

A Magazine Devoted to The Living of the Higher Life

LIGHT OF ALL LIGHTS	397
PREPARING FOR DEEPAVALI	
HAVE WE THE RIGHT TO CRITICIZE OTHERS?	403
IS ETHICS IN BUSINESS POSSIBLE?	407
TIRUKKURAL—THIRUVALLUVAR'S LIFE AND TEACHINGS—V	412
“LIVING MESSENGERS CALLED WORDS”	416
THE OPPOSING FORCES	419
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS	423
IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY	428

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सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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LIGHT OF ALL LIGHTS

PREPARING FOR DEEPAVALI

For within you is the light of the world—the only light that can be shed upon the Path. If you are unable to perceive it within you, it is useless to look for it elsewhere. It is beyond you; because when you reach it you have lost yourself. It is unattainable, because it forever recedes. You will enter the light, but you will never touch the flame.

—*Light on the Path*

DEEPAVALI has been called the “Festival of Lights”; literally it means a “row of lights.” Significantly, this festival is celebrated during the period of *Dakshinayana*, when the sun begins to go away from the Northern Hemisphere, denoting a period of darkness. Thus the festival reminds us of the presence of the light of divinity within each one of us. The festival extends over five days, commencing on the thirteenth day, in the dark fortnight, in the lunar month of *Ashwin*, and ending with the second day in the lunar month of *Kartika*. The first day of Deepavali is called *Dhana teras* or *Dhana trayodashi*. On this day *Dhana* or Wealth is worshipped. Whatever may be our possessions—money, ideas, knowledge or powers—our attitude towards them must be of *trusteeship* and not that of ownership. The trustees are constrained to use the funds only for the purposes or objects for which the trust was set up. So also, we must use our possessions for higher purposes.

The second day, known as *Narak Chaturdashi*, celebrates the

destruction of the demon Narkasura—the demon of filth and darkness—by Krishna, releasing sixteen thousand princesses who were held captive by him. On being released they told Krishna to marry them, which he did. The princesses represent higher potentialities and faculties that are trapped by the demoniacal or lower aspect in man and that need to be extricated and linked back to the Lord. In other words, a lot of energy is trapped within the evil, which, when released, can be put to higher use. Hence Deepavali celebration begins with house cleaning and removal of filth. At the time of Deepavali when we undertake *rigorous* cleaning up, we may notice cobwebs at places and encounter lizards and cockroaches, which suddenly leap up from behind the cupboards and tables. So also, it is only when we decide to reform ourselves in dead earnest that we become aware of many ugly, horrible and fearsome things that were lying hidden in our mind and heart.

The third day of Deepavali is *Laxmi Poojan* when Laxmi, the Goddess of Prosperity and Wealth, is worshipped. She is said to enter the house only if it is clean and free from quarrels.

The fourth day of Deepavali is known as *Maha Bali Pratipada*, which is celebrated in some parts of India as the New Year day. As the legend goes there was a mighty demon king called Bali who took care of the well-being and prosperity of his people. It is said that he was trying to trap Laxmi and get her to his kingdom from Vaikuntha, in order to bring prosperity to *his kingdom only*. Vishnu then decided to teach him a lesson and took the form of a dwarf and went to Bali, who was conducting a great sacrifice. Now Bali welcomed this dwarf wholeheartedly and requested him to have anything as a sacrificial gift. Vishnu asked him to give him land which he could cover in three strides. When Bali consented, Vishnu assumed a huge form and with his first step he covered the earth, with the second he covered the heavens, and for the third step Bali had to allow Vishnu to put his foot on his head. Thereupon, Vishnu, who is also called *Trivikrama*—the Lord of three strides—became extremely pleased with Bali and he put his foot on Bali's head and pushed him beneath to *Patala*, the nether region, where Vishnu

gave Bali a kingdom exclusively for himself, which Vishnu himself protected. In other words, once you put yourself in correct relationship with the Divine and bow down to it, you are protected. Or, as *The Voice of the Silence* says: “Help Nature and work on with her, and Nature will regard thee as one of her creators and make obeisance.” In the *Rig Veda*, Vishnu says that he is the dwarf seated in the centre of all beings.

The fifth day is called *Bhaubij* or *Yama-dwitiya*. It celebrates love between brother and sister. Yama is supposed to be the twin brother of Yami and Yama presides over the sacred relationship between brother and sister.

The symbol of light is a profound symbol. There is (1) light of the eyes and the physical light, (2) light of the mind and (3) light of the heart and soul.

To be able to see an object, not only the light rays reflected from the object must enter our eyes, but also, light from the beholder's eyes must fall on the object. We observe that light travels in a straight line and if we keep anything in the path of light, it casts a shadow, and the shadow never gives us a correct picture of the object. So also our personality tends to obscure the truth. But personality is not useless. We see that matter is essential in order that we can see the light. A bulb becomes incandescent because the filament offers a certain amount of resistance. It offers just enough resistance for the bulb to be lighted up. So also the personality must be so moulded that it becomes a useful instrument for the Soul within and not an obstruction or “dead weight”—like the total resistance of the filament which altogether stops the current from flowing. Soul and body must work in harmony.

In Deepavali, from one lighted lamp, all other lamps are lighted and yet the quantity or quality of the first light is not diminished. It is a reminder of that point in man's evolution when the *Manasaputras* or *Solar Pitris* lighted up the *Manas* in man—that was lying dormant, like an unlit candle—and endowed man with the power to think and choose.

Light of the mind is the light of intellect, which is necessary,

though not sufficient. *The Voice of the Silence* says that ignorance is like a closed and airless vessel. And yet, *Head learning* or worldly knowledge is not enough, as even very knowledgeable people are often enveloped in darkness—blissfully unaware of the real nature of man. It is only in the *light of Spiritual knowledge* that one realizes the follies of the past and the darkness that surrounds the inner man. *In the light of wisdom* he realizes that what he considered all-important in life, what he valued and struggled to achieve and keep for himself all the time, were transitory, illusory things. Underlying most of them was selfishness. Then again, one needs a guru—one who dispels darkness. It could be the light thrown by a scripture, a book or the light of the Higher Self.

The highest light is the light of *Atman*—that spark of divinity which is present in us all, and is described in the *Gita*:

It is within and without all creatures animate and inanimate; it is inconceivable because of its subtlety, and although near it is afar off. Although undivided it appeareth as divided among creatures, and while it sustains existing things, it is also to be known as their destroyer and creator. It is the light of all lights, and is declared to be beyond all darkness.

