

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

Vol. 4, No. 2

June 17, 2012

A Magazine Devoted to The Living of the Higher Life

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THE ANXIETIES OF A SEEKER

WHO is a *seeker*? What does he seek? Why does he seek? These are three inter-related questions. There are seekers and seekers. Not all are seeking knowledge; not all are seeking God; not all are seeking lasting happiness. It all depends upon “why” or what it is that sets them searching. A person suffering from a fatal disease or a huge financial loss, or strained relationship is seeking relief from pain. In case the one suffering from an incurable disease finds the cure or relief in one of the alternative therapies, he may seek to learn and use the same for others. Such a person, while he/she was in the process of finding the solution, briefly turns to books, institutions, teachers and different philosophies. Such a person may be temporarily interested in Karma and Rebirth, in God and prayer, but once the disease is cured, the interest may fizzle out, and the search may come to an end. The same holds true of others who are afflicted. Their concern is narrow and so the search is temporary. After a while, such a “seeker” begins to drift away from the system which provided the solution, or he might maintain a superficial connection—just in case, there might be need in the future!

But sometimes pain and suffering may give birth to a “seeker” whose search goes beyond the immediate concern of relieving the pain. He wants to learn the cause and cure of sorrow. But, even then he may not be interested in going too far in his search. He asks questions, and studies in some depth the doctrines of Karma and

Rebirth, seeks to learn meditation technique, such that suffering could be kept at bay. Then there are seekers who never cease seeking, because they never commit themselves to a single system of thought. Are they really aware what they are seeking? They are certainly fascinated by the terms, “Self-realization,” “*moksha*,” “*nirvana*,” “enlightenment,” and may even claim to be seeking one or all of these. But begin to tell them what God really is, and they will be bored.

Then, there are genuine seekers, who might have been driven to search due to suffering, or due to emptiness in life, or due to satiety and over-abundance of pleasures. They wish to know the “why,” for all that happens. They wish to understand the relationship of man with man, of man with God, of man with whole of nature. They may seek to understand with heart, choosing the path of devotion; or they may seek to understand, first, with mind, choosing the path of knowledge; or they may seek to understand by working for others. Sooner or later there must be a realization that all three paths must combine, that ethics and metaphysics must go hand in hand. The *Gita* classifies the “seekers” into four categories. “Four classes of men who work righteousness worship me, O Arjuna; those who are afflicted, the searchers for truth, those who desire possessions, and the wise....Of these the best is the one possessed of spiritual knowledge, who is always devoted to me,” says Shri Krishna.

Each seeker begins to feel at some point in time, the anxiety, am I stagnating? The one fascinated by knowledge, may begin to feel anxious, “when will I finish knowing all that is to be known”? In general, most seekers feel the anxiety for progress.

When the earnest desire to be better is accompanied by the earnest desire to do good works for humanity, then there is growth and progress. But it may not be a continuous growth that is visibly seen. Mr. Crosbie explains spiritual progress by an analogy. There are trees in nature which denude and remain expressionless for a long time, while the others continually renew themselves, putting forth,

flowers, fruit or leaves. Thus, there seems to be two ways of making progress. In some cases, the progress is by fits and starts, while in other cases, there is continual progress, with un-relaxed efforts. At times, there might appear to be “growth” and “retardation,” but what appears to be “retardation,” is really speaking the process of “solidification.”

There is the story of a person who was fed up with life because nothing exciting or significant happened in his life. So he decided to quit life. He went to God to have one last word with Him, and asked to give one reason why he should not quit. God asked this man to look around and see fern and bamboo. God said that when He first planted fern and bamboo seeds and watered them and gave them light, He found that the fern grew quickly, and spread across the ground, producing a green cover on the floor. But nothing came from the bamboo seed for the first, second, third, and the fourth years, and it was challenging. And yet, He did not quit. Only in the fifth year, a tiny sprout emerged from the earth, and it was very small and insignificant as compared to the fern. But in the next six months the bamboo plant grew a hundred feet tall! It had spent all these five years patiently growing its roots, making a solid base and gathering strength it needed to survive. Likewise, the man was told that all the while when he thought nothing happened, as he struggled, though there was no visible or obvious progress, he was building the foundation for the future growth.

When we are *anxious* we seem to assert, in a subtle way, our own will. We want things to happen as we desired. Mr. Judge says, “By anxiety we exert the constrictive power of egoism, which densifies and perturbs our magnetic sphere, rendering us less permeable to the efflux from above.” In other words, by being anxious, we mar our chances of receiving help from our divine nature. Instead, if we learn to accept that whatever happens is for the best, we will never have any need to be anxious. Sometimes, apparently adverse looking circumstances or happenings work to our advantage or at least prove to be educative for the soul.

Patience and anxiety often go hand in hand. We are anxious, because we expect instant results. Some of us get anxious as to our progress in spiritual life. A good gardener does not dig out the plant by the roots to see how it is growing. We cannot force the growth of the soul-plant. It may not be large or strong enough to bear fruit when we wish it to, but some day it will, if only we are not anxious, and nurture it well. “What is to learn, is to be content, or, rather, resigned to ourselves and our limitations even while striving to get above them.... We cannot all at once live up to these high ideals as some others live up to theirs,” writes Mr. Judge.

Next, there is anxiety for power. A genuine seeker could get impatient and feel disappointed when he sees another “seeker” developing powers, or being apparently “conferred” powers by his guru—if such a thing were possible—while he has no such luck. He feels that if only he had powers he could bring about so much good of humanity, such as heal the sick, or multiply food, and so on. Such a seeker should ask himself as to what use is he making of the powers he already possesses? For instance, how does he use the power of thought and the power of speech? If one is rich, how does one use that money? Raja-Yoga tradition is very clear. The development of psychic powers must be the natural by-product of spiritual life. Both psychic and spiritual powers are mere accompaniments of purity and knowledge. A sincere seeker is bound to acquire these powers as he learns to forget himself in working for humanity. It is not desirable to acquire these powers till one has developed pure motive and gained control over his lower nature.

A spiritual seeker must not desire to acquire these powers. Even a seeker, who says that he wishes these powers for the good of humanity, is not aware of the strength of selfishness in the human nature. Once these powers are acquired it is very easy to use them for bad ends, either consciously or unconsciously. For instance, if one possessing powers gets angry, it is likely that the powers would work to bring about harm or even death of a person towards whom anger was directed. Hence, in the Raja-Yoga tradition emphasis is

laid on first purifying one’s psychic nature. If we are sure that no selfishness, nor anger, nor any other evil thing is within us, then we may make use of these powers. In fact, in the article, “Occult Powers and Their Acquirement,” Mr. Judge mentions that till the disciple is ready, the acquired powers may lie dumb and dormant in their potentiality like the wheels in a music box. It requires winding of the key to start them. The Master can wind the key, and thus start the machinery, but he can also refuse to give the necessary impulse to start them. Further, he may not only refuse to give the impulse, but may even prevent the wheels from moving, since, he can clearly see the motive and readiness of the person concerned. A Master knows when to make an exception.

