

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

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WHEN GURU AND CHELA MEET

There is a road, steep and thorny, beset with perils of every kind—but yet a road, and it leads to the heart of the Universe. I can tell you to find Those who will show you the secret gateway that leads inward only, and closes fast behind the neophyte for evermore. There is no danger that dauntless courage cannot conquer. There is no trial that spotless purity cannot pass through. There is no difficulty that strong intellect cannot surmount. For those who win onwards, there is reward past all telling: the power to bless and save humanity. For those who fail, there are other lives in which success may come.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

WILLIAM Quan Judge and Damodar Mavalankar were declared by the Masters to be successful and accepted disciples—out of many who aspired for chelaship, and failed for one reason or another—in the last quarter of the 19th century. Human evolution is linked with spiritual evolution, and discipleship is for the whole of humanity to aspire for.

“Not only is man more than an animal because there is the god in him, but he is more than a god because there is the animal in him.” Spiritual progress depends upon right relation of these two forces—animal and divine. We have allowed the animal to usurp the place of the god. So long as the animal rules, there will be desire for physical life, oscillation between pain and pleasure and keenest suffering. But man is the king who can resolve to evict the

animal from the usurped throne and restore it to the god. Once we allow the god to rule the animal, we will be in possession of great force and power, hitherto unknown to us (*Through the Gates of Gold*). This is involved in our journey from discipleship to adeptship. But as the same book points out, do not fancy that this is easily done. Do not think that it is done by a religious or virtuous person—he only follows a certain discipline or a fixed standard to hold the animal in check. In *An Epitome of Theosophy* we are given a bird's eye-view of the spiritual development. Thus:

As to the process of spiritual development, Theosophy teaches:

First: That the essence of the process lies in the securing of supremacy to the highest, the spiritual, element of man's nature.

Second: That this is attained along four lines among others—

(a) The entire eradication of selfishness in all forms and the cultivation of broad, generous sympathy in, and effort for, the good of others.

(b) The absolute cultivation of the inner, spiritual man by meditation, by reaching to and communion with the Divine....

(c) The control of the fleshly appetites and desires, all lower material interests being deliberately subordinated to the behests of the spirit.

(d) The careful performance of every duty belonging to one's station in life, without desire for reward, leaving results for Divine law.

Third: That while the above is incumbent on and practicable by all religiously disposed men, a yet higher plane of spiritual attainment is conditioned upon a specific course of training, physical, intellectual, and spiritual, by which the internal faculties are first aroused and then developed.

Fourth: That an extension of this process is reached in Adeptship, Mahatmaship...attained by laborious self-discipline and hardship, protracted through possibly many incarnations, and with many degrees of initiations and preferment.... (pp. 26-27)

Steps from (a) to (d) are preparatory, which, if sincerely followed, would bring us to a stage where we are ready to be guided

by a Guru. The aspirants to higher planes of being need to undergo a specific course of training, for which guidance of a guru is necessary. But till such time self-discipline is needed. As H.P.B. says, "Of what use would Professor Clerk Maxwell have been to instruct a class of little boys in their multiplication-table"? We are assured, "When the pupil is ready the Master will appear." A story in Buddha's life speaks of his halting in a potter's cottage for a night, while on his journey to spread the *Dhamma*. Buddha has to share the room with a traveller named Pukkusati. Buddha learnt that the traveller had left home searching for the Exalted One. He said, "My faith is in Him, my mind approves of His teachings." When Buddha asked him if he knew where the Exalted One was at the moment, Pukkusati replied, "Somewhere in the North." Buddha said, "You have never seen him, would you recognize him if you were to meet him"? Pukkusati answered, "No, I would not know him because I have never seen him." Then Buddha told him to listen carefully as he expounded the doctrine of sevenfold man. When the preaching was over, Pukkusati prostrated himself before Buddha and said, "I have found the Master!" With faith in the Doctrines he had learnt and practised, Pukkusati had prepared himself and was ready. So the Master came where he was.

But this meeting with the Guru in flesh and blood comes at a far later stage. Before this, there is a period of transition, in which the disciple has to prepare himself and in which he will be tested. As a Master of Wisdom says, to accept any person as a chela is not a matter of his personal will, but merit is the deciding factor. If one lived the life of moral and spiritual discipline, doing good works in the name of the Master, he would have forced that Master to accept him. Mr. Judge writes that first of all, the aspirant should ask himself, "When and how did I get a desire to know about chelaship and to become a chela? What is my motive in desiring to be a chela?" Secondly, "What is a chela and what does chelaship involve?" "There are many sorts of chelas. There are lay chelas and probationary ones; accepted chelas and those who are trying to fit themselves to be even lay chelas." A lay chela is but a man of

the world who affirms his desire to become wise in spiritual matters. H.P.B. defines Chela and Guru thus:

A “Chela” then, is one who has offered himself or herself as a pupil to learn practically the “hidden mysteries of Nature and the psychical powers latent in man.” The spiritual teacher to whom he proposes his candidature is called in India a *Guru*; and the real Guru is always an Adept in the Occult Science. A man of profound knowledge, exoteric and esoteric, especially the latter; and one who has brought his carnal nature under subjection of the WILL; who has developed in himself both the power (*Siddhi*) to control the forces of nature, and the capacity to probe her secrets by the help of the formerly latent but now active power of his being—this is the real Guru. To offer oneself as a candidate for Chelaship is easy enough, to develop into an Adept the most difficult task any man could possibly undertake. (*Raja Yoga or Occultism*, p. 1)

Before one can reach that state where one is ready to be taught practical Occultism by a Guru, one has to qualify oneself. One of the first things required is faith, which helps him firmly to believe in the existence of the Masters, because it would be a very long time before he could actually meet one of them. One of first qualifications for chelaship is: “Perfect physical health.” It does not mean we are required to have the body of an athlete or an acrobat, but it should be strong enough to take the stress which is involved in tearing away the lower from the Higher Self. Next, we need to develop absolute mental and moral purity and unswerving devotion and faith in the Law of Karma—so that at the first instance of pain and trouble we would not run to the nearest temple and make offerings, or resort to ceremonies and rituals to be relieved of the pain, but *accept* whatever troubles and trials come our way, and drink without a murmur whatever the cup of life holds for us, to its last bitter dregs.

H.P.B. points out, “No man or woman knows his or her moral strength until it is *tried*. Thousands go through life very respectably, because they were never put to the pinch.” It is the very Law of spiritual life which makes certain that we have the right stuff in us

before we can be accepted as a chela. As soon as one resolves to walk the path, Karma begins to precipitate far more rapidly than in the case of an average person. At every point we are required to make the choice and each choice will have definite results. The latent good and bad come to the surface and the chela has to deal with his passions and desires, *unhelped*. It is the fight between the chela’s will and his carnal nature, in which “Karma forbids any angel or a Guru to interfere until the result is known.” The aspirant should be ready to acquire mastery over his body, senses, pain, and recognize in his *Atman* the highest ruler; then only under the time-honoured rules he could be taken in hand by one of the Mahatmas.

Just as there are various degrees of disciples, so also there are degrees of Masters (Gurus). There is a *guruparampara* chain. In a sense, a school teacher, who has taught us our alphabet, is our guru and an important link in the chain. A child does well, if he holds this teacher in reverence and tries to follow what he teaches, with faith. This attitude of reverence is very important. In the East, a Guru is regarded as second only to one’s parents in dignity. The relationship between Guru and Chela is far deeper, which bond we carry from life to life. In the eyes of the chela, Guru is the embodiment of *Atman*, *i.e.*, Guru is a living vision, which he is going to find in himself. In the East, to be disrespectful to one’s Guru, even in thought, is considered to be a great sin—something which harms the moral nature of the pupil. This *Guruparampara* chain extends from our present Guru to the highest Spiritual chief in whose ray or descending line we happen to be.

“The proper function of the Guru is to readjust and not to pour in vast masses of knowledge expressed in clear and easily comprehended terms.” The faith and love which exist between them act as a stimulus and purifier for the mind of the chela.

When the true link is established between Guru and Chela, there is an inner osmosis and knowledge flows from Master’s consciousness to the pure consciousness of the disciple. We are told that the disciple becomes the outpost of Master’s

consciousness, *i.e.*, his consciousness is not encapsulated—the consciousness of the two works in a well-synthesized way.

