

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

## THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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### THE LINE OF LIFE'S MEDITATION

LORD Buddha said: “Without insight there is no meditation and also without meditation there is no insight.” We must cultivate an *insight* into the real nature of conditioned existence, and become aware that it is full of pain, ever changing and transitory. Just as meditation and insight (*Prajna*) reciprocally affect each other, so do *Sila* (moral practices) and *Dhyana* (meditation). We sit for meditation and wonder why we do not succeed. How can we suppose that with half-an-hour of meditation and the remaining 23 1/2 hours spent the way we like would enable us to concentrate? Our whole day should be an exercise in concentration. We allow our energies to drain away by engaging in idle conversations, mental ramblings, re-living the past experiences or being anxious about things that have not yet happened. Every moment must be spent usefully.

But just as our waking life affects meditation practice so also our meditation must affect our waking life. Initially, we may become aware of the objective aspect of action, *i.e.*, whether the action was right or wrong, but soon we would start becoming aware of the subjective side, *i.e.*, the motive behind the action. A man of meditation is definitely more calm, more cheerful, more detached, and to an extent equal-minded in pain and pleasure. Once a Sufi saint was asked why he meditated the whole night and his reply was, in the night I pursue Allah (God), and He pursues me all through the day. *Dhyana* is described as ceaseless contemplation.

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

THE LINE OF LIFE'S MEDITATION	123
INSTINCT—WHAT IS IT?—I	129
RISHIS—WHO ARE THEY?—I	134
STUDIES IN THE DHAMMAPADA VIGILANCE—I	139
JULIUS CAESAR A STUDY IN VIOLENCE AND BLOODSHED—I	144
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS	149
IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY	153

THEOSOPHY COMPANY (INDIA) PRIVATE LTD.

40 New Marine Lines, Mumbai 400 020, India  
email: bomult@vsnl.com ♦ Phone : 22039024

We might meditate everyday but we find it difficult to integrate it to our day to day life. As a result, little things in life have the power of shattering our peace and disturbing our calm. We all experience this. If we do not get taxi as we set out for work, or after reaching office we do not find the necessary papers which we had asked the subordinate to prepare and keep, we fly into a rage—we fret and fume. Mr. Crosbie writes:

Your studies and your efforts are futile if you are disturbed inwardly. The first thing then is to get calmness, and that can be reached by taking the firm position that nothing can really injure you, and that you are brave enough and strong enough to endure anything; also that all is a necessary part of your training. Mr. Judge once said, “It may be a child’s school, but it takes a man to go through it.” Then why not make up your mind to go through it, no matter what the circumstance or condition? (*The Friendly Philosopher*, p. 11)

Our meditation should influence and reflect itself in our day to day activities. A man of meditation will not waste time in idle talk, but he will also not fail in a friendly greeting. He will be more watchful of his time, intelligently proportioning it to his various duties. He will not want to leave one duty half done and turn to another, unless it is possible for him to do several duties simultaneously. He would have acquired better concentration and as a result better and deeper understanding of whatever he reads. Our half-hour of meditation and the way we live the life reciprocally affect each other. Hence, Mr. Judge says:

Let us divide Meditation into two sorts. First is the meditation practised at a set time, or an occasional one....Second is the meditation of an entire lifetime, that single thread of intention, intentness, and desire running through the years stretching between the cradle and the grave. (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 12*, p. 12)

How are we going to arrange our life in a proper manner so that it will aid in our half-hour meditation? Our meditation undertaken at a fixed time can be aided when we have the *line of life's meditation*—a single thread of intention or desire running all through the life. But what is the “line of life’s meditation”? It is that on which the heart is set. For those of us who have no spiritual inclination and are given only to low plane gratification, the *line of life's meditation* could be acquiring money, comfort, luxury, name, fame, etc. Then all the activities and thinking that is done is ultimately subservient to and guided by the single motive, which is determined by one’s “line of life’s meditation.” However, in case of those who have even a little inclination towards spirituality, we may say, there are two lines of life’s meditation—one guided by lower, animal nature and the other guided by higher, spiritual nature. It is our duty to make the line of life’s meditation guided by the lower nature, subservient to that, which is guided by the higher nature. It involves purification of our thoughts, feelings, desires and actions, which is not an easy matter. This happens gradually. In *U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 7*, we are shown how we can purify our desires, step by step, beginning with killing out the desire for the things of matter, since these can be enjoyed only by the separated personality. Even in case of daily food, Gandhiji used to say that the food he ate, no one else could eat, and hence he seemed to deprive others of that food. The second step is to overcome subtler desires such as those for power, knowledge, love, happiness or fame. How to achieve this? The answer is, “Life itself teaches these lessons,” because even when we get what we want, we are likely to lose it, or it may not be what we had expected it to be, or it loses its charm once we have attained it. Thus, our life experiences show that it all turns to dust and ashes in the mouth. Gradually, after many such experiences, we begin to intuitively perceive that satisfaction is attainable only in the infinite, so that at last, we begin to use our “Will” to centre all our desires on the Eternal.

However, for most of us, our desires are for money, fame, name,

etc.—centred on lower plane, so that we create a “centre of attraction” on the lower plane. The one, who lives entirely on the plane of sense gratification, will draw from higher planes the energies required for the fulfilment of his desires and aspirations on the lower plane. This will cause the past Karma to unfold itself on that plane. On the other hand, in case of a person who has purer desires and who aspires higher, fixes the “centre of attraction” on the higher plane. The energies on the lower plane are drawn there, resulting in increase of spirituality. Thus, when we make a demand on lower plane for sensual gratification, the fulfilment of lower desires happen at the expense of higher development. That energy which should have gone in strengthening our morals and fulfilment of higher aspirations is dragged down in satisfying lower desires. “By degrees the higher planes are exhausted of vitality and the good and bad Karma of an entity will be absorbed on the physical plane.” On the other hand, when we constantly struggle to fix our mind and heart for the attainment of highest ideal, our past Karma will begin to unfold on the higher plane and aid us in spiritual pursuit. Thus, for instance, if we have generated good Karma, on physical plane, by giving large donations in the past lives, and if our heart is set on making money in this life, we may find, money, comfort and luxury coming our way very easily. But if our heart is set on acquiring spiritual knowledge then the same good Karma of the past, on the physical plane, will aid us on the physical plane, in terms of getting right kind of books, a quiet place for study and meditation and so on, for higher purposes. Thus, in a million different ways we are aided on physical, mental, moral and psychic planes. How does this happen? The law is that Karma manifests in harmony with the plane of desire. It is our attitude of mind that binds our soul with Karmic cords.

We create our “centre of attraction” on higher plane, more markedly, when we take a vow, a pledge or a resolve. In that we focus our mind and heart on the higher plane and earnestly desire to purify our lower nature and become spiritually wise. Such a vow

brings to the surface every latent quality in person's nature, leading to an all-round development.

A philosopher, scientist, criminal, saint, businessman and artisan, each has his own *line of life's meditation*, as each one of them pursues that on which his heart is set. How can we make spiritual pursuit our line of life's meditation? Is it possible? There are so many allurements in this world. We have an excellent example of King Janaka, who was a *Rajarshi* or an adept-king. He set an example of what it is to live *in* the world but not be *of* the world.

Although he was outwardly engaged in managing the affairs of his state, he could at the same time be an Occultist. In other words, “his inward aspirations had been leading him on continually to the goal in which his whole inner self was concerned”—that on which his heart was set.

