

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

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MEDIATORSHIP—SOME REFLECTIONS

A MEDIATOR is the one who mediates, and to mediate means to be the medium for bringing about the result or to form a connecting link between two things or people. However, there is a special sense in which the words, “medium” and “mediator” are used in the philosophy of Theosophy. A medium is a person whose thoughts and emotions, and consequently whose actions are influenced by the active will of another. In this sense, we are all mediums to a certain extent, because we all get influenced by an idea, a thing, an action or a person. Pupils are influenced, to a great extent by their favourite school teacher, a speaker or a writer may inspire us to do the good or succeed in awakening base feelings. The radio, television or internet, can influence our minds for better or for worse. A little observation shows that we are impressionable and more prone to influences from the outside than from inside. Theosophy aims at imparting knowledge and mental training which can make our brain-mind more receptive to the soul’s influence. It is only on the placid surface of a lake that a clear reflection of moon is obtained, so also, the brain-mind must be made tranquil, free from the turmoil of passions.

There is a difference between passivity and receptive passivity, *i.e.*, positiveness or conscious submission. There is also a difference between being impressionable by the lower influences and being receptive to the higher. The latter is an indicator of individual’s

A Magazine Devoted to The Living of the Higher Life

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advancement towards chelaship or discipleship. Each one of us is influenced by these two forces: those coming from the lower, animal nature and from the higher, divine nature. Thus, we find that there are different *degrees* of mediumship, varying from *partial* to *total* passivity, *i.e.*, the extent to which one loses self-control, and also different *types* of mediumship, depending upon by what the medium gets influenced.

In her article “Are Chelas Mediums?” H.P.B. explains that a completely passive medium is a sick sensitive who allows the other being to influence him to such an extent that he loses his self-control. This relinquishing of self-control can be conscious or unconscious, active or passive, voluntary or involuntary. The other “being” may be another human being, and the medium will be then obedient to him and could be used for good or bad purposes. The other “being” could be an idea, such as love, greediness, hate, jealousy, or some other desire, which may possess the person.

The other “being” may be man’s own higher principles or divine nature, and he will then be a great genius, a writer, a poet, an artist, a musician, and so on. A person may be in *rapport* with the “intellectual” ray of Shakespeare and write a Shakespearean poetry, and at the same time imagine that the personal spirit of Shakespeare is writing through him, explains H.P.B. He may be influenced by some Adept to write a great scientific work and be entirely ignorant of the source of his inspiration, or perhaps imagine that it was the “spirit” of Faraday or Lord Bacon that is writing through him, whereas all the while he would be acting as a “Chela,” although ignorant of the fact.

A medium is a passive instrument through whom knowledge, skill or talent of another may manifest. The book, *Arigo: Surgeon of the Rusty Knife*, by John G. Fuller, deals with the curious case of a peasant named Arigo in a small village of Brazil, who brought about almost miraculous cures and performed hundreds of operations, without antiseptics and anesthetics, and usually with an ordinary kitchen knife, while in mediumistic trance. He made

thousands of correct diagnoses without even examining the patient. According to his autobiography, around 1950 he began to suffer from trances and hallucinations. One day he felt that the voice that was pursuing him took over his body and he had a vision of a bald man, dressed in a white apron, and supervising a team of doctors and nurses, in an operating room. This entity identified itself as “Dr. Fritz,” a German surgeon who had died during World War I. Hence, it is said that when Arigo performed operations, he embodied the spirit of Dr. Adolf Fritz.

The passivity of mediumship is the opposite of true receptivity—receptivity to the Inner Ego. The task is to transform the brain-mind from being passive into a receptive instrument. The “lives” or elementals that constitute our brain, at present, are susceptible to impressions of lower kind, from the lower planes of astral light, wherein base or purely worldly thoughts, feelings and actions of other beings are impressed. Hence, driving out of impure thoughts and feelings, and working towards acquiring impersonality are essential.

In that sense, a genius is a *mediator*. No Ego differs from another Ego, in its essential nature. That, which makes one person a great individual and another a silly person is the capability of the brain and body to transmit and give expression to the light of the *Inner man* within, writes H.P.B. The physical body is an instrument, while the Ego is the performing artist. She points out that even the great Violinist Paganini cannot bring out the melody if the violin is broken or if the strings are strung too loose or, too tight. The instruments of the Ego are the body and the brain.

A genius can become a mediator under the influence of an Adept. “The Adepts assert that Shakespeare was, unconsciously to himself, inspired by one of their own number,” writes Mr. Judge. We may wonder why such aid was given to Shakespeare. Theosophy teaches that whenever someone is engaged in an activity which tries to shed light so as to awaken human nature, that person comes to the notice of Higher Minds. We are told that like his contemporaries,

Shakespeare also dealt with a mixture of good and evil material, but he put less emphasis on evil and thus reached a more humane breadth in his plays than was found in others. Even his Sonnets, more than those of other sonneteers, showed flashes of the divine discontent that draws men to the Beyond, and his writings exhibited generosity of his soul. In other words, from the first, he unconsciously exhibited such largeness of mind as is necessary to receive, and to work under, Adept influence.

We are reminded that Shakespeare was not favoured, but he had to win his help, like other and more ordinary men. The *Adept Influence* is directed not to the physical but to the inner and especially the upper planes of man's nature. Therefore, when he came under Adept influence, he felt a broader and keener alertness of his own higher mind. The superior possibilities embedded within himself were what Adept inspiration spurred to stronger activity. In most cases such inspiration does not come suddenly. It is like a dawn; and its progress or increase depends on how worthy the recipient continues to prove. Moreover, we must remember that for a long time literature has been one of the major channels used by the Adepts to instruct the human race, and to change the *Manas* and *Buddhi* of the race. Today, perhaps, more use is made by the Adepts of the avenue of Science than that of Literature. Since he remained unconscious of the Nirmanakayic influence, which his genius attracted, we must not expect the unadulterated expression of Divine Wisdom in all that he created.

Active mediators have always existed side by side with passive mediums. A true Mediator is a temple in which dwells the spirit of the living God. In his case such is the purity of his magnetism and his aura, that evil influences get repelled. Thus: "About such men as Apollonius, Iamblichus, Plotinus, and Porphyry, there gathered this heavenly nimbus. It was evolved by the power of their own souls in close unison with their spirits; by the superhuman morality and sanctity of their lives, and aided by frequent interior ecstatic contemplation. Such holy men pure spiritual influences could

approach. Radiating around an atmosphere of divine beneficence, they caused evil spirits to flee before them. . . . This is MEDIATORSHIP, not *mediumship*." (*Isis*, I, 487)

A chela is moving towards becoming a mediator, as he learns to control himself and all his lower tendencies so that his soul can become a mediator between the Universe of Light and the world of shadows. We are told that the medium may be a channel of influences coming from a high source, but he is not aware of the source, and receives the influences passively. A chela, on the other hand, is *conscious and active* receiver. He throws his mind into *receptive passivity* while receiving a message from the Master. As the God within the shrine becomes more and more active, the aspirant becomes a centre from which, in his measure, flow out the potentialities for good that from the Perfect Blessed Ones come in large affluent streams.

