

**A Magazine Devoted to
The Living of the Higher Life**

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सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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HUMAN RELATIONS—THE GITA WAY

KRISHNA came into the world as an *avatar* at the beginning of *Kali-yuga*, and once again gave out the sacred teachings which can help humanity in the Dark Age. His teachings are contained in the *Bhagavad-Gita*. The *Gita* is so valuable that even the Adepts are said to study it. It is like an exhaustless mine. Each one can extract precious gems according to one's capacity. What do we learn from the *Gita* on our treatment of other human beings?

In the very first verse of the *Gita*, we find Dhritarashtra, the blind king of Kuru clan asking the question to his wise companion Sanjaya:

“Tell me, O Sanjaya, what the people of my own party and those of Pandu who are assembled at Kurukshetra resolved upon war, have been doing.”

The opening verse contains the philosophy of life of man of the world, who believes that only my kith and kin, who share my views, my values, and who support me in my good and evil undertakings are “mine,” while the rest of the people, however great, wise or right in their views are to be classed as “not mine,” but the “others.” The result was the slaughter of the entire Kuru clan and destruction of many a great warriors in the most horrible war between the two clans. But what else can you expect from blind Dhritarashtra, representing ambitious man of the world, who lacked the right

knowledge of the true nature of man and the true purpose of life. In the Ninth Chapter of the *Gita*, Shri Krishna tells Arjuna, “I am the father and the mother of this universe.” He tells him that He, as the transcendental and immanent reality, is the source from which everything comes into existence and into which everything returns at the close of manifestation. And this process of manifestation and dissolution of the world has no beginning and no end. He tells Arjuna: “All this universe is pervaded by me in my invisible form. . . I emanate again and again this whole assemblage of beings, without their will, by the power of the material essence.” (*Gita*, IX)

If we have come from the same source, exist in that source and are sustained by that source, it makes us all members of one family, united to one another, affecting one another, for better or for worse. This being so, when we hate another, harm another, speak ill of another, insult another, we are despising Krishna who is present in all beings. Jesus said that whoever says to his brother, “You fool!” will be subject to hell fire. It clearly tells us of the consequences of ill-treatment of a fellow human being.

It is because we have different bodies, different personalities, different capabilities, powers and positions, we think we are separate from other people, and hence act selfishly. But in the Tenth Chapter of the *Gita*, Shri Krishna says: “I am the Ego which is seated in the hearts of all beings.” Thus, the Self within is identical in all beings. But the outer appearance deludes us. Therefore, Shri Krishna shows us the distinction between the body and the Spirit.

These finite bodies, which envelope the souls inhabiting them, are said to belong to Him, the eternal, the indestructible, unprovable Spirit, who is in the body. . . As a man throweth away old garments and putteth on new, even so the dweller in the body, having quitted its old mortal frames, entereth into others which are new. (*Gita*, II)

It clearly shows us that while the body dies, the spirit within is immortal and changeless. The same Self shines in all, though it does

not shine forth equally. And if all beings are identical in their essence, there can be no distinction between the poor and the rich, the good and the evil. The true devotee, who sees the presence of Krishna in all things, is considered to be the most excellent devotee.

Therefore, the illuminated sage regards with equal mind an illuminated, selfless Brahmin, a cow, an elephant, a dog, and even an outcast who eats the flesh of dogs (*Gita*, V). He sees the same spirit dwelling in every being. Even if we are not able to behave like an illuminated sage towards others, we can remember what the Buddha said. He said: “All men tremble at the rod, to all men life is dear; all men fear death. Putting oneself in place of another, one should neither slay nor cause to slay.” Try to get into the shoes of another to find out where the shoe pinches. “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you,” said Jesus. “Do not do unto others what you would not wish others to do unto you,” said Confucius to his disciples. We need to cultivate sympathy towards all.

In the Fourth Chapter of the *Gita*, Krishna tells Arjuna about the exhaustless doctrine which he said he formerly taught unto Vivaswat, who communicated it to Manu, who gave it to Ikshwaku; and being thus transmitted from one unto another, until at length in the course of time the mighty art was lost. He was giving out once again the same exhaustless, secret, eternal doctrine to Arjuna. Krishna thus confirms the existence of a body of knowledge which is periodically given out by the Great Beings for the benefit of the world, and which is the source of all religions. And since all religions have sprung from the same source which is called the “Wisdom Religion,” we can appreciate that “all religions are true at the bottom, and all are false on their surface.” All religions teach us to be kind, truthful, honest, and so on. If this is so, then where is the question of one religion being superior to another? Why should there be fight between Hindus and Muslims, between Christians and Jews and between members of different sects of the same religion? On the contrary, we need to become open-minded, and try to see the truth underlying all the religions, by their comparative study, or at least

try to cultivate tolerance towards views of people of other religions.

In the same Chapter, Krishna tells Arjuna, “Both I and thou have passed through many births...Mine are known unto me, but thou knowest not of thine.” In this, there is definite affirmation of the doctrine of Reincarnation. The question is: If we have lived before in other bodies, though we do not remember our past lives, is it not likely that in some other birth we might have been a Hindu or a Muslim or a Christian or a Jew, whom we despise in the present birth? Also, can we deny the possibility that we might be born into that religion in some future life? This realization ought to help us to get rid of our narrow-mindedness.

In olden days, people born in supposedly superior caste, such as Brahmin, considered a *shudra*, who did the menial work, as untouchable and ill-treated him. At the present time, this has been replaced by a strong feeling of superiority exhibited by the whites towards blacks, the rich towards the poor, the educated towards the illiterate; without realizing that the one who feels superior might very well be born in the next life as a black or as a poor or a foolish man. Hence, we must remember that if we ill-treat another on the basis of externality, we make a serious mistake. Karma might then teach us a lesson by placing us in that identical situation. We must not shun another because he is wicked, or because he is a leper or an ugly person, or because he is foolish and boring, or because we do not like the way he dresses up or speaks. We must treat all with respect and dignity. In India, when a person meets another, he joins palms and says: “Namaste,” saluting, as it were, the Spirit within the person.

Hence, at any time, when we feel anger, irritation, boredom, hatred, malice or ill-feeling towards another, we can remember the stern statements in *Light on the Path*: “If you allow the idea of separateness from any evil thing or person to grow up within you, by so doing you create Karma, which will bind you to that thing or person till your soul recognizes that it cannot be isolated.”

It is said, “hate the *sin* and not the *sinner*,” because the sinner up

may one day realize the mistake and turn the corner. Valiya, the robber, became rishi Valmiki when he realized his mistake and gave up robbery and meditated. What do we do? If someone is caught stealing, he is branded as a thief for life. People do not wish to have any traffic with someone who has been to jail. We neither forget nor allow him to forget his past by our attitude; without realizing that the real man is the Spirit within, which is not affected by anything that the personality does. Spirit is all-knowing and powerful, but it cannot do anything on this plane unless the personal man turns to it for help. When he does that, he is already on the road that leads to self-realization. Men can and do change, and therefore, no one must be utterly condemned. Krishna sets an example for us:

I know not hatred nor favour; but those who serve me with love dwell in me and I in them. Even if the man of most evil ways worships me with exclusive devotion, he is to be considered as righteous, for he hath judged aright. Such a man soon becometh of a righteous soul and obtaineth perpetual happiness. (*Gita*, IX)

In the Second Chapter of the *Gita*, Krishna praises *Nishkama* Karma—actions performed without concern for the results. He tells Arjuna:

Let, then, the motive for action be in the action itself, and not in the event. Do not be incited to actions by the hope of their reward, nor let thy life be spent in inaction. Firmly persisting in Yoga, perform thy duty, O Dhananjaya, and laying aside all desire for any benefit to thyself from action, make the event equal to thee, whether it be success or failure. Equal-mindedness is called Yoga. (*Gita*, II)

If we examine ourselves, we may find that we are doing just the opposite. There is desire for result in almost every action of ours. Cold calculation has entered even into human relations. If we are introduced to a person, the evaluation process kicks off without our being conscious of it. Will this person be of use to me or will I end

helping him without getting anything in return? A person holding an important post in the government office or a multinational company will find many who maintain good relations with him. But from the day he retires, the number of his so-call friends and well-wishers begin to dwindle. When we help someone, there is expectation that the person will help us when we need his help. If this person does not help us then we get terribly upset. Krishna therefore asks us to perform our duty without any desire for benefit to ourselves.