In case of accepted *Chelas* (disciples) the Master takes upon himself the responsibility of the exercise of the powers by the *Chela*—like the god-parents of the child in Baptism—and hence they thoroughly test the *chela* as to his purity before allowing the development of such powers. We are not given any method as to how the Master would check the development of powers in a *lay-chela*. We may compare it with what is said in *Vernal Blooms*. It is stated that a section of occultists could be set apart to watch the section of people who are engaged in the direction of research and then the moment any mind(s) is found to come close to the secret regarding elementals—sometimes elementals carry this information to them—they might throw pictures of some social reform or some other invention before the eyes of this person so as to side-track him. *Or*, they might throw his mind into a rut. Similar method could well be used by the Masters to dissuade a probationer from pursuing the course of acquiring magical powers. They would not interfere with the free will of the probationer, but he may be warned, guided and then left free to choose.

“Desire power ardently.... And that power which the disciple shall covet is that which shall make him appear as nothing in the eyes of men,” says *Light on the Path*. One acquires the power “to appear as nothing in the eyes of men,” when one gradually learns to

sink the personal self. Then one comes to possess spiritual will, and also the power to bless and save humanity.

To someone anxious about his progress in spiritual life, Mr. Crosbie says, “May I add one word to you, as a friend and brother: make clean and clear, first, the mental conceptions and perceptions; the rest will follow naturally; there will be no destruction—the undesirable will die a natural death. ‘Grow as the flowers grow,’ from within outwards.” *Light on the Path* asks the seeker to “grow as the flower grows, unconsciously, but eagerly anxious to open its soul to the air...But it must be the eternal that draws forth your strength and beauty, not desire of growth.” When the process of growth is from within outwards, there is no destruction and the undesirable dies a natural death. In other words, when our ideas are clear, we tend to spontaneously follow the discipline. When we have realized that running after wealth, fame or name is futile, then like a child who has outgrown his fascination for toys, and as a result very willingly gives up toys without having to curb or suppress his desire, worldly allurements will stop having fascination for us. Similar is the advice of the Buddha, who asks us to “kill out love of self as you would an autumn lily.”

Let us take to heart these words of Mr. Judge: “It is in and through the incidents of daily life, in work well done, in duties thoroughly performed, that we today can most readily make progress in the higher life—slow progress, it may be, but at any rate sure. These are stepping stones to better things. We advance most rapidly when we stop to help other wayfarers.....We become one with the Supreme most surely when we lose ourselves in work for humanity.”

JUST so surely as you murmur and complain, just so surely will you find that “from him that hath not shall be taken even that which he hath.”

—W. Q. JUDGE

DEVOTION TO THE CAUSE OF THEOSOPHY

WHAT does the phrase “independent devotion to the cause of Theosophy,” in our U.L.T. Declaration, mean? It does not mean isolation from others except in the sense that, no matter what others do, *our* devotion is to Theosophy and its mission. This devotion must be able to stand every strain and we must be capable of standing alone. What does standing alone mean? There are two methods of standing alone: one that of the dictator, the one who must dominate all others, who must have his own way under all circumstances, who is deluded and whose opinion of himself is not shared by others; and the other that of the one who has reached the point where he will suffer isolation because of his principles. What is a principle? We can call it a dictate of conscience if we wish. But what is conscience? What speaks to us as the voice of conscience? All these points need to be meditated upon so that we can come to some conclusion for ourselves, which will provide a working basis for our life. We have heard many ideas advanced on these topics. What ideas have we made our own through our meditation?

What does devotion mean? It means setting our heart, not our mind, on something. A mind not ensouled by the heart quality does not lead us to devotion. The spiritual heart is the seat of the higher spiritual faculties, of *Buddhi*, intuition, etc; and from the lower aspect of the heart come emotions like love. True devotion is not a feeling as we understand feeling; it is not the giving up of oneself to the whims of another. The truly devoted think of the best interests of the object of their devotion, even at the sacrifice of their own personal comforts or wishes. But only the false devotee sacrifices his free will or conscience or principles for the object of his devotion. Hence we must think before we act upon what the object of our devotion demands from us.

Our devotion at our stage must be to the Movement and to the genuine teachings of our philosophy. We must learn, practise and pass them on without bias or predilections. Let us remember that

we ourselves are only the transmitters.

All that is required of the Associates in the U.L.T. is independent devotion to the cause of Theosophy, with all that it implies. Everything else in the Declaration follows from this as a basis. Brotherhood does not obliterate the fact that each of us is an individual. Our goal is to maintain our individuality while functioning from the universal basis. There can be no real unity until the real meaning of unity in diversity is grasped. There is no such thing as separation in reality; but unity cannot be understood and practised until each unit realizes his own individuality, is capable of standing on his own feet and, by self-effort, pours himself into the ALL.

Therefore side issues and differences of opinion do not affect the independent devotion of the sincere student. He cannot, by virtue of his independent devotion, adopt the follow-the-leader mentality. His only leader is the philosophy and the Movement. He must recognize that others are as free to believe what they wish to believe as he is free to hold to his own beliefs. Through right and wrong actions each learns the strength or the weakness of his own position.

That is why the Third Fundamental Proposition speaks of our progress through self-induced and self-devised methods. We have to mould and chip our own character. We can follow the hints given to us in our philosophy, but we must prove them by experimenting with them.

If our devotion and understanding are totally different from those of others (*e.g.*, how can there be unity of opinion between a student of Theosophy and an orthodox religionist?) we are advised to leave them and unite those having the same *aim, purpose and teaching* as we hold to. How else but by studying the same teachings and going towards the same goal can there be unity?

MAN was born alone, must stand alone, die alone—so he must needs be strong.

—W. Q. JUDGE

H. P. BLAVATSKY AND HER BOOKS

III

IN THE Conclusion to *The Key to Theosophy*, H.P.B. reflects over the future of the Theosophical Movement and explains that the future would depend upon the “selflessness, earnestness, devotion, and last, but not least, on the amount of knowledge and wisdom” possessed by those on whom it would fall to carry on the work till 1975. This book has proved to be very useful for class work, but, as stated in the Preface, “To the mentally lazy or obtuse, Theosophy must remain a riddle; for in the world mental as in the world spiritual each man must progress by his own efforts.” H.P.B. dedicated the book “to all her pupils that they may learn and teach in their turn.”

The Voice of the Silence, first published in 1889, is particularly meant for the daily use of *lanoos* or disciples. It consists of chosen fragments from the Book of the *Golden Precepts*, translated and annotated by H.P.B. for our benefit. She writes in the Preface: “The work from which I here translate forms part of the same series as that from which the ‘Stanzas’ of the *Book of Dzyan* were taken, on which the *Secret Doctrine* is based.” Beautifully poetic, it is profound yet simple, and helps to cleanse the mind and the heart. It is divided into three parts, or fragments. The opening verse of the first fragment makes clear that the instructions the book contains are meant “for those ignorant of the dangers of the lower *IDDHI*,” or the lower, coarse, psychic and mental energies within us. How to control the senses and the mind, how to purify the heart and reach the innermost being is explained. It is a book of compassion *par excellence*. He who would tread the Path taught by the Buddhas of old has to live, not for himself, but for the world, has to choose, not the *Path of Liberation*, which makes one completely forget humanity and its woes and enjoy the peace and bliss and rest of Nirvana, but the *Path of Renunciation* meant for those who wish to remain with suffering humanity, to help and uplift it. The underlying motive should always be “to live to benefit mankind”; that is the first step.