A student-aspirant is called upon to resist quick and impulsive responses to outer suggestions, and act with deliberation, after calmly evaluating the suggestions. Shri B. P. Wadia suggests that every earnest and devoted student-aspirant must strive towards becoming a mediator. He writes, "You may not have surrendered yourself body and soul, to the Masters but are you not attempting a surrender? What means application in reference to the Path of Chelaship? Their Movement, in every age and cycle, deals with the Karmas of Humanity, and one striking variety in that Motion is the selection of chelas who are ready to become channels for Them." What a miracle can be wrought by a student-aspirant who fits himself to become such a channel is vividly described, thus: "When H.P.B. said: 'Where thought can pass they can come,' she referred to the particular condition and atmosphere which alone can form the channel for the passing of thought. A thread of glass cannot conduct the electric fluid, but a copper wire can. Each student has to find out for himself those particular wires within him which act as conductors for spiritual influences." When a group of student-aspirants are united, a divine atmosphere overspreads the group, and the nobler part of each one's

nature is aroused and exercised. (*The Theosophical Movement*, September 1953)

Correct receptivity develops *pari passu* with the awakening Will which is *Buddhi* made active. Interestingly, *Buddhi* has been described as the Plastic mediator, while Manas is “the intelligent medium between the upper Triad and the lower Quaternary” (*S.D.*, I, 242 fn.). Thus, *Buddhi*, the vehicle of *Atman*, without which *Atman* cannot manifest itself, is regarded as a Mediator. A medium can be a channel for good as well as bad influences, so also, incarnated mind can be influenced by *Buddhi* as well as by *kama* or passions and desires. But a mediator is not influenced by lower influences, and so also *Buddhi*. In *The Key to Theosophy* (p. 100, Indian ed.), H.P.B. says that *Atman* only overshadows the mortal man, but what enters the body of man and pervades through it, are the rays of *Atman*, or light of *atman*, through the vehicle of *Buddhi*.

In a simple sense, a mediator is a link between the high and the low. Mr. W. Q. Judge, the co-founder of the Theosophical Society, and a “successful disciple” was one such Mediator. In one of her letters, concerning Judge and the American work, H.P.B. spoke of him as “*part of herself since several aeons... the Antaskarana [bridge] between the two Manas(es) the American thought and the Indian—or rather the trans-Himalayan—Esoteric Knowledge.*” He was a Mediator in a far higher sense; the real Mr. Judge, was a Nirmanakaya, masquerading under the outer, mortal garment known as W. Q. Judge. In other words, Mr. Judge was an advanced soul using a borrowed body. The phenomenon is described by a Tibetan term *Tulku*. A true alchemist performs the magic of transmuting the iron of his lower nature into the pure gold of the higher. Such was Mr. Judge, revealing to us the possibility of remaking ourselves, and whose death anniversary falls on March 21, the day of the Spring Equinox.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT THE TRUST PROPERTY

RABINDRANATH Tagore’s short story, “The Trust Property,” originally titled, *Sampatti Samarpan* (or Wealth Surrendered) is a mordant tale of madness and desolation brought about by overweening greed. The story revolves round an extremely stingy person, Jaganath Kundu, who is disliked by his son, Vrindavan Kundu for his stingy and harsh nature. Once the son gets married there are frequent quarrels between the father and the son, as the son refuses to live the life of want imposed by his miserly father. When Vrindavan’s wife suffers from a life-threatening disease, the son calls for a doctor. When the doctor prescribes some costly medicine, Jaganath refuses to spend the money on medicine. Finally, when his wife passes away the son abuses his father and calls him a murderer. But he is reminded that his mother and grandmother had also died without taking any medicine. Horrified by his father’s behaviour, Vrindavan leaves home, taking with him his four-year-old son. But the father is unfazed by his son’s departure, and is, in fact relieved, as he can save some money on his household expenses, and is now free from the fear, which had always haunted him, of being poisoned by his son and heir. The neighbours, steeped in traditional customs, are equally unsympathetic towards Vrindavan and feel that he should not have left his father, because, “if your wife dies, you can always get another wife, but you cannot find another father.”

However, Jaganath is now lonely and miserable and misses playing with his little grandson, Gokul Chandra. “His empty home seemed emptier every day.” As time passes, he becomes an eccentric old man, and is considered miserly and antisocial by the village people. The naughty young village boys make fun of him. One day, he spots a cheeky boy, named Nitai Pal, among the young tormenters, who takes away a cloth from his shoulder and wears it as a turban. But the boy is willing to talk to Jaganath who invites

him home. He finds out that Nitai has run away from home because his father wanted to send him to school. Jaganath invites the boy to stay with him, and the boy readily agrees. Though initially, the boy enjoys being pampered, he is soon bored and wants to leave.

Jaganath is not happy to let his only companion go, and therefore, tells him temptingly, “I will leave you all the property I possess.” The villagers begin to make enquiries after the father of the boy and soon find out that someone called Damodar Pal has been searching for his son. They warn Jaganath to return the boy to his father, else he could go to jail. When the boy comes to know that his father is searching for him, he panics. Jaganath assures the boy that he will hide him in a place where none can find him.

Then, in the middle of the night Jaganath takes the boy to an ancient, abandoned temple in forest. They enter the main chamber, where Jaganath removes a slab of stone, revealing an underground room. They enter it carrying a lamp. The room has brass pots full of jewels and gold coins. It is the place where miserly Jaganath has been hiding his great wealth. However, he brings the boy here not with the intention of hiding him, but with the intention of converting him into a *yaksha*, a nature-spirit, to guard his hidden wealth. He makes the sleepy boy undergo a ceremony, in which he is made to recite, “I do solemnly promise that I will hand over all this treasure to Gokul Chandra Kundu,” the grandson of Jaganath Kundu, or any of Gokul’s heirs, if they ever appear at the temple and want the hidden treasure. The boy repeats this *mantram*-like declaration, over and over again, falling into almost a trance-like state.

Meanwhile, Jaganath comes out of that secret chamber, closing the exit door with the slab. In the morning Jaganath is awakened by his son Vrindavan, who had left him several years ago, who tells him that he has been looking for his son Gokul, whose name he had changed to Nitai Pal, and his own name to Damodar Pal. The boy has run away from home, and that he has come to Jaganath because there is a rumour that the boy has been staying with him. With this news—that the boy he had condemned to be a *yaksha* in the temple,

was actually his beloved grandson Gokul—Jaganath slips into complete madness. He keeps staring vacantly into space and is constantly haunted by the feeling that the child has been calling out. From that day onward, he goes about asking people, “Do you hear any wailing sound? Do you hear anybody calling out ‘Father’?” Four years later, he dies, and disappears into that region where no one has ever been found out in the world’s eternal game of hide-and-seek. The father of the boy is unable to find his son, so the boy also does not survive his grim imprisonment.

Rabindranath Tagore, born on May 7, 1861, was a Polymath, poet, musician and artist, from Bengal, India, and was the first non-European to win the Nobel Prize for Literature. In his childhood, he heard mythological stories and fairy tales from his aunt and mother. At that time, he also heard the stories of Indian *Yaksha*, the treasure guarding spirit of Indian Mythology. These stories influenced him so much that later he used these myths in some of his short stories, as in the story above. In a comment on this story, we read that such criminally superstitious practices were resorted to by miserly persons under the idea that they themselves would re-acquire the treasure in a future state of existence. “When you see me in a future birth passing this way, you must hand over all this treasure to me. Guard it till then and stir not,” was the promise extracted from the victim before he became a *yaksha*. We are told that there were many stories heard of people becoming suddenly rich by coming across ghostly custodians of wealth belonging to them in a past birth.