It is the Master who, after accepting a chela, arouses the powers and faculties which are otherwise dormant in the latter. Although all potentialities and powers are in man, someone experienced has to guide in developing or in bringing out those potentialities. A wise teacher takes the chela ahead, only one step at a time. We need guidance in the process of development and unfoldment, so that we do not lose balance, *i.e.*, do not get into serious psychological and moral problems. This is called Initiation. Even if a chela has certain powers, a guru can seal them till it is safe for him to exercise them.

A Guru tests his disciple in various ways. The test consists in seeing how well he responds to it. The attitude with which he responds decides everything. A story is told that a disciple, when he saw men revelling, merry-making and drinking, felt disgusted and also proud that he was not indulging in such things. The Guru of this disciple made him work through the brain of a drunken person, *i.e.*, the disciple had to work through the physiology of another person with the drunkenness problem. This is possible through *parakayapravesh*—the power of temporarily entering the body of another. He was being tested to see if he could maintain stability under those conditions. A disciple has to go from initiation to initiation. From the final initiation, he emerges recognizing his true Self.

We are advised to deserve, before we desire, intimacy with the Masters. “Do you wonder that in the case of those who rush unprepared into the ‘circle of ascetics’ and before the ripe moment, insanity sometimes results?” (*Letters That Have Helped Me*). When we go unprepared in the presence of the Great Ones, we might find that the good and the bad tendencies resolve themselves suddenly—separate out like the two armies in the *Mahabharata*—and we may begin to experience the conflict, so that if we lack the necessary moral stamina, the struggle to overcome the base nature may prove to be strenuous. When a big ship is sailing, it is not

right for a small boat to go near it, because the currents created by the big ship in the surrounding water might cause the little boat to sink. So, before the little boat may go near, the ship is prepared through internal adjustment. Similarly, the Great Ones tone down or veil their magnetic influence before an ordinary person can go near them.

Ultimately, the only way we are guaranteed to attract the attention of the Masters is by serving humanity. It is said, “Where thought can pass, They can come.” A Master of Wisdom writes:

Nature has linked all parts of her Empire together by subtle threads of magnetic sympathy...thought runs swifter than the electric fluid, and your thought will find me if projected by pure impulse, as mine will find, has found, and often impressed your mind...Like the light in the sombre valley seen by the mountaineer from his peaks, every bright thought in your mind, will sparkle and attract the attention of your distant friend and correspondent...and it is our law to approach every such an one if even there be but the feeblest glimmer of the true “Tathagata” light within him.

THIS pearl of eternity is the Church or Temple of God within thee, the consecrated place of divine worship, where alone thou canst worship God in spirit and in truth...When once thou art well grounded in this inward worship, thou wilt have learnt to live unto God above time and place. For every day will be Sunday to thee, and wherever thou goest thou wilt have a priest, a church, and an altar along with thee.

—WILLIAM LAW

W.Q.J.—HIS LIFE AND WORK

Strive to get a clear, comprehensive and common-sense view of Theosophy, and to the world give only that view, and the world will appreciate. Never consider yourself as the actor, and think of the real Self.

—W. Q. JUDGE

MARCH 21 always brings to the minds of all sincere students of Theosophy the remarkable life and work of William Quan Judge, for on that day, in the year 1896, he closed his life record. Whether we try to understand him as a man or as a worker in the Theosophical field, we find in him one predominant quality—his loyalty and devotion to Theosophy, to Masters, and to H.P.B.; to the teachings, the Custodians of the teachings and their transmitter for our generation. It is this loyalty, this devotion, which stood him in good stead where others failed, and here is something we all can learn from, remembering that not only are the Custodians, the Masters, alive and in physical bodies today, but also that H.P.B. is not dead and gone; she still remains alive, for her heart and vitality pulsate throughout the Theosophical Movement and in every word she wrote.

To know Mr. Judge, the man, we have to take note of the inner and outer environment of the Ego in the Irish borrowed body, and of the “NIRMANAKAYA...that blended with him,” as H.P.B. wrote. Everyone has two environments in which he lives: one that is composed of his family, friends, nation, race, etc., and the other his inner environment of secret endeavours, thoughts, feelings and desires. This latter is the more important, for it is the battleground on which takes place the struggle between the spiritual, or egoic, and the personal, the results of which make themselves known later on, perhaps not until coming lives. They show themselves in the expressions of our feeling-thoughts, namely, our actions, for the latter are the embodiments of the former.

As far as the outer personality of Mr. Judge is concerned, we have been given the picture of a lovable man, kind, sympathetic,

“never narrow, never selfish, never conceited.” The Irish poet AE wrote that he considered Judge “the wisest and sweetest of any I have ever met...I have more reverence for him than for any other human being I know of.” His friends described him as completely trustworthy. “I trust Judge more than anyone in the world,” wrote H.P.B. He made many friends, and it is owing to the foresight and endeavours of some of these friends that pure Theosophy is alive today and the original writings of the teachers are still in print.

With regard to his inner environment, we can learn much from a study of his letters and of his *Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita*. There is a statement in the latter book (pp. 4-5) which gives an insight into his character:

What I propose here to myself and to all who may read these papers is to study the *Bhagavad-Gita* by the light of that spiritual lamp—be it small or great—which the Supreme Soul will feed and increase within us if we attend to its behests and diligently inquire after it. *Such at least is the promise by Krishna in the Bhagavad-Gita—the song Celestial.* (Italics ours)

It was just that attitude of trust and loyalty which was fundamental to his life, keeping him always at the heart of the Movement. Through struggles and dark periods of despondency, such as come to every *earnest* student when he begins to feel his unworthiness, he kept on, writing after one such period:

These last days have been a trial to me. Quite vividly the question of sticking fast or letting go has come up. I believe that I have been left alone to try me. But I have conquered. I will not give up; and no matter what the annoyance or bitterness, I will stand.

His trust in H.P.B. was equal to her trust in him. “I will never forget Judge’s loyalty and devotion, his unswerving friendship,” she declared. And she wrote to him: “Take my place in America now and, after I am gone, at Adyar.” She defended him all she could, and about none did she write as she did about him, as in the last of her Five Messages to the American Theosophists.

As for Mr. Judge as a worker for Theosophy and the

Theosophical Movement, we find that, though living a troubled life, feeling an exile and alone, he remained steadfast and devoted to the last, filling any place that was vacant in the Work, without looking for results. His chance came when he returned to the U.S.A. from India, at a time when the Theosophical Society was passing through a crisis, and resuscitated the work there from coast to coast. Under his leadership, a spectacular revival of Theosophy took place in America. He founded the magazine *The Path*, which H.P.B. described as “most excellent.” “His *Path* begins to beat *The Theosophist* out of sight,” she wrote. “*The Path* alone is his *certificate* for him in Theosophy.”

Often ill, always kind, always working, never pushing himself forward, he embodied the spirit of the Movement. When he died his spirit lived on in Robert Crosbie, and lives today in the resuscitated Movement.

Judge’s personal attitude toward himself and his sense of responsibility towards the Movement were revealed strongly in the tribulations that came after the death of H.P.B., culminating in the “case” against him. Though he suffered greatly in his person, he refused to harbour hatred towards anyone and did all he could to help his friends also to free themselves from ill feeling. “Forgive, forgive and largely forget,” and “Cast no one out of your heart” were his mottoes. He could forgive and forget the personal hurt to himself and act only for the good of the Movement.

It is when he saw that the wrongs being committed were harming Theosophy and the Theosophical Movement that his strength was revealed. He fought hard to prevent the Theosophical Society from straying away from the lines laid down; also to check the development of psychism within the Society, but, unfortunately, psychic traits and tendencies have, since his day, led students into the most dangerous delusions. The evil directed against him finally ruined his health and brought about his death, but not before he had made the administration of Theosophical work in America completely free and independent of the Parent Society, though in friendly relationship with it. This change in the outward form, *not*

in Theosophical ideals, aspirations, aims and objects, was an inevitable one, and in making it he but followed H.P.B.’s example, for she, too, had left the Headquarters of the Society at Adyar and begun a new movement in the West on the original lines, with the founding of *Lucifer* and of the Lodge which bore her name.

