

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

Vol. 3, No. 11

March 17, 2012

ON ACCEPTANCE

WHETHER we realize it or not, the “ability to accept” is not only an essential virtue but, at times, a necessity, which keeps us linked to reality. What happens when a wife refuses to believe that her husband is dead, or when a mother does not allow taking away of the dead body of her child, unable to *accept* that he or she is dead? There are cases where a mother is unable to accept that she gave birth to a still-born baby, and goes around with a doll, believing that the doll was her child. In some cases the person may accept the inevitability of the death of the loved one, but then they are unable to “come to terms” with it, for the rest of their lives. A certain father, having lost a young son, would not stop crying and calling out his name, every single day, even twenty years after his death! Whether it is death, or huge financial loss, or loss of a limb in an accident, or a broken relationship, you are unable to take the remedial step, until you *accept* it.

Just as we are slow to accept the death of our loved one, so are we equally reluctant to accept their faults, mistakes and blunders, when they are brought to our attention. Sometimes it is our deep love, trust and faith in our dear ones, while at other times it is our pride which makes us refuse to accept, even in the face of glaring evidences.

Likewise, we are reluctant to accept the hard realities of life. For instance, you cannot have the strength of a twenty-year-old boy at

A Magazine Devoted to The Living of the Higher Life

ON ACCEPTANCE	3
THREE BILLY GOATS GRUFF A SCANDINAVIAN TALE	9
STUDIES IN THE DHAMMAPADA ANGER—I	12
SLEEP, DREAMS AND DREAMLESS SLEEP—II	17
THE YOGA OF IMPERSONALITY	22
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS	28
IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY	32

THEOSOPHY COMPANY (INDIA) PRIVATE LTD.

40 New Marine Lines, Mumbai 400 020, India
email: ultmumbai@mtnl.net.in ♦ Phone : 22039024
website: www.ultindia.org

the age of seventy. You cannot have the beauty and freshness of youth at the age of fifty or sixty. It is pathetic to see men and women willing to go to any length to look young, instead of accepting that they have aged, and choosing to grey gracefully.

Acceptance is recognition, or becoming aware. There can be no self-improvement, so long as we are not aware of our weaknesses and wrong habits. When our attention is drawn to our mistakes and weak points, we either brush them aside or are eager to justify. Each one of us has some subtle faults and peculiarities, which we fail to become aware of, even during self-examination. When others make us aware of them, we must be willing to accept and work on them. Psychology tells us that desires, faults, emotions that are not acknowledged tend to get repressed. Psychology defines *repression* as the *unconscious* impulse to exclude from one's consciousness certain desires, wishes, socially unacceptable ideas, traumatic memories, etc. While "suppressed," desires and emotions are those which we *know* to be improper tendencies in our moral nature and hence we *consciously* dismiss or try to control them.

We dismiss or put down certain desires—because we do not like to face them—by a strong effort of will instead of struggling to slay or transmute them. It is like allowing the fire to smoulder under a thin layer of ashes. A small whiff of wind can cause big flames to leap out. We are then behaving like that Spartan boy who hid the baby fox under his coat, when he was caught stealing it; and while he valiantly kept answering the questions put to him, the baby fox was eating away his entrails. H.P.B. points out that similarly our dormant desires tend to corrupt the better part of our nature, when we refuse to kill out or transform them. Later, we would have to fight much harder in the destruction or transformation of these desires and vices. In Shakespeare's play *The Tempest*, Prospero the Magician, comes across a deformed monster, an elemental being, called Caliban, whom he teaches religion and language. But Caliban only misuses speech to curse, and rebels against Prospero. In the end, Prospero says, accepting his responsibility for Caliban: "This

thing of darkness, I acknowledge mine." We must be able to say the same of our unwholesome thoughts, feelings, desires and actions.

How can steps for correction be taken when people do not feel that they are doing anything wrong? Society has given tacit permission to certain unethical practices, drowning the voices of isolated reformers. Every criticism meets with the counter-question: "What is wrong with it?" Our society encourages ambition, so much so that the ambitious feel no qualms of conscience in using others as stepping stones to realize their ambitions.

While we are extremely reluctant to accept our faults, we are only too eager to point out faults of others. And others, like us, are unwilling to accept their vices and weaknesses. Should we not rather accept them as they are? It is not just for the lovers to sing, "Don't go changing, to try and please me...I love you just the way you are." Many of us have reformist streak in us. We want to change the world. We go out with missionary zeal to reform people. "You must be the change, you wish to see in others," said Gandhiji. When we decide to accept people as we find them, we get an opportunity to cultivate the virtue of *Adaptability*. Adaptability is a very rare virtue. In a subtle way our likes and dislikes work havoc, reminding us that we must learn to adjust with those *we like*, as also, with those *we do not like*.

The first test of an earnest aspirant, the first manifestation of descending Karma on his head, is always around this quality—ADAPTABILITY. To adapt oneself to one's teacher means conquest of doubt in the first and of despair in the second instance. There must be readiness to leave behind our prejudices, false conceptions and embrace the discipline and the teachings, and to reconstruct our entire nature in conformity with the requirements of the Path, writes Shri B. P. Wadia.

The Voice of the Silence says: "Accept the woes of birth....Teach to eschew all causes; the ripple of effect, as the great tidal wave, thou shalt let run its course." At first sight it appears to be a counsel of despair, an abject yielding to the inevitable. But actually, it is

patient resignation. It is a dynamic, positive precept. It requires the courage and the stoicism of the brave to accept the woes of birth in a spirit of true resignation. It implies surrendering our personal will to the Divine will. We always want things to go our way. In the Ninth discourse of the *Gita*, Shri Krishna says that “Unto thee who findeth no fault,” he will make known the most mysterious knowledge, coupled with its realization. The words “Unto thee who findeth no fault,” imply a person who understands that Law rules in everything and every circumstance, and that nothing can come to him, whether good or evil, of which he himself was not the cause. Hence, he accepts the good without exultation and evil without complaint. Such “acceptance,” leads to equanimity, where the person is ready to enjoy or suffer whatever the Higher Self has in store for him by way of experience and discipline.

Since the Law of Karma is just and merciful, there cannot be a misshapen day. So, instead of complaining or grumbling there must be acceptance or resignation. We might even go a step further and say, “This is not only what I deserved, but what in fact I desired.” This is an attitude of supreme surrender, of unswerving faith in the Law of Karma—an inward stance necessary to cultivate by every true spiritual aspirant. With such attitude, we will not resort to any prayers or propitiatory ceremonies, or to cause to deviate the course of the Law and dodge the karmic consequences. It is total acceptance that “my own comes back to me.” Common sense declares that what cannot be cured must be endured. “Kicking against the pricks hurts only the one who kicks; moreover the pricks seem to enjoy it, for, being kicked, they keep coming back.... ‘Even this will pass away’ is a good motto to keep in mind, when things come up that are hard to stand,” advises Mr. Crosbie.

When we refuse to take the responsibility for the calamities, adversities and painful circumstances of life, and hence continue to complain or seek to escape from the unfavourable circumstances by ceremonies and rituals, or still worse, seek to commit suicide, we complicate our karma. There are ceremonies performed to dodge

the karmic consequences. It is questionable if such ceremonies and offerings can help us dodge the karmic consequences, and even if they do, we are only postponing the day of settlement. Explains H.P.B.:

It had been explained numberless times that no Adept of the Right Path will interfere with the just workings of Karma. Not even the greatest of Yogis can divert the progress of Karma, or arrest the natural results of actions for more than a short period, and even in that case, these results will only reassert themselves later with even tenfold force, for such is the occult law of Karma. (*H.P.B. Series No. 32*, p. 34)

Probably there is temporary respite, but till we have paid up our karmic debt and learnt the necessary lesson, that situation or that person will be brought back to us again in some other life.

