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सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

Vol. 17, No. 1

May 17, 2025

THE INNER REFUGE

THE SACRED day of Buddha Purnima falls on the full moon day of the lunar month of Vaisakh. It is the day on which the Buddhists all over the world pay homage to “Gautama the Buddha,” *i.e.*, Gautama the Enlightened One. This day marks the triple anniversary of (a) Buddha’s birth as Prince Siddhartha, (b) his Enlightenment, *i.e.*, the day on which he attained to Supreme Wisdom under the Bodhi tree at Gaya, and also (c) the day of his death, when he discarded his mortal coil and proceeded to *Mahaparinirvana*. Gautama the Buddha occupies a special place in the Hierarchy of Exalted Beings.

Buddha made spiritual life possible for all; born a prince, he mingled with the poor and lowly and broke all fetters of caste. Upali, the barber, who was born into the Sudra caste, was accepted by the Buddha as his disciple and treated as an equal to disciples born into the highest caste, thereby showing that the merit of a human being is determined by his inner life and inner motive.

In his book, *A Guide to the Buddhist Path*, Sangharakshita, a Buddhist teacher, writes that a Buddhist is one who “Goes for Refuge” in response to the Buddha and his teachings; one who commits himself to the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha with the body, speech, and mind, *i.e.*, totally. When one says: “To the Buddha for Refuge I go! To the Dharma for Refuge I go! To the Sangha for Refuge I go!” one commits oneself to the vision that the Buddha had shown—the vision of truth, of existence, of human life

itself in all its depth and complexity—and commits himself to the Three Jewels. When a group of individuals who have thus committed themselves to the Three Jewels work together, they form a spiritual movement—a spiritual community; an association of committed individuals, freely working together for a common spiritual end.

Taking “refuge” generally means seeking shelter, asylum, or protection from danger, trouble, or unhappiness. In former ages, asylum might be sought and found in a temple or a church, and in India, it could be in forests where Yogis dwelt in holy contemplation. But in our days of personal and national tensions, it would be futile to put our trust in outer retreats. Karmic entanglement does not arise from one’s contact with other beings, but due to attachment. Unless there is inner relinquishment or true detachment, forests and mountain tops are of no use. Says the Buddha: “*Men driven by fear seek refuge on mountains, in forests, under sacred trees or at shrines. Such refuge is not secure, such refuge is not the best. Such refuge frees not a man from pain.*” (*The Dhammapada*, Ch. 14, verses 188-189)

In a spiritual context, particularly in Buddhism, “taking refuge” means acknowledging and relying on a higher power or spiritual path for guidance and support. One finds that ultimately taking refuge in the Buddha includes the other two—refuge in Dhamma and Sangha. There is only one refuge, split into three aspects or means by way of attracting people of different spiritual capacities.

But what does it mean when one says: “I take refuge in the Buddha, in the *Dhamma* or *Dharma*, and in the *Sangha*”? Who is a Buddha? The word “Buddha” is not a proper name but a title. It means “one who knows, one who understands.” It also means one who is “awake.” Buddha means the “unconditioned mind” or the “Enlightened mind.” Therefore, knowing the Buddha means knowing the mind in its unconditioned state. *The Voice of the Silence* tells us: “Look inward, Thou art Buddha,” that is, you yourself are the Buddha, potentially. We can really and truly come to know the Buddha only in the process of actualizing our own potential Buddhahood through spiritual living. It is only then that we can

say, with our own knowledge and experience, who the Buddha is. To achieve this end, we have to take Buddhahood, or Enlightenment, as a living spiritual ideal, as the ultimate objective, and try our utmost to realize it.

Dhamma is not simply the books of the Buddha's teachings—it is the Path leading to Enlightenment. The *Dhamma* is well expounded by the Blessed Ones. Thus, Refuge in the *Dhamma* includes not only the words of the Buddha but also the living experience of realization and teachings of the fully realized practitioners. In Buddhism, *dhamma* is the doctrine, the universal truth common to all individuals at all times, proclaimed by the Buddha.

The *Bhikshu-sangha* consists of those who have “gone forth from the household life” and joined the monastic order founded by the Buddha. Those taking refuge in the *Sangha*, also took refuge in the Buddha, their Spiritual teacher, and in *Dhamma*, their common teachings or principles. This would tend to draw them together. None, as an individual can come to know all the aspects of the truth, and therefore, each one can help the other in seeing things from a different perspective. Members of the *Sangha* should be sympathetic towards each other. It is not only essential to be in sympathy with another's joys and sorrows but also with their opinions and views.

We find these views reflected in the incident narrated: At one time, a certain brother was suffering from dysentery and lay where he had fallen in his own excrement. The Buddha, as he was going His rounds of the lodgings, came to the lodging of that brother, and he asked, “Brother, what ails you?” The brother replied, “I have dysentery.” The Buddha asked, “Why is it, brother, that the brethren do not take care of you?” The brother replied, “I am useless to the brethren, Lord; therefore, the brethren do not care for me.” This showed that other monks had no sympathy, no sensitivity towards this monk. The Buddha, with the help of his disciple Ananda, bathed the monk. When the Buddha called the other monks and enquired of them, he was told that the brother was useless to the other brethren,

and that is why they did not take care of him. Then the Buddha said: “Brethren, ye have no mother and no father to take care of you. If ye will not take care of each other, who else, I ask, will do so? Brethren, he who would wait on me, let him wait on the sick. If he has a teacher, let his teacher take care of him so long as he is alive, and wait for his recovery. If he has a tutor or a lodger, a disciple or a fellow-lodger or a fellow-disciple, such should take care of him; if he does not do so, it shall be reckoned an offence.”

The whole process of realizing Buddhahood has been given in *The Voice of the Silence*, which involves not only changing the quality of mind but also acquiring the heart quality of mind. To cultivate not only an intelligent mind and a compassionate heart, but also an intelligent heart and a compassionate mind. It is to be accomplished mainly by paying heed to the Voice of Conscience and Intuition. The Buddha’s parting message to his disciples was: “Those who either now or after I am dead, shall be a lamp unto themselves, relying upon themselves only and not relying upon any external help, but holding fast to the truth as their lamp and seeking their salvation in the truth alone, shall not look for assistance to anyone besides themselves; it is they, among my Bhikkhus, who shall reach the very topmost height! But they must be anxious to learn!”

There are many levels of “going for the refuge.” It is not a one-time exercise, because as one’s understanding of Buddhism grows, one can renew the act of “going for the refuge.” It is re-dedicating oneself, writes Sangharakshita. In a way, in a far higher sense, we may connect the term “refuge” with the Sanskrit term “*sharan*” and hence with taking “*sharan*” in God, also known as *sharanagati* or *prapatti*, which means seeking refuge and surrendering to a higher power. This implies trusting God’s guidance and accepting His Will by surrendering one’s Ego and self-will.

What does “surrendering” mean in the context of spiritual life? Surrendering involves acceptance and adaptability. At one level, one surrenders to the law of Karma, accepting that whatever happens is for the best, though one may not know the reason for the present

situation. One accelerates the process of evolution by surrendering the personal ego to the divine within. In the *Mahabharata*, when Draupadi was being disrobed publicly in the court, she pleaded with all those present in the court, including her five husbands, grandsire, warriors, and teachers, but all were silent. It was only when she stopped struggling to maintain her modesty and, with folded hands, prayed to Krishna, that yards upon yards of cloth seemed to get added to her robes, which became endless. “In a real crunch situation, each one is alone....As long as we wrestle and struggle, the Lord would stand aside....To the one who takes refuge in the Lord, to the one who truly surrenders...there is redemption and salvation,” writes Narendra Murty in *Life Positive*. *Atma-nivedana* or complete surrender of the self is the highest form of devotion, which is the surrendering of the personal will to the divine will.

