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**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”

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

Vol. 17, No. 4

August 17, 2025

WISDOM IN ACTION

ARE WE responsible for the welfare of others? Each one of us has a duty towards themselves and towards other people. All of us are aware, to some extent, what our duty is, but it is also important that when we perform that duty, there should not be any feeling of resentment, animosity, disgust, or anger. There is a sense of joy, satisfaction, and fulfilment when we have found our mission in life. On the other hand, a sense of “worthlessness” assails us while we are doing the work that clearly does not match our inner longings, inclinations, and temperament. It would be good to endeavour to succeed in doing what we truly love, but how about disciplining ourselves to love what comes to us under Karma? We can change our job to escape the unpleasant duties at the office, but can we run away from our household duties, or duties to neighbours, or to humanity at large?

Often, the work at the office or at home feels like drudgery. Who wants to do the same thing, day in and day out? The small, plain duties of life call upon us to acquire skill in action as well as concentration of mind. It is only by careful performance of small, plain duties that we are fitted for greater duties. If we are restless or feel bored attending to the prolonged sickness of an old parent, do we think we would be able to serve humanity, life after life? All mothers prepare food. Some do it grudgingly, while others do it without complaining, and then there are a select few who put their heart and soul into it—whether the husband or children appreciate

it or not. The food so cooked with love and care is more nourishing, in its own way, than any other vitamin-rich food. That mother, for a moment, becomes the Mother Nature, “*Mata Annapurneshwari*,” nourishing her family.

All men are our brothers. If we take reincarnation into account, we find that the “stranger” or “chance acquaintance” of this life may have been a close relation or friend in our past life. Our effort now is to fit ourselves to know how to help. In discharging the duties towards oneself and others, one faces certain difficulties, and getting answers to them is not easy. Since there are many conflicting answers, wisdom is necessary to arrive at the right course of action. For instance, is it our duty to interfere if we see a wrong being done? We are not likely to find a clear answer in any book or any code of laws. No hard and fast law or rule or scheme is laid down that will apply to all. Each man has to determine for himself what his duty is in a given situation. It is left to each one’s judgment, intuition, or discretion, because at this stage we are not having the wisdom; we do not have the understanding as to what is the right thing to do and what the Divine Will is. An action that is in accordance with the Divine Will is right; that opposed to it is evil or wrong.

“Each man is the law unto himself—the law as to right and wrong, good and evil,” writes Mr. Judge. (*W.Q.J. Series No. 14*, Indian Ed., p. 16). That is to say, each man is endowed with free will, and he exercises that free will depending on his understanding, his level of development, the circumstances he faces, and according to his wisdom. What it is that makes a man act in the way he does, only the Supreme knows. Why? Because It knows the heart, the mind, and the soul of each man. That Supreme may be taken to refer to the God within each one of us or the Law of Karma, for God is Law. Hence, the injunction, “Thou shalt not judge.” The inner state of a person in a given life is the sum total of all experiences and circumstances of a given life as well as those of earlier lives. A stingy and unkind person often has the background of a difficult childhood or exposure to severe poverty. So also, our mental, moral,

and psychic constitution is the result of Karma from past lives. Epictetus, the Stoic philosopher, puts it thus: “When someone speaks to you curtly, disregards what you say, performs what seems to be a thoughtless gesture or even an outright evil act, think to yourself, ‘If I were that person and had endured the same trials, borne the same heartbreaks, had the same parents, and so on, I probably would have done or said the same thing.’ We are not privy to the stories behind people’s actions, *so we should be patient with others and suspend our judgment of them*, recognizing the limits of our understanding.... When people do not act as you would wish them to, exercise the muscle of your good nature by shrugging your shoulders and saying to yourself, ‘Oh well.’ Then let the incident go.”

Keeping these factors in the background, when we see someone abuse an animal, it is our duty to interfere and prevent suffering to the helpless, dumb, and weak creature. However, at the same time, it is also our duty to help “our brother” who is doing something that is not right from the point of view of the animal, and therefore we need to educate him and remove his ignorance, because it is ignorance that makes him do these things. Likewise, if a man is abusing his wife and children under the influence of drugs or alcohol, it becomes our duty to prevent further sorrow or suffering to the wife and children. At the same time, our duty lies toward the man, not in condemning but in seeking the cause for his cruel behaviour and striving to alleviate the same, because he also is our brother. In other words, it is our duty to prevent all kinds of suffering, want, misery, suicide, etc., “from love for and a desire to help all men, not because men’s actions seem to me wrong or their courses evil. I know not the causes of their actions...How then may I say, this or that man is evil, this or that thing is wrong?” writes Mr. Judge. Thus, our duty is not to condemn the person who seems to *us* to be doing wrong, but to prevent “evil” to others, to the best of our understanding and wisdom. Then, we are not performing “duty” in its general sense, which we are supposed to perform, but performing actions

which *we know* “are good for *others*, or the wisest at the moment.” (*Ibid.*, pp. 17-18)

We are given here a unique perspective on helping and overcoming suffering, in which we keep in mind the well-being of both the offender and the victim. This can be done when we stop condemning the offender and his action, and therefore do not have the feeling of hatred or anger towards him but regard him as a brother whose boots have become heavy with mud and give him a helping hand.

Good and Evil are relative terms, and we all have in us the germs of all the evil and wickedness we find in the world. It would be a folly to categorize action as good or bad on appearances, without taking into account the motive, the inner state of the person, the degree of his development and knowledge, and the weight of his past karma. As mentioned in the *preface* to the *Dhammapada*, we need to retain an ethical awareness but reject the *categorical morality*, which then leads to self-righteousness. We need to dig deep and go to the base of apparent good and evil actions. In *Letters That Have Helped Me*, Mr. Judge points out that what seems evil and “painful” may be necessary for the soul’s progress. Murder is evil, we may say, but as a result the soul is incarnated into adverse and miserable circumstances, and the man is chastened and softened. Was the deed wholly evil? Not really. We do experience the “meanness” of human nature at every step of life. Shall we condemn it? Shall we isolate ourselves? Shall we despair and become bitter? Mr. Judge advises us to cultivate a lot of compassion in our hearts for our own benefit and for that of the evildoer. Thus: “In order to off-set the terrible cold effect of perceiving the littleness of human affairs, one must inculcate in oneself a great compassion which will include oneself, also. If this is not done, contempt comes on, and then the result is dry, cold, hard, repellent, and obstructive to all good work.” (*Letters That Have Helped Me*, p. 130)

Duty does not necessarily mean performance of a particular task or those acts that are necessary for making progress. Mr. Judge writes,

“We are instructed to do good. That is duty...[But] we are enjoined to do good *where it is safe*. Not safe for ourselves, but safe for the objects towards which our duty points.” For example, we often come across people who are wronged, and they suffer intensely. Our first impulse is to rush forward and prevent the same, but we must act wisely, knowing that such an act would only arouse the antagonism of those who are inflicting this pain, and they will perpetrate greater wrongs on their victims. Therefore, before doing any good action, it is necessary to find out how to do it without creating evil or harming others. (*W.Q.J. Series No. 14*, p. 18)

There are deep philosophical and psychological aspects that must be taken into consideration even in helping others. In the article “Let Every Man Prove His Own Work,” H.P.B. shows that the philanthropists who sought to make people happy by improving their physical conditions or external environment—by building homes, starting soup kitchens, etc.—were ultimately disappointed. Those who had spent their lives doing such work confessed that, “as a matter of fact, misery cannot be relieved. It is a vital element in human nature and is as necessary to some lives as pleasure is to others...that misery is not just endurable, but agreeable to many who endure it.” She tells us of a lady who had worked all her life for the amelioration of prostitutes, confessing that it was not possible to better the condition of these girls because they seemed to “love the very state which wealthy people may call misery.” Even today, we find that when blankets are given to the poor during winter, they sell them off. At times, proper houses are built for them, yet they sell those and go back to living in their huts. H. P. B. advises exercising discretion even in helping others. She writes: “...it takes a very wise man to do good works without the danger of doing incalculable harm. A highly developed adept in life may grasp the nettle, and by his great intuitive powers, know whom to relieve from pain and whom to leave in the mire that is their best teacher....Kindness and gentle treatment will sometimes bring out the worst qualities of a man or woman who has led a fairly

presentable life when kept down by pain and despair.” (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 31*, p. 10)

For a true aspirant who is trying to walk the spiritual path, “duty” does not mean observing silence, undertaking penances and austerities, charity to the poor, etc. The only thing that he is really concerned with is doing good to other people, and in doing so he forgets himself so completely that he does not even think, “I am doing my duty,” or “I am helping others.” “Forgetfulness of the *personal* self and sincere altruism are the first and indispensable requisites in the training of those” who aspire to become “Adepts.”

