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सत्यत् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।
"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF CHRISTMAS

THE best way we can understand the spiritual significance of Christmas is by understanding the allegory of Jesus' life. H.P.B. says that the whole of the New Testament, in a way, is an account of the Cycle of Initiation, from the birth of man in a body of flesh up to his second or spiritual birth and initiation---allegorized in the life of Jesus. At a simple level, Christmas is supposed to be the festival that emphasizes the spirit of giving. But do we really see that? A great satire is directed at the superficial and ritualistic way of celebrating Christmas---applicable to almost all festivals---when H.P.B. describes the vision of a man who saw a palatial church, on a Christmas eve, full to its capacity with well-dressed men and women. The priest was delivering the sermon in impeccable diction, with a recording angel standing by his side, expressly sent to make a record of an act of prayer or charity that would be acceptable to God. When the mass was over and the parishioners went out of the church, everyone went their way, keeping a safe distance sailor passed by, and seeing the girl, he thrust a few pennies into her hand, saying, "Here, you poor forsaken cuss, take this!" Instantly, a celestial radiance lighted up the face of the recording angel, who recorded the sailor's act of sympathy and charity. Of what use are religious observances if they fail to stir out heart to pity!

A Christian writer, Janina Gomes, contrasts the present pomp and show during the Christmas festival with the condition in which Jesus was born. She observes that just as then, today Jesus is unwelcome—we have crowded him out. With our parties and merrymaking and artificial lights, we

have forgotten the real Jesus. If only someone would look into the eye of the poor, the lonely, the helpless, the orphan, or sit down and meditate, then he might hear the Voice of Jesus and know what real Jesus was like. H.P.B. makes similar observation in the article, "Christmas Then and Christmas Now." There is glamour everywhere, including the churches, and before the dazzled eyes of the devotee the humble Bethlehem stable vanishes altogether, says H.P.B. It is not as if there should be no enjoyment and festivity, but why celebrate a festival in a manner that only emphasizes the gulf between the rich and the poor? The one class squanders money, while the other has to be satisfied only with the smell of the savouries and meat being cooked in the rich man's kitchen!

The Roman Christians were not sure of Christ's birth date, and so they fixed it on 25th December which is the day the Pagans celebrated as the birthday of their Sun-gods. All the Sun-gods, the Egyptian Horus, the Babylonian Adonis as also Apollo and Osiris, were said to be born at the Winter Solstice and had virgin mothers. The ancients believed that it was on 21st December that the Sun-god went down under the earth, to help the imprisoned souls or seeds, and remained there for three days to come up triumphant on the 25th December. What does it mean? It represents something that happens actually during the mysteries of initiation. "Sun" represents the candidate who aspires for spiritual rebirth. The candidate for initiation personifies the sun, who has to kill all his fiery passions before he can rise to new life and be reborn. He was made to sit, all alone, in a dark room. After facing and purifying the lowest levels of his consciousness, he rises fully purified.

On solstices, the Sun stands still, and after the Winter Solstice, *i.e.*, December 21st, it begins to move northwards. The astral life of the earth is young and strong between Christmas and Easter. Those who form their wishes now will have added strength to fulfil them consistently, says H.P.B. Sun is the giver of life physical and metaphysical. During the

northward movement of the sun there is renewal and refreshment of life energy. Astral body in man and astral light in nature is the vehicle of the life energy. Every thought and feeling leaves an impression on the astral light. Good thoughts and ideation impressed on the astral are attracted to us and support us—by the law of consubstantiality—whenever we make a resolve to be good. Thus, the astral acts as an unobstructed pipe or a sieve. This support is greater during this period due to renewal of life energy.

Behind the physical sun is the True Sun or Central Spiritual Sun. Sun symbolizes the very *Atman* in man, the Christos or the Divine Principle. So Christ, the true esoteric Saviour, is not a man but the divine presence latent within the hearts of men. In the article, "A Commentary on the Gayatri," Mr. Judge translates the Gayatri mantra thus:

Unveil, O Thou who givest sustenance to the Universe, from whom all proceed, to whom all must return, that face of the True Sun now hidden by a vase of golden light, that we may see the truth and do our whole duty on our journey to thy sacred seat.

Mr. Judge comments that the whole verse is an aspiration in the highest sense and "unveil" is the cry of the man who is determined to know the truth; the cry is made to the Higher Self. Just as the True Sun is hidden behind the physical sun, so also, the Higher Self is hidden by the passions and desires, the personal self and the thirst for life. "So long as desire and the personality remain strong, just so long will the light be blurred, so long will we mistake words for knowledge and knowledge for the thing we wish to know and realize." *The Voice of the Silence* suggests that unless the flesh is passive, the head cool and the soul as firm and pure as a flaming diamond, the sunlight will not reach the inner chamber and do its work of illumination. Inner preparation needs to be made before we can partake of the guidance and communion with that Sun or Christos within. Thus, knowing the *real* Jesus involves undertaking rigorous discipline. Janina Gomes says that Jesus came to us wearing a face of God and to know

him we must be able to repeat the adventures of the life of Jesus—going through what he went through. The ultimate gift that God gave us was to show us His face in Jesus, and yet it is the *true face* of Jesus that people would rather flee from, and that is because the gift comes wrapped up in foils of hardship, pain, affliction, poverty, and even betrayal. We would recognize that Jesus went through all of these experiences. The wrappers so intimidate us that we hesitate to open the gift. Thus, if we live the life that Jesus lived in order to become "Jesus the Christ," or "Jesus the Anointed-One," we will have in us the "risen Christ," as Jesus is not the only Son of God; we are all Sons of God in our divine nature.

There are various aspects to the mysterious character of Jesus. There is the historical character of Jesus, and there is the deep and allegorical side. As for the historical Jesus it is said that someone like him lived a hundred years before his birth, and the Bible story is built around that personage. H.P.B. has this to say:

The position THEY [the Mahatmas] give to Jesus, as far as we know, is that of a great and pure man, reformer who would fain have lived but who had to die for that which he regarded as the greatest birthright of man—*absolute* Liberty of conscience; of an adept who preached a universal Religion knowing of, and having no other "temple of God" but man himself; that of a noble Teacher of esoteric truths

which he had no time given him to explain; that of an initiate who recognized no difference—save the moral one— between men; who rejected caste, and despised wealth; and who preferred death rather than to reveal the secrets of initiation. And who lived over a century before the year of our vulgar, so-called. Christian era. (*The Theosophist*, Vol. IV)

At the age of 30, Jesus set out from home and came to the river Jordan where John-the-Baptist was baptizing people with water, signifying purification brought about by knowledge. He would say, "I baptize you with water but He that is going to come will baptize you with fire." Baptism is a symbol of regeneration. Baptism by fire is purification through trials of spiritual life that separates the grain from the chaff,

burning the dross of the non-essentials and leaving behind the noble qualities in one's nature, bringing about spiritual regeneration.

Jesus is called Emmanuel and also Yesu or the "saviour," and that is how adepts and the great ones are described. They are saviours of humanity, because they can take upon themselves or alleviate some of the *collective Karma* of humanity, as they identify themselves with humanity. But they cannot take away the individual Karma of people. Hence, it would be a fallacy to believe that Jesus died on the Cross for us and if we only believe in the blood that he shed, all our sins could be washed off. The real meaning of the doctrine of vicarious atonement is that the Divine Nature or Individuality, the parent, suffers for the transgressions and misdeeds of the child, the personality. For, at death, when the personality is gone, the Karmic focus or the responsibility is shifted to the Individuality. In other words, though during life, the higher and lower egos are distinct, at death, in reuniting with the parent Ego, the lower self fastens upon and impresses upon it all its bad and good actions, so both have to suffer. The Higher Ego though pure and innocent, has to bear the punishment of the misdeeds committed by the lower self together with it in their future incarnation.