Shri Krishna says in the *Gita*: सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं ब्रज, “which is translated as, “Forsake every other religion and take refuge alone with me” (Chapter 18, *sloka* 66). In other words, we are asked to relinquish all the religions which are superimposed on the true knowledge of the *Atman* (Supreme Self), and focus our entire attention upon the Supreme Self, as only that can lead to freedom from terrestrial bondage. This is not possible unless one is ready to relinquish one’s *Ahankar* (egoism) or Individuality. According to Swami Tadrupanandji, to surrender is to be like a river that is willing to give up her form, her identity, and merge into the ocean. Thus, real surrender consists in sacrificing the name and form, as well as egoism. *The Voice of the Silence* says, “The Self of Matter and the SELF of Spirit can never meet. One of the twain must disappear; there is no place for both.” Saint Kabir has sung: “*Jab mein tha tab hari nahi, ab hari hai, mein nahi; Sab andhiyara mit gaya, jab Deepak dekhyā maahi*,” i.e., “When ‘I’ (lower, personal) was, then Hari (God) was not; but now God is, and ‘I’ am not; All darkness (illusions) dissolved when I saw the light (illumination) within.”

Commenting on three kinds of surrendering, Swami Tadrupanandji writes that the first form of surrendering is called the

THE INNER REFUGE

ordinary surrendering. Here, the feeling is “I am His.” There is complete surrender of one’s Ego and dependence on the wish and will of *Paramatma* or One Reality, as in the case of Draupadi. The second form of surrendering is called *madhyam* or middle surrendering, in which the feeling is that “*Paramatma* is mine,” and therefore the devotee is like the baby monkey clinging to the mother. The third and the highest form of surrender is constant meditation on *Paramatma*. The mind becomes that to which it is devoted. We are given an analogy. *Bhringa* (*Bhramar* or wasp) is a type of insect in which there are only males and no females. Then how do they populate? It catches the larva of another insect and puts it in its habitat made of mud. The wasp is said to sting the larva repeatedly, and constantly makes a humming sound. Every now and then it enters the hive and stings the larva. Some say that it stings at least one lakh times. As a result, so to speak, the larva’s attention is focused on the wasp as to when it will receive the next sting. The larva, so to say, meditates on the presence of the wasp all the time, and in turn becomes a wasp itself. So, just as the larva of an insect becomes itself a wasp by, so to speak, meditating on the wasp, so also a devotee becomes THAT, the Brahman, by constantly meditating on It.

HOWEVER mean your life is, meet it and live it; do not shun it and call it hard names. It is not so bad as you are. It looks poorest when you are richest. The fault-finder will find faults even in paradise. Love your life, poor as it is. You may perhaps have some pleasant, thrilling, glorious hours, even in a poorhouse. The setting sun is reflected from the windows of the alms-house as brightly as from the rich man’s abode; the snow melts before its door as early in the spring. I do not see but a quiet mind may live as contentedly there, and have as cheering thoughts, as in a palace.

—HENRY DAVID THOREAU

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

KING HARISHCHANDRA—THE EPITOME OF TRUTH

HARISHCHANDRA was a legendary king of the Solar dynasty, known for his unwavering commitment to truth, even in the face of adversity. The story shows how he was willing to endure hardship and suffering to fulfil a promise. He appears in several legends in texts such as the *Aitareya Brahmana*, *Mahabharata*, *Markandeya Purana*, and *Devi Bhagavat Purana*. The story mentioned in the *Markandeya Purana* is the most famous of them all. The *Markandeya Purana* is a Sanskrit text of Hinduism and one of the eighteen Puranas. King Harishchandra lived in the *Treta Yuga*, or Silver Age. King Harishchandra was a descendant of the Ikshvaku dynasty and an ancestor of Lord Rama, who also belonged to the Solar dynasty.

Sadhguru, the founder of the Isha Foundation, observes that King Harishchandra was not any kind of divine incarnation, but his virtues and sacrifices were no less than those of the ideal man, Lord Rama. Even today, no one is considered more truthful than King Harishchandra. He gave up his kingdom to fulfil the promise he made to Sage Vishwamitra. Lord Rama, a divine incarnation, renounced his kingdom to fulfil his father Dasharatha's promise. The story of King Harishchandra shows that one does not need to be a divine incarnation to walk the path of righteousness.

He had a queen named Taramati and a son named Rohit. Once, while on a hunting expedition, he heard the cries of a woman asking for help. He went in the direction of the sound, armed with a bow and arrow. However, the sound was an illusion created by Vighnaraja, the lord of the obstacles, who was trying to disturb the *Tapasya*, or deep meditation, of sage Vishwamitra, one of the most venerated sages of ancient India. Vighnaraja needed an agent to help him do so. When he saw Harishchandra, he entered the king's body and started abusing Vishwamitra. This disturbed Vishwamitra's meditation and destroyed all the knowledge he had acquired during his meditation.

When King Harishchandra saw what had happened and how he had been used as an agent to disturb Vishwamitra's meditation, which made the sage extremely angry with him, he apologized. He promised the sage that he was willing to fulfil any of his desires to overcome his guilt. Sage Vishwamitra demanded *dakshina* (donation) for his *rajasuya yajna* or "king's sacrifice." It is a ceremony that marks a consecration of a king. According to the Puranas, it refers to a great sacrifice performed by a *Chakravarti*, or universal monarch, at the time of his coronation as a mark of his undisputed sovereignty. King Harishchandra asked the sage what he wanted in *dakshina*. Vishwamitra asked him to give all that the king had, except himself, his wife, and his child. Harishchandra agreed and relinquished all his possessions, including his clothes. However, as he prepared to leave the palace with his family, Vishwamitra demanded another *dakshina*. Since the king did not have any possessions left, he promised to give another *dakshina* within a month.

The king started living in poverty with his family, followed by his subjects. This angered Sage Vishwamitra, and he said that the subjects were part of the kingdom donated to him. So, the king decided to leave the kingdom with his family. To make them go away sooner, Vishwamitra started beating the queen with a stick. When the five guardians of the directions saw this, they condemned Vishwamitra, who cursed them to be born as human beings, and they are said to be born as sons of Pandavas. In Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism, mention is made of the "Guardians of the Directions"—the deities that rule the specific directions of space.

Harishchandra decided to go to Kashi, or Varanasi, a place in North India, to collect money as a loan, to be repaid later. Their travel through the dense forest was difficult and was made unbearable by Vishwamitra, who created endless troubles for them. They suffered immense trauma, both physically and mentally. Yet, all through, Harishchandra did not swerve from his vow of truthfulness and righteousness.

On reaching Varanasi, they found that Vishwamitra was already present there. The sage demanded the *dakshina* that the king had promised him. Harishchandra pointed out that there was still some time left in the completion of one month. The sage agreed to come back at the next sunset and departed. As his hungry son cried for food, Harishchandra worried how he would be able to give the *dakshina* to the sage. Harishchandra's wife, Taramati, suggested that he should sell her and their son, Rohit, so that he could give the *dakshina* to Vishwamitra. Initially, Harishchandra was shocked, but eventually, the once powerful monarch was prepared to sell his wife and son, and for that purpose, he wandered from street to street. Ultimately, Harishchandra was able to sell his wife and son to an elderly Brahmin.

When Vishwamitra appeared again and demanded the *dakshina*, Harishchandra gave him all the money he had received from the sale of his wife and son. However, the sage demanded more. Harishchandra then decided to sell himself. An outcaste, *chandala*, who was actually Yama, the god of death, in disguise, offered to buy him. *Chandala* is a Sanskrit term for someone who deals with the disposal of corpses and an untouchable belonging to the Hindu lower caste. Harishchandra, being the high-caste *Kshatriya* (a warrior caste), did not accept the offer. Instead, he offered to be Vishwamitra's slave. Vishwamitra agreed but then declared, "Since you are my slave, you must obey me. I sell you to this *chandala* in exchange for gold coins." The *chandala* paid the sage and took along the king as his slave.

