

**Vol. 16**

**October 2024**

**Rs. 3/-**

**No. 6**

**A Magazine Devoted to  
The Living of the Higher Life**

---

<b>MANAGING OUR DUAL NATURE</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>FOOD FOR THOUGHT</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>THE CELESTIAL OMNIBUS</b>	
<b>HIOUEN-THSANG — A CHINESE BUDDHIST MONK</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>A PARABLE OF THE STREAM</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>IMPERATIVE OF NONVIOLENCE</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>THE URGE FOR FREEDOM</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY</b>	<b>33</b>

---

**THEOSOPHY COMPANY (INDIA) PRIVATE LTD.**

40 New Marine Lines, Mumbai 400 020, India  
email: [ultmumbai@mtnl.net.in](mailto:ultmumbai@mtnl.net.in) ♦ Phone : 22039024  
website: [www.ultindia.org](http://www.ultindia.org)

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

## THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

---

---

Vol. 16, No. 6

October 17, 2024

---

---

### MANAGING OUR DUAL NATURE

BEFORE we can consider the subject of how we can manage our dual nature, we have to first recognize that there is a dual nature in us. When we say dual nature, it refers to two aspects of our nature—higher and lower, personal and impersonal, divine and diabolical, good and bad—one of which predominates over the other most of the time. If we are observant, we will find people showing altogether different aspects of their nature at different times or under different circumstances. A very meek and obedient servant becomes a dominating tyrant and uncaring person at home. We can have the best proof of the existence of the dual nature of man by examining our own nature. At the end of every day, if we examine all our thoughts, feelings and actions of the day, impersonally and impartially, we realize that we are a mixture of good and bad.

The question is: why is it that only man has a dual nature and not animals? A dove, a tiger, a deer, a cow, a dog and every other animal is known to follow its own nature quite predictably because though animals have minds and intelligence, they lack self-consciousness; their choices are made instinctively and there is no moral quality attached. However, man is much more than an animal. He is evolving God. Having passed through mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms when the soul had reached the human stage, his mind was activated by the Solar *Pitris*, who imparted to him their own essence by giving him a spark of light, or even incarnating in man. These were the perfected beings from prior periods of evolution.

Man has the power to think, and choose, has a reasoning and analytical faculty; he can introspect, deliberate and make conscious choices for good or bad. Therefore, he becomes morally responsible for his actions. His evolution is now in his own hands. He can accelerate his progress and become divine or degrade himself and become worse than an animal through right or wrong use of the powers of the mind.

At every step, we are faced with choices. Most of the time, we choose that which satisfies our desires and brings happiness to us. But when we are faced with moral choices, something within tries to stop us from choosing that which is selfish, which might harm another. Also, when we see the helpless suffering of another person, something within urges us to help the person. But an aspect of our mind tells us that if we pause to help this person, we might miss the train or be late for the movie. Our practical mind may even justify our walking away saying, “How can we be sure that the person is genuine?” Thus, we all have experienced the dual nature in us. Its presence is explained by H.P.B. thus:

“Manas [Mind] is dual—*lunar* in the lower, *solar* in its upper portion,” says a commentary. That is to say, it is attracted in its higher aspect towards Buddhi, and in its lower aspect descends into, and listens to the voice of its animal soul full of selfish and sensual desires; and herein is contained the mystery of an adept’s as of a profane man’s life.” (*S.D.*, II, 495-96)

Mind is essentially divine in its nature, but once incarnated, it forgets its divine nature. It is like an ambassador who gets so involved and identifies with the locals that he forgets his parent country. What makes man more dangerous than even the most ferocious animal is that his personal desires and worldly ambitions are made much more powerful by *his superior intellect*, making him worse than an animal. We need to remind ourselves that:

“All good and evil things in humanity have their roots in human character, and this character is, and has been, conditioned by the endless chain of cause and effect...Selfishness, indifference, and

brutality can never be the normal state of the race...Progress can be attained, and only attained, by the development of the nobler qualities.” (*The Key to Theosophy*, pp. 232-33, *Indian Ed.*)

But the question is: Why do we need to manage our dual nature? Are we not fine as we are now? The answer is: No. That aspect of our nature, which is purely personal, worldly and selfish, perishes at death. We spend enormous amounts of energy to achieve many things in life—name, fame, wealth, power, position etc. These do not accompany the real man after death. Only that which has its roots in the Spirit, the undying qualities of love and mercy, the love of the good, the true and the beautiful, noble thoughts and aspirations for ideal and abstract things such as mathematics, music, painting etc. are carried by the immortal Spirit beyond death and assimilated. To become consciously immortal, the whole of the working consciousness in the body has to be so purified that nothing is lost at death. This can happen when we live as the immortal Self within and not the personal self. This is self-realization. This is not achieved in one life. We take birth, again and again, in different bodies, in different surroundings to go through experiences and learn lessons and grow until we attain perfection. On the other hand, if we become selfish and live for no one else but ourselves, a terrible fate awaits us. And that fate is:

“A man who becomes selfish isolates himself, grows less interesting and less agreeable to others. The sight is an awful one, and people shrink from a very selfish person at last, as from a beast of prey.” (*Light on the Path*, p. 79)

And if we persist in living such a life, we are going to fall lower and lower till there comes a time when the higher nature fails to have any influence on the lower and is shut out completely so that we become “spiritually dead.” So also, pure intellect without heart quality to guide it will lead us to a similar fate.

“Great intellect and too much knowledge are a two-edged weapon in life, and instruments for evil as well as for good. When combined with Selfishness, they will make of the whole of Humanity a

footstool for the elevation of him who possesses them, and a means for the attainment of his objects; while, applied to altruistic humanitarian purposes, they may become the means of the salvation of many.” (*S.D.*, II, 163)

The first step in managing our dual nature is to resolve to allow the Spirit within to guide us. To allow the voice of intuition and the voice of conscience to override the voice of our personal desires. It will not be easy for us to change our nature. But it is possible to do so. The Buddha said: Think not lightly of good, saying “it will not come unto me.” Even a water-pot is filled by the constant falling of drops of water. A wise man becomes full of goodness even if he gathers it little by little. In this, there is hope for everyone. But let us not delude ourselves that it will happen overnight or it will be easy. According to an occult law, the moment we resolve to live the spiritual life, the good and bad forces in our nature separate out as two warring armies of Kauravas and Pandavas. The resistance to change comes from our own lower nature which is used to living in a particular way.

A special effort will have to be made by us to “undo the mistakes of the past,” to reverse wrong habits. Our personal nature will rebel and resent the effort but we have to keep up the effort. We are assured that in this work, no effort is lost. The slain tigers can no longer turn and rend you. The only real failure is the failure to try. However, we must not try to force the process, or it might lead to insanity. We should not try to achieve too much too soon but make constant efforts to progress gradually. We can start by attempting to become a little less selfish; willing to make small sacrifices and engage in acts of small self-denials, undertaking disciplining of our personal nature in small measures. We have to be gentle but firm, because then the opposition provoked will be somewhat manageable, and one gets a chance to acquire gradual strength.

The whole discipline starts with the subduing of the personal self with the help of the spiritual Self. Mr. Judge tells us that however interior this process of self-development may be, it is not unaided.

Help comes from our own higher nature. But in order to receive this help, we have to be ready and receptive. Mr. Judge tells us how we can do this.

“Every impulse from above, every prompting of the Divine within should meet at once with hearty welcome and response.... If some pathetic story of suffering has moved you, act on the emotion while your cheeks are still wet with tears. In short, put yourself at once in line with Divine ways, in harmony with Divine laws. More light, more wisdom, more spirituality must necessarily come to one thus prepared thus expectant.” (*Vernal Blooms*, p. 32)

In Theosophy, a lot of practical suggestions have been offered for getting rid of identification with the personality. We are asked to distinguish between personality and individuality, the lower self and the higher Self. In our real or essential nature, we are the higher Self which is immortal and remains unmoved through the vicissitudes of life.

If someone criticizes or insults us, we tend to react in the same manner, forgetting that “the self is in itself without a body; either praise or blame affects it not.” We should try to find out whether there is truth underlying the criticism directed at us. If it is true, we must make an effort to make the necessary corrections. If it is false, we should let it pass. We must learn to abstain from condemning others, we have no right to believe in evil things said of another person unless we have undeniable proof of the same. And even when we have such proof, we have to be charitable. When a desire to condemn others for their faults arises in our mind, we have to ask ourselves whether we are the judge in the matter and whether we ourselves are not erring in some other way just as much as they do.

Unfortunately, there is too much identification with the personality which brings in a sense of separateness which is at the root of all selfishness. Then we forget that the same Self shines in all. Life then tries to teach us this lesson through pain and suffering. In *Light on the Path* we are told that if we allow the idea of separateness from any evil thing or person to grow within us, we

create Karma, which will bind us to that thing or person till our soul recognizes that it cannot be isolated. The sin and shame of the world are *our* sin and shame; because we are part of it and our Karma is inextricably interwoven with the great Karma.

