

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

A Magazine Devoted to
The Living of the Higher Life

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- (a) To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or colour;
- (b) The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences and the demonstration of the importance of such study; and
- (c) The investigation of the unexplained laws of Nature and the psychical powers latent in man.

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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GOING FORWARD

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WHAT contribution can students of Theosophy make to the construction of a new world? Our Esoteric Philosophy is practical and contains Teachings which are applicable to the problems confronting the race-mind.

Though Universal Brotherhood is on everyone's lips, it is not in everyone's heart; that is so because Everyman does not adequately use his head to inquire and determine. The mind is the real plane of action and the chaos which prevails at this hour prevails primarily in the race-mind. Clear perception of our problems is lacking and their solutions are not thought out.

One confusing problem for the student of Theosophy arises from the existence of a hundred and one agencies which claim to be serving humanity and which appear to be actuated by the principle of Universal Brotherhood. As H. P. Blavatsky pointed out, “Theosophists are of necessity the friends of all movements in the world, whether intellectual or simply practical, for the amelioration of the condition of mankind.” She stated that as individual students of Theosophy each should feel free to engage himself in any of these movements in particular. But she added that “as Theosophists we have a larger, more important, and much more difficult work to do.” What is that? “To open men's hearts and understandings to charity, justice and generosity.”

Applying to himself the idea put forward, each must recognize that as a Theosophical student his task is that larger and more important one to which H.P.B. referred. Self-examination and self-analysis are not used to tear off the mask which hides mental laziness and moral passivity. Unconsciously to himself many a

student confines himself to the sphere of the “larger, more important, and much more difficult work”—but it is not done. Superficial in quality and restricted in quantity is the output in actual service of the Cause of the Esoteric Philosophy, *i.e.*, the Cause for the right progress of which that Philosophy was recorded. That particular type of service of humanity depends upon a clear perception of:

(a) Man’s duty to himself and consequently the work he has to do on and with himself. In the home, as well as where his livelihood is earned, and in connection with the modes and methods of his recreation, his enlightened heart has to produce self-reformation.

(b) His duty to the U.L.T. in which a Nucleus of Universal Brotherhood is to be established and through which the sphere of the race-mind has to be stirred, awakened and enlightened.

The propositions outlined here need sincere and not only serious consideration by every earnest student who aspires to learn so that he may serve.

WHEN you come to a good book, you must ask yourself, “Am I inclined to work as an Australian miner would? Are my pickaxes and shovels in good order, and am I in good trim myself, my sleeves well up to the elbow, and my breath good, and my temper?” And, keeping the figure a little longer, even at cost of tiresomeness, for it is a thoroughly useful one, the metal you are in search of being the author’s mind or meaning, his words are as the rock which you have to crush and smelt in order to get at it. And your pickaxes are your own care, wit, and learning; your smelting furnace is your own thoughtful soul. Do not hope to get at any good author’s meaning without those tools and that fire; often you will need sharpest, finest chiselling, and patientest fusing, before you can gather one grain of the metal.

—JOHN RUSKIN

THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH

THE student life in Occultism is a strange life because it finds no parallel in ordinary human experience. It has its own discipline and its own set of Rules. Its axioms are *sui generis* and are more often than not contradictions of modern scientific thought. This is especially so because science is limited to the sensuous side of nature and therefore fails to understand the supersensuous. One instance may be cited to advantage. Morals, however lax, are supposed in no way to limit the search of the scientist or to vitiate his findings. The immorality of the scientist has no effect on his microscope or on the numerous aids with which he surrounds himself. On the other hand, the slightest deviation from the paths of morality by an Occultist has the effect of tainting his mind and distorting his perceptions. Worse still, the slightest impurity has the effect of closing those passages which alone can give ingress to the higher planes of being. Once this calamity is attracted, the student's immorality not only poisons his soul but also poisons all those who come in contact with him. Foul waters are not potable and it is this truism which made Jude exclaim: "Hate the very clothing that is contaminated with sensuality."

When in this life an individual starts searching for divine knowledge, he does not necessarily do so for the first time. The quest may have started in preceding centuries and among civilizations now forgotten. The returning soul but picks up the thread of his previous efforts according as the cycles of his life permit. He comes across fellow searchers of incarnations past and renews his ties of a comradeship in their endeavour and a sharing in their sacrifice. Those enemies to his spirituality that he slew in previous lives will no longer return in this life. Yet the armies of the foe are hydra-headed and have to be slain past resurrection. In this life, there are battles always. It is in an environment of perpetual turmoil that the student has to find his bearings. Matthew Arnold catching a glimpse in human psychology put his ideas in verse: "Tasks in hours of insight willed, Can be through hours of gloom fulfilled." The student has so to equip himself as to be able to live through these dark and threatening hours of gloom. Many there are who in the first flush of enthusiasm try to rush into a lower plane counterpart of the circle of ascetics. If the urge which motivates them is emotional, their efforts will wax and wane as do emotions, and will ultimately die the death to which emotions are prone. There is a flash of great expectations which is succeeded by darkness as enthusiasm wanes and exhaustion spreads. It

is one of the duties of a student to see that he carries no run-down spiritual batteries and that his enthusiasm is keyed to the exact pitch.

When the soul is ripe to recommence his studies from where he left off in a previous incarnation, he also becomes ready to acknowledge his kinship with other souls whose aspirations commingled with his can form a nucleole of effort. They must now join together awaiting a fusion of their natures. It is the degree of this fusion which will determine the strength or the weakness of their Brotherhood. Societies, lodges, brotherhoods, churches, leagues and congregations are thus born, live their life and die out if the cementing binding energy loses its cohesive properties. Though the ultimate aim of any group is to have one mind and one heart, the forging of this in the truly spiritual sense may take years and is necessarily delayed till the least of the brothers is ready for the great event. It is here that the mettle of each soul-unit is tested. Are you chafing at your brother's weakness? Have you criticized him, slighted him, paid him scant courtesy, looked down upon him from the eminence of your virtuous height? It may be true that your erring brother has retarded your growth, but can you not also realize that your own self-righteous stance may have contributed in no small measures to an alarming backsliding of the entire nucleus? This fall from a high sense of unity, this backsliding due to the somnolence of units comes because the Higher Force is neither invoked nor treasured in all moments of striving. Earthly norms of behaviour, earthly drawing in of energy from the lower aspects of *Prana* are not capable of achieving spiritual results. The invocation of Ishwara, the remembrance of Ishwara, the readiness to sacrifice for Ishwara (see *Patanjali*, I, 23-27) is impossible of attainment amidst the clutter of emotional urges.

In the second chapter of the *Gita*, Arjuna is drowned in a torrential stream of emotions. His values become inverted; his reasoning becomes a slave to his moods; he cannot see himself to be in the wrong; he questions his previous decisions. He is so captivated by his despondency that he is prepared to declare that the fight would be contrary to all spiritual principles. This state of the mind is common to all Arjunas. Without the experience of this despondency, no Arjuna would be capable of progress. He finds his own reasoning perfect. Yet, he intuitively senses the falsity of his position. It is this tacit acceptance of the position that intellect alone is incapable of guidance that makes Arjuna request Krishna for his advice. The intuitive knowledge of the perennial philosophy cannot be compared with the knowledge

obtained through a reasoning intellect. The difference is not one of degree but of kind. The modern Arjuna often tries to evaluate the spiritual by comparison with the dicta of modern science as though that which is *sui generis* can be accepted only if it conforms to the error-ridden conclusions of modern scientific thought. The despondency comes because Arjuna loses faith in the infallibility of the spiritual. His conclusions are wrong because his premises are wrong—they have put wrong values on the eternal and the perishable. The hold of the non-eternal is finally loosened in the Eleventh Chapter when Arjuna's reawakened Soul makes the great penance: "Having been ignorant of thy majesty . . . I have at times treated thee without respect in sport, in recreation, in repose, in thy chair and at thy meals, in private and in public; all this I beseech thee, O inconceivable Being, to forgive." Ere the student can learn of that Faith with which the Twelfth Chapter deals, he has to learn to choose his premises. Without this knowledge, he becomes like a child playing at blind-man's buff.

The great difficulty is that the intellect by itself will never be able to grasp the full Truth even though it be presented through printed words upon a page. Unless the heart accepts it, the Truth must for ever remain hidden. This is the invariable law. True knowledge is not to be found merely in a book or an academy. It has to well up within the man and fill up the vacant spaces. As it bubbles forth in drops or in streamlets, it has to pass through the complex structure of the mind. Long before the divine knowledge has the chance to emerge on the physical plane, it picks up from the individual's mind the tinge and colour of his morality. That which began as a pearl may ultimately emerge as a speck of mire. The knowledge which is channelled through purity heals and becomes a benediction. The knowledge that gets tainted through the effluvia of a sensual mind becomes of the earth earthy and is a scourge that visits large sections of mankind. The student who through neglect or perversity allows the divine Knowledge to be sullied, partakes of evil and inherits the wages of that evil.

