

Seminar Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2017  
 Finding the Path : “Rules for Living Well”

## No. 1 The Eight-Fold Path of Buddhism

From *The Light of Asia*, by Sir Edwin Arnold, subtitled *The Great Renunciation, being The life and Teachings of Gautama Prince of India and founder of Buddhism*.

**The Fourth of the Four Noble Truths:**

The First Truth is of Sorrow  
 The Second Truth is Sorrow’s Cause  
 The Third is Sorrow’s Ceasing

The four truths of Buddhism are a means of finding our place in the world and, by meditation, to transform our emotions, so ending suffering and achieving happiness.

**The Fourth Truth is The Way.** It openeth wide,  
 Plain for all feet to tread, easy and near,  
**The Noble Eightfold Path;** it goeth straight  
 To peace and refuge. Hear!

The “holy” or sacred path is the one that leads to Nirvâna. (‘Marga’, Glos)

...

By lower or by upper heights it goes.  
 The firm soul hastes, the feeble tarries.  
 All Will reach the sunlit snows.

**The First good Level is Right Doctrine.**

Walk in fear of Dharma, shunning all offence;  
 In heed of Karma, which doth make man’s fate;  
 In lordship over sense.

(1) Samyag-drishti is ability to discuss truth. The first of the eight Mârga (paths) of the ascetic living according to the Law (Karma); however a real Yogâcharya (one practicing the Buddha’s path) would have nothing to do with “orthodox views.” In other words, it means to see things through, to grasp the impermanent and imperfect nature of worldly objects and ideas, and to understand the law of karma. It begins with the intuitive insight that all beings are subject to suffering and it ends with complete understanding of the true nature of all things. Since our view of the world forms our thoughts and our actions, right view yields right thoughts and right actions.

**The Second is Right Purpose.** Have good-will  
 To all that lives, letting unkindness die  
 And greed and wrath; so that your lives be made  
 Like soft airs passing by.

(2) Right Purpose or Intention, which the Buddha divides in 3 types: 1. the intention of renunciation, which means resistance to the pull of desire; 2. the intention of good will, meaning resistance to feelings of anger and aversion; 3. the intention of harmlessness, meaning not to think or act cruelly, violently, or aggressively, and to develop compassion.

**The Third is Right Discourse.** Govern the lips  
 As they were palace-doors, the King within;  
 Tranquil and fair and courteous be all words  
 Which from that presence win.

(3) Right speech; Buddha expands: 1. to abstain from false speech, especially not to tell deliberate lies and not to speak deceitfully; 2. to abstain from slanderous speech and not to use words maliciously against others; 3. to abstain from harsh words that offend or hurt others; 4. to abstain from idle chatter that lacks purpose or depth. Positively phrased, this means to

tell the truth, to speak friendly, warm, and gently and to talk only when necessary.

**The Fourth is Right Behavior.** Let each act  
Assoil a fault or help a merit grow:  
Like threads of silver seen through crystal beads  
Let love through good deeds show.  
Four higher roadways be. Only those feet  
May tread them which have done with earthly  
things;

**Right Purity (5), Right Thought (6), Right  
Loneliness (7), Right Rapture (8).**

(...)

He knows the Noble Truths, the Eightfold Road;  
By few or many steps such shall attain  
NIRVANA'S blest abode.

(4) HPB: Samyag-âjiva is mendicancy for religious purposes: the correct profession, the vow of poverty, obligatory on every Arhat and monk.

Commentary: right action means to act kindly and compassionately, to be honest, to respect the belongings of others, and to keep sexual relationships harmless to others.

(5) Right livelihood means that one should earn one's living in a righteous way and that wealth should be gained legally and peacefully.

(6) HPB: Samyak-samâdhi is an absolute mental coma, the full attainment of Samâdhi.

