thing as non-verbal education, i.e., transmission of ideas and feelings between two closely related bodies and souls. This less-known observation implies that the concept of education should not be restricted to the academic field only. Life itself, could be the chief teacher, moulding us through major and minor experiences.

In the above mentioned quotation from *The Key to Theosophy*, H.P.B. leaves no doubt as regards the *true objects* of education. With this as the starting base she left it to the ingenuity of the teaching fraternity and the academicians for the effective methods of conducting so responsible a task of fulfilling the high ideals they themselves advocate in theory. The ideals, we know, have remained on paper, in the midst of *commercialization of life* including the whole field of education, from the nursery level to the so-called elite education.

"What is so *sacred* about education that it cannot be profit-

## TOTAL EDUCATION

making?" writes a prominent economist. Once this degrading attitude is lightly accepted as norm in the "business" of education (considered as service industry), do we wonder when he further states: "Efficiency is best assured through open competition and choice." Of course, here competition is an euphemism for the clash of ambitions and the fierce rivalries—among learners, between teachers and within institutions. And the so-called "choice" is based on the survival of the fittest—an ability to elbow out the weak by the strong. This economist admits that it has led to exploitation and commercial environment, with the quality of education and of students being compromised "especially in the Management Education in Business Schools."

It is now openly admitted that the main object of the teaching institutions, (especially of the coaching classes) is preparation for the lucrative *livelihood*. Nowhere there is the concept of the "total education for life" itself, and for the collective progress of the human race. The latter objects are dismissed as too idealistic and impractical, although high sounding methods and ideal goals are preserved in the learned "thesis" on education. The high schools and colleges, the so-called "temples of learning" are simply the means, or preparation for an entry-point, an arcade into the vast arena of struggle for personal advancement and glory.

The consequences are not far to be seen. The ruling ideas and the cultural contents of the age are materialistic intellectualism, commercial values, consumerism, etc. resulting as the product of "ethical illiteracy" and lax culture. The increasing rate of crimes, violence, suicides, mental breakdowns, etc. are the signs of moral decadence in the society which ignores the *sacredness* of education and which has lost true reverence toward their teachers.

There is an on-going discussion whether, the advancement of science and learning, and the modern facilities provided by the technological advancement, have made us better citizens, happier parents, enthusiastic children, robust youth, in short, endowed us with a life of peace and prosperity, and an all-round growth for all.

R. W. Emerson, the American philosopher said: "The true *test of civilization* is, not the census, nor the size of cities, nor the crops, but the kind of men that country turns out." Where shall we find the noblest men of culture? It is said that sages are produced among virtuous nations. Instead, our civilization has become what Huxley calls, "the conspiracy against nature."

Why is there a failure to reach the practical goal of an ideal education? A great man of science, Einstein (in his address to California Institute of Technology (1931)) said: "Why does the magnificent science, which saves work and makes physical life easier, brings so little happiness? The simple answer runs: Because we have not yet learnt (even after 200 years of the Age of Reason) to make sensible use of it." In other words, scientific genius can produce gadgets, but it needs wisdom to make proper use of them. We need the capacity for the right value judgment so as to know what is essential for human life and what is of less consequence for his true welfare.

Prof. Alexis Carrel, the Nobel prize winner, and researcher in the field of Biochemistry, recognized the self-limited scope of scientific studies. He pointed out, in his famous book "Man, The Unknown," that we know enough of the gadgets of convenience but very little about ourselves. And what we know of human organism is a mechanical model—a living robot of self-centred purpose, with no vision for humanity's great future. Under his studies on the *marvels of biology*, Dr. Carrel saw the underlying "intelligent purpose," even in the minute cells. The next logical step is to conclude that the *same* should prevail everywhere in the universe and mainly in Man—the crown piece of evolution. He has much higher object to live for and the mission to fulfil.

The whole issue of what is the right form of education suitable for human species and his purpose is based on certain principles and premises. Basically, it should take into account what is our *concept of Man* and his intrinsic *needs* to maintain his exalted position among creatures, and even help their evolutionary progress.

Shakespeare may well say: "In action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god!" But scientific temper has no patience with poets and dreamers. Its popular theory of biological evolution may well pigeon-hole human creature into the category of a "superior genus of animals" evolving like others through continuous struggle for existence.

