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सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

## THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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### WHY ALTRUISM?

ALTRUISM is defined as the moral practice of concern for the happiness of other human beings. The word “altruism” is derived from Latin *alteri*, meaning “other people,” or “somebody else.” In its broader and deeper aspect, it is a willingness to do things that benefits another individual, either directly or indirectly, even if it results in disadvantage for oneself, and without the expectation of reciprocity or compensation for the same. In that sense altruism becomes a synonym for selflessness which is the opposite for selfishness. As an ethical doctrine altruism implies that individuals are morally obliged to benefit others, which is normally taken to be an antonym of *egoism*, which emphasizes concern for one’s own needs or self-centredness.

On the scale of altruism, there are those few who are extremely self-centred, while on the other end there are a rare few who are willing to risk their lives, even for strangers. Most of us fall into the middle area wherein besides helping our family and friends, we occasionally extend help and kindness to others. “At the very base of your nature you will find faith, hope and love,” says *Light on the Path*. Since altruism has its roots in love and compassion, we might say altruism is innate in all of us, often obscured by certain adverse experiences in life or too much materialism.

Philanthropy is a form of altruism. The word philanthropy is derived from the Ancient Greek term *philanthropia* which means

“love of humanity,” and Plutarch used the Greek concept of *philanthropia* to describe superior human beings. Normally, philanthropy is equated with the donation of money or material things for the betterment of humanity, but in its deeper aspect, it ranks higher than charity. Charity focuses on eliminating the suffering caused by social problems, while true philanthropy focuses on eliminating social problems.

“Theosophists are of necessity the friends of all those movements in the world, whether intellectual or simply practical, for the amelioration of the condition of mankind,” writes H.P.B. But we must not lose sight of the fact that man is not just his body, nor just his mind, but something more. Mr. Judge observes that the physical woes of the race are only skin-deep; the real cause of these woes is mental and moral. It has been observed that in the last few years, the usual problems of poverty, lower life expectancy, malnutrition, etc., are not so much a cause for concern as mental and moral problems.

Today, the majority of people going to a psychiatrist are not “sick” in a conventional sense. According to Dr. Erich Fromm, “They complain of being depressed, having insomnia, being unhappy in their marriages, not enjoying their work, and any number of similar problems.” What they really suffer from, says Dr. Fromm, “is an inner deadness. They live in the midst of plenty and are joyless.” Another psychiatrist, Viktor Frankl, writes, “Ever more people today have the means to live, but no meaning to live for.”

The first object of Theosophy is the formation of a nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood. Theosophical philosophy seeks to show that every being in its essential nature is a fragment of the divine, thus there is unity among beings on the spiritual plane. Also, “humanity is a great Brotherhood by virtue of the sameness of the material from which it is formed physically and morally.” However, it is necessary to realize this intellectually by every human being because only then it is possible to build a nucleus of universal brotherhood, which in turn can lead to the physical as well as moral

betterment of humanity. “The first object means philanthropy,” writes Mr. Judge, which must include, besides physical charity, every effort to understand Theosophical philosophy and cultivate the ability to expound the teachings in a way that can be understood by the ordinary person. In doing that each student becomes a wider philanthropist by nourishing the inner man or the thinking being with the right philosophy. Moreover, good works are necessary but these cannot be performed in the right manner without knowledge.

In the article, “Let Every Man Prove His Own Work,” H.P.B. writes, “without good works the spirit of brotherhood would die in the world; and this can never be. Therefore, is the double activity of learning and doing most necessary; we have to do good, and we have to do it *rightly*, with knowledge.” According to her, the practical implication of forming the nucleus of universal brotherhood has been expressed in these words:

“He who does not practise altruism; he who is not prepared to share his last morsel with a weaker or poorer than himself; he who neglects to help his brother man, of whatever race, nation, or creed, whenever and wherever he meets suffering, and who turns a deaf ear to the cry of human misery; he who hears an innocent person slandered, whether a brother theosophist or not, and does not undertake his defence as he would undertake his own—is no Theosophist.” (*Lucifer*, November 1887)

In the third chapter of the *Gita* we read about three classes or modes of action—the action rooted in desire and passion, *i.e.*, the *kamic* action; the action which is the performance of duty for the sake of duty, as an obligation—that which we call *dharma*-action; and then there is sacrificial action, or *Yagna*-action. Altruism can be cultivated only by entirely eliminating *kamic* action, which can be a step towards overcoming self-centredness. The other two types, *Dharma* and *Yagna* (sacrificial) actions, should go hand in hand. *Dharma* should be performed as *yagna* action. Generally, we distinguish between evil and good, but there is also a need to distinguish between good and spiritual action.

## WHY ALTRUISM?

The evil action is rooted in *kama*, the lower nature, and takes man away from his Higher Self into the world of delusion, separation, and division. The good action is rooted in the idea of the performance of duty, or fulfilment of one's obligations. But unless we begin to offer those duties as sacrifices, we cannot become spiritual. The Good man performing his "duties as duties," is very different from the spiritual man performing those self-same duties, because, whereas the duties do not change, the attitude in which they are performed changes. The three types of actions are respectively related to the selfish man, the unselfish man and the selfless man. True altruism involves learning to perform our actions as sacrifices, and set such an example so as to change the mind and heart of the race. We see this in the case of Great Masters of Wisdom who do not go about giving wealth or possessions, nor do they go about bestowing knowledge and wisdom, but extend their helping hand and offer it only to those who deserve it. Thus, it is not giving outwardly which is a sign of true altruism but regenerating our own selves, and thereby offering the means and way for every human being to do the same, writes Shri B. P. Wadia.

Thus, "true" altruism takes us a step closer to the divine within. Therefore, when we help others with the expectation of return or for gratitude or for earning karmic merit, we do not take a step closer to the divine. We forget that we are indebted to many beings for our existence. Manu in his ordinances enjoins five sacrifices (*Yajnas*) which must be performed every day by each one of us to pay up the debt we owe to various beings. The five sacrifices are: sacrifice to the supreme (*Brahma yajna*), sacrifice to our progenitors (*Pitri yajna*), sacrifice to the gods (*Deva yajna*), sacrifice to the lower kingdoms of nature (*Bhuta yajna*) and sacrifice to mankind (*Nara yajna*). Therefore, in a sense, through our charitable actions, we are but paying up our debt to various beings. Moreover, help given to others with the expectation of reward, return or earning merit or *punya*, keeps us bound to the wheel of birth and death.

The Sanskrit term for altruism is *paropkar* and consists of two

terms: *para* and *upakar*. *Para* means another or other, and *upakar* means favour or benevolence. Swami Shri Savitanandji observes that Shri Krishna says in the *Gita*, “I am the Ego seated in the hearts of all beings.” Elsewhere in the *Gita*, he says that He pervades the entire universe. Thus, in a spiritual context, if we are all fragments of the divine in our essential nature then we are all one, and no one is separate from us. How can we then confer a favour on “another” when there is no “other”? Everything and every creature is essentially divine. Therefore, let us learn to regard each being as an expression of the divine, and extend our help as *seva* rather than as a favour, which will bring about the purification of mind and heart, writes Swamiji. In the article, “Theosophic Diet,” Mr. Judge emphasizes this point by saying that the inner nature subsists on our thoughts and motives. If these are low, gross or selfish, it is equivalent to feeding it upon gross food. Therefore, the health and purity of the inner man depend upon unselfish thoughts and deeds, untiring devotion to the welfare of the “great orphan Humanity,” or altruism. It is these very qualities which endows one with the necessary stamina to lift his lower nature above and beyond the dead level of the world. Steady upward progress, almost without slipping down, is difficult for most of us. A “few are strong enough to keep up the never-ceasing strain. Time alone, and many ages of service can give them the strength,” writes Mr. Judge. (*Letters That Have Helped Me*, p. 94)