Regarding evil, the Sermon on the Mount says: “resist not evil” (*Matthew 5:39*). It advocates a non-violent, non-retaliatory approach in dealing with negativity and harm, especially when directed towards oneself. It does not imply condoning or allowing evil to prevail, but to adopt a compassionate and potentially transformative approach. If we resist, we create greater evil. However, there is another interpretation of this phrase. When Jesus taught “resist not evil,” he desired that we should learn to forget ourselves. “Men think that all things which are disagreeable to them are evil. By resistance he meant complaint, anger, objection to or against the inevitable, disagreeable or sorrowful things in life, that come to self,” writes Mr. Judge. (*W.Q.J. Series No. 14*, p. 19)

Since the Law of Karma is just and merciful, there cannot be a misshapen day. Hence, instead of complaining or grumbling, there must be acceptance or resignation. However, “acceptance” should not be equated with passivity and helplessness. When we are unable to change the situation despite our best efforts, we can use the same as raw material and extract the necessary lessons. It might consist of learning the lessons of fortitude and sympathy, or detachment and patience, and so on. “There is never any need to worry. The good law looks out for all things, and all we have to do is our duty as it comes along from day to day,” writes Mr. Judge.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THE STORY OF SAGE VISHWAMITRA—II

IN THE process of forming a new heaven for Trisanku, Vishwamitra used up all the power he had gained from his austerities. Therefore, he had to begin his austerities again to attain the status of a Brahma Rishi to become equal to Vasishta. At this point, Indra sends Menaka, an apsara, to seduce him. Vishwamitra falls prey to the charm of Menaka, and they live together for ten years. The Rishi begat on Menaka a daughter named Shakuntala. However, later, Vishwamitra cursed Menaka to be separated from him forever, and he travelled south to the river Godavari to resume his austerities.

After many thousands of years of penance, Brahma names him a *maharishi* but also tells him that he has not yet become a “*jitendriya*,” i.e., he has still not conquered his senses and hence lacks control over his passions. This is brought to light when Indra sends the apsara Rambha to seduce him. Vishwamitra curses her to become a stone for a thousand years. After cursing Rambha, he goes to the highest mountain of the Himalayas to perform even more severe austerities for over a thousand years. He ceases to eat and reduces his breathing to a bare minimum. This time, Indra tests him by appearing as a poor Brahmin, begging for food, just as Vishwamitra was about to break a fast of many years by eating some rice. He instantly gives his food away to Indra and resumes his meditation. He finally masters his passions, refusing to be provoked by any of Indra’s testing and seductive interferences.

Ultimately, when Vishwamitra’s yogic power is at its peak, Brahma, followed by other Devas, comes to Vishwamitra and names him as Brahma Rishi. After becoming Brahma Rishi, he was known to use the power of his austerities to help anyone who was in need, whatever the cost to himself. And yet, there was a vestige of pride left in him. Hence, initially, when he greeted Vasishta with the pride of being a Brahma Rishi, Vasishta simply blessed him. It was customary that, if a sage were greeted by an equal or superior person,

the sage would also greet in return, but if the sage was greeted by an inferior person, he would simply bless them. A realization dawned on Vishwamitra. Immediately, all pride and desire left his heart, and he became a Brahma Rishi in the true sense. Therefore, when Vishwamitra turned to leave, Vasishtha could gauge the change of heart and proceeded to greet him and addressed him as Brahm Rishi. They embraced each other.

In the epic *Ramayana*, Vishwamitra is the preceptor of Rama and his brother Lakshmana. Rama is the prince of Ayodhya and the seventh Avatar of God Vishnu. Vishwamitra gives them the knowledge of celestial weaponry, trains them in advanced religion and guides them to kill powerful demons like Tadaka, Maricha, and Subahu. It is said that he lived for many years before and after Rama. Thus, he may be said to have lived for thousands of years.

The life story of Vishwamitra shows that the journey of one who aspires to reach spiritual perfection is a series of progressive awakenings and that in spiritual discipline, we have to be prepared to try again even when we fail because otherwise progress cannot be made. When we are able to overcome the *vasanas*, or desires, and negative tendencies in their gross form, they lurk, unknown to the spiritual seeker, in their subtle form. One has to fight the *vasanas* till they are completely eradicated. In one of his books, Swami Shri Savitanand writes that in the *Mahabharata* war, it is recorded that the torso of one in ten thousand warriors was seen to be fighting even after the head was separated from the body. He observes that this automatic action of the “*kabandh*,” or torso, is very suggestive. It is symbolic of the fact that just when the spiritual aspirant has progressed far on the path and is confident that he has overcome desires and obliterated his *vasanas*, or tendencies, he experiences a sudden coming to the surface of a latent tendency that was hiding in some corner of his being. He is taken by surprise. Such a person may experience sudden outbursts of anger or attacks of jealousy, or sexual attraction. There are several examples of Rishis who fell after reaching a high position. It is said that Rishi Vishwamitra did *tapasya*

(asceticism) for 64,000 years, and yet when he came across the beautiful apsara Menaka, he got attracted and fell for her beauty.

A genuine seeker has to fight many foes within their nature. It is said that sexual desire and Egotism are the two most potent enemies to fight in the spiritual battle and are the last to get conquered. Between these two, it is egotism, pride, or the sense of separateness, which is the most difficult to surmount. This was evident in the case of Vishwamitra.

Egotism or a strong sense of selfhood separates man from man. Egotism, or a sense of separateness, is like a personal devil, sitting in its firm fortress, protected by sentries at various outer posts. Egotism or pride works at various subtle levels. It has many strongholds. If we conquer it at one level, then it surfaces at another, subtler level. Its presence is easy to detect when it is of a gross nature. Love for the enjoyment of senses, desires for material and worldly things, and desires for wealth and fame are easy to detect and may be overcome through will and fierce fight, but it is only a small victory. One may be unaware of other, subtle desires, such as the desire for power or the desire to love and be loved as a great benefactor of mankind. Each of these is a stronghold of the devil in man. He may engage himself in the work of humanity or undertake religious observances and disciplining of his senses, and consider himself superior to others. Behind the fervent work for humanity, there lurks pride, a sense of superiority—a holier-than-thou attitude. He may refrain from being at the forefront, but likes to mastermind the work from behind the scenes. In such a case, he has fallen prey to his ambition for power. The enemy forces take on new and subtler forms where their presence is difficult to detect. Thus, one has to fight the enemy from the outermost gates to the inner until the final Great War is fought in the centre of the fort and won.

A Rishi is considered to be an inspired poet-sage, to whom the hymns of the Vedas were revealed and under whose names they stand. According to post-Vedic tradition, the *Rishi* is a “seer” (*mantra-drashta*) to whom the Vedas were “originally revealed” through states of higher

consciousness. H.P.B. points out that *Rishis* such as Vishwamitra, Valmiki, and Vasishtha were historical personages and very high adepts, entitled to be called *Mahatmas*. However, many of the *Rishis* are mythical rather than historical figures.