The *chandala* employed Harishchandra as a worker at the cremation ground. He was directed to collect fees for every dead body that was cremated there. He was given to understand that some part of the fees would go to the *chandala*, some to the local king, and the rest would be given to Harishchandra as his remuneration. Meanwhile, the elderly Brahmin started harassing Taramati and her son Rohit endlessly. One day, when Rohit went to the forest to gather wood, he was stung by a poisonous serpent and died. Taramati

was heartbroken upon hearing the news. Weeping inconsolably, she went into the forest in search of her child's body. On finding the body, she lifted the lifeless body and walked to the cremation ground, and placing the body there, went in search of the firewood for the funeral. Harishchandra recognized his wife and the son, and was grief-stricken and dejected. When she was ready to cremate their son, Harishchandra told her that he would not let her do so without paying the fee, which she was unable to.

According to one version of the story, all the deities appeared, led by Yama and accompanied by Vishwamitra, and praised Harishchandra for his sterling qualities and invited him to heaven. Another version of the story says that the gods blessed Harishchandra and revived his dead son. Vishwamitra said that he was only testing the king, who had passed the test, and that he would give back his wealth and power and also half of all the grace that he had earned in his lifetime of penance. Thus, the king was able to set a good example of the power of his truthfulness and virtue.

The main theme of this story is the importance of truth and honesty and honouring one's word in the face of extreme adversity. The story of Harishchandra is said to have influenced several great figures in India, and Mahatma Gandhi was one of them. After watching the play depicting the life and times of Harishchandra, he was inspired and resolved to emulate the life of this king and live the life of truthfulness.

The story of King Harishchandra has been compared by some to the *Book of Job* in the Bible, which tells us that Job was devoted to God. Satan tells God that it is because Job is protected by Him that he is so devoted. He asks God to remove the protection so that his devotion could be tested. Accordingly, Job undergoes tremendous suffering in terms of the loss of all his wealth, his wife and children, and being struck with a dreadful skin disease. H.P.B. suggests that the allegory of Job is the allegory of karmic purification and initiation. Initiation may be described as a trial or a test, which every earnest spiritual aspirant has to pass through and which helps to determine

whether the aspirant is ready to take the next step on the Path. There are levels and levels of initiation, wherein the aspirant is subjected to progressively difficult trials.

Light on the Path makes a distinction between ordinary humanity and those few who decide to take their evolution into their own hands by making a vow or a pledge. The masses of men go through life waveringly, not having a definite goal, and hence their karma operates in a confused manner. But those who resolve to practice a virtue to the hilt are likely to be tested, first, in the circumstances of life, and then through more severe trials.

When one takes a vow or pledge in earnest, one makes a solemn promise to one's divine nature to be a better human being. When one is determined to keep the "promise" made to his divine nature and sincerely endeavours to overcome the weaknesses of his own nature, surmounting them one by one, he progresses beyond ordinary humanity, "as a charger outdistances a weak horse." However, such a determination also invokes opposition from the inner and outer planes and calls for tremendous moral power. We can accumulate the required moral strength by "unselfish acts, by kind thoughts, by detaching our minds from the allurements of the world," writes Mr. Judge. It is not easy, he explains, to continue steadily on the path, with little or no variation, because very few are strong enough to keep up the never-ceasing strain. "Time alone, and many ages of service [of humanity], can give them that strength" (*Letters That Have Helped Me*, p. 71 and p. 94). What we call "karmic stamina" is the effect or fruit of past unselfish good karma that has ripened. The ripening of past good karma depends upon the stock of unselfish good thoughts in the present life. (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 34*, p. 13)

"Absolute morality," which, among the other things, means that every virtue must be practiced to the hilt, without making allowances. When people are not able to practice honesty or truthfulness or forgiveness in certain circumstances, they feel that it is too much to expect a person to remain honest in such a situation. However, we must be clear in our minds that *moral principles* are one thing and

our ability to apply them or live up to them is quite a different thing. Depending upon our inner state of development, there are limitations to our ability to practice morality. We must acknowledge those limitations instead of trying to dilute the principles or justify our actions.

Mr. Judge says that “The promises I made to myself are just as binding as any others” (*Letters That Have Helped Me*, p. 130). Here, he speaks about the importance of a vow or a resolve. “Every pledge or promise unless built upon four pillars—absolute sincerity, unflinching determination, unselfishness of purpose, and *moral power*, which makes the fourth support and equipoises the three other pillars—is an insecure building,” writes H.P.B.

Shila is a transcendental virtue and may be described as “a good moral character that is a permanent disposition.” Moral qualities like truthfulness, equanimity, honesty, etc., appeal to us all, but *Shila* implies leading a pure and virtuous life from *moment to moment* and not once in a while. It does not take a spectacular mistake or slip on our part to let in bad influences. Living a pure life, continuously, creates a shield. Then, evil thoughts, words, and deeds of others do not affect us; they would be like dust thrown against a high wind. Professor C. S. Lewis observes that there is a difference between doing some *particular* just and temperate action and *being* a just and temperate man. Someone who is not a good tennis player can play a good shot now and then. But a “good player” is the man whose eyes, nerves, and muscles have been so trained by making innumerable good shots that they can now be relied upon. They have a certain tone or quality, even while he is not playing—just as a mathematician’s mind acquires a certain habit or an outlook, even when he is not doing mathematics. Likewise, the one who perseveres in doing good actions gets in the end a certain quality of character. It is this quality of character that is the real virtue of *Shila*. Buddha describes such a man as one for whom “occasions to act with like or dislike arise not.”

SOUND AND ITS POWER

VI

IN HIS book, *The Sleepwalkers*, Arthur Koestler points out that “The Pythagorean discovery that the pitch of a note depends on the length of the string which produces it, and that concordant intervals in the scale are produced by simple numerical ratios (2:1 octave, 3:2 fifth, 4:3 fourth, etc.), was epoch-making.” He seemed to suggest that the music produced by two strings whose lengths were in proportion 1:2, 2:3 or 3:4 would produce harmonious sound or vibrations. Arthur Koestler writes that, extended to the stars, the doctrine took the form of the “Harmony of Spheres.”

The Music or Harmony of the Spheres is not a mere fancy. We are not able to hear it, perhaps because we are grossly constituted. As Shakespeare makes Lorenzo say in *The Merchant of Venice*: “There’s not the smallest orb which thou behold’st but in its motion like an angel sings...Such harmony is in immortal souls; But, whilst this muddy vesture of decay doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.” These lines express the idea that the smallest celestial bodies are in motion, and this motion, like an angel’s singing, creates harmony. This harmony is inherent in immortal souls, but we cannot hear it while we are encased in the physical body, which is described as a “muddy vesture of decay.” In other words, the universe and the human souls are imbued with a beautiful, spiritual harmony that we are unable to perceive in our present state, which shows the limitations of human existence.

The Voice of the Silence says: “Disciples may be likened to the strings of a soul-echoing Vina....The string that fails to answer ‘neath the Master’s touch in dulcet harmony with all the others, breaks—and is cast away.” Being in harmony is very important. We may not agree with another, and yet, acknowledging his uniqueness, we may accept and learn from the peculiarities of his nature. When a disciple refuses to adjust and persists in being separate and assertive, then, like the overstretched string that breaks, he may find a crack

developing in his inner consciousness, and the silver string that binds him to his divine nature might be stretched unduly, making it difficult for him to get guidance from the Master within.

