

A Magazine Devoted to The Living of the Higher Life

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सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

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THREE KINDS OF KARMA

KARMA is the law of action and reaction; cause and effect. The law of Karma adjusts every effect to its cause and restores the disturbed equilibrium. Karma is said to be of three kinds: *Sanchita*, *Agami* and *Prarabdha*. In Vedantic literature, there is a beautiful analogy. The bowman has already sent an arrow and it has left his hands. He cannot recall it. He is about to shoot another arrow. The bundle of arrows in the quiver on his back is the *sanchita*; the arrow he has shot is *prarabdha*; and the arrow which he is about to shoot from his bow is *agami*. Of these, he has control over the *sanchita* and the *agami*, but he must surely work out his *prarabdha*. He has to experience the pressure from the past which has begun to take effect.

Sanchita Karma is that which is stored up and not in operation now because there is not the appropriate environment or conditions for bringing it into action. It is like the vapour held in suspension in the atmosphere, which will fall as rain upon earth, when conditions are ripe. When we plant different varieties of seeds, they grow and bear fruit at different times. Strawberry or apple plant will bear fruits only when the season comes. Moreover, mango plant will bear fruit only after many years. Likewise, the entire stock of karma cannot come to fruition all at once. Patanjali describes the “stored-up karma” as mental deposits. We feel the effect of mental deposits created by our thoughts, actions and feelings of present or past lives, when we

have obtained just the right kind of bodily or mental frame and environment necessary to bring them into play. Some Karmic causes are held in abeyance only for a little time, and come to fruition quickly. Thus, for instance, overeating or eating stale food might cause stomach-ache within few hours. A person indulging in chain-smoking or chewing of tobacco might experience cancer of mouth or lungs in old age. However, some actions do not bear fruit in this life, and for which the person appears to have gone scot free, but that is not the case. Such actions of one life are like the arrows shot from the bow, acting upon us in the later life, producing our rewards and punishments. We are told that until appropriate instrument is found, karma related to it remains unexpended. For instance, so long as one is in a male body, he cannot have the experience of motherhood; so long as one is enjoying bright intellect as a result of good mental karma of past life, one is unable to experience idiocy. Likewise, a person enjoying riches as a result of past good karma cannot experience poverty at that same time.

Mr. Judge describes *Sanchit* Karma as that which has not begun to produce any effect on our lives owing to the operation of some other karmic causes. We are able to understand it based on the law in physics that two opposing forces tend to neutrality, and that one force may be strong enough to temporarily prevent the operation of another one. Thus, Karma can be held over from the past lives, or from the current life, till the obstructive karma is removed.

Just as we do not go to market carrying our entire bank balance, so also, each Ego is born with only a portion of mental deposits or karmic causes, which he has to exhaust now. One may come to a point in the given life where all the previous causes are worked out, so that new karma or unexpended karma must begin to operate. Thus, we find in certain cases, sudden reverses of fortune, where there is change for the better or for worse, either in circumstances or character. Sometimes the karma of the Ego is just strong enough to make him take birth into a poor family, but then, new karma begins to operate, and the child is adopted by rich parents, and is thus thrown

into different surroundings. Mr. Judge gives an illustration of a *Rajah* (King) who had a strange dream, which was interpreted by a soothsayer, whereby the King was called upon to give a large sum of money to the first person he would see after awaking on the next day, as the soothsayer intended to remain present at an early hour. Next day, the King arose unusually early, and when he went near the window he saw a *chandalah* sweeping up the dirt. He gave his fortune to him, thus raising him, in a moment, to affluence, from abject poverty.

An aphorism on Karma says that “while a man is experiencing Karma in the instrument provided, his other unexpended Karma is not exhausted through other beings or means, but is held reserved for future operation; the lapse of time during which no operation of that Karma is felt causes no deterioration in its force or change in its nature.” Thus, the force of stored-up Karma will neither become stronger nor get diluted due to lapse of time. Appropriateness of the instrument is determined by the exact relation of the Karma with the body, mind, intellectual and psychical nature acquired for use by the Ego in that particular life.

However, changes may occur in instrument so that it becomes appropriate for the precipitation of held over Karma or new class of Karma. Such change in the bodily, mental or psychic constitution of a person may occur either due to intensity of thought and the power of a vow, or because of natural alteration due to complete exhaustion of old causes, says an aphorism on Karma. Thus, when a person determines to become an engineer or a doctor, or a dancer, and exerts in that direction, all the faculties related to that field begin to get trained and developed. Thus, the bodily, mental and psychic natures are developed so as to provide appropriate instrument for pursuing that art or subject. When one determines—takes a pledge or a vow—to live the spiritual life, all aspects of his nature, noble or otherwise, begin to develop. Moreover, in case of such a person there is quicker precipitation of Karma. Each one who undertakes to climb to the world of the Spirit has to face not only his *Prarabdha*

Karma—that portion or aspect of Karma with which he is born, *i.e.*, the Karma for whose precipitation the field is ready, but because of his newly made resolve to break the limitations of Karma, he cuts a canal through which some of the dammed-up Karma known as *Sanchita Karma* begins to flow and become *Prarabdha*.

It also implies that the person who has sincerely taken a vow to purify his nature will experience sudden good and bad effects, which would have otherwise spread over many more days or years as number of small events.

Agami is that Karma which we are making in the present life, the effect of which will be felt by us in this or in the future births. It is generated by our thoughts, feelings, words and deeds, day by day. *Prarabdha* Karma is the portion or aspect of Karma that is operating in the present life and body, right from birth, bringing about all the circumstances and changes. Destiny or Fate is the Karma that has ripened, so that its expression cannot be averted or postponed. For instance, we cannot change the sex, family, nation or race into which we are born. The Karma that is irreversible may be called fate or destiny. Mr. Judge defines Destiny thus:

Destiny is the English word applied to a Karma so strong and overpowering that its action cannot be counteracted by other Karma; but in the sense that all happenings are under Karma, all things are destined as they occur.

In the absence of the knowledge of the law of karma we describe certain inevitable events by saying, “These things were destined.” But destiny is only the working of certain powerful causes, so that no action of ours or any other karma can avert or modify the result. For such Karma we can say, “what cannot be cured, must be endured.” We experience the effects of Karma from this life as well as from many previous ones. What we experience is the result of the *balancing* of several Karmic causes.

Karma does not operate on the principle of one cause producing one effect; several causes may precipitate at the same time. Likewise,

one strong cause may channel out into effects in more than one direction. There is the law of parallelogram of forces, wherein the good and the bad cause may either partially or completely counterbalance each other’s effect and then what we experience is the resultant. Thus, acts of love could, to some extent, mitigate the severity of karmic consequences.

There is the *doctrine of nullification of Karma*. According to the well-known law in physics, two equal forces opposing each other, lead to equilibrium. “A person may have in his Karmic account a very unpleasant cause and at the same time a cause of opposite character. If these come together for expression at the same time they may so counteract each other as that neither will be apparent and the equilibrium is the equivalent of both,” explains Mr. Judge. He further states that it is not necessary that we should feel every minute portion of Karma in the same detail as when it was produced, because several sorts of Karma may precipitate together at a point in life, and their combined effect produces a result which, while, as a whole, accurately represents all the elements in it, is still a different Karma from each single component part.

