

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

Vol. 13, No. 7

November 17, 2021

A Magazine Devoted to The Living of the Higher Life

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THE BIRTH OF A SPIRITUAL MOVEMENT

AS EXPLAINED in the *Gita*, whenever there is a decline of virtue and an insurrection of vice and injustice in the world, some great being takes birth among human beings for the destruction of the wicked and the establishment of righteousness. From time to time, there is reincarnation or re-embodiment of the ancient knowledge, to once again awaken men's minds and hearts. The *Gita* also recommends meditation upon birth. But have we ever reflected upon the factors or forces that bring about the birth of a spiritual movement in the world? The Theosophical Movement being a movement of spiritual ideas, is born in the world, when these ideas are put forward by an individual. But when these ideas are received, reflected upon and applied, then the movement is born within human hearts, enabling them to strive more sincerely towards spiritual perfection.

Every human birth is accompanied by joy, anguish and expectancy. Mr. Judge writes that “earthquake means some souls of use have come into the world somewhere.” Earthquakes are indicators of disturbed harmony, and disturbance at one place will affect all the others, as we are all bound through invisible threads of sympathy on the inner plane of our being. Therefore, all human beings everywhere are in need of help. Just as a doctor visits sick people, Great Souls go where there is need for them. The birth of the Theosophical Movement which brought the pure Message of Theosophy, was like the birth of a Great Soul, called forth because

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of the disturbance caused by scientific materialism and religious dogmatism and superstition, which had made Truth unwelcome.

The Theosophical Movement for our era and generation, was launched in 1875 in the city of New York by H. P. Blavatsky. But in its timeless aspect we can trace it back, century by century, to find that it began far back in the night of time. The word “movement” means, among other things, a mental impulse. Mr. Judge says that the Theosophical Movement is an ethical, moral, spiritual, invisible, universal and continuous movement. It is continuous and therefore it can be found at all times and in all nations. He gives a very comprehensive definition of the Theosophical Movement: “Wherever thought has struggled to be free, wherever spiritual ideas, as opposed to forms and dogmatism, have been promulgated, there this great movement is to be discerned.”

The Movement was discerned in three areas: religion, science and politics. Luther’s reformation of the Church should be considered a part of this movement. Likewise, the struggle or conflict between science and religion portrayed by John William Draper also forms a part of the Theosophical Movement. In the political field, the Movement is to be discerned in the Independence struggle of the American colonies. Wherein the Theosophical Adepts influenced the Free Masons and through them brought Thomas Paine to America, and then directly influenced him in writing “Common Sense.” The adepts also presided over the drafting of the Declaration of Independence.

We know that the period from the fifth to around thirteenth century is known as Dark Ages for Europe. During this period freedom of thought, and freedom to learn were practically non-existent. The period between the fifteenth to the eighteenth-century A.D. was the period of reformation or renaissance, and during that period there was rebirth of the seed ideas sown by Plato in the Fifth century B.C. Renaissance means rebirth. The Renaissance was the process of revolutionizing social, religious, scientific and political ideas. It was characterized by the spirit of enquiry and intellectual activity.

From the fourteenth century onwards, there was an open work of the Theosophical Movement. During the last quarter of every century an attempt is made by the Adepts to help spiritual progress of humanity. There have been messengers from the White Lodge of Adepts, appearing in the world, for spiritual upheaval, and we can trace back century by century, the appearance of these messengers, which forms part of the Theosophical Movement. Thus, in the period between the fifteenth to the eighteenth century, prominent part was played by messengers like, Paracelsus, Cagliostro, Mesmer, Count St. Martin and Count St. Germain, and they prepared the ground for the movement, by making the minds of the people receptive. The last known Messenger and representative of these “Brothers of the Snowy Range” was H. P. Blavatsky, whose *Secret Doctrine* “contains all that can be given out to the world in this century.” The philosophy of Theosophy, being scientific religion and religious science, sought to reconcile science and religion. Not only is there a need for scientific religion and religious science, but also there is a need for the *synthesis* of science, religion and philosophy.

This Movement is neither Eastern nor Western; it was started in the Spiritual World above, so we say that the Masters or adepts are behind this Movement. The birth of pure Message of Theosophy was possible because there were in the world few men and women, who were able to transcend all limitations through Love of Truth. The definite and specific Cause of Pure Theosophy is to support by thoughts and deeds those who are devoted to the real spiritual advancement of mankind.

The philosophy of Theosophy teaches the value and right use of free thought, free speech and freedom of action. The teachings of Theosophy are unsectarian. In the present critical condition of the world, a student-worker should take into account the wider aspect of the Theosophical Movement, and strive to be practically philanthropic, which involves not only being charitable in thought, word and deed, but to so spread the teachings and live the life himself by applying the teachings, as to make those charitable who were

not so before. Each student-worker, who genuinely appreciates the teachings has to determine for himself where he will lend his help and how he will use his Theosophical knowledge to energize other movements. Whether it is religious, cultural or social movement, it can be helped by bringing people closer to each other in thought and ideation. With the help of the doctrines of Theosophy one must point out the True and warn against the false.

By imparting the right ideas, a student-worker can help others to adjust their minds and hearts, especially the leaders of various movements, by throwing Theosophic light in the domain of their work, to give them deeper understanding. When someone studies in order to promulgate the teachings for the benefit of others, he is helped on the inner plane by those who are fanning the flame of illumination and inspiration. Devotion and study must go hand in hand. If the person is only devoted to the interest of others, but has not studied, then the weakness and folly of the race to which he belongs will pull him down, over and over again. But those who combine devotion with knowledge are not dragged down often, and they have true philosophy to guide their steps. Mr. Crosbie explains that study enables us to gain true knowledge. Good motive without knowledge makes sorry work sometimes. There may be good motive but power and zeal might be misused for want of knowledge. Good motive and wisdom must go hand in hand if our work has to bring the desired result.

No doubt, to feed the hungry and to clothe the naked is a noble work, but there is a higher and greater philanthropy to be accomplished by attending to the needs of the mind and soul. Writes a Master of Wisdom: “Are you ready to do your part in the great work of philanthropy? You have offered yourself for the Red Cross; but, Sister, there are sicknesses and wounds of the Soul that no surgeon’s art can cure. Shall you help us teach mankind that the Soul-sick must heal themselves? Your action will be your response.”

Many are drawn to Theosophy, some come out of curiosity, grasping the philosophy only superficially. However, the philosophy

of Theosophy is rich and caters to the needs of every grade of human intelligence. “Mind temperaments are numerous and provision is made for each. It is like a buffet supper; 20 dishes are offered; we can eat what we find suitable for us. Some eat what is tasty and get pain; some sample all 20 dishes and very probably go away hungry, dissatisfied and full of complains!” writes Shri B. P. Wadia. There are those who grasp the “spirit” of the Movement, which we might say is to change the Mind and Buddhi of the Race, by putting before people the Truth, carefully avoiding the superstition and dogmatism of religion, and materialism of science, and by exposing the falsehood in social customs and traditions, and fighting against prejudice and social evils. The aim of this movement is to make Theosophy a foundation for future religions of humanity, and this can be achieved by bringing about brotherhood among the high and the low of the society.

We are in a transition period, as everything is in the process of changing. If the student-workers can learn to recognize and understand these changes and deal with them in the right way then it can open the door for them to acquire true knowledge, true perception, strength and wisdom to apply the knowledge, so that they can become leaders of humanity in the future time. “Transition,” in general, means passing or change from one state or condition to another. Such a “transition period” is faced by every spiritual aspirant in his individual life as he struggles to leave behind ordinary life—centred in personal care and worldly affairs—and live a spiritual life, where the focus shifts from one’s personal self to the Spiritual Self.

