

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

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H.P.B.—THE SPHINX OF THE 19TH CENTURY

Arhans and Sages of the boundless Vision [superhuman sight and knowledge] are rare as is the blossom of the Udumbara tree. Arhans are born at midnight hour, together with the sacred plant of nine and seven stalks, the holy flower that opes and blooms in darkness, out of the pure dew and on the frozen bed of snow-capped heights, heights that are trodden by no sinful foot.

—*The Voice of the Silence*, pp. 42-43

IT is said that a “blue lotus” burst forth just before the birth of Gautama Buddha and another before the birth of Tsong-kha-pa. *Nila Udumbara* or “blue lotus” is a lotus of gigantic size, and is regarded as a supernatural omen whenever it blossoms, for it flowers once every three thousand years (*The Theosophical Glossary*). Thus, Arhans and sages are rare and are born at midnight hour just like the blossom of the Udumbara tree. H. P. Blavatsky, like Shri Krishna, was born at the midnight hour of 11-12 August, in Russia, in 1831. The world at large has heard too much about Madame Blavatsky, but has known too little. For one reason or another, the world keeps talking of her, defending or assailing her character and motives. Many compliments and criticisms, brickbats and bouquets have gone her way in the last 110 years. Franz Hartmann wrote:

It is doubtful whether there ever was any great genius and saviour of mankind, whose personality while upon this earth,

was not misunderstood by his friends, reviled by his enemies, mentally tortured and crucified, and finally made an object of fetish-worship by subsequent generations. H.P.B. seems no exception to the rule. The world, dazzled by the light of her doctrines, which the majority of men did not grasp, because they were new to them, looked upon her with distrust, and the representatives of scientific ignorance, filled with their own pomposity, pronounced her to be “the greatest impostor of the age,” because their narrow minds could not rise up to a comprehension of the magnificence of her spirit. (*In Memory of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky*, p. 122)

People were constantly in awe of her even during her childhood and adolescence. Later, crowds of visitors were constantly calling at her rooms in Irving Place. The newspapers were full of narratives of her supposed powers or deriding her assertion of the possibilities of the same in everyone. A prominent New York daily wrote of her thus:

A woman of as remarkable characteristics as Cagliostro himself, and one who is every day as differently judged by different people as the renowned Count was in his day. By those who know her slightly she is called a charlatan; better acquaintance made you think she was learned; and those who were intimate with her were either carried away with belief in her power or completely puzzled. (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 14*, p. 6)

She was called “the Sphinx of the 19th century,” because she was an enigma to most people. In Bombay, and later in Adyar, Madras, H.P.B. worked assiduously, day after day. The Hindoos believed in her, and always said that she could explain to them their own scriptures and philosophies when the real key to it was lost or concealed. She performed experiment after experiment for the instruction of those who personally sought her. The phenomena she performed in the initial years of the Society, were meant not to overwhelm people but to show that when a Yogi produces ash out of thin air or lifts himself up into the air, such feats *appear* miraculous, but *there are no miracles*. Everything happens under

Law. There is an invisible side to both man and nature. Just as there are physical laws governing the physical universe, so also there are occult laws and occult forces and processes that are known to an occultist. She always deprecated the craving for wonders. She steadily refused to vulgarize her mission by any kind of “general performance of phenomena,” which could only gratify curiosity and serve no useful purpose. When urged to “show her powers” merely to convince people, who cared nothing for the Theosophical teaching, she answered that they might believe it or not as they chose. Franz Hartmann wrote:

The true life of every spiritually awakened human being is not his external but his interior life. To describe merely the events that took place in the earth-life of an embodied genius and not mention her inner life, her thoughts and feelings, is like describing the history of the house ignoring its inhabitant. (*In Memory of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky*, p. 123)

To know the *real* H.P.B. one must have patience and perseverance to go through the teachings in three major works—*The Secret Doctrine*, *Isis Unveiled* and *The Key to Theosophy*. *Isis Unveiled*—a master key to ancient and modern Science and Theology, written in 1877—was a book which was to be found in the library of every scholar of that time. It attracted wide attention, and all the New York papers reviewed it, each saying that it exhibited immense research. In this book she provides the rationale for various phenomena and carries out an impartial comparison of major world religions. She writes in the Preface:

The work now submitted to public judgement is the fruit of a somewhat intimate acquaintance with Eastern adepts and study of their science....It is meant to do even justice, and to speak the truth alike without malice or prejudice....Men and parties, sects and schools are but the mere ephemera of the world's day. TRUTH, high seated upon its rock of adamant, is alone eternal and supreme.

Hence the motto of the Theosophical Society: “There is no Religion higher than Truth.” *The Secret Doctrine* [S.D.] comprised

two volumes—*Cosmogogenesis* and *Anthropogenesis*—treats of the genesis and evolution of worlds and man. As Robert Bowen remarks:

Every form, no matter how crude, contains the image of its “creator” concealed within it. So likewise does an author’s work, no matter how obscure, contain the concealed image of the author’s knowledge....

Every form of art has the distinctive mark of its creator. We see that a painting of Van Gaugh would be different from a painting of Picasso in terms of colour-combination, style, brushstrokes, etc. A connoisseur of art could make out one from the other. It is said that Michael Angelo made stone sculptures, which at one time used to get stolen and others would sell them in their name. Then he decided that he would make such statues as would carry his distinctive mark, so that when people looked at them they would be convinced that the same must be by Michael Angelo and none other. So also in a written work we come in contact with the author’s mind.

The *S.D.* contains all that H.P.B. knew. It has been said that a piece of art is not like a pebble lying on the sea-shore to be picked up by any careless passer-by. To understand it completely we must repeat the adventure of an artist. We need to raise our consciousness to that of the artist or writer who created that work of art or piece of writing. “Knowledge is the function of Being.” The more we change inwardly, the more our perceptions open, enabling us to have greater understanding of the work and *vice versa*. This is applicable especially to the study of the *S.D.*, as it is not a book to be understood using mere intellect. In “Some Observations on the Study of the Secret Doctrine of H.P.B.” we are told that the *S.D.* is written in an unusual style, and the specific method used is to bring out the faculty of spiritual perception in the reader. It is the power of the mind to alight upon a subject and be able to suck everything that is in the subject. This is the penetrative faculty of mind. We are required to read “not only between the lines, but within the words as well.” Further:

In the study of *The Secret Doctrine*, an attempt should be

made by each student to contact the Mind of the writer. If the student sits down to his study with his lower mind emptied of all thoughts, and entirely at rest, at peace with itself and all the world, if he approaches his study with a feeling of willingness, nay eagerness, to grapple with a difficult subject and a determination to attempt to contact the Mind of the writer of the book, then may he hope for real results. And...help and illumination will come not only from the student’s mind but also from the Mind that recorded the teachings, for that Mind is very much alive and will help the students of the book if they proceed in the right manner, along the occult and spiritual line....In proportion as the mind of each student is concentrated and perfectly at rest, ideas will begin to strike him.... Information will begin to come to him from within, not from without. (pp. 18-20)

As we study the *S.D.*, we realize that truth has many aspects and H.P.B. seems to have responded to them. We find that she is not tied down by only one explanation on a subject, but brings out various aspects. Shakespeare was called “myriad-minded” and the same epithet is applicable to H.P.B.

