

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

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THE POWER OF POSITIVE THINKING

THEOSOPHY teaches *Man is a soul*. “Soul” indicates essential nature of things. For instance, “sweetness” is the soul of sugar, *i.e.*, even if other qualities of sugar—its colour, size of the crystal, etc.—might change, so long as it is sweet, it does not cease to be sugar. So also the basic or essential nature of man is “self-awareness,” which comes from the mind [soul]. But “Mind is the name given to the sum of the states of consciousness grouped under Thought, Will and Feeling” (*S.D.*, I, 38). Besides self-consciousness or “I-am-I” feeling, what distinguishes man from an animal is the power to think and choose.

In the *Gita*, Shri Krishna says, “No man resteth a moment inactive,” *i.e.*, even when inactive on the bodily plane, we are all the time acting on the thought-plane. What is the nature of our thoughts? Mostly self-regarding—what shall I cook? What shall I wear tomorrow? Or of settling scores with some colleague in the office, or enviously brooding over another’s success, or getting anxious about things that are clearly beyond our control. There are sensuous thoughts and wicked thoughts of harming another. How often do we find ourselves thinking about another’s sorrow or reflecting upon some verses from the scriptures?

It is from such a chaotic state of mind that we have to make the beginning. As *The Voice of the Silence* says:

Strive with thy thoughts unclean before they overpower thee.
Use them as they will thee, for if thou sparest them and they

take root and grow, know well, these thoughts will overpower and kill thee. Beware, Disciple, suffer not, e'en though it be their shadow, to approach....If thou would'st not be slain by them, then must thou harmless make thy own creations, the children of thy thoughts, unseen, impalpable, that swarm round human kind. (pp. 13 and 61)

This shows two things: (1) we can observe our thoughts and (2) Thoughts are “creations” or entities. Hence, when unwholesome thoughts enter our mind, we can observe them as an outside invasion and not be identified with them or brood over them. By brooding over them, we give them a power that they do not ordinarily have. Two thoughts cannot occupy the same plane [or mind] at the same time. We must cultivate the power of positive thinking by learning to displace negative thoughts by positive thoughts. When we say “positive” thoughts, we mean positive or affirmative formulation, *i.e.*, instead of saying “I will never be angry,” let us say, “I will always be calm.” But more than that, “positive” thoughts are the *thoughts arising from the wholesome state of mind*. Thus, we can replace thoughts of envy by *mudita* or sympathetic joy, *i.e.*, sharing the joy of others; thoughts of hatred and anger by thoughts of love and charity. Buddha says that those who express thoughts of revenge tie their mind with the intention of retaliation. We actually experience a kind of “knot” in our mind and heart, when we entertain revengeful thoughts. As against this, when we practise love and charity we are in a totally different state of mind. *The Voice of the Silence* compares charity with a “sunny glade in the dark forest depths, a spot on earth mirrored from Amitabha’s paradise.” Imagine journeying through a dark forest, with its terrifying darkness, and then walking along, when you come across a “sunny glade,” *i.e.*, a patch of ground free from darkness, you feel great joy and relief. Our everyday consciousness, or our consciousness when we harbour thoughts of criticism, anger, hatred or dislike for another, is like the dark forest. But when we consciously entertain thoughts of good will, affection, love and charity, we create in our consciousness a “sunny glade.” This state

of mind is like a “spot on earth mirrored from Amitabha’s paradise,” *i.e.*, it is as if our consciousness, temporarily, reflects the purity and clarity of Amitabha Buddha’s consciousness.

But, in what sense is thought a “creation”? As soon as a thought leaves the brain, it combines with a unit of life energy called an elemental and forms an *entity*. This “entity” gets its character from us, depending upon the quality of the thought—good, bad or indifferent. *We create, with every thought, a demon or an angel*. To think angrily or with hate about another is like sending on an invisible plane a tiny man with a stick to beat that person. The length of life of this “entity” depends upon the intensity of the thought. It is said that when a person who normally harbours good and noble thoughts, suddenly gives way to base thoughts and feelings, the life span of such thoughts is longer.

These thoughts, good and bad, not only help or hinder their creator, but are impressed in an invisible register called *astral light*, forming a common pool of thoughts. Each one of us attracts from this pool, the thoughts that are consubstantial with our nature. Just like pollution affects us, but once again the way we handle our cars affects the surroundings. Often we find a picture of a Saint or a Yogi in meditation, surrounded by ferocious animals, subdued to a state of calm. Tigers, deer, snakes and doves are all in harmony in the vicinity of such a being. The state of total harmlessness within him gets reflected outside, creating an atmosphere of calmness and harmony. Pure thoughts give rise to pure magnetism. Hence we say that the great ones entertain only such benevolent thoughts that they charge the atmosphere *with entities powerful for good alone*.

A Master has gone on record as saying that each member, if earnest and unselfish, can become a centre of powerful influences, gathering like-minded people around him and benefiting the whole neighbourhood. What comes in the way of each member becoming such a centre? It is, basically and mainly, the mental attitude. Mr. Judge points out that most students think that people around are not receptive. Who cares for Theosophy these days? But this is

dangerous, because we are connected with others on the mental plane and if we think nothing can be done, we impress other minds around us with the same thought and then, of course, nothing is done. As against this, if we *think* Theosophy and say to ourselves, earnestly and sincerely with the wish that just as I have benefited from Theosophy, let others too, be benefited, then it would be like whispering into the ears of others who are in our vicinity, “Theosophy, help and hope for thee.” Such an attitude combined with sincere efforts at promulgation can have a miraculous effect. To *think Theosophy* means to *constantly aspire* towards it day and night. In other words, each one of us must inquire, where do my thoughts turn *naturally*, when I do not have anything pressing to think or do? Like children having finished their homework run towards their base, *i.e.*, playground, have we made Theosophy such a base?

H.P.B. wrote that there are people who never think with the higher faculties of their mind at all and there are those who think even upon ordinary matters from that higher plane. “The person who is endowed with this faculty of thinking about even the most trifling things from the higher plane of thought has, by virtue of that gift which he possesses, a plastic power of formation, so to say, in his very imagination.” Whatever he thinks about, his thoughts will be more intense than the thoughts of an ordinary person, and by this very intensity, it obtains the *power of creation*.

To achieve the desired result, we need to *picturise*, *i.e.*, form a clear mental picture of what we want. Mr. Judge says that trained Imagination can produce an actual image or form in the astral substance which works as a mould. “It is therefore the King faculty, inasmuch as the Will cannot do its work if the Imagination be at all weak or untrained” (*The Ocean of Theosophy*, p. 148). Most of our diseases are caused by fear and wrong imagination. If we would remove the fear and give a right bent to our imagination, then two thirds of the diseases would vanish, says H.P.B.