There are three classes of Karma, because karma operates on physical, psychic and moral planes. A deformed person with a fine mind has unpleasant karma operating in his body and good karma is being experienced in his intellectual nature. In understanding the nullification of Karma we must remember that just as pounds could not be added to rupees or, rupees to dollars, so also, in counteracting bad karma with good karma it is essential that both the kinds of karma must be compatible. Thus, it appears that the results of acts done primarily on *mental plane* cannot be mitigated or obliterated by actions done on *physical plane*. For instance, a person who spent many years of his life in mentally torturing another human being cannot hope to nullify that act by giving large sums of money to the poor. Charity done out of the surplus, without any particular concern for the poor, or still worse, only with the intention of earning merit (*punya*), cannot bring about refinement of moral character.

It is also true that Karma manifests in harmony with the plane of desire. When our desire is for money, fame, name, etc.—centred on lower plane, we create a “centre of attraction” on that 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, for instance, if we have generated good Karma by giving large donations in the past lives, and if our heart is set on acquiring spiritual knowledge then the same good Karma of the past on the physical plane will unfold on the higher plane and we might find that we are aided, in terms of getting right kind of books, a quiet place for study and meditation, and so on.

Today’s destiny (*prarabdha*) is made by our choices in the past. Today’s choice weaves our future destiny. If a man makes the choice to go in the right direction, he goes forward, else he goes backward. Destiny is woven in the minds of men with good and evil thoughts. With *Agami* Karma being generated now, we can change the sum total of our stored-up Karma. Further, when Karma has ripened and begun to precipitate, we can experience the effects with right attitude. However, “acceptance” should not be equated with passivity and helplessness. If we are able to change the situation, we must do all in our power to change it. We are not expected to remain poor, handicapped, ignorant, weak, oppressed, or whatever be our plight. We can use the situation as raw material and extract the necessary lessons. It might consist in learning the lessons of fortitude and sympathy, or detachment and patience, and so on. One of the aphorisms on Karma points out that in the given life we can take measures to repress wrong tendencies and eliminate defects. When intense efforts are made, the influence of the Karmic tendency is shortened. Karma has placed us where we are, but it does not hold us there.

THE WAY TO THE TRUE GURU

ON May 8th falls the anniversary of the passing away of our Guru and Teacher H. P. Blavatsky. Through the decades she has been esteemed and revered, as also maligned and calumniated. But the passing of the years is proving that her power, being spiritual, is of increasing beneficence to a growing number of men and women the world over. Often, when May 8th comes around, like the two little girls mentioned in the book, *The Eternal Verities*, we are seized with the longing to know just what H.P.B. was like, as a *person*. And one of the girls describes her powerful personality by saying, “H.P.B. was like the sun—and the wind—and the waves—and the stars. Sunlight does not have odor, but it brings out sweet odors in the flowers. And the wind does not have any odor but it bears sweet odors from many gardens. And the waves do not have odor, but they send a salty tang into the air. And the stars don’t have any odor either, but they are a Presence. Yes—that was H.P.B.” But her personality was a mask within which worked a really powerful intelligence.

There are several biographies of H.P.B.—both, favourable and unfavourable—but even those which are favourable, and are partial, do not do justice to her colossal mind and her lion heart. These will have to be read for what they are worth, for it is one thing to know about the events and incidents in the life of a person, and altogether another thing to understand their real significance, and interpret them accurately. Our approach to H. P. Blavatsky must be through her works. Of course, all students want to know about the real H.P.B. but there is hardly anything that is printed which would give us an absolutely clear picture. The very best that we, at the present hour, can do is to study her writings, because invariably the law of the spiritual life is: From the teachings to the teacher. How many of those who repeat “our Guru H.P.B.” are real, intelligent devotees? She has done a tremendous beneficence to all devotees and aspirants by opening a door to the Masters. The knock at the door becomes

necessary, writes Shri B. P. Wadia.

Like a true Teacher she taught how to follow the Path of Self-Knowledge, and cautioned: “Do not follow me, nor my path, but follow the Path I show: the Masters who are behind.” Devotion to H.P.B., if it is of the right kind, must be rooted in her recorded message. It is as we assimilate her writing that we see the breadth and depth of her mind and the magic power of her heart.

Theosophy teaches that the science of Soul-life is an exact science, and that its doctrines are definite and arrived at by long search and prolonged experimentation. It confidently asserts that the existence of Deity and immortality of man’s Spirit can be demonstrated like a problem of Euclid; that Man-Spirit proves God-Spirit, as one drop of water proves a source from which it must have come; that blind faith is not necessary, for priceless KNOWLEDGE exists; and that it has been hidden only from those who overlook it, deride it, or deny its existence. Science, theology, every human hypothesis and conception born of imperfect knowledge lose forever their authoritative character when Theosophy is *really* contacted. Lest this claim sound dogmatic, it is necessary to say that by Theosophy we mean that immemorial Wisdom-Religion, Bodhi-Dharma, which, antedating Buddhism and the still earlier Brahmanical Vedism, underlies every great religion. Theosophy ever bases its moral ethics on three fundamental principles:

- (1) Everything existing, exists from natural causes.
- (2) Virtue brings its own reward and vice and sin their own punishment.
- (3) The state of man in this world is probationary.

These are axioms of the science of the soul. Occult physiology, occult psychology, occult spiritualism are the three branches of that perfect science, defined by its KNOWER as the Mathematics of the Soul. The ancient Wisdom-Religion is at once a philosophy, a science, and an art. Its modern expression is to be found in the recorded writings of H. P. Blavatsky who claimed “a somewhat intimate acquaintance with Eastern adepts and study of their

science”—which claim she fully justifies in her teachings. In her monumental *Secret Doctrine* she describes these teachings thus:

To the public in general and the readers of the *Secret Doctrine* I may repeat what I have stated all along, and which I now clothe in the words of Montaigne: Gentlemen, “I HAVE HERE MADE ONLY A NOSEGAY OF CULLED FLOWERS, AND HAVE BROUGHT NOTHING OF MY OWN BUT THE STRING THAT TIES THEM.”

Pull the “string” to pieces and cut it up in shreds, if you will. As for the nosegay of FACTS—you will never be able to make away with these. You can only ignore them, and no more. (I, xlvi)

From these Teachings to the Teachers is but a step, though a stupendous one. A long line of Teachers exists, known in India as the *Guruparampara* chain. This is the ever-lengthening chain of Gurus, each of whom is but a *sisya*, a pupil, to mightier Lord. In his lifetime, the Buddha was always approached by the title of Tathagata—he who follows in the footsteps of his Predecessors. These views represent the hidden fact with which every tyro in Occultism is familiar, namely, that the Fraternity of Adepts on earth is a branch of the Cosmic Fraternity of *Maha Rishis* and Dhyani Buddhas. The office of the Guru was deemed essential and was greatly revered in the olden days when Soul-life was more of a reality than it is today. Those who have gone any distance in the development of the Inner Life feel the necessity of a guide and come to recognize that the age-old institution of the Guru is not only beneficent but also a necessity.

In the modern world, Soul-life has become largely a matter of experimentation. All suffer from lack of clear perception of two concepts, which in the ancient world were key ideas. Those who aspired after the Inner Spirit knew that a perfectly codified Science of the Soul existed, and that its study required the aid of those who had mastered it not only in theory but also in practice. Teachings and Teachers were tangible facts—one might take them or leave

them; but the safe, nay the only, way was to prepare oneself and become worthy of learning the Science by sitting at the feet of Soul-Scientists. Experiments in the laboratory of mind and heart were made under the direct observation and guidance of the Guru.

In no country of the ancient world was the Ideal of the Guru higher, or better recognized, than in India; today it is corrupted and degraded. This has happened because would-be pupils did not know that their primary task was to make sure that the chosen Guru was not a fake. For example, the Upanishads say: “Arise, awake, seek the Great Ones.” Many sought the Gurus, but before they had *arisen* from the ranks of the mentally lazy, before they had *awakened* from the dreams of personal preferment and happiness. H.P.B. also said what the Upanishads taught, that one must *arise* to leave sin behind, and *awaken* from the dreams of fancy and make-believe before that Adept-Guru appears.

