

		Rs. 3/-
Vol. 16	September 2024	No. 5

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

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सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

Vol. 16, No. 5

September 17, 2024

RULES FOR HIGHER CONDUCT

THERE is a close relationship between beliefs and human conduct or human behaviour. In fact, our beliefs are the basis of our conduct. Individuals cannot change their conduct from bad to good or from good to better, unless they change their beliefs. Thus, those with materialistic values, such as, “eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die,” are likely to lead a pleasure-seeking and frivolous life because of their disbelief in God, Soul or life-after-death. Hence, it is extremely necessary to question our beliefs as also to examine our conduct. Those who wish to take their evolution into their own hands must examine their beliefs. Moreover, it is important to note that our conduct is also based on the voice of conscience, which in turn depends on our beliefs; it is moulded and coloured by racial and national traditions as well as by age-old customs. As a result, our voice of conscience is not always reliable and can lead us in the wrong direction. However, it is far better to be guided from *within*, by one’s beliefs, and correct them when necessary, because those who lack any belief-system are more likely to be ruled from outside, say, by religious dogmas and religious authority. Therefore, for a good, and especially for spiritual conduct, it is necessary to have well-defined beliefs, based on the high principles and in conformity with Nature’s laws.

Both, the *Gita* and the *Dhammapada*, emphasize good conduct and teach: “Do not perform actions that are evil.” That is because when we commit evil action, we forge fetters of suffering and pain,

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while good actions deliver us from the bondage of suffering. But much confusion arises when we ask “What is evil?” There are very few people who knowingly follow the path of evil, the rest of us are not wicked but commit mistakes, unconsciously to ourselves. We might say, that is right which helps us onward on the path of evolution from the stage at which we find ourselves; and that which hinders our evolution is wrong and sinful. To do right is conducive to happiness and to do wrong is to be at war with ourselves and with others, and brings misery.

Though there are varied views on good and evil conduct, and also metaphysical basis for the same, the Buddha begins by saying, “Do not do that which *you* consider to be evil and wrong.” When you catch yourself doing wrong, stop and do not continue. Develop the longing or desire to do good. Hasten to do good and repeat it because happiness is the outcome of good conduct. Evil and good arise in the mind. They express themselves in speech or action. Most of us begin by being careful as to what we speak and what we do, but we do not succeed because we do not control our thoughts. The advice is to consult our conscience and our Soul. Conscience gives us a warning against evil, but is not able to tell us “What to do.” The Soul is the Divine Ego which has the power to tell us what we should do. We fail to consult our Ego because we are driven by our impulses; by our likes and dislikes, and by our loves and hates. In other words, we are swayed by our feelings, desires and emotions. We need to train ourselves to first consult our mind before we say or do anything.

The first step is to prepare the mind by study and reflection upon a philosophy that teaches Universal Truths, such as the philosophy of Theosophy, which gives true concepts of God, Laws of Karma and Reincarnation, triple line of evolution—physical, mental and spiritual, the ideal of the Masters, spiritual perfection as the goal of evolution, and the spiritual unity of all. We need to study and reflect upon these ideas by exercising our reason and intuition, and then make them the basis for our conduct.

If Universal Brotherhood is a fact in Nature and yet we seem to miss out perceiving this Truth, the reason for that has been explained by a Master of Wisdom, thus: “Look around you, my friend: see the ‘three poisons’ raging within the heart of man—anger, greed, delusion; and the five obscurities—envy, passion, vacillation, sloth, and unbelief—ever preventing their seeing truth.”

Thus, it is necessary to have an ethical foundation for the right conduct. Normally, human conduct or human behaviour at home, in the office, in the society, and as a citizen, requires to be regulated by certain rules or laws to ensure protection, cooperation, peace and well-being of human beings. These are man-made rules, changing over time, in order to adapt to changing circumstances. Man-made rules are made by humans adapted to the needs of a particular time and place, but imperfectly modelled after moral or natural law. According to Martin Luther King Jr., a just law is a man-made code that squares with the moral law, while an unjust law is a code that is out of harmony with the moral law.

Every religion has its “Code of Conduct” which consists of certain ethical rules or injunctions, because good character and conduct are the foundation of spiritual life. For instance, in the Hindu Philosophy, a “code of conduct” has been presented in the form of *yamas* and *niyamas*. The *yamas* are the don’ts, or five negative things to abstain from. These rules prohibit those activities which we perform from our lower animal nature, which tend to bring harm. Hence, the *yamas* help us to control lower, impulsive sensual nature. The five *yamas* are: *Ahimsa* (non-violence in thought, word and deed), *Satya* (truth), *Asteya* (non-stealing or misappropriating another’s wealth or possessions), *Aparigraha* (non-possessiveness) and *Brahmacharya* (celibacy). The *yamas* are called the “mighty universal vows” which should be followed unconditionally by everyone because they include rules on which the society is based.

The *niyamas* are the do’s or ethical injunctions that help to cultivate refined moral qualities and put us on the path of compassion, selflessness, wisdom and bliss. They are spiritual or virtuous deeds.

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The five positive things to strive for, are: *Saucha* (purity in body, speech and mind), *Santosha* (contentment, acceptance of circumstances with optimism), *Tapas* (austerity), *Swadhyaya* (self-study or self-examination), *Ishwar-Pranidhan* (Surrender to God).

According to traditional Buddhism, the “code of conduct” for laypeople is *Panchashila* or five precepts: no killing, stealing, lying, sexual misconduct, or intoxicants. In becoming a Buddhist, or affirming one’s commitment to Buddhism, a layperson is encouraged to take vow to abstain from these negative actions. However, there is higher, more stringent “code of conduct” for Buddhist monks and nuns.

Theosophy points out that all religions have sprung from the same source and hence they are all true at the bottom, false on the surface. Comparative study of world religions reveals striking similarity in ethics, as shown by H. P. Blavatsky in her book *Isis Unveiled*. The rules of Manu, Buddha’s *Patimokha* rules for Bhikkhus, and Sermon on the Mount by Jesus reiterate age old truths of spiritual living. If we turn to the *Pratimoksha Sutra* and other religious tracts of the Buddhists, we find following ten commandments, writes H.P.B. (*Isis*, II, 164). Thus,

1. Thou shalt not kill any living creature.
2. Thou shalt not steal.
3. Thou shalt not break thy vow of chastity.
4. Thou shalt not lie.
5. Thou shalt not betray the secrets of others.
6. Thou shalt not wish for the death of thy enemies.
7. Thou shalt not desire the wealth of others.
8. Thou shalt not pronounce injurious and foul words.
9. Thou shalt not indulge in luxury (sleep on soft beds or be lazy).
10. Thou shalt not accept gold or silver.

These are ten basic rules or ethical injunctions which are obligatory and binding on every Bhikkhu. If he breaks any of these rules, he is expelled from the *Sangha*. These rules include the five rules of *Panchashila* enjoined upon every Buddhist. Control of senses and contentment, together with cultivation of friends who are noble, pure and zealous are the additional steps that would help the Bhikkhu to keep these rules in the face of temptations.

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In one's spiritual journey towards Adeptship, there are various degrees of discipleship, from lay chela, probationary chela to accepted chela. *Light on the Path* says that the one who chooses to walk the path of occultism makes choices, and knowingly he takes steps on the right or wrong path, and every step produces great karmic results. Vices which are conquered at *gross* level in ordinary men, "reappear with changed aspect in the heart of the disciple," who then has to deal with *subtle* aspects of the vices and weaknesses and overcome them.