The above picture, gloomy as it looks, pertains to that aspect of Man which is ever-changing and mortal, and is responsible for the state of affairs in the field of education. Have we not heard the mortal man saying: "It is *my* life"! That it is "precious to *Me*," to be preserved at any cost, and it is "the most familiar treasure I possess, till it is taken away from me"? This is only one aspect of human nature. We need not despair as we are assured by the ancient psychology that there is the deathless aspect of man which he can claim as his own, and is truly himself. Here is the truth about the cheerful view of man, who is actually the Real man. It means, man is made up of a dual constitution—an immortal higher and the familiar lower. To evaluate their proper function and value in life is in itself an important part of Education.

Such are the basic concepts, which have been preached and practiced in the psychology of the ancients—a branch of the Ancient Wisdom of the ages, which exalts man as a "god in the making." This goes in line with the Biblical Words: "Man is made in the image of God." Man should, therefore, reflect god-like qualities *inherent* in him, derived from the One Divine source of his being.

Fortunately there are Humanistic Schools of philosophy based on the above view of man. They postulate that there must be latent powers and faculties, and great possibilities of his hidden mental, moral and psychical natures. These are awaiting to be unfolded if properly educated and fostered by the enlightened parents and teachers in an appropriate cultural environment. It is in line with the truly higher or ideal form of educational practices which have existed in the glorious civilizations of old.

The former ways of life and learning have produced grand

civilizations where free and all-round development of the body, mind, and character was possible. What are the road-blocks—social, moral, intellectual, which are likely to prevent the achievements of the higher goals of life? One of the greatest hindrances, as Dr. Alexis mentioned earlier, is the misinformation, if not stark ignorance, concerning what man is as a *whole*, and complete indifference to his intrinsic need as superior being on earth. These higher needs of the inner man are to be met by attending to the starry region of the mind, by means of education—formal as well as private.

How strange that in the midst of the ocean of learning and its distinguished universities, the human soul is left athirst for its most vital needs, Truth, Goodness and Beauty, which are to be found at the door of the *soul-satisfying Wisdom of the ages*. The latter has stood as the beacon-light of truth concerning man's undying luminous nature and the great scope of quickening his mental and spiritual powers through proper training, discipline and environment.

These principles have been partly recognized by the humanistic thinkers and social reformers, but nowhere in the citadels of learning an effective *philosophy of life* has been clearly enunciated based on the timeless principles which the Ancient Wisdom has left on record for us.

For an intelligent man, any human pursuit, which should include education, has to be guided by one's practical *Philosophy of life* and one's "world view." These help to define appropriate *principles* to be applied to the methods of teaching and the process of learning. Since it is the *whole* human life with which the philosophy deals, it has to have the *same central aim* to pursue in education, too. Most thinkers would agree to an *all-round progress* for the individual and the society, as the *goal* of all human aspiration and labour, and that of education in particular. It would be a folly to dissociate education from life and living, as two separate or independent human calling.

## 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:** What is meant when it is said that the law of Karma works unerringly and in a just manner and takes into account our motive, our knowledge, the inner state of mind and circumstances at the link of action, as also the load of past karma that has ripened? Does the fruition of Karma depend upon appropriate environment? Answer: Karma is the law, which is perfectly just, yet merciful. Its mercy is not in terms of allowing the guilty to go scot-free, but in delivering justice in a manner, which is educative and not penal though we may feel it to be so.

The law of Karma does not work mechanically on the basis of outward act. It takes into consideration various factors under which an act is done. This includes the knowledge of the person, his motive, his inner state of mind and circumstances, his karmic stamina or load of past karma at the time of performing the action. For instance, the karmic responsibility is in proportion to one's knowledge. Thus, a saint who knows what is right and wrong and in spite of his great knowledge, if he goes ahead and commits a crime, he is held far more responsible for his actions and the karmic consequences in his case will be far more severe than in the case of an ignorant person who does not know what is right and wrong. Karma also takes into consideration the karmic stamina of the person, i.e., at any given time, it brings to us the results of only a small portion of our past actions, taking into consideration our ability to handle them, our capacity to bear them. Her intention is never to crush us under the weight of the consequences, but to teach us the lessons of life by putting us in such circumstances from which we may learn. We can