These Teachers, Living Mahatmas, suffer with the suffering of humanity, guiding those who desire guidance, instructing those who will to be instructed. They do not labour for any definite organization, church, or society, but work for the enlightenment of the human mind and for bringing to birth within it the power of Intuition. These Great Souls ever wait and watch for the lonely sore-footed pilgrims on their way to Perfection.

What is the Way to the true Gurus? The very first step is the search for the Science of the Soul. Is there such a science in existence which these Gurus teach? Are its early and preliminary lessons available—lessons which, once learned, will bring the learner face to face with the Guru? The first task of every aspirant is to ascertain the credentials of his future guru; this may sound irreverent, but a fearless and courageous examination by every soul of the status of a school or academy wherein he proposes to enter is a solemn duty. Many whose aspiration has been exploited could have saved themselves by a humble but cautious examination of the claimants and their claims. The first step is to “compare all things, and, putting aside emotionalism as unworthy of the logician and the

experimentalist, hold fast only to that which passes the ordeal of ultimate analysis.”

Theosophy says that the truths of Soul-science should be questioned before being accepted. Let every mind test by reasoning out for itself the basic principles with which Soul-life has to begin; let every heart feel the depth of the nobility of those teachings. Teachings are the vestures of Teachers. If the former are unconvincing to reason, and do not awaken in the heart the fire of devotion, wherefore should we follow their authors?

H.P.B. gave a system of thought that we may investigate, not assertions that we must believe without proof. She says, “As all Theosophists have to be judged by their deeds and not by what they write or say, so *all* Theosophical books must be accepted on their merits, and not according to any claim to authority which they may put forward” (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 298). Regarding accepting H.P.B.’s teachings shri B.P. Wadia writes, thus:

An impartial and critical study of her system of thought, not with a desire either to prove that she is right or to prove that she is wrong, but to find out what her teachings are: that is what is wanted. Do they solve the intricate problems which confront us? Do they illumine our intelligence? Do they satisfy the yearnings of the human heart? Do they inspire us to a noble life-struggle, to a greater altruism, to a grander selflessness? Above all, are they in harmony with the established facts of ancient science, proven laws of ancient ethics, profound truths of ancient philosophy? (*Studies in the Secret Doctrine*, p. 6)

Before one desires to learn from the Guru, one must acquire the knowledge of the state of Chelaship. The path to the Gurus is hidden. Their Voice is lost in the babel of tongues around us. The discriminating mind and the intuitive heart must learn to distinguish the Song of Wisdom from among the welter of worlds, the clash of thoughts, and the talk of claims.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THE MAGIC WATCH

A RICH man sent the eldest of his three sons out to travel and see the world. In three years he returned with fine raiment and manners and was welcomed with a feast. The father also sent out the second son well supplied with money. He too returned after three years, during which he did all that he should have done, and the feast with which he was welcomed was even more splendid than the first. The third brother, Jenik, was considered a fool, since all he did was to sit over the stove and dirty himself in the ashes. Still his father allowed him to go as well and gave him a sum of money. On his way Jenik met some shepherds who were about to kill a dog, which he begged them to spare and give to him. So, too, he rescued a cat, which also went with him. Finally, he saved a snake, which said to him, “Go where I go.”

Now the snakes seek their holes in the winter and present themselves before the Serpent King. “All the others are housed,” said the snake, “and I am behindhand. But when my King knows how you saved me from death, he will not be angered. When he asks you what you desire in return, beg for the watch that hangs on the wall. It will grant you whatever you want.” And so it happened. Jenik became the master of the watch. He rubbed his watch and wished for bread and meat and wine, a room for the night, with a comfortable bed; he rubbed his watch and there it was. The next day he went home, but as he wore his old clothes, his father gave him no feast of welcome, and Jenik went back to the ashes again. The third day he thought he would like a three-storied house filled with all kinds of treasures. He rubbed his watch and there it was. Jenik told his father, “You gave me no feast; now it is I who invite you and all our relations and friends.”

The father in astonishment invited all the world, and everyone was amazed. After the first course Jenik begged his father to invite the King and his daughter. He rubbed his watch and there was a

fine carriage drawn by six horses in glittering harness, but the father followed humbly on foot. As the King and his daughter stepped in, Jenik wished the road, paved with marble for six miles. As the carriage approached he wished for a four-storied building, still more magnificent than the first, with everything marvellous inside. The King was impressed and begged Jenik to be his son-in-law.

After the wedding, the princess soon became bored because she found Jenik too simple. She learnt of the watch with its wonderful power, and one dark night she stole it. She wished for a palace in the middle of the sea, reached by a bridge. When she got inside it she rubbed the watch once more and the bridge vanished right away. This left poor Jenik very unhappy, for his family laughed at him and all he had left was the dog and the cat. He sat out with them for the desert, where he saw a group of crows flying towards a mountain. One crow said to the others, “I have seen a most marvellous palace in the middle of the ocean.” Then Jenik went to the shore and bade the dog swim to the palace with the cat on his back so that the latter could hide there and steal back the watch. When the cat crept inside the castle, the princess locked the watch in a box in the cellar, but the cat found her way down, scratched the box till she had made a hole. She took the watch in her mouth and slipped softly out.

“Be careful not to speak to me as we cross the water,” she said, and at first the dog paid attention. But as they got near the shore he felt he had to ask, “Have you got the watch?” Fearful of dropping it, the cat did not answer; and as they reached the other side the dog asked again, “Are you *sure* you have got the watch?”

“Yes,” said the cat; and the precious treasure fell right into the water. Sorrowfully the two gazed at the spot, when suddenly a fish appeared and the cat pounced upon it. “Spare the father of nine,” cried the fish. “So be it,” said the cat, “if you find our watch.”

The fish achieved this mission and the watch was brought back to its master. Jenik rubbed it and wished—and the Princess and her palace and all its inhabitants were swallowed up in the waters. Then Jenik returned to his parents and lived happily ever after, with his

watch and his cat and his dog.

To make only one of the various possible interpretations, we can read in this tale the history of the evolution of man's self-consciousness.

The monads, or sparks of life, radiate from the parent source, the Supreme Spirit, by a series of stages. So the father sends his three sons out into the world. In the first stage towards human evolution the monads acquire forms and power to act in them, producing a rich reward from life itself; *i.e.*, the first son comes back with bright raiment and manners and receives a banquet from his father. In the next stage comes the development of the instinctive intelligence and activity, by which each creature *does all that it ought to do* in its own sphere and degree, as the second son did. The third son stands for the stage of Man-to-be, the Human Monad. He is considered a "fool" because as yet "mindless," and though he clings close to the stove, whose fire implies his spiritual affinity, yet outwardly only the residue, the ash, of his divinity is apparent. Incidentally, the religious myths of both hemisphere speak of the Third Race of men as born from the ash tree. For man is the microcosm of the World-tree, the *Ask*, or *Ashwattha*.

So Jenik sets out. He "saves from the previous evolutionary experience the higher animal mind in its dual aspect of thought and feeling—positive-negative, male-female (the dog and the cat). When he saves the serpent, enabling it to go underground, he is rewarded with the gift of "time" (the watch). We have here an unmistakable allegory of the "birth" of self-conscious Man. For the serpent is the incarnating Soul-Ego, mind-born, self-conscious, who descends, in the dark winter time of the Soul, into the underground regions of human bodily existence. But through the Soul-Ego's connection with Universal Mind (the King of Serpents), Man receives the magic gift of "time." The watch symbolizes very graphically the idea of

awareness of "past, present and future," the gift of self-consciousness that the animal does not possess. From that self-consciousness comes the power of choice, of free will, of creation—faculties that bring to man whatever he wants.

