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The Living of the Higher Life**

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सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

Vol. 16, No. 7

November 17, 2024

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

DURING the last quarter of every hundred years an attempt is made by the “Masters” to help the spiritual progress of humanity in a marked and definite way, and hence towards the end of every century there is spiritual upheaval. 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.

Theosophy is age-old and is the very root, the basis, the origin of all thought, whether religious, scientific or philosophical, and from it has sprung all the historical faiths of humanity, through the agency of prophet-reformers. Just as the white ray of light on passing through the prism breaks up into different colours of the solar spectrum, so also, the white ray of Truth, in passing through the three-sided prism of man’s triple nature, breaks up into different fragments called “religions.” Every religion becomes disfigured, distorted, desecrated and even anthropomorphized, as time passes and the influence of the Founder or Teacher wanes. Theosophy is but a fragment of THEOSOPHIA or Wisdom-Religion. Theosophy is the central core of Truth in all religions, and to get at the central truth in every religion one has to remove all falsehoods, and learn to understand the symbolic language of these religions. The Key to interpretation of Universal Symbolism in

all religions is provided by Theosophy. “In our humble opinion, the only ‘Essentials’ in the Religion of Humanity are—virtue, morality, brotherly love, and kind sympathy with every living creature, whether human or animal,” writes H.P.B.

The object of H.P.B.’s mission was, among other things, to make the world aware of the very existence of a body of knowledge which she called Theosophy. The teachings of Theosophy contain the seeds of all possible growth. A small seed that happens to fall in the right soil might produce rich harvest. When the mind of the person is struck by the greatness and beauty of an idea, or when his heart is moved by wisdom and compassion of great living beings, it can start him on to an entirely new path. Though we live in Kali Yuga or Dark Age, where people do wrong and commit grievous errors, it is felt that the voice of the inner god is not completely smothered. Placing great faith in human nature, Masters and H.P.B. struck first notes of ageless wisdom, which brings the message of faith and trust, whatever the outside circumstances might appear to be. The knowledge also brings to us the comforting idea that a living fraternity of perfected human beings exist, who form an unbroken chain around us, and that even at the darkest hour no man is left completely without succor or hope.

In our modern civilization, religion and science conflict with each other on all points, from an atom to God, because they have entirely different lines of approach. In ancient times, true religion was meant to be a unifying force binding all together in a harmonious whole. It taught that divine life and light was the root and source of all. And true science began its search on that invisible, universal plane, coming down to the human and the terrestrial and objective. In those days, different branches of knowledge were not divorced from one another but all followed the same pattern—from the universal to the particular, from the immortal to the mortal, from the subjective to the objective.

Although it is true that the word Theosophy has come into prominence only since the year 1875, yet it is entirely false to jump at the conclusion that the name originated then. H. P. Blavatsky invented neither the word Theosophy nor the Teachings which she gave under that name. Both the word itself and the philosophy are ancient, immemorial. The word as it stands today, in its present form, had been known and used in earlier centuries and especially was it so in the third and fourth centuries of the Christian era with the starting of what is known as the Neo-Platonic Movement, the founder of which was Ammonius Saccas. His aim was to bring about the union of the followers of all sects and creeds through the demonstration that all the various religions once purified of the dross of forms of ritual and of points of dogma were one and the same teaching. Such is the aim and ideal of the present Theosophical Movement.

To students of Theosophy, the Neo-Platonic Movement of Ammonius Saccas is but a manifestation of the ever existent and universal movement which consists in the reiteration of the great principles of Nature. Before the Neo-Platonic Movement, Theosophy had already been given to the world and its note sounded for the elevation of the Human Race. That word Theosophy which is used today to designate the Ancient Wisdom Religion was not originated by Ammonius Saccas. The word comes from the two words, *Theos and Sophia*, meaning Divine Wisdom. The Greek form used by Ammonius is however simply the translation of the Sanskrit term *Brahma-Vidya*. This shows that the word Theosophy itself is an ancient one.

As for the teaching, it too is ancient, and no true student of theosophy ever claimed that he could give anything new to the public as the fourth chapter of the *Gita* clearly indicates. Theosophy is the doctrine of Yoga—the same exhaustless, secret eternal doctrine which has reached us from the night of time through transmission throughout the age. It is the source from which have originated all

great world religions and philosophies of all times and no one need accept this claim blindly. A comparative study of various systems of thought conclusively shows that there are certain fundamental principles common to all. It was such a study that Ammonius Saccas adverted and today, in our present Theosophical Movement the same method is put forth as the Second of the theosophical objects of the movement: “the study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences and the demonstration of importance of such study.”

Theosophy is impersonal and universal. It is not the exclusive property of any one race, one nation or one group of students. It belongs to each and to all and is birthright and the property of all members of the Human Race. Further, it has not come down to us through the efforts of one teacher only, but through a long line of teachers, all of whom are recognized and revered by Theosophical students. This is where theosophists differ from the followers of any one religion. Theosophists do not believe in one single founder in a unique divine incarnation but believe in Brotherhood of Divine Teachers from which messengers are sent in accordance with cyclic law to reiterate the same truths.

Theosophy is Divine truth and not a speculative philosophy or an evolving science, but an exact code of knowledge, the accumulated Wisdom of the Ages, proved, verified, modified and ultimately recorded, now become eternal and changeless because accurate in every detail of doctrine and principle. Theosophy is a complete and changeless body of truths which has always existed and will continue to exist forever. It is ever existent and changeless for two reasons: 1) because it is a statement of the Laws of Nature which laws are always and invariably the same, like the principle of any exact science such as Mathematics, 2) because the knowledge of these absolute and changeless laws is embodied by Souls who have become perfected and attained their own immortality and whose knowledge therefore cannot be lost. In the world, however, the truths uttered by the great ones may be misunderstood, misapplied and misused, and the custodians of the Wisdom again send one of Them

among men to destroy superstition and materialism and show the right lines.

The same eternal message was reiterated for our time and era by H. P. Blavatsky. If we examine the situation of that period, in 1875, when the present movement began, we find once again a corroboration to the teaching of the fourth chapter of the *Gita*. “Whenever there is a decline of virtue and an insurrection of vice an injustice in the world”—this was strikingly the case in 1875. The Theosophical Movement was launched at a crucial moment in human history, which a Great Master of Wisdom describes thus: “Between degrading superstition and still more degrading brutal materialism, the White Dove of Truth has hardly room whereon to rest her weary unwelcome feet. It is time that Theosophy should enter the arena.” Scientific skepticism and religious dogmatism had made Truth unwelcome. Like a wrestler entering the arena and challenging another wrestler, Theosophy challenged many fields—Science, Education, Theology, Religion, Society and its values, and Humanity at large. The ancient spiritual truths had been forgotten and H. P. Blavatsky was sent to re-proclaim them. These truths are: Universal Brotherhood is a fact in nature, Man is inherently perfect and potentially divine, and Soul evolution is through Karma and Reincarnation.

Theosophy being a synthesis of religion, science and philosophy has a power of its own, dynamic and vibrant, which can be applied in daily life, to all spheres of activities, because it is essentially practical. There are millions of human souls like ships in the Ocean of life—ships steered by ignorant men without the help of a chart or a compass and so, in the eddies of materialism, in the whirlpools of religious superstition, many of us get destroyed. Theosophy provides the chart and the compass and enables us, each one of us, to steer our ship of life in the heaven of Illumination and of Compassion.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THE INVISIBLE MAN—I

THE INVISIBLE MAN is an 1897 novel by the British writer H. G. Wells. It is a story about a scientist, Jack Griffin, who turns himself invisible through a scientific experiment. He finds himself in possession of an enormous amount of freedom, and uses the same for committing immoral acts. The story begins with the stranger (Jack Griffin) arriving at an inn owned by Mr. and Mrs. Hall of the English village of Iping, West Sussex, during a snowstorm. He wears a wide-brimmed hat, a long-sleeved, thick coat and gloves. When he removes his hat and coat, the landlady is frightened to see that his face is entirely hidden by bandages, except for a prosthetic nose. The landlady makes an effort to engage him in a conversation but finds him reclusive, unfriendly and introverted. He tells her to keep an eye out for some parcels he is anxiously awaiting. Later that day, he explains that he is an “experimental investigator” and that he needs his equipment.