If we follow spiritual discipline making it our line of life's meditation, setting our whole heart on it, then we are assured that we will be able to carry it to next life, like an unbroken thread. Hence, if some of us are naturally attracted to and find it easy to follow spiritual discipline in this life, it is because we would have made that our line of life's meditation in prior lives. A Master of Wisdom beautifully describes the process of self-purification with the promise that no effort is lost. Thus:

The process of self-purification is not the work of a moment, nor of a few months but of years—nay, extending over a series of lives. The later a man begins the living of the higher life, the longer must be his period of probation, for he has to undo the effects of a long number of years spent in objects diametrically opposed to the real goal...*If his aspiration is genuine—a settled conviction and not a sentimental flash of the moment—he transfers from one body to another the determination which finally leads him to the attainment of his desire.* [Italics ours]

The line of life's meditation is sum total of thoughts underlying all our actions of the lifetime. The total quantity of life thoughts

which constitute the thread of life's meditation or "that on which the heart was set," are not lost but are stored in *Manas* and they get expression in some life when we have appropriate brain and bodily environment. The line of life's meditation determines our last thoughts at the dying moment and those in turn will determine the kind of state after death we shall have. It is believed that if one dies with God's name on one's lips, one will go to heaven. Hence, many people in India keep their children's names after the names of gods and goddesses, such as, "Narayana," "Laxmi," etc., thinking that by calling their children by their names, on the deathbed, they would have the merit of remembering God. But you cannot think of God at the dying moment if you have not thought of Him all through the life. If your heart was set on money, then you will think only of money at the dying moment. The last thoughts become the basis for the ideation and assimilation of the noble qualities and pursuit of abstract knowledge in *Devachan*, popularly known as heaven or *swarga*.

The last series of powerful and deeply imprinted thoughts are those, which give colour and trend to the whole life in *devachan*. The last moment will colour each subsequent moment. On those soul and mind fix themselves and weave of them a whole set of events and experiences, expanding them to their highest limit, carrying out all that was not possible in life. (*The Ocean of Theosophy*, p. 121)

Though we all have mixed desires, there is still a group of dominant desires to which all other hopes, dreams and desires are subservient. The last dominant thoughts act as a keynote, which works itself out in the subjective state of *Devachan*, into numberless harmonic tones and semi-tones of psychic phantasmagoria. If we have followed music, mathematics, philanthropy, etc., then these will find expansion and further development in *Devachan*. The Ego is born again with that faculty enriched.

## INSTINCT—WHAT IS IT?

### I

"INSTINCT is simply a direct perception of what is right, within its own realm....Animals have right instinct in regard to what to eat, and in regard to what is dangerous to them, for their instinct is acquired experience." There is wisdom in this instinct. We find that the dog stops eating completely when it is unwell and that is one of the ways in which he recovers. Dogs sometimes eat certain type of grass and then vomit, as a result, throwing out unwanted things from the system. But, we also say that display of intelligence in lower kingdoms is nothing but working of "Dhyan Chohanian Impulse." How do we reconcile these statements?

We must not confuse instinct in animals with the intuition or a gut feeling in man. Automatic regulation of breathing, heartbeat, and body temperature is attributed to acquired instinct or reflexes. Most of man's actions are a mixture of instinct and learning. The human child is always taught by the elders and hence it is difficult to know what things he would *instinctively* do under the given circumstances. About instinctive nature of man we can say that he has a large number of instincts but they are very indefinite as compared to those of animals.

But how did instinct evolve in animals and what are the causes of evolution itself? These questions are partly explained by science. Darwin's theory of evolution postulates that various types of animals and plants have their origin in other preexisting types and that the distinguishable differences are due to modifications in successive generations. But, what is the origin of "preexisting types" and how does "modifications" in successive generations take place? We are told that modifications in the successive generations take place as a result of "Natural selection."

"Natural selection is a process that results in the adaptation of an organism to its environment by means of selectively reproducing changes in its genotype or genetic constitution. In Natural selection,

those variations in the genotype that increase an organism's chances of survival and procreation are preserved and multiplied from generation to generation at the expense of less advantageous ones. Adaptation is simply the process by which an animal or plant becomes fitted to its environment; it is the result of natural selection acting upon heritable (transmittable) variations. Even simpler organisms must be adapted in a great variety of ways: in their structure, physiology, and genetics; in their locomotion or dispersal; in their means of defense and attack; in their reproduction and development; and in other respects." (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*)

Thus, "Natural Selection" is a process by which the "fit" survive, while the "unfit" are eliminated in the "struggle for existence." Organisms tend to multiply. The constant battle for life—the "struggle to obtain enough to eat and to escape being eaten," together with challenging environmental conditions—necessitates a perpetual weeding out of the unfit. The "fit" which survive, produce offspring and transmit their organic characteristics to their descendants. Under the law of Natural Selection, all "useful variations" or useful modifications or useful changes in the species are thus perpetuated, and a progressive improvement is effected.

But, the law of "Natural selection" will perpetuate "useful variations" *once they are produced*, and the "survival of the fittest" can take place *only after useful variations have sprung up*, together with improved organisms, says H.P.B. The question is: What caused such "useful variations" in the first place? The causes may be physical, climatic, dietary, etc., grouped under sexual selection, natural selection, isolation, etc. However, these are only *secondary* causes. But, what is the CAUSE of the *secondary* causes themselves? From where comes the intelligence in working of the law of Natural Selection and other secondary causes? Surely, this is not the work of blind forces of nature.

To understand evolution, we need to have answers to the key questions: (a) What is the CAUSE behind the secondary causes such as Natural Selection, Sexual Selection, Isolation, etc.? (b) Whence

the "ancestral types" (preexisting types) which served as the starting point for physical development? H.P.B. provides us an insight into these difficult questions thus:

What *is* EVOLUTION?...."the act of unfolding; the process of growth, development; as the evolution of a flower from a bud, or an animal from the egg." Yet the bud must be traced through its parent-plant to the seed, and the egg to the animal or bird that laid it; or at any rate to the speck of protoplasm from which it expanded and grew. And both the *seed* and the *speck* must have the latent potentialities in them for the reproduction and gradual development, the unfolding of the thousand and one forms or phases of evolution, through which they must pass before the flower or the animal are fully developed? Hence, the future plan, if not a DESIGN, *must be there*. (*S.D.*, II, 653)

The whole order of nature evinces a progressive march towards a *higher life*. There is design in the action of the seemingly blindest forces. The whole process of evolution with its endless adaptations is a proof of this. The immutable laws that weed out the weak and feeble species, to make room for the strong, and which ensure the "survival of the fittest," though so cruel in their immediate action—all are working toward the grand end. The very *fact* that adaptations *do* occur, that the fittest *do* survive in the struggle for existence, shows that what is called "unconscious Nature" is in reality an aggregate of forces manipulated by semi-intelligent beings (Elementals) guided by High Planetary Spirits, (Dhyān Chohans), whose collective aggregate forms the manifested *verbum* of the unmanifested LOGOS, and constitutes at one and the same time the MIND of the Universe and its immutable LAW. (*S.D.*, I, 277-278)

The true solution of the mystery is to be found in the impersonal Divine Wisdom, in its IDEATION—reflected through matter. (*S.D.*, II, 299)

Thus, it is the “Dhyan Chohanian Impulse” or “Divine Intelligence” which lies behind all secondary causes or minor agencies giving birth to various SPECIES, says H.P.B. These causes include: 1) Variation transmitted by heredity, 2) Natural Selection, 3) Sexual Selection, 4) Physiological Selection, 5) Isolation, 6) Correlation of Growth, 7) Adaptation to Environment (*S.D.*, II, 738). Dhyan Chohanian or *Fohatic* impulse is the impulse given to congeries of lives or units of life energy that underlies all forms.

