

A REVOLUTION IN ONESELF

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It has been said that he who sets out to tread the spiritual or occult Path has to turn himself inside out. That seems a large statement to make; yet I think it expresses literally the truth of what has to take place, which is nothing less than a complete revolution in oneself. This, too, may seem exaggerated and even incomprehensible, but we might approach the nature of the change in this manner:

Let each one examine himself as he is, his present condition. Leaving the body alone, as it is only the outer vesture, if he looks at the reactions and ideas present in his mind he will see that it is not a far-fetched comparison to describe it as a kind of sack which has varied contents, with its mouth very nearly closed. Each one has packed it with a certain amount of information about the world around him, and also with various ideas as to his relationship with that world, his needs, desires, possessions, beliefs, and so on. His thinking moves very largely round and in between these ideas.

If we study ourselves, we will see that when we start thinking on any subject the mind tends to go over the same track as before. Every movement of the mind produces a certain groove along which its energies tend to flow again. We may shift our ideas a little, manipulate and reorder them, transpose them variously, but fundamentally it is ideas accumulated over a period of time and the reactions connected with them which constitute the structure of our minds. For the most part the mind is closed and does not readily admit any ideas or truth which will disturb its settled condition.

What has now to take place is the turning of this enclosed mind, which is like a bag, into something open and different. The turning of it inside out means the emptying of the mind, the complete purgation of its contents, so that it is no longer the mind as it has come to be but a pure expanse of consciousness with nothing adhering to it. We are all acquainted with Einstein's idea of space and time as a continuum, that is, an expanse which would be perfectly smooth and regular but for the fact that there are various objects in it, all the objects in the universe, which pull it in different ways and create irregularities. Thus this space becomes finite and enclosed. This is a highly illuminating conception, whether or not the theory is absolutely correct. Various ideas which are formed exert each its pressure upon the consciousness, so that at various points it is pulled towards a certain centre which we call ourselves or pushed away from it, and what should be a smooth, open expanse becomes an enclosed sack.

It is when everything that it holds is let go that the consciousness, which in itself must be thought of as indestructible and extraordinary elastic - everything about it is extraordinary - is restored to its original condition, without any distortion, all the irregularities evened out completely, and the various pressures that wrinkle and constrain it no longer present. More than that, it becomes free even from any stain or trace of its association with the past contents. We can see what a wonderful state of mind and heart this would be, open at every point to reflect, record and know everything with absolute

truth. Such a mind, without that centre of a self to which everything was previously pulled, is a pure mind capable of reflecting the truth.

Its condition then is a condition of humility, in which alone there is the possibility of wisdom. Humility is not self-depreciation, as many people think. When I say I am an insignificant person, I am deploring my insignificance, expressing the feeling that I am not as important as I should like to be. It is the desire for importance, putting oneself on the map prominently and playing a part, which generates the regretful feeling that one is not there already. Humility is like the darkness of an extraordinary sensitive photographic film or plate, in which everything that is before it is truly and faithfully reflected. To reach this condition one does not have to engage in any pursuit, which would be the pursuit of a self-projected aim, but one has to denude oneself of everything that stands in the way of being able to reflect the truth, which truth is about everything and oneself. Truth manifests itself as in a mirror when there is the condition in which it can do so. One does not then have to run after it. It is a state of masterful negativity in which everything positive within its field is automatically comprehended. Those whom we call the Masters of the Wisdom, as I understand them, are persons who have arrived at this condition.

In such a state of humility, which is pure and absolute self-negation, in which there is a complete absence of egoism and no element of self-assertion, the truth of whatever happens to confront that state becomes absolutely plain and self-evident. Any assertion of oneself, which means also of the ideas which the self has attached to itself and made part of itself, the swelling or pushing of oneself, trying to impress others, and all such activities of the self have to cease for that intrinsic negativity, which is also purity and humility, to come into existence.

When we think of an Adept or a great spiritual Being we generally form an idea of what he is, which reflects our ignorance. It does not represent the reality of his state of being. We think of him as having various extraordinary powers, as a person who has access to hidden worlds and is in a position to grant favours. He may have such powers, but that is not the essence of his being. It is not the possession of powers which constitutes perfection. It is the beauty of his nature, the truth of what he is, which evokes one's spontaneous love and wonder.

We have all read about that nature or principle in man which is termed *Buddhi* in Sanskrit. It is generally translated as spiritual Intuition. In the old days Dr. Annie Besant called it "the pure Reason". But these descriptions convey but a partial idea of what it is in its totality. We might think of it simply as the deeper spiritual nature of man. The reason for my referring to it here is that it is only in the condition of purity and humility, which I have been picturing, that this extraordinary faculty of *Buddhi*, or truth-consciousness as it has been called, unfolds itself. It has been said that the heart is the seat of *Buddhi*, whereas the brain is the seat of *Manas*. The heart is that nature which gives of itself freely.

The fundamental difference between *Manas* and *Buddhi* lies in the fact that whereas *Manas* is an energy directed outwards to different particulars or parts of a whole, and attempts to know them and their mutual relations, *Buddhi* has a different approach. It embraces the whole with all its parts from within. It knows the truth of a thing by identification with it, this truth being not merely the truth of what it is outwardly, the truth of its form, but also and primarily what it is in itself apart from the

form, the truth of the indwelling life. It is a different aspect of the totality of one's being which responds to the quality or inner nature of a thing. There is such a response when there is love of the type that gives itself.