But we are not aware of its presence. As St. John puts it: “And the Light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehendeth it not.” H.P.B. explains the real meaning of this verse, thus:

According to the tenets of Eastern Occultism, DARKNESS is the one true actuality, the basis and the root of light, without which the latter could never manifest itself, nor even exist. Light is matter and DARKNESS pure Spirit. Darkness, in its radical, metaphysical basis, is subjective and absolute light; while the latter....is simply an illusion, or Maya....[In the verse quoted above] the word “darkness” does not apply to man’s spiritual eyesight, but indeed to “Darkness,” the absolute, that comprehendeth not (cannot cognize) transient light, however transcendent to human eyes. (*S.D.*, I, 70)

It is essential to enlighten others by imparting spiritual knowledge and setting an example, as Jesus advises his disciples:

Ye are the light of the world. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the House. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. (*Matthew*, V, 14-16)

But how does one receive the light of Spirit or Higher Self? Says *Light on the Path*:

Seek it by plunging into the mysterious and glorious depths of your own inmost being. Seek it by testing all experience, by utilizing the senses in order to understand the growth and meaning of individuality, and the beauty and obscurity of those other divine fragments which are struggling side by side with you, and form the race to which you belong. Seek it by study of the laws of being, the laws of nature, the laws of the supernatural; and seek it by making the profound obeisance of the soul to the dim star that burns within. Steadily as you watch and worship, its light will grow stronger. Then you may know you have found the beginning of the way. And when you have found the end its light will suddenly become the infinite light. (p. 6)

The Voice of the Silence gives us assurance and the steps to reach the “light” within:

The light from the ONE Master, the one unfading golden light of Spirit, shoots its effulgent beams on the disciple from the very first. Its rays thread through the thick dark clouds of matter. Now here, now there, these rays illumine it, like sun-sparks light the earth through the thick foliage of the jungle growth. But, O Disciple, unless the flesh is passive, head cool, the soul as firm and pure as flaming diamond, the radiance will not reach the *chamber*; its sunlight will not warm the heart, nor will the mystic sounds of the Akasic heights reach the ear, however eager, at the initial stage. (p. 19)

This gives us assurance that above our present level of consciousness is this Higher Self ready to help and guide, if only we are ready to receive the guidance. For this light to shine through,

three conditions must be fulfilled. (1) Flesh must be made passive. (2) Head must be cool, *i.e.*, our emotions must not interfere with our thinking. (3) Soul must be as firm and pure as the flaming diamond. A diamond reflects light, can withstand great pressure and cannot be scratched easily. So also, our Soul should be firm and should remain unshaken by outside pressure as well as internal pressure, caused by inner turmoil. As *Light on the Path* says:

If grief, dismay, disappointment or pleasure can shake the soul so that it loses its fixed hold upon the calm spirit which inspires it, and the moisture of the life breaks forth drowning knowledge in sensation then all is blurred, the windows are darkened, the light is useless.

But our mind is unable to reflect the *Atmic* light properly, when the dust of attachment—thinking guided by emotions—gathers over it. We have to make our mind Buddhi-tending and extricate it from involvement in passions and desires. We find ourselves closer to the One Reality, in those rare moments when we forget ourselves in working for others. When we are able to look beyond the personality and love *unconditionally*, it is then that the “Tathagata” light burns within us and is noticed by the Great Ones. A Master of Wisdom writes:

Like the light in the sombre valley seen by the mountaineer from his peaks, every bright thought in your mind...will sparkle and attract the attention of your distant friend...and it is our law to approach every such an one if even there be but the feeblest glimmer of the true “Tathagata” light within him.

THE fish looks eagerly at the red fly with which the fisherman will take him; but it does not see the hook. So it is with the poison of the world. Its danger is not realized.

—MECHTHILD OF MAGDEBURG

HAVE WE THE RIGHT TO CRITICIZE OTHERS?

THE word “tolerance” is very much misunderstood by most people; it is rooted for them in the emotional concept of “live and let live” instead of in the concept of intellectual freedom for which Theosophy all down the ages has stood.

The dictionary says that tolerance is forbearance in judging of the acts or opinions of others, the disposition or willingness to endure or allow. The opposite, intolerance, is bigotry, or refusal to tolerate opposing beliefs.

Robert Crosbie said that “Tolerance does not mean fraternizing with everything and everyone that demands it. It only means that no one is to be condemned for his opinions.” H.P.B. has given us much more information on the lines of action and feeling that tolerance demands. We learn that there are two aspects to the problem—one the duty of an individual, and the other the duty of an organization or society.

Searching for the reasons for tolerance, we learn that we may be tolerant from fear, apathy, a feeling of separateness, or from ignorance. We and societies may be intolerant through a feeling of aggression, of fanaticism, prejudice, conceit or ignorance. So the next question we need to ask ourselves is, Why are we tolerant or intolerant of this or that? We need, therefore, to look at the subject not only from an emotional angle but also from an intellectual viewpoint.

Intellectually, we must learn to have our facts clear and try to see the object of our tolerance and intolerance from a universal point of view. Are the things we are intolerant of bad for the whole world? On what basis do we judge them? Conscience is our measuring rod in terms of our own experience and knowledge, but do we not have to remember that there is a greater conscience than our own, namely the conscience of Nature which shows no leniency or prejudice, does not act in terms of one thing or another, but acts in terms of Universal Law? This is the Law of Harmony, for only through harmony can evolution take place as it should. Harmony,

however, is often produced but by disharmony, for the destruction of old ideas or feelings must be effected before new ones can take their place. So life on almost all planes is a fight for the destruction of old forms, no longer useful, and their replacement with new forms. It is a gradual process, or progress.

Therefore our attitude must be one of “Thus have I heard” and not one of “Behold, I know.” Only then will we be able to separate the things we tolerate or are intolerant of into two classes: those that are obviously against right and justice and harmony for all, and those that conflict with our own feelings and present state of consciousness and cause us personally to suffer. No student of Theosophy or lover of mankind ought to be intolerant of the things that disturb the even course of his own personal life but are beneficial to others, nor should he tolerate things that give him comfort at the expense of others.

Then, each one has to decide whether it is his duty to be tolerant or intolerant towards this or that. Is it *necessary* for him to act or speak for or against a particular thing or happening? When a decision is taken, the next point is *how* he should act. There is an important statement in the letter from a Master of Wisdom (“Some Words on Daily Life”: *U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 22*) in which it is said that the Theosophical Society

has not only the right, but the duty to uncloak vice and do its best to redress wrongs, whether through the voice of its chosen lecturers or the printed word of its journals and publications—making its accusations, however, as impersonal as possible. But its fellows or members have, first of all, to set the example of a firmly outlined and as firmly applied morality, before they obtain the right to point out, even in a spirit of kindness, the absence of like ethic unity and singleness of purpose in other associations or individuals.

Hence, as individuals our work is chiefly on ourselves, to find out how impersonal we are and whether we are truly trying to base our life and actions on the principle—“live to benefit mankind.” It is the example we set, the Master points out, that will be our real

strength. But this does not mean indiscriminate acceptance of everything and everyone. It means we must not condemn those who, as far as we can see, err. As the extract quoted says, a certain quality has to be ours before we have the right to criticize another.

The following extract from the same letter from the Master needs to be reflected upon:

No Theosophist should blame a brother, whether within or outside of the association; neither may he throw a slur upon another's actions or denounce him, lest he himself lose the right to be considered a Theosophist. For, as such, he has to turn away his gaze from the imperfections of his neighbour, and centre rather his attention upon his own shortcomings, in order to correct them and become wiser. Let him not show the disparity between claim and action in another, but, whether in the case of a brother, a neighbour, or simply a fellow man, let him rather ever help one weaker than himself on the arduous walk of life.

The path of the reformer is a razor's edge!

It is when we turn to what a society or organization has to do that we find the fighting spirit of H.P.B. to the fore, not as an individual, but as the spokesman of the Theosophical Society.