A disciple takes a vow to walk the spiritual path. In the worldly sense, the one breaking a vow, a promise made to his divine nature, may hardly be regarded a "sinner." But a vow cannot be taken casually by the one who is determined to walk the spiritual path. The Karmic responsibility is in proportion to his knowledge. The more the knowledge—of right and wrong—the less will be the "mercy" of the law. For instance, the severity of the karmic backlash in case of a Bhikkhu stealing bread when hungry, would be more than in the case of an ordinary man—because the Bhikkhu has taken up the discipline to control his lower appetites. This might be the principle behind the stories about a great karmic backlash for a trifling sin. "Every pledge or promise unless built upon four pillars—absolute sincerity, unflinching determination, unselfishness of purpose, and moral power...is an insecure building," writes H.P.B.

Just as there are man-made laws and ethical rules for ordinary human beings there are rules of most stringent character that are binding on all who walk the path of occultism, and the one who breaks them cannot hope to escape the consequences. "Those rules are not made up by some brain or mind, but flow from the laws of nature, of mind, and of soul," writes Mr. Judge (*Vernal Blooms*, pp. 199-200). Perhaps this can be best expressed by the saying, "Virtue is its own reward, and vice its own punishment." Even before one can get punishment for the wrong action, through Karma, which is an all-seeing law, there is already a corruption of character.

Mr. Judge gives two examples of "rules for higher conduct," by

showing how the rules or commandments given by Jesus for ordinary people will apply differently to those who have progressed on the Spiritual Path. Jesus said, “Thou shalt not steal,” which when applied to an ordinary person implies that one should not steal wealth or possessions of another person. But at a higher level, “possessions” include “ideas, their private thoughts, their mental forces, powers and faculties, their psychic powers—all, indeed, on all planes that they own or have” (*ibid.*, p. 201). An adept can direct his inner sight and hearing to another mind, and at once, he becomes aware of another’s thoughts. Only a rogue would pry into another’s mind without permission, but never an adept, writes Mr. Judge. No one has the right to look into another’s mind and pick out its secrets, as it amounts to burglary on a mental and psychic plane, only much worse. Analogous to the rule on material plane, “Thou shalt not steal,” the rule on psychic plane prohibits one from stealing the thoughts of another. Even if we possess the power, we must not try to influence or pry into mind of another that is not protected. If we find that we are about to discover the secrets of another, we must at once withdraw and proceed no further. Even if he happens to be a disciple, it is misuse of power, and he would lose the power. “For nature has her laws and her policemen, and if we commit felonies in the Astral world the great Law and the guardians of it, for which no bribery is possible, will execute the penalty, no matter how long we wait, even if it be for ten thousand years.” (*The Ocean of Theosophy*, p. 149)

The other commandment given by Jesus, “Thou shalt not bear false witness,” means one should not give false testimony, as in court of law. When one gives false testimony, they are influencing the judgement of the Judge and opinion of others in the court, by creating a false picture about a person, and that person, though innocent, can get punishment. This principle includes all forms of lying and has its roots in integrity and honesty.

At a higher level, “it requires you never to inject into the brain of another a false or untrue thought....It comes before him, and he

overcome by its strength perhaps, finds it echoing in him, and it is false witness speaking falsely within, confusing and confounding the inner spectator who lives on thought,” writes Mr. Judge. (*Vernal Blooms*, p. 202)

We can take as an example, a person instilling false ideas into the mind of another. For instance, consider a student who has been studying correct philosophy, which teaches that one’s sins cannot be forgiven and cannot be wiped away, but that one has to bear the consequences of one’s wrongdoings. Now, someone with a strong mind implants the ideas into the mind of the student that one’s sins can be forgiven if one prays to God, or they be washed away by taking a dip into Ganga waters, or by believing that Christ died on the Cross for humanity and shed his blood on our behalf, etc. If the person is weak-minded then he will be confused—although at that moment he may brush it aside, there is a seed of doubt sown into his mind. Mr. Judge goes to the extent of saying that in an argument “Urge no man to see as yourself, as it is quite possible you may see differently when you awake in the morning. It is wiser to let the matter rest without argument.” (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 36*, p. 8)

There are people who are weak minded, and there are people who are sensitives, and therefore easily influenced and have no protection. There is a profound thought on Black Magic and black magicians in *Letters That Have Helped Me* (p. 161): Mr. Judge suggests that it is easy to fall into Black Magic or dark side of nature. “The first exercise of Black Magic is to psychologize people.” When a person tries to bring upon another an undue personal psychological influence, it becomes *unconscious black magic*. By our very act of living, we influence others around us, for good or ill. However, enormous would be the Karma of someone who deliberately and with premeditation influences hundreds of people, at times misguiding them through wrong philosophy. On the other hand, the great ones entertain only such benevolent thoughts that they charge the atmosphere *with entities powerful for good alone*.

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

ROOTS—THE SAGA OF AN AMERICAN FAMILY—II

SLAVE trade, means the capturing, selling, and buying of enslaved persons. Slavery and trading in slaves have existed throughout the world since ancient times. In the Atlantic slave trade, enslaved African people were transported to the Americas by slave traders, and the vast majority of them were from Central and West Africa. European slave ships regularly used the “triangular trade route.” The first side of the triangle was the export of goods from Europe to Africa. A number of African kings and merchants took part in trading of enslaved people from 1440 to about 1833. For each captive, the African rulers would receive a variety of goods from Europe. These included guns, ammunition, alcohol, and other factory-made goods. The second side of the triangle was the export of enslaved Africans across the Atlantic Ocean to the Americas and the Caribbean Islands. The third side of the triangle was the return of goods, such as, cotton, sugar, tobacco, to Europe from the Americas. The colonial South Atlantic and Caribbean economies were particularly dependent on slave labour for the production of sugarcane and other commodities. By the middle of the seventeenth century, African slaves and their offspring were being considered legally the property of their owners, as children born to slave mothers were also slaves, and were sold at markets with other goods and services.

A major Christian justification for the use of slavery, especially against those with dark skin, was the “Curse of Ham,” which refers to a biblical parable (*Genesis*, 9:20-27) in which Ham, the son of Noah sins by seeing his father drunk and naked. Noah then curses that Ham’s offspring, Canaan, will be a “servant of servants unto his brethren.” Many scholars started interpreting this passage as justification for the enslavement of coloured people, especially those of African descent.

In the *Key to Theosophy* (pp. 40-42, *Indian Edition*,) we come

across H.P.B.'s comments on justification of slavery based on verse 25 (*Genesis*, IX). She observes, "People's ideas about right and wrong have been entirely perverted by the literal acceptance of the Jewish Bible.... 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth' has come to be the first maxim of your law." Whatever Moses is now believed to have been, he was an Initiate. We read in *Isis Unveiled* (II, 471) that "*The real Hebrew Bible was the secret volume unknown to the masses.*" The teachings of Moses have been distorted. Since Moses was teaching the *tribals*, "Eye for an Eye..." may have meant that for your one eye, take only one eye of the enemy and not more. It may also be allegorical statement of the way the law of Karma works—as you sow, so shall you reap. However, Jesus seems to set a higher standard. We may refer to St. Matthew's Gospel, Chapter 5, where, for instance, Jesus says: "if you love them (only) which love you, what reward (or merit) have ye? Do not even the Publicans [Roman tax-gatherers] the same? And if you salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even Publicans the same?"