The next day his luggage arrives, and when he leaves his room to collect the same, the delivery man’s dog bites him on the leg. When he goes to his room to attend to the wound, Mr. Hall follows him, and in the dim light of the room he is able to see that Griffin has no hands. He is violently pushed out of the room by Griffin. His luggage mainly consists of scientific equipment, handwritten notebooks and crates of fluids, some of which are labelled “Poison.” At dinner time, Mrs. Hall enters his room, without knocking on the door, and gets a glimpse of Griffin’s face. It looked as if he had no eyes! Then onwards, he demands to be left alone and spends most of his time in his room working with chemicals and laboratory apparatus, going out only at night. Mrs. Hall is able to hear the sound of bottles smashing and Griffin talking to himself in an agitated tone. When she questions him concerning this, he tells her not to bother him and that she can add an extra charge to his bill.

As time passes, the villagers gossip and invent many different

stories about him. The local doctor, Cuss, after visiting him, swears that he saw Griffin lift his arm, though there was no actual arm inside the sleeve. Then on one holiday, Rev. Bunting and Mrs. Bunting wake up to the sounds of vicarage being burgled. They are able to hear all kinds of noises but there is no actual physical evidence of a burglar's presence. The same morning, Mr. Hall and his wife notice that the door to Griffin's room is open, and his bed is empty. They call a blacksmith to change the locks so that they can lock Griffin out. However, when they are discussing this, Griffin emerges from his room, which had looked empty before and goes into the parlour, which he has been using as a personal study. He locks himself in and can be heard shouting and smashing things. Later, when Mrs. Hall asks Griffin why he has not paid his bill, he offers to pay his bill. She is surprised and suspicious because a few days back he had said that he did not have any money.

That bill remains unpaid, but Mrs. Hall puts pressure on him by refusing to bring any food for him. She tells him that he has alienated the entire village with his odd behaviour and it is time that he comes out with the truth. As the anger and frustration of the villagers mount, Griffin confesses that beneath his bandages, he is invisible. When confronted by the villagers at the inn, Griffin takes off his bandages to reveal a "black cavity," which is his invisible face. At that point, the villagers run away in horror and try to contact the local constable and a complex plan is made to arrest him for burgling the vicarage, which fails, and Griffin escapes. Since only his body has become invisible and not his clothes, therefore in order to remain completely invisible, he cannot wear clothes. He wishes to retrieve his belongings from his lodging but since his books, money and other things have not been made invisible, he decides to take the help of a local "tramp," Thomas Marvel.

At first, Marvel thinks he is imagining, when hears a voice but sees no person. However, Griffin proves that he is real and invisible by throwing stones at him. With Marvel, he returns to the inn to bring back his belongings which include three notebooks that contain

records of his experiments. The villagers try to prevent Griffin from escaping but fail. Griffin smashes the windows of the inn and cuts the village's telegraph wire before fleeing. Everyone in Iping is scared to come out of their houses for two hours.

Marvel tries to betray Griffin, who threatens to kill him. Marvel escapes to the seaside town of Port Burdock, pursued to an inn by Griffin, who is shot by one of the bar patrons. The narrative shifts to a man named Dr. Kemp. When his doorbell rings, his servant reports that no one was there when she answered. However, Kemp finds blood on his bedroom door handle and floor. In the bedroom, Griffin speaks to Kemp, who refuses to believe that Griffin is really there. Griffin reminds Kemp that they studied together in the same college. Kemp allows him to sleep in his bedroom and is worried that Griffin might be insane and "homicidal."

The next day, Griffin reveals his true identity to Kemp. Griffin is a former medical student who left medicine to devote himself to optics. Many years ago, while researching light and optics, he discovered a way of turning a living tissue invisible. He kept his findings to himself as he was afraid that someone might steal the same. His research on invisibility continued for three years but he needed money to actually conduct the experiment. He stole money from his father, which was not his own, and hence he committed suicide. However, Griffin did not feel guilt or sympathy for his father.

He tells Kemp that "Visibility depends on the action of the visible bodies on light. Either a body absorbs light, or it reflects or refracts it, or does all these things. If it neither reflects nor refracts nor absorbs light, it cannot of itself be visible. You see an opaque red box, for instance, because the colour absorbs some of the light and reflects the rest, all the red part of the light, to you. If it did not absorb any particular part of the light, but reflected it all, then it would be a shining white box. Silver!"

He continues to explain saying, "You make the glass invisible by putting it into a liquid of nearly the same refractive index; a transparent thing becomes invisible if it is put in any medium of

almost the same refractive index. And if you will consider only a second, you will see also that the powder of glass might be made to vanish in the air if its refractive index could be made the same as that of air; for then there would be no refraction or reflection as the light passed from glass to air.” He continues to explain that “the whole fabric of a man except the red of his blood and black pigment of hair are all made up of transparent, colourless tissue.” He invents a way to change a body’s refractive index to that of air so that it neither absorbs nor reflects light.

Griffin carried out his first invisibility experiment on a piece of fabric, and then on his neighbour’s cat, whose pained mewling awoke his landlord, making him suspicious. Next, Griffin conducted the experiment on himself, successfully turning himself invisible. He is a former medical student and becomes fascinated by his discovery that it would be possible to make human tissues invisible. Knowing that he had aroused his landlord’s suspicion, he set his apartment on fire and fled.

He tells Kemp, what according to him were the advantages and disadvantages of becoming invisible. He says, “I beheld, unclouded by doubt, a magnificent vision of all that invisibility might mean to a man—the mystery, the power, the freedom. Drawbacks I saw none.” He could only see himself, a poverty-struck, demonstrator in a college, becoming rich and powerful. It was not easy to be invisible. If he wore clothes he would be seen, and therefore had to freeze without the clothes in the cold season. He could not eat because food showed up in his stomach before it was fully digested. To conceal his invisibility from the world he started to rob clothing and other items to disguise himself, by wrapping himself up.

Eventually, he came to Iping to continue his research to reverse his invisibility but failed in his attempt to reverse it. Kemp, who has already denounced Griffin to the local authorities, led by Port Burdock’s chief police, Colonel Adye, waits for help to arrive. When Adye and his men arrive, Griffin fights his way out and the next day leaves a note announcing that Kemp will be the first man to be

killed in the “Reign of Terror.” Kemp tries to organise a plan to use himself as bait to trap the invisible man, but a note that he sends is stolen from his servant by Griffin. During the chase, Griffin arms himself with an iron bar and kills a bystander.

Griffin shoots Adye, then breaks into Kemp’s house. Adye’s constables fend him off and Kemp bolts for the town, where the locals come to his aid. Still obsessed with killing Kemp, Griffin nearly strangles him but is cornered and then beaten by the enraged mob. He begs for mercy. Kemp urges the mob to stand away and tries to save Griffin’s life, though unsuccessfully. Griffin’s battered body becomes visible as he dies. His face is then covered with a sheet.