From the story of his life, it appears that Vishwamitra must have lived for thousands of years. Could it be possible? In her article “Do the Rishis Exist?” H.P.B. says that we are not prepared to say that “any Hindu Rishis of old still exist in flesh and blood,” although we have our own reasons to believe that some of the great Hindu Adepts of ancient times have been and are reincarnating themselves occasionally in Tibet and Tartary.

Traditionally, *Rishi* Vasishtha is also considered to be Lord Rama’s guru; the Vishnu Purana makes him the family priest of the Ikshvaku (or Solar) Dynasty. He is considered to be not only the contemporary of Ikshvaku but also his descendants down to the sixty-first generation. How could this be possible? Perhaps we can understand it if we grasp the concept of “permanent astral.” Each one of us possesses an astral body on which the physical body is moulded. For each life, the astral body is built from the *skandhas* of past lives, governed by the stock of Karma to be exhausted in a given life. “Permanent astral is constructed during life on the basis of the aspirations and self-induced efforts. Only those who have arrived at a certain stage of development or initiation return to incarnation with a permanent astral.” All others form a new astral for each incarnation. Since our physical body is modelled on the astral body, the changes in the astral body get reflected in the physical body; since the astral body changes very gradually in a given life, the physical body and appearance also change very slowly. The perfected beings, who have constructed for themselves the “permanent astral,” would be born with the *same astral body* every time they take birth, and consequently, with almost the same physical appearance. This might have given rise to the stories of the sages and rishis living for thousands of years.

There were three classes of *Rishis* in India, who were the earliest

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

However, in Hinduism, a *Brahmarshi* is considered to belong to the highest class of *rishis*, one who has understood the meaning of *Brahman* or has attained the highest divine knowledge, *i.e.*, *Brahmjnana*. A *Rajarshi* is a *rishi* of the royal caste. A *Rajarshi* is a king who became a royal sage, or *rishi*, through pure and holy life, such as Vishwamitra, who progressed further to become a *Brahmarshi*. On the other hand, a *Rajarshi* may still rule the kingdom, having reached a state of *rishi*, such as Janaka, the king of Mithila and father of Sita, as also Dasaratha, the king of Ayodhya and father of Rama. King Janaka, says the *Gita*, set an example of a morally pure and altruistic life, even while living in the world.

Commenting on the article by Charles Johnston, entitled “The Red Rajputs,” that appeared in the *Imperial and Asiatic Quarterly Review* for October 1893, Mr. Judge writes that Shri Krishna traced his doctrine from the *Kshatriya* Manu through a line of *Rajrshis* or *Rajanya* sages. The last personage named in the line is Ikshvaku, of whose race the Buddha was. Hence, Mr. Johnston ascribes the spirit of the Upanishads and Buddhism to the mystical genius of the *Rajanya* race. Mr. Judge comments that it is a very remarkable fact that the *Gayatri*, or that holy verse that is the “mother of the Vedas,” was composed by a *Kshatriya* (of warrior caste) and not by a *Brahmin* (of priest caste). On this, he quotes the words from the Upanishads: “The *Brahmin* sat at the foot of the *Kshatriya*.” This upholds the spiritual dignity of *Rajanyas*, who are *Kshatriyas* and the Red Rajputs. Mr. Johnston points out that to this day, the Ranas (kings) of Mewar [in Rajasthan] “unite spiritual with royal authority and officiate as high priests in the temple of the guardian deity of their race.” The Red Rajputs are the descendants of the solar race

(*Suryavansha*), a race of kings, of mystical men who not only could learn mystic occultism but also fight and rule.

At the beginning of the story, we read that Vishwamitra wanted to own Kamdhenu as if she were property. Kamdhenu is the divine, wish-fulfilling cow. Kamaduk, mentioned in the third chapter of the *Gita*, is another name for Kamdhenu. The term “Kamaduk” specifically refers to her as the cow “from whom all that is desired is drawn,” highlighting her nature as a cow of plenty.

In the Third Chapter of the *Gita*, *Kamaduk* represents sacrifice and sacrificial deeds. Thus, “the creator, when of old he had created mortals and appointed sacrifice, said to them, ‘By means of this sacrifice ye shall be propagated. It shall be to you a cow of plenty. By means of it do ye support the gods, and let these gods support you. Supporting one another mutually, ye shall obtain the highest felicity.’” It refers to an element of sacrifice inherent in the cosmos from the very beginning. Human beings have to emulate it and act with compassion, without attachment to result, for the sake of others, renouncing the doership (*kartabhav*). Only human beings have the capacity to sacrifice their self-interest for the purpose of a higher cause. It enshrines the principle of Brotherhood or reciprocity. Sacrifice means cooperation, keeping in mind the claims of other beings—plants, animals, human beings, and even gods—on us, making our contribution to meet their requirements. Such sacrificial actions will prove to be for us “Kamdhenu,” a wish-fulfilling mythological cow of sage Vasishta, with divine qualities and with the ability to grant any wish asked of it. If one continues to work selflessly, both material and spiritual benefits will be showered upon him. In this connection, Devdutt Pattanaik, a mythologist, remarks that “all those people who tried to steal this cow from Vasishta ended up being cursed. What people did not realize was that while Kamdhenu could give anything that a person wanted, her keeper, Rishi Vasishta, did not desire anything. That is why Kamdhenu enjoyed his company.”

(Concluded)

WILLIAM CROOKES—A SCIENTIST OF THE DAY

I

WILLIAM CROOKES was an English chemist and physicist who attended the Royal College of Chemistry to study organic chemistry. He was continuously engaged in scientific activity for nearly sixty-seven years. A man of remarkable intellect, he was known for his industriousness. His experiments in chemistry and physics were known for the originality of design, and he was considered a “superb experimentalist.” Besides science, he was interested in economic and practical problems and psychical research. At the end of his second year in college, Crookes became a junior assistant to August Wilhelm von Hofmann, doing laboratory demonstrations and helping with research and commercial analysis. Crookes met scientists like George Stokes and Michael Faraday, who reinforced his interest in optical physics. When he embarked upon original work, it was in new compounds of selenium, and he published his first paper on the same in 1851. In 1859 he founded the journal “Chemical News,” which made him widely known, and remained its editor and owner all his life.

When spectrum analysis was introduced by G. R. Kirchoff, this technique was applied by Professor Crookes to the study of selenocyanides, newly discovered compounds of selenium. In 1861, he discovered thallium in some seleniferous deposits, isolated it, and studied the properties of this new element. In 1873 he determined its atomic weight. The name of this newly discovered element was based on its bright green emission line in spectrum analysis, as the Greek word *thallos* means “a young, green shoot or twig.” The discovery of thallium brought him a lot of recognition, and he was elected into the Royal Society of London in 1863.

Around 1870, Crookes invented partially evacuated glass tubes, called “Crookes tubes,” that contained two electrodes, a positive electrode (anode) and a negative electrode (cathode). When an electrical current was passed between the electrodes of one of the

tubes, a glow could be seen in the chamber. It is now known that the glow is due to the interaction of electrons, which travel from the cathode to the anode, with residual gas present in the device. At the time of Crookes's initial studies, however, the fluorescent light was poorly understood, being attributed to enigmatic rays, which were called *cathode rays* because they appeared to be emitted by the negative electrode. William Crookes was able to generate a higher vacuum in tubes and found out that as he pumped more air out of the tubes, they became totally dark, except for the anode end, where the glass of the tube itself began to glow. This showed that the cathode rays travelled in straight lines from the cathode (negative) end to the anode (positive), causing fluorescence in objects upon which they impacted, and produced great heat.