Commentary: Right effort is detailed in four types of endeavors that rank in ascending order of perfection: 1. to prevent the arising of unarisen unwholesome states, 2. to abandon unwholesome states that have already arisen, 3. to arouse wholesome states that have not yet arisen, and 4. to maintain and perfect wholesome states already arisen.

(7) Right mindfulness: ability to see things as they are. Right mindfulness enables us to be aware of the process of conceptualization in a way that we actively observe and control the way our thoughts go. Buddha accounted for this as the four foundations of mindfulness: 1. contemplation of the body, 2. contemplation of feeling (repulsive, attractive, or neutral), 3. contemplation of the state of mind, and 4. contemplation of the phenomena.

(8) HPB: Samyak-karmânta is strict purity and observance of honesty, disinterestedness and unselfishness, the characteristic of every Arhat.

Commentary: Right Concentration; ekagrata or one-pointedness, cultivated through meditation.

HPB emphasised the difference between exoteric and esoteric knowledge and the need to possess the keys to interpret these doctrines (these keys are given to the Initiated, after having proven worthy of the trust of the custodians of Wisdom); Theosophy as it was given out in the 19<sup>th</sup> century revealed certain truths which had been esoteric knowledge so far and became exoteric.

*The Voice of the Silence* contains truths which go beyond the purely exoteric interpretation, such as that Nirvana is not the highest goal, and introduces the notion of the two paths and the higher path of those Nirmanakayas (Buddhas of Compassion) who choose to give up their reward of Nirvana to stay in touch to help suffering Humanity. More elements will be given in the other talks, in particular the last one regarding the Theosophical views.

## No. 2 The Laws of Manu

**Manu** - (Sk.). The great Indian legislator. The name comes from the Sanskrit root man “to think”-mankind really, but stands for *Swâyambhuva*, the first of the Manus, who started from *Swâyambhu*, “the self-existent” hence the Logos, and the progenitor of mankind. Manu is the first Legislator, almost a Divine Being. (Theosophical Glossary)

**Mânava Dharma Shâstra** - is the ancient code of law of, or by Manu. (Theosophical Glossary)

Now every Brahmin knows that *it is only with Vaivasvata Manu* that *our Humanity* began on this Earth (or *Round*). And if the Western reader turns to the sub-section on “*The Primeval Manus of Humanity*,” he will see that Vaivasvata is the *seventh* of the fourteen Manus who preside over our planetary chain during its life cycle. (Secret Doctrine Vol. 2 p. 321)

We read in the preface to a treatise on legislation by Narada,” says Jaccoliot, “written by one of his adepts, a client of Brahmanical power: ‘Manu having written the laws of Brahma, in 100,000 slokas, or distichs, which formed twenty-four books and a thousand chapters, gave the work to Narada, the sage of sages, who abridged it for the use of mankind to 12,000 verses, which he gave to a son of Brighou, named Soumati, who, for the greater convenience of man, reduced them to 4,000.’ (Isis Unveiled, Vol.1 p. 586)

But what is the good of this? What do we Theosophists have to do with Brâhmanism, except to combat its abuses, since The Theosophical Society was established in India nine years ago. Rangunath Rao, a Brâhmana of the highest caste, who has presided for three years over The Theosophical Society of Madras, and who is at present Prime Minister (Dewan) of the Holkar, is the most fervent reformer in India. He is fighting, as so many other Theosophists, the law of widowhood, *on the strength of texts from Manu and the Vedas*. He has already freed several hundred young widows, destined to celibacy because of the loss of their husbands in their childhood, and he has made possible their remarriage in spite of the hue and cry of protest on the part of orthodox Brâhmanas. He laughs at castes; and the one hundred odd Theosophical Branches in India help him in this all-out war against superstition and ecclesiastical cruelty. (Misconceptions, H.P.B.)

The esoteric meaning of the *Laws of Manu* (Chap. XII, 3 and 55), of the verses that state that “every act, either mental, verbal or corporeal, bears good or evil fruit [Karma], the various transmigrations of *men* [not souls] through the highest, middle, and lowest stages, are produced by his actions” (Transmigration of the Life-Atoms, H.P.B.)