H.P.B. observes that the statement in *Genesis*, "Cursed be Canaan, a servant of the servants shall he be unto his brethren" was taken literally, giving rise to inhuman practice of slave-trafficking. In chapter IX of *Genesis*, we read that Noah and his sons, Ham, Shem and Japhet, were saved from the floods. They are considered to be the ancestors of all the people on the earth. Noah was the first man who planted the vineyard and then he became drunk. We are told that in his drunken state, he removed his clothes and was lying naked. His son Ham entered the tent and saw the nakedness of his father and reported it to his other two brothers who then covered him. When Noah was sober again, he became aware of what his youngest son Ham had done, *i.e.*, he had stolen the garment of his father, he gives curse that Canaan (one of the four sons of Ham) will be slave of Shem and Japhet. In the *Secret Doctrine* (II, 397), we read that Noah represents Third Race separated, and his three sons represent the last three subraces of the Third Race. Ham

“symbolizing that race which uncovered the ‘*nakedness*’ of the Parent Race, and of the ‘Mindless,’ *i.e.*, committed sin.” In *Isis Unveiled* (I, 149-50), H.P.B. explains that Adam and Eve were given “coats of skin” by Lord God which shows evolution into physical man. Noah has obtained these garments of skin from Enoch and Methuselah, and he takes them into the ark. Ham steals them from Noah and gives them “in secret” to Cush (one of the sons of Ham) and Cush gives them to Nimrod. Cush wears the coat of skin “in secret,” *i.e.*, when his spiritual nature began to be tainted by the material, it is placed or passed on to Nimrod, who is the strongest and most powerful of physical men, the last remnant of antediluvian giants.

According to the *Book of Genesis*, Canaan was the youngest son of Ham as also the father of the Canaanites. According to *Genesis* X (verses 15-19) Canaan was the ancestor of tribes who originally occupied the ancient Land of Canaan, whereas verse 21 says that Shem, the elder brother of Japhet was the ancestor of all the Hebrews. Some modern scholars view the curse of Canaan as justification for the later Israelites driving out and enslaving the Canaanites. Another explanation is that in the 1600 and 1700s, a misreading of the language led to a belief that the name Ham referred to “dark” or “black,” and this incorrect interpretation was used by the advocates of the enslavement of the Black people, to justify their stance. But scholars negated this entirely.

H.P.B. writes: “What crimes have been committed on the strength of this infernal (if taken in its dead letter) passage in *Genesis*, history alone gives us an idea, however inadequate.” For instance, at the close of Middle Ages which is around fifteenth century, the slave trade in Europe was stopped under the power of Moral Force or on moral basis. But at the same time two major events occurred which in a way proved to be something which brought curse on European countries. Around that time there was discovery of large quantities of gold and silver in the New World after Christopher Columbus discovered America. By 1550 Spain had power over West Indies

and Central America. The other was discovering and travelling to that coast of Africa from where human beings were picked up on a ship and used as slaves. There was gold and silver in the Caribbeans or West Indies islands like Cuba, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, etc. which had to be mined and for which labour was needed. The slaves were picked up from the African coast and taken to West Indies in a ship. Middle passage refers to the trade where African men, women and children were packed onto ships, in an area below the deck, living with the dead, and were transported across the Atlantic to the West Indies. The voyage took two to three months. This went on for 400 years. During one such voyage nearly 2 ½ lakh people were thrown into the sea out of some three million. These slaves were made to work in sugarcane and rice fields. H.P.B. writes, “‘In the name of the most Holy Trinity,’ the Spanish Government (Roman Catholic) concluded more than ten treaties authorizing the sale of some five hundred thousand human beings.” (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 42 & fn.)

We can understand this probably in the light of the concept of spiritual slavery, wherein each man is a slave to his sins and it is impossible for him to free himself from the life of evil. Then God redeems him, by calling him. He is “bought with a price,” so that now he is God’s “property” and God loves and protects him. Thus the “bondage” is beneficial. Based on this the Catholics of Spain and elsewhere used to baptize the slaves, convert them and then take care of their marriages, burials, etc., and in return the slaves served them.

When did slavery end? On September 22, 1862, Abraham Lincoln issued a preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, and on January 1, 1863, he made it official that “slaves within any State, or designated part of a State...in rebellion...shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free.” However, it was passing of the 13th Amendment, that officially ended all slavery in America, after the Civil War ended in 1865.

“Saviours of nations such as....Lincoln...owe their elevation,

their singular power, and their astonishing grasp upon the right men for their purpose, not to trained intellect or long preparation in the schools of their day, but to . . . unseen Adepts, who crave no honours, seek no publicity, and claim no acknowledgement,” writes Mr. Judge. Theosophy teaches that spiritually advanced beings known as Adepts, remain in secluded spots which are inaccessible to the unprepared disciples or merely curious people. Often, they choose to remain in the invisible atmosphere of the earth, in a fine or ethereal body, being able to remain in touch with what happens on earth and able to guide human beings by sending ideas. They are known as *Nirmanakayas*.

They help by putting right ideas in the mind of the person who is far enough advanced. These Beings are constantly engaged in the far greater task of the betterment of the soul of man and the elevation of the race, which they accomplish through human agents. These wonderful beings have swayed and are shaping even today the destiny of nations through their human agents, such as, pillars of peace and makers of war like Bismarck, or saviours of nations such as Washington, Lincoln and Grant. It is said that Lincoln always felt that in some way he was to be an instrument for some great work, writes Mr. Judge.

In an article that appeared in *The Theosophical Movement* (October 1959) we read that Abraham Lincoln, the Civil War President of the United States of America, said, “As I would not be a *slave*, so I would not be a *master*.” His was indeed the compassionate mind yoked to the intelligent heart. He could see that “slavery” was acting as force and dividing the country into two opposing groups, and could see the dangers of such a situation. In the midst of confused social, political and humanitarian issue of that time, he shouldered heavy responsibilities and dealt “with malice towards none, with charity for all,” and thus rendered a great service to human brotherhood and saved the unity of his nation.

The Theosophical Glossary defines “Humanity” as the “great brotherhood by virtue of the sameness of the material from which it

is formed, physically and morally. Unless, however, it becomes a Brotherhood also intellectually, it is no better than a superior genus of animals.” Mr. Judge points out that universal brotherhood is a fact in nature, whether we recognize it or not. It is a sound doctrine and yet we fail to practise it because we have denied it in the heart. Human solidarity is the corollary to Universal Unity. There is the same divine spark shining in every human heart. We have to cultivate the art of looking beyond the personality, the outer garments, which delude us into thinking that we are separate from others. “The white race must be the first to stretch out the hand of fellowship to the dark nations, and...call the poor despised ‘nigger’ a brother.” This may not be palatable to all, but he is no Theosophist who objects to this principle. (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 33*, p. 2)

There are various kinds of slaveries, of which slave-purchasing and slave-owning is only one. It is the most concrete type of slavery, in which there is owning of another body, mind and soul. It is far more detrimental to one’s progress to be enslaved mentally, morally and emotionally. “A slave may be dragged through the streets in chains, and yet retain the quiet soul of a philosopher, as was well seen in the person of Epictetus,” says *Light on the Path*.

