

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

## THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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

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### STANDING TALL, ALL ALONE

HUMAN beings need company of other human beings, notwithstanding all assertions for independence. Mr. Judge writes in exasperation to a co-worker that he was tired of all those people “who gape and gape and are (excuse me) so Americanly ‘independent’—as if men were ever independent of each other.” That need for sharing, when it is not fulfilled for some reason, finds an outlet somewhere else. In Maxim Gorky’s poignant story, “Her Lover,” a woman of loose morals, shunned by all, approaches a college student with a request to write a letter to her lover, which she dictates. After a few days she returns with a queer request to write down a reply from her lover to herself, also dictated by her! Later she confessed that in reality no lover existed but such exchange of letters made life bearable for her. Here was a person who had no one to call her own, so she had invented a friend for herself.

Many young people want their own “space.” They do not want to live in the shadow of their parents. They want to be independent. They want to live on their own terms and cannot tolerate interference from their parents, who might object to their coming home late at night or to their way of dressing up, or to their erratic eating and sleeping habits. No doubt, staying alone makes one self-dependent to a certain extent. Also, there are different kinds of lessons to be learnt in the life of a single person. And yet, though initially one may enjoy such a life of independence, not all are equipped,

emotionally and mentally, to live such a life. Those who choose to move away from their families are still looking for companions and friends, and some even indulge in a series of casual affairs. At times, a person asserting his independence is only running away from his responsibilities and obligations. If we were able to cope with life's problems "all alone," we would not have so many people experiencing depression, and other psychological disorders, or have so many turning to drugs and alcohol. We have substituted friends and companions with Blogs, Twitter, Facebook, and so on.

We have to admit that human relationship is undergoing a radical change. There are people who love animals more than human beings. They share a very deep and intimate relationship with their pets. Earlier, people felt kindness and pity for the helpless suffering of the animals, and were moved to protect them. But pets were never "close companions" as they are today. The animal-human relationship is undergoing change, which actually reflects the changing human-to-human relationship. Pets seem to be taking the place of friends, because finding a true friend, a close friend, is becoming increasingly difficult. Often, there is not a single person with whom you can share the deepest secrets, your problems and weaknesses, without the risk of being ridiculed or the information being used against you. With the advent of nuclear families, even family bonds are weakening. Animals are found to be good companions because they are not at all demanding, nor will they do anything to break your trust. So there are people who talk to plants and pets. It appears that when people are ill-treated or let down by other human beings, they tend to cultivate attachment for objects, with whom they can share the innermost secrets of their hearts and give vent to their feelings. This is an abnormal state.

There are people who fall in love with dolls or are obsessed with computers. They "marry" pillows and experience withdrawal symptoms when separated from their inanimate "partners." They are termed "Objectum Sexu-als." The word "Objectum Sexu-als," was first coined by a 54-year old woman, who has been married to

Berlin wall for 29 years. Likewise, there is the instance of a soldier from San Francisco "marrying" Eiffel Tower. Psychologists feel that such cases stem from fear of rejection by other people. The objects accept you as you are. "Objects do not let people down and this sort of relationship might attract someone who has had trouble coping with rejection earlier, or is very lonely," writes Manasi Choksi. (*The Times of India*, [*The Crest Edition*], July 10, 2010)

It is true that sooner or later we must learn to be on our own, and stop being other-possessed. But, it must happen naturally and gradually. We are prepared for independence, only when we have fully appreciated inter-dependence and passed through various experiences that the company of other human beings—good, bad and indifferent—has to teach us. A demanding job or profession leaves little time to experience loneliness. But then there is the need to *share* our frustrations, disappointments and achievements; and communications through electrical gadgets, mobiles, web cameras and e-mails, cannot give the same joy that we experience in a person-to-person contact.

The key to be *truly* independent is to cultivate detached attachment, and that is not at all easy. In the book, *Nine Lives: In Search of the Sacred in Modern India*, by William Dalrymple, a Jain nun confesses that though they are supposed to cultivate detachment and indifference, she had hopelessly failed. She, who could leave her parents in order to take *diksha* (initiation) and join Jain sangha, was shattered when her companion nun died. "I could not bear it. I wept, even though we are not supposed to....The attachment is there even now....We lived together for twenty years. How can I forget?" Shattering as it is, such experiences show us that we, as human beings, have been looking for love, for appreciation, for support and for guidance, outside ourselves.

We may begin by learning to be self-dependent while we are surrounded by the loved-ones—in terms of doing one's own things and also learning to curb the impulse of sharing "every little thing" with another. There are families where very little is exchanged among

the members by way of verbal communication. Yet, a lot of support is drawn from silent presence. Impersonality is another key to true independence. We keep our personality in the foreground by inordinate self-assertion, in small and seemingly harmless ways, such as, telling others what we are going to do in regard to matters that are not necessary to communicate. What dress we wish to wear to office the next day, or how we shall deal with a certain client, etc. Some of us *just have to* narrate every trifling detail of happenings in the office to our family members, and likewise, cannot help but discuss our family life with the colleagues. In small ways, we are trying to attract attention to ourselves, by our speech, by action, by calls for sympathy, and so on. A time must come when not only should we be not compelled from within to speak about happenings, but also should not feel the need to communicate our problems and sorrows. We sort them out ourselves. “Do your crying and sighing within you. If you cannot receive the small events of life and their meanings without crying them out to all the world, think you that you are fitted to be trusted with the mysteries?” (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 36*, p. 4).

As we advance spiritually, our responsibilities would increase and we would have to face greater trials. Everyone around will seem to make more demands on our time and energy. We have to train ourselves to forget our needs and develop the inner capacity to devote ourselves to the interests of others. We can begin doing this in small ways. Mr. Crosbie draws our attention to some good maxims to remember and apply: “Never ask another to do for you what you can do for yourself.” “Know where your things are and get them for yourself when you need them.” “Do for others all you can in a nice way, but do not expect others to do for you.” “You are valuable only when you are helpful, not when you require help” (*The Friendly Philosopher*, p. 121). It is through performance of natural duties that we become aware of our true relationship to other human beings and the whole of cosmos.

Apart from cultivating impersonality and self-dependence, we

might learn to spend some time every day in solitude. The mystic traditions of Islam emphasize the need to be away from the activities of life and spend periods of time in quiet contemplation. Some of us cannot remain alone for more than 10 to 15 minutes, without reaching out for a phone, or switching on the television set or music system. Every day we must observe silence for a few minutes and set apart half-an-hour for meditation. Most of all, we need to cultivate companionship with that silent Spectator within. You cannot “stand tall, all alone,” in the true sense, by shunning human companionship and duties of life. There are personality types described as “Siberian Cranes.” Siberian Cranes are known to move in pairs all the time. Such a person opens up mainly to the person of the opposite sex, and also has the tendency to cling to or lean heavily on to another person for doing every small thing. On the other end of the scale are those who prefer to be alone. They will be seen going alone for a movie, for shopping, to a restaurant; they make their own choices and decisions. Right Loneliness is not to be attained by a loner. It is to be achieved by one who combines in himself the capacity of a voluptuary and a stoic—one who is able to enjoy all the pleasures of life to the fullest and yet is not cast down if any or all the pleasures are denied. Likewise, he must combine the capacity of a loner and, a gregarious and social person. We are all interdependent and inter-related and still are different. Paradoxically, Right Loneliness goes hand in hand with Right Companionship. A person who knows what right loneliness is, will make friends wherever he goes. Self-reliance has radiating and drawing power.