All evil and sin are the offspring of selfishness. The pandering to one's appetites, the hungering for name, power and love have their roots in the person who views himself as one isolated from other persons and who therefore seeks to extract his satisfaction at the expense of those other persons. Sometimes the selfish and therefore the sinful masquerades under the guise of philanthropy, altruism, assumed virtue or outraged piety. It is this selfishness

which provides the tainting media to Knowledge, and the personality provides the instrument. Both of these have to be removed expeditiously but also with an abundance of caution. Constant practice and an eradication of desires are the chief cleansing agents. They effect a cure by the simple expedient of filling in all available spaces of the mind with thoughts and images that reflect only the Spirit and Soul. When a personal desire arises, it has to be crowded out so that it can have no staying ground in the individual's make-up. This in fact is the procedure which conforms to the injunction: "Resist without resisting."

This grand experiment (of chasing the money-changers out of the temple) has to be undertaken—as all momentous experiments should be undertaken—under the alert and watchful gaze of the operator. As the crowding out of the undesirable takes place, discipline itself is raised from tedious boredom to an exercise of absorbing interest. Here again there is need for caution. There are nuances of the personal element which may still percolate through and ruin the entire effort. The desire to outshine another in the imposition of discipline, the urge to brush aside co-disciples so as to reach the goal ahead of them are indications that the selfish nature is still very much alive and seeks expression in unorthodox ways. These strayings from the path of rectitude are not only indications of a backsliding. These become tainting media which impart their colours—light, medium or dark—and so discolour the pure white light of Truth. The harm, however, is not limited to the defiling of Truth. It dries up one's power to serve. It makes the disciple tired and denuded of the vitality which alone can hold him steadfast to his Cause.

It therefore follows that the art of conserving energy is an important stage in the life-endeavour of the disciple progressing towards his knowledge. We have access to several types of cosmic forces which can be drawn upon by him who knows the art of commanding these wondrous powers. The athlete draws upon one type of energy; the poet, the mystic and the sculptor draw upon yet other types and sub-types of the cosmic force. All these replenish or deplete their reservoirs by an unconscious or semi-conscious obedience or resistance to laws which govern these forces. The student has, as a first step, to learn to discriminate between the frittering away of energy and the conserving and the transmutation of that same energy. In the first case, he but impoverishes himself as does the wastrel in any department of life. In the second, the energy, though expended by use, transfers itself through that very use into a higher state and so conserves

itself for the one who used it. There exist students who after long years of sacrificial service have become frustrated because unconsciously they had all along worked for a reward. There are others who drifted away because they found they were left behind and apparent favours were shown to those who in their opinion deserved them the least. Personality and selfishness are in them racing towards their ruin. In such instances, though there was the outward show and semblance of service, their actions were merely worldly acts motivated by inferior forces. The higher power was not drawn upon mainly because it is always beyond the reach of the selfish and the personal. What they drew upon was a terrestrial force, and that having exhausted itself left them bankrupts—derelicts on life's ocean and a constant danger to navigation.

What each student is to be cautious about is that the freshness of his enthusiasm is not allowed to be drained away. When the mind is bent exclusively upon the contemplation of metaphysics (the personal and the selfish have the least chance to intrude here), a conjunction of Manas and Buddhi takes place. The pulsation of the mind assumes a different vibration; the breathing, if one can call it that, is of an entirely different strata of *Prana*. The use of the higher force is induced by the act of living on a higher plane of consciousness. It is not a laboured manipulation of *Prana*—a practice deprecated by Theosophy. The energy so vitalized by the union of Buddhi-Manas remains and is never entirely lost. It can be drawn upon for revitalizing the individual and urging him on to greater efforts. The rationale of this lies in the fact that man is built up from every secret part of nature. From each such part must sustenance be drawn—not only through osmosis but now by invocation through the action of the awakened Will. It is for the recharging of his batteries that the student is advised to fall back upon the Spirit in all moments of leisure. Genuine recuperation is possible only by ascending to the higher planes of Being.

THOSE who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts. There is symbolic as well as actual beauty in the migration of the birds, the ebb and flow of the tides, the folded bud ready for spring. There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature—the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after the winter.

—RACHEL CARSON

FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT

. . . arise with determination fixed for the battle. Make pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat, the same to thee. . .

—*Bhagavad-Gita*, II, 37-8

EACH whose mind and heart respond to the Teachings of Theosophy and who intuitively sees the potential blessings to mankind from the spread of those Teachings must, unless wholly self-centred, aspire to fit himself to spread their message, through his living example if not with voice or pen. He very soon becomes aware that this demands self-conquest in an increasing measure if he is not to play the hypocrite, a traitor to himself and to the Cause.

The seemingly paradoxical injunction of Krishna, quoted above, must, however, have puzzled many. On what is our determination to be fixed, if not victory? On fighting well the good fight, well called the greatest of all wars, against the wiles and machinations of our lower nature. On living well each moment, hour by hour, and doing this because it is right and not because of what we think we may gain from doing so. And this demands that we listen for and obey the orders of the true warrior within, who is ourself, yet infinitely wiser and stronger than ourself as a personality.

Motive is the essential test. Mr. Judge warns plainly that if we "go into this battle from pride, from self-will, from desire to hold our position in the face of the world, from anything but the purest motives, we shall fail." If we are sincere, we cannot be consciously fighting for a future of power and glory. But it is well indeed for us if our whole aspiration, held in all humility, is to do all we can to serve the servants of the Servants of mankind, while ever trying to fit ourselves for worthier performance of such service.

But who can be fully confident that his motive is completely uncoloured or be sure that it will remain so? Though personal pride may be in abeyance when we enrol ourselves for the great battle, may it not reawaken, even when we may have triumphed over every animal instinct and all greed for self-advantage? *The Voice of the Silence* warns:

Thou hast removed pollution from thine heart and bled it from impure desire. But O thou glorious combatant, thy task is not yet done. Build high, Lanoo, . . . the dam that will protect thy

mind from pride and satisfaction at thoughts of the great feat achieved.

H.P.B. cautions us specifically in regard to vanity, the sense of personal pride, which she says is the last to die in man. In her article, "The Devil's Own: Thoughts on Ormuzd and Ahri-man," she writes:

Let it awake but for an instant, and the seemingly crushed-out personality comes back to life at the sound of its voice, arising from its grave like an unclean ghoul at the command of the midnight incantator. Five hours—nay, five minutes even—of life under its fatal sway, may destroy the work of years of self-control and training, and of laborious work in the service of Ahura Mazda, to open wide the door anew to Angra Mainyu. (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 7, pp. 7-8*)

Such a catastrophe would be indeed a deplorable setback, deplorable for ourselves and also for the world which so badly needs the help of all who can rise to the heights of impersonal service. But it need not, should not, mean final defeat and we need not add prolonged dejection to the enemies we have to fight, if only we have the necessary stamina to pick ourselves up and renew the fight with vigour, holding our place among the relatively few who have the patience, the "simple perseverance and singleness of purpose" to fight the good fight to the end.

In this battle with our lower nature each has his own handicaps in his weaknesses, his circumstances and surroundings, but we are assured that he who does all that he can and the best that he knows how to do, does enough for the great Masters. Even to hold our ground is sometimes victory.

If we but hold fast in our consciousness the thought of Them and of Krishna, the Spirit in our own heart consciousness, "the Lion our guard, the Sage our guide, the Warrior our sure defense and shield," we need have no fear of being overwhelmed either by others or by circumstances. So long as our faces are turned in the right direction, we need heed only "the praise or blame of that deity" which, we are told, can never be separated from our *true* self, "*as it is verily that God itself: called the Higher Consciousness.*" The sentence of the Supreme Court within is the only one without appeal.

Even when we stand self-convicted, however, we must still fight grimly on, hoping to turn today's defeat into tomorrow's victory. There is no real failure but ceasing to try. Victory and

defeat, therefore, have to be differently judged by Theosophical aspirants than as the world judges. Thus the man who suffers bravely for a principle or even dies for it is not defeated. The world may never hear of him, yet he has made this earth a better place for all, since none can rise without making the next step easier, in however small a degree, for all his brothers. We have, moreover, Krishna's assurance in the Sixth Discourse of the *Bhagavad-Gita* that, even though one fails in attaining to perfection in his devotion in a given life, one will, "even unwittingly, by reason of that past practice," be led and will work on.

H.P.B. tells us, indeed, that those only may be certain of success who are "passion-proof," "Mystics and Occultists by birth, and by right of direct inheritance from a series of incarnations and aeons of suffering and failures." ("Occultism versus the Occult Arts": *Raja-Yoga or Occultism*, p. 37)

Nevertheless those who have striven valiantly, though they have advanced but a little on the Way, stumbling and falling often but always picking themselves up and going on, have not failed. Dying with the confidence of returning to carry on the battle, these as well as the true victors can exclaim with St. Paul, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

Truly is it said in *The Voice of the Silence* that "the path that leadeth on, is lighted by one fire—the light of daring, burning in the heart." The same book also tells us for our encouragement and energization:

If thou hast tried and failed, O dauntless fighter, yet lose not courage: fight on, and to the charge return again and yet again.

