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## Some Laws of the Spiritual Life

**T**he individual who seeks to achieve in the Fifth Race that which is the goal for humanity, at the end of this Fourth World Period, is confronted with certain natural laws governing the process of self-quickening.

That goal which some students of Theosophy set before themselves, is discipleship of a Master and under His guidance, the safe awakening of occult powers and attainment of the First Great Initiation.

Thus to force one's evolution, thus to attain in advance of the Race, demands obedience to certain natural laws, we are informed.

The rules put before us, the discipline and especially the attitude of mind, are not arbitrarily planned. They are based on natural laws governing enforced spiritual, intellectual and even physical unfoldment and development.

The attitude of mind necessary to fit anyone to become a disciple of a Great Teacher is said to be all-important.

This necessary mental outlook, we are told, is one of complete detachment from objects of sense and desire, renunciation of possessiveness and of the spirit of acquisition and self-centredness.

Personal disinterestedness is very difficult of attainment for some

of us who are in Western bodies, and are brought up in and imbued with the spirit of competitive progress to a solid position in life and of making good.

What we are asked to do seems at first like a renunciation of the spirit of courageous and determined endeavour essential to 'getting on in life'.

Let us then examine the ideal more closely to the end of understanding. First, I think it has to be remembered that occultism is common sense. So through all and especially in the personal application of great ideals, common sense must rule.

Indeed the very first quality put before us — *Viveka* — can be translated as common sense, though it is usually advocated as discrimination, which is much the same thing.

Above all we must not foolishly apply the rules, must not, for example, make ourselves penniless objects of charity in the pursuit of detachment and discrimination.

The ideal is expressed wholly in three Sanskrit words and one Greek word, in themselves strange in our ears.

The Sanskrit words are: *Viveka*, *Vairagya* and *Upeksha* and the Greek word is *Kenosis*.

*Viveka* means discrimination, wise choice between the more valuable and the less valuable and is beautifully explained, as is *Vairagya*, in *At the Feet of the Master*. It really means common sense based upon appreciation of spiritual values.

*Vairagya* means dispassion, detachment. A wonderful book on these two qualities is *Viveka Chudamani* (or *Crest Jewel of Wisdom*). *The Bhagavad Gita* is also replete with such guidance.

*Upeksha* means the poise of indifference, absolute unconcern about oneself.

### ***Viveka***

*Viveka*, then, means a sturdy common sense, a wise discrimination between the false and the true, the evanescent and the lasting, the unreal and the Real.

Examples of *Viveka* are:

The choice of Theosophy when breaking away from orthodox religion. The rejection of spiritualistic phenomena for the philosophy behind.

The choice of movements for public welfare instead of the social round as fields of spare-time activity.

The choice of idealists, students and serious thinkers for companions instead of other types.

The rejection of personal gain at the cost of honesty.

The choice of mental freedom instead of obedience to supposed superiors and parrot-like repetition of what they say.

The search for knowledge instead of the somnolence of blind faith.

### ***Vairagya***

*Vairagya* means renunciation, complete detachment, dispassion, absence of personal desire of any kind. It is personal disinterestedness, purity of heart.

Examples of *Vairagya* or Dispassion are:

Renunciation of self-will, obstinacy and combativeness on one's own behalf. Transmutation of the creative force into mental and spiritual channels following renunciation and cessation of its physical expression. Extension of the power of love to include more numerous and less personal objects of affection.

Reduction to a minimum of self-indulgences.

Elimination of all possessiveness and acquisitiveness, granting complete freedom of thought and action to all, even the most loved, whilst ever ready to give guidance and support when needed.

Generosity, largesse, sacrificial service.

Freedom from anger, hate, passion.

### ***Upeksha***

*Upeksha* is a state of complete equilibrium between all pairs of

opposites and uttermost freedom from self-interest and self-concern.

Examples of *Upeksha* or Absolute Personal Indifference are:

Recognition of the *Atma* as one with the *Paramatma*, of the self of man as identical with the Supreme Self.

Elimination of *Ahamkara* or the illusion of I-ness.

Complete indifference as to what happens to one's Personality.

Complete absorption in the welfare of the whole to the exclusion of any self-interest, fear for self and desire for separate existence and gain.

Rest in perfect equipoise in the Eternal.

To achieve even a measure of right judgment, detachment and personal disinterestedness, constant watchfulness is needed. The old habits of self-desire and self-seeking, with all their potentiality for pain, continually tempt one to self-centredness. Without Realizing it at the time, desire again has one in thrall.

This is the real evil in us from which we are advised to win free. It is called *Ahamkara*, the I-making faculty, the sense of separated, self-personality, I-am-ness.

For some temperaments, the reason can help. If there exists but one Will, One Life, One Intelligence, of which the Monad-Ego of man is but a temporarily-focussed ray, then separateness of existence is indeed an illusion. Each pseudo-individual is only a centre of, and in, the One Life.

There is no place for *maya* [illusion] in the occult life.

These are not moral maxims. They are safeguards against terrible heartbreak and defeat.