Constant vigilance combined with introspection and meditation will help us to curb our lower nature. It is a long and uphill task in which one cannot afford to be complacent. Until we reach perfection, the stage of *Samadana*, when the yogi becomes constitutionally incapable of doing wrong, there is always a possibility of fall. Great *Rishis* have fallen prey to the beauty of *Apsaras* or anger or pride; thereby losing the merit of thousands of years of labour. Subtle pride at the progress achieved, and contempt for sinning humanity makes us unfit for spiritual path. *Through the Gates of Gold* tells us that the pure life and high thoughts are no more finalities in themselves than any other mode of enjoyment. By the practice of virtue, it is possible to get fettered in one changeless fashion of life in matter. It prevents one from making further progress. We need to cultivate true detachment which will not allow us to get attached even to purity, light, knowledge and virtue—the *sattva* quality. We are advised by Mr. Judge to “think, think, think, on the truth that you are not body, brain, or astral man, but that you are THAT, and ‘THAT’ is the Supreme Soul...By persistence in this, by submitting your daily thoughts each night to the judgment of your Higher Self, you will at last gain light.”

---

IF we could read the pulse beneath the bark  
 And catch the stirs and tremors of the wood,  
 Would we not find a something known, and mark  
 How man and maple merge in brotherhood,  
 And note a sameness, dimly understood,  
 Which fires the oak and Homer with one spark?

—STANTON A. COBLENTZ

## SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL NOTICE

Have you renewed your subscription to THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, for the next period commencing November 2024? If not, may we have the necessary remittance soon?

**Please note that we will be able to accept fresh/renewal subscription for a maximum period of 2 years only.**

### **For Indian Subscribers:**

**Annual Subscription:** One Year: Rs. 30.00 Two Years: Rs. 60.00

Indian subscribers are requested to pay the subscription amount by bank transfer, if feasible. Please communicate Transaction Id / Reference number and complete Postal Address, mobile number, if any, by an email to [ultmumbai@mtnl.net.in](mailto:ultmumbai@mtnl.net.in) or [ultmumbai7@gmail.com](mailto:ultmumbai7@gmail.com)

**Our Bank details are as follows:** Canara Bank,  
37, Kshamalaya, 10, New Marine Lines, Mumbai – 400 020.

**Beneficiary:** Theosophy Company (India) Pvt. Ltd.

**Account No:** 50352010033211      **IFSC:** CNRB0001389

**Alternatively,** you can pay your subscription by Cheque / DD, drawn in favour of “**Theosophy Company (India) Pvt. Ltd.**” and send the Cheque / DD to: **Theosophy Company (India) Pvt. Ltd., Theosophy Hall, 40, New Marine Lines, Mumbai - 400 020.**

### **For Foreign Subscribers:**

On account of **introduction of 18% GST on Postal Rates in India**, the subscription rates for foreign subscribers have been revised as follows:

#### **Air-Mail subscription:**

<b>For subscribers in:</b>	<b>Pound Rate*</b>	<b>Dollar Rate**</b>
USA	£26.50	US\$32
North America (excluding USA) & Australia	£22.50	US\$27
South America	£23.50	US\$28
Africa & Europe	£21.50	US\$25

**\*Inclusive of Bank Charge of £7.50**

**\*\*Inclusive of Bank Charge of US\$8.00**

The remittances should be sent by Cheque / International Demand Draft favouring “**Theosophy Company (India) Pvt. Ltd.**” to: **Theosophy Company (India) Pvt. Ltd., Theosophy Hall, 40, New Marine Lines, Mumbai - 400 020, India.**

**For other payment options** please send an email to:  
[ultmumbai@mtnl.net.in](mailto:ultmumbai@mtnl.net.in) or [ultmumbai7@gmail.com](mailto:ultmumbai7@gmail.com)

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT THE CELESTIAL OMNIBUS

THE CELESTIAL OMNIBUS is a short story by E. M. Forster, which was originally published in 1911 in an anthology titled *The Celestial Omnibus and Other Stories*. In this story the author makes use of symbols and metaphors to convey deeper meanings and themes. The story explores themes such as spirituality, imagination, and the human desire for transcendence, showing that there is more to life than the mundane world we see around us. According to some critics, this story reminds us of stories like Peter Pan and Alice in Wonderland, and shows the “triumph of childhood innocence and wonder over literary snobbery and intellectual pretence.”

The story is about a young, imaginative boy who comes across a magical omnibus that takes him on a journey through heaven. During his journey he comes across characters and undergoes experiences that challenge the way he perceives the world around him. An omnibus is another word for a bus. Celestial means something related to heaven or the sky. The unnamed young boy lives with his parents in Surbiton, a suburban neighbourhood southwest of London, and is puzzled by a signpost opposite their home, which points to an empty alley, and is painted with the words, “To Heaven.” His flustered mother answers that it had been placed there by “naughty young men.” A patronizing, name-dropping neighbour, Mr. Bons (actually “snob” spelt backwards) reveals that the sign was a joke of a person named Shelley. He asks the boy if he knows who Shelley was, the boy admits that he does not, and hangs his head in shame because he considers Mr. Bons “probably the wisest person alive.”

Just as Percy Shelley was seduced by the evening carolling of a skylark, the boy is beckoned towards something to which he feels inextricably drawn. He is filled with vague stirrings “for something just a little different,” and enters the alley. He comes across a cryptic paper pasted on the wall of the “alley to heaven.” An enigmatic timetable is plastered to the wall, indicating the schedule of the

celestial omnibuses which leave for Heaven, twice daily, at sunrise and sunset, from that very alley opposite his home.

After his parents thoroughly mock him, the boy decides to see if the omnibus is real or not. When he reaches the place at sunrise, he is surprised to find the omnibus. “It had two horses, whose sides were still smoking from their journey, and its two great lamps shone through the fog against the alley’s walls, changing their cobwebs and moss into tissues of fairyland.” The driver is none other than Sir Thomas Browne, the seventeenth-century English physician and author, best known for his book of reflections, *Religio Medici*. Though the boy is unaware of his importance, when he is invited to join him on the driver’s box, the boy asks him about his profession. Sir Browne replies, “As a healer of bodies, I had scant success... But as a healer of the spirit I have succeeded beyond my hopes and my deserts. For though my draughts [drinks stored in bulk in a large container like a barrel] were no better nor subtler than those of other men, yet, by reason of the cunning goblets wherein I offered them, the queasy [feeling sick] soul was oftentimes tempted to sip and be refreshed.” The boy confesses he has felt similarly “queasy.”

The driver, Sir Browne, heads upward through lightning and thunder, which synthesize to create a rainbow bridge to Heaven. Colour and Sound become one for the boy. The two of them pass the gulf between the real and ideal and hear the song of Rhinemaiden, as they see a vision in which a wonderous landscape unfolds before them, including a river, in which maidens are singing and playing with a golden ring. The boy finds it beautiful. His journey is an adventure into the world of literature and art, naively but genuinely appreciated. When the boy returns home at sunset, driven by a young woman, his parents are unsympathetic to his tales of “Neverland” and he is punished with caning. The father asks him to memorize a passage from the poetry of Keats.

Though the boy’s parents refuse to believe in the story of the boy’s adventure, a visiting neighbour, Mr. Bons, the President of the Literary Society and an intellectual snob is perversely intrigued

by the boy's celestial adventure. Mr. Bons prompts the boy to recite a John Keats poem. When he does, he bursts into tears, explaining, "All these words only rhymed before, now that I have come back, they are me." The familiarity of the images is such that the boy cannot help insisting on their reality, which Mr. Bons finds silly, and says that he only believed in the *essential* truth of Poetry. When the boy recites the first line of the poem, "Standing aloof in great ignorance," the boy's father applies the words to his son, but which more fittingly apply to people like his father, who would punish joyful discovery and naïve enthusiasm. The boy says that it has all happened as the people "up there" had warned him. He tells Mr. Bons that "when I told them about you, and how clever you were, and how many books you had, they said, 'Mr. Bons will certainly disbelieve you.'"

Mr. Bons agrees to accompany the boy to the alley the following evening at sunset in order to verify for himself the mysterious story of the omnibus. To his utter astonishment, Mr. Bons witnesses the arrival of the omnibus. This time the driver is none other than Dante Alighieri, considered to be the greatest Italian poet, best known for an epic poem, *The Divine Comedy*, which is divided into three sections—Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise. That the driver was Dante is made explicit in the revised version of the quotation from *Inferno*, which is placed above the carriage door, which reads: "Abandon all self-importance, you who enter here," (instead of the original, "Abandon all hope, you who enter here"). Characteristically, Mr. Bons points out the error, saying that the correct term was "hope" and not "self-importance." Being a scholar, he cannot tolerate any form of deviation when it comes to appreciation of the Great writers, and in the process the irony is wasted on the self-righteous pedant.

As they take flight over the city, the boy, who is utterly in awe of Mr. Bons, innocently recounts the characters from the literary classics—such as, by Charles Dickens and others, hopelessly mixing them up—whom he had met on his previous trip. His naïve enthusiasm only serves to irritate Mr. Bons, who continues to correct

his mistakes. He seems to suggest that a cultured person would have confined himself to the writings of Homer, Shakespeare and Dante, and asked intelligent questions.

