

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

Vol. 4, No. 10

February 17, 2013

A Magazine Devoted to The Living of the Higher Life

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SEX AND WOMEN—A HIGHER PERSPECTIVE

IN THE recent past, there has been unprecedented increase in the violence against women, especially in India. There are sexual crimes, domestic abuse and harassment of women. After the gang-rape and death of a young girl in Delhi, the general conclusion is that the women in our country are in danger. The laws, it is felt, must be made more stringent—instead of few years in prison there must be life imprisonment. Rape cases must be settled in fast-track courts and even minor harassment and eve-teasing should be taken seriously and the perpetrator must be adequately punished. The issue, it is recognized, is not merely of law and order, but has both social and psychological aspect. “There are too many aspects to the problem and the nature of crime is different in different parts of the country,” writes Tuhin A Sinha. He points out that in India a huge chunk of male population lives away from its spouse to earn a livelihood. It is this chunk of population which has shown greater propensity towards crimes against women. Could we perhaps consider legalizing prostitution? asks Sinha.

Steven Pinker, a professor of psychology at Harvard University, says that “rape is an extreme end of a continuum of male sexuality—males pursue sexual partners more ardently and indiscriminately than females. Ordinarily, this leads men to woo, proposition, seduce—but in unregulated settings and when men are desperate, low in empathy and self-control, it can lead to harassment and rape.

This can be exacerbated in cultures that practise female-selective infanticide,” as then the ratio of male to female is skewed (*The Times of India*, January 14, 2013). There are plenty of practical suggestions to deter sexual crimes, but very few have felt the need to change the mind-set of modern man. It was heartening to learn that while most people were discussing the ways and means to improve the laws for the protection of women, a group of school principals thought that another important issue that needs to be addressed is the need to sensitize men. Boys must be taught to respect both girls and women. Parents must not discriminate between sons and daughters but treat them equally. It would indeed be worthwhile to ponder over and popularize the attitude and views of the ancients towards women, sex and marriage.

In the course of time the status of woman in the society has been lowered. How many men are ready to recognize and practise the teaching of Manu: “Where women are honoured, there verily the Devas rejoice; where they are not honoured, there verily indeed all rites are fruitless.” In many stories, legends and allegories the woman is symbolized as inferior to man. These stories must not be taken literally but allegorically. Matter is symbolized by woman and the powers of Matter or *Shaktis* are personified by women. Just as Spirit and Matter are but two aspects of One Reality, so are man and woman. “When man, the Soul unites with Wisdom the woman, he attains Enlightenment. If without her he cannot rise, without him she is an impotent abstraction,” writes Shri B. P. Wadia. For a long time now, men have assumed the position of superiority and women that of inferiority, and the way out is not by woman asserting her independence or trying in her turn to exploit men, but by trying to awaken in men the sense of duty towards women. Both men and women must recognize their duties and their interdependence. It is good that woman is capable of doing what man does, but does she need to? Is the task of women inferior to that of men? A woman is not a machine for breeding children, nor need she be confined to the kitchen and care of the children, and yet in both these departments

she has the most important functions to perform, writes Shri Wadia.

“Man and woman are complementary in character. . . . It is natural that each sex should enjoy the company of the other,” says Mr. Judge. Mutual affinity can result in intimacy and sympathy that leads to appreciation of unity and identity. “The more perfect the sympathy—in its best sense, of sharing another’s life and penetrating it with filaments of love—the more clearly the truth is apprehended. . . . *that masquerading under very different appearances, the soul of man and the soul of woman are the same.*” It is through the love between the two sexes that life teaches the lessons of sympathy and unity, writes Charles Johnston. (*The Path*, February 1888)

In our modern society we find that there is a need to recognize sanctity of sex and marriage. Emphasis and struggle for gender equality has changed the male-female relationship, in turn changing the very attitude towards marriage. Among other things marriage is supposed to be “the only remedy against immorality,” says H.P.B. But the very definition of morality is undergoing change. For instance, the premium put on virginity as a virtue has become a non-issue today. Both men and women, who earlier looked for stability and security of marriage, prefer casual flings and one-night stands from which they can walk away without looking back. “Women have joined the guys in their uninhibited, no-responsibility nocturnal romps. And, much to the delight of the men, they come to them without baggage—no clinging, no tears, no emotional breakdowns and above all, no demands to declare everlasting love and attachment. In fact, the new woman seems to run away as fast as any man from commitment,” writes Vinita Nangia. Most young men and women juggle multiple relationships, enjoy life and extract as much fun as possible before settling down. Marriage may bring stability but it also brings with it restrictions. Financial independence and jobs that involve wide travel have given taste of freedom to women, who prefer not to get tied down to home, bringing up children, and other responsibilities. Perhaps this is a reaction to many years of oppression of women.

Shri B. P. Wadia points out that in married life of a *Grihasta*, man and woman must try to realize that true union is the contact of mind with mind, of heart with heart, of soul with soul—where the wife regards the husband, not as a possession but as a partner, where the husband treats his wife not as his personal property, but as a companion—and where both help each other to tread the Path of Nobility.

A married man has the opportunity to develop his will-power by resisting temptations of every kind. If he rightly uses his will-power he becomes strong, and he would be born in the next life with more developed will-power, and come to possess the quality of Continence. The sexual instinct is the strongest of all, and he who vanquishes it, becomes a god. Marriage is the union of two souls for the purpose of propagating of the species, but if in its place, there is only a union of male and female bodies, then marriage becomes merely a brutal act, which sometimes lowers man and woman to a level lower than that of animals. But how many marriages are really spiritual and not based on beauty of form or other considerations? If a man allows full liberty to his animal passions, without restraint, then he will find himself gradually becoming a slave to his animal cravings, and the wife begins to look upon him as a brute. Conjugal bliss begins to be replaced by misery and unpleasantness. The remedy for all these evils is continence, writes Franz Hartmann in his article, “Chastity.”

Mr. Aldous Huxley was one of those few western thinkers who believed that our intellectual and material progress has outstripped our moral and ethical development. Recognizing the dire need for self-control and subduing of our animal nature, he writes: “Chastity is one of the major virtues inasmuch as, without chastity, societies lack energy, and individuals are condemned to perpetual unawareness, attachment and animality.” Chastity has been emphasized by all the spiritual teachers for two reasons: (1) It is not possible to realize oneself as a spiritual soul, so long as one is identified with the body and bodily functions; (2) Chastity is the

means for the conservation of vital energy or *Prana* which can be directed towards the higher planes of consciousness. The *Kama-Deva* of the early Vedic period, which is the divine desire of creating happiness and love, may be compared to Eros in Greek mythology, which symbolizes Universal, Impersonal Love that works for the spiritual elevation of the race. *Kama-deva* has become on the lower material plane, *Kama* or animal desire and animal procreative power, comparable to Cupid of the Greeks, which symbolizes the force of selfish lust. Abuse of the creative power, and wasting the life-essence for bestial personal gratification has made of man “A hapless, scrofulous being. . . the wealthiest heir on the globe to constitutional and hereditary diseases, the most consciously and intelligently bestial of all animals,” writes H.P.B. Our society seems to be following the philosophy of hedonism, believing that acquirement of pleasures is the principal good, considering the control of passions as unnatural. Mr. Huxley explains how sex addiction is like habit-forming drugs, such as alcohol, morphine or cocaine, leading to torment of body and mind.

