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The Living of the Higher Life**

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सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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DEPENDABILITY—A RARE QUALITY

DEPENDABILITY is defined as the quality of being trustworthy, consistent and reliable. A dependable person is someone we can count on to perform the task they have been entrusted with. We prefer to give time-bound tasks to someone dependable, who is known to complete a job within the required timeframe. A person of great ability proves to be of little use if he is not dependable as well. A dependable person works conscientiously, controlling his impulses and acting responsibly and productively. A man’s dependability depends to a considerable extent on his sense of responsibility. Mr. Crosbie describes the feeling of responsibility as the first step towards selflessness.

A dependable person is true to his work, his word and his relations. The smooth working of any human relationship and of society depends to a very great extent upon the sense of responsibility and trust. “An honest man’s word is as good as his bond,” said Miguel de Cervantes, a Spanish novelist. It means that an honest person is he who is ready to fulfil his promise and do what he has agreed to do, even if it means personal inconvenience or loss. In earlier times, business transactions, involving money and property, would take place based on mere oral promises or agreements. Today, many people have little or no regard for the promises they make. An honest man is one with truthfulness in his character, and his word is sufficient.

There are folk tales to show that dependability could be found in simple people and is not exclusive to the higher strata of society. There is a folk-tale illustrating faithfulness to a trust. A peasant woman was carrying two small children. When she came across a strange, unknown soldier, she tried to run away with the children. She found it too difficult to run fast while carrying both the children, so she put one of them down and ran with the other. The soldiers picked up the child left crying in the field and ran after the woman. When they caught up with her, they questioned why she had left that child behind. She told them that it was her own child. The child that she carried away with her was her sister's child, entrusted to her care. The soldiers formed part of a group that had come to this town for an exploratory survey, seeking information about enemy positions. When the group of soldiers returned with this report to their General, he gave up his project of invading the province with the intention of robbing. He reflected that if a peasant woman there put her sense of responsibility even before her mother's instinct, the invaders would surely meet with great opposition from her countrymen.

As a matter of fact, the world runs on trust. We trust that the Sun will rise at a certain time and it does. It is not only nature which is trustworthy, but even man-made things and affairs run on trust. We travel by trains, buses and planes without any feeling of apprehension or doubt, as we know that the driver/pilot has taken on a job and will do his best. We trust our servants, not only to do the work they have been assigned but also to not steal from our homes. In the *Book of Confidences*, the householder speaks to the Sage and laments that he despairs nothing more than his loss of faith in human nature. The Sage then makes him see that there is THAT in every human being which can be trusted—which stands behind his human nature, which is the Witness and the Judge. When we put our trust in THAT we may take heart that “however much my friend may betray me, I can have faith that someday, somewhere, he will repair the evil done to me and to all beings, however long ago. *That is impartial...It ever is, the Source of Faith.*”

We read in the Bible *The Parable of the Talents* (Matthew 25:14-30). It is the story told by Jesus of a rich man who has three slaves. Before going on a journey, he entrusted his wealth to them. He gives each slave a certain amount of money or bags of gold, referred to as “talents.” To the first, he gave five bags of gold, to the second two bags, and to the third he gave one bag, *each according to his ability*. The first two servants doubled their talents by using them to trade and gain profit. Thus, the one with five bags of gold gained five more bags and likewise the other with two bags gained two more bags. The third one who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money. When the master returned and settled accounts with them, the first two servants who had doubled their talents, to each of them, he said, “Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!” The third servant returned just one talent to his master. The master scolded him saying that he should have invested the money and received interest.

The parable has been variously interpreted. It is of great significance that the servants are only “administrators” of the wealth that belongs to the master. Symbolically, each one of us has been endowed with various skills and abilities by God or under the Law of Karma. The *Gita* says that true wisdom results from “an exemption from self-identifying attachment for children, wife, and household.” All that we think we possess, our children, wife, wealth, property, time, abilities, knowledge, and many other things, are given to us, from the spiritual point of view, simply to use for the service of the whole of humanity. “Remember this, that you own not one thing in this world. Your wife is but a gift, your children are but loaned to you. All else you possess is given to you only while you use it wisely. Your body is not yours, for Nature claims it as her property,” writes Mr. Judge. In other words, we are trustees of our possessions. Each one has to find out if one is dependable for cultivating the attitude of trusteeship towards one’s possessions. We

should be careful about what we spend and how. One has to follow the “middle way” between being miserly and spendthrift, and also not spend money for sense-gratification or donate for self-glorification. Are we striving to purify our love, learning to love impersonally and expand the circle of love? We must spend some time every day in study and self-examination, only then application of what we study becomes possible. “One has to be cautious about giving out knowledge, pouring out affection, or spending money—all these are the Soul’s possessions which, under Karma, at this period of time, are in one’s hands,” writes Shri B. P. Wadia.

It is not easy to become dependable or trustworthy as it calls for firm determination and the practice of the “remorseless self-discipline,” which Leonardo da Vinci took as his motto. Unless one is *obstinate* in doing what one ought to do, at any cost, *i.e.*, exercise the power of Will, the quality of dependability cannot be cultivated. Since “Will” is the force of Spirit in action, cultivating and exercising the power of Will requires us to listen to the promptings of the Higher Self and obey them faithfully. In other words, spiritual will could be developed only when we have learnt to drink, to the last bitter dregs, what the cup of life holds for us, without a murmur, and realize that the adverse and painful circumstances are for our experience and discipline. When we are ready to sacrifice our personal nature then all the power and force of the divine nature becomes available. The more we pay heed to the “Voice of Conscience” within, the greater will be the development of our will.

A dependable person is also the one who is faithful. We should be faithful in carrying out our duties. Are we impatient to be lifted up to higher, spiritual planes while we detest the dreary routine of the daily duties? The way lies through small plain duties of life. We meet our Karma in our daily duties and we are tested in the performance of those duties. The world is kept going because everything in nature performs its repetitive duty without complaining. For instance, the stars follow their course through the sky, cyclically; the seasons and the tides repeat themselves, and the heart pulsates

endlessly and repeatedly without complaint. How can we hope to come to our initiation by escaping the “repetitioned sweep of daily toil”? One has to be prepared to perform every humble labour as though it were exalted.

One of the qualifications expected in a Chela (disciple) is “Truthfulness and unswerving faith in the law of Karma, independent of any power in nature that could interfere: a law whose course is not to be obstructed by any agency, not to be caused to deviate by prayer or propitiatory exoteric ceremonies,” writes H.P.B. In his book, *A Grief Observed*, Prof. C. S. Lewis says, “You never know how much, you really believe in anything until its truth or falsehood becomes a matter of life and death to you.” For instance, it is easy to say that you believe the rope to be very strong as long as you are going to use it to tie a box. But suppose you had to hang by that rope over a precipice, then would you not try to find out how much you really trusted the rope? Only a real risk tests the reality of a belief, and through the pain we come out of mere *verbal thinking* and *notional belief*.

“Faith,” says *Light on the Path*, “is a great engine, an enormous power, which in fact can accomplish all things. For it is a covenant or engagement between man’s divine part and his lesser self.” A covenant is a pact or agreement. The covenant between man’s lower and higher nature is analogous to the agreement between a child and his parents. It is based on trust. A child knows that even though he is scolded, reprimanded by his parents, or denied certain pleasures, it is all for his good. Likewise, the man of *true* faith who knows that the universe is governed by a just and impartial Law is able to maintain his faith in the divine nature, even as he passes through painful experiences, without resorting to any propitiatory prayers or ceremonies.