She never wanted a great following. She said: “We are not working merely that people may call themselves ‘Theosophists,’ but that the doctrines we cherish may affect and leaven the whole mind of this century.” The aim and object of her life was to break the shackles forged by priestcraft for the mind of man. She wished all men to know that they are potentially divine and that they must bear the burden of their own sins. Hence, she brought forward to the West the old Eastern doctrines of *Karma* and *Rebirth*. Her object was to make religion scientific and science religious. She laid emphasis on the practice of ethics and considered them more important than the development of psychical powers.

Her teachings influenced several distinguished men and women all over the world, past and present—poets, writers, statesmen, philosophers and scientists. Several of them have found in her writings a deep mine of wisdom. In his *Autobiography*, Gandhiji relates that “toward the end of my second year in England I came

across two theosophists...they talked to me about the *Gita*...they invited me to read the original with them. I felt ashamed, as I had read the divine poem neither in Sanskrit nor in Gujarati...I recall having read, at the brothers' insistence, Madame Blavatsky's *The Key to Theosophy*. This book stimulated in me the desire to read books on Hinduism...."

Some day, let us hope, as an editorial in *New York Tribune* expressed after her death, "the loftiness and purity of her aims, the wisdom and scope of her teachings, will be recognized more fully, and her memory will be accorded the honour to which it is justly entitled." (*In Memory of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky*, p. 197)

ACCORDING to her [H.P.B.], there are certain persons on this earth, living and working as ordinary human beings and members of society, whose informing divine part is so immeasurably high in development that they as such high beings have a definite status and function in the "supersensuous regions." We should say—assuming the correctness of the author's statement—that she herself was such a case, and that "H.P.B.," whether hourly in the day or at night when all around was still, had a "status and function" in other spheres where she consciously carried on the work of that high station, whatever it was. There were many events in her daily life known to those who were intimate with her that this hint may ravel, or at least shed much light upon. And in one of her letters this sentence appears—in substance—"The difference between you and me is that you are not conscious except at day, while I am conscious day and night, and have much to do and to endure in both of these existences from which you, being thus half-conscious, are happily saved.

—W. Q. JUDGE

DUAL NATURE OF MIND

I

Our *Ego* is a ray of the Universal Mind, individualized for the space of a cosmic life-cycle, during which space of time it gets experience in almost numberless reincarnations or rebirths, after which it returns to its Parent-Source.

The Occultist would call the "Higher Ego" the immortal Entity, whose shadow and reflection is the human *Manas*, the mind, limited by its physical senses. The two may be well compared to the Master-artist and the pupil-musician. The nature of the Harmony produced on the "organ," the Divine melody or the harsh discord, depends on whether the pupil is inspired by the immortal Master, and follows its dictates, or, breaking from its high control, is satisfied with the terrestrial sounds produced by itself conjointly with its evil companion—the man of flesh—on the chords and keys of the brain-organ.

—*Theosophical Articles and Notes*, p. 208

WHAT is mind? The dictionary defines mind as (1) that which thinks, perceives, feels, wills, etc.; (2) intelligence or intellect, being the faculty of mind by which one knows or understands, as distinguished from that by which one feels or wills. It is the capacity for thinking and acquiring knowledge; (3) conscious and the unconscious together as a unit or *psyche*. H.P.B. defines mind as: "a name given to the sum of the states of Consciousness grouped under Thought, Will and Feeling." (*S.D.*, I, 38)

Modern Science is unable to understand the true nature of the mind as it continues to neglect the moral values of life associated with it. Some of the modern scientists accept that there is order and intelligence in the universe and dimly sense the link between mind and matter.

In the human constitution, *Manas* is the fifth principle—loosely translated as Mind. Mind is an instrument of the Soul. In *The Ocean of Theosophy*, Mr. Judge mentions that *Manas* becomes dual at birth when it inhabits, informs or inheres in a body. *Manas* uses

the brain to reason from premises to conclusions. If our premise is wrong then our conclusion also will be wrong. This is the lower aspect of the Thinker or *Manas* that is nearest to *Kama* or the principle of Desire. *Manas* differentiates man from the animals. Its other aspect is the Higher *Manas* that has affinity with the spiritual principles in man. When a conjunction of *Manas* with *Buddhi* occurs, it gives rise to spiritual intuition. In a spiritually regenerated man, this conjunction is permanent. When a person is able to act from the plane of *Buddhi-Manas*, he becomes a genius.

In *Manas* the thoughts of all lives are stored. The Lower *Manas* operating through the brain is at once altered into the shape and characteristics of any object, mental or otherwise, it dwells on. Patanjali says that “the mind is ‘modified’ by any object or subject brought before it, or to which it is directed. Four peculiarities of the Lower *Manas* are: (1) Like a butterfly, it flies to any object or subject. (2) It flies to a pleasant idea. (3) It flies to an unpleasant idea. (4) It remains passive.

Patanjali says that the real experiencer and knower is the soul and not the mind, *i.e.*, it is only an instrument used by the soul to get in touch with nature and garner experience in life. Mr. Judge’s comment on Aphorism 24 in Book IV is very illuminating.

The mind is merely a tool, instrument, or means, by which the soul acquires experiences and knowledge. In each incarnation the mind is, as it were, new. It is a portion of the apparatus furnished to the soul through innumerable lives for obtaining experience and reaping the fruit of works performed. The notion that the mind is either knower or experiencer is a false one, which is to be removed before emancipation can be reached by soul. It was therefore said that the mind operates or exists for the carrying out of the soul’s salvation, and not the soul for the mind’s sake. When this is fully understood, the permanency of soul is seen, and all the evils flowing from false ideas begin to disappear. (*The Yoga Aphorism of Patanjali*, p. 70)

In the Third Fundamental Proposition of the *The Secret Doctrine*, H.P.B. states that all souls are emanations of the Universal Over-

Soul that is an aspect of the Unknown Root. During the course of evolution, man, the divine monad, has passed through all the forms, *i.e.*, the elemental, vegetable, plant and animal kingdoms before reaching the human stage. In the elemental kingdom the monad is asleep, and in the other three kingdoms it is in a state analogous to the dream state. Man was *amanasa*, *i.e.*, mindless, as the mind remained dormant like an unlit candle. The Solar angels—*Agnishwatta pitris*—lighted up the *manas*, endowing man with self-consciousness and apperception. Henceforth, man could look within and without and had the power of choice—between right and wrong. Evolution proceeds by natural impulse in the lower kingdoms. When the human stage is reached the force of free-will overrides the natural impulse, so that further progress is accomplished by one’s own self-efforts, checked by Karma. This vast scheme of evolution ranges from the mineral atom to the mightiest archangels, through a long series of metempsychoses and reincarnations.