The fearless warrior, his precious life-blood oozing from his wide and gaping wounds, will still attack the foe, drive him from out his stronghold, vanquish him, ere he himself expires. Act then, all ye who fail and suffer, act like him; and from the stronghold of your Soul chase all your foes away—ambition, anger, hatred, e'en to the shadow of desire—when even you have failed. (p. 68)

As rivers have their source in some far-off fountain, so the human spirit has its source. To find his fountain of spirit is to learn the secret of heaven and earth.

—LAO-TZU

THE THEOSOPHY OF DIONYSIUS THE AREOPAGITE

[Dr. Margaret Smith's analysis of the teaching of Dionysius the Areopagite, reprinted here from *The Aryan Path* for November 1936, continues her series on the early Theosophists.—Eds.]

DIONYSIUS, the so-called Areopagite, was a writer whose influence on the development of mysticism, in both East and West, was far-reaching, although practically nothing is known of his life and personality. He claimed to be St. Paul's convert, the Athenian Dionysius, and gives historical references in support of his claim; but his work plainly belongs to a later period. His writings were obviously influenced by Neo-Platonism, and especially by Proclus (410-485), and he mentions Hierotheos, who is most probably to be identified with Stephen bar Sudayli, a monk living in Jerusalem at the end of the fifth century A.D. Dionysius himself was probably a monk or priest residing in Syria, possibly a pupil of Stephen bar Sudayli, and almost certainly a student of Neo-Platonism, whose writings belong to the end of the fifth century. He seems to have made a thorough study of Greek philosophy, of Christian dogma, of the Jewish Kabbala, and of the Neo-Platonic theosophy, influenced as it was by the ancient philosophies of India, for all these were studied in the Alexandrian schools. He may well have studied under Proclus, the greatest thinker among the Neo-Platonists after Plotinus. Proclus made it his business to collate, arrange and elaborate the whole body of transmitted philosophy, while he added to it his own conceptions.

The work of Dionysius is full of the terminology of Proclus and Plotinus, and shows the influence of Iamblichus, though Dionysius himself had exchanged the old philosophy for Christianity, and adapted Neo-Platonist and Jewish conceptions to form a highly developed system of Christian mysticism. His extant works include *The Divine Names*, *The Mystical Theology*, *The Celestial Hierarchy*, *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, and a few letters, but he refers to a number of writings, which appear to have been lost, including the *Outlines of Divinity*, *The Symbolic Divinity*, *Sacred Hymns*, *The Just Judgment of God*, *The Objects of Sense and Intellect* and *Concerning the Soul*. Dionysius bases his teaching throughout on the pantheistic doctrine of emanation, as taught by the Neo-Platonic school, the evolution of the universe from the Supreme Essence, the One ineffable and Unknowable, and the tendency of all beings to return to that original One, and to be

reunited once again with the Divine.

He also taught an esoteric doctrine. What he is writing, he says, is not for the "uninitiated." He bids those who have become inspired through instruction in sacred things and who have received what is Divine into the secret recesses of their minds, to guard them closely from the profane multitude.¹ Again he writes:

It is necessary that those who are being initiated should be separated from the profane and become recipients of that knowledge which makes perfect those holy ones who are initiated into the highest mysteries.²

There is a re-echo of Plotinus in his exhortation:

I pray, let no uninitiated person approach the sight; for neither is it without danger to gaze upon the glorious rays of the sun with weak eyes, nor is it without peril to put our hand to things above us.³

His conception of Ultimate Reality is that of the Neo-Platonic Monad, the Super-Essential Godhead:

The One, the Unknowable, the Super-Essential, the Absolute Good, cannot be described in its ultimate Nature. It is both the central Force of all things and also their final Purpose, and is Itself before them all and they all subsist in it.⁴

The Universal Cause cannot be described by either affirmation or negation:

It transcends all affirmation by being the Perfect and Unique Cause of all things, and transcends all negation by the pre-eminence of Its simple and absolute nature—free from every limitation and beyond them all.⁵

Yet from what men see of the manifestation of the One, they conceive of It as Eternal Life, as Ineffable Truth; as the Fount of all Wisdom; as Overflowing Radiance; illuminating unto contemplation; as the Beloved in whom all Beauty and all Goodness meet; as Inexhaustible Power; as the Sun and Morning Star; as the Wind and the Fire and Living Water, as Spirit and Dew and Cloud, as All Creation, who yet is no created thing.⁶

The One is Perfect, Transcendent and Undifferentiated in its Unity, but in order to be manifested, the One becomes the Cause and Origin of Multiplicity.

¹ *Celestial Hierarchy*, cap. II.

² *Ibid.*, cap. III.

³ *Eccles. Hier.*, cap. II.

⁴ *The Divine Names*, I, 5.

⁵ *The Mystical Theology*, V.

⁶ *The Divine Names*, I, 6; IV, 1, 4, 6, 7.

The yearning which createth all the goodness of the world, being pre-existent abundantly in the Good Creator, allowed Him not to remain unfruitful in Himself, but moved Him to exert the abundance of His powers in the production of the universe.⁷

The One issues from Itself, in order to return to Itself. Considered from the standpoint of the Absolute, the whole process of emanation is self-movement; viewed from beneath it appears as a process of unfolding, differentiation and descent, and again of ascent, unification, and return to the One:

The Pre-Existent is the Beginning and the end of all things: The Beginning as their Cause, the end as their Final Purpose. That which bounds all things is yet their boundless Infinitude, containing beforehand and creating all things in One Act, being present unto all and everywhere, both in the particular individual and in the Universal Whole and going out into all things and yet remaining in Itself.⁸

So Dionysius teaches that there is nothing in the world without a share in the One; as all number participates in unity, so everything and each part of everything participates in the One, and on the existence of the One all other existences are based. The transcendent is also Immanent, and if all things are conceived as being ultimately unified with each other, then all things taken as a whole are One.⁹

The Absolute Godhead therefore exists both as Ultimate Reality and Manifested Appearance. The interpenetration of all things by the Divine, Dionysius compares to the action of Fire:

For this sensible fire is, so to speak, in everything and passes through everything, unmingled, separating, unchangeable, elevating, penetrating, lofty, ever-moving, self-moving, comprehending, uncomprehended, needing no other, energetic, powerful, present in all; when unobserved, seeming not to be, but manifesting itself suddenly, according to its own proper nature, when we seek to find it; and again flying away uncontrollably, it remains undiminished, in all the joyful distributions of itself.¹⁰

Such are the characteristics of the Divine Energy displayed in sensible images; it is at work everywhere, purifying, enlightening, making perfect, for ever drawing back all things to Itself, their Source. By Prayer, Dionysius observes, men think they bring God near to themselves, but Prayer is like the cable of a

⁷ *Ibid.*, IV, 10.

⁹ *Ibid.*, XIII, 2.

⁸ *Ibid.*, V, 10.

¹⁰ *Cel. Hier.*, XV.

ship, fastened to a rock: as the mariner pulls upon it, he seems to draw the rock near to the boat, but is really drawing himself and the vessel to the rock. Or it is to be compared to a chain of light, a resplendent cord let down from heaven. As men climb up it, hand over hand, they appear to pull it down, but in truth they themselves are being drawn upwards to the higher Radiance of the Divine Light. For, while men draw near to God, He does not draw near to them, being everywhere and changeless.¹¹

The soul of man, therefore, participates in the One, but, like all existent things, while in the material world it has two sides to its existence, one outside its created being, in the Super-Essence, wherein all things are One, and the other within its own created being, on this lower plane, where all things are separate from each other. Each grade of being, ascending from mere Existence, through Life and Sensation to Reason and Spirit, has its laws and proper virtues, and failure to observe these is the origin of evil. Nothing is inherently bad; evil consists in being separated from God; it is a pure negation; it is the unnatural, that which does not correspond to the nature of beings and things, each taken in its distinctive character. A man sins when he acts in defiance of his own highest nature, defiling the image of God within him, but when man realizes his own spiritual nature, he seeks by purification to restore the Divine image to its original brightness, and he seeks to make that ascent by which his personality can be transformed.

The Path of the soul back to God, Dionysius teaches, is an ascēsis by which the spiritual powers can be concentrated and unified:

If we would be united to a uniform and Divine agreement, we must not permit ourselves to descend to divided lusts, from which are formed earthly enmities, envious and passionate, against that which is according to nature.¹²

The advance is to be made away from outward things and towards the hidden depths of the soul, and all that hinders must be cast away. It is a *via negativa*, involving the purification first of the external senses and then of the inner faculties, from which the soul passes to a state beyond either:

In the practice of mystic contemplation leave the senses and the activities of the intellect and all things sensible and intelligible and things that are and things that are not, so that thine

¹¹ *The Divine Names*, III, 1.