Crookes insisted that the cathode rays were formed by particles. He maintained they were a fourth state of matter, or radiant matter, where atoms were electrically charged. In 1897 it was Sir J. J. Thomson, who using a Crookes tube and deflecting the cathode rays by a magnetic field, discovered that the cathode rays were actually very tiny particles with a negative charge. Thomson proved that the cathode rays are streams of electrons. Thus, Crookes's work with radiant matter laid the groundwork for the understanding of plasma, a state of matter distinct from solids, liquids, and gases.

The article, "What is Matter and What is Force?" (*The Theosophist*, September 1882) mentions Professor Crookes's discovery of the "radiant matter," or "the fourth state of matter," by refining the gases to a condition so ethereal as to reach a state of matter that could be described as "ultra-gaseous," exhibiting an entirely novel set of properties. This fourth state of matter was named plasma by an American chemist, Irving Langmuir, in 1928. Plasma is a gas in which atoms have been stripped of electrons, *i.e.*, ionized. Several great men of science admitted the existence of such matter. They accepted the possibility on the analogy that just as there are sound and light vibrations to which our ears and eyes are insensible, so there could be matter beyond the gaseous state. Elsewhere we

read that occult science says that still beyond radiant matter lies the source of electricity, which is still matter.

A Master of Wisdom points out that the three states of matter—solid, liquid, and gaseous—are but so many stages in an unbroken chain of physical continuity. Beyond the fourth state of matter, there are fifth, sixth, and even *seventh* conditions of matter, as well as seven senses in man. It is not impossible that in time, these higher states of matter and higher dimensions of space will be discovered, and nature will be found to be septenary. In “Five Years of Theosophy,” the Master of Wisdom says that the “essence” of cometary matter is different from chemical and physical characteristics with which science is familiar, because the “essence” cannot be judged by that which is outwardly manifest. It is like trying to understand the nature of the mind by studying the brain. We must know the inner constitution of comets and other heavenly bodies to understand the “essence” of that matter. He describes comets to be the eldest progeny of *Mulaprakriti*, and to know about cometary matter, Professor Crookes will have to find out the fifth state of matter or extra-radiant state of matter.

In the *Secret Doctrine* (I, pp. 581, 583 and 584 *fn.*) we read that according to Professor Crookes one needs to understand protyle or the original primal matter that existed before the evolution of chemical elements. He observed that the definitions as to “what are the elements,” are far from satisfactory. His remarks support the assertions of the occultists that the terrestrial elements with which the chemists are familiar are present only in the outward robes of the sun, but there are many more elements in the sun and stars with which they are not familiar. “Our globe has its own special laboratory on the far-away outskirts of its atmosphere, crossing which, every atom and molecule change and differentiate from their primordial nature.” He also seems to suggest that our so-called elements have evolved from one primordial matter.

Some of the scientists, like Professor Crookes, accepted the possibility of reducing the elements to their first state, and even to

their first and primordial element. The difficulty arises because modern chemistry is familiar only with gross matter and is ignorant of the “real matter,” or SUBSTANCE. Occult Science teaches that there is one and only ONE ELEMENT, and various elements and sub-elements are but modifications and aspects of it. Modern Chemistry is only aware of chemical elements. But there are terrestrial and cosmic elements. Modern chemistry erroneously regarded these chemical elements to be simple bodies. Professor Crookes came very close to the occult position when he pointed out that what were regarded by modern chemistry as elements, and therefore considered to be simple and homogeneous bodies, were actually complex bodies made up of two or more constituents. For instance, he showed that Yttrium, which was considered to be a simple, homogeneous element, when subjected to some method of fractionation, was found to contain five different constituents, each of which had different properties. Similarly, when Didymium, which was for long thought to be a simple element, was subjected to fractionation, it was resolved into Praseodymium and Neodymium, each with dissimilar properties. Is it not possible that Praseodymium and Neodymium could be further resolved into simpler bodies? Where, then, is the actual ultimate element? The very idea of an element, as something absolutely primary and ultimate, seems to be growing less and less distinct, observed Professor Crookes. (*S.D.*, I, 140-41 & *fn.* and p. 625)

Such observations pointed to the existence of some homogeneous source and the possibility of reducing the elements to their primal form. Hence, Professor Crookes pointed out that commonly accepted elements of Chemistry are not simple and that they have evolved from simple matters, or perhaps from one sole kind of matter. In other words, he posited a homogeneous matter, which he called *protyle*, from which all the elements are derived. Professor Crookes’s suggestion of a primordial substratum (*protyle*) laid the foundation of METACHEMISTRY, *i.e.*, a complete philosophy of physics and chemistry that could take the place of mere hypothesis and empiricism

(*S.D.*, I, 622). “The Protyle of Professor Crookes is probably used to denote homogeneous matter on the most material plane of all,” *i.e.*, our plane. “Such matter is homogeneous only for those who are on the same plane of perception; so that if the Protyle of modern science is ever discovered, it will be homogeneous only to us,” writes H.P.B. (*Transactions*, p. 6)

The protyle of Professor Crookes is the original primal matter existing before the evolution of the chemical elements. It is the purely homogeneous substance in the ultimate composition of the atom. As mentioned in the *Secret Doctrine* (I, 46), biologists are searching for their homogeneous protoplasm and chemists for their protyle. “The Secret Doctrine carries this idea into the region of metaphysics and postulates a ‘One Form of Existence’ as the basis and source of all things....The Sanskrit word is *Prabhavapyaya*, ‘the place, or rather plane, whence emerges the origination, and into which is the resolution of all things,’” which is *Mulaprakriti*. But “Protyle” is on seven planes. On p. 328 and footnote (*S.D.*, I), we read that there are Seven Protyles or Seven *Prakriti*, each forming a *relatively* homogeneous basis for further differentiation into heterogeneity. The Seven Protyles are thus the phases assumed by “Substance” from its abstract state to the concrete objectivity. The protyle of Professor Crookes is the last of these, and “the incipient segregation of primordial matter into atoms and molecules takes its rise subsequent to the evolution of the Seven *Protyles*.”

On pp. 621-22 (*S.D.*, I), we read that in the “Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita,” T. Subba Row draws our attention to the lecture delivered by Professor Crookes upon the so-called elements of modern chemistry that gives an idea of the way in which these Elements spring from *Vishwanara*, the most objective of the three principles into which *Mulaprakriti* is differentiated. According to him, *Vishwanara* “seems to stand in the place of the *protyle* of Professor Crookes. *Except in a few particulars*, this lecture seems to give the outlines of the theory of physical evolution on the plane of *Vishwanara* and is, so far as I know, *the nearest approach made*

by modern investigators to the real occult theory on the subject.” H.P.B. adds approvingly that “these words will be re-echoed and approved by every Eastern Occultist.”

According to Shankaracharya, there are three stages in the process of evolution, analogous to the stages in the development of a seed into a plant. There is the undifferentiated seed stage or causal stage, the subtly differentiated germinating stage, and the fully differentiated plant stage. All change and evolution belong to the sphere of *Maya*. It is *Maya*, the creative power, which at first remains unmanifested, then becomes differentiated into subtle objects, and then into gross ones. *Brahman* conceived as the possessor of the undifferentiated *Maya*, or power of creation, is called *Isvara*. *Brahman*, possessed of subtly differentiated *Maya* is named *Hiranyagarbha*. God in this aspect would be the totality of all subtle objects. *Brahman* possessed of *Maya* differentiated further into gross or perceptible objects is called *Vishwanara*. This aspect of God is the totality of all gross objects, the entire manifested world.