Theosophy teaches that elementals or nature-spirits are the soul of the elements. There are four types of elementals pertaining to four elements, also known as, “nature-spirits.” The elementals of fire are called “spirits of fire,” or Salamanders; of the air are called “spirits of air,” or sylphs, etc. In the myths and fables of almost all nations, they appeared under various names, such as, fairies, dwarfs, djins, peris, goblins and pixies; and in India as *yaksha*, *gandharva*, *kinnara*, *apsara*, etc. They are called *devas*, generically, by the Hindus. A *yaksha* is earth-spirit or gnome. The natural tendency of

the elementals connected with mineral kingdom and with metals is to hide treasures. *Preta, Yaksha, Dakini* are the lowest of the Hindu elementals, while the *Gandharvas, Vidyadharas* and even *Apsaras* belong to the highest. The former are dangerously mischievous, while the latter are benevolent, says H.P.B.

When a person buries or loses a large sum of money, jewels or precious things, his desires are fastened to that which he has lost or hidden. The *cause* for the hiding and the *thoughts* of the person determine whether the treasure will remain concealed forever or would be found by others. How do the thoughts and desires of people bring about the concealment of the treasure? Every person has about him a sphere, or fluid or energy in which are found, units of life energy, called elementals or “lives.” They are coloured by or impressed with thoughts, feelings and desires of the person. Anything worn by a person, a ring, a watch, a bracelet, or clothes, is soaked with magnetic fluid or magnetism of the person. It is through this magnetic fluid that elementals have a link with anything worn by the person. When one of these objects is suddenly dropped, the elementals are drawn after it by attraction, covering the object. In many cases they completely envelop the object, so that, although it is near at hand, it cannot be seen. Often, when we drop an earring or a ring, it takes a long time to find it. As the magnetism wears off and the power of the elementals to hide the object weakens, the object becomes visible. The thoughts and desires also play a role in concealment. The same rule applies to the concealment of buried treasures. When a ship carrying a treasure sinks, the influences are very powerful, because then the elementals concealing the treasure are gathered from all the persons connected with the treasure. Often, these elementals influence animals. As a result, wild animals and poisonous snakes surround the spot where the treasure is buried, preventing any person from approaching or finding it. Forces of air and water further aid in concealment, through thunderstorms, heavy rains or gale.

Money is neither good nor bad in itself. It is a disadvantage if

wrongly used. And yet, what is there about the worldly possessions that makes it so difficult to find peace and truth? A rich man is full of anxiety for his possessions. Many are the anxieties of the man of possession. Instead of the man possessing his possessions, his possessions possess him! Often, money alone is enough to corrupt the character by leading one to pamper the body and to indulge in alcohol, drugs, smoking, gambling, and many other sensual pleasures. “Poverty has no natural tendency to engender selfishness, but wealth requires it,” writes Mr. Judge. Spiritually advanced beings, like King Janaka, remain unaffected by wealth and comfort. Having learnt in some prior lives the lessons of detachment, they are able to say, “We are trustees of our possessions.”

Mr. Judge points out that there is a curse attendant upon money. That is because although money could be and has been used by some to benefit humanity, very few have the attitude of “trusteeship” towards their wealth. Often, a wealthy person is tempted to exercise power on the beneficiary or ask for something in return for the monetary favour. Unless a person has developed sufficient detachment, very strong and peculiar feelings get attached with wealth. There is wisdom in the advice, “Neither lender nor borrower be.” More often than not, wealth or money is at the base of family feuds and is also the cause of ruining human relationships.

Though Jesus said that “it is difficult for the rich man to enter heaven,” there are other possessions which constitute greater hindrance to spiritual life and growth, such as, wide, all-embracing, rapidly-acting brain stored with knowledge. The one misusing mental powers might be punished by a life of stupidity in one of his subsequent lives. Similarly, an excessively stingy man or the one who misuses his wealth and oppresses the down-trodden, might be punished in the future with the life of poverty. “One has to be cautious about giving out knowledge, pouring out affection, or spending money—all these are Soul’s possessions, which under Karma, at this period of time, are in one’s hands,” writes Shri B. P. Wadia.

SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

THE CAPTION, “Sphere of influence,” has not the same connotation in this article as that used in political science, or in molecular physics, or in astronomy, but has a psychological, moral and spiritual meaning applicable to such who aspire to live the Higher Life and exert to fit themselves to enter upon selfless service of humanity. One may, however, discern an analogy between the physical and the spiritual sense in which the term is used. Analogy there must always be between the spiritual and the physical, and terrestrial and celestial phenomena, because, as St. Paul says, this world is the mirror of pure truth, terrestrial events being the shadowing forth of celestial abstractions.

In physics, sphere of influence is the sphere of space or volume around a molecule in a substance, inside which the molecule at the centre exerts an attractive force on other lesser particles within a certain limited space around it; in astronomy it is the gravitational influence exerted by a planet over other lesser bodies falling within a certain spherical spatial limit around it; in political science the term refers to political, economic or cultural influence one nation exerts over another independent country, not necessarily impinging on its sovereignty.

Analogous phenomenon is seen in moral psychology also. Numerous instances of it are seen in human relations. It is commonly seen in the life of people. For instance, we have seen how the course of the life of a person is altered in a significant way, for good or ill, after coming into the “sphere of influence” of another. How can this be but for the irresistible magnetic power of sympathy and antipathy generated mutually by both in the past—the one who influences and the one influenced? Everyone seeks, and comes under the influence of, that which accords with one’s disposition which is acquired by one’s own Karma. “All creature act according to their natures; what, then, will restraint effect?” (*Gita*, III). Like attracts like.

One who would as a result of past good Karma, feels called to turn away from a life of careless indifference and vice, as is the way of the world, and seeks to walk on the path of virtue and duty, has to, first of all, step out of the sphere of influence emanating from individuals, sects, groups and organizations espousing views and ideas opposed to truth and subversive of the principles of higher life; and seek the company of the like-minded and the wise. Much emphasis is laid by Teachers on the importance of *Satsang*, or good company, since one becomes of the nature of the people with whom one associates. We can, therefore, see how important it is to associate oneself with the good and the wise. Dissociating oneself from bad company, includes giving up irrational and unjust social customs, immoral and corrupt practices, hereditary belief systems and superstitions. It requires conviction and moral courage to do so. Says the Teacher:

We are at first irresistibly or unwittingly drawn within its dark circle by that peculiar influence, that powerful current of magnetism which emanates from ideas as well as from physical bodies. By this we are surrounded, and finally prevented through moral cowardice—fear of public opinion—from stepping out of it. (*Isis*, I, 39)

Established customs and beliefs die hard, and from which it is difficult to extricate oneself. Orthodoxy, whether of theology or of science, always resists change and reform. The honest scientist who would courageously stand by the truth he has found, which contradicts the pet theories of the day of the body of scientific orthodoxy, has to court ostracism, though, in the course of time, he would stand vindicated. One who would come out of the fold of unjust and corrupt system of social life and practices, such as discriminatory caste system, racial prejudices, superstitious practices based on perversion of the true knowledge and centuries of priestcraft, and fight against the evils, has to court stiff opposition, and, perhaps, even martyrdom. Once the light of the eternal verities of the Wisdom-Religion awakens spiritual perception of the seeker of

truth he is impelled by the mandate of divine conscience to step out of the dark circle, or the sphere of dark influence, of soul-blinding conventions and customs. Implores St. Paul, “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing* and I will receive you” (*Corin. II*, 6-17). “Lord,” the Higher Self, can only receive and act in man as his Inner Ruler and Guide when he has purged himself of all prejudices, biases, and selfishness, and his heart is imbued with love of humanity. Teaches the Buddha, “Draw yourself out of evil, like an elephant sunk in the mud...If you find a prudent companion, upright and self-possessed, walk with him, joyfully and mindfully, overcoming all dangers. If you do not find a prudent companion, upright and self-possessed, then walk alone like a king who has renounced his kingdom and his conquests. Be like a free elephant in the forest. It is better to live alone. There is no companionship with a fool.” (*The Dhammapada*, verses 327-329)