When the rainbow materializes once again beneath the carriage, the boy is positively ecstatic at the sight of the hero, Achilles, who is standing sentry on the bridge. As the omnibus lands, the boy springs out onto the shield of Achilles, who holds him lovingly aloft. Mr. Bons, however, is terrified by the personification of the Greek warrior. He asks the driver to take him home, back to the comfort of his suburban library with its second-hand knowledge, rather than be party to the extraordinary and overwhelming experience. He addresses the driver, Dante: "Save me!...I have honoured you. I have quoted you. I have bound you in vellum. Take me back to my world." However, Dante is unimpressed and replies: "I am the means and not the end. I am the food and not the life. Stand by yourself, as that boy has stood. I cannot save you. For poetry is spirit, and they that would worship it must worship in spirit and in truth." Eventually, Mr. Bons steps out of the omnibus and falls to his death. As a procession of torches and music approaches, the boy is confused, assuming it is meant to honour Mr. Bons. However, he himself is crowned.

It is clear that whether it is literature or religious scripture, it is futile if one clings to the "letter" and not the "spirit." According to some critics, the "celestial omnibus" can be seen as a metaphor for the journey of life, with its various stops representing different stages and experiences. In one sense, the story is all about the triumph of *experience over knowledge*. Albert Einstein once said, "Pure logical thinking cannot yield us any knowledge of the empirical world; all knowledge of reality starts from experience and ends in it." Conceptual knowledge is of little use. A person may know all about toothache conceptually but so long as he has not *undergone the pain* of "toothache," this knowledge is inadequate. So also, in the spiritual life, no amount of someone telling us about faith and love will help. We are required to have first-hand experiences of faith and love.

When we personally encounter or undergo something, we call it an experience. Experience is the knowledge or mastery of an event or subject gained through involvement in or exposure to it. For some people, nothing is an experience till it happens to *them*. But it is possible to learn from the experience of another, if we have empathy. We enjoy and suffer vicariously, by reading a book or watching a movie or television. This learning from the experiences of other people calls for great imagination and sympathy. Without ourselves being an orphan or even without encountering one in our life, we can experience that state, if we are sensitive enough, when we read, say, about the little girl Topsy, in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, who says that she never had a father or mother, she just grew. In a sense, the nine *rasas* or nine basic emotions or feelings mentioned in Sanskrit literature—such as *Shringar rasa* pertaining to love, *Veer rasa* pertaining to courage, *karuna rasa* pertaining to sadness, etc.—represent the basic types of experiences through which each one must pass. Our reading and responding to Kalidas's play "Shakuntala" or Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet" is, in a way, experiencing *Shringar rasa*—the agonies and ecstasies of love.

In Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, at the beginning of Act V, Theseus, Duke of Athens, announces that the imagination of poets, madmen, and lovers are all the same: All are prone to excesses beyond the realm of reason, and thus he denigrates the poet's imaginative faculty by comparing it with that of lovers and madmen. His theory denies the importance of craft and discipline in the creation of art, casting artistic talent as little more than airy fantasy. He says, "The poet's eye, in fine frenzy rolling, Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven; And as imagination bodies forth the forms of things unknown, the poet's pen turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing, A local habitation and a name." In fact, it is the faculty of intense imagination, which enables them to create and inhabit a world of fantasy. The poet emphasizes the power of imagination in both transforming the ordinary into the extraordinary, and creating entirely new fanciful situations from almost non-existent realities.

Hence, it is clear that to appreciate the beauty of a poem, painting or a sculpture we need to go beyond mere understanding. What it calls for has been expressed beautifully by W. Somerset Maugham, thus: “Why should you think that beauty, which is the most precious thing in the world, lies like a stone on the beach for the careless passer-by to pick up idly? Beauty is something wonderful and strange that the artist fashions out of the chaos of the world in the torment of his soul. And when he has made it, it is not given to all to know it. To recognize it you must repeat the adventure of the artist. It is a melody that he sings to you, and to hear it again in your own heart you want knowledge and sensitiveness and imagination.”

According to some critics, the story reminds us that the faculty of imagination and creativity are something to be admired. As we read this story, we are made to wonder, how many events are really happening and how much is merely the imagination of the boy. The one trait which differentiates the boy from Mr. Bons in the story is that despite being an expert, Mr. Bons has no real spark of creativity. All he can do is quote stories that already exist in the world, but makes no addition or contribution. His expertise does not enable people to have further insight into life. The boy, on the other hand, is creative. He dares to dream of a fantastical world and strange things that may not exist. He is willing to embrace and explore life. It is this creativity and joy which keeps the boy alive and does not allow him to fall to his doom like Mr. Bons.

Generally, imagination is defined as the faculty of imagining or of forming mental images or concepts of what is not actually present to the senses. We see it being used in planning, hypothetical reasoning, picturing things in the past or the future, etc. Albert Einstein said: “Imagination is more important than knowledge, for knowledge is limited to all we now know and understand, while imagination embraces the entire world, and all there ever will be to know and understand.” He imagined himself running alongside a light wave, a fantasy that ultimately led to his theory of special relativity. The Scottish philosopher David Hume believed that

fantasy helps us to move beyond and change our present reality. Leonardo da Vinci's fantastical flying machines paved the way for the Wright brothers, and likewise, H. G. Wells's novel *The War of the Worlds* (1898) inspired the first liquid-fuelled space rocket.

Creativity is the ability to make new things or think of new ideas. Creativity is the phenomenon whereby something new and sometimes valuable is formed. It includes exploring new ways of doing things as also realizing dreams. Some have felt that creativity need not be restricted to any particular activity, such as music, painting, writing, poetry or dancing. Creativity may be regarded as a quality. It is not a mysterious quality possessed only by a few. This quality, one can bring to bear upon any activity. The ability to see things in a fresh way is vital to the creative process.

At a deeper level, as some critics suggest, the celestial omnibus represents the journey towards self-discovery, and the search for meaning and purpose of life, which requires the cultivation of qualities of curiosity and open-mindedness. It can also be seen as the journey of life and the search for enlightenment. In that context, creativity may be regarded as the manifestation or expression of latent skills, potentialities, or ideas from within, without. "I saw the angel in the marble and carved until I set him free," said Michelangelo. The true Self is hidden and covered over by "wall upon wall of gross flesh," the sheaths of the soul. We must each become an artist and using our power of choice, will and imagination, carve or cut away, all that which is out of sync with the contours of this Real Self, the Divine Angel. Creativity may be regarded as an impulse towards self-transformation and spiritual progress. This creative process stretches over several lifetimes. In each life, as we grow, keeping the ideal before us, we carve ourselves. A spiritually regenerated sage may be considered a true genius, who has created or transformed himself anew in the image of the Divine. "Unless above himself he can erect himself, how poor a thing is man!" writes Samuel Daniel.

## HIOUEN-THSANG—A CHINESE BUDDHIST MONK

HIOUEN-THSANG or Houen Tsang or Xuanzang, also known by his Sanskrit Dharma name, Moksadeva, was a seventh-century Chinese Buddhist monk, scholar, traveller and translator. As a boy, he read religious books, and discussed the same with his father. Like his elder brother, he became a student of Buddhist studies at Jingtū monastery. He was ordained as a novice monk at the age of thirteen, and later ordained as a *bhikshu* (full monk) at the age of twenty. Later, he travelled throughout China in search of sacred books of Buddhism. He spent the next several years, studying Sanskrit along with other foreign languages. He was concerned about the incomplete and misinterpreted nature of the Buddhist texts that had reached China as well as competing Buddhist theories in various Chinese translations. He was looking for the original Sanskrit texts from India which could help to resolve some of these issues. At age 27, he resolved to embark on a pilgrimage to India, though the then-Chinese emperor had forbidden travel outside China. He started a seventeen-year journey, travelling by night and hiding during the day.

Hiouen-Thsang travelled along what we now know as the Silk Road. The Silk Road took him through countries ruled by powerful leaders. He was invited by the king of Turfan, a devout Buddhist. Realizing that the king planned to detain him for life to be the ecclesiastical head of his court, Hiouen-Thsang staged a hunger strike and was eventually allowed to continue his journey. He continued his journey as a pilgrim, and was no longer a fugitive, as he was provided with introductions to all the kings on his route.

During his travel, he came to the country of Baluka, where the Sarvastivada school of Hinayana Buddhism was in vogue. He crossed the countries of Samarkand, Mimoha, Kaputana, etc. and ultimately reached the valley of Bamiyana, which is a part of modern Afghanistan. He describes colossal Buddhas carved into the rocks of the Bamiyan region. His travelogue mentions that there is a

colossal statue of a standing Buddha, carved from a rock in the mountains, which is around one hundred and forty feet tall and decorated with gems. This valley has Buddhist monasteries, and also a colossal copper statue of the Buddha, that is over one hundred feet tall.

