

Theosophy and Buddhism on the Balanced Mind

Sunday 23rd September 2018

A Collation from original Theosophical sources



Karma is the Law of re-adjustment which ever tends to restore disturbed equilibrium in the physical, and broken harmony in the moral world.... it does not act in this or that particular way always; but that it always does act so as to restore Harmony and preserve the balance of equilibrium, in virtue of which the Universe exists.

The Key to Theosophy, 205-6

The Dhammapada

The sayings of the Buddha

1. Just as a fletcher makes straight his arrow, the wise man makes straight his crooked thinking. This is difficult to guard. This is hard to restrain. (33)
2. Like unto a fish snatched from its watery home and cast on land, the mind trembles and quivers leaving the dominion of Mara (comforting illusion). (34)
3. Thinking is difficult to discipline. Mind is flighty, alighting where it listeth. Good is to tame it. The tame mind is the bearer of happiness. (35)...
5. He who controls his mind escapes the bondage of Mara. The mind is incorporeal, moves alone, travels far and rests in the cave of the heart. (37)
6. Wisdom fills not the unsteady mind of the man of ruffled serenity; he is ignorant of the true teaching. (38)
7. Fear there is not for him whose mind is not burning with desires, and which, having risen above likes and dislikes, is serene. He is awakened. (39)...
10. Whatever an enemy may do to an enemy, whatever a hater may do to a hater, a wrongly directed mind will do to us greater harm. (42)
11. Not a mother, not a father, not any kindred can do much; a well-directed mind does us greater service. (43)

Ch 3 "The Mind"

1. Better than a thousand-word speech of empty words is one pregnant sentence hearing which one feels peace. (100)
2. Better than a thousand-verse poem of empty sounds is one stanza hearing which one feels peace. (101)
3. Better than reciting a hundred verses of empty words is the repeating of a single stanza hearing which one feels peace. (102) ...
8. Better than a man who tends the sacred fire in the forest for a hundred years is that man who pays homage to one grounded in wisdom. Superior is that homage to a century of formal sacrifices. (107) ...
10. Four blessings to the man who respects the elders and practises reverence—length of days, beauty, happiness and strength. (109) ...
16. Better than the life of a hundred years of the man who perceiveth not the highest law, is the short life of a single day of the man who perceiveth the most excellent doctrine. (115)

Ch 8 "The Thousands"

The chief occasions for distraction of the mind are Covetousness and Aversion, and what the aphorism means is, not that virtue and vice should be viewed with indifference by the student, but that he should not fix his mind with pleasure upon happiness or virtue, nor with aversion upon grief or vice, in others, but should regard all with an equal mind; and *the practice of Benevolence, Tenderness, and Complacency brings about cheerfulness of the mind*, which tends to strength and steadiness.

Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, 1:33

THE DOCTRINE OF THE HEART

“There is plenty of material, as well as help, in the devotional books to the realization of the heart doctrine, for they are designed to awaken the Buddhic faculty—that of Intuition, the only means by which light can come to you or anyone. Printed words and the information that they indicate, are only “ladders” by which the learner can climb to Wisdom...

“So long as we are working for some reward, are inclined to be despondent or impatient, we shall be placing obstacles in our own way.

“Read *The Voice of the Silence*¹ and see the keys of the different “portals.”

Dana, the key of Charity; consideration for others, no matter what their state.

Shila, the key of harmony in word and act; that means among other things, sincerity—not to let acts belie one’s words, or words, one’s acts.

Kshanti, patience sweet that naught can ruffle.

“These three, if practised, will create a fairer and clearer atmosphere. *Shila* counterbalances the cause and the effect and leaves no further room for karmic action. The same idea is set forth in the *Gita* where it says that “Freedom comes from a **renunciation of self-interest** in the results of our actions.”

“The question always is, “How shall we stand the pressure?” Patience and fortitude are necessary under every condition. The ripening of one’s Karma presents the opportunity to gain these qualities, and it is well that we should learn the lesson. The principal effect of Karma is mental and psychical.