The Master's letter outlines not only the Society's duty but the basis behind that duty which alone will bring success:

Theosophy can only find objective expression in an all-embracing code of life, thoroughly impregnated with the spirit of mutual tolerance, charity, and brotherly love. Its Society, as a body, has a task before it which, unless performed with the utmost discretion, will cause the world of the indifferent and the selfish to rise up in arms against it. Theosophy has to fight intolerance, prejudice, ignorance, and selfishness, hidden under the mantle of hypocrisy. It has to throw all the light it can from the torch of Truth, with which its servants are entrusted. It must do this without fear or hesitation, dreading neither reproof nor condemnation. Theosophy, through its mouthpiece, the Society, has to tell the TRUTH to the very face of LIE; to beard the tiger in its den, without thought or fear of evil consequences, and to set

at defiance calumny and threats.

H.P.B. wrote that one of the things to be denounced unsparingly is the debasement of the pure teachings of the true prophets and teachers by pernicious systems “that are ruinous to man’s faith in his immortality and his God, and subversive of all moral restraint. We cast our gauntlet at the dogmatic theologians who would enslave both history and science...” (*Isis Unveiled*, Preface to Vol. II)

She tells us, further:

...nations which...patronize prize-fights, bull-fights, useless and cruel sport and even indiscriminate vivisection—such nations have no right to boast of their civilization. Nations furthermore which from political considerations, dare not put down slave-trade *once for all*, and out of revenue-greed, hesitate to abolish opium and whiskey trades, fattening on the untold misery and degradation of millions of human beings, have no right to call themselves either Christian or civilized. A civilization finally that leads only to the destruction of every noble, artistic feeling in man, can only deserve the epithet of barbarous....Beliefs are dying out, divine life is mocked at; art and genius, truth and justice are daily sacrificed to the insatiable mammon of the age—money-grabbing. The artificial replaces everywhere the real, the false substitutes the true. (“Civilization, the Death of Art and Beauty”: *She Being Dead Yet Speaketh*, pp. 42-43)

H.P.B. points out in *Five Messages* that as individuals we have the duty to help on all movements for the betterment of man. Individually we have to learn more and have the courage of our convictions, but obviously what H.P.B. recommends is not the condemnation of other individuals or societies, but the uncovering of the wrongs embodied in them, and assistance to all who are fighting these evils.

Perhaps the best idea to close with is that individually our duty lies in passing on whatever true facts we know will help others, and in trying to live as Theosophists, not tolerant of evil but always judging the act and not the actor.

IS ETHICS IN BUSINESS POSSIBLE ?

THE question is often asked : Since business, as a vocation, involves profit-making as a valid and chief object, what is wrong or objectionable if an energetic businessman strives after this object by every possible effort? The answer partly depends on the meaning we assign to the words “profit-making” and to the phrase, “by every possible effort.”

If a man chooses “business” as his chief occupation and means of livelihood, and intends to create his own income, wealth and fortune, it may possibly indicate in general—as per the *Bhagavad-Gita*’s remarks—that he belongs to one of the “four classes of men,” classified according to vocation and temperament. The business class, it is assumed, may have a predominant commercial or “*vaishya*” tendency. Even during his profit-making pursuits he may exhibit in his nature one or more of the three main qualities or *gunas*, viz., *sattvic*, *rajasic*, and *tamasic*, according to ancient psychology.

It is known that the *sattvic* nature tends to justice, fair play, generosity, forgiveness, etc., in all dealings in life, including business. On the other hand, when an “energetic” businessman, with a predominant *rajasic* inclination, decides to make money “by every possible effort,” he may tend to ignore the moral rule of using proper means to gain his ends. He may therefore neglect his responsibility as a citizen and a fellow human being, and may choose improper and objectionable ways to suit his goals. “Commerce,” as it stands today, is largely motivated by a strong, unbridled desire for gain, technically called “Profit,” resulting from the use of capital and labour. Thus it involves the moral issue of “proper means for proper ends” to make any pursuit legitimate and worthwhile.

Let us grant that everyone has a right to some means of livelihood and creating wealth. Also, wealth, prosperity, etc., are considered as auspicious signs called “Sri” in India, supposed to be presided over by goddess Laxmi, symbol of good fortune in Eastern

tradition—the truth being, Laxmi is a goddess presiding over *spiritual* wealth and prosperity, and accidentally the material. But even this tradition stipulates a proviso that wealth must flow from *sattvic* or clean sources and by morally proper means. Although wealth as such is not to be despised, the ancients considered the wealth-generating activity, *Artha*, as not the only pursuit of life for a mature person. The other pursuit being *Dharma* or duty toward individuals and society. On the opposite end of the social scale, privation and penury, misery and degradation in a community are disturbing symptoms of unequal distribution of wealth. The result is a state of moral and psychic degeneration, for which mainly the wealthy group is morally answerable. Says H. P. Blavatsky: “The neglect of social duty on the one side [the rich] is most closely connected with the stunted and arrested development on the other [among the poor].” It is because “the action of one reacts on the lives of all.” (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 232)

Lust for pecuniary gains, though more or less present in human nature, is self-defeating because it arises from an inadequate knowledge of the ultimate cost one has to bear both morally and in economic terms. Franklin Roosevelt once said that we have always known that heedless self-interest was bad morals; we know now it is bad economics!

Experts say that greater financial success comes when a businessman keeps himself also concerned with the advancement of the trade and fortune of his regular clients or customers. Thereby he gains their trust and goodwill. This policy may bring to him more business and unsolicited recommendations in return. Thus there is mutual benefit in “honourable” business practices. This may be purely a worldly-wise argument in favour of co-operative spirit in business dealings, but it also involves *sattvic* or generous nature and less “competitive edge” over others.

Apart from such pragmatic advice favouring clean business, other questions concerning the world of business also come up. What about fierce *competition* in a world where everyone tries to go ahead of others? Also, what about the social disease called

corruption or uncontrolled financial behaviour that is rampant in some places and is *accepted* as a “way of the world”?

These are serious questions every businessman has to confront during his career. It is true, as they say, “everybody complains about the weather but no one does anything about it!” As regards corruption as a global phenomenon, much discussion and conferences are held internationally, but finally the corrective measures are relegated to the administrators or bureaucrats and the executive arm of the governments who themselves are involved in shady transactions (barring some exceptions)! H. P. B. writes: “No lasting political [or social] reform can be ever achieved with the same selfish men at the head of affairs as of old... To seek to achieve political reforms before we have effected a reform in *human nature*, is like putting new wine into old bottles.” It means self-reformation precedes social regeneration, and in Theosophy this is the crux of an answer to most human problems arising from lax character and weakness of human nature.

So where do we turn to seek for a “pragmatic” remedy against corrupt practices? The priority in the public mind, especially in the under-developed countries, is given to their immediate necessities of life, and there is a sad lack of awareness of the serious damages that will accrue from corruption in public and personal life and in business. Sooner or later, it leads to a degenerated social structure and weakens the moral fibre of a nation. Many civilizations have vanished through internal tensions, finally leading to fierce wars among conflicting interests, which destroy one another.