What does the crucifixion of the Christ signify? Every time we remain deaf to the Voice of Conscience, or the prompting of the inner God, we crucify the Christos within us. Jesus was made to carry the cross on which he was nailed. We often say, "Each one must bear his own cross." In that sense, "cross" represents our Karmic responsibilities. Our present unfavourable circumstances are the result of our past actions, which must be met with, without complaining or grumbling. Every person finds his own "cross" the heaviest and most difficult to bear. There is the story of an unhappy man who was at his rope's end. He approached God saying, "My cross is too heavy, I cannot bear it any more." God took him to a room lined up with crosses of various sizes and weights and asked him to put his own cross in a corner and choose any other from the room. The man went

from cross to cross till he came to the last one which he found to be the smallest and the lightest. He expressed his wish to exchange his cross for that. And God said, "Well my child, that's the one you just brought!" Our own suffering always seems most terrible and yet it is said that if we shun the cross we will make it heavier. In other words, if we shun the circumstances or try to dodge the Karmic consequences instead of accepting them and learning the lesson, we make our karma more difficult and complex. To celebrate Christmas is to remember that we are Sons of God potentially, and not measure ourselves by standards of emotions, intellect, knowledge, etc., but by the standards of our being emanations from divinity. It also means evaluating how many commandments of "Sermon on the Mount" have we carried out during the year. Jesus said: "Anyone who hears these words of mine and obeys them is like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain poured down, the rivers overflowed, and the wind blew hard against the house. But it did not fall, because it was built on rock" (*Matthew, 7:24*). Thus, by hearing and practising the injunctions in the "Sermon on the Mount" we would be building a solid foundation on which we can build a Spiritual edifice. We need to make an "island" of pure thoughts that will not be swept away by the Great World Maya's Ocean, but will protect the Spiritual edifice against the temptations and suggestions, against opposition and persecution from the world.

SHRI Krishna, in the opening slokas of the Ninth Chapter of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, tells us that there is knowledge and there is also the realization of knowledge. There are many things which we know intellectually and yet, we are not capable of applying or practising, and therefore that knowledge is not assimilated. True realization and assimilation alone enables any individual to make that knowledge an integral part of his Immortal Self. This distinction, then, is most important in connection with *Raja-Vidya*—the Kingly Science. Why is it called Kingly Science? Why is it given supremacy over all other sciences and aspects of knowledge? It is because Kingly Science is the combination of *jnanam* (knowledge) and *vijnanam*, realization of knowledge through experience, actual practice and application. In the Ninth Chapter of the *Gita* Shri Krishna says that he will make known the most mysterious and secret knowledge, the Kingly Science, to one who "findeth no fault." The recognition, of the justice of an impersonal, divine law, ever-present, ever-operative, incessantly moving to good and to righteousness, is an essential qualification for the understanding of this *Raja-Vidya*. It is the realization that everything that occurs at the hand of the Law, the Law of divine justice and of divine compassion, is what we deserved and desired, and that is the very best to bring us one step further on our progressive path.

H.P.B. says, *Raja-Vidya* is *Atma-Vidya*—the science or knowledge of *Atman* or Spirit. It is an all-pervasive principle which is both immanent, *i. e.*, manifesting in the universe itself, and transcendental, *i. e.*, remaining in the unmanifested background, ever eternal, changeless and permanent. In each one of us there is the spirit of that glorious one sun. Therefore, we speak of *atman* as the universal principle and we also speak of It as the Higher Self, the Spirit as it reflects itself in the consciousness of every human being. It is that One Self, One Consciousness, which focuses itself at different levels of manifestation of the universe, and different levels of consciousness for man, which gives him a sense of his own consciousness. Some identify their consciousness-^the consciousness of the One *Atman*—at the level of the

body, and they think of themselves as the body; others identify their consciousness with their feelings and their emotional nature and think of themselves as the personality. Others again have come to the stage of identifying themselves as the spiritual individuality, and they need one step further to become true practitioners of *Atma-Vidya* or *Raja-Vidya*, and that is the knowledge that the individual Spirit in them is one with the Spirit of the universe. So, the one who has become perfect, the knower of this Kingly Science says, "I am verily that Brahman." When the Delphic Oracle spoke the injunction, "Man, know thyself," it was this knowledge of the spiritual self that was meant.

How does *Atma-Vidya*, the highest spiritual knowledge, compare with all the sciences that we can acquire through our brain and our mind? H.P.B. has said that the difference is as great as that of the glory of the sun compared to the feeble glimmer of a candle. Chemistry, physics, physiology, psychology, tell us something about the mental and the psychic nature of man, but with all that knowledge at our command what do we really know about the purpose of life and the meaning of our being here as self-conscious thinkers? Nothing. And therefore, viewed theosophically, all that knowledge, although it has its place, is considered the knowledge of the non-self, and the knowledge of the non-self is ignorance. There are four different kinds of *vidya*, and *Atma-Vidya* includes them all, and uses that which can be used beneficently and along spiritual lines. H.P.B. describes the four *vidyas* as:

(1) *Yajna-Vidya*, knowledge of the occult powers awakened in Nature by the performance of certain religious ceremonies and rites. (2) *Maha-Vidya*, the "great knowledge," the magic of the Kabalists and of the Tantrika worship, often sorcery of the worst description. (3) *Guhya-Vidya*, knowledge of the mystic powers residing in sound (Ether), hence in the Mantras (chanted prayers or incantations) and depending on the rhythm and melody used; in other words, a magical performance based on knowledge of the Forces of Nature and their correlation; and (4) *Atma-Vidya*, a term

which is translated simply "knowledge of the Soul," *true Wisdom*, by the Orientalists, but which means much more.

H.P.B. points out that the qualifications for attaining that knowledge of the *Atman*, purity is essential, as the first, second and the last step. Besides the purity of the body or the senses, it demands purity in thought and feeling, *i.e.*, unselfishness and altruism, ultimately leading to selflessness, forgetfulness of the little self, to be fully and self-consciously identified with the self of all creatures. *Mundaka Upanishad* distinguishes between *Apara-vidya*, lower *vidya*, lower science or knowledge, and *Para-vidya*, higher science or higher knowledge, or *Atma-Vidya*. It is also the secret mystery, the great esoteric philosophy, and in man it corresponds to the principle of intuition, principle of *Buddhi*, connecting *Atma* with the self-conscious man. The esoteric philosophy recorded in the *Secret Doctrine* is the path or the way, narrow indeed, which few can tread, which leads from knowledge that is relative to absolute knowledge. And what is the knowledge of our modern world if not relative knowledge?