Shri B. P. Wadia explains that each disciple is like the string of a *Vina*, capable of echoing the tunes of the Soul. The minds of the disciples must be in harmony with that of the *Guru*, and that is possible only if all the minds are in attunement and harmony with each other. The conductor of an orchestra wants all the players of different instruments to play in harmony with him, but that, in turn, is possible only if each player playing his own particular instrument is in harmony with the other players playing their own particular instruments. The unity and harmony between co-disciples and co-workers may be called the horizontal unity, and the unity controlled and used by the Master may be named vertical unity. (*Living the Life*, p. 88)

In the article “Hypnotism and its Relations to other Modes of Fascination,” H.P.B. explains the rationale of hypnotism. When hypnotism is produced by Braid’s method by looking at some bright spot, metal, or a crystal, it is the “eye,” the most occult organ of all, on the superficies of our body, serves as a medium between the object gazed at and the brain of the person, which “attunes the oscillations of his cerebral nervous centres to the rate of the vibrations of the object gazed at by catching the rhythm of the latter and passing it on to the brain.” On the other hand, in the second method, hypnotism is induced by the direct gaze of the operator; “it is the Will of the operator radiating through his eye that produces the required unison between his will and the will of the person operated upon. For, out of two objects attuned in unison—as two chords, for instance—one will always be stronger than the other, and thus have mastery over the other and even the potentiality of destroying its weaker ‘co-respondent.’” This is corroborated by physical science. We can take the example of the “sensitive flame.” According to science, “if a note be struck in unison with the ratio of the vibrations of the heat molecules, the flame will respond immediately to the sound (or note struck), that it

will dance and sing in rhythm with the sounds. But Occult Science adds that the flame *may also be extinguished* if the sound is intensified.” (H. P. B. Series No. 9, pp. 36-38)

The *rationale* of telepathy is that if two minds vibrate or change into the same state, they will think alike, *i.e.*, receive the impression sent by the other. “When two minds are sympathetically related, and the instruments [brains] through which they function are tuned to respond magnetically and electrically to one another, there will be transmission of thoughts from one to the other, at will.” (*The Key to Theosophy*, Indian Ed., p. 289)

In Indian philosophy, especially in Vedic tradition, sound (*Vak* or *Vach*) is understood to manifest in four stages: *Para*, *Pashyanti*, *Madhyama* and *Vaikhari*. These are different levels of sound energy, from the most subtle to the gross, which correspond to four states of consciousness. In *The Voice of the Silence* (p. 19) the disciple is told that “unless the flesh is passive, head cool, the soul as firm and pure as flaming diamond, the radiance will not reach the *chamber*, its sunlight will not warm the heart, nor will the mystic sounds of the Akasic heights reach the ear, however eager, at the initial stage.” The footnote explains the “mystic sounds” as the melody heard by the ascetic at the beginning of his cycle of meditation. It is called *Anahat Shabd* by the Yogis. In the *Glossary*, *Anahat Shabd* is described as mystic voices and sounds heard by the Yogi at the incipient stage of his meditation, and it is the third of the four states of sound, called *Madhyama*. We hear only the fourth state of sound, called *Vaikhari*, with our physical ears. The sound in its previous three stages is not heard except by those who have developed their internal, highest spiritual senses.

The article “The Hindu Theory of Vibrations as the Producer of Sounds, Forms and Colours,” by C. Kottaya, F.T.S., that appeared in *The Theosophist* magazine for October and November 1890, deals with the subject of vibrations in Nature as treated in Hindu metaphysics, based on the general proposition that all phenomena, whether in the form of the cosmos as a whole or that of its

constituents, *i.e.*, twenty-five *Tattwas*, with their attributes of colour, sound, etc., are caused by motion, vibration, or Spirit acting on or in conjunction with matter. *Nada*, *Swara* and *Sabda* are the Sanskrit equivalents of sound. *Nada* signifies spiritual sound, vibration, or motion. It is this inner motion which is the noumenal cause of all the manifestations.

In the Hindu philosophy, *Aum* or *Omkara* is described as the primordial vibration pervading the entire universe. The subject of sound and vibrations is closely related to AUM. In the article, “AUM!” Mr. Judge points out that the Hindu Puranas and other philosophical texts have extensively dealt with AUM, and in doing so, they were analyzing sound. The syllable *a* represents the Word, the Logos, or the *Verbum* of St. John, and is comparable to Brahma of the Hindus. It represents the Divine Resonance, or *Nada Brahma*, which pervades the whole universe. It is the vivifying power which stirs up all the particles in the universe. Without this resonance or motion among the particles, there would be no visible universe. The sound *a*, after being produced, is altered into the sound *au*, so that the second sound *u* is that one made by the first in continuing its existence, which represents preservation. The utterance is closed with the sound *m*, which marks *stoppage* or destruction. In other words, the *au* sound, or the Divine Resonance, indicates conservation of energy during the “Day of Brahma,” or manifestation, and the *m* sound indicates re-absorption of the energy during the “Night of Brahma.” This Divine Resonance, says H.P.B., is “vibrations,” or that which gives impulse to every kind of phenomenon in the astral plane.

At the base of every word, there is thought. Thus, speech is the faculty which is directly related to the mind. Speech is the *logos* of the thought. *Logos* means outward expression or effect of the concealed cause. Thus, on the higher plane, *Manifested Logos* is the expression of Divinity. The plan for the phenomenal universe resides in the Divine Mind, which is like unexpressed thought. *Brahma* is the male *logos*, and his female counterpart is *Vach*, the

female *logos*, or the female creator, Saraswati of the Hindus. Vach is the “mystic secret speech” of the Rishis, *i.e.*, the “creative speech.”

Regarding the process of manifestation, Mr. T. Subba Row writes in the “Notes on the Bhagavad Gita” (*Theosophist*, February 1887 onwards) that *Parabrahmam* is the one essence that exists before all things in the cosmos. There arises a centre of energy within *Parabrahmam*, and that is called Logos. He describes the Logos as *gnatha* or Ego, which lies latent in the bosom of *Parabrahmam* during *Pralaya*, and starts as the centre of conscious energy at the dawn of *Manvantara* or cosmic activity. Such centres of energy are almost innumerable in the bosom of *Parabrahmam*, and we may take each of these centres of energy as representing the potentiality of giving birth to a cosmos or solar system. “When once it starts into conscious being...from its objective standpoint, *Parabrahmam* appears to it as *Mulaprakriti*.”

Parabrahm, after manifesting on the one hand as *Mulaprakriti* and on the other as the Logos or Ego, acts as one energy through the Logos, which is called Fohat or *Daiviprakriti* or the Light of the Logos. This is explained by means of an analogy. The Sun in our solar system is like the Logos through which light, heat, and energy are radiated from some unknown centre in Space, as visible light and heat. The Sun is only the agent. That unknown centre is the Central Spiritual Sun. Likewise, light, life, and energy of *Parabrahmam* is radiated through the Logos. T. Subba Row writes, “The universe in its infinite details and with its wonderful laws does not spring into existence by mere chance...it comes into existence mainly through the instrumentality of...the Logos [one source of energy and power]....This light of the Logos (or Fohat) is the link...between the objective matter and the subjective thought of *Eswara*....What springs up in the Logos at first is simply an image, a conception of what it is to be in the cosmos. This light or energy catches the image and impresses it upon the cosmic matter, which is already manifested. Thus, spring into existence all the manifested solar systems.”

Referring to *Rig Veda* and several Upanishads, T. Subba Row speaks of four kinds of *Vach* or speech—*Para*, *Pasyanti*, *Madhyama*, and *Vaikhari*. *Vaikhari Vach* is a symbol of the manifested Cosmos. The *Madhyama* form of *Vach* represents the “light of the Logos” (*Daiviprakriti* or *Fohat*). The *Pasyanti* form of *Vach* represents the Logos. The *Para Vach* represents *Parabrahmam*, who is beyond the *noumenon* and all the *noumena*. T. Subba Row explains that according to Patanjali, Logos is *Chit* or consciousness. The light of the Logos is *Madhyama Vach*, or *Chidachit*, because it exists as a link between the mental form in the Logos (*Chit*) and the manifested form (in matter) or *Achit*. Thus, *Madhyama* is *Fohat* as a link between the Logos and the cosmic matter, which impresses the ideas in the divine mind on matter. In fact, *Fohat* transforms that which was subjective into the objective, that which was *noumenal* into the phenomenal, just as the idea or the ideal image in the mind of man may be reproduced as a concrete form, as when the potter makes a pot out of clay.