We are told of the Seven Portals to be opened by cultivating the divine virtues. Their source is Compassion, which is not an attribute but is the LAW OF LAWS. It is under this Law that one renounces Nirvana, to become a stone in the “Guardian Wall” which “shields mankind, since man is man, protecting it from further and far greater misery and sorrow.” This book is “dedicated to the few,” for the Path it recommends can only be trodden with strenuous effort, and only a few would be ready to undergo the discipline indicated in it. Only a few would have the patience and the perseverance to go on, day after day, overcoming temptations and unfolding the necessary qualities and the strength and perception needed for the great work of transforming themselves and helping others.

It may be questioned what effect H.P.B.’s writings have produced. The Western world has been moved to study seriously the ancient books of the East. Ordinary people as well as scholars and writers, statesmen and politicians, have made of “One World” a popular slogan, but without the correct basis of the unity of the Divine Life and the immortality of man—it has not yielded practical results. In the field of archaeology, the discoveries made prove the existence of ancient cultures and civilizations and the height of progress they had reached. The concepts of Karma and Reincarnation have penetrated into Western thought. In short, men’s minds and hearts have been awakened to something higher, nobler and everlasting. This being *Kali Yuga*, men and women can either use the swift momentum of this cycle and live the life necessary according to the teachings of the Ancient Wisdom or drift with the current if they so choose. It is the responsibility of those who have had the privilege of contacting this mighty philosophy to keep it alive so that its life-giving waters may quench the thirst of other human souls and keep them well nourished, well sustained. May H.P.B.’s hope be realized and the earth turn into a heaven in the 21st century!

(Concluded)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

WHAT ABOUT THE OTHERS?

“LOOK at all the people there are in the queue! Come on, Jagannathan! There comes the bus!” Without a glance at his companion, whom he assumed to be at his heels, Vasant dashed out as the bus stopped, rushed ahead of several people, ducked under a man’s arm and climbed triumphantly into the already crowded bus, just as the conductor shouted, “No more room!” to the advancing queue and gave the driver the signal to start.

Vasant looked around then for Jagannathan and saw him standing quietly in the queue. He gave an impatient ejaculation, jumped down at the next stop and ran back to him, for the two school friends, though rather new acquaintances, were setting out for a park to fly their kites.

“Hey! what’s the idea?” Vasant demanded. “See how many people are ahead of you! Do you want to stand here all day?”

“No, I don’t, Jagannathan answered, “but I don’t think the ones ahead want to, either, and they have been waiting longer.”

“Well, if I am smarter and quicker than they are, why should they not wait?” Vasant demanded.

“Fair is fair,” said Jagannathan. Why do you think they have a queue?”

“I suppose so they will not all fight to get in at the same time and maybe knock somebody down.”

“My father says,” Jagannathan persisted, “that they have queues so that everybody will have an even chance. ‘First come, first served.’”

“You are right, my boy,” the tall man just back of Jagannathan in the queue said heartily. “Look at that mother up ahead with a baby in one arm and holding another little one by the hand. What chance would they ever have to get in if everybody pushed and shoved? What chance would boys like you have if all the strong men crowded in and pushed you aside?” “A queue,” he went on thoughtfully,

“makes the difference between living among civilized people and living where there isn’t any law and anybody can take what he wants and is strong enough to keep.”

A bus came along just then and ten or fifteen from the top of the queue, including the woman and her little ones, got in and the bus moved away while the rest of the line moved forward to the bus stop sign.

“I sometimes get a thrill,” the tall man resumed, “in looking at a queue; so many people standing quietly, paying their respects, even without thinking much about it, to the law, to human rights and to the brotherhood of man, and only a few thinking only of themselves and what they want and never caring what happens to others.”

Part of this was over the boys’ heads, but the last words about the selfish few went to the mark and Vasant hung his head. He kept his place unchallenged beside Jagannathan, however, though, coming later, he should have gone behind the ones who joined the queue while he was on the bus, but he looked rather troubled. Their bus came at long last and both got in. Flying their kites was fun and Vasant had forgotten the tall man’s reproof before they came home, but that night he had a curious dream.

He dreamt that he slipped to the head of the queue and a policeman tapped him on the shoulder and took him to the court. Vasant had only the vaguest idea of what a court was like, but he knew it had a Judge, and sitting at the front of a big room into which the policeman thrust him was a stern man who looked quite like the Principal of his former school, when Vasant had been sent to him for clowning in the classroom and making all the children laugh.

The policeman came in after him and told the Judge what Vasant had done.

“Call the people whom he pushed ahead of !” said the Judge.

“I couldn’t get them all,” the policeman said, “but here are some,” and he beckoned them from the side door to come in.

The mother with her two children came first and said, “He pushed

ahead of me, and I had a heavy baby in one arm and was holding the hand of my little girl.”

She sat down and an old man leaning on a cane spoke next, in a quivering voice. “He pushed ahead of me and I am old and feeble, and it is hard for me to stand up long.”

A thin little woman said: “He got ahead of me and I was going to give a music lesson to a little boy. Because I couldn’t get on the first bus that came I got to his house late and his mother had let him go out and play and he was nowhere to be found, so I’ll get no pay for the lesson I couldn’t give, and I needed the money.”

A nurse said she had been going to a patient who had got worried because she was late and it had made her worse. “He ought not to have gone ahead of me,” she said.

A poor looking workman stood up next. “Somebody told me there was work in a new house near the park, and that they wanted bricklayers. But this boy ducked under my arm and just then the conductor shouted ‘No more room!’ And when I got to the place all the jobs were gone.”

A man who looked just like the one who thought so well of queues said that he thought perhaps he had just missed getting a good contract by arriving a few minutes too late.

A youngster about Vasant’s age said he had missed the bus and he had been told if he came straight home from school he might help his mother plant a garden plot, which he loved to do. But he was late and she had done it all when he got home.

Then the Judge called on Jagannathan, whom Vasant hadn’t seen come in and felt relieved to see. But Jagannathan had to say that Vasant had run ahead this time, but he added that he did not think he ever would again if he could be excused this once.

“So many people inconvenienced!” the Judge said severely. “What have you to say for yourself, young man?”

“I am sorry, Sir,” said Vasant miserably, feeling very low indeed about the difficulties he had helped to cause. “I was in a great hurry.”

“So were they,” the Judge said, “and you are partly responsible

that they had to stand so long. You took the place of one of them yourself and set a bad example to other people who also pushed ahead. What was your great hurry, may I ask?" he said sarcastically.

"I wanted to get to the park soon to fly my kite," Vasant mumbled.

"To fly his kite!" the Judge exclaimed, and some of the witnesses echoed, "To fly his kite!" so that Vasant was heartily ashamed. His face felt hot, and tears came to his eyes.

"Do you see now why it is necessary to keep the queue and take your proper turn?"

"Oh, yes, Sir!" Vasant gasped. "I only did it because I didn't want to wait."

"I, I, I!" said the Judge. "What about the others?" And all the people who had spoken, except Jagannathan, as well as the policeman, repeated in a noisy chorus, "What about the others?" "What about the others?" till Vasant put his fingers in his ears to shut it out.

"The next time you feel tempted to break the queue, young man," the Judge said sternly, "you ask yourself, 'What about the others?' Say that and 'Stay in the queue!' And do it, too. Say that over now!"