What is this Supreme *Vidya* or this *Vidya of Atma*, when compared to, let us say, the different schools of philosophy in India? H.P.B. explains that these six schools of philosophy, are in reality six points of view of philosophy, each presenting one point. Just as we have four cardinal points and the zenith and the nadir, so too, we have six points of view to study any subject or object. When we see one point of view we miss out the other five, but there is no contradiction, no clash. These six points of view make it possible to perceive truth at six angles of vision. But even so something will be missing and that is provided by the seventh point of view which is the central and the inner, and from the central point a synthetic view can be taken and therefore the seventh synthesizes the six outer points of view. So, *Atma-Vidya*, is that synthetic, inner, seventh point of view. H.P.B. observes that in the *S.D.* she has revealed as much as it is necessary for the intuitive student to reach that seventh point of view, that true absolute knowledge, and through that

synthetic, unifying principle it will be possible for him to realize himself.

Who are the possessors of this *Atma-Vidya*, Absolute Knowledge? The possessors of this knowledge are necessarily those who have transcended fully and completely the personal nature. However brilliant the personal consciousness in any individual man or woman, the personality cannot possibly realize a knowledge that is essentially impersonal, pertaining to the impersonal universe, the Supreme Spirit. This knowledge springs up spontaneously if we perfect ourselves in true spiritual devotion—that knowledge is in the interior recesses of our own divine and Immortal Self. H.P.B. says that by paralyzing the lower personality we may arrive at that knowledge. The very characteristic of the personality is to assert itself in separation from others. Therefore, the very first step in trying to paralyze the personality is to curb the manifestation of egotism or selfishness and to cultivate a broad, sympathetic current of life for all beings throughout the universe. We are told not to rush into the practical use of the great mystery until we have made sufficiently sure that our motive is unselfish, disinterested, altruistic. Theosophy is in the world to prepare individuals to make their luggage ready so that they can reach the path leading to knowledge and realization of *Atman*, perhaps in the next life, perhaps after several lives. Sri Krishna promises to bear the burden of the responsibility of the happiness of the one with the single view-point, who has dedicated himself to the self of all beings, to the worship of all aspects behind all forms.

MIRACLES OF FAITH AND WILL

There are two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle.

—ALBERT EINSTEIN

A SCIENTIST like Einstein with a streak of the mystic and childlike wonder in him can spontaneously respond to the wonders of the Universe. For the poetic philosophers like Walt Whitman, "miracles are to be seen everywhere," if by definition, a miracle means a wonderful or a remarkable thing or event. Even physiologists and biochemists, especially the neuro-biologists, are sometimes astounded at the uncanny but intelligent way the biochemical activities are continually going on within the cells of the body.

However, the other dictionary meaning of miracle: "An unusual and unaccountable appearance or an act which apparently breaks a law of nature, especially attributed to a deity or supernatural force," is something no rational man can approve if he has observed nature and its changeless laws. In this sense, Theosophy states: "There is no miracle. Everything that happens is the result of law—eternal, immutable, ever active," although the latter may not be known yet to science.

It is recorded that when Mme. Blavatsky travelled around the world all alone for twenty years, beginning at 21 years of age, in search of truth concerning Man, Nature and God, she came across advanced beings called sages and rishis (seers) especially in the East, capable of wonderworks or thaumaturgy, in the daylight, for specific and wise purposes. Not only was she convinced about the existence of the god-like powers latent in most men but was moved to great awe at the incalculable majesty of the powers of the Divine Itself. The latter is the very source of such powers guardedly exhibited by holy men and also manifested in nature, Paracelsus puts it thus:

The human spirit is so great a thing that no man can [fully] express it; as God Himself is eternal and unchangeable, so also is the mind [soul] of man.

MIRACLES OF FAITH AND WILL

If we rightly understood its powers, nothing would be impossible to us on earth. The imagination is strengthened and developed through *faith in our will*. Faith must confirm the imagination, for faith establishes the will. (*Isis*, II, 597-98)

He points out that determined will is a beginning of all magical operations. In true Magic, astonishing powers are exhibited by the help of Faith, which gives strength and direction to the gift of imagination (clear image-making faculty), and activates the power of human will, which is a latent spiritual force. But is it such a simple thing to develop that Faith in the power of one's Spirit, leave alone the cultivation of the Will and Imagination?

The general view on miracles is that many of them are clever "magic tricks" performed by the conjurers and "snake-charmers" of the East, by the jugglery of the hand, such as often performed in modern-day magic shows. Others attribute the miracles to the supernatural powers and this view leads to superstitious beliefs, fears and awe, encouraged by religious preaching. That is why the miracles are called hoax by scientific minds and are rejected outright. A nineteenth century intellectual would say, "Faith is a dangerous nonsense," as that was the period of sudden triumph of scientific materialism over the church authorities and dogmas, in the West.

When the intellectual climate was suitable during the last two centuries, called the "Age of Inquiry," Theosophical ideas were appropriately ushered in and were readily acceptable. These could bridge the gulf during the conflict of science with religion, by presenting convincing explanation on the so-called miraculous phenomena which the religions claimed for their own uniqueness. It was also the period when the craze for psychism, spiritualism, yogism, hypnotism, etc., increased dangerously, calling for warning signals that Theosophy furnished along with explanations.

To do this, H.P.B. wrote extensively (1874-1891) on the schools of magic, on mystic orders and their strict rules and methods. She also pointed out

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the collective testimony of traditions and authentic historical facts over the centuries to prove the validity of the magical phenomena, such as mediumship, miraculous healing, etc. The basis of all such wonderworks was enunciated by pointing to the tradition of the sacred knowledge or "the accumulated wisdom of the ages." The latter declared a few *fundamental principles* regarding the laws governing the birth and evolution of mankind and nature, having their origin in the Universal Divine Principle of LIFE and LIGHT. That is why the central teaching of all world religions is the spiritual nature of man and his latent powers awaiting to unfold through the process of evolution by self energized effort and discipline. Once we accept the fact that we are all "gods in the making," having our origin in Divinity, then all the god-like powers, like the buried seeds, can be cultivated and fructified by undertaking necessary training under the guidance of a competent Teacher.

One such great power of the soul of men is the power of Faith. The *Bhagavad-Gita* refers to three kinds of faith as expressed by different human natures or temperaments and according to the degree of development. But they all, in their essential nature, have their origin in man's spiritual centre. Man can exhibit "rational faith," and "irrational faith," or "intuitive faith," described as moral sense, conscience etc. The latter expressions are the part of man's "Soul-memory" consisting of the "Eternal Ideas" permanently stamped upon his Immortal Soul. This is the reason why our faith in the justice of divine providence (which is nothing but the universal unchanging eternal Law) and also our faith in the spiritual world come naturally to us.

James Allen rightly said: "By the power of a formidable faith every enduring work is accomplished." Here is the key even to the worldly achievements. The common adage: "He can, who thinks he *can*," is based on the same philosophy. It refers to the great power of thought of the successful men, who also have the power of concentration and the ability to visualize clearly their goal, ever kept before them. This is but one

illustration of the use of god-given power in many a great man. H.P.B. writes:

This *thinking of oneself as* this, that, or the other, is the chief factor in the production of every kind of psychic or even physical phenomena. The words "whosoever shall say to this mountain be thou removed and cast into the sea, and *shall* not doubt...that thing will come to pass," are no vain words. Only the word "faith" ought to be translated by WILL. Faith without Will is like a wind-mill without *wind*—barren of results. (&£>., II, 59 fn.)

Isis Unveiled (published in 1877), describes the Fakirs in India who conjure up the "Indian Rope Trick," and also an illusory appearance of animals, such as snakes, before the public. This is further explained in *The Secret Doctrine*, (II, 293): "The ancients held that *any idea will manifest itself externally if one's attention is deeply concentrated upon it*," by the trained power of Will and the image-making faculty passed on in some tribes.