The real beginning of the practice of continence or chastity must be made at the level of thoughts, and then extend it to words and deeds. There are many who enjoy discussing the subject of sex-indulgence. Gandhiji wrote that the observance of *Brahmacharya* (celibacy) does not mean mere physical control. It means complete control over all the senses. Thus an impure thought is a breach of *brahmacharya*; so is anger. We are continually and at times unconsciously dissipating the vitality or creative energy through base and unwanted thoughts. Jesus says, “Whoever looks on a woman to lust after her, has committed adultery with her already in his heart.”

In *Letters That Have Helped Me*, Mr. Judge writes that there is no sex at the level of Spirit. There, all men are women and all women are men, two coalesced into one. But in psychic consciousness there are still distinctions. Each human being prepares to move over from a male body to the female body, and *vice versa* in some subsequent life for gaining experience. All of us must have lived in the past

incarnations many times in male as well as in female bodies by now. There are lessons to be learnt in both male and female bodies, and through masculine and feminine natures.

It is said that liberation for a woman is only through man. Mr. Judge points out that it is equally difficult for both a man and a woman to reach the goal of spiritual perfection. Man works through the intellect, woman works through the emotions or heart. Both are equally useless after a time, and of the two the heart is the better tool. But a woman gets overwhelmed by her emotions and is unable to go further. However, it is more difficult to master the body as a woman than as a man, writes Mr. Judge.

We are at the point in evolution where *Kama* or desire principle is predominant. We are being told by the Teachers that the race as a whole is behind the schedule in its development. We ought to show greater development of mind with its higher faculties, and lesser involvement with our desires and passions, by now. Instead what do we find? We find that there is too much preoccupation with the development of personality; too much importance is being given to physical appearance, and acquiring of name, fame, and power. In all the modes of living, gratification of senses is esteemed the highest good. There is a need to control our desire nature in general, instead of giving free play to our desires, sexual or otherwise.

Says *Through the Gates of Gold*: “No brute of the earth is so brutal as the man who subjects his godly power to his animal power....Not only is man more than an animal because there is the god in him, but he is more than a god because there is the animal in him. Once force the animal into his rightful place, that of the inferior, and you find yourself in possession of a great force hitherto unsuspected and unknown. The god as servant adds a thousandfold to the pleasures of the animal; the animal as a servant adds a thousandfold to the powers of the god. And it is upon the union, the right relation of these two forces in himself that man stands as a strong king....”

FOOD FOR THOUGHT THE LITTLE HUNCHBACK

“YOU must be a bad boy.”

“No, I am not bad boy!” The big, dark eyes in the little hunchback’s pale face were very serious. He looked about the same age as the little fellow who had stopped on the sidewalk of a suburban shopping street to gaze at him—eight or nine years old.

His earnest denial of the charge confused the little moralist. “How could god give you a crooked body if you aren’t bad?” he demanded. He had been taught that God was good, and the foundation of his faith seemed to be rocking.

“I am not a bad boy,” the little hunchback repeated quietly. “I am a good boy. Isn’t that true, Mother?” He turned to the lady who had just then come out of the shop in front of which they stood.

“Yes, my darling!”

The other boy was embarrassed at finding a grown-up stranger brought into the conversation, but the urge to get his thoughts straightened out was stronger than the embarrassment, especially when she turned to him kindly, adding her assurance, “Philip really is a very good boy, and he studies his lessons very well too.”

“Then how could God do that to him?” He blurted the question out with a child’s blunt frankness, but she recognized that he did not mean to be unkind. He was looking genuinely troubled, his innate faith in justice shaken.

“Shall we walk along to that little park down the street and find a bench where we can talk it over and try to understand it?”

“Oh yes, please!”

Philip carried his mother’s small purchase and skipped briskly along beside her, the other boy, who gave his name as Ralph, walking soberly along, as if he had the care of the universe on his shoulders, but stealing a glance every now and then at Philip’s mother’s reassuring, friendly face.

Seated on the bench between the boys, she tried to draw Ralph

out about what worried him,

“How could God do such a thing to a good boy?” he asked again.

“I see what is troubling you, Ralph. You have a feeling that there must be a reason for everything and you are quite right. You want to see that what looks like punishment must be deserved, that it must be just. Isn’t that so?”

Ralph nodded.

“Of course there must be justice in the world,” she went on. “Where should we all be if the law didn’t work? I like to say “the law,” but God is really Law and Law is God. I don’t mean the laws that people made and the police make people obey, but the real Law. Supposing we couldn’t count on it. If we could drop a stone and instead of hitting the ground it could float away, shouldn’t we feel all confused? Or supposing water sometimes ran uphill, or if we could add 2 and 2 and sometimes get 3 or 5 instead of 4, we couldn’t be certain of things, could we?”

Ralph shook his head miserably.

“But that isn’t true. We do live in a world of law! If you throw a ball against the wall, doesn’t it bounce back at you?”

Ralph nodded.

“And if we eat too much candy, don’t we get sick? And so many other things have a reaction that we know and can count on! We can be absolutely sure the law works, Ralph! Philip’s father and I used to feel very sad about our little son’s having been born with a crooked back. We couldn’t understand it, and it worried us, just as it puzzled you. But a good friend told us about them, and then it was easier to understand. We decided that some time, somewhere, when we were living on this earth in other bodies, Philip and we must have made mistakes or done wrong things that caused this in this life. When we saw it as the working of a law we felt much better. Perhaps we had not been kind to a crippled person or had made him feel unhappy in some way.

“It seemed as if once, long ago, we had chosen the wrong road,

and now we found ourselves on a rough stretch of it, but we had to go right ahead to get to the edge of the woods. So there was nothing sensible to do but to go through it bravely and cheerfully, remembering that we must have chosen that road ourselves. And we are very happy to have our Philip with us, even if in a coat that doesn’t fit him well and is not very comfortable.”

She smiled down at her little son, who gave her back a radiant smile that lighted up his face. “And I am very happy too,” he whispered.

“So you see, Ralph, if we all do our best in this life we can learn the lesson so well that it will never have to come to us again, when we come back in new bodies to go on in the School of Life.”

“I say, Mrs. _____”

“Mrs. Bolton,” she supplied.

“It all sounds good, but not at all like what I had heard before. I never heard that we had been here before. I wish I could hear more about it.”

“I am afraid we have to start home now, but would you like to come and play with Philip, Ralph? And after your play we can talk some more.”

Philip smiled a second to the invitation. “Do come, Ralph!”

“This Saturday?”

“Surely, you’ll be very welcome! This is our address.” She wrote it down and told him how to get there.

It was a thoughtful Ralph who carefully tucked the address into his pocket, and a happy Philip who turned back to smile and wave to his new friend.

Karma is the law of action and reaction; cause and effect. The law of Karma adjusts every effect to its cause and restores the disturbed equilibrium in the physical world and broken harmony in the moral world. When the adjustment of the effect to the cause is

quick, we are able to relate the effect back to its cause. For instance, overeating or eating of stale food resulting in stomach-ache; chain smoking in youth causing lung cancer in old age and so on. But there are times when we are unable to see the cause for the effect or the karmic consequences, because those causes might have been generated in one of our prior lives. Our actions in one life are like the arrows shot from the bow, acting upon us in this or the later life, producing our rewards and punishments. Thus, each of our actions, at the level of thought, word and deed, gets recorded either on the credit or on the debit side of the life's ledger. Those accumulated on the debit side come to fruition when an appropriate body and environment is obtained by the soul, and until then remain as karmic debts. How does one settle or repay the debt? The settling of debts or the Karmic adjustment takes place through reaction for our actions. It is called the *Karmic compensation*.