Noell Nelson, a clinical psychologist, shows how positive beliefs and hence optimism play an important role. Thus:

All of your beliefs—about yourself, your abilities, your potential, your “place” in the world—affect how you live your life. In fact, beliefs are so powerful that they can even affect whether you live or die....To discover your beliefs about the future, start by looking at your “core beliefs,” the ones that make broad, sweeping statements about life....“The future is wide open; it is whatever you make of it” is a typical winner’s core belief. It stresses the enormous possibilities available in the future and the degree to which an individual is in charge of his or her own future. From this belief, winners will generate secondary beliefs such as “Where there’s a will, there’s a way” and “As one door shuts another one opens.”...Winners’ beliefs imply a future full of positive possibilities and support their ability to go into the unknown with confidence and hope....No matter how grim your present seems, be willing to accept the belief that the future holds positive possibilities. The wonderful thing about possibilities is that they can be turned into probabilities and from there into actuality.

Positive thoughts and feelings call forth best efforts; so that the thing that seemed impossible moves into the sphere of the possible. When we make a positive formulation, *it is a direct affirmation of the will*. Once we take the positive mental position saying, “I can do it,” or “it can happen,” the whole of the emotional nature must be brought in perfect harmony with this. *When the desire is intense, the will comes into action*. Mr. Judge says that when you ardently desire to do some good thing, “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.”

We have to think positive, feel positive, believe and have faith, but this does not mean getting attached to the results or asserting our will. There is a difference between the statements: “I *must* get a first class” and “I *can* get a first class.” In the latter we do our very best and leave the results to the Law. In the former case, it is assertion of personal will. When our will is not in conflict with the Divine Will it becomes Creative Will.

As Mr. Crosbie suggests:

The action of the will is through ideas. The ideas give the direction. Small ideas, small force; large ideas, large force; the Force itself is illimitable, for it is the force of Spirit, infinite and exhaustless. What we lack are universal ideas. (*The Friendly Philosopher*, p. 270)

At the cosmic level, it is through this will that everything in the Universe came into existence and is kept in place. The highest power of thought, *Kriyasakti*, which makes of man a creator, lies latent within each. “The ancients held that any idea will manifest itself externally; if one’s attention [and will] is deeply concentrated upon it...” (*S.D.*, I, 293). Further:

This thinking of oneself as this, that, or other, is the chief factor in the production of every kind of psychic or even physical phenomena. The words: “Whosoever shall say to this mountain be thou removed and cast into the sea, and shall not doubt...that thing will come to pass,” are no vain words. Only, the word faith ought to be translated by WILL. Faith without will is like a wind-mill without wind—barren of results. (*S.D.*, II, 59 fn.)

Mr. Judge suggests that in order to develop spiritual will we must learn to eradicate the personal element, and the essence of eradicating the personal element lies in doing the things we dislike to do—mortifying the personality.

BE of good cheer. Do not think of today’s failures, but of the success that may come tomorrow. You have set yourselves a difficult task, but you will succeed if you persevere; and you will find a joy in overcoming obstacles. Remember, no effort that we make to attain something beautiful is ever lost.

—HELLEN KELLER

HOW SHOULD WE TREAT OTHERS?

THE BHAGAVAD-GITA WAY

IN the very opening verse of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, we find Dhritarashtra, the blind king, the patriarch of the Kuru clan, asking the question to his wise companion Sanjaya:

Tell me, O Sanjaya, what the people of my own party and those of Pandu, who are assembled at Kurukshetra resolved upon war, have been doing. (*Gita*, I)

In this first verse itself, the philosophy of life of the man of the world is summed up. There is a deep-rooted notion that only a close group of my kith and kin, my friends and relations, my servants and my acquaintances, only those who share my views, my values and support me in my good and evil undertakings are “mine” and the rest, however great and mighty, however right and justified in their stand, are to be classed as “not mine” or “others.” The result of such an attitude was the slaughter of the Kurus and the destruction of many a great warrior of that time in the most horrible battle between the two clans. But what else can we expect from blind Dhritarashtra whose kingdom was run by his ambitious and evil-minded son Duryodhana? His basis of life lacked the right knowledge of the true nature of man and the true purpose of life.

In reality, there is no such thing as *separateness*. We are all children of one sweet mother—brothers and sisters. The manifested world with myriads of things and beings has the same divine origin and the same possibilities of glorious destiny, if only we would understand our true nature. In reality, each one of us is the Immortal Self, working through the body.

Krishna then draws the attention of Arjuna to his duties. Each person is expected to make his contribution, in his sphere of life. Each one has to do his natural duty. In this excellent scheme of division of labour, each is expected only to do what comes to him naturally, effortlessly and joyfully under Karma.

The respective duties of the four castes, of Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, and Sudras, are also determined by the

qualities which predominate in the disposition of each, O harasser of thy foes. (*Gita*, XVIII)

Interdependence is a way of life, whether we like it or not. We derive benefits from the labour of “other” men and women on physical, psychic, and intellectual as well as on spiritual planes. No task is mean or insignificant. Categorization of human beings on the basis of the kind of work they do for their livelihood and the amount of money they earn has created “class culture” and removed the sense of dignity of labour, so much so that not so long ago, one class of human beings whose job it was to do menial work were considered “untouchables” and treated like lepers! It may be worthwhile to pause and ponder over the kind of treatment we mete out to others less fortunate than ourselves, who are dependent on us and whose service we take for granted.

The great ones, the sages and seers live their life and set an example for us to follow. It is lack of true knowledge, our own ignorance, that creates confusion and a sense of separateness.

Seek this wisdom by doing service, by strong search, by questions, and by humility; the wise who see the truth will communicate it unto thee, and knowing which thou shalt never again fall into error, O son of Bharata. (*Gita*, IV)

If it were not for the kindness and compassion of these “wise ones,” our materialistic world would have long ago lost all the gems of truth and wisdom. They are the true “Elder Brothers” of humanity who selflessly work for others, age after age, ever ready to pass on to true aspirants all that they have learnt, so that the mighty art would not get lost forever. In these days of fierce competition, when knowledge and findings which might benefit others are patented and commercialized, Krishna’s message to us is to share knowledge with others; to give to others just as others have given to us. This we owe to humanity.

This exhaustless doctrine of Yoga I formerly taught unto Vivaswat; Vivaswat communicated it to Manu and Manu made it known unto Ikshwaku; and being thus transmitted from one

unto another it was studied by the Rajarshees, until at length in the course of time the mighty art was lost, O harasser of thy foes! It is even the same exhaustless, secret, eternal doctrine I have this day communicated unto thee because thou art my devotee and my friend. (*Gita*, IV)

Throughout the *Gita*, Krishna is at pains to explain to Arjuna the true nature of man and the brotherhood of all beings in the manifested world.