In the *Secret Doctrine* (II, 336) we read that there was a human race, nine yatis or 27 feet high and its proof is to be found in history and tradition. For instance, “India had her Danavas and Daityas; Ceylon had her Rakshasas; Greece, her Titans; Egypt, her colossal Heroes...Moses speaks of Og, a king who was nine cubits high (15ft. 4in.) and four wide (Deut. iii. II), and Goliath was ‘six cubits and a span in height’ (or 10ft. 7in.)” There are witnesses to the submerged continents which were inhabited by giants or colossal men, such as is seen in the case of Easter Island statues. Archaeologists, when they come across them, only wonder as to what these could be but have not made “any serious attempt to solve the mystery,” writes H.P.B.

“But who cut the Bamian, still more colossal, statues, the tallest and the most gigantic in the whole world, for Bartholdi’s ‘Statue of Liberty’ (now at New York) *is a dwarf* when compared with the largest of the five images.” H.P.B. writes that some of the learned Jesuits, who visited the place with two immense giants cut in the same rock and refer to them as modern *Miaotse*, *i.e.*, the last remnants of the Fourth Race giant Atlanteans, are right, while the “Archaeologists, who see Buddhas in the largest of these statues, are mistaken.” H.P.B. writes:

“Bamian is a small, miserable, half-ruined town in Central Asia, half-way between Cabul and Balkh, at the foot of Kobhibaba, a huge mountain of the...Hindu-Kush chain, some 8,500 feet above the level of the sea. In days of old, Bamian was a portion of the ancient city of Djooljool, ruined and destroyed to the last stone by Tchengis-Khan in the XIIIth century. The whole valley is hemmed in by colossal rocks, which are full of partially natural and partially artificial caves and grottoes, once the dwellings of Buddhist monks

who had established in them their *viharas*. Such *viharas* are to be met with in profusion, to this day, in the rock-cut temples of India and the valleys of Jellalabad. It is at the entrance of some of these that five enormous statues, of what is regarded as Buddha, have been discovered or rather *rediscovered* in our century, as the famous Chinese traveller, Hiouen-Thsang, speaks of, and saw them, when he visited Bamian in the VIIth century.” (*S.D.*, II, 338)

The Buddhist monks, who came to Central Asia in the first century of the Christian era, turned the grottos of the *Miaotse* into *Viharas* and cells. As a result, Hiouen Thsang says that in his day, “the shining of the ornamentation that overlaid the colossal statue, dazzled one’s eyes,” but in modern times there remains not a vestige of such gilding. Talbot (archaeologist) is of the opinion that in contrast to the figure that has been cut out of the rock, the drapery is made of plaster, and belonged to a far later epoch. The statue belongs to a far earlier period than Buddhism. (*S.D.*, II, 339)

H.P.B. points out that tradition, corroborated by written records, explains the mystery, thus: “The Buddhist Arhats and Ascetics found the five statues, and many more, now crumbled down to dust, and as the three were found by them in colossal niches at the entrance of their future abode, they covered the figures with plaster, and, over the old, modelled new statues made to represent Lord Tathagata. The interior walls of the niches are covered to this day with bright paintings of human figures, and the sacred image of Buddha is repeated in every group.”

The fact is that these five colossal statues were built by the Initiates of the Fourth or Atlantean Race. When the Atlantean continent submerged, these Initiates took refuge in the fastnesses and on the summits of the Central Asian mountain chains. These five statues are “an imperishable record of the esoteric teachings about the gradual evolution” of the five races of humanity. The largest statue, 173 feet high, represents the First Race of mankind, having an extremely ethereal body. The second statue represents the Second Race of Humanity that was sweat-born and was 120 feet high. The third

statue, 60 feet high, represents the Third Race humanity, which was the first *physical* race, in which there was the separation of sexes into male and female, and human beings were born through the union of the sexes. However, when the third continent, Lemuria, was submerged, humanity then was around 20 to 25 feet in stature. The fourth statue represents the Fourth or Atlantean Race which was smaller in stature than the Third Race, but gigantic in comparison with our present Fifth Race. “These are, then, the ‘Giants’ of antiquity, the ante- and post-diluvian Gibborim of the Bible.” They lived and flourished one million years ago rather than between three and four thousand years ago. (*S.D.*, II, 339-40)

During his travel, Hiouen-Thsang also visited Udyana, a kingdom to the north of Gandhara in ancient India. In *Isis* (I, 599-600) H.P.B. writes that Marco Polo, the daring traveller of the thirteenth century, says, “The people of Pashai (Udyana) are great adepts in sorceries and the diabolical arts.” Hiouen-Thsang says of these inhabitants: “The men...are fond of study, but pursue it with no ardour. *The science of magical formulae has become a regular professional business with them.*” H.P.B. remarks that “we will not contradict the venerable Chinese pilgrim on this point, and are willing to admit that” it is possible that in the seventh century, *some* people made “a professional business of magic,” but certainly not the true adepts. It does not appear that Hiouen-Thsang, the pious, courageous man, who risked his life a hundred times to have the bliss of perceiving Buddha’s shadow in the cave of Peshawar, would have “accused the holy lamas and monkish thaumaturgists of ‘making a professional business’ of showing it to travellers.” For, Hiouen-Thsang must have always been aware of the reply given by Gautama to King Prasenagit, who had called on him to perform miracles. The Buddha had said that he did not teach his pupils to perform miracles, before the eyes of the Brahmins and householders, greater than any man can perform, using their supernatural powers. “I tell them, when I teach them law, ‘Live, ye saints, *hiding your good works, and showing your sins.*’”

In *Isis Unveiled* (II, 600-601) H.P.B. draws our attention to “Buddhism and Buddhist Pilgrims,” in which Max Muller writes that Hiouen-Thsang entered India by way of Kabul. Shortly after he arrived at Purushapura, *i.e.*, modern Peshawar, “he heard of an extraordinary cave where Buddha had formerly converted a dragon and promised his pupil to leave him his shadow so that whenever evil passions of his dragon-nature should revive, the aspect of his master’s shadowy features might remind him of his former vows. This promise was fulfilled and the dragon-cave became a famous place of pilgrimage.”

The appearance of what is called *Buddhachhaya* (shadow of Buddha) takes place, but only for him whose mind is perfectly pure and who knows how to invoke that Luminous Appearance. Hiouen-Thsang could invoke the great *chhaya*. It is recorded that when he arrived at the cavern all was dark and dreary. Hiouen-Thsang entered and began his great devotions. He made 100 salutations, but neither saw nor heard anything. Then, thinking himself too sinful, he cried bitterly and despaired. But, as he was about to give up all hope, he perceived on the eastern wall a feeble light, but it disappeared. He renewed his prayers, full of hope this time, and again he saw the light which flashed and disappeared again. After this, he made a solemn vow: he would not leave the cave till he had the vision of the “Venerable of the Age.” After 200 prayers the dark cave was suddenly “bathed in light, and the Shadow of Buddha, of a brilliant white colour rose majestically on the wall, as when the clouds suddenly open, and, all at once, display the marvellous image of the ‘Mountain of Light.’ A dazzling splendour lighted up the features of the divine countenance.” Hiouen-Thsang was lost in contemplation and wonder, and would not turn his eyes away from the sublime and incomparable object. Hiouen-Thsang adds in his own diary, *See-yu-kee* that it is only when man prays with sincere faith, and if he has received from above a hidden impression, that he sees the shadow clearly, but he cannot enjoy the sight for any length of time.

From Peshawar, Hiouen-Thsang proceeded to Kashmir, visited chief towns of Central India, and arrived at last in Magadha, the modern city of Bihar in India, the Holy Land of the Buddhists. He visited among other places, the famed Nalanda University, where he studied logic, grammar, Sanskrit and philosophy of Yogacharya School of Buddhism, under monk, Silabhadra. It is said that his teacher Silabhadra, made available to him, and through him to the Sino-Japanese world, the entire heritage of Buddhist Mahayana thought. From Nalanda, he travelled through several kingdoms. In the end he was given a grand farewell by Emperor Harshavardhana. He reached China in 645, which was 16 years after he had left Chinese territory.

“He was accorded a tumultuous welcome at the capital, and a few days later he was received in the audience by the emperor, who was so enthralled by his accounts of foreign lands that he offered the Buddhist monk a ministerial post. Xuanzang [Hiouen-Thsang], however, preferred to serve his religion, so he respectfully declined the imperial offer. Xuanzang spent the remainder of his life translating the Buddhist scriptures, numbering 657 items packed in 520 cases, that he brought back from India. He was able to translate only a small portion of this huge volume, about 75 items in 1335 chapters, but his translations included some of the most important Mahayana scriptures. Xuanzang’s main interest centred on the philosophy of the Yogacara (Vijnanavada) school, and he and his disciple Kuji...were responsible for the formation of the Weishi (Consciousness Only school) in China.” (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*)

When he found that the hour of death approached, he had his property divided among the poor. He said, “I desire that whatever merits I may have gained by good works may fall upon other people....When I descend again upon earth to pass through other forms of existence, I desire at every new birth to fulfil my duties towards Buddha and arrive at the last at the ‘highest and most perfect intelligence.’ He died in the year 664,” writes Max Muller.