¹² *Eccles. Hier.*, III, 3.

understanding being at rest thou mayst rise, so far as thou art able, towards union with Him, who is above all knowledge and all being. For, by the unceasing and absolute renunciation of thyself and of all things, thou shalt in pureness cast all things aside and so shalt be borne upwards into the supernatural Radiance of the divine Darkness.¹³

The stages of the upward path are three, and the first is that of Purgation, when the soul cleanses itself from the hindrances which come from the sensual, irrational self. The second is that of Illumination, when the reasoning intellect is purified and concentrated on the One:

Every procession of illuminating light proceeding from the Divine, whilst visiting us as a gift of goodness, restores us again as a unifying power to a higher spiritual condition, and turns us to the oneness of the Divine and to a deifying simplicity.

Having unified its own powers, the human soul is enabled to contemplate the Simple Unity of the Uncreated Light, but it must seek to go beyond contemplation, in which there is still subject to contemplate and object to be contemplated, and pass altogether out of self into That which it contemplates, and so to be utterly merged. This transcendent unification of the human spirit with the Divine is called by Dionysius "Unknowing," for in that state the soul passes beyond the senses and no longer has need of the reasoning faculty:

When we have received, with an unearthly and unflinching mental vision, the gift of Light, primal and superprimal, from the Supremely Divine, let us then, from this gift of Light, be restored again to its unique splendour.¹⁴

This is the stage which is the goal of the mystic, the end of the Path, for this Divine Light elevates those who aspire to Itself and makes them One, after the example of its own unifying Oneness. Those who have followed the Path to its end are thus perfected, "as "Divine images, as mirrors luminous and without flaw, receptive of the Primal Light and the Divine Ray, devoutly filled with that Radiance committed to them, but, on the other hand, spreading this Radiance ungrudgingly to those that come after."¹⁵ Only those who have freed themselves from the fetters of the flesh, and the more subtle fetters of the mind, can attain to union with Pure Spirit:

¹³ *The Mystical Theology*, I.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, III.

¹⁴ *Cel. Hier.*, I.

They who are free and untrammelled enter into the true Mystical Darkness of Unknowing, whence all perception of understanding is excluded, and abide in that which is intangible and invisible, being wholly absorbed in Him who is beyond all, and are united in their higher part to Him who is wholly unknowable and whom, by understanding nothing, they understand above all intelligence.¹⁶

The Divine Darkness, Dionysius states, is in truth that Unapproachable Light in which God is said to dwell:

And since He is invisible by reason of the abundant outpouring of supernatural light, it follows that he who is counted worthy to know and see God, by the very fact that he neither sees nor knows Him, attains to that which is above sight and knowledge, and at the same time realizes that the Godhead is beyond all things both sensible and intelligible.¹⁷

Those who in spirit are thus united with the Divine Spirit, are "deified," for salvation and true blessedness is deification, which is assimilation and union with God. This is the true end of the human soul, a love divinely sanctified into oneness with Him and, for the sake of this, complete and unswerving removal of things contrary; the vision and clear knowledge of sacred truth, the participation in the Supreme Perfection of the One.¹⁸ So the human soul, in finding its true self, finds and comes into possession of the Divine Self.¹⁹ Yet this attainment of the goal does not mean annihilation: "in the Super-Essence all things are fused yet distinct."

Dionysius, therefore, teaches a mystic theosophy, based on Neo-Platonism. As the soul came forth from God, so it must return to Him, after being purified, illuminated, and perfected, ascending from multiplicity to unity, from finitude and disunion into the ocean of Divine Being. His doctrine is definitely pantheistic and its widespread influence led to the acceptance of pantheistic doctrines in the West. The first mention of Dionysius and his writings was in A.D. 533, when Severus, the Patriarch of Antioch, appealed to them at a Council held in Constantinople, and it is obvious that they already possessed some authority. A Syriac version was made of them in the sixth century by the Aristotelian physician Sergius, and several commentaries on them were produced in the sixth and seventh centuries by Syrian scholars. They were widely read in the Eastern Church and their

¹⁶ *The Mystical Theology*, I.

¹⁷ *Letter*, V.

¹⁸ *Eccles. Hier.*, I.

¹⁹ *The Divine Names*, VIII, IX.

authority was strengthened by an edition prepared by Maximus the Confessor (580-662). Pope Gregory the Great (*ob.* 604) appealed to the authority of these writings, and they were cited at the Lateran Council in 649. John of Damascus, living at the beginning of the eighth century, who had a considerable influence upon the theological doctrine of the Scholastics of Western Europe and whose influence is still great in the East, made a special study of the works of the "Areopagite." There is little doubt that in the Near and Middle East the teachings of Dionysius had their effect on the mysticism of Islam and, later, on the Muslim mystics of Spain.

In the year 827, the Byzantine Emperor Michael sent as a gift to Louis I of France a copy of the Dionysian writings. They were deposited in the Abbey of St. Denis, who was identified with Dionysius the Areopagite, and the gift, in consequence, aroused great interest. The Abbot Hilduin made an attempt to edit and translate the books into Latin, but the task was beyond him, and it was left to Erigena, the Irish scholar, who arrived at the court of Charles the Bald in the latter half of the ninth century, to produce an adequate Latin version. This version made the writings available to mediaeval Christendom and their authority was accepted without question by the great scholars of the West. Commentaries on the Dionysian writings were written by the mystic, Hugh of St. Victor (*ob.* 1173), by Albertus Magnus (1193-1280) and by St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), of whom it has been said that he is "but a hive in whose varied cells he duly stored the honey" which he gathered from the writings of Dionysius, to such a degree that, had the works of Dionysius been lost, it would have been possible to reconstruct them, to a considerable extent, from the works of his great successor.

Scarcely a mediaeval European mystic but shows the influence of the Areopagite's writings, among them Eckhart (1260-1327), the German mystic, who wrote:

All that is in the Godhead is One—above all names, above all nature. The end of all things is the hidden Darkness of the eternal Godhead, unknown and never to be known.

Eckhart was reckoned a Plotinist and a Pantheist. Another was Tauler, who writes that when "the outward man has been converted into the inward, reasonable man and the powers of the senses and the power of the reason are gathered up into the very centre of the man's being," then the human spirit can ascend towards the Divine Darkness and multiplicity is effaced in unity,

“for the sole Unity, which is God, answers truly to the oneness of the soul, for then is there nothing in the soul but God.” The Flemish mystic John of Ruysbroeck (1293-1381) was another who followed in the steps of Dionysius, writing that the soul which has passed through the stages of purgation and illumination must ascend to that region where reason has to be put aside:

The soul there is simple, pure and spotless, empty of all things, and it is in this state of absolute emptiness that the Divine Radiance is revealed. To that Radiance neither reason nor sense nor remark nor distinction may serve; all that must remain below, for the infinite Light blinds the eyes of the Reason and makes them yield to that Incomprehensible Radiance.

And then the mystic is “one life and one spirit with God.”

To this period belongs the first English translation of *The Mystical Theology*, called the *Dionise Hid Divinitie* by the anonymous author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*, who teaches that the Godhead is beyond the reach of human understanding, but union may be attained by the soul which has passed beyond knowing and entered the “Cloud of Unknowing.”

The same influence is to be noted in the great mystics of Italy and Spain and France, so that Dionysius, himself deriving his teaching from the school of Ammonius Saccas, proved to be the chief influence in moulding the mystical theology of the West; and in Christian mysticism, both mediaeval and modern, is to be found the same ideal of union with the Godhead, based on the belief that the soul itself was divine in origin, and that when it should come to itself by the threefold Path of purification, illumination and perfection, it would return once again to the Divine, whence it came forth. As a modern writer has stated:

The mystics are like a chain of stars, each separated from the other by a gulf. We think we can trace resemblances, even connections; but they themselves tell us that the light comes direct from the sun and is not passed on at all.

Yet we cannot doubt that the beacon of such an one as Dionysius wakes the kindred soul, even though it be across the seas and across the centuries.

—MARGARET SMITH

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MIND, THE FEEDER OF DESIRE

THERE is a statement attributed to the Sage Vasishtha which startles the earnest endeavourer on the Path of the Spirit. It is this:

Even the crushing of a flower is attended with some effort but it requires no effort to destroy your desire.

How can this be? Desires are as hard as iron; their depth is dark like that of a sunless forest from which access to light seems impossible; years of effort strengthen the perception that desires are the most difficult to overcome. How then is this statement of the great Vasishtha to be understood? He himself explains:

Try to relinquish your desire and you will evade all difficulties; cease to think of a thing and your desire for it will disappear of itself. Even the crushing of a flower is attended with some effort but it requires no effort to destroy your desire, which vanishes of itself for want of its thought.

For want of its thought. Therein lies the secret. The strength of the desire derives from our own thought. Our mind is the feeder of the desires. The Sage continues his instruction of Prince Rama:

You have to extend the palm of your hand in laying hold of a flower, but you have nothing to do in destroying your frail and false desires. Your thoughts being repressed from other objects and fixed in Brahman, will enable you to do what is impossible for others to effect.

In this text a very straight line of demarcation is drawn. We are told to make a clear distinction between our desire and our thought. It is our ideation which, becoming the soul of desire, keeps the latter alive, nay, gives it vitality to carry on. What do we do? What is the state of our mundane existence?