The spirit in the body is called *Maheswara*, the Great Lord, the spectator, the admonisher, the sustainer, the enjoyer, and also the *Paramatma*, the highest soul. (*Gita*, XIII)

Arjuna, the warrior turned disciple, clearly exhibits advancement in his spiritual life when, instead of outright denunciation of others, he expresses his desire to understand the causes which make men commit offences, forgetting their divine nature. His question expresses faith in the inherent goodness of man’s heart. “By what, O descendant of Vrishni, is man propelled to commit offences, seemingly against his will and as if constrained by some secret force?” And Krishna replies:

It is lust which instigates him. It is passion, sprung from the quality of *rajas*; insatiable, and full of sin. Know this to be the enemy of man on earth....By this—the constant enemy of the wise man, formed from desire which rageth like fire and is never to be appeased—is discriminative knowledge surrounded. Its empire is over the senses and organs, the thinking principle and the discriminating faculty also; by means of these it cloudeth discrimination and deludeth the Lord of the body. (*Gita*, III)

It is very easy to find fault with others. Excuses, smart reasoning, convincing logic and sharp intellect is used by us to explain away why we cannot and should not be charitable, why “others” do not deserve our kindness, forgiveness, our helping hand in their hour of crisis. “They ill-treated us in the past, wronged innocent people, they are selfish and self-centred, they are a danger to society, they take advantage of people, they are uncultured and uncouth...”—reasons galore. We have mastered the art of reasoning to pacify

our nagging conscience for the harsh treatment and condemnation meted out to others by us. However, Shri Krishna sets for us his own example to follow:

I am the same to all creatures; I know not hatred nor favour; but those who serve me with love dwell in me and I in them. Even if the man of most evil ways worship me with exclusive devotion, he is to be considered as righteous, for he hath judged aright. Such a man soon becometh of a righteous soul and obtaineth perpetual happiness. (*Gita*, IX)

There is no permanent labelling of human beings as good or evil. Krishna does not give up hope. Even the man of most evil ways may choose to turn a new leaf, some time in his life. Mother Nature does not discriminate. To her, all her children are equal. It is we human beings who are in a hurry to label a man a criminal, a murderer beyond redemption, and approve of putting him to death without giving him a chance to repent and mend his ways. We often pre-judge, and arrive at conclusions in matters in which we have no expertise. Regarding judgment of others, Mr. Judge in one of his letters gives important advice:

If we can all accumulate a fund of good for all the others we will thus dissipate many clouds. The follies and the so-called sins of people are really things that are sure to come to nothing if we treat them right. We must not be so prone as the people of the day are, of whom we are some, to criticize others and forget the beam in our own eye. The *Bhagavad-Gita* and Jesus are right in that they both show us how to do our own duty and not go into that of others. Every time we think that someone else has done wrong we should ask ourselves two questions:

(1) Am I the judge in this matter who is entitled to try this person?

(2) Am I any better in my way, do I or do I not offend in some other way just as much as they do in this?

This will settle the matter I think. (*Letters That Have Helped Me*)

Judge not—said Jesus. Even when we have undeniable proof

of another's wrongdoing, we ought to exercise mental charity.

Pity and forbearance, charity and long-suffering, ought to be always there to prompt us to excuse our sinning brethren, and to pass the gentlest sentence possible upon those who err. A Theosophist ought never to forget what is due to the shortcomings and infirmities of human nature. (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 248)

Spiritual discipline is the work of many lifetimes. What we need is patience and perseverance. We should not blame others for the circumstances of our life. The law of Karma works to bring us our just deserts. Shri Krishna says:

...Never to an evil place goeth one who doeth good. The man whose devotion has been broken off by death goeth to the regions of the righteous, where he dwells for an immensity of years and is then born again on earth in a pure and fortunate family; or even in a family of those who are spiritually illuminated. (*Gita*, VI)

Friends and enemies are of our own making. It is our own action and reaction and interaction that weaves the intricate fabric of our lives and puts us in the middle of those whom we have loved or hated in the past, with these tendencies increased or decreased depending on our own treatment of them when our paths crossed. Are we kind, forgiving, and patient with those whom we instinctively dislike or hate?

For no man becomes your friend in a present life by reason of present acts alone. He was your friend, or you his, before in a previous life. Your present acts but revive the old friendship, renew the ancient obligation. Was he your enemy before, he will be now even though you do him service now, for these tendencies last always more than three lives. (*Vernal Blooms*, pp. 14-15)

The illuminated sage regards with equal mind an illuminated, selfless Brahmin, a cow, an elephant, a dog, and even an outcast who eats the flesh of dogs. (*Gita*, V)

The "Masters of Wisdom," the "Elder Brothers of Humanity,"

work silently, unthanked and un-noticed by the majority of mankind. They never interfere with the free will of man, but like Krishna, leave us free to choose our path, and become self-reliant.

Thus have I made known unto thee this knowledge which is a mystery more secret than secrecy itself; ponder it fully in thy mind; act as seemeth best unto thee. (*Gita*, XVIII)

How should the *Bhagavad-Gita* influence our life? How we should treat others is beautifully summed up in the description of the true devotee:

My devotee who is free from enmity, well-disposed towards all creatures, merciful, wholly exempt from pride and selfishness, the same in pain and pleasure, patient of wrongs, contented, constantly devout, self-governed, firm in resolves, and whose mind and heart are fixed on me alone, is dear unto me. He also is my beloved of whom mankind is not afraid and who has no fear of man; who is free from joy, from despondency and the dread of harm. (*Gita*, XII)

LORD, make me an instrument of Your Peace:
 Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
 Where there is injury, pardon;
 Where there is doubt, faith;
 Where there is despair, hope;
 Where there is darkness, light;
 And where there is sadness, joy;
 O, Divine Master, grant that I may not so much
 Seek to be consoled as to console;
 To be understood as to understand;
 To be loved as to love;
 For it is in giving things that we receive;
 It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
 It is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

—ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

CONQUEST OF FEAR

From desire arises grief; from desire arises fear. There is no grief for one who is free from desire. Whence, then, can there come fear?

—*The Dhammapada*

At once, when...universal ideas are seen and to some extent realized, one loses all fears. Neither change nor death, nor things present or to come, can have any effect upon that one. He meets conditions as they come, does what he can, and lets other conditions succeed them.

—*The Friendly Philosopher*

To be ambitious for wealth, and yet always expecting to be poor, to be always doubting your ability to get what you long for, is like trying to reach east by traveling west....No matter how hard you work for success, if your thought is saturated with the fear of failure, it will kill your efforts, neutralize your endeavours and make success impossible.

—CHARLES BAUDOUIN

FEAR is a hydra-headed enemy of man. Sometimes, more people are killed by fright than by the actual originating circumstance. No textbook of psychiatry is complete without a large section on Fear (phobia), Anxiety (neurosis), etc.

There are various types of fears, divisible into “irrational” fears and those arising from probable circumstances. Of the first larger group a great number of “phobias”—being of the nature of morbid mental disturbances in need of psychiatric care—are beyond the competent management by laymen or non-professionals. Claustrophobia (fear of closed places), fear of mirror, knife, pins, needles, dirt, crowd, height, hypochondria, *i.e.*, abnormal preoccupation with one’s illness (imaginary or real), and fear of morbid, imaginary objects are covered in this category.

Many of the imaginary fears are often created in childhood traumas, or by an adult using fearful object or idea to control children by creating fright from ghosts, boogie-man, supernatural objects, etc. H.P.B. states in *Isis Unveiled* that sudden insanity may

arise from fright in an adult who had similar experience during childhood.

Then, there are “anxieties,” arising from fear of failure, anticipation, fear of the future, an imaginary threat from impending conditions such as old age, death, sickness, probable infection, etc. Most of these arise from ignorance such as could happen to a child afraid of an unfamiliar object, insect or a stranger. However, fears of these in children are inculcated by wrong fearful suggestions by adults.