be sure, that we are never given more than what we can bear and handle, though we may feel it all too heavy. It is only when we are faced with trying situations, difficult circumstances that we turn within and find that inner strength to go through the most difficult situations and emerge wiser, better and mellowed human beings. When we look back, we are surprised by our own inner strength. Kamm is the merciful mother who puts us into circumstances again and yet again, till we learn the lesson. Motive is most important. The judgment of the world is in terms of outward action, good or bad. But there can be outwardly good action with a bad motive and also outwardly bad action with a good motive. For instance, a large sum of money given out with a genuine desire to help the poor and the needy is far more meritorious action as compared to the case when money is given with the intention of gaining name and fame. Also, there is a difference between murder committed in cold blood, deliberately and in a planned manner by a person with wicked motive and a murder committed by a desperate man in a fit of rage, losing his mind for a moment, without real intent to kill. We can never know the inner state of a person who commits an act, the inner pressures, his struggles, his efforts at resisting evil impulse before he has finally fallen prey to an outburst in a weak moment, leading to heinous crime. However, Karma is the all-seeing law and takes all these factors into consideration before meting out justice. It brings the results in those circumstances when we are most likely to be able to deal with and learn from them. It is also stated that crimes committed in ignorance bring physical consequences but not moral suffering.

Past actions are like seeds (Karma) which sprout and grow and bring us the fruit when the environment is proper. The seed cannot grow unless soil, water, manure and sunlight are in proper measure. Similarly, our Karmic seeds await appropriate environment to come to fruition. For instance, it is obvious that a person who has to experience the pain and joy of giving birth to a child cannot have this experience while he is in a male body. Naturally, that Karma

will have to wait till he is born in a female body in some future incarnation. Then, the stored up Karma which required him to have the experience of child-bearing and child-birth will manifest itself. Similarly, if the person born in a rich family is required to experience poverty in order to cultivate fortitude and sympathy, this experience will necessarily have to wait until he loses all his money in this life or is born in a poor family in some future incarnation. Thus, our past actions (Karma) require appropriate environment for them to come to fruition, to bring us appropriate results from which we may learn necessary lessons. While it awaits its fruition, its intensity or nature does not change or get diluted in any manner. We reap in exact And just measure what we have sown in the past.

**Question:** It is said regarding working of the law of Karma that if a good cause comes to fruition at the same time when the ill-effect of bad cause has ripened, the two may nullify each other or result in reducing the impact. Could we consider prayers to be beneficial measure in nullifying evil acts or suffering?

**Answer:** Prayer is generally considered to be a means of communicating one's problems, wishes and desires to the Almighty. Most of the time we are engaged in purely petitionary prayer, asking God to grant this wish or avert that disaster. Does an Omniscient God need to be told what is to be done? H.P.B. points out that *petitionary prayers kill self-reliance*. Sometimes a person says that by his own strength he was unable to conquer any passions or weaknesses, but when he prayed to Jesus Christ or Allah or Rama, by *His power* he was able to conquer. To explain what happens in such cases, H.P.B. gives an analogy of hypnotism and mediumship, which often produce positive results, but for which the subject can claim no merit. For instance, when a hypnotizer helps the subject to overcome the habit of lying or drinking, by suggestion, there is no merit in it for the subject. There would be real inner transformation and an addition to the good Karma of the subject had he made personal effort to reform, involving great mental and physical

struggle. When we pray to God to wipe off certain Karmic consequences or suffering, which is the result of our own unwholesome acts in the past, we are living the life of moral idleness and passing on our burden to God. As a result of our prayer, if certain calamity is averted or cure of a disease is brought about, it might not be permanent cure or relief, and might only be postponement of karmic results. H.P.B. has this to say:

Not even the greatest of Yogis can divert the progress of Karma, or arrest the natural results of actions for more than a short period, and even in that case, these results will only reassert themselves later with even tenfold force, for such is the occult law of Karma. (H.P.B. *Series No. 32*, p. 34)

However, one of the aphorisms of Karma says that effects of Karma may be "counteracted or mitigated by the thoughts and acts of oneself or of another, and the resulting effects represent the combination and interaction of the whole number of causes involved in producing the effects." Often, our prayers are but intense thoughts and desires backed by strong faith. Mr. Judge points out that in India, when help is needed for some orphanages, they pray to some patron god and help comes. What actually happens is that strong and constant faith carries the thoughts of prayer into receptive minds and they are then moved to action. Our intense desire may strike like a Vulcan and another person may do that which we desired to do. Our good thoughts must be sustained. Those who think about the most trifling things from the higher plane of thought, their thoughts are very intense and by that very intensity they acquire the power of creation.