The above picture seems grim or exaggerated, but the very word “*corruption*” acknowledges that fact. The shady transactions, bribery, etc., are not only signs of internal decay as leading to the breakdown in the institutions involved, but it has direct impact on the moral health of the individuals concerned.

It surely debases *human nature* in the long run: Decay or an infection, however slow-spreading, is pathogenic for the *whole* organism. Indians of Gandhiji’s time appeared naïve, artless and

backward, but upright compared to the “advanced” urbanites of today who are sophisticated and shrewd, and know how to survive at all costs! We feel that it is only human to be susceptible to temptation and greed and hence take for granted that corruption is inevitable, and that some unscrupulous ways are *necessary* in politics and in business whose chief objective is “profit” and personal advancement. H.P.B. writes: “Selfishness, indifference, and brutality can never be the normal state of the race—to believe so would be to despair of humanity—and that no Theosophist can do.” (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 233)

But the knowledge of “human nature” covers a vast territory of man’s character and temperament. It is admittedly dual, lower in its transient aspect which appears on the surface, and latent and more recondite in its real and permanent constitution. The intuitive poet Matthew Arnold rightly says in his sonnet: “The will is free; Strong is the soul, and wise and beautiful; The seeds of godlike power are in us still: gods are we, Bards, Saints, Heroes, if we will.” The latent potentiality towards goodness is the undying trait in us all—always capable of rising to an occasion, “if we will.”

In all our dealings and pursuits (including leisure), such as business, the moral issue is whether a man prefers to exercise his higher nature—which is *sattvic* and compassionate—even at the cost of serious personal loss, or to succumb to the familiar lower tendencies which he has fostered by frequently neglecting the “call of honour.” Indeed, it needs moral stamina to stand upright in the face of hardships, frustrations and even business failure. Such men of stature exist even today, who can make the difference in our national character, even if they may not be recognized among the gallery of distinguished luminaries.

People around us glibly say: “Without some ‘artfulness’ and improper ways no business can be carried out,” and carry this excuse for the easy way out and do not hesitate to grab business advantage over competitors. But must we, too, take the same road and thereby *contribute* further to the general evil? Carlyle said: “Make yourself an honest man and then you may be sure that there is one rascal

less in the world!” Will it make a difference, we may doubt! But such small selfless acts of noble men have invisibly made a great contribution to human welfare and moral progress of the race, which is the dream of the Holy Ones!

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TIRUKKURAL—THIRUVALLUVAR'S LIFE AND TEACHINGS

V

FROM the sphere of the family, where domestic affection reigns, Valluvar passes on to the world in which the householder is to learn to treat all men with *Equity*. This alone secures the welfare of himself and his family. This equity is to be exercised in the treatment of foes, strangers and friends. Valluvar defines equity as a virtue that knows no partiality. It is justice. The wealth of the upright does not dwindle but passes on to their heirs. The just and the unjust can be known by their progeny. Ill-gotten wealth, though it brings in its train prosperity, should be given up, says the Sage, as ruin follows him who swerves away from justice. The equanimity and true resignation advocated by Shri Krishna in the *Gita* (VI, XII and XIV) is brought out by Valluvar in verses 115 and 118-120. The teaching of the Upanishad that we are trustees of our possessions is well brought out by Valluvar, in his last couplet, where he says: "Trade among traders is to deal with others' goods as one's own." A weaver uttering such mighty truths!

Under "Self-control"(13), Thiruvalluvar tells us that the most important virtue to be possessed by a householder, nay by everyone, is control over body, speech and mind. It is this wealth alone that makes one the noblest of mankind and ranks him with the gods. He emphasizes the control of the tongue because what is uttered cannot be taken back: "A blister caused by fire will heal but the brand of a bitter tongue never" (verse 129). One who withdraws his five senses within himself like a tortoise, is protected for seven births. This idea also can be found in the *Gita* (II, 58). "Well-controlled indeed are those wise; they have mastery over body, tongue and mind," says the *Dhammapada* (Verse 234).

Under "*Right Conduct*," which is also one of the steps of the Noble Eightfold Path of Lord Buddha, Valluvar points out that to be strict in the performance of one's own duty is true nobility. So also, Krishna says:

"It is better to do one's own duty, even though it be devoid

of excellence, than to perform another's duty well. It is better to perish in the performance of one's own duty; the duty of another is full of danger." (*Gita*, III)

The performance of the duties of a man's own particular calling, although devoid of excellence, is better than doing the duty of another, however well performed; and he who fulfils the duties obligated by nature, does not incur sin. (*Gita*, XVIII)

Valluvar says that Right Conduct alone will give happiness and make one exalted. Such men will not utter evil words even in a forgetful mood and always move in harmony with the world. In his inimitable way he says that a Brahmin may learn anew the Vedas which he has forgotten, but if he were to fall from his estate he is lost.

Thiruvalluvar calls "Adultery" an unpardonable sin, unworthy of a true householder. He who misbehaves with the wife of another is as good as dead. Like the Buddha he names four evils—enmity, sin, fear and disgrace—that befall a man who covets the wife of another. (*The Dhammapada*, verse 310)

"Patience" he calls the crown of virtue. To put up with another's transgressions is good but to forget the wrong done to oneself by another is the best. A Chela is therefore asked to be charitable to the weaknesses of others. *Kshanti* or Patience is one of the Seven Paramitas of Perfection (transcendental virtues). Repeating with the Buddha that "Hatred ceaseth not by hatred but by Love," Valluvar calls him great in whom "there is malice for none but charity for all."

"Freedom from envy" is another virtue of a householder. Envy blights one's fortune and casts one into hell. In his humorous way, he says that Fortune forsakes the envious to go to her elder sister.

Regarding "Non-coveting" Valluvar says: "Covet not the wealth of another, for it is the mother of all evils. The spotless wise though they may wander earth in rags, will never covet the wealth of another. One's property is preserved through non-covetousness."

Another common weakness and vice which one should be free from is "Back-biting" It is a deadly sin. Death is preferable to the life of a slanderer, says Valluvar. Talk your bitterest to a man to his

face but never behind his back. Mr. Judge advises us to be free from this vice in these words: “For the love of heaven do not take any tales or information from any person to any other. The man who brought news to the king was sometimes killed. The surest way to make trouble out of nothing is to tell about it from one to another... In all such things I never meddle, but say to myself it is none of my affair at all, and wait till it *comes to me*—and thank God if it never arrives! And that is a good rule for you.” (*Letters That Have Helped Me*)

Shun evil; follow good, is the teaching of all the Prophets down the ages. Valluvar does not therefore utter any new truth but repeats with the Tathagata: Evil follows one close on one’s heels like a shadow and the consequences one must face with suffering one day. To lead a happy life one should neither do evil to others nor even return evil to those who do evil. What a sublime teaching! Said Jesus of Nazareth on the Cross, referring to his tormentors: “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”

Acquiring wealth by just or unjust means for the gratification of one’s own selfish desires is deemed a virtue in our modern materialistic civilization. But Valluvar, being a Spiritual Sage, considers that the wealth one earns is for rendering help to the deserving and that wealth spent in this way will never diminish. “Those who have the good of every living thing in their heart and serve and strive towards the happiness of all are truly living; others are dead.”