There is no other business of our lives but to desire and to be doing; and then back to the desiring again.

It is a round of desire, circling from thought to action and back to thought again. Unchecked, the force gains momentum and the spiral of desire is formed. In the process, the mind feels delight and an increase of its own power, and unconsciously to itself its separative tendency transforms into egotism or ahankara. The mind's forgetfulness of its real source—the Soul—arises from the zest which desire produces. Like alcohol, which enhances the sense of life by taking the drunkard out of his normal consciousness for a while, so does desire arouse in the mind a sensation of

enhanced life which may be translated as a sense of self-importance. The Egotist is an intoxicated mind, and is apt to lose all soul sense if he does not abjure.

Yoga Vasishtha does not stop with the description of the round of desiring and doing; it tells us how to jump out of this dizzy merry-go-round:

As all restless craving is rooted out of the mind, it becomes free from all anxieties.

Forsake thy fond reliance on all visible phenomena; leave these things and remain rooted in the consciousness—*I am Infinite*.

In two stages the task has to be accomplished. Rooting out likes and dislikes from the mind is the first; using the sense of “I”—Egoity—on the divine plane is the second. The “I” exists as the Reality and that “I” is infinite. It is not nothing; It is the Ineffable Eternal. Just as our bodily limbs and organs, our senses and sensations, our desires fulfilled or unfulfilled give the false separative “I” a basis of reality, so also all the shadows of all objects cast on the Screen of Time, when that is pierced through, establish the fact that—All is I. All men, all women, all children are but projections of that “Real I”; the insect, the bird, the reptile, the mammal are also projections of the “Real I.” The green in Nature which soothes and pleases our eyes is but a projection from our own mind; the blue dome of heaven which marks the periphery of our sight and mind is but a projection of our own Self-god, and the “Real I” has peopled that expanse with Its myriad images.

The cultivation of the habit of perceiving this with the mind’s eye and of feeling the Presence of the “Real I” within one’s soul is recommended as a sure method of weakening and killing the enemy within. H.P.B. has outlined the practice to be adopted:

He who would be an occultist must not separate either himself or anything else from the rest of creation or *non-creation*. For, the moment he distinguishes himself from even a vessel of dishonour, he will not be able to join himself to any vessel of honour. He must think of himself as an infinitesimal something, not even as an individual atom, but as a part of the world-atoms as a whole, or become an illusion, a nobody, and vanish like a breath leaving no trace behind. As illusions, we are separate distinct bodies, living in masks furnished by Maya. Can we claim one single atom in our body as distinctly our own? Everything, from spirit to the tiniest particle, is part of the whole, at best a link. Break a single link and all passes into annihilation; but this is impossible.

THE UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE

THE dictionary defines a symbol very loosely as “something that stands for or represents another thing; especially an object used to represent something abstract.”

To anyone who has gained even an inkling of the breadth and depth of the significance of the subject, as suggested in *The Secret Doctrine*, such a definition of symbolism must seem superficial and inadequate. Concrete symbols, geometrical, numeral and other, such as the point in the circle, the cross, the Pythagorean triangle, the serpent, the tree, the egg, the lotus, contain a wealth of meaning which *The Secret Doctrine* illuminatingly suggests. There much evidence is assembled for H.P.B.'s statement: “There are no ancient symbols, without a deep and philosophical meaning attached to them; their importance and significance increasing with their antiquity.” (I, 379)

Ancient symbols were not adopted haphazardly but combined the conception of the Divine Invisible with the earthly and visible on the lines of analogy. “As above, so below.” Symbols, thus, can raise our consciousness, as they convey much more than the obvious meaning. In the words of Carlyle:

A symbol is ever, to him who has eyes for it, some dimmer or clearer revelation of the Godlike. Through all there glimmers something of a divine idea; nay, the highest ensign that men ever met and embraced under the Cross itself, had no meaning, save an accidental extrinsic one. (*S.D.*, I, 303)

“Every symbol,” H.P.B. declared, “must yield three fundamental truths and four implied ones, otherwise the symbol is false.”

Every religious and philosophical symbol had seven meanings attached to it, each pertaining to its legitimate plane of thought, *i.e.*, either purely metaphysical or astronomical; psychic or physiological, etc., etc. These seven meanings and their applications are hard enough to learn when taken by themselves; but the interpretation and the right comprehension of them become tenfold more puzzling, when, instead of being correlated, or made to flow consecutively out of and to follow each other, each, or any one of these meanings is accepted as the one and sole explanation of the whole symbolical idea. (*S.D.*, II, 538)

What is the source of true symbols? The ancients, who were in possession of the true teachings, knew that nothing could be preserved in human memory without some outward symbol.

From the very beginning of Aeons—in time and space in our

Round and Globe—the Mysteries of Nature (at any rate, those which it is lawful for our races to know) were recorded by the pupils of those same now invisible “heavenly men,” in geometrical figures and symbols. The keys thereto passed from one generation of “wise men” to the other. (*S.D.*, I, 612)

It is the universal agreement of the ancient symbols, when read esoterically, testifying as it does to the underlying unity of concepts in widely separated parts of the world, which furnishes one of the best proofs of the once universal diffusion of the primitive Wisdom-Religion and of its Mystery Language, which is now called symbolism.

Every symbol—in *every* national religion—may be read esoterically, and the proof furnished for its being correctly read by transliterating it into its corresponding numerals and geometrical forms—by the extraordinary agreement of all—however much the glyphs and symbols may vary among themselves. For in the origin those symbols were all identical. (*S.D.*, I, 443)

Why do students of Theosophy bother with this difficult subject? The language of symbols is a complete language, and we cannot understand any great Scripture unless we learn this Mystery Language. In the Scriptures of the world is to be found, for him who can read them with the eye of understanding, the history of nations and races, of worlds and of the Cosmos itself, in their sevenfold natures.

Since the symbolic formula attempts to characterize that which is far above scientific reasoning, and as often far beyond our intellects, it must needs go beyond that intellect in some shape or other, or else it will fade out from human remembrance. (*S.D.*, I, 473)

The religious and esoteric history of every nation was embedded in symbols; it was never expressed in so many words. All the thoughts and emotions, all the learning and knowledge, revealed and acquired, of the early races, found their pictorial expression in allegory and parable. (*S.D.*, I, 307)

A symbol has to be meditated upon, and the more we do so, the more spiritual knowledge we shall gain. The keys to Universal Symbolism are still in the keeping of the Initiates. The suggestive clues given in Theosophical teachings can help us to penetrate into the underlying meaning of symbols. For a deeper study of the subject the sections on Symbolism in the two volumes of *The Secret Doctrine* may be recommended.

DISCRIMINATION OF SPIRIT AND NOT-SPIRIT

[We reprint here from *The Theosophist* for December 1883 the concluding portion of Mohini M. Chatterji's translation of Shankaracharya's treatise, *Atmanatma Vivekah*. The first part appeared in our December issue.—EDS.]

Q. What is Spirit?

A. It is that principle which enters into the composition of man besides the *three bodies*, and which is distinct from the five sheaths (*Koshas*), being *sat* (existence),¹ *chit* (consciousness),² and *ananda* (bliss),³ and witness of the *three states*.

Q. What are the three bodies?

A. The gross (*sthula*), the subtile (*sukshma*) and the causal (*karana*).

Q. What is the *gross body*?

A. That which is the effect of the *Mahabhutas* (primordial subtile elements) differentiated into the five gross ones (*Panchikrita*),⁴ is born of *Karma* and subject to the six changes beginning with birth.⁵ It is said: "What is produced by the (subtile) elements differentiated into the five gross ones, is acquired by *Karma* and is the measure of pleasure and pain, is called the body (*sarira*) *par excellence*."

Q. What is the *subtile body*?

A. It is the effect of the elements not differentiated into five and having 17 characteristic marks (*lingas*).

Q. What are the seventeen?

A. The five channels of knowledge (*Jnanendriyas*), the five *organs of action*, the five *vital airs*, beginning with *prana*, and *manas* and *buddhi*.

Q. What are the *Jnanendriyas*?

A. [Spiritual] ear, skin, eye, tongue and nose.

Q. What is the *ear*?

¹ This stands for *Purusha*.—Tr.

² This stands for *Prakriti*, cosmic matter, irrespective of the state we perceive it to be in.—Tr.

³ Bliss is *Maya* or *Sakti*, it is the creative energy producing changes of state in *Prakriti*. Says the Sruti (*Taittiriya Upanishad*): "Verily from Bliss are all these *bhutas* born, and being born by it they live, and they return and enter into Bliss."—Tr.

⁴ The five subtile elements thus produce the gross ones: each of the five is divided into eight parts, four of those parts and one part of each of the others enter into combination, and the result is the gross element corresponding with the subtile element, whose parts predominate in the composition.—Tr.

⁵ These six changes are: birth, death, being in time, growth, decay, and undergoing change of substance (*parinam*) as milk is changed into whey.—Tr.