True altruism is *seva*. *Seva* is a *Sanskrit* word, which means “*selfless* service” or work performed without any thought of reward or repayment, which helps one’s spiritual growth. True altruism leads to an appreciation of oneness and deepens one’s compassion. “Altruism is an integral part of self-development,” says H.P.B. We are able to understand this if we refer to the words of a Philaletheian, quoted by H.P.B.: “For every flower of love and charity he plants in his neighbour’s garden, a loathsome weed will disappear from his own, and so this garden of the gods—Humanity—shall blossom as a rose” (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 53, Indian Edition). A little

reflection shows that this seemingly simple injunction is the most difficult of application. Is it easy to love others, or even feel goodwill towards them, by overlooking their faults and weaknesses? But when we are determined to be kind and loving to another person, who, say, is greedy, dishonest, or a liar, we are forced to make some inner adjustment and overcome in us the aversion for greed or dishonesty or lying. At a minor level, perhaps, we are applying the principle: “Don’t hate vice; don’t love vice, but understand it.” Thus, love for another helps us to get rid of a “loathsome weed” of our own vices and weaknesses, leading thereby to morally good and even sacrificial actions.

H.P.B. seems to equate true altruism with self-sacrifice, which she defines as “the giving to others *more* than to oneself.” She gives an example of Father Damien and Sister Rose Gertrude. Father Damien, a young man of thirty, went to Leper Island of Molokai, and lived with the lepers for eighteen years, to alleviate their suffering. He finally contracted the loathsome disease and died. He did not die in vain. “He has given relief and relative happiness to thousands of miserable wretches. He has brought to them consolation, mental and physical. He threw a streak of light into the black and dreary night of an existence, the hopelessness of which is unparalleled in the records of human suffering. He was a *true Theosophist*, and his memory will live for ever in our annals” (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 236 ). Sister Rose Gertrude, says H.P.B., is not only a great and saintly heroine but also a *spiritual mystery*. She gave up comfort and security of home and family to perform a work of great heroism, knowing full well that she would not be able to save these lepers from death and suffering, but only soothe and alleviate their moral and physical tortures. It is Compassion which drives individuals like Father Damien and Sister Gertrude as if by whispering day and night, “Can there be bliss when there are men who suffer?” “The young heroine, like her noble predecessor, Father Damien, is a true Theosophist in daily life and practice,” writes H.P.B. (*Lucifer*, February 1890)

## WHY ALTRUISM?

Unless there is a pure motive of benefitting humanity, for those treading spiritual path, it is very easy to wander away into by-lanes, lured by psychic powers. Even if one succeeds in acquiring *psychic powers*, in the absence of altruism, one is likely to misuse those powers and fall into black magic. On the other hand, the acquirement of spiritual powers requires the development of altruism of the highest order. For instance, the necessary condition for the development of “the power to know” or “intuition with certainty,” is, “the actual practice of altruism in deed, word, and thought; for that practice purifies the covers of the soul and permits that light to shine down into the brain-mind” (*Vernal Blooms*, p. 190). The same applies to the development of spiritual clairvoyance. “Spiritual sight comes only to those who are pure, devoted, and firm...and only after discipline, long training, and the highest altruism.” (*The Ocean of Theosophy*, pp. 151-52)

Hence the emphasis on altruism: “For real Theosophy is ALTRUISM, and we cannot repeat it too often. It is brotherly love, mutual help, unswerving devotion to Truth. If once men do but realize that in these alone can true happiness be found, and never in wealth, possessions, or any selfish gratification, then the dark clouds will roll away, and a new humanity will be born upon earth. Then, the GOLDEN AGE will be there, indeed,” says H.P.B. (*Lucifer*, May 1889)

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YOUR morning thoughts may determine your conduct for the day. Optimistic thoughts will make your day bright and productive, while pessimistic thinking will make it dull and wasteful. Face each day cheerfully, smilingly and courageously, and it will naturally follow that your work will be a real pleasure and progress will be a delightful accomplishment.

—WILLIAM M. PECK



## FOOD FOR THOUGHT THE COMING RACE—I

THE COMING RACE is a novel by the British author Edward Bulwer-Lytton, published anonymously in 1871. It has also been published as *Vril, the Power of the Coming Race*. The novel centres on a young, independent, unnamed, wealthy traveller, the narrator of the story, who visits a friend, a mining engineer. They explore a natural chasm in a mine, opening into a newly dug shaft, which they decide to explore. The narrator reaches the bottom of the shaft safely, but the rope breaks and his friend is killed. As the narrator explores further, he comes across the entrance to an underground world occupied by humanoid beings, who seem to him to resemble angels—tall, beautiful and winged. He befriends the first being he meets, who takes him on a tour through this underground world. The buildings there remind the narrator of ancient Egyptian architecture. The narrator meets his guide's wife, his daughter Zee, and his son, Tae.

The narrator learns from them that the Vril-ya are descendants of the human beings that belonged to a civilization called Ana that flourished before the catastrophic flood, which appears to be a pre-Biblical flood. We read: "According to the chronology of these people...it must have been many thousands of years before the time of Noah." Originally, they were inhabitants of the Earth but they fled underground thousands of years ago to escape a massive flood and gained greater power by facing and dominating the harsh conditions of the Earth. They live in networks of caverns linked by tunnels. The place where the narrator descended houses 12,000 families, which constitutes one of the largest groups.

Among the powerful tools developed by them is an "all-permeating fluid" called "Vril." It is a latent source of energy that can be mastered by the spiritually advanced among them through the training of their will. The mastery over the fluid gives them access to an extraordinary force that can be controlled at will. It is

this fluid that the Vril-ya employ to communicate with the narrator. The powers of the Vril include the ability to heal, change and destroy beings and things. The destructive powers, in particular, are so immense that they would enable its users to destroy entire cities if necessary. We read: “If army met army, and both had command of this agency, it could be but to the annihilation of each. The age of war was therefore gone,” echoing the concept of Mutual Assured Destruction, which is the principle of deterrence founded on the notion that a nuclear attack by one superpower would be met with an overwhelming nuclear counterattack such that both the attacker and the defender would be annihilated. Even before the invention of nuclear weapons, the English author Wilkie Collins wrote in 1870: “I begin to believe in only one civilizing influence—the discovery one of these days of a destructive agent so terrible that War shall mean annihilation and men’s fears will force them to keep the peace.”

According to Zee, Vril can be changed into the mightiest agency over all types of matter, both animate and inanimate. It can destroy like lightning or replenish life, heal or cure. It is used to cut ways through solid matter. Its light is said to be steadier, softer and healthier than that from any flammable material. It can also be used as a power source for animating mechanisms. Vril can be harnessed by the use of the Vril staff or mental concentration. The Vril staff is about the size of a walking stick but can be lengthened or shortened. These staffs are hollow rods with “several stops, keys or springs by which its force can be altered, modified, or directed—so that by one process it destroys by another it heals....When used for special purposes, the upper part rests in the hollow of the palm with the fore and middle fingers protruded.” The appearance and function of the Vril staff differs according to gender, age, etc. For instance, a staff used by a child is said to be much simpler than the one used by a sage. Likewise, in the staff used by a female—a mother or a wife—the destructive part is removed while the healing aspects are emphasized.

We are able to see the power of Vril when the narrator goes along with a very young boy to hunt and finds that he is able to kill

a one-hundred-foot reptile with ease using the power of Vril. The boy also controls his mind through the power of Vril, which he describes as: “All power of volition left me. Submissive to the infant’s gesture, I followed him.” By touching him, the boy is able to control his mind and then uses him as bait to kill a giant creature, which he accomplishes easily through the power of Vril. “The fire lodged in the hollow of a rod directed by the hand of a child could shatter the strongest fortress.”