Mr. Judge’s knowledge was stupendous. He had thoroughly imbibed the teachings of H.P.B. and of the Masters, and was able to expound them in his own writings in a simpler, more understandable form. His work along these lines has kept alive the philosophy for us, in its main fundamentals, and our gratitude to him for so doing is great.

One other point which emerges when we try to understand this great man is that he never thought that the Work was *his*. The Work was Masters’, and he but tried to help Them with that Work. This was the *real* reason for the opposition he had to face from those who did not have the same loyalty and devotion to the Masters and to H.P.B. that he had, the “charges” against him being only the *apparent* reasons. He had the task of keeping the memory of H.P.B. clean and pure, and of preserving the Teachings as she gave them. The proof remains; during his lifetime he was the life-force which kept the Path straight, and after his death this task fell upon Robert Crosbie, his pupil. It now falls upon all true students of Theosophy who are aware of their responsibility and are awake to the reality that we cannot serve two masters. We cannot serve H.P.B. and Those behind her if we collaborate with those who deny her and Them, by altering Their Teachings and casting aspersions against Them.

HUMILITY is to the virtues what the chain is to the rosary: remove the chain, and all the beads escape; take away humility, and all the virtues disappear.

—THE CURE d’ARS

THE WONDER THAT WAS EGYPT

III

EGYPTIANS firmly believed in immortality of the soul and its reincarnation. The “Soul” or the Ego of the defunct is said to be living in Eternity. The soul is said to join the living on earth by day and return to *Tiaou* (the realm of the cause of life) by night, in the *Book of the Dead*. This expresses the periodical existence of the immortal Ego. Egyptians believed that the soul of the mummified defunct remained attached to the body by a magnetic thread which could be broken by its own exertion. They placed an ever-burning lamp in the tomb—the symbol of incorruptible and immortal spirit, to help the soul to leave its body and unite forever with its Divine SELF.

In Kircher’s *Oedipus Egyptiacus* (vol. iii., p. 124) one can see, on the papyrus engraved in it, an egg floating above the mummy. This is the symbol of hope and the promise of a *second birth* for the *Osirified* dead; his Soul, after due purification in the Amenti, will gestate in this egg of immortality, to be reborn from it into a new life on earth. For this egg, in the esoteric Doctrine, is the *Devachan*, the abode of Bliss; the winged scarabeus being alike a symbol of it.

The Spirit of Life and Immortality was everywhere symbolized by a circle...the globe, with two wings added to it, which then became the sacred *Scarabæus* of the Egyptians, its very name being suggestive of the secret idea attached to it. For the *Scarabæus* is called in Egypt (in the *papyri*) *Khopirron* and *Khopri* from the verb *Khopron* “to become,” and has thus been made a symbol and an emblem of human life and of the successive *becomings* of man, through the various peregrinations and metempsychoses (reincarnations) of the liberated Soul. (*S.D.*, II, 552)

In the after-death state of man, Osiris plays a significant role as the Judge of the defunct in the region of *Amenti*. It reminds us of the Hindu doctrine of *Yama* (*Dharmaraja*) judging the man on the basis of the record of the actions of the dead man read out by

Chitragupta. Man is responsible for his actions and is answerable to God. A complete record of all his actions is maintained by the record-keepers of the god, known also as *Lipikas*. As already seen, Osiris was killed by his brother Typhon (also called Seth) and dismembered. He was brought back to life by Isis—his wife and sister (*Mulaprakriti*). Death and resurrection of Osiris thus became a model for every human being. The mummy became identified with the body of the god, and the dead person became an Osiris. Osiris having died and risen became the god and judge of the dead and ruled over the underworld.

The “soul” under trial is brought before Osiris, the “Lord of Truth,” who sits decorated with the Egyptian cross, emblem of eternal life, and holding in his right hand the *Vannus* or the flagellum of justice. The spirit begins, in the “Hall of the Two Truths,” an earnest appeal, and enumerates its good deeds, supported by the responses of the forty-two assessors—*its incarnated deeds and accusers*. If justified, it is addressed as *Osiris*, thus assuming the appellation of the Deity whence its divine essence proceeded, and the following words, full of majesty and justice, are pronounced: “Let the *Osiris* go; ye see he is without fault....He lived on truth, he has fed on truth....*The god has welcomed him* as he desired. *He has given food to my hungry, drink to my thirsty ones, clothes to my naked....He has made the sacred food of the gods the meat of the spirits.*” (*Isis Unveiled*, II, 548)

The Hindu *Chitra-Gupta* who reads out the account of every Soul’s life from his register, called *Agra-Sandhani*; the “Assessors” who read theirs from the heart of the defunct, which becomes an open book before (whether) *Yama*, *Minos*, *Osiris*, or *Karma*—are all so many copies of, and variants from the *Lipika*, and their *Astral Records*. Nevertheless, the *Lipika* are not deities connected with Death, but with Life Eternal. (*S.D.*, I, 105)

Esoterically, *Amenti* is said to be the dwelling of the God *Amen*, or *Amoun*. It is also a place of purification. Exoterically, it is the kingdom of *Osiris* divided into fourteen parts, each of which was

set aside for some purpose connected with the after-state of the defunct. These divisions included the Hall of judgment and celestial field—Aanroo. The field of Aanroo is said to be covered with wheat, and the “Defunct” are represented as gleaning it, the food of divine justice—their reward or punishment, for the “Master of Eternity”; some stalks being three, others five, and the highest seven cubits high.

Regarding the mystery of mummification, not much is known. According to one view, the dead body was considered to be an earthly home for the soul and, therefore, had to be preserved. The inevitable decay of the bodies was therefore recognized as a disaster that would, if uncorrected, prevent the deceased from achieving eternal life. As a result, the whole art and science of mortuary was perfected through experimentation over generations and its secret was passed from father to son.

It is not known what was the real origin of making mummies, as the examples we have belong to very recent periods of the Egyptians, who must have existed many thousands of years before the times we can know of their history. It has been suggested very justly that the practice began with their Adept kings for reasons of their own, and that it came to be imitated afterwards. If this is so, then it would be natural for the kings to permit it among the people so as to create a greater security for their own mummies, for if there be mummies for all, no one will bother to look for any particular mummy for some special reason, whereas if only kings were known to be mummified, then later people might want to exhume and inspect them, for the early kings were thought by the people to be Adepts, as is evident from the records. But on all this we are as yet but making assumptions. (*Forum Answers*, pp. 93-94)

It was believed that mummification accompanied by the rituals and ceremonies performed by the priests, purified and restored the deceased, giving a reason for joy among the relatives who then feasted with the mummified deceased before it was finally entombed. It was also believed that in order to enter its second life, the body has to be reunited with the spiritual elements, which

had previously animated it. The body had to be preserved for resurrection. This brings to our mind the teaching of Theosophy that the human soul acquires immortality by uniting itself with its higher self. Giving us the inner significance, Mr. G. Massey connects the Greek Christos with the Egyptian *Karest*, the “mummy type of immortality,” and proves it very thoroughly.

The mummy-image was the preserved one, the saved, therefore a portrait of the Saviour, as a type of immortality. This was the figure of a dead man, which, as Plutarch and Herodotus tell us, was carried round at an Egyptian banquet when the guests were invited to look on it and eat and drink and be happy, because, when they died, they would become what the image symbolised—that is, they also would be immortal! This type of immortality was called the *Karest*, or *Karust*, and it was the Egyptian Christ. To *Kares* means to embalm, anoint, to make the Mummy as a type of the eternal; and, when made, it was called the *Karest*; so that this is not merely a matter of name for name, the *Karest* for the *Christ*.

This image of the *Karest* was bound up in a woof without a seam, the proper vesture of the Christ! No matter what the length of the bandage might be, and some of the mummy-swathes have been unwound that were 1,000 yards in length, the woof was from beginning to end without a seam...Now, this seamless robe of the Egyptian *Karest* is a very tell-tale type of the mystical Christ, who becomes historic in the Gospels as the wearer of a coat or chiton, made without a seam, which neither the Greek nor the Hebrew fully explains, but which is explained by the Egyptian *Ketu* for the woof, and by the seamless robe or swathing without seam that was made for eternal wear and worn by the Mummy-Christ, the image of immortality in the tombs of Egypt.