True happiness and progress of man is dependent on his choosing to always abide within the sphere of influence of his higher nature and Self which speaks to him, if he allows it, as clear conscience, and think and act from that basis. He must constantly endeavour to raise his self by the Self, and not suffer Self to be lowered, as the *Gita* teaches (VI, sloka 5). Personal self, without the help of its heavenly prototype to raise itself, will, following the dictates of the evil genius—desires and passions, or *Kama*—will enter on a downward course. Thus, man becomes an enemy to himself. “This is because,” Mr. Judge teaches, “that lower one is so near the thick darkness that hangs about the lower rungs of evolution’s ladder, it is partly devil. Like a heavy weight it will drag into the depths the one who does not try to conquer himself.” (*Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita*, p. 129)

There is a natural attraction of the Soul (*Manas*) to its parent, the Divine Spirit (*Atma-Buddhi*), whose emanation it is. This is centripetal force. All noble impulses come to man from this spark of the divine that lurks in Soul of man, which is his true saviour and

redeemer if he develops it in himself and takes refuge in it. On the other hand, when embodied, the principle of terrestrial passions and desires, *Kama*, which is coeval with the body, deludes the Lord of the body, and drags him down. This is centrifugal force. If man allows the latter to prevail to the neglect of the former, he will enter upon a long journey on the regressive path that ends in annihilation of the personal self, the temporary reflection in the body of the Immortal Higher *Manas*. The life of man on earth is a struggle between these two antagonistic titanic forces which rages in the body of man, which is the field of action. What survives of man in each earth-life after death of the body, in every one of the series of his reincarnations, is only the essence of all that was of humane quality, thoughts and deeds of kindness and nobler aspirations during life. These are assimilated in the blissful felicity of post-mortem state of consciousness, called *Devachan*, at the end of which the Soul (Ego) falls back into another incarnation to work out the unspent and unadjusted store of its past Karma. Gathering and assimilating quintessential experiences from each of the innumerable reincarnations, as the bee gathers honey from many flowers, the Ego at last, after many ages, blossoms into conscious godhood and becomes a co-worker with Nature in the scheme of universal evolution. How important it is for the human being to keep proper balance and harmony between these two forces—centripetal and centrifugal forces—of his dual nature is stated by H.P.B., thus:

Break or damage the centripetal motion of the earthly soul tending toward the centre which attracts it; arrest its progress by clogging it with a heavier weight of matter than it can bear, or than is fit for Devachanic state, and the harmony of the whole will be destroyed. Personal life, or perhaps rather its ideal reflection, can only be continued if sustained by the two-fold force, that is by the close union of *Buddhi* and *Manas* in every rebirth or personal life. The least deviation from harmony damages it; and when it is destroyed beyond redemption the two forces separate at the moment of death. (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 187)

This is what is called as spiritual death, than which no worse calamity can befall man. To keep the harmony between the two opposite forces in earthly life man has to choose to remain within the ambit of the law of spiritual continuity, by abiding by the laws of virtue and duty with a knowledge and understanding of the Science of the Soul.

Individual happiness and progress is inseparably bound to the happiness and progress of mankind as a whole. General condition of mankind as a whole imposes limitation on individual effort towards spiritual progress. Every man, therefore, is duty bound to strive to improve the general condition through his own efforts in self-improvement, and dissemination of Theosophical philosophy, and fit himself to be the better able to help mankind on the path of higher evolution. Masters, therefore, insist on the Heart Doctrine. When some members of the T.S. (Theosophical Society) suggested to the Masters that it was time that They help science in its discoveries, a Master of Wisdom wrote:

The moral and spiritual sufferings of the world are more important and need help and cure more than science needs aid from us in any field of discovery. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." (*W.Q.J. Series No. 4*, p. 22)

One must therefore guard against the general tendency to pay too much attention to the intellectual or scientific side of Theosophy alone. Mr. Judge writes in his article, *What the Masters have said*, that in response to a query from the members of the T.S. as to what they might do, how they might work, and what "sphere of influence" they might find, a Master of Wisdom wrote:

Spheres of influence can be found everywhere. The first object of the Theosophical Society is philanthropy. The true Theosophist is a philanthropist, who "not for himself but for the world he lives." This, and philosophy, the right comprehension of life and its mysteries will give the "necessary basis," and show the right path to pursue. Yet the best "sphere of influence" for the applicant is now in [his own land]. (*ibid.*, pp. 21-22)

Masters having merged their Selves with, and abide in, the Higher Self, which is One, the Self of All, Their "sphere of influence" is everywhere, and which can be found by anyone who unselfishly works along the line of the Heart Doctrine and dedicates himself to serve the Great Cause of the Lodge of Masters, which is emancipation of all mankind through realization of the truth of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity. This is the original line of work, Mr. Judge says, which the Masters traced out at the outset when the T.S. was founded. Writes Mr. Judge:

All those who do not follow them are those who feel dissatisfied with our work, and those who try to go upon these lines are those who feel and know that help is always given to the sincere Theosophist who ever tries not only to understand the philosophy but also to make it forceful for the proving and exemplifying of the doctrine and object of Universal Brotherhood. (*ibid.*, p. 22)

OF COURSE, different attitudes of mind produce different actions in any given case. Those who have knowledge will not act from the same motive as those who have less knowledge or none. Those who have no knowledge act under the impulse of the common attitude or way of doing things. Those who are wise naturally take all possible results into consideration from their wider point of view, before acting. With them it is largely a question of duty, unswayed by what the views of others may be, except in so far as those views might interfere with larger duties and influence at other times. In fact, so many things have to be taken into consideration possible to be seen and applied by the person alone who is involved, that no direct answer can be given in any particular case. General principles may be stated, and each individual left to apply them as he sees fit. In no other way can progress be made. We have finally, in any case, to determine whether we are swayed by inclination rather than plain duty, in order that we may not deceive ourselves. Whatever, then, is decided in all honesty with ourselves, is our duty, and no man is our judge.

—ROBERT CROSBIE

EXTRACTS FROM UNPUBLISHED LETTERS
STUDY, APPLICATION AND PROMULGATION—X

EVERY WORKER is an aspirant and soon or late every aspirant seeks the Upward Way to the Inner Life of Wisdom and Service, of Holiness and Sacrifice. We belong to one Great Family, and as one who has laboured in and for that Family for over half a century, I am coming to you with my thanks for your past helpfulness to our Cause and my hopes for your future.

In our small army of Fortune's Favoured Soldiers every soul is occupying a vital place, and so you are right—you have a peculiar high duty to perform in——. We are a small band, but we have Faith wedded to Knowledge and our Kingdom is the most ancient and honourable. It is a great joy for me, therefore, to find in you a new recruit-helper, a new colleague.

Theosophy has two sides: metaphysical and moral. Space-Time-Motion, Rounds and Races, etc., are of the former, while Reincarnation, Karma, Cycles are of the latter. But can we do with one without the other? A bird cannot go high on one wing!

It is true, Theosophy answers every problem, and that gives us not only confidence but also power. We must be humble to seek, patient to apply what we learn, and grow as the flower grows. So, do not be timid; quiet courage is calmness itself. We do not need calm courage with our own problems; we need love and sympathy for those of others.