H.P.B. explains that for the noumenon to become phenomenon on any plane of existence, an appropriate vehicle on that plane is required. On the cosmic plane, Dhyani-Chohans—Collective Host of Spiritual Beings—serve as the vehicle for the manifestation of Divine Thought and Will. Man is an emanation of these Divine Beings at the third stage. Thus:

The divine, purely Adi-Buddhic *monad* manifests as the universal Buddhi (the *Mahabuddhi* or Mahat in Hindu philosophy) the spiritual, omniscient and omnipotent root of divine intelligence, the highest *anima mundi* or the Logos. *This* descends “like a flame spreading from the eternal Fire, immovable, without increase or decrease, ever the same to the end” of the cycle of existence, and becomes universal life on the Mundane Plane. From this plane of *conscious* Life shoot out, like seven fiery tongues, the Sons of Light (the *logoi* of Life); then the Dhyani-Buddhas of contemplation: the concrete forms of their formless Fathers—the Seven Sons of Light, *still themselves*, to whom may be applied the Brahmanical mystic phrase; “Thou art THAT”—*Brahm.*” It is from these Dhyani-

Buddhas that emanate their *chhayas* (Shadows) the Bodhisattvas of the celestial realms, the prototypes of the *super-terrestrial* Bodhisattvas, and of the terrestrial Buddhas, and finally of men. (*S.D.*, I, 572)

In *The Key to Theosophy*, explaining the nature and source of Manas, H.P.B. writes:

MAHAT or the “Universal Mind” is the source of Manas. The latter is Mahat, *i.e.*, mind, in man. Manas is also called *Kshetrajna*, “embodied Spirit,” because it is, according to our philosophy, the *Manasa-putras*, or “Sons of the Universal Mind,” who created, or rather produced, the thinking man, “*manu*,” by incarnating in the *third Race* mankind in our Round. It is Manas, therefore, which is the real incarnating and permanent *Spiritual Ego*, the INDIVIDUALITY, and our various and numberless personalities only its external masks. (p. 133)

(*To be Concluded*)

THE most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead: his eyes are closed. This insight into the mystery of life, coupled though it be with fear, has also given rise to religion. To know that what is impenetrable to us really exists, manifesting itself as the highest wisdom and the most radiant beauty which our dull faculties can comprehend only on their most primitive forms—this knowledge, this feeling, is at the centre of true religiousness. In this sense, and in this sense only, I belong in the ranks of devoutly religious men.

—ALBERT EINSTEIN

ATTAINING WORLD PEACE

THE General Assembly of the United Nations Organization passed a Resolution on September 7, 2001, to observe September 21 as the International Peace Day. The Assembly declared that the Day be observed as the day of global ceasefire and non-violence. It invited all member-states, U.N. organizations, government and non-governmental organizations and individuals to commemorate the Day through education and public awareness. It is a tragic commentary on the state of moral sickness of the world that violence continued unabated in all the troubled parts of the world on the day of the International Peace Vigil.

The twentieth century has been a century marked by phenomenal progress in the fields of science, technology, communications, trade, commerce, transport, etc., but it has also been a century of wars and violence on a scale of destruction unprecedented in the history of the world. The devastation of the First World War moved the leaders of the warring nations to come together to discuss ways and means of ending wars and to resolve international disputes peacefully, as a result of which the League of Nations was formed. But it did not last as was expected because member nations were not prepared to sacrifice their national pride and selfishness for the larger—international—good. Robert Crosbie, the founder of the U.L.T. [United Lodge of Theosophists], said in one of his talks:

A league of nations could only fulfil its purpose by a common aim and by a like ideal. Such do not obtain. The nations are not alike. None of them have high ideals—not even our own nation, which should have the greatest ideal of humanity and of nature. Instead, our ideal is one common idea—of trading, of gaining dollars or possessions, of getting advantage and prestige over other nations. Such an ideal will never give us peace, will never bring happiness, content or right progress, and there will always be struggle until we change that ideal. A league of nations among similar selfish nations can only bring what self-interest always brings—disasters of some kind. The seeds of war are in it. (*The Friendly Philosopher*, pp. 306-7)

True to this prophecy, another (the Second) World War broke out on a scale and intensity far more devastating than the first, in which millions perished. Appalled by the death, destruction and misery unparalleled in history, the leaders of the warring western nations again got together to find ways and means to end wars. The result was the birth of the United Nations Organization [U.N.O.]. Reforms often follow bloody revolutions and wars, as a result of stirring of the conscience. The bitter experience of the two bloody world wars made the world leaders realize the truth that the seeds of war are in the minds of men and that it is from the minds that the causes of wars need to be eliminated. The U.N.O. was meant to resolve all international disputes peacefully by the collective wisdom of the member nations. A number of branch-organizations were founded in the U.N.O. to promote international co-operation in the field of health, education, culture, social and economic development, poverty alleviation, safeguarding human rights and so on. International laws and treaties were signed by member nations. Statesmen dreamed of a world-state governed by international law under which all nations would mutually co-operate for the common good of all. Desire for peace was evident.

Yet peace seems to be eluding the world. If in the field of science and technology astounding progress has been made for the benefit of mankind, the same science and technology have been used to forge more sophisticated and deadlier weapons of mass-destruction with which savage wars have been fought. To make things worse, the ugly head of religious fanaticism and terror has risen all over the world.

Not only war but many other man-made ills are threatening the stability of the life-supporting system of our earth. Polluting effluents and gases, discharged by global commercial and industrial activity, have destroyed many thousands of plant and animal species, and are threatening to exterminate many thousands more. Warning of the scientists regarding drastic alterations in the global climate leading to dire consequences like cataclysms is not heeded because nations pursue their narrow selfish goals of short-term

gain. The gulf between the poor and the helpless, and the rich and powerful, is widening every day, and the former are made to bear the burden of a system designed to serve the interests of the latter.

It is evident that no lessons have been learnt from the two devastating World Wars. The follies of the past are repeated. The root of the problem, clearly pointed out by Robert Crosbie, remains. What is the remedy? How can selfishness of individuals and nations be restrained and their energies directed towards nobler ends? Ideas and beliefs that have no basis in truth and reality should inevitably lead mankind to bewilderment and sorrow, till truth in all things is learned and acted upon. One chief cause of strife, struggle and mutual exploitation in society lies, among other things, in the predominant western idea of “struggle for existence” and the “survival of the fittest,” propounded by Darwin as the law by which evolution of species takes place. By it, man degrades himself and retrogresses to the animal level. Theosophy shows that it is only when this idea is seen to be invalid in the moral plane of being, in which absolute justice reigns and which is at the core of man’s being, that man may raise himself higher to godlike perfection.

As the great French Orientalist Émile Burnouf, shows, “struggle for life” operates in the plant kingdom and less so in the animal world as they rise on the ladder of evolution in which the *Law of sacrifice* begins to manifest itself. Burnouf writes:

In man, these two laws counterbalance one another, and the law of sacrifice, which is that of charity, tends to assume upper hand, through the empire of the reason. It is reason which, in our societies, is the source of right, of justice, and of charity; through it we escape the inevitableness of the struggle for life, moral slavery, egoism, barbarism, in one word, that we escape from what *Sakyamuni* poetically called the power and the army of *Mara*. (*Lucifer*, August 1888)

As man evolves higher, morally and spiritually, the more the Law of Sacrifice becomes the ruling impulse in his life. It is the teaching of the ancient Wisdom-Religion that the Universe originated and is sustained and evolved by the Law of Sacrifice—

Yajna, and Man, the highest product of evolution, is the exemplar of this Law. Hence, Shri Krishna says, “*Adhiyajna* [Great sacrifice] is myself in this body” (*Gita* VIII). Theosophy says that at the present stage of man’s evolution, selfishness and brutality are abnormal.