However, “acceptance” should not be equated with passivity and helplessness. If we are able to change the situation, we must do all in our power to change it. We are not expected to remain poor, handicapped, ignorant, weak, oppressed, or whatever be our plight. We can use the situation as raw material and extract the necessary lessons. It might consist in learning the lessons of fortitude and sympathy, or detachment and patience, and so on. One of the aphorisms on Karma points out that in the given life we can take measures to counteract wrong tendencies and eliminate defects. When intense efforts are made, the influence of the Karmic tendency is shortened. Karma has placed us where we are, but it does not hold us there.

If we are working out the effects of our past Karma now, we have also the inherent ability, by our power of choice, to build for ourselves a bright and happy future. When it is possible to change the situation we do our very best to come out of it. But we also learn to accept the inevitability, and not just that, but make the most of it.

When a daughter-in-law accepts her nagging mother-in-law, tries to understand her, and decides not to retaliate, she might just succeed

in winning her over, at least by the fag end of her life. There is the lovely story of a man who not only accepted and triumphed over the inevitability of his illness but decided that life will never get the better of him. The story is called the “The Window,” which appeared in *Chicken Soup for the Soul* series. There were once two men, both seriously ill, in the same small room of a great hospital. One of them was allowed to sit up in his bed for an hour, but the other man had to spend all the time flat on his back. Every afternoon when the man next to the window, which apparently overlooked the park, was propped up for his hour, he would pass the time by describing what he could see outside. Every day he entertained the other man by his vivid description of the lake, the flowers, the children playing with their little boats, etc. The other man always hoped to have his bed near the window, so that he could look out of the window himself. One night the other man was gasping for breath and finally died. As soon as it seemed decent, the other man asked if he could be switched to the bed next to the window. As they moved him, he sat up in his bed to look out of the window. He was shocked to find that there was neither a park nor a lake facing the window. It faced a blank wall!

Acceptance should come easy for one who knows that everything is in flux, constant change. “The first step in becoming is Resignation. Resignation is the sure, true and royal road....After Resignation, follow (in their own order) Satisfaction, Contentment, Knowledge,” writes Mr. Judge.

HERE lies a most beautiful lady, Light of step and heart was she;

I think she was the most beautiful lady, That ever was in the West Country.

But beauty vanishes; beauty passes; However rare—rare it be;

And when I crumble, who will remember, This lady of the West Country?

—WALTER DE LA MARE

THREE BILLY GOATS GRUFF

A SCANDINAVIAN TALE

[This Scandinavian tale may seem at first too trifling to carry significance, but the warning it gives is a most vital one, profound as well as helpful at the everyday level.]

ONCE upon a time three billy goats gruff wanted to go up the hillside to graze. The road by which they had to go was over a bridge, and under the bridge lived a large-eyed Troll with a long nose. First came small billy goat Gruff, “trip-trap, trip-trap,” over the bridge.

Who’s that tripping over my bridge? Called out the Troll.

“I’m only teeny-weeny billy goat Gruff,” said the goat in a very small voice, “going up the hill to get fat.”

“Ha!” said the Troll, “watch me gobble you up!”

“Oh don’t!” said the goat, “I’m much too small. Why don’t you wait for second billy goat Gruff? He’s bigger.”

“All right,” said the Troll, “get along with you then.”

Soon came along second billy goat Gruff, “TRIP-TRAP, TRIP-TRAP,” over the bridge.

Who’s that trotting over my bridge?” cried the Troll.

“It’s only the middle billy goat Gruff, going up the hill to get fat,” said the goat, but his voice wasn’t too small.

“Now,” said the Troll, “I shall gobble you up.”

“How silly you are!” said the goat. “You ought to wait for big billy goat Gruff. He’ll be big enough.”

“Oh all right!” said the Troll. “Get along with you.”

By and by along came big billy goat Gruff, “TRIP-TRAP, TRIP-TRAP,” over the bridge, which almost bent under him.

“Who’s THAT tramping over my bridge?” shouted the Troll.

“It’s big billy goat Gruff,” said the goat, and his voice was really fierce and loud.

“Ho!” roared the Troll. “Now I can gobble you up!”

But the goat rushed at the Troll, poked out his eyes, crushed him

to little bits, and threw all the pieces into river. And then the three billy goats Gruff got so fat on the hill that they could hardly get home and are probably still fat.

* * * * *

The goat is the general symbol of “the carrier of sins,” and can be understood to represent the accumulated evil tendencies of the past that appear as temptations to the personal self, the “lower mind,” that, like the Troll, dwells under the bridge between the higher and lower natures. [That bridge is *antahkarna*, and is formed of higher thoughts and aspirations, which connects the lower mind with the Higher Mind]. Temptation never shows its full strength at once. It comes so gradually that we, like the foolish Troll, tend to let its first manifestations go by, thinking they are too insignificant to count, and do not really matter. But finally the cumulative strength of evil is so great that it overthrows the whole fabric of our being, and invades and feeds upon the higher nature.

It is the same lesson, though in a more fantastic guise, as that in *The Voice of the Silence*:

Strive with thy thoughts unclean before they overpower thee. Use them as they will thee, for if thou sparest them and they take root and grow, know well, these thoughts will overpower and kill thee. Beware, Disciple, suffer not, e’en though it be their shadow, to approach. For it will grow, increase in size and power, and then this thing of darkness will absorb thy being before thou hast well realized the black foul monster’s presence. (p. 13)

But even a child can understand the practical application of the tale at its own everyday level. The grown-ups may say to Johnny, “Someone has broken the front window with a ball. Was it you? And in the stress of the moment Johnny automatically says, “No”; and, as the grown-ups seem satisfied with the answer, he lets it go—and there’s little billy goat Gruff gone by. But the grown-ups make

further enquiries, and come back and ask once more, “Are you sure you didn’t break it?” And again Johnny says, “No. I didn’t. I wasn’t there.” And that is a bigger untruth—second billy goat Gruff. Finally, the grown-ups come back again and say, “Nobody else could have done it. It must be you.” And then Johnny comes out with a “whopper.” He says, “Billy did it. I saw him.” And that catches him out, for the grown-ups say, “Billy has been with Granny all day. And since you said you were not there, how could you see him do it?” So there is Johnny’s reputation for truthfulness all scattered to little bits!

The story has other applications also; *e.g.*, to the habit of procrastination. People so often wait for big opportunities to show how wise they are—or how clever, faithful, strong, or whatever virtue they think they possess. They let the little opportunities go by, as unimportant, and then, when the great moment of testing comes, they cannot stand up to it, and are broken by the impact.

The Buddha speaks of the cumulative effect of both good and evil in the *Dhammapada*:

Think not lightly of evil, saying, “it will not come unto me.” Even a water-pot is filled by the constant falling of drops of water. A fool becomes full of evil if he gathers it little by little.

Think not lightly of good, saying, “it will not come unto me.”... A wise man becomes full of goodness if he gathers it little by little. (Verses 121-122)

Over and over again the Teachers have emphasized the importance of watchfulness in “little things.”

Three billy goats gruff remind us of a gift of “three wise monkeys” given to Gandhiji by a Chinese group. They are: *Mizaru*, who covers his eyes and sees no evil; *Kikazaru*, who covers his ears, and hears no evil; and *Iwazaru*, who covers his mouth, and speaks no evil. Sometimes there is a fourth monkey *Shizaru* shown as crossing his arms, and symbolizes the principle of “do no evil.”

