

# On the Watch-Tower

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## Evolution and Life as a Human Being — Some Reflections

*At the Feet of the Master* has the following statement at its beginning: ‘In this world there are only two kinds of people — those who know and those who do not know; and this knowledge is the thing which matters — the knowledge of God’s plan for evolution.’ It would be relevant to quote here a statement by the famous Sufi sage, Jalaluddin Rumi, about evolution:

I died from mineral and became a plant,  
I died from plant and reappeared in an animal,  
I died from animal and became a man.  
Whenceforth then should I fear?  
Where did I grow less by dying?  
Next time I shall die from man,  
That I may grow the wings of an angel.  
Once more shall I wing my way above  
the angels;  
I shall become that which entereth not the  
imagination,  
Then let me become naught, naught,  
For the harp-string crieth unto me;  
‘verily unto Him shall we return’

It is important to mention here that in

this evolutionary process, the stage of life as a human being is very important, in fact absolutely necessary. H. P. Blavatsky has mentioned that nobody can rise to the higher levels of spiritual consciousness without passing through human life. It has been said that the world is like a crucible in which gold is purified. Eckhart also stated that ‘if the soul could have known God without the world, the world would never have been created’.

In saint Tulsidāsa’s epic *Ramacharitmānas* once again one finds the same statement in Rāma’s teaching to a gathering of serious-minded persons of his capital. He said that it is great good fortune to be born as a human being, for it is the abode for spiritual endeavour and consequently for reaching the gate to liberation or salvation. Elucidating it further, he added that the human form is like a ship for crossing the ocean of this material world and that evolved Teachers are there to propel that ship; dull-witted is the person who does not avail of this opportunity.

Annie Besant in her book, *The Laws of the Higher Life*, explains that spiritual consciousness, referred to earlier, is that

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which recognizes unity, which sees one Self in everything and everything in the Self, and that spiritual life is the life which, looking into the infinite number of phenomena, pierces through the veil of Māyā and sees the One and Eternal within each changing form.

With an emerging perception of the oneness of all life, boundless love and compassion for all wells up naturally and spontaneously from within. One moves from self-centredness to Self-centredness. Not that the self should be totally done away with, but that it should be placed in its proper place as an instrument for work at the lower level of consciousness.

*At the Feet of the Master* mentions that the body is your animal — the horse upon which you ride. Therefore, you must treat it well and take good care of it . . . for without a perfectly clean and healthy body, you cannot do the arduous work of preparation, you cannot bear its ceaseless strain. But it must always be you who control that body, not it that controls you. Saint Mark puts it beautifully thus: 'For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye, therefore, for ye know not when the master of the house cometh; lest coming suddenly he finds you sleeping.'

Some of the guidance given to us by the wise ones in the context of our lives in this world may be referred to here. J. Krishnamurti advised: Sir, live, live in

this world. This world is so beautiful. It is our world, our earth to live upon, but we do not live, we are narrow, we are separate, we are anxious, we have no relationship, we are isolated, despairing human beings; we do not know what it means to live in an ecstatic, blissful sense. I say one can live that way only when one knows how to be free from all the stupidities of one's life. To be free from them is only possible in being aware of one's relationships, not only with human beings, but with ideas, with nature, with everything.

In the *Bhagavadgītā*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa mentions: As the ignorant act from attachment to action, so should the wise act, without attachment, desiring the welfare of the world.

The Buddha advised: practise living in *awareness*, children, and you will deepen your understanding. You will be able to understand yourselves, other people and all things. And you will have hearts of love. That is the wonderful path I have discovered.

One may add that awareness implies viewing things from a deeper, purer level of consciousness. It is the light within us. It needs to be unravelled by removing the cover of the 'self'.

Thich Nhat Hanh mentions that when the light of awareness (*within us*) shines, the nature of thoughts and feelings is transformed. They tend to become channels of love, joy and peace.

A mystic poet wrote: As a child, I was told and believed that there was treasure buried beneath every rainbow. I believed

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it so much that I have been unsuccessfully chasing rainbows most of my life. I wonder why no one ever told me that the rainbow and the treasure were both within me!

In *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, the Master in his letter to Francesca Arundale gave very beautiful, inspiring and simple advice and guidance which runs as follows: To the good of mankind devote your energies.

Be a missionary of love and charity, thus in helping others win your own salvation. There are innumerable pages of your life-record still to be written up; fair and blank they are as yet . . . seize the diamond pen and inscribe them with the history of noble deeds, days well-spent, years of holy striving. So will you win your way ever upward to the higher planes of spiritual consciousness. Fear not, faint not, be faithful to the ideal you can now dimly see. . . . Try child, Hope and accept my blessings.

One feels tempted to add the following simple teaching once given by the Buddha to his young son, Rāhula, when, after enlightenment, he visited his former home:

The Buddha: What is a mirror meant for, Rāhula?

Rāhula: To look at yourself, father!

The Buddha: So must you look at yourself, look and look at yourself.

What are you thinking?

What are you speaking?

What are you doing?

So shall you gradually rise to be a good human being.

Treading the evolutionary or spiritual path in our workaday world is not an easy task. It has been mentioned as thorny, or even walking on a razor's edge. But the Teachers have provided us courage and confidence in their teachings. One would like to refer here to two pieces. The first one is from Madame Blavatsky and runs as under:

There is no danger that dauntless courage cannot conquer. There is no trial that spotless purity cannot pass through. There is no difficulty that strong intellect cannot surmount. For those who win upwards, there is reward past all telling — the power to bless and serve humanity.

The second is from Sage Pythagoras: 'Take courage, the race of man is divine!'

Every one of us can play a role, however humble and small, in helping a little bit the furtherance of the divine plan of evolution. A tiny flower growing in a crannied wall had unconsciously played a role in inspiring a mystic poet, Alfred, Lord Tennyson! ✧