The common fear of the future is a great demoralizing and unnerving obstacle to sane and creative living. A person’s constant state of insecure feeling usually arises from the abnormal “instinct of self-preservation” or what the ancients called “*trishna*” or thirst for continuing one’s vital existence. The animal instinct is proper in its place for it can effectually keep the animal out of danger. But in man, whenever his ego-sense is threatened by a real or imaginary factor, he blindly hastens to protect the little “self” in him. One may be excessively preoccupied with the self and its concerns and demands. Such a one easily succumbs to fear when threatened. The cure, therefore, lies in the knowledge of this state and also in not granting such *pampered* “self” its exaggerated self-image. The real value and usefulness of the personality depends upon the extent to which it is subservient to the will of the Inner Man and the divine purposes of one’s existence.

On the other level, lack of adequate self-confidence may make us nervous, enfeebled and ineffective in our daily duty and challenges of life. The “dignity” and strength of the real Man, our true or higher Ego, are based on the purity of living and calmness of conscience, which go to make our moral stamina and character. Such a “man of character” has strong sinews that do not shake before fear or threat, and even in his fall or death he is inwardly victorious.

Also, when a man finds himself truly useful to his fellowmen he finds a satisfying meaning to his existence and is happily content with his fate. He cannot afford to give way to weakness arising

from undue anxiety, fear, agitation, etc. He can endure afflictions or their fear with fortitude because he has resigned himself in faith to the justice of the divine Law which sustains the Universe and which is also mercifully retributive. As Lord Krishna says in the *Bhagavad-Gita*, the faith in the least of aspirants is an expression of the Supreme in us, which is above events and which is also the author of the event. Our self-sufficiency then does not lean on outer advantages or personal abilities but on this faith and true dependence on just and merciful providence. Who is afraid when Krishna is his Charioteer!

“Fear eclipses reason and understanding.” Later, when we have overcome it we may laugh at our folly! But we weaken ourselves, to a certain extent, by yielding to fears, doubts and cynicism. We put obstacles in our path by permitting the terror of the future—real or imaginary—to overtake us.

In war strategy, the enemy is firmly thwarted at the entrance, lest he can threaten to engulf the citadel. Fear must be recognized as such, and *at once* disarmed by taking stock of its strength and weapons, and then one can effectively neutralize it. In actual practice, it is better to face squarely a dangerous opponent than to be always in fear. Mr. Crosbie’s advice is to sit down and mentally undergo (in imagination) the worst that can probably happen, and then devise ways and means (if they are in our power) to handle the future calamity. It is the strategy to neutralize the fear of the grim future and the anticipatory anxiety. However, we are not to dwell in morbid imagination.

“To cross the bridge before we have arrived at it,” is illogical and lacking in judgement. A proverb says that he is a miserable one who feels it, but twice he who fears it before it comes! Another remedy against timidity and habitual nervousness is an ancient panacea against all ills: Altruism. “Charity endureth long and is kind,” says St. Paul. This is the same as saying, “Love knows no fear” and “He that loveth not, abideth in fear” (*John*, iii, 14). People who desire to live for the sake of others (many mothers do every day) may sensibly guard themselves enough so as to remain truly

useful for others, being also confident that so long as the Higher Self or the Master needs his/her services, he will be amply protected. Have not we heard of a mother who had gallantly and fiercely fought against a leopard or a dangerous predator to retrieve her child from its jaws or paws? Courage sometimes rises to an occasion unexpectedly, where love, loyalty or integrity is the motivating force. Sometimes, we are surprised by joy, awe or wonder at the astonishing human spirit, hitherto lying latent in an ordinary-looking man or woman. In this sense no one is truly “ordinary”—a poor “sinner,” in need of priestly help!

Arjuna’s despondency was based on fear of consequences—death and destruction of the familiar and traditional, which he thought to be a sinful act. Like him, many of us are placed at the crossroads of life, and may face such a “terror of change.” This can only be overcome by the knowledge which *Sanatan-Dharma* brings. Even the terrifying and awe-inspiring vision of *Viswarupa* (“Universal form” of the Eleventh chapter of the *Gita*) created by Sri Krishna was a lesson for Arjuna—realization of his smallness in the scheme of things! The remedy is in the enlightened Faith and the will to conquer. Fearlessness (*Virya*) arises from dispassion (*Viraga*) and non-attachment to the results.

In a personal existence we are never truly safe and we are made perfect by suffering. There is no hero who has not felt fear knocking at his heart. But he alone knows how to answer the knock and face it.

WHY know’st thou not the witness in thy heart?
 Why slightest thou that Blessed Guide Within?
 He who ignores and does not satisfy,
 But disobeys, the One, auspicious, pure,
 Perpetual “Inner Witness,” the “One Self,”
 The “Ancient Sage,” all-knowing, who abides
 In every heart, recording every act,
 Him Yama doth award dire punishment.

—*Mahabharata*

THE POWERS OF THE SOUL

ONE of the most misunderstood words in modern science and philosophy as well as in the theology of the churches is the word “soul.” Everyone talks about soul, yet different people use the word with different implications and meanings, and sometimes they are not at all sure of what they mean when they speak of soul. It is most essential for us to exercise care in our use of words, for much confusion arises when words are used indiscriminately or without proper understanding of their meaning.

To the psychologist, soul means one thing; but the theologian, surrounded as he is by concepts of theology, gives to the word an altogether different meaning. The man who has studied philosophy in the Western world has a different idea of soul from the man who has studied Eastern philosophy. Then again, Theosophy uses the word in a different sense. This has been the difficulty all through the ages. Even in India, where the higher branches of philosophy and psychology have been studied for thousands of years, the same words have been used by different people with different meanings. If we take, for instance, the word *Atma*, the Self, the Spirit, we find that it has been used by the authors of the Vedas, the Upanishads and their Commentaries, each in his own peculiar way. Hence it becomes the first duty of the student to get at the meaning of the word as it is used by a particular author or commentator.

Now what do we mean when we speak of soul? It is useless to speak of the advance, the progress or the growth of the soul unless we are clear in our own minds as to just what the soul is.

The Christian scriptures say that God made man in His own image; also, that God is a Trinity—God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit. The Christian believes that man has a soul, even if he does not clearly perceive the teaching that man *is* a soul. But, in the West, the same logical conclusion is not drawn from this premise that is drawn in the East. Here they say that if God-consciousness is triune—Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver, Shiva the Regenerator—and if man is made in the image of God,

then also must man be triune. We must understand this trinity of human consciousness.

First, it is said that man is *Atma*, the Self, and that the great quality which he manifests as Atma is that of Will.

Then man in his second aspect is *Buddhi*, the discerner, he who has the faculty of acquiring that knowledge which will enable him to discriminate between the true and the false, the real and the unreal.

In his third aspect he is *Manas*, the thinker, whose special function is creative activity. It is this Manas which makes of man a creator.

So, by the power of Atma, we resolve, we will; by the power of Buddhi, we discern and know; and by the power of Manas, we create.

This triune being, with the capacity to will, to know, to create, is a spiritual entity, for he is made in the image and likeness of God; he is divine in his nature, because he is rooted in divine consciousness. The difference between God-consciousness and man-consciousness is that while the latter is a seed in which all divine powers are locked up, the former is the full-grown tree in which all the powers of the seed have become manifest. Hence we, as seeds, are latent Gods, Gods who have still to become patent; and the process by which this is to be accomplished consists in the bringing out of our powers of will, of discernment, of creative activity, so that human will can become divine will, human discernment divine discernment, and the creative activity which is human can become manifest as that creative activity which is divine.