It is the mission of the Theosophical Movement to cleanse the race mind of false ideas and sow seeds of right ideas based on true knowledge of Man and Nature. H.P.B. writes:

It is not the policy of self-preservation, not the welfare of one or another personality in its finite and physical form that will or can ever secure the desired object and screen the Society from the effects of the social “hurricane” to come; but only the weakening of the feeling of separateness in the units which compose its chief element. And such a weakening can only be achieved by a process of *inner enlightenment*. It is not violence that can ever insure bread and comfort for all; nor is the kingdom of peace and love, of mutual help and charity and “food for all,” to be conquered by a cold, reasoning, diplomatic policy. It is only by the close brotherly union of men’s inner SELVES, of soul-solidarity, of the growth and development of that feeling which makes one suffer when one thinks of the suffering of others, that the reign of justice and equality for all can ever be inaugurated. (*Lucifer*; August 1888)

A PERSON may *teach* a truth and yet may not *be* that truth, by virtue of living it. But he cannot impart a truth in its vitality, so that it fructifies—an energetic impulse of power—in other lives, unless he possesses that life-impulse by reason of his having become it. He cannot give what he has not.

—J. CAMPBELL VER PLANCK

UNDERSTANDING KARMA

WE often think of Karma when trouble or disaster strikes us personally, or our family, or a city, or a nation. It is easy to say: “It is Karma!”—and stop there. That is negative fatalism, not positive “do-it-ness.”

“Do-it-ness” should not start *after* a disaster, but ought to begin now, *before* the disaster—the sooner the better.

The starting point for this seems to be in inner work on ourselves—on our mind-thoughts and heart-feelings. First we should try to understand that these are our tools and are subordinate to our Real Selves. Unfolding knowledge of the Law of Karma is an indication of inner progress. We must try to determine, each one for himself, how much we know, and then we can make application of the doctrine of Karma in our own lives and to our own problems.

Let us look at certain ideas with which we are all familiar:

An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. — This is a statement of the Law attributed to the Prophet Moses. Interpreted literally, it is misleading. It is not an injunction to human beings to make themselves judges of others, or “Karmic agents.” It is a statement of the action in Great Nature of the impersonal, universal Law of Karma, which adjusts *every* cause to an *exact* effect, mathematically.

As we sow, so shall we reap.—This is another important warning statement, and, together with the preceding one, ought to make us see that we call forth from Nature, under Karmic Law, what we ourselves impress on it. The Law is immutable, sure. *We* sow the seeds of Karma, and Nature produces, in due time, the harvest—the fruits not only of our outer deeds, but also of our *inner* thoughts and feelings.

The hands that smite us are our own.—This phrase is an elaboration of the previous one. Yet many may not understand it, see it, *realize* it; and often we blame the “agents” of our own Karma for the pains and sorrows that come to us. We look for their cause outside, instead of looking inwards.

We get not only what we deserve, but what we in fact desired.— This should bring us to a higher aspect of Karma—recognition of the *theory* of the Law. *Ishwara*, an ancient name for the Reality, the impersonal, impartite Deific Principle which resides in the hearts of *all* beings and which is the Real Man, overshadows the personal man. The personal man thinks and feels and acts. The *Ishwara* within the personal man is the Perceiver, the unmoved watcher, silent but sentient. The personal man is the disciple, the learner, the weary pilgrim, threading his way through the paths of life that are strewn with the thorns and weeds that he himself has sown in the past, whether in this present life or in former lives on earth. The *Ishwara*, sitting in wakeful watchfulness in the cave of the heart, desires the object-involved personal man to look up, to see the light of Wisdom, the truth about Karmic life, which affects all entities in the manifested universe and forms their essential correlation; then, with even an inkling of this perception, assume, in the outside, objective world of *Maya* (Illusion), the responsibility of practical harmlessness and harmonious living with all beings. Thus is generated that Karma which is pleasing to the *Ishwara* within.

“*The Guru is Karma,*” says Mr. Judge in one place. What does he mean? Are the Masters the makers of Karma? No. Let us consider the important hint given to us by Mr. Judge:

Why, the Masters are anxious (to use a word of our own) that as many as possible may reach to the state of power and love They are in. Why, then, suppose they help not? As they are Atman and therefore the very law of Karma itself, They are in everything in life, and every phase of our changing days and years. If you will arouse your faith on this line you come nearer to help from Them than you will recognize.

This seems to emphasize several things. First, that those we call Masters or Elder Brothers have, over a period of many, many incarnations, refined and purified their personal natures by acting in harmony with the united spirit of life that is our only true self. Secondly, that they did this deliberately and with a knowledge of

the laws of Nature acquired through lives spent in study and verification of the facts recorded by the Great Ones who preceded them. Thirdly, that those qualities which we call “virtues” are but an expression of the action of Karmic law in the moral realm of Nature—a realm where harmlessness, generosity, charity, patience and wisdom can be seen to work (just as in the physical world the laws of gravity, friction, viscosity, chemical affinity, etc., can be proved to act).

Having thus ceased to disturb Nature, because they knew all her secret departments and could will-fully and willingly attune themselves to her all the time, they first exhausted their personal Karma, set up in the past; secondly, they have ceased generating fresh Karma of a destructive kind; and, thirdly, they never act against Karma, as they are in accord with Nature’s purposes and have made themselves willing servants of Nature’s laws, with full knowledge of past, present and future. They have thus made themselves impersonal forces for good. Their perfect knowledge of Law enables them to learn the great secret: “*Gentleness is the key to Occult effort.*”

Let us then understand that the Masters, the Mahatmas, the Great Souls of the human race, stand in the same relation to us in our present-day personal lives as the *Ishwara* within each one of us does to the personality that lives in the outside world, and which we call “myself.”

We, as Spirit beings, are ourselves Karma. In our lower-mind consciousness, attracted (or, rather, distracted) by feelings of lower self-interest, we forget this fact; or, perhaps, make it inconvenient to remember! We need to use the instrument of humility, and the determination to learn and to apply; else, we cannot hear the still, small voice that comes from our higher nature.

If we do this, all things become our teachers. He is indeed wise who, each morning upon awakening, reminds himself, like the wise Socrates, that the one thing he can be certain of is his own ignorance; and, by implication, reaffirms his determination and his will to learn and to know. Nothing, no event or work, is trivial. We who

are reaping the effects of our own Karmic causes need to search for those causes—*in ourselves*: in our habits, in our characters, among our talents and our interests and aversions, asking always, “Why?” Our limitations and our abilities are an index to former weaknesses or strivings towards disciplined living. We can develop detachment in observation, and watch how these limitations and abilities affect others, and how they assist or prevent us in harmonizing with the flow of events that our Karma has called down upon us.

The circumstance is not important; what we do with it, is. The circumstance arises from our past. By our reactions to it we determine our future. We need to develop right circumspection (which is *not* procrastination).

Such considerations ought to induce a sense of right contentment. We are to develop, not *laissez-faire*, or inertness, or a false submission to the decrees of “fate,” but, rather, contentment in doing the duties that are ours, while avoiding meddling in the duties and Karma of others. Consider our own physical bodies, as a good analogy. The cells of the brain perform a duty different from those that make up the bones. The cells that make up the muscles of the heart have different functions from the blood cells, and so on. All these, different in their functions yet united in one living body, work co-operatively and unitedly and serve the embodied intelligence. Yet, if the heart begins to fail, while the cells of the brain may observe this and know that it will spell their ultimate death, they cannot leave their post or their duties to perform those of the heart. In addition to our natural duties we have to perform special duties, such as acts of charity, sacrifice and mortification, mentioned in the *Gita*. We need also to observe and learn from Nature and her universal laws, so that our vision broadens and becomes universal. This is what is implied by the expression “the Universe made ‘I.’”