An equally strong faith in the teachers and teachings is necessary for those of us who wish to become “dependable” workers of Theosophy, constantly striving “to become the better able to help and teach others.” In her fourth message, H.P.B. reminds us of this

responsibility, thus: “In your hands, brothers, is placed in trust the welfare of the coming century; and great as is the trust, so great is also the responsibility.” The Teachers have entrusted posterity with the solemn responsibility of keeping the lofty ideas alive and floating—ideas which can change the mind and *Buddhi* of the race. “A Curious Tale,” is a tale containing a vivid illustration of the great importance of dependability, showing the dire results of a young disciple’s momentary lapse from dependability. In this tale, Mr. Judge mentions that once the great Masters had settled themselves in Ireland and were tending and keeping alive the fire in various towers. When the time came for them to go away, they left behind strict injunctions to watch the fires, in every tower, and take care so that no fires on these towers should go out. The tale goes on that when the one who was entrusted with the task of watching the last burning fire became inattentive for a few moments—as he glanced at the fires on the other towers that had died—to his horror his own fire expired. Obviously, it refers to *the fire of spiritual knowledge*, which needs to be kept burning, and the task is especially daunting when the cycle is descending. Without getting distracted or despaired by other dying fires, one needs to pay attention to the “fire” entrusted to one’s care.

“The Lamp burns bright when wick and oil are clean,” says *The Voice of the Silence*. The “pure flame” of the life-giving philosophy can result if the “wick and oil” are clean. As the departing Masters in the Curious Tale—referred to above—warned, the ability to keep the fires burning depends upon inward purity. Thus: “When the great Masters had to go away...the warning was also given that, if the duties of life were neglected, if charity, duty, and virtue were forgotten, the power to keep these fires alive would gradually disappear. The decadence of the virtues would coincide with the failure of the fires.” (*Letters That Have Helped Me*)

OFTEN the real test of courage is not to die, but to live.

—CONTE VITTORIO ALFIERI

FOOD FOR THOUGHT THE PREMATURE BURIAL—II

THE STORY, which is in a way collection of incidents, deals with the cases of suspended animation and also of vampirism. The phenomenon of vampirism is often attributed to premature burial, in which an animated corpse that remains in the grave during daytime, emerges to prey on the living at night.

Is Vampirism a reality? What is the rational explanation for vampirism? The Hindus, Greeks, the Servians and the Slavonian nations have always believed in vampires and vampirism. The slavonians know the vampires as *vourdalak*. There has been unanimous credence and similarity in details and descriptions from the people who live far apart from each other. The facts of vampirism are constantly being reported and have been testified by many eye-witnesses. Yet, scientists and the sceptics deny the phenomenon of vampirism point blank, while few others believe that such cases are produced by the Devil, who clothes himself with graveyard corpses, and roams in the night, sucking people's blood.

Every belief, every custom springs from facts and causes which gave it birth. At the time of death, the astral body is withdrawn from the physical body, through the brain. The astral body along with desires and lower mind forms *kama-rupic* shell, generally known as ghost. The astral form has a natural attraction for the physical body. At death, the astral form exudes from the physical, and is held near its old garment, *i.e.*, the physical body, by a double attraction, physical and spiritual, until the physical body has decomposed. (*Isis*, I, 476)

There have been several reports of death-bed visions, where people have seen the severing of the magnetic cord, which joins the astral body to the physical. A doctor reported having seen the hazy, fog-like human body a few feet above the physical body of his dying aunt. This he called spirit-body. He also reported having

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seen a silver-like substance streaming from the head of the physical body and connecting to the head of the astral form. This was the magnetic cord, which seemed alive and vibrant with energy. With each pulsation of the cord, the astral body became more alive and dense, whereas the physical body became more lifeless till at last the connecting strand of the cord snapped off, and the astral body was free.

However, so long as the astral form is not entirely liberated from the physical body, there is a possibility that it may be forced by magnetic attraction to re-enter it. Sometimes it will be only half-way out, when the corpse, which presents the appearance of death, is buried. In such cases the terrified astral soul re-enters the body, and then either the unhappy victim suffers the agony of suffocation, or if the person was grossly material during life then he becomes a vampire. In the latter case, the body that is buried lies in a cataleptic state, while the astral body robs the life-blood from living men or animals. The astral body is free to wander about, so long as it does not break the link which attaches itself to the physical body. The life-blood sucked from the victims is transferred to the physical form in the tomb, by the astral soul through the mysterious and invisible cord of connection, which perhaps, some day may be explained, writes H.P.B. She points out that the main difficulty in understanding is how these vampires can quit the tombs, and how they re-enter the same without appearing to disturb the earth in the least. She observes that we must understand that there is something like *half-death*, in which the body is virtually dead. If such a person was averagely good, then the astral soul will disengage itself by gradual efforts, and when the last link is broken, it is separated forever from the physical body. It is only in the case of a grossly wicked person, in whom matter predominates spirit, that phenomenon of vampirism takes place. Both the Greek and Latin religions think it beneficent to have such bodies dug out and transfixed to the earth by a pole of aspen-tree wood. To put an end to it, however, the body needs to be exhumed and burned. (*Isis*, I, 449-52)

H.P.B. mentions in *Isis Unveiled* a few cases of vampirism. For instance, the spectre or ghost of a village herdsman, in Bavaria, began appearing to several inhabitants of the place, and either as a result of fright or some other cause, every one of them died during the following week. Driven to despair, the peasants disinterred the corpse, and pinned it to the ground with a long stake. The same night he appeared again, causing panic among people. Ultimately, the corpse had to be burnt.

Cremation, *i.e.*, burning the body by lighting the fire or in an electric crematorium is considered to be the best method of disposing of the physical body, for various reasons. Primarily, cremation facilitates quick disposal of the physical body and it is comparatively more hygienic method. Moreover, it helps to separate psychic body or *Kamrupic* shell from the physical body. Mr. Judge writes: “Cremation has no direct effect on any of the sheaths or vehicles, but it must have the indirect effect of freeing the astral form from the influence of the material body and thus give the astral a chance to more quickly dissipate....From a sanitary point of view cremation is of high importance, as it does away with injurious matter or matter in such a state as to be injurious to the living.” (“*Forum Answers*”, p. 102)

Death of the body implies that now the body is going to dissolve into its constituent elements, the *Panchamahabhutas*, and cremation expedites this process. Mr. Crosbie puts it thus: “The death of the body means a return of the ‘Lives’ of the body to their respective elements. In cremation this return is immediate. The Ego then has no point of physical contact and is free to work out and assimilate of the last life lived....When considered from every point of view, cremation is beneficial. There is a psychological effect from it, too, on those who are left behind; for as soon as the cremation is completed the bereaved at once feel that release.” (*Theosophy*, March 1929)

Occultism for its own reasons favours cremation. H.P.B. wrote: “There are occult reasons why cremation should be an imperative

necessity, and all Theosophists should gladly welcome and hasten the day when this ‘purification by fire’ will be an accomplished fact.” (*Lucifer*, May 15, 1890)

