

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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“BEWARE OF CHANGE!”

It is the custom among some good people to glance back at their life’s path from the hillocks of time they annually surmount.

—A MASTER OF WISDOM

SOMETIMES the mass opinion could be hypnotizing. There is a *Panchatantra* story of a brahmin who lived in a certain town. One day he was returning back to his village, carrying a goat on his shoulder, which the devotees of another village had presented to him to offer as a sacrifice. On his way home he was seen by three crooks, who were starving and hence worked out a plan to rob the brahmin of that goat. The first crook went ahead of the brahmin and when he saw him approach, he said, “Why do you behave so ridiculously? Why are you carrying a profane dog on your shoulders?” The brahmin insisted that the fellow was blind as he could not see that it was a sacrificial goat and not a dog. When the brahmin had gone a little further, second crook accosted him and told him that he was carrying a dead calf. The brahmin paid no heed, but already his conviction was beginning to weaken. Just then he was approached by a third crook, who said that the brahmin was carrying a donkey. Now the brahmin was convinced that he must be carrying a goblin which was changing shape all the time. He threw the goat on the ground and ran home. Through intrigue the

three crooks robbed the brahmin of his goat. The story conveys another message, besides the obvious one. An individual or minority has to be on their guard against the influence of the majority. It is not easy to hold on to our principles and morals against the hypnotizing influence of the majority in the world that holds contrary views and doctrines.

As student-aspirants work for Theosophy, often against overwhelming odds, the important thing is not how much they achieve, but as Mr. Crosbie says, at times, to stand our ground is in itself a victory. That is because it is very easy to get “brain-washed” like the brahmin of the story. *The Voice of the Silence* cautions: “Beware of change! For change is thy great foe.” Change is a way of life and yet we must see to it that it does not begin to apply to the things we have found by experience, to be true and good and valuable. It is very easy to get discouraged and disheartened when only a few come for the lodge meetings. It is very easy to feel disillusioned when others enjoy life or seem to get solutions to their problems by attending a ten-day crash course in spirituality. We begin to wonder if we have made the right choice and come to the right place. Having decided to live the life according to theosophical teachings there should be no turning back. The opinions of the people around—family, society or office should not influence our basic and well-considered decision. It is so easy to get carried away and think that we have made a mistake and that other things must get priority and so on.

Conviction breeds enthusiasm. At such times, it is not enough to have the conviction that we have contacted the right philosophy. It must be the kind of conviction that keeps intact our enthusiasm for the work. The dwindling numbers at lodge meetings may make us wonder: Who needs Theosophy today? The philosophy of Theosophy contains everlasting truths, so perhaps, we only need to change the “packaging,” to suit the needs of the people, and hence the method and manner of promulgation. The Buddha dealt with humanity as he found it and used simple symbols of flower, elephant,

etc., to convey the truths. Mr. Judge advises: “We should do as Buddha taught his disciples, preach, practise, promulgate and illustrate the doctrines. He spoke to the meanest of men with effect, although having a deeper doctrine for greater and more learned minds.” Mr. Crosbie writes:

Either Theosophy pure and undefiled is the most real thing in the world, or we are all wasting our time and effort. If we are able to conceive its reality in all seriousness, we should then never cease trying to understand and apply what has been recorded by Masters’ Messenger [H.P.B.] for our guidance and instruction.

We must “feel” for the Cause. Some of us may be doing the self-chosen task, as our own little contribution to theosophy, as a matter of discipline, with utmost *sincerity*, for may be 30, 40 or even 50 years, almost without a break. The word sincere is derived from a Latin word which is in its turn supposed to be from *sine* “without” and *cera* “wax,” that is, *pure honey*. Just as pure honey is without any traces of wax mixed with it, so also our sincerity towards the Cause must be without the “wax” of prejudice, vested interest or ulterior motives. But, let devotion blend with sincerity. There is the story of a *pujari* (priest) in a temple who, for a number of years, had been almost ritualistically performing *puja* (worship), twice a day. Sincere as he was, still in the heart of his heart he was aware that he lacked that deep devotion which alone can make his worship worthy. Once, as he finished the *puja*, a devotee who came regularly for the *puja* came running, gasping for breath, and on discovering that the *puja* was over, let out a big sigh, saying, “Ah! I have missed it!” The priest told the man, “Transfer the merit of that single sigh and I will confer on you the merit of my several years of worship.” Do we feel like that man when we, at times, are forced to miss the lodge meeting? When we are forced to remain at home due to illness or unavoidable circumstances, do we still try to remain connected, mentally and emotionally, in mind and heart, in that hour, and suffuse

those few who are carrying on the work, with encouragement and enthusiasm? In Mr. Judge’s words:

Do not think you do nothing for the Cause, which is so dear to you, for indeed the truest work is done on the inner planes, and without this there could be no work done on the outer planes. So, remember that you can work and are doing real work to help the cause by being strong in heart, in trust, and in devotion. In this way you help to keep the centre of the whole movement strong, and others, who can work on the outer plane, will be helped to do their work because the centre is strong, and they themselves get help from it.

November 17 marks the anniversary of both, our magazine, THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, as also of the Theosophical Movement for our era and generation, which was launched on November 17, 1875 in the city of New York by H. P. Blavatsky. U.L.T. is an integral part of the Theosophical Movement. U.L.T. is an organ, vehicle or outer shell through which this “most serious movement of our age” finds expression. U.L.T. is like a lamp and this “movement of ideas” is like the light. The lamp needs to be cleaned, from time to time, as it gathers soot. The outer shell is made up of individuals and hence the nature of these individuals will determine to what extent the spirit of the movement can find expression through the present vehicle. We are afforded the opportunity to participate in the Theosophical Movement, by virtue of being the associates of U.L.T. It is up to us to keep this body, instrument or form as pure as possible so that the light within can radiate in the outside world, and people outside can get Theosophy pure and simple—uncontaminated by our opinions and biases. The success of the Movement depends almost entirely upon the degree of selflessness, devotion, unbiased and clear judgment and the amount of knowledge and wisdom possessed by those who will take up the responsibility of carrying on the work, says H.P.B.

Light on the Path says: “Give your aid to the few strong hands

that hold back the powers of darkness from obtaining complete victory.” There is a Chinese saying: “It is better to light a candle, than to curse darkness.” Jesus said to his disciples, “Ye are the light of the world.” Says Portia, in *The Merchant of Venice*:

That light we see is burning in my hall;
How far that little candle throws his beams!
So shines the good deed in the naughty world!

In the “naughty world” of today, each student-aspirant has to kindle in him the *Tathagata* light, awaken in his heart concern for the needy and suffering humanity. Through good deeds we purify the coverings of the soul and allow that light within to shine forth. But good deeds stem from good thoughts and right ideas. In all religions and traditions darkness is equated with ignorance and light with wisdom. Today, what humanity needs most is the Theosophical education. Right ideas and right philosophy is the dire need of our age. We are held back by our own false ideas. Mr. Crosbie describes the situation by an illustration. In the East they catch monkeys by putting nuts in the bottom of a narrow-necked jar. The monkeys put their paw inside the jar to grab a fistful of nuts. They do not know enough to let go of the nuts and be free and so get caught. We want to be free of misery, but will not let go of the “nutty-ideas” we hold.