The race as a whole is in a transition state, with much selfishness and materialism. We can change it by changing our own nature, and becoming a centre for good, by trying to overcome race tendencies which are lying latent within us. We will have to wage a war against our lower nature when we try to rise above the dead level of the world. The required stamina can be gathered by unselfish actions, kind thoughts and by detaching our minds from the

allurements of the world, writes Mr. Judge. All the obstacles of personal life are opportunities to learn the necessary lessons. If we miss them then they are brought to us again and again till we see that it is precisely these obstacles that we have to learn to overcome, which in turn helps us to overcome some of our defects. We are then fitted to change the Mind and Buddhi of the race.

We also perceive the beginning of the transition from what we are, *i.e.*, beings who are in possession of the *germ* of real mind to men of mind complete. The race mind is changing by enlargement, as dogmatism is being replaced by the “age of inquiry.” These inquiries will grow louder, year by year, and the answers will be required to satisfy the mind as it grows, until at last all dogmatism will end, and those who will overcome the animal nature will attain to perfection, writes Mr. Judge. However, *Manas* will be fully developed only in the Fifth Round, and at that point, the whole of humanity will be faced with the “Moment of Choice”—choice between taking the Left or Right Path. Since *Manas* is not fully developed at present, allowances are made for our choices, as we make for a child’s wrong choice. But with full development of *Manas*, we will be fully responsible. So, it is by way of preparation for that crisis, that each one has to take his evolution in his own hands. This “transition period” is the preparatory period where we can decide, by making choices, in which direction we wish to go. By making right choices now, we can help in securing the safety of the entire human race in the future, which is one of the aims of the Movement.

The challenge of Theosophy is not *how much* we have learnt, but how willing we are we to take up this obligation. We are afforded this opportunity to participate in the Theosophical Movement, by virtue of being associates of U.L.T. It is up to us to keep this body, instrument or form as pure as possible so that the light within can radiate in the outside world, and people outside can get Theosophy pure and simple—uncontaminated by our opinions and biases. “Let us labour in love and leave results to Them who know what is best for us as also for the Cause,” writes Shri B. P. Wadia.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT KAFKA AND THE DOLL

KAFKA AND THE DOLL is a story written by Larissa Theule, inspired by a heart-warming episode in the later life of Prague-born author Franz Kafka, published in March 2021. The story recounts a remarkable gesture of kindness from one of the world’s most bewildering and iconic writers. The story was first published in the almost half his age year 2006, under the title, “Kafka and the Travelling Doll,” by Spanish writer Jordi Sierra i Fabra. Taking into account various versions of the story, we gather that Kafka has fallen in love with Dora Diamant, a young girl, who has run away from her family in Poland and lives in Berlin with him. They have come to Berlin in the fall of 1923. At the age of forty, just one year before his death. Kafka, who never married and had no children, walks through the park in Berlin, along with Dora Diamant. This is his daily walking route, but today something unusual happens. They come across a little girl who is in tears, sobbing her heart out. Kafka asks her what is wrong and she tells him that she has lost her doll. The girl’s name is Irma and the doll’s name is Soupsy. Initially, Kafka helps her to find the doll, but they are unable to find it. Softened by her tears, and unable to remedy the pain by finding the doll, he thought of a different solution to calm her down. He invents a story to explain what had happened. He tells her that her doll has gone off on a trip, and she has written a letter. The girl wants to see the letter. Kafka tells her that the letter was in the pocket of his overcoat. “I am a volunteer postman, you see. I will bring you the letter tomorrow.”

After that Kafka goes straight home to write the letter. In that letter from the doll, the doll is seeking pardon of the girl for going away without saying goodbye. She just jumped into an empty basket on a passing bicycle. As she loved adventure, she has boarded a train, and is on her way to go hiking. She writes that she has grown tired of living with the same people all the time. She needs to get

out and see the world, to make new friends. In the next letter she writes that she has hiked to the very top, and from the top of a cloud she watches sunrise. She watches the world turn softly purple, but that was not her favourite colour. To console the girl he decides to write one letter every day. In the subsequent letters the doll writes about her visit to Paris where she eats croissants for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Next, she visits England and has tea with Peter Rabbit. In Morocco she tries to ride a camel. She visits the pyramids in Egypt and is awestruck by the vast expanse of beauty and sand. For nearly three weeks, he writes letters for the girl, meets her, reads them out to her, and gives them to her. Each letter was written with the same focus that he applied to all his writings. The letters are funny and absorbing. Day by day the doll grows up, goes to school, meets new people. She assures the girl that she loves her, but due to some complications in her life, she is unable to return home. Kafka was trying to make up for the loss, heal the wound of that child's heart, by providing something which although false, was still believable.

Then one day Kafka does not visit the park. The little girl waits for a while and then walks back home. It is Dora who visits the park and meets the girl. She tells her that Kafka has headache but he has sent a letter for her from the doll. Kafka has been suffering from tuberculosis. Through a series of letters, he has been preparing the girl for that ultimate moment when the doll will vanish from her life. He considers several possibilities to arrive at a satisfactory ending. He decides to marry off the doll. In the last letter the doll gives description of the young man that she has fallen in love with, the engagement party, the wedding preparations, and then the description of the house where she lives with her husband. She bids farewell to the little girl, saying: "You yourself will understand, we must give up seeing each other." Kafka has succeeded in curing the girl of her unhappiness by then, so that the girl does not really miss the doll.

There are many versions of this story. According to another

version of the story, after three weeks, the girl receives no more letters from the doll, but instead receives a doll from Kafka as a last gift. This doll is very different from the original doll. But the note which is given to her along with the doll reads, "my travels have changed me." Many years later when the girl has grown up, she finds a note hidden inside the doll given to her by Kafka. It reads: "Everything that you love, you will eventually lose, but in the end, love will return in a different form."

Franz Kafka was a German-speaking novelist and a short-story writer, born in July 1883. His work combines elements of realism and the fantastic. His works explore themes such as, alienation, existential anxiety, guilt and absurdity. He had a strained and formal relationship with his father, who was a businessman. On business days both the parents worked for as many as twelve hours each day. Consequently, Kafka's childhood was somewhat lonely. Kafka had lifelong suspicion that people found him mentally and physically repulsive. He died in 1924 at the age of forty from tuberculosis.

There are several versions of the story, which was first recounted by Dora Diamant, Kafka's partner for the final year of his life. Could such an incident really have occurred? The doubt arises for two reasons. If such a thing happened there should be concrete proof available in the form of letters, or copies of "doll" letters, written by Kafka to the girl. Though efforts have been made by several researchers and Kafka experts, these letters have not been found. If Kafka did not hand over the letters to the little girl, but only read them to her, or if he had retained copies of these letters, they may have been destroyed by Dora when he instructed her to destroy several of his manuscripts. It is quite possible that they may surface at some later date. Secondly, could this author, who is gloomy and pessimistic, have such sensitivity to compile letter after letter for nearly three weeks to cheer up a little girl? We are able to see the other side of the author, who takes trouble to write imaginary letters to console the little girl, who is a stranger to him, at a point in his life when he has been suffering from tuberculosis and his own death is imminent.

Though it is not clear if the story is based on facts, it is a “healing story,” which seems to provide comfort to those facing grief and loss.