It is also not possible for an ordinary person to know the *manner* in which the law of compensation exacts the due. The general understanding is that if we persecute or ridicule a crippled person in this life, we will be persecuted and ridiculed in turn, in this or in some future life. Mr. Judge's explanation in *The Ocean of Theosophy* is that a child is born humpbacked *probably* because in some prior life he persistently reviled and persecuted a deformed person so as to imprint the picture of that person in his own immortal mind. On coming to birth again, the Ego carries that picture and causes the astral body, being formed in the womb, to assume a deformed shape, by electrical and magnetic osmosis through the mother of the child.

Among other things, an Ego seeking birth is drawn to a family for having generated causes for good or evil together as members of a family, justice demands that the same Egos come together again to meet the effects they produced together in the past. In no other way may the effects be worked out and Karmic adjustment effected. There might be a lesson to be learnt by both parents as well as the child.

STUDIES IN THE DHAMMAPADA

MISCELLANEOUS—I

THE CHAPTER is called *Prakinnakavaggo* or "Miscellaneous." It contains miscellaneous verses of great importance. Unlike other chapters, this chapter does not focus on one particular theme but retains the beauty and simplicity of the Buddha's teachings which have power to touch the hearts of men.

1. *If by surrendering a pleasure of little worth one sees a joy worth having, the wise man will give up the pleasure of little worth and look to securing the deep joy. (290)*

The Buddha is called the greatest psychologist of our age. He knows well that human nature always seeks happiness. To ask them to give up happiness would be to take away the very basis of their life. Therefore, instead of asking us to cultivate equal mindedness to pleasure and pain, he presents to us a more appealing approach which our worldly, calculating mind, like a shrewd businessman, is likely to respond to. Who would not hesitate to surrender pleasures of little worth in order to secure deep joy? The mother might tell her young son to keep aside the video game and first complete the home work after which she would not only allow him to play his video game but also permit him to watch his favourite cartoon channel on the television. The child obeys because he sees that he can obtain greater joy later by giving up his small pleasure now. So, like this child, we learn to give up joys of little worth in order to secure deeper joys. Religions often use this method to make us do what is right and avoid doing that which harms others. They ask us to give charity and perform sacrifices because it promises greater joy in the heaven world after death.

However, when Buddha speaks of "deeper joy" he speaks of "real joy" which is not dependent upon any object. Joys of this world are conditioned, transitory and depend on external objects or beings. In this world, that which gives us joy has the potential of

giving us pain by their removal from the scene; like the breaking of our favourite flower vase or destruction of our prized possessions in a calamity or the loss of the loved one. But even in this world, there are events which can give us selfless, impersonal joy such as appreciation of a piece of art, nature's beauty, sweet smile of a child, etc. There is immense joy to be derived from being of help to another, from doing the acts of charity, justice and generosity without personal considerations. Pleasures may be *sattvic*, *rajasic* or *tamasic*. When it is gained selfishly at the cost of others it is not of true worth. Pleasure which brings happiness to others without desire for reward is of greater worth. Worldly pleasures are short-lived and left behind at death. It is only the noble qualities and merits earned which are carried by the Ego to heaven world, the state of unalloyed peace. Still deeper joy is called *Ananda*, the natural and spontaneous joy, which we experience when we live according to our true nature—as the divinity within.

The explanatory note on this verse in the book points out: "Though it is not very clearly enunciated, the implication of this verse seems to be distinguishing between pleasures of the lower order, pertaining to the personality, and the joys of the soul arising out of the disciplined life." However, we are unable to appreciate the possibility of obtaining this "deeper joy." It is very difficult for a child born in a prison cell to imagine the joy of living freely in the beautiful world outside. We can begin by undertaking a simple exercise. Whenever we are faced with a moral dilemma we can ask ourselves whether that which I seek is going to give me lasting happiness; whether we are going to harm or injure another in obtaining our object of happiness; whether that which I seek selfishly is of greater value to another. Then, treating other people as our own self, we should choose that which is good (*shreyas*) and not that which dear to us personally (*preyas*).

It is said that in *Sushupti* or deep sleep, we experience this joy but we fail to bring back its memory to our waking life. It is by learning to act for and as the Self of all that we can experience such

a joy.

2. *He who wishes for his own happiness and inflicts injury on others for obtaining it is entangled in the bonds of hatred. He is not free from hatred. (291)*

The saddest part of the physical existence is that it makes us feel separate from other people. The pair of fine clothes can be worn by one man, a morsel of food can be eaten by one man and not more, a movie ticket will admit only one person into the cinema hall and not more. This gives rise to conflict when there are many contenders for the same thing. Then, what gives joy to one becomes the source of pain for another. When it comes to pleasures, we tend to become selfish and grab our pleasures unmindful of others. Worse, we become harsh and heartless and even inflict injury on others for obtaining our own happiness. Naturally, those who are trampled, used, exploited are not going to like it in the least. In seeking our pleasures we continually sow the seeds of hatred in others. They would retaliate and take their revenge.

3. *Evil tendencies of the unrestrained and careless go on increasing if they neglect doing what ought to be done and do that which ought not be done. (292)*

4. *But in those who are mindful of fleshly activities, who do not do what should not be done, who steadfastly do what should be done, their evil tendencies go on decreasing and come to an end. (293)*

When we act, we are either acting in accordance with the Law or against it. We commit the sin of omission when we neglect to do that which ought to be done. So also, by doing that which ought not to be done, there is an act of commission that violates the law. Moreover, since every thought, feeling and action has a tendency to return, the tendency to do wrong goes on increasing if we are not vigilant.

We have to also become mindful of fleshly activities. However, we must not blame our body for our "fleshly appetites." Most of

these are natural and essential for existence. Hunger, thirst, sleep, etc. are the means by which body draws our attention to its legitimate need for food, water and rest. Once fulfilled, these would no longer crave our attention until the next cycle arrives. These are wisely appointed demands that nature has placed within our body. What makes them get out of our hand is our attachment and craving for this or that particular sensation, and identification with it: “I like ice cream, I want to have more”; “I want to start Air Conditioner because I feel very hot”; and such other desires. If we indulge them, our desires become our passions which are insatiable and ultimately lead to sin. It is by becoming mindful of fleshly activities and doing that which ought to be done that our evil tendencies go on decreasing and come to an end. In the *Gita* we are told: “Those who have spiritual discrimination call him wise whose undertakings are all free from desire, for his actions are consumed in the fire of knowledge. With mind and body subdued and being above enjoyment from objects, doing with the body alone the acts of the body, he does not subject himself to rebirth.”

In *An Epitome of Theosophy* Mr. Judge writes that the real object to be kept in view is to open up or make porous the lower nature so that the spiritual nature may shine through it and become the guide and ruler. For it to descend, we need to prepare the vehicle. The “spiritual culture” is only attainable as the grosser interests, passions, and demands of the flesh are subordinated to the interests, aspirations and needs of the higher nature.

