

On the Watch-Tower

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Leaving this 'World'

Two sentences from *The Mahatma Letters* to Sinnett run as follows: 'If any of you is so eager for knowledge and the beneficent power that knowledge confers, he has to be ready to leave your world and come into ours.' This is a serious matter: Are any of us willing to leave our world because we want real knowledge? 'Let him come by all means, but as a pupil to the Master, and without conditions.'

The Master put this also in a different way. 'He who would cross the boundary of the unseen world, can no more prescribe how he will proceed than the traveller who tries to penetrate to the inner subterranean recesses of Lhasa.' So the pupil who wants to enter the world of the Master, the world of light, cannot make conditions.

In another context, the Master said: 'You must come unconditionally, without the prudential considerations of the world.' He also said: 'The door is always open to the right man, and we invariably welcome the newcomer. Only, instead of going over to him, he has to come to us.' As long as we nourish our illusions, we cannot cross the boundary. Therefore, we may try to understand our weaknesses. We think we see and we know, but we only know some facts, which may not really be facts at all.

For example when we say, I know such and such a person, perhaps we know some facts about that person. But there is the illusion that we know fully. Even if we know all the facts about that person we do not really know, because it is only in terms of a value which we cannot describe, that knowledge exists.

What happens to the average human being is that he becomes involved in the objects of perception. The moment we come to a judgement about an object (I like this, I don't like that; this is nice, that is not nice), we have become entangled psychologically. Is it possible to be indifferent to the object of perception in that sense?

The object will not disappear. It is there; the mind is still observing the object of perception, but not assessing the object, not formulating opinions, neither attracted, nor repelled. But simply by this faculty of watching, of observation or attention, it comes to know the within of whatever there is.

In one letter the Master says that They have only to turn their attention to something and then they have an instantaneous comprehension of what they are looking at. In another letter, they say they live in the Realm of Truth and they

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act from Truth, which is not different from Light: it is the Light of Truth. From their point of view, all our knowledge is trivial and we spend a lot of time in making efforts to get this knowledge. Then we regard ourselves as experts in this or that.

It may be of practical importance to know how an aeroplane is made and how it flies, and so many other things in the world. But apart from the practical, it has no value at all. Is the person who is knowledgeable about aeroplanes happier? More generous, more compassionate, more capable of freedom from misery? Not at all. Real knowledge is different from what *we call* knowledge. It is the perception of the immanence of the One Reality in every atom, which creates an awareness of beauty, an expansion of love and relationship, an insight into the hidden nature of things.

We know the very famous statement: 'He who does not know, knows. He who thinks he knows, does not know.' When a person thinks 'I know', it is only a little activity of the mind. It is not an insight into the nature of whatever he claims to know. When there is that insight, there is no need to say, 'I know'.

Life is Indivisible

Let us think of another kind of illusion — separateness. Even though theoretically as Theosophists we may say, 'All Life is One, in fact life is indivisible', the fact remains that we are constantly experiencing the sense of separateness. It is easy for us to talk about unity but it is at a very

shallow level. Deeper in our subconscious is this feeling of the other, including all other people and things and creatures.

It is probably true that this sense of separateness arises with the growth of mental capacity. The mind sees differences more and more as evolution takes place. All other creatures are not bothered about differences. They only want to get food and survive. But slowly the thinking process develops: From where will I get my food? How will I survive? The mind develops in thinking about all that. And evolutionists say that individuality develops as the mind develops.

But why do we want to go on preserving that sense of separateness? Let us think of our so-called normal reactions. Someone says something which one does not find pleasant. Then there is an immediate reaction: Why did he say that? That was not nice of him. He ought to behave better.

When our mind is doing all that, we might feel self-righteous and believe that we are asserting rights and norms; actually we are only building up this separate personality. If the other man says something which is not very pleasant, why not simply be aware of that, without reacting. Be calm and do not get disturbed inwardly. We may want not to get disturbed, but there is another side which likes to be disturbed, because that is one of the ways in which we maintain our identity and separateness. Just imagine for yourself what life would be, if there are no likes and dislikes, nothing that attracts or repels me, then I may feel, I do not

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exist. My personality exists only because of these reactions, which in minor ways differ from the reactions of others. That makes us feel good. It preserves our identity.