Thus, we need to overcome the urge to always be able to share ideas and communicate with another. There is another sort of loneliness experienced by a person who looks on life differently and ventures to go beyond the accepted concepts of his time. He is “alone” as there is no other like-minded individual to share his views and outlook. But these are pioneers of the Race, centuries ahead of their time. It demands courage and faith in human nature to dare to think, to dare to challenge the leading minds of the time. Again, the

person who can “stand tall, all alone,” without conforming to the accepted ways of life, is the person who regards his own “small voice” to be the final authority. He may consult the scriptures, take advice from the elders and wise people, but finally makes his own decision, following his heart or intuition, and also accepts the consequences for the same. Each one of us is a unique being, occupying special place in the universe with special tasks to perform. We come to the world alone and go out of the world alone. “You yourself must strive; Buddhas are but sign-posts.”

In *Light of Asia*, after describing the four steps of the Noble Eightfold Path of the Buddha, Sir Edwin Arnold describes the four higher steps, thus:

Four higher roadways be. Only those feet  
May tread them which have done with earthly things,  
*Right Purity, Right Thought, Right Loneliness,*  
*Right Rapture.*

Right Loneliness is preceded by Right Purity and Right Thought and is followed by Right Rapture. These are inner states. Right Loneliness is the last but one stage on the Path. It implies inner equipoise and absolute detachment from worldly matters, when one lives in the world but is not of the world. He has realized, “Not a mother, not a father, not any kindred can do much; a well-directed mind does us greater service.”

In the process of spiritual development, help and guidance comes from the inner planes of being and to avail of it we must stop inner and outer chatter. “Silence thy thoughts and fix thy whole attention on thy Master, whom yet thou dost not see, but whom thou feelest.” We are asked to increase impersonal moments in our life—such as when we are lost in appreciating sunrise or sunset, in helping someone, and so on. *The Voice of the Silence* says: “Seek in the impersonal for the Eternal man, and having sought him out, look inward: thou art Buddha.”

## THE PHILOSOPHY OF PATANJALI’S YOGA

THE WORD *Yoga* draws the attention of many. It is generally understood that it refers to bodily postures, breathing exercises, breath control and meditation techniques. The reasons for practice of “yoga,” assuming it to be nothing more than postures and breathing exercises, are several. Good physical health, a certain calmness of mind and reduction of stress, improving strength and stamina, are the few common motives. In addition, some enthusiasts go further and desire to develop psychic powers. The result is, we find many self-styled teachers and schools catering to public demand.

Amidst these innumerable modern-age “teachers” and claimants, each proposing various techniques and practices, a serious consideration of the teachings of Sage Patanjali is of vital importance. Any technique or practice of yoga, without understanding the *fundamental ideas*, which are few in number, is as dangerous as the foolish experiments of the novice in chemistry who lacks sound understanding of chemical substances, their properties and interactions. Once we acquaint ourselves with the philosophy of the ancients, we cannot but reach the conclusion that today’s popular conception of “yoga” is a negation of the true Yoga inculcated by the sages.

First and foremost, the nature of man is to be understood. The body, its senses and the brain are not the whole of man. They are just the instruments of an inner, Real entity. Our body and brain have undergone, and are constantly undergoing, innumerable changes since its birth. Even our ideas and emotional nature is under constant change. However, there is that *identity*, which is constant, unchanging through all changes, and the Perceiver of the innumerable perceptions. When we look back at our lives, we find that we have gone through myriads of changes, physically, intellectually and emotionally. Nevertheless, there is a witness of all the altering states of consciousness, Itself unaltered. This is our real Self. Just as an astronomer uses telescope to gain knowledge of

heavenly bodies, we use mind, brain and body as instruments to come in contact with and experience nature.

Now, viewing the subject in the light of these ideas as to what is the real nature of man, and his relation with the body that is transitory and impermanent, we find that any undertaking, which is a preoccupation with merely the body and breath, is a journey in wrong direction.

Next, the characteristics of the mind are to be understood. Mind, the "thinking principle," is an instrument that is *modified* by any subject or object that comes before it. It thus reflects to the soul the qualities and characteristics of the subject/object, and enables the soul to contact and experience nature. This *involuntary* modification is to be hindered, and the process of hindering is known as yoga.

Yoga is not a set of techniques and breathing exercises. When we recognize ourselves to be beyond mind and matter, and see them both as our tools and implements, *dispassion* and the power to check the impulses of the mind arises. The understanding of superiority of oneself over mind will enable us to control, direct, and use the mind to accomplish the divine purposes of life. "Dispassion, carried to the utmost, is indifference regarding all else than soul, and this indifference arises from a knowledge of soul as distinguished from all else" (*Patanjali's Yoga Aphorisms, Book I, Aphorism 16*). Once this is achieved permanently, yoga (or union) with the Imperishable Principle within us is accomplished. This practice has to be striven for in the daily and hourly performance of duties.

The prime cause of all suffering and distress is confounding the Real and subsisting part of us with the transitory and perishable, so that we identify ourselves with our body, mind and emotions. This confusion is Ignorance. "Ignorance is the notion that the non-eternal, the impure, the evil, and that which is not soul are, severally, eternal, pure, good, and soul" (*Patanjali's Yoga Aphorisms, Book II, Aphorism 5*). This misconception leads to wrongful acts, which will inevitably bring about pain in the future. The opposite of Ignorance is Spiritual Wisdom, *i.e.*, the knowledge of one's identity

with Spirit, and this knowledge is the end of all suffering.

The whole of universe, and everything contained in it, exists for arousing the spiritual discrimination latent in us. The latent powers of divinity in us can sprout, grow and bear fruits of knowledge only when it has been sown in dense matter of body and its limitations; and by contrasting experiences, learns to assert its freedom and reach self-knowledge. "The Universe, including the visible and the invisible, the essential nature of which is compounded of purity, action and rest, and which consists of the elements and the organs of action exists for the sake of the soul's experience and emancipation" (*Patanjali's Yoga Aphorisms, Book II, Aphorism 18*). Wise is one who sees all experiences of life as lessons for the soul in the School of Nature. "It is even a portion of myself which, having assumed life in this world of conditioned existence, draweth together the five senses and the mind in order that it may obtain a body and may leave it again. And those are carried by the Sovereign Lord to and from whatever body he enters or quits, even as the breeze bears the fragrance from the flower." (*Gita, XV*)

When we confuse ourselves to be the body or the mind, and thus act under this misconception, we create causes that will hinder our growth as spiritual beings. The seeds we have sown in the long past bear fruits in terms of our opportunities in life, pleasure and pain, happiness and suffering, good fortune and disasters. "While that root of merit and demerit exists, there is a fructification during each succeeding life upon earth in rank, years, pleasure, or pain. Happiness or suffering results, as the fruit of merit and demerit, accordingly as the cause is virtue or vice." (*Patanjali's Yoga Aphorisms, Book II, Aphorisms 13-14*)

This is fundamentally different from our present understanding of life. The unquestioned assumption of today's world is that we live only once, that we are here only for enjoyment, so one must satisfy one's unrestrained desires at any cost! But we must understand that we are going to come back again, to reap the fruits whose seeds we are now sowing. "A harsh word uttered in past life

is not destroyed, but ever comes again." Our present life, with its "fortunes" and "misfortunes," opportunities and hindrances, friends and foes, is the making of ourselves. Also, our present actions and thoughts will determine our future conditions.