"What about the others?" said Vasant.

"And?" prompted the Judge.

"Stay in the queue," he almost whispered.

"Louder!" cried the Judge. "Say them both!"

"Vasant said them in his ordinary voice.

"Louder!" the Judge urged.

And Vasant, terribly embarrassed, shouted, "What about the others? Stay in the queue!"

"What is the matter son?" It was his mother's voice as she switched on the light. You have been making such strange noises! Did you have a nightmare?"

"Maybe that was what it was," he answered, feeling much relieved but looking rather sheepish.

"When I came in it sounded as if you were saying, 'Stay in the queue!'"

"That's right, Mother. I am going to do it, too!"

"That's my good boy!" said his mother. "And now go back to sleep and we shall try to, too!"

In *The Voice of the Silence*, the transcendental virtue, *Sheela* is described as the "key that counterbalances the cause and the effect, and leaves no further room for karmic action." We are acting all the time. But, when we act, so as to pass the burden of our karma to others, we are not balancing the cause and the effect. For instance, while we are standing in the queue for a ticket it may so happen that just when it is our turn to buy the ticket, it is time for the ticket-window to close. In such a case, we need to accept the situation that comes to us under karma. Instead, if we plead with the clerk on the counter to keep it open for a little while longer, and issue us the ticket, we have created fresh karmic debt, and failed to "counterbalance the cause and the effect." Similarly, when we jump the queue instead of waiting patiently for our turn to get into the bus, we fail to accept the karmic consequences.

Light on the Path advises that every person must begin to regard himself as a part of the vast multitude; like a grain of sand which is washed hither and thither, and which, now and then, gets a chance to lie for a moment in the sunshine. In other words, there must be willingness to suffer and be inconvenienced like any other person in the world. Thus: "When a man is able to regard his own life as part of the whole like this he will no longer struggle in order to obtain anything for himself. . . . The ordinary man expects, not to take equal fortunes with the rest of the world, but in some points, about which he cares, to fare better than the others."

EACH and every one is here for a good and wise reason.

—W. Q. JUDGE

STUDIES IN THE DHAMMAPADA

IMPURITY—II

5. *Let a wise man remove his impurities, one by one, little by little, day by day, as a smith removes the impurities of silver. (239)*

6. *As the rust sprung from iron itself corrodes and eats into it, so with the man who sins. His own deeds bring the sinner to an evil end. (240)*

IN THE CHAPTER on “Evil Conduct,” the Buddha tells us: Think not lightly of good, saying, “it will not come unto me.” Even a water-pot is filled by the constant falling of drops of water. A wise man becomes full of goodness even if he gathers it little by little. Buddha asks us to remove impurities, one by one, little by little, day by day. It requires constant effort on our part. Having resolved to get rid of some vice of our nature, we have to keep up the struggle at all times. If we are not vigilant, we can easily fall back into old ways of living. Also, it is advisable to attack small faults, to begin with. The person who wants to become a champion in weight-lifting does not attempt to lift very heavy weight right in the beginning. He begins by lifting small weights and then goes on steadily increasing the weight. This method is practical and also boosts confidence when one meets with success. We can gradually attack our small faults such as tendency to over eat, over sleep, laziness, looking for comforts, etc. If we are eating four times in a day and too much, we can begin by controlling our desire to go on eating, just for the taste, even when the stomach is full. Then we can reduce the amount of food that we take in a day so that the stomach remains a little empty. We can then reduce our food intake from four times in a day to three times, at least once in a week and then attempt to increase the frequency, and so on. Fasting is recommended in almost every religion of the world. It helps in developing self-control.

If we try to remove all our faults at once, we are likely to fail in

the face of tremendous pressure from our past habits. An animal is trained gradually, little by little. So it is with our animal nature. If we try to curb it forcibly all of a sudden, it will react violently. People are known to break down under severe discipline. Initially there is lot of enthusiasm. But as time passes, the strain becomes too much to bear for the personality and then comes a reaction which throws him off-balance. Pure silver is bright and makes a good mirror. But when it gets oxidized, it becomes dull. This is also true of our astral body. It gets affected by our thoughts and desires. Impurities such as anger, envy, fear, greed, vanity, etc., affect the astral body and consequently the physical body. Anger has explosive effect on the astral body, it ruptures it and breaks it into pieces; fear shrivels it up; envy makes it dull and cloudy; vanity leads to illusion from which arise anger and envy. Purification of the astral, inner man is a painstaking and gradual process in which one cannot afford to become slack.

Buddha also uses another analogy to drive home the point. He tells us that the iron gets corroded in contact with moist air. The tendency to rust is inherent in iron itself, and one has to take preventive measures. Rust can completely eat away the vital equipment and machinery parts used on a daily basis. Once the rust begins to develop, it can spread like an infection. To protect iron from rusting, we need to apply paint on the surface so that it does not come in direct contact with atmosphere. This is also true of evil tendencies. They bring the sinner to an evil end. They corrode our entire nature. Therefore, we must remain on guard and protect ourselves by studying the scriptures, reflecting upon them and practicing virtues with understanding and devotion. These act like the paint which prevents rust formation in the iron. Alchemists compare our lower nature with the base metals. They speak of transmuting the base metal such as Lead into Gold through alchemical process. This, in fact, refers to the spiritual alchemy which transmutes our base nature into spiritual nature.

7. *Non-repetition taints our prayers. Non-repair taints*

the house. Sloth taints our body. Heedlessness taints the watchman. (241)

8. *Unchastity taints a woman. Niggardliness taints a benefactor. Evil deeds taint us in this world and the next. (242)*

9. *But there is a taint worse than all taints—ignorance is the worst taint. O Bhikkhus, remove that taint and so become taintless. (243)*

Regular praying is considered to be the means of attaining union with the Divine. But we must not pray mechanically. In the *Gospel According to St. Matthew* (vi, 6-8) we find: "...when you pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him." We are expected to understand the meaning of the prayer. Repeating prayer at certain fixed time of the day helps in achieving concentration. If we pray attentively, each time we pray, we learn deeper meaning. Even an artist practices many hours every day in order to master his art. Repetition of prayer sets your mental channel in a certain direction. Hence, certain prayers are worth remembering and repeating. It purifies our mind.