“Family Karma is not our own, and will come about sooner or later. The same with difficult financial conditions, or any other hard circumstances: they will come to all. So we should strive for calmness, patience, and fortitude, and also have full confidence that the tide is bound to turn, even at the fifty-ninth minute of the eleventh hour. “If the candidate has faith, patience and confidence, verily he will not have to wait too long.” There is one thing that should be remembered in the midst of all difficulties; it is this — “When the lesson is learned the necessity ceases.”

“We should know that Karma does not castigate; it simply affords the opportunity for adjustment.... it is well to remember that it was caused by ourselves, precipitated by ourselves, can be met by ourselves. We must, then, assure ourselves that nothing can possibly overwhelm us.

“It is better to assume a cheerful attitude to cultivate in one’s self a feeling of confidence, and endeavor to impart it to our nearest. Our anxiety and inner fears... may go a great way in depressing those who love us and whom we love.

“We all get in that temporary state... there is a point in our progress which involves the passing from one state of thought and action into another, and knowing this, **we should not be dismayed nor disturbed by anything that may come to pass**. It may seem to you that you are now useless, and your future circumstances dark and foreboding. These are only shadows of the past cast on the screen of the present; like shadows they will pass, if you but recognize them for what they are.

“Are you thinking too much of yourself, your present conditions and your prospects? This is not a firm reliance on the Law of your own being which brings to you the very opportunities that your soul progress needs. What if the future presents no clear view; what if your desires are not fulfilled; what if your progress is not at all apparent—why worry about it? You cannot change it. All you can do is the best you can under existing circumstances, and that is the very

¹ An esoteric and very ancient Mahayana Buddhist text, translated for the first time by H. P Blavatsky in 1889.

thing you should do, dismissing from your mind all thought of those things which are not as you would have them.

“Your studies and your efforts are futile if you are disturbed inwardly. The first thing then is to get calmness, and ***that can be reached by taking the firm position that nothing can really injure you***, and that you are brave enough and strong enough to endure anything; also that all is a necessary part of your training. Mr. Judge once said, “It may be a child’s school, but it takes a man to go through it.” Then why not make up your mind to go through it, no matter what the circumstance or condition? Others have; you can. Are you of weaker caliber than they?

“The whole position of the sincere student is summed up in the words: “Hold on grimly; have confidence and faith; for faith in the Master will surely bring victory.” We must “have *patience*, as one who doth forevermore endure”—and *forget ourselves* in working for others.”

As ever, R. C.

The Friendly Philosopher, Spirit in the Body, Letter 3, pages 10-11, Robert Crosbie

KARMA: “A TENDENCY TO RESTORE EQUILIBRIUM”

“You have asked me for comment... as to “Karma being as merciless as the Bible-God.” (But why not) consider that Mercy is not opposed to Justice, and that the fullest justice is the same as the fullest mercy?

“Some take the meaning of Mercy to be a permitted escape from the results of wrong-doing; but this would not be Justice, nor would it be merciful to those injured by the wrong-doing... *remember the definition of Karma: an undeviating and unerring tendency in the Universe to restore equilibrium, which operates incessantly.* Karma is inherent law and its operation must therefore be impersonal. Some might take this to be “merciless,” but that would only be because they desire escape from consequences that are unpleasant. (!)

“There are just two ways of looking at the question: (a) either the Universe is governed by Law and under Law, or (b) all is Chaos.

“Our experience in every department of Nature points to the fact that Law reigns everywhere; nothing is done of any kind or anywhere, except under Law. *Our control of the elements*, our use of the materials in Nature is possible only because the same thing can always be done when the same conditions are present...

“There can be, then, but one consideration, and that is, Justice. Why should we desire anything but Justice to be done? The Bible says, “Whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap,” and “Resist not evil and it will flee from you.”

“What is “evil” but the reaping of effects of wrong done? If we try to avoid the restoration of equilibrium, the evil will not flee from us, but come again. But if we accept all as just and right, then the “evil” flees.

“We should apply Karma not merely to what we call good and evil in physical life. The earth rolls on in its orbit, carried further and further by the Sun in his greater orbit; it grows old through the cycles; it changes its appearance, and comes under states of matter undreamed of by us. Such is the Karma of the earth. Soon or late, even while revolving in its orbit, our planet will slowly move its poles and carry the cold band of ice to where are now summer scenes—the Karma of the earth and its inhabitants. How, then, shall Karma be restricted in consideration to the details of one life, or judgment passed upon it from that basis? I should say that Karma is Mercy itself, for do I not know that nothing can prevent me nor any other from obtaining what is his by law, exact and unerring?