In the Third Chapter of the *Gita*, Shri Krishna explains why it is necessary to do our duty. In the work of the world, each person is expected to make his contribution. Each one has to do his natural duty. In this excellent scheme of division of labour, each is expected only to do what comes to him naturally, effortlessly and joyfully. No work is small or insignificant or inferior. Have we ever given it a thought that we are able to pursue our cherished goals or profession or hobbies because someone else is doing that which we consider inferior or not worthy of spending our precious time on? Thousands of people work round the clock to ensure that essential services and essential commodities are made available to us. Interdependence is a way of life. We derive benefit from the labour of other people on physical, mental, psychic, and intellectual as well as on spiritual planes. We are expected to do our bit for them. If we enjoy the fruits of labour of others without making our contribution, then we are like a thief. Krishna says that “he who, sinfully delighting in the gratification of his passions doth not cause this wheel thus already set in motion to continue revolving, liveth in vain.” By doing our duty, we make our contribution, which in turn helps others.

AND all people live, not by reason of any care they have for themselves, but by the love for them that is in other people.

—LEO TOLSTOY

FOOD FOR THOUGHT THE PARABLE OF THE OCEAN

“NOW at one time the Blessed One was abiding at Savatthi, in the Eastern Arama. It was Uposatha-Day, known in the older Sanskrit tongue as *Upavastha*. The Lord had ordained that all monks in any given place should foregather to benefit from the influences which made certain nights of the lunar month auspicious for the work of learning and teaching the *Dhamma*. It was one such night when the Lord was seated in the midst of the assembled Bhikkhus. The night was far spent in silent meditation, but the Tathagata would not speak the words of light which always dispelled darkness.

The first watch was passing away. The venerable Ananda arose, arranged his robe over one shoulder, saluted the Teacher with joined palms, and said, “Lord, the night is far spent. The Bhikkhus have been waiting eagerly. Will the blessed one preach?” The Tathagata was silent. The second watch was passing away and Ananda’s petition drew not any sermon. For the third time, Ananda proffered his request.

“The assembly, Ananda, is not pure,” said the Lord.

The venerable Maha Moggallana, acting as the master of ceremonies, wondered to whom the Lord was referring. Penetrating with his own mind the minds of the assembled brethren, Maha Moggallana detected the profane—not a student and a *Samana*, though he had taken the vows, foul within, full of cravings, worthless. On perceiving who it was, Mahamoggallana went up to the individual and said, “Arise, sir! The Blessed One has detected you. You do not belong to this assembly.” But the man kept silent in spite of three requests from Maha Moggallana, whereupon that master of ceremonies took the man by the arm, put him out, and locked the room. Proceeding with folded hands with salutation, he approached the Blessed One. “Lord, I have done my duty. The assembly is now undefiled. Will the Wise One speak?”

“How astonishing! How curious a thing it is, Moggallana, that

that foolish fellow should have waited up to the very point when he had to be put out!”—said the Blessed One. And then He preached.

And the Blessed One said to the Bhikkhus: “There are, O Bhikkhus, in the great ocean, eight astonishing and curious qualities, by the constant perception of which the mighty creatures take delight in the great ocean.

“And just in the same way, O Bhikkhus, there are in this doctrine and discipline eight marvellous and wonderful qualities, by the constant perception of which the Bhikkhus take delight in this doctrine and discipline. What are the eight?

“Just, O Bhikkhus, as the great ocean gets gradually deeper, slope following on slope, hollow succeeding hollow, and the fall is not precipitately abrupt—just so, O Bhikkhus, in this doctrine and discipline is the training a gradual one, work following on work, and step succeeding step; and there is no sudden attainment to the insight of Arhatship. This is the first quality.

“Just, O Bhikkhus, as the great ocean remains of the same nature, and passes not beyond the shore—just so, O Bhikkhus, is the body of precepts which I have established for those who are hearers of my word, and which they, their lives long, do not pass beyond. This is the second.

“Just, O Bhikkhus, as the great ocean will not brook association with a dead corpse; but whatsoever dead corpse there be in the sea that will it—and quickly—draw to the shore, and cast it out upon the dry land—just so, O Bhikkhus, if there be any individual evil in conduct, wicked in character, of impure and doubtful behaviour, not a Samana, though he have taken the vows of one, foul within, full of cravings, a worthless creature; with him will the Sangha brook no association, but quickly, on its meeting together, will it cast him out. And though that man should himself be seated in the midst of the Bhikkhus Sangha, *verily, both is he afar off from the Sangha, and the Sangha from him.* This is the third.

“Just, O Bhikkhus, as the great rivers, when they have fallen into the great ocean, renounce their name and lineage and are

thenceforth reckoned as the great ocean—just so, O Bhikkhus, do the four castes when they have gone forth from the world under the doctrine and discipline proclaimed by the Tathagata, renounce their names and lineage and enter into the number of the Sakyaputtiya Samanas. This is the fourth.

“Just, O Bhikkhus, as though all the streams in the world flow on till they reach the great ocean, and all the waters of the sky fall into it, yet does it not seem thereby to be either more empty or more full—just so, O Bhikkhus, though many Bhikkhus pass entirely away in that kind of passing away which leaves not a trace behind, yet does not the Sangha thereby *seem to be either more empty or more full.* This is the fifth.

“Just, O Bhikkhus, as the great ocean has only one taste, the taste of the salt—just so, O Bhikkhus, has this doctrine and discipline only one flavour, the flavour of emancipation. This is the sixth.

“Just, O Bhikkhus, as the great ocean is full of gems, of gems of various kinds, just so, O Bhikkhus, is this doctrine and discipline full of gems, of gems of various kinds, among which are the four Earnest Meditations, the fourfold great Struggle, the four Roads to Iddhi, the five Moral Powers, the five Moral Senses, the seven kinds of Wisdom, and the noble eightfold Path. This is the seventh.

“Just, O Bhikkhus, as the great ocean is the dwelling place of mighty beings, just as there are in the great ocean creatures so constituted that they stretch from one to five hundred leagues—just so, O Bhikkhus, is this doctrine and discipline the resort of mighty beings, among whom are, he who has entered the First Path (the *Sotapanno* or stream-entrant), and he who has realized the fruit thereof (the *Sakridagamin*, or one who has to take one more birth), and he who has entered the Third Path (the *Anagamin*, who has no more births to take), and he who has realized the fruit thereof, the Arhat, and he who realized the fruits of Arhatship. This is the eighth.

“These, O Bhikkhus, are the eight marvellous and wonderful qualities in this doctrine and discipline by the constant perception of which the Bhikkhus take delight therein.”