Jesus recommends silent, unuttered prayer to one's Father-in-Secret. It is "Will prayer." In such a prayer, the inner attitude is, "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." There is no personal or selfish element, and yet it is finite good that is desired, and in it the power and potentialities of the divine become available to us for brief space of time so that our thoughts and desires are translated

into action. But in its highest sense, prayer is a meditation that is described by Plato as the ardent turning of the soul towards the divine. In that, one does not ask for any particular good but for good itself, or the Universal Supreme Good. We are asked to remain silent in the presence of the Divine Ones, so that they can show us, by the light which issues from them, what is *intrinsically* good—and not *what appears to us to be good*. In the eyes of the Law of Karma, perhaps the good consists in allowing the karmic effects of our past thoughts and deeds to work out. We pray for this or that *particular* good to happen, because we do not have before us the larger picture.

Self-examination is a "prayer" we must practise every day, before going to sleep. We are asked to impartially review all our thoughts, feelings, words and deeds of the entire day, and note our strong and weak points without trying to make excuses or explaining away our mistakes and blunders, and resolving to make amends the next day. Such prayer keeps us from accumulating further bad Karma.

Turning to the Higher Self within and recognizing that we are "That," which is never touched by Karma, leads to inner calmness and strength. It prepares us to receive whatever life brings to us by way of Karmic consequences without complaint and thus enables us to liquidate our karmic debts.

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IN the same manner as lovers gradually advance from the beauty which is apparent in sensible forms, to that which is divine; so the ancient priests, when they considered that there is a certain alliance and sympathy in natural things to each other, and of things manifest to occult powers, and discovered that all things subsist in all, they fabricated a sacred science from this mutual similarity. Thus they recognized things supreme in such as are subordinate, and the subordinate in the supreme.

-PROCLUS



## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

We now have scientific evidence that "otherness" or "separation" is only an illusion. Quantum physicist David Bohm was of the opinion that time and space were not the dominant factors that separated things. He believed that what is perceived as manifestly explicit or unfolded reality is only an expression of a latently implicit or infolded, actual reality. David Bohm illustrated this by putting a drop of ink into a beaker of viscous fluid such as glycerine. On rotating the beaker, the drop slowly begins to move in spirals and merges in the surrounding fluid till finally it disappears. However, on rotating the beaker in the opposite direction, the drop begins to reappear again. Bohm called the unseen ink in the glycerine the *infolded order* while the materialization of it again, as the *unfolded order*, and he said that the two were never separate. There is yet another illustration of inseparability offered by Quantum physics and it is termed "entanglement." Thus, if an elementary particle such as photon passes through matter, it is absorbed by an electron, which eventually emits back the photon. But at times, the photon is split into two, and then it is observed that whatever happens to one of these two split photons, immediately alters the other particle, as if they were somehow entangled and functioning as one entity. This happens even when these two particles are billions of kilometers away from one another. Though Einstein worked hard to disprove it, calling it "spooky action at a distance," today, quantum entanglement is accepted by almost all physicists. However, the change in one of the split photons bringing about instantaneous change in the other cannot be explained on the basis of communication between the two particles because communication would involve a finite amount of time. The splitting of the photon is only an unfolded manifestation, whereas in their infolded state they remain one, and hence time and space are no longer relevant to them. Likewise, human beings, whales, bacteria, rocks, planets and galaxies are all made up of elementary particles that were once

## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

entangled in one superbly infolded particle, which exploded in the Big Bang. In which case, our individually separate otherness is only an illusion, writes Mukul Sharma. (*Sunday Times of India [The Speaking Tree]*, June 20, 2010)

A Master of Wisdom says that there exists a Law of Sympathy in the universe. "Nature has linked all parts of her Empire together by subtle threads of magnetic sympathy, and there is a mutual correlation even between a star and a man." This fact is intuitively grasped by certain poets and writers so that Francis Thomson says: "All things by immortal power, near or far, hiddenly to each other linked are, that thou canst not stir a flower without troubling of a star."

Humanity is the great brotherhood by virtue of the sameness of the material from which it is formed. H.P.B. points out that there is no such thing as separateness and that it exists only in the unclean fancy of human beings. Though we are in separate bodies and forms, *essentially* we are the same. Theosophy teaches the doctrine of *emanation*. There is first an *involution* of spirit into matter, followed by *evolution* through matter. Shri Krishna speaks of this divine essence, thus: "It is within and without all creatures animate and inanimate; it is inconceivable because of its subtlety, and although near it is afar off. Although undivided it appeareth as divided among creatures." (*Gita*, XIII)