The central message and the importance of the story were beautifully summed up by May Benatar, the psychoanalyst and writer, in a column for HuffPost (formerly *The Huffington Post* until 2017) of October 3, 2011. She writes, “For me there are two wise lessons in this story: Grief and loss are ubiquitous even for a young child. And the way toward healing is to look for how love comes back in another form.” The most profound manifestation of grief is the loss of a loved one. For the little girl love came back in the form of letters coming from Kafka, someone who cared for her pain. When love returns, we should be able to recognize it in a new form.

The story also draws our attention to “change” being a fact of life. Philosophically, change is the very nature of existence. No one expressed it better than the Buddha who taught, “All Conditioned existence is impermanent.” It is not possible to hold on to things, people or places forever and ever. Our body, our ideas and emotions, all keep changing. We try to derive pleasure out of sensations. But *Light on the Path* cautions: “In sensation no permanent home can be found, because change is the law of this vibratory existence. That fact is the first one that must be learned by the disciple. It is useless to pause and weep for a scene in a kaleidoscope which has passed.” Things and pleasures of the world are as fleeting as the scene or pattern formed in a kaleidoscope. When we look at our child, we must be aware that someday it will lose its innocence and grow into an adolescent and then into an adult.

If the aspirant resists change from the fear of the suffering it entails, he invites stagnation. “Woe to those who live without suffering. Stagnation and death is the future of all that vegetates without a change. And how can there be any change for the better without proportionate suffering during the preceding stage?” (*S.D.*, II, 475)

If we cling to life at lower levels then life at higher levels remains only a latent potentiality, a possibility. There must be loss of something at a lower level, in order to gain it at a higher level.

Refinement of emotions, desires, thoughts and ideas happen only when we stop clinging to old moulds of thought, desires and emotions. It is the most delicate and crucial period in an aspirant’s life, as he effects the transition, leaving the familiar in order to grasp the unknown and the unfamiliar. Not only are we called upon to break old moulds of thought, old ways of looking at life and its meaning, but also touch deeper levels of consciousness through refinement of feelings. It is here that one has to summon courage and take the next higher step, which requires both faith and trust.

The seed must die to give birth to a tree; the nonessentials must die for the spiritual regeneration. Thus: ‘To live as a plant, the seed must die. To live as a conscious entity in the Eternity, the passions and senses of man must first DIE before his body does. ‘To live is to die and to die is to live,’ has been too little understood....Siva, the *destroyer*, is the *creator* and the Saviour of Spiritual man, as he is the good gardener of nature. He weeds out the plants, human and cosmic, and kills the passions of the physical, to call to life the perceptions of the spiritual man.” (*S.D.*, I, 459 fn.)

A child playing with a doll would be extremely reluctant to leave it and come with you to the sea-shore even if she is told that she would enjoy herself much more over there. So also, we are reluctant, to let go of something familiar and tangible for that which is unknown, though more valuable. However, the experiences of life teach us to move towards refined or purer forms of love, desire, ideas, and even pleasures.

In the article, “Love With an Object” (*Lucifer*, January 1888), we read that Love is a universal power, and therefore immortal. It can never die, only the instruments through which it becomes manifest, are born and die and are born again. A love which becomes attached to objects of sense, ceases to be love, and becomes a mere desire. Pure and eternal love asks for nothing, but gives freely to all who are willing to take. Earthly love is attracted to persons and things, but Divine spiritual love seeks only that which is divine in everything. Divine love manifesting itself in perfect man is distributed

alike to every one without partiality. The more perfect he is, the more will his love descend upon and penetrate all who come within his divine influence. Love can exist without form, but no form can exist without love, because love is pure Spirit, and when its light is reflected in matter, it creates desire, and that desire produces forms.

Some critic has observed that Kafka has helped the little girl to overcome the pain of losing her doll by substituting the doll with the letters from the doll. “She has the story, and when a person is lucky enough to live inside a story, to live inside an imaginary world, the pains of this world disappear. For as long as the story goes on, reality no longer exists.” In other words, this is an ingenious way of healing, by pushing the little girl into a subjective world, so that she forgets old pain. What is implied, in a sense, is that healing can happen on a subjective plane. At a simple level, there is vicarious enjoyment, of attending a party, or experiencing love, through characters in a novel or a drama or a movie. At another level, there is subjective healing for our soul for all the pain and suffering it goes through in a given life on earth. The personal man (soul) suffers acutely, and feels that the suffering is unmerited, for having to pass through abject poverty, or for being childless, etc., during earth life, because he has no memory of the karmic cause that was set into motion in some past life. Karma is the tender or compassionate mother, who wants every human child to grow and therefore she gives a wound, or pain for the wrong deeds of the past lives, during our earth life, but she also provides for healing. For this feeling that one suffered for no fault of his own, nature compensates, after death, in a state of peace and bliss called *Devachan*, or heaven, by providing the human soul with fullest consolation, rest and peace. Thus, a person who suffered abject poverty during earth life, will have the consolation and joy of finding himself surrounded by wealth and comfort that would satisfy all his material desires, during his stay in *devachan*. The process of healing happens in *devachan*, which is a subjective state of consciousness.

EXTRACTS FROM UNPUBLISHED LETTERS TESTS, TRIALS AND TEMPTATIONS—II

YOUR VALIANT stand and your right resolve, as also your desire to tread the Right Path, for which purpose you have sacrificed much, is a force which makes you a member of a Mighty Company. We put ourselves on probation as personalities by such resolve and sacrifice. This means that there is a new orientation in your life; you are on the Bridge which H.P.B. called *Antaskarana* and which Zoroastrianism calls the Chinvand Bridge. This Bridge bridges the deep waters which separate this from the Occult world. The latter is the world of the Ego. The purification of the personality by life means reverses to it and these naturally produce irritation, non-understanding, depression, suffering, and through them all—Realization. Each time pain transforms itself into a faculty—a spiritual faculty, and gradually produces Clear Vision. This Clear Vision has a double aspect; it not only is the Vision of the Ego, but he sees the worlds through clarified and purified emotions and feelings as also thoughts and reasonings. Therefore the Ego does not see colours—it sees through colours; it does not hear sounds—it hears through sounds; thus all colours and sounds and their forms and shapes are mere symbols which weave themselves into emblems which the Ego fully understands.

Now, what are called tests on the Path and trials of the neophyte are as truly self-engendered as the resolve we make or the sacrifices we offer. We put ourselves on the Path and thereby precipitate our own tests and bring forth our own trials. These tests and trials *seem* to us to be rooted outside of us—but this is due to misunderstanding of the Law of Karma. The Law operates within us and through us on others; within others and through them on us. Think on this and you will gain some illumination. To continue—being what you have made yourself by your noble resolve and beautiful sacrifice, and standing on that Bridge, you must perforce meet your Kurukshetra. You are *between* the two armies: the abyss of the material world is

behind you; you can try to walk back into it, which will be equivalent to a boy of seven trying to make himself an infant of three; he will only disfigure himself if not destroy himself, for it cannot be done. Having passed the abyss, you must be prepared to go through the *Yoga of Despondency*. Remember, please, it is not the despair of the world; it is a *yoga*; see the title of the first Discourse of *The Bhagavad-Gita*. Read carefully that first discourse and remember that Krishna is the Ego—your own Real Self—the Charioteer who has placed you in the midst of the two armies because, *you*, Arjuna, the Reincarnating Self-Personality, asked Krishna to take you there. Therefore, Arjuna-like, you have to survey the armies, and *which* Arjuna during these millions of years has not thrown down his weapon in the despondency caused by that first survey?