It is later revealed that Marvel has secretly kept Griffin’s notes, and with the help of the stolen money, becomes a successful businessman, running the “Invisible Man Inn.” However, when not running his inn, Marvel tries to decipher the notes, hoping to one day recreate Griffin’s work. However, this seems unlikely, because some of the pages were accidentally washed clean, and the remaining notes were coded in Greek and Latin, which Marvel cannot comprehend.

H. G. Wells was an English writer who has written many books, which include novels, short stories and history. He is now best remembered for his science fiction novels and is often called the “father of science fiction,” along with Jules Verne. Besides *The Invisible Man* his most notable science fiction works include *The Time Machine* and *The Island of Doctor Moreau*. He said that his inspiration for “The Invisible Man” was “The Perils of Invisibility” by W. S. Gilbert, which has a couplet, “Old Peter vanished like a shot, but then—his suit of clothes did not.”

Another influence on this novella was Plato’s *Republic*. In the second book of the *Republic*, we read about the “Ring of Gyges,” which is a hypothetical magic ring that grants its owner the power to become invisible at will.

(To be concluded)

THE MYSTERIOUS LIPIKA

GOD, in Theosophy, is an Impersonal, Eternal, Boundless, Omnipresent and Unchanging Principle; IT can neither emanate nor be divided. However, there is a second “One,” so to speak, the reflection of the first “One,” called the Logos or *Eswara*, which emanates the seven Rays or Dhyan Chohans. This Creative Logos is not a personal deity, some sort of extra-cosmic god, but an aggregate of the Dhyan Chohans or Dhyanis, and other forces, writes H.P.B. Dhyan Chohan or Dhyani is a generic term for all celestial beings or gods. There are seven hierarchies of celestial beings, of various grades, and classes, on various planes. These celestial beings on various planes perform functions appropriate to the plane, and may well be regarded as so many expressions and manifestations of the Divinity.

Among many degrees and orders of these celestial beings, H.P.B. makes a special mention of three chief groups—of “Builders,” “Planetary Spirits,” and “Lipika,” and each group is divided into seven sub-groups. The beings such as Lipika and Builders are normally described as intelligent and creative forces and powers, and these are personified and given labels. Out of three groups of Lipika, it is the lowest group which is connected with records of our world. The word *Lipi-ka* is derived from *lipi*, or writing. They are the Divine Beings, connected with Karma, for they are the Records or Scribes.

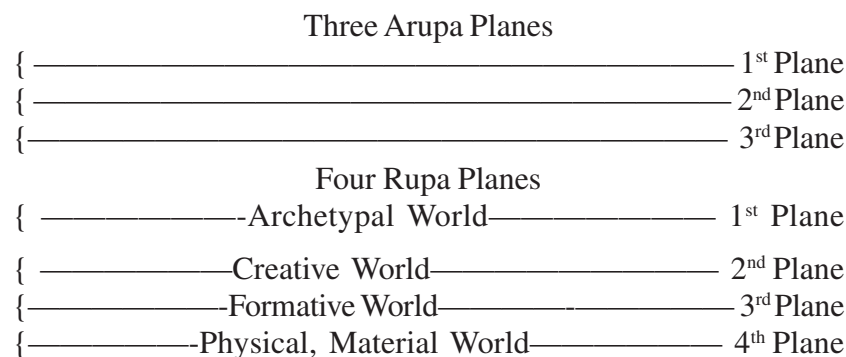
On p. 104 (*S.D.*, I) we read that the Lipika project into objectivity from the passive Universal Mind, the ideal plan of the Universe, and thus, it is they who are the direct amanuenses of the Eternal Ideation or, as called by Plato, the “Divine Thought.” It is based on the ideal plan furnished by them that the “Builders” reconstruct the Kosmos [Solar System] after every *Pralaya*.

What is the “eternal ideation”? In the *Glossary*, we read that “Akasa is the subtle, supersensuous spiritual essence which pervades

all space; the primordial substance....It is, in fact, the Universal Space in which lies inherent the eternal Ideation of the Universe...and from which radiates the *First Logos*, or expressed thought.”

In *Studies in the Secret Doctrine*, we read: “The archetypal world is an expression of Platonic philosophy,” which is “the world as it existed in the mind of the Deity.” Further, “This world in the mind of the Deity, this cosmic substance which is energized by cosmic ideation, is the world of noumena, in which inheres, in which lives, the world of phenomena, in its abstract and archetypal aspects.” (pp. 29-30)

Our attention is drawn to a diagram on p. 200 (*S.D.*, I) showing three planes which represent the *Arupa* or “formless worlds” and four planes that represent the *Rupa* or world of forms, which we may perhaps correlate with the three planes of Akasa and four planes of Astral light, respectively. The following is the rough copy of a diagram on p. 200 representing three higher and four lower planes of cosmic consciousness.



The archetypal world of *noumena*, mentioned by Plato, is “the second of ‘the three planes of the Septenary Kosmos’” (*ibid.*, p. 30). In other words, the archetypal world of Plato is on the second of the *Arupa* planes. The “archetypal world” mentioned as the first of the *Rupa* planes, in the diagram, is the world of models. “The builders build models after the patterns in the mind of the Deity. The world of models is also the model world; it is made up of models

and is in itself the model of succeeding worlds in or on which forms succeed models” (*ibid.*, p. 30). Thus, “the ideal forms...lie buried in the bosom of Eternal Ideation, as the future lotus leaves, the immaculate petals, are concealed within the seed of that plant.” (*ibid.*, p. 31)

Once the Lipika project into objectivity the ideal plan of the Universe, *i.e.*, once the Lipika transform or translate Universal Ideation into Cosmic ideation—the builders build the model world based on these ideal forms. In *Transactions*, H.P.B. explains how the condensed and concrete forms in the physical world are developed from the prototypes in the archetypal world. We are told that “prototypes or ideas of things exist first on the plane of Divine eternal Consciousness (Akasa) and these become reversed in the Astral Light.” Akasa represents higher planes of matter and consciousness, which is also, called the *noumenal* or archetypal world. In the Archetypal World of Plato, there exist abstract ideas of things to be.

We can say that on that plane there is the idea of “triangularity,” based on which different types of triangles—right-angled triangle, equilateral triangle etc., may be formed subsequently. Based on the abstract idea, the builders build the models. The models built by the builders, are improved from plane to plane, till the Elementals or Nature Spirits work on those models to build the physical forms. The first model is improved upon by the worlds which succeed it, each of which is grosser than the one on higher plane, and in that sense less pure. These are the astral prototypes which are like developed pictures. We can understand this by an analogy: The blue-print of a house prepared by an architect represents spiritual prototypes, while the miniature model made of wood or cardboard represents the astral models, based on which the actual house is built.

In *The Secret Doctrine Commentaries*, H.P.B. explains the four lower planes of the diagram on p. 200 (*S.D.*, I) by an analogy: She

says that the archetypal world may be compared to the thought preceding action. It is like individual Manas. The artist conceives his idea first, before he can begin to work. But before he can paint the picture, he has to gather his materials such as his canvas, brush, colours, etc. This is an intellectual or creative world. The next world or formative world represents the rough sketch of the idea on canvas. The last world is a material world which is represented by the complete picture on the canvas.