In a story entitled "Three Hermits" by Leo Tolstoy, a bishop was sailing on a ship with other people to a place of pilgrimage. While they were thus sailing, he came to know about three hermits who lived on an island in the sea for the salvation of their souls. The bishop told the captain to take the ship to the island as he wanted to meet the hermits. The bishop met the three old men and asked them how they were going to save their souls. One hermit told him: "We do not know how to serve God. We only serve and support ourselves." "But how do you pray to God?" asked the bishop. "We pray in this way" replied the hermit, "Three are ye, three are we, have mercy upon us." "You have evidently heard something about the Holy Trinity" said the bishop. "But you do not pray aright." And the bishop began explaining to the hermits how God had

revealed Himself to men—telling them of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. God the Son came down on earth to save men, and this is how He taught us all to pray, said the bishop. He told them to listen to him and repeat after him the prayer: "Our Father..." and he made each one of them to repeat it and went on: "Which art in heaven..." and made them repeat that and so on till they had said the entire prayer. Again and again, they repeated the prayer after him and then tried to repeat it on their own, again and again, till each one could say it on their own. It was already night. The bishop then boarded the ship and the ship sailed away, so far away that the island was no longer visible. Deep in his thoughts, the bishop was looking at the sea, and then he found some shapes moving on the water. He wondered whether it was a fish or a bird or a boat and then he saw, the three hermits, running on the water towards the ship. They seemed to glide on water and soon they reached the ship even before the ship could be stopped. They raised their hands to him and said: "We have forgotten your teaching, servant of God [that is how the bishop had introduced himself]. As long as we kept repeating it we remembered, but when we stopped saying it for a time a word dropped out, and now it has all gone to pieces. We can remember nothing of it. Teach us again." The bishop crossed himself, and leaning over the ship's side said: "Your own prayer will reach the Lord, men of God. It is not for me to teach you. Pray for us sinners." And the bishop bowed low before the old men; and they turned and went back across the sea. Though this simple story has more profound message to convey, at a simple level, it shows the importance of repetition of prayer. We can forget the prayer, its purpose and its meaning, if we neglect to say it regularly.

By repetition, the prayer or a *mantram* is made more potent by the will of man. When the same prayer or *mantram* is used by many people, it becomes much stronger. That is why the prayers and *mantrams*, which are regularly used in the temple or church or mosque, when uttered, at once fill the hearts of men with hope and devotion. Mr. Judge gives us the reason why it is so:

With thousands thinking unitedly in one direction...they all help each other, lending strength to each other's will, whether they are aware of it or not. According to this principle it would seem that a word used commonly for *mantric* purposes has a greater potency over the forces of the spirit, owing to the impression it has made upon the *akasa*, than a word not commonly used, for in the case of the former the user has the aid of the wills of all others who have used it. (*W. Q. J. Series No. 13*, p. 32)

In order to explain this, the Buddha goes on to give examples from day-to-day life which require no explanation. Just as non-repair taints the house, sloth taints our body, heedlessness taints the watchman, so also, non-repetition taints our prayers.

Unchastity taints the woman. Chastity means purity in conduct and intention, restraint and simplicity in expression, and above all, abstention from unlawful sexual activity. We may ask, will not unchastity taint a man? It will. But Buddha was speaking to the people who were brought up on certain ideas which came down to them from pre-vedic times, in which women held a special place in the society. According to the laws of Manu, where woman is not honoured, that household does not prosper. From woman comes the offspring; and her chastity ensured the purity of family stream.

Niggardliness taints the benefactor. When a gift or bequest is given reluctantly or out of a feeling of compulsion, it taints the nature of the giver. Instead of good-will and kindness, there is ill-will and even malice towards one to whom one is forced to give, and often the giver has some vested interest. In the *Gita*, such gifts are said to be *rajasic*—bad and partake of untruth. All evil deeds taint our nature. But worst of all taints is ignorance or *avidya*, the real cause of sorrow and rebirth as explained by the Buddha in the Twelve *Nidanas*.

(*To be continued*)

SLEEP, DREAMS AND DREAMLESS SLEEP

V

THE STATE of mind, immediately before going to sleep, affects remembering of dreams on waking up. Hence, it is recommended that we practice self examination. We must examine at night our motives, methods, habits and our dealings with others all through the day. If we are unable to do anything elaborate, then let us say a small prayer which might help to calm the mind. Thoughts and actions of the whole day will influence our sleep and dreams. This is similar to what is said in the *Ocean of Theosophy* about the last thoughts of the dying person affecting his *devachan*. But the last thoughts are not likely to become spiritual if the person has spent his entire life in the opposite direction. It is a *line of life's meditation* which will determine your last thoughts. So also, the state of mind before we fall asleep will be influenced by our state of mind during the day. In two different examples we see how dreams are induced by the waking associations which precede them. Coleridge is said to have composed his poem *Kublai Khan* in dream when he fell asleep after reading about Kublai Khan. Some of these dreams produce such a deep impression that any thought or event associated with that dream may bring about recurrence of that dream, even years later. Tartini, the famous Italian violinist, composed his "Devil's Sonata," under the inspiration of a dream. In the dream the Devil challenged him to a trial of skill, which was accepted by Tartini. When he woke up the melody of the "Devil's Sonata" was so vividly impressed on his mind that he began to note it down. However, as he came to the *finale*, he could remember no more. He laid aside the incomplete piece of music. Tartini could complete the *finale* of his "Devil's Sonata" when the same dream was repeated owing to a blind street musician fiddling on his instrument under his window during the day.

Often, it happens that even when the Ego makes the impression of what takes place on its own plane, on the brain, in an appropriate

nerve centre, for some reason, owing to some physical obstacle or physical condition, it does not become possible to transmit that impression to *conscious waking memory*. For instance, it may happen that the person is suddenly woken up, and so there was no facility to make this transmission. In the article, “Seership,” Mr. Judge mentions that sometimes the desire or *anxiety* to bring back the experience of the dreamless sleep state (*Sushupti*) to waking state may act as an obstacle. He describes this situation as that of a girl who is eating bran. She has bran in her mouth and at the same time she is trying to kindle the dying fire. When she blows the dying embers with bran in her mouth, the bran falls on the dying fire and extinguishes it.

H.P.B. points out that unspiritual men and those who do not exercise their imaginative faculties, dream rarely, if ever, with any coherence. To dream is to see pictures and visions, awake or asleep. For instance, if the Astral Light is collected in a cup or metal vessel by will power, and if one’s gaze is fixed at some point, then, if the person is sensitive, waking vision or “dream” is the result.

Astral Light can be collected in the cup or a metal vessel by the will power of a person. H.P.B. mentions in (*Isis*, I, 463), about an Adept, who made few passes over a piece of a common tin, the inside of a dish-cover and looked at it attentively for few moments. After this, he seemed to grasp the imponderable fluid by handfuls and throw it against the surface. The tin was exposed to the full glare of the light for a few seconds, when its bright surface suddenly got covered with a kind of film on which emerged the exact picture or photograph, of the landscape that surrounded it, perfect in every colour. The will of the Adept had condensed upon the tin a film of *akasa* which became for the time being like a sensitized photographic plate with light doing the rest.

In the article, “Universe in a Nutshell,” H.P.B. quotes Eliphas Levi regarding divinations, visions and prophetic dreams. Divination is the ability to see reflections of the Astral Light. The paraphernalia and instruments of divinations are simply the means for

communications between the divinator and the one who consults him; they serve to fix and concentrate two wills, bent in the same direction, upon the same sign or object that help to collect the reflections of the Astral fluid. Thus, one is enabled to see in the grounds of a coffee cup, or in the clouds, or in the white of an egg, the pictures from the astral light. “Highly spiritual persons will see visions and dreams during sleep and even in their hours of wakefulness: these are the sensitives, the natural-born seers,” writes H.P.B.

Even if one is able to bring back the memory of dreams, it is very difficult to interpret dreams. Mr. Judge speaks of a peculiar dream in which one is apparently attacked and pursued. This dream often comes to those who are striving to live the higher life and to develop their inner faculties. It represents the struggle between the higher and lower nature. If the aspiration towards the higher life is kept up, but a corresponding change in daily thought and act does not take place, the dream will be repeated, varying perhaps in detail, and cease to come only when the fight is given up and one plunges into lower sort of conduct, or when the battle is won by the opposite course of life and thought. The same dream might be interpreted differently by another person.