In the article, “Slavery” that appeared in *The Theosophical Movement* (October 1938) we read that there is religious slavery wherein one believes in what is given out by the priest, *pandit* or *purohit* and is ready to follow their orders as to “what to do and what not to do,” without any questioning or analysis. The priest does not use a weapon like a whip or a revolver but makes use of human superstition and credulity to persuade people. Thus, there are slaves and slave-drivers. The slave-drivers of one age are driven by the slaves in another, and this snowball work of Karma would continue till the understanding dawns on us that man *is* his brother’s keeper. We are advised to undertake self-examination, every night or as soon as we get up in the morning, by putting certain questions to ourselves, which will determine if we fall into the category of “slave” or “slave-driver.” For instance, let us ask ourselves, have

we, even unconsciously to ourselves, a tendency to control other people's thoughts, feelings or Will? Do we have the desire to direct, guide and order those who were only seeking our advice? Do we have the desire to play the guru? In these tendencies is seen the germ of being slave-drivers. On the other hand, if we not only wish to consult but to receive orders about what we should do or not do, or seek help so that we may go to heaven and not to hell, after death, or we wait open-mouthed to be fed instead of doing our own thinking, exercising our own power of choice and take our own decisions, we have slave mentality.

For a spiritual-aspirant it is very necessary to learn to not depend too much on anything outside, but rather learn to listen to the voice of his Inner Self. When our mind stops being a slave to our desires and passions, and stops paying heed to the voice of flesh, then it is able to hear the Inner Voice. It is only the one who acquires the power of Dependence on the Higher Self recognizes the law of Interdependence in its correct sense.

This has been beautifully expressed in *Through the Gates of Gold*, which says, there exists a double constitution in man, which refers to lower, animal and higher Divine nature. When man enslaves his Divine nature to his animal nature, he becomes worse than an animal, because then the force of his double nature is used in one direction. The animal pure and simple obeying his instincts, seeks to gratify his love of pleasures. The man who has enslaved his Divine nature turns the divine powers of his being into his channel of selfish self-gratification and "degrades his soul by making it the slave of his senses. The god deformed and disguised, waits on the animal and feeds it." But let the God in man enslave the animal and "you find yourself in possession of a great force hitherto unsuspected and unknown. The god as servant adds a thousandfold to the pleasures of the animal; the animal as servant adds a thousandfold to the powers of the god."

(Concluded)

EXTRACTS FROM UNPUBLISHED LETTERS

MISCELLANEOUS—IV

THERE will be no difficulty about becoming better speakers by the right kind of preparation. What is necessary is not great learning and recondite use of phrases and sentences, but a simple presentation of great ideas. This comes naturally to one who begins to take care of his mental furniture. We have to throw out of our mind and our brain the old notions which do not exactly fit in with our Theosophical teachings and principles. Once that is done, devotion does the rest of the work—devotion not only to the Masters and our own Inner Ruler, but also devotion in a very real sense to and for our fellow men. Our audiences are composed of living germs, and it is by our heart alone that we are able to establish contact with their hearts. This is essential for our platform work. As to the larger audiences, I am not worried about that. If a dozen people can bring to Theosophy a dozen more, they have done the task. I believe that Theosophy really gains by the snowball method. Time has come for us to think more of the inner attitude and inner development for the sake of present-day civilization and poor humanity.

It would help you considerably if you were to make a comparative study of the first six pages of *The Voice of the Silence*, the preliminary four statements-rules of *Light on the Path*, and the second chapter of the *Gita*.

This is a cycle of trials for the personal everywhere and in strange ways. But trust and self-control, generosity of mind and speech, protect our own self and help others.

Our Work is our Work: from coast to coast and country to country, all of us who belong to the Great Army of Voice are united, whether we are of that in our brains or not. But, if incarnation on earth is a necessity of and in evolution, our knowing each other on the physical plane is also a Theosophical necessity. The same feelings throb our hearts, the same thoughts energize our brains, and if words audible or visible further join us all in our endeavour we should take the course of helpfulness. And so herewith go expressions of thanks for the help given to the Movement in the past, hopes for what is to come, and greetings and wishes and love heartfelt for the day and the year.

(Concluded)

SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

III

THE MODERN concepts of the “struggle for existence,” and the “survival of the fittest,” seem to have their source and inspiration in Malthusian theory of population, given out in the early part of the nineteenth century. The Malthusian theory looks at the relationship between population growth and resources. He enunciated the theory that the realization of a happy society will always be hindered by the miseries resulting from the tendency of population to increase faster than the means of survival. The Malthusian theory explained that the population grows in a geometrical fashion, while the food supply grows in arithmetic progression. Since food supply increases at a slower rate than the population, there will be only a limited food supply in a few years. This doctrine coincided with the time of French Revolution and therefore with the period of social unrest and upheaval throughout Europe. Those who were being blamed for human misery seized upon this doctrine which shows that it is Nature and not man that was responsible for all the social and political problems.

On the other hand, when the Buddha was troubled by the sufferings, the decay and death of all beings, he attributed it to *animality*, *i.e.*, the cause of man’s sorrow is his ignorance that he is Spirit, and as a result of that ignorance, he falls prey to the illusions of matter. Moreover, the end of evolution is not “survival in matter,” but “survival in Spirit.” The purpose of evolution is to raise “the entire mass of manifested matter up to the stature, nature, and dignity of conscious god-hood,” writes Mr. Judge. Therefore, “survival in Spirit” is based on the recognition of the interdependence of all evolving units, and the duty of aiding the orderly and harmonious unfoldment of all grades and conditions of life. Altruism, selflessness and sacrifice to the limit, can then be reconciled with the concept of “the survival of the fittest.” Theosophy accepts that there is struggle for existence in nature, but asserts that this struggle is merely

incidental, a passing phase of a process whose end is perfection through universal sacrifice. Hence, in direct antithesis to Darwinian theorems, “Theosophy teaches that the evolutionary impulse within and behind all life is one of constant sacrifice, and those alone survive as ‘individualities’ whose sacrifices are unconditioned.... Theosophy teaches...that *real* survival is dependent upon ceaseless sacrifice for the good of ALL life; and that the kind of survival based on an intense struggle for individual existence is *unreal* and wholly *mayavic*. Only those are fittest and are worthy of survival who not only share their lives with the lives of the whole nature, but who do not even distinguish between the two.” And such are the Masters of Compassion. (*Theosophy*, July 1930)

Our fitness for the “survival in Spirit,” or reaching spiritual perfection, largely depends upon the choices we make now. We are in the “transition period” and this term is used in the theosophical literature in a definite context. We are in the Fourth Round and Fifth Race, which is the point in evolution where our lower four principles, *viz.*, physical body, astral body, *Kama* (passions and desires) and *Prana* are completely developed. We find that *Kama* or desire principle is predominant. We are being told by the Teachers that the race as a whole is behind the schedule in its development. We ought to show greater development of mind and lesser involvement with our desires and passions, by now. Instead, what do we find? We find that there is too much preoccupation with the development of personality; too much importance is being given to physical appearance, and acquiring of name, fame, position and power. In all the modes of living, gratification of senses is esteemed the highest good. There is greater sensuality in our art and literature. As *Light on the Path* puts it, those days when poets and sculptors saw the divine light and embodied it in their art and literature, lie buried in the past. However, we also perceive the beginning of the transition from what we are, *i.e.*, beings who are in possession of the *germ* of real mind to men of mind complete. The race mind is changing by enlargement, as dogmatism is being replaced by the

“age of inquiry.” These inquiries will grow louder year by year and the answers will be required to satisfy the mind as it grows, until at last all dogmatism will end, and those who will overcome the animal nature will attain to perfection, writes Mr. Judge.