In the Gospels Jesus rises again with every member sound, like the perfectly-preserved *Karest*, to demonstrate the physical resurrection of the mummy. But, in the Egyptian original, the mummy transforms. The deceased says: “I am spiritualised. I am become a soul. I rise as a God.” (*The Esoteric Character of the Gospels*)

At the end of it all, a sad thought troubles our mind, though. Is this to be the fate of all great civilizations? Are all mighty nations but counting their days to reach their doomsday? Where have those great people of Egypt disappeared? Mr. Judge points out that they have not. The egos of the great Egyptian people have long since reincarnated on the European and American continents to carry on their evolutionary progress.

The Egyptian souls who helped in planning the pyramid of Gizeh, who took part in the Egyptian government, theology, science, and civilization, departed from their old race; that race died out and the former Egyptians took up their work in the oncoming races of the West, especially in those which are now re-peopling the American continents. (*The Ocean of Theosophy*, p. 18)

Great civilizations like Egypt and Babylon have gone because the souls who made them have long ago reincarnated in the great conquering nations of Europe and the present American continents. As nations and races they have been totally reincarnated and born again for greater and higher purposes than ever. (*The Ocean of Theosophy*, p. 91)

(Concluded)

A Theosophist [is] one who seeks after divine wisdom—*i.e.*, the comprehension of the ultimate causes of force, correlation, and psychic development, the method of solving all life's riddles. Persons of this temperament cannot be bigots; they chafe under the sectarian yoke, and their hearts warm with sympathy for all who suffer, who groan under social burdens resulting from ignorance, for all of any race, creed, or colour, who aspire after knowledge. These men are true Theosophists, the brothers of humanity, and, in their complete development, the spiritual exemplars, guides, teachers, benefactors, of our race.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

SUFISM—MOHAMMEDAN MYSTICISM

I

Deep in the sea are riches beyond compare,
But if you seek safety, it is on the shore.

—SAADI

TODAY, Sufism is known more for its Creed of Love and the dance of Dervishes. We need to delve deeper to grasp the essence. The word *sufi* implies wise, devout, spiritual, etc., derived from *sefa* meaning purity, clearness; hence *saf*, pure, clear, sincere, candid. Some consider that the word *sufi* is derived from *suf*, wool, on account of this peculiar order wearing woollen apparel, as a mark of contempt of luxury and worldly grandeur, while adhering to rigid austerity of manners. Sufism means fervour, wisdom or ardent devotion. However, when one studies the doctrines and tenets of Sufism, one feels that mysticism or quietism is a more appropriate term.

Mysticism may be defined as the rising of an individual soul to awareness wherein it sees itself identical with the Universal Whole and bows in reverence to THAT. Today, mysticism has degenerated into psychic emotionalism. Jalaluddin Rumi, Fariduddin Attar, El-Ghazali of Persia, Omar Khayyam, Ibn El-Arabi, were some of the rare pearls among Sufi mystics. Can there really be a Christian mystic, Jewish mystic or Mohammedan mystic? Some scholars are of the view that the Kaballah of the Jews and the Sufism of the Mohammedan are derived from the same source.

What is Sufism? There is a traditional Sufi story about four travellers—a Persian, a Turk, an Arab, and a Greek, arguing as to how they should spend a single coin they possessed. The Persian suggested buying *angur*; the Turk wanted *uzum*, the Arab wanted *inab*, while the Greek suggested buying *stafil*. Another traveller, who was a linguist, asked them to give him the coin and promised to satisfy the desires of all of them. When he was given the coin, he bought grapes and gave them, seeing which the Persian recognized them to be his *angur*; the Turk his *uzum*, the Arab his

inab and the Greek said that in his language they were called *stafil*. “The travellers are the ordinary people of the world. The linguist is the Sufi. People know that they want something, because there is an inner need existing in them. They may give it different names, but it is the same thing. Those who call it religion have different names for it, and even different ideas as to what it might be,” explained a Sufi teacher (*The Sufis* by Idries Shah, p. 24). The author points out that the grape is the raw form of the wine, while wine is the real essence of that fruit. Since the travellers were ordinary people belonging to different religions, the Sufi shows them that the basis of all religions is the same. He does not impart the “wine” or essence, “which is the inner doctrine waiting to be produced and used in mysticism.” Robert Graves describes Sufism as the essence or secret teaching within all religions.

H.P.B. points to the Magian and Chaldean origin of Sufism and shows that the Sufis taught the grand idea of one universal creed. Thus:

Plato states that the mystic Magian religion...is the most uncorrupted form of worship in things divine. Later, the Mysteries of Chaldean sanctuaries were added to it by one of the Zoroasters and Darius Hystaspes. The latter completed and perfected it still more with the help of the knowledge obtained by him from the learned ascetics of India, whose rites were identical with those of initiated Magi....“Instructed by them in the science of the motions of the world and of the heavenly bodies, and in pure religious rites...he transfused them into the creed of the Magi. The latter, coupling these doctrines with their own peculiar science of foretelling the future have handed down the whole through their descendants to the succeeding ages.” It is from these descendants that the Sufis, chiefly composed of Persians and Syrians, acquired their proficient knowledge in astrology, medicine, and the esoteric doctrine of the ages. “The Sufi doctrine...involved the grand idea of one universal creed which could be secretly held under any profession of an outward faith; and, in fact, took virtually the same view of the religious systems as that in which the ancient philosophers had regarded such matters.” (*Isis Unveiled*, II, 306)

A person of any religion or sect can be a Sufi. Sufism is not restricted to the East. Anyone who is willing to follow Sufi discipline and shun ambition, greed, pride, vanity, arrogance, blind obedience to people and custom, treads the way of Sufism. Anyone who desires to become a Sufi has gradually to renounce worldly pursuits, *i.e.*, learn to be *in* the world, but not be *of* the world. The emphasis is on *actual* experience, more than on philosophical argument. In this, the Sufi teachers adopted methods to suit the people and the environment. For instance, Jalaluddin Rumi used a combination of dance and music. “The body-mind movements of the Whirling Dervishes, coupled with the reed-pipe music to which they were performed, is the product of a special method designed to bring the Seeker into affinity with the mystical current, in order to be transformed by it. Everything which the unregenerate man understands has a use and a meaning within the special context of *Sufism* which may be invisible until it is experienced” (*The Sufis*, p. 133). We know of the importance given to “Music” in the schools of Pythagoras and Plato. Sufi teachers made use of the basic elements in human nature, from which the ordinary person can take his next higher step. One such element is Love. Rumi said: “Whatever you are, whatever your condition is, always try to be a lover.” Similarly, *The Voice of the Silence* also teaches us to begin with ordinary human love, expand it, and transform it into the love of the Divine. The first *Paramita* or Virtue is *Dana*, “the key of charity and love immortal.” Since it seems easy to begin the spiritual life from natural goodness, the disciple is told, “The portal that faceth thee is high and wide, seems easy of access. The road that leads therethrough is straight and smooth and green.” Sufi teachers made use of legends, myths, poetry and even subtle humour—as is found in the subtleties of Mulla Nasruddin, a Sufi teacher.

In the context of Islam, Sufism is considered to be the esoteric teaching of the Prophet Mohammed, communicated by him to his son-in-law, Hazarat Ali, and a few select disciples. The Sufis interpret the Koran allegorically. Sufism is essentially a practical way of life. It involves for a spiritual aspirant (*salik*) a transition

from the “shell” to the “kernel” of the religion.

The aspirant has to give up all doubt, superstition, practical modes of worship, *i.e.*, rituals and ceremonies laid down by his religion. All this, the Mohammedan law terms as *Sheryat*, or Canonical Law. The disciple has to engage in mental abstraction and contemplation of the Soul and Deity. In other words, it is seeking communion with the Divine, and giving up fasts, prayers, pilgrimages, ablutions, rites, ceremonies, etc., which are termed as *Jismani Amul* or Practical worship, and taking up *Roohani Amul* or Spiritual worship. He is not attached to coming and going of worldly wealth and possession. As Job says: “Naked I came out of my mother’s womb, and naked I shall return.”