So most of our life is spent in preserving our separate identity. This is the basic cause of other unhappinesses and the great unhappiness of the whole world. This is the reason why relationships can never be peaceful, because each one of us is pulling in a different direction. But the Mahatmas do not try to preserve an identity or impress others with the personality. True individuality or uniqueness is something different. It is part of Nature to bring out the uniqueness in everything. But as Krishnamurti used to say, the more we try to maintain our personality, the more we are like everybody else. We are destroying the possibility of that uniqueness developing.

One person's way of being ambitious, his route to fulfilling ambition, may be different from that of another. But actually both are ambitious. It is a state of mind and so they are both the same. All the people who are trying to preserve their sense of separateness are the same, duplicates of each other.

The Masters' World

In the Masters' world, all this does not exist. They live in the eternal Truth. It is a world of peace, not of struggle, of rivalry, of frustration, of hope. Peace is something we cannot grasp as long as we live in the world of illusion, just as the blind man cannot imagine what it is like when there

is sight. It is a world in which there is a union, which creates relationship with everything that exists. In one of the Mahatma Letters it is said that Nature has built an empire in which there is a magnetic sympathy with everything that exists, even between a most distant star and some person or object here. And separateness is a denial of that primary fact.

We have touched upon just three things which are very much part of our world of illusion and then the question arises, how can we pass from the illusion to that sphere of light. The Master says that the person who wants to go deep into the subterranean areas of Lhasa cannot tell his guide which is the way to go. But in the modern world everybody feels that this freedom is dependent on making their own choices. What happens if you progress fast in the wrong direction? You do the opposite of reaching your goal. The direction is very important — the direction given by those who have already gone to the light, to wisdom, to truth. That is why in one of the Mahatma Letters the Master says that the means to illumination have been found empirically, by experimentation, by the Wise Ones of all ages. The means have been stated in different ways by different people, but you will find they all converge towards certain things. The Master includes in his list of the means: Chastity of thought, word and deed. Chastity means restraint — not doing or speaking or thinking whatever one wants but learning and then acting.

In all of Nature there is a principle of restraint — for example, a coconut tree,

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or a tree which grows very tall, eighty feet or something similar, and then stops. There are millions of coconut trees which are really very tall with no branches to create a balance. If a tree grew taller, it would not be able to withstand the wind and the weather. It knows when to stop. Most non-human creatures know when to stop after eating. Only the human being does not know. If we study it actually, we will find that Nature puts a stop to the various things in the case of creatures which live naturally. But it is left to human beings to impose restraint on themselves.

We have to learn not to speak unnecessarily; learn to use the right words in the right circumstances; not allow our thoughts to run away here and there or interfere with everything else that we do. If we find anger arising in us we have to restrain it, not immediately go to fight with the other person. That is what culture means for the human being: to put brakes on our thoughts, words and deeds by using our intelligence to find out what is really beneficial.

It is very difficult for us to know what

is right and what is wrong. Human beings have done horrible things, thinking that they were doing good. The Buddha said, consider carefully what is beneficial to everybody, to other people, to other creatures, to the atmosphere, to the earth itself. If we are concerned with the welfare of all, we will impose restraint upon ourselves.

This is one of the qualifications which the Mahatma mentions. In the present age nobody likes restraint. We have wrong ideas of freedom, but we think we are doing good, even at the practical level. For instance when one nation thinks it is competent to decide how another nation must live, is it really good?

Chastity of thought, word and deed is the natural way of growth spiritually and anybody who says, 'I do not like that', cannot find the way to the light. We cannot make the conditions to proceed from the world of illusion to the world of truth or light. We must listen and reflect and meditate and realize deep in our heart what changes have to occur in our own psychology, in our consciousness. ✧