Our true and real nature, therefore, must first be understood. Like a spark from fire, a drop from ocean, Soul arises from Universal Over-soul, and is essentially identical with it. Being essentially of spiritual nature, and being in touch with material nature, each of us have a choice to make: to choose and assert our inner divine nature by subjugating matter, or give in to the turbulent animal nature, thus divorcing oneself from Spirit. If our lower, material self takes the upper hand, it leads to perdition. But, if we are able to control our passions and desires and succeed in merging with the Divine Source we are able to reach a high spiritual state known as *Isolation*. This state is one of faultless spiritual vision and all-knowingness. There is a complete isolation from all illusions and delusions of matter. This is the assigned purpose and final destiny of each of us.

The scientific process and means to attain this *Isolation*, a complete union with one's inner Divine nature, is *true Yoga*. The present state of general mankind is such that mind and will are the slaves of desire. Our job is to reverse this condition, and make free our mind and "will" from the dominion of desire, and give them an altogether different direction, towards our spiritual nature. The first two steps, out of the eightfold path of Yoga (*Ashtanga Yoga*), are most important. These are, Forbearance (*Yama*) and Religious Observances (*Niyama*). The sage explains them as follows:

"Forbearance consists in not killing, veracity, not stealing, continence, and not coveting." These, he mentions next, are not the duties of just spiritual aspirants, but Universal Great Duties, to be practised by everybody without exception! "These, without respect to rank, place, time, or compact, are the universal great duties." (*Patanjali's Yoga Aphorisms, Book II, Aphorisms 30-31*)

Thus we find, when we carefully consider the words of the Sage, that Yoga is a pre-eminently *mental* and *moral* effort, aimed at

developing one's awareness of the *Spirit within oneself*. This has to be effected while living in the body, amidst the din and noise of the world, all the while doing every duty of life, whatever our station of life may be, without any self-interest and as a sacrifice to the divinity within. "All actions performed other than as sacrifice unto God make the actor bound by action. Abandon, then, O son of Kunti, all selfish motives, and in action perform thy duty for him alone." (*Gita, III*)

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## STUDIES IN THE DHAMMAPADA EVIL CONDUCT—I

THE CHAPTER is called *Papavaggo* or Evil Conduct. The canto is a quintessence of the Buddhist attitude towards *papa* (sin) and sinful people. Man is not considered to be born in sin, having natural sinful tendencies, and dependent on some external God or a saviour to redeem him. Evil has its roots in ignorance of our real nature and ignorance of the working of the law of Karma. Thinking ourselves to be separate from others, we act selfishly for our own happiness, unmindful of the law of harmony and mutual cooperation; thinking that we can get away from the consequences of our evil deeds, by repentance, prayers, confessions or by earning *punya* (merit) through ill-gotten money, power or position. Buddha dispels our ignorance by telling us that just as one cannot escape from death, one cannot escape from the consequences of evil deeds. Therefore, instead of condemning the evil-doer, he teaches us how to overcome the evil tendencies in us and establish ourselves in good, which can eventually lead us to *Nirvana*.

1. *A man should hasten towards the good; he should restrain his evil thoughts; if he is slack in doing good his mind inclines to delight in evil. (116)*

2. *If a man commits sin, let him not continue in it. Let him not set his heart on it. Painful is the accumulation of evil conduct. (117)*

3. *If a man does what is good, let him do it again and again. Let him set his heart on it. Happiness is the outcome of good conduct. (118)*

In these verses, Buddha asks us to respond *immediately* to an impulse to do good and restrain evil thoughts, because if we are slow in responding to noble impulses, we are more likely to delight in evil. Mr. Judge tells us that every aspiration of the soul for spiritual things, every resolve of man to lead a purer life, every helping outstretched hand to a weaker brother, every desire for the truth, all

hungering and thirsting after righteousness—these and like yearnings and strivings of the soul have first of all come from above, from the Divine within. These are the gifts from the higher nature to the lower, from the spiritual to the human, seen in those humane attributes, or qualities, or virtues such as love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance. Since most of us cannot become spiritually perfect overnight, we have to strive after “ordinary manifestations of the spirit” by adopting the following line of conduct suggested by Mr. Judge:

If you feel as if something urged you to visit some sick or afflicted neighbour or friend, obey the suggestion without delay.... 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 the Divine ways, in harmony with the Divine laws. (*Vernal Blooms*, p. 32)

When an impulse to do good arises in our heart, we must hasten to act, otherwise, our calculating and reasoning mind is likely to talk us out of it. If we feel like helping the needy person, we must do so without delay, otherwise we are very likely to come up with convincing reason as to why we cannot or must not help. By not responding, we subject ourselves to the “blunting” process by which our sensitivity gets blunted or dulled. The first time we come across a starving man, a man suffering from terminal disease, a person who has lost a dear one, a distressed person, our heart goes out to him and we want to be of help in some way. We, as it were, feel the pain of another by spontaneous sympathy. Such natural responses, unless nurtured, tend to get atrophied. It is the Voice of Christos within, who gets crucified whenever we turn a deaf ear to it. It is the voice of our conscience, which becomes feeble, if unheard. Gradually, we become more and more self-centered and begin to live in our cocoon, unconcerned about the sorrows of other people. And this self-centeredness makes us more and more selfish whereby the old virtues give way, at first, to the minor indulgences and then

to positive evil for obtaining happiness. This is particularly so at the present stage of our development when Spirit has not yet mastered the animal within. Mind of a man is forever active. And amidst a host of ideas vying for attention, good ideas tend to get displaced by personal and selfish thoughts.

Why should one do good and shun evil? Because, happiness is the outcome of good conduct and pain that of the evil. But this does not become evident at once and hence we give in to various impulses, unmindful of their consequences. But our thoughts have self-reproductive power. Thoughts, good or bad, have a tendency to return. By pondering over them and responding, we lend them energy and make them stronger. And when they recur, we accept and respond to them more readily and easily than before. And before long, some of them begin to occupy our complete attention—we set our hearts on it. They become our line of life's meditation—that upon which our heart is set—be it pursuit of wealth, power, women, possession, *or* spiritual knowledge and unselfish desire to relieve the suffering of others. Hence, we have to be constantly vigilant and not allow evil thoughts to take possession of our mind and hearts. Instead, we have to consciously and deliberately strive for good thoughts and good company, which shapes our character.

Fortunately, ethics are universal and known to everyone. We intuitively know what is good and what is evil. What is needed is to become aware and allow only good tendencies to become part of our nature. And even if we happen to slip and do evil, we must make a note of it and dismiss it from mind. We must displace evil thoughts by good. At the end of every day, we can sit down and take stock of day's events to dispassionately note our good and evil actions and resolve to become more vigilant so as to respond when a good thought comes to our mind and reject what we consider to be evil by turning our attention at once to something worthwhile, something ennobling or good. It is a conscious and deliberate exercise by which we train and tame our mind as we would an animal. As Mr. Crosbie suggests, we must not want to *be* good but

*do* good, then we *are* good.