We are all the same and if I write this it is to remind you that Krishna is near—nearer to you today than last year, nearer to you than your friend can ever hope to be, or, for the matter of that, anyone. We all of us become Krishna, *are* Krishna. Therefore do not, delude yourself that your moods are something of a speciality of abomination. There is a danger that lurks in that. Our subtle *Ahankara* forces itself forward and if we cannot be an especially good someone then we want to be an especially bad someone. Do you see the Personality—how it stealthily comes forth? Remember therefore not to grieve for your mistakes any more than to extol your good deeds. On the Bridge, in the midst of the two armies, the activities which we pursued in the World of Matter follow us and overwhelm our march forward to the World of Spirit.

Be wise in living—look not behind, nor far away into the Golden Age, yet to be. Do what is nearest at hand as a real warrior—chivalry, courage, love are our virtues and the sword of knowledge destroys doubt, fear and the binding limitations of matter.

What a long, grandfatherly sermon!

It is one of the tests that every one of us has to go through to see that the world is not too much with us. A new proportion between

the inner and the outer is necessary as a first step so that the outer may ultimately become a reflection of the inner.

Look within, for there you are strong and resourceful. That within is apt to be forgotten, for memory is a trickster. Remember, “Thou art That.” To remember that, “Let not thy senses make a playground of thy mind.”

“What you *need* now is regular and steadfast study and practice of the Discipline. Some of you are so immersed in the outer life and work that mind and heart get neglected. So you better give yourself a Theosophical chance of regular meditation and self-examination.

I know you will be anxious these days; this also will pass away. It is we, each one of us, who should stabilize ourselves—taking a firm position with the end in view. Live within by the aid of study, work for others, and unfold the Unity in your own heart. The United Spirit of Life which is should be recognized, be realized. This is *Metta*—Divine Impersonal Pity and Compassion.

You must seek the archetype for every typical action and thus get hold of the Law of Analogy and Correspondence. Of course it is taxing; and that is because we are surrounded by mundane vibrations of the five senses and the five organs. In the midst of illusions we are touching the Real. Every word is used both in prose and poetry; and, just as good and noble prose is poetry of its kind, so every prosaic and mundane thing has its poetic and spiritual roots.

What are the methods by which we can obtain the art of sacrifice? Now it all depends in what sense the word “sacrifice” is used. If it is used in the ordinary sense of sacrificing oneself for the good of others, then it comes in the moral sphere of action in day-to-day living. But if the word sacrifice is used in the sense of *yagna*, then it applies to every action and every deed of ours. However trivial it may be, it can be made sacramental or holy by a right kind of knowledge which is available. Spiritual knowledge can be utilized to make every act a sacred and a holy act, and the distinction between the secular and the sacred is done away with and every secular act becomes sacramental.

Let us hold on to the principle that whatever his temperament—lower psychic or higher spiritual—the probationer meets his trials and tests and stands or fails. Judge and Damodar succeeded where so many others failed. None, none can escape the “probation.”

Inner Egoic strength comes fast and strong if we study regularly and attentively. You *will* gain that strength and the balance which follows it in the course of time. Do not lose heart; be courageous and persevering.

How are you? I don’t mean bodily for on that I do get reports. How are you within yourself? A very, very big portion of your ailment is rooted in your Kama-Manas and there no doctor, no Master, can do anything save give advice and make suggestions. You alone have to do the needful. Why not take advantage of your bodily disability and work on and with your mental attitude and outlook? Get well soon, but thoroughly well.

It is gladsome news that you have returned to your city and are eager to participate in the Work there. It is necessary, however, to note the change in your health, and unless you are quite well and strong enough I hope you will not overdo things. Our devotion to work ought to enable us to be discriminative and to prompt us to recognize our duty to our physical body and its health, without which proper service cannot be rendered on this plane. If, therefore, in your laudable enthusiasm you feel zealous to act and to do, I hope you will check yourself and go with care and deliberation.

Pranic currents are what are absorbed by the Astral *Nadis* and *Chakras* from the Ocean of *Jiva*. They circulate in the astral body as blood circulates in the gross body. As a result of circulation these currents absorb and assimilate our thoughts and feelings as blood does our bodily food. Then animal magnetism results. *Prana* absorbed from *Jiva* is healthful; in conjunction with the prevailing thought-feeling-moods, animal magnetism is generated. It is through the last named that our “lives” go out, with our personal stamp upon them.

(Concluded)

THE SUN—PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL

I

Above this first line and below the title of the article, insert “I” in the centre of the line. the Sun is a star at the centre of our Solar system. It is one of the hundred billion stars in the Milky Way galaxy. The enormous effect of the Sun on Earth has been recognized since prehistoric times. It is considered to be a source of light and heat. It influences weather, ocean currents, seasons, climate and makes plant life possible through photosynthesis.

The Sun is not one of the sacred planets referred to by Astrologers. Both the Sun (which not a planet) and the Moon (which is a dead planet) are substitutes for two sacred planets which were known to the Initiates. One is the invisible trans-Mercurial planet still nearer to the Sun and the other a planet with a retrograde motion, sometimes visible at a certain hour of night and apparently near the moon.

According to one theory the seven planets have evolved from the central mass of the Sun. Occult philosophy teaches that the Sun and the planets are only co-uterine brothers, having the same nebular origin, but not in the way it is postulated in astronomy (*S.D.*, I, 589). According to the modern Nebular Theory, the Sun and the planets are created from a giant cloud of molecular gas and dust. This cloud collapsed, around 4.57 billion years ago. With the collapse of the cloud, packets of dust and gas began to collect in the centre, pulling towards it more matter and became a rotating ball. The rest of the matter flattened out as disk and rotated around this ball. The central ball or mass became sun while from the rest of the material were formed planets.

In the Vedic allegory Eight Sons called *Adityas* are said to be born from the body of *Aditi* which includes Sun or *Marttanda*. She built for them eight houses, four large and four small ones. The ancient Commentary writes that sun was not satisfied with his house, though his house was the largest. He breathed and drew in like a big elephant into his stomach the vital airs (cosmic vitality) of his

brothers. The larger four were far away; they laughed saying “Do your worst, Sir, you cannot reach us.” But the smaller ones wept and complained to the Mother. She then relegated the sun to the centre of her Kingdom from whence he could not move. It is said that since then he only watches and threatens, turning slowly around himself and they turning swiftly from him. From that day he feeds on the sweat of the Mother’s body or Ether. She is said to have rejected him. In this cosmic allegory we are shown how the contrary force of attraction and repulsion finally equilibrate or get adjusted in the solar system with the sun in the centre and seven planets moving around it in their respective orbits.

Aditi is *Mulaprakriti* or Primordial matter. The “curds” or Cosmic matter is the first differentiation of primordial matter and it is the origin of the Milky Way. They are called World-stuff or star-stuff. The Milky Way is the storehouse of the matter from which heavenly bodies such as stars, planets, etc. are formed, after several stages of further differentiation. The matter within the solar system is entirely different from that outside the solar system.

The Sun, besides rotating around his own axis, also revolves around some centre. According to the present theory, the Milky Way is the galaxy which contains our Solar system. Our solar system and the sun orbit around the centre of this galaxy or galactic point, and it takes around 230 million years to complete one orbit around the centre of galaxy. That period is called the cosmic year.

Popular scientific theories attribute the heat of the Sun to the conversion of hydrogen atoms into helium by the process of fusion under enormous pressure and density that exist at the centre of the Sun. To them, the Sun is a burning mass, destined to die out. Occultism disagrees with this view, too. Occultists point out that the Sun is not a gradually cooling mass of matter giving off heat and light. The Sun is not a globe in combustion, but simply a world, a glowing sphere of electro-magnetic substance. The sun is a centre of electrical and magnetic energy which turns into heat and other things when it reaches the earth’s atmosphere.