Sloka 6 (a) of Stanza V says that “The Lipika circumscribe the triangle, the first One (the figure 1), the Cube, the Second One and the Pentacle within the Egg (circle). It is the Ring called ‘Pass-not’...” (*S.D.*, I, 129). If we numerically interpret the symbols used in this sentence we get the numbers, 3, 1, 4, 1 and 5 (31415), which may be correlated to what is said in Stanza IV, *sloka* 2(b), which speaks of “The Three, the One, the Four, the One, the Five,” making totally twice seven or 14. The value 31415 or 3.1415 is the ratio of the circumference to the diameter of a circle or the value of *Pi*. This number is supposed to represent the hierarchy of Dhyan Chohans of various orders, and it is also the number of the inner or manifested world which is circumscribed. It is also the number which represents the beings which are placed on the boundary of the circle which separates the phenomenal or manifested world from the noumenal world. These beings are supposed to form what is called the *Dhyanipasa* or “rope of the angels” or Ring “Pass-Not.”

Thus, the Lipikas, who form the Ring called, “Pass-Not” may be thought of as separating the *Rupa* planes of the planetary chains, from the three higher *Arupa* planes in the diagram on p. 200 (*S.D.*, I). Thus, at the cosmic level, the Lipika form the Ring “Pass-Not” which circumscribes Brahma’s Egg represented by a circle, or the manifested world.

“The Lipika separate the world (or plane) of pure spirit from that of Matter. Those who ‘descend and ascend’—the incarnating Monads, the men striving towards purification and ‘ascending,’ but still not having quite reached the goal—may cross the ‘circle of the

Pass-Not,' only on the day 'Be-With-Us'" (S.D., I, 131). The Ring "Pass-Not" is the Circle which is crossed by the monads or Egos while "descending" or incarnating and once again they cross the "circle of the Pass-Not," on "ascending," *i.e.*, in the process of purification, at the stage when the Individual Ego struggling through the meshes of matter realizes that it is not separate from the Universal Ego, and merges into the One Essence.

Metaphorically, we may say that every individual determines for himself a Ring "Pass-Not," depending upon the degree of development and the extent to which he is under the sway of the illusion of separateness. Each one creates a Ring "Pass-Not" for himself, intellectually, psychically and spiritually, through his present choices and past karma, which is watched over by the Lipika. It is an impassable barrier or self-created boundary, which we must cross. As a human being progresses, he pushes farther and farther away the impassable barrier, which is one day crossed when he enters *Nirvana*. In *The Key to Theosophy* (p. 113, Indian Edition), this state is described thus: "When the Spiritual *entity* breaks loose for ever from every particle of matter, substance, or form, and re-becomes a Spiritual breath: then only does it enter upon the eternal and unchangeable *Nirvana*." Only the Lipika can cross the "Ring," but apart from them no celestial beings or no ordinary people—who have not yet reached *Nirvana*, can cross the "Ring" except at the time of *Mahapralaya*.

There is an allusion to the Ring "Pass-Not" in *Vishishtadwaita* philosophy. In the *Secret Doctrine* (I, 132) H.P.B. mentions that according to *Visishtadwaita*, the one who reaches *Moksha* enjoys the bliss in a place called *Parampadha*, which place is not material but made of *Suddasatwa*, or the divine essence, of which the bodies of the manifesting highest Dhyanis are formed. There, the *Muktas* are never again subject to the qualities either of matter or Karma, and they may voluntarily incarnate on earth for the benefit of humanity but are not compelled to be born.

It is said that elementals are the carriers of Karma and these

elementals or “lives” seem to function under higher agents called *Chitra-gupta* or *Lipikas*, who are agents in the karmic dispensation. They are the Divine Beings, connected with Karma, for they are the Recorders or Scribes. They impress on the “invisible tablets of the Astral Light, ‘the great picture-gallery of eternity’ a faithful record of every act, and even thought, of man, of all that was, is, or ever will be, in the phenomenal Universe.” The Egyptian tradition mentions forty “Assessors” who are supposed to be in the region of Amenti, and they read out the account of every soul’s life from the heart of the dead, which becomes an open book before Osiris—the Egyptian equivalent of Yama or Karma. Similarly, the Hindu *Chitra-Gupta* reads out the account of every soul’s life from his register, called *Agra-Sandhini*, which refers to the Astral records. (*S.D.*, I, pp. 104-105)

Chitra-gupta is a Hindu god whose task is to keep the record of all the human beings on earth, and is usually shown standing on the right side of King Yama holding a book and a pen, and maintains the record of the actions of human beings in a register called *Agra-Sandhini*. Upon the death of a human being and his arrival at Yamaloka, *Chitra-gupta* reads out their deeds, allowing the god of death, Yama, to decide whether they go to *Swarga* (Heaven) or *Naraka* (Hell), depending on their actions on earth.

The Lipika are the agents of KARMA—the retributive Law. They “are called in the Kabala the four Recording Angels; in India, the four Maharajas, those who record every thought and deed of man” (*Transactions*, p. 148). The four Maharajas are the Regents or angels, which rule over the cosmical forces of North, South, East and West. These beings are also connected with Karma, but they need *material agents*, such as four kinds of winds, to carry out Karmic decrees. Science admits that some of these winds have evil while others have a beneficent influence on mankind. So also, “The glory of God comes from the East,” says Ezekiel, while the Roman Catholic doctrine traces the various calamities, such as wars and epidemics of disease, to the invisible “Messengers” from North and West (*S.D.*,

I, 123). But is it the Maharajas who punish humanity by sending calamities? No. Man himself, acting individually and collectively, attracts every calamity. We produce causes by our thoughts and acts which awaken corresponding powers in the sidereal world. And these powers are magnetically drawn to and react upon those who produced the causes.

These powers seem to refer to elementals. We say that elementals are carriers of Karma. It is these elementals or lives which bring reaction to our thoughts and actions. These consequences are brought to individuals as also to the collectivity of people. Mr. Judge describes physical sickness as the discharge of the inner sickness of the inner being on the physical plane. In the book *“Because—” For The Children Who Ask Why* we read that when the lives of the earth that have been impressed by selfish thoughts of millions of men [and women] have reached a point of explosion it results in natural calamities or disasters like Tsunami, Earthquake, Volcano and so on, as we are punished also for our thoughts. Science teaches that thought is matter. Every particle of matter registers happenings.

“Connected as the Lipika are with the destiny of every man and the birth of every child, whose life is already traced in the Astral Light—not fatalistically, but only because the future, like the PAST, is ever alive in the PRESENT—they may also be said to exercise an influence on the Science of Horoscopy. We must admit the truth of the latter whether we will or not.” (*S.D.*, I, 105)

AS LEON BLOY has well said, “Suffering disappears, but the fact of having suffered remains always with us.”...What has once been lived through cannot possibly be effaced. That which has been continues to exist in a transfigured form. Man is by no means a completely finished product. Rather he moulds and creates himself in and through those various trials which his destiny imposes upon him. Man is only what God is planning, a projected design.

—BERDYAEV

ON LOWER MIND

“BEHOLD, I KNOW,” says the lower mind, and so saying shuts the door in the face of further knowledge on any particular subject. The lower mind is the aspect of the mind entangled in *Kama* or passions and desires.

Of what value, then, is the lower mind? Its work is to make the effort to understand the knowledge it has been taught. It is the tool of the knowledge we have heard. When the lower mind acts on its own, it can only look at life through sense impressions, reason and logic. But as reason and logic rest on the premises of knowledge already possessed or gained from sense impressions, the conclusions reached are often untrue, or biased. It is therefore essential that reason and logic should guide us in our understanding of what we have “heard,” and this applies mostly to what we have heard from the lips or writings of someone wiser than ourselves. By applying our logic and reason we shall find that these sayings throw light on what our senses tell us.

The next stage is to prove by application what has been heard. Then with the Buddha we can say, “Behold I show you the truth.” What is of value, then, is neither what we know nor what we have heard, but what *is*. We become a pure channel through which Truth can be expressed. The mind becomes the servant of the Truth, carrying it to all. Truth alone is the Master.