4. *Even an evil doer sees happiness as long as his evil deed has not ripened; but when his evil deed has ripened, then does the evil doer perceive the evil. (119)*

5. *Even a good man, mayhap, suffers evil so long as his good deeds do not ripen; but when his good deeds ripen, then he perceives the good accruing to him. (120)*

Humanity sins, sorrows, suffers and dies a thousand deaths; because of what? Just IGNORANCE, writes Mr. Crosbie. They do not know that happiness is an outcome of good deeds, and suffering results from evil. Hence they resort to unfair and unlawful means to obtain their happiness. They do not hesitate to injure or even murder another for their own happiness. It seems to work well for a while until, at last, their evil deeds ripen, and then they suffer. Then they *know* that the law works. Similarly, the good man may sometimes suffer until his good deeds ripen. When they do, he *knows* that the law works. The law of Karma works in just and unerring manner, bringing to us the exact consequences of our actions. A man becomes bold when he manages to commit crimes without getting detected, when he manages to dodge the law. But sooner or later he gets caught and punished for his offences by the law of the land. At other times, calamities strike in quick succession which, at last, opens his eyes. When one set of Karma (past actions) is already in operation, the other set may have to wait. Only when the first set of karma gets exhausted, the second set can begin its operation. In the meantime, forces begin to work imperceptibly for fruition of the karma in hold. They are like the seeds in the soil. Some seeds sprout immediately, and others take longer time. And even when they sprout, some grow and bear fruit quickly, while others take deep roots, but may not bear fruit for a long time.

*(To be concluded)*

## ON DELUGES, CATAclysms AND PRALAYAS

## I

MANY people erroneously believe that on December 21, 2012 our world will come to an end. According to the Mayans, our Sun and all of its planets rotate in cycles in relation to the center of the galaxy or the central light of the galaxy. It takes 25,625 years for our solar system to make one cycle on this ellipse. One complete cycle is called a Galactic Day, which is divided into five cycles of 5,125 years, and December 21, 2012 marks the end of the fifth and final cycle. Mayans believed that every 5,125 years there is change in magnetic field of the Sun, as also, in the earth's rotation, which could produce catastrophes. But winter solstice of 2012 A.D. must be looked upon as the point of transition, which marks the end of one cycle and the beginning of another. It does not mean end of the world, or of our earth.

Such transition periods are often characterized by minor cataclysms. The period of 25,868 years is termed the Sidereal Year. Every year the Sun crosses the celestial equator at a slightly different point. This point shifts backwards from the *first degree of Aries*, at the rate of a degree in 71.8 years. In 2,155 years it moves backward by 30 degrees or one zodiac sign. In 25,868 years, it comes back to the original position, after traversing all twelve zodiac signs. The completion of this grand cycle brings our earth into newer spaces of the cosmos. Occult philosophy points out that at the beginning and end of great cycles, as also, at the intersection of great cycles, there is shifting of the poles, great cataclysms and other convulsions, such as, earthquakes, fire and flood.

There is an indissoluble connection between man and every event that takes place on this earth. The changes in the season, the great upheavals of continents, the movements of glaciers, the terrific eruptions of volcanoes, or sudden overflowing of great rivers, are all *through* man. These changes are closely linked with changes in the inclination of the axis of the earth. How is man responsible for

cataclysms, earthquakes and volcanoes? Occult philosophy says that besides undue interference with nature, there is a direct relation between man's thoughts and natural calamities. Thus:

Karma operates to produce cataclysms of nature by concatenation through mental and astral planes of being. A cataclysm may be traced to an immediate physical cause such as internal fire and atmospheric disturbance, but these have been brought on by the disturbance created through the dynamic power of human thought. ("Aphorisms on Karma," No. 30)

Though, often it is said that Mother Earth is not able to bear anymore the burden of the unrighteous people, it does not seem to have reached its acme, so as to *destroy* the earth. We can understand this by the analogy of the human body. A human being does not die because of his selfishness or thoughts of anger and hatred. For a long time he may suffer from sicknesses like ulcers, etc., and only sometimes the sickness proves fatal. That is in accordance with the law of Karma. So also destruction of any planet is in accordance with the law of cycles. Cycles are the clocks of Karma. The periods of various minor and major cycles are determined by the Karma of the people who inhabit the planet.

Our earth is made up of tiny units of energy termed "lives." Cyclically, the lives of the earth that have been impressed by the harmful thoughts—the selfish thoughts—of millions of men [and women] reach a point of explosion, producing earthquakes, cataclysms or volcanoes.

Both Egyptians and Greeks had their cycles, which they derived from the Brahminical cycles, computed by the Indian Sages. The Cycles of the Egyptians are termed "Saros" and "Neros," and of which very little is known. H.P.B. points out in *Isis Unveiled* (I, pp. 30-31) that at the close of each "great year," which consists of six *sars* or *saros*, our planet (earth) is subjected to a thorough physical revolution. In the article, "Ancient Doctrines Vindicated by Modern Prophecy," (*H.P.B. Series No. 1*, p. 46), we are told that the "great

year” consists of 21,000 odd years (the latter varying) or six Chaldean *saros* consisting of 3,500 years each. These two decimillenniums are naturally halved, the first period of 10,500 years bringing us to the top of the cycle and a minor cataclysm; the latter decimillennium to a terrible and universal geological convulsion. During these 21,000 years, the polar and equatorial climates gradually exchange places, with polar region moving slowly toward the equatorial line with exuberant vegetation and animal life replacing the icy poles. This change of climate is necessarily attended by cataclysms and earthquakes. This year was called the *Heliacal* by the Greeks. The winter of this great year was called the Cataclysm or the Deluge—the summer was termed the *Ecpyrosis*. The popular traditions taught that at these alternate seasons the world was in turn burnt and deluged. This was also known to Babylonians and the Egyptian High priests. Regarding complete change of climates at the tropics and poles, *The Secret Doctrine* (II, p. 11), mentions that during the Miocene Age, Greenland and even Spitzbergen, which are the remnants of the Second or Hyperborean Continent, had *almost a tropical climate*. There was abundance of trees such as the Redwood, the Sequoia, Oaks, Poplars, Walnuts etc.—the Southern plants unknown to Northern regions.

There is yet another mention of alternate destruction by fire and water in *Isis Unveiled* (I, pp. 33-34). We are told that the computation of *saros* and *neros* is a secret computation and yet some of the mathematicians and archaeologists have fixed the length of a *neros* cycle to be 600 years. They say that the plane of ecliptic and the plane of equator will coincide in ten *neroses* or 6000 years, when the worlds would be destroyed by fire. In another ten *neroses* or 6000 years more, the sun would be situated relatively to the Southern Hemisphere instead of Northern Hemisphere, when the world would be destroyed by water. Again, after ten more ages or 6000 years hence, the two planes would coincide, and there would be destruction by fire. Finally, after ten *neroses*, or 6000 years more, the Sun would be situated relatively to the Northern Hemisphere,

as it is now and there would be destruction by water. This would complete 24,000 years, or nearly one sidereal year. This computation is erroneous, says H.P.B. But it gives us some idea as to how depending upon the relative position of the sun and earth, there is destruction by water or fire, which accompanies climate changes.

While the destruction by water refers to various deluges, the destruction by fire refers to volcanic eruption and earthquakes. *The Secret Doctrine* (II, 776 fn.) mentions that the continents perish in turn by fire and water, *i.e.*, either by earthquakes and volcanic eruptions or by sinking due to displacement of waters, which roll towards the poles to make place for continents. Our continent will perish by fire, *i.e.*, by earthquakes, which we are witnessing now.