It is stated that in the middle of the Fifth Round there will come this point where the race as a whole will have a fully developed and active *Manas* (mind)—with complete powers and knowledge. Full development of mind will bring with it complete responsibility for the choices made. It is then that humanity will be called upon to make a *conscious choice* as to the path they will take. It is called the “Moment of Choice,” where every unit of the human race will be compelled to make the conscious choice of the right or the left-hand path; for good or evil. The survival in Spirit will be only for those who are “fit” to choose the right-hand path leading to complete and conscious union with *Atma*, and hence conscious immortality.

But that moment of choice is made up of and will be affected by all the choices we make now. Just as our state after death is determined by our last group of prominent thoughts, and those in turn depend upon the kind of life lived, so also, this “transition period” is the preparatory period where we can decide, by making choices, in which direction we wish to go. But it is not as if we are compelled to wait till the middle of the Fifth Round, which will be millions of years later, in order to make the final choice of taking the path of Buddhahood. We have shining examples of Shankara, Buddha and Plato, who being in the fourth round displayed power and knowledge which the average humanity will have only in the Fifth or Sixth Round. The “transition period” will be over for average humanity in the middle of the Fifth Round. But an individual, who takes his evolution into his own hands, need not wait so long. “For the student of occultism, it [‘Moment of Choice’] may come in the next instant, or it may come one hundred lives after. But it cannot come this instant unless all the previous lives have led up to it,” writes Mr. Judge.

We see that the world is in a transition state and therefore every

spiritual aspirant is bound to find it difficult to walk the spiritual path. They are kept back by the force of materiality. They cannot escape the downward pull because they are units of the race and had a hand in making the race condition what they find it today. What is needed is the moral strength to force one's inner nature above the dead level of the world, and for that purpose one needs to accumulate all that one can of merit "by unselfish acts, by kind thoughts, by detaching our minds from the allurements of the world," writes Mr. Judge. (*Letters That Have Helped Me*, p. 71)

The reason why the spiritual aspirant is bound to experience the downward pull is because this world is working purely on the "survival of the fittest" principle. Naturally, the question arises, to what extent can we apply Theosophical principles in such a situation? Today, the phrase "survival of the fittest," implies survival of the most highly trained and physically energetic. It is also used in the sense of unrestrained competition. The wrong connotation of the theory has been widely debated and it has been pointed out that the phrase must not be understood to mean violent struggle for survival, and that the "fittest" need not mean the strongest and the most aggressive. Those who interpret the phrase and therefore live the existence as "each one for himself," being selfish and wanting things even at the expense of others, will sooner or later be made to realize that co-operation and interdependence is the law of happy life.

Shri B. P. Wadia explains that when "free, independent and fearless" people obstinately disregard the Law that works to Righteousness, they are broken by the Divine *Vajra*. *Vajra*, the thunderbolt is the celestial weapon possessed by Indra. Among other things, it represents punitive and reformative aspect of the Law of Karma. When people rashly assert independence and disturb the harmony of the universe, they suffer a severe karmic backlash, which at last, teaches them the lesson of interdependence.

It is not difficult to live in this competitive world if we have developed contentment. We need to go back to the basics. "Contentment is the greatest wealth." There is the beautiful story by

Leo Tolstoy, *How much land does a man need?* It is about a man who had insatiable desire for possessing larger and larger areas of land. His greed leads him to a village where the elder tells him that as much land as he can cover by walking, from morning till sunset, will be his, with the condition that he should return to the original spot by sunset. The greedy man tries to cover a very large area, with the result that he is breathless by sunset and dies of exhaustion as he returns to the original spot. Ironically, the villagers bury him by digging a patch of land, just long enough to hold his body, *i.e.*, seven feet! Some of the ambitious “achievers” of our day fall in the same category. Often, those who have achieved desired objects too quick in life, at a very young age, experience existential vacuum.

In the section on “Theosophy and Education,” H.P.B. points out that efforts must be made to eliminate competitive spirit right from childhood. Our schools and colleges need to be reformed, because instead of cultivating thinking and reasoning power in children, we judge their fitness through competitive examinations. It is during the school training that our character is built. The seeds of competition and selfishness are sown right from the childhood when the child is taught to take care of his own interest and always try to remain ahead of others. All the training is towards development of personality. Instead of self-centredness, children could be taught love, mutual charity and altruism.

Theosophical principles say that instead of competing with others, we should compete with our own previous performance. Having done our best let us leave the results to the law. Among other laws, the most important one is the *law of Least Effort*. Not only are we expected to continually strive towards our ideal and “work as those work who are ambitious,” but also to learn to surrender personal will to the Divine Will. When we surrender personal will, we offer minimum resistance and find that much is accomplished with very little effort.

H.P.B. points out that we are like cells in the body. One unhealthy cell may affect the whole body. There is no such thing as separateness. It is an occult law, “No man can rise superior to his

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individual failings, without lifting, be it ever so little, the whole body of which he is an integral part. In the same way, no one can sin, nor suffer the effects of the sin, alone” (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 201, *Indian Ed.*). What is needed is an inner conversion, change in people’s minds and hearts. By applying theosophical principles, we may set an example, and help to bring about the change.

In materialistic civilisation, people believe that the “fittest” are those with great worldly power and they are the ones sure to survive. But the reality is that when men worship worldly power they engage in fights for land, goods and organizational power. It gives rise to insecurity and fear. In *Kali Yuga*, only the *morally* fit can survive in the life of the soul, for those who live as creatures of the jungle must die in the same way. Each one needs to evolve the god-like quality of sympathy and self-sacrifice in an ever-expanding circle, beginning with family, society, nation and ending with humanity at large.

The extent to which there is realization of non-separateness or oneness of humanity, one sees its expression in thoughts, words and deeds of divine self-sacrifice. “‘I am my brother’s keeper,’ is the cry of repentant Cain... With this cry the struggle for animal existence begins to yield to the struggle for divine existence. By extending our love to all men, aye, to animals as well, we joy and sorrow with them, and expand our souls towards the One that ever both sorrows and joys with all, in an eternal bliss in which the pleasure of joy and the pain of sorrow are not.” Using the sword of self-sacrifice and with good of humanity being their watchword, one must strive to crush out selfishness and individualism. Always asking, “Does this, or this, tend to the realization of universal brotherhood? If it is not so, the effort should be to turn such forces as act against the stream of right progress, gently and silently into their proper course... Now the path of right progress should include the amelioration of the individual, the nation, the race, and humanity; and ever keeping in view the last and grandest object, the perfecting of man, should reject all apparent bettering of the individual at the expense of his neighbour.” (*Lucifer*, Vol. IV, April 1889)

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CHARACTER—THE TRUE WEALTH OF NATIONS

THE term character is used in different contexts with varying meanings. In literature or in a play, the storyteller or the playwright portrays in his narrative human nature in its many manifestations, which are referred to as characters. The term also refers to the distinctive features and qualities of a thing. In the context of the theme we are considering, the term character refers to distinctive mental and moral qualities of individuals. Aggregate individual character of the people of a nation constitutes the national character. As the character of each individual belonging to a nation has distinctive features different from that of other individuals, though all share in common the features of the national character, so do nations distinctively differ in character from one another, each of which being, however, different aspects of common human nature.