Theosophy must be held out continually for all who will listen. That is our self-assumed work; we have our example in H.P.B. and W.Q.J.—as to means, method and manner: let us imitate them, and so do their work in their spirit.

Our magazine does just that by reiterating the age-old wisdom that can inspire at least a few to live a morally pure life, so that by our thoughts and deeds we may endeavour to “sweeter make the ocean’s bitter waves.” “Let the darkness within help you to understand the helplessness of those who have seen no light, whose souls are in profound gloom.” Each one of us has to decide what role he or she will play in the progress of the whole race.

THE CREATIVE POWER OF SPEECH

ALMOST all of us would have experienced, at sometime or another, the power of speech and the magical effect of spoken words. In our youth, when we were about to abandon a dream, that seemed impossible of realization, “I know, you can do it,” from a well-meaning friend or elder filled us up with renewed vigour. Who has not experienced the magic of the words, “I love you,” during the adolescence? Who can forget the soothing effect of “Don’t worry, this too, shall pass away,” in the middle of adversities? And yet, sadly, we have missed to appreciate the sacredness of speech.

One of the evils by which modern society is debased is constant misuse of the power of speech. Too many talk for the sake of talking. When two or more people come together, they indulge in idle talk, small talk, or crack jokes often, at the expense of another. Idle talk easily degenerates into gossip and backbiting. It is quite a challenge to be part of a group and yet not be party to gossip and slander. It is only with some effort that now and then, one succeeds in diverting the conversation to discussing weather or some social or political issue. Mr. Judge almost laments at this folly of humanity, saying: “What a petty lot of matter we spend time on, when so much is transitory. After a hundred years what will be the use of all this?” It is better that we spend our energy in working for the Cause, imparting it a higher impulse.

Very few, if any, are aware of the “*creative power*” latent in speech, because this power can manifest only through *right* speech. Speech may be defined as “the faculty of expressing thoughts and emotions in spoken words.” Only human beings are endowed with articulate speech; animals communicate through sounds. It is said that early humanity (first three and a half races) did not possess articulate speech. Theosophy asserts that “a *human* brain is necessary for *human* speech.” It has been observed that while the brain of the largest ape, the gorilla, measures no more than 30.51 cubic inches; while the average brains of flat-headed Australian natives—one of

the least developed races—amount to 99.35 cubic inches! (*S.D.*, II, 661)

Speech is also connected with mind. The First Race of humanity was mindless and therefore speechless. When human beings separated into sexes and *Manas* (mind) was “lit-up,” in the middle of the Fourth Race, speech developed gradually. In the earlier races, when speech was not clear and definite, there was more insight and intuitive understanding of one another. Now the speech is more precise but most of us are able to get only what the words convey.

Speech is one of the greatest privileges acquired by human beings in the course of evolution. We long for powers, overlooking the responsibility that goes with the use of those powers. One of the Masters writes, “Each man is personally responsible to the Law of Karma for every word of his voluntary production.” “Gentle speech which causes no anxiety, which is truthful and friendly, and diligence in the reading of the Scriptures, are said to be the austerities of speech” (*Gita*, XVII). Regular reading of the “Scriptures,” or sacred texts, if possible aloud, is recommended, as it leads to purification of mind and speech. Scriptures are instinct with the power of their own. Even regularly turning to books that we have found by practice to be elevating and ennobling, helps.

When we are at the receiving end of harsh, angry or insulting speech, we tend to *react* instead of *responding*. The more impersonal we are, the more capable we become of giving right response to another’s insults, taunts or criticism. In the Noble Eightfold Path of the Buddha, “Right Resolve” precedes “Right speech”. Our speech should be deliberate, as then it is likely to be free from anger, lie or unpleasantness.

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.

Brahmâ is the male *logos* and his female counterpart is *Vâch*, female *logos*, or the female creator, Saraswati of the Hindus. *Vâch* is the “mystic secret speech” of the Rishis, *i.e.*, the “creative speech.” There are four forms of *Vâch*—*Para*, *Pashyanti*, *Madhyama* and *Vaikhari*. *Vaikhari vâch* is the uttered speech. Writes T. Subba Row:

Parabrahm is the *Para* aspect of *Vach*...*Pasyanti Vach* corresponds to the *Logos*, is *Chit* [Consciousness]; *Vaikhari Vach*, which is a symbol of the manifested cosmos, is *Achit*, and *Madhyama Vach*, which represents the light of the *Logos* [Fohat], is *Chidachit*....When Patanjali speaks of *Madhyama Vach* as *Chidachit*, he refers to it as a link between the mental form (in the *Logos*) and the manifested form (in matter). The Universe exists in idea in the *Logos*, it exists as a mysterious impression in the region of force, and it is finally transformed into the objectively manifested cosmos, when this force transfers its own image or impulse to cosmic matter. (*Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita*, p. 26 and pp. 92-93)

There is something like unuttered speech as well. In one sense, silence is unuttered speech. There is a Sanskrit verse to the effect that the guru is a young man, and disciples are elders; the teaching is silence, and yet the doubts of the disciples are dispelled. There are occasions when words are not necessary. One of the requirements of spiritual life is to learn the value of silence. Silence is needed to conserve spiritual energy, as one of the main avenues through which it goes to waste is through empty sounds and vain speech. At the highest level, the power to speak emanates from the Higher Self. Thomas Carlyle says:

Speak not, I passionately entreat thee, till thy thought hath silently matured itself, till thou hast other than mad and mad making noises to emit: *hold thy tongue* till some meaning lie behind to set it wagging. Consider the significance of SILENCE...

Speech consists of thought, feeling, will and sound. *The Secret*

Doctrine mentions six *saktis* or powers, one of which is *Mantrika sakti*, the power or the occult potency of sound, words, letters and numbers that are used in the *mantras*. In *Vernal Blooms* we are told that a single letter can be used mantrically by one who knows how to pronounce it. The effect produced by any *mantram* is determined by the numbers, syllables and intonation of the sacred metre. For instance, *Aum* can be pronounced as one, two or three syllable word. When it is pronounced with right intonation it becomes an invocation, an affirmation and a benediction. In the mouth of an Adept it would have infinite potency. But even when a good person pronounces it with proper intonation it would strengthen him morally. When a *mantram* is pronounced slowly and in a certain rhythm, one effect is produced; if pronounced quickly and with another rhythm, there is a different result, awakening and attracting good or evil spirits. A single word mispronounced can have drastic effects. So it is important to have *accuracy* in speech.

Aphorism 36, in *The Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali*, mentions that when the Yogi is firmly established in the practice of truth, his words become so potent that whatever he says comes to realization. Commenting on this aphorism, Shri B.K.S. Iyengar says that in order to create the reality we desire, our intention must be whole-hearted. For instance, if we say, “I will never eat chocolates again,” it can come to realization only if not a single cell of our body is in disagreement with the others.

To a large extent, the creative and destructive powers of speech stem from sound. H.P.B. says:

We say and maintain that SOUND, for one thing, is a tremendous Occult power; that it is a stupendous force, of which the electricity generated by a million of Niagaras could never counteract the smallest potentiality when directed with *occult knowledge*. Sound may be produced of such a nature that the pyramid of Cheops would be raised in the air, or that a dying man, nay, one at his last breath, would be revived and filled with new energy and vigour.