T. Subba Row, in his *Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita* (p. 27), explains that *Vishwanara* is not to be looked upon merely as the manifested objective world but as the one physical basis from which the whole objective world starts into existence. Beyond this is *Hiranyagarbha*, which must be looked upon as the basis of the astral world. Beyond it is *Eswara*, which may alternatively be called *Sutratma* and may be looked upon as the *Karan sarira* of the Cosmos.

On p. 339 (*S.D.*, I), we read that the Ether of Science or the *Protyle* of Chemistry constitutes the *rude* material out of which the Builders built the systems in the Cosmos. In *Transactions*, (p. 108), we read that “the ether of which science has a suspicion is the grossest manifestation of Akasa, though on our plane, for us mortals, it is the seventh principle of the astral light, and three degrees higher than ‘radiant matter.’” The footnote on p. 621 (*S.D.*, I) says that radiant matter discovered by Professor Crookes will help further in understanding the true source of light.

(To be continued)

ON OVERCOMING EVIL

O MASTER, I see evil without and around me—hatred and plots against one’s fellow beings, plots against nature, plots against Mother Earth. I find myself plotting against these evildoers, whom I am beginning to hate. Am I becoming evil myself? Where does acquiescence in evil begin, and where does it end? When does passivity become a sin? Shall I not be hurt if I retaliate, even if the evils I fight are not directed against me personally but against others, or against nature? Is indignation against evil-doers justifiable? I beseech you to “completely dispel this doubt for me.”

Friend, he who touches dirt becomes dirty. He who thinks of evil becomes evil by the very act of giving room in his mind to those evil entities called bad thoughts, which pollute him. Yet you have spoken truly—passivity also gives entry to evil entities. Even indignation against evil adversely affects the particles making up the astral body, and so soon does indignation turn to anger! The mind is captured by these evil entities and is led away to plan retaliation. Constantly dwelling on the evil actions of others, whether with repugnance or pleasure, has an effect on the whole character.

O Master, does that mean that if I see injustice, I am to ignore it and turn my eyes away? Does not the mere fact that my Karma brought me to the position where I see it make me an accessory if I do nothing?

Look for that which is the destroyer of all evil and the generator of all good. *Love*, which breeds infinite patience, gives a knowledge of Time, of the chain of cause-effect-cause. It gives knowledge of the appropriate time for action and inaction—and purity in action, which contains *in itself* no seeds of individual thought, *i.e.*, the actor has not impressed his picture on the action but instead impressed on it the Universal Good. Therefore, does Krishna teach us to dedicate all actions to him.

But Master, will evil ever be checked this way? Did not the “Brothers of the White Lodge” have to give their life-blood to conquer the “Brothers of the Shadow” in the great destruction of

Atlantis? Must we not be ready to fight and to give up our life, if need be, to destroy evil forces?

Surely that is correct, my Friend, but does this only imply physical fighting? You cannot kill the deadly upas tree of evil by killing those who are but the temporary embodiments of evil. Only by altering the character of these temporary embodiments of evil can world conditions be produced where *none* are capable of giving way to evil, for they have become good.

Speak always of good, my Friend; teach others to distinguish between that which brings good and that which brings evil. Some will listen. Plead with the evil-doer; point out to the ignorant what evil is and what it does, and what is good. “Point out the ‘Way,’” while you are trying to tread it yourself. Never let your feelings be hardened against the wrong-doer. Treat him as well as the helpless and the afflicted with compassion. Yet it *is* necessary to fight evil, for both patience and tolerance can become evil. The line that separates good from evil is very thin. What method will you employ?

Unless it is your actual *dharma* to fight the evil actively, obey the following rules: “Love your enemies. Do good to them that hate you.” But remember that “justice commands us also never to allow injury to be done to the many, or even to one innocent person, by allowing the guilty one to go unchecked.”

What then is the drawbridge between the “evil without” and the “evil within”? Duty—what is due to another and what is due from us. Therein lies the secret of life. It is a secret that can be found only after lives of self-searching. The drawbridge stretches from the “evil without” over the “evil within” to the good that is in ourselves. When it has been built and we have learned how not to fall into the moat of inner evil, then we can withdraw it, for now we can look on the “evil without” dispassionately from above and work to ameliorate it.

This drawbridge can be called *Antaskarana*. It is built by constantly keeping that highest in mind. In this way even the evil-doer is an aid to our growth, for he makes us think of justice, of right and wrong.

THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE

FRAGMENT ONE—VII

“WHEN beholding her image on the waves of Space she whispers, ‘This is I,’—declare, O Disciple, that thy Soul is caught in the webs of delusion.” It is the higher mind that enables us to say, “I am I,” and in conjunction with Atma-Buddhi, it becomes the Individuality or the Reincarnating Ego or the “Hidden Self.” Waking up in the morning, one does not feel that one is a different person. There is a continuity of consciousness. Even in case of loss of memory, a person may forget his name and address, but he still feels that “I am myself and no other.” A schizophrenic is confused at the level of personality, but the sense of “I-ness” remains. This feeling of identity is the proof of the “Hidden Self.” It is called the “Soul” and “Perceiver” by Patanjali, and it is not dependent on the body and brain but works through and feels sublunary things through its *alter-ego*, the (lower) mind.

True individuality is different from the complex feeling, “I am Mr. Smith or Mrs. Brown,” which arises out of a long series of daily experiences strung together by the thread of memory. These experiences produce the sense of *Egoity* only while they last, which we call the *personality*. We tend to derive our identity from what surrounds our true Self, *i.e.*, our body, ideas, feelings, education, etc. This derived sense of self could be extremely fragile, requiring continual maintenance, nurturing, and defending. For instance, when we derive our sense of identity from our interactions with others, we may work towards getting approval from others and avoiding criticism. To bolster the sense of identity, we gather possessions. Our identity is often measured in terms of houses, cars, television sets, furniture, and paintings. We fear physical death because it implies separation from everything that we depend upon for a sense of self. The word “identity” is derived from the Latin *idem ficare*, which means “to make the same as ‘I.’” As we grow, we tend to equate or associate our body, feelings, or possessions with “I.” This

is termed *Sakkayaditthi*, or “delusion” of personality.

In Buddhist philosophy, *Sakkayaditthi* is the belief that the five aggregates, *i.e.*, *skandhas* or attributes, namely, physical form, feelings, perceptions, mental formations, and consciousness, are either the self, or that the self exists within them, or that the self possesses them. In his book, *A Guide to the Buddhist Path*, Sangharakshita, a Buddhist teacher, mentions ten fetters that bind a person to the wheel of life, or *bhavachakra*. The first fetter is *Sakkayaditthi* or personality view. To break this fetter is to understand that after death, there is neither the complete annihilation of the personal identity nor does the personal identity persist *unchanging*.

**“When to the World’s turmoil thy budding Soul lends ear;
when to the roaring voice of the Great Illusion thy Soul
responds; when frightened at the sight of the hot tears of pain;
when deafened by the cries of distress, thy Soul withdraws
like the shy turtle within the carapace of SELFHOOD, learn, O
Disciple, of her Silent ‘God’ thy Soul is an unworthy shrine.”**

The footnote explains that “Soul” is used here for the Human Ego or Manas. It is “Human Soul” in contradistinction to the Spiritual and Animal Souls. At every new birth, a new ray is launched by the Manas, or Higher Mind, to work through the body. That ray is as divine and pure in its essence as the Higher Mind, but in order to work on this plane, it gets clothed in the astral vesture, which makes it forget its divine origin. It is called the lower mind or incarnated mind, which becomes dual in nature, capable of turning toward the divine to get help and guidance or gravitating toward *Kama*, the principle of passions and desires. When the mind becomes *Kama*-tending instead of *Buddhi*-tending, it pulls itself away from the divine parent. Likewise, when it becomes selfish and self-centred, it distances itself from the divine parent.