H.P.B. explains that there is another form of vampirism, wherein some individuals rob others of their vitality. When we hold any object in our hand, we transfer our magnetism to that object. In a healthy and young person these magnetic emanations are strong while the same are weak in case of diseased or old person. When two such people come in close proximity of each other, there is transfer of magnetic fluid or vitality from the stronger to the weaker person, which may leave the stronger person exhausted. H.P.B. points out that breeders never herd together young animals with old; intelligent physicians forbid parents to have young children occupy their own beds. When David was old and feeble his vital forces were replenished by bringing a young person in close contact with him so that he could absorb her strength. As an extreme example, there is the case of Seeress of Prevoist, Madame Hauffe, who repeatedly stated that she supported life merely on the atmosphere of the people surrounding her and their *magnetic emanations*. H.P.B. points out that the seeress was a *magnetic vampire*, who absorbed vitality of stronger people in the form of *volatilized* blood. (*Isis*, I, 463)

In the article, “The Magical Evocation of Apollonius of Tyana” we read that certain Kabalists believe that incurable insanity is an incomplete but *real* death, which leaves the earthly body under the exclusive control of the astral body. When the human soul experiences a shock too violent for it to bear, it would separate itself from the body and leave in its place the astral body, which reduces that human being to a state which makes him “in one sense less living than even an animal. Dead persons of this kind can be easily recognized by the complete extinction of the affectional and moral sense; they are not bad, they are not good; they are dead....These beings, who are the poisonous mushrooms of the human species, absorb as much as they can the vitality of the living;

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that is why their approach paralyzes the soul, and sends a chill to the heart. These corpse-like beings prove all that has ever been said of the vampires, those dreadful creatures who rise at night and suck the blood from the healthy bodies of sleeping persons. Are there not some beings in whose presence one feels less intelligent, less good, often even less honest?"

Of the ten precepts of Buddhism "taking what is not given," is the second precept. It means not taking or appropriating that which another is not willing give. Interestingly, it includes not just things, property and wealth of another, but even taking the time or energy of another person against his or her wish. One forces oneself upon another person to such an extent, and compels him to listen to one's complaints, or tirades or appeals for so long that one eventually reduces the other person to a state of physical prostration, emotional exhaustion, and even nervous collapse. At the end of such draining session, the person is often heard to remark, "I really enjoyed our little chat." Human vampires of this sort are sometimes quite oblivious to the damage they have done, writes Sangharakshita, a Buddhist teacher. Then, there are emotional vampires who tend to drain us emotionally, as they are constantly seeking for approval, love and attention. Mostly, they are found among our friends, neighbours and loved ones. But we must learn to be prudent and conserve our psychic energy, while not being rude or unkind to them.

(Concluded)

No THEOSOPHIST or other has the right to sacrifice himself unless *he knows for a certainty* that by so doing he helps someone and does not sacrifice himself in vain for the empty glory of the abstract virtue. . . . Psychic and vital energy are limited in every man. It is like a capital. If you have a dollar a day and spend two, at the end of the month you will have a deficit of \$30.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

DEATH OF DEATH

DHRITARASHTRA, the forlorn blind King, after losing all his beloved sons and the kingdom, in the terrible war of Kurukshetra, asks his mentor and counsellor, the wise Vidura, what is death? Relatively very few in the world reflect on the phenomenon and the mystery of death. Majority of people go on with the humdrum of life finding it quite pleasant, as the only reality, the one plenum, beyond which all is a void. Occasionally the mind of man in a solemn mood, in the presence of death of a loved one, broods for a while over the transitoriness of life and feels dejected, but it is soon forgotten in the over-mastering thirst for savouring the familiar sensation of worldly life. But a thoughtful few, having learnt through bitter experience the deceptive allurements and evanescence of pleasures of life, and softened by pain and misery, which are as inseparable twin of the former, begin to reflect on the cause of pain, and on the meaning and purpose of life. Fortunate is he who, beginning his search, sooner comes into the true philosophy of life than later, which could not be otherwise than the fact that it is due to his Karmic merit.

Dhritarashtra is the type of humanity in the thrall of illusions of matter, giving rise to Ignorance, which mistakes, as a Patanjali Yoga Aphorism says, non-eternal to be eternal, the impure to be pure, evil to be good, and that which is not soul to be soul. Life lived under this mistaken notion necessarily leads man to think and act in ways which, being out of tune with the true and the real, will inevitably bring on pain and suffering.

We are Souls, not bodies, nor are we of the earthly generation but sons of Universal Mind, have come down from on high to be conjoined to the body through the organ of thought, in order to apprehend the nature of the universe and of the soul, the true self itself, as the Yoga Aphorisms teach.

The universe thus is an embodied consciousness and it exists for the sole purpose of experience and final emancipation of souls.

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We are, therefore, in the condition of ignorance, conjoined to mind and body, for a great purpose, which is realisation of true Self to be unconditioned, eternal, pure, unaffected, whether in the body or out of it. So long as Ignorance-*Avidya* persists, so long will the embodied soul live under mistaken notion, a slave of *Kama* or passions and desires, make Karma leading to endless cycles of births and deaths. The only salvation of the suffering soul, as the Yoga Philosophy teaches, lies in its quitting this conjunction of it with the mind and body through development of spiritual discriminative knowledge—*Buddhi* considered as an active principle, which destroys Ignorance. Softened by the buffetings by the hand of Karma-Nemesis, life after life, man at last begins to inquire into the cause of pain and turns to Self-knowledge. *Sanatsujatiya*, one of the greatest practical treatises of Vedanta, forming a part of the epic, the *Mahabharata*, treats of the nature of Ignorance, cause of its persistence, and of emancipation of man by the destruction of it.

Sanat Sujata, a Kumara, invoked by Vidura to answer searching questions put forth by Dhritarashtra on the mysteries of life and death, dispels the notion of death as ordinarily understood, and proclaims heedlessness (*Pramada*) to be death, and freedom from heedlessness (*Apramada*), immortality. *Pramada* is a Sanskrit word which connotes a state of consciousness alienated or divorced from its natural state of repose as unconditioned Absolute consciousness (*Brahma bhava*). As all other states of existence being periodical, progressive manifestations of the One indivisible Absolute consciousness, into which they must ultimately merge. The latter alone is immortal, and former states, arising out of reflection of the One in various *upadhis* and appearing seemingly as many, being temporary, relative, and subject to change, deviant from the natural state, are verily death. *Pramada* arises from forgetfulness of our true Self, and it is variously defined as heedlessness, carelessness, negligence, inattention, inadvertence, oversight, etc. A graphic description is given in *Sanatsujatiya* to show how heedlessness is

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death, and how it arises in us. Thus:

“Heedlessness develops in men as desire, and afterwards as wrath, and in the shape of delusion. And then travelling in devious paths, through egoism, one does not attain to union with the Self. Those who are deluded by it, and who remain under its influence, depart from this world and then again fall down into generation. Then the senses gather round them. And then they undergo death after death. Being attached to the fruit of action, on action presenting itself, they follow after it and do not cross beyond death. And the embodied self, in consequence of not understanding union with the real entity, proceeds on all hands with attachments to enjoyments. That, verily, is the great source of delusion of the senses: for, by contact with unreal entities, his migrations are rendered inevitable; because, having his inner self contaminated by contact with unreal entities, he devotes himself to objects of sense on all sides, pondering on them only. That pondering first confuses him, and soon afterwards desire and wrath attack him. These lead children to death.” (*Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita*, pp. 77-78, *Indian edition*)

Thus, do men mistaking that which is not Self, to be the Self, following after desires, fast bound by the bonds of Karma, suffer miseries of conditioned existence, till they realize their true Self to be All and in all.