A. That channel of knowledge which transcends the [physical] ear, is limited by the auricular orifice, on which the *akas* depends, and which is capable of taking cognizance of sound.

Q. The *skin*?

A. That which transcends the skin, on which the skin depends, and which extends from head to foot and has the power of perceiving heat and cold.

Q. The *eye*?

A. That which transcends the ocular orb, on which the orb depends, which is centred in the black iris and has the power of cognizing forms.

Q. The *tongue*?

A. That which transcends the tongue and can perceive taste.

Q. The *nose*?

A. That which transcends the nose, and has the power of smelling.

Q. What are the *organs of action*?

A. The organ of speech (*vach*), hands, feet, etc.

Q. What is *vach*?

A. That which transcends speech, in which speech resides, and which is located in *eight different centres*⁶ and has the power of speech.

Q. What are the *eight centres*?

A. Breast, throat, head, upper and nether lips, palate, ligature (frenum) binding the tongue to the lower jaw, and tongue.

Q. What is the *organ of the hands*?

A. That which transcends the hands, on which the palms depend and which has the power of giving and taking. . . . (The other organs are similarly described.)

Q. What is the *antahkarana*?⁷

⁶ The secret *Commentaries* say, seven; for it does not separate the lips into the "upper" and "nether" lips. And, it adds to the seven centres the *seven* passages in the head connected with, and affected by, *vach*; namely—the mouth, the two eyes, the two nostrils and the two ears. "The left ear, eye and nostril being the messengers of the right side of the head; the right ear, eye and nostril—those of the left side." Now this is purely scientific. The latest discoveries and conclusions of modern physiology have shown that the power or the faculty of human speech is located in the third frontal cavity of the left hemisphere of the brain. On the other hand, it is a well known fact that the nerve tissues intercross each other (decussate) in the brain in such a way that the motions of our left extremities are governed by the right hemisphere, while the motions of our right-hand limbs are subject to the left hemisphere of the brain.—*Ed.*

⁷ A flood of light will be thrown on the text by an editorial note in *Theosophist*, Vol. IV, 269: "*Antahkarana* is the path of communication between soul and body, entirely disconnected with the former, existing with, belonging to, and dying with the body." This path is well traced in the text.—*Tr.*

A. *Manas*, *buddhi*, *chitta* and *ahankara* form it. The seat of the *manas* is the root of the throat, of *buddhi* the face, of *chitta* the umbilicus, and of *ahankara* the breast. The functions of these four components of *antahkarana* are respectively doubt, certainty, retention and egotism.

Q. How are the five vital airs,⁸ beginning with *prana*, named?

A. *Prana*, *apana*, *vyana*, *udana* and *samana*. Their locations are said to be: of *prana* the breast, of *apana* the fundamentum, of *samana* the umbilicus, of *udana* the throat, and *vyana* is spread all over the body. Functions of these are: *prana* goes out, *apana* descends, *udana* ascends, *samana* reduces the food eaten into an undistinguishable state, and *vyana* circulates all over the body. Of these five vital airs there are five sub-air, namely, *naga*, *kurma*, *krikara*, *devadatta* and *dhananjaya*. Functions of these are: eructations are produced by *naga*, *kurma* opens the eye, *dhananjaya* assimilates food, *devadatta* causes yawning, and *krikara* produces appetite—this is said by those versed in *Yoga*.

The presiding powers of the five channels of knowledge and the others are *dik* (*akas*) and the rest. *Dik*, *vata* (air), *arka* (sun), *pracheta* (water), *Aswini*, *bahni* (fire), *Indra*, *Upendra*, *Mrityu* (death), *Chandra* (moon), *Brahma*, *Rudra*, and *Kshetrajnesvara*,⁹ which is the great Creator and cause of everything. These are the presiding powers of ear, and the others in the order in which they occur.

All these taken together form the *linga sarira*.¹⁰ It is also said in the *Shastras*: "The five vital airs, *manas*, *buddhi*, and the ten organs form the subtile body, which arises from the subtile elements, undifferentiated into the five gross ones, and which is the means of the perception of pleasure and pain."

Q. What is the *Karana sarira*?¹¹

⁸ These vital airs and sub-air are magnetic currents.—Tr.

⁹ For an explanation of this term see Sankara's commentaries on the *Brahma Sutras*.—Tr.

¹⁰ *Linga* means that which conveys meaning, characteristic mark.

¹¹ Mr. Subba Row understands it in exactly the same way. See *Theosophist*, Vol. IV, 249. See also in this connection an editorial note in the same number of that journal, p. 255, running thus:

"This *Karana sarira* is often mistaken by the uninitiated for *Linga sarira* (e.g. Sridhara Swami in his commentaries on the *Bhagavad-Gita*—Tr.), and since it is described as the inner rudimentary or latent embryo of the body—confounded with it."

I am under the impression that I follow the best authorities in regarding *Karana sarira* as surviving in *devachan*, and when the proper time comes, furnishing the monad with the other two bodies, of which it embodies the causal germs.—Tr.

A. It is ignorance (*avidya*), which is the cause of the other two bodies, and which is without beginning,¹² ineffable, reflection [of Brahma] and productive of the concept of non-identity between self and Brahma. It is also said: "Without a beginning, ineffable, *avidya* is called the *upadhi* (vehicle)—*karana* (cause). Know the Spirit to be truly different from the three *upadhis*, i.e., bodies."

Q. What is *Not-Spirit*?

A. It is the three bodies [described above], which are impermanent, inanimate (*jada*), essentially painful and subject to congregation and segregation.

Q. What is *impermanent*?

A. That which does not exist in one and the same state in the three divisions of time [namely, present, past and future].

Q. What is *inanimate (jada)*?

A. That which cannot distinguish between the objects of its own cognition and the objects of the cognition of others.

Q. What are the three states [mentioned above as those of which the Spirit is witness]?

A. Wakefulness (*jagrata*), dreaming (*svapna*), and the state of dreamless slumber, (*sushupti*).

Q. What is the state of *wakefulness*?

A. That in which objects are known through the avenue of [physical] senses.

Q. Of *dreaming*?

A. That in which objects are perceived by reason of desires resulting from impressions produced during wakefulness.

Q. What is the state of *dreamless slumber*?

A. That in which there is an utter absence of the perception of objects.

The indwelling of the notion of "I" in the gross body during wakefulness is *visva* (world of objects),¹³ in the subtile body during dreaming is *taijas* (magnetic fire), and in the causal body during dreamless slumber is *prajna* (One Life).

Q. What are the five sheaths?

A. *Annamaya*, *Pranamaya*, *Manomaya*, *Vijnanamaya*, and

¹² It must not be supposed that *avidya* is here confounded with *prakriti*. What is meant by *avidya* being without beginning is that it forms no link in the *Karmic* chain leading to succession of births and deaths; it is evolved by a law embodied in *prakriti* itself.—*Tr.*

¹³ That is to say, by mistaking the gross body for self, the consciousness of external objects is produced.—*Tr.*

Anandamaya.¹⁴

Annamaya is the transformation of *anna*¹⁵ (food), *Pranamaya* of *prana* (life), *Manomaya* of *manas*, *Vijnanamaya* of *vijnan* (finite perception), *Anandamaya* of *ananda* (illusive bliss).

Q. What is the *Annamaya* sheath?

A. The gross body.

Q. Why?

A. The food eaten by father and mother is transformed into semen and blood, the combination of which is transformed into the shape of a body. It wraps up like a sheath and hence so called. It is the transformation of food and wraps up the spirit like a sheath—it shows the spirit which is infinite as finite, which is without the six changes beginning with birth as subject to those changes, which is without the three kinds of pain¹⁶ as liable to them. It conceals the spirit as the sheath conceals the sword, the husk the grain, or the womb the foetus.

Q. What is the next sheath?

A. The combination of the five organs of action, and the five vital airs form the *Pranamaya* sheath.

By the manifestation of *prana*, the spirit which is speechless appears as if the speaker, which never gives as the giver, which never moves as if in motion, which is devoid of hunger and thirst as if hungry and thirsty.

Q. What is the third sheath?

A. It is the five (subtile) organs of sense (*jnanendriya*) and *manas*.

By the manifestation of this sheath (*vikara*) the spirit which is devoid of doubt appears as doubting, devoid of grief and delusion as if grieved and deluded, devoid of sight as if seeing.

Q. What is the *Vijnanamaya* sheath?

A. [The essence of] the five organs of sense form this sheath in combination with *buddhi*.

Q. Why is this sheath called the *jiva* (personal ego) which by reason of its thinking itself the actor, enjoyer, etc., goes to the other *loka* and comes back to this?¹⁷

¹⁴ This subject is also treated of by the author in the *Atmabodha* and has been admirably expounded in this journal for July last, p. 255, q.v.—Tr.

¹⁵ This word also means the earth in Sanskrit.—Tr.

¹⁶ The three kinds of pain are:

Adhibhautika, i.e., from external objects, e.g., from thieves, wild animals, etc.

Adhidaivika, i.e., from elements, e.g., thunder, etc.