STUDIES IN THE DHAMMAPADA

ANGER—I

THE CHAPTER is called *Kodhavaggo* or “Anger.” In the *Gita*, Shri Krishna tells Arjuna that the gates of hell are three—lust, anger and greed, which destroy the soul and therefore, one should abandon them. In the Second Chapter of the *Gita*, he tells Arjuna: “He who attendeth to the inclinations of the senses, in them hath a concern, from this concern is created passion, from passion anger, from anger is produced delusion, from delusion a loss of the memory, from the loss of memory loss of discrimination, and from loss of discrimination loss of all!” Anger is a great obstacle to spiritual progress. It tends to destroy us—physically, emotionally and mentally, so that we lose what we had gained through years of discipline. In many stories in the *Puranas*, when a sage cursed another, he immediately lost the merit worth thousands of years of penances and sacrifice; and he had to undertake penance and sacrifice once more to regain merit. In an article on “Anger,” Shri B. P. Wadia writes that when sage Parasara, the grandson of holy sage Vasishtha organized sacrifice for the destruction of all *Rakshasas* (demons) to avenge the death of his father and uncles at the hand of a king-turned-*Rakshasa* by his father’s curse, sage Vasishtha tells him:

Enough, my boy. Let thy wrath be appeased. The *Rakshasas* are not culpable; thy father’s death was the work of Karma. Anger is the passion of fools; it becometh not of a wise man. By whom, it may be asked, is anyone killed? Every man reaps the consequences of his own acts. Anger, my son, is the destruction of all that man obtains, by arduous exertions, of fame and of devout austerities, and prevents the attainment of heaven or of emancipation....Mercy is the might of righteous.

Thus, no matter how justified one feels about one’s anger, it has to be avoided because of its destructive nature. The greatest antidote to anger is patience, tolerance and mercy, nay, love and compassion.

1. *Let a man forsake anger; let him root out pride; let him break all fetters. No sufferings befall him who clings not to name and form and who calls nothing his own. (221)*

2. *He who curbs his rising anger which like a chariot out of track rolls on, him I call a real charioteer; others but hold the reins. (222)*

In these verses the Buddha offers us solution for getting rid of anger. First, we must resolve to give up anger. There is no place even for what we may call the “righteous indignation.” Holding on to anger is like grasping a hot coal with the intent of throwing it at someone else; you are the one who gets burned. Christian scriptures have a telling proverb: “Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned!”

We are not to suppress anger, but get rid of it by finding out the root cause. It is our pride and attachment to name and form which lead to anger. If someone insults us, we get angry. If a person in a high position—social, economic, political or otherwise—is not shown respect, he resents it. Like in animal kingdom, we humans have our “pecking order.” If a man fails to respect this order, he may be rebuked, or may face the wrath of the higher-ups. We have our likes and dislikes. We get angry when things are not done in “our way.” We also feel anger when we lose someone or something for no apparent fault of our own. We get angry when something unpleasant happens or when our plans are frustrated because of action of another. For a person who is trying to become spiritual, it will be worthwhile to pay attention to what Mr. Judge says in one of his letters. He writes: “An occultist is never fixed on any particular mortal plan...Nothing is gained, but a good deal is lost, by impatience—not only strength, but also sight and intuition. So decide nothing hastily. Wait; make no set plan.”

Often, our virtue makes us intolerant of other people; it could be cleanliness, punctuality, truthfulness, honesty, frugality, simplicity, modesty or any other thing. This is another form of pride. Mr. Judge suggests: Every time we think that someone else has done wrong,

we should ask ourselves two questions. (1) Am I the judge in this matter who is entitled to try this person? (2) Am I any better in my way? Do I, or do I not offend in some other way just as much as they do in this?

If only we are able to remember that we are not our body, our temperament, our likes and dislikes, our ideas and emotions; but the Self within; which had at other times some other body, some other likes and dislikes, some other ideas and emotions, which at times were quite opposite of what we now profess, we would not get obsessed with them. It is said that the mad man does not recognize his lunacy, nor does an angry man remember the saying of Horace: “Anger is momentary madness, so control your passion or it will control you.” If we remember that the “Self is in itself without a body and either praise or blame affects it not,” we will be in a much better position to play the role of the charioteer, who controls the horses, instead of being controlled.

3. Let a man overcome anger by gentleness; let him overcome evil by good; let him overcome the niggard by liberality; let him overcome the liar by truth. (223)

We get angry when we are unable to handle the situation. If a person gets angry with us, we get frightened or get angry in return. Very rarely we are willing to admit our fault. If someone acts evilly, we are ready to condemn him. Similarly, many lives may get ruined because of lies uttered by an unthinking person. We may feel justified in losing our temper in the face of such provocations, but if we count the cost, we would refrain. The Buddha shows us the way to handle provocative situations. The *Sanatana Dharma* is: “Hatred ceases not by hatred but by love.” Here again, the Buddha asks us to make use of the power of opposites.

Overcoming anger by gentleness relies upon the trait which is inherent in all living beings. Aggression or opposition tends to increase similar tendency in the opponent. But the moment one shows gentleness, the other is forced to likewise become gentle or

at least tone down his aggressive stand. Many of us might have witnessed events in which an aggrieved party launched menacing attack on the perpetrator who wronged them; but when the other party admitted the wrong done and expressed genuine desire to make up for the loss or asked for forgiveness, they calmed down and sorted out differences.

In his book, *King Solomon’s Ring*, Konrad Lorenz describes fight among wild animals such as two wolves or lions in a conflict. They move in circles, bare fangs, snap and growl angrily at each other. After a fierce fight, one of the fighters proffers intentionally that part of his anatomy to which a bite must assuredly prove fatal. Standing shoulder to shoulder, the younger wolf offers unprotected the bend of his neck to his enemy—the most vulnerable part of his body where jugular vein lies immediately beneath the skin. He writes that in this particular situation, the victor will definitely not close on his less fortunate rival. You can see that he would like to, but he just cannot. He comments: “I think it truly magnificent thing that one wolf finds himself unable to bite the proffered neck of the other; but still more so that the other relies upon him for his amazing restraint. Mankind can learn a lesson from this.” Similarly, the Homeric warrior who wishes to yield and plead mercy, discards helmet and shield, falls on his knees and inclines his head, a set of actions which should make it easier for the enemy to kill; but in reality, hinders him from doing so. As Shakespeare makes Nester say of Hector:

Thou hast hung thy advanced sword in the air,
Not letting it decline on the declined.

Jesus said: “And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek, offer also the other.” Not so that your enemy may strike you again do you turn the other cheek towards him, but to make him unable to do it. Between such extreme form of gentleness and violent aggression, Gandhiji offered another way—refusal to cooperate with the wrong in peaceful manner. His “non-cooperation” and “Satyagraha” movements made deep impact on the minds and hearts

of people all over the world. He wrote:

It is not that I do not get angry. I do not give vent to anger. I cultivate the quality of patience as angerlessness, and generally speaking I succeed. How I find it possible to control it would be a useless question, for it is a habit that everyone must cultivate and must succeed in forming by constant practice.

A niggard is not just a stingy or miserly person who grudges to spend, or to give away, but also the one who lacks generosity in bestowing goods, praise, smile or any other thing. While we are not asked to reform the world, we can make a positive difference by setting an example by our generosity. If others are sensitive and receptive, they would be inspired to reciprocate or emulate. Sometimes, having suffered abject poverty, man forgets the difference between frugality and miserliness. Teach him to have faith in the Law. Repay his niggardliness with liberality. In *The Key to Theosophy*, H.P.B. describes chief of the negative Theosophical duties as:

To be ever prepared to recognize and confess one's faults. To rather sin through exaggerated praise than through too little appreciation of one's neighbour's efforts.