The great “Bard of Avon,” William Shakespeare, explores depth of human soul, reflects on immortality, death, time, decay, and puzzles of life. One of his sonnets (sonnet number 147) voices the same theme of *Sanatsujatiya* that heedlessness, giving rise to desire, is verily death. It is presented as a repentant lamentation of one who becomes aware of his mistake in trusting and following after desire, realizing in the end that he was deluded:

My love is as a fever, longing still
For that which longer nurseth the disease,
Feeding on that which doth preserve the ill,
Th’ uncertain sickly appetite to please.

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My reason, the physician to my love,
Angry that his prescriptions are not kept,
Hath left me, and I desperate now approve
Desire is death, which physic did except.

Past cure I am, now reason is past care,
And frantic-mad with evermore unrest;
My thoughts and my discourse as madmen's are,
At random from the truth vainly expressed;
For I have sworn thee fair and thought thee bright,
Who are as black as hell, as dark as night.

It is through heedlessness that we drown the voice of Reason, the voice of divine conscience, in the throng of sensations of the body, and in following after insatiable desires of lower self, alienate ourselves from the Higher Self—the divine physician who alone has the panacea for the affliction of attachment of the soul for objects of sense.

The Secret Doctrine teaches that that which propels Man towards perfection is MONAD through a force inherent in itself, referred to also as Free Force or All-Force, on the one hand, and the lower *personal* Self, referred to as Imprisoned Force endowed with reason, will and the potentialities of its prototype in heaven—the Immortal Divine Ego—but deluded by, and following the impulses of passions and desires, *Kama*, on the other. “For it is this Ego, with its fierce Selfishness and animal desire to live a Senseless life (*Tanha*), which is ‘the maker of the tabernacle,’ as Buddha calls it in *Dhammapada*...” (II, 110)

Its only salvation lies in its effort to control and conquer its passions and desires through exercise of higher Reason and Will with which it is potentially endowed, follow the dictates of and merge with the MONAD, the Higher Self—the All-Force—the true and the natural state of Man. “Unless the Ego takes refuge in the Atman, the ALL-SPIRIT, and merges entirely into the essence thereof, the personal Ego may goad it to the bitter end” (*ibid.*, 109). The

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wise man chooses the difficult path of overcoming heedlessness which is death, exercising vigilance that leads to Immortality—Life Eternal. Of such an one says *Sanatsujatiya*:

“But sensible men cross beyond death by their good sense. He who, pondering on the Self, destroys the fugitive objects of sense, not even thinking of them through contempt for them, and who, being possessed of knowledge, destroys desires in this way, becomes as it were, the death of Death itself, and swallows it up.” (*Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita*, pp. 78-79)

Shakespeare in another Sonnet (Sonnet number 146) portrays in his inimitable quatrains and a couplet the voice of Reason revealing to the striver for perfection the deception and worthlessness of the senseless life of slavery to the mortal self, encourages and stimulates him to conquer Death, echoing the notes of the song of *Sanatsujatiya*:

Poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth,
Thrall to these rebel powers that thee array,
Why dost thou pine within and suffer dearth,
painting the outward walls so costly gay?
Why so large cost, having so short a lease,
Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend?
Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,
Eat up thy charge? Is this thy body's end?
Then, soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss,
And let that pine to aggravate thy store;
Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross,
Within be fed, without be rich no more.
So shalt thou feed on Death, that feeds on men,
And Death once dead, there's no more dying then.

THE beginning is the most important part of the work.

—PLATO

EXTRACTS FROM UNPUBLISHED LETTERS
SILENCE AND SPEECH; FANCY AND IMAGINATION

IN SILENCE, in study, in inner effort, much of nourishment to the Soul can be gained. The manifestations of the lower nature are many and they have to be controlled. For this, silence is needed. But silence has to be real. Merely abstaining from verbal activity is not real silence if sensuous enjoyment and indulgence in fancy are going on within. Real silence is the controlling of the ebullitions of our mind and of the feelings of the lower psychic nature.

To be silent is not to become dumb; it means to speak (a) deliberately, (b) manasically, (c) composedly. We are not evolved enough to do so every day and hour by hour. Therefore, we have to learn the art of true speaking through the study of Nature which always speaks and sings. The Esoteric Philosophy insists that we remain silent and give Nature a chance to speak to us. There is a motive and a method in the practice of both silence and secrecy. Narada, the Deva-Muni, talks plenty! Secrecy and silence are faculties which can be wrongly used, but so can any faculty. *Light on the Path* has numerous valuable hints. We have to lose the power to wound; we have to acquire knowledge, for speech comes with knowledge. Expand your circle of friends, says Crosbie. How? By speech, of course, situated as we are. But what type of speech?

Think what an effort silence is for so many of our friends! Small talk, shop talk, deteriorates into base and worse talk. Secrecy covers a wider field, as outer environment is involved. We are not able to get away from our environment, but Karma opens the door when we are ready or have made ourselves ready. The principle of that procedure is in *Light on the Path*—the seclusion of the Adept. As you labour persistently in this you will win your own seclusion.

There never has been in my mind any question as to whether to speak falsehood or truth; that issue is as clear as daylight. It is the speaking of *unnecessary* truth which might harm; to my mind an unnecessary truth is as wrong as what people call a necessary

falsehood. As for main issue—there can be no question on that at all and ever, but for the truly accurate a way always opens.

The less you talk about it, the easier you will find it to carry out your plans. Otherwise you will have from all and sundry a hundred questions of why, how and what. From the start keep to your discretion. It is none of the other people's business as to where you go and what you do or why it is done. All this is a good discipline for you in observing silence and secrecy.

Indulgence in phantasy may be due to wrong mental habits from the past and the elementals in the present, which implies influence of and from the Astral Light. Phantasy has numerous aspects. You have to take into account that Item of the Ten Items which deals with the Astral Light and its two aspects—lower separative astral and the higher divine *Akasha*. As for the purification of the elementals and their handling, Judge has many wise things to say in his “Conversations” (see *Vernal Blooms*).

There is something useful in the *Transactions* about our two brains—cerebrum and cerebellum. As above, so below, and the very process of emanations reveals the Law of Correspondence. One has to keep the mind busy with useful and constructive work; thus we gain some concentration and overcome the habit of fancy. Imagination is the image-making faculty. There is an important footnote in *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. II, p. 59, which points to the use of this faculty, and Judge's article in *Vernal Blooms* (p. 111) has some good things. Shall we say that false imagination is phantasy and right phantasy is imagination? It is what and why we image forth that counts.

The imagination and visualization faculty (the reverse of fancy and daydreaming) is the master-power. Will, thought, aspiration or higher feelings, are all involved. Works can be endowed with sacramental values and auras by Imagination. The doctrine of transubstantiation is not wholly inaccurate. The leaf, flower, fruit, of the ninth chapter of *The Bhagavad-Gita* are but examples. They point to the fact that small trifles are usable; next, that by imagination

such objects become holy, because our powers go into them—*e.g.*, the flower of Karma which fades after giving the sense of pleasure of fragrance and colour; there are flowers without scent; there are flowers with different scents, etc. Fragrance-aroma is the assimilation aspect of Karma. Similarly, a fruit is nourishment with its properties and tastes, curative or laxative; water is a purifier; and so on. Imagination is a power and we develop it harmoniously by this exercise. Attention and perseverance are also called for.