These, then, are the threefold powers of the triune being that each of us is in his higher nature. By the power of our creative activity we create the instruments which would help us to know the universe in which we find ourselves. So, because we are thinkers, we create mind.

At this point we should note one fundamental difference between the philosophy of the East and that of the West. Mind, says the Asiatic Science, is not man; mind is the instrument of man. Mind

is not the thinker; mind is the instrument in and through which the thinker works and carries on his activity as a creator. Mind is his creation, his instrument of knowledge.

Now sometimes this mind is spoken of as the soul; at other times it is the thinker, using the mind as his instrument, who is so spoken of; again it is the man who wills, discerns and thinks with the help of his mind who is referred to as soul. The soul, according to Theosophy, is that which has been described as the *creative, active aspect*, the *third* aspect of triune man. The soul, in other words, is the creative actor who creates as his first instrument the mind, in and through which he begins to think.

What does he think? He thinks naturally about those subjects in which he is interested, subjects which pertain to the universe in the midst of which he finds himself. Having created his mind, he begins to perceive the universe of mind. As soon as he perceives it, he wants to know it, because the nature of the soul is knowledge. Energized by the power of his second aspect, discernment, he creates the instrument by which he can know. The senses come into existence in order that the inner man may contact the outside world and gain impressions. But now he finds that, although he can get impressions, still he cannot make response. Hence he creates something else, the instruments of action or response, spoken of as the sense-organs and the organs of action.

There is a distinction between what is called the sense of sight and the organ which is spoken of as the eye; between the sense of hearing and the ear; between the power to act and the organ of action, the hands. These organs are often spoken of as the instruments through which Karma operates.

Now the mind, the senses and the organs work on each other, and in their interplay they give birth to a fourth factor. We find certain impressions coming through the senses, taken up by the mind, and given back through the organs of action, and this interplay produces that which we speak of as the desire nature.

So man has these four instruments in and through which he works: the senses, the sense-organs, the desire nature and the mind.

This fourfold nature assumes an independent activity of its own, and forms what is spoken of as the *lower self*, the *animal soul*. Man is both an individuality and the reflection of the individuality, sometimes called the personality. Let us ponder on this point for a moment, for it has become the cause of great confusion in the world today. In all the processes of psychoanalysis, in the so-called “going down deep into the soul,” what “soul” is meant? It is into this *animal soul* that people are digging deep down, the animal soul of the senses, the sense-organs, the desire nature and the lower mind, which often exhibits its own independent powers, its own activities. It is the arousing into activity of this animal soul which people often mistake for the birth of the soul. This animal soul is what is sometimes called “*subconsciousness*.”

What is normal consciousness? That which we have called the soul, the third aspect of the man, working through the mind. He speaks of “*my senses, my body, my likes and dislikes, loves and hates,*” and has a faculty of his own, ordinarily spoken of as the voice of conscience. This is the voice of the human creator who works in and through the mind when the mind is set free from the slavery which the senses, the sense-organs and the desire nature impose upon it. When the mind is thus enslaved, it becomes the lower mind; once freed of its fetters, it becomes the higher mind. When it is the higher mind, it becomes the instrument of the creative actor, the man himself; when it is the lower mind, the creative actor sits imprisoned, as it were, because all the faculties of the mind are warped by the desire nature.

What, then, is the difference between the life of this lower or animal soul and the life of the higher or real Soul? The life of the lower soul is complex; it is guided by the desire for possessions. Therefore it is a life of struggle and of distress. The activity of the senses, energized by the desire nature, enables us to desire things; our sense of possession grows strong, we continually want more things, and life becomes more and more complex. The complex life then grows into the life of struggle. But are those who struggle for possessions, and even succeed in gaining them, necessarily

happy? Time and again we see that the complex life, leading to the life of struggle, ends eventually, not in happiness, but in distress.

What, then, is the spiritual life? It is the way of the soul, and the reverse of the life of the lower, animal soul. It is the simple life instead of the complex life; the strenuous life instead of the life of struggle; the life in which all activities produce happiness instead of distress. It is not the life of idleness, of withdrawing from the world, but the contrary. Let us examine this threefold life which is the threefold way of the soul.

First, it is the simple life. All of us think we live, but do we really do so? When we begin to examine ourselves, to analyse our minds, thoughts, activities and processes of everyday life, we find that we are continually passing from life to death, not from life to life. For what is death but change?

The simple life, then, is the life with a single purpose, with an ideal where all other considerations and complexities are removed, because our mind's eye is fixed on our ideal. But our purpose must not be of the nature of the world of complexities; it must not be desire for wealth, or for power, or for fame, or for human affection, for these are the purposes of the lower world. Man seeks wealth first of all; then, having gained wealth, he seeks fame; having achieved fame he wants power over the minds of other men; when he has that, he seeks human affection, so that he may find his own image in kin and friends. If we love all people in an ever expanding way, without caring for the return of love, life becomes simple. As long as we love in this way, it is not our concern whether we are loved in return or not. If we love our neighbour as ourselves, it means that we see all our own qualities manifesting themselves in him.

Then we come to the question of the strenuous life. To go on pouring out love on all people, all things, every month of the year, every day of the month, every hour of the day, every minute of the hour, that is the strenuous life. To see the power of our love energizing other people does not mean running about here and there; it means the power to give steadily and persistently, at every

point of space, at every moment of time. We cannot attempt to achieve all this in a short time. Just as it takes years of practice to become a good musician or a good mathematician, so also to acquire the power to love steadily requires time and effort; it is hard, plodding work. How shall we go about it? Krishna answered this question: “By constant practice and absence of desire, or dispassion.”

The moment we begin to live like that, then and there we begin to get knowledge; because as we begin to pour ourselves out into others, we begin really to understand all things, all people. When we begin to love in this manner, we find that we need that quality of discernment which knows how to give love. And so we see that the strenuous life becomes discriminative activity; we see all things as aspects of the divine. In other words, it becomes a sacramental life.

There is a wonderful definition of the word sacrament—“an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace.” Therefore we need not consider as sacraments only those rites instituted by the churches. Our very getting up in the morning, refreshed, might be considered a sacred thing. Our work at the office, in the home, behind the counter; our every gesture or word, every line that we write, becomes an outward and visible sign of the inward and spiritual grace if it comes from the man who has resolved rightly. And so our outer life becomes the expression of our soul life; the two blend into one. The man who works with his hands need not stop working with his hands in order to lead the soul life. He begins to live on a different plane because his inner resolution has become different. And from that point of view it does not matter much *what* we do, but it matters very much *how* we do it.

The threefold way of the soul is, then: first, the simple life, with one purpose, to love; second, the strenuous life, with the purpose of discerning and loving with that discernment; and third, the sacramental life, in which all actions are made sacred, because each has been valued at its own worth, with discrimination.

Then we begin to see what comes out of it: union with the divine—*Yoga*. It means the perception of divinity in all things around us. And so everywhere we see one great consciousness manifesting and acting. “The Universe grows I”; and that is *Yoga*.