All selfishness must be eliminated from the lower nature before its divine state can be reached. So long as the smallest personal or selfish desire—even for spiritual attainment for our own sake—remains, so long is the desired end put off. Hence the above term “demands of the flesh” really covers also demands that are not of the flesh, and its proper rendering would be “desires of the personal nature, including those of the individual soul.”

(To be concluded)

NUMBERS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

II

THERE are two kinds of numbers—numbers or figures used in mathematics and the numbers which are called Sacred Numbers. The former are physical, the latter are metaphysical, and they are related to each other like matter and spirit. The Sacred Numbers symbolize something higher. Numbers are also used to represent geometrical figures such as triangle, square, pentagon, and so on. When Pythagoras is quoted as saying “all things are numbers,” probably what he meant was that all things have forms and all things *are* forms, and these forms can be defined by numbers. Thus the form of the square corresponds to a “square number,” *i.e.*, $16=4 \times 4$, represented by arranging 16 dots in four rows, each row with four dots. Likewise, rectangle corresponds to an oblong number twelve, and can be represented by 12 dots arranged in three rows, each with four dots.

Pythagoras showed mystic relation of every number to everything intelligible to human mind. Pythagoras described the indivisible *Unity* lying behind all manifestation as “No Number.” The unmanifest and the invisible plane was represented by *nought* or *Circle*, which Pythagoras said is the most appropriate symbol of Divinity. We are told that everything in the Kosmos, all the forms we see are through the Deity. Pythagoras calls Deity as no number, but Balzac calls Deity, the Number endowed with Motion. Deity is symbolized by Absolute Abstract Motion. That Deity is called Unity which begins the Numbers, just as all numbers begin with one, but Deity as *Unity* has nothing in common with other numbers. As said in *The Key to Theosophy*:

Thou art one, the root of all numbers, but not as an element of enumeration; for unity admits not of multiplication, change or form. Thou art one, and in the secret of thy unity, the wisest of men are lost, because they know it not. Thou art one, and thy unity is never diminished,

never extended, and cannot be changed. Thou art one, and no thought of mine can fix for Thee a limit, or define Thee. Thou Art, but not as one existent, for the understanding and vision of mortals cannot attain to Thy existence, nor determine for Thee, the where, the how and the why, etc.

In the Pythagorean system all numbers are derived from “No Number.” In the beginning of manifestation the Monad or first number appears, and from this number the geometry of the universe emerges. Pythagoras called the Monad, or *One*, the first odd and therefore divine number. In the phenomenal world the reflection of Monad becomes the apex of the manifested equilateral triangle, or the “Father.” The left line of the triangle becomes the Duad or “Mother.” This represents the origin of all the contrasts in nature, the point at which the roads of good and evil bifurcate. This being the case, the Pythagoreans are said to have “hated” the Binary. Considering the number *Two* as a representation of the law of polarity, they stressed its positive aspect by entering a temple on the right side and by putting on the right shoe first (*S.D.*, I, 614). The Pythagoreans refused to recognize number two even as an abstract idea on the ground that in geometry it is impossible to construct a figure with only two straight lines. At least three lines are necessary to enclose space. Hence, two was not considered a sacred number. The right line of the triangle represents the “Son,” described in every ancient cosmogony as one with the apex or “Father.” The line at the base of the triangle stands for the universal plane of productive nature, in which “Father-Mother-Son” are unified on the phenomenal plane as they were united in the supersensuous world by the apex. H.P.B. writes that by mystic transmutation they become the Quaternary; the triangle became the *Tetraktis*.

The Greek and Latin churches, which regarded marriage as one of the sacraments, made triangular formation during the marriage ceremony. The officiating priest represents the *apex* of the triangle; the bride and bridegroom would stand facing him to his left and to his right, representing feminine and masculine principles respectively,

and the row of witness, the bridesmaids and best-men standing behind them would form the base line. The altar behind the priest symbolizes the super sensuous world or ultimate Deity, and only consecrated priest could enter inside that altar. (*S.D.*, I, 614 fn.)

Number four is considered sacred by the Pythagoreans. Four represents perfect square, all the four bounding lines are of equal length, and neither of the four lines exceeds in length the other by even a single point. It is the emblem of moral justice and divine equity expressed geometrically. The ineffable name of the Deity, which is unutterable, was replaced by the Pythagoreans by this sacred number 4 or *Tetraktys*. The Pythagoreans swore by the sacred *Tetraktys* (*Isis*, I, 9). When the higher triad of the *Atma-Buddhi-Manas* is reflected in the purified incarnated *Manas* during the *Turiya* state, it becomes *Tetraktys*. Then, the glory, the powers and potentialities of the triad become manifested; the potentiality becomes the potency.

In the occult and Pythagorean geometry the Tetrad is said to combine within itself all the materials from which Kosmos is produced. To understand this we may recall that *Tetraktys* is also represented by 10 dots arranged in a triangle in four rows. The first row of one dot represents a point. The second row with two dots represents a line. The three dots on the third row represent a triangle. The fourth row with four dots represents tetrahedron. *The Theosophical Glossary* mentions that the *Tetraktys* is an equilateral triangle formed from the sequence of the first ten numbers aligned in four rows. It is both a mathematical idea and a metaphysical symbol that embraces within itself in seed-like form the principles of the natural world and the harmony of the cosmos. The One is the impersonal principle “God”(or spirit); the Two, matter; the Three, combining Monad and Duad and partaking of the nature of both, is the phenomenal world; the Tetrad, or form of perfection, expresses the emptiness of all; and the *Decad*, or sum of all, involves the entire Kosmos.

In his book, *The Sleepwalkers*, Arthur Koestler points out that

“The Pythagorean discovery that the pitch of a note depends on the length of the string which produces it, and that concordant intervals in the scale are produced by simple numerical ratios (2:1 octave, 3:2 fifth, 4:3 fourth, etc.), was epoch-making.” He seemed to suggest that the music produced by two strings whose lengths were in proportion 1:2, 2:3 or 3:4 would produce harmonious sound or vibrations. Applied to a stringed instrument like violin, the octave ratio of 1:2 means that a string of any material, will produce a frequency an octave above the pitch of its full length when it is reduced by one half. The mathematical relationship between the keynote and its octave is expressed as a “frequency ratio” of 1:2. Notes separated by intervals of a perfect fifth (ratio 2:3) and a perfect fourth (3:4) have always been the most important “consonances” (harmonious vibrations) in western music.

Arthur Koestler writes that extended to the stars, the doctrine took the form of the “Harmony of Spheres.” As the planets move around the Sun in their respective orbits, the swift revolution of each of these bodies causes a swish, or musical hum, in the air. “Evidently each planet will hum on a different pitch, depending on the ratios of their respective orbits—just as the tone of a string depends on its length. Thus the orbits in which the planets move form a kind of huge lyre whose strings are curved into circles. It seemed equally evident that the intervals between the orbital cords must be governed by the laws of harmony,” writes Koestler.