Among other things, “ocean” symbolizes vastness and depth. Mr. Judge writes, “Theosophy is that ocean of knowledge which spreads from shore to shore of the evolution of sentient beings: unfathomable in its deepest parts, it gives the greatest minds their fullest scope, yet shallow enough at its shores, it will not overwhelm the understanding of a child.”

Mundane, ordinary existence is often compared to ocean, and attainment of spiritual goal involves crossing over the ocean of life or *bhavsagara*. For those of us who are satisfied with our present state, spiritual life is irrelevant. Buddha said of such complacent, worldly persons: “Most people go their rounds on this shore only.” Spiritual aspirants long to cross over to the other shore.

The river is formed by water that comes from the action of the sun. As a Sanskrit verse expresses it, water falls from the sky (forming a river) and then flows into the ocean. It shows that both the ends are at a grand scale, though in-between the river may get utterly dirty, it begins from the great source and ends also in greatness. It is the symbol of the way the great “inner life” flows, neither its beginning nor its end are here. “Humanity is an emanation from divinity on its return path thereto.” Ocean represents unconditioned consciousness. Our personalities are like waves in the ocean. A wave rises in the ocean and *appears* separate, but for how long? A few seconds, then it falls and merges back into the ocean. Individuality or the real “I” is compared to a drop in the ocean. *The Voice of the Silence* describes the state of *Samadhi* as the merging of the drop in the ocean. The ascetic loses consciousness of every individuality, including his own. He becomes—the ALL.

The *Gita* uses the symbol of ocean to explain that desires may arise in the heart of even a Great One, but he is not swayed by them. Thus: “The man whose desires enter his heart, as waters run into the unswelling passive ocean, which though ever full, yet does not quit its bed, obtaineth happiness; not he who lusteth in his lusts.”

STUDIES IN THE DHAMMAPADA IMPURITY-IV

17. *There is no fire like passion; there is no strangler like hate; there is no net like delusion; there is no torrent like craving. (251)*

THE BUDDHA said: “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.” By our passion, hatred, delusion or craving, we create for ourselves a true hell, right here on earth. Passion is a state of desire which has gone beyond our control. There is an obsession to achieve the object at any cost. When Arjuna asked Krishna the reason why a man is propelled to commit offences, almost against his will, as if constrained by some secret force; Krishna tells him that it is due to passion. He describes passion as an enemy even of the wise man and tells Arjuna how it may be controlled.

It is lust which instigates him. It is passion, sprung from the quality of rajas; insatiable, and full of sin. Know this to be the enemy of man on earth. As the flame is surrounded by smoke, and a mirror by rust, and as the womb envelopes the foetus, so is the universe surrounded by this passion. By this—the constant enemy of the wise man, formed from desire which rageth like fire and is never to be appeased—is discriminative knowledge surrounded. Its empire is over the senses and organs, the thinking principle and the discriminating faculty also; by means of these it cloudeth discrimination and deludeth the Lord of the body.

Hatred gives rise to anger or frustration, particularly when it does not find an outlet. Enmity increases, it eats up the vitals of man and has strangling effect. Psychosomatic diseases are often an outward expression of suppressed emotions such as anger, hatred or anxiety. The person in inferior position often suffers from impotent but intense hatred which has certain bodily consequences. In all the circumstances of life, a true disciple is asked to cultivate

“resignation.” He is expected to remember that nothing befalls anyone unless there is some karmic connection. As Mr. Judge puts it: He must be ready to say, under whatever circumstances, whether expected or unexpected: “It is just what I in fact desired.”

18. *Easy it is to see the faults of others; difficult it is to see our own. One winnows others' faults like chaff, but his own faults he hides even as a cheat hides a losing throw. (252)*

19. *He who is given to finding faults in others and is ever censorious increases his own weaknesses. Far indeed is he from their destruction. (253)*

It is easy to detect faults in others, particularly when we do not like the person. When we like someone, we are able to ignore his faults. Man's perception of others is often a reflection of what he is. When noble-minded Yudhisthira was asked to find an evil person, he said that he searched and searched hard, but he could not find a single person who was evil. When evil-minded Duryodhana was asked to find a good person, he said that he searched and searched very hard, but he could not find single good person.

We are asked not to judge another. But if it happens to be our responsibility to judge another, then we require knowledge and objectivity to be able to take total view of things. In any matter, when there is something of ours at stake, we are emotionally attached, and then it becomes difficult to remain objective. A mother would find it very difficult to blame her own child. A judge may also find it difficult to pass judgment against his kith and kin. A surgeon is not to perform surgery on his own dear one. No doubt, there are always exceptions.

In the article “Laws Governing Elementals,” the sage tells the pupil that every time you harshly and unmercifully criticize another, you produce an attraction to yourself of certain quantities of elementals from that person. They fasten themselves upon you and endeavour to find in you a similar state or spot or fault that they have left in the other person. It is as if they left him to serve you at

higher wages, so to say. As a result, you may find the very same fault developing in yourself.

Finding fault with others is a subtle sign of sense of superiority—the holier than thou attitude. It often is an attempt to hide our own faults. Such people try to rise by showing faults of others. They criticize others and forget the beam in their own eyes. Mr. Judge asks us to remember that:

We are all human, and thus weak and sinful. If, in one respect, we are better than others, then, in some other way, they are better than we are. We would be self-righteous to judge others by our own standard....Are we so wise as never to act foolishly? Not at all....Everyone should never think but the very best, no matter what the evidences are....Masters deal kindly with us in the face of greater knowledge of our faults and evil thoughts from which none are yet exempt. (*Letters That Have Helped Me*)

In her article, “Is Denunciation a Duty?” H.P.B. said that “we denounce indignantly systems and organizations, evils, social and religious—*cant* above all; we abstain from denouncing persons.” *Lucifer* assumed this position as the representative of the Theosophical Movement. But to the individual theosophists her advice in the matter was:

A true theosophist must be a cosmopolitan in his heart. He must embrace mankind, the whole humanity in his philanthropic feelings. If a theosophist happens to be a public officer, a judge or magistrate, a barrister or even a preacher, it is then, of course his duty to his country, his conscience and those who put their trust in him, to “denounce severely” every case of “treachery, falsehood and rascality” *even* in private life; but—*nota bene*—only if he is appealed to and called to exercise his legal authority, not otherwise. This is neither “speaking evil” nor “condemning,” but truly working for humanity; seeking to preserve society, which is a portion of it....But even then the theosophist may assert

himself in the magistrate, and show his mercy by repeating after Shakepeare's severe judge: "I show it most of all when I show justice." (*H.P.B. Series No. 33*, p. 44)

...no accusation against another person should ever be spread abroad. If true, and the fault hurts no one but the sinner, then leave him to his Karma. If false, then you will have avoided adding to the injustice in the world. Therefore, keep silent about such things with every one not directly concerned. But if your discretion and silence are likely to hurt or endanger others, then I add: *Speak the truth at all costs.* (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 252)

20. *There is no path in the sky; there is no true monk outside the Order (Sangha); mankind delights in worldliness; Buddhas are free from worldliness.* (254)

21. *There is no path in the sky; there is no true monk outside the Order; nought survives in the phenomenal world; but the Buddhas are ever the same.* (255)

Just as there is no path in the sky, there can be no true monk (*samana*) in the outside world, *i.e.*, outside the *Sangha* or the Buddhist order. Mankind delights in worldliness—craving and false views; the Buddhas are free from them. The Buddha was trying to reform people. He was asking them to follow the path by joining the *Sangha*—the spiritual community, where one can have the benefit of guidance of other advanced monks and company of other like-minded disciples. He encouraged people to join the *Sangha*. A *Samana* is one who leads a religious life. We may say that *Samana* is a Buddhist counterpart of *Brahmana*. It is a call of the Master to the worldly to wake up and realize the transient nature of the phenomenal world. That which is true, that which is eternal and unchanging is the Self within. That Self is verily the Buddha sitting in the hearts of every being. "Look inward, thou art Buddha."