As regards evolution of various plants and animals from other “ancestral types” (preexisting types), H.P.B. points out that the differentiating “causes” known to modern science have come into operation only after the *physicalization of the primeval animal root-types out of the astral* (*S.D.*, II, 736). Darwinism only meets Evolution at its midway point—that is to say when astral evolution has given place to the play of the ordinary physical forces with which we are acquainted. Therefore, it is the astral world in which we need to look for the root-types, in the period when the world was still in its ethereal state. H.P.B. traces the true cause of variations in species to Dhyan-Chohanian wisdom, as follows:

In the *creation* of new species, departing sometimes very widely from the Parent stock, as in the great variety of the *genus Felis*—like the lynx, the tiger, the cat, etc.—it is the “designers” who direct the new evolution by adding to, or depriving the species of certain appendages, either needed or becoming useless in the new environments. Thus, when we say that *Nature* provides for every animal and plant, whether large or small, we speak correctly. For, it is those terrestrial spirits of Nature, who form the aggregated Nature; which, if it fails occasionally in its design, is neither to be considered blind, nor to be taxed with the failure; since, belonging to a *differentiated* sum of qualities and attributes, it is in virtue of that alone *conditioned and imperfect*. (*S.D.*, II, 732)

Thus, it is not the blind forces of nature, but Divine intelligence

working through nature that is the guiding force behind the *secondary* causes of evolution. The plan of the universe to be, first existed in the Divine Mind, like a blueprint of a building. This plan was conceived and transmitted or impressed on matter by the Divine Intelligences, as “Laws of Nature.” Water wets and Fire burns. Various chemical elements exhibit unmistakable characteristics or their properties in consistent manner. Are these merely due to chance? Certainly not. These characteristics, traits, properties have evolved over ages as a result of unfoldment of the plan, under the evolutionary impulse from the intelligence or consciousness which is present in the whole of the manifested nature. Even the doctrine of the survival of the fittest should show this. For, the fitness cannot come from nothing, but must at last show itself from the coming to the surface of the actual inner character, the inherent potentiality.

(*To be concluded*)

YOU must have heard about the tremendous power of faith. It is said in the Purana that Rama, who was God Himself—the embodiment of Absolute Brahman—had to build a bridge to cross the sea to Ceylon. But Hanuman, trusting in Rama’s name, cleared the sea in one jump and reached the other side. He had no need of a bridge.

Once a man was about to cross the sea. Bibhishana wrote Rama’s name on a leaf, tied it in a corner of the man’s wearing-cloth, and said to him: “Don’t be afraid. Have faith and walk on the water. But look here—the moment you lose faith you will be drowned.” The man was walking easily on the water. Suddenly he had an intense desire to see what was tied in his cloth. He opened it and found only a leaf with the name of Rama written on it. “What is this?” he thought, “Just the name of Rama!” As soon as doubt entered his mind he sank under the water.

—SRI RAMAKRISHNA

## RISHIS—WHO ARE THEY?

## I

A RISHI is considered to be an inspired poet-sage, to whom the hymns of the Vedas were revealed and under whose names they stand. According to post-Vedic tradition, the *Rishi* is a “seer” (*mantra-drashta*) to whom the Vedas were “originally revealed” through higher states of consciousness. H.P.B. points out that *Rahat* or *Arhat* is the Pali equivalent of the Sanskrit *Rishi*—one who has developed his psychical powers to their fullest extent. Thus, a *Rishi* is an adept. After many stages and degrees of development one reaches such pinnacle of spiritual perfectibility. A *Rahat* may be of lower or higher degree of development (*The Theosophist*, August and October 1880). She points out that *Rishis* such as, Visvamitra, Valmiki and Vasishtha were historical personages and were very high adepts entitled to be called *Mahatmas*. However, many of the *Rishis* are mythical rather than historical figures.

The most popular are the seven *Rishis* (*saptarishis*) or the *Prajapatis* (progenitors), also known as “the mind-born sons” of Brahma. Their names are: Marichi, Atri, Angiras, Pulatsya, Pulaha, Kratu and Vasishtha. Vasishtha is often replaced by Daksha, and Marichi by Bhrigu. H.P.B. points out that these are called seven *rishis* of the *Third Manvantara*, which refers to Third Round as well as Third Root Race and its sub-races in the Fourth Round. They are the creators (*Prajapati*) of various beings on this earth (*S.D.*, II, 78). There are two kinds of Pitris, *Barhishad* and *Agnishwatta*. The *Barhishad* or lunar pitris are responsible for giving form to humanity, and are considered to be sons of Atri. The *Agnishwatta* gave man the “light of mind.” They are said to be sons of Marichi and Sambhuti, daughter of Daksha (*S.D.*, II, 89). Stories of several *Rishis* and their multifarious progeny is but a veiled account of the order of evolution in this Round, as also the various modes of procreation in the earlier races of mankind. For instance, the Third Race was a-sexual in the beginning. Then humanity

became hermaphrodite or bisexual and finally man-bearing eggs began gradually to give birth to distinct men and women. Now, Pulatsya is the father of all the Serpents and *Nagas*. *Nagas* are semi-divine beings, and they refer to the “Sons of Will and Yoga,” in the early Third Race, which were produced by the power of *Kriyasakti* of the sages. Kasyapa, the Vedic *Rishi* is the most prolific of creators, and exoterically, he was the son of Marichi. Kasyapa was father of cows and buffaloes through his wife Surabhi. The fable of Kasyapa with his twelve wives, giving birth to numerous and diversified progeny of *nagas* (serpents), reptiles, birds and all kinds of living things, is a *veiled* record of the order of evolution in the present Round (*S.D.*, II, 181). Thus: “He [Kasyapa] was also the father of *Garuda*, the bird, the ‘King of the feathered tribe,’ who descends from, and is of one stock *with the reptiles*, the *nagas*; and who becomes their mortal enemy *subsequently*” (*S.D.*, II, 253-54), which shows that birds developed from reptiles.

Pulatsya is revered because through him the Puranas were made known to men. He is the progenitor of Demons, the *Rakshasas*. H.P.B. points out that *Danavas*, *Daityas* and *Rakshasas* are represented in the Puranas, as extremely pious, following the precepts of the Vedas, and that some of them were Yogis. They opposed priestcraft, ritualism and sacrifices. *Gibborim*, the giants of the Bible, and the *Rakshasas* of the Hindus, are both Atlanteans, and belong to the submerged races (*S.D.*, II, 415). Parasara, the Vedic *Rishi*, received *Vishnu Purana* from Pulatsya and taught it to Maitreya. (*S.D.*, II, 456 fn.)

*The Secret Doctrine* (II, 501-502), mentions that there were three classes of *Rishis* in India, who were the earliest adepts known. They are *Rajarshis*, *Devarshis* and *Brahmarshis*. *Rajarshis* were the *Kshatriya* adept-kings who were well-versed in scriptures and who adopted the ascetic life. The *Devarshis* were the sons of *Dharma* or Yoga—Narada being one of them. The *Brahmarshis* were the descendants of those *Rishis* who were founders of *gotras* of *brahmins*.

What is *gotra*? There is the story of Satyakam, who was the son of a woman named Jabali. He had a strong wish to study and so he left home in search of a guru. He went to the ashram of sage Gautam and requested him to take him as his pupil. Gautam questioned him, “Before I make you my pupil, I need to know about your family, *i.e.*, *gotra* or caste-race.” This puzzled Satyakam, as he had no idea about his caste. When he asked his mother about his *gotra*, his mother told him to tell the sage that he was the son of Jabal and that his name was Satyakam Jabal. Satyakam went to Gautam and told him what he knew. The sage was pleased with his truthfulness and accepted him as his pupil, though he was not a *Brahmin*. The sage wanted to know the *gotra* because in those days certain knowledge could be imparted only to a person belonging to *Brahmin* caste.