The path moves twixt cliffs of ice and iron and somehow the aspirant must find and keep to the middle path between the ice and the iron. Hence *Viveka*, *Vairagya*, *Upeksha*.

*Vairagya* and *Upeksha* seem to depend ultimately upon surrender to, and self-identification with, the One Will. I-am-ness then gives place to I-am-all-ness.

***Kenosis***

Mental self-emptying or *Kenosis* is the very heart of Christian mysticism. St Paul's Epistles to the Phillipians, 11:6, is translated by Lightfoot: 'Though he (Christ) pre-existed in the form of God, yet he did not look on equality with God as a prize which must not slip from his grasp, but he emptied himself, taking upon him the form of a slave, being made in the likeness of men'.

Here we think of Christ in his macrocosmic self as the Logos who continually empties Himself of His own life. By that emptying the worlds are ever nourished and sustained. He is said to have: 'poured Himself out, like water from a vessel, in order to enrich others'. Of Him as Logos it is said: 'Thou didst breathe forth Thine own Divine Life into Thy Universe . . . by that self-same sacrifice Thou dost continually uphold all creation . . . dying in very truth that we might live'.

This *Kenosis*, this self-emptying attitude of mind and mode of life is a key word in the Christian religion. Applied to the life of the Sanctuary, it is inculcated by our Lord in the words: 'He that loseth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal'. 'Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die it beareth much fruit'. Some must become 'the wheat of Christ', as a Christian mystic has said.

Also the poverty of the Nativity and the surrender to Pilate, the Jews and to Crucifixion, piercing of skin, the Sacred Heart and open wounds are all allegories of this attitude and condition.

Such self-emptying, such entirely self-forgetting love, such figurative death is necessary, it is said, for the more abundant life. To die to the sense of separated Individuality, egoism and possessiveness is to live unto life eternal. By some this is thought to be the greatest truth ever uttered.

Apparently we are in the presence of a strange law.

In imitation of the Great Exemplar, the Lord of Love, we must die to self-desire in order to live the larger life, pour ourselves out in selfless sacrifice and service. We must surrender self for love's sake, if we would know life eternal. Universal love is the only true way to eternal life, because it involves 'self-emptying of self'. Self-forgetfulness is

the basis of all spirituality.

These words 'self-emptying' and 'dying' are not to be taken as wholly expressing the truth. For, of course, the Logos does not ever become empty, nor does 'He' ever really become dead.

This leads one's thought to a strange spiritual law under which self-surrender brings not loss but renewal, to be considered later.

The Logos is ever Self-renewed from a higher dimension. The Sun does not exhaust itself despite its immeasurable out-pouring. For proportionate inpouring occurs. So selflessness does not bring loss but sufficiency and even abundance.

These four ideas of *Viveka*, *Vairagya*, *Upeksha*, *Kenosis*, seem to form a gate opening on the whole world of spiritual truth, spiritual experience and spiritual fulfilment.

This ideal self denudation is not at all new to us as students of Theosophy. It is inculcated in all the wonderful books of spiritual counsel with which we are so richly blest.

*Light on the Path*: 'Kill out ambition . . . the first curse, the great tempter. . . . Its results turn to dust and ashes in the mouth. . . . The pure artist who works for love of his work is sometimes more firmly planted on the right road than the occultist who fancies he has removed his interest from self. . . . But not until the whole personality of the man is dissolved and melted . . . not till the whole nature has yielded and become subject unto its Higher Self, can the bloom open'.

*The Voice of the Silence*: 'Give up thy life, if thou wouldst live'. 'Ere thou canst attempt to cross this wide abyss of matter thou hast to lave thy feet in the waters of renunciation'. 'And now thyself is lost in Self, thyself until Thyself, merged in that Self from which thou first didst radiate'. 'Where is thy individuality, Lanoo, where the Lanoo himself? It is the spark lost in the fire, the drop within the ocean, the ever-present ray become the All and the eternal radiance'. 'To don *Nirmanakaya*'s humble robe is to forego eternal bliss for self, to help on man's salvation; to reach Nirvana's bliss but to renounce it is the supreme, the final step — the biggest on renunciation's path'. 'The way to final freedom is within thy Self. That way begins and ends outside of self' (personal lower self). 'When to the permanent is sacrificed the

mutable, the prize is thine; the drop returneth whence it came'. The *Bodhisattva* who has won the battle, who holds the prize within his palm, yet says in his Divine compassion: 'For others' sake this great reward I yield' — accomplishes the greater renunciation. 'A Saviour of the world is He'.

In a remarkable passage in one of his letters to A. P. Sinnett, Master K. H. [Kuthumi] translates. 'Absorbed in the absolute self- unconsciousness of physical self, plunged in the depths of true being, which is no being but eternal, universal life, His whole form is immovable and white as the eternal summits of snow in Kailasa where He sits, above care, above sorrow, above sin and worldliness, a mendicant, a sage, a healer, the King of kings, the Yogi of yogis'. Letter XXXI [*The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*].

(From Study Notes of Geoffrey Hodson)

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