T. Subba Row sums it up thus: “Every kind of *vaikhari Vach* exists in its *madhyama*, further in its *pasyanti*, and ultimately in its *para* form.... Now the whole manifested solar system exists in its *sukshma* form in this light or energy of the *Logos*, because its image is caught up and transferred to cosmic matter, and again the whole cosmos must necessarily exist in the one source of energy from which this light emanates. The whole cosmos in its objective form is *vaikhari Vach*, the light of the *Logos* is the *madhyama* form, and the Logos itself the *pasyanti* form, and *Parabrahmam* the *para* aspect of that *Vach*. It is by the light of this explanation that we must try to understand certain statements made by various philosophers to the effect that the manifested cosmos is the *Verbum* manifested as cosmos.”

(Concluded)

UNCERTAINTY always creates doubt, and doubt creates fear.

—OSCAR MUNOZ

KARMIC CHAINS

Take then as much as merit hath in store for thee, O thou of patient heart. Be of good cheer and rest content with fate, Such is thy Karma, the Karma of the cycle of thy births, the destiny of those who, in their pain and sorrow, are born along with thee, rejoice and weep from life to life, chained to thy previous actions.

—*The Voice of the Silence*

HOW RARELY do we think that we, in the past, have “chained” our enemy to ourself! He cannot avoid taking birth at the same time as we do and coming into contact with us once again, if not in the next life then in a succeeding one. Therefore Mr. Judge asks us to make friends, not enemies, for future births.

How shall we win over our enemies and turn them into friends? First, by dwelling upon the thought that there are *no* enemies; no one can be our enemy. Even in the fight in life between the good and the evil, virtues can be gained and courage developed. Humility, compassion, unselfishness and the like often arise out of suffering and sorrow, and we grow in stature. Therefore, we see, quite simply and logically, that enemies, trials and rebuffs are our teachers. A kind, too kind, mother who spoils her child with “kindness” is more an enemy of the child than one who trains the child in right living, right habits, right discipline, even though all this might appear galling to the child at his stage. So, our so-called friend is often in reality our enemy, and the reverse is equally true.

We have to learn that the first thought that springs to our mind with regard to the one who brings us trouble should be one of gratitude. The second thought should be one of regret that we have made it possible for him to be “an agent of evil.” Next, we must automatically ask how we can repay our debt to him. We have “chained” him to ourself through past actions; we must now begin to “chain” him by developing in ourselves the “truer realization of the SELF.” For that SELF is in him as it is in us. We have to search for

KARMIC CHAINS

it in him, seek out what is good in him and strengthen it. If we find this impossible then let us strongly refuse to engage in any and every *emotion* regarding him, and concentrate on what we can learn through what he has done to us. If even this is not possible to us at present, then we must *resolutely put him out of our mind*, which means that we must refuse to let any thought or picture of him or his actions enter the mind. Mr. Judge says we must put no one out of our *heart*. Emphatically true, but there is a stage when we must not let our *thought* dwell on such an one. We can think of him again later when our emotions are less involved.

All of us are a mixture of good and evil. The evil will go in the course of evolution, but the good will remain. We have therefore to try to find the good points in the evil man and strengthen them if we can.

But, whatever the evil done by him, *we* created the channel between him and ourselves. *We* gave him the opportunity to err.

Continue the same line of thinking and see that others give *us* the opportunity to err in a similar manner. They are tempters, linked to us by a certain degree of consubstantiality. If there were no consubstantiality between two persons, they would not clash.

There is no hope for us unless we look upon life, and the smallest as the greatest happening, as of our own making, and see that those through whom good or bad comes to us are *agents* only.

Our own vices must become our teachers; our own virtues need to be watched carefully lest they become our enemies. Pride and humility are opposites. Who am I to vent my anger on another, or reproach him!

You are not here merely to make a living. You are here in order to enable the world to live more amply, with greater vision, with a finer spirit of hope and achievement. You are here to enrich the world, and you impoverish yourself if you forget the errand.

—WOODROW WILSON

THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE

FRAGMENT ONE—IV

THE wandering mind is graphically called the butterfly-mind which moves from object to object. The four peculiarities of the Lower *Manas* are: (1) Like a butterfly, it flies to any object or subject. (2) It flies to a pleasant idea. (3) It flies to an unpleasant idea. (4) It remains passive. Patanjali says that “the mind is ‘modified’ by any object or subject brought before it, or to which it is directed.” The Lower *Manas* operating through the brain is at once altered into the shape and characteristics of any object, mental or otherwise, it dwells on.

Our senses and organs are instruments, and they will have their normal demands, but it is not the eyes which ask for pleasant sights or the tongue which wants sweet things. When mind intervenes and submits to the dictates of *Kamic* nature, all troubles arise. Moreover, our mind is like water, which takes the shape of the vessel it is poured into. So also, our mind takes the shape of the object it is thinking about. Mind becomes that to which it is devoted. Mr. Judge expresses it thus: “Mind is immediately tinted or altered by whatever object it is directed to. By this means the soul is enmeshed in the same thought or series of thoughts as is the mind....It is naturally clear and uncoloured, as we would see if we were able to find one that had not gone through too many experiences.” (*Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita*, p. 141)

As long as the mind wanders and undergoes modifications, it is not performing its real function as the instrument of the Soul. The mind is diffused over a multiplicity of subjects. It is only when this tendency to diffuseness is corrected that concentration or “one-pointedness” is achieved. It is the “power to apply the mind, at any moment, to the consideration of a single point of thought, to the exclusion of all else” (*The Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali*, p. 2). In *The Voice of the Silence*, (pp. 1-2), we are told how the modifications of the mind are to be avoided. Thus: **“Having become indifferent to objects of perception, the pupil must seek out the Rajah of the senses, the Thought-Producer, he who awakes illusion. The Mind is the**

great Slayer of the Real. Let the Disciple slay the Slayer.”

In the waking state of consciousness, man lives in the world of senses that are ensouled by desires which hold the mind captive. Just as the mind of a drunken man sees things askew, so also, the mind of a person who draws his conclusions based on the senses ensouled by desires sees things askew. (*Studies in the Voice of the Silence*, p. 6)

Mind has been described as “the Rajah of the senses,” *i.e.*, the King or chief of the senses. In the *Secret Doctrine* (I, 96) quoting from the *Anugita*, H.P.B. writes that smell, sight, touch, taste, hearing, mind, and understanding are the seven sacrificial priests. The mind says that without it the nose does not smell, the eyes do not see, the tongue does not taste, etc. Without the mind, the senses are like fires with their flames extinct. Without the mind, all the beings are like half-dried and half-moist wood, as they would not be able to apprehend the qualities or objects, even if the senses are functioning. It is the mind which interprets the data brought to it by the senses, and then perception happens. But it does not stop there. The senses bring in the data, which the mind perceives, and it lingers over the perception, forming attachment to pleasant sense-perceptions and aversion to the unpleasant ones. If each perception dies after its completion, and no mental indulgence is allowed, then self-restraint for each perception is cultivated.

This has been elucidated in the Fourth Chapter of the *Gita*, which says that every activity can become a sacrifice (*yajna*), an oblation or offering into the fire of the *Brahman* or the Supreme Reality. The *yajna* consists of two essential factors: the *ahuti* (offering) and the kindling of the fire. The fire consumes *ahuti* and the flame shoots up. In verse 26 we read that sense-perception is a *yajna* in which the stimuli entering the sense organs—sound entering the ears, colour and form for the eyes, smell for the nose, etc.—constitute the offering, and the resulting sense-perception is like the flames kindled. Thus, sound and other sense-objects sacrifice themselves into the fire of sense-perception. Likewise, self-restraint is a *yajna*, in which the hearing, seeing, and other sense-perceptions are offered, which

kindle the flame of self-restraint.