When Zee begins to explain what Vril is, the narrator says, “I understood very little....I should call it electricity, except that it comprehends in its manifold branches other forces of nature, to which, in our scientific nomenclature, differing names are assigned, such as magnetism, galvanism, etc.”

The “Wings” of the Vril-ya are another technological innovation. Every member of the Vril-ya society wears a pair of Vril-powered wings. The host gives a demonstration to the narrator of how it works. He “slowly expanded his pinions. I observed that his garment beneath them became dilated as a bladder that fills with air. The arms seemed to slide into the wings, and in another moment he had launched himself into the luminous atmosphere, and hovered there, still, and with outspread wings...” They also have robotic servants or vril-powered automata that perform all the menial work. “In all service, whether in or out of doors, they make great use of automaton figures, which are so ingenious, and so pliant to the operations of vril, that they actually seem gifted with reason.”

Men, called “An” and women called “Gy” in Vril-ya’s language have equal rights. The women are stronger and larger than men, and they also pursue romantic relationships. They marry for just three years, after which the men choose whether to remain married, or be single. The female may then pursue a new husband. However, they seldom make the choice to remarry.

The Vril-ya believe in the permanence of life, which according to them is not destroyed but merely changes form. The narrator, who is impressed by the Vril-ya, begins to adopt their clothing and

customs. Zee falls in love with the narrator but he will be at risk if she proposes to him, as society will not approve of Vril-ya woman marrying an inferior specimen. However, when Zee tells her father, he orders Tae to kill the narrator. When Zee comes to know about it, she leads the narrator to the chasm by which he had entered the Vril-ya world. The narrator, on returning to the surface, warns the people on the Earth that one day when the Vril-ya will run out of space underground, they will return to the surface of the Earth, destroying mankind in the process, if necessary.

*The Coming Race*, considered to be one of the first science-fiction novels as well as one of the first lost world novels, was preceded by Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* and Jules Verne's *Journey to the Centre of the Earth*. When *The Time Machine* by H. G. Wells was published in 1895, *The Guardian* wrote in its review that the influence of the author of *The Coming Race* on other contemporary authors was still powerful. There were stories describing the peoples and their customs in imaginary worlds, sometimes in the stars above, sometimes in the unknown continents and sometimes below the waters under the earth, and *The Time Machine* was the latest in that list.

In *The Theosophist* magazine (November 1879) concerning Bulwer-Lytton H.P.B. writes that his "memory will ever be dear and sacred to the heart of every true Theosophist." Bulwer-Lytton, the author of *Zanoni*, *A Strange Story*, *The Coming Race*, and *The House and the Brain*, "ranked higher than any other in the small number of genuine mystical writers, for he knew what he was talking about, which is more than can be said of other writers in this department of literature," and by that probably she means literature dealing with the occult. Elsewhere she observes that his work *Zanoni* that deals with tests and trials of chelaship, "will ever be prized by the occultist; while in his *Strange Story* he has with equal power shown the black side of occult research and its deadly perils."

There is no doubt that Bulwer-Lytton did not invent but discovered vril as well as the underground civilization of the Vril-

ya. The author also seems to explore the concept of evolution and in writing about the civilization of Vril-ya he is trying to show that among human beings there exist and have existed superior human beings or superhumans. Theosophy agrees with Professor Huxley who asserts that just as the intelligence of human beings exceeds that of the black beetle, so also, there must be beings in the universe whose intelligence exceeds our intelligence. According to Theosophy there exist not only advanced civilizations but there are beings known as Masters, Elder Brothers, Adepts, and Sages, who possess perfect knowledge and powers, and take an active part in the government of the natural order of things. Such beings were once human but through training and experience reached perfection on some other worlds.

Theosophy teaches about races of human beings that existed in the far back past, who were superior to our race in knowledge and powers. Our present humanity is described as the Fifth Race Aryans. The Third Race was called the Lemurian Race while the Fourth Race people are called the Atlanteans. The huge statues at Easter Island are reminders of giants of early races. Ancient Greeks believed in giants—Pelops, Atlas, the Cyclops and the Titans are some of the mythic heroes, supposed to be of gigantic stature.

The Fourth Race Atlanteans of the later period are renowned for their magic powers and wickedness, as also their ambition and defiance of gods. H.P.B. points out that no one can fail to recognize the Atlanteans of *The Secret Doctrine* in Ravana and the Rakshasas of Lanka. It is from the Fourth Race that the early Aryans got their knowledge of wonderful things. One of them is the Mayasabha mentioned in the *Mahabharata*, which was built by Mayasur, an Atlantean, for the Pandavas. The chronology and computations of Brahmin Initiates are based on the works of that great astronomer and magician, Asurmaya, who was also an Atlantean. The Aryans learnt from the Atlanteans the aeronautics or *Viman Vidya*, and so also their great arts of meteorography and meteorology.

A few wise men among the Atlanteans were saved from the

cataclysm, and they became forefathers of the Fifth Race. We are in the fifth subrace of the Fifth Root Race and this race has been in existence for one million years. The Sixth subrace is being formed on the American Continent, which is described as the crucible or refining pot where men and women of every race are found to be living together and attacking problems of life together. A process of amalgamation is going on so that in the course of many generations there will be produced on the American continents, an entirely new (sub) race—with new bodies, new powers of the mind, curious and unheard of psychic and physical powers. The transition from one Root Race to the next or one subrace to the next is very gradual and there is always the overlapping of the races.

In his lecture on *The Action of Natural Selection on Man*, Mr. Alfred R. Wallace expresses that as to the development of human races under the law of selection, “it must inevitably follow that the higher—the more intellectual and moral—must displace the lower and more degraded races,” and with the power of “natural selection,” acting on his mental organization, “his mental constitution may continue to advance and improve, till the world is again inhabited by a single, nearly homogeneous race, no individual of which will be inferior *to the noblest specimens of existing humanity*.” H.P.B. says that if we go one step beyond Mr. Wallace’s deductions, then we have in the future the possibility—nay, the assurance of a race, which, like the Vril-ya of Bulwer-Lytton’s *Coming Race*, will be but one remove from the primitive ‘Sons of God’” (*Isis*, I, 296). Among other things, “Sons of God,” refers to the Seventh Race—the race of “Buddhas.” (*S.D.*, II, 483)

We might say that it is because of the evolutionary superiority of the Vril-ya that they are being described as “The Coming Race,” and because they believe in evolution, and hence the possibility of progressing physically, mentally and spiritually, that they view the narrator and the entire human race as being inferior.

(*To be concluded*)

## DHARMA—THE STERN LAW

THE SANSKRIT term *Dharma*, among many others in the philosophical tradition of ancient India, has been variously understood and interpreted in the popular discourse, while the true significance of it remains elusive because of the vast scope of its many meanings and applications, encompassing the cosmic order, and its innumerable specific applications to everything and every being, from an atom and an infusoria to the Sun. The many specific microcosmic applications of it in specific environment ever gravitate towards and subserves the macrocosmic order and purpose. Mr. Judge in his “Letters” has given a meditative and vivid but concise word picture of the Cosmic order and purpose, which will give us an idea of vast scope and meaning of the term Dharma:

“The Deity desires experience or self-knowledge, which is only to be attained by stepping, so to say, aside from self. So the Deity produces the manifested universes consisting of matter, psychical nature, and spirit. In the Spirit alone resides the great consciousness of the whole; and so, it goes on ever producing and drawing into itself, accumulating such vast and enormous experiences that the pen falls down at the thought. How can that be put into language? It is impossible, for we at once are met with the thought that the Deity must know all at all times. Yet there is a vastness and an awe-inspiring influence in this thought of the Day and Night of Brahman. It is a thing to be thought over in the secret recesses of the heart, and not for discussion. *It is the All.*” (*Letters That Have Helped Me*, p. 60)

The profoundly meditative and abstract meaning of Dharma given by Mr. Judge in the foregoing seems to imply that it is the ultimate Law—LAW of all Laws—of universal progression by alternating cycles of manifestation and non-manifestation in an ever ascending scale of perfection, having neither beginning nor end, accumulating incomprehensibly vast experiences and Wisdom. It means Absolute Deity is synonymous with Absolute LAW, the two being one.