Science teaches that the human family is one species, *homo sapiens*, in the sense that, unlike the animal kingdom, the genetic code of all humans is fundamentally the same, with very little variation, and inter-breed, though differing in morphological features. They yet differ from one another in traits of character, not because of the genes, but as a result of the Karmic effect of their mental action. Hence character of each, individuals as nations, is *acquired* by their thoughts, beliefs, shared values derived from their respective religions, traditions, historical experience, and the stage of their moral and intellectual evolution. Thus, a character is self-made, or acquired, and this acquired character is called *svabhava*. Everyone acts according to the impulse proceeding from one's acquired nature, and the good and evil consequences resulting therefrom are invariably in exact accord with one's nature and character. In the sixteenth chapter of the *Bhagavad-Gita* it is taught that there are two kinds of natures in beings in this world, that which is godlike, and the other which is demoniacal, and that the destiny of those who are godlike in disposition is liberation, and that of the demoniacal one is to suffer continued bondage to mortal births.

Therefore, it stands to reason that for national prosperity in the true sense, for international concord and cooperation, and for world peace, building of human character by means of Theosophical education is imperative. For this, correct understanding, and dissemination, of the knowledge of the philosophy of the three qualities, of the science of dual nature of Manas—the human soul, together with that of the twin laws of Karma and Reincarnation, is crucial.

Essential nature of the universe, visible and invisible, and of all beings that constitute it, as taught in the Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali, are made of the three qualities of *sattva* or purity, *rajas* or action, and *tamas* or inertia, and consists of elements and organs of action, in which the souls become embodied and bound, by means of which they come in touch with the whole of nature, gaining experience therefrom, leading finally to emancipation. We must ever remember that we are not, as we are prone to think in our ignorance, bodies, or even mind, or objects of perception, but immaterial spiritual beings; who, descending from eternal spheres, have become embodied in matter in order, as said above, to arrive at complete Self-knowledge—conscious Divinity. Great Teachers constantly remind us of this verity, but owing to persistent Avidya we falsely identify ourselves with the body, its relations and circumstances, with the personal idea, and suffer continual bondage. Jesus reminded his followers, “I and my Father are one....Father is in me, and I in him,” and, likewise, “Ye are gods,” (*John*, X:30-38); and St. Paul, “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (*1 corin.* 2-16)

The Divine Ego, which “we” are in reality, can enter the body only during the cycle of incarnation, indirectly through its shadow, which it emanates to manifest as the Lower Mind or human soul. Thus, Manas becomes dual in incarnation, the lower mortal personality enthroned in the principle of Kama, the principle of passions and desires, deluded thereby, on the one hand, and the higher and the nobler portion of it, aspiring towards the divine parent

Ego, on the other. There is the downward pull of the soul by association with Kama, and there is the natural upward energy towards its parent source. Teachers say that just as the centripetal and centrifugal forces acting in contrary ways keep the planets in harmonious revolution in their orbits around the Sun, so the two opposite tendencies in human nature—one tending to Kama and the other tending heavenward—must be harmoniously balanced during life, so that the harvest of essential experiences of each life is gathered by the Master, the divine Ego, like the bee gathers the honey from the flower, leaving the latter to perish; and that if, on the contrary, the soul follows the dictates of animal passions to the extent that its natural upward energy loses its power, the soul then enters a downward path leading ultimately to its annihilation. The one leads the soul on the path of higher evolution, developing in the heaven-aspiring soul, god-like virtues, described in the sixteenth chapter of the *Gita*, whose destiny is assimilation with the Supreme Soul; and the other tends towards development of demoniacal qualities, and of such Sri Krishna says, “Wherefore I continually hurl these cruel haters, the lowest of men, into wombs of an infernal nature in this world of rebirth. And they being doomed to those infernal wombs, more and more deluded in each succeeding rebirth, never come to me, O son of Kunti, but go at length to the lowest region.” (Ch. XVI, sloka 19 and 20)

What is true of individuals is also true of nations. The Enlightened Ones do not value mere material progress which aims at insatiable acquisition of wealth and power as an end in itself. This line of progress is what our modern material civilization has adopted and is vigorously pursuing. Teachers warn that in it is inherent the seeds of its own undoing, that in the long run it will end in catastrophic self-destruction. Premonitory symptoms of it are seen in such signs as climate change, destruction of biosphere, looming threats of self-destructive high-tech modern warfare, soul-eclipsing materialism, immorality, and so on. History of civilizations is a witness to this truism. Plato shows that in the progress of mankind there are

alternating periods of enlightenment and of darkness of ignorance succeeding each other in cycles; that in the brighter age, which he terms fertile periods, the *Sattvic* qualities in people being predominant, human nature is in accord with the divine, and all Nature become beneficial to him; and in the dark ages, which he calls as barren periods, the spirit is eclipsed by the darkness of ignorance of the lower human nature, and that with the loss of spiritual perception, man becomes enemy to himself, and the civilization declines and perishes.

Man's bondage is due to thought and his liberation due to nothing else. Mind being the real plane of action, generating Karma, true progress is possible only when it is presented with the right ideas based on right perception of the nature of the true Self, of the fact of universal brotherhood, and on the right comprehension of the knowledge of the laws of Karma and Reincarnation. If, on the contrary the mental action is confined in narrow grooves of sectarian thoughts and bigotry, or given over to materialism and selfish indulgence, in either case, the Thinker, the soul, will stray far from Truth, ending in degradation. Historical experience of the world bears witness to the truth of it. Teachers say that this is a transition period and race mind needs to be educated out of superstitions and materialism, and given an impulse towards higher thought and a nobler civilizational ideal—of Universal Brotherhood and the immutable law of universal Justice, Karma.

Mr Judge shows that the elemental world, which invisibly pervades our visible sphere on the plane of our mind, is a powerful factor in the Karma of the human race. Being unconscious agents of cosmic and Karmic laws, they assume the very character, thoughts, feelings, motives, and deeds of mankind, and reflect them back on the world of men. Natural calamities, revolutions, cycles of epidemics of moral, mental and physical diseases, and of crime are man-made as a result of the action of his Lower Mind in the grip of Karma. Thus, man becomes enemy to himself, in his ignorance, and not knowing the cause of the miseries that afflicts him he is

bewildered, blaming “providence” or attributing them to chance. There is absolutely no remedy for human misery and solutions to world problems except through the inculcation of right knowledge of the meaning and purpose of existence which Theosophy gives, and that is the real wealth of nations.

“If Theosophy prevailing in the struggle, its all-embracing philosophy strikes deep root into the minds and hearts of men, if its doctrines of Reincarnation and Karma, in other words, of Hope and Responsibility, find a home in the lives of the new generations, then, indeed, will dawn the day of joy and gladness for all who now suffer and are outcast. For real Theosophy is ALTRUISM, and we cannot repeat it too often. It is brotherly love, mutual help, unswerving devotion to Truth. If once men do but realize that in these alone can true happiness be found, and never in wealth, possessions, or any selfish gratification, then the dark clouds will roll away, and a new humanity will be born upon earth. Then, the GOLDEN AGE will be there, indeed.” (*H.P.B. Series No. 6*, p. 29)

A fever, a mutilation, a cruel disappointment, a loss of wealth, a loss of friends, seems at the moment unpaid loss, and unpayable. But the sure years reveal the deep remedial force that underlies all facts. The death of a dear friend, wife, brother, lover, which seemed nothing but privation, somewhat later assumes the aspect of a guide or genius; for it commonly operates revolutions in our way of life, terminates an epoch of infancy or of youth which was waiting to be closed, breaks up a wonted occupation, or a household, or style of living, and allows the formation of new ones more friendly to the growth of character...and the man or woman who would have remained a sunny garden-flower, with no room for its roots and too much sunshine for its head, by the falling of the walls and the neglect of the gardener, is made the banyan of the forest, yielding shade and fruit to wide neighbourhoods of men.