The control of speech from **the Laws of Manu**:

In Occultism, speech is regarded as an act, and the most difficult of all acts to control. To control speech, regular and persistent efforts are required. The rule for speech is given as:

**Let him say what is true.**

**Let him say what is useful.**

**Let him say what is pleasant.**

**Let him utter no disagreeable truth.**

**Let him utter no agreeable falsehood.** (Friendly Philosopher, Robert Crosbie p. 47)

W.Q. Judge said “Let us use with care *those living messengers called words.*”

## Other Laws of Manu (according to exoteric texts)

107. In this (work) the sacred law has been fully stated as well as the good and bad qualities of (human) actions and the immemorial rule of conduct, (to be followed) by all the four castes (varna).

108. The rule of conduct is transcendent law, whether it be taught in the revealed texts or in the sacred tradition; hence a twice-born man who possesses regard for himself, should be always careful to (follow) it.

104. A Brahmana who studies these Institutes (and) faithfully fulfils the duties (prescribed therein), is never tainted by sins, arising from thoughts, words, or deeds.

57. Excessive eating is prejudicial to health, to fame, and to (bliss in) heaven; it prevents (the acquisition of) spiritual merit, and is odious among men; one ought, for these reasons, to avoid it carefully.

49. These (plants) which are surrounded by multiform Darkness, the result of their acts (in former existences), possess internal consciousness and experience pleasure and pain.

88. A wise man should strive to restrain his organs which run wild among alluring sensual objects, like a charioteer his horses.

110. Unless one be asked, one must not explain (anything) to anybody, nor (must one answer) a person who asks improperly; let a wise man, though he knows (the answer), behave among men as (if he were) an idiot.

## No. 3 What does it take to become a true Theosophist?

*Inspired by HPB's poem 'There is a road steep and thorny'*

In her magazine “Lucifer” which Madam Blavatsky edited, we find in the September edition of 1891 a poem by her which has been my favourite for many years. It includes these lines:

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 onward, there is reward past telling - the power to bless and save humanity - for those who fail there are other lives in which success may come. (HPB's Collected Writings XIII p. 219)

In Isis Unveiled II:639 we can read “As the **white ray of light** is **decomposed by the prism** into the various colours 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 varicoloured fragments called religions.**”

Further explanation can be found from Robert Crosbie who says

“Generally speaking, a “ray” comes from a “light”; the ray is not the light itself, but a **projection** of it, and yet is the light, because without the light there would be no ray. The **colour of the light is clear and uniform**; the ray is **changed** in colour by the **substances** through which it passes. When the “ray” is “indrawn”, it is of the same colour as the light and is the light; in fact was the light all the time, for the **appearance of the different colours ... was ... from that through which it passes.**”

(The Friendly Philosopher, 93)

All true students of mysticism have good reason to believe, even when they do not absolutely know, that the various schools of occultism considered from their **highest or most spiritual and abstract teaching, lead to the same goal.** They may be called by different names, and their methods in minor details may not be the same, but the wisdom *au fond* is identical. (CW VIII:257)

... the same elasticity of interpretation is needed when dealing with the texts of other Nations. Each symbol and glyph has **seven keys**, which means that one group may be using one key to any subject under dispute, and another student is using another key, which can lead to deliberate misinterpretation. (CW VIII:156-7)

### Rules from “Practical Occultism”

10. No **animal food** of whatever kind, nothing that has life in it, should be taken by the disciple. **No wine, no spirits, or opium (or other drugs of course) should be used**; for these are like the *Lhamayin* (evil spirits), who fasten upon the unwary, **they devour the understanding.**

11. **Meditation, abstinence in all, the observation of moral duties, gentle thoughts, good deeds and kind words, as good will to all and entire oblivion of Self,** are the most efficacious means of obtaining knowledge and preparing for the reception of higher wisdom. (Practical Occultism, CW IX:160)