(Concluded)

THE PLANET VENUS

I

OUR Planet earth is one of the many planets in our solar system. Mercury, Mars, Venus, Saturn and Jupiter are some of the other planets belonging to our solar system. Sun is the centre of our solar system. How does nature build planets? Regarding the formation of the seven planets and the Sun, *The Secret Doctrine* explains: Allegorically, from the body of Aditi, *i.e.*, *Mulaprakriti* or primordial matter, eight sons are said to have been born, known as eight Adityas. Cosmically and astronomically, these are the seven planets, and the eighth son being our Sun (*S.D.*, I, 99). The occult doctrine rejects the hypothesis that the seven great planets have evolved from the Sun's central mass. "The Sun and the planets are only co-uterine brothers, having had the same nebular origin, only in a different mode from that postulated by modern astronomy." (*S.D.*, I, 589)

Venus has the most massive atmosphere of all the terrestrial planets. Its atmosphere is composed of 96.5 percent carbon dioxide and 3.5 percent nitrogen. Trace amounts of a number of other gases have been detected, including carbon monoxide, sulphur dioxide, water vapour, argon, and helium. Because of its bright, continuous cloud cover, Venus actually absorbs less of the Sun's light than does the Earth. (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*)

Planet Mercury is closest to the Sun. Planet Venus is next in the order of the planets revolving around the Sun. Venus has a mean distance from the Sun of 108 million kilometers, and takes 224.7 earth days to complete one revolution round the Sun. The length of this planet's day nearly coincides with that of our own. Most of the planets in the solar system rotate in a counterclockwise direction when viewed from above their north poles. Venus rotates in the opposite, or *retrograde*, direction. Hence, an observer on the surface of Venus would see the Sun rise in the west and set in the east.

Astronomers have always been fascinated by Venus, which is nearest to earth, and perhaps that makes it one of the brightest objects

in the night sky. Researchers believe that Venus might have been once Earth's twin planet, complete with giant rivers, deep oceans and teeming with life. "The planets Venus, Earth, Mars are surely interconnected biologically, and life on earth represents a connected chain of being that extends to the remotest corners of the Cosmos," says Professor Chandra Wickramasinghe of Cardiff University.

Life of the sort we know may not be present on Venus; but how much do our scientists know of the type of life that exists on other planets? Mr. Crosbie remarks that it is not wise to conclude that because a planet is nearer the Sun than we are, its climate and condition will make sustaining of life thereon impossible. Life always adjusts itself to whatever conditions exist. Hence, bodies and ideas connected with that state of matter will exactly fit those existing conditions. The Wisdom of the Ages asserts that "wherever there is an atom of matter, a particle or a molecule, even in its most gaseous condition, there is life in it, however latent, and unconscious (*S.D.*, I, 258). Quoting Camille Flammarion, the well-known French Astronomer, H.P.B. writes that Venus would be less adapted for life such as exists on earth, because on Venus there are sudden changes of temperatures and its seasons are more extreme. But some forms of life as we know are possible on Venus, Mars and Mercury. All the three planets have very dense atmosphere. Their poles are covered with snows and their surfaces are hidden by clouds. The geographical configuration of their seas and continents, the variations of their seasons and climates are closely analogous. (*S.D.*, II, 707)

Occult Philosophy teaches that Venus is the most occult, powerful and mysterious of all the planets, and has very prominent influence upon the earth. This planet is our earth's spiritual prototype. "Every world has its parent star and sister planet. Thus, Earth is the adopted child and younger brother of Venus, but its inhabitants are of their own kind....All sentient complete beings (full septenary men or higher beings) are furnished, in their beginnings, with forms and organisms in full harmony with nature and state of the sphere they inhabit."

Venus is said to be "the little sun in which the solar orb stores his light." It is well known that Venus receives from the sun thrice as much light and heat as the earth, and gives to the earth one-third of the supply she receives. Hence the earth and Venus are called "Twin-sisters." This has an occult and astronomical meaning.

"Venus is nearly the Earth's twin in terms of size and mass. Venus' diameter is about...94.9 per cent of the Earth's diameter at the Equator, while its mass is...81.5 per cent that of the Earth. The similarities to the Earth in size and mass also produce a similarity in density; Venus' density is 5.24 grams per cubic centimetre, as compared with 5.52 for the Earth." (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*)

In the article, "The History of a Planet," H.P.B. approvingly quotes Reynaud, who writes in *Terre et Ciel* (p. 74): "Venus is a second Earth, so much so that were there any communication possible between the two planets, their inhabitants might take their respective earths for the two hemispheres of the same world....They seem on the sky, *like two sisters*. Similar in conformation, these two worlds are also similar in the character assigned to them in the Universe."

Archaic tradition states that Venus changes simultaneously (geographically) with the Earth; that whatever takes place on the one takes place on the other; and that many and great were their common changes. "Every sin committed on Earth is felt by *Usanasukra* [Venus]. The Guru of the *Daityas* is the Guardian Spirit of the Earth and Men. Every change on *Sukra* is felt on, and reflected by, the Earth." (*S.D.*, II, pp. 24 and 29-32)

Every race is said to be born under the direct influence of one of the Planets. The First Race was born under the influence of Sun, while the later part of the Third Race, where the androgyne man separated into two sexes—male and female—is said to be under the direct influence of Venus. (*S.D.*, II, 29)

One of the biggest mysteries in the solar system is why Venus has no moon (satellite). Alex Alemi and David Stephenson of the California Institute of Technology suggest that Venus may have had

a moon but that it was destroyed. They suggest that Venus may have had two collisions. The first caused the planet to rotate counterclockwise and created the moon that began to drift away. The second impact caused Venus to rotate clockwise and cancelled the effect of the first collision. This also caused change in the gravitational interaction between Venus and her moon, setting the moon to move inward and ultimately collide with the planet. If the second collision created the moon, it might have been swept inward along with the first moon—toward doom, writes George Musser. (*Scientific American*, December 2006)

H.P.B. points out that it is still a mystery to science why Venus and Mercury have no satellites, and when they did exist, how they were formed. It is because science has only one key—the key of matter—to open the mysteries of nature, while occult philosophy has seven keys. H.P.B. writes:

Mercury and Venus have no satellites but they had “parents” just as the earth had. [Our Moon is considered to be the mother of the Earth.] Both are far older than the Earth and, before the latter reaches her seventh Round, her mother Moon will have dissolved into thin air, as the “Moons” of the other planets have, or, have not, as the case may be, since there are planets which have *several* moons—a mystery again which no Oedipus of astronomy has solved. (*S.D.*, I, 155-56 fn.)

It appears that what science regards as satellites or moons, the occult philosophy regards them as “parents” of the planet. It seems that Venus and Mercury have no moons at present, but may have had them in the past, but they have disappeared because both these planets are in their Seventh Round. But what is a Round? Each planet is sevenfold and has seven globes, A to G, say. These seven globes, while differing from one another in the substance of which they are made, are united together in a single mass. They are not seven separate balls; and may be seen when we are in a

corresponding state of consciousness. The course of evolution begins on globe A and proceeds through globes B, C, D, up to G, and these seven globes constitute a *Planetary Chain*. When the Egos have completed their evolution from A to G globes, then one circling is completed, and that is termed one “Round.” We, on earth, are in the middle of the Fourth Round. The evolution of the egos on a planetary chain is completed at the end of seven rounds.