Mr. Crosbie points out that the Self (*Atma*) is the same in each being, no matter how great or low that being may be. The soul represents the acquired experience gained through evolution. Each individual being is not only Self, but, in addition, the acquired

experience gained through contact with all other beings. Thus, the only differences between souls are in their degrees of acquired experience. (*The Friendly Philosopher*, pp. 343-44)

These experiences bring about a change in the instruments used by the Ego, as well as the capacity of the Ego to use these instruments and express itself. H.P.B. sums up the idea in the article, “Genius.” What is the difference between an ordinary man, an idiot, and a genius? The Ego in each of these cases is of the same essence and substance. No Ego differs from another Ego in its essential nature. That which makes one person a great individual and another a silly person is the capability of the brain and body to transmit and give expression to the light of the *Inner man* within, writes H.P.B.

We are all budding souls, unfolding and evolving through experiences. Sometimes the one who is young in age may be old in soul-experience. There exists turmoil and deceptions in the world, and if the soul gets distracted or gets involved in them, it is lost. The Soul “lends ear,” meaning it gets interested and involved. The noise, the turmoil, may be there, but they cannot harm us as long as *we* do not take an interest. Also, when the soul responds to the objective world, *i.e.*, it attends to inclinations of the senses, it becomes *kama*-tending, and at the time of death, there is very little that is worthy of getting assimilated with the Ego, to be taken to *Devachan*.

Our soul responds to the roaring voice of the “Great Illusion,” or the objective universe. Our Higher Mind is the Perceiver, and anything that is looked at or perceived or experienced is objective. Even our personality, which, to us, is subjective, is really objective because the *Bhikkhus* are able to stand aside, observe, and analyse it. As we go higher in evolution, more and more things that appeared subjective to us would become objective. For example, when one gets angry, “anger” is subjective, but after a while, when one sits down to analyse the reason for anger, that same anger becomes objective. We need to become more and more objective in our experiences, where we take the position of an observer of both painful and pleasurable experiences. Mr. Judge advises that we

should lean back “on the great ocean of Self which is never moved....So, lean back and look on at the ebb and flow of life that washes to our feet and away again many things that are not easy to lose nor pleasant to welcome.”

Our soul can become a worthy instrument of the Divine only when we have cultivated sympathy, which is the opposite of indifference. The carapace is the hard shell on the back of crustaceans, like crabs or tortoises, which protects them. Selfhood is the carapace of the man who is fully absorbed in himself and avoids getting involved in others' woes. If pain, extreme sorrow, and suffering of others, give us a terrible fright and make us withdraw into our safe and secure world, refusing to get entangled, saying, “It is their karma!” then such a soul cannot receive and reflect the guidance of its divine parent.

When we see someone in pain, it is our duty to help in whatever way we can instead of thinking that it is *his* karma. *Light on the Path* reminds us, “Remember, the sin and shame of the world are your sin and shame.” None of us acts in isolation. We are all united on inner and invisible planes and are continually affecting each other through our thoughts, feelings, and actions. To ignore the suffering of another by saying, “It is his karma!” is a gross misunderstanding of the doctrine of Karma. If a person meets with an accident and we are present at the scene, then under karma, it is our duty to help him. If a person comes to us asking for money, or seeking solace, or to solve a legal or moral problem, then it is our duty to help. Many people in India felt that the miserable plight of the untouchables was owing to their own karma, so, for a long time, no one came forward to take up their cause.

It is difficult to say what portion of another's karma is *strictly of his own making*. As Mr. Judge suggests, “The indissoluble unity of the race demands that we should consider every man's troubles as partly due to ourselves, because we have been always units in the race and helped to make the conditions which cause suffering.” (*“Forum” Answers*, p. 55)

However, if the motive for withdrawal is good, it is taken into account by Karma. Also, if the lack of knowledge or extreme grief or circumstances render us incapable of helping, but if we ardently desired to help, then, “your strong desire will strike like Vulcan upon other hearts in the world, and suddenly you will find that done which you had longed to be the doer of,” writes Mr. Judge. (*Letters That Have Helped Me*, p. 1)

Lending a sympathetic ear to others’ sorrow gives us an opportunity to learn from other people’s experiences. Life is a school in which every event and experience yields a lesson, and the learning of the lesson is the most important factor. For some people, nothing is an experience until it happens to *them*. But it is possible to learn from the experience of another if we have empathy. We enjoy and suffer vicariously by reading a book or watching a movie, or watching television. This learning from the experiences of other people calls for great imagination and sympathy. Without ourselves being an orphan, or even without encountering one in our life, we can experience that state, if we are sensitive enough, when we read, say, about the little girl Topsy, in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, who says that she never had a father or mother; she just grew. When we genuinely *sympathise* with the person who has lost a loved one or is experiencing sickness or a financial loss, we *live* that experience with him/her. We *know* where the shoe pinches. While travelling in a railway compartment, many things happen around us. For those who are attentive, this journey may prove to be an enriching experience; for the one lost in the thoughts of what they would do on getting down, this journey means nothing. The same is true of life’s journey.

In light of the above, it is easy to understand when and why the soul becomes an *unworthy* shrine (temple) of the Silent “God.” The Silent “God” or Higher Self, being of divine nature, cannot directly incarnate in, nor act upon, the gross material nature of the four lower principles. It can act on the earth in the body acquired by Karma, through its image reflected in the lower mortal nature. This reflected

image is the Lower Self—the mortal terrestrial man. While the former is Divine immortal Individuality, the latter is the perishable personality. By making good use of our mind and keeping the astral body pure, we provide a fit vehicle for the Higher Self to shine through.

This earth, Disciple, is the Hall of Sorrow. Buddha taught that all conditioned existence is *Dukkha* or suffering; is impermanent; and is devoid of true selfhood. Sangharakshita, a Buddhist teacher, points out that there are three kinds of suffering: (1) *Actual suffering*, as when we have a toothache, bruised hand, etc. (2) *Potential suffering*: The process of birth, growing up, old age, and up to death is full of suffering. There is suffering arising from our likes and dislikes. It does not mean that there are no pleasant experiences in the world, but even at the bottom of pleasant experiences, there is pain, a concealed suffering. “We look before and after, and pine for what is not; our sincerest laughter, with some pain, is fraught,” writes Shelley. That which is a source of pleasure may be tied up with anxiety, as we are afraid of losing it. It could be a person, a thing, a position, or power. There is always the *potential suffering* attached to everything in this world—the suffering that comes from the loss of the loved object, due to the impermanent nature of things. (3) There is Metaphysical suffering, as nothing mundane, earthly, or conditioned can give full or final satisfaction.

Our body, our ideas, and our emotions all keep changing. “In sensation no permanent home can be found, because change is the law of this vibratory existence. That fact is the first one that must be learned by the disciple. It is useless to pause and weep for a scene in a kaleidoscope which has passed.” We try to derive pleasure out of sensations, but things and pleasures of the world are as fleeting as the scene or pattern formed in a kaleidoscope. In fact, the law of diminishing returns seems to govern the realm of pleasures. We do not derive the same pleasure the second time and still less the third time, and so on.

(To be continued)

THE FOUR PURUSHARTHAS

THE HINDU *Shastras*, or religious injunctions, are underpinned by the philosophy of the *Purusharthas*, or the fundamental objectives of all human endeavours. These are generally stated as *Kama* or Desire; *Artha* or Wealth; *Dharma* or Virtuous Law; and *Moksha* or Liberation. When we juxtapose these alongside the four causes of Platonic philosophy, we find that *Moksha* or liberation, would be the final, or teleological cause, as it is the ultimate purpose of all existence. *Dharma* would be the formal cause, as it is the archetypal model on which all human action ought to be based. *Artha* would be the material cause, since it serves as the worldly or mundane means to the fulfilment of desires. And finally, *Kama*, the irrepressible driving force of all existence, would be the efficient cause. When seen in this light, it becomes clear that the *Purusharthas* are not so much an externally imposed injunction as they are a delineation of the innate and fundamental aspects of human existence. An individual's evolutionary trajectory in the stream of life is determined by the quality along which these four aspects are fashioned by the individual himself.