PATANJALI'S YOGA APHORISMS—REFLECTIONS

THE four books of Patanjali's Yoga Aphorisms, as interpreted by William Quan Judge, present a clear picture of metaphysical tenets and principles as a basis for the psychological disciplinary practices outlined throughout them. Their metaphysics provide a comprehensive foundation upon which their ethical and moral practices are built, and these in their turn must become part and parcel of the inner and outer life of the student. Study and practice should go hand in hand, for the study of the tenets, with the necessary meditation on their actual meaning, provides a chart by which the student can guide his mental, emotional and physical natures towards a safe anchorage in “Concentration.” When the practical application of the philosophical tenets is seen to be necessary and is undertaken by the student, then the whole book becomes a “living treatise” on how to disentangle the mind from the several allurements of the senses and of the desire nature, which cause its “modifications.”

The mind gets modified or transformed, as it were, into the subject or object that comes up before it, and this makes concentration difficult for most of us. Book I carefully enumerates these modifications of the mind, which the student can verify by the direct process of observation or perception, the analytical process of inference, which involves weighing and measuring, and by the careful checking of his findings with the testimony of others. These three, Perception, Inference and Testimony, give rise to what Patanjali calls “Correct Cognition,” that is, an accurate appraisal of all objects taken up by the mind for meditation. This form of meditation, which requires an object for the mind to focus itself upon, is called by Patanjali “meditation with its seed.”

That kind of meditation in which there is “distinct cognition” of the subject to be pondered upon involves the mental processes of Argumentation, Deliberation, Beatitude and Egoism. These four constitute degrees which the mind in meditation reaches. Egoism or the fourth degree, Mr. Judge explains, leads to that state of Egoic

perception where “a distinct recognition of the object or subject with which the meditation began is lost, and self-consciousness alone results; but this self-consciousness does not include the consciousness of the Absolute or Supreme Soul.” From this point the meditation may proceed to an abstract stage, and to quicken this process the symbolic and mystical meaning of the Supreme Spirit manifesting as *Ishwara* (the spirit in the body) and named OM, is to be meditated upon.

When meditation has reached the “Non-Argumentative” condition, a state in which the object selected for meditation has disappeared from the plane of contemplation, and when “Wisdom has been reached, through the acquirement of the non-deliberative mental state,” there is spiritual clearness, or the perception of “that Knowledge which is absolutely free from Error.” This Knowledge differs from the knowledge resulting from testimony and inference, because, in the pursuit of the former, the mind is “engaged with the general field of knowledge itself.” The train of self-reproductive thought that results from this puts a stop to all other trains of thought.

The two main trains of thought are, first, that which depends on suggestion made either by the words of another or by impression upon the bodily or psychic senses or the mind; and secondly, that which may be referred to as “self-reproductive,” which depends altogether upon itself and “reproduces from itself the same thought as before.” Self-reproductive thought acts “as an obstacle to all other trains of thought, for it repels or expels from the mind any other kind of thought. Even this train of thought, with but one object, may be stopped, and then there results “meditation without a seed,” with consequent progressive thought upon a higher plane.

Book II continues with the practical aspect of the disciplinary instructions, and indicates that Ignorance is the source of all other forms of mental afflictions which assail the disciple from within. “Egoism, Desire, Aversion, and a tenacious wish for existence upon the earth” naturally arise from ignorance and produce “results in both physical and mental actions or works,” and these “have their

fruitage either in the visible state or that which is unseen.”

Egoism is the confounding of the soul with the mind or with the organs of sense. Pleasure and pain have their seat in Desire and Aversion, respectively. “The tenacious wish for existence upon earth” is inherent in all sentient beings, and this wish, having its roots in the tendency of the spirit to manifest itself on the material plane throughout a Manvantara, continues through all incarnations, reproducing itself in each life.

The “afflictions” mentioned above may be evaded by producing “an antagonistic mental state,” and when they “modify the mind by pressing themselves upon the attention, they are to be got rid of by meditation.”

Vice, with its fruit of demerit in the form of suffering, can be transformed into its corresponding virtue with its fruit of merit in the form of happiness. This transformation, although a necessary step on the Path of Spiritual Cultivation, is not the ultimate goal or objective, for “to that man who has attained the perfection of spiritual cultivation, all mundane things are alike vexatious, since the modifications of the mind due to the natural qualities are adverse to the attainment of the highest condition.” Lack of discrimination follows from the fact that “the soul is conjoined in the body with the organ of thought, and thus with the whole of nature”; this produces misconceptions of duties and responsibilities.

The Universe, both visible and invisible, exists for the sake of the soul’s experience and emancipation, and when discriminative knowledge of the soul and its environment is attained, the ignorance that holds the soul in a state of bondage to matter is dispelled. With the attainment of perfect discriminative knowledge, the stage called the “Isolation of the soul” is reached.

“Isolation of the soul” means, not a permanent withdrawal of the soul from its instruments, but the unbroken retention of consciousness while in the body, at the moment of quitting it, and when passing into higher spheres, and likewise when returning to the material plane. The mind, freed from the modifications resulting from sensory and psychical perceptions, becomes an instrument

for the unfoldment of the soul's powers. But before perfect discriminative knowledge, continuously maintained, becomes ours, it is possible to achieve, with the help of practices which are conducive to concentration, an illumination more or less brilliant which is effective for removing impurities. Such practices include, among other things, harmlessness, veracity, abstinence from theft in mind and act, continence, elimination of covetousness, purification of mind and body, contentment, austerity, properly uttered invocations, persevering devotion to the Supreme Soul, and restraint. Postures and regulation of the breath are also mentioned, but Mr. Judge explains that these exercises are not absolutely essential to the successful pursuit of the practice of concentration and attainment of its ultimate fruits. At the present day, few are acquainted with the rules and prescriptions for physical exercises performed with a view to producing physiological, followed by psychical, effects, and therefore such exercises had best be left alone.

Other practices conducive to concentration are attention, contemplation, and meditation, and these are dealt with in Book III.

Perfect concentration, or *Sanyama*, is explained as the use or operation of the practices of *Dharana* or attention, *Dhyana* or contemplation, and *Samadhi* or meditation, in respect to a single object. These three practices are to be used by the student for overcoming all modifications of the mind, or the tendency towards mental diffuseness. They facilitate the attainment of that state of meditation in which that which is to be pondered upon is well known, without doubt or error, and it is a distinct cognition which excludes every other modification of the mind than the object that is to be pondered upon. Attention, contemplation and meditation are anterior to the state called "meditation without a seed."

There are two trains of self-reproductive thought, "the first of which results from the mind being modified and shifted by the object or subject contemplated; the second, when it is passing from that modification and is becoming engaged only with the truth

itself." That state of meditation in which there is a uniform flow of mind, and in which the mind is concerned in both the trains of self-reproductive thought, is called *Nirodha*. *Ekagrata* is a state of one-pointedness in which the mind is intent on a single object, having transcended all thoughts about its condition, qualities and relations.

Sanyama or perfect concentration may be performed with regard to any particular object or subject, and by this means the ascetic acquires thorough knowledge concerning it as also the powers resulting from such thorough knowledge. By concentrating the mind upon the true nature of the soul "as being entirely distinct from any experiences, and disconnected from all material things, and dissociated from the understanding, a knowledge of the true nature of the soul itself arises in the ascetic." Such an one becomes endowed with power over space, time, mind and matter.

One who has attained to perfect discriminative knowledge and power is a *Jivanmukta*, the possessor of "knowledge that saves from rebirth." Such an one may, however, return to earth by his own free choice, in order to help and teach others. Such Adepts, Mahatmas, Masters, are not in any way subject to the body, for the soul is perfectly free at every moment. When the mind has become one with the soul, which is the real knower and experiencer, "Isolation takes place and the soul is emancipated."