The lower kingdoms of nature instinctively obey the law and

progress on the path of evolutionary development to higher life heading towards Man stage, which when attained they receive the fire of self-consciousness, or *Manas*. Further development of Man, the *Manasic* being, is no more by natural impulse as in the case of lower kingdoms; but having been endowed with reason, will, intellect, judgment and spiritual discrimination, standing as he does on the pinnacle of evolutionary ladder of the sub-human kingdom, he is compelled to make moral choices in every act and in every situation, and progress by self-effort and merit, checked by his Karma, and learning from the experiences thereof through a long series of cycles of reincarnation. Here we come upon the nuanced difference between, and yet inseparable concomitance of, Karma and Dharma.

Karma is action and the consequences which follow every act in producing moral, mental, physical effects by which the thinker and the actor becomes bound. If the Karma of man is in accord with the Dharma, the great evolutionary Law, the Law of the Deity, ever tending towards self-realization, he rapidly evolves towards conscious union with the Deity, and becomes a co-worker with progressive order of Nature. If, on the contrary, his Karma is in dissonance with the great Law of the Deity, striving for separate existence due to the illusion of separateness of the personal self, he retards the harmonious progressive order of the great Nature, and suffers from the retributive Karma which he thus sets in motion. All beings perform their Dharma proper to their respective kingdoms according to the overall plan of progression in the universal mind. Man too, as the Thinker, Soul, has his Dharma. What then is his Dharma? Mr. Judge discounts the ordinary meaning ascribed to the term Dharma, such as rules of human conventions, and gives the true significance and meaning of the Law of Karma-Dharma in his *Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita* (p. 9, Indian Edition):

“It [Dharma] means an inherent property of the faculties or even of the whole of man, or of anything in the cosmos. Thus it is said that it is the duty, or Dharma, of fire to burn. It always will burn and



thus do its whole duty, having no consciousness, while man alone has the power to retard his ‘journey to the heart of the Sun,’ by refusing to perform his properly appointed and plainly evident Dharma.”

Hence the natural Duty-Dharma of Man is to acquire the right knowledge of self, of the purpose of life, and of the implacable Law of Karma and of Reincarnation, and make the insight so gained as the foundational principle for his thought and action and strive towards the great end of self-realization, thereby actively aiding whole Nature in her incessant work of higher evolution of beings. Existence, well-being, and higher progress of man is dependent on the sacrifice of beings of all grades of development, and he is, therefore, duty bound to reciprocate by living to benefit all mankind and all beings below and above him. This is the Wheel of Duty-Dharma spoken of in the *Bhagavad-Gita*, failing to perform which, says Sri Krishna, man incurs sin and lives to no purpose.

Great Teachers of humanity from time immemorial have laid down *Dharma Marga*, the Law of Virtue, which form world ethics that underlie all religions to be found in devotional books, such as, *The Bhagavad Gita*, *The Dhammapada*, *The Voice of the Silence*, and so on, following the precepts of which man attains happiness in life, leading in the end to his emancipation and perfection. “Do not follow the law of evil.” teaches the Buddha. “Do not live heedlessly. Do not follow the false doctrine. Do not befriend the ways of the worldly. Be watchful. Be not heedless. Follow the Law of Virtue. The virtuous live happily in this world now and also in the hereafter.” (*The Dhammapada*, Canto—*The World*). *The Bhagavad-Gita* teaches that human happiness naturally follows when one lives a life of moderation in everything, regulating natural human desires by moral fitness, and performs proper duties of manhood without attachment to the outcome, whether they succeed or fail, as sacrifice to the Higher Self. Even a little of this practice saves man from great danger.

Failing to live and practice the Law of Virtue one inevitably

succumbs to the impulses of Kama-desire, egotism, and treads the Law of Vice, which is the source of all the misery and unhappiness in the world. Pain and sorrow which form the bulk of life's experiences, that follow the living the life of indifference or of vice, is however not an unmixed evil. The soul ripens in the fire of suffering in the domain of Karma-Nemesis, learns, and at last takes to the path of righteousness, however long the consummation may take in the journey of the Ego through cycles of earth life.

It is the paramount duty of man, even in ordinary life, to live by the Law of Virtue taught by all the great Teachers of humanity. It is conducive to happiness, prosperity and harmony. Man has however a greater duty and higher purpose than basking in the warmth of the sun of virtue. For the one who has learnt the deceptive allurements of personal existence and earnestly aspires to live the Higher Life, the path of Dharma he has to traverse becomes more stringent, which he has to pass through, and prepare himself for the arduous labour protracted through many lives. The labour consists in absolute renunciation of personal self, imbued as it is with the illusion of separateness, and strive for realization of true self to be indivisible One SELF, even while performing obligatory mundane duties.

*The Secret Doctrine* teaches (II, 109-110) that two forces propel all evolution and compel Man to growth and development towards perfection. One is the universal force inherent in the MONAD, the ALL-FORCE, which is limitless and absolute, which “cannot be said to act understandingly, but it is the one and sole immutable Law of Life and Being.” It is the “Free Force.” This is Dharma in its highest sense.

The other is the “indwelling or the conditioned force” which is the mortal personal Self of Man, the maker of Karma and the product of his own Karma, the law of cause and effect, perpetuating itself blindly through countless reincarnations by self-perpetuating power of *Tanha*, thirst for gratification of desire and sensation in earthly life. The Ego must conquer this blind concupiscence, take refuge in and become a slave of Higher Self, the All-Spirit, whose mission it is to guide and shape it.

## EXTRACTS FROM UNPUBLISHED LETTERS

### KRISHNA AND GITA

TODAY, the calendar reminds me, is a new lunar month in which Krishna took shape some 5,000 years ago. How illusory is time, for the Self in us, the Divine Krishna, is near and dear and here—close! It is in your heart and head and hands. It sees through your eyes and speaks through your lips. And Krishna, the one and the same, is what I am trying to find and to hold in my own consciousness.

The manifested human form of Krishna is the form of his incarnation as Krishna. He has his Universal Form. The former shines with his *Vibhutis*, his Divine Excellences, as given in the 10th discourse. The Universal Form is the *Vishwa Rupa* of the 11th chapter. The first is the visible but is not understood unless the *Vibhutis* are understood: *e.g.*, his blue-black form is due to certain of the *Vibhutis*, and so on. The Universal Form is not visible unless the divine eye is opened by one's own effort, or, as Krishna did for his devoted chela Arjuna, as a “gift”—of course deserved.

The form of Krishna represents the unity aspect of Spirit manifesting in the diversity aspect of Matter. How do the *Vibhutis* manifest or express themselves? Through what kind of matter? What does the formless Universal Form mean and signify? What is the “Word made flesh”? Think along this line.

As to the keys for understanding *The Bhagavad-Gita*: We use the psychological key most of the time, for in living the life it proves most useful. But there is the historical or socio-political key; and there is the cosmic key. Tilak's *Arctic Home in the Vedas* refers to it, I think. Also, *The Theosophical Glossary* speaks about the Dance of the Gopis as related to the signs and the belt of the Zodiac. Look up also Judge's article on “Two Lost Keys: *The Bhagavad-Gita*—The Zodiac.” It seems to me, however, that for us the psychological key has a fascination and also a practicality.