As H.P.B. says, Manas and Buddhi have to be brought into harmony with each other, so that they constitute the unity of Buddhi-Manas. Then there open out various possibilities, all of which flower out of a condition of giving oneself, the whole of one's interest and love to life in every form. The complete giving of oneself is a state of surrender which cannot be produced by any act of will. Such giving has to be free and unforced. Only when the self which is a product of the formula, "I want," has completely gone, been purged out of one's nature, does one attain that absence of tension, purity and sensitiveness in which truth is made manifest. The change from one point of view is a becoming, but not a self-becoming. It is an unfoldment made possible by the breaking up of the self, which process, when it is initiated, proceeds quickly, like the melting of congealed waters at the onset of spring. It cannot be a conscious becoming, as it is becoming without self. It is the sense of a separate self which breaks up the unconscious unity that was our original state. The self, as we can all see, is a thing of many wants. It is really a product of contradictory desires. As all desire, for anything whatsoever, is basically self-centred, it is a question whether it is not the wanting of different things, holding and possessing them, which creates the illusion of an ego with many contradictory impulses. I am not referring to that "Ego" in our Theosophical literature which is the sum of all realized spiritual possibilities, containing within itself the thread which connects them.

It is the dissolution of the centre of separateness, which has many forms of action and expression, which throws out tentacles by which it grasps what it desires and strives to hold it for its own enjoyment, which is the revolution in oneself. It is the absence of egoism, manifesting an understanding of one's fellow beings not based on one's reactions, which gives rise to love in the true spiritual sense. Then instead of an empire of egoism, there is set up in the heart a different kind of empire, one of love and understanding. And this empire or state is not static but a constant flowering or burgeoning from within. There is in it a continual upwelling of the waters of life, a fountain which takes a new shape from moment to moment.

Even to perceive the possibility of such a change has great value. The moment we see the goal we know at least the direction in which to proceed. A single glimpse of that goal which is in oneself brings a tremendous assurance and an unconcern with any other thing beside it. One is not misled by counsels of ignorance into by-paths which are all ways of turning round the self or selfinvolution.

The revolution which has to take place is not a revolution in the ordinary sense, not partial, not violent. It is a revolution which has to take place in a condition of understanding and freedom from conflict, and is the establishment of an order different from the order - or rather, the chaos - which exists in us at present, an order that is a state of freedom and gives rise to a love which casts its rays upon all, making what is divinely lovely in others manifest to one's vision. We are not in that condition at present. What are we to do to create this love? The answer to this would be: All those things which are of the greatest beauty and significance can be produced only by Nature, that is, by a wholly natural process, not by our will or a mind which is limited and ignorant. It is Nature, the universal Mother, that knows how to bring to fruition the possibilities that lie latent in all life, how to bring about a complete change, how to produce something absolutely new. All that we can do is to remove the impediments in ourselves that prevent that flowering which must take place by itself.

An individual may be old, stale, encrusted, limited in various ways. Can he become young at heart, fresh and completely rejuvenated? How is this to be achieved? Not by any planning on his part or by the will. It cannot be done that way, because it is only life, which rejuvenates and we must make it possible for this life to flow freely. As has been said of old, death is the gateway to life - the renewal of life. Death means the death of all the elements which block the fountain of life. It is life upwelling from one's eternal roots which rejuvenates the individual so that he becomes completely new in his inner being.

A state of being in which there is no deterioration, a condition of timeless youthfulness, is possible on the planes of consciousness. The liberated man may have a physical body which grows old in course of time - that is inevitable, because the body changes according to the laws of physical Nature - but inwardly in his heart and being, in his consciousness, he is ever fresh and new, ever like the new-born child along with all his wisdom. There is no virtue in prolonging one's life, but there is virtue in remaining young at heart, new, innocent, unconditioned, free and incorrupt. That is the nature of the Adept.

If such a change has to take place unforcedly by a natural process, what then are we concerned with? "We" means our will and intelligence which can remove the impediments to that process and liberate that nature which is susceptible to no conditioning, which we call the spiritual nature. Therefore we are concerned only with two things: first, truth, or rather, the understanding of truth; second, the direction of our will towards such unself-seeking action as is possible, the service we can render for no gain. It seems to me that if life can be reduced to these two essentials, if we can concentrate on them, and not have any other aims or desires, whatever can take place in that state of freedom from preoccupation with oneself, will represent the truth of our fundamental being.

Understanding is not the understanding of abstractions or gaining the knowledge that is in encyclopaedias, but it is an understanding of how to live, of our own minds, of others, how we must act, the way in which to look at things. It is an understanding which has a direct bearing on all the aspects of our living. It is only by understanding that the will is changed from being self-will to a selfless will. We often use the word "will," but its nature is difficult to understand. It is so often misunderstood as the so-called will of a dominant, insistent person. It is stupid to maintain one's stand doggedly against reason or considerations affecting the happiness and welfare of all. Will as ordinary understood generates a consciousness of power which intensifies the sense of separateness and creates obstacles in the way of the One Will that is at the back of all life and evolution, the way Life moves when there is no compulsion.

The will of the Spirit is not the will of blind matter, of mechanical self-assertion or aggressive self-defence.

When we understand these things, we begin to see the direction in which we should proceed and the possibility of proceeding along it, avoiding different things which divert us from the road, such as seeking psychic powers, the enhancement of one's personality, status, success, and so forth. One has to leave all that alone to tread that path of which it has been said: "There is no other path at all to go," because that path, which is a way of life, and oneself in one's truest nature are realized to be the same.

Occultism means that a man takes himself in hand, and not others.

Annie Besant