Chapter 23 is headed “Liberality.” To be liberal and charitable even under the worst of circumstances is to possess a lordly character. More squalid than begging is a life of selfishness or self-indulgence. It is better to give than receive: and to give to a deserving one seeking no return is best, says the Sage of Mylapore.

The last chapter in the section on *Grihastha Ashrama* is entitled “Renown.” When a householder lives the life portrayed by Thiruvalluvar, possesses the virtues he describes, and removes the vices he mentions, naturally such a one will be worthy of praise and stand as a noble example for others to follow. The world

remembers for ever one who has won the love and respect of all the people of the world. The world does not revere so much an Alexander or an Aurangzeb as it does an Asoka or Arjuna. Names like Plato, Socrates, Zoroaster, Mohammed, Lao-Tse, Confucius are immortal. These were not the conquerors of worlds and empires in the modern sense, causing untold sorrow and suffering to the poor people but Men who had conquered the self and recognized the Spirit within in its full majesty and splendour. They came not to destroy but to fulfil, by proclaiming the Ageless Truths to those who were groping in darkness, as Mme. H. P. Blavatsky has done for our era. Valluvar says in his characteristic fashion: Let one be born and achieve greatness; otherwise it is better not to be born at all. Only the unblemished truly live; the others merely exist, says the poet-philosopher Thiruvalluvar.

“A tree is known by its fruits” is an old saying. The Tirukkural is the fruit of the Wisdom tree called “Thiruvalluvar.”

One who wishes to live the life of a true *Grihastha*, according to the teachings of Valluvar and other benefactors of Humanity who preceded and succeeded him, should ever remember the God within; revere and respect the Great Mother Nature who fulfils his daily needs; follow the path, study the noble teachings of the Perfected Ones, and perform diligently his daily round of duties to his family and to humanity of which he is a part. To fulfil these obligations, he needs the virtues of Love, Hospitality, Gratitude, Equity, Self-control, Patience and Liberality, and to practise Charity and Right Speech; he should strive his best to root out such weaknesses as Envy, Hatred, Covetousness, Back-biting, Useless Speech, Lust and Anger and commit no evil actions. Such a one will be properly equipped to enter the next stage of life—“True Asceticism,” and ultimately become a servant of the Great Servants of Humanity.

(Concluded)

“LIVING MESSENGERS CALLED WORDS”

SPEECH is one of the greatest privileges and powers acquired by human beings in the course of their long evolutionary journey, a real pilgrimage. It is the highest expression of sound, having the power of thought behind it. Describing his *vibhūtis* in the Tenth Discourse of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, Sri Krishna states: “Of all sciences I am the knowledge of the Adhyatma, and of uttered sounds the human speech.” Note that the highest spiritual knowledge is coupled with the human speech. It is that higher type of speech that is referred to in *Light on the Path* (p. 12): “Speech comes only with knowledge. Attain to knowledge and you will attain to speech.” And the note on pp. 24-25 adds: “It is impossible to help others till you have obtained some certainty of your own....then you will find there is a fount within you from which speech will arise.”

Every human being speaks, with the exception of course of those unfortunate ones who can only express themselves through sounds and signs and for whom we feel sympathy; but our speech is neither wise nor deliberate—and is for the most part the working of the lower mind. It sometimes degenerates into falsehood, gossip, scandal, criticism, backbiting, flattery, which create disturbances and difficulties in families, nations and races throughout the world. As Burke stated: “A very great part of the mischiefs that vex this world arises from words.” And Seneca taught: “Speech is the index of the mind.” Mr. Judge wrote: “Let us use with care those living messengers called words.” They are the true expressions of one’s thoughts and carry their message far and wide. They can bless or curse, depending on the motive and the feeling with which they are spoken. Is it a wonder then that Lord Zoroaster built his philosophical and ethical precepts on the trinity of pure thoughts first, then pure words and deeds?

It should be noted that human speech as we understand it today did not exist in the first three Races of our evolution on this earth. It is only after the lighting up of Manas at the midway point of evolution that the power of speech developed, proving its close

connection with the mind. The mindless men did not speak.

“The Fourth Race developed Speech,” says *The Secret Doctrine* (II, 198). The first Race being devoid of mind on our plane was speechless. The Second Race had a “Sound-language,” that is to say, chant like sounds composed of vowels alone. The early Third Race developed a kind of language which was only a slight improvement on the various sounds in Nature. It was only after Manas was lit up by high and exalted beings that speech was developed, but it was still a mere tentative effort. “The whole human race was at that time of ‘one language and of one lip.’” We are told further that “a *human* brain is necessary for *human* speech” (*S.D.*, II, 661). And if both are kept pure, misuse of speech will be avoided.

All the great teachers have prescribed rules for the right kind of speech. In the *Dhammapada* we are told: “Guard ye well your speech.” Human beings are so impulsive that they speak without previous thought, sometimes harshly, sometimes vaguely, without realizing the consequences. Says *The Voice of the Silence*: “A harsh word uttered in past lives is not destroyed, but ever comes again”—if not in this, then in another life. Lord Buddha has given the *Panchasila*, the five rules of conduct, one of which is:

Bear not false witness, slander not, nor lie;
Truth is the speech of inward purity.

So full control over our words is essential. Let us remember that the mouth is the gateway for the expression of the soul in a tranquil and courteous way so as to make those words effective and impressive. In the Seventeenth Discourse of the *Bhagavad-Gita* Sri Krishna says: “Gentle speech which causes no anxiety, which is truthful and friendly, and diligence in the reading of the Scriptures, are said to be austerities of speech.” Diligence in the reading of Scriptures inspire us to go deeper into their inner significance, to reflect upon them, to make them a part of our own mind and heart so as to use them in our daily life and activities.

A good deal of our energy is frittered away in useless talk. It is necessary for us so to train and control our minds that noble ideas may express themselves in fruitful words and deeds. To qualify

oneself to become a link between the world of the Masters on the snow-capped mount of purity eternal and the din of this world, it is necessary to purify one's speech so that not only in promulgating the teachings but also in our daily contacts we may be able to inspire and energize others along the right lines.

One of the six *Shaktis* mentioned in *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 293) is *Mantrika-Shakti*, "the force or power of letters, speech or music....The power of the ineffable name is the crown of this *Shakti*." Sound, when uttered in the right way, can even heal and cure certain ailments. What the student has to learn is to transform his speech of the lower plane into the Buddhi-Manasic speech, the fruits of which shall feed the world.

Wordsworth addresses the Skylark thus: "Ethereal minstrel! Pilgrim of the sky!" Each one of us is the pilgrim of the sky, an exile from heaven coming down to the earthly plane to gain experience and become at the end of the journey an ethereal minstrel, singing the song of life that would help and cheer other human souls. And he wisely closes the poem thus :

Type of the wise, who soar, but never roam—
True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home.

We as responsible human beings should never roam on our pilgrimage, but ever try to soar to the divine height which is the true Home from where we have come. Shelley too gives us an inspiring verse in his poem "To a Skylark":

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest,
Like a cloud of fire,
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

This verse too inspires us not to take the sideways but ever to climb higher and higher and go deeper and deeper, soaring and singing at the same time.