“The Mind is the great Slayer of the Real. Let the Disciple slay the Slayer.” To doubt oneself is to forget that we are the divine, but to doubt the lower mind and sense impressions is necessary for growth. Reason has to be seen as a good servant but a bad master, for it shuts out man’s spiritual perceptions, his soul intuitions. We can only reason in terms of what knowledge we possess, but if we remember the law of analogy and start with the basic idea of the oneness of Life and the universality of Law, reason will prove to us that our intuition is true.

THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE THE BOOK AND DEDICATION

THERE are ethical and moral instructions enshrined in devotional books. Among the four devotional books in the Theosophical literature, *The Voice of the Silence*, dedicated by H.P.B. “To the Few,” takes the first place, followed by *Light on the Path*, the *Dhammapada* and the *Bhagavad-Gita*. *The Voice of the Silence* is a Mahayana Buddhist text. Apart from containing invaluable ethical and moral instructions, the book may well be regarded as a priceless gem dealing with the metaphysical and mystical aspects.

In his work “Poetry and Paradox in the Voice of the Silence,” Bhikshu Sangharakshita, a Buddhist teacher, writes that *The Voice of the Silence* “seeks more to inspire than to instruct, appeals to the heart rather than to the head. To make use of De Quincey’s classification, it belongs not to the literature of information, the purpose of which is to augment knowledge, but to the literature of power, the aim of which is to move.” In the language of *The Voice of the Silence*, the former constitutes “Head-learning” while the latter belongs to “Soul-Wisdom.”

Some truths are experiential, and ordinary language is not adequate to express or explain them. According to Sangharakshita, some of the Buddhist teachings which fall into this category, such as the *sutras* constituting *Prajnaparamita*, make use of the “paradox,” while another group of *sutras* which include *Sukhavati-vyuha Sutras* has recourse to “poetry” to convey their meaning. “*The Voice of the Silence* is probably unique in making use of a combination of both methods,” *i.e.*, poetry and paradox. This procedure has “much to do with the extraordinary effectiveness of this little treatise in awakening the dormant Soul-wisdom of the qualified disciple.”

What is a paradox? It is a truth standing on its head to attract attention. A paradox involves contradiction and also carries an element of truth. However, one finds that the contradiction is only

apparent and the truth which it intends to emphasize can be stated quite logically. Thus, “the paradoxical form is no more than a literary trick to excite attention.” However, in Buddhist scriptures, a paradox is used to express in terms of logical contradiction, something which transcends logic. Sangharakshita explains that a mystic might say that a spiritual experience is three-dimensional while the intellect is two-dimensional. Hence, he does not abide by the “Laws of Thought” when he is conveying things that transcend logic and the rational mind. In brief, the “Laws of Thought” include: The “Law of Identity” which says that if A is A, it cannot be not-A. According to the “Law of Contradiction,” A is not “not-A.” There is the “Law of Excluded Middle,” which implies that between two contradictory statements, there is no middle ground. For instance, A is either B, or A is not B.

The Voice of the Silence uses paradox as a method of awakening Soul-wisdom. The very title of the book is profoundly paradoxical, with two contradictory terms, “Voice” and “Silence” in juxtaposition. In a sense it warns the aspirants that if they hoped to understand and apply the wisdom enshrined in the book they would have to exercise “a chastened and sublimated spiritual intuition.” Sangharakshita mentions that according to the great seventeenth-century French mystic, there are four kinds of silence: the silence of sound, the silence of desires, the silence of thoughts and the silence of the will. The *Aryan* or *noble silence* spoken of in the Buddhist texts is the silence of thoughts, which implies concentration of mind that is free from discursive thought and investigation, in a state of joy, zest and peace. For instance, the two statements in *The Voice of the Silence*, wherein the paradox has been used are: “Thou canst not travel on the Path until thou hast become that Path itself,” and the other is, “Give up thy life, if thou would’st live.”

Sangharakshita praises the poetry of *The Voice of the Silence* saying that in places it is as beautiful as its paradoxes are startling.

The essence of poetry is imagery. Imagery is defined as “anything concrete or abstract introduced figuratively to represent something which it strikingly resembles.” Imagery is based on comparison, for example, sleep is often compared to death. Images are the perception of real correspondences, and a true poet is intuitively able to perceive them. All great teachers down the ages have made use of metaphor and simile in their teachings, which may be due to the fact that images based on a system of correspondence can easily stimulate intuition or awaken Soul-wisdom, than the use of rational methods. The book abounds in imagery. He draws our attention to the simile which speaks of the newly arisen Buddha: “He standeth now like a white pillar to the west, upon whose face the rising Sun of thought eternal poureth its first most glorious waves.” It is not just the imagery alone that is responsible for producing marvellous effects, but at certain places, it is due to the combined effect of the imagery and rhythm. For example, “Let thy Soul lend its ear to every cry of pain like as the lotus bares its heart to drink the morning sun.” Sangharakshita ends his insightful analysis by reminding us that to understand *The Voice of the Silence*, we must realize that “it appeals to the heart, it strives to develop intuition, to awaken Soul-wisdom, and that in so doing its principal methods are paradox and poetry,” though rationality and prose intervene them, now and then.

A dedication or book dedication is supposed to be the expression of friendly connection, or gratitude by the author towards another person or persons. At times, the book dedication could provide fascinating glimpse into the life and times of the author. Sometimes a book is dedicated to the memory of a loved one or to a cause. A book could also be dedicated to those who are likely to be impacted by the contents of the book. We come across very meaningful dedications in all the books written by H.P.B. The dedication makes it clear for *whom* the book is meant and what is expected of the reader. For instance, dedication in her book “The Key to Theosophy,” which covers the fundamental teachings of Theosophy, reads, “Dedicated to all her pupils, so that they may learn and teach in their

turn.” On the other hand, her monumental work, *The Secret Doctrine*, which is “The synthesis of Science, Religion and Philosophy,” has been dedicated to “all true Theosophists, in every country, and of every Race, for they called it forth, and for them it was recorded,” clearly showing that the book was the need of the hour and has a universal appeal because that was the period when religious superstitions and scientific materialism had made Truth unwelcome.

The Voice of the Silence is “Dedicated to the Few” and it is for the “Daily use of Lanoos (Disciples or *Chelas*)” because by its very nature, it is devotional yet mystical, requiring well-developed intuition, and hence meant only for those who are committed to living the higher life, those who are *shravakas* (listeners) and *shramanas* (practitioners).

The book is dedicated to the “few” because to appreciate poetry and to understand the paradox, besides the logical or intellectual mind it requires Spiritual intuition. Moreover, very few in this century perceive the need for striking a balance between knowledge and love. Very few realize that head-learning alone is useless, and must be combined with Compassion and works of sacrifice. Hence, it is to those “few” who are able to see this and therefore willing to mould their minds, that she dedicates this book. To appreciate work such as this, a touch of mysticism is necessary. Mr. Judge writes: “In the hearts of all, at some time, there arises the desire for knowledge. He who thinks his desire will be fulfilled, as the little bird in the nest, who has only to open his mouth to be fed; will very truly be disappointed.”