The Sanskrit term “Gotra” was initially used by the Vedic people for the identification of the lineages. Generally, these lineages meant patrilineal descent from the sages or *rishis* in Brahmins; from warriors and administrators in *Kshatriyas* and ancestral trademen in *Vaishyas*. However, according to original Hindu Vedic system, *Gotra* has always been only a Brahmin lineage that descends from seven or eight *Rishis* associated with the *Saptarishi* or the seven stars of the *Great Bear constellation*. Thus, for instance, Bhṛigu, the great Rishi, and one of the seven *Prajapati*, is the founder of the Race of *Bhargavas*, in which Parasurama is born (*S.D.*, II, 32 fn.). In the earlier days, before the ancient teachings had become materialized, marriage was a sacred institution and religious contract. Family life was understood and conducted so as to provide proper environment for egos of the same nature as the family. The ancients tried to develop very pure family lines such that over many centuries that family line would have the power to repel the evil or mediocre Egos that did not come up to the standard of that family stream. There were pure family lines of true Brahmins, with genuine love for knowledge and high moral values. They aspired to produce saviours and regenerators of humanity, writes Mr. Judge. However, in our days, there is *varnasankara* or mixing up of castes, and hence the

nature of those born in a given caste does not necessarily conform to the original caste. In earlier days, because of pure family lines, by knowing the *gotra* or caste it was possible to discern the inner nature of the person. In those days there was direct relation between outer physical characteristic and inner psychic and moral nature. Today, the castes are mixed up, in the sense that man’s physical body is of one type (say, very healthy and good), his psychic nature is of another type and again moral nature is of yet another type. So caste or *gotra* does not have much relevance in our days. Probably the mixing up of the castes or *varnasankara* has some significance, as it is only through the process of amalgamation that a new sub-race is formed, as in the case of sixth subrace, which is being formed on the American continent.

Thus, *Brahmarshis* are the founders of the *gotras* of Brahmins. However, in Hinduism a *Brahmarshi* is considered to belong to the highest class of *rishis*, one who has understood the meaning of *Brahman* or has attained the highest divine knowledge, *i.e.*, *Brahmjnana*. A *Rajarshi* is a *rishi* of the royal caste. A *Rajarshi* is a king who has turned into a royal sage, or *rishi*, through pure and holy life, such as Visvamitra (who later advanced to becoming a *Brahmarshi*). On the other hand, a *Rajarshi* may still rule the kingdom but has reached a state of *rishi* such as Janaka, the king of Mithila and father of Sita, as also Dasaratha, the king of Ayodhya and father of Rama. King Janaka, says the *Gita*, set an example of morally pure and altruistic life, even while living in the world.

Commenting on the article by Charles Johnston, entitled “The Red Rajputs,” that appeared in the *Imperial and Asiatic Quarterly Review* for October 1893, Mr. Judge writes that Shri Krishna traced his doctrine from the *Kshatriya* Manu through a line of *Rajrshis* or *Rajanya* sages. The last personage named in the line is Ikshvaku, of whose race was Buddha. Hence Mr. Johnston ascribes the spirit of the Upanishads and of Buddhism to the mystical genius of *Rajanya* race. Mr. Judge comments that it is a very remarkable fact that the *Gayatri*, or that holy verse which is the “mother of the Vedas,” was



composed by a *Kshatriya* (of warrior caste) and not by a *Brahmin* (of Priest caste). On this he quotes the words from the Upanishads: “The *Brahmin* sat at the foot of the *Kshtriya*.” This upholds the spiritual dignity of *Rajanyas*, who are *Kshtriyas* and the Red Rajputs. Mr. Johnston points out that to this day the Ranas (kings) of Mewar [in Rajasthan] “unite spiritual with royal authority and officiate as high priests in the temple of the guardian deity of their race.” The Red Rajputs are the descendants of the solar race (*Suryavansha*), a race of kings, of mystical men who not only could learn mystic occultism but could also fight and rule. (*The Path*, May 1894)

According to Puranic stories, Vishvamitra originally belonged to the *Kshatriya* caste of kings and warriors, and rose by pure merit to the stage of a *Brahmarshi*. There are various versions of how Visvamitra became a *brahmrshi*. It is said that on one of his exploits, the king and his soldiers took rest in the *ashram* of *Rishi* Vasishtha. There, his whole army was well fed and taken care of. The King was surprised as to how it was possible for this simple sage to feed an entire army. When he expressed his surprise to sage Vasishtha, he was told that he owned a calf, Nandini, daughter of Indra’s cow Kamadhenu, who provided him with everything he needed. The King asked for the cow to be given to him. When sage Vasishtha refused, he ordered his soldiers to seize the cow, and drive it to his kingdom. By his yogic powers, the great sage Vasishtha, called forth an entire army of fierce warriors. They fought the army of the king and defeated it thoroughly.

This incident made a deep impression on the King. He realized that the power obtained by penance was far greater than mere physical might. He renounced his kingdom and began his quest to become a greater *rishi* than Vasishtha. After many trials and undergoing many austerities, Vishvamitra at last obtained the title of *brahmarishi* from Vasishtha himself.

(To be concluded)

## STUDIES IN THE DHAMMAPADA

### VIGILANCE—I

THE SECOND chapter of the book is called *Appamada* or Vigilance. It is also translated as Carefulness, Mindfulness, Heedfulness, Watchfulness, Wakefulness, Thoughtfulness, Reflection, Diligence, Earnestness and Zeal. *Pamada* means sloth or sluggishness. *Appamada* signifies opposite trait of sloth, *i.e.*, watchfulness.

We need to cultivate awareness or mindfulness at four levels. There must be awareness of things, awareness of self, awareness of people and awareness of reality. Regarding awareness of things, Sangharakshita, a Buddhist teacher, narrates the story of an apprentice painter who wanted to paint bamboos. He was asked by his master, to first learn to *see* the bamboos. So, he *looked at the bamboos*, in all their details, and under various conditions of rain and mist; in sunlight and moonlight, in different seasons till he became one with the bamboos, and only then was he asked to paint bamboos. We also need to be aware of our thoughts and feelings. Most of the time we are unaware of what we are thinking about. Thoughts and feelings drift through our mind. Then how can we control the entry of unwholesome thoughts and desires? Mr. Crosbie points out that people often look at their watch and put it back in the pocket. Next instant, if someone asks, “What time is it?” they have to look again, being unable to tell. That is because, the first time they looked at the watch, it was to see *what time it was not*. It is the careless habit of letting things impress us without definite notation. H.P.B. also emphasizes the need to be aware of the contents of our mind. She points out that “purely bodily actions and functions are far less important than what a man thinks and feels, what desires he encourages in his mind, and allows to take root and grow there.” If we are vigilant there is no scope for the unwholesome thoughts and desires to enter and take root.

1. *Vigilance is the path to Life Eternal. Thoughtlessness*

*is the path to death. The reflecting vigilant die not. The heedless are already dead. (21)*

*2. The wise distinctly understand this. Therefore they delight in wakeful watching. They graze in the pastures of the Aryas, the Noble Ones. (22)*

*3. Meditative, persevering, ever strenuous in endeavour, the tranquil ones attain Nirvana, the highest freedom and happiness. (23)*

These three verses summarize the whole journey and purpose of human life. In the East, the teaching of *Moksha* or *Nirvana* is a common knowledge. People say that they must live such a life that finally they will not have to be born again. It is a doctrine of attaining freedom from the chain of birth and death and rebirth. Also, *Nirvana* does not mean annihilation where everything comes to an end. It does not mean total destruction of everything. On the contrary, it is “Eternal Life”—immortality. But how does one attain it?