We have much to be grateful for in life. Seeing a group of criminals led out to their execution, John Bradford, the Christian Reformer declared: "There but for the grace of God go I." To the struggling student of Theosophy, Mr. Judge wrote:

Why, if the Masters were to judge us exactly as They must know we are, then good-bye at once! We would all be sent packing. But Masters deal kindly with us in the face of greater knowledge of our faults and evil thoughts from which none are yet exempt.

(To be concluded)

SLEEP, DREAMS AND DREAMLESS SLEEP

II

WHEN we say, "I was asleep," we mean that the body was in the sleeping state, but the real "I" never sleeps. It passes away altogether from this plane for the time being, and enters into dream state. We have all the *senses* in dreams, though the *sense organs* are not in use. We see and feel, we hear and talk, and act, just as we do in the waking state, without using physical sense organs. Our identity is not disturbed when we enter dream state, even if we happen to dream about any of our past births. Our dream experiences may seem to occupy a long period of time, though in reality only few seconds may have elapsed.

Dreams could be sub-divided into seven classes. In order to understand these we must first distinguish between "ordinary" dreams and real dreams. The Greeks also speak of dreams coming through the "Gates of Ivory" and "Gates of Horn." What are described as ordinary dreams or idle visions are caused by physiological, biological and we might say, even psychic activities of man. The real dreams are the reflections of the activities of the real man, or Higher Ego on its own plane, when brain and body are paralyzed during sleep.

The principles which are active during *ordinary* dreams are *Kama* (desire nature) and mechanical activities of the lower mind. During waking state we are receiving impressions and sensations, which are stored in appropriate nerve centres. During sleep, memory acts mechanically and reproduces past sensations. Our brain, in falling asleep is like last embers of a dying fire. Any idea or event that impressed itself on the active brain during waking hours can produce dreams. During sleep, when active functioning of cerebrum ceases, cerebellum begins to throw off impressions just as a bar of heated iron radiates heat. This produces chaotic dreams. If cerebrum were to be active during sleep, we would have dreams with proper sequence as it happens in day-dreams. The fact that we experience

vivid dreams as we approach the sleep-waking state is due to the mechanical activity of cerebrum. This activity sometimes awakens the memory of the dream state. The play of this memory acts like a current of air re-kindling the embers of dying fire, thereby recalling into activity the cerebellum which was fading below the threshold of consciousness, thereby helping in dream reconstruction. Thus, when cerebellum and cerebrum act in co-operation, dream recollection becomes possible.

We know that the psychic element or *Kama-manas* is common to both the animals and human beings. There is far higher degree of development of lower mind or *Kama-manas* in man because of the great perfection and sensitiveness of his cerebral cells. Unlike man who thinks, animals receive stimulus and impressions from their senses which become the basis of their dreams through automatic throwing out of these impressions by brain. H.P.B. mentions that *every being endowed with physical brain or organ approximating thereto, must dream*. Every animal has physical senses through which it receives impressions. These senses are dulled during sleep, but memory still acts mechanically, reproducing past sensations (*Transactions*, p. 70). To some extent, this is proved in an experiment conducted by scientists at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. A number of mice which were fitted with electrodes in their brains to record the brain activity when they explored the maze and came out of it, exhibited similar neural activity when they fell asleep later; indicating thereby the re-living of their experience of waking state during sleep.

Ordinary dreams or idle visions are the physiological dreams provoked by indigestion, or they may be caused by some idea or event impressed upon the brain during waking hours. In *Letters That Have Helped Me*, Mr. Judge describes a dream in which a Professor dreamt of a duck he ate at dinner. The duck became bigger and bigger until it had grown to the size of an elephant and threatened him with waving of his webbed foot—terrifying the professor. Mr. Judge observes that this dream was produced by bad digestion. But

the important point was that the person and faculties that shrink from a real danger in waking life are the same person and faculties which were terrified by the imaginary duck in the dream, thereby showing the identity of both. However, in another dream, a lady found herself before the mirror, wearing a new bonnet, and congratulating herself that she was the first one to possess the bonnet of the latest fashion. When she was thus admiring herself, she found another lady entering into the room and going green with envy upon seeing her new bonnet. Mr. Judge comments that her dream indicated her love for personal decoration and a desire to stand ahead of others. Though the dream was not due to physiological reasons, it reflected thoughts and desires of waking state, and hence can be termed as idle dream, having its basis not in physiological but in the psychological nature. H.P.B. does not specifically mention dreams from repressed feelings, and past or present life (childhood) trauma, etc. But we might classify such dreams as “ordinary” dreams, in which *kama-manas* plays prominent role. Such dreams have been studied in detail and commented upon by psychoanalysts. Freud has dealt with such dreams at length wherein he speaks of repressed desires finding expression in dreams. He considered dreams to be the avenues of the unconscious.

From dream state we pass into *Sushupti* or dreamless sleep. In this state, our lower nature is paralysed, which includes lower emotions and intellect. Here, that aspect of mind which is mainly concerned with personal existence—or jailor—falls asleep, and the inner man that was held prisoner in waking life becomes free to be on its own plane. The jailor observes through half open eyes the acts and thoughts of the inner man.

In *Sushupti* we exist as our true individuality, unhindered by personality. So the *Upanishads* say that in deep sleep state, “the father is father no more, nor mother, a mother.” Even the most hardened criminal passes through this state of dreamless sleep. Mr. Judge calls it a great spiritual reservoir “by means of which the momentum toward evil living is held in check.” In this state our ego

acts on its own plane and is fully conscious and omniscient, and it can communicate with other egos on the same plane, if there is spiritual attraction between them. It is in this state that we get communication from the dear departed ones. We wake up with the feeling of well-being of the person who had died.

When we fall asleep, we pass through the dream state, producing ordinary dreams. Similarly, when we return to the waking state from *Sushupti*, we once again pass through the dream state. Thus, we pass through dream state twice—in going from waking to *Shshupti* or dreamless sleep state, and then once again while coming back from the *Sushupti* to waking state. It is quite possible that we move between *Sushupti* and dream state several times before finally waking up in the morning.

We might say that real dreams are *thought-actions* of the Ego, or reflection of what is witnessed by our Ego on its own plane during *Sushupti*. When we are awake, our thoughts and deeds are two different things—our thoughts are subjective to us. But in case of the real Ego, its thoughts become instantaneously actualized. Therefore, they are called *thought-actions*. For the real Ego, the past and future are as present. Therefore, while for us the act of the murder, the trial and the execution may be three different things in past, present and future; for the real Ego, they are all in the present. H.P.B. writes that “The nature and functions of real dreams cannot be understood unless we admit the existence of an immortal Ego in mortal man, independent of the physical body.”

The thought-actions of the Ego must be peculiar to that individuality. For instance, the Ego of a king, the Ego of an ordinary mother, the Ego of a disciple, the Ego of an altruistic person, will have different store of experiences and will be concerned with different subjects and people. A king is more concerned with his kingdom and his territories etc., so Mr. Judge says that his Ego becoming aware of impending war may try to impress the brain of the sleeping king with pictures of battle tanks, rifles, etc. In the dream of a Pharaoh there were seven fat cows followed by seven lean

cows coming out of a lake, warning the king of seven years of prosperity to be followed by seven years of famine, and so on.