The thinking man begins to sustain himself on the bread and meat and wine of thought-desire. For man is made of thought. His individual thoughts and longings produce his heaven state, his *Devachan*, between two earthly lives. That state did not develop until Man had self-conscious mind. And how amusingly descriptive is the phrase "a room for the night with a comfortable bed" for the blissful periodic rest of *Devachan*."

He recreates his own "houses," the subjective and the objective bodies, with the four elements of fire, air, water, and earth. The carriage with the six horses reminds one again of the septenary body. But instead of placing the Spirit of Life within the chariot, Man invites therein the King of this world (personified illusion) and his daughter (the false, personal notion of self, born from illusion). Jenik then weds the Princess: Man mistaking the material and unreal for the spiritual and real, espouses a false sense of identity. He thinks: "I *am* my body," "I *am* my senses," "I *am* my desires," "I *am* my notions," "I *am* a separate being." But this complex notion of "self" has nothing in common with the simple nature of the spiritual Monad.

The Princess becomes bored and seizes the magic, creative power itself, in order to build an even stronger delusion about "self" as separate. She returns to her father's home, the house of illusion (the four-horse carriage denotes her purely material nature), and then with her attendants, the thousand and one aggregates that support the complexity of the personal nature, she goes down to the shore. The sea here represents the deep of illusionary matter out of which rises, at the bidding of the false self, the island of delusion, the centre of utter selfishness, once the frail bridge that links it to the mainland of reality is destroyed. The false self dwells in its citadel, and the human soul is bereft. The family laughs at him, though it is the parents' loving laughter at the child's tumbles in his efforts to walk.

Yet Man, though robbed of much of his power by the guile of the false self, still has that aspect of the mind and feeling nature that obeys him (the dog and the cat). With them he sets out for the desert, a state that corresponds to the mystic's "dark night of the soul," when all seems desert and dead. Then come the crows—for the black birds, like the ravens of Odin, symbolize the secret wisdom. Through them comes the knowledge that truth has to be sought in the midst of untruth, that within the very heart of the false self-consciousness is the real Self-awareness.

Man then bids his thought carry his aspirations to search out the talisman. It is of interest to note that thought is the carrier but it is the feeling aspiration that finds the treasure, since feeling is, in its nature, nearer to the real heart of understanding than is intellect. So, too, the dog doubts whether the deed has been really achieved. A high state of consciousness can be attained through aspiration and thought, but, too often, the logical, doubting mind demands assurance that one has really reached that state. The feelings respond, the state is at once lost and one is back where one was before—the magic watch slips into the ocean.

Nevertheless, feeling again comes to the rescue. The cat pounces on the fish. The fish usually symbolizes the Spiritual Principle (whether in the abstract, or embodied in a Spiritual Saviour) and here, as the "father of nine," the fish seems to stand for the topmost point of the Pythagorean decade, involving all, including all. For it is the Spiritual Self that, when strongly called upon, reveals reality once more.

Man finally uses his magic watch (his self-conscious mind) to send the false self, and all that belongs to it, to destruction, and then he returns "home" to the eternal centre of Life, and lives happily in its midst, as an integrated Being of free will, feeling and thought—Jenik in his family, "with his watch and his cat and his dog."

STUDIES IN THE DHAMMAPADA

THE BHIKKHU—V

20. *Rouse your self by your Self, examine your self by your Self. Thus self-guarded and mindful you will live happily, O Bhikkhu. (379)*

21. *For Self is the lord of self; Self is the refuge of self; therefore curb yourself, even as a merchant curbs a fine horse. (380)*

IN BOTH these verses, "the self" is referred to as *atta* or *atma* or soul. It is argued that Buddha denied the existence of abiding substance called the soul or self, which persists through changes that overcome the body; which exists before birth and after death and migrates from one body to another. The question is: How does one explain the continuity of a person through different births, or even through the different states of childhood, youth and old age? Though denying the continuity of an *identical substance* in man, the Buddha does not deny the continuity of the *stream of successive states* that compose his life. Life is considered to be an unbroken series of states: each of these states depends on the condition just preceding and gives rise to the one just succeeding it. The continuity of the life-series is, therefore, based on a causal connection running through the different states. The end-state of this life may cause the beginning of the next. Rebirth is therefore not transmigration, *i.e.*, the migration of the *same soul* into another body; it is the causation of the next life by the present. The conception of soul is thus replaced here by that of an unbroken stream of consciousness. The Present state of consciousness inherits its character from previous one, the past, in a way, continues in the present, through its effect.

In both these verses, he not only affirms the existence of the Soul but also makes the distinction between its two aspects, the higher and the lower, the temporary and the permanent, the ever changing and the unchanging self. The real teaching regarding the nature of Soul or the Ego was given by him only to his initiated

disciples. That is why, when the monk Vacchagotta inquired whether there was or was not an Ego in man, the Buddha remained silent. When his close disciple Ananda asked him for the reason of his silence, his unequivocal answer was:

If I, Ananda, when the wandering monk Vacchagotta asked me: “Is there the Ego?” had answered “The Ego is,” then that, Ananda, would have confirmed the doctrine of the Samanas and Brahmanas, who believed in permanence. If I, Ananda, when the wandering monk Vacchagotta asked me, “Is there not the Ego?” had answered, “The Ego is not,” then that, Ananda, would have confirmed the doctrine of those who believed in annihilation. If I, Ananda, when the wandering monk Vacchagotta asked me, “Is there the Ego?” had answered, “The Ego is,” would that have served my end, Ananda, by producing in him the knowledge: all existences (*dhamma*) are non-ego? But if I, Ananda, had answered, “The Ego is not,” then that, Ananda, would only have caused the wandering monk Vacchagotta to be thrown from one bewilderment to another: “My Ego, did it not exist before? But now it exists no longer!” This shows, better than anything, that Gautama Buddha withheld such difficult metaphysical doctrines from the masses in order not to perplex them more. What he meant was the difference between the personal temporary Ego and the Higher Self, which sheds its light on the imperishable Ego, the spiritual “I” of man. (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 80 fn.)

Thus, the Ego or the Soul or the Self is the reincarnating being; the immortal who carries the results and values of all the different lives lived on earth or elsewhere. But, when it incarnates, it becomes dual. Its lower aspect uses the brain to reason from premises to conclusion. Its higher aspect is heaven aspiring, has affinity for the spiritual principles above, and is intuitional, which knows and does not depend on reason. The lower is purely intellectual and tending downward, to the seat of passions and animal desires.

In *Transactions*, H.P.B. points out that the Higher Manas or Ego is essentially divine, and therefore pure; no stain can pollute it. This being so, it is possible for man to become his own saviour by overcoming the lower self and evil in his nature. He has to examine the lower self in the light of the Higher and curb the lower tendencies and impulses, even as a merchant curbs a fine horse. Left to itself, the horse will follow its own animal nature and instincts. When tamed and trained, it becomes a fine instrument in the hands of a skilled rider. It is precisely because we have this capability of either becoming identified with the personality, its pain and pleasure, or becoming a mere witness that we are free-willed beings. It is for us to control and conquer the lower with the help of the higher and become free from the pairs of opposites to obtain perpetual happiness or *ananda*, which is not dependent on anything external. Our higher nature is eager to help and guide the lower. It is for the lower to turn to the higher for help and guidance, which comes to it as voice of conscience. When it listens to the inner voice and follows it, it begins to speak louder and louder, and leads the man to that stage when he becomes constitutionally incapable of doing wrong.