In Book IV we are told that each life leaves in the Ego mental deposits which it holds in a latent state, and each of these becomes manifest in other births whenever a suitable bodily constitution and environment are provided. These deposits are produced by the force of desire, and though they are always added to by new experiences and new desires, they may be removed by eliminating the causes producing them.

The mind is merely an instrument that the soul uses for acquiring experience and attaining emancipation. When the false notion that the mind is the knower and experiencer is removed, then the permanency of the soul is seen and Self-knowledge results. "Then the mind becomes deflected towards discrimination and bowed

down before Isolation.” If the ascetic who has arrived at this stage bends his concentration towards the prevention of all other thoughts, and is not desirous of attaining the powers resulting just at his wish, a further state of meditation, called “cloud of virtue,” is reached. It is so called because it will bring about the “spiritual rain” needed to reach complete emancipation, which is the chief end of the soul. Until this end is attained, the desire for results acts as a hindrance.

This complete emancipation of the soul is called in the Aphorisms Isolation. When this stage is reached, the objects, senses, feelings, etc., that had hitherto hindered the soul are no longer mistaken by it for realities, and it abides in its own nature, united with understanding, and unaffected by such “pairs of opposites” as cold and heat, pleasure and pain, good and evil, etc. The next step that the emancipated soul takes is to help other souls, who are still struggling on the way, to achieve their end.

This concludes this résumé of the instructions given in the Aphorisms, instructions which provide the means for the transition of the mind from Kama-Manas to Buddhi-Manas. This transition is to be achieved by the metaphysical principles and ethical and moral precepts which form the basis of the disciplinary practices and methods outlined throughout the four books of the Aphorisms. Spiritual knowledge arises spontaneously in the disciple who studies such treatises with the intention of undertaking the necessary discipline to bring about the desired result—Isolation or Emancipation of the Soul.

It is a good thing to strike while the iron is hot; but it is a better thing to make the iron hot by striking.

—OLIVER CROMWELL

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: The Enlightened One says: “Trust is the best of relationships.” However, we find that it is not easy or practical to trust any and everyone. Often, people betray our trust. How do we understand and live up to the Buddha’s precept?

Answer: As beginners, we may keep in mind the cardinal virtue of “Prudence.” Prof. C. S. Lewis writes: “Prudence means practical common sense, taking the trouble to think out what you are doing and what is likely to come of it...Christ told us to be not only ‘as harmless as doves,’ but also ‘as wise as serpents.’” In other words, we may use our discrimination. For instance, when someone gives us back the money he owed, we must count before putting it into our pocket. So also, if a person is known to be a cheat, we may think twice before dealing with him or trusting him. Then again, it is possible that some people cannot be trusted with money, but can be trusted to keep a secret, to keep their word, or to finish their work on time, and so on. In short, there may be areas in which they are perfectly trustworthy.

We must have a healthy relationship with ourselves and with others. If we lack faith in others, we find ourselves in a terrible state of mind—a mind full of suspicion. As a matter of fact the world runs on trust. We trust that the Sun will rise at a certain time and it does. It is not only nature which is trustworthy, but even man-made things and affairs run on trust. We travel by trains, buses and planes without any feeling of apprehension or doubt, as we know that the driver/pilot has taken on a job and will do his best. We trust our servants, not only to do the work they have been assigned, but also not to steal from our homes. There is the

exceptional servant who will even murder for money. But have we stopped employing servants? Why not? It is because we feel that, by and large, we can put our trust in them. The murderer becomes news, the trustworthy don't.

We trust our teachers, our parents and our children. If our trust happens to be misplaced, if we get cheated, can we say it is only chance? If there is not even a misshapen day in our lives then everything comes to us under law. We must have sown some causes that have led to the present situation. In such a case let us not blame the person but only the act. We may decide not to have any future dealings with him, but we must not put him out of our heart.

“Trust is the best of relationships.” This verse occurs in the chapter on “Happiness” in the *Dhammapada*. It seems to suggest that among other things, mutual trust in human relationship is productive of happiness. Trust begets trust. If we do not trust the law and other human beings, we cannot live in the world. Trust alone can bind humanity into one grand whole. The dictionary defines trust as (1) confidence in the honesty, integrity and reliability of a person and (2) faith.

Light on the Path describes faith as “a great engine, an enormous power, which in fact can accomplish all things. For it is the covenant or engagement between man's divine part and his lesser self” (p. 50). In other words, faith or trust in the other person, is trust/faith in his spiritual nature. We may say that it is trusting his spiritual nature to ultimately triumph, because at the base of every nature, there is faith, love and hope.

Robert Crosbie remarked about W. Q. Judge: “I trusted him then, as I trust him now and all those whom he trusted; to me it seems that ‘trust’ is the bond that binds, that makes the strength of the Movement, for it is of the heart” (*Vernal Blooms*, p. 1). Trust or faith is one of the innate ideas possessed by all human beings, that which was burnt into the minds of infant humanity and which manifested also as devotion. Infants and children have immense trust in their parents. A child holding the hand of the adult goes wherever it is taken. When man received “the spark of consciousness, the first feeling it awoke to life and activity was a

sense of solidarity, of oneness with his spiritual creators—as the child's first feeling is for its mother and nurse...DEVOTION arose out of that feeling, and became the first and foremost motor in his nature; for it is the only one which is natural in our heart, which is innate in us, and which we find alike in human babe and the young of the animal.” (*S.D.*, II, 210)

We would do well to differentiate between spiritual principles on the one hand and our ability to apply them on the other hand. Just because *we* cannot apply them up to the hilt, does not mean that they are not practicable. We must admit—deep down in our heart—our inability to live up to a spiritual precept, but never seek to dilute, belittle or explain it away. Immanuel Kant described moral and ethical injunctions as “Categorical Imperatives,” *i.e.*, there are no “ifs” and “buts” about them. It is no use saying, “Don't expect me to be a saint,” because, if we want to be spiritual, we must act as spirituality requires us to act. Often, it is also a question of how willing we are to suffer the consequences that practice of such a spiritual precept may bring. Spiritual life is never easy. Is it easy to live up to Jesus' injunction and offer our right cheek to the one who smites us on our left cheek?

However, we must keep in mind that a spiritual man trusts irrespective of the consequences, unafraid of betrayal. Just as we have to learn to love unconditionally, so too, we have to learn to trust *unconditionally*.

Question: If no religion teaches enmity, why then, are there wars in the name of religion?