In his book, *Man and His Symbols*, psychologist Carl Jung explores the unconscious in man which expresses itself in dreams through symbols. Convinced that dreams offer practical advice, sent by the unconscious to the conscious self, Jung felt that self-understanding would lead to a full and productive life. Regarding recurring dreams he mentions that there are cases in which people have dreamed the same dream from childhood into the later years of adult life. Such a dream could be an attempt to compensate for a particular defect in the dreamer’s attitude to life. Sometimes a recurring dream might foretell a future event of importance. People could also experience recurring dreams because of some traumatic experience.

It is said that a dream that is not understood is like a letter that is

not opened. We are the only ones who can interpret our dreams. Just as in waking life, thoughts of different people are different, so also dream is peculiar to a person. One of the difficulties in interpreting the dream of another is that dreams are not always plain pictures, because the Ego communicates in symbolic language. Without the context and the knowledge of the background of the person, it is difficult to interpret the dream of another. It is like watching a clip from a movie, in which a person enters the room and another person sitting on a sofa gets up and shoots the person entering the room. What could be inferred in the absence of more data or context? Was it an act of self-defence, revenge, or of plain panic?

Most people are at a loss to explain the rational basis for interpretation of symbols given in dream books. Sir Thomas Brown, for instance, wrote that he could understand that before journey if someone dreamt that his feet were cut off, then he had a plain warning not to undertake his intended journey. But he could not explain or understand why, for instance, it is said that to dream of Lettuce should presage some ensuing disease, to dream of eating Eggs signifies trouble and to dream of eating figs signifies foolish talk.

In the Book, "Behold, this Dreamer!" Walter De la Mare narrates many dreams, some of which become possible of interpretation when the context is known. A young lady, engaged to be married, dreamt that she was writing a letter, when big blob of ink fell on the paper, and her fingers were stained. She went to the wash-basin to wash her hands, when the engagement ring from her finger slipped off into the basin, and which she was not able retrieve. What was the dream trying to convey? The next day she got a telegram announcing the death of her fiancé in an accident. Later, when she tried to interpret the dream, it appeared that the ink on paper symbolized receiving of telegram, while the disappearance of the engagement ring in the wash-basin hole symbolized loss of her fiancé. Only an Adept, who is aware of the inner nature of a person

and who understands the language of symbols, can interpret the dream of another, accurately. Thus, for instance, when a Pharaoh dreamt of seven fat cows followed by seven lean cows coming out of a lake, a wise man told him that seven fat cows symbolized seven years of prosperity to be followed by seven years of famine, which were symbolized by seven lean cows.

When psychologists like Carl Jung attempted to interpret the dreams of their patients, they were generally aware of their background and personal traits. In his book, *Man and His Symbols* he says that it is plain foolishness to believe in ready-made systematic guides to dream interpretation, as if one could buy a reference book and look up a particular symbol. "No dream symbol can be separated from the individual who dreams it, and there is no definite and straightforward interpretation of any dream. Each individual varies so much in the way that his unconscious complements or compensates his conscious mind that it is impossible to be sure how far dreams and their symbols can be classified at all." When he says that the dreams play the complementary or compensatory role, he means that the dream compensates for the deficiencies of the personalities. Thus, for instance, people who have unrealistic ideas or too high an opinion of themselves, or who make grandiose plans, out of proportion to their real capacities, have dreams of flying or falling.

As for symbols, he says that they do not occur solely in dreams. There are symbolic thoughts and feelings, symbolic acts and situations. Even inanimate objects seem to co-operate with the unconscious in the arrangement of symbolic patterns. Thus, there are instances of clocks stopping at the moment of their owner's death; a mirror breaks or a picture falls when a death occurs, and so on.

A symbol can be interpreted in various ways. If two people dream about snake, it might signify different things for each of them. One can never be sure what exactly the symbol represents when interpreting another's dream. Hence, Carl Jung writes: "Learn as much as you can about symbolism; then forget it all when you are

analyzing a dream.” He points out that many dreams can be interpreted with the help of the dreamer, who provides both the associations to and the context of the dream image, by means of which one can look at all its aspects. However, in certain type of dreams personal associations are not sufficient for a satisfactory interpretation. In such cases, we have to take into consideration the fact that elements often occur in a dream that are not individual or related to dreamer’s personal experience. Freud described these as “archaic remnants,” and Jung calls them “archetypes,” or “primordial images.” These are not inherited images, but they are universal symbols. For instance, the hero figure is an archetype, which has existed since time immemorial.

Each symbol has seven meanings. For instance, Erich Fromm mentions the symbol of “sun,” in his book “Forgotten Language.” In the Northern hemisphere, where the vegetation and life in general is dependent on sunlight, “Sun” is regarded as benevolent—the giver of life and light. However, in the equatorial region where there is scorching sun, it may be looked upon as the symbol of destruction.

In dreamless sleep state the Ego is on its own plane, and all that it perceives on that plane appears reversed from our plane. When awake, it tries to convey its experiences in a language which appears to be totally foreign to the personal man. We hear the words, but only now and then understand their meaning. It is like an English-speaking person who knows a few foreign words; when he enters the foreign town he is able to grasp only a few terms but not entire sentences. We then need to learn the language of the Ego, which is not an actual language. The Ego communicates ideas and experiences by means of pictures, figures, smell or sound. When one leads a pure and virtuous life one is enabled to interpret the language of the Ego and grasp the meaning of the dream.

(To be concluded)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

[In this section we seek to answer frequently asked questions, at U.L.T. meetings or during private conversations and discussions with people who seek the answers in the light of Theosophy. Answers given in this section are by no means final. Only a line of thought is being offered by applying general principles of Theosophy.]

Question: In science we use terms such as radiation, emanation, emission, evolution, induction, osmosis, etc. Do these terms have any philosophical or metaphysical meaning?

Answer: In the world of manifestation, we use many of these terms, such as radiation, emission, emanation, etc., interchangeably. But when we consider them as metaphysical terms, they are more specifically used for certain things. In *Transactions*, the term “radiation” is used for instantaneous action in the pre-cosmic period within the Absolute (*Parabrahmam*), about which action, the Absolute is unconscious; just as Sun knows nothing about its rays being concentrated by a lens and setting fire to the paper placed beneath the lens. This “unconscious” is not what we humans understand as lack of self-consciousness in kingdoms below man, in whom the mind is not yet active as in the case of man. But it is unconsciousness of the Absolute which is said to be the Absolute Consciousness and Unconsciousness, or Unconditional consciousness.

But the term “emanation” pertains to the manifested world in which one thing emanates another *consciously*, which in turn emanates something else; thus on and on, it goes on for a long period of time. While radiation is withdrawn immediately, the emanation gets withdrawn only after a long period of *Maha-manvantara*. Emanation may be viewed like a collapsible telescope with a series of cylinders with decreasing size that fit into one another. They may be pulled out of or pushed into the largest and the outermost cylinder.

In the *Glossary*, the term “Emanation” is equated with evolution.