Having completed our evolution in four Root Races, the humanity of our earth is now in the Fifth Root Race or Aryan Race. We are told that so far there have been four great cataclysms, supposed to mark the end of four Root Races, accompanied by disturbances in the axis of the earth. Since Vaivasvata Manu’s humanity appeared on this Earth, there have already been four axial disturbances, when old continents (except the first) submerged giving place to new ones and also giving rise to huge mountain chains (*S.D.*, II, 330). The first great cataclysm occurred when, what is now North Pole separated from the later continents. However, the First Race could not be destroyed by death because they had very ethereal bodies, which could not be affected by flood or fire. The Second or Hyperborean Continent and the bulk of Second Race perished, owing to the displacement of the great waters of the globe, and due to oceans changing their beds (*S.D.*, II, 138 and fn.). The Third Continent, called Lemuria, was destroyed by submarine fires, while “Atlantis,” the Fourth Continent, was submerged by the waves. (*S.D.*, II, 762)

Some of the myths concerning floods and deluges seem to refer to sinking of the Third and the Fourth Continents. Some of the well-known myths are Biblical account of Noah’s Ark, Hindu Puranic story of Manu, and Deukalion in Greek mythology. Biblical account

states that upset by the wickedness and violence of mankind, God sent devastating flood, and he also asked Noah to build a ship (Ark) and take in it *seven pairs* of each kind of animal and bird. But this must be understood *allegorically*.

However, similar story also occurs in the *Mahabharata*, with some variation. H.P.B. points out that Noah's flood is a purely mythical rendering of old traditions. Noah corresponds to Vaivasvata Manu of the Hindus, and is thus a progenitor. According to the story in the *Mahabharata*, while Vaivasvata Manu was engaged in devotion on the riverbank, a fish appears and pleads to be saved from bigger fish. He saves and places it in a jar, where growing larger and larger, he tells him of the forthcoming deluge. H.P.B. points out that it is the well-known "Matsya Avatar," the first Avatar of Vishnu and many other things besides. Vishnu orders a ship to be built, in which Manu is said to be saved along with the seven *Rishis*. H.P.B. explains that the seven Rishis stand for *seven Races*, the seven principles and various other things.

Lemuria is supposed to have perished about 700,000 years before the commencement of the Tertiary age (the Eocene) by a geological deluge, destroying the Third Root Race; from which, Vaivasvata Manu is shown to have saved a portion that formed the Fourth Root Race humanity. Similarly, he is said to have saved the Fifth Race during the destruction of the last Atlanteans, the remnants that perished at the time of destruction of the Ruta and Daitya islands some 850,000 years ago. This was followed by sinking of Plato's Atlantis or Poseidonis 11,000 years ago. But the main Atlantis perished several million years ago in Miocene period. (*S.D.*, II, 313-14 and 314 fn.). Most of Asia issued from under the water after the destruction of Atlantis. Africa came later, while Europe is the fifth and the latest portion. The two Americas emerged much earlier. (*S.D.*, II, 606 fn.)

(*To be concluded*)

## THE LAW OF TRANSMUTATION

The subject of the Hermetic Art is MAN, and the object of the art is the perfection of man.

—(*Isis*, I, 309)

TRANSMUTATION literally means changing a thing into another form, nature, or substance. The phenomenon of transmutation, in this sense, can be seen in action, everywhere in nature, which is observed and acknowledged by modern science. It was well known to the wise men of the past. What is, however, not admitted by the mainstream modern science is the claim on behalf of the Rosicrucian philosophers of the middle ages that they knew the secret of transmuting the base metals into the noble metals, *viz.*, silver and gold. The science was known in the middle ages in Europe as Alchemy, a derivative of the Arabian nomenclature, *Ul Khemi*, meaning, the Chemistry of Nature. Alchemists kept their knowledge of transmutation secret, and whatever they committed to writing on the subject, they wrote in cipher unintelligible to all but the initiated. Unable to make any sense of the strange terminology they used, repudiating the validity of their propositions, our modern schools of learning look up on their claim to be charlatanry, and consider alchemy to be a dream.

In our study of Theosophy we learn that modern science errs in discrediting alchemy while admitting, at the same time, that such transformations and transmutations are indeed going on in the bosom of Mother Nature. It is taking place in the central mass of the distant stars, as much as, in the core of our Sun, in the fiery bowels of the earth, and in the biological processes of living organisms on the earth. Science admits that base metals could be transmuted into gold through thermo-nuclear reactions in a nuclear reactor—"nuclear transmutation"—but that the enormous amount of energy required to be expended, and the high costs involved, make it a profitless enterprise. Some scientists have found experimental evidence to show that transmutation of chemical substances do take place in the

biological system of living organisms. They call it “biological transmutation.” But, it is disputed by other scientists, on the grounds that it clashes with the basic axiomatic assumptions of modern chemistry and, therefore, they are set aside, at any rate for the time being, by them as “anomalous.”

If our modern scientists have not discovered the secret of nature’s transmutations and imitate it in their laboratories, it is because they willfully confine their observations and researches to the external observable phenomena alone, disbelieving in the existence of occult virtues and essences of things on the plane of *noumena*. The ancient scientists, on the contrary, were thoroughly versed with the latter, and were able to apply their knowledge to produce such wonderful results which, in our day, would be looked upon as miracles.

The ancients were always distinguished—especially the Chaldean astrologers and Magians—for their ardent love and pursuit of knowledge in every branch of science. They tried to penetrate the secrets of nature in the same way as our modern naturalists, and by the only method by which this object can be obtained, namely: by experimental researches and reason. If our modern philosophers cannot apprehend the fact that they [ancients] penetrated deeper than themselves into the mysteries of the universe, this does not constitute a valid reason why the credit of possessing this knowledge should be denied [to] them or the imputation of superstition laid at their door. (*Isis*, I, 49-50)

Is transmutation of base metals into gold as claimed by the alchemists of olden days impossible? Is their claim of having known the secret of the “Elixir of life,” by which one could overcome physical death and extend one’s life span far beyond the normal span of human life, fraudulent? If, from out of the homogeneous igneous mass of the core of the earth, has been formed the crust of the earth, containing the many “elements,” some of which modern chemistry has catalogued in its “periodic tables,” it should be possible to reduce these “elements,” by some process, into their primary

homogeneous condition from which they were evolved. Not just that, it must also be possible to transmute one into another of a higher virtue and value. While the physicists and chemists of our day see in the earth nothing but a mass of electrical, magnetic, physical and chemical forces, the ancients saw it as a living organism with terrestrial circulation comparable to the circulatory system in the body of man. Just as our body, through its circulation, respiration and elimination renews itself, so does the Mother Earth—the “Mother of all living things.”

Now, since it is a doctrine as old as time, that nature is continually renewing her wasted energies by absorption from the source of energy, why should the child differ from the parent? Why may not man, by discovering the source and the nature of this recuperative energy, extract from the earth herself the juice or the quintessence with which to replenish his own forces? This *may* have been the great secret of the alchemists. Stop the circulation of the terrestrial fluids and we have stagnation, putrefaction, death; stop the circulation of the fluids in man, and stagnation, absorption, calcification from old age, and death ensue. If the alchemists had simply discovered some chemical compound capable of keeping the channels of our circulation unclogged, would not all the rest easily follow? And why, we ask, if the surface-waters of certain mineral springs have such virtue in the cure of disease and restoration of physical vigour, is it illogical to say that if we could get the first runnings from the alembic of nature in the bowels of the earth, we might, perhaps, find that the fountain of youth was no myth after all. (*Isis*, I, 503)

Numerous are the well testified historical anecdotes of men who actually made gold and gave it away, of men who lived far beyond the average span of mortal life on earth. Of the latter, legends are rife in this old land of India.