Thus, for instance, we put ice-cream on the tongue, which reports the sensation of its being cold and sweet. The mind says: “I like it and I want more,” thus developing craving, or *trishna*. Craving, or *trishna* is an important link in the chain of causes, or *Nidanas*, which becomes the cause of its entanglement into the cycle of life and death. It is the thirst or craving for the sensation which brings us back to life again and again. When we have learnt to experience the sensation without allowing the corresponding craving to arise, we succeed in breaking the link between *vedana* and *trishna* and overcome the necessity of rebirth. This link needs to be broken by training and control of the mind to restrict it to its function of perception without getting attached. When the mind or the lower self is thus detached from the perceptions, it brings emancipation of the Self itself.

In the *Anugita* there is a long argument put forward by the senses that without them, the mind also cannot have perception. If perception is dependent on the *mind interpreting* the data, then likewise, the mind, too, is dependent upon the data brought by the senses. A person surviving only on the pleasures obtained from mental operations and not connected with the objects of the senses is like a person entering the house without a door; he will meet with death because the life-winds will not receive their fuel, in terms of sense data, just like a fire is extinguished in the absence of fuel. Thus, if without mind there is no perception, it is equally true that without senses there is no sense-perception possible. Here it is important to note H.P.B.’s remark that it is only on the *sensuous plane* that the mind is dependent on the senses, but “Spiritual mind (the upper portion or aspect of the *impersonal* manas) takes no cognisance of the senses in physical man.” (*S.D.*, I, 96)

In what way is the mind the Slayer of the Real? In *Studies in the Voice of the Silence* (pp. 6-7), we read that the world of objects is illusory in the sense that our valuation of them is false. The objective world may be compared to a great bazaar in which the desire-

enslaved minds, not knowing the true prices of things take them and then bargain and haggle for them. The mind exploited in the bazaar of the objective world gains experience and learns to evaluate each object at its proper worth. Ultimately, one has to be indifferent to objects of perception. When the mind is engulfed in desires it is unable to see the true value of worldly objects. “We value an object in terms of the satisfaction or the delight which it gives to our desire-fraught senses. This is the cause of illusion which is ignorance—not total absence of knowledge but the false evaluation of objects, mistaking lust for love.” Therefore, we may say that when the mind has become detached, without being caught in desires, and therefore is able to learn true evaluation of things, it can become indifferent to objects of sense.

For growth it is necessary to doubt the lower mind and sense impressions. Reason has to be seen as a good servant but a bad master, for it shuts out man’s spiritual perceptions or soul intuitions. We can reason in terms of what knowledge we possess, but “intuition soars above the tardy processes of ratiocinative thought.”

In the third chapter of the *Gita*, Shri Krishna shows Arjuna the method of overcoming desire. “In the first place, restrain thy sense.” It is by means of the outward senses and their inner counterparts that a great turmoil is set up, first in the heart. We are asked to *begin* with the senses but not stop there. What happens when we are addicted to eating cakes? In the beginning, in spite of our great determination, the sight of cake or the smell of cake being cooked is enough to shake our determination. A person who has a weakness for cake may avoid going near the place where it is cooked, sold, stored, etc. We restrain the senses by not allowing the eyes to rest too long on tempting sights or the ears to rest on tempting sounds, and so on. Like a tortoise withdraws its feet and head within the shell at the approaching danger, the advice is to draw in all the senses and restrain them from running in their accustomed directions.

If one is blind, then the beauty of a thing does not disturb one’s mind; if one is deaf, neither criticism nor praise can disturb one’s

mind, and so on. Alternatively, it could be a *psychological retreat*, as, for instance, when one is very sick or in a trauma or experiencing deep sorrow or misery, then temporarily the senses are not able to tempt the mind. It could also be by being a stoic or by a strong effort of Will that senses are held under control or suppressed. As a result, the attachment or aversion for the sense-objects merely remains dormant. Hence, though initially it is useful to restrain the senses, a time must come when the mind must be so trained that it is not swayed by the data brought in by the senses.

Simultaneously with the control of the senses, one must control the mind and heart, lest one becomes a “false pietist of bewildered soul.” At times, we give up the desire outwardly, but within there is a longing for sweets, cakes, alcohol, movies, etc. As one controls the senses, one must also control the mind and not indulge in mental gratification by fantasizing. It is important to recognize that *ultimately*, it is the *mind*, and not the senses, that leads us astray. As stated briefly in *Katha Upanishad*, the senses are the horses; the mind or *kama-manas* is the reins; the body is a chariot and the Will is the charioteer. In *Patanjali’s Yoga Aphorisms* (p. xiii) we are told that Will is not wholly dependent on the mind but is separable from it, and Will and mind are servants for the Soul’s use. By using Will, the higher can control the lower mind, and through the reins of the mind, horses of the senses can be restrained, and then all must be turned inward. *The Voice of the Silence* asks the disciple to become “indifferent to objects of perception” or strive for inner detachment. That means one aspect of the mind experiences the sensations, feeling the pain or pleasure, but another aspect of the mind becomes a witness and does not allow them to affect the mind.

To be able to hear the “Voice of the Silence,” certain conditions have to be fulfilled. Our life is so bound up with sensation and sense objects, with finite space and time, that we dread when we are asked to transfer our attention and interest to that which is changeless, neither perceptible to the senses nor something that can be grasped by the lower mind. It is absolutely clear that the

“changeless” Reality is not to be found in the outside world. We must turn within. We must come to the stage of correct perception.

When can correct perception take place? When it is free from Maya or illusion, or “When to himself his form appears as unreal, as do on waking all the forms he sees in dreams,” says *The Voice of the Silence*. Just as when we wake up, we become aware of things seen during dreams to be illusions, so also, we must become aware of our perceptions in the relative world to be illusions. When we dream various events in our dreams and then wake up, we are able to dissociate ourselves from these dreams, even though we actually took part in them during the dream stage. Thus, on the plane of activity, the dream stage is illusionary. Somehow it must dawn on us that even this plane of action is *mayavic*; that we are *not* this present body, ideas, emotions, etc., to which we hold on so firmly. We change and are never the same, even for a moment. If we start questioning the dream state and also our waking state, it will be a positive step towards realizing the Self in us, which is never changing and the witness of all the changes. A Chinese philosopher Zhuang Zhou dreamt that he was a butterfly. On waking, he wondered whether he was the man who dreamt that he was a butterfly or he was a butterfly now dreaming that he is a man!

This does not mean that we start considering the earthly existence as unreal. It is only that there are various planes of consciousness. If we dream of a tiger pursuing us, it is so very real that we are afraid and may even wake up. Thus, what is reality on one plane becomes an illusion when looked at from a different level of consciousness.

In other words, we must realize the personality to be an illusion. We identify ourselves with the ever-changing perishable body and with its conditions and relations, which are also ever-changing. We say, “I am happy, or I am sad,” “I am sick, or I am well.” These expressions are because of the self-identifying attachment to some form or conditions which are changing.

(*To be continued*)

NON-SECTARIAN EDUCATION

EDUCATION in its true sense is unfoldment, which means to bring out, to reveal, or to elicit the knowledge, skill, talent, powers, and capacities which are already there potentially in an individual. How else could some individuals exhibit extraordinary talents and capacity in various fields of human activity, such as art, knowledge, and intelligence, far above the average mankind, often even at the stage of infancy or childhood, even before formal education commenced? Examples of such extraordinary individuals and precocious children are not wanting. They are found in all ages and places. Modern pedagogy, while acknowledging the phenomenon of such precocity, cannot account for the cause of it, bound as it is to the premise that man is no more than a material body. The very premise of the modern school stands disproved by such innumerable instances of child prodigies.