The book is dedicated to the “few” because only a few aspire to raise their inner nature above the dead level of the world. The required merit and strength can only be accumulated by unselfish actions, by kind thoughts and by detaching our minds from the allurements of the world. “*This world is wrapt in darkness. Only a few can see here. Only a few birds escape the net. Only a few escape into the heavenly light*” (*The*

Dhammapada, Verse 174). The Darkness of ignorance surrounds the world. In the Seventh Chapter of the *Gita*, Shri Krishna tells Arjuna, “Among thousands of mortals a single one perhaps strives for perfection; and among those so striving, perhaps a single one knows me as I am.” As Coleridge puts it, out of millions of acorns, perhaps one develops into an Oak tree. The Majority of the acorns fail to develop into a new living tree. Thus, there are only a few, ready to leave behind the familiar ground, and keep up the never-ceasing struggle and aspiration till the goal has been reached. The same idea is beautifully conveyed in the book *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*. The seagull, Jonathan, who is trying to achieve perfection in flying and rise above the ordinary flock, is told about the difficulty of the task in these words:

“You are pretty well a one-in-a-million bird. Most of us came along ever so slowly. We went from one world into another...forgetting right away where we had come from, not caring where we were headed, living for the moment. Do you have any idea how many lives we must have gone through before we even got the first idea that there is more to life than eating, or fighting, or power in the Flock? A thousand lives, Jon, ten thousand! And then another hundred lives until we began to learn that there is such a thing as perfection, and another hundred again to get the idea that our purpose for living is to find that perfection and show it forth.” (pp. 53-54)

It is also in a far higher sense that she has dedicated this work to the “few.” We find that almost at the end of the Preface to this book H.P.B. writes that she has made judicious selection only from those treatises of the *Book of Golden Precepts* “which will best suit the few real mystics in the Theosophical Society, and which are sure to answer their needs.”

The book is for the “Daily use of Disciples.” To become a disciple, one has to be a “perfect listener” of the right philosophy before one can become a “perfect practitioner” of it. For, according

to Mr. Judge, “We become *chelas*; we obtain that position in reality because our inner nature is to that extent opened that it can and will take knowledge,” and “a man is hardly ready to be a *chela* unless he is able to stand *alone* and uninfluenced by other men and events.”

Devotion and action combined with knowledge leads to final wisdom. Knowledge and action are two wings that are necessary for the soul’s ascent. As the actions grow more and more free from attachments, as also equal-minded and sacrificial in spirit, one becomes fitted to acquire the higher and abstruse knowledge. On the other hand, with the acquirement of knowledge the soul becomes firm in such desireless and sacrificial acts. We need to put into practice the spiritual teachings, because only then the quality of mind can change, making it porous to the influx from above. It involves tearing one’s self away from ordinary ways and ordinary life.

Why should there be “daily” reading and reflection? At a simple level, *pathanam* or reading over and over again, is recommended. In the olden days, importance was given to “repetition” in the learning process, in order to create a clear and definite impression. Impressions that are deeply imprinted because of the special attention given to them, can be easily recollected. However, “daily use” seems to imply the threefold discipline of attentive reading or listening (*shravana*), and reflection (*manana*), which help to remove unwholesome thoughts, followed by the process of assimilation of truths and living by it in all modes of existence (*Nididhyasana*). Moreover, daily reading and reflection help us to acquire a deeper meaning by going beyond words and ideas. “Realisation comes from dwelling upon the thing to be realised,” writes Mr. Judge.

HELP thou thy brother’s boat across and lo, thine own hath
touched the shore.

—CONFUCIAN SAYING

MYSTERY OF THE HUMAN HEART

TURN wherever we may, we behold marvellous in nature and mystery in all life, evoking in us a sense of wonder and awe. Poets, artists, philosophers express it in their creative works of literature, art, and theses in diverse ways. The Scientist has unraveled many a wondrous mystery of life only to realize that the more he explores and uncovers the secrets of nature the farther the final mystery recedes before him, eluding his grasp. Science has explored vast depths of infinitude of space, and has been probing the unfathomable depths of ultramicroscopic subatomic realms in search of the origins of matter and of life, only to find itself as far from finding final answers to the question as at the beginning when it set about its exploration.

Human body itself, nearest and most familiar to us of all things, presents to us in its complex structure and marvellously coordinated intelligent purposive vital functions, such a mystery that even qualified and experienced physicians confess that their knowledge of it is a mere fraction of the whole mystery which they do not comprehend. Denying the reality of vital force and mental consciousness independent of, and ensouling, corporeal organs and functions, mistaking them to be evanescent secondary phenomena produced by molecular vibration, science interprets the phenomena of life in terms of empirical and mechanistic theoretical framework. Thus, modern science limiting its research to the material and the physical nature alone, is cutting itself off from viewing the vast field of the realms of soul and spirit—the world of Reality—which causes the production of, and ensouls and sustains, the physical, the gross instrument of the former. It is like trying to understand objects by investigating their shadows cast on the wall.

The physical human heart, for instance, has been thoroughly explored by science, yet none is able to account for the cause of the

marvels it exhibits except in terms of a mechanistic model, which is no explanation. For instance, human heart beats about one hundred thousand times, and pumps two thousand gallons of blood, in a day, ceaselessly throughout the life of a man; blood flowing through blood vessels, length of which, if stretched out, measures sixty thousand miles, thereby enabling distribution of vital energy and nutrients to the tissues and organs, elimination of waste, and performing other functions. Heart is the first organ to grow and begin to throb in the fetal development, even before the formation of the brain. Apparent stoppage of the heartbeat which, according to the modern physiologist, signals death of the body, is not actual death. This fact is demonstrated by some Fakirs who volunteer to be buried underground for weeks, apparently found dead, the heart having ceased to beat, but when disinterred, revived and resumed normal life after subjecting the body to certain physical processes (*Isis*, I, 477). In the book, *Sleeping, Dreaming, and Dying*—which is a compilation of a dialogue held by the Western Scientists with His Holiness, the Dalai Lama (*Wisdom Publications*, Boston, 1997)—it was demonstrated to scientists that apparent death, as determined by the stoppage of the heart, is not the actual death which may occur soon thereafter or after several days (pp.162-164). Science is unable to account for this. Theosophy teaches that so long as the subtle vital magnetic line of force, linking the Astral and the physical bodies is not severed in the natural course, the heart and the brain are alive in mutual relation, though clinically pronounced dead.

Interesting research has been carried out at the Heart Math Institute, California, on the intimate relationship between the heart and the brain in the human being. Their research shows that Human heart is the seat of human emotions and positive emotions increase the brain's ability to make sound decisions, and negative emotions bring about disorderly functioning of the nervous system. Magnetic field of the human heart has been found to extend to several feet away from the body; changing with changes in human emotions. Some of their discoveries in this field have

practical applications in the harmonious management of thought and emotions in a way that enhances the well-being of individuals. Similarly, the whole human body, with trillions of cells and microorganisms which make up the tissues and organs, down to the sub-molecular phenomena, present a mystery which is not wholly understood.

The mystery of the human heart, the subject under consideration, is a part of the greater mystery of the whole of the terrestrial man in his physical, psychic, and spiritual aspects, who is a perfect copy, a microcosm, of the similar three aspects of the Macro-cosmos, called the Heavenly Man. Man is constituted of seven principles: three immortal and divine—Atma, Buddhi, and Manas; and four mortal principles: Body, Astral Body, Prana, and Kama. So is the solar universe constituted of seven hierarchies of planetary spirits, each furnishing man one of his principles, such that, man, the Microcosm is indissolubly connected forever with the seven primary forces of Macrocosmos. (*S.D.*, II, 29)

The Body is constituted of the elements of the Earth; the Astral Body of man, and the Earth itself, come from the Moon; principle of life, Prana, is an aspect of the Absolute Life, Jiva; Kama, the principle of passions and desires, is a reflex on the material plane of Divine Desire, universal all-embracing Love which first arose at the dawn of the manifestation of the universe; Mind or Manas is a ray of the universal Mind, Mahat; Buddhi comes from spiritual soul of the universe; all these are aspects of One Spirit, Atman, Self of All.