22. *The Bhikkhu fulfilled of joy and with faith in the teachings of the Buddha attains the state which is conditionless—the Abode of Peace. (381)*

23. *Even a young Bhikkhu who applies to himself the teachings of the Buddha, illuminates this world, like the moon from a cloud released. (382)*

When the Bhikkhu lives the life according to the teachings of the Buddha, he experiences the inner joy and attains to that state in which there is no more wavering. He is on his way to Nirvana—the abode of Peace. Like the moon released from the cloud, his life sheds light, however feeble, inspiring many others to emulate him.

(Concluded)

CHIRANJIVIS—THE SEVEN IMMORTALS

I

THERE ARE seven *Chiranjivis* or Immortal living beings mentioned in Hinduism, who are to remain alive on this earth, through Kali Yuga till its very end. Tradition says that there are seven immortals, at least for the present *Kalpa*, namely, Ashwatthama, Bali, Vyasa, Hanuman, Vibhisana, Kripa and Parashuram. Strictly speaking, the term immortality can be applied to something beginningless and endless, the Self or Atman. Thus, Immortality can never be applied to the personal nature, which has a beginning in time and space; though a portion or essence of it is said to become immortal by attaching itself to the reincarnating Ego or *Atma-Buddhi-Manas* or individuality, which is said to last for a period of *Mahamanvantara*. In Hinduism Immortal does not mean eternal.

Immortality of the physical form is impossible. We have stories in which devotees obtain a boon by propitiating the deity by long penance. All kinds of boons are given, but the boon of immortality is never granted. Daitya king Hiranyakasipu is said to have been slain by Vishnu in his Narasimha Avatar. The legend goes that Hiranyakasipu, the Daitya, who was supposed to have conquered the three worlds, was inflated with pride and self-esteem. He had a very pious son, Prahlad, who was a great devotee of Vishnu. When Prahlad refused to recognize the supremacy of his father, but revered Vishnu as the sovereign of the three worlds, Hiranyakasipu tried his best to kill his son, but every time the son remained unscathed. Upon being told by Prahlad that he was protected by Vishnu who was everywhere and that he was present even in the pillar, Hiranyakasipu struck the pillar, in order to kill Vishnu. Immediately, Vishnu in the form of half-man and half-lion, came forth from the pillar, laid hold of the Daitya king by the thighs with his teeth and tore him up in the middle. Brahma's boon to the Daitya king was that he would not be destroyed by a common animal or man; he

would die neither in the day nor night, and so on—but he did meet his end. Also, there is the account of a demon who attempted to become immortal by swallowing the Vedas, as they escaped from the mouth of Brahma. However, the scriptures were retrieved by the first or *Matsya* Avatar of Vishnu.

Ashwatthama was the son of Dronacharya and Kripa, who was the sister of Kripacharya. Drona was a great warrior and a guru of both Pandavas and Kauravas. After the last great battle between the Kauravas and Pandavas, Ashwatthama with two other warriors, Kripa and Kritavarman, were the sole survivors of the Kaurava host, and Ashwatthama was made the commander. He was keen to avenge the death of his father Drona. These three surviving Kauravas entered the Pandava camp at night and killed the sleeping sons of Pandavas and many other prominent warriors. Those who tried to flee from Ashwatthama's wrath, were hacked down by Kripacharya and Kritavarman at the camp's entrance. He also killed Parikshit, the grandson of Arjuna, and son of Abhimanyu, while he was in his mother, Uttara's womb, by using celestial weapon, *Brahmastra*. It is said that Drona was not supposed to impart the knowledge of *Brahmastra* to Ashwatthama, yet he did so out of paternal affection. However, Ashwatthama could wield the potent missile at will, but could not revoke it. He was thus a person with partial knowledge. He was told by Vyasa that if he did not have the knowledge of revoking the *Brahmastra*, he should channel it to target an isolated point on the planet that was uninhabited by any life form. Being truly evil and spiteful, Ashwatthama directed it to Abhimanyu's unborn son in his wife's womb, to end the Pandava dynasty. For this cowardly act, Ashwatthama was cursed by Krishna. Krishna, however, brought back Parikshit to life.

Shri Krishna cursed him that he will carry the burden of all people's sins on his shoulders and will roam alone like a ghost without getting any love and courtesy for 3000 years. He will have neither any hospitality nor any accommodation; He will be in total isolation from mankind and society; His body will suffer from a host of

incurable diseases forming sores and ulcers that would never heal. Ashwatthama had a gem on his forehead which used to protect the wearer from fear of any snakes, ghosts, demigods and demons. However, Ashwatthama was asked to surrender this gem. Lord Sri Krishna is supposed to have further cursed him that the wound caused by the removal of this gem on his forehead will never heal and he will suffer continually. Thus, Ashwatthama will be in search of death every moment, and yet he will never die. This is looked upon by some as *Prarabdha Karma*, or destiny, which Mr. Judge explains as karma so strong and overpowering that its action cannot be counteracted by other Karma.

We might probably see another aspect of the law of Karma at work, namely, that the Karmic responsibility is in proportion to one's inner development and knowledge. The more the knowledge—of right and wrong—the less will be the “mercy” of the law. Hence, the karmic backlash for such unethical behaviour in case of a warrior like Ashwatthama would be severe. We might look upon it as a warning to future generations that a great warrior's life, bereft of good conduct, is a life given to eternal suffering. His killing the unborn child in the womb using *Brahmastra* shows that in the absence of moral purity, occult powers are likely to be misused. H.P.B. says, “Ashvatthama has gained an *immortality of infamy*.” (*H.P.B. Series No. 35*, p. 43)

Kripa or Kripacharya was the chief priest at the court of Hastinapura and he was one of the teachers of Kauravas in the *Mahabharata*. Kripa is known to be an extraordinary and impartial teacher. He upheld highest standards expected of a teacher. It appears that he told Aswatthama to seek the advice of the elders of his family, and counselled Aswatthama against pursuing his plan. However, ultimately, he was an accomplice in the dastardly act committed by Ashwatthama, and hence, as H.P.B. says, “Kripa's association with Ashwatthama will explain the nature of his immortality.”

Bali or Maha Bali stands out for his valour and his charity—two great eternal qualities. As the legend goes there was a mighty demon

king called Bali who took care of the well-being and prosperity of his people. It is said that he was trying to trap Laxmi and get her to his kingdom from Vaikuntha, in order to bring prosperity exclusively to *his kingdom*. According to another version of the story, the “demon” Bali, curiously enough, is said to have been an exceedingly good and virtuous Daitya King, who defeated Indra, humbled the Gods and extended his sovereignty over the three worlds by his *devotion and penance*. In fact he was a pious and holy ascetic, like many other “demons” in the *Puranas*. The Gods appealed to Vishnu for protection, and the Deity manifested himself in the *Vamana* (Dwarf) *Avatara* in order to restrain Bali, who was conducting a great sacrifice. Bali welcomed this dwarf wholeheartedly and requested him to ask for anything as a sacrificial gift. Vishnu asked him to give him land which he could cover in three strides. When Bali consented, Vishnu assumed a huge form and with the first step he covered the earth, with the second he covered the heavens, and for the third step Bali had to allow Vishnu to put his foot on his head. Thereupon, Vishnu, who is also called *Trivikrama*—the Lord of three strides—became extremely pleased with Bali and he put his foot on Bali's head and pushed him beneath to *Patala*, the nether region, where Bali was given a kingdom exclusively for himself, which Vishnu himself protected. In other words, once you put yourself in correct relationship with the Divine and bow down to it, you are protected. Or, as *The Voice of the Silence* says: “Help Nature and work on with her, and Nature will regard thee as one of her creators and make obeisance.” In *Rig Veda*, Vishnu says that he is the dwarf seated in the centre of all beings.