H.P.B. explains the inextricable unity of the whole of manifestation by means of an analogy. Humanity as a whole is the stem that grows from the spiritual root. If we hurt the stem, every shoot and leaf will suffer, and so it is with mankind. Any injury to the plant will affect the whole course of its future growth and development, just as a cut in the finger may make the whole body suffer and react on the entire nervous system. Every physical action has its moral and everlasting effect. If we hurt a person, his pain and suffering is not restricted to him but spreads and affects not only his neighbours but people of other nations, *in good time*. Unless we accept at least as an *axiomatic truth* that by wronging one man we

wrong not only ourselves but also the whole of humanity in the long run, no brotherly feelings such as preached by the great reformers are possible. (*The Key to Theosophy*, pp. 45-46)

We are interconnected on the inner plane. One person's unhappiness pollutes not only his own inner being and of those around him, but also the collective psyche of which he is an inseparable part. Further, any negative inner state is contagious: Through the law of resonance, it triggers and feeds latent negativity in others. Mr. Crosbie writes:

It is better to assume a cheerful attitude, to cultivate in one's self a feeling of confidence, and endeavour to impart it to our nearest. Our anxiety and inner fears, as well as our outward expression of them, may go a great way in depressing those who love us and whom we love.

Recently, a fatwa was issued by the Deoband Dar-ul-Uloom seminary, discouraging women from working, which is looked upon by many as unfortunate and unwarranted. In Islamic history there are examples of women empowerment in the fields of politics, economics, social engagement and spirituality. Prophet Muhammad worked for a woman trader, Khadijah who became the first financier of Islam. "Even though majority of Indian Muslims do not adhere to the Deoband creed, such edicts reinforce stereotypical perceptions of Islam and Shariah law," writes Sadia Dehlvi, an author and a commentator (*The Times of India*, June 8, 2010). Apart from Quran and Sunnah, Shariah law is based on *ijma*, i.e., consensus of the scholars. For many centuries, Muslim scholars, theologians, sufis and philosophers have interpreted the Shariah law keeping in mind the needs of their times. Shariah literally means "the road," or the outward path to righteous actions, which in turn prepares the person for the internal spiritual quest. The guidelines offered by the Shariah laws can be classified into actions that are indifferent, recommended,

required, reprehensible and forbidden, covering areas outside the modern legal systems. However, we are advised not to pay too much attention to Shariah but instead focus on the essential spiritual dimensions of Islam, such as *ihsan*, which commands purity of heart and excellence of character. Also, distinction is made in Shariah between the spirit and the letter of the law, because the Prophet has said, "All actions are based upon intent."

Shariah laws are contextual to environment, intention and circumstances. For instance, covering one's head is preferred in the Shariah, but after the 9/11, as Muslims were becoming the targets of discriminatory behaviour, some American Muslim scholars issued a fatwa that Muslim women should avoid wearing a headscarf. Shariah came to make life easy and not difficult. The spirit of Islam lies in free will and not in compulsion.

It is interesting to note that the Prophet revealed two-thirds of Quran while in Mecca, and it was only after 13 years, when the Prophet migrated to Medina, that he revealed the rest of the Quran, consisting of *legal rulings*. These rulings came only after the new society had practised non-violence and imbibed the ideals of tolerance, brotherhood and honouring of women. Also, out of 1,24,000 companion of Prophet Muhammad, who ranked the highest in Muslim piety, only 10 of them issued fatwas, while the remaining worked towards betterment of society. "Muslim scholars could well follow this example and concentrate on the community's economic and educational progress. Traditionally, fatwas required scholarship, caution, reflection and deep insights into Islamic philosophy. Enlightenment should accompany the study of religion, not dogma. We now have every other self-styled scholar rushing to issue headline-grabbing fatwas leading to unproductive sound-bite journalism....Edicts coming from Muslim seminaries must be more accomodating in their nature, particularly because we share secular space with Indian brethren of other religions," writes Dehlvi.

It is felt that fatwa is one of Islam's most misunderstood words. Ideally speaking, a fatwa is advice, opinion or suggestion, often in

response to a question, and the decision to accept it or not rests with the individual. But most of the time the fatwas issued by the religious heads give the impression of being a command or a dictum. Mr. Crosbie points out that the conflicts and troubles in the world will never cease so long as we seek to make men "good" by legislation without trying to arouse the real nature of man and seek only to repress what is considered "bad." *Prohibitions* of all kinds serve only to *exasperate the evil nature in men*. We need not to *prohibit*. We need to *educate*, and first of all we need to educate ourselves. We must try to follow the law of our own being and practise compassion, love and helpfulness for all, then we shall be able to help leaven the whole lump. (*Universal Theosophy*, p. 97)