## A PARABLE OF THE STREAM

“O MASTER! I am afloat on a great river, the source of which I know not, nor where it ends. I hear the rush of the storms and the roar of the waves. I hear a million voices cry, ‘Save!’ I struggle, carried by a current I do not see, knowing not whither I am going nor why, I pray you, enlighten me, who cry so in the deep.”

“Dear Son, I bid you stand apart, stand apart from the roar of this Universe of which you are a part. Stand apart and look on, where the seeker searches, thorns for flowers, the traveller scours the desert for water.”

“O Father! as I look I see a great stream passing. It is so broad it covers the whole horizon. I see myriads of figures that swim on the water, groaning and struggling. They pass like shadows, now cast into the whirlpool, now lashed by the icy waves, and are finally carried yonder, into the yawning cave, to vanish into its depths. O Father! that dark tunnel looks so hideous that I shudder to gaze at it.”

“Look on, Son, where millions go to the cave of Death, carried by the currents of Karma, struggling on the waves of existence, on this Stream of Life.”

“I look on again, Father, but I see the same figures returning. They rush out again and again, wearing different forms and apparel. Torn and bleeding, they are carried again and again into the selfsame cave. They fight amongst themselves, tear at one another and, shrieking and groaning, writhing with pain, wounded, maimed, float spiritless on this Great Stream, to be swallowed once again into the Hollow of Death.”

“Look close, Son, where the swimmer takes the raft for a study boat, the hungry takes spiny growths for fruit, and thirsty takes mirages for water.”

“As I look, Father, I see a wonderful boat. It waits and shines with brilliant light. But alas! those that rush do not see. None hears its echoing call. Could they but see and hear! Their sobs mingle

A PARABLE OF THE STREAM

with the gurgling stream; some clutch a splinter and some a straw for support. Yet they see not the boat standing by their side. See how in their hurry they dash past it and run!”

“See you not those who try?”

“Yes, Father, I see some swimming boldly towards the boat! But alas! the dreadful current carries them away! Alas! some are pulled down by those still in the water as they clutch at the boat. All wail and cry, ‘Help!’ Oh, cannot someone reveal the sacred boat to the Seeing Blind and take them to the other shore?”

“What do you see there?”

“O Father! I see a garden of peace. I also hear a resounding call. I see the Few that stand, with tears in their eyes, pointing at the shining boat. But alas! the Mad Rush heeds not. They rush on and on, to crash within the hollow.”

“Enough, my Son! You have seen this day the Hollow Struggle of what you are a part. You have seen the Roaring Stream on which you float, and the Ferry-Boat. Now you may go.”

“Where, Father? Shall I who saw this moment the self-imposed struggle of Madness on the Stream of Existence go back to be buffeted by the waves? Who would climb a falling tree? Who would pluck a withered flower? Ah, Father! I cried to you in darkness and you gave me light. I go but to swim to the Other Shore, where Immortal Life reigns. I plunge but to rise, and sink but to save!”

---

A GRAVE emotional concern of thinking men today is over the present state of the world. If deep uneasiness disturbs us when we look out on the world, it only shows that a great change must come. We are trembling on its verge. Whether it is a leap forward to unmeasured prosperity or a plunge backward to barbarism depends on us, on what we make of the spectacular achievements of science and technology.

—S. RADHAKRISHNAN

## IMPERATIVE OF NONVIOLENCE

THE birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi (*Gandhi Jayanti*) is observed on the second day of the month of October every year all over India, and in some parts of the world. Gandhiji was inspired by the teachings of ancient sages and saints that in the discovery of Truth (*Satya*) and in the practice of nonviolence (*Ahimsa*) is to be found the panacea for all ills and freedom of Soul. He was also inspired by the living examples of such thinkers and reformers as Leo Tolstoy, Henry David Thoreau, Ruskin, among others, who championed the cause of self-reliance, nonviolent living, social justice, and so on. Gandhiji said that he too discovered the irresistible transforming power of these two verities by his lifelong experiments with practical application of them in all aspects of his private and public life. He believed that humanity is destined to discover the same in the course of its higher evolutionary progress, however far in time the consummation of such a prospect may be. The whole nation was galvanized by the power of all-embracing unconditioned Love and fearlessness that radiated from his person, and participated with zeal and in the spirit of self-sacrifice in the nonviolent struggle for freedom from colonial rule, which he spearheaded. He had a clear vision of, and tirelessly worked for, national regeneration through eradication of such social ills as untouchability, superstition, oppressive caste system, exploitative political and economic order. He clearly enunciated the imperative moral bearing of Truth and Nonviolence on every aspect of life— institution of marriage, education, religion, politics, economics, emancipation of women, communal harmony, on world issues, and so on. India, however, has sadly moved away from the ideals Gandhiji advocated and exemplified, and people in general, barring a few devoted souls, have forgotten his message. Gandhiji was so wholly devoted to the ideal of Truth and Nonviolence, and so utterly humble, that he never wanted him to be remembered after his passing but that his message of national reconstruction and social reform on the principles of Truth and Nonviolence be pursued.

An intuitive perception of the truth of the essential unity of all life and of the Universal Brotherhood of humanity enables one to appreciate the importance of the virtue of Nonviolence and inspires to try to live up to it. His God-idea was universally pervasive Deific essence which is present as latent divinity in the hearts of all, and that the true worship of God is to serve humanity. An enlightened belief in this seminal principle is basic to any reform towards an equitable and just society. He wrote, “This society must naturally be based on truth and nonviolence which, in my opinion, are not possible without a living belief in God, meaning a self-existing, all-knowing Living Force which inheres every other force known to the world, and which depends on none, which will live when all other forces may conceivably perish or cease to act. I am unable to account for my life without belief in this all-embracing living Light” (*The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi*, Navajivan Publishing House, 1967, p. 253). For him worship of God was service of humanity and of the least and the humblest among his countrymen. “I am a part and parcel of the whole, and I cannot find Him apart from the rest of humanity” (*ibid.* p. 52); and, “I claim to know my millions. All the 24 hours of the day I am with them. They are my first care and last because I recognize no God except the God that is to be found in the hearts of the dumb millions. They do not recognize His presence; I do. And I worship the God that is Truth or Truth which is God, through the service of these millions” (*ibid.* pp. 52-53). This is a clear vision of Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, the natural consequence of an awareness of which is development, in one, of a tendency towards altruism and universal Love.

The general misconception is that nonviolence as an ethical principle is weakness and cowardice. Gandhiji showed that, on the contrary, it requires not only a courage that will not back out in the face of danger to life but radiates a quality of Love that has the power of transforming enmity into friendship, adversary into an accomplice. He said that one who in the face of danger cowers and behaves like a mouse is rightly called a coward, who nevertheless

retaliates when there is no danger to his person. “Strength does not come from physical capacity,” he wrote, “It comes from indomitable will” (*ibid.*, p. 142). “And History is replete with instances of men, by dying with courage and compassion on their lips, converted the hearts of their violent opponents” (*ibid.*, p. 144). Gandhiji was practical enough to recognise that life itself involves some kind of violence and that we have to choose the path of least violence. In some instances he said, one may have to use physical force, in such emergent situations as, for instance, when the honour of a woman is threatened by a violator, as a matter of duty but devoid of any malicious feelings like revenge or hatred.

In his work, *Hind Swaraj*, Gandhiji reviews the modern Western economic theory and practice, and shows it to be violent, destructive, and unjust, and advocates an alternative model of social development that is humane, nonviolent, just and equitable, based on the principles of Truth and Nonviolence. Gandhiji’s critique of modern civilization perfectly harmonises with the views of H.P.B.—both echoing the ancient wisdom that a materialistic civilization devoid of morality and ethics of social responsibility is suicidal. “Real culture is spiritual.” wrote H.P.B, “It proceeds from within outwards, and unless a person is naturally noble-minded and strives to progress on the spiritual before he does so on the physical or outward plane, such culture and civilization will be no better than whitened sepulchres full of dead men’s bones and decay.” (*H.P.B. Series No. 2*, p. 36)

H.P.B. wrote in *The Key to Theosophy* that practical Occultist is one who has an accurate knowledge of Nature’s secret workings and the power to use them, entirely and unconditionally, he has renounced his personality and lives only to ceaselessly labour for the good of humanity. Such are the very embodiment of Truth and Nonviolence, having given up all weapons of offense and defense. This is illustrated in the lives of both H.P.B. and W.Q.J.; being Occultists and Teachers *par excellence*, they offered themselves in the spirit of self-sacrifice as the shield of protection against the relentless attacks on the Society they founded to serve as the

organizational means to realize the objects of the Theosophical Movement. Both had not one word of complaint or resentment against their detractors but had charitable attitude towards them. Both actively defended the Cause they served against attacks with Truth and nothing but the Truth, but never defended themselves against attacks of enemies on their person and on their character; on the contrary, they had utmost charity and compassion for their detractors.