H.P.B. points out that esoterically, *patala* represents the earth. Moreover, “Bali is not an individual properly speaking. The principle denoted by the name will be known when the esoteric meaning of *Trivikrama Avatar* is better comprehended,” writes H.P.B. (*H.P.B. Series No. 35*, p. 43). According to the popular understanding “Asura” is “A-sura” or “no-god,” but as explained in the *Secret Doctrine*, *Asuras* are divine Egos, *fallen* into matter, or incarnated

in human forms, the Christian myth of “Fallen Angels” having the same significance. The *Archangels* of the Christians and the *Manasaputras* or Solar angels (*Agnishwatta Pitris*) of the Hindus, are all variously termed *Asura* (no-god), because they refused to create men. H.P.B. explains that they were formless and intellectual, and hence they could not build the *form* of man, but they endowed him with *mind*. These rebellious angels, or first mind-born sons of Brahma, who refused to create physical man, were hurled down to Earth. The three strides of Vishnu has been explained thus: “The three strides relate metaphysically to the descent of Spirit into matter, of the Logos falling as a ray into the Spirit, then into the Soul, and finally into the human physical form of man, in which it becomes LIFE” (*S.D.*, I, 113 fn.). *Manas* is conditionally immortal, and the extent to which it become assimilated to the divine nature (*Atma-Buddhi*) it becomes immortal.

Hanuman is the divine monkey chief, a central figure in the great Hindu epic, the *Ramayana*. Hanuman is the child of a nymph by the wind god; accompanied by a host of monkeys, he aided Rama in recovering his wife, Sita, from the demon Ravana. His heroic exploits are many. He acted as Rama’s spy in the midst of the demon’s kingdom; when he was discovered and his tail set on fire, he set fire to Lanka. Hanuman flew to the Himalayas and carried back the mountain of medicinal herbs to revive Laxman, the brother of Rama. He crossed the strait between India and Sri Lanka in one leap. *A Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology and Religion* says that “Hanuman was a grammarian; and the *Ramayana* says, ‘The chief of monkeys is perfect; no one equals him in the sastras, in learning, and in ascertaining the sense of the scriptures. In all sciences, in the rules of austerity, he rivals the preceptor of the gods.’”

Hanuman is considered to exemplify selflessness, courage, devotion, energy, strength and righteous conduct. He stands for the potential that is inherent in all of us. He also represents the air, the atmosphere and thus the life-breath—the *prana*. He is said to have received from Rama the reward of perpetual life and youth.

Cynocephalus is the dog-headed ape, an Egyptian god, and when seen with a reed, or a roll of parchment, he stands for Hermes, the secretary and adviser of Isis, as Hanuman filled the same office with Rama, writes H.P.B. (*S.D.*, I, 388). *The Theosophical Glossary* says that he is an emblem of secret wisdom, as was Hanuman, the monkey-god of India. *Cynocephalus* was to show the way for the Dead to the Seat of Judgement and Osiris. Hanuman is also called *Vayuputra*, son of *Vayu* or air. The *Glossary* mentions that the trinity of mystic gods in the Kosmos, which are closely related to one another are, *Agni* (fire), *Vayu* (air) and *Surya* (Sun). In esoteric interpretation, these three cosmic principles correspond with the three human principles, viz., *Kama* (desire), *Kama-Manas* (lower mind) and *Manas*, the sun of the intellect. “*Hanuman* was neither a human being nor a monkey: it is one of the powers of the 7th principle [*Atman*] of man (Rama),” writes H.P.B.

(To be concluded)

WHATEVER our hands touch, we leave fingerprints!
 On walls, on furniture, on door-knobs, dishes, books.
 There is no escape.
 As we touch we leave our identity.
 Wherever I go today, help me leave heart-prints!
 Heart-prints of compassion, of understanding and Love.
 Heart-prints of kindness and genuine concern.
 May my heart touch a lonely neighbour
 Or a runaway daughter, or an anxious mother,
 Or perhaps, an aged grand-father.
 Send me out today to leave heart-prints.
 And if someone should say, “I felt your touch,”
 May they also sense the love, that is deep within my heart.

—A Book of Inspirations

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: Is there any truth behind exorcism practised by the Catholic Church?

Answer: Exorcism is related to obsession or possession, which is a very old phenomenon. H. P. Blavatsky mentions several cases of obsession and exorcism in her book *Isis Unveiled*. The more passive a person is, the more he becomes suggestible. A time comes when that medium becomes perfectly and completely passive. It is then, as H.P.B. writes, “his own astral body may be benumbed and even crowded out of his physical body, which is then occupied by an elemental [or even the ‘elementary,’ *i.e.*, disincarnate spirit] who proceeds to use it as his own. But too often the cause of the most celebrated crime is to be sought in such possession....Spirits never control persons of positive character who are determined to resist all extraneous influences. The weak and feeble-minded whom they can make their victims they drive into vice,” (*Isis*, I, 490). It can be seen that the disincarnate spirits are those who had always delighted in evil, and now being without a body they take every opportunity to enter someone else’s body to commit the evil acts. In India, one comes across several cases, especially of women, who in the state of religious frenzy claim to have been possessed by some god or goddess. Often they are possessed by only a *devata* or elemental spirit of lower order.

Mr. Judge mentions that in a hypnotized person the relation between the Ego and the astral man is temporarily broken. There is a possibility that during this state astral shell of men and women, who have died, may enter the body and brain and masquerade as

the real person. As a result, the person becomes insane; and many a maniac is simply a body inhabited by an outside entity.

A true exorcist is someone who is able to discern correctly the case of possession or obsession, and is able to drive out the entity. Like the purity of mesmerizer in healing the sick, the purity of the exorcist is emphasized. People like Appollonius, Plotinus, Jesus, Prophecy, etc., had around them an atmosphere of such divine beneficence, created through superhuman morality and sanctity of their lives, that they caused evil spirits to flee before them (*Isis*, I, 487). H.P.B. writes, “These demons seek to introduce themselves into the bodies of the simple-minded and idiots, and remain there until dislodged therefrom by a powerful and *pure* will. Jesus, Apollonius, and some of the apostles, had the power to cast out devils, by purifying the atmosphere *within* and *without* the patient, so as to force the unwelcome tenant to flight.”

As for the exorcism practised by Catholic Church, or so-called *tantriks*, in the absence of purity and wisdom, more harm can result instead of cure, because often mental illness may be mistaken for obsession or possession. The Hollywood film “The Exorcism of Emily Rose” released in the year 2005 was based on the life of a 22-year-old girl, Anneliese Michel, who was suffering from epilepsy and prone to seizures. Two local priests tried to exorcise her for 10 months, but the girl died in 1975, weighing only 31 kilos, as she was denied food and water during the exorcism. A *Newsweek* article (October 24, 2005) mentioned that according to the Italian Association of Psychiatrists and Psychologists, half a million Italians seek exorcism each year. There have been several deaths outside of Italy from exorcisms gone wrong around the world. For instance, in Romania, when a novice nun who was being medically treated for schizophrenia, complained of hearing voices, a priest and four nuns, killed her in the process of exorcising by tying her to a wooden cross and gagging her with a holy vestment. Thus, it is very important for an exorcist to be able to distinguish the psychological and pathological ailments, from possession by an entity.