In the above cases of what is called in India, "*nazar-bandi*" or the fascinating spell upon the captivated sight of the on-lookers, the method is to visualize a clear image, say, of a vertical rope or a lying seipent. It is firmly held long enough to create a "model" or a matrix in the "astral" substance, to which are attracted elemental beings or "lives." Thus, some kind of formation appears before the public eyes.

As mentioned by the great Occultist Paracelsus, the starting point for the most marvellous powers exhibited by men, is Faith. It is also a "cardinal" virtue, along with Hope and Charity. Medical journals mention cases of unexpected recovery from advanced diseases or serious accident, through the patients' own will to survive and their faith in their recovery. Or, there may be complete trust in the physician, the "healer" or even in the "magic" talisman—anything that inspires strong faith. No doubt these are called "faith cures" and healing by "suggestion." The Bible too states: "It will be done to you according to your faith."

In olden times, the witch-doctors and temple-priests and priestesses, have had a powerful hold on the minds of ailing people and were able to bring about astonishing cures through mesmerism. H.P.B. wrote: "There is a wierd and formidable potency existing in human Will and Imagination, whether consciously or otherwise. There is the imperial power, even of the unconscious Will to create according to the imagination or rather the faculty of discerning clearly the images in the astral light." She adds: "Imagination is an abstract outlining and preparing a model (astral matrix) in the Astral Light, for the concrete form to manifest." Both, the psychic phenomenon and the spiritual creation employ the power of concentration. The difference is in the outcome, depending on the "ideal on which the Faith is fixed," and the level of spiritual development of the performer.

If life is a probationary school where man is expected to undertake rigorous discipline so as to make an integral progress, then we have a choice to apprehend and wisely use the god-like powers, for the higher purposes of the Soul. Most of us fritter away our energies in pursuit of lesser goals like personal advancement, which appear desirable as per the ruling ideals of the age. Fortunate is the one who knows the value of the "Treasures in Heaven" and pursues them with zeal, nay, the desperation of a drowning man. Till then, "each man is [becomes] of the same nature as that Ideal on which his faith is fixed." (*Gita*, XVII)

DEVOTION and aspiration will, and do, help to bring about a proper attitude of mind, and to raise the student to a higher plane, and also they secure for the student help which is unseen by him, for devotion and aspiration put the student into a condition in which aid can be given to him, though he may, as yet, be unconscious of it.

—W. Q. JUDGE

MAN—RISEN APE OR FALLEN ANGEL?

II

IN considering the evolution of man it is important to keep in mind three lines of evolution—physical, intellectual and spiritual. *The Secret Doctrine* teaches that moon is the parent of the earth. When the monads or Egos had completed their evolution on moon, she began to die out, sending all her energies into space and leaving behind the physical vehicle. Those energies revolved and brought about the condensation of matter in space, and produced our earth. The moon that we see is the corpse, which is in the process of disintegration. Seven streams of monads or waves of life or mass of egos came on earth having completed their evolution on the moon. These monads were of varying degrees of development, and the most developed monads were the first to go through experience in lower kingdoms and reach the human form. This group of advanced monads, called lunar pitris or lunar ancestors, played an important role in endowing subsequent classes of monads with ethereal human form. The second group of monads or egos, formed the average humanity. The least developed monads are termed laggards.

For a vast period of time, about 300 million years, earth, man and all the kingdoms of nature were in the astral stage. Hence, earlier human races were ethereal. However, if we trace the physical evolution of man we find that the present human form was acquired after several transformations and only with the aid of the divine beings or lunar pitris, referred to earlier. The building of the Solomon's temple in silence, without chisel or hammer, refers to this gradual process of building of the human frame—the temple for the use of the divine Ego. The process continued in silence, through ages upon ages, involving various forms in nature, from the mineral to vegetable, animal to human.

The human foetus shows in its transformations all the forms that the physical frame of man had assumed before arriving at the present form. The Kabalistic axiom: "A stone becomes a plant; a plant, a beast; a beast a man,

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etc.," refers to the spiritual and physical evolution of man on this Earth. The analysis of ovum, the infinitesimal nucleus of the future man, shows that it is composed of the same elements as a stone, thus it may be said that man first appears as a stone. At the end of three or four weeks the ovum assumes plant-like appearance, being spherical at one end, and tapers like a carrot at the other. When dissected, it is found to be composed of laminae or coats, enclosing liquid and the embryo hangs from the root of the umbilicus, like the fruit from the branch. There is a metempsychosis or transformation of stone into plant. Next, as the foetus develops its limbs, eyes, ears, nose, etc., it resembles a tadpole and like the amphibious reptile, lives in water and develops from it. Later, it gradually assumes human shape. (*S.D.*, II, 188)

Even the ethereal form of early humanity was not like the body, as we now inhabit. *The Secret Doctrine* points out that such ethereal form of the First Root race humanity could not be formed without the intervention of intelligent beings called Lunar Pitris, "Lords of the Moon," "Lunar ancestors" or Jehovah, mentioned above. *The Secret Doctrine* shows that nature, when left to herself in the creation of animal and man, failed. The water-men terrible and bad she [nature] herself created, from the mineral, vegetable and animal remains of their previous forms (*S.D.*, II, 55). We are given the description of these creatures: "Men with wings, four and two-faced men, human beings with two heads, with the legs and horns of a goat. ...In short, combinations of various animals and men, of fishes, reptiles and other monstrous animals assuming each other's shapes and countenances" (*S.D.*, II, 54). The account goes on to say that these forms were destroyed. In other words, intervention of intelligent Divine Beings was necessary. Thus:

Mankind in its first prototypal shadowy form, is the offspring of the *Elohim* of Life (or Pitris); in its qualitative and physical aspect it is the direct progeny of the "Ancestors," the lowest Dhyanis, or the Spirits of the Earth; for its moral, psychic, and spiritual nature it is indebted to a group of divine Beings....Collectively, men are the handiwork of hosts of

various spirits....The first Dhyanis commissioned to “create” man in their image, could only throw off their shadows, like a delicate model for the nature Spirits of matter to work upon. (S.D., I, 224-25)

Theosophy teaches that physical form of man is built on the astral model. The acquirement of physical form by man is referred to in the Bible as Adam and Eve acquiring “coats of skin.” Only when the astral model was perfected did we get material bodies. This astral model or *chhaya* is the gift of the Lunar Pitris. The lunar pitris, also known as Barhishad Pitris, or Pitar-Devata, evolved their shadows or *chhayas* to form the First Root Race on our Earth.

The First Race is described as the shadows of the shadows of the Lords, *i.e.*, “Self-born,” being the (astral) shadows of their Progenitors. The Lunar Pitris created men out of their own divine essence, *i.e.*, they became the First Race. But they could not give man the sacred spark, (light of mind), or self-reflective consciousness that distinguishes man from animals, and this was left to the class of *Devas* symbolized by Prometheus, also known as *kumaras*, *Manasputras* or *Agnishwatta* pitris.