Theosophists are not Occultists but students who study Theosophy, learn the dynamic reality of the fact of Universal Brotherhood of humanity, and of the laws of Karma and Reincarnation in human life, and realize a self-compelling conscientious imperative to try to practice Nonviolence in daily life. Many misconceptions prevail in the minds of people in general as regards nonviolence. Some think that it is a weakness to be forgiving when offended instead of punishing the offender, and others hold that adherence to a vegetarian diet is a sufficient measure of nonviolent living and spirituality. Such misgivings are due to the lack of understanding of the true nature of man to be an eternal thinker, and of the dynamic power of human thought.

Thought is the real plane of action which makes our character and by it we shape our destiny. Lifetime thoughts of a man centred in his lower personal nature, considering himself to be separate from others, being selfish, is the prolific cause of every evil which besets mankind, is invariably violent. Animals in the wild are inimical to man because they sense violence in him; being out of harmony with the natural order of higher progress, nature becomes unfriendly to man. Natural calamities and moral and physical epidemics are thus brought on by man himself in his ignorance by his own base thoughts, sensuality and selfishness.

Once it is realized that we are in truth spiritual beings inseparably bound with all life, one with whole of humanity, and thought and action on the basis of such understanding will naturally well up in the soul, the love of all, and develop virtues of charity, forgiveness

IMPERATIVE OF NONVIOLENCE

of personal offense suffered, rendering good for evil, and a strong sense of personal responsibility for the good of the world and towards the lower kingdoms of Nature which depend on man for their progress and higher evolution. Nonviolent thought and action are the natural concomitance of realization of the Truth of unity and interdependence of all life and of the twin laws of Karma and Reincarnation. It is in this, and in this alone, lies the key to true human happiness, social equity and justice, world peace, and true progress of humanity towards perfection.

---

Down the years a murmur runneth,  
Bleeding hearts that wince in pain,  
While the boasting politicians  
Vaunt the claims of man in vain.

Building cities, stone on stubble,  
Seeking safety in their might,  
Till they grind the men to rubble  
With their bombers of the night.

Through the earth there runs a challenge  
Clearer than the trumpet call:  
“Oh, forsake your ancient folly,  
Build the Brotherhood of all.

“Seek the city that God buildeth,  
City of the heart and hand,  
Not beyond the grave of shadow,  
Here on earth, in your own land.”

—PHILIP BRITTS

“DOWN THE YEARS A MURMUR RUNNETH”

## THE URGE FOR FREEDOM

THE urge for freedom is inherent in every being, for it results from the inner impetus to unite oneself with the One Self, and this is the object of evolution. It shows itself in the human being through the power to choose, which is both a burden and a joy. Yet, when we come to the position when we want to escape from some of the bonds that are binding us, we do not know how to act.

When we think on this problem, we find that there are three courses open to us: either we can do nothing about the conditions in which we find ourselves; or we can burst the bonds, or we can act within the bonds. This last course is the only one which succeeds and is of help to us in the long run: We have to learn to be free *within* the bonds.

In a world of duality, there are two methods of approach to this kind of freedom—one that of the arrogant who do what they want in spite of the bonds, and often succumb under the strain; the other, the recognition of the bonds as an opportunity Karma affords us to pay off past debts and improve our character. For example, if we want to practice patience, the best opportunity to do so comes when we are bound by others and prevented from acting as we wish. This method is the only one which will give us true freedom. It is analogous to accepting a law of the material universe; Once we know it, we can employ it to our own advantage.

Another advantage of this method is that we begin to see the difference between ourselves as perceiver and sufferer and the environment in which we live and perceive and suffer. Once this difference is seen, we begin to realize that it is our duty, not to alter the environment, but to get whatever benefit we can from it. It is ours under Karma; therefore we have something to learn from it. It is better to think of it as something from which we can learn rather than as the paying off of a debt from the past. If we just pay our debts, we are beginning on the Path of Liberation; if we learn while paying them, we are on the Path of Sacrifice.

But the path of the student is one of paradox, we are told. We often hug the old environment even when Karma brings us the opportunity to get out of it. The path of duty is difficult to find, for we are enmeshed in traditions of what is right to do. There come times in our life when our environment has to be left, but in most cases this is only the material environment. All great Teachers have told us to “come out from among them and be separate.” We can see an example of this when we consider religious ceremonies and traditions which we have outgrown *mentally*. Is it not hypocritical to obey the old traditions or perform the old ceremonies when we have seen their uselessness? Ought we to be hypocrites in order to please our family and friends?

These difficulties come to us because we are halfway between the old conditions and the new way of life; we have not yet reached the point of “no-return.” We have not absorbed *why* we ought not to conform. We have not realized the effect on others for good if we do not conform. We only try to avoid what would be troublesome, emotionally, for us. Few of us wish to be pioneers in a line of action which will bring us unpopularity!

Freedom in, and not freedom from, such conditions will depend on us, and on our inner conviction and humility and sympathy. The scornful, pugilistic attitude only brings trouble and suffering to ourselves and others. Such attitude results when we are *not sure* of ourselves.

Sometimes we feel bound by family duties and are unable to free ourselves from them. What is a family duty? The relationship between parent and child alters completely after the child reaches the full age of responsibility. The most difficult task for parents is to give up their sense of responsibility at this stage. Advice is all that can, and should be given. Parents should not make demands upon their grown-up sons and daughters, or burden them with duties and responsibilities. The relationship should have been throughout one of friendship and helpfulness. If this has been achieved, then the sons and daughters will willingly take on the responsibility of doing

THE URGE FOR FREEDOM

all they can for those who have done all they could for them in the past. The young should learn to be grateful; the parents should learn to be grateful. But the “demand idea” of youth to age, and age to youth, should stop. It breeds unhappiness and becomes the steel bonds that bind both parents and sons and daughters. True bonds are those of love and sympathy, of sacrifice and helpfulness.

But, whatever happens, the one who is bound has to act. The only really wrong method of trying to gain freedom is to “put up” with the bonds and grumble all the time, to fight against them, or to work grudgingly within them with hatred in the heart. To grumble at conditions will not change them but will warp our emotional nature and degrade the mind. A man can have no attachment to that on which he does not think. To think about any condition in order to change it for the better is one thing; to brood and grumble over it is quite another. To work grudgingly within the bonds is to destroy the whole basis of right action. The thought-feeling behind action has to be clean and pure if the action is to bear good fruit. If not, the fruit will be poisonous, and hatred will spring up, not only in our own hearts, but in those who are making our bonds.

Let us stop blaming our environment. Let us alter it, or use it, or leave it, without complaint, but with sympathy, basing our action on love.

---

This is my prayer to thee, my lord—strike,  
strike at the root of penury in my heart.  
Give me the strength lightly to bear my joys and sorrows.  
Give me the strength to make my love fruitful in service.  
Give me the strength never to disown the poor or bend my  
knees before insolent might.  
Give me the strength to raise my mind high above daily trifles.  
And give me the strength to surrender my strength to thy will  
with love.

—RABINDRANATH TAGORE  
“GIVE ME STRENGTH”

## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

This year when World Book Day was observed in over a hundred nations, the theme was “Read your way.” Reading should be done for fun, pleasure, entertainment, and above all for one’s personal growth. Normally, we are less inclined to read books after acquiring degrees and securing a job. However, George R. R. Martin says: “I have loved a thousand loves. I have walked on distant worlds and seen the end of time. Because I read.” When we pursue a certain profession, it is necessary to read further and update our knowledge concerning the chosen field. As long as one knows how to read, it is easy to develop the hobby of reading, which needs no special skill or training. Reading is a panacea for the addiction to mobile phones and social media that is plaguing our society.

The habit of reading can be inculcated in children by reading to them cartoons, comics and bedtimes stories. Puzzles, crosswords and quizzes in magazines can help to develop in children, an inquisitive mind and sharpen their skills. “It is a good idea to carry one or two books or magazines of your interest in your handbag before embarking on a journey. A book that is thoughtfully selected makes for a gift of lasting value for your loved one. Also, one can build one’s own library over a period of time and leave it as a legacy for one’s loved ones,” writes Gorlakatte.

In selecting a good book one can take help of friends with reading habit or by visiting websites that recommend good books and best-selling books. Reading autobiographies of great people could prove educative and inspiring. Joining a good library enables us to read books that are otherwise too expensive to buy. “When feeling lonely and down in the dumps, one has to only open a good book to drive away one’s depression. There are a variety of books to help develop essential human traits....Great men who walked on this earth are just waiting to share their wisdom through their books....So keep reading and rewarding yourself,” writes Laxman Gorlakatte. (*Bhavan’s Journal*, September 16-31, 2024)

Joseph Addison, a seventeenth century English writer, said, “Reading is to the mind, what exercise is to the body.” Research shows that regular reading benefits both the physical and mental health. However, the first step is to inculcate in oneself and others, the habit of reading good books. Gradually, without forcing, one can arouse mental hunger. A truly healthy mind desires and relishes mental food, studies regularly and methodically, and derives help from it in discharging his life-duties. What will change the quality of our brain is right kind of reading and reflection, and that in turn will lead to intuition which will help in helping others in the right way. When we take up an ennobling theme we carve out a new path in the brain.