The classification of Krishna's nature in the seventh chapter of *The Bhagavad-Gita* is somewhat unique—exoteric and esoteric. As a matter of fact, without H.P.B.'s esoteric wisdom it would sound like abracadabra. The 13th chapter makes it clearer and also the triple division of the

15th. The lower nature of Krishna *corresponds* to the lowest line of human evolution; His higher to the second; and Himself as the third (see *Secret Doctrine*, I, 181). But do not overlook that this passage in the *Secret Doctrine* deals with *human* evolution. Metaphysically, the lower nature is a manifestation of *Mulaprakriti*; the higher, of *Daiviprakriti* or *Fohat*; and the third, of the Logos or Verbum.

Let me try to put for your consideration something of the lower nature of Krishna. First, the source of the lower nature is *Mulaprakriti*, *via* the three *gunas*. Now, the physical body, the astral body, Prana, Kama and Lower Manas form the lower man in our Theosophical classification. But Kama and Manas are now a joint unit. We have Higher Manas, Lower Manas, Kama-Manas. At present we have Higher Manas overbrooding the personality and, because its agent, the Lower Manas, has been enslaved by Kama, the Higher can do little, if anything. Now note—the Manas, Buddhi and *Ahankara* of *The Bhagavad-Gita*, are not our Manas or our Buddhi; the last, *Ahankara*, is the “I”-making power. In the personality it represents or corresponds to Atma. Buddhi is not our Sixth principle; it is the Buddhi of *The Bhagavad-Gita*, which is either *tamasic*, *rajasic* or *sattvic*. Manas is mind dominated by Kama; Kama enlivens Prana which energizes the astral body, which in its turn guides and moulds the gross body. So Manas, Buddhi and *Ahankara* form the higher aspect of the lower nature of Krishna. Earth, water, air, fire, light, build the body. Fire gives heat and one kind of light; *Akasha* gives another kind of light. When Manas by the power of will frees itself from Kama, that Manas becomes *Antahkarana*. So we have Kama-Manas, then Kama controlled by the Internal Organ, *Antahkarana*; and it goes with the aid of *Akasha* towards the Monad. It is the bridge. *Antahkarana* is made of four constituents—*Manas*, *Chit*, *Buddhi*, *Ahankara*. *Chit* is the power in and of Manas which can secure the discerning power of Buddhi and the will power of *Ahankara* and become the Personal Centre of Krishna, which can join itself with the Higher Nature—the Atma-Buddhi-Manas Monad, which is *Daiviprakriti* or *Fohat*. We cannot put in parallel columns our Theosophical principles and the eightfold constituents given in *The Bhagavad-Gita*. The lower nature is personal; the higher nature is the Individual, and the Monad is Krishna. The lower *Ahankara* is “I am Mr. So-and-so”; the individual *Ahankara* is “I am I”; the spiritual *Ahankara* is “I Am.” See the *Secret Doctrine*, I, 335 fn.

## MODES OF PROCREATION

### II

THERE ARE various legends associated with the birth of Ganesa and his elephant head. In *Matsya Purana*, Ganesa is shown to be the child born of sweat and dust on Parvati's body. What is the meaning of the creation of the child out of sweat and dust? As seen earlier, the Second and early Third Race was formed from drops of "sweat" (vitality), which after many a transformation, grew into human bodies. It is not difficult to imagine or believe this if we accept and understand the growth of the foetus from an imperceptible germ, which foetus develops into a child, and then into a strong, heavy man, says H.P.B. (*S.D.*, II, 177)

The Second Race gives birth to the Third. The Third Race could be divided into three distinct divisions, depending on the three modes of procreation. The first two of these are produced by an oviparous method that is probably not known to modern Natural History. The early sub-races of the Third Race were procreated by a kind of exudation of moisture or vital fluid (*vis formativa*), which changed the drops of perspiration into greater drops, which grew, expanded and became ovoid or spherical bodies—huge eggs. In these the human foetus gestated for several years. The mode of procreation by the later races changed. The offspring of the early sub-races were sexless and almost shapeless, but those of later sub-races were *androgynous*.

We read in the *Secret Doctrine* (II, 132-34): "It is in the Third Race that the separation of sexes occurred. From being previously a-sexual, Humanity became distinctly hermaphrodite or bi-sexual; and finally, the man-bearing eggs began to give birth, gradually and almost imperceptibly in their evolutionary development, first, to Beings in which one sex predominated over the other, and, finally, to distinct men and women." Regarding the androgynous or hermaphrodite race of humanity, H.P.B. quotes views put forward by Professor Alexander Wilder for believing in the existence of a

double-sexed primeval race of humanity, giving scientific reasons for the same. He argues that “a large part of the vegetable creation exhibits the phenomenon of bisexuality,” which includes both the higher and lower forms of the vegetable kingdom, from the Hemp to the Lombardy Poplar and Ailanthus. In the animal kingdom, he gives an example of the coral-producing family, “which produce their offspring from themselves like the buds and ramifications in a tree.” In Aphides or plant lice, “the *virgin parents* perpetuate the Race for ten successive generations.” In Plato’s *Banquet*, Aristophanes describes the nature of the old race as *androgynous*, with a rounded form and possessing terrible force and strength. He adds that to make them weaker, “Zeus divided each of them into two,” and thus refers to the separation of sexes into male and female in the last part of the Third Root-Race. All this only goes to support that primitive humanity could have been hermaphrodite, at a certain point in its evolution.

H.P.B. observes: “Every living creature and thing on earth, including man, evolved from *one common primal form*. Physical man must have passed through the same stages of the evolutionary process in the various modes of procreation as other animals have: he must have *divided* himself; then, hermaphrodite, have given birth *parthenogenetically* (on the immaculate principle) to his young ones; the next stage would be the *oviparous*—at first ‘without any fructifying element,’ then ‘with the help of the fertilitary spore’; and only after the final and definite evolution of both sexes, would he become a distinct ‘male and female,’ when reproduction through sexual union would grow into universal law.” (*S.D.*, II, 659)

Parthenogenesis is derived from Greek *Parthenos*, meaning “virgin” and *genesis*, meaning “birth.” Thus, Parthenogenesis means “virginal reproduction,” which in turn implies, “when the egg-cells are formed within the body, issuing from it in atomic emanations and becoming matured outside of it,” explains H.P.B. (*S.D.*, II, 657). Parthenogenesis is regarded as a form of asexual reproduction because a zygote or fertilized egg cell develops without the union

between male and female gametes (sex cells). Thus, the offspring develops from the egg or female gamete without prior fertilization from the male gamete. It is a common method of reproduction in the invertebrates such as, ants, bees and wasps, etc., and also in certain vertebrates such as, reptiles, amphibians, fish, etc. Komodo dragons are an example of a species which can produce offspring both through sexual reproduction and parthenogenesis. Parthenogenesis may be described as an “incomplete form of sexual reproduction,” since the offspring develop from gametes.

In the *Puranas*, we read that Marisha, who symbolises the sweat-born Race, becomes the wife of *Prachetsas*, the mind-born sons of Brahma, from whom they beget, the Patriarch (progenitor) Daksha. It is an allegory referring to the Mystery of the Second and Third human Races. Among other things, in the given context, *Prachetsas* seem to refer to those Prajapati (ten and seven) who were concerned with the evolution of the form as can be seen from the footnote on p. 176 (*S.D.*, II). Before the birth of Daksha from Marisha, the living beings and men were procreated “by the will, by sight, by touch and by Yoga” (*S.D.*, II, 176). Daksha is the father of the first *human-like* progenitor that is born in this way. Daksha is considered to be *the progenitor of real physical men*.

In almost all the *Puranas*, the story of the “Sacrifice of Daksha” is given. There is a story that once Daksha, Siva’s father-in-law, was performing a sacrifice, to which Siva was not invited. However, Siva’s wife Uma was most anxious to attend it. But when she reached there, she was insulted by her father, so she voluntarily gave up her body. At Uma’s death, Siva-Rudra gets angry and he creates the terrible demon, Virabhadra, the thousand-headed, thousand-armed monster, to destroy the sacrifice prepared by Daksha.