—RALPH WALDO EMERSON

CAUSE AND EFFECT

EMERSON in his essay on “Compensation” states that “all infractions of love and equity in our social relations are speedily punished. They are punished by fear.” He also tells us, “Men suffer all their life long, under the foolish superstition that they can be cheated. But it is as impossible for a man to be cheated by any one but himself, as for a thing to be and not to be at the same time.” He has a graphic sentence: “Men call the circumstance the retribution.”

It would appear therefore that the first thing we need to realize is that we can never be cheated save by ourselves. In Theosophical parlance, we must trust the Law. If in any circumstance we do feel cheated, by other people, by life itself, then we deny that the universe is governed by Law. We deny that “every act rewards itself.” If we see that action and reaction make one whole, much of the feeling that we did not deserve the effects we have received would die out. It is difficult for us, at our stage, to get entirely rid of the idea that bad or painful circumstances are a punishment, often unjust. The result is only one side of an action; we may have no knowledge of the other side, the causal side, which has brought the result. The Good Law “knows not wrath nor pardon.” Seeming punishment is just “a fruit that unsuspected ripens within the flower of the pleasure which concealed it.” The time element between cause and effect is not important.

No one rewards us; no one punishes us. “Every act rewards itself.” This is the logical, reasoned approach to the problem of compensation. Without it we fall prey to fear because we know that we have done wrong and we instinctively know that we will get the fruit of the act in time. We are filled with fear only when we do wrong, when, as Emerson says, we infract the law of love in our social relationships. The punishment we get for such infractions is fear of the consequences. “As soon as there is any departure from simplicity and attempt at halfness, or good for me that is not good for him, my neighbour feels the wrong; he shrinks from me as far as

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I have shrunk from him; his eyes no longer seek mine; there is war between us; there is hate in him and fear in me.”

The only possible way of achieving freedom from fear is to love all men and all circumstances, to act rightly all the time, to accept what comes as what we deserved and even desired, to remember that the Law never lets us down, but that each trouble offers us the opportunity for growth. “Our strength grows out of our weakness....Blame is safer than praise,” Emerson tells us, because we sit still when life seems good to us; we exert ourselves and overcome our weaknesses when life is hard. “In general, every evil to which we do not succumb is a benefactor.”

Conditions may sometimes seem very hard; we may have to serve an ungrateful master. If so, writes Emerson, “serve him the more. Put God in your debt. Every stroke shall be repaid. The longer the payment is withholden, the better for you; for compound interest on compound interest is the rate and usage of this exchequer.”

Why should we fear? Let us rather learn that “no efforts, not the smallest—whether in right or wrong direction—can vanish from the world of causes....for rigid Justice rules the World.” We should remember that not only our friend but also our enemy is chained to us in this life because of our former actions. “Act thou for them ‘today’”—even for the criminal and the enemy, for we have a responsibility towards them. In this way liberation from fear, from the erosive thought that others can cheat us, can be achieved. And only when we are “liberated” can we act for them truly.

So long as we are attached to any circumstance, we cannot render help. Love is the liberator. That is why Jesus said there were only two commandments: to love God with all our heart and mind, and to love our neighbour as though he were our very self. We must learn to love everyone and all circumstances before we can truly gain from them. Only then can we become integrated beings. Body (action), feeling (motive) and mind-soul (knowledge)—the integration of all three produces Compassion-Bliss-Wisdom.

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

We human beings are blessed with the power of telepathy, but few of us are aware of it, and only a few makes use of it. Telepathy is the ability to transmit thoughts or feelings between individuals without using the five traditional senses. Telepathy is a mysterious connection between minds. The author, Abhilasha Srivastava, narrates her experience in which she was reading a book one afternoon when she felt that someone whispered the name “Krishna” in her ear. It was the name of an old friend who she had not spoken to for many weeks. Something urged her to call him up, and when she did, she found that this friend was terribly upset because he had lost his job and desperately needed someone to talk to. Telepathy manifests in various forms. *Instinctive telepathy* occurs when you sense someone’s presence or emotions before any physical interaction, as it happens when you think of someone just before they call you. *Emotional telepathy* occurs when there is sharing of feelings and experiences, such as, feeling a loved one’s distress even if they are miles away. Mental telepathy occurs when there is direct transmission of thoughts or ideas between individuals, which happens between people with a strong bond, like close friends.

Regular meditation can enhance one’s awareness and sensitivity to telepathic messages. To enhance one’s telepathic abilities, one can find a willing partner and then practice sending and receiving thoughts or images. One can begin with simple concepts like colours and shapes and gradually move to more complex ideas.

Scientists who were intrigued by telepathy carried out an experiment called Ganzfeld experiment, in which a person is made to sit in a quiet room with red light everywhere, so that they are unable to see or hear much. Another person tries to send a thought or a picture to them. After a while the person in the room is able to guess what the other person was thinking. If it happens more than once, then it is not chance, but maybe telepathy.

Dean Radin, a parapsychologist, who has extensively studied

telepathy and other psychic phenomena, believes that “the real challenge is not proving that telepathy exists but understanding how it works and what it means for our understanding of consciousness,” writes Abhilasha Srivastava (*Life Positive*, August 2024)

Telepathy is the communicating of thought or idea from mind to mind, at no matter what distance. It is a natural power. Among birds and beasts, telepathy is instinctually performed. We are using telepathy every day, in common life, in our communication with each other. Every thought produces an image or a picture. Telepathy is closely related to clairvoyance, which is the ability to see with the inner senses, pictures and images in the astral light or in the mind of another. It is with the aid of this power of clairvoyance that we are able to convey to another any idea whatsoever, says Mr. Judge. The *rationale* of telepathy is that if two minds vibrate or change into the same state they will think alike, *i.e.*, receive the impression sent by the other. “When two minds are sympathetically related, and the instruments [brains] through which they function are tuned to respond magnetically and electrically to one another,” there will be “transmission of thoughts from one to the other, at will.” (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 289, *Indian Edition*.)

Two persons in sympathetic agreement are like two connected vessels. In 1952, writing in a column in *The Times of India*, Dr. J. B. Rhine of Duke University of U.S.A., mentioned several strikingly spontaneous cases of telepathy. A woman, playing cards at a club, got up in the middle of the game and phoned her maid to find out about her baby’s safety. At that very moment the maid was rescuing the baby from being strangled. In each of these cases there was obviously strong psychic sympathy, existing like a telegraph line, which carried impressions from one person to another.

However, while it is fine for impersonal scientific investigation to test one’s ability of mind-reading, with the consent and co-operation of that person, it is quite another matter to read another’s mind without his permission, or try to impose our thoughts and thus influence another mind. So long as we are not free from human

weaknesses, trying to use telepathy consciously would be dangerous because one is likely to have almost irresistible temptation to pry into another's mind out of curiosity or make a mental suggestion. Even to send a strong thought to a particular person, asking that person to ring up, or concentrate one's thoughts on a person and make him turn his head, is undesirable. H.P.B. sounds warning in these terms: "Unless the 'suggestion' made is for the good only of the subject, and entirely free from any selfish motive, a suggestion *by thought* is an act of *black magic* still more pregnant with evil consequences than a *spoken* suggestion."