What is given in *Brihadarnyaka Upanishad* should give us some idea of the state of the Ego in Dreamless sleep. We are told that it is above pain and pleasure. The Ego sees not; yet seeing not it sees, because the energy that dwelt in sight cannot cease, because it is everlasting. Likewise, it is said of the Ego that hearing not it hears; smelling not it smells; knowing not it knows; thinking not it thinks.

In *Sushupti* state we find solution to our problems. Many artists have found inspiration, and many inventors have found solution in dream, of a problem which they were struggling to solve while awake. For instance, Kekule dreamt of a serpent biting its own tail and he was able to give closed ring structure of Benzene molecule. Generally, the solution obtained is in the symbolic form. The language used by our ego on its own plane is quite different from any that we know of in waking life. So, when the ego resumes its life in the body, it finds it difficult to convey its experiences to our brain. It communicates in the form of pictures and images.

It is possible to receive an answer in dream, from our divine nature, if before falling asleep a *strong desire* is formulated to receive that answer. But that desire must be high and altruistic. A certain lady had a sick relative who was acutely suffering from some ailment. The lady knew of a similar case in the past being cured by some medicine, but could not recall the name of the medicine. However, she remembered that her aunt, who had died, knew very well the name of the medicine. She went to sleep with the intense feeling that if only she could recall the name of the medicine, she could help her relative. The next morning she woke up and said that in her dream she met her dead aunt, who told her the name of the medicine. It could be that the answer was received from the Higher Self, *or*, it could also be that during deep sleep her Ego received communication from the Ego of her aunt in the *Devachan*.

(To be continued)

THE YOGA OF IMPERSONALITY

WHEN we refer to ourselves, or when we address others, we generally mean by “we” or “you” the visible corporeal personality with its specific name, form and its distinctive idiosyncrasies. Yet, a thoughtful reflection shows that, strictly speaking, we are mistaken in identifying ourselves and others by the visible personality. The truth is that this outer form of man is only a mask which hides the real Inner Man, the thinking Self, who is invisible. The *Yoga Vidya* shows that the Inner Man has an invisible subtler body of vital energy, which is the model of the outer gross body and its animating principle, which acts through the physical body. Both the inner and the outer mind-body-complex are the instruments of the Inner Man, the Thinker, who is distinct from them and of another nature than the visible. Over-brooding these two, the inner and the outer man, is the sovereign immortal spirit, which is the source of all forces, and it alone is changeless, eternal, whereas the other two are subject to constant change. When the inner man succeeds in merging himself with the Spirit, which in reality is his True Self, he becomes an Immortal Entity and partakes of the omniscience and the omnipotence of the Spirit, and is able to control forces of nature, as well as his lower self, at will. Knowledge of these principles and of the ways and means by which the union with the Spirit, the Higher Self, is effected by man while still living in the body leading to self-mastery, is the Science of Magic, which is spoken of in the *Bhagavad-gita* as the exhaustless doctrine of Yoga.

It is the destiny of every man to work towards this highest consummation of his existence. That is the whole purpose of life of man on earth. But it is the most difficult of accomplishment. The difficulty lies in the personal idea we have, with which we are imbued, which is not easy to overcome. It is the feeling that we are the body, and that we are each a distinctive self separate from others. The personal idea with its strong sense of separateness in the Thinker arises because of his tendency in incarnate life to identify himself

with the body and its sensations, with his thoughts and desires, and in forgetting that he is indeed, in reality, not so bound, but free and one with the Supreme. From this Self-forgetfulness arises attachment to things unreal, which develops into a thirst for enjoyment of embodied life on earth. This powerful undying desire in man has the power of its own self-perpetuation leading to cycles after cycles of reincarnation. Overcoming the sense of separateness by sacrifice of personal self to Self Impersonal through discriminative knowledge is Yoga. We need to learn the lesson that “we” are not this personality, but something more than the personal consciousness. Life itself is teaching us this lesson.

It is not much of a difficulty to visualize interiorly in our own mind that we are certainly not the sensations we experience, emotions and desires which impel us to action in every direction, the thoughts which arise in us, ideas, beliefs and ideals we hold, or the knowledge we possess. We feel them all vividly and become identified with them, yet we can see with our mind’s eye that we are none of these. We also can, standing apart interiorly from the incessant thought-feeling modification going on in our mind, choose not to be impelled to action by their promptings and, instead, exercise our will to think, feel and act differently. We would not have been able to do so were not the true Self free, unchanging, unaffected witness of them all. And we are That. Therefore, we are the creators of the conditions surrounding us, pleasant or unpleasant as they may be, and not an accident of life. Such conditions continue to environ us as long as we maintain the ideas and desires we hold, which created them; and we alone can choose to change them by thought and action along different lines. When we meditate along these lines we come to see that strictly speaking no conditions of life, however grave or fraught with difficulties or dangers, can really overwhelm us, as we are the creators of them, being their creators unavoidably experience them, and yet we have the power to stand apart as silent watchers even while, outwardly trying to cope with them. It is certain that even death itself cannot touch the real “us.”

Another line of meditation which we can pursue is that every one of us can sense the persistence of our unchanging self-identity through all the changes our personality has been undergoing, right from infancy through youth and old age, and through the changes that are going on, in and around us, from moment to moment. Yet again, we can clearly see that our self-identity remains the same, unchanged, when we daily traverse in turn the three states of waking, dreaming and deep-sleep. The registration of the experiences of each of these different states and planes we live through should be there in our higher, real, undivided consciousness which we can access, though our brain-memory, at our present stage of evolution, cannot be a sharer in it. In the same way the indivisible Self must persist through the great change we call death and rebirth, as there is a perfect analogy between sleep and death.

These reflections unmistakably prove to us that our true Self is changeless, unborn, undying. This self-evident truth of our true nature and self opens up another profound aspect of our being, which commends itself to our reason. That which is changeless cannot be but eternal. As there can be no two eternal, our higher reason and intuition give us the firm conviction that there can only be One Self, undivided, though appearing as divided among creatures. Hence our true Self is the Self of All beings. We are, in truth and reality, in all, and so also, all are in us, though due to ignorance we think we are separate from others, and are deluded into thinking and acting on the basis of separateness. Hence, any selfish action cannot but result in breach of universal harmony. This impersonal, implacable law of our being in its unerring justice compels us to eat the fruits of our own actions, bulk of which are bitter, and at last through pain and suffering, it awakens the soul to search for, and seek the Truth. We begin to realize that the longings of life personal are no better than chasing mirages in the desert, and that, as the Buddha teaches, there is no misery worse than personal existence.

Our long study, reflection and application of these profound truths give us an intuitive understanding of the true nature of our self and

a growing conviction of Universal Brotherhood. But at the same time we find the old habits of thoughts and tendencies of our personal self constantly militating against the higher light and loftier aspirations we have touched inwardly. A conflict is thus set up in us between the two contrary natures within—the higher and the lower. The many contradictions and paradoxes of life we encounter when we are trying to live up to the higher ideal we see, bewilder us. They are the clouds of illusion thrown up by our material self. But the self has to be raised by the Self. That is the task before us. It has to be accomplished, as Mr. Judge teaches, in small plain duties of everyday life through practice of Impersonality—meaning, not falling prey to the personal idea, but, instead, to think and act as the Self, which is the Self of All. It is giving up motive of personal interests and concerns, and doing every duty as sacrifice of the personal to Self Impersonal. It means that the motive for action has to be for the highest good of all mankind, for all beings. Once we realize that the personal self is not the true self but the Self is All, beyond all change, we feel the higher truth and aspiration, and it comes naturally.