Virabhadra symbolises the “sweat-born” or the Second-Race of mankind, which was still ethereal in nature. Hence, the story goes that Virabhadra, abiding in the region of the ethereal men, “created from the pores of the skin (*Romakupas*),” the powerful *Raumyas*. H.P.B. says that all this is an allegorical description of the “Sweat-



born” race. In the strife that ensues between the gods and the *Raumyas*, Daksha loses his head. This head is burnt in the fire, and is replaced by the *head of a ram* (Kasi-Khanda). H.P.B. explains that the ram’s head and horns are the symbol of generating power and of reproductive force.

Daksha symbolises many things. In his highest aspect, he is “the personified correlating Creative Force acting on *all the planes*. . . . The generative Force, spiritual at the commencement, becomes of course at the most material end of its evolution a procreative Force on the physical plane.” The *Puranas* show that it is Daksha who established the era of men produced by sexual intercourse, after trying every other means of procreation (*The Theosophical Glossary*). Probably that is what is signified when it is mentioned in *Vayu Purana* that Daksha’s sacrifice “took place in the presence of creatures born from the egg, from the vapour, vegetation, pores of the skin, and finally only, from the womb.” This sacrifice was interfered with by Siva, which signifies that the mode of procreation by sexual intercourse did not occur suddenly, but required long ages before it became the one “natural” way. It also shows that Daksha represents physiological or biological evolution, and since evolution cannot proceed through physical form only, Siva destroys Daksha’s sacrifice. According to Theosophy, there is a triple line of evolution—physical, intellectual and spiritual (or monadic). Siva is concerned with the latter two. Thus: “....Siva, the *destroying* deity, *evolution* and *PROGRESS personified*, who is the *regenerator* at the same time; who destroys things under one form but to recall them to life under another more perfect type.” (*S.D.*, II, 182)

Daksha typifies the early Third Race, holy and pure, still devoid of an individual *Ego*, and having merely passive capacities. From the end of the third Root-Race, living creatures were produced by sexual intercourse, which is the present mode of procreation. After the separation of the sexes, man was man only in form, but mindless—the mind was lying dormant like an unlighted candle. In the second chapter of *Genesis*, this state of mental torpor and



unconsciousness of the first two races, and also of the first half of the Third Race, is symbolized by the *deep sleep of Adam*. “It was the dreamless sleep of mental inaction, the slumber of the Soul and Mind, which was meant by that sleep.” (*S.D.*, II, 181)

*The Secret Doctrine* teaches that in both men and animals there was the separation of sexes. H.P.B. explains that Adam and Eve represent a stage in human evolution when the hermaphrodite man separated into male and female sexes. Since the mind of man was not yet lighted up or activated, the “Sons of Wisdom” or *Manasputras*, who later endowed the human race with the light of the mind, had warned humanity to leave alone the fruit forbidden by Nature. In other words, humanity was warned to leave alone physical procreation through the union of the sexes, until its physiological nature had adjusted its instincts in the right direction. But some of the humanity disobeyed the warning and beget progeny. Being still mindless at the period of separation, it begot anomalous offspring, by uniting with huge she-animals. Thus, the warning proved of no value. Men realized the *unfitness*—*we must not say sin*—of what they had done, only when too late: after the angelic monads from higher spheres had incarnated in, and endowed them with understanding, writes H.P.B. (*S.D.*, II, 267). However, the “forbidden fruit” is also the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil, eating which would endow humanity with Divine Creative Wisdom. On eating the fruit their eyes were opened and H.P.B. points out that they knew many more things besides becoming aware that they were naked.

The occult philosophy tells us that the anomalous progeny of the unnatural union between man and animal was the anthropoid apes. Although great similarities in anatomical structure and behaviour have led scientists to think that man has descended from the apes, or that man and apes have common ancestors, the adepts say that man has neither descended from apes, nor has he risen from the apes. If so, how does one account for the human-like intelligence possessed by the anthropoid apes? The adepts, standing on the immeasurable height where centuries lie under their glance, possess

certain and definite knowledge regarding the evolution of man. As mentioned above, the mindless men of the Third Race, millions of years ago, committed the sin of uniting with huge she-animals, producing man-like monsters. Such union was possible because man as well as animals were in semi-astral form. “Medical science records such cases of monsters bred from human and animal parents, even in our own day. The possibility is, therefore, one of *degree*, not of fact” (*S.D.*, II, 689). The apes produced through such union, in semi-astral form, consolidated into physical and later dwindled in size, producing the lower apes of the Miocene period. After this, man was endowed with mind, and hence with the power to think and choose, and also with self-consciousness. But once again, men with mind belonging to the Atlantean Race, repeated the sin of the mindless, by uniting with the lower apes of the Miocene period, giving rise to the species of apes—Orangutang, gorilla and chimpanzee—now known as anthropoid apes (*S.D.*, II, 683 and 689). They are described as “human presentments,” and are half descended from man—distorted copies of early humanity. They are the “dumb races,” whose monads are already within the human stage. Thus: “The ape we know is not the product of natural evolution but an *accident*, a cross-breed between an animal being or form and man...” (*S.D.*, II, 262)

It was only in the very beginnings of physical man that such cross-breeding was allowed by nature. “Since then, Nature has changed her ways, and sterility is the only result of the crime of man’s bestiality.” However, until a few years ago, there were descendants of these half-animal tribes or races, originating from the Third and the Fourth Race of humanity. The world knows them as Tasmanians (now extinct), Australians, Andaman Islanders, etc. Darwin observed that women belonging to the Tasmanian tribe were struck with sterility, all together, after the European colonists had arrived there. An occultist will explain it by saying that the “crossing” of the Europeans with Tasmanian women brought on sterility to prevent further propagation of an abnormal race. (*S.D.*, II, 195-96)

*(To be continued)*

## OUR APPOINTED WORK IN LIFE

### II

THE DEVELOPMENT of the *Kama-manasic* principle and the ensuing earthly personality is a necessary part of the cycle of involution and evolution. The fourth principle, as a pivot, is necessary for Spirit to find expression, no matter how feebly in the physical form of man. A pregnant Platonic analogy can help illustrate this point: the element of air of gaseous nature cannot directly come in contact with and inhere in the element of earth of solid nature or *vice versa*. It needs the liquid middle element of water which when cooled becomes solid (ice) that partakes of the nature of earth and when heated becomes gaseous (vapour) which partakes of the nature of air. As such, to bring together and bridge the two elements of dissimilar nature, a third element is needed of an intermediate quality which can partake of the nature of both.

Regardless, the man of today is still heir to that high estate from which he has fallen. By subjugating the lower personality and making it porous to the influence of the higher, he can even in this life be guided by his divine-self. As the *Voice of the Silence* says, “Before the soul can comprehend and may remember, she must unto the Silent Speaker be united just as the form to which the clay is modelled, is first united with the potter’s mind.”

Logically, one might plead the following question at this point: *If I do not remember, how will I know? And if I do not know, how can I act?* We do not need to first remember in order to know and act. We only need to have *faith* in the LAW, because, as Krishna says in the fourth chapter of the *Gita*: “The ignorant, those full of doubt and without faith, are lost.”

Faith in the LAW is not a blind faith but reasoned faith. A sober analysis from the long arc of human history to that of an individual’s life, when seen in the light of the doctrines of “Karma and Reincarnation” will show it to be the key that most efficaciously unlocks every riddle of life. As the student faithfully applies these

doctrines in daily life, the Law proves itself in its universal applicability and practicability. Then it is no longer an intellectual exercise or an article of faith but it becomes a living reality.