Every part of the human body and every organ, and every cell which make the organs and tissues, is also constituted of seven principles, except that Manas or mind in them is latent, to evolve to human stage in a far distant future with the aid of Man, who stands in relation to them as Macrocosm, a god, as Man stands as Microcosm in relation to the Heavenly Man, the Macrocosm. All are inseparably bound together in a web of Life, all evincing a

progressive march to higher and higher evolutionary perfection.

Interconnectedness of all things on all the planes of Being, derivation of each of the lower orders from their prototypes, the higher orders, can be traced by the law of analogy and correspondence, since all are differentiated aspects of the One indivisible Unity of Life and Being. “What is below is like that which is above, and what is above is similar to that which is below to accomplish the wonders of one thing.” (*Isis*, I, 507)

The Heart of man, as also of everything down to the atomic level, is analogous to the great heart of the Macrocosmic septenary hierarchy of the Dhyan Chohan body. “The esoteric Mystagogy speaks of the mysterious relation existing between the hebdomadic essence or substance of this angelic Heart and that of man, whose every physical organ, and psychic, and spiritual function, is a reflection, so to say, a copy on the terrestrial plane of the model or the prototype *above*.” (*S. D.*, II, 91-92)

The function of the human heart, and that of the nucleole in the cell, correspond to the function of the Sun in the Solar World. Teaches the *Secret Doctrine*, (I, 541): “*The Sun is the heart of the Solar World (System) and its brain is hidden behind the (visible) Sun. From thence, sensation is radiated into every nerve centre of the great body, and the waves of the life-essence flow into each artery and vein....The planets are its limbs and pulses.*” As the heart pumps blood in the human body to vitalise and nourish organs of the body, as the nucleus governs the functions of the cell, so does the Sun regulate and nourish the earth and planets and everything in them. Complimenting an intuitional great man of science, Robert Hunt, F.R.S., that pulsation of vital matter in the central Sun of our system to be source of all the life which crowds the earth and other planets, H.P.B. avers that he has corroborated one of the fundamental axioms of Esoteric Philosophy, namely, “that (a) the Sun is the store-house of Vital Force, which is the *Noumenon*

of Electricity; and (b) that it is from its mysterious, never-to-be-fathomed depths, that issue those life currents which thrill through Space, as through organisms of every living thing on Earth” (*S.D.*, I, 531). The double action of the breath of living creatures on earth corresponds to the great cycle of out-breathing and in-breathing of the Great Breath of the Unknown by which the universe comes into existence and goes out of existence. The double action of the systole and diastole of the heart by which the blood circulates in the human body is analogous to similar double action of the Sun—the heart of the Solar World—as seen in the eleven year cycle of the Solar Maxima and Minima—by which the ether, “blood” of the cosmic body, circulates throughout the Solar system to nourish everything on the planets.

The Heart is associated with a range of emotional feelings, of love and affection—from a lofty feeling of universal Love and benevolence to base maleficent ones. Empirical science is unable to explain it. Ancient Wisdom from remotest times has always held that the human heart is the seat of Divine Consciousness—Higher Manas and Buddhi—just as the Sun, which corresponds to the heart, is the abode or focus of the Spiritual Sun. Human being is a complex combination of animal passions, associated with Kamic organs in the body, such as the liver and stomach; mind and intellect with the brain as their *upadhi* or instrument; and spiritual consciousness dwelling in the heart. The purpose of the life of the Human Soul, Man, is to conquer animal desires and passions, and transmute them into pure upward energy of spiritual aspiration and altruism by the exercise of higher Reason and guided by the Light of the Heart. In the ordinary life of a man, it is the Kamic Mind (Animal Soul) and the brain-intellect that govern, casting a dark shadow on the heart, while the Heart-Light remains dormant. In other words, it is the *Tamasic* and *Rajasic* energies which mainly rule the life of a man of the world, which stems from Ignorance, the chief cause of human bondage to endless miseries of rebirth in this world of sorrow.

MYSTERY OF THE HUMAN HEART

This is why the Teachers say that highly developed intellect alone without the Soul-wisdom to illuminate and guide it leads to much misery as to make of the life of mankind a hell. It is not easy to have the heart to guide man's life. However, a beginning must be made to attend to the prompting of the Heart, through much unselfishness, performance of duties of life devoid of expectations, as sacrifice to the Supreme Self, which is in the Hearts of all, and altruism. "There dwelleth in the heart of every creature, O Arjuna, the Master—*Ishwara*—who by his magic power causeth all things and creatures to revolve mounted upon the universal wheel of time. Take sanctuary with him alone, O son of Bharata, with all thy soul; by his grace thou shalt obtain supreme happiness, the eternal place." (*Gita*, XVIII, 61)

"To them thus always devoted to me, who worship me with love, I give that mental devotion by which they come to me. For them do I out of my compassion, standing within their hearts, destroy the darkness which springs from ignorance by the brilliant lamp of spiritual discernment." (*Gita*, X, 10-11)

A poet's wandering heart is precious
Only to a few eager souls, who hear
Their heart's songs echoed in his words.
That's why to them, the poet is so dear.

A poet's heart cannot be possessed
By a single soul mate entwined or not,
For a poet's heart is free to wander,
From heaven to earth without a knot...

Their words can cheer wistful minds
And bind by friendship's invisible cord.

—KHAIRUL AHSAN
"A POET'S HEART"

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

On the spiritual path if we try to arrive at some particular place then our mind will start creating a “place.” It is not about giving up one level of hallucination and moving into another level, but to learn to live with reality by giving up hallucination altogether. We need to make an effort to get the Truth and that Truth is existential and not what we make up in our mind. We may see things in terms of culture and what we may be exposed to. It may be that we are optimists or pessimists and may see god or devil in a person, but all these have nothing to do with the reality. To be concerned with reality would mean knowing why we are here, where we have come from and where we will go.

Some religions try to instil the concept of hope; people take it and try to visualise a better future. One begins to be hopeful about joys of heaven. We should try to be joyfully hopeless. We could come to a stage where we are all right in whatever condition we are because we have found something within ourselves.

Learning to live with reality is the most important thing, and that means not distorting things in our minds but seeing things as they are. We should stop creating god or devil, heaven or hell, good or bad. There should be no likes or dislikes. It may be necessary to do so at certain times, but apart from that we should be able to see things as they are. We will gradually appreciate that life is not just in forms, and also stop identifying things as animate and inanimate, but realize that the whole cosmos is a living cosmos. “Even modern physicists say this is an ever-expanding universe. Essentially they are saying there is nothing conclusive about anything....So there is no ‘this is it.’...If you arrive at a station called reality, there is no such thing as ‘this is it.’ Conclusions happen only in your mind, never in the existence. Conclusion is the nature of the mind. It wants to close one chapter and say, ‘I got it.’ But life is a limitless

possibility,” writes Sadhguru, a yogi, mystic and visionary. (*Free Press Journal*, September 29, 2024)

We do not see things and people as they are but we see them from our own perception. There is a world and there is a projection. Projection is the result of our psychological background, which stifles our perception and estimation of the world. When we see an object, say a chair, our senses bring to us its details as a raw data. The lower *Manas* synthesizes or transforms it into an idea of a chair, which may be quite different from the *real* chair. Our perception is affected by our conceptions and imperfections of the instruments that bring the data, and hence, we do not see things correctly.

Mr. Crosbie says that *true perception is from within, without*, because *Atma-Buddhi-Manas* or the Higher Ego is the true Perceiver, which perceives things correctly. As Patanjali says: “The soul is the Perceiver; is assuredly vision itself pure and simple; unmodified; and looks directly upon ideas.” For correct perception, the lower mind has to reflect the true perception of the Higher Ego, and that happens when the lower mind is cleaned of the dust of passions, biases, ignorance, etc.