HERE it is the lure of enjoyment of natural pleasures, growing out of life's physical basis; there it is self-praise, anger, vanity, what not? Even these beautiful hills and river—they mock one, for they live on untrammelled. Perhaps they do not speak to us because they know the superiority of silence. They laugh with each other at us in the night, amused at the wild struggle of this petty man who would pull the sky down. Ach! God of Heaven! And all the sucklings of Theosophy wish that some great, well-diplomaed Adept would come and open the secret box; but they do not imagine that other students have stepped on the spikes that defend the entrance to the way that leads to the gate of the Path. But we will not blame them, nor yet wish for the things—the special lots—that some of them have abstracted, because now we know the dreadful power that despair and doubt and violated conscience have, we prefer to prepare wisely and carefully, and not rush in like fools where angels do not pass uninvited.

But, Companion, I remind you of the power of the lure. This Path passes along under a sky and in a clime where every weed grows a yard in the night. It has no discrimination. Thus even after weeks or months of devotion, or years of work, we are surprised at small seeds of vanity or any other thing which would be easily conquered in other years of inattentive life, but which seem now to arise as if helped by some damnable Intelligence.

—W. Q. JUDGE

MODES OF PROCREATION

I

CREATION is an act of creating, causing to exist, to bring into being. It is like a potter creating a pot where the efficient cause, *i.e.*, the idea or the design for the pot comes from the potter, while the material for the pot, *i.e.*, the clay is outside of him. Procreation is an act of begetting. In biology, procreation is the reproduction of offspring by a sexual or asexual process. The vast majority of animal species, including humans, reproduce sexually, *i.e.*, by the union of male and female animals, which is known as breeding or mating. However, some of them reproduce asexually, and still other organisms can reproduce by both types of reproduction, sexual and asexual.

In asexual reproduction, offspring are genetically identical to the parent; they are all clones of the original parent. In this method of reproduction, a large number of offspring can be quickly produced, by a single organism or parent, and it can prove to be an effective mode of procreation in a stable environment because all offspring will be adapted to that environment. Sexual reproduction is combining genetic material from two parents. It produces offspring that are genetically distinct from other offspring and from their parents.

There are several methods of asexual reproduction. For instance, fission, also called binary fission, is a method in which the organism appears to split itself into two parts and, if necessary, regenerate the missing parts of each new organism. Thus, for instance, in certain species of flatworms, the bodies separate into head and tail regions and then regenerate the missing half in each of the two new organisms. This method of reproduction is also used by some species of Sea anemones and Sea cucumbers.

In *The Secret Doctrine* H.P.B. describes modes of asexual reproduction in the early races of humanity, analogous to those in animals, before the present mode of procreation, namely, by the

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co-operation of two beings of opposite sex, was used. Research shows that there has not been in nature one fixed method of reproducing life. Also, certain modes of reproduction, such as, spontaneous generation, have now been extinct.

Spontaneous generation, also called *abiogenesis*, is the belief that some living things can arise from inanimate or non-living matter without the need for a living progenitor to give them life. Until recently, modern science had been a supporter of *biogenesis*, which means life can only be produced as a result of pre-existing organisms. The doctrine of spontaneous generation refers to spontaneous evolution of the simplest and earliest forms of biological life from complex chemical, but *non-biological*, molecules of matter. Some 2,000 years ago Aristotle suggested that “nature makes so gradual a transition from the animate or living to the inanimate or non-living that the boundary line between the two is doubtful and perhaps non-existent.” H.P.B. observes that even if science denies that spontaneous generation could not be possible in the present period and conditions, that does not mean that it could not have taken place “under different cosmic conditions, not only in the seas of Laurentian period, but even on the then convulsed Earth.” There is no denying spontaneous generation in the genesis of earth life, though it probably has changed its methods now and therefore almost escapes detection (*S.D.*, II, 150-51). H.P.B. quotes in support of the view of occultism, the opinion of the scientist of her day, L. Buchner, who wrote: “Spontaneous generation played no doubt, *a more important part in the primeval epoch than at present; nor can it be denied that in this way beings of a higher organization were produced than now.*” (*S.D.*, II, 718-19)

In *The Physics and Chemistry of Life*, (a *Scientific American* book) in a chapter entitled “The Origin of Life,” George Wald, a biologist, speaks of the opposing forces of dissolution and integration, incessantly operating in most forms of matter. According to him “spontaneous dissolution” is a more rapid process

than “spontaneous synthesis,” and yet if complex compounds or even simplest type of organisms have to be evolved, the process of spontaneous synthesis would have to predominate. He describes how, for instance, a fully formed protein molecule displays much less tendency to disintegrate into its constituent amino acids than a smaller compound consisting of just two or three amino acids. Also, there are aggregations of several such proteins. He explains that such *molecular aggregates* are intermediates between *molecules* and *organisms*. “We have no need to try to imagine the spontaneous formation of an organism by one grand collision of its component molecules. The whole process must be gradual....Aggregates of various kinds interact with one another to form still larger and more complex structures.” In this way we can imagine the formation of the first living organisms, writes Wald. However, we cannot say that such explanations have *scientifically proved* the formation of “living” organisms from “non-living” matter. For an occultist there exists no inorganic matter in cosmos. Life is always present in every atom of matter. “When life-energy is active in the atom, that atom is organic; when dormant or latent, then the atom is inorganic.”

In *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 166) H.P.B. writes that the progressive order of the methods of reproduction, as given by science goes to confirm esoteric ethnology. Thus, for instance, according to occultism “fission” was the mode of reproduction used for the evolution of first race of humanity on our earth.

The Secret Doctrine shows that nature, when left to herself in the creation of animal and man, failed. The water-men terrible and bad she [nature] herself created, from the mineral, vegetable and animal remains of their previous forms (*S.D.*, II, 55). We are given the description of these creatures: “Men with wings, four and two-faced men, human beings with two heads, with the legs and horns of a goat....In short, combinations of various animals and men, of fishes, reptiles and other monstrous animals assuming each other’s shapes and countenances” (*S.D.*, II, 54). The account goes on to

say that these forms were destroyed. In other words, intervention of intelligent Divine Beings was necessary. Thus: “The first Dhyanis commissioned to ‘create’ man in their image, could only throw off their shadows, like a delicate model for the Nature Spirits of matter to work upon.” (*S.D.*, I, 225)

Theosophy teaches that physical form of man is built on the astral model. The acquirement of physical form by man is referred to in the Bible as Adam and Eve acquiring “coats of skin.” Only when the astral model was perfected did we get material bodies. This astral model or *chhaya* is the gift of Lunar Pitris. The lunar pitris, also known as *Barhishad Pitris*, or *Pitar-Devata*, evolved their shadows or *chhayas* to form the First Root Race on our Earth.