How was the First Race humanity formed? It is called *chhaya*-birth, or primeval mode of sexless creation, where the First Race *oozed out* of the bodies of the Pitris. This is allegorized in the story of *Purana* in which Sanjana, the daughter of Viswakarman---married to the Sun, is unable to bear his effulgence and therefore retires to the forest but leaves behind with him her *chhaya* (shadow, image or astral body). The sun supposing the “*chhaya*” to be his wife begets children through that shadow. H.P.B. points out that during the séances, if the astral form oozing out of the mediums could be fixed and made solid, then *creation* of first race will be understood. (S.D., II, 174)

This mode of reproduction is comparable to Fission. (a) It is seen in the division or splitting of the homogeneous speck of protoplasm (Amoeba) into two. (b) It is also seen in the division of nucleated cell, where the nucleus of the cell splits into two sub-nuclei, which develop within original cell-wall or they may burst the cell and then multiply outside as independent entities. (S.D., II, 166)

The Second Race is said to be “sweat-born.” It “was the product by budding and expansion; the a-sexual (form) from the sexless shadow.” There is corroboration for the “sweat-born” race in the allegory of the *Puranas*. Sage Kandu was performing pious austerities when Indra, the king of the jealous gods sent a female *Apsara* (nymph) called Pramlocha to tempt the sage and disturb his penance. She spent 907 years, six months and 3 days in the company of the sage, which seemed to him like *one day!* H.P.B. points out that these are the esoteric figures, which are purposely distorted, but they are supposed to represent the duration of the cycle between the first and second human race. When the sage wakes up from this psychological or hypnotic state he curses Pramlocha, who is terrified and flies away from him, wiping the perspiration oozing out of her body with the leaves of the trees. The child she had conceived by the sage came out from the pores of her skin in drops of perspiration. The wind collected these drops into one mass, which matured by the rays of the moon, gradually increased in size and in time became the lovely girl, named Marisha---the symbol of Sweat-born race. Kandu stands for First Race. He is a son of the Pitris and therefore *devoid of mind*, and hence mistook the lapse of nearly one thousand years for one day. In *Genesis*, we are told about Adam of clay into which god breathes the *breath of life*. Pramlocha is the Hindu counterpart of the Biblical Lilith. H.P.B. says that the *Apsara* (nymph) is the ambassador of *Kama* (not Indra). *Kama* is the personification of that feeling which leads and propels to creation. This is very suggestive and it shows the psychic element developing the physiological, before the birth of Daksha. Patriarch or *Prajapati* Daksha is the progenitor of real physical men and he is shown to be born from Marisha. (S.D., II, 174-76)

The second Race was the product by Budding and Expansion. H.P.B. points out that this mode of procreation is difficult to comprehend, but there are analogies. There is scientific corroboration for this method of procreation. Budding is described as the method where a small portion of the parent structure swells out at the surface and finally parts company, growing to the size of the original organism, as is found in the case of many vegetables and the sea-anemones. Alternatively, as observed in bacteria and mosses, a single cell thrown

by the parent organism develops into a multicellular organism, which reproduces the features of the parent. The drops of perspiration that Pramlocha exuded symbolize the "spores" of science. (S.D., II, 166)

The Second Race gives birth to the Third. The Third Race could be divided into three distinct divisions, depending on the three modes of procreation. The early sub-races of the Third Race procreated by a kind of exudation of moisture or vital fluid (*visformativa*), which changed the drops of perspiration into greater drops, which grew, expanded and became ovoid or spherical bodies—huge eggs. In these the human foetus gestated for several years. These beings so created were a-sexual. It is not difficult to imagine or believe this if we accept and understand the growth of the foetus from an imperceptible germ, which then develops into a child, and then into a strong, heavy man, says H.P.B. Daksha is the father of the first human-like progenitors, having been born in this way (S.D., II, 177). From being a-sexual, humanity became hermaphrodite or bisexual, like snails and earthworms. Then we are told about Adam—as divine androgyne who separates into man and woman or Cain and Abel. Seth is the first human race born through union of sexes and he represents later Third Race, his progeny is Enos. From this stage, there came about separation of sexes, distinct men and women. Daksha is supposed to have started the era of procreation by union of the sexes. However, this did not happen suddenly, it took long ages. Therefore His (Daksha's) sacrifice was destroyed by Siva because Siva is destroyer and regenerator—evolution and progress personified, who destroys forms in one type to recall them to life under more perfect type.

After the separation of sexes, man was man only in form, but mindless—mind was lying dormant like an unlighted candle. Once again, intervention of divine beings (Dhyanis) was essential. Beings called "Sons of Wisdom," *Kumaras*, *Manasputras* or *Agnishwatta* pitris or solar angels, endowed man with mind, which formed the link between the Spirit of God above and the personal element below. These Beings had undergone evolution

in other worlds and systems of worlds, in other evolutionary periods, before our solar system began. However, the entire Third Race humanity did not get the light of mind at once. The "Sons of Wisdom" *entered* or incarnated in the forms that were completely "ready," and produced by *Kriyasakti*—the mysterious *power of thought*—a progeny called "Sons of Will and Yoga." They are considered to be "seeds" or "ancestors" of all the subsequent Sages, Arhats, Rishis, etc., known historically. Those who were "half ready," received "but a spark," constituting average humanity, which has to undergo evolution and become ready for the full reception of the "Sons of Wisdom." While those which "were not ready" at all, the last class of Monads, termed "laggards," which had hardly evolved from their last transitional and lower animal forms, and remained "narrow-brained," formed the savage tribes of South-Sea Island, Africa and Australia. This explains the varying degrees of intellectuality among various races of men.

(To be concluded)

THOSE plans we make may all be made ignorantly and thus wrongly and kind Nature will not permit us to carry them out. We get no blame for these plans, but we may acquire Karmic demerit by not accepting the impossibility in achieving.

—W. Q. JUDGE

TRUE DETACHMENT

THE materialist puts value on worldly possessions and gives them precedence over such imponderables as truth, sacrifice and austerity. His feelings and inclinations, his emotions and urges get modulated by his attachments to matter and material things. His care for these produces a hunger and from this arise attachments which become obsessions. These attractions captivate his senses which thus get fixed on certain objectives and fail to respond to the higher emotions. His mind becomes selective of only that type of knowledge which can be used to feed the dominating appetites. Thus oriented, he is indifferent to philosophy or the cosmic ultimates. He is in a rut and enjoys being in it.

The orthodox religionist is of a type different from the materialist. His beliefs force him to bend knees to images of wood, stone or clay. He may worship the elementals and the ghosts of dead men. He is firmly fixed in the belief that gods and angels if propitiated through bell, book and candle can give him the enjoyment of his desires, or if aroused to anger can wreck his life. He is not over-afraid of sinning, for he firmly believes that forgiveness is a commodity which can be purchased through church and priest, prayer and propitiation, animal sacrifices, rites and ceremonies. He is not indifferent to material things. On the contrary, he has faith that if the gods are propitious, their help linked to his own ingenuity can perform wonders. He is fixed in his views as rigidly as is the materialist. He is wary of any knowledge that may upset his notions and therefore assumes an uneasy antagonism to other religions and philosophies. It is no doubt true that similar notions about god and the celestial hosts have led men and women to renounce the world and to adopt high standards of morality and self-abnegating service. All honour to them for the self-sacrificing work they do. However, they too get fixed to a limited ideology which restricts their outlook. They become indifferent to material things, but get caught up in that which still is less than the eternal. They refuse to lift their eyes to the distant horizon which is limitless. They are not indifferent to names and labels. They may be classed and identified as those who worship the gods

TRUE DETACHMENT

and must therefore go to them. They are bound ultimately to get lost in hosts, powers and principalities, and getting absorbed in these, they cut short their journey from the eternal to the eternal.