The basic postulate of the Alchemists is that there exists a universal, homogeneous, eternal essence of all things, containing

the potentialities of the numberless elements, which go into the composition of the body of the universe, and are capable of being resolved into the primal homogeneous Essence. The latter was called the “Universal Solvent,” the “Philosopher’s Stone,” the “Hermetic Gold,” of which they said, it “draws inferior natures in the metals, and intensifying and multiplying, converts into itself” (*Isis*, I, 511)—a statement pregnant with meaning.

Alchemy was studied under three main aspects: Cosmic, human and terrestrial, or, to put it in another way, Spiritual, psychic and physical, each of which had a number of sub-disciplines or specializations. The actual transmutation of base metals into the nobler metal, gold, was one of the minor specializations belonging to the terrestrial aspect of alchemy—the lowest of the three. The other two, the psychic and the spiritual aspects, were held in highest veneration and they belonged to the higher alchemy. The holy sages, devoted themselves to the study of the higher alchemy—transmutation of their lower animal nature into their higher divine nature, the true Gold of the alchemists—the Alchemy of the Soul. They fitted themselves to be the co-workers with the divine nature, in her ceaseless work of transmutation of grosser energies into subtler, of evolving the higher order of life from the lower. This is a universal, eternal process, of which, Man, in his three-fold constitution of Spirit, Soul and Body, is the highest product and potentially a perfect exemplar. The end and aim of man’s existence is to discover this, that he himself, in his essential nature, is the universe, which is, likewise, three-fold; and to become conscious, active, intelligent helper of nature in her ceaseless work of transmutation.

We are spiritual beings. Never were we born, nor shall we ever hereafter cease to be. We have descended, in the course of the great cycles of involution and evolution of the world, to the physical plane, even at the inevitable and unavoidable risk, thereby, of losing the memory of our immortal spiritual consciousness. It is in order to learn the science and the art of the Alchemy of the Soul—which is raising up the lower nature, with the help of “the one unfading

golden light of spirit,” the light and the life of our soul, the true Gold of the alchemists. H.P.B. writes:

For that “solitary” light in man, which burns for ever, and can never be darkness in its intrinsic nature, though the “animal” outside us may remain blind to it—is that “Light” upon which the Neo-Platonists of the Alexandrian school, and after them the Rosecroix and especially the Alchemists, have written volumes, though to the present day their true meaning is a dark mystery to most men. (*H.P.B. Series No. 14*, p. 40)

The end and aim of this higher alchemy is to dispel the darkness of the nether soul by that Eternal Light which burns in the deep recesses of our consciousness. Were not gold intrinsically present, however undetectable by physical and chemical analysis, in the base metals, the latter could not by any means be transmuted into gold. This is terrestrial Alchemy. Were not the beams of the Light Eternal of the Spiritual Sun present intrinsically in the molecules of gross material nature, however obscure, the former could not by any means be awakened to life and activity, purified and merged in the first. This is Spiritual Alchemy, the noblest of all sciences and the greatest of all arts.

Man himself is the exemplar of the law of transmutation, as he, as the Eternal Thinker, is the link between the animal below and the divine spirit above, in whom the two natures dwell. Through him, and him alone, the effulgent golden light of spirit latent in the animal can be elicited, evolved, made to shine through it, and raised up to its original purity “to be wedded in Eternity” in the ecstasy of the realization of the eternal oneness of the two opposite natures—Spirit and Matter.

It is the Marriage of “Heavenly Man” [Logos] with the “Virgin of the World”—Nature, as described in *Pymander*; the result of which is their progeny—immortal man. (*S.D.*, II, 231)

## 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:** How do I know that I am being tempted? When someone uses unfair means to progress, is he not tempting me to do the same? Is it not the way of the world? How do I resist temptation?

**Answer:** What is temptation? When there is a conscious or unconscious desire or aversion in us, we tend to get carried away to fulfill that desire or avoid the unwelcome situation—almost against our better judgment. For a diabetic patient, a piece of sweet may become a great temptation. For another, it could be good clothes or cars or travel or movies or women. When we say, we are being tempted, we know that we are being drawn to do something, which in our considered view is not right. When the temptation presents itself, we are standing on the bridge (*antaskarana*) and can choose to go either way. This is a better state than being simply carried away by the force of our desire. When we resist the temptation, it becomes weaker and weaker until at last it stops bothering us altogether. However, it takes a long time to reach that stage.

But who tempts us? Can *someone else* really tempt us? No. For, unless there is a desire in us, even if it is in a germ form, nothing and no one from outside can really tempt us. However, it is possible for another to know about our weakness and then exploit or manipulate it into making us do exactly what they want. It is like a chink in the armour through which a weapon can pierce us. The Buddha says: “He whose hand has no wound may touch poison. Poison harms not one who has no wound.” As children, we could be tempted by toys, and as we grew up, we had outgrown our desire for toys. But then desire for good clothes, movies, and the opposite sex were our

weakness. In future, as we grow, these may be replaced by something else.

If someone uses unfair means to obtain promotion or recognition, we are tempted to do the same, particularly when our fair and just approach fails to bring us the desired results. Do we then give in? Is someone else tempting us? No. It is the desire in us for recognition, for progress, which tempts us to do the same. It is a matter of adherence to principles and ethics, which have been found to be of value and must not be allowed to be shaken. What we need at such times is to remind ourselves that we are the Spirit within, which desires neither praise nor blame, which remains the same through success or failure, which is capable of absorbing all jolts and shocks. Then we are able to stand firm without deviating from the true path. Also, if we have paid attention to our own experiences, we would know that nothing external brings us lasting happiness. Realized goals and achieved objects lose their initial charm and we are forever striving after new goals, new objects. Desires thus grow endlessly. We need to discriminate. We need to be vigilant and exercise control.

Just because majority of the people follow a trait does not make it right. It is said, “Jesus was killed by the choice of *majority*.” Never should we allow the voice of majority to drown our own small voice of conscience or inner judgment, which admonishes and guides us. If something within prompts that it would be wrong to do a certain thing, then we must not do it. If we do, we create a kind of divide within our own nature. And if we persist in following others, our own judgment tends to get warped. Hence it is important to be vigilant all the time. The path of righteousness is not easy and we have to be prepared to make sacrifices at a personal level. Temptations are the trials that come in our path and when overcome, we are initiated from one level to the next. But once conquered and subdued, they cannot torment us any more. But until the final triumph, the disciple is tested. Indra is said to have sent *apsaras* or celestial damsels to tempt the *rishis* and produce disturbance in their meditation.

In Buddhism, temptation is personified as “Mara.” He is

considered to be an individual who tempts us to follow the wrong way. He is depicted as wearing a shining jewel in his crown, which dazzles and bewitches a person. Mara is said to have tempted even Jesus and Buddha. As the disciple advances along the spiritual path, the vices of the whole of human family, as it were, rise against him and assume the form of the “dweller of the threshold,” trying to sway him from the path in a last ditch and desperate effort. These find comrades in the Black forces about which Mr. Judge writes:

Be sure that you understand me right about the Black side. I mean this: when men work along a good while, and really raise themselves up by that, they get the attention of the Black if they are of sufficient importance for it. I have their attention, and it makes a trouble now and then. What we all want to have, then, is the best armour for such a fight, and that is patience. Patience is a great thing, and will work in more ways than one, not only in personal life, but in wider concerns. (*Letters That Have Helped Me*, p. 117)

**Question:** What is the Theosophical view about Mongoloid child? Who is responsible for his birth? Is such a child responsible for his Karma during that life?