We learn from those more advanced in knowledge than ourselves that Venus is inhabited, and that her humanity has reached a very high stage. Planets such as Venus are the habitation of still more progressed Egos than ourselves. They are raised to the pitch of glory incomprehensible for our intellects. Each planet is a physical world for the purpose of evolution. Since Venus is in her last round, the Egos on that planet must have nearly completed their evolution on that planet. Unlike our earth, planet Venus is considered to be one of the sacred planets. Venus is superior to earth, because its substance and texture are finer than, and superior to, that of our earth. Every physical planet may be looked upon as the house or dwelling place of Regent or Ruler or Planetary Spirit of that planet. H.P.B. points out that Saturn, Jupiter, Mercury and Venus were the heavenly bodies in direct *astral* and *psychic* communication with the Earth. They are the *Guides* and *Watchers* of our Earth, morally and physically. The visible planets furnish our Humanity with its outward and inward characteristics. The “Regents” of these planets furnish us with our Monads and spiritual faculties. (*S.D.*, I, 575)

On June 6, 2012, planet Venus passed directly between the Earth and the Sun. This is called the *transit of Venus*, when Venus appeared like a small dot on the Sun’s elaborate circumference. The transit of Venus is described as an astronomical rarity, as the next Venus transit is likely to occur only in the year 2117, *i.e.*, after 105 years. Many astrologers view this event as similar to mini-eclipse, comparable to eclipse of the sun or moon. Could there be any astrological significance of the transit of Venus? Some of the astrologers believe that though Venus may appear like a small dot on the surface of the

Sun, during the transit, the impact of the transit of Venus is likely to be as strong as any lunar or solar eclipse. The effect of the transit is expected to last for next six months. In astrology, Venus is connected with love, relationships, women and finance, hence these are the areas which are predicted to be affected by the transit of Venus.

Today, astrological knowledge is almost entirely concerned with the personality and physical life. Astrologers generally speak about effects of planetary movements merely upon the physical affairs of men. The physical, is only one line of effect, because planets are not just the visible orbs we see in the sky. There are other sides to the nature of planets. Just like human constitution is sevenfold, all planets are sevenfold in nature. There is a spiritual “something,” a psychic “something,” an intellectual “something,” an astral “something,” and a physical “something,” in every planet. All the planets have their effect upon us, and the greater or lesser influence is determined by the angle of position of the planet. There is a correspondence between each and every planet, because they have emerged from the same Centre or Source. We are related to Mars, to Mercury, Venus, Jupiter, Saturn, and the Moon by certain correspondences. In fact, there are organs in our bodies which correspond to the various planets, writes Mr. Crosbie.

In the exoteric astrology Venus is represented by hand-mirror, ♀, as she is associated with beauty. H.P.B. explains the symbol. The *diameter* when found isolated in a circle, stands for female nature and the primitive Root Races. The cross +, represents male-female separated and fallen into generation. Venus is symbolized by a sign of a globe over the cross ♀, which shows it as presiding over the natural generation of man. The Egyptian ansated cross which is another form of Venus meant, esoterically, that mankind and all animal life had stepped out of the divine spiritual circle and fallen into physical male and female generation.

(To be concluded)

EDUCATION FOR THE SOUL

IT IS well known that the future of a nation is moulded not by political legislation, but by the self-discipline of her own sons and daughters. By self-discipline an individual shines forth; so does a nation. The power of the vote confers on the citizen a right from without, but the culture of the individual who lives and labours by the performance of duty develops from within, and that alone is dependable. Not by sense-education but by soul-education a nation's regeneration must take place.

The influence of modern scientific knowledge, and especially of Western psychology rooted in materialism, cannot but produce faulty systems of education. Modern methods are not conducive to the development of the *whole* man, and the ideal of education today is very lop-sided. How can it be otherwise? How can there be education of the inner man, of the *psyche* and *nous*, of the soul and the spirit, when men of modern knowledge misunderstand these principles and even deny their very existence? Modern men are looking for the soul in the wrong place; they are speculating wrongly about soul-evolution, and are utterly ignorant of soul-faculties and the method of their development. There is an aspect of modern knowledge that is useful, and that aspect we cannot reject; but supplement it we must with ancient knowledge if we are to make our lives meaningful. Let us then see what is meant by soul-education.

Soul-education is not only a matter of schools and colleges; all human souls are learners, and Life itself is the School. Any plan for the soul-education for the young will meet with frustration unless a beginning is made with the adults. Therefore, in defining soul-education we must bear in mind the adult population.

How then shall we define soul-education? Soul-education is the training of the whole man into wholeness. What are the different implications enshrined in that definition? First, we need to note that man as a complex being is potentially the whole, the all; but all his

powers and faculties have not yet become patent. Man is whole in latency, but not whole in patency.

Secondly, when we say man is whole we are but translating the root idea of Indian philosophy that *Atma* and *Paramatma*, *Purusha* and *Uttam-Purusha*, are identical—not two beings, but two aspects of one and same principle.

Thirdly, man's evolution proceeds from within without; man, like a lotus bud, grows from within; that which is latent is becoming manifested. Therefore, true education should not be the pouring in of outside information, but the bringing out from within all that lies latent. That which is latent is becoming manifested. The human soul is unfolding, *Atma* is becoming *Maha-Atma*, *Purusha* is becoming *Purushottama*.

These three principles are fundamental: man and God are not separate entities; man is the unfolding God; within him all the powers of divinity are locked up and the process of evolution brings more and more of that hidden divinity into expression and manifestation. Soul-education is the deliberate training by which the powers and potencies locked up *within* man are developed or unfolded.

Keeping this in mind, look at man as he is at present. What is man? Man is a complex being, but let us see if we cannot analyse him in some simple way.

There is first the aspect of his living body. The senses and organs, *jnana-indriyas* and *Karma-indriyas*, actively functioning, give man his body aspect. A moment's thought on the two states of the body, living and dead, reveals the second factor. What makes a body living? What is the difference between a living body and a corpse? In the living body, feelings and thoughts, sensations and emotions, are experienced; in the corpse pathological and physiological processes continue, and decay and disintegration are the effects of such processes which are highly complex; but, in the corpse, psychological processes do not take place, that is, there is no sensation and emotion. So we come to the second factor: in the living human being there is an assemblage of sensations and

emotions; there is not only the physical feeling of heat and cold, but also the psychological feeling of attraction and love, of aversion and hate, of shame and remorse, of pride and ambition, and many more. Thirdly, there is the aspect of knowledge represented by our mind. We not only feel; there is also the thinking process going on. We acquire knowledge, we change our mind, and we use it to respond to or to wrestle with our emotions. Fourthly, there is the aspect of choice and determination; we possess the power to choose one thing in preference to another, and this we name will-power. Fifthly, there is the aspect of being itself—he who wills and chooses, he who thinks and cogitates, he who feels and desires, he whose presence keeps the body alive and whose departure from it causes death.

Now this is a very simple classification, which is self-evident and complete enough, and a fivefold education would fulfill the condition of our definition—the training of the whole man into wholeness. Each aspect of man must be trained, and for each we need one department of education, but all aspects belong to the Soul, and so the whole of education must be under the jurisdiction of Soul principles.