It is not enough to impose laws, in order to improve any social, economic or political system. It has been noticed, for instance, that so long as men are dishonest, bullies and twisters, they always find out some new way of cheating and evading tax. However stringent the laws are made, people succeed in finding loopholes. We cannot have good society without good men, and we cannot have good men, merely by imposing laws. The emphasis must be on individual morality. Thus:

....and he [the disciple] smiles at the socialist and the reformer who endeavour by sheer force to re-arrange circumstances which arise out of the forces of human nature itself. This is but kicking against the pricks; a waste of life and energy. (*Light on the Path*, p. 77)

The important thing about Stigmata is not *how* or *why* it happens, but that it does. It is the ability of some people to spontaneously reproduce the crucifixion wounds of Jesus Christ. There have been 500 known cases of people since the 13th century, who have replicated Jesus' wounds while he was on the Cross. It has been for these people a profoundly positive and life-changing experience.

The first case is that of St. Francis of Assisi. In 1224, during his prayers on the mountain retreat of La Verna, he started bleeding just as Jesus did, from his palms and feet where the nails were driven in; from his forehead as the crown of thorns was worn; and from the side of the abdomen where he was hurt with a lance by a Roman centurion. Out of the 500 known cases, 60 have been declared saints or blessed. In the 20th century there have been two cases of stigmatics—Therese Neumann from Bavaria in Germany and the Franciscan monk Padre Pio from Italy who died in 1968. Since the number of stigmata cases are on the rise and they include ordinary people rather than mystics or the members of the religious orders, the Vatican now approaches it with skepticism. Many skeptics have regarded stigmata as hoaxes or self-inflicted wounds. Some have offered psycho-physiological explanation. For instance, blisters are formed on the skin as a result of hypnotic suggestion. It is argued that under suitable trance-like conditions induced either by intense prayer or due to devotional fervour, people could inflict themselves with wounds similar to those on the body of the crucified Christ. These stigmatics bleed according to their beliefs, i.e., depending on whether they believe the nails were put through the palms or the wrists of Jesus, or whether the centurion stabbed Jesus on the right or left side of the abdomen, writes Mukul Sharma. (*Sunday Times of India [The Speaking Tree]*, May 23, 2010)

In sense perception stimuli are sent from without to within. But it is also possible to send the stimuli from within to the without. Within the physical man is the astral, inner man. Stimuli are often sent from the astral man within to the periphery or the physical body, which can bring about changes in the physical body. For instance, in cases where hair turns grey overnight, due to intense grief, thoughts and emotions first affect the astral body which in turn affects the physical. Likewise, a blister is produced on the arm of a hypnotized subject when a hypnotizes puts a plain paper on his arm with the suggestion that he has put a burning coal on his arm and that it will soon produce a blister. Mr. Judge explains that the picture or the

idea of a blister is impressed on the astral body of the subject by the hypnotizer and that in turn controls all the nerves, sensations, currents and secretions. It is done through the sympathetic nervous plexus and ganglia. In case of stigmata it is a case of self-hypnotism and self-suggestion, possible only in fanatical hysterical ecstasy. The ecstatic fanatical men and women by brooding over the pictured idea of the wounds of Jesus produced the same on their own bodies. In such cases, the constant brooding over the wounds of Jesus produced an internal impression and imprinted the picture deeply on the astral body, and then the physical molecules were gradually impressed from within resulting in the stigmata. When one is hypnotized by another, the operator has to simply make the image or the picture and impress it on the astral body of the subject during the hypnotic process. Whereas, in *self-hypnotization*, a *long-continued ecstasy is necessary* in order to make the impression complete. (W. Q.J. Series No. 16, pp. 12-13)

Our ideas and imagination, first affect the astral body and then, through it, the physical. In *Isis Unveiled*, H.P.B. mentions that when a person witnessed deep wounds being inflicted by one soldier on the body of another soldier, he was so dreadfully frightened that when he reached home, the same wounds broke out on his body.

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FLIES sit at times on the sweet-meats kept exposed for sale in the shop of a confectioner; but no sooner does a sweeper pass by with a basketful of filth than the flies leave the sweet-meats and sit upon the filth-basket. But the honey-bee never sits on filthy objects, and always drinks honey from the flowers. The worldly men are like flies. At times they get a momentary taste of divine sweetness, but their natural tendency to filth soon brings them back to dunghill of the world. The good man on the other hand, is always absorbed in the beatific contemplation of divine beauty.

-SRI RAMAKRISHNA