THE OPPOSING FORCES

THERE are two interesting statements in *Isis Unveiled* (II, 480-81) on the subject of good and evil:

In human nature, evil denotes the antagonism of matter to the spiritual.

In the cosmos, the equilibrium must be preserved; the operation of the two contraries produces harmony, like the centripetal and centrifugal forces, and each is necessary to the other.

The question that strikes one is, Why is there "antagonism" between the two opposites in human nature, whereas in the cosmos the operation of the contraries produces harmony? In the cosmos, the opposing forces are necessary to each other. If these contrary—a different word from "antagonistic," which implies purpose or feeling behind it—forces did not work on each other, the whole universe would cease to be, for equilibrium would no longer be preserved. Equilibrium is the balance point at which the cosmos works harmoniously and perfectly until such time as it begins its descending path towards dissolution. If one of the forces is arrested, the action of the other will immediately become destructive. In man, likewise, both the material and the spiritual forces are purified by the "antagonism" between them.

What is the balance point between the two?

The *balance* is there, ever sensitive at the intersection point. It regulates the action of the two combatants, and the combined effort of both causes planets and "living souls" to pursue a double diagonal line in their revolution through Zodiac and Life; and thus preserving strict harmony, in visible and invisible heaven and earth, the forced unity of the two reconciles spirit and matter. (*Isis Unveiled*, II, 463).

If this unity were disturbed, "final cosmic destruction and individual annihilation" would result; but, if it is undisturbed, "the spiritual realm of salvation and eternal life" prevails.

How can this balance regulate the forces? The balance at the

intersection point is in the control of the great cosmic forces, or Universal Mind and its agents. In human evolution it is man himself who is at the intersection point and has the choice whether he will maintain harmony or go his own way. This is why evil comes with man's appearance upon the scene. There is no evil in Nature because there are no personal desires and wishes interfering with Nature's established laws. In fact, the goal of man's evolution is the perfect balancing of the two forces, so that he can control Nature through his will.

How are we to learn how to do this? Perhaps the key lies in the understanding of the law of necessity. The recognition of this law brings with it acceptance of all that happens, that acceptance which uses the difficulties that come our way to create harmony and thus preserve the balance. If this is done, then both forces, matter and spirit, are harmonized and do not encroach on each other. Spirit without matter has no vehicle to work through; when the matter aspect predominates, one becomes a destructive force that is dissolved in time by Nature; whereas he in whom the forces are balanced becomes one of Nature's servants and thereby reaches immortality.

We must not forget that all Nature is guided and controlled by the great Dhyan-Chohanian Forces and Intelligences and that we, human beings, are on the way to becoming such impersonal servants of the Law.

As to the purification of the two opposing forces, we have this portrayed admirably in *Through the Gates of Gold*:

The animal in man, elevated, is a thing unimaginable in its great powers of service and of strength....The god, given his right place, will so inspire and guide this extraordinary creature, so educate and develop it, so force it into action and recognition of its kind, that it will make you tremble when you recognize the power that has awakened within you....

The animal as servant adds a thousandfold to the powers of the god. And it is upon the union, the right relation of these two forces in himself, that man stands as a strong king, and is enabled to raise his hand and lift the bar of the Golden Gate.

The first step to be taken would seem to be to recognize that no force is evil *per se*; it becomes so when overbalanced or underbalanced, and there is need of a constant watch that the balance is maintained. The mere fact that these forces are necessary to each other and that each is purified by contact with the other, should help us to perceive dimly the law of necessity as the only law of life. With this would come adaptability to circumstances, which implies the attitude of working through them, extracting the juice from them for our benefit in the spiritual sense, and ultimately becoming free from them. This can only be when we have fully realized the truth of Karma.

Not a misshapen day, says *The Secret Doctrine*, but is caused by our previous actions. Therefore no man can hurt us. Whatever conditions we find ourselves in, have been created by ourselves. It is Law that brings us those conditions. The one who "wrongs" us just brings to us our own, and gratitude and sympathy should be given to him, for he has shown us our defect and given us the opportunity to practise the opposite virtue. Let us also remember that had we not created the causes the occasion would not have arisen for him to be the agent who brings us suffering. It is our own past action that makes others bring us good or ill.

The centripetal and centrifugal forces, as symbols of Good and Evil, Spirit and Matter, Life and Death, are also those of the Creator and the Destroyer—Adam and Eve, or God and the Devil, as they say in common parlance. In the subjective, as well as in the objective worlds, they are the two powers, which through their eternal conflict keep the universe of spirit and matter in harmony. They force the planets to pursue their paths, and keep them in their elliptical orbits....In their conflict the centripetal force, were it to prevail, would drive the planets and living souls into the sun, type of the invisible Spiritual Sun, the Paraâtma or great universal Soul, their parent; while the centrifugal force would chase both planets and *souls* into the dreary space, far from the luminary of the objective universe, away from the spiritual realm of salvation and eternal life, and into the chaos of final cosmic destruction, and individual

annihilation. But the *balance* is there, ever sensitive at the intersection point. (*Isis Unveiled*, II, 463)

The whole Kosmos is guided, controlled and animated by almost endless series of Hierarchies of sentient Beings, each having a mission to perform, and who—whether we give to them one name or another, and call them Dhyan-Chohans or Angels—are “messengers” in the sense only that they are the agents of Karmic and Cosmic Laws....each of these Beings either *was*, or prepares to become, a man, if not in the present, then in a past or a coming cycle (Manvantara). (*S. D.*, I, 274-75)

Of these we are. Every moment is the balancing point; adaptability to and use of the Law brings progress; the opposite brings destruction. At one with Nature’s laws we are invincible, says *The Voice of the Silence*.

AND you, O man, who will discern in this work of mine the wonderful work of Nature, if you think it would be a criminal thing to destroy it, reflect how much more criminal it is to take the life of a man; and if this, his external form, appears to thee marvellously constructed, remember that it is nothing as compared with the soul that dwells in that structure. Leave it then to dwell in His work at His goodwill and pleasure, and let not your rage or malice destroy a life—for indeed, he who does not value it, does not himself deserve it.

—LEONARDO DA VINCI

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: Is it right to use hypnotism to help someone?

Answer : While answering this question Mr. Judge says that in his personal opinion “hypnotism should be prohibited by law...as I regard it as a dangerous and injurious power....No one but some very few high-minded and learned physicians should be allowed to practise it....In the present age of black selfishness I would vote for its total seclusion from use for the present” (“*Forum*” *Answers*, p. 25). Today, hypnotism is being increasingly used, especially, in the field of medicine, to help patients overcome a variety of mental illnesses. Medical and other journals narrate cases where hypnotism has been used with seeming success, and tend to persuade readers that no harm can come to anyone who allows himself to be hypnotized. Like most other psychological phenomena, hypnotism is very little understood, even by those who use it for a good purpose. Even when the outcome of submitting oneself to hypnosis may appear to be good, there always remains the possibility that some suggestion or psychic infection that was introduced during the passive state of the subject, can manifest after many years. As against few and dubious advantages, there are immeasurable dangers in this practice.

Often, hypnosis is used in the treatment of deleterious habits. It is claimed to have been effectively used to help a person to overcome alcoholism, insomnia, nail-biting, fear phobias, etc. But, in the process, the person so treated becomes dependent on the hypnotizer. When a habit is overcome by hypnosis, the person has to face the same temptation again, with added handicap/weakness of increased suggestibility. Thus, sooner or later the person has to

regain his self-control and learn to overcome the habit himself.