Adhyatmika, i.e., from within one's self, e.g., headache, etc. See *Sankhya Karika*, Gaudapada's commentary to the opening Sloka.—Tr.

¹⁷ That is to say, flits from birth to birth.—Tr.

A. It wraps up and shows the spirit which never acts as the actor, which never cognizes as conscious, which has no concept of certainty as being certain, which is never evil or inanimate as being both.

Q. What is the *Anandamaya* sheath?

A. It is the *antahkarana*, wherein ignorance predominates, and which produces gratification, enjoyment, etc.

It wraps up and shows the spirit, which is void of desire, enjoyment and fruition as having them, which has no conditioned happiness as being possessed thereof.

Q. Why is the spirit said to be different from the three bodies?

A. That which is truth cannot be untruth, consciousness inanimate, bliss misery, or *vice versa*.

Q. Why is it called the witness of the three states?

A. Being the master of the three states, it is the knowledge of the three states, as existing in the present, past and future.¹⁸

Q. How is the spirit different from the five sheaths?

A. This is being illustrated by an example:

“This is my cow,” “this is my calf,” “this is my son or daughter,” “this is my wife,” “this is my *anandamaya* sheath,” and so on¹⁹—the spirit can never be connected with these concepts; it is different from and witness of them all. For it is said in the Upanishad:

[The spirit is] “naught of sound, of touch, of form, of colour, of taste, or of smell; it is everlasting, having no beginning or end, superior [in order of involution] to *Prakriti*;²⁰ whoever correctly understands it as such attains *mukti* (liberation).”

The spirit has also been called [above] *sat*, *chit* and *ananda*.

Q. What is meant by its being *sat* (existence)?

A. Existing unchanged in the three divisions of time and uninfluenced by anything else.

Q. What by being *chit* (consciousness)?

A. Manifesting itself without depending upon anything else and containing the germ of everything in itself.

Q. What by being *ananda* (bliss)?

A. The *ne plus ultra* of bliss.

Whoever knows without doubt and apprehension of its being otherwise, his self as one with Brahma, which is eternal, non-dual and unconditioned, attains *moksha*.

¹⁸ It is the stable basis upon which the three states arise and disappear.—*Tr.*

¹⁹ The “heresy of individuality” or *attavada* of the Buddhists.—*Tr.*

²⁰ Differentiated matter.

APPENDIX

I

In the opening Sloka all *drisyā* is described as *anatma* (not spirit) and the spirit of one possessed of right discrimination is called *drik*. These two Sanskrit words are thus described in the author's *Brahma namavalimala* or the String of names of Brahma, Sloka 18: "*Drisyā and drik exist, different from each other; the former is māyā and the latter Brahma—this is celebrated in all Vedantic works.*"

II

Sarira (body) is derived from the root *sri*, to shrink, and is so called because it shrinks with age or when the knowledge of identity of self with Brahma is realized.

Deha (body) is from the root *dah*, to burn, so called on account of its being burnt up after death or at all events by the threefold pain in life (*vide supra*).

FOR a practical man living in the world, the development of psychic powers is dangerous for it lays him open to all the evil influences emanating from his different surroundings. The first thing to be accomplished is to strengthen the will power both on the physical and spiritual planes, so as to obtain a complete mastery over SELF and to be able to control all thoughts, for no man can control the powers of nature until he has gained a complete victory over self. *Five Years of Theosophy* contains hints on this subject, also *Patanjali's Yoga Philosophy* and the back numbers of the *Theosophist* have many practical instructions.

By leading a pure life, living on vegetarian food, the grosser particles of the body gradually disappear, making way for finer elements and thus rendering the body more susceptible to the astral influences; so therefore necessarily as the outer covering gets less dense the inner man should become stronger and more powerful so as to enable it to resist the surrounding dangers; if not, as a sensitive he will simply fall into mediumship.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

THE year 1985 culminated in India with a unique event. The Indian National Congress celebrated its centenary. India does not possess another political organization with a comparable record of service to the nation; and 100 years are a long time in the life of any party anywhere in the world. *The Times of India* for December 27, 1985, remarked editorially:

The party reflects the quintessence of the Indian genius. . . .

The Congress has often been described as the microcosm of the Indian macrocosm. Its centenary is, therefore, no mere party event. It is a national event in which all Indians can, and indeed should, participate emotionally.

The media have widely acknowledged A. O. Hume's role as a prime mover in the formation of the Indian National Congress. Hume was formerly a responsible Government official and an influential member of the Theosophical Society who had espoused the Indian cause. There were others in the T.S.—some now forgotten—who helped to make the birth of the Congress possible. In her article, "Our Three Objects," originally published in *Lucifer*, September 1889, H.P.B. records the attainments of the Theosophical Movement in India, pre-eminently its "silent but irresistible" influence in fostering unity and brotherhood among diverse elements of Indian society where formerly there had been disunity and strife. One step in this direction, she says, was taken by

the sudden birth and phenomenally rapid growth of the patriotic movement which is centralized in the organization called the Indian National Congress. This remarkable political body was planned by certain of our Anglo-Indian and Hindu members after the model and on the lines of the Theosophical Society, and has from the first been directed by our own colleagues; men among the most influential in the Indian Empire. At the same time, there is no connection whatever, barring that through the personalities of individuals, between the Congress and its mother body, our Society. . . . We aroused the dormant spirit and warmed the Aryan blood of the Hindus, and one vent the new life made for itself was this Congress. All this is simple history and passes unchallenged. (*The Theosophical Movement*, December 1965)

P. C. Roy Choudhury's chronicle of the birth of the Congress (*Indian Express*, December 15, 1985) substantiates, with quotations from the media of a century ago, the role played by this

organization, from its very inception, in fostering unity by becoming an all-India forum, an event unique in those days:

“The assembling of Sindhis, Punjabis, Bengalees, Madrasis, Gujaratis, Maharatas, Parsis, Marwaris, Hindus and Muslims under the same roof and for a common object, is by no means trifling,” observed the *Hindustani* of Lucknow.

The Indian Mirror of Calcutta wrote, “The day on which it opened, namely, December 28, 1885, will form a red-letter day in the annals of the national progress of the native races. It is the nucleus of a future parliament for our country, and will lead to good of inconceivable magnitude for our countrymen. If we were asked what was the proudest day in our life, we should unhesitatingly say it was the day on which we, for the first time, met all our brothers of Madras, Bombay, the North-Western Provinces and the Punjab under the roof of the Gukul Dass Tejpal Sanskrit College [Bombay] for the purpose of the National Congress. From the date of this Congress we may well count the more rapid development of national progress in India in future.” . . .

It is significant that a report published in *The Times* (London) on December 31, 1885, mentioned, “They brought together a National Congress composed of delegates from every political society of any importance throughout the country. Members met together; 29 great districts sent spokesmen. The whole of India was represented from Madras to Lahore, from Bombay to Calcutta. For the first time, perhaps, India as a nation met together.”

Over the past 20 years or so, consumption of narcotic drugs has spread cancerously in India among different age-groups. What is especially disturbing is that young people in increasing numbers are getting addicted to drugs, especially to crude heroin. The problem can no more be ignored. The recent passing by parliament of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Bill is a step in the right direction. Through the new Bill, which replaces the archaic drug laws, the punishment for drug-trafficking has been made more deterrent. But the Bill by itself is not going to eradicate the evil. More needs to be done. (*Science Today*, December 1985)

Surveys reveal that drug addiction has spread deep into our society, encompassing urban and rural areas. Worse, it is not con-

fined to any identifiable group; people from all professions, all regions, all backgrounds are affected. Even eight- and nine-year-old children are not spared by the pushers.

The recovery rates for drug abusers are as low as 20 per cent and recurrence of the habit is common. Desperate, and physical and psychological wrecks, the addicts resort to any activity, even theft or murder, to obtain the drug. Ingenious ways are employed to evade the law-enforcement agencies.

It is generally agreed that something needs to be done urgently to control, if not to completely eliminate, this scourge of drug-abuse in our society. A UN treaty calls for international co-operation against drug abuse. At the national level, close co-operation is needed between different societal, medical and government agencies. Special courses in schools and nationwide publicity and propaganda effort to educate the people about the threat posed by these drugs can prove of help in checking the spread of the evil. Above all, efforts should be made towards strengthening of the family unit and the social structure.

The three articles which follow a general introduction in *Science Today* highlight some aspects of drug addiction. Dr. Rajendra Barve, lecturer at the Department of Psychiatry, Nair Hospital, Bombay, discusses how best to go about when confronted with an addict in the family:

Successful management of drug addiction demands understanding of factors which force a person into this habit. The personality of an individual determines the type of drugs he will take. Hence, the personality types have been described as inadequate, psychopathic, attention-seeking, anxious, etc. It is usually observed that these individuals have low frustration-tolerance and inability to cope up with even minor stressful events.