Question: What is the difference between a Theosophist, an Occultist, an Adept and a Mystic?

Answer: The term “Theosophist” is used quite indifferently, and often made applicable to a mere student of Theosophy. A person who becomes an associate of the United Lodge of Theosophists does not become worthy of the title of “theosophist” just because he attends the meetings and studies the philosophy of Theosophy. A student of Theosophy is not necessarily a “Theosophist.” H.P.B. says, “Theosophist is, who Theosophy does.” In that sense, a person who may not have heard of the word “Theosophy,” may still be called Theosophist if he genuinely strives to *practice* Theosophy. A true Theosophist must put in practice the loftiest moral ideal, must strive to realize his unity with the whole of the humanity, and work ceaselessly for others, writes H.P.B.

A Theosophist is one who has made Theosophy a living power in his life. The theosophical teachings, read but not applied, will not be able to guide us in the time of need. In *Raja-Yoga or Occultism*, we have a very comprehensive definition of a Theosophist: “Any person of average intellectual capacities, and a leaning toward the metaphysical; of pure unselfish life, who finds more joy in helping his neighbour than in receiving help himself; one who is ever ready to sacrifice his own pleasures for the sake of other people; and who loves Truth, Goodness and Wisdom for their own sake, not for the benefit they may confer—is a Theosophist.”

H.P.B. mentions in *The Key to Theosophy* that a Theosophist need not be an Occultist, but no one can be a true Occultist without being a real Theosophist; otherwise he may only become a black magician—conscious or unconscious. The word “occult” means hidden or secret. When a person comes to possess the knowledge of secret potency of things in nature, and is able to cultivate hidden powers latent in man, he becomes, in a sense, an occultist. In the absence of purity of motive and moral nature, he can misuse his powers to harm others or for selfish purposes, and thus he can become a dangerous enemy of the world. For instance, the knowledge of

mesmerism and hypnotism is only one of the minor branches of occultism, and a person possessing the power of hypnotism can do almost anything with it. He may make a man commit a crime. A true occultist is aware of the philosophic rationale underlying the powers of mesmerism, hypnotism, clairvoyance, etc. If a Theosophist tries to practice these powers without the knowledge of its rational basis, on blind faith, then he may tend towards mediumship, even if he may be practising highest code of ethics. An occultist in the truest sense is the one who possesses *Atma-Vidya* or the knowledge of the real nature of things or Wisdom. In *Raja-Yoga or Occultism* H.P.B. mentions that one who strives to become an occultist puts himself on the path which leads to the knowledge of what is good to do, as also the spiritual discrimination between good and evil. He is able to acquire such power through which he can do the good he desires, often without even apparently lifting of a finger.

An Adept is both a Theosophist and an Occultist, on his way to attaining complete perfection. People, who might have devoted themselves to the service of mankind and the pursuit of knowledge, are known as disciples or chelas. There are several degrees of disciples, so that some of them might possess so much power and knowledge as to seem to the ordinary people to be Adepts. They have gained through discipline and knowledge, certain powers, and yet they are not the Masters or *Mahatmas*. A *Mahatma* is a perfected being, a Great Soul, and much more than an Adept. The word Adept signifies proficiency. We speak of a person being proficient in music, or mathematics or dancing, etc. So also, an Adept is one who has proficiency in one or more branches of occult science.

Mysticism may be defined as the rising of an individual soul to awareness wherein it sees itself identical with the Universal Whole and bows in reverence to THAT. Today, mysticism has degenerated into psychic emotionalism. For a mystic, the world of spiritual life has as much reality as the material world of everyday affairs, and he tries to integrate both worlds by his life and thought.

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Animals possess capacity to heal themselves. When dogs have stomach problem they eat grass and then vomit. After that they rest for a while, and are fit again. A dog would catch his own tail and move round and round in circles, to relieve himself of stress and anxiety. Left to themselves, animals and birds do not have access to high-end medical care, yet they remain more or less healthy as long as they live. Animals living in the wild have been found to be much healthier than those living in captivity, or as pets. On the other hand human beings report large number of diseases. Can we perhaps take a cue from the animals and learn what they do to stay healthy?

Dr. Silloo Bhagvagar, a veterinarian and founder of NGO (Non-Government Organization) called PALS (Plants and Animal Welfare Society) says that animals do suffer from infections and wounds but they do not interfere mentally with their problems. Unlike human beings they do not bother about insults or financial losses and do not connect one problem with the other. Dr. Shally Jalali, Veterinary Surgeon at Dr. Batra's Pet Care Hospital, Delhi, says that animals in the wild have a peculiar affinity towards certain herbs and plants and their well developed sensory system enables them to identify and use natural healing resources in the environment. For instance, a pregnant African elephant kept her regular dietary habits all through her pregnancy, but changed her routine abruptly towards the end of her term. She went a long distance, in search of a plant (a member of borage family), and chewed and ate the bark and leaves of that bush, and gave birth a few days later. The plant was eaten to induce her labour which is also known to be brewed by Kenyan women to make a labour inducing tea. It was observed that only sick Chimpanzees of Tanzania eat bristly leaves of *Aspilia*, and also peel the stems and eat the pith of the *Vernonia* plant, which are known to be Tanzanian folk medicine for stomach upsets and fevers. Some species of South American parrots and macaw, whose diet of fruit seeds contain toxins, were seen to eat soil with high kaolin content,

which tends to absorb the toxins and carry them out of the birds' digestive system.

Prolonged observations of animals have led the researchers to conclude that animals have access to the world's largest pharmacy, *i.e.*, nature herself. This research has thrown light on natural ways of healing and given birth to the emerging science of *Zoopharmacognosy*. It is believed that folk remedies have come from noticing which plants animals eat when they are sick. "The more we align ourselves to nature, listen to our bodies, and live in harmony with our animal friends, the less we will have to depend on chemicals to heal our bodies," writes Shivi Verma. (*Life Positive*, April 2014)

Disease indicates that we have broken some law of hygiene. If we live according to the laws of hygiene then we would be free from diseases. The savages or the Red Indians knew nothing of the advanced healing techniques but they had remarkably healthy bodies. What made them healthy was their mode of life—because they lived naturally. It is our modes of thought that make us take up unhealthy modes of life. When disease is caused by deficiency of some chemical or element, by supplying that element we may be able to restore the organ to its natural condition. Diseases caused by wrong habits can be cured by correcting the habits. The body has its own immunizing power if left alone, writes Mr. Crosbie.

Animals have instinct. "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. But human beings have intuition or gut feeling, which is higher than instinct, and it is direct cognition of truth in all things. Ancients intuitively knew the cure of a disease. "The explorers of old medical literature, from the time of Hippocrates to that of Paracelsus and Van Helmont, will find a vast number of well-attested physiological and psychological facts and of measures or medicines for healing the sick which modern physicians superciliously refuse

to employ,” writes H.P.B. (*Isis*, I, 20). H.P.B. mentions that Yogis of olden times and modern lamas use a certain ingredient with little sulphur mixed with a milky juice of certain medicinal plant, and heal the most rebellious wounds and restore broken bones without surgery. When H.P.B. had contracted a fearful fever, when she was near Rangoon, she was cured in few hours, by the juice of a plant named *Kukushan*, by a simple mendicant. “No country in the world can boast of more medicinal plants than Southern India, Cochin, Burmah, Siam, and Ceylon. European physicians—according to time-honoured practice—settle the case of professional rivalry, by treating the native doctors as quacks and empirics, but this does not prevent the latter from being often successful in cases in which eminent graduates of British and French schools of Medicine have signally failed,” writes H.P.B. (*Isis*, II, 621 and fn.)