(S.D., I, 555)

Music is defined as the combination and modulation of sounds and is known to have singular power, especially, over nervous diseases. In *Isis Unveiled*, mention is made of harmonica, an instrument composed of five tumblers, filled with water, wine, oil, etc. Sound is produced by rubbing the edges of these tumblers. Sound has an attractive property, so it draws out the disease and the two kinds of vibrations blend together and disappear in space. Mesmer is supposed to have used harmonica to cure diseases such as insanity and epilepsy.

Music helps to deal with and counteract sorrow, disappointment, depression and emotional upheavals in life. It helps eliminate negative emotions and enhance positive emotions. It seems to work on the principle of “like cures like.” T. V. Sairam has shown that “a musical form representing a certain emotion could help to destroy the very same emotion.” Thus, “listening to a fiery composition of Vivaldi, representing the moods of rage can actually melt away years of accumulated anger and frustration in an individual.” (*Dignity Dialogue*, December 2003).

The sacred scripture of the Sikhs, “Guru Granth Sahib,” is a collection of hymns, which are arranged under different *ragas* or musical modes of Indian classical music system, because it is strongly believed that one can have spiritual experience through combination of words and music, *i.e.*, *Shabda-kirtan*. The *Shabda-kirtan* creates an atmosphere of sanctity and helps to establish a link between the almighty and the devotee, writes Kulbir Kaur, a professor of Sociology at Delhi University.

Like all other powers, speech can be used constructively or destructively. Constructive or Creative speech which ever blesses is that of the sages and seers. Blessings as well as curses are creative powers of speech. How is it that we do not possess this power? It is because the creative power of speech is also dependent upon heart feeling and the quality of thoughts. Mr. Judge observes:

Words are things....Upon the lower plane of social intercourse they are things, but soulless and dead because that convention in which they have their birth has made abortions of them. But when we step away from that conventionality they become alive in proportion to the reality of the thought—and its purity—that is behind them. So in communication between two students they are things, and students must be careful that the ground of intercourse is fully understood. Let us use with care those living messengers called words. (*Letters That Have Helped Me*)

Very frequently, if not always, we use words like “thank you,” “sorry,” “all the best,” etc., only as a matter of convention. These words should be spoken meaningfully, backed by intense and pure emotions. The Buddha tells us: “Better than a thousand-word speech of empty words is one pregnant sentence hearing which one feels peace.” When a person practises daily meditation, he acquires one-pointedness, as also deeper understanding of what is read. When such a person speaks the listeners become aware of his deeper understanding and his speech tends to steady the wandering minds of the listeners. The listeners gain in attentiveness. It is said that when Buddha spoke, at least a few among the listeners “entered the stream” there and then. This kind of speech originates from *Buddhi-Manas*. Speech comes with knowledge. Attain to knowledge and you will attain to speech, says *Light on the Path*. It is only when the disciple has acquired the knowledge of real nature of things, and conquered the sense of separateness, such that he never raises his voice to condemn another or in self-defence or excuse, that he becomes capable of speaking in the presence of the Masters.

WHEN the heart weeps for what it has lost, the soul laughs for what it has found.

—*Sufi Aphorism*

OVERCOMING EGOTISM

HUMAN vanity, pride, conceit manifest themselves in a million forms. Just as the One Self is in every form of matter, so also is *Ahankara*, Egotism, in every human form. The very conception of I-ness or egoity is fundamental to human life: no egoity, no self-consciousness, no man. Like *Atma*, *Ahankara* also is a protean power; but while the former is the unifying force, the latter is destructive in dividing, in separating. *Atma* is life, *Ahankara* is death.

Metaphysically and philosophically every student of Theosophy knows this. He is on his guard against the obvious and the blatant forms of egotism; but often he is ignorant of the subtle ways in which egotism manifests, and even when curbed leaves unmistakable marks on his nature. The first weakness to manifest, it is the last vice to die.

The desire to grow in soul-life develops in us, albeit unconsciously to ourselves, the tendency to compare ourselves to our superiors in knowledge or power or service, and in our desire to become like them we fancy that our ailments are similar to theirs, our experiences likewise similar to theirs. There is an amusing and instructive story of a would-be chela who, seeing how his guru could go into self-induced trance, bought some dry herbs, inhaled their smoke and fainted. Later, he reported that at last, like his teacher, he had experienced self-induced trance!

Another variant of this species of egotism expresses itself as rivalry with co-students, co-workers and co-disciples. Instead of recognizing that “harmony does not come through likeness,” that “fingers of the one hand to be really useful have to be different,” the neophyte blunders, trying to do someone else’s job rather than engaging himself in his own duty.

Then, there is the noble ideal of helpfulness and service of others which also our egotism exploits: we often fail in rendering aid because we ourselves are crippled; we are willing to prescribe medicine from the printed book, which we ourselves have not taken.

Subtle egotism in the shape of desire to help has been the unmaking of not a few; to play the guru to others is a sure sign of coming failure. He who plays the guru talks too much, likes to show off, hustles here and bustles there unlike the true Guru whose marks are very different.

Many are the remedies suggested for killing *abhimān*-pride and *ahankara*-egotism. Knowledge helps, meditation helps, good works performed and duties discharged help, but none of these are sure remedies. There is only one sure remedy—Devotion, *Bhakti*, the true devotion which brings to birth that Faith, *Shraddha*, which knows that the Universe is governed by Law and that nothing but uttermost justice continually prevails. Putting on of airs, bluffing, mystification and all such expressions cannot succeed in the life of the Soul. The Soul cannot grow overnight any more than the child body, though the child might intensely wish that, and might even play “I-am-the-grown-up” game!

It is easy when we have seen the glory of the Sun to worship it; but what when the Master has not been ever glimpsed? How can the feeling of devotion for Him arise? As that is beyond our reach, let us at least endeavour to keep within the ray of some lesser star so that its silvery light may penetrate the murky darkness through which the stony path of life treads onwards; for without this divine radiance we risk losing more than we imagine.

The remedy, the only remedy for the disease of egotism, is to develop the true devotion that kills doubt and hypocrisy, the two unpardonable sins in Occultism. Can we be the grain of incense which the Masters can use in their task of purifying the world? Can we be a small flower which They can use to beautify the world? Are we content to be the servant of Their servants? If we can burn up like incense and not feel that we are *non est*, if we are prepared to be thrown away like a dead flower and not feel that we are useless, if we are content to serve Their servants and not feel that progress is not achieved, ah! then the death of egotism is near at hand.

ON SPIRITUAL LIVING

MANY a great Teacher, such as, Jesus, Buddha, Mahavira, Shankara and Confucius have shown by the example of their own lives, what it is to live a true spiritual life. An earnest aspirant knows well that living the spiritual life is the most serious undertaking. He realizes that Spiritual life is not just about performing rituals or ceremonies, nor is it concerned merely with almsgiving or the reading of the Scriptures or performing austerities. It is about dedicating one's whole life to the new way of living. It does not mean running away from the world and tiresome responsibilities, but living the life of a chela, a disciple, a neophyte or a devotee of the spiritual discipline. While the outward expression and methods differ, the goal is the same—Self-realization—reaching enlightenment and perfection.