There are five basic practices or “pillars” in Islam: bearing witness or confession of faith, daily prayers, fasting during the month of *Ramadan*, charity, and pilgrimage to Mecca.

One comes across terms like *Sufi*, *Dervish* and *Fakir* in Sufi literature. Different scholars have defined them differently. A Dervish is a good, simple person devoted to truth. A Fakir is one who struggles to improve himself with humility. A Sufi is one who follows the Sufi Way or one who has attained progress in the Way (*The Sufis*, p. 318). In *Isis Unveiled*, H.P.B. points out the distinction between a Dervish and a Hindu fakir thus:

DERVISHES, or the “whirling charmers,” as they are called. Apart from the austerities of life, prayer and contemplation, the Mahomedan devotee presents but little similarity with the Hindu fakir. The latter may become a sannyasi, or saint and holy mendicant; the former will never reach beyond his second class of occult manifestations. The dervish may also be a strong mesmerizer, but he will never voluntarily submit to the abominable and almost incredible self-punishment which the fakir invents for himself with an ever-increasing avidity, until nature succumbs and he dies in slow and excruciating tortures. (p. xxviii)

There are four main Orders or Ways of Sufism—Rifa’i (nicknamed “Howling Dervishes”), Qualandarîs (nicknamed “Shaven”), Chistîs (nicknamed “Musicians”) and Naqshbandîs

(nicknamed “Silent”).

The Dervishes are divided into two sections—dwellers and travellers. Being a Dervish is considered to be a certain phase or condition of being a Sufi, not a vocation or permanent state. Among the community considered *dwellers*, there are three stages or conditions. In the earliest stage, they are called the People of Service (*Ahl-i-Khidmat*). They have to make themselves worthy by serving the regular dwellers, before they can be given inner exercises. The People of Society (*Ahl-i-Suhbat*) spend time in sitting at house assemblies and carrying out activities designed to provide knowledge. The People of Retirement (*Ahl-i-Khilwat*) are generally senior people who spend their time in solitude. Such assembly of Dervishes has to cultivate trust, patience and contemplation and live in a state of complete equality. The *travellers*, on the other hand, follow detailed programmes for travel, known as Twelve Rules of Travel, in such a way that the dervish can utilize its experiences. Travel—both physically and metaphysically—forms an important part of Dervish activity. (*The Sufis*, pp. 301-2)

(*To be continued*)

CONQUERORS are a class of men with whom, for most part, the world could well dispense; nor can the hard intellect, the unsympathizing loftiness and high but selfish enthusiasm of such persons inspire us in general with any affection; at best it may excite amazement. . . . But a true Poet, a man in whose heart resides some effluence of Wisdom, some tone of the “Eternal Melodies,” is the most precious gift that can be bestowed on a generation: we see in him a freer, purer development of whatever is noblest in ourselves; his life is a rich lesson to us; and we mourn his death as that of a benefactor who loved and taught us.

—THOMAS CARLYLE

THE WAY PRESCRIBED

STUDY, application and promulgation of the genuine teachings of Theosophy as given out by Madame Blavatsky constitute the triple foundation for the work of the United Lodge of Theosophists. Every true student of Theosophy who feels for the Cause of the great Masters of Wisdom and Compassion has to keep in his mind and heart this threefold task which he has to carry out for the moral and spiritual upliftment of humanity. In order to get acquainted with the principles for which Theosophy stands, study is essential, and this necessarily includes reflection on the subject studied. Study brings about a change of ideas, a new attitude of mind and heart, leading to the application of the principles in however small a measure. It is easy to know about them, but when it comes to actual practice, one realizes the difficulty. If, however, one persists diligently, one will gradually succeed. Then, an inner awakening in the individual brings into play the third aspect of the trinity—promulgation. The student comes to recognize his own responsibility of sharing with others what he has learnt, and of helping the work through example and precept. Study by itself, without application, would remain barren; and application would be fruitless without promulgation. The pure waters of the Wisdom-Religion must ever flow on to make the mental and moral soil of human nature more fertile.

“Point out the ‘Way’” is one of the most valuable instructions of *The Voice of the Silence*, the “Book of the Golden Precepts,” meant for the daily use of Lanoos (disciples), and dedicated to “the Few”—those few who want to study, apply and promulgate. *The Voice of the Silence* is of great help to one who wishes to live the life, not in a haphazard way, not in terms of self-gratification, but in the way prescribed by the Sages.

Point out the “Way”—however dimly, and lost among the host—as does the evening star to those who tread their path in darkness.

This particular verse follows a significant statement on humility

which it is necessary to keep in mind. In the spiritual life, each aspirant is at a different stage from all others. If we are not able to shine like the dazzling noon-day sun upon the snow-capped mount of purity eternal, then we can be like the evening star, which sheds its light, dimly though it be. Humility must always be observed when pointing out the “Way.” The world is enveloped in moral and spiritual darkness, and therefore it is essential to keep the light of truth burning, in however small a degree. As the star-studded firmament dispels physical darkness and lights up the way of solitary wayfarers, helping them to reach their destination, so the light of truth helps one on the moral and spiritual planes. The student-practitioner has to emulate, in however humble a manner, those glorious figures down the ages who have pointed out the “Way” and who are eager and anxious always to have new recruits for their army of peace. They need those who can equip themselves for the great task of keeping alive their teachings, which are forgotten and lost cycle after cycle and have to be resuscitated. Masters need companions. Each one has to discipline himself to become a bridge between the snowy caps of purity eternal and the stir and din of the market place. Such a bridge was Mr. Judge.

The word “Way,” it should be noted, is in quotes. It is a special kind of a way—the inner way which can be trodden without moving to east or west, north or south. It is an uphill climb from the mire of lies terrestrial to the glorious heights of the Nirvanic light, and in the end it transforms man into a super-man. Though one has to walk that path through one’s own self-effort, there are other pilgrim-souls on the way, and we have the assurance that all the great teachers have travelled the same way. It is a difficult way, but we have been warned, by those who have gone ahead, of obstacles to be avoided and limitations to be conquered. So, with patience and perseverance, step by step, the goal can be attained. Unless one feels for the Cause of the Masters, unless one attunes oneself to humanity’s great pain and suffering, unless one has the wherewithal to relieve that suffering, one is not ready to point out the “Way.”

So many discoveries are made, but scientific and technological advancement cannot remove the sorrows and miseries of the world.

The great teachers, being true scientists and psychologists of the highest order, are able to heal and cure the diseases of the mind and soul. They have indicated the root cause of the troubles afflicting the world, and have also pointed to the remedy, which requires the removal of ignorance and selfishness and the cultivation of virtue and wisdom, leading to joy and peace. The key-note of their teachings is altruism, without thought of personal gain. Therefore, purity of motive is essential. "To live to benefit mankind is the first step. To practise the six glorious virtues is the second."

To point out the "Way" by spoken or written word is indeed necessary, but far more important it is to live the life and set a noble example. This is how Mr. Judge accomplished all his work successfully, bringing out the practical aspect of the teachings in a simple way so as not to overwhelm the understanding of even a child. His own living example impressed all those around him. He wrote:

What we most need is such a Theosophical education as will give us the ability to expound Theosophy in a way to be understood by the ordinary person. (*Vernal Blooms*, p. 54)

U.L.T. exists to give Theosophical education, to give all possible help on an impersonal basis, to indicate the true concepts as given by all the great teachers, so that more and more people may derive benefit from them and become ready to point out the "Way."

The image of the evening star is most inspiring. Not only does it help the lonely traveller in the darkness, but during certain months of the year it changes its position from the west to the east and becomes the morning star heralding the dawn, the dawn of a new day, the dawn of a new year, the dawn of a new era, the dawn of a new age.

We owe a deep debt of gratitude to Mr. Judge for pointing out the "Way" so precisely through example and precept, in a simple and straightforward manner.

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 conscience? We are advised to listen to or consult the "voice of conscience," but warned, at the same time, that it may not always be reliable. This is confusing. Please explain.