The immediate environment, that is the family of an individual, plays a major role in forcing a person into this habit. Broken families breed social deviants and addicts; parents may be indifferent or over-protective. The emergence of the new class of *nouveau riche*, with lots of easy money and distorted values of life, is another breeding ground of this habit. Also, where the environment is stifling and highly disciplined, children tend to react in one way or the other and the drug-intake may just be an expression of their freedom. The role of home environment should not be underplayed; rather unknowingly the parents may be forcing their children into this habit. Perhaps, it will be more apt to describe drug addiction as a symptom of the decaying socio-political situation of the country and our society.

Dr. Barve stresses the role of an emotionally supportive atmosphere. An addict can only be cured if the motivation to abstain from drugs is extremely strong. The family of the addict as also the professional looking after him must remain sympathetic and supportive. Associations like Narcotic Anonymous or Drug Anonymous also play a significant role in rehabilitation of addicts.

Drug-taking only constitutes a screen behind which the true problems can be hidden. Most researchers in the field agree that low self-regard is a crucial factor in addiction. Drug abuse is a symptom of a deeper psychological and social malaise. It is only the tip of the iceberg showing above the surface.

Although the ways in which children play have changed dramatically in the past centuries, the *need* for play has remained constant. In an essay in *Psychology Today* for October 1985, psychologist Brian Sutton-Smith offers his view of what role play has in our lives. Play is becoming steadily less physical, more computerized and, most of all, more isolated:

Modern children spend an increasingly large part of their lives alone with their toys, a situation inconceivable several centuries ago. Childhood was once part of a collective village life. Children didn't play separately but joined youths and adults in seasonal festivals that intruded upon the work world with considerable regularity and with great boisterousness. . . .

For Schiller, play and playful imagination were manifestations of human freedom, the basis for both fine art and for the higher morality. Many modern scholars see play in much the same romantic way as a special kind of freedom and intrinsically motivated behaviour.

As the 19th century progressed, however, observers came to connect children's play increasingly with human or cultural evolution. . . . Biologically oriented thinkers, on the other hand, saw play as preparation for life. . . . For Freud, play was an especially useful form of human adjustment, bringing the child mastery over anxieties and conflicts. Even today, many people justify their play and sports by saying that these activities "release their tensions," words of Freud that have passed into everyday language.

In the past 30 years, a number of other theories have vied for recognition, all of them making positive statements about play.

Psychologist Jean Piaget has argued that play contributes to thought by consolidating the learning already acquired by the child. Psychologist Daniel Berlyne has said that play is a form of exploration in which a child learns by responding to novel objects and stimulation. Anthropologist John Roberts has contended that children's games are models of power through which children learn the strategies of human interaction. Philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer sees play as a higher form of truth and human freedom. Anthropologist Gregory Bateson, on the other hand, looks on it as a special kind of communication, evidence of the child's ability to invent human society.

None of these theorists doubt that play is functional in some way and contributes value to human life. They all, however, overlook the fact that in some other cultures, as well as in our own past, play has often been regarded with suspicion. They neglect to mention that play is often dangerous and cruel, as many historical animal and anthropological examples can attest. They forget that serious questions have been raised about the artificiality and isolation of much modern play.

Play itself is neither good nor bad. It is a form of expression and communication. What makes it good or bad is what we do with it. The responsibility of parents and others looking after a child's upbringing is great indeed, for the kind of play the young are encouraged to participate in will affect and mould their future lives. For, in the words of H.P.B.:

The child is father to the man. It is the first impressions, visual or mental, which the young senses take in the quickest, to store them indelibly in the virgin memory. It is the imagery and scenes which happen to us during our childhood, and the spirit in which they are viewed by our elders and received by us, that determine the manner in which we accept such like scenes or look upon good or evil in subsequent years. For, it is most of that early intellectual capital so accumulated day by day during our boyhood and girlhood that we trade with and speculate upon throughout later life.

At a time when nature conservation is at a low ebb in India, are we going to have academic discussions on whether to use the rational approach or the emotional approach to bring it about? This was the question which inspired "Sanskar," an audio-visual

presented by World Wildlife Fund (India), on nature conservation as an ancient Indian tradition.

Shanta Chatterji's two-part article in *The Times of India* for December 18 and 19 advocates the tapping of myths, rituals and Vedic wisdom by environmentalists, with a view to preserving nature. With our environment in a shambles, with forest cover dangerously nearing 10 per cent, with 1.3 million hectares of trees disappearing every year, which is our quickest way of getting an active response from the public?

If we give them facts and figures will they absorb them beyond a point? Having absorbed them, will they be moved to act on them? Experience shows that "statistics never moved souls." And then, what percentage of the population will react? For the bulk of the population, while we go through the cycle of literacy, education, public awareness of social and economic issues, will the environment wait?

So what is the quickest way?

What about stirring up our subconscious, the storehouse of myth and history which we gathered in our childhood, the association we have with stories of Krishna and Ram, of living in harmony with Nature, of protecting it, of cherishing it? And one by one, all the concepts of ecology, the environment and the interdependence of all species come alive, in an idiom which is relevant and easily assimilated by most of traditional India—with a power that touches a level of consciousness which never forgets the lessons. . . .

What greater impact than the dramatic content of the Cosmic form of Krishna, as revealed to Arjun on the battlefield of Kurukshetra? What would the *Gita* be without this Virat Roop where the web of life, the unity and interdependence of all species comes to life in a flash? The same energy that transforms itself from one to the other. Echoing strains from Fritjof Capra, the nuclear physicist of today, who so lucidly draws parallels between ancient insights and the conclusions of quantum physics, that all matter is energy—that Shiva's dace of creation is almost identical in its postures to the behaviour of the splitting of particles into energy, in a nuclear bubble chamber. Only the image of Shiva remains longer in the mind than a diagram of lines going in different directions. "Clay models are immersed, but concepts stay behind." If you take the trouble to investigate these concepts or even if you do not, they stay with you. And so the dancing Shiva is almost a symbol of India for the world. . . .

How was nature conservation a way of life in India?

We seem to have gone through a range of attitudes from wonder and worship in the Vedic period, to equality and communication in the Ramayana period, to devotion and closeness during the Krishna period, tinged with romance and poetry of which scented glades and ebullient animals and birds were always a part. There was no art without nature, no music without the live symbols of the seasons which gave content to it—the koyal heralded spring, the cranes followed the rains. . . .

Symbolism has played an important role in the shaping of our psyches. . . .

Thirty-eight years after independence, we are still looking for a national identity. Can we sieve through our *sanskaras*, our cultural imprints, and come up with a mix which is rational in content and imaginative in its approach? By imitation of other societies, we are likely to remain shadows of ourselves. By a judicious blend of centuries old experience with the investigative technique, we might just about stop ourselves from throwing away the rice with the chaff.

In the past two decades, psychologists such as Lawrence Kohlberg of Harvard and Norma Haan of the Institute of Human Development at Berkeley have been investigating into the underlying structure of moral thought. Kohlberg's theory is that a child passes through a series of stages of moral growth on the road to moral maturity. Each higher stage reflects a more adequate representation of the principle of justice, which, according to him, is the defining characteristic of the highest stage. (*Psychology Today*, October 1985)

In studies of the relationship between athletes' moral reasoning and their aggression tendencies, coaches described athletes demonstrating the most morally mature reasoning as low in aggression, and the least mature reasoners were characterized as high aggressors.

In another test, school children in grades four through seven were assessed for their aggressive tendencies and were interviewed individually to determine their level of moral reasoning. The children who demonstrated higher moral reasoning were less verbally and physically aggressive both in daily life and in sports, while those with less mature reasoning had stronger aggression tendencies.

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THE policy of this Lodge is independent devotion to the cause of Theosophy, without professing attachment to any Theosophical organization. It is loyal to the great founders of the Theosophical Movement, but does not concern itself with dissensions or differences of individual opinion.

The work it has on hand and the end it keeps in view are too absorbing and too lofty to leave it the time or inclination to take part in side issues. That work and that end is the dissemination of the Fundamental Principles of the philosophy of Theosophy, and the exemplification in practice of those principles, through a truer realization of the SELF; and a profounder conviction of Universal Brotherhood.

It holds that the unassailable *Basis for Union* among Theosophists, wherever and however situated, is "*similarity of aim, purpose and teaching*," and therefore has neither Constitution, By-Laws nor Officers, the sole bond between its Associates being that *basis*. And it aims to disseminate this idea among Theosophists in the furtherance of Unity.

It regards as Theosophists all who are engaged in the true service of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, condition or organization, and

It welcomes to its association all those who are in accord with its declared purposes and who desire to fit themselves, by study and otherwise, to be the better able to help and teach others.

"The true Theosophist belongs to no cult or sect, yet belongs to each and all."

Being in sympathy with the purposes of this Lodge, as set forth in its "Declaration," I hereby record my desire to be enrolled as an Associate, it being understood that such association calls for no obligation on my part, other than that which I, myself, determine.

The foregoing is the form signed by Associates of the United Lodge of Theosophists. Inquiries are invited from all persons to whom this Movement may appeal. Cards for signature will be sent upon request, and every possible assistance furnished Associates in their studies and in efforts to form local Lodges. There are no fees of any kind, and no formalities to be complied with.

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