How was the First Race humanity formed? It is called *chhaya*-birth, or primeval mode of *sexless* procreation, where the First Race *oozed out* of the bodies of the Pitris. This is allegorized in the story of *Purana* in which Sanjana, the daughter of Viswakarma—married to the Sun, is unable to bear his effulgence and therefore retires to the forest but leaves behind with him her *chhaya* (shadow, image or astral body). The Sun supposing the “*chhaya*” to be his wife begets children through that shadow. H.P.B. points out that during the séances, if the astral form oozing out of the mediums could be fixed and made solid, then *creation* of first race would also be understood. (*S.D.*, II, 174)

The first race humanity is described as “the shadows of the shadows of the Lords,” *i.e.*, the progenitors created first race humanity out of their own astral bodies. Thus, *Chhaya* represents the astral body or form projected by the lunar *pitris* and the “Sun” represents the Monad, or *Atma-Buddhi* unit, from which comes the impulse to evolution. Every ancient scripture, says H.P.B., mentions that man evolved primarily as a *luminous incorporeal form*, over which the physical body was built, by lower forces of nature, just like the molten brass around the clay model. (*S.D.*, II, 112)

This mode of reproduction is comparable to Fission. (a) It is

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seen in the division or splitting of the homogenous speck of protoplasm (Amoeba) into two. (b) It is also seen in the division of nucleated cell, where the nucleus of the cell splits into two sub-nuclei, which develop within original cell-wall or they may burst the cell and then multiply outside as independent entities. (S.D., II, 166)

Budding is also a type of asexual reproduction in which the new organism (offspring) grows as an outgrowth from the body of the parent. In this method, the new individual starts growing as a small body on one side of the parent organism and continues growing in size while still attached to the parent. Budding is the mode of reproduction seen in invertebrate animals such as hydras. A bud forms on the tubular body of an adult hydra, develops a mouth and tentacles, and then detaches from its parent. “*The Second Race was the product by budding and expansion,*” says the Stanza in *The Secret Doctrine*, showing that the Second Race of humanity was formed from the asexual and ethereal “shadows” of the First Race, by the process of budding.

As seen earlier, the astral form of the first race humanity covered or clothed the Monad. This form was in turn surrounded by its egg-shaped sphere or *aura*. We may regard this astral form as a nucleus and take the *aura* to represent the cell. When the season of reproduction arrives, the *sub-astral extrudes* a miniature of itself from the egg of the surrounding aura. The germ grows and feeds on the aura till it becomes fully developed. Then it gradually separates from its parent, carrying with it, its own sphere of aura. (S.D., II, 116-17)

“*The early Second (Root) Race were the Fathers of the ‘Sweat-born’; the later Second (Root) Race were ‘Sweat-born’ themselves.*” We have the corroboration of the “Sweat-born” race of humanity in the allegory of the *Puranas*. Sage Kandu was performing pious austerities when Indra, the king of the jealous gods, sent an *Apsara* (nymph) called Pramlocha to tempt the sage and disturb his penance. She spent 907 years, six months and three days in the

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company of the sage, which seemed to him like *one day!* H.P.B. points out that these are the esoteric figures, which are purposely distorted, but they are supposed to represent the duration of the cycle between the first and second human race. When the sage wakes up from this psychological or hypnotic state he curses Pramlocha, who is terrified and flies away from him, wiping the perspiration oozing out of her body with the leaves of the trees. The child she had conceived by the sage came out from the pores of her skin in drops of perspiration. The wind collected these drops into one mass, which matured by the rays of the moon, gradually increased in size and in time became the lovely girl, named Marisha—the symbol of Sweat-born Race. Kandu stands for First Race. He is a son of the lunar Pitris and therefore *devoid of mind*, and hence mistook the lapse of nearly one thousand years for one day. In *Genesis*, we read about Adam of clay into which the “Lord-god” breathes the *breath of life*. Pramlocha is the Hindu counterpart of the Biblical Lilith. H.P.B. says that the *Apsara* (nymph) is the ambassador of *Kama* (not Indra). *Kama* is the personification of that feeling which leads and propels to creation. This is very suggestive and it shows the psychic element developing the physiological, before the birth of Daksha. Patriarch or *Prajapati* Daksha is the progenitor of real physical men and he is shown to be born from Marisha. (*S.D.*, II, 174-76)

We read in *Srimad Bhagavatam* (Canto 4, Chapter 24): “There are four types of living entities born within this material world. Some are born by way of embryo (*Jarayuja* or *Pindaja*); born from eggs (*andaja*); perspiration (*svedaja*) and like the trees, by way of seeds (*udbhijja*). Human beings and animals fall under the category of *Jarayuja* as they are born from the womb. Birds, fishes and reptiles are examples of egg-born. Lice, germs and bed bugs come under the category of those born of sweat. Trees that are born of seeds are classified under the head *udbhijja*.

(*To be continued*)

OUR APPOINTED WORK IN LIFE

I

A COMMON theme we come across in many disparate sources of ancient wisdom is the idea that each one of us comes into this world for a particular purpose, the unfulfilment of which renders that life futile. *The Bhagavad-Gita* (III.16), says: “He who, sinfully delighting in the gratification of his passions, doth not cause this wheel thus already set in motion to continue revolving, liveth in vain, O son of Pritha.” In the *Light of Asia* we read:

And man who lives to die, dies to live well
So if he guide his ways by blamelessness
And earnest will to hinder not but help
All things both great and small which suffer life.

The Voice of the Silence emphasizes the same idea, thus: “The Selfish devotee lives to no purpose. The man who does not go through his appointed work in life—has lived in vain.” It is a powerful idea and yet an ominous one. Ominous because the majority of humanity goes through life with no definite purpose. However, even the most materialistic of us all, frequently stop to question the point of it all. We do it not only when we are faced with adversities but also when we are satiated with pleasures. But even when things are going swimmingly well, there is still an unfulfilled yearning to find meaning and a deeper purpose. And as year after year of our short lives roll by, we are gripped with the fear of having lived a meaningless life. Shankaracharya, the poet of *Bhaja Govindam*, opines:

Childhood is whittled away by playfulness
Youth whittled away on women
Old age whittled away with worry
Nobody is drawn to the supreme Brahman

When personality fails to live a meaningful life, it causes disappointment for the Soul or the Ego. Yet the merciful law of

Karma offers opportunities again and again, if we can only seize upon this all-important question and strive to resolve it for ourselves. So, let us logically explore an approach to this fundamental and yet seldom asked question—*Why am I here?*

The first logical question in the approach to this subject is: *Is there some definite appointed work to accomplish in life? Does life have any purpose at all?* Scientists have meticulously catalogued life on our biosphere in every department and yet have only scratched the surface. By their own estimates, there are around 8.7 million species of plants and animals in existence, but only about 1.2 million have so far been identified and described. Yet, this is just in the visible, phenomenal nature on earth. We know that there are many hierarchies of invisible beings both below and above the sublunary region that work behind the scenes to support visible nature. But even in this shallow exploration of tangible nature, science has discovered that every element of the biosphere, both living and nonliving, has a critical role to play in supporting planetary life as we know it. This life is the result of the complex interactions between species wherein the whole is unspeakably greater than the sum of its parts. Hence, reductionism (which only looks at a system as the sum of its parts) is incompatible with this living reality because from the smallest bacterium to the pinnacle of creation, man, all are inextricably interconnected in the web of life. Nothing can be considered in isolation. In this great economy of nature, there is not one organism that exists which does not serve the larger purpose of life in some way. What then should be said of man, the crown jewel of evolution on earth? It would be unreasonable to attribute no purpose to his life.