Answer: In "*Forum*" *Answers* Mr. Judge throws some light on questions pertaining to conscience. "Conscience seems to be a faculty which may be stilled or made active. In my opinion its source is in the Higher Self, and as it comes down through plane after plane it loses its force or retains power according to the life and education of the being on earth." Its expression could be partially or totally blocked depending upon the ideas, habits of thought and ideologies followed by a person. A savage who kills, or the religionist who indulges in religious persecution for the sake of God and Christ, are both acting according to what they call their *conscience*, but limited and tainted by education or lack of it, and right or wrong beliefs. "In those cases where men are doing wrong according to what they call their conscience, it must be true that they have so warped their intuition as not to understand the voice of conscience."

"Voice of conscience" is generally understood to guide in terms of negatives such as "do not go there," "do not do this," rather than pointing to a clear-cut course to be followed. The more one pays attention to and acts in accordance with the conscience, the louder it speaks. Conversely, every time we turn a deaf ear to its voice, we still that voice which finally stops warning.

True conscience, called the Voice of *Antahkarna* or the "internal organ" is the bridge between our external consciousness and the action of the "higher regions of the Mind." It is through this channel

or organ, present in every one of us, that we receive an influence, a hint, a faint whisper, a voice—more or less clear, depending on the regularity with which we faithfully *consult* and *respond* to the higher part of our Being.

Like any human organ, the inner voice grows in strength or atrophies according to the proper use or disuse of the same. At first, it is just a faint voice of warning, checking our impulses, but gets clearer as we pay heed to it. The lower must look up to the higher for guidance. If the channel—*Antahkarna*—is not allowed to get choked with weeds of personal concerns, fancy, useless accumulations, then the action of the Higher becomes more marked or pressing and may even goad us onward along the path, at times even against personal inclinations and worldly noises.

“This divine conscience acts in all struggles for betterment, but clouded more or less in each by reason of education and habit of thought....If we fix for ourselves the rule that we will try to do the very best we can for others, we will generally be led aright. If we rely on the higher self and aspire to be guided by it, we will be led to the right even if the road goes through pain, for sorrow and pain are necessary for the purification of the soul,” writes Mr. Judge.

Apart from the voice of our higher nature, conscience is also built up of the bittersweet “lessons” of life, extricated from our experiences. The memory of these lessons becomes part of our nature and warns us against repeating the former mistakes and follies, if we respond to this “warning faculty” in us.

Question: Is it necessary for an individual to pass through all possible experiences—good and evil, pleasant and unpleasant—for acquiring wisdom or for the purpose of evolution?

Answer: *Light on the Path* says, “And before you can attain knowledge you must have passed through all places, foul and clean alike.” This seems to suggest that it is necessary for an individual to pass through all kinds of good as well as bad experiences. But can one learn from the experiences of another? An event becomes an experience when we learn the necessary lesson and change inwardly. For some people nothing is an experience till it happens

to *them*. As Mr. Judge says, we have formed grooves in our minds by thinking along the same old lines, and we need to fill up these grooves by learning to look into the lives of other people around us and profit from their experiences, as then we will have in one life the advantage of having lived several lives.

This learning from experiences of other people calls for great imagination and sympathy. While travelling in a railway compartment, many things happen around us. For those who are attentive, this journey may prove to be an experience, whereas someone who is engrossed only in what he would do on getting down, this journey means nothing. The same is also true of life’s journey.

Light on the Path says that in order to reach perfection one must learn that light and darkness, good and evil are the world’s eternal ways. A person who is pure and innocent like a child, because he has never faced temptation and evil, will find that he is not able to handle evil when he encounters it. The first reaction to encountering evil is a shock. Whereas spiritual perfection implies being able to handle evil oneself and also be able to help others overcome it when they are faced with it. When Buddha met Angulimala, the highway robber, he was not shaken and was able to deal with him, as he knew of worse kinds of evil, whereas Angulimala was aware of only one aspect of it. Knowledge is maturity or total understanding that includes good as well as evil.

If we have remained over-protected, then even at a very high level we could have problems in dealing with and conquering evil. Sommerset Maugham’s story, “Rain,” is about a missionary who undertakes to reform a prostitute, but in the process is hopelessly attracted towards her and succumbs to her charm.

Through the Gates of Gold says that it takes a very exceptional nature to touch the very depths of evil and yet come up triumphant. Most of us lead a very secure life and learn slowly through our experiences. But there are a few with a strong will power, who can touch the depths of sin and then come out of it, like a good swimmer touching the bottom of the swimming pool, and then rising to the surface.

It is possible to learn through “imaginative sympathy,” without going through the experience ourselves. It is the learning and the change produced in the person as a result of that event that is important. That event can happen in our life or someone else’s life. In fact the experience need not necessarily be an event in someone’s life; it can be a painting or music or book or any other medium. Some people are more responsive to a poem or to a painting. They may acquire experience through that particular medium. When we genuinely *sympathize* with the person who suffers the loss of a loved one, or experiences sickness or financial loss, we *live* that experience with him/her. We *know* where the shoe pinches.

It is true that each one has to go through what are called the *basic type* of experiences. Some of the major ones are: (1) experience of poverty, (2) experience of loneliness, (3) experience of parenthood—which teaches even a most self-centred person to do something for someone else, or self-transcendence.

In a sense, the nine *rasas* mentioned in Sankrit literature—such as *Shringar rasa* pertaining to love, *Veer rasa* pertaining to courage, etc.—represent the basic types of experiences through which each one must pass. Our reading and responding to Kalidas’s play “Shakuntala” or Shakespeare’s “Romeo and Juliet” is, in a way, experiencing *Shringar rasa*—the agonies and ecstasies of love.

But more or less, for each of us, the imaginative sympathy and experience in our own life overlap—both are the means through which we learn. We are required to go through the experience again and again, till we have learnt the necessary lesson. The more we live up to Master’s suggestion: “What hurts one ought to hurt the other—that which rejoices A must fill with pleasure B,” the greater is our chance to learn from other people’s experiences.

It is a good thing, before you suffer, to have learnt how great a blessing is tranquillity.

—APOLLONIUS OF TYANA

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

The co-founder of “Crips” gang, Stanley T. Williams, aged 51, was executed in San Quentin State Prison, in the State of California, U.S.A., this December (*The Indian Express*, December 14, 2005, courtesy, *Associated Press*). He was kept as a convict for 24 long years—for almost half his life—on death row. His long-standing case of murder, to which he never admitted, has led to a national debate about capital punishment *versus* the possibility of redemption. Many people in the state desired that the death sentence be commuted to life in prison, as he claimed innocence. Because of his personal encounter as a gang leader he understood and later disapproved of gang-culture. He wrote children’s books about the dangers of gangs and violence of which he was himself a voluntary victim, and he knew the psychology of the violent groups of men.

His request for clemency was denied by the Governor of the State of California, “because he had not shown any real remorse for the killings committed by the Crips.” However, he pleaded innocence and spoke about the newly found peace in his heart. The protesters carried placards stating that executing him was no less a cold-blooded, state-sponsored murder! One of the ex-members of the Crips gang resolved to spread Williams’ message against gang violence. The execution witnesses like the prison warden reported that when the nurse had trouble finding the vein for the lethal injection, Williams offered to help.

Man is often a victim of his environment to which, at first, he is drawn under the law of Karma by birth and by constitutional tendencies in him. Indeed, there are those who have the strength to come out of the atmosphere of strife, hatred or lust for power. Those who succumb and continue with the degrading state, end up as incorrigible and confirmed criminals. Experts in this matter agree that there are such unfortunate people who cannot be radically reformed but whose passion and energy can be utilized by directing them to some useful purpose. A social culture, which meekly tolerates, if not encourages values of aggressiveness, exploitation,

etc., is found to nurture pockets where a gang and its leaders thrive. But weakness of human nature cannot just be crushed out by imposing so-called deterrent measures like capital punishment or imprisonment, by law enforcement, or by easy-going tolerance and false sympathy for the criminal's evil conduct.