“It knows not wrath nor pardon; utter true
 Its measures mete, its faultless balance weighs;
 Times are as naught, tomorrow it will judge,
 Or after many days.

“Such is the Law that moves to righteousness,
 Which none at last can turn aside or stay;
 The heart of it is Love, the end of it
 Is Peace and Consummation sweet. Obey!”

The Friendly Philosopher, Spirit in the Body, Letter 11, p 31, Robert Crosbie

BALANCING THE FORCES IN OUR MIND

(The balancing of forces is) “the ‘continuous adjustment of **internal relations to external relations**,’ which is the basis of rebirth, both of which have to be subjugated before freedom is obtained.

“If so, this is kundalini — the power or force that moves in a spiral path; it is the Universal life-principle manifesting everywhere in nature. This force includes the two great forces of attraction and repulsion; electricity and magnetism are but manifestations of it. Hermes says:

“the genii have, then, the control of mundane things, and our bodies serve them as instruments ... but the **reasonable part of the soul is not subject to the genii**; it is designed for the reception of the God who enlightens it with a sunny ray, **for neither genii nor gods have any power in the presence of a single ray of God**. But all other men, both Soul and body, are directed by genii, to whom they cleave (join to) and whose operations they affect.”

“If forces are balanced, there must be something upon which the balance may be obtained; anything that can be moved by the forces would not so serve. There is but One Immovable—the Self.

“Transitory balancings may be obtained but not maintained. The “ups” and “downs” every one is subject to; sometimes **psychic**, sometimes **mental** and sometimes **physiological**; occasionally, **all three at once**. These must necessarily be the various adjustments, or “balancing of forces,”² which are in constant process of variation. There are, of course, “devachans” in between.”

Extracts from Letter 33, *The Spirit in the Body* by Robert Crosbie

“At certain stages of his student life, the Disciple often feels that getting away alone somewhere with regularity helps him keep his psychic balance. Surely it is not a good thing for progress to depend upon externals for balance.

“Thinking so only perpetuates the dependence, and cannot bring that inner strength and perception which is so necessary. That dependence occasions dissatisfaction at the majority of externals, and demands periodical changes, none of which brings anything lasting. From all this a nervous tension is produced which is corrosive and destructive, occupies the mind with one’s fancied needs, and reacts injuriously on the body.

“True strength lies within and can only be aroused and used by ceasing to think that anything in particular of an external nature is necessary for us, in the ordinary acceptance of the word. We have our place and our duty to fulfill and perform; externals are our temporary opportunities, and we shall be wise to use these rightly.”

The Friendly Philosopher p 125, Robert Crosbie

² The idea of balancing forces by the adjustment of “internal relations to external relations” should be dwelt on. Especially so regarding the mind’s direction while engaging in meditation and the times (fruits) after it.

Between the ancient Hindu *Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali and the Buddhist philosophy of Prince Gautama, there came many years ago to ancient Greece the Eastern impulses that gave birth to the Platonists, Stoics and others.³ These influences formed the basis of modern Western psychology which with the theosophical teachings enable the psychologist to trace their roots and form a coherent synthesis and more definite system based on a correct knowledge of the principles of man's true nature.⁴

For instance we are told how to resist the invasion of unwanted thoughts and tendencies into our personal sphere by those elemental energies which will – even unconsciously to ourselves – affect our mental state of balance and well-being.

Such resistance is the key note of a certain spiritual outlook and practice given in the sixth of “The Ten Points of Isis Unveiled”:

“Mediumship is the opposite of adeptship; the medium is the passive instrument of foreign influences, the adept actively controls himself and all inferior potencies.”

The Buddha also teaches self-mastery as path to the highest virtue and that the warrior (*Kshatriya*) is pre-eminently a spiritual soldier before a physical one:

“Better than a man who conquers in battles a thousand times a thousand men is he who conquers himself. He indeed is the mightiest of warriors.” (Dhammapada 103)

“[much failure]... lies in not realizing how necessary it is to apply to ourselves the criticisms and judgments we so freely apply to others... it is not desirable to let the mind become of the shape and mirror of undesirable things.