He who fixes his gaze on the limitless sees in manifestation the play only of soul and spirit. The body with its senses and organs, the brain with its intellections, are but the tools which nature provides to enable the Soul to establish contact with matter in its grosser and denser forms. The person who thus views his life's sojourn on earth modulates his actions and behaviour in accordance. The tools must for ever remain subservient to his will so that he can choose any that he may consider appropriate and find them in good fettle for instant and effective use. The various sheaths and bodies that clothe the soul, unless trained and controlled, resemble wild horses that resent being bridled, and stampede at the slightest imposition of authority.

Each one has his body of flesh and its inner model, within which course the life energy and desires. With these, he enters the human arena to gain experience of earthly conditions and to enter upon a course of training in the skilful handling of these instruments. Can he by some method acquire such expertise as shall enable him by the use of these very instruments to penetrate the outer shell of things and so reach their essence? Can he look beyond the diversified and separative forms to that which constitutes the core and centre of an all-pervasive unity? This is what the soul seeks. This is what the soul desires. Why then is it that large masses of people act like wild horses and rejoice in freedom from all curbs such as the irksome imposition of spur and bridle? The answer is to be found in our forgetfulness of our mission upon earth. In fact, through the indolence and perversion of ages, we have forgotten our lineage to such an extent as to require an Oracle to remind us of this by the now famous words: "Man, know thyself."

Indifference is an attitude. It is spontaneous, or should be so. For, a laboured indifference merely draws greater attention to the things to be shunned. Set a bottle of liquor before several people and watch their reactions. The senses of sight and smell carry messages on the instant to

each organ of the man. In the case of the teetotaller, the organs tell the brain centres that they are not concerned. The reaction being negative, the mind remains placid and is not lashed into activity by seething desires. The bottle is looked upon as any other receptacle for holding liquids. Indifference manifests itself. In the case of the drunkard, the reactions become interesting. The telegraph which emanates from the senses sends out a general message that a liquor bottle has been located through sight and smell. This information reaches to the organ that has stored within itself the memories of previous bouts and the carefree happiness they seem to bring. This creates a concern. The wave of urge mounts and, like any other fever, produces a heat in the organism. It saturates the mind so much that the latter suddenly becomes one-pointed. The desire, now sufficiently aroused, *colours prana* (the vital energy) that courses through the outer and inner bodies. The atoms of the various sheaths that make up the person start oscillating on the wavelengths which pertain to gross and debasing materiality. He is lost to the higher influences—at least during his periods of insane cravings, if not longer—and indulging in his desire, drowns his cravings in the oblivion that follows inebriety. Indifference thus becomes a trait of character and shifts according to the changes in one's inclinations.

When the person emplaces himself in the True, his aspirations and longings are those of the Soul. He cares not for the things which the soul does not need. He is thus indifferent to several things which the man of worldly desires craves for and fights over. Possessions which cannot cross with him across the gulf of death have little or no attraction for him. To him, any thing or object which arouses desires for exclusive rights and therefore creates antagonism with other men is useless and even undesirable. Why then should he care for it? The thing may be his today. Tomorrow it may have gone to anybody else. He therefore hungers for such possessions as can belong to the pure soul only and thus be the property of all pure souls equally. But just because he has lost the craving for material things, it does not follow

that he uses them not, or that he becomes indifferent to their potentiality for good. He remains active in waking existence, but he touches not the things that harbingers death. He toils and he spins for obtaining that which can neither be filched nor obtained through violence or deceit. Love, charity, courage and the other subjects of his quest are neither his to give nor his to take. They can be his only if he plants their seedlings in the soil of his nature and attends to their growth. He therefore does not crave for the roses that bloom in another's garden. In fact, if he can so contrive, his joy would lie in the direction of the other's enrichment in preference to his own. Since he knows the true value of material things, he takes them in his stride, uses them for the discharge of his duties and leaves them in the same manner as artisans do, who leave their tools when their work is done. He tailors his possessions to the needs of his Soul.

People are wont to call that person a renouncer who in their eyes leaves untouched the possessions which they themselves crave. They are unable to see behind the renouncing, the indifference, the care, anxiety and urge for things that alone can satisfy the aspirations of soul and spirit. To the outside world, an austere self-abnegation is something which one imposes on oneself by force. The fact of the matter is that when the soul awakes, this same self-abnegation but portrays the mode of life which becomes natural to the person. However, before his eyes open upon the inner worlds of light, he remains torn between the lower desires and the higher aspirations. At times he is indifferent to the one and he basks in the warmth of a close proximity with the divine. At other times, his indifference is to the behests of soul and spirit, and then like the hog he finds his enjoyment by wallowing in the mire.

When temptations beset the aspirant and he finds that all his pasts clamour for those very things to which the Soul would be indifferent, he has to find some way by which the old desires may be stilled and indifference to things of the Soul eradicated. Here, the old adage "resist without resisting" is the best suited to give relief. To achieve even a modicum of success, the student has

first to awaken in himself a constant and consistent awareness that he is Soul. This awareness, by assiduity in devotion, becomes a part of his character and memory. He must so go on working for continuous years and thus arrive at a condition when the memory of himself being Soul springs up spontaneously on the instant that he is beset by worldly considerations.

It then remains for him during times of stress to withdraw within the closet, shut the door, and seek communion with the nameless lord within. In that company and close union he is safe. He does not fight evil. He bypasses it so that it touches him not. The Buddha under the *bodhi* tree sat in serene contemplation, unmoved by and indifferent to the scenes and sounds of temptation marshalled before him by Mara and his furious hosts. He did not use force to drive them away. They spent themselves in the act of temptations.

The higher indifference comes to the man who has learnt to discriminate and to separate in his own life those things which are perishable from those which are imperishable. The *Paramitas*, the virtues transcendental of *The Voice of the Silence*, the imperishable qualities that are set out in the opening verses of the Sixteenth Chapter of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, are the characteristic marks of the man in whom the soul has started its cycle of blooming. Revered be they who can recognize soul-action and respect it.

EVERY time a resolve or fine glow of feeling evaporates without bearing fruit, it is worse than a chance lost; it works to hinder future emotions from taking the normal path of discharge.

—WILLIAM JAMES

[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: What is the difference between "stubbornness" and "will"?

Answer: Mind is a name given to the sum of the states of consciousness grouped under Thought, Will and Feeling (*S.D.*, I, 38). Will is the colourless force which can either go totally in the direction of thoughts or in the direction of feelings. So we say, "Behind Will stands Desire," or desire is the basis of action and mover of the Will. Will is a spiritual power or attribute constantly present in every portion of the Universe. It is a colourless power, to which no quality of goodness or badness could be assigned but which could be used in whichever way one pleases, writes Mr. Judge.

At times we feel that we had an intense desire to do a thing, yet "will" did not come into play. We say, "I wanted to come and see you badly, but could not." That is because this "wanted to" was not intense enough. The state of a man who is fully possessed by desire is described in the *Gita*, thus: "As the hungry man loseth sight of every other object but the gratification of his appetite." The "will" comes into picture when there is a question of satisfying a desire. We experience will at two levels. There *is personal will* displayed markedly by a strong-willed or stubborn person. But, strong will in a stubborn person only implies that he has a strong drive at the level of lower mind. Thus, we have drives for making money or for acquiring fame and so on. and that really implies weakness of will. Such a person, in fact, does not have much capacity to say "yes" or "no" to things coming to his mind. He just goes along the previously built capacities. "It is an error to say of those who are known as strong-willed men, that their wills are wholly their servants, for they are so bound in desire that it, being strong, moves the

will into action for the consummation of wished for ends," writes Mr. Judge.