What should we read? What constitutes a *good* book? Since we live in the world, we should be aware of what happens in the world. But even there, let us apply the touchstone: “What is not worth remembering is not worth reading.” Apart from information and knowledge, there are those rare books which are stepping stones to acquirement of Wisdom or Spiritual knowledge. That is why apart from companionship with the like-minded people, regular reading of holy books could prove to be the greatest source of inspiration and solace.

Mr. Judge advised students to read the *Bhagavad-Gita*, saying that “it will give them food for centuries if they read with spiritual eyes at all.” However, by “good books” he does not mean only spiritual books, but advises students to read whatever books that they have found by experience to *elevate their consciousness*. Our experience shows that it is erroneous to think that reading fiction or storybooks is a waste of time, or that it is an attempt to run away from reality. Thus, Jug Suraiya, a prominent Indian journalist, author and columnist, says that Creative fiction allows us to escape from our own consciousness into the consciousness of others and gives us a chance to see things from another’s point of view. We are invited to read good literature as it helps us to develop *imaginative sympathy*. It is possible to learn through “imaginative sympathy,” without going through certain experiences ourselves.

Mythologies, fairy-tales and folk-lore have distinct value of their own. We might say, Myths convey cosmic and anthropological facts just as fables convey truths about the social behaviour of men and women. Similarly, fairy tales reveal one aspect of the human subconscious, the psychic nature of every man. These must be read intuitively to understand the symbology.

---

In different religious traditions the snake or serpent stands for subliminal nature or innate wisdom, evil power, sexuality, spirituality, death or rebirth, etc. Likewise, the image of two snakes entwined around a central staff shows reconciliation of opposites in a person, among other things. Adi Shesh, the thousand-headed snake represents eternal time and he sustains the world at the time of great dissolution so that new creation can take place. Adi Shesh also symbolizes *maha-kundalini shakti* or great serpent power, which remains dormant in *muladhar chakra*, and when awakened by yogic, *trancic* or other spiritual practices, it reaches *sahasrar chakra* at the crown of the head. *Sahasrar* is the abode of Shiva and *muladhar* is the abode of Shakti.

Shiva wears the long writhing Vasuki snake as his necklace. Vasuki is said to rule *patala* or the nether world, and was used by the gods as the churning rope at the time of churning of the ocean. Shri Krishna says in the *Gita*, “Of serpents, Vasuki, their chief. I am Ananta among the Nagas.” The earth is said to be supported by Adi Shesh or Ananta. The five vices, lust, anger, greed, infatuation and pride, are represented by five heads of Kaliya Nag, which Krishna crushed. Balaram, the elder brother of Krishna, Laxman, the younger brother of Rama, and Patanjali, the compiler of Yoga Sutras, are considered to be the incarnations of Shesh Nag. Both Buddha and Guru Nanak are said to have been protected by snakes during meditation. Snakes “shed worn-out skin as a part of the growing process, called ecdysis” writes Satish Kapoor. (*The Speaking Tree, The Times of India*, September 17, 2024)

Serpent is an emblem of eternity, infinitude, regeneration and rejuvenation, as well as, of divine wisdom and perfection. H.P.B. points out that “Serpent” and “Dragon” were the names given to the “Wise Ones,” the initiated adepts of olden times. The serpent biting its own tail symbolizes Eternity or all-devouring Time—the great spiral of evolution or *Manvantara*. Vishnu, the Preserver, is usually portrayed as reclining on the enormous coiled body of *Adi Seshha* or *Ananta*, with multiple cobra heads. Garga, the oldest astronomer in India, is supposed to have obtained astronomical knowledge from *Sesha*—the thousand-headed serpent, who bears seven *Patalas* and the entire world upon his head—who is also *Ananta*, the infinite, and also the “Cycle of Eternity,” in esotericism.

In India, Siva is described as a healer of snake-bites because he is said to have neutralized the poison of the snake that surfaced during the churning of the ocean, by swallowing it and holding it in his throat. He is a *healer*, giver of health, spiritual and physical. The Upanishads have a treatise on the Science of Serpents, *i.e.*, the Science of Occult Knowledge. The *Nagas* of the exoteric Buddhists are not “the fabulous creatures of the nature of serpent,” they are beings superior to men and the protectors of the law of Buddha, because they interpret correctly Buddha’s metaphysical tenets, writes H.P.B. (*S.D.*, II, 26 fn.). The *Nagas* of the Hindus were Adepts and Initiates, and not reptiles. Exoterically, the *Nagas* are semi-divine beings who have a human face and the tail of a serpent. However, there was also a race of *Nagas*, said to have sprung from Kadra, sage Kasyapa’s wife, *for the purpose of peopling Patala*, which, says H.P.B., is undeniably America. There was also NAGA-DWIPA, one of the seven divisions of *Bharata-varsha* or India which was inhabited by the *Nagas*. (*S.D.*, II, 132)

Thoth Hermes carries the serpent-rod, emblem of Wisdom, the rod that became the Caduceus. We find this rod in the hands of Aesculapius which is different in form from the wand of Mercurius or Hermes. The rod of Caduceus is a rod with a knob, flanked by two wings of the Swan (*Hansa*). The rod is entwined by two

serpents. *Metaphysically*, the rod represents the trunk of the *Ashwattha* tree or the tree of life and being, which grows and descends at every new *manvantara* from the two dark wings of the Swan of Life. The two serpents coiled around the rod represent Spirit and Matter, and descending along the trunk they are interlaced in close embrace so that the two tails embrace on the earth, which forms the manifested universe, or the world of illusion. (*S.D.*, I, 549-50)

A serpent always coils up in order to strike and that “coiling to strike” represents the working of the law of Karma, which, based on the causes or actions set into motion by us, strikes an unerring blow on us. The serpent also symbolizes the circle of necessity or numerous reincarnations of the soul. The serpent casts off its skin periodically, just as the soul leaves the body to assume another. In this aspect it represents renewal of life or rebirth. Hence, serpent symbolizes spiritually regenerated man or an Initiate.

---

Knowledge of reincarnation or rebirth can save us from many misfortunes, though many people do not believe in it. Even those who believe do not seem to take it into account while living their daily lives. Some of us take this incarnation to be the final reality and act as if we are never going to die. “When as a man someone humiliates or abuses a woman, he acts from the belief that he will always be a male under all circumstances.” If he is made to realize that in the next life he could be born as a female and may be made to undergo the same pain and trauma that he is inflicting on women, thinking of them as being inferior, he would not behave in this manner. When rich ill-treat the poor they forget that the situation can change any time in this life or they may be born extremely poor in their next birth, and receive the same treatment that they mete out to others.

When people in authority misuse their power and oppress the weak, they forget that in their next birth they could be in the same situation and would have to undergo similar misery and helplessness.

We can multiply examples to include pain inflicted on animals and ill-treatment meted out by mothers-in-law to their daughters-in-law. We forget that bad karma is not just stealing or killing but includes emotional hurt caused to another. Keeping this in mind, when we find ourselves in pain or adverse situations, instead of complaining or crying, “it is better to live in intense awareness of our thoughts, speech and action so that such a situation never arises,” writes Shivi Verma. (*Life Positive*, September 2024)

The Laws of Karma and Reincarnation are called twin doctrines. Law of Karma is the law of cause and effect, and it adjusts every effect back to its cause, and restores the disturbed equilibrium. When a stone is thrown into the water it creates disturbing waves that oscillate backwards and forwards till, they converge back to the point of disturbance, bringing the waters to the state of calm tranquillity. So also, when we disturb the harmony of nature through our thoughts, words or actions, we get the reaction from the law that works to restore equilibrium. When a branch of a tree is bent down forcibly, it rebounds with corresponding force. “A harsh word uttered in past lives is not destroyed, but ever comes again,” says the *Voice of the Silence*. For some of our actions we experience the effect in the same life, while for others, the reaction may come in the next or in a subsequent life. It is in these two doctrines that we find the basis for ethics. Good will bring good, and the evil will bring, without doubt, evil consequences, in this or future life.

No man becomes our friend in the present life by reason of our behaviour in the present life alone. If he was our enemy in the previous life he will be now, even if we do him service and be good to him, because these tendencies always last for more than three lives. So, towards those who are hostile to us, if we practise charity, kindness, and love, then this tendency of enmity will be one-third lessened in every life. On the other hand, if we continue to be hostile, we put off the “Day of Reconciliation” by three more lives, writes Mr. Judge.