As far back as 1923, Dr. D. Ross Diefendorf pointed out in his book on clinical psychiatry:

Hypnotism is of limited value, because those susceptible to hypnotic suggestion are apt to be influenced by any powerful suggestion that happens to be presented. Furthermore, hypnotic experience brings about an undesirable dependency of the patients upon the physician, which makes impossible an effective subjugation of their own will in the strife with morbid influences.

In 1941, Prof. Wesley Raymond Wells of Syracuse University conducted experiments to show that hypnotized subjects, who are noncriminal in character, can be made to commit real crimes. In fact, some doctors point out that hypnotism tends to increase suggestibility and such patients are open to accept both favourable and unfavourable suggestions. They easily fall prey to destructive suggestion from relatives, friends and popular nostrums of the day. In other words, hypnotism tends to weaken the will and hence, the self-control of the subject. As an English physician put it: "The confirmed and trained hypnotic subject is a maimed individual in mind and body, and is likely at any time to be dangerous to himself and to society."

Mr. Crosbie explains:

Hypnotism is a modern name for a power known for ages. By means of this power one who has it and uses it on his fellowmen, paralyzes that channel in the brain of his subject through which the subject, as Ego, operates and controls his brain. This action prevents the subject from receiving any other impressions than those suggested by the operator, in ordinary cases..... Crimes have been committed under such suggestions, the subject being ignorant of the fact that the suggestion of the operator led to and impelled the act. Occasionally the subject gets beyond the control of the operator and may disclose what are called different "personalities." These may be memories of past experiences, or as is more likely, contacts with other beings constituting an obsession; for the state is a defenseless one.

This practice is considered to be Black Magic by the Ancient Schools because it is an interference with the free-will of the Ego as regards his bodily instrument. (*Answers to Questions on The Ocean of Theosophy*, p. 32)

H.P.B. explains that Mesmerism is beneficent and hypnotism is maleficent. Thus:

Hypnotism is produced by the withdrawal of the nervous fluid from the capillary nerves. The latter being, so to say, the sentries that keep the doors of our senses opened, they become anaesthetized under hypnotic conditions, and allow these doors to get closed.

Mr. Judge explains that hypnotism produces a deleterious effect on the cells of the physical body. Thus:

Whatever the influence is, the process going on in hypnotism is the contracting of the cells of the body and brain from the periphery to the centre. This process is actually a phenomenon of the death state, and is the opposite of the mesmeric effect; and this point is not known to the medical profession, nor will it be, as they now proceed, because *post mortem* examinations never reveal the action of the living cell. (*W.Q.J. Series No. 16*, p. 27)

Question: The third object of the Theosophical Movement is to gain knowledge concerning the occult side of man and nature. Is it not enough if one is more concerned with the first two objects only and leaves out the third one, since it does not seem to coincide well with the scientific temper and inquiry?

Answer: Sadly, this is what is actually happening among the so-called intellectuals. Modern education trains us to become "specialists" in every field at the neglect of the other areas of human existence. Some claim to be experts in "psychical research," or an abnormal psychology, while others of scholastic temperament and choice would prefer the study of religions and philosophies as an academic speciality and nothing more. These pursuits unfortunately do not lead to the most vital need of the person concerned and of humanity in general, namely, peace and progress which could result

from the true “Human Brotherhood” and which is the first object. Mr. Judge describes it as “our only creed.”

The Three Objects with which the modern phase of the Theosophical Movement was ushered in, in 1875, were specially chosen to suit the need of the modern era. The third one, as the questioner states, was and is to gain knowledge concerning the occult side of Man and Nature and through this to *explain* some baffling questions of phenomena, unusual occurrences, magical feats, man’s complex nature, and superstitious beliefs which have a grain of truth in them. But the basis of these explanations is the theosophical system of philosophy itself, *viz.*, the whole theosophical teaching concerning God, Man, Nature, Life and Death, progress and suffering, Karma and Reincarnation, Good and Evil, etc. This means no one Object can be taken up for consideration by excluding others. The whole “System” is a synthetic whole, made up of Science, Religion and Philosophy, as three pursuits rolled in one.

The Third Object, *viz.*, “The investigation of psychic laws pertaining to man and nature” was carried out partially by the Psychical Research Societies in America and England, but it was more of an effort at recording the various phenomena observed, while no satisfying philosophical or scientific explanation was forwarded by them.

In his talk (1892) [“The Three objects and the Three Doctrines”], Mr. Judge states: “We (Theosophists) have discovered in the investigation of the ancient philosophies that they have thought out all the psychological laws of nature, and have given a system of philosophy which is scientific, and which explains them all.”

In sincerely attempting the same, starting with any one of the three objects, the person of scientific temper will come across in life many questions concerning unfamiliar, astonishing and super-normal phenomena and events. These can be satisfactorily answered in the light of the whole philosophy. Only, this latter course has to be pursued by the student if he is a true seeker after Truth, which means he is a true “Scientist.”

Take for instance, the phenomenon of spiritism or spirit communications. The explanation concerning these will involve related areas. It may involve the question of states after death, what survives after death, the relation between life and death, the experiences of the individual while alive, what may be the purpose of his existence, etc. In short, it would cover the whole ground of human existence and the nature and constitution of man. Anyone who is sincerely interested in the nature and meaning of life will have to inquire of Religions and Sciences—ancient and modern—concerning man and his destiny.

H.P.B. explains that the purpose of studying the Third Object is to keep alive in man his spiritual intuitions and to obtain the *knowledge* of all the laws of nature and promulgate the same. It aims at encouraging the study of those laws which are least understood by modern people, with a view to counteract bigotry in the form of belief in miracles or anything supernatural. “Popular folk-lore and traditions, however fanciful at times, when sifted may lead to the discovery of long lost, but important, secrets of nature. The Society, therefore, aims at pursuing this line of inquiry, in the hope of widening the field of scientific and philosophical observation.” (*The Key to Theosophy*, pp. 47-48)

WHATEVER experience of a great, beautiful, or significant nature we may have encountered must not be merely remembered nor yet pursued externally. It must, on the contrary, be woven into our personalities from the outset and become a part of our inner being. There is no past that our longing should attempt to recreate. There is only the eternally new which is formed from the expanded elements of the past. Genuine longing should always be productive, in order to create the new and better.

—GOETHE

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

How can one be spiritual in this materialistic world, especially at one's workplace? In the first place, we must cease to view spiritual and worldly life as being opposed to each other, writes Janki Chopra (*The Economic Times*, August 8, 2005). Thoughts constitute the foundation of spiritual life. We can spiritualize our workplace by entertaining divine thoughts while at work. Janki writes:

We are materialistic when we believe and act as if life is all about gaining material success. To earn money for me and my family is the mission of life. A spiritual person is one with a greater vision. He may be doing exactly the same work but he conceives of a higher ideal, a broader perspective....His attention is on more than himself and his family. A higher ideal is something which encompasses a wider circle of identification. It can be the organization, the industry, the economy, the country....