Timeless Universal Wisdom, now promulgated to the modern world as Theosophy, which teaches and demonstrates that man is essentially a pilgrim Soul, presided over by an indivisible universal Spirit, which is One, unborn and eternal, subject to endless series of reincarnations under the Law of Karma, alone not only accounts for such prodigies but opens a boundless vista of knowledge and powers latent in man, leading to the possibility of highest human perfection. Every human being, irrespective of social distinctions of castes or creeds, high or low, has such a potentiality of divine perfection. It is the natural endowment of every man and woman. For such innate natural potentiality to be realised in *actu* the system of modern education needs to be revamped on the basis of an appreciation of the knowledge of the dual nature of the human soul— lower mortal and higher immortal Ego—presided over by Universal Spirit, and the universal laws of Karma and Reincarnation.

Birth of a child in a family and a nation is not an accident or a chance happening. It is a Soul incarnating anew in a particular environment by the dictate of the Karmic Law, having quitted the

old form it had inhabited which grew old and perished in the previous incarnation. Each rebirth of a Soul is a link in the series of cycles of re-embodiment, whose beginning and end is incalculable. Therefore, by reason of the fact that the reincarnating Ego is an inalienable portion of the World Soul, is essentially divine and All; and carrying with it the distilled experiences of innumerable reincarnations from an immense past, it is easy to see how every child born in this world has immense potentialities, but generally hemmed in by unsuitable environment for their expression, due to karma of the individual and of the race or the nation. Quality of the general trend of our thought, action, and motive of action of a life-time are the factors which render our lower nature either responsive to, or obstructive of, the potentiates of our higher nature to freely manifest in life.

Man is a Mind-being (*Manasa*), formed of thought. All actions, whether of speech, body, or desire, are generated by thought. “These thoughts are lodged in that part of man which we have called *Manas*—the mind, and there remain as subtle but powerful links with magnetic threads that enmesh the solar system, and through which various effects are brought out” (*The Ocean of Theosophy*, p. 97). Hence, the Karmic effects of the thoughts of a life-time of an individual, added to the vast store of unexpended Karma of many past incarnations, determine the quality, nature, character, and circumstances of the life of every Ego that is born. The perfect justice of it is evident. Inasmuch as, Ego is bound to the collective Karma of the nation and the race, individual Karma profoundly affects for good or evil the racial and national Karma, and *vice versa*, show us how important it is to revise our pedagogical system to take into account these truths, especially in its bearing on character formation of children and youth.

In order that innate knowledge and potentialities latent in the Immortal Higher Manas may percolate and inform the lower brain-mind and quicken the mental and psychic faculties, the lower nature and mind have to be educated, trained, and prepared in order that the nature of the person is rendered responsive to the afflatus from

above. That indeed is the whole purpose of education. The formidable obstruction in the way of this line of human development is the ideas that are held generally with regard to the universe, of man, of life, and of the purpose of life that are far removed from truth.

Sectarian religious beliefs and customs, and unquestioning conformity thereto fastened on the child, on the one hand, and the competitive school education that accentuates competitive spirit and selfishness, and inculcation of ideas and values wholly self-centred and materialistic, on the other, render the mind impervious to the influence of the light of Higher Manas, to universal ideas, love of Truth, moral conscientiousness, nobler ideals, higher aspirations, and altruistic impulses. In other words, education ought to be non-sectarian, which means that the mental action should not only be free from constricting *sectarian* religious ideas and beliefs but also from biases and prejudices in favour of one's own ethnic, racial, national, religious, or cultural identities. H. P. Blavatsky, in her work, *The Key to Theosophy*, a treatise on practical Theosophy, offers insightful practical hints, which if deeply reflected upon and thoughtfully implemented, new generations of open-minded, liberal, altruistic citizenry would doubtless come into being, heralding a new era of Enlightenment before long. A few salient ideas may be recounted in this regard.

Self-reliance is a crucial ethic to be inculcated if latent potentialities of the Soul are to be practically realised, even if partially, in life. Conviction of the reality of the eternal and universal nature of the Higher Self, in which is the great root of Karmic energy of all the past and of the future, is the motivating power to dedicate one's thought in that direction. It means to learn to think and reason for oneself with eternal verities as the premises. It leads to the perceptive appreciation of the reciprocal interdependence of all life and of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity. This line of thought and education spontaneously unfolds in the thinker a regard for all life forms and love of fellowmen and a deep sense of self-responsibility

towards all. A conscientious appreciation of the reality, importance and potency of the ethics of means and ends, and of the proper relation between rights and duties, naturally follow in building character. It obviates blind dependence on authority—whether of science or religion—which is a weakness that stultifies free mental action. The pupil so educated and equipped will come into possession within himself of the touch-stone—right discrimination and correct judgment—by which he can test by his own independent thought and experience the validity and veracity of any idea or proposition presented to him, and intuit the meaning, value, and purpose of every experience in all situations he meets in life.

A few basic ideas have to be kept in view in working out the modality of imparting such an education with the end contemplated as in the foregoing. Each individual, being unique in qualities, character, intelligence, interests, special aptitudes, and early education must begin with considering each child as a unit with a view to identifying its special aptitudes and providing opportunities for their development. In order to inculcate independent critical thinking, the basic approach in teaching various subjects ought to avoid rote learning and memorising, and, instead, teach to understand the fundamental concepts, their rationale, and their application. For instance, in teaching the idea of evolution, modern theories of random, mechanical process of organic evolution as put forth by Darwin to be contrasted with the intelligent, teleological theory offered by Alfred Wallace and the ontological conceptions of ancient thinkers. Similarly, in teaching science at the high school and college levels, a broad perspective of the philosophy of science covering the method of scientific inquiry of the modern Western school, its methodology, scope, and limitations, must be contrasted with the epistemology of the science and philosophy of ancient civilizations and their achievements.

The immeasurable value of a study of classical arts and literature, which humanises, deepens, and refines perception and sensibilities, ought to be an important component of the system of education. At

the primary and secondary levels of school education, myths and legends of different cultures, and the morals they impart, are to form a part of the art curriculum. The ethics of means and ends is to be inculcated, supported with the logic of the laws of Karma and Reincarnation, interrelation and interdependence of all beings, and Universal Brotherhood. From this follows the logic of self-reliance and of assumption of self-responsibility for the adverse conditions of life in which one may be situated, and the firm belief in the power everyone has to shape one's destiny. An appreciation of the absolute justice of the Karmic Law helps us to appreciate with an unbiased mind the moral causes of historical events produced by human action in the past and enables us to draw the right lessons from the historical experience.

Competitive spirit and grading, which characterises the system of education today, promote fierce selfishness and mutual envy and hatred almost, which animalise the human being, and need to be entirely abolished. Instead, pupils must be taught to be mutually cooperative, sympathetic, and helpful to fellow pupils weaker than themselves.

A broad-based system of education as outlined in the foregoing brings out liberal minded citizenry with cosmopolitan outlook, humanistic and sympathetic sentiments, and altruistic and nobler impulses, thus forming the foundation for the building of a nation of a superior kind.

WORDS can be twisted into any shape. Promises can be made to lull the heart and seduce the soul. In the final analysis, words mean nothing. They are labels we give things in an effort to wrap our puny little brains around their underlying natures, when ninety-nine percent of the time the totality of the reality is an entirely different beast. The wisest man is the silent one. Examine his actions. Judge him by them.

—KARAN MARIE MONING

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

A young man who had lost sixty million dollars due to the volatility of the stock market told Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev, the founder of the Isha Foundation, that the uncertainty of what tomorrow will bring bothered him. Sadhguru's immediate response was that the best thing about tomorrow is that it never comes! However, at a deeper level, his view is that we should never allow our happiness to be determined by the stock market, politics, relationships, or anything external, and if we are allowing this to happen, then we are not in control of our mental activity. If we are stressed by uncertainty, then the problem is with our internal condition.