The Great Master's letter states: "How is the *combative* [Italics ours] natural instinct of man to be restrained from inflicting hitherto unheard-of cruelties and enormities, tyranny, injustice, if not through the soothing influence of Brotherhood, and of the practical application of Buddha's esoteric doctrines?" (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 33*). Our duty, therefore, is to keep reminding of the great human possibilities lurking in our heart, which when encouraged will unfold astonishing qualities. The example of what appears to be inner change of the ex-gang leader Williams is quite heartening and shows the possibility of inner conversion, even in hardened criminal, if kept alive. Besides, an executed criminal has greater influence on sensitives and other criminals, on the inner planes, than while he is in the body. Although Theosophy puts the responsibility squarely on the individual, and emphasizes efforts on transformation of human nature, the community too can help by creating an environment conducive to a refined and virtuous nature. There is the collective responsibility of reforming or rehabilitating confirmed criminals and convicts. It is a complex task, which could involve the criminal justice system, deep understanding of the psychology of various types of violent men, and well-thought out strategies drawn by professional expertise. This may seem a Herculean task, since to reform human nature seems a never-ending exercise. Our role is to carry on our theosophical duty to raise the heart and mind of man for the better.

Will science explain mental illnesses such as depression, bipolar disorder (or manic depression) and schizophrenia? The issue was debated by Peter McGuffin, director of the social, genetic and

developmental psychiatry centre at King's College, London, and Steven Rose, director of the brain and behaviour research group at the Open University (*Prospect*, October 2005). McGuffin believes that molecular genetics and understanding of the brain structure and activity hold the key to mental disorders. Since many psychiatric disorders are thought to be a blend of heredity and social "stressors," present genetic studies help in identifying those genes. Further, a better understanding of neuropsychology and neurobiology may not only help us treat better but also provide a deeper knowledge of causes—reducing the fear and mystery surrounding mental illness.

As against this, Steven Rose observes that assuming for every psychic state a corresponding brain state, so that the brain processes of a mentally ill person would differ from a "normal" person, may alleviate the symptoms by manipulating brain chemistry. But could this "explain" the mental illness? He argues:

The fact that a drug such as Prozac, which affects serotonin reuptake, will alleviate the depression in many patients, is sometimes taken to mean that the depression is caused by a deficit in serotonin metabolism. Yet the flaw in the logic of such an argument is clear; aspirin alleviates the pain of toothache, but we do not conclude that the cause of the toothache is too little aspirin in the brain. So where do the *determining* causes lie?

Though biochemical and genetic factors help to explain why one person becomes depressed in a given set of circumstances while another does not, it is not likely that in most cases the *major determinant* is biochemical. Rose observes that in the passage of time one biomarker (biochemical cause) of a mental disorder has been replaced by another and so also one "scientific method" has been succeeded by a new one. Just as Freudian methods and conclusions are being replaced by new conclusions, so also in a hundred years from now—or sooner—today's attempts to locate causes in terms of genes will seem similarly misguided. Rose writes:

I am still not sure whether you would want to argue that, once you have catalogued all your genes of small effect, you would say you have “explained” the “causes” of schizophrenia. The phenotypic effect of any one of your genes will be probabilistic....It may be that your techniques *will* point to new drug prospects, but I fear that “explanation” will still elude simple reductionism.

What is the cause of most physical and mental disorders? Mr. Judge answers this question in the article, “Replanting Diseases for Future Use”:

Mind is the container of the efficient causes of our circumstances, our inherent character and the seeds that sprout again and again as physical diseases as those purely mental. It is the mover who is either voluntary in his motion, free if it will, or moved hither and thither by every object and influence and coloured by every idea. From life to life it occupies body after body, using a new brain instrument in each incarnation. As Patanjali put it ages ago, in mind lie planted all seeds with self-reproductive power inherent in them, only waiting for time and circumstances to sprout again. Here are the causes for our diseases.

We need to have right thinking, right ideas and the will to put them into practice. “Those who break Nature’s laws lose their physical health; those who break the laws of the inner life, lose their psychic health,” says *Light on the Path*. The same mystical book mentions the need to learn to keep the mental poise. If grief, dismay, disappointment or pleasure can shake the soul (mind) to such an extent that it loses its hold on the calm spirit, then all is blurred, the divine is no longer able to guide and help us.

Patanjali mentions certain positive attitudes, such as benevolence, tenderness and complacency, that help in purifying the mind, and Mr. Judge adds a note that the practice of these “brings about cheerfulness of the mind, which tends to strength and steadiness.”

Some of the causes of the diseases are carried forward from

earlier lives. Thus, transmission of physical traits and mental peculiarities by means of parent and body (*i.e.*, heredity) is exactly the *mode* selected by nature for providing the Ego with the proper body through which to carry on its work. It is the Karma of previous lives which “governs the station in life, sex, the conditions of the irresponsible years of childhood, the constitution with the various diseases inherent in it, and in fact all those determining forces of physical existence which are ordinarily classed under the terms, ‘heredity’ and ‘national characteristics.’” (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 6*)

“Can one believe that everything we call ‘human,’ such as intelligence, emotions, values and even self-awareness, really results from physical processes that can in theory (and increasingly in practice) be duplicated or surpassed by non-biological systems—namely, machines?” asks Mukul Sharma (*Times International*, December 17, 2005). In what way is man superior to science-fiction creations—from Frankenstein to robotics? It is really scary that while evolutionary processes took millions of years to produce brainpower, which we interpret as intelligence, computers have taken less than 60 years. But the important question is: “Will computers ever have self-realization like we do?” Some believe that though an individual computer may not compare with human brain with its hundred billion nerve cells, Internet could so compare and in the course of time, when Net’s interconnectivity level begins to equal the one inside our head, then it is possible it could slowly develop awareness. However, in the absence of body and the sensory apparatus, how could this entity become aware of the phenomenal world? “A living Internet would possess an astonishing memory, all the knowledge of the world and the ability to process any amount of data at the speed of light, but it would be totally ineffectual in projecting itself in any way to impinge upon us. In other words, when we finally manage to create another form of life with its own siliconised awareness, we would never be able to

know about it,” writes Sharma.

Many proponents of Artificial Intelligence believe that machines with their superior intelligence will, one day, make men superfluous. Is it possible? Harvard physicist John H. Trolle presented lucid exposition of capabilities and limitations of modern electronic computers in his article “The Thinking of Men and Machines” (*The Atlantic Monthly*, July 1954), part of which is reproduced in the article “Mind, Brain and Machine” (*The Theosophical Movement*, November 1954). He observes that a good “thinking” machine can remember, classify, choose between alternatives on the basis of logic and, acting on past experience, can even correct itself; but activity of any one machine is strictly limited to the instructions with which it is fed, in the form of mathematical formulae or other code mechanisms. In spite of its speed, precision and infallibility, the most “intelligent” computer cannot correlate dissociated ideas and events spread out in time and space and present an original thought or an unexpected query. Its conclusions are foregone and even if it “comes up with a million theories...it would have no criterion for selecting the ones that are meaningful. It always takes a human to come up with the approach, the generalization, the idea which furnishes the basis for the machine’s lightning checking, applying, and finding of new facts.”

We are made aware of the need, not only to distinguish between brain and machine, but also between brain and mind as also between the higher (*Buddhi-Manas*) and the lower (*Kama-Manas*) mind. Mind is not an epiphenomenon of matter, as some believe, and brain is only an instrument of the mind. Faithful replication of even the *human brain* would be a great achievement. H.P.B. describes brain to be a complex thing, both physically and metaphysically. “It is like a tree whose bark you can remove layer by layer, each layer being different from all the others, and each having its own special work, functions, and properties.” (*Transactions*, p. 64)

Frankenstein, in Mary Shelley’s mystic tale, who created a man-monster, which destroyed him after committing numerous

atrocities, is said by one of our Masters to be a possibility in nature. However, mechanically constructed machines are different from the direct products of *Kriyasakti*, “the mysterious power of thought which enables it to produce external, perceptible, phenomenal results by its own inherent energy” (*S.D.*, I, 293). We need fear no robot or computer as it could never possess self-consciousness, freedom of choice, creative thinking or exhibit higher powers of the mind, such as intuition, imagination or compassion—all prerogatives of man endowed with mind.

ALL men face what is inevitable. Why should death be feared? We begin to die as soon as we are born. At what moment, then, should we be most fearful of leaving the known for the unknown? Understandably, there may be a desire to postpone the transition—for ourselves and for our loved ones—but of what is there to be afraid?

Our physical body is lent to us as a house in which we live. When that dwelling becomes unfit for the purpose for which it was intended, a kind and benevolent nature has provided a way to get rid of that shell. That way is death.