The physical sun protects the solar system from being reduced to ashes, for that is what would happen once the protective cover of the physical sun is removed. Hence, we are told that contrary to scientific speculation, while there is one man left on the globe, the sun will not be extinguished, and when it does, it will unveil the “Central Sun,” the mysterious, ever-hidden centre of attraction of our sun and the system. Astronomers admit that our sun along with the entire solar system is in motion around some far-off undetermined centre, and that in turn could possibly be revolving around a still more distant and more powerful centre. However, they know not whether the undetermined centre be a sun or simply a larger and stronger centre of energy than the sun.

Johannes Kepler has given three ideas concerning the Sun. “The ideas of Kepler, weeded from their theological tendencies, are purely occult,” says H.P.B. Thus, (I) The Sun is a great Magnet. This is what some eminent modern scientists and also the Occultists believe in. (II) The Solar substance is immaterial. (III) According to him spirit is the cause of constant motion and restoration of the Sun’s energy and planetary motion. The occultists replace the word “Spirit” by “intelligent Creative Forces.”

The gravitation as explained by science is only the law of attraction, and not as a dual force of attraction and repulsion. Newton himself felt that there were many phenomena in the Solar system that could not be explained on the basis of the law of gravitation, and therefore such cases he describes as “the work of an intelligent and all-powerful Being.” H.P.B. seems to suggest that it ought to be “intelligent, powerful, Beings,” or “gods.” (*S.D.*, I, 497-98)

Kepler described cosmic magnetism and the dual force of attraction and repulsion, believed in from the days of Empedocles. Certainly, such magnetism exists in nature, within our solar system, the earth’s atmosphere, and *beyond* in the Kosmos. In *Isis Unveiled*, (I, 208-09) we read that according to Father Kircher there exists a sort of universal magnetism. He asserted that although every particle of matter and also intangible invisible “powers” were magnetic, they

were not magnets. There is but One Magnet in the universe from which proceeds the magnetization of everything existing, and that magnet is the Central Spiritual Sun, or God. He observed that the sun, moon, stars and planets become highly magnetic by living in the universal magnetic fluid or Spiritual light. He says that the sun is the most magnetic of all the bodies, which was asserted many years later by General Pleasanton. He as well as Father Kircher spoke of magnetism or magnetic sympathy and antipathy, which is found in plants, animals and human beings. According to Pleasanton, the movement of the planets in their orbits is regulated by the powerful magnetism of the Sun and not by their weight or gravitation. (*Isis*, I, 271)

The real Sun refers to a spiritual centre. Our sun being a focus or reflector for this spot in the space, it is through the visible sun that the life energy of the solar system comes, though originally generated by that true centre. Sun is the reflection or a shell of the True Sun or Central Spiritual Sun. It is the window cut out in the Cosmic palace. The Willow leaves are the reservoirs of the solar vital energy, the energy which feeds the entire solar system. It is the real Sun which generates and stores the vital fluid, which it also receives back after circulation. This fluid circulates through the solar system, just as the blood circulates through the human body. As the human heart contracts and expands, so does the sun, which contracts rhythmically when the vital fluid returns to it. While the blood circulates through the body and returns back to heart in a second or so, in the case of the sun, it takes ten years for the vital energy to return back to the sun. It takes one year for this energy to pass through the auricles and ventricles, and then pass through the lungs, and then go to arteries and veins. The sunspots which are observed every eleven years are because the vital energy returns back to the Solar heart, and then it contracts. H.P.B. points out that the sunspots are formed due to healthy pulsation of the heart, as the vital energy passes through the hollow muscles of the sun. If the human heart can be made luminous and if we could see it on a screen, we would find the sunspot phenomenon repeated every second,

as the blood enters the heart, and the heart contracts.

Cosmo-biology is concerned with studying the effect of the planets and stars on the events that take place on the earth. Studies have shown that the sunspots produce a lot of social upheavals, revolutions, epidemics, bad weather conditions and are linked with an increase in suicide rate. The sunspots are the areas in the Sun with very high magnetic density and emit certain radiations and charged particles. H.P.B. says: “The earth is very seriously affected by what takes place in the sun... a connection is strongly suspected between epidemics and appearance of the sun’s surface. One of the best-known vegetable epidemics is that of the potato disease. The years 1846, 1860, and 1872 were bad years for the potato disease, and those years are not very far from the years of maximum sunspots.”

As to how the sun’s motion and restoration of energy is attributed to the spirits, we may refer to the *Secret Doctrine* (I, 479), which speaks of the dual nature of the Sun. Our sun is both matter as well as Spirit. It has been believed to be a symbol of Divinity, concealing within it the God of Spiritual and terrestrial light, by the ancients. Theosophy teaches that behind the physical sun is the True Sun or the Central Spiritual Sun. The Sun symbolizes the very *Atman* in man, the divine presence latent within the hearts of men and may be looked upon as the Seventh Kosmic principle. In one sense, the spiritual Sun may be regarded as *Parabrahmam*, but more appropriately, it refers to the Logos. The unmanifested logos (or first logos) corresponds to the Sun and contains the whole Universe as the acorn the oak. This point marks the beginning of Brahma’s egg. It is the *Avalokiteswara* of the Hindus, the *Verbum* of the Christians. Such centers are innumerable—so are the Suns. Heat, Light, Electricity, etc. are “Ghosts or Shadows of Matter in motion,” referring to elementals as the proximate cause, but behind these elementals are the Dhyana chohans. (*S.D.*, I, 146)

According to Kepler the Solar substance is immaterial, and that is because the state in which matter exists in the sun is not known to science. The visible Sun is merely a reflection, a focus, a lens, a

window through which the rays of the *primordial light* become materialized, are concentrated upon our solar system and produce all the correlation of forces.

Astronomers or scientists have never been able to probe the “body” of the sun with either their telescope or spectroscope. None of our terrestrial elements (and in the state we are familiar with) are present in the “body” of the sun. They are present merely in the *outward robe of the sun*, along with hosts of other elements with which science is not familiar. Also, every element found on earth is present in the sun. The sun has all the elements that go to make up the solar system. However, the substances which give the coloured glow to the sun are not in solid, liquid or gaseous state. Likewise, in the article, “Is Sun a Cooling Mass?” we read that “they [astronomers] have to look to the 6th state of matter, for divulging to them the true nature of their photospheres, chromospheres, appendages, prominences, projections and horns.”

Is the Sun’s corona, an atmosphere of any known gases? Why does it assume the rayed shape always observed in eclipses? In answer to the question a Master of Wisdom writes that it can be called neither chromosphere nor atmosphere because it is the magnetic and ever-present aura of the Sun, seen by the astronomers only for a few brief moments during the eclipse. What the astronomers call the red flames in the “corona” may be also seen in any other strongly magnetic body. This is depicted by the artists as aureoles about the heads of the Gods and Saints. “The closer to the head or to the aura-emitting body, the stronger and the more effulgent the emanation. . . hence the irregular red flames around the Sun or the *‘inner corona.’*” Something similar is witnessed in case of a person in a strong ecstatic condition when all the electricity of his system is centred around the brain. The further the emanation shoots out the more it loses in intensity, until gradually subsiding it fades out; hence the “outer corona.”

(To be continued)

GROWTH AND STAGNATION

STUDENTS who have devoted years to the study of Theosophy often wonder whether they have made any progress. Even those who have given themselves over entirely to service sometimes feel despondent at the paucity of results. They feel as though they were striking the same musical note *ad infinitum*, and they do not like the experience. Doubt has insidious ways of creeping in. This is one of its numerous ways.