What is *scientific*? What constitutes a scientific theory and what does not, and why is this distinction important in our pursuit of knowledge? The essence of the scientific method is testing beliefs with structured experiments and discarding those that do not pass the test, writes Dr. Venugopal. Probably the distinction between science and non-science was made after Karl Popper, a professor of philosophy at the London School of Economics, in his work *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (1934), set the stage for a test to distinguish between science and non-science. Probably, after his work, the scientific world adopted the test, the test of falsifiability, for verifying scientific nature of a work. The "falsifiability" idea implies that "for any theory to qualify as 'scientific,' it should be possible to create an experiment to disprove or falsify it." For example, consider the theory or hypothesis that "All crows are black." Since all the crows we have seen so far are black, the theory stands till somebody sees a white or non-black crow. A theory stands till it is disproved, by setting up an experiment. "The test of a scientific theory is not whether it has been falsified or not—the test is: whether it can be falsified....It is through this never ending process of falsifying beliefs that science expands the horizon of the known."

Beliefs that are not tested or not challenged become dogmas. However, there are several theories, such as, the theory of

reincarnation, that are not falsifiable, and they may or may not be true. Since the theory of reincarnation cannot be proved or disproved, it does not qualify as a scientific theory. Likewise, one cannot conclusively disprove astrology. A true scientist starts with beliefs (or theories) and then repeatedly attempts to falsify using tools of science, not caring for the source of the theories. Ideas and beliefs are generated sometimes intuitively, as for example, the helical structure of DNA by Crick and Watson. Even in natural and social sciences, this method of intuition and enquiry followed by tireless efforts at falsification, helps us to move from darkness of dogma to the light of knowledge.

“Where then is the place for beliefs in this world dominated by science? ...Man is so beautifully designed that the scientist in him stops the questioning when it comes to issues of faith, love or beauty. It is almost as if there is a part of man that wants to just feel and enjoy freedom while the other demands that all beliefs be logically tested.” The world needs both, the freedom to feel and the rigour of science, but not dogma that masquerades in the garb of science, writes Dr. Venugopal, an alumnus of IIT (Indian Institute of Technology), Kharagpur, India. (*Bhavan's Journal*, August 1-15, 2024)

“Science” is a term used in different ways, but etymologically derived from the Latin word “*scientia*,” connected with the verb “*scire*,” to know. Science, in the widest sense, encompasses every concept related to concrete or the abstract, the seen or the unseen world. Ordinarily the term is used to denote natural sciences or those fields of knowledge connected with the study of facts in nature observable by five senses. The scope of such knowledge is necessarily narrow. The field of scientific investigation is bounded by *physical nature*. Theosophy as a true Science, does not stop at physical realm but goes beyond and thus speaks of the existence of astral, intellectual and spiritual realms. Theosophical psychology is based on certain fundamental propositions of the Oriental Psychology that describe both man and nature as being threefold. There is visible,

objective nature; an invisible, indwelling energizing, nature which is the model for the physical; and above these two changing aspects is the *spirit*, which is the source of all forces and is unchanging. Similarly, man has physical body, within which is the astral body (or soul) and above these two is the *spirit*.

Theosophy teaches about spiritually advanced being called Initiates and Adepts. Their spiritual perceptions are so trained as to range beyond the material limits, enabling them to penetrate into the actual reality of things. These adepts are the true scientists. The knowledge of modern scientists is limited, not just due to imperfections of instruments used but because of their unwillingness to probe beyond the material plane. Neither Science nor religion admits the existence of the occult or super-material region, governed by laws.

In *Light on the Path* we read that “the scientific workers are progressing...towards the far line which divides things interpretable from things uninterpretable. Every fresh discovery drives them a step onward. Therefore, do I very highly esteem the knowledge obtained by work and experiment,” but the book emphasizes the importance of intuitive knowledge. Science is analytical and experimental and therefore believes that nothing can be known about the constituents and properties of a plant or stone without subjecting it to the mechanical and chemical processes. Theosophy asserts that through the development and use of astral and spiritual senses it is possible to know unexpressed thoughts of another and the very essence of a plant or stone.

“Knowledge is a function of being. When there is a change in the being of the knower, there is a corresponding change in the nature and amount of knowing,” writes Aldous Huxley. At times, we are required to become something different in order to acquire knowledge, and when we are ready, inwardly, the meaning dawns on us. But till such time there is no hurry to accept or reject a thing. Nor should we try to somehow fit it into our existing belief system. We should not be in a hurry to reach any definite conclusion, but

must be willing to remain in a state of doubt and uncertainty.

Who am I? The answer to this question typically would be: I am “a man, a woman or a transgender; a traditionalist or a modernist; a believer or an atheist; an achiever, a struggler, or a complete failure.” A large part of our lives is spent in working hard to nurture and shape these identities, and once they are formed, we allow ourselves to be defined and guided by these identities. Psychologists believe that having a clear and strong sense of identity is beneficial because it gives us some idea of our likes and dislikes. Based on it we can set our long-term goals, work to achieve them, and as a result derive a sense of fulfilment and self-worth. At the level of civilisation our identities help us in cherishing our religious, cultural and historical heritage and motivate us in preserving and rebuilding the same.

On the other hand, our identity can limit us and make us biased. When we are deeply attached to our identity, we strive to maintain that false sense of identity and are ready to sacrifice our self-growth. We can take the example of a man who is identified with his status of being a CEO of a company and therefore, he feels confident and elated as long as the company thrives and he is successful. The moment he experiences a series of setbacks and is forced to resign, he may lose his self-worth and happiness.

The fact is that if we look into the depths of our being we would realize that we are complete within ourselves and do not require anything external to validate our sense of self. Therefore, we can continue to participate in life and playing different roles without getting attached to them, and “it is this way of life that gives us an authentic sense of Self,” writes Pulkit Sharma, a clinical psychologist based in Puducherry. (*The Speaking Tree, The Times of India*, August 7, 2024)

The word “identity” is derived from the Latin *idem ficare*, means “to make the same as ‘I.’” Thus, to begin with, our body, feelings or our possessions are not “I.” But as we grow, we tend to equate them

or associate them with “I.” We tend to derive our identity from our body, ideas, feelings, education, etc. This derived sense of self could be extremely fragile, requiring continual maintenance, nurturing and defending. To bolster the sense of identity we gather possessions. Our identity is often measured in terms of houses, cars, television sets, furniture and paintings. Our self-worth is generally measured by others and ourselves, on the basis of derived “self.” There are experiences in life that open our eyes to the fact that our identity runs deeper than our appearance, our achievements, our ideas or feelings.

It is the higher mind which enables us to say “I am I” and in conjunction with *Atma-Buddhi*, becomes the Individuality or Reincarnating Ego or “Hidden Self.” The real “I,” or the true individuality is different from the complex feeling, “I am Mr. Smith or Mrs. Brown” that arises out of a long series of daily experiences strung together by the thread of memory. These experiences produce the sense of *Egoity* only while they last, which we call the *personal* “I” or *terrestrial* “I.” Our true worth is derived from the real “I.” The lower “I” can get corrupted but it can be salvaged if it makes its connection with the Spiritual “I,” which is unaffected by praise or blame, adversity or prosperity. The personal and the spiritual “I” in man are described in the *Mundaka Upanishad*, thus: “Two birds, inseparable companions, perch on the same tree. Of these two, one eats the fruit (suffers and enjoys); the other looks on without eating.”

In *Letters That Have Helped Me*, Mr. Judge recommends a meditation: “Every day and as often as you can, and on going to sleep and as you wake—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. For by this practice, you will gradually kill the false notion which lurks inside that the false is the true, and the true, the false. By persistence in this, by submitting your daily thoughts each night to the judgment of your Higher Self, you will at last gain light.” (p. 115)