Then comes the practical application of our knowledge. We love our neighbour as ourselves, not differently, and the barriers of caste, creed, sect, race, or nation, fall. The entire universe becomes for us *one* universe. Everywhere we see the all-pervading Supreme Spirit.

The threefold way of the soul we can adopt here and now. We cannot expect to succeed all at once; the time it will take us will be determined by the degree of intensity with which we act now. The spiritual life must begin in the selfsame environment in which we now find ourselves. Every act must be made a sacrament, every sacrifice must bring us joy, not pain. And so we become one with Nature; we become fully cognizant of the universal consciousness working in and through us every moment of our lives.

EVERY microscopic cell has a consciousness and an intelligence of its own, and man thus consists of innumerable “lives.” This is but physiological synthesis, logically deduced no less from the known facts in physiology and histology than the logical sequence of the philosophy of occultism. Health of the body as a whole depends on the integrity of all its parts, and more especially upon their harmonious association and co-operation. A diseased tissue is one in which a group of individual cells refuse to co-operate, and wherein is set up discordant action, using less or claiming more than their due share of food or energy. Disease of the very tissue of man’s body is neither more nor less than the “sin of separateness.”

—W. Q. JUDGE

PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF ACTION

HOW often do we take these words from the *Bhagavad-Gita* (XI, 33) to apply only to one person, Arjuna, and one set of circumstances, *i.e.*, one particular battle in which he had to fight—the result of which was predetermined by Krishna!

But suppose we begin to take the sentence as applying to ourselves, in our everyday life, at all times and places. It would give us a totally different basis for thought, feeling and action, as also rid us of indecision, fear of consequences, and selfishness.

Arjuna's feelings are affected by the thought of destroying his kin, fear of the consequences that must ensue and how hollow victory, when gained, would seem to him. Here is an important point: he is looking at one consequence of one action, namely, what would happen if he fought the battle. He has ignored what would happen if he refused to fight.

Is not this what we do? We seldom try to visualize the consequences of *inaction* in some event, and therefore we lack discrimination.

We often speak of Karma, the great law of cause and effect, realizing in the mind that what comes to everyone is the due effect of the past, and that none can stay its course. But here Krishna speaks of himself as Karma, for he says that all those to be killed in the battle "have been already slain by me." Hence it is their Karma to die in that way.

Who shall bring something that is preordained to pass? The one whose *dharma* it is, the one who is placed there by Karma. And it is better to perform one's duty, even if full of faults!

Therefore we must find out the difference between an "agent" and an independent actor. An agent is one who follows a certain path laid down for him by another. In doing so, he has, or should have, no personal or selfish wishes, etc., for he is only the agent on whom it has fallen to perform a certain piece of work. A tree, for example, which falls down and destroys someone is an agent bringing Karmic precipitation at the proper time and place and to

the proper person; it has no feelings attached to the action. Neither has the sun which shines on the just *and* the unjust, on the health-giving crops and the poisonous weeds.

What should be our attitude, then, to acts that need to be performed? If an action presents itself to us, and there is no escape except personal cowardice, then we have to ignore all personal feeling regarding the action. We have to act with neither liking nor disliking, but because it is our *dharma*. In that way we are embroiled neither in the consequences of the action nor in the consequences of inaction. In another place Krishna tells Arjuna to dedicate all his actions to Him; this is another way of saying the same thing. We are also told not to bother about results. It is action which counts; the results of both action and inaction will follow of themselves.

Therefore, it would seem, we need a philosophical basis by which we can determine what is right action and what is right *inaction*, for there are two kinds of action and inaction. We can act wrongly, inharmoniously and personally, or we can refuse to act in a righteous cause as well as in an unrighteous cause. When in doubt, therefore, we must earnestly decide what is our *duty*, not our *wish*. False duties are many and absorb us all the time. So, "What is my business?", "Am I concerned here?" are questions to consider at every stage. Whatever conclusion we come to will be in terms of our nature. If we make a wrong choice, we shall meet the same circumstances again and again, until we judge aright.

Remember, feeling should follow thought; thought must not become lost in feeling.

Consider these quotations:

Both action and inaction may find room in thee; thy body agitated, thy mind tranquil, thy Soul as limpid as a mountain lake. (*The Voice of the Silence*, p. 32)

Stand aside in the coming battle, and though thou fightest be not thou the warrior.

Look for the warrior and let him fight in thee....Unconcerned in the battle save to do his bidding, having no longer any care as to the result of the battle, for one thing

only is important, that the warrior shall win, and you know he is incapable of defeat.... (*Light on the Path*, pp. 9, 11)

“BE THOU ONLY THE IMMEDIATE AGENT.”

ALL men wish to live happily, but are dull at perceiving exactly what it is that makes life happy; and so far is it from being easy to attain to happiness that the more eagerly a man struggles to reach it the further he departs from it, if he takes the wrong road....

True happiness consists in not departing from nature and in moulding our conduct according to her laws and model. A happy life is one which is in accordance with its own nature, and cannot be brought about unless in the first place the mind be sound and vigorous, enduring all things with most admirable courage suited to the times in which it lives, and must be able to enjoy the bounty of Fortune without becoming her slave.

A happy life consists in a mind which is free, upright, undaunted and steadfast beyond the influence of fear or desire. A man must be accompanied by a continual cheerfulness, a high happiness, which comes indeed from on high because he delights in what he has. If we attain to this, then there will dawn upon us those invaluable blessings, the repose of a mind that is at rest in a safe haven, its lofty imaginings, its great and steady delight at casting out errors and learning to know the truth, its courtesy and its cheerfulness, in all of which we shall take delight.

—ANNAEUS LUCIUS SENECA

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

[In this section we seek to answer frequently asked questions, at U.L.T. meetings or during private conversations and discussions with people who seek the answers in the light of Theosophy. Answers given in this section are by no means final. Only a line of thought is being offered by applying general principles of Theosophy.]

Question: Why does Theosophy not recommend organ transplantation from a human donor, even in cases of “End-Stage Renal (kidney) Disease” where a therapy of dialysis is not effective?

Answer: The reasonable objections to this surgical procedure are at least on three grounds—economic, moral, and psychical (occult). As a result, some countries have enacted the Transplantation Act, banning or restricting the transplantation of organs with a proviso for exception under certain precautions and procedures.

Organ transplant requires “live” donors as well as organs retrieved from fresh cadavers. Unchecked, illegal and clandestine financial arrangements often take place in many cases since there is the ever-present possibility of vested interests of the “middle-men,” the private clinics and the so-called “authorization committees.” In India, for instance, safeguards are available through the Transplantation Act of 1994 *banning the sale* of live organs. It is not effective enough, in spite of the fact that all such centres are required to have an “Authorization Committee” to review the donors and to ensure that the donation is done out of altruistic reasons and not for commerce.