The most important thing to learn is surrendering of self-will or personal will to the Divine Will. A Master of Wisdom says, "The Way of inward peace is in all things to conform to the pleasures and dispositions of the Divine Will." We will never know peace or joy if we insist upon all things to succeed and come to pass according to our own fancy.

We can begin by denying ourselves small whims and fancies during the day. On the other hand a strong will is developed if we learn to "accept the woes of birth," and to drink to the last dregs what the cup of life holds for us, without a murmur. Then there will no longer be conflict between what we desire and what we, in fact, ought to do. It will then become *Creative Will* Using this will we can break one mould of personality and fashion it into another, till the personality becomes worthy of use by our Higher nature. At Cosmic level there is no difference between desire and will. That is what happens for the spiritually advanced person, who no longer has to control his desire, but his desire flows harmoniously in the direction of his will. For this to happen, Mr. Judge suggests that we must gradually purify our desires and at the same time make our "will" absolute ruler. A time must come when our whole nature must be intent on achieving union with the divine in us. Then "will" begins to work in a different direction independent of desire, becoming free from the domination of desire, and at last subdues the mind itself.

Will is defined as the "principle of life" or Akasa. The mysterious effects of attraction and repulsion are the unconscious agents of will. Fascination exercised by animals and serpents over birds is a *conscious* action of will. When we rub wax, amber or glass, latent heat in the substance is awakened, and it attracts to itself paper and other lighter bodies. This is *unconscious* exercise of will. At the highest level, it is said that the great Universal Idea willed, and the Cosmos sprang into existence. (*Isis*, I, 144)

Question: We aspire to be like our ideal. In the process should we compare ourselves to our ideal?

Answer: In the first place, who are we going to select as our ideal? Today, actors and sport personalities are generally the ideals and role models of the younger generation. Often we take renowned industrialists, philanthropists and artists as role models. Most of them are human beings who have developed one or two aspects of their nature. There is often a lopsided development and even debased character. We are not considering those who wish to acquire money, name and fame or excel in one or the other chosen field of life. If we are aiming at *integral development*, aiming to be not just good but *spiritually perfect* individuals, then who shall we choose as our ideal? We become of the nature of the ideal on which our faith is fixed. The power of our spirit is limitless, but by choosing an ideal with limitations, we unconsciously limit the power of the spirit to expand beyond the limitations of the ideal. Any person, however great he may seem in our eyes, is not infallible or without limitations. There is no need to *compare* ourselves with our ideal. We may only remember that *every* good quality must be developed to *perfection*. We study the lives of great people to get inspiration and insight as to how that goal was achieved by them against all odds. In making comparison we might feel despair or may develop a feeling of inferiority. Even jealousy might creep in insidiously. Continual comparison may make us anxious that we have not yet reached the ideal.

Even a great individual with development of one or two aspects of his nature—say truthfulness and non-violence—cannot compare with the perfected being, even in those one or two aspects which he has developed. Because those qualities of truthfulness and nonviolence are not *perfected* in him—practised to the hilt—as they are in Buddha or Jesus. The Perfected Ones have reached that state of perfection after passing through varied and subtle temptations and coming out triumphant. There is a further danger in taking any *living person* as ideal. As Mr. Crosbie says, it is not the best thing

to rely upon any *living person*, to the extent of *idealizing* him; for if such a person is even seemingly swept away in darkness—such as lapse in discipline, or is accused and slandered even falsely—then it would dishearten us. Many spiritual leaders have lost some of their followers because of accusation of their involvement—justly or unjustly—in a sex-scandal; or accusation of moneymaking or corruption, etc. Hence, both Mr. Judge and Mr. Crosbie advised fellow Theosophists, not to put them on any pedestal or to think highly of them. Mr. Judge wrote to one such member: "I am like you, struggling on the road. Perhaps the veil might in an instant fall down from your spirit, and you will be long ahead of us all." H.P.B. too said: "Do not follow me or my Path: follow the path I show, the Masters who are behind."

We are asked to accept only the Masters as our Ideals. They were once human beings like us, but through training and development they have achieved perfection. We have in us, potentially, all the powers and knowledge displayed by them. It is from scriptures such as the *Gita*, that we understand what it is to emulate the Masters, the Wise Ones. The *Gita* describes the qualities of a Wise One, and some of them are: "freedom from self-esteem, hypocrisy, and injury to others; it is patience, sincerity, respect for spiritual instructors, purity, firmness, self-restraint, dispassion for objects of sense, freedom from pride, and a meditation upon birth, death, decay, sickness, and error; it is an exemption from self-identifying attachment for children, wife, and household, and a constant unwavering steadiness of heart upon the arrival of every event, whether favorable or unfavorable; it is a never-ceasing love for me alone." Since there is no limit to perfection, Mr. Crosbie says, "Our ideals are never reached: they continually *precede* us."

Psychologists are realizing the importance of the old adage: try, try and try again, but the wisdom is in giving up when the going gets really tough. In the study published in the September issue of *Psychological Science*, psychologists Gregory Miller and Carsten Wrosch, who studied a large number of teenagers over a year, concluded that it may be more prudent to give up an important life goal, which seems impossible to achieve. Those who gave up the goal after several good tries had much lower levels of a protein called CRR. High levels of CRP indicate infection and inflammation and have been associated with several serious diseases, which include diabetes and heart disease. The study suggests that healthy but stubborn teens, unable to accept failure are prone to chronic illness later in life. Dr. Samir Parikh, consultant psychiatrist of Max Hospital, has this to say:

One should always have a plan B. The sign of a successful person is one who has the ability to shift from plan A to plan B after realizing that the original plan is not working.

The person may have it in him but may not be able to achieve his goal due to aptitude or lack of proper effort. Then, one should give the same effort in achieving another goal rather than follow the goal that is not seeing the light of the day. Constantly trying to achieve what is not happening can cause fatigue and illness.

Psychologists found that people who set new goals and pursued them and thus jumped back into life had a greater sense of purpose and mastery, and it enabled them to absorb emotional consequences of failure, writes Kounteya Sinha. (*The Times of India*, September 28, 2007)

It was Socrates perhaps, who said that there is no failure in unavoidable surrender; to know when to give up struggle, that also is a triumph. In every field of life we are required to give our very best, but we must also remember that each one has limited strength and capacity. Mr. Judge points out that we must set high mental and spiritual aims, but also remember that we cannot go quite as high as the aim, because our aspirations are hindered

by hereditary defects, wrong habits, etc., which never permit us to do as much as we would wish to do. How do we know that we have tried our best? That is something which each one has to find out for himself and our developing intuitions and sincerity will suggest as to when we should stop further attempts in the same direction. It need not always be purely personal goals, it could even be altruistic objective to benefit others through some definite project, that could be frustrated. We must forbear from fixing our desire on accomplishing even a seeming good result. It is not wise to fix our mind on any set plan. Buddha brings home this truth when he says, "'Here shall I pass the monsoon; there shall I dwell in winter and summer.' This is foolish reflection. He does not consider obstacles of existence."

Avoid putting all your eggs in one basket, is the sage advice.