Immanuel Kant spoke of the existence of the noumenal world behind the phenomenal world. He called the noumenon as the “thing-in-itself.” Kant said that the phenomenal world is the world of appearances which continually changes. The “thing-in-itself” must always remain “unknowable” because we perceive it through the threefold veil or prism, made up of time, space and causality, which distorts the reality of “thing-in-itself.” In the phenomenal world objects are limited in space. The rose that we see here cannot be present elsewhere at the same time. There was a time when it did not exist and there will be a time when it will cease to exist. These phenomena are seen as a causal series. Each phenomenon is the effect of the preceding one and will in turn become a cause for the next one that appears. Kant’s idea of “thing-in-itself” is quite similar to Plato’s Archetypal World or the World of Ideas.

Does God depend on us for existence? This is unasked question underlying the theme of a 2023 film based on a book, *The Question of God*, by American academic, Armand Nicholi. The film shows a fictional meeting, taking place in London, between Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, and the Oxbridge scholar and author, C. S. Lewis, just before the beginning of World War II. In the film, Freud is portrayed as an unshakeable atheist and his atheism stems from his adherence to rationality and science, as well as due to loss of his daughter and five-year-old grandson. Though Lewis and Freud probably never met, separated as they were by a generation, Freud would have certainly demanded to know what made Lewis, who had been an atheist for a long time, convert to devout Christianity.

During their meeting Freud asks Lewis, “What sort of God is this who takes the lives of innocent children?” Is what we call religion nothing more than escapist wish fulfilment? Both, the book and the film, do not take sides, for or against, two diametrically opposed views, that of the atheist and the believer.

The debate brings in the concept of theodicy, explored by Lewis in his book, *The Problem of Pain*, which deals with the question: Why do bad things happen to good people? Theodicy is the term coined by Leibnitz, the eighteenth-century German philosopher, in an attempt to justify why an omnipotent creator can condone the existence of evil. There are several views on theodicy, and Lewis explains theodicy in terms of free will, *i.e.*, if all is predetermined, if an omnipotent God worked miracles to avert suffering, human beings would lose their freedom to choose between right and wrong, and cease to be human and become automatons.

However, questions arise: By granting us free will does God, paradoxically, limit his own limitless power? By giving us the right to choose between good and evil, between belief and rejection of belief, does the Creator depend upon us for existence? (*The Speaking Tree, The Times of India*, October 8, 2024)

Humanity has always been divided into two camps: believers

and nonbelievers. Belief in God's existence rests mainly on the anthropic principle, while non-belief rests on unaccountability of so much pain and wickedness. The atheists argue that if an omnipotent and benevolent God exists, why should there be so much suffering and evil? The theists counter this with the free-will argument. The anthropic principle seems to emphasize the existence of intelligence behind the orderliness of the universe.

Shankara distinguishes between two different points of view—practical or ordinary viewpoint that regards the world as real and God as its omnipotent and omniscient creator, sustainer and destroyer. God in this aspect appears to have qualities. The second is the real viewpoint, which is that of the wise who have realized that only God is real and that the world is an appearance. Here, God is *Nirgunbrahman* or the transcendental reality, or an Impersonal, Eternal, Boundless, Omnipresent and Unchanging Principle. It is Absolute Being and Absolute Non-Being. It is BENESS. Shankara taught that *Jivatma* or *Atman* is not separate from *Paramatma* or One Reality. Neither *Paramatma* nor *Atma* are subject to change, and remain unaffected by praise, blame, belief, non-belief, good or evil. The appearance and disappearance of universes or thoughts and actions of people in manifested universes cannot affect the One Reality. In the *Gita*, Shri Krishna says, “I established this whole universe with a single portion of myself, and remain separate.”

It is useful to reflect upon what is said about *Atma-Buddhi* or Monad in (*S.D.*, I, 174-75 fn.): “It stands to reason that a MONAD cannot either progress or develop, or even be affected by the changes of states it passes through. *It is not of this world or plane*, and may be compared only to an indestructible star of divine light and fire, thrown down on to our Earth as a plank of salvation for the personalities in which it indwells. It is for the latter to cling to it; and thus, partaking of its divine nature, obtain immortality.”

The free will of the individual is not absolutely free and also with exercise of free will or choice comes responsibility. God is Law. God is all-pervasive and so is Law. In fact, in the manifested

Universe, the presence of God is felt through the Law, which works impartially and unerringly. Individual existence, sorrow and happiness can only be understood in terms of Karma and Rebirth. H.P.B. says: "Virtue in distress and vice in triumph, make atheists of mankind." But the law of Karma is just, unerring and impartial. It is possible to suffer in this life as a result of our action in some prior life. Thus, a good man or an innocent child who suffers now must have been guilty of disturbing the harmony by some wrong action in one of his past lives. Likewise, the bad person who *appears* to go scot-free *now*, will reap the consequences and suffer in some subsequent life. The one who consistently chooses the true and the good, progresses step by step towards the Divine and at last reaches self-realisation, while the one who chooses evil moves away from the Divine and is at last annihilated.

It is essential to walk the spiritual path for growth, but it also brings with it a variety of conditioning. Most of us have to work the treadmill for many long years, and in the meantime, the conditioning piles up. We experience intense fear and resistance to all negative emotions. We feel that now that we are aspirants, we ought to feel peace, love, compassion, and therefore, we cringe each time we experience, anger, greed, jealousy, hate, shame or guilt. We get the message to steer clear of every negative emotion, from our judging mind and also from our Gurus and teachers, but we have no idea as to how to overcome the same. As a result, we try to suppress, deny, reframe and rationalize such emotions. If these methods fail to help us then our self-esteem dips further, and we often feel discouraged.

However, when we keep up our efforts instead of quitting, we begin to experience spiritual competition. When we come across someone who is ahead of us, there is envy and anxiety to reach that point in our progress. Since we are slow in cultivating kindness, love, forgiveness, etc. we begin to pretend that we are loving, kind and compassionate. However, if we persist then we begin to get

insight, and are often helped by our teachers who throw light on our weaker side. If we have enough awareness then we can learn through events and experiences of life. This greatly helps us in building our confidence, self-esteem and the capacity to look at our shadow side in its face, writes Suma Varughese. (*Life Positive*, October 2024)

Each seeker begins to feel at some point in time, the anxiety, am I stagnating? In general, most seekers feel the anxiety for progress. But it may not be a continuous growth that is visibly seen. We must cultivate patience. “What is to learn, is to be content, or, rather, resigned to ourselves and our limitations even while striving to get above them....We cannot all at once live up to these high ideals as some others live up to theirs,” writes Mr. Judge. For overcoming negative emotions, we must first become aware of them through self-examination. The Buddha asks us to remove impurities, one by one, little by little, day by day. It requires constant effort on our part. Having resolved to get rid of some vice of our nature, we have to keep up the struggle at all times. If we are not vigilant, we can easily fall back into old ways of living. Also, it is advisable to attack small faults, to begin with. The person who wants to become a champion in weight-lifting begins by lifting small weights and then goes on steadily increasing the weight.

When the earnest desire to be better is accompanied by the earnest desire to do good works for humanity, then there is growth and progress. Let us take to heart these words of Mr. Judge: “It is in and through the incidents of daily life, in work well done, in duties thoroughly performed, that we today can most readily make progress in the higher life—slow progress, it may be, but at any rate sure. These are stepping stones to better things. We advance most rapidly when we stop to help other wayfarers.....We become one with the Supreme most surely when we lose ourselves in work for humanity.”