As the corpuscles of the blood, floating in the common fluid, affect each other, so also the planets affect each other. The planets differ from each other in size and distance, and hence the intensity of the impulse they give to the surrounding ether as they move around the sun in their respective orbits, is different. Music is the combination and modulation of sounds, and sound is the effect produced by the vibrations of the ether. H.P.B. points out that we may compare the impulse communicated by different planets to the surrounding ether to the tones produced by the different notes on a musical instrument. It is easy to understand the combined influence

caused by the movement of these planets in their orbits producing harmonious vibrations. We are also able to appreciate that certain planetary aspects (planetary position measured by their angular distance), may imply disturbances in the ether of our planet earth, while certain other aspects may imply rest and harmony. (*Isis*, I, 275)

In the *Secret Doctrine* (II, 601) H.P.B. points out that it is on number seven that Pythagoras composed his doctrine on the Harmony and Music of the Spheres. He called the distance between the Moon and the Earth, “a tone,” between Moon to Mercury half a tone (semi-tone); between Mercury to Venus half a tone; from Venus to Sun 1 ½ tones (minor third); from the Sun to Mars a tone; from Mars to Jupiter half a tone, from Jupiter to Saturn half a tone; and from Saturn to the Zodiac (sphere of the fixed stars) a tone; thus making seven tones. “All the melody of nature is in those seven tones, and therefore is called ‘the Voice of Nature.’” The Music of the Spheres is not mere fancy, and we are not able to hear, perhaps because we are grossly constituted. As Shakespeare makes Lorenzo say in *The Merchant of Venice*, “There’s not the slightest orb which thou beholdest but in its motion like an angel sings....Such harmony is in immortal souls; But, whilst this muddy vesture of decay doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.”

The number four contains both the productive and produced numbers. The number four forms the arithmetical mean between the monad and the heptad ($1 + 7 = 8$ divided by $2 = 4$). We may regard 1, 2 and 3 as productive numbers, as their power is derived from monad which is three in one or trinity in unity. But *four* also has the power of produced numbers because when combined with three it forms seven, which is the vehicle of life, or matter.

The *Secret Doctrine* (II, 592-93) mentions that numbers 3 and 4 are respectively male and female, Spirit and Matter, and their union is the emblem of life eternal in spirit and of life in matter. All the matter of the Universe, when analyzed by science to its ultimate can be reduced to four elements only—carbon, oxygen, nitrogen and

hydrogen. These four elements of physical matter are compared with four lower principles of man. The four elements of matter are on the phenomenal plane but they are derived from the three *noumenoi*, which she calls as principles of physical nature, just as the higher three principles, *Atma, Buddhi, Manas*, can be considered as *noumenoi* or basic principles while the lower four may be considered transitory aspects. Hydrogen, the lightest of all gases burns in oxygen giving off the most intense heat in combustion and forms water, the most stable of compounds. So also, *Kama* which corresponds to Hydrogen, is the principle of animal desires which burn fiercely during life in matter. Oxygen corresponds to *prana*, and *Kama* depends on *Prana*, which makes all desires vital and living. Nitrogen which is an inert gas when mixed with oxygen makes the latter suitable for animal respiration. Nitrogen corresponds to *Linga-Sarira*; the inert vehicle or form on which the physical body is moulded, and which brings *prana* into a form that can be assimilated to matter on this plane. Oxygen is supporter of combustion and the life-giving gas. Carbon is the fuel *par excellence*; the basis of all organic substance. It corresponds to gross matter of the body.

The number 4 was called by the Pythagoreans the Key-Keeper of Nature; but in union with the 3 which made it seven, it became the most perfect and harmonious number—nature herself.

Man is called *Saptaparna* or seven-leaved plant. The T, or *tau*, is formed from figure 7 and the Greek letter gamma. It was symbol of life and of life eternal; because (gamma) is the symbol of the Earth (*gaia*) and hence represents “earthly life”; and the figure 7 is the symbol of earth life linked with divine life. The double glyph (of earth life and divine life) is expressed in geometrical figures with a square below a triangle—a triangle and a quaternary being the symbol of septenary man. (*S.D.*, II, 590-91)

(*To be continued*)

CREATOR AND CREATION

ALL RELIGIONS in their exoteric discourse on “creation,” when read, taking their outer metaphorical expressions in their literal sense, as is popularly done by the faithful followers of each, strongly suggest the idea of a creator and his creation. Belief in creator and his creation in its dead-letter sense gives rise to the notion of a personal God in the minds of the believers, and this belief is strengthened by the exoteric ritualistic worship which is popularised by the religious establishments, and on which they thrive. Thus belief in a personal God is one of the most formidable and deeply rooted one among the religiously inclined people in general. H.P.B. shows that the belief in a personal God may do some good in certain circumstances, but that it may also do a great deal of harm according to the attributes which we give to that personal God. Mystics and saints in every age felt the ubiquitous impersonal divine principle within them, as well as in everything and every being, with which they communed in ecstatic meditation, called it by different names as the god in them, and left to posterity invaluable religious teachings in songs, poetry and other immortal works of art, instilling devotion and inspiring aspiration to live a true religious life among common people. God-idea in this sense is beneficial as it accords with reality.

But the god idea with personal attributes, which is made the foundation of some theologies, if blindly believed in, will act as an obstacle in the way of human progress and a source of many an evil which afflicts mankind. Writes H.P.B.:

A personal god without personal attributes is unthinkable and illogical; because it is his personal attributes which constitute him a “personal” god. If we believe that such a god is passionate, revengeful and changeable, if we believe that he favours some and condemns others, that he can be persuaded to forgive our sins and thereby act contrary to the law of justice, such a belief not only impedes our own progress, but is highly pernicious.

It is pernicious in its consequences. Absurdity of the idea of a god claimed to be infinite, eternal and changeless and, at the same time, regarded as being engaged in the work of creation and, moved by emotional impulses rewards and punishes his creatures, is apparent. This false idea coupled with the dogma of vicarious atonement has been the bane of Christendom. The belief that we are not responsible for our actions and can escape from their consequences and obtain pardon of our sins by prayers and supplications to god, or by faith in the blood of Christ, which unfortunately has become an article of popular faith, even among those who are not directly taught it, has evil consequences: the belief is the hotbed of immorality and every conceivable crime in society, and the unreasonableness and injustice of it, and in absence of right philosophy, has driven thinking section of populace into agnosticism, which is the parent of materialism. Efforts at trying to reform evils of society by social action will forever be fruitless as long as faith in such false ideas and beliefs are not remedied through diffusion of the seeds of right mental action based on the right philosophy of life. It is said in *The Secret Doctrine* that the evolution of God idea proceeds apace with man's own intellectual evolution (I, 326). General spread of the right ideas of Deity, Law and Being as taught in the ancient Eastern Wisdom alone can aid man's intellectual evolution along the right lines, and it is the constant endeavour of devotees of Occult philosophy to help on this development.

If we go beyond the dead-letter construction of religious scriptures and read them in the light of Esoteric Philosophy, we find that religions do not teach "creation" or a "creator," though such an idea suggests itself in the exoteric rendering. They all teach periodical manifestation of the universe in regular succession from the infinite, boundless, eternal, Absolute Principle which is Unknowable. It is pictured as an out-breathing and in-breathing of the "Great Breath," called Days and Nights of Brahma. It is graphically pictured in the *Bhagavad-gita* as follows:

Those who are acquainted with day and night know that

the day of Brahma is a thousand revolutions of the yugas and that the night extendeth for a thousand more. At the coming of the day all things issue forth from the unmanifested into manifestation, so on the approach of that night they merge again into the unmanifested. This collection of existing things having thus come forth, is dissolved at the approach of the night, O son of Pritha; and now again on the coming of the day it emanates spontaneously.