At that point, the student approaches every situation, no matter how difficult, as the very thing he himself desired. Then, the appointed work in one's life becomes absolutely clear—it is the performance of every duty, no matter how small or insignificant, demanded by the situation and the station in life that you find yourself in.

This may seem like a platitude that we hear everywhere but it is not an easy endeavour. It is soul-work and the effort must be kept up as Mr. Judge advises in the *Letters That Have Helped Me*: “You can solidify your character by attending to small things. By attacking small faults, and on every small occasion, one by one. This will arouse the inner attitude of attention and caution. The small faults and small occasions being conquered, the character grows strong. Feelings and desires are not wholly of the body. If the mind is deliberately taken off such subjects and placed on other and better ones, then the whole body will follow the mind and grow tractable. This struggle must be kept up, and after a while it will be easier.”

Ironically, attending to the nagging duties of daily life is easier for those that are sincere but have not yet awakened to the higher calling. The worldly duties weigh more heavily on the shoulders of those looking to work themselves out of such concerns. A student writing for *The Path* declared the following, quoted in the article, “Living the Higher Life”: “I have no desire for any other line of life; but by the time I had awakened to a knowledge of this life, I found myself involved by circumstances against which I do not rebel, but out of and through which, I am *determined* to work, neglecting no known duty to others.”

Our appointed work in life begins with the performance of duty with the right attitude but it does not end there. To best illustrate this point, let us begin with one of the key foundations of Western Psychology—Maslow's Hierarchy of needs:

At the lowest level, there are basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, safety, etc. As these needs are fulfilled, people aspire for needs at the next level, such as a sense of belonging, self-esteem which can be termed psychological needs. And at the highest level, there is the need for self-actualization, which is really the selfish culmination of all the material potentiality of the lower personality, or achieving one's full potential including creative activity. People in each level aspire for the needs of the next level. These needs are arranged in the form of a pyramid with "basic needs" forming the base, and self-actualization needs forming the apex, showing that fewer people have needs at higher levels.

If one looks at these *needs* in isolation, it is a very self-centered view, because it is clear that what is one individual's *need* is another individual's *responsibility*. For example, a child's need is the parent's responsibility. As such, there is responsibility at the other end of every need. It is the other side of the coin and the other side of the ledger, which needs to be balanced. So, just as we have needs, we also must have commensurate responsibilities.

Just as there is a hierarchy of needs, there is also a corresponding hierarchy of responsibilities. And we may formulate it as such:

At the lowest level, there is fulfilment of duties, small and large, demanded by the situation and station in life, executed with the mental attitude of acceptance and cheerfulness, which could be thought of as forming the apex of the pyramid, upside down. Next are duties to men and beast that are societally considered non-obligatory, but done with no expectation of personal gain or preferred outcome—*Karma Yoga*. And finally, self-sacrifice that involves giving up all sense of personality and sacrificing oneself to the eternal. But as H.P.B. says in her article, "What Shall We Do For Our Fellow Men?": "Esoterically, there is no other way, *means* or *method* of sacrificing oneself 'to the eternal' than by working and sacrificing oneself for the collective spirit of Life, embodied in, and (for us) represented in its highest divine aspect by Humanity alone."

These three would form the hierarchy of responsibilities. At each

higher level, you are not voluntarily taking on more duties but rather waking up to the realization of your own greater responsibility. But to reach for higher responsibilities while being in dereliction of even the smallest of your worldly duties would be to sin against the LAW. We should diligently execute appointed work at each level before reaching for the next. In essence, our appointed work in life is a series of ever-increasing responsibilities corresponding to the ever-increasing sense of SELF, culminating in the annihilation of the personal self and the realization of ALL-SELF or the Self of all.

We read in the article, “Living the Higher Life” that we have three kinds of Karmic propensities: (a) Individual, (b) Filial—associated with Family line and (c) National. “We need to overcome the evil propensities common to ourselves and to our family; those common to ourself and our nation; and those common to ourself and to mankind in general, known as the weakness of human nature.” But just as it is very difficult for an Ego to outstrip general humanity in its development, so also, no Ego can elevate itself beyond filial Karmic tendencies. But that it can be done has been shown by the Buddha, Shankara and Plato. Similarly, while it will be difficult for an Ego to elevate itself beyond filial karmic tendencies, it is possible for him to do so, by elevating the family line in this effort. The article points out that “The only effectual way to get out of family defects is to discharge all our duty to our family before leaving it, as ascetics, or before we die.” He is like the water on the lotus leaf, making only the good traits of the family the seat of his higher self, by getting rid of the defects of the family into which he is born, and “thereby converts those defects in his parents, brothers, sisters, into noble qualities, thus strengthening and developing the good qualities both of himself and of the family, then strives to be born in the same family again and again, until he himself becomes a Buddha and assists his family to become a family fit for a Buddha to be born into, while he becomes the cream of all the noble qualities of the family without being tainted with its idiosyncrasies.”

We find this in the life of Gautama Buddha, “the Lion of the

Law.” After having crossed to the other shore, to the threshold of Nirvana and returning back with a solution to life’s woes and miseries, he eventually turned his footsteps towards Kapilvastu to instruct and uplift his family. He then travelled the length and breadth of the nation of his day, instructing and elevating a whole generation and many to come after. Then, “he preached on mount and plain, and held discourses in the cities, to Devas, men and gods.”

As H.P.B. says: “*Theosophy is the quintessence of duty.*” And duty is the debt that each one has to pay. A debt which, if left unpaid during life, leaves us “spiritually insolvent and hence moral bankrupts in our next incarnation.” So, the appointed work in life is to fulfil our duty *for duty’s sake*. Our duty is to drink without a murmur to the last drop, whatever contents the cup of life may have in store for us.” (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 227, Indian Edition)

But our appointed work does not end with fulfilling prescribed duties. As H.P.B. says: “In every conceivable case he himself must be a centre of spiritual action, and from him and his own daily individual life must radiate those higher spiritual forces which alone can regenerate his fellow-men.” (*ibid.*, pp. 233-34)

In conclusion, there is purpose to human life as there is purposefulness in Nature. The work we take up for each life, we appoint for ourselves with the goal of eliminating defects in our journey towards perfection. Not just for ourselves—that would be spiritual selfishness—but for the stream of life with which we are associated—starting from our Family Line, Nation and finally the whole of Humanity. As H.P.B. puts it, “Each shall live for all and all for each.” (*ibid.*, p. 232)

(Concluded)

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HE who never sacrificed a present to a future good, or a personal to a general one, can speak of happiness only as the blind speak of colour.

—HORACE MANN

## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

We should strive to master the technique of choosing wisely, because to be successful in life one does not need the right breaks, wealth or connections but the ability to make the right decision at the right time, constantly. “You are what your choices are,” writes Jaya Row. Human beings alone possess the ability and the power of choice. No other species has this ability. A human being can choose what food to eat, and whether to react or respond to the situation. We build our future by these choices, some of them have been made as we were lured by instant pleasure, which ultimately brings sorrow.

It is easy to see that whenever we make a choice impulsively it leads to sorrow or even disastrous consequences. Our choices must be guided by our intellect. It is our duty as adults to think the matter over, and weigh the pros and cons before arriving at a decision. Children are not allowed to make choices in certain matters because their intellect is not developed.

When adults act on whims and fancies of the mind and not the sane counsel of the intellect they are likely to make wrong choices. We could also make wrong choice when we act under peer pressure, as in taking drugs, or are driven by herd mentality, as we do in following the materialistic way of life. Often, we are driven to make a wrong decision because our mind is influenced by some strong desire, as when we decide to buy a car that we cannot afford.