Working for the higher does not necessitate our leaving whatever we are doing and doing social work.... When I can do the same work for the cause of enlightenment or self-realization, this work attains the highest Divinity. It gives joy to one's heart, prosperity in one's life and above all, unfolds the divinity inherent within.

To learn "to be *in* the world and yet not be *of* the world" is the key to being spiritual in this work-a-day world. The path to final liberation and perfection lies through "small plain duties" of life. As Mr. Judge says, it is not what is done, but the spirit in which the least thing is done, that is important. He also advises that one who seeks the upward path must work, and perform that which presents itself. He must "work as if it was the object of his life, as if his whole heart was in it." "By doing the proper duty in the proper place, a man may make the world his debtor," says an English writer. A Master of Wisdom writes:

Does it seem to you a small thing that the past year has been spent only in your "family duties"? Nay, but what better cause

for reward, what better discipline, than the daily and hourly performance of duty?

Krishna's advice in the *Gita* is to work for the welfare of humanity and set an example for others to emulate. Thus:

Even by action Janaka and others attained perfection. Even if the good of mankind only is considered by thee, the performance of thy duty will be plain; for whatever is practised by the most excellent men, that is also practised by others.... As the ignorant perform the duties of life from the hope of reward, so the wise man, from the wish to bring the world to duty and benefit mankind, should perform his actions without motives of interest. (*Gita*, III)

Are there two brains in man? Apart from the one in the head, Dr. Michael D. Gershon, the chairman of the department of anatomy and cell biology at Columbia, has identified a powerful brain in the gut—also named "second brain"—known as the enteric nervous system. The gut's brain is located in sheaths of tissue lining the esophagus, stomach, small intestine and colon. He believes the connection between these two brains can explain many physical and psychiatric woes. "Ailments like anxiety, depression, irritable bowel syndrome, ulcers and Parkinson's disease manifest symptoms at the brain and the gut level," writes Harriet Brown (*The Times of India*, August 24, 2005) [courtesy *The New York Times*]. Dr. Gershon explains that the gut deserves to be called "second brain," as the enteric nervous system takes care of every aspect of digestion from the esophagus to the stomach, small intestine and colon, with the help of nearly self-contained network of neural circuitry, neurotransmitters and proteins. Further:

When someone skips lunch, the gut is more or less silent. Eat a pastrami sandwich, and contractions all along the small intestines mix the food with enzymes and move it toward the lining for absorption to begin. If the pastrami is rotten, reverse

contractions will force it—and everything else in the gut—into the stomach and back out through the esophagus at high speed. In each situation, the gut must assess conditions, decide on a course of action and initiate a reflex.

“The gut monitors pressure,” says Dr. Gershon. “It monitors the progress of digestion. It detects nutrients, and it measures acid and salts. It’s a little chemical lab.” The enteric system does all this on its own, with little help from the central nervous system.

More than a hundred years ago, the great scientist Thomas Edison had remarked, “To me it seems that every atom is possessed by a certain amount of primitive intelligence.” In H.P.B.’s time Dr. Pirogoff shared this belief with Edison. H.P.B. writes:

Occultism tells us that every atom, like the monad of Leibnitz, is a little universe in itself; and that every organ and cell in the human body is endowed with a brain of its own, with memory, therefore, experience and discriminative powers.... If plants can be shown to have nerves and sensations and instinct (but another word for consciousness), why not allow the same in the cells of the human body?...Modern science, owing to physiology, is itself on the eve of discovering that consciousness is universal—thus justifying Edison’s “dreams.” (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 20*, pp. 5-6)

Some enlightened physiologists, in H.P.B.’s time, had argued that if amoebas and many other unicellular organisms can exercise *discrimination* in selection of food, why should not the epithelium cells of the intestinal canal, *sense, choose* and *select* drops of fat from the food particles? (*Ibid.*, p.16) It was discovered by a physiologist that

A large number of poisons are prevented by the epithelium cells from penetrating into lymphatic spaces, though we know that they are easily decomposed in the abdominal and intestinal juices. More than this. Physiology is aware that by injecting these poisons directly into the blood, they will separate from, and reappear through the intestinal walls, and that in this process the *lymphatic cells* take a most active part. (*U. L. T. Pamphlet*

No. 20, p. 20)

H.P.B. observes that every atom of matter is “endowed with *consciousness*, each of its kind, and free-will, acting within the limits of the law.”

Studying and defining “evil,” was formerly considered to be a subject for “ethical” consideration by philosophers and theologians. However, psychiatrists who studied abnormal behaviour, such as, cruelty, habitual thoughtless savagery, cannibalism, and other forms of related depravities are compelled to accept these psychological aberrations as “evil”—a word, they thought to be of the nature of moral judgement, that the clinicians should avoid, writes Benedict Carey from New York (reprinted in *The Indian Express*, February 9, 2005). Further:

Many career forensic examiners say their work forces them to reflect on the concept of evil [formerly studied in religious academies], and some acknowledge they can find no other term for certain individuals they have evaluated....A prominent personality expert at Columbia University has published a 22-level hierarchy of evil behaviour, derived from detailed biographies of more than 500 violent criminals.

Sigmund Freud “rarely used the term evil. He argued that brutal acts arose from the cauldron of unresolved conflicts in the human psyche.” St. Thomas Aquinas said: “Evil resulted from man’s abuse of God-given free will. It was not possible for God to create humans having a rational nature and a free will who would never sin.” St. Augustin of Hippo said: “Evil arose from the original sin committed by Adam and Eve. Evil is only curable through God’s grace.”

While the psychiatrists studiously avoided calling some extreme clinical abnormalities as “evil,” they neglected an important area of human experience. They have relegated it to the domain of theologians and philosophers. Theologians seem to suggest that evil is an unavoidable result of god’s gift of rationality and free

choice! The responsibility for the origin and the cure of evil is shifted from man himself to his “creator”! H.P.B. fought uncompromisingly against this blasphemy by theologians and moralists, as she considered that to be the chief cause of perpetuating evil in the world.

There is no escaping the fact that man has a dual nature—higher, nobler and more “productive” on one side—that is neglected for study by psychiatrists, and the lower nature which is apparent in our daily experiences. Only a few “behavioural” psychologists like Erich Fromm, and the study of “motivational” psychology by Abraham Maslow, demonstrated definite nobler (truly human) streaks in man and how these can be of help to ameliorate human conditions, if fostered in a society.

Study and emphasis only on the lower aspect of the human mind has led to false conclusions that justify animal cruelties in scientific experiment, torture of enemies during wars, and terrorism as a religious duty.

Whenever mind becomes free from the influence of passions and desires, it becomes the “guide of the highest mental faculties.” H.P.B. writes:

It is our *Mind*—our tempter and Redeemer, our intelligent liberator and Saviour from pure animalism. Without this principle....We would be surely no better than animals. (*S.D.*, II, 513)

Truly, “the real evil proceeds from the human intelligence,” but H.P.B. points out:

Ancient wisdom...attributes the birth of Kosmos and the evolution of life to the breaking asunder of primordial, manifested Unity, into plurality, or the great illusion of form. HOMOGENEITY, having transformed itself into Heterogeneity, contrasts have naturally been created: hence what we call EVIL. (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 26*, p. 1)