This fivefold education of the fivefold man is based on ancient psychological and philosophical concepts. But it has also the advantage of satisfying the modern man. To show this double advantage let us classify the fivefold man in a triple group. Man, the Soul, is group number one; his three powers of thought, will and feeling form group number two; his body is group number three. Man, the Soul, *Atma* or *Purusha*, functions through three powers: *Ichchha-Shakti*, desire-power, *Jnana-Shakti*, thought-power, and *Kriya-Shakti*, will-power. The well-known triad of Thought, Will and Feeling corresponds to the *Jnana*, *Kriya* and *Ichchha* aspects of the ancient Indian psycho-philosophical system.

Thus the education of the fivefold man falls into three compartments: (1) education of the body; (2) education of the three aspects or three power of *Ichchha*, desires or feelings, *Jnana*,

knowledge or thoughts, and *Kriya*, will or creativeness; (3) education of the Soul itself. Let us look at them one by one.

Body-education nowadays means mostly athletics, and though this plays an important part in the building of a strong and robust body, it is not enough. Body-education should imply much more than physical training. The body is the dwelling-place of Krishna: he who tortures and disfigures the body, tortures and disfigures Krishna; he who pollutes the body makes it unfit for divine habitation. Then there is the other ancient concept ignored entirely by the West—there are the presiding deities (the *devatas*) of every organ, sub-human intelligences who themselves evolve aided by men. Not to degrade them, ever to elevate them, is part of body-education. To remove the dullness of *tamas*, to control the movements of *rajas*, to stream forth the radiance of *sattva*, which are all three inherent in these *devatas*, is part of body education. To add magnetic purity to physical cleanliness is very necessary and in these days when exaggerated sense life and complete identification with the body prevail, we must emphasize the real constitution of the body and inculcate the true ideal of self-control and purity of life.

Next, we come to *Ichchha-Jnana-Kriya*; the culture of emotions, the culture of concentration, the culture of the creative will, is an important department of education. Each of these cultures has destructive and a constructive aspect—the destruction of foul desires, of false thoughts, of selfish choices, and the development of radiant purity, of spiritual knowledge, of enlightened creativeness. The correct development of the three *shaktis* or powers of Will, Thought and Feeling has to be undertaken with the full recognition that these powers belong to the human Soul. That human Soul is three-faced, and these faces of the Soul are covered over by the smoke of *kama*, passion, as Sri Krishna points out to Arjuna in the Third Discourse of the *Gita*. *Kama* is the enemy of man and its destruction means the birth of *karuna* or divine love and compassion. Let our choices be ever in terms of soul-knowledge, let our thought be ever pure and noble, let our everyday actions express the divinity latent within

ourselves.

And that brings us to the last aspect of education, the education of the man himself, *Manushya*, the soul. The Soul has two aspects, the transcendent and the immanent. The Soul in the body is called *dehi*, the dweller and labourer in the field, and that is the immanent aspect. The other, the transcendent aspect of the Soul, is our *Paramatmic* aspect. The culture of the Soul implies *yoga*, which is union between the incarnate Soul and the overbrooding Spirit; but *yoga* is also the yoke of the Soul, the higher divinity living and labouring in the body in the service of humanity.

Education is a misnomer if it does not take into account the Soul. All men, all women, are essentially Souls, albeit all know it not. As Souls we have gone to sleep. We must follow the injunction of one of the Upanishads to arise, awake, seek the Great Ones and learn. The Great Ones have recorded Their knowledge, and we possess those records of the ancient Rishis and Sages. We must arise, awake, and seek the knowledge and the Knowers of the essence of things. Prajapati, the Creator, is not some distant God; he is the Soul who has come to abide in his own shrine of the body because pure desires, wise thoughts, true spiritual will have been developed. The bodies of today are like the temples wherein is found enshrined an idol of matter, lifeless and dead; the God within is disregarded and the body is looked upon as God! The task before us is to purify our temples, to dethrone the idol of mud and metal, to enthrone the Living Image of the One Deity, the Universal Self, *Paramatma*. Each man, each woman, by discipline and education, must come out from the kingdom of the dead into the land of the living, from the world of darkness into the world of Light, and that Life and Light are within each one of us. The door of the temple is the heart, Hardwar (place of pilgrimage in India), and to it we must go on our first pilgrimage.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

[In this section we seek to answer frequently asked questions, at U.L.T. meetings or during private conversations and discussions with people who seek the answers in the light of Theosophy. Answers given in this section are by no means final. Only a line of thought is being offered by applying general principles of Theosophy.]

Question: After death, does the departed soul retain the memory in the other world, of who or what it was during earthly life? Does the soul remember and recognize relatives and friends?

Answer: Theosophy teaches that the states after death are effectual states. After death the soul or Ego passes through *Kama-loka*, which is called the slag-pit of life. In *Kama-loka* it sheds off the non-essentials, *i.e.*, the memory or impressions of purely personal as well as wicked thoughts, desires and actions indulged in during the earth life. Next, the soul finds itself in a state of complete bliss called heaven or Paradise or *Swarga*. The equivalent term for paradise or heaven, in Theosophy, is *Devachan* or *Devasthan* (the land of gods). In leaving behind the *Kama-loka* state, the soul gathers to itself memory or impressions of noble thoughts, deeds and actions. The personality on earth is compared to a flower. The soul gathers to itself the *aroma* of that flower. The ideal efflorescence of all the noble qualities such as love and mercy, the love for the good, the true and the beautiful, clings to the Soul or the Ego and is carried to *Devachan*. Thus, the Soul becomes the ideal reflection of the human being it was when last on earth. It is an idealized and subjective continuation of the earth life.

The Soul enters the heaven world clothed in an ethereal vesture or celestial body, which is impressed with good karmic record, or the ideas, aspirations and thoughts of the last personality of earth life. It is this good karmic record of the last personality which enables the soul to continue believing that it is Mr. X or Miss Y it was on earth. Thus, the entity in *Devachan* firmly believes that it never left

the earth. When a mother dies, leaving behind her children, her *post-mortem* spiritual *consciousness* will represent to her that she lives surrounded by her children and all those whom she loved. Thus, there is no gap, and life in *Devachan* is a continuation of life on earth. But in *Devachan* there is an *absolute* oblivion of all that produced pain and sorrow during earth life. The Soul in *Devachan* lives “surrounded by everything it aspired to in vain, and in companionship of everyone it loved on earth,” writes H.P.B. After death, the Ego passes through three states, namely, (1) *Kamaloka*, when it is still under the influence of lower passions and desires, (2) *Rupa-devachan*, when the Ego is still identified with the personality in the last earth-life, (3) *Arupa-devachan*, when the Ego exists as formless entity, as true individuality, shedding the illusion of personality.

We leave behind the body, when we die and go to heaven. In the mental and spiritual life, recognition cannot depend on physical appearance. Moreover, the one who dies before us, and is in *Devachan*, say, twenty mortal years before us, he should have made progress equivalent to the progress he might make in hundreds of years on earth, because in *Devachan*, the Soul is free from the limitations imposed during earth-life by the astral and physical bodies. Thus, when our soul reaches *Devachan*, twenty years hence, we will not be able to recognize those who had been perfecting themselves in heaven, explains Mr. Judge.