**Answer:** *Encyclopaedia Britannica* states that Mongolism is also known as Down’s Syndrome or trisomy 21. It is a congenital disorder caused because “chromosome 21” is present in triplicate instead of being two or pair, one from each parent. Thus, it gives to the person a total of 47 chromosomes rather than the normal (23 pairs) 46. Persons born with Down’s Syndrome are characterized by mental retardation, often accompanied by poor muscle tone, heart or kidney malformations or both. The mental retardation seen in persons with Down’s Syndrome is usually moderate, though in some it may be mild or severe. Down’s syndrome occurs in about 1 in every 800 live births, which increases markedly in the offspring of women over the age of 35.

Unlike the cases where deformity in the child is produced due to neglect on mother’s part or due to wrong diet or medicines, or even

due to imagination of the mother, in the case of a child born with Down’s syndrome the only culprit is “heredity.” Could we hold the parents responsible? Theosophy points out that heredity is only the mode used by nature to provide the Ego with the proper tenement in which to carry on its further evolution. In other words, the nature of the physical body—healthy or diseased; the mental capacity—with low or high IQ; the emotional nature, etc. are brought by the Ego with it as a result of karma in previous lives. These bodily, mental and emotional traits or qualities are called *samskaras* or *skandhas*. When a child is born with physical or mental limitations, though it might appear to be the limitations imposed on the Ego by *family heredity*, actually it is the exact consequences of the karma of that Ego in prior lives. Parents and heredity are only means for transmitting the physical, mental and emotional characteristics in a given life. Thus, the child is himself responsible for a birth in weak and sickly body coupled with mental retardation. It is difficult at our level to say, for what kind of karma the child gets such a birth. It could be the result of the misuse of the body and the mental faculties in some prior life. It could be as a result of persecution or ridicule of such a person in some past life, and for many such reasons. Mr. Judge’s explanation in *The Ocean of Theosophy* is that a child is born humpbacked *probably* because in some prior life he persistently reviled and persecuted a deformed person so as to imprint the picture of that person in his own immortal mind. On coming to birth again, the Ego carries that picture and causes the astral body, being formed in the womb, to assume a deformed shape, by electrical and magnetic osmosis through the mother of the child.

Why does such a child take birth to these particular parents and no other? It may be because they belong to the family line where transmission of such traits becomes possible. It may also be because the parents and the child are indissolubly connected by past actions, so that it is the occasion for punishment and learning for the parents. Instead of shunning or abandoning the child, if the parents decide to take care of it, they have the opportunity to develop patience,

sympathy and many other virtues, and of fulfilling their karmic debt.

During Karmic adjustment, as we repay the debts, the Law of Karma takes into account many factors. Crimes committed in *avidya* (ignorance), as by children, idiots, savages and people who know no better, involve *physical* but no *moral* responsibilities or karma. For instance, if a blind and helpless person *accidentally* hits another in the eye, causing hurt, it is usual for the hurt person to excuse the act and to feel no resentment, and to bear within no seed for future hate. But the same action done purposely, arouses hatred and resentment in the other person and that person on dying carries with him the seed of hatred and in some other life it will sprout and bring the reaction, pain and also the opportunity to learn the lesson. In the first case there will be consequences on the physical plane but no moral suffering, which is involved in the latter case. Thus, we might say that children suffering from Down's syndrome, with mental retardation would mainly suffer physical consequences for their actions during present life, while moral suffering would be in proportion to their retardation.

Mr. Judge has explained the *rationale* of the operation of the Moral Law of Compensation, in one particular case, of an idiot boy, born of wealthy parents, but with malicious nature. He mutilated flowers and killed insects, in his state of idiocy. The insects and flowers, not knowing his state of idiocy, turned their eyes upon him with pain, as he tortured them. In dying, his spiritual picture, together with that pain and the desire for revenge, were photographed, so to speak, upon their spirits (elementals). These elemental spirits being impressed with his image kept a link with him and when he was born again, as a normal person in the next life, these elementals precipitated down his glance, when he directed his glance on any thing or person. They saw what he looked upon and brought about disaster. But gradually the old impressions wore off and he found success in all that he did.

## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Most of us choose to live life comfortably, undisturbed by larger truths. Our belief systems work as lenses through which we interpret, and then decide and act accordingly. Writers and film-makers have tried to draw our attention to the fact that we have the ability to question, to choose and to make our own decisions. For instance, in the film, *The Matrix*, Neo, the protagonist, is offered the choice between "red pill," which represented seeing and knowing the truth, or "blue pill" that represented returning to the familiar life and an illusory world determined by Matrix, the machine, which controlled everything. It is a choice between all that we love, know and work towards, on one hand, and promise of truth with no idea of what that truth is, and how to find it. Choosing "blue pill" is having the blue print of the path to follow, without doubts and discomfort, which may be experienced by the trailblazer. We have learnt to silence the voice that says, "There must be more to life." Greek philosopher Plato has depicted this human condition in the "Allegory of the Cave," where a person, imprisoned in a dark cave, facing a wall, understands the world in terms of the shadows that are projected on the wall by the fire behind him. Plato explains how the philosopher or a questioner, who is like this prisoner, manages to escape from the cave, realizing that the shadows are not reality. Plato also explains that if the prisoners in the cave were suddenly released, some would be terrified and would want to return to the cave's familiar dark existence. Some others, who realized that their previous existence was but a shadow of truth, might want to return to the cave in order to help other prisoners, who might resist them. Leaving the cave or choosing the "red pill" is difficult because challenging the status quo carries the danger of rejection and even persecution.

Then what is it that prompts the heroes, pathfinders and trailblazers, to choose the red pill? It comes with dissatisfaction with life as it is, accompanied by questioning. Then, there is letting go of the old, over-used lenses, with their self-limiting beliefs and flawed

concepts that cause us to suffer, and many times block us from reaching our highest potential. Gradually, one finds the strength to walk the lonely path and compassion to widen the limited sense of “us.” There is seeking of like-minded people and then almost in surprise we begin to perceive deeper Truth, writes Marguerite Theophil, a Mumbai-based organisational consultant and personal growth coach. (*Sunday Times of India [The Speaking Tree]*, August 22, 2010)

The mystical book, *Through the Gates of Gold*, shows through the imagery of “golden gate,” how difficult it is to choose the “red pill,” and effect the transition from the mundane to spiritual life, taking one’s evolution into one’s own hands, instead of drifting. There is a struggle involved in leaving behind ordinary life—centred in personal care and worldly affairs—in order to live a spiritual life, where the focus shifts from one’s personal self to Spiritual Self. It is a transition from dealing with tangible and palpable to things invisible, immaterial and impalpable, beyond the domain of the five senses. This “transition period” is the most delicate and crucial period in an aspirant’s life, because it is difficult to leave the familiar in order to grasp the unknown and the unfamiliar. It is here that he has to summon courage and take the next higher step, which requires both faith and trust.