At the simplest level, if we do not pay attention while cutting vegetables, we might cut our finger. If we are not careful while crossing a busy street, we might be run over. If we are not wakeful and watchful while journeying through life, we are not likely to partake of Eternal Life. Plato and St. Paul speak of man as: Body, Soul and Spirit. The soul is the consciousness working through the body. Spirit is the universal source of all the force and consciousness in man and it is eternal. The soul, which works through the personality, has to attain its immortality by becoming of the nature of the Spirit, which is immortal. Acts of cruelty, hatred, lust, greed, anger and all kinds of selfishness, which separate us from other beings, have no place in the world of Spirit. Noble acts of kindness, love, charity, generosity, that relieve distress and suffering of others, are for the good of others, and are of the nature of Spirit, attach themselves to Spirit and become immortal. At death therefore we take with us only a small portion of the experiences of the soul, the rest is left behind as karmic tendencies and magnetic links which exert a force bringing us back to earth, again and again, to deal with

and overcome them. Thus, at death a portion of the incarnated soul or mind is lost, it dies. It requires constant awareness and vigilance to generate such thoughts, acts and feelings which are of the nature of spirit. The distinction between everlasting and evanescent has to become the guiding force of all our actions.

Right knowledge, company of the Wise Ones, be it a person or scripture, are essential to steer away from evil and falsehood. Man does not live by bread alone. He needs the bread of wisdom, the food for thought. If our philosophy of life is universal, impersonal and open then our thoughts and motives will be pure and selfless. Selfless service finally leads us to *Moksha* (Liberation)—freedom from the cycle of birth and death. It is a lofty goal that cannot be attained by intermittent and lukewarm efforts. It requires “strenuous endeavour,” constant vigilance and reflection, from moment to moment, life after life, until everything is totally aligned to the Spirit within, to partake of Eternal Life.

*4. Continually grows the glory of that man who is wakeful and mindful, whose deeds are pure, whose acts are deliberate, who is self-controlled and who lives according to Law. (24)*

Perfection in vigilance is attained by constant practice, failures followed by determined effort again and again. He exercises watchfulness in every action without exception. How else can control in big matters be expected if we are unable to exercise concentration and awareness in small matters? Practice of mindfulness in small matters equips him to deal with larger matters. Zen Buddhism is full of anecdotes which show importance of mindfulness in smallest things. By practice of awareness, the entire psycho-physiological instrument of the personality is tuned up and disciplined to serve the inner man within. Moreover, when actions are deliberate, pure, and in accordance with the Law, two forces are brought to work at once—force of his own personality and that of divinity within. He is helped and guided by his own higher nature

and divine intelligences which keep the whole universe in place and work for the good—the “General Will of Nature.” His personal will is aligned to the divine will. His state of mind is wholesome.

5. *By endeavour, by vigilance, by discipline and self-control, let the wise man make for himself an island which no flood can overwhelm. (25)*

When the calamity strikes, when there is loss of someone close, when disease disrupts life, when natural disaster destroys what we have built with effort, when there is heavy financial loss, and so on, we are overwhelmed and badly shaken. We lose our mooring. Our faith in the working of karma and belief in the orderly universe are put to severe test. Doubt creeps in and we are unable to deal with the situation on hand, and we feel let down, abandoned and forsaken. The disciple cannot allow that to happen, and he has to remember:

If grief, dismay, disappointment or pleasure, can shake the soul so that it loses its fixed hold on the calm spirit which inspires it, and the moisture of life breaks forth, drowning knowledge in sensation, then all is blurred, the windows are darkened, the light is useless. (*Light on the Path*, p. 38)

“To suffer either pleasure or pain, causes a vivid vibration which is, to the consciousness of man, life,” says *Light on the Path*. The disciple feels these sensations more keenly than an ordinary man. Yet, he has taken upon himself the discipline to not lose his hold, to not allow his suffering to shake him from his fixed purpose. It is the first test of his strength. He manages to do that when he has by regular practice built that island to which he can withdraw at will. It is an island of good and pure thoughts; an island of equanimity and detached concern. This comes by knowing, believing and acting as the divine self within, which remains unaffected under gravest trials. It is in daily and hourly experiences that we get an opportunity to cultivate equanimity. Making joy and suffering as events which must be experienced to learn necessary lesson. Krishna’s advice to

despondent Arjuna was:

I myself never was not, nor thou, nor all the princes of the earth; nor shall we ever hereafter cease to be. As the lord of this mortal frame experienceth therein infancy, youth, and old age, so in future incarnations will it meet the same. One who is confirmed in this belief is not disturbed by anything that may come to pass. The senses, moving toward their appropriate objects, are producers of heat and cold, pleasure and pain, which come and go and are brief and changeable; these do thou endure, O son of Bharata! For the wise man, whom these disturb not and to whom pain and pleasure are the same, is fitted for immortality. (*Gita*, II)

A youth named Kappa asked Buddha: “Tell me about an island where all this suffering will be no more.” The Buddha replied: “Kappa, for those struggling in midstream, in great fear of the flood, of growing old and of dying—for all those I say, an island exists where there is no place for impediments, no place for clinging: the island of no going beyond. I call it *Nirvana*, the complete destruction of old age and dying.” *Nirvana* is the highest bliss.

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’Tis said, the pipe and lute that charm our ears  
Derive their melody from rolling spheres....  
We, who are parts of Adam, heard with him,  
The song of angels and of seraphim.  
Our memory, though dull and sad, retains  
Some echo still of those unearthly strains.  
Oh, music is the meat of all who love,  
Music uplifts the soul to realms above,  
The ashes glow, the latent fires increase:  
We listen and are fed with joy and peace.

—RUMI

## JULIUS CAESAR

### A STUDY IN VIOLENCE AND BLOODSHED

#### I

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“The Adepts assert that Shakespeare was, unconsciously  
to himself, inspired by one of their own number.”

—*Echoes from the Orient*, by WM. Q. JUDGE

THE CARRYING on of government is of far too much importance in human life for the problems of it not to attract the attention of a great dramatist, and the interest of the Adepts in those same problems would fuse with his own to increase his perceptions and intuitions. Political plays were not a new field for Shakespeare when he approached the story of Julius Caesar. His long series of English chronicle plays were in essence political and governmental problems, and through his close following of history gave him a varied study of councillors and conspirators, mobs and armies, patriots and self-seekers, and good or poor queens and kings. Hence the play *Julius Caesar* exhibits the treatment of an expert in dramatic effects and also in the intricacies of human nature.

For many generations Rome had had a republican form of government, the people having some voice in their concerns. But conditions now seriously threatened these popular rights; republican citizens were facing a great extension of monarchy and curtailment of the people's privileges. Caesar had retained the preceding governmental forms, but had nearly emptied them of validity. Gradually he had enforced measures that gave him entire control of Roman affairs everywhere. His government had at first been regarded as a necessary but temporary dictatorship; he had been reappointed, however, and planned for permanency and greater importance. He used as the first in his list of titles the grand word *Imperator*; and most of the policies he introduced became foundation stones of the

later Empire.