A startling exposure of “Kidney Trade” in Chennai, a city of India, was published, as a reprint from the Journal of the American Medical Association, in JAMA-India (February, 2005). It gives a detailed report on “Economic and Health Consequences of Selling a kidney in India.” It was based on a scientific survey done by qualified Indian physicians, in January 2001, covering 305 individuals (discovered after a search) who admitted to having *sold*

their kidneys in that city's private clinics about six years earlier. The objective of the survey was the long-term (6 years) follow-up of the donors, in order to assess their health and financial condition. Of these, 305 eligible "sellers"—euphemistically called the "voluntary donors"—the majority (71%) were women, most of whom worked as poor labourers or street vendors and sold their kidneys through the middle-man! The report further states: "Almost all respondents (94%) had sold their kidneys to pay off personal debts, 75% were *still in debt*, and an average annual income (which was almost touching the 'poverty-line') had further declined by one-third (due to incapacity and continuous pain), and the percentage of those living below the 'poverty-line' had increased. Most respondents reported a deterioration in their health status after the donation."

Similar reports and conclusions on kidney transplant donors are available in other international medical journals, like the *Lancet*, especially regarding the global traffic in human organs.

The ethical element in this transaction is evident. There is but greed and exploitation involved on all sides. The wealthy recipient is naturally thirsty to extend his life span and quality at the expense of the quality of life of the hapless donor who is supposed to be "rewarded" for his sacrifice. "When asked a separate question about wanting to help a sick person with kidney disease, 95% of the participants honestly admitted that this was not a major factor in their decision to sell." As per the "right of information" in decision-making process before surgery, none was properly warned about the physical and economic consequences of selling a kidney. Hence 71% would not recommend to another to sell his kidney.

The moral question of survival in a desperately sick person often comes up for consideration. But survival at what expense? Is it right to keep on prolonging one's physical existence, at any cost, even if it results in lowering of the quality and life-span of another being—be it man or animal? We, as moral beings, have to answer this question individually, for ourselves, and have to accept the personal responsibility of and the consequences to the donor as

well as the recipient of another's organ.

As to how even the *recipient* of the cadaver or a live transplanted organ can be affected, much has been written in the past issues of this magazine, *The Theosophical Movement*, and elsewhere. It is a very large and important field to be considered since it embraces the inescapable "occult," *i.e.*, psychical, vital and psychological elements in the practice of organ transplantation.

Modern surgeons and physicians, who are apt to view bodily organs purely anatomically, would do well to consider their interrelationships. The modern system of medicine loses much by not recognizing the astral counterpart of man's body. In larger perspective, *how* a person lives is of far greater consequence than *how long* he lives.

Another important aspect is that if science persists in organ transplantation, the transplanted "organs" should be those of a "good" man, and willingly given. We are continuously imparting good and bad psychic impulses to our bodily organs through our thoughts and feelings. So also, "every organ in our body has its own memory....every cell must of necessity have also a memory of its own kind" (*Raja-Yoga or Occultism*). The engrafted organs can affect their new owner with thoughts and feelings he had never before experienced. There have been cases where the recipient's body rejects the transplanted organ. As mentioned in *The Theosophical Movement*, November 1969:

According to a Stanford University psychiatric team, some heart transplant patients become psychotic. They suggest that an anti-rejection drug called "prednisone" may cause psychotic behaviour such as delusions, insomnia accompanied by fear of a murder plot and a belief that the patients had received not only a new heart but also a new personality. Psychiatrists report, too, that there is in general a higher incidence of emotional problems in heart patients than in any other group of surgical patients. (*Science Digest*, July 1969)

Question: How is it that the female of the human species experiences labour pain, while the process is comparatively painless

in the animal kingdom?

Answer: Sex and Speech are the two avenues through which we lay waste our divinity. Sexual power is creative power. In the course of evolution, men of the Fourth Root Race (Atlantean Race) abused this creative power—wasting the life-essence for bestial and personal gratification. The result of such excessive sensuality and sexual indulgence, under Karma, was that the healthy and gigantic bodies with great powers and intellect of the Atlantean Race were slowly replaced by dwarfed and weakened human beings. It is as a result of such Karma of the Atlanteans that the females of our Race bring forth progeny in pain. For, *we* are those same Atlanteans reborn. H.P.B. puts it thus:

Nature had never intended that woman should bring forth her young ones “in sorrow.” Since that period, however, during the evolution of the Fourth Race, there came enmity between its seed, and the “Serpent’s” seed, the seed or product of *Karma* and divine wisdom. For the seed of the woman or lust, *bruised the head* of the seed of *the fruit of wisdom and knowledge*, by turning the holy mystery of procreation into animal gratification; hence the law of Karma “bruised the heel” of the Atlantean Race, by gradually changing physiologically, morally, physically, and mentally, the whole nature of the Fourth Race of mankind, until, from the healthy King of the animal creation of the Third Race, man became in the Fifth, our Race, a helpless scrofulous being, and has now become a wealthier heir on the globe to constitutional and hereditary diseases, the most consciously and intelligently bestial of all animals! (*S.D.*, II, 410-11)

THE supreme reason why I am unattached is that nothing really exists except the Self.

—SRI SANKARACHARYA

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Are human beings risen apes or fallen angels? It is believed that gorillas cannot swim and are fearful of water. Yet, recently, some photographs were produced by scientists, showing one female gorilla getting into a deep pool of water and using a stick for support as well as to plumb the depth of the pool, and another female laying the stick across the swampy ground, creating a bridge. These photographs make us rethink man’s relationship with the animal world and his place in nature. “It may only be the first step on a journey on which we humans have advanced a million miles,” writes Desmond Morris (*Times International*, October 5, 2005 courtesy *Daily Mail*). Jane Goodall had observed during her field studies that the wild chimpanzees made and used tools to obtain termites as food. It only proves that tool-making is not unique to humans. American researchers could communicate with apes by teaching them a simplified form of sign language used by the human deaf. One young chimp called Nim was able to learn 125 signs and could combine these to make statements such as “banana me eat” or “more drink” or “give ball” or “tickle there.” Observation of Japanese monkeys and groups of chimpanzees, etc., has shown that the ability to develop different cultures, to communicate ideas, to make pictures and create art, etc.—that were once thought to be uniquely human, have been discovered in other, closely related species. Desmond Morris, the author of well-known books like *The Naked Ape* and *The Human Zoo*, writes that human qualities are magnification of ape properties. Morris writes:

They [apes] can use a walking stick, we can fly to the moon; they can combine a few words, we can write great literature, they can make abstract patterns, we can paint masterpieces. We may differ from apes only in degree, but it is a huge difference.

We may be the most remarkable animal on the planet, but we are still animals. I was once criticized for saying that we are “risen apes, not fallen angels,” but I continue to believe this

most fervently. Accepting this means that we must see ourselves as part of nature and not above it.