You speak of your limited knowledge and the preparation of your talks: we learn as we teach, and as we lecture and write, our knowledge grows. It is one process, learning and teaching, and when service of the Masters is our motive an aspect of sacrifice comes into operation. Preparation of any lecture should be in two parts: (1) the gathering of ideas and substance and arrangement; (2) the inner calming of the mind and energizing of the heart by thinking about the Great Blessed and Holy Ones. Always practise that.

For your talk on animals and Karma you will find some helpful thoughts in Mr. Judge's article about the Karmic reactions between

humans and animals: "The Moral Law of Compensation," *U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 6*; see also *U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 3*, pp. 4 and 5: "Universal Applications of Doctrine." Also see H.P.B.'s "Have Animals Souls?" reprinted in THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, Vol. IX. Then please see "Why Do Animals Suffer?" in Vol. XIV of the same magazine. I have given too many references for a short talk; but I have done so not only for the talk but for any future use.

What you say about Christianity and Theosophy has force in it. Give straight Theosophy straight. If questions on Christianity arise, distinguish between Christ and Church and you will find yourself not only on safe ground but on a helpful one, from which your hearers will gain.

About your lecture on "Do We Stand Alone?": It is an excellent topic. Metaphysically, it is the doctrine of Universal Brotherhood (see *The Heart Doctrine* (pp. 61-69)). Morally, each must ask: "Am I my brother's keeper?" and answer is "Yes." Remember the story of the Good Samaritan. What you say is true. Christmas should be made an occasion to cultivate warmth and love. Instead of killing turkey, we should sacrifice our gross animal nature and so love the animal kingdom. Instead of plum pudding we should make a "pudding" of graciousness and gratitude, love and joy, and above all gentle speech, which refers to the birth of the Soul in Man. Not independence but interdependence is required. *The Voice of the Silence* has a good verse about becoming soft as the mango pulp for the woes of others. Judge's article on "How Should We Treat Others?" (pp. 85-90 of *The Heart Doctrine*) will give you numerous good points. Prepare your talk by giving time to study these and other things, and then give a heart-warming lecture to help all.

You gave some very good points in your lecture, but I do not like your report that you were tired after the lecture because of tension. Mr. Judge mentions that ease of manner is necessary in all our Theosophical work, and that we should not be anxious or worried about it. But it is all a matter of training and I doubt not that you will acquire the power in due course.

ZODIAC—A LOST KEY

IV

AT THE TIME when Egyptians were building pyramids, the North Pole star was Alpha Draconis (Thuban) in the constellation of Draco. Today, our pole star is Polaris in Ursa Minor. H.P.B. tells us that by means of the cycle of 25,868 years, the approximate year of erection of the Great Pyramid of Giza can be ascertained.

Assuming that the long narrow downward passage was directed towards the pole star of the pyramid builders, astronomers have shown that...Alpha Draconis, the then pole-star, was in the required position about 3,350 B.C., as well as in 2,170 B.C. (Proctor, quoted by Staniland Wake). But we are also told that “this relative position of Alpha Draconis and Alcyone being an extraordinary one...it could not occur again for a whole sidereal year” (*Ibid.*). This demonstrates that, since the Dendera Zodiac shows the passage of three sidereal years, the great Pyramid must have been built 78,000 years ago, or in any case that this possibility deserves to be accepted at least as readily as the later date of 3,350 B.C. (*S.D.*, II, 432)

In the famous Dendera zodiacs are buried mysteries of our history. Numerous astronomers have studied them carefully and offered useful and plausible interpretations. Here again, the zodiacs are closely connected with sidereal cycles. Dendera was the main centre for the worship of goddess Hathor—the goddess of fertility, of women, and of childbirth. The village of Dendera is situated 60 kilometres north of Luxor on the west bank of the Nile. The present building dates to the Ptolemaic Period (305–30 B.C.) and was completed by the Roman Emperor Tiberius (A.D. 14–37), but it rests on the foundations of earlier buildings dating back at least as far as Khufu (Cheops; second king of the 4th dynasty [c. 2613–c. 2494 B.C.]).

The temple contains two well-known, but slightly different representations of the heavens. There is a round zodiac ceiling and

a square zodiac in the outer hypostyle hall. The round zodiac shows the various constellations associated with the Greek astrological signs along with many other figures. Along the edge are shown 36 figures that represent the spirits of the 36 decan stars, one corresponding to each of the Egyptians’ 10-day weeks. The Egyptians used 36 bright stars that rose in the east, just before sunrise, to mark the start of their weeks. A new star rose about every 10 days.

While these details are fairly easy to understand, what makes the study most interesting is the corroboration of facts of history stated by Egyptian priests to Herodotus. The priests informed the Greek inquirer that time had been reckoned by them for so long that the sun had twice risen where it then set, and twice set where it then arose—a period of two cycles Precession—or a period of 51,736 years (*S.D.*, I, 435). H.P.B. confirms that this Zodiac, with its mysterious three *Virgos* between the *Lion* and *Libra*, justified the truthfulness of those priests who told Herodotus that—(a) The poles of the Earth and the Ecliptic had formerly coincided; and (b) That ever since their first Zodiacal records were commenced, the Poles have been three times within the plane of the Ecliptic, as the Initiates taught.

As asserted by the Egyptian Priests to Herodotus, who was informed that the terrestrial Pole and the Pole of the Ecliptic had formerly coincided, thus was it found and corroborated by Mackey. For he states that the Poles are represented on the Zodiacs in both positions, “And in that which shows the Poles (polar axes) at right angles, there are marks which prove that ‘it was not the last time they were in that position; *but the first*’—after the Zodiacs had been traced.” “Capricorn,” he adds, “is represented at the North Pole, and Cancer is divided, near its middle, at the South Pole; which is a confirmation that originally they had their winter when the Sun was in Cancer; but the chief characteristics of its being a monument commemorating the *first time* that the Pole had been in that position, are the

Lion and the Virgin.” (See in Part II, “A Mystery of the Zodiac.”) (*S.D.*, II, 431)

There is also an indication that different representation of three Virgos (*e.g. Virgin is nursing her child, and one which holds in her hand an ear of wheat—signifying spring time*) belong to three different epochs: namely, to the last three family races of the fourth Sub-race of the Fifth Root-race, each of which must have lived approximately from 25 to 30,000 years—an approximate period of a sidereal year (25,868 years). So also, inversion of axis finds its corroboration in Mackey’s comment on some of the zodiacs witnessed by him showing Lion (*Simha*) with his tail turned up over his back and ending with a Serpent’s head—indicating that the position of the Lion had been *inverted* (*S.D.*, II, 433). Axial inversion from 0 degrees to 180 degrees would involve something like 11.6 million years. As Theosophy says, every sidereal year the tropics recede from the pole *four degrees* in each revolution from the equinoctial points, as the equator rounds through the Zodiacal constellations (*S.D.*, II, 331). However, Science is yet to admit this fact. These views are by no means exhaustive and much has been written on Dendera zodiacs for those who wish to pursue deeper study.