The true aspirant does not study and apply knowledge for personal advancement. His need of knowledge—of course beyond the rudiments of Theosophy—can arise only as demands for his services grow. He exists primarily to serve Master’s Cause and therefore Master’s bidding. All else is subsidiary. Where, then, can there be cause for lament? Disciples can be used in numerous ways—to rediscover the philosophy; to promulgate it by missionary effort; and to obey Master’s behests. They have to set an example of devotion and of a genuine willingness to do that which goes against one’s grain if Master wants it done. They are expected to consider no work too low, nor any effort too high, and to go on serving humanity whether orders are received or not, and though they be denied the privilege of seeing their Guru for an entire incarnation.

All too often, the earnest and otherwise sincere worker ploughs himself into a rut. His actions become mechanistic and bereft of psychic vigour. Being thus shorn of inner power, they bring indifferent results. After the first flush of enthusiasm has reached its ebb, the student forgets to invoke the power of Theosophy. When engaged in the routine of daily life, he forgets that even at the low level at which he stands he can represent master. The problem is not that of an ability to show a steady progress of power. The problem is hardly ever of capacities. When these are necessary, they will be added unto him. What the aspirant is expected to develop is a willingness to accept tasks—even menial and distasteful ones—and to take a delight in their performance. It is this delight and enthusiasm

that get eroded by lassitude and the passage of time. Vows thus dwindle into promises, promises into assurances, assurances into pious resolutions (like those that people make at each year's beginning), and resolutions are forgotten and erased, so that after a while one does not even know what solemn commitments one had made to oneself and others. This attitude to the living of a Theosophic life takes its own toll; and instead of acknowledging his limitations, the student starts complaining that he is marking time. As in other spheres of life, Theosophy has its own dilettanti.

The chief cause of forgetfulness of the high purpose visioned in the first moments of the soul's awakening is a tendency bordering on laziness and, later, an indifference in the carrying out of the duty to make Theosophy a living power in one's life. Discontent can only come when the aspirant either desires a reward for his services or fails to recognize that in his routine duties he is doing Master's work. Arjuna had a similar difficulty in the second chapter of the *Bhagavad-Gita*. The application in life of such aspects of Theosophy as have been acquired, yields a twofold result. It makes available to the student that knowledge which will help him to reveal himself to Himself. More important still, it leads him to a study of the human heart in general. Unless this dual study is diligently undertaken, a meaningful brotherhood becomes impossible of establishment between the disciple and the souls that wait hungrily for his ministrations. Without this, study becomes a mere shibboleth—a refuge of the learned-ignorant, a word used to bolster up one's own image to oneself.

Self-introspection is a great step, an important one which cannot be missed or overstepped. But, by itself, it leaves the discipline incomplete. It limits the area of research to one little self with its limited body and as limited an environment. For his study, the aspirant has to reach out to other human hearts—their efforts, their failures and their successes. Can he lend a helping hand through the light which Theosophy provides? Can he soothe a fevered brow, a heart burdened with sorrow, a mind so clogged that it sees no hope

and is closed to all consolation? A sinning student, a faltering student, even a handicapped student may derive strength from the philosophy and offer his mite of force to alleviate suffering. If he does this an opportunity upon opportunity arises, can he ever feel that he is marking time? Never.

As the disciple applies himself to this task of studying humanity in particular and in the mass, he finds that a meaningful brotherhood becomes possible of establishment between himself and humanity—not only between him and individual units, but between himself and the suffering conglomerate whole. The great orphaned heart of which the disciple is a part cannot, nay, dare not, be forgotten, lest he abandon the paths of Theosophy and seek through other masters a selfish liberation that separates him from the world and men for ever. Master's philosophy and Master's help is not for such. They may attain certain heights, but they reach them with aims and purposes which the Masters do not have and cannot recommend.

There is a tendency among students to hope that, since they study Theosophy and proclaim Brotherhood, they may by some miraculous dispensation escape the ups and downs of life. In other words, these future saviours of humanity expect right from the initial stages to be saved themselves. A little thought will convince them that this cannot be so. To be at one with humanity requires the sharing with it of its great pain. The child cannot overnight imbibe even the worldly knowledge that is taught in college and university. For several years it does mark time—at least apparently so. But, as everyone knows, its growth is not arrested by that experience. Further, the student who thus complains loses sight of the fact that by his ennui and discontent he is losing a wonderful power which gets developed under those very circumstances. If he is convinced that the Guru's eye is on him, then any complaint made is an indication of a loss of faith in that Teacher. It is under adverse circumstances and darkening skies that the true student finds his incentives for growth.

WORSHIPPING THE BODY

THE FUNDAMENTAL teaching which underlies all religions of the world is that man is an immortal being inhabiting a mortal body. The Roman Catholic Church has perverted this truth by its dogma of the resurrection of the body of flesh, and is responsible for the materialistic outlook adopted by its votaries.

Man must know his true nature. Is man a God in incarnation or the final refined product of the evolutionary process of Nature? Can blind matter, which, if unaided, acts so haphazardly, alone be responsible for the evolution of the human frame? It has, in fact, taken the higher potencies and Nature aeons to fashion and mould the body of man. The evolution of the manifold forms of Nature continues *pari passu* with the evolution of the form of man, which is a miniature copy of the body of the Cosmos. Yet the physical body is the lowest and the most transient of all human principles, and, without the animating inner principles, a useless mass of matter which will disintegrate as soon as death sets in. Yet it is in a body alone that final emancipation may be obtained. Therefore it is to be looked upon as a necessary instrument.

There is an infinite variety of human forms, not only in outward appearance but also in degrees of sensitivity. It is the Inner Man who decides the nature of the body. From this the inference must be drawn that the whole man is a perfectly integrated being. Man is the architect of the body and the body has to be made a worthy temple of the Inner God. The lives of the body are derived from and akin to those of other kingdoms of Nature, and this points further to the inextricable unity and oneness between man and the Cosmos. These lives have their evolution speeded up or slowed down by the impact of the human Manasic principle. The right attitude towards the physical body is assumed through right knowledge of what it really is, in itself and as part and parcel of the entire human constitution.

Its significance and usefulness rest in the fact that it is the instrument of the Soul: that it has been evolved and perfected by the Self, for

the Self. Let us not forget that the first qualification for Chelaship is perfect physical health. The God in us can only act and express himself through a perfected and highly sensitive instrument. The purpose of the evolutionary scheme in which man has a leading part is to rise to the status of conscious Godhood, and this can be achieved only in and through a body.

It is a great error to identify man with his body. By always feeling and acting on the basis of the body, man draws himself downward, to the plane of the lower forces of nature. The body with all its various functions could be compared to an army whose chief and final co-ordinating force is the mind. If the mind surrenders its leading role, the senses and organs are no longer controlled and lead man to his doom. By indulging in sensual pleasures, such as gluttony, man debases the lives of the body, and they are no longer fit to perform their proper functions. Let us read in this context what Mr. Judge writes in *The Ocean of Theosophy*: “Man could not have his bodily temple to live in until all the matter in and about his world had been found by the Master, who is the inner man; when found the plans for working it required to be detailed. They then had to be carried out in different detail until all the parts should be perfectly ready and fit for placing in the final structure. So in the vast stretch of time which began after the first almost intangible matter had been gathered and kneaded, the material and vegetable kingdoms had sole possession here with the Master—man—who was hidden from sight within, carrying forward the plans for the foundations of the human temple. All of this requires many, many ages, since we know that nature never leaps. And when the rough work was completed, when the human temple was erected, many more ages would be required for all the servants, the priests, and the counsellors to learn their parts properly so that man, the Master, might be able to use the temple for its best and highest purposes.”