We can quite easily imagine and perhaps see around us the demoniacal quality of these *Purusharthas* as Shri Krishna denotes it in the Sixteenth Chapter of the *Bhagavad-Gita*. The demoniacal quality of *Kama* is selfish desire or lust—the craving for one's own gratification, even if at the expense of another. Such *Kama* would naturally exploit illicit means to achieve its ends, which is the demoniacal quality of *Artha*. Such motive and means are diametrically opposed to the archetypal model of conduct exemplified in the Jaina philosophy of *parasparopagraho jivanam* or Prajapati's injunction of *parasparabhaava* as stated by Shri Krishna in the Third Chapter of the *Bhagavad-Gita*. And hence, debased *Kama* and *Artha* occasion demoniacal *Dharma* as a natural consequence. And for those who have engendered such demoniacal tendencies by their own thoughts and deeds, Shri Krishna says in the Sixteenth Chapter

that he hurls them into infernal wombs life after life, whereupon they enter a downward path that never reaches him. Theosophy teaches that those who enter this path eventually sever their connection with their Higher Self and are immediately reborn upon death, successively for long periods of time until their personality is completely annihilated, there being no redeeming quality that can assimilate into the higher Spiritual nature that has deserted them. The most evil among them become Adept-Sorcerers, co-workers with nature in her destructive aspect, and achieve immortality *in matter* or in evil for ages to come, as opposed to Spirit or good. This becurd and wretched life is the eventual “Moksha” awaiting those that tread the demoniacal path in alacrity today. But the law of Karma is ever merciful and offers opportunities for redemption even up to the very precipice into which the demoniacal path culminates. One thought of regret or pang of conscience is enough to turn a person around from even the most debased state. And hence Mr. Judge warns that no man has the right to judge another when the never-erring law of Karma itself has not condemned.

Then we have the popular understanding of *Moksha* as *Mukti*, the final liberation of the individual from the cycle of birth and death, which is called the Open Path in the *Voice of the Silence*. This is achieved by conformance to *Dharma* as enjoined in the *smritis*. Such *Dharma* would only allow for the acquisition of legitimate wealth or *Artha*, through hard work in a socially beneficial enterprise. And the wealth so acquired is entreated for use to fulfil desires concomitant with the stage of life or *ashrama*, in which the individual is passing through, after having made the requisite sacrifices. Such desires, strictly within the precincts of *Dharma*, are of a godly nature, and Krishna says that he is that *Kama* himself in the Seventh Chapter (sloka 11): *dharmaviruddo bhutesou kamo'smi bharatarsabha*. Such a life of godly characteristic is exemplified in the life of Sujata from the *Light of Asia*. She lives a simple householder life, dutifully turning the wheel of life, performing good deeds and sacrifices, and enjoying as a consequence a tranquil life on earth interspersed with

long sojourns in *Devachan* and its unalloyed felicity, as is the case for such individuals. The supreme of such sacrifices is the sweetmeal she brought to Lord Buddha when his life was waning for want of nourishment, that great life which would offer hope to all mankind.

Then spake our Lord, "Thou teachest them who teach,
Wiser than wisdom in thy simple lore.
Be thou content to know not, knowing thus
Thy way of right and duty: grow, thou flower!
With thy sweet kind in peaceful shade—the light
Of Truth's high noon is not for tender leaves
Which must spread broad in other suns and lift
In later lives a crowned head to the sky.
Thou who hast worshipped me, I worship thee."

Such serene souls go from felicity to felicity, doing their whole duty appropriate to their station in life, and are borne along on the stream of evolution guided by stronger hands. They will eventually reach *Moksha* at the end of the great cycle, reaping a rich harvest of experiences from life's inevitable pains and sorrows. This is the Open Path. But there is a higher way still.

The path of the Bodhisattva is entered by souls that have reached the unshakeable conviction that all conditioned existence is suffering and, out of boundless pity for all that lives, have forsaken their own Nirvana to help nature on her upward arc. For them, *Moksha* is *Mukti* from selfishness to "*remain unselfish till the endless end*," "*to forego eternal bliss for Self, to help on man's salvation*" (*The Voice of the Silence*). The *Dharma* he follows to achieve this end is that of self-sacrifice and the practice of Paramitas six and ten in number. The *Artha* or the means he seeks to achieve his ends, is Power, Peace, and Possessions. Says *Light on the Path*:

"But those possessions must belong to the pure soul only.... The peace you shall desire is that sacred peace which nothing can disturb, and in which the soul grows as does the holy flower upon the still lagoons. And that power which the disciple shall covet is that which shall make him appear as nothing in the eyes of men." Furthermore, the *Kama* or

THE FOUR PURUSHARTHAS

Desires he entertains is for “only that which is within you... that which is beyond you...that which is unattainable.” (pp. 3-4)

For him, the *Purusharthas*, or four fundamental objectives, are not for the embodied *Purusha* but for the supreme *Purusha*—the Self of ALL. Verily such a one is the *Purushottama* spoken of by Shri Krishna in the Fifteenth Chapter of the *Bhagavad-Gita*.

TURNING and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out
When a vast image out of *Spiritus Mundi*
Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.
The darkness drops again; but now I know
That twenty centuries of stony sleep
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

—WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS
“THE SECOND COMING”

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

According to myths, the ancient world was filled with wild animals, terrifying monsters, deities, and also nymphs. Nymphs are semi-divine female beings that personified the elements of nature, like water bodies, mountains, forests, the weather, or specific plants. Nymphs “encompassed almost every semi-divine woman and girl in myth, including a number of goddesses.” For instance, Thetis, the sea goddess, and the underworld river Styx were both sea nymphs as well as goddesses. When applied to mortal women, the word “nymph” in ancient Greek could also mean “young girl” or “unmarried woman.” However, in Greek mythology we have nymphs that were married or were mothers. Thus, Maia was the mother of Hermes, the messenger god, and Amphitrite was the wife of Poseidon.

In the Roman poet Ovid’s poem, the *Metamorphoses*, Daphne was a stunningly beautiful nymph who lived in the forest and was a huntress who had decided to abstain from sex and marriage. One day when she was in the forest, the god Apollo saw her and chased her. Daphne fled through the forest and was saved by her father, Peneus, a river god, who transformed her into the laurel tree. The story shows how Daphne is represented by a laurel tree, which is of significance to the god Apollo. Thus, Daphne was a dryad, or tree nymph, while Oreads, mentioned in Homer’s *Iliad*, were mountain nymphs. “The Pleiades and Hyades were two sets of daughters of the god Atlas who eventually were transformed into stars.” Although myths may appear to be fictional stories, we see that nymph myths are about ancient landscape and ancient people. “The natural world was imbued with a divine presence from the gods who physically made it....Nymphs were a part of this divine presence....Being present in nature and present in places with nymphs could bring about divine inspiration for philosophers, poets, and artists alike,” writes Kitty Smith, Ph.D. Candidate in Classical and Roman History, University of Sydney. (*The Conversation*, July 8, 2025)

The celestial beings are called *devas*, generically, by the Hindus. The term *deva* literally means the Shining Ones, and they cover spiritual beings of various degrees. All these celestial beings are not superior to man. H.P.B. points out that some of these *devas* are superior and some inferior to man. Each of these beings was either a man in prior periods of evolution and thus is a perfected being, or he is preparing to become a man. Thus, Beings above men who are perfected are the *gods*, and those below him are the non-intelligent and semi-intelligent Elementals. There are four types of elementals pertaining to four elements, also known as “nature-spirits.” The elementals of fire are called “spirits of fire,” or salamanders; those of the air are called “spirits of air,” or sylphs; those of the water are called “spirits of water,” or undines (also known as nymphs); and those of the earth are called “spirits of earth,” or gnomes or elves. In the earlier times, most people believed in the existence of elementals. In the myths and fables of almost all nations, they appeared under various names, such as, fairies, dwarfs, djins, peris, goblins, pixies, *gandharvas*, *yakshas*, *kinnaras* and *apsaras*. The nature-spirits, or, gnomes, sylphs, fairies, etc., are termed *Deva Yonis*. They are elementals of a lower kind and belong to the three lower kingdoms. After a very long period, these beings will be evolved into men. They are *future men* or *incipient men* because their purity is automatic, like the innocence of a child. They will have to pass through the human stage and acquire purity through merit by exercising moral choice.