It is a good practice to make a choice after consulting our intellect and making important decisions after much deliberation. The kings in ancient India made important decisions only after seeking the advice of in-house sages, so must we consult those with clear thinking. “The best choice is based on values. Choose the higher against the lower, the permanent over ephemeral, worldly joys....Value-based decisions make you happy. And when you choose Spirit, you evolve spiritually,” writes Jaya Row. (*The Times of India*, July 16, 2022)



“Choices are the hinges of destiny,” says Edwin Markham. Destiny and free will co-exist. A person may think ten times before he makes the choice, but having made it, that choice becomes his destiny, by which he is bound. Human beings have free will but in making choices and decisions our will is influenced by our preconceptions, biases, educational and cultural background as also the moral values we hold. We are predisposed to making certain choices, driven by the power of our previous choices. The fact is that we are conditioned, to an extent, by our previous right or wrong actions so that our present choices are, as it were, determined or influenced by the past. Hence, in a larger context, when applied to moral choices in life, H.P.B. points out that man is a free agent during his stay on earth, but “there are *external and internal conditions* which affect the determination of our will upon our actions.” In other words, the exercise of free will is conditioned or limited by the *external* circumstance, as well as, the *inner* capacities and conditions—both being the result of past Karma.

In the ultimate analysis, for those who want to grow spiritually, there is no alternative to making choices. It is by exercising the sovereign power of choice that we learn how *not to make mistakes*. We crave freedom of choice, but many people go through life, without doing their own thinking or making their own choices.

Theosophy teaches that in the middle of the Fifth Round, millions of years later, humanity as a whole will have fully developed and active *Manas* (mind)—with complete powers and knowledge. Full development of the mind will bring with it complete responsibility for the choices made. It is called the “Moment of Choice,” when every unit of the human race will be compelled to make the conscious choice of *right* or *left-hand* path; for good or evil. The choice of *right-hand path* will lead to complete and conscious union with *Atman*, and hence conscious immortality, the other to the severance from the divine and hence annihilation. But that *moment of choice* is made up of and will be affected by all the choices we are making now. By our present choices, we will determine, in which

direction we wish to go. An individual, who takes his evolution into his own hands, need not wait very long, provided he makes choices guided by his intellect (*Buddhi*) or spiritual discrimination.

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It is believed that *Stanleycaris hirpex*, a three-eyed predator which lived in the Cambrian period, with two protruding eyes on the side of its head and a large eye in the centre, must have stalked the seas 500 million years ago. This animal with wing-like fins was roughly the size of a human hand. The two protruding eyes on each side of its head, with hundreds of lenses, and a third eye, much larger in size and being in the middle, provided much heightened visual perception. According to Joseph Moysiuk at the University of Toronto in Canada, it probably used its advanced visual system to hunt down finger-sized, fast-moving prey. He observes that the study of the first predators shows the evolution of complex sensory systems where probably different eyes are performing different tasks for the organism. He and his colleagues have recently investigated hundreds of extremely well-preserved fossils of *S. hirpex* obtained from the Cambrian Burgess Shale in the Canadian Rockies of British Columbia. These fossils were so well-preserved that even after 506 million years when first seen in the sunlight their eyes were gleaming, which made it clear that these organisms had three eyes. Among the arthropods, which include insects, arachnids and crustaceans, it is the first animal with three eyes, though there may also be others with three eyes yet to be discovered.

Moysiuk thinks that probably among early invertebrates a large middle eye combined with two lateral eyes might have been a common form and then later species might have developed two or more pairs of eyes, an example of which is the 520-million-year-old *Lyrarapax* that belonged to the same group of early arthropods, having a structure on its forehead which might have been an eye, writes Christa Lesté-Lasserre. (*New Scientist*, July 16 2022)

Homer's *Odyssey* mentions Cyclops that possessed a third eye, *Grimm's Fairy Tales* mentions Sister Three Eyes. Like the sea lamprey and some species of frogs, the fossils of a small lizard-like tuatara found only in New Zealand, shows that it possesses a third eye. It is a cleft-like opening on top of its skull, consisting of a lens and a retina connected by nerves to the brain while the skin covering this area has, over the years, become translucent.

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 physical form, 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, which is the pineal gland. (*S.D.*, II, 295-96)

"Palæontology has ascertained that in the animals of the Cenozoic age—the Saurians especially, such as the antediluvian *Labyrinthodon*, whose fossil skull exhibits a perforation otherwise inexplicable—the third, or odd eye must have been much developed." Several naturalists feel convinced that in the now extinct animals, this eye functioned and was a real organ of vision, whereas although now covered with opaque skin, such an eye in the reptiles of the present period can only distinguish light from the darkness. Science admits that many of the animals—especially among the lower orders of the vertebrata, which includes the chameleon, certain reptiles, and even fishes, have a *third* eye, now atrophied, but

necessarily active in earlier times. (*S.D.*, II, 299 fn. & 296)

There must be a creative spirit in education. We find that today some modern teachers are not worried about their students. Their job is to make notes and deliver their discourses. Likewise, students today feel that they are too modern to have respect for their teachers. They attend the classes because the university insists upon it. Their sole aim is to pass examinations and for that they need some assistance. Creative education requires that student-teacher relationship must undergo a radical change. A teacher should realize that he or she is not an instructor or a taskmaster but an apostle of culture and as such “his duty is to inspire his student to high intellectual, moral and cultural effort. He has to start the student on the road to his own perfection and sustain his enthusiasm on the journey.” In the ancient Indian educational system, the *guru* (teacher) commanded the loyalty of his students not by knowledge alone, but by drawing the attention of the pupils to the sacredness attached to implicit obedience and “by the inspiring admiration and reverent emulation which a healthy tradition enjoined.” This spirit at least can be reproduced in the present educational systems. The teacher today must strive to take personal interest, at least, in case of responsive and promising students, if not all. A student on his part must remain true to himself and to that end he should develop purity and conscientiousness in his family relations, and the same must reflect in his studies, sports and his service to the motherland. As a result, he learns the art of life and the skill to make the world his own, writes P. V. Sankarankutty. (*Bhavan’s Journal*, January 15, 2022)

The term education is derived from the Latin word “*Educere*,” which means to elicit, to extract an essence. It also means, in practice, to unfold whatever essential faculties are already lying *latent* in the inner (*higher*) *layers of the mind*, by the *process of induction*. Most thinkers would agree to an *all-round progress* for the individual and the society as the *goal* of all human aspiration and labour, and that

of education in particular. It would be a folly to dissociate education from life and living as two separate or independent human calling.

The fact is that we need the most valuable faculties during life and living, such as that of discrimination (called *Buddhi*), value judgment and independent critical thinking. Since opportunities for their proper unfoldment are hardly provided during the impressionable growing years, these mental and moral qualities are left to be later cultivated, if at all, through the hard “school of life” by the struggling individual himself. In fact, *real* education starts after one leaves the academic institution, as one faces the challenges of life against which his schools have left him unprepared. Robert Browning rightly said: “I count life just the stuff to try the soul’s strength on.” Therefore, what we really need is a system of Education, which is geared to serve the double Objects—of formal education as well as of the life of man as a whole.

The *real* object of education should be “to cultivate and develop the mind in the right direction; to teach the disinherited and hapless people to carry with fortitude the burden of life (allotted to them by Karma); to strengthen their will; to inculcate in them the love of one’s neighbour and the feeling of mutual interdependence and brotherhood; and thus to train and form the character for practical life,” writes H. P. B.

It is possible to imbibe some teachings through, what may be described as “osmosis,” from an enthusiastic teacher. This mode of learning by “osmosis” needs closer contact between the teacher and pupil. An inspired teacher can transmit his enthusiasm and love of knowledge and wisdom, without sermonizing. His personal magnetism is enough to arouse those within his circle and around him.

It is said that even before birth the little developing life in the womb is capable of being “educated” in a sense, by the way the mother conducts her life and thoughts, and by the conditions which may affect her. If that is so, there is such a thing as non-verbal education, *i.e.*, the transmission of ideas and feelings between two closely related bodies and souls.