This spontaneous successive appearance and disappearance of the universe has neither conceivable beginning nor an imaginable end, our universe being only one of an infinite number of universes which preceded ours, each of which standing as an effect of the previous one, and the cause of the one that succeeds it. Each reappearance or rebirth of the universe evolves on a higher plane as a result of the experience gathered and assimilated by beings in the previous appearance, and this progression by cycles is endless.

The Endless, the Boundless cannot be the Creator or fashioner or modeller of the universe, as IT can neither think, will nor act. There is no creator of the worlds but there are progressive hierarchies of intelligent creative forces of nature, which issue forth from the Unknown when the hour strikes for the rebirth of the world, and are re-absorbed in It at the end of the cycle of manifestation. When the period of activity commences the highest of these creative potencies which radiate out of the Unknown Absolute reflect in themselves the plan in the Universal Mind, and impress the same on the pre-existent root-substance co-eternal with it, and cause the universe to evolve through a series of emanations impelled by the fatality of the Law which is Eternity itself, of which the creative forces are the agents, collectively called the "Creator" under different epithets, like Brahma, Jehova, Ormazd, Osiris, etc. by different religious philosophies.

Furthermore, the one absolute, ever acting and never erring law, which proceeds on the same lines from one eternity (or *Manvantara*)

to the other—ever furnishing an ascending scale for the manifested, or that which we call the great Illusion (*Maha-Maya*), but plunging Spirit deeper and deeper into materiality on the one hand, and then *redeeming it through flesh* and liberating it—this law, we say, uses for these purposes the Beings from other and higher planes, men or *Minds* (Manus), in accordance with their Karmic exigencies. (*S.D.*, II, 87- 88)

Thus the object of existence is liberation through self-realization of beings by numberless reincarnations under Karmic Law. Karma is defined in the *Bhagavad-gita* as the emanation which causes the existence and reproduction of creatures. An aphorism of Karma points out that there can be no Karma unless there is a being to make or feel its effects. Every being or creature acts according to his degree of perception and feels the reaction produced thereby. So far as the worlds are concerned, each being a stream of evolution, the Karma of all the beings concerned in that stream, from the highest to the lowest, collectively experiences the effects of their collective action. It is thus that individuals as well as races, nations and worlds progress in smaller and greater cycles of existence, smaller ones revolving within the larger cycles, which are produced by their own actions by the Law inherent in the whole and in each, all tending towards emancipation, the progressed beings helping in the development of the less progressed. Aphorisms of Karma say on the question of birth of the world or systems of worlds:

The Karma of this earth is the combination of the acts and thoughts of all beings of every grade which were concerned in the preceding Manvantara or evolutionary stream from which ours flows. And as those beings include Lords of Power and Holy Men, as well as wicked ones, the period of the earth's duration is greater than that of any entity or race upon it. Because the Karma of this earth and its races began in a past too far back for human minds to reach, an inquiry into its beginning is useless and profitless. (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 21*, Aphorisms 9, 10 and 11)

This period of evolution, or Manvantara (between the two Manus), in which we are involved, is the exact and just outcome of the action of beings—who were ourselves, collectively, in different stages of development—of the previous Manvantara. The next Manvantara, which will succeed our this present one, millions of years hence, will be the exact and the just outcome of the resultant of the sum of the actions of the whole of our fellow-beings and fellow-creatures, who are all indissolubly bound up together by the fact of universal brotherhood and the law of interdependent reciprocity. The world of beings is like a collection of atoms and molecules in our body, all interdependent, health or wholeness of which is determined by the action of each in harmony with the whole. Hence, thoughts and action of each unit of the human race affects either for good or for evil the whole collection of beings which make our world, and determine its destiny.

Considerations of these great truths show us how important it is to acquire the right knowledge of the true nature of Self and Law of our being, and, in contrast, the danger of holding false ideas and beliefs. There is no god outside of Man as his true Self is one with the Universal Self, his being a perfect copy of the Universal Being, and himself the exemplar of the Law of all laws. Realizing thus his true estate and the divine destiny of humanity, “man ought to be,” as *The Secret Doctrine* teaches, “ever striving to help the divine evolution of *Ideas*, by becoming to the best of his ability a *co-worker with nature* in the cyclic task” (I, 280). H.P.B. writes:

There is one eternal Law in nature, one that always tends to adjust contraries and to produce final harmony. It is owing to this law of spiritual development superseding the physical and purely intellectual that mankind will become freed from its false gods, and find itself finally—SELF-REDEEMED. (*S.D.*, II, 420)

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: How does Maya or “Illusory super power” work in the life of every individual? How to overcome it?

Answer: The word Maya includes both illusion and delusion. Illusion may be defined as faulty perception of external object or figment of imagination. Delusion is defined as false belief or impression, and in Psychology it is regarded as a form of mental disorder. We speak of optical illusion, wherein we see the sun rising in the East and setting in the West. If someone perceives a rope, not as a rope, but as a snake, then that is an illusion. Mirage is an optical illusion caused by atmospheric conditions. Psychologically, false perception could arise due to our biases. Each one of us carries with himself the background of his culture, education, religion, and tends to look at the world and people through bits of these coloured glasses. Our judgment, more often than not, is biased. H.P.B. stresses the need for acquiring unbiased and clear judgment. Thus, our faulty perception or illusion could be because of the limitations of our senses or it could be the result of false conceptions, inherent in our build up, carried from the past.

Philosophically, we may say that illusion is what is called “Maya,” and it is part of the cosmic order. The world around us is a relative Reality. Ultimate Reality is Beness or *Parabrahmam*. When we look upon the relative reality as the Ultimate Reality then we are deluded. And in that sense we are all deluded. Illusion is an incorrect picture of Reality. H.P.B. writes in the *Secret Doctrine* that we are able to perceive only the *phenomena* that have in them the element of illusion or *Maya*. Absolute, One Reality or God is the *noumenon*

(Causeless Cause) of all the *noumena* which must underlie all phenomena and give to them whatever shadow of reality they possess, but which we are not able to cognize at our level. An example is given to understand this. The atoms of gold scattered throughout the substance of auriferous quartz may be imperceptible to the naked eye of the miner, yet he knows that they are not only present there but that they alone give his quartz any appreciable value. The relation between *noumenon* and phenomenon is similar to that between gold and quartz. But whereas the miner knows what gold will look like when extracted from quartz, we at our level cannot form any conception of the reality of things as separated from the veil of *Maya* which hides them, *i.e.*, we are able to grasp only its manifested aspect. Only an initiate using his inner, spiritual eye is able to see the essence of things uninfluenced by *Maya* or illusion. (*S.D.*, I, 45)

Maya or illusion is the result of differentiation or the result of one becoming the many. But it is also true that if there were no *Maya*, there would be no differentiation or rather no objective universe would be perceived. *Maya* may be said to be the Cosmic power which renders phenomenal existence and the perceptions thereof possible. *Maya* or illusion is an element which enters into all finite things, for everything that exists has only a *relative*, and not *absolute reality*. The appearance which the hidden *noumenon* assumes for an observer depends upon his power of cognition. Where a savage might see in a painting just streaks and daubs of colour, the educated eye sees a landscape or a face. As we rise in the scale of development, from stage to stage, we go on discarding the relative “realities.” Only when we shall have reached the absolute Consciousness and blended our own consciousness with it, shall we be free from the delusions produced by *Maya*.