“This is all detrimental to the performance of our own duty, and to our progress on the Path of Compassion. Errors have to be recognized and avoided, and pointed out to others when necessary... For all (those) honestly striving with their enormous difficulties, we should have pity, sympathy, charity; we cannot do this if we mentally reproduce the opposites, weighing the act and actors....”

Letter 14, “Living The Life” by Robert Crosbie

A KEY TO EQUINIMITY IS UNITY & NON-SEPARATENESS

Unity and non-separateness arise from an intellectual then a practical appreciation of the philosophy: the metaphysical teachings of all the ancient systems stress that in our inner nature WE ARE ONE WITH THE WHOLE: that we – as psycho-spiritual pilgrims of an unimaginably long history – have come from the same place (non-Being, Nirvana), have the same work to do here, and will one day fulfill a similar destiny, aiding the aim of life to raise up of all of nature “to the state of conscious godhood.”

³ A map showing the path of these early teachings from China and India into Greece and Europe via early Egypt, was published in Part 2 of “The Wisdom of Early Egypt & Palestine,” [Theosophical Notes, Spring 2018](#) page 12. This article and its earlier Part 1 – all being extracts from *Isis Unveiled* by H. P. Blavatsky in 1877 – demonstrate the great similarity of these ancient doctrines, showing them stemming from a common Aryan root.

⁴ The whole secret of the mind's complex reaction to physical and psychic stimuli lies in its *dual nature*.

An ancient Buddhist axiom states it in these poetic lines:

“Thou canst not travel on the Path before thou hast become that Path itself.

“Let thy Soul lend its ear to every cry of pain like as the lotus bares its heart to drink the morning sun.”

The Voice of the Silence by 1889 1st ed, p 12, translated by H. P. Blavatsky

And what is *the Path*, other than our pre-selected destiny that we came into when falling from the universal into the individual, on our downward “in-voluting” cycle of destiny?

Earlier we read that Robert Crosbie asked why should we not desire perfect justice to always be done, ie for harmony to be re-established and not trying to put off ‘bad’ karma?

Well, courage is needed and a sense of unity provides it. Armed with courage, right compassion and discrimination is developed, because devoid of the personal selfish element:

“Let not the fierce Sun dry one tear of pain before thyself hast wiped it from the sufferer’s eye.

“But let each burning human tear drop on thy heart, and there remain, nor ever brush it off, until the pain that caused it is removed....

“It is the seed of freedom from rebirth. It isolates the Arhat both from strife and lust, it leads him through the fields of Being unto the peace and bliss known only in the land of Silence and Non-Being.”

The Voice of the Silence by 1889 1st ed, p 13, translated by H. P. Blavatsky

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We have hoped to illustrate how Theosophical and Buddhist texts give principles of psychology that will be of great usefulness when understood. They are the means to master the states of mind many of us will experience during life, made more inevitable by the pace of modern living.

The great appeal of theosophy to the religious and non-religious alike – who, all being human, suffer from mental trials or disturbances – is the methodical and scientific assessment of the Laws of Nature that may guide them and the practices they may apply.

And in such a scientific age as ours, where better to start searching for psychological solutions than in the modes of thinking of the inner man, with whom we hold our daily dialogues.

To conclude we will give example of four of the Buddhist practices outlined in the Seminar on 22nd of September that have been endorsed by ancient theosophical wisdom:

“... Buddhist teachings encourage us to explore our positive and negative emotions. The four positive (also called limitless) minds: **Metta or loving kindness, Karuna or compassion, Mudita or sympathetic joy** (as in feeling happy for someone else's joy), **and Upeksha or equanimity/tranquillity**... Metta Bhavana helps cultivate kindness and is an antidote to hatred. A meditation typically follows these stages: cultivating kindness towards ourselves, a good friend, a neutral person, someone we dislike, then picture all together with equal measure of loving kindness towards all three, and lastly gradually expand as to include family, friends, the city, the nation and the whole universe (including all kingdoms visible and invisible!). When dealing with difficult relationships with another person, e.g. those who have harmed us, this technique can be very powerful.”

[Great Minds of East and West](#) pages 2-3, ULT Seminar