Occult philosophy points out that at the beginning and ending of great cycles, as also, at the intersection of great cycles, there is shifting of the poles, great cataclysms and other convulsions, such as, earthquakes, fire and flood. “If the sidereal period be divided by four, we have the figure 6,450 years, or the five-thousand-year period with the requisite twilight and dawn added. And it was taught by the Egyptians that with every quarter of the circle of the Sun’s great path there were changes caused physically by the alteration of the poles, and spiritually there must be changes due to the inner development of the human race as an entirety.... The teaching from the Lodge is that the spiritual inner changes cause the physical ones through the appropriate means; in this case those means are in the movements of the great heavenly bodies,” writes Mr. Judge. (*W.Q.J. Series No. 7*, p. 21)

In other words, there is an indissoluble connection between man and every event that takes place on this earth. The changes in the season, the great upheavals of continents, the movements of glaciers, the terrific eruptions of volcanoes, or sudden overflowing of great rivers, are all *through* man. These changes are closely linked with changes in the inclination of the axis of the earth. How is man responsible for cataclysms, earthquakes and volcanoes? Occult philosophy says that besides undue interference with nature, there is a direct relation between man’s thoughts and natural calamities.

According to Seneca, Berosus taught prophecy of every future event and cataclysm by the Zodiac. According to him, cataclysms occur at every renewal of the sidereal cycle of 25,868 years (*S.D.*, I, 649). “The weal and woe of nations is intimately connected with the beginning and close of” the sidereal cycle (*S.D.*, II, 330). Also, one is able to observe rise and fall of nations to be closely linked to the sidereal cycle.

Both Egyptians and Greeks had their cycles, which they derived from the Brahminical cycles, computed by the Indian Sages. The Cycles of the Egyptians are termed “Saros” and “Neros,” and of which very little is known. H.P.B. points out in *Isis Unveiled* (I, 30-31) that at the close of each “great year,” which consists of six *sars* or *saros*, our planet (earth) is subjected to a thorough physical revolution. In the article, “Ancient Doctrines Vindicated by Modern Prophecy,” (*H.P.B. Series No. 1*, p. 46), we are told that the “great year” consists of 21,000 odd years (the latter varying) or six Chaldean *saros* consisting of 3,500 years each. These two decimillenniums are naturally halved, the first period of 10,500 years bringing us to the top of the cycle and a minor cataclysm; the latter decimillennium to a terrible and universal geological convulsion. During these 21,000 years, the polar and equatorial climates gradually exchange places, with polar region moving slowly toward the equatorial line with exuberant vegetation and animal life replacing the icy poles. This change of climate is necessarily attended by cataclysms and earthquakes. This year was called the *Heliacal* by the Greeks. The

winter of this great year was called the Cataclysm or the Deluge—the summer was termed the *Ecpyrosis*. The popular traditions taught that at these alternate seasons the world was in turn burnt and deluged. This was also known to Babylonians and the Egyptian High priests. Regarding complete change of climates at the tropics and poles, *The Secret Doctrine* (II, 11) mentions that during the Miocene Age, Greenland and even Spitzbergen, which are the remnants of the Second or Hyperborean Continent, had *almost a tropical climate*. There was abundance of trees such as the Redwood, the Sequoia, Oaks, Poplars, Walnuts etc.—the Southern plants unknown to Northern regions.

There is yet another mention of alternate destruction by fire and water in the *Isis Unveiled* (I, 33-34). We are told that the computation of *saros* and *neros* is a secret computation and yet some of the mathematicians and archaeologists have fixed the length of a *neros* cycle to be 600 years. They say that the plane of ecliptic and the plane of equator will coincide in ten *neroses* or 6000 years, when the worlds would be destroyed by fire. In another ten *neroses* or 6000 years more, the sun would be situated relatively to the Southern Hemisphere instead of Northern Hemisphere, when the world would be destroyed by water. Again, after ten more ages or 6000 years hence, the two planes would coincide, and there would be destruction by fire. Finally, after ten *neroses*, or 6000 years more, the Sun would be situated relatively to the Northern Hemisphere, as it is now, and there would be destruction by water. This would complete 24,000 years, or nearly one sidereal year. This computation is erroneous, says H.P.B. But it gives us some idea as to how depending upon the relative position of the sun and earth, there is destruction by water or fire, which accompanies climate changes.

(To be concluded)

APHORISMS ON KARMA—SOME REFLECTIONS

X

APHORISM 14: “*In the life of worlds, races, nations, and individuals, Karma cannot act unless there is an appropriate instrument provided for its action.*”

Aphorism 15: “*And until such appropriate instrument is found, that Karma related to it remains unexpended.*”

Aphorism 16: “*While a man is experiencing Karma in the instrument provided, his other unexpended Karma is not exhausted through other beings or means, but is held reserved for future operation; and the lapse of time during which no operation of that Karma is felt causes no deterioration in its force or change in its nature.*”

We habitually identify ourselves with our body when we speak of ourselves in the first person. The body, the name, gender, personal characteristics, mannerisms, etc., are the general features by which we identify each other in social life. The Real Man, the Reincarnating immortal Ego, the Pilgrim Soul, is not the body which is its *instrument*. The senses and organs of perception and action, mind, intellect, egoism and the body, are all *instruments* evolved by the Ego to come in contact with nature and experience life on all planes and states of consciousness through cycles of reincarnation propelled and regulated by the Law of ethical causation—Karma. Two powers or forces which propel this evolutionary progress of Man towards perfection are, firstly, that which proceeds from the Supreme Spirit, and, therefore, inherent in the essential nature of souls, which causes the Egos to evolve and assume *instruments* needed for their experience; and, secondly, the blind creative force of the principle of *Kama*—of passions and desires—of the lower earthly personal self. (*S.D.*, II, 109-10)

It is this personal self, thinking and acting from selfish basis, in ignorance of the true nature of self, which creates causes, and compels the Ego to experience the effects which flow from those causes. We reap the Karmic effects of our actions in embodied life

on earth, in post-mortem states of consciousness, and in the future rebirths to come. Post-mortem states of disembodied existence of the Ego is the world of effects; the earth life in which we think and act is the world of causes. When the energy of ideation generated in the embodied state on earth life that causes the Ego to fall into Devachanic state after the death of the body is exhausted, the Ego is attracted back to another earth-life, the circumstances of which are determined by its past Karma. The body, the mind, the intellect, psychic nature, moral propensities, qualities, character, the parentage, the nationality, and the circumstances of life in each rebirth are all, in every minute detail, by no means random occurrences. All the circumstances of life, and the personality everyone is born with, are then the *instruments* which the Ego caused to be produced by its past Karma, with which it is environed, by which it is influenced, and in and through which it experiences good and evil effects of its past deeds, thinks and acts accordingly, and produces more Karma which in turn bear fruit in future life.

In any one life we are able to exhaust only a small portion of the vast store of accumulated Karma of innumerable past lives on earth. The *instruments* that are acquired by the Ego in each life are appropriate to the Karma of the Ego operating in that life. The remainder of the store of past Karma that is left unexpended is held over till another life when appropriate instrument is acquired for their manifestation. Patanjali describes the “stored-up karma” as mental deposits, generally known as *Sanchita* Karma. We feel the effect of mental deposits created by our thoughts, actions and feelings in this or in previous lives, when we have obtained just the right kind of bodily or mental frame, constitution and environment, necessary to bring them into operation. Thus, for instance, so long as one is in a male body, he cannot have the experience of motherhood. You cannot experience poverty till the karma that brings riches is exhausted. It shows that we may have in store the *skandha* of addiction to drugs and drinks, but it is held in suspension till another kind of karma is exhausted. Sometimes the karma of the

Ego is just strong enough to make him take birth into a family, but then, new karma operates and the child is adopted by rich parents, and is thus thrown into a different surrounding.