Why then, should we be sad or rebellious? Death does bring changes and adjustments for those who are left behind. The warmth and association of former days are gone. The silence, the finality, the incommunicability disturb, but for our loved one who has triumphed, there should be rejoicing. Sorrow is centered on self.

—BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

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DUTY—THE ROYAL TALISMAN

EVER since the birth of orthodoxy, of exoteric religion and of black magic, thousands upon thousands of years ago, two predominant vices have held sway over the minds of men—Doubt and Hypocrisy. In pure Occultism, White Magic or Divine Wisdom, these two are known as unpardonable sins. The first anthropomorphists who worshipped form and matter were the creators of these two vices, which invariably go together.

Doubt is ever rooted in the doubt of and about one's own Higher Self and Inner God. Hypocrisy is related to the lower personal self. The self of matter is like a woman with many paramours—innumerable expressions of hypocrisy—who ever doubts the very existence of virgin chastity or marital fidelity.

Hypocrisy is the human psychological aspect of the metaphysical *Maya*; the great Buddha taught that life has coverings which give to our existence and problems false meanings and so veil the Light of *Nirvana* that its very existence is doubted.

Hypocrisy is pardonable in the ordinary man whose upbringing—social, religious and educational—keeps him in crass ignorance about the God within him. Anthropomorphism and Atheism, *i.e.*, religious orthodoxy and scientific orthodoxy, blind him; however different these two orthodoxies, they produce the same result—doubt in regard to the Divinity which abides, albeit in a slumbering state, in the heart of every man.

Unpardonable becomes hypocrisy when a person accepts the rational philosophy of Theosophy and its very primary teaching, the existence of a living God within the consciousness of man. No student deliberately commits the sin of hypocrisy; for no student deliberately doubts the existence of his own Inner Ego and Higher Self. But is there anyone among us who is absolutely free from doubt and hypocrisy and who does not, *unconsciously to himself*, commit these sins?

But, while all aspirants slip into these sins, the earnest rectify their mistakes with the aid of self-examination and study. But there

are others whose Karma blinds them and whose defects are not unadulterated vices but are the defects of their quality and virtues. One of the most pitiable instances of such a sinful aspirant is the Selfish Devotee. The very taint of his motive is hidden from him; fancying himself a devoted servant of the Cause, ever ready to extend a helping hand, he, unconsciously to himself, enveloped in egotism, self-righteousness and false piety, falls—never suspecting that he is developing into an Uriah Heep while believing himself to be on the highway to Adeptship.

Turn to Mr. Judge and note what he has to say about doubt:

Some too have doubt and darkness, the doubt mostly as to themselves. This should not be harboured, for it is a wile of the lower man striving to keep you back among the mediocre of the race....

Doubt is not to be solely guarded against when applied to Masters (whom I know you doubt not). It is most to be guarded and repelled in relation to oneself....We are not to try to be chelas or to do any one thing in this incarnation, but only to know and to be just as much as we can, and the possibility is not measured....

All doubts come from the lower nature, and *never* in any case from the higher nature.

This doubt in regard to one's own Divinity does not always take the familiar forms—of despair, of nonchalance, and so on. Very often it is subtle in manifestation, producing subtle forms of hypocrisy.

In this Kali-Yuga many are the lures which draw the aspirant to Adeptship away from the Path of Purity. One of the most powerful lures is that of running away from one's Karma in the belief that there is a Call for self-sacrifice in behalf of the Cause of Masters and Human Brotherhood.

The teaching reiterated by W. Q. Judge is very often overlooked, that "Duty persistently followed is the highest Yoga." He calls it "the royal talisman." He writes:

Perhaps I see in you—I hope I mistake not—a pure desire

to seek Knowledge for its own sake, and that all others may be benefited. So I would point out to you the only royal road, the one vehicle. Do all those acts, physical, mental, moral, for the reason that they must be done, instantly resigning all interest in them, offering them up upon the altar.

Doing that which must be done, but instantly resigning interest in what is done—duty without interest in the accruing results. This, be it noted, leads to knowledge—this, the method which must be ensouled by the pure motive—is of benefit to others. Mr. Judge further explains:

I do not say, nor have I said, that you ought to do something other than you do...It is one's duty to try and find one's own duty and not to get into the duty of another. And in this it is of the highest importance that we should detach our *minds* (as well as our tongues) from the duties and acts of others, whenever those are outside of our own. If you can find this fine line of action and inaction you will have made great progress...Often we do not know our duty, but that too is our own fault; it is a Karmic disability.

In another place he gives a very direct teaching on the subject which would-be occultists will do well to memorize, take to heart and practise from day to day:

It is not that you must rush madly or boldly out *to do, to do*. Do what you find to do. Desire ardently to do it, and even when you shall not have succeeded in carrying anything out but some small duties, some words of warning, 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. Then rejoice that another had been so fortunate as to make such a meritorious Karma....

Remember it is the little things the work is done through....

The very first step towards being positive and Self-centred is in the cheerful performance of duty. Try to take pleasure in doing what is your duty, and especially in the *little* duties of life. When doing any duty put your whole heart into it.

When the instructions contained in the above citations are neglected, then the Selfish Devotee is born. In a couplet of *The Voice of the Silence* this whole teaching is imparted, but it is the genius of W. Q. Judge who explains it in a way which the ardent practitioner of this era admiringly accepts and in silent gratitude applies. Here is H.P.B.'s rendition of that couplet:

The selfish devotee lives to no purpose. The man who does not go through his appointed work in life—has lived in vain.

Follow the wheel of life; follow the wheel of duty to race and kin, to friend and foe, and close thy mind to pleasures as to pain. Exhaust the law of Karmic retribution. Gain Siddhis for thy future birth.

To go through our appointed work, *i.e.*, our congenital duties, the duties which Karma has brought us, but without seeking pleasures or shunning pains which result from their performance. Thus not only is freedom from Karma achieved but also yogic powers are unfolded; or, to repeat and complete the above-quoted words of W. Q. Judge:

Duty persistently followed is the highest yoga, and is better than mantrams or any posture, or any other thing. If you can do no more than duty it will bring you to the goal.

Now, in this correct performance of duties are developed primarily Faith in the Inner Ruler and Veracity in outer life. The artlessness and ingenuousness of the child-state which has to be attained is reached through this veracity in the doing of duties; the doer thereof is the Soul in whom we have faith. Those who have faith in others before they have faith in their own Soul cannot but go wrong.

To avoid hypocrisy we should develop Faith in the God within, in the Inner Ruler immortal. And remembering him as continuously as possible, we should work outwardly, confining ourselves to the field of duty. As we grow, that field will expand, for as H.P.B. has pointed out in *The Key to Theosophy*:

Duty is that which *is due* to Humanity, to our fellowmen,

neighbours, family, and especially that which we owe to all those who are poorer and more helpless than we are ourselves. This is a debt which, if left unpaid during life, leaves us spiritually insolvent and moral bankrupts in our next incarnation. Theosophy is the quintessence of *duty*.

All of us are debtors to Nature and to humanity. But unless we find out the quality and the quantity of that debt we may turn speculators on the psychic plane, gamblers who gamble more and more in the mere hope of acquiring merit by which the debt incurred might be paid. Therefore the very straight warning of H.P.B. to all would-be chelas:

A man tied by his duty to one place has no right to desert it in order to fulfil another duty, let it be however much greater; for the first *duty* taught in Occultism is to do one's duty unflinchingly by *every duty*.

Light and darkness chase each other through the days and the nights. Real and false devotion also run a race in the life of every earnest aspirant. Devotee and Selfish Devotee by rotation, so to speak, play each his part in the Occult World as in the heart of the aspirant. It is for each individual to establish himself in the Life of Duty in such a way that the very desire to grow and to serve becomes automatic and his mind does not always turn to peer whether he is growing or serving. In his "Ode to Duty" Wordsworth makes this point in words worth remembering, and students of Theosophy will do well to study that poem dedicated to the Goddess of Dharma. He says to her:

There are who ask not if thine eye
Be on them; who, in love and truth,
Where no misgiving is, rely
Upon the genial sense of youth:
Glad hearts! without reproach or blot,
Who do thy work, and know it not:
Oh! If through confidence misplaced
They fail, thy saving arms, dread Power!
around them cast.