We have to overcome the many biases which we have. They arise purely from the personal idea. There are many kinds of biases. They are so subtle and formidable that it is hard to eradicate them. To eradicate them entirely is to become unprejudiced in all respects, the pre-requisite condition for emancipation. The Buddha teaches that bias is like a flood that carries off the unwary. We are constantly deluded by them. *The Dhammapada* mentions four biases which are to be gotten rid of : Bias in favour of sensuous living; bias for continuing with life; bias in favour of one's own views; bias arising out of ignorance. The last is the parent of the other three. Antidote to Ignorance is the Knowledge of the Self and of the Law of our being. We may try to overcome bias by thinking and acting always from the highest perception we have touched, and not by succumbing to personal considerations. We must be ever aware of the fact that we are constantly subject to error arising out of personal bias—a healthy distrust of ourselves—and search for, and act upon, the

impersonal principles of the Higher Life. Such a practice may be called the Yoga of Impersonality.

For instance, we are easily swayed by praise or blame, elated by the one and downcast by the other. This is purely personal predilection, a great deluder. In one case, we ought to remember the teaching: “Thy body is not Self, thy SELF is in itself without a body, and either praise or blame affects it not.” When blame comes, we ought to search in ourselves by the impersonal clear light of the *Paramitas* (transcendental virtues) and inquire whether the blame attached to us for our action is just. If the blame is just and merited, then we must tender an apology, if the situation warrants it, and rectify ourselves; if the blame has no basis, and it hurts no one else except our personal self, then we ought to ignore it without the slightest thought of revenge, retaliation, self-assertion or sorrow.

Bias in favour of one’s own views is a formidable obstacle on the path of seekers after truth. H.P.B. says, in her *Introductory to The Secret Doctrine*: “Old truisms are often the wisest. The human mind can hardly remain entirely free from bias, and decisive opinions are formed before a thorough examination of a subject from all its aspects has been made.” A prejudiced mind is incapable of perceiving truth of things in every situation but is misled by appearances and personal opinions, and it invariably misconstrues teachings of the Wise Ones. None of us is entirely free from bias. To be aware of the presence in ourselves of this universal error and to be on guard against it in our endeavour to live the Higher Life is in itself a significant advance on the path of freedom.

There is one very practical and highly beneficial line of action which we ought to constantly pursue to eradicate the bias in favour of our own personal views, which are deeply ingrained in us by education, heredity and our individual Karmic tendency. It is, as taught by Mr Judge, to deliberately keep aside our own personal views and line of thinking, and adopt those of others, and think, feel and mentally live them out, and evaluate them in the impersonal light of Eternal Verities. We will thus not only be able to fill-in the

ingrained grooves of thoughts and feelings peculiarly ours along which we habitually traverse but will gain the ability to freely traverse at will along various other modes of thoughts, of aspirations and action. It will broaden our sympathies and develop the capacity to understand the minds of our fellowmen, different from ourselves, as also the ability to help them in the right way. It is one of the potent means to overcome personal bias.

One who is free from bias has an open mind and an eager willingness to consider, impartially, the views of others though they might be different from his, and thus seek what truth they may contain and learn the lessons from the experience. We must try to emulate such examples. H.P.B. teaches that there is no merit on our part to be living amidst only those who think like ourselves, but that we will have greater opportunities for growth when we are thrown-in among those who hold views and beliefs divergent from our own. H.P.B. followed this policy as the Editor of *Lucifer*, in which the opinions and views of every system of thought, even those diametrically opposed to those of the editor, were allowed free expression in the journal in the spirit of broad tolerance and catholicity, with the sole object of eliciting truth. The one who is entirely free from bias is the perfect renouncer, and he alone is free from error and the guiles of self-deception, and apprehends truth directly. In the article, “On Pseudo-Theosophy,” H.P.B. wrote:

Self abnegation is possible only to those who have learnt to know themselves; to such as will never mistake the echo of their own inner voice—that of selfish desire and passion—for the voice of divine inspiration, or an appeal from their MASTER.

To forget personality and regard truth only, by whomsoever presented and from whatever source it may come from, and do our duty without self-interest, and promulgate impersonally Theosophy pure and simple, which alone can save the world, is the Yoga of Impersonality. We can try, and that is our duty.

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: Mount Meru has been mentioned in the *Puranas*. Where is it situated? Does it have any inner significance?

Answer: Mount Meru, also called *Sumeru*, *i.e.*, the “Excellent Meru,” is a sacred mountain in Hindu and Buddhist cosmogony, and is considered to be the centre of all the physical, metaphysical and spiritual universes. It is called the abode of Lord Brahma and other demi-gods. The *Suryasiddhanta* mentions that Mount Meru lies in “the middle of the Earth,” in the land of the *Jambudvipa*, or the Rose Apple tree continent.

According to the allegorical description of creation of the universe given in *Vishnu Purana*, Manu had two sons, Uttanapada and Priyavarta, and the former had a son called Dhruva. Priyavarta had ten sons of which three became sages while the seven became kings. Hence Priyavarta divided the world into seven regions, and each son was given a region or *dwipa* to rule over. These seven *dwipas* are Jambudwipa, Plaksha, Shalmalia, Krauncha, Kusa, Saka and Pushkara *dwipa*. Of these Jambudwipa was under the rule of Agnidhra and he had nine sons, so he apportioned or divided Jambudwipa into nine sub-regions or *varshas* (countries). Agnidhra’s son Nabhi ruled over region which later was called Bharatvarsha, named after his grandson Bharata, (son of Rishabha). These seven *dwipas* are said to have been surrounded by seven oceans, namely, *Lavana* or sea of salt-water, *Sura* or ocean of wine, *Dadhi* or ocean of curds, *Dugdha* or ocean of milk, *Jala* or ocean of pure water, *Sarpi* or ocean of clarified butter and *Ikshu* or ocean of Sugarcane juice. They placed Mount Meru in the middle of Jambudwipa. It is

stated that there are three mountains to the north and three mountains to the south of Meru. It is also stated that Meru is supported or fortified by one mountain in each direction. To the east of Meru is Mandara, to the west is Vipula, to the north is Gandhamadana and to the South is Suparswa.

H.P.B. explains that *dwipas* are the continental islands and they refer to many things or localities. *Dwipas* refer to our planetary chain, where Jambudwipa refers to our earth or globe D. The remaining six *dwipas* refer to remaining six globes of the earth. Ocean of milk and curds is only metaphorical description of Milky Way and Nebulae, says H.P.B. (*S.D.*, II, 320-21)

We are told that mount Meru is *not* “the fabulous mountain in the navel or centre of the earth,” but its roots and foundations are in that navel, though it is in the far north itself. “Occult teaching corroborates the popular tradition which asserts the existence of a fountain of life in the bowels of the earth and in the North Pole.” Meru is called the land of Gods. In the *Secret Doctrine* Meru is connected with the North Pole, and hence may also be connected to “the imperishable sacred land,” on which flourished the first race of humanity, which was one of the five continents of ancient times; others being Hyperborean, Lemuria, Atlantis and America. It is the only one whose destiny it is to last from the beginning to the end of the *Manvantara* throughout each Round. It is the cradle of first man and the dwelling of the last *divine* mortal, chosen as *Sishta* for the future seed of humanity, writes H.P.B. (*S.D.*, II, 6). “It is averred in occultism that the land or island, which crowns the North Pole like a skull cap, is the only one which prevails during the whole Manvantara or our ‘Round.’ All the central continents and lands will emerge from the sea bottom many times in turn, but this land will never change.” (*S.D.*, II, 400 fn.)