There is supposed to be in all matter an impulse to take on a higher form. While Science speaks of evolution from the simple to complex forms taking place as a result of working of blind forces of Nature, the “Doctrine of Emanation” speaks of divine intelligences guiding this process. Nothing may evolve except it has first been involved; nothing can be unfolded unless it has been first enfolded.

A term may be applied to something on the higher plane as well as to that which is on the lower plane. This idea is well illustrated in the article, “The World of Archetypes,” appearing in the *Studies in the Secret Doctrine*. For instance, a table in our world of manifestation is a concrete reflection of the idea of the table in the archetypal regions. All sorts of tables are seen and used on earth because *tabularity* exists in its archetypal counterpart. Manifestations on this plane are reflections of their archetypes on a subtler plane. Mother’s love for her child typifies the compassionate love of the Great Ones for humanity; husband’s love for the wife represents the mutual attraction between the higher and lower selves in man.

In the manifested world, we have radiations from certain chemicals like radium, uranium, etc., which emanate waves of energy with or without mass; we have light and heat radiations; we have microwave radiations, and so on. But since these are at cosmic level, in time and space, all these may be termed “emanations” and not “radiation.” In “osmosis,” the concentrated solution is said to pass *osmotically* from one partition through the membrane into the weaker solution in another partition, and reach a point of balance. It is similar to water flowing from one full tank into another empty tank connected to it by a pipe. An accepted *chela* is called an outpost of guru’s consciousness. It is said that as the water in a full tank runs into an empty one, with which it is connected, so as to reach a common level, sooner or later, according to the capacity of the feed pipe, so does the knowledge of the Adept flow to the *chela*; and the *chela* attains the Adept level according to his receptive capacities. This process is comparable to *osmosis*.

Induction is the production of an electric or magnetic state, by

the proximity (without contact) of an electrified or magnetized body and its field. “Induction” requires two things of like nature to exist before one thing can magnetise another. And that another thing must be of the *similar nature* so as to be magnetised. It is not possible to magnetise a lump of gold with a strong magnet. Activation of *Manas* (Mind) principle in man, called the “Lighting up of *Manas*,” by the Solar Pitris may perhaps be classed under “induction,” because induction is an act of *inducing*. The *Manasaputras* act like catalyst in awakening the dormant mind and activate the latent mind principle. The process of lighting up of *manas* is not as if somebody hands us something that we did not have. It is like someone awake waking up another who is asleep.

There are times when the teacher *induces* enthusiasm in his students, bringing forth that which was latent. The fact that the knowledge of the teacher can reach the student without uttering a word, and could even dispel their doubts is depicted in “*Dakshinamurti Stotra*” which mentions that the pupils are old, the teacher is a young man, the mode of teaching is silence and yet all doubts in the minds of the pupils are dispelled. It is said about Ramana Maharshi that he did not give any discourse. He would sit silently, while people would come and sit in front of him. Waves and waves of knowledge and peace, as it were, touched the inquirers.

Question: In Theosophy we are told that useless sacrifice is the crime of folly. How does one distinguish between useless and useful sacrifice? Are there any guiding principles?

Answer: Self-sacrifice has been defined as giving to others more than to oneself. But self-sacrifice has to be performed with discrimination. H.P.B. points out that one of the fundamental rules of Theosophy is, justice to oneself. The guiding principles are: One can sacrifice himself only if by the sacrifice of one person many are going to be benefited. Likewise, “a man has no right to starve himself to death that another man may have food, unless life of that man is obviously more useful to the many than his own life,” writes H.P.B.

She considers the sacrifice of the Missionaries, who sacrificed their lives in trying to teach their philosophy to people of China and to the savages of South Sea Islands, to be vain sacrifice because the savages were not yet ready for any philosophy, while those in China already had a grand and lofty philosophy of their own. Likewise, we make useless sacrifice, when by helping another we make that person other-dependent, and thus retard his development. However, it is not always easy to distinguish between useless and useful sacrifice. In many cases, we are simply guided by our emotions and sentiments, and even false sense of duty. For instance, some parents are prepared to spend, up to their last penny, and even sell or mortgage the house in order to see their daughter happily married, instead of insisting on a simple marriage and refusing to give dowry. Sometimes we make a sacrifice in ignorance, not knowing the background of the person, who pleads for help.

However, there are cases when people make *apparently* foolish sacrifices guided by heart-impulse, or in order to defend a principle. Thus, for instance, the Vishnois—a Vaishnavite sect living on the fringes of Thar Desert, in western Rajasthan—are lovers of Nature, who believe that “if a tree is saved from felling at the cost of one’s head, it should be considered a good deed.” For them, it is a cardinal sin to cut green or flowering trees. They are willing to go to any extent, even sacrifice their lives, to protect the environment. In 1604 C.E. two Vishnoi women in Jodhpur, and then again in 1730 around 363 men and women sacrificed their lives to prevent the trees from being hacked (*The Speaking Tree*, May 20, 2012). Similarly, the Buddha, in one of his former lives, gave away his body to be eaten by a starving tigress so that she could feed her cubs. Our logical mind questions such sacrifices, and considers them futile. Why give away life in order to save a tree or an animal? These are actions prompted by the feeling of boundless love and compassion for the lower forms of life.

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Why are we good? Many are of the opinion that our belief or non-belief in God greatly affects our moral decisions. “However, my personal experience is that while I strongly believe in God, He is not the reason for my moral choices,” writes Shivani Dayal, a fifteen year old student. Her morality is based on seven key aspects. Firstly, being good, feels good. Secondly, being good helps one to reconnect with God. Just as we normally do not want to harm someone physically, so also, she says that she desists from lying and being deceitful. Lying hurts the liar because it breaks his integrity, and that in turn breaks his link with God. Thirdly, she shares Umberto Eco’s idea that we are good in order to be examples for others to emulate. “When I am gone, I want to be remembered as someone who lived her life with integrity, and who inspired others to do the same. The aspiration, therefore, creates motivation to be honourable to do the right thing,” writes Dayal. Fourthly, she is inclined to act morally based on the working of the Law of Karma, which may not always act instantly, but which brings back the reaction for every action. If we fail to help the person who is bullied, then it becomes an act of omission. The karmic reaction might be that when we are bullied, no one will come to help us. Fifthly, morality is our inherent nature. We are souls and not the bodies. Our souls have been beclouded due to involvement in worldly temptations. It is the soul’s innate desire to return to its original self that motivates human morality. When we decide to act morally, we scrape off some of the mud that covers our true self. Sixthly, when one desires to experience oneself as an elevated being, it is easy for that person to make the right decisions, and abstain from anger, hatred or jealousy. Lastly, what motivates her to act morally is the knowledge that it feels good to have a clear conscience. “I act morally because I like sleeping at night. Someone once said, ‘A clear conscience is the softest pillow’ and I could not have said it better myself. I appreciate reviewing my actions throughout the day and

seeing that I have acted with kindness, warmth and compassion... Nothing makes my heart as light as being free from guilt," writes Shivani Dayal. (*Purity*, April 2012)

True basis for moral action cannot be the fear of God. True morality must not be based on conventions but it must flow from man's own spiritual nature. "A clear perception of one's spiritual nature, and the motive to benefit mankind in every direction in every case, without self-interest, are two essentials for true morality," writes Mr. Crosbie. Laws of Karma and Reincarnation provide sure and logical basis for practising morality. When there is internal recognition of value, of what is right and what is wrong, we would spontaneously take the right course. When we are truly honest, charitable, kind and truthful we take a step closer to our divine nature. H.P.B. points out that ethics sink into and take hold of the real man. When we act immorally, we temporarily sever the connection with the divine. Hence, when we ask our divine nature to forgive the sin, our sins are not wiped out. When we admit that we were wrong, and are truly repentant, we succeed in establishing our connection with the divine, once again, which then continues to guide us as before. Rules for moral conduct flow from laws of mind and soul. They are not made by any brain or mind or imposed by some personal God. Hence, it is said that virtue is its own reward, and vice its own punishment. In other words, besides reaping demerit for our bad action, the immediate effect of our immoral action is that it tends to corrupt our character.