Once we admit that there must be a purpose to the human existence, the next logical question that arises is: *who has assigned this work to him?* This is a very important question because the ideological basis of the answer to this question accounts for all the difference between the actions of a sage and that of a mass murderer. Some of the most heinous crimes against humanity have been

committed by men, convinced that they were executing the work appointed to them by their exclusive God. The mental abomination that accepts a supra-natural God who goads his followers to violence through his order has been the bane of humanity through all ages.

Here again, the ennobling twin-doctrines of Karma and Reincarnation alone hold out a solution that elevates rather than debases mankind. This doctrine teaches that the real man is not his personality but its victim on this plane. That which in man is changeless and yet is the substratum of all changes, that which does not act but is the witness of all action and that which is immortal and yet incessantly incarnates, this is the real self, the Soul of man.

That which is changeless and undying is necessarily infinite and that which is infinite is necessarily ONE. For there cannot be many infinities, as each infinity would subsume every other. This establishes the fundamental identity of all Souls with the Universal Over-Soul, its pilgrimage *wherfrom* and its ultimate goal *whereto*. And throughout this journey, the Soul is guided and checked by the law of Karma which brings in each incarnation its destiny based on the accumulated actions of its past lives.

Who chooses the conditions into which we are born and the duties that are demanded thereof? *We ourselves choose it*. The many lower personalities unknowingly and unconsciously make their own destiny as a natural consequence of their actions. While the higher consciously chooses the conditions of its birth in every incarnation as an expression of the law of harmony. When W. Q. Judge advised us to look at any circumstance, no matter how distasteful, as the very thing we *ourselves* desired, he spoke a profound truth. Ultimately, there is no God that destined any circumstance nor appointed any work for us but ourselves. Consequently, we are answerable to none else but to our own Divine Self that finds expression in the *still small voice* and the LAW that it embodies.

Why have we appointed this work for ourselves? The ultimate

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purpose of all life is perfection—even nature evinces a progressive march towards a higher life. The twin-laws of Karma and Reincarnation aid the Ego in achieving *that* purpose throughout the period of manifestation or *Manvantara*. In each life, we ourselves choose the circumstances and attendant work required to garner the right experiences that bring about an opportunity to *counteract and eliminate defects*. It is only through lived experience and constant struggle that defects can be counteracted and lessons of life be indelibly impressed upon the soul. As the *Voice of the Silence* says: “Out of the furnace of man’s life and its black smoke, winged flames arise, flames purified, that soaring onward, ‘neath the Karmic eye, weave in the end the fabric glorified of the three vestures of the Path.”

The next logical question would be: *Why do I not recollect this work that I have appointed for myself? Would it not be better if we all came into this world with a roadmap of what to do and when?*

Our real-self *does* come into this world with a *clarity of purpose* but from the moment the soul wakes up in the body, it is deluded. The vehicle, that the soul inhabits, has only faculties that can cognize objects from the five senses. And all higher faculties are dormant due to *habitual neglect* through many incarnations.

However, there was a time in the latter part of the Third root-race, immediately following the lighting-up of the Manas, when Men were as Gods on earth. But as spirit invested itself deeper and deeper into matter, the principle of *Kama* (desire) started to develop and assert itself. The personality gaining the upper hand and the resultant “great, dire heresy of separateness,” caused the Egos (incarnated minds) to sin against their own higher nature and thus progressively atrophy their higher faculties.

(To be concluded)

TRY not to become a man of success. Rather become a man of value.

—ALBERT EINSTEIN

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

What determines one's self-worth. One's self-worth is determined by knowing and abiding in one's natural state of being, and not by endlessly pursuing goals, says Ajay Kalra. Since childhood we have learnt to give importance to achievement, ambition and success. Our worth is based on our achievements and what others think of us. We are seldom asked what we wish to do. We are always told what we should do and if we do what we are asked to do we will be successful and that in turn will lead to happiness. But is that true? Is pursuit of success the purpose of life? We seem to chase one goal after other. We tend to get addicted to admiration, fame and power which follow success. What pushes us on is our anxiety of being left behind. We erroneously believe that others are watching us and evaluating our worth, but the fact is that others are "busy pursuing their worth in the eyes of others."

When we are forced to re-examine our life due to job loss, health-crisis, emotional breakdown or relationship breakup, we recognize that we are afraid of being worthless. At such times, we begin to wonder if the purpose of life is to pursue success. Then, there is a subtle change, we seek fulfilment and not success as a measurable goal. There is also the realization that success cannot satisfy the longing of our soul. We are at a loss because we do not know any well-defined steps to follow. We are in a transition state, "a twilight phase of self-transformation," where we have lost the old without having any idea of the new, and assailed by the feeling of being a loser. If one begins to listen to one's heart, one may begin to know the meaning and purpose of one's life.

The wave does not become worthy by becoming bigger than other waves, but by realising that it is not a wave but water. "In that realisation the pursuit of self-worth disappears. Self-worth cannot be doing something or becoming someone. It comes from realising our true essence. In that realisation, the pursuit of self-worth disappears." Then we feel blissful, we act creatively and

without seeking results. When we are able to see the futility of seeking self-worth through success, our mind begins to pursue the image of being a spiritually enlightened person. It is only when the futility of all pursuits is recognised that there is fulfilment, and “the Self has found its worth. In Itself,” writes Ajay Kalra, a life coach, psychologist and yoga teacher. (*Life Positive*, June 2022)

We tend to derive our identity from what surrounds our true Self, *i.e.*, our body, ideas, feelings, education, etc. This derived sense of self could be extremely fragile, requiring continual maintenance, nurturing and defending. For instance, when we derive our sense of identity from our interaction with others, we may work towards getting approval from others. To bolster the sense of identity we gather possessions. Our identity is often measured in terms of houses, cars, television sets, furniture and paintings. Therefore, the Delphic oracle, “Man, know thyself,” seems to suggest that we are not what we think we are. The personal self is the derived self, an instrument of the Real Self which is all-knowing, all-powerful and imperishable. It is only when the personal self is able to identify itself with the Real Self that it partakes of all the power and knowledge of that Spiritual Self. The goal, the purpose and meaning of life is self-realisation, and the Universe exists for the experience and emancipation of the soul. The purpose of life is to learn and that it is all made up of learning. It is a long journey from being an ordinary human being to reach the stage of a perfected being. Every life is meaningful, provided we change our attitude towards what life brings to us. Life of a teacher, a businessman or a sweeper could be meaningful, provided each lives his life with the aim of self-actualization and self-transcendence.

“Begin by trying to conquer the habit, almost universal, of pushing yourself forward. This arises from personality. Do not monopolize the conversation....Try to recollect that you are a very small affair in the world, and that the people around do not value you at all and grieve not when you are absent. Your only true

greatness lies in your inner true self and it is not desirous of obtaining the applause of others. If you will follow these directions for one week you will find they will take considerable effort, and you will begin to discover a part of the meaning of the saying, ‘Man, know thyself,’” advises Mr. Judge.

Do you really love others? Or only your own self? It appears that our love for people and things is mere delusion. We claim to love our near and dear ones, our friends, and our pets. We are ready to do anything for them so long as they bring us happiness. But the moment any of them behaves against our wish, stops caring for us, or fights with us over property and makes us miserable, then will we still love them as we did before? The same applies to our possessions. We love our car when it is new and works well. We are too ready to discard it when it begins to require frequent repairs. We erroneously believe that we love money. The fact is that we love what money is able to get for us, comfort and luxury. The same money feels troublesome when we get life threats from a gangster or when Income Tax authorities raid our house.