The soul of the dear-departed one cannot see relatives and friends on earth. If the Ego could remain in touch with those on earth during the period of *Devachan*, then it would cease to be a period of absolute bliss. H.P.B. gives an example of a mother who has left behind her husband and children. If she could see the agony of her children and husband, she would not be able to enjoy the felicity of heaven-world. Hence, once the Ego enters the state of *Devachan*, the question of *recognizing* friends and relatives on earth does not arise. As for the interaction with the Ego of a friend or relative in *Devachan*, we are told that two sympathetic souls in *Devachan* are

dissociated from each other and hence there is no actual mutual intercourse. Thus, the Ego in *Devachan* does not see those it has left behind on earth, or those who died earlier. But the Ego makes for itself ideal images of friends and relatives, full complete and as objective as in life. The mother who has left behind a drunken son, sees him in *Devachan* as a sober, good man.

However, before entering the state of *Devachan*, the Soul is in *Kamaloka*. There are many different kinds of states in *Kama-loka*. It must vary from person to person depending on what kind of life they have lived. Some people are aware that they have died, while others are unaware of it; some are able to see those they have left behind, other are not; but each one is able to see all that pertains to their particular plane of *Kama-loka*.

To sum up, the Ego in *Devachan*, retains for certain time, a complete recollection “of ideal part of his earth life,” but it can never visit the earth, until next incarnation.

Question: Can the Soul of the dear-departed one come down to this world in any garb, move around among his friends and relatives, or leave any message, say in dreams? Could that soul wield any power to bring about good or evil to someone on earth, overriding the law of Karma?

Answer: After death, the Ego of an averagely good person leaves behind *Kamaloka* state almost immediately and enters *Devachan*. However, in case the person had some strong unsatisfied desire, the Ego may remain in *Kamaloka* till that desire is satisfied. Also, in case of unnatural deaths, such as accident, suicide, execution, etc., the Ego remains in *Kamaloka* till the completion of normal life-span. In such cases, communication with those on earth is possible.

It is only in rare cases that after death, a person remains behind for a brief period, if he has some intense unfulfilled desire or something important to communicate to someone. It is then possible for the real man—the spirit of man or soul within—to communicate with us. Many such instances have been reported in which a dead person is known to have appeared before his mother or wife or a

friend or a distant relative to convey some important message—often far away from the actual place of his death. But in these cases, the spirit has not yet left our earthly plane and may appear in his inner, finer body—called the astral body or *Mayavi rupa*—to someone who is sensitive and receptive, to tell something important or just to be with them. In the book, *The Airmen, Who Would Not Die*, by John Fuller, we are told about the plane crash. But the Captain on the plane had a message to be conveyed to his wife, about the details of his insurance. Hence, he contacted his wife through a medium.

At the moment of death, if the dying man thinks very intensely of another person, or is anxious to see that person, or loves that person a lot, then he may appear to that person. The thought becomes objective, and the apparition or shadow of the dying person, which is like a reflection in a mirror, appears before the other person.

However, once the Ego enters the state of *Devachan* it cannot descend on earth. But, it is possible for the soul of the living men on earth to ascend to the state of *Devachan*. In other words, if there is any spiritual attraction between the living and the dead person then the two can communicate, provided the person on earth is a sensitive. For ordinary people, such communication with the Soul of the dear-departed ones happens during dreamless sleep state. H.P.B. points out that during the sleep of the body almost every one without exception communicates with the souls of the dear-departed ones in *Devachan*, but because of too much pre-occupation with our worldly life, our brains are non-receptive, and we are not able to bring back the memory of such intercourse, on waking up. “A pure-minded living person by his aspiration and love may *himself ascend* to a heavenly place and there seem to speak and feel and be with those he loved, but that speaking and feeling do not disturb the one there,” explains Mr. Crosbie.

In the article, “The Various States of *Devachan*,” that appeared in *The Theosophist*, (August 1883), we are told that the scholar who had mainly lived under the influence of *manas* (the thinking

principle), and for the pleasure of developing his highest physical intelligence, kept absorbed in the mysteries of the material universe, will still be magnetically held by his mental attractions to scholars and their work, influencing and being influenced by them *subjectively*.

The divine love of a *Devachanee* has power to make itself felt by those on earth. If sensitive and attentive, those on earth may actually feel the presence and guiding hand of the departed, particularly in their hour of need. Thus:

Again we say that love beyond the grave, illusion though you may call it, has a magic and divine potency which reacts on the living. A mother's Ego filled with love for the imaginary children it sees near itself, living a life of happiness, as real to it as when on earth—that love will always be felt by the children in flesh. It will manifest in their dreams, and often in various events—in providential protections and escapes, for love is a strong shield, and is not limited by space or time. As with this Devachanic “mother,” so with the rest of human relationships and attachments, save the purely selfish or material. Analogy will suggest to you the rest. (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 148)

A person committing suicide or an executed criminal finds himself in the astral atmosphere only partly dead, only minus the physical body. Such an entity moves around in the astral atmosphere, near the earth, wanting to satisfy certain desires but unable to do so in the absence of the body. If the person committed suicide at the age of thirty and his natural life term was seventy then the astral entity will remain in the astral atmosphere for next forty years, only after that there is final separation of the Ego from the lower principles. Such entities may take “possession” of someone on earth who may be excessively passive. The *kamarupic* shell of the executed criminal seeks to inject thoughts of revenge and murder in the mind of a sensitive person and incite him to commit a crime.

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

When we perceive the “world out there,” our perception of the external world is not “actual.” It is nothing more than a dream. The colours and sounds we perceive are only the pictures and images of reality constructed by our mind. We never experience the physical world directly. The eighteenth century German philosopher Immanuel Kant differentiated between the forms that appear in the mind—what he called *phenomenon*, a Greek word meaning “that which appears to be”—and the world which gives rise to this perception, which is called *noumenon*, or that which is apprehended. We know only the phenomenon, while the *noumenon* or “thing-in-itself,” remains beyond our knowing. Kant believed that mind is an active participant in the process of perception, shaping our experience of the world. Each one of us constructs reality for himself. British philosopher, John Locke, on the other hand, felt that perception was passive, in which mind reflected the images received by the senses. Irish theologian Bishop Berkeley believed that nothing exists apart from our perceptions. But then, does the world cease to exist in the absence of the perceiver? Kant was of the view that we take our perceptions to be real, but there is underlying reality, which we cannot know directly.

Today, we are able to appreciate the viewpoint of Kant through knowledge of the physiology of perception. We know that when we look at a tree, an image of the tree is set up on the retina of the eye, and then the vibrations are transmitted to the brain, which creates its own reconstruction of the external world. The same hold true in other sense-perceptions. “In short, all that I perceive—everything that I see, hear, taste, touch and smell—has been reconstructed from sensory data. I think I am perceiving the world around me, but all that I am directly aware of are the colours, shapes, sounds and smells that appear in the mind,” writes Peter Russell. (*The Speaking Tree [Sunday Times of India]*, July 22, 2012)

Who is the perceiver in man? The answer is, neither the senses

nor the brain, which is but an instrument of the mind. Though we say eyes see, ears hear, nose smells, or the tongue tastes, etc., the organs and the senses do not cognize objects. In *The Ocean of Theosophy* Mr. Judge explains that when we “see” an object, the eye receives the picture on the retina, which is first turned into vibrations in the optic nerves, and then transmitted to the brain, where *Manas* is able to perceive the object as an *idea*.