Likewise, the meritorious Karma one may have made by charitable deeds may not bear fruit either in this or even in the next life, and may not show forth for several lives. So also, in a given life one may come to a point, where all previous causes being worked out, the unexpended karma begins to operate. Mr. Judge gives example of two people who experienced sudden reversal of fortune. The great French engineer, de Lesseps, who rose to a high pitch of glory and achievement for many years of his life, with the building of Suez canal, but suffered loss of reputation, while building of Panama Canal. Another example is that of Napoleon I, who rose to a very great fame, and then suddenly fell and died in exile and disgrace.

The force of stored-up Karma will neither become stronger nor get diluted due to lapse of time. It is important to note that *Sanchita Karma* is regarded as our total Karmic debts, taken as combination of Karmic Credit and Karmic Debit. However, unlike the bank account, in the karmic account the Credit or good karma, and Debit or bad karma, are maintained separately. The credit and debit can never cancel out each other automatically; the ego has to face the consequences of each type of karma, good as well as bad, separately, through appropriate instruments. It appears that the good and bad karmic causes can cancel each other only at the time of karmic precipitation. If *sanchita karma* is regarded as the bundle of arrows in the quiver on the back of a bowman, then it is easy to see that till these arrows are shot they cannot counteract each other. Hence, when it is said that one can mitigate one’s “stored up” karma through prayers, meditation, self-less service, we might look upon these as means to create good karma. The only way one can nullify the bad karma is by setting in motion the right or good karma. If one has erred by lying, stealing or backbiting, one has to set in motion good causes by resolving and learning to abstain from repeating the same

wrongs. True repentance must lead to inner transformation. We are then sowing new causes that can counteract or mitigate the bad effects generated by previous causes. What we experience is the resultant or sum total of the old, bad karma and new, good karma, on a given plane—physical, psychic or intellectual.

In the aphorism No. 16 is found the explanation for the paradox that is seen in life in which sometimes men of good character are found to be suffering from disadvantages, and those of questionable character are found to be blessed with what in the opinion of the world is called good things of life. This is taught in the *Dhammapada*: “Even an evil doer sees happiness as long as his evil deed has not ripened; but when his evil deed has ripened, then does the evil doer perceive the evil. Even a good man, mayhap, suffers evil so long as his good deeds do not ripen; but when his good deeds ripen, then he perceives the good accruing to him. (Verses 119-120)

Death comes to all, and those who had a loving relationship are separated, the magnetic affinity they had engendered in the past life will bring them together again either in the next life or after many lives when appropriate conditions are furnished by their individual Karma to be reborn at an appropriate time and place. The past loving relationship is thus renewed. Similarly, antipathetic feeling one may have towards another, such as dislike, hatred, or uncharitable attitude, etc., remain as latent force even after death has separated them. Then in some future life the two are sure to come in touch with each other, when the old enmity instantly asserts itself and it will work harm to both. If one of them has during the intervening period changed the attitude and learnt to be charitable and forgiving, still the old enmity is felt by both, and the one with changed outlook strives to overcome past antipathy with charity and love towards the adversary, and thus tries to mitigate the ill-effects of the bad Karma. The events, circumstances, relationships, fluctuating fortunes, pains, sorrows, etc., in everyone’s life are all the effects of the causes generated in the past by the individual concerned.

The Karmic Law works in the case of nations and races as much

as in the life of individuals. It is the individuals with similar character and tendencies that make a nation. The aggregate of individual Karma becomes the Karma of the nation, and collective Karma of nations and races becomes the Karma of the earth. Antipathetic relationship between nations, or between communities or ethnic groups, leading to conflicts and wars, are due to the collective Karma of the groups involved. Nations and races are also born, progress and die out, like individuals. Egos constituting the nations return by Karmic and cyclic law to form new nations and civilizations on the basis of the collective assimilated knowledge, character and experiences of their past. The old enmities and affinities come into play when they are drawn together and are strongly influenced by them, for good or ill.

When the scene of evolution of a humanity ends on earth, it dies and disintegrates. The Egos go into a spiritual state analogous to Devachan, for the assimilation of the collective experiences, knowledge and wisdom that had been gathered. At the end of it, as long in duration, as was the period of manifestation, a new earth is formed in space but on higher plane by the intelligent constructive power of Cosmic Ideation, *Fohat*, according to the plan in the universal Mind. “He builds them in the likeness of the older Wheels (*worlds*), placing them on the imperishable centres.” (*S.D.*, I, 144). When a planetary system comes to its destined end, there is always a considerable remnant of unadjusted collective Karma of all the beings connected with the world system. The unexpended Karmic store will then be the cause of evolution of a new one in the likeness of the old one. All the beings involved in the past world-system, except those Egos who had attained perfection and entered Nirvana, will again enter the cycles of reincarnations in the new earth or world-system to work out the effects of the Karma they had generated in the previous one. The immensity of ages which intervene between the ending of a world and re-emergence of it as a new one by Karmic Law does not cause any variation in the unexpended held-over individual and collective Karma of the beings.

(To be continued)

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

It is possible to experience peace and happiness, if we learn to take charge of our lives. That means we should be ready to work on ourselves. But we find that it is hard to do small things that can improve our lives. However, we can master our life through two techniques. The first technique is to follow the *five-second rule*. All great things and the results that we want are only a decision away from us, but we fail because we are indecisive and do not push ourselves enough. The successful people are those who procrastinate less and take necessary actions every day towards their goals. We are unable to follow the simple discipline of getting up early to exercise and to go for a morning walk, because our mind always tries to keep us safe inside our comfort zone. The easiest way is to take action within five seconds before the mind takes charge and forces us to procrastinate.

The other technique is to follow the *90-second corridor rule*. We get hurt and are carried away by comments, arguments, judgements, opinions and behaviour of others, because we have given others the power to annoy us. “According to a study, emotions have a lifetime of only 90 seconds, and within those 90 seconds, if we can manage to stay calm, the feeling passes and we become normal. But if we react in this corridor of 90 seconds, we get carried away and may extend this feeling to a whole day, week or sometimes, even a month.” The phenomenon of the 90-second rule was studied by Dr. Jill Bolte Taylor, who points out that if an emotion lingers on for more than 90 seconds, it means that the person has chosen to stay in that emotional loop by thinking again and again and getting entangled in the web of thoughts. But if we can flush out the emotion then we have a chance to think calmly and respond. This can be achieved by practising mindfulness. Thus, for instance, we can allow positive emotions like sympathy, zeal, enthusiasm, etc. to linger on for more than 90 seconds. Likewise, we should observe the situation, and change it if we can, else, either accept it or try to move away from it. These two rules are magical, because the five-second rule

allows us to take charge of our materialistic lives, and the 90-second corridor ensures a healthy, emotional life, as we learn to *respond* and not react, writes Anuradha Narang. (*Life Positive*, February 2020)

There is a saying, *Shubhasya Shighram, i.e.*, there should be no delay in doing good. That “good” may include our decision to practice some virtue or to get rid of some unwholesome emotion, desire or habit, or to be of help to someone. We must act at once. Mr. Judge says, “Every impulse from above, every prompting of the Divine within, should meet at once with a hearty welcome and response. If you feel as if something urged you to visit some sick or afflicted neighbour or friend, obey the suggestion without delay. If the wish to turn over a new leaf comes into the lower consciousness, don’t wait till next New Year’s before actually turning it over; turn it now. If some pathetic story of suffering has moved you, act on the emotion while your cheeks are still wet with tears. In short, put yourself at once in line with the Divine ways, in harmony with the Divine laws. More light, more wisdom, more spirituality must necessarily come to one thus prepared, thus expectant” (*Vernal Blooms*, p. 32). All our habits leave a deep impression upon “lives” or elementals that form atoms and cells of our body. Breaking a habit amounts to washing the concerned elementals clean of their first impressions and giving them reverse kind of impressions. A good moral habit is not readily formed, but once commenced it is not very difficult to maintain, especially, if one deeply aspires.