In the article, “Kosmic Mind,” H.P.B. quotes a physiologist who explains how the *epithelium cells* prevent a large number of poisons from penetrating lymphatic spaces, and if these poisons are injected directly into blood, then *lymphatic cells* play a role in separating and making them reappear through the intestinal walls. Interestingly, the Latin word “*lympa*” is derived from the Greek “*nymphē*,” which means “a nymph or *inferior Goddess*.” Therefore, the ancient Greeks, Latins, and Hindus maintain that every atom of matter in the five Elements is an emanation from an inferior god or goddess, and that god or goddess is himself or herself an emanation from a still superior

deity. Each of these atoms is *Brahma*, because one of the names of *Brahma* is *Anu*, or atom, so that each atom becomes endowed with consciousness, intelligence, and free will of its kind. Moreover, the trinity of Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva is the symbol of the material Universe and its gradual evolution, as *Brahma* comes from the root *brih*, “to expand,” and Vishnu from the root *vish*, “to enter into” or “to pervade.” All these go to show why the ancient Hindus endowed every atom with a mind and consciousness and gave it a distinct name of a god or a goddess. Hence, it would not be an exaggeration to say that the thirty-three crores, or 330 million, of gods and goddesses of the Hindu Pantheon are contained not only in the macrocosm, or the Universe, but also in the microcosm, or man, writes H.P.B.

The term “nymph” appears to be synonymous with “apsara.” In the article “Footnotes to ‘Notes on the Modern Egyptian Theosophy,’” H.P.B. comments that the jinn, or Genii are “the *Preta*, *Yaksha*, *Dakini*—the lowest of the Hindu elementals, while the *Gandharvas*, *Vidyadharas*, and even the *Apsaras* belong to the highest. Some of them—the former, are dangerously mischievous, while the latter are benevolent and, if properly approached willing to impart to men useful knowledge of arts and sciences.” In light of this, it is easy to understand the stories of nymphs such as Urvasi and Pramalocho. In *The Theosophical Glossary*, Urvasi is described as a divine nymph, mentioned in the *Rig-Veda*, who, cursed by the gods, descended to earth. The loves of Pururavas (the Vikrama), an occult character, and the nymph Urvasi are the subject of Kalidasa’s world-famous drama, the *Vikramorvasi*.

In the allegory of the Puranas, Sage Kandu, who represents the first race humanity, was performing pious austerities, and an *Apsara* (nymph), Pramlocha, was sent by Indra to tempt him. They spend an enormous number of years together, which represents the duration of the cycle between the first and the second human race. When the terrified Apsara flies away, along with the drops of perspiration from her body, the child she has conceived comes out. These drops are

gathered by the wind, matured by the beams of the moon, and in time grow in size and become the lovely girl named Marisha—the symbol of the Sweat-born Race.

A team of interdisciplinary researchers has uncovered striking evidence that chimpanzees are not just tool users but intuitive engineers possessing “an innate understanding of material properties, crafting termite-fishing tools with a level of sophistication once thought to be exclusive to humans.” Researchers observed that they picked flexible plant stems for termite fishing, avoiding the stiffer ones, which, when tested with a mechanical tester were found to be 175% more rigid than the stems selected by chimpanzees. These preferred plant species were also used by distant chimpanzee populations, thereby showing a shared technological culture among them.

Moreover, such advanced tool-making skills in chimpanzees make us think that perhaps the roots of human ingenuity go far deeper into our shared evolutionary past than previously imagined. Additionally, humans and chimpanzees share approximately 98.7 per cent of their DNA, which goes to explain similarities in their behaviour, cognition, and social structures. “However, small genetic differences account for key distinctions—humans have larger brains, complex language capabilities, and more intricate cultures.”

Premeditated behaviour in chimpanzees, such as preparing specific tools in advance for anticipated tasks, “is a hallmark of higher intelligence, blurring the lines between human and non-human cognition.” Jane Goodall, whose work in Gombe has revolutionised our understanding of chimpanzees, has observed that besides using tools, chimpanzees displayed emotions, social bonds, and rudimentary communication. Her “work paved the way for modern primatology and redefined humanity’s place in the animal kingdom....If we acknowledge their advanced capabilities, we must also take responsibility for ensuring their continued existence. By studying and protecting them, we gain invaluable insight into our

origins and the very essence of what it means to be human,” writes Dr. A. P. Jayaraman. (*Bhavan’s Journal*, July 16-31, 2025)

Desmond Morris, the author of *The Naked Ape* and *The Human Zoo*, once observed, “We may prefer to think of ourselves as fallen angels, but in reality, we are rising apes.” But is that true? Although great similarity in anatomical structure and behaviour had 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 risen from the apes. If so, how does one account for human-like intelligence possessed by the anthropoid apes? Occult science teaches that at a certain point in evolution, man was mindless, *i.e.*, devoid of thinking and choosing powers and lacking *self-consciousness*. These 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 a union, in the 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 power to think and choose, and also with self-consciousness. But once again, men with minds 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—Orangutan, 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....The latter [Apes] are truly ‘speechless men’ and will become speaking animals (or men of a lower order) in the Fifth Round,

while the adepts of a certain school hope that some of the Egos of the apes of a higher intelligence will reappear at the close of the Sixth Root-race.” (*S.D.*, II, 262)

What is it that distinguishes a man from an animal? It is self-consciousness and the power to think and choose. These arise from the mind. “Without this *quicken*ing spirit, or *human Mind* or soul, there would be no difference between man and beast” (*S.D.*, II, 513). It is said that only when man had developed a brain that was of much *better* and *deeper* capacity than that of any other animal, was he given the light of mind by Divine Beings—*Manasaputras*—in a manner comparable to one candle lighting many. As a result, man was endowed with self-consciousness and with the power to think and choose. Can an improved quality of *brain* endow an animal with humanlike consciousness and cognitive capacities, such as the ability to feel pleasure and pain (like human beings), rationality, and richness of relationships? It is the mind that affects the quality of the brain and not *vice versa*. “The depth and variety of brain convolutions in man are caused by the presence of *Manas* and are not the cause of mind,” writes Mr. Judge.

H.P.B. observes that according to Dr. F. Pfaff, Professor of Natural Science in the University of Erlangen, the gulf between man and apes was as wide and as deep in the Tertiary period as we find it today. The Tertiary period consists of the Eocene, Miocene and Pliocene periods. If we turn to pp. 678-79 (*S.D.*, II), we read that in the Miocene period there was the existence of primeval savage and fossil relics that show that this savage man was acquainted with fire and the mode of kindling it, whereas at that time the only anthropoid ape was *Dryopithecus*. And from that time onwards, right through the Pliocene period and Glacial period, it has not changed much but is in the same low grade of development. How then can we explain the evolution of this ape into man during the first half of the Miocene period? If we push back to the Eocene period to find a common ancestor of man and *Dryopithecus*, no fossils of anthropoid apes are to be found in that strata. It is anthropoid apes that have descended from man.