The purpose of civilization is to produce spiritual fruit (progress and perfection) but unfortunately after the civilization has flowered, in terms of technological and material advancement, the flower of civilization falls and dies, without producing spiritual fruit. Why do we struggle to roll the stone up the hill only to see it roll down again? It is because of indolence and incredulity of humanity, which refuses to believe that peace and happiness can lie in the direction other than material advancement. A good person must recognize the need, and feel the urge to change.

*Light on the Path* states that only he who is untameable, who cannot be dominated, who knows that he has to play the lord over men, over facts, over all things save his own divinity, can arouse

the faculty of intuition. We are influenced by a thousand and one voices, but we have to follow only our own sense of right and wrong. We need to consult wise people, good books and above all our own inner nature. We may go wrong in our judgment, but the important thing is to learn self-reliance and self-rule.

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A study published in the recent edition of journal *Science* reveals that our Moon is shrinking, but very, very slowly and hence, it is not likely to disappear any time soon. New research has shown that as the interior of the moon has cooled and shrunk over the last billion years, it has led to formation of cracks on Moon’s crust, indicating the shrinking of the surface as well. Thomas Watters and his colleagues of the Centre for Earth and Planetary Studies at the Smithsonian’s National Air and Space Museum have identified 14 landforms called lobate scarps scattered over the surface of the Moon. The scarps, or cliffs, extend across some small craters, and small craters tend to be obliterated over time. Moreover, no large craters are imposed on top of the scarps, indicating that the scarps are relatively recent, and that this contraction occurred recently and that the Moon is still active. In planetary science, “recent” could mean a billion years ago. The size of the scarps indicates shrinkage in the size of the Moon of about 328 feet. (*The Times of India*, August 21, 2010)

Theosophy points out that like man, every planet is constituted of seven distinct principles. There is a spiritual “something,” a psychic “something,” an intellectual “something,” an astral “something,” and a physical “something,” in every planet. Moon is a dead planet, only in respect of her inner principles. Her lower or physical principles are not dead, but have a certain activity. It is stated that in a remote period, when there was no Earth, the Moon existed as an inhabited globe. When evolution on Moon was completed, she died, throwing all her energies into space and leaving behind the corpse

or physical vehicle. Thus, Moon is looked upon as former body of our Earth. These energies worked on the cosmic matter, bringing about gradual condensation of matter in space and produced our Earth. After that the Moon, its parent began to disintegrate, but continued to revolve around her child, the Earth, and influence it physically and psychically. Having transferred her powers and energies to the Earth, Moon is now soulless and lifeless, and yet she is described as “a *dead yet living* body.” She is a decaying corpse and yet the particles forming that dead body are full of active and destructive life. Before our earth has reached seventh Round, her mother Moon would have dissolved into thin air. (*S.D.*, I, 155-56 fn.)

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The recently released Hollywood film *Inception*, with Leonardo Di Caprio in the lead role, is all about “extracting” and “implanting” ideas and thoughts in the minds of others through the medium of dreams. The film depicts layers and layers of consciousness, and also dreams within dreams. *Mandukya Upanishad* explains that the word AUM represents, among other things, various states of consciousness. Thus, “A” stands for *Jagrat* or waking state, when consciousness turns outward through its seven instruments and 19 channels. “U” stands for *swapna* or dream state when consciousness turns inwards through the same 7 instruments and 19 channels. “M” stands for *Prajna* in which there is neither desire nor dream. It is a state of deep bliss. The fourth state is the silence that follows the word AUM and is called *Turiya*. In this state, consciousness turns neither outward nor inward. It is beyond both cognition and absence of cognition, and cannot be comprehended by the senses, logic or reasoning. It is pure consciousness or real Self. In between these four states there are three transitional states, thus making seven states of consciousness. In the first three states there is that which is a witness and one who experiences the Self. In the fourth state there is no witness or experiencer, because then you become one with

God. In the film we are shown that instruments like computers, sedatives, timers and “kick” machines are used to reach and implant ideas in the deeper layers of consciousness of the sleeping person. In order to reach deepest level of our being, the Self, we have to use seven instruments, through which Self can manifest, and they are: space, air, fire, water, earth, individuality and vital energy. The 19 channels are the four aspects of the mind: *manas* or perception, *chitta* or memory, *ahankara* or ego and *Buddhi* or intellect. Add to this, five *Jnanendriyas* or five cognitive senses—smelling, seeing, touching, tasting and hearing; five *Karmendriyas* or five action senses—eliminating, procreating, moving, grasping and speaking; five *pranas* or breaths—*prana*, *apana*, *vyana*, *udana* and *samana*, making it nineteen, writes P. V. Vaidyanathan. (*Sunday Times of India*, [*The Speaking Tree*], August 8, 2010)

In the film *Inception*, Di Caprio plays the role of a specialist who helps people against “dream thefts,” or *extractions*—the possibility of someone extracting corporate secrets from the sleeping or dreaming mind. He also attempts “inception,” or implanting the idea into a sleeping or dreaming mind, so that the person, on waking up, believes that idea to be his own.

Theosophy says that there is one consciousness, functioning at several levels. Thus, there are four states of consciousness, *viz.*, *Jagrat* (waking), *Swapna* (dreaming), *Sushupti* (dreamless sleep) and *Turiya*, which can be looked upon as concentric circles. *Atman* being at the centre, *Turiya* state is closest to *Atman*. This is the state into which only sages and seers enter at will. *Jagrat* state being farthest from the centre. In *Sushupti* we exist as our true individuality, unhindered by personality. Mr. Judge calls it a great spiritual reservoir “by means of which the momentum toward evil living is held in check.” *Turiya* State is a state of high spiritual consciousness, and is a state beyond Dreamless Sleep State. It is the state in which the lower mind merges into the Divine triad, *Atma-Buddhi-Manas*. In this state the individualized spirit lives the ecstatic life, where it possesses true knowledge and the universal, eternal, ever-present

intuition.

Rational and irrational desires, which we try to repress and push back into the “unconscious,” find their expression in dreams. In fact, there are seven kinds of dreams. Besides dreams of premonitions and warning dreams, there are dreams sent by adepts, good or bad, by mesmerizers, as also by the thoughts of very powerful minds bent on making us do their will (*Transactions*, p. 79). In the waking life, a hypnotizer can paralyze the will and hypnotize a person of weak will. He can implant a suggestion in his mind, and such a person is known to act on the suggestion of the hypnotizer, even after he has come out of the hypnotic state. Crimes have been committed under hypnotic suggestions. Implanting a suggestion can also be done during sleep, because the will of the person is generally, dormant or inactive during dreams. It is possible to give certain bent to the will of the sleeping person, to produce desired results, “by mutual inter-action—produced almost mechanically—through union between two or more ‘principles’ into one, so that they will act in perfect harmony, without any friction...when awake.” H.P.B. calls this one of the “tricks” of “black magic.” It could be used for good purpose also, and then it becomes part of the training of an occultist. It is only in the case of the spiritually advanced person that his will can act consciously during his sleep. It can also act on the will of another sleeping person, so as to be able to control his dreams and therefore, control his actions during the waking state (*Transactions*, p. 66). Our dream state is influenced by our waking state, and so also, our waking state is affected by our dreams.

Though it is possible for certain powerful minds to “extract” and “implant” ideas in the mind of a sleeping person, it is not a common occurrence. Also, a person who strives to live pure life, who has clear conscience and a firm desire to benefit humanity, may find that he is protected.