You only love something or someone who gives you happiness, because you love only yourself. Every individual dearly loves only himself, says *Brihadaranyak Upanishad* (verse 2.4.5). This verse applies to every human being on this planet. We wish to part from every person or thing that ceases to give us happiness. “Even a person who commits suicide does it because he loves himself so much that he wants to get free from the problems causing him pain,” writes Acharya Upendra ji.

But great saints or gurus have a far exalted definition of self, namely, “*Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam*,” or the whole world is their family. A guru physically bears the pain of the sins of his disciples and yet thinks only of their upliftment. Jesus died on the Cross to alleviate some of the suffering of humanity. “Even though gurus too love their own selves, the entire world fits into their ‘self.’ Now

do you really feel that your love for your partner, children, parents or your belongings is selfless?...Think and you will get the answer,” writes Acharya Upendra ji, a spiritual leader and the founder of Antar Yog Foundation. (*Sunday Free Press Journal*, June 5, 2022)

Love is an essential part of human existence, as without love, life is barren and frozen. Without love there can be no unfoldment, no growth. The accepted notion, that love is merely an emotional state, needs correction. If we can feel the little of “compassion” that the great ones feel, then we will know that love is more than the opposite of hate and a far more nobler feeling which helps us overcome the sense of separateness between ourselves and our fellows. There is “Love” as a feeling, which is different from “Love” as a virtue. “Love” as virtue is the result of transformation of natural love. All *feelings* are separative. There is blind Cupid and the all-seeing Eros, which is the Love that sees and understands, writes Shri B. P. Wadia.

A Master of Wisdom hints at the ladder of love that has many steps. *He who loves lives. He who loves himself lives in hell. He who loves another, lives on earth.* In loving another, we go over the wall of our selfhood, push aside our own happiness as triviality, and effortlessly plant the interest of another in the centre of our being. *He who loves others lives in heaven.* When we are able to generate unselfish impersonal love for the fellow-men, expanding the circle of love to include, “the great orphan—Humanity,” and are able to love without being loved in return, are ready to sacrifice our own good for the welfare of others, then we find ourselves in blissful state of mind of heaven. But there is a still higher step. *He who silently adores the Self of all creatures lives in that Self: and It is eternal peace.* Even the satisfaction of helping others must be given up, as there is higher life than that of altruism, the life of self-identification with the Supreme, enabling us to recognize the One in the many, and to be the friend of all creatures, and remain in harmony with all that lives and breathes.

Animal minds exhibit extraordinary diversity, and if they are categorised, they could reveal distinct nature of intelligence in everything, from dolphins to bees, including humans. We are fairly familiar with the intelligence of whales, dolphins, chimpanzees and orangutans, but are we aware that wasps can recognise human faces, crabs use stinging anemones to defend themselves against predators and alligators place sticks on their snouts to catch egrets? Such observations raise questions that are difficult to answer: What actually is intelligence? How did it evolve and how do the abilities of various organisms compare? Though evaluating intelligence in nature is tricky, a group of neuroscientists, AI (Artificial Intelligence) researchers and philosophers propose to create a periodic table of intelligence, very similar to the one that is used to categorise chemical elements. A periodic table of chemical elements arranges these elements into columns and rows such that by merely knowing the position of the element in the table enables one to ascertain its properties, such as, if it might react vigorously with water, or it would conduct electricity, etc. The table enabled scientists to predict elements that were discovered in the future. This table sorts elements by their atomic number or atomic mass. But it is difficult to identify a criterion for the “periodic table of intelligence.” The brain size can certainly not be the criterion as is indicated by comparing brain weight and number of neurons in adult human brain with that of other animals. Likewise, testing for intelligence through behaviour is difficult. For instance, magpies and dolphins recognise themselves in mirror but dogs cannot, which probably could be due to their reliance more on smell than vision. How is the cognition in a shark shaped, which senses nearby animals through its electric field?

Researchers believe that “intelligence might become more transparent through a combination of behavioural and neuroanatomical features.” They hope to get insights by studying different neuronal architectures. In Jellyfish one finds decentralised network of neurons, while worms and sea slugs have a series of

dispersed neuron clusters, and owing to such differences, information is organised, processed and spread differently.

Some believe that after all there may not be clear boundaries between the different dimensions of intelligence, and then this project may not succeed. And yet, this project could change the way we view other species, and the information about an animal's intelligence could help us decide how that animal should be practically and ethically treated. Some believe that human intelligence does seem to be special and a periodic table of intelligence can show us how, writes Ute Eberle. (*New Scientist*, May 11, 2022)

If human intelligence seems to be special and superior, it is because intelligence arises from mind, and human mind is superior to animal mind. Ordinarily, the mind is considered to be immaterial. It is taken to be the “name for the action of the brain in evolving thought.” The brain is only an instrument of the mind. Theosophy teaches that there was a point in the course of evolution, when man in form was devoid of self-conscious mind. However, he had developed a brain that was of much *better* and *deeper* capacity than that of any other animal. Man was given the light of mind by Divine Beings—*Manasaputras*—in a manner comparable to one candle lighting up many. As a result, it linked the Divine nature (*Atma-Buddhi*) with the personal or animal man. Thus, in the human kingdom, the monad (*Atma-Buddhi*) is *individualized*, and as a result man is endowed with self-consciousness and apperception, whereas in the animal kingdom we speak of “monadic essence.” However, in animals, this process of individualization of monad is gradual, and in the higher animals it almost comes to the point of being individualized. Hence, some of the animals *seem* to exhibit self-reflective consciousness.

When mind in man is involved in desires and passions, it is *kama-manas*. This aspect of mind is present in animals. But apart from that man is capable of reasoning, has intuition and spiritual discrimination. The lighting up of Manas also endowed man with the power to think, choose and to reason. The human brain is the

most complex phenomenon. Intelligence in animals is related to brain weight in relation to body weight, as also, to brain size relative to body size. There are many views concerning relation between brain-size and intelligence as also, concerning the origin of brain convolutions and its relation to intelligence. Human brains are more folded or convoluted than brains of any other animal. Theosophy teaches that brain is not the cause of mind. In fact, the depth and variety of brain convolutions are caused by the presence of the mind. Therefore, the intelligence in man depends upon not only the brain capacity but also the ability of the mind (Ego) to use the brain itself. For many savages have good actual brain capacity but still are savage because the Ego in that body is still savage and undeveloped. In contrast, many civilized men with small actual brain force are not savage in nature because the Ego has had long experience in civilization during other lives, and being more developed, soul has power to use the brain instrument to its highest limits, writes Mr. Judge.

Mind or mental activities affect the brain and brain substance. H.P.B. points out that “the brain is the instrument of waking consciousness, and every conscious mental picture formed means change and destruction of the atoms of the brain. Ordinary intellectual activity moves on well-beaten paths in the brain, and does not compel sudden adjustments and destructions in its substance. But...[any] new kind of mental effort calls for something very different—the carving out of new ‘brain paths’....”

Not all of your decisions will be correct. None of us is perfect. But if you get into the habit of making decisions, experience will develop your judgment to a point where more and more of your decisions will be right. After all, it is better to be right 51 per cent of the time and get something done, than it is to get nothing done because you fear to reach a decision.

—H. W. ANDREWS