When we see an object, say a chair, our senses bring to us its details as a raw data. The lower *Manas* synthesizes or transforms it into an idea of a chair, which may be quite different from the *real* chair. Our perception is affected by our conceptions and imperfections of the instruments that bring the data. Hence, we do not see the *thing-in-itself*. Our perceptions are the “creations” of our perceptive faculty. Theosophy teaches that this universe of *phenomena*, illusions, *Maya*, is the universe of relativity. The other universe, as opposed to and distinct from that of relativity, is the world of *noumena*, of unity of ideas, *of things-in-themselves*. The world of *noumena* is the archetypal world. The archetypal world is an expression of Platonic philosophy—the world as it existed in the mind of the Deity.

Patanjali says that the Soul is the Perceiver; it is vision itself, pure and simple and looks directly on ideas. In other words, Higher Ego or *Atma-Buddhi-Manas* is the real Perceiver, it is the *seer*, pure consciousness, and capable of perceiving things as they are. But it is unable to perceive them so, because it has to use lower mind as its instrument, like the astronomer uses his telescope for acquiring information respecting the heavens.

Does the Internet make us crazy? For a long time, Internet was seen as just another medium, a delivery system, not a diabolical machine, but something which made people happier and more productive, because there was no proof to the contrary. Now,

however, the proof is starting to pile up. Recent research has shown that the current incarnation of Internet “may be making us not just dumber or lonelier but more depressed and anxious, prone to obsessive-compulsive and attention-deficit disorders, even outright psychotic. Our digitized minds can scan like those of drug addicts, and normal people are breaking down in sad and seemingly new ways,” writes Tony Dokoupil. Sherry Turkle, a psychologist at MIT points out, “we are all cyborgs now.” Though this life of continuous connection has come to become normal, it is not healthy or sustainable. Americans have merged with their machines, staring at a computer screen for at least eight hours a day. The sending and receiving of text messages has become like blinking. The average teen processes an astounding 3,700 texts a month. Many cyborgs report that their phone vibrates, when in fact nothing is happening. Researchers call it “phantom-vibration syndrome.”

Digital world is like a horse that has sprinted out from underneath its rider, dragging the person who once held the reins. Peter Whybrow, the director of the Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behaviour at UCLA, argues that “the computer is like electronic cocaine,” fuelling cycles of mania followed by depressive stretches. So far, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) of Mental Disorders has never included a category of machine-human interactions, but next year the new DSM will include, for the first time, Internet Addiction Disorder among the mental disorders.

Recently China, Taiwan and Korea began to treat the problem of Web usage as a grave national health crisis, with their newspapers carrying alarming stories such as that of a young couple who neglected its infant to death, while nourishing a “virtual baby” online! Two psychiatrists in Taiwan made headlines with the idea of iPhone addiction disorder and reported the case of a high-school boy who used iPhone 24 hours a day, and ended in an asylum.

Research has shown that there are changes in the brain as a result of even moderate usage of Internet, and that the Web users displayed fundamentally altered prefrontal cortexes. The brains of Internet

addicts, they say, look like the brains of drug and alcohol addicts. Internet addiction has also been linked to “structural abnormalities in grey matter,” *i.e.*, shrinkage of 10 to 20 per cent in the area of the brain responsible for speech, memory, motor control, emotion, sensory and other information. The more the person tends to remain online, the more the brain shows signs of “atrophy.” Seriously, we need to do something. The days of complacency should end. “The Internet is still ours to shape. Our minds are in the balance,” writes Tony Dokoupil. (*Newsweek*, July 16, 2012)

The problem of addiction to digital world is indeed grave and all need to sit up and take notice. We need not blame Internet or the digital world but we must learn to exercise moderation in its use. The abuse of even water or bread could be prejudicial, says H.P.B. How could we allow the machines to control us? Should we not find out what has led us to this stage? Are we perhaps trying to break away from the real world and remain absorbed in the virtual world? If so, why? Addiction to machines may be partially attributed to deteriorating human relationships. Human beings need company of other human beings, notwithstanding all assertions for independence. That need for sharing, when it is not fulfilled for some reason, finds an outlet somewhere else. If we were able to cope with life’s problems “all alone,” we would not have so many people experiencing depression, and other psychological disorders, or have so many turning to drugs and alcohol. We have substituted friends and companions with Blogs, Twitter, Facebook, and so on. There is also commitment phobia. It suits us to have friends on the Facebook or Twitter, with no strings attached. One of the solutions could be that each one should impose upon himself the discipline of using Computers or iPhone for limited number of hours in a day.

A 61-year-old man in Chennai, India, got a fresh lease of life, when a 21-year-old youth’s liver was transplanted in him in 2008.

The transplanting of young man’s liver, who had died in an accident, has miraculously reversed ageing in the old man. As a result, his hair has turned from grey to black, and his wrinkles are gone. He was earlier suffering from diabetes and had been taking medicines for diabetes for 12 years. But after the liver-transplant, he no longer has to depend on diabetes drugs. He says, “I am off drugs and my sugar levels are mysteriously under control.” Four years after the transplant, the man says that he not only looks young, but feels that he has been reborn. Doctors say that the blackening of hair and the renewed energy experienced by the man receiving the liver-transplant can be attributed to the availability of nutrition to the body, as his liver functions have normalized, writes Ajay Umat. (*The Times of India*, July 13, 2012)

Modern surgeons and physicians, who are apt to view bodily organs purely anatomically, would do well to consider their interrelationships. The modern system of medicine loses much by not recognizing the astral counterpart of man’s body.

Another important aspect is that if science persists in organ transplantation, the transplanted “organs” should be those of a “good” man, and willingly given. We are continuously imparting good and bad psychic impulses to our bodily organs through our thoughts and feelings. So also, “every organ in our body has its own memory....every cell must of necessity have also a memory of its own kind,” writes H.P.B. (*Raja-Yoga or Occultism*). The engrafted organs can affect their new owner with thoughts and feelings he had never before experienced. There have been cases where the recipient’s body rejects the transplanted organ. As mentioned in *The Theosophical Movement*, November 1969:

According to a Stanford University psychiatric team, some heart transplant patients become psychotic. They suggest that an anti-rejection drug called “prednisone” may cause psychotic behaviour such as delusions, insomnia accompanied by fear of a murder plot and a belief that the patients had received not only a new heart but also a new

personality. Psychiatrists report, too, that there is in general a higher incidence of emotional problems in heart patients than in any other group of surgical patients. (*Science Digest*, July 1969)

Some of the most amazing instances of organ-transplants have been reported corroborating the fact that every cell and hence organ, has a memory of its own. Some patients having undergone organ transplants have been known to develop characteristics of the donor whose organ they had been given. A certain person, known to be shy and introvert, turned extremely gregarious and extrovert, after the organ transplant. In an article in *Life Positive* (August 2008), Megha Bajaj gives an instance of a person who had an organ transplant. After the transplant the person said, “Everything is copasetic,” as he emerged out of the operation theatre and continued to use that word all the time. It was later explained by the donor’s wife that she and her husband used that word as a signal, when they made up after an argument, to show that everything was okay. The donor had died in a car accident after he had an argument with his wife and had never made up.

In another startling case, a girl received the heart of a ten-year-old girl who had been murdered. After the transplant the recipient had horrifying nightmares of a man murdering her donor. They could find the murderer using the details given by this girl, of time, weapon, place, clothes he wore, his features, etc. Such cases compelled the scientists to conclude that, perhaps, memory was stored in every single cell of one’s body. Rebecca Noel, a healer of the cellular memory, explains that the memory from the old cell, also called phantom memory, is passed on to the new cell being born, so that the disease is replicated again and again, even though the cell is entirely new, and this continues indefinitely until the cell programming is interrupted, writes Bajaj.