The pivot of this tragic drama is Brutus. A man of noble nature and unselfish motives, knowing that he was a chief traditional leader among republican citizens, and that they were out of sympathy with Caesar's policies, he was led by his own sense of duty, and even more by the urging of his party, to assist a movement for change. How this should be made was the problem. He had been brooding over it long before Cassius suggested conspiracy and murder.

Neither of these men realized the prime fact that solution by murder must always meet ultimate failure, because of the inherent moral ignorance and injustice. In the Roman conditions of the time, that solution had little chance of succeeding even temporarily. For in truth most of the citizens had lost, ethically, their right to liberty through their neglect of their own responsibilities under liberal government. To Caesar's political aggressions many people of the higher classes, though not desiring a king, were half blind; while the populace was little more than a mob, switching suddenly from one leader to another, from one policy to its opposite. Yet those who like Brutus stood for popular freedom did not realize the existing political weakness; they did not see that if as conspirators they should be successful, they could hardly expect lasting moral support for any government they might create.

There is no escaping the Karmic law that a government is the outcome of the people who make it and live under it, and that to cause a change by violence is certain to bring violence in reaction. The Romans of that period, having laid themselves open by their weakened moral fibre to a dictatorship, may be thought fortunate, so far, in having a ruler as prudent and moderate as Caesar. His imperialistic tendencies were evident enough, but Brutus in condemning him seems to have forgotten that Rome was no longer a small city-state. It had acquired by war vast outlying colonies and provinces settled by peoples of varying civilizations. Caesar was the only general who had shown capacity to handle problems arising from these conditions.

To murder such a leader was the poorest way possible to free the state from his policies without resulting anarchy. Lack of executive prudence in the conspirators is proved by the oversight of these facts. Besides, they were moved largely by personal resentments, Cassius being the chief spokesman of these. Brutus alone was free from selfish motives. He said: "I know no personal cause to spurn at him, but for the general." Yet Brutus's opposition to Caesar and imperialism was partly due to custom and theory. It was sentiment as much as statesmanship. With republicanism representing to him the only political good, he had been considering heavy sacrifices. To Cassius he replied: "What you would work me to, I have some aim." Thus he showed that the thought of violence toward Caesar had already roused his feelings for and against it—the two selves in him making the inner "war" and the "passions of some difference" that he declared had been troubling him.

In such an inner "war" a man's Higher Self would ever be his guide and literally his "guardian angel" ; would prevent the lower self from becoming a demon of darkness; would ever reject violence, treachery and secret betrayals, such as easily lead to murder. But the lower self clings to its opinions, sees no solution of problems except those of its own desire, and thus becomes so blinded that it often through mere desperation or weariness of the conflict bursts into extreme irremediable actions. Brutus himself described this situation exactly:

Between the acting of a dreadful thing  
And the first motion, all the interim is  
Like a phantasma or a hideous dream:  
The genius and the mortal instruments  
Are then in council; and the state of man,  
Like to a little kingdom, suffers then  
The nature of an insurrection. (Act II, Scene 1)

But though within himself he saw this image, his lower mind did not follow the monition thereby conveyed. He remained theoretical.

In such an experience, just before that point of outbreak, there is so much intervention by the lower self that the force of the Higher can hardly pass through; hence it cannot prevent the "insurrection."

So it was with Brutus. When he decided to enter the conspiracy, to lead the revolt, to share in the murder, he took his stand on the belief that noble ends, such as he thought his to be, could justify the ignoble murderous means. Indeed, as pictured in the play,<sup>1</sup> Brutus did not have the sagacity supposed to be his. Every time he and Cassius differed as to policies, Brutus insisted on a way that contributed to their final failure. And if there was little or no justification beforehand for the murder of Caesar there proved to have been none afterward, when as a result the country passed into long civil war, the later conditions being worse than before the revolt.

From the standpoint of Theosophy, this story is overcrowded with brutality and grievous moral errors—treachery, conspiracy, murder, suicide—these are the great crimes; the lesser ones are many. But *the people whose history was therein recorded, as well as the people who were given the play, did not regard the events as indicating a special measure of depravity. Rather the contrary.* The narrative still forms one of the hero-stories of the "grandeur that was Rome."

The moral standards and practices of Roman civilization passed along with its political conquests throughout Europe, all the conquered countries adopting the habits and ideals of the Empire. By them they are still living—and dying. Romans for the most part were not studious or meditative; they lived a life greedy of sensation, luxury and excitement, full of self-will and self-glorification. They were of course unhumanitarian, ignorant of the life-principle and irreverent of it, being by long mental habit strong in the kill-impulse, weak in the mercy impulse; for they were a warring blood-sodden people.

<sup>1</sup> The drama is said to be based on North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives*: "Julius Caesar" and "Marcus Brutus."

By men living under such dark lights, murder and suicide are neither understood nor deplored. Judged by Theosophy, both are among the worst crimes, because they attack the very foundation of Nature. The purpose of Life being a long development of soul into Spirit, by contact and experience with matter, these crimes throw effective and far-reaching barriers against further evolution upward. They check the progress of both the killer and the killed. The conditions of each after death are in general not known or even considered, death being thought of as “the end of all” or—by the more religious—as a means of “knowing all.”

The teachings of Theosophy are very definite on these subjects. Man in essence is a spiritual, bodiless, formless being. Entering Earth-life he assumes a body for the purpose of living, learning and evolving with other beings like and unlike himself, who have reached the Earth-stage of evolution. Only through such a body can a man do outward acts on this plane. Murder kills the physical body but nothing more. If mind and soul have been wicked, they remain just as wicked. They still form a mind-entity.

The Karma of such a murder as that of Caesar could but be terrific—for the state, in the ensuing war; for the conspirators, varying in accordance with the unrighteousness of their individual motives. The drama shows only two of these.

After long uncertain strife, the conspirators had gathered their forces for a final effort. Evil omens had been frequent, even the skeptical Cassius feeling their genuineness. Brutus, dreading failure, was afflicted too by grief over his wife’s desperate suicide and the torturing manner of it. On both men was the overwhelming weight of wasted struggle and lost cause. The conflict of the next day was only a fight against time—and a short time—a fight confused by blundering directions and misunderstandings, the broodings of Nemesis clouding the field like a pall.

(To be continued)

## 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:** Eminent writers like Bulwer Lytton and Emerson have praised enthusiasm. How can one achieve some great good with its help, because often, enthusiasm is only momentary, which soon tends to fizzle out?

**Answer:** Though devotion could be a mere emotional effervescence, *true devotion* springs from one’s divine nature and is not evanescent. Likewise, enthusiasm could be at a superficial level. It could be the mood of the moment, a fleeting emotion when one is taken up by some idea. We find people dedicating themselves to a cause, even without trying to understand its nature. But a truly enthusiastic person is one who is inspired. The etymology of the word suggests that Enthusiasm means, “possessed by God.” In *The Key to Theosophy*, H.P.B. points out that “conviction” breeds enthusiasm. What happens when we are convinced about the efficacy of certain medicine or system of cure? We enthusiastically recommend it to all those people, who might be in the need of it. Similarly, when study and application of the teachings of some philosophy convince us that it is true and that it works, and if we find that by its application our life changed considerably, then, as Mr. Crosbie puts it, we will naturally keep our faces turned in that direction. We would want to spread the teachings with enthusiasm, saying, “Just as I have benefitted let others also benefit.” In the preface to *The Ocean of Theosophy* Mr. Judge speaks about conviction, saying that the tone of settled conviction that pervades these pages is not the result of conceit or dogmatism, but flows from *knowledge based on evidence and experience*. It is this sort of conviction which gives rise to true

enthusiasm, which cannot be shaken and which is contagious. One enthusiastic person can touch several others around him communicating his zest and fervour. Such a person may appear to make an appeal to “reason,” but what goes with his exposition is “enthusiasm” that touches the heart of the listener. In his book, *The Last Days of Pompei*, Edward Bulwer Lytton writes:

It is men of this mould whom nothing discourages, nothing dismays: in the fervour of belief they are inspired and they inspire. Their reason first kindles their passion, but the passion is the instrument they use. They force themselves into men’s hearts, while they appear only to appeal to their judgment. Nothing is contagious as enthusiasm. It is the real allegory of the tale of Orpheus—it moves stones, it charms brutes. Enthusiasm is the genius of sincerity, and truth accomplishes no victories without it.