First comes the motivation. If the desire is for self-advancement or for powers, such as, clairvoyance, clairaudience, mind-reading, etc., then he has chosen a dangerous goal, as these will take us away from the Path. Wonder-workers and snake-charmers in India exhibit astonishing feats, but they are not spiritual. The desire to attain *Moksha*—peace and bliss of *Nirvana* for oneself—is good, but ultimately considered as glorious selfishness, since all of us are identical in our physical and spiritual essence and interconnected on the inner plane, how can we choose bliss for ourselves while mankind suffers? The Bodhisattva Ideal exemplifies renunciation of *Nirvanic* bliss for the sake of suffering humanity. Hence, it is prudent to look into the innermost thoughts and ensure that Self-realization is sought for the sake of humanity.

Spiritual living is not an abstraction. It means living the life as per the spiritual doctrines, so that they become living facts in one's life that can be sensed by others around. Hence the need for a thorough understanding of the fundamental teachings of the system of philosophy followed. A true Guru presents the truths for consideration and encourages inquiry and seeks to arouse intuition of the earnest aspirant. The insincere pupil merely gets the most

obvious meaning because the keys, which can unlock many a hidden meaning, require sincerity and effort. He should not ask questions merely out of curiosity or without a sincere desire to know. Nor should he ask question unless he has made every effort in his power to get the answer himself. How else can he learn self-reliance? Krishna says: “Seek this wisdom by doing service, by strong search, by questions, and by humility; the wise who see the truth will communicate it unto thee.” In the Socratic Method, the student was guided to seek the answer for himself. Socrates simply questioned the finality of the findings and conclusions of his pupils by gently pointing out the fallacy. He then presented questions that would encourage his pupil to make fresh search along new lines, thereby bringing him closer and closer to truth. The method also prepared his pupils to deal with possible objections in a convincing manner, because he had worked it out himself during his quest for truth.

Living the Spiritual life does not require complete mastery of the teachings. The Buddha said: “He who forsakes lust, hatred and folly is possessed of true knowledge and a serene mind, craves nought of this world or of any other, applies to himself the teachings of the Sacred texts he recites, even though a few in number—such a one shares in the blessings of the Good Life.” Ethics are like axiomatic truths. They do not need much explanation. It is true that one does not become an adept overnight. In fact, we should not even attempt it. Slow and steady is the best approach. The delicate Human constitution would break under such sudden and heavy strain. We have learnt many false things and lived by the way of the world for many years in this life and thousands of incarnations in the past. The momentum would topple us over if we apply sudden break. Hence, it is better to take a few fundamental teachings for sincere application in day to day life.

Let the first step be, practice of brotherhood, at least among the co-disciples. In *The Voice of the Silence*, the disciples are likened to the Veena, a musical instrument with many strings. Each string must vibrate in harmony with others or else it would break and be

discarded. Co-disciples are the pilgrim souls. Each one is unique in some respect and hence presents an opportunity of having simultaneous experience and learning of many lifetimes. It also presents the benefit of *satsang* (good company) and varied viewpoints from which the truth can be approached. Mutual sympathy and tolerance are the basic qualities expected of those who join such a Brotherhood or *Sangha* or Order, where strength of one complements weaknesses of another and makes strong bonds. A whole living and vibrating unity can become like a nucleus that can attract others to itself, and deserve guidance from the Guru.

Fundamental to the Spiritual living is the correct concept of God, Law and Evolution. If God is not a person but an omnipotent reality pervading entire world and if the universe is governed by the Law of Karma—the law which works unerringly and impartially to bring just results in accordance with our own actions—then we must have courage to hold on to these ideas even under heaviest trials. If we seek to dodge the Law of Karma by performing propitiatory ceremony or by making offerings to some deity, then our learning is only intellectual. The Theosophical position is summed up, by H.P.B. and Mr. Judge, in following words:

If you ask me how we understand Theosophical duty practically and in view of Karma, I may answer you that our duty is to drink without a murmur to the last drop, whatever contents the cup of life may have in store for us, to pluck the roses of life only for the fragrance they may shed on *others*, and to be ourselves content but with the thorns, if that fragrance cannot be enjoyed without depriving some one else of it. (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 227)

We must be ready to say at any moment under whatever circumstances, whether expected or unexpected: “It is just what I in fact desired.” For only those ideals can be dissipated which rest upon a lower basis than the highest aim, or which are not in accord with nature’s (God’s) law. And as our aim ought to be to reach the supreme condition and to help all

other sentient beings to do so also, we must cultivate complete resignation to the Law. (*Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita*, p. 45)

To be watchful and mindful of one’s own faults and acts of omission and commission will leave little time to dwell on faults of other people. Disciples are not saints and are bound to have some defect in their natures. Not knowing what inner struggle the person is going through, not knowing circumstances in which karma has placed him, not knowing his karmic stamina, how can anyone sit in judgment over another? Daily introspection and self-examination *vis-à-vis* the ideal in view must teach humility and determined effort to move in the right direction, little by little.

Most difficult is the conquering of the personal self. Small victories—such as overcoming vices, practice of virtues, ability to understand intricate teachings, sometimes lead to pride and intolerance of the shortcomings of others. When other struggling co-students look up to him, seek his help and guidance, a sense of superiority and desire for respect or even reverence from the fellow-students are the dangers which he must guard against. He has to remind himself: “That power which the disciple shall covet is that which shall make him appear as nothing in the eyes of men.” Check this out: Are you content to be a foot-soldier, ready to lay down your life for the Cause which is dear to your heart? If yes, then you are fit to be the General, not otherwise.

This is a righteous war in which no retreat is possible. Once the desire for the divine has arisen in his heart and moved him to declare his resolve, the door has closed behind him. He cannot go back to his days of ignorance and irresponsible life any more. Idle and frivolous life, innocent and perfectly legitimate joys in which man of the world indulges, stop giving him the same pleasure. In those enjoyments there is awareness that “these are the joys of little worth.” His duty to himself is well described by H.P.B., thus:

To control and conquer, *through the Higher, the lower*

self. To purify himself inwardly and morally; to fear no one, and nought, save the tribunal of his own conscience. Never to do a thing by halves; *i.e.*, if he thinks it is the right thing to do, let him do it openly and boldly, and if wrong, never touch it at all. (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 238)

He is fortune's favoured soldier in righteous war. Karma has now taken him into her own gentle but firm hands. She works on him like a blacksmith hammering away a block of iron to shape it into a useful tool. He will put the piece of iron in and out of fire, hammering it again and again till he has made a perfect tool out of a raw block of iron. Suppressed vices covered over by fine manners and false exhibition are now truly threatened. Quickened under trials, his vices, however cleverly hidden, are bound to surface. So will his virtues and goodness. Having invited Krishna to become his charioteer, he has no escape but to face and exterminate his fond vices—the very kith and kin without whom existence seems to become meaningless and uninteresting. Yet, he knows that it is the personal man who is despondent and diffident. The Master within, his own higher spiritual nature, rejoices that the prodigal son has at last returned home! And a voice within repeats what Sanjaya said in the last chapter of the *Gita*: “Wherever Krishna, the supreme Master of devotion, and wherever the son of Pritha, the mighty archer, may be, there with certainty are fortune, victory, wealth, and wise action; this is my belief.”