Most of us try to avoid what we dislike and go after what we like. We seem to waste a lot of vital energy in the vacillations of the mind which swings away from what it does not like and swings towards what it likes. So long as we are caught up in likes and dislikes, in strong opinions and rigid habits, we cannot know real peace or security. We are elated when things go our way, and depressed when they do not go our way. A person who is free from likes and dislikes, and rigid habits and opinions, is able to see clearly without the distorting medium of strong opinions, and can respond to people as they are and not as they imagine them to be. When a person says, “I am going to do this because I like it, and I am not going to do that because I do not like it,” he really seems to be saying that he is bound, and that he has no choice. One who overcomes likes and dislikes is able to master life. People with strong likes and dislikes find life very difficult, because they cannot bend and if compelled to bend, they would only break, because they have

become so rigid, as if they have only one bone.

In our days, we witness rigidity setting in at a very early age. A certain student would not start eating, in the college canteen or restaurant, until he had arranged his chair, plates, bowls, napkin, spoons and glass in a particular way. When we go through life having to have everything just right before we can function, we will find it difficult to adjust, to be resilient, and to accept any change at all. We should all cultivate precious quality of resilience, so that after being knocked down by life, we could spring back, like the Japanese daruman doll with a rounded base, which is weighted in a such a way that no matter how long you hold it down, it jumps back, as soon as the hand is removed. People who cannot bend and adjust get uprooted like the big trees that are uprooted and carried away by the mighty currents of river Ganges as she flows down from the Himalayas, while the tall grasses and reeds that do not resist are left intact, writes Eknath Easwaran. (*The Speaking Tree, Sunday Times of India*, March 23, 2014)

We create attachment and consequently karmic bondage by our likes and dislikes. To a student-aspirant who wanted to change place in order to do theosophical work, Mr. Judge wrote, “We do not change ourselves by moving the body to another *locus*. We only put it under a different influence. And in order to change we must have got to dislike the place we moved from. That is *attachment by opposites*, and that will produce detriment, as does all that disturbs the equilibrium of the soul.” To “turn away in horror” from a vice is not detachment. When we love vice or anything, it seizes on us by attachment, but even when we hate or dislike a thing or a person we create a karmic link with it. When we turn in horror from the bad, even though we may feel sad and charitable, then in future life, we will develop that vice by reincarnating into a body and place, where we will be compelled to go through that very thing we now hate, writes Mr. Judge and advises that we should neither like nor dislike vice, but try to *understand* it. Not only when we love someone but also when we hate someone, we may be thrown into a closer relation

with that person in the next life, say, as a wife, husband, brother, son, etc.

We are able to rise above likes and dislikes by cultivating adaptability. “The first test of an earnest aspirant, the first manifestation of descending Karma on his head, is always around this quality—Adaptability. Adaptability is a very rare virtue in Occultism; in a subtle way our likes and dislikes work havoc and we fail to practice and to realize that co-disciples, co-workers and co-students *have* to march forward together. To adapt oneself to one’s teacher means conquest of doubt in the first place and of despair in the second instance. . . . Then the person has to learn to be adaptable to his co-learners and co-servers,” writes Shri B. P. Wadia.

We could experience real happiness only when we cease to oscillate between likes and dislikes. To grow above likes and dislikes means to have cultivated equanimity or *Upekkha*. The Buddhists say that it is only after we have learnt to appreciate joys and sorrows of others that we are ready to practice equanimity. The quality of patient understanding will slowly inculcate the feeling of equanimity. We are warned to be careful so that *Upekkha* or equanimity does not degenerate into cold, hardened and fixed indifference, or, lukewarmness and lack of interest.

How smart are Dolphins? Ever since Ancient Greece, these marine predators have been held in high esteem for their friendliness and intelligence. In 1955, John Lilly, a neuro-anatomist, after examining the freshly harvested brains of half a dozen bottlenose dolphins, concluded that these fish-shaped aquatic mammals have huge brains, even bigger than human brains, and hence must possess an intelligence to rival our own. But research has since then showed that the conclusion, the bigger the brain, the smarter the animal, is not true because crows, octopuses and even insects have all demonstrated feats of brain power comparable to those of dolphins,

even when they do not possess nearly as much grey matter. The Encephalization Quotient (EQ) is a measure of how large an animal’s brain is compared to what you would expect for its body size. Humans have the largest EQ of 7, with brains seven times larger than one would expect for their body size. Dolphins come second with EQ of 5. The relationship between body and brain size can indicate some but not all forms of intelligence. Large EQs are found to correlate with the ability to cope with new environments or the ability to produce diverse behaviour, but it is not related to tool use or imitative ability.

Dolphins have a cortex that is larger than the human cortex, but it is not “frontal cortex” which in some animals such as chimpanzees, gorillas and elephants have been thought to be responsible for mirror self-recognition skills. However, magpies, which can also recognise themselves in mirrors, do not have a cortex at all. Another enigma surrounding the dolphins is their complex communication system, in which they would often call out to each other, using whistles. In some dolphin species each individual has its own signature whistle that it will use throughout its life, and that might serve as a “name.” It is believed that dolphins have big brains because they are socially complex animals. However, small-brained insects have been found to be very intelligent, and hence “simply having a big brain is no guarantee that an animal will display intelligence,” says Dr. John E. Bradford, president of SpaceWorks Engineering. What is intelligence? Is it really possible to compare the cognitive abilities of completely different species? Most scientists studying animal behaviour do not like to define intelligence, as we cannot reduce diversity of animal cognitive skills to a single standard that allows us to compare different species, writes Justin Gregg, a researcher at the Dolphin Communication Project and the author of *Are Dolphins Really Smart?* (*BBC Knowledge*, April 2014)

Theosophy teaches that brain is the instrument of the mind. In the evolutionary journey, there was a point when man’s mind was latent, just as it is latent in animals, plants and other lower kingdoms.

The mind of man was activated or lighted up only when the brain of man was of much better and deeper capacity than that of any other animal. The tribes of savages, such as South-Sea Islanders, Bushmen of Africa, the Veddhas of Ceylon and the Australian aborigines, whose reasoning powers are only a little above the level of the animals, are termed “narrow-brained.” H.P.B. mentions that narrow-brained did not imply skulls of a smaller volume. It would be absurd to judge intellectual capacity of a man according to his cranial capacity because it has been found that skulls of the stone period, as well as those of African Races (Bushman included) show that they are above rather than below the average of the brain capacity of the modern man (*S.D.*, II, 168 and fn.). The brain is the organ of the soul, and that organ must change its quality in accordance to the use and misuse it had been subjected to by the soul. H.P.B. approvingly quotes G. T. Ladd, the author of *The Elements of Physiological Psychology*, who says, “All attempts to account for the orderly increase in complexity and comprehensiveness of the mental phenomena by tracing the physical evolution of the brain are wholly unsatisfactory to many minds. We have no hesitation in classing ourselves among this number.” (*Raja-Yoga or Occultism*, p. 68)

Brain is not the cause of mind. In fact, the depth and variety of brain convolutions are caused by the presence of the mind. The Ego, though all-knowing, will not be able to use the brain to its full capacity unless it has experience. For instance, savages have good brain capacity, but the Ego is not mature and experienced to use it to its highest capacity. It is like asking two people to use computers. One who has mere working knowledge can only use it as a typewriter or calculator, while the one who has experience and has knowledge of computers, can utilize it better. It is only when the Ego has passed through various experiences of life and learnt from them that it acquires the power to utilize the brain to its full capacity.