Emerson has also said that enthusiasm is the mother of effort. Enthusiasm must be the motive power or energy that moves all things. You are able to put in *sincere and sustained* efforts when you are enthusiastic about something. Hence, it is called “genius,” meaning guardian spirit of sincerity. Enthusiasm is energy, with it wars and conquests also take place. Competition without enthusiasm is impossible.

Success and enthusiasm work reciprocally on each other. Edward Butler said: “Some men can stay enthusiastic for thirty minutes; some for thirty days but the successful man stays enthusiastic for thirty years!” An enthusiastic person gives his whole self to the task to be performed, and can work wonders. Emerson most truly remarks that “every great and commanding movement in the annals of the world is the triumph of enthusiasm.”

Enthusiasm for life is not based on possession of money, wealth or comfort, but seems to be based on meaningfulness of life. The psychiatrist, Viktor Frankl writes in his book, *The Unheard Cry for Meaning*: “As the struggle for survival has subsided, the question has emerged: survival for what? Ever more people today have the

means to live, but no meaning to live for.” What helps a person to pull through even the most painful conditions is a future goal. Nietzsche’s words are very profound: “He who has a *why* to live for can bear with almost any *how*.” (*Man’s Search for Meaning*, p. 97)

**Question:** In *The Key to Theosophy*, in the section on “Charity,” H.P.B. writes: “For gratitude does more good to the man who feels it, than to him for whom it is felt.” How?

**Answer:** Just as there is right attitude of mind and heart needed in *giving*, there is also the right attitude of mind and heart required in *receiving*. Some people are too reluctant to *accept* material or non-material help. One needs to master both arts—the art of giving and also the art of gracefully receiving. Often, a person who has been self-dependent all his life shuns receiving help and support in his old age. He would rather die than receive help—out of pride and false sense of self-sufficiency. In Buddha’s wise words: “Freely give and freely receive.”

Then there are those who receive help or charity with a feeling of utmost indifference. When a rich person gives away a large sum of money in charity to the poor, the receiver is often found to remark: “What is so great about it, he is so rich, he could well afford to give that much money!” Thus, very few people accept what is given, with the right attitude, which is the attitude of gratitude and obligation. Many times we express gratitude only mechanically, without really meaning it. A truly grateful person says inwardly: “I am indebted to this person and if the opportunity presents, may be, I will try to repay. If not to him, I would want to help some other needy person, just as he has helped me.” Thus, when a receiver feels the gratitude, it kindles in him reverence for the very process of giving and receiving. It appears that gratitude is a heart quality. To the extent we feel gratitude, we have allowed the spiritual consciousness to make itself felt, and impress on our everyday consciousness.

Catherine Athans, a teacher of metaphysics and a life coach, based

out of Los Angeles, has spent years understanding and researching what gratitude does to us. She writes:

Saying “thank you” is a way of saying to God, I am open to receiving. Having a grateful attitude brings us back to the present, because most of the time, when we are complaining, we are in the past. We are thus closed off from receiving....If you are facing tough times, and cannot see anything in your life that you can be grateful for, start with your bones. By thanking each and every one of them for helping you move from place to place—by doing that you are actually putting yourself out of the complaint mode and placing yourself in an appreciative mode. Slowly you will see the many, many more gifts life has already provided you and then, it may even begin to look miraculously full. Things and events you have been wanting for long appear in your life simply, miraculously. Gratitude ties in beautifully with the state of living a full, abundant life. (*The Times of India*, December 25, 2008)

H.P.B. points out that among other things, the *attitude of giver* is responsible for kindling the feeling of gratitude in the heart of the receiver. When there is *personal* sympathy; *personal* mercy and kindness; *personal* interest in the welfare of those who suffer, there is greater likelihood of arousing this gratitude in the receiver. That is why when people just poured money to help the poor in the East End of London without trying to find out whether it actually benefited them or not, H.P.B. remarked, “Where is the gratitude your millions of pound should have aroused”? There is a difference between *giving* and *offering*, as suggested by the very posture of our hands, when we “give” and when we “offer.” In *offering*, there is reverence and love and in *giving* there is a feeling of superiority. We speak of debt to our parents and teachers. While we cannot go and teach our teacher, we can try and pass on the knowledge to someone else, and thus keep the wheel of sacrifice revolving.

## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

For long, Mistletoe has inspired couples to share a Christmas kiss under its evergreen leaves. Now, researchers in Switzerland, at Institute Hiscia in Arlesheim, who studied a group of cervical and ovarian cancer patients found that medicine made out of fermented mistletoe can prolong the lives of cancer patients—an average of half a year longer. The fermented mistletoe medicine is called Iscador. “Mistletoe is an old medical drug in Europe, particularly in Germany, and goes back at least to Hippocrates,” says lead researcher, Renatus Ziegler. (*The Times of India*, December 26, 2008)

The Druids held Oak and mistletoe in high esteem. They performed none of their sacred rites without Oak leaves. A mythical god in relation to mistletoe was the Norse god Baldur. Baldur, states H.P.B., is the well-beloved God of goodness, who alone is without sin. He is killed by the crafty Loki. Loki made a dart of mistletoe and put it in the hands of blind Hodur who killed Baldur with that dart.

James Frazer mentions in *The Golden Bough* that the mistletoe is used as a remedy against all poisons. It was a cure for epilepsy, sterility in women, ulcers, etc. The mistletoe was a mystic plant in several ancient religions and mythologies. It grows as a parasite upon other trees such as the Apple and the Oak. The name in German means “all heal.” According to the myth, Baldur could not be killed by anything in heaven or earth, save the mistletoe. Now if we suppose Baldur was the Oak then we understand the meaning. The mistletoe was believed to be the seat of life of the Oak, and as long as mistletoe was intact, so was the Oak. The Oak is deciduous and in winter, when divine life has ceased to animate the branches, it survives in the mistletoe. If Oak is taken to represent the human being, then mistletoe would be his heart. The invulnerable Baldur is personification of the “Oak, bearing mistletoe,” explains Frazer. The dart made of mistletoe, killing Baldur, only means that when mistletoe is removed from the Oak, the Oak would perish.



Rudolf Steiner perceived the striking similarity and parallel between cancer growth and the life cycle of the mistletoe, and introduced the latter in cancer therapy in the 1920s. Unlike other plants and trees, the mistletoe does not obey the normal biological rhythm in nature and asserts its autonomy. It has an inherent tendency of indefinite growth and proliferation in its leaves, flowers, berries, and also has the capacity to overcome this tendency through regulated growth. It eats up tumour-like protuberances on the host-tree. This intuitive perception led to scientific research and mistletoe extracts are now used in cancer therapy.