WHETHER we wish to do well or ill we have first to arouse within us the desire for either course. The good man who at last becomes even a sage had at one time in his many lives to arouse the desire for the company of holy men and to keep his desire for progress alive in order to continue on his way.

—W. Q. JUDGE

STUDIES IN THE DHAMMAPADA

THE TWIN VERSES—I

THE FIRST chapter of the *Dhammapada* is called in Pali *Yamakavaggo* or the Twin Verses, as it consists of ten pairs of verses. Each pair drives home a point with the help of sharp contrast in terms of the expected result by following a particular course of action. The Buddha does not preach or advise us to do this or that. He simply puts across two points or options for consideration. The options are so logical, compelling and commonsensical that even the simplest mind would find it quite easy to spot the better of the two ways—the one which would make him a better human being. The method respects free will in man and wants each one to exercise one's own judgment. When a person has himself thought through and accepted a viewpoint, it has a greater possibility of finding a place in his life and influencing him in his everyday life. Here is a true teacher and a master psychologist at work.

1. *All that we are is the result of what we have thought: all that we are is founded on our thoughts and formed of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with an evil thought, pain pursues him, as the wheel of the wagon follows the hoof of the ox that draws it. (1)*

2. *All that we are is the result of what we have thought: all that we are is founded on our thoughts and formed of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with a pure thought happiness pursues him like his own shadow that never leaves him. (2)*

These verses state the Law of Karma in clear and simple terms. Evil thoughts bring pain, and good thoughts bring happiness. Theosophy says: “Thoughts are the seeds of Karma.” As we sow, so shall we reap. When you plant a mustard seed, you do not get roses but mustard. Whatever we are—physically, mentally, psychically and spiritually, and whatever circumstances we find

ourselves in—they are the result of our own thoughts. “All that we are” is what we exhibit to others as our “*Dharma*” the peculiar property or character which we have acquired as a result of our thoughts. Because: “Sow a thought, reap an act. Sow an act, reap a habit. Sow a habit and reap a character. Sow a character and reap a destiny.” What matters is not the “external” action, but the underlying motive.

However, an observant person may ask, if what is stated is true, then why is it that the good and virtuous people suffer and evil doers go scot-free? The answer for this lies in the correct understanding of the working of the Law of Karma. Different varieties of seeds take different time to sprout and grow into a plant. Some grow quickly while others take days or months to grow. Also, if the ground is hard and stony, it may have to wait until it is dug out and planted in an appropriate soil. Thus, there is *quick karma*, the action whose results come quickly, and there is *slow karma*, which take much longer to bring to us the results. Also, if the current circumstances are inappropriate, then that Karma is held in abeyance until suitable circumstances are found. If the man is currently enjoying the riches as a fruit of his past actions, then the actions which lead to poverty will have to wait. He may experience reverses of fortune later in this life or may be born into poor family in some future life. The karmic seed has already locked up within it what is to come and these are the kind of seeds that do not rot with time, but put forth, appropriate plants sooner or later. In other words, the passage of time and delay in fruition does not dilute the intensity of karmic results. Also, we should not get disheartened if our good actions do not show results. This is the time when our inner nature is working silently as does the mother earth on the seed buried within her bosom. If we have piled up much evil in the past, its eradication is bound to take some time and the progress may not be immediately perceptible. What matters is the direction in which we are going—the right direction.

3. “*He reviled me, he beat me and conquered and then plundered me,*” who express such thoughts tie their mind with the intention of retaliation. In them hatred will not cease. (3)

4. “*He reviled me, he beat me and conquered and then plundered me,*” who do not express such thoughts, in them hatred will cease. (4)

No man is our enemy or a friend when we meet him for the first time. Yet, as time goes, we love or hate some of them in particular. What is it that creates hatred? Love or hatred has its basis in our thoughts. We are not very likely to give much thought to our casual interaction with other people. It is only when they arouse some interest or certain feelings in us that we give them a second thought. The feelings aroused are most intense when the person is ill-treated, when others are intentionally malicious and hurtful. One of the characteristics of our mind is to fly to a pleasant or to an unpleasant object. The unpleasant object may be an unpleasant incident that has left a deep impression on the mind. We then re-live the incident a thousand times in minutest details. The unpleasant words of another ring in our ear and the pictures of the wrong done to us flash past our mind’s eye, arousing strong feelings of anger and hatred towards another. Tremendous mental force and psychic energy is expended when we brood over such thoughts. They become stronger and more intense each time they return. Until at last they arouse such intense hatred that one is driven to rash action.

Thoughts get energy when we dwell on them. They have self-reproductive power. Moreover, we attract to ourselves that which is consubstantial, from the invisible register of nature which has record of all the thoughts, feelings and actions of beings on earth. So, the angry thoughts get intensified by attracting similar hateful thoughts of other people. But, if a person consciously and deliberately brushes off the incidence from his mind with a determination that he is not going to allow anger and evil to take root in his heart, then these thoughts get weaker and weaker each time they return and finally

torment him no more. A wise man does not react. He acts. He is not agitated by evil and hurtful acts of other people. He simply dissociates himself. But how can any self-respecting person allow another to ill-treat him? Is it not cowardice? Of course not. He is able to do that because he knows that it is his personality which feels insulted and hurt. The real Self within seeks neither praise or blame and is unaffected. The Buddha did not allow hatred of his cousin Devadatta to affect him. He had no enmity towards Devadatta.

It is true that we do not always tie our mind with the intention of retaliation. It depends on the occasion and the nature of the insult or injury. For instance, we are deeply hurt, particularly when it is something about which we care passionately, about which we feel proud and have an intense sense of superiority or inferiority, and so on. *Or*, it could also be a natural sense of human dignity. What is suggested here is that if we go on thinking about the wrong done to us, it is bound to create ill-feeling and enmity. Repetition of such thoughts strengthens retaliatory thoughts and before we know, in the next encounter with that person, a simple incident may bring out violent outburst in us, if we are not vigilant. The important thing to remember is that we do not have control over what *others* say or do, but we have or should have complete control over what *we* say or do. If we do not allow angry thoughts to enter our mind, then from our side, at least, the slate remains clean. We remain calm and are able to focus our energy on something more important. We are told to forgive and forget. If the root of hostility remains in our mind, if we remember the wrong done to us, then we have not forgiven in true sense. True forgiveness reestablishes trust and confidence without the past spoiling the present. In fact, we need to forgive someone not once, but many times—as many times as we remember the injury. It would be still better if we could bring ourselves to *forget* the injury. It is the high standard for getting rid of venom from our own hearts, which eats into the bowels of compassion, literally.

(To be continued)

HAMLET

A STORY OF PSYCHIC UNBALANCE

I

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AS THERE is equilibrium in Nature, so there is equilibrium in man, and likewise between man and Nature. Sanity properly defined is that equilibrium. It is mental, moral and physical health. It is a right balance between all the human states and all the principles. Very few men in the present age possess such health and sanity. Most of us have only compromises. Certain average conditions are looked on as standard and normal, therefore healthy. Whatever departs much from these is called diseased, abnormal or subnormal. The principles in man, those instruments through which his soul works, both protect and manifest his Spirit-Power or Life-Force. Because of some past errors of thought and action, these instruments and defenders may be poorly connected in a man, and the result in the parts of his nature called psychic is comparable to the action of a loose-jointed physical body in which bones or muscles sometimes slip out of place.