The main problem which faces the people of the world is how to keep themselves well fed. Is it not true to say that the chief cause of half of the population of the earth being on the verge of starvation is

that the other half, those who have, are so anxious to preserve, nourish and secure riches for the bodily idol? The real root of the evil lies there. If the body was made to serve the needs of the soul, it would change the world in which we live. Practically all the ills of mankind would vanish into thin air.

Is not the despondency of the warrior Arjuna rooted in the same evil of identification with the body? The beautiful discourse of Krishna in Chapter II of the *Gita* gives us a right perspective of the place of the body in the scheme of things. What does the great Avatar say to his pupil?— “As the lord of this mortal frame experienceth therein infancy, youth, and old age, so in future incarnations will it meet the same....These finite bodies, which envelope the souls inhabiting them, are said to belong to Him. the eternal, the indestructible, unprovable Spirit, who is in the body: wherefore, O Arjuna, resolve to fight.” The climax of this teaching is reached in Chapter XIII, where the distinction is made between this perishable body or the *Kshetra* and the Knower within, the *Kshetrajna*. “The spirit in the body is called *Maheswara*, the Great Lord, the spectator, the admonisher, the sustainer, the enjoyer, and also the *Paramatma*, the highest soul.” What *we* really are is not the body, is not our feelings, or even our ideas, but the Eternal Pilgrim, the Perceiver, the Experiencer. It is by dwelling upon that which is to be realized that the Soul-Ego reaches the terrace of illumination and becomes initiated into the mysteries of Life and Death.

Man’s debasement is due to the prostitution of his powers and faculties, starting with those of the physical body. As an illustration, think of what man has made of that most sacred of all powers, the power of creation. Sex life has become not only ugly and unhealthy but also cruel and destructive. The body has become a god and true education is lacking. Our worship of the harmony and sheer beauty of the physical form is misguided. Self-indulgence and self-gratification destroy the beauty and perfection of the form. From within without was the body evolved; from within without has the body to be regenerated, made whole again, so that the God within

may shine forth. The body is a living, sentient, receptive instrument; it has connections with every part of the cosmos and can reach to and know the life and consciousness around it. It is on earth a replica of the divine form of Krishna, the Supreme, that has hands and feet in all directions; eyes, heads, mouths and ears in every direction. It has to be rendered worthy of the Inner God.

Though men have grown to worship the body, often they know it not. They cannot think of themselves apart from it. This is the great delusion and foreshadows the death of the soul. But true life and the treading of the path of immortality begin when little by little, day after day, man says to himself, “I am That,” and in silence and secrecy repeats the words of the divine Krishna to Arjuna: “It is even a portion of myself which, having assumed life in this world of conditioned existence, draweth together the five senses and the mind in order that it may obtain a body and may leave it again. And those are carried by the Sovereign Lord to and from whatever body he enters or quits, even as the breeze bears the fragrance from the flower.”

AS THE white ray of light is decomposed by the prism into the various colors of the solar spectrum, so the beam of divine truth, in passing through the *three-sided* prism of man’s nature, has been broken up into vari-colored fragments called RELIGIONS. And, as the rays of the spectrum, by imperceptible shadings, merge into each other, so the great theologies that have appeared at different degrees of divergence from the original source, have been connected by minor schisms, schools, and off-shoots from the one side or the other. Combined, their aggregate represents one eternal truth; separate, they are but shades of human error and the signs of imperfection.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

It appears that Indian authors are giving to the traditional fairytales a modern spin. These stories are sprinkled with feminism. In these narratives helpless beauties are not waiting for any prince or a fairy godmother to rescue them. For instance, in her book, *Fierce Fairytales*, British-Indian poet Nikita Gill portrays the characters in the Cinderella story differently. The stepmother is shown dealing with challenges of single motherhood, while the step-sisters are struggling with being labelled ugly. Gill wants to show that no one is born evil, but such actions stem from hurt and trauma. In the modern version of the fairytales Gill blurs the distinction between heroes and villains, and incorporates into the stories contemporary issues such as, mental health, environmental destruction, etc.

Journalist Sowmya Rajendran, the author of *Girls to the Rescue*, focuses on giving agency to the girls and women. For instance, Rapunzel's mother is an astronaut and Sleeping Beauty's mother is a scientist working on a book. She says that she thought of writing this book when she narrated fairytales to her toddler. At that time, she changed the characters and plot because she did not want her daughter to grow up with the idea that she needed a prince to rescue her.

Authors like Payal Kapadia are portraying princesses in the traditional fairytales in a different light. In her book, *Twice Upon a Time*, she writes about an intelligent princess who is bored with her perfect life, which she quits and finds her replacement in the form of another girl, and together they rescue everyone in the royal palace. She says that the real struggle today in princess stories is not about finding the prince or escaping a dragon but "finding out what kind of person you want to be."

Other writers, and all of them are women, have written their reinterpretation of fairytales and folktales. Sunita Namjoshi, who has similarly reinterpreted Sanskrit and Greek myths in 1981, believes that each retelling of a story alters it. Women can speak

with their own voices using the very power of a male-dominated literary tradition. It is clear that "there is no definitive version of a fairy tale, and [there is] a potential for countless updates," writes Sonam Joshi. (*Sunday Times of India*, September 26, 2021)

Fairy tales do not belong exclusively to nurseries, and apart from their literary and cultural value, nearly all tales that have come down to us from ancient times, and even those by Andersen, derived from ancient folklore, convey facts and teach truths. If fairy tales and fables remain sealed mysteries to most persons in our present civilization, it is because we do not have the clue to their correct interpretation. The key to their interpretation is provided by the Science of Occultism, which helps to decipher symbols, emblems, allegories and metaphors used in these stories. Fairy tales and fables enable us to cultivate our intuitive and imaginative faculties.

For instance, in the version given by brothers Grimm, of the fairy tale, "The Four Skilful Brothers," the Princess represents Nature herself. No one individual unit of life can possess her separately for himself, since none has the greater claim than the rest. Yet all can share her possessions, the Provinces of the Spirit. We cannot, as separated beings, know the Spirit of Nature itself.

The Wisdom in Fairy Tales by Ursula Grahl, first published in the year 1956, draws our attention to the living spiritual truths which lie concealed in the fairy tales that have been handed down to us through the centuries. She deplores that in our present "advanced" civilization fairy tales are little understood by most people and considered to be "utter nonsense, the product of ignorance or of wild and childish phantasy," because they lack insight into their real meaning. We know that the genuine fairy tales could only have been told by people who had knowledge of the spiritual world. There are progressed beings in possession of knowledge which cannot be expressed in ordinary language, in words that uninitiated can follow. As time went on the interpretation of these fairy tales became more and more difficult for human souls, because of their inability to cross the threshold from the material to the spiritual world.

She explains the hidden meaning of a few important aspects of some well-known fairy tales, such as, “Cinderella,” “Sleeping Beauty,” etc. She discusses in her book the technique of telling these stories to children, so that when they are told by those who understand their symbology and deep spiritual content, they “nourish the soul of the child and make it strong and healthy for later life.” She concludes by saying, “Fairy tales were certainly not invented for the passing amusement of children, but that they were told by initiates, for all those who are ready to receive from them truth and wisdom.”

Thus, there is a need to go beyond the “story” and its obvious and literal meaning, to be able to extract the essence of fairy tales.