Answer: People generally feel that religion is a matter of beliefs and emotions in which there is no scope or need for enquiry or seeking of explanation. We seldom, if ever, question. Somehow we feel that to question the scriptures or religious authorities is to be irreverent towards our religion. We prefer to follow the beaten track, blindly adopting the opinion of the majority. Mr. Crosbie defines true religion thus:

True Religion must give us a basis for thinking, and

consequently, a basis for acting; it must give us an understanding of nature, of ourselves and of other beings. Religion is a bond uniting men together—not a particular set of dogmas—binding not only all Men, but also all Beings and all *things* in the entire Universe, into one grand whole. (*The Friendly Philosopher*, p. 211)

It is the prerogative of every man to find out if his religion satisfies the above definition. We find that religions and religious creeds with their rituals and dogmas are intellectual extinguishers. We accept things on blind belief. It is felt that to have blind belief is to have strong faith. H.P.B. observes that between *faith on authority* and *faith on one's spiritual intuition* there is a great difference. She quotes Tourgenyeff who said that blind faith is like the logic of some emotional people, for whom 2 plus 2 could be 5, if the priest says so. It is this kind of *blind* faith which leads to religious conflicts and makes one a fanatic. H.P.B. points out that "He who believes his own religion on [such a] faith, will regard that of every other man as a lie, and hate it on that same faith." Vivekananda explains it thus:

The great disadvantage of [*Bhakti* or devotion] is that in its lower forms it oftentimes degenerates into hideous fanaticism....The singleness of attachment (*Nishtha*) to a loved object, without which no genuine love can grow, is very often also the cause of denunciation of everything else....This kind of love is somewhat like the canine instinct of guarding the master's property from intrusion; only the instinct of the dog is better than the reason of man, for the dog never mistakes its master for an enemy in whatever dress he may come before it. Again the fanatic loses all power of judgement. (*Bhakti-Yoga*, pp. 4-5)

All religions have two aspects. The first is the spiritual and metaphysical and the second is the code of conduct. Of these, the metaphysical part is often beyond the grasp of a large number of followers and they go more by the code of conduct given by the Teacher. Sometimes the code of conduct is not so explicit. People

tend to depend on *purohits*, *pandits* or priests, who may even deliberately misinterpret the teachings, add or subtract to suit their own purpose and to hold sway over the people. Neither the spiritual truths nor the code of conduct differ, in essence, between different religions, but the words used to express them naturally do differ and the interpretations certainly do, even more. For instance, the Mosaic law, "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," was interpreted to mean one could take revenge, though originally it probably only referred to the way the law of Karma operates in nature. Also, the original or early disciples, in every religion, are serious practitioners; but with the passing away of the Teacher, the inspiration wanes. A large majority just uses the code of conduct that gradually degenerates into customs and traditions. They get bogged down by rituals and ceremonies. Morality does get thrown to the winds.

Then again, most people desire to possess material goods in abundance and it is easy to covet the wealth of another, especially, if they can be designated as belonging to another faith and therefore counted as enemies. Call someone an enemy and some people feel they have a license to loot, kill or even to rape. Commandments are misinterpreted to mean that if you can convert a person to your religion or even kill someone belonging to another faith you will have an assured place in heaven! Calling another a *kafir* (infidel) or a *mleccha* (one belonging to a religion other than Hindu/a foreigner) is a sure way of considering him an enemy who deserves no quarter.

In some religions, people belonging to the same faith but not the same cult were burnt at the stake, on the pretext of sending them thus to heaven. Some maintained that the founder had given them permission to spread the religious teachings by force. Religious wars were deemed *holy wars*.

HE who knows others is wise; he who knows himself is enlightened.

—*Tao Te Ching*

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Is Christ's nativity account fact or fiction? Many scholars are of the opinion that the Gospel account of Jesus' birth is a mixture of faith and history. "As with so many other elements of faith, the Nativity narratives are the subject of ongoing scholarly debate over their historical accuracy, their theological meaning and whether some of the central images and words of the Christian religion owe as much to the pagan culture of the Roman Empire as they do to apostolic revelation," writes Jon Meacham (*Newsweek*, December 20, 2004). Thus:

The origins of the Nativity stories are much murkier than the accounts of Jesus' adulthood. Where did the details—of miraculous conception, of birth in Bethlehem, of stars in the sky, shepherds in the night and wise men on a journey—come from?

Neither Jesus nor Mary nor Joseph seems to be its direct source. John P. Meier, a Roman Catholic priest and professor at Notre Dame, writes: "The traditions behind the Infancy Narratives differ essentially from those of the public ministry and the passion," which were the result of firsthand testimony. Could there have been such a star, guiding the wise men in the search of baby Jesus? Halley's comet made an appearance in 12 B.C. and the Book of Numbers mentions: "There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel." The three wise men (Magi) visiting infant Jesus is considered by some scholars to be fulfilment of Psalm 72: "The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts." There is no historical evidence of such a visit and so also of the Herodian atrocity.

In *Isis Unveiled*, H.P.B. traces the origin of the Gospels to Oriental Gnosis and Oriental Kabala and points out that the Fourth Gospel was not written by John (II, 211). She writes:

The *Acts* and the fourth *Gospel* teem with Gnostic expressions....Peter's second *Epistle* and Jude's fragment, preserved in the *New Testament*, show by their phraseology

that they belong to the kabalistic Oriental Gnosis, for they use the same expressions as did the Christian Gnostics who built a part of their system from the Oriental *Kabala*. (*Isis*, II, 205)

The legends of three Saviours—Krishna, Buddha and Jesus—when compared, show striking similarity. She suggests that *St. Thomas* adopted "in his gospel (from which all others were copied) the most important details of the story of the Hindu Avatar," Krishna (*Isis*, II, 539). The Gospel account of Virgin Mary and the slaughter of the innocents ordered by king Herod, compares thus:

Christna's mother was Devaki...an immaculate virgin (but had given birth to eight sons before Christna). Buddha's mother was Maya or Mayadeva; married to her husband (yet immaculate virgin)...Christna is persecuted by Kansa, Tyrant of Madura, but miraculously escapes. In the hope of destroying the child, the king has thousands of male innocents slaughtered. (*Isis*, II, 537)

The real meaning of Herod's "infant-massacre" is explained as persecution during the Herodian reign of kabalists and the *Wise men*, who had not remained strictly orthodox. The *Wise men* as well as the prophets were nicknamed the "Innocents" and the "Babes" on account of their holiness. (*Ibid*, II, 199)

As for the "three wise men" and the star that guided them, Kepler maintained that at the moment of the "incarnation," all planets were in conjunction in the sign of *Pisces*, called by the Jews (the Kabalists), the "constellation of Messiah." It is in this constellation that the "*star of the Magi*" was placed. Of the names of the three Magi—Kaspar and Melchior, Balthazar—two have Chaldean ring. (*S.D.*, I, 654 and fn.)

H.P.B. points out that the concept of "Immaculate conception" is purely astronomical, mathematical and pre-eminently metaphysical, but carnalized by the Christian Church. Thus:

The Male element in Nature (personified by the male deities and Logoi—Viraj, or Brahma; Horus or Osiris, etc., etc.) is born through, not from, an immaculate source, personified by the "Mother"; because the Male having a Mother cannot have

a “Father”—the abstract Deity being sexless, and not even a Being but Be-ness, or Life itself. (*S.D.*, I, 59)

What does Siva’s “Third Eye” depict? Is it a fact of human evolution or just allegory? Recently, Dr. O. P. Jangir, a Zoology professor in Bikaner, created frogs with three eyes in the laboratories of Dungar College. He removed the two eyes of a tadpole and treated the pineal gland with Vitamin A, which gradually transformed into an eye having all the properties of a normal eye. He transplanted this eye in another tadpole, giving rise to three-eyed tadpoles. “According to him, evolutionary history suggests that primitive animals, including some vertebrates, had three eyes on the frontal lobe,” writes Sandipan Sharma (*The Indian Express*, January 30). Dr. Jangir observes:

With time, two of these eyes shifted sideways in animals. Due to this development, the middle eye, which remained in its place, lost its utility. But it survived as a vestigial organ, right above the nose, as pineal gland.