In general usage, “psychic” and “psychism” are not clearly defined. They include both correct and partially incorrect or at least vague, limited conceptions. They are made to refer not only to a division of man’s nature and to some of his important powers and principles, but also to many life-phenomena. Each of these uses is proper enough, yet it is well to see that the psychic powers and principles largely make up in fact man’s nature as a human being; likewise, that they are the means by which human nature operates and manifests itself. And it should also be understood that the life-phenomena referred to, both subjective and objective, result from the interrelations and activities of the principles and powers. The phenomena give evidence of the existence and characteristics of the Psychic as a great Department in Nature and in man. Much of

the confusion is due to the limited concepts of what psychic phenomena are. Many things actually such are not so named; for example, what people call “brain storms” and emotional “upheavals,” either of enthusiasm, fear or anger, are psychic phenomena.

Popularly, however, the expression psychic phenomena is chiefly applied to the extraordinary or the abnormal. For this is the point to be particularly noted: it is the abnormal, the weird, the wrongly-called “supernatural”—it is what science ignores or does not explain—that is especially referred to, by custom, in the word psychic. This limitation in meaning is indeed unfortunate, though even so the word covers a wide range of experience and a very important tendency in humanity. The fascination, often hypnotic, exerted by the weird and the uncanny is a source and an abiding-place of superstition, excessive emotionalism and strange fears. Naturally too it has always been—never more than now—a rich pasture for commercially-minded mystery-mongers and “psycho-” specialists under many names.

The welter of ignorance thus indicated can be removed and men’s minds enlightened as to Psychism by a study of the Theosophical teachings in regard to the sevenfold division of man’s nature. In that teaching Psychic is a big general term for all of man’s elements except the very highest or purely spiritual, and the very lowest or purely physical. Men have therefore higher psychic phases of life and lower phases. It is thus the Psychic in humanity which undergoes evolution in the long course of experience, which either remains mortal and transitory or becomes pure and lasting, according as it moves downward to undeveloped matter or upward to Spirit, according as it follows unwisdom or wisdom. Most men of today know little of the higher psychic phases; they live too largely in the mere physical and its close companion, the lower psychical.

There is also in Theosophy another and a special use of the term psychic. It is a name in particular for the fourth or middle division of the seven in man—for the principle or section that hangs in the balance, the one that sways between good and bad, true or false.

In this special Theosophic meaning, the drama *Hamlet* may be called “psychic”; for in the behaviour of that middle balance principle in the chief character the action is centred and the tragedy is found.

Without opposing directly any of the arguments for or against the sanity of Hamlet, a Theosophist may say that in insanity there is some actual disconnection between the organs and functions of the brain; that insanity is of course Karmic; and that its cause is really moral. In the man Hamlet the middle principle tips in some actions far over toward uncontrol. Yet it soon recovers its balance. The unbalance is a kind of temporary insanity. In a man whose principles are not firmly connected (and are thus comparable to the loose-jointed physical body), the middle balance principle, always changeable, is especially unstable; his mind is wavering, easily open to outside influences high or low; he may have daring flights of fancy, sudden gusts of passion, moods of exalted enthusiastic action, or times of drooping melancholy and doubt which check any action. Such a man lives chiefly in his lower psychic nature, and fails to control it, for in will he varies between violence and laxity; the physical in him is a close adjunct to the lower psychical, the ethical impulses are inconstant and the operation of the purely spiritual is almost choked. Possibly not enough attention has been directed by critics to the phases of Hamlet’s life that may be called ethical.

The special touchstone given by Theosophy as a test for insanity is the degree of a man’s selfishness, his intensity of personalism. Hamlet is certainly not an altruist, yet he is not especially selfish in the way that might be expected. The fact that his uncle has supplanted him as heir to the throne seems not to be the chief element in the melancholy that veils him at first. He has had a strong confiding filial love for his father and mother. The father has suddenly gone. Astonished that the mother so promptly married the uncle, he distrusts them both. His self-love is less wounded than his filial love. This feeling affects him much throughout the play and fills him with dismayed wonder. He does not think of fighting for his legal rights but wishes, against his mother’s and his uncle’s desire, to withdraw

to his university again where he may continue to live in quiet. These facts, made evident at the very first, before he has seen The Ghost, show traits that should be observed. He is a student, a thinker, a dreamer. He prefers passiveness to action.

A question as to what throws his middle principle somewhat out of gear and leaves it undirected by Will from his higher nature is answered as the drama proceeds. The shock to his filial love causes the first unbalancing, namely, the undue melancholy. The shock given by the coming of his father's Ghost carries him into amazed terror. The revelations of the father's death by murder, of the uncle's other vile treachery, of the mother's weakness, mental and moral—these plough up all his solid foundations. On this terrific overturning comes the command "Revenge!" But before obeying that command, while he is hesitating about it, while his soul is harrowed by suffering, he forms a relation with Ophelia which soon creates much added mental disturbance and unbalance.

In this relation he moves farthest over the border toward insanity. Unhappy at home, he has gone to her at first because she is winsome and may give him comfort. He loathes the proved sensuality of his mother; Ophelia seems sweetly pure. When later she obeys her father's hasty command to give Hamlet no more time, he is hurt by the unexplained change and coldness in her. Brooding over all these heart-shaking experiences, his feelings rise at times almost to frenzy. At one such moment, with thoughts distraught and clothes awry, he privately seeks her out to learn what indeed she is—can he trust her, can she be what he needs? He gets the answer from her blank face, her silent lips, her fright. With such response to his moment of sick longing for help, how can he regard her as more than a weak child? He leaves her in great grief, in lingering silence, slowly seeing that he does not wish to woo her further. Ophelia's own grief at the father's command, which deprives her of her lover, is now intensified by pity for that lover as mad—mad for love of her.

(To be continued)

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 determines the purpose of life? Is it determined by our desires or by our conscious choices? Can we know the purpose of life only by inference?

Answer: A little observation of our own life, and life around us shows that it is difficult to imagine action of any kind without a purpose. Every action has an implicit purpose, and serves some purpose. Initially, we understand the purpose of life in terms of short-term goals we set for ourselves. So long as we have some goal, we feel our life has a purpose. But almost all our goals are transitory. We realize one goal and then we are after another. When we choose these goals guided by desire, sooner or later, as these desired goals are achieved, we experience existential vacuum. Then comes a turning point. Instead of our choices being guided by desires, we begin to make our desires follow our choices. From setting up self-centred goals such as making money, getting power or position, winning a beauty contest or becoming a world-renowned athlete and so on and on, we begin to set goals where emphasis is on "others". More and more young people are motivated, these days, to leave well-paying, prestigious jobs, or promising careers to join organizations which work for the betterment of the downtrodden. Life itself gradually leads us from choosing self-centred to self-less goals. But everyone is not fortunate enough to get the opportunity or have the facility to undertake social work, especially when one is handicapped or old or poor. What is he going to make his purpose of life? In such circumstances we do not have much choice of

determining the purpose of life. It is then that we begin to see that the purpose of life is common for all. Universe exists for the experience and emancipation of the soul. The purpose of life is to learn and that it is all made up of learning. The purpose of life is self-realization. We then find that whether we set up short-term or long-term goals, *or* take life as it comes, we only need to be aware of this purpose as an underlying current. Some lessons are learnt consciously while others unconsciously. If we are able to do what comes our way, carefully, cheerfully and selflessly then with every such action we are stepping closer to the grand purpose of self-realization, which involves perfection on physical, mental and moral planes. Knowing that there is ever-growing perfectibility to be achieved through continuous process of learning and assimilation, life will never seem purposeless.