What does holistic success mean and how we can attain it? Consider a person who has set up business empire worth billions by destroying the environment or by neglecting family relationship or by overlooking morals. Would we consider him a successful person? Can success achieved in only one aspect of life at the expense of others, be called real success? A little while before his death Steve Jobs is reported to have said: “I have come to the pinnacle of success in business. In the eyes of others, my life has been the symbol of success. However, apart from work, I have little joy.” He adds that having come close to dying the accolades and riches of which he was once proud have now become insignificant. The author, Suma Varughese, speaks of holistic success, which means being a successful human being, which is the result of living a spiritual life, so as to be concerned about the welfare of humanity rather than focusing on narrow self-interest. Such holistic success implies building meaningful human relationships by striving to be more loving, selfless and compassionate.

The four *purusharthas* or exertions mentioned in Indian philosophy enable one to forge a successful framework of life. It is interesting to note that two of these four, *artha* (money) and *kama* (pleasure) are flanked on either side by *dharma* (duty or appropriate

action) and *moksha* (enlightenment), showing that acquirement of money and enjoyment of life rest on the framework of morality and attainment of enlightenment. In other words, all other successes must emerge from our success in leading a spiritual life. Jesus expressed it thus: “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness and all things shall be added unto you.” He advocates building the edifice of one’s success on the foundation of righteousness.

In his book, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen Covey lists out principles related to true success. One should never lose sight of the end in view. One must set up the priorities and always put what is important ahead of what is not, and strive to improve oneself physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. Deepak Chopra mentions in his book, *Seven Spiritual Laws of Success*, the Law of Giving, *i.e.*, when we give, we get; the Law of Least Effort, *i.e.*, success comes when you stop resisting; the Law of Detachment, *i.e.*, our wishes are fulfilled when we cultivate detachment, and the Law of Dharma, which indicates finding one’s purpose in life. “And finally, we can best attract success when we are passionate about what we do.” Even after following all the principles, if we fail to attain success, it means that perhaps this lifetime is meant for learning our lessons, writes Suma Varughese. (*Life Positive*, April 2021)

Our universe is governed by the pairs of opposites or dualities of “pleasure and pain,” “good and evil,” “success and failure.” Each one of us desires “success” and shuns failure because society lauds success and the successful person. Worldly success comes when limited and temporary knowledge is applied and the results aimed for are achieved. This, in fact, hinders the true growth of the being. Success gives birth to pride and strengthens the personality, thus creating a barrier between the outer man and the inner God.

Real success is what is learnt through failure. It is in failing that we learn how to become. And in “becoming” lies our growth, our success. As becoming is an endless, ever-unfolding process, so is success. What are the characteristics of a “successful man” in the

worldly sense? He is, generally, a man of great wealth, power, fame, self-will and one with the ability to survive in this competitive world. What characterizes spiritual success? Buddhism describes a spiritually advanced person as one possessed of *Maha-Prajna* or “great spiritual insight,” and *Maha-Karuna* or “great compassion.” However, description of the qualities of a true devotee in the *Gita* gives us a yardstick to measure spiritual success. In one sense, to be spiritually successful is to become a true devotee. Thus: “My devotee who is free from enmity, well-disposed towards all creatures, merciful, wholly exempt from pride and selfishness, the same in pain and pleasure, patient of wrongs, content, constantly devout, self-governed, firm in resolves, and whose mind and heart are fixed on me alone is dear unto me.” (*Gita*, XII)

A “successful” life is not necessarily meaningful (*sarthak*), but a meaningful life is always “successful” in the true sense of the word. To make our lives meaningful, we must try to understand the divine plan, see our place in it and then work towards realization of that plan.

It appears that we can make a mistake of taking an extreme view of morality. Michael Leviton, the author of *To be Honest: A Memoir*, writes that he and his family took an extreme view of “lying.” From his kindergarten years he used to be on the lookout for what his family considered “lying.” Once he fell down from a swing and was crying. A lady picked him up and stroking his head, told him that he was a brave boy. He told her that he was crying and therefore he was not brave, and she was lying, because she wanted him to stop crying. What he and his family called “lying” was not dishonesty at all, but was perfectly normal behaviour. He says, “The word lie meant something different to us....To us, people’s politeness was lying, their tact was pandering, their indirectness was cowardice, and their omission was manipulation.” He found that people were talking only about what they were supposed to, and he failed to understand why they should prefer such dissembling to authenticity.

In order to ascertain if the person was lying, he would ask himself two questions: Can I recognize what the person hopes to get out of this lie? Is this what an uncreative person would make up to achieve that outcome? For instance, if a child told him that his father was a fighter pilot, it would be because he wanted him to think that his father was cool, and therefore he was cool. However, he confesses, “I cared only about spotting the lie, not empathizing with the liar. For instance, it never would have occurred to me that the kid who lied about his father being a pilot might have no father or have an abusive father or have other family trauma or shame that led him to lie to random people. I could have used my talent for lie-spotting as a method of identifying suffering, seeing who needed compassion or help. But I had missed that part of the equation.”

When he suffered in many ways on account of his itch for detecting a lie everywhere, he paused to consider if he was mistaken in understanding other people. He then realized that what he called dishonesty was how culture agreed to communicate, which connected people, made them feel safe, and even loved. Since last ten years he has been lying, according to his definition of the word, but his tempered honesty is more appreciated than his insistence for truth. And yet, he is still attracted to unvarnished truth in all its thrilling and heart-breaking glory, says Leviton. (*Psychology Today*, January 2021)

An extreme view of any virtue can prove troublesome. In our civilization we mostly come across dissembling, if not outright lying. “There is simulation of feelings according to a received standard.” We are all guilty of it at some time or other. We do not dare to express what we *really* feel. Do we honestly express our opinion when we come across a painting or a classic? As Erich Fromm points out, more often than not, if the painting is by a famous painter like Picasso or Van Gaug, we judge it to be extremely beautiful. If we were honest, we would admit that we did not find the painting particularly impressive, but judged it beautiful because we are *supposed* to find it so—because we have heard from our childhood that certain authors and artists are great and that it is a mark of “good taste” to like and admire their work.

People who may be extremely charming in their interaction with others, slander behind their back. “Who loves truth in this age for its own sake? How many of us are prepared to search for, accept, and carry it out, in the midst of a society in which anything that would achieve success *has to be built on appearances, not on reality, on self-assertion, not on intrinsic value?* We are fully aware of the difficulties in the way of receiving truth,” writes H.P.B.

Philosophically, we are invited to analyze implications of “absolute morality,” which among other things means that every virtue must be practiced to the hilt, without making allowances. When people are not able to practice honesty or truthfulness or forgiveness, in certain circumstances, they feel that it is too much to expect a person to remain honest in such a situation. We must be clear in our minds that *moral principles* are one thing and our *ability* to apply them or live up to them is quite a different thing. Depending upon our inner state of development there are limitations to our ability to practice morality. We must accept those limitations, instead of trying to dilute the principles or justify our actions.

Another meaning of Absolute morality is rigid following of the moral principle. For instance, should one insist upon speaking the truth if speaking of the truth is going to cost a person his life or his job? There might be instances when our choice is not only going to affect us but also those around us. One should exercise discrimination in practicing morality. Mr. Crosbie defines true discrimination as, “the ability to do the *right thing*, at the *right time*, and in the *right place*; on every plane of action,” which few of us possess.

“True morality rests in an understanding and in a realization of man’s own spiritual nature, and must of necessity flow from it, irrespective of all kinds of conventions....The conventions of external life are established merely by a consensus of opinion of the beings living at any one time and in any one place,” writes Mr. Crosbie.