Maya or illusion is defined as the “perceptive faculty of every Ego, which considers itself a Unit separate from, and independent of, the One infinite and eternal SAT, or ‘be-ness’.” Delusion is *Moha*, so that the person is convinced that his illusion is right. Delusion

seems to be the result of egoism. It is possible to avoid delusion. In the Ninth Chapter of the *Gita*, Shri Krishna says, “The *deluded* despise me in the human form, being unacquainted with my real nature as Lord of all things.” Being encased in different bodies and personalities, the true light is obscured and we are led to believe that each one of us is separate from others. Arjuna, too, was under the same delusion. It is only when he was made to realize that in the heart of every creature there is Master *Iswara*, that he says that his *moha* or delusion was destroyed and that he had regained his (*smriti*) memory.

In *Devi Bhagwata Purana*, it is said that once Narada asked Vishnu: “What is *Maya*?” Vishnu told him to fetch some water from the river before he answered his question. When Narada was bringing water, he saw a beautiful woman and was smitten by her beauty. He married this woman and built a house and had children and grand-children. Then Vishnu sent flood and lightning, and Narada was swept in the flood and began drowning. He cried for help and then Vishnu brought him out of water and asked, “Where is my water?” Narada said, “how can you be so remorseless and ask me for water when I have lost my entire family?” Vishnu told him to calm down. He reminded Narada that his house, his family all came only from Vishnu; and that Vishnu was the only reality and that everything else was an illusion. Narada, the greatest devotee of Vishnu, knew all that and yet he fell under the sway of *Maya*. In the *Key to Theosophy*, H.P.B. points out that unless a God descends as an *Avatar*, no divine principle can be otherwise than cramped and paralyzed by turbulent, animal matter. Heterogeneity will always have the upper hand over homogeneity, on this plane of illusions.

Under the spell of *Maya* there is self-identifying attachment to our body, our likes and dislikes, our thoughts, feelings, near and dear ones, our possessions, and so on. Only when we are able to become aware of ourselves and other things and people as nothing else but the manifestations of One Reality, are we free from *Maya*. The key lies in gradually becoming impersonal. Mr. Judge suggests

that every day and as often as you can, and on going to sleep and as you wake—think, think, think, on the truth that you are not body, brain, or astral man, but that you are THAT, and “THAT” is the Supreme Soul.

Question: How to neutralize or eliminate the bad karmas committed through ignorance?

Answer: Karma has two aspects, one is that of action and reaction on physical plane and another is that of moral responsibility. The former is applicable to all beings. So, if a child puts its finger into the fire, it will burn, or if a Mahatma throws a stone into the pond, it will cause ripples. But the law of *moral compensation* does not apply in case of a child, idiot, savage and truly ignorant person. Because in case of children below seven years of age, idiots and savages, their Higher Mind has not made contact with the personal being and therefore, their action is not guided by the spirit within. We incur heavier karmic debt when we engage in a wrong action *knowingly*. In fact, the more aware we are—of right and wrong—heavier is the debt incurred for wrong actions. On the other hand, crimes committed in ignorance involve physical but no moral responsibilities or karma. For instance, if a blind and helpless person accidentally hits another in the eye, it is usual for the person who is hurt to excuse the act and to feel no resentment. But the same action done purposely, may arouse hatred and resentment in the other person. In the first case there will be consequences on the physical plane only, but no moral suffering, which is involved in the latter case.

An ordinary human being is *morally* responsible, which in the case of a pledged disciple becomes more intense. In bringing the karmic results, the Law takes into account the motive, degree of knowledge or ignorance, Karmic stamina and the state of mind of an individual at the time of action. Karmic backlash for a person who steals a loaf of bread because he is hungry will not be as severe as in case of a *Bhikkhu*, who having taken a vow to control his hunger, steals the bread. The moral compensation in normal human

beings would involve intense pain and suffering in one's inner nature till the person finally learns the lesson and reforms. This gets intensified manifold in case of the pledged disciples. But even here, much is forgiven during the initial years of probation.

The only way one can nullify bad karma is by setting into motion right or good karma. When bad karma is committed in ignorance, we will experience the consequences on physical plane. However, when we gain knowledge and become aware of our mistakes committed in ignorance, we have the freedom to set into motion fresh good karma. If one has erred by lying, stealing or backbiting, one has to set into motion good causes by resolving and learning to abstain from repeating the same wrongs. True repentance must lead to inner transformation. We are then sowing new causes that can counteract or mitigate the bad effects generated by previous causes. What we experience is the resultant or sum total of the old, bad karma and new, good karma. The Aphorism on Karma says:

The effects may be counteracted or mitigated by the thoughts and acts of oneself or of another, and then the resulting effects represent the combination and interaction of the whole number of causes involved in producing the effects. (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 21*)

There is the law of parallelogram of forces, wherein the good and the bad cause may either partially or completely counterbalance each other's effect and then what we experience is the resultant. There is also the *doctrine of nullification of Karma*. According to the well-known law in physics, two equal forces opposing each other, lead to equilibrium. "Thus, a person may have in his Karmic account a very unpleasant cause and at the same time a cause of opposite character. If these come together for expression at the same time they may so counteract each other as that neither will be apparent and the equilibrium is the equivalent of both," explains Mr. Judge.

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

What is Consciousness? We might say that an awake person has consciousness, but not the person who is asleep. Someone awake might be so absorbed in his thoughts that he is not conscious of things around him. We speak of political, social or ecological consciousness. We also say that human beings have consciousness, *i.e.*, they could think and are self-aware, while other creatures do not have consciousness. The faculty of consciousness may be compared to the light from a video projector, which modifies the light so as to produce images on the screen. Likewise, perceptions, sensations, dreams, memories, thoughts and feelings are like images and which may be described as "contents of consciousness." When we see the images on the screen we are not aware of light because we are caught up in the images and the stories they convey. Similarly, we are not aware of consciousness itself, but of different perceptions, thoughts and feelings appearing in the mind, writes Peter Russell. The faculty of consciousness is not limited to human beings. A dog, although not capable of reasoning, and not possessing self-awareness as human beings, none the less has his inner world of experiences. It has its own mental picture of the world, full of sounds, colours, smells and sensations. A dog shows fear and excitement, it dreams, and is capable of feeling pain. Every animal possesses consciousness, though not self-consciousness like human beings. Likewise, insects too have consciousness. We usually assume that some kind of brain or nervous system is necessary for the consciousness to come into being. But the question then arises, "how can any purely material process ever give rise to consciousness?" asks Peter Russell. (*The Speaking Tree, Sunday Times of India, January 20, 2013*)

Occult philosophy teaches that everything which changes is organic; it has the life principle in it. Everything in the universe is sentient or conscious. Everything in the Universe, throughout all its kingdoms, is Conscious, *i.e.*, endowed with a consciousness of its own kind and on its own plane of perception. We must remember

that because we do not perceive any signs of consciousness, say, in stones, we have no right to say that *no consciousness exists there*, because the whole of manifestation is an emanation from and an aspect of One Reality or Absolute Consciousness.

The universe is the result of the combination of Spirit (or Consciousness) and Matter. Every particle has its own kind of consciousness. Even the so-called inorganic matter has consciousness. In minerals and crystals consciousness expresses itself as psychic intelligence, as crystals have their own particular sympathies and antipathies, their own attractions and repulsions. In vegetables there is sensation. In animals, in addition to sensation, consciousness expresses itself as instinct. Man alone possesses self-consciousness. Thus, there are several degrees and aspects of consciousness, *viz.*, Cohesion, Sensation, Instinct, Reasoning, Intuition and so on.