Patanjali points out that all knowledge rests in three things—*pratyaksha*, *anuman* and *pramana*, *i.e.*, Perception, Inference and Testimony. First is what one sees for himself, *i.e.*, one's own perception. How do we know that we exist? Do we know because others tell us or by inference from what goes on about us? First and foremost we know it by self-perception. As Descartes says: "I think, therefore I am." But, knowing that our perceptions are not infallible, we compare notes with others. We go to another and if he also says that he sees what we see then that becomes evidence. We then try to corroborate our perception with ten or twenty other people and if their perceptions agree with our perception, then it becomes testimony. From our own perception combined with the testimony of others' perception, we draw a conclusion, which we call inference. Though our *theoretical knowledge* of the purpose of life arises by inference—by observing lives of others around us or from the scriptures—its true realization depends upon self-evident perception.

Question: What is the purpose of the "Institution of Marriage"? Is it still meaningful in today's world?

Answer: Emphasis and struggle for gender equality has changed

the male-female relationship, in turn changing the very attitude towards marriage. Among other things marriage is supposed to be "the only remedy against immorality," says H.P.B. But the very definition of morality is undergoing change. For instance, the premium put on virginity as a virtue has become a non-issue today. Both men and women, who earlier looked for stability and security of marriage, prefer casual flings and one-night stands from which they can walk away without looking back. "Women have joined the guys in their uninhibited, no-responsibility nocturnal romps. And, much to the delight of the men, they come to them without baggage—no clinging, no tears, no emotional breakdowns and above all, no demands to declare everlasting love and attachment. In fact, the new woman seems to run away as fast as any man from commitment," writes Vinita Nangia in *Sunday Times of India*. Many young men and women juggle multiple relationships, enjoy life and extract as much fun as possible before settling down. Marriage may bring stability but it also brings with it restrictions. Financial independence and jobs that involve wide travel have given taste of freedom to women, who prefer not to get tied down to home, bringing up children, and other responsibilities. Is this a reaction to many years of oppression of women? Perhaps.

It is good that woman is capable of doing what man does, but does she need to? Is the task of women inferior to that of men? A woman is not a machine for breeding children, nor need she be confined to the kitchen and care of the children, and yet in both these departments she has most important functions to perform, writes Shri B. P. Wadia. In a race for equality with men, woman forgets that man and woman are complementary in character and that they are like two wheels of a chariot. It is possible to adopt children or have them outside of wedlock, but morality apart, does not the child need care, love and attention of both the parents? Marriage provides the foundation for building of the home. Mr. Judge writes that when a suitable mate is found, a man should marry and settle down as a householder, bringing up a family with right views

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

Closely related to the institution of marriage is the institution of family. Family is a great school where lessons in true love, unselfishness and sacrifice are learnt and when practised in an ever-expanding circle, it could finally include the whole human family. "If you choose, you may make your home one of the most important centres of spiritualizing influence in all the world," writes a Master of Wisdom.

The institution of Marriage forms the foundation for the Householder state. In India many sages voluntarily and deliberately, entered the *Grihastha Ashrama* (householder state), so that they might set an example of building the Home after the true spiritual pattern. The institution of human family provides the pattern for the building of the State, writes Shri B P. Wadia.

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

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

On the occasion of the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, who was one of the greatest advocates of non-violence, 82 year-old monk Thich Nhat Hanh, also the tireless advocate of non-violence, said in his peace message to the world: "Terrorists are also victims who create more victims of misunderstanding." Thich Hanh is credited with a big role in turning American public opinion against the war in Vietnam, and for which Martin Luther King Jr. had nominated him for Nobel Peace Prize in 1967. Journalists, he said, must report in a way that invites readers to reflect why terrorist activities continue and make them see that they have their roots in anger, fear, hate and wrong perceptions. We must prevent anger from becoming a collective energy. The only antidote for anger and violence is compassion. "Every reader has seeds of fear, anger, violence and despair, and also seeds of hope, compassion, love and forgiveness. As journalists you must not water the wrong seeds. It is not what is the story, but how you tell it is important." How should the State deal with terror? His suggestion was that those who believe themselves to be the victims of violence and injustice should be invited for a dialogue with spiritual people and these sessions must be televised nationally. The war on terror will not succeed because you cannot bomb *perceptions*. When we reduce violence in us, and try to be calm and compassionate, we induce others around us to change because then we are connected. How can humanity relate with each other with its divisions in racial, ethnic and national identities? The monk answered that the problem arises when one self is set against another self. Each one must recognize in him the "non-self" in order to recognize the real self. Let each one take away "non-me" elements, such as, the family and educational background, one's ideas, etc., then there is no "me" left. Once we eliminate the false sense of "I," what remains is only universal self. (*The Times of India*, October 2, 2008)

Violence, evil, wars, conflicts, all have their roots in the minds

of men. So much of terrorism is in the name of religion and arises from false and literal interpretation of lofty spiritual concepts. Perception of oneself and one's community as victims leads to anger. The terrorist takes the role of martyr. Sudhir Kakar, celebrated psychoanalyst, rightly points out that the two biggest causes of violence are: high self-esteem and moral idealism. Once a person believes that his violence is a means to a moral end, the floodgates of brutality are opened, and such a person displays no feeling of guilt or shame for his murderous actions. H.P.B. writes: "We denounce indignantly systems and organizations, evils, social and religious... we abstain from denouncing persons. The latter are the children of their century, the victims of their environment and of the Spirit of the Age. To condemn and dishonour a man instead of pitying and trying to help him, because, being born in a community of lepers he is a leper himself, is like cursing a room because it is dark, instead of quietly lighting a candle to disperse the gloom.... One should denounce and fight against the root of evil and not expend one's fury by knocking down the irresponsible blossoms of its plant." The outer wars are but elongated shadows of the war within. The cancerous disease of thoughtlessness is eating away the eye of spirit, writes Shri B. P. Wadia