H.P.B. mentions that in the beginning, every class and family of living species was hermaphrodite and objectively one-eyed. Prior to acquiring the “coats of skin” or the physical form, when man and animal were both ethereal, the third eye was the only seeing organ; the two physical front eyes developed only later, in both man and animal. This “Cyclopean” eye was, “and still *is*, in man the organ of *spiritual* sight; in the animal it was that of the objective vision” (*S.D.*, II, 299). H.P.B. mentions that during the course of evolution there were races of men with three eyes and four arms. Before the human form became perfect and symmetrical in the Fifth Race, there are indications of the early Fourth Race being three-eyed. However, this third eye need not have been in the middle of the brow; in fact, it was at the back of the head (*S.D.*, II, 294). Thus, the “third eye” was once a physiological organ, but later on, owing to the gradual increase of materiality and disappearance of

spirituality, this “third eye” got atrophied, and was gradually transformed into a simple gland (*S.D.*, II, 295-96). “The *third eye is dead*, and acts no longer; but it has left behind a witness to its existence. This witness is now the PINEAL GLAND.” (*S.D.*, II, 295)

It is said that John Elbert Wilkie, a young reporter for *The Chicago Tribune*, was the inventor of the legendary Indian Rope Trick. It was only a figment of the American scribe’s imagination, writes Teller (*The Times of India*, February 17, 2005). *The Chicago Tribune* for August 8, 1890, carried an article that narrated the rope trick witnessed by two Yale graduates on their visit to India. A street fakir tossed the ball of gray twine up into the air, holding its loose end in his teeth. The ball unrolled until the other end was out of sight. Then a small boy climbed the twine, but vanished at the height of 30 or 40 feet in the air. The artist made the sketch and the photographer took the snapshots of the event. However, when the photos were developed, they showed no twine, no boy, only the fakir sitting on the ground. The reporter concluded, “Mr Fakir had simply hypnotized the entire crowd, but couldn’t hypnotize the camera.” This item was picked up by the newspapers of the U.S. and Britain and was translated into almost every European language. Peter Lamont, in his “Rise of the Indian Rope Trick,” comments that Wilkie’s article appeared at the right moment to feed the needs and prejudices of modern Western culture. To justify the colonial rule, the British had convinced themselves that Indians were superstitious savages. “The prime symbol of Indian benightedness was the fakir, whose childish tricks—as the British imagined—frightened his ignorant countrymen but could never fool a Westerner.”

H.P.B. was asked by an American subscriber to *Lucifer* to comment upon this curious report in the *Chicago Tribune*, which had the heading “It is only Hypnotism.” H.P.B. observes that such phenomena, produced by Indian jugglers, are as old as the hills

and are well known to every Occultist. She explains that the man who performed the phenomena was not a fakir but a public juggler and a “producer of illusions.” However, she asserts that the two gentlemen [the Yale graduates who witnessed it] would never be able to repeat such *juggling phenomena* because these “jugglers” are not sleigh of hand conjurers. She writes:

“It is *only* Hypnotism,” you say. Then those who say so, do not know the difference between hypnotism, which, at best, is only a *purely physiological manifestation* even in the hands of the most powerful and learned experimenters, and real mesmerism, let alone *mahamaya* or even the *guptamaya* of ancient and modern India. We defy all, and everyone, from Charcot and Richet down to all the second rate hypnotizers....to produce that with which...[the two Yale graduates] credit their “juggler.”...We say *yes*; it is *glamour*, fascination, psychology, call it what you will, but it is not “hypnotism.”...[It is] collective and instantaneous *fascination* produced on hundreds by one passing gaze of the “juggler,” even though the gaze did “take in every man” “from sole to crown.” (*Lucifer*, September 1890)

Further, H.P.B. observes that by analogy, “if such phenomenal powers of fascination, as throwing glamour over audiences often numbering several hundreds and even thousands, are once proven to exist in simple professional jugglers, who can deny the same powers, only twenty times as strong, in trained adepts in Occultism?”

Each creature on earth is composed of billions of atoms. There is a kinship between man and other species on earth based on—among other things—exchange of atoms between them. All creatures on Earth are indistinguishably intertwined, “making us soulmates in more ways than one.” When any living being dies, decomposition sets in, releasing the constituent atoms into the atmosphere. Some of these atoms may get reconstituted in a shorter

or longer period of time, in the same or in another species. Thus, each of us has some of the ingredients of the other, writes Jahanavi Shandilya (*The Times of India*, February 28). Bill Bryson in *A Short History of Everything* talks about the pervasive nature of atoms. Bryson writes:

Atoms are fantastically durable. Because they are so long-lived, atoms really get around. Every atom you possess has almost certainly passed through several stars and been part of millions of organisms on its way to becoming you. We are each atomically so numerous and so vigorously recycled at death that at death a significant number of atoms—up to a billion for each of us, it has been suggested—probably once belonged to Shakespeare. A billion more each came from Buddha and Genghis Khan and Beethoven, and any other historical figure you care to name....So we are all reincarnations—though short-lived ones. When we die, our atoms will disassemble and move off to find new uses elsewhere—as part of a leaf or other human being or drop of dew. Atoms themselves, however, go on practically for ever.

“Humanity is a great Brotherhood by virtue of the sameness of the material from which it is formed physically and morally” (*The Theosophical Glossary*). In *The Ocean of Theosophy* Mr. Judge points out that a continuous exchange of atoms has been going on all the time. Atoms from our body are being replaced by other atoms and thus our body undergoes a complete alteration and renovation every seven years. At the end of the day, our body is believed to have changed at least seven times. (pp. 39-40)

In answer to a question, Mr. Judge mentions that such recombination and recycling of atoms illustrates the idea of universal brotherhood. He writes:

If we have all, as Egos, used over and over again the atoms physical which all other Egos have used, we lose all individual property in the atoms and each is common owner of all. I believe, but am unable to prove, that we use over again the atoms we once used in a body, but how many times the great wheel of the solar system allows this permutation and recombination to

happen is beyond me and my generation. (“*Forum*” *Answers*, p. 66)

We continuously impress the atoms that we use, with either lower, psychic or higher, spiritual impressions—depending upon our thoughts. When these atoms are impressed by evil thoughts and actions, they get attracted to lower kingdoms, by magnetic affinity, and go in the formation of lower animals or brutes. This is the real meaning of the doctrine of Metempsychosis (*H.P.B. Series No. 25*, pp. 33-34). It is in this sense that man is said to be reborn as an animal. Man is responsible for the evolution of the lower kingdoms, as he has to raise “the entire mass of manifested matter up to the stature, nature, and dignity of conscious god-hood.” The explanation given to Mr. Judge, by a holy man, runs as follows:

Atoms fly from all of us at every instant. They seek their appropriate centre; that which is similar to the character of him who evolves them. We absorb from our fellows whatever is like unto us. It is thus that man reincarnates in the lower kingdoms. He is the lord of nature, the key, the focus, the highest concentrator of nature’s laboratory. And the atoms he condemns to fall thus to beasts will return to him in some future life for his detriment or his sorrow. But he, as immortal man, cannot fall....He is the brother and teacher of all below him. See that you do not hinder and delay all nature by your failure in virtue. (*The Heart Doctrine*, p. 145)

How clear is the path of one who believes! He lives with honour,
with honour he leaves; Walks straight on the highways, nor
wanders in the bye ways, And is to Dharma, the duty, bound.
When hands, feet and body are soiled, water washes them pure;
When clothes are spoiled soap clears them sure; When the mind
is polluted by sin and shame, it is cleansed by the love of Your
name.

—GURU NANAK

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