When involved in desires and passions, the mind is *reactive*, making man an animal-man. When mind works in conjunction with spiritual nature, it is *creative*—making man divine. Our ordinary, everyday mind is reactive. We need to learn to adjust our mind to other minds. Instead of *reacting* angrily to criticism, bad behaviour or selfishness, we could always pause and reflect, “Why does he behave the way he does?” When criticized for being proud or stingy, we can always do some soul-searching. If the criticism applies, we must take steps to improve; if not, we may ignore it. Similarly, when we are up against a difficult situation or a difficult person, instead of

our usual reaction of frustration and despair we could always ask, “Why is it that no one else but *I* am put into this situation? Do I perhaps have to learn something from this?” This is the mark of a creative mind. As H.P.B. suggests, we must learn to *act* from within and not just *react* to stimuli from without. The creative mind *responds*, instead of reacting.

Most of us are afraid of old age. How do we deal with this anxiety? From the spiritual point of view, old age must be looked upon as ageing of the body and not of the soul. We should not equate the “self” or “I” with old age, saying, “*I* am old.” The body is like a dress, and that dress does become old and torn, and then we might have to drop it and go for a new dress. Low confidence, fear and anxiety have nothing to do with the body. Once we realize that it is the body that is growing old, then we should begin to take care of our physical health, by sleeping, eating and exercising well, so that even in old age one can have relatively healthy and disease-free body. We must adopt healthy lifestyle from young age.

However, it is equally important to take care of the mind and emotions. We must take care to think right, speak right and act right. Most importantly, we must not allow ourselves to be emotionally dependent. Some of us believe that as we have taken care of our child till he was, say 25 years old, he will likewise take care of us in future. We may seek financial or physical support from our children but we should not seek emotional support, as they are dealing with their own pressures, says B. K. Shivani in a conversation with Mona Mehta. She observes that today, on an average, one student is committing suicide every hour in the world. This did not happen when we were children. As they grow up, they are barely able to manage their own marriages, and parenting is stressful too. So, the 70-year-old parent will have to take care of children and grandchildren emotionally. As parents we should become aware of this and not feel pained if they do not even enquire about our well-

being. But there is nothing wrong in seeking financial or physical help, without having the guilt feeling. Moreover, we must strive to energise ourselves emotionally by listening and reading emotionally strengthening things. “You must give yourself one hour of emotional self-care every morning. The self-care could be meditation, spiritual study of any kind, reading something uplifting....Write a daily journal, recollect the things you are grateful for, have right thoughts before going to bed for good sleep,” Says B. K. Shivani. (*The Speaking Tree, Sunday Times of India*, February 9, 2020)

In the *Gita*, meditation upon birth, death, decay, sickness, and error is considered to be spiritual wisdom. The Buddha urges us to engage in deep reflection on the impermanent nature of the body. To one who does not like to pay attention to the unwelcome facts of life, the Buddha speaks sternly, urging him to start thinking of these things before it is too late. He seems to say: how can you laugh or rejoice when the world around is constantly changing; slowly but steadily destroying the very things that now give you pleasure. In the *Dhammapada*, our eyes are opened to the fact that one may grow old without much learning or knowledge. What does not grow old with age is the virtue of the good. The Buddha shows the importance of learning the lessons of life, gaining knowledge and becoming virtuous. The man who grows old without becoming wiser is compared with an ox.

Lastly, it is impressed upon us that preparation for old age must be made in young age. Thus, “*Men who have not lived the disciplined life of a chaste mind, who have not gathered soul wealth in young age, pine away like old cranes in a lake without fish*” (*The Dhammapada*, verse 155). It warns us of the consequences of not making good use of the young age. Living of spiritual life must not be postponed to the old age. It must begin when we are young and strong. One who has not lived the disciplined life in young age will have nothing to reflect upon. This is the reason why some religions have initiation ceremonies such as *Navjot*-ceremony, thread-ceremony, etc. to impress upon child’s mind the importance of

gathering spiritual wealth. What cannot be moulded in young age will be difficult to mould when we are old. The old crane in a lake without fish does not have strength to fly to another lake. A person would find it difficult to begin the arduous journey in an old age, and can but sigh for the lost opportunity.

If reason exists without deliberation, it cannot be uniquely human. Generally, reason is considered to be a power of making inferences, and hence, philosophers and cognitive scientists consider reason to be uniquely human, and therefore, they cannot explain the origin of reason without resorting to supernaturalism, while those who consider reason to be a fundamentally natural property, believe that the “lower” life forms are also capable of exercising it. But the question is, how? It is seen that the search for reason beyond the human species always ends up as a search for beings that remind us of ourselves. However, if we regard reason as not merely inferential ability but the ability to do the right thing at the right time, then we might agree with the sixteenth century diplomat, Girolamo Rorario, that reason is not only natural, but is very widespread in nature. When “reason” is interpreted thus, as being other than deliberation, Rorario felt that human deliberation is not an advantage over other beings, but in fact, a mark of inferiority. Animals and plants do not deliberate, and yet they seem to be doing just fine for themselves, pursuing their species-specific ends. When reason is interpreted as power to move directly to action, rather than the power to make the correct inference, we find that everything in nature does what it does, without deliberation, by virtue of being bound by the same physical laws.

According to this definition of reason, we may consider that Nature itself is a rational order, both as a whole and in any of its subdomains. Human reason may be regarded as an example or reflection of the universal reason that informs the natural world. So also, the laws governing the motion of the planets are a reflection of

that same universal reason. When we dispense with the human-exclusivity of reason, we are able to regard reason as natural, whereas “faith in the strange idea that reason appears exactly once in nature, in one particular species and nowhere else, seems, on reflection, to be a vestige of pre-scientific supernaturalism,” writes Justin E. H. Smith, a professor of history and philosophy of science at the Université Paris Diderot, in an article that appeared in *Aeon* magazine.

When reason is described as other than deliberation, and a reflection of universal reason, which is reflected in all things, the author seems to be referring to “intelligence.” Occult philosophy says that “There is but one indivisible and absolute Omniscience and Intelligence in the Universe, and this thrills throughout every atom and infinitesimal point of the whole finite Kosmos...” That Intelligence or Consciousness is reflected in the manifested world, in which beings acquire human Intelligence or Consciousness, through the process of evolution. “The whole order of nature evinces a progressive march towards *a higher life*. There is design in the action of the seemingly blindest forces,” and what is called “unconscious nature” is but an aggregate of forces governed by semi-intelligent and Intelligent Beings, who constitute the Mind of the Universe and its immutable LAW. (*S.D.*, I, 277-78)

Often man is described as the most intelligent animal. Animals do possess intelligence but not the kind of rationality that man has, to reason from premises to conclusion. However, an animal devoid of reasoning powers possesses instinct. Instinct is the direct perception of what is right, within its own realm. Animals have right instinct in regard to what to eat, and what is dangerous to them, because their instinct is acquired experience. H.P.B. points out that man has developed his reason at the expense of instinct. In losing instinct, man has also lost his intuitional powers, which are the crown of instinct. But man *can* develop intuition, which is “a direct cognition of the truth in all things” by acquiring universal ideas and by practicing altruism.

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