H.P.B. points out that the consciousness of an individual may fall into, or work itself into, one of the three modes of existence, and adoption of the particular mode knowingly or otherwise, determines the character and intrinsic value of the consciousness. The first form of consciousness is *sensuous consciousness*, which operates merely through the senses and nervous system, which delights merely in the external forms of objects and receives impressions only from those forms as they are found. The second form of consciousness is *intellectual consciousness* which is concerned with movement of objects and the effects of those movements on objects themselves. *Spiritual consciousness* is concerned with the hidden causes of the sensuous and intellectual consciousness.

Is the brain of a genius heavier than an average brain? The answer given is possibly, yes, but the size alone cannot explain why some

of us are regarded as geniuses. Some large-brained animals, such as dolphins and whales, are very intelligent, but so are crows with notably tiny brains. The brains of geniuses such as Albert Einstein have been measured, but no relationship with size or weight was found. One study revealed that Einstein had more glial cells than average. These support and protect neurons, suggesting that his brain demanded more energy.

Other studies show that geniuses have more long-range neural connections reaching from one area of the brain to another. Yet no single feature explains their exceptional abilities. Persistence, hard work and determination may be equally important factors—and these qualities do not require an especially heavy brain, writes Susan Blackmore, an expert on psychology and evolution. (*BBC Knowledge*, February 2013)

Theosophy teaches that human brain is of much better and deeper capacity than that of any other animal. It has been observed that while the brain of the largest ape, the gorilla, measures no more than 30.51 cubic inches, while the average brains of flat-headed Australian natives—one of the least developed races—amount to 99.35 cubic inches! (*S.D.*, II, 661). However, genius cannot be explained on the basis of brain structure. Brain is an instrument of mind. The depth and variety of the brain convolutions in man are caused by the presence of mind (*Manas*) and are not the cause of mind.

A genius is not made but is born. It is the fruition of the Ego's efforts in past lives and cannot be explained in terms of heredity. It is quite possible that a person pursues only one field, one subject or develops only one particular faculty. If, say, the pursuit of music, literature or Mathematics is kept up for many lives, then we have a great musician, literary genius or a Mathematical wizard. The intuitive flash of an artist or a scientist is the result of a temporary conjunction of *Manas* with *Buddhi*, and the receptivity of the brain cells helps to receive and manifest the impressions from within without. Explaining the phenomenon of genius, H.P.B. writes,

“Great Genius, therefore, if true and innate, and not merely an abnormal expansion of our human intellect—can never copy or condescend to imitate, but will ever be original, *sui generis* in its creative impulses and realizations.” The seeds of spiritual knowledge, art, science, agriculture and architecture exist in the divine nature of man, burnt into imperishable centre of his consciousness, by the divine Instructors, 18 million years ago. These exist as *innate* ideas. Why do we not show forth this knowledge? The light of wisdom is covered by layers or sheaths or vehicles, which need to be purified. H.P.B. sums up the idea in the article, “Genius.” What is the difference between the 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. The physical body is an instrument, while the Ego is the performing artist. She points out that even the great Violinist Paganini cannot bring out the melody if the violin is broken or if the strings are strung too loose or, too tight. The instruments of the Ego are the body and the brain. The Ego, though all-knowing, will not be able to use the brain to its full capacity unless it has experience. For instance, savages have good brain capacity, but the Ego is not mature and experienced to use it to its highest capacity. It is like asking two people to use computers. One who has mere working knowledge can only use it as a typewriter or calculator, while the one who has experience and has knowledge of computers, can utilize it better. It is only when the Ego has passed through various experiences of life and learnt from them that it acquires the power to utilize the brain to its full capacity.

There is a lot of genetic information in the world—about three zettabytes worth, *i.e.*, three hundred billion bytes, and to this already

massive data more and more digital information is being added, posing a real challenge to the archivists. Hard disks are expensive and also require constant supply of electrical power. Devices like magnetic tapes, which do not require electrical power, degrade within a decade. This is a growing problem in the life sciences, where massive volumes of data—including DNA sequences—make up the fabric of the scientific record. The researchers at EMBL-European Bioinformatics Institute (EMBL-EBI) published a new method of storing information, in the journal *Nature*, which makes it possible to store at least 100 million hours of high-definition video in a cup of DNA. It has been possible to store all 154 sonnets of Shakespeare on to strands of synthetic DNA. Scientists were able to decode the information and reproduce all the sonnets with complete accuracy. The fact that we are able to extract and understand the information drawn from the bones of woolly mammoths, which date back tens of thousands of years, makes DNA the most enduring storage device, says Nick Goldman of EMBL-EMI. Reading DNA is easy but not writing it. The new method required synthesizing DNA from the encoded information which was done by a California-based company. (*The Times of India*, January 25, 2013)

There have been several different types of recording materials used in the past for storing information. There were manuscripts in the form of scrolls or books (codices). Parchment and papyrus was used very commonly to preserve data for a long period of time. In Russia birch bark documents as old as from eleventh century have survived. In India Palm leaf manuscripts with a distinctive long rectangular shape, was used from ancient times until the Nineteenth century.

Ancients used discs and plates for recording and preserving secret and sacred knowledge. H.P.B. points out that the teachings of the *Voice of the Silence* have been derived from the *Book of the Golden Precepts*, and that the original Precepts are engraved on thin plates or discs. These are rendered in cryptographic alphabet.

Not only the ancients had the art of making enduring material on

which information could be recorded and preserved for millions of years, but they also made use of cyphers, of geometrical signs and glyphs, to record elaborate information, so that information that would have required numberless volumes to record, has been fitted into few pages. Thus: “The Secret Doctrine is the accumulated Wisdom of the Ages, and its cosmogony alone is the most stupendous and elaborate system: *e.g.*, even in the exotericism of the Puranas. But such is the mysterious power of Occult symbolism, that the facts which have actually occupied countless generations of initiated seers and prophets to marshal, to set down and explain, in the bewildering series of evolutionary progress, are all recorded on a few pages of geometrical signs and glyphs,” writes H.P.B.

By way of example, H.P.B. mentions “an old book” which is “so very old that our modern antiquarians might ponder over its pages an indefinite time, and still not quite agree as to the nature of the fabric upon which it is written. It is the only original copy now in existence. The most ancient Hebrew document on occult learning—the *Siphrah Dzeniouta*—was compiled from it, and that at a time when the former was already considered in the light of a literary relic. The ‘very old Book’ is the original work from which the many volumes of *Kiu-ti* were compiled. Not only this latter and the *Siphrah Dzeniouta* but even the *Sepher Jezirah*, the work attributed by the Hebrew Kabalists to their Patriarch Abraham (!), the book of *Shu-king*, China’s primitive Bible, the sacred volumes of the Egyptian Thoth-Hermes, the Purânas in India, and the Chaldean *Book of Numbers* and the *Pentateuch* itself, are all derived from that one small parent volume. Tradition says, that it was taken down in *Senzar*, the secret sacerdotal tongue, from the words of the Divine Beings, who dictated it to the sons of Light, in Central Asia, at the very beginning of the 5th (our) race; for there was a time when its language (the *Sen-zar*) was known to the Initiates of every nation....” (*S.D.*, pp. xlii-xliii)