In Sri Aurobindo's spiritual philosophy we come across a unique term, *viz.*, "supramental." Supramental refers to a level of consciousness which is a significant milestone in the evolutionary process. Sri Aurobindo teaches that when the all-knowing, all-powerful chose to manifest as matter, it was an act of involution, wherein the Supreme Consciousness did not disappear but merely

hid itself. The Supreme Consciousness lies dormant in matter, as the plant lies dormant in the seed. Involution is followed by evolution, in which, there is progressively better expression of the Supreme Consciousness hidden in matter. A better expression of Supreme Consciousness was achieved through the evolution of mind, which uses brain as its instrument. Mental consciousness is believed to have reached its peak in human beings. But even human consciousness expresses only a small fraction of Supreme Consciousness. We find that the evolutionary urge of the Divine is worked out by nature till we come to human beings. A human being can rise in consciousness through his own efforts. Spiritual and religious tradition shows that such rise in consciousness has been experienced by yogis and mystics. The highest level of expressed consciousness, as visualized by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, is Supramental Consciousness. Between the ordinary human consciousness and the Supramental Consciousness there are many intermediate planes.

Ordinary human consciousness makes us perceive plurality of things, but as we rise in our consciousness we are able to see the unity in diversity, and that unity is rooted in the fact that the Supreme Consciousness inherent in all forms of manifestation is identical. The gulf between mental consciousness and supramental consciousness is greater than that between humans and other species. We have the capacity to rise in our consciousness, and if each one of us perseveres, we can contribute to ushering in a new world order based on compassion, co-operation and contentment, writes Ramesh Bijlani, inspired by Sri Aurobindo. (*The Speaking Tree*, [*Sunday Times of India*], April 15, 2012)

There cannot be evolution without involution, or descent of spirit into matter. Mr. Crosbie sums up the concept of evolution by explaining that forms and conditions do change, but not of themselves. There is that in us which causes changes, and That is the indwelling Spirit, which continually impels the instruments It has evolved towards further perfection. "So progress and evolution

mean an unfolding from within outward, a constant impulsion towards a better and better instrument for the use of the Spirit—the Self within.” Occult philosophy speaks of Monad or *Atma-Buddhi* unit, which is essentially and potentially the same in the lowest vegetable organism, through all animal forms up to man and beyond. There is a gradual unfolding of potentialities. When this monad is enclosed in a form, it is limited by matter, and becomes conscious on its own plane, and in its own degree. Every atom is endowed with and moved by intelligence, and is conscious in its own degree, on its own plane of development. There is consciousness in plants and animals, but *self-consciousness* belongs to man. Mind is more or less dormant and latent in kingdoms below man. In man, the higher triad of *Atma-Buddhi-Manas* is active, but it has to reach the stage of full activity, when man will be conscious on still higher plane, and become a “God,” explains Mr. Judge.

In kingdoms below man evolution is by natural impulse, but since mind is active in man, he can think and choose, and therefore either retard or accelerate his evolution. In human kingdom, evolution is by self-devised ways and means, checked by Karma. Self-consciousness, when looked at from the point of view of animal plane, is the beginning of perfection, but when looked downward from the divine plane, self-consciousness is the perfection of selfishness and the curse of separateness. The “eternal pilgrim” has to strive to go higher, and beyond the plane of self-consciousness to achieve self-conscious godhood, or “supramental” consciousness.

An Israeli mentalist, Lior Suchard, calls himself the “Supernatural entertainer,” as he has left some of the Hollywood biggies, entranced and wonderstruck by his mental feats. At designer Donna Karan’s party he performed a trick of touching one person, while another felt it. He says that he feels like a superhero because he grew up with superpowers. “I may not save the world but I sure can help

people discover the strength of their minds,” says Suchard. He seems to be naturally gifted, as he has been performing some of these magical feats from childhood. For instance, he says, “I shocked my mother at six when I moved spoons and stopped watches with my gaze. In school, you would usually find me in the middle of a large crowd, carrying out experiments; moving objects. I could just look at something and say—Move! Bend! —and it would happen.” He can read minds and influence thoughts. His tools are intuition, telekinesis and Neuro-Linguistic Programming. In the outguessing game he would ask a person to think up a number between 1 and 100, and a few seconds before one thinks up a number he would have already written that number on a piece of paper. He can guess the name you have written on a piece of paper, even after you have torn the paper to pieces. He can make a pair of glasses somersault, and bend a one-rupee coin by merely looking at it. Once he invited 10 people on stage and stopped all watches except that of a one who wore a Tissot brand. “I cannot mind-read if you block me or think negatively...I try to control negative energies when I sense it. But I have never misused my abilities...My job is not to turn them [the skeptics] into believers, but to make you think positive. You do not have to believe in what I do, but only in what you do,” said Lior Suchard in conversation with Anand Holla. (*Mumbai Mirror*, May 6, 2012)

We are all magicians, says Theosophy. Each one of us has in him the germ of every power exhibited by the so-called supernaturally gifted people or even those in possession of a spiritually advanced person. Mr. Judge points out that great musical ability is not usual or common but it is natural. Any person with proper training can learn music and even become a good musician. Likewise, with proper training of astral and spiritual senses, and following the necessary discipline, one can develop or rather unfold the psychic and spiritual powers. Man is the highest product of evolution, and has in him a centre or focus corresponding to each centre of force or power in the universe.

“Electricity is a most powerful force not fully known to modern science, yet used very much. The nervous, physical, and mental systems of man acting together are able to produce the same force exactly, and in a finer as well as subtler way and to as great a degree as the most powerful dynamo, so that the force might be used to kill, to alter, to move, or otherwise, change any object or condition,” writes Mr. Judge. 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 fine for impersonal scientific investigation to test one’s ability of mind-reading, with consent and co-operation of that person, but it is quite another matter to read another’s mind without his permission or try to impose our thought 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.

Most of the supernormal phenomena are performed with the help of perfected human will. H.P.B. narrates several instances where a fakir is able to move or freeze the movement of a person or an animal by the power of will. Will is the force of Spirit in action. “Determined will is the beginning of all magical operations,” says Paracelsus. At times it is not possible to perform various phenomena in the presence of a skeptic, a person with strong disbelief in such powers; because then his power of disbelief can completely neutralize the power of the performer. “Jesus met with cases where the unconscious force of resistance overpowered even his so well directed current of will,” writes H.P.B.

ASSERT to yourself that it is not of the slightest consequence what you were yesterday, but in every moment strive for that moment; the results will follow of themselves.

—W. Q. JUDGE