Writing to some student-aspirant Mr. Judge says:

Why not take up an easy and fluidic position in the matter? An occultist is never fixed on any particular mortal plan. So do not fix your mind as yet on a plan. Wait. All things come to him who waits in the right manner. Make yourself in every way as good an instrument for any sort of work as you can. Every little thing I ever learned I have now found out to be of use to me in this work of ours. *{Letters That Have Helped Me}*

Wabi Sabi philosophy, the characteristic feature of traditional Japanese beauty, is about seeing beauty in simplicity and finding appeal in natural imperfection of life. It is the Japanese art of finding beauty in flawed artistry of nature, of accepting the natural cycle of growth, decay and death. It is in contrast with the Greek ideal of finding beauty in proportion and symmetry. Andrew Juniper, author of the book titled, *Wabi Sabi*, says, "If an object or expression can bring about, within us, a sense of serene melancholy and spiritual longing, then the object could be said to be wabi sabi." Renowned

American Novelist, Richard Powell points out that Wabi Sabi acknowledges three simple realities: nothing lasts, nothing is finished, and nothing is perfect. The word "wabi" connotes rustic simplicity, freshness, quietness, as applied to both natural and man-made objects, while "sabi" means beauty or serenity that comes with age. Hence, Wabi Sabi means "sad beauty." It is the understanding that beauty is fleeting.

D. T Suzuki, a Zen Buddhist teacher, describes wabi sabi as "an active aesthetical appreciation of poverty," by which he means removing the huge weight of material concerns from our lives. "Wabi is to be satisfied with a little hut, and with a dish of vegetables picked in the neighbouring fields," says Suzuki. Like Zen Buddhism, wabi sabi says that the inward eye sees the beauty in the ordinary, the small detail, and the spaces between things, and is not seduced by magnificence or grandeur.

We have the choice of leading the wabi sabi life, which will take us from more to less and then from less to nothingness. Give up, give up, give up, in order to go up, seems to be the call of wabi sabi. Let us not misuse wabi sabi and apply it to every dirty, shabby, worn out thing. A wabi sabi attitude helps us to accept and understand that others are not perfect and hence to enjoy them and learn out of them, write Gitika K. Kaji and Megha Bajaj (*Life Positive*, October 2007). Further:

In fact, isn't life itself wabi sabi in its core? There is space for mistakes. Our greatest learning arises out of experiences gone wrong, from the "imperfect" moments of our life. Life too will follow its own rule of aging, will bloom and wither away with time. But there will be beauty in it too. A child can never boast of the experiences an old person can.

It is the inner perception that takes us beyond the obvious and enables us to see the beauty and perfection beneath the apparent imperfection and ugliness. To the unveiling spiritual perception, Nature lifts veil upon veil, revealing the treasures and beauty buried in "her pure virgin bosom," says *The Voice of the Silence*. The whole universe appears to

be chaos to the senses but is cosmos (order) to the reason.

An ugly exterior often hides a noble soul. Our age is the age of dissembling, and everything is built on appearances. Whether we are seeking for true beauty or lasting happiness, we need to go beyond the physical. *Through the Gates of Gold* suggests that we must learn to look for the kernel within the shell and the essence of a thing is obtained by cracking the shell and casting it away. We must lend all our emotions, thoughts and ideas to this process, so that instead of being tied to a treadmill of emotions or thoughts we will be able to enjoy the peace, happiness and beauty that arises from appreciation of subtler aspects of things. It will enable us to recognize the *soul* within the person we love, and see within our thought the finer qualities of spiritual truth, as we soar beyond the action of our *mental machinery*, mounted on the broad back of the eagle of *intuition*.

Unless our inward eyes open, it is vain to go in search of a Guru. Many false prophets and teachers have led astray, people who are glamourized by the charisma and handsome exterior of the so-called spiritual teachers. On the other hand, judging by the appearance and through sheer blindness, as Mr. Judge puts it, many failed to see the lion's glance and diamond heart of our teacher H.P.B.

What makes us believe in the supernatural? What makes us superstitious? Bruce Hood, professor of psychology at the University of Bristol, conducted an experiment in which he asked a large audience if anyone would be willing to wear an old cardigan if he paid twenty pounds to the person. Almost all showed willingness to wear it. However, when told that it had been worn by a notorious murderer, hardly two or three people were ready to put it on. Hood concluded that people viewed

evil as something physical and tangible that could infect the sweater like lice. That explains our belief in the spirits and souls appearing in this world, as that is based on our belief that the nonphysical can be transferred over to the physical world. A Gallup poll found that only seven per cent of Americans do not believe in telepathy, ghosts, past lives or other supernatural phenomena. "Supernatural" phenomena are those which could not be explained by laws of physics or biology, and include beliefs like, you can *feel it* if someone is staring at you from behind, and that if you think about someone, he is more likely to phone you.

Cognitive scientists believe that belief in the supernatural arises out of our normal mind or mental processes. In fact, such beliefs might help us explain how the normal mind works. For instance, *drive to perceive patterns* may underlie such supernatural beliefs as seeing Jesus in scorch marks or Virgin Mary in a stain or human voice in the sound of wind in the cave, etc. There are patterns in time, such as superstitious ritual of wearing the same shirt when you compete in a sport. Our tendency to assign consciousness to inanimate objects may lead us to believe that certain natural phenomena are caused by some supernatural agents or spirits. For instance, we may assign the noise caused in the night by brushing of the branches against the drainpipes to some spirit or agent. It is the dualism of seeing mind as separate from body that underlies the belief in supernatural beings like ghosts, as ghosts are without material bodies but with minds.

Scientists suspect dopamine to be closely linked with superstition. In a study, when skeptics were given L-dopa, a drug that increases dopamine, their behaviour began to come close to believers in the supernatural, writes Sharon Begley (*Newsweek*, November 5, 2007)

Could we explain the supernatural on the basis of normal brain functions? Eastern Psychology points out that there is more to Man and Nature than meets the eye. Both Man and Nature are triune. There is a visible physical nature; an invisible, indwelling, energizing nature, brooded

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over by unchanging spirit, the source of all the forces. In man, there is objective, physical body built on an astral or model body, brooded over by the immortal spirit. Thus, besides the physical, there are astral, psychic and spiritual realms, and like the physical realm, there are laws governing astral, psychic and spiritual realms. In the absence of knowledge of these laws that govern occult forces and processes, it is impossible to explain certain phenomena and they are therefore classed as supernatural.

Astral body has its own set of senses and the *real* centres of perception reside in that astral. It is like a sponge, which retains the memory of every thought, feeling and action, and once the physical body is gone, the astral, with impressions of thoughts and feelings remains, which we call "ghost." Corresponding to the astral body in man is the astral light in nature, described as the tablet of the unseen universe. All things that ever were, that are, or that will be, are recorded on the astral light. It is by training the astral senses that one is able to perceive the records of the astral light. Many "supernatural" happenings such as, clairvoyance, clairaudience, etc., could be explained on the basis of the knowledge of the astral senses and astral light. Mind is described as sum of the states of consciousness grouped under thought, will and feeling. One common vital principle pervades all things, and it is controllable by the perfected human will.

Many superstitions result from lack of knowledge of causality, others from unenlightened fears. Many superstitions are based on accidental luck or misfortune. For instance, if wearing a particular dress or ornament brought good luck on a certain occasion, then there is a tendency to wear it again. Subsequently if that dress or ornament continues to bring luck, it is our belief *or faith* that makes it lucky.