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Christmas is the season of hope, faith and happiness, and some people are calling out to their guardian angels, for healing, hope and happiness. A new cult of angel therapists is on the rise and they hold workshops, sessions and courses in angel therapy, and in giving insights and interpretations of the messages from angels. The angel movement was started by Doreen Virtue, a spiritual doctor, after her two books, *Healing with the Angels* and *Messages from Your Angels* became bestsellers. London-based Ranjini Woodhouse, angel therapy practitioner says that if you ask them for help, you will find certain calmness come over you and you will get brilliant ideas. It is believed that everyone has a guardian angel, in fact, two guardian angels, who protect and guide us in one lifetime. They give messages through our subconscious and through the gut and intuition. Angel therapy is about listening to our instinct. There are experiences of calling the angels to take away fever and the help does come. You could receive angelic guidance through voices. The voice of the angels is called *clairaudience* or clear hearing. It could also be through one's emotions and physical sensations, called *clairsentience*, or clear feeling. The signs or signals could come in terms of numbers. It is suggested that one can call out to archangel Michael for protection and power, archangel Gabriel for purity,

Raphael for healing and Jophiel for wisdom, writes Nona Walia. (*Sunday Times of India*, December 21, 2008)

Theosophy points out that there are seven hierarchies of Creative Powers, designated as gods, angels, archangels or Dhyan Chohans. The seven rulers of sacred planets, such as, Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel, Michael, are also called *daimon*, genii or Planetary Spirits. Belief in Hosts of Spiritual entities, dwelling on various planes and spheres in the Universe, is reasonable, says H.P.B. Often what we term angels are celestial beings on lowest plane, also called elemental spirits.

H.P.B. writes that there has always been a belief in the guardian angel, or tutelary spirit. This doctrine has not originated with the Christians but with Pagan world. It was represented in the tutelary *daimon* of Socrates. (*The Theosophist*, September 1881). There was belief in the existence of genii, so that every city had its protecting genius, to whom people made sacrifices.

The word *Daimon* was given by the ancients to all kinds of spirits, *whether good or bad*, human or otherwise, but the appellation was often synonymous with that of Gods or angels. Some of these *daimons* are elemental spirits. Socrates had his own *daimon*. He was frequently warned by a *daimon*. He maintained that a god (*daimon*) gave him secret warnings; and he warned his disciples to do or not to do certain things, according to the dictates of his genius, writes Xenophon, disciple of Socrates. While the angels or *daimon* may guide us, consulting of these elementary spirits may easily lead one to mediumship and consequently, in time, one may completely come under their sway, something undesirable for one who wants to walk the spiritual path. We are given the example of Socrates. H.P.B. writes:

The old Grecian philosopher was a “medium”; hence, he had never been initiated into the Mysteries; for such was the rigorous law. But he had his “familiar spirit” as they call it, his *daimonion*; and this invisible counsellor became the cause of his death....There was a law against the admission

not only of such as were convicted of deliberate *witchcraft* but even of those who were known to have “a familiar spirit.” The law was just and logical, because a genuine medium is more or less irresponsible; and the eccentricities of Socrates are thus accounted for in some degree. A medium must be *passive*; and if a firm believer in his “spirit-guide” he will allow himself to be ruled by the latter, not by the rules of the sanctuary. A *medium* of olden times, like the modern “medium” was subject to be *entranced* at the will and pleasure of the “power” which *controlled* him; therefore, he could not well have been entrusted with the awful secrets of the final initiation, “never to be revealed under the penalty of death.” The old sage, in unguarded moments of “spiritual inspiration,” revealed that which he had never learned; and was therefore put to death as an atheist. (*Isis*, II, 117-18)

The occultists believe most firmly in the personal, *divine* spirit in man, the source of his inspiration, and which is both his “angel” and “guardian.”

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As the scientific world prepares to observe Charles Darwin’s bicentenary, he is accused by some critics of plagiarism and unjustly claiming credit as the father of evolutionary theory. The supporters of Alfred Russell Wallace, a naturalist who worked for eight years in modern Indonesia, claim that some of the most important ideas in Darwin’s book, *On the Origin of Species*, published in 1859, were taken from Wallace’s paper submitted in 1858. The ideas that Darwin is accused of having plagiarised include: (1) Species with variations helping them to survive would thrive and pass on these features to their offspring. (2) Species are engaged in a struggle for existence. (3) Checks in nature impede a species from proliferating. (4) Climate affects the survival or extinction of a species. (4) Selective breeding of domesticated animals illustrates the process of evolution in the

wild. One group of critics has commissioned computer experts with anti-plagiarism software to detect identical phrasing, to see signs of author’s style and consistent sentence structure, which would suggest that one has copied from the other. Darwin’s defenders claim that it is quite plausible for two scientists to have come up with similar ideas independently, at the same time, writes Jack Grimston. (*The Times of India*, December 29, 2008, courtesy *Sunday Times London*)

H.P.B. describes Alfred Wallace as an eminent naturalist and one of the greatest Western Evolutionists of modern day and the coadjutor of Darwin. She points out that though the “Theory of Natural Selection,” is correct in minor particulars, it does not agree with occultism and also with Mr. Wallace. Mr. Wallace, in his “Contributions to the Theory of Natural Selection,” shows pretty conclusively that something *more* than “natural selection” was requisite to produce physical man (*S.D.*, II, 696). Further, he held that the evolution of man was directed and furthered by superior Intelligences, whose agency is a necessary factor in the scheme of Nature. But once we admit the operation of these Intelligences in one case, logically it must be extended further. (*S.D.*, I, 107)

As for the Darwinists’ claim that two scientists could have come up with the same ideas independently of each other, at the same time, Theosophy states that there is nothing new under the sun. Theosophy posits the existence of invisible register called Astral Light, on which all the thoughts, feelings and events of past, present and future are impressed. It is like a sensitive photographic plate. Hence, it acts as the repository of the ideas, the philosophy, the arts and sciences of long buried civilizations. The pictures from the astral light are continually being projected in the brains of the living men. “This gives meaning not only to the oft-recurring ‘coincidences’ of two or more inventors or scientists hitting upon the same ideas or inventions at about the same time and independently of each other, but also to other events and curious happenings,” writes Mr. Judge (*Echoes from the Orient*, p. 62). In other words, it is possible for two scientists, thinking along similar lines on the same subject, to

pick up relevant ideas from the astral light, and hence write about and make same discovery at the same time.

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Are some people luckier than others? Richard Wiseman, the author of “The Luck Factor,” and teacher at the University of Hertfordshire, carried out several experiments. The result of these experiments revealed that our own thoughts and behaviour are responsible for our good and bad fortune. He found that unlucky people are generally more tense than lucky people, and this anxiety disrupts their ability to notice the unexpected. For instance, they go to parties intent on finding their perfect partner and so miss opportunities to make good friends. Lucky people are more relaxed and open, and therefore, see what is there rather than just what they are looking for. To be lucky, one has to keep in mind four points: (1) Listen to your gut instincts—they are normally right. (2) Be open to new experiences and breaking your normal routine. (3) Spend a few moments each day remembering things that went well. (4) Visualize yourself being lucky before an important meeting or telephone call, writes Wiseman. (*The Times of India*, December 27, 2008)

“Lucky” people are often those who are not anxious but display faith in the Law. “Anxiety” puts an invisible obstacle in the path of what we want done. In the absence of anxiety, there is clarity of perspective and it facilitates to turn the tide in a favourable direction. At times, it is not as if the person has advantage, but rather he has the knack of turning to his advantage whatever comes his way. We must not be in a hurry to judge everyday circumstances as “lucky” or “unlucky.” Often, an obvious setback proves to be an opportunity in disguise, and *vice versa*. While it is true that so-called luck or advantages are the result of Karma, whether they are conducive for spiritual progress or not is determined by the way we handle them. It appears that seldom have we the wisdom to use the advantages beneficently.

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