Spinal column is often referred to as *Meru danda*. In the article “Mount Meru,” first printed by Mr. Judge in *The Path* magazine for January and February 1891, we are told that Meru is geographically described as passing through the middle of the earth. In this we find

a good picture of the spinal column as the centre of man's nervous system. When we find the gods on its upper station and the demons on its lower station, and its roots and foundation in the navel, we are reminded of the physiological and generative powers of man at his lower pole, and the high Mahatic powers at the seat of the soul in the brain, said by some writers to be the pineal gland.

In the allegory of the "churning of the ocean," the *Devas* and *Asuras* jointly churned the ocean for obtaining *Amrita* or nectar of immortality, and in the process of churning, mount Mandara was used as the churning tool and Vasuki, the king of serpents, as the churning rope. However, during the churning process, the mountain began to sink, hence Lord Vishnu in his second incarnation (*avatar*) as the tortoise (Kurma) dived to the ocean floor and supported the mountain on his back.

In the above mentioned article in *The Path* magazine, anthropological (physiological) key is applied to the myth of the churning of the ocean. The article mentions that the churning of the ocean takes place round about Mount Meru, and in man that process might refer to the electro-spiritual process by which he produces the brain fluid; the moon or soma juice or "World-Mother" [*Kundalini*]. Our attention is drawn to the footnote on p. 10 of *The Voice of the Silence*, which mentions that when *Buddhi* is activated it gives rise to one of the mystic yogic powers, an electro-spiritual force called *Kundalini*, which rises into the sixth, the middle region, the place between the eyes. Could it be between the optic thalami? "We are given reason to believe, through the *Secret Doctrine*, that the seat of this process is pineal gland, or pine-formed heart—secret heart of occultism—and that this gland corresponds to Mount Meru." It appears that Mandara represents solar plexus, around which the great serpentine force (*Kundalini*), represented by serpent Vasuki (used as a rope for churning) is deployed. The mountain Mandara was placed on the back of the tortoise. The article points out that the tortoise is androgynous creature, and symbolizes bi-sexual force. The solar plexus, symbolized by Mandara, is in the pelvic region,

and the shape of pelvic bones resembles that of the tortoise.

Question: Who is a *Jivanmukta*?

Answer: *Jivanmukta* is one who has attained to salvation or *moksha* and is not compelled to take birth. We are told that there are various degrees of Adepts and they are "generally classed by the number of 'Principles' they have under their perfect control." When an Adept succeeds in uniting all his principles into one, he is a *Jivanmukata*; he is no more of this earth virtually, and becomes a *Nirvane*, who can go into *Samadhi* at will. Mr. Judge defines the *Jivanmukta* as "entire separation of Jiva from all connection with matter and complete destruction of Karma, whether *good* or bad" (*W.Q.J. Series No, 28, p. 23*). As to separation from all connection with matter, we find that according to *Visishtadwaita* philosophy, the released soul or a *Jivanmukta*, after reaching *Moksha*, enjoys the bliss in a place called *Parampadha*, which place is not material, but made of *Shuddasatwa*, the essence of which the body of *Iswara* is formed. There, the *Jivatmas* (Monads) who have attained *Moksha*, are never again subject to the qualities of either matter or Karma, but if they choose, *for the sake of doing good to the world*, they may incarnate on Earth (*S.D., I, p. 132*). In the footnote, H.P.B. mentions that such voluntary incarnation is defined as *Nirmanakaya* or the "surviving spiritual principles of man." This clearly indicates that when a perfected being blends all his "principles" into one, it may refer to the higher three principles of *Atma-Buddhi-Manas* clothed in the *Nirmanakayic* body. We are told about Adepts living in their *Nirmanakayic* body after death; having overcome the illusion of *Devachan*. Of their lower principles only body disintegrates; there being no lower desires or thoughts to form *kamarupic* shell. A *Jivanmukta* can enter into *Samadhi* at will, unlike Plotinus who is described as having reached that high state only six times during lifetime. (*Isis, I, p. 591*)

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Should one maintain a personal diary or journal? Writing a personal diary could be a harmonizing and enriching experience. To some it serves as a close confidante, where they put their private thoughts and musings. People who journal on a regular basis, do constant introspection. One of the greatest benefits of journal writing is that it makes one grounded, happy and empowered to lead life on an even keel. A certain wholistic healer and spiritual scientist maintains three journals called, “My love journal,” “My forgiveness journal,” and “My gratitude journal,” and she writes one page in each journal, expressing love, gratitude and forgiveness. In the fourth journal, which she keeps by her bedside, she records her dreams. She has found a strong correlation between her feelings during waking hours and her dreams. Journaling helped her to overcome negative emotions and inculcate positive ones; it helped her in knowing and understanding aspects of her emotional self. Another person who was overweight, and had cultivated the habit of binge eating and purging, confessed that maintaining a journal helped her to examine herself objectively, decipher the patterns of binge eating and also deal with her emotions. Journalling offers an opportunity to rise above our worries and find solution to our problems.

A study performed by the department of psychology at the University of Iowa, tried to find out the effect of journaling in 122 students, who were divided into three groups. Researchers discovered that the group of students who focused on *emotions alone* reported more illness symptoms. While those who were asked to focus on thoughts *and* emotions, developed greater awareness of the benefits of the stressful events, indicating that their self-analysis allowed them to overcome and heal.

To be able to write honestly and truthfully, it is recommended that you keep your writing private. Maintaining a journal “helps us to slow down and observe how events and experiences influence us. It gives us the opportunity to reflect on our past and see how we

have grown. In moments of great distress... we find an ever-patient listener in ourselves as we write. Your writings cleanse your mind as you learn to be compassionate and gentle with yourself,” writes Anisha Anilraj. (*Life Positive*, February, 2012)

Many great personalities in the world have been known to keep diaries. These diaries have served different purposes, besides of course, giving an insight into one’s real nature, one’s strong points and weak points, as also, serving as an outlet for one’s bottled up feelings and emotions. Every spiritual aspirant must maintain a spiritual diary, in which one should truthfully record one’s feelings, thoughts and actions. Gandhiji maintained a diary and always advised his students to keep a daily diary.

Mahadev Desai, who joined Gandhiji in 1917 and remained with him in India’s freedom movement till 1942, regularly wrote his day-to-day diary. The period between 1917 and 1942 was a glorious chapter in India’s non-violent struggle for Independence. He has vividly portrayed the social, political and spiritual atmosphere in India during those years. Through his writings we get a glimpse of Gandhiji’s thought-processes, as also, his historical speeches and interviews. Boswell, the learned English writer, had similarly noted the events of Dr. Johnson’s life in his diary.

There is the famous Anne Frank’s diary, which is an account of the harrowing experiences of a young Jewish girl, who, with her family and friends was forced into hiding in an attic in Nazi-occupied Amsterdam. She kept her diary from June 12, 1942 to August 1, 1944. In her diary, she has discussed some of the changes that had taken place in the Netherlands since the German occupation. Otto Frank, Anne’s father, the only one of the family to survive the concentration camps, published the diary so that people could know about the effects of the Nazi regime, and its process of dehumanization. During the years of hiding the diary was the best friend and confidant to Anne Frank.

Maintaining a diary may help us understand how certain moods, of depression or anger, return to us cyclically. Mr. Judge mentions

the case of a person who had periods of depression. On examining his diary, he found that he experienced despondency at fixed or regular intervals of time. The old impressions return cyclically, and they must be counteracted by setting into motion joyous cycle, by trying to feel the joy of others, writes Mr. Judge.