An increasing number of Jains are renouncing the good life and taking *diksha* (renunciation). Recently, a business tycoon renounced his multi-crore company, family, and all the comforts of the world to take the vow of *diksha* to embrace simple life of a monk. A woman, with strong bent of mind towards Jainism, said she was following her inner calling, when she left home after seeking her son's consent. Every year, almost 2000 persons from the Jain community take *diksha* in India. The number of women taking *diksha* is three times the number of men. "Taking the life-long vow is never an impulsive decision. One carries forward certain innate values from one's

previous birth," says a monk. Some cases at least seem to bear out this argument, as is the case of a youngster, from a village in Rajasthan. After ranking third nationwide in the tough chartered accountancy exam he decided to renounce the world and lucrative career to become a monk. At times, however, increased consumption brings about dissatisfaction and restlessness. Statistics indicate that "group *dikshas*" (two or more people taking the vow together) is on the rise, while *bal dikshas*, or *dikshas* by minors, have dropped drastically. "Whether it is the responsibilities of being a mother or the five-star comfort of living the life of a diamond merchant, the peace of being free of all attachments seems to be beckoning many," write Mansi Choksi and Hemali Chhappia. (*The Times of India*, September 20, 2008)

For those of us who are satisfied with our present state, spiritual life is irrelevant. More often than not, what jolts us out of this complacency is some painful experience. But sometimes we follow circuitous route to spirituality. Having enjoyed all the pleasures life has to offer, sooner or later, a point of satiation is reached, waking us up to higher possibilities. Renunciation of the world should happen in the right spirit. Desire to take *Diksha* (renunciation) should not stem from the desire to escape from the troubles and responsibilities of family life, it must arise from true inward detachment.

The Theosophical ideas are very clear. For instance, one is not allowed to desert family duty in order to devote oneself almost entirely to Theosophical work. It is stated that no master will accept any one who tries to sacrifice someone else's interests, as a chela (disciple), "because he who plays truant in one thing will be faithless in another." Many were refused to be accepted as chelas because they were married and had to perform their duty to wife and children. They had to get the consent of their wife before entering the Path. Similarly, if a person has dependent father or mother, he is not allowed to leave them in order to pursue occultism. According to the *Shastras* (scriptures) there are four *ashramas*, of which last is

Sannyas. The four successive stages of the life of a *Sannyasi*—one who has renounced all worldly considerations—are *Kutichaka*, *Bahudaka*, *Hansa* and *Paramhansa*. A *Parmahansa* is on the very threshold of becoming a *dikshita*, i.e., ready to receive his final initiation into the mysteries of *Yoga Vidya*, writes H.P.B. (*The Theosophist*, Vol. I)

The river Ganga is considered holy by many, and many have protested against her pollution. The Ganga waters get polluted mainly because of the dumping of the industrial waste. The Ganga is both goddess and river. How was Ganga brought down to earth? The story goes that Sage Kapila reduced to ashes, 60,000 sons of King Sagara, by his single glance. To wash away these ashes, “Sagara’s descendant, sage Bhagiratha, obtained permission from the gods for the river to descend to earth. But so mighty was the force of the river that Shiva absorbed the force of the mighty torrent by letting it flow through his matted locks. From the head of Shiva it flowed down as the *Sapta-Sindhava* or the seven sacred rivers. Ganga is also called Alaknanda (flowing from the locks of Shiva); Deva-Bhuti (heavenly); Gandini (ever-shining); Mandakini (gently flowing), and so on. If Himalayas are supreme among the mountains, Ganga is supreme among rivers. In India, river Ganga is looked upon as mother, as Volga is *Mat Rodanya* (mother of the land). In ancient Egypt waters of river Nile were considered the tears of Goddess Isis, writes Kailash Vajpeyi. (*The Times of India*, September 23, 2008)

The river Ganga is sacred in the eyes of the Hindus, because she is the greatest of all the nurturing goddesses of the country and a daughter of Himalaya, from whose heart she springs forth. The town of Hardvar is built at the source of river Ganga. Hardvar is *Hari-dvara* or the doorway of Krishna, and is often called *Gangadvara*, the doorway of Ganga, where Sage Kapila sat in meditation for a

number of years, writes H.P.B. (*From the Caves and Jungles of Hindostan*)

The story of sage Kapila reducing 60,000 sons of King Sagara to ashes is an allegory. The 60,000 Sons, brutal, vicious and impious, are the personification of the *human passions* that a “mere glance of the sage”—the SELF who represents the highest state of purity that can be reached on earth—reduces to ashes (*S.D.*, II, 571). Sage Kapila’s glance is referred to in the esoteric works as *Kapilaksha* or “Kapila’s eye.” It is a reference to a great vibratory, Sidereal force, which Bulwer Lytton mentions in his “Coming Race” as *vril*. This force, forms part of *Ashtar Vidya*, and when aimed at an army, it could reduce to ashes 1,00,000 men and elephants, as easily as it would a dead rat. (*S.D.*, I, 563)

Most great civilizations have begun on the banks of great rivers. The river is formed by water that comes from the action of the sun. As a Sanskrit verse expresses it, *Akashat patitamtoyam sagaram prati gachhati*, i.e., water falls from the sky (forming a river) and then flows towards the sea. It shows that both the ends of a river are on a grand scale, though in-between the river may get utterly dirtied. It is the symbol of the way the great “inner life” flows, neither its beginning nor its end are here. “Humanity is an emanation from divinity on its return path thereto.”

A team of scientists led by the French marine archeologist, Franck Goddio, have discovered a bowl in Egypt, dating between late 2nd century B.C. and the early first century A.D. The engraving on the bowl reads, “Dia Chrstou O Goistais,” which has been interpreted by the team to mean, either, “by Christ the magician,” or, “the magician by Christ.” The bowl was found during an excavation of the underwater ruins of Alexandria’s ancient great harbour. The French archeologist believes that it could well be reference to Jesus Christ, who was once the primary exponent of white magic, and

that the bowl could have been used by him during the fortune telling rituals. According to a report in Discovery News, if the word Christ refers to Jesus Christ, then this may provide evidence that Christianity and paganism at times intertwined in the ancient world. (*The Times of India*, October 3, 2008)

The whole of the New Testament, in a way, is an account of the Cycle of Initiation, from the birth of man in a body of flesh up to his second or spiritual birth and initiation—allegorized in the life of Jesus. From Jesus the man, he became “Jesus the Christ,” or “Jesus the Anointed-One.” Christ, the true esoteric Saviour, is not a man but the divine presence latent within the hearts of men. All the Initiates or wise men were magicians. Magic, *Magia*, means, in its spiritual, secret sense, the “Great Life,” or divine life *in spirit*. Magic, as a science is the knowledge of the hidden aspects of man and nature, by which omniscience and omnipotence of the spirit can be acquired while in the body, and by which one is able to have control over nature’s forces. When this knowledge is used for beneficent purposes, it is White Magic, but when misused, it becomes sorcery or Black Magic.

Every tradition shows that Jesus was educated in Egypt and passed his infancy and youth with the Brotherhood of Essenes and other mystic communities. The Essenes were the descendants of Egyptian hierophants. Many of the Christian traditions and legends have been borrowed from the pagans. For instance, the Roman Christians were not sure of Christ’s date of birth, and so they fixed it on 25th December which is the day the Pagans celebrated as the birthday of their Sun-gods. All the Sun-gods, the Egyptian Horus, the Babylonian Adonis as also Apollo and Osiris, were said to be born at the Winter Solstice and were said to have virgin mothers.

LIFE is an island, rocks are its desires, trees its dreams, and flowers its loneliness, and it is in the middle of an ocean of solitude and seclusion.

—KAHLIL GIBRAN