Life is full of uncertainties. "As human beings, we came here without any investment. We will leave without any capital, and still, irrespective of what happens in our lives, we will always be in profit because no one can take away the richness of our experience." We can never completely fix our external circumstances, but once we are able to control our inner disturbance, we are able to handle outside issues with ease. Instead of being identified with the externalities, with the help of Yoga, one can "create a little space between you and your body, you and your mind, you and the world. This spells the end of suffering....What you experience may never be completely in your hands, but how you experience it most definitely is."

Once a frog had fallen into a pit and was unable to come out. A rabbit heard him croaking in distress and told him to wait till he brought a ladder. When the rabbit returned with a ladder, he was surprised to see the frog sitting outside the pit. On enquiring, the frog said, "A snake entered the pit. So, I leapt out." This shows that it is only when we experience life's instability that we have the opportunity to leap into another dimension and propel ourselves to a new level of well-being and freedom. "It is life's uncertainties that make it exciting....With vision, uncertainty can be transformed into a tremendous possibility," writes Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev. (*The Speaking Tree, The Times of India*, April 17, 2025)

Everything in the manifested universe is in constant flux. When surrounded by comforts and happiness or by pain and adversities, it is good to remind ourselves, “This too shall pass away.” If life brings unexpected calamities and pain, it also brings unexpected joys. We need only to build the capacity to maintain our inner poise and equilibrium. Uncertainty of life is interwoven with free will in man, using which he can change the future. Life would be meaningless if everything was fixed and certain, leaving no scope for progress.

Most of us desire to live programmed lives, expecting that our lives will go on following the same daily routine, with unchanging sameness. However, we are rudely awakened and shaken up when the uncertainty of life hits us in the face at some time or other. After being happily married for 10, 15, or 20 years many have to undergo the unexpected trauma of separation or divorce. It takes only one earthquake or tsunami to reduce the rich and famous to a life of utter destitution and hardship. When there are sudden reversals of fortunes or changes for the better, either in circumstances or character, it may be explained on the basis of Karma. It simply shows that one has come to a point in life where a set of prior causes being exhausted, the new karma, or that which is unexpended (stored up), begins to operate.

You may not be able to execute even your best of plans, or if you are able to, they may not bear the desired fruit. Hence, Mr. Judge says, “An occultist is never fixed on any particular mortal plan. So do not fix your mind as yet on any particular plan. Wait. All things come to him who waits in the right way.” Lord Buddha, the greatest psychologist of all time, remarks: “‘Here shall I pass the monsoon; there shall I dwell in winter and summer.’ This is foolish reflection. He does not consider obstacles of existence.” Buddhist monks survive on whatever is put into their begging bowls. The day one finds nothing in the bowl, one must be prepared to go without food. An ordinary person, on the other hand, takes all the care to provide for the future, making the right kind of investments in gold, shares, bonds, and property.

Instead of trying to keep the rod of uncertainty entirely at bay, by clever planning and manoeuvring, one might learn to cultivate a

detached attachment, determined to “suffer or enjoy whatever the Higher Self has in store for one by way of discipline and experience.” The calculation, “Which way can I be safe?” does not work. To embrace uncertainty whole-heartedly, is to have faith in the law. It means complete surrender to what the law brings, knowing it to be necessary for one’s growth and experience, and hence it must be something that one’s Ego desires and requires.

Young people often ask: “Why must we have humility? Is it not enough if we do social good? What need has a social worker or a national leader of humility? Let us remember that the worker is God and man is only His instrument. We would cease to be proud if such consciousness grew upon us that it is God who is the worker, the helper, and the saviour of the nations. Zarathushtra gives a vivid picture of hell, saying that in hell there are numerous souls, as the hairs in the mane of the horse, and they are as close to one another as our ears are to our eyes, and yet everyone feels himself alone! It is this feeling of loneliness which is at the root of misery in our modern world. The richness of life is rooted in the recognition that in our work we are in contact with and dependent on the divine.

Humility is not self-condemnation; it is self-renunciation. The acme of humility is when we regard ourselves as nothing and realize God to be the mighty worker. Thus, for instance, in making a New India, God works through us if we are humble enough. There are young people today who do not believe in conventional God-concepts, but they wish to be of service to the nation and feel that what is needed is not humility but the will-to-power, aggressiveness, and hardness. However, humility is a demand even of the deeper spirit of modern life.

The two aspects of modern life are: passion for science or knowledge and love of activity. No doubt, young people can help India by scientific investigations and activities, provided they have a willingness to learn and a humble spirit. Some of them display an

unscientific tendency of talking without the discipline of study. Reverence for truth makes the heart humble. The dominant characteristic of the “seers of science” is that which was displayed by Newton, who said that he was as a child picking up pebbles at the shore of knowledge. For the vision of the science is the vision of the Infinite. In that infinite nature, there are worlds upon worlds, and the whole of this earth is but a speck. Likewise, there is the infinity of nature in the tiny grain of sand and “microscopic” beings.

The realm of knowledge is a limitless universe, so the scientist has to become humble; only then can he learn the secrets of nature. “Sit down before facts as a little child and follow humbly wherever nature leads you, or you shall learn nothing,” says Huxley.

Must a man of action be humble? Anyone who works for the society, for his country, or for the cause dear to them will realize that after struggling for years together, they have been able to do so little! The more one acts, the more humble one becomes. The feeling that grows upon every servant of the ideal, after years of work, is: “What can one man do?” Though there are many today who rebel against the spirit of humility, there are groups of people scattered in many lands who believe in the beatitude: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” “And the daily deepening faith within me is that the poor in spirit will build the new temple of freedom,” writes Sadhu Vaswani. (*East and West Series*, January 2025)

Humility may be considered a form of spiritual modesty, which results when we understand our place in the order of things. It is an indispensable virtue for a spiritual aspirant. Sincere humility, or not thinking of oneself or of one’s personality more highly than one ought to, is a beautiful quality, without which one cannot attain wisdom, says *The Voice of the Silence*. Someone who wants to apprehend truth must be humble enough to lay aside his preconceptions. If he holds on to his preconceptions, he can never really acquire a new idea or a new point of view.

When one acts for and as the self of all creatures, one becomes truly great, and in such greatness lies true humility. A humble individual is

oriented towards others and values the welfare of others, sometimes to the extent of forgetting himself. The mystical book, *Light on the Path*, teaches that “that power which the disciple shall covet is that which shall make him appear as nothing in the eyes of men.”

We are asked to cultivate *higher patience*, which is a fine line between pride and humility. How shall we be proud when we are so small? How dare we be humble when we are so great? In both, we blaspheme. But between these two extremes there is a spot, “neither too high nor too low,” and *there* we may stand calmly, not overshadowed by any man, however great, because each of us contains potentialities of every other.

Humility is freedom from pride and arrogance. It is said that the two most potent enemies to fight in the spiritual battle and the last to get conquered are sexual desires and Egotism. Between these two, egotism, pride, or the sense of separateness is the most difficult to surmount. Egotism, or pride, has many strongholds. If it is conquered in its gross aspect, it reappears in its subtle aspect. There are many stories of sages and spiritually advanced beings who, even after making great progress, display pride or egotism. It may surface as a “holier than thou” attitude or as pride for one’s intellectual, psychic, or spiritual achievements.

Lao Tzu, a Chinese philosopher, considers “humility” to be an indispensable quality, especially for a leader or a ruler. He says that you can be a leader among men if you can avoid putting yourself before others. He who is great must make humility his base. “The Sage expects no recognition for what he does; he achieves merit but does not take it to himself; he does not wish to display his worth.” Therefore, “though he has his place before them, they do not feel it as an injury. Therefore, all mankind delight to exalt him, and weary of him not.” Once we realize that the SELF shines in all but does not shine forth equally in all, our egotism melts into nothingness.

SILENCE is safer than speech.

—EPICTETUS