The three dances of Shiva, performed at three different locations have great inner significance. The first dance of Shiva is where he dances alone on the remote Kailasa pinnacle. It is the dance of eternity and dance of the *panchatattva*—the five elements of creation, the dance of ether, air, water, fire and earth. The moment of dance is twilight, or *pradosham*, when evening mingles with night. It is cosmic dance, in which shiva stirs the cosmos. It is the dance which evokes the feeling of *vismaya* or wonder. Here, Shiva is not the divine in human form, but he is the cosmos in dance. “Perhaps no other culture of the world has visualized the cosmic creation in its unending rhythm of evolution, devolution, creation and destruction of timeless and temporal...as India has in the image of Shiva the dancer—Natesa,” writes Geeta Chandran, an acclaimed dancer.

The second dance is supposed to have been at Tillai, in the golden hall at Chidambaram, which is called *ananda tandava* or dance of celebration; dance of joy and achievement. In that dance Shiva is accompanied by fellow gods and goddesses playing different instruments. It is the dance of cosmic organization. It evokes the feeling of astonishment or *adbhuta*. Shiva celebrates the vanquishing of three evils: ambition represented by the tiger skin that Shiva wears as loin cloth, passion represented by the coiling snakes that he subdues and adorns as his ornaments, and the ego represented by the goblin *Muyalakan* on whose broken spine Shiva dances. This is the dance of the Nataraja, king of dancers. In one hand he holds rattle drum from which all creation springs and in the other he holds fire, the symbol of destruction. With his third hand he makes

abhayam mudra, which says, “Do not fear; I shall protect, as I shall destroy.” His fourth hand points at his raised foot, which symbolizes salvation or release from *maya*.

The third dance of Shiva is performed in *chith-ambaram* or the innermost recesses of the human heart. Shiva resides within us as a potent, latent force. It is only through discipline that this dance can be accessed. It is the mingling of Sound and silence, of *naada* and *omkara*, of finding the resonance of universal energies deep within ourselves, writes Chandran. (*The Speaking Tree [The Times of India]*, February 19, 2012)

Brahma, *Vishnu* and *Shiva* represent three aspects of the One Reality—creation, preservation and destruction. There is seen to be a double atmosphere about Shiva. On the one hand, he is *terrible*, a *destroyer* of ordinary passions and desires. But, he is also *auspicious*, as far as man’s higher strivings and aspirations, love for knowledge, etc., are concerned. Siva is a destroyer and the *regenerator* at the same time; who destroys things under one form, to recall them to life under another more perfect type.

Shiva is the divine dancer of three different dances. In the Cosmic dance, he is shown playing the drum, and the sound of his drum changed chaos into cosmos. In the *Tandava* dance, he dances in the burning ground, a terrible place of death and decay. This is the dance of destruction of evil, of lower desires and emotions, of wrong thoughts and actions. The macrocosmic dance must find its reflection at the microcosmic level, in the heart of the individual.

For the modern physicist, Shiva’s dance is the dance of subatomic matter. As in Hindu mythology, it is a continual dance of creation and destruction involving the whole cosmos; the basis of all existence and of all natural phenomena. Modern physics has shown that the rhythm of creation and destruction is also the very essence of inorganic matter. Because according to quantum field theory, all interactions between the constituents of matter take place through the emission and absorption of virtual particles. Modern physics has thus revealed that every subatomic particle not only

performs an energy dance, but also *is* an energy dance; a pulsating process of creation and destruction, writes Fritjof Capra, in his book *The Tao of Physics*.

The holiday or vacation has become an integral part of our culture, in which we seek relief from stress, harshness of work and the working environment. The trend may continue till we realize that any stress or unhappiness in our life is self-created. However, the concept of going on a vacation was preceded by “going for a retreat.” It was seen as a time to strengthen a personal connection with “the source,” or the self within. On an authentic retreat, with a spiritual emphasis, questions of identity (who am I?), meaning and purpose of life (why am I here?), are explored in reflective state of consciousness. There is also the effort to bring the noise of the over-stimulated monkey mind into a state of silence and stillness, so that the voice of one’s innate spiritual wisdom gets the chance of being felt and heard.

When we are on a holiday, our attention is focused *outside*. A “vacationer” returns laden with many photos and memories, is often weary and drained, and in need of rest. The holiday experience fades with little lasting value. On the other hand, a person on a retreat is focused *within*. A “retreatant” is more likely to have renewed energy arising from new perspectives about himself, and the meaning of life itself. He returns much lighter after starting to ditch old memories, habits and lifelong patterns of thinking and behaving. The retreat experience expands when used on a day-to-day basis. Holidays become memories of “then” while retreats are accessible “now”!

But even if one is unable to go for a retreat to some remote place, by daily practice one can cultivate the habit of retreating within. Caves in the mountains, cottages in hills, Ashrams and Monasteries as “retreat centres,” are all just metaphors for the “inner space” of

your own consciousness, your own spirit. “You can go there any time. Once you have found that ‘inner space’ you are likely to discover an energy that, in time, and with little practice, restores calm to your mind and clarity to your intellect, in a matter of moments,” writes Mike George. (*Purity*, February, 2012)

There is no doubt that change of place does have positive effect, but it is temporary, and then there is a tendency set up to turn “outward” for relieving stress. Theosophy speaks of two kinds of environment: Besides the external environment that is made up of one’s family, society, circumstances, etc., there is the Ego and its environment. Often, we notice that wherever we go, we carry with us our anxieties, fear, bitterness, disappointments, or whatever the negative emotion we were trying to overcome. Hence, Mr. Judge writes: “No matter where we are, the same spirit pervades all and is accessible. What need, then, to change places? We do not change ourselves by moving the body to another *locus*. We only put it under a different influence.” Just as we create positive attachment when we like a person or a place, so also we create negative attachment through our dislike. What we need to cultivate is equanimity towards people, places and circumstances that come to us under Karma.

Mr. Crosbie points out that at times students feel that getting away alone somewhere, regularly, would help to keep one’s psychic balance. If we give in to this desire and habit of depending upon the *externals*, our personality demands periodical changes, producing nervous tension that is corrosive and destructive. Our mind is occupied with fancied needs and that in turn reacts injuriously on the body. “True strength lies *within* and can only be aroused and used by ceasing to think that anything in particular of an external nature is *necessary* for us,” writes Mr. Crosbie. *The Dhammapda* asks us to build an “island of pure thoughts,” and turn to it in the times of spiritual need.

Statement about ownership and other particulars about the magazine
“THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT” to be published in the first issue
every year after the last day of February

FORMIV
(See Rule 8)

1. Place of Publication: Theosophy Hall
40 New Marine Lines
Mumbai 400 020
2. Periodicity of Publication: Monthly, 17th of the month
3. Printer's Name: D. Parajia
Whether citizen of India: Yes
Address: Theosophy Hall
40 New Marine Lines
Mumbai 400 020
4. Publisher's Name: D. Parajia
Whether citizen of India: Yes
Address: Theosophy Hall
40 New Marine Lines
Mumbai 400 020
5. Editor's Name: D. Parajia
Whether citizen of India: Yes
Address: Theosophy Hall
40 New Marine Lines
Mumbai 400 020
6. Names and addresses of individuals who own the magazine and partners or shareholders holding more than one per cent of the total capital: Theosophy Co. (India) Private Ltd.
40 New Marine Lines
Mumbai 400 020
(A charitable Company)

I, Daksha S. Parajia, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

17th March 2012

(Sd.) DAKSHA S PARAJIA
Publisher