## INDEX TO “THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT”

Period: NOVEMBER 2023—OCTOBER 2024

### GENERAL INDEX

- 
- Action, The Path of ... .. Jul-24  
Ageless Wisdom, The ... .. Nov-23  
Attitude of Mind, The ... .. Aug-24  
Blavatsky, H. P. ... .. Apr-24  
Brotherhood—False  
and True ... .. Jan-24  
Cause and Effect ... .. Sep-24  
Character—The True Wealth  
of the Nations ... .. Sep-24  
Charitable Criticism ... .. Jul-24  
Conduct, Rules for Higher ... .. Sep-24  
Criticism, Charitable ... .. Jul-24  
Death and Immortality ... .. Aug-24  
Dharma Danda—A Parable ... .. Aug-24  
Disciples, A Parable of Two ... .. Jan-24  
Distributive Karma ... .. May-24  
Duties, On Mundane ... .. May-24  
Effect, Cause and ... .. Sep-24  
Extracts From Unpublished Letters—  
    Analogy and Correspondence  
        ... .. Nov-23  
    Heart and Buddhi ... .. Dec-23  
    Kali Yuga ... .. Jan-24  
    Miscellaneous ... .. Jun-24  
        ... .. to Sep-24  
    Sex ... .. Feb-24  
    The Paramitas ... .. Mar-24  
        ... .. to May-24  
Fatalism, Karma—Not ... .. Jul-24  
Fittest, Survival of the ... .. to Sep-24  
Food for Thought—  
    Letter to a Child Never  
    Born ... .. Mar-24 to Apr-24  
The Celestial Omnibus ... .. Oct-24  
The Finest Story in the World  
... .. Jun-24 to Jul-24  
The Lottery ... .. Mar-24  
The Saga of an American  
Family ... .. Aug-24 to Sep-24  
The Sphinx ... .. Nov-23  
The Story of the Other  
Wise Man ... .. Dec-23  
The Strange Case of  
Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde ... .. Jan-24  
    ... .. to Feb-24  
Freedom, Slavery and ... .. Nov-23  
Freedom, The Urge for ... .. Oct-24  
Free-will, The Problem of ... .. Nov-23  
Gurus—True and False ... .. Jul-24  
H. P. Blavatsky ... .. Apr-24  
Halls, The Three ... .. Jun-24  
Heaven and Hell, On ... .. Mar-24  
    ... .. to Jun-24  
Hell, On Heaven and ... .. Mar-24  
    ... .. to Jun-24  
Hiouen Thsang—A Chinese  
Buddhist Monk ... .. Oct-24  
Humility, True ... .. Apr-24  
Immortality, Death and ... .. Aug-24  
Imperative of Nonviolence ... .. Oct-24  
In the Light of Theosophy ...  
    ... (Separate Index)  
Inexplicable Nature of  
Karma, The ... .. Dec-23  
Judge, William: A Performer of  
Good Works ... .. Mar-24

INDEX TO “THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT”

Karma, Distributive ... ..	May-24	Psychology—Ancient and Modern ... ..	Jan-24 to Feb-24
Karma, The Inexplicable		Rules for Higher Conduct ... ..	Sep-24
Nature of ... ..	Dec-23	Sacrifice, The Path of ... ..	Dec-23
Karma—Not Fatalism ... ..	Mar-24	Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram ... ..	Jun-24
Knowledge—Receiving and Giving ... ..	Mar-24	Scriptures of the Soul, The ... ..	Feb-24
Letters, Extracts From Unpublished—		Self-Control and Self-Indulgence ... ..	Feb-24
Analogy and Correspondence		Self-Expression and Spiritual Life ... ..	Dec-23
... ..	Nov-23	Slavery and Freedom ... ..	Nov-23
Heart and Buddhi ... ..	Dec-23	Spiritual Life, Self-Expression and Stream, A Parable of the ... ..	Dec-23
Kali Yuga ... ..	Jan-24	Survival of the Fittest ... ..	Jul-24
Miscellaneous ... ..	Jun-24	... ..	to Sep-24
... ..	to Sep-24	Symbology, Water and Its ... ..	Dec-23
Sex ... ..	Feb-24	... ..	to Feb-24
The Paramitas ... ..	Mar-24	Theosophy, In the Light of ... ..	(Separate Index)
... ..	to May-24	Three Halls, The ... ..	Jun-24
Managing Our Dual Nature ... ..	Oct-24	True Humility ... ..	Apr-24
Mind, The Attitude of ... ..	Aug-24	Urge for Freedom, The ... ..	Oct-24
Nature, Managing Our Dual ... ..	Oct-24	Water and Its Symbology ... ..	Dec-23
Nonviolence, Imperative of ... ..	Oct-24	... ..	to Feb-24
On Heaven and Hell ... ..	Mar-24	Wealth of the Nations, Character—The True ... ..	Sep-24
... ..	to Jun-24	What Ought I to Do? ... ..	Jun-24
On Mundane Duties ... ..	May-24	William Judge: A Performer of Good Works ... ..	Mar-24
On Using Words With Care ... ..	Apr-24	Wisdom, The Ageless ... ..	Nov-23
Parable of the Stream, A ... ..	Oct-24	Words, With Care, On Using ... ..	Apr-24
Parable of Two Disciples, A ... ..	Jan-24		
Parable, Dharma Danda—A ... ..	Aug-24		
Path of Action, The ... ..	Jul-24		
Path of Sacrifice, The ... ..	Dec-23		
Path to Prosperity, The ... ..	May-24		
Pragmatism of Nonviolence ... ..	Dec-23		
Problem of Free-will, The ... ..	Nov-23		
Prosperity, The Path to ... ..	May-24		

INDEX TO “IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY”

Ageing and death, we understand their causes at a biological level, but are far from major breakthrough, says Venki Ramakrishnan ...	May-24	Faith or Reason, which is true? ... ..	May-24
Artificial Intelligence, its so-called empathy, will it change one day our understanding of empathy and also the human interaction? ...	Apr-24	Fasting, says Gandhiji, must be undertaken with right mental attitude ... ..	Mar-24
Books, Reading, it should be done for pleasure, entertainment and for personal growth ... ..	Oct-24	Fear of God, is it good? ...	May-24
Death and Ageing, we understand their causes at a biological level, but are far from major breakthrough, says Venki Ramakrishnan ... ..	May-24	Forgiving, brings freedom and life to the forgiver and the forgiven ... ..	Jul-24
Dodecahedron, a mysterious twelve-sided object, found among the remains of Roman Villa—is it a tool, a toy or a religious relic? ... ..	Jun-24	Gayatri Mantra, its origin and significance explained by late Swami Veda Bharati ... ..	Jul-24
Doppelgangers or doubles, Are they real? ... ..	Apr-24	Guru's testimony, given more importance to by Indians, over the scientific method ... ..	Nov-23
Dream engineering has succeeded in improving sleep quality and mood, as well as boosting learning and creativity ... ..	Mar-24	Hope, abandoning it, compels one to take up the responsibility for the existing situation, and come to terms with reality ... ..	Feb-24
Dreams, do animals dream like we do and, if so, what they are dreaming about? ... ..	Jan-24	Identities, when used to play different roles without getting attached, helps to give us an authentic sense of Self ... ..	Sep-24
Emptying ourselves of all conditioning gives our true self the chance to express itself ... ..	Mar-24	Out-of-body travel, is it possible for the soul? ... ..	Nov-23
Euthanasia is medical assistance in dying (Maid), proposal to extend Maid to those suffering solely from mental illness ... ..	Aug-24	Jealousy leads to resentment, bitterness, anger and paranoia, and is internalised ... ..	Dec-23
		Jellyfish, Caribbean box, can learn from experience, even though they lack a central brain ... ..	Dec-23
		Joy, finding it in little things can be a game-changer ...	Aug-24

INDEX TO "IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY"

- Kaizen, Japanese concept of "change for the better" is a philosophy of continuous and incremental improvement ... .. Feb-24
- Object, its true nature, can we know independent of our limited perception? ... .. Dec-23
- Positivity, toxic, refers to excessive positivity which is bad for one's health and mental well-being ... .. Jul-24
- Ramarajya, what is it according to Gandhiji? ... .. Jun-24
- Reading Books, it should be done for pleasure, entertainment and for personal growth ... Oct-24
- Reason or Faith, which is true? ... .. May-24
- Reincarnation, Knowledge of, can save us from many misfortunes ... .. Oct-24
- Religious and Spiritual, it is possible to be both, by being receptive to the spiritual element in the religion ... Apr-24
- Right, insistence on being right, always, makes a person rigid, and its opposite course helps to achieve wider perspective ... .. Feb-24
- Scientific method, given less importance to by Indians than the Guru's testimony, ... .. Nov-23
- Scientific theory, what constitutes it and what does not, and why is this distinction important in our pursuit of knowledge? ... Sep-24
- Serpent or snake, symbolizes innate wisdom, evil power, death and rebirth ... .. Oct-24
- Snake or Serpent, symbolizes innate wisdom, evil power, death and rebirth ... .. Oct-24
- Spiritual and Religious, it is possible to be both, by being receptive to the spiritual element in the religion ... .. Apr-24
- Success, wanting too much of it, must be bad ... .. Nov-23
- Telepathy, Mental, is the direct transmission of thoughts and ideas, and occurs between people with a strong bond ... Sep-24
- Transplant, can an organ transplant really change someone's personality? ... .. Jun-24
- Uketamo, the Japanese philosophy, encourages individuals to accept what is, and welcome life with an open heart ... .. Jan-24
- Values, such as honesty, must be taught by relating them to real life situations ... .. Jan-24
- Viveka or Spiritual discernment, helps to differentiate between right and wrong, real and unreal, self and non-self ... .. Aug-24