Although, a 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 we have neither descended from apes nor have we risen from the apes. The adepts, standing on the immeasurable height where centuries lie under their glance, possess certain and definite knowledge regarding the evolution of man. Occult science teaches that at a certain point in evolution, man was mindless. These mindless men of the Third Race committed the sin of uniting with animals, producing huge man-like monsters. As time passed, these semi-astral forms consolidated into the physical, and later dwindled in size, producing the lower apes of the Miocene period. Man was then endowed with mind, and hence with the power to think and choose. After this, once again the sin of the mindless men was repeated by the men of the Atlantean Race—this time with full responsibility, giving rise to species of ape—orangoutang, gorilla and the chimpanzee—now known as the Anthropoids. This explains the similarity between man and ape. (*S.D.*, II, 683 and 689). These animals described as “human presentments” are half descended from man, and are the 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 Ape is, indeed...“a transformation of species most directly connected with that of the human family—a *hybrid branch engrafted on their own stock before the final perfection of the latter*”—or 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)

The Hollywood film “The Exorcism of Emily Rose” released on October 7 this year in Italy, is based on the life of a 22-year-old girl, Anneliese Michel, who was suffering from epilepsy and prone to seizures. Two local priests tried to exorcise her for 10 months, but the girl died in 1975, weighing only 31 kilos, as she was denied food and water during the exorcism. “The movie has now reignited a decades-old controversy,” writes Barbie Nadeau (*Newsweek*, October 24, 2005). Interest in satanic worship has risen sharply across Europe, with 5000 Italians involved in 650 active satanic cults in the country—more than double the number a decade ago. According to the Italian Association of Psychiatrists and Psychologists, half a million Italians seek exorcisms each year. There have been several deaths outside of Italy from exorcisms gone wrong around the world. For instance, recently in Romania, when a novice nun who was being medically treated for schizophrenia, complained of hearing voices, a priest and four nuns, killed her in the process of exorcising by tying her to a wooden cross and gagging her with a holy vestment. Her doctor insists that she was suffering from schizophrenia and was probably having her first episode. Dr. Scott Lilienfeld, professor of psychology at Emory University in Atlanta and an expert in exorcism, says, “Exorcism is the most dangerous hoax in treating mental illness.” In response, the Vatican has begun offering bona fide medical training to its exorcists to help them distinguish between psychological and pathological ailments and possession by the Devil. Scientists and doctors insist that there is no scientific basis for making such distinction, “for the simple fact that possession is not a valid medical condition.”

Obsession or possession is a very old phenomenon. H. P. Blavatsky mentions several cases of obsession and exorcism in her book *Isis Unveiled*. The more passive a person is, the more he becomes suggestible. A time comes when that medium becomes perfectly and completely passive. It is then that, as H. P. Blavatsky writes, “his own astral body may be benumbed and even crowded out of his physical body, which is then occupied by an elemental

[or even the ‘elementary,’ *i.e.*, disincarnate spirit] who proceeds to use it as his own. But too often the cause of the most celebrated crime is to be sought in such possession....Spirits never control persons of positive character who are determined to resist all extraneous influences. The weak and feeble-minded whom they can make their victims they drive into vice” (*Isis*, I, 490). It can be seen that the disincarnate spirits are those who had always delighted in evil, and now being without a body they take every opportunity to enter someone else’s body to commit the evil acts. Like the purity of the mesmerizer in healing the sick, the purity of the exorcist is emphasized. People like Appollonius, Plotinus, Porphyry, etc., had around them the atmosphere of such divine beneficence, created through superhuman morality and sanctity of their lives, that they caused evil spirits to flee before them. (*Isis*, I, 487). H.P.B. writes:

These demons seek to introduce themselves into the bodies of the simple-minded and idiots, and remain there until dislodged therefrom by a powerful and *pure* will. Jesus, Apollonius, and some of the apostles, had the power to cast out devils, by purifying the atmosphere *within* and *without* the patient, so as to force the unwelcome tenant to flight. (*Isis*, I, 356)

In the article “A Case of Obsession,” H.P.B. makes the following suggestion for the cure of obsession:

The sensitive must have his sensitiveness destroyed....He can be helped by a magnetizer who understands the nature of obsession, and who is morally pure and physically healthy; it must be a powerful magnetizer, a man of commanding will-force. But the fight for freedom will, after all, have to be fought by the patient himself. His will-power must be aroused. His diet must be of the simplest, he must neither eat animal food, nor touch any stimulant....[He must] control his thoughts and compel them to dwell upon pure, elevating spiritual things. (*H.P.B. Series No. 9*, p. 44)

“How much more future is still there waiting to catch up with us unexpectedly from the past?” asks Mukul Sharma (*Times International*, October 4, 2005). In 1900, divers discovered a 2000-year-old shipwreck off the Greek Island of Antikythera, and found, among other ancient artefacts, the remnants of an elaborate mechanical device. After elaborate X-ray analyses, when the device—that came to be known as Antikythera Mechanism—was reconstructed, it turned out to be “an analog calculator used to model not only the motions of the Sun and Moon, but those of every celestial body known to the ancient Greeks such as Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. Also, by winding the knob on the side, the bodies could be made to advance and retreat, so that their positions could be determined for any date.” A science historian, who wrote about it in *Scientific American* in 1959, said it was “like finding a jet plane inside Tutankhamen’s tomb.”

Similarly, in the Baghdad museum there is another artefact, consisting of a 13 centimetre clay jar containing a copper cylinder that encases an iron rod. After close examination, the German archaeologist, Wilhelm Konig, concluded that it was a primitive type of battery. When a German Egyptologist constructed a replica of the battery and filled it with freshly pressed grape juice, it was found to generate 0.87 volts of electricity that was used to electroplate a silver statuette with gold. The “Baghdad battery,” as it is called, is claimed to be invented 1800 years before the modern battery by Alessandro Volta.

There is nothing *new* under the sun, said the wise Solomon. In the article, “The Mind in Nature,” H.P.B. comments that many modern, distinguished scholars and scientists have derived honour and credit, by merely dressing up the ideas of old philosophers, and yet, many of them have been contemptuous of the ancients, describing their knowledge as “the untenable conceptions of an uncultivated past.” (*H.P.B. Series No. 14*). In the article “The Babel of Modern Thought,” H.P.B. gives several instances to prove that the ancients anticipated modern knowledge in numerous ways. For instance, the works of Sir Isaac Newton, the greatest among the

scientists, reflects the ideas put forward by old philosophers like Anaxagoras, Democritus, Pythagoras, Aristotle, Lucretius, Plutarch, etc. In *Isis Unveiled*, we are told that Gunpowder which has long been thought an invention of Bacon and Schwartz, was known to and used by the Chinese for levelling hills and blasting rocks, centuries before our era (I, 241). H.P.B. writes:

Show us, if you can, that mortal who in the historical cycle of our human race has taught the world something entirely new....At best, you are but the modern popularizers of very ancient ideas. Consciously and unconsciously you have pilfered from old classics and philosophers, who were themselves but the superficial recorders....Ragon was right in saying... "Humanity only *seems* to progress in achieving one discovery after the other, as in truth, it only finds that which it had lost. Most of our modern inventions for which we claim such glory, are, after all, things people were acquainted with three and four thousand years back [H.P.B. comments that it would be more appropriate to add a few more zeroes to four thousand years]. Lost to us through wars, floods and fire, their very existence became obliterated from the memory of man. And now modern thinkers begin to *rediscover* them once more." (*H.P.B. Series No. 1*, pp. 4-5)

Joy and woe are woven fine,
 A clothing for the soul divine;
 Under every grief and pine
 Runs a joy with silken twine,
 It is right it should be so;
 Man was made for joy and woe;
 And when this we rightly know,
 Safely through the world we go.

—WILLIAM BLAKE