**Dr. Victor Mansfield (1941-2008)** Prof. of Physics and Astronomy wrote in his book "Tibetan Buddhism & Modern Physics", that for the attainment of non-conceptual awareness of ultimate truth like in Buddhism requires a **transformation of the personality at the most profound level.** In science no such transformation of the individual is required. Following the usual route in science through the Ph.D. and into contemporary research does require some native talent and much hard work, it **does not require moral and spiritual transformation.**

In the article “**Psychic and Noetic Action**” HPB refers to the Kathopanishad with its beautiful and descriptive metaphor where it says “The senses are the horses, the body is the chariot, and mind (the lower or kama manas) is the reins, and the intellect – or free will – is the charioteer.” (CW XII:350)

HPB tells us further, that **Universal Mind is only another name for the Absolute out of time and Space, it is not an evolution**, least of all a “creation”, but simply **one of the aspects of the Absolute**, which knows no change, which ever was, which is, and will be. (CW X:319)

The **divine resonance** is only the out-breathing of the first sound of **AUM** – the power which **stirs up and animates the particles of the universe**. (CW X:265)

Pythagoras taught the world was called forth out of Chaos by **Sound and Harmony**, constructed according to the principles of **musical proportions**. (Secret Doctrine I:433)

As the Macrocosm so the Microcosm, in HPB’s article “Genius” – published in 'Lucifer' November 1889 – she says **physical man** is a musical instrument, and the **Ego is the performing artist**. The potentiality of perfect melody of sound is in the former, the instrument, but no skill of the Ego can awaken a faultless harmony out of a broken or badly made instrument...

In his book “A beautiful Question – finding Nature's deep Design” Frank Wilczek, Nobel Prize Laureate and Prof. of Physics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology confirms:

From the heart of matter – music. There is no logical reason to expect that the mathematics developed to understand music should have anything to do with atomic physics. Yet the same concept and equations turn out to govern both domains. Atoms are musical instruments, and the light they emit makes their tones visible. Atoms emerge from the Laws, and they emerge as beautiful objects.

So which practices shall we practice to lead to the higher life, of conscious perception of our divine soul, the Ego? The Eastern Esoteric system *starts* modifying the mind and emotional states by the **first four Paramitas**:

1. **DANA, the key of charity and love immortal.** (as the discernment of loving parents.)
2. **SHILA, the key of Harmony in word and act, the key that counterbalances the cause and the effect, and leaves no further room for Karmic action.** (unity between what we say & do.)
3. **KSHANTI, patience sweet, that nought can ruffle.** (includes the power of resistance.)
4. **VIRÂGA, indifference to pleasure and to pain, illusion conquered, truth alone perceived.** (from “absolute indifference to the objective universe.”) (Voice, 1889, 47-48)

These are described allegorically as **Golden Keys** which open us to successively highest states of consciousness.

They are **keys** in the sense that our doorways to these states remain locked and so block us from progress until we cultivate the needed quality. So the possession of great patience and perception (the 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup>) fit one for better

We can understand this through the Law of Karma: **“When the lesson is learned, the karma ceases.”**

The aim of the paramitas is to help us to conform our thoughts and conduct to the latent divinity within, the spark of eternal individuality which sits – suffering or enjoying – as we, as personalities determine. Such a simple formula provides us with the great Karmic encouragement of taking back responsibility:

**Strive with thy thoughts unclean before they overpower thee. [...]**

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

**On the fields of charity immortal... grows the midnight blossom of Buddha... the seed of freedom from rebirth. It isolates the Arhat (saint) from strife and lust, it leads him through the fields of Being into peace and bliss...** (Voice 1889, 11-13)

*In the East there invariably follow every treatise or invocation a salutation